



Election Monitoring of TV Channels

News Releases

June 15-30, 2014

In connection to the local elections of 2014, CRRC Georgia implemented the media monitoring within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU-UNDP program. The monitoring started on April 15 and ended on June 30. The monitoring was performed for the main evening news releases on Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia and TV3. This report describes the media monitoring results for June 15-30.

Following key findings were revealed as the result of monitoring of main evening news releases on televisions during this period:

- News on majority of channels was analytical and informative. Critical stories were also prepared. However, the objects of criticism differed from channel to channel. Maestro and TV3 prepared critical stories for the government, also for government members. However, negative attitude towards the government was more observed on Rustavi 2. Stories broadcasted via Kavkasia were mostly dry and were focused on reporting the facts.
- All the channels provided quite extensive and detailed coverage of the Election Day. They showed the conduct of elections, voting by politicians, exit poll results, evaluations by politicians and experts, etc.
- Almost all the channels allocated quite much time and provided detailed coverage to the topic of the Association Agreement, the signature process and evaluations.
- During this monitoring period, there was quite a high rate of positive tone observed towards the Prime Minister on the majority of the channels, which was basically caused by his interviews and evaluations of the Association Agreement, also by his evaluations and comments about the elections.

- Coverage time of the election subjects decreased after the elections on all the channels, and so did the share of positive tone observed towards them.

The following election-related events were extensively covered in the monitored main news releases during this monitoring period: Davit Narmania's mother, who was accused of rigging the elections, videos disseminated by the United National Movement on rigging the elections, distribution of mandates and positions at Sakrebulo, visit of the Armenian President, scandal related to Irma Nadirashvili and Zurab Japaridze, bonuses at Tbilisi Sakrebulo, Nato-Georgia relations, Association Agreement, rerun at 14 constituencies, probable debates between Davit Narmania and Nika Melia, new charge against Gigi Ugulava, relationship with breakaway regions, etc.

Note: Due to the different format - longer news releases on the Election Day, quantitative data of June 15 are not included in the charts, because we did not want these outliers to distort the general trend for this period.

Channel One of the Public Broadcaster

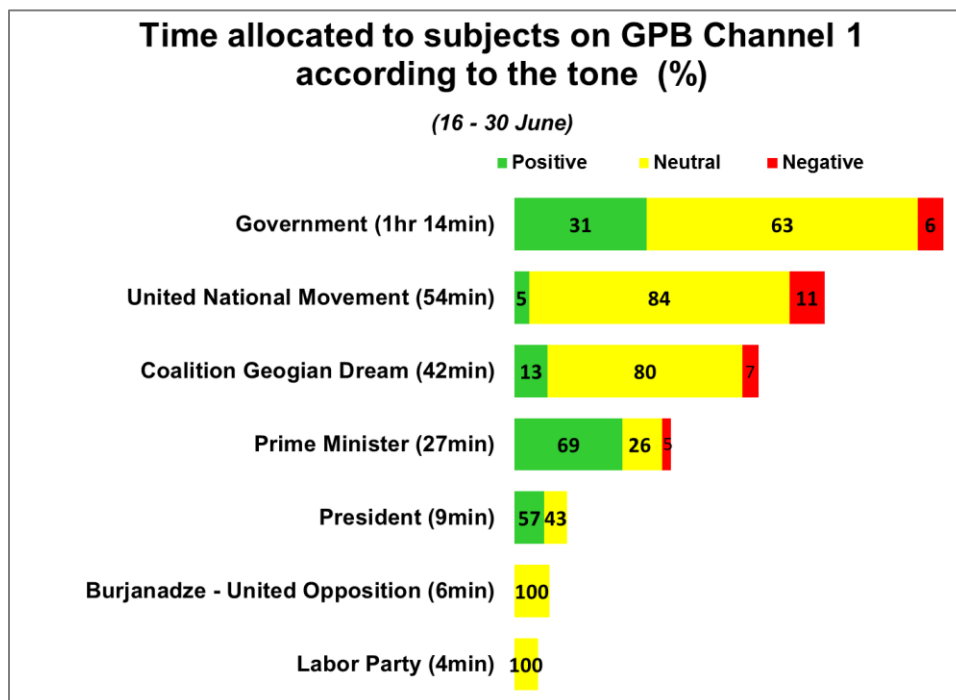
Other than the important ongoing events, Channel One of the Public Broadcaster laid a big emphasis on the elections and its results in its main evening news releases during the period of June 15-30. The broadcasted news was mostly informative and analytical, and represented different opinions about a particular issue. A visit of the Armenian President to Georgia was being extensively covered for two days (June 18 and 19). There were analytical stories broadcasted about Armenia's membership to the Customs Union, also about signing the Association Agreement by Georgia and what impact it would have on Georgian-Armenian relations. It is noteworthy that quite a big attention was allocated to the Association Agreement and relationship of Georgia to the European Union. There were extensive interviews with foreign and Georgian politicians in connection to this topic. Analytical stories were prepared clarifying what the Association Agreement was about, how it can benefit Georgia, and what obligations Georgia is undertaking, and the EU history as well. There were also similar stories about the NATO.

The issue of bonuses of Sakrebulo's members and its chairperson was covered quite broadly and analytically (June 19). Shikhiashvili's comment and evaluations by the

Coalition and the minority were shown together with Sakrebulo member's different approaches to the big bonuses. The story was balanced and creative enough.

