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The socio-psychological study of the phenomenon of «religious fanaticism»

One of the central problems of modern society, which is associated with the manifestations of religious fanaticism, is considered in the article. The questionnaire, consisting of 15 questions related to the relationship of students to the manifestation of religious fanaticism was carried out. The results of research show that the relationship of the respondents to this phenomenon, regardless of religion, in general, adverse and negative. Majority of the subjects believe that the most effective way to deal with religious fanaticism is with the help of social and public institutions engaged in the study of the problem of religious fanaticism, and the main cause of manifestation of religious fanaticism is a psychological problem that exists in our society.

Key words: religion, fanaticism, religious fanaticism, the attitude to religious fanaticism, terrorism and manifestation of terrorism, religious terrorism, the attitude of believers to religious fanaticism, religious extremism.

One of the central issues in the international community is the phenomenon of terrorism. In recent years, global terrorism is considered in connection with the Islamization of East and West. This is due not only to the political or economic situation in Europe and the Middle East, but also to migration, which has recently swept the countries of Western Europe. Staying of refugees from the Middle East to Europe from conflict zones raises the question about the Islamization of many European countries, where historically been a different faith — namely, The Catholic, Protestant and the other forms of Christianity.

Modern people often enough faced with these manifestations not only in the media but also in social and entire state life. This is evidenced by terrorist acts passing in Western Europe and in the whole world. It is September 11th, when terrorists demolished two twin towers, located in New York, the terrorist attacks in Paris, riots in Germany and in other countries. Very often such events occur because of the attitude of people who are tolerant of manifestations of religious extremism and perhaps who even demonstrate sympathy, to this kind of action.

The problem of religious fanaticism and extremism, recently took an increasingly prominent place in the life of every human being. We know that religious fanaticism is blind following the conviction, excessive exalted attitude towards religion, rituals and the belief which is bordered on insanity. It is obvious that religious fanaticism should be seen as a manifestation of undeveloped human spirituality. But, apart from this, there is one more negative side of religious fanaticism — it is religious intolerance towards people of other faiths, war, bloodshed, offensive language and actions, humiliation of another faith which were fomented on the basis of this. This is evidenced by the destruction of mankind heritage sites, which exist for more than hundreds of years, and perhaps millennia by religious fans. Public executions of other people who are not committed to their religion, wherein for religious fans nothing is sacred, when they kill with particular cruelty the women, the elderly and the children. It should be noted that religious fanaticism has nothing in common with religion and the true faith. Rather, it is a distorted form of mental disorder, the neurotic character used by various institutions for their own purposes.

If we consider the history of world religions, we can see that all religions are the result of the resistance of people, society and the state. This can be seen in the origin of the Christian religion in ancient Jerusalem, when not only the power but also the people executed Jesus Christ, for the preaching of the new faith.

From the history of the wars of the world civilization, it is known that Islam originated in Arabia, by means of war, conquered other countries. Catholicism attempted to assert its domination by means of the Crusades to the East, by preaching the idea of salvation of the Holy Sepulcher. Protestants, colonizing the America, carried out extermination of Native Americans. Various religious currents are often organized massacres of those who are not in a hurry to look for salvation of souls from their leaders. And these wars took place in almost all over the world.

From this we can conclude that any religion at the beginning of its inception was conquering adepts in a quite complex and difficult way.

Therefore, many contemporary studies link the religious teachings with war and terrorism because a phenomenon of religious fanaticism is a common occurrence in our time, for example, the Islamic State (the IS). Today, modern Kazakhstan is a part of the international community in this global world, which is facing problems of radical Islam in many states. This is primarily connected to the fact that some members of the youth are fighting on the side of terrorism in the Islamic state. Therefore this problem is not only relevant in terms of the many sciences, but also including psychology. Before we consider the manifestation of religious fanaticism it is necessary to analyze the scientific sources about this phenomenon.

Religious fanaticism, according to the researchers, has Latin roots, ie, fanaticus means frantic, frenetic or differently is blind, carried to the extreme commitment to religious ideas, intolerance towards dissidents. For example, in studies of Ye.M. Kaljuzhnaja fanaticism «is ecstatic blind faith associated with intolerance and aggression towards the supporters of other faiths» [1, 2].

