



Media monitoring of 2014 local self-governance elections

Print Media Monitoring

May 3 – May 23, 2014

The Civic Development Institute has carried out monitoring of press in regards to the 2014 local self-governance elections within the frameworks of the EU and UNDP funded project “Professional Media for Elections”. The election monitoring will cover the period from April 15 until June 30, 2014 inclusive. The following print media outlets have been monitored within this period: *the Resonance, the Alia, the Kviris Palitra, the Asaval-Dasavali, the Akhali Taoba, the Versia and the Kviris Qronika*.

This report presents results of the media monitoring from May 3 through May 23, 2014. Following **key findings** were identified after performing the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the material:

- Criticism towards the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream has significantly increased upon adoption of antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia.
- This change is especially evident in case of the following media outlets: *the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali, the Akhali Taoba, and the Kviris Qronika*.
- The newspaper *Alia* has openly appealed to readers to refrain from voting for the United National Movement or the coalition Georgian Dream.
- Pre-election activities of the mayoral candidates are covered less intensively; the media outlets have paid more attention to coverage of political parties and government agencies.
- Among the mayoral candidates coverage of the candidate from the United National Movement Nika Melia has appeared to collect highest indicator of negative tone.
- Journalism standards and ethical norms have been violated in *the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali, the Versia, the Kviris Qronika* and the *Akhali Taoba*.
- Particularly rough violation of journalism standards and ethical norms has been registered in *the Alai, the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris Qronika*.

The Resonance

Within the second period of monitoring the Resonance has still been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. Positive or negative attitude towards any political power has

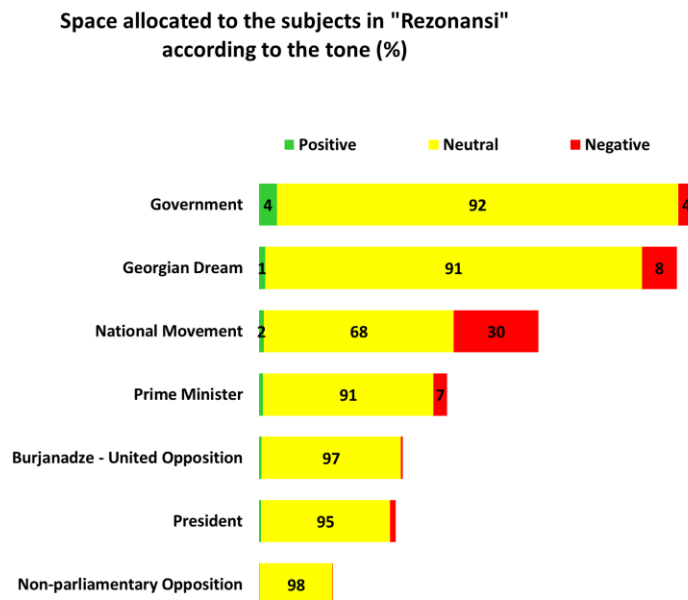
never been observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed. The Resonance has been distinguished by diversity of information sources in certain articles.

Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Government (25%), the coalition Georgian Dream (24%) and the United National Movement (16%) have been covered most intensively. There has been no especially high percentage indicators of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject. Relatively high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the United National Movement (30%) (refer to Diagram 1). It shall however be noted that negative tone has been most often observed in statements made by respondents and not the texts drafted by journalists. The journalists of the Resonance have been refraining from making political evaluations and unjustified judgments within the monitoring period. Neutral tone has been prevailing while covering mayoral candidates (refer to Diagram 2).

Within the given period of monitoring the Resonance has been distinguished by multiplicity and diversity of information sources in certain articles. For instance the article - “Will Bacho Akhalaia be released from prison on July 26?” (22.05.2014, page 2) comprises comments made by the attorney of Bacho Akhalaia, as well as Manana Kobakhidze, Eka Beselia, Irakli Sesiashvili and the wife of the accused; the article – “How are we going to show people one in three or at least three in one?” (12.05.2014, page 3) presents various standpoints.