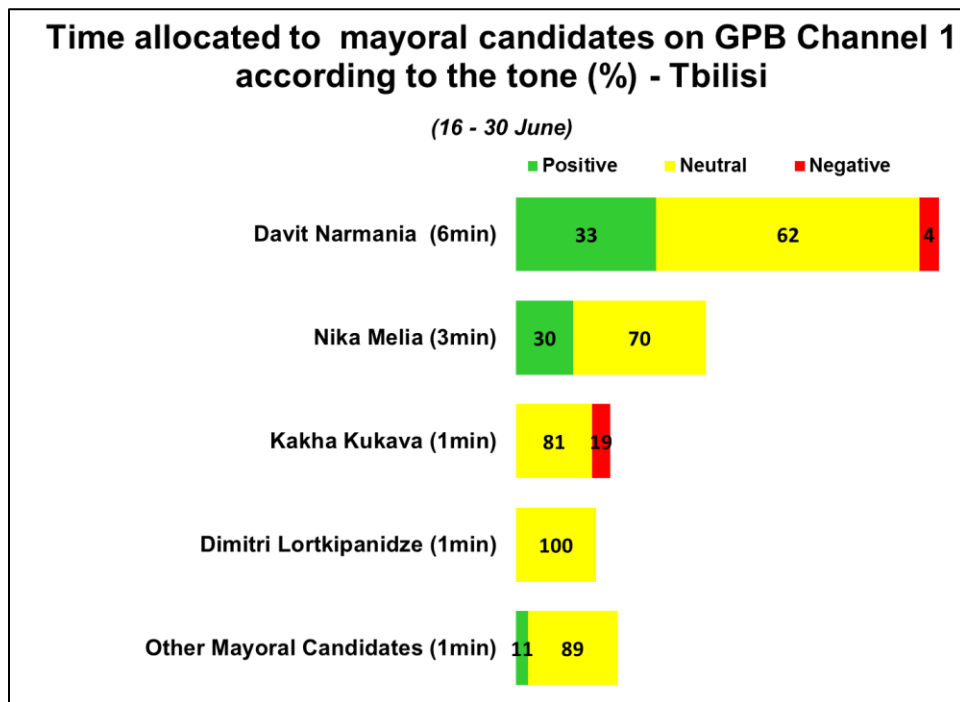
The conduct of elections was covered in details on the Election Day. There were live broadcasts from the offices of various parties, both ruling and opposition ones, showing their comments and evaluations about the process and results of the elections. They also showed voting by party leaders, and various constituencies where the election results were appealed. The news programs also contained stories about violations or confrontations. The news release on June 16 was almost completely focused on the elections. They highlighted in details who got how much percent in which district, where the second round was to be expected and what evaluations the politicians made. At the end of the day, the coverage of the Election Day was quite balanced.

As for the time allocated to the subjects, the biggest time was dedicated to the government (33%) during the period of June 16-30, followed by the United National Movement (24%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (19%). It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister, to whom 27 minutes were dedicated in total, had quite high rate of positive tone - 69%. Relatively less time was dedicated to the President - 4%. However, 57% of this time was a positive coverage.



As for the coverage of mayoral candidates, quite little time - in total 12 minutes were allocated to them after the elections, as compared to the previous period. Out of this

time, 6 minutes were dedicated to Davit Narmania, 3 minutes – to Nika Melia. Other candidates got one minute each. The first two candidates had pretty equal share of positive tone: Davit Narmania – 33 percent, and Nika Melia – 30 percent.



Adjara TV

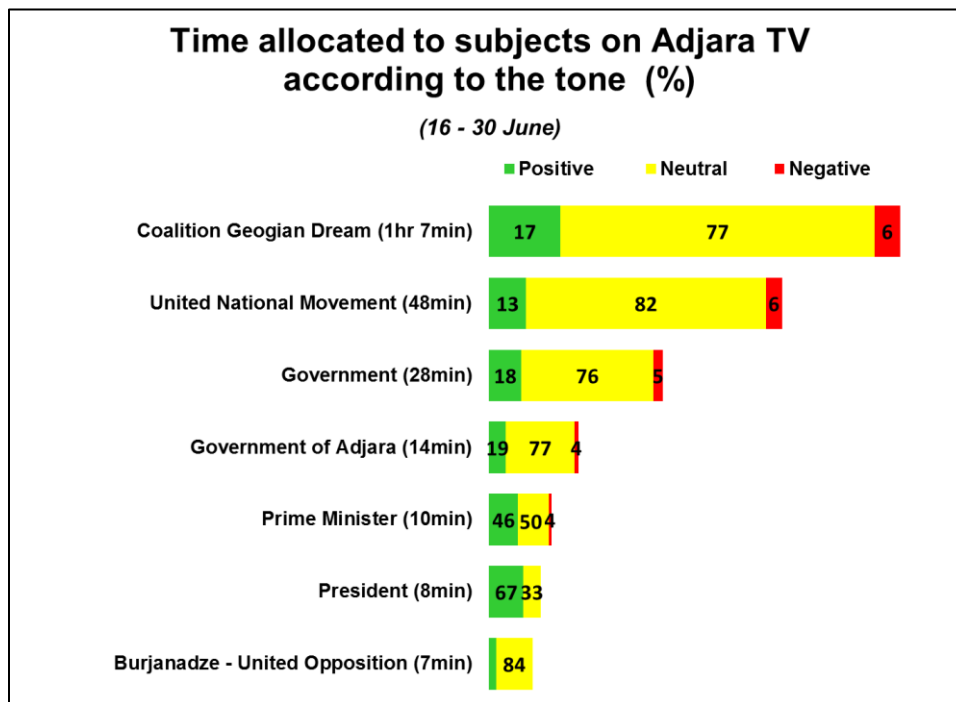
Adjara TV basically provided the objective coverage of topics in its main evening news programs during June 15-30 inclusive. The journalists did not demonstrate bias and they were focused on fact reporting. The stories and subjects represented in the news actually provided the arguments and evaluations of the parties in a balanced way.

The twists and turns of the second round, also the distribution of seats in the Sakrebulo of new convocation were actively covered in during this period. As for the Election Day, Adjara TV provided a detailed coverage about the events taking place through the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, conduct of elections and observed violations. Performance of Sakrebulo of previous convocations and the adopted decisions were summarized as well.

