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RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IS A THREAT TO SOCIETY: SOCIAL  
ANALYSIS OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

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**ABSTRACT:**

In recent years, the world community has faced a problem of unprecedented scale and consequences, which today is far from not only being resolved, but also far from adequate comprehension. We are talking about the rapid spread of various forms of social violence, among which extremism in all its varieties and in almost all spheres of society's life poses a particular social threat.

Religious extremism poses a particular danger as a threat from extremism. He is not associated with any one religious system or community.

Religious extremism is inextricably linked with terrorism and fundamentalism. The situation is aggravated by the fact that society, the state, science turned out to be incapable of decisively and effectively reacting to the surge of manifestations of extremism in general and religious extremism in particular, believing that as science develops, religion will fall into the past.

However, events at the end of the last century showed the possibility of a religious renaissance. Among the reasons for this phenomenon is the failure of the secular authorities to effectively solve many socio-economic problems. This fully applies to modern countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**INTRODUCTION**

The efforts being made today are not bringing the desired results. It seems that the main reason for the unresolved issue of this problem is associated with the specifics of religious extremism, with the phenomenon of religion itself and religious experience as complex social phenomena. The rapid spread of new religious organizations, nontraditional cults also increases the social danger of religious extremism from the side of yet unexplored religious communities. This allows us to raise the question of the religious nature of civilization wars and the corresponding scale of threats from religious extremism.

An analysis of the current situation shows that religious extremism is one of the main threats to modern society, cultural and civilizational interaction, security of peoples and states, including the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

More specifically, the relevance of the study is due to the following circumstances.

First, the increased scale of the spread of extremism as such. It is inextricably linked to the growth of social violence and aggression as such. Entire regions of the world are being hit by extremism, which is used by a wide variety of social movements and groups. There is a trend towards the growth of extremism in the modern world and the transformation of this phenomenon into one of the global problems of our time.

Second, the growth of religious extremism itself. Its growth is so rapid that in the public consciousness extremism in general begins to be associated exclusively with religious extremism and with some of its varieties. Increasing numbers of people are becoming supporters of religious extremism.

An example is the extremism of supporters of globalization and representatives of anti-globalization. In these conditions, an urgent need is the development of the most effective measures to counter the spread of religious extremism among the population of the CIS countries.

Third, the complexity and diversity of religious extremism is associated with the hidden nature of religious experience<sup>1</sup>, its dynamism. These features require, in the current conditions, a comprehensive rethinking of this phenomenon on the basis of a systematic approach, which presupposes deep research, in particular, organizational-legal and information-logical models of the fight against negative manifestations of religion.

Thus, the problem of studying religious extremism as a social threat of modern society on the example of the CIS countries, identifying the causes and sources of this phenomenon, classification, genesis and trends of modification, manifestation of the essence, content and forms, the nature of challenges and threats to social systems and personality is currently acquiring special significance.

The problem of extremism, along with terrorism and fundamentalism in modern society, is one of the actively studied problems. This problem is studied by various sciences, which present their analysis of this phenomenon. But, unfortunately, in most works that try to consider the phenomenon of religious extremism as a social threat in all the diversity and complexity of this phenomenon, there are manifestations of tendentiousness and one-sidedness.

An idea of the level of socio-philosophical analysis of modern religious extremism can be made on the basis of the available literature, which is conventionally divided into the following groups.

So, for example, V.F. Khalipov defines extremism (from Latin *extremus*) as adherence to extreme views and measures, with an emphasis on the political sphere<sup>1</sup>.

This assessment is typical for A.S. Kapto. He defines extremism as “any act aimed at the violent seizure of power or the forcible retention of power, as well as the violent change of the constitutional system of the state, as well as a violent encroachment on public safety, including the organization of illegal armed groups for the above purposes or participation in them”.

A special place in this group of works is occupied by V.I. Krasikov's studies, devoted directly to extremism from the standpoint of philosophical analysis.

There are studies that show that extremism reflects the extremism of the very life of a modern person, which is formed as a certain state of society and a form of governance (“controlled social chaos”, “risk society”) and that extremism can be created by the dominant social strata and countries.

In general, an analysis of the available literature shows that the existence of the problem of religious extremism in modern society is associated, first of all, with the influence of this phenomenon on the political sphere of social systems. To a lesser extent, the question of the comprehensive impact of this phenomenon on society, social systems and spheres of life in general is raised from the standpoint of the threats and challenges that religious extremism is fraught with. A certain superficiality, one-sidedness, political and religious bias is sometimes seen in research.

In this regard, it becomes necessary to analyze the origins, causes, and social essence of religious extremism as a social threat of our time, to show the relationship, mutual influence and interaction of religious extremism with various spheres of society. As an independent research task, practically religious extremism has not been investigated in this context.

The purpose of the study is to examine from a socio-philosophical standpoint the essence and main content of modern religious extremism as a social threat, to identify its main types and dynamics of the development of this phenomenon, as well as to substantiate the priority areas of countering challenges and threats from carriers of religious extremism in order to ensure security of the individual, society and state.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following interrelated research tasks:

- to reveal the essence of religious extremism as a social threat to modern society;
- to reveal the typology of religious extremism.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The direct methodological basis of the dissertation was formed by the basic provisions of social and philosophical science, its conceptual and categorical apparatus in relation to the object and subject of research. The work uses and implements the principles of philosophical analysis: functional-activity, organizational-system, structural-content, axiological, phenomenological approaches, principles of social determinism, historicism, etc. We also used more specific methods of classification and systematization, theoretical generalization and description, content analysis, etc. This study considered the methodological requirements of the principle of objective reality, the

multidimensionality of truth, its mediation by various forms of scientific knowledge.

