

Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections

TV Talk Shows Monitoring Report

01 July – 30 August, 2016

The present report provides the findings of the monitoring of social-political talk shows aired in prime time of the following eleven TV channels: “1st Channel” of the public broadcaster, “Rustavi 2”, “Maestro”, “GDS”, “Tabula”, “Kavkasia”, “TV Pirveli”, “Obieqtivi”, “Ajara TV”, and “TV 25”.

The report covers the period from 01 July through 30 August 2016.

Methodology

The monitoring subjects were the President of Georgia, the Government of Georgia, and Political parties. The GCJE observed the appearance of the monitoring subjects in the TV talk shows and evaluated the programs according to the following criteria:

How relevant was the topic of the talk show? How adequate was the qualification of invited guests to the topic of discussion? How unbiased was the criteria of the selection of invited guests? How the discussion was going on? How well was the anchorperson facilitating the discussion? How well-prepared was he or she? How well-formulated were the questions asked? How well the anchorperson prevented the distribution of false information during the discussion? Was the hate speech used? Was the talk show audience able to get additional information that would allow them to make informed decision?

Key findings:

- In many cases the talk shows reacted to developing news stories widely discussed on TV news broadcasts and often failed to provide additional insights.
- Some broadcasters preferred in-studio interviews with guests more than discussions.
- Many talks shows dealt with a broad range of issues in a single telecast that made discussions rather superficial.
- TV anchors often asked only general questions (i.e. what is your opinion? What do you think about this issue? How do you assess the election environment? Etc.), and answers of respondents, were too general. Many times TV anchors were not able to inquire more to clarify issues. Neither did they demand specific answers. In general, the TV audience was hardly able to get valuable information.
- Many anchorpersons were not well prepared to telecasts and couldn't perform as good opponents, especially when guests tried to spread misleading information. This was notably problematic with those linked with pro-Russian political groups. They were spreading myths and deceitful information about EU, NATO (and western democracies in general) and anchorpersons were not able to refute their false statements.

- In many cases overly open-ended questions were asked (like, for example, how do you assess your activity? How do people meet you?) that would allow the respondents to portray their activities in excessively positive terms.
- Too often invited guests were asked to react to statements of other political groups or politicians and instead of topical, issue-based discussion, substantial part of talk-shows were devoted to personal sentiments.
- Only from late August discussions on election programs and visions started on TV talks shows.
- Competing parties invited to talk shows frequently were spending most of time in arguments and mutual accusations. Some anchorpersons were not able to moderate discussions.
- In many cases the qualification and background of guests invited to studios were rather incompatible to the topic under discussion. This may be the mistake of broadcasters, or, perhaps more likely, the election subjects lacked speakers with relevant background and broadcasters faced problems of getting relevant respondents.
- In a number of cases anchorpersons were demanding invited guests to present statistics instead of finding data earlier and demanding answers and reactions from respondents during shows.
- The monitoring demonstrated that the talk show “Ghamis Studia (Night Studio)” of “Obieqtivi” TV may be regarded as a political platform of the election bloc “Patriotic Alliance, United Opposition”, where they can talk about anything without restrictions.
- The TV talk shows “Ghamis Studia” (Obieqtivi TV) and “Speqtri” (Kavkasia TV) are perhaps exceptional in a way that they allow either talk show guests, or anchorpersons make improper statements and use rude terminology and hate speech. On other talk shows (e.g. “Rviani” on TV Pirveli, or “Barieri” on Kavkasia TV) hate speech was used by guests but no adequate reaction of anchorpersons followed.

To sum-up, it can be said that during the monitoring period TV Talk-shows were hardly able to give electorate information sufficient to make informed decision.

Public Broadcaster's First Channel

The monitors observed the following programs aired by the First Channel: "Mtavari" (*the main*) (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 20:50), "Inter-view" (Thursday, 20:50), and "Realuri Sivrc'e" (*the real space*) (Friday 22:00)

All the three programs mainly involve face to face talks to one guest, which does not provide for debates on a specific matter, discussions and broader reviews. The very fact that the broadcaster has no program in its broadcasting net, where guests from various viewpoints could be invited at the same time for holding discussions between them, may be considered the broadcaster's major drawback.

"Mtavari"

The program overviewed current issues, guests were selected in a relevant way, but the program invited basically two respondents, who talked face to face to a journalist in different blocks. Thus, there were no debates between the two and it all had the form of an interview.

In many cases, discussion themes were of general nature. One spoke with representatives of political parties on the election issues without emphasizing a certain specific issue (for example, visions regarding the foreign policy, the economy, etc.), around which important questions could be asked, and the journalist could have presented a variety of data, facts, could have an argumentative discussion with them. On the contrary, the journalist tried to express the guest's opinion on every issue, which ultimately led to a very superficial picture and nothing more than the same things the audience used to hear from these persons in the news.

For example, on August 3, the first block hosted Archil Talakvadze, majoritarian candidate of the "Georgian Dream" in Ozurgeti, while Levan Samushia, majoritarian candidate of the "Free Democrats" in Didube talked in the second block; despite the fact that both guests had been nominated as majoritarian candidates, the host neither asked them any questions about their parties' election programs, nor any critical questions about unfulfilled and practicable promises. Instead of it, Archil Talakvadze was asked a question regarding the election, inquiring why this election was so important and why it should be conducted in a calm and quiet situation. And the main time of the discussion was devoted to the developments around the constitutional court.

Sometimes, the host gave the respondent a chance to disseminate false information. For example, on July 4, Davit Tarkhan Mouravi, leader of the "Patriots' Alliance" was a guest, and he stated: "Perhaps, now everyone has become aware that the NATO issue has been postponed for 20 years", while in fact, the accuracy of this information has never been confirmed by any official source, but the journalist required no explanations from the respondent.

On July 11, the guest Giorgi Akhvlediani was allowed by the journalist to lie, when saying that Georgia will not be able to become a member of NATO without solving the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts, and that the Crimea and Donbas events were the result of the fact that the new Ukrainian authorities had started talking about the country becoming a member of NATO.

There were cases, when the host asked a guest irrelevant questions. On August 24, Paata Burchuladze, leader of the party "State for People", was initially asked a general question – "Don't you regret to have entered Georgian politics, i.e. how do you like the developments taking place in the Georgian politics?", and later the host inquired: - "Don't you get upset when seeing that some other person is singing, and you are busy with the issue of who is going to be on a certain place of the list, or a member of which party will take a certain place, and so on?".

The question Paata Burchuladze was asked in the context of association with the "Girchi" also contained incorrect information: - "Do the views coincide regarding the idea that all taxes should be abolished?" The "Girchi" had never declared such an unrealistic thing, as the abolishment of taxes.

On August 29, "Mtavari" was broadcasted in a new format, as announced by its host, and, in the pre-election period, they would provide the airtime to 10 qualified subjects, while the order of their appearance was decided by voting.

The first program was entirely dedicated to the presentation of the "Democratic Movement – for United Georgia" election program. The party members and its supporters were invited to the studio.

"Inter-View"

Within the survey period, the monitoring subjects participated only twice in the program. Since August 30, the "Inter-view" was broadcasted in a renewed format of the TV on. According to the host, they would invite members of a political party in the pre-election period.

The broadcast format implies a face to face interview. The discussion themes of the programs aired during the monitoring were always interesting and topical, with well-chosen guests. It became obvious from the programs that the host had conducted in-depth inquiries about the theme and was well informed. The host was using various sources, quotes, and asked the respondents well-formulated, interesting and topical questions deriving from public interests. (The host) held dialogues, opposed the guests and tried to receive comprehensive information on the issues of public interest. The host was very polite both to the guests and the people they were talking about, and asked very critical questions.

The host did not give a chance to the guests to make populist statement. For example, on August 30, the “Labor Party” leader was asked 4-times the same question, however, the respondent did not answer, which gave him the opportunity to direct the interview into the respondent’s desired context.

The main drawback of the “Inter-view” was the visual aspect of the program, which was improved by the end of August.

“Real Space”

During the monitoring period, only one release of the “Real Space” was aired (26.08). The broadcast was presented to the audience in a different format - members of political parties were asked questions by citizens themselves, and these questions had to be answered within a certain timeframe. The program presented a diversity of parties. The host mentioned several times that a representative of the “Industry Will Save Georgia” party was also supposed to be present in the show, though he/she had not appeared. According to the same host, a voting would decide which party would have to talk about which region.

