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Transformation of the Functions of Kazakhstan Television in the Information Society

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The paper deals with the problems and prospects for the development of television broadcasting in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the context of the information society. The author suggests the mechanisms for controlling and forecasting socially responsible television and discovers its role in democratic modernization of society. The paper analyses the ways of developing television in the information society and studies the role of television in the new social conditions. It contains predictive models of relationships between television and political institutions, as well as principles behind formation of the mechanisms of social control over the television activity in the information society.

Keywords: Television broadcasting, information society, social responsibility, television, Social control

Throughout all of its history, mankind has never witnessed another medium of communication as powerful and influential as television which would exert the same profound effect on people, society or the state. Emerged relatively recently, it has already turned into a unique and original means of disseminating information that combines video and audio broadcasting technology. Due to this power to simultaneously transmit images and sounds, television has become the most popular mass medium in the world. Mankind is getting used to living in the information society. As we know, during the World Summit on the Information Society 2003-2005 (WSIS), which addressed the issues of the information society, new requirements for mass media, including television as the most popular means of communication, were formulated. Complying with the new requirements was formulated as the global task in the new millennium (Dumazedier, 1993; Yegorov, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to identify avenues for further development; predict possible transformations and the place of television in the information society; establish the role of television under new social conditions; forecast models of relationships between television and political institutions; form mechanisms of social control over the television activity on the information society.

Research Approach

An interdisciplinary approach is used which embraces a political science method, as well as other methods of the theories of the information society and contemporary communications, and sections of the theory of journalism in the study. The current research

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also applies a chronological approach, together with systems analysis methods based on political science and synchronism.

The theoretical base of the topic under consideration is the analysis of the central trends in the development of the global information space which include, in particular, the formation of the information society and the functioning of television under new communication conditions. We analyze the official international documents of the United Nations adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society where new requirements for the mass media were formulated.

We also thoroughly examine the European Convention on Transfrontier Television which established the fundamental principles of modern digital television. The paper addresses laws and regulations in the field of the information policy of Kazakhstan, creation of the information society, and electronic government. This demonstrates a sufficient level of statutory regulation and proves the liberal nature of the legal system of Kazakhstan in the sphere of the state information strategy.

Results

In the course of the research, we obtained the results that substantiate the necessity to transform television in Kazakhstan which is a universal institution of public life in the information society and performs political and socio-cultural functions. At the same time, it is worth noting that over the past 10 years the Kazakhstan government has initiated institutional measures to create and maintain the system of socially responsible television, improve information legislation and reconstruct the paradigm of the state information policy.

The Kazakh society promotes and supports the idea of establishing equal relationships between television broadcasters and their audience and developing a transparent media economics and media research. In the present paper, we systematize the national legislation of Kazakhstan in the field of freedom of speech; creation, acquisition, processing and dissemination of information; and organization of activities of journalists and mass media.

The fundamental principles of socially responsible television should embrace openness and transparency. The same characteristics of television were specified in the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. In addition to the aforementioned principles, the Convention also names universality, diversity, responsibility and independence (Tarasenko, 2010).

Thus, the old broadcast schedules are being replaced with editorial policy, and social irresponsibility of media-managers' television is superseded by a growing responsibility. Under such conditions, TV ratings and measuring TV audience will encourage institutional changes, expansion of TV audience and its transformation from a passive segment into an active participant in social and political discourse (Kuznetsov et al, 2002).

Modern convergence-prone television implies the transformation of passive audience into active consumers and full-fledged participants in the complicated communication process. With the emergence of interactive television, this process takes on an absolutely different quality (Uchenova, 1976; Freylikh, 2002).

In this context, we can identify the information society with the civil society, in which not only instruments of political communication, but also the major actors of these

processes have been significantly changed. At that, society and its institutions, as well as the entire audience, are becoming active participants in multilateral communication that are able to influence not only the program policy, but also take part in forming and administering the television agenda (Kuznetsov et al, 2002).

