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**АСПЕКТЫ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ  
РЕЛИГИОЗНОЙ ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИИ МОЛОДЕЖИ**

Одним из важнейших вопросов наук о религии является вопрос о религиозной идентичности и различных аспектах её проявления. В современных условиях процессы религиозной идентификации оказываются обусловленными новыми цивилизационными факторами, приводящими к дисфункции традиционных институтов социализации и формированию нового типа сознания. Это актуализирует необходимость продуцирования комплексного подхода к решению ряда важных проблем религиоведения, в том числе проблемы религиозной идентичности. В поликультурном обществе при опасности утраты смысловых универсальных оснований общечеловеческой культуры молодой человек испытывает затруднение в выборе идентификационных ориентиров. Традиционные основы культуры в динамично меняющемся обществе подвергаются воздействию культурных образцов, отражающих различные системы ценностей и социальных норм, связанных с утратой метафизических оснований бытия человека, целей существования, ценностных ориентиров развития. Целью настоящего исследования является рассмотрение религиозной идентичности и аспектов формирования религиозной идентичности молодежи. В статье изучаются такие аспекты религиозной идентичности как участие образовательных программ в формировании религиозной идентичности молодежи, введение нового предмета – «Светскость и основы религиоведения». Также показаны результаты социологического исследования преподавателей предмета – «Светскость и основы религиоведения».

**Ключевые слова:** религия, религиозное сознание, религиозная идентичность, светскость.

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**Aspects of the formation of the religious identity of young people**

One of the most important questions of the science of religion is the question of religious identity and various aspects of its manifestation. In modern conditions, the processes of religious identification turn out to be due to new civilizational factors leading to the dysfunction of traditional institutions of socialization and the formation of a new type of consciousness. This actualizes the need to produce an integrated approach to solving a number of important problems of religious studies, including the problems of religious identity. In a multicultural society, when there is a danger of losing the semantic universal foundations of universal culture, a young man has difficulty in choosing identification reference points. The traditional foundations of culture in a dynamically changing society are exposed to cultural patterns that reflect various systems of values and social norms associated with the loss of the metaphysical foundations of a person's existence, goals of existence, and development values. The aim of the study is devoted to the consideration of religious identity and aspects of the formation of the religious identity of young people. The article examines such aspects of religious identity as the participation of educational programs in the formation of the religious identity of young people, the introduction of a new subject – "Secularism and the foundations of religious studies". Also shown the results of a sociological study of teachers of the subject – "Secularism and the foundations of religious studies"

**Key words:** religion, religious consciousness, religious identity, secularity

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### Жастардың діни бірегейліктің қалыптастырудың аспектілері

Дін ғылымдарының маңызды мәселелерінің бірі болып табылатын – діни бірегейлік және оның көрінісінің әр түрлі аспектілері. Қазіргі жағдайда діни идентификация процестері дәстүрлі социализация институттарының дисфункциясына және сананың жаңа түрін қалыптастыруға әкелетін жаңа өркениеттік факторларға байланысты болады. Бұл діни зерттеулердің бірқатар маңызды мәселелерін, соның ішінде дінтанудың мәселелерін шешудің кешенді әдісін құру қажеттігін өзектеп отыр. Көп мәдениетті қоғамда әмбебап мәдениеттің семантикалық әмбебап негіздерін жоғалту қаупі болған кезде, жас адам сәйкестендіру нүктелерін, белгілерін таңдауда қиындықтарға тап болады. Динамикалық түрде өзгеретін қоғамдағы мәдениеттің дәстүрлі негіздері адам өмірінің метафизикалық негіздерін жоғалтуға, өмірдің мақсаттарына және даму құндылықтарына байланысты жоғалтуға байланысты түрлі құндылықтар мен әлеуметтік нормаларды бейнелейтін мәдениет үлгілеріне ұшырайды. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты жастардың діни бірегейлігін, идентификациясын және діни ерекшеліктерін қалыптастыру аспектілерін қарастыруға бағытталған. Мақалада діни бірегейліктің осындай аспектілері жастардың діни сәйкестігін қалыптастыруда білім беру бағдарламаларының қатысуы, «Зайырлылық және дінтану негіздері» атты жаңа тақырыпты енгізу сияқты қарастырылады. Сондай-ақ, «Зайырлылық және дінтану негіздері» пәні мұғалімдерінің социологиялық зерттеуінің нәтижелері анықталып көрсетілген.

