

VI. МАДАНИЙ ДИПЛОМАТИЯ ТАРИХИ
Cultural Diplomacy History
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CULTURAL HERITAGE IN PRESERVING NATIONAL TRADITIONS¹

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Abstract: This paper attempts to clarify the continuity of handicraft production from the Mid-19th century to the present and especially examines the roles of people who acquired skills and experience in state-run factories during the Soviet period and those who received higher education in languages and arts in current handicraft production, by focusing on embroidery and carpet production in Shahrisabz as a case study. In addition to the role of human resources, I examine whether any continuity exists between the Soviet period and current handicraft production.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, Cultural Heritage, National Traditions, Handicraft, Shahrisabz, Development, Embroidery, Carpet Production, Human Resources

1. Introduction

The variety of handicrafts currently produced in Uzbekistan is an important component of the country's culture. In recent years, the demand for handicrafts as souvenirs has increased due to the development of tourism. According to the presidential decree issued on December 31, 2021, "Measures to further enhance the support system for handicraft activities" (Hunarmandchilik faoliyatini

¹ The present article is based on a progress report, "History of Handicraft Production in Uzbekistan: The Case of Shahrisabz from the Mid-19th Century to the Late 2010s" *Kikuta H.* (ed.) Interim Report on the Study of Reconstruction of the History of Handicrafts of Uzbekistan and Regional Development through "Traditions to be Protected." 2021. P. 3-24. (In Japanese)

qo'llab-quvvatlash tizimini yanada takomillashtirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida), the number of skilled artisans has increased sevenfold and the number of apprentices has increased ninefold in the past five years as a result of the government's handicraft promotion policy.² Through further support for handicrafts, the decree aimed at expanding employment opportunities, especially for the youth and women, and to further contribute to handicraft production in the tourism industry. Currently, handicrafts are expected to contribute significantly to Uzbekistan's economic development and image-building.

The revival of traditional handicrafts since Uzbekistan's independence in 1991 has been largely due to the support of the Hunarmand Association, which was established in 1997. This association was established based on the presidential decree, "State supports for the further development of folk arts and applied arts" (Xalq badiiy hunarmandchiliklari va amaliy san'atini rivojlantirishni davlat yo'li bilan qo'llab-quvvatlash chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida), which was published on March 31, 1997. The association aimed to further develop handicrafts and revive traditional skills and provide various benefits to its members, such as tax incentives, opportunities to participate in national and international exhibitions, and insurance coverage for their activities, in order to increase the number of artisans and stimulate their activities.³

The Hunarmand Association was established to support handicraftsmen's activities with the aim of further developing handicrafts and reviving traditional skills. Why is it necessary to revive traditional skills? In general, handicrafts declined because of industrialization under the socialist regime from the 1920s to 1991. In the late 1920s, with the implementation of restrictions on the private production of handicrafts, they began to be produced in production cooperatives (artel') (later state-run factories). This reorganization of the production system forced many artisans to follow government production plans; some designs and techniques that had been passed down through apprenticeships and local communities declined or disappeared. The Hunarmand Association's goal of reviving traditional skills was based on the major changes in handicraft production during the Soviet period. Since Uzbekistan's independence, people involved in handicrafts have sought to revive the techniques and designs of pre-Soviet handicraft production and produce handicrafts that contribute to the development of tourism.

² Lex.uz online <https://lex.uz/docs/-5807559> (Accessed on 21/03/2023)

³ Hunarmand uyushmasi. Uyushma Haqida. <https://handicraftman.uz/about-me/> (Accessed on 21/03/2023)

Educational institutions for handicrafts were established and talented artisans were selected and encouraged to produce high-quality handicrafts.⁴ A system for training craftsmen was established that differed from the traditional apprentice-master relationship. However, this study only provides an outline. Thus, few studies that specifically clarify the changes in handicraft production during the Soviet period exist; how these changes supported (or did not support) handicraft production after independence has not been fully clarified.

