

PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

ZAID ABDULAGATOV. EXTREMES OF RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS
IN THE SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF DAGESTAN. (ENDING. OPENING IN NO 4–2021).

*Keywords: extremity of consciousness,
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secondary school.*

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Abstract. The author, basing on sociological surveys of different years, showed the extremes of the religious consciousness of Moslems who studied in Islamic educational institutions of the Republic of Dagestan. The statistics of Islamic education in the republic are shown. The factors that strengthen the role of religious worldview in the socialization of Dagestan youth are revealed. The issues discussed are considered from the standpoint of the interests of the secular state in

solving the problems of social stability, the formation of a secular legal culture, countering religious extremism and terrorism.

Statistics of Islamic Education in Modern Dagestan

According to the survey of the Dagestan region, in 1892 in Dagestan there were 646 Moslem mosque (primary) schools, where 4,306 students studied. The ratio of maktab and madrasahs was within 15:1.³² The assimilation of the madrasah program enabled to translate the Quran, to write correctly in Arabic. Madrasah had two varieties – secondary and higher madrasah.

By 1978, there were only 27 officially operating mosques in Dagestan. Nevertheless, there was not a single mosque school, especially a madrasah, in Dagestan at that time. The Moslem clergymen of Russia were mainly trained at the Mir-Arab madrasah located in Bukhara, as well as at the Imam Al-Bukhari Islamic Institute in Tashkent. Foreign Islamic education could be received by the very few gifted students who successfully passed the relevant competitions. According to experts, there were many clandestine Islamic educational institutions on the territory of Russia in the pre-perestroika period. As of 1998, 108 educational institutions were already registered, which in general were secondary educational institutions, although some of them were formally called higher ones.³³

By the beginning of the 21st century, the quantitative indicators of the Islamic educational system in the RD went up sharply, as evidenced by the data in the following table.

Table 1

Moslem educational institutions of the RD on 01.02.2001³⁴

Total educational institutions	Higher				Secondary		Primary	
	HEI	Students	HEI branches	Students	Madrasahs	Students	Mosque schools	Students
438	17	2835	44	2045	132	5329	245	3306

In total, by the beginning of 2001 13515 people were studying in the Islamic education system of the RD. This figure is twice as high as the same indicator in 1913.

By the end of 2002, as official data show, the number of students enrolled in Islamic universities increased. In total, about 17 thousand people studied Islam in 2002, including: in madrasahs - more than 5,700 people, in primary schools - more than 4,200 people.

Further development of the IEI shows that after 2005 there was a decrease in the number of students in madrasahs, maktabas, universities. The number of maktabas has sharply decreased.

Table 2

**Universities, madrasahs, maktabas in the Republic of Dagestan.
2005–2012.³⁵**

	Higher educational institutions			Madrasahs			Maktabas		
Year	2005	2008	2012	2005	2008	2012	2005	2008	2012
Total EI	16	16	15	132	116	79	278	94	201
Number of students	2600	2500	1770	4400	3000	2970	4000	700	–

The downward trend in the indicators of Islamic education in the RD continued after 2012. According to data received from the Ministry of National Policy and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan, as of January 1, 2021, there are 6 Islamic higher educational institutions in the republic, in which 624 students study, 16 madrasahs and 1 madrasah branch 1310 students, 173 mosque primary schools (maktabas) 4527 students. The total number of students in Islamic educational institutions as of January 1, 2021 amounts to 6461 people.

The reliability of statistics for the mosque schools is low, since they arise and cease their activities spontaneously.

Official statistics are not interested in information about Islamic education, which is practiced by individuals at home. At the same time, it is an important segment of primary Islamic

education. It is at this stage that the fundamental worldview foundations of personality formation are acquired and consolidated. According to the 2019 sociological survey conducted by the author among students of comprehensive schools in the Republic of Dagestan, significantly more young people are involved in the initial segment of the Islamic educational process in relation to the official data on maktabas.

The involvement of pupils of comprehensive schools of the Republic of Dagestan in the Islamic educational process is shown in Diagram 1.

