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# The Role of the Media in the Formation of Social Opinion

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**Abstract:** The article theoretically highlights the importance of the role of the media in shaping public opinion. There is also talk of a media agenda setting theory in the formation of opinions.

**Keywords:** information, media, information dynamics, public, public opinion, propaganda, conflict, agenda.

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In the modern world, the media play an important role in shaping and changing public opinion. At the current stage of development of society, it is the media that can be a tool in the struggle between political actors. Often this can deviate from the basic principles of journalism, such as objectivity, reliability, information content, and so on. The importance of the impact of the media on public opinion is one of the main topics of our research. Today, with the rapid growth of information flows and the intensification of the most important processes, the media is at the forefront of these processes. The media is, first and foremost, a key player in shaping the public opinion of its audience and maintaining stability in society.

The importance of the media is that people are aware of the social, economic, political changes taking place around them. In fulfilling its role in disseminating information, the media also plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion. This is important in a democracy because a positive opinion on any topic means it can be legitimized and approved by the public. In most cases, the media plays the role of an indirect participant or third party in the political process. One of the most important tasks facing researchers today is to use this media as a means of preventing political conflict by shaping public opinion.

It should be noted that in recent decades, both the form and dynamics of information flows have changed. They focus on human psychology, its emotional aspects. This, in turn, raises the problem of shaping political stereotypes and shaping the components of the emergence of conflicting situations.

The development of human society has led the media to become the subject of a political struggle for power. At the same time, given the entire historical experience of the last two decades, they have often acted as one of the main destructive elements. As a result, political conflicts began to arise, this is to prevent existing conflict situations, alert and at the same time identify other information flows, political conflicts must end and be eliminated.

In our view, the problem of managing political conflicts through the media is of conceptual importance and reflects a particular area of society. Although the media is a specific type of organization that exists at the expense of one or another type of activity or funding, this in turn determines a certain order of obtaining information to one degree or another. Journalists work in this context. Defines the specificity of the information space and flows that apply to both listeners and customers.

Political activity is almost impossible without the use of the media. Because the goal of any political entity is to influence voters and citizens in their positions, that is, to convey certain

facts to them using images. At the same time, it is an appeal to society and the individual in a unique way. This situation undoubtedly explains the communicative aspects of information presentation.

The media play important roles in the political process, such as managing political events, propaganda (ideological) and reflexive (feedback). The general public usually receives information on political topics, social issues, entertainment, and popular culture news through the media. The media can also play an educational role in a democratic society, for example, in the context of pluralism of opinion.

It is the formation of effective media feedback and plays a central element in cultivating politicians. This naturally includes the task of shaping new ethical rules for covering political conflicts and instilling in journalists a sense of responsibility for the flow of information and its consequences. Areas of journalism such as political and extreme should be highlighted. They are more often involved in covering political conflicts than other types.

Political journalism is a broad branch of journalism that encompasses political events, happenings, and, of course, contradictions. The media influences political processes by coordinating the joint actions of elements of the political system. Therefore, journalism is the subject of political relations at almost all levels of the political system of the media and can act as an object<sup>1</sup>. Modern communication in the Internet environment, as well as the provision of airtime to various political entities for leading national television broadcasts, is of course legitimate. However, in some cases, this allows the spread of false information about the actions of various politicians, parties and the processes of political conflict. It also raises the level of political awareness among the audience by forming a certain opinion. Journalist A.A. Yurkov, the lack of ideological, economic, moral self-identification of society from the political point of view of journalistic creativity. It also emphasizes that journalistic creativity is becoming more relevant with its subjective nature<sup>2</sup>.

There is another type of conflict journalism that investigates unusual facts and events, and that is extreme journalism. From a professional point of view, the media is the subject of conflict when reporting on conflict, that is, it provides information about the problem that is causing the confrontation and the goals of the opposition.