Other researchers describe fanaticism as «perverse commitment to his ideas and sharp attitude towards its negation» [3]. The most common quality inherent in religious fanaticism, is the value of their ideas and opposition to the ideas of others [4].

Religious fanaticism, from the point of view of psychology is «idées fixes», obsessive-compulsive disorder of the human psyche, obsession and visions, often accompanied by a life of religious fanatics, showed a deviation from the norm, in fact, being a psychopath.

Psychopathic organization of the nervous system often entails increased excitability, hysteria, temper. So, precisely religious fanatics have intolerance bordering on aggression, which — in small or severe, depending on the severity of psychopathy — is a weapon in the hands of the leader.

So, the problem of religious fanaticism is not a common expression in the form of a single scientific concept. Many researchers are studying only certain aspects of it, such as mental illness (neurosis) or a manifestation of the collective unconscious, etc. Consequently, there is a contradictory theory of understanding of the phenomenon of religious fanaticism and depending on it are carried out studies on this issue.

At this time, among the people there is a perception that a religious fanatic — a brutal terrorist, one who sows fear and terror, sweeping and killing everyone who gets in his way. This problem is very specific, since according to many researchers, religious fanaticism is expressed not only in intolerance and superstition, excesses of expression of religious feelings, zeal and ignorance [5, 6].

From the media, we know that young people, because of their unformed worldview or for other reasons frequently are affected by extremist groups. Many young people are recruited, lured by means of the Internet or in other places where you can usually meet young people. And educational institutions, where the majority of young men and women learn are the most attractive place for recruiters, for example, everyone knows the story with a student from MSU Varvara Karaulova.

Therefore, the purpose of studying our research was the attitude of believers and non-believers in the phenomenon of religious fanaticism.

Sample of the subjects: the total number of 50 people: 25 people are believers and nonbelievers 25 people. Age of subjects from 18 to 25 years. We chose the believers who subjectively perceive themselves as such. As the subjects were students of first, second and third year of the Karaganda State University named after Ye.A. Buketov.

This sample of the subjects based on the fact that we were interested in the students' attitudes to the phenomenon of religious fanaticism, in order to further preventive work.

To study the relationship of believers and non-believers to religious fanaticism, we conducted the author's questionnaire, which consisted of 15 questions. The questionnaire was drawn up in such a way that it envisaged as an open question, and gated. Respondents were provided an opportunity to unspecified response for each of the items of the questionnaire. For example, question 1 provides an «open» answer: «What do you think, what is «religious fanaticism?»». The following questions have included different areas of research on religious fanaticism. Open questionnaires were processed using content analysis, closed questions of the questionnaire were processed by means of frequency analysis, and then to identify the differences, we used the U-criteria of Mann-Whitney between the two samples of the subjects.

Results of the study.

To the first question «What do you think, what is «religious fanaticism?»», the following answers were received:

1. The deviation from the norm.
2. Incorrect interpretation of the religion.
3. Ardent subordination of religion.

4. Recognition of only their religion.

5. The blind faith

For the second question: «Have you ever experienced religious fanaticism?» «Yes, we faced» was chosen by 4 people (16%) of the believers, and 5 (20%) by nonbelievers; «Yes, constantly confronted» chose 2 people (8%) believers and 5 (20%) nonbelievers; «Not sure» chose 6 people (24%) of believers and 7 (28%) of nonbelievers; «No, did not face» chose 9 people (80%) of believers and 3 (12%) of nonbelievers; «I do not know» was chosen by 2 (8%) of the believers; «Other» was chosen by 2 people (8%) of believers and 5 (20%) of nonbelievers.

On the third question, «Where do you most often encounter the fanaticism?» Were the following answers — «among friends» chose 1 person (4%) of believers and 1 person (4%) of nonbelievers; «At the university» has chosen 1 person (4%) of nonbelievers; «Nowhere» was chosen by 10 people (40%) of believers and 6 (24%) of nonbelievers; «On the street» was chosen by 7 people (28%) of the believers, and 13 (52%) of nonbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 14 people (24%) of believers and 14 people (16%) of nonbelievers.

