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THE ROLE OF MEDIA AND ICT IN FORMING POLITICAL THINKING AMONG CITIZENS

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The integration of mass media (mass media) and information and communication technologies (ICT) into political processes is analyzed. As effective institutional mechanisms of political communication, they strengthen the interaction between the state, society and citizens. In particular, media platforms and digital systems actively participate in elections, referendums and political projects put up for public discussion, serving to raise political awareness and culture.

Communication (lat. *communicatio* - “to connect”, “to generalize”) is essentially a process of information exchange. It is interpreted differently in cybernetics, technical and social spheres. From a cybernetic point of view, communication is a process of information transmission through “human-human”, “human-machine”, “machine-human” and “machine-machine” systems.

From a social point of view, communication is a process of communication, exchange of ideas and dissemination of information between members of a group or society, which is carried out through natural language. It is this type of social communication that is important in political processes, because it determines the political thinking, behavior and participation of citizens in political decision-making processes.

Political communication, which is formed through the media and ICT systems, serves to strengthen political consciousness in society, increase the level of information ownership of citizens and develop political forecasting abilities. Therefore, the mass communication system is considered an integral factor in improving political culture.

Another separate type of communication is political communication, which is a means of connecting political institutions with each other. This type of communication serves to establish and properly conduct relations between political systems.



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In our opinion, first of all, we must say that, based on the level of thinking and means of communication in society, communications, and specifically political communication, have gone a long and difficult path from the primitive level to modern cyber and digital communication.

Today, wherever we are, in a situation where receiving a large amount of information every day has become a common occurrence, it is difficult to imagine life without television, radio, the Internet and other mass media. In the modern information society, the important role of the mass media in educating the population and influencing the worldview of each person is clearly manifested.

The research will comprehensively study the functions of the media, “their institutional characteristics in modern society, the main mechanisms of influencing public consciousness, and their functions in covering various political events; their unique role in the formation and consistent improvement of citizens’ political consciousness and political culture will be scientifically analyzed, and theoretical and practical conclusions will be developed.”

The novelty of this research is expressed in the fact that with the development of information technologies, the temptation to use the media for personal gain is becoming increasingly strong. “And the main way to do this is to train young people in pre-programmed behavioral patterns. This study will help identify methods of manipulative influence on the population and prevent its negative consequences. The object of the study is to study the manipulative function of the media as a means of influencing the formation of the worldview of the population. Using modern organizational and technical complexes that ensure the mass reproduction and rapid transmission of oral and audiovisual information, the media can affect the human emotional system not only with the content of the information, but also with the method of its transmission.” “The media is usually understood as a set of mass communication subjects engaged in the collection, processing and dissemination of information among the population at the local and international levels; they are manifested as an independent social institution that shapes public communication and social perception through institutional mechanisms for the production, verification and delivery of information to the audience.



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With the collapse of the USSR and the changes that have occurred, the activities of the media have changed dramatically. “Now they are a means of implementing political dialogue, which was previously practically impossible due to complete control over the activities of the media.” As V.F. Kuznetsov noted about the interaction of the state, the media and the people: “The degree of influence of various sources of information (including the media) on the formation of political views depends on the level of development of political communication in society.” The state is the owner or co-founder of the largest media, which allows it to control the political flow.

The media are developing rapidly and are acting as intermediaries in the interaction between society and the government. It should be noted that the media are able to influence the political choices of the population. It is very difficult to influence the choice of a mature person with one or two video clips. “Here there is a long-term discrete information effect to form certain ideological motives and encourage a person to take actions that are necessary for certain individuals. Numerous studies have shown that a change in worldview is the most complex process, continuing inertia, but at the same time affecting all other areas of social development, serving as a means of clarifying changes in them.” But as for representatives of the generation under 25, the situation is completely different. The danger here is that those who are most vulnerable to the manipulative influence of the media are young people who are politically incompetent in the sense of the word. The media are largely an authority for this category of citizens, and the persuasive effect of videos or other means is more effective. Therefore, following the actions of a reputable person is a rational way to make decisions. Thus, the media can indirectly, but extremely effectively, legitimize the values and behavioral standards of certain groups as “norms”; therefore, it is undeniable that the risk of political values being violated can lead to erosion of the social foundation of the entire society. Reducing these risks requires comprehensive state measures to counter the influence of harmful information, while preserving the pluralism of values and freedom of speech: strengthening the infrastructure of media literacy and fact-checking, making the ownership and sources of financing of media structures public, establishing open registers of political advertising and targeted propaganda (microtargeting), ensuring



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algorithmic transparency and accountability on digital platforms, using editorial ethics and self-regulation mechanisms, and forming rapid refutation and verification teams. “Especially in competitive elections, when an ‘alternative point of view’ may appear democratic, it is necessary to consistently implement legal and procedural safeguards to detect and limit such situations, including the obligation to disclose signs of foreign influence, rules on foreign financing, technical audits for platforms and broadcasting providers, and public oversight. Of course, you can ban some media outlets, but then you can jeopardize democracy in our society.”

