Terrorism as a Unity of Destructive Ideology and its influence on Theology

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Abstract

This article delves into the intricate interplay between terrorism, its ideological underpinnings, and their intersection with theology within a national context. Employing the principles of activity, historicism, system-structural, and comparative methods, this research scrutinizes the essence of terrorism as a unified entity shaped by its ideological roots and theological influences. The primary findings highlight terrorism as a complex, systematically organized phenomenon, shedding light on its evolution from antecedent forms of destructive activities. Moreover, the study elucidates the constitution of terrorism, emphasizing its distinct ideological and theological dimensions, unravelling their profound impact on the national landscape. The implications of this study are far-reaching. Firstly, it contributes significantly to the theoretical advancements in understanding terrorism, extremism, and radicalism. Secondly, it offers actionable insights for practical interventions aimed at preempting and dismantling terrorist groups and cells. Lastly, it enriches educational curricula across disciplines like social philosophy, sociology, political science, and psychology. The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach, viewing terrorism as an integrated system, and uncovering the evolutionary trajectory from earlier forms of destructive behavior. By exploring the amalgamation of ideology and theology within terrorism, this research breaks new ground, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing this complex socio-political phenomenon.

Keywords*: terrorism, extremism, terrorist ideology, theology, violence, intimidation.

Introduction

In the evolving narrative of human history, the latter half of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first century stand out as a period marked by the unsettling emergence and proliferation of terrorism. What was once a sporadic and localized phenomenon has metamorphosed into an unsettling global reality, intricately woven into the very fabric of our existence. This ominous evolution, driven by diverse motivations, demands our unwavering attention as the threats posed by terrorism become increasingly serious, requiring proactive measures to safeguard humanity. The gravity of this contemporary challenge has catalyzed a surge in scholarly examination, prompting special research endeavors across various disciplines.

The academic landscape, official documents, media discourse, and public dialogue have been dominated by discussions surrounding terrorism's manifold manifestations— political, economic, and notably, religious. It is within the realm of religious studies, particularly in the field of theology, that the profound impact of terrorism has left an indelible mark on the discourse. In recent decades, the subject of terrorism has permeated theological inquiries, provoking profound questions about the relationship between religious beliefs and acts of violence. This intersection between theology and terrorism has become an integral aspect of the broader dialogue surrounding global security. The impetus for heightened attention can be traced back to the seismic event of September 11, 2001, an act of terrorism that not only shook the foundations of the United States but also ignited a series of consequential events in the Middle East. In the aftermath, as the world grappled with the complexities of these events, the association between terrorism and Islam became particularly pronounced in contemporary discourse.

In modern conditions, discussions surrounding terrorism have often been framed in the context of Islamic or Islamist terrorism, reflecting a prevailing perception shaped by geopolitical realities (Nicolaides, 2016). It is crucial to approach this association with sensitivity and intellectual rigor, acknowledging the diversity within Islamic communities and recognizing that terrorism transcends any single religious or cultural identity. The profound impact of terrorism has thrust this complex issue into the forefront of social philosophy, political science, sociology, legal studies, and psychology, shaping it into a multifaceted challenge that demands an interdisciplinary approach. Beyond academic discourse, the practical-life implications of counterterrorism efforts underscore the urgency of finding comprehensive solutions. This article embarks on a journey to unravel the theological dimensions of terrorism, recognizing the importance of theological perspectives in understanding the motivations, justifications, and responses to acts of violence rooted in religious ideologies.

By engaging in a holistic inquiry that encompasses theology alongside other disciplines, we seek to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between religion and terrorism, fostering a path towards effective counterterrorism strategies and a more secure global future. Firstly, all researchers note that terrorism is a very complex phenomenon. And this means that it cannot be understood in the way of a simple empirical description of the forms of its manifestation. This complex phenomenon has its own essence, which should be revealed. Many researchers do not bother to delve into the essence of terrorism and therefore give out inadequate concepts.

Terrorism is a system of various elements. Some researchers focus on one or more of these elements and reduce its essence to these elements. As a result, the integral essence eludes the researcher. Thirdly, each researcher represents a particular discipline and examines the phenomenon of terrorism in the light of this discipline (its concepts, methods, etc.). It turns out again a one-sided concept.

In this regard, the task arises to try to develop a common position. And this is possible only from the standpoint of philosophy. After all, it is philosophy that develops general ideological and methodological guidelines, which each specific science applies, modifying in relation to its subject.