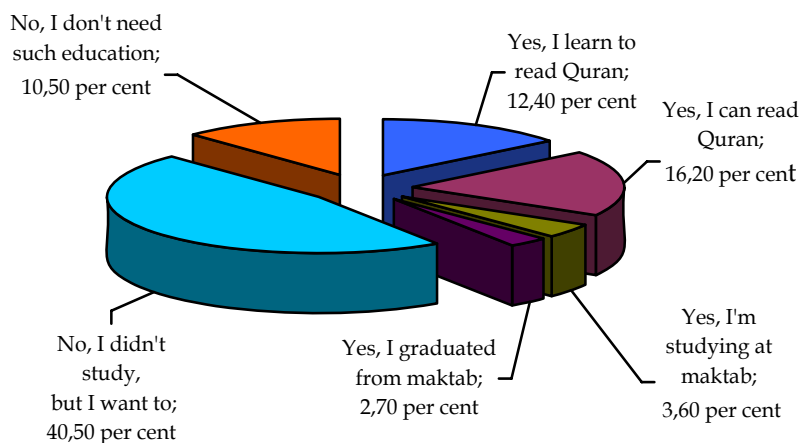


Diagram 1

**Distribution of answers to the question "Have you studied (or are you studying in parallel) religious sciences?"
RD. 2019 Students. (per cent).**

According to Diagram 1, more than one third of comprehensive school students (General – 34.0 per cent; Boys – 41.7 per cent; Girls – 30.7 per cent) have or are receiving Islamic education. 34.0 per cent of the total number of students in municipal and state comprehensive schools of the Republic of

Dagestan (total – 413,230 students³⁶) is about 27,000 people. Of course, this group not only learns the Quran, the Arabic script, but also receives the ideological and normative knowledge corresponding to Islam. If we take into account that another 40.5 per cent want to receive such education, then it must be admitted that this desire for sacred knowledge has embraced more than three quarters (74.5 per cent) of schoolchildren. This is an important factor in the formation of the religious consciousness of young people, which in the North Caucasus, in contrast to the Volga region, does not have its own scientific research.³⁷

Islamic socialization in the Republic of Dagestan is actively carried out by religious leaders, using the possibilities of the general education school. According to the survey data, more than 60 per cent of pupils say that at school clergymen hold conversations with them “often” or “rarely”.

An important, systematically used tool of Islamic socialization is the course “Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” (FRCSE), more precisely, its module “Fundamentals of Islamic Culture”. In 2012, 13 786 students studied in the Islamic module of the FRCSE course in Dagestan schools, and in 2015 – 13 715 students of grades 4–5. This is about 40 per cent of all students in the four modules of the FRCSE course, which take place in the comprehensive schools of the Republic of Dagestan. In the opinion of the absolute majority of the interviewed teachers who teach this module, the content of the textbook, according to which the student learns the “Fundamentals of Islamic Culture”, “mainly forms a religious worldview, introduces children to religion, teaches children that there is God, that faith in God is necessary for man.” – 53.0 per cent. Only 11.5 per cent of the respondents said that it forms a secular worldview. It should be noted that 91.6 per cent of the teachers surveyed considered themselves to be believers, which testifies to the impartiality of the expressed assessments.

Experts working in the Russian Academy of Sciences made an unambiguous conclusion about the inadmissibility of using

the existing textbooks on FRCSE in schools of the Russian Federation. According to A.V. Smirnov, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Philosophy, Deputy Director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (now Academician, Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences), scientists “were actually completely removed from the preparation of four of the six modules - those modules in the title of which appears the name of any of the four religions. These modules ... wholly, one hundred per cent, categorically from the very beginning were given to the confessions. They weren't written by scientists. ... The Russian Academy of Sciences, as an organization, did not do any expertise ...”. At the same time, the state declared that the course of the FRCSE should be secular and not doctrinal.

Results of Opinion Polls

In the course of the study, the results of several sociological surveys conducted by the author were used. The following indicators were used as indicators of the extreme religious consciousness of the respondents:

1. Denial of the need to adapt Islamic norms to modern public and state life;
2. The negative attitude of the believer to visiting “holy places” (ziyarats, mazars) by Moslems, the definition of Sufis as lost Moslems;
3. Recognition by believers of the priority of sharia norms in relation to the laws of a secular state;
4. Negative attitude towards secular culture, recognition of the culture of the Arab-Moslem world as the most acceptable for Dagestani;
5. Recognition of radical Salafis (“Wahhabis”) as “true” Moslems;
6. Approving attitude to the activities of Dagestanis in ISIS;

7. Negative attitude towards cohabitation with a Russian person;
8. Negative attitude to patriotism from religious motives;
9. Negative attitude towards secular education;
10. Expression of the exclusivity of religious identity for a person, the insignificance of Russian identity for a Moslem, etc.