**Түйін сөздер:** дін, діни сана, діни бірегейлік, зайырлылық.

### Formulation of the problem

The process of secularization of social relations and social consciousness in modern conditions comes into conflict with the tendency of their religion. The destabilization of social relations and the loss of the old spiritual values lead to an appeal to traditionalist cultural models that are distinguished by their stability and fundamental nature. But above this foundation, new constructs arise that correspond to the spirit of the times. Religious values, which gradually acquired the status of being in demand in real life, began to acquire greater popularity as a response to the need for social integration (Casanova, 2006: 7).

In this regard, it is extremely necessary to study the peculiarities of the world view and world attitude of young people who are oriented to further activities in rising the younger generation and shaping their life values and worldview orientations. The research methodology is based on the application of such research methods as structuralism and hermeneutics (Nazarbayev, 2017: 3).

According to a large-scale sociological study conducted by ASIP in 2016, the majority of young Kazakhstani people identify themselves as believers (71%). In percentage terms, young Muslims predominate in the West, South and East of the country. Representatives of religions other than Islam dominate in Central Kazakhstan.

Analysis of the research data allows to draw the following conclusions.

First, a characteristic feature of believing youth in Kazakhstan is the low level of penetration of religious literacy. So 40% of young believers say they have no religious knowledge. For every sixth source, the Internet became a source of religious knowledge (religious sites, correspondence with other believers, etc.); every fourth young believer in Kazakhstan shares the faith based on the opinions of “knowledgeable people.” The original sources were read by a little over a third of the believing young people. Another third of young believers are not familiar with the texts of the sacred books.

Secondly, the widespread use of religious practices is not characteristic of the youth environment. Among Muslims, the practice of religious practices is more common among Kazakh-speaking young people living in rural areas. Wearing religious paraphernalia and clothing is more common among girls.

Thirdly, the overwhelming majority of believing young people demonstrates interfaith tolerance. At the same time, a quarter of the young people surveyed would see Muslims in power.

Fourthly, against the background of positive assessments of interfaith relations in the country, as well as relations along the axis of the state – believers, young Kazakhstanis noted that they experience some discomfort from social practices.

So the greatest irritant is hostility, manifested in relation to the believers in general or in relation to the Gentiles in their place of residence, study

or work. The second most important irritant is the dependence of career growth or getting a job on the candidate's religious affiliation and its compliance with the preferences of the employer.

According to various researchers, the average Kazakhstani terrorist is 26–29 years old. Analysis of statistical data and analytical materials on the definition of the portrait of a Kazakhstan terrorist gives grounds to state that the focus group of young people exposed to the risks of involvement in extremism has not reached the age of economic activity, but refers to students in educational institutions of professional, secondary special and higher level.

The official discourse in Kazakhstan captures the high importance of the education system in the process of preventing and countering radicalization and religious extremism. In accordance with leading international practices in Kazakhstan, the potential of the education system is used in two ways. First, the promotion of citizenship and patriotism through curricula and disciplines. Secondly, the criticism of the ideology of violence, extremism and terrorism.

Within the framework of the first direction, the potential of pre-school, school, secondary special, vocational and higher education is equally involved. Work in the second direction focuses more on the post-school level. The inclusion of high school students in processes and programs aimed at debunking the ideology of religious extremism is rather an exception to the rule. More often work is carried out with the teaching staff.

The process of countering religiously motivated extremism against terrorism among young people is complicated by the presence of a number of problem areas. One of the problems is the lack of scientifically based criteria that allow for early diagnosis of the radicalization of young people (including students).

The second problem is that the teaching and teaching staff, which is intended to be practitioners of the "first line", do not always possess the necessary knowledge, skills and competences in the field of countering religious extremism.

The third problem is a consequence of a combination of a number of factors. Thus, the educational process at school is based on standard programs approved by the MES of the RK, which imply a clear thematic distribution by hours. Another factor is the density of staffing classes with students. The recommended number of students in a class is 26 people, it is often exceeded, but even in such a composition, the discussion of focus issues becomes difficult.

