



ევროკავშირი
საქართველოსთვის

The European Union for Georgia



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



Results of Media Monitoring of 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia



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Published with assistance from the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Georgia under the project “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia”.

The contents of this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union and UNDP.

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Monitoring of TV News

May 20 – November 2, 2016

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics implemented the 2016 Parliamentary Elections media monitoring within the framework of the project entitled “Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring was carried out from May 20 through November 2, 2016 and covered main news programs on the following 11 TV channels: “I Channel” of the public broadcaster, “Rustavi 2”, “Maestro”, “GDS”, “Tabula”, “Kavkasia”, “TV Pirveli”, “Obieqtivi”, “Ajara TV”, and “TV 25”.

Key Findings

- The largest amount of time was allocated to the Government of Georgia, with nine out of 11 monitored channels having covered it most extensively.
- The United National Movement (UNM) was the leader among political parties by the frequency of coverage on all channels but one; the Georgian Dream was second to the UNM. The only exception was Obieqtivi TV, which allocated most of its time to the coverage of the election bloc Alliance of Patriots.
- Throughout the entire monitoring period activities of the Government of Georgia were most positively covered by “GDS” with 24% of positive tone indicators. “Rustavi 2” was most critical of the government with 66% negative coverage;
- The UNM was most favorably covered by Rustavi 2 and most unfavorably by GDS, with the corresponding indicators at 5% and 53%, respectively.
- Activities of “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” were covered most favorably on “GDS” (7% of positive tone indicators), and most negatively on “Rustavi 2” (46% of negative tone indicators);
- Compared to the 2012 parliamentary elections, the use and broadcast of hate speech and improper terminology were less frequent on TV channels, but still observable.
- Seeking and covering exclusive stories of high public interest in a comprehensive, exhaustive manner remains the key challenge for TV channels. Throughout the entire monitoring period, TV channels were mainly busy reflecting politicians’ agendas and covering the topics raised by them, thereby harming the interest of society to receive information about the topics of public interest. The exception was Rustavi 2 which frequently offered in-depth coverage of exclusive topics in its news programs.
- Instances of unbalanced reporting were seen on all TV channels without exception. There were also instances of reporting stories based on a single source.

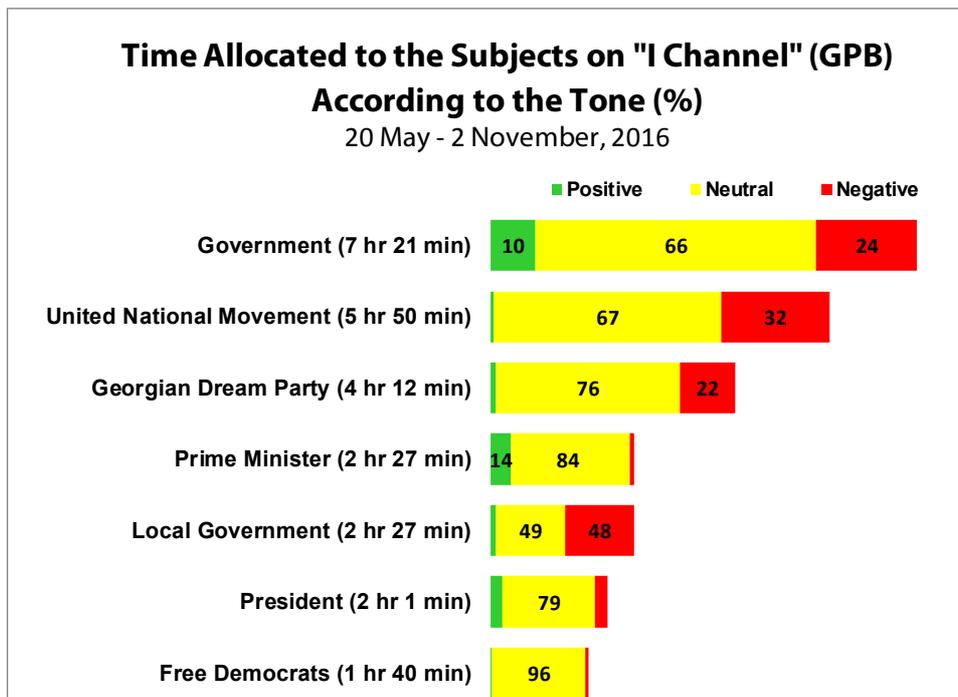
- Broadcasting information, communicated by politicians at news briefings, without double checking or seeking opposite views remained a problem. Such information was frequently provided in the format of short footages with soundbites and often, in an unbalanced form.
- To cover activities of electoral subjects several TV channels ran a special section or produced lengthy reports. According to the modern standards they were too lengthy, activities of the election subjects were aggregated mechanically, without a clear storyline behind, and, they were almost unwatchable, thus undermining a possibility of audience, who receive needed information primarily from TV channels, to make informed choice. Equal distribution of time, with the precision of seconds, left the impression that such sections and reports were produced for media monitors rather than to serve voters' needs.
- Judging by the analysis of distributed time and results of qualitative observation, separate TV channels appeared to favor specific subjects. For example, the election bloc Alliance of Patriots was a clear favorite of Obieqtivi; preferential treatment of the UNM and severe criticism of the government were apparent on Rustavi 2; Imedi, Maestro and GDS often showed favoritism towards the government, Prime Minister and the political party Georgian Dream and scathingly criticized the UNM.

I Channel (Georgian Public Broadcaster)

During the monitoring period, monitors studied a daily primetime news program “Moambe at 20:00” and “Kviris Moambe” (Sunday Moambe).

I Channel allocated the largest amount of time to the government of Georgia. It covered the Prime Minister most favorably, with the indicator of positive tone at 14% of the total reporting on this subject, and the local self-government most unfavorably, with the negative tone indicator at 48%.

I Channel allocated its news broadcast time to all key electoral subjects though there were instances when the Georgian Dream was placed in an advantageous position, for example, providing a 24-minute long live coverage of the nomination of majoritarian candidates for Tbilisi from this political party. It must be noted that I Channel did not allocate such amount of live broadcast time to any other subject in a primetime news program.



News broadcasts of I Channel were mostly balanced and impartial, through ethical problems were still observed. Several instances of unbalanced, one-sided reporting were detected during the monitoring period. For example, due balance was violated in the report on 11 July in which a member of Alliance of Patriots accused the state security service of exerting pressure on political party members. The same report contained accusations against the government by members of Giorgi Vashadze's political party New Georgia and the Labor Party. Giorgi Vashadze even cited a particular case while a Labor Party representative accused the government of striking a corrupt deal with a specific company. The report did not provide either evidence or a reply of the government; nor was an attempt to obtain such reply seen in the report. Balance was violated in a report aired on 13 September too, which concerned a single seat candidate from the Free Democrats who defected the party to join the Georgian Dream. Although both Free Democrats and its leader were portrayed in a negative light, neither a reply was provided in the report nor an attempt to obtain such a reply was seen.