The program blocks start with a review of a specific region, which enables one to understand, what problems are there, for example, in Adjara. Then, citizens of the same region ask questions about the issues important to them. The host is mobilized, and in case of wandering from the point, he/she encourages everyone to give specific answers to specific questions, because the population needs concrete answers. However, representatives of parties still give general answers. The broadcast showed clearly that the political parties have formed no vision on a number of issues.

Rustavi 2

The show “Archevani” (*choice*) was subject to the monitoring at the “Rustavi 2” TV Company, which was aired every Tuesday. Since August 29, the program format was changed, and it became devoted to the election subjects. The change was reflected in the title as well, and it became “Archevani 2016”. Since August 29, the show is aired twice a week.

At “Rustavi 2”, the part of the “Saturday Courier” was also observed, where the host reviewed topics together with guests.

“Archevani”

The talk show “Archevani” hosted leaders of various political parties, and discussions were held between them on different issues. The program theme was clearly manifested and, therefore, the discussions were

structured. The host managed the moderation quite well, providing equal portions of time to the guests, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions.

The program consists of several blocks, and there are occasions when its runtime is very long.

Before airing in the new format, the guests invited in July represented the following parties - UNM, Georgian Dream, Free Democrats, State for People. The Labor Party leader Shalva Natelashvili was also hosted in the program. And in one program, a one-hour interview was held with the Republican Party leader, parliament speaker David Usupashvili. Representatives of the abovementioned political parties were given the opportunity to talk about their pre-election programs, as well as express their opinion on other discussion topics. When an invited guest refused to appear, the host informed the audience and explained, why this or that party is not being presented.

The program themes were always relevant; the host asked relevant questions, opposed and gave the guests the opportunity to express their opinions. However, there were cases when bias was observed.

For example, in the program of July 5, the broadcast was devoted to the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara - Levan Varshalomidze, former chairman of the government, had returned from Ukraine, while the current chairman, Archil Khabadze intended to resign.

When Varshalomidze joined the broadcast, a photo exhibition was selected as a background behind him, which, as Varshalomidze explained in response to the journalist's question, was showing the projects launched by him and later suspended by the current government; the journalist's assessment was as follows: "This is to say that what we see behind you, is how Batumi might have been looking after these four years". The journalist made the following assessment regarding Varshalomidze – "Your value is in the fact that you are the old one... Batumi residents and Adjarians know what you have done and what you are able to do."

The next guest of the program, director of the "Procurement Monitoring and Training Center" Giorgi Bajelidze talked for about 20 minutes about state procurements implemented by various agencies and possible violations in this regard. He accused the former Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and Zviad Jankarashvili of corrupted deals related to the "DAG" Company; however the journalist has never asked him to provide the relevant evidences.

A remark of the presenter Giorgi Gabunia to the same guest's statement concerning the issue of procurement of a two-story train by the Railway, was as follows: "Well, if they cut it in two and make two trains out of it, then it's OK"; it was an attempt to misrepresent the unconfirmed information as a fact that the Railway had bought a two-story train, which could not pass through a tunnel.

Another visitor, Aleksandre Elisashvili accused Tbilisi chief architect of bribery, saying that he was “a son in law, sister’s husband of one of the experts [Vasil Maglapheridze] promoted “at court” of Ivanishvili.” Elisashvili also spoke about possible corruptive ties of Irakli Narmania, brother of Tbilisi Mayor David Narmania. Tbilisi Mayor’s Office had responded earlier to this issue, however, this information was not voiced in the program¹. Instead of it, the journalist assessed Elisashvili’s speech in the following way: “The picture you are painting leaves an impression that the Mayor’s Office, in fact, has become a money-machine”.

In the end, the second block of the show was quite biased, directly accusing certain individuals of “stealing people’s money”, while the respondents of the show expressed only assumptions, and no relevant documentary evidence were presented there. In addition, despite the fact that the ruling team representatives refused to participate in the program, it was possible to present at least positions of the “accused officials” towards the issues, about which they had already provided their responses, as the program discussed the already well known events, which occurred during 2015-2016, and numerous TV stories had been produced about them - also by the very “Rustavi 2”.

Much better prepared is the journalist Georgy Gabunia, when he holds long face-to-face interviews with his respondents, an example of which is his interview with the President and the Speaker of Parliament, who were asked a plenty of very important questions.

There were cases, when the “Rustavi 2” Director General, Nika Gvaramia was invited to the broadcast as a party opposing the government; or the journalist himself constantly refers to the “Rustavi 2” court case, in order not to miss the chance to criticize the government.

For example, on July 26, Gvaramia not only talked about the case directly related to him, but he also made political assessments; he accused the prime minister in relation to the video footages depicting private life scenes. According to him, the PM is not directly involved, than he turns out to be a “clunker” and etc.

On August 23, he said about a candidate of the “Georgian Dream”: “I do not think that the politician Mamuka Mdinaradze is known by anybody at all, such a thing does not exist in the world, and we have seen a speech of an absolutely ridiculous and unsubstantial person, who spoke such stupid things that will be very difficult to explain rationally.”

Positions of the TV Company director, expressed in the abovementioned way, may be perceived by the audience as the position of the channel, which raises doubts against “Rustavi 2” in terms of its impartiality.

“Archevani 2016”

¹ <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/sazogadoeba/376311-davith-narmania-aleko-elisashvilis-ganckhadebas-sisuleles-utsodebs.html?ar=A>

In accordance with the format, a presentation of party programs was held by party members for half an hour, and the next one hour was devoted to the acute questions asked the politicians by the “Rustavi 2” journalists. It should be noted that the host has not stated how the appearance sequence of the parties participating in the broadcast had been selected.

Airing broadcasts of this format in a pre-election period promotes awareness of the audience, so that they can make conscious, informed choices. It also helps the election subjects, as well as the journalists to better demonstrate the party’s goals and disadvantages.

The host asked no additional questions when presenting the show. And in the second part, the journalists’ questions had been prepared in advance. The audience had the opportunity to obtain information on what promises had been given in the election period 2012, and what was actually fulfilled; what statements had been made regarding particular issues and what bills had been supported by the politicians.

It should be noted that the journalists ignored the statements made on August 29 by members of the “Alliance of Patriots” about good relations with Europe. Neither did they remind them the anti-Western statements made repeatedly in their speeches before.

In addition, the journalists did not inquire the “Alliance of Patriots” closely with regard to the initiative, according to which “Georgian people should have the right to call referendums... when the people will have the right to withdraw deputies, city mayors, even the prime minister, or an ineffective law through of a referendum.” The journalists did not show the audience, how realistic it would be to implement this initiative, or whether they realized the consequences, or whether there is any analogy in the world, etc.

Neither had they any counter question regarding the following statement made by Nino Burjanadze on August 30:

“Each of our legislative acts works towards making the banks extremely rich, rather than towards encouraging them to serve themselves, the state and the people; meanwhile, neither the interests of the banks’ clients are taken into account, nor the public interests, and nor the fact that the banking activities should encourage economic development, development of enterprises, overcoming the unemployment, which, in case of actual calculations and proper steering of the banking system, is indeed possible.” The audience remained unaware of what Burjanadze’s party was going to do to the banking system. |

“Saturday Courier”

The “Saturday Courier” is a news release, where topical themes are discussed together with guests. Similar to the “Archevani”, basically five political parties were to be seen in the “Saturday Courier” – “Georgian Dream”, “National Movement”, “Free Democrats”, “State for People”, and “Labour Party”. Like in the case of “Archevani”, also the “Saturday Courier” host announced to the audience, whether a certain person had refused to participate in the show.

The host Giorgi Gabunia basically asked general questions, mostly requesting from the parties to assess a specific event, important topics of the week, hardly trying to make an in-depth analysis of the issue.

For example, in the broadcast of July 9, Shalva Natelashvili said that during the war of August 2008, the contemporary prime minister of Turkey and the current President “Erdogan rushed to Putin to take away Adjara”. The journalist did not ask the respondent, based on what source he had disseminated this information, which has not been confirmed by any open sources. In addition, Shalva Natelashvili said that he had made “a certain contribution” to John Kerry’s visit to Georgia, as, during his visits in the USA, he, allegedly, had requested that Kerry should come to Georgia before the elections “to warn the government in place not to rig the elections.” Natelashvili also criticized the survey on ratings of political parties that had been commissioned by “Rustavi-2” – “Whatever Bokeria has scribbled and that “black man” there, you know, Tarkhnishvili – those are no ratings, but rather marasmus,” said Natelashvili and added that 6 out of 7 people would vote for the Labor Party, however, he has never explained on what this calculation was based, and neither the journalist had any additional questions on this topic. Natelashvili was actually speaking in a monologue mode.