Literature review

The problem of terrorism in the literature is discussed in various aspects. There are historical studies in which the authors find out when the phenomenon of terrorism arose (W. Laqueur, B. Hoffman, B. Hoffman). Alexander and Maxwell (I. Alexander & S. Maxwell), J. Marcella (A. J. Marsella), V. Chalikova, O. V. Budnitsky, V. A. Sosnin and T. A. Nestik, etc.). And there are also different points of view on this issue. Some authors attribute the appearance of terrorism to the times of antiquity (for example, W. Lacker (Laquer, 1979), others - to the end of the XIX century (Alexander, I and Maxwell, S) (Alexander & Maxwell,1979), V. Chalikova, O. V. Budnitsky, as well as V. A. Sosnin & T. A. Nestik agree with them. Although, of course, some elements and ideological origins of terrorism can, according to J. Marcella, be found in antiquity. In the history of various phenomena, the following often takes place (Marsella, 2004). This phenomenon is a kind of system of elements that are uniquely associated with it. But over time, it turns out that some of its elements already existed long before it did (Chalikova,1989). But then it turns out that these elements existed, firstly, in a system of other phenomena, and therefore performed other functions than in this one, and secondly, that in this phenomenon they reach their developed form (Budnitskii, 2000). The same is the case with the elements included in the system of terrorism as a specific phenomenon (Sosnin & Nestik, 2008).

Take, for example, violence, which is rightly considered an attribute of modern terrorism. Didn't it exist at the dawn of human history? Existed. And it existed in a variety of forms - as physical, psychological, ideological, legal, gender, etc. And continues to exist today, and also in different forms. Zizek (2010) writes: "We are accustomed today to associate violence with crimes and terrorist attacks, not to mention large-scale wars. We need to learn to distance ourselves, to free ourselves from the spell of this directly visible "subjective" violence, violence committed by some clearly identifiable force. Detachment allows us to recognize the violence that underlies our very attempts to combat violence and promote tolerance" (Zizek, 2010:21). In addition to violence, which he calls subjective, he distinguishes two more types of it - symbolic, embodied primarily in language, and systemic, emanating from economic and political systems. You can agree or disagree with Zizek, but he is right that violence is not reduced to clearly expressed gross forms.

The scholarly discourse surrounding terrorism encompasses a rich array of typologies, each seeking to categorize and understand the multifaceted nature of this complex phenomenon. Various dimensions, including political, religious, and pathological perspectives, are explored in the literature, reflecting the diverse motivations, goals, and methods that underlie acts of terrorism.

One seminal contribution to the typology of terrorism comes from the American social psychologist, Post (1984). Post's comprehensive framework stands out for its meticulous categorization, distinguishing between political and religious terrorism, and within these categories, further classifying subtypes. Notably, political terrorism is dissected into non-state terrorism (substate terrorism), state-supported terrorism, and state terrorism proper (state or regime terrorism). This nuanced approach allows for a more granular understanding of the diverse manifestations of political violence. Within the realm of religious terrorism, Post identifies fundamentalist groups, exemplified by organizations like Al-Qaeda, and groups formed by new religions, such as Aum Shinrikyo. This categorization acknowledges the ideological underpinnings that often drive religiously

motivated acts of terrorism, emphasizing the importance of understanding the specific beliefs and doctrines that fuel extremist groups. Moreover, Post's typology extends beyond motivation to include a classification based on the methods employed by terrorist groups. This division into criminal and pathological methods provides insight into the diverse ways in which terrorism is executed. Such a comprehensive typology enables scholars and practitioners to navigate the intricate landscape of terrorism, appreciating the varied dimensions that contribute to its complexity. While Post's typology has garnered attention and praise, it is not without its critiques and alternatives. Nevertheless, scholars like Sosnin and Nestik (2008) acknowledge the utility of Post's framework, suggesting that it can serve as a foundational basis for the classification of a wide range of terrorism models. This recognition speaks to the enduring impact of Post's typology in shaping the discourse on terrorism and providing a robust foundation for subsequent research endeavors. Beyond typologies, the literature delves into the structural aspects of terrorism, probing the organizational frameworks that facilitate its existence. Understanding the structure of terrorist groups is essential for developing effective counterterrorism strategies. The intricate web of relationships, hierarchies, and communication channels within these organizations contributes to their resilience and adaptability.

