



Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia

TV Talk Shows Monitoring Report

26 September – 2 November, 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”.

This report presents the media monitoring results for the period of 26 September through 2 November, 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 anchor facilitating the discussion? How well-prepared he or she was? How well-formulated were the questions asked? How well the anchor 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?

Trends:

- The interest of TV channels in discussing election topics has gone down after the first round of the elections. Particularly little time was devoted to majoritarian candidates campaigning for the second round.

- Salome Zurabishvili was the most frequently covered independent candidate for the majoritarian elections, while other independent candidates have rarely been invited.
- As during the previous round of monitoring, representatives of “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” were the most frequent guests at “2030” talk-show of “GDS” TV.
- “Obieqtivi” TV continued to serve as a platform of “Patriotic Alliance”. This political group was present at almost all talk shows and enjoyed open support from anchors.
- Many talk-shows usually discussed statements of politicians that had already been aired by TV news, reacted to stories widely discussed on TV news broadcasts, and often failed to provide additional insights.
- During the first part of this monitoring period the leading topic for a number of TV outlets was the “anticipated destabilisation”, even though it was not always supported by any specific evidence.
- During the second part of the monitoring period discussions about election results and threats related to gaining constitutional majority prevailed. TV talk shows discussed an open appeal by a number of public figures about the matter. A talk shows on “Rustavi 2” invited only guest who shared the common view on the threat, while “GDS” - only those who campaigned against “United National Movement”.
- Before the second round of the elections “Georgian Dream” members from Ajara did not take part in planned debates on “Ajara” TV, and “TV 25” channels triggering cancelation of the debates.
- Before the first round of elections “Georgian Dream” and “United National Movement” did not send their representatives to the debate of party leaders, organised by I Channel of the Georgian Public Broadcaster.
- TV anchors often played a role of moderators and did not inquire much to clarify issues. Therefore, the problem of spreading misinformation remained challenging.
- Two talk shows, “Ghamis Kontaqti” and “Maestro Factor”, have been closed on “Maestro” TV.
- After being defeated in the first round, Mr Bondo Mdzinarashvili, a majoritarian candidate of “Patriotic Alliance” resumed his job of an anchor at “Obieqtivi” TV.

1st Channel of the Public Broadcaster

The monitors observed the following programs aired by the First Channel: “Mtavari” (Monday, Wednesday 21:30), “Inter-view” (Tuesday, Thursday, 21:30), and “Realuri Sivrc” (Friday 21:30)

“Mtavari”

The show was aired twice a week. In the reporting period, presentation of two parties – “Georgian Dreem” and “Republican Party” – was held. The show also provided two broadcasts

of political debates: between the first numbers of the electoral list of qualified entities and female leaders of qualified parties. In case of women, one of the 9 political entities, the “Patriots’ Alliance” refused to participate in the debates. As regards the first numbers’ debates, only four parties took part in them. Five parties, including the “Georgian Dream” and “National Movement”, did not come to take part in the broadcast.

Other broadcasts of the talk show were devoted to current events, while the invited guests were from the following parties¹:

“Georgian Dream” - 6, “United National Movement” - 4, “Republican Party” - 3, “National Forum” -2, “Nino Burjanadze –Democratic Movement” -2, “Topadze – Entrepreneurs - Our Homeland” - 2, “Free Democrats” - 2, “Labor party” - 1, an independent candidate (Salome Zurabishvili) – 1.

It should be noted that in the course of presentation of the parties, the presenter referred to the work done by the “Georgian Dream” in past 4 years, calling it “impressive”; in addition, when asking one of the questions, the presenter noted that the government had implemented “lots of” projects to support business.

The presenter asked also such questions, the essence of which remained unclear. For example, “...quite a large portion of the [election program] is devoted to education. Especially to the strengthening of vocational education. On the one hand, vocational education, and on the other hand, many Universities begin also in Kutaisi. We have so many young people who will study there and here, too. I think that we need to have many young people, but are there so many young people both for the university and vocational education?”

Each party was given certain time in the format of debates. The presenter acted only as a moderator. She almost did not intervene in the respondents’ speech. Even when a representative’s words were vague, or the latter provided the audience incorrect information.

For example, during the debates of October 3, the number one of the “Industry will Save Georgia”, Gogi Topadze said:

“We should believe less our foreign advisers. The tragedy that happened in Georgia after the 90s, when there was a number of lists of issues on insistent demand that we should not have production, industry, agriculture in general. We fell astern of modern technologies to such an extent that we only should let an oil pipeline pass through, should be a transportation corridor,

¹ Note: the data cover both the debates and the party presentation. The party presentation was counted as a single unit in the quantitative data.

and live from tourism. Exactly due to the fact that we followed this way in the previous government, that's why there is a deplorable result.”

Whose demand it was that the industry should not have developed, or based on what materials the respondent claimed it, remained unclear.

One should note Nino Burjanadze's anti-Western statements and those misleading the audience, which remained unanswered. For example, when talking about the visa liberalization, she said, that “those are just visas for a short-term European travel, which will allow people to merely get into Europe, allegedly, through more simple procedures, but this is not an easy process too, because they will need to provide a lot more documents at the airport, rather than this may be required at the embassy, and a chance that even in case of availability of the visa liberalization and all documents they won't be sent back by the same plane that will fly to Tbilisi, is now really very low.”

No one asked, on what basis the politician had made such a conclusion. Nino Burjanadze also noted that it is an illusion that allegedly “the European market was opening for us, and that our entrepreneurs would establish serious contacts there”. Nobody has inquired why our economic cooperation was an illusion, while exports to the EU are growing from year to year.

In the same show, the presenter declared the following: “Let's allow the women go first, so to say, I'll start with Mrs. Nino this time...” Nino Burjanadze protested against this – This woman-man in politics is not a correct separation”; and the presenter replied, “Well, why do they say then: more women in politics”. It remained unclear, what the women's rights activists' appeal for “more women in politics” had to do with this particular case.

Gogi Topadze used a discriminatory statement:

“I think that we, Georgians, need to manage Georgia, and foreigners should not dictate us how to live. This led to the demolition of churches, Orthodoxy was almost wrecked, introduction of some Witnesses of Jehovah, some sects. Everyone is fighting us.”

According to the Broadcasters' Code of Conduct, “a broadcaster should avoid insulting any groups on religious, ethnic, or other basis, including the use of certain terminology and images.”

“If a source makes in a live broadcast or in news an unjustified referral to ethnic origins, religious faith, sexual orientation, family or property status, communal affiliation or any other feature as to the cause of a problem, or uses offensive terminology against a certain group, the

presenter should not join such a dialogue and try to ask the author of the offensive statement a question in order to substantiate the voiced opinion.”

Unlike women’s debate, in the leaders’ debate the presenter had also individual questions to party representatives, which was informative. During the women’s debates, there were no individual questions, and a number of important issues remained beyond the presenter’s interest, such as why the previous government failed, for example, name just a few, to adopt a “Law on Femicide” (Mariam Jashi could have been asked the question), also why is there only one woman in the top ten of the “National Forum” (Ani Mirotadze could have been the addressee of this question, etc.).

The show broadcasting format was represented rather by monologues than debates; the presenter was passive, therefore it was difficult to ascertain how realistic the politicians’ promises were, or how these promises would develop the country.

During the shows made in a traditional format, questions asked by the presenter were in some cases vaguely worded or less relevant. For example, on October 10, after the end of the first round of the elections, when the second round was forthcoming, the presenter asked the “Georgian Dream” member Irina Fruidze:

“Probably, the “Georgian Dream” will enter the new parliament with a constitutional majority”. Do you intend to fight for all the remaining fifty mandates? In other words, I mean the second tours. Will the “Georgian Dream” fight to the end for all mandates?” The presenter answered the questions herself, because if the “Georgian Dream” would not fight for all mandates, it could impossibly obtain the constitutional majority. In addition, it is natural that the political power is going to fight for mandates in the second round too.

The presenter’s questions were not critical. For example, in the broadcast of October 31, the “Georgian Dream” member Eka Beselia was asked by the presenter about the judicial reform, namely, in what form the new parliament would discuss the “third wave of justice” that had been already adopted by the parliament after two readings. The presenter did not require an answer to the question why the reform, that was so important for the country and the judicial system, was suspended and delayed at the third stage of hearing, while, in fact, only editorial amendments had been introduced to the project. Instead of such questions, Eka Beselia was given the opportunity to speak generally about the importance of this reform for the country.

In the show of November 2, the presenter read to the “Georgian Dream” representative, Mamuka Mdinaradze an excerpt from the election program, according to which a new law on freedom of information is intended to be elaborated, and then asked: “I wonder if the existing

one will be discussed, or do you intend to develop, at least, something new?” The presenter did not remind the respondent that this law should have been adopted before, and the commitments undertaken within the Open Government Partnership (OGP) had never been fulfilled. She did not ask why the elaborated bill had not been approved for such a long time.

