



THE HARMONY OF MILITARY-PATRIOTIC EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

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ABSTRACT

In the context of growing global challenges and socio-political transformations, the integration of military-patriotic education with national spiritual values emerges as a critical dimension in shaping resilient and ethically grounded citizenship. This article explores the theoretical and practical foundations of military-patriotic education as a vital mechanism for instilling loyalty, discipline, and national consciousness among youth, while simultaneously emphasizing the role of spiritual heritage in preserving moral orientation and cultural identity. The study examines the intersection of defense readiness and ethical upbringing, arguing that true patriotism must be rooted not only in formal military training but also in the internalization of cultural-historical memory, religious and ethical norms, and civil responsibility. Drawing on sociological, pedagogical, and philosophical perspectives, the article proposes a model of value-based patriotic education that harmonizes state interests with personal moral development. This synthesis is essential for forming individuals who are not only ready to defend their homeland but also deeply committed to its moral and spiritual continuity. The findings contribute to the discourse on national identity formation, moral education, and the strategic importance of cultural resilience in the face of global ideological challenges.

KEYWORDS

Military-patriotic education, spiritual values, national identity, moral upbringing, civil responsibility, cultural heritage, defense readiness, youth education, patriotism, ethical consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by intensifying global instability, ideological polarization, and the erosion of spiritual moorings, the integration of military patriotic education with spiritual and moral values assumes profound significance in forging resilient national identity and civic responsibility. Contemporary states increasingly recognize that defense readiness alone cannot sustain the cohesive social fabric; rather, it must be underpinned by deeply internalized moral and spiritual convictions. Within this conceptual terrain, it is imperative to explore how the symbiosis of structured military patriotic instruction and cultural ethical heritage fosters a holistic model of citizenship. Empirical data underscores the urgency of this educational convergence. For instance, a recent All Ukrainian Survey encompassing 28,464 high school students and 21,665 teachers across 19 regions revealed that while a significant proportion could recount historical episodes relevant to Ukraine's sovereignty, only a minority expressed readiness to engage in future civic or defense-related duties without sustained value-based reinforcement. These findings suggest that formal curricular exposure alone yields limited efficacy unless accompanied by value-centric pedagogical frameworks. Parallel findings

emerge from Western contexts: a 2023 study conducted by sociologist Anne Muxel among 2,301 French youth aged 18–25 demonstrated an intriguing reversal of anti-military sentiment. Over 57% of respondents indicated willingness to enlist if national defense so demanded—a remarkable shift from previous generations—while ecological and economic concerns remained primary priorities for only a minority. Such data point toward evolving attitudes among youth, where constructive forms of military loyalty, when aligned with moral purpose, can gain traction even in traditionally pacifist cohorts. These empirical patterns foreground several critical considerations[1]. First, they confirm that a values-infused pedagogical approach can produce higher levels of patriotic identification, particularly when educational initiatives resonate with spiritual and cultural identity. Secondly, they hint at the potential for “constructed patriotism”, where critical engagement with military and civic institutions leads to constructive rather than blind allegiance—a phenomenon explored in recent pedagogical research. Historically, military-patriotic education has operated in tandem with spiritual traditions in various societies. In Russia, for example, the revived “Important Conversations” lessons, instituted since 2022, blend Soviet-era narratives with Orthodox-informed cultural symbols to cultivate an ethos of national unity and historical continuity. In China, the campaign to erect 353 patriotic-education sites between 1995 and 2009 reified state-sanctioned spiritual narratives about collective sacrifice and national destiny[2]. These historical precedents demonstrate the strategic role of cultural spiritual symbolism in embedding military patriotic values. Against this backdrop, the present article aims to: (1) chart the conceptual and empirical landscape where military-patriotic education intersects spiritual values; (2) analyze international statistical data evidencing shifting youth attitudes toward defense and moral duty; and (3) forecast future trajectories in the harmonization of militaristic readiness and moral orientation under globalizing conditions. Looking forward, one can reasonably predict that by 2030, nations with robust institutional frameworks will increasingly adopt integrated educational models, whereby religious, ethical, or cultural traditions are systematically incorporated into defense curricula at early stages of formal schooling—and potentially within informal community settings. Such integration is likely to yield higher civic engagement, reduced radicalization, and a more ethically oriented citizenry. This introduction establishes the empirical urgency and normative rationale for investigating how military patriotic education and spiritual values can be synthesized[3]. The sections that follow will delineate theoretical frameworks, methodological design, statistical analysis, and policy recommendations conducive to advancing a value-based model of military patriotism that neither compromises spiritual integrity nor diminishes national security readiness.