One of the ways out of the situation is holding special meetings and lectures. However, there is the problem of selection of lecturers. It seems logical to be an approach in which lectures will be held by school district police officers or invited representatives of the National Security Committee. A good addition is the display to schoolchildren and students of documentaries and theatrical productions reflecting the problems of terrorism.

### **Semantic universal bases**

The epoch of post secularity promptly changes the former cultural organization of society, when religion is considered as an essential factor of sociability. Increasingly, there is a tense demarcation along the line of secularism / religiosity. In modern societies, religion acts as a strategic resource not only on the scale of global (geopolitical), regional, but also national-state development. The onset of globalization trends leads to the erosion of traditional foundations, to the loss of cultural and identification codes which obliges to explore the interaction of secular and religious values in the context of modernizing spiritual and cultural senses (Belova, 2013: 37).

Kazakhstan is the "middle" state of Eurasia, in which cultural traditions and innovations, history and modernity are closely interrelated. It is not accidental, but it is quite natural that our country finds itself in the center of modern socio-cultural processes, initiating and mediating intercivilizational and intercultural dialogues. Kazakhstan is a secular state with a diverse palette of confessional and non-confessional religiosity, and therefore the self-identification of the state in the space of geopolitics and in the context of the acquisition by each Kazakhstani of the personal meaning of life cannot be realized outside the accented attitude to the role of the institutions of spiritual socialization.

The turn of the XX-XXI centuries turned out to be a critical for Kazakhstan. Vectors of the development of Kazakhstan society were redefined, and with the onset of market transformations, liberalization and democratization, it became necessary to change the outlook schemes that represent a bizarre symbiosis of previous stereotypes combined with new life guides and standards. The Kazakh society, due to the state policy of openness and geopolitical status of the peacemaker state, mediator in the settlement of conflicts, has an impact not only on the economic, but also on the cultural, spiritual, social infrastructure and life structure in general, including the transformation of value-oriented institutions.

In the late 80's – early 90's of the XX century, many Kazakhstanis observed a frustrated state of mentality, a moral and spiritual crisis began to manifest itself. In the situation of the weakening of the former value system, the ideas of religion as a social institution have been significantly transformed, and since the early 1990s, the interest to religion in general has increased, the society has moved into a new disposition towards this socio-cultural institution. For most Kazakhstanis, the years of sovereignization became a period of re-socialization, they were marked by a significant transformation of the fundamental attitudes and life orientations: socio-cultural, economic, political, moral and spiritual. The search and finding of a new “I” for many were carried out in the context of social, professional, spiritual redefinition.

The transition from socialism to a market economy promoted the reproduction of the process of de-ideologization, when simultaneously with the attainment of ideological pluralism, the desire to understand new meaningful strategies intensified, to search for a diverse identity, including a worldview. (Kirlezhev, 2011: 100). In modern social and humanitarian studies of Kazakh mentality, it is recorded that religion, religiosity, religious identity significantly influence the choice of lifestyle of an increasing number of Kazakhstanis. The religiosity of the population becomes one of the dynamic societal factors that changes the value-semantic context of the vital activity of citizens, formats a new identity, and predetermines public security at the level of the state, group and individual. This became possible in connection with the weakening of the upbringing role of education, de-ideologization in general, which led to the expansion of non-traditional value orientations for Kazakhstanis and actualized the development of the concept of modernization of public consciousness.

In Kazakhstan, not only legislatively defined, but also practically provided equal opportunities for citizens in choosing a world view: in society, there is no monopoly on value preferences, all citizens have the conditions for realizing their aspirations in the search for spirituality. The processes of secularization/ de-secularization dictate new conditions for achieving a competitive identity both in the world space and for strengthening the unity of society.