“Imedi”

Two broadcasts of the “Imedi” TV Company were observed by the monitors: the talk-show “Politics” (every Friday) and the “Chronicle Studio” (every Saturday).

“Politics”

The talk-show “Politics” was not aired since August 12.

All in all, representatives of various political parties were presented in the program. The host allowed them to express their opinions, though the discussion was superficial and less heated, which might have been caused by its format – during about one and half hours, the “Politics” mainly discussed the topical themes of the week that had been already widely covered by the media. The show failed (which might have been caused by the lack of preparation time) to present the current issues from a new point of view, or to analyze them. Consequently, the same considerations that the public had been already well aware of, circulated also in this broadcasting.

In most cases, the second part of the program was devoted to political parties; about 3-4 persons spoke in each program. During the monitoring period, the election programs were not discussed with members of the political parties. They were basically assessing current news or other people's statements. It would happen that several current topics were discussed with a single guest. Ultimately, it is difficult to ascertain what the focus of the program was.

For example, on July 29, (the host) spoke separately to 8 guests, including representatives of political parties, the Parliament Chairman, the Deputy Interior Minister, a judge from the Constitutional Court, a political analyst, a film director. The discussion topic was the NDI's survey; however, many other issues were also addressed during the conversation.

At the time of visit of the Parliament Chairman Davit Usupashvili, the Parliament had recently completed its 4-years work. Despite this, not a single question has been asked about the activities of the parliament, neither about the lawmaking, nor about the absence of parliamentarians, or about bonuses, or achievements, or the EU-integration, or new political forces, or about the fulfillment of political promise, or about a new program and new promises, or even about how he protected the interests of Saburtalo residents (Usupashvili was a majoritarian candidate of Saburtalo district).

The host let the Parliament Speaker talk on the following topics:

- Why are his statements vague, "conciliatory, neutral" (although, the host did not cite any single example of such statements, regardless Usupashvili's repeated requests. It raises a doubt that the host had not prepared (*presumably, the materials*))?
- What were the issues he talked to the Prime Minister about (Usupashvili didn't even try to disclose details of this meeting)?
- Does he trust the NDI survey?
- Trump-Clinton battle in the US presidential election
- Why did the state commission replace Nana Mchedlidze by Eva Gotsiridze on the list of candidates to be elected to the Court of Strasbourg from Georgia
- Developments taking place around the Constitutional Court

The host was unprepared also on July 1, when talking to the Minister of Environment Gigla Abulashvili. The journalist was not aware of any data on air pollution existing in Georgia. Neither was she familiar with the studies conducted in relation to this issue in the years 2015-16, although those were available on the website of the National Environmental Agency². The journalist asked the minister to "tell something" about the studies, asked him whether the public transport issues were related to the self-government, or the central government was involved, who was monitoring the fuel. She was trying to clarify these issues

² <http://nea.gov.ge/>

during the live broadcasting, although she should have had researched them in advance. Instead of being asked such questions, it would be better, if the minister would have to answer the question about the things he had not done timely, and why the problem was remaining unsolved for years. In addition, the host did not ask critical questions supported by references to specific data regarding air pollution. And as for the initiative on technical inspection of motor transport, the host asked: “It cannot be managed before elections, right?”, instead of asking why it had not been done until now, since the technical inspection was to become mandatory from March 1, 2015³. And moreover, she asked the minister to evaluate the work of the government carried out in the field of environmental protection during their 4-year rule. The minister replied that this was rather a function of the media – “I do not have to assess it”.

During the broadcast of July 22, Koba Narchemashvili, majoritarian candidate of the “Georgian Dream” was asked at the end – “What is better - institutional violence [the main feature of Saakashvili government] or total corruption [the main feature of Shevardnadze government, a member of which was also Narchemashvili], which, as it appears, is often followed by violence? The respondent hinted indirectly that the total corruption was better. After this, the journalist bade Narchemashvili farewell.

Teona Gegelia did not ask substantial questions about what important things he had done during his tenure as minister, or whether he had implemented any single reform, or made any single bold decision as the minister; whether he had made a single step towards combating corruption at least in his own system. Why should the population vote for a man, who had failed to anyhow combat corruption in his system?

“Chronicle Studio”

The “Chronicle Studio” was not aired since July 30.

The “Chronicle Studio” and “Politics” had almost identical formats. In addition, both of the talk shows often discussed the same topics. Representatives of various political parties were hosted in the “Chronicle Studio” as well, and the balance and diversity of opinions was maintained. They were given appropriate time for answering the questions, but they did not sit facing each other, and no debates were held. The guests had to answer separately the host’s questions.

Both in the “Chronicle Studio” and “Politics”, representatives of political parties were not asked questions deriving from their competences, but rather those related to current developments, and they appeared in the role of some kind of experts.

Despite the fact that the show was visited by a number of politicians within the monitoring period, the host did not ask any questions regarding the election programs.

³ <http://ick.ge/articles/17197-i.html>

For example, on July 23, Irakli Alasania, leader of the “Free Democrats” was asked a question about the election environment; Alasania tried to speak also about the party’s election program, however, the host did not let him do so, saying that it was not the topic of the show.

There was a case, when they brought to the live broadcast the politicians, who were irrelevant respondents in terms of the broadcast topic, and were not aware of the current issue. For example, in the broadcast of July 30, the conversation with Gedevan Popkhadze concerned the issue of Nana Mchedlidze’s replacement by Eva Gotsiridze in the Court of Strasburg, which had been the government’s decision. During the interview that lasted about ten minutes, Gedevan Popkhadze began his answers to three answers in the following way: 1. It was the government’s decision, and I cannot tell you in detail what the government was guided by. 2. I cannot tell you anything about it - in this case, the European Court gives recommendations; the government considered it necessary to do so. 3. I do not know whether any opinions have been expressed towards Anna Dolidze’s candidature.

The parliamentarian began his answers to the questions with the words “I do not know”, and still, during 10 minutes of the live broadcasting, he had to answer the questions he was unaware of.

Neither in this show were the public opinion surveys (GFK) properly analyzed, remaining in the medium of political speculations.

There was a case, when during the live broadcast, (the host) was clarifying the details, which would be better to have been clarified beyond the broadcast, and ask other questions in other wording on the air. For example, on July 23, Anna Dolidze, Parliamentary Secretary of the President, joined the broadcast 2 minutes earlier to talk about the statement made by the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Giorgi Papuashvili regarding the pressure; she was asked in the live broadcast: “Have you received additional information from Giorgi Papuashvili, based on the fact that you are now in Batumi, and the Constitutional Court is located in Batumi as well?” Ana Dolidze gave a negative answer to the question, and said that she was waiting for a meeting between the President and the Chairman of the Constitutional Court. The host’s next question was about how the events might develop; the respondent said that the prosecutor’s office should investigate. Also this conversation with her was ended.

When political opponents do not sit against each other in a talk show, the journalist is assigned higher responsibility. In such cases, he/she has to ask hard questions, and work, seek materials.

GDS

The monitors observed a part of the show “2030” at the GDS- TV Company - the one in which different topics were discussed together with guests in the talk show format; also the show “59 seconds”, which was aired every Sunday.

2030

Several problems were revealed in course of monitoring of the show, including the lack of critical questions - especially towards government officials - as well as the relevance of the invited guests and the questions they were asked. During the monitoring period, representatives of the “Georgian Dream” were invited 15 times to speak live in the TV, while more than two representatives other parties have spoken as guests. The main opposition party, the “National Movement” has not participated in the show, and neither have been given any explanations. If a guest refuses to come to the show, it is better that a journalist informs the public about it.

As mentioned above, no critical questions towards the ruling team were heard there. For example, on July 8, Eka Beselia was given the opportunity to speak actually in a monologue mode about the country’s foreign policy, Warsaw Summit, domestic policy, current situation in terms of human rights, elections. The host did not ask her critical questions. When a host is talking face-to-face to a guest, and there is no other respondent with a different, opposite position participating in the program, the very host is considered to act as an opponent and ask clarifying, critical questions, referring to counter arguments.

one of the questions to Eka Beselia She was formulated as follows: “You were in the UK and held a presentation in the Parliament. Could you tell us what it meant, what this presentation was about?”