There were cases, when time was unevenly distributed among respondents, for example, in the show of October 24 broadcast, the “Georgian Dream” representative was given 25 minutes, that of the “Free Democrats” - about 13 minutes, while in the broadcast of October 24, the independent majoritarian candidate Salome Zurabishvili talked for about 24 minutes on the elections and her plans, her opponent Nika Rurua was given only 11 minutes of airing time to discuss the same issues.

“Inter-View”

Salome Asatiani’s show “Inter-View” was aired twice a week. In 5 cases of the broadcasts aired during the monitoring period, the show hosted representatives of different political parties - Irakli Alasania (Free Democrats), Kakhaber Shartava (National Forum), Zurab Japaridze (Girchi), Irakli Kobakhidze (Georgian Dream) and Tamar Kordzaia (Republican Party).

The show is quite dynamic and evolves rapidly. After asking an initial question, the presenter starts to go into details, requires answers regarding every specific step made by the party or politician.

When asking questions, the presenter provides arguments. She has studied almost all actions and statements made by the respective political party, and uses them as counterarguments by necessity. When asking questions, she refers to statistics, supporting video materials, quotations from articles, studies, social networks.

The presenter is concentrated in order to receive an unambiguous answer to the question asked, so that the politician’s position becomes obvious. Usually, politicians rarely leave questions unanswered; they can respond to any awkward question, but in most cases, the “Inter-View” presenter does not accept “some answers” and tries to receive specific information using a chain of logical counterquestions. For example, with regard to the Presidential Election Rules, the respondent Irakli Kobakhidze Irakli Kobakhidze tried to shift the discussion to a theoretical viewpoint in order not to express his own position regarding the President of Georgia. 1 clarifying and 4 direct questions of the presenter were necessary to

receive a clear answer from the politician - the audience learned that Irakli Kobakhidze was quite critical of the President of Georgia.

The presenter does not try to avoid being sharp in her assessments, which is not derived from bias, but from critical attitude towards a respondent, and she tries to support these assessments by facts in the question itself.

For example, she asked Zurab Japaridze (Girchi):

“Your portrayal on the poster may have been perceived as quite grotesque, comical, for example, the one which read “The State for People”. You, Libertarian Center, the center supporting a lesser government, the center supporting personal, economic freedoms, a political union. Also Paata Burchuladze, who appeared and said that marijuana should be sold in pharmacies. He often confused even a recreational user with an intravenous user. Not because he is not interested in it, but it was obvious that this was not “his” topic. Does not it mean a betrayal of principles and juggling different values?”

Salome Asatiani manages to show the audience the overall picture. She does not review even a lesser event without a context and depth, and that’s why (her show) is informative.

The presenter, despite sharp debates, always manages to maintain a calm tone of conversation and remains balanced to the end.

“Realuri Sivrtse”

During the reporting period, only one program was dedicated to the topic of elections. In October, the “Realuri Sivrtse” (real space) returned to its original format, and its discussion theme concerned social problems.

The show aired on September 30 aimed to discuss economy issues among the electoral entities. However, the party leaders did not attend the program, and the discussion passed without dynamics. At the same time, economists had been invited to the show to receive questions; they were considered to help “the public to better comprehend the choice”, however, the discussion turned rather into a professional review and was difficult to understand.

Rustavi 2

The TV-show “Archevani 2016” (Choice 2016) was monitored at the “Rustavi 2” TV-company; it was aired several times a week. In addition, the part of the “Shabatis Kurieri” (Saturday Courier) was observed, where the presenter reviews a topic together with guests.

“Archevani 2016”

In the pre-election period, the TV-show “Archevani” was aired in a different format - every Tuesday we firstly heard debates of majoritarian candidates of parties by Regions, and then the show was dedicated to the presentation of visions of the parties, while in the last block, the “Rustavi-2” journalists asked the guests their questions in a “hard talk” format. Before the first and second rounds, during one week, the program was aired every weekday, except for Friday; it had no determined timing and lasted sometimes for 2, 3 or 4 hours.

Before the second round was held, representatives of the following parties had attended the program: “Georgian Dream”, “National Movement”, “Labor Party”, “Free Democrats”, “Republicans”, “State for People”. Also a representative of “Entrepreneurs” Simon Nozadze, who was a majoritarian candidate in Khashuri. And once the elections were over, they also invited Nino Burjanadze, leader of the Democratic Movement.

It should be noted that the “Georgian Dream” refused 5 times to participate in the program. Consequently, in the accounting period, this party was presented 5 times in the “Archevani 2016”. Participation frequency of other parties was as follows: “National Movement” - 11, “Labor Party” - 6, “Republican Party” – 6, “Free Democrats” - 6, “State for People” – 6, “Entrepreneurs” - 1, “Democratic Movement” - 1.

All qualified entities participating in the elections had the opportunity to introduce their views to voters. Despite the fact that before the date of the second round voting, representatives of the aforementioned parties had been equally represented to discuss various topics, it can be said that, in exceptional cases, unfair approach was still apparent.

For example, in the show of October 18, society members spoke about the threats that could result from obtaining constitutional majority by the “Georgian Dream”, and they practically urged citizens not to vote for the “Georgian Dream” in the second round. Later, the “National Movement” candidate Elene Khoshtaria joined the show and she was given time to address the audience. It should be noted that three days before, Elene Khoshtaria had been invited to Giorgi Gabunia’s program “Saturday’s Courier” to discuss the same topic. Inviting only one candidate participating in the second round sets other candidates in an unequal position.

In one of the blocks of the show, journalists asked party representatives their questions; asking critical questions was intended to show the way the parties had gone, as well as their mistakes, their true face, which would help citizens in making informed choices. It can be said that the journalists handled this task quite poorly, because their questions lacked argumentation and support by facts. Instead of this, the journalists tried to “crack” their respondents by asking persistent questions.

For example, on September 27, when the “Paata Burchuladze – State for People” party visited the program, journalist Tamar Bagashvili asked questions about the party’s finances. She tried to find out who was actually funding the party, while donors of other parties were facing a problem, and why donors of the “State for People” were put in “hothouse conditions. This discussion between the Journalist and the party representatives lasted quite long, but the journalist had no evidence to doubt on the list of donors submitted by the party to the Audit Service. The party representatives asked the journalist to refer to concrete examples of doubtful donors; the journalist named some of them and asked who they were. One of the named persons turned out to be Giorgi Vashadze’s spouse, and another one – a majoritarian candidate of the party. If the journalist had doubts regarding the authenticity of the donors, it would be better if she had studied their identities before the show was aired, supporting her doubts with concrete facts, and then require a response from the party.

On October 3, from among the parties that had come to discuss problems of the capital city, journalists had questions practically only to the “Georgian Dream”. Representatives of other parties were just listening to the discussion held between them.

In the same program, Giorgi Gabunia used a text that was inconsistent with ethical journalism, when saying the following:

“In Tbilisi, ugly buildings of reinforced concrete have continuous orgasm; they are located so close to each other, rubbing and hugging each other in such a manner that they have no other way out; they endlessly rape each other, as well as the city. The result is obvious: multistory buildings are breeding like piglets and are not going to stop. By contrast, reproduction and proliferation becomes increasingly difficult for their green fellow citizens”.

The program of October 5, where journalists were asking the “Georgian Dream” questions, is worth mentioning as a separate point. A larger portion of the show was dedicated to pointless disputes and mutual accusations between the respondents and journalists. There was a confrontational tone in the studio; the respondents were trying to find out how ethical or unethical the journalist’s question was. They used inappropriate statements.

In some cases, the journalists' questions were vague.

For example, in relation to an informal rule, Akaki Gogichaishvili and the invited guests were trying to clarify the essence of the question during 7 minutes. Later, a discussion on another topic was held for about 14 minutes as to under what formulation the journalist had asked his question. The respondents were addressing the journalist as an opposing party.

Journalist Natia Trapaidze phrased her question in such a manner that practically demonstrated the fact that people were being detained for political reasons. "Why don't you acknowledge that you have people detained for political reasons?" To confirm this, she said: "...both local and international institutions underline in their reports the fact that political interest is apparent in cases of some inmates."

After Kakha Kaladze asked to specify the issue, the journalist named examples of Gigi Ugulava, Vano Merabishvili and Bacho Akhalaia. This was followed by a sharp response from the "Georgian Dream" to prove that no politically motivated action had been taken towards Bacho Akhalaia. At such times, it is better that a journalist supports his/her question with excerpts from reports, other available evidences, leaving the respondents less space for speculation.