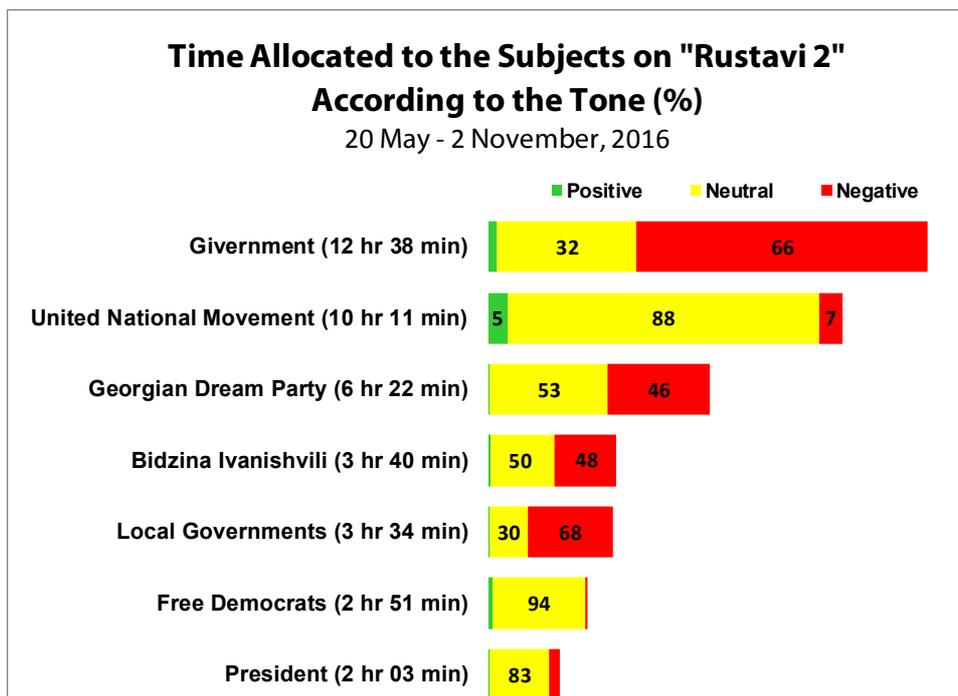
Alike other outlets, I Channel focused on covering pre-election activities of subjects or activities of the government. The channel mainly limited itself to reporting the issues raised by electoral subjects, rarely producing exclusive, in-depth stories. Similar to other TV channels, I Channel did not highlight topics of public importance and did not provide in-depth, comprehensive coverage of such topics. On several occasions, I Channel, when covering important novelties, communicated only government messages, leaving society ignorant of significance aspects of the issues. For example, on 26 October, just days before the runoff election, Moambe aired a report about the construction of thermal power plant in Gardabani. The report contained comments of the Prime Minister, the Energy Minister and several experts of the energy sector. Based on these comments, the thermal power plant was presented as the best state-of-the-art project which would only benefit the country. The report did not provide a dissenting view of environmentalists. It did not discuss the amount of harm the new thermal power plant may cause to the environment. Media and especially the public broadcaster have the obligation to provide

society with comprehensive information about their living environment and risks in this environment.

Rustavi 2

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

Rustavi 2 allocated the largest amount of time to the government of Georgia. It covered the local self-government and the central government most unfavorably, with the indicators of negative tone at 68% and 66%, respectively, and the UNM most favorably with the positive tone indicator at 5%.



Rustavi 2 was distinguished from other TV channels for the production of quality media products. The channel offered many exclusive, in-depth reports on social and economic issues, human rights, corruption and other interesting topics. It is worth noting that throughout the pre-election period Rustavi 2 was distinguished for its criticism of the government; there were instances when reports were biased and unbalanced. For example, an almost 17-minute-long report aired on 7 October, i.e. on the eve of parliamentary election, was dedicated to the assessment of the four years of the Georgian Dream in power. The entire report was focused on the criticism, often unfounded, of the Georgian Dream.

For example, the Georgian Dream was accused of killing a toddler, Barbare Rafaliantis, on the eve of the 2012 parliamentary election; the report also presented as a proved fact that Georgian law enforcement entities of the Georgian Dream government removed Vano Merabishvili from the prison cell “with a sack pulled over his head” although this fact had not been proved by any evidence. In the report a journalist openly accused the Interior Ministry of tampering with crime statistics. The state security service was accused of secretly recording opponents to the

government and releasing those recordings. The author of the report accused the “entire state apparatus” of fighting against Rustavi 2. According to the report: socially vulnerable people “were doomed to death by a social policy of the government;” “the entire state apparatus was mobilized when the Saqdrisi mine was blown up. On a personal decision of Bidzina Ivanishvili the ancient mine was almost entirely destroyed.”

The entire report was built on unverified facts. Manipulation of footage and audio effects were also used; archive comments of the ruling team and Bidzina Ivanishvili were placed only in a negative context.

This 17-minute report did not contain replies of the Georgian Dream to accusations voiced therein; nor was the attempt seen of seeking such comments. It is worth noting that the report was aired on the eve of election, thereby leaving the Georgian Dream with no opportunity to respond to accusations before the elections. The report was a flagrant example of subjective, biased, unbalanced reporting.

