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AN EVALUATIVE APPROACH REGARDING THE POLITICAL BROADCASTS IN THE MEDIA SPACE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Political analysis shows maintain a high rating and undoubtedly participate in the process of authorizing the electorate, the actual increase of the electoral mass and the formation of political culture among citizens. However, the aspect concerning the journalist's political culture has been investigated fragmentarily. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that television is not (never has been) only a simple tool for information and education, but also a tool for the formation of ideologies. An important component of television content on political topics complements the injection of the political sphere, transgressive and rigid, at first glance, with show elements, which gives it a new status - that of a political show, which serves as the basis for the television political show.

Keywords: *television content, talk-show, policy, political analyst, moderator, political actor.*

O ABORDARE EVALUATIVĂ PRIVIND EMISIUNILE POLITICE DIN SPAȚIUL MEDIA AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA

Evaluarea domeniului politic de către cel mediatic conduce la menținerea unei cote înalte de cultură politică în rândul cetățenilor, la participarea incontestabilă a acestora la procesul de autorizare, la creșterea efectivă a masei electorale și la formarea culturii politice în rândul cetățenilor. Cu toate acestea, aspectul referitor la cultura politică a jurnalistului a fost investigat fragmentar. De asemenea, este necesar să se țină cont de faptul că televiziunea nu este (și nu a fost niciodată) doar un simplu instrument de informare și educație, ci și un instrument de formare a ideologiilor politice. O componentă importantă a conținutului televizat pe teme politice vizează injectarea sferei politice, transgresive și rigide, la prima vedere, cu elemente de spectacol, ceea ce îi conferă un nou statut - acela de spectacol politic, care servește drept bază pentru spectacolul politic televizat.

Cuvinte-cheie: *conținut televizual, talk-show, politică, analist politic, moderator, actor politic.*

Introduction

The relevance and importance of this research are argued by the expansion of political talk shows and political analysis programs in the broadcasting schedule of domestic television stations. This situation can be explained by the socio-political context in the Republic of Moldova in recent years, related to a rather unstable and ambiguous political system, the EU accession process, the cooling of relations with the Russian Federation, the need to improve the political culture of voters, the latent tendency of the power to manage public opinion, the crisis in Ukraine and political decisions at the highest level, in the context of the war in Ukraine. Given that the electorate in the Republic of Moldova is divided into two camps: pro-European and pro-Russian, the domestic media space also includes private television stations that promote Kremlin policies and broadcast numerous political analysis programs, spreading propaganda ideas in an attempt to manipulate public opinion.

Context

Television is not just a simple tool for information and education, but also a tool for shaping ideologies, considered, moreover, "a means of governance in the contemporary world" [1, p. 71]. We can no longer perceive mass media and the political sphere separately, since, as researcher Remy Rieffel opines, "power not only deliberates, analyzes and makes decisions, but also knows how to make acts of governance visible" [2, p. 199]. Another important component of the pop politics phenomenon involves

injecting the political sphere, seemingly flexible and rigid, with elements of spectacle, which gives it a new status – that of a political show. Respecting the requirements of show business in the process of developing and emancipating the political sphere is positioned as an argument for the consideration that the political aims for popularity and applies the laws of the show to obtain and maintain it. At the same time, it is the mass media that represents the political, both when it interprets facts and when it injects critical messages into the public space towards political actors. In the view of researcher Aurelia Peru-Balan, "political actors are cautious about the reaction that the press will produce towards certain decisions and statements" [3, p. 86]. Given that the press has always held an overwhelming power of persuasion, especially in a democratic regime, it must assume, on the one hand, the objective and equitable information of the electorate, and, on the other hand, just as assumed, "the press selects and prioritizes political messages, includes them in prioritized agendas and builds scenarios for the appearances of political people" [4, p. 81]. We subscribe to the opinion of researcher Luminița Roșca, developing the idea that the mass media builds and promotes the public image of politicians, it actually creates politicians.