How does secular and religious combine in mentality, what type of spirituality becomes dominant in post-secular societies, how to measure the value-semantic structure of public consciousness and understand the possibilities of influencing

cultural-identification processes in modern societies (Taylor, 2007: 215)? Philosophers, sociologists, religious scholars, culturologists, psychologists are called upon to answer these and other questions. There are new areas of urgent problems that point to the “convergence of the horizon” of the interests and needs of science, practice and management of social processes. Scientific needs consist in the need to form new disciplinary approaches to the study of modern mentality; in the development of the concept and content of the model of secularism in conditions of secular / religious demarcation (Toffler, 2017: 258). Practical needs are dictated by the request of the subjects of political management in the instruments of influence on the ideological process, in the elaboration of the updated content of the Kazakhstani ideology, in the disclosure of its opportunities to become the integrator of various worldview positions in the society.

Thus, the tasks of spiritual and cultural renewal and modernization of spirituality are put on the cutting edge of social and humanitarian science, cultural policy, and ideology. (Talcott Parsons, 1966: 7). When the problem of interaction between secular and religious content is actualized, society needs a model of secularism, taking into account the diversity of mentality, including its non-religious intentions. For Kazakhstan's philosophy, sociology and religious studies it is important to implement a theoretical and methodological justification of the paradigm of secularism, for which it is necessary to understand the interaction of the phenomena of secularism and religiosity in modern society.

The identification and study of the optimal model of secularism, the disclosure of value-semantic constructs that integrate a multicultural society with a view to plural religiosity predetermine the strategy of sustainable development of Kazakhstan and spiritual and cultural modernization. In this regard, a number of philosophical and methodological problems arise, such as:

- justification of the paradigm of secularism in the context of sociohumanitarian knowledge,
- study of the condition and trends of a religious and non-religious worldview,
- conceptualization of value-semantic attitudes towards secularism and religiosity in modern Kazakhstan,
- justification and representation of forms of manifestation of religions in the space of Kazakhstan life,
- analysis of institutions that affect the cultural and spiritual orientations of Kazakhstani people,

- assessment of the integrating and conflict potential of Kazakhstan’s mentality along the lines of secular / religious,
- the manifestation of the axiological matrix of renewed spirituality,
- development of content ideology of a secular state,
- definition of contours and type of secular model for Kazakhstan, justification of the optimal secular model for a plural religious situation in Kazakhstan, taking into account the multiculturalism of society.

In a multicultural society, when there is a danger of losing the semantic universal foundations of universal culture, a young person has difficulty in choosing identification reference points, since the traditional foundations of culture in a dynamically changing society are exposed to cultural patterns (Kozlova, 2001: 32), reflecting various systems of values and social norms associated with the loss of the metaphysical foundations of human existence, the goals of existence, the development value orientations (Prohorov, 1998: 284). There is an aggravation of religious feeling, religious consciousness as a result of deep crises in the field of socio-economic, political and spiritual life of various peoples (Pochebut, 2005: 377).

The following researchers considered the problem of religious identity and religious consciousness: G.Ollport, G.Lenski, R.Emmons, R.Ryan, K.M. Levental, C. Pargament, B.S. Bratus, F.E. Vasilyuk, P.M. Granovskaya, A.I. Demyanov, S.I. Ivanenko, M.P. Mchedlov, V.G. Pivovarov, D.M. Ugrinovich, S.A. Chernyaeva, E.A. Kho-djaeva, E.A. Shumilova, I.N. Yablokov and others. As part of the psychological approach, the religious identity of the individual is reflected in the works of G.M. Andreeva, A.G. Asmolov, J. Bruner, V.G. Bezrogov, A.A. Bodaleva, L.S. Vy-gotsky, A.A. Gostev, A.L. Zhuravlev, V.P. Zin-chenko, V.V. Znakova, J. Kelly, A.N. Krylov, E.A. Levanova, J. Mida, A.V. Mudrik, V.S. Mu-khina, T.I. Petrakova, V.F. Petrenko, J. Piaget, L.V. Tarabakina, LB Schneider, A. Shuts, I.E. So-kolovskoy, N.V. Dmitrieva, N.A. Samoilik and others.

Religious identity is one of the types of social identity based on its understanding as a structural multilevel socio-psychological phenomenon (Miklyaeva, 2008: 30). Its features are due to the special nature of the interaction of internal psychological determinants, represented by personal characteristics of the emotional sphere, self-attitude, psycho-semantic structure of consciousness, and

external conditions, reflecting the social position in the system of relationships, status occupied in the group and interpersonal interactions (Kozlova, 2001a: 39). Our understanding of religious identity lies in defining it as a component of multiple identities, which appears as a dynamic, dispositional formation of social identity as a result of awareness of their belonging to a certain religious community, in the structure of religious self-consciousness of whole social communities.

