



## The Balance Between Ideological Pluralism and Security in a Democratic Society

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents a theoretical and comparative-legal analysis of the problem of balancing ideological pluralism and security in a democratic society. The systemic importance of the principle of pluralism for democratic orders is substantiated, and its limitations within certain frameworks are demonstrated. The author examines legal and institutional mechanisms for ensuring this balance through the lens of the concept of «militant democracy» and the paradox of tolerance. The experience of Germany, France, and the United States is analyzed, and the author's conclusions are presented regarding the reflection of these principles in the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

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### Introduction

In the context of globalization and the information revolution, one of the most pressing tasks facing modern democratic states is to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens while simultaneously preserving societal security and social stability. Ideological pluralism, as one of the core principles of democratic society, guarantees the free existence of diverse ideas, views, and beliefs. However, the practical implementation of this principle always requires a balanced approach. While diversity of opinion contributes to political activity, socio-cultural development, and the advancement of civic consciousness, it may also create certain opportunities for the dissemination of destructive ideologies, extremist views, and ideas that threaten societal security.

The tension between ideological freedom and security is regarded as an important scholarly problem in the theory of democratic development. In the 1930s, the rise to power of certain totalitarian and extremist forces in Europe through the use of democratic institutions and electoral mechanisms significantly increased the political and legal relevance of this issue. Today, international terrorism, religious extremism, radical populism, information manipulation, fake news, and processes of online radicalization are further expanding the scope of this problem. As a result, the relationship between ensuring ideological pluralism and protecting national security requires not only legal analysis, but also philosophical, political, sociological, and geopolitical examination.

From this perspective, the issue of maintaining a balance between ideological pluralism and security in a democratic society is directly connected with determining the delicate relationship between freedom and responsibility, rights and order, openness and stability. On the one hand, a democratic state must not restrict diversity of opinion and must guarantee citizens' freedom to hold political and ideological positions. On the other hand, it must possess effective legal and institutional mechanisms against destructive ideas that threaten human rights, the constitutional order, interethnic harmony, and societal security.

The purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and legal foundations for ensuring the balance between ideological pluralism and security in a democratic society, as well as to identify optimal institutional mechanisms that help preserve this balance. The study employs comparative-legal, systemic-analytical, and historical-dialectical methods. The scientific novelty of the research is determined by the fact that the issue is analyzed through the integration of philosophical-theoretical, political-legal, and international-comparative approaches in the context of Uzbekistan's new constitutional realities and democratic reforms

### Analysis and Results

Although the philosophical roots of the concept of pluralism go back to ancient thought, its formation as a political and legal category is mainly associated with the democratic development of the twentieth century. In contemporary political theory, pluralism refers to the free existence of various social groups, interests, ideas, and political positions in society, as well as lawful competition among them. R. Dahl explains pluralism through the concept of "polyarchy," linking it to the institutional existence of independent groups competing for power [1, p. 45]. N. Bobbio, in turn, interprets pluralism as a democratic value and regards it as a means of coordinating alternative opinions and interests within society [2, p. 87].

The modern interpretation of ideological pluralism includes three main aspects: first, no ideology should be established by the state as compulsory; second, different socio-political forces should have the opportunity to compete openly and equally; third, citizens' freedom of conscience, speech, and belief should be guaranteed by law. According to J. Rawls's idea of "reasonable pluralism," in a free society it is natural for citizens to hold different, and even conflicting, worldviews [3, pp. 63–64]. In this sense, ideological pluralism is not a weakness of democratic society, but an important feature based on freedom and civic activity.

In the twenty-first century, the concept of security has moved beyond its classical military-territorial meaning and has begun to include the spiritual integrity of society, the information space, social trust, and the stability of the constitutional order. B. Buzan and representatives of the Copenhagen School interpret modern security as a combination of political, economic, social, environmental, and military sectors [4, pp. 22–23]. This approach makes it possible to examine ideological security as an independent scientific and legal category.

Ideological security is aimed at protecting society's values, national identity, constitutional order, and social stability from the influence of destructive ideologies. However, when this concept is applied incorrectly, it may turn into a tool for treating any alternative opinion as a "threat." Therefore, in a democratic society, ideological security must rely on clear legal criteria and the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

The right of a democratic society to defend itself is explained within the concept of "militant democracy." Karl Loewenstein, analyzing how fascism and Nazism came to power through democratic institutions, argued that democracy must not allow its mechanisms of freedom to be destroyed by anti-democratic forces [5, p. 423].

K. Popper's idea of the "paradox of tolerance" also supports this approach. According to him, unlimited tolerance may ultimately lead to the disappearance of tolerance itself [6, p. 581]. Therefore, a democratic society has the right to impose certain restrictions on intolerant and destructive movements that pose a real threat to human rights, the constitutional order, and public security. However, such restrictions must always be lawful, necessary, and proportionate.

