



Results of Media Monitoring of 2014 Local Government Elections

Monitoring of TV Channels (main news releases)

April 15 – June 30, 2014

In connection to the local government elections of 2014, CRRC Georgia implemented the media monitoring within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP. 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.

Within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, CRRC Georgia monitored the main news releases of TV Channels in 2012 and 2013 as well. There were seven TV channels monitored in 2012 from May 11 until November 30: Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Rustavi 2, Imedi (until October 17), Maestro, Kavkasia, Channel 9, Real TV (until October 8). The monitoring in 2013 lasted from May 15 until November 30 for the following channels: Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia and Channel 9 (until August 18).

Key Findings

2014 local government elections were special with its scopes and number of election subjects. Mayors were directly elected in 12 self-governing cities of Georgia and also Gamgebelis were also directly elected in other municipalities for the first time. A large number of election subjects and candidates represented a certain challenge for the media, which had a task of providing sufficient information to the voters for making informed decisions.

The monitored TV channels mostly emphasized the Tbilisi candidates in their main evening news releases. In this respect the Adjara TV was an exception where more focus was laid on Batumi mayoral candidates. The news programs actively reported about the election

campaigns of politicians and candidates, their meetings with population, statements and promises. Some of the channels provided live broadcasts in their news programs, or invited the guests to their studios. In regards to the allocated time, the balance was kept if the major candidates were invited. The candidates had equal opportunities in the news programs to speak to the audience during the election period, inasmuch as the spectrum of political talk shows was pretty diverse other than the news programs, and also there were some programs broadcasted by the TV channels in a form of the debates.

Majority of TV channels broadcasted the news programs on the Election Day, which were of different format and longer than usual. These news programs provided detailed reporting about the conduct of elections, violations, exit poll results, evaluations of representatives of various political parties and statements of candidates.

There was less polarization observed on the monitored TV channels during the local government elections in 2014. Main evening news releases prepared critical stories for the majority of channels not only about the ruling coalition, but also the main opposition parties. However, Rustavi 2 marked with more negative attitude towards the government as compared to other channels. There were some stories observed on TV3 during some monitoring sections, which were prepared in the negative context for the United National Movement.

In regards to the polarization, the monitoring results for TV channels during the local elections were not very different from the period of presidential elections in 2013. News releases of the monitored channels were not openly biased to any political force in 2014.

The situation was clearly different from the pre-election period during the parliamentary elections in 2012, when three out of the six monitored channels (Rustavi 2, Imedi, Real TV) were focused on positive presentation of the former authorities and negative presentation of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream, but two channels (Maestro and Channel 9) covered the United National Movement and the former authorities in a critical and negative light.

As the result of polarization, it was frequent to see **one and the same facts and events covered differently by different channels** in 2012. In some cases this difference was so big that it was difficult for the audience to learn the truth. In 2012, the most evident examples of this were the spread of videos about torturing the inmates at prisons in September and the visit of Saakashvili and Ivanishvili in Beshumi in August. These cases decreased in 2013, but did not disappear completely (issues about removal of the Bagrati Temple from the UNESCO world heritage list, and the purchase of two French helicopters by the former

authorities). Different coverage of the events of 2014 became even more rare (incident in Gardabani at the end of May).

Alongside with the decreased polarization, the coverage of key subjects in negative tone decreased since 2012. Besides, the negative tone was observed in regards to all the key subjects, and there was hardly any particular subject that would stand out in this respect. There was more positive tone observed towards the subjects, especially towards the election subjects during the election periods in 2013 and 2014.

It is noteworthy that compared to other key subjects, there was quite high rate of positive tone observed for the Prime Minister, Irakli Gharibashvili in the monitoring results of 2014, despite the fact that he was not found among the top three subjects according to the allocated time. Coverage of the Prime Minister was mostly related to the topics on foreign policy of the country.

During the elections in 2014, the TV companies had an analytical approach while covering the key topics of current significance. There was extensive and detailed information broadcasted about the issues discussed in the stories, diverse sides were represented, including the representatives of various political forces, also the experts as well. During the three waves of monitoring, the lack of analysis was most evident in 2012 among the news releases on TV channels. Number of analytical stories increased in 2013, and the increasing trend was maintained in 2014 as well.

It is noteworthy that we did not observe gross violations of journalistic standards during the monitoring in 2014, such as hate speech and manipulation with pictures and music. Compared to 2012, when these violations were reported in the stories of several channels, the situation has improved significantly in the main evening news releases on TV channels during the local government elections.

This report provides the monitoring results per each channel.

Channel One of the Public Broadcaster

Main evening news releases of the Channel One of the Public Broadcaster were quite balanced and neutral during the whole monitoring period (April 15, June 30). These stories provided different positions regarding the covered issues. Majority of these stories contained the opinions of the government, the opposition and the experts as well; however, there were some cases during the elections, when the particular parties were speaking about pressure, but the position of the other side was not represented. The main news releases

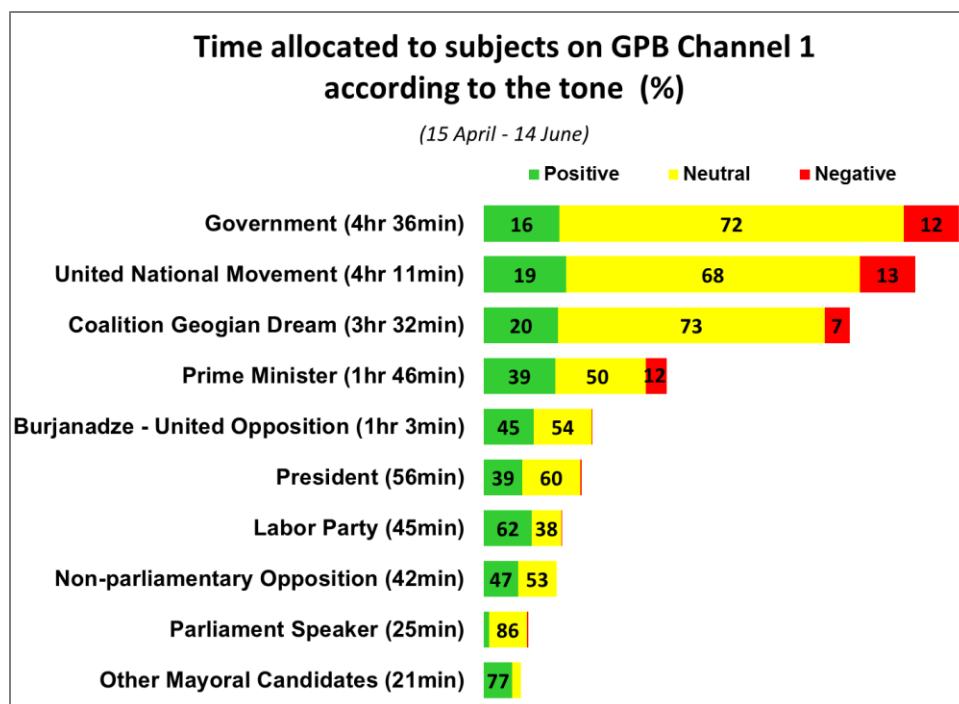
often were made of extensive and analytical stories, which provided detailed information to the audience about a particular topic. It was visible that the journalists were trying to report the news in a neutral way, regardless their political significance, or the negative or positive contents.

Main news releases of the Channel One provided active coverage for all the important events, which took place during this period. The issues such as: the antidiscrimination law, supervisory board of the Public Broadcaster and the events developed in Ukraine, were reported with special intensity since April. During the whole monitoring period, the Association Agreement and the related stories were often reported. The draft law on defense and the law on public service were covered broadly and in details. The stories provided exhaustive information and provided clarification about the contents of the laws, their subjects and the relevance of draft law on defense with the Constitution, etc. There were quite extensive and informative stories prepared about the visits of foreign politicians in Georgia. Besides, court trials of the members of former authorities were quite intensively covered as well.

The election process was highlighted in details on June 15, with live broadcasts from the offices of various parties, their evaluations about the conduct of the elections and its results. They showed how the party leaders voted, and also gave pictures of various electoral districts, where the election results was appealed, or where the violations or confrontations took place. The news release on June 16 was almost completely focused on the elections. They showed the details about who got how many votes in which district, where the second round would be expected, and what evaluations the politicians made.

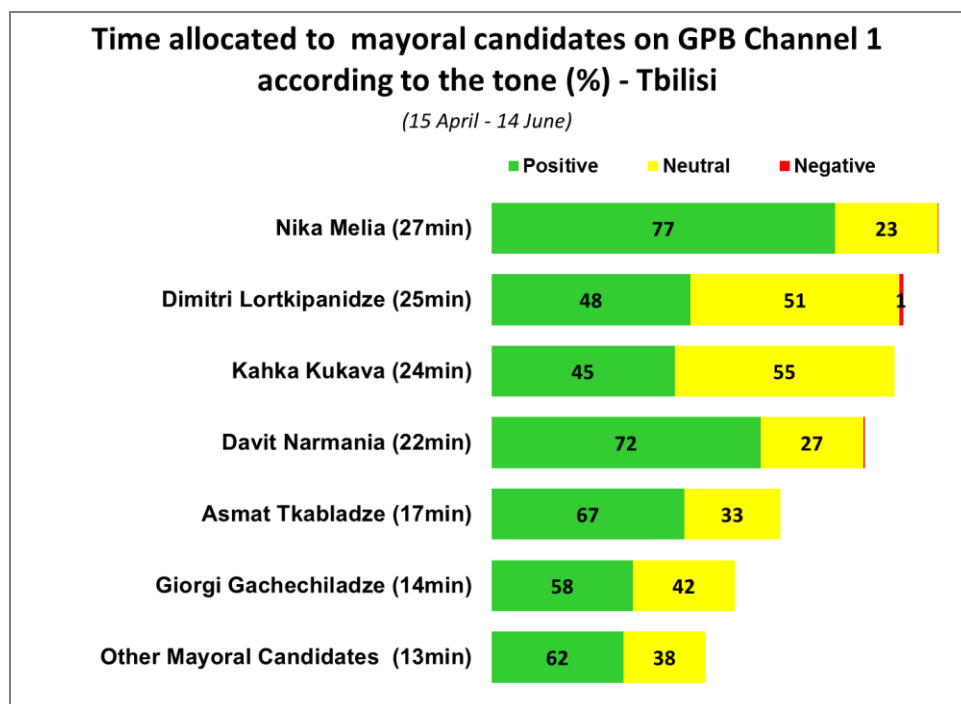
After the elections, during June 16-30, inclusive, main evening news releases of the Channel One of the Public Broadcaster continued their usual programs. The emphasis was laid on the election results, but the current news was also covered in analytical stories.

As for the time allocated to the subjects, in total, 19 hours and 19 minutes were dedicated to them during the election period – April 15 until June 14, inclusive (and 24 hours and 32 minutes from April 15 until June 30, inclusive). There were 3 key subjects identified on the Channel One during the election period, to whom the most time was allocated than all the other subjects. These were: the government – 24%, the United National Movement – 22%, and the Coalition Georgian Dream – 18%. Other monitored subjects got 9 percent of total time, or less. The above-mentioned 3 subjects had almost equal shares of positive tone (government – 16%, the National Movement -19%, and the Coalition Georgian Dream – 20%). Other subjects, to whom less time was allocated, had quite high rate of positive tone, and this rate is more than 39 percent for each of them, which is caused mostly by their coverage with direct speech.



As for the coverage of mayoral candidates, here the most time was allocated to the Tbilisi candidates during the whole monitoring period – 2 hours and 59 minutes in total. During the election period, the live air was dedicated to the mayoral candidates in the studio in main evening news program of the Channel One on Saturdays. As the elections got closer, the candidate coverage gradually intensified. The main focus was targeted on their election campaigns not only in Tbilisi, but also in other self-governing cities. There was even more emphasis laid on this topic in the weekend programs. There were live broadcasts in the format of talk shows, also stories about the mayoral candidates of various self-governing cities. Besides, their election meetings were covered as well.

Out of Tbilisi candidates, the most time were dedicated to the following four subjects: Nika Melia – 18%, Dimitri Lortkipanidze and Kakha Kukava 16-16%, and Davit Narmania - 15%. There was quite high rate of positive tone observed towards all the candidates, but the highest rate was observed in case of Nika Melia – 77% and Davit Narmania – 72%. It is noteworthy that in fact almost none of the candidates were covered with negative tone. Only Dimitri Lortkipanidze and Davit Narmania both got one percent of negative coverage.



Compared to previous periods, quite little time was dedicated to them after the elections – in total 12 minutes. Out of this time, 6 minutes were allocated to Davit Narmania, 3 minutes – Nika Melia, and one minute to each of the remaining candidates. As for the top-two candidates, they have quite equal shares of positive tone: Davit Narmania – 33 percent, and Nika Melia – 30 percent.

Adjara TV

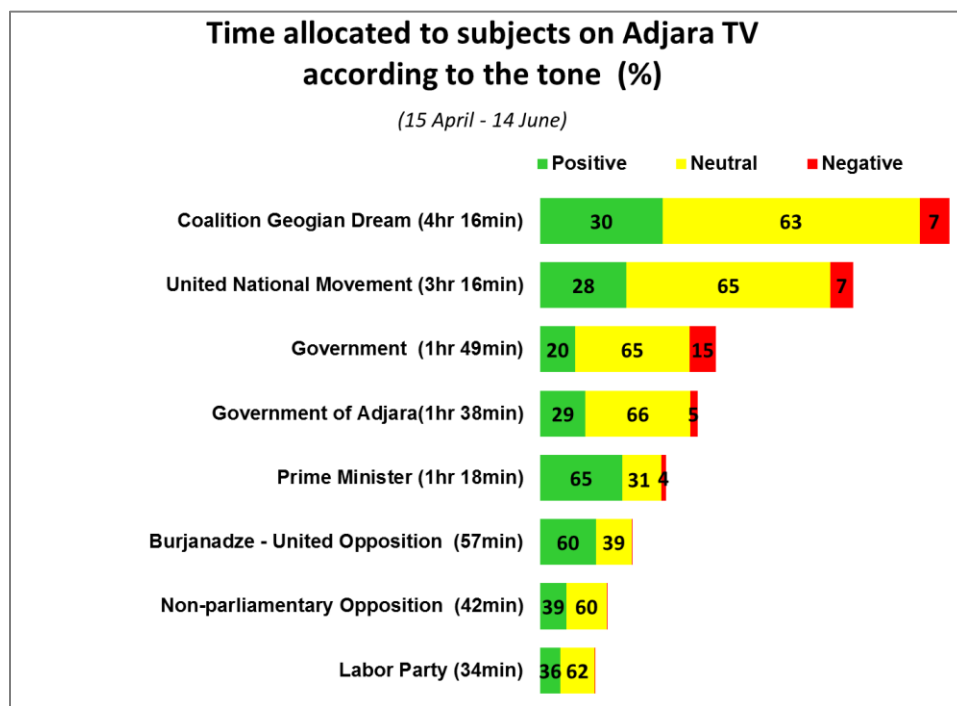
Main news releases of Adjara TV were mostly balanced and objective during the monitoring period. The parties presented in the stories had different positions. The journalists tried not to use judgmental vocabulary and to shift focus to the happenings. There was a lack of analytical stories observed in the main evening news releases on Adjara TV, but as the elections got closer, the number of analytical stories increased.

Adjara TV had extensive reports about the local issues: social problems of the population of Adjara, infrastructure projects and environmental problems. There was a trend observed: the journalists would follow up the development of topical issues during the whole week and keep the viewers updated about subsequent news.

As the elections got closer, the political parties and their election programs had more and more coverage. There were frequent stories about the election promises and goals of particular candidates. While covering the election topics, the political subjects were selected in a balanced way. Other than the stories about main political subjects, the Adjara TV also covered the representatives of other political forces and independent candidates as well.

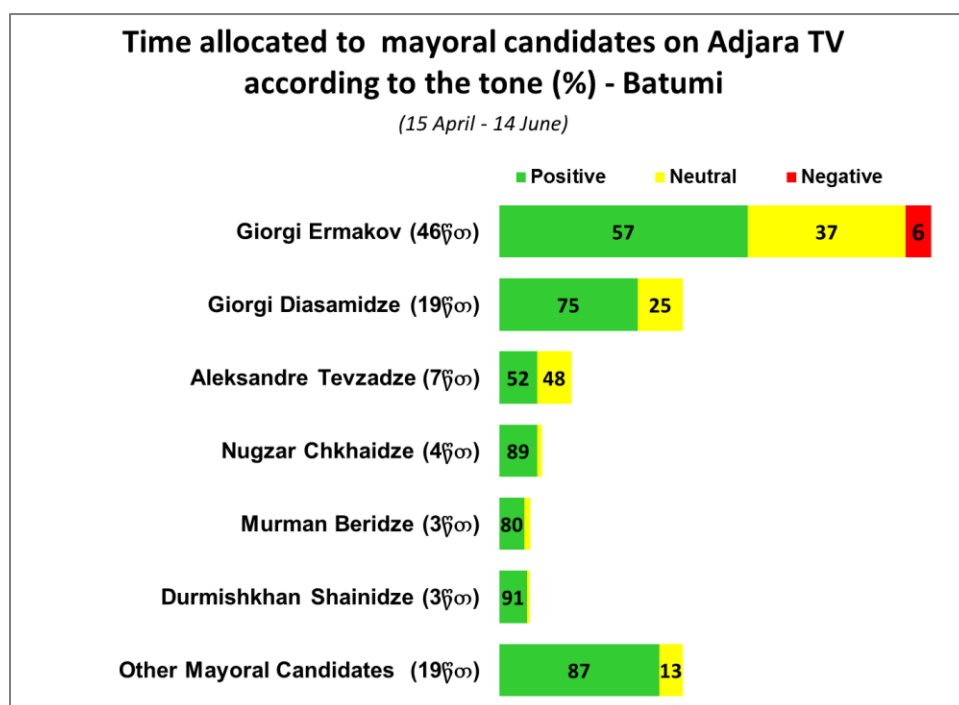
Adjara TV provided detailed coverage of the events taking place throughout the Autonomous Republic of Adjara on the Election Day, also the conduct of elections and observed violations. Performance and decisions of Sakrebulo of previous convocation were summarized. There was much time allocated to the second round appointed in some of the constituencies from June 16 until June 30, inclusive, also to the distribution of seats in the Sakrebulo of new convocation.

In total 19 minutes and 58 seconds were allocated to the monitoring subjects during the monitoring period. The most time was dedicated to the two political forces – the Coalition Georgian Dream (26%) and the United National Movement (20%) during the election period (April 15 – June 14). Significant portion of time was dedicated to the government (11%), the government of the Adjarian Autonomous Republic (10%) and the Prime Minister (8%). The Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement have almost equal shares of positive and negative tones. Among the most often covered subjects, the highest rate of positive tone was reported for the Prime Minister – 65%. As for the negative tone, in this respect the government had the highest rate – 15%.



The number of stories on election topics decreased after the elections (June 15 – June 30), which found its reflection on the reduced rate of positive tone. Despite this, the trends of subject coverage remain the same according to the allocated time.

As for the coverage of mayoral candidates, the most often coverage was observed for the data about candidates from Batumi during the period from April 15 until June 30 – in total 1 hour and 53 minutes. The most time was allocated to Giorgi Ermakov (44%), representative of the Coalition Georgian Dream and Giorgi Diasamidze (19%), candidate of the National Movement during the election period. It is noteworthy that unlike other channels, there is quite much time allocated to the other mayoral candidates as well – 19% of the total time. The candidates were mostly presented in a positive light during the coverage of election campaigns. It is noteworthy that one of the candidates was covered with negative tone except for Giorgi Ermakov, who got 6 percent of negative tone out of the total time dedicated to him. Coverage of mayoral candidates continued after the elections were over. However, the emphasis was laid on the candidates who made it to the second round – Giorgi Ermakov and Giorgi Diasamidze.



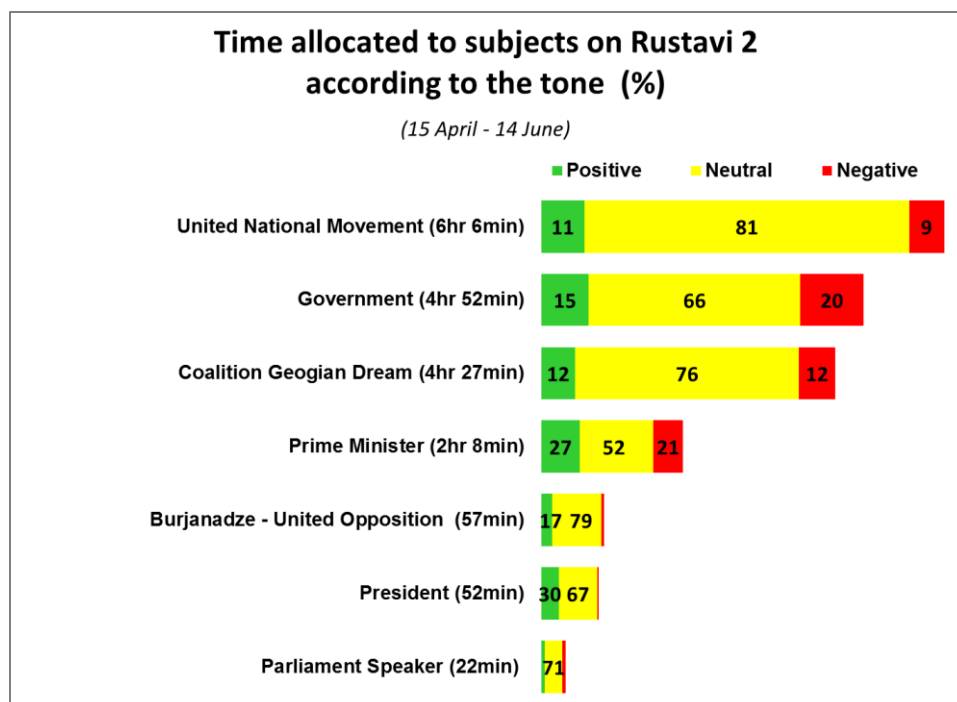
Rustavi 2

News releases on Rustavi 2 provided detailed coverage of topical issues during the monitoring period from April 15 until June 30. The balance among the respondents was observed, representing the comments of members of various parties and political unions, also opinions of experts and NGO representatives. The stories often would start with disseminating information and detailed about the covered issue, which made the contents of the story more understandable to the views. Last part of news programs used to be dedicated to a political talk show on Fridays on Rustavi 2, where the invited guests were talking about the topical and important issues.

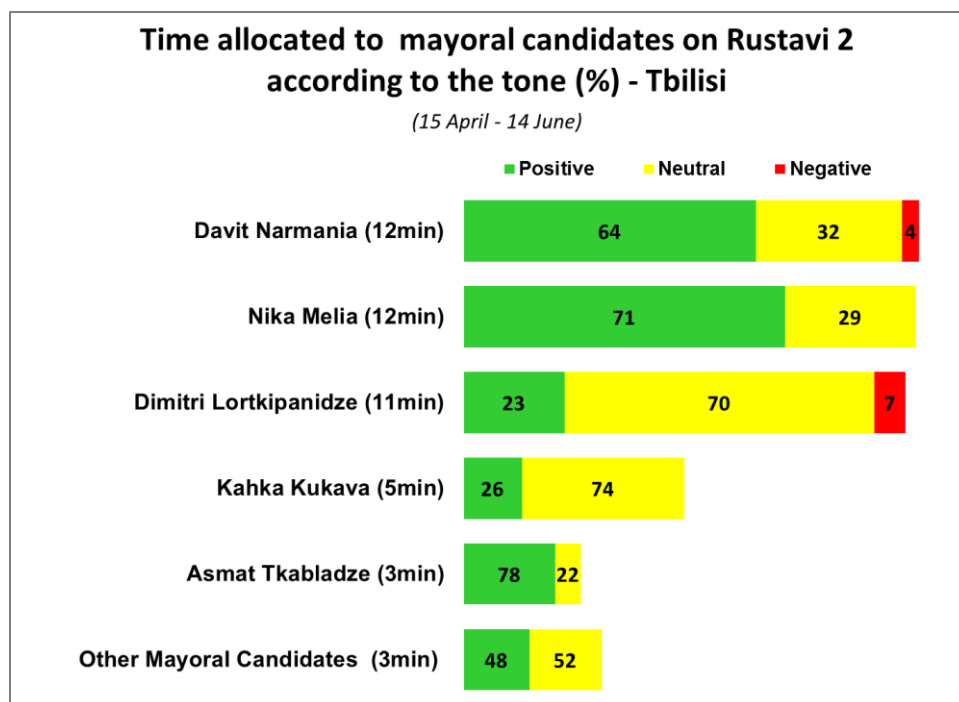
The stories mostly laid emphasis on the government, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement. Despite the government members were represented positively in some stories, there were also some critical stories about the government and the authorities, the number of which increased as the pre-election tension grew. Sequence of stories and the emphases laid in these stories, in general, often portrayed the government and members of the majority negatively, but on the other hand, the United National Movement and their activities were quite intensively covered in the positive context.

Rustavi 2 regularly covered the election period and laid main emphasis on the influence exercised against opposition candidates. There was much time dedicated to the confrontations between the activist of the National Movement and the Georgian Dream in Gardabani, Marneuli and Rustavi. The same context was present while reporting about the elections. The stories on elections often portrayed the government and the Coalition Georgian Dream in negative light, focusing on violations and rigging the elections, also on influencing the CEC by the government.

During the period from April 15 until June 30, the subjects were covered for almost 27 hours. During the election period (April 15 – June 14), most part of the time was dedicated to the United National Movement (30%), the government (24%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (22%) and the Prime Minister (10%). It is noteworthy that the highest rates of positive and negative tones were observed for the Prime Minister (27% and 21%) out of the most frequently covered subjects. It is also noteworthy that 20% of the time dedicated to the government was covered in negative tone. The most frequently covered subjects did not change after the elections, but relatively higher rates of negative tone were again reported for the representatives of the government and the Coalition Georgian Dream.



As for the time allocated to the mayoral candidates, it was Tbilisi mayoral candidates who were most frequently highlighted by the Rustavi 2 during the monitoring period. In total, about 1 hour and 10 minutes were allocated to them. The most time was dedicated to three candidates during the election period (April 15 – June 14): Davit Narmania (25%), Nika Melia (24%), and Dimitri Lortkipanidze (24%). The rate of positive tone is quite high in case of Davit Narmania (64%) and Nika Melia (71%), whereas only 23% of Dimitri Lortkipanidze’s time was covered with positive tone. Besides, Dimitri Lortkipanidze had the highest rates of negative tone (7%). The situation changed at some extent after the elections and the positive tone decreased for all the mayoral candidates.



Imedi

During the monitoring period in 2014, main news programs of Imedi mostly broadcasted balanced and impartial stories. There were several extensive and analytical stories at the beginning of the program. Many topics were highlighted exhaustively and the viewers got comprehensive information about the discussed issue. Opinions of the position, the opposition and experts were represented.

Imedi allocated quite much time to the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. In Several analytical stories were prepared about this topic. On the signature day, June 27, there were experts on EU issues invited to the main news program. Questions of Kronika's host were answered by the Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili as well.

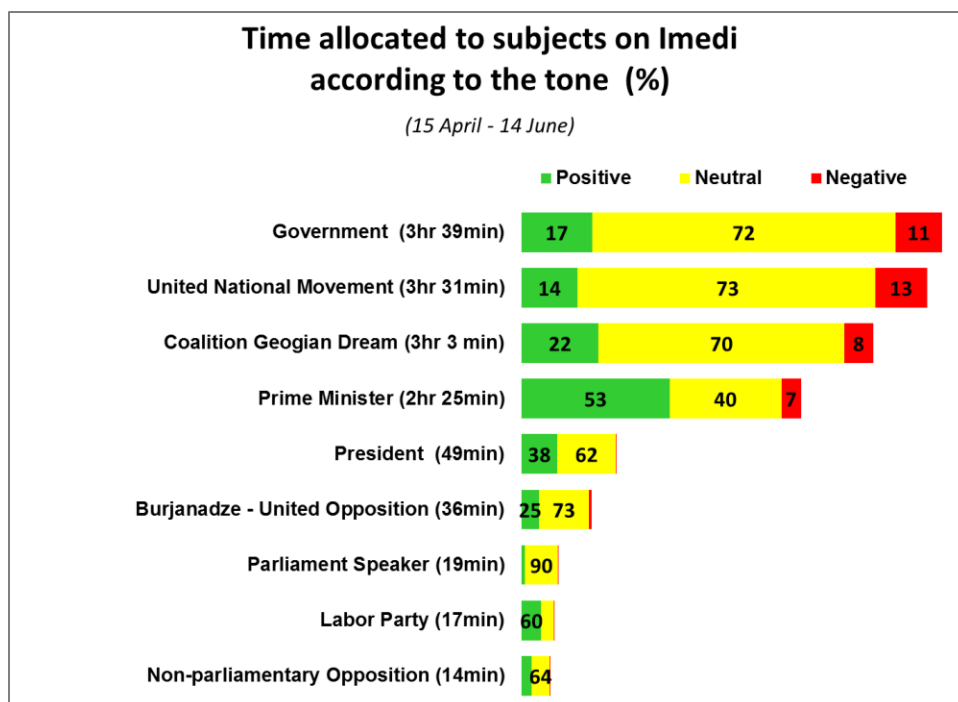
There were critical stories prepared during the monitoring period about the government and the ruling team, also about the National Movement as well. The journalists tried to maintain impartiality and neutrality even in those cases, when the politicians criticized their activities (for example, the Prime Minister's harsh criticism against journalists on June 4 and Nino Burjanadze's evaluation on May 27).

