

Political And Legal Foundations Of National Identity Formation In Contemporary Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the political and legal foundations of national identity, provides a brief philosophical analysis of the concept of national identity, and explores the impact of the reforms currently being implemented in New Uzbekistan on the process of national identity formation. Particular attention is given to the role of state policy, legal mechanisms, and social transformations in strengthening national consciousness, civic solidarity, and social stability. The study also highlights the significance of national values, historical memory, and cultural heritage in shaping a modern national identity under the conditions of ongoing modernization.

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Introduction

In New Uzbekistan, the restoration of historical heritage, the commemoration of prominent historical figures, and the legal protection of national values have become essential components of ongoing reforms. The effectiveness of these reforms largely depends on the strength of their political and legal foundations.

From a political and legal perspective, national identity is shaped through state policies promoting interethnic harmony, religious tolerance, gender equality, and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. These initiatives have contributed to a new stage in the development of national identity based on the principles of recognition and civic inclusion [1]. At the same time, excessive institutionalization of recognition mechanisms may weaken the social foundations of identity, making public awareness and legal education particularly important.

National identity today represents not only a historical and cultural legacy but also a political and legal construct formed through constitutional values, civic responsibility, legal consciousness, and democratic governance [2]. The renewed Constitution of Uzbekistan, emphasizing human dignity, the supremacy of the people's interests, and the strengthening of democratic institutions, provides a normative framework for the consolidation of national identity.

Literature review and methods

Contemporary studies indicate that national identity is shaped through several interconnected factors, including territory, statehood, language, culture, economic development, and the preservation of sovereignty. In Uzbekistan, political and legal reforms have become important instruments for strengthening these foundations and fostering civic unity.

The concept of justice serves as a key methodological basis for understanding the legal dimensions of national identity. Constitutional reforms aimed at ensuring social justice, equality, and the rule of law contribute to the formation of a stable civic identity. Likewise, modernization processes—such as digital

transformation, transparency, and anti-corruption measures—promote a new model of national identity grounded in citizenship, legality, and public participation.

The institutionalization of social memory, the improvement of the electoral system, the liberalization of political life, and the expansion of local self-governance further reinforce the civic content of national identity. Moreover, legal guarantees of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, property rights, gender equality, and the rights of persons with disabilities strengthen the political and legal foundations of national cohesion.

Therefore, the analysis of national identity formation in Uzbekistan requires not only an examination of domestic legal and political realities but also a comparative consideration of international theories, concepts, and experiences.

Results and discussion

Understanding the political and legal foundations of national identity is a prerequisite for political modernization, as identity largely depends on the legitimacy and stability of political institutions. In New Uzbekistan, reforms such as the liberalization of public administration, the expansion of parliamentary powers, and the strengthening of local councils have linked national identity to a new model of state legitimacy [3].

In Uzbekistan, new state policy discourses – such as “human dignity,” “a just state,” and “the interests of the people above all” – function as normative frameworks that reconstruct national identity [4]. However, a critical perspective suggests that frequent changes in normative discourses may undermine the semantic stability of identity.

Legal consciousness also plays a crucial role in understanding the political and legal foundations of national identity. The meaning of legal order is reflected in individuals’ ability to consciously regulate their social relations. Without a developed legal culture, legal order itself cannot remain stable. In this regard, policies aimed at enhancing legal awareness and strengthening citizens’ legal responsibility constitute an important social process that reinforces the legal basis of national identity.

Social memory is another key factor in the political and legal interpretation of national identity [2; 5]. National identity emerges through the interaction of historical experience and expectations for the future. Uzbekistan’s appeal to its ancient traditions of statehood and the institutional strengthening of the history of independence contribute to the political legitimacy of national identity. At the same time, a critical approach highlights the risks of selective historicism, whereby certain historical narratives may be idealized while others are marginalized.

The political and legal foundations of national identity formation in contemporary Uzbekistan represent a complex process closely connected with the transformation of public consciousness, the renewal of sources of state legitimacy, and the reinterpretation of normative values. National identity today manifests itself not only as a symbol of ethnic and cultural unity but also as a space of interaction between the political-legal system and society [6]. From the perspective of social philosophy, understanding this process requires an analysis of the epistemological role of political and legal modernization in shaping national identity.

