Preventing The Spread of Radicalization And Extremist Ideas Among Youth Is A Demand of Our Time

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Abstract: This study examines modern strategies for preventing youth radicalization and the spread of extremist ideologies. The research focuses on the socio-political and psychological factors contributing to radicalization and explores various deradicalization efforts. The methodology includes a review of international counter-radicalization programs and case studies of successful prevention initiatives. The findings indicate that a multi-sectoral approach involving education, social engagement, and community resilience-building is essential in combating radical ideologies. The study emphasizes the need for early intervention and the role of government and civil society in addressing these challenges.

Keywords: Security, Threat, Extremism, Radicalization, International Terrorism, Political Radicalism, Deradicalization, Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships.

Introduction

In today's world, where various new threats and dangers are emerging that undermine the stable development and peaceful life of countries, focusing on spirituality and enlightenment, youth education, and their pursuit of self-improvement remains a more pressing issue than ever before. As a result of attempts to resolve large-scale contradictions, conflicts, and disputes through the use of force, threats to global security and sustainable development are deepening day by day. Before our eyes, a completely new, unstable, and alarming geopolitical and geo-economic architecture of the world is taking shape (Mirziyoyev, 2024).

The urgency of the problem of countering extremism and radicalism is due to the current global trends in the spread of these practices. Recently, the processes of radicalization leading to violent extremism have become widespread and are taking on new evolutionary forms. This is due, on the one hand, to the aggravation of the socio-economic and political situation, crisis phenomena in the cultural and spiritual spheres, and, on the other, to the rapid development and popularization of information and telecommunication technologies (ICT), and the expansion of their functionality (Youngblood, 2020).

Taking into account the current global trends in the spread of these practices, as well as the challenges and threats they pose, the purpose of the article is to identify promising

approaches to preventing radicalization of sentiments and manifestations of extremism in the context of ensuring sustainable democratic development of the state. That is why there is a need for a broader approach to preventing radicalization, focusing on holistic intervention at an early stage and involving a wide range of actors across society in this process (Paripuma, 2021).

Methodology

Currently, radicalism and extremism is characterized by the presence of an appropriate ideology, which is very actively and rapidly improving in the context of modern international conflicts and domestic crises observed in the state, which contributes to the entrenchment of illegal ideas and views in the minds of the population, especially among the younger generation, and increases the number of committed offenses and crimes of extremist orientation.

Moreover, in recent years, the problem of the radicalization of the younger generation has arisen as a result of the propaganda of various extremist ideas. Therefore, while preserving the right of citizens to freedom of thought and belief, there is a need to prevent and minimize radicalism in the environment of adolescents with sharp views on the perception of the world. One of the noteworthy approaches is the implementation of the deradicalization process through national values (Duindam, 2024).

We must pay special attention to preventing the spread of radicalization and extremist ideas, particularly among the youth (president.uz).

Adolescents should be viewed as a group more susceptible to radicalization, as they are emotionally sensitive and prone to maximalism, dissatisfaction, and dogmatism. It is essential to formulate a clear goal for young people to channel their energy in a positive direction.

Why are teenagers more prone to radicalization? The adolescent brain develops rapidly, along with the ability to think more abstractly and critically. In early adolescence, teenagers begin to form their ideals, strive to understand their place in the world, establish their values, and attempt to define their identity (Awan, 2024).

Psychological characteristics such as self-awareness and finding one's place in society can increase young people's susceptibility to radical views. Individuals experiencing feelings of uncertainty and hopelessness are more likely to fall under the influence of radical groups that effectively exploit these emotional states. Radical propagandists create compelling narratives about belonging to significant communities, offering simple and convenient solutions to complex social problems. This demonstrates that their approach is manipulative and targeted (Bello, 2024).

Group pressure dynamics and the pursuit of social identity also play a crucial role in radicalization. Youth subcultures and communities often become fertile grounds for emotional manipulation. In these environments, individuals seeking active forms of self-expression become more susceptible to extremist ideas. Psychological factors such as low self-esteem and a sense of meaninglessness in life further intensify these processes.

Thus, developing comprehensive strategies aimed at engaging youth in active social initiatives, supporting their ideas, and creating opportunities for effective dialogue is considered a crucial aspect in the fight against radicalization.

Radicalism

Refers to a sharp and uncompromising devotion to certain views or ideas. This term is often applied to thoughts and actions in the socio-political sphere, especially in relation to ideas aimed at drastic and fundamental changes to existing social structures. Radicalism typically represents an aspiration to radically alter the structure of society and completely reconstruct the existing system.

Western researchers define the term "deradicalization" as "methods and techniques used to halt and reverse an ongoing or already completed process of radicalization (i.e., the 'radicalization of consciousness of an individual or group of individuals')." This aims to reduce the threat of extremism and terrorism to society.

There are several reasons for radicalization: injustice, religious fanaticism, the desire for self-expression, characteristics of youth such as idealism and extremism, among others.