The representative of the ruling team expressed her gratitude for this question and said: “It is important to provide more information about such positive events and very important success to our citizens, and thank you that we can talk about this issue”. Then she continued telling what a good situation is there in the country in terms of human rights reforms. Although there are many critical opinions towards the ruling team regarding this issue, the host did not ask any questions about existing problems.

It should be noted that in the guests’ block of the “2030” we often hear useless questions, for example, on July 11, an interview with Gia Volsky began with the question about why the “Georgian Dream” was going to start presenting majoritarian candidates especially in Imereti? The guest noted that this question could have been asked in case of choosing any other region.

On July 12, the following dialogue took place between the parliament speaker and leader of the “Republican Party” Davit Usupashvili and the host:

The host: Mr. David, another very important issue: you are preparing for the elections in Adjara, and the same Davit Berdzenishvili will lead this direction; could you tell us, what precisely is unacceptable to you?

The guest is confused and tries to clarify the question:

Guest: Inacceptable?

Host: Yes

Guest: In relation to what?

Host: To what you are planning to change after the elections, or to the today's reality.

Guest: In Adjara?

Host: Yes, and not only there.

Guests: No, you have begun with Adjara, sorry, I may have misunderstood the question.

After that, the respondent started talking about the pre-election process in Adjara and the party list of the Republican Party. The host's question seems to have remained unclear to the guests and he had never mentioned "what was unacceptable".

"59 Seconds"

The "59 Seconds" is a show of a different format, where the host alternately asks the guests a question, and they have to manage responding in 59 seconds. The advantage of such a format is that the guests listen to each other, they are in similar conditions, no one speaks simultaneously, but on the other hand, it is obvious that they have difficulties in expressing their opinion in 59 seconds. The show format implies the provision of additional 59 seconds, but it is unclear by what principle gives the host this additional time to the guests. In the introductory part the host explains that a guest has the right to use only once the extra 59 seconds, though there were occasions when they were given this time more than once. When a guest asks for additional time, the host becomes often confused and waits until being told in the "ear" whether or not this or that guest shall get the additional time.

In addition, this is the very format, due to which the guests are actually unable to enter a dialogue; we do not see debates; they often begin speaking at the moment, when an opponent's microphone is turned on, and thus, their voice cannot be heard (e.g. the broadcast of July 10). It is due to the format that we cannot see debates and a living process of opposing in the talk show.

Discussion topics are always clearly defined. The host's questions are concrete, and, therefore, guests are made to answer exactly the questions asked by the host and to be prepared.

Usually, the show consists of two parts, but these two parts are not thematically interconnected. For example, in the first block of July 24, parties spoke about healthcare priorities, while in the second block the area specialists, teachers, and a school principal reviewed school education.

Possibly, it would be better to thematically connect both parts of the show. For example, if politicians are talking about healthcare in the first part, the same topic could be continued in the second part by a conversation with experts and non-governmental organizations. Thus, the audience would receive more comprehensive answer about one particular theme, and see how consistent the views of politicians are with those of the civil society.

Counter questions, probing and etc. are almost never heard from the host. Questions are not derived from the answer. We do not see a live process of interview. Apparently, the format does not provide for these types of questions, and the host is just an arbiter.

Usually, the host is prepared and is familiar with the subject. For example, on July 10, when discussing the economic part of parties, the host's in-depth knowledge was obvious. However, in the show of July 17, where the social part of the programs was the topic, the journalist asked the guests a question, which he, normally, should have clarified during the show preparation, rather than in the studio.

We were talking about demographic problems, and Mr. George already approached that topic, hunger, for example, it is interesting to hear from you, whether you know the statistics supported by many figures. You have brought quite a lot of papers, which prove some statistical data, shows us the number of people below the poverty line during the last 2-3 years. It is interesting, whether or not it has changed, improved, worsened, or remained unchanged."

Questions asked during an interactive part of the show are sometimes a bit confusing and unclear. For example: the question asked in the interactive of August 21 was as follows:

What do you prefer?

- A) Rapid development
- B) A high degree of democracy
- C) Both possible

The issue was raised in a way, as if one was saying: if the country develops economically at a rapid pace, this will mean that the quality of democracy won't be high, and on the contrary - if the quality of democracy is high, no rapid economic development can take place.

One could feel stereotypical approaches in the broadcast of August 28, devoted to women's political participation – both in the host's questions and answers of the guests (although stereotypical, but not

discriminatory). When addressing women, the host and the guests repeatedly used the word “Qalbatoni” (lady), which is considered a stereotypic expression and encourages portraying the woman as a superior, extraordinary being, and promotes her stereotypization and positive discrimination.

The reasons why women’s participation in politics is generally important, or why the quoting is good or bad, were not discussed in the show. At the same time, a lot of time was spent talking about the question whether the today’s female parliamentarians are there just to press a button on the remote control, or “stars” (the host called “stars” the parliamentarians, who are often seen on the screen and make statements on various topics). |

Maestro

The monitors observed the talk-shows “Maestro Factor”, “Night Contact” and “SWOT analysis broadcasted by the “Maestro” TV-Company. The “Night Contact” was first aired on August 9. After that, the airing time of the program was changed.

“Maestro Factor” |

The “Maestro Factor” is not focused on one particular topic and offers the audience superficial discussions on different themes. Often happened that the host asked every guest the same question on several topics (e.g.: “What is your position?”).

During the monitoring period, representatives of the “Georgian Dream” was invited 25 times (among them, majoritarian candidate Mamuka Mdinaradze, who visited the program 4 times), while members of the “Girchi” and “National Movement” - 10 times each.

On July 21, Magda Anikashvili practically yielded the floor to the “Georgian Dream” majoritarian candidate Koba Narchemashvili so that he could talk on various topics. The host’s subjective attitude towards the issue became obvious. Anikashvili asked Narchemashvili: “How good is voters’ ability to analyze so that they could overcome certain stereotypes and whatever this stream is - the one of accusations – to avoid it?” In addition to the fact that this question reveals the host’s attitude (that Narchemashvili’s judgment is a stereotype due to the Shevardnadze period), it is not clear why a majoritarian candidate should evaluate the voters’ abilities, or how would the voters benefit from the answer.

Salome Zurabishvili, who is going to be an independent majoritarian candidate in Mtatsminda district, is not a member of the “Georgian Dream”; however, Anikashvili offered her a similar format⁴.

⁴ “Georgian Dream” did not nominate its own candidate in Mtatsminda district, and noted that it supports Salome Zurabishvili

Other than in cases of Koba Narchemashvili and Salome Zurabishvili, on July 26, the host asked the “State for People” candidate Kote Kemularia relatively critical questions, requiring from him to reason his statement about punishment of perpetrators, and in addition, asked him, as a former member of the “National Movement”, questions about mistakes made by Saakashvili government.

On August 1, the host Magda Anikashvili asked the new Defense Minister Levan Izoria no critical questions, towards whom there are numerous claims, and it was one of the first interviews since he had entered upon the new office.

For example, she asked the following question:

“Khidasheli said that it is the Prime Minister’s mistake, when someone from security services is appointed to this position. In fairness it must be said that your case is not unique, the US Ministry of Defense was headed by Robert Gates, who previously had been the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. For the USA this was no problem. But I’m interested in your opinion: is your experience in the security service an advantage, or it could really create some problem?”

The host did not explain the audience, why the opponents believed that no member of the security service personnel should be appointed as the defense minister. And in the question asked afterwards, one could feel certain skepticism towards Georgia’s NATO integration:

“One feature was typical to defense ministers in recent years. Most of them offered the population exaggerated expectations regarding NATO integration. Especially, before the summits ... Are you going to be different and moderate?”

Skepticism towards joining NATO was outlined in many other shows.

Sometimes it is unclear what the principle for selecting the topic and guests of the talk show is. For example on July 22, one of the major topics of Maestros Faktori (Maestro Factor) was Tamaz Mechiauri’s visit to Russia. Mechiauri was switched live from Moscow via Skype. It is unclear why so much attention was given to Mechiauri’s visit. For quite a long time Mechiauri had possibility to spread pro-Russian messages.

Openly pro-Russian party leader – Valeri Kvaratskhelia also had possibility to spread such rhetoric, demagogic and false information on August 4.

On July 8 one part of the show was entirely devoted to Nino Burjanadze and her blockless status.

