

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE INFLUENCE OF PROPAGANDA ON THE MASS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POPULATION

^aVOLODYMYR POLTORAK, ^bYANA ZOSKA, ^cALONA STADNYK, ^dYANA PYLYPENKO, ^eALEXANDER ZUBCHENKO, ^fNATALIIA POLOVAIA

^{a,c}Classical Private University, 70-b, Zhukovsky Str., 69002, Zaporozhye, Ukraine

^{b,e}Mariupol State University, 129a, Budivehnykiv Ave., 87500, Mariupol, Ukraine

^dZaporizhzhia National University, 66, street Zhukovsky, 69600, Zaporozhye, Ukraine

^fNational Aviation University, 1, Liubomyra Huzara Ave., 03058, Kyiv, Ukraine

email: ^av.a.poltorak20@gmail.com, ^bzoskayana@gmail.com,

^ca.g.stadnyk@gmail.com, ^dpilipenko.yana90@gmail.com,

^ezubchenko2016@online.ua, ^fsosonovitch.natalia@ukr.net

Abstract: This article represents a theoretical analysis and generalization of the views of various scholars and understanding the essence of the mass consciousness of the population, propaganda, and the specifics of the latter's influence on such mass consciousness. It is proved that mass consciousness (unlike individual, group, etc.) is a specific type of social consciousness that "possesses" certain advantages in terms of specificity and effectiveness of propaganda influence on it. The main states of mass consciousness are analyzed: value orientations, cognitive potential of individuals, public sentiments, and public opinion. It is shown that propaganda acts within the limits of its influence on the mass consciousness as a non-marketing mechanism for the production and transmission of both negative and positive information. It is revealed that both direct propaganda and its derivative forms such as paid journalism, publicity, propaganda 2.0 are used.

Keywords: Mass consciousness, Propaganda, Propaganda 2.0, Public opinion, Public sentiment.

1 Introduction

In recent years, a new area in the system of general scientific and The article is intended to analyze a complex and rather contradictory, not fully studied in sociological science problem of the impact of propaganda on the mass consciousness of the population, including the consideration of the mass consciousness as the main object of propaganda, the impact of some methods and technologies on the mass consciousness.

Today in Ukrainian and Russian sociological sciences (formerly partly within the framework of Soviet sociology) these problems are studied by O. Boyko, B. Borisov, V. Vasyutinsky, O. Vyshnyak, B. Grushin, B. Isayev, D. Olshansky, V. Ossovsky, V. Poltorak, G. Pocheptsov, A. Solovyov. As to the foreign experts, E. Bernays, G. Blummer, G. Lebon, D. Lilleker, W. Lippman, S. Moskovichi, E. Noel-Neumann, F. Allport, and J. Zaller pay considerable attention to the development of relevant issues.

The urgency of the problem of mass consciousness and the impact on it, a certain "management" of the consciousness of the population in the implementation of social, economic, cultural, and other policies, is very significant. It is fair, from our point of view, remarked by G.G. Pocheptsov in this regard: "Earlier, the management of mass behavior was much easier (for example, religion worked for this), because the world was more stable, so its model (picture) was also stable and fixed. Today, the world is in dynamics, so it requires more complex management methods that would take into account both these dynamics and the fact that there is a greater variety of permitted behaviors. That is, the past stages with one variant of behavior and constant views of the world, are, based on these positions, simple and easy to manage the mass consciousness" [17].

Unfortunately, this problem remains insufficiently developed today, including in sociological science. At the same time, it is closely related to another problem, why and how propaganda most deeply and effectively affects the mass (and not, for example, the individual, group, specialized) consciousness of the population in society including during such important and sharp actions as election campaigns, information wars, and so on.

There are striking examples of such an in-depth scientific approach to the study, analysis of propaganda as one of the most important mechanisms for influencing the mass consciousness and public opinion. Unfortunately, most often in this case the journalistic approach prevails; various, in particular, manipulative, receptions and technologies of propaganda are most often analyzed. At the same time, its deep mechanisms, such as the non-marketing approach to the formation and dissemination of both negative and positive information in order to influence the audience is practically not studied, as well as various modern forms of propaganda in particular, such as propaganda 2.0.