For a political journalist, the television studio is perceived as an arena where real scripted political shows take place, a laboratory for creating theses, concepts of thought and political myths, thus creating the context for a massive pseudo-involvement of citizens in a political pseudo-reality. However, political analysis programs maintain a high rating and, undoubtedly, participate in the process of authorizing the electorate, the actual increase of the electoral mass and the formation of political culture among citizens. For these reasons, the political culture of the journalist is the decisive factor that directs citizens "what to know, what to think about, who to sympathize with" [5, p. 119]. When we refer to the concept of political culture, we consider the journalist's level of competence in the socio-political sphere, the level of knowledge about their conduct in relation to the political field, and the role of journalism in the development of the socio-political domain. The main requirements for a journalist's political culture relate to the knowledge of the societal structure, the particularities of the socio-philosophical system adopted by the journalist, the ability to perceive how the value system is shaped in a society, which serves as a basis for political decisions, and the development of ideas about the economic interests and needs of the groups that make up society. A professional journalist must be a good connoisseur of the process of hierarchizing political values, understanding the nature and arrangement of the main forces operating in the political arena. For the journalist's "score" in political relations not to be the result of superficial impressions and hasty conclusions, to avoid improvisation and the research of phenomena by the "trial and error" method, the journalist, like any political personality, should understand the properties of political relations and the factors that condition them.

Another equally important aspect targets the moderator's insufficient documentation regarding the topics addressed during the show, which allows guests to sometimes lie and easily handle uncomfortable questions. If they do not master the topic well enough, they cannot make a pertinent comparative analysis of the statements and facts of the subjects present in the studio. This denotes that the journalist does not have the ability to direct the discussion in the right direction, turning into a comfortable interviewer. At the same time, those in front of the televisions perceive such situations as attempts to distract attention and minimize the importance of other topics of public interest. We insist that a political talk-show should not be structured from a few monologues, sometimes independent of each other, but should insist on the exchange of ideas, the confrontation of ideas, the display of arguments, and in all of these, the spirit of analysis and expertise should be present.

Conclusions

Within the limits of this scientific study, we propose to analyze the particularities of the political culture of talk-show and political analysis program presenters, the journalist's behavior, tolerance, and professionalism in interaction with guests, and the functions performed by this type of television format. For analysis, political-themed television products from the broadcasting schedule of 2 private television stations were selected: Jurnal TV and TV 8. The choice was determined by the results of a survey conducted by the intelligent data company iData, namely a socio-political study conducted at the end of 2023, on a sample of 1007 people, which shows that these television channels are among the top preferences: Moldova 1 -13.4%, Jur-

nal TV -12.2%, TV 8 -11.4%, and the most watched political analysis programs by domestic viewers were: ”Cutia neagră”- 9.9% - TV 8, ”Secretele puterii”- 4.7%- Jurnal TV, ”Ora expertizei”- 2.4% - Jurnal TV, ”Cabinetul din umbră”- 0.9% - Jurnal TV [7]. To attract viewers' attention, these programs are broadcast in the evening, between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM, and the guests are experts, politicians, political commentators, political scientists, and journalists. Thus, the object of this research consisted of 4 political analysis programs: “Ora expertizei” (Jurnal TV), presenter Dumitru Mișin; “Secretele puterii” (Jurnal TV), presenter Alex Cozer; “Novaya nedelea” (TV8), presenter Anatol Golea; “Freedom” (TV8), presenter Dorin Galben.

The “Ora expertizei” program lasts 70-75 minutes and is broadcast weekly on Mondays at 8:00 PM. The “Secretele puterii” program is also broadcast on Mondays at 8:00 PM in the evening. “Secretele puterii” has journalist Alex Cozer as its presenter, the program lasts 75 minutes, and is broadcast every Wednesday at 8:00 PM. From the TV8 television station, the “Novaea nedelea” (“New Week”) programs were subjected to content analysis, broadcast on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, with Anatolie Golea as the presenter, and the political talk-show “Freedom” with Dorin Galben, broadcast every Tuesday at 8:00 PM. In total, 16 editions were analyzed, 4 editions of each media product, and the analysis period is 02/01/2024-02/28/2024. We mention that within the study, we also conducted a survey to record the opinion of viewers from the domestic media space regarding the presenters' attire, charisma, level of political culture, and the topics discussed during the editions.

The recorded results configure the following picture. The topics addressed in the “Ora expertizei” and “Secretele puterii” programs on Jurnal TV were as follows: The fugitive Șor and the new blow; Russia stirs up separatist sentiments; The echoes of Alexei Navalny's death; The mills of Russian propaganda in Moldova; The toxic legacy of the 5 plus 2 format; The scarecrows from Tiraspol; Marina Tauber sanctioned by the USA; The socialists do not forget Mosova; Investments in the defense sector; The situation at Chișinău Airport; Protests in the Transnistrian region; Leușeni Customs closed again; Farmers' protests; Scandal at the General Prosecutor's Office and rigged results of the competition for the election of the General Prosecutor.

