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STATE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON COUNTERING EXTREMISM IN THE INTEREST OF ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY

Specialty 5.5.2: "Political Institutions, Processes, and Technologies"

ABSTRACT

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This dissertation focuses on contemporary socio-political transformations—at both the global and regional levels—that are accompanied by an increasing complexity in the forms of extremist activity, thereby posing direct threats to the security of the Russian Federation.

In the 21st century, extremist activity has come to represent not only an internal threat to society but has also evolved into a method of conducting hostilities on an adversary's territory as part of so-called hybrid warfare.

The substance of armed conflict is sustained by diplomatic, economic, ideological, information-psychological, intelligence-subversive, and extremist activities. Consequently, extremist activity must be countered by a specific state policy—one grounded in the theoretical framework for the Russian Federation's state policy on countering extremism, with the ultimate goal of ensuring national security. This policy constitutes an integral part of broader state policy, harmoniously incorporating other policy elements as well as the security dimensions inherent to those policies.

Thus, it is advisable to single out for study the "state policy of the Russian Federation in the sphere of countering extremism, in the interest of ensuring the country's security" (hereinafter referred to as "state policy"). The challenges involved in researching this policy necessitate the refinement of federal legislation in the area of countering extremism.

Extremist tendencies within a society can divide citizens, provoke internal conflicts, and undermine trust in state institutions. If left unchecked, these tendencies may escalate into large-scale unrest or even armed insurgencies—scenarios that would necessitate the deployment of significant military forces and resources to suppress them, as was the case, for instance, with the Chechen separatism of the 1990s. Thus, the fight against extremism is directly linked to strengthening national defense: by neutralizing internal threats, the state preserves its integrity and governability, allowing it to focus its efforts on external security.

In the context of hybrid challenges and attempts to destabilize the domestic political situation, state policy on countering extremism requires constant adaptation and scholarly reflection. The need for a comprehensive analysis of this policy's role within the national security framework, as well as the development of practical recommendations for government authorities, underscores the relevance of this dissertation research.

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state policy on countering extremism, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the nation's security.

This policy is a component of broader state policy, harmoniously incorporating other policy elements as well as the security-related aspects of those policies. It is, therefore, appropriate to single out for study the "state policy of the Russian Federation in the sphere of countering extremism, aimed at ensuring the nation's security" (hereinafter referred to as "state policy").

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The problem of extremism among young people is one of the key challenges facing contemporary Russian society and the state. Regardless of its underlying ideology, extremist activity is, in all its manifestations, destructive and destabilizing. It is also significant that the danger posed by extremism stems not only from the direct threat it presents to public order, but also from its inherent tendency to escalate into more serious crimes, such as terrorism and the organization of mass unrest.

The relevance of this work is further underscored by:

- the rise of extremist threats in the current environment, exacerbated by an intensification of information-psychological operations;
- the fragmented nature of existing mechanisms for countering extremism, which poses a threat to the state's internal stability and national security;
- the absence of a clearly structured theoretical model that links state anti-extremism policy with the safeguarding of national security;
- insufficient exploration of the role of ideology, patriotic education, and legal culture within the system for preventing destructive ideologies and behaviors among young people;
- the need for a scientific rationale for new approaches and proposals that could be implemented within the school and university education system.

Level of scholarly development. Political science has accumulated a substantial body of knowledge regarding the nature of extremism, the legal mechanisms for combating it, and the role of law enforcement institutions. At the same time, the dynamics of contemporary threats necessitate a re-evaluation of the balance between state coercion and sociocultural preventive mechanisms, as well as a more precise definition of the role of political socialization within the framework

of security provision. Existing research is often confined to specific disciplinary domains—such as law or sociology—whereas there remains a significant need for a political science analysis of integrative state policy.

The object of this research is the phenomenon of security in the Russian Federation.

The subject of the dissertation research is state policy on countering extremism, aimed at ensuring the security of the Russian Federation.

The objective of the dissertation research is to develop a comprehensive, scientifically grounded approach to the formulation and implementation of state policy on countering extremism as a key element of the security system of the Russian Federation.

