

**THE PROCESSES OF FORMATION OF RADICAL IDEAS IN YOUTH  
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**Abstract.** The article briefly analyzes the factors influencing radicalization, including personal characteristics, the social environment, and the impact of online information. It emphasizes that radicalization cannot be explained solely by religious factors, as it is a complex social phenomenon. The study highlights the importance of education and media literacy in its prevention.

**Keywords:** radicalization, extremism, globalization, social media, youth, information security, algorithmic influence.

The acceleration of globalization processes, the rapid development of information and communication technologies, and the widespread popularization of social networks have been exerting a direct influence on all layers of contemporary society. While these developments, on the one hand, create broad opportunities for science, education, and enlightenment, on the other hand, they also provide a favorable environment for the rapid dissemination of various ideological movements, as well as radical and extremist views. In the present context, young people, as a social group, are considered particularly vulnerable to diverse ideological influences and misinterpreted religious or political ideas due to their psychological adaptability, openness to new information, and limited life experience.

The information revolution and the rapid advancement of internet technologies since the 1990s have brought about profound transformations in the life of modern society. A study conducted by Arkansas State University involved 3,000 American respondents, with particular

attention given to young people aged between 15 and 36<sup>1</sup>. The findings revealed that the degree to which young individuals encounter hate-based and extremist content in the online environment is directly associated with their socio-political attitudes. In particular, among respondents aged 15-24, frequent exposure to such materials demonstrated a correlation with dissatisfaction regarding existing social conditions and a lack of trust in political institutions. This indicates that psychological and social factors play a significant role in the formation and spread of radical ideas.

The amount of time respondents spent on the internet, as well as active engagement with platforms such as Snapchat, YouTube, and Reddit, increased the likelihood of encountering extremist content, whereas no significant correlation was identified with the use of Facebook, Twitter, or Google. The formation of radical ideas is influenced not only by passive consumption but also by active participation<sup>2</sup>. Certain young individuals not only consume extremist content but also engage in supporting or disseminating it. This demonstrates that the process of radicalization is not one-dimensional; rather, it is characterized by the existence of contradictory tendencies and multidirectional dynamics.

Within the process of radicalization, influencing the consciousness of young people is carried out through various mechanisms, including the transformation of patterns of thinking, the dissemination of ideas through discourse and rhetoric, the manipulation of emotions, and the cultivation of a sense of belonging to a particular social or ideological group.

Radicalization is not a one-time phenomenon rather, it represents a system of gradual transformations in an individual's perception, beliefs, and patterns of behavior. According to Western scholars, radicalization is commonly explained through a four-stage model<sup>3</sup>. The first stage, pre-radicalization, is characterized by the absence of full adherence to radical ideas, although certain forms of dissatisfaction or grievance may already exist. The second stage, acceptance and identification, involves the gradual adoption of radical ideas and the individual's self-identification with a particular ideological orientation. The third stage, indoctrination and group attachment, is marked by the strengthening of ideological convictions and the intensification of emotional and social ties with the group. The final stage, operational action, refers to the planning or execution of terrorist activities. In this context, interpersonal relations within small

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Costello et al., "Radicalization on the Internet: Virtual Extremism in the U.S. from 2012-2017," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, award number 2014-ZABX-0014, January 2021, NCJ 256036, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/256036.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Costello et al., "Predictors of Viewing Online Extremism Among America's Youth," *Youth & Society* 52 no. 5 (2020): 710-727, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X18768115>.

<sup>3</sup> Borum, R. *Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research* // *Journal of Strategic Security*. – 2011. – Vol. 4, No. 4. – P. 42.

groups and the development of a strong sense of group affiliation are regarded as among the most significant factors accelerating commitment to extremist ideology.

Within the context of globalization, the problem of radicalism and extremism has been recognized at the international level as a serious socio-political threat. Owing to certain media narratives and misinterpretations, these phenomena are at times associated with Islam. From a scholarly perspective, however, such an approach is considered one-sided and methodologically flawed. Extremism and radicalism are understood as phenomena fundamentally contradictory to the authentic teachings of Islam. The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the principle of moderation in the verse: "Thus We have made you a middle (moderate) nation," thereby underscoring balance and moderation as essential principles of Islamic teaching.

