

## PARTICIPATION OF RADICAL LEFT-WING MOVEMENTS IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD: THE INFLUENCE ON THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL MECHANISMS OF ADMINISTRATION

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The study analyzes the operation of radical left-wing movements in various countries of the world. The purpose of the study is to compare the political and legal status of radical left-wing movements in different countries. **Methods:** Pursuing this goal, the paper presents various points of view expressed by researchers on the specific features of left-wing radicalism, describes the history of the emergence of radical left-wing movements the main reason for their popularization in the modern world, and their distinctive characteristics in different states. **Results:** The authors proceed from the fact that radical left-wing protests in various countries that have taken place around the world over the past 10 years (events in 2011 such as the Arab Spring and the outrage movement in Spain, political protests in Russia, the Euromaidan in Ukraine, and many other events, including left-wing protests in Kazakhstan in 2022) against the background of current economic and political instability increase the interest of researchers to understand the impact of left-wing movements on the legal and political spheres of contemporary society. The article sheds light on the diverse goals that radical left-wing movements are trying to pursue, as well as on the main strategies and tactics of achieving them. Conclusion: As a result of the conducted research, certain provisions are formulated regarding the political and legal status of radical left-wing movements, which is viewed as conditioned by the presence of the elements of extremism in the activities of these organizations. Furthermore, promising directions of improving the state policy on mitigating contradictions between the state administration and the interests of society are suggested. A part of the paper is devoted specifically to the study of the possibility of involving left-wing movements in the political life of the state through legal mechanisms of participation in politics, considering such involvement as a mechanism for reducing tensions in society and increasing the level of security.

**Keywords:** radicalism, left-wing movements, left-wing regime, political life, mass demonstrations



## PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS MOVIMENTOS RADICAIS DE ESQUERDA NA VIDA POLÍTICA DE VÁRIOS PAÍSES DO MUNDO: A INFLUÊNCIA NOS MECANISMOS JURÍDICOS E POLÍTICOS DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO

### ABSTRATO

**Objetivo:** O estudo analisa a atuação dos movimentos radicais de esquerda em vários países do mundo. O objetivo do estudo é comparar a situação política e jurídica dos movimentos radicais de esquerda em diferentes países. **Métodos:** Perseguindo esse objetivo, o artigo apresenta vários pontos de vista expressos por pesquisadores sobre as características específicas do radicalismo de esquerda, descreve a história do surgimento dos movimentos radicais de esquerda, principal motivo de sua popularização no mundo moderno, e suas características distintivas em diferentes estados. **Resultados:** Os autores partem do fato de que protestos radicais de esquerda em vários países que ocorreram ao redor do mundo nos últimos 10 anos (eventos em 2011 como a Primavera Árabe e o movimento de indignação na Espanha, protestos políticos na Rússia, o Euromaidan na Ucrânia e muitos outros eventos, incluindo protestos de esquerda no Cazaquistão em 2022) no contexto da atual instabilidade econômica e política aumentam o interesse dos pesquisadores em entender o impacto dos movimentos de esquerda nas esferas jurídica e política de sociedade contemporânea. O artigo lança luz sobre os diversos objetivos que os movimentos radicais de esquerda estão tentando perseguir, bem como sobre as principais estratégias e táticas para alcançá-los. **Conclusão:** Como resultado da pesquisa realizada, são formuladas algumas disposições sobre o estatuto político e jurídico dos movimentos radicais de esquerda, que é visto como condicionado pela presença de elementos do extremismo nas atividades dessas organizações. Além disso, são sugeridas direções promissoras para o aprimoramento da política estadual de mitigação das contradições entre a administração estadual e os interesses da sociedade. Uma parte do trabalho é dedicada especificamente ao estudo da possibilidade de envolver movimentos de esquerda na vida política do Estado por meio de mecanismos legais de participação na política, considerando tal envolvimento como um mecanismo de redução de tensões na sociedade e aumento do nível de segurança.