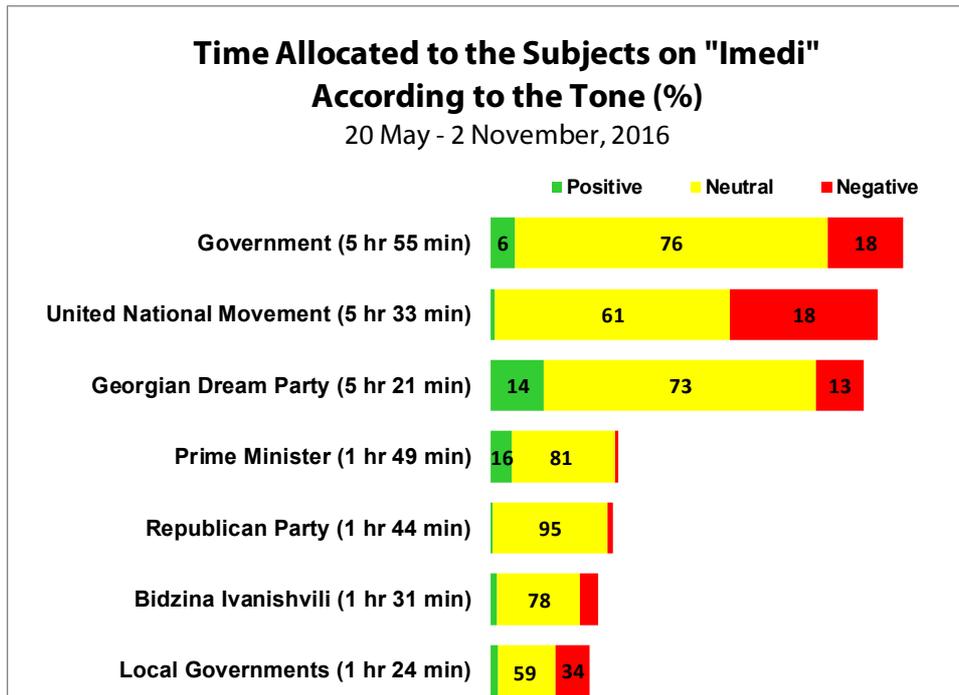
The program “Shabatis Kurieri” of Rustavi 2 needs to be mentioned separately. The anchor of the program is distinguished for his partisanship and frequently his behavior falls short of standards of news anchor. For example, on 9 July, the presenter of the program, Giorgi Gabunia, spoke about Ambassador of Georgia to the USA Archil Gegeshidze violating diplomatic rules by disclosing the information about a visit of US Secretary of State John Kerry to Georgia in advance. Along with this information, the presenter quoted a fragment from the Ambassador’s interview: “It is the fact that we continue to exist and had it not been that treaty [Treaty of Georgievsk with Russia], we, much like Persians, would have had coal-black eyebrows and hair.” After this quote the presenter offered the audience photoshopped images of Georgian politicians with black, thick eyebrows added (drawn) to them, noting that had it not been the Treaty of Georgievsk, our politicians would have had such looks. After showing the photos, the presenter made remarks of satirical and humorous nature. We believe that it is unacceptable to include satirical or humorous segments in news and current affairs programs; this is required under Paragraph 10 of Article 14 of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, which states: “Not to mislead audience, broadcasters should refrain from using humor, irony or satire when covering news or clearly explain the meaning thereof.” In this particular case, the presenter made such a mix of satire, humor and news in his monologue that it hardly met the requirements of abovementioned article.

The major problem of abovementioned media product was that the photoshopped images shown in the program lacked any newsworthiness; portraying politicians with thicker eyebrows than they have in reality told nothing new to audience. Hence, we believe that the monologue offered to the audience by the presenter violated the media standard of impartiality and fitted more a presenter of entertaining satirical-humorous program.

Imedi

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

Imedi also allocated the largest amount of time to the government of Georgia. It covered the Prime Minister and the Georgian Dream most favorably (16% and 14%, respectively) and the local self-government most unfavorably, with the negative tone indicator at 34%.



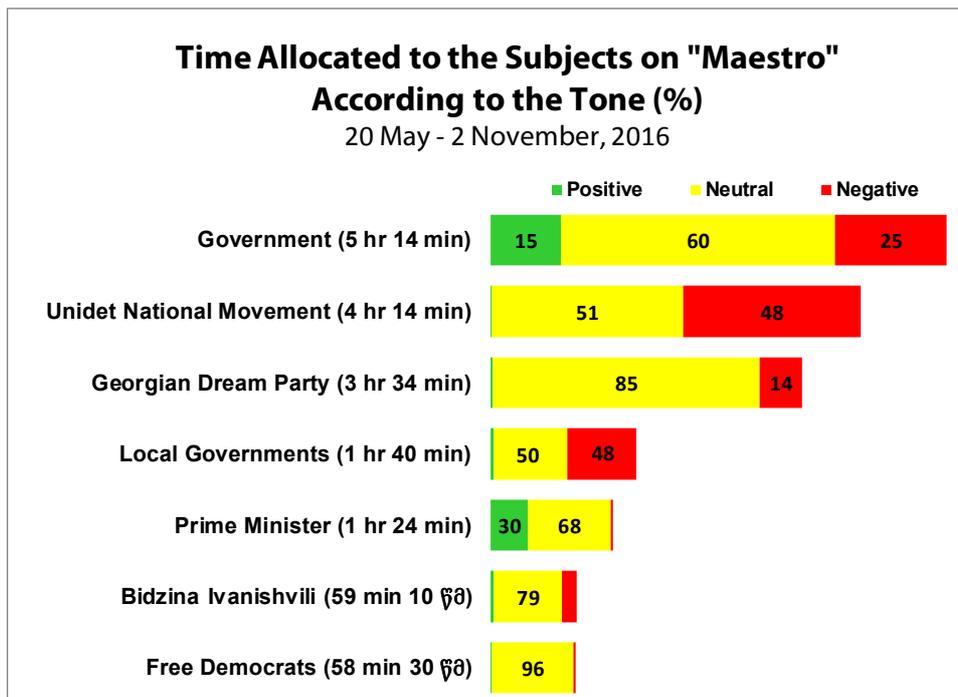
Reporting on Imedi news programs was mostly impartial and balanced, though the lack of citizens and experts in their reports was an obvious problem. News items of Imedi were mainly about politics and with the participation of politicians.

Both quantitative and qualitative data showed that Imedi favored Georgian Dream. For example, on 8 October, a report was produced on political party lists. It covered top ten candidates on the lists of almost all major parties, though only the Georgian Dream was portrayed in a positive context. Namely, the journalist's text said: "According to experts, only the Georgian Dream delivered on the promise to have new faces on the lists." This text was followed by an expert's comment saying that the lists of other parties did not offer anything new. This information was not true as top ten of several other parties' lists included new faces too, but the journalist ignored that fact. It was apparent that the journalist's text and selected comments served the aim of portraying the Georgian Dream in the favorable light.

Maestro

During the monitoring period, monitors studied the primetime news program "Kontakti at 8 o'clock" (aired every weekday at 20:00).

Maestro also allocated the largest amount of time to the government of Georgia. It covered the Prime Minister most favorably with the positive tone indicator comprising 30% of the total reporting on the subject. The UNM was the leader among the political parties by the indicator of negative coverage – 48%.