In the current geopolitical and sociocultural landscape, the relevance of harmonizing military-patriotic education with spiritual values has reached an unprecedented level of urgency. Contemporary societies, particularly those undergoing processes of nation-building, security reform, or ideological contestation, are increasingly recognizing that the mere possession of military capabilities does not guarantee societal resilience or civic unity. Rather, the strength of a nation lies in the moral fiber of its citizens—their capacity to internalize not only a sense of duty and discipline but also ethical responsibility, historical consciousness, and spiritual depth[4]. The global security environment has shifted dramatically in recent decades, with hybrid warfare, cyber threats, ideological extremism, and sociopolitical fragmentation

undermining traditional defense paradigms. In this context, military-patriotic education cannot be viewed solely as a set of tactical competencies or nationalist slogans; it must become a comprehensive educational strategy that fosters national consciousness grounded in moral principles and cultural continuity. The failure to integrate value-based education risks producing technocratic citizens who may comply with orders but lack the ethical clarity to discern right from wrong in complex situations of conflict, loyalty, and civil obligation. Moreover, the increasing moral relativism and identity fragmentation observed in many countries—exacerbated by rapid digitalization and the erosion of intergenerational continuity—has created a dangerous vacuum in which youth are susceptible to apathy, nihilism, or radical ideologies. According to recent studies, including UNESCO's 2024 Global Citizenship Education Report, over 63% of youth in conflict-affected regions express a lack of trust in political institutions, while more than half feel disconnected from the cultural and moral traditions of their ancestors[5]. These trends demonstrate that national education systems must respond not only with strategic defense training but also with ethical and spiritual instruction that nurtures belonging, dignity, and civic virtue. Furthermore, in multiethnic and post-Soviet societies such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, the strategic integration of military-patriotic education with national-spiritual values represents both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, there is the legacy of Soviet-style militarism, often devoid of moral nuance; on the other, there is the rich reservoir of Islamic, Turkic, and Central Asian cultural ethics that can be harnessed to shape a new generation of morally alert patriots. Uzbekistan's ongoing educational reforms, for example, are increasingly oriented toward fostering "Ma'naviyat" (spiritual-moral development) in parallel with defense readiness, signaling a paradigm shift toward holistic civic formation[6]. In addition, global military powers such as the United States and China are also witnessing renewed debates on the role of moral education within defense structures. The U.S. military has recently revised its training programs to include ethical decision-making under combat stress, while China continues to implement value-infused patriotic curricula rooted in Confucian ideals and socialist morality. These developments reinforce the notion that a nation's defense is not solely reliant on weapons or strategy, but also on the ethical consciousness of its soldiers and citizens. In light of these conditions, the topic of this article is exceptionally timely and necessary. The fusion of military-patriotic education with spiritual values is not a nostalgic return to traditionalism, but a forward-looking framework essential for addressing the multidimensional crises of identity, security, and civic alienation in the 21st century[7]. It offers a model for cultivating individuals who are not only capable of defending their homeland, but who also possess the moral compass, cultural literacy, and spiritual depth to do so in a just and responsible manner. This research therefore aims to contribute to a growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship that seeks to bridge the domains of defense, pedagogy, and cultural philosophy. It advances the argument that the moral and spiritual architecture of patriotism must be reconstructed to meet the evolving demands of modern societies—balancing national defense imperatives with the enduring values that make a nation worth defending.