**Palavras-chave:** radicalismo, movimentos de esquerda, regime de esquerda, vida política, manifestações de massa.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

For more than two centuries, one of the most pressing trends in the political life of various countries around the world, including Russia, has been the activation of social movements and political parties that express acute rejection of the fundamentals of the established socially significant values and established social institutions. Such a rejection is clearly apparent in the ideologies and doctrines of contemporary protest movements, which include one of the large groups of far-left organizations and parties – the left-wing radicals (Roca, Martín-Díaz, & Díaz-Parra, 2017).



In contemporary Russia, radicalism is generally one of the most acute problems of political development. The spread of various ideas related to national, political, or religious hatred in society, and especially among the younger generation, today is one of the most threatening problems in the functioning of various state and social institutions, which calls for an immediate solution. At present, political radicalism is becoming more and more dangerous as it mixes with extremism (Zelenkov et al., 2021). Overall, the problem of radicalization of society is a complex phenomenon associated with the penetration and adaptation of revolutionary ideas in various social groups.

In our view, this conclusion can be applicable to left-wing radicalism, the existence and development of which largely owes to the specifics of the historical, socio-political, and economic development of Russia, the formation and development of its statehood, and has a special weight in Russian society, causing genuine interest among the younger generation and involving young people in politics (Marin, Kalita, Yulina, Polozhentseva, & Kalnibolanchuk, 2019). Specifically, the activities of the non-parliamentary left, in particular, the “Antifa” movement and the Left Front, orchestrated the mass protests of 2011-2012, which became the most large-scale ones in the modern history of Russia (The Economist, 2011). Along with Russian nationalists, liberals, and civil movements, the radical leftists were important participants in that protest movement (Erpylev & Magun, 2015). For example, by various accounts, up to 150,000 people participated in the Bolotnaya Square protests in Moscow (Grani.Ru, 2011). The opposition protest rally on May 6, 2012, turned out to be the most problematic in terms of security: the protests turned into mass disturbances, which resulted in the arrest of a number of opposition activists and the Bolotnaya criminal case, as part of which dozens of people were put under investigation (RIA.News, 2013). Thus, the activity of left-wing radical movements in individual cases may pose a threat to the normal functioning of state power and the state of law and order in the country.

The problems of the activity of radical left-wing movements are studied in the scientific works of S.A. Sergeev (2019) (research of modern West European radical left-wing movements), Iu.N. Poltavskaya (2013) (the reasons and mechanisms of the involvement of youth in radical left-wing movements), and R.G. Seale (1996) (African-American radical left-wing movements), which vary in their volume and focus. However, despite a large number of studies on the problems associated with the



activity of radical left-wing movements, the topic has not been exhausted. The aforementioned authors have explored only part of the important aspects of the topic. In addition, the political life of modern Russia is constantly presenting new material for analysis. While there is an obvious correlation between the radicalization of society and the level of socio-political tension, there is also an objective need to study this issue and develop recommendations for reducing social tension in terms of the realization of political freedoms and the principle of multipartyism. An analysis of the activities of radical movements, the reasons for their emergence, and the methods of expressing protest sentiments provides an opportunity to develop effective algorithms of interaction between the state and society in the political sphere.

The hypothesis of the study. Currently, there are no legal obstacles to the wide participation of radical left-wing organizations in the political life of the state under the condition of the lack of signs of extremism in their activities. However, the authorities need to strive to build a constructive dialogue with left-wing movements, without which such participation in current conditions is virtually impossible.