The electoral candidates were more and more actively covered as they were getting closer to the elections. Besides, there was quite much time dedicated to the coverage of Irakli

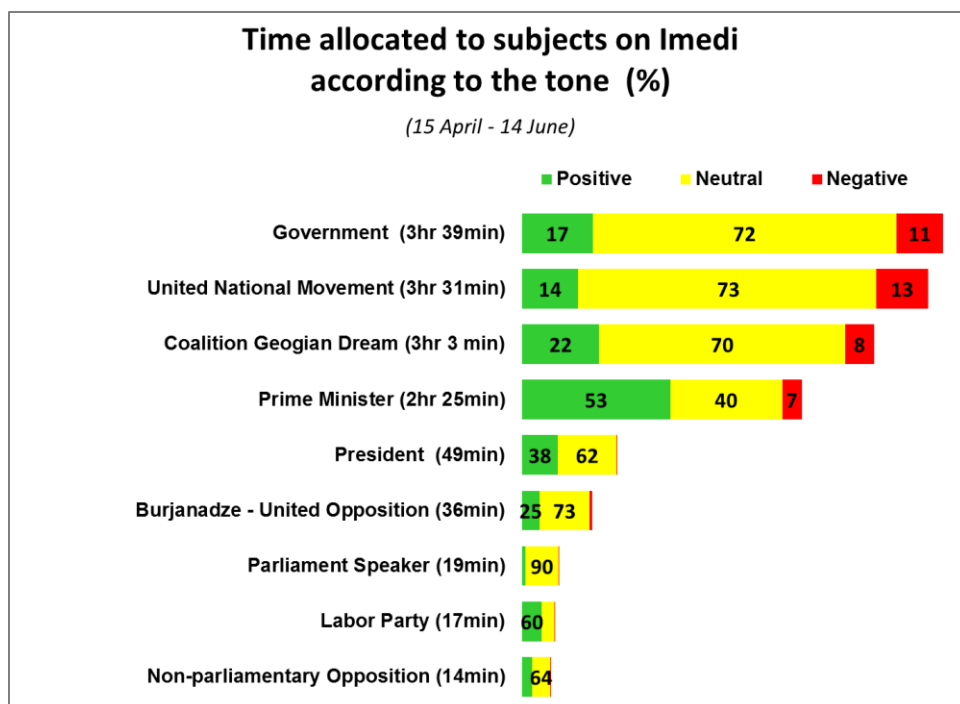
Gharibashvili from the end of May until June 14. Namely, he was broadcasted live on June 9, when he introduced candidate Gamgelis in Adjara and on June 13, when he summarized the election campaign of the Georgian Dream at the Sports Palace. We should also point out that the United National Movement held analogous events on June 13, but less time was allocated to its coverage. The balance and impartiality were maintained even after the elections, and the stories presented the positions of various political sides, NGOs and the civil sector.

Conduct of elections was actively reported on the Election Day, the voter turnout rate was reported, and results of the exit poll, which was commissioned by the Imedi, were announced at the end of the day. Representatives of various political parties and mayoral candidates were brought live in the evening news releases. All the key mayoral candidates of Tbilisi were given a chance to speak directly. There was much time allocated to the discussion of election results during the post-election period, also to the evaluations of politicians and experts, and violations and inaccuracies revealed during the election process, also to the probable second round in some cities and municipalities.

As for the time allocated to the subjects, in total, 21 hours and 49 minutes were allocated to them from April 15 until June 30. There were four main subjects identified, who got the most portions of time during the election period (from April 15 until June 14), and this time was equally distributed among them. According to the allocated time, the government ranked first with 24%, followed by the United National Movement with 23%, and the Coalition Georgian Dream with 20%. Irakli Gharibashvili got 16 percent of the time, and other subjects – 5% and less. We should point out the exceptionally high rate of positive tone observed for the Prime Minister – 53%. In case of other key subjects, the highest rate of positive tone – 22 percent – was observed for the Coalition Georgian Dream. As for the negative tone, it was quite equally distributed among the top-four subjects. The government and the United National Movement had 11 and 13 percent of negative tone, and the Coalition Georgian Dream and the Prime Minister – 8 and 7 percent.



As for the mayoral candidates, as it was the case on the majority of channels, Imedi also allocated most of the time to the candidates running in Tbilisi. Their campaigns and meetings were intensively covered, and consequently, there was a big share of positive tone observed for all of them. In total, they were covered for 1 hour and 40 minutes. The most time was allocated to Davit Narmania and Nika Melia before the elections, from April 15 until June 14, inclusive.



After the elections, the Tbilisi mayoral candidates got in total 17 minutes on Imedi. As it was before the elections, here the most coverage was provided for Davit Narmania (34%) and Nika Melia (28%). The highest rate of positive tone was reported for Nika Melia (38%) and the negative tone – Davit Narmania (10%).

Maestro

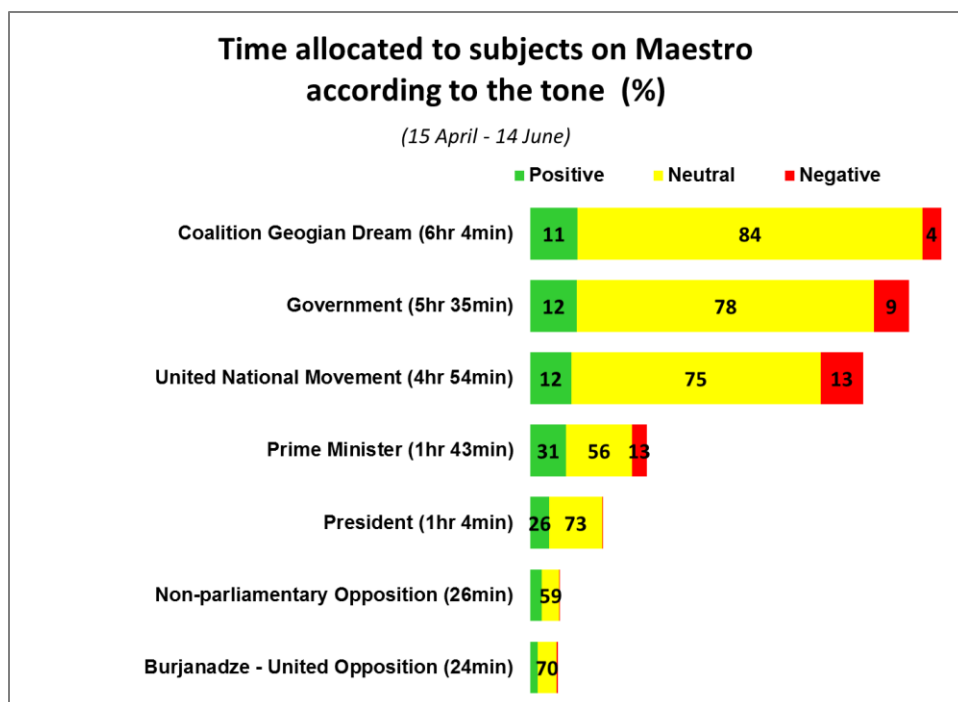
Starting from April 15 until June 30, main news releases of Maestro discussed actualities and significant topics for that given moment. The viewers were able to get exhaustive information, as opinions of various sides were represented. There were extensive and analytical stories, where the highlighted issues were discussed in details. Critical stories were prepared about the former and current authorities, without negative context. Despite severity of covered topics, the journalists did not try to aggravate the issue even more and refrained from presenting any party in a negative or positive context.

A few days after launching the election monitoring in 2014 (April 21), the format of main news program was changed on Maestro, and a talk-show component was added to the news release, where the hosts would discuss actualities of the day together with the invited guest. There were few cases during the monitoring, when heated arguments emerged between the various political subjects and Maestro's journalists during such live broadcasts.

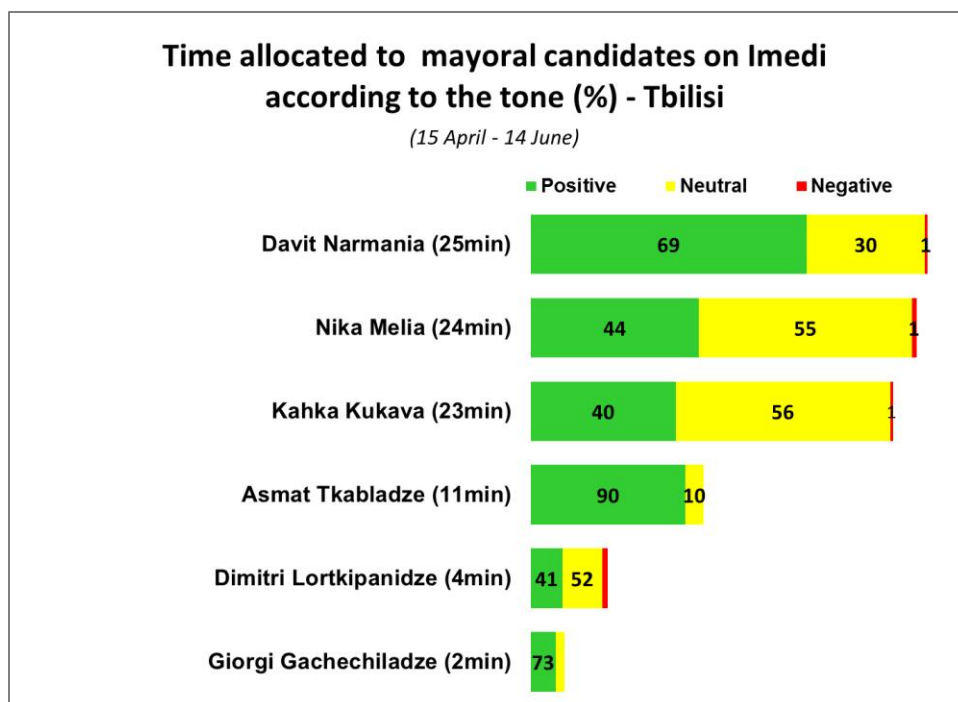
A quite harsh talk took place on May 16 between Nino Zhizhilashvili and Erosi Kitsmarishvili, mayoral candidate from Rustavi, who was not given an opportunity to talk about his election program and future plans, because he basically had to answer to the question related to the events of TV company Maestro in 2011. It was felt that the host was a biased party and protected the interests of Maestro. Besides, Mikheil Saakashvili was brought live into Maestro's air on June 7, and Khatia Kvatadze often interrupted him, and her questions and tone were extremely ironical. Although she had mentioned in the beginning that the talks would only be about the foreign policy of the country, pursuant to the respondent's request, she still asked many questions to him about the domestic policy of Georgia, the current government and period of Saakashvili's presidency.

During the election period, Maestro intensively covered the meetings of electoral subjects with population, their election programs and promises. Main emphasis was laid on Tbilisi and Tbilisi mayoral candidates on the Election Day. The viewers were able to get familiar with the results of exit poll that were commissioned by Rustavi 2 and by Imedi as well. The post-election period was more focused on the signing of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union, and also on appointment of the date for the second round of elections.

Starting from April 15 until June 30, inclusive, Maestro allocated 27 hours and 27 minutes to the coverage of political subjects. The most time was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream (28%), the government (26%) and the United National Movement (23%) during the election period. We could observe low rates of both positive and negative tones for all the subjects, with the exceptions of Prime Minister – 31% and the President – 26%, who got higher rates of positive tone than other subjects. Positive tone ranged between 11%-12% among the most frequently covered subjects. As for the negative tone, here the highest rate was reported for the United National Movement and the Prime Minister – 13%. This trend did not change after the elections and all the subjects kept their low rates of positive and negative tones.



Maestro allocated 1 hour and 43 minutes to the Tbilisi mayoral candidates during the monitoring period. The most time was dedicated to Davit Narmania (27%), Nika Melia (27%) and Kakha Kukava (25%). Unlike political subjects, high rates of positive tone were observed for mayoral candidates. This rate was the highest in case of Davit Narmania – 69%. As for the negative tone, it was almost equal for all the candidates – 1% - 1%.



After the elections, the most time was dedicated to the candidates who made it to the second round – Davit Narmania and Nika Melia. The highest rates of positive tone was observed for Nika Melia – 46%, and the highest rate of negative tone – Davit Narmania – 13%.

Kavkasia

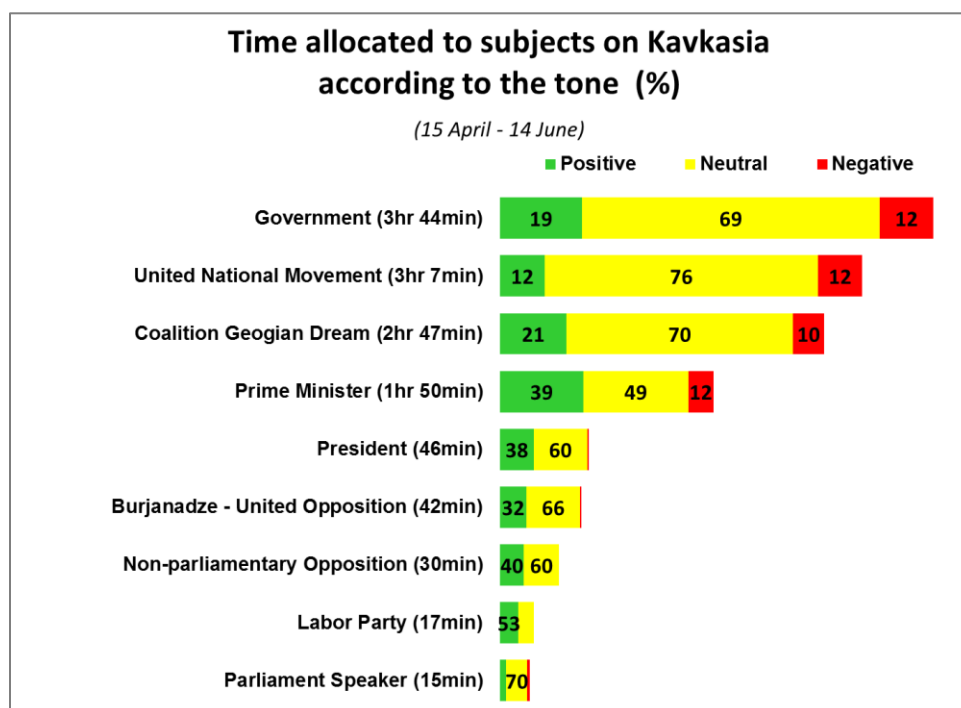
Starting from April 15, until June 30, inclusive, main news programs of the TV Company Kavkasia were characterized with neutral and balanced stories. The journalists were trying to deliver positions of all the sides without their own judgments. However, these circumstances often had negative impact on the quality of stories. Majority of the news was distinguished with presenting dry facts only, without analytical development of the story. Various gaps remained to be a problem during the whole monitoring period. Namely: usage of one and the same pictures in various stories, journalists made mistakes when identifying the respondents, and coverage without subtitles.

Coverage of political parties and candidates was basically limited to showing the meetings of politicians with the population during the election period. The news release was aired in an ordinary format on the Election Day, and was fully dedicated to the elections,

highlighting the electoral process, exist-poll results, statements of various political parties, electoral violations and comments of main mayoral candidates of Tbilisi.

After the elections, main emphasis was laid on the evaluation of results by the experts and politicians, also on the observed violations and possibility of the second round.

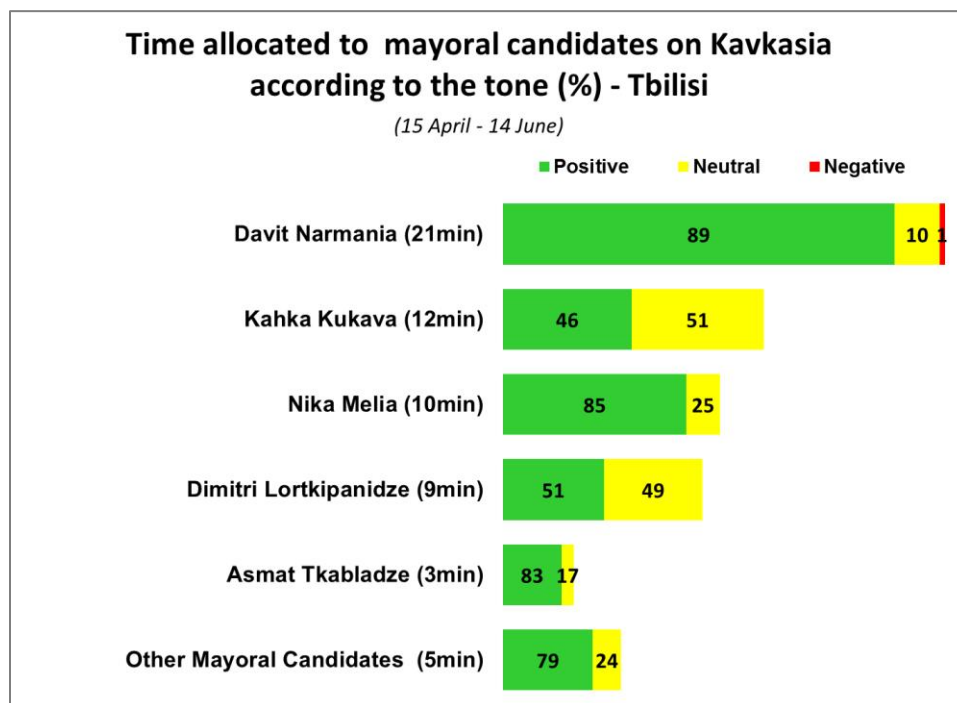
In total, 18 hours and 18 minutes were dedicated to the subjects during the monitoring period. The most time was allocated to the government during the election period (26%), also to the United National Movement (22%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (20%) and the Prime Minister (13%). Among these subjects, the highest rates of positive tone were observed for the Prime Minister – 39%. As for the negative tone, its rate was almost equal for the most frequently covered subjects and ranged between 10%-12%.



This trend did not change after the elections: the highest rate of positive tone was again reported for the Prime Minister, and negative tone ranged between 8%-11% for the most frequently covered subjects. The only exception was the Prime Minister, as the negative tone was only used for 3% of the time dedicated to him.

As for the coverage of mayoral candidates, the most extensive coverage was provided for the Tbilisi mayoral candidates during the period of April 15 – June 30, and in total 1 hour and 21 minutes was dedicated to them. The most frequently covered subject was Davit Narmania during the election period (33%), and almost equal time was dedicated to Kakha

Kukava (19%), Nika Melia (16%) and Dimitri Lortkipanidze (15%). This monitoring period was characterized with positive tone used towards mayoral candidates, which from its side was caused by the coverage of election activities of candidates. The highest rate of positive tone was observed for Davit Narmania – 89%. However, he was the one with the highest rate of negative tone – 1%. After the elections the coverage of mayoral candidates decreased. The most often covered topic was about Davit Narmania (40%), and the remaining time was equally distributed among other candidates.



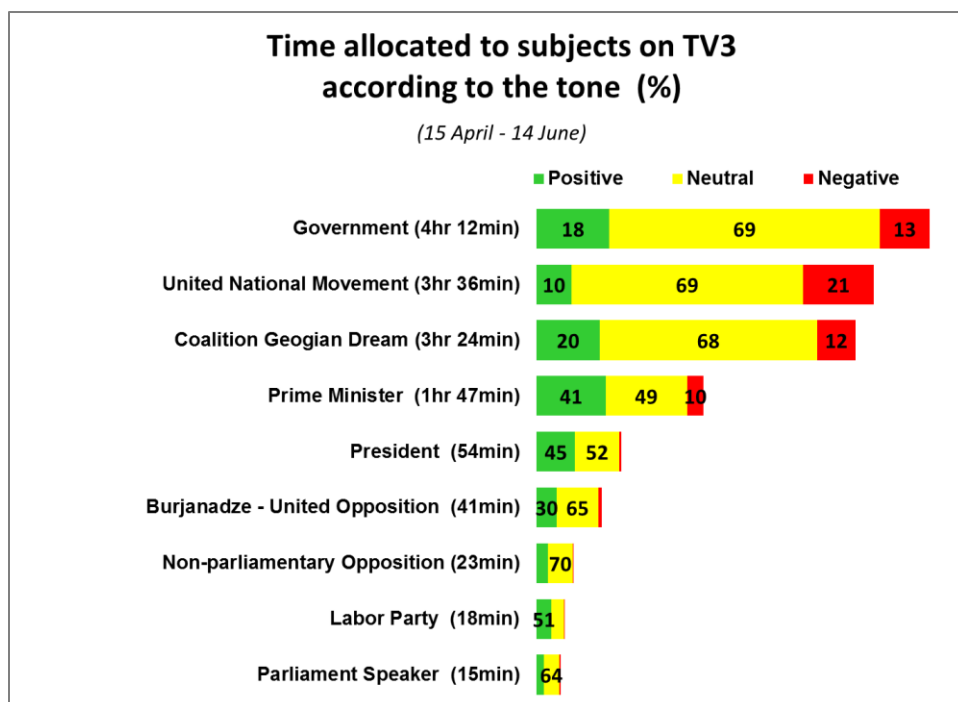
TV3

Main evening news releases of TV3 intensively and critically covered actualities and events taking place in the country. The stories were analytical and were focused on providing profound and multifaceted information to the viewers. Journalists of TV3 were trying to cover the news in a balanced way, in adherence to ethical norms. However, we should point out evaluations and critical comments made before the stories by Nana Lezhava, host of the main evening news program, which often created negative context to the topic to be covered.

There was much time dedicated to the election campaign, the candidates' meetings with population and electoral violations. These stories, which were broadcasted by the main news programs on TV 3, were equally critical to the government and the Coalition Georgian Dream, also to the United National Movement representatives. Besides, analytical stories were prepared about influencing the electoral subjects, usage of administrative resources before the elections and Tbilisi mayoral candidates.

The news program was fully dedicated to the conduct of elections on the Election Day on June 15, broadcasting the elections process in various regions. Out of Tbilisi candidates, the program reported the comments of Nika Melia, Davit Narmania and Dimitri Lortkipanidze, and evaluations of mayoral candidates of various parties in Batumi and Akhaltsikhe. Exit-poll results were announced to the viewers. As for the post-election period, TV3 laid main emphasis on the violations. Representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream and those of the United National Movement were negatively represented in some stories, as they were blaming each other of rigging the elections.

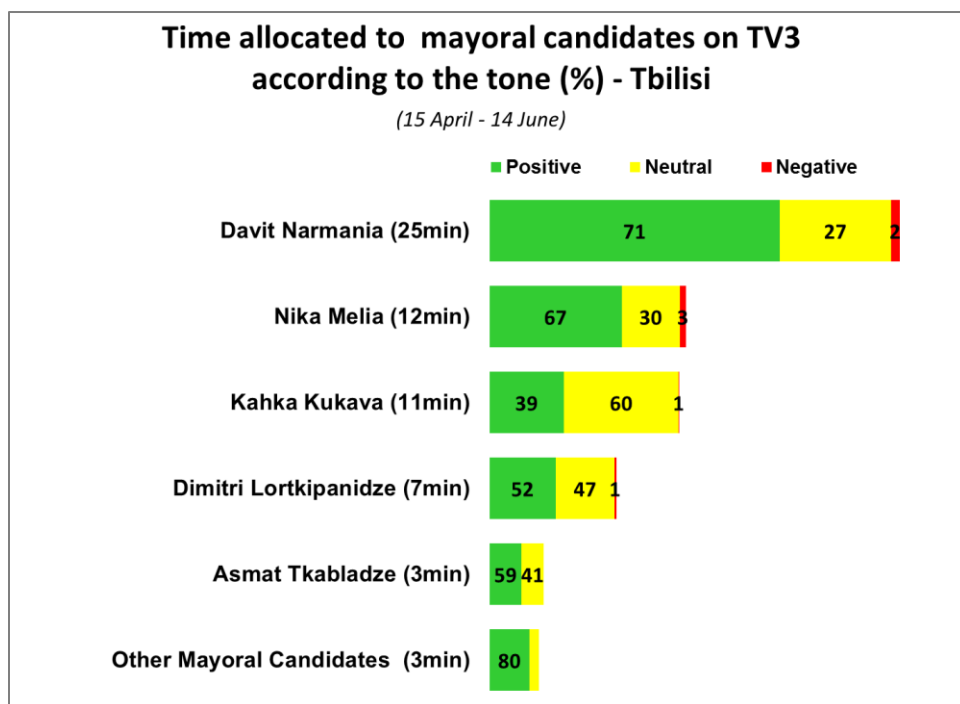
During the monitoring period, TV3 allocated 21 hours and 54 minutes to the subjects. The most time was dedicated to the government (27%) during the election period, also to the United National Movement (23%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (22%) and the Prime Minister (11%). Like other channels, the Prime Minister had the highest rate of positive tone among the most frequently covered subjects – 41%. As for the negative tone, the highest rate was observed for the United National Movement – 21%.



The situation did not change after the elections. The Prime Minister still has the highest rate of positive tone, and the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream – highest rate of negative tone – 17%-17%.

Same way as other channels the main news releases of TV3 most frequently covered the Tbilisi mayoral candidates during the monitoring period, and in total 1 hour and 12 minutes was dedicated to them. The most frequent coverage was provided for Davit Narmania (39%). He also had the highest rate of positive tone – 71%. In general, we should point out the high rates of positive tone for all the mayoral candidates. As for the negative tone, it was quite low for all the candidates, and ranged from 1% to 3%.

Coverage of mayoral candidates decreased significantly on TV3 after the elections, and only Davit Narmania and Nika Melia were covered. Besides, the total time allocated for Nika Melia was done in neutral tone, whereas 3% of the time allocated for Davit Narmania was positive, and 35% - negative.



Conclusion

The monitored TV channels covered the 2014 local elections in a balanced way in their main evening news, and provided detailed information to the viewers about the subjects participating in the elections. There were no gross violations of journalistic standards revealed while reporting about the political parties and election subjects, neither was there evident bias to any political party.

Following recommendations were developed based on the election monitoring results of 2014 and its key findings for objective and exhaustive coverage of the election period:

- Rather than laying emphasis on the candidates' meetings with population, the reports about election campaigns of political parties and candidates should be more focused on their programs and promises and how realistic their implementation is, or how this should happen, and how this particular promise falls within the official competency;
- Despite the number of analytical stories increased as compared to the monitoring of previous years, it is preferable to maintain this trend. Besides, topics of analytical stories should not depend on the issues raised on politicians and they should depend on the needs of the community;

- For the profound and analytical coverage of various topics, it is preferable to deepen knowledge of journalists in the fields they will be regularly reporting about. This way the journalists will be ready to ask more reasoned questions to the respondents, act in opposition to them and the provide competent analysis in their stories;
- It is recommended that the positive trends (less polarization, more analytical stories, diversity of opinions in the stories), which were identified as the result of 2014 monitoring, be continued during non-election and non-monitoring periods.



Results of Media Monitoring of 2014 Local Government Elections in Georgia

Monitoring of TV Channels (Political Talk Shows)

April 15 – June 30, 2014

In connection to the local government elections of 2014, CRRC Georgia implemented the media monitoring within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP. The monitoring was performed for all the political talk shows broadcasted during the prime time on the Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia, TV3, and Tabula. The following talk shows fell under the monitoring:

Channel One of the Public Broadcaster: “First Studio” – Eka Mishveladze;

Rustavi 2: “Choice” – Giorgi Gabunia, “Position” – Nino Shubladze;

Imedi: “Politics Time” – Tea Sichinava, “Reaction” – Inga Grigolia;

Maestro: “Subjective Opinion” – Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia; “Debates on Maestro” – Natia Gamtsemlidze;

Kavkasia: “Spectrum Studio” – Davit Akubardia, “Barrier” – Nino Jangirashvili and Irakli Kordzaia (Alexander Elisashvili until May 1);

Tabula: “Focus” – Salome Ugulava, Nino Macharashvili and Irakli Kiknavelidze, “Theorem” – Tamar Chergoleishvili.

Within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections” CRRC Georgia monitored main news releases of TV Channels in 2012 and 2013. The monitoring in 2012 was held from July 9 until November 30, and seven TV channels were monitored: Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Maestro, Kavkasia, Channel 9. The monitoring in 2013 covered the period from September 16 until November 15 and covered the

following channels: Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia, TV3 and Tabula.

Methodology and Analysis

Election media monitoring of talk shows consisted of only a qualitative part. The monitoring was focused on the guests invited to the programs, also the topic and journalists, and program hosts as well. It was evaluated how much equal conditions the journalist was creating for the guests: whether the journalist's questions were equally demanding/lenient to all the guests; or whether the host of the talk show let the guests express themselves and when s/he interrupted them. Besides, the monitoring evaluated how much the host was trying to get in-depth information from the guests and to provide comprehensive information to the audience regarding the discussed issue; or if the journalist identified the source of information when asking questions or making a comment, and what kind of non-verbal language s/he was using. The monitoring also observed the usage of hate speech in talk shows (offensive or humiliating phrases/statements) by the hosts, and their reaction in case if their guests were using the hate speech. Besides, the journalists' role and involvement in the program was evaluated as well.

Key Findings

During the 2014 local government elections, main TV Channels of Georgia broadcasted diverse spectrum of talk shows during the prime time. There were political talk shows, which discussed the events taking place in the country and then, as the elections got closer, laid their focus on the involved parties and candidates. There were two talk shows that were created specifically for the elections, also the debates, which were focused on presenting the programs of various candidates, and identification and discussion of their positions regarding various issues.

It is noteworthy that despite the parliamentary election period was much more tense in 2012 than in subsequent years, there were more political talk shows broadcasted in 2013 and 2014. Representatives of the government and political parties, also the NGO sector and experts were actively involved in the programs, and viewers were very well informed about the election processes and the ongoing events. Compared to previous years, political talk shows in 2014 provided much more information to the viewers about the election process and participating subjects. Special focus was laid on the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral and majoritarian candidates.

Monitoring of 2014 revealed that the majority of talk shows did not violate journalistic standards. The hosts maintained neutral position in most cases and did not create privileged conditions to any of the sides. They were trying to provide leveled field to all the invited guests. Basically, the journalists did not use hate speech and unethical vocabulary. The only exception was Davit Akubardia, host of the Spectrum Studio, who was not reluctant to use abusive terminology and hate speech.

The hosts used to express their sympathies in the talk shows towards the former or current authorities in 2012 and 2013, but this trend was almost never revealed in 2014. However, the situation is different in this respect in talk shows of Tabula, as compared to other channels, especially the talk show Theorem, where the host's position was clear in most cases, which coincided with the position of the former authorities.