Network Analysis: Utilizing network analysis techniques can provide insights into the structure of terrorist groups. By mapping out the relationships, hierarchies, and communication channels within these organizations, analysts can identify key nodes, leaders, and operational cells. Understanding the connectivity and flow of information within the group enables authorities to target critical points of vulnerability, disrupt communication lines, and dismantle key operational units. Moreover, network analysis allows for the identification of potential splinter groups or affiliates, helping to anticipate and mitigate emerging threats.

Behavioral Analysis: Examining the behavior and decision-making processes of terrorist groups offers valuable insights into their resilience and adaptability. By analyzing patterns of recruitment, financing, and operational tactics, analysts can discern the group's strategic objectives and adaptive strategies. This understanding enables policymakers to anticipate the group's responses to counterterrorism measures and develop more effective, proactive strategies. Additionally, behavioral analysis can uncover internal rifts, ideological shifts, or leadership struggles that may weaken the group's cohesion and effectiveness, providing opportunities for targeted interventions.

Furthermore, scholars grapple with the complex issue of destructive forms that precede terrorism logically. Investigating the roots and precursors of terrorism is crucial for comprehending the evolutionary trajectory that leads individuals and groups toward engaging in acts of violence. This exploration goes beyond mere classification, shedding light on the developmental stages and societal conditions that contribute to the emergence of terrorism as the apogee of destructive activity.

In conclusion, the literature review underscores the significance of typologies in categorizing terrorism and illuminates the ongoing discussions surrounding the structural dynamics and antecedents of this pervasive phenomenon. By building upon existing frameworks and critically examining diverse perspectives, scholars continue to deepen our understanding of terrorism, paving the way for more informed policymaking and counterterrorism efforts (Sosnin & Nestik, 2008).

Methodology

This research employs a comprehensive methodological approach, drawing on the principles of activity, historicism, system-structural analysis, and the comparative method.

These methodological frameworks collectively provide a robust foundation for understanding terrorism as a complex and evolving socio-political phenomenon.

Principle of Activity: The principle of activity, grounded in cultural-historical psychology, serves as a fundamental lens through which terrorism is examined. Activity is viewed as the essence of human existence and societal functioning, with two primary vectors: subject-subject and subject-object. By applying this principle, the research treats terrorism not as a static entity but as a distinctive form of negative and destructive human activity. This perspective allows us to delve into the motivations, intentions, and interactions underlying terrorism, considering both its individual and societal dimensions.

Principle of Historicism: The principle of historicism guides the analysis by emphasizing the temporal context in which terrorism emerged and evolved. Recognizing that terrorism is a product of specific historical epochs and societal developments, this principle ensures that the research accounts for the dynamic nature of the phenomenon. By tracing the historical trajectory of terrorism, from its origins to contemporary manifestations, the study unveils the intricate interplay between societal transformations and the evolution of terrorism as a distinct form of destructive activity.

System-Structural Analysis: The system-structural method is employed to dissect terrorism as a systematically organized and intricately structured phenomenon. This approach requires a holistic examination, considering terrorism in its entirety rather than isolating specific aspects. By adopting a systemic perspective, the research aims to prevent oversights and misconceptions, offering a comprehensive understanding of the internal coherence and interconnectedness within the phenomenon of terrorism. This method ensures that the study captures the multifaceted nature of terrorism, acknowledging its internal dynamics and external influences.

Comparative Method: The comparative method is instrumental in elucidating the relationships between terrorism and other forms of destructive activity and consciousness, such as extremism, radicalism, and fundamentalism. Through comparative analysis, the study seeks to identify commonalities, distinctions, and interdependencies among these phenomena. By placing terrorism in juxtaposition with related concepts, the research explores how it correlates with and diverges from alternative expressions of destructive human activity. This method facilitates a nuanced understanding of terrorism within the broader context of ideological extremism and radicalization.

By integrating these methodologies, the research aims to transcend reductionist approaches and offer a comprehensive exploration of terrorism. This methodological framework enables a nuanced analysis that considers the historical, systemic, and comparative dimensions of terrorism, fostering a deeper understanding of its origins, manifestations, and implications for contemporary society.

Results

This article contributes significantly to the scholarly discourse on terrorism by presenting two key results that depart from conventional approaches within the literature. Firstly, while existing literature often delineates various structural elements of terrorism in isolation, this article takes a distinctive approach by endeavoring to synthesize these elements into a comprehensive and internally systemic phenomenon. Rather than treating terrorism as a mere collection of disparate components, we propose a holistic framework that emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of its various facets. By doing so, we aim to provide a more nuanced and holistic understanding of terrorism as a complex sociopolitical and ideological phenomenon.

