



Political Mentality and Its Transformation (In the Case of Post–Communist Uzbekistan)

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Abstract

The article analyzes the transformational processes under the influence of universal democratic values (human rights and freedoms, pluralism, justice, democracy, democratic political governance) in the political mentality of ethnic Uzbeks, who make up the majority of the population, on the example of Uzbekistan, one of the post–communist young independent states of Central Asia. Adoption of democratic laws is not enough for the political transformation of society. The democratic political transformation in the spiritual life of the society cannot be achieved without changing the communist values that have been forcefully instilled in the human mind by the communist political regime for 70 years, without completely removing them from the life of the person and the society. Today, the post–Soviet Uzbek society is undergoing a complex and difficult process of spiritual transformation.

Keywords: *Political Mentality; Transformation; Communist Regime; Democracy; Globalization; Human Rights; Freedoms; Political Entity; Sustainable Development; Strategic Cooperation*

Introduction

Ethnic Uzbeks, who make up the majority of the population of the Central Asian region (more than 35 million: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine) are a political entity that has a strong influence on social stability, peace and sustainable development on the geopolitical map of the region. As it is located in the heart of the mutual borders of the young independent states of Central Asia, it has great influence in the political life of the region. The political processes taking place in Uzbekistan–foreign policy based on open, all–round cooperation, since 2017, the policy of good neighborliness with the independent countries of the region, which is expanding year by year, strategic cooperation also affects the mentality of ethnic Uzbeks, requires transformation and modernization specific to the requirements of the time. In this context, the scientific analysis of the national mentality of ethnic Uzbeks, getting rid of the divisive mentality formed in the post–Soviet era at the social and personal levels, the social political identity of the region, the political integrity of the region in the direction of the policy of regional spiritual unity of ancient brotherly and blood–related people, traditional and cultural traditions (Turan civilization, rising Turkic people) cooperation) is of great importance for achieving sustainable development through the formation of unity.

On the other hand, ensuring regional identity at the level of mentality and national consciousness also corresponds to the requirements of the CIS Convention. That is, not only issues extremism, international terrorism, which threatens the security of the region, but also the trend of separatism, regional alienation, and in the future, it helps to prevent extremist approaches to historical and cultural heritage in the field of education and training. Especially after the collapse of the totalitarian Soviet system, in the former Central Asian countries, instead of cultural integration, the creation of various myths about the unique historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples formed aggressive nationalistic sentiments in the minds of the young generation, elements of regional alienation sentiments also began to form. Since 2017, the leader of Central Asia The policy of good neighborliness with the independent states of one of the countries of Uzbekistan has made the problem of regional identity more urgent. The solution of this issue requires a thorough investigation of the mentality, spirit and national character of the peoples of the region, conducting deep and unbiased scientific research free of old national stereotypes.

Main Part

The problem of political mentality has become one of the universal human problems today. Western researchers are leading in this matter. For example, the internal cohesion of society, the presence of social and political consensus in it, or the problem of social division, conflicts R. Inglehart, R.K. Welkel, S. Lipset, S. Rockon, A. Remmole, F. Analyzed by prominent Western scholars such as Schmitter. The issue of national mentality, identity, Uzbek philosopher and psychologist M. Bekmurodov, T. Madaeva, N. Shermuhammedova, M. Kuronov, K. Vakhobov and others have also researched the content of the problems of national revival and the realization of national identity, the formation of democratic thinking. Mentality, especially political mentality, is related to the science of psychology in its origin. For example, categories such as “People’s psyche”, “social psychology” are related to the socio-cultural and political-spiritual context. From Western researchers P. Burde, M. Castele, A. Melucci and others studied the ethnopsychological features of social and political culture related to the individual and the superstructure of individuality (social large and small communities, groups) through these categories.

The relevance and complexity of the problem is that the social situation analyzed above—the fact that the political element in the national mentality of the ethnic Uzbeks have been deformed under the influence of external pressure (national political), as a result of which there is an obstacle to finding a solution in a democratic society makes the issue even more urgent. The fact is that the political immunity formed as a result of this in the national mentality prevents the consolidation of national sovereignty and national independence.