The legislative acts adopted by the Kazakh Parliament regulating the spheres of the information policy and information communications contain principle provisions on the place and the role of television in the territory of Kazakhstan and stipulate the necessity to reconsider television as a single complex of mass media (Barmankulov, 1998).

In this paper, we intend to demonstrate the degree to which the legal system of Kazakhstan in the sphere of the information policy of the state is formed and integrated. We believe that further democratic modernization of the social system, accession of Kazakhstan to international agreements on human and civil rights and freedoms, as well as on cross-border movement of information flows, will become a catalyst for further development of the information society and the Kazakh digital television.

To this end, it is necessary to continue to implement tasks on enhancing the effectiveness of the public administration system and ensure the access to innovative infrastructure in the field of information and communication. Creation of the information environment for socio-economic and cultural development of the state and society, as well as the expansion of the Kazakh information space, also suggests pooling the effort of the state and society. Due to the fact that the state program "Information Kazakhstan-2020" is implemented in two stages (Stage I: from 2013 to 2017 and Stage II: from 2018 to 2020), with a view to achieving its main objectives the following key indices have been determined:

- (i) Availability of the information and communication infrastructure in households of the Republic of Kazakhstan: cent per cent; the number of Internet users in 2020: seventy-five per cent; the level of computer literacy of the population: eighty per cent; and ninety-five per cent coverage with digital television and radio services of Kazakhstan's population.
- (ii) Four per cent share of the sector of information and communication technologies in the country's GDP; cent per cent share of public health organizations operating within the single health care network; and cent per cent share of scientific and educational organizations operating within the single national scientific and educational network.
- (iii) Cent per cent share of electronic mass media in the total number of mass media registered in Kazakhstan and 40 per cent share of Kazakhstani online stores in the total turnover of products and services with electronic payment.
- (iv) Fifty per cent share of public services provided electronically and 80 per cent share of electronic public services rendered in relation to the number of services provided in the traditional form.

Official documents adopted in 2010 do not contain exhaustive answers to modern challenges, some of them are concentrated on resolving technical issues about introduction of digital broadcasting, but they lack approaches to organization of television in the digital environment.

Tendencies in the development of the global information space require the state and society to jointly search for and establish new categories of electronic mass communication tools reflecting the processes of inevitable convergence of information and communication. It is also necessary to realize the inevitability of an increase in social responsibility of television and its development in the information society which become increasingly topical in the conditions of Kazakhstan (Shevelyov, 2012).

Discussion

Nowadays, the special importance is attributable to network-based mass communication tools, online and other information and communication resources that provide open access to informational and moral values, encourage the audience to freely express their opinion, and generate a massive inflow of original ideas. The above mentioned principles are the fundamental democratic values of society.

The problems of formation of the information society in Kazakhstan are reflected in many legislative acts and government programs. In general, they are aimed at resolving political-economic and social issues about eliminating information inequality in society, as well as technocratic and technological problems (Yessenbekova, 2011).

There is an integral legal institution developed in the country, i.e. legislation in the field of freedom of speech; creation, acquisition, processing and dissemination of information; and organization of activities of journalists and mass media. This system is constantly and actively evolving (Shorohov, 2001-2002). A number of objective factors have a stimulating effect on this process. Such catalysts incorporate further democratic modernization of the social system, accession of Kazakhstan to international agreements on human and civil rights and freedoms, as well as on cross-border movement of information flows, etc.

Government agencies and authorities gradually change their attitude towards mass media and create departments to deal with mass communication channels (Muratov, 2012). The program of electronic government is being gradually implemented. The early 2000s were marked by a discussion about the issues of further strengthening the democratic trajectory of Kazakhstan's development. This work culminated in the adoption of two important documents: the Concept of Civil Society Development in Kazakhstan for 2006–2011 and the Concept of Development of the Information Space Competitiveness in Kazakhstan for 2006–2009 (Official website of the Ministry of Information and Communication of the Republic of Kazakhstan (www.mic.gov.kz)).

