

Buryat Ethnic Mentality and National Broadcasting

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Abstract. The article focuses on ways the national (in a regional aspect) broadcasting impacts ethnic mind formation and its further development, the latter issues being under a main focus of Buryat State University scholars as well. They set an objective to investigate the issue from different angles, for this reason gathering within scientific projects into scholars' groups took place. In this case the group of educators, philologists and sociologists have focused on media which construct ethnic mind via interiorizing and cultivating ethnic-related ideas and images for five years. Providing a general outlook of the world, National Broadcasting (NB) is a proper institutional mechanism that helps a person identify himself / herself among different ethnic groups. Ethnic identity and self-consciousness are manifested in various social and intercultural communications. This allows a person to become aware of the peculiarities of his / her and others' ethnic communities. The outcomes of a sociological research held by the authors verify the significance of both the posed problems and the TV role. One may find theoretical and empirical data in Zandeeva, S.K. (2012), Dagbaeva, N.Zh.(2012), Dagbaev (2014), Dashinimayeva, P.P., et al (2015). Generally, national programs do contribute to integrating people of the same ethnicity into a common community, to shaping such moral qualities as humanity, love to motherland, respect for the elders and other ethnic nationalities. All these characteristics form proper rules of living in a tolerant community. At the same time, they contribute to strengthening of the feeling of ethnic unity. Beyond any doubt, NB needs a relevant assessment and interest to promote and advance its function in a modern society. On the one hand, telecommunications markets liberalize. On the other hand, broadcasting technologies have developed to a highest extent, leading to the increase of international competition [14]. Anyway, both directions force the national broadcasting to review their trends.

Introduction

National television plays an important role in an ethnic identity development. However, this role is hardly made aware of, for television is considered to be an entertainment tool. Here we put the question *What might be regarded as National Broadcasting (NB)?* By this term we mean regional TV companies of national republics. Let us note that there are 89 branches of the Federal State Unitary enterprise (FSUE), the All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting company (ARTRBC) in Russian regions. And only 30 channels belong to national TV and radio broadcasting. In Siberia 6 regions have NB: Republics of Altai, Buryatia, Tuva, Khakassia, Chita region and Novosibirsk region. The television in the Buryat language broadcasts in the Republic of Buryatia and Chita region, the latter's office, «State Television and Radio company "Chita", being in the settlement "Aginskoye". The extent of national programs production on public TV channels ranges from 3 to 4 hours a day.

So, the reason for having NB is defined by the fact that Russian humanitarian scientific knowledge traditions differ much from the ones accepted in western countries. We will empirically figure out a role which NB plays in ethnic identity formation.

Materials and methods

Some researchers believe that NB implies so called "ethnic mass media". Thus, V. K. Malkova refers to them newspapers, magazines, TV and radio broadcasting addressed to an ethnic group, related ethnic groups and sometimes to fellow countrymen – people coming from the same region. Here she considers the terms "ethnic-oriented mass media" and "the press and television of ethnic groups" to be more appropriate, although the terms "ethnic media", "ethnic press", "ethnic television" and etc. might be used as well [11].

In term identification N. Kondakova goes significantly further. According to her definition, all media channels functioning in Russia in all national

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languages, except Russian, can be called "ethnic" or "national" [9].

K. Aliev refers all channels, which are on in national republics all over Russia, to "ethnonational" [1].

However, in our case the use of "ethno" is not quite acceptable because it does not take into consideration peculiarities of TV broadcasting in our country. Indeed, on the one hand, there are ethnic mass media, that is the media of expat communities and ethnic groups broadcasted in different languages, including Russian. Ethnic mass media may equally include numerous religious periodicals, their readers dominantly belonging to the same ethnicity. On the other hand, such all-national TV companies as "The First Channel" or "Russia" are called all-Russian or federal channels but not national ones.