The results of the answers show that the believed subjects generally did not face with manifestations of religious fanaticism, while unbelieved subjects still see the manifestation of religious fanaticism on the streets.

On the fourth survey question, «What is your attitude towards the phenomenon of «religious fanaticism?», answer «Very negative» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers and by 5 (12%) of the unbelievers; «Negative» was chosen by 12 people (48%) of the believers and 11 people (44%) of the unbelievers; «Indifferent» was chosen by 8 people (32%) of believers and 7 (28%) of the unbelievers; «Positive» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of believers; «Very positive» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers; «Other» was chosen by 3 people (12%) of the believers and 3 (12%) of the unbelievers.

Thus, the results of the responses of the subjects shows that the majority of believers and non-believers refer to this phenomenon negatively.

On the fifth question in the questionnaire, «What kind of people do you feel about religious fanatics?» Answers as to the phenomenon of «ordinary believer» was chosen by 1 (4%) person who believes; «Covered person (hijab, skullcap etc.)» was chosen by 2 people (8%) of the believers, and 2 people (8%) of the unbelievers; «Believer belonging to the sect or religious group» was chosen by the 7 (28%) believing people, and 9 nonbelieving people (36%); «Deeply believing person, to comply with all regulations, makes everyone to think like him, dress him, etc.» selected 14 people (56%) of the believers and 14 people (56%) of the unbelievers; «Person with mental health problems» was chosen by 2 people (8%) of the believers and 4 people (16%) of the unbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers.

These results show that the majority of the subjects chose the people belonging to religious fanatics, as a deeply believing person, who is abiding by all regulations, and forcing all to think like him, dress like him, etc.

For the sixth question, «How do you feel when you face with the religious fanaticism?» The following answers, «fear» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers; «Indifference» was chosen by 13 people (52%) of the believers and 7 people (28%) of the unbelievers; «Anxiety» was chosen by 6 people (24%) of the believers, and 6 people (24%) of the unbelievers; «Sympathy» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers; «Threat» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers and 5 (20%) of the unbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 3 people (12%) of the believers and 7 (28%) of the unbelievers. Based on the results to this question, it is seen, that in both samples of the subjects, mostly prevails indifference.

On the seventh question, «Would you communicate with the person, if you noticed in his behavior manifestations of religious fanaticism?» The answers were as follows: «Yes, but more cautiously», was selected by 12 believing people (48%), and 6 unbelieving people (24 %); «No, I would stop communicating immediately» was chosen by 1 believer (4%) and 8 unbelievers (32%); «I do not know» was chosen by 8 people (32%) of believers and 6 (24%) of the unbelievers; «I would love to continue to communicate» — 1 person (4%) of the believers and 1 person (4%) of the unbelievers; «Yes, I do not see anything wrong with that» chose 2 people (8%) of the believers and 4 (16%) of the unbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers.

The results of the responses indicate that the majority of believers of the subjects continued to communicate with people, but more cautiously, whereas the majority of non-believers of the subjects would stop communication immediately.

On the eighth question, «How does your family react when the media show the manifestations of religious fanaticism?», answers «Are horrified» selected 7 people (28%) of the believers and 7 (28%) of the unbelievers; «Are afraid, as we would have been influenced by them» selected 4 people (16%) of the believers,

and 1 person (4%) of the unbelievers; «Behave calmly» selected 7 believing people (28%) and 8 unbelieving people (32%); «Hard to tell» selected 4 people (16%) of the believers and 4 (16%) of the unbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 3 people (12%) of the believers and 5 (20%) of the unbelievers.

So, the largest number of the believing subjects chose two answers: no matter how you were influenced by, and behave calmly. In unbelievers most replies the answer about behaving calmly.