In the implementation of conflict information, the media diagnoses the conflict, forming ideas about it. It predicts its development and offers its own opportunities to solve problems. In other words, they act as independent or dependent actors in the field of information. Thus, the press formulates conflicting ideas and provides guidance for resolving them. In general, it affects the original event. The use of unconfirmed information implies the creation, not the reflection, of political realities that are useful for attracting a certain circle of people more to their side. The fact that the reality created by the media does not coincide with each other, or that violent contradictions occur in the information space, in other words, is one of the most common phenomena in information warfare.

The emergence of the concepts of "information warfare", "information security" and others is a testament to the close ties of the media with the political sphere. This, in turn, clearly shows that the struggle in the field of information is not small. In any case, this is more important than a direct political confrontation. In our opinion, certain views of the individual and society are formed mainly on the basis of information provided by the media.

<sup>1</sup> Korkonosenko S. G. Politicheskaya jurnalistika. Uchebnik dlya bakalavriata i magistraturi/ S.G.Korkonosenko. – M.: Izd-vo Yurajt, 2015. – P. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Yurkov, A.A. Politologicheskaya sostavlyayushshaya kvalifikatsii jurnalista / A.A. Yurkov. – M.: Izd-vo Yurajt, 2016. – P. 44.

Before talking about the main reasons for the formation of this or that image of the political subject, we must determine the image of the subject of political activity. It means a set of views formed in the individual or collective consciousness of citizens through all forms of communication. These views show that it can be conscious and unconscious.

Just as no psychological state exists in isolation, the image is constantly filled with an emotional component as a mental formation. These two parts together create the necessary conditions for the implementation of a particular behavioral strategy in relation to the subject of political activity. For example, the presence of a “positive” characteristic in the content of an image does not mean that the attitude towards the political subject in general is positive. While a “positive” cognitive assessment may be accompanied by feelings of pride and joy, in the end it may indicate benevolent or contradictory actions toward a particular topic with feelings such as jealousy or resentment. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that emotional and mental characteristics are closely related: the likelihood of a negative attitude being perceived as “positive” decreases<sup>3</sup>.

Today, there is an overactivity of many information communities related to the level of technology development and general globalization and informatization, which forces the media to compete for leadership and influence in the public consciousness of the public. The media also plays an important role in establishing diplomatic dialogue between the two countries. This is reflected not only in any information message, but also, above all, in the conduct of foreign or domestic policy.

How a political theme is reflected depends largely on how its image is interpreted by the media that adheres to its policies. It is in this way that the media image on a political topic is created by the media through journalistic texts through the press, television, radio and other media. In the same way, the development of people's attitudes to this or that event happens. Thus, the formation of a holistic image of the subject of political activity requires the formation of a particularly positive view of the subjects - prototypes in society.

The main resource in the information society remains the media. In this sense, they become a leading technical resource for image shaping or correction. It is important to note that the media not only uploads an idea or statement, but also provides a topic for public discussion, during which time the topic develops ideas about any event or event<sup>4</sup>.

It is well known that the greatest power of the media is “social persuasion”. Because television has a wide media audience, it has the highest impact of “social persuasion”. The media sometimes changes the dynamics of society for the worse. This is because users consume information provided by the media. Nowadays, most users don't even try to check the news transmitted in the leading media. The reason is that they fully trust these media. Thus, the media gained control over consumers to the extent that they could not distinguish information from right or wrong. The media has become the most reliable source of information that is considered true and accurate at any cost. As a result, it provides an opportunity for individuals who personally use the media to shape people's opinions and possibly have a negative impact on society<sup>5</sup>.