To fill this historical void in the history of handicrafts in Uzbekistan, a Japanese research group consisting of Haruka Kikuta, Emi Imahori, and the author aim to clarify the real conditions of handicraft production during the Soviet period. Kikuta's research revealed that although pottery production in Rishton shifted to state-run factories and was mechanized during the Soviet period, traditional designs and techniques were revived among the potters in state-run factories in the 1980s. In addition, after independence, many potters entered the international pottery market with the skills and knowledge they acquired at the Soviet pottery factory.⁵ According to Imahori, in post-independent Buxoro, women who received higher education in art and language during the Soviet period used their deep knowledge of art and foreign language skills to develop embroidery businesses for foreign markets.⁶ These cases demonstrate that, since independence, the production of handicrafts for the foreign market in Uzbekistan has been supported by people who gained skills and experience while working in Soviet state-run factories and acquired knowledge of language and art through higher education.

Kikuta and Imahori revealed that even during the Soviet period when industrialization led to the breakdown and decline of handicraft traditions, creative activities and education that formed the basis of current handicraft production were conducted. Clarifying the continuity of handicraft production during the Soviet period and the present day is necessary not only to fill the gaps

⁴ *Abdinazarov N.* O'zbekistonda Xalq Hunarmandchilik Turilari // Ta'lim Fidoyilari. 2022. Vol.1. Issue. 1. P. 418-422.

⁵ *Kikuta H.* Veneration of Patron Saints in Uzbekistan: A Pottery Town and Islam in the Post-Soviet Period - Tokyo: Fukyosha. 2013. (In Japanese)

⁶ *Imahori E.* Kashta [Embroidery] and Side Jobs in the Post-Soviet Period: A Case from Shofirkon District, Bukhoro Province, Uzbekistan. // *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies*. 2006. Vol. 21. No. 2. P. 113-140. (In Japanese) *Imahori E.* The Birth of the Kashtachi Business: The Case from Shofirkon District, Bukhoro Province, Uzbekistan. // *Annual Report of Social Anthropology*. 2006. 32. P. 57-84. (In Japanese) *Imahori E.* Embroidery for Dowries, and Embroidery for Trade: A Case of Kashta Handiwork in the Shofirkon District of Uzbekistan. // *Takakura H. and Sasaki S.* (eds.), *Perspectives of Postsocialist Anthropology through Japanese Eyes*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology. 2008. No. 78. P. 451-480. (In Japanese)

in Uzbekistan's history of handicrafts but also to develop handicraft activities in contemporary Uzbekistan.

This paper attempts to clarify the continuity of handicraft production from the mid-19th century to the present and especially examines the roles of people who acquired skills and experience in state-run factories during the Soviet period and those who received higher education in languages and arts in current handicraft production, by focusing on embroidery and carpet production in Shahrissabz as a case study. In addition to the role of human resources, I examine whether any continuity exists between the Soviet period and current handicraft production.

Shahrissabz is surrounded by the Hissar Mountains to the east and the Zarafshan Mountains to the north and has developed as a city since ancient times owing to its abundant water sources. At present, it is the second-largest city in the Qashqadaryo Province, with a population of approximately 140,000; moreover, it is a historical tourist city that attracts domestic and international tourists. The birthplace of Timur, the founder of the Timurid Empire, is located in the suburbs of Shahrissabz, and the city is dotted with buildings constructed by Timur. These sites were registered as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2002. This led to full-scale tourism development in the city, and the production of embroidered products, carpets, and other handicrafts became active in Shahrissabz, primarily targeting tourists who purchased these products.

The fieldwork on which this study was based, was conducted intermittently between 2010 and 2020. It consisted of interviews with former workers in Hujum (Table 1) and with Y, who was engaged in handicraft businesses in the city, as well as reading and collecting materials related to Hujum stored in the national archive. The fieldwork was conducted in Uzbek, where former workers were interviewed to document their names, birth years, duration of work, reasons for participating in Hujum, and working environment (work type, salary, facilities, social security, etc.). Interviews conducted in 2017 were with Z, the manager of the guesthouse where Z was staying (born in the 1960s, female), mainly neighbors and acquaintances; in some cases, Z was present. Y, who runs a handicraft business, was asked to talk about how she started handicraft production, her current activities, and her future perspectives. In addition, as the author stayed at Y's home during fieldwork in May and September 2019, this report includes information obtained from conversations with Y.

