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FUQAROLIK JAMIYATIDA JAMOATCHILIK BILAN ALOQALARINING ROLI

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada raqamli davrda jamoatchilik bilan aloqalarning fuqarolik jamiyatiga ta'siri, ayniqsa O'zbekiston misolida, qiyosiy tarzda tahlil qilinadi. O'zbek, rus va xalqaro adabiyotlar, shuningdek siyosat hujjatlari va amaliy hisobotlar asosida AQSh, G'arbiy Yevropa, Markaziy Osiyo va O'zbekistondagi PR amaliyoti ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijasida PR jamoatchilik fikrini shakllantirish, islohotlarni tushuntirish va inqirozlarni boshqarishda muhim kommunikatsiya infratuzilmasi ekani, ammo uning demokratiyaga ta'siri siyosiy-media muhitga bog'liq ekani ko'rsatiladi. Markaziy Osiyo va O'zbekiston sharoitida PR fuqarolik jamiyatini rivojlantirishi uchun etik me'yorlar, oshkorlik, uzoq muddatli ishonchli munosabatlar va media erkinligini mustahkamlash zarur, degan xulosa ilgari suriladi.

РОЛЬ СВЯЗЕЙ С ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬЮ В ГРАЖДАНСКОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

Аннотация

В данной статье в сравнительной перспективе анализируется влияние связей с общественностью (PR) на гражданское общество в цифровую эпоху, особенно на примере Узбекистана. На основе узбекской, русскоязычной и международной литературы, а также нормативных документов и практических отчетов рассматривается PR-практика в США, Западной Европе, Центральной Азии и Узбекистане. В результате исследования показано, что PR выступает важной коммуникационной инфраструктурой для формирования общественного мнения, разъяснения реформ и управления кризисами, однако его демократический эффект существенно зависит от политико-медийной среды. Делается вывод, что в условиях Центральной Азии и Узбекистана для того, чтобы PR способствовал развитию гражданского общества, необходимо укреплять этические стандарты, открытость, долгосрочные доверительные отношения и свободу медиа.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Annotation

This article examines how public relations shapes civil society in the digital age, with a focus on Uzbekistan in comparative perspective. Drawing on Uzbek, Russian and international scholarship, as well as policy documents and practitioner reports, it analyses PR practices in the United States, Western Europe, Central Asia and Uzbekistan. The study shows that PR functions as key communication infrastructure for shaping public opinion, communicating reforms and managing crises, but its democratic impact is strongly context-dependent. For Central Asia and Uzbekistan, the article argues that strengthening ethical standards, transparency, relationship-building and media freedom is crucial for PR to support, rather than constrain, civil-society development.

Introduction. The definition of the twenty-first century as an “information age” is no coincidence: digital communication technologies, online journalism and social networks have opened a fundamentally new stage in human history. Concepts whose boundaries are still not clearly fixed in journalism theory, such as blogging, citizen journalism and mobile reporting have become widespread and, alongside traditional mass media, are turning into major arenas for shaping public opinion. Uzbek scholars, especially in journalism and PR studies, emphasize that information services and PR units are emerging in this digital environment as key communicative platforms for structuring public opinion [1].

At the same time, the format of information has changed: statements and decisions by state bodies, officials and public figures are quickly debated, reinterpreted and turned into contested discourse by social media users, online outlets and citizen journalists. This “boiling” environment not only speeds up public awareness, but also shapes civil society institutions, citizens’ political-legal participation and their civic stance. Recent studies on PR and information services, focusing on reliable, accurate information exchange rather than propaganda, provide a solid scholarly basis for this trend [2].

