

ABSTRACT

**Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Specialty “6D020600 – Religious Studies”
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New Islamic Movements in the context of world geopolitical context

The Thesis defines the fundamental difference between traditional Islam as a religious system and new Islamist trends in modern world geopolitics. In addition, the formation and development features of New Islamist Movements various forms from their ideological origins to modern doctrine and the political orientation of their activities is analyzed. The research work analyzes the process of activation of New Islamist Trends at the present stage on the example of transnational organizations such as al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Muslim Brotherhood, an-Nusra Front, Hezbollah, etc. Social, political and religious reasons for the development of radical forms of New Islamist Trends are considered.

Relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that in modern international relations and in world geopolitics, the Islamic world is represented by very diverse state and non-state actors, including anti-system ones. This gives rise to contradictory manifestations of the factor in the international and regional arenas. Without a serious study and theoretical understanding of these phenomena, it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the modern global geopolitical process features. Today, Islam continues to be the fastest growing and developing religion in the world. According to the Pew Research Center, 1.8 billion people, or 24% of the world's population, consider themselves Muslims. Of course, this fact can not fail to attract attention, especially since the rapid spread of Islam is observed not only in traditional Islamic regions, but also around the world. This phenomenon has a number of consequences: on the one hand, the total number of adherents of Islam is increasing; on the other hand, attracting new adherents leads to the emergence of many movements, trends and interpretations of the faith. This is due to two main reasons:

- the increase in the number of believers, especially in “non-traditional” regions, often results in a natural distortion of the faith, which is associated with the lack of literate and educated clergy, lack of educational institutions, as well as the negative influence of destructive elements, primarily represented by new Islamist trends;

- modern secular trends inherent in Western society, which is increasingly based on postmodern relativistic socio-philosophical positions, lead to the fact that a number of followers of Islam are trying to find ways to adapt to the new reality, to adapt Islam to current circumstances. Definitely, a serious influence on Islam, as well as on its perception, is exerted by the situation associated with the radical views of some Muslims, who consider it possible to resort to extreme methods, including

armed struggle and terrorism, in order to “purify” the faith and return to its origins. These negative trends are certainly condemned in the Muslim community (Ummah), both in Kazakhstan and around the world.

The research object is a new Islamist movement in the contemporary global geopolitics.

The research subject is trends in the development of new Islamist trends as a factor of destabilization of the current geopolitical situation in the world.

The purpose of the study is to examine the evolution new Islamist trends ideology and practice in the context of the possibility of the current socio-political situation destabilization in the world. This goal is specified in the analysis of the activities of certain political actors, their methods, means, and ideological and political views.

Objectives of research:

– Reveal the subject field of concepts associated with the concept of “New Islamist Trends”, to show their heuristic and epistemological significance in the analysis of modern political reality;

– Analyze the evolution of the ideological and political doctrine of New Islamist Trends, its impact on the spread and specifics of the practical activities of modern political actors;

– Consider the set of prerequisites of new Islamist trends and their modern projections, which allow us to interpret it as a threat to the world community;

– Demonstrate the diversification of modern methods and tools used in the ideological and political activities of Islamist organizations, depending on their orientation: moderate or ultra-radical;

– Identify key features of the ideology and practice of a number of Islamist organizations such as al-Qaeda, Muslim Brotherhood, an-Nusra Front, Hezbollah, etc., which allow us to consider them as political actors capable of destabilizing the political situation in the world;

– Give a precise definition of the ideas of jihadist Salafism represented by jihadist groups and organizations, primarily “al-Qaeda” and “Islamic State”;

– Determine the classification of these organizations ideology, their work mechanisms, points of contact and differences, and common ideological denominators that connect them;

– Develop and propose a number of measures to optimize the existing policy of countering new Islamist trends at the present stage.

Scientific novelty of the Thesis

– The subject field of the concept of “New Islamist Trends” has been revealed by identifying common and special features in the ideology and practice of Islamist persuasion radical political subjects;

– The interdependence of the complex of historical, political, economic, socio-cultural and other factors, as well as the ideological design of the radical Islamist

doctrine, leading to modern parameters of political activity and ideology of Islamist radicalism subjects have been highlighted;

- The doctrinal foundations of new Islamist trends and its various trends have been revealed;

- The place of new Islamist trends in the system of modern geopolitical relations were determined;

- The impact of Islamist radicalism various trends on modern ethno-political processes in Kazakhstan in the context of the processes that are taking place in the near and Middle East has been established;

- A set of measures to combat new Islamist trends, including its extreme forms, has been proposed;

- In the dissertation research, a number of foreign studies on this problem has been introduced into scientific circulation for the first time.

