

Political Mechanisms for Countering Ideological Threats Targeting Youth (A Case Study of Foreign Countries)

Sardor Ashurov

Researcher, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article analyzes the experience of Eastern and Western foreign countries in countering ideological threats targeting the consciousness of youth. The study examines the main forms and mechanisms of ideological threats, as well as state and societal measures aimed at their neutralization. Particular attention is given to a comparative analysis of approaches used by Eastern and Western countries, including legal, educational, cultural-educational, and informational mechanisms of counteraction. Based on the study of foreign experience, both common and distinctive features of the applied models, as well as their advantages and limitations, are identified. The article concludes with practical recommendations for adapting the most effective foreign practices, taking into account national and socio-cultural characteristics.

Keywords: Ideological threats, youth, public policy, information security, education, foreign experience.

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1. Introduction

In the context of contemporary globalization and the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies, the problem of ideological threats has acquired particular relevance. The expansion of the digital environment, the growing influence of social media, and the intensification of transboundary information flows facilitate not only the free exchange of knowledge and values, but also the active dissemination of destructive ideologies. In this regard, youth constitute one of the most vulnerable social groups, as it is during this formative stage that worldview, value systems, civic attitudes, and social identity are shaped.

Ideological threats targeting the consciousness of young people may manifest in various forms, including

radicalization, extremism, the distortion of historical memory, the promotion of violence, consumerist and antisocial values, as well as the erosion of national identity and moral-spiritual foundations. Contemporary information technologies enable such ideas to spread rapidly and on a large scale, often disguising themselves as alternative viewpoints, entertainment content, or forms of social protest. This significantly complicates their identification and mitigation. Youth, being in a phase of active social and intellectual development, often exhibit heightened interest in new ideas and a critical stance toward traditional norms. While this characteristic fosters creativity and social engagement, it simultaneously increases susceptibility to manipulative ideological influence. An insufficient level of critical thinking, media literacy, and political culture may further

amplify the impact of destructive ideologies on young minds.

In this context, states are compelled to develop and implement comprehensive measures aimed at countering ideological threats. Of particular interest is international experience, as different countries adopt diverse approaches shaped by their historical, cultural, political, and social specificities. An analysis of the practices of both Eastern and Western states makes it possible to identify universal mechanisms for countering ideological threats, as well as specific models that reflect national priorities and value orientations.

Eastern states, as a rule, place emphasis on strengthening traditional values, collective responsibility, cultural identity, and the formative role of education. Considerable attention is devoted to state regulation of the information space, as well as to the integration of moral, ethical, and patriotic components into educational curricula. Western countries, in contrast, tend to prioritize the development of civil society, the protection of freedom of expression, and the cultivation among youth of critical thinking skills, media literacy, and the capacity for independent analysis of information. In this context, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and media structures play a significant role.

Despite differences in approaches, both Eastern and Western states face common challenges associated with the expansion of digital platforms, the rise of transnational ideological movements, and the intensification of information warfare. This necessitates a comprehensive and systematic approach to countering ideological threats, encompassing legal, educational, cultural, and informational measures.

2. Method

In the context of the transformation of contemporary society and the accelerated development of global communications, the concept of ideological threats acquires a multidimensional and complex character. Ideological threats may be defined as a set of deliberate influences on public consciousness aimed at altering the system of values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns of social groups, particularly youth. These threats may manifest in both explicit and implicit forms, which significantly complicates their identification and effective counteraction [1].

In academic literature, ideological threats are regarded as one of the key components of the system of national and information security of the state. They manifest themselves in the dissemination of ideas that undermine the foundations of social stability, moral and spiritual values, and social cohesion. Unlike traditional threats associated with the military or economic spheres, ideological threats influence long-term processes of worldview formation, which renders their consequences less immediately visible, yet more persistent and potentially more destructive.

Particular attention within the framework of ideological threats is given to youth as a social group undergoing an active phase of personal development. Young people are characterized by a high degree of social mobility, openness to new ideas, and a strong drive for self-expression. While these qualities constitute an important resource for societal development, they simultaneously create conditions for manipulative influence by various ideological actors [3]. The lack of life experience and stable value orientations may contribute to the uncritical acceptance of radical or destructive ideas.

Ideological threats targeting youth consciousness manifest in various forms. One of the most dangerous among them is radicalization, which involves the gradual involvement of young people in extremist or radical movements. This process often begins with the dissemination of ideas related to social injustice, discrimination, or cultural conflict, which subsequently evolve into calls for violence or unlawful activities. Digital platforms play a significant role in this process, enabling the anonymous and large-scale dissemination of such content.

Another form of ideological threat is the distortion of historical memory and national identity. Through manipulative interpretations of historical events, substitution of concepts, and selective presentation of facts, a distorted perception of the past is constructed, potentially leading to the erosion of a sense of national belonging and civic responsibility. For youth lacking a sufficient level of historical knowledge, such influences pose a particular risk [3].