Channel One

First Studio

The political talk show "First Studio" is broadcasted twice a week via the Public Broadcaster, analyzing the actualities of the week. It is hosted by Eka Mishveladze. The program highlighted not only the events of the week from April 15 until 30, but also the issues related to the elections. Following guests were invited to the program during the monitoring period: members of the parliamentary majority and the government, also representatives of the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition, the NGO sector and experts.

The program was quite balanced, and the journalists were impartial and neutral. In Majority of programs, the guests represented all the sides around the discussed issue and all of them had an opportunity to express their opinion. Correspondingly, the viewers were able to get diverse information about the topic. Eka Mishveladze was actively involved in the program, she was well aware of the topic of the discussion and asked exhaustive questions. In some programs the journalist would rather act as a moderator and was not harsh or critical, but in some programs she asked demanding questions and tried to present an opposing idea. The journalist was asking questions from the position of the other party and tried to formulate her question this way. Eventually, there was an equal attitude to the guests and nobody enjoyed any privileged situation.

There was no diversion from the announced topic during the monitoring period in the talk show. The host did not use or disseminate any unreliable or unverified information. Neither the journalist nor the guests used hate speech or politically incorrect vocabulary.

Rustavi 2

Choice

The public-political talk show “Choice” is broadcasted by Rustavi 2 every Tuesday, hosted by Giorgi Gabunia. The program dedicated much time to the election issues during the monitoring period, such as: pre-election moratorium, election programs and campaigns of various political parties, election results. Other than electoral topics, the talk show also highlighted other events of current significance. For example, the program discussed anti-discrimination law, issues related to the Sakdrisi deposit and law on regulating the wiretaps. The guests of the program represented a broad political spectrum, including the members of parliamentary majority and minority, also representatives of non-parliamentary opposition and the government. Due to the format of the talk show, the audience also had an opportunity to express their opinions.

The host Giorgi Gabunia hosted the program quite actively and positively. His questions were mostly demanding and related to the issues of current significance. The journalist tried to get comprehensive information from the guests and also to act as their opponent. Sometimes the host’s remarks were ironical, but the observation proved that this did not lead to the creation of advantageous condition for any respondent in the programs during the monitoring period, or vice versa. We should point out the first part of the program of May 6, which discussed the covert video recordings found at Rustavi 2. Despite the program’s topic was directly related to the professional field of journalism and the TV company, Giorgi Gabunia maintained impartiality and tried not to express his own position.

The airtime was dedicated to various parties during the elections, so that they could promote their programs. In these cases, the party candidates, leaders and members were represented in the program. During these programs the respondents were able to talk freely and for a long time. Correspondingly, Giorgi Gabunia was less involved in

the program. The host almost never interrupted the guests and allocated main airtime to them, enabling them to fully speak about their promises.

It is noteworthy that Giorgi Gabunia usually used reliable source while asking a question or making a comment, and quoted the statements. He never used hate speech or articulated any offensive phrases. Neither was something like this observed from the side of the guests.

Position

Another political talk show on Rustavi 2 – “Position”, hosted by Nino Shubladze, was selected for the monitoring alongside other programs. However, the talk show was aired on May 9 for the last time. The host stated on May 12 that she was suspending her journalistic activities for some time. Consequently, only 4 programs fell under the monitoring during this period, where the last one was hosted by Giorgi Gabunia instead of Nino Shubladze. As far as the election campaigns have not entered in a very active phase yet during this period, there was little time allocated to the election topics and the emphasis was laid on current events. The program was distinguished with diverse number of guests. They represented the current authorities and the opposition as well.

Nino Shubladze was actively involved in the program. She listened to the guests attentively and often interfered with her comments. She acted as an opponent to her guests and provided contrary arguments against their opinions. She also played the role of a moderator and tried to let all the guests express themselves.

We did not observe any usage of hate speech by the host or guests. However, at one instance the guest Father Davit mentioned the television of the journalist Tamar Chergoleishvili in a bad context. The journalist reacted on that and interrupted the guest.

Imedi

Reaction

There is a talk show “Reaction” broadcasted on the EV Company Imedi every. As a rule, the program is hosted by Inga Grigolia and consists of several blocs. The audience and invited guests are actively involved in the talk show. During the monitoring period,

Reaction dedicated the majority of topics to the elections. Inga Grigolia announced in the program of May 2 that the Election Rubric, so called Election Air was now open, after which the studio was mostly allocated to the key political parties and their supported in every program. Considering this format, the air of Reaction was dedicated to almost all the key political forces and their representatives. The electoral candidates had an opportunity to talk about their political plans and to provide information to the voters.

The host was actively involved in the program. It was a characteristic feature for Inga Grigolia to host the program emotionally, to present facts dramatically, which was especially felt when announcing the topic. All these things were even more intensified with the attached stories, music and the hot's tone.

The journalist asked many questions, tried to get exhaustive answers to all the questions asked, and acted in opposition to the respondents irrespective of their political affiliation. She was equally demanding and critical towards everyone and asked for precise answers to the questions. However, this trend was less present when the businessman Levan Vasadze visited the program. There was an impression created that it was the guest who managed the program and not the journalist herself. Vasadze was mostly speaking on behalf of the people, and Inga Grigolia did not manage to effectively oppose to him or ask in-depth questions. Besides, during Levan Vasadze's visit they showed a video about the sex manuals used in Scandinavian countries for the children aged 4-6. It is noteworthy that the host did not ask additional questions about reliability or authenticity of this information. However, we should note that there were cases in other programs, when the host would not agree to play the video material that contained any doubtful sources.

Inga Grigolia did not use hate speech or politically incorrect expressions; and when the program participants said something unethical, she always encouraged them to be more politically correct.

Politics Time

"Politics Time" is a weekly talk show, which is broadcasted via Imedi on Tuesdays, hosted by Thea Sichinava. Members of the parliamentary majority and minority, NGO representatives, experts and other public figures were visiting the program during the monitoring period. There were many issues discussed in the program during this

period, not only those related to the elections, but also others concerning the domestic and foreign policy of Georgia.

In general, “Politics Time” is a balanced talk show in regards to the diversity of invited guests and relevance of selected topics. During the monitoring period, the journalist was trying to present different opinion and opposed to the guests with counter arguments. Her questions were always asked from a different position and were quite demanding and informative.

Thea Sichinava did not demonstrate bias or subjective attitude towards any side. However, there was a case observed during the monitoring period, when the host received a negative comment from the guest, an MP Tamar Kordzaia, who said that she did not manage to properly allocate time to her (program of June 3). It is noteworthy that the journalist was more actively involved in the program when she was alone versus the respondent; and she played a role of a passive listener when the guests started to debate in the program.

The programs broadcasted during the monitoring period did not reveal any facts of deviation from topic, or usage of hate speech or unethical expressions. When the guests used offensive phrases, the host would ask them to be more politically correct. Thea Sichinava did not use unreliable or unverified information in her reasoning or when asking a question.

Maestro

Subjective Opinion

The talk show “Subjective Opinion” is broadcasted every day via Maestro from Monday through Friday. The program is hosted by Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia. The program hosted members of the authorities and parliamentary majority, also the representatives of the opposition, NGOs and the community, also the electoral subjects, mayoral and majoritarian candidates. The program is divided into two parts, where the hosts discuss the news of the day in the first half, and then continue to talk about actualities together with the guests in the second half. There were public-political events, also the elections and electoral campaigns of various political parties and coalition discussed in the program.

The hosts were actively involved in the program. The talk show “Subjective Opinion” was distinguished with the diversity of topics: during the first half of the program,

where the guests were not present, Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia were discussing several topics, stated their opinions regarding the ongoing events, made evaluations and gave recommendations to political figures. Sometimes there was ironical attitude expressed verbally or non-verbally by the hosts in the first half of the program.

As for the second half of the program, when the hosts were joined by the guests in the studio, the journalists asked quite demanding and harsh questions and tried to ask probing questions in order to get additional and comprehensive information. However, there was no bias towards any particular side observed in their questions and attitudes. They were critical and straightforward towards the authorities and the opposition as well. It is notable that their questions were more demanding when they were talking to the politicians, but as for other guests, the hosts would mostly be satisfied with informative questions.

Majority of the broadcasted programs were informative and created a picture for the audience about important topics of the day. When deciding which respondent to select for the program, it was always considered how competent they would be for speaking about the topics of the discussion. The hosts did not disseminate unreliable or unverified information. However, sometimes they did not specify the source of information and were relied upon so called “widespread information”, or their own assumptions. The program hosts or students did not use hate speech or unethical vocabulary.

Debates on Maestro

A new public-political talk show “Debates on Maestro” started on Maestro since May. The program was aired live twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, hosted by Natia Gamtsemlidze. The talk show overviewed the electoral or other issues of current significance through debating with the guests invited to the studio.

The program was mostly focused on discussing the electoral processes and the events taking place in the Georgian politics. It is noteworthy that most part of the guests was representing the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement. Natia Gamtsemlidze was characterized with asking quite demanding questions from a different position. At the same time, she did not state her position, and if the discussion turned into harsh arguments, the host would refer to a more neutral position, trying to regulate the arguments and to let the talk show participants express their opinions as

much as possible. However, the respondents sometimes were dissatisfied, as they did not have an opportunity for free talk.

Despite the above mentioned, the guests were provided with equal conditions in the program, and the journalist was equally rigorous in opposing them. Natia Gamtsemlidze hosted the program in adherence to the journalistic standard, was not trying to state her position or use hate speech, and avoided an unreliable source of information.

Kavkasia

Barrier

The political talk show “Barrier” is broadcasted via Kavkasia four times a day. The program used to host by Nino Jangirashvili and Alexander Elisashvili, but he stated on May 1 that he was leaving the program as he was running for Tbilisi Sakrebulo. He was replaced by Irakli Kordzaia, who started to host the program together with Nino Jangirashvili. The program was distinguished with the diversity of guests and optics. During the monitoring period, which lasted from April 15 until June 30, inclusive, the program was hosted by representatives of various political forces, electoral subjects, NGO sector, community and experts. The guests were talking about the events taking place in the country, and the development of political and economic issues and election campaign as well.

The program and its conduct were often different and depended on which journalist was hosting a particular program. The journalists had different hosting styles. Alexander Elisashvili was characterized with asking general questions without using probing questions. He seldom interfered in the program for obtaining detailed information. He would often observe heated debates quietly. Elisashvili treated the guests mostly with equal attitude and gave equal opportunities to them to speak about their programs. He did not call on to the guests to be politically correct when they used abusive vocabulary. Moreover, once he himself used a politically incorrect word, when he called “son of a bitch” to Davit Kezerashvili.

Nino Jangirashvili was trying to present an opinion that would be different from that of the guest, and use the opinions expressed in the studio in her questions. The host was neutral to all the respondents, and equally opposed to them, as she presented different position. She often used probing questions in order to get detailed information about

the question asked. When there were several guests in the studio and the conversation turned into heated debates and arguments, the journalist could not keep order, though she tried. Nino Jangirashvili did not use hate speech, but neither she reacted on the cases of usage hate speech by the guests.

Irakli Kordzaia's programs were distinguished as he had co-hosts: representatives of various media. Various representatives of the Georgian media were represented in "Barrier" on Monday, and they asked quite demanding questions to the hosts together with Irakli Kordzaia. We did not observe any case during the monitoring when the host would use any personal attitude towards any particular subject or political force. Irakli Kordzaia did not interfere the guests except the cases when she asked a question or tried to distribute time to other guests as well. The journalist had equal attitude to all the respondents in the program. He did not use any politically incorrect vocabulary or hate speech.

Spectrum Studio

The talk show Spectrum Studio is aired every evening via Kavkasia, hosted by Davit Akubardia. During the monitoring period, Akubardia overviewed the important events of the day, also the less significant issues together with the guests. There were experts and NGO representatives prevailing among the respondents. However, representatives of the authorities, political parties and mayoral candidates, who were running for local government elections, were among the guests as well. There were different topics discussed in the program from almost all fields of public-political life. The host did not announce topic of the program in most cases. There were cases, when the talks were about various issues during one program or section. Correspondingly, the respondents and the host as well often went beyond the topic of the discussion.

Davit Akubardia hosted the program in a quite informal, in a "homey" manner. He was actively involved in the program and although he asked little number of questions, he often stated his opinions. He informally addressed the guests in most cases and was never reluctant to address them with words of appraisal. The host seldom probed in order to get information and rarely expressed any opinion that would be different from that of the guests. The journalist interrupted the guests, if he wanted to emphasis his own position. There was a case observed, when there was only one side represented in the program, but the guests, who were invited to the program with the status of 'experts', were selected based on subjective criteria. The host and his guests often used information that would be provided by unverified and doubtful sources.

Majority of Davit Akubardia's opinions were ironical. He often used offensive and humiliating phrases towards various structures and organizations. The host did not respond to the politically incorrect speeches by the respondents, but on the contrary, he would rather ask encourage the guests to get even harsher. For example, he asked Oleg Iadze in the program of June 19: *"Oh, man, why are you saying that this is not right? I said it is cheeky, right? Say something harsher, ok? Say that it is a bullshit"*.

Tabula

Theorem

Tamar Chergoleishvili's talk show "Theorem" is aired via Tabula on Mondays and Thursdays. The program is co-authored by Salome Barker. Topics of the program are very diverse and touch upon political, economic, social and cultural issues. The guests are competent and relevant to the topics of the discussion. There is a rubric Vox Populi in the second part of the program, where the people express their opinions about the topic of the program. The expressed opinions are diverse, a more than one position is represented.

The program was quite informative while discussing social and cultural topics during the monitoring period. The journalist was always well aware of the topic. Her questions were never general or meager. She provided a deep analysis of the issue, asked probing and many additional questions, also stated facts and arguments. As for the programs on political issues, here the lack of balance was observed in regards to the political affiliation of the presented respondents: representatives or supporters of the current government were less represented in the program. The host explained such imbalance saying that the representatives of the authorities refused to participate in the program. Hence abovementioned, the talk show was often biased and mostly critical towards the government while discussing the political topics.

Tamar Chergoleishvili was sometimes characterized with ironical tone to various political subjects. The host would have her own vision established regarding certain issues, and actively expressed them during the program. It is noteworthy that the host's behavior was different in the second part of the program, when the topic was not discussed in the political slight. She acted as a moderator, who did not interrupt the guests, did not state her position and was limited only to informative questions.

Focus

“Focus” is a daily public-political talk show aired via Tabula, highlighting the important events of the day. The program has three hosts, who lead the program alternatively: Salome Ugulava, Nino Macharashvili and Irakli Kiknavelidze. Current political events were discussed in “Focus” from April 15 until June 30, and much time was also allocated to the election activities.

Despite the program was hosted by the members of the parliamentary majority and minority as well, NGO representatives and experts, still, there was a lack of balance felt in the program in regards to the political affiliation of the invited guests. At the beginning of the program, the journalists often pointed out that the members of the ruling coalition were invited, but they could not make it or refused to participate in the program. As far as the official representatives seldom visited the talk show, there was more criticism seen towards the authorities. The invited experts often shared such position and did not demonstrate different attitude about the issue.

The journalists were actively involved in the program, allocated equal time to their guests and always let them express themselves. However, in some cases the hosts were opposing to the representatives of the United National Movement than to the members of the Georgian Dream. There was no case of usage hate speech or politically incorrect speech at all by the host or a guest observed in the program during the monitoring period.

TV 3

Debates on TV3

“Debates on TV3” started on May 24 and was aired only until the Election Day. The program started right after the news releases were over twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The very first program was hosted by the journalists Imeda Darsalia and Natia Toidze, but the subsequent ones – Natia Toidze only. Other journalists of TV3 also actively participated in the program, which asked questions from their editorial boards. Main goal of the talk show was to present the mayoral candidates of various parties.

The most highly rated mayoral candidates of Tbilisi participated in the face-to-face debates on TV3: Davit Narmania, Nika Melia, Dimitri Lortkipanidze and Kakha Kukava. Other than Tbilisi candidates, the airtime was also allocated to other

candidates in Rustavi and Zugdidi. Besides, the program was also hosted by the parliamentary majority and minority, non-parliamentary opposition, and NGO representatives. The hosts presented the candidates in a balanced and impartial way.

The programs were quite dynamic and informative. The journalist Natia Toidze was actively involved in the program, she often asked questions and verified information. Her questions were mostly demanding and actual. She tried to get in-depth information from the guests and act as an opponent. She did not interrupt the guests and let them finish. The journalists in the program were mostly playing the role of a moderator. As observed, the hosts did not use hate speech.

Conclusion

Talk shows, which were broadcasted during the prime time via the main TV channels of Georgia during the local government elections in 2014, provided the viewers with information about the electoral process and the participating subjects that was sufficient enough for making informed choice. The monitored TV channels broadcasted diverse spectrum of political talk shows, including the debates, where the whole airtime was allocated to the candidates for presenting their election promises and plans.

The talk show hosts mostly maintained neutral position and did not demonstrate their attitude to any political force. In fact, there were no cases of gross violation of journalistic standards.

The following recommendations are developed based on the results and key findings of the election monitoring in 2014:

- To have more guests with different positions about the discussed issue and with different political affiliation represented in a political talk show during the election period. If any of the sides refuse to participate in the program, it is preferable if the host explained the reasons for their absence and to act in opposition to the guests from a different standpoint;
- The talk shows should not always be focused on main events of the day and the week; they would rather promote burning issues that the host would discuss with political circles, government representatives, NGO sector and representatives of the public;

- The hosts should not use hate speech or politically incorrect vocabulary, and react adequately if the guests do so;
- When asking a question or providing information, the hosts would identify the source of this information and they should use reliable and double-checked sources.

Media Monitoring Results of 2014 Local Government Elections in Georgia



Monitoring of Radio Channels (News Releases)

April 15 – June 30, 2014

Internews – Georgia, under the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP, has monitored the major news releases on selected Georgian radio channels. The monitoring started on April 15 and lasted until June 30, inclusive, focused on evening news releases of 12 radio broadcasters: Radio 1 (Public Broadcaster), Imedi, Fortuna, Radio Liberty, Palitra, the First Radio, Utsnobi, Maestro, Hereti (Lagodekhi), Old City (Kutaisi), Atinati (Zugdidi) and Ajara (Batumi).

Results of the monitoring in 2014 revealed that the radio does not represent a polarized media segment. The radio broadcasters were reporting the news impartially, and they did not present any political force in an especially positive or negative context. Compared to the years of 2012-2013, there was more time dedicated to the coverage of non-parliamentary opposition parties. However, coverage of politicians’ activities without asking critical questions remains to be a problem.

The journalists were not proactive enough in order to identify problematic issues for the population and to raise these problems on the agenda of the Georgian politics. The journalists did not actually try to look for additional information. They did not seize opportunity to double-check the accuracy of politicians’ statements by inquiring public information, referring to the research results or using other empirical data. Correspondingly, the stories and journalists’ questions were based on the statements made by politicians only.

Superficial coverage of events by a radio broadcaster was reflected on the increased neutral tone. The negative tone was accumulated due to the mutually critical statements of politicians, as far as the politicians used most of their time for criticizing their opponents. Representatives of the opposition parties constructed their election campaign on the criticism of the authorities, which increased the rate of negative coverage of the ruling team. However, there was a different picture in case of the President Giorgi Margvelashvili, because the opponents did not criticize him at all. Giorgi Margvelashvili’s time was mostly related to the coverage of official meetings and it was hardly ever used in the context of the election campaign.

Like the monitoring results from presidential elections, the radio broadcasters paid less attention to particular candidates. The stories were prepared about them mostly when they had meetings with the population and referred to the issues such as: “whom the candidate has met with, where the meeting was held and what promises were made.” The election programs were not considered. The journalists would not ask a question about how realistic this or that promise of the candidate was, or what results it might bring. This is why the news releases on majority of radios did not support the voters to make informed decisions.

Like 2012 and 2013, still there is a trend that the journalists adhere to the professional ethical standards of journalism. We did not observe any case of manipulation with voice/music or usage of hate speech in any of the radios.

Monitoring of radio channels during April 15 - June 30, 2014 revealed the following key findings:

- The most time was dedicated to the government, the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream;
- Questions of journalists were only based on the statements of politicians rather than on empirical data;
- Majority of radio broadcasters did not try to double-check the information disseminated by politicians;
- The journalists were reduced to making single stories about social problems, without any follow-up about further developments, and did not provide additional information to the audience;
- Compared to 2012-2013, coverage of non-parliamentary opposition parties increased;
- Central radio broadcasters did not cover the mayoral candidates of self-governing towns in the regions;
- There was little time allocated to the mayoral candidates and they were covered superficially;
- Majority of radio broadcasters did not express interest in the second round of elections;
- The journalists did not manipulate with sound/music, neither did they use hate speech.

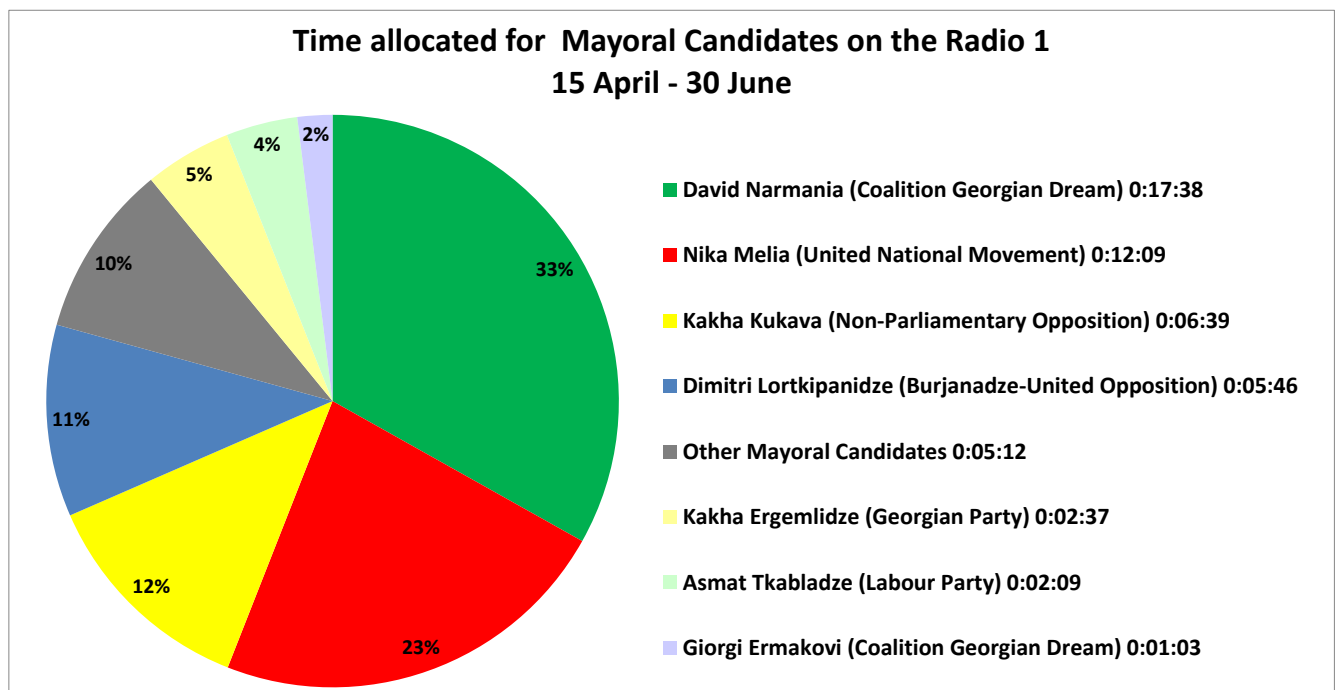
“Radio 1” (Public Broadcaster)

Radio 1 reported about the subjects without any bias. There was much time allocated to the coverage of pre-election themes as well. However, the journalists were not proactive and mostly were limited only to making dry quotes of the politicians’ statements.

There were 3 hours and 50 minutes allocated to the monitoring subjects, where the most coverage was observed for the United National Movement (19%), the government (14%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (13%). The journalists did not express subjective attitude to any political force. However, on the other hand they did not ask harsh questions about their activities. Distribution of negative tone was caused by the criticism of opponents by politicians.

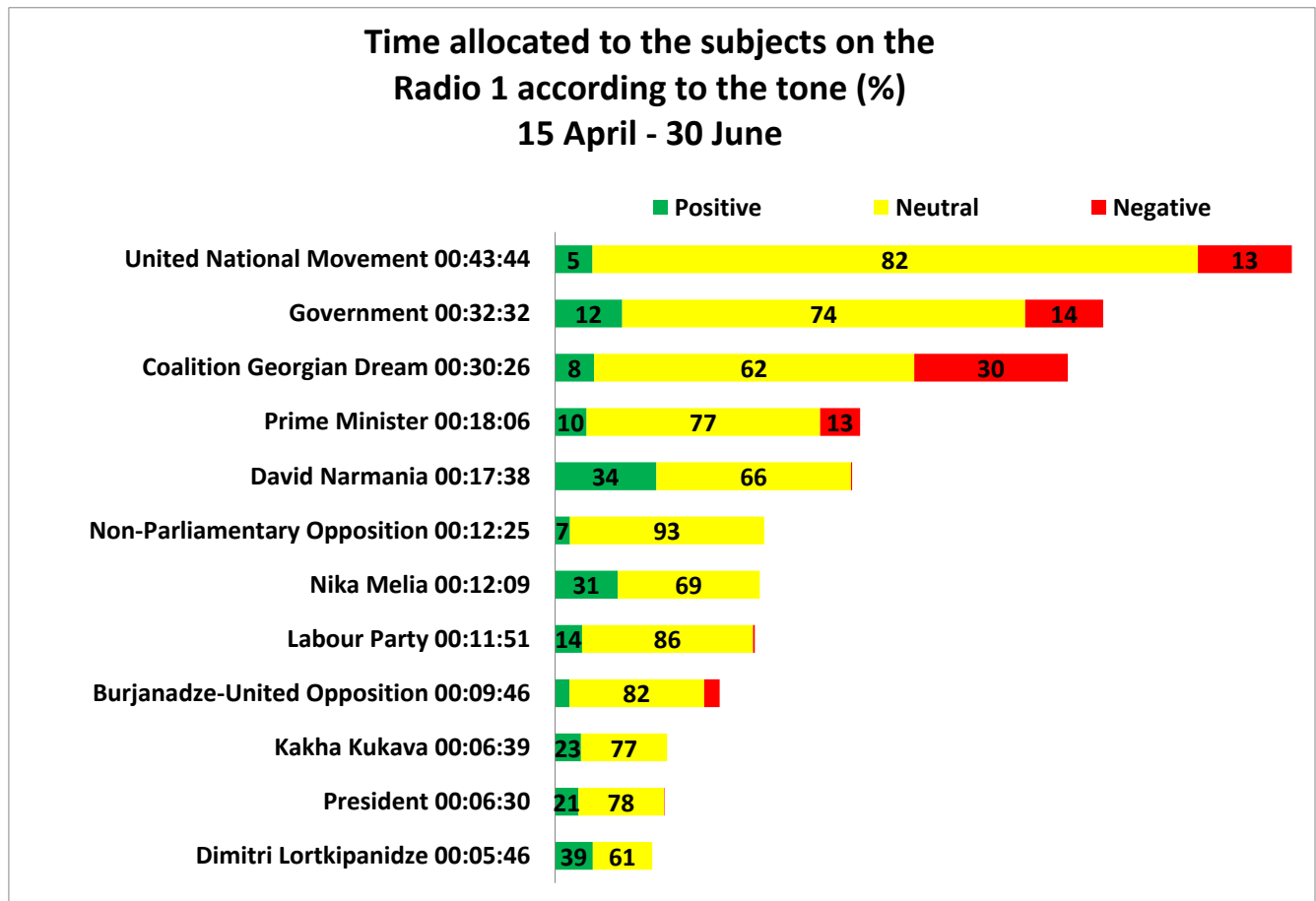
Compared to the majority of radio broadcasters, Radio 1 allocated much time to the Tbilisi mayoral candidates. They were mostly covered when they had meetings with the public, and there was only scarce information disseminated about their election programs or their visions about addressing a certain problem. For example, the news program on June 1 only reported that Kakha Kukava presented the election program, but there were no details about what issues this program addressed. Correspondingly, the audience was unable to get information about the political visions of mayoral candidates.

Chart 1



As it was common in 2012-2013, lack of analysis, critical questions and diversity of sources remained to be the main problems for the radio broadcaster.