This publication attempts to consider in some depth, using a number of approaches proposed by relevant experts in the analysis of such issues, some particularly important issues of mass consciousness (including its essence, states, specifics of functioning) and propaganda as a mechanism of influencing mass consciousness. In particular, a task was to conduct a brief analysis of the specifics and effectiveness of various forms of propaganda.

2 Materials and Methods

Theoretical understanding of methodological approaches to the problems of mass consciousness and propaganda requires the introduction of primarily general scientific methods of theoretical knowledge. This is necessary primarily to clarify the complexity of problems related to the nature and structure of mass consciousness, its relationship with other components of social consciousness, including individual, group, ethical, and so on. Of particular importance is also a systematic analysis aimed at determining the place of propaganda in the system of methods and technologies for influencing the behavior of individuals, different groups of the population, their mass consciousness. Comparative and multifactor analysis are used to determine the components of mass consciousness and elements, propaganda technologies, the specifics of its impact on mass consciousness. For this purpose, functional analysis is used, which allows to clearly "place" the various elements of the phenomena and processes under consideration in the overall system of issues analyzed in the work.

3 Results and Discussion

Before proceeding to the analysis of the main problem of work, namely the impact of propaganda on various aspects of mass consciousness, which characterizes various aspects of society, individual groups and individuals operating in it, it is necessary to really understand the problem of mass consciousness, which undoubtedly (see below) is the main object of any propaganda activity, propaganda influence on the population.

Although the problems of the latter began to be studied (although mainly in scientific and journalistic terms) at the turn of the 18th -19th centuries, in, so to speak, the scientific context, this issue began to be investigated in the twentieth century, when large masses of people began to "grow" and integration of people from different social groups intensified.

What is mass consciousness? Why is such influence on it the main factor that "provides" any propaganda effect when it comes to any human communities: individuals, various social and other groups of people, in general, the masses of people? There are many theoretical definitions of the concept of "mass consciousness". Let us consider some) of them. For example, D.V. Olshansky writes that mass consciousness is one of the varieties of social consciousness, the most real form of its practical existence and embodiment. This is a special, specific kind of social consciousness, inherent in large, unstructured masses of people [12].

V.V. Rizun believes that it is a public consciousness, which is a set of views, principles, ideas, judgments, traditions, superstitions, knowledge, social and emotional experiences belonging to different social actors (relevant individuals, social institutions, groups, organizations, etc.), and produced throughout the history of social development [22]. Petrov interprets mass consciousness as a complex formation; it is characterized by rupture, porosity, contradiction, the ability to make rapid and unexpected changes in some respects and a certain "ossification" ("associated" with the formation of stereotypes) in others [15].

In domestic Ukrainian sociology, Vyshnyak wrote that "the separation of mass consciousness is most often associated with the division of public consciousness according to the ways in which its components arise. In accordance with this criterion, there are two major types of social consciousness: a) that which is formed by the whole mass of citizens with their direct reflection of public life; b) one that is formed in the process of specialized and formalized spiritual and spiritual-practical activities of individuals, professional groups, and various social institutions. The first type of social consciousness was called "mass consciousness", and the second "specialized consciousness" [28].

A more detailed description of the phenomenon of mass consciousness is given by a well-known expert on social and political psychology Olshansky. "Mass consciousness," he explains, "as the coinciding at some point in time (combination or intersection) of the main and most important components of consciousness of a large number of very diverse "classical" groups of society (large and small), but irreducible to them. This is a new quality that arises from the coincidence of certain fragments of the psychology of destructed for some reason "classical" groups. The industrial revolution and urbanization that began led to the emergence of mass professions and, consequently, to the mass spread of a limited number of lifestyles and the increasing consolidation of production, and it inevitably led to the deindividuation of the individual (to the typification of his psyche, consciousness and behavior)" [13].