The ninth question, «How do you think, the religious fanaticism, it is something that the believer must strive to», answers «No» was selected by 22 people (88%) of the believers and 20 people (80%) of the unbelievers; «Yes» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers and 1 person (4%) of the unbelievers; «Maybe, why not» selected 3 people (12%) of the unbelievers; «More yes than no» selected 1 person (4%) of the believers; «I do not know» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers, and 1 person (4%) of the unbelievers.

Thus, mainly, a review of both of the subjects' samples were matched in this question, they believe that religious people should not strive to religious fanaticism.

In the tenth question, «In your opinion, who are often subjected to religious fanaticism», the following results were obtained: «The children of believers» chose 5 people (20%) from the believers, and 1 person (4%) from the unbelievers; «Teenagers because of the immaturity of the psyche» was chosen by 6 people (24%) of the believers, and 7 (28%) of the non-believers; «Young people» have chosen 7 believing people (28%), and 5 non-believing people (20%); «The female believers» chosen 1 person (4%) of the believers, and 5 (20%) of the non-believers; «The male believers» was chosen by 2 people who believe (8%); «Other» was chosen by 8 people (32%) of the believers and 9 people (36%) of the non-believers.

On the eleventh question, «Your attitude to the religious fanatics is more consistent with what?» The following answers were given: «This is good, religious people, seeking for perfection and harmony of the world» was chosen by 1 believing person (4%), and 1 non-believing person (4%); «This are religious people who need support and sympathy» chose 9 believing people (36%), and 5 non-believing people (20%); «it is those who disbelieve, posing as believers» chose 9 believing (36%), and 5 unbelieving people (20%); «This are very impulsive, aggressive people, causing fear and terror» was chosen by 2 believing (8%) and 6 unbelieving people (24%); «This are the terrorists» was selected by 2 unbelieving subjects (8%); «Other» was chosen by 4 believing (16%), and 8 unbelieving people (32%).

Opinions of believing people on the eleventh question divided as follows, namely half of the subjects selected that it is religious people who need support and sympathy, the other half of the subjects chose the following that it is unbelievers, posing as believers. In unbelievers' leads the response that it is very impulsive, aggressive people, causing fear and terror.

For the twelfth question «Do you need to fight religious fanaticism» answers «I think so» chose 9 of believing (36%), 7 of unbelieving subjects (28%); «No, I do not see the point in it», was chosen by 1 believing (4%), and 2 unbelieving subject (8%); «Yes, all manifestations of fanaticism» chose 9 believing (36%), and 6 unbelieving (24%) subjects; «difficult to answer» was chosen by 3 believing (12%), and 8 unbelieving subjects (32%); «They should be treated» was chosen by 1 believing (4%), and 3 unbelieving subjects (12%); «Other» was chosen by 1 believing (4%), and 2 unbelieving subjects (8%).

So we see that the responses of believing people were mainly chosen meanwhile. That it is needed to combat manifestations of terrorism and needed to combat any manifestations of religious fanaticism.

On the thirteenth question, «In your opinion, by what means and methods it is effectively to combat manifestations of religious fanaticism?», the answers were following: «via media» was chosen by 1 believing (4%), and 1 unbelieving person (4%); «With the help of social and public institutions engaged in the study of the problem of religious fanaticism» chose 10 believing (40%), and 15 unbelieving people (60%); «family» was chosen by 2 believing (8%), and 1 non-believing people (4%); «Official religious institutions (mosques, churches)», chose 9 believing (36%), and 8 non-believing people (32%); «Specialized military institutions» was chosen by 1 believing (4%), and 2 non-believing people (8%); «Other» was chosen by 2 believing (8%), and 3 non-believing people (12%).

The results of the given question shows that the subjects in both samples consider most effective to combat religious fanaticism with the help of social and public institutions engaged in the study of religious fanaticism problems.

On the fourteenth question, «In your opinion, what are the main causes of religious fanaticism», the answers were as follows: «Political» was selected by 2 people (8%) of the believers, and 2 people (8%) of the unbelievers; «Religious» — 7 people (28%) of the believers and 6 people (24%) of the unbelievers; «Psychological» — 14 people (56%) of the believers, and 12 people (48%) of the unbelievers; «Social» — 3 people

(12%) of believers, and 8 people (32%) of the unbelievers; «Economic» was chosen by 2 people (8%) of the unbelievers; «Other» was chosen by 1 person (4%) of the believers.