Chart 2



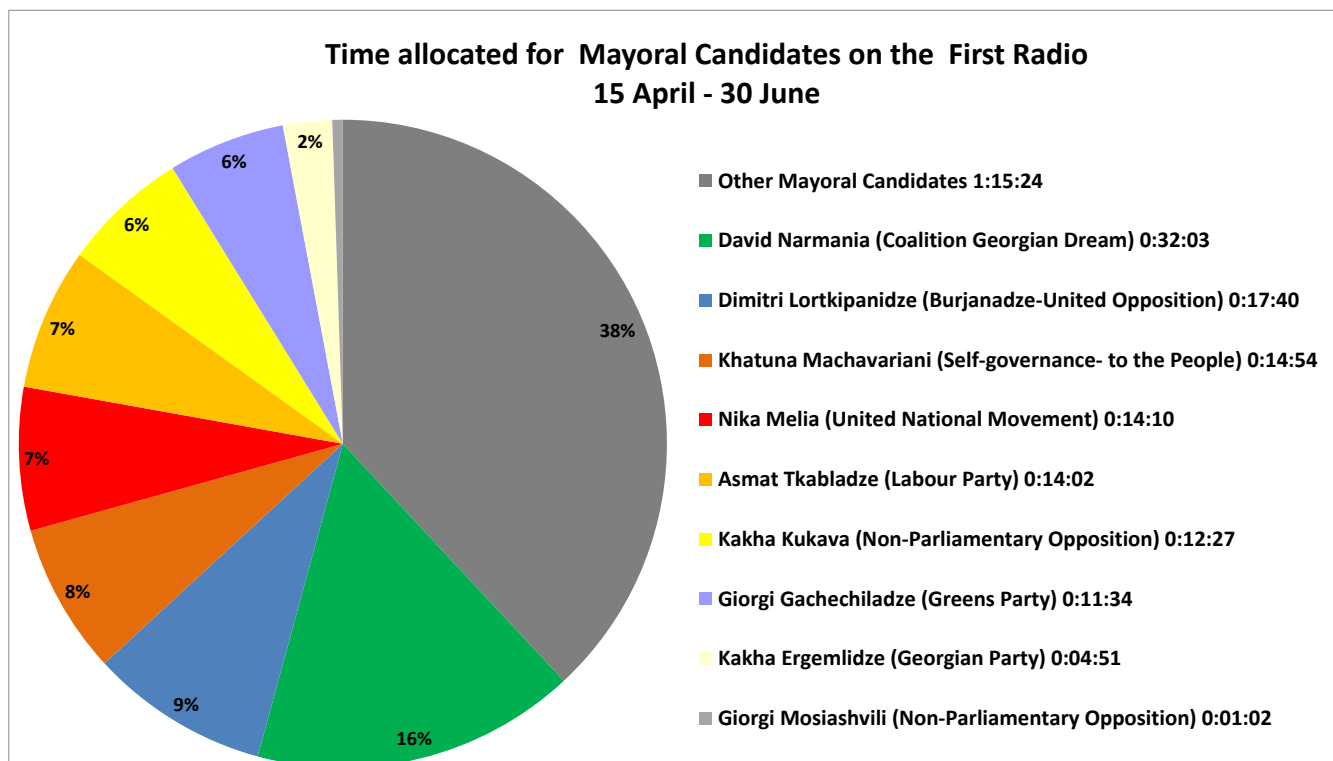
The First Radio

The First radio regularly reported the news about current events taking place in the country. The radio broadcaster allocated time to the most number of monitoring subjects. In total, there was 10 hours and 6 minutes dedicated to them. Compared to other broadcasters, it was where the mayoral candidates were most intensively covered. The journalists did not actually ask critical questions, though they covered the events impartially, without any subjective evaluations. Ethical standards of journalism were observed in the radio.

The most frequently covered subjects were the government (18%), the United National Movement (16%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (10%). All the subjects got time for direct and also for indirect speech. The journalists did not really try to look for additional information and did not prepare analytical stories. Correspondingly, the subjects were mostly covered with neutral and positive tone. The non-parliamentary opposition parties used most part of the time allocated to them for criticizing the United National Movement, thus, these subjects got some portion of time in a negative tone as well.

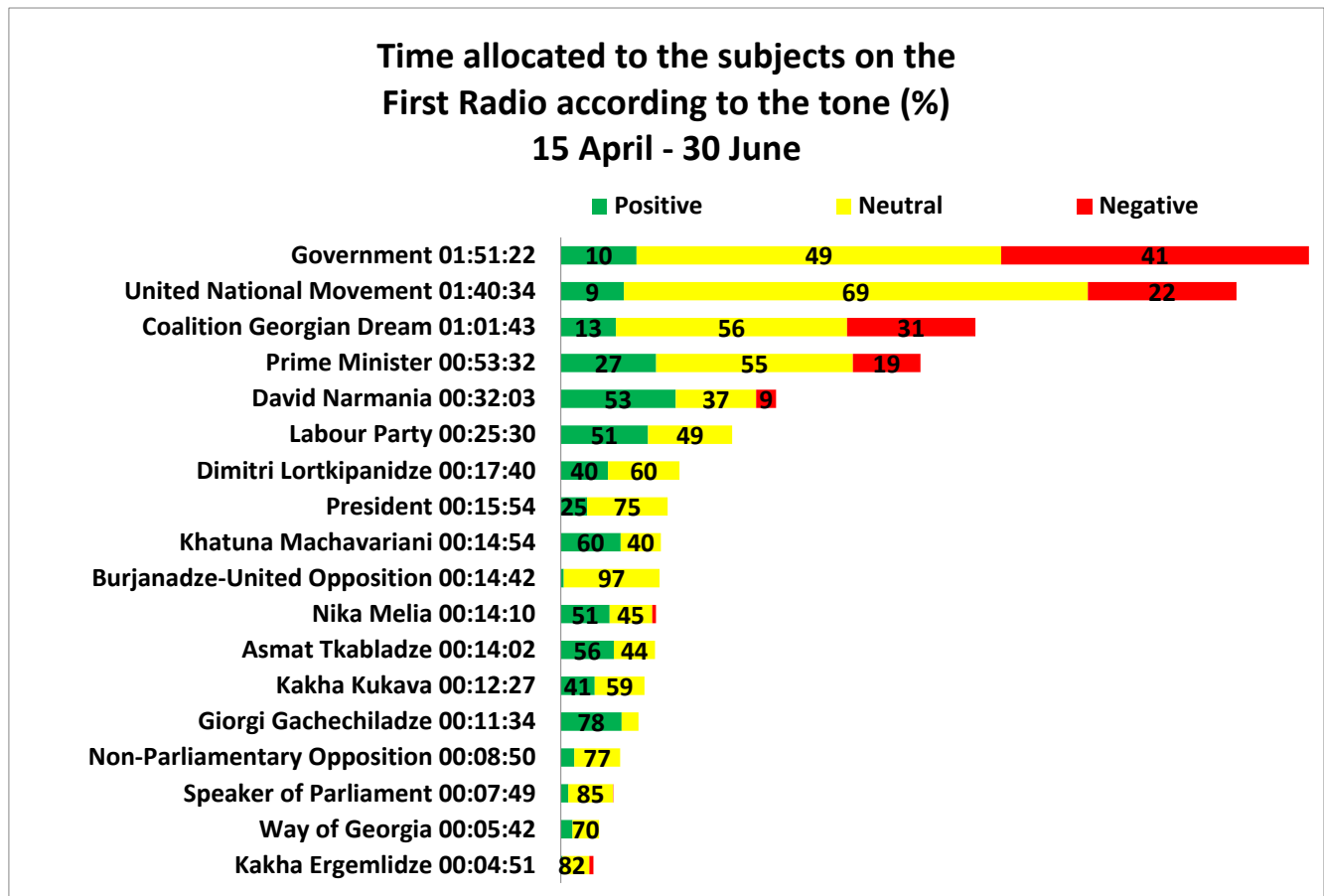
The radio was distinguished with an active coverage of non-qualified mayoral candidates. There used to be an interview with one of the mayoral candidates broadcasted at the end of the news release. The journalist did not ask questions in order to get deeper into the candidates' statements, although the guests had an opportunity to talk about their advantages and to inform the public about their plans for addressing the problems. Unlike other radio broadcasters, listeners of the First Radio were receiving information about the election programs of mayoral candidates. Besides, the journalists kept on intensive coverage of elections even in the context of the second round as well.

Chart 3



Compared to 2013, this channel covered the elections more deeply, but only quoting the politicians' statements. However, less proactive approach of journalists and the lack of critical questions still remains to be a problem. Besides, the journalists would not sometimes introduce the respondents, which made it unclear who was speaking in the radio.

Chart 4



Radio Palitra

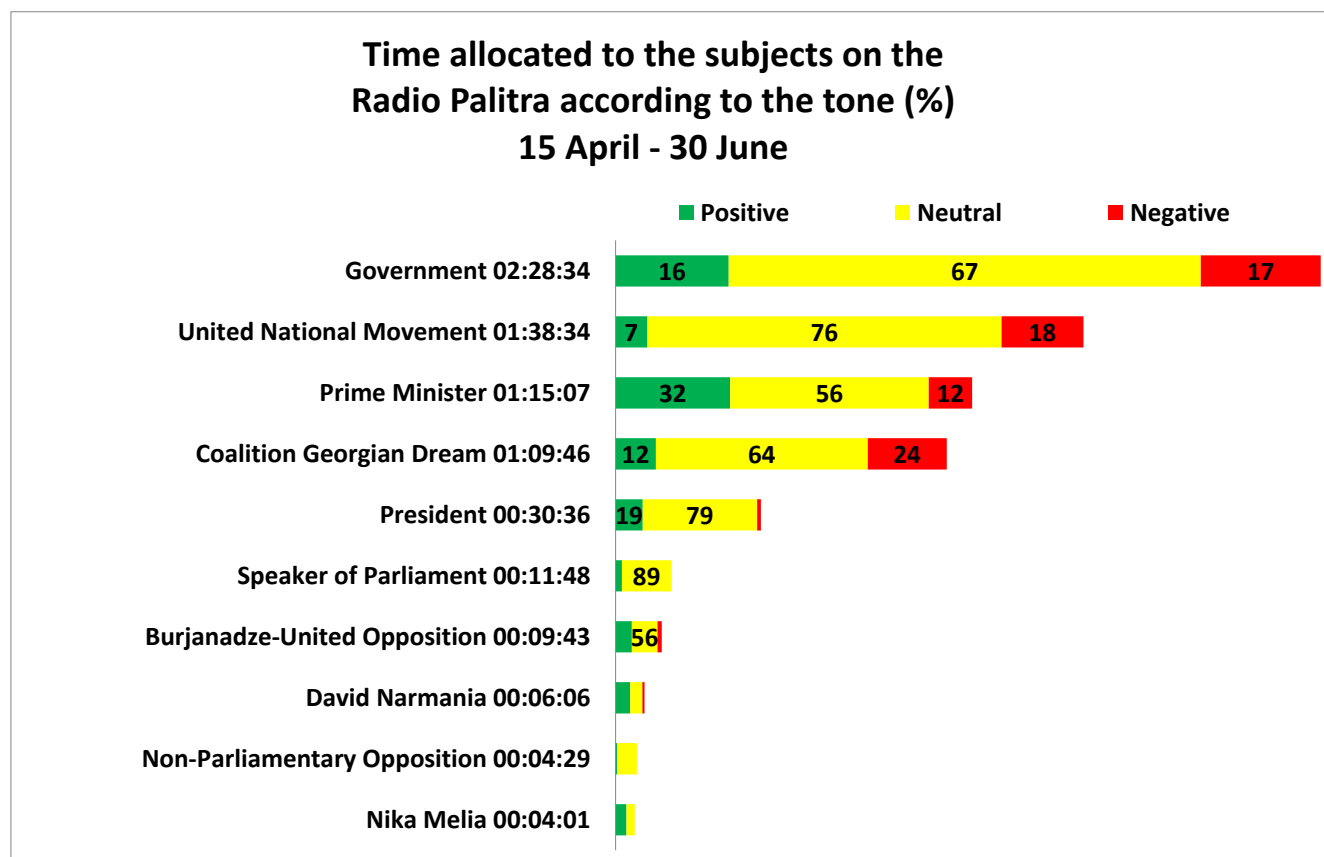
The Radio Palitra intensively covered the political processes. Their stories were more analytical than those of other radio broadcasters. They broadcasted the direct and indirect speeches of monitoring subjects. The journalists observed the standards of professional ethics of journalist when reporting the facts.

In total, 7 hours and 47 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects, from which the most time was allocated to the government (31%), the United National Movement (21%) and the Prime Minister (16%). Instead of asking the respondents to evaluate the statements of politicians, they were asking questions about particular problems. The most frequently covered subjects got some time with negative tone as well, which was caused by the critical questions of journalists and the number of sources used. Coverage of expert opinions in the news releases made the stories more diverse. For example, they discussed the election slogans of mayoral candidates on June 10, and then the journalists approached the specialists of PR technologies for analysis.

However, generally speaking, the activities of mayoral candidates were covered superficially. Among Tbilisi mayoral candidates, only Davit Narmania (the Coalition Georgian Dream) and Nika Melia (the United National Movement) got more than three minutes. However, there was hardly any coverage for the mayoral candidates of non-parliamentary opposition parties. The radio prepared more in-depth stories about the election environment, threat of using the administrative resources, the voter lists and the situation at the CEC. Nevertheless, there were brief and dry news about the mayoral candidates.

As it was observed in 2012-2013, the radio broadcaster produced balanced stories. However, the mayoral candidates were covered superficially like the presidential candidates used to be before. Coverage of non-parliamentary opposition parties decreased as well.

Chart 5



Radio Utsnobi

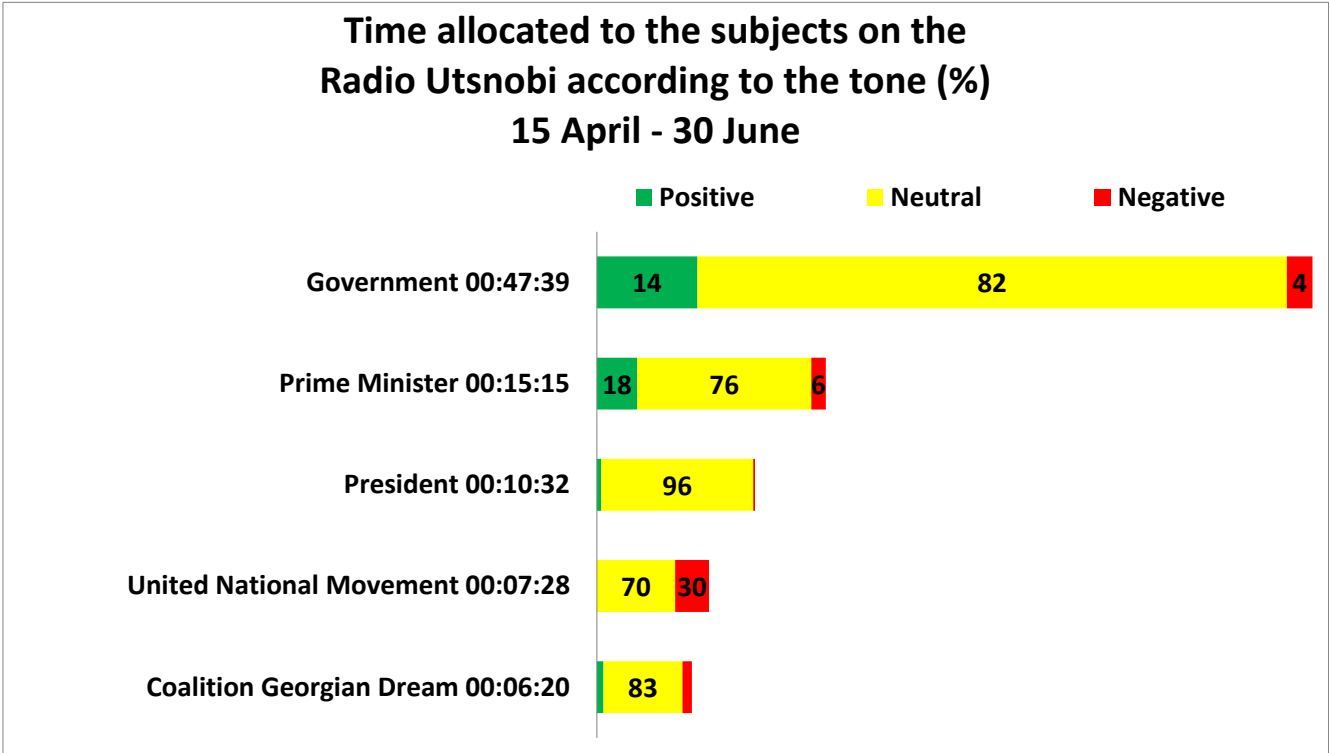
The Radio Utsnobi released brief news programs. Their timing never exceeded 5 minutes. The journalists covered the events without subjective evaluations, but the news was prepared without any balance and was based on one source only.

There was an hour and 30 minutes dedicated to the monitoring subjects. Most part of this time (51%) was allocated to the government. Only the ruling team and the United National Movement got more than 3 minutes among the political parties. The news programs did not report about the activities of non-parliamentary opposition parties. Neither did the radio broadcaster allocate time to the mayoral candidates: there were no stories that would let the listeners make informed choice.

The journalists reported brief news, where they were only limited to quoting the statements of politicians and did not try to look for additional information. The unbalanced and superficial coverage of the events found its reflection on the high rate of neutral tone. Besides, activities of the officials were reported without asking critical question and they accumulated more positive tone as compared to the negative one. As for the United National Movement, there was only neutral and negative information broadcasted about them.

Like in 2012, the radio broadcaster covered the news briefly, without looking for additional information. The news program was broadcasted in the manner of news agencies.

Chart 6



Radio Liberty

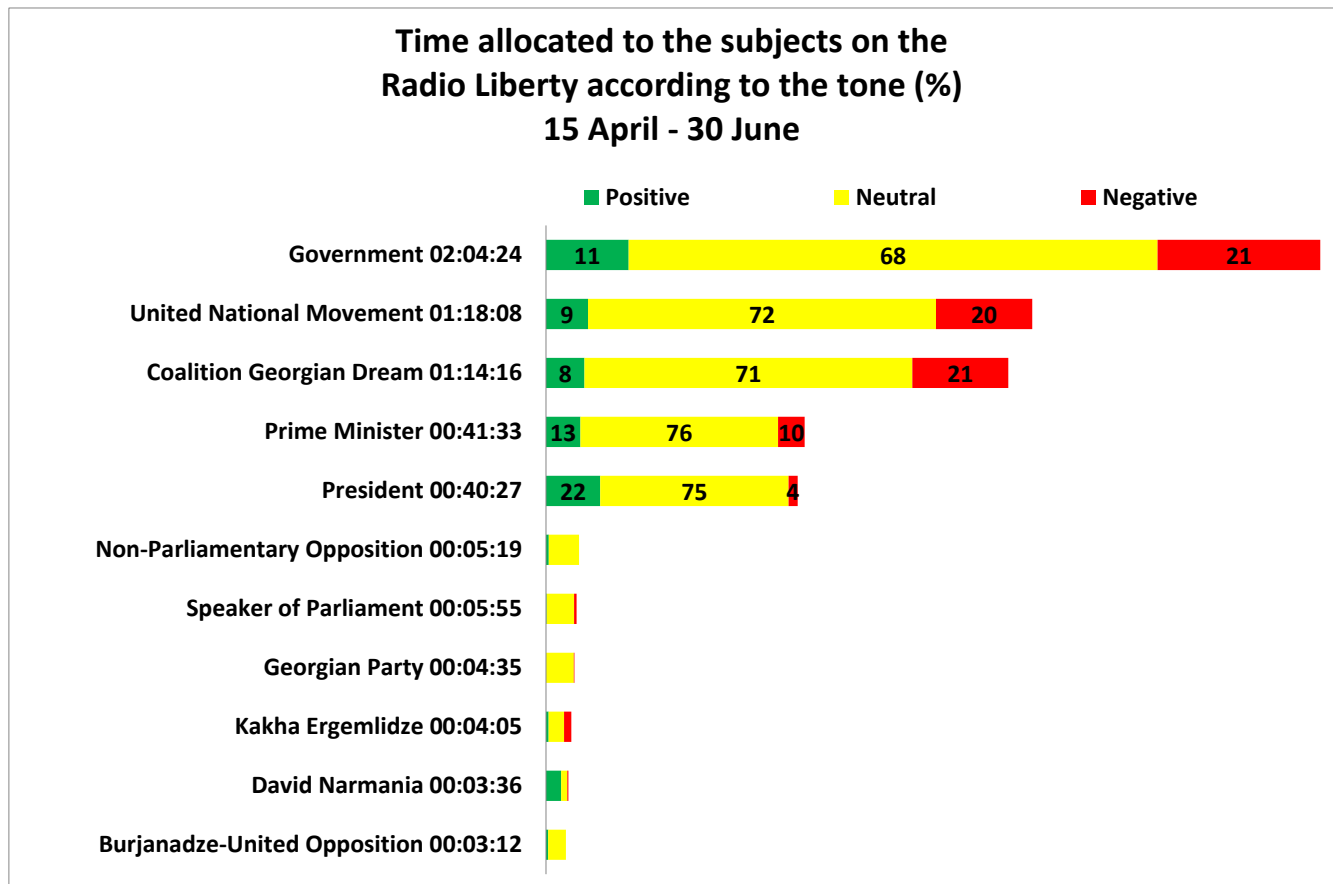
The radio Liberty covered the news in the most extensive and detailed manner than other radio broadcasters. The journalists presented the news from various angles. The balance was always observed in the stories and ethical standards of journalism were maintained.

The radio allocated 6 hours and 54 minutes in total to the monitoring subjects. Out of this time, 67% of the time was used for covering the activities of the government, the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream. The journalists were not limited to quoting the politicians' statements only, and tried to look for additional information. Their questions to the politicians were not based only on the allegations of the opponents and were corroborated by empirical data as well. Besides, compared to other radio broadcasters, the events were highlighted exhaustively and presented different opinions on the issue. For example, while covering the anti-discrimination law, the journalists highlighted the contents of particular articles, whereas other radios only disseminated general comments on the law.

While reporting about the election campaign, the emphasis was laid on the overview of election environment. The journalists were highlighting the alleged influence on citizens and candidates from opposition parties; also the CEC statements and opinions of international organizations. However, only two mayoral candidates got more than three minutes. The radio provided little coverage of election programs and the listener did not have an opportunity to get information about future plans of the candidates or their visions on problem solving.

Like the years of 2012-2013, the Radio Liberty, compared to other radios, prepared the most analytical news programs. However, as it was the case with presidential candidates, they allocated little time to the coverage of mayoral candidates too.

Chart 7



Radio Maestro

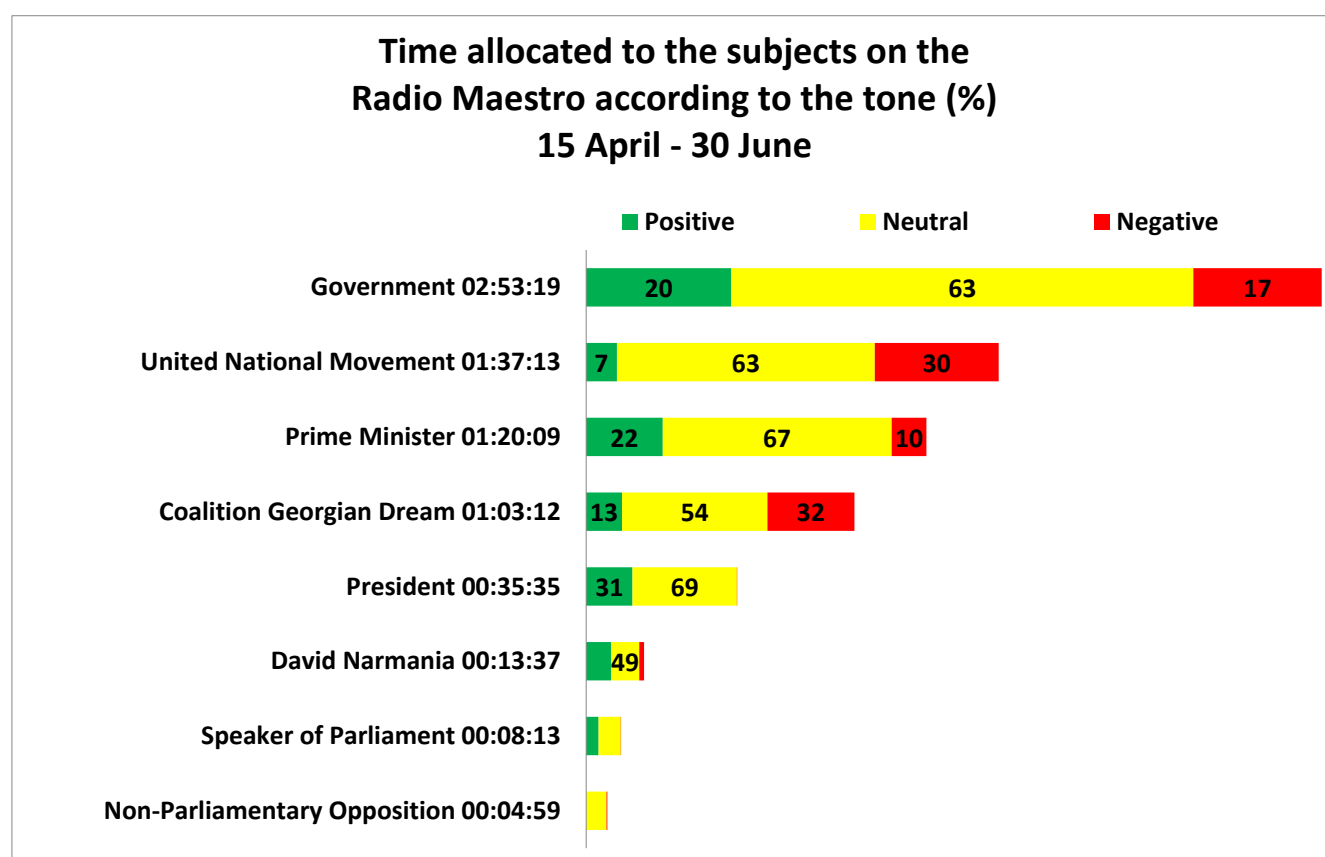
The Radio Maestro allocated much time to the coverage of ongoing political events, but some stories were brief and superficial. The news only contained the quotes from the politicians' statements and less time was allocated to their direct speech (6%). Most part of the stories was unbalanced, but there was no biased attitude towards any political force.

Despite the Radio Maestro prepared long news programs than all the other radio broadcasters, coverage of the news was dry, without any analysis. The radio allocated 8 hours and 17 minutes to the monitoring subjects, and the majority of the time was dedicated to the government, the United National Movement and the Prime Minister. The authorities and the parliamentary opposition also had some time with negative tone, but not because of the journalist's severe questions, but rather as the result of coverage of mutually critical statements of politicians. The journalists did not seek updated information: neither did they refer to the research results, nor inquired needed information and they also provided little coverage of expert analysis. There were no analytical stories prepared during the monitoring period.

Stories about the elections were also similar. Only the Tbilisi mayoral candidate from the Coalition Georgian Dream got more than three minutes out of eight hours. Correspondingly, the listeners could not get information about the candidates' election programs. The radio became more active after the elections. The journalists highlighted the identified violations, and evaluations by politicians and the NGO sector. They also interviewed political scholars for evaluating the elections.

The gaps identified during the monitoring in 2013 remained unaddressed. However, the trend was maintained and the journalists were not making subjective evaluations nor did they violate the standards of professional ethics.

Chart 8



Radio Fortuna

News releases of the Radio Fortuna never exceeded 5-6 minutes. Correspondingly, the news was presented in brief and no analytical stories were prepared. Consequently, the information was disseminated based on one source only and there were no diverse opinions highlighted about the issue. The journalists did not try to seek additional information; nevertheless, they did not express any subjective attitude to any political force.

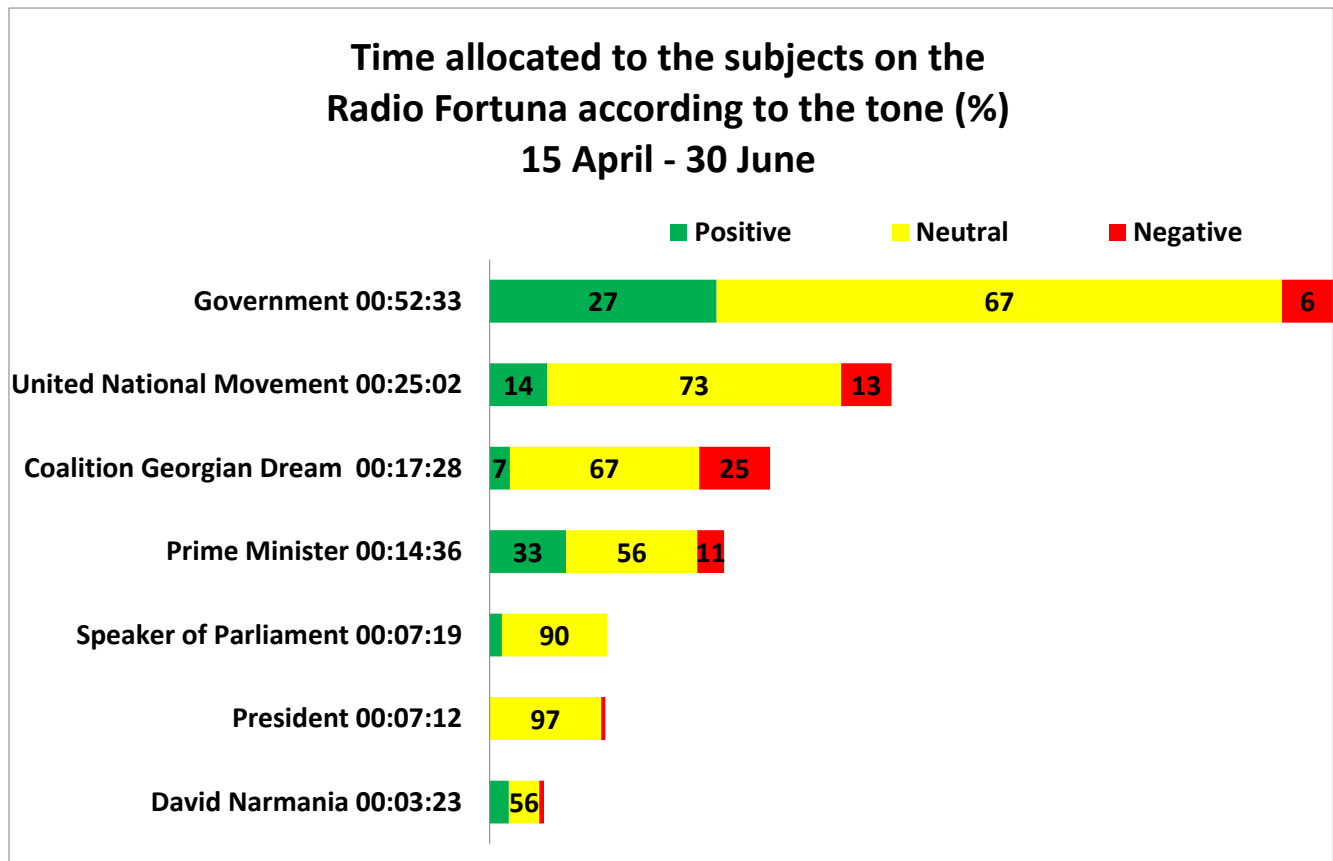
The radio allocated 2 hours and 20 minutes to the monitoring subjects. The most time was dedicated to the government (37%) and the United National Movement (18%). Only the representatives of the officials got time for direct speech, and other subjects were covered indirectly.

