



STAGES AND FEATURES OF NEW SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS FORMATION IN THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

This article explores the philosophical foundations of changes in social consciousness, analyzing how transformations in societal values, norms, and collective thinking reflect broader historical, cultural, and technological shifts. The study discusses the dialectical relationship between material conditions and consciousness, highlighting the influence of globalization, digitalization, and ideological narratives on public perception. Special attention is given to the role of education, media, and social institutions in shaping collective awareness. The research concludes that understanding changes in social consciousness is essential for effective policy-making, national development, and preserving cultural identity in the modern world.

Keywords: Social consciousness, philosophy, change, society, collective thinking, values, ideology, globalization, digital transformation, public awareness, education, cultural identity.

Introduction

The formation of a new social consciousness is a central element in the process of national renaissance. It is not merely an ideological shift, but a comprehensive transformation of how individuals and societies perceive themselves, their history, their future, and their values. As nations undergo major transitions—political independence, globalization, or cultural revival—the evolution of social consciousness becomes both a reflection and a driver of these processes.



In the context of Uzbekistan, the post-independence era marked a turning point in rethinking national identity, cultural heritage, and societal goals. The emergence of a new consciousness, rooted in human dignity, critical thinking, and civic responsibility, signifies a departure from the inherited frameworks of the past and opens the way for building a future-oriented society. This transformation is not spontaneous; it progresses through identifiable stages, each marked by key philosophical, social, and legal shifts that shape public awareness and national self-understanding.

This paper explores the stages and characteristics of new social consciousness in the context of Uzbekistan's national development. It aims to highlight how historical memory, human-centered values, civil participation, and media literacy interact to construct a dynamic and forward-looking societal mindset. Through a philosophical lens, the study emphasizes that building a renewed national identity requires not only institutional reforms but also a deep transformation in collective thought and value systems.

Main Part

In the process of the development of human society, social consciousness has always been one of the key phenomena in constant motion and transformation. The forms of social consciousness characteristic of each historical period are shaped directly as a result of the social, political, and cultural processes occurring within society, as well as the way people think, their values, and worldview. Especially in the context of globalization, technological advancement, and the intensification of information flows, the changes taking place in social consciousness are becoming increasingly complex.

The process of national revival is not confined solely to economic or political reforms; it is also fundamentally characterized by deep philosophical transformations in social consciousness. The emergence of a *new social consciousness* signifies a profound shift in society's capacity to comprehend itself, its historical trajectory, its future, and its existential significance. As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev aptly stated:

“Undoubtedly, during this era, the most significant achievement on our path is that our people's mindset and worldview have changed; people are striving for



great goals and living with firm confidence in tomorrow. Today, our society is truly becoming the initiator of major reforms and a creator of laws.” [1]

This statement underscores the centrality of transforming social consciousness and cultivating civic awareness as foundational pillars of the national renaissance. National revival is, in essence, a comprehensive process through which a people reinterprets and reconstructs its historical identity, cultural heritage, and spiritual values, and integrates them into a coherent and sustainable vision of the future. From a philosophical perspective, this transformation is grounded in ontological (being), epistemological (knowledge), and axiological (values) principles.

National revival, therefore, extends beyond mere economic growth or technological advancement. It encompasses a paradigmatic shift in the collective consciousness of the nation — a process of spiritual reawakening and the rediscovery of national identity. In philosophical literature, social consciousness is understood as a spiritual process that arises from the dynamic interplay between subjective and objective realities. During the period of national transformation, social consciousness evolves based on new criteria such as human dignity, legal rationality, and civic responsibility.

The concept of the *Axial Age* (*Achsenzeit*) proposed by German philosopher Karl Jaspers highlights a similar phenomenon. According to Jaspers, every civilization undergoes a pivotal transformation in its consciousness at critical moments in history [2]. For Uzbekistan, such a turning point was the independence achieved in 1991, which marked the beginning of a profound process of spiritual renewal and nation-building.

Social consciousness is not merely a repository of information or knowledge; it is the product of a person's reflective awareness of their position and role within society, nature, and interpersonal relationships. Philosophy distinguishes between two levels of consciousness:

- Individual consciousness encompasses personal experiences, emotions, and reasoning.
- Social consciousness, on the other hand, consists of the collective ideas, values, and worldviews shared by a community.

Social consciousness, in this sense, is a system of shared beliefs, cultural values, and ideologies that articulate a society's understanding of its past, spiritual ethos,



social reality, and collective aspirations. It acts as a spiritual bridge between the individual and society, serving as an integrative structure of thought and worldview.

The necessity of reshaping individual consciousness in the early years of Uzbekistan's independence can be explained by several interrelated factors. First and foremost was the need to overcome the inertia of the Soviet era. This inertia manifested in the form of authoritarian thinking, passivity, and a sense of disempowerment among individuals. In a newly independent state, the individual was expected to become active, responsible, and accountable for their own destiny.