In this text, due to the limitations of its volume, only a part of the above indicators is used to identify extremes.

The main issue with which the manifestations of the extremes of Moslem consciousness are connected is the issue of adaptation to the conditions of modern life. These are secular norms, laws, innovations determined by changes in social relations, globalization processes, etc. The problems of Salafism are well known, it resolves very rigorously not only the issues of its attitude to secular norms, but also its attitude to other trends in Islam. From the point of view of the general problems of adapting a Moslem to modern conditions, "traditional" Islam in Dagestan, by which Sufi, Tariqa Islam is understood today, has almost the same problems. In a narrow sense, Islamic fundamentalism in this text is understood as a state of religious consciousness and social behavior corresponding to this consciousness that do not meet the objective requirements of life, generally accepted norms, and laws of the state. These are manifestations of the Islamic consciousness, which could not "digest life", is not able to "digest" it for objective or subjective reasons. Or, it does not want to do this because of the "firmness" of the religious position. As a consequence, fundamentalist adaptation is understood as opposition to existing norms and values. This manifestation of "fundamentalism" takes place both in Salafism and in "traditional" Islam, although to varying degrees of severity.

"The main question of fundamentalism" – the question of a Moslem's attitude to changes in Islam in order to match the time during surveys in Dagestan was asked repeatedly. The survey revealed exclusively extremes of consciousness, which only

supposedly can hinder successful secular socialization, contribute to extreme behavior, extremism.

The respondents were asked the following question: “What do you think:

a) The Islamic religion should be the same as it was under the Prophet Muhammad;

b) The Moslem religion should change over time, as life changes;

c) I find it difficult to answer.”

According to the 2010 survey among the youth of the RD, the following results were obtained.

Table 3

Distribution of answers to the question whether the Moslem religion should change over time, or should remain the same as it was under the Prophet Muhammad. Education groups. 2010 Youth survey. (per cent).

Groups by education	Groups by relation to adaptation			
	“Fundamentalists” (The Moslem religion should be the same as it was under the Prophet Muhammad)”	“Modernists” (the Moslem religion should change over time, as life changes)	I find it difficult to answer	Rank
Primary (grades 4–6)	50,0	33,3	16,7	9
Secondary basic (grade 9)	73,3	6,7	10,0	5
Secondary general (grades 10–11)	74,5	11,3	9,9	4
Secondary special	71,7	6,5	8,7	6
Higher incomplete (after the 3 rd year at a HEI	64,6	11,0	15,9	8
Higher secular	67,4	5,8	20,9	7
Moslem primary (maktab, mosque school)	100,0	0,0	0,0	1
Moslem secondary (madrasah)	84,6	1,9	1,9	3
Moslem higher	91,7	8,3	8,3	2
A Teacher of an Islamic educational institution	100,0 per cent	0,0	0,0	1
A clergyman	100,0 per cent	0,0	0,0	1

The “fundamentalism” of respondents with an Islamic education was significantly higher than that of Moslems who received only a secular education. The influence on the process of fundamentalization of Islamic consciousness on the part of the bearers of Islamic normativity – teachers of IEI, clerics is obvious. The same question was asked in 2016 during a study of the state of Islamic education in the RD. “Fundamentalism” among pupils and students of higher educational institutions as an average indicator in this case turned out to be quite high – 91.1 per cent. It should be noted that according to repeated surveys of the population of the RD as a whole, and not just young people, this figure was slightly more than 50 per cent, the maximum was 52.1 per cent (2007). Kabardino-Balkaria – 52.8 per cent (2011), Chechnya – 86.7 per cent (2011).

Despite the fact that the identified group of “fundamentalists” in the answers to other questions of the questionnaire reduced its level of “fundamentalism” – in some answers to 30 per cent and below, it steadily maintained a hard core, which distinguished it from other survey groups by the worst indicators of social adaptability.