The news releases were prepared based on one story only at the beginning of the monitoring, and they were limited only 3-4 minute interviews with some of the politicians. Topics of the stories became more diverse at the subsequent stages of the monitoring, and touched upon various issues.

Among the mayoral candidates, the radio dedicated more than three minutes of coverage only to the Tbilisi mayoral candidate of the Coalition Georgian Dream. Sometimes the opinions of experts and the NGO were covered as well. For example, the news program on June 16 highlighted the evaluations of the expert Kakhi Kakhishvili.

Compared to the 2012-2013 monitoring results, there were no significant differences revealed in 2014. The Radio Fortuna covered the news again in the format of a news agency.

Chart 9



Radio Imedi

Radio Imedi intensively covered the national events. They highlighted the activities of parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties. Most part of the time allocated to the subjects (52%) was used for direct speech. The balance was observed in the majority of stories, though the journalists used to ask severe questions.

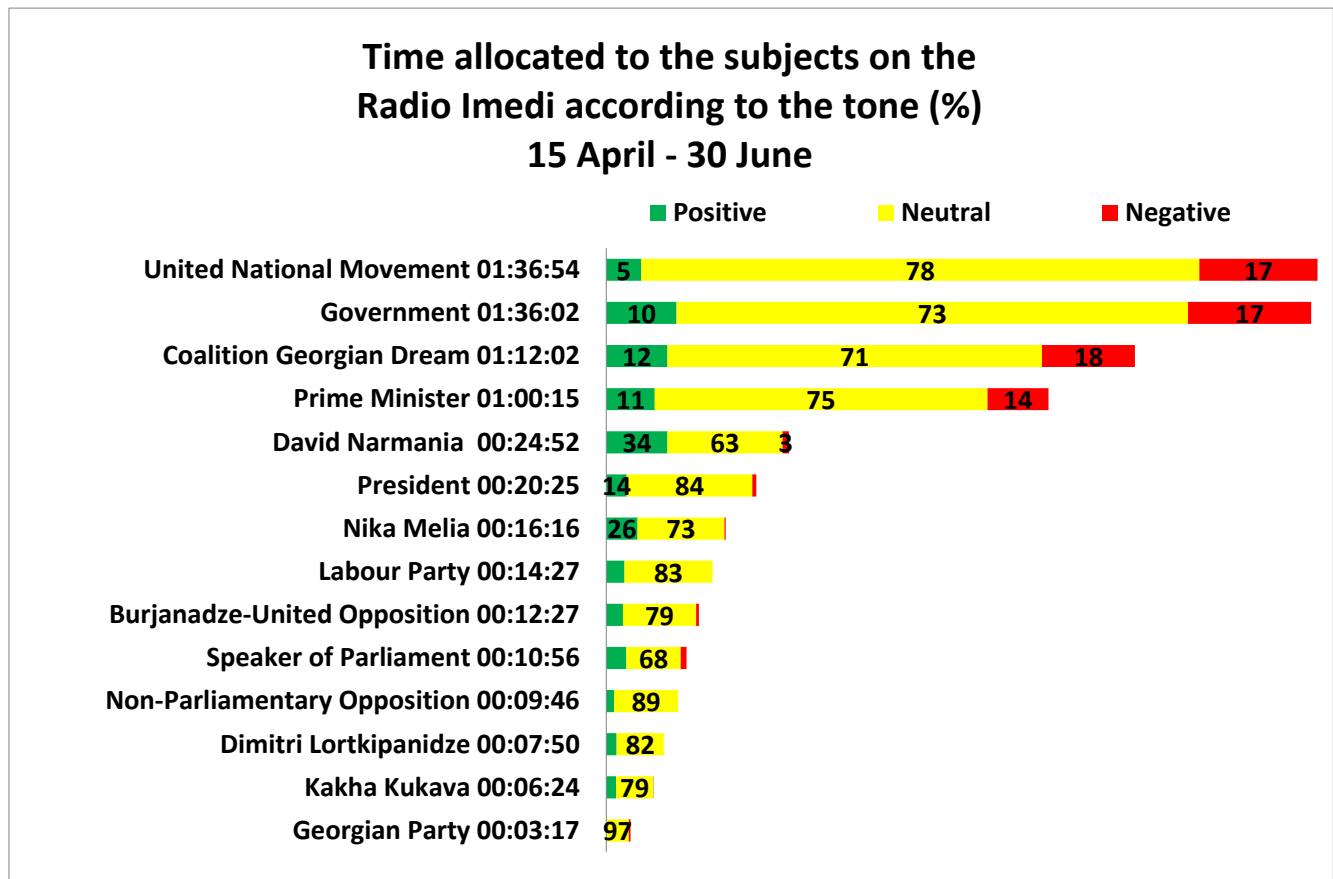
There were 7 hours and 47 minutes dedicated to the coverage of monitoring subjects. Out of this time, 21-21% was allocated to the United National Movement and the government, followed by the Coalition Georgian Dream (15%) and the Prime Minister (13%). Balanced coverage of the news was reflected on the equal distribution of tones: often the covered subjects had almost equal rates of positive and negative tones.

Coverage of politicians' activities without asking critical questions remained to be the main problem of the radio. The journalists were not proactive enough to seek additional information about the event, or inquire public documentation or refer to research results, which made the stories more exhaustive and informative.

The Radio Imedi dedicated much time to the coverage of election topics. The journalists even prepared a separate bloc about this topic, where they discussed the election environment, but they disseminated superficial information about mayoral candidates. The candidates were mostly covered when they had meetings with the public, but little time was dedicated to their election programs. The radio did not cover mayoral candidates after the elections on June 15. The journalists demonstrate interest in the second round of the elections.

Compared to the years of 2012-2013, the stories were more balanced, but the lack of critical questions still remains to be a problem.

Chart 10



Radio Atinati (Zugdidi Town)

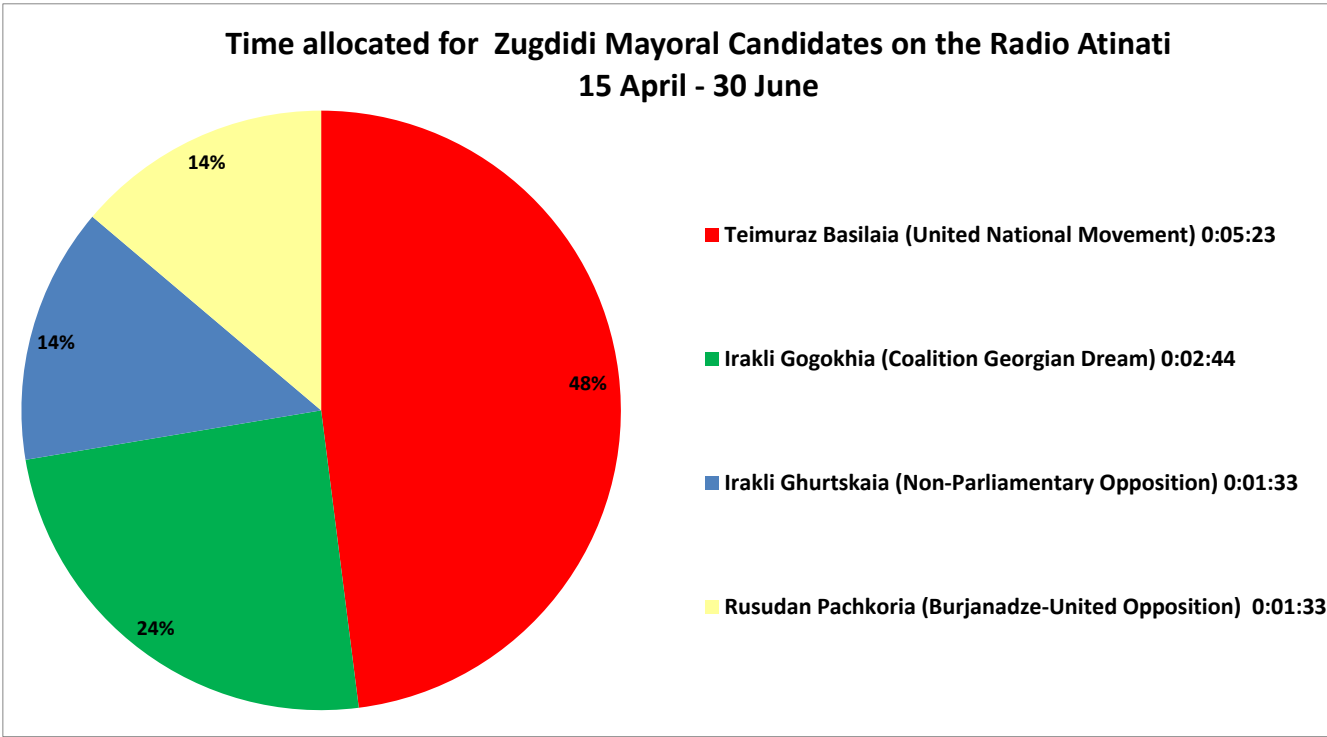
The Radio Atinati is mostly focused on the events taking place in Samegrelo. The journalists did not express biased attitude to any of the political forces. Superficial reporting was observed to be the channel's main problem.

The Radio Atinati broadcasted brief news releases. In total, an hour and 26 minutes were allocated to the coverage of monitoring subjects. Out of this time, 22-22% of time was equally dedicated to the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream, followed by the government with 19%. The journalists did not ask critical questions, but the mutually critical statements of the authorities and the opposition were intensively covered, which found its reflection on the diversity of tones.

The radio broadcaster even covered the burning issues for the population, which were not discussed by politicians. However, in this case the journalists were not that active for asking the demanding questions to the respective people in charge, and to follow up on further developments.

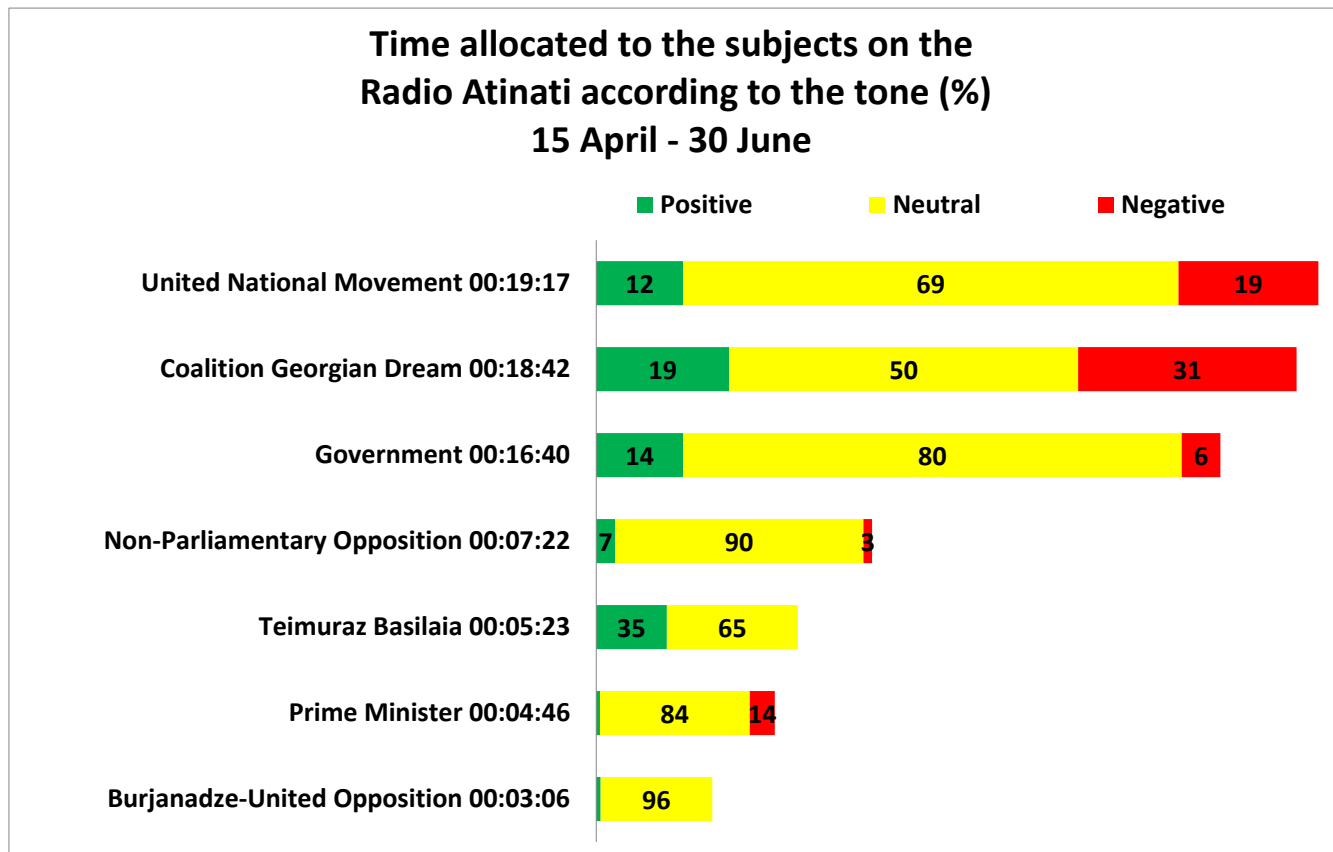
The journalists laid much emphasis on the coverage of election environment in Samegrelo. There were frequent reports published about alleged usage of administrative resources, CEC statements and evaluations of the NGOs. The radio broadcaster allocated time to all the mayoral candidates running in Zugdidi, but allocated more than three minutes only to the candidate of the United National Movement. There were no in-depth reports about the election programs of the candidates.

Chart 11



Working style of the radio Atinati has not changed significantly in years. Like 2012-2013, the absence of critical questions remains to be a problem so far, although the trend of impartial coverage is maintained.

Chart 12



Radio Old City (Kutaisi City)

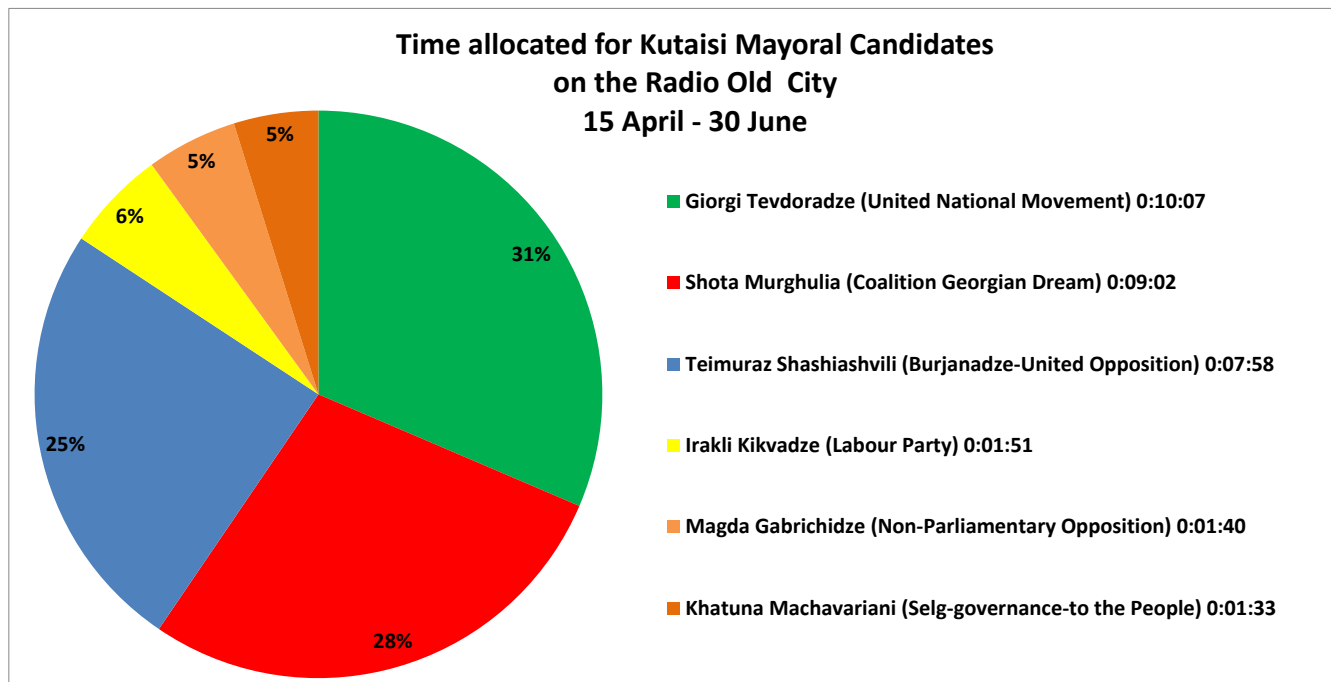
The radio Old City laid emphasis on the events taking place in Kutaisi. The stories were impartial and the journalists did not demonstrate subjective attitude to any of the political forces. The events were covered more superficially at the beginning of the monitoring and the news was based on one source. However, the situation changed thereafter: the stories became more balanced and the journalists started to ask critical questions.

The radio prepared brief news releases, allocating 2 hours and 23 minutes to the subjects in total, but the stories were diverse. For example, the two most frequently covered subjects: the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government, were covered with more negative tone, which was caused by severe questions of journalists. Out of the total time allocated to the monitoring subjects, on average, 38% was used for direct speech, and the politicians used this time for speaking about their advantages, hence the rates of positive tones for these subjects. The radio broadcaster actively covered problems of the population and approached the people in charge of finding the ways for addressing them. Besides, the journalists were proactive and tried to seek additional information. For example, the journalist was trying to

find out on May 15 whether the assistance to veterans could be considered vote buying or not.

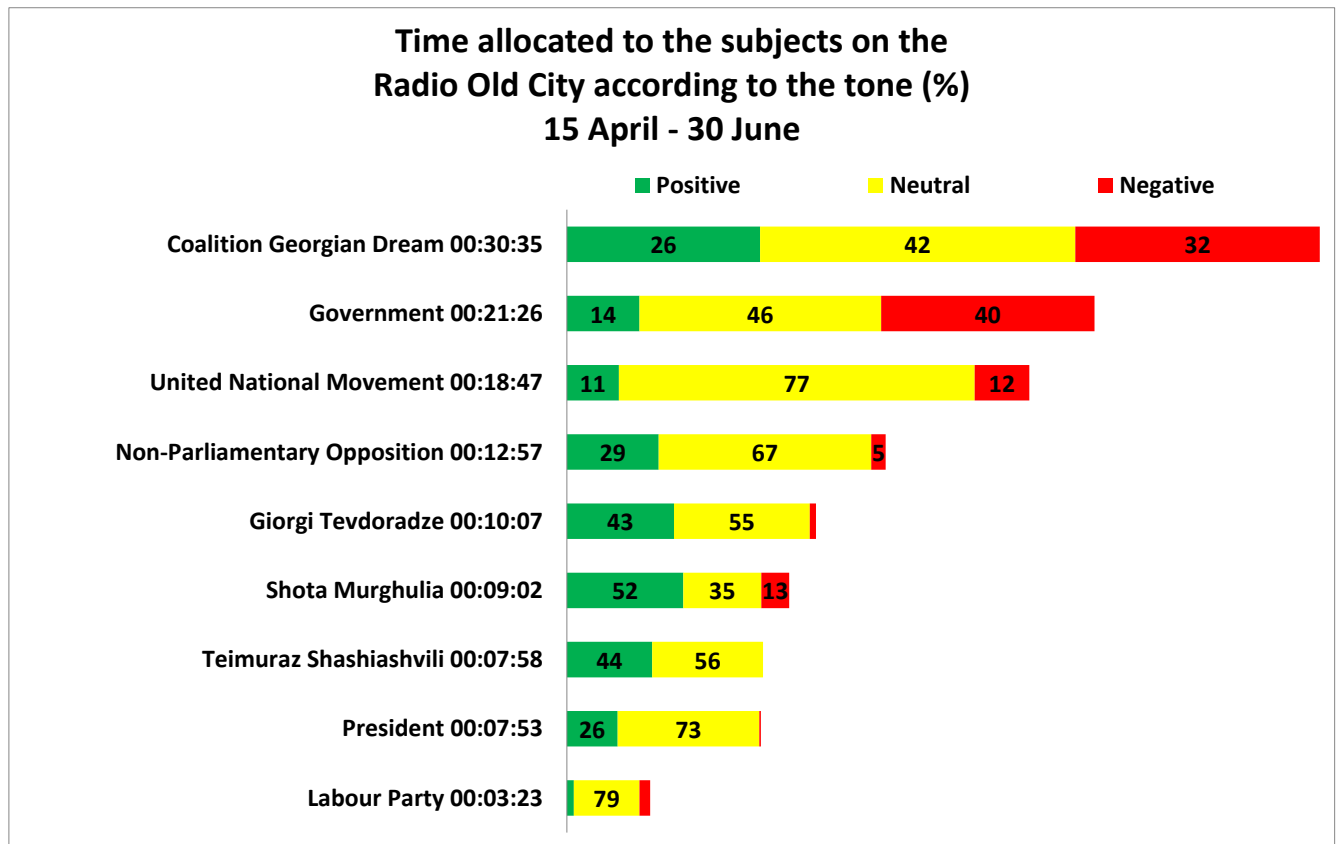
The radio broadcaster allocated much time to the election topics as well. Other than overviewing the election environment, possible violations and evaluations of the NGO sector, the mayoral candidates were covered as well. More than three minutes were allocated to the three candidates who got most number of votes in the elections, and 6 out of 7 Kutaisi mayoral candidates were highlighted.

Chart 13



Compared to 2013, the radio reduced the duration of news releases. Despite this, the problem of superficial stories improved and the events were covered with deeper emphasis.

Chart 14



Radio Hereti (Lagodekhi Town)

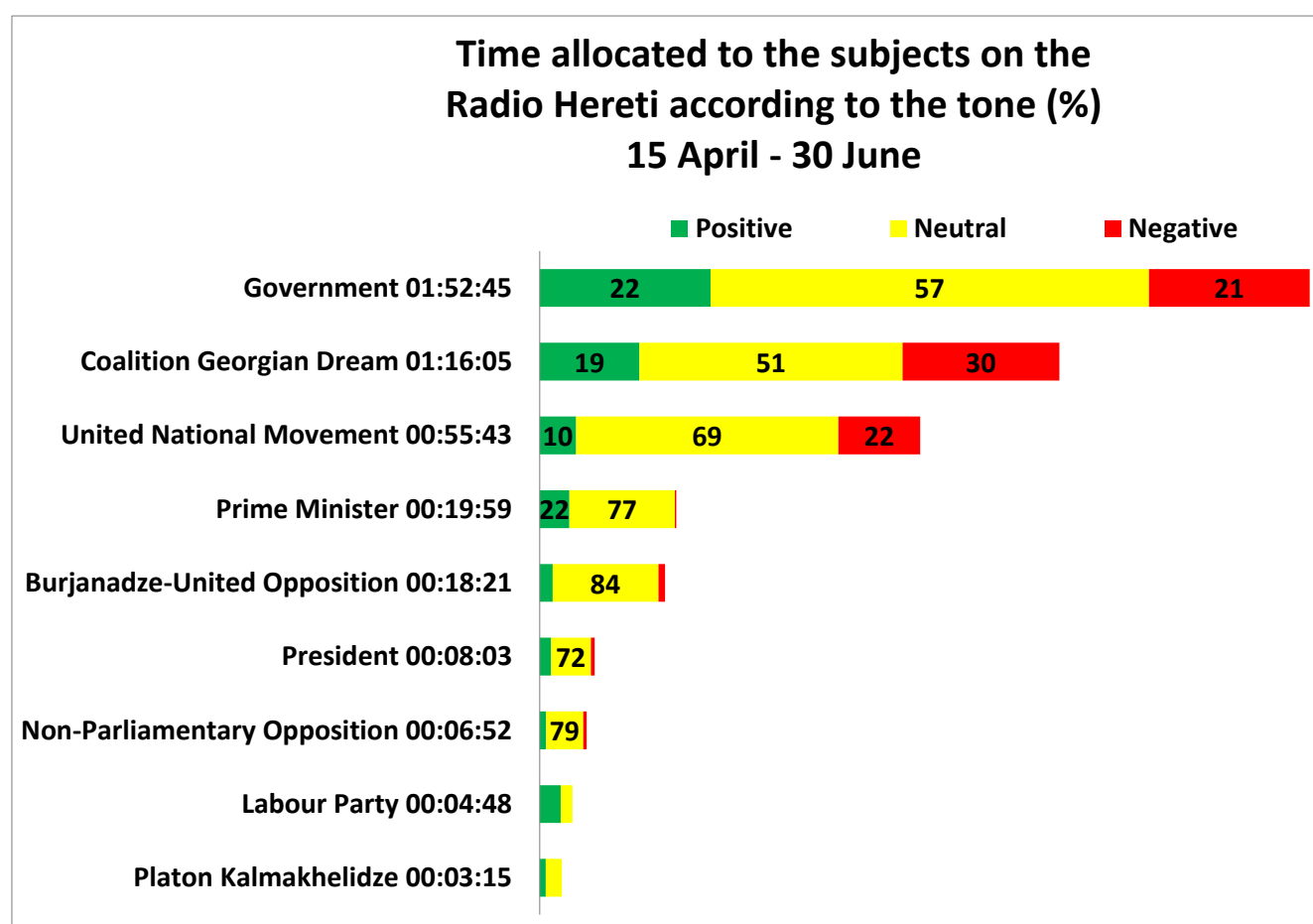
The Radio Hereti mostly covered the events in Kakheti. The journalists were trying to get additional information, and the aired material was not based only on the politicians' statements. The radio allocated much time to the coverage of population problems. Instead of making general comments on the opponents' statements, the journalists were asking questions to the politicians in the context of particular problems. Besides, they were not limited only to the one-time coverage of issues and updated the listeners about further developments in the subsequent news releases.

The radio allocated 5 hours and 27 minutes to the subjects during the monitoring period. Out of this time, 34% was used for covering the government, 23% - for the Coalition Georgian Dream, and 17% - for the United National Movement. All the three subjects had some negative coverage as well, which was often caused by the critical questions asked by a journalist. Besides, 38% of time was used for direct speech. Some part of the news was covered in a balanced way, but the stories prepared on the main topic of the day were always distinguished with the diversity of sources.

While reporting about the elections, the radio broadcaster was focused on the threat of usage of administrative resources, CEC statements and evaluations by the NGO sector. The journalists also reported about the Telavi mayoral candidates, but only brief and superficial information was disseminated about them. Their election programs were hardly ever discussed. Only the mayoral candidate of the Coalition Georgian Dream got more than three minutes among other candidates in Telavi.

Compared to 2012-2013, the radio broadcaster prepared more diverse news programs. Journalists of Hereti were distinguished by their proactive activities and maintained the standards of professional ethics as well.

Chart 15



Radio Ajara (Batumi City)

The Radio Ajara broadcasted brief news releases. The news was prepared based on one source at the beginning of the monitoring, without highlighting different opinions. However,

starting from the end of May, the journalists became more active and the stories became more diverse.

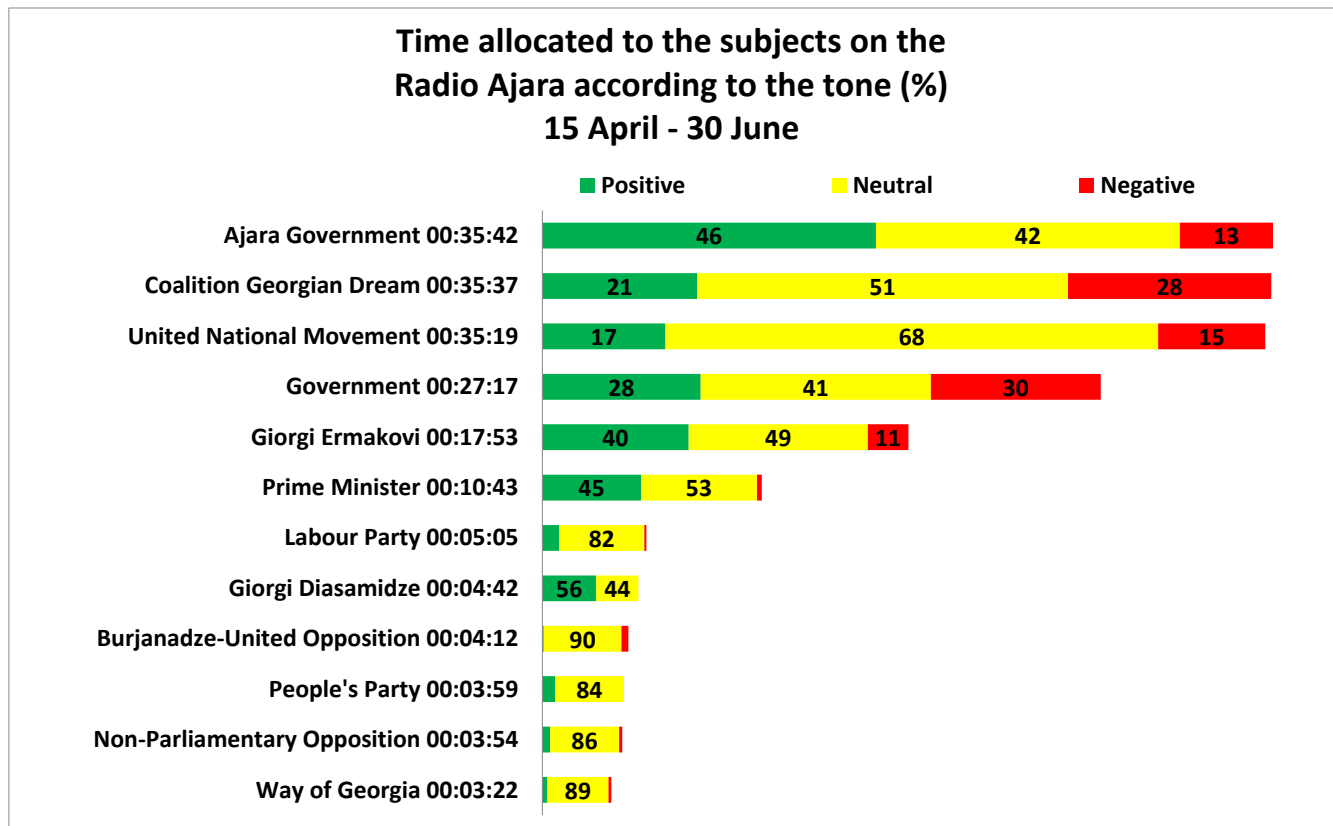
In total, 3 hours and 17 minutes were dedicated to the monitoring subjects, where the most time was dedicated to the Ajarian government, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement (18-18%). The journalists covered activities of the authorities without any criticism at all. For example, there was much time dedicated to the coverage of projects that were implemented successfully by the Ajarian government, but the responsible persons almost never had to answer the harsh questions about unaddressed problems. Correspondingly, the government of Ajara had 46% of positive coverage. However, the subjects also got time in negative tone, because the journalists were not reluctant to cover the critical statements made by the opposition politicians towards the authorities.

