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## THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE NEED TO INCREASE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION WITH WEB 2.0 TOOLS

***Viacheslav Dziundziuk,***

*Doctor of Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Public Policy,  
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Kharkiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0622-2600  
dziundziuk@karazin.ua*

***Dmytro Karamyshev,***

*Doctor of Sciences, Professor, Professor at the Department of Public Policy,  
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Kharkiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1617-3240  
dvk1vip@gmail.com*

***Lina Ignatenko,***

*Senior Lecturer at the Department of Law, National Defense and European Integration,  
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Kharkiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1628-1244  
linaign8@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** Citizen participation is an essential component of modern democratic public administration. However, it is not provided automatically but requires efforts from both public authorities and citizens themselves. The formation of public opinion on the need for citizen participation contributes to the unification of these efforts on both sides. In the context of the development of the information society, public opinion can and should be formed with Web 2.0 tools and technologies, primarily social media, which have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion in modern societies. The purpose of this article is to explore the possibility of forming public opinion on the need to increase citizen participation using social advertising on social media as a Web 2.0 tool. To achieve this, three research tasks were solved: to determine the essential features of public opinion; to consider the features of analysis and formation of public opinion; to consider the use of social advertising as a Web 2.0 tool for forming public opinion. A separate section of the article is devoted to each of the tasks. Based on the results of the study, several conclusions are drawn. The authors propose a mechanism for shaping public opinion on the need to increase the level of citizen participation, which includes the following components: identification of social groups for further interaction; monitoring of the social mood of these groups; tracking and analysis of social information targeted at these groups; studying public opinion rooted in certain social groups through establishing communication with them; analysis of public opinion in terms of its contribution to increasing the level of citizen participation; application of Web 2.0 tools to identify and analyse public opinion.

**Key words:** citizen participation, public opinion, governance, public authorities, social media, social advertising, digital technologies.

**Introduction.** Citizen participation is an integral and important component of modern public administration in democratic states. However, the desire to increase the level of participation alone is not enough – it is necessary to form the appropriate public opinion that would, on the one hand, encourage citizens to participate in public governance, and, on the other hand, put pressure on public authorities to provide broad opportunities for such participation. That is why we have devoted this article to the formation of the public opinion in question.

The democratic path of development of Ukrainian society has naturally led to an increase in the number and diversity of entities interested in establishing effective interaction with members of the public and various social groups. This has also become true for public authorities, although this aspect of their activities is probably more difficult for them than for other types of organisations.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, as some authors note (Ates, 2005), the public administration system in the 21st century has objectively become so complicated that ordinary citizens are unable to understand it, and sometimes have no idea where and to whom they should address their problem, which causes public apathy and general frustration of citizens, a sense of helplessness before the state and public servants representing it at all levels. Many citizens do not understand what is being done and why, or to what extent the actions and decisions of public authorities contribute to the realisation of their interests, which leads to distrust and, consequently, a negative attitude towards these organisations. Of course, the public authorities themselves are largely to blame for this, as they forget the principle that not only should the authorities work effectively, but all citizens should be convinced that they work effectively (Clarke, 2014).

The second reason is related to the negative image of public authority employees that is ingrained in the public perception. Unfortunately, in Ukraine the words «bureaucracy» and «officialdom» have always carried a certain negative connotation, and the general perception of the work of public authorities by the majority of the population is characterised by such concepts as «corruption», «personal interests», and «bias». It should be acknowledged that there were good reasons for this, as historically the bureaucracy in Ukraine has in many ways surpassed M. Weber's ideal bureaucracy, bringing many bureaucratic principles to the point of absurdity. For our citizens, who for many years have not had the opportunity to participate in the governance of the state, the bureaucracy has always been an alien force «detached from the people», engaged exclusively in solving its own problems. Therefore, the current public authorities in Ukraine face not only today's problems but also the legacy of a negative image, that has been around since time immemorial and strengthened during the socialist era, which should undoubtedly be taken into account when building a system of public relations to engage citizens in public administration. To solve this problem, it is advisable to use new channels of interaction between public authorities and citizens, in particular, social networks based on Web 2.0 technologies.

