



THE COOPERATION OF THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS IN ENHANCING THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the internal and external factors influencing the formation of the political elite and the endogenous characteristics of political thinking. It theoretically substantiates the role of political consciousness in the development of a democratic society and in shaping political culture. The study also examines the interaction between the political elite and the people within the framework of democratic values, emphasizing the role of political thinking in ensuring social stability, civic activism, and political responsibility. The research findings reveal the innovative significance of political thinking in the processes of democratic governance.

Introduction

Enhancing the political and legal culture of youth is a fundamental doctrine that determines the dynamics of a society's legal and political life. Youth represent an important social stratum endowed with the potential to shape the future trajectory of a nation's legal and political development, while legal and political institutions serve as the primary agents of these processes. For young people to find their proper place in the political and legal life of society, it is necessary to ensure that they acquire appropriate education, upbringing, practical skills, and experience. Civil society institutions create mechanisms for active participation in the legal and political system and include elements that attract young people into their structures. It is essential that youth understand the importance of joining political institutions to fulfill their interests and needs. Therefore, studying the influence of civil society institutions on the formation of youth's political and legal culture is of great relevance.

An individual is both the object and subject of law and politics; their participation in legal and political processes directly reflects this dual role. Consequently, citizens consciously and purposefully engage in these processes to achieve personal and collective goals. Through political participation, individuals pursue specific social aims, often mediated by social groups or political parties. Attaining such objectives requires active civic and political engagement—a quality particularly vital among young people as a dynamic segment of society.

The primary aim of legal education for youth is to ensure that every young person internalizes a sense of legal culture. From a societal perspective, legal culture represents the qualitative unity of legal values, norms, institutions, and behaviors. On an individual level, it

reflects a personal “legal code” that guides one’s perception of reality and serves as a measure for understanding legal norms and justice.

The legal culture of an individual is the outcome of their legal and political socialization, shaped by their entire life experience, especially through interactions with institutions responsible for law and order, government officials, and public authorities. Importantly, this process of socialization primarily occurs during the early decades of life, which coincide with youth. Defining youth as a distinct socio-demographic group is based not only on age or psychological traits but also on the specific social role they perform—absorbing the experience, values, and culture of previous generations and enriching them with new characteristics and perspectives [1].

One of the distinctive features of legal norms compared to other social norms is that they are enforced by the state in the interests of society as a whole, with sanctions imposed for their violation. Therefore, legal institutions and the media should emphasize the importance of compliance with laws and the necessity of just legal responsibility. At the same time, fostering respect for the law and promoting lawful behavior as a matter of personal conviction are equally important.

In many cases, young people’s relationship with the law is characterized by fear of punishment rather than intrinsic respect for legal norms. They often view stricter penalties as the primary means of ensuring lawfulness. In the political sphere, however, youth social activity has recently become visible not only on paper but also in practice. Nevertheless, the situation remains complex and contradictory—political apathy, mistrust, and disillusionment persist among some groups of young people. These challenges necessitate decisive measures to strengthen youth’s legal and political awareness.

From a practical standpoint, the task is to provide youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate meaningfully in democratic governance—understanding the mechanisms of popular sovereignty, democratic institutions, rights and freedoms, and methods of their protection. This includes transparency, constructive criticism of errors and shortcomings, the ability to vote for multiple candidates during elections, participation in referendums, and engagement in activities promoting justice and legal order.

Unfortunately, the level of legal literacy among adolescents and young people remains low. Juvenile delinquency often stems from ignorance of legal rights and responsibilities. Sociological studies show that nearly one-third of minors serving sentences in correctional institutions were unaware that their actions were criminally punishable.

Raising the legal culture of youth in a civil society is not only the responsibility of state institutions but also requires the active participation of public and non-governmental organizations. Ensuring youth engagement in civil initiatives and continuously improving their legal awareness have become urgent tasks of modern development.

Trade unions, youth associations, and women’s organizations play a crucial role in enhancing the legal consciousness of young people by organizing educational and awareness programs. Transparency of legal information is essential in the process of building civil society, where the role of neighborhood (mahalla) institutions should also be recognized. Implementing community-based educational programs and awareness campaigns in neighborhoods can significantly improve the legal literacy of youth.

One of the key conditions for the viability of civil society institutions is the effective reflection of public interests in state policies and legislation. The active participation of citizens in public life contributes to further democratization, liberalization, and the consolidation of civil society structures.

Formation of civil society primarily involves reducing the role of state structures in addressing certain socio-economic issues and gradually transferring these functions to public organizations. The institutions of civil society include:

- Political parties;
- Trade unions;
- Self-governing bodies of citizens;
- Women's committees;
- Public associations;
- Non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs);
- Mass media.