This process demonstrates that identity is continuously reinterpreted and reconstructed rather than permanently fixed. The new Constitution of Uzbekistan, human rights legislation, and the evolving model of state–society relations indicate that the narrative of national identity is being continuously rewritten in accordance with the demands of modernization and democratic development.

First, identity in a democratic society depends on the extent to which political and legal equality becomes a lived reality. If equality remains merely declarative, the political substance of identity weakens and democratic principles enter into crisis. As legal scholar Miravzal Mirakulov notes, freedom, equality, justice, ideological and opinion pluralism, the formation of power through elections, the separation of powers, the inviolability of citizens’ rights and freedoms without a court decision, and the presumption of innocence are among the most important features of democracy [7]. This approach constitutes the foundation of contemporary legal reforms in Uzbekistan. Political and legal mechanisms such as equality before the law, social protection, gender equality, and civic participation contribute to the development of a

new content of national identity [11]. Nevertheless, a considerable gap may exist between the legal recognition of equality and its actual realization in social life, which can slow the consolidation of national identity.

Second, the political and legal formation of national identity is determined by society's capacity for self-governance. Where freedom is absent, identity remains only a formal ideal. Reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at reducing centralization, strengthening local self-government, and institutionalizing public councils demonstrate that national identity is increasingly formed on the basis of political and legal autonomy [10]. However, the insufficient effectiveness of autonomous institutions may hinder the deeper internalization of identity.

Third, the political and legal foundations of national identity are closely related to the politics of social memory and historicity. Identity is embedded in political consciousness through the legal normalization of historical experience. When memory is legitimized, it becomes a mechanism of collective self-understanding. In Uzbekistan, the reassessment of the legacy of historical figures, the promotion of national revival, and the institutional strengthening of independence history further reinforce the political and legal foundations of national identity. At the same time, a critical perspective suggests that the selective institutionalization of memory may create alternative historical narratives and limit interpretative diversity [9].

Fourth, public trust in the state represents another essential principle of national identity formation. Trust functions as a stabilizing resource of identity; where trust is lacking, the legal system loses much of its symbolic authority. Reforms promoting openness, transparency, and anti-corruption measures contribute to the formation of national identity through the accumulation of political trust [8]. However, legal reforms alone are insufficient to sustain trust. The consistent realization of social justice remains a decisive factor, since social justice is not only a moral requirement but also a foundation of national stability and sustainable development.

Fifth, the political and legal foundations of national identity are increasingly linked to the global legal environment. National identity defines its boundaries not only through domestic legal norms but also through universal human values. Uzbekistan's ratification of international conventions and the integration of global legal standards into national legislation enrich national identity with cosmopolitan dimensions [7]. Nevertheless, a critical approach points to the possibility that these processes may not always fully correspond to the internal cultural codes of identity.

Sixth, national identity may also be interpreted through the self-explanatory technologies of the state. Identity is continuously reproduced through political and legal discourses and practices. Without repetition and symbolic reinforcement, identity gradually weakens. In contemporary Uzbekistan, rhetorical constructs such as "New Uzbekistan," "Human Dignity," and "A Just State" function as performative expressions that contribute to the production and reproduction of national identity.

The political and legal foundations of national identity in contemporary Uzbekistan therefore constitute a complex phenomenon shaped by the emergence of a new normative model of statehood, the expansion of public self-awareness, and the modernization of legal consciousness. National identity is defined not only by historical memory or linguistic unity but also by the internalization of political and legal norms, the transformation of relations between legal institutions and citizens, and the development of the axiological foundations of modern Uzbek society. Understanding this process requires the harmonious application of normative, ontological, and axiological dimensions of social philosophy [5].

From the perspective of personal and political identity, recognition of an individual's political and legal status is essential for the stabilization of identity. Political society serves as the primary sphere in which identity is formed. In this regard, constitutional reforms in Uzbekistan contribute to the stabilization of national identity through legal recognition and political inclusion.

Political liberalism is also highly relevant to the political and legal interpretation of national identity. The primary condition of political unity is not agreement on a single truth but the willingness to recognize the legitimacy of differing political positions. Reforms promoting pluralism, political diversity, and the

recognition of social group interests contribute to the development of an inclusive model of national identity. However, excessive expansion of pluralistic identities may weaken aspirations toward national unity.