Thus, the results of the answer to this question show, according to most respondents, that the basis of religious fanaticism is psychological or social problem.

On the fifteenth question, «In your opinion, what impact does religious fanaticism carries to society?», the following answers: «A negative impact on society» was chosen by 7 believing (28%), and 9 non-believing people (36%); «A positive impact on society» was chosen by 1 believing people (4%); «Do not affect the society» was chosen by 1 unbelieving person (4%); «Distort public confidence in the believers» was chosen by 20 believing (80%), and 15 unbelieving people (60%); «Their work is admirable», was chosen by 3 unbelieving people (12%).

Thus, the majority of participants believe that religious fanatics distort public confidence in the believers.

We checked the reliability of the empirical data by using the Mann-Whitney's U-criteria, showing that the differences in the level of significance ($p \leq 0,05$) do not exist.

So, by the results the survey, we can make the following conclusions:

- In the majority of the subjects there is no clear notion of religious fanaticism and religious fanatics;
- Both believers and non-believers subjects, mostly have negative attitude to the phenomenon of «religious fanaticism»
- A religious fanatic or a manifestation of religious fanaticism for the subjects is a deeply religious person who observes all the regulations, forcing all to think like him, dress like it, etc.;
- Faithful subjects more loyal to religious fanatics, as they would continue to communicate with them, but those subjects who disbelieve would immediately stop communication with them;
- Relatives of the believing subjects are ambivalent about the manifestation of religious fanaticism, are afraid, as if their children are not subjected to their influence, and the relatives of the other respondents refer to this phenomenon quite indifferent;
- The subjects in both samples believe that religious fanaticism is not something that a believer should strive;
- Believing subjects think that religious fanatics are people who need support and sympathy and it is those who disbelieve, posing as believers, whereas the unbelieving subjects believe that religious fanatics are terrorists;
- The subjects in both groups think that the most effective way to deal with religious fanaticism is with the help of social and public institutions engaged in the study of the problem of religious fanaticism;
- Subjects also believe that the main cause of manifestation of religious fanaticism is a psychological problem that exists in our society;
- In the opinion of most of the subjects, religious fanaticism distorts the public confidence in the believers.

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«Діни фанатизм» құбылысын элеуметтік-психологиялық зерттеу

Мақалада қазіргі қоғамның өзекті мәселелерінің бірі — діни фанатизм көрінісі қарастырылған. Зерттеу тақырыбының өзектілігі, сыналұшылардың таңдамасы негізделген. Діни фанатизмнің көрінісіне қатынасын анықтау мақсатында студенттік жастар арасында 15 сұрақтан тұратын сауалнама жүргізілген. Алынған нәтижелер барысында респонденттердің берілген құбылысқа олардың қай дінге сенетіндеріне қарамастан, жағымсыз екені анықталды. Көптеген сыналұшылардың ойынша, қоғамдағы діни фанатизмнің көрінуінің басты себебі психологиялық мәселе екендігі және діни фанатизммен күресу діни фанатизмнің мәселелерін зерттейтін элеуметтік және қоғамдық институттар арқылы жүргізу тиімдірек екені анықталды.

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Социально-психологическое изучение явления «религиозный фанатизм»

В статье рассмотрена одна из центральных проблем современного общества, которая связана с проявлениями религиозного фанатизма. Проведено анкетирование, состоящее из 15 вопросов, касающихся отношения студенческой молодежи к проявлению религиозного фанатизма. Полученные результаты исследования показывают, что отношение респондентов к данному явлению, вне зависимости от вероисповедания, в общем негативное и отрицательное. Большинство испытуемых, подчеркнuto авторами, считают, что эффективнее всего бороться с религиозным фанатизмом с помощью социальных и общественных институтов, занимающихся изучением проблемы религиозного фанатизма, и что главной причиной его проявления являются проблемы психологического характера, существующие в нашем обществе.

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