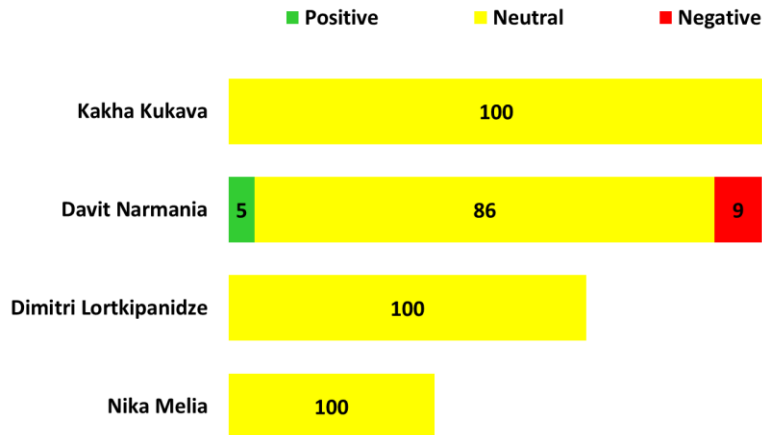
As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that within the second stage of the monitoring the Resonance has been covering ongoing political events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. However, we shall highlight a relatively high indicator of negative tone towards the United National Movement. Within the given period of monitoring journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed in the newspaper.

(Diagram 1, Coverage of subjects, The Resonance)



(Diagram 2, Coverage of mayoral candidates, the Resonance)

**Space allocated to the subjects in "Rezonansi"
according to the tone (%)**



The Alia

Within the second period of monitoring criticism towards the United National Movement, the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream has further increased in the Alia. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been violated on frequent occasions. Unjustified value judgments, unethical statements and cases of publishing unverified facts and information supplied by unreliable source have been observed in the newspaper.

Among the monitoring subjects the activity of the coalition Georgian Dream (31%), the United National Movement (57%) and the Government (21%) have been covered most intensively. The highest percentage rate of negative tone has been applied to the United National Movement (57%) the coalition Georgian Dream (56%) and the Government (38%) (refer to Diagram 3). The lowest percentage indicator of negative tone has been observed in case of Burjanadze – United Opposition (1%). The Alia has not actively covered activities carried out by mayoral candidates within the given period.

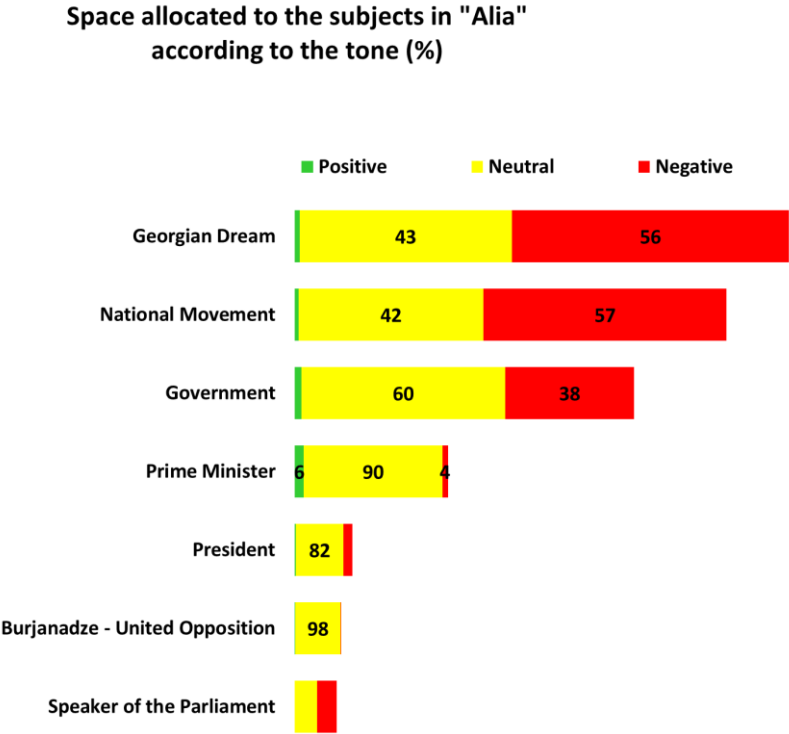
Upon adoption of the antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia the criticism of the coalition Georgian Dream has significantly increased in the Alia. On the first page of the May 6 issue the editorial office published a rather large picture (comprising abusive elements) titled “The Georgian Dream deceived you”. Brief statements with figures 5 and 41 being crossed out have been observed on the pages