Secondly, there was a vacuum in the system of values. In the immediate post-Soviet period, individuals lacked guiding principles and cultural anchors. In response, the state undertook a comprehensive effort to reconstruct national ideology, spirituality, and redefine the meaning of living in Uzbekistan. As the First President Islam Karimov noted:

“The thinking, way of life, and spiritual outlook of any people or nation are never formed in a vacuum” [3].

This underscored the need for a new generation of citizens rooted in a rich historical consciousness, while also embracing modern innovation — individuals with independent thinking and clear civic positions.

From a philosophical standpoint, the formation of a *new conscious individual* can be understood through a multi-stage model:

1. Stage One – Awakening the Individual: This involves the cultivation of historical memory and identity, through the rediscovery of national values, the Uzbek language, cultural symbols, and the collective memory of repression and resilience. In this stage, the person begins to recognize themselves as an integral part of the nation.
2. Stage Two – Prioritizing Reason and Enlightenment: Here, moral and spiritual education, national ideology, and an effective educational system foster critical thinking and intellectual autonomy in the individual.
3. Stage Three – Formation of Responsible Civic Consciousness: At this stage, the individual becomes aware of their rights and duties, engages with the



principles of the rule of law, and actively participates in the development of a civil society and interaction with the state.

The early years of Uzbekistan's independence saw the philosophical reconfiguration of the individual—not merely through education, ideology, or politics—but via a fundamental transformation in moral and ethical worldviews. Core values such as human dignity, historical memory, civic activism, moral freedom, and critical thinking served as the foundations for this transformation. Analyzing the socio-philosophical nature of this process reveals several dimensions:

- **Ontological Aspect – The Shift from Being to Subjectivity:** During the Soviet era, individuals were often seen as passive elements of the social machine — obedient executors of centralized decisions. In the post-independence period, however, there emerged a reinterpretation of the human being as the center of existence and an active subject of social processes. As G.W.F. Hegel stated, “Only when the individual recognizes themselves as a subject, do they fully comprehend their existence.” [4] Thus, the newly shaped individual emerged as a responsible agent of their own life, choices, and future.
- **Epistemological Aspect – The Transformation of the Model of Knowledge:** In the post-Soviet educational system, a shift occurred from a “prescribed knowledge” model to one based on inquiry and critical engagement. Rather than passively absorbing ready-made ideologies, individuals were expected to seek the truth and develop independent judgments. Immanuel Kant’s imperative aptly reflects this transformation: “Dare to use your own reason.”[5] The new conscious individual became someone who can make choices, analyze deeply, and take responsibility for their actions.

At the heart of every new socially enlightened mindset lies the principle of *human dignity*. In this framework, the individual is no longer regarded as a mere object of the social system, but as its active subject. Their thoughts, desires, potential, and rights become the foundational criteria for both state and societal policy. This marks a philosophical transition from *ontology* to *humanism*. The new social consciousness fosters the ability to reclaim historical truths, rehabilitate the victims of repression, and perceive national history through an indigenous lens — aligning with what philosophy describes as *self-consciousness*. This is



conceptually consistent with Karl Jaspers' idea of "historical guilt and responsibility," which emerges in such societal transformations.

New social consciousness does not represent a unidirectional ideology, but rather a worldview grounded in *dialectical reasoning*, *critical analysis*, and *dialogue*. It reflects the essential principles of modern philosophy such as *intersubjectivity*, *responsibility*, and *spiritual freedom*. A renewed consciousness does not passively absorb ideas; it re-evaluates them, raises questions, and makes informed choices. One-sided ideologies (dogmas) hinder the development of thought. In contrast, new social consciousness initiates thinking itself. As Karl Popper notes:

"Undefeatable ideologies conceal their own flaws and become enemies of critical thought." [6]

From this perspective, dialectical thinking is the process of engaging contradictions—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis—to arrive at truth. As Hegel emphasized:

"True knowledge develops through the struggle of opposites." [7]
Such a method of thinking liberates society from stereotypes and guides it toward a deeper self-understanding.

One of the key challenges in forming this new consciousness is the inertia of outdated thinking. Under the former Soviet regime, social consciousness was shaped by centralized ideology, obedience, and collectivism. Following independence, this ideological inertia resulted in a *crisis of consciousness*: while formal freedom was achieved, the mental framework necessary to exercise that freedom was lacking. From a philosophical standpoint, this constitutes an *ontological rupture*—a spiritual void between the old and the new. To overcome this void, a new system of values, methods of thinking (critical, civic, and analytical), and a modern reinterpretation of cultural heritage must be constructed.