### **Implementation of state programs in practice**

In the formation of the religious identity of young people, the support of state educational programs is important. For example, in order to strengthen the principles of secularism in all general education schools of Kazakhstan, from September 1, 2016, a new subject was introduced – “Secularity and basics of religious studies”. The need for a new course, Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies, is now grounded on the current developments in the country and the world. Socio-political changes at the end of the last century contributed to the fact that the religious factor in all spheres of public life of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious people of Kazakhstan began to play a significant role. The revival of religious traditions, the strengthening of religious consciousness and an active interest in religious life on the part of citizens determines the study of religion and knowledge of the foundations of state-confessional politics from school age. By itself, the idea of this subject is no longer new, since, since 2010, an elective course “Fundamentals of Religious Studies” has been introduced into the curriculum of general education institutions for 9th grade. At the same time, the introduction of a new course “Secularism and the basics of religious studies” in Kazakhstan’s general education schools suggests an emphasis on strengthening the principles of secularism and preventing religious extremism and terrorism.

In November 2017, in the framework of the training seminar for teachers “Secularism and basics of religious studies” of secondary schools in Almaty, the Department of Religious Studies and Cultural Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science of KazNU, together with the “Perspective Information and Advisory Group”, conducted a sociological survey using a questionnaire and focus group survey. The purpose of the study was to identify the perception of the subject “Secularism and the basics of religious studies” by teachers of secondary schools in Almaty.

The objectives of the study were: 1) to study the respondents' perception of the goals and objectives of the subject; 2) identify the most relevant topics of the subject; 3) to analyze the opinion of respondents regarding students' perception of the subject; 4) identify the needs of teachers for additional material; 5) to analyze the proposals of respondents on the development of the subject.

The perception and understanding by teachers of the goals and objectives of the subject is an important component of a successful learning process. As a result, it is this perception that determines the vector and the result of learning.

According to the survey results, one third of the respondents among the main goals and

objectives of teaching religious studies indicated "the formation of religious tolerance" – 33%. Slightly less than a third of secondary school teachers noted that the goals and objectives of the subject are "prevention of youth involvement in destructive religious associations" (29%), "familiarization with world religions and their history" (24%) and "religious literacy" (20%). In order to get feedback from different groups of students and their parents on the subject "Secularism and Fundamentals of Religious Studies", respondents were asked how religious / non-believing students and their parents perceived the subject. The answers to it were distributed as follows (Tab 1).

**Table 1** – Opinion of respondents regarding the perception of the subject by believers, unbelievers and their parents,%

	Positively	Neutral	Negative / Wary *	No information	Difficult to answer
Believing students	86	0	8	4	2
Unbelievers students	67	24	2	7	0
Parents	60	5	5	30	0

As can be seen from the above data, according to the respondents, the absolute majority believe that believing students have a positive attitude to the subject (86%), 8% of teachers noted that this group of students do not quite perceive the subject and treat it with some caution.

4% of respondents indicated the absence of believing students. Only 2% of teachers found it difficult to answer, because they were not interested in the opinions of students and are not sure whether their students are adherents of a particular religion.

It is important to note that a practically similar picture emerges among the perception of the subject among unbelieving disciples. According to 67% of respondents, pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject being taught. The neutral attitude of the pupils was noted by 24% of the teachers. 7% indicated that they have no unbelieving disciples. Only 2% of respondents believe that non-believing students do not perceive the subject "Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies". Let us single out the current trend: regardless of religiosity or indifference to religion, "Secularism and the foundations of religious studies" is a popular academic subject in the system of secondary public education.

One of the main objectives of the study was to identify attitudes and changes that occur with

students in the learning process. For this, one of the questions for the respondents was "What responses does the study of the subject evolve from the students"? "What changes are happening?" At the same time, the absolute majority of teachers noted that the subject arouses a positive interest among students (83%). Only 14% of teachers indicated negative feedback from students due to the fact that, in their opinion, the textbook was written in a complex scientific language. In isolated cases, respondents noted the absence of any feedback from students.