Later, journalist Tea Adeishvili addressed the guests and wondered which of them had been in a museum recently. The respondents got confused. They should have known who and when had been in a museum, whose visit was the "most recent", and then raise a hand. They were dragging feet for a while, initially asking the journalist to specify the question as to what "the most recent" could have meant in this case. Finally, the team was "rescued" by Manana Kobakhidze, as she said that she had been in a museum in Svaneti.

The journalist did not like the answer: "No, I wanted you to have been in the National Museum, but that's okay", and they continued to discuss ethicality of the question for quite a long time. Eventually it turned out that the journalist needed this introduction to ask the following question:

"To this day, there are artifacts still exhibited in the National Museum of Georgia, and when we go to see them, a tour guide tell us that the exhibits from the fourth to third centuries BC have been obtained on the Sakdrissi-Kachagiani hill, and the exhibits were extracted from an ancient gold mine. Our historians lie to us when we go to the museum, and if they lie, why is this exhibit at the National Museum of Georgia? And if they do not lie, then why did you blow up Sakhdrisi, or did Sakdrisi blew itself up, like Targamadze did?"

It would be better if the journalist had presented conclusions made by numerous organizations in connection with Sakhdrisi, as well as reports, information from an investigative documentary prepared by the media, and ask the question on this high-profile case in a documented manner, supporting it with evidences. Asking the question in such a wording, the journalist practically failed to receive an answer, came across as unserious, and spent few minutes in vain holding an objectless discussion.

At the end of the show, the respondents and journalists used offensive language towards each other. Such a long discussion ended in a way that voters received almost no new and additional information.

Also in this reporting period, the “Rustavi 2” Director General, Nika Gvaramia actually made political assessments live on television. For example, on October 11, he said that victory of the “Georgian Dream” in the second round would be a disaster. He urged viewers to support pro-Western parties. He even named an example of Labors, calling it the only pro-Western left-wing party in the country. He used the following phrase with regard to the CEC Chairman: “Wearing a pearl bead is the only thing Mrs. Tamar Zhvania does”. Such open assessments made by the Director General may affect the channel viewers’ impartiality, as it may be seen as a pursuer of a specific position, and contribute to the loss of the society confidence in the television.

The block of the TV-program, where the party representatives argued around a particular topic, was the most interesting one - the same as in the previous monitoring period.

“Shabatis Kurieri” (Saturday’s Courier)

The program is aired on every Saturday; one of its parts is devoted to stories about current news, while the other part - to talks with guests. 4 of 5 broadcasts aired in the monitoring period were attended by monitoring subjects - “United National Movement” (5), “Georgian Dream” (2), “Free Democrats” (2), “State for People” (1), and “Labour Party” (1). One of the broadcasts was aired on the voting day and it had not the traditional format.

It is true that the “National Movement” members dominated among the guests, but the presenter pointed out that he had offered the “Georgian Dream” members to join the program, though, they had refused to do so (e.g. 29 September).

However, It should be noted that on October 15, when society members were talking about the threats related to obtaining constitutional majority by a single party, Elene Khoshtaria (from the National Movement) was the only electoral entity brought in to participate in the live broadcasting.

The presenter was prepared for the discussion and was familiar with the subject he (she) was discussing with the guests. Questions were formulated clearly and specifically.

“Imedi”

In the current reporting period, the monitors observed the program “Gia Eteri” (“Live broadcasting”), which was aired twice a week – on Wednesday and Friday.

“Gia Eteri”

The show was aired every Friday. The exception was October 8 - the polling day, when it was also live broadcasted. In most cases, the elections and “possible destabilization” were the discussion topics. The following parties were invited to the show:

“Georgian Dream” - 10, “National Movement” - 9 (did not participate on one day), “Free Democrats” - 3, “Patriots’ Alliance” - 3, “State for People” - 2, “Republican Party” - 1, “Burjanadze - Democratic Movement” - 1, “National Forum” - 1, independent candidate Salome Zurabishvili - 2.

It should be noted that on September 30, the “Georgian Dream” member, Otar Abesadze spoke as a Doctor of Economics together with society members.

At the first stage of the reporting period, numerous discussions were devoted to a “possible destabilization”. On September 30, during a discussion on this issue in the interactive part of the show, the question was about how realistic was the scenario of revolutionary development of events in the country; the vast majority of more than 80% confirmed that such a threat did not exist, however, at least 1.5 hours were spent on discussing this issue.

On October 3, when the topic of the “possible destabilization” was still being discussed, the “National Movement” member, Petre Tsiskarishvili voiced numerous promises on the air – “There will be more investments in the country, more jobs will be created, revenues and salaries will increase for the existing jobs, because there will be perception of a stability perspective in the country, where every investing local entrepreneur will feel protected, and will have the opportunity of making forecasts, unlike the situation they are currently living in; pensions will increase, teachers will have more a decent remuneration, we will take care of a high quality education; we have a very specific plan regarding the healthcare.”

After having this text heard, the presenter did not ask the respondent to justify how they were going to fulfill this promises, or what had hindered them from doing so as they were in power. Instead, she stuck with the “revolutionary scenario: *“You say that the Georgian society will not allow the vote rigging [...] given that even based on this reality, the Central Election Commission would not provide results that are undesirable to you, what is the “National Movement” going to do in this case”?*”

It should be noted that in the same broadcast, the “Georgian Dream” member Tamar Chugoshvili was asked by the presenter: “One gets the impression that constantly referring to the revolutionary scenario and destabilization, the ruling party has nearly “expelled” the substantial discussion and debates from the pre-election debates” – and this was happening at the time when the presenter herself had contributed to it, and instead of political debates between political parties, she devoted many hours to the “possible destabilization” and “revolutionary scenario”.

When discussing election issues with representatives of parties, the presenter did not ask questions about the election program. If a journalist is not familiar with the election programs, he/she may ask the electoral subject what type of reforms his/her party is going to implement in the education sector, field of healthcare, agriculture, social sphere, or with regard to vulnerable groups, human rights, labor security, economic growth, business stimulation. Instead of it, the presenter asked, for example, on September 26, what were the five main promises that the party had to offer to voters, and who would be the prime minister? As a result, the respondents were talking one solid hour about their promises, so that the journalist had no further questions; neither did she ask the respondents to present specific plans regarding each issue.

A discussion with the candidates shortlisted in the second round was held in the same vein. Voters heard nothing from the show about visions and plans of the candidate regarding any single particular issue. For example, on October 17 (13 days before the second round), the presenter hosted two candidates – Gia Baramidze from the “National Movement” and Levan Koberidze from the “Georgian Dream”. The presenter has asked any questions neither about the election program, nor about their past in order to show how consistent Baramidze was in his actions, and whether it was worth for voters from Gldani district to vote for him. Or Levan Koberidze, a political newcomer - what are his values, what attitudes will he have towards various issues, vulnerable groups, what experience does he have? Why is he going in politics?

Instead of this, the presenter frequently asked questions, requiring a kind of forecasts from the respondent - What chances do you have? How many mandates will you obtain? What would you do if you lose the elections? Why have not you managed to win right in the first round?

In the talk show, information covered in news was repeated in a way that the audience could not learn anything new. For example, on October 10, the “Qronika” devoted a 4-minute story to the issue whether the “National Movement” would enter the parliament or not; they read Shota Utiashvili’s post on the Facebook related to the same issue. On the evening, the very Shota Utiashvili was switched to the live broadcasting via videoconference, and he repeated the same thing he had written in his Facebook post and which had been discussed in the “Qronika”.

On the same day, Levan Samushia was invited to the live broadcasting; he had to answer questions about who and why from among his party comrades was going to leave and who stayed. The fourth story of the “Qronika” was about this very topic, where Levan Samushia could be seen too. He had not yet taken a decision. In spite of this, Samushia had been invited to the show and we heard the same thing as in the story of the “Qronika”.

All in all, one can say that no in-depth discussion has taken place in the show, and the half-baked discussion lasted for an hour and a half. Voters could not receive additional information about the candidates.

GDS

At the GDS-TV-company, the monitors observed the part of the show “2030”, where various topics were discussed together with the guests in a talk show format. Also the show “59 seconds” was monitored every Sunday at 21:00.

