



Public Opinion in Journalism

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Abstract

It is known that public opinion plays an important role in the life of society. This article examines important theoretical and practical issues such as public opinion and its characteristics, the relationship between journalism and social opinion, the manifestations of public opinion in mass media, the role and importance of journalism in expressing public opinion. The issue of organizational forms of working with the public in society was also touched upon.

Keywords: *Society; Philosophy; Journalism; Media Space; Public Opinion; Publicism; Genres; Press Functions; Symposium; Referendum*

Introduction

The social nature of journalism, from the point of view of its main tasks, is evident in its other feature – the representation of public opinion. Mass media rely on public opinion to reflect the socio-political, economic and cultural-spiritual life of society and to act as an active factor in the interaction of social existence and social consciousness.

Public opinion is a complex concept that forms an important part of social consciousness. Social consciousness is the philosophical, political, spiritual, aesthetic and other views of a certain society, which originates from the social existence – the material life conditions of the society at that time, the form of the economic system. Public opinion is one of the necessary layers of this social consciousness. Public opinion is a state of public consciousness that refers to the hidden or open attitude of people, different groups or classes in society to facts and events in social reality. Public opinion fulfills the controlling, advisory or coercive functions in the society, expresses opinions and makes judgments on one or another issues and problems of social life. With respect to such judgements public opinion performs the functions of evaluation, analysis, practical regulation and introduces certain norms of social relations. Public opinion can be positive or negative depending on its nature. Public opinion covers all areas of social life and grows from small to large, individual to general. That is, public opinion can cover from a

small issue in social life to very large-scale issues and problems that concern the entire humanity. At the same time, public opinion does not rise on any issue, but selects important and necessary issues that arouse social interest in life.

The above rule, that is, growing from small to large, from individual to general, also determines the birth process of public opinion. That is, it can consist of the opinion of one person – the opinion of the community, the opinion of certain groups, class, country and the whole world. Public opinion can be unanimous or controversial. Public opinion can be spontaneous or organized in terms of its origin and operation.

In the history of world philosophy, the issue of public opinion has been given a lot of attention. Ancient Greek philosophers emphasized that public opinion plays an important role in the management of society. Democritus emphasized that the opinion of the majority plays an important role in the life of society. Protogoras believed that public opinion is the opinion of the majority and determines what is false and what is true. Philosopher Socrates believes that only the opinion of wise and intelligent people is important, therefore the state should be ruled by wise men. Plato also stated that “the opinion of the wise is better than the opinion of the majority”, while Aristotle said that it is necessary to rely on the opinion of the people in managing the society. Later, the German philosopher and scientist Hegel, based on the internal rules of public opinion, emphasized that its object is what it is aimed at, and its subject consists of who is raising it.

Eastern scholars also paid great attention to public opinion. It can be seen that the great thinker and poet Alisher Navoi gave a high value to public opinion in his wise words: “A person does not call someone a person (human) if such someone does not care about people’s needs”. The fiery poet Boborakhim Mashrab, the enlightened poet Furkat, the folk poet Mukimi and others expressed the opinion of the people in their works, while the founders of the Jadidist social movement appealed to the public opinion to enlighten the people.

It can be seen that public opinion is a natural state of consciousness left over from the time when people started gathering, lived in groups, and later in communities. Later, the ruling classes used various means to subjugate public opinion to their interests. During the authoritarian regime, individual rulers took measures to make their opinions public opinion, while during the communist regime, public opinion was unconditionally subordinated to a single ideological rule. In the current era, when human society has achieved unprecedented progress, public opinion is of decisive importance in society. “Nowadays, public opinion has an ever-increasing power,” writes the famous American journalist Walter Lippman. “It is becoming a force that decides life or death”. In developed countries, public opinion is more widely relied upon in the process of managing society, and the systems built on the basis of individual rule, which ignores public opinion, are in crisis. In the socio-political life of our republic, which has achieved its national independence, public opinion is more and more important, socio-economic reforms, spiritual issues, various laws are being discussed with reference to public opinion and national opinion, and more and more important issues related to the life of our country are being resolved.

Public opinion is expressed through various ways and means. First of all, it is reflected in the medium of speech – from simple spoken words, “rumors” to speeches at various gatherings, lectures, and negotiations. The right to freedom of speech, which is reflected in the basic laws of our country, is primarily the freedom to express one’s opinion to the public. This right is handled differently in different societies. Public opinion can also be expressed in works of literature and art. The great works that left an indelible mark in the history of mankind are the works that were able to give people great, noble ideas and immortal thoughts. It should be noted that public opinion in fiction and works of art can achieve its goal only when it is expressed in a high artistic form and skill, and not in a direct way.

Media space is a social space where public opinion is widely and freely expressed. The press has the ability to shape social opinion and turn private interest into general interest. The press is the most effective area in the formation and dissemination of public opinion and reaching the object – the minds of readers.

The main task of publicism, which forms the basis of mass media materials, is to shape public opinion. All types and genres of journalism are involved in this. Public opinion is constantly expressed in all forms of press and mass media – newspapers, magazines, radio and television broadcasts, and Internet social networks.

