

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****ROLE OF REGIONAL ELITES TO COUNTER MANIFESTATIONS
OF EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM**

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Abstract

The publication analyzes the socio-economic, political and legal measures taken in the course of countering extremism manifestations, and associated with the activities of the state, government, including legal structures, business elites, including the regional ones, which formed a society based on private property. The formation and spread of extremism and terrorism are analyzed theoretically and methodologically. Despite being different, the terms “extremism” and “terrorism” are closely interconnected. Extremism in politics is defined as a commitment to extreme, radical views and modus operandi on the part of individuals or social groups. In Russia, much attention is paid to legal and political measures to counter extremism and terrorism. Appropriate laws allowing for the prevention and counteraction to extremism and terrorism have been adopted at the state level. An important role in countering extremism and terrorism in society is played by local political and religious elites, who use the ethno-cultural resource, customs and traditions of peoples to counteract, as well as to form the proper view and behavior in society among the younger generation aiming young people at creative activity and overcoming radical sentiment. General and specific methods for studying them are revealed, and their internal interconnection is considered. Considerable attention is paid to political and legal measures to counter extremism and terrorism, the role of regional elites involved in counteraction based on ethnic traditions and values is specified.

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1. Introduction

Despite being different, the terms “extremism” and “terrorism” are closely interconnected. Extremism in politics is defined as a commitment to extreme, radical views and modus operandi on the part of individuals or social groups. There is also such a definition of extremism as “an act aimed at the forcible seizure of power, its retention, changing the constitutional order of the state, as well as a violent encroachment on public security, including the organization of illegal armed forces to achieve the above goals or participation in them, prosecuted under criminal law in accordance with national legislation” (Shanghai Convention, 2001, p. 5). Extremism in this case is considered as a violent act, an encroachment on public security, the organization of illegal armed forces that are prosecuted by the state. These features of extremism also apply to terrorism defined as an extreme measure aimed to achieve political, religious and economic goals through violent actions and intimidation of the population.

In Russian legislation, terrorism is defined as the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing public consciousness, “decision-making by state authorities, local self-government or international organizations associated with the use of force, intimidation of the civilian population and/or other forms of illegal violent actions” (RF Government, 2006, p. 2).

The widespread use of the terms “extremism” and “terrorism” in social discourse occurs after the collapse of the USSR, during the modernization processes in post-Soviet Russia, the formation of a new social order based on a variety of private forms of ownership, separatist processes in the country, particularly in Chechnya. The diverse socio-economic, political, religious processes that took place in the new Russia were associated with the formation of a new economy in the country based on private property.

The privatization in Russia resulted in rendering 80 % of all property in Russia private. Thus, by the beginning of 2001, only 42 % of fixed assets in the economy were in state ownership (compared to 91 % in 1991), more than 80 % of the total number of enterprises were privately owned. The privatization of state and municipal property affected all sectors of the economy without exception. As a result, state property began to occupy a subordinate place not only in the total number of enterprises, but also in the total volume of production and the number of employees. As a result, not only in the total number of enterprises, but also in the total volume of production and the number of employees, state property became subservient.

From our point of view, these processes contributed to the formation of extremist and terrorist sentiments in Russian society, the emergence of social groups appealing for anti-state, violent practices. Some researchers believe that the issue of the socio-economic foundations of extremism, as well as terrorism in society, is associated with manifestations of social tension, injustice, and increased poverty of the population.

Thus, Pain (2002), who studies extremism among young people, connects it with various manifestations of social injustice, deterioration in the financial situation of this category of the population, violation of the youth rights, youth discrimination and limited forms of their protection, etc. As the author notes, these reasons indicate that the main problems causing various protest forms of youth self-

organization are as follows: social injustice, violation of the economic and constitutional rights of young citizens.

There is a concept denying that people are driven to terrorist activities by poverty and a low level of education. As is well known, there are statistics according to which “half of the world’s population spends only \$2 a day or even less. Over one billion people have only primary education and about 785 million adults are illiterate” (Krueger, 2007, p. 32). Consequently, the cited author argues that “if poverty and low levels of education were indeed the causes of terrorism, the world would be replete with terrorists aiming to destroy our way of life” (Krueger, 2007, p. 57).

Regarding the explanation of the economic causes of terrorism, there is another point of view arguing that “individuals become terrorists when participation in terrorist attacks is more profitable than finding a job in the labor market” (Benmelech et al., 2010, p. 2). According to this concept, “with a growing economy and declining unemployment, individuals have many opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills; thus, terrorist organizations have to recruit people of little talent. On the contrary, amidst the economic crisis, the leaders of the terrorist underground can afford to recruit well-educated personnel who, for objective reasons, cannot find a decent job.” Supporters of this position believe that “acute unemployment in accordance with the standard deviation leads to an increase in the likelihood of hiring an educated terrorist by 34.3%, an adult (over 20 years old) by 5.57%, and an experienced terrorist by 33.5%” (Benmelech et al., 2010, p. 16).

The positions expressed are reflected in the socio-philosophical and political science discourse of Russian researchers, who often resolutely reject the opinion that terrorism has a socio-economic basis. However, if we consider the socio-economic condition of specific terrorists in Russia, then it is quite obvious that the majority of them are economically insecure.

