



MODERN MANIFESTATIONS OF YOUTH MIND MANIPULATION AND MANKURTIZATION IN THE INFORMATION SPACE

Madрахimov Vaisbay Bakhtiyarovich
Senior Lecturer, University of Military
Security and Defense of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract: *This article investigates the socio-philosophical essence of youth mind manipulation and the processes of modern “digital mankurtization” in the digital space under the conditions of globalization and informatization. It analyzes the dangerous consequences of distancing youth from their national identity and historical memory, leading them into cognitive dependence through “filter bubbles” on social networks, fake news, and “soft power.” Furthermore, the study scientifically substantiates the role of military-patriotic education as a spiritual defense mechanism in forming a culture of information-psychological security, independent critical thinking, personal responsibility, and strategic defense awareness among youth.*

Key words: *Information space, youth consciousness, manipulation technologies, digital mankurtization, cognitive defense, information-psychological security, social networks, national identity, military-patriotic education, socio-philosophical analysis.*

At the current stage of modern socio-cultural development, information and communication technologies and the digital space have become the most fundamental, decisive part of society's life. While the unprecedented expansion of globalization and virtual reality offers humanity limitless intellectual opportunities, it also gives rise to serious information-psychological threats aimed at the consciousness and psyche of the individual, particularly the youth. Today, geopolitical and ideological struggles have shifted directly to digital platforms, and the manipulation of youth consciousness has evolved from a simple information

attack into a complex socio-technological process aimed at destroying their national identity, historical memory, and capacity for independent thought.

In scientific research, this phenomenon is interpreted within the framework of the concept of “modern mankurtization.” Unlike traditional physical slavery, today's cognitive enslavement is directed at severing the individual's spiritual roots through information media. As experts note, “In the conditions of information attacks and globalization, the most dangerous and hidden manifestation of manipulation is to subjugate the individual not physically, but cognitively, arousing doubt and indifference toward their own national history, language, and values” [1, p. 45]. As a result, the value system of youth exposed to destructive information flows in the virtual world collapses, and they turn into easily manageable objects.

Artificial fake news, foreign subcultures, and “soft power” technologies spreading in the digital space primarily and masterfully exploit the lack of life experience and emotional instability of youth. Through artificial intelligence algorithms and filter bubbles on social networks, the worldview of youth is being forced into one-sided molds. Sociologists and philosophers state the following scientific conclusion in this regard: “Continuous psychological manipulation carried out through the Internet and social networks extinguishes objective critical thinking in youth, turning them from independent information consumers into unconscious information victims” [2, p. 112]. This process redirects the social activity of youth toward an artificial reality, distancing them from their real civic duties.

The formation of the modern “digital mankurt” image—deprived of historical memory, distanced from a sense of national pride, and living solely by the utilitarian needs of today and the standards of global mass culture—poses a direct and serious threat to the strategic security of the state. Because, as acknowledged in scientific literature, “The loss of national identity and historical memory, and falling into information dependency, will inevitably turn youth into a passive, yet dangerous weapon of any destructive ideas and geopolitical games” [3, p. 78].

Today, the digital space is not merely a platform for information exchange; it is a major socio-technological testing ground that serves to format the consciousness and worldview of the individual. The manipulation of youth consciousness in the information space is primarily carried out through social engineering technologies and digital algorithms. Due to their structure, social networks trap the user in a specific filter bubble, constantly offering information that aligns only with their interests, often in a radical or one-sided manner. As a result, the worldview of youth is artificially narrowed, leading to the formation of false perceptions regarding social reality. As philosophers acknowledge, “Modern information technologies have become a digital panopticon that deprives humans of free thinking and secretly controls their will and choices, where the information consumer unknowingly becomes an object of manipulation” [4, p. 58]. This process leads to the complete disappearance of the boundary between objective reality and virtual illusion among youth.

The main tragedy of the mankurt character, profoundly depicted in the works of Chingiz Aitmatov, lay in his deprivation of his own past, parents, and national memory, and his transformation into a fully obedient slave. Today's “digital mankurtization” is aimed at the exact same global goal—erasing the historical memory of youth and alienating them from traditional values. The difference is that today this process is carried out not through physical torture, but imperceptibly through mass culture, fake news, and the endless infotainment industry, i.e., with the help of “soft power.” Ideas mocking national history, evaluating values as relics of the past, and promoting cosmopolitanism are constantly being instilled into the minds of youth. Sociological studies confirm that “A younger generation disconnected from the sense of historical memory and national identity loses its immunity against any external information attacks and turns into a 'digital crowd' that has completely lost its socio-cultural orientation in the processes of globalization” [5, p. 92]. This causes a break in the continuity between generations in society and irreparably damages the continuation of traditions.

