

# STRATEGIC-EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELIGIOUS FACTORS AFFECTING MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF MODERN TERRORISM: AN ECONOMIC AND STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*The study object is modern terrorism. The subject is the religious factor, as one of its system elements. The goal is to identify its role in the system of modern terrorism based on the results of the religious factor structure analysis. The theoretical background of the research was made up of a conjunction of scientific works on the religion structure, the results of research on the constructive and destructive role of the religious factor in the process of anti-terrorist activity. The methodological framework was a systemic comprehensive analysis that allowed identifying and characterizing the role of the religious factor in the modern terrorism system. The epistemological potential of statistical and sociological methods of quantitative and qualitative studies has made it possible to define the place and purpose of religious ideology and religious psychology in the terrorism structure appropriately to the contemporary context in relation to the hypothesis put forward by the authors. The novelty of the paper is determined by a peculiar approach to identifying characteristic traits that reveal the constructive and destructive role of the religious factor as an element of the modern religious terrorism system. The results obtained in the course of the study allow to conclude that the religious factor is capable of playing both a destructive and a constructive role in the of terrorism system in the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** Factor Structure Analysis, Characteristic Traits, Quantitative and Qualitative Studies, Destructive and a Constructive Role, Methodological Framework, Comprehensive Analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, religion is actively used as a tool of countereffort or terrorism encouragement by the authorities of many countries of the world. In this regard, scientists and experts around the world are actively studying the problem of the relationship between religion and terrorism. Among the scientists who note the existence of a wide range of problems in the dialectics of the

interaction of religion and terrorism, we would like to name (Cordesman, 2017), who holds to an opinion that religion is only one of the factors leading to terrorism and (Hennies, 2021), who believes that religious conflicts are based not only on values, but also on identity and transcendence. And that lends the believer a completely different weight. The abovementioned allows us to assert that it is difficult to doubt the special distinctiveness of religious terrorism. However, terrorism is not an inevitable consequence of existing religious beliefs, for religion is linked to its transnational nature. An attempt to prove or disprove a direct link between religion and terrorism has given birth to a new direction in the understanding of religion, which considers it independent of the world in which it is practiced. Religion is viewed here as a corpus of the sacred writings completely removed from the world in which believers live. However, despite their good intentions, representatives of this direction overlook the fact that their opponents adhere to an identical, but diametrically opposite approach. They “extract” the sacred texts, and also the religion itself as a whole with them from its historical context and just concentrate on their radical content, trying to use only passages, moving away from the base of the text to prove their point of view. The religious factor is a concept used to describe the impact of religion on a particular object, and has an unambiguous meaning in the process of its functioning in specific socio-political conditions. In our case, this is modern terrorism. However, religion has never been the only source of radicalization. Based on this, the hypothesis of our research is that the religious factor in the system of terrorism can play both a constructive (hindering) and destructive (reinforcing) role.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is the religious ideology that prompts people to do terrible things. If the adept really deeply believes that his God wants to see him as a martyr who blows people up, then he will do it and will be convinced that he is doing it for righteous reasons and will think that he did the right thing (Dawkins, 2017). Religious people form much stronger communities because due to the common belief in the Supreme Beings, they stick together more closely. However, this fact within our hypothesis has a dichotomy. On the one hand, this can be positive, since religion is an illusion, but it is very useful for believers: It has been proven time and again that the pious people, believing in general, are better at coping with life's obstacles than enlightened rationalists. Religion gives people security, a primary trust that doesn't seem to exist among the non-believers. But this coin also has the reverse side. *“Just think about the ability of religion to bring communities together. That’s why the one who has common interests, political, ideological, is supported by his faith. Human groups define themselves through their beliefs. From the events of the modern world today we know how dangerous it is”* (Konigorski, 2017). Religious psychology edges and fixes religious attitudes and interests of adherents in a religious-psychological form and contributes to the development of direct motives and attitudes of religious behavior in them. Very often believers cannot explain at the cognitive level why they act in the process of cult activity at all events (Belzen, 1999). Research has proven that identity is a critical component of a person's self-esteem and is associated with self-respect and psychological adjustment (Smith & Silva, 2011). Religious faith, understood as adherence to a structured, definite doctrine of salvation, prompts the believer to *“subscribe to it”* and extract for oneself a range of dogmatic truths. Immersion in a coherently structured doctrine allows to see the world as a whole, and also to highlight a number of principles necessary for living in it, structuring one’s existence and worthy eternal life after death (Abbruzzese, 2015). At the same time, the opinion of Grau (2015), who considers that religion that takes itself seriously should

