

SUMMARIES of publications of Svetlana Alexandrova, PhD, presented in a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, in the scientific specialty "Sociology" (Procedural aspects of the emergence and formation of public opinion), professional field 3.1.Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences, announced for the needs of section SOCIAL SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, published in the State Gazette, issue 61/29.07.2025

Monograph

Chengelova, E., Alexandrova, Sv., Gerganov, A., Ivanova, Iv. (2023). *Public opinion: essence, genesis, factor determinacy and interpretations*. Academic Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences "Prof. Marin Drinov". ISBN 978-619-245-337-4. 327 p. [in Bulgarian]

The book is organized in the following parts: Methodology and Theoretical Foundations; Results of the Study on the Processes and Factors for the Emergence and Formation of Public Opinion; Conclusion; Bibliography; and Appendices, which present the research instruments specifically developed for the purpose of the study - questionnaires and guidelines for conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The monographic work applies an interdisciplinary approach and combines theoretical and practical-applied approaches in an attempt to make sense of the main discussion questions surrounding the nature of public opinion and the possibilities for its study. The use of well-established qualitative and quantitative methods and methodological experiments served to explore in detail the main aspects of public opinion and its manifestations in current social processes in Bulgaria.

In its theoretical part, the study proposes key concepts and explores the substantive aspects of the phenomenon, viewing it as a dynamic and multilayered process. It explores the nature, structure and influential factors in the processes of emergence and formation of public opinion, tracing the problems facing its study, the controversies surrounding the nature of the concept, its various manifestations and functions. The role of public opinion in managerial decisions in democratic practices and its dual nature are analyzed. The premises for the establishment of the polling method and the criticisms of simplifying the dynamic nature of public opinion by imposing it in practice are examined. The subject of interest are the manifestations of public opinion in contemporary social processes and the (in)possibility of public consensus - in the virtual public space, and in the Bulgarian social environment in the context of democratic changes.

The monograph explores in depth the content of the concept of "public opinion" and analyzes the social-psychological aspects of its emergence and formation. It highlights the main characteristics of the phenomenon, its critical-receptive status and the role of publicity, conformism and its susceptibility to external influence. It takes into account the most common definition of public opinion as 'a collection of individual opinions', which has been imposed by mass polls that are based on strict methodological principles and give expression to people's evaluations and attitudes on socially significant issues in the form of quantitative ratios, but argues that this definition ignores the dialogical nature of public opinion. The nature of public opinion contains both a quantitative element - irrational, susceptible to influence and conformity, and measurable in

percentage terms - and a qualitative component, which is characterised by its discursiveness, rationality and criticality. The study of public opinion as an objectively existing social fact outside the social context and the influence of its influencing factors excludes the interaction that underlies the formation of public opinion. A significant aspect of this interaction is the questions of how consensus is reached and whether we can even speak of consensus or whether public opinion is formed in conditions of control and social pressure, with the support of various instruments of influence such as managerial propaganda, media creation of perceptions, but also the imposition of the majority over the minority and unheard voices.

Based on the theoretical concepts reviewed (Lippmann 2001; Blumer 1948; Habermas 1995; Noelle-Neumann 2010; Crespi 1996; Bourdieu 2004; Moscovici 2007; Herbst 2011; Clawson & Oxley 2016), which deal with the scope and content of the concept of public opinion, it is concluded that public opinion is not a mere aggregation of individual opinions. The process of public opinion formation contains socialization, motivational, informational, and communication aspects (Lippmann 2001; Kelman 1961; McQuail 1992; Roberts 1992; Schramm 1992), and proceeds as a multilayered, dynamic process that is essentially a struggle of influences between various public and individual factors and assumed positions in the public sphere (Blumer 1948; Bourdieu 2004). On the basis of a review of the scientific literature in the problem field, an enriched definition of public opinion is proposed, which reflects its multiple aspects and the complex interrelations of social interaction and social influence that characterize the process of public opinion formation.

