

Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections

TV News Monitoring Report

11 July – 30 August, 2016

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics is implementing the monitoring of TV news broadcasts within the framework of the project entitled “Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring is carried out from 20 May to 19 December, 2016 and covers main news programs on the following 11 TV channels: “1st Channel” of the public broadcaster, “Rustavi 2”, “Maestro”, “GDS”, “Tabula”, “Kavkasia”, “TV Pirveli”, “Obieqtivi”, “Ajara TV”, and “TV 25”.

The report covers the period from 11 July through 30 August 2016.

The quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the monitoring data has revealed the following **key findings**:

- As during the previous round of monitoring, majority of TV channels most actively covered the activities of the government of Georgia (GoG).
- “Kavkasia” leads the list of the channels with favorable treatment of the Government’s activities with 18% of positive coverage. “Rustavi 2” is the most critical to the GoG with 72% of negative coverage and “GDS” – the most neutral, with 83% of neutral tone.
- “Kavkasia” revealed highest indicators (14%) of positive tone in connection with the President of Georgia. “Obieqtivi” was the most critical with 14% of negative tone and “Tabula” - the most neutral with 95% of neutral tone indicators.
- Activities of the “Georgian Dream” party were covered most favorably on “Imedi” (54% of positive tone indicators), and most negatively on “Rustavi 2” (52% of negative tone indicators). “Maestro” was the most neutral with 86% of neutral tone indicators.

- The “United National Movement” had most positive coverage on “Kavkasia” with 11% of positive tone indicators. “GDS” was the most critical with 51% of negative tone indicators, and “GDS” revealed high indicators (75%) of neutral tone.
- Bidzina Ivanishvili was covered most favorably on “Maestro” (42% of positive tone indicators), and most negatively on “Obieqtivi” and “Tabula” (100% of negative tone indicators each). “TV 25” was the most neutral to Mr Ivanishvili with 53% of neutral tone.
- The analysis of time allocation and qualitative observation reveals that specific TV channels may be sympathizing particular election subjects. Thus “Obieqtivi” openly supports the election bloc “Patriotic Alliance, United Opposition”. “Rustavi 2” shows that it sympathizes the “United National Movement”, and “Imedi” treats the “Georgian Dream” party favorably.
- The content analysis of the TV broadcasts indicates that the channels cover election subjects more or less according to ethical standards. However, their coverage was unbalanced on all TV channels. TV media imbalance was identified as one of the main problems during the previous round of monitoring as well.
- In majority of cases TV channels use short footages with soundbites. In many cases news stories are based on only one source of information. The problem was already mentioned in the previous report. It seems that TV media outlets do not consider soundbites as complete media product, nether do they prepare them on par with TV stories or reportages, and thus constantly violate the balance. However, being the ordinary media product, soundbits should also be prepared according to the coverage standards. For TV audiences it does not matter whether they get biased information as a TV story or a soundbit.
- A few TV channels prepared lengthy TV stories to cover activities of election subjects. They all displayed the following problems: 1. According to the modern standards the TV stories were very lengthy (5-9 mins) and, therefore, rather tedious. 2. Activities of the election subjects were aggregated mechanically, without a clear storyline behind, and, they were rather monotonous to watch. 3. Some of the TV stories featured briefings of election subjects with the indictment of their competitors. No responses to the accusations were provided. 4. Meticulously equal amount of time allocated to each subject makes the impression that the balance was maintained formally. It should be noted that this type of news stories frequently appear during the election cycles as though they are prepared with the aim to show the formal balance among electoral subjects to external observers. The goal of this monitoring, however, is not to encourage the creation of such mechanically balanced media products.

- Unlike the previous round of monitoring, no cases of usage of hate speech or improper terminology was observed on TV news.

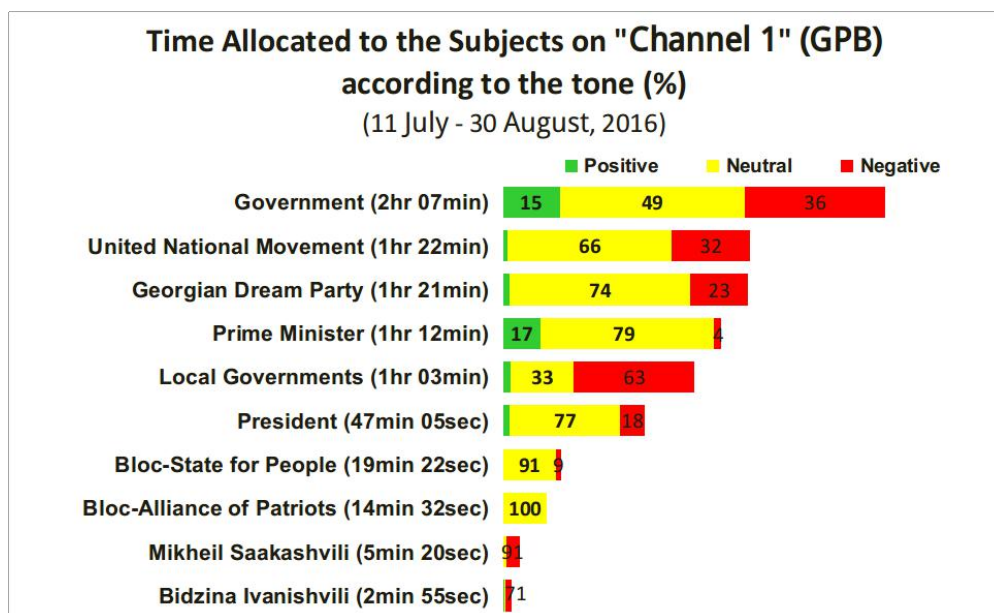
Results by TV channels

Charts provided below show the data of qualitative analysis by the time allocated to and the tone of coverage of 11 subjects on 11 TV channels. The eleven subjects were selected according to two criteria: the frequency of coverage and the popularity of subjects. For the sake of clarity, these 11 subjects are the same for all monitored channels; the exceptions are Ajara TV and TV 25 which include the data on the government of Ajara as these two broadcasters mainly focus on the developments in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara and their audiences are mainly local residents.

