

# Modern Understanding of the Concept of ‘State Ideology’: Philosophical and Legal Reflection

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The article substantiates the concept of ‘state ideology’ from the philosophical and legal methodological standpoint, which is interpreted as a spiritual and value phenomenon. The authors formulate the hypothesis that state ideology is not exclusively a political phenomenon, but rather a result of the spiritual development of the Ukrainian people. In a general sense, the state ideology should embody the national idea and national interests of Ukrainians at the current stage of national state-building. State ideology is a worldview, value, political and legal strategy for building a country that does not ‘belong’ to any political party, but at the same time, every subject in state and nation-building can contribute to its enrichment. It aims to combine the process of active state and national development in a single systemic model, where the state plays a leading role, while civil society institutions are active co-creators of the national project. Our study uses a complex of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction), and philosophical and legal (philosophical and legal reflection, axiological method, etc.) methods.

**Keywords:** state ideology, Ukrainian national idea, national values of the Ukrainian people, patriotism, state-building, political and ideological borders

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## INTRODUCTION

Overcoming its totalitarian past, the Ukrainian state has embarked on a course of de-ideologisation of public life, which has contributed to the democratisation of political, economic, spiritual, legal, and other spheres. At the same time, it was necessary to solve the problem of formulating a strategy for national development, determining the priorities of social life, which are reflected in the programs of political parties and their ideological postulates. Despite the ambiguous attitude in the national public consciousness to the concept of ‘ideology’,

we propose to reflect on the modernisation of this concept from the philosophical and legal standpoint. In this research, we will focus on understanding the phenomenon of 'state ideology'. The relevance of this format of studying the concept of 'ideology' is due to both the theoretical point of view – the importance of modernising existing scientific approaches – and the practical one – the struggle for the independent existence of the Ukrainian people, which should be based on a system of values of a national-state character that create a spiritual foundation for progressive national development.

In analysing the concept of 'state ideology' from the philosophical and legal perspective, we relied on the scientific works of domestic and foreign scholars. In particular, O. Myroniuk (Myroniuk 2018), I. Vladlenova (Vladlenova 2014) and A. Buchanan (Buchanan 2024) summarised the views of scholars on the phenomenon of ideology, showing a wide range of definitions and features in philosophical discourse. A. Sukharyna (Sukharyna 2019) substantiated the semantic distinction between the concepts of 'state ideology' and 'public ideology', which contributed to the identification of the essential features of state ideology in the philosophical and legal dimension. From the point of view of E. Holovakha, V. Pukhliak (Holovakha, Pukhliak 1994), O. Diedush (Diedush 2017), O. Makarenko (Makarenko 2019), M. Mykhalchenko (Mykhalchenko 2004) and O. Marushchak (Marushchak 2020), state ideology is an important component of the development of modern Ukraine not so much in a political sense, but in a worldview and civic sense. The above-mentioned experts emphasise that the principle of ideological pluralism should not be violated in Ukraine, and the concept of 'state ideology' concentrates national and patriotic values and is the basis for consolidating the nation. The state ideology should become a unifying value platform for Ukrainian society, a means of overcoming spiritual uncertainty in the strategic development of Ukraine. Instead, Y. Habermas (Habermas 1991) interprets ideology as a mental product of society, which is a condition of communication, which is closely related to the system of social relations. Researchers I. Myklashchuk (Myklashchuk 2009), T. Kačerauskas (Kačerauskas 2024), M. Boda (Boda 2024) and M. Holovatyi (Holovatyi 2003) emphasise the determining role of values, political values in particular, in the formation of ideological systems, while I. Kuras (Kuras 1993) and M. Teleshun (Teleshun 2000) consider the national idea as the basis of state ideology. According to V. Sabadukha (Sabadukha 2021), one of the conditions for understanding and realising the national interests of the Ukrainian people is the national ideology. Important for our research were the scientific works of O. Vysotskyi, in which he considers Ukraine's foreign policy positioning at the present stage of democratic development as a continuation of the state ideology (Vysotskyi 2024 a; Vysotskyi 2024 b).

