Секція: **Гуманітарні науки**

УДК 316.4

Баран Д. - ст. гр. СА-21

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ЩОДО ПИТАННЯ ВИЗНАЧЕННЯ ПОНЯТТЯ «РАДИКАЛІЗАЦІЯ»

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REGARDING THE DEFINITIONAL QUESTION OF «RADICALIZATION»

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The question of why individuals adopt extreme beliefs and behaviors has been a subject of extensive research for many decades. Scholars from various disciplines have advanced numerous theories and hypotheses in an effort to address this complex issue. The concept of radicalization serves as a cornerstone in such academic discussions, frequently appearing alongside terms such as extremism, terrorism, counter-terrorism, conspiracy theories, insurgency, prevention strategies, and societal resilience.

It is important to note that, compared to terms like «fundamentalism», «extremism», «terrorism», or even «radicalism», the notion of «radicalization» as a process is relatively new. Nevertheless, it has become widely utilized in academic literature, preventive policy frameworks, and public discourse. To describe it as merely prevalent would be an understatement: the term «radicalization» appears in over 80,000 references in scholarly works [1]. During my research, it was challenging to identify a single definition of the term «radicalization» that all researchers would agree on. I think it is partiarly do to the fact that there are many similaritieis beetwen the terms such: «radicalization», «radicalism», «extremis», «terrorism» and so on.

it is important to note that radicalization has not only a negative perspective. Radicalization can also be vieuvid positively. For example, the suffragette movement, which laid the foundation for the modern fundamental women's rights, the struggle to abolish slavery, the advocacy of universal suffrage, were at one time considered radical because they were in opposition to the dominant views in their societies. Today, radicalization is a contested concept, with numerous definitions proposed in the literature.

The term is derived from the Latin word radix (root), leading one to assume that radicalization involves addressing the roots of an alleged problem. However, this interpretation is not only somewhat uninformative but also insufficiently distinctive, as activists also aim to address the roots of societal issues. While etymology may offer an intriguing starting point, it cannot, on its own, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding radicalization [2].

According to official definitions, such as that of the European Commission, radicalization is described as «the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views, and ideas that could lead to acts of terrorism» [3].

The Radicalisation Awareness Network defines radicalisation as «the process by which an individual comes to adopt extremist political, social, or religious ideas and aspirations, which then serve to reject diversity, tolerance, and freedom of choice, and to legitimise the breaking of the rule of law and the use of violence against property and people» [4]. In academic research, definitions of radicalisation are broader and vary significantly across disciplinary perspectives, including psychology, sociology, criminology, and security studies. These definitions are shaped by the theoretical frameworks employed to understand and explain the processes underlying radicalisation [5].

Scholars Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko define radicalisation as an intensified preparation for intergroup conflict and an enhanced focus on engagement in such conflict [6].

One of the most frequently cited definitions is offered by Alex P. Schmid, who describes radicalisation as a radicalisation' as a socialisation and mobilisation process, defining it as an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (nonviolent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate [7].

In my opinion, social media today plays a pivotal role in the process of radicalization. It is used as a «motor» for amplifying radical ideas and narratives. It provides connectivity, virtual participation, and an echo chamber for like-minded individuals, creating effective ground for both self-radicalization and targeted recruitment. From my perspective, in today's digital world to combat the growing radicalization through social media, individuals must have strong critical social media literacy.

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