The polls touched upon the issue of attitude to the laws of the state, which is relevant for a modern Moslem and the state. The meaning of the Islamic attitude to the laws of a secular state is that they are evaluated as secondary, “second-rate”, invented by people, changing over time. Nevertheless, a Moslem in “traditional” Islam, in moderate Islam, can follow the laws of the state, but cannot allow the thought that they are above Sharia.⁴⁰ In radical Salafism, in religious and political extremism, this position finds an extreme form of its manifestation: a) a Moslem cannot be judged or sworn to the court of Shaitan (Satanic) laws, in addition to the laws sent down by Allah; b) a Moslem cannot grant “the right to legislate to anyone other than Allah (only Allah makes laws).”⁴¹ We see the practical implementation of the second of these positions in the activities of radical Salafists in the North Caucasus.

One of the questions that revealed the extremity of the respondent's Islamic consciousness was the question of Sharia and the laws of the state.

Table 4

Distribution of answers to the question
"Do you think sharia norms are higher than the laws of the
state?" by the nature and level of education of the respondents.
Survey 2010 N - 574. Youth. (per cent).

Groups by education	Variants of response			
	Yes	No	I find it difficult to answer	Rank
Primary (4-6 grades)	16,7	16,7	33,3	9
Secondary basic (9 grades)	46,7	26,7	16,7	6
Secondary general (10-11 grades)	50,0	16,8	26,3	5
Secondary specialized	43,5	26,1	21,7	7
Incomplete higher education (after the 3rd year of a HEI)	53,7	17,1	23,2	4
Higher secular education	43,0	19,8	27,9	8
Moslem elementary (maktab, mosque school)	71,4	0,0	28,6	3
Moslem Secondary (madrasah)	88,5	1,9	7,7	2
Moslem Higher Education	100,0	0,0	0,0	1

As it turned out, firstly, for respondents with an Islamic education, the norms of Sharia have a much higher significance compared to the laws of the state. Secondly, with the growth of the level of Islamic education, the importance of religious normativity for the respondent also tends to increase. Thirdly, in comparison with respondents with a secular education, respondents who have received an education in an IIE are about twice as likely to declare the priority of Sharia norms. This shows the negative impact of Islamic socialization, especially in the field of Islamic education, on the formation of the legal culture of young people.

The influence of sharia norms on the legal culture of students of HEI was concretized by the question of the official behavior of a Moslem.

Table 5

Distribution of answers to the question “What should a Moslem do if the performance of official duties contradicts the norms of Sharia?” RD. 2016
(as a percentage of the number of answers). N – 776.

Groups	Variants of response				
	A Moslem should not do anything contrary to Sharia in the performance of official duties	The performance of official duties is mandatory. At the same time, violations of Sharia norms are permissible	By observing official norms, you can violate the provisions of Sharia, but you cannot in your heart consider that these norms are higher than the norms of Sharia	I find it difficult to answer	What else? (write)
Youth	52,0	6,6	14,9	21,3	0,7
Older generation	31,6	19,4	19,8	21,7	2,8
Believer	48,1	8,8	17,2	19,5	1,2
Unbeliever	25,6	27,9	11,6	18,6	4,7
City	39,4	13,9	15,8	24,5	1,6
Village	49,6	9,6	16,2	18,7	1,3
Secular educational institutions	52,3	6,4	14,8	21,5	0,6
Religious educational institutions	68,2	13,6	0,0	9,1	0,0
General	44,7	11,1	16,6	21,4	1,4

Students of IEI speak about the need to follow the Sharia contrary to official duties, significantly more than other survey groups – 68.2 per cent. None of the students of IEI chose a moderate position for a Moslem – “observing official norms, you can violate the provisions of Sharia, but you cannot in your heart believe that these norms are higher than the norms of Sharia”. In Dagestan, supporters of “Wahhabism” in government structures have been repeatedly exposed. The head of the republic, the Interior Minister spoke about “traitors among their own people.” Among them was the mayor of Makhachkala, head

of the Pension Fund of the Republic, employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RD.

Currently, the state print media of the Republic of Dagestan almost never use the terms “religious extremism” and “religious-political extremism.” Islamic leaders actively object to the combination of the words “Islam”, “extremism”, “terrorism”. On December 1, 2014, at a meeting with religious leaders within the framework of the II Congress of Religious Figures of the North Caucasus, the Head of the Republic of Dagestan at that time R.G. Abdulatipov said: “I banned the use of the expression “Islamic extremism and terrorism” in Dagestan”⁴².