A significant place among ideological threats is occupied by the propagation of antisocial and consumerist values oriented toward the cult of individualism, violence, or moral relativism. Such ideas are often disseminated through mass culture, entertainment content, and social

media, contributing to their normalization as acceptable patterns of social behavior. In the long term, this may lead to a decline in social responsibility, the weakening of family institutions, and the erosion of moral and ethical frameworks. The information space constitutes one of the key channels for the spread of ideological threats. Social networks, video-hosting platforms, and messaging applications provide extensive opportunities for targeted influence on youth audiences [4].

An important factor contributing to the vulnerability of young people to ideological threats is the insufficient level of media literacy and critical thinking. The inability to distinguish reliable information from manipulative content, as well as the lack of skills in source evaluation and argumentation, creates a favorable environment for the dissemination of destructive ideas. In this regard, educational institutions play a pivotal role in fostering resilience among youth to ideological influence.

It should be noted that ideological threats do not always possess an overtly destructive character. In a number of cases, they are masked under the guise of democratic values, freedom of expression, or the pursuit of social justice. This necessitates the development of a balanced approach on the part of both the state and society, combining security measures with respect for individual rights and freedoms. Excessive restriction of the information space may produce counterproductive effects, intensifying protest sentiments among young people [5].

The experience of Eastern foreign states in countering ideological threats is characterized by a systemic and comprehensive approach, grounded in the prioritization of social stability, collective values, and the preservation of cultural identity. In Eastern countries, state policy in this domain is typically closely linked to historical traditions, religious and moral principles, and the specific features of national development. This determines the distinctive nature of the mechanisms and approaches employed to protect youth from destructive ideological influence. One of the key elements of the Eastern model of counteraction is the active role of the state. In most Eastern countries, state institutions act as the primary agents of ideological security, developing strategic frameworks, legal and regulatory instruments, and targeted programs aimed at youth education and the regulation of the information space [6]. Particular emphasis is placed on preventive measures designed to avert the spread of radical and extremist ideas.

An important feature of Eastern countries is their reliance on traditional values and cultural-historical heritage. The cultivation of respect for national culture, language, history, and religion is regarded as an effective instrument for strengthening youth resilience to external ideological influence. In a number of East Asian and Central Asian states, elements of moral and spiritual education, patriotic instruction, and the study of national history are integrated into educational curricula [7]. Such an approach contributes to the consolidation of national identity and the development of a sense of social responsibility among young people.

The education system plays a significant role in countering ideological threats. Eastern states attach particular importance not only to the transmission of knowledge but also to the formative and educational functions of academic institutions. Schools and universities are viewed as key platforms for shaping the value orientations and worldviews of youth. Educational programs emphasize discipline, respect for social norms, and collective interests. In addition, extracurricular activities—including youth organizations, volunteer movements, and cultural-educational initiatives—are widely utilized.

Regulation of the information space constitutes another important dimension of the Eastern model of countering ideological threats. Despite criticism from international organizations, proponents of this approach highlight its effectiveness in reducing levels of youth radicalization [8].

The experience of specific Eastern states is of particular interest. In China, counteraction to ideological threats is grounded in the concept of “ideological security,” encompassing the spheres of education, culture, mass media, and the internet. The state actively employs mechanisms of content censorship and filtering, while promoting official ideology through educational and media channels. Youth are engaged in patriotic and socially significant initiatives aimed at strengthening loyalty to the state and public institutions. In Japan and South Korea, emphasis is placed on combining traditional values with modern educational approaches. In these countries, considerable importance is attached to fostering social responsibility, respect for the rule of law, and collective discipline. Countering ideological threats is carried out primarily through the education system, the development of civic consciousness, and the support of positive youth initiatives [9]. At the same time, the state

cooperates with educational institutions and civil society organizations, minimizing direct ideological pressure.

The experience of Central Asian countries also merits attention in the context of countering ideological threats targeting youth. Under conditions of historical and cultural transformation, these states place particular emphasis on the prevention of religious extremism and youth radicalization. State programs are implemented to enhance religious literacy, promote national self-awareness, and strengthen the secular foundations of the state. Spiritual-educational institutions and youth organizations play a significant role in this process. An important element of the Eastern model is the integration of the family and social institutions into the process of youth upbringing. The family is regarded as the primary institution of socialization, shaping fundamental values and behavioral norms. State programs are often oriented toward supporting family-based upbringing and reinforcing traditional family values. The interaction between family, school, and the state creates a sustainable system for the prevention of ideological threats [10].

Thus, the experience of Eastern foreign states in countering ideological threats directed at the consciousness of youth is characterized by an active role of the state, reliance on traditional values, and the educational potential of upbringing. This experience demonstrates the effectiveness of comprehensive preventive measures; however, it requires flexible adaptation in light of contemporary challenges and the evolving needs of younger generations.

