



Election Media Monitoring of Talk Shows

September 29 – November 12, 2012

Election monitoring of talk shows is performed for all the talk shows, which are broadcasted during the prime time and are dedicated to political topics. As far as not all the channels have the programs like that, only the following channels and talk shows fell under the monitoring:

On the First Channel of the Public Broadcaster – “Dialogue with David Paichadze” and “Accents with Eka Kvesitadze”;

On Maestro – “Subjective Opinion”, hosts: Shalva Ramishvili and Diana Trapaidze; “Politmeter” – Nino Zhizhilashvili; “Arguments” – Thee Sichinava and “Us” – Tamar Chikovani;

On Kavkasia – “Studio Spectrum” – Davit Akubardia, “Barrier” – Alexander Elisashvili and “Hotline”, which is hosted by Alexander Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze and Natia Orvelashvili in turn;

On the Ninth Channel – “Akhalkatsi’s Matrix”, “Counseling with Vasil Maglapheridze” and “Eka Beridze’s Main Question”.

Methodology and Analysis

Election media monitoring of talk shows consist of a qualitative component only. Only the journalists are monitored based on various criteria during the monitoring. The evaluation is focused on the role and involvement of journalists during the program; whether a journalist is a moderator only, who is managing a process, or is s/he trying to state her/his position; whether the talk shows’ hosts let the guests express their opinions and when s/he interrupts them. Besides, it is also monitored how equal conditions the journalist is creating for the guests; how equally demanding/permissive the questions of a journalist are towards all the guests, and how much the journalist is trying to get in-depth information from the guest through probing. The monitoring is also observing the

usage of hate speech in talk-shows (insulting or abusive phrases/statement) by the journalists/anchors, and their reaction on the cases if their guests are using the hate speech.

The report covers the period from September 29 – November 12, inclusive, and provides the analysis of programs broadcasted during this period per channels.

The First Channel

Two programs became the monitoring subjects on the First Channel. These are: “Dialogue with Davit Paichadze” and “Accents with Eka Kvesitadze”. Since October, Davit Paichadze’s program has been broadcasted three times a week – on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and “Accents” have been broadcasted every Tuesday and Friday.

Members of the ruling team, also the opposition representatives and experts were invited to both programs. Both journalists are pretty actively involved in the talk show. They are trying to get exhaustive answers to their questions and they give opportunity to the guests to fully state their opinions.

In case of both journalists it is possible to say that often the host’s attitude is significantly changed alongside with party affiliation of the guests. This is reflected in the questions asked to them, ironic attitude and comments. Representatives of new authority are more actively opposed to, and they are asked more probing questions; however, the representatives of the previous government are opposed less, and neither are the journalists distinguished with demanding tone towards them. The talk show is always conducted in moderate and politically correct frameworks, and correspondingly, we do not come across with any politically incorrect expressions or hate speech by the journalist or the guests.

Maestro

There were 4 talk-shows monitored on Maestro: “Subjective Opinion” by Shalva Ramishvili and Diana Trapaidze, “Politmeter” hosted by Nino Zhizhilashvili, “Arguments” with Tea Sichinava and “Us” hosted by Tamar Chikovani. The first three talk shows are broadcasted via Maestro every day. However, the program “Us” is broadcasted only once a week.

In most cases, the “Subjective Opinion” hosts the guests who are loyal to the authorities. Among the invited guests there was a relatively bigger number of the members of the Georgian Dream and those of the government. During the program both of the journalists are quite actively involved in the discussion, and in this respect Shalva Ramishvili is more distinguished. Due to the talk show’s headline, the hosts do not conceal their subjective opinion and openly state them many times during the program. Shalva Ramishvili states his political sympathies more often and more openly, but Diana Trapaidze is relatively moderate. Besides, Shalva Ramishvili names the sources of his information less frequently. However, on the other hand, Diana Trapaidze tries to refer to a certain type of documentation almost in all the cases. It is notable that the guests with various affiliations are presented in unequal situation in the program, and the hosts’ critical attitude is biased in this respect.

Politmeter hosted the guests, such as the representatives of not only the new government and the majority, but also the former authorities and the minority and other opposition parties as well during the monitoring period. The host is mostly distinguished with equal criticism and demanding questions to the ruling and opposition parties, also to the non-political subjects, which she invites in the third part of his exam. However, sometimes more criticism is observed by the host about the representatives of the former government and the people who are loyal to them. In some cases the host tries to act in opposition to the guest who has been invited to the program, and to state a different position. The host states her position almost never. Only in very rare cases, her irony and distrust is revealed towards the respondents’ answers.