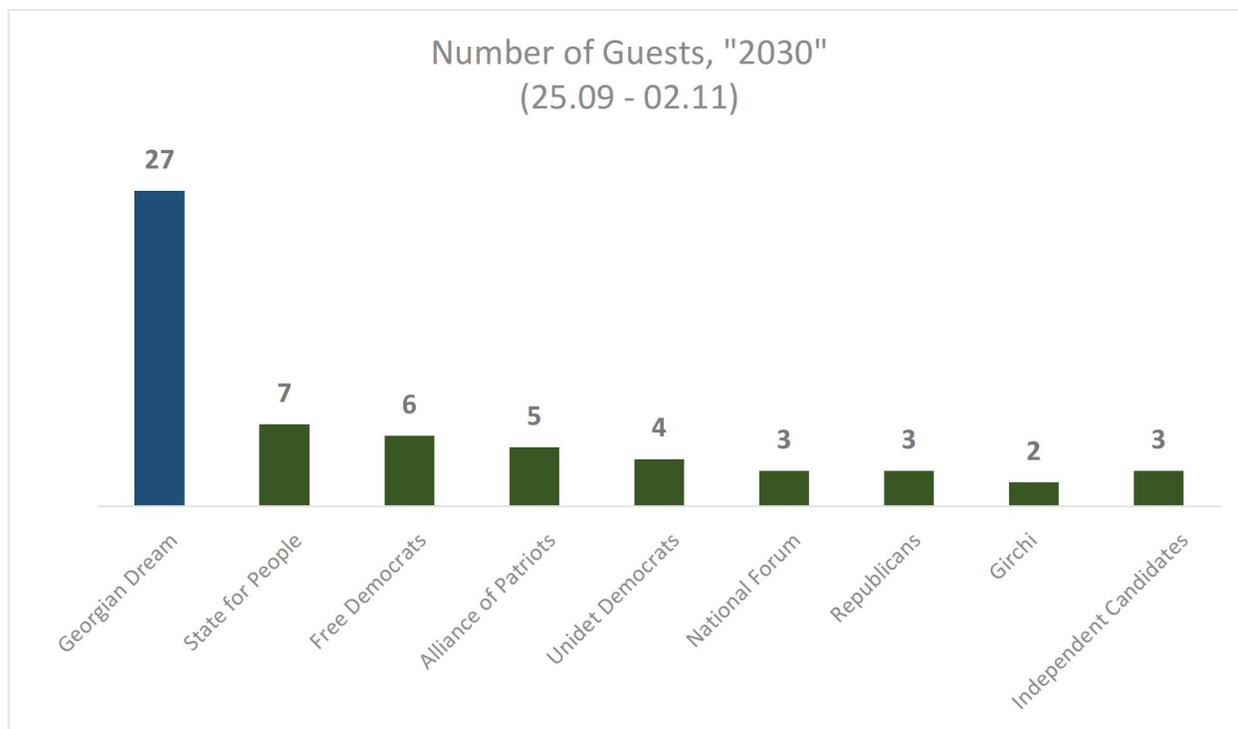
“2030”

Similar to the previous monitoring period, the show “2030” invited several guests every day after the end of a news program to discuss current issues with them. During the reporting period and until the voting day, there were mostly 2 topics of discussion - the possible destabilization and the parties’ chances to enter the Parliament. After the voting day, they discussed prospects of the parties in the second round of elections, and debated whether the “Georgian Dream” should have the constitutional majority.

Similar to the previous periods, also in this reporting period particularly much time was given to the “Georgian Dream” members; 27 of their representatives were invited to the program (among them Irakli Kobakhidze who was invited 4 times), while no more than 7 representatives of other parties took part in it. According to the presenter, the “National Movement” had boycotted the TV-channel.

From among independent candidates, the “2030” hosted Salome Zurabishvili (Mtatsminda district) and the Vake district majoritarians Hamlet Gegia and Gia Patsuria, who had appeared

in the show two days before the elections, on October 6. By what features they had been chosen to participate in the “2030”, and why other independent candidates had failed to deserve the attention of the show, remained unclear. Nor did the show invite the candidates to live broadcasting, who turned out to be exceptions, being neither members of the “Georgian Dream”, nor those of the “National Movement”, but still having managed to pass into the second round - Simon Nozadze (“Entrepreneurs”) and Teimuraz Gaprindashvili (“Free Democrats”).



The presenter’s questions were still based on assessments made by others, and respondents had to discuss them. The discussion was mainly focused on forecasts. Many of the guest were asked by the presenter: “What a chance do you have to get into the parliament?” “What results do you expect?” It is natural that all the representatives of parties said they were expecting to win.

With regard to the second round, there was an opinion among the society that the “Georgian Dream” should not receive constitutional majority, and, therefore, one should vote for the “National Movement”; however, this position has never appeared during the talks in the “2030”; all invited guests were expressing the opposite opinion, criticizing opponents’ ideas and noting that it was unacceptable to vote for the “National Movement”, because this party

was a group of abusers, etc. In fact, they urged the population during the live broadcasting to vote for the “Georgian Dream”. No opposite opinions have been voiced.

On September 30, majoritarian candidates from various parties visited the TV-program. The presenter read to each candidate their ratings according to surveys of the “Imedi”, as well as the periodicals “Palitra” and “for.ge”, and, considering these results, asked them what chances they had to get into the parliament. It should be noted that the “Palitra” and “for.ge” conducted the surveys on their own websites, and it would be unacceptable to consider them representative data. Due to the fact that public opinion surveys allow for manipulations, a separate chapter is dedicated to their coverage in the Broadcasters’ Code of Conduct. According to this document, in order to avoid doubts regarding the accuracy of survey results, broadcasters should make sure of appropriateness of the survey methodology, reliability of the results, and objectivity of those who had carried out or ordered the survey in question.

In accordance with the Guidelines on coverage of surveys², which has been approved by the Board of Charter, and, in addition, is based on the best international practices, online surveys should be assessed carefully before using. In case if a public opinion surveyor uses fundamental methods necessary to conduct a survey, and the objects of interest have universal access to the Internet, only then it is possible to consider online surveys a reliable source for coverage.

Also in this particular broadcast, the majority of respondents answered to the host that they did not consider an internet survey representative. We can say that in general, a considerable amount of time was dedicated to the public opinion polls in the “2030”. The presenter discussed results of various surveys with the majority of the guests, and asked the respondents to provide their own forecasts.

For example, on October 5, there was the following dialogue with the “Free Democrats” member Gia Tsagareishvili:

- *Does, in your opinion, the “National Movement” have a chance to take the second position?*
- *Let’s see, it will become clear in just two days.*
- *We will see it in two days, but can you make a certain prediction today on the extent to which they have sufficient resources or a chance to make it?*
- *I would wish one thing, that the “National Movement” would not regain the leadership of this country [...] Who will be take first, second, third, fourth places – let’s see, a few days are remaining, a few hours ... Let us wait for October 8.*

² <http://qartia.org.ge/2016/07/22/poll/>

With regard to the studies, we should also note the discussion with the “Georgian Dream” member, Irakli Kobakhidze, as the presenter told him that according to a statement made by the “Maestro” presenter, Shalva Ramishvili, the “Rustavi 2” TV-company had rigged the polls. “There are two data. How do you think personally, what were they intending to achieve and on what target was it focused [meaning the rigging]?” Through such a wording, the host presented an accusation of a particular person - in this case, Shalva Ramishvili – as a confirmed fact, thus giving the respondent a chance of speculating, especially under conditions when no counter-respondent was present in the studio.

It is true that explanations had been made several times during the reporting period that the “National Movement” was boycotting the channel, but in such circumstances, in case of accusations a presenter should try to act him-/herself as an opponent, ask counterquestions.

Neither on October 21 did the presenter ask critical questions or request evidences, when an ex-convict, Alexandre Akhalkatsi was visiting the studio, who said that the former Minister of Corrections, Khatuna Kalmakhelidze had ordered to torture him. The journalist, instead of requesting evidences to substantiate this serious allegation, asked him: - Why? What was the reason?

The same respondent blamed also Sandra Roelofs, saying that she brought medicines into the prison, which then “were given to inmates, and they got destroyed both mentally and physically and began to cut their own throats and crack their heads”.

The presenter asked one of the questions in the following wording:

“As for your story, it is a story of morgue. This is one of the toughest things I’ve seen in “Herocracy”, the film that was made by Goga Khaindrava and the first two series of which are based on your story, if I remember correctly. It is an analog. All the things that are depicted in the film, you’ve experienced them yourself, right? How they bring you to the prison morgue, tie you to a dead corpse, etc. and so forth. What was the cause, i.e., what did they tell you, why did they bring you to the morgue? Why did it happen so that they tied inmates to dead bodies and left them over night or for several days, what was the cause?”

Then the presenter also asked in what condition were those who had been tied to corpses.

Through the questions asked in this way, the presenter accepts the respondent’s words as a fact, and, although no evidences had been presented there in the show, did not doubt the respondent’s narrative.

On October 7, Irma Inashvili said: “Our path is directed towards the West and we have to carry on moving towards it. We are the very political force, which is exactly the Western political team and group” - she said. The presenter did neither ask counterquestions, nor reminded of the statements that “Patriots’ Alliance” had made (statements) against the West for years.