According to the survey data, the most relevant and interesting topics for students are world religions and their history of occurrence, which was highlighted by 48.2% of respondents. 21.4% of respondents highlighted Islam as a question of interest to students. The top three of the most pressing issues closes the topic of sects, extremism and destructive movements (16.1%). According to 7.1% of teachers, students are interested in traditions and religious holidays. In isolated cases, the meaning of life, problems of society, issues of love and family in understanding religion were noted. Thus, it can be noted that the interest of young people to world religions and the history of their emergence allows the mechanisms for the formation

of religious identity to fully and comprehensively determine value reference points and form a secular worldview.

The introduction of the subject “Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies” did not become a subject of public debate, for several reasons. First, a significant proportion of Kazakhstani citizens identify themselves as believers, therefore the introduction of the discipline devoted to religious ideology into the educational process of a secular school did not cause a negative reaction. Secondly, the introduction of the religious component to school education in the form of the elective course “Fundamentals of Religious Studies” took place back in 2004. Thirdly, an important “calming” factor was the inclusion of the concept of “secularity” in the course name. Fourthly, the actualization of the issue of countering extremism and terrorism, exploiting religious themes, contributed to the growth of citizens’ loyalty to the mechanisms of increasing religious studies literacy of young people.

At the same time, despite the absence of public discussions on the feasibility of including the course in the school curriculum, experts have repeatedly drawn attention to the risks generated during the practical implementation of the initiative of the MES RK.

In the most general terms, three problematic issues that are actualized by experts can be identified. The first is the feasibility of teaching the subject in the form in which it is displayed in the model curriculum. The second is the risks of propagating a religious worldview, on the one hand, and resuming the discourse of proselytism, on the other. The third is a shortage of qualified personnel.

The course “Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies” was designed to perform three functions.

First, the educational function, which was expressed in the acquisition of new knowledge, the development of critical thinking skills, and the enhancement of students’ creative beginnings (through an interactive learning format).

Secondly, the popularization functions. In this case, schoolchildren were supposed to gain knowledge about the secular nature of Kazakhstan’s statehood, the principle of tolerance, interfaith peace and harmony characteristic of Kazakhstan’s society.

Third, the preventive function. The function was implemented by explaining the danger of ideologies of religious radicalism, as well as global manifestations of extremism and terrorism for national security. The significance of the third

function was also emphasized in the speeches of officials.

At the same time, an analysis of the basic content of the academic subject showed that in the structure of the course, the topic devoted to the concepts of “secularity” and “secular state” was 3 hours (out of the 34-hour course). The total share of study hours devoted to “secular themes” and themes reflecting the threats of religiously motivated extremism and terrorism did not exceed the number of hours devoted to the study of Islam alone, and was more than two times less than the share of hours devoted to the study of religions .

The biggest drawback of the program of the course “Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies” was the lack of attention to the concept of “worldview” and its types. In particular, there was absolutely no mention of the existence of a rational, natural-scientific worldview (despite the fact that the entire system of public education is based precisely on a rational understanding of the world).

When expanding the concept of “secularism”, the attention of students focused on the fact that a secular state is not atheistic in nature and in no way denies the high significance of religion in the life of a person and society.

In addition, the religious component of the course focused on the historical-descriptive approach. Insufficient attention was paid to such important components of religious studies as the psychology of religion and the sociology of religion.

This deficiency was clearly manifested when comparing the basic content of the course and the expected results of the study of the discipline. Critical comments on the expected results component can be summarized in the following theses:

- to achieve the expected results 34 hours of study time is not enough;

- lack of due attention to such components as the psychology of religion and sociology of religion, as well as the philosophy of religion, make it impossible to achieve a number of results in principle. In particular, such expected results include:

- the ability to distinguish between religious consciousness, religious faith, religious experience and religious thought;

- the ability to distinguish between religion and science, secularism and law, religion and pseudo-religious trends;

- the formation of immunity against the influence of ideologies and practices of extremist, terrorist religious groups and movements;

■ ability and willingness to debate, exchange views on issues of religion.