The scope of this dissertation research encompasses state policy on countering extremism—with the aim of ensuring security—within the context of the modern history of the Russian Federation, current conditions, and future development prospects up to the year 2035. The study focuses primarily on extremism among young people, as this demographic, due to objective factors, is the most susceptible to extremist and radical influences.

To achieve the research objective, the following specific scientific tasks were defined and addressed:

- to examine and analyze contemporary approaches to formulating state policy on countering extremism in the interest of national security, and to propose an original definition;
- to study the history—both domestic and international—of countering extremism as a threat to national security;
- to examine key theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of extremism as a direct threat, taking into account the specificities of its formation, development, and spread within the context of modern-day Russia;
- to identify the features of the existing legal and regulatory framework in the Russian Federation that governs state policy on countering extremist activity in the interest of national security, and to propose ways to improve it;
- to analyze the extremist movements and organizations present in the Russian Federation in order to determine the level of threat they pose to the country's interests;
- to investigate the specific factors that contribute to the spread of extremist sentiments within Russian society, assess their significance, and propose potential methods for neutralizing them;
- to identify the possibilities and prospects for political-legal aspects and sociocultural forms of countering extremism, in the interest of ensuring the country's security;

- to update the experience of collaboration among security and law enforcement agencies in preventing extremist activities that pose a threat to the country;

- to develop an original methodology for the "political socialization of society" and the "sociocultural overcoming" of extremism as fundamental elements of the mechanism for ensuring national security;

- to establish a theoretical and methodological foundation for developing a policy aimed at neutralizing and preventing extremism;

- to propose concrete mechanisms for implementing state policy on countering extremism, including legal, organizational, informational, and ideological instruments;

- to create diagnostic frameworks for monitoring extremist activity and assessing its impact on national security;

- to draft a concept paper titled "On Countering Extremist Activity in the Interest of Ensuring National Security."

Propositions submitted for defense:

1. A theoretical and methodological framework for analyzing extremism as a strategic threat to the national security of the Russian Federation has been substantiated.

The study provides a refined conceptual framework—developed by the author—regarding the nature of extremism within the contemporary Russian context; it establishes its status as a strategic threat and creates a theoretical foundation for formulating counter-extremism policies.

2. Historical and contemporary factors contributing to the spread of extremist sentiments within Russian society have been identified and systematized, including an assessment of the level of danger they pose and methods for their neutralization.

Based on an analysis of domestic and international experience in countering extremism, a classification of active extremist movements in the Russian Federation—categorized by their level of danger—has been developed, and specific factors contributing to their growth have been identified.

The study presents an original approach to countering extremism, which incorporates the "political socialization of society" and "sociocultural overcoming" as fundamental mechanisms for ensuring national security.

The author proposes not merely a set of measures, but a comprehensive approach that operates proactively through socialization and the transformation of the cultural environment.

A complex of political-legal and sociocultural instruments for implementing state policy to counter extremism is presented. This includes legal and organizational measures, informational and ideological mechanisms, as well as diagnostic tools designed to monitor the dynamics of extremist activity.

1. The use of this framework makes it possible to systematize the accumulated experience of cooperation among security and law enforcement agencies, specify the mechanisms employed to counter extremism, and establish a basis for assessing the impact of extremist activities on the state of security.

2. An interagency concept titled "On Countering Extremist Activity in the Interest of Ensuring National Security" has been drafted; it is proposed that this document serve as a foundation for the strategic planning of the Russian Federation's state policy through 2035.

Thus, one of the key practical outcomes of this doctoral research is a draft concept designed for use within the spheres of public administration and strategic planning.

The scientific novelty of the work lies in its systemic examination of countering extremism as an independent area of state policy, directly linked to ensuring the nation's security.

This approach incorporates several novel aspects, the most significant of which is the integration of counter-extremism policy into the framework of national security. The research indicates that, in the current context, extremism is viewed not merely as a social issue, but as a strategic threat to the security of the state. It is proposed that counter-extremism measures be incorporated into the strategic documents that govern the nation's security. Such an approach establishes the fight against extremism as a core component of the country's security system.

The study also employs a quantitative method to analyze official statistical data from the Main Information and Analytical Center (GIATS) of the Russian Interior Ministry for the period from 2016 to 2025, which enabled an analysis of the dynamics and structure of the phenomenon under study based on representative numerical indicators.

