



THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND POLITICAL CULTURE

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Annotation

This article analyzes the role and significance of the mass media in the formation of political consciousness and political culture. The impact of the mass media on socio-political processes, the role of citizens in increasing their political thinking and activity in the political decision-making process is covered from a scientific point of view. It also considers how the reforms being implemented in the information sector in Uzbekistan, freedom of speech and the press affect the development of political culture.

Keywords: political consciousness, political culture, mass media, freedom of speech, political thinking, information space, civil society.

Introduction

In today's era of globalization and digital transformation, the media (mass media) are emerging as an important subject of political processes. The role of the mass media in forming the political consciousness of members of society, involving them in political life, managing public opinion, and improving political culture is unparalleled.

The reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan in recent years, in particular, the processes of ensuring freedom of speech and the press, and introducing the principles of openness and transparency, have further increased the socio-political importance of this area.

Political consciousness is a person's ability to perceive political reality, evaluate political decisions, and respond to them. Political culture includes citizens' attitude to the political system, political values, traditions, and political behavior. The



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influence of the mass media plays a central role in the formation of these two concepts.

Political consciousness has existed in human thought since ancient times, and it has played an important role in the processes of social development, political relations, and state governance. Due to technical progress and the development of information communications, the mass media (mass media) have become the main mechanism for shaping political consciousness today.

In the modern world, the concept of “information management” is becoming increasingly relevant, and political, economic, and cultural processes in society are directly dependent on the information field. As Alisher Navoi wrote in his epic poem “Farhod and Shirin” “If you are aware, you are a king,” awareness is the basis of governance, and awareness is the foundation of political thinking [Navoi, 1991].

From this perspective, the rise of political consciousness is closely related to information flows in society. The interaction between political processes, political culture, behavior, and systems is formed today through the information environment. As noted by the well-known political scientist N. Jo'rayev, "awareness" is a criterion of political maturity [Jo'rayev, 1998].

The media is not only a means of disseminating political information, but also a powerful social institution that determines the internal and external image of the country. According to researcher B. Alimov, positive or negative images created through the media directly affect the image of the state in the international arena [Alimov, 2018].

From a legal perspective, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Mass Media" (2007) defines the media as legally registered publications that provide information to the public in print or electronic form. This determines their place in the circulation of information in society and the formation of political opinion [Lex.uz].

The mechanisms of political influence of the media are studied based on various theoretical approaches. In particular, the economic-political approach sees the media as an institution that analyzes the uneven distribution of global information flows [McBride, 2004]. Sociological approaches, on the other hand, assess the media as an institution that is part of the social system - social consciousness, politics, culture and economy [Marchenko, 2016].



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Along with the formation of political thought and political culture, the media serves the development of civil society. Through advertising, PR and communication technologies, it helps to manage political processes, shape public opinion and ensure openness and transparency in state administration. The media are emerging in modern society as a powerful social institution that shapes political consciousness, enhances political culture and strengthens political stability. The idea that “he who has information - he who rules society” is today confirmed not only as an artistic, but also as a political and social truth.

Mass media (mass media) are an integral part of modern political, social and cultural processes, and various theoretical approaches have been developed to analyze them. Information theory researcher, Dutch sociologist D. McQuail proposes studying mass media through two main approaches: media-oriented and socially-oriented concepts. The first sees mass media as an autonomous source of changes in society; the second interprets political and economic processes in society as a factor shaping mass media [McQuail, 1995].

Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci associates the function of mass media with the representation of the interests of the ruling group as the interests of society as a whole through the “process of incorporation” [Strinati, 1995].

Representatives of the Frankfurt School, M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno, in their work “The Dialectic of Enlightenment” (1947), evaluate the media as an integral part of the “culture industry”, interpreting it as a means of controlling the audience and strengthening conformity [Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002].

American researcher D. Smythe calls the main product of the media an “audience commodity”. In his opinion, media companies form an audience and “sell” it to advertisers, which creates an economic connection between the “invisible trinity” – the media, the audience and the advertisers [Smythe, 1981].

British scholar N. Garnham analyzes the media as a means of controlling society by the power structures. According to him, the media system acts as a mechanism for strengthening the interests of political forces [Garnham, 1995].

In the modern information space, political manipulation, disinformation, and influencing public consciousness through biased messages are widespread. This situation demonstrates not only the political, but also the ideological power of the



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media. In some cases, misinterpretations threaten regional conflicts, distrust, and political stability.

In the case of Uzbekistan, the influence of the media on geopolitical processes is also increasing. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the national information policy and take an active position in the international information space.

One of the important signs of civil society is the free activity of the media and public control. As noted in “Ma’naviyat: An Explanatory Dictionary of Basic Concepts”, the media, working in partnership with civil society institutions — public organizations, NGOs, and the mahalla [Ma’naviyat, 2013].

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