Main statements submitted for defense

- The definition of “New Islamist Trends” refers to a political trend based on religious and ideological doctrine and socio-political practice, which is manifested in the various moderate and ultra-radical persuasions radical Islamist organizations activities. The modern rise of new Islamist trends is not only an ideology and a practical form of social protest, but also an attempt by Muslim society to overcome the identity crisis. The appeal of Muslims to their traditional culture in search of spiritual support, the desire to defend their identity and their multifaceted interests are caused by deep structural changes in the socio-political and cultural life of the modern world.

- The doctrine of new Islamist trends does not have a clear written statement, it is a set of theoretical heritage of socio-political teachings of Muslim thinkers, whose followers were members of most radical Islamist organizations. Islamists have become a vector for the development of Muslim societies and a strategy for creating a number of socio-political and economic institutions, expressed in the discourses of religious and political leaders, in the activities of international non-governmental organizations, and has many means of dissemination. The evolution of the ideological design of Islamist radicalism was expressed in the emergence of two trends – moderate and ultra-radical. The criterion for their difference is their attitude to the means and methods of achieving political goals, namely, the spread of Islamist doctrine and the destabilization of the global geopolitical situation.

- New Islamist trends in modern world geopolitics, representing various religious and political trends such as al-Qaeda, is, the Muslim Brotherhood, the an-Nusra Front, Hezbollah, and Hamas, are a reflection of the complex political, economic, and social situation in Muslim countries. Each of them has its own political and ideological projects that are built around the theoretical heritage of Muslim figures and the main ideological concept of “jihad”. All actions of organizations are aimed at building a Caliphate and, consequently, at destabilizing the geopolitical situation in the world.

– The basis of the ideological base and at the same time the political practice carried out in a variety of forms, "The main supplier and main distributor" of terrorism in the modern geopolitical relations system, are the new Islamist trends. At the same time, we emphasize that the "New Islamist Trends" cannot be identified with Islam in general. Therefore, the subject of cognitive interest in the dissertation is not actually the great world monotheistic religion – Islam – but only those radical and transformed forms that, in order to achieve the political goals set by their initiators, transform religion-faith into an ideological tool that justifies violence in any of its forms. The ideologies of new Islamist trends in the world are difficult to get rid of, Islamists affect more and more countries, and Kazakhstan is no exception.

– New Islamist trends have an extreme form, this is radicalism and extremism, destructive non-traditional trends are inherent not only in Islam, as researchers sometimes write, and they are in all religions. Unfortunately, in Kazakhstan, in particular, in recent years, terrorist acts have been committed by young people – adherents of New Islamist Trends, who considered themselves representatives of Islam in the context of the processes that are taking place in the Middle East. But it should be noted that all religious extremists and terrorists, regardless of their religion, are criminals they have nothing to do with religion, in this case, with Islam, because Islam does not call for violence, does not call for killing. Such criminals, under the guise of religion, commit their criminal plans.

– The dissertation worked out an effective policy of countering New Islamist Trends, political strategies, and the formation of a special logic of relations with Muslim countries. In modern conditions, no policy has yet been developed that would be able to respond effectively to the rapid changes in the Muslim world.

– In the dissertation work, a number of foreign studies of New Islamist Trends are introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. Materials of speeches, articles and ideological texts of the founders of the new Islamist movements ideology and political figures as H. al-Banna, A. Mawdudi, S. Qutb, O. bin Laden, A. al-Zawahiri. It should also be noted that in the works of L. Dawson, S. Lacroix, M. Barnett, J. Levy, U. Hasan, special attention is paid to New Islamist Movements, which is considered through the prism of fundamentalism. Researchers pay great attention to the cultural and civilizational differences between the world of Islam and the Western world. The use of special terminology for the concepts of "New Islamist Trends", "Islamic radicalism", "Islamism", "political Islam", etc. continues to be debatable issues.

Theoretical-methodological bases of the research is the works of domestic and foreign authors on the problem under study. A special place among them is occupied by theoretical works that touch on historically determined, socio-cultural, political, and organizational aspects of the manifestation of New Islamist Trends in modern world geopolitics. Methodological principles of scientific analysis, the feasibility of which is determined by the nature of the object and subject of research. The work uses both general scientific and specialized methods of cognition: system,

historical, comparative, structural and functional, as well as methods of empirical analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis, which allowed us to fully and objectively study the problems of new Islamist trends.

The provisions of the dissertation can be used in further research on the problems of New Islamist Trends as a factor in politics, and by state authorities in developing an effective policy to counter New Islamist Trends. The research materials can be used to analyze and forecast international political processes, especially in areas where destructive trends are spreading, and in the international practice of fighting new Islamist trends. The results of the dissertation research can be used in lectures and special courses on political science, international relations and world geopolitics, political sociology, and religious studies.

The structure of the Thesis

The volume of the dissertation is 159 pages. The list of sources used includes 302 names.