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**POLITICAL EXTREMISM ANALYSIS IN THE MODERN
WESTERN EUROPE USING INTELLECTUAL DATA
PROCESSING**

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Abstract

The article considers preliminary results of a multidisciplinary project. The project presumes comparative political, historical and legal studies by the joint efforts of a team of scientists from the leading universities of St. Petersburg, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Russian Academy of Science), with the involvement of foreign experts. These efforts will lead to a better understanding of the state-of-the-art in European political processes, existing and potential challenges and threats to national and international stability. Sources, causes, development and measures to combat extremism and related xenophobia, racial discrimination, intolerance are examined on materials from different countries of Western Europe (Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, France, Sweden). In the modern context, the issue of countering any form of extremism, especially political one, is especially acute. Current political problems make it necessary to expand cooperation between states in responding to new challenges, which include political extremism and closely related terrorism. Political extremism refers to the extreme manifestation of ideas, actions, and views aimed at radically changing the existing political, social, ideological foundations of the state and society, creating a real threat to the rights, interests and security of individuals, society and state. The study of its sources, its historical evolution and features in the most economically developed region acquires important theoretical and practical significance, including Russia.

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1. Introduction

The article focuses on preliminary results of the interdisciplinary research. The intelligent analyser is launched by a group of specialists in information technologies especially for in the context of the mentioned project, what already takes place in ethno sociological researches (Bataeva, 2015, pp. 31-54; Kanygin, Poltinnikova, & Koretskaya, 2017, pp.125-143).

Prerequisites for the project are the following theoretical footings. Firstly, the process of globalization caused great changes in all regions of the world. In many countries, the consequences of this process were not only positive, but also negative. In the modern context, the issue of counteraction to any forms of extremism, especially political, religious and ethnic ones, is especially topical.

Secondly, the European model of integration has become widespread outside the EU, especially in the Eurasian space, so studying the European experience is of considerable value for the Russian Federation and its partners. However, current political and economic problems make it necessary to expand cooperation between states in order to preserve sustainable development, regional stability and security, as well as to respond to new challenges, including political extremism and closely related terrorism.

Thirdly, extremism has place in all parts of the world, and armed extremists exist in many countries and among all faiths (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, etc.). Hence, the conclusions that extremism is related only to some of ethnic groups or a religion are false. Political extremists who seek to seize power in individual states or even entire regions especially constitute menace.

In view of reason, effective fight against violent extremism is impossible without combating racial discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia and gross violations of human rights. For example, in many European countries, like in Russia, an acute problem is the spread of xenophobia among the population in recent years; partly it is the result of various fears, such as fear of losing resources, jobs, losing own identity, etc. Xenophobia, including migrantophobia, often leads to domestic extremism, acts of violence and sometimes to terrorist acts.

In host communities, there is often a lack of understanding that migrants naturally have their own traditions and culture, which, nevertheless, are gradually changing in the process of adaptation to local conditions. Moreover, in the era of globalization and liberalization, isolated cultures and societies cannot more exist - they inevitably have to find a common language.

According to Tsapenko (2017, pp. 454-463), "An alternative to the existing approaches to integrating immigrants and their descendants is interculturalism, which implies establishing positive intercultural interaction between people, which would be based on the commonalities of their needs and interests".

2. Problem Statement

The subject of the study are features of political extremism in Western Europe from 2001 to the present. They include sources, causes, specific forms of expression and trends in the development of extremism and measures to counter political extremism and related xenophobia, racial discrimination, intolerance. The main research data is about Western European countries: Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, France and Sweden. Results of the research are expected to lead to a refined understanding of the current European political processes, existing and potential challenges and threats that

affect Russian interests in the region. These problems already take place in the history of ethno sociological researches (Drobizheva, 2018, pp.17-21).

In the modern world, “the boundaries between states and localities ... are becoming more permeable, and transnational spaces, including diasporal ones, are places for public discussions, permanent redefinitions of culture and identity” (Kurojatkik & Kurojatkik, 2017, pp.145-156)

3. Research Questions

The following research questions are in the limelight:

1. Classification of different definitions of political extremism, its main characteristics taking into account features of the modern law and international treaties. Elaboration of an atlas of conflict factors and zones, as well as of the analyser program, is presumed to be special instruments.

