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E-mail: k.b.aizhan@gmail.com**General concept of culture: historical development  
and the role in a democratic mass media**

This article is about to open three different issues: first of all, historical development of modern market economy that brings existence of particular social elites that have significant impact on culture and mass media. Secondly, the definition of modern cultural framework; the last one is the discussion of the role of mass media in defining the strategies of integration of democracy to the present cultural doctrine. The primary reason for the exploration of historical development of modern market economy is the significant impact of financial issues on the authority of social elites that have enough power to establish certain culture in society by direct influence of mass media that is absolutely the best way to spread new trends that in further time will become a culture. Furthermore, it is better to clearly define the framework of modern culture that changes from place to place and from one historical period to another. Finally, in order to have balance on the verge of political trends and cultural doctrine, it is essential to correctly utilize the power of mass media, and this article will briefly explain the strategies of power utilization.

**Key words:** Historical development of modern market economy, social elites, culture and mass media, modern cultural framework, role of mass media, power of mass media.

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**Мәдениеттің жалпы тұжырымдамасы:  
тарихи дамуы және демократиялық БАҚ-тағы рөлі**

Бұл мақала үш түрлі мәселенің көзін ашпақ: ең алдымен заманауи нарық экономикасын және онымен бірге қоса келетін қоғамдағы дегдар азаматтар және олардың қоғамдағы мәдениет ұғымына, оған қоса БАҚ-қа әсері. Екінші қозғалатын мәселе, заманауи мәдениет іргетасы және соңғы бөлігі БАҚ-тың демократия ұғымын заманауи мәдениет доктринасына енгізу стратегиялары. Заманауи нарықтың тарихи дамуын зерттеу себептерінің бірі – қаржы мәселелерінің қоғамның дегдар мүшелерінің абыройына тікелей әсер ететіндігі. Ал қоғамдағы дегдар мүшелердің өз кезегінде керекті деңгейдегі мәдениетті өзінің абыройы арқасында енгізе алуы жаңа заман үрдісін қалағанынша жалпы әлеуметтің санасына енгізе алу мүмкіндігіне ие бола алады. Онымен қоса, негізгі көздейтін міндеттердің бірі – заманауи мәдениет түсінігінің айқын анықтамасын анықтау, өйткені ол дегеніміз түрлі тарихи кезеңдер мен оқиғаларға байланысты қоғам ішінде өзгеріп отыратын құбылыс. Сонымен соңғы мәселе, саяси тенденциялар мен мәдени доктриналардың аражігін бірдей ұстау мақсатында БАҚ күшін сауатты қолдану. Бұл мақала қазірде әлем бойынша қолданылатын мысалдарға қысқаша тоқталып кетеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** заманауи нарық экономикасының дамуы, қоғамның элитасы, мәдениет және БАҚ, заманауи мәдениет іргетасы, жаңа заман үрдістері, заманауи мәдениет түсінігі, БАҚ күші.

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**Общая концепция культуры:  
историческое развитие и ее роль в демократических СМИ**

В статье рассматривается историческое развитие рыночной экономики, дается определение современной культурной базы. Автор отмечает, что одной из основных целей развития является четкое определение рамок современной культуры. Чтобы иметь баланс на грани политических тен-

денций и культурной доктрины, важно правильно использовать влияние СМИ. В статье дается краткое содержание эффективных мировых стратегий.

**Ключевые слова:** историческое развитие современной рыночной экономики, социальные элиты, культура и СМИ, новые тенденции в культуре, рамки современной культуры, мировые стратегии.

Culture is simply an assimilation of common sense, belief and attitudes of certain nations. However we remember that culture has more aspects such as language, ideology, customs, taboos, traditions and so on, but today we will discover the other side of the broad concept discussed above.

In order to establish certain beliefs in any society, there has to be some generally accepted values that are approved by most powerful part of the community. I would call this part as «dominant figures». Nonetheless, history shows that beliefs or behavior of people change through time with adjustments to trends of corresponding times and places of societies. According to social observations, the «dominant figures» are usually an active and economically stable part of the society. In other words, I would call them as «elites». People are usually accepted as «elites» when they have enough power to change the path of already established systems. However in today's standards the power means money [1].