The study pays special attention to the stages, elements, external and internal factors that influence the dynamic and complex processes of the emergence and formation of public opinion. The importance of social interaction and social influence in these processes is analyzed, highlighting the key role of the elements of socialization, motivation, information and communication in the structure of public opinion as a social-psychological phenomenon. The influence of the factors analyzed in the scientific literature, which have an impact in the processes of emergence and formation of public opinion and the mechanisms by which they function and interact, is considered. The process of social influence identifies media, political elites and opinion polls as activating factors of public opinion. Due to their premise to have a large-scale impact, they play a decisive role in the construction of issues of importance for public opinion and their dissemination, creating plurality and publicity, characterizing public opinion and distinguishing it from private, individual opinion. In turn, the activated themes and reactions, the publicly formed opinions are processed in the process of social interaction, where the role of the individual's reference group, opinion leaders and the subjective predispositions formed in the individual is crucial. Thus, the complex and dynamic influence of expectations, knowledge, interests, determining the motivation for the formation of one or another opinion; ideas, thought patterns, values and stereotypes adopted and established in the course of socialization of the individual; various information signs, signals and messages and their communication exchanges, effects and interpretations are involved in the processes of emergence and formation of public opinion.

In the second part of the book, the proposed theoretical explanatory process model is applied to the empirical study of the main aspects of the emergence and formation of public opinion. On the

basis of qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions), evaluations and attitudes towards the phenomenon in Bulgarian society are explored, and current perceptions of public opinion in Bulgarian publicity - state, roles, manifestations and influences on public opinion - are examined. The obtained and analysed comprehensive corpus of subjective attitudes towards the phenomenon is applied and verified in the quantitative public opinion surveys presented in the following subsections of the book.

The thematic analysis of the data focuses on questions about the nature of public opinion and its essence as a process - how it emerges, how it is formed, which issues attract its attention, which factors influence it, when its critical state and when its receptive state is manifested, and under what circumstances public opinion is subject to manipulative techniques and mechanisms. The specifics of power influences in the Bulgarian public sphere and the main prerequisites that have the potential to attract public attention are examined, with emphasis on the specifics of the processes of attitude formation towards the scientific sphere and the formation of public opinion in pre-election situations. It examines attitudes towards social networks that shift traditional layers of influence, expand the public sphere and enable the public expression of private opinions. It analyses perceptions of the influence of individual characteristics, socio-economic background, values, interests and trust levels. The influence of significant factors in the public opinion formation process - politicians, media, experts, opinion leaders, opinion polls and an individual's social circle - is verified. It is concluded that in the specific Bulgarian public environment their effectiveness is influenced by the levels of trust. Lack of interest, distrust and reluctance to discuss certain topics lead to less influence of external factors such as media, politicians, experts and opinion polls. Their effect is limited to creating superficial perceptions. Growing distrust of the credibility of information provided by traditional media channels and the expert positions and political messages disseminated through them, together with increasing public anomie, lead to the formation of private spaces in the public digital space where the influence of respected authorities within the group is enhanced. Three types of opinion leaders emerge: authorities in the immediate social circle; opinion leaders on Facebook; and opinion leaders with charisma. Personal interest, trust in sources of information, knowledge based on one's own experience or the experience of close others, authorities in the individual's social group, and established group values stand out as very significant aspects in the formation of public opinion, with a high level of education leading to a more rational approach to opinion formation. At the same time, higher socio-economic status and educational level are prerequisites for taking an interest in public issues, but also for assuming and imposing positions in society.

The analysis of the data obtained with qualitative methods showed that public opinion is understood either as an expression of different and opposing interests of social groups, formed under the influence of economic and political factors, but presented as public; or as a dominant and mass opinion imposed by media and political elites, which is accepted uncritically. Alternative and minority opinions are perceived as an opportunity to counteract the establishment of such apparent consensus, and the permeability of the public environment helps to shape public opinion more critically. However, at the very least it supports the notion of public opinion as a consensus reached as a result of discussion. The study highlights that while publicity plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, the subjective perception of the application of manipulative practices

affects the attention, interest and credibility of the messages circulated. Social networks and personal authorities are perceived as more reliable sources of information. In the process of public opinion formation, there is a dynamic interaction between external and internal factors, with the end result often being a fragmented and polarised public opinion guided not by common values and developmental frameworks, but by the social characteristics of different social groups.