Philosophers Herbert Marshall McLuhan, and Quentin Fiore<sup>6</sup> consider the influence of information on the active development of society and the formation of the processes of

<sup>3</sup> Galumov E.A. Imidj protiv Imidja / E.A. Galumov. – M.: Izd-vo Izvestiya, 2014. – P. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Mihajlov S.A. Sovremennaya zarubejnaya jurnalistika: pravila i paradoksi / S.A. Mihajlov. – Spb.: Izdvo Mihajlova V.A., 2012. – P. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Muntasir Murshed essay “Mass Media: Shaping identity of the Society”. 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Maklyuen G.M., Fiore K. Vojna i mir v global'noj derevne / G.M. Maklyuen, K. Fiore. – Moskva: ACT: Astrel', 2012.– P.16.

globalization of the communicative space. This phenomenon is characterized not only by the proliferation of online versions of TV channels, radio stations, print media, and the emergence of online publications, but also by the expansion of the world information space. Defines the primary importance of the media in the process of shaping the country's image in society.

The media is becoming a major source of information for the international community. It is becoming increasingly clear that the media is the most convenient medium in the country, as it is almost impossible for the subject to witness events in a foreign country. Information on the subject can be obtained mainly through the media: television, Internet, radio, press. If the event is not covered in the media, then the importance of this event will decrease.

Thus, the media has become a primary source of information, not a single one for everyone. It is also shaping the image of the state as a subject of political activity abroad. that is, the policy pursued by this or that publication. it can be noted that it has a certain weight. Dissemination of information through channels and websites has a direct impact on the image of the state. Here it is necessary to dwell on the main positions of the theory of the impact of the media on the public agenda, proposed in 1974 by American researchers McCombs M. and Shaw D.L.

The theory of setting the agenda of the media plays the biggest role in shaping opinions<sup>7</sup>. There are two aspects to this agenda creation theory, namely, the first is that the media does not show the truth, but rather the truth is filtered and shaped before the telecast. Second, there is no need to show everything that is available in the media, it is to focus on a few topics. This, in turn, encourages the public to think of these as important issues<sup>8</sup>.

Now, there is no need to interpret these aspects as good or bad in themselves, as some issues are more important than others. In the absence of direct experience or other information on a particular issue, the role of the media, including social media, becomes more significant. In such a situation, what the audience has is something that is presented by the media, where there is no possibility of cross-examination, which makes them suspicious. Even if there are other sources to investigate, a situation that facilitates the formation of public opinion on the agenda is the growing tendency of people to believe in everything that is there..

It is preferable to prioritize the agenda formed in the media and the event proven by the research of leading scientists of the society. As a result of reviewing the materials conducted during the election campaign, the scientists. came to the presumptive conclusion that opinions about the incident were largely shaped by the media.

In our opinion, here we need to understand the following: the media shapes events from the point of view that they should be reflected among the audience. Accordingly, if the problem does not involve the audience in any way, it will not have the next stage (position).

In theory, agenda setting occurs under the influence of the media. As a result, subjects feel that some of the events they affect are more important than others. That is, it plays an important role when events are accompanied by information flows. We need to keep in mind that the information agenda is also shaped by the audience's interest in a particular news event. Because it is that audience that needs the information of certain media outlets. In general, the media, which shapes the information agenda, is a unique constructor of social

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<sup>7</sup> McCombs & Reynolds. "News influence on our pictures of the world", Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2002, pp. 1-18.

<sup>8</sup> Dearing & Rogers, "Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going?", Vol. 11, Communication Yearbook Journal, 1988, pp. 555-594.

reality<sup>9</sup>.

The media has the means to create information and its flow in society. Accordingly, they have the ability to engage only in certain events or factors by manipulating information causes. This means that the information that the media conveys to the recipient allows the subject to change or correct the beliefs that have already been formed. The purpose of media influence is clear media awareness. Because through information policy it is consciously divided into having a certain set of features that have already been formed. Today, the media is becoming an information analogue of reality. The reason is that they mainly determine the opinion of the society and to a certain extent model the behavior of the subjects. One of the most important manipulative technologies used in the media to influence public opinion and shape the information agenda is a special way of presenting information material called a framework (design). The basic meaning of this concept is the way in which information is presented visually. Several definitions of the concept have been given, for example, by researcher J.J. Tankard according to "information design is the central organizational idea of the information structure that provides this context and identifies what the main problem is through selection, omission, and clarification"<sup>10</sup>. As you know, the most important event is given on the first page, in the main time, during the broadcast, and so on.