The most dangerous aspect of manipulation in the information space is that it directly strikes the cognitive functions of an individual. Due to the excessive speed of the information flow, youth are being deprived of the opportunity to deeply analyze, logically sort, and critically evaluate the information they receive. The phenomenon known as “clip culture” leads to young people being unable to focus their attention on one thing for a long time and failing to understand complex socio-philosophical texts. They have become accustomed to receiving only short, bright, and emotionally rich information. According to the conclusion of psychologists and sociologists, “Cognitive simplification and a superficial approach to information kill independent analytical thinking in youth; as a result, they turn into an easily manageable mechanism in social and political processes, operating based on a scheme drawn by manipulators” [6, p. 134]. It is precisely through this psychological vulnerability that various extremist groups and destructive political forces easily inject their harmful ideas into the minds of youth.

In the information age, cybersecurity and cognitive defense have become one of the top priorities of state security. The most primary and decisive condition for protecting the consciousness of youth from these digital manipulations is that security at all levels must begin directly with the individual themselves, their inner determination, and their culture of information consumption. No matter how strong the cybersecurity systems a state creates, or what laws it passes, if the individual lacks internal censorship, digital hygiene, and a critical attitude toward information, the threat of manipulation will fully persist. In scientific literature, a well-founded opinion is expressed in this regard: “The architecture of information-psychological security must primarily rely on the individual's instinct for self-preservation and strong will; the fight against digital threats begins with the individual realizing their own cognitive boundaries” [7, p. 105]. Therefore, along with improving the skills of working with information among youth, forming the rules of personal responsibility in them is the main task of modern sociology and philosophy.

In this process, the role of national military service culture and strategic thinking in creating a strong defense wall in the minds of youth and protecting them from digital mankurtism is incomparable. Military-patriotic education is not just physical training or the skill of handling weapons; it is, above all, a means of consolidating fundamental values such as social duty, loyalty, and holding the state's inviolability sacred at the cognitive level. Within the framework of Uzbekistan's defense doctrine, developing a military culture among youth hardens them ideologically and provides clear life goals. As researchers note, "Patriotism and strategic defense awareness formed within the framework of military service culture save youth from spiritual fragmentation, establish the high status of a defender of the state in their axiological system, and thereby create a strong spiritual shield against any ideological manipulations" [8, p. 167].

In today's global geopolitical arena, the only way not to become an information weapon is to continuously raise the level of national identity awareness among youth. To save youth from the captivity of virtual illusions, all social institutions in society must deeply instill in them real life goals, including a sense of personal involvement in ensuring state security. According to the rightful acknowledgment of scholars, "In order not to turn its youth into digital slaves, modern society must provide them not only with technological knowledge but also with a high socio-philosophical idea that teaches them to consciously use these advanced technologies for the benefit of the people and the nation"

As a result of the conducted socio-philosophical and scientific-theoretical analyses, the following final conclusions were reached regarding the processes of youth mind manipulation and digital mankurtization in the information space:

Today's manipulation is not merely an information attack, but a systemic socio-technological process aimed at destroying the cognitive functions and historical memory of youth. Algorithmic confinement (filter bubbles) on social networks and the artificially formed "clip thinking" extinguish the ability of youth to deeply and critically analyze reality, turning them into an easily controllable "digital crowd."

Today, alienating youth from their national identity, historical roots, and traditional values is carried out continuously not through open aggression, but through mass culture, fake news, and "soft power." Distancing youth from historical memory and a sense of social duty turns them into a passive weapon for various destructive forces, posing a direct and long-term threat to the strategic security of the state.

The most effective mechanism in combating these global information attacks is personal responsibility and conscious information consumption. Any digital threat stops when an individual realizes their own cognitive boundaries; meaning, true information-psychological security starts with you. Any perfect cybersecurity measures and legal restrictions at the state level will yield the expected results only when combined with the individual's internal censorship, digital hygiene, and strong will.

National military service culture and strategic defense awareness play a foundational role in forming a strong spiritual immunity against information manipulations among youth. Uniting youth around the defense doctrine and patriotic values provides them with clear life goals and guarantees a stable continuity of generations in society.

In general, the threat of manipulation and mind manipulation in the information space cannot be fully eliminated merely by technological or legal prohibitions. This can only be achieved by elevating the national identity of youth, developing their independent analytical thinking, and strengthening their sense of involvement in state security at a cognitive level. Only then will the younger generation become a true, conscious intellectual shield for societal progress and state security, unyielding to the information illusions of globalization.

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