

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Requirements for Journalists in Political Commentary

Gulzor Temirova

PhD Candidate at Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This scientific article comprehensively examines the essence and significance of political commentary, the journalist's role in working with political information, and the main professional, analytical, and ethical requirements imposed on political commentators. Political commentary, as one of the most complex and responsible forms of journalism, involves not only reporting on political events but also analyzing their socio-political, economic, and ideological implications. Therefore, a political journalist must possess strong analytical thinking, a broad worldview, political culture, objectivity, neutrality, and the ability to verify information sources.

KEY WORDS

Political commentary, journalist, political information, political culture, objectivity, neutrality, analytical thinking, political process, communication, political ethics, international experience.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization and intensified information flows, the analysis of political processes and their accurate communication to the public has become one of the most important areas of journalism. Political commentary is not only the reporting of political events, but also a complex genre that serves to shape a proper understanding among the audience through analysis, explanation of causes, and interpretation of consequences. Therefore, a political commentator must possess a broad worldview, independent thinking, a deep understanding of political processes, and the ability to analyze them objectively.

In recent years, reforms implemented in our country in the areas of information policy, transparency, and freedom of speech have created new opportunities for the development of political commentary. At the same time, this process imposes greater responsibility on journalists. A political commentator is required to base every opinion on verified facts, maintain political neutrality, and present balanced

analysis by comparing multiple sources.

This article examines the theoretical foundations of the political commentary genre, its role in journalistic practice, and the professional, ethical, and analytical requirements imposed on political commentators. The aim of the study is to explore theoretical and practical approaches to modern requirements for journalists in political commentary and to analyze them based on international experience.

Political Information and Mass Communication. Political information is a set of data related to political processes in society, including public policy, political parties' activities, elections, legislation, and foreign policy. Through such information, citizens gain an understanding of political decisions, and public opinion is formed. Therefore, the role of journalists in covering political information is extremely important. A journalist functions not only as a transmitter of information but also as a communicator who analyzes it and highlights its most significant aspects.

From a theoretical perspective, the role of political information in mass communication has been widely studied in the works of scholars such as Lazarsfeld, Merton, and McQuail. According to them, political information serves to ensure social stability, develop civic consciousness, and facilitate information exchange between the government and the public (McQuail, 2010).

Formation and Types of Political Commentary. Political commentary belongs to the analytical genres of journalism. It not only reports events but also provides an in-depth analysis of their causes, consequences, and socio-political context. The genre of commentary emerged in Western media in the late 19th century and began to develop in the press of Uzbekistan in the early 20th century.

The following types of political commentary can be distinguished:

1. Analytical commentary – focuses on an in-depth analysis of the causes and consequences of political events.
2. Expert commentary – an analytical article based on the opinions of specialists in a particular field.
3. Comparative commentary – written through the comparison of different political situations or state policies.
4. Predictive commentary – based on forecasting the future development of political processes.

Among these types, analytical commentary is the most widespread, as it requires a deep examination of events and the formulation of conclusions based on factual evidence.

Professional Responsibility of Political Commentators.

The most fundamental requirement for a political commentator is objectivity and adherence to facts. A journalist should express analytical reasoning rather than a political position. Therefore, a commentator must avoid bias in their work and maintain balance among different political forces.

Professional responsibility also includes adherence to ethical standards. A journalist must approach the coverage of political events with respect for human rights, national values, and professional ethics. In this regard, the International Federation of Journalists Code of Ethics (1996) serves as an important international standard. It states that “a journalist should report facts accurately and avoid false or manipulative information.”

Key Requirements for Journalists in Political

Commentary. The effectiveness of a political commentator largely depends on their professional training, political awareness, and analytical thinking skills. In covering any political process, a journalist is required not only to collect information but also to analyze it deeply, reveal its contextual meaning, and maintain balance among different sources.

Therefore, the requirements imposed on journalists in political commentary constitute a complex system that includes ethical, professional, and intellectual dimensions.

Analytical Thinking and Intellectual Capacity. The most important professional requirement for a political commentator is the ability to think analytically. Unlike standard news reporting, political commentary does not merely list facts. It requires analyzing the causes, consequences, and socio-political impact of events.

A journalist must be able to identify causal relationships between events, understand conflicts or balances of interests among political forces, and interpret them accurately.

The process of analytical thinking consists of three main stages:

1. Collecting and filtering information.
2. Comparing and analyzing facts.
3. Formulating logically grounded conclusions.

In this context, knowledge of political science, history, economics, and international relations plays a crucial role. A lack of understanding of these aspects may lead to incorrect interpretations. Therefore, a political commentator must possess the ability to conduct multidimensional analysis on any topic.

In this regard, a journalist’s knowledge of political science, history, economics, and international relations plays a decisive role. For example, in political analysis, a failure to understand the social impact of economic reforms or to take into account geopolitical interests in international politics may lead to incorrect interpretations. Therefore, a political commentator must possess the ability to conduct comprehensive and multidimensional analysis on any given topic.

Political Neutrality and Objectivity. In the practice of political commentary, the principles of objectivity and neutrality play a decisive role. Regardless of personal political views, every journalist should strive to present the truth. Political neutrality implies that a journalist does not promote

the interests of any particular party, ideology, or political force, but instead provides balanced coverage of diverse perspectives.

Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Mass Media" states that "Mass media activities must adhere to the principles of impartiality, truthfulness, and avoiding bias." This provision forms the legal foundation for the work of political commentators.

These requirements are also strictly applied in international practice. For example: The BBC Editorial Guidelines (2020) state that any political commentary must maintain balance, fairness, and independence. The Reuters Handbook of Journalism requires journalists to cross-check two or more sources in every political story.