Another key process linked to social networks is the growing impact of “opinion leaders” and influencers. Operating partly outside traditional journalism, they set the agenda, shape the emotional climate around issues and frame problems from a civic perspective, thereby steering public opinion. In global PR research, this is seen as a way in which civil society is communicatively enacted [13]. Analysing Bosnia, M. Taylor shows that media relations can unite diverse interest groups and civil society actors, playing a central role in building civil society [3]. In later work, Taylor defines PR as a rhetorical and relational system that enacts civil society by fostering trust, social capital and partnership among citizens, NGOs, business and the state [4]. These perspectives align with Uzbek scholarship, which sees PR as a key tool for structuring state–society dialogue. This article uses Uzbek and international research to show how PR works in a digital environment and what opportunities and limits it has for shaping public opinion and supporting civil society.

Literature review. Research on PR and civil society can be grouped into three strands that are directly relevant to Uzbekistan: information services and public opinion, PR as civil-society infrastructure, and ethics/propaganda. Uzbek scholarship shows how information services inside state bodies

and universities are being institutionalised as two-way communication hubs. Qosimova defines them as professional structures responsible for transparent decisions and citizen feedback, positioning them as key nodes in the national communication system [1]. It is analysed how PR tools frame reforms, explain policies and legitimise change, insisting on a shift from one-way propaganda to credible, fact-based communication [15]. Internationally, Taylor links PR to civil society by showing how media relations can connect fragmented groups and help rebuild post-conflict societies [3]. Hon and Grunig add measurement criteria for relationship quality, emphasising long-term trust as a core outcome of effective PR rather than just a persuasive tool (Hon & Grunig, 1999), while evaluation debates highlight the need to show impact on agendas, regulation and reputation, not just media visibility (Institute for Public Relations, 2011; Cacciatore, 2020).

A second strand focuses on ethics, propaganda and hybrid media systems, including post-Soviet contexts. Russian-language authors such as Gavra, Vylegzhanin and Chumikov show that PR operates at the intersection of information, persuasion and symbolic power, centring on image, reputation and brand [10,13,15]. For Central Asia and Uzbekistan, PR can either foster civil society through open dialogue or, under strong state control and weak media freedom, become mere image-management.

Methodology. This study uses a qualitative, comparative case-study design combining document analysis and expert literature review. Policy documents, legal acts, official strategies and institutional reports from the United States, Western Europe, Central Asia and Uzbekistan were examined to identify how public relations is formally positioned in relation to civil society, information services and communication reforms. These materials were triangulated with scholarly works in Uzbek, Russian and English on PR, civil society and communication ethics, as well as practitioner reports from professional associations and institutes. The analysis focused on recurring themes dialogue, transparency, crisis communication, stakeholder engagement and propaganda risks allowing the article to reconstruct context-specific PR functions and to compare their democratic potential and constraints across different media systems.

Results and discussion. This section presents and interprets the main findings on how public relations affects civil society in the United States, Western Europe, Central Asia and, more specifically, Uzbekistan. Based on policy documents, expert literature, media analysis and practitioner insights, it shows that PR functions as a key communication infrastructure for shaping public opinion, communicating reforms and managing crises. At the same time, the results highlight that the impact of PR depends on context: in open systems it can strengthen dialogue and accountability, while in hybrid regimes it risks sliding into propaganda and agenda control.

The impact of public relations on US civil society. Empirical analysis of US practice shows that PR has become part of the infrastructure of civil society, helping to shape public opinion, channel citizen preferences into institutions and stabilise public life in crises. Political actors, corporations, universities and social movements use media relations, social media and events to frame issues and construct favourable narratives, while contemporary debates stress that professional PR must combine ethics, data literacy, stakeholder engagement and issues management rather than rely on simple persuasion [9]. In the policy sphere, lobbying, advocacy and coalition-building are evaluated not only by media visibility but by concrete outcomes such as agenda inclusion, amendments and regulatory decisions, indicating that PR can translate citizens'

preferences into the policy process [5]. Non-profits and grassroots organisations similarly depend on PR to raise awareness and mobilise supporters around social issues including racial justice, climate change and gender equality, turning communication into a resource for weaker actors [9]. During crises such as pandemics or corporate scandals, PR supports rapid, transparent and empathetic communication, which research identifies as essential for leading "beyond the crisis" and preserving institutional legitimacy [7].