## 2 METHODS

The study is founded on the principles of the systemic-structural, functional, and institutional approaches, which allow disclosing the political essence of radical left-wing movements. To achieve the established goal and solve the corresponding objectives, the study employs a wide range of general and special scientific research methods of both qualitative and quantitative nature. Comparative analysis allows identifying the specific features of the development and emergence of radical left-wing movements in different states during different historical periods. The statistical method provides for disclosing the scale of these movements and the problems that their activity can bring. Situational analysis contributes to an understanding of the specifics of the participation of radical left-wing movements in contemporary politics, as well as the political processes associated with it (the response of state authorities). The observation method provides the primary empirical material for the subsequent study of the practical implementation of radical left-wing ideas in the political activity of organizations. The information base of the study is represented by the following groups of sources: monographs and scientific articles of Russian and foreign researchers on the problems of political participation of radical left-wing organizations; normative legal



acts of the Russian Federation and its constituent entities that reflect the position of state authorities on the problems of radicalism and extremism in society; open-source publications in electronic social and political periodicals allowing to obtain relevant information and keep track of its transformation: "RIA Novosti" (<http://ria.ru/>), the daily online periodical "Grani.ru", the online newspaper RBC.RU, articles published in journals and monographs indexed by the Scopus and Web of Science citation databases.

### 3 RESULTS

Initially, the concept of "left-wing radicalism" was used to characterize left-wing organizations and groups prone to decisive and violent action. Later, when communists started to occupy an important place among the far-left parties and movements, the concept "left-wing radical" began to be used to refer to an undefined group of leftists who are committed to revolution yet do not identify themselves as social democrats or communists and are critical of both capitalism and Soviet socialism. At the beginning of the 21st century, post-communist parties and movements to the left of Social Democracy (which by this time had shifted significantly to the right) began to be called left radicals (Sergeev, 2019). The first such organizations were the Left Bloc of Portugal and the Coalition of the Radical Left of Greece. They emerged as pre-election unions of the rather heterogeneous Trotskyist, Maoist, and Euro-Communist groups, but by the mid-2000s, they had become full-fledged parties. In Ireland, the People Before Profit Alliance emerged in 2005, the Left Party of Germany – in 2007, the Left Front of France – in 2008, and the Podemos Party – in 2012, on the wave of mass protests against austerity in Spain (Sergeev, 2019). Research assessments of left-wing radicals changed, as well. While in the mid-2000s, they were characterized in approximately the same manner as communist parties were earlier – as opponents of capitalism and liberal democracy (March & Mudde, 2005), ten years later, the view of left-wing radicals had become less straightforward. L. March and C. Rommerskirchen (2015) state that left-wing radicals reject the fundamental socio-economic structures, values, and practices of modern capitalism, but most of them advocate for deepening economic and political democracy through the transformation of "neoliberal" globalized capitalism. Today, movements and parties to the left of traditional social democracy are referred to as the new left-wing radicals (Keith, 2018). They reject the basic socio-



economic structures, values, and practices of modern capitalism, yet most of them advocate for deepening economic and political democracy through the transformation of “neoliberal” globalized capitalism (Sergeev, 2019).

World political practice offers few examples of left-wing movements achieving major success in the political life of the country associated with the formation of so-called “left-wing” regimes, such as in some countries of Latin America (Kashina et al., 2021; Shinkarenko, 2021; Tolmachev, Starodumov, Nesova, Kotovchikhina, & Magomedov, 2021). Representatives of this movement harshly criticize the neoliberal model of development, opposing it to an equivalent economy based not on market principles but on the value of labor input. All left radical regimes are characterized by nationalism and anti-imperialist rhetorics. The doctrine of J. Monroe (1823), which proclaimed the priority of the United States in the Western Hemisphere, is opposed to the ideas of Simon Bolivar on the unity of Latin American states as opposed to the United States. Nicaragua presents a striking example of a left-wing radical movement coming to power and creating a left-wing regime. The left radical movement “Sandinista Front for National Liberation” brought its leader, Daniel Ortega, to power twice (from 1979 to 1990 and from 2007 to the present day). The Bolivian Movement to Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) and its leader E. Morales were in power from 2006 to 2018. The core of the Movimiento al Socialismo is composed of leftist currents, among which the most radical is the Indiohenist bloc, which advocates the opposition and reconstruction of the indigenous Indian world, the defense of Mother Earth, and life in harmony with nature, and the etatist current represented by Marxist intellectuals, which includes supporters of nationalization, increased state intervention in the economy, its control over natural resources, and the revision of contracts with foreign investors (Laserna, 2007).