of this issue – the newspaper openly appealed to readers not to vote for the United National Movement and the coalition Georgia Dream. Moreover, the newspaper published an obituary on the first page of the same issue, which announced “untimely decease of the Georgian Dream”.

Within the given period Journalists have been using abusive terminology on numerous occasions. For instance: “Mrs. Panjikidze! As I remember you are still the first diplomat of the country, I am sorry but how come you still have not passed by “Shalakho” (Georgian folk dance), black tights, black purse and messed up black and white snacks?!”, “..My Margvel (the President Margvelashvili) does not give a damn about public opinion concerning that issue, which is in fact correct, who cares who my Margvel shares his bed with?” (What does Giorgi Margvelashvili and President of France have in common?”, 16.05.2014, page 7).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Alia has covered ongoing political events of the country in an extremely subjective way. The newspaper has openly appealed to readers not to vote for the United National Movement and the coalition Georgian Dream. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been violated systematically.

(Diagram 3, Coverage of subjects, The Alia)



The Kviris Palitra

Within the second period of monitoring the Kviris Palitra has still been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. There has been no particularly positive or negative attitude towards any political power observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

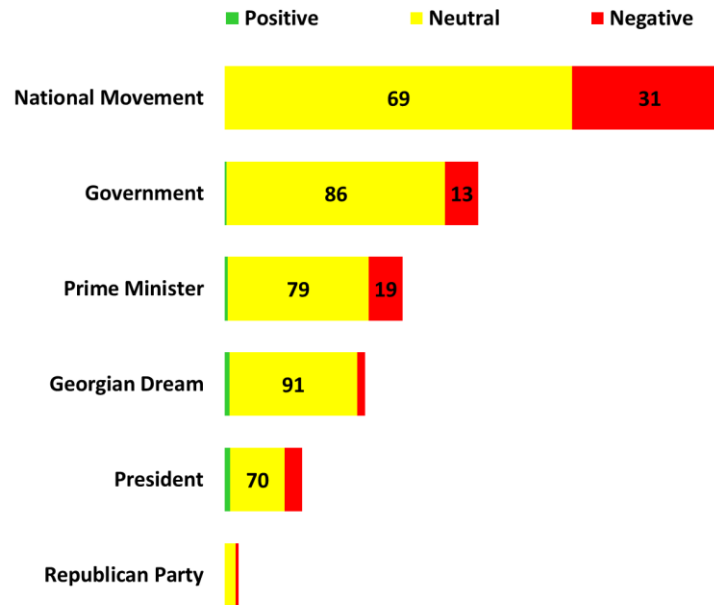
Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the United National Movement (43%), the Government (22%) and the Prime Minister (15%) have been covered most intensively. There have been no particularly high percentage indicators of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject. Relatively high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the United National Movement (31%) (refer to Diagram 4). The Kviris Palitra has not actively covered pre-election activities carried out by the mayoral candidates.

Issues related to bonuses and extra salaries of the Government representatives have been actively covered in the newspaper within the given period of monitoring. In such articles the value judgments of journalists have been supported by relevant data, however in certain cases a text of a journalist comprised abusive terminology addressed to public officials; for instance: “Obviously we deal with excessive appetite. It seems that certain officials holding cozy armchairs have forgotten that this is a country, where a chief nurse of surgery department is paid 20 tetri per one surgery”, “Shortly speaking, they still consider the budget of the country as their own pocket, therefore the Government shall hold ties of certain officials’ excessive appetite” (Massive bonuses, whose dream came true?”, 19-25.05.2014, page 6-7). Apart from the above example no other cases of violating journalism standards have been registered in the Kviris Palitra.