It should be noted that this study is a continuation of the discussion initiated by the authors of the article within the framework of the International Scientific Conference 'Modern Warfare: Humanitarian Aspect' (24–25 May 2024, Ivan Kozhedub Kharkiv National Air Force University) (Danilyan, Kalynovskyi 2024). This work also became a development of the scientific ideas of the authors presented in the articles 'The Influence of Historical Traditions on the Formation of Legal Consciousness of the Ukrainian People' (Danilyan et al. 2021); 'Historical and Cultural-Mental origins of Legal Consciousness of the Ukrainian People' (Danilyan et al. 2022); 'Value Aspects of the Safe Existence of Social Systems in an Unstable World' (Danilyan et al. 2023).

Thus, the article aims to analyse the essential characteristics of the state ideology as a spiritual and value-based foundation for the development of the Ukrainian nation from the philosophical and legal perspective.

The methodological basis of our research is the general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction. The basic method used in our scientific investigation to study the concept of 'state ideology' is philosophical and legal reflection, which allowed us to clarify the essential characteristics of the object of research and show the genesis of approaches to this phenomenon. We also used the significant heuristic potential of the comparative method to understand the paradigmatic differences in the concept of 'ideology' in order to further develop our own vision of the concept of 'state ideology'. In turn, the dialectical method allowed us to study the system of interconnections and mutual influences of individual elements of state ideology, namely values, national interests, national idea, and mental characteristics of the Ukrainian people. It is worth emphasising the philosophical orientation of our scientific exploration – the emphasis of research on the spiritual, value, and mental aspects of the concept of 'state ideology'.

## THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY IN SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE

Analysing the scientific interpretations of the concept of 'state ideology', let us briefly dwell on the definition of 'ideology'. Summarising various points of view, O. Myroniuk argues 'that ideology is a value system that expresses attitudes to existing social orders, substantiates political ideals, principles, norms, priorities, patterns of behaviour, etc. Ideology as a phenomenon of socio-political life exists both on the international scale and at the local and regional level. With the help of ideology, political forces justify political priorities and select the means for their realisation. Political concepts, doctrines and programs are developed on the basis of ideology. Ideology, according to A. Gramsci, serves to awaken the collective will of the people. German scholar R. Mannheim drew attention to the negative side of ideology, emphasising that ideology masks 'fraud' (Myroniuk 2018: 9).

For example, explaining the emergence and importance of ideology through the lens of the 'superstructure' structure, A. Gramsci notes: 'At present, two major "levels" of the superstructure can be distinguished: the level that can be called "civil society", meaning the collection of organisms generally known as "private", and the level of "political society or the state", which corresponds to the functions of the "hegemony" of the ruling group in society as a whole and the function of "direct domination" or command, expressed in the state and the "legal" government' (Gramsci 2017: 126).

Obviously, we should be aware of both positive and negative connotations of the concept of 'ideology'. In the context of our study, 'state ideology' is a driving spiritual force of national development, a means of preserving national identity, and a strategic program of national state-building.

To describe polymethodological approaches to understanding the concept of 'ideology', let us turn to the scientific work of I. Vladlenova 'Conceptual Formulation of the Concept of "Ideology": Philosophical Approaches'. The researcher notes that for D. Bell, ideology is focused on specific actions based on a system of beliefs; according to T. Parsons, ideology is a system of values of a given society, a functional element of the political system that determines the main directions of development of a given society, and maintains the existing order; R. Aron, E. Shiels and U. Matz imagine ideology not simply as a regulator of social relations, but also as a religiously motivated system – an ersatz religion, capable of constructing a picture of the world that is taking shape in the space of existential crisis. According to U. Matz, ideology gives meaning to action within the framework of existence as a religious sacred-political doctrine. For J. Habermas, science and technology act as ideology, for L. Althusser, the total

nature of ideology always reflects some class positions, whatever their form (religious, moral, legal, political). Within the framework of the concept of 'disciplinary power,' M. Foucault assigns ideology a subordinate place in relation to institutions of power. Ideology is shaped by institutions of power, and they will always demand that science 'sanctify' their ideological positions (Vladenova 2014: 51–52).