That is why and namely in historical retrospect, along with individual, group, ethnic, class, and other such consciousness, a mass consciousness arose and exists, which, as already noted, "generates" in representatives of different social, ethnic, and other segments of the population of the same type (sometimes exactly the same) opinions, assessments and so on, and, accordingly, simplifies the task of propaganda.

It is really the case. V.A. Poltorak quite rightly notes that the mass consciousness is a part, a sector, a slice of public consciousness, within which representatives of different social, national, professional, and other groups may have and still have similar opinions, judgments, assessments that reflect their attitude to problems and facts of reality [18]. Accordingly, namely the presence of such a mass consciousness greatly simplifies the task of any propaganda because it allows the use of the same type of propaganda "product" (in a broad sense) and the same methods and technologies to convey it to almost all groups.

The following should be noted. When it comes to the mass consciousness that emerges in society (including through propaganda), one cannot ignore its connection with such a phenomenon as the mentality of the population and its various groups. The latter, as Isayev rightly believes, is a socio-political category that is a reflection of the socio-psychological state of the subject (ethnic group, social group, individual), that is the result of long-term, fairly stable influence of natural, geographical, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural living conditions of the subject and is manifested in various areas of activity [8].

Based on this, we can say that the very formation of mass consciousness in society in some way "hits" the mentality of individual ethnic groups, social and professional groups, etc., and in some way violates elements of their mentality [1, 6]. This

is neither good nor bad. Objectively, we can say (and this can be observed at times when revolutions occur and people with different mentalities go out to protest together), that the very process of formation and functioning of mass consciousness can really violate and violates elements of mentality in attitudes and behavior of some groups of the population.

Concluding the general review of the problems of the essence of mass consciousness, it is impossible to avoid views on it, and the processes of its formation and functioning of the famous Soviet sociologist B.A. Grushin, who for the first time paid special attention to this problem and prepared a special work *Mass Consciousness*, which was published in 1987. The beginning of his consideration of this phenomenon was made by him in the monograph *Thoughts on the World and the World of Thoughts* (1967). However, it should be noted that in this work the scientist did not distinguish between the essence of mass consciousness and public opinion. In 1987, he already considered public opinion as one of several states of mass consciousness.

In 1987, he noted, in particular, that if "mass consciousness is qualified as a special case of unconditionally social consciousness, which, although realized in the mass of individual consciousness, does not coincide with each of them separately, with individual consciousness as such, and if subjects that are at its core will be qualified as a special kind of human communities – the masses, which do not coincide with humanity as a whole, or with any society as a whole, or with any, including social (in the narrow sense of this word) groups that make up humanity and different societies" [7].

Although the above author's judgment of one of the classics of Soviet sociology seems difficult, it clearly expresses the position of the author, who believes that the mass consciousness is not the consciousness of certain groups of society, first, and does not coincide with individual consciousness secondly, as well as with universal consciousness, thirdly [30]. It is another, very specific formation, which differs from the individual, group, and universal consciousness by certain characteristics, which we consider in this paper.

Thus, considering the essence and specificity of mass consciousness as a whole, it is necessary to identify its main components or states, as they are often called. These primarily include value orientations, which are inherent in people who together "make up" this very mass consciousness, or rather which is inherent in them [23]. At the same time, it is cognitive potential, which is a measure of public awareness of various social problems, in relation to which the mass consciousness is created and functions [29]. It is clear that both the direction of propaganda and its effectiveness largely depend on the level of such awareness.

However, the main, key states of mass consciousness are certainly public sentiment and public opinion. The first, the public sentiments (moods), according to Petrovsky, are characterized, on the one hand, by their subject orientation (religious, political, etc.), on the other – the nature and level of their emotional tension (apathy, depression, elation, enthusiasm) [9].

Similar public sentiments, as noted by Nazaretyan, can stimulate spontaneous mass behavior, which is characterized by "involving a large number of people, at the same time, irrationality (weakening of conscious control), as well as weak structure, i.e., blurred positional-role structure, which is characteristic of normative forms of group behavior" [20].