Therefore, labeling regional (or republican) television as "national" has been a tradition so far. To add, one relate to regional /national media not only channels that broadcast in ethnic language, but also radio and press. To exemplify, L. D. Dryakhlova calls the TV broadcasting of the republic of Mordovia as national, which is in Russian, Moksha and Erzya languages [7].

Sticking to the researchers' opinion, we are inclined to name the like TV, broadcasting in the republics of Russia, as "national", because they piloted alongside with the foundation of Russian TV industry in general. Then, for many decades, this TV contributed to consolidation of Russian ethnic groups via involving them into the system of inter-ethnic communications, to preservation and further development of the national culture and the language.

Thus, NB is regional mass media, television which broadcasts in ethnic languages of different folks of the Russian regions. The main peculiarity of national TV broadcasting is bilingualism, which is of substantial meaning in TV media. We refer affiliated branches of FSUE ARTRBC and other regional commercial TV channels, which work in the format of NB, to them. Russian-non-Russian bilingualism on TV channels is one of the established factors to develop TV broadcasting for indigenous people all over Russia, bilingualism being a relevant guideline to include and to show all possible relations.

The objective set before the researchers defined a sampling principle – to enroll Buryat respondents. Then parent population set the parameters and quota samples. Further on, a questionnaire was worked out for a target TV audience of the Republic and the number of people participating in the study reached 450. They are bilinguals speaking Russian and Buryat, from 15 to 70 years of age, prospective and real TV viewers from Tunka, Oka, Ivolve and Zaigraevo districts, and the city of Ulan-Ude.

The questionnaire includes the following units: TV audience's «social and demographic characteristics» to figure out occupation, a marital and social group status, age, an education level, a place of residence; «TV program viewing and assessment frequency» to reveal time spent on watching, a channel and a genre preferences, national program topics and a current state of affairs; «NB impact on interethnic

relations» to consider relations between Buryats and other peoples, which reveals availability or lack of conflicts, a tolerance grade in ethnic interactions, an ethnic identity type, neighborhood, business, friend and family contact feasibility etc.

Results and discussion

In Buryatia there are two commercial TV companies except RTRBC «Buryatia». They are "Arig Us" and "TV com". Among cable TV broadcasting channels there is "Mir Buryatia".

Analyzing the extent of FSUE ARSTRC affiliated branches, we consider that the broadcasting network is made universal for all regional TV and radio channels. However, in spite of a critical approach to having an insufficient time portion, the volume of STRBC "Buryatia" TV broadcast cannot be regarded as minor. According to the 2012 statistics, "Buryatia" TV broadcast extent is as follows:

Table 1. STRBC "Buryatia" TV Broadcasting Extent in 2012

Products in Items	Plan (per hour)	De Facto (hour/minute)
Total:	710	695,7
News programs, news and analytical newscast, including those in the Buryat language	520	515,5
Cultural and public awareness programs including those in the Buryat and Evenki language	105	103,5
Art and journalistic programs including those in the Buryat language	95	93
Advertisement	75	72,7
The overall volume of national TV broadcasting (hour/minute) %	32	28
	25	23
	63	59,2
	205	199,2
	29%	28,6%

According to these data we can see that the biggest part belongs to news broadcasting (520 hours). At the same time art broadcasting, which was always dominant and traditionally strong in republics, retains its positions. The factual volume consisted of 685,7 hours, NB being broadcasting during 199,2 hours, i.e. 28,6 % of the total.

96% of the respondents turned out to be prospective viewers having TV at home, about 73% of them watch satellite and cable broadcasting. 4 %, predominantly students, do not have a TV-set. All of the viewers, except for 6%, have a weekly time-sheet at hand. 78,35% of the testees regularly watch TV, 16,06% do it more rarely. The one who preferably switches a channel and selects a program for co-watching is a man. In addition, in 75 % of cases it is not an individual process, but co-watching.