Later, all these changes in legislation were enshrined in the law “On Amendments and Additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan”. Under the influence of these factors, the liberal trajectory of the development of media law in Kazakhstan was approved. It was implemented by adoption of the following documents like: Laws ‘On Mass Media’, ‘On Informatization’, and ‘On Communications’; Concept of Civil Society Development; Concept of Development of the Information Space Competitiveness in Kazakhstan; Concept of Information Security in the Republic of Kazakhstan; and Program for Reducing Information Inequality in the Republic of Kazakhstan (the government program “Information Kazakhstan-2020”).

The government program “Information Kazakhstan-2020” underlines a crucial role of electronic mass media in strengthening democratic institutions and society development. This is attributable to traditionally high level of coverage with conventional television which represents the most effective means of gaining information (Amandosov, 1994; Kabdolov, 1992). The recent sociological research studies have shown that 88 per cent of Kazakhs prefer watching domestic TV channels, while 53 per cent of respondents watch them daily. Online media encompass a wide range of various resources, the most important of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Audience of online media projects in Kazakhstan

Indicator		Mail.ru Group	Vk.com	Ok.ru
Monthly reach	Thousand people	4209,7	2718,2	1937,5
	Population ages 12–54	80,1%	51,7%	36,9%
Average weekly reach	Thousand people	3635,8	1923,0	1282,6
	Population ages 12–54	69,2%	36,6%	24,4%
Average weekly frequency		142,4	114,6	55,7
Average daily reach	Weekdays	Thousand people	2462,7	1027,3
		Population ages 12–54	46,9%	19,5%
	Weekends	Thousand people	1922,6	925,9
		Population ages 12–54	36,6%	17,6%
Average daily frequency		32,1	31,8	15,7

Source: TNS Central Asia. Media review for September, 2017 (<http://www.tns-global.kz>)

Kazakhstani television broadcasters are represented by a number of binary oppositions: conventional television and innovative electronic mass communication channels; television and the environment of online and mobile television; open access to information and the problem of restricting access to data; opportunity to freely express opinions and inability to take it.

Hence, society and the sphere of electronic mass media in particular experience serious problems associated with the necessity for institutional changes. These changes are impossible without improvement and further liberalization of national legislation, implementation of the updated information policy and modernization of the system of television and radio broadcasting in the conditions of formation of the information society as an important element of civil society.

Admittedly, in practice, the development of television is hindered by the inadequacy of legal regulation in the area of information relations within the socio-political system and by poor social awareness of the issues mentioned, which creates managerial risks.

We believe that the only effective mechanism for its construction is the *introduction of the model of the public media sphere*. To preserve and augment considerably the advantages of television in the Kazakhstani context, one should understand the nature of the impact of information and communication technologies on the media industry (Livshits, 2012; Montaigne, 2003). We suppose that today's television system in Kazakhstan can be characterized as a combination of all-Republic and regional, state and commercial, production and network companies. We assume that the need of the information society can lead to formation of a more flexible system of TV channels that will rely on solely the interests and needs of different segments of the audience (Boykov, 2004 & Izotov, 2008).

Interactive technologies should facilitate this process due to their capability to establish the so-called “feedback” with the audience. Without them, it is impossible to achieve a qualitative programming that meets the needs of public institutions and individuals. Such an audience becomes an active social object of television communication acquiring the properties of a functional element of the political order, which means returning to a new technological paradigm—the instruments of the direct democratic public governance (Livshits, 2005). Building new media relationships and game-changing content management result in increased civic engagement. And this will be an effective way of changing the social segment.

Conclusion

In this paper, we tried to identify the problems and prospects for the development of television broadcasting in Kazakhstan in the context of the information society. We considered the mechanisms for controlling and predicting socially responsible television, as well as its role in democratic modernization of society. The paper studies the specifics of contemporary television in the conditions of the information society and illustrates the conceptual opportunities and problems of television in Kazakhstan in the future. In the course of the research, we determined the characteristics of socially responsible television and indicated the opportunity for its regulation and control. We formulated the ways of implementing the principles of social responsibility of television in democratic modernization of society, identified the problem areas of legal regulation of the information policy.

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