1st Channel

In the reporting period, monitors studied a daily primetime news program “Moambe at 20:00” and “Kviris Moambe” (Moambe on every Sunday).

Quantitative analysis



The news program Moambe on the 1st Channel of Public Broadcaster allocated the largest amount of time to the coverage of the government; most favorable was the reporting about the Prime Minister, with the indicator of positive tone comprising 17%. The most unfavorable coverage was received by the former President Mikheil Saakashvili as 91% of total reporting on

this subject was negative in tone. The neutral tone was the highest in relation to the election bloc Alliance of Patriots, with its total coverage (100%) being neutral in tone.

In its 15 August news program, 1st Channel allocated 24 minutes of live airtime to the nomination of Tbilisi single-seat candidates from the Georgian Dream. Such a large amount of live airtime was not allocated to any other subject, in the reporting period. On 13 August, election activities of seven subjects were combined in one report whereas the nomination of candidates from the Georgian Dream in Ajara was provided as a separate footage with soundbites.

It has become a tradition on the 1st Channel to cover activities of various electoral subjects in one report which is a mixture of activities of the day in a longer-than-five-minute material. In such reports one can sometimes hear a political subject criticizing another political subject; however, the response of the latter is missing and the report turns into a mere collection of activities of various subjects. Such reports lack content and a general line; they are unbalanced and uninteresting to watch. They create impression of serving the aim to achieve mechanical balance time-wise. In the reporting period the news broadcasts aired materials on electoral topics, which provided comments of only one subject.

For example, on 15 August, a report concerning the incitement to suicide of a young resident of Samtredia contained a comment of only one member of the Georgian Dream. A report about the National Examination Center, aired on 24 August, contained the comment of a UNM member alone. It is important for the channel to treat key electoral subjects in a maximally equal way and enable them, as much as possible, to express their views on non-electoral topics of public interest.

One of the problems observed in the reporting period was the violation of balance in some cases. The examples of this are provided below.

On 11 July, in a report on election activities of political parties a member of Alliance of Patriots accused the State Security Service of exerting pressure on activists of the political party. The report did not contain any evidence or a response to accusations. Moreover, the report contained accusations against the government too, which was voiced by members of Giorgi Vashadze's political party, New Georgia, and the Labor Party. Giorgi Vashadze cited a concrete case of pressure whilst the representative of the Labor Party accused the government of entering into a corrupt deal with a concrete company. However, the report did not provide a response of government representative to accusations; nor did it show any signs of seeking such comment.

On 20 July, a report in Moambe, covering the claims of interparty group regarding the distribution of free advertising airtime was unbalanced. The authorities, namely, the parliament was blamed for committing unlawfulness and worsening the election environment, though a response to the accusations were missing and thus, the reporting was unbalanced.

In a report on **9 August**, two nongovernmental organizations accused the UNM and Mikheil Saakashvili of violating the electoral law and pre-election agitation involving the screening of video address of Mikheil Saakashvili during the nomination of candidates from the political party. The report did not provide views or counter arguments of the UNM. Nor did it show any attempt to seek comments. The reporting was not balanced.

It is worth noting that on **23 August**, Moambe had the leader of Democratic Movement Nino Burjanadze as a guest of the program. Her constitutional initiative about a bloc-free status of the country was not registered due to failure of a parliamentary committee to hold a sitting. The presenter started the interview with Nino Burjanadze with this very topic.

During the 20-minute-long interview when Nino Burjanadze spoke extensively about the country's "bloc-free status," the presenter did not ask her why this status was "the only way for the country to survive," what in general that status meant, whether there was an analogous example in the world. The presenter was unprepared and allowed the guest to spread incorrect information constituting part of Russian propaganda. For example, Burjanadze said:

"No one will accept you into NATO together with Abkhazia and South Ossetia where the Russian military forces are stationed; this means that you must say no to these territories."

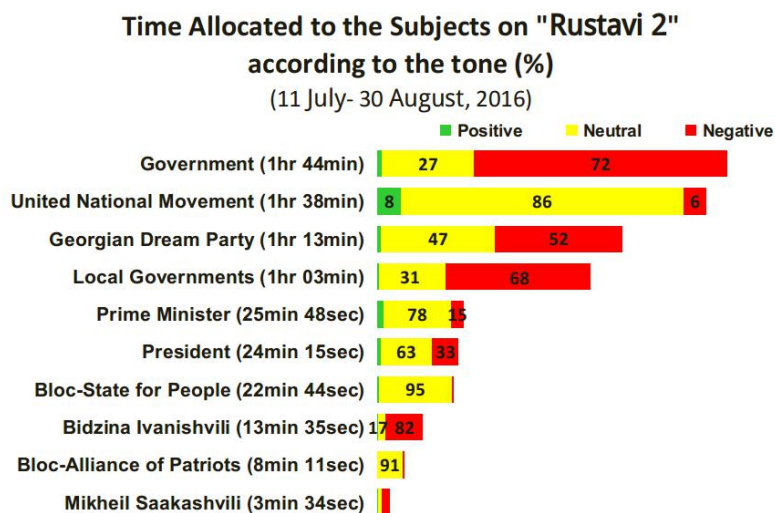
"The European Union faces serious threats in terms of its unity."