The work introduces and provides a theoretical foundation for the concept of extremism as an element of information-psychological warfare that undermines the stability of law enforcement and state institutions from within. The author proposes a new approach to extremism, framing it as a "factor of subversive activity." This reflects a contemporary understanding of hybrid threats.

The uniqueness of this work also lies in the author's proposal of a multi-level system—comprising strategic, tactical, and operational tiers—for implementing anti-extremism policy within security and law enforcement agencies. This departs from the traditional approach, which focuses primarily on prevention within civil society.

One of the study's outcomes is the specification of psychological, ideological, and organizational measures for preventing extremism. The author suggests accounting for the distinct nuances of applying these measures—both within civil society and across various security and law enforcement structures.

A significant role in this area is played by the cultivation of patriotism, the development of individual resilience against ideological influence, and the timely identification of social and psychological factors that create vulnerability.

A distinct line of research concerns how the nature of radicalization is shifting under the influence of digital platforms. The contemporary information environment creates new opportunities for the dissemination of extremist ideas, the recruitment of new participants, and the formation of stable, network-based communities.

In this regard, proposals have been formulated to improve the monitoring of the information space, identify destructive content, and develop mechanisms for countering threats in the information sphere.

Another outcome is the development of a model for coordinating the activities of security agencies and civilian government authorities. Such coordination is considered a prerequisite for a comprehensive approach to countering extremism. While existing research sometimes addresses these issues only in a fragmented manner, the proposed model focuses on integrating various state policy stakeholders into a unified system for prevention and response.

The study also offers proposals for improving the regulatory and legal framework. In particular, it substantiates the need for the further development of specialized legal mechanisms designed to counter extremist activity within security and law enforcement agencies.

Thus, the scientific novelty of the study lies not only in the identification of specific issues but also in their integration within a unified approach. Extremism is examined simultaneously as a socio-political phenomenon, a risk factor for national security, and a subject of state governance.

This makes it possible to bridge theoretical concepts with concrete organizational and legal solutions that are significant for the practical operations of state bodies and security-related institutions.

Consequently, the research is highly relevant—both theoretically and practically—to law enforcement agencies and state security institutions.

All findings were obtained by the author personally.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the study is defined by conceptual approaches, principles, and specific scholarly developments within political science—established by leading domestic and international researchers—that possess universal significance for conducting a comprehensive political science inquiry.

The specific nature of the subject matter dictated the choice of a systems approach as the methodological foundation for this research. This approach allows for the examination of the phenomenon of extremism as an integrated system, the attributes of which emerge during the functioning of the state—both as a cohesive socio-political mechanism and as an environment conducive to the manifestation of extremism. To address the research objectives, a structural-functional variant of

systems analysis was employed, directing the focus toward analyzing structural characteristics and identifying the specific ways in which the system functions as a whole.

In conducting this research, in addition to general scientific methods (comparison, analysis and synthesis, modeling), the study also employed methods specific to political science: a neo-institutional approach, which examines political institutions through the lens of both formal norms and informal rules within a state's domestic policy; comparative assessments, based on the categories of identity and difference, aimed at identifying similar, identical, or distinct characteristics of political institutions or mechanisms; and the "case study" method, used as a tool for examining contemporary extremism in the Russian Federation using specific cases—applying an inductive approach based on a "fact–fact–conclusion" sequence—to identify patterns and derive the necessary generalizations; and employing political-prognostic tools to analyze the prospects for eradicating negative extremist phenomena within society.

In addressing the issues under consideration, the author has adhered to the principles of objectivity and scientific substantiation, which necessitate the comparison of various viewpoints and assessments, as well as the use of verifiable materials.

Based on the comparative analysis conducted, the following definition—formulated by the author—is proposed:

"Extremism is a systemic, socially dangerous phenomenon consisting of ideologically motivated activity by individuals, groups, organizations, or other entities—rooted in an adherence to radical views and an intolerance toward differing ideological, political, national, racial, religious, or social positions—that is directed toward the violent or unlawful alteration of the constitutional order, the destruction of state unity, the undermining of public order, the incitement of hatred and hostility, or the coercion of a broad range of people into adopting and disseminating such an ideology, including through the use of information and telecommunication networks."