There were cases when it remained unclear, why the presenter was discussing one or another issue with a guest, who may not have had the respective information. For example, on October 12, the presenter discussed developments taking place in the “National Movement” with the “Georgian Dream” member, Irakli Kobakhidze:

“What process is taking place in your opponents’ party?”

I mean the “National Movement” representatives, the leaders in this case. Did not they know what result would come out with regard to their party?”

“The same experts said that Giga Bokeria is getting stronger as a leader, he’s trying to sort distance himself from Mikheil Saakashvili, and in addition, he is predicted to have more active and ... political life and, at the same time, a higher number of supporters than the rest of the Nationals who, say, stick with the old team. In this case, could you tell me, how do you see the work in the parliament?”

“59 Seconds”

3 TV shows were covered by the reporting period in total (September 25, October 23, 2), when the show hosted the monitoring subjects. In other cases, experts and analysts discussed the issue of elections.

Ultimately, Republicans have participated 4 times in the show, representatives of the “Georgian Dream”, “Free Democrats” and “State for People” – 2 times each, the “National Forum” visited the show 3 times, the “Patriots’ Alliance” and “Nino Burjanadze Democratic Movement” have been invited one time each. In the broadcast of September 25, in which majoritarian candidates were participating, the presenter noted that the “Free Democrats” refused to participate in the show, while the “National Movement” was boycotting the channel.

The presenter was prepared, and the questions were well phrased. Since a timer was on there in the studio, the respondents were given equal time and the opportunity to respond to each other. Similar to the previous monitoring period, we have to note also this time that proceeding from the format, the presenter plays the role of a moderator, not inquiring and making respondents to clarify certain issues, that’s why there were cases when particular facts

remained unclear to the viewer. For example, in the broadcast of October 2, representatives of an oppositional party stated that the administrative resource had been used, however, the presenter did not specify what they had meant when talking about the “use of administrative resource”, nor did she ask them to provide concrete examples.

“Maestro”

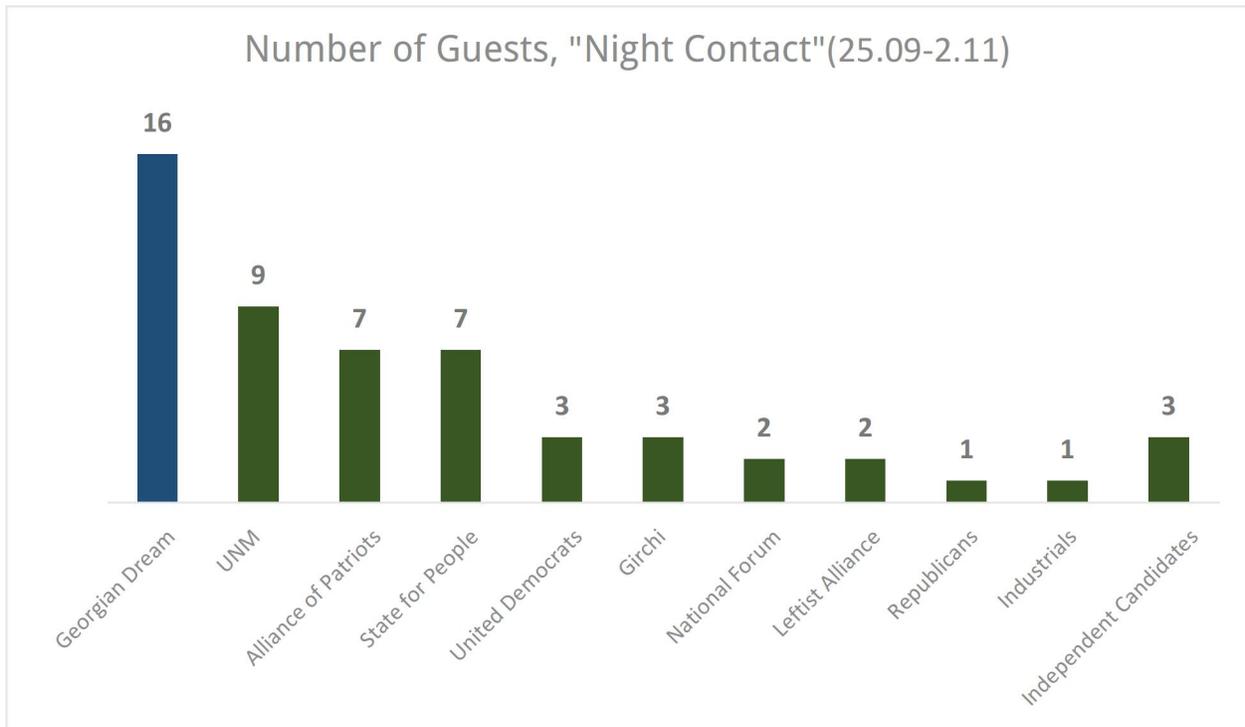
In case of the “Maestro” TV-company, the monitors observed the talk shows “Maestros Gamis Faqtori” (Maestro’s night factor) and “Gamis Kontaqti” (night contact). They had different airing periodicity.

“Gamis Kontaqti”

During the current monitoring period, the show had numerous presenters, in contrast to the previous reporting period. Each broadcast consists of 2 or 3 blocks; themes mainly derive from important events of the day or week. In addition, interviews with certain party representatives are shown in an individual block, being titled, for example, “Free Democrats” policy, or “Georgian Dream” policy, etc.

During the reporting period, on October 5, the election-devoted show “Regions” was aired instead of the “Night Contact”, while on October 24 and 26, the show was not aired on grounds that remained unclear for the audience. Only by the end of the show on October 27, the audience learned from the presenter that the show would no longer be aired, though without providing any explanation on reasons for the closure. Neither the channel management has made any clear explanations on this matter; it is only known that the channel management decided to close several programs in the post-election period, as well as increase the periodicity of transmission, etc.

In the “Night Contact”, the “Georgian Dream” was represented in the highest “dose” - with 16 respondents; the “United National Movement” - 9, “Patriots’ Alliance – United Opposition” - 7, “Free Democrats” - 5, “Paata burchuladze – State for People” - 7, “Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement” - 3; Independent candidates - 3 (Salome Zurabishvili - 2 times, and Ilia Kokaia – once), “National Forum” - 2, “Girchi” - 3, “Left-Wing Alliance” - 2, “Republican Party” – 1, and “Entrepreneurs” - 1.



Particularly striking was the “Georgian Dream” representatives’ numerosity in the pre-election broadcast of October 6, the discussion topic of which was the 25th anniversary of Georgian-American relations. Prior to that, “Maestro” had aired a documentary - “Quarter of a century” - in which 8 US ambassadors were talking about Georgian-American relations. In the documentary, one of the former ambassadors, Richard Miles criticized Saakashvili’s government because of the war in 2008. That was exactly the context, to an extended discussion of which the journalist (Qeti Qashakashvili) dedicated the show. Only the “Georgian Dream” representatives had been invited to participate in the TV-program; moreover, three respondents - one, the film director in person (Irakli Mezurnishvili), who, at the same time, was standing for elections in Kaspi from the “Georgian Dream”, and two other electoral candidates from the same “Georgian Dream”. The following phrase could be heard in the show – “This is the verdict of the “National Movement””. No profound inquiry into the matter or reasoned opposing could be felt on the part of the Journalists. She wondered: “Why is this movie so important to you?”, and asked other general questions of this kind.

Often happened that the same respondents represented certain parties in the show. For example, in the UNM’s case, mainly Gigi Tsereteli, a majoritarian MP-candidate in Kutaisi, participated in the show while in the case of “Burjanadze - Democratic Movement” it was Nino Burjanadze, the leader of the party in person. Despite the fact that these one and the same respondents made identical statements during each broadcast, journalists showed insufficient opposition and knowledge and awareness of the issues raised by them. For example, Nino

Burjanadze reiterated in every program that the elections had been rigged, that she had filed a lot of complaints, requesting cancellation of electoral districts, and (as he said), due to the fact that the elections had been indeed rigged, her complaints had never been redressed. The presenters could have seen these complaints personally on the CEC website³ prior to the preparation of the show, and could have shown the viewers on what these complaints were based, or to what extent were real grounds there for re-counting the electoral districts, thus giving the respondent no chance of replicating the information desired only by the respondent herself.

In the majority of the broadcasts devoted to interviews with party representatives on important issues of the day, the final interview was always made with a representative of the “Georgian Dream”. No actual debates between representatives of parties were held in the show, consequently, a member of the ruling party summarized the issues voiced in the show and offered the viewers his/her final assessments.

It was not clear by what principle were only Salome Zurabishvili and Ilya Kokaia (Zestafoni) chosen from among the independent candidates to be guests of the show, while a number of other independent candidates was participating in the elections, and some of them had even managed to pass into the second round, for example, the independent majoritarian candidate from Mtskheta, Cesar Chocheli, or in Chokhatauri - Akaki Chkhaidze .