Significant part of the covered time was again dedicated to the stories on social topics. We observed a trend that the journalists would follow up the development of a

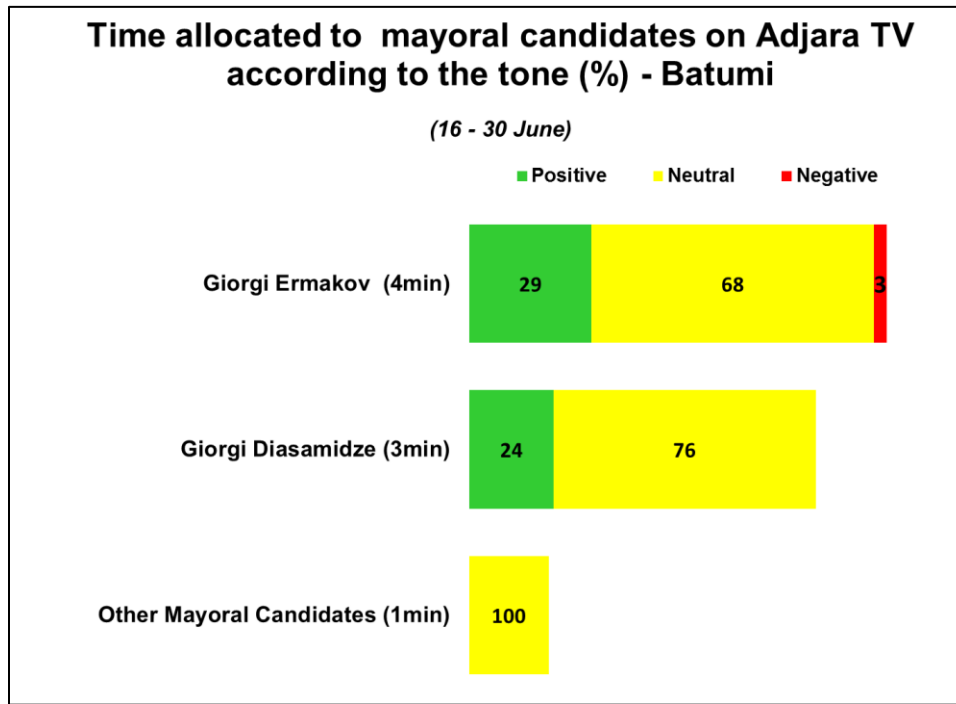
concerned topic during the whole week and keep the audience updated. One of the topics like this was the confrontation between Medea Vasadze, member of the Supreme Council of Adjara and Jaba Ananidze, journalist of the TV Company Channel 25, which was actively covered by the news programs of the Adjara TV. In general, this story was told in the news in a balanced way, many sources were shown and there was no bias of the journalist. Much time was also allocated to the topic of signing the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. There was an analytical story prepared, and Irakli Sesiashvili was invited to the studio in connection to this topic.

As for the time allocated to the subjects, in this respect the most coverage was provided for the Coalition Georgian Dream (35%) and the United National Movement (25%). 15% of the total time was dedicated to the government, and 8% - to the government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. Unlike the previous monitoring periods, number of stories on election topics decreased during June 16-30, inclusive, which found its reflection on the rate of positive tone. This rate was almost equal in case of the Coalition Georgian Dream (17%), the government (18%) and the government of the Adjarian Autonomous Republic (18%). the rate of positive tone is 13% for the United National Movement. As for the negative tone, it is equal for the most frequently covered subjects and it ranges between 4-6%.



Coverage of mayoral candidates decreased after the elections. During the period of June 16 until June 30, inclusive, in total 8 minutes were allocated to them, where the most

frequently covered mayoral candidate was Giorgi Ermakov (49%) and Giorgi Diasamidze (41%). The share of positive tone is almost equal for them. The negative tone was observed only in case of Giorgi Ermakov – 3%.



Rustavi 2

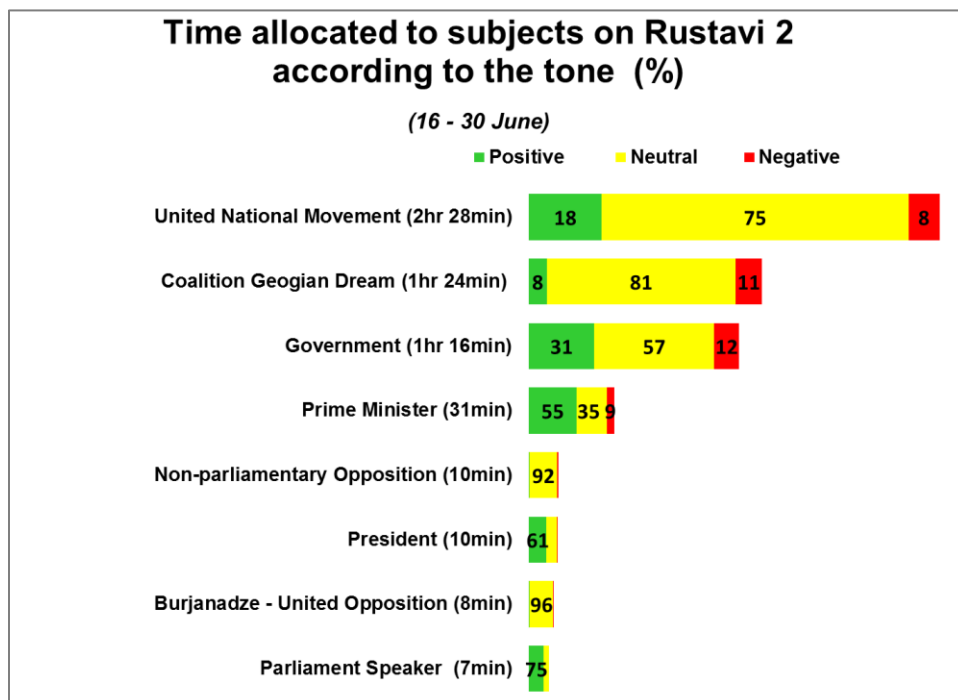
The news broadcasted by the Rustavi 2 in its main evening news programs during June 15-30, inclusive, were mostly dedicated to the elections. However, there were several topics, which have been covered quite extensively and analytically for several days, for example, the topic of the Association Agreement, which was intensively covered in main news releases for several days. Rustavi 2 also provided live broadcast of the speeches of the Prime Minister, the President and the Speaker of the Parliament from the concert dedicated to the signing of the Association Agreement on June 27. The same day, they hosted Mikheil Saakashvili (live broadcast from the US) for their weekly topic, who talked about the Association Agreement. In addition, Irakli Gharibashvili and Maia Panjikidze were also brought live as well.