The radio allocated much time to the social problems of the population, but mostly it was limited to quoting the citizens' statements: neither did the radio highlighted the comments of responsible persons, nor was there any follow-up about these events in subsequent news releases.

The journalists often covered the statements of politicians, NGO sector and citizens in the election context. More than three minutes were dedicated to the subjects made it to the second round: mayoral candidates of the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement. The journalists provided active and balanced reports about the violations revealed on the Election Day. Compared to other radio broadcasters, there was more interest observed in the second round.

Like the monitoring in 2013, the same problem was still present: coverage of activities of the authorities without asking critical questions. The journalists did not prepare analytical stories, as before. However, there was much more focus laid on the topic of elections this year, and the non-parliamentary opposition parties were covered more intensively.

Chart 16



Conclusion

Main problem of radio broadcasters was the lack of analysis in their stories, where the journalists did not ask critical questions and did not try to look for additional information. It is the main challenge for radio broadcasters to address these issues.

The journalists need to be more proactive to make more diverse stories. Involvement of experts in the coverage of events and looking for empirical data by the journalists would enable the radio broadcasters to broaden their coverage and not to limit the broadcasted information to quoting the politicians' statements in the news releases any more.

Coverage of the candidates' meetings with population is not enough for the radio broadcasters to let the voters make informed decisions, and the election programs need to be highlighted more.

Results of the monitoring held during 2012-2014 makes it clear that the journalists of radio broadcasters do not violate the standards of professional ethics. It is a necessary condition for the media development to keep this trend and report the news impartially, without manipulation with voice/music and usage of hate speech.

Media Monitoring results of 2014 Local Government Elections in Georgia

Monitoring of Print Media

April 15 – June 30, 2014

The Civic Development Institute (CDI) performed the media monitoring of 2014 local government elections in Georgia within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP. The monitoring was carried out from April 15, 2014 through June 30, 2014 and covered 7 publications: the Rezonansi, the Akhali Taoba, the Asaval-Dasavali, the Alia, the Versia, the Kviris Kronika, and the Kviris Palitra.

Key Findings

The monitoring results have revealed that journalistic standards and ethical norms are quite often violated in the Georgian print media. The journalists often provide subjective and ungrounded reasoning, and cases of publishing unverified facts and using offensive terminology are also frequent. Especially gross violations of journalistic ethical norms were regularly encountered in the newspapers: the Asaval-Dasavali, the Kviris Kronika and the Alia. The subjective reasoning and usage of offensive terminology by the journalists was observed also in the Versia and the Akhali Taoba, though less frequently. As for the Rezonansi and the Kviris Palitra, they were providing quite an impartial coverage of current political processes, and there were no cases of gross violation of journalistic standards in these publications.

Criticism of the United National Movement prevailed in all the monitored publications while covering the activities of political parties. This very party had the highest rates of negative tone in all the selected newspapers. After passing the antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia, criticism of the Coalition Georgian Dream increased in the print media. This change was especially evident in the newspapers the Asaval-Dasavali, the Kviris Kronika and the Alia, editorial boards of which openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the ruling party, because it supported the adoption of this law.

Newspaper the Alia openly encouraged the readers not to vote for the United National Movement or the Coalition Georgian Dream in the elections.

The newspapers covered the activities of mayoral candidates, though their election programs were seldom discussed. More emphasis was laid on their personal evaluation by other respondents. The highest rate of negative coverage tone among the Tbilisi mayoral candidates was used for Nika Melia, candidate of the United National Movement.

During the 2012 parliamentary elections and the 2013 presidential elections the Georgian print media was monitored by the organization – International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, and their reports reveal that the journalistic standards and ethical norms were quite often violated in the print media even during the monitoring periods held in previous years. As we read in the reports, the election programs of candidates were less frequently covered during the 2013 presidential elections, and main emphasis was laid on the activities of political parties and official structures. Unverified facts would also be often published as well. As it seems, the Georgian print media did not undergo significant changes since the election period of 2012. However, the journalists used even more offensive and discriminatory terminology in the print media during the 2014 local government elections.

Media monitoring of 2014 local government elections from April 14 through June 30 revealed the following trends in the print media:

- Criticism against the United National Movement prevailed in all the publications that have been selected for the monitoring;
- Criticism against the government and the Coalition Georgian Dream increased significantly in the Georgian print media after the Parliament adopted the anti-discrimination law;
- This change was especially observed in the newspapers: the Alia, the Asavali, the Akhali Taoba and the Kviris Kronika;
- The Alia openly called on the readers not to vote for the United National Movement or the Coalition Georgian Dream either.
- There was less coverage provided for election activities of mayoral candidates; the newspapers laid more emphasis on the coverage of political parties and authorities;
- Election programs of mayoral candidates were underemphasized;
- The highest rate of negative tone among the mayoral candidates was observed for Nika Melia, Tbilisi mayoral candidate of the United National Movement;

- Journalistic standards and ethical norms were violated in the newspapers: the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali, the Versia, the Kviris Kronika, the Akhali Taoba;
- Especially gross violations of journalistic standards and ethical norms were regularly encountered in the newspapers: the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris Kronika;
- The print media provided active coverage of evaluations of election results by various politicians;
- Frequency of coverage of mayoral candidates decreased in the newspapers after the Election Day;
- Rates of neutral tone used during the subject coverage increased after the Election Day;
- Main challenges of the Georgian print media are: subjective and groundless reasoning by the journalists, usage of offensive terminology, publishing of unverified facts and the lack of sources of information in some articles.

The Rezonansi

The Rezonansi provided quite objective and unbiased coverage of national events during the monitoring period. There was no clearly positive or negative attitude towards any political power observed in this publication. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

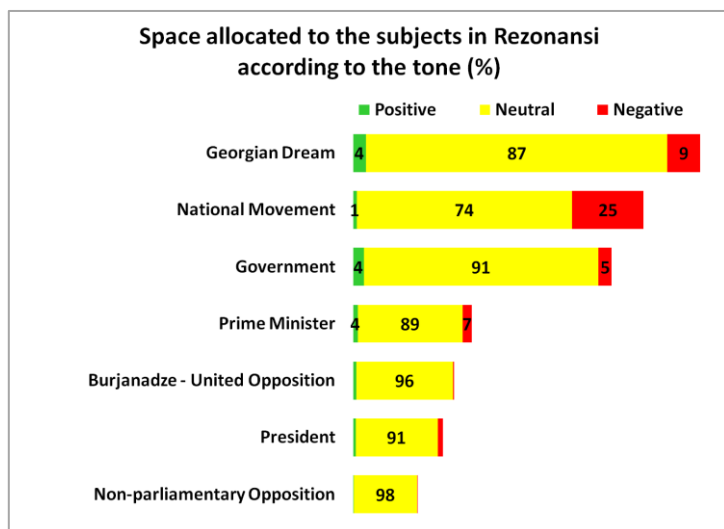
The most intensively covered activities were those of the Coalition Georgian Dream (26%), the United National Movement (22%), the government (20%) and the Prime Minister (9%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed towards any of the monitoring subjects. A bit higher rate of negative tone was revealed while covering the activities of the United National Movement (25%) (See the Chart 1). However, we should point out that the negative tone was mostly observed in the statements of respondents and not in the texts of journalists of the Rezonansi, who actually refrained from making political evaluations or ungrounded reasoning during the monitoring period.

Out of mayoral candidates, the Rezonansi provided the most intensive coverage of mayoral candidates of Tbilisi. The highest rate of positive tone (15%) was reported while covering Davit Narmania, candidate of the Coalition Georgian Dream (See the Diagram 2).

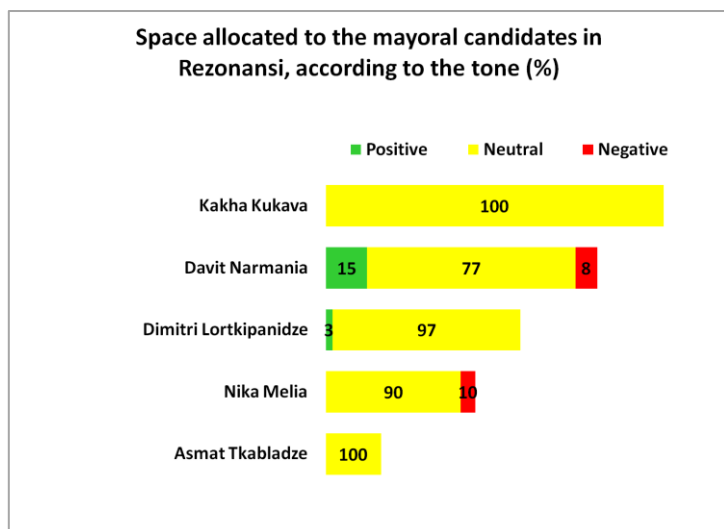
The monitoring results let us conclude that the Rezonansi provided quite objective and unbiased reporting about the currently ongoing events in the country during the

monitoring period. However, we should point out the relatively higher rate of negative tone when covering the activities of the United National Movement, and on the other side, higher rate of positive tone when covering Davit Narmania, candidate of the Coalition Georgian Dream. There was no violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms revealed in the Rezonansi during the monitoring period.

(Chart 1, Subject Coverage, the Rezonansi, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 2, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Rezonansi, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



The Alia

The Alia was distinguished with its quite critical disposition to various political forces during the monitoring period. The newspaper was especially critical towards the United National Movement. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were often violated. We would encounter ungrounded reasoning by the journalists, or unethical expressions, and also the cases of publishing unverified facts and information obtained from less reliable sources.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the United National Movement (32%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (24%), the government (16%) and the Prime Minister (10%). Pretty high rates of negative tone was observed while covering the United National Movement (51%) (See the Chart 3). High rates of negative tone werereported for the Coalition Georgian Dream (35%) and the government (22%). As for the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, here the highest rates of positive tone were observed for Dimitri Lortkipanidze (19%), and Davit Narmania (17%), and the highest rate of negative tone – for Kakha Kukava (18%) (See the Chart 4).

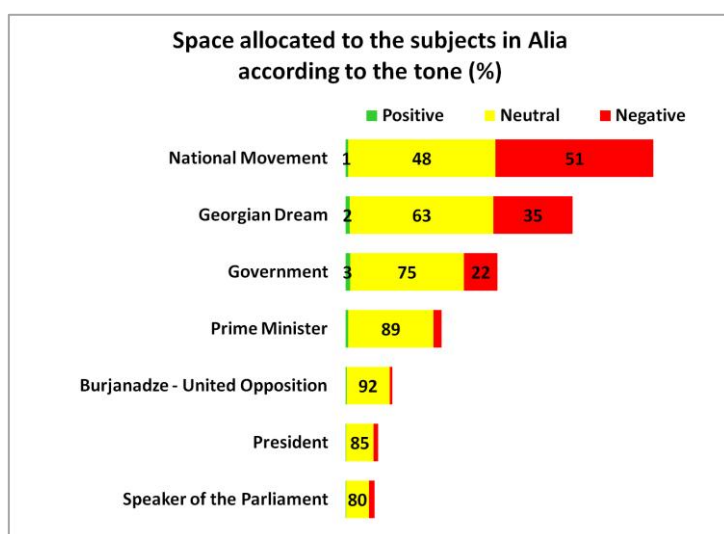
Criticism of the Coalition Georgian Dream sharply increased in the Alia after passing the antidiscrimination law by the Parliament of Georgia. The editorial board published a large photo (containing quite offensive elements), titled “The Georgian Dream Has Cheated You” on the front page on May 6. We also encountered short statements in the same issue, where the numbers 5 and 41 were crossed out – and the editorial board of the newspaper openly called on the people not to vote for the United National Movement or the Coalition Georgian Dream, either. The editorial board also published an obituary in the front page of the very same issue, where they were announcing untimely death of the Georgian Dream.

We encountered the cases of gross violation of the journalistic ethical norms in the Alia many times during the monitoring period, which was demonstrated by journalists’ subjective evaluation of various politicians, usage of offensive terminology by the journalists and publishing information that had been obtained from less reliable sources. For example: “Alas, my Ex-President”, you have completely lost shape since you left us, you have swollen up, and you have become more stupid, cheap and down-and-out; “Hi, is that you, Givi?! I could recognize you by your way of being a scoundrel!” “People, can’t you see what they have done to the True Opposition?!” “Rizha took away the title of world champion of scoundrels from Givi”; “there is a big competition even among scoundrels!”, “Another notorious phrase from Maka Kiladze’s outrageous thinking is a precise adjective of the regime that Hakim Pasha of the “Nationals” arranged for the Georgian people, and what is the National Movement? – Devil, this mother-f***er” (My

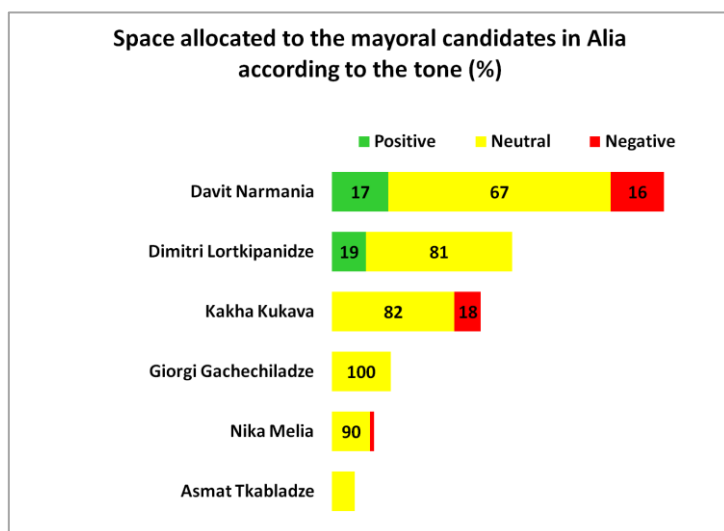
dear Ex-President, I see that you've become even more stupid since you left us...", 12.06.2014, page. 3-4).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Alia reported the national events in a quite biased way. We regularly observed the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms. Journalists of the newspaper were not reluctant to use abusive and discriminatory terminology when covering various politicians. Editorial board of the newspaper openly called on the readers not to vote for the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream.

(Chart 3, Subject Coverage, the Alia, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 4, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Alia, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



The Kviris Palitra

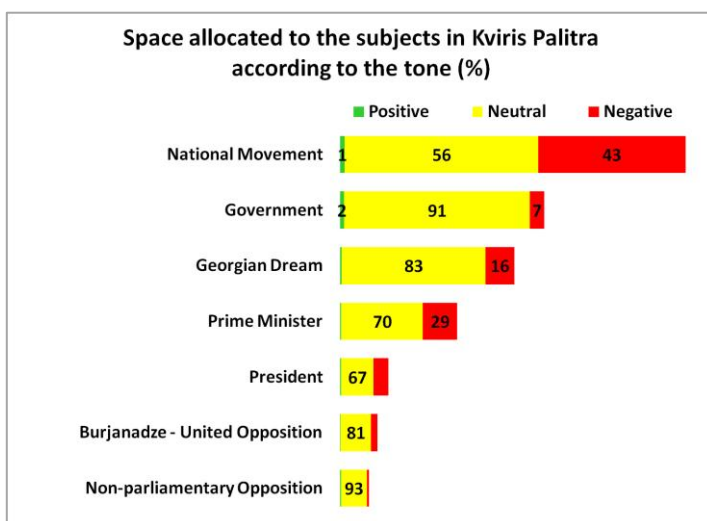
The Kviris Palitra covered the events taking place in the country in a quite objective and impartial way during the monitoring period. We did not observed any especially positive or negative disposition towards any political force. However, we could feel a more negative disposition to the United National Movement. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

The most intensive coverage was observed for the activities of the United National Movement (35%), the government (21%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (18%) and the Prime Minister (12%). Quite a high rate of negative tone was used in case of the United National Movement (43%) (See the Diagram 5). Higher rates of negative tone were observed while covering the Prime Minister (29%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (16%). However, it should be pointed out that we mostly observed the negative tone in the respondents' statements and not in the journalists' texts. Journalists of the Kviris Palitra refrained from making political evaluations and ungrounded reasoning during the monitoring period.

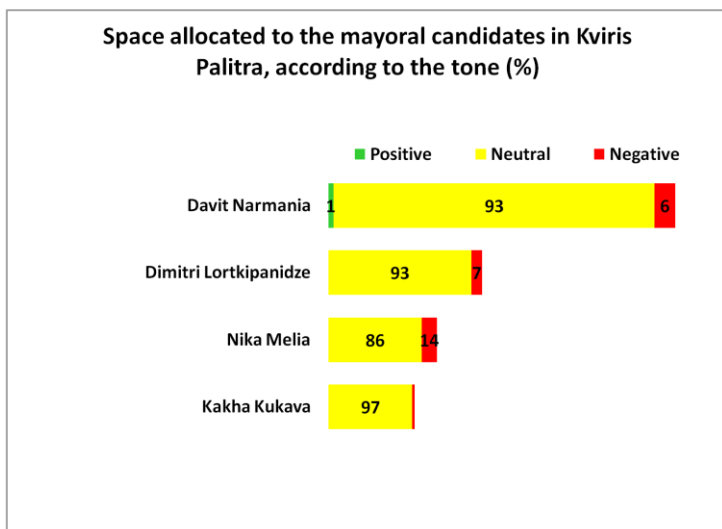
Rates of neutral tone prevailed in the newspaper while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (See the Diagram 6).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Kviris Palitra reported the national events in an objective and impartial way. However, a relatively negative attitude was felt in the newspaper towards the United National Movement. We did not observe any cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the Kviris Palitra.

(Diagram 5, Subject Coverage, the Kviris Palitra, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 6, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Kviris Palitra, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



The Asaval-Dasavali

During the monitoring period, the Asaval-Dasavali was distinguished with its extremely critical disposition towards representatives of the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream and various government structures. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were regularly violated in the articles. The journalists often provided ungrounded reasoning and used abusive terminology. Coverage of national news by the Asaval-Dasavali was extremely biased during this monitoring period.

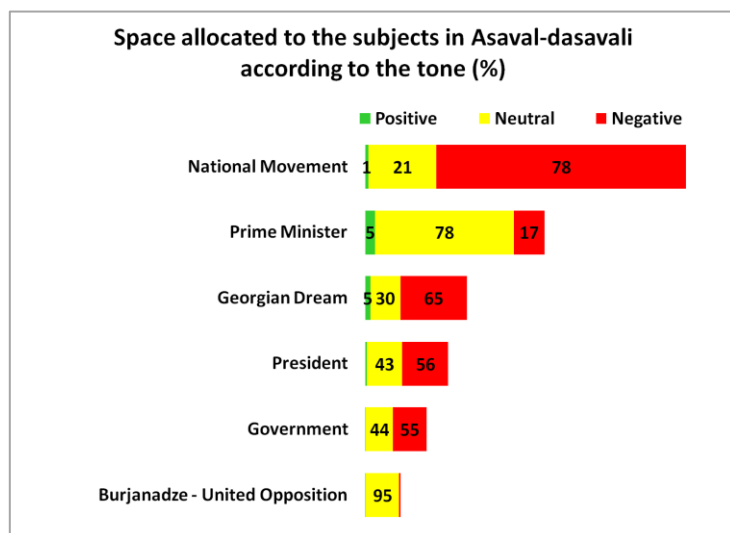
The most intensively covered activities were those of the United National Movement (36%), the Prime Minister (20%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (11%) and the President (9%). Extremely high rates of negative tone were observed while covering the United National Movement (78%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (65%), the President (56%) and the government (55%) (See the Chart 7). The lowest rate of negative tone was reported for “Burjanadze - United Opposition” (4%). The Asaval-Dasavali did not cover the election activities of mayoral candidates very extensively.

Criticism of the Coalition Georgian Dream increased significantly in the Asaval-Dasavali after the Parliament of Georgia passed the anti-discrimination law. The Asaval-Dasavali mostly published comments and interviews of those respondents mostly, who had negative disposition towards the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream as well. However, neither were the journalists reluctant to use subjective judgments and offensive vocabulary when speaking about these parties; for example: “yes, Saakashvili is now a victim of a political syphilis...”, “Eventually, Saakashvili will necessarily find himself where other people like him are, such as “Davit Agmashenebelis”

and “Ilia Chavchavadzes”, i.e. a place with many insane people in straightjackets”... “However, as we see, Saakashvili’s schizophrenia is progressing every day...” (“Are you a tyre?”), (28.04.2014 page 2), “Further approximation of our country to the European Union is directly linked to how courageous and free the faggots and United National Movement members will feel in Georgia! And they will observe the United National Movement-faggot on the stage with European self-possession and repose...” (Rompay’s Lanterns, 19.05.2014, page 3), “some unicellular member of the National Movement, selected for the Sakrebulo, will not be able to do more harm to the city and the country, even if he tries hard, than the harm already caused by this Davit Zurabishvili!” (*The article is attached with the election photo of Davit Zurabishvili, which is crossed over. “Why I have crossed over the republican candidate of the Georgian Dream in the ballot paper!”*, 16.06.2014, page 11). However, we should also point out the cases when the journalists mentioned Davit Narmania, Tbilisi mayoral candidate from the Coalition Georgian Dream in a quite positive context, for example: “I can say without any curtesy that – Dato is a Georgian man to the core, a young man who was grown up in a very honest Georgian family, with a true Georgian heart!” (“Second round should be about returning the Davit Agmashenebeli’s statue to the Tbilisi center!” 16.06.2014, page 2).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Asaval-Dasavali reported the news in an extremely biased way. We regularly encountered the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the newspaper.

(Chart 7, Subject Coverage, the Asaval-Dasavali, April 15-30, 2014)



The Akhali Taoba

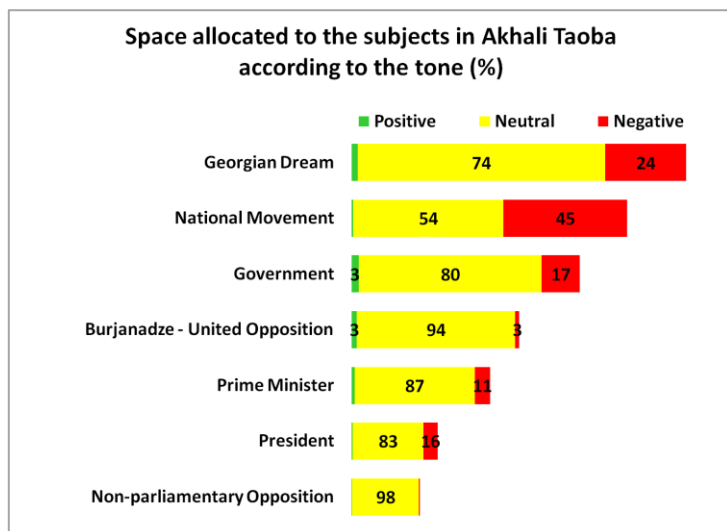
The Akhali Taoba was critically enough while covering the activities of the ruling party and those of the opposition, especially the United National Movement during the monitoring period. In some cases we encountered the cases of violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms, which was demonstrated by unreasoned judgments by journalists and unethical expressions.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the Coalition Georgian Dream (24%), the United National Movement (20%), the government (16%) and the “Burjanadze – United Opposition” (12%). We should point out quite a high rate of negative tone used while covering the activities of the United National Movement (45%) (See the Chart 8); also, there are relatively high rates of negative tones were reported for the Coalition Georgian Dream (24%), the government (17%) and the President (16%). As for the Tbilisi mayoral candidates, the highest rate of negative tone was observed for Nika Melia (16%) and the highest rate of positive tone – for Dimitri Lortkipanidze (35%) (See the Chart 9).

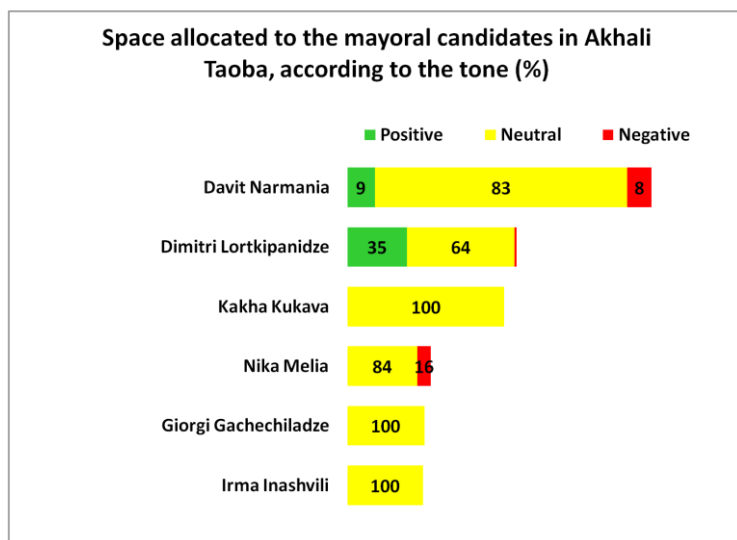
Criticism of the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government became more frequent in the Akhali Taoba after the Parliament passed the antidiscrimination law. This monitoring period was marked with many cases of subjective judgments by journalists and unethical expressions about the representatives of the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government. For example, “Dark Clouds Gathering above Commander Irakli Alasania” (Irina Imerlishvili vs. Irakli Alasania, 10.05.2014, page 2), “The United National Movement people want to get back to power with stupidities of the Dreamers and Republicans” (conspiracy at Adjarian “Georgian Dream”, 16.05.2014, page 4). Besides, there was a case reported during this monitoring period, when the newspaper journalist addressed the supporters of one of the party with offensive words: “fans of the top-five, don’t be nervous, diplomas of your favorites were found!!!” (“Why does staff of the Parliament hide the diplomas of Goka Gabashvili and Nugzar Tsiklauri”, 8.05.2014, page 6).

The monitoring results let us conclude that some negative disposition is felt in the Akhali Taoba towards the Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement and the government. The positive tone was most frequently encountered while covering Dimitri Lortkipanidze, candidate of the Burjanadze – United Opposition. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were violated at some instances.

(Chart8, Subject Coverage, the Akhali Taoba, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 9, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, The Akhali Taoba, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



The Versia

There was a quite critical disposition observed in the Versia towards the United National Movement during the monitoring period. The newspaper mostly adhered to the journalistic standards and ethical norms while reporting the news. However, articles by certain authors included some ungrounded reasoning and unethical expressions.

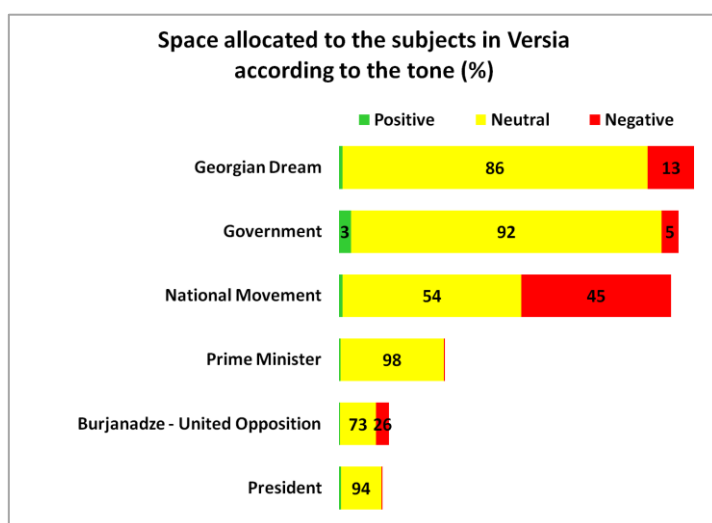
The most intensively covered activities were those of the Coalition Georgian Dream (26%), the government (25%) and the United National Movement (24%). Especially high rate of

negative coverage was reported while covering the United National Movement (45%). We did not observe high rates of positive or negative tones when covering other subjects (See the Chart 10). Among the Tbilisi mayoral candidates, high rates of negative tone were used for Nika Melia (65%), Asmat Tkabladze (77%) and Kakha Kukava (73%). Davit Narmania got the highest rate of positive tone (5%) (See the Chart 11).

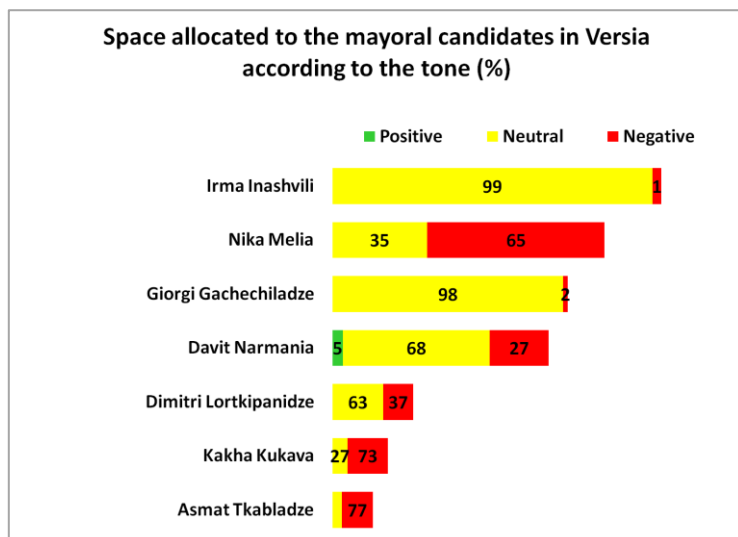
We have often encountered subjective reasoning and ethical expressions of journalists addressed to various politicians, mostly to the representatives of the United National Movement in the newspaper during the monitoring period. For example: “The only thing the National Movement has been doing for 9 years was to take revenge, punish its own nation, rape, murder and treat its people disgracefully” (“the bomb that the United National Movement members will explode a few days before elections” 12.05.2014, page 3). We often came across with the cases of publishing information based on less reliable sources; for example: “according to the off-stage information, the parole board has released them based on Moroshkina’s recommendation...”, “There is off-stage information from the penitentiary agency that “the bosses” have learned about Moroshkina’s abovementioned contacts and took notice of it”. (“Lali Moroshkina’s high-profile “prison scandal””, 21.05.2014, page 5). However, it is worth mentioning that as the elections got closer, the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards became less frequent.