Secondly, the article addresses the common tendency in the literature to consider phenomena such as fundamentalism, radicalism, and extremism as externally related to

terrorism. In contrast, we present these phenomena not as isolated entities but as interconnected forms of destructive activity. Moreover, we propose a conceptualization that views these phenomena as logical stages in the development of destructive activities, culminating in the apogee of terrorism. By contextualizing fundamentalism, radicalism, and extremism within a continuum of destructive behavior, our approach highlights the evolutionary progression that leads to terrorism, thus providing a more coherent framework for understanding the continuum of violence and its escalation.

By presenting these results, the article aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of terrorism, moving beyond fragmented analyses to offer a synthesized perspective. This approach not only enriches academic discussions but also holds practical implications for developing more effective strategies for prevention and counteraction. The recognition of the interconnected nature of these phenomena prompts a holistic response that extends beyond counterterrorism efforts to address root causes and underlying dynamics, fostering a more resilient and secure global community.

Discussion

Some researchers argue that it is impossible to create a general theory of terrorism. These include such Western researchers as W. Laqueur, Whittaker, (D. Whittaker), Reich, and others. So, W. Lacker explains this by saying that terrorism is an extremely complex phenomenon, that it manifests itself differently in different states, etc. The reason for this kind of judgments is that these researchers stand on the position of empiricism. The empiricist is indeed given various forms of manifestation of the same phenomenon, which he tries to generalize, but he does not succeed. He goes from the singular (many singularities) to the common, but does not acquire this common. In other words, dialectics is alien to empiricism as logic, as a method of constructing a theory. Dialectics orients the researcher to reveal the essence behind the diversity of phenomena. This is the way to go.

Here the principle of subject activity can help. Terrorism appears as a specific form of human activity, and since activity is a social phenomenon, it is a social phenomenon in its essence. But human activity can have both a positive, creative, and negative, destructive, destructive character. Terrorism belongs to the second type of activity. Consequently, this is a destructive activity by its nature, guided by a certain - destructive - ideology. The main method of carrying out terrorist activities is violence. The main types of terrorism as a unity of destructive ideology and destructive practices based on it are secular and religious, or, more precisely, religiously motivated, terrorism (Nicolaides, 2016). Secular terrorism is divided into subtypes.

But terrorism is not the only form of destructive activity. There really are others. This issue is considered in the literature. They are called radicalism, extremism, fanaticism, chauvinism, fundamentalism. Let's consider this on the example of a monograph by Sosnin and Nestik (2008). They analyze them in relation to political terrorism. According to them, political extremism includes: "1) the adoption and defense of a political position (idea) without taking into account the unacceptability of "negative" influences on opponents in order not just to resist, but to destroy them; 2) intolerance to the value orientations of other subjects with an opposite position; 3) the use of such means to achieve political goals that ignore the attitudes and rights of other people" (Sosnin & Nestik, 2008:40). Radicalism, according to them, "is a principle or direction". They define fundamentalism as "adherence to the original ideas, principles, ideals of certain doctrines or doctrines, which demands overcoming the perversions, deviations, heresies that appeared during their development and "returning to the origins", the revival of rituals and customs. Fundamentalism is close to various types of orthodoxy".How these phenomena are related to each other, the authors do not explain and note only that "terrorism grows out of the extremes of extremism (radicalism, fanaticism,

fundamentalism) ..." (Sosnin & Nestik, 2008). Of course, not all these phenomena play the same role and are equally associated with secular and religious terrorism. For example, there is no chauvinism in religious terrorism, but extremism takes place, which Sosnin and Nestik wrongfully deny.

We propose a different connection of these phenomena, excluding chauvinism. Such a form of destructive activity as terrorism could not appear immediately without having any previous forms. Sosnin and Nestik listed almost all of these forms, but they did not link them into a sequential chain. After all, a more developed form grows out of a less developed one. And although we are talking about destructive, that is, negative, activity, the concept of development is applicable to it (medical professionals, for example, have the expression "the disease is progressing"). Therefore, it is necessary to find the simplest form of destructive activity, which, having passed the path of development, will turn into a terrorist one.