There was quite active coverage for several days of the arrest of Zurab Japaridze and Irma Nadirashvili in Azerbaijan. Stories about this topic were pretty negative towards the authorities. Irma Nadirashvili was invited to the program on June 20 and this topic was discussed in details. Nadirashvili was blaming the government of the happenings.

In general, Rustavi 2 maintained the trend of broadcasting stories and topics, majority of which was negative to the government. Topic of elections was also covered in the similar context. Government and the Coalition Georgian Dream were negatively portrayed in almost all the stories about the elections. The emphasis was mostly laid on violations and rigging of the elections in these stories, also on having the CEC influenced by the government. In connection to the elections, the main topic was related to the likelihood of the second round between Narmania and Melia.

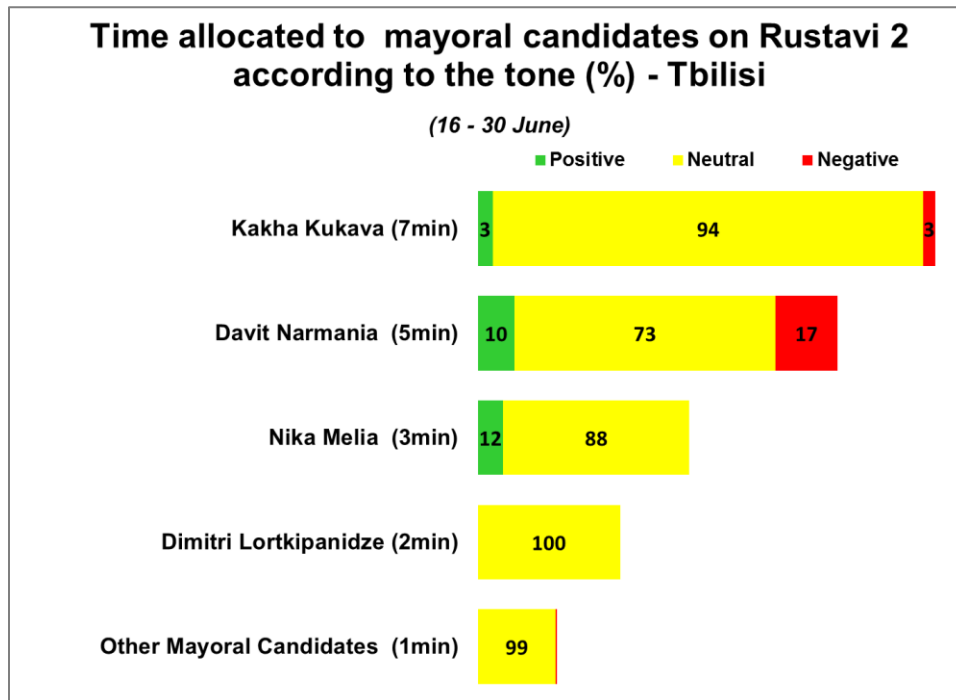
This very context was used for covering Gigi Ugulava’s case and his charges; also, breaching of moratorium, claiming that Gigi Ugulava was charged during the elections. There were experts, whose speeches made it clear that the authorities broke the moratorium.

As for the subject coverage times, in total, 6 hours and 23 minutes were allocated to them during June 16-30, inclusive. 39% of this time was dedicated to the United National Movement, followed by the Coalition Georgian Dream – 22%, and the government – 20%. The Prime Minister got less time – 8 percent, and other subjects – 3 percent and less. As for the coverage tone, the highest rate of negative tone was observed for the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government – 11 and 12 percent.



As for Tbilisi Mayoral candidates, in total 21 minutes were allocated to them after the elections. Largest portion of time was dedicated to Kakha Kukava – 7 minutes, followed

by Davit Narmania – 5 minutes, and Nika Melia – 3 minutes. Melia and Narmania had almost equal share of positive coverage (12 and 10 percent). However, it is noteworthy that only Davit Narmania had higher rate of negative tone – 17 percent.



Imedi

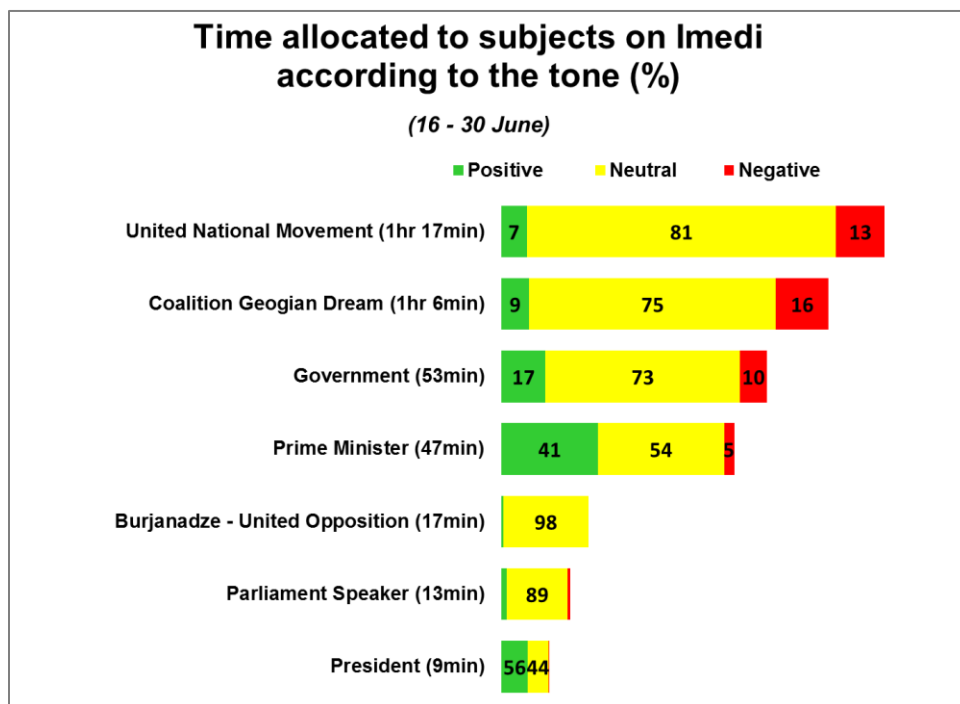
News programs of Imedi were balanced and objective during the period of June 15 – June 30. Positions of various political sides, NGOs and civil sector were represented in the news. The stories were characteristic with neutral tone and impartiality to any of the sides. Analytical and informative stories were prepared about the actualities.