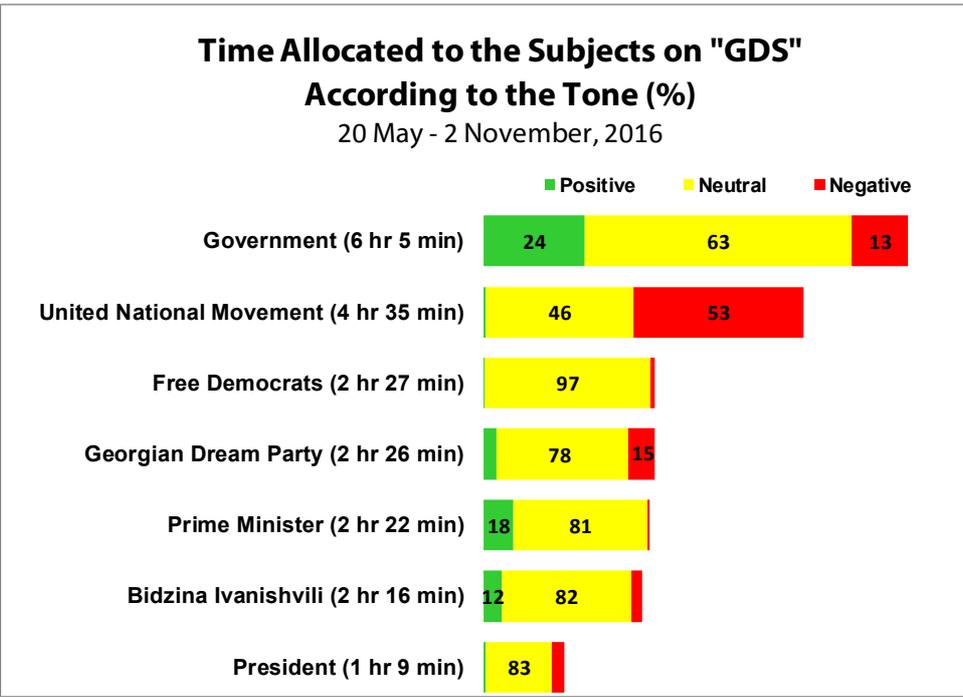
Negative attitude towards the UNM was translated into specific biased and unbalanced reports. For example, on 6 June the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights presented a report on facts of torture. Respondents in the report on this issue spoke about systemic torture of persons during the rule of previous government.

The journalist even named persons who, according to the report, were accused of torturing people, Prime Minister, MP, Minister of Refugees and Accommodation, Public Defender, a representative of a nongovernmental organization spoke in one voice about systemic crime committed against people under the previous government. Despite grave accusations, the report did not contain a reply of even a single representative of previous government or the United National Movement. The report was one-sided and unbalanced.

GDS

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

GDS also allocated most of time to the government and covered it most favorably – at 25% of the entire reporting on the subject. The most unfavorable coverage was received by the UNM, with more than half of the time allocated to this political party being in negative tone – 53%.



Loyalty towards the government and Bidzina Ivanishvili was apparent on GDS. There were instances of reporting allegations of Mr Ivanishvili against the political opposition without providing replies of the addressees of accusations.

Negative attitude towards the previous government and the UNM was also apparent on GDS. For example, on 9 September, an almost three-and-a-half-minute-long report was dedicated to the election list of the Georgian Dream and throughout the entire report, the Georgian Dream was presented in a positive way. The journalist spoke only about those topics which would portray the Georgian Dream in a positive light, for example, that the political party had new faces, a person with disability was on the party list, majoritarian candidates were not among top 50 candidates on the party list meaning that the political party did not insure them against the defeat, old faces such as Jachviani, Zviadauri, Tamazashvili were no longer on the list, et cetera.

The report did not contain even a single critical opinion, although after the presentation of the party list many people criticized it for including several such persons in it whose credentials were questionable. The list was presented in the positive context alone, thereby failing to reflect an objective picture. A media outlet shall provide audience with diverse opinions and positions on issues of public interest.

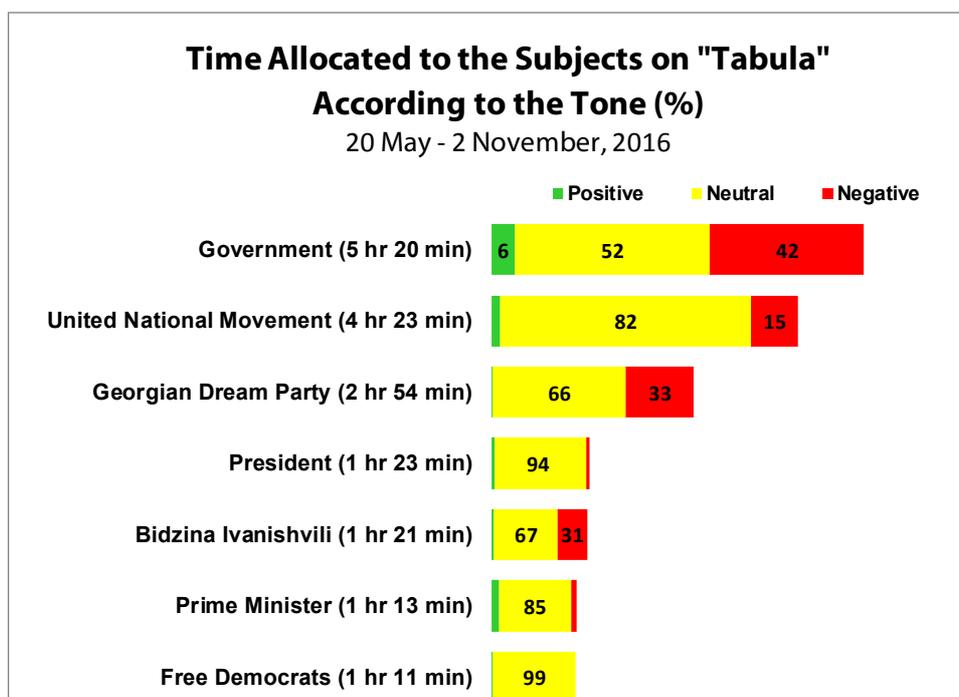
For comparison, a report aired on GDS on 27 September portrayed the UNM in a negative light based on allegations: “Revolutionary scenario; the mobilization of people and installation of tents – this is the plan discussed by Saakashvili and UNM members in the audio recording” – this is how the presenter of 2030 introduced the audio recording which was released on the Internet. The journalist mentioned only lightly that “the authenticity of this recording” was being studied by the state security service. Throughout the entire report the journalist spoke affirmatively, presenting the audio recording and its participants as a proven fact. The journalist never said who released the recording and where it was released. Nor did the journalist mention that the recording was obtained illegally and that surreptitious recording of others’ conversations

was a crime punishable under the law. The report did not provide an assessment of even a single impartial person, say, a lawyer, who would speak about the legality of such recording and the content of the recording. Nor did it say that it was the duty of the government to establish persons who made such a recording and released it. The report recalled other secretly recorded conversations which were released earlier, though it did not say that it was always the recordings of conversations between members of political opposition that were released. The report was biased, presenting the UNM and Mikheil Saakashvili in a negative light. Mentioning lightly that the state security service was investigating the authenticity of the recording was not sufficient to make the report balanced, hence leaving the impression that the mention was a mere formality.