We mention that each edition of the programs addressed between 2-4 topics. In each edition, there were between 2-4 guests in the studio, including a political analyst as a mandatory presence. We counted 88% attendance of PAS deputies in the program editions and no deputies from other political formations, but former deputies were invited.

In the “O nouă săptămână” programs with Anatolie Golea and the “Freedom” talk-show with Dorin Galben during the analyzed period, the following topics were addressed: 2024 – a year of elections in Russia, the USA, the European Parliament, Romania, the effects; The municipal budget was not approved, the councilors are arguing; The situation in the health sector, reforms; Farmers' protests; The initiative to organize the referendum; The increase in the gas tariff; Justice reform; How pensions are calculated and recalculated, how social aid is offered; The coalition between PAS and PSRM; The situation in the Chișinău Municipal Council; PPDA President Dinu Plingău and the Director of the Women's Political Club answer viewers' questions; Raisa Dogaru, the director of the National Employment Agency, answers viewers' questions.

The editions of the “O nouă săptămână” program address 2 topics, with 2-3 guests present in the studio, while each edition of the “Freedom” talk show developed a single topic, and in 3 of the 8 analyzed editions, only one guest was present in the studio. Moreover, during the analyzed period, no political analyst and only one deputy participated in the “Freedom” program, with the rest of the guests being directors of various state agencies. Unlike the “Freedom” talk show, the “O nouă săptămână” program featured deputies and representatives of several political formations, including opposition parties, as guests. The moderator ensured the presence of 2-3 guests in the studio in each edition, and a civic activist was invited once. However, during the analyzed period, no edition of the program had a political analyst as a guest.

Within the limits of the investigation carried out by the author, we also conducted a survey, in which 142 respondents aged between 35-65 years, residents of the municipality of Chișinău, participated, based on the broadcasting area of the analyzed private television channels. According to the survey results, Dumitru Mișin (“Ora expertizei”) is considered the most charismatic presenter, followed by Anatolie Golea (“O săptămână nouă”), Dorin Galben (“Freedom”), and Alex Cozer (“Secretele puterii”). Dumitru Mișin (32%) is perceived as the best-documented presenter, followed by Alex Cozer (28%), Anatolie Golea

(26%), and Dorin Galben (14%). According to the respondents' answers, Dumitru Misin (31%) asks the best questions, followed by Alex Cozer (29%), Anatolie Golea (24%), and Dorin Galben (16%).

The last question in the survey concerned the current and pressing nature of the topics addressed in the political analysis programs. According to the recorded results, "Secretele puterii" with Alex Cozer is at the top of the ranking, with viewers considering that the editions of this television program address current topics in the political and social field. The "Ora expertizei" program, moderated by journalist Dumitru Mișin, is in second place, based on the reaction speed and the concordance of the program organizers with the latest facts, processes, and events that occur in the political environment. At the same time, it is necessary to specify that the "Freedom" talk show, which ranked last, is no longer in the television station's broadcasting schedule, but was still broadcast during the analysis period.

In conclusion, talk shows and political analysis programs in the media space of the Republic of Moldova contribute to some extent to the process of forming the political culture of voters. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen several aspects, namely:

1. These media products pursue a well-defined goal – to discover the truth not only through comparative and/or evolutionary analysis and expertise, but also by creating conditions to place guests in confrontation situations, in which they refer to concrete facts and examples, come up with arguments and counterarguments, and motivate their behavior and decisions adopted in a particular political conjuncture.

2. On the expertise side, a very rigorous selection of guests in the studio is required, they must have a good command of the field and are obliged to come prepared to the program. In this context, we also target political analysts, who have multiplied extremely in the last decade and many of them are no longer seen deliberating in the studios of uncomfortable television stations. We must admit, a large majority of political analysts also have preferences for certain political formations and, in this sense, the ability to expertise cannot prevail over the simple exercise of expressing an opinion, a point of view.

3. It is necessary to strengthen the aspect of the presence in the studio of political actors specifically, because a picture is emerging in which those who act are less there to talk about their decisions, but their decisions are discussed by political analysts who have a very similar vision. I believe we should gradually abandon the „tactic of gentle moderators" who invite only comfortable politicians and political analysts to the studio, because, yes, television stations also have preferences.

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