Quite much time was allocated to the topic of signing the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. Several analytical stories were prepared about that. On June 27, when the Association Agreement was signed, the EU experts were invited to the news program. Questions about the EU relations asked by the hosts of “Chronicle” were also answered by the Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili.

Election process was actively covered on the Election Day, and the turnout of voters was reported. Results of the exit polls, commissioned by Imedi were announced at the end of the day. The evening news programs provided live broadcasts with the

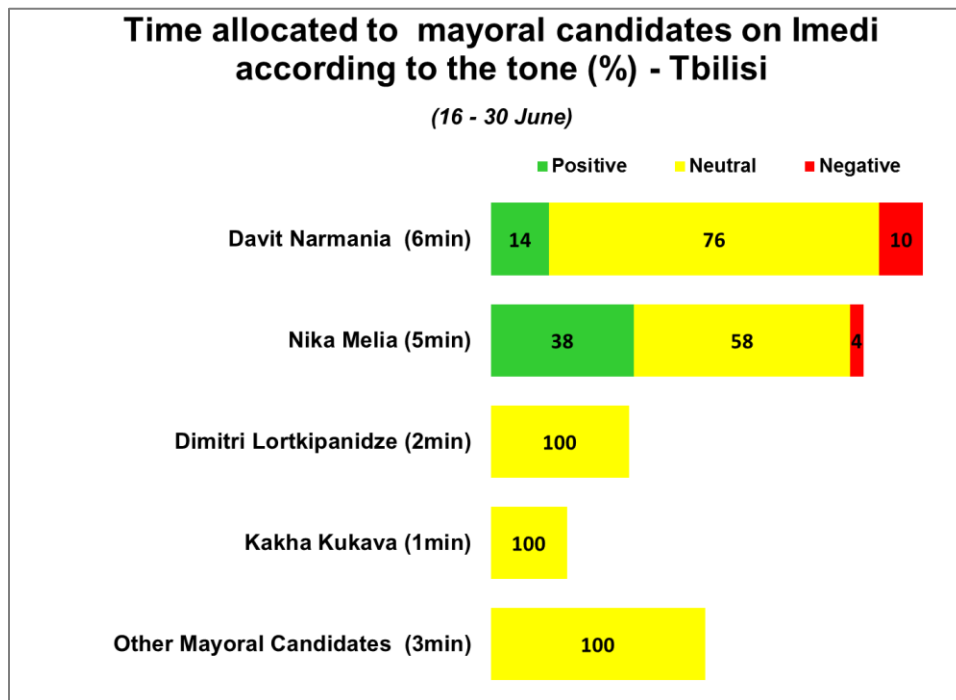
representatives of various political parties and Tbilisi mayoral candidates. All the major mayoral candidates of Tbilisi had a chance to speak live. After the elections, there was much time allocated to the discussion of election results, evaluations of politicians and experts, also violations and inaccuracies revealed in the election process, also to the probability of the second round in some cities and municipalities.

As for the subject coverage, the most time was allocated to the following subjects – the United National Movement (26%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (22%), the government (18%) and the Prime Minister (16%). Compared to the previous monitoring periods, high rates of positive tone decreased. The Prime Minister is an exception with 41% of positive tone out of all the time dedicated to him¹. Positive tone was 17% in case of the government. This rate was almost equal for the United National Movement (7%) and for the Coalition Georgian Dream (9%). As for the negative tone, the highest rate was reported for the Coalition Georgian Dream (16%) and the lowest – for the Prime Minister (5%).



¹ This is caused by his positive evaluation expressed at the signing of the Association Agreement.

During the period of June 16 until May 30, inclusive, the most frequently covered subjects were the Tbilisi Mayoral candidates in news programs on Imedi. In total, 17 minutes were allocated to them. The most frequent coverage was provided for Davit Narmania (34%) and Nika Melia (28%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed for Nika Melia (38%) and – negative tone – for Davit Narmania (10%).