The presenter did not bring counter arguments, did not put follow-up questions and did not ask her to corroborate her statements even when Burjanadze talked about public opinion polls which she branded as written "under the dictate of US special services," and "ordered and bought" and repeatedly referred to the United States in the negative context.

The presenter did not challenge Burjanadze with regard to the 2008 war either, when she said that "their president [meaning Saakashvili] brought in the Russian army into Georgia."

Rustavi 2

In the reporting period, monitors studied a daily primetime news program “Kurier” (aired every weekday at 21:00), “Shabatis Kurieri” (at 21:00 every Saturday) and “P.S” (at 21:00 every Sunday).



Quantitative analysis

In its news broadcasts, Rustavi 2 also allocated the largest amount of time to the coverage of government. Most favorable coverage was received by the UNM, with 8% of positive tone in the total amount of time allocated to this political party. Most unfavorable coverage was received by Bidzina Ivanishvili (82%) whilst the highest indicator of neutral tone was observed in the reporting about the election bloc Burchuladze - State for People. Among political parties, the UNM was in the lead by the allocated time and the positive tone of coverage.

The above trend was observed in terms of content too. For example, there were frequent instances of reporting on various pressing issues with comments only from representatives of the UNM, thus covering the issues from their perspective. For example, a report on 29 July, which concerned statements of the former minister of refugees, contained assessments of UNM members alone. The UNM is one of key sources of the news broadcasts of Rustavi 2, which puts other political parties in unequal conditions in the run up to elections. The time should be fairly distributed among, at least, key political subjects.

There were violations of balance in reporting on Rustavi 2. Balance was mainly violated in detriment to the government with the addressees being unable to respond:

On **14 July**, Nino Burjanadze criticized Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli, calling her activity harmful. The report did not provide the response of another party or the overview of the facts which triggered the criticism by the politician of the minister; the information was provided

from the perspective of only one party. Nor was the attempt to seek comments of another party apparent in the report.

In a report aired on **19 July**, members of the interparty group criticized the government and the Georgian Dream for legislative amendments concerning the distribution of free advertising airtime. The report featured the total of four respondents with all of them criticizing the decision and accusing the Georgian Dream of taking measures in advance to falsify the parliamentary election results. The report did not contain a response from a government representative or the Georgian Dream. The story was told in a one-sided and unbalanced way.

On **28 July**, the Labor Party leader accused the State Security Service of exerting pressure and carrying out repressions. The report contained the accusation by Shalva Natelashvili alone; no concrete facts were cited or position of the security service provided; nor was the attempt of seeking comments seen. The report was one-sided and unbalanced.

Imedi

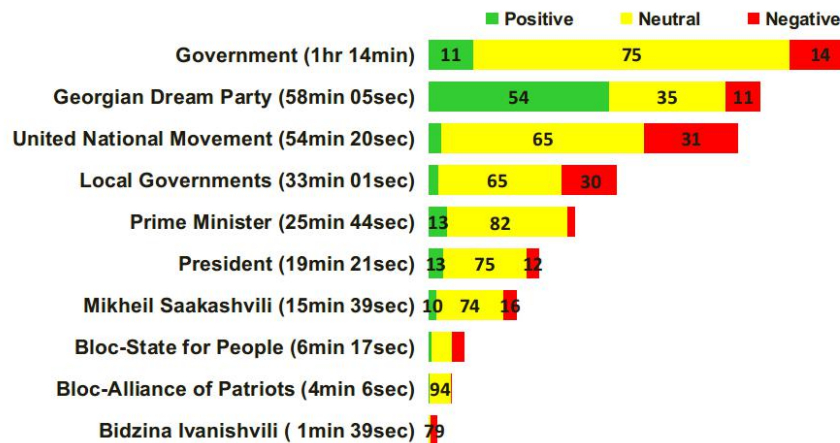
In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Qronika” (aired every weekday at 20:00), “Qronikis Studia” (at 20:00 every Saturday) and “Imedis Dro” (at 20:00 every Sunday).

Quantitative analysis

Imedi TV also allocated most of its time to the coverage of government activities. The most positive coverage was received by the Georgian Dream (54%) whereas, among electoral subjects, the most negative coverage was received by the election bloc Burchuladze - State for People (35%). The highest indicator of neutral coverage was seen in the reporting about the Alliance of Patriots (94%).