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Kviris Palitra has been covering ongoing political events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed. Relatively high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the United National Movement.

(Diagram 4, Coverage of subjects, the Kviris Palitra)

**Space allocated to the subjects in "Kviris Palitra"
according to the tone (%)**



The Asaval-Dasavali

Within the second period of monitoring the criticism towards the coalition Georgian Dream has significantly increased on the pages of Asaval-Dasavali. The newspaper has still been extremely critical towards the United National Movement. The highest percentage indicator of positive tone has been observed while covering Burjanadze – United Opposition. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been systematically violated. Unjustified value judgments and abusive terminology have been applied on frequent occasions. Within the given period of monitoring the Asaval-Dasavali has covered ongoing events extremely subjectively.

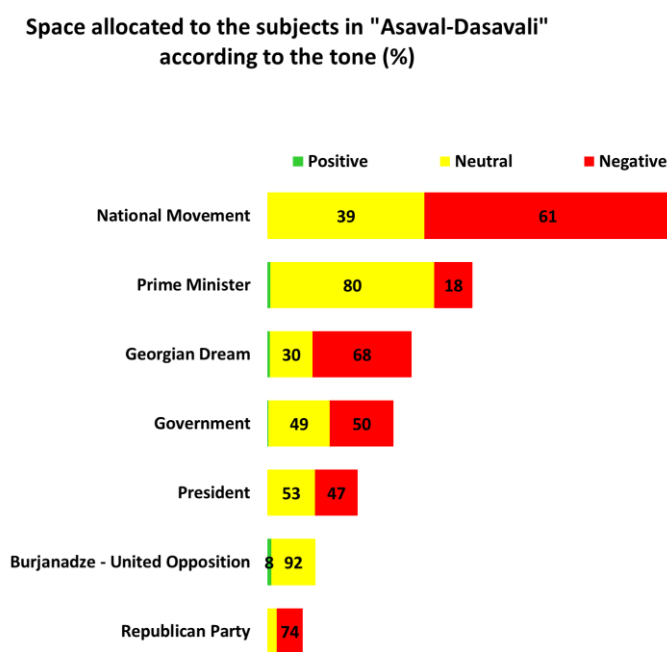
Among the monitoring subjects the United National Movement (39%), the Prime Minister (20%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (14%) have been covered most intensively. Extremely high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the Republican Party of Georgia (74%), the coalition Georgian Dream (68%) and United National Movement (61%) (refer to Diagram 5). Pretty high indicator of negative tone has been addressed to the coalition the Government (50%) and the President (47%). It is noteworthy that there has been no negative tone registered while covering Burjanadze – United Opposition whatsoever. The Asaval-Dasavali has not covered pre-election activities of the mayoral candidates within the given period.

Within the given period of monitoring Asaval-Dasavali has mainly offered comments of those respondents, who have demonstrated negative approach towards the United National Movement. The newspaper journalists have not refrained from systematic usage of subjective judgment and abusive terminology either. For instance: “Indeed, Saakashvili got harmed by political syphilis...”, “Finally Saakashvili will by all means get where similar “David Agmashenebelis”, “Ilia Chavchavadzes” are located in large quantities – i.e. among lunatics wearing robes..”, “...However, obviously Saakashvili’s schizophrenia is progressing on a daily basis...” („Are you a tire?“, 28.04.2014, page. 2); “Yes, similar to lack of justification for Juda, who gave up Jesus for 30 silver monets, the people who sell themselves out to National liers for 30 GEL may not be justified...” (“Is a “National” a human at all?”, 21.04.2014, page 8).