Eliminating this situation requires changing the values of the traditional political space. Because as mentioned above, “a new life cannot be created with old values” (I. Karimov). This is evident in the existence of conflicts between political values and globalization, democratization, and new political values in today’s political space. Authoritarian thinking inherited from the past in state administration, achieving political monopoly is one of the important principles of democracy-political pluralism, and the absence or narrowness of sufficient opportunities and conditions for it at the mental level proves this point. In order to effectively solve this problem, it is necessary to understand new values in society. This is related to the activities of ordinary citizens and the state, as well as other social institutions (schools, neighborhoods, various non-governmental organizations, etc.). Bold steps were taken in this direction—in September 2017, the Law and Concept “On Administrative Reforms” were adopted. The goal of these legal-normative documents is to gradually reduce state interference in the activities of civil society institutions and ensure their freedom. It is inevitable that it will have a positive effect on the political mentality. After all, the goal and task of the strategic platform “From Development to Growth” is to further reduce the distance between the state and the people, society and the individual, to establish and strengthen legal democracy in the political life of society. The issue of political identity occupies the

center of the transformation of the political mentality of the society. This can be observed when citizens and electorates support the ideology of one or another political party in the elections aimed at shaping the state power. In this matter, the contradictions of retrospective and rational political evaluation are noticeable. The number of votes collected by one or another political party as a result of the elections is functionally dependent on the degree of identification (identity) of the electorate with the party's program. Retrospective means that the electorate has old political stereotypes about past elections. Rational political participation, on the other hand, means conscious, informed, free political participation in democratic political processes.

The formation of a political mentality of a new democratic nature in the post-Soviet, post-communist political space, especially in Uzbekistan, involves the introduction of political values alien to this space in the form of symbols and signs, and the collision with the local, more precisely, symbols of the old communist political system and political order, and on the other hand, religion and above the emphasized retrospective was intermingled with our spiritual desire. This process has a semiotic nature when viewed from a methodological point of view. It is the semiotic methodology that has hermeneutic dimensions that are subject to the understanding of the meaning and significance of the political transformation processes taking place in society. This is somewhat hypothetical. But such a hypothetical thought also contains axiomatic elements. For example, official policies supporting national identity are symbolically retrospective in nature. In the process of correct political assessment of the original content of such a policy, retrospective and rational aspects provide mutual balance (balance). The paradigm put forward by the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov—the idea of “no historical memory—future burden” represents exactly this methodological (semiotic) construction.

Ensuring interethnic and interreligious harmony (tolerance) in the conditions of a multi-ethnic (multi-cultural) and multi-confessional state is therefore an important requirement for the sustainable development of society. Such a policy, in turn, becomes an important factor in the formation of the national mentality among the population, especially the future of the society.

Semiotic methodology and paradigm are important for the formation of a new political mentality in which national and universal values are determined. Otherwise, the new political mentality that is being formed will go to the bottom of eclectic, one-sided formation. The first is extreme left-wing nationalism. This is a political retrospection of fierce nationalism observed in the early years of national independence (early 90s); republic—“republic”, newspaper—“diary”, plane—“plane”, district—“district”, etc. It can be seen in the attempts to introduce “Ulic” symbols such as the Latin language into circulation in the modern era. The second is the blind application of the West and its values to the life of society and the state, political imitation. Such a trend, in our opinion, will burn water to the mill of cosmopolitanism and globalization, as a result of which the state sovereignty will suffer—the formation of national statehood will slow down. This, in turn, has a negative impact on the transformation of the national political mentality. Getting out of this situation is possible only on the basis of philosophical methodology, one of its advanced manifestations today—synergetic paradigm.

The synergetic paradigm paves the way for a multi-linear development strategy in the direction of political mentality process, personal political identity in a healthy, national, patriotic spirit, maintaining and strengthening political sovereignty in today's global political situation. The development and growth strategy for 2022–2026 and 2030 will be implemented on this basis [1].

Therefore, the transformation, modernization, liberalization and democratization of the political mentality in the post-communist society is not only based on a linear cause-and-effect methodology, but also at the risk of various coincidences, chaos, disorder, and external global influences. Because today's information age, media space has a great impact on social state policy, but also on every mind, psyche, mentality, besides civil literacy, it is required to maintain a sense of personal involvement in state policy. This can only be done through political wisdom.