As shown in Table 6 below, the religious factor plays a significant role in the possible protest behavior of young Moslems in the Republic of Dagestan, and in IEI it is dominant, far ahead of other reasons.

Table 6

Distribution of answers to the question “In what case could you show disobedience to the state?” Religious and secular educational institutions. RD. 2013 (per cent). N- 855.

Respondent groups	Variants of response					
	If the laws contradict my faith	If the laws relating to my vital interests are not implemented	In no case, since all power is from God	If the law is not fair	If the laws are violated by the prosecutor's office, courts, police, power	I find it difficult to answer
Religious educational institutions	50,0	1,7	6,9	13,8	12,1	10,3
Secular educational institutions	18,0	7,9	6,4	25,0	19,6	21,1

One of the complex problems of modern Russia is the low level of patriotic consciousness of the population, especially young people. The State Duma was unable to adopt two draft laws submitted for discussion in 2018 - the Law on the Russian Nation and the Law on Patriotic Education in the Russian Federation, which indicates serious ideological problems in the field of education in general. There are many factors of negative influence on Russian patriotism. As polls show, one of the significant factors of this nature in the Moslem component of the North Caucasus is the state of Islamic consciousness. In the region, on the pages of the print media, publications of the Muftiate of the Republic of Dagestan, in the activities of the Committee for Youth Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan, there was open opposition to the cultivation of Russian patriotism, the need for a Moslem to perform his official duties, even if they interfere with Sharia norms. The large-circulation newspaper *Novoye Delo*, popular in the Republic of Dagestan, answering the reader's question, "Can a Moslem be a patriot of a non-Sharia state?" gives the answer: no, he cannot⁴³. The Secretary General of the World Union of Moslem Scientists (WUMS), Sheikh Ali Muhiddin al Karadagi, while staying in the republic in 2014, gave the following instructions to the Dagestani Moslems: Dagestan is the territory of Islam, "which means that the laws of the territory of Islam should apply to it, and its rulers should strive to apply the norms of Sharia"⁴⁴, "you are obliged to live according to Sharia"⁴⁵, "observance of laws that do not contradict Sharia"⁴⁶, "serving the Motherland so that such patriotism does not contradict religious devotion in the framework of achieving good."⁴⁷ The results of the survey on patriotism in the Dagestani consciousness are presented in the following table.

Table 7

Distribution of answers to the question
“What do you think, can a Moslem to be a patriot
of a non-Sharia (Islamic) state?” RD. 2016. (per cent).

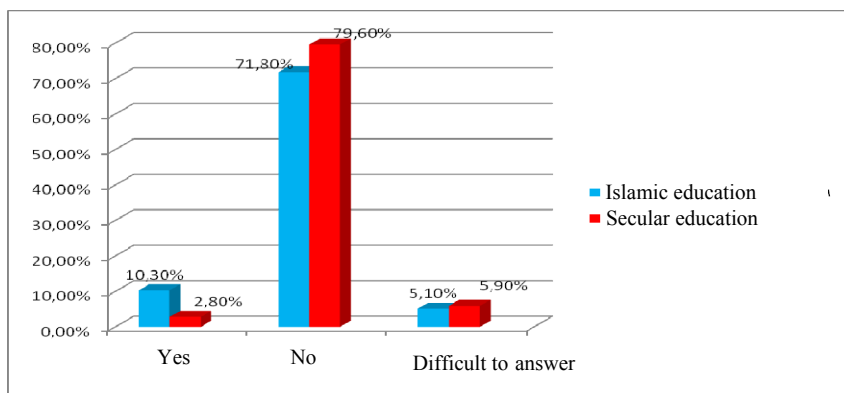
Respondent groups	Variants of response		
	Yes	No	I find it difficult to answer
Youth	41,0	19,3	21,3
Older generation	53,4	13,8	16,2
Pupils, students of secular educational institutions	43,3	18,9	23,0
Pupils, students of religious educational institutions	22,7	31,8	22,7
Clerics	40	50	10
Workers, peasants	44,2	23,1	15,4
White-collar workers	54,5	13,8	15,0
City	45,5	14,2	20,0
Village	44,1	21,8	18,7
General	44,7	18,4	19,3

According to the survey, the least Russian patriotism is expressed by pupils and students of religious educational institutions and representatives of the Islamic clergy. The negative influence of religious consciousness on patriotism is more pronounced in the position of young people. This circumstance indicates a possible strengthening in the future of religious motivation in the departure of the population of the Republic of Dagestan from the positions of Russian patriotism.