Tabula

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

Tabula also allocated the largest amount of time to the government. It covered Prime Minister most favorably, with the positive coverage at 8% of the entire reporting on the subject, and the government most unfavorably – at 42%.

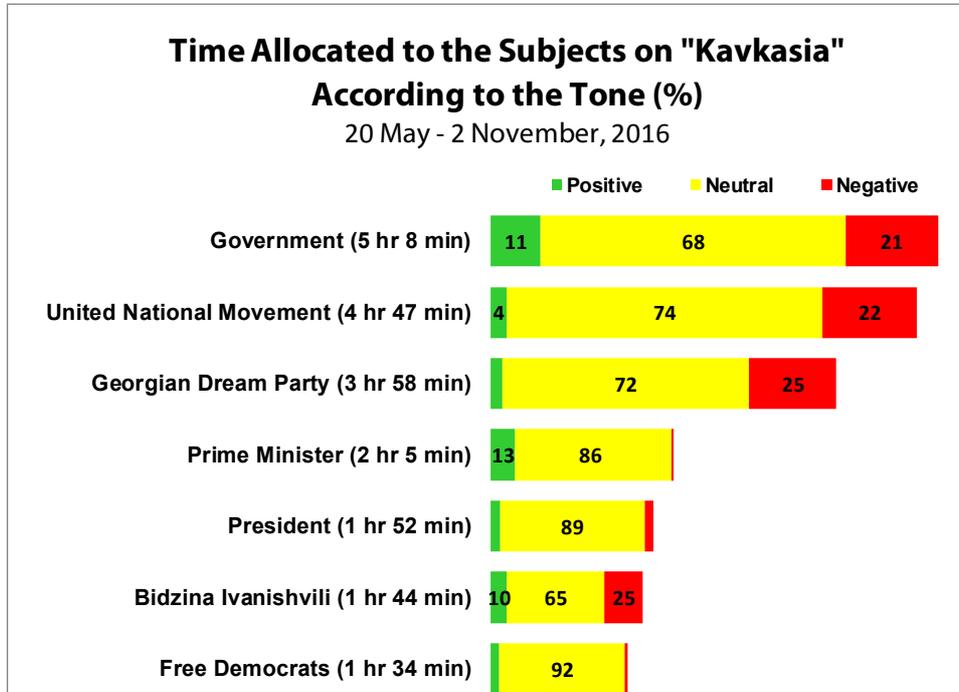


Tabula aired brief news programs mainly comprising of short footages with soundbites and hardly offered in-depth reports. Stories were covered superficially and instances of single-sourced reporting were frequent. Favoritism towards the UNM and frequent unbalanced criticism of government were observed on Tabula. For example, the government was criticized in short footages with soundbites aired on 20 May, 10 August and 28 October, on the basis of recounts of the UNM alone and without providing replies of the Georgian Dream. The government was portrayed in a negative light on 20 May and 3 October as well; replies of the government were missing here too and the efforts to obtain such replies were not seen in the reports.

Kavkasia

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

Kavkasia also allocated the largest amount of time to the government. It covered Prime Minister most favorably (13%) and the Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili most unfavorably – at 25% each.

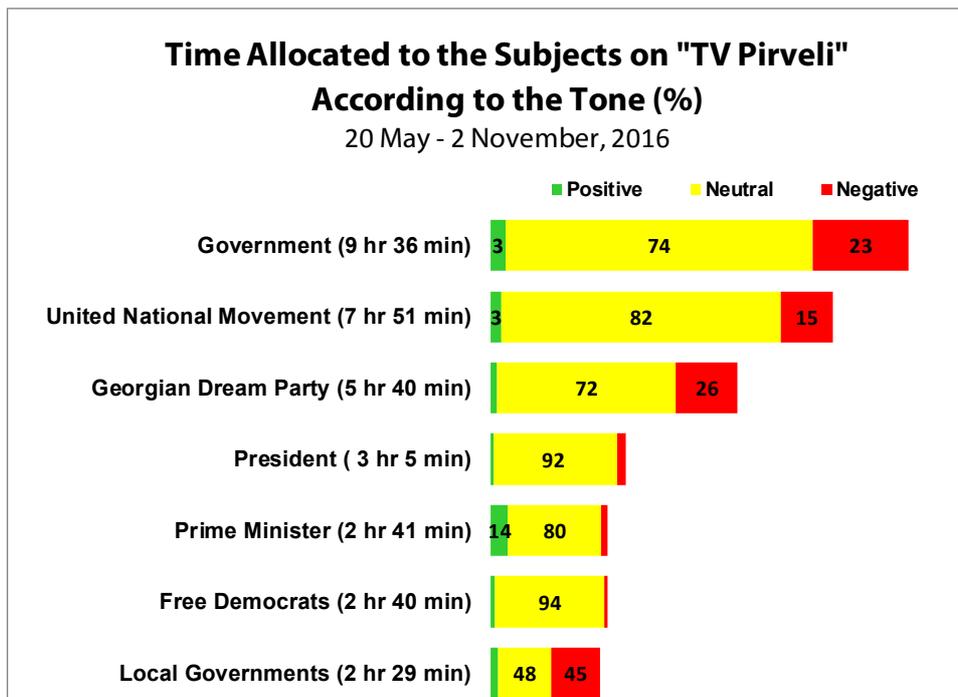


Kavkasia was distinguished for shortage of news stories. News programs consisted mainly of fragments of interviews recorded at news briefings. In-depth reports and exclusive topics were a rarity on Kavkasia. The main ethical problem was unbalanced and single-sourced reporting. For example, short footages with soundbites on 21 June and 1 September, criticizing the government, were aired without replies from the government.

TV Pirveli

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

TV Pirveli allocated the largest amount of time to the government too. It covered Prime Minister most favorably (14%) and the Georgian Dream most unfavorably – at 26%.