Everything begins, as a rule, with doubt: an individual begins (by himself or by someone's suggestion) to doubt the justice of the political regime or the truth of certain religious provisions or elements of a cult. Doubt in itself is neither destructive, nor even just a deviant form of activity. It is an attribute of all creative thinking. But doubt can lead to both right and wrong conclusions. Gradually, these conclusions become the beliefs of this individual. For example, he came to the conclusion that the current political regime has departed from the previous principles and is leading the country to a dead end, or a believer sees some deviations from the provisions of the founders of the faith or in the worship. In relation to religious consciousness, this phenomenon is defined as fundamentalism. In relation to political consciousness, this term does not fit, but there is also a similar state in it. Fundamentalism requires a return "to the origins", to the teachings of the founders. In the consciousness of the individualist, a negative attitude towards his co-religionists is emerging, who, in his opinion, deviate from the canon, profess a deviant faith (See Nicolaides, 2016).

As fundamentalism grows stronger, it develops into radicalism (Nicolaides, 2016). An objective of terrorist attacks is to create a climate of fear among the rival group's population (Byman, 1998). In Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, radicalism is defined as an extreme, uncompromising commitment to any views, ideas, concepts. Accordingly, the element of intolerance towards dissidents is increasing in radicalism. It should be noted that the difference between political and religious radicalism is that the former is almost one hundred percent based on rationalism, while the basis of the latter is irrationalism. Therefore, in religious radicalism, one of the components, as a rule, is fanaticism. He is characterized by uncritical acceptance of certain ideas on faith and equally unreasonable adherence to them, combined with intolerance to other views, ideas and beliefs. In this regard, fanaticism, unlike fundamentalism, contains not only a negative, but also a destructive element.

A radical - both secular and religious - begins to proclaim his views and agitate others to join them. Thus, over time, a group of like-minded people is formed. As the group of radicals expands and even similar groups with the same ideas appear, radicalism develops into extremism. The core of extremism is a specifically extremist – both political and religious - ideology. Ideology is a system of views, ideas, principles specially developed with the formal use of scientific and philosophical terminology, designed to justify and justify extremism and its practices (behavior and actions). Terrorism is of course also a means to communicate a message and the terrorists groups seek targets that are worthwhile from their standpoint and they use tactics that are aligned with their prevailing political aims (Hoffman, 1999). This ideology expresses specific extremist values and demands for religion, for society and - to the limit - for the world as a whole. This ideology establishes religious nihilism, religious intolerance and religious

xenophobia as a principle. A religious extremist treats not only non-believers, but also those who profess the same religion "wrongly" as someone else, unacceptable and not worthy of respect. The extremist is convinced that only he and his like-minded people deserve to be recognized as true representatives of this religion or denomination, and those who profess a normal religion are infidels, unworthy to be considered orthodox. Thus, the ideology of religious extremism proclaims and asserts the selectivity of its adherents.

Religious extremism, as well as radicalism, is characterized by internal aggressiveness, rejection of consensus and compromise. His aggressiveness is already evident in the very proclamation of extremist ideology. Extremists are not inclined to enter into a meaningful dialogue with representatives of the official religion, to strive to come to some common opinions. Thus, religious extremism is in principle anti-democratic and anti-humanistic, since it tramples on all basic human rights and civil rights. By its very nature, religious extremism is also a deviant and therefore a negative form of religiosity. And moreover, it is also an entirely destructive form of it, therefore, a form of negative-destructive.

Religious extremism is prone to violence and carries it out in two ways: first, through language (propagandizing, imposing its ideas). This is a mild form of extremism. In arguing their views, extremists turn not to reason, but to the feelings and prejudices of people, propagandize slogans and appeals designed not for knowledge, but for the primitive consciousness and instincts of the crowd. Secondly, religious extremism carries out violence in a harsh, i.e. practical form. It includes: holding unauthorized rallies, distribution of literature and symbols prohibited by law, hooligan antics, etc. It is for the implementation of this and similar activities that extremist organizations are created. Consequently, religious (as well as any other) extremism as such is impossible without an organization based on extremist ideology. This organization is built according to a rigid hierarchy, at the top of which is its leader and several of his closest associates.