**Purpose of the study.** The purpose of this article is to consider the possibility of forming public opinion on the need to increase citizen participation using social advertising on social networks as a Web 2.0 tool. To achieve this goal we should solve three research tasks: 1) to determine the essential features of public opinion; 2) to consider the features of analysis and formation of public opinion; and 3) to consider the use of social advertising as a Web 2.0 tool for forming public opinion.

**Results and discussion.** The formation of public opinion is an indicator of the importance and significance of an issue for the group, the group's inclusion in a certain system of relations, the breadth (or narrowness) of its public interests, and the level of development (underdevelopment) of the group itself. That is why it is impossible to increase the level of public participation without a shaped public opinion on the need for citizens to take an active part in public administration.

Public opinion has a value-regulatory, practical, and effective character, which is directly reflected in the behaviour and activities of individual social groups and society as a whole. In relation to the group, it performs several vital functions: informing and advising its members on a particular issue (problem), controlling their actions and behaviour, determining the position and acceptable (desirable) ways of solving the problem, forms of participation in a particular type of activity (Salmanov, 2013).

Public opinion contributes to the formation of the group's cohesion and, in certain conditions (which is important!), to the stability of society as a whole. In a modified form, these functions of public opinion are also realised in relation to the external environment of the group (e.g., other social groups, state institutions, etc.). Accordingly, by analysing the state of public opinion, public authorities can obtain information on the attitude of different groups of the population toward them,

the acceptability of decisions and actions of these organisations for citizens, receive proposals for their improvement and identify the most constructive forms of cooperation with citizens. At the same time, by shaping public opinion in a certain direction with public relations (PR) mechanisms, public authorities can establish effective interaction with relevant social groups. However, three important aspects related to the phenomenon of public opinion should be taken into account: its formation, its relationship with social mood, and social information (Kandahura, 2010). Let us dwell on them in more detail.

While recognising the great importance of identifying public opinion for public authorities, it should be noted that it is often difficult to do so, since public opinion is not an arithmetic sum of statements recorded in one way or another. Public opinion is a fairly mature organic product of public life, a collective opinion that emerges in the process and as a result of a very complex social communication – public discussion (Afonin, 2006). If the society does not have a set of conditions necessary for its emergence, namely: the public that perceives itself as a subject of social behaviour; flows of free and accessible information on the subject of discussion; developed interest of the public in this information; their ability to articulate their position; a wide network of trouble-free channels of interpersonal and intergroup communication, then this product will be absent. In this sense, public opinion does not exist everywhere, i.e. not in all social environments, and not always, i.e. not on every occasion that deserves attention and is of interest to researchers (Ossovskiy, 1999).

There are several main factors that complicate the process of forming public opinion of Ukrainian citizens, its analysis, and correct interpretation of its results, especially now in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. These reasons include the following:

- the majority of the population's lack of understanding of what is happening in the country, the loss of basic guidelines in life and, as a result, extreme emotional excitement, instability of reactions and assessments, a tendency to wobble from one side to the other, dependence of statements on many random, including latent, factors hidden from the researcher;
- significant differentiation of lifestyles, including cultural and regional factors, and, as a result, a sharp pluralism of positions that arises at the non-standard intersections of many socio-demographic backgrounds and is difficult to classify;
- excessive fatigue from an extensive number of daily worries and, as a result, loss of trust not only in the existing government but also in the institutions of power as such, widespread socio-political absenteeism, extreme forms of exclusion from various political processes, including the processes of forming and expressing public opinion;
- a pronounced internal contradiction of views associated with orientations toward a significant number of new values with a strong commitment to most of the old ones, and, as a result, an unprecedented mosaic of consciousness;
- the obvious increase in the mass consciousness of many pre- and non-rational, including outright irrational, forms of its existence and expression, which do not coincide with the public opinion itself and therefore not only should not be identified as such but also require special ways of analysis.