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Imedi" according to the tone (%)

11 July- 30 August, 2016)



Quantitatively most positive coverage of Georgian Dream was also observed content-wise. Imedi provided extensive and even more so, live coverage of nomination by Prime Minister of candidates from the Georgian Dream; for example, on 13, 15 and 21 August, Imedi allocated the total of 40 minutes of live coverage to the nomination of Georgian Dream candidates. None of other electoral subjects had been provided with such opportunity by Imedi TV channel. In terms of journalistic standards, the main problem observed on Imedi was the violation of balance. On several occasions, the information provided to audience was one-sided. For example:

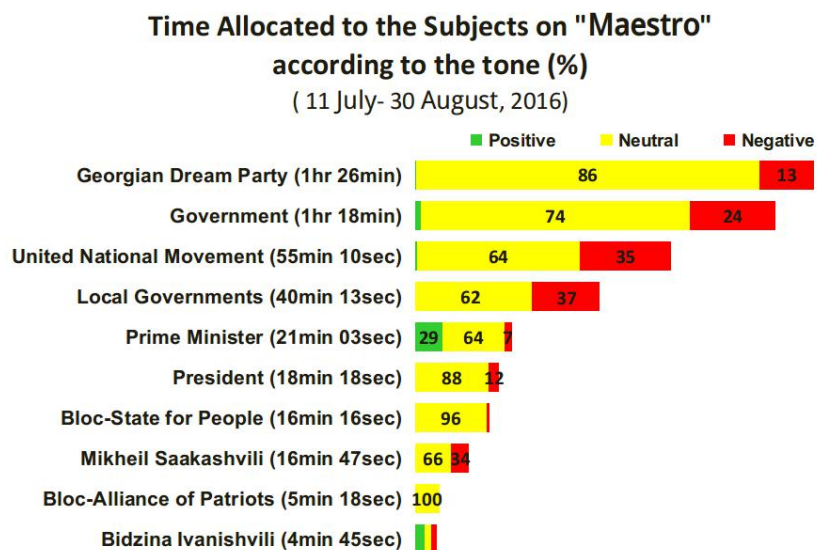
On **11 July**, a report was aired regarding an ongoing court hearing concerning the Imedi TV company. The report covered the testimony of the former director of the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Levan Kubaneishvili, who said that upon the instruction of former Defense Minister Davit Kezerashvili, he persuaded a segment of journalists to leave Imedi and move to the public broadcaster. According to the report, charges were brought against Davit Kezerashvili and former Tbilisi Mayor, Gigi Uguava, in the Imedi case, while the person involved in persuading Imedi journalists was the UNM member Givi Targamadze; however, the report did not provide the comments of any of the abovementioned persons or their defense lawyers. The report was unbalanced while the key source of information was materials provided by the prosecutor's office to the TV channel.

On **21 August**, a rally was staged outside the Tbilisi Mayor's Office to protest not only the felling of trees on Kazbegi Avenue but also the activities of the mayor's office. There were live link ups of journalists from the scene and interviews with participants in the rally, including representatives of opposition political parties. Respondents accused employees of Tbilisi municipality of crime and corruption. The report did not provide responses from municipality employees. The information lacked balance.

On **12 August**, Qronika covered a statement released by the nongovernmental organization Fair Elections. The NGO demanded that the registration of political party Centrists in the Central Electoral Commission be annulled. In the statement, the Centrists were accused of bribing voters and breaching the law. The report lacked a comment from Centrists; the effort to seek such comment was not apparent; the balance was violated.

Maestro

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Kontakti at 8 o’clock” (aired every weekday at 20:00).



Quantitative analysis

Maestro also allocated most of its time to the coverage of government activities. The most favorable coverage was received by Bidzina Ivanishvili with the positive tone indicator standing at 42% of the total time allocated to this subject. The most unfavorable coverage was received by the local government – at 37%. The highest indicator of neutral tone – 100% of the allocated time, was observed in the reporting about the election bloc Alliance of Patriots. Much like 1st Channel and Imedi, Maestro also distinguished for its special attention to nomination of Georgian Dream candidates. For example, on 13 and 15 August, news broadcasts on Maestro spent the total of 47 minutes on the candidates from the Georgian Dream while on 16 August, it spent more than 10 minutes on the same topic whereas it often allocated less than one minute to nominations of other candidates. The monitoring period saw the instances of violation of balance as well. For example:

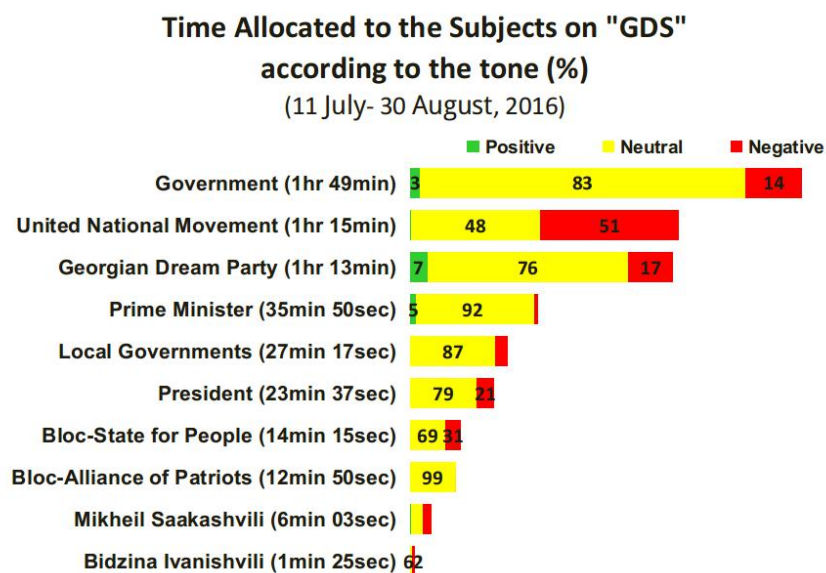
On **13 July**, a report was aired about the court hearing of the Imedi case. In the report, Vano Merabishvili and Zurab Adeishvili were accused of issuing an order to raid Imedi in 2007. The report noted that charges were also brought against Mikheil Saakashvili and Gigi Ugulava on the same case. The report was one-sided, mainly rested on materials of the prosecution, did not contain even a single position of defense lawyer of any accused person though the report was about the ongoing court proceeding which was also attended by the defense lawyers of accused persons and it would not be difficult to obtain their comments. The balance in the report was breached.