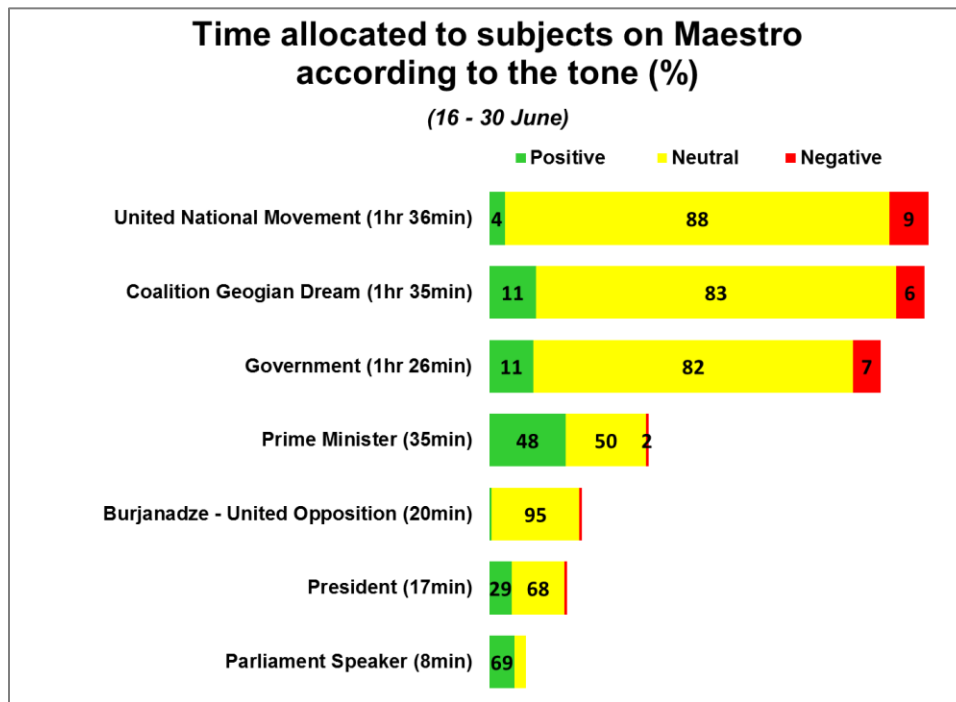
Maestro

Stories broadcasted by the news programs on Maestro were balanced during June 15 – June 30, inclusive. The stories were moderately critical and demanding towards the authorities and the opposition as well.

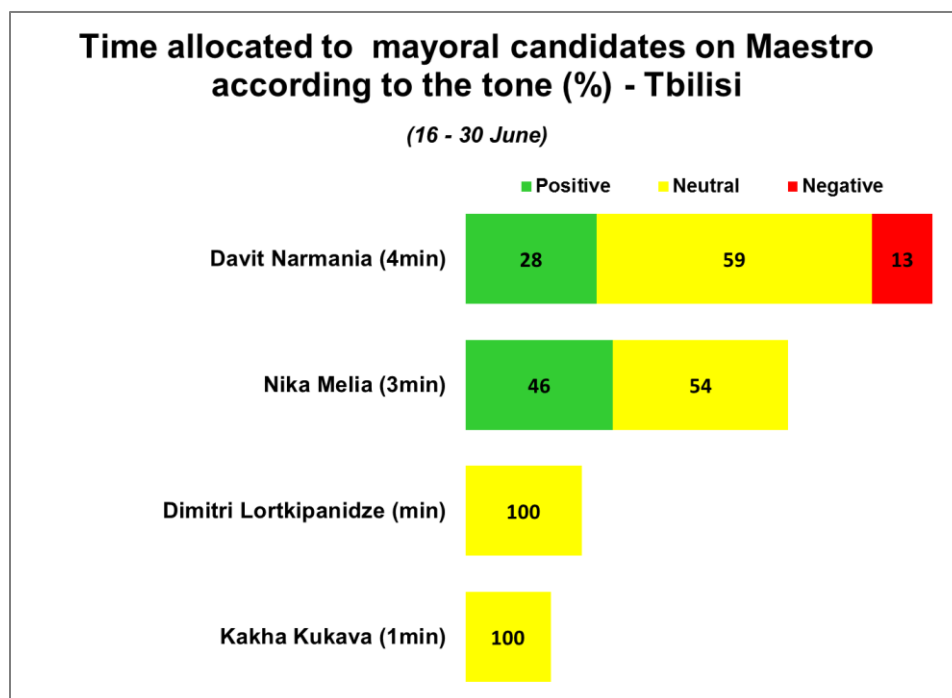
There was an extensive news program dedicated to the Election Day, where the main emphasis was laid on Tbilisi. Comments of Tbilisi Mayoral Candidates and offices of their parties were represented one by one. The audience had an opportunity to get familiar with the results of exit polls conducted by Rustavi 2 and Imedi. Comments of various parties were highlighted about the exit poll results and reported gaps. There were also several analytical stories about the history of elections in the independent Georgia, the essence of self-governance, its functions and importance.

Significant time was allocated to the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. Future relations between Georgia and the EU were discussed in details on June 27, showing the evaluations by politicians and experts regarding these events.

The most frequently highlighted subjects on Maestro were: the United National Movement (27%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (26%), the government (24%). The rate of positive tone was 4% for the United National Movement, and 11%-11% for the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government. As for the negative tone, it was almost equal among the most frequently covered subjects and ranged between 6-9%. There was quite a big share of positive tone reported for the Prime Minister – 48 percent, which is explained by his comments expressed on the day of signing the Association Agreement.



The most frequently covered subjects were the Tbilisi mayoral candidates from June 16 until June 30, and in total 11 minutes were allocated to them. Among them the biggest share of time was dedicated to Davit Narmania (42%) and Nika Melia (29%). In addition, Nika Melia has the highest rate of positive tone – 46%. As for the negative tone, it was observed only in case of Davit Narmania – 13%.