First, this paper reviews the history of handicrafts in Shahrissabz in the

mid-19th and early 20th centuries, during the Soviet era and since independence. Second, it introduces Y and her handicrafts business. Finally, it examines the continuity between the production of handicrafts in Shahrizabz during the Soviet period and post-independence Uzbekistan based on Y's business.

2. History of handicraft production in Shahrizabz

This section reviews the history of handicraft production in Shahrizabz, which is divided into three periods: 1) the late 19th and early 20th centuries, 2) the Soviet period (1920s-1991), and 3) post-independence Uzbekistan (- 1991 onwards).

The late 19th and early 20th centuries

In the oasis settlements of southern Central Asia, embroidery was an essential decoration for interiors and small daily items, such as covers, curtains, wall hangings, and clothes. Women were the main embroidery sewers for weddings and family needs.⁷ According to Soviet ethnographer O.A. Sukhareva, who conducted research in Samarqand during the Soviet period around 1850-1880, embroidery work sometimes involved not only women in the family but also relatives, neighbors, and friends of the brides; embroidery sewing was an activity to maintain kinship and friendship.⁸ The most famous embroidered product of Shahrizabz is duppi, a cap with colorful floral embroidery over its surface without a rim.⁹ It is unique in its embroidery, using a cross-stitch technique called iroqi.¹⁰ According to Sukhareva, most women at that time possessed embroidery skills, but designs were drawn by designers called "qaramkash" or "chizmakash," specialized skilled women who lived in each mahalla. The skills of the designer were passed down from the mother (or grandmother) to one of her daughters. The new designer could become an independent artist with the help of only the ancestors' souls.¹¹

In the late 19th century, embroidered products were produced as

⁷ *Chepelevetskaya G. L.* Suzani Uzbekistana, Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury UzSSR. 1961.

⁸ *Sukhareva O. A.* Suzani: Sredneaziatskaya dekorativnaya vyshivka. Moskva: Izdatel'skaya firma "Vostochnaya literatura" Ran. 2006.

⁹ *Davlatova S.* O'zbek kiyimlari atamallari izohli lug'ati. Toshkent: Yangi nashir. 2017.

¹⁰ *Chepelevetskaya G. L.* Suzani Uzbekistana, Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury UzSSR. 1961.

¹¹ *Sukhareva O. A.* Suzani: Sredneaziatskaya dekorativnaya vyshivka. Moskva: Izdatel'skaya firma "Vostochnaya literatura" Ran. 2006.

commodities for the wealthy and commercial markets. Commoditization was mainly led by designers, and in Samarqand at the beginning of the 20th century, some embroidery products for dowry were often purchased from bazaars.¹² In Shahrisabz, women appeared to produce embroidered tablecloths (dasturxon) for the court in the Amir.¹³ In Kitob, a town next to Shahrisabz, a designer and embroidery sewer named Kobiljan Musajanov began working with Bek. He was the only male designer and embroidery sewer in Kitab and Shahrisabz.

It is likely that embroidered products were commercialized in Shahrisabz from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. According to Sukhareva's study of the mahalla of Shahrisabz in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, various craftspeople tended to live together in the same mahalla. However, there was no information in the text regarding the concentration of designers or embroiderers.¹⁴ This is because most designers and embroiderers were women, and because virilocal residence was common in the settled areas of southern Central Asia, it is assumed that it was structurally difficult for designers and embroiderers to congregate; in other words, it was difficult to establish relationships among them.