The results show that TV watching takes more time than reading or doing household chores compared to all kinds of leisure. On weekdays research subjects (32%) spend 2 or 3 hours daily on weekends watch-time. In case of 47% of testees this index rises up to 3 or 4 hours

(see diagram 1). The ones who sit in front of TV for half an hour or an hour on weekdays are respondents who can afford having evening prime time after work. They usually watch federal or regional news. The utmost number of weekend watchers are (3 or 4 hours) the representatives of high school students and elderly people. So, there were no testees who found it hard to say anything about NB.

Despite the common knowledge that men and women are alike in TV watching, the data show that women do it at any time of the day except late hours, men watch TV predominantly at nights.

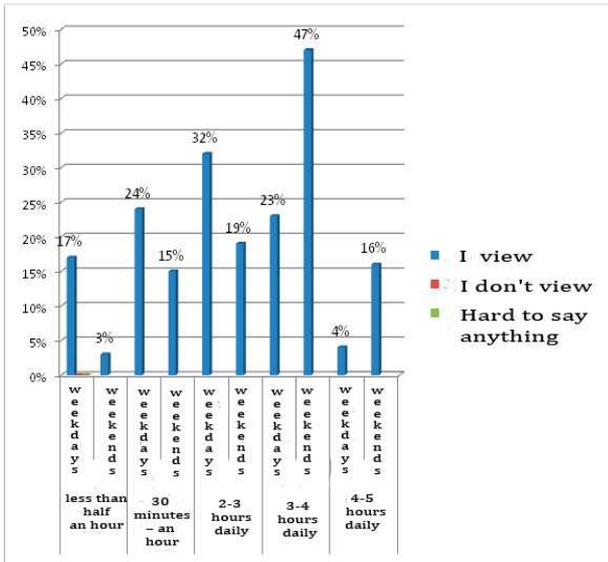


Fig 1. Watching time range: weekdays and weekends

As for federal and NB watching correlation, the subjects prefer to watch local programs daily: 46% – within 2-3 hours, 27% – 30 minutes to an hour, 13% – less than half an hour, 11% – 3-4 times a week, 3% – once or twice a week. It is necessary to note that there is 0% of the testees who do not watch regional programs (see Fig.2).

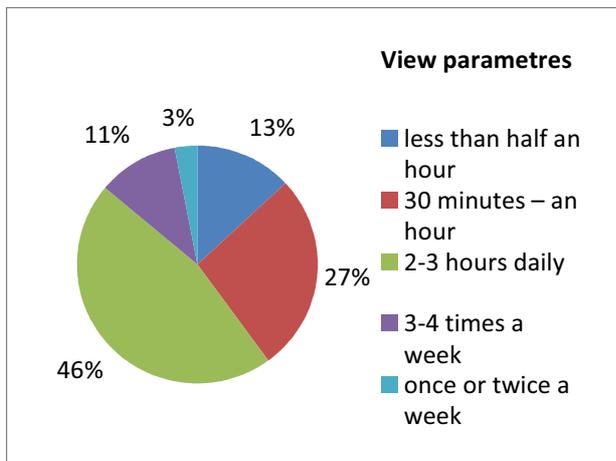


Fig 2. Regional channel watching

As to the issue of crucial importance – frequency of viewing TV programs in Buryat – it has the following view (Fig.3):

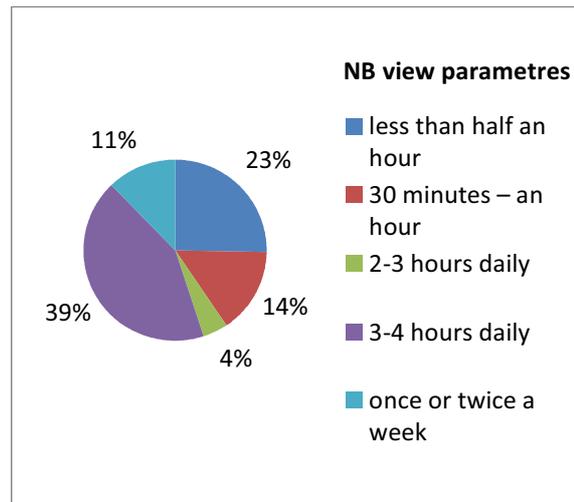


Fig 3. NB television

It turned out that people view NB programs more rarely (3-4 times a week), giving preference to federal broadcasting (2-3 hours a day). Among those who watch NB programs there are only 17 % of viewers who do not view NB programs in the Buryat language. The latter are city-dwellers who do not know their mother tongue. The NB low rating is accounted for a small daily portion of broadcasting time and dispersion of programs worth viewing at an inconvenient time.