Along with the social preconditions that complicate (or facilitate) the process of forming public opinion, there are also natural ones, stipulated by the complexity of this phenomenon itself and the presence of stages of its formation: from the emergence of the first opinions in a group to clarifying the essence of the issue (problem). In this regard, researchers have to study both mature, crystallised public opinion and its newly-emerging forms, while the status of public opinion directly depends on the level of its maturity (Ossovskiy, 1999). It should be noted, however, that the effective and practical nature of public opinion does not usually manifest itself, but requires certain organisational forms – institutions and organisations that, relying on the support of the public opinion, are able to conduct a long and regular dialogue with the authorities. Outside of these forms, the power of public opinion can be manifested mainly in individual spontaneous protests.

The second aspect noted by many researchers of the phenomenon of public opinion is its relationship with social attitudes, which are a real form of behaviour of social groups, acting as a form of validity of expression of social consciousness in the process of its transformation into a social force (Ossovskiy, 1999). It can be said that public opinion is a crystallisation of social mood in a certain period of time. At the same time, social mood has several essential features.

First, it has an integrating character, combining the influence of both objective and subjective factors, thus forming a certain fusion of emotions, feelings, mindsets, value orientations, and attitudes, which, at the same time, is not their sum total – it is a fundamentally new quality of public consciousness, which can be used to judge it with a high degree of reliability and certainty.

Secondly, social mood more definitely and more clearly and specifically reflects previous social experience, «digests» it, comparing the past with the present and drawing conclusions for the future. Moreover, in this case, experience acts not as a «well of wisdom» that is created and stored just in case, but as a tool that directly affects the nature of social mood.

Thirdly, social mood is the immediate, actualised real consciousness that governs people's behaviour at a given moment in time. At the same time, even though the mood may be undulating and various problems may come to the fore at any given moment, it generally has a longer lifespan than public opinion, which is often fleeting.

Fourthly, social mood is that element of actual public consciousness that embodies practical readiness for action and is an immediate precursor and even a component of behaviour. While not all elements of social consciousness (awareness, knowledge, opinions, etc.) are characterized by an active beginning, social mood is the component of people's behaviour that can directly define their real intentions, their attitude to the world around them, and the processes taking place in it.

And finally, fifthly, social mood is also a background that «colours» people's lives, shows with a high degree of probability the direction of their behaviour, and helps to predict the possibility of strengthening positive and weakening negative aspects of public consciousness.

The third aspect is related to the fact that information, especially social information, plays an important role in the mechanism of forming both social mood and public opinion (although any information always has a certain social colouring, as it reflects the processes of material and spiritual life). Social information can be viewed as a set of knowledge, information, data, and messages that are generated and reproduced in society and used by individuals, groups, organisations and various social institutions to regulate social interaction (Afonin, 2006). Moreover, the main «producer» of this information is the state, so public authorities, by creating appropriate communication channels and filling them with relevant content, can significantly influence the formation of both social mood and public opinion, including for the purpose of effective interaction with certain social groups and citizens. The following points should be taken into account.

Firstly, modern mass communication relations involve interaction between two subjects – a communicator and communicants, in which each participant in this process, carrying out its specific activity, also longs for the activity of its partner. Only in this case will it be possible to establish effective interaction with communicators, which should be understood as the communicator achieving their goal at the lowest possible cost. However, to establish a dialogue relationship or achieve the goal of their activity, communicators need to take into account the needs, interests, motives, attitudes, and corresponding characteristics of communicators. In other words, in order to form a new public opinion, it is necessary to know the old one.

And, secondly, mass communication activities related to the consumption, use, and production of mass information, with its total prevalence and accessibility, become a necessary condition and means of practically any social activity, but this happens only when the content and form of mass information changes in accordance with the information interests and needs of people. Satisfaction of the information needs of communicators should be considered as a goal-means of the communicator to achieve other, in this case managerial, goals.

The nature and content of information needs are deeply connected with all the diversity of human activity. They should be viewed as the need for messages of a certain content and form that people need to orientate themselves in the environment, clarify their worldview, choose a mode of behaviour and resolve problems, to achieve internal balance and coherence with the social environment (Norris, 2001). Without satisfaction of these needs, purposeful rational human activity is impossible, so the degree of development of information needs and their satisfaction are closely related to human social activity, acting, as well as other needs, as its causative agent.