Soviet Period

As the influence of the Soviet leadership in Central Asia increased in the 1920s, efforts to reform the existing social structure and construct socialism began in various areas, such as religious persecution, land and water reform, educational reform, and agricultural collectivization. The reorganization of handicraft production was one such effort, the purpose of which was to share production tools, eliminate hierarchies among craftspeople, and make it easier for the state to obtain products.¹⁵ In Shahrisabz, cooperatives were established in the 1920s to produce rugs, duppi, wheels, hand hoes, carriages, scythes, sickles, horseshoes, tubs, lamps, and wash basins.¹⁶

Simultaneously, the Soviet regime launched a women's emancipation

¹² Sukhareva O. A. *Suzani: Sredneaziatskaya dekorativnaya vyshivka*. Moskva: Izdatel'skaya firma "Vostochnaya literatura" Ran. 2006.

¹³ Chepelevetskaya G. L. *Suzani Uzbekistana*, Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury UzSSR. 1961.

¹⁴ Sukhareva, O. A. *K istorii gorodov Bukharskogo khanstva: Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki*, Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk UzSSR. 1958.

¹⁵ Kikuta H. *Veneration of Patron Saints in Uzbekistan: A Pottery Town and Islam in the Post-Soviet Period*. Tokyo: Fukyosha. 2013. (In Japanese)

¹⁶ Zaxarov, C. M., i X. Xikmatov. *Shaxrisabz*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan. 1979.

movement in Central Asia. Its goal was to liberate Central Asian women from the old customs of Islam and patriarchy and transform them into a labor force that would contribute to the development of socialism. Women's clubs were established in various places where legal counseling, sanitary instruction, and literacy education were provided to local women. In addition, embroidery, carpet, and dairy production cooperatives (*artel'*), in which women were traditionally involved, were established. Production associations, such as the reorganization of the production system for other handicrafts, were established with the aim of sharing production tools and facilitating the state's procurement of products, therefore, freeing women from their old customs, and mobilizing their labor force. In Shahrizabz, an *artel'* named "Hujum," specializing in duppi production, was established by seven local women activists as an organization that aimed to help women achieve economic independence.¹⁷

In the late 1930s, Hujum branches were established in surrounding villages, providing employment opportunities for women.¹⁸ When the war between Germany and the Soviet Union began in 1941, many husbands of the Hujum workers and male workers moved to the front. In addition to duppi, Hujum began to produce various types of clothing, rugs, women's upper garments, fur hats, and slippers. Some of these products were sent to the front.¹⁹

In 1960, Hujum was reformed from a production cooperative into a state-run factory named "'Hujum' Artistic Products Factory" and began mechanization and expansion on a full scale. In 1960, it opened a carpet department and machine embroidery section. Hujum became a comprehensive artistic products factory with embroidery, machine embroidery, carpeting, sewing, and dyeing sections. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Hujum's main products included three types of duppi (*sanama*, *chizma*, and *iroki* (machine embroidery)) and five types of carpets. Although mechanization progressed, handcrafted work remained highly important. Some high-quality products were stored in or exported to the Historical Museum of Moscow.²⁰ Highly skilled workers produced high-quality products. Foreign tourists and students visited the rooms in which these workers worked.

¹⁷ Qashqadaryo viloyati Shahrizabz tumani Davlat arxivi. Fond. 44. "Shahrizabz tumani 'Hujum' badiiy buyumlar fabrikasi." 1-ro'yxat, 235-yig'ma jild "Shahrizabz 'Hujum' badiiy fabrikasining 50 yilligiga bag'ishlagan taitalari yig'ilishda korxonasi yarim asrlik yo'li tog'risida fabrika direktorining ma'ruzasi." V. 4.

¹⁸ QVShTDA. f. 44. r. 1. y.j. 235. V. 5.

¹⁹ QVShTDA. f. 44. r. 1. y.j. 178 "Trudovoi raport kollektiva fabрики: ministerstvo mestnoi Shahrizabzskovo raiona." V. 3.

²⁰ QVShTDA. f. 44, r. 1, y.j. 189 "Materialy po provedeniyu i provedeniyu itogov sots. Sorevnovaniyu fabрики za 1980 g." V. 1.

In 1984, Hujum had more than 2, 000 workers (Figure 1). The majority were women; male workers were responsible for machine repair and dyeing and were not involved in handicraft production. Most workers had completed compulsory education (primary and secondary). In Shahrizabz, women who had completed compulsory education had two choices of employment, Hujum or silk mills. Therefore, Hujum was one of the main factories.

