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## THREATS TO INFORMATION SECURITY IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE POLITICAL-ELITE MEASUREMENT

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### *Abstract*

In modern society, crises permanently arise, caused by social transformations and contradictions. The contemporary era is the era of the emergence of new security threats, especially information threats, which can destabilize the functioning of state institutions and provoke an escalation of conflicts and clashes. In the North Caucasus, traditionally political elites play a decisive role in managing political processes, in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in countering sociocultural threats, terrorism, and political extremism. The degree of responsibility and the ability to negotiate with the federal legislative and administrative elite, to relay the interests of society depends on the stability of the functioning of the political system. In current conditions, there are new threats to the regular operation of public authorities. In recent years, with the use of modern network technologies, misinformation and stuffing have been carried out, which mobilizes socially active layers of society, mainly young people, to overthrow legitimate authorities. These politicians are not acceptable and changing regimes. Due to the historical, sociocultural specificity and multiconfessional structure, the population is susceptible to territorial issues, religion, culture, and interethnic relations. Today, in many ways, information technology determines the status positions and the strength of the stay of political and administrative actors in the political system, primarily political elites. The systematic transition to the information society around the world is recognized as a strategic priority. In conclusion, the team of authors developed recommendations for the prevention of conflict behaviour of elites, smoothing out points of ethnopolitical tension.

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**Keywords:** North Caucasus, power, political elites, political governance, conflicts, information security.



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## 1. Introduction

The relevance of this topic is also determined by the emergence of the following regional and global security factors:

- the weakness and inefficiency of the information security system in the country, which does not allow Russia integrating into the world information society fully, and as a result determines the threats to the political system;
- the limited oriented regional policy in ensuring information security, taking into account the ethnopolitical and economic specifics of the North Caucasus.

Political marginals and outsiders, provocateurs, agents of influence, actively use information systems, social networks in the emergence of regular points of political tension, the escalation of youth protest behaviour, especially in the electoral cycle. The world is transforming, the forms and methods of political struggle are changing; they are not always legal. The task of state institutions is to implement a systematic and valid information policy at the local level, forecasting, preventing and localizing conflicts, manifestations of extremism, terrorism, and protests.

## 2. Problem Statement

In the era of the emergence of new threats, especially information threats, it becomes necessary to research the subnational level, taking into account regional specifics. Due to the multi-ethnic structure, elements of archaization in the North Caucasus, traditional practices and relations are still strong. Ethnopolitical elites, ethnocracies are the main actor in managing the political process; their role in ensuring security, preventing terrorism and extremism, conflicts is significant. An analysis of the security of political elites in the North Caucasus is a scientifically, theoretically and methodologically related problem. Its practical significance is quite apparent; it is socially significant.

## 3. Research Questions

In current conditions, we are witnessing an increase in the role of regional counter-elites, leading ethnic clans, national and religious groups. Counter-elites seek to remove opponents and control spheres of influence. For achieve their political goals, political outsiders and marginals use the “national map” against the political and administrative elite and the authorities. The counter-elites do not perform a public correspondent function. They do not relay the opinion of ordinary citizens but only use the ethnic-mobilization potential to achieve specific tactical tasks. The issues of historical memory, territorial disputes, political repression, and the problems of nation-ageing are especially sensitive and acute for the inhabitants of the North Caucasus. Often, the counter-elites, using these contradictions, try to undermine the situation on the ground and determine tension and conflicts in the region.