In addition, also government representatives were asked less critical questions by the Journalists. In one of the broadcasts (October 17), Zaza Vashakhmadze, head of the Religion Agency was invited to the show in connection with the conflict in Mokhe that had arisen around a disputed Muslim prayer building between the local Muslim and Orthodox population. Zaza Vashakhmadze declared that the Muslim community had no problem in terms of praying in Mokhe, and it was not impossible that this topic had been deliberately activated before the second round of elections, because the work on this topic in a dialogue mode had been ongoing during the last 1.7 years. Instead of concentrating and focusing around this very matter, namely, why had the state failed to settle this disputed issue in the 1.7 years, the journalist tried to shift the issue into the political context of elections; she asked the respondent whether it could be in the best interests of a particular group to connect this sensitive topic with politics. Although the respondent was reluctant to name a particular power, the journalist tried to apply the method of deduction, thus making the respondent to admit that he had not meant the ruling party, and that the above might be in the interests of the “National Movement”.

³ <http://sachivrebi.cec.gov.ge/>

The show was problematic also due to the fact that it consisted of numerous blocks, where different topics were selected, basically, with one guest, which did not allow for holding in-depth discussions and reviews on a particular issue.

Accordingly, depthless questions were asked, and there was less opposition on the part of the journalists based on factual circumstances. The journalists mainly requested feedbacks from their respondents, as well as evaluations regarding the allegations voiced in relation to them by their opponents. However, such an attitude creates always the opportunity for respondents to dodge and avoid a discussion on the actual problem, fully dedicating his/her response to such a question to the criticism of his opponent. Ultimately, the audience is affected.

“Maestro Factor”

The show was aired every Friday and consisted of 2 or 3 blocks. Topics derived from significant event of the day or week. On October 28, the program was not aired; it was closed by a decision of the channel management, similar to a number of other shows of the “Maestro”.

Guests of the “Maestro Factor” were, basically, prominent public figures, representatives of civil society, politicians, government officials. Sometimes there were no monitoring subjects participating in some of the broadcasts. Overall, 3 government officials, 1 representative of the President’s Office, 2 - from the “Georgian Dream - 2, 1 – from “Girchi”, and no one from other parties have participated in three broadcasts aired during the reporting period.

On October 21, the presenter began the show with the following text:

“And at the national level, there are constitutional passions on the top of the political agenda. There is a hysteria about the “Georgian Dream’s” prospects of obtaining constitutional majority, as if it were some illegal activity. The issue of the Constitutional Court is also traditionally actual. If this situation give rise to your questions, why is it so? Why do we have to listen to this hysteria, if this is the people’s choice, and why have we failed to agree on the issues related to the country’s basic law during 25 years of independence history? Carefully watch the video we are offering now, and you will become convinced that there are much more severe cases in the post-Soviet space”.

A video was live broadcasted, narrating that the original Constitution had been lost in Kyrgyzstan. It is unclear, why the fact that the situation in Kyrgyzstan is far worse than in Georgia should be considered appeasing information for the public. Moreover, it remained unsubstantiated why the journalist had called the opinion of one part of the society “hysteria”.

At the same time, the journalist said in her opening text that part of the society calls upon against the constitutional majority, “while actually urging the public to support the “Nationals”. Such a wording may be regarded as manipulation on the part of the journalist, as the pathos of the letter was the very threat arising from the constitutional majority in the parliament.

The journalist suggested an interview on possible constitutional changes with the “Georgian Dream” representative, Tamar Chugoshvili. The respondent stated that the “Georgian Dream” would use the constitutional majority for noble purposes only, while the journalist did not provide any counter arguments, by which she would have appropriately opposed to the respondent as to how they were going to overcome the threats created by concentration of the constitutional majority in hands of a single political power.

One block of the show was dedicated to the preparation for the second round of elections. The show hosted Beka Odisharia, majoritarian candidate of the “Georgian Dream” in Krtsanisi district, who spoke about his election campaign, preparation for the second round, etc. In fact, this part of the show was devoted to that particular candidate’s PR, because the journalist asked general questions: “What do you promise the voters? What advantages do you have over your competitors?”, etc. In addition, no one from the opposition had been invited to participate in this this block, not even Odisharia’s immediate competitor in the second round, the UNM representative Irakli Abesadze.

Also noteworthy the broadcast of October 14, where society members discussed the elections. Tbilisi Mayor David Narmania was also connected to the show via teleconference to talk about the same topic.

The journalist explained the teleconference connection by the fact that the city was going to celebrate Tbilisoba on the next day, however, it remains unclear what the aforementioned fact had to do with the main issue. Even more confusing for the audience was the first question posed to Narmania and preceded by the journalist’s explanation that during Tbilisoba a year ago, he (Narmania) participated in her show in relation to the issue of his possible dismissal in the nearest future: “Well, the elections are over, Tbilisoba is already there, and how come that the opposition has not managed to dismiss you yet?”

After the questions on the elections, the Journalist asked – “Tell us about the tomorrow’s events of Tbilisoba.”

“Pirveli”

In case of the “Pirveli” (“The First”) TV-company, the monitors observed the show “Rviani” (“Eight”) broadcasted every weekday at 20:00 pm.

“Rviani” (eight)

The program was broadcast at 8 p.m. on every week day. Presenter discussed the current events with guests. Within the reporting period the guests were invited from the following political parties: Georgian Dream – 19, National Movement – 16, Free Democrats – 10, Republicans – 8, Paata Burchuladze – 8, Burjanadze – Democratic Movement – 7, National Forum – 4, Alliance of Patriots – 2, Girchi – 2, Industry Will Save Georgia – 1, Labor Party - .

There were cases during the reporting period when some irrelevant guests were speaking on the air. For example: the leader of National Forum Gubaz Sanikidze was invited to speak about the explosion of the car of the member of National Movement - Givi Targamadze, which occurred on 5th October, and its reasons.

Also, on 18th October, the former prosecutor – Lasha Natsvlishvili was invited to the show to rate the current political developments. In both cases the connection of the events with the respondents remained obscure.

The guests had to answer the questions separately and no discussion took place. The journalist gave them specifying questions quite frequently, however, still there were several cases when things remained unclear.

For example: on 11th October the presenter asked the leader of Democratic Movement Nino Burjanadze what were her pretences to the election process for the time being. Burjanadze said that in the village Ubisa the coordinator of the seventh district – Dato Maxatadze and his family were beaten by the governor of Boreti and his chair, just because they supported Burjanadze. The presenter didn’t show any interest whether the case was filed and what reactions followed from the relevant agencies. Later Burjanadze says:”Isn’t it clear that we got minimum 7 percent, which was reported in Batumi even after the fraud”. The presenter doesn’t ask her why she thinks that in Batumi elections were rigged. According to Burjanadze only in the last week she got 20000 additional signings in favor of “without any blocks status”, this is her argument and she says that more people supported her party than it was shown by the election results. The presenter doesn’t put the counter-question: how do these signatures guaranty that those people will vote for her on the election day.

On 21st October, the host of the program while talking with the member of National Movement – Mikheil Machavariani noted that Mikheil Saakashvili rebuked some of his party members. He/she said: “we was that several of your supporters didn’t hide this fact, among them the wife of one of your leaders - Chorgoleishvili expressed it quite openly even on the social network”. Mikheil Machavariani answered that being the wife of Giga Bokeria doesn’t mean that it is a political post, no one is responsible for the posts made by their wives or brothers on the social network. In response of this remark the journalist added that Sandra Roleofs “is sent by her husband as one of his representative”.

In regard with Tamar Chorgoleishvili the presenter clarified that “she always voices her husband’s position and no matter how you deny it now, when she writes about her ideas openly on the face-book it is normally associated to her husband’s positions”. By saying this, the presenter actually named Tamar Chorgoleishvili and Sandra Roleofs as people who don’t have their own opinion and only voice their husbands’ positions.

Caucasus

The monitors observed talk-show “Barrier” on Caucasus TV (four times a week 21:15p.m.)

Barrier

During the reporting period, the representatives of various parties visited the program. Among them: the "Georgian Dream" 15 times, "National Movement", 12, Girchi 7 (Iago Khvichia - 3 times visited the "barrier"), Burjanadze-Democrats - 4, Movement - State for people - 5 (Manana Nachkepia four times), "Free Democrats" 4, "National Forum" - 3, "Patriotic Alliance" 3, "the Republican party" - 2, Industry Will save Georgia – 1.

We should note that during the observation period the program has not even once convened independent candidates.