Thamaz mechiauri and Nino Burjanadze visited the show twice. During reporting period, respondents also included Irma Inashvili, Kakha Kukava (3 times), Levan Mamaladze, Jondi Baghaturia, Nana Devdariani, “Centrists” – Theimuraz Khachishvili (twice) Vladimer Bedukadze. On August 15 there were both representatives of “Centrists” invited – Theimuraz Khachishvili – in the first block, while Vladimer Bedukadze - in the second.

Not to mislead the viewers, when inviting such openly pro-Russian persons, the host should be well-prepared and should not let the respondents disseminate false information.

Selecting the guests of the show is unclear too. During the reporting period there were cases when a host invited guests who were not related to the topic discusses and were not specialists of the field.

E.g. on July 5, when the topic of the show was Gigi Tsereteli failing elections for the post of the President of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, first guests to “Maestros Paktorshi” were Tamaz Mechiauri and Kakha Kukava. They do not represent any confrontation parties. In addition, Tamaz Mechiauri, who started the show spoke on his future political plans and party views as well.

Sometimes the host was partial and provided some evaluation of the events. For example during the show of July 1, host Magda Anikashvili named supportive statements of Russian MPs with regard to National Movement candidate Gigi Tsereteli “friendship of the Nationals and Russian Delegation”. This was in circumstances when the other side was not presented at the show and they did have an opportunity to respond. It should be mentioned that representatives of the National Movement considered behavior of Russian MPs as campaign against them and called it a “Political trick”⁵ The show of July 15, which dealt with confiscation of businessmen’s property, was absolutely unbalanced. Only businesses were present who declared themselves affected, while representatives of the entities, who pressured business and were accused of deprivation of property, were not present. Their position was not shown by the journalists either and neither attempt of the host to gain comments from the other party was clear. Particular substantiated facts demonstrating threats, or pressure were not presented during the show. Throughout the show, it was found that court proceedings, or investigations of the prosecutor’s office were ongoing, indicating that the crime was not proved yet so a journalist could not speak in affirmative about bankruptcy of businessmen and crimes of the National Movement governance. Yet, the host’s statement upon the start of the show was: “Revolution owns everything, money, business assets, immoveable property, people’s lives and freedom. Today we will show you timeline of transactions of violence from the Rose Revolution until October 1, 2012. What was the scheme of making business bankrupt and politicians - rich, in what

⁵ <http://rustavi2.com/ka/news/50842>

ways were businessmen made to give up properties of many millions, threatening and convicting people during Saakashvili governance? Who gave and who followed the orders during big distribution of private property? Stories told in whisper by people for many years."

Host Magda Anikashvili often asked illogical and superficial questions and sometimes revealed lack of knowledge of the issue. During the show of July 5, the host presented the Minister of Regional, Development and Infrastructure, Nodar Javakhishvili in the following manner: "Where will he be after the elections and what he thinks on secret state tenders, lack of roads and electoral campaign, where can and cannot go the road of Georgian Dream." Yet, Javakhishvili did not mention secret state tenders. Questions of the host were quite superficial. For example Magda Anikashvili asked Nodar Javakhishvili: "Construction of roads is interesting?" "Do you wish to proceed with the activity after the elections?" She also asked "Is it a myth that roads were constructed during Saakashvili governance... People think that roads were constructed". The respondent agreed and spoke about how Saakashvili said that snow was best in the mountainous Ajara." Apart from the fact that the question showed partiality, the host did not ask the respondent for a substantiation. It was unclear why road construction was a myth and how it was related to the statement about snow.

On August 8, she asked Irakli Sesiashvili the following question: "Population always stands on Rustaveli on April 9... In Mukhatgverdi politicians and members of the cabinet of ministers made the majority, [together with] the family members of the deceased, of course. How would you assess, August 8 is not as emotional for the population as April 9? Why aren't there lines of people in Mukhatgverdi? Does the society not understand courage and devotion of the boys as duly as it should?"

On July 13, while speaking with a member of Georgian Dream - Omar Nishnianidze, the host asked whether he would be a majoritarian candidate for Kutaisi, to which Nishnianidze replied, that it was not determined yet, but he had great wish to do so. Yet, Magda Anikashvili asked the guest anyway: "This is a great challenge and great honor. What will you say to Kutaisi residents?" During the same show Tamaz Mechiauri said he was sorry that Omar Nishnianidze was not in the party list. Magda Anikashvili asked him about making the electoral list of Georgian Dream: "Is it a sad process?" Then she made Mechiauri answer the question why it was necessary that the Prime Minister emphasized western education of new candidates. In response, Mechiauri recalled that Ilia Chavchavadze had studied in Peterburg. The host asked: "Do you think Georgian Dream deviated from the Road of Chavchavadze?"

By answering such illogical and useless questions, the audience cannot receive valuable information.

It should also be mentioned that Irakli Zarkua was invited to the studio four times as an expert. The host presented him as a specialist of international economic relations, yet he evaluated inner political processes instead of economics. It should be noted that Zarkua was expert and adviser on economic

issues of “Gadatsema 2030” (Program 2030), created by the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili.⁶

Third block of “Maestros Paktori” of July 27 was like an advertisement, discussing festival Jam Fest, which is known to be organized with the support of the government. The host asked superficial questions, it seemed that she was trying to present the festival positively. The host has not mentioned once that private festival organizers said that Jam Fest and festivals organized with governmental support created certain financial problems for private initiatives, as they were in the situation of unfair competition.

“Ghamis Kontakti” (Night Contact)

“Ghamis Kontakti” goes on air three times a week from August 9. Frequency of “Maestro Paktori” reduced ever since and it goes on air twice a week. It is noteworthy, that the format of the shows is almost identical.

Members of various political parties visited the show and diversity of opinions was more or less displayed. Yet, it should be mentioned, that 9 representatives, including majoritarian candidates of Georgian Dream were invited, while only two members of the National Movement visited and they didn’t speak of the elections. Republican Party, State for the People, Girchi and National Forum were invited twice, while Democratic Movement, Free Democrats and Leftist Alliance were invited once.

The host did not show partiality towards any of the sides. The issue selected for the show was often interesting and topical, but the host was not ready. She had not studied the issue in depth, did not use facts, data, quotations or sources. She often started discussing the issue without providing information to the viewers. For example, she started discussing drug policy without explaining to the viewers the essence of drug policy and its negative aspects using a small video. There are situations, when guests are not selected in accordance with the topic. For example, in the show dedicated to drug policy, governmental side, or the side responsible for the mentioned policy was not present at all.

The host does not ask critical questions, she does not oppose the respondent and allows them to be in comfort zone and speak on topics they wish to. This was the case with Political secretary of Georgian Dream Kakhi Kaladze (10.08). For example she asked Kaladze – “What is the attitude of the people when they meet you?” “What don’t you like and what do you wish to do in the future?”

She asks superficial questions with regard to electoral shows and elections. Therefore, discussion of respondents is superficial too and viewers do not receive particular information on how an electoral subject sees the ways of dealing with particular problems. For example, on August 23, the host was not

⁶ http://www.commersant.ge/?m=5&news_id=21328&cat_id=2

ready to speak on the promise of pension increase. She had only found the information on the promises made by parties with regard to the amount of pension and asked the same question to all guests on how they intended to collect the money and tried to make them evaluate each other's electoral promise.

The host has not processed the information. For example how many pensioners there are in Georgia, how much is spent on their pension from the budget; whether this amount is enough for medications and other necessary means for existence; What kind of pension systems there are around the world, what criteria are used to calculate the amounts the parties mention – whether the amounts are what the state budget will be able to pay during their governance, or the amounts required for subsistence of the pensioners etc.

The identical problem was observed while speaking on drug policy (16.08), the host did not know the issue in fact.

She spoke to political parties about electoral environment in general, instead of electoral shows. She asked a question what their "maximum for these elections" would be.

Similar conversation took place between Eka Beselia from Georgian Dream (19.08), she mostly made the respondent comment on the opinions of others, e.g. she asked:

"One of your former team-member is saying that the team now has more members from "Nationals" than "Georgia Dream". Should the electors look for "Nationals" among your lines?"

Afterwards she made her evaluate various political party unions, their majoritarian candidates. With regard to the leader of "State for People" she asked: "In general, what would you say about Mr. Burchuladze?"

On August 12, she let Nino Burjanadze disseminate false and desirable information to her. Burjanadze said – "This is an absolute lie as if we were protected, that today NATO will protect us. It is like it protected us in 2008, when nobody did anything to protect us, while in case of blockless status, we will be protected in reality."