On **24 July**, Merab Metreveli, a member of the State for People political party, criticized the government for the failure to carry out traffic safety reforms. He said that the Georgian Dream disregarded the reform of this very important sphere because of pre-election populism. Despite the scathing criticism, the government was not given an opportunity to respond to it; hence, the balance was violated and the provided audience with the information which was based only on one source.

On **25 July**, one of the leaders of the National Forum accused the Georgian Dream of moral pressure on their supporters in the regions. No response to the accusation was provided; nor was the attempt to obtain it seen.

GDS

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “2030” (aired every weekday at 20:30).



Quantitative analysis

GDS also spent the largest amount of time on the government and most favorably covered the Georgian Dream, with the indicator of positive tone comprising 7%. The most unfavorable coverage among political parties was received by the UNM, with the negative tone indicator reaching 51% of total reporting on this subject. As regards the neutral tone, it was the highest in the coverage of the Alliance of Patriots – at 99%. The high negative tone towards the UNM was observed not only in quantitative terms but also in terms of content. The balance in reporting was often violated when it came to the coverage of this political party. There were instances of accusations voiced against the UNM in the news broadcasts of GDS, but the political party was not given an opportunity to respond to them.

For example, on **11 August**, a report was aired in which the leader of the majority alleged that the UNM took attempts to stage a so-called constitutional coup. The report, however, lacked a response of the UNM to this allegation; nor did it show an attempt to obtain such response. The balance was violated in the report.

On **9 August**, a report was aired covering a news briefing of Mamuka Areshidze. The presenter of the news program cited Mamuka Areshidze as saying that secret recordings of private lives of judges of the Constitutional Court might be released by representatives of the former government. According to the presenter, Mamuka Areshidze viewed this as an attempt to discredit current government. The report was one-sided, based on only one source and did not contain a response of any UNM representative. The report was unbalanced.

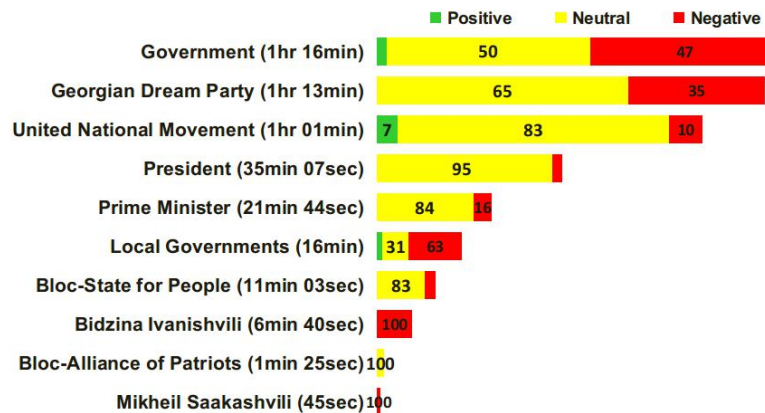
A report aired on **12 July** concerned court hearing on the Imedi case, in which concrete members of the former government were accused of exerting pressure on Imedi TV company whereas the current government was accused of failing to investigate into a concrete fact of pressure. The report did not contain responses to the accusations; the information was not verified with all parties and the balance was violated.

Tabula

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Focus” (aired every weekday at 19:00).

Quantitative analysis

**Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Tabula TV"
according to the tone (%)**
(11 July- 30 August, 2016)



Tabula allocated the largest amount of time to the government and covered most favorably the UNM with the positive tone towards it standing at 7% of the total reporting on the party. In terms of negative tone, Bidzina Ivanishvili was in the lead with 100% of total coverage. The neutral tone was most extensively used towards the President (95%). Tabula's news broadcasts were dominated by comments of UNM members. In the majority of cases UNM criticized the government and sometimes, this criticism was provided in a one-sided and unbalanced manner. For example:

On **20 July**, Tabula covered a news briefing of the UNM criticizing the government for decrease in exports and increase in imports. Representatives of the political party criticized the economic policy of the government. This information was based only on one source - the UNM; the report lacked comments of the government and an attempt to obtain them was not seen. The report lacked any other source of information such as, for example, independent experts.

On **10 August**, one of UNM members accused the government of applying pressure on supporters of the political party. Although a concrete fact of pressure was cited, the report did not provide a comment of an official accused of exerting pressure; nor did it contain a comment of any other government representative.

On **17 August**, a representative of the UNM criticized the economic policy of the government, saying that a four-point economic plan of the government did not exist and the government's economic team was weak and incompetent. According to the journalist, with 51 days left before the parliamentary elections, the ruling team still did not have the election program.

The report was one-sided, missing a response of the government; it relied on the information of the UNM alone and did not show an effort of the journalist to verify the information.