They also focus on the attribute component of the news message, i.e., the audience's perception of events through their respective attributes<sup>11</sup>. In our view, information is presented using a different design to reduce the attention to this or that information, depending on the need for the audience to pay attention. As part of shaping the learning characteristics of the agenda, the first event is called the first level of the agenda. However, the study of the concept of agenda formation and design analysis is now expanding to the assessment of information attributes. In addition to the importance of news for this audience, the attributes of media news also consider an integral part of the audience's needs. While the amount of news on a particular topic continues to affect the level of relevance of the topic to the public, the second level (qualitative analysis of attributes) involves evaluating the views generated (how the public feels after the news messages are transmitted). A 2000 study in New Hampshire by U.S. researchers Guy Golan and Misty McDaniel found that presidential candidate John McCain's image in the election was generally more positively portrayed by the media than George W. Bush. Thus, it highlighted work experience, leadership qualities, attitudes towards democracy and social benefits, and aspects of raising taxes. The second part of the study consisted of assessing candidates' attitudes toward problems and assessing their personal qualities. Features were rated as neutral, negative, and positive. So McCain, who started the war in Iraq and allowed his attacks on September 11th, seemed more useful than Bush. A similar study was conducted 4 years later by Spiro Kiusius. He also worked with Guy Golan, where he analyzed how subjects reacted to some changes in the portraits of candidates created in the media at the level of personal and professional characteristics<sup>12</sup>. The findings of this study fully support the notion that the ideas about candidates that were disseminated by the media were shaped by the subjects. Researchers T. Takeshita and Sh. Mikami also study the first and second levels of decision making at the same time. There was

<sup>9</sup> Философский энциклопедический словарь / Л.Ф. Ильичёв, П.Н. Федосеев, С.М. Ковалёв, В.Г. Панов. – М.: Изд-во Сов. Энциклопедия, 2013. – С. 401.

<sup>10</sup> Galiahmetova I.M. Imidj Rossii v presse SSHA v 2007–2012 gg.: masterskaya dis./ I.M. Galiahmetova– M., 2013// URL: [http://korunb.nlr.ru/queries\\_catalog.php?p=2&rid=517](http://korunb.nlr.ru/queries_catalog.php?p=2&rid=517)(data obrashcheniya: 09.01.2018).

<sup>11</sup> Nikolaeva Y. Vliyanie SMI na formirovanie obshchestvennogo mneniya / Y. Nikolaeva. URL: <http://www.dnp.ru/publications/our-publications/media/smivsom> (data obrashcheniya: 11.01.2018).

<sup>12</sup> Semenova, A.A. SMI kak faktor vliyaniya na obshchestvennoe mnenie // PR, biznes, SMI – problemy vzaimodejstviya: sb. materialov Vseros. nauch.- prakt. konf., 26 noyab. 2010 g. – Murmansk, 2011. – P. 119–123.

a significant impact of the direct transmission of total and attribute value from the media to the public. In general, the media is the main channel for shaping the image of the subject of political activity. At the same time, the continuation of political processes is usually not possible without interaction and feedback from the public. The media can act as both a cause and a tool in political processes..

The media influences not only the political process but also the formation of public opinion as its participants. First of all, it has to do with public opinion. Public opinion is the opinions, views, beliefs, and attitudes expressed by a particular section of society that may be on the same topic<sup>13</sup>.

Human nature has a strong interest in information about the processes taking place around it. As a result, it tends to believe and be influenced without questioning the authenticity of the information received. Apparently, sometimes information providers not only tell false information, but also express their relationship with them. The media, including news channels, the internet (social networks), newspapers, and other similar media, are able to change people's views on a particular issue<sup>14</sup>. Of course, it depends on the accuracy of the news and how people interpret it. All such cases contribute to the formation of public opinion.