There are different ways to reflect public opinion in the press. In this regard, we also see the phenomenon of growth from small to large, from simple to complex. In press publications, the most basic form of public opinion is expressed through letters to editors. People turn to editorials on various issues of their daily life and express different opinions. There may be various issues and problems of social importance among them. Such letters are published on the pages of newspapers under the headings “They write to us”, “Letters from newsreaders”, “Suggestions and comments” and other columns. Through this initial form of expression of public opinion, it is possible to find out the mood of people, the issues that are on their minds. Newspapers and mass media, which have given a lot of attention to this important issue, will achieve good results in fulfilling their social tasks, and will be popular and popular. On the contrary, the press publications, which are filled with materials of an official nature, separated from the people and lively opinion, are facing a crisis. In some press publications, special permanent columns are organized to direct public opinion. How much each publication pays attention to the public opinion depends on the diligence and skills of the editorial leaders, employees.

As we mentioned above, journalism plays a key role in forming and reflecting public opinion in the press. Journalistics means conveying today’s events, events and problems to today’s society and readers, referring to public opinion, forming and finalizing this opinion. Without public opinion, without raising the problems and issues of the majority, the press material will not be liked by anyone, and no one will read it. In contrast to public opinion in fiction, public opinion in journalism is sometimes expressed directly, and in genres related to literary journalism, it is expressed to a certain extent through artistic means.

All three components of journalism participate in the expression of public opinion. In its initial – informative part, public opinion is awakened in its own way. News in newspapers and magazines, radio broadcasts, TV shows on various topics, films, reports, materials on the Internet must be alive and vital in order to arouse interest in the reader’s mind and stimulate their thoughts. On the contrary, superficial, one-sided messages and pictures that do not arise interest in people’s minds do not arise public opinion, preventing press publications and mass media from fulfilling their descriptive function, and as a result lead to a crisis.

The main task of analytical journalism and publicism, which is a component of journalism, is to serve public opinion. Genres related to this type – article and its types, interview, review, comment, observation, etc. raise various problems of social-political, economic, cultural-spiritual life and refer to public opinion. Along with newspapers, magazines play a key role in the activity of analytical journalism. Different types of magazines – social-political, scientific, literary-artistic, comic magazines focus on the problems in their fields and engage in raising public opinion on the most important issues. In this regard, specialist publicists have great role in raising public opinion. Among modern Uzbek publicists A.Meliboev, Kh. Dostmukhammedov, K. Norkabil and others’ contribution in raising public opinion on various issues and problems of social, cultural and spiritual life are noteworthy. Uzbek analytical journalism relies on public opinion to perform the analysis function of our press.

The third, most important part of journalism – artistic journalism also serves to shape public opinion. The main genres of literary journalism – essay, feuilleton, pamphlet express the problems of social life through journalistic and artistic means. Naturally, the basis of these genres is public opinion. Artistic journalism, unlike analytical journalism, widely uses imagery and other visual tools of fiction. Therefore, public opinion in artistic journalism can be more deeply expressed through images, for example, through social laughter in feuilletons and pamphlets related to comic journalism, which can increase its effectiveness. Although the current Uzbek press creates some works that raise the public opinion in artistic journalism, the work done in this regard is not enough. Uzbek artistic journalism should reveal more deeply the problems of the social-political, economic, cultural–spiritual life of our independent country, and serve public opinion.

There are also a number of organizational forms of determining public opinion in the press. These include debates, discussions, roundtables organized on the pages of newspapers and magazines, radio and television shows, internet networks, asking people’s opinions about certain topics, public discussion of important laws and documents, distribution of questionnaires, surveys, sociological research. Press publications should also be in constant contact with local social research centers.

The functions of image, analysis and impact of the press serve in the direct implementation of public opinion. Other organizations and state agencies also play an important role in the implementation of public opinion. For example, the fact that the parliament of Uzbekistan has submitted the new Constitution of Uzbekistan and other important laws and documents to public discussion is a proof of our opinion.

Deeply feeling the role and importance of public opinion in the press, knowing its laws and using it is an important task of every journalist and writer. Special press services organized in all executive agencies and public organizations of our republic are also aimed at the higher goal of working with the public, and serve to implement this important issue on a large scale in our country.

In the press and mass media of Uzbekistan, which has achieved national independence, great attention is paid to the formation and development of public opinion. “We have set ourselves the ambitious goal of building a new Uzbekistan together with our people”, says the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev in his addressing to the Oliy Majlis. The new idea that society is the initiator of reforms is getting deeper and deeper into our daily activities. In the congratulatory letter of the President to the newspaper team of the “New Uzbekistan” newspaper on the occasion of commencing its publication, it is emphasized that this new press publication should carry out important work on the formation of public opinion. Public opinion is given a wide place in the adopted decision regarding further development of mass media.

Deeply feeling the role and importance of public opinion in the press, knowing its laws and using it is an important task of every future journalist.

One of the main organizational manifestations of the formation of public opinion is the establishment of special public relations departments of state and executive authorities. Currently, each executive and other organizations have their own press service departments, which from time to time inform the general public about the progress of work in this field, offices and organizations, and about solving problems in this regard. Obviously, this serves to improve the interaction between the press and public opinion, and further development of the media space.

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