In this case, in the fair opinion of Rizun, the formation of mass sentiment is influenced by reality (social, economic, political living conditions), which directly affects people and changes the possibilities of realization of demands, desires, wishes, and virtual reality (propaganda, ideology, advertising, journalism, etc.), that through mass communication affects the minds of citizens, manipulating the demands and desires, needs of people [22].

Finally, of course, the main state of mass consciousness is public opinion (let us recall that the famous researcher of mass consciousness Grushin from the beginning generally identified it with the mass consciousness). Fortunately, regarding the essence and specifics of the functioning of public opinion in sociology, and in particular domestic, today there are enough scientific works.

If we give a general for today's definition of public opinion (not as a social institution, but as a state of mass consciousness), it is a "state of mass consciousness", which is a hidden or explicit, undisguised, fairly stable and competent evaluation of different social groups, strata to the problems, events, and facts of social life [18].

Ukrainian sociologist Ossovsky, in one of his works, characterizing, in particular, the concept of public opinion of the American researcher Allport and other modern scientists, came to the conclusion that "public opinion is a common opinion of individuals, representing a consensus of individual opinions on a particular problem of common interest" [21].

In general, characterizing the available number of foreign and domestic scientific works on public opinion, we can consider many problems related to its formation, functioning, influence on the processes of public institutions of various social, political, and economic decisions. But, based on the main purpose of this work, which is devoted primarily to the analysis of the specifics of mass consciousness and the propaganda' impact on the latter, we note only the following.

First, public opinion is formed and functions on those issues in relation to which public interest arises and exists. Secondly, it arises mainly on topical issues of society. Third, public opinion is the result of a discussion process involving individuals and groups of people. Fourth, public opinion has a certain competence, i.e., it can really be competent on issues that are available to the public and on which the latter is sufficiently informed [20].

Thus, it is possible to draw a fairly fair and reasonable conclusion that public opinion is practically the "main state" of mass consciousness, which is primarily influenced in the process of regulating the social sphere of functioning and development of society to take into account the state of mass consciousness and influence (if necessary) on its regulation.

To what extent can such an impact occur, in particular on the state of mass consciousness? It is clear that the mass consciousness as such, of course, has certain levels, which, on the one hand, provide "opportunities" for their functioning and change. On the other hand, they must be taken into account when organizing the impact on it. Vasyuchynsky singles out, in particular, the following three levels of mass consciousness. The first – "basic" means a set of opportunities that are inherent in the actual mass collective consciousness. They are determined by the general mental properties of human, the peculiarities of human consciousness as a form of reflection of reality. The second level structural and functional covers the sphere of mass consciousness, which is the result of long cultural and historical development.

The third, most superficial level (it can be called current-functional) applies to those processes and states of mass consciousness that are ordinary, wave reflection of current events. Hence politicians and political technologists who intend to influence the content of mass consciousness and want to their influence was sufficiently adequate, must take into account the complete impossibility to change the structures of the basic level, the extreme importance of the influence on the structural-functional level and only the relative potential to change the mass consciousness at the current level [27].

The great theoretical significance of the study of mass consciousness, the need for its practical analysis and regulation in the process of governing society cause attention to it in many branches of sociological science (especially, sociology of

politics) and many areas of regulation of social processes. At the same time, the main, say, means, complexes of mechanisms of such regulation of the processes of formation and functioning of the mass consciousness are advertising, public relations and propaganda.

Namely through them, primarily through propaganda, the population, including its political consciousness, is influenced, in particular, politically. "Political influence," as Boyko rightly notes, is one of the key factors in the process of seizing, using, and retaining power. Its essence is the ability of a political entity to actively stimulate the process of changing the motives and attitudes of other political actors in order to transform their behavior and actions. Political influence can be exercised both consciously and purposefully through the mechanism of persuasion and suggestion, and unconsciously (spontaneously), when changes in behavior, beliefs, and attitudes occur on the basis of the psychological effects of 'infection' and imitation. Political practice has shown that manipulation is an extremely effective tool of political influence [5].