At the same time, the communicator must also satisfy the information needs of communicants because if they are not satisfied with messages transmitted through certain channels, the communicators either seek the necessary information in other channels, which the communicator may not be in control of, or suppress the need for this kind of information and, consequently, their activity in this area, which leads to the impossibility of establishing a dialogue. Moreover, when satisfying information needs, it is advisable to satisfy the thematic interests of communicators, which are a subjective reflection and expression of information needs and depend on the content of the information offered and on situational socio-psychological factors (such as popularity, topicality, prestige of certain topics, etc.), since not all information needs are realised by communicators and expressed in their communication behaviour.

As noted above, the formation of a new public opinion should be preceded by an analysis of its existing state, which should begin with the identification of interested groups and then priority ones, i.e. groups that, due to their size (voters, consumers) and influence (opinion leaders), can have the greatest impact on the organisation's activities. At the same time, there is always a temptation to identify priority groups by the simplest and most tangible socio-demographic characteristics: gender, age, place of residence, occupation, etc. Sometimes this simple approach is enough to identify priority groups, but more often it is necessary to identify additional characteristics related to the values, lifestyle, and worldview of the groups.

Many PR specialists distinguish eight categories of consumers (Afonin, 2006):

- «fulfilled» consumers are successful people with high self-esteem, ready for change, whose lives are rich and varied;
- «doers» and «believers» who are focused on their principles. The difference between them is that the «doers» are practical and choose quality products with a longer service life, while the «believers», having a more modest approach and level of education, prefer old, traditional brands;
- «achievers» and «aspirants» who in their choice are guided by their status. The «achievers» tend to make purchases that can be used by people in their circle to judge their success. «Aspiring» consumers have limited funds but want to look stylish and can sometimes behave impulsively;
- «experienced» and «makers» are action-oriented and want to demonstrate their influence. The «experienced» are usually young, disregard comfort and authority, and tend to spend money on entertainment and clothing. By contrast, the «makers» are more traditional and conservative, and are rarely impressed by things that have no practical use;
- «accepters» are so poor and have such a low level of education that they usually focus on basic needs.

Even though this classification was originally defined for consumers of goods and services in the private sector, it can, with certain conditions, be applied to citizens in their interaction with public authorities, in the sense that it helps to identify different styles of behaviour of citizens towards these organisations based on their consumer patterns. For example, the «fulfilled» and the «experienced» are more likely than others to welcome various innovations and are willing to incur additional costs to save their time (if the service provided allows for such a possibility). The «achievers» and «aspirants» will demand increased attention and seek to bypass the «regular order» of service provision. The «doers» and «makers» are focused on «everything being done properly» and «the usual way». The most demanding consumers will be from among the «believers».

It is obvious that identifying groups based on behavioural and consciousness characteristics that may only partially overlap with socio-demographic parameters (or may not overlap at all) requires serious analytical work. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the fact that any typology of priority groups is not suitable for all cases, so the analysis of priority groups should be «tied» to the problem and analysis of the general situation at a certain point in time.

It is but natural that the group(s) in question can only be identified from among those that actually exist. From the point of view of public relations activities, a social group can be considered as existing only if it is ready for active communication on the issue, which in turn implies that:

- the group recognises the existence of such an important problem that its members need additional information to shape an attitude to it;
- an acknowledgement of external constraints on the possibilities of solving the problem and, at the same time, the group's ability to influence its solution to some extent, for which the group members need additional information to develop an action plan;
- the existence of the condition of involvement, i.e. involvement in the problem, interest in a particular solution. The more involved the group members are in the problem, the more likely they are to discuss it and seek additional information on the problem (Isin, 2007).

Therefore, any study of public opinion with the aim of analysing it, correcting it or forming a new opinion should begin with identifying whether the three components that characterise a social group as being communicatively active are present. If the group is not ready for active communication exchange on the issue of interest, and does not feel the need for it, obviously, any message addressed to it is doomed to failure, no matter what communication channels are used and how efficient they are.

Based on the above, we propose a mechanism for shaping public opinion on the need to increase the level of citizen participation, which includes the following components: identification of social groups for further interaction; monitoring social mood of these groups; tracking and analysing social information that reaches these groups; if possible, shaping a certain part of it; studying public opinion that is predominant among certain social groups by establishing communication with them; analysing public opinion from the point of view of its contribution to increasing the level of citizen participation; applying Web 2.0 tools to certain social groups to correct existing or form new public opinion.