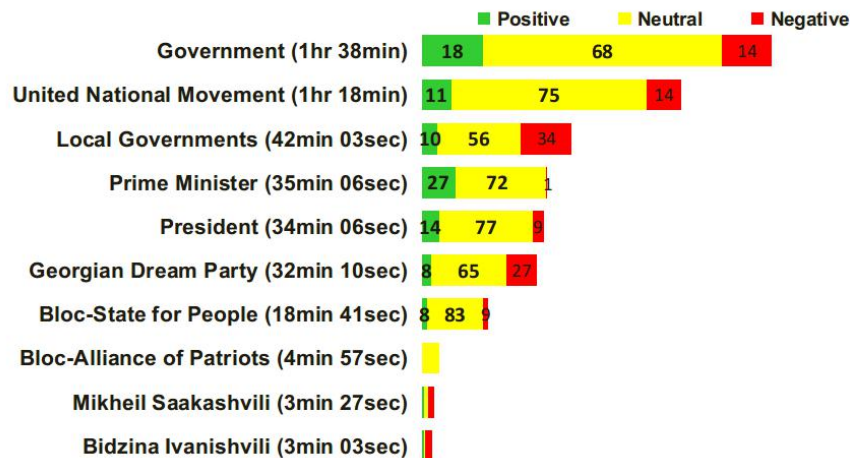
Kavkasia

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Dghe” (aired every weekday at 20:30).

Qualitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Kavkasia" according to the tone (%)

(11 July- 30 August, 2016)



Kavkasia spent the largest amount of time on the government. The most favorable coverage was received by the Prime Minister, with the positive tone at 27% of the total reporting on the subject. The highest negative tone was observed in the reporting about the local government – at 34%. The most neutral coverage in tone was the reporting about the Alliance of Patriots – 100%. News broadcasts on Kavkasia is distinguished for its shortage of reports. News are mainly reported in short footages with soundbites. Lack of captions identifying respondents remain a problem and in some cases it is impossible to identify respondents. The main problem on Kavkasia is a lack of balance; accusations voiced in footage with soundbites are sometimes provided without response. For example:

On **11 July**, during a news briefing, an advisor to the President criticized the parliamentary majority for the failure to adopt a draft law within the justice reform, which had already passed two readings in the parliament. The advisor expressed doubts about artificial procrastination of the reform. This information was one-sided, lacking comments of the parliamentary majority or government and no effort to obtain such comments could be discerned. The balance was violated.

On **14 July**, in a footage with soundbites, the leader of Free Georgia criticized the President for signing amendments to the Election Code into the law. The material lacked response from the President’s administration. No efforts to obtain such comment were apparent.

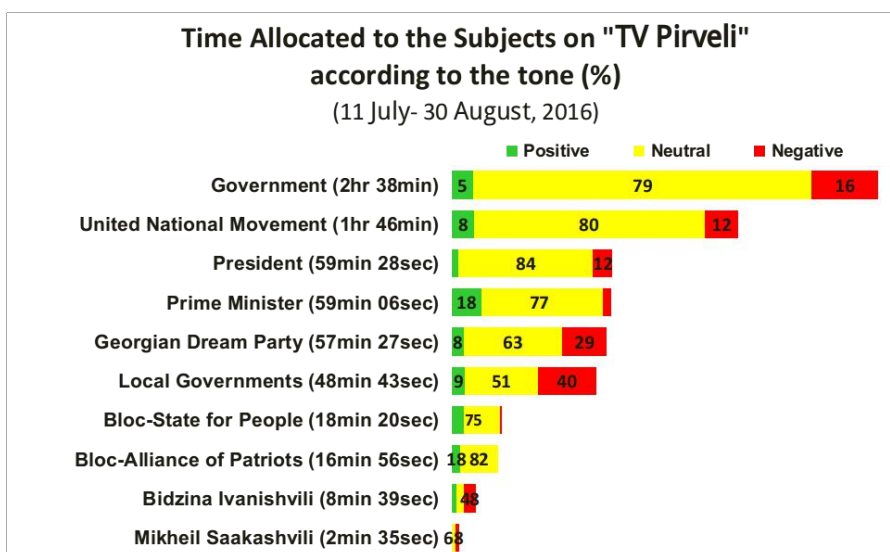
On **15 July**, members of interparty group voiced protest against the amendment to the electoral law, establishing a new rule for the distribution of free advertising time. They criticized the President, the parliamentary majority and the Georgian Dream. The report featured four respondents all representing one side alone; it did not contain a response of any other side. The report was one-sided and unbalanced.

On **5 August**, Kavkasia covered a protest rally of socially vulnerable citizens. Participants in the rally accused a representative of Georgian Dream, Ilo Mirotadze (the caption identifying Mirotadze was missing in the report), of exerting pressure, claiming that Mirotadze threatened them to annul the state assistance unless they vote for the Georgian Dream. Although several respondents accused Mirotadze of pressure, the latter’s comment was not provided in the report and no attempt to obtain one was seen.

TV Pirveli

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (aired at 22:00).

Qualitative analysis



TV Pirveli covered the government most extensively. The highest indicator of positive tone – 23%, was observed in the reporting on the election bloc Burchuladze - State for People. The

most negative tone was observed in the reporting about Bidzina Ivanishvili – 42% of the total coverage of this subject. The most neutral tone was applied towards the President (84%).