Political mentality represents the highest level of personal psychology, but in order to understand it, it is necessary to know the semantics and phenomenological aspects of the essence of various concepts related to this concept. Since the second half of the 20th century, historians, philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists and pedagogues have been interested in the problem of mentality. Today, interest in the issue of national identity, its partial manifestation, is growing [2].

The study of the Uzbek mentality in pedagogical, philosophical, anthropological, sociological and other directions related to national independence, its maintenance and development has become popular in the field of social humanitarian sciences, but the problem of mentality and its partial appearance—political mentality is poorly studied in local scientific literature. Western scientists, especially Russian scientists, are leading in this matter [3]. Political mentality plays an important role not only in the current state of society, existing problems, but also in the implementation of future strategic goals. Political mentality defines the content and character of a person's political consciousness by reflecting his axiological, psychological, ethnic and social relations to the surrounding political environment. At the core of the political mentality, in our opinion, is the attitude towards the government and state activities. Eastern peoples, especially ethnic Uzbeks, have a paternalistic attitude towards the state. Paternalism is related to the psychology, lifestyle, traditions, etc., national ethnic characteristics of the peoples of the East, and it has the level of a national—spiritual code. Looking at the political mentality in the form of a certain social code has a semiotic, that is, a sign, symbol characteristic. As the political mentality has the character of a symbol, it also has its semantics and certain meaning-content parameters. The semiotic approach to political mentality is important to express its essence more clearly. The semiotic approach to mentality existed even in Soviet times. Representatives of the famous Tartu—Moscow school of semiotics (Y.M. Lotman, V.V. Ivanov, B.A. Uspensky, L.O. Reznikov) discussed the existence of a cultural “code” of a particular nation. It is difficult to imagine the processes of social communication without the participation of political symbols. After all, human daily life is connected with conscious and unconscious layers of social consciousness. This is reflected in the interrelationship of everyday consciousness and imagination with the dominant official policy and ideology in society. Mentality is a social constant that ensures communication between generations and ancestors. Such a constant is enforced by folk traditions and culture. National identity also rests on this basis (constant).

Today, with the honor of independence, the processes of transformation and modernization in the national mentality, especially in the political mentality, and a number of actual conceptual problems related to the political mentality are visible. The most important of them is the problem of conflicts between the democratic development and the population, the nation, in a word, the ethnic Uzbek mentality, which has arisen under the influence of social transformation.

“De jure”, i.e., officially, Uzbekistan entered the path of democratic development, but “de facto”, i.e., in fact, due to the influence of national mentality, we are of the opinion that this path has not been completed. For example, thirty years later, “even though a lot of time has passed, the “backbone” of democracy—the distribution of powers, the mechanism of “mutual restraint” between them, and the “posangi” effect has been decided in life until now. Democracy means the power of the people. So, democracy is decided by the people. For this, it is necessary for every citizen to have the status of “attitude” to be interested in democracy, to be involved in democratic reforms. In practice, although the democratic development was officially announced, until 2017, the principle of “state reformer” became a priority in the state modernization policy. As a result, the historical tradition of paternalistic attitude towards the state was preserved. Attempts were made to restore the historical traditions of old, medieval state and community management (Amir Temur, Babur’s statehood) in new conditions. The principle of separation of powers is historically and politically—anthropologically related to the traditions and political values of the Western government, and it is considered a new model of political management given to humanity by J. Locke, T. Hobbes, S. Montesquieu, Hugo Grotius and other thinkers. The political mentality of the ethnic Uzbeks, on the one hand, was formed during the struggle to preserve the long—lasting national identity of spiritual and spiritual qualities (firmness, oriyat, passion, etc.) was formed on

the basis of the policy of openly seeking national values, alienating the local people from their age-old and traditional national values, and systematically strengthening the priority of Russian national values in the life of society. That's why today we observe competing (surrogate) spiritual values in the national Uzbek character and mentality. At first, 60 years of tsarist colonial policy and then the council system, which lasted for more than 70 years, caused the formation of qualities such as hypocrisy, hypocrisy, and softness in the people's psyche.