The criticism towards the coalition Georgian Dream has significantly increased upon adoption of antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia. The newspaper journalists have also often used discriminatory and abusive terminology while covering the United National Movement; for instance: “Further approachment of our country to the EU is directly linked to the level of freedom felt by faggots and nationals (members and supporters of the United National Movement)! So this insane nationalist faggot laying will be observed with purely European staidness and quietness...” (“Rompei’s rotches“, 19.05.2014, page 3), “Nationalists shall not fill the Sports Palace but rather fill in crosswords laying on their prison beds” (“Mishdevil is in details”, 19.05.2014, page 6).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Asaval-Dasavali is covering ongoing events of the country extremely subjectively. The newspaper is being characterized by intensive use of abusive and discriminatory terminology. Absolutely all journalism standards are being violated in articles published in the Asaval-Dasavali.

(Diagram 5, Coverage of subjects, the Asaval-Dasavali)



The Akhali Taoba

Within the second period of monitoring the criticism towards the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream has increased in the Akhali Taoba. The newspaper has still remained critical towards the United National Movement. In certain cases we have observed violation of journalism standards and ethical norms that has been expressed in unjustified value judgments and unethical statements.

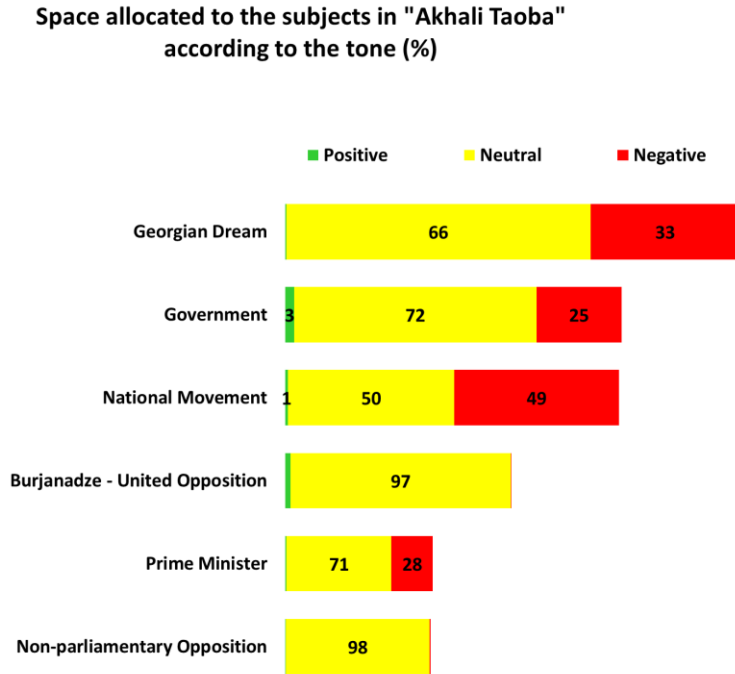
Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the coalition Georgian Dream (25%), the Government (18%), the United National Movement (18%) and Burjanadze – United Opposition (12%) have been covered most intensively. Pretty high indicator of negative tone towards the United National Movement (49%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (33%) shall be highlighted (*refer to Diagram 6*). Relatively high percentage indicator of negative tone has also been addressed while covering the coalition Prime Minister (28%) and the Government (25%). The highest indicator of positive tone has been registered while covering Burjanadze - United Opposition (9%).

Among the Tbilisi mayoral candidates Dimitri Lortkipanidze (8%) has been covered in the most positive way. (*refer to Diagram 7*). The highest indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the candidate from the United National Movement Nika Melia (41%).

Upon adoption of the antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia the criticism of the coalition Georgian Dream and the Government has significantly increased in the Akhali Taoba. Within the given period of monitoring subjective judgment and unethical statements made by journalists and addressed to the United National Movement, the coalition Georgian Dream and the Government have been registered on numerous occasions. For instance: “Black clouds are gathered over the head of the Defense chief” (Irina Imerlishvili vs Irakli Alasania”, 10.05.2014, page 2), “National movement representatives wish to come to power thanks to weakness of the Georgian Dream and support of the Republican party” (“Conspiracy in Adjarian office of the Georgian Dream”, 16.05.2014, page 4). Also there has been a case registered within this period of monitoring, when a journalist of the newspaper addressed supporters of one of the parties using abusive terminology: “Fans of the figure five, do not worry, they have found diplomas of your selectees!!” (“Why does the apparatus of the Parliament hide diplomas of Goka Gabashvili and Nugzar Tsiklauri”, 8.05.2014, page 6).

