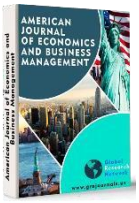

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Article

The Evolution of Television Images

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Abstract: This article discusses how the state has used and continues to use television images to reinforce its policies. The emergence of images during the course of programs is analyzed through examples, and the article explores how the evolution of these images has undergone various changes.

Keywords: Television Image, Television, Evolution, Viewer, Hero, Presenter, Program.

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1. Introduction

Television images are connected to changes in society; they penetrate the public consciousness through heroes and participants in television projects who reflect the politics of a given era. The power of an image has the capacity to transform our inner world and way of life.

For example, some visual images influence the mass consciousness and, having been implanted in the memory of millions of people, become idols for them [1]. A country wisely uses television images to consolidate its policies. If we analyze the Soviet era, the period of perestroika, and the era of independence, the hero of each period is unique and does not repeat the previous one. Television images were created accordingly.

We will examine the evolution of television images in three stages:

1. The Soviet Union era: 1956–1985.
2. The perestroika years: 1985–1991.
3. The era of independence: from 1991 to the present.

Uzbekistan Television, in line with the ideology of the time, was directly connected to the Soviet Union along with the other 14 republics. Each republic's television service, operating in offline mode, felt that it was functioning within a single unified system and acted accordingly.

Literature Review

Researcher V.V. Yegorov notes that "the foundation of Soviet television was defined by the tasks set for television by the Communist Party" [2]. This applied to all CIS states. On November 5, 1956, the television service in our country began broadcasting in black and white, with an airtime of 2 hours consisting of feature or documentary films and recorded concerts. From the 1960s onward, television projects began to be produced gradually. The format (even at the risk of repetition) was nearly identical for all Soviet republics. Television was not concerned with providing real information about events in

the world and on its own territory, but with promoting state policy. Television images were also created and presented in accordance with this policy.

Initially, radio announcers were invited to serve as television presenters, having passed a special audition before appearing on air. During the years when the blue screen entered households, this type of selection process was observed in all CIS countries. The image of the television presenter was also cast from nearly the same mold, and the classical style was seen as an unwritten rule. Strict adherence was required to literary language norms, clear enunciation of letters and words, and all means of expression. Every announcer was not merely the 'face' of a television channel, but appeared on screen as the image of the country. Because, right up until perestroika, almost every television project—from news programs to social-political, artistic-dramatic, and entertainment programs—was presented by announcers.

- I have interviewed cosmonauts, spoken with Shostakovich, Plitsetskaya, Vishnevskaya, Mukhtor Ashrafy, Tamarakhanum, and famous writers and poets of Uzbekistan [3].

These recollections by Galina Melnikova—a top-class announcer, Honored Artist of Uzbekistan, and mentor to many announcers—relate to the Soviet era. She also recalls roundtable discussions with scientists, workers, service employees, and cotton growers. Naturally, this list is the very image of the 'heroes' in those programs. In a television project, the show's 'hero' is always used not necessarily in reference to a winner in some field, but in relation to a participant in that particular content.

A number of serial projects broadcast on television and radio in 1973–1974 were dedicated to the collective of the Chirchiq Electrochemical Plant, covering their social activities and attitude toward increasing labor competitiveness in a communist spirit [4]. Based on this example from Uzbekistan Television, we can imagine the airwaves of Soviet republic television stations. Programs broadcast on the blue screen, and the images of program participants, came from above—that is, from Moscow—based on decrees and orders. For several decades, television was on a par, in terms of its status, with institutions such as state security.

In the late 1970s, color television began presenting its projects to viewers. Among the first major television projects on Uzbekistan Television were teledramas (teleplay productions). Their purpose was to connect the population—that is, the mass audience—more organically with literature. Every Monday a live theatrical production was broadcast. Promoting loyalty, patriotism, and industriousness through positive or negative characters in the television play was one of the main goals. Because the actor embodying the characters on screen brings all his capabilities to bear, delivering the hidden 'secret' of the literary pages into the viewer's heart—this is yet another testament to the unique capabilities of television [5]. Subsequently, teledramas were replaced by the Theatre of Television Miniatures, projects such as 'Otalar sözi — aqlning közi' ('The Words of Fathers are the Eyes of Wisdom'), and multi-episode video films such as 'Bahor qaytmaydi' ('Spring Shall Not Return') and 'Girdob' ('The Whirlpool'). The positive heroes in these works—products of television—were so thoroughly embedded in the viewer's consciousness that imitating the positive image became fashionable in the streets and even within the family circle. In this way, television images influenced the lives of people in society, and people, feeling ashamed of their shortcomings, strove to rid themselves of these flaws.

Programs about cotton—described as 'white gold' and considered the main 'face' of the country's agriculture—and cotton growers were produced. In television, the image of cotton was idealized: ensembles named 'Pakhtaoy' ('Lady Cotton'), programs and video films featuring cotton plants and harvests were brought to the foreground.

2. Methodology

From the 1960s–1970s onward, Uzbekistan Television increased the number of television projects. Devoted scientists and workers in various fields were also brought to the foreground as television images. In the 1960s, Tursunoy Okhunova—the first Uzbek female machine operator to sit in a cotton-harvesting machine—was celebrated as a television screen hero for years. Through this image, other women in the country were also called upon to become machine operators, and as a result, thousands of women began harvesting cotton by machine. The image of the first female machine operator was idealized to such a degree that the all-union movement 'Tursunoychilar' ('Followers of Tursunoy') was formed at that time. According to Soviet ideology propaganda, Tursunoy Okhunova—twice a Hero of Socialist Labor across the Union, who harvested 322 tons of 'white gold' in 1960—was always shown in a happy, healthy appearance. The truth about this 'hero,' who according to doctors died of lung disease at age 47 as a result of poisoning from chemically treated dust in the cotton fields, was revealed later. According to the politics of that era, this image, displayed and promoted at the state level as a role model, had to be nearly ideal and healthy.