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Versia was quite critical to the United National Movement. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were mostly observed during the reporting. However, we often came across with the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards in the articles of individual authors.

(Chart10, Subject Coverage, The Versia, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 11, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Versia, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



The Kviris Kronika

The Kviris Kronika was distinguished with its quite critical disposition towards various political forces during the monitoring period. The newspaper was especially critical to the United National Movement. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were often violated. Journalists of the Kviris Kronika did not try to avoid subjective reasoning and usage of abusive terminology when covering various politicians.

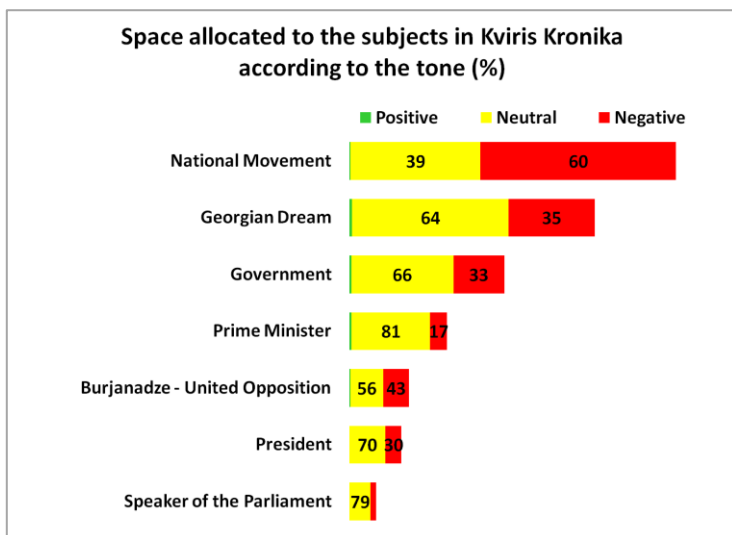
The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the United National Movement (31%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (23%), the government (15%) and the Prime Minister (9%). There was an extremely high rate of negative tone observed while covering the United National Movement (60%) (See the Chart 12). Pretty high rates of negative tone were reported for the President (43%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (35%), the government (33%) and the “Burjanadze – United Opposition” (30%). As for the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, here the high rates of negative tone were observed for Nika Melia (50%) and Davit Narmania (24%) (See the Chart 13).

Criticism of the Coalition Georgian Dream significantly increased in the Kviris Kronika after the Parliament of Georgia passed the antidiscrimination law. In addition, the negative coverage also increased for the Burjanadze – United Opposition, which was the consequence of an extensive article that criticized Nino Burjanadze’s political activity (Is Nino Burjanadze cheating voters?”, 12.05.2014, page 33). We often came across with

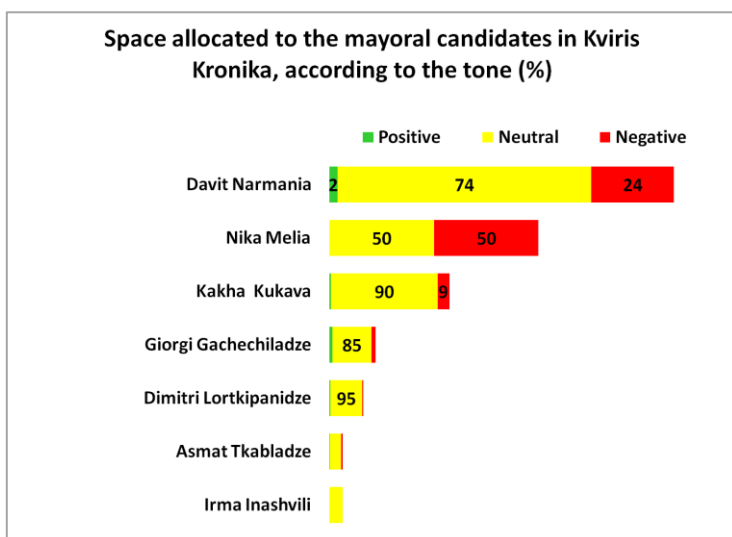
subjective reasoning and abusive phrases used by the journalists towards certain politicians in the Kviris Kronika during the monitoring period. For example: "President Giorgi Margvelashvili has superseded his predecessor with his fantasy and impertinence. He has started to enjoy our money much earlier than Mikheil Saakashvili", "... Margvelashvili had already has become reckless in 2013, meaning that he has gone nuts quite a lot..." ("Giorgi Margvelashvili's appetite has exceeded that of Mikheil Saakashvili", 28.04.2014, page 227-28), "So, now Nodar [Khaduri] has remembered his genius calculation and rhymed: I saw a tractor cultivating valleys, and I don't care if potato does not grow there!" ("Give us this day our daily MAPand forgive us our cohabitation", 22.04.2014, page 31), "Instead of growing remaining hair and cover bold parts of his head, [Jondi Baghaturia] preferred to shave off all of his hair without ever thinking about hair transplant" ("How much property Jondi Baghaturia has?", 12.05.2014, page 35-36), "Enough is enough, why can't I ignore everyone and just write a poem? Like this: I watch dumb United National Movement members on TV, some has a smoky face, others look as if they were beaten up." ("I guess this country looks completely different from the Parliament", 2.06.2014, page 33), "Mayor of Tbilisi Gigilo Ugulava, who has slipped on ice like a pregnant donkey, has been summoned to the Financial Police for interrogation on June 30" (let me tell something to this nerd Gharibashvili and his ichthyologist Ivanishvili: it does not matter how many billions you earn and what position you occupy, neither flute can be carved out of you nor a man will become of you", 30.06.2014, page 2); "The bad news is not the fact that Usupashvili, who has tied his tail with other flatterers of the Western policy, is making such a statement (on the contrary, this is quite logical), but the bad news and the tragedy is that this three-percent parasite is an official, and he is a head of the legislative power" ("Usupashvili has taken off his mask", 30.06.2014, page 15). Besides, the very next day after the Parliament passed the anti-discrimination law, the Kviris Kronika published a large photo in its front page (containing pretty offensive elements) with three inscriptions: "ex-cool boys of the parliament do not dare wining about other's inaptness"; "they oppose a three-stage plan to the antidiscrimination law that was passed only because the authorities wanted so!!!"; "it took 9 years for the previous government to make us hate them, and these ones succeeded to do it in 18 months" (5.05.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Kviris Kronika was covering the ongoing events in a quite biased way. We regularly encountered the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the newspaper by the journalists.

(Chart 12, Subject Coverage, the Kviris Kronika, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



(Chart 13, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Kviris Kronika, April 15 – June 30, 2014)



Recommendations

The monitoring has revealed that journalistic standards are quite often violated in the print media. While reporting about a certain politician, the journalists often do not refrain from providing their own subjective evaluations and in some cases, insulting and discriminatory expression. Programs of election subjects are less frequently highlighted, and often the published information is not verified.

Following recommendations can be offered to the representatives of the print media based on these findings:

- The journalists should do their best to report about the ongoing political processes as impartially as possible. Instead of personal evaluation of politicians, it would be better if the journalists offered the readers a more profoundly obtained facts and unbiased evaluations based on verified facts about important events, so that the readers are able to draw conclusions about the activities of a certain politician.
- The journalists should discontinue usage of offensive and discriminatory terminology while covering the activities of politicians;
- It is inadmissible for the media during the election period to openly call on to readers to vote for a certain political party;
- The media would rather highlight the programs of election subjects more intensively during the election period;
- The media should refrain from publishing unverified information. Especially if this information contains grave allegations against a certain individual;
- The journalists should try to offer diversity of opinions and sources of information to the readers in their articles, so that the opinions represented therein are not one-sided and to enable the readers to get familiar with different opinions about a certain issue and to draw conclusions themselves.



Media Monitoring Results of 2014 Local Government Elections in Georgia

Monitoring of Online Media

April 15 –June 30, 2014

In connection with the local government elections of 2014, the Civic Development Institute (CDI) renewed its media monitoring within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP. The monitoring was carried out for the period of April 15 through June 30, 2014, covering the most rated 12 Georgian websites: *netgazeti.ge*, *droni.ge*, *pirveliradio.ge*, *liberali.ge*, *news.ge*, *presa.ge*, *civil.ge*, *tabula.ge*, *reportiori.ge*, *for.ge*, *dfwatch.net*, *palitrato.ge*.

Key Findings

Compared to the results of the monitoring carried out during the elections in 2012 and 2013, there a clear improvement was observed in the Georgian online media during the monitoring period in regards to balanced coverage of subjects, also in the light of adherence to the journalistic ethical norms. It may be said that the Georgian online media was polarized during the 2012 parliamentary elections, and the majority of websites openly declared support to this or that political party. In addition, extremely grave violations of ethical norms of journalism were often encountered, which was expressed by using the offensive and discriminatory vocabulary against various politicians by the journalists. The overall picture improved relatively during the 2013 presidential elections. The journalists were less frequently using subjective evaluations and offensive expressions. However, some of the websites were still openly expressing their attitude toward a certain party or presidential candidate. The overall picture improved significantly during the 2014 local elections. Out of the 12 selected websites only two revealed negative attitude toward a certain political party. It is also noteworthy that the cases of violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms decreased significantly. We almost never encountered the cases of usage ungrounded reasoning and abusive

vocabulary by the journalists during this monitoring period. We should especially single out the websites droni.ge and presa.ge, which radically improved the working style in regards to from the standpoint of objective coverage of activities of politicians and adherence to the journalistic ethics as well. However, it is noteworthy that these were the two very websites where the monitoring revealed the gross violations of journalistic ethical norms during the monitoring in 2012. Main challenges for the Georgian online media during this monitoring period was the superficial coverage of facts and in some cases – publishing of unverified information as well.

Monitoring of the Georgian online media during 2014 local elections revealed the following findings:

- Compared to the results of the monitoring held in 2012 and 2013, there is a significant improvement observed in the online media in regards to the adherence to the journalistic ethical norms and objective coverage of monitoring subjects as well;
- Compared to the 2013 monitoring results, there are positive changes observed in the websites: presa.ge, droni.ge and tabula.ge;
- We should point out presa.ge, which has radically changed its mode operations;
- Election activities of mayoral candidates were less frequently covered; the websites paid more attention to the coverage of political parties and representatives of government structures;
- It was evident that the websites for.ge and reportiori.ge had a negative attitude towards the UNM;
- There was no especially positive or negative attitude observed towards any other political party in any of the monitored websites;
- All the monitored websites actively covered the issues related to the local elections;
- Majority of the websites impartially reported about the Election Day, also the vote counting procedures and violations revealed during elections;
- Superficial coverage of events and, in some cases, publishing of unverified information is the main challenges for the online media.

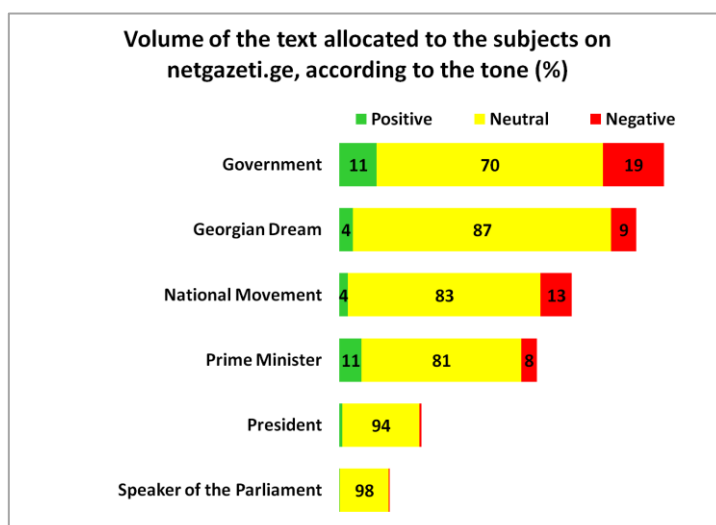
During this monitoring period, netgazeti.ge provided an objective and impartial reporting of the events taking place in the country. There was no positive or negative attitude observed on the website towards any political force. The journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed at the highest level.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the government (26%), the CGD (24%), the UNM (19%) and the Prime Minister (16%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed towards any of the subjects (*See the Chart 1*). Rates of neutral tone prevailed on the website while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates. High rate of positive tone was reported only for Davit Narmania (24%) (*See the Chart 2*).

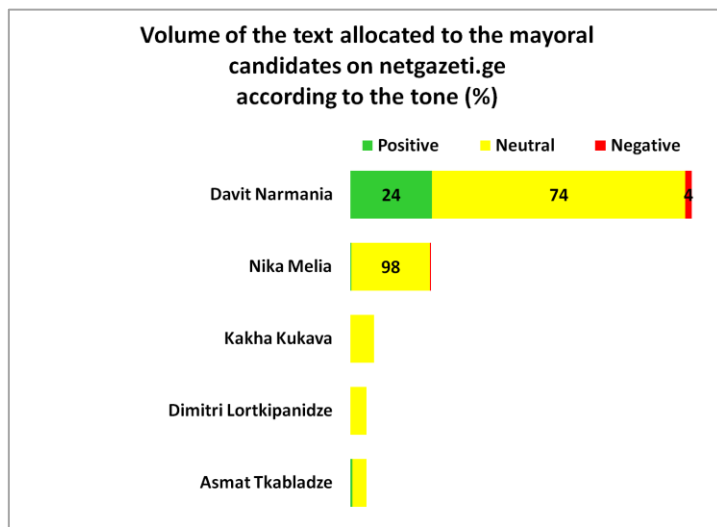
Local Election Day had an intensive coverage on the website. A website “Local Government Elections” was launched specifically for this day. This website was updated automatically, and this is where the most updated information was being uploaded about the conduct of elections during the whole day. After the elections, the website actively reported about the results of the elections (e.g. the Dream won at 7 precincts out of 14, and the National Movement – at 3 precincts, 30.06.2014), also about the violations revealed during the elections by various organizations (e.g. “Violations reported by the GYLA during the re-run”, 29.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that netgazeti.ge provided quite an impartial coverage for the ongoing political processes. Journalists of this website highly observed the journalistic standards and ethics. The website provided an active and objective coverage of the local government elections and its process.

(Chart 1, Subject Coverage, netgazeti.ge, April 15 –June 30, 2014)



(Chart2, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, netgazeti.ge, April 15– June 30, 2014)



droni.ge

Compared to the monitoring results during the 2013 presidential elections, there was a positive change observed on droni.ge during this monitoring period in regards to balanced coverage of subjects. The website did not display any positive or negative disposition towards any political force. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are observed.

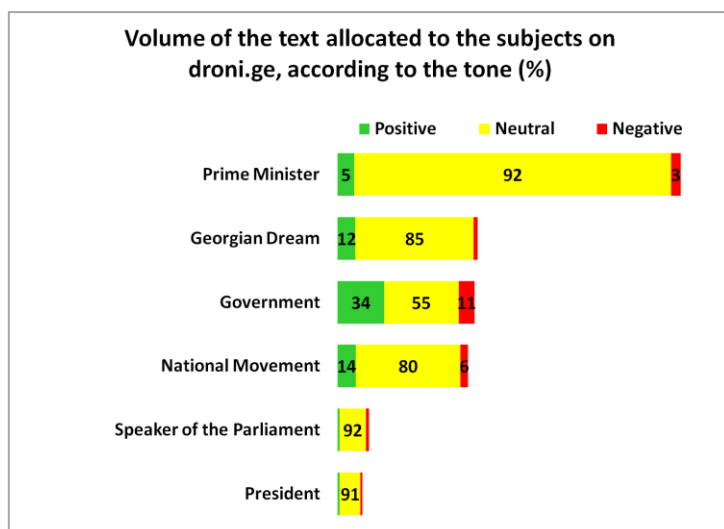
The most intensive coverage was provided for the Prime Minister (37%), the CGD (16%), the government (15%) and the UNM (14%). There were no extraordinarily high rates of positive or negative tone observed towards any of the subjects (Chart 3). Rates of neutral and positive tone prevailed on the website while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (See the Chart 4).

Compared to the monitoring results of previous years, there were changes observed in the website during this monitoring period from the viewpoint of adherence to the ethical norms of journalism, also the subject coverage balance. We no longer come across with offensive or discriminatory vocabulary used by the journalists on droni.ge.

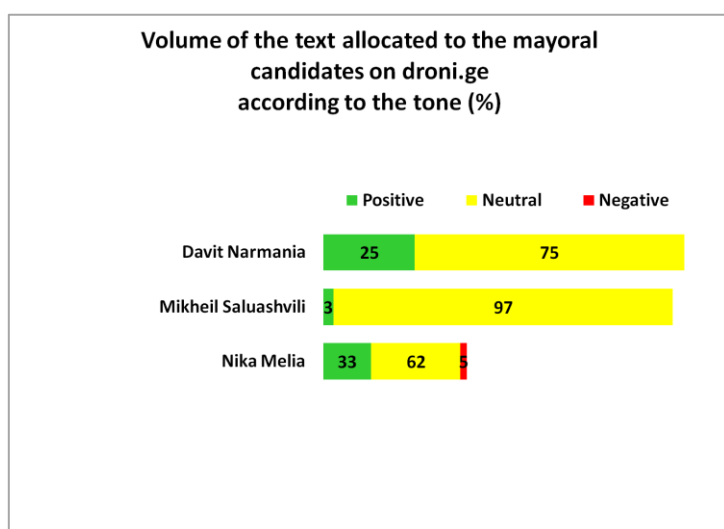
The website extensively covered the voting by various politicians on the local government election day (e.g. “Kakha Kaladze voted – what did he say to the journalists?”, 15.06.2014; “Alexander Chikaidze went to the precinct without his ID card” 15.06.2014; “The President made his choice”, 15.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that during this monitoring period droni.ge has objectively and impartially covered the ongoing political processes. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

(Chart3, Subject Coverage, droni.ge)



(Chart 4, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, droni.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



pirveliradio.ge

Pirveliradio.ge reported actually all the important events in a quite objective and impartial manner during the monitoring period. There was no especially positive or negative disposition observed on the website towards any political force. Journalistic

standards and ethical norms were observed. However, we encountered several cases of publishing unverified information on the website during the monitoring period.

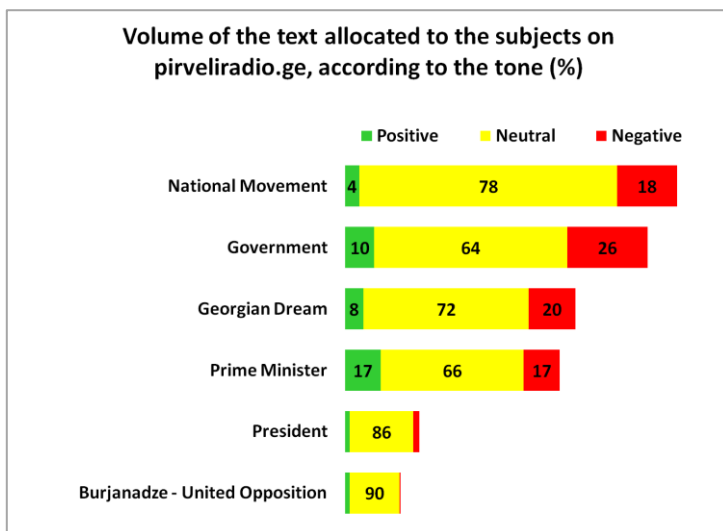
The most intensive coverage was observed for the activities of the UNM (26%), the government (24%), the CGD (18%) and the Prime Minister (17%). We did not observe especially high rates of positive or negative tone towards any of the subjects (*See the Chart 5*). Rates of neutral tone prevailed while covering Tbilisi mayoral candidates on the website (*See the Chart 6*).

Journalistic standards were basically observed on the website during the monitoring period. However, there were some articles containing unverified information. For example, the journalist was discussing the candidate chairpersons of Tbilisi Sakrebulo in the articles “Kobakhidze’s brother at Sakrebulo – will Tkemaladze’s son become a chairperson” (18.06.2014) and “Former high-ranking police official will become a chairperson of Sakrebulo” (26.06.2014), and used the terms: “forecasts are made at the political offstage...”, “According to some information...”, “... as they say at the backstage of the Dream...”, “Now this is confirmed at the backstage of the Georgian Dream...”.

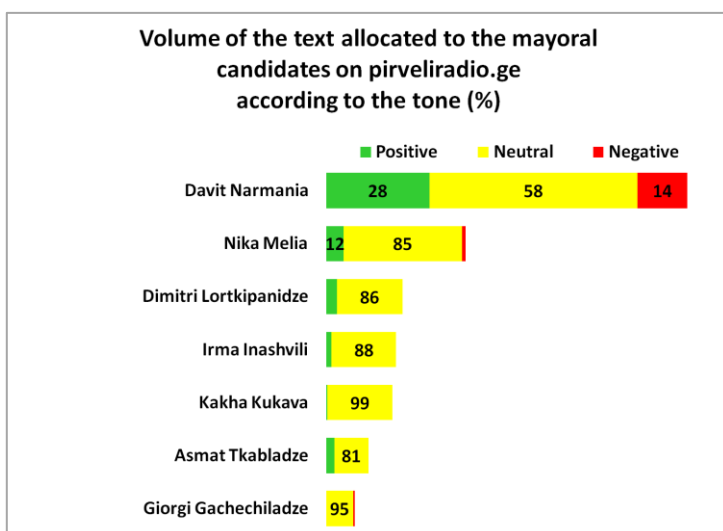
The website provided quite an active and objective coverage of the issues related to the results of local government elections (e.g.: “Election results known in Kutaisi”, 16.06.2014; “According to the CEC’s preliminary data, there will be a second round of elections for Tbilisi mayoral elections”, 16.06.2014; “Almost 87 percent of precincts in Tbilisi are counted”, 16.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the pirveliradio.ge provided intensive and impartial coverage of the events taking place in the country. Journalistic standards were mostly observed, but we still encountered with the cases of publishing some unverified information.

(Chart5, Subject Coverage, *pirveliradio.ge*, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart6, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, *pirveliradio.ge*, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



liberali.ge

During the monitoring period, liberali.ge provided quite an objective coverage of the events taking place in the country. There was no positive or negative disposition observed towards any political force on the website. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly respected.

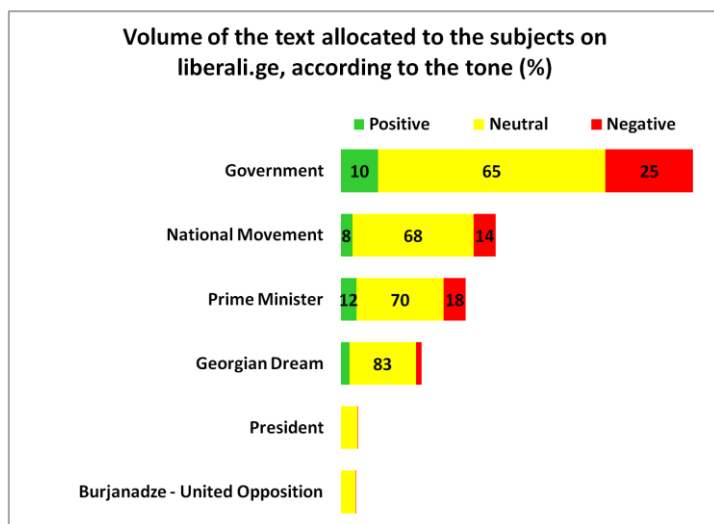
The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the government (45%), the UNM (20%), the Prime Minister (16%) and the CGD (10%). We should point out the higher rate of negative tone observed while covering the government activity (25%) (See

the Chart 7), which was caused by the extensive coverage of quite critical appeals of various organizations to the government (e.g.: “Should the foreign experts monitor the ruining of Sakdrisi?!”, 7.05.2014; “the NGOs disseminate information about homophobic evaluations of Davit Darakhvelidze” 12.05.2014; “GYLA: the authorities were unable to prevent violent facts before the elections”, 13.06.2014). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tones observed against other monitoring subjects. As for Tbilisi mayoral candidates, here the rates of positive tone prevailed for Nika Melia (33%) and Davit Narmania (28%) (See the Chart 8).

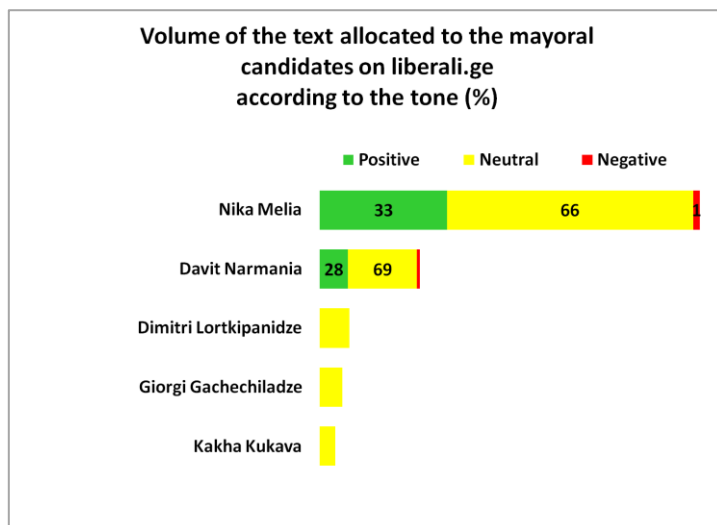
The website quite actively covered the issues related to the results of local government elections and also the statements of various organizations regarding the violations revealed during the elections (e.g.: “there is a lack of ballot papers at almost all the precincts in the regions populated with ethnic minorities,” 15.06.2014; “The police has found the ballot papers that have been seized”, 15.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that liberali.ge provided quite an objective coverage of the events taking place in the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly observed.

(Chart 7, Subject Coverage, liberali.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart8, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, liberali.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



news.ge

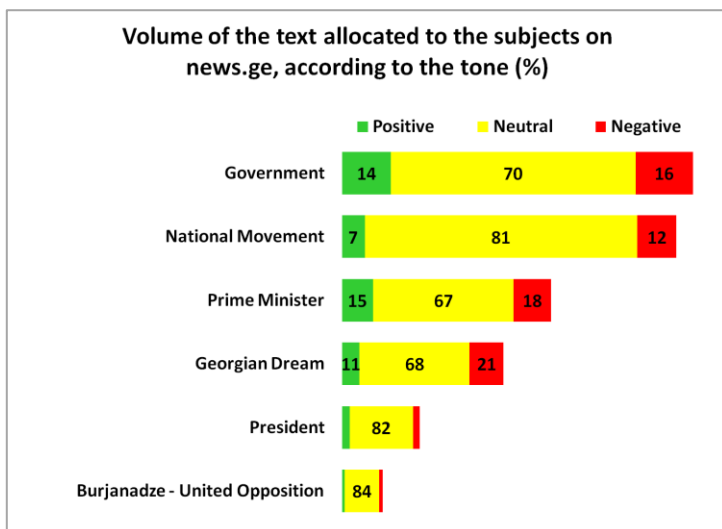
News.ge intensively covered the national news during the monitoring period. There was no positive or negative disposition observed towards any political force on the website. We did not encounter any instances of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms on the website during this monitoring period.

The most intensively covered activities were those of the government (28%), the UNM (27%), the Prime Minister (17%) and the CGD (13%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone while reporting about any of the subjects (*See the Chart 9*). Higher rate of positive tone was revealed for Davit Narmania (27%) and Nika Melia (24%) while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (*See the Chart 10*).

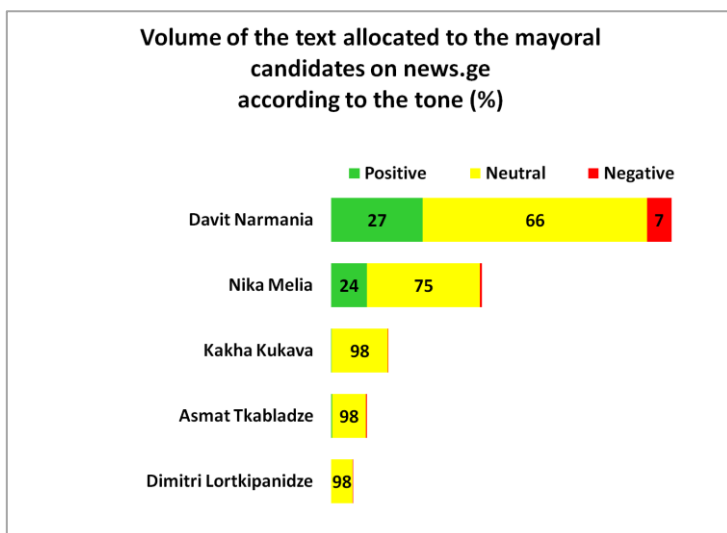
The website provided active and impartial coverage of the local government elections; besides, the evaluations by politicians were intensively covered as well (e.g. “Bakradze – population of Georgia rejected confrontation and unmet promises”, 15.06.2014; “Davit Sergeenko: According to our data, the second round will not take place”, 15.06.2014; “Prime Minister’s statement indicates that there is a likelihood of shifting the influence to election commissions”, 15.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that news.ge provided active and objective coverage for the political processes taking place in the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

(Chart9, Subject Coverage, news.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart10, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, news.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



presa.ge

Compared to the results of the monitoring taken place during elections in 2012 and 2013, there was a radical change observed on presa.ge during this monitoring period in regards to the adherence of journalistic standards and ethical norms. We no longer came across with subjective evaluations or offensive terminology in the journalists' texts, which used to be a characteristic feature for presa.ge. The website provided quite an objective

and impartial coverage of the events taking place in the country during the monitoring period.