Cognitive inertia, in this context, refers to the persistence of outdated thought patterns, values, or attitudes that resist change. It originates from the term "inertia" in physics but is applied philosophically to describe the static nature of consciousness in the face of evolving realities. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* explains this:



“Habitus is the system of durable, transposable dispositions formed by historical conditions, which tends to reproduce structured patterns of thought and behavior.”[8]

From a philosophical perspective, mental inertia is the ongoing influence of past ideological frameworks on present-day thinking. In Uzbekistan’s case, remnants of Soviet-era consciousness are still occasionally evident — in the form of bureaucratic dependence, fear of creative autonomy, formalism, and a tendency to avoid personal responsibility.

In every society, the formation of a new type of social consciousness undergoes a series of successive stages. The first of these may be described as the “stage of national awareness.” At this point, society begins a process of reestablishing its historical memory, reassessing its cultural heritage, and reviving its sense of identity. The initial signs of emerging consciousness include historical re-evaluation, cultural revitalization, and the reawakening of national self-confidence. As the First President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, once remarked: “Without reviving national consciousness and thinking, it is impossible to speak of a free society and progress” [9].

The next stage is the “stage of humanism and legal consciousness,” in which the concept of human dignity becomes central. Human rights, freedom of thought, legal culture, and the intrinsic value of the individual become philosophical and social cornerstones. Constitutional reforms and human rights legislation provide a juridical framework for this evolving consciousness.

A subsequent stage may be termed the “stage of civic responsibility and civil society.” Here, citizens are not merely passive members of the state but active participants. A spirit of conscious, responsible, and initiative-driven participation in public life begins to take shape. During this stage, civil society institutions, NGOs, and independent thinkers increasingly emerge as influential actors.

In independent Uzbekistan, several distinctive features characterize the emergence of new social consciousness. One of the most salient is the synthesis of historical memory with the idea of national independence. This consciousness integrates lessons from the past to build a visionary outlook for the future — creating a philosophical link between self-awareness and nation-building. Another key trait is freedom of information and critical thinking. The



development of media literacy and the ability to analyze information are pivotal to the strength of modern consciousness.

Moreover, this new social consciousness is not rooted in data, but in values. At its core lie human dignity, spiritual development, and patriotism. We argue that fostering new social consciousness is essentially a process of leading individuals toward spiritual maturity, which can only be successful when harmonized with shared national values.

The transformation of social consciousness during the era of national renaissance is a holistic, evolutionary, and historically grounded process. It entails not merely superficial changes in thought but a profound reconfiguration of moral, legal, and philosophical perspectives. New social consciousness is not just about a new political system — it is about nurturing a new citizen, who is conscious, responsible, and proactive. In our view, philosophy plays a vital role in understanding, theorizing, and advancing this process. Filling the ideological vacuum with meaningful moral and legal concepts and directing public consciousness toward national interests is key to ensuring sustainable national growth.

Fostering new social consciousness requires teaching society to approach complex issues through critical and dialectical thinking. Philosophy must be incorporated not only into formal education systems but also into broader public discourse — through forums, dialogue platforms, and media programming. This activity should promote a synthesis of national and universal human values, centered on ideals such as human dignity, justice, accountability, and deliberative reasoning. We propose positioning the idea “Self-awareness is the foundation of active citizenship” as a central ideological motif.

Conclusion

New social consciousness should also emerge through the development of informational culture. This includes equipping young people not only to consume information, but to critically analyze it. Educational initiatives such as media clubs and TV programs should train youth to detect misinformation, propaganda, and manipulation. Likewise, promoting a culture of dialogue and public discourse — both online and offline — through platforms like debates, forums, and



interactive digital spaces, will cultivate a more open, pluralistic society. Organizing regular “New Consciousness” forums on such platforms can serve as a practical mechanism for developing and reinforcing this transformation.

The formation of a new social consciousness is a multidimensional and gradual process that plays a critical role in the national renaissance. It reflects not only the transformation of ideological frameworks but also the evolution of identity, values, and civic responsibility. In the case of Uzbekistan, the transition from a post-Soviet mentality to an independent, future-oriented worldview has involved key stages—reclaiming historical memory, embracing human dignity, strengthening legal consciousness, and cultivating critical thinking.

These stages demonstrate that social consciousness is shaped by both internal socio-cultural needs and global influences. A truly renewed national identity requires individuals to not only be aware of their rights and responsibilities but also actively participate in the development of society. As such, fostering a culture of open dialogue, media literacy, ethical responsibility, and civic engagement is essential.

Ultimately, the success of a national renaissance depends not only on political and economic reforms but also on the deep philosophical transformation of the collective mind. The rise of a new social consciousness—one rooted in self-awareness, critical analysis, and shared national values—is the foundation for building a just, inclusive, and forward-thinking society.

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