In the discourse on the integration of military-patriotic education with spiritual and moral frameworks, two influential foreign scholars—Prof. Charles A. Moskos (Northwestern University, USA) and Prof. Sergei Kara-Murza (Moscow State University, Russia)—represent divergent intellectual positions that reflect broader cultural and epistemological tensions

between Western liberal thought and post-Soviet philosophical traditions. Prof. Charles A. Moskos, renowned for his sociological studies on military institutions and civil-military relations, argues that patriotism in a democratic society must be grounded in civic values and universal ethical norms, rather than in cultural-religious particularism. In his seminal works such as "The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War", Moskos contends that the role of military education in modern democracies is not to cultivate blind loyalty or dogmatic nationalism, but to develop critically thinking citizens-soldiers who understand their duties within the framework of constitutional rights and global ethical standards[8]. He warns that excessive reliance on spiritual or national-religious narratives may lead to exclusionary identities and ideological rigidity, potentially undermining pluralism and civil cohesion. For Moskos, military-patriotic education must emphasize professionalism, civic responsibility, and ethical restraint under the rule of law, especially in multicultural societies. In sharp contrast, Prof. Sergei Kara-Murza, a prominent Russian philosopher and historian of science, advances a civilizational and culturalist critique of what he considers the moral vacuum of Western liberal patriotism. In his influential treatises, including "Manipulation of Consciousness" and "Soviet Civilization", Kara-Murza insists that true patriotism is inseparable from a people's spiritual traditions, historical memory, and metaphysical worldview[9]. He argues that in postmodern societies, where neoliberalism has eroded collective identity, the military becomes not only a tool of national defense but a guardian of cultural continuity and spiritual sovereignty. Kara-Murza is deeply critical of attempts to secularize patriotic education, claiming that such approaches produce rootless individuals disconnected from the moral authority of their ancestors and unprepared to defend their civilization's core values in times of existential threat. The polemic between Moskos and Kara-Murza thus crystallizes a deeper philosophical dispute: Is patriotism best cultivated through civic universalism or through rooted cultural-spiritual heritage? Moskos's model is procedural, emphasizing institutional ethics and democratic values; Kara-Murza's is ontological, centering on existential loyalty to the nation's spiritual soul[10]. While Moskos fears that religio-cultural patriotism may foster xenophobia or ideological dogmatism, Kara-Murza contends that value-neutral patriotism breeds moral relativism and weakens national resolve. Both perspectives offer compelling insights. Moskos is right to emphasize ethical professionalism and civil accountability, especially in diverse and globalized societies. Yet Kara-Murza's emphasis on historical continuity and spiritual loyalty cannot be ignored in contexts where cultural survival is perceived as being under siege. The synthesis of these positions—if possible—would involve cultivating a form of critical patriotism, rooted in ethical reflection, cultural memory, and moral responsibility, capable of resisting both ideological nihilism and uncritical nationalism.

Conclusion: The comprehensive exploration of the interplay between military-patriotic education and spiritual values reveals that the moral fortification of a nation must parallel its defense capabilities. As contemporary societies grapple with rising ideological ambiguity, cultural fragmentation, and threats to national integrity, the harmonization of these two spheres becomes not merely desirable but imperative. The study underscores that military-patriotic education, when detached from spiritual foundations, risks devolving into mechanistic discipline devoid of ethical direction. Conversely, spirituality without patriotic grounding may remain abstract and disengaged from civic responsibility. The synthesis of military preparedness with moral consciousness forms the backbone of a sustainable civic identity—

one that is resilient not only in times of conflict but also in times of peace and moral trial. The findings of this research, supported by comparative international analyses and theoretical polemics, suggest that countries which embed cultural, historical, and ethical values into military-patriotic curricula are more likely to foster committed, reflective, and ethically responsible citizens. Therefore, the implementation of an integrated model—combining national defense training with spiritual, historical, and moral instruction—should be institutionalized within educational systems. Such a model equips future generations not only to defend their homeland, but to do so with a profound understanding of why it is worth defending. Ultimately, the fusion of patriotic duty with inner moral conviction stands as a crucial pillar for national unity, social cohesion, and enduring sovereignty in the 21st century.

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