The main feature of the program Barrier is that it almost never discusses one particular issue in depth. Typically, the subject of the program is the latest developments, which is assessed by the questions hosts ask guests. There was a time when for few days one main topic was discussed, namely: "What threat could create the" Georgian Dream "by the adoption of the majority."

Despite, the discussed topics were very actual, they repeated what was broadcast on the news and didn’t offer any kind of different analysis.

Mainly, the guests were chosen in relevance with the topic and their political approaches were also considered, but there were some exceptions as well.

For example: on 6th October, the singer Irma Sokhadze and the president of chamber of culture Davit Qitoshvili were invited to the program to speak about the ongoing election environment. It is unclear why their opinions are so important about the pre-election period. With them in the studio there was one representative from the only political party Girchi – Nika Qavtaradze.

There was a problem of balance in the audience the information was unilaterally adopted on October 17, when the subject of "Barrier" was society led campaign against the constitutional majority. They had not invited anyone participating in the campaign to the program, who would have been able to talk about their arguments. The representative of only "Georgian dream" was speaking for 30 minutes about this issue, and he had no opponent.

The questions of the Barrier was not critical and it aimed to present the opinions of the guests.

For example: on 6th October, during the program the host asked Nika Qavtaradze – the representative of the political centre Girchi the following: "how do you think the recordings of secret surveillance should be published in such a way? And am also interested in your opinion about destabilization?"

After the election, on 12th October, the host of the program Maia Mamulashvili asked the first guest of the program – Nukri Qantaria the following: "Are you on a festive mood or do you feel grave joy? This of course half jokingly, because 4 hard years are ahead of you".

On 24th October the topic of the program was the murder in the Krtsanisi Base. Kakha Kukava (the Alliance of Patriots), Manana Nachkepia (State for the People), Levan Samushia (Free Democrats) and Mamuka Gamkrelidze (the expert) were talking about the issue. At the beginning of the program the host was interested what were the reactions of the guests when they read the notice from the Ministry of Defense and what they think about this issue generally.

It is incomprehensible, why these people were invited to talk about Krtsanisi incident, what specific information they could have about this matter. Furthermore, in the second half of the program they start to talk about Sandra Roelofs and her decision of withdrawing the candidacy. It is unclear how they connect these two incidents, why they discuss them within one block with the same guests.

The host asked Mamuka Gamkrelidze whether he thought that Sandra Roelofs took decision of withdrawal on her one or was the influence of Misha. It is obscure why should Mamuka Gamkrelidze know about the motives of Sandra Roelofs. And he rightly noted that isn't in close relations with either of them to be aware of such details.

Generally, the hosts looked very weak, despite the fact that the guests were very dominant and guided the discussions. There were cases when guests were all talking simultaneously and nothing could be heard.

Tabula

The monitors observed the program “Teorema” on Tabula TV, which is on air on every Monday and Thursday.

Teorema

The current affairs were discussed in the program with the guests. Before 8th October elections one block of the program was entirely dedicated to the topic-discussions of election subjects.

Representatives only from five parties took part in the program: National Movement – 10 times, State for the People – 7 times, Girchi – 1, Free Democrats – 3 times, Republicans – 1.

As the hosts explain the representatives of the Georgian Dream refused to participated in the program, although they didn't provide any further information why other parties were not invited and why the above named election subjects were chosen.

The presenters were mainly prepared. It should be noted that in September in the block where the guests talked about the specific topics (health, economics) no discussion took place, they only presented their views. For example, in the program on 26th September, where the guests were talking about healthcare, the journalist put general questions about their election program and wasn't able to oppose them. Thus, it remained unclear which program was better and more realistic.

On the same day, the journalist was very well aware about the issue of TSU, about the conflict their and discussed the matter from different points. However, principle according which the guests were chosen was still unclear. The guests were: Simon Janashia – who was presented by the host as the professor of Ilia State University, but later the guest himself said that he hadn't worked in that university for more than a year. The other guest was the member of Girchi (which joined the collision State for the People) – Sandro Tarkhhanmouravi. The journalist

didn't explain the reason why he/she had chosen the representative of this specific political party.

Despite the fact that the hosts pointed out several times about the refusal of Georgian Dream representatives to take part in the program, it is necessary that journalists themselves put counter questions or invite someone who is able to criticize the ruling party. Otherwise, the society gets information from only one side, accusations and criticism.

For example, on 27th October, in the program, when Roman Gotsiridze – member of National Movement was talking about the depreciation of Gel, the main object of criticism was the government and the ruling political party. No opposite ideas were heard in the program, the non-political guests were chosen in the way that the different opinions, discussions and arguments were not heard.

Obiectivi (objective)

The monitors observed program "Night Studio," on Objective TV, which is aired every day at 22:30 pm.

Night Studio

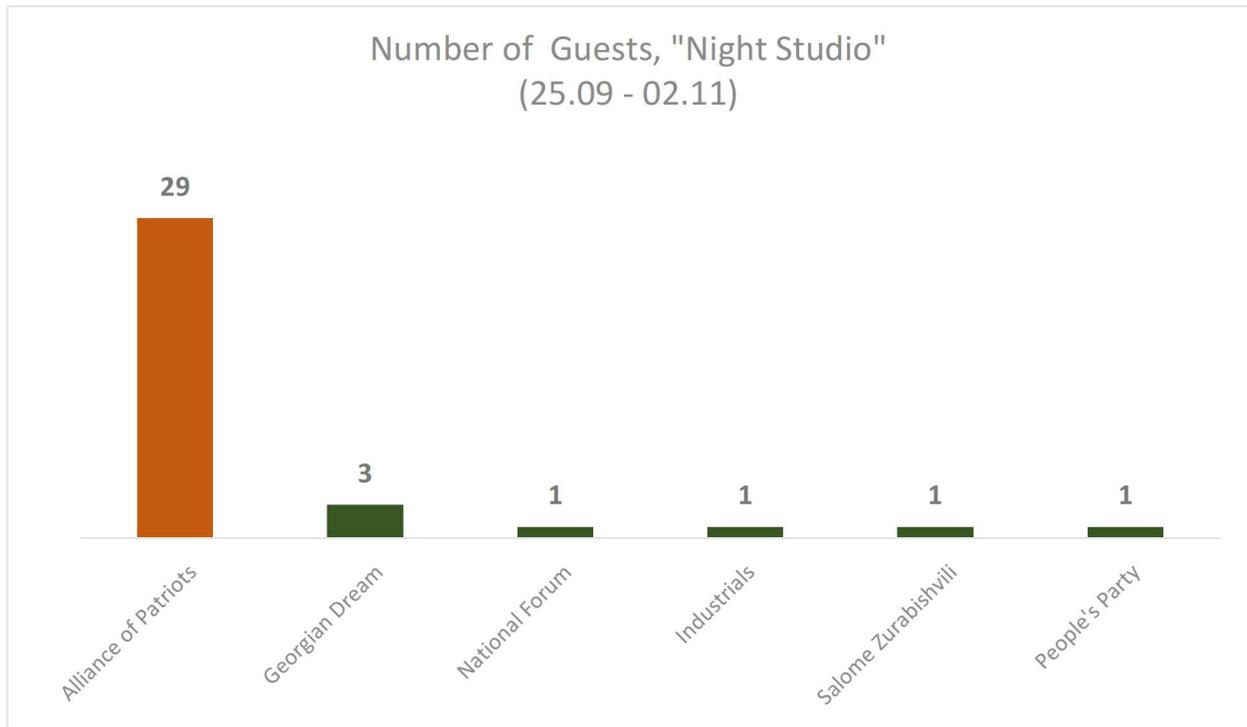
The program has steady timetable and format. On 10th, 14th, 17th October it wasn't on air. The TV channel didn't consider it necessary to explain the reason to the viewers. Besides this, Night Studio has several hosts. It is unclear who is the host in each day. Sometimes one journalist hosts the whole program, sometimes one of them work together and sometimes – one block is hosted by one, the other – by another.

The program consists of two blocks. Often, hosts don't name the topic of the program and neither are their questions focused on any particular issue. There is no dynamics in the program. There were cases when they had no guests in the studio, the host was reading some information and answered calls from citizens.

Like the previous monitoring period, the program was like a platform of one political party – the Alliance of Patriots. At first, the hosts were the majoritarian candidates from the same party, then, after not going to the second round they returned to the program, for example Bondo Mdzinarashvili.

In all, during the monitoring period the following parties were invited to the program: "Patriotic Alliance" (29 members), "Georgian Dream" (3 members), "National Forum" (1

member), People's Party (1 member), "Topadze - industrialists, "Our homeland" - one member, Simon Nozadze and independent candidate Salome Zurabishvili.



It should be noted that the Night Studio hosts are mainly like-minded people and sometimes they have very friendly dialogues between each other. Some of the presenters even don't try to hide their positive feelings towards the Alliance of Patriots. For example, journalist Nino Ratishvili often identifies herself with the Alliance.