Skills in Selecting and Verifying Information Sources For a political commentator, the process of selecting and verifying sources is a key guarantee of professional reliability. Political information is often prone to manipulation, misinterpretation, or deliberately biased content. Therefore, a journalist must verify the source of each fact and compare its reliability. Information sources are generally divided into three categories:

1. Official sources – government agencies, government decisions, statements of parliament or political parties.
2. Unofficial sources – experts, representatives of civil society, research and analysis centers.
3. International sources – foreign media, reports from international organizations.

In analytical commentary, unofficial sources play a particularly important role, as they help cover events from different perspectives and reveal the underlying causes of political processes. At the same time, quoting a source without verification or spreading unconfirmed information violates journalistic ethics.

Resistance to Political Pressure and Professional Independence. A political commentator often faces various pressures and influences: political parties, government agencies, or economic interest groups may attempt to affect the journalist's position. Therefore, a journalist must have professional independence and firm personal conviction. There are three criteria for professional independence:

1. Freedom in selecting information.

2. Relative independence from editorial policy.
3. Commitment to ethical principles.

These requirements are also outlined in the "Professional Journalists Society Code of Ethics" (2022): "Journalists must act independently in seeking and reporting the truth, free from political, financial, or personal interests".

Positive Developments in Uzbek Journalism Positive changes are also being observed in Uzbek journalistic practice. For example, internal codes of ethics that ensure independence have been introduced for journalists producing political analytical programs at the "Uzbekistan National News Agency" and the "National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan."

Communicative Culture and Ethical Qualities of Journalists. A political commentator interacts directly with the audience. Therefore, they must possess a high level of communicative culture in areas such as word choice, style, tone, and attitude. Any analytical material, especially political commentary, reflects not only the information but also the author's worldview. Consequently, a journalist's cultural literacy, respect for national values, and social responsibility directly affect the quality of their analysis.

A political commentator must be able to express their position firmly yet respectfully, value diversity of opinions, and avoid manipulating the audience. These qualities define a journalist's professional ethics and moral responsibility.

Requirements for Political Commentary in International Journalism. In today's global information environment, political commentary is one of the most responsible and influential areas of journalism. Internationally, a set of common standards has been established for preparing political commentary, which serve as key criteria for professional journalists.

In the experience of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), political commentary is strictly based on the principle of editorial impartiality. BBC political commentators are required to maintain balance on any topic, present two or more political positions fairly, and clearly distinguish subjective opinion from facts. The BBC's "Editorial Guidelines" document states.

The BBC (2020) notes that: "A commentator must remain faithful to the truth when expressing their views and avoid misleading the audience."

The Reuters agency prioritizes accuracy, timeliness, and fact-checking when preparing political commentary. Their "Trust Principles" (2021) state: "It is important to deliver news quickly, but accuracy and the reliability of facts are even more important." In Reuters analytical commentary, every statement is supported by reliable sources, and journalists are required not to mix their personal opinions into the material.

The Al Jazeera television network emphasizes cultural sensitivity and respect for human rights in political commentary. Their "Code of Ethics" (2019) states that "every political analysis must avoid racial, religious, national, or ideological discrimination." In this regard, Al Jazeera commentators interpret political processes within an international, cultural, and human context. The experience of these three major media organizations shows that in political commentary:

1. Fact-checking.
2. Balance and neutrality.
3. Cultural sensitivity.
4. Ethical responsibility.

The State of Political Commentary in Uzbek Media.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, political commentary entered a new stage of development. Since 2017, within the framework of the principles of a "transparent and publicly accessible government," the transparency of state policy has increased, which has contributed to a growth in both the quantity and quality of political commentary.

Currently, among the publications active in political analysis in the country, online media such as "Daryo.uz," "Gazeta.uz," "Kun.uz," and "Xabar.uz", as well as television channels like "Uzbekistan 24," "Yoshlar," and "Milliy TV," play an important role. These platforms regularly publish political analytical articles, interviews, and commentaries. However, in practice, some challenges still exist:

1. Among commentators, the culture of fact-checking is not yet fully developed.
2. In some political materials, instead of a thorough analytical approach, coverage is based on emotions.
3. The principle of political neutrality is sometimes not fully observed.

At the same time, in recent years, a new generation of specialists in analytical journalism has emerged in Uzbekistan

as a result of training and seminars conducted by the Uzbekistan Center for Journalist Professional Development, the Agency for Information and Mass Communications, and the University of Journalism and Mass Communications. This indicates a transition to a higher level of political commentary culture. To further develop political commentary, a systematic approach is needed in the following areas:

1. Strengthening analytical journalism courses in education. Teach political analysis, international politics, and media ethics in depth at journalism faculties.
2. Improving fact-checking mechanisms. Establish independent fact-checking departments within Uzbek media outlets.
3. Integrating international practices into political commentary. Develop training programs based on the standards of BBC, Reuters, and Al Jazeera.
4. Updating codes of ethics. Include specific provisions related to political commentary in the national journalists' code of ethics.
5. Ensuring journalists' safety. Strengthen legal protection mechanisms for commentators working on political topics.

CONCLUSION

Political commentary is not merely information; it is a complex genre based on the combination of opinion and analysis. Its success depends on a journalist's independent thinking, impartiality, intellectual capacity, and ethical responsibility.

The study identified that the main requirements for political commentary are as follows:

1. Conducting in-depth analysis of political events.
2. Verifying the reliability of facts.
3. Maintaining political neutrality.
4. Adhering to ethical standards.
5. Establishing proper communication with the audience.

International experience (BBC, Reuters, Al Jazeera) shows that strengthening a political commentator's professional ethics is a key factor in journalistic reliability and the development of democratic values. Uzbek media outlets are gradually adopting this experience, moving analytical journalism to a new level of quality.

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