Now the system has changed, the era has changed, society has changed, and the journalist's perspective and gaze have changed [6].

By the late 1980s, global political changes began in the Soviet republics, and naturally this also affected television. New 'air' entered television programs, and commercial projects also slowly began. Naturally, manufacturers and entrepreneurs began to be recognized by the public through their image in television content. Ample space was given to youth topics.

3. Results and Discussion

Television became one of the most attractive and rapidly developing sectors of the non-state economy [7]. Advertising programs began to take shape gradually. Now, the image of a person with substantial material wealth became not negative, but worthy of praise and became a subject of promotion.

After the dissolution of the Union, the path was opened for all former Soviet republics to watch and study foreign television channels. If perestroika began in 1985, examining sources from recent history, we see that changes in the mass media began first in the press. Step by step, radical reforms began in radio and television.

Not only television programs but also their presenters became legends [8]. New television projects began to change people's worldviews. The participants in programs began to consist of ordinary people from various fields. Live broadcasts began, and interactive communication with viewers became urgent—listening to their opinions on every subject and holding discussions became a pressing need.

More than 15 sessions of the Supreme Assembly were broadcast live, and the live image of political figures began to appear before viewers. The mass media rose to the level of a fourth branch of government, and journalists became the advanced class of society [9].

For the first time in the history of Uzbekistan Television, a 24-hour live Nowruz charity telethon was held on March 21, 1990. Although announced as 24 hours, it lasted 25 hours and 9 minutes. It was precisely during this period that the television image of young people began to emerge. Young journalists began to appear with author programs as television presenters. New information programs took shape, and viewers still recall journalists such as Said Hidoyatov and Furqat Zokirov preparing segments as authors and presenters.

The attitude toward religion changed positively: the Soviet system's policy of atheistic hostility toward religion was ended, and freedom of conscience was guaranteed

by law [10]. As a result of freedom of belief, religious figures began to appear on television channels both as presenters and as heroes. At a time when the 'Uzbek Model' of development was beginning, during the transition from a transitional period to a market economy, the people fixed their eyes on the television screen and began to observe the course of reforms. Multi-party politics was permitted, and the image of political figures began to take shape. As freedom was given to property owners and manufacturers, the image of the entrepreneur began to emerge.

In the era of independence, the television image of Uzbek women began to emerge through programs telling of the achievements of the country's women in public life and their role in politics. For example, journalist Nafisa Zohidova's program 'Ajab saodat erur' ('What Wondrous Fortune'), Umida Usmanova's 'Azizim' ('My Dear'), and Nilufar Umrzoqova's 'Begoyim' ('My Lady') serve as examples. In television projects, the image of women was presented in various ways. Program heroes were covered ranging from the Deputy Prime Minister down to a cleaning woman.

The role of the intellectual television project 'Zakoat' in the emergence of the television image of a new generation of knowledgeable people is immeasurable. The program's author and presenter, Rasul Abdullayev, began the program after obtaining permission from Russian television channels for the program 'Chto? Gde? Kogda?' ('What? Where? When?'). While 'Chto? Gde? Kogda?' has been presented to viewers from 1975 to the present, the 'Zakoat' intellectual game has been expanding its audience since 2001. This interactive program, which falls within the second and third groups of the evolution of television images, brings the image of knowledgeable and talented young people to the public and continues to promote them to this day. 'Zakoat' can serve as an example that the image of knowledgeable people will never 'become outdated' or fall out of fashion.

After Shavkat Mirziyoyev was elected president in 2016, Uzbekistan began to experience yet another new era. For the people of Uzbekistan, the image of the head of state began to take on a positive character. President Mirziyoyev congratulated his citizens via television on the eve of the arrival of 2017. This had not been observed on the blue screen since 1992—when only minutes remained before the New Year, announcers would read the President's congratulatory address in Russian and Uzbek. The President granted freedom to the mass media and also to activity on social networks, and thus the image of bloggers emerged.

COVID-19 changed the lives of people around the world, and it directly and indirectly affected the mass media as well. Just as world television was reformed, it began to make only medically related broadcasts, including television in Uzbekistan. Program presenters, participants, and heroes began to speak in content related to health. Live broadcasts also consisted mainly of question-and-answer formats, with the main heroes being doctors. Through online lessons, teachers began giving classes every day via the blue screen in the guise of a tele-image. Television channels changed their programs. It would not be surprising if the next generation remembers this era of television as one of masked television images [11], [12], [13], [14], [15].

4. Conclusions

Television is one of the most effective means of manipulating people's consciousness. An image displayed in a program has the power to change a person's destiny in terms of its influence. Because visual and audiovisual projects on the blue screen influence the thoughts, behavior, and even beliefs of people.

Television images, while possessing the power to influence viewers and change their lives, also speak about the image of the country. A viewer outside the country who wishes to gain an impression of Uzbekistan may draw conclusions about the country's

socioeconomic and political situation by watching programs and television series on the blue screen and observing the images within them.

The evolution of television images shows that intellectual programs that invite reflection and speak from real life—like news programs and the 'Zakoat' intellectual television project—will have a long lifespan. However, as the flow of information continues to occupy the human mind, genres will also change character according to need and exert their influence on images.

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