The formation of political worldviews occurs not only through direct actions used by the media, such as video clips, advertising or other things that motivate certain actions. Such tools are very obvious, and citizens can quickly recognize the manipulative effect in them and reject the actions programmed in them. It is a different matter when the manipulative effect of the media is achieved due to more effective indirect factors. These are called multiple transitions. A common phrase in Western management theory. It is necessary to create a problem, solve a problem and take into account their differences. It is this model of manipulation that lies at the heart of the multi-movement approach. “For example, extremist organizations seeking to obtain long-awaited mandates in parliament can spread through the media a number of bloody incidents related to terrorist acts, bombings, etc. At this point, finish your advertising campaign and actually go into the shadows. The meaning of this action is that citizens, having seen such events, draw unpleasant conclusions for themselves and really want their houses not to be blown up. And at the last moment, political forces launch a campaign like “Vote for us, we are against terrorism.” Unfortunately, the unique capabilities of the media are also actively used to achieve the goals of terrorists and extremists.

“Since we live in a society of market relations, where advertising and market values have a great influence on the population, the media are no exception to this rule. For example, the media often use the most ordinary and completely unintellectual content to increase their ratings, which does not require serious analysis from the outside.” This can lead to the formation of tools and methods of understanding reality in a simplified way in the human mind, even in a child.



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Scientists have clearly linked the formation of simplified models of behavior that are divorced from real life to the emergence of distorted political values in people. “In the political sphere of society, the media are one of the most effective ways to manipulate the consciousness of the population. They influence people's minds and, among other things, contribute to the formation of a political worldview, which is usually understood as a set of views that are firmly established in society and reflect the idea of the government and its policies.” The media is often called the “fourth branch of power” due to its enormous influence on society. For example, over time, in the United States, the idea has grown that the media have more power than other branches of power to influence political processes, especially due to their direct interaction with society and, in particular, with specific people.

The issues of the influence of the media on society can be considered from two sides: First, when we are talking about a high moral and spiritual influence on society, media managers can refuse any bonuses and privileges (for example, ratings) and have only a developmental impact on society.

The second point of view speaks of the reverse process, when it is necessary to carry out someone's political order or pursue even higher ratings. In this race of the media, they do not hesitate to use the lowest methods. Moreover, cynicism, that is, naive interpretations and moral laxity, knows no bounds. Literally everything is used: lies, fraud, falsification, blackmail, speculation, caustic assessments, provocations, insults, black PR. Their final product is not just debates on the monitor, but very real pickets, rallies, protests, Maidans, Orange Revolutions.

In the system of political science, the essence of the political worldview is studied in two aspects:

Firstly, due to the abundance of various information about politics and political power, it is impossible to form a unified worldview, since various superstitions and myths are widespread. In our opinion, in most societies, the traditions of believing in and being inclined to these very superstitions and myths remain.

Secondly, “the content of this concept is constantly expanding, and many researchers propose to include political values in this concept. That is, such values that are implemented through political power, relying on the state apparatus, or for the implementation of which a struggle for power is waged. Based on this, we can say



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that political worldview is understood as the beliefs of individuals and social groups about the political structure of society and the place of socio-political communities and individuals in it.”

“As an important component of the state political system, the mass media perform several functions:

Firstly, they perform an information function, that is, they cover events not only in their own country, but also internationally. At the same time, this information is usually evaluated and interpreted by experts and ordinary people.

Secondly, the mass media act as an effective means of political education and socialization of citizens”: as a result of the information received through the media, people form a holistic picture of the political system and processes, understand the essence of events, and assimilate the prevailing norms and values into their personal views. Thus, the mass media form political consciousness, strengthen moral and ethical orientations, and encourage the conscious participation of citizens in public life.

Thirdly, the mass media perform a representative mission, providing a “voice” on behalf of society by studying public interests and views, monitoring the mood of the population. They provide reliable “feedback” to government bodies and social institutions by reflecting the interests and needs of citizens through surveys, analyses, and audience communication channels. At the same time, one of the most important tasks of the media is to shape public opinion: to set the agenda, to provide free and balanced coverage of reality, to develop a culture of political reflection among citizens, and to strengthen their conscious social position by comparing different points of view.

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