The journalist did not stop the respondent and said nothing on economic and political assistance (leaders coming to Tbilisi, sending humanitarian cargo with the ship of NATO, Sarkozy assistance on ceasefire agreement, assistance of donors enabling Georgia to restore infrastructure and build houses for IDPs) that Georgia received from the EU countries and the US.

The host found it difficult to manage the debates as well. For example she was not able to manage the

debates of Tsezar Chokheli and Dimitri Khundadze (26.08), as well as those of Otar Abesadze and Ghia Japaridze (30.08), where the host was very passive and the questions were mainly asked by the guests.

“SWOT Analysis”

SWOT Analysis is a TV show of specific content. A particular topic is discussed with one guest and the host mainly asks questions about the mentioned topic: weaknesses and strengths of the topic, as well as opportunities and threats.

During the study only two persons participated in the show – Tamaz Mechiauri (For Unified Georgia) and Irakli Sesiashvili (“Georgian Dream”).

The questions were prepared in advanced and did not arise from the discussion. In some cases the host did not ask a question to the guests on some issues. For example during the show of July 2, the host did not correct the term “one-sex” of the guest, in fact she repeated the term herself. Yet, there is no “one-sex” marriage, it was about the marriage between persons of the same sex.

In addition, the host of the show helped discredit political parties and NGOs, as well as western partners in general. The guest, Tamaz Mechiauri stated that NGOs try to weaken the country. The host did not ask the guest to specify, agreed with him and moved to the next issue. In addition, Tamaz Mechiauri called representatives of the previous government, National Movement criminals and accused them in murder of Sul Khan Molashvili, as well as other persons, which was not followed by specifying questions either.

Pirveli

Monitors observed the talk show “Rviani” (eight), which goes on air every working day at 20:00.

Diverse political parties were present in “Rviani”. Shows were prepared demonstrating views of the parties on particular direction. However, in most cases the show is divided into blocks and the host discusses a selected topic in each block. Questions asked by the host did not demonstrate partiality towards any political power.

When several guests were invited together, interested discussion went on, but there were situations, when debates went over the limits of political debate and became personal insults. In such cases all

respondents shouted together and the viewers could not hear anything. Although he/she tried, the host could not manage the process.

For example this was the case from the middle part of July 4 show. All the respondents spoke together and only unclear sounds were heard on the air.

On August 4, the situation went out of control. Grisha Oniani, a guest (communist party) used the following insulting phrases towards Badri Shubladze (UNM) and his party on the air, which were not prevented by the journalist:

- The pot-bellied man that this fat man sits here, is a crime!
- You are weathered!
- Do not cry like a pregnant pig!
- I will drink the blood of the nationals!
- They (UNM) need to be put to the Pole of Shame
- In the name of the grave of your brother (spoken to the Host Vakho Sanaia) ... let me speak for half an hour about the activity of these scoundrels.

Cursing was heard between the opponents, while the host – Vakho Sanaia, declared the show finished. Before going out of the air, Oniani rushed towards Shubladze and physically assaulted him. Overall, the show was finished with fight, while the journalist was standing between the fighting respondents and was trying to stop them. The host did not manage to cope with the respondents and couldn't prevent violence in the studio.

"Rviani" sometimes presents inadequate guests. On August 5 the topic of the show was possible plea bargain with the detainees with regard to the case of secret video records and Constitutional Court. Nana Kakabadze, representative of "Former Political Prisoners for Human Rights" and Irakli Ghlonti, leader of "Reformers" were invited to speak on the issue. It is unclear what the principle of selecting the guests by the journalist was, because they did not have appropriate qualifications and expert knowledge with regard to these issues. One respondent was a sharp opponent of the previous government, while the other was a leader of a relatively new political party.

It should be mentioned, that Nana Kakabade in the mentioned show, while Irma Inashvili, a member of "Patriot's Alliance" (11.09) and Nino Burjanadze of "Democratic Movement" (12.08) disseminated strongly anti-West messages, to which the journalist did not react. For example, he/she did not provide arguments that introducing democratic principles in Georgia is indeed the result of cooperation with the west. The Journalist did not ask any questions on any topic and only made superficial evaluations.

Irma Inashvili named a study ordered by Rustavi 2 as Saakashvili's study. The host did not correct the

factual mistake, allowing the electoral subject to manipulate with the facts and mislead the electorate. In certain cases there was an impression, that the guest was freely using the tribune for demagogy, while the host was trying to ask critical, specifying questions, yet the attempt was often without any results. Irma Inashvili said that Georgia should cooperate with Russia. The Host asked what examples, analogues she remembered of Russia cooperating with its former subjects, with such small countries as Georgia. "I will finish and answer your question later" said Inashvili and continued speaking about foreign relations. She finished and she "forgot" to answer the question. And the host told the viewers that the time was over.

Burjanadze said "One-sex marriage is unacceptable to me, a child should be raised by a mother and a father". The host should have mentioned that same sex marriage is not legal in all western countries and nobody is asking that from Georgia either.

A host should be more ready for those respondents, who disseminate pro-Russian messages, to correct factual mistakes made each time and provide precise information to the viewers.

The host of "Rviani" did not ask critical questions to the Chairperson of the parliament on August 11. The interview was very general, the questions were as follows:

- You will soon leave the post, this isn't probably a comfortable change for a politician. What are your sentiments at the moment?
- Can it be said that this was a four-year golden age for the republicans? Judging by positioning
- When do you think such an opportunity (means posts of ministers) will be available for the "Republican Party" again within reality?

While speaking Usupashvili mentioned, that the host would probably ask about the manifesto of the "Republican Party", and the host promised to do so. The show ended without the journalist asking the question.

On August 1, initially conversation started about possible access to secret military base of Tristan Tsitelashvili. Giorgi Kandelaki spoke in general about possible connections of the effective government with Russian special services. The journalist let him speak freely in accusations without asking for particular proof, arguments. The host let the other guest – Gedevan Popkhadze, speak in response to the accusations, yet he did not have a proper possibility to reply, because the opponent criticized all his words and didn't let him speak, while the journalist couldn't eliminate this. Thus, Popkhadze, who had to respond to accusations, statements and opinions of the national Movement, found himself in an unfair situation.

During the monitoring period hatred speech was also used on July 4, in relation to ethnic afghans. At

first, the host's position was not precise, clear and distinct. Towards the end of the show the guest repeated discriminating remarks. This time the host mentioned that the guest used hatred speech and discrimination. On August 9, the guest of the show Sandro Bregvade made homophobic statements. For example "Why did the entire liberal kingdom, Soros Foundation and Giga Bokeria rise against that?" or "We will not tolerate that from this man, he will not be allowed to have a president's seat. Let him send an official letter to us, he has two republicans from the right and from the left, Dolidze and Kozhoridze, let them write a letter and we'll send back to them and make them eat the paper these protectors of homosexuals are going to send us.") The journalist did not adequately react to such statements. It is important that a journalist is prepared in advance and think that considering the topic and the guest, his/her show may be used to replicate hatred speech.

Caucasia

In Caucasia monitors observed two talk shows: "Barrier" (four times a week at 21.15) and "Studia Spektri" (Studio Spectrum) (every day except Saturday and Sunday at 19:30).

"Barrier"

"Barrier" was visited by representatives of various parties, who mostly discussed current news. The talk show did not offer the audience views of electoral subjects on various issues. The host was impartial, however she asked superficial questions, sometimes was not able to manage the discussion and at the end of the show discussion was not finished. It should be mentioned that the issue and focus of discussions was repeated several times. For example two shows dealt with old and new faces of parties and a similar discussion was carried out.

The host was often unprepared and asked questions like – what do you think? How would you evaluate? What will be the main tendency of elections etc. She was mainly hoping for debates between the guests.

On July 19, she did not ask the Minister of education many important questions. For example she didn't mention the meeting with the teachers taking place several days before in the regions where the minister spoke about revising the higher education system, teacher's role in teaching process, national curriculum etc. The host did not ask about Batumi Shahini school, which was topical at that time, or about importance of professional education, while Jejelava had spoken much at a conference "Professional education for economic development" and it would be interesting for the public if she responded to specifying questions. The host did not have information about the initiative of the minister on introducing dual education in higher education institutions.

In some cases irrelevant guests spoke about the discussion issue – experts and famous persons were invited, rather than the persons who could speak competently about the selected issue.