Regarding the working environment, there were several production sections in Hujum, including carpets, embroidery, machine embroidery, sewing, and dyeing. Working hours were from Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Salaries were set by section and paid twice a month with extra production added to the quota. The salary was “comparable to other jobs” (I from Table 1) and “sufficient and adequate. It was sufficient for our lives in our households. Everything was cheap. It was not particularly bad” (B).

There were two types of work styles in Hujum, that is, working in a factory, or working at home, which the workers could choose. Home-based handicraft workers received materials from Hujum and produced products at home on specified dates. Figure 1 shows that home workers accounted for nearly half of all factory workers from 1969 to 1984. The reasons given for choosing to be a home-based worker were “the death of my mother who took care of my children” (D), “I needed to take care of my daughter” (P), and “I had no mother-in-law to take care of my children” (H). This indicates that a child-rearing environment was a major reason for choosing to be a home-based worker. P returned to factory work several years after working from home. She returned to factory work because she felt bored working at home and enjoyed birthday parties and other events held by workers in Hujum.

Hujum not only had a workshop but also a cafeteria, nursery, club, store, clinic, and library.²¹ Young workers and those who did not receive an education at school could work while attending night school. The best workers received a chek that they could exchange for free lunch in the canteen, or for sugar or flour by accumulating the chek.

Moreover, there were trips for rest and relaxation, and in 1968, trips to Buxoro and Samarqand were organized, as well as trips to see movies and concerts.²² K was responsible for organizing these trips. According to her, every year from April to May, a three-day and two-night trip was organized for workers.

²¹ Qashqadaryo haqiqati. “Yuksalish odimlari.” avgust 23, 1972.

²² QVShTDA. f. 44. r. 1. y.j. 105-yig‘ma jild “Plany, plany meropriyatii nadomnogo truda i drugie.” V. 9.

This was a bus trip in which everyone, except for the driver, was female. This seemed to be a good way for workers to relax as they left their children and families at home.

After Uzbekistan's Independence

After Uzbekistan's independence in 1991 and the transition to a market economy, the management structure of Hujum changed drastically. In 1993, it became a jointly owned company (Jamo'a Korxonasi);²³ however, its management continued to worsen. The inter-republican division of production broke down, making it difficult to obtain materials and stagnating production. Power outages were frequent, and the machines could no longer be repaired on time. According to Y, the director of Hujum at the time had closed part of the factory by cutting back on the production lines. Nevertheless, Hujum was able to sell its stock of products in Qozog'iston at the time and make profits. However, the financial situation of Hujum did not improve. During this period, the Hujum workers began manufacturing and selling their products.

The final factory director of Hujum was U. When U became the director in 2002, Hujum had 250 workers (120 factory and 130 home workers). In order to turn the business around, she bought silk yarns unused by homeworkers and went to Russia and Namangan to buy materials. She stocked up on materials, trained 100 workers in carpet weaving, and worked hard to revive traditional carpet weaving techniques; however, in 2006, Hujum went bankrupt.

Despite Hujum's bankruptcy, handicraft production is currently thriving at Shahrisabz. There are embroidery and carpet workshops for tourists in Oq Saroy Palace Park and sewing machine embroidery and clothing workshops in residential areas and bazaars in the city where women produce embroidered products. At least 5 of the 21 former workers interviewed by the author were engaged in handicraft production, using the skills they acquired in Hujum.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially until the 2000s, the problem of unemployment in Uzbekistan grew because of the shrinkage and bankruptcy of state-run enterprises. People tried to secure as many sources of cash income as possible to maintain the livelihood of their households. In this context, embroidery, and carpet-making, which provided cash income, were positioned as activities in which women contributed to the support of their livelihoods during

²³ *Anonymous*. Shahrisabz 2700 ming yillar merosi. Toshkent: Sharq. 2002.

these difficult times. In the following chapters, we clarify how handicraft production has been conducted since the independence of Uzbekistan based on the case of Y.