Protest activity, acclamation behaviour destabilize the social and political situation in the region (Abakarov, Avksentiev, Adiev, & Akkueva, 2019), the front groups are gradually transformed into extremist, are not always legal and constructive. These signals require tracking and detailed analysis, as they carry a high potential for conflict. In the North Caucasus, in recent years, conflicts and centres of ethnopolitical tension have arisen. For example, amid territorial disputes over the establishment of an

administrative border between the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Ingushetia, an acute and prolonged conflict of elites in Ingushetia arose. The subject of the dispute was the injustice of the agreement (according to the protesters) on the definition of borders, the loss of territory by Ingushetia. This political conflict determined the process of changing regional political elites and revising the centre's local policies. The articulation of interests in the regional political process was caused by the internal struggle of pressure groups under the guise of protecting national interests, not justice since the counter-elites understood the utopianism and futility of their demands. The protesters in the city of Magas also discussed the issue of returning the lost Prigorodny district, which today is included in the administrative borders of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. The situation was aggravated by the decision of the Constitutional Courts of Ingushetia on the illegality of the agreement. As a result, Moscow was forced to fit in not only with the decision of the Constitutional Court of Russia, which essentially reversed the decision of the Constitutional Court of Ingushetia but also with bringing instigators to criminal responsibility (Salgiriev, 2015; Shevchenko & Titov, 2019).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is the analysis of the forms and methods of ensuring information security by political elites in the North Caucasus.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The authors of the project adhere to a neo-institutional, structural-functional and systemic approach. Based on the neo-institutional approach, it is planned to analyze the legal framework and the subjectivity of political elites that ensure regional information security in the North Caucasus, taking into account its ethnic-confessional and multicultural structure. In solving the problems posed in the study, it will be essential to use a systematic approach that allows analyzing the object of study as an integrated system, taking into account its structure, functions and goals. The "General Theory of Action" (T. Parsons), developed under the structural-functional approach, is also used.

#### **6. Findings**

Under the conditions of international pressure, increasing isolation and autarchy, the practical task of a comprehensive analysis of destructive trends and catalysts of political tension is being actualized (Kuhn, 1998). These processes are especially acute in the Russian North Caucasus.

The very natures of the formation of counter-elites, the circulation channels characterize their high conflict-generating potential (Gaman-Golutvina, 2020; Gaman-Golutvina, Grigoryev, Duka, & Zelenko, 2012). Ultimately, these processes contribute to the emergence of centres of ethnopolitical tension and the growth of new crises in society. The elite's behaviour model is guild (patron-client), and the formation mechanisms are built on ethnocratic principles. Such circumstances create the basis for the development of extremism, terrorism and separatism. The solution to this fundamental problem will expand knowledge about the nature of the counter-elites and resist negative scenarios of events in the region. The problems and significance of the Russian North Caucasus have not been decreasing in recent years; instead they

have been increasing due to the multiconfessional, multiethnic structure and elements of archaization. There are new hotbeds of political tension, escalation of conflicts caused by intra-elite conflicts, the struggle for power, resources. Tension remains in the political process of Ingushetia, which determined the resignation of the regions head and the change of elites. Conflicts are provoked in Dagestan, issues of Aukhov, Prigorodny districts do not fall off the agenda. These problems testify to the complexity of the system of relations in the region (Magomedov, 2019a; Magomedov, 2019b).

The low quality of the elites themselves closed channels of circulation, and the process of elite formation lead to the strengthening of the front groups (Betilmerzaeva, Akhtaev, Sadulaev, & Salgiriev, 2017), which are capable of destabilizing the political process. The very nature of politics in the region is built on events, a situational approach to decision making.

In a regional political process, political turbulence is often artificially induced. Political turbulences in the regional political process generate great protest that can get its way out at any time (Akayev, Keligov, & Nanaeva, 2019; Pleis, Okunev, Pyatibratov, & Mashyanov, 2019).

## 7. Conclusion

Theoretical communication of information security practices by political elites showed that there was a need to develop new mechanisms to protect society and the state from information threats, to develop innovative methods for identifying conflicts in the North Caucasus (Salgiriev, Osmaev, Betilmerzaeva, Shamsuev, & Soltamuradov, 2019). Authorities should monitor incoming signals on the ground and monitor based on objective target indicators that will allow realistically assessing political security risks taking into account religious, cultural, political and societal factors (Osmaev, 2009a; Osmaev, 2009b).

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