

The Influence of Political Thinking on the Development of a Democratic Society

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of political thinking in the development of a democratic society and its impact on social life. It examines the processes of forming political consciousness and thinking, as well as their influence on human worldview, civic position, and the strengthening of democratic values in society. Furthermore, the article evaluates the development of political thinking culture as a key factor in enhancing citizens' political activity, ensuring social stability, and increasing the efficiency of the governance system. The author also analyzes the roles of education, mass media, and social institutions in fostering political thinking. The research findings contribute to developing theoretical and practical conclusions aimed at raising citizens' political awareness and responsibility in a democratic society.

Key words: political thinking, legal culture, political culture, democracy, democratic society, democratic reforms.

INTRODUCTION

The study of problems related to enhancing political thinking in society requires a deep analysis of the various approaches and perspectives proposed by scholars in this field. Political thinking is determined by the level of legal consciousness and legal-political culture among individuals within a given community, as well as by the development of legal norms and legal activity (law-making, law enforcement, and legal protection). Its foundation lies in knowledge of law and its interpretations, along with corresponding actions that reflect the level of citizens' legal and political culture in society.

The normative interpretation of politics first appeared in ancient times. Aristotle regarded politics as the highest form of human activity, emphasizing that justice is achieved in the process of human interaction. He stated, "*Justice exists only in political life, for the entire political system itself is based on law.*" [1] Hence, law regulates social relations, and in scholarly literature, humans are recognized as *political beings*. Politics cannot exist outside society, and it is implemented through legal mechanisms. From this perspective, law and politics, though distinct, are phenomena that cannot exist independently of one another. Their dialectical interconnection and practical application create the foundation for a stable social mechanism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Professors H. Odilqoriev and Sh. G'oyibnazarov define political thinking as an inseparable component of general culture, representing the unity of historical-political experience, political consciousness, and political behavior [2]. Professor I. Ergashev argues that political culture reflects the ideas of different nations or social groups concerning political reality, politics, laws, and their operational principles and values [3]. In our view, the scholar's definition limits political culture to a set of perceptions. To be more complete, it should also include political knowledge, political experience, and the political activity of cultural subjects.

Political scientist R. Jumaev considers political thinking to be the basis for conscious reflection on reality and events, forming a systematic worldview and serving as the foundation for purposeful action by each individual [4].

Russian scholars N. Blinov, Yu. Ozhegov, and F. Sheregi note that *“the core of political thinking has always been the human being, his formation and perfection. Political thinking is closely connected with political consciousness but is not identical to it. It reveals the specific features of political consciousness as expressed in real political activity. It characterizes not only human thoughts and emotions but also real actions and behavior. Political experience, traditions, knowledge, and perceptions constitute integral components of political culture.”* [5]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This view indicates that political culture is directly linked to the processes of human formation, socialization, and intellectual development. Political thinking, as one of the fundamental components of political culture, is not a static phenomenon; rather, it is a dynamic process that evolves alongside social, economic, and cultural changes in society. It is transmitted from one generation to another through accumulated political experience, collective consciousness, knowledge systems, value orientations, and established traditions. In this sense, political thinking functions as a bridge that connects historical political experience with the realities of contemporary governance and civic life.

According to Professor H. Odilqoriev, political culture broadly represents the level of political experience, knowledge, perceptions, activities, and behavioral models of political actors. It serves as an indicator of the political maturity and civic engagement of a society, as well as of the overall quality of the political system. Political culture, therefore, is not merely a set of abstract ideas; it is a living mechanism that reflects how individuals, groups, and institutions understand and participate in political life. It expresses the historical experience and memory of political actors, as well as the habits, moral tendencies, and traditions that influence their political behavior and decision-making.

Political thinking, in turn, represents the intellectual dimension of this culture—it is the capacity of individuals and communities to interpret political events critically, evaluate political systems, and make informed choices that align with democratic principles. It is closely connected to political activity, defining its direction, methods, and “technology.” The interaction between political thinking and political consciousness allows for the formation of stable democratic values and ensures the consistency of political behavior. In this regard, political thinking is both a reflective and practical process: it not only interprets political reality but also serves as a driving force for political transformation and civic participation.

Therefore, political culture should not be regarded merely as a collection of knowledge, values, and traditions, nor as a passive reflection of political systems. It is, in fact, a dynamic and creative field in which political thinking plays an active role in shaping public consciousness, promoting democratic ideals, and constructing effective governance practices. Political thinking is also a method through which individuals and groups articulate and realize their political interests, contributing to the continuous renewal and improvement of democratic institutions [6].

The essence of political thinking lies in cultivating positive moral and intellectual qualities among participants in political relations—qualities such as responsibility, tolerance, justice, and respect for pluralism. It develops the ability to analyze social problems objectively, engage in constructive dialogue, and participate in political life not as passive observers but as active and responsible citizens. In this sense, political thinking performs an educational and moral function: it helps to shape individuals who are capable of independent reasoning, ethical judgment, and meaningful contribution to public affairs.

Political thinking is a vital element of any political system because it ensures the human dimension of politics. Without it, politics risks turning into a purely bureaucratic or technocratic process devoid of moral and civic content. Through behavioral patterns, values, emotions, and lifestyles, political thinking connects institutions, laws, and policies with the lived experience of ordinary people. It transforms

political systems into spaces of human creativity and ethical interaction, where decisions are not only legally justified but also morally grounded.