The tsarist government and the Bolsheviks put Russian cultural values above their own national spiritual values, masquerading their traditional way of life as a European way of life, such behavior was deliberately encouraged. The tradition of appointing Karab to social positions was established, and the local Uzbek language was reduced to the level of the language of everyday life.

The official policy of society and state administration was carried out only in Russian. The Republic of Uzbekistan did not have sovereignty. The political pluralism characteristic of democratic thinking was completely absent in the conditions of various forms of persecution for the totalitarian regime based on one-party political order. In such socio-political conditions, the brave, patriotic Uzbek people and their leading patriotic intellectuals were subjected to physical torture for free thought and free speech. Officially, the policy of social equality was in practice in favor of the invaders. From time to time, healthy, strong branches that grew from the bosom of the nation were regularly cut off. The Uzbek people were very far from freedom and well-being, they were forced to adhere to false standards of equality. Anyone who disobeys this standard will be severely punished, not only free speech, but also free speech was emphasized. As a result, the authoritarian state policy, although it claims false patriotism, is very far from the principles of democracy, and in some issues it completely contradicts the requirements of democracy. fake, mirage political ideology left a deep mark on the mentality of ethnic Uzbeks. During the Soviet era, the traditions of praise, praise of state policy, and idealization of the policy of such a system became official. As a result of such a policy, flatterers, various "informants" were encouraged, material gifts, titles and positions were awarded. At first, Uzbeks looked at "informers" with sincerity and traitors with inner hatred, but later they looked at them with fear, and if they criticized them, they were afraid of receiving the label "enemy of the people" because endless troubles would rain not only on themselves, but also on their children. The feeling of fear and self-doubt had a negative impact on qualities such as the priority of the sense of correctness, sincerity, and faith, characteristic of the Uzbek mentality.

The primacy of the feeling of fear began to discourage the realization of the qualities of creativity, initiative, creativity, striving for innovation, growth in people. As a result, the feeling of fear caused the biological instinct—the instinct of self-preservation—to achieve a priority position in the national mentality. Especially in the 30s of the 20th century, the rabid repression, repressions, persecution of any bold, free thought, the "service" of traitors, "messengers" out of ourselves caused this instinct to be deeply rooted in the national mentality. The sense of fear was so ingrained in people's minds that even the announcement of national independence by the First President I. Karimov at the 12th session of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan on August 31, 1991, a historic event in the life of the nation, was met with disbelief and disbelief by the country's political elite. Then the President re-announced national independence: "This is the truth. Now there is no way back, the stable system has disappeared", he said. Fear, as a biological instinct, increases people's need for the most important things necessary for life. For example, when there is a flood, earthquake or fire, a person tries to save his life and loved ones, not his wealth and various valuables. First, the tsar's government, then the Bolshevik regime, kept the Uzbek people in the grip of fear, if a piece of land, a piece of bread, a woman, a child, a cow survived, some archaic traditions left by ancestors and rituals would have been preserved. Under the influence of mental inertia, such mental complications, unfortunately, have been preserved even now. That is why, no matter how much the government supports the process of democratization and modernization of society, the old, out-of-date morals of the national mentality still have a negative conservative effect on the minds of some citizens. The development strategy aimed at building a new Uzbekistan, the goal and dream of achieving national growth through the creation of the Third

Renaissance, making fundamental changes in the Uzbek national mentality, strengthening the sense of courage in people for the reforms being carried out, uniting the citizen, society and the state by further reducing the distance between the citizen and the government in the past. The new President of the new Uzbekistan put forward a number of initiatives in this direction: “Let the people agree!”, “For human dignity!”. The principles of “Let the people serve our people, not the public authorities, let the public authorities serve our people!” are promising because they are aimed at fundamental changes in the Uzbek mentality. There is a phrase named after “From Action Strategy to Development Strategy!”. It is natural that the principle will lead to radical changes in the Uzbek national mentality based on this paradigm and political algorithms.