Islam is regarded as *rahmatan lil-alamin* – a religion of mercy and peace for all creation. It guides humanity toward tranquility, social harmony, and a prosperous way of life. The primary objective of Islam is not to impose hardship upon people, but rather to facilitate ease and direct them toward the righteous path. Muhammad consistently warned against excessiveness in religious practice. In cases where certain companions exceeded moderation in worship to the extent of neglecting their worldly responsibilities, he corrected and advised them accordingly. His statement, "Beware of extremism in religion, for those before you were destroyed because of excessiveness,<sup>4</sup>" serves as a clear indication of this principle.

Radical groups frequently misinterpret verse 5 of Surah At-Tawbah as evidence legitimizing violence against non-Muslims. The verse states, "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush...". This verse was revealed within the framework of a specific military circumstance during the early period of Islam. It should not be understood as a universal command, but rather interpreted in connection with its particular historical context<sup>5</sup>. The concept of jihad cannot be transformed from its essentially defensive nature into an aggressive doctrine through selective and decontextualized interpretation. Extremist groups, nevertheless, present this verse as unconditional justification for violence against non-Muslims.

Prior to the authorization of armed struggle in Islam, the prohibition of fighting was articulated in several verses of the Qur'an, including verse 34 of Surah Fussilat, verse 13 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, verses 82 and 125 of Surah An-Nahl, verse 63 of Surah Al-Furqan, verse 22 of Surah Al-Ghashiyah, verse 45 of Surah Qaf, and verse 14 of Surah Al-Jathiyah. Certain Salafi-jihadist

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<sup>4</sup> Sunan as-Sughra / Abu Abdurahman an-Nasa'i. – Vol. V. – Aleppo: Maktabat al-Matbu'at al-Islamiyya, 1986. – P. 268.

<sup>5</sup> <https://ejournal.ciosunidagontor.com/index.php/jios/article/view/35/19>

groups have misinterpreted the meaning of jihad. During the time of Muhammad, jihad was understood primarily as a collective duty and did not exclusively signify armed conflict or killing. From a linguistic perspective, the term “jihad” (jahada) denotes “striving” or “exerting effort” and does not inherently imply the notion of “holy war” or military confrontation<sup>6</sup>.

Since the late twentieth century, however, certain groups have employed the concept to justify terrorism, resistance movements, and liberation struggles under the label of “holy war.” Examples include organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and Islamic State. According to their interpretation, the struggle against non-believers represents a war between truth and falsehood, thereby opening the way for what they characterize as “holy war”<sup>7</sup>.

Within Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), the sanctity of human life constitutes one of the fundamental principles. This principle occupies a central place within the framework of maqasid al-sharia under the concept of *hifz al-nafs* (the protection of life), which strictly prohibits aggression against human life. Verse 32 of Surah Al-Ma'idah states, “...whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain all mankind.” This norm categorically rejects extremism and acts of terrorism.

The Qur'an also contains explicit verses emphasizing that aggression and oppression are forbidden. In verse 190 of Surah Al-Baqarah it is stated: “...And do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not love transgressors.” Such verses demonstrate that Islam advocates not violence, but rather the principles of moderation, justice, and humanity.

Addressing this issue during the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. Islam is not terror; terrorism is not religious terrorism, but international terrorism<sup>8</sup>.” At the core of this statement lies the rejection of violence, opposition to the misinterpretation of religious values, and the promotion of social stability and interfaith harmony.

Today, even peaceful societies are increasingly confronted with the threat of ideological extremism. Combating such ideology differs fundamentally from conventional methods of warfare, as it requires distinct strategies, objectives, and approaches. In this regard, limiting efforts solely to elimination measures is insufficient; rather, a preventive and prophylactic approach aimed at addressing the roots of the problem acquires significant scientific and practical importance. A comprehensive understanding of the factors attracting young people to radical

<sup>6</sup> <https://muslim.uz/uz/e/post/7908-jihod-nima-2>

<sup>7</sup> <https://ejournal.ciosunidagontor.com/index.php/jios/article/view/35/19>

<sup>8</sup> <https://bukhari.uz/?p=46934&lang=oz>

groups, as well as the methods employed to encourage violence, should begin with analysis grounded in precise concepts and reliable empirical evidence.

Radicalization generally does not emerge as the result of a single cause, but rather develops under the influence of multiple interconnected factors. Among these are both broad grievances that “push” individuals toward radical ideas and specific motivations that “pull” them into extremist environments. Such ideas are shaped through influences operating at different levels, including the family, social environment, economic conditions, and political system. Overall, the prevention of radicalization requires a systematic and comprehensive approach in which improving the quality of education, strengthening media literacy, and reinforcing social stability hold considerable scientific and practical significance.

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