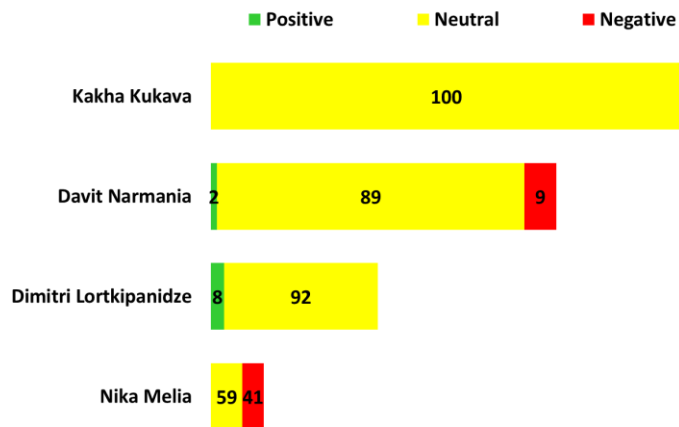
As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Akhali Taoba have demonstrated a rather critical approach towards the United National Movement, as well as the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream. In certain cases the newspaper journalists openly express their negative attitude towards certain politicians. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been violated.

(Diagram 6, Coverage of subjects, the Akhali Taoba)



(Diagram 7, Coverage of mayoral candidates, the Akhali Taoba)

Space allocated to the Mayoral candidates in "Akhali Taoba", according to the tone (%)



The Versia

Within the second period of monitoring a rather critical approach towards the United National Movement has still been observed in The Versia. Criticism towards the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream has increased. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been mostly followed during news coverage, while articles often contained unjustified value judgments and unethical statements. Information supplied by less reliable sources has often been published.

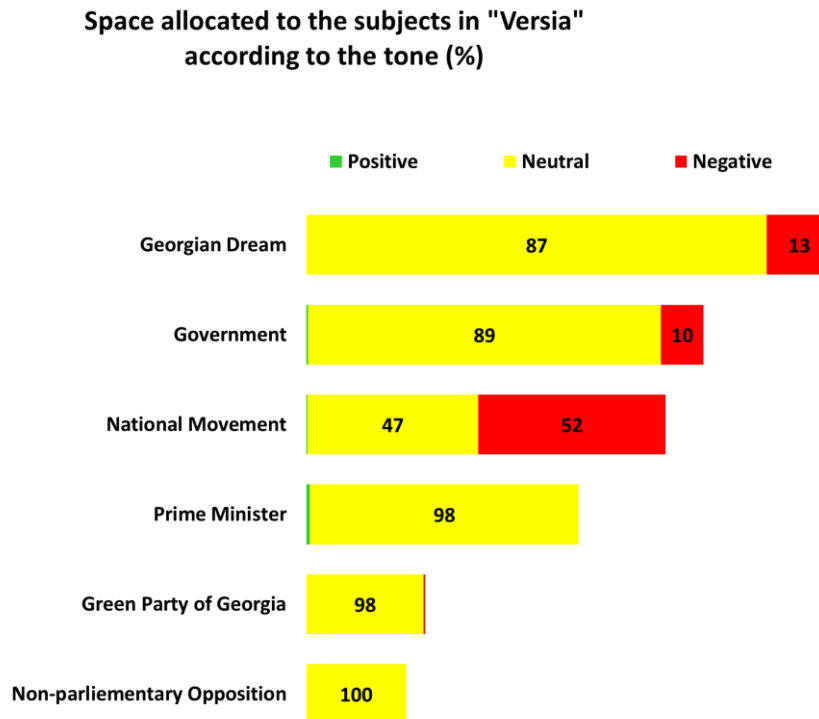
Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the coalition Georgian Dream (25%), the Government (19%), the United National Movement (17%) and the Prime Minister (13%) have been covered most intensively. Particularly high indicator of negative tone has been registered towards the United National Movement (52%). High indicators of positive or negative tone have not been registered while covering other subjects (*refer to Diagram 8*). The Versia has not been active in covering pre-election activities of the mayoral candidates.