Since September, there is also “Arguments of the Week” broadcasted together with “Arguments”. Its format is different and there are more guests invited to that. Besides, the attending audience and the viewers are involved in the program. It is notable that other than the different format, the host’s behavior is different in “Arguments” and “Arguments of the Week”. In “Arguments” Tea Sichinava is acting in opposition to the guests more than in “Arguments of the Week”, where she is playing the role of a moderator. Correspondingly, it happens more often in the “Arguments”, when the host is stating her position directly or indirectly. Those hosts, who have a different position, are confronted with more opposition by the host. Tea Sichinava is actively involved in the program of both formats, asks topical questions to the guests, such questions being sometimes demanding, sometimes – loyal, and also probes in order to verify information.

As for the program “Us”, nobody from the government or any political party visited the program during the monitoring period. The journalist and the guests mostly share one and the same position, which is distinguished with critical attitude towards the former authorities. The journalist is loyal to them, do not interrupt, let them finish their opinions and rarely asks in-depth

questions about a certain issue. The journalist's attitude towards this or that issue is revealed in the way she asks questions or uses a non-verbal language.

Kavkasia

There are three talk shows monitored on Kavkasia. These are: "Studio Spectrum", hosted by Davit Akubardia, "Barrier" hosted by Alexander Elisashvili and Nino Jangirashvili and "Hotline" led by three different hosts in turn: Alexander Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze and Natia Orvelashvili. In addition, Merab Metreveli hosted some of the programs as well during the monitoring period.

In most cases, Davit Akubardia invites those respondents to his programs, who express the opinions that are acceptable to him. The host basically agrees with them and lets them fully express the opinion. The program's format is flexible, the host asks little number of questions and the conversation is conducted in a very informal setting. Akubardia often states his own opinions, which are mostly distinguished with ironic and very negative contents. This happens especially in regards to the president, the former ministers and the National Movement. The host often uses derogatory, insulting and humiliating phrases in reference to the representatives of various structures and organizations. On the other hand, Akubardia is never reluctant to praise and positively evaluate the guests who have visited him and does not conceal his benevolence towards the new government.

Among the guests invited to the programs of Hot Line broadcasted during the monitoring period, there were members of the government and the ruling party, also those of the United National Movement. At first glance, the balance is observed in the program, as far as two different parties are always represented there. However, it is very evident that Elisashvili is biased. He always openly criticizes the National Movement and representatives of so called old authorities, and he does not ask questions with critical contents to the representatives of the Georgian Dream who have been invited to the studio. He explicitly expresses his critical and often politically incorrect evaluations in regards to this or that issue. Programs hosted by Nino Jangirashvili are relatively different. Her program is aired more smoothly and dynamically. In addition, the journalist is actively involved in the program, but she tries to play the role of a mediator.

It is notable that those programs of the "Hot Line", which were hosted by Aleko Elisashvili, contain some trends similar to the program "Barrier". As for other three hosts of the "Hot Line"; Natia Orvelashvili, Zviad Koridze and Merab Metreveli, they mostly act as moderators and they do not openly state their own opinions.

The Ninth Channel

Three programs were monitored on the Ninth Channel. These are: “Akhalkatsi’s Matrix”, “Counseling with Vasil Maglapheridze” and “Eka Beridze’s Main Question”. All the three talk shows are broadcasted every business day during the week. It is notable that nobody from the United National Movement or the former government participated in any of the monitored talk shows on the Ninth Channel. In all the three cases the guests were mostly those people who were loyal to the authorities. Correspondingly, during this monitoring period, the political balance is not observed and the program does not host the people/politicians of fundamentally different position and opinions. Besides, it is noteworthy that the hosts do not make it clear what the reason is behind that: whether the respondents do not agree to visit their programs or there is another cause.

Gogi Akhalkatsi’s program is not distinguished with the critical attitude towards the guests. He does not actually ever act in opposition to them and often it is possible to see his solidarity and positive attitude towards the guests and their opinions, both verbally and non-verbally. This is why the programs are mostly dynamic and goes on without heated discussions and arguments. It is especially easy to see his negative attitude towards the so-called “previous authorities” and the National Movement, and positive attitude towards the members of the Georgian Dream.

It is noteworthy that during the monitoring period none of the programs of “Counseling” was dedicated to the topics, such as the arrest of Bacho Akhalaia and the appointment of the Public Defender. Vasil Maglaperidze tries not to make a political talk show out of his program, but the topics and guests selected by him directly or sometimes indirectly are related to the politics. Maglaperidze is actively involved in the program; he often gets involved in the conversation with the guests, interrupts them and states his opinions. Such involvement of the journalist is sometimes even disturbing for the guests.

Eka Beridze is active in various programs at times and asks quite hard questions and probes deeper, but sometimes she is passive – does not ask many questions and mostly dedicates her air time to the guests and lets them state their position. She mostly is just a moderator in the program. She does not openly state her position. However, sometimes she expresses her evaluations while formulating a question.