Some applied aspects of the above views were reflected in the article 'On the Discourse of the Victim in the Context of Biopolitics' (Kovalenko et al. 2024), in particular, M. Foucault's ideas about 'disciplinary power'.

Thus, from a philosophical and philosophical-legal perspective, ideology has several basic semantic meanings: as a futurological vision of the development of the national community; as a spiritual and value basis for the state reform strategy; as a kind of concept for establishing social justice (in the understanding of the creators of this ideology); as a means of overcoming a person's existential crisis if he or she supports ideological postulates, etc.

### **STATE IDEOLOGY AS A SPIRITUAL AND VALUE CONCEPT: WORLDVIEW AND PHILOSOPHICAL SUBSTANTIATION OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPEDIENCY**

One of the types of ideology is state ideology. Contemporary scholarly research presents various points of view on understanding the essence of the concept of 'state ideology.' There is also no unambiguous position among scholars on the need for its official introduction in modern Ukraine.

It is worth noting that the need to create a state ideology in Ukraine has been discussed since the declaration of independence in 1991. Thus, from the point of view of E. Holovakha and V. Pukhliak, 'a normal state cannot exist without ideology and ideological institutions, the purpose of which is to reproduce this ideology in mass and individual consciousness. For a modern society, the only ideology capable of ensuring the stability of the state and a sufficient level of material and spiritual life is a democratic system of values based on political pluralism, a free market economy, and equality of citizens before the law' (Holovakha, Pukhliak 1994: 26–29). This position was a kind of reaction to the 'ideological vacuum' that formed after the declaration of Ukraine's independence in 1991.

Subsequently, the concept of 'state ideology' needed to be clarified based on the experience of the national state-building. According to A. Sukharyna, 'today there is an urgent need to separate the term "state ideology" in its autocratic meaning (actually "state ideology") and the term "public ideology" as a phenomenon that exists in systems of full or limited democracy. There are two extreme alternatives to understanding ideology in the state. The first of them is to some extent normative and advocates the de-ideological nature of the state, the absence of any specific ideological factors, etc. Representatives of the second alternative argue that state ideology exists in any state, even if this fact is officially denied in the Constitution' (Sukharyna 2019: 5).

In our understanding, state ideology is not a classical political ideology such as liberalism, conservatism, or nationalism. It is a unique spiritual product created by a nation in the process of its formation and development. State ideology is a unique spiritual phenomenon, the quintessence of ideas, values, and priorities for the development of a particular national community, and therefore it (unlike classical political ideologies) cannot be fully extrapolated to other nations due to the mental, spiritual and historical peculiarities of their development. State ideology, while having a relatively static value framework, is at the same time flexible and pluralistic in relation to the challenges of today.

State ideology is a worldview, values, and political and legal basis for building a country. It is designed to combine the process of active state and national development in a single systemic model, where the state is given a leading and responsible role, while civil society institutions are active co-creators of the national project.

According to O. Diedush, the functioning of a certain structure of ideologemes is vital for maintaining a sense of patriotism among citizens, countering information attacks by neighbouring states, and moral support for statesmen. This collective 'function' of ideology, often called civic nationalism in Western social science, correlates with another important marker of human personality: national (ethnic) identity. 'The harmonious development of the Ukrainian state is impossible without its citizens adhering to a clear and modern ideology of statehood, which is better known as the "national idea" (Diedush 2017: 140).