Within the given period of monitoring subjective judgment and unethical statements addressed to various politicians, mainly representatives of the United National Movement, has often been a case in the newspaper. For instance: “Over the nine year period the United National Movement has practically done nothing but revenge, punishment, rape, murder and humiliation of own nation” (“The bomb that will be exploded by National Movement a few days prior to elections”, 12.05.2014, page 3).

On numerous occasions we have come across information based on less reliable sources that has been published in the newspaper. For instance: “According to the lobby talks, it was Moroshkina’s recommendation to the Probation Commission to release...”, “They say in the Ministry of Corrections that the management has learned and noticed the said contacts and acquaintances of Moroshkina”. (“Red hot Prison scandal by Lali Moroshkina”, 21.05.2014, page 5).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Versia has still been pretty critical towards the United National Movement. During the news coverage journalism standards and ethical norms have mostly been followed. In author’s articles, however, there have been numerous cases of rough violation of journalism standards.

(Diagram 8, Coverage of subjects, The Versia)



The Kviris Qronika

Within the second period of monitoring criticism towards the coalition Georgian Dream and Burjanadze – United Opposition has significantly increased in the Kviris Qronika. The newspaper has still preserved an extremely negative attitude towards the United National Movement. We have encountered frequent cases of rough violation of journalism standards and ethical norms. The journalists of the Kviris Qronika have not refrained from making subjective judgment and using abusive terminology addressed to various politicians.

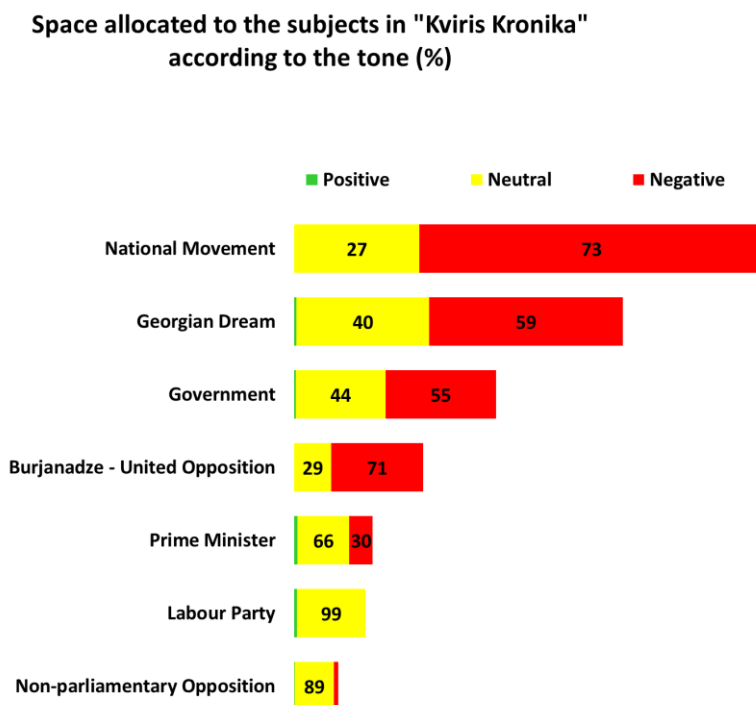
Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the United National Movement (31%), the coalition Georgian Dream (22%), the Government (13%) and Burjanadze – United Opposition (9%) have been covered most intensively. Extremely high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the United National Movement (73%) and Burjanadze – United Opposition (refer to Diagram 9). The coalition Georgian Dream (59%) and the Government (55%) have received pretty high indicator of negative tone. David Narmania (67%) and Nika Melia (64%) have received highest indicator of negative tone among the mayoral candidates (refer to Diagram 10).