The empirical base of the research includes the results of the analysis of guidelines regulating the activities of state bodies and public organizations to study this phenomenon and counter religious extremism in society; scientific and methodological generalizations of various social institutions on the problem; sociological data obtained and used by other authors on the topic of the dissertation; content analysis of periodical materials on the problem, as well as generalization of the practice of professional activities of various bodies of society and the state in order to ensure the security of the state, society and the individual in the field of countering challenges and the threat of religious extremism and from its social carriers.

## DISCUSSION

The world today faces many dangers traditional and new, including political radicalism with its harsh intolerance, military conflicts and terrorism, which for the first time in history acquired a planetary format with an unprecedented number of victims, with an increasingly real prospect of using weapons of mass destruction. Religious extremism is one of the direst threats to the stability of nation states and the entire world community. Religious extremism, on the one hand, revives what is worse than characterized the past - dense chauvinism, separatism and nationalism with signs of an ideology of intolerance towards everything alien and incomprehensible, the assertion of violence in interethnic relations. On the other hand, religious extremism left the sphere of purely religious relations and became, so or otherwise, to penetrate into various political and spiritual structures of society and state. Its strengthening and spreading horizontally and vertically provoked by real political, economic and social problems that are really difficult and possibly destructive in some way. Among such problems, there are attempts to form a unipolar global peace, which leads to the weakening of national states and creates the need for their protection. Under these conditions, some of the subjects of religious extremism seeks to create new forms of uniting people, above all on religious grounds in order to resist globalization, and before its entire capitalist version. At the same time, religious groups oppose each other up to the point of refusal to the opposing side. The main goal of these subjects, who usurped the right to rule nations is, nevertheless, the seizure of power and the political dictate of one's vision of the future. Preservation of socio-cultural identity, tolerance for national traditions and peculiarities, mutual respect between peoples and nations, with appropriate to various religious confessions, is impossible without organizing an active overcoming of the creeping germs of religious extremism. At the present stage of development of the world community, the problem of identifying the essence of religious extremism in the context of social changes is considered a special one. Its solution requires, first of all, the study of the issue through the prism of the changing world and those problems that, in one way or another, affect the development of modern society. Theoretical justification innovation of the studied phenomenon will help to more accurately reflect its essence, causes and consequences.

Religious extremism should be viewed as a type of specific religious activity that is motivated and ideologically colored. He is distinguished by extreme radicalism, aimed at an irreconcilable struggle either with established traditions,

or at a struggle against religious modernism. At present, this phenomenon is being formed as an expansion of religious and pseudo-religious organizations and systems that form their own models of social structure and behavior of individuals, and in some cases offer their own alternative models of globalization. Religious extremism, due to the integrity of religion itself, operates in all spheres of society's life and therefore it is necessary to understand the essence of its manifestation in the social, spiritual, economic and political spheres of society.

Among the reasons for the emergence of religious extremism can be identified socio-psychological, spiritual-ideological, political and others. One of the main reasons for religious extremism is the contradictory essence of religion itself, which manifests itself in the political scene. Other reasons for the emergence of religious extremism are ignorance of modern science and technology, the lack of a scientific worldview in some people, political immaturity, economic backwardness, etc.

When studying the nature of religious extremism, the main issue is the systematization and typology of its manifestations. Modern religious extremism can be classified on various grounds. Among such grounds in the political sphere of society, there are classifications according to the use of specific religious rhetoric and according to the impact on various spheres of the life of society.

One of the most important threats to the national security of the Republic is the extremism of radical Islamic organizations.

The main direction in the fight against such movements in Tajikistan should be the neutralization of the most important factors contributing to its activation. The development of extremist processes is determined by socio-economic, political, religious-political and ethnic factors, and their original synthesis also takes place. Improving the socio-economic situation in the republic plays a major role in countering Islamic radicals, since this not only significantly narrows the social base of the Islamists, but also contributes to the settlement of political conflicts.

The religious factor affects the national security system negatively or positively, depending on the subjective and objective nature of the actions of a person or social groups, and this factor also contributes to the support of a particular ideology. For this reason, ensuring the national security must be turned into the basis of the state strategy and one of the vital directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the state.

Counteraction to religious extremism should be expressed in active actions of society and the state to detect, prevent, prevent and neutralize the activities of subjects of religious extremism at various levels and in all spheres of society. In this direction, Tajikistan needs to apply measures to the following levels of anti-extremist confrontation: international, regional, local, state and personal.

The fight against religious extremism is impossible without the use of psychological struggle. Clarification of the role, place, functions, means and forms of psychological struggle, strengthening the impact of information-psychological operations as an integral part of anti-extremist actions should be carried out constantly. Public consciousness in conditions of social change must become important and convincing a means of countering all violent and religious terrorist and extremist actions.

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it should be noted that religious extremism is a phenomenon that poses a danger to the normal functioning and development of society. Religious extremism as a social threat is antisocial, radically directed activities of organized social actors to implement a negative project of change society from the standpoint of a religiously colored model of the future as ideally due through social violence, in which intransigence towards the declared enemies becomes the main guiding principle. In this regard, religious extremism as a social threat is a type of certain religious activity that is motivated and ideologically painted. It is distinguished by extreme radicalism, aimed at an irreconcilable struggle either with established traditions (characteristic of new religious organizations) or at a struggle with religious modernism. Religious extremism can be both intra-confessional and non-denominational.

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