O. Makarenko emphasises that not only the state, but also the citizens need the national social and state ideology. Ideology is not just a set of certain ideas, it is a system of views on the world, society, state and human, a system that determines certain value orientations and a line of behaviour. Its absence leads to disorientation of a person in society, as a result of which social reality loses its meaning and the future remains uncertain. That is, ideology is the driving force of social development and acts as a means of political mobilisation of society, national identification and consolidation. This is its key applied aspect. 'For modern Ukraine in the context of globalization, a prerequisite for its socio-state ideology is orientation towards the future of the country. It should also take into account the trends of global social processes, reflect the concept of development for the future decades, and embody public ideas about the future "ideal state of Ukraine" and its place in the future world. At the same time, this ideology must respond to today's internal and external challenges and threats to our country, as well as be capable of consolidating different social communities in Ukrainian society' (Makarenko 2019: 3). Similar ideas are also formulated in the scientific work 'Postpanopticon: Control and Media in the New Digital Reality' (Kovalenko et al. 2023).

Opponents of the creation of a state ideology argue that a number of principles, values and norms regarding the development of Ukraine are presented in the 1996 Constitution, but in our opinion, they need to be specified and clarified within the framework of philosophical and legal doctrines of the Ukraine-centred direction. Also, when thinking about the prospects for implementing a state ideology in our country, it is worth remembering Article 15 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which states the following: 'Public life in Ukraine is based on the principles of political, economic and ideological diversity. No ideology can be recognized by the state as mandatory' (Constitution of Ukraine 1996: 7). In this sense, the opinion of M. Mykhalchenko is correct, as he substantiated 'the idea that there can be several state ideologies that compete for ways to effectively implement the goals of the state' (Mykhalchenko 2004: 21).

From our point of view, state ideology cannot be 'privatised' by a single political force; it is a guideline for all actors in the political space and is developed in consensual practices of interaction between the government and civil society.

According to O. Makarenko, in a democratic state, the state ideology is rather a 'framework ideology'. As a result of the victory of a particular political force at the election, there is a certain shift in value priorities within the framework ideology. 'And most importantly, the existence of a state ideology does not make it mandatory for society, since it concerns only one aspect of social life – the state' (Makarenko 2019: 272).

In the context of the above, O. Marushchak notes that 'ideological pluralism does not mean "the end of ideology". It presupposes the existence of an ideological concept of a special

type of “national” or “nationwide” ideology, which is often defined as “the ideology of national interests” or “the ideology of national harmony”. The features of this ideology are as follows: eclectic in content; populist-oriented; outside the struggle of “traditional” political ideologies; outside (at least externally) the struggle of classes; designed to maintain social peace and consensus of elites; explain and justify the actions of the authorities; consolidate society to solve the tasks of domestic and foreign policy’ (Marushchak 2020: 98).

Thus, state ideology should play a number of socially important functions, the main one being integrative.

In continuation of the above idea, E. Romanenko, relying on the views of J. Habermas, emphasises that ideology is a certain mental product of society, which is a condition of communication that is closely related to the system of social ties. Under the ‘system of mentality (mental product)’ the scientist (J. Habermas) understands the norms and rules of behaviour of citizens, the delicate taste and tact of communication, language, manners, various distinctive features of group and social affiliation, spiritual values, expectations, beliefs. This system is a structural component of ideology, which establishes a certain communicative discourse in society, within which theoretical and practical issues are thematised and problematised, and individual provisions of state policy are accepted or rejected on the basis of basic arguments. Therefore, ideology as a certain communicative tool for implementing state policy provides a kind of legitimisation of norms, knowledge and values, that is, various kinds of universals that should be taken into account in the activities of the institutions of democracy, transparency and openness, on which the development of an open society should be based. ‘On this basis, the scholar saw the strategic purpose of ideology as a communicative tool for implementing state policy in strengthening the trust of citizens in the state as an institution for realizing their interests’ (Romanenko 2013: 122).