The criticism towards the coalition Georgian Dream has increased in the Kviris Qronika upon adoption of antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia. Percentage indicator of negative tone towards

Burjanadze – United Opposition has also increased that is caused by the extensive article, which considered political activity of Nino Burjanadze in a rather critical way (“Does Nino Burjanadze lie to voters?”, 12.05.2014, page 33). Within the given period of monitoring we have come across numerous instances of Kviris Qronika journalists using subjective judgment and abusive terminology towards certain politicians. For example: “Dear Zugdidi loser Irakli (Alasania), even a bush would beat Akhalaia in elections”, “Keep quiet, Irakli (Gharibashvili) until you lose your position, we know that your fascination rests with positions rather than struggle for justice” (“NDI – stands for National Stupidity Institute”, 12.05.2014, page 9-10), “Mrs. Nino Burjanadze, if cohabitation of the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement is a crime then what is cohabitation of your party and the National Movement – redemption or what?” (“Does Nino Burjanadze lie to voters?”, 12.05.2014, page 33-34); “Jondi Baghaturia preferred to shave his head completely rather than wear a lot of hair, so that he did not even consider hair transplantation” (“What is the property of Jondi Baghaturia?”, 12.05.2014, page 35-36). Also, the next day after adoption of antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia, the first page of the Kviris Qronika contained a large picture (with pretty abusive elements) with three inscriptions: “Good fellas from the Parliament do not scream about others’ obedience any more”; “Antidiscrimination law pushed by the Government has been altered by a three stage plan!!!”; “It took the previous Government 9 years to make us hate them, while the current one managed to feel us fed up with everything in just a year and a half” (5.05.2014).

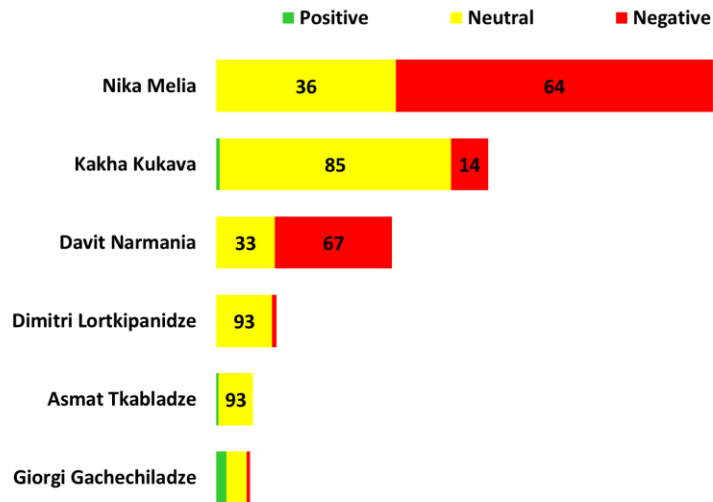
As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that the Kviris Qronika is covering ongoing political processes in the country in a rather subjective way. Journalism standards and ethical norms are systematically violated in the newspaper.

(Diagram 9, Coverage of subjects, the Kviris Qronika)



(Diagram 10, Coverage of mayoral candidates, the Kviris Qronika)

Space allocated to the Mayoral candidates in "Kviris Kronika", according to the tone (%)



Conclusion

Within the second period of monitoring journalism standards and ethical norms have still been violated in Georgian print media pretty often. Journalists do not refrain from subjective and unjustified value judgments on frequent occasions. Moreover, the texts prepared by the journalists of the selected media outlets often contain abusive and discriminating terminology addressed to various politicians. Particularly rough violation of journalism standards and ethical norms has been systematically observed in the Asaval-Dasavali, the Kviris Qronika and the Alia.

Criticism towards the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream has significantly increased upon adoption of antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia. The newspaper Alia has openly appealed to readers to refrain from voting for the United National Movement and the coalition Georgian Dream.