On 6th October, speaking with the leader of the Alliance of Patriots – Davit Tarkhan-Mourav – she says: “I repeat again, Adjara and Megrelia are won, right? Now, our opponent is the government or still the National Movement. These are we, our supporters.

On the same program the host directly urges the voters to vote for the Alliance of Patriots, then on the same evening to come to the rally at 8 p.m. which was earlier announced by the Alliance. “If you want to be rich, secured, be able to support family, restore your dignity, be happy in this case vote to number 8 on the 8th November, and wait for you at 8 in the evening on 8th October.

Presenters often criticize both current and former governments, however, while talking about the members of the current government they use very accurate utterance, unlike the one they use towards the previous members of government which is sharply negative.

They use the following epithets in regard with the National Movement: "Walking evil," "sectarian", "eaters of Georgian people", "evil force", "National sect", "murderers and torturers sect", dishonest people.

On 21st October, before the second round of the elections, there was shown a film in the second half of the program. It was done because, as the hosts says: "we should all realize to whom not to vote." The film "Killer in the Town" made by "Caucasus internet media group" in 2009 is about the Afrasidze case and the high-profile murders of Zurab Vazagashvili, Buta Robakidze, Sandro Girgvliani and Giorgi Gamtsemlidze. It is noted in the film that more than 100 of young lives were liquidated by the different agencies of Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2004-2009 years. The protector of the murderers was Mikheil Saakashvili.

After the second round of elections, the hosts openly expresses the sympathy towards the ruling party and its candidates. On 27th October the presenter Bondo Mdzinarashvili (who was the majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots on 8th October) directly asked the viewers to support the candidate of Georgian Dream Bidzina Gegidze: "Bidzina Gegidze has the image of a very positive person, right? I think he is really a very noble man and can't do anything wrong, I address to people who live in Vake, I can promise them that he will not any anything wrong and he seems able to do many things with you..." The host added that the "evil force" – National Movement shouldn't get any vote, as for the candidate of the "National sect" - they can roll him/her down the stairs: "because we all know very well that in the second round should win the force which will be able to beat the evil forces in the legislative body. And we all know who is this evil force – National Movement, they shouldn't get even one vote. I am saying this especially for sectarians, leave the evil, leave the evil, leave the evil. Cross those representatives of Nationals who come to you and if they didn't obey roll them down the stairs, but leave alone the young ones. This isn't a call for violence, it is call for exercise.

Some journalists allow guests to use the hate speech and voice anti-western messages (for example Rezo Amashukeli on 26th October)

In one of the programs (6th October), the host approves the fact of violence which took place in Tbilisi, Agmashenebeli str. when young Georgians broke up the Turkish cafes and restaurants, the host himself shows the signs of phobia: "it has already become embarrassing to call this street Davit Agmashenebi str. because it is all Turkish and now Iranians also added, of course I am a bit exaggerating but who is to blame for this [...] I have pretense towards my government, because the foreigners themselves don't come to our country, on the contrary they are invited [...] I am angry with my government because it couldn't protect me. Maybe the young people rent down something, but the state is to blame to have led our children to such actions. These

children saw that we are disabled and they themselves did what was necessary and the government detained them, it is our fault, the fault of our government not the Turkish people.”

The journalist delivers the wrong information (13th October) when he/she says that the greater part of Georgians support visa liberalization because they hope to go abroad, work there and send many to their families. In reality visa liberalization doesn't give the right to work.

Adjara

In Adjara TV of Public Broadcaster monitors observed the program "Factor", which was aired in different periods time.

Factor

Instead of the program Factor the program “Choice 2016” was aired during the pre-election period. Later the previous format of the program was restored. But still the periodicity of the program remained unclear for the viewers.

During the reporting period there was the presentation of "Free Democrats", "Labor Party" and the "National Movement" and "Davit Tarkhan Mouravi Irma Inashvili Patriotic Alliance", the debates of the second round candidates (in the Parliament, as well as the Supreme Council of Adjara), but the "Georgian Dream" members refused to take part in the debate and the debates failed. Only the members of the "National Movement" visited the program. During the reporting period, the "Georgian Dream" only once took part in the program.

The host was impartial and guaranteed fair coverage to all participants of the program. During the presentation of the parties his role was passive and basically played the role of moderator.

Without counter questions parties had the opportunity to air their desired opinions, including the dissemination of false information. Voters didn't have the opportunity to find out how real the promises given by the candidates and party members were.

For example, on October 5, "the Alliance of Patriots" leader David Tarkhan Mourav said about exit polls conducted by GFK, which was ordered by Rustavi 2: ”I have learnt that they have brought a new organization KFC, which is extremely incompetent and liar. You should know that KFC is the organization, which sells chicken wings in the world.”

The hosts didn't correct him that he was disseminating the wrong information and that GFC and KFC are the different companies.

It should be noted that in the same program the journalist tried to refrain Tarkhan Mourav from using the hate speech, although not quite successfully. Tarkhan Mourav said that Georgians have worse conditions in their own country than Turkish people.

“The ice-cream vendor shouldn’t be Turkish – Georgians are also able to sell the ice-cream.”

“Not only Turkish people, we should refrain ourselves from making any discriminatory remarks, a lot of people from different nationality live in this town and not only in this town, there are in all over the country and they also have right to work in Georgia” – said the host, but the respondent continued: “if Georgian man decides to sell the corn he has to fight for 2 months and the Turkish person can do it - gain the right for his work in a day”. After this the host moved to the different topic. It audience were uncertain what was discrimination, opposing the respondent wasn’t considered by the format of the program and thus the host didn’t continue with the topic.

TV 25

On TV 25 the monitors observed talk-show “Dialogue”, which was on air two times in a week. But as an exception, during the monitoring period two programs were added.

Dialogue

The time in the program was given both to the majoritarian candidates from Adjara who wanted to get the seat in the Parliament of Georgia and to those who fought for the seats in the Supreme Council of Adjara.

It should be noted that from those candidates of Georgian Dream, who fought for the seats in Supreme Council and were in the second round, no one came in the program despite being invited. The host several times informed this fact to the viewers.

In fact, no debates took place and the journalist had just to interview the representatives from National Movement.

Leonid Chernovetski also refused to participate in the program.

On 14th October the hosts said:”The Alliance of Patriots have announced moratorium till October 22nd and they will not take part in the program.” Republicans weren’t also ready to participate.

Overall, 7 times visited the program the "National Movement", 3 times the "Georgian Dream" (4 times did not appear), the following parties were presented only once: the Industrialists, "National Forum", "Labor Party", "Republican party", "Patriots Alliance, Burjanadze - Democratic

Movement," Free Democrats ". The independent, majoritarian candidate Armaz Akhvlediani also visited the program.

The journalist was ready to speak to all of them, opposed their ideas, put critical questions and was impartial. He/she led the program correctly, asked politicians to clarify some obscure moments for the viewers.

The exception case was on October 3rd, when Armaz Akhvlediani, who was in the studio said, that when he first met Bidzina Ivanishvili, he offered Mr. Akhvlediani the post of the head of government in Adjara, “ though, at that time some clans in Adjara were not in favor of my coming here”. The journalist asks him to specify which clan he meant, who was against his coming. Mr. Akhvlediani refrained from answer, later he several times mentioned clans, the journalist didn't ask for further specification.

In this case the – when the respondent doesn't want to answer the question, the presenter should note out that he/she is moving to the next topic because the respondent doesn't want to speak about this particular issue and not because that the theme is exhausted.

At the beginning of the program the brief biography of one of the candidates were shown, which was good for the awareness of the viewers. During the programs the viewers were given the opportunity to call in the studio and ask question to the guest, which is good for the involvement of citizens but we think that the calls should be filtered.

For example, on October 14th a viewer called in the program who didn't have a question and simply said: “Hello Armaz, Angisa is with you.” On October 19th one of them said:”We support Nugzar Amaglobeli and are with him” and hung.

During the program, the host presents different videos which is good for diversity. We should note out the videos October 24th 26th 28th program, when there were shown videos not only about National Movement, but also Georgian dream though the later wasn't presented in the studio.

The attempt of the journalist to balance the material should be praised. Although, there were cases when the video was mainly about one person we was in the studio.

For example, on October 19th the same person Nugzar Amaglobeli from National Movement – was talking in the studio and on the video. In such cases it is not clear what is the aim of the video coverage – as the journalist can put questions to the guest live in the studio.

It should be noted that during the visit of majoritarian candidate much time was given to the judgment of the first guest, the estimation of the past of National Movement and the candidates for the Supreme Council of Adjara talked very little about their election programs, future plans, about the development of Adjara and etc.