2. Studying of the sources of political extremism and different stages of its evolution in a range of states of Western Europe (Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, France, Sweden) concerns sources, causes, specific forms of manifestation and trends in the evolution of extremism and measures to counteract political extremism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

3. Studying of the connection of extremism with racial discrimination and xenophobia.

One of the most vulnerable groups in many states are immigrants who are much targeted by right extremist groups in mass media and Internet. In Europe, “radical right political propaganda emphasizes the exclusion of legal immigrants who already live in the country. Infamous election posters have depicted those with a nonmajority background as society’s black sheep who will be kicked out in order to regain security and prosperity” (Appel, 2012, pp.483-493).

Moreover, there is a correlation between violence and migrantophobia. As indicate Laitin et al. (2012), roots of cultural diversity determine local violence. Concerning extremism causes and its national specifics, the mentioned determinant is to be taken into consideration.

Kunst et al. (2017) recently published results of their study on social violence. In particular, they wrote that in different countries the violence degree “is reflected in their populations’ minds in the form of support group-based hegemony. This support... increases individual endorsement of ideologies and behaviours that ultimately sustained group-based inequality, such as the ethnic persecution of immigrants” (Kunst et al., 2017, p. 5407). Naturally, it also concerns extremist groups with xenophobic ideology, which is easily approved by analysis of correspondent websites and other sources of data.

Interestingly, the low incidence of civil war violence for international migrants was revealed. Different cases were studied by Laitin (2009, p. 36) who highlighted “a general statement of the relationship between immigration and rebellion, where the level of grievances is less consequential than the conditions that make insurgency pay off”.

“Nowadays the international community has the legal resources to eliminate progressively war and armed conflicts across the earth through the respect of international law, the promotion of the culture of peace and the friendship among all peoples and nations” (Fernandez & Puyana, 2015, p.84). The statement also fits countering both terrorism and extremism. The main issue is lack of effective international law mechanisms due to political contradictions and rivalries.

There are different points of view on causes underlying the origin and dissemination of extremism in the modern world. However, there is no universally recognized scientific definition of extremism. Meanwhile, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination contains a legal qualification of racism. The definition given in the article 1 of the convention must be widely understood and extended to all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Failure of multiculturalism policy is one of the reasons of far-right turn in Europe. Indeed, “multiculturalism is criticized as too focused on symbolic culture – ethnic foods and dance – rather than attacking deeply racist practices and institutions” (Bloemraad & Wright, 2014, p. 318). In Europe, particularly in the situation of the refugee crisis, the extreme right ideology threatens future tendencies of refugees and forced immigrants (as well as their offspring) who had to escape from extremism and state violence in their homeland.

McCauley’s pyramid model of the radicalisation levels makes the difference between sympathizers, supporters, activists, and radicals. Radicals at the top of the pyramid are only a small part of sympathizers of a radical group (McCauley, 2007; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Borum, 2012). Analysis of the sympathizers’ activity allows tracing their journey to radicals and extremists.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is achieved by analysing origins, causes, evolution of the political extremism. The analysis is carried out by processing of big data owing to a specially developed platform to analyse electronic media streams, scientific and social networks, thematic and news information resources based on the model of given characteristics and criteria. As a result, theoretical conclusions and practical recommendations on countering political extremism and related xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance are developed. Platform is built using cloud computing technology developed in St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (Resource scheduler based on multi-agent model and intelligent control system for OpenStack, Lukashin A., Lukashin An., Lecture Notes in Computer Science (including subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics) and massively uses natural language processing (Sokolov, Timofeev, & Samochadin, 2015). For collecting and structuring big data information represented as a stream of hybrid data coming from different sources including social, media, scientific portals system uses parallel processing and distributed computed techniques (Laboshin, Lukashin, & Zaborovsky, 2017). For extracting information from text sources, data analyser uses machine-learning methods to solve following challenges:

- Extraction of structured representation of specific facts (including entities, relations, statements) from their description expressed in a natural language;
- Construction of a better specified description of facts based on a set of their partial formal specifications;
- Identification of relations between various facts in a given text.

We suggest a range of tasks as implementation strategy – development of the following:

1. Fact extraction method based on semantic and syntactic analysis of the text;
2. Methods, models, and algorithms for building semantically annotated (and not annotated) corpora;

3. Models and algorithms for semantic unification in order to perform unification of underspecified facts;

4. Methods, models, and algorithms for rhetoric analysis in order to extract linked facts, their relationships, as well as roles of these facts within a text of a particular article.