Together with the beginning of hierarchy and social class terms in mankind history, the concept of «Rat race» has also got its existence [2]. As things go on we see that every individual seeks to reach the high welfare level, but not everyone achieves this goal. However people are amazing. They never stop moving forward, so the world economy. As significant share of people work hard to reach good social conditions, the average welfare of people also improved from ancient period. Therefore the living standards establish the position and give certain power to people. Usually higher standards of living are highly valued and respected; hence there is a point in trying to reach higher social positions. Those who already achieved higher standards of living usually called «elites». According to social observations, the «elites» have some common characteristics. They usually try to impact on public opinion; thus it is not a matter of surprise if «elites» try to get in hand mass media sources[3].

Now let's figure out whether mass media reflects the reality of the world in a broad sense or filtered out by elites owning the mass media sources. First of all, mass media in politics do not seem to be colored but reflect only the truth, as politics are not generally accepted as «positive» figures whom it is

not necessary to have reliance on. However, if we consider general population as politics, then most of the time mass media distorts the real view of what is happening. Moreover, we more often witness the wry picture of the causes of crisis, or of any negative incidents that involve different sections where elites are somehow related. Therefore, we cannot totally believe that mass media provides us with the right information. However, despite the fact of knowing about some distortions, the general audience does believe what media tries to explain them. As we see, elites can have enough power to establish certain culture on public minds.

The second thing I wanted to discuss is the modern cultural framework. Nowadays we live in a sophisticated world of highly developed technology. Obviously this is the effect of chain reaction that started in twentieth century with the beginning of market economy that was continued with growth economy. We have to admit that the results of market economy impact on lifestyle of people are extremely big. Right now anyone can easily contact any friends locating in other continent within a few seconds or any Kazakhstani can reach to any part of the world with the help of developed transport system and so on. All of these are the results of sophisticated technology that leads mankind to a new era. However, the other side of the coin is the extinction of uniqueness of certain characteristics pertaining to nations living on various part of the world. I would call this process as «culture homogenization»[4]. Today there are many examples of culture homogenization process, such as people are doing almost alike job even being in two different parts of the world, cities are almost alike with huge skyscrapers and business centers, iPhone and Android users having the same applications utilized in everyday life, even buying the same brands of shoes in the same type of malls. This phenomenon could be discussed from various aspects, however I definitely agree with one thing: huge step towards technology development brought to globalization that makes the world as a huge international market that destroys the concept of unique culture established within thousands of years of humankind history.

Today we rarely see traditional communities and their cultures and the funny part of this issue is that even real descendents of corresponding traditional communities are surprised when they see the customs of their predecessors. I think, such funny things happen because people become the part of huge mass culture market established by washing the minds of young generation and converting them to «global» citizens [6]. Basically this is the general framework of modern culture.

Finally, by assuming the factors mentioned above we came up with an opinion to make some changes in society, especially in mass media. However, before starting to make any further step it is better to make a strategic plan. The strategic plan is based on a solution of a problem of power concentration in an ownership of mass media sources that is obviously located on the hands of social elites. Therefore the primary goal of the strategic plan is the equal distribution of power among citizens. Yet not any of regular citizens can manage mass media, but still those who can manage properly should be in charge and work on fair distribution of any public news. The next strategy is the creation of the state power, which in turn means the centralization of mass media power. According to this strategy everything is regulated by government. This approach was practiced in human history, but in today's realms this is not an accepted version. And the last strategy is the creation of

autonomous media source that does not belong to anyone. Today, such sort of media sources began to appear on Internet. For instance, [www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com) and I think such trends are getting pretty popular among modern Internet users.

All in all, the positive effect of high living standards gives more incentive to people in reaching to the higher level of social hierarchy pyramid. Therefore, the top of the pyramid or in other words, elites have more power. Most common practice among utilization of elite's power happens through the help of owning mass media sources. Therefore sometimes mass information is distorted towards the benefits of elite owners of the media sources.

Moreover, today the concept of modern culture is a way different than it used to be described in prior centuries. The realms of today's opportunities are getting to the limitless with the existence of the new era in technology. This is the main reason why the world became as a huge mass market where there is no place to traditional customs or cultures. There has to be only one thing, Global culture.

It has been quite a long time since socially active people try to fix distorted media sources. I also tried to give some of my opinions (in forms of strategies) about the ways of changing the power distribution in media ownership. However, strategies I mentioned are already existing ones, but still might be somehow informative for the reader.

#### References

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- 4 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), chs. 14-15.
- 5 See, for instance, Michael Taylor, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 28-33
- 6 Noam Chomsky, 'On freedom of press and culture :an interview' (in this issue)