Unlike the definition provided in legislation, the proposed definition does not rely on an exhaustive list; instead, it articulates the core, defining characteristics of the phenomenon, incorporates an ideological component as an essential element, and encompasses both traditional and digital forms of extremist activity.

The foundational legal instrument is Federal Law No. 114-FZ of July 25, 2002, "On Counteracting Extremist Activity," which contains a definition based on a specific list of acts. As is rightly noted in academic literature, "the definition of extremism, based on this law, is complex, as it encompasses a broad range of potential actions." At the same time, a number of researchers criticize this approach for lacking a single, unifying, defining characteristic—a shortcoming that diminishes the effectiveness of its legal application.

In political science literature, extremism is characterized by features that distinguish it from other forms of social protest: it is defined by its "corporate" nature and adherence to a specific doctrine—meaning that extremism is always a group phenomenon, representing a distinct collective outlook with its own unique internal structure.

Key, consistent features of political extremism include: a political focus in its activities; the use of violence as a primary method; an organized structure; and a refusal to compromise with political opponents.

The updated 2024 Strategy defines extremist ideology as a set of views that promote violent or otherwise unlawful actions as the primary means of resolving political, racial, ethnic, religious, and social conflicts.

Based on an analysis of academic literature, regulatory documents, and materials from preventive practice, the author identifies the following indicators that can help recognize individuals who are involved in—or are prone to becoming involved in—extremist activity:

1. **Ideological indicators:**

- ostentatious adoption of a radical ideology (nationalist, religious-extremist, far-right, or far-left);
- intolerance toward other viewpoints, religious beliefs, or nationalities; the absolutization of one's own perspective;
- justification of violence as a legitimate method for resolving political and social conflicts;
- an appeal to the notion that one's own group is chosen or exceptional;
- rejection of democratic norms and the constitutional order.

2. **Behavioral indicators:**

- an unhealthy interest in terrorist activity, or the endorsement of extremist manifestations;
- active dissemination of extremist materials on the Internet and social media;
- participation in unauthorized events involving extremist symbols;
- displaying the symbols of banned organizations;
- attempts to acquire weapons or explosives without legal authorization.

3. **Psychological signs:**

- aggressiveness, fanaticism, and a readiness for self-sacrifice in the name of an idea;
- blind belief in the correctness of an ideology, combined with extreme intolerance toward other viewpoints;
- a tendency toward dichotomous thinking ("us" vs. "them");
- self-isolation from one's previous social circle and integration into a new, closed group.

4. **Social-network-related indicators:**

- membership in closed groups that promote violence and hatred;
- regular access to prohibited resources and extremist channels;
- correspondence with individuals linked to extremist organizations;
- demands to keep one's contacts and the nature of one's communications secret.

Based on an analysis of the 2024 Strategy for Countering Extremism and various scholarly studies, five categories of extremists can be identified—each posing a different level of danger and requiring a tailored counter-extremism approach: 1) religious radicals; 2) nationalists and neo-Nazis; 3) foreign agents of influence and destructive non-governmental organizations (NGOs); 4) youth extremist groups; and 5) autonomous, independent actors.

The dissertation research demonstrates that extremism is recognized as a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation—a fact enshrined in key strategic planning documents. Specifically, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 400 dated July 2, 2021, explicitly identifies "extremism" and "terrorism" as primary threats to state and public security.

In accordance with the updated Strategy for Countering Extremism, "extremism in all its manifestations leads to the disruption of civil peace and harmony, as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens; it undermines state and public security, and poses a real threat to the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, as well as to the foundations of the constitutional order."