3. The connection between Y's handicraft business and Hujum

This section introduces handicraft production in Shahrisabz after the independence of Uzbekistan, by focusing on the business of Y.²⁴ Based on Shahrisabz, Y has been producing and selling embroidered products and carpets to foreigners since the early 2000s.

Y's Background

Y was born in the 1960s in a village near Shahrisabz; her father was a kolkhoz worker and her mother was a home-based duppi producer in Hujum. After completing her studies in Maktab, Y enrolled at university and studied French. In 1990, she married and began teaching Russian and French at a local maktab.

Y's involvement in the handicrafts business began in the late 1990s when she attended a training course in a maktab. An officer from the French Embassy came to the training and Y decided to invite the French Ambassador to her workplace. In recognition of her achievements, Y went to France for training. During this time, F, a Hujum worker, asked Y to sell her embroidery products. When Y showed them to other teachers during the training in France, the products sold like hotcakes. After returning to Shahrisabz, Y suggested to F that they start a handicrafts business.

In 2003, Y opened a foreign-language school and an embroidery workshop at F's home. At the beginning of its establishment, materials were not available and stable production was impossible. After some time, Y met a woman named W in the bazaar, a former worker in the sewing machine embroidery section of Hujum, who began selling threads in the bazaar after Hujum's bankruptcy. Y became her customer. With the material availability channels secured, Y's business progressed.

In 2004, Y attended a training course on starting a small business in the US. In 2005, she received a grant and purchased sewing machines and materials to establish a production system for her workshop. During this time, Y was conducting business for the US, but the slowing dynamic of relations between

²⁴ Interviewed on September 15, 2019.

Uzbekistan and the US made business more complicated. However, F's experiences in Hujum, such as "producing carpets is better than embroidery because carpets are more profitable than embroidery," and W's advice to expand machine embroidery production led Y to start producing carpets and expand machine embroidery production. In 2012, Y began producing eco-bags with patterns printed on cotton fabric. Eco-bags are distributed at international events and sold in supermarkets throughout the country.

As of 2019, Y's handicraft business consisted of embroidery and machine embroidery (duppi, cushion covers, knickknack cases, bags, shoes, etc.), carpets, and eco-bags. The products are sold at the workshop and stored in the Oq Saroy Palace Park, souvenir stores in Buxoro and Toshkent, and duty-free stores at Toshkent International Airport. Y will also try to secure stable profits by producing products, such as eco-bags, which can be produced in large quantities and under large contracts.

The total number of workers involved in Y's business is approximately 50. Women living in the city of Shahrisabz work in a store and carpet workshop in Chors, in the Ok Saroy Palace Park, and in a workshop in another place in the city. Women living in villages around Shahrisabz produce embroidered products at home based on orders from Y. Carpet weavers are collected via F and sewing machine embroidery via W and F, mainly from former workers of Hujum.

The designers are Y and her eldest daughter, F. Y says that her stay abroad made her realize the importance of tailoring her products to the tastes of foreigners. She obtained ideas for new designs by checking foreigners' belongings and receiving advice from customers. Sometimes, her eldest daughter searches for new designs on the Internet, and F teaches Y and her daughter how to design sewing machine-embroidered products and carpets that were made in Hujum. F told them not to change their designs.

In the future, Y hopes to open a handicrafts workshop for women in the village. Women working in this workshop will not only receive wages but also have a nursery, library, swimming pool, and showers; women working at the workshop can use these facilities. Y says that she wants to create opportunities for women to have time for themselves, work on their bodies, and learn about themselves. She mentions that the idea for the project came from visits to various workplaces during her training in the US. F, who serves as an advisor to Y, says that she wants the workshop to be named after her teacher, Mohiniso Jalalova, the head of the factory in Hujum.