Due to very large volumes of data to be processed, development of effective algorithms is of an utmost importance:

1. Development of highly scalable parallel algorithms of machine learning, syntactic, semantic, and rhetoric natural text analysis;

2. Elaboration of data structures and algorithms that allow for storing and augmentation of the unified set of facts and relations between them, as well as efficient knowledge database (graph) querying algorithms.

The standard method of training language processing tools is to use an optimization method to find the unknown parameters of a linear or log-linear probabilistic model using an annotated corpus as a train set. Recently nonlinear models gained popularity, especially when unsupervised learning problem is considered. They are often implemented with multilayer neural networks – an approach known as deep learning. Because of high complexity of the computations the studies were performed in supercomputer center “Polytechnic” (Ilyashenko, Lukashin, Zaborovsky, & Lukashin, 2017, pp. 426–434).

Besides, ways to counteract political extremism in modern conditions, including proposals for changing legislation and mechanisms for international cooperation are to be defined. The uniqueness of the research results is ensured by the application of new methods for processing media and sociological data. For the purposes of the research project, a special analyser for monitoring and retrieving data from poorly structured texts of large volumes of information is going to be launched.

5. Research Methods

The research combines methods of political science, law, history and information technology to create a special program that is analyser of the information flow from different Western media (electronic versions), scientific and social networks, thematic and news information resources. At different stages of the study, the following research instruments are used:

- Comprehensive comparative regional studies, covering the problematic regions of Western Europe.
- Solving analytical problems associated both with studying the chronology of processes in the sphere “migration-xenophobia-extremism” (period of 2001-2019) and with developing criteria to overcome the problems.

- Combination of studying both the consequences and their direct connection to the regional history and traditions, possibilities of the JSM-Method for Creating Sociological Hypotheses (Klimova & Mikheyenkova, 2017, pp. 80-91).

In addition to traditional methods, a new technique of data processing based on the application of the aforementioned analysis is specially launched.

6. Findings

In its final stage, our research works out some proposals on preventing and countering xenophobia, racial discrimination, including provision of political and legal measures. It is proposed to apply various general scientific, qualitative and quantitative methods to study the problems in question in a number of European Union countries such as Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, France, Sweden. Taking into account the historical experience, the analysis is made of the factors and conditions that contribute to emergence and spread of the aforementioned negative phenomena, using experience of different views on the nature, the causes and distribution of extremism in the modern world (Joppke, 2004, pp. 237-257; Barash, 2016, pp. 31-54). In an effort to prevent social conflicts and radicalization, multidimensional approach (political, educational, social, economic) seems to be particularly promising (Atnashev, 2016, p. 103).

To that end, a special analyser for monitoring and extracting data from poorly structured texts of large volumes of information (electronic media, news and information resources of the aforementioned countries) is going to be applied. For example, approximate areas of monitoring consist of English, French and Spanish-speaking websites related to extremist groups and parties, such as European Alliance for Freedom, Alliance of European National Movements, United Kingdom for Independence Party, Identitarian Movement, Britain First, Scottish Dawn, Sweden Democrats, Swiss People's Party, National Democratic Party of Germany, and others.

7. Conclusion

The recent events in Europe and in the world once again demonstrate the need for analysing conflict factors, countering all forms of extremism, combating violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, preventing intolerance, xenophobia, and racial discrimination. It is implementation of universal and European legal norms in the national legislation that points to understanding the human rights significance and increasing role of law in the European states.

It is logical to discuss the problem of interaction between structures of early warning about extremism at the national, regional, universal levels (states, EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, UN). In addition, the participation of civil society and traditional minorities contributes to the prevention of various conflicts; political will and adequate resources are prerequisites for well-timed and adequate response to crisis situations. The issues of state interaction with civil society in the legislative and law enforcement spheres must be also studied.

Tensions between immigrants (refugees) and host societies lead to intolerance, mutual distrust, growth of nationalism, radicalization of population, and increased conflict. It is believed that scrapping social structures and habitual practices, social isolation and negative attitude of local society facilitate the process of radicalization of migrants. Therefore, it is necessary to touch on the problem of integration of immigrant communities, in a number of countries in Western Europe. Moreover, it is the state that acts as the main guarantor of observance of constitutional and international legal norms; it should implement a reasonable and balanced policy towards traditional minorities, which often have their own institutions, such as territorial, national cultural autonomies, diasporas, religious and social organizations, as well as towards migrants and refugees.

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