This article focuses on propaganda, and propaganda aimed at changing the motives and attitudes of individuals, the mass consciousness of the population primarily by persuasion, without the active use of processes of manipulation of public consciousness in general and mass consciousness in particular. At the same time, this is based on the traditional understanding of the concept of propaganda, which has developed over the centuries.

In general, the origin of the term "propaganda" dates back to the 16th century, when Pope Clement established the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. It was about promoting the influence of the Catholic Church, its struggle with secular authorities around the world, the creation of missions in different countries. Later, this church term acquired a political tone [4].

Today, it is really primarily used in the implementation of political tasks in society, while ensuring that political actors achieve political goals. But not only this. Therefore, before covering this method in politics, it is necessary to say a few words about how the method is interpreted in politics in general; it is necessary to say a few words about how propaganda is interpreted in modern Russian and Ukrainian sociological encyclopedias.

In the first case: "propaganda can be considered as the dissemination, transmission of certain information, its interpretation and taking into account the impact of information on the formation of public opinion in general, as well as the views of certain classes, social groups, etc., social communities" [25]. In the second case: "propaganda is the purposeful spread of political, legal, scientific and technical, philosophical, sociological, medical, religious and other knowledge in society in order to form certain beliefs and orient the activities of people in certain areas" [26].

Thus, sociological encyclopedias quite rightly and logically interpret propaganda as not necessarily evaluative, not necessarily positive or negative flow of information in society. At the same time, it is certainly a question of disseminating certain information to the mass consciousness in order to regulate it, especially when it comes to politics. Namely in this perspective we will continue to consider the problems of propaganda.

We believe that the presentation of this problem should begin with the opinion expressed by Pocheptsov. "A person," he says, "cannot witness all events. Most of the information comes to him through specially designed information flows. However, during this transition, the original "fact" is imperceptibly transformed into "opinion", and it is done so that the consumer of information does not find a substitution" [19].

We should say that Pocheptsov attaches great importance to this "mechanism of influence", interpreting it as certain tools and instructions, attaching such great importance to propaganda as a

mechanism of truly tendentious influence on the mass consciousness. "Objectively speaking," he writes, "propaganda, advertising, and public relations do not create and promote descriptions of life as much as its models. The same applies to news streams. That is, they are not based on information, but instructions... Propaganda can also be defined as the manipulation of meanings. Moreover, to refer to the desired meanings, propaganda uses labels – symbols that turn from endless repetition into symbols" [17].

Bloomer made a few more clarifications about this essence of propaganda: Propaganda, in his opinion, can be understood as a deliberately provoked and directed campaign to force people to accept a given point of view, mood or value. Its peculiarity is that in trying to achieve this goal, it does not provide an unbiased discussion of opposing views. The goal dominates, and the means are subordinated to this goal. Thus, we see that the initial characteristic of propaganda is the attempt of propaganda to achieve the acceptance of some point of view not on the basis of its real value, but an appeal to some other motives. Namely this trait makes propaganda suspicious. In the field of public debate and public discussion, propaganda operates in order to form opinions and judgments not on the basis of the merits of the subject, but mainly playing on emotional attitudes and feelings. Its purpose is to impose a certain attitude or value that begins to be perceived by people as something natural, true and real, and thus as something that is expressed spontaneously and without coercion [3].

After the above characteristics and judgments about the specific negative role of propaganda in its impact on the mass consciousness (regarding the general goals of propaganda as a disseminator of knowledge and information, we have already said above), the following opinion arises. Isn't propaganda in politics, in the sphere of public consciousness, something that always harms the affairs and that needs to be "removed" somewhere? But we also know examples when propaganda in such a case (by the way, there is also counter-propaganda) was quite positive, formed worthy goals, encouraged people to believe in something positive that is happening in society.

Therefore, continuing the analysis of problems of propaganda and its influence on mass consciousness, it is necessary, from our point of view, first of all, to define what place it occupies in the information communication which occurs between various public structures, institutes, social and other groups of people, separate individuals. The authors of "Political Communications", from our point of view, quite rightly believe that it is possible to distinguish two main ways of broadcasting information messages, which are almost opposite in nature, namely: marketing and non-marketing.