Key factors that lead to the classification of extremism as a threat to national security include:

- Destabilizing potential. Extremist activity disrupts social stability, interethnic peace, and interfaith harmony, and undermines the functioning of state institutions.
- Threat to territorial integrity. Separatist and nationalist forms of extremism pose a direct threat to the unity and territorial integrity of the state by promoting ideas of decolonization, regionalism, and the secession of specific territories.
- Link to terrorism. Extremist activity often serves as a transitional stage toward terrorist activity, as extremist ideologies typically allow for the "justified" use of violence to achieve specific goals.
- Threat to the constitutional order. Certain forms of extremism are aimed directly at the forcible alteration of the foundations of the constitutional order, which poses a direct threat to state sovereignty.
- Radicalization of the population. The spread of extremist ideology leads to the radicalization of specific segments of the population—most notably the youth—which entails long-term social consequences.

- External interference. Foreign states and non-state entities utilize extremist organizations as instruments of hybrid warfare, funding and coordinating destructive activities against Russia.

The working hypothesis of this dissertation is that, despite the complexity and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of extremism in the Russian Federation—and the genuine shortcomings in the legal and regulatory framework for countering this negative aspect of socio-political life—there remain prospects for eradicating extremism through mechanisms involving positive intervention by both civil society and the state.

The empirical basis of the study consists of official socio-political statistics, sociological research materials, and the practices of law enforcement agencies. Specific empirical material used in the dissertation includes laws, decrees, orders, and messages of the President of the Russian Federation, resolutions and orders of the Government of the Russian Federation, documents of the State Duma, the Federation Council, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, and other government bodies, as well as constitutional and legal norms, [documents/materials] regulating political activity related to ensuring security; data from sociological and political science research, public opinion polls, historical facts and analytical materials, expert assessments and individual forecasts from independent research organizations and foundations, as well as other domestic and foreign sources pertaining to the subject under study.

The theoretical significance of the research results lies in the following: for the first time, the theoretical foundations for a state policy on countering extremism—aimed at ensuring Russia's security—have been developed. These foundations are based on a comprehensive examination of the theoretical and practical issues surrounding extremist activity within the context of shaping the state's security system. This entails new approaches to state policy as a factor in ensuring the security of the state. More specifically, this is expressed as follows:

- firstly, in the development of conceptual tenets for state policy on countering extremism, in the interest of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation;

- secondly, in the advancement of theoretical tenets for state policy on countering extremism, in the interest of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation;

- thirdly, in the substantiation of methodological tenets for state policy on countering extremism, in the interest of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation;

- fourth, in defining the key directions for the development of state policy on countering extremism, with the aim of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation, and in formulating recommendations for governing bodies regarding its implementation.

Consequently, the theoretical significance of this dissertation lies in the fact that it represents one of the first studies in Russian political science to provide a systematic examination of state policy on countering extremism, with the aim of ensuring the security of the Russian Federation.

The practical recommendations formulated in this work should be applied toward the further improvement of state and public mechanisms for countering extremist activity—in the interest of ensuring state security—as well as toward the refinement of Russian legislation in this area at both the federal and regional levels.

Approbation of the dissertation research results. The dissertation was discussed at the Department of Political Processes and Technologies of the Autonomous Non-Profit Organization of Higher Education "V.V. Zhirinovsky University of World Civilizations" and recommended for defense. More than 80 works related to the dissertation topic have been published (including 4 monographs, 1 scientific-practical handbook, and 41 research articles in journals included in the list approved by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation), with a total volume exceeding 400 printer's sheets.

The main findings of the dissertation research were presented by the author at international, all-Russian, and inter-university conferences, symposiums, and seminars held in Moscow, Tver, Nizhny Novgorod, and Ruza between 2003 and 2026; they were also tested and refined through the organization and facilitation of round tables and academic-practical events focused on the research topic, which involved representatives from federal, regional, and municipal authorities.

The results of the dissertation research have been utilized by relevant departments within the Management Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and the V. Ya. Kikot Moscow University of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. Furthermore, they have been incorporated into the educational process for students and postgraduate cadets (adjuncts) at the Management Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, where the dissertation's core findings and results are presented within the framework of the following courses: "Fundamentals of Information Security in Society," "The Russian Federation as a Modern State and Guarantor of World Order," and "The Role of the Russian Federation as a Participant in International Legal Relations in the Sphere of Combating Crime."

The structure of the dissertation corresponds to the goals, objectives, and logic of the research; it consists of an introduction, four chapters divided into thematic sections, a conclusion, a list of sources and literature, and endnotes.