Radicalization is characterized by three important features, namely:
1. Personal process. Radicalization is usually viewed as a process of personal self-discovery. For adolescents, the search for identity is one of the main processes of this age period, through which a person defines themselves in relation to the surrounding world.
2. Dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal communication with others is required to motivate people in the process of radicalization and influence their understanding.
3. Environmental impact.
   Foreign literature highlights the following factors that protect individuals from succumbing to radical beliefs:
   1) Belonging to a non-violent social group (physical or virtual).
   2) Strong family ties.
   3) A positive role model.
   4) Support in difficult life situations.
   5) Promising opportunities for education and career development.
   6) Formed and stable personal identity.
   7) Strong social connections.
   8) A sense of inclusion in society and acceptance by it.
   9) Critical thinking.
   10) Emotional stability.
   11) Emotional self-management skills.
   12) Empathy and openness towards others.

Radicalism can have various orientations and manifest itself in different forms: **conservative, nationalistic, religious, and cultural**. Based on its manifestation, radicalism can be categorized into political, social, ethnic (nationalism), and religious spheres. Youth extremism is specifically highlighted as a distinct form of radicalism.

Result and Discussion

Scientific literature analyzes various forms of radicalization: "Political radicalization," "Religious radicalization," "Psycho-social and socio-economic radicalization," and others (Konovalov, 2021) Two important facts should be taken into consideration:

Firstly, mental health experts emphasize that adolescents involved in radicalization and terrorism, when compared to delinquent adolescents not involved in these processes, do not exhibit specific mental health disorders, do not show suicidal tendencies, and are not characterized by a lack of empathy;

Secondly, researchers acknowledge that adolescence is characterized by a search for identity, and this search is interpreted as the primary factor in radicalization.

Components of deradicalization

Deradicalization is a process consisting of two main components.

First, it involves various behavioral changes. For example, an individual may withdraw from a radical environment, which can occur due to recognizing the negative consequences of violence or experiencing personal crises. A person might not completely reject extremist ideas, but they begin to perceive alternative, non-violent methods to achieve their goals. This includes engaging in sports, volunteering activities, or participating in positive social initiatives.

Secondly, this involves ideological changes in the individual. At this stage, a direct deradicalization process takes place, which requires a more profound transformation, where a person's views and beliefs are altered.

This can occur as a result of interaction with people who hold alternative perspectives or through educational programs that emphasize the values of peaceful coexistence. In this process, the primary focus is on recognizing the possibilities for change and embracing different life paths.

In the current era, effectively and reliably safeguarding the minds and consciousness of young people from harmful ideas and influences entering through the Internet has become an increasingly pressing issue.

Unfortunately, a significant portion of young people lack the necessary skills and culture for proper Internet usage. Some youth view the Internet not as a source of information, knowledge, and enlightenment, but merely as a means of entertainment. It is no coincidence that the majority of crimes related to extremist activities and violence are committed by individuals under the age of 30. Consequently, preventing the spread of the "virus" of violent ideologies among young people is also among the most urgent issues to address.

The process of radicalization indeed encompasses many complex aspects, and understanding it requires an in-depth study of both individual and group factors. Radicalization can occur and be fostered under various social, political, and economic conditions; therefore, intervening in this process necessitates a multifaceted approach.

As you know, it is the youth (citizens aged 14 to 35 years) who It is the most socially active group of society, characterized by dynamism, mobility, receptivity to new ideas, values, principles, norms, etc., However, despite this, according to statistics and the results of numerous sociological studies, youth is also the most vulnerable socio-demographic group of the population. Thus, prolonged political and economic crises, social tension, domestic troubles, unemployment, dissatisfaction with one's condition in society, and the lack of clear guidelines for social development serve as a source of negative changes in the socio-psychological well-being of young people (Abukin, 2023). This leads to the corrosion of moral principles among young people, rejection of the spiritual values and ideals of their parents, provokes interpersonal conflicts between life values and lifestyle, and can also be the cause of affective perception of reality, making inappropriate decisions, perception of extremist ideas, radicalism in thought and behavior.

Despite this, it should be noted that the prospects and options for the impact of ICT on democratic governance differ significantly. On the one hand, ICT marks the dawn of a new era of democracy, offering new opportunities for citizen participation. On the other hand, ICT leads to increased control by the state and commercial structures, and in the absence of the necessary political will of the authorities to implement an effective policy of socio—economic and socio-political development of the state, ignoring the rights and interests of society by government representatives can lead to significant radicalization of public sentiment and redirection of the potential of ICT in the formation of stocks in a non-virtual, real-world environment.

Conclusion

Youth is the future generation. Their upbringing in a healthy, just, and democratic society based on principles is considered the successful future of the country.

Several important points can be highlighted in the work on preventing the spread of radicalization and extremist ideas among young people. For example:

Strengthening educational efforts: It is crucial to develop knowledge and intellect in young people, providing them with legal and moral guidance. This is because radical ideas are often linked to a lack of educational maturity or insufficient understanding of human rights.

Psychological and social support: Problems among youth or in families, social isolation, economic conditions, or depression can pave the way for extremism. Therefore, providing psychological assistance and social support to them is very important.

Cultural and social events: Youth participation in positive processes should be ensured through cultural events, sports, and social projects to strengthen social cohesion.

Monitoring social media: The Internet and social media play a significant role in spreading radical ideas. Therefore, to protect young people from negative information, it is

crucial to enhance education and media literacy, as well as to combat negative influences on the Internet.

Collaboration with government and local administrative bodies: Cooperation between public and state organizations is crucial in combating the radicalization of youth. To be effective, it is necessary to develop practical measures, preventive projects, and specialized programs for young people.

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