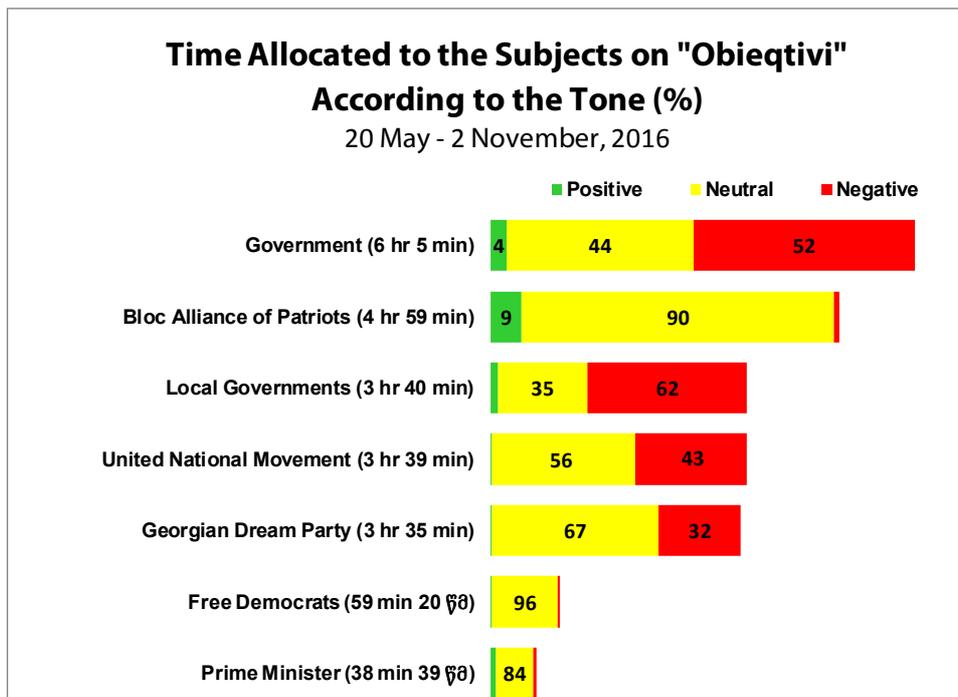
News broadcasts of TV Pirveli were distinguished for their length and diversity. Each news program consisted of tens of short footages with soundbites, featuring activities of political subjects. News items were mainly limited to comments of numerous politicians on a concrete issue. It lacked in-depth reports produced to inform voters comprehensively.

Alike other TV channels, the problem on this particular channel was unbalanced, one-sided reporting. For example, short footages with soundbites aired on 7 June, 18 August and 13 October, criticized the government, though none of them provided replies of the government or showed attempts to obtain such replies.

Obieqtivi

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

Much like other TV channels, Obieqtivi allocated the largest amount of time to the government. Most unfavorable coverage among political parties was received by the UNM (43%) whereas most favorable coverage was received by the election bloc Alliance of Patriots (9%).



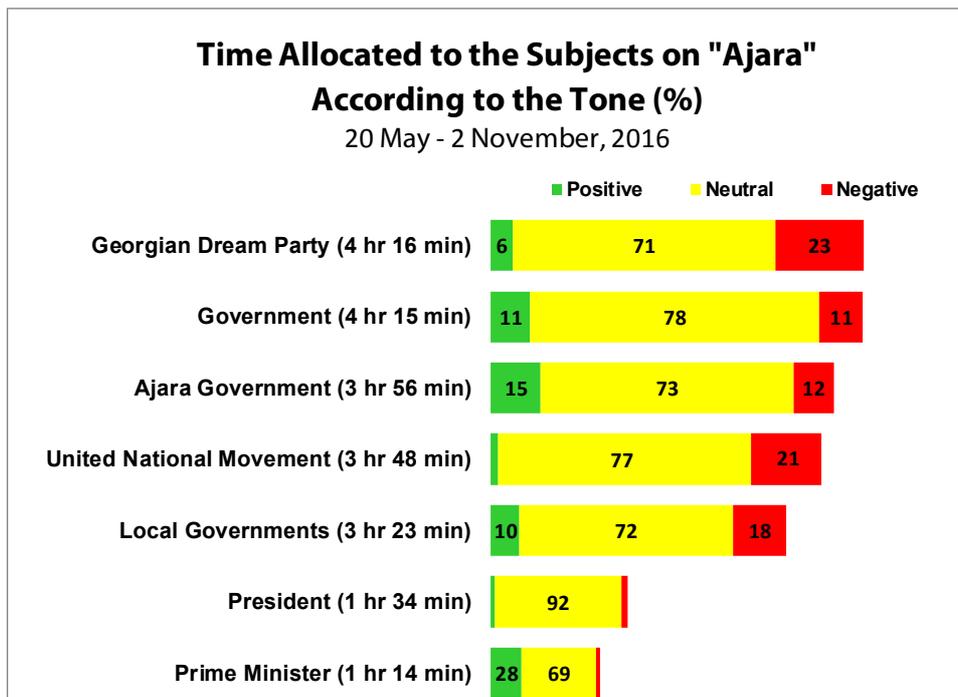
Obieqtivi differed from other monitored TV channels by allocating the largest amount of time to the Alliance of Patriots in contrast to other channels where the Georgian Dream and the UNM were in the lead by the same indicator. This can be explained by the link between the Alliance of Patriots and Obieqtivi, namely, both entities have a common co-founder – Irma Inashvili.

Special favoritism towards the Alliance of Patriots was seen in news programs of Obieqtivi. For example, on 8 September, Bidzina Ivanishvili, at one of regional meetings, called on the Alliance of Patriots to openly declare their foreign policy course. The news program spent a mere eight seconds on this call which was followed by a lengthy reply - 4.5 minute-long and unsuitable for a news format - of one of the leaders of Alliance of Patriots, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi. Also, on 17 October, the news program aired a 224-second-long (almost 4 minutes) soundbite of Davit Tarkhan Mouravi, something absolutely unsuitable for the news format, in which he, standing against an election banner, addressed the viewers and complained about the black PR launched against him. He criticized the UNM and the government in regards with surveys on party ratings. The material did not contain any comment in response to the accusations; the information was reported in an unbalanced way.

Ajara TV of Public Broadcaster

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

Ajara TV was the only broadcaster among 11 monitored channels, which allocated the largest amount of time to the Georgian Dream. It covered Prime Minister most favorably with the positive tone indicator comprising 28% of the total reporting on this subject and the Georgian Dream most unfavorably – at 23% of the total reporting on this subject.