Accordingly, citizens’ trust in state structures is developed through their cooperation with the subjects of civil society. In this regard, Habermas emphasises that ‘democratic participation requires a strong civil society, where citizens can form associations and express their interests and opinions outside the state and the market’ (Habermas 1996: 338).

Obviously, the state ideology should become an effective means of social consolidation and a specific background for spiritual and value-based communication of citizens about the directions of the country’s development in the future. Also, the state ideology has a significant potential for strengthening the internal and external security of the country. It is the basis for the creation and implementation of reputation management technologies for public authorities related to ensuring the legitimacy and safe functioning of the political sphere. ‘They include technologies of political mythologization, political ritualization, political nominalization, technologies of production and use of functional symbols, technologies of positioning, technologies of managing attention, emotions, and experiences’ (Vysotskyi 2023: 129).

In general, state ideology from a philosophical and legal standpoint has a two-level structure. One of the basic principles of the first level is the legitimisation of the state as a social institution. ‘Only a society that has an ideological core that is understandable to every citizen can develop dynamically. The basic principles of the second level are the need to form a political nation, civil society, and the democratization of social relations. This necessity is conditioned by objective laws of social development, which show that countries that have followed this path have achieved the greatest success. The establishment of such foundations guarantees social harmony and peace’ (Myklashchuk 2009: 66).



In our understanding, to specify the concept of 'state ideology', it is extremely important to take into account the value aspect. Value orientations are the most important component of mass consciousness, which determines people's reaction to the phenomena of reality and the direction of their behaviour. In modern conditions, their role as motivators of actions of social communities is increasing. All groups of values (political, legal, economic, spiritual) are gaining in importance, as they should ensure the security of a person, society, state, region and humanity. Among the above values, we believe that spiritual and political values play a leading role in creating a state ideology: the former are worldview guidelines, the latter are practically oriented axiologemes of nation-building.

V. Andrushchenko defines political values as politically significant phenomena, processes, foundations, aspects of political life and phenomena of political consciousness. 'He considers such values to be democracy, humanism, solidarity, sovereignty, will, equality, justice, dignity, etc.' (Andrushchenko 2001). These values of a democratic society are a necessary condition for the stability of the political and legal regime and the relative stability of power.

According to M. Holovaty, 'political values reflect the highest principles that ensure harmony in society or in individual social groups regarding the main directions of solving problems, belief in the desired and best type of political system, in the political goal, the means of achieving it, and the idea of them' (Holovaty 2003: 221).

Thus, the state ideology is the following:

- 1) The driving force of social development is its key applied aspect;
- 2) It affects the legitimisation of power, that is, the ability of a certain regime to achieve public recognition and justification of the chosen political course, political decision-making by this regime, personnel or functional changes in the power structures;
- 3) 'Ideology becomes a guideline and a system of coordinates for individuals and social groups in general, providing a sense of unity in the interests of joint work' (Myklashchuk 2009: 68).

It is quite obvious that the development of the Ukrainian state requires a worldview and ideological project that is the basis for developing a strategy for national state-building. The basis of such a project is the national idea. Today, the main problem for the national scientific community and Ukrainian politicians is not only the formulation of the content of the national idea, but also its implementation in the process of state-building. 'As noted by domestic scholars, it is the national idea that should become the value core of the unification of the Ukrainian people as the ideological quintessence of state and spiritual orientations' (Kalynovskyi 2011: 362). According to a number of researchers, the national idea as a spiritual, socio-cultural and political phenomenon can become the factor that will finally help to develop an effective model of Ukrainian state-building adequate to the requirements of the 21st century.

I. Kuras believed that the maturation and formulation of the 'national idea is the first step in the formation of a nation, and the acquisition of political and state independence is the last step of a nation as a natural and social phenomenon' (Kuras 1993: 125). According to S. Teleshun, 'the development and implementation of a national idea is one of the components of the development of the Ukrainian state at the present stage, a means that can help Ukraine get out of a state of permanent instability...' (Teleshun 2000: 76).