In the last decade, many researchers have proposed the use of Web 2.0, especially social networks, to shape public opinion and increase the level of citizen participation (Kavanaugh, 2012; Bonson, 2012; Molinari, 2009). However, such a tool as social advertising is overlooked. Social advertising has proven itself quite well in the «offline» world to form the necessary public opinion, so, in our opinion, it should be actively used in social networks, considering social advertising in this case as a Web 2.0 tool.

One of the key functions of governance, including state governance or public administration, is motivation, and social advertising is primarily related to motivation. Moreover, the implementation of the motivation function in public administration is twofold: first, as a tool for the internal organisation of the administration process, and second, as a tool for managing the external environment. As an internal influence tool, it is exercised in staff management of certain labour groups. From the point of view of implementing external influences, motivation is a process aimed at inducing the object of management to take certain actions necessary to achieve the goals of the subject of management.

In this sense, motivation is close to incentives, which act as an external influence in relation to a certain citizen or social group, the purpose of which is to provide the object of management with certain benefits in exchange for acceptable forms and patterns of behaviour (Manzhola, 2007). In any case, motives serve as the basis for the implementation of certain actions and acquire the character of a personal necessity for the individual. The process of motivation from the point of view of the object of management implies the satisfaction of certain needs of the individual (which have their own structure). Thus, in the process of implementing the motivation function, the subject of management

should reach certain established structures of consciousness of certain social groups and encourage them to perform certain social acts in such a way that their implementation would be an internally conscious and personally acceptable action for the object of motivation. Based on this, it can be noted that there may be a certain lag between the influence of the subject of management and the actions of the object of management, since a conscious change in social practices mostly takes time. In this sense, social advertising is the most appropriate form of implementing the function of external motivation for public authorities.

The famous American researcher E. Aronson noted that social advertising is not advertising of a specific product, but a certain «attitude to the world», which may be manifested mainly in the long term (Aronson, 2001). It can be noted that social advertising is «atypical», as it is known that advertising is created to encourage a person to take some action, for example, to buy a product. The purpose of social advertising is to change the public's attitude to a problem – to citizen participation in our case. In addition, unlike commercial advertising, the information contained in social advertising is usually not new. On the contrary, the more the recipient of social advertising is aware of the topic of the social message, the more keenly he or she reacts to it, and thus the more effective the advertising campaign is.

Thus, the subject of social advertising is an idea that should have a certain social value. Therefore, such advertising can be targeted at both the broadest audience concerned with universal issues and a narrow category of the population, certain social groups. If we consider social advertising as a Web 2.0 tool (i.e. advertising through social networks), we will be talking about the latter case.

The demand for social advertising is constantly growing, which is explained by the following factors (Aronson, 2001): 1) the increasing complexity of the tasks being solved in the public sphere; 2) the lack of competition, since the state is mainly engaged in social problems (although the role of non-governmental organisations has been growing recently). Undoubtedly, these factors are also present in Ukraine, but government agencies do not attach due importance to them, not considering it necessary to fund social advertising campaigns. However, the experience of many countries proves that social advertising is an effective means of solving social problems. As noted above, such advertising changes people's attitudes to everyday reality, and then their behaviour changes.

It should be noted that, despite a significant number of illustrative examples, some experts believe that it is impossible to determine the effectiveness of social advertising. For example, E. Aronson notes that it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of social advertising because it does not have a specific measurable effect (Aronson, 2001). It is difficult to agree with this, especially considering that based on the accumulated practical experience, it is possible to clearly define the indicators of effective social advertising, according to which it is such if:

- it is a channel of practice-oriented communication between the society and representatives of the public interest, and makes people think;
- it is positive – not «against», but «for», including for the absence of something, for example, anti-drugs;
- it has a «human face» – the focus is not on the object but on the person;
- it is based on socially approved norms and actions, values and stereotypes;
- it does not provoke contradictions between different social groups; on the contrary, messages in social advertising unite and strengthen ties between them;
- it indicates conditions and ways for direct participation of citizens in positive social processes;
- it creates not an immediate and one-time action, but a sustainable and often prolonged socially significant behaviour.