The global dimension of national identity formation is reflected in New Uzbekistan's active cooperation with international organizations, the incorporation of global legal norms, and the harmonization of national political and legal principles with universal ethical standards.

The concept of the citizen-subject occupies a central place in this process. Civic participation is not merely the outcome of legal development but an active force in the construction of identity itself [1]. Public oversight, the growing role of civil society organizations, and expanded political participation strengthen the political foundations of national identity. Nevertheless, genuine participation requires practical implementation that corresponds to the standards proclaimed in official documents.

Today, the dissemination of legal and political reforms increasingly relies on examples drawn from everyday life, practical experiences, and public communication strategies. Special attention is given to simple yet meaningful forms of communication that take into account people's lives, activities, and expert opinions. Such innovative methods of public outreach play an important role in ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of laws, decrees, and governmental decisions. The more effectively the essence of reforms is communicated, the more successfully society can be mobilized around common goals.

Finally, the political and legal foundations of national identity are closely connected with the concept of the active citizen. By expanding the sphere of individual freedom, political and legal reforms in Uzbekistan are transforming national identity into a more responsible, active, and participatory form. At the same time, the expansion of freedom without a corresponding strengthening of social responsibility may lead to individualistic fragmentation and weaken collective identity.

Conclusion

The political and legal foundations of national identity formation in contemporary Uzbekistan were clearly reflected in the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on December 26, 2025. The essence of this issue lies in the fact that the state manifests itself as a complex socio-philosophical structure shaped through strategic planning, the expansion of civic space, and the reinterpretation of normative values.

Today, national identity is not merely a continuation of historical memory and ethnic unity; it is also a new model of identity presented to society through the political and legal system. An analysis of this process requires a philosophical interpretation of how political and legal consciousness shapes national identity at the constitutional level. In this context, national identity is expressed through the manner in which the political system interacts with its citizens. Legal principles constitute a space in which identity is continuously reconstructed. The openness of Uzbekistan's political system in recent years, the dialogue between the state and society, and the citizen-oriented nature of public institutions indicate that this semantic space is being renewed. However, a critical perspective suggests that dialogue alone cannot guarantee the stability of identity; it must be accompanied by deep institutional trust.

It should also be noted that national identity is influenced by numerous factors, including historical experience, the years of independence, language and culture, religious values, political and social transformations, and the processes of globalization. The issue of national identity remains highly relevant in New Uzbekistan, and its development continues to be an ongoing process. Efforts to understand and strengthen national identity contribute to the further consolidation of national unity and the preservation of the unique character of the Uzbek people.

The political and legal formation of national identity occurs in interaction with global normative systems. Contemporary identity increasingly extends beyond national borders. As political and legal institutions adapt to universal ethical values, national identity acquires the dimension of global responsibility. Uzbekistan's membership in international organizations, its adoption of international legal standards, and its commitments in the field of human rights contribute to harmonizing the political and legal foundations of national identity with the global normative order. At the same time, a critical approach highlights the possibility of tensions between national sovereignty and global requirements.

Another important political and legal factor in the formation of national identity is the state's reconstruction of the concept of citizenship. In this regard, national identity emerges through the recognition of citizens' political, social, and civil rights. In recent years, the expansion of civil rights, the humanization of public services, and the strengthening of the rule of law in Uzbekistan have reinforced the legal foundations of national identity. However, from a critical perspective, the adoption of legal norms does not automatically guarantee their full realization in social practice.

The formation of national identity on political and legal foundations in contemporary Uzbekistan is directly connected with the state's redefinition of itself, the creation of a new level of dialogue with society, and the modernization of civic consciousness. National identity is no longer based on former ideological models but on a new axiological framework emerging from transformations in the political and legal order. It is determined by the interaction between political consciousness and legal norms, as well as by the opportunities created by the state for citizens' self-realization. The analysis of such a complex phenomenon is of particular importance for social philosophy and requires an interpretation of national identity in accordance with contemporary intellectual and theoretical developments.

To ensure the unity and prosperity of the Uzbek people, it is essential to enhance the effectiveness of restoring historical memory, define the prospects for the nation's spiritual development, strengthen political and legal culture, improve mechanisms of public administration, and further modernize the law-making process. Equally important is the promotion of legal awareness through innovative legislative approaches, media technologies, and practical examples from everyday life, enabling citizens to better understand the essence and significance of legal reforms.

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