Articles and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information

Alexandrova, S. (2025). Science. Discourses. Roles. – *Filosofiya – Philosophy*. 34 (1), 90-99.
<https://doi.org/10.53656/phil2025-01-08> [in English]

The paper aims to trace the change in the public discourse regarding science and the roles assigned to the sphere of science under the impact of this change. On the one hand, science is a specialized field that develops within a specific context and framework. On the other hand, it is an important part of the social structure, a feature that requires its interaction with other spheres and its striving for legitimation in various contexts. The field of science is characterized by objectivity and credibility, but is put to instrumental uses in the course of social interaction. The paper examines the mechanisms of interaction and functioning of science in three areas of interaction: “science-politics”, “science-media” and “science-society”; it discusses the positioning of science in central, intermediate or peripheral roles within these three areas. Changing conceptions of science also reflect broader social transformations that challenge traditional conceptions of truth and rationality and impose new ways of understanding the role of science in society.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2024). Approaches to Change the Quality of School Education. NSLLL 2014 – 2020. *Chuzhdoezikovo Obuchenie – Foreign Language Teaching*, 51 (6), 780-793.
<https://doi.org/10.53656/for2024-06-09> [in Bulgarian]

In recent decades, the quality of school education has been the subject of intense debate in Bulgarian society. The most common concerns include a lack of comprehension and practical application of what is taught in schools, an overemphasis on memorization of facts with little relevance to real-life situations, and a general absence of key competencies needed to thrive in the 21st century. Other frequently cited issues are the dependence of student achievement on external factors (such as private tutoring and socio-economic background), outdated and irrelevant curriculum content, the use of obsolete teaching methods, unengaging learning processes, problematic assessment and discipline systems, inadequately modernized learning environments, and a lack of student motivation. This paper focuses on the issue of institutional responsibility and examines the role of educational policy approaches in shaping these societal attitudes. It specifically analyzes the impact of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (NSLLL) for the period 2014–2020, which concerns the improvement of the quality of school education, the raising of student achievement, the acquisition of key competences, and the development of the individual, and which sets the stage for efforts, still relevant today, to change the learning environment and introduce a competence-based approach to education. It seeks answers to the questions of how effective the measures implemented are, and why, during the period of the strategy, there has been

a decline in the functional literacy of pupils, the targets in this area remain unachieved and the overall impact assessment of the strategy document reports a complete lack of progress in the quality of school education and the achievement of Bulgarian pupils. The content analysis of the relevant documents showed that the measures implemented are characterized by unsustainability, partial impact on school system factors, inconsistency, inertia, and lack of innovation.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2023). Political practices and mechanisms of influence on public perceptions of science. *Filosofiya – Philosophy*, 32 (1), 42-54. [in Bulgarian]
<https://doi.org/10.53656/phil2023-01-03>

The paper focuses on studying public attitudes toward science in Bulgaria and the role of political discourse in shaping public expectations and perceptions. The study's methodology includes an analysis of theoretical concepts and their empirical verification with data from a quantitative Eurobarometer survey (Special Eurobarometer 516) and a discourse analysis of the representation of the scientific sphere in the public debate. The Bulgarian social reality clearly shows a blurring of the role, nature, and participation of science in societal development, the imposition of populist societal expectations towards it, as well as political statements that abuse the reputation of the scientific sphere and its representatives.

Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

Alexandrova, Sv. (2024). Conjunctural-Adaptational Factors. In: Chengelova, E., Nakova, A., Alexandrova, S., & Gerganov, A. Factor Determinants of the "Shadow Economy". Monograph. Academic Publishing House "Prof. Marin Drinov". ISBN 978-619-245-409-8. 484 pages. pp. 95–139. [in Bulgarian]

The study is part of a published monograph containing results from the implementation of a project funded by the "Scientific Research Fund" titled "*Factor Determinants of the Shadow Economy and Approaches for Its Limitation in Bulgarian Society*" (Contract No. KP-06-N35/9 dated 18.12.2019), led by Prof. D.Sc. Emilia Chengelova. The paper analyzes quantitative data from a nationally representative survey conducted in 2021 (1,800 respondents aged 15+), which examined Bulgarian public attitudes toward shadow economic practices and the psychological readiness to engage in them. Based on the analysis, recommendations were made for the prevention and limitation of shadow economic practices through political measures and mechanisms to influence them. The study examines 22 conjunctural-adaptational factors that form part of the socio-economic context, creating an objective and often individual-independent market environment—laying the foundation for the individual's functioning as a market actor. The sensitivity shown by respondents regarding the degree of influence of the examined factors reveals the motives by which individuals, as market participants, become complicit in the reproduction and dissemination of various forms of the shadow economy. Thus, they contribute to integrating such practices into the country's economic conjuncture. The influence of factors that sustain the shadow economy is assessed as stronger than that of those causing its initial emergence in the Bulgarian economy. The conclusion is drawn that punitive economic measures aimed at workers for limiting shadow