Public opinion is important, with the help of which several political decisions can be made by the government. In a democracy, government policies and programs are citizen-centered, and public opinion is needed to know whether the government is effective through its actions. The media acts as a medium between the government and the public. Its mission is to provide information to community members for the formation of information-based opinions. In the media that Anna Hazare received, the issue of corruption came to the fore. Anna's support for Lokpal's law reached out to many, which helped shape public opinion to fight corruption<sup>15</sup>. Thus, creating awareness is the main task of being able to form an opinion in the media, because it is very important to be aware of what is happening in the community and what is going on around it in order to express an opinion on a particular issue.

The role of media and social networks in shaping social opinion is growing day by day. It is important to understand that the role of the media in shaping public opinion can be both positive and negative. Just as every coin has two faces, sometimes conflicts caused by the media can help promote good, and sometimes they can be harmful. The important role of the media in shaping opinion can be considered, for example, in the case of China. The Chinese government has complete control over what is shown to its people. From television to the internet, the government decides what its citizens should watch and what they should not see. The Chinese people do not have the right to post on the Internet of their own free will, and worst of all, it is not even considered a violation of their right to speak<sup>16</sup>. This clearly shows how the government is trying to prevent the freedom of the press and media from forming any public opinion that is anti-government.

It is worth noting that today in the media space, social networks are emerging as a modern phenomenon and their sphere of influence is growing. In particular, social media is also a platform for influencing public opinion. This action is carried out by social media influencers. An influential person on social media can be anyone from celebrities to bloggers

<sup>13</sup> Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan. "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics", 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Husak & Fialka, "Social Medial Influence on Public Opinion and Youth Behavior", 2018.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/fast-over-lokpal-will-go-on-till-my-last-breath-anna-hazare/article26142955.ece>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-3258-public-opinion-and-role-of-media.html>

who are persuasive based on their recommendations. Since social media is a platform where everyone can express their opinion, influencers will also be able to form an opinion. For example, the assassination of African-American George Floyd by a police officer in the United States in 2020 caught the attention of many celebrities, which in turn brought the issue of racism back to the forefront. As a result, there were protests in the United States against the brutal treatment of a black police officer<sup>17</sup>. Prominent people in and around America have condemned such practices, which have not only helped shape public opinion but also intensified protest movements.

In general, the media provide all the information they need to keep abreast of all the events happening around the world. The media shapes public opinion by announcing certain events or highlighting certain aspects of it. The main point of the media is that the exact details of the incident are considered to be the most important part of it. For example, two media outlets can each report on the state of the economy. One could highlight the regulatory policies of the current administration, while the other could focus on interest rates. In both cases, the facts are the same, but the presentation of the information has changed dramatically. The media plays a big role in the life of an ordinary person. People don't have the opportunity to visit that place to know the real situation. That's why they follow the media. The media has the power to create or destroy a country. The media plays an important role in the development of any country and it is essential for the media to be independent and impartial<sup>18</sup>.

All media have a big impact on individuals and society. Because many rely on the media as a source of information without even thinking whether the information is true or false. Moreover, the media has become a very powerful weapon that can quickly change people's worldviews and beliefs in a matter of minutes. For example, news coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict covers most events only one-sidedly and attracts attention. He ignores or does not mention the other. This situation causes the viewer to become acquainted with only one side of the story and ignore the other side. In addition, today, news presenters and commentators have begun to express their views. This may seem like a positive situation in some ways, but they need to be careful when it comes to thinking about an important topic. Because many people take their opinions as the ultimate truth and then walk away with a misconception on that topic. That is why in the next chapter of our study, the media was studied as an important institution that influences public opinion. The current situation and problems in this area in Uzbekistan are considered on the basis of a scientific approach.

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<sup>17</sup><https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/officer-charged-with-george-floyds-death-as-protests-flare/articleshow/76104411.cms>

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