Extremism is just a step away from terrorism. All these destructive forms differ from each other only in the degree of severity and the degree of intensity of the negative, destructive component in them. At the same time, religious extremist ideology in religiously motivated extremism is only an ideological banner, and the core is terrorist activity. Religious terrorism is no longer a completely religious phenomenon, since it contains a political or/and geopolitical component (for example, ISIS aims to create a world Caliphate). In it, the destructive beginning reaches its apogee. In addition, if extremism simply requires organization, then in terrorism, organization is everything (Dershowitz, 2002; Nicolaides, 2016). This organization is also organized in a hierarchy. But at its peak it is no longer just a leader, but a whole staff headed by a leader. A significant part of the terrorist organization consists of militants - perpetrators of terrorist acts developed at the headquarters. Since terrorism is a phenomenon prohibited by the state, as long as it has no permanent location, it is constantly migrating. Moreover, the terrorist organization is divided into many cells led by its commanders and interconnected by a network principle.

A document prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) [Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE)] says: "Without trying to define terrorism here, we can consider some of its permanent characteristics, including the following:
- organized nature (regardless of the size of the organization);
- danger (to life, health and property);
- targeting, in particular, against the government (the desire to influence those responsible for the development of policies and laws);

– its unsystematic nature, leading to the spread and escalation of fear among the population" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2009). Of course, not all (even the main) characteristics of terrorism are listed here, and besides, only political terrorism is meant. Let's continue our reasoning.

In terrorism, the negative-destructive principle reaches its apogee. In this regard, J. Baudrillard is right when he writes: "Terrorism invents nothing and discovers nothing. He just takes everything to the extreme, to paroxysm" (Baudrillard, 2016). Terrorist activity can turn into large-scale military activity, as in the case of ISIS (DAESH). If we compare secular and religious (religiously motivated) terrorism on the scale of the degree of cruelty, then the second immeasurably exceeds the first. If a secular (for example, a political) terrorist commits a terrorist act in the name of a just system and acts in this respect like an ordinary person, then a religious terrorist in the terrorist acts carried out by him, as he believes, acts on behalf of God, that is, performs a sacred act. For him, his life is only a means of carrying out this sacrament. That's why suicide bombers are revered in Islamist terrorism.

It should be noted that many forms of terrorist attacks resemble sabotage, and their perpetrators are saboteurs. However, this is only an external, formal similarity. Their fundamental difference is in the ratio of the purpose and means of both. For a saboteur, the goal is to kill a lot of people, blow up an airplane, train, etc. For a terrorist, these actions themselves are a means. The goal is to destabilize the situation, causing terror and panic, as well as the desire to force the government to fulfill the numerous demands often made by terrorist groups (Konovalov, 2007; Nicolaides, 2016). And the terrorist war (for example, the one waged by ISIS) is different from a conventional war. Glucksmann (2006) writes: "The traditional war, no matter how wild, has its end. But the terrorist war, left to boundless violence, knows no truce. It replaces the demonstration of force with a demonstration of hatred, which, feeding on its own disastrous consequences, becomes unquenchable" (Glucksmann, 2006:5). This is the phenomenon of terrorism in general and more some Islamic Fundamentalism (Nicolaides, 2016).

Conclusion

In conclusion, viewing terrorism through the lens of theology provides us with a profound perspective that underscores its organized manifestation as the zenith of destructive activity. Terrorism, as an orchestrated form of State-sanctioned violence, is not merely a random occurrence but rather the culmination of a specific terrorist ideology. This ideology evolves organically, finding its roots in earlier manifestations such as radicalism and extremism. These precursor forms are not external to terrorism; instead, they constitute integral components within its complex structure.

The theological viewpoint allows us to recognize terrorism as a distinct ideological entity with a trajectory that encompasses various stages of radicalization and extremism. Understanding terrorism as a self-contained system of beliefs and practices sheds light on its evolution and the logical progression from radical ideologies to the ultimate expression of organized violence. This holistic comprehension is essential for devising comprehensive counterterrorism strategies that address not only the immediate threat but also the ideological underpinnings. As we confront the challenges posed by terrorism, incorporating theology into our analysis offers a deeper understanding of its roots, motivations, and dynamics. This, in turn, equips us with the knowledge needed to develop effective preventive measures and counteractions that consider both the theological foundations and the broader societal context in which terrorism emerges.

Limitations of research and prospects of research

This study is limited only by the general characteristic of the phenomenon of terrorism, but in it this phenomenon is presented as a holistic, systemically organized phenomenon, which is the highest level of a number of logically preceding destructive phenomena. The results of the research can be applied in the further theoretical development of various aspects of the problem of terrorism, as well as in the practice of teaching philosophical, political science, sociological, legal and psychological disciplines. Further research may focus on, for example, issues such as the sources of financing of terrorist organizations, especially such large-scale ones as ISIS.

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