In Russia, much attention is paid to legal and political measures to counter extremism and terrorism. Appropriate laws allowing for the prevention and counteraction to extremism and terrorism have been adopted at the state level. An important role in countering extremism and terrorism in society is played by local political and religious elites, who use the ethno-cultural resource, customs and traditions of peoples to counteract, as well as to form the proper view and behavior in society among the younger generation aiming young people at creative activity and overcoming radical sentiment.

2. Problem Statement

The article analyzes the substantive aspects of extremism and terrorism, and their relationship, reveals political and legal measures to counter them, as well as considers the ways to mobilize ethno-cultural values aimed at countering and prevention. The significant role of local ethno-political and religious elites, who have authority among the population, as well as youth groups is substantiated. In traditional ethno-cultural societies in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, political and religious leaders often rely on ethnic values and resources enabling to provide ideological opposition to extreme manifestations among people, as well as among young people forming their views, lifestyle, and aimed at social concord and constructiveness.

3. Research Questions

Countermeasures carried out in the course of countering extremism and terrorism in society are associated with the use of political and legal measures determined by the anti-extremist and anti-terrorist activities of the authorities, which is manifested by the use of various measures aimed at preventing and countering extremism and terrorism. To a large extent, they are associated with condemning the corrupt government, immoral pluralism, the immeasurable dismemberment of society based on violence, cruelty, and inhumanity by the advocates and supporters of these movements. To counter such social processes in the regions of Russia, in particular in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, local political and religious elites mobilized the traditional values of ethnic cultures.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to identify the features of extremism and terrorism in society, their criminal nature, the negative impact on society and the younger generation. The development of countermeasures and prevention measures, as well as their successful use, is the most important basis for socio-political stabilization in Russia and its regions.

5. Research Methods

Important research methods implemented in the publication are analysis, synthesis, generalizations, and, at large, general scientific methods considering the research problem as a system of interrelated phenomena and elements, which together provide a holistic view. The study applies a cross-cultural approach basing on the analysis of data from the media, statistics, and scientific publications.

6. Findings

Russia counteracts extremism and terrorism by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, the Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses, the following Federal Laws: “On countering extremist activity”, “On countering terrorism”, “On the Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation”, “On the state of emergency”, “On political parties”, “On public associations” based on the Concept of “Combating Terrorism in the Russian Federation”.

The Russian Federation counteracts and prevents extremism and terrorism through explanatory and preventive activities. Such activities are aimed at the youth, as well as public associations of a different nature. Counteraction and prevention of extremist and terrorist activities in Russia and its regions base on the following political and legal principles: legality, openness, priority of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation, priority of measures preventing extremist activity, cooperation of the state with public and religious associations, other organizations, citizens in countering extremist activities, the inevitability of punishment for carrying out extremist activities.

At the same time, the goal of countering terrorism in the Russian Federation is to protect the individuals, society and the state from terrorist threats and manifestations. Thus, the following major tasks are solved:

- identifying and eliminating the causes of terrorism emergence and spread;
- identification and suppression of the activities of individuals and organizations that commit crimes of a terrorist nature;
- bringing the subjects of terrorist activities to justice in accordance with the current legislation of the Russian Federation;
- ensuring anti-terrorist protection of terrorist attacks objects being critical infrastructure, life support and crowded public places;
- counteracting the spread of the terrorism ideology, the implementation of active anti-terrorist outreach activities;
- etc.

It is very important for young people to develop a tolerant worldview, a tolerant attitude towards people regardless of their nationality, religion, social status and other circumstances. For these purposes, for example, in the Chechen Republic, schools and universities undertake educational activities aimed to form tolerant relations in society, condemn racial and national hostility. In pursuing these aims, the traditional values of the Chechens, who condemn evil and violence, are also used. In this regard, the Unified Concept of Spiritual and Moral Education and Development of the Younger Generation of the Chechen Republic plays a positive role. This was approved by the head of the Chechen Republic Kadyrov in 2013. This concept notes the need to use ethnocultural values, including religious ones, in the course of educational activity directed at Chechen youth by showing their humanistic, peacemaking nature. Well-known scientists, spiritual authorities, representatives of the business elite respected among Chechens take part in the educational process.

Some experts, for example, the President of the Republic of Dagestan M.G. Aliyev believes that the main reasons for the increase in extremism and terrorism are as follows: the low living standards of a significant part of people of the republic, high unemployment, especially among young people, excessive property polarization of the population, which have caused high spirit of bribery and corruption.

In the North Caucasus, the problem of countering extremism and terrorism is quite acute. The reasons are in the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the region, of course, this situation applies to all of Russia. The power that has been established in the country and in the regions largely protects the interests of officials, the economic and financial elite, when the interests of the majority of the people are often ignored.

7. Conclusion

A crucial measure to solve the problems noted is the intense activity of officials, authorities, various elites aimed to improve the socio-economic problems of the North Caucasus and the country as a whole. In this regard, it is necessary to overcome unemployment, poverty, acute social inequality, pronounced polarization of society, which often provide the breeding ground for extremism and terrorism.

In the multi-ethnic regions of the North Caucasus, it is necessary to resolutely oppose ethnic discrimination, which often determines ethnic extremism. In the region, ethnic clannishness and corruption negatively affect the efficiency of resource management in the region, the unfair distribution of budgetary funds among ethnic regions as their theft flourishes causing damage to the economy and people. This situation contributes to the discontent of the people, even the emergence of extremist sentiments; violence is not uncommon as well.

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