Thus, effective social advertising, in addition to its direct purpose, can bring additional benefits, such as the transmission of positive values that contribute to the humanisation of society, and the involvement of citizens in participation (which is what we are interested in in this paper), which helps them to develop a position of «civic responsibility».

The positive effect of social advertising on the public consciousness should be sought primarily in psychological aspects. Social advertising is characterised by such criteria of psychological effectiveness as memorability, attractiveness, informativeness, motivation, and, especially, emotionality. It is emotionality, which determines the attitude to the object of advertised information (sympathy, antipathy, neutrality, contradiction), that should, in our opinion, be considered a key aspect in this type of advertising. Putting forward this thesis, we base it, firstly, on the fact that any advertising materials always evoke unconscious emotional images, i.e. an advertising product is not only information, it is also several emotionally intense minutes that a person personally experiences at the moment of its «consumption»; and, secondly, on the findings of psychologists that people have a very stable emotional memory (working on the principle of «pleasant – unpleasant», «liked – disliked»), and emotional memory has a much stronger impact on human behaviour than other types of memory.

Thus, a social advertising campaign should form such a chain: «problem – idea – advertising implementation of the idea – emotional impact on the consumer – emotional memorisation – change of value orientations – behaviour, actions». This raises an important question about which of the known emotions (love, joy, happiness, surprise, sadness, suffering, fear, anger, rage, disgust, contempt, guilt, etc.) should be evoked in the addressee. Here, first of all, it is necessary to determine the «polarity» of the emotion: it should be positive or negative, bearing in mind that positive emotions stimulate the addressee to achieve a goal, and negative emotions – to avoid objects that cause unpleasant states. After that, you can choose a specific emotion that will be incorporated directly into the advertising product. In our case, we can suggest relying on such a positive emotion as the joy of gaining increased opportunities to influence public life.

If emotionality is the first «pillar» of social advertising, then suggestion should be considered as the second «pillar», which can be seen as a process of influencing the consciousness of the addressees, whereby it changes without external coercion (Aronson, 2015). That is, the essence of suggestion is to influence a person's feelings, and through them, their mind and will. This subsequently leads to a change in the addressees' behavioural model in the desired direction. Suggestion is carried out using many well-known and well-described methods and techniques, and the effect of indoctrination is particularly strong when what is being indoctrinated generally meets the needs and interests of the addressees. And that is why the use of social networks, which people use voluntarily in accordance with their interests, is the best channel for promoting social advertising.

Naturally, when dealing with a group of recipients, it should be borne in mind that different people have different degrees of suggestibility, susceptibility to suggestion, and subjective readiness to experience the impact of suggestion and obey it. Nevertheless, experts have identified several situational factors of suggestibility that are, generally speaking, common to all (Aronson, 2015): certain mental states (relaxation or, conversely, strong emotional arousal, stress); low level of awareness and competence in relation to the information being suggested; high degree of importance of the information being suggested; uncertainty of the addressee's own position; lack of time.

Many of these factors are inherent in Ukrainian citizens who are currently living in conditions of uncertainty caused by the war, which aggravates stress; and when it comes to information coming from government agencies, it is undoubtedly significant, but at the same time, most citizens have a low level of awareness of it. Based on this, it can be concluded that Ukrainian citizens are quite suggestible in terms of the influence from government agencies, which, of course, should be used in social advertising campaigns. When developing an advertising concept, it is also necessary to take into account the dual task of social advertising: on the one hand, it informs the public (or certain target groups) about certain social problems, and on the other hand, it calls for their solution.

**Conclusions.** Thus, a social media advertising campaign should include two components: 1) a high-quality advertising product (or several products) that would evoke certain emotions and influence the target audience; 2) an educational component in the form of special information messages aimed at rational thinking of the recipients.



In addition, social advertising as a Web 2.0 tool requires choosing the best social media promotion channels. To form public opinion on the need to increase the level of citizen participation, we suggest using accounts of public authorities, as well as information bots that send information to citizens about the provision of various public and municipal services.

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