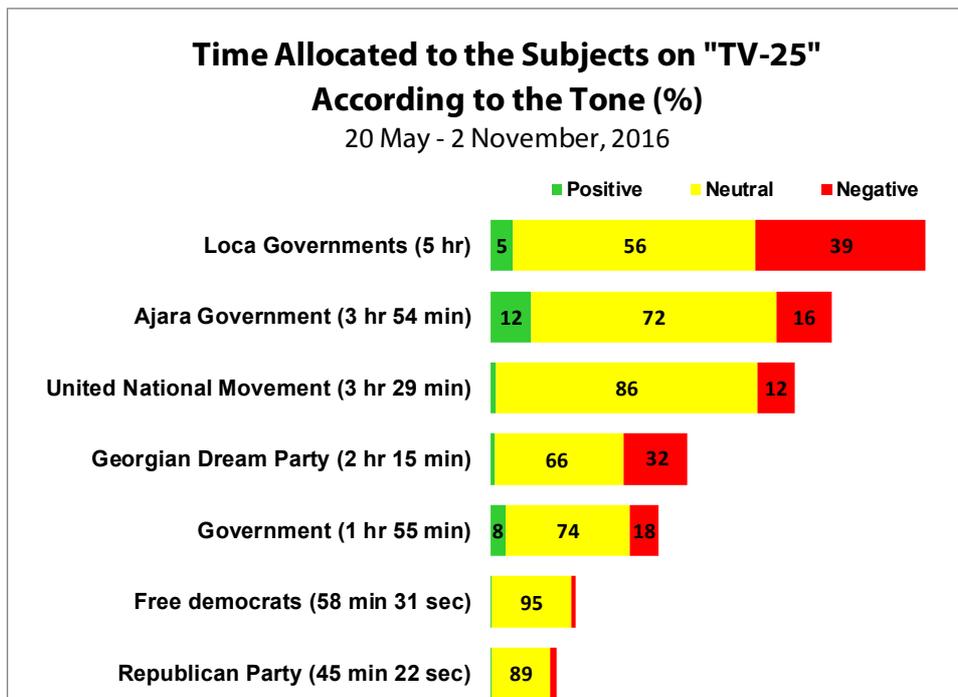


Throughout the monitoring period, Ajara TV was distinguished for its balanced, impartial coverage, though several problematic instances were observed: a report on 6 September covered the presentation of majoritarian candidate for Batumi constituency, Armaz Akhvlediani. He was portrayed positively by the journalist's text. The journalist abundantly used modifiers articulated in praise of Akhvlediani at the presentation, such as: honest, humble, professional, et cetera. In the report, the Georgian Dream, the local government of Ajara and the head of government Zurab Pataridze were accused of luring and pressurizing Akhvlediani's supporters. Akhvlediani accused concrete representative of government of blackmailing and intimidation. He even cited concrete facts. Despite grave accusations, the report did not contain comments in response to accusations; nor was an attempt to obtain such comments seen. The reporting was unbalanced. On 28 July, the adviser to the President, Kakha Kozhoridze, accused the Interior Ministry of breaching the law. Leveling a concrete accusation against the Ministry, Kozhoridze cited two facts in which, according to him, various departments of the Interior Ministry breached the law. The information was aired based on a single source - Kozhoridze; no efforts were undertaken to verify it; nor was a reply of the Ministry provided; the balance was violated.

TV 25

During the monitoring period, monitors studied the primetime news program "Matsne" (at 19:30).

TV 25 allocated the largest amount of time to the local government. It covered most unfavorably the local government – 39% and most favorably the Ajara government – at 12%.



TV 25 mainly covered developments in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, hence a high share of coverage of local government. The channel mainly observed ethical standards, though alike other channels, instances of unbalanced reporting were observed. Unbalanced reporting favoring the UNM and disfavoring the government increased in September and October: a report titled “Petre Zambakhidze speaks of violations in electoral precincts” was aired on TV25, in which a UNM representative accused the government of illegally appointing chairmen and deputy chairmen of electoral commissions, and claimed that these positions were undertaken by people serving interests of the government. The report did not contain replies of the electoral administration or the Georgian Dream. The story was unbalanced and based on a single source.

According to a footage with soundbites aired on 24 September, a UNM representative accused the head of Ajara government, Zurab Pataridze, of corruption, citing a concrete fact which, according to the UNM representative, provided ground to suspect corruption. The material did not contain a comment of the head of Ajara government, nor did it show an attempt to obtain one. It contained a general phrase that the government declined to comment on this issue; however, this cannot be regarded as an attempt to observe balance in reporting. The material did not make it clear whether the government was approached for comments on the accusation.

Recommendations

- TV channels should take more efforts, especially in the run up to elections, to seek and report exclusive topics of public interest. Important topics should be covered in a comprehensive and in-depth manner. It is desirable for media to create the agenda of its own instead of merely describing activities of politicians as it was commonly done during the reporting period.
- A common problem of broadcasters is the violation of the principle of due balance and the coverage of stories based on a single source. However, one of the obligations of journalists

is a balanced, multiple-sourced and impartial reporting of stories. The Code of Conduct for Broadcasters requires an equal and adequate coverage of different opinions. Journalists must spare no efforts to reflect opinions of all interested parties in news programs.

- Balanced reporting was mainly violated in so-called short footages with soundbites. A short footage with soundbites is a media product where a fragment of interview of a concrete subject – a soundbite is aired accompanied with a text of presenter recounting a story in a news program. Such products often do not contain replies. For some unknown reason, media outlets do not view such short footages as a full-fledged media product and do not produce them in accordance with the standards which they normally apply when producing reports; thereby they violate the principle of balanced reporting. A short footage with soundbites, however, is an ordinary media product; standards equally apply to them and it makes no difference for viewers whether they receive unbalanced information from a report or a short footage with soundbites. We believe that a reply must necessarily be provided in the same product or in a separate short footage with soundbites which contain the reply must be aired in the same news program. Where neither of the two is possible, viewers must be informed that the reply will be sought from the “accused” subject.
- A term “accusation without a reply” may be used as to denote facts, which were observed on almost all TV channels, when one electoral subject not only criticized another but also accused him/her of a concrete crime, for example, bribing, blackmailing, pressurizing or intimidating voters, et cetera. Such accusations were sometimes broadcasted without replies of accused persons. Media should treat the broadcast of single-sourced accusations with utmost caution. If there is no necessity for speed, it is better to offer such a story to audience after replies to “accusations” have been obtained. In case of necessity, when the information is of high public interest, a single-sourced information may be broadcast provided that a media outlet explains to the audience that the information was not double-checked and is based on one source alone, and that they are making efforts to verify it and will provide it once a comment of another side has been obtained.
- When reporting is unbalanced and single-sided, journalists, sometimes, do not inform public about the reason of lacking the position of another side. In private conversations journalists cite a number of reasons - that this or that entity declines to comment or a press service never answers phone calls, et cetera. We recommend journalists to explain, on each and every such occasion, to viewers why the material lacked obtain comments of another side and what efforts they have undertaken to obtain these comments. Ethical journalism requires from journalists to show to public that they tried all possible means to obtain accurate information; the reflection of these attempts, be they even futile, in a report makes a media product more comprehensive and accurate.
- Homophobic and xenophobic statements of respondents were aired on several TV channels. There were instances of respondents using discriminatory language, hate speech and improper terminology. In such a case, journalists have two choices: either to refuse to broadcast such statement if the author of discriminatory language or hate speech is a private person, or to broadcast it if the author is a public person, a politician, provided that the journalist explains outright that such statements are unacceptable, that the editorial board

disapproves of such statements and broadcasts them only because the author is a public person. Unfortunately, in cases observed by us, media failed to comply with this requirement. When releasing such a statement media must distance itself from it and explain to audience that the statement is xenophobic, homophobic and unacceptable. Modern ethical standards obligate journalists to express their position, criticize intolerant, xenophobic statements as well as authors of such statements.

