

# Features of the study of public opinion in multinational environment

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**Annotation.** Traditionally, public opinion is considered as a specific manifestation and one of the ways of existence of mass consciousness. In public opinion, value judgments (verbal and non-verbal) are expressed, reflecting the attitude of different social groups to the problems, events, facts, phenomena, processes of real reality. And the more these phenomena of reality affect the vital needs, goals, interests of social groups, the more explicit as a rule, public opinion is expressed.

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Public opinion cannot be singled out as a separate, independent form, type or type of public consciousness, since it is not something static, unambiguous. Rather, it is a dynamic characteristic, representing a certain state of a particular social group (or society as a whole) in a certain period of time.

When analyzing public opinion, it should be borne in mind that there are different approaches to the definition of its very concept. At least two should be noted:

- public opinion as the main (leading, dominant, most popular) opinion in society as a whole;
- public opinion shared by a certain social group (demographic, ethnic, professional, etc.)

In the first case, public opinion acts as a consensus of opinions, and we can talk about the unity of the concepts of "public opinion" and "public opinion". In the second case, a priori it is assumed that public opinion in any society is many, and the more complex the social structure of this society, the higher the level of its social differentiation.

The subject of public opinion of society as a whole is the people, which, however, is not a kind of monolith, but constitutes a special system with a complex internal structure. From a constitutional and legal point of view, the people are formed by all citizens, regardless of their age, gender, national, racial, linguistic, confessional and other differences. But for a sociologist, these differences are undoubtedly important, since it is through them that the specifics of public opinion are expressed. different social groups.

In traditional (tribalistic, patriarchal-clan) society, public opinion is formed mainly as a result of direct interpersonal contacts based on trust and authority. The tribal elite makes decisions collectively and on the basis of precedents: customs, traditions, customary law, etc. In emergency cases, it appeals to the opinion of the community as a whole due to the limited, as a rule, number of its members.

The increasing complexity of the social structure of society, combined with population growth, served as starting points in the process of increasing differentiation of public opinions of various social groups. For example, the emergence of multinational (multi-ethnic) societies, i.e. having a complex national (ethnic)

population structure, which may include a significant number of nations, nationalities, tribes: ethnic, racial, linguistic, ethno-confessional groups, determines the complexity of the internal structure of public opinion itself.

Under absolutist, authoritarian, totalitarian and other undemocratic regimes, public opinion does not play any significant role at all, at least within the state. Appeals to it, if any, are exclusively for declarative or demagogic purposes. The main elements of the manipulation of public opinion are open violence and obvious demagoguery. At the same time, tougher regimes prefer the first, more flexible ones prefer the second, although history knows cases of extremely developed demagoguery and under very rigid political regimes (fascist Germany, etc.).

It should be noted that in non-democratic societies, one of the most discriminated segments of the population are minorities: national, racial, linguistic, confessional, etc. Moreover, humiliation and discrimination of certain groups of the population can become the basis of the policy of a particular regime (for example, apartheid against the "colored" population in South Africa, anti-Jewish policy in Hitler's Germany, periodic "ethnic cleansing" in certain regions of the planet, etc.). Of course, in such circumstances, there is not and cannot be any question of taking into account the views of minorities. However, the undemocratic regime, in fact, does not take into account the opinions of the majority: this opinion is not studied – it is "created".

Only true democracy ensures an increase in the role of public opinion, which is due to the following factors:

- the population (or social community) gets a real opportunity to express its opinion indirectly (elections, lobbying, etc.) or directly (rallies, demonstrations, pickets, etc.) in ways;

- a modern democratic society is inconceivable without a sufficiently developed system of mass communication, the importance of which in the process of forming public opinion can hardly be overestimated;

- In a democratic society, it is possible to consistently and effectively implement that or that political line only with the approval of public opinion.

It should be borne in mind that public opinion is not a simple mechanical set of opinions of individuals (or even groups), but is a product of their interaction, mutual enrichment, organic fusion.

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Public opinion acts as a rational-emotional-volitional integrity. Manifestations of this integrity can be mainly spiritual (ideological), spiritual-practical or mainly practical in nature. In the first case, manifestations of public opinion act as emotional-value judgments, in the second - as volitional impulses, in the third - as practical actions. In the history of sociological thought, at different periods, certain points of view prevailed both on the processes of formation and functioning of public opinion, and on the possibility of its research and study. Thus, at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries, the famous French sociologist G. Lebon believed that <sup>1</sup>society was ruled by the idea of "spiritual unity of the crowd". Public opinion, according to G. Lebon, is formed by imposing certain ideas to the passive majority through affirmation, repetition, spiritual expansion.

Similar views were held by another French sociologist G. Tarde<sup>2</sup>. G. Lebon and G. Tarde saw one of the main tasks of sociology (and the emerging social psychology at that time) in the study and disclosure of the essence of the emergence of those impulses that "infect" the masses, turning them from an uncontrollable people into an uncontrollable crowd. This is especially important in the conditions of a multinational society, since the emotional potential of national (ethnic) feelings is extremely high.

In addition, these feelings have a significant mobilizing ability. Ignoring the public opinion of certain national (racial, linguistic, etc.) groups of the population is quite capable of leading society to acute or chronic conflict situations. In addition, inattention to the very mechanism and process of the formation and functioning of public opinion is fraught with the danger of degeneration of democracy (the power of the people) into ochlocracy (mob power). Therefore, the study of public opinion should set one of its important tasks the development of theoretical foundations for the prevention of this negative phenomenon.