Some researchers quite logically link the need to implement a state ideology with the effective protection of Ukraine's national interests. In particular, V. Sabadukha 'argues that one of the conditions for understanding and implementing national interests is national ideology'.

National interests are the core of national ideology and the nation's self-identity. The absence of a clearly formulated national interest and national ideology allows individual state structures, figures and political leaders to act with impunity against national interests. To overcome the contradictions between the national interest and the interests of certain social groups, a national state ideology should be formulated. The above-mentioned researcher believes 'that the role of such an ideology can be played by the "ideology of personalism", which is capable of outlining new dimensions of human existence. On the one hand, it brings politics closer to the individual, and on the other, it puts politics and politicians under the control of civil society and makes the need for self-actualization the norm of socio-political life' (Sabadukha 2021: 62).

Continuing the above-mentioned reflections, T. Kačerauskas notes that the role of ideology as a defensive mechanism significantly increases during wartime. The author asserts: 'There is no society without any ideology that nourishes the identity of a nation or region. In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian War, we face a clash of European values and Russo-centric ideology. An illusion, prejudice, or even an ideological attitude would be the belief that society can exist without any ideology' (Kačerauskas 2023: 149).

It can be stated that the nature of the national idea, the form of articulation of national interests, is a reflection of the level of self-awareness of the nation as a unique subject of history, which asserts the right to exist in geopolitical, geohistorical space and time. In turn, the state ideology is a comprehensive representation of the national idea in political, legal, spiritual, economic and geostrategic dimensions.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the state ideology is the quintessence of national values, development priorities, and the spiritual and institutional experience of the Ukrainian people. In the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, it should strengthen the consolidation of the nation both in armed confrontation and in spiritual resistance. Ukrainian state-building is being tested in all dimensions, including the worldview and value dimensions, which is why it is important to establish nationally-oriented values in the public consciousness. In our opinion, state ideology should not be reduced only to political values; it is a communicative and axiological basis for the development of the nation, first and foremost, as a spiritual community.

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## Šiuolaikinis „valstybinės ideologijos“ sampratos aiškinimas: filosofinė ir teisinė refleksija

### *Santrauka*

Straipsnyje filosofiniu ir teisiniu metodologiniu požiūriu pagrindžiama „valstybinės ideologijos“ samprata, kuri interpretuojama kaip dvasinis ir vertybinis reiškiny. Autoriai formuluoja hipotezę, kad valstybinė ideologija nėra išimtinai politinis reiškiny, o veikiau Ukrainos žmonių dvasinės raidos rezultatas. Bendrąja prasme valstybinė ideologija turėtų įkūnyti ukrainiečių nacionalinę idėją ir nacionalinius interesus dabartiniame nacionalinės valstybės kūrimo etape. Valstybinė ideologija – tai pasaulėžiūra, vertybė, politinė ir teisinė strategija kuriant šalį, kuri „nepriklauso“ jokiai politinei partijai, tačiau kartu kiekvienas valstybės ir tautos kūrimo subjektas gali prisidėti prie jos turtinimo. Siekiama sujungti aktyvios valstybės ir tautos raidos procesą į vieną sisteminių modelių, kuriame valstybė atlieka vadovaujantį vaidmenį, o pilietinės visuomenės institucijos yra aktyvios nacionalinio projekto bendrakūrėjos. Mūsų tyrime naudojamas bendrųjų mokslinių (analizė, sintezė, indukcija, dedukcija) ir filosofinių bei teisinių (filosofinė ir teisinė refleksija, aksiologinis metodas ir kt.) metodų kompleksas.

**Raktažodžiai:** valstybinė ideologija, Ukrainos nacionalinė idėja, Ukrainos tautos nacionalinės vertybės, patriotizmas, valstybės kūrimas, politinės ir ideologinės sienos