The first method – marketing – includes procedures and technologies that are focused on the specific needs of the actor and aimed at delivering messages to him at the right time and place. The second method – non-marketing – not only functions independently of the information needs of the recipient, but also the relevant contacts are formed only on the basis of the interests (positions, resources, etc.) of the communicator – that is, the one who organizes and transmits the relevant messages.

It is clear that propaganda (primarily political) refers to non-marketing methods of producing and broadcasting information messages. By definition of Solovyov, political propaganda is the main form of one-sided and monologue organization of information flows in the field of power, which are formed without taking into account the views of the recipient and on the basis of sharply critical attitude of the communicator to the position of its competitors [24].

In short, propaganda is no different from any other means of political information, which, like it, seeks to build information messages in such a way as to achieve recognition of their goals by the audience (perhaps, both positive and negative). It is clear that many different propaganda technologies are used for this, including manipulative ones. The task of this publication does not include a special consideration of such manipulative

propaganda technologies: it is a matter of a special publication. We will briefly analyze only the main forms of propaganda influence used when it comes to the mass consciousness.

The point is that in addition to the classic, so to speak, "direct propaganda", when certain ideas and problems are declared to influence the audience, the mass consciousness directly, without any camouflage, there are certain forms, so to speak, indirect influence on the mass consciousness in the process of propaganda. These include paid journalism, publicity and propaganda 2.0.

The first of them – 'paid journalism' – is a type of ordered, custom-made material. The main purpose of such materials is to create controlled information drives that are carried out in someone's interests [4]. According to Olshansky, "most often, it is positive material about a politician or a party, which is not accompanied by any messages that it is advertising. This type of material looks quite organic in the media and is often perceived as independent judgments or the editorial board's own opinion. This is due to the greater trust of the audience in such materials than in overt advertising" [13].

A slightly different "approach" to increasing the trust of the audience, the mass consciousness to the propaganda materials are implemented using "publicity" – the next form of propaganda influence. Unlike paid journalism, as noted by Korolko, "publicity is information from an independent source used by the media because it has the value of news. This is an uncontrolled method of posting messages in the media, because the source of the message does not pay anything to the press for posting" [10].

Finally, another new form of propaganda, designed to inspire maximum confidence in the mass consciousness, is "Propaganda 2.0". Sometimes when it comes to it, they say "soft propaganda"; sometimes, following Bernays, it is identified with public relations. But this is really a separate, specific kind of propaganda [2]. Although, it should be noted, the problems of such propaganda have not yet found their consideration and definition in sociology.

Pochepstov, who uses the term most often today, says that "Propaganda 2.0 is propaganda hidden within literature and art, movies and TV series... Propaganda 2.0 is characterized by the fact that its propaganda orientation is not disclosed. If earlier only literature and art were built in such a manner, today news has moved to such a platform" [16].

Considering these three specific forms of propaganda – paid journalism, publicity, propaganda 2.0, it should be noted once again that in contrast to other methods and technologies of propaganda that use (often with elements of manipulation) to "organize", so to speak, purely propaganda in the negative sense of influencing the mass consciousness, they are aimed at carefully and unobtrusively convincing the audience, which is influenced by propaganda, in the real goals and intentions of a particular subject of propaganda.

4 Conclusion

The results of the theoretical analysis of the problems of mass consciousness and the influence of propaganda on it in the process of its appropriate regulation allow ingdraw the following conclusions.

The thesis that the mass consciousness acts as a certain, specific level of social consciousness, which is not reduced to individual, group, universal and "has" certain advantages in terms of the impact of propaganda on it, is defined and confirmed.

It turned out that the main states of mass consciousness are the value orientations of individuals, their cognitive potential, as the main – public sentiment and public opinion.

The analysis showed that propaganda, which has the main function in the processes of influencing the mass consciousness, its regulation, can cause both negative and positive consequences

and acts as a specific non-marketing form of production and transmission of information messages to the public.

The article identifies and briefly describes the main forms of propaganda that affect the mass consciousness and can regulate its state, namely: direct propaganda, paid journalism, publicity, propaganda 2.0.

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