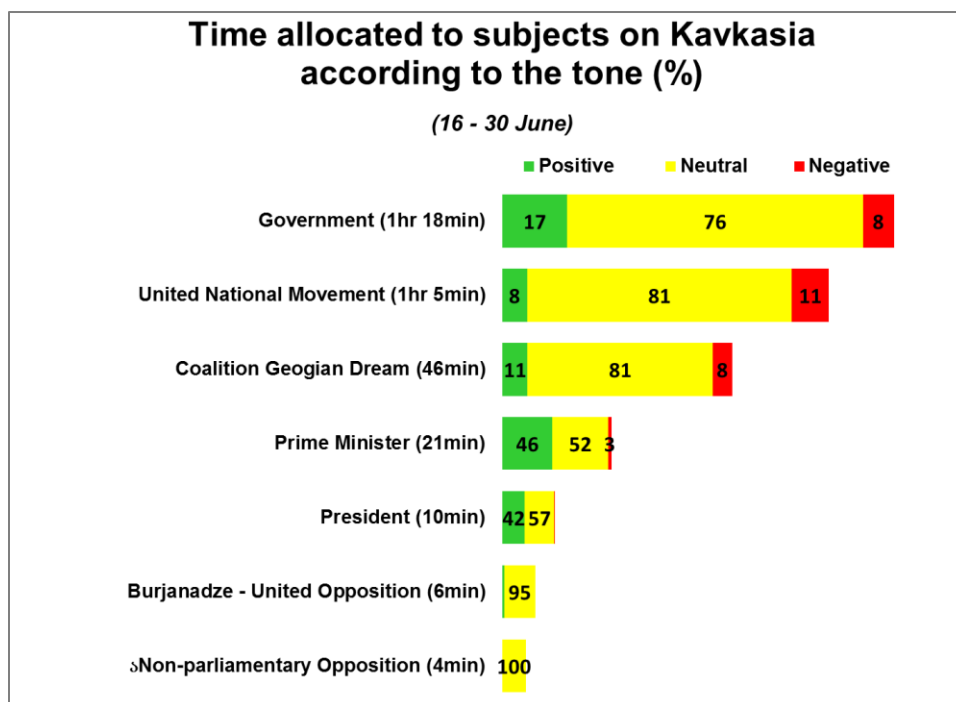


Kavkasia

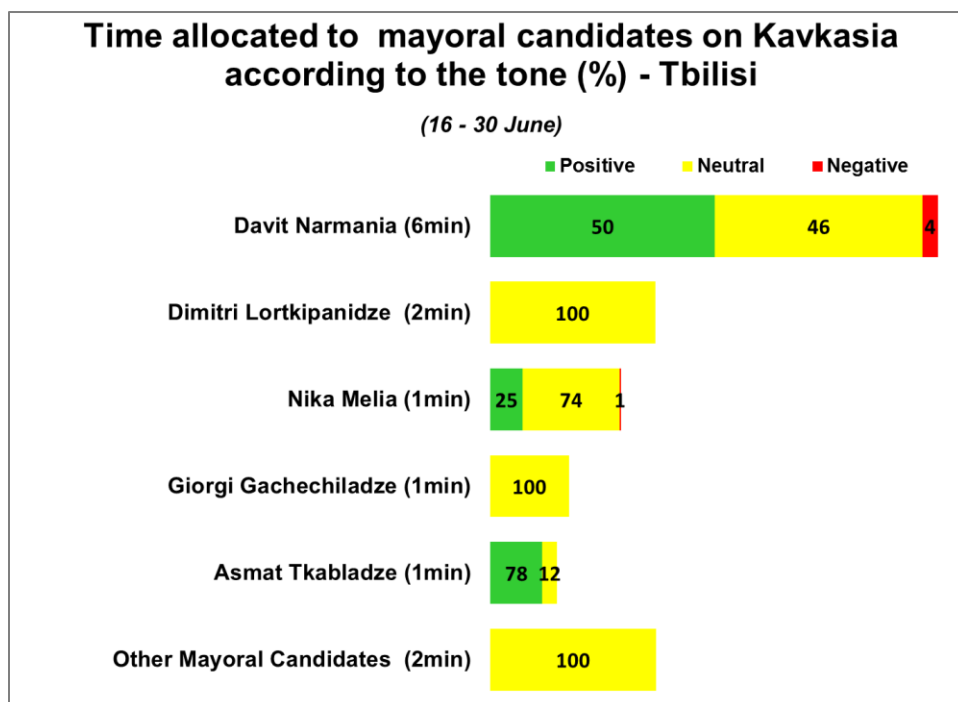
News releases of Kavkasia were neutral and informative from June 15 until June 30, inclusive. However, majority of news was distinguished with reporting dry facts only, without broadcasting analytical stories.

Evaluations of experts and politicians about the election results were actively covered during the post-elections period. Election violations and likelihood of the second round were also highlighted. Signing of the EU Association Agreement was covered superficially, only providing the brief evaluations by politicians and comments of the ruling team and experts. We again observed technical problems, and the respondents in the stories often were not identified.

According to the allocated time, the first two subjects were the government (32%) and the United National Movement (27%), followed by the Coalition Georgian Dream (19%) and the Prime Minister (9%). Among them the highest tone is observed for the Prime Minister - 46%, and also the government has higher rate of positive coverage - 17%. As for the negative tone, the lowest rate was observed for the Prime Minister (3%), and other three subjects got almost equal rates ranging from 8 to 11%.



Kavkasia most frequently covered the Tbilisi mayoral candidates in its news programs from June 16 until June 30 – in total 16 minutes. Among them the most frequently covered candidate was Davit Narmania (40%), and the remaining time was allocated almost equally on other candidates. As of the tone-based allocation of time, the highest rate of positive tone was observed for Davit Narmania (50%). He also had the highest rate of negative tone – 4%.