economic practices would be ineffective, as workers themselves do not create the conditions for the existence of the shadow economy but adapt to them due to the lack of real alternatives and/or the risk of exclusion from the labor market. The high level of agreement among the Bulgarian population about the influence of the analyzed factors shows no significant differences by gender or age. However, more prominent effects are observed based on educational status, employment status, and income level. Individuals with low income are significantly less aware of the impact that negative economic conjunctures have on their opportunities for legal and active participation in the labor market. The same conclusion applies to individuals with lower educational status and to students: these groups are more exposed to potential future involvement, even unconscious participation, in shadow economic activities due to insufficient awareness. Policies for the prevention and limitation of shadow economy practices should include, in a structured and systematic way: efforts to increase income levels; incentives for employers to improve transparency; informational campaigns about legally established rights and obligations in the labor market and the consequences of violating them for individuals; and the integration of financial and economic literacy into educational programs.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2022). Gathering Empirical Information for Quantitative Research in an Online Environment. *Postmodernism Problems*, 12(3), 418-440. [in Bulgarian]
<https://doi.org/10.46324/PMP2203418>

The paper analyses the potential of the online environment for obtaining empirical data. It discusses the positive and the negative aspects of their use in scientific research and attempts to highlight the challenges of using social media for empirical data collection. Facebook and its growing levels of consumption attracts research interest because it facilitates recruitment of respondents, saves considerable money, time and effort, and opens access to hard-to-reach populations and highly engaged citizens in a variety of topics. At the same time, the use of online space for empirical data collection remains problematic in terms of representativeness, accessibility and security. The article briefly describes the process of recruiting Facebook respondents to participate in an online survey - a post-election study. The analysis of the results clearly shows the outreach, based on convenience sampling, to an online sample that is characterized by high interest in political issues, active communication practices, variety of information sources used, well-established practices of civic activism and participation in elections, relatively stable party affiliation and consistency in political orientation.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2021). Distinctive characteristics and mechanisms of influence in the processes of public opinion formation for two social spheres. *Sociological Problems*, Special Issue Vol. 54. ISSN 0324-1572. 56-85. [in Bulgarian]

This text presents the results of a qualitative study conducted using the focus group discussion method between March 15 and April 15, 2021. The research involved participants divided into four focus groups based on their attitudes—either positive or skeptical—toward voting in elections and toward science. The study offers insights into the prevailing social perceptions at the time of the research, as expressed by the focus group participants, specifically regarding the key factors and characteristics that influence the formation of public opinion. In particular, the research delineates the framework within which current attitudes toward two spheres of public life in

Bulgaria—science and politics—are situated. The findings suggest that the dynamics of new information and its interpretations distinctly shape the processes of public opinion formation in each domain. Another notable aspect is the clearly articulated trend of distrust and skepticism toward information disseminated through traditional media channels, contrasted with significantly higher levels of trust in online sources—particularly those embedded within individuals' social networks (e.g., friends, acquaintances, and curated online media content). The erosion of trust in public information sources, combined with the prevalence of conflicting political, expert, and media messages during the COVID-19 pandemic, has shifted the process of opinion formation toward the relatively more stable and predictable order and context of individuals' immediate (physical or virtual) social circles.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2021). Essence of the term “public opinion” and its role in the social processes. *Philosophical Alternatives Journal*, Issue 1. ISSN 0861–7899, 56-82. [in Bulgarian]

The study focuses on the nature of the concept of *public opinion* through the lens of publicity, mass communication, and democratic practices. It synthesizes the scholarly foundations for conceptualizing public opinion as rationality, as a form of social control, as discourse, and as enumeration. The paper argues that public opinion constitutes a complex, dynamic, and factor-driven communicative process. Its active role in contemporary societal processes intensifies efforts to influence its formation, often resulting in its artificial construction. Within this framework, one of the widely accepted definitions in the public sphere—that public opinion is a "sum of individual opinions"—is critically examined. While this definition underpins the methodological basis for measuring public opinion, it has been subject to well-founded critiques (Blumer, 1948; Bourdieu, 2004). These critiques point to the lack of empirically grounded knowledge about the actual process of opinion formation, wherein multiple factors interact with varying degrees of influence in a complex and dynamic manner.

Articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

Alexandrova, S. (2024). Science and Public Perceptions in the Social Media. Interactions and Perspectives. – *Sociological Problems*, Vol. 56, Special Issue: Networks of Understanding: Public Image(s) of Science(s) in the Digital Age. ISSN 0324-1572. 134-144. [in English]

The article examines the communication of science at an everyday level in the perspective of virtual communication. Although communication in online space is accepted as yet another tool for popularising science and attracting public attention, communicating science at an everyday level, as in non-specialised virtual networks, is a problematic matter. Instead of conveying a better understanding of science, what actually happens is rather a neutralisation and domination of the specialised field by public opinion. In the specificity of the digital environment, the interaction between science and society leads to mixing scientific methods and facts with popular opinions and attitudes. This study investigates the interaction between scientific and everyday discourse in a Facebook group with a scientific theme, using ethnographic embedded observation and discursive analysis in the course of three months. It is concluded that communication is mediated by the various resources and expectations of the participants, and the structure of online

communication in social networks retains its specificity in terms of dynamic sharing of opinions and attitudes, while ignoring the scientific context of communication.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2024). The propensity to give or accept bribes and attitudes towards the "shadow economy". In: *Proceedings of a national conference on "Factor Determination of the Shadow Economy in the Perceptions of Bulgarian Society: Empirical Research, Results, Interpretations and Policy Recommendations"*. Academic Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences "Prof. Marin Drinov". ISBN 978-619-245-413-5 (print). ISBN 978-619-245-414-2 (online). 116-125. [in Bulgarian]

The report presents the profile and potential motivations for engagement in shadow economic practices among individuals who exhibit a psychological predisposition toward giving or receiving bribes, as well as their attitudes toward the key factors contributing to the emergence and reproduction of the shadow economy. The analysis draws on data from a nationally representative sociological survey conducted in 2021 (N = 1,800, aged 15+), within the framework of the project *"Factor Determinants of the Shadow Economy and Approaches for Its Limitation in Bulgarian Society"* (Contract No. KP-06-N35/9, 18.12.2019), funded by the National Science Fund. The findings reveal that the willingness to participate in such practices often reflects the activation of adaptive mechanisms in response to the challenges of a problematic socio-economic environment. Negative perceptions of the institutional landscape, a widespread belief in the inefficacy of institutional mechanisms, and the conviction that legal frameworks are routinely circumvented further reinforce the social acceptability of shadow economy practices.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2023). Online field opportunities: an example of recruiting respondents on Facebook. In: *Internet Research Methods: Present, Cognitive Potential, and Technological Possibilities for Development*. Publisher "Prof. Marin Drinov". ISBN 978-619-245-346-6. 57-64. [in Bulgarian]

This report addresses the methodological aspects and challenges associated with the use of virtual space as a research field for conducting both qualitative and quantitative studies. Specifically, it examines the opportunities and limitations of internet-based research through the case of an online survey designed to explore the factors and attitudes influencing respondents' decisions to vote in the three consecutive parliamentary elections held in Bulgaria in April, July, and November 2021. An inherent outcome of employing a self-selection recruitment method is the predominance of a sample composed of politically engaged and interested individuals. When operating within a predefined methodological framework aimed at reaching politically active respondents—supporters of various political parties—a strategy involving the prior mapping of Facebook groups and online forums may prove effective. However, including such a mapping phase in the research methodology does not guarantee the participation of supporters from all political parties, as participation in online surveys, in the absence of additional incentives, remains voluntary and primarily driven by a genuine interest in the topic. In this context, the principle of random selection—central to representative quantitative research—may, in the realm of online studies, be reduced to ensuring that invitations are equally distributed across all pre-identified groups of interest. Thus, research efforts aimed at achieving a (necessarily imperfect) form of representativeness in online respondent recruitment can focus on the strategic selection of online

channels that enable an equal opportunity for dissemination and outreach to potential respondents. However, this does not equate to an equal probability for all members of the general population to be included in the sample.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2022). Bulgarian publicity and opinion polls - relations, practices and public trust. *Ethical Studies*, 7(2). ISSN 2534-8434, 188-204. [in Bulgarian]