How and in what way the national TV broadcasting might help the Buryats strengthen their Buryat identity. The answer is quite predictable: via the revival of ethnic self-consciousness. Ethnic identity is primarily connected with ethnic self-consciousness revival and activation [4].

Ethnic self-consciousness in its broadest sense may be defined as “the feeling of belonging to this or that ethnicity expressed in ethnic self-identification, that is person’s self-attachment to a definite ethnic group” [12].

In case ethnic identification becomes important to a person, we may conclude that his/her ethnic self-consciousness is active. Moreover, even if one does not become a generator of ideas, she/he takes part in ethnic mobilization [3].

Thus, ethnic self-consciousness promotes people to find their place among other ethnic groups developing an overall outlook for the world. Being a part of different (social, intercultural) communications, ethnic self-consciousness enables a person to achieve understanding of her/his and other ethnic communities.

The like understanding helps us clarify outcomes of a sociological inquiry of the rural population in two Buryat settlements. The both settlements are located considerably far from the center where there is no commercial TV. About 450 respondents took part in our inquiry. They all identify themselves as Buryats (100%) who profess Buddhism (93,6% of the respondents) and shamanism (6,4%). The majority of them speak Buryat as a mother language, and 8,3 % of them speak Russian as a mother tongue.

Within the sociological inquiry it was important to reveal the traits that are peculiar to the Buryats’ ethnic identification – the data which would help us compare

communication message images of the author and of the recipient and thus measure the communication effectiveness.

Table 2. An inquiry into responses to the question “Which factors would you name as the ones of the Buryats’ integration?”

	Parameters	%
1	genesis and history	22
2	appearance	10,3
3	traditional material culture (national food, clothes and etc.)	7,8
4	peculiarities of the national character and behavior	12,7
5	tribal relations	7,7
6	religion	12
7	language	13,6
8	native land, nature, territory	13,9
	Total:	100

According to the data in Table 2, the most significant factors in the process of integration and consolidation are Buryats’ common genesis and history (22%), homeland, nature, territory (13,9), language (13,6), peculiarities of the national character and behavior (12,7), religion (12), appearance (10,3). All these factors are represented in national TV channels.

About 87,9 respondents consider that the TV NB conveys them a feeling of belonging to the ethnic group. The ways national TV channels transmit this feeling is shown below.

Table 3. An inquiry into responses to the question “How does NB convey the feeling of belonging to a certain folk?”

	Parameters	%
1	... when I hear native songs about my homeland and people in my native language	32
2	... when I hear about outstanding achievements of the people of my ethnic background	23,6
3	... when I watch social-related programs, especially showing injustice when people of my ethnic background do not get a job worth their abilities and business proficiency	13
4	... when I watch ethnic holidays and celebrations on TV	28
5	... when people discuss the history of native folk on TV	16,4
6	... when they show datsans (buddhist temples) and other sacred places	17
7	Other	0

According to the results (table 3), 32% of the respondents preferred watching the programs about homeland in the native language and it helps them to get closer to their folk. Also the feeling of being the ethnos part is conveyed via programs about national holidays (28%), people’s outstanding achievements (23,6%), about datsans and other sacred places of Buryatia (17%), history of the folk (16,4%) and social injustice related to Buryat people (13%).

Another question concerned the traits that people generate while watching TV.

Table 4. An inquiry into responses to the question “What kind of traits does the national program form?”