TV3

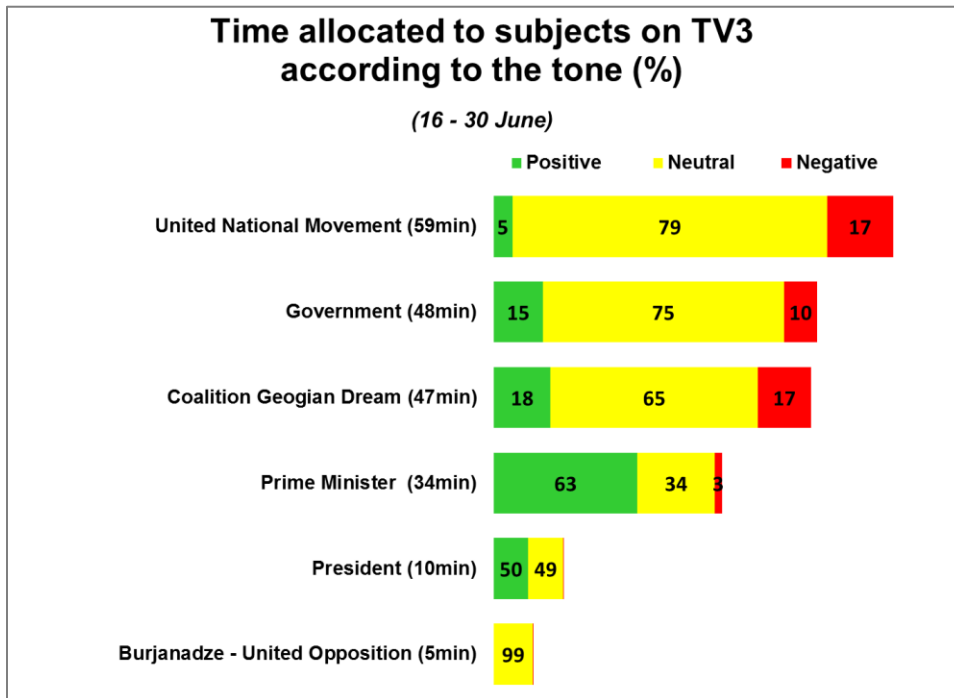
TV3 highlighted the actualities in its news programs from June 15 until June 30, with analytical stories. There was critical attitude observed in the stories towards the authorities, also towards the opposition as well.

The news programs were completely dedicated to the elections on the Election Day, on June 15. The process of elections was shown in various regions, and exit poll results were announced for the audience. As of the post-election period, TV3 laid emphasis on election violations. Some of the stories provided negative coverage of the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement, who were blamed of rigging of elections.

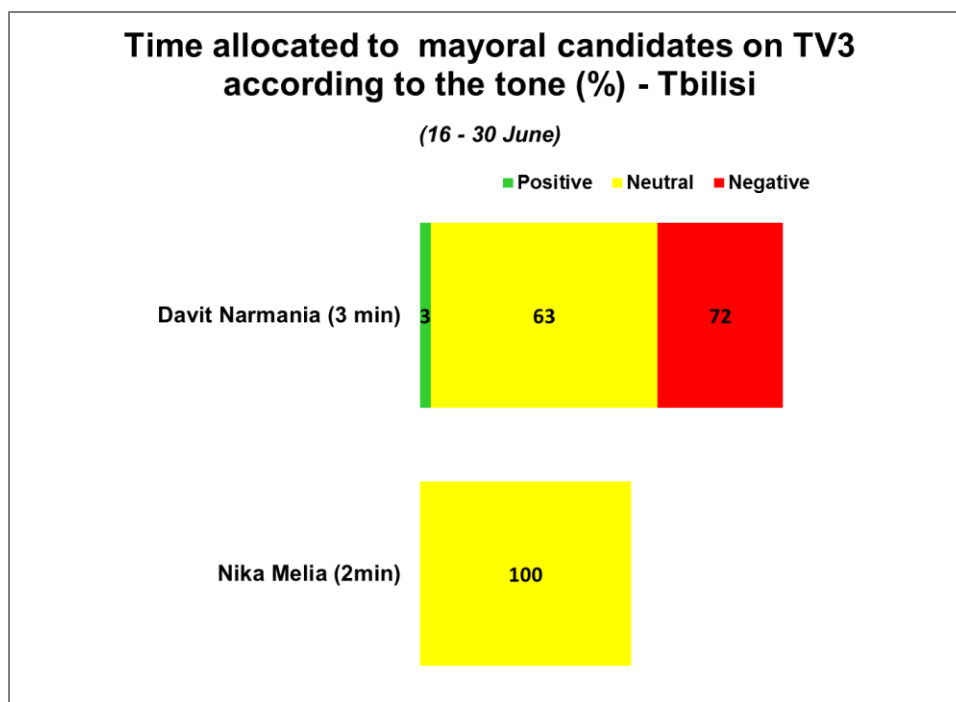
During this monitoring period, much time was dedicated to the signing of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU. Contents of the Agreement were discussed on June 27, showing the signing of the Association Agreement, with the evaluations of politicians and experts.

As for the subjects coverage, the biggest time was allocated to the United National Movement (28%), the government (22%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (22%) and the Prime Minister (16%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed for the Prime

Minister – 63%, caused by his direct speech about the Association Agreement and the elections result. The lowest rate of positive tone was observed for the United National Movement – 5%. The highest rate of negative tone was reported for the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream – 17%-17%, and the lowest – for the Prime Minister – 3%.



TV 3 most extensively covered the Tbilisi mayoral candidates during the monitoring period of June 16-June 30, allocating 7 minutes to them in total. Most part of this time was dedicated to the two candidates Davit Narmania and Nika Melia. We need to point out that the time dedicated to Nika Melia was 100% neutral, as for the time dedicated to Davit Narmania, the rate of positive coverage was 3%, and the rate of negative coverage – 35%.



Conclusion

During the period of June 15 until June 30, the TV channels laid main emphasis on the Election Day and its results. All the channels provided detailed and extensive coverage of the election process on June 15, highlighting the exit-poll results and evaluations of politicians and experts. Starting from June 16, the main topic was the likelihood of the second round in several cities. On this background we need to point out that the coverage of candidates decreased as compared to the previous periods, and quite little time was allocated to them after the elections.

The Association Agreement and related activities were quite actively and broadly covered during this period. News programs of all the channels showed the comments and evaluations of political parties and candidates participating in the elections. Analytical and informative stories were prepared on the majority of channels, providing clarification about this document, its contents and importance, and what changes it could bring to the country. Consequently, the Prime Minister has quite high rate of positive tone on almost all the channels, due to his interviews and positive evaluations. We did not observe any special violation of journalistic standards or ethical norms during the monitoring period.