The paper analyzes the position of opinion polls in the Bulgarian public environment. It examines the impact of opinion polls and public attitudes towards them, based on current qualitative and quantitative data. The results show an uncertainty in a part of the Bulgarian society regarding the role and use of opinion polls and tendencies to spread negative attitudes, which define polls as a public actor that is more a part and a factor in a manipulative public environment than a democratic tool providing informed choices to citizens. Applying and legitimizing unethical practices and approaches in public discredits the public environment in general and opinion polls in particular.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2022). Social environment, public attitudes and political process: the Bulgarian context. *Philosophical alternatives Journal*, Issue 4. ISSN 0861-7899. 124-138. [in Bulgarian]

The article is an attempt to address and link the issues of public opinion and political development in Bulgaria in the last decades, as the research efforts are aimed at highlighting the peculiar transition from socialism through pluralism to populism. The substantive aspects of public opinion participation as equal and proportional to political representation are problematized. Public opinion is predominantly formed under the pressure of media, but also political (dis)information, in conditions of prolonged crisis of trust in institutions and low efficiency of communication with them, lack of sustainable authorities, underdeveloped political and civic culture, low levels of self-confidence and the sense of having lost the ability to influence the course of public issues and the making of decisions. The formation of Bulgarian public attitudes largely depends on the impact of deficits in the public sphere, the defects of the educational system in terms of building political and civic culture, lack of critical thinking and education, and the internalization of conformist and authoritarian practices in society.

Alexandrova, Sv. (2021). Transformations in the Social Impact: Politics, Media, Social Networks. *Postmodernism Problems*, 11(1), 58-75. [in Bulgarian] <https://doi.org/10.46324/PMP2101058>

This article explores the role of political elites and the media in shaping public opinion and directing public attention. Focusing on the transformations in social influence under the impact of networked culture within the online communication environment, it examines how the role of traditional power structures is evolving and how this transformation affects political culture, public opinion formation, and civic participation in socio-political life. Whereas prior to the rise of online communication, unidirectional messaging from political elites and mainstream media largely shaped a passive public opinion—positioned as a recipient of dominant power narratives—the contemporary context of information abundance, instant accessibility, and real-time interaction through social networks gives prominence to a more active form of public opinion. While this active opinion is often unstructured and polarized, and the productivity of online social interaction is frequently subject to critique, social media platforms nonetheless serve as mediating tools for dialogue and organization. This growing dynamic increasingly compels political elites and media

institutions to engage with and respond to public opinion as it manifests within the online communicative sphere.

Alexandrova. Sv. (2020). Socialization, motivation, social relationships and attitudes. *Industrial Relations and Public Development*. Issue 4. ISSN 2683-0167. 31-43. [in Bulgarian]

The influence of socialization and motivation in the process of forming attitudes mediates both social relations and social development. The first process frames our perceptions of the world from how we understand social processes and relationships, through the admission of new and different from our own understandings and knowledge, to our choice of strategies for dealing with different life situations. Motivation is crucial in the importance of our personal motives and needs in the formation of our attitudes, behavior and relationships. Despite the impact of media and political elites in the process of imposing a new relations and practices, sustainable role plays the discursive processing in the social environment of the individual, established ideas, individual interests and needs guided by them.

Alexandrova. Sv. (2020). The information and its role in public opinion in a state of emergency. *Ethical Studies*. Issue 1. ISSN 2534-8434. 100-113. [in Bulgarian]

This article addresses the complex process of public opinion formation and the roles played by the media and governing authorities within it. It analyzes the informational and communicative dimensions of the public sphere during the declaration of a state of emergency in response to the escalating COVID-19 pandemic on March 13, 2020. In the context of a state of emergency, the significance of information conveyed through official messages becomes even more critical. For such messages to be correctly interpreted, they must exhibit consistency and stability within the communication process. Furthermore, specific and unambiguous restrictions and regulations should be most clearly reflected in the conduct and example set by those in power.