At the same time, US experience highlights significant risks: disinformation, astroturfing and polarising frames can fragment public discourse and erode trust. Ethical analyses therefore insist that future PR must be purpose-driven and anchored in clear values to avoid drifting into manipulation [9]. These findings show that PR in the US context combines high democratic potential with high vulnerability, offering a benchmark for comparison with more constrained media systems.

The impact of public relations on social life in Western Europe. In Western Europe, PR is closely integrated into political communication, corporate governance and the non-profit sector, operating under stricter regulatory frameworks than in the US but following comparable strategic logics [14]. Political actors use opinion polling, message testing and media planning to frame debates on European integration, migration, climate policy and welfare reforms, turning elections into mediated conversations with citizens. For companies, reputation, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ESG indicators are central, with authors highlighting the interdependence of image, reputation and brand in long-term stakeholder relations [17], while boards increasingly demand evidence of PR's contribution to trust, license to operate and ESG performance rather than mere media visibility [17]. Repeated financial, migration, health and energy crises have pushed institutions to professionalise crisis and risk communication so as to align responses with citizens' expectations and maintain social cohesion [7]. At the same time, NGOs and transnational advocacy networks use PR tools to build alliances and influence EU-level decisions on human rights, climate and social policy, strengthening civil society by enabling organised citizens to enter policy debates on a more equal footing with corporate and governmental actors [5]. Overall, the Western European experience suggests that when PR is embedded in transparent governance, stakeholder dialogue and evidence-based evaluation, it can support democratic deliberation, although risks of spin and disinformation remain.

The impact of public relations on civil society development in Central Asian states. Central Asia overall demonstrates a hybrid media environment where PR simultaneously contributes to nation-branding and development goals, yet may also support regime legitimisation. On the positive side, PR helps governments and cultural institutions promote national image, tourism and heritage, while also drawing attention to social concerns such as education, gender equality and ecological challenges. At the same time, one-way and opaque communication practices risk drifting toward propaganda rather than dialogic PR, particularly in settings with limited media freedom [10]. Therefore, PR's contribution to civil society across the region remains contingent upon institutional openness and stakeholder autonomy.

In Uzbekistan, these regional dynamics intersect with local cultural, political and economic conditions, shaping specific factors essential for effective PR development. Cultural resonance requires that messages align with historical memory, religious sensitivities and community norms [11]. Relationship-

building remains central in a high-context society, where long-term trust with journalists, officials and influencers strengthens legitimacy [12]. Work with diverse media demands an understanding of the interplay between state, private and digital outlets, ensuring PR supports pluralism rather than reproducing official discourse. Digital engagement through Telegram, YouTube and Instagram opens new participatory spaces but requires transparency to counter rumours and polarisation. Openness and sincerity are increasingly expected by publics, as emphasised in modern Russian-language PR scholarship [13]. Finally, adaptability to reforms, crises and shifting expectations is crucial for institutional resilience. When these factors are effectively institutionalized, PR in Uzbekistan can evolve from a narrow image-management tool into an integral mechanism of civil-society development, facilitating dialogue among the state, market and citizens.

Conclusion. The distinction between public relations and propaganda is fundamental for understanding how

communication shapes social and political life, especially in transitional contexts. While PR is grounded in transparency, ethical responsibility and reciprocal dialogue with stakeholders, propaganda relies on one-sided persuasion, emotional manipulation and concealment of intent. These differences determine whether communication strengthens or weakens civil society. Ethical PR contributes to trust, accountability and participation by fostering open interaction between institutions and the public. Propaganda, by contrast, limits pluralism, suppresses feedback and narrows the space for critical thought. For regions such as Central Asia, where media systems remain hybrid and politically sensitive, reinforcing ethical standards, transparency and media freedom is essential to prevent PR practices from sliding into propaganda and to ensure that communication supports, rather than constrains, democratic development.

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