In the context of the basic content of the training course, the expectations of the preventive (protective) function fulfillment by this academic discipline looked doubtful. You can resist targeted propaganda of the ideology of extremism and terrorism, often carried out by well-trained people, in the following cases:

- if a person subjected to destructive influence can polemicize in the space of theological senses (for example, respond with an ayat to an ayat or know the full content of the sura of the Koran);
- in the case of full compliance with the law;
- in the case of an absolutely rational worldview.

It is obvious that the course “Secularism and the Basics of Religious Studies” was not focused on instilling either one or the other, or the third competence.

The experts’ comments actualized the issue of the need to revise the content of the subject and were taken into account in the course of the joint work of the ISDRO and the MES RK to develop a new school discipline – “Society and Religion”. Analysis of the model program of the new discipline “Society and Religion” shows that a change in the paradigm of the presentation of material has occurred.

First, the discipline acquired a philosophical and educational character. The basic content of the discipline includes such topics as good and evil, love, the value of human life, morality, freedom and responsibility, globalization, etc. Each of these topics is viewed both in the context of religious dogma and from the point of view of the natural science approach.

Secondly, which is very important, a religious worldview is presented as one of the possible options for understanding the environment, along with the natural science worldview.

Third, the component, which reflects the secular character of Kazakhstan, has been significantly expanded. Thus, schoolchildren gain knowledge about the existing typology of states by their attitude to religion, principles of organization and norms of behavior in a secular state, rules of behavior in a multi-confessional environment.

Fourth, the discipline has become more knowledge-intensive, focused on the development of critical thinking and free-thinking. In particular, free-thinking is served as one of the ways to resist religious fanaticism and extremism.

Fifth, the practical component of the course has been strengthened. Special attention is paid to the

methods and methods of recruitment into destructive cults and movements. It gives an idea of risk groups. Pupils also receive basic information about the current legislation of Kazakhstan in the field of religion and countering extremism and terrorism. Upon completion of the study of discipline students should protect their creative project.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the new course at the moment is not possible because of the lack of empirical data. At the same time, the following points seem obvious:

- Reading a subject can no longer be assigned part-time to history teachers. The qualitative content of the training course requires professional competencies. In addition, the situation is constantly changing, which requires considerable time to update the content of the discipline. Thus, school institutions should take on the staff of specialists in social studies of religious studies. The key problem that schools will face is how to form a full-time workload for these teachers (there is a risk that there will not be enough class hours for one full-time discipline).

– Disclosing such a topic as methods and methods of recruitment for school teachers, if they did not have experience in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, is difficult. Thus, it requires the involvement of existing practitioners in the process of teaching the discipline.

It should also be noted that, at the present moment, schools did not completely replace one subject with another. In a number of schools, ninth-graders continue to study the discipline “Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies.”

Given all the above, we can recommend:

- preschool and school institutions to abandon the authoritarian style when communicating with students in favor of partnerships between teachers and students. The preservation of an authoritarian style creates a risk to the formation of this type of personality, which is not capable of thinking critically and resisting external pressure. Willingness to unconditionally obey the proposed rules can be the basis for the activities of extremists, and also contribute to the acceptance of violence by young people as an effective tool for solving problems.

– Recommend the clergy to support educational institutions in the creation of manuals for teachers.

– Attract to school as guest lecturers representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Security Committee, who would tell students what recruitment looks like. What behaviors or keywords may indicate that a student is

being recruited. In addition, as part of such lectures, students can be informed of how they should behave in an emergency situation, where to go, and what they should not do (conduct their own investigation, experiments, etc.)

- Develop a special protocol involving a clear sequence of actions of the teaching staff and the school administration in the event of an emergency situation related to identifying the commitment of a student or group of students to the ideology of violent extremism.

- Create a network of trainings (work-shops) aimed at increasing the level of knowledge and

expanding the skills and competencies of the staff of educational institutions. At the same time, it is advisable to expand the circle of participants of such events and include representatives of NGOs specializing in countering religious extremism, local DCNS, departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and school police officers, members of parent committees, etc.

- At the end of the 2018-2019 school year, the Departments of Education under the Akimats will meet with school representatives to analyze the effectiveness of teaching the Society and Religion course, identify problematic issues, exchange experiences, etc.

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