The approach of Western states to countering ideological threats targeting youth consciousness is shaped within the framework of democratic values, the primacy of individual rights and freedoms, and a developed civil society. In contrast to the Eastern model, where the state plays a leading role, Western countries employ a decentralized and multi-level mechanism involving government bodies, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and media structures [11]. A key feature of the Western approach is the legal regulation of efforts to combat extremism and radicalization. The emphasis is placed not on controlling ideology per se, but on preventing destructive behavior, thereby maintaining a balance between ensuring security and safeguarding freedom of expression.

A significant role is also played by the development of critical thinking and media literacy among youth. Educational programs are designed to cultivate skills in information analysis, detection of manipulation, and reasoned argumentation. Non-governmental and youth organizations implement preventive, cultural, and social initiatives, engaging young people in socially beneficial activities and thereby reducing the risks of radicalization [12].

Particular attention is paid to the digital environment. Western countries develop cooperation with online platforms to limit the dissemination of extremist content, favoring self-regulation and public oversight rather than direct censorship. The practices of individual countries demonstrate a diversity of approaches: in United States, emphasis is placed on the protection of constitutional freedoms and engagement with local communities; in Germany and France, on the prevention of extremism and the integration of migrant youth; and in United Kingdom, on comprehensive interaction between the state and society.

Despite certain limitations, the Western model is oriented toward the long-term prevention of ideological threats through education, the development of civil society, and the strengthening of democratic institutions, which makes it significant for comparative analysis and context-sensitive adaptation.

A comparative analysis of Eastern and Western approaches to countering ideological threats targeting youth consciousness reveals both common features and fundamental differences, shaped by the historical, cultural, and political specificities of regional development, as well as differing interpretations of the balance between security and individual freedom [13]. A common element of both models is the recognition of youth as the primary target group of ideological influence. Both Eastern and Western states regard the younger generation as a strategic resource and, simultaneously, as a vulnerable social group in the context of globalization and digitalization, placing particular emphasis on the prevention of radicalization and extremism, especially within the information space.

In the sphere of education, the Eastern model is oriented toward fostering collective values, respect for traditions, and adherence to state institutions, whereas the Western model emphasizes the development of critical thinking, individual responsibility, and the capacity for

independent analysis of information. Similar differences are evident in the role of the family: in Eastern societies, it remains a central institution of socialization, while in Western countries this function is largely distributed among social and educational structures. In terms of effectiveness, both models possess distinct advantages and limitations. The Eastern approach is characterized by systemic coherence and a preventive orientation, yet it may constrain youth initiative. The Western model, in contrast, promotes the formation of active civic engagement, but may be less resilient to organized ideological influence under conditions of information warfare [14].

Thus, comparative analysis demonstrates that neither model is universal. The most promising approach appears to be a hybrid model that combines the systemic coherence of the Eastern approach with the Western emphasis on the development of critical thinking and civic engagement among youth, thereby enabling the formation of more balanced and adaptive strategies for countering ideological threats.

The Western experience in fostering critical thinking, media literacy, and civic participation is of considerable value. The inclusion of courses on information analysis, digital security, and civic engagement contributes to strengthening youth resilience to manipulative influence and enhances their level of social responsibility. It is essential that these elements be integrated with national moral and cultural frameworks [15]. The digital environment also assumes particular importance in the process of adaptation. While Eastern states tend to rely on state regulation of the information space, Western countries develop mechanisms of self-regulation and cooperation with digital platforms. A combined approach may include the monitoring of destructive content, partnerships between the state and IT companies, and the implementation of educational programs for youth, parents, and educators.

The development of civil society institutions also plays a significant role. Support for youth, volunteer, and cultural-educational initiatives fosters youth engagement in constructive activities and reduces the risks of social marginalization. At the same time, effective coordination between the state and civil society organizations is essential to ensure the systemic and sustainable implementation of such measures [16].

The effective adaptation of international experience requires an interdisciplinary and flexible approach that integrates legal, educational, formative, and digital instruments. In the context of the dynamic development of information technologies, it is necessary to establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of preventive measures, as well as to train qualified professionals capable of working with youth in the digital environment.

3. Conclusion

This article has presented a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of Eastern and Western foreign states in countering ideological threats directed at youth consciousness. The study demonstrates that, despite a shared objective—protecting the younger generation from destructive influences—the approaches of these two models differ significantly. Eastern countries emphasize state regulation, the cultivation of patriotism, and the reinforcement of cultural and moral values, as well as preventive work through educational and cultural institutions. Western states, by contrast, prioritize the development of critical thinking, media literacy, and civic engagement, providing greater freedom of expression and actively involving civil society institutions in the protection of youth.

The comparative analysis reveals both the strengths and limitations of each model. The Eastern approach is characterized by systemic consistency and effectiveness in preventing radicalization; however, excessive control and centralization may constrain freedom of thought and youth initiative. The Western model, in turn, promotes independent thinking and civic activity, yet in conditions of rapid information dissemination, it may be less resilient to organized destructive ideologies.

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