not tolerate any other religion or worldview next to it, because there can be no two truths, anything else would-be relativism. Therefore, it is important to help one truth rule and eliminate evil. Religious beliefs are difficult to measure because they are not constant or innate. In terms of content all beliefs can be divided into factual and non-factual: factual ones express the essence of a certain concrete or possible experience, and non-factual ones, on the contrary, express a certain semantic point of view related to existence and, therefore, to a given state of the world or facts that determine being and specific states of the world. Religious beliefs are mostly non-factual, since they relate to axiological assessments of the phenomenon character measurement surpassing the experience (Bertini, 2016). Saal (2017) believes that theological history is full of violence, both in religious texts and in practice. It is enough to look at the Torah, the Bible or the Koran to find in them countless stories related to violent acts. In the sacred books one can find norms that prescribe when and what kind of violence is legal. It can be ritual or punitive; it can be directed against sinners and apostates or outsiders. However, this becomes especially problematic when a religious movement is particularly exceptional and has an absolute claim to truth (Saal, 2017). Moghadam (2008) argues in the same way, believing that the Salafi jihad is more like an ideology than a religion. Like other ideologies, he sharply distinguishes between his supporters and those who reject his doctrines. Westerners are usually called infidels, and moderate Muslims and Arabs are called apostates. For the most extreme Salafi jihadists, Muslims who reject their principles are tantamount to infidels, and thus deserve to die. At the same time, according to the documents published by the Syrian opposition website Zaman al-Wasl and analyzed by the Associated Press, 70% of recruits between 2013 and 2014. had only basic knowledge of Sharia and the words of the Prophet Muhammad, while 24% had an intermediate level of religious education, and only 5% could be considered advanced students of Islam (Nurra, 2016). Each religion exhorts the importance of serving society, acting for the good of man. That is why religion very often plays an integrative constructive role. For example, in African countries, where religiosity is more deeply rooted than in the West, religious leaders are very often used as mediators in conflicts. They are peacemakers between two clans fighting over pastures or wells, and are trained to divert conflict from the violent level (Hennies, 2021). A study using World Values Survey data obtained from 61 countries for 1981-1997 showed that religiosity lowers the revolutionary sentiments in societies, with the exception of the Muslim communities (Egger & Magni, 2018). This may reflect the ability of the militant Islamist groups to influence and radicalize ordinary believers. In terms of the abovementioned, in our opinion, a fairly adequate position is taken by (Hennies, 2021), who does not deny that the number of conflicts of a religious nature in the world has increased significantly, but believes that religiously motivated conflicts take more time and, therefore, are present longer in war statistics.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis was the systemic comprehensive analysis, which allowed identifying and characterizing the role of the religious factor in the system of modern terrorism. The epistemological potential of statistical and sociological methods of quantitative and qualitative studies has made it possible to define the place and purpose of religious ideology and religious psychology in the terrorism structure appropriately to the contemporary context in relation to the hypothesis put forward by the authors. The authors also relied on the generalized results of their research within the framework of the RFBR scientific project No. 18-29-16175 "Blockchain technologies for countereffort the risks of cyberterrorism and cyber-extremism: a criminological legal research. The novelty of the paper is determined by a peculiar approach to

identifying characteristic traits that reveal the constructive and destructive role of the religious factor as an element of the modern religious terrorism system.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study identified two basic elements of religious consciousness: religious ideology and religious psychology, which are closely interrelated and interdependent on each other. Religious ideology is the core of the moral courage of the adepts, the systematized assembly of elements that express their fundamental interests regarding the essence and content of religion, its practical side and the need to protect it. This is their worldview, which proclaims the spiritual immaterial principle. It is the most enduring in comparison with the political, nationalist, etc. Let's single out the constructive and destructive roles of religious ideology in the system of terrorism (Table 1):

<b>Table 1 THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE ROLES OF RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY IN THE SYSTEM OF TERRORISM</b>	
<b>Constructive role (prevents the spread of religious terrorism)</b>	<b>Destructive role (encourages the spread of religious terrorism)</b>
it can increase the likelihood that followers of religious terrorism will change their attitude towards it and turn away in the process of compensatory changes in the culture of society;	disciplines adherents of the same faith, who have different motives for struggle against the infidels, and creates the basis for the hierarchy within the terrorist organization;
Increases awareness of the gap between traditional believers and fundamentalists, especially in terms of the application of the religion dogmata in real life, highlights the problem of the gap between the traditional and the so-called. "True" faith, thereby, is the foundation for the support and promotion of religion in society based on the awareness of its members of their identity and devotion to a religious organization;	structures the terrorist organization, i.e. roles accepted in a group based on religious ideological aspects are accepted by its members better than in groups that are not religiously motivated, that's why the terrorist organizations based on religious ideology are harder and may be more effective than radical actors who are motivated materially, for example;
having penetrated deeply and entrenched firmly in the upper level of the adherents' consciousness, it is a rigorous imperative of their actions, an ensample, creates a support system for believers, playing the role of a beacon on the way to knowledge of the essence and content of faith;	Is able to greatly simplify or limit reality and many options for action. Under the conditions of confrontation with the state or other opponents, this means that the leaders of religious terrorist organizations can make very quick decisions without worrying about possible victims in the group or society;
Condemns the committed a terrorist attacks, but they are perceived differently from the outside. Promoted to the outside world, it can arouse denial of terrorist activities and lead to the rejection of the terrorism ideology.	Justifies the committed terrorist attacks, but they are perceived differently from the outside. Promoted to the outside world, it can awaken awareness for terrorist action and lead to the levy of new recruits.