Civil society institutions operate on a strong legal foundation — that is, within a democratic legal framework. Their effectiveness depends on the extent to which they understand their legal status, make use of the rights and opportunities granted by law, and display a high level of legal culture in their interactions with state bodies. These aspects, however, have not been sufficiently studied in legal scholarship. A scientific analysis of these issues and an understanding of their essence contribute to the successful establishment of civil society and the enhancement of legal culture. A high level of legal culture serves the formation of a democratic rule-of-law state in Uzbekistan and ensures the legal basis for all reforms aimed at building a just civil society. Therefore, the study and legal resolution of issues related to legal culture represent an urgent task of today [2]. It becomes evident that the formation of youth legal and political culture is closely connected with socio-economic realities. In the system of secondary specialized and vocational education, the following key factors influence the development of students' legal and political awareness:

- the existence of an environment in the family that encourages independent thinking and analysis of social, legal, and political systems;
- the effective organization of the mahalla (neighborhood community) institution in accordance with current social, legal, and political requirements;
- the professional approach of educational institutions to shaping students' legal and political awareness through understanding the essence of state policy;
- the comprehensive and demographically sensitive work of the mass media in conveying the goals of the legal and political system to all segments of society;
- the non-interference of legally operating religious organizations in state affairs;
- the personal sense of belonging and responsibility of each individual for the social, legal, and political life of society, combined with the habit of constantly improving their legal and political knowledge.

The level of activity among young participants in legal and political processes naturally varies. Some demonstrate high engagement and initiative, while others show low levels of awareness about legal institutions or fail to align personal interests with

those of civil society. In contrast, active young people tend to exhibit creativity and leadership in legal and political participation. Such activity manifests both individually and collectively, through participation in political parties, social movements, associations, or civic groups. Therefore, political institutions play a crucial role in shaping youth legal and political culture.

As political scientist M. Qirg'izboev noted, "From the standpoint of democratic principles, political parties are not part of the system of state bodies and do not directly participate in state governance. However, they belong simultaneously to both the state sphere and civil society, which makes them unique institutions" [3]. This means that political parties constitute the active segment of political institutions.

Political institutions, by their nature, play a significant role in shaping the legal and political culture of youth. Through their participation in political parties or civic organizations, young people both learn about the objectives and functions of these institutions and pursue their own interests within society.

As Aristotle correctly stated, "Man is a political being and naturally inclined to live in a community. The satisfaction of his multifaceted needs and his path to happiness can only be realized through relations with others" [4]. Indeed, humans achieve their social and political goals by uniting with others in associations, movements, or groups — a principle that holds particular importance in the political engagement of youth.

Political institutions represent a fundamental condition for any democratic society. They serve as mechanisms through which citizens lawfully express their interests and goals. In a democratic context, such institutions and their supporters are given opportunities to actively participate in political processes. As one scholarly source notes:

"At the current stage, it is essential to expand the scope of democratic institutions, enhance the political activity and culture of the population, maintain balance among various interests and beliefs, strengthen the role of public associations, improve political party performance, liberalize the economy and state governance, and transfer certain state powers to non-governmental and public organizations as part of the civil society formation process" [5].

This clearly demonstrates that political institutions occupy a central role in shaping youth legal and political culture. Since these institutions evolve with civilizational development and ideological transformation, they inevitably influence young people's political thinking. Social transformation, in particular, brings about new demands, ideas, and opportunities — especially requiring the participation of intellectually active youth.

The effectiveness of the country's democratic reforms directly depends on the correct understanding of these processes by the younger generation. A lack of political knowledge or low political culture can negatively impact reforms, even leading to social instability [6]. Therefore, building legal and political awareness among youth begins with a solid foundation of civic education.

In Uzbekistan, courses such as History, Society and the Individual, Law, Ethics, Family Psychology, Civic Ideology, Constitution of Uzbekistan, and Fundamentals of Economics — as well as extracurricular civic and patriotic events — all contribute to

forming students' political literacy and engagement. Political culture develops gradually through sustained education and practice.

According to Russian scholar E. Ya. Batalov, "Political culture is a system of historically developed models of individual and group consciousness, patterns of political behavior, and the modes of functioning of political institutions manifested in the activities of political actors" [7].

In conclusion, the level of an individual's legal and political culture directly reflects the effectiveness of political institutions. It evolves through participation in institutional processes, as individuals achieve their goals via political mechanisms. For youth, therefore, political institutions represent the primary means of realizing their civic and political aspirations.

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