On July 13, during the third block of the show, she asked Mamuka Gamkrelidze, who was invited as an expert, to evaluate the electoral list of Georgian Dream, in response to which Gamkrelidze said:

“I may be different from an average statistical Georgian from the fact that I do not watch TV and I don’t really know the people whose surnames you mentioned. The only person I’ve heard of, is

Chuguashvili.” The host corrected him that the surname was “Chugoshvili”, that she was publicly known and reminded the guest her career.

On August 18, she invited the editor of Kronika+ - Eliso Kiladze, member of “Democratic Movement” Beso Danelia and NGO “Apriori” representative Beso Shengelia to speak about authenticity of prison videos. If the host wanted political parties to participate in the discussion, it was unclear what criteria were used to select “Democratic Movement”. The host mentioned that “Georgian Dream” refused to participate. There were accusations regarding the National Movement. However, why their representatives did not participate was not explained. The host found it difficult to manage the debates. The discussion between Beso Shengelia and Beso Danelia finally went on regarding Nino Burjanadze being a traitor, rather than prison videos. The host finally showed the advertisement.

This show was not an exception, the debate management style of the host was rather weak. She often failed to manage the discussion. On August 16, there were fierce debates between the guests on blockless status. They spoke simultaneously on air and only unclear sounds could be heard. The host could not manage the situation. “I cannot make the guests stop, let’s get them off the air” she said, so the sound of the guests stopped slowly and again advertisement started.

It should be mentioned that the host only asked two questions while the remaining time was spent on the guests debating with each other.

New host of the Show was passive as well. On August 29 he also found it difficult to manage the discussion between Irakli Abesadze (UNM) and Beka Natsvlishvili (GD).

On July 25 hate speech was used in the show, the guest Guram Palavandishvili insulted LGBT community. In the debate with Kordzadze he said: “XXI century is the reign of the gay. Do you like it?” The host stopped him and asked to be more tactful, yet not mentioning that the guest was using hate speech.

At the final show there was a clash between the guests. They insulted each other. The journalist could not manage the discussion well.

“Spektri”

The show “spektri” violated media standards the same way it did in the past. The show has always had the problem of partiality, balance, guests and topic relevance, as well as hate speech. The show is too general and they speak of the topics which are mentioned in the conversation.

The guests may be invited to speak on such issues as “what happens in the Soviet Georgia” or “what are the challenges of the Georgian society”. The host did not specify which particular challenges he was going to speak about with the guests.

For example on July 18, to speak about the reasons for terrorism and its “philosophy”, Dato Chichinadze was invited, who was presented in the following manner: “I thought a lot about who I should invite and I decided to invite Dato Chichinadze. Dato is from Avlabari and, in fact, this district is populated with people of different confessions ethnically.”

The host cannot manage the show and the dialogue. He often interferes while the guests speaking and changes conversation to a very different topic. The host and his guests mostly share the same opinions and agree almost in everything, the conversation takes place in informal, friendly style.

The hosts appeals to unverified facts, gossip which have no factual basis and is based on conspiracy theories. He often makes his own prognosis and evaluations. For example:

July 13 – “I laughed, today I heard that the National Movement asked diplomats to introduce their manifesto to... even if they were to find the grave of King Tamara, nobody would vote for them, terrible aggression is directed towards them, but neither the other side, these morons have any real manifesto. Both need to see their own faces on air”.

July 21 – “What hatred was directed towards the Nationals, the same is directed towards GD”. “What chances does Paata (Burchuladze) have? They are a dormant party.” “Georgian Dream has lost Ajara.”

August 22 – “I have already said on October 16 that I didn’t like this government... on December 31, there came Bidzina and I said this is an idiot you have, this is an idiot, he has done this”.

He does not use appropriate terms. He calls “Nationals” and “GDs” to “United National Movement” and “Georgian Dream” members. He refers to Vano Merabishvili as “Vanichka”. The host often criticizes both current and former governments, yet he uses politically correct words in relation to current government, while criticism of the previous government and Mikheil Saakashvili is extremely negative. For example, he uses attributes like: crazy, rattlebrained, cursed, mad, out-of-his-mind, Satan.

During the show of July 11 he mentioned, “Misha used to be crazy and he is like that now too, the poor thing.” On July 20, he said – “Misha found energetic guys, made them work and perverted them.”

The host identifies himself with the government – (21.07) “I am really sorry that Batumi is lost. Batumi has won in 2012. We won completely, don’t you remember?”

There are cases when the host, rather than distancing himself from hate speech, in fact, uses such terminology in relation to ethnic Azeri and Turks. For example on July 28, Akubardia blamed the Azeri living in Georgia in harassment of Georgians.

Tabula

In TV station Tabula, Talk show “Teorema” (Theorem) was observed every Monday and Thursday. It should be mentioned that from August 1, the show was not aired any more.

“Teorema”

Talk show “Teorema” does not follow current topics and mostly tries to analyze various issues. Each block has selected a particular topic for discussion, allowing the viewers to receive additional information. The show always has good, easy-to-understand introduction, where the host explains the context and the topic of the show clearly. The hosts are mostly prepared. Yet, the show lacks diversity of views.

During the monitoring period position of the government and of the Party “Georgian Dream” was not presented. Their representatives did not participate and the explanation was not provided. If anybody refuses to participate, the host should explain it to the audience.

The problem of balance was on July 21 too. The program discussed electoral list of “Georgian Dream” and new faces of the list. The guests evaluated renewal of the list negatively. The viewers only listened to criticisms and “Georgian Dream” had no possibility to express their position. There was no indication from the host that they tried to invite them to the studio.

On July 18, member of “national Movement” Sergi Kapanadze was invited, who, as an expert, and in the second part, as a party member, criticized foreign course of the government and spoke about views of the “National Movement”.

The questions of the hosts were mainly well structured, but, e.g. on July 18, a host asked the following question:

“I would like to refer to John Kerry’s visit to Georgia, which coincided with the week before the Warsaw Summit and this could have been a reassuring visit as well. In this context we may see that Warsaw Summit results could not have been so exciting for Georgia and at the same time this pre-elections visit and warning messages we heard from the US secretary of State and what you emphasized, media freedom was highlighted. In this context, what do you think, what the US positions will be. In that context, we have mentioned this word many times, but considering the circumstances, the region where the same thing happens, in Turkey. You know that you can often have an impression that yes, problems of Georgia are clear, inner democratic processes Georgia may have, but in the region with so many heavier problems, e.g. in the Eastern Partnership countries, that Georgia’s problems are less important, this can often be heard. How can Georgian society manage, with the problems Georgia has today, to make the west become more interested?”

Obiektivi

In Obiektivi monitors observed talk shows “Ghamis Studia” (Night Studio) which goes on air every day at 23:30.

The talk show violates ethical standards. The hosts are biased, Russian propagandist messages, hate speech, as well as anti-Turkish statements are heard during the show, which the host and respondents repeat unanimously. Different opinion is never heard on air and guests and hosts are in fact of the same opinion. Conversation is of friendly nature, no preparation is felt, the show often has no focus and they speak about many topics.

There were several cases when no guests participated in the show and the host expressed his opinions for one hour. For example on August 13, Valeri Kvaratskhelia used the show in such a format to disseminate his messages. He is also an electoral subject and “Broadcasters’ Code of Conduct” prohibits him from being a host of the show. Charter of Journalistic Ethics filed a suit in self-regulation body of “Obiektivi”, National Communications Commission also made a recommendation, after which Kvaratskhelia made a statement on leaving the show and on the same show of August 13 he said farewell to us hoping the he would return to the air.

“Ghamis Studia” is, in fact tribune of a single party – “Patriot’s Alliance”. Representatives of the party visited the show 22 times, while one of the leaders of the Davit Tarkhan Mouravi was invited 7 times. The hosts are, in fact, of the same opinion and are only limited to comments and formal questions, praise them and allow them to express their opinion fully. It seems that hosts only remind the guests, particularly Tarkhan Mouravi, of particular issues, they were to speak about, while the guests express their opinions non-stop for 8-10 minutes.

It should be noted that one of the hosts, Bondo Mdzinarishvili spoke in monologue for the entire program (50 minutes) and disseminated his opinions. While on August 8 “Patriot’s Alliance” named him as a majoritarian candidate. The same day Bondo Mdzinarishvili visited the program

as a candidate. He was invited on August 11 as well.