Source: Authors' Compilation

Consequently, the absence of a compromise in relations between the contending confessions or their directions (denominations) is conditioned not only by ideological, but also psychological factors. It can be argued that human behaviorism is regulated according to a model that is not conscious. But, since religious ideology in the hierarchy of consciousness stands above the religious psychology, it is she who plays an active role in the formation and development of such structural components as ideas and needs, morality, ethics, illusions, feelings, emotions of adepts, etc. Let's single out the constructive and destructive roles of religious psychology in the terrorism system (Table 2):

<b>Constructive role (prevents the spread of religious terrorism)</b>	<b>Destructive role (encourages the spread of religious terrorism)</b>
forming a narrow view of the radicalism concept, which is limited only to violent actions, allows to fend off the "blind" belief of adherents into the destructive influence of an external threat by the social and financial methods ;	forms the morality in the adherents that their religion is beyond any form of criticism, therefore, it must be imposed on all the representatives of earth civilization both by peaceful means and with force;
proceeding not from the consciousness of the adherents, but from their behaviorism and the reality of the surrounding and internal environment, it is capable of exerting a destructive influence on the unity of a terrorist organization, especially among its members of Arab origin;	instills anger, a sense of alienation and a plump denial of any logical explanation and scientific evidence that their religious beliefs contradict the foundations of traditional religion into the consciousness of adherents;
Having high efficiency in the process of interaction of adherents of the same faith, it is able to ensure their emotional and moral attachment to the traditional faith.	Creates in the adherents group the opinion that their religion is under the threat of death, first of all, from the outside world, and they defend themselves, being the opposition to it and " <i>fighters for the faith</i> ".

Source: Authors' Compilation

The strength and direction of the interaction between the religious factor and terrorism are conditioned by raft of objective and subjective circumstances. The most significant of them is the interest (or disinterest) of the authorities in consolidation of role of religion in the life of society. Let's formulate the fundamental directions that contribute to the change in the vector of the destructive role of the religious factor in the modern terrorism system to the diametrically opposite - constructive: the formation and spreading of an all-encompassing religious concept of tolerance, calling for peace in the world, regardless of religion; development and introduction of effective methods to change the radical outlook of the adherent and achieve recognition by him of only an absolute view of the environment; changing the role of the media and utility system "*Internet*" in the process of presentation the ideological views of religious terrorists and giving the media and utility system "*Internet*" the functions of an actor to control the fundamentalist ideologies and debunk the image of a "*true fighter for the faith*". Members of such a community share a common purpose of life and give rise to the social community through the symbolics of the sacred, which supports more ordinary aspects of social life. Religion in this interpretation legitimizes society, ensures social order. At the same time, it should be noted that fundamental religious beliefs have the potential to hamper the social, psychological, political and intellectual development of the adherent. And as practice shows, the seeds of this lie in the sacred texts, which the adherents consider faultless and which contain a great wealth of knowledge. The emergence of the "*religious terrorism*" concept itself begins with the assumption that religious beliefs lead to the certain patterns of radicalization. Thus, religious terrorism uses religious ideas and exploits the religious feelings of believers to justify its goals. Its danger lies in the fact that, through the religious factor, it affects the emotions and faith of people, which are formed at the ordinary level of the individual and mass consciousness of society.

## CONCLUSION

The religious factor is one of the acute issues that pursue modern social relations, and poses a serious threat to their stability and development. Realistic objective conditions,

especially chaos, existential threat to the identity, tyranny and political marginalization, are the first and greatest reason for the growing destructive role of the religious factor in the system of modern terrorism. Religious fundamentalist ideology is not destroyed by the military or armed operations. It can only be fended by mainstreaming the constructive role of the religious factor on the forefront of the fight against terrorism, based on the development of new technologies that allow rebuilding the radical consciousness of religious fundamentalists and introducing tolerance and patience into their worldview. The abovementioned allows us to assert that the hypothesis put forward by us has been confirmed.

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