Furthermore, political thinking serves as a mediator between the state, civil society, and the individual. It enables citizens to understand their rights and responsibilities, to evaluate government actions critically, and to participate in shaping the future of their nation. A well-developed political thinking fosters political tolerance, dialogue between different social groups, and a shared sense of collective responsibility for the common good.

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the development of political thinking acquires even greater significance. The spread of information technologies and social media has radically changed the way people form their political views and interact with power structures. Therefore, the cultivation of critical and independent political thinking becomes essential for protecting society from manipulation, populism, and misinformation. In democratic societies, strengthening political thinking among citizens is a key precondition for ensuring political stability, civic solidarity, and sustainable social development.

Thus, political thinking is not only an intellectual category but also a practical necessity for democratic governance. It integrates knowledge, ethics, and active participation, making it possible to balance individual freedoms with collective interests. By nurturing a culture of critical reflection, dialogue, and responsibility, political thinking ensures that democracy remains a living and evolving system grounded in human dignity, justice, and mutual respect.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the analysis above, the author proposes the following comprehensive definition of political thinking: it is a set of individual and collective perceptions about the political system, political reality, political processes, and the operation of laws and institutions, shaped by historical and social experience. Political thinking serves as the intellectual and moral foundation for conscious reflection on socio-political events and the development of a coherent worldview. It represents the process through which individuals and communities interpret political life, evaluate governance systems, and determine their own active roles within them. Structurally, political thinking comprises essential elements such as political knowledge, political consciousness, political perception, and political behavior—all of which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing components of a democratic society.

Political thinking performs several key functions in social and political life. First, it plays a cognitive function, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge about the state, law, rights, and governance mechanisms. This knowledge allows citizens to understand not only how political institutions operate but also how their participation can influence these processes. A person with developed political thinking does not remain indifferent to political changes; rather, he or she evaluates events through the prism of justice, legality, and civic responsibility.

Second, political thinking fulfills an evaluative and critical function. It equips individuals with the intellectual tools to assess political actions, policies, and decisions objectively. In democratic societies, critical political thinking serves as a safeguard against authoritarianism, corruption, and social injustice. It promotes transparency, accountability, and the active engagement of citizens in public oversight. Through this evaluative function, individuals learn to distinguish between genuine democratic reforms and superficial political rhetoric, thereby contributing to the moral purification and development of political institutions.

Third, political thinking carries a practical and motivational function. It transforms political knowledge and values into conscious actions, shaping the behavior of individuals and groups in real social and political contexts. This process is manifested in civic activism, participation in elections, voluntary associations, and social movements. Through these actions, political thinking becomes a practical force

that sustains democracy, reinforces social solidarity, and strengthens the political responsibility of citizens.

Fourth, political thinking has a moral and cultural function. It integrates ethical values such as justice, equality, respect for diversity, and human dignity into the sphere of politics. It ensures that political activity is not merely a struggle for power but also a reflection of collective moral aspirations. In this way, political thinking connects political rationality with moral consciousness, creating a balance between pragmatic interests and ethical responsibility.

In addition to these functions, political thinking also contributes to the formation of a civic identity. It helps individuals recognize themselves as part of a political community, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to the nation's destiny. A citizen with developed political thinking is aware of his or her rights and duties, understands the value of participation in governance, and respects the principles of pluralism and rule of law.

In the modern globalized world, political thinking acquires new dimensions due to the rapid expansion of information technologies and communication networks. The digital era provides vast opportunities for access to political information, but it also exposes individuals to misinformation, propaganda, and manipulation. Therefore, the development of critical and independent political thinking is essential to distinguish truth from falsehood and to preserve democratic stability. The ability to analyze political messages, verify facts, and make reasoned judgments becomes a vital element of political literacy in the 21st century.

Furthermore, political thinking plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony and intercultural dialogue. In pluralistic societies where multiple ideologies and belief systems coexist, political thinking serves as a mechanism for mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. It encourages tolerance toward differing opinions and prevents polarization by promoting dialogue and compromise. Through this, political thinking acts as a stabilizing factor that ensures the sustainability of democratic institutions.

From a philosophical perspective, political thinking represents the unity of theoretical understanding and practical action. It not only interprets political reality but also provides guidance for transforming it. The development of political thinking thus requires a synthesis of education, cultural experience, and moral formation. Educational systems, media institutions, and civil organizations play decisive roles in nurturing citizens capable of independent thought, civic responsibility, and constructive participation in political life.

Ultimately, political thinking is the cornerstone of democratic governance. It ensures that democracy is not limited to formal institutions and electoral procedures but is rooted in the active consciousness of citizens. A society endowed with deep political thinking is capable of self-reflection, reform, and renewal. It respects human dignity, upholds the rule of law, and aspires toward justice and collective well-being.

Therefore, political thinking should be understood not merely as an academic concept but as a living, evolving force that shapes the moral and intellectual foundations of human civilization. It is through the continuous cultivation of political thinking that societies can achieve genuine democracy—one grounded not in coercion or conformity, but in freedom, awareness, and the responsible participation of every citizen.

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