A number of left-wing radical movements hold some positions on the European continent as well. Left-wing movements and parties have reached peak success in Greece and Spain in 2015: the Greek Coalition of the Radical Left (“Syriza”) won two elections in 2015, becoming a senior partner in the coalition government (Katsourides, 2016). The successes of Podemos are more modest: in the 2015 and 2016 elections, it won more than one-fifth of the Spanish electorate (Agustin & Briziarelli, 2018). However, the new left-wing radicals did not manage to expand their electorate in any of the Western European countries. In the European Parliament elections in May of 2019, Syriza came in second place after the right-wing New Democracy party. Its



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leader, A. Tsipras, dismissed the government and announced early parliamentary elections. In these elections, Syriza once again lost to New Democracy, although it remained the second-largest party in Greece. The Podemos party created the Unidos Podemos coalition for the 2019 Cortes and European Parliament elections, but the electoral result of this coalition was weaker compared to Podemos' results in 2015 - 2016: in the Spanish parliamentary elections of April 28, 2019, the coalition lost 5.4% of the votes and 24 mandates, in the European Parliament elections of the same year in May – 8% of the votes and 5 mandates.

The achievements of Russian radical left-wing movements are much more moderate. Some rise of radical left-wing movements in the early 2010s was due to the following factors: the increasing adaptation of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation to the Russian political regime, which was interpreted by radicals as "opportunism," the crisis of 2008-2009, as well as the rise of Russian nationalism, which was opposed by "Antifa".

Research into left-wing radical movements in various countries allows us to group these movements by the degree of participation in political life and public administration; these findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 1.** Systematization of radical left-wing movements according to the degree of participation in political life and public administration

Country	Influence of radical left-wing movements on the political life of the state	Name of movements
Bolivia, Nicaragua	Decisive	Movement towards Socialism (MAS), Sandinista National Liberation Front
Spain, Greece	Moderate	Pandemos, Syriza
Russia, USA	Insignificant	Left Front, Navalny Headquarters, Foundation for the Protection of Citizens' Rights, Black Panther Party (for Self-Defense)

#### 4 DISCUSSION

Let us consider the reasons for the varying degrees of participation of left-wing movements in political life and public administration in the countries considered above. The political practices of the Latin American countries examined above are based on the etatization of the economy and the strengthening of the role of the state, which



owns the key sectors of the economy while preserving private entrepreneurship (Dudin, Afanasyev, Voropaev, & Zasko, 2020). One of the key proclaimed objectives is the resolution of social problems, primarily the reduction of poverty and social polarization and ensuring access to education and health care, which is reflected in the concepts of “decent life” (Bolivia) and “civil revolution” (Ecuador) (Ivanovskii, 2021). In countries with a high share of the Indian population, much attention is paid to the rights of Indians, sustainable development, and ecology, the rights of nature based on the cult of Mother Earth (Pachamama) are enshrined in the constitutions (Pereira da Silva, 2017). In practice, the principle of the so-called democratic caesarism is put into practice: the key role in the political system is played by a charismatic leader, and the declared plebiscitary democracy relies directly on the opinion of civil society, while state institutions are of secondary importance (Huong, Nguyet, & Bang, 2022). However, it should be noted that the successful implementation of these left-leaning ideas becomes possible only in times of high prices for raw materials, which are abundant in the mentioned countries (Dudin, Frolova, Protopopova, Artemieva, & Abashidze, 2016).

The relative success of left-wing radical movements in Western Europe was achieved, in our opinion, largely due to the fact that Western left-wing radicals to a much greater extent adopted and reprocessed the experience of the “New Left”, which were critical not only of capitalism but also of the USSR and Soviet Marxism (Wennerhag, Fröhlich, & Piotrowski, 2019). A number of Western European left-wing parties were also able to expand their parliamentary representation and social influence largely due to the economic crisis of 2008-2009.