In the reporting period, TV Pirveli covered news mainly in the format of short footage with soundbites, with in-depth reports being in shortage. News were mainly reported superficially and the lack of balance in the coverage was the main problem. For example:

On **11 July**, TV Pirveli reported about a protest rally outside the building of Ajara government, staged by citizens who suffered from mortgage loans. Participants in the rally criticized the government, the Georgian Dream and accused them of not delivering on pre-election promises. The report did not provide a response of Ajaran government; it did not show an attempt to obtain one either.

On **10 July**, at a special news briefing, Labor Party members accused the Tbilisi Mayor and his deputies of corruption, deceiving outdoor vendors and oppressing them. A response of Mayor's Office was not provided; an attempt to obtain one was not apparent.

On **26 July**, at a news briefing, UNM representatives presented statistical data in the field of education and criticized the Education Minister. The report did not provide a comment from the Education Ministry and covered the information relying on only one source – the UNM, which made the accuracy of the information questionable.

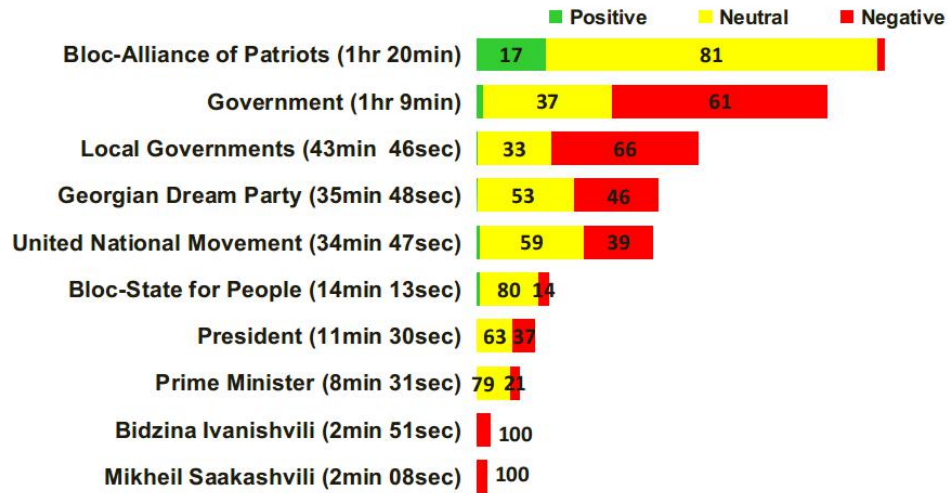
On **18 August**, the UNM member Gia Roinishvili accused the government of political corruption in relation to the felling of trees on Kazbegi Avenue. Roinishvili said: "I am told today that the company Orbi which performed this vandalism and cut down the trees, is the key bankroller of the Georgian Dream; this speaks about the political corruption." No response of Georgian Dream or the government was provided to this accusation. The journalist did not verify this accusation.

Obieqtivi

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (aired every weekday at 19:30).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Obieqtivi"
according to the tone (%)
 (11 July- 30 August, 2016)



Obieqtivi is almost the only TV channel that does not spend most of its time on covering the government. The leader on the channel by allocated time is the Alliance of Patriots (Irma Inashvili is a founder of Media Union Obieqtivi). The highest indicator of positive coverage also belongs to the Alliance of Patriots (17%) The highest negative tone is seen in the coverage of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Mikheil Saakashvili (100% each). The leader by the indicator of neutral tone is the Alliance of Patriots again (81%).

Frequent and loyal coverage of members of the Alliance of Patriots is apparent on the channel. No less obvious is a negative reporting about the Republican Party and the violation of balance.

On **13 July**, a report was dedicated to the resignation of ministers from the Republican Party and the chances of the political party in the parliamentary elections. Respondents in the report said that the Republican Party had no chances to clear the hurdle, let alone to win in the elections. It was also said that the disintegration of the Republican Party had already begun and was continuing. The majority of respondents criticized the political party. Although the entire report was dedicated to the Republican Party, the party was portrayed negatively and even accusations were voiced against it, the report did not provide a response of the Republican Party and no signs of taking efforts to obtain such comment was seen.

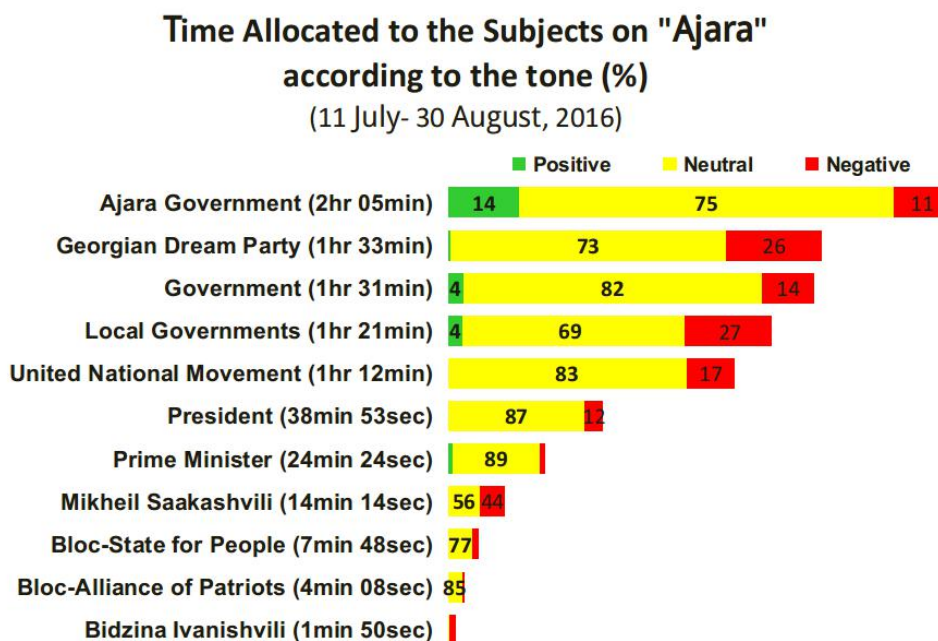
In a report aired on **12 July**, it was said that according to a statement released by the Public Defender's Office, a political advertisement of the political party Girchi was discriminatory and stereotyping and should be taken off the air. The report did not contain comments by Girchi, the Communications Commission, or an expert. The information was provided based on one source alone and balance was violated.