The experience of foreign countries demonstrates that there are different models for ensuring the balance between ideological pluralism and security. In Germany, the model of *streitbare Demokratie*, or militant democracy, allows anti-constitutional parties to be banned by a decision of the Federal Constitutional Court. However, the rejection of the request to ban the National Democratic Party in 2017 shows that restrictions are applied not merely to the ideas themselves, but according to their real capacity to pose a threat.

In France, the balance between pluralism and security is regulated through the principle of *laïcité*, or secularism. This model recognizes religious belief as a personal matter while seeking to preserve ideological neutrality in the state and public sphere. In the experience of the United States, freedom of expression is

interpreted very broadly. At the same time, expressions that call for violence or create a real danger may be restricted through the criteria of “clear and present danger” and “incitement to imminent lawless action.”

The comparative analysis shows that there is no single universal model for maintaining the balance between pluralism and security. Each state forms its own model based on its historical experience, legal tradition, and political culture. Nevertheless, all democratic models share a common criterion: restrictions must be lawful, necessary, clearly justified, and proportionate.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in its new edition by referendum on April 30, 2023, established important legal foundations for ensuring the balance between ideological pluralism and security. The recognition of human life, freedom, honor, dignity, and inviolable rights as the highest values forms the axiological basis of the democratic legal system [7]. In addition, the recognition of the diversity of ideas, opinions, and ideologies, as well as the principle that no ideology may be established as the state ideology, serves as a constitutional guarantee of democratic pluralism.

At the same time, while guaranteeing freedom of religion and conscience, the Constitution also provides for restrictions on activities that threaten the constitutional order, public security, and the rights and freedoms of citizens [8, p. 112]. This shows that in Uzbekistan, pluralism is interpreted not as absolute and uncontrolled freedom, but as a democratic principle harmonized with law, responsibility, and security.

Today, important reforms are being carried out in Uzbekistan to increase the transparency of law enforcement agencies, liberalize legislation in the field of religious freedom, develop civil society institutions, and ensure openness in the information space [9, p. 245]. However, the real effectiveness of these guarantees is directly linked to citizens’ legal culture, the independence of the judiciary, a responsible media environment, and the ideological immunity of young people.

In the context of the rapid spread of radical ideas, fake news, and manipulative content in the digital information space, the “digital dimension of militant democracy” is gaining particular importance. This direction includes online security, cooperation with digital platforms, media literacy, and the development of critical thinking among young people [10, p. 15].

Thus, in the context of Uzbekistan, the balance between ideological pluralism and security is an important component of democratic reforms. The most appropriate approach is not to restrict diversity of opinion, but to harmonize it with legal responsibility, constitutional order, social stability, and democratic values.

## **Conclusion**

The study shows that the balance between ideological pluralism and security in a democratic society is a complex, multidimensional, and constantly evolving issue. It requires determining the delicate relationship between freedom and order, diversity of opinion and social stability, democratic openness and constitutional security.

First, ideological pluralism and security are not mutually exclusive principles of a democratic system; rather, they complement one another. Properly organized pluralism ensures lawful competition among different ideas, views, and interests, strengthens civic activity, and enables social problems to be addressed through open dialogue. In this sense, pluralism becomes an important factor of internal stability and long-term societal security.

Second, any restriction on ideological freedom must comply with democratic and legal criteria. Such a restriction should be established by law, directed toward a clear and legitimate aim, genuinely necessary in a democratic society, and consistent with the principle of proportionality. The principle of proportionality requires that the least restrictive legal means be used to achieve the intended purpose.

Third, for states undergoing democratic transformation, including Uzbekistan, maintaining the balance between pluralism and security should not be limited to improving legal and institutional mechanisms. It also requires developing citizens’ legal culture, critical thinking, responsible journalism, civil society institutions, and open public dialogue. Democratic security is strengthened not only through restrictive measures, but also through society’s capacity for conscious choice and responsible decision-making.

Fourth, there is no final and universal model for maintaining the balance between ideological pluralism and security. This process must constantly adapt to historical conditions, political experience, legal culture,

and technological change. The development of the Internet, social networks, artificial intelligence, deepfake technologies, and algorithmic information environments adds new dimensions to this issue and requires the continuous improvement of legal, political, and educational response mechanisms.

In general, ensuring the balance between ideological pluralism and security in a democratic society does not mean restricting free thought. Rather, it means harmonizing freedom of expression with legal responsibility, constitutional order, and social stability. The most appropriate approach is to protect society from destructive ideologies while preserving a broad democratic space for open dialogue, healthy competition, critical thinking, and civic participation.

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