The rise of radical left-wing movements in Russia was interrupted by the “targeted” repressions of 2012-2013 (Bolotnaya Case) and the rise in the popularity of Putin’s policies after 2014, which deepened the split in the leftist movement and led to its subsequent decline (as well as the decline of other opposition movements in Russia). S. Udal’tsov was convicted in 2013 and was imprisoned until 2017. Since 2014, the Left Front has been in organizational and ideological disarray. Upon his release from prison in 2017, Udal’tsov attempted to revive the organization. Some rise in its activity was observed only in the last months of 2018, after the announcement of the unpopular pension reform. However, the ideological and coalition positioning of the Left Front in 2008 - 2013 and in 2017 - 2019 differ drastically: in 2008 - 2013, the Left Front acted



as an alternative to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), while in 2017 - 2019, it became a junior partner of the CPRF (Sergeev, 2019).

Today Russian radical leftists are in decline, split into several groups (communists, fundamentalists; anarchist and “Antifa” movements; “hybrid” organizations that combine features of the “new” and “old” left, like the Left Front), have limited social support, and are not represented in the parliament. This is probably due to the fact that the Russian left-wing radicals are much more dependent on the Soviet experience and the worldview that developed during the Soviet era, which predetermines the hegemony of the CPRF in the Russian left-wing movement.

A major role in the legal status of left-wing radical movements in Russia is played by the permissive factor, namely the absence of an official ban or restriction on its activities. Prohibition and liquidation of a movement, regardless of the ideology it promotes, is applied if its statements contain signs of extremism, which has a legislative definition. Part 1, Article 1 of the Federal Law No. 114-FZ of July 25, 2002, “On Combating Extremist Activity” (State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 2002) defines the signs of extremism or extremist activity, the list of which is not closed. Thus, the political characteristic of the promoted ideology is not decisive for the legal status of a radical left-wing movement, same as any other. The activities of individual participants of the movement is also not a basis for its prohibition. For instance, the Left Front was not prohibited in the Russian Federation during the mass protests of 2011-2012 (although its activity was briefly suspended by the prosecutor’s office in 2013 (for 3 months) for reasons unrelated to the protests) (RBK, 2013), while hundreds of its participants were subjected to certain reprisals, as noted above. The same legal practice is observed not only in Russia. In the USA, given the numerous instances of armed opposition to the representatives of the authorities, the “Black Panther Party (for Self-Defense)” organization has not been officially banned despite the efforts made by the FBI (Churchill & Wall, 2001). In modern Russian legal practice, an example of a ban on a movement that can to some extent be classified as radical left-wing due to the presence of extremist features in its activity is the public movement “Navalny Headquarters” banned by the resolution of the Moscow City Court of June 9, 2021 (Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, 2021).



## 5 CONCLUSION

In the Russian Federation, same as in many other countries of the world, the promotion of radical left-wing ideology is not officially prohibited given that it lacks elements of extremism. This, in turn, means that there are no legal obstacles to the participation of left-wing movements in the political life of the country, expressing the interests of the part of society that has embraced this ideology. However, the rejection of left-wing ideas by the overwhelming majority of society currently significantly limits these opportunities.

At the moment, the leadership of the Russian Federation does not consider radical left-wing movements as a serious political force that should be either contained as opposition or attracted to its side as an ally. The political actions carried out by radical left-wing organizations only cause socially repressive reactions on the part of the authorities. As a consequence, at the present stage, Russian politics does not allow left-wing movements to set up a dialogue with the authorities, to see the real strategic tasks of the country's development and the possibility of direct participation in their resolution. What we see as a way to achieve this is the development and application of a clear model of partnership between the authorities and members of society inspired by left-wing ideas aimed at solving the most critical social problems.

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