Ethnic communities (nations, nationalities, national and ethnic groups) as separate subjects of public opinion are of extreme interest. This is due to the fact that ethnic communities, due to the significant prevalence of ethnocentrism as a socio-psychological phenomenon, have, as a rule, a certain set of ethnic stereotypes (both autostereotypes and geteostereotypes), ethnic attitudes, ethnopsychological preferences of their members.

However, despite this, in a multinational (multi-ethnic) society, the dilemma "our own (ours) are strangers (not ours)" seems too simple and visible, and it would be erroneous and premature to conclude that the unity of public opinion of the entire ethnic community is stable. Even if we are talking about those social problems that are vital for this particular ethnic community, it can have a complex (ambiguous) opinion. This is due to the following fundamental ones. Moments.

Ethnic self-identification. The fact of formal belonging to a particular ethnic community may not have, or it may be of greater and lesser importance not only for individual members of the community, but also for entire groups. For example, the leading factor of self-consciousness may not be ethnic, but other affiliation (confessional, territorial, political, corporate, etc.).

They can be active (considering any social issues exclusively through the prism of ethnicity), less active (considering only some issues from an ethnic point of view), passive (ethnicity as an insignificant or insignificant social and psychological factor).

Ethnicity as a factor of group solidarity. This is due to the two points mentioned above, since there is a fairly clear correlation between the level of self-identification, the forms of manifestation of ethnic self-consciousness and group solidarity based on ethnicity. However, there is one point of discrepancy: if the first two points are relatively stable, then the third is very dynamic and subject to strong influence of external conditions. For example, in a situation of a real threat to an ethnic community, its mobilization on an ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> Lebon G. Evolution of civilization Psychology of peoples and masses, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Tard G. Laws of imitation Public opinion and crowd, etc.

basis can occur very quickly, although in stable and safe conditions this feature may not be significant for a part of this ethnic community.

Internal differentiation of an ethnic community. Every ethnic community is not a monolith, but a system. In other words, its internal structure is complex, which gives rise to differences in the public opinion of certain groups.

Among the specific methods of studying the public opinion of a multinational society, a special place belongs to the quota sampling method. This is due to the very specifics of the general savocupity. Typical mistakes in the application of this method in practice can be:

- the desire to cover all elements of the national national (ethnic) structure of society, i.e. to ensure in a selective set the representation of all nations, nationalities, national and ethnic groups, and not the main, the most numerous. Although this is permissible if we are talking not about the entire society as a whole, but its part, i.e. the whole thing here is on the scale of the general population;

- Underestimation of internal differentiation of ethnic community, too formal approach to sampling. For example, a particular ethnic community in the general population can be represented mainly by rural residents, and as part of a sample population (with the same percentage ratio) - mainly by urban residents. Attention to one feature should not lead to ignoring all the others;

- Incorrect assessment of the nature of the distribution in the general population. Thus, outdated information about the national composition of society can be used, without taking into account the difference in natural growth among different ethnic communities, migration, etc.

In addition to these fundamental, methodological errors, there may be tactical errors associated, firstly, with the replacement of some subjects with others, only on the basis of one feature. For example, a seventy-year-old dehkan cannot be replaced by a twenty-year-old student just on the basis that they are of the same nationality (even if it is a grandfather and grandson). The replacement must be: a) forced (the subject of observation is inaccessible for objective reasons - death, illness, departure, etc.), b) competent (nominated for replacement must meet the essential signs of the respondent being replaced). Another tactical error is related to the incomplete coverage of the sample itself, when, based on the predominance of a certain part of the sample, it is extrapolated to the sample as a whole. For this purpose, a sampling adjustment procedure is used.

Thus, in a multinational society, there is practically no social issue that could be solved without taking into account the national factor, the public opinion of ethnic communities.

The polyethnicity of Uzbekistan has deep historical roots. It was formed from ancient times, because the country, occupying an advantageous geographical position in Central Asia, was in an important node of the famous Great Silk Road. The territory of present-day Uzbekistan, primarily its oases with fertile natural and climatic conditions, has long attracted immigrants from both the East and the West.

The multinationality of the country significantly expanded during the years of tsarist and Soviet colonization, when mass migration of Slavs was purposefully carried out in Uzbekistan, forced resettlement of entire peoples - Crimean Tatars, Koreans, Meskhetian Turks, Germans, Caucasian peoples, etc.

The Slavs mostly settled in cities, where their share among the inhabitants was very high. Therefore, one of the ethno-social features of Uzbekistan, which require consideration when studying public opinion, here is the low urbanization of the indigenous population, which still remains mostly rural.

Another, no less important, social aspect, the consideration of which is very important in the study of public opinion in Uzbekistan, is the social structure of the country's population, deformed in the Soviet years. The main social strata of Uzbek society are farmers, farmers, the proportion of workers of indigenous nationalities is very low. Only with the acquisition of independence in the country begins to form a class of owners, entrepreneurs, bankers, etc.

It should be borne in mind that the general level of education of the population of Uzbekistan is quite high. Complete literacy of the population has been achieved in the republic, secondary education is compulsory. But, despite this, the special mentality of the Uzbek people creates certain difficulties in studying public opinion. The fact is that for a native, collective opinion is much more important than his own opinion. This communal mentality is still combined with the unquestioning acceptance of the opinion of the elders in age, position, position in society, etc.

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Community thinking in Uzbek society is supported by the traditions of collective behavior of the population, thanks to the preservation and strengthening of the institution of local self-government - the "makhalla" - in the years of independence. Residents of this peculiar territorial district for the most part measure their behavior with the opinion of neighbors, makhallas and generally adhere to national traditions, folk customs, communal way of life observed in their makhallas.

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