	Parameters	%
1	Love to native land	53,4
2	Citizenship	39,4
3	Humaneness	84,5
4	Respect to elder people	73,2
5	Respect to other nationalities	69,2
6	Honesty	38,5
7	Fair-mindedness	16,2
8	Cynicism	0,8
9	Cruelty	0,2
10	Absence of commitment to principles	0,1
11	Other	0,7
12	Hard to find an answer	1,6

As we see, the NB content generally builds positive characteristics like *humaneness* (84,5 %), *love to native land* (53,4 %), the trait especially important for all the Buryats is *respect for the elders* (72,2 %), not less valued factor – *respect to other nationalities* (69,2 %) – ensures a tolerant society. Also we observe a high percentage of such qualities as *citizenship* (39,4 %), *honesty* (38,5 %) and *fair-mindedness* (16,2 %).

In the next direct question we asked the testees to name several national TV programs that help people to get to know more about the lives and creative work of their favorite Buryat artists, actors and actresses, painters and composers. In the table below we place most frequently mentioned people and the programs that reported about them.

Table 5. An inquiry into responses to the question “Can you name several national programs from which you learnt much about your favorite Buryat artists, actors and actresses, painters and composers?”

	Programs mentioned by the respondents	Buryat artists, actors and actresses, painters and composers
1	“Buryad Oron”	Valerii Inkizhinov, Olga Zhigmitova, Solbon Lygdenov
2	“Mungen Serge”	Erdeni Zhaltsanov, Dashi Namdakov, Zorigto Dorzhiyev, Solbon Lygdenov
3	“Gulamta”	Yelena Sharayeva, Kim Bazarsadayev, Bau Yampilov

The respondents’ opinions correspond to the rating of both the national programs and most well-known hosts. The programs that heightened interest in the Buryat national rituals, customs and holidays are represented in Fig.4. Thus, we found out that 63,5 per cent of people watching national programs learnt more about the Buryat national holiday “Sagaalgan” or New Year by the lunar calendar. 23, 8% of the respondents found out more about summer holidays “Surkharbaan”. 7,3 % of the testees were better informed about the peculiarities of matrimonial traditions. 2.7 % of the subjects pointed at *Yokhor Naadan* and *Shagai Naadan*, related to the programs, which broadcast traditional Buryat dancing and games.

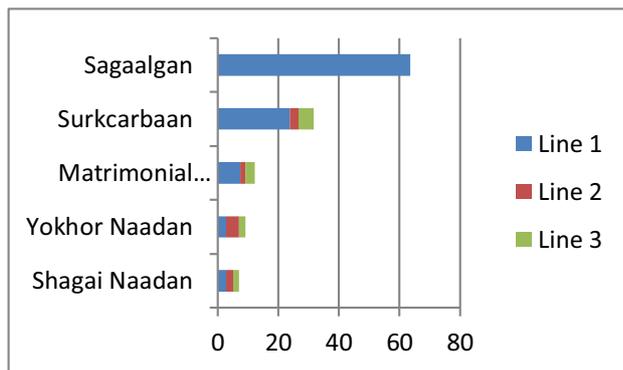


Fig. 4. Respondents' answers regarding obtaining knowledge from national programs about Buryat traditions and customs and mentioning frequency, %

It is worth noting that 33,5 % of the respondents keep their traditions and customs alive after watching topic-centered programs, 41, 2 % answered that they partially do it. There were 13,4 % of those who do not keep them alive and 11,9 % did not know what to say.

Table 6. An inquiry into responses to the question "Do the programs in the mother tongue help the Buryat people unify?"

	Parameters	%
1	Yes, they do, because only by means of TV broadcasting we can get unified	31,9
2	Yes, they do, as they transmit different programs that unite Buryats	52,3
3	Yes, when I watch programs in the Buryat language, I feel belonging to my ethnic group	10,4
4	No, they do not, because the national programs' low rating cannot disseminate ethnic unification ideas	3,8
5	Other	1,6
6	I don't know	0
	Total	100

There were the following responses to the question "Whether NB channel information is worth trusting? »: 87,5% of people feel that it is quite trustworthy, 10,3% think it is not quite trustworthy, 1,3 % believe it is not at all trustworthy, 0,9% of the testees could not decide (see Fig.5). These data confirm that the degree of trust to NB programs in Buryat is high.