The negative influence of Islamic education on Russian patriotism in the same survey is confirmed by the respondents' attitude towards the Russian people. The attitude towards the

Russian person is one of the indicators of Russian patriotism and Russian identity. The desire to live with a Russian person in certain conditions (there is no representative of their ethnic group nearby) in the early 90s of the last century, was expressed by from 40 per cent to 50 per cent of representatives of the Dagestani ethnic groups. They also chose each other (an Avar – a Dargin, a Kumyk – a Lak, etc.) within 4-8 per cent. More than 15 years later, the desire to live with a Russian person among Dagestanis has greatly diminished – to 14.4 per cent in the total sample. Moreover, what is important in connection with the discussed issues, among those who consider themselves, first of all, a “citizen of Russia”, there are 17.1 per cent, “a Moslem” – 11.2 per cent. For believers this figure is 14.1 per cent, for “non-believers” – 27.8 per cent. Among the pupils, students of Islamic educational institutions, there was no one who expressed a desire to live with a representative of the Russian people in conditions when there are no representatives of their ethnic group nearby.

In 2016, ISIS was very active. Many young Dagestanis left for Turkey without stating their purpose, and then flew to Syria and joined ISIS. The poll showed that the Moslem community of Dagestanis supported the activities of ISIS – 4.1 per cent in the sample as a whole. Youth - 4.8 per cent, older generation – 2.0 per cent. In the total sample of those who said that they may, for one reason or another, find themselves in the ranks of those fighting on the side of ISIS, there were 2.7 per cent. In recalculation per person it makes approximately 60,000 people of the adult population of the Republic of Dagestan. Comparison of secular and Islamic educational institutions in the answers to this question showed that among respondents with Islamic education, the extremes of consciousness are much more pronounced. (See Histogram 1).



Histogram 1

Distribution of answers to the question: "Could you, for any reason, be in the ranks of those fighting on the side of ISIS?"

RD. 2016 Groups with secular and religious education

10.3 per cent of the respondents with an Islamic education claim that they may find themselves in the ranks of ISIS. Another 5.1 per cent of them found it difficult to answer, that is, they are not sure that they will not become participants in extremist, terrorist activities, which are essentially against the interests of Russia. These are high indicators of the extremeness of the Islamic consciousness of those who studied at the IEI of the Republic of Dagestan.

Main Conclusions

1. Islamic educational institutions of the Republic of Dagestan have ample opportunities in the implementation of programs of Moslem education and upbringing of youth. Despite the fact that in recent years order has been restored in matters of licensing and accreditation of IEI, state statistics do not provide complete, reliable information about the degree of involvement of the republic's youth in the Islamic educational process. This

applies to the educational activities of mosque schools, and, in particular, home (individual and collective) teaching of religion.

2. The comprehensive school has lost its secularity. According to the leading scientists of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as the teachers of the course FRCSE in a general education school, the textbooks of the FRCSE religious module educate religiosity in pupils of grades 4-5. They are not culturological, but doctrinal in nature.

3. For various reasons, including those of legal nature, more than 40,000 school teachers in the Republic of Dagestan are not involved in solving the issues of shaping the secular worldview of students. This is one of the factors in the strengthening of the role of the religious worldview of the youth of the Republic of Dagestan.

4. IEI reinforce the extremes of Islamic consciousness that take place in the minds of the youth of the Republic of Dagestan. Among the respondents with completed Islamic education, studying at the IEI, the highest extremes of Islamic consciousness among the survey groups were revealed. In particular, under the influence of Islamic education: a) the indicators of Russian patriotism are decreasing; b) the possibility of religiously motivated disobedience to the state increases; c) a negative attitude is formed towards living together with a Russian person; d) the indicators of adherence of young Moslems to a secular legal culture are decreasing; e) the performance of official duties becomes optional if they contradict the norms of Sharia; e) the fundamentalist components of Islamic consciousness are strengthening.

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