4. Conclusion

This study traced the history of handicraft production in Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan. In Shahrisabz, the production cooperative “Hujum” was established in 1928 to promote women’s economic independence. When Hujum was established, it specialized in the production of handmade doppi, a famous Shahrisabz handicraft. However, in the 1960s, it became a comprehensive art factory that also produced carpets, machine embroidery, and fabric products. During the Soviet era and years after independence, Hujum was a place of work for women in Shahrisabz. Interviews with former workers revealed that they not only worked to earn wages but also enjoyed educational opportunities and participated in various events. In addition to economic independence, Hujum was a place for women to improve their intellectual standards and enjoy recreational activities. Although it went bankrupt in 2005, various embroidery products and carpets are still produced in Shahrisabz. The third section focused on Y’s handicraft business, which has been part of the post-independence handicraft production in Shahrisabz, making good use of the handicraft support policy and foreign aid.

The case of Shahrisabz revealed that embroidery and carpet production was conducted by women from the mid-19th century (at least embroidery production) to the present. However, the role of production differed from time to time. In the mid-19th century, it was an activity that reproduced women’s social relations, and in the early 20th century, it took on the character of a source of cash income. During the Soviet period, it was regarded as an activity to promote women’s social advancement and economic independence. After the independence of Uzbekistan, it has been emphasized as an activity that contributes to the livelihood of households in conditions of economic transition.

Then, what role do those who acquired knowledge and skills in handicrafts during the Soviet period play in the current production of handicrafts in Shahrisabz? Kikuta and Imahori highlighted that handicraft production in post-independence Uzbekistan was driven by people who had experience working in state-run factories during the Soviet period and those who received higher education in the arts and language spheres during the Soviet period. Moreover, this study reveals that people who gained experience and education during the Soviet period have driven handicraft production since independence. Y managed her handicrafts business by utilizing the French language skills acquired at

university during the Soviet period. In addition to Y's language skills, F, who had gained experience at a state-run factory during the Soviet period, played an important role in Y's business.

The continuity between the Soviet and post-independence years was not limited to the aforementioned human resources. Y's vision of establishing a workshop with a nursery, library, swimming pool, and showers and F's wish to name the workshop after the former factory director of Hujum suggest that these women want their handicraft business to not only provide a source of income but also opportunities to improve cultural standards and enjoy their lives. Current handicraft production in Shahrisabz can be assumed to have incorporated Hujum's concepts. Whether their vision has been realized remains unclear. However, this study reveals that the current development of handicraft production in Uzbekistan did not start from scratch after independence but was driven by people who were trained during the Soviet period. Moreover, Hujum's philosophy of improving women's quality of life is still referred to by handicraft workers. This indicates the potential contribution of handicraft production, which developed during the Soviet period, from the grassroots level to the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality, which has been a goal in recent years.²⁵ Nevertheless, it has been highlighted that the revitalization of handicraft production through the transition to a market economy and tourism development after Uzbekistan's independence has led to a growing gap among artisans.²⁶ Future support for handicrafts should focus on improving the quality of life for handicraft workers.

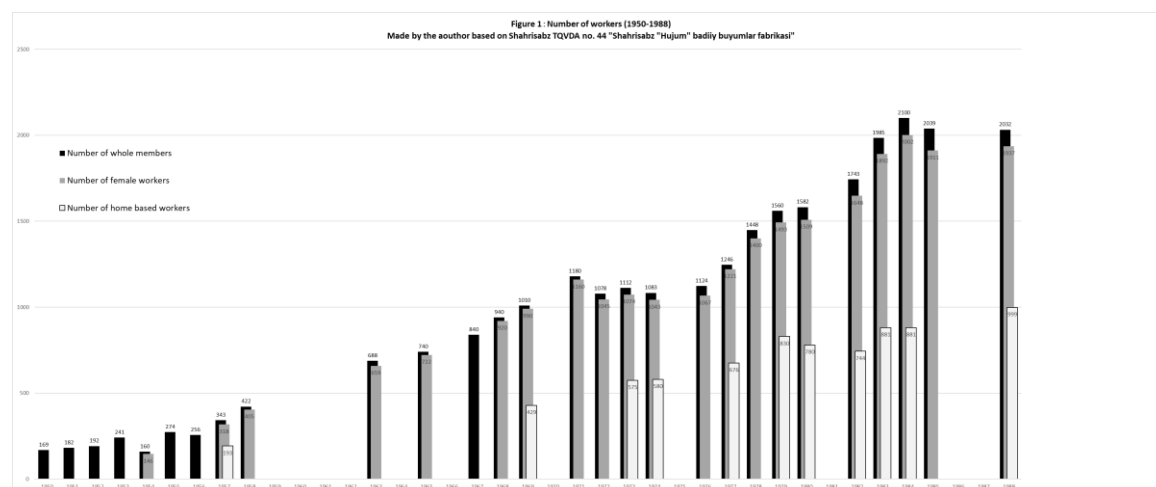
Therefore, further clarifying the reality of handicraft production in the Soviet period will reveal the benefits and losses of the reorganization of the production system in the Soviet period, as well as a sustainable form of handicraft production that is closely aligned with the improvement of handicraft workers' livelihoods.