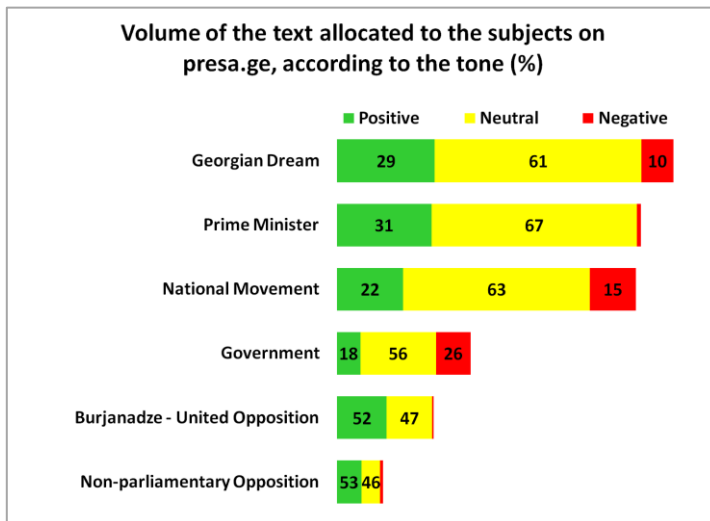
The most coverage was provided for the activities of the CGD (26%), the Prime Minister (24%), the UNM (23%) and the government (10%). Rates of positive tone prevailed on the website while reporting about the subjects (*See the Chart 11*). There were no especially high rates of negative tone towards any of the subjects. Rates of neutral and positive tones prevailed on the website while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (*See the Chart 12*).

The website intensively and exhaustively covered the programs and promises of election subjects during the monitoring period. We should point out a special rubric which highlighted the election programs of mayoral candidates of various self-governing towns (e.g. "These are key messages of Kutaisi mayoral candidates", 26.05.2014; "What do the Akhaltsikhe mayoral candidates promise us?" 30.05.2014; "What are the plans of Ozurgeti mayoral candidates?", 9.06.2014).

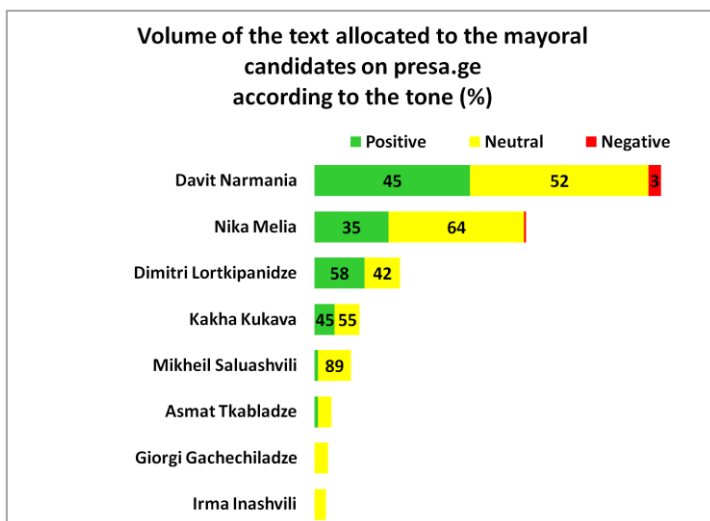
On the local Election Day, the website quite actively and impartially covered the voting procedures by various politicians (e.g. "Davit Narmania voted at #1 Precinct in Saburtalo", 15.06.2014; "Nika Melia: I am sure, the people of Tbilisi will make a pragmatic choice", 15.06.2014; "Defense Minister made his choice in Zugdidi", 15.06.2014). Besides, there was coverage of the progress of elections (e.g. "CEC: as of 12:00, 571,123 voters have participated in the elections", 15.06.2014; "The turnout by 12:00 and the voting process", 15.06.2014), and about the election violations too (e.g.: "GYLA speaks about the violations revealed by 14:00", 15.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that presa.ge has radically improved its mode of operations in regards to adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. The website provided an objective and impartial coverage of ongoing political processes during this monitoring period.

(Chart11, Subject Coverage, presa.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart12, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, presa.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



civil.ge

During the monitoring period civil.ge provided quite an objective and impartial coverage of the events taking place in the country. There was no positive or negative disposition felt to any of the political forces. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly observed.

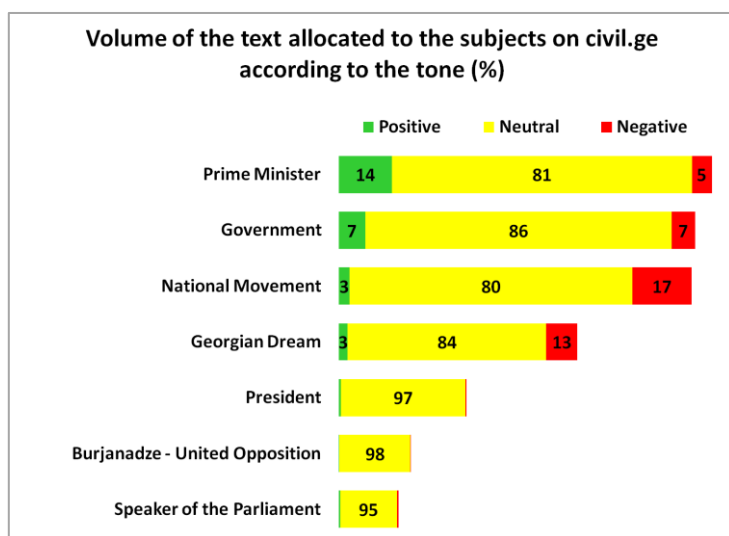
The most intensive coverage was provided for the Prime Minister (22%), the government (21%), the UNM (21%) and the CGD (14%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed while covering any of the subjects (*See the Chart 13*). Neutral tone prevailed on the website while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (*See the Chart 14*). Higher rates of positive tone were reported for Davit Narmania (15%) and Nika Melia (15%) (*See the Chart 8*).

The website exhaustively covered the lists of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, political parties and election blocs during the monitoring period (e.g. “14 Candidates Run for Tbilisi Mayor”, 19.05.2014; “20 Parties, 4 Blocs Registered to Run in Local Elections”). Besides, various issues, which were pertinent to the local government elections, were profoundly discussed (e.g.: “Mayoral Candidates”, 25.05.2014; “CEC: Number of Voters 3, 429, 748”, 10.06. 2014; “Gamgebeli Candidates”, 10.06.2014).

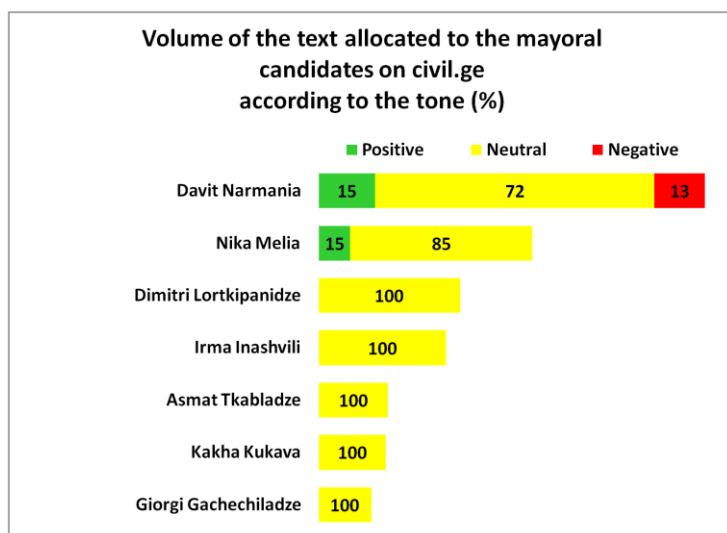
The website intensively reported the conduct of the elections during the Election Day (e.g.: „Monitoring Groups’ Report on Voting Process”, 15.06.2014; “Municipal Elections Underway”, 15.06.2014; “Exit Polls Give GD’s Tbilisi Mayoral Candidate Lead, But Runoff Possible”, 15.06.2014). Besides, the website also provided exhaustive coverage of the election results (for example: „Round-Up of Local Elections’ Preliminary Results”, 25.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that civil.ge provided quite an objective coverage of the events happening throughout the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly observed. The website intensively covered the process of conducting the local government elections.

(Chart13, Subject Coverage, civil.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart14, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, civil.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



tabula.ge

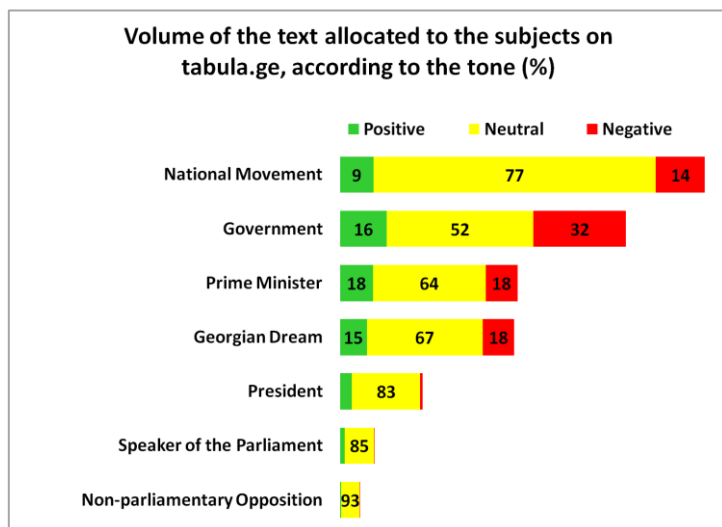
Compared to the monitoring results from the elections held in 2012 and 2013, we observe positive change on tabula.ge regarding the balanced coverage of subjects. During this monitoring period the website covered the national news in a pretty objective and impartial manner. However, more extensive reporting was observed for the statements of representatives of the UNM. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly observed in the articles published by tabula.ge.

The most intensive coverage was observed for the activities of the UNM (32%), the government (25%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the CGD (15%). Higher rates of negative tone were observed for the government (31%). However, it is worth mentioning that the negative tone was observed in the respondents' statements and not in the journalists' texts. Journalists of tabula.ge refrained from making political evaluations and providing unsubstantiated reasoning during the monitoring period. There were no extraordinarily high rates of positive or negative tone used towards any subject (Chart 15). Rates of neutral and positive tone prevailed on the website when reporting about the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (See the Chart 16).

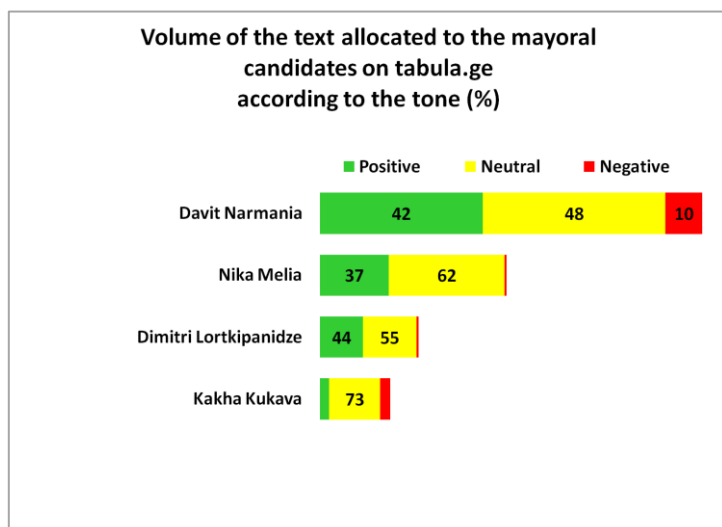
The website was actively and impartially highlighted the Election Day for the local elections, also the issues related to the election results and identified violations (e.g. "ISFED: observers have filed 62 claims to the Commission by 17:00", 15.06.2014; "there will be a second round for mayoral elections in Tbilisi and seven self-governing cities", 17.06.2014; "the recent data suggests that the second round for electing the Gamgebelis will be held in 13 districts", 17.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that tabula.ge has actively and objectively covered the political processes taking place in the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

(Chart 15, Subject Coverage, tabula.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart16, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, tabula.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



There was some negative disposition observed on reportiori.ge towards the UNM during the monitoring period. The website reported the news in adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms, although we still encountered some video materials during the monitoring period, which represented the leaders of the UNM in an extremely negative light. It is worth mentioning that these video materials were posted without any comments or reference to the author or the source.

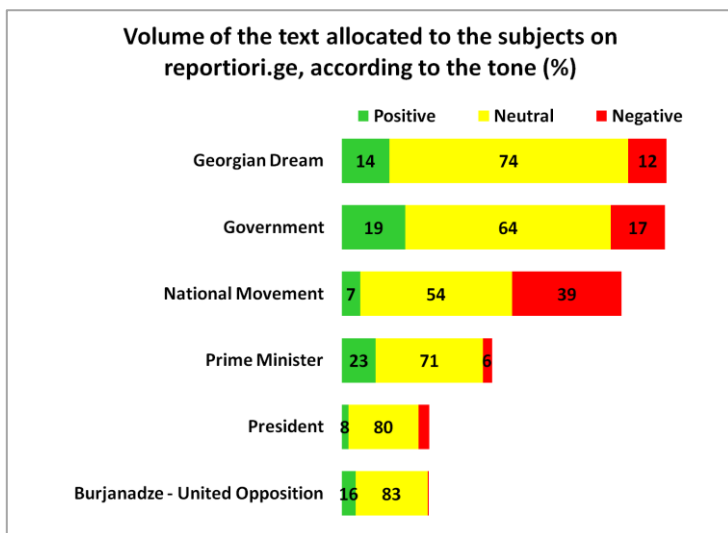
The most intensively reported activities were those of the CGD (23%), the government (23%), the UNM (20%) and the Prime Minister (11%). The highest rate of negative tone was observed for the UNM (39%), and the highest rate of positive tone – for the Prime Minister (23%) (See the Chart 17). Rates of neutral and positive tone prevailed on the website when reporting about the Tbilisi mayoral candidates. The highest rate of positive tone was observed for Davit Narmania (38%), Dimitri Lortkipanidze (38%) and Irma Inashvili (34%) (See the Chart 18).

There were many videos uploaded on the website during the monitoring period, which presented the UNM and namely Mikheil Saakashvili in an extremely negative way (for example: Mikheil Saakashvili, KGBagent, 11.06.2014; Thanks to Giorgi Gabedava, 13.06.2014). It is noteworthy that these materials were posted without comments or reference to the author. Besides, we need to point out the article “New Faces of the Georgian Dream” (24.06.2014), where the author of the article positively evaluates three members of the Georgian Dream.

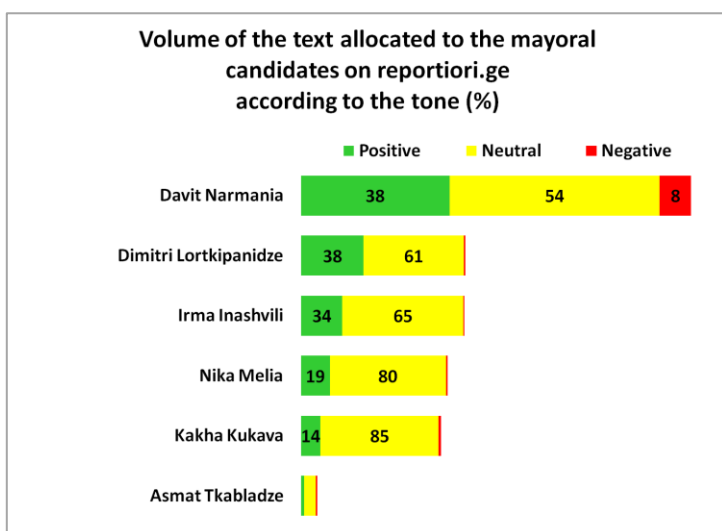
The website pretty actively covered the local elections. The voting procedures by Tbilisi mayoral candidates were being covered during the entire Election Day (for example: “Davit Narmania has already made his choice” 15.06.2014; “Dimitri Lortkipanidze: I have voted for organizing our city and for ensuring prosperous future for our children” 15.06.2014; “Nika Melia: I have voted for implementation of infrastructure projects, cheaper transportation and reduced utility bills”, 15.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that there is a clear negative disposition observed on reportiori.ge towards the UNM. Ethical norms of journalist were observed during the news reporting, but we need to point out that there were some video materials uploaded without any comments or reference to the author or a source.

(Chart 17, Subject Coverage, reportiori.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart18, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, reportiori.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



for.ge

There was a clearly felt negative attitude observed towards the UNM on for.ge during the monitoring period. In some cases the website journalists openly expressed their negative attitude towards this party. For.ge often violated the journalistic standards and ethical norms during the monitoring period. As observed, there was an attempt of discrediting Nika Melia, one of the mayoral candidates running for Tbilisi.

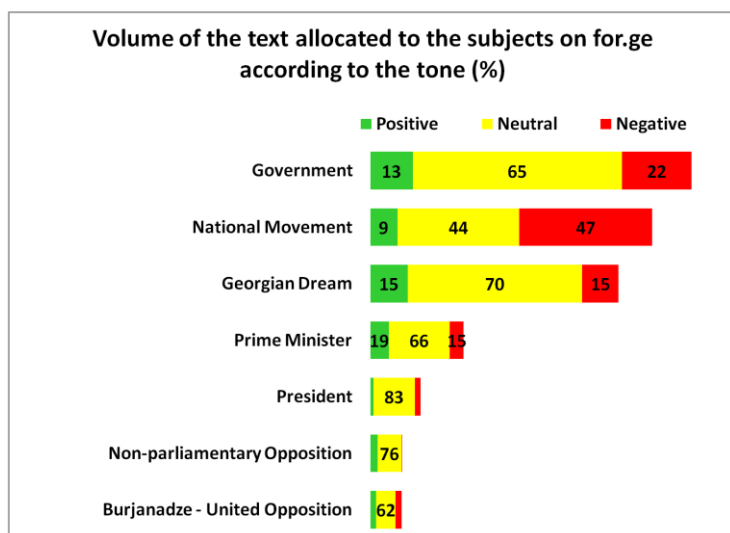
Among the monitoring subjects, the most intensive coverage was provided for the government (28%), the UNM (25%), the CGD (22%) and the Prime Minister (8%). There was quite a high rate of negative tone observed while covering the UNM (47%) (*See the Chart 19*). When speaking about the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, we should point out the extremely high rate of negative tone used for Nika Melia (67%). However, the rates of positive tone prevailed on the website when reporting about other mayoral candidates (*See the Chart 20*).

For.ge often published interviews during the monitoring period with the respondents with extremely difficult disposition towards the UNM (e.g. “Manana Kobakhidze can’t help laughing at Rustavi 2 and the UNM Members: “”people are dirty”, 12.05.2014; “Sports Excellency of the Beacon of Democracy – what happened on May 13, i.e. failure of the operation “While the President was asleep”, 13.05.2014). However, we should point out that the website allocated more space to the comments of the representatives of this party during this period as compared to the monitoring in 2012 and 2013.

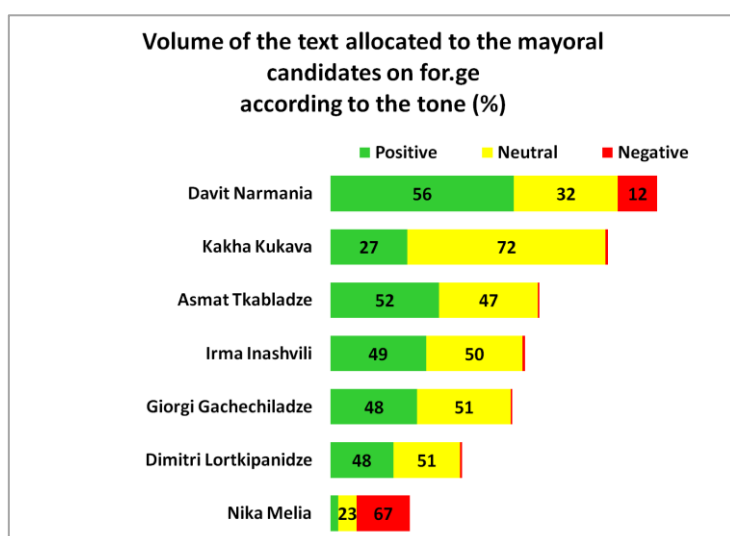
We often came across with instances of using ungrounded reasoning and offensive vocabulary by the journalists in the articles on for.ge; for example: “this lousy cohabitation between the Georgian Dream and the National Movement, which has been found to be guilty of multiple systemic crimes, has now turned into a political marriage” (“Inga Grigolia Tears a Mask off!”, 16.05.2014). We also found some cases of visual manipulation during the monitoring period; for example, the article “Thea Tsulukiani, if she were Khatuna Gogorishvili, because of Ahmed Imamkuliev...” (6.06.2014) was published with a photo of Khatuna Gogorishvili, member of the UNM, showing her an unnatural posture and thus created negative attitude towards the politician.

The monitoring results let us conclude that there is negative disposition towards the UNM that is clearly felt on for.ge. We have encountered many instances of violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in this website.

(Chart 19, Subject Coverage, for.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart20, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, for.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



dfwatch.net

During the monitoring period, dfwatch.net provided quite an objective and impartial coverage of the national news. The website did not demonstrate any positive or negative disposition towards any political power. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

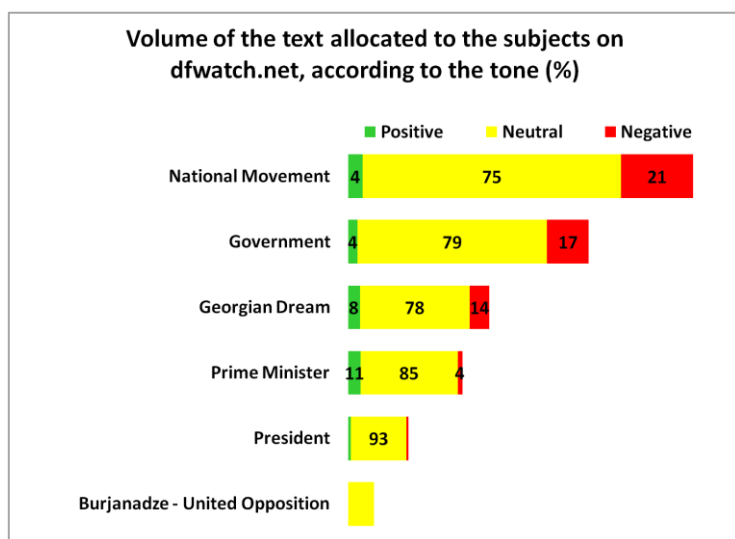
The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the UNM (36%), the government (25%), the CGD (15%) and the Prime Minister (12%). We did not observe too

high rates of positive or negative tone towards any of the subjects (*See the Chart 21*). Comparatively higher rates of negative tone were observed for the UNM (21%), the government (17%), and the CGD (14%). However, we should point out that the negative tone was basically found in the respondents' statements and not in the journalists' texts. Journalists of dfwatch.net refrained from making political judgments and ungrounded reasoning during the monitoring period. Neutral tone prevailed while covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (*See the Chart 22*).

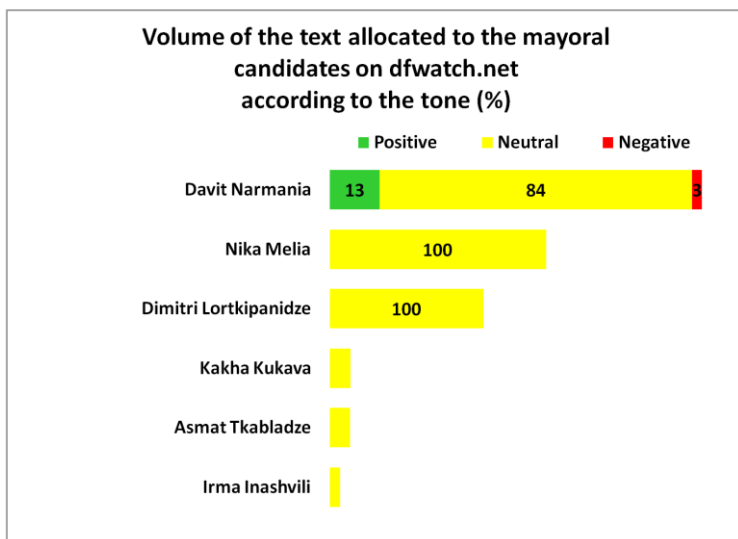
The website covered the Election Day pretty objectively (for example: "Voting Goes Smoothly in Georgia's Local Election", 15.06.2014), also the issues pertinent to the elections (for example: "Exit poll: second round may be needed in Tbilisi", 15.06.2014; "Election update after 98% of votes have been counted", 17.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that coverage of national news by dfwatch.net was quite objective. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were highly observed.

(Chart21, Subject Coverage, dfwatch.net, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart22, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, dfwatch.net, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



palitrav.ge

During the monitoring period, palitrav.ge provided a very objective and impartial coverage of the national news. We did not observe any positive or negative disposition towards any political power on the website. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the government (29%), the UNM (21%), the Prime Minister (21%) and the CGD (13%). We did not observe any extraordinarily high rates of positive or negative tone while covering any of the subjects, however, comparatively higher rate of negative tone was observed for the UNM (24%) (See the Chart 23). As for the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, here the high rates of positive tone was observed for Davit Narmania (56%) and Dimitri Lortkipanidze (52%) (See the Chart 24).

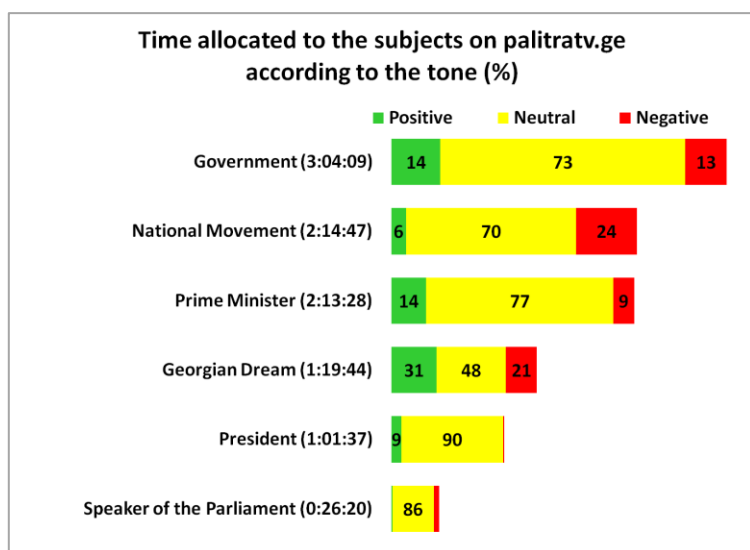
The website posted reports about the voting procedures of Tbilisi mayoral candidates on the local government election day, (e.g. "Davit Narmania came to the precinct together with his family", 15.06.2014; "It's time to relieve Tbilisi from venomous politicians" – Nika Melia, 15.06.2014), also the issues pertinent to the elections (for example: "Second round to be expected in Tbilisi? – results of exit poll by Rustavi 2", 15.06.2014; "According to the exit-poll commissioned by Imedi, Narmania is leading with 51.2%", 15.06.2014).

palitrav.ge often posted public opinion polls about the election results conducted by the editorial board during the monitoring period. We should point out that these stories kept

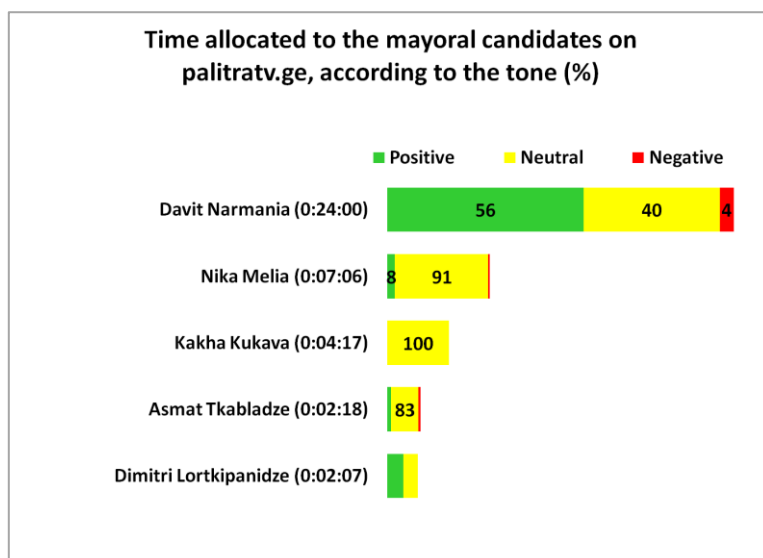
balance of opinions and represented the respondents who had different viewpoints about a certain issue (for example: “what was the most unexpected thing for you about the election results?”, 16.06.2014; “Why has the number of the Georgian Dream supporters decreased?”, 17.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that palitratv.ge objectively covered the events taking place in the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed. We should point out that Davit Narmania and Dimitri Lortkipanidze were distinguished from other Tbilisi mayoral candidates due to quite high rates of positive tone used during the coverage.

(Chart23, Subject Coverage, palitratv.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



(Chart24, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, palitrato.ge, April 15 - June 30, 2014)



Recommendations

The monitoring has revealed that the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms decreased significantly in the online media. We only encountered some exceptional instances of usage of offensive expressions by the journalists and publishing unverified information. Due to the above-mentioned positive changes, superficial coverage of significant events remains to be one of the key challenges for the Georgian online media. The online editions should allocate more time and attention to the in-depth study of the covered issues. Besides, it is desirable if the journalists look for interesting and important topics proactively instead of automatically uploading the happenings during the day and evaluations by politicians. It is also desirable for the reporters to offer a more critical analysis of programs and promises of election subjects. In most cases, the journalists were reporting about the promises of election subjects directly, without comments. It would be good for the journalists, especially in their interviews with the election subjects, to ask more critical questions about particular ways of delivering the election promises.