An important aspect of mentality is that it expresses the interests of a certain social unit, nation, and society in a general way. Also, its thread affects the changes and transformational processes taking place in society, determines their nature and direction. Therefore, the processes of transformation taking place in the post-Soviet social space are closely related to the mentality of man and society, their change and renewal. However, as mentioned above, the colonial era of the last century left a deep mark on the psyche of the Uzbek people, instead of the ancient national qualities characteristic of the nation—mutual kindness, honesty, justice, striving for leadership, artificial flattery to officials, praise of the authorities. He decided on the negative qualities characteristic of the demands of violent political orders, such as the cult of personality and the tendency to betrayal. It is not a secret to anyone that behind this is hidden an autocratic ideology, typical of colonialism and national chauvinism. The Russian language, along with it, the Russian mentality, was instilled into the minds of the population of the system in a methodical way using various means. They showed great bravery, the policy of repression of the 30s was repeated in new circumstances, the original patriotic layer of the Uzbek people was physically destroyed again.

As a result of this, the following negative aspects were formed in the national character and national mentality of the Uzbek people. The saddest thing is that they slow down the processes of democratization, renewal, and social transformation of society, and hinder the decision-making of the development strategy in society:

1. Primitive feelings such as localism, kinship and kinship have settled in the society;
2. The policy of violating freedom, human rights, and hypocrisy of the communist system increased the distrust of the state among the former Soviet citizens. As a result, the main value of democracy—democratic elections—formed absenteeism in the psyche of the people, not only the distance between the people and the state increased, but also a chasm appeared;
3. Equalization, centralized economy, false ideology weakened people’s desire for newness, innovation, initiative, and creativity;
4. In the spiritual life of people, not the state ideology, but rather national bigotry, the ideas of ideological extremism were formed, and the ancient spiritual values of the national mentality began to decline;
5. Starting from August 1991, a process of changes was observed in the national mentality. Such changes occurred as a result of the independent state’s policy of universal human value—democratization. In the political sphere, instead of ideological autocracy, another political value of democratic life—political pluralism—was gradually established. It gave impetus to changes in consciousness and mentality;
6. At first, the changes in the national mentality took place in anticipation of the load of morally negative values historically settled under the influence of the former Soviet ideology, everything related to the Soviet system began to be investigated, and a nihilistic approach to history was established in the mentality of the society. Call such a mental element positive.

Today, representatives of more than 130 different nationalities, 16 religious confessions operate on the basis of equal rights in Uzbekistan on the basis of mutual solidarity, there are no conditions for nationalism and religious conflicts. The mentality of ethnic Uzbeks is historically imbued with the ideas of religious and national tolerance, humanitarianism, their sources are the humanitarian ideas of the holy Islamic religion and the life-giving effects of the economic, cultural, spiritual East–West communication relations.

Results and Discussions

1. Consolidation of the political, economic, legal and ideological foundations of national independence first requires changing the mind, spirituality and mentality of the creator, creator of any changes;
2. The democratization of society first takes place in the spiritual, mental stage. The transformation of the national mentality cannot take place without a fundamental reform of its quintessence, people's worldview, without getting rid of the old, learned mentality, stereotypes and habits in the society;
3. Over the centuries, fear, living in poverty, dependency and dependence have left a deep mark on the Uzbek mentality and crippled the spirit. The paternalistic mentality took precedence over the collective mentality;
4. Striving to achieve national identity is the first step towards eliminating the above mental ills;
5. The achievement of national independence and development is achieved through the national feeling based on national identity, national honor, national honor, in one word–national pride.

Conclusions

1. From the political–philosophical point of view, the strengthening of the economic–legal and ideological foundation of national independence requires changing the mind, spirituality and mentality of the person who is the creator of any changes;
2. The democratization of society first takes place in the spiritual, mental stage. It is difficult to get rid of the old, learned mentality, stereotypes, skills and habits without completely reforming the national mentality, its quiescence–human consciousness;
3. Over the centuries, fear, mediocrity, muteness, and dependence have left a deep mark on the Uzbek national mentality, crippled the spirit, and paternalistic mentality has become a priority in the human worldview;
4. Striving to achieve national identity is the first step towards eliminating the above vices;
5. The achievement of national independence and development is realized through the national feeling based on national identity, national honor, national honor, in one word - national pride.

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