²⁵ Inson huquqlari bo'yicha O'zbekiston Respublikasi milliy markazi. O'zbekistonda gender siyosatiga e'tibor yanada kuchaymoqda. <https://pravacheloveka.uz/oz/news/ozbekistonda-gender-siyosatiga-etibor-yanada-kuchaymoqda> (Accessed on 21/03.2023)

²⁶ Kikuta H. Interpretations and Practices of "Tradition" in the Social Change: A Case from Potters in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. //Asian Economy. 2005. Vol. 46. No. 9. P. 42-61. (In Japanese) Imahori E. Artisans Support focusing on the Embroidery Maker in Rural Area, Bukhoro Province: A Case of an Anthropological Interview. // Russian and Eurasian Economy and Society. 2018. No. 1029. P. 39-49. (In Japanese)

Table 1: List of respondents (ex-workers of Hujum)							
Name (pseudonym)	Year of birth	Length of work	Date of interview (* is recorded)	Educational background	Working section	Experience of working at home	
A	1922	1940~77	18/10/2011*	Compulsory	Embroidery		
B	1938	1956-1981	20/04, 17/10*/2011, 20/05/2019	Compulsory	Carpet->Embroidery->Carpet->Committee on Labor Affairs		
C	1941	1959-1992	10/10/2010	Compulsory	Carpet		
D	1946	1964-1996	25/02/2020	Compulsory	Carpet	Did	
E	1946	1965	20/09/2010, 20/05/2019	Higher	Machine embroidery		
F	1951	1965-2005	10/02/2011*, 30/09/2017*, 19/05/2019	Higher	Carpet->Quality control->Director->Carpet		
G	1937	1966-1985	30/09/2017	Compulsory	Carpet	Did	
H	1948	1966-1998	02/10/2017*, 19/05/2019	Compulsory	Carpet	Did	
I	1948	1967-1992	30/09/2017*, 20/05/2019	Compulsory	Machine embroidery		
J	1950	1967-2000	24/02/2020	Compulsory	Carpet->Sewing->Working at home->Carpet	Did	
K	1949	1968-1998	25/02/2021	Compulsory	Machine embroidery->Quality control		
L	1950	1969-2000	02/10/2017*, 20/05/2019	Compulsory	Machine embroidery		
M	1955	1970-2000	02/10/2017*	Secondary vocational	Carpet->Machine embroidery->Sewing->Quality control		
N	1946	1974-2001	05/02/2020	Compulsory	Carpet		

O	1959	1976-1998	17/10/2011	Compulsory	Machine embroidery		
P	1959	1978-2006	25/02/2020	Compulsory	Carpet	Did	
Q	1952	1979-1998	25/02/2021	Compulsory	Carpet		
R	1962	1980-2005	22/10/2011, 21/05/2019	Compulsory	Machine embroidery- >Sewing->Machine embroidery->Sewing	Did	
S	1963	1981-2003	10/10/2010, 20/05/2019	Compulsory	Machine embroidery		
T	1959	1984-2000	25/02/2020	Secondary vocational	Carpet	Did	
U	unknown	2002-2006	16/09/2011*	Higher	Director		



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