On **3 August**, Obieqtivi aired a report in which Tina Khidasheli was accused of concealing the crime and blackmailing. The information was based on only one source without any additional evidence as well as without a comment of Tina Khidasheli. The report did not show whether Tina Khidasheli was reached for a comment.

Ajara TV of Public Broadcaster

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (“Main News at 21:00”).

Quantitative analysis



Ajara TV covered the government of Ajara most extensively with the highest indicator of positive tone also seen in the reporting about it – 14% of the total coverage time of this subject. The highest negative tone was seen in the reporting about Bidzina Ivanishvili – at 80%. Most neutral in tone was the coverage of the Prime Minister – 89%. News program of Ajara TV experiences shortage of in-depth reports. It is desirable to provide a deeper insight into problems. However, Ajari TV is distinguished for its adherence to ethical standards; only few examples of unbalanced reporting were observed.

On **25 July**, a representative of one nongovernmental organization spoke about the responsibility of the government concerning the increasing number of traffic accidents. At a special briefing, the NGO representative accused government entities of failing to fulfill concrete obligations. The information was one-sided, was not double-checked to verify the

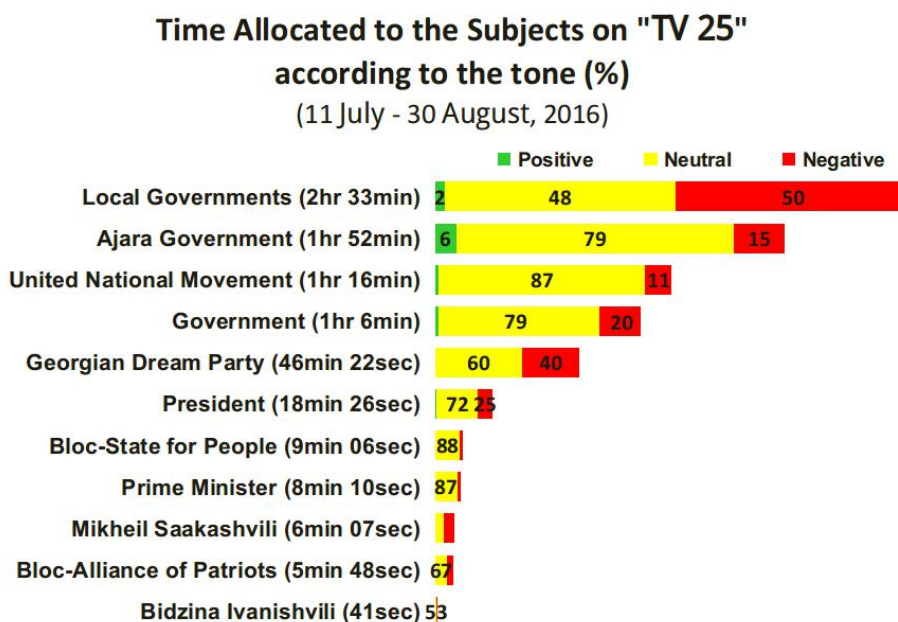
accuracy of accusations voiced by the respondent, the information was unbalanced, it did not contain a comment from any public entity and did not show the attempt to obtain such comments.

On **28 July**, the advisor to the President, Kakha Kozhoridze, accused the Interior Ministry of breaching the law. Leveling a concrete accusation against the Ministry, Kozhoridze cited two facts in which, according to him, various departments of the Interior Ministry breached the law. Koshoridze was the only source of the information; no efforts were undertaken to verify it; no comment from the Ministry was obtained and the balance was violated.

TV25

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Matsne” (at 19:30).

Quantitative analysis



TV 25 allocated most of its time to the coverage of local government, while covered the government of Ajara most favorably (6% of positive tone). The most unfavorable coverage (50%) was received by the local government. The high indicator of neutral tone was observed in the reporting about the election bloc Burchuladze - State for People. TV25 is also distinguished for the adherence to ethical standards though shortage of in-depth reports is observed here as well. Few violations were observed on TV25, manifested in the lack of balance.

On **5 August**, representatives of UNM's youth wing gathered outside the building of Ajara government, criticizing and accusing it of seizing the agrarian university. The report lacked response to accusations; nor was it said that they tried to obtain comment, but got refusal. Balance was violated and the information was one-sided.

On **10 August**, the UNM accused the Ajara government of stopping the construction of skate park in Batumi. Although accusations were voiced against the government for its inactivity, the report did not contain a comment of government representative; nor was an attempt to obtain a comment seen.