The hosts never spare praise for the members of “Patriot’s Alliance”. On August 23, the member of the party Zaza Mamaladze, who was also a host of “Obiektivi” was presented by Nino Ratishvili in the following manner:

“Zaza Mamaladze” is the head of Tbilisi office of “Patriot’s Alliance”. Zaza Mamaladze is a vice-colonel, has fought in all wars and has a wonderful biography. Tbilisi singer and yet no wars took place in Georgia for the last years where he has not fought. You went where breathing of Georgia was heard, this is your rich background, we all love you with. “Furthermore, the guest was given a surprise and switched his friend Merab Tavadze on air, who spoke about his friend’s good qualities. Later, the records of the songs performed by Zaza Mamaladze were shown.

On August 10, Nino Ratishvili declared direct support to this party – “I am in a situation where, who can I lie to and say that I am not going to vote for “Patriot’s Alliance”. But I want very much not to be subjective. I want “Patriot’s Alliance” to be such a party that I needn’t be subjective. I really want that.”

Unlike “Patriot’s Alliance” negative attitude can be heard on “National Movement” and “Republican Party”.

On August Bondo Mdzinarishvili predicted – “in the face of the Republicans, who ordered forging, who in Sagarejo had a client or a blackmailer or a bully, are no longer considered as a single team (with the government) and will have less temptation to abuse people.”

The show demonstrates extremely negative attitude towards ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili. For example on July 9, the host evaluated his activity in the following manner – “Saakashvili, together with Adeishvili, Akhalaia and Merabishvili is a Bolshevic fascist force, that ...”

On July 28, the host Merab Bladadze said “Which Dream and which National Movement are you voting for, people, come to your sense, we are downfalling, people” – the host spoke emotionally and showed obscene gesture with the middle finger.

At “Ghamis Studia” anti-western and Russian propagandist messages are often heard. Host Valeri Kvaratskhelia particularly stood out with these.

We should tell the people directly that not the American People ... but the US politics it has been carrying out for decades, is aimed at destroying the world. Thus, strong no, should be told to this politics and yes, we should slam the door behind it”, he said on July 10.

Not only Valeri Kvaratskelia is famous for his Russian propagandistic messages, but it can be said that all shows carry such narratives, the main idea of which is discrediting NATO and discussing friendship with Russia, as the sole alternative.

On July 31, Communist Party Leader Grisha Oniani brought the Soviet symbolic, hammer and sickle to the studio.

At “Ghamis Studia” anti-Turkish rhetoric can also be heard. The guests, especially Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi often repeats that Turkey is an enemy and has occupied territories.

On August 10, the host Nino Ratishvili said “Isn’t, unfortunately, the entire Batumi, Turkey?” “The guest should not become a host.”

There are cases when it is unclear who the guest is. For example on August 7, the host presented Leonardo Devdariani as follows – “Our guest is Leonardo Devdariani, who you know very well”. The host spoke with him in Russian about foreign policy of Russia.

The conversation often becomes informal. For example on August 8, the guest Bondo Mdzinarishvili who, before becoming member of “Patriot’s Alliance”, was the host of the same show, remembered the stories of childhood and the host told the story of his dog with him. They spoke about kindness, love and life in general.

Hate speech could be heard in the show too, from the respondents, as well as the host. On July 13, the guest Tharkhan Mouravi said that homosexuality was a disease. “The world is not interested in propaganda of gayness”, the host shared his opinion and expressed regret about taking homosexuality from the list of diseases. Afterwards, he said that refugees (from Syria) are skin disease (for Europe).

Ajara

Two talk shows were observed in Ajara – “Pirispir” (face to face) (22:00) and “Paktori” (factor) (21:40 every Friday), both goes on air once a week.

“Faktori”

Topics selected for the show were about important issues for Ajara. The guests were invited in accordance with topics. All guests were provided with an opportunity to express opinions. The host provided information to the audience on which guest refused to come to the show.

July 22 was the only case when the object of accusations, the government, was not provided with an opportunity to respond. Citizens visited the show with the problems of a particular street (Otsnebis kalaki – Dream City). In accordance with the host, they asked to have the entire air to themselves. In such case it would have been better to switch to air the addressees of the accusations during the second block, so that they still could have an opportunity to demonstrate their position.

Journalist is poorly prepared for the show. He/she mainly asks general questions.

For example on July 15, the show dealt with appointment of a new chairperson of Ajara government. The host asked the member of the “National Movement” – “Mr. Irakli, on the one hand, the decision of the president, on the other hand, decision of the government of Georgia in general. and thirdly, consultations with the Supreme Council with regard to Zurab Pataridze candidature, can you briefly discuss the issues and what your evaluations will be”?

On July 29, while speaking on tourism, the host asked representative of Ajara tourism and resorts, Mamuka Berdzenishvili - “What is activity like? Do you have any statistics?” These data could have been found by the team of the show before the show and the host could continue speaking with the respondent considering the data.

During the show the host did not ask a single tough question on tourist season. It seemed that the host was letting him speak on the good things the government had done, asked about increasing number of tourists and news. On the problems of the population and tourists often complained about, the host asked in general, the question about the responsibility of the government was not asked. The guest spoke in general too and said it was “a natural process”. The question on how the government intended to solve these problems was not asked.

In the same show, the host asked head of the National Environment Agency, Tamar Bagratia a question on air quality in the following manner:

- I should definitely ask you about the air quality. This is one of the most important problems, like the issue people care about a lot, especially when there is tourist season in Batumi. Number of vehicles increases of course, therefore air pollution indicator also increases. Could you respond more competently?

The host had not found studies in this direction, did not ask Thamat Bagratia critical questions on environment pollution, therefore, the government didn't assume any responsibilities for the mentioned issue either.

The host controls a discussion, yet the conversation rarely becomes an argument. The show is not dynamic, guests often speak in monologue.

"Pirispir"

The talk show "Pirispir" mostly selects local news for discussion. The host is more or less prepared, asks specifying questions as well. The show lacks dynamics.

It should be mentioned that the host does not present a topic for discussion and starts the show by presenting a guest directly. It would be better, if the host informed the audience on the issues to be discussed and explained arguments behind inviting the guests.

On August 24, the show had invited Irakli Alasania from "Free Democrats", in the second block – Davit Berdzenishvili from "the Republican Party". Despite the fact, that the guests were party leaders, the host did not speak on the elections with them.

The host did not ask what the difference was between the ideology their party manifesto was based on, and those of the other parties, how they intended to tackle unemployment, how they would achieve economic growth, how healthcare system would work, what reforms education system would encompass. What plans they had in Ajara. The host did not demonstrate particular problems and did not hear the politician's views on solving them.

Instead, the host spoke about political ratings with Irakli Alasania. The host stopped or interfered with the respondent speaking because the show was more about "Politics" which meant the percentages in ratings, alliances and satellites.

For Example Iraklia Alasania spoke about a controversial issue on protecting the base, instead of asking further and showing the viewers whether the initiative was correct, the host moved to another issue allegedly the viewers were interested in. Such interesting issue was found to be the form of presenting candidates: "We have seen that former and current government practically gathered the supporters and in such environment their candidates were presented. Why didn't you, "Free Democrats" choose this method? Is it costly or is there a problem mobilizing electorate?"

Afterwards, the host asked about GFK survey, political ratings, Alasania Had already evaluated and his opinion was already known. While the host asked Davit Berdzenishvili for a political review and the

respondent evaluated the events of the recent years when Davit Berdzenishvili was invited to the show as a candidate for membership of the Supreme Council.

It should also be noted that on July 27, Zviad Chitishvili – leader of the party “Our Motherland” made xenophobic statements:

“I, for example, am building five churches. Have you seen a Turkish person build churches? Have you seen that they are thinking of orthodoxy? .. They ask their institutions to be built here, they won’t let you open another church.”, “We won’t be Georgian and we won’t substantiate and hit the table with our hands and say this or nothing, until then, we will have nothing between us. We will always be suppressed and we won’t have any friends.”

Even though the host interfered and indicated that his statements were discriminatory, the host does not ask for substantiation, does not widen the issue. Instead says that they should move on to another issue “on Patrol police”. In such cases it would be better if the host asked for more arguments, did not let disseminate unsubstantiated information and did not promote anti-Turkish attitudes. In case of such statements the host should mention discrimination and the viewers should also be aware what kind of statements are unacceptable.

TV Channel 25

During the monitoring period Talk show “Dialogi” (Dialogue) of TV Channel 25 was only aired once. Monitoring subjects did not participate in the show.