In the question on the NB impact on intraethnic identification there appears a related problem: whether NB affects lifelong objectives choice, motivations and social living guides. The response data are shown in table 7.

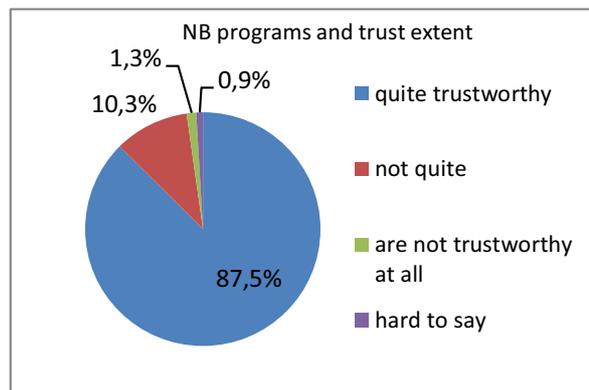


Fig.5. NB programs and the trust degree

Table 7. Does NB affect lifelong objectives choice, motivations and social living guides?

	Parametres	%
1	NB inspires that one does need self-realization	47,9
2	NB teaches to build a proper family, hearth and home	59,6
3	NB shows samples of national heroes, it guides me to live my life in the name of my nation and for its sake	38,4
4	NB nurtures a drive for high material benefits and social standing promotion	19,2
5	Other guides	11,7
6	Hard to say	16,1

The outcomes show that the main NB guide is likely to be a call to build a proper hearth and home (59,6%). Then a self-actualization idea goes (47,9%), followed by NB sampling of national heroes, who would live in the name of the nation and for its sake (38,4%).

83,2% of the young people under study responded to the question «whether NB forms identity and ethnic self-consciousness» in the affirmative, 13,4 % – in the negative (see Fig.6).

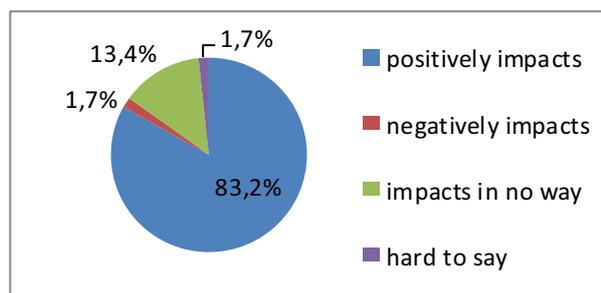


Fig. 6. NB impact on young people's identity and ethnic self-consciousness

76,9% of the testees said that NB improves their worldview scope, 17 % denied that it does in any way or argued that it does to a limited extent. We assume that these 17 % are the afore-mentioned respondents who have not acquired their mother language.

Conclusion

So, it is obvious that the national TV broadcasting helps Buryat people unify for it transmits programs in the mother language (52,3 %), while watching the like programs people feel belonging to their folk (10, 4 %). And the absolute minority (3,8 %) of the respondents pointed at a low rating of national programs as the factor that hinders popularization of the unification ideas. On the whole, it is necessary to note that NB is undoubtedly an institute in need, a medium to promote ethnic self-consciousness evolvement. Television has to be sustained among other modern record media and entertainment tools. The words “research and development activities are becoming more and more important for the development of the telecommunications industry. To a large extent they determine the competitive position of firms and nations”, said at the end of the previous century, [8] remain still true at the beginning of the XXI century.

15. S.K. Zandeeva, Vestnik of BSU, **6 (1)**, (2012)

16. S.K. Zandeeva, Vestnik of BSU, **6 (1)**, (2014)

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