Monitoring of TV Talk Shows

May 20 – November 2, 2016

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics implemented the 2016 Parliamentary Elections media monitoring within the framework of the project entitled “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring was carried out from May 20 through November 2, 2016 and covered talk shows aired by 11 TV channels during the prime time. The monitoring was carried out on the following TV channels: Public Broadcaster’s I Channel, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, GDS, Tabula, Kavkasia, TV Pirveli, Obiektivi, Ajara-TV, TV Channel 25.

The monitors assessed each talk show by the following criteria: whether the broadcasted topic was selected relevantly, to what extent the invited guests’ qualifications corresponded with the themes to be discussed, whether there was bias when selecting guests, how the discussion was held, how well the discussion was led by TV anchors, what were their questions, and how well they were prepared, and how well they managed to prevent the distribution of false information during the discussion, whether or not the program was used to disseminate hate speech, whether or not the viewers received any additional information, which could help them in making an informed choice.

Key Findings

- Major part of the shows choose the discussion topics that had been already widely covered in news releases, thus, failed to offer the audience additional information or analysis.
- In September, there was an increase in the number of TV shows discussing election programs and visions of political parties. Nevertheless, substantive debates among political leaders were held quite rarely.
- Instead of asking politicians critical questions and showing to what extent they had developed their views regarding one or another issue, or how realistic their promises were, TV anchors often gave the floor to the electoral subjects to discuss the topics preferable to them. One could only rarely hear counterarguments, which could have given the viewers an idea about how relevant and realistic the promises were.
- Anchors asked electoral subjects mainly general questions (e.g.: How would you assess it? What do you think about this? How is the election environment?), and asked them to assess statements made by other political groups, accordingly, the respondents’ answers were often of general nature.
- Candidates of the majoritarian elections from individual districts participated in some TV programs; however, their selection criteria remained unclear.

- When formulating their questions, the anchors sometimes confused competencies of the local self-government and majoritarian candidates with each other. The same problem occurred on the part of the candidates themselves, which ultimately contributed to misleading of voters.
- Prior to the first round of the election, the TV channels “Maestro”, “Imedi” and GDS often asked about a “possible destabilization” on the part of the “National Movement”, and devoted a lot of time to discussions on this issue, even though there were no specific facts proving the destabilization.
- The talk show “2030” of the GDS TV Company and the TV Maestro’s talk shows were visited by far more representatives of the “Georgian Dream” than by members of other parties.
- The talk show “Night Studio” of the “Obiektivi”-TV was a tribune of the “Patriots’ Alliance”. Representatives of this party took part almost in every broadcast of the TV program, while the anchors used to declare their support to them.
- There were cases when anchors failed to manage a discussion, and the studio guests used hate speech and even physically assaulted each other.

I Channel (Georgian Public Broadcaster)

The monitors observed the following talk-shows aired by I Channel: “Mtavari”, “Inter-View” and “Realuri Sivrtse”. As the elections approached, the talk show format and the frequency have changed. Presentations of political parties were provided on the “Mtavari”, while the “Realuri Sivrtse” dedicated its time to majoritarian candidates, and the “Inter-View” offered its viewers face-to-face interviews with the leaders of the qualified election subjects. Political debates of the parties’ “number ones” and female leaders were aired as well.

“Mtavari”

Current topics of the TV program “Mtavari” during the first period of the monitoring used to be discussed basically with one of the guests present in the studio, which had a form of a face-to-face interview. The program format changed along with the approach of the upcoming elections, and parties’ presentations were held in that format.

During the parties’ visits in the studio, less time was dedicated to the analysis of their programs; the presenter often just redirected conversations, though asking no critical questions. In addition, one got the impression that the presenter was rather less familiar with the election subjects’ plans. For example, on September 7, when presenting the “Free Democrats” vision regarding the election, the presenter noted that she had never read the party’s election program, but had seen their “video clip” about election promises.

Since there were rather less counterquestions and the presenter acted as a moderator, representatives of parties were often given the opportunity to disseminate false information. For example, leader of the “Industry will Save Georgia”, Gogi Topadze, first on September 19, and then on October 3, blamed foreign advisors acting in the country for obstructing the industry

development. In none of the cases did the presenter ask the politician to specify, whom or what exactly had he meant, or based on what had he made such statements.

Numerous topics were discussed at once in the show. Questions to political parties' representatives were often superficial and inadequate. For example, on August 24, the leader of the State for People", Paata Burchuladze, was asked by the presenter – "Don't you feel sorry when you see other people singing, while you are dealing with the issue as to who is going to be on the list and under what number?"

Another example of the presenter's insufficient awareness of the issue and lack of criticality is the question addressed on October 31 to Eka Beselia, a member of the "Georgian dream", as to in what form would the new parliament discuss the "third wave of justice", which had already been passed after two readings. The presenter did not ask why the reform, that was so important for the country and the judicial system, was suspended and delayed at the third stage of hearing, while, in fact, only editorial amendments had been introduced to the draft. Instead of such questions, Eka Beselia was given the opportunity to speak generally about the importance of this reform for the country.

"Inter-View"

Political parties' leaders were invited to the show one by one. Face-to-face interviews were quite dynamic. After an initial question, the presenter began to discuss details, requested answers regarding specific steps made by the respective party or politician. Questions were well formulated, interesting and topical.

When asking questions, the presenter referred to arguments. She had studied almost all significant actions and statements of the respective political party, which she used as counterarguments, when needed. She was concentrated in order to receive an unambiguous answer to the question asked. Usually, politicians rarely leave questions unanswered; they can respond to any awkward question, but in most cases, the "Inter-View" presenter did not accept "some answers" and tried to receive specific information using a chain of logical counterquestions. She did not review even a single event without a context. That is why the show was informative. Despite of tough debates, the presenter always managed to maintain calm conversation tone and remained balanced to the end.

During the reporting period, the only noticeable flaw has occurred on September 13, when an interview with Davit Usupashvili was aired, and the respondent was not allowed to fully express his opinions. The presenter's question on illegal tapping remained unanswered, as the journalist ended the program. The main drawback of the "Inter-View" was the visual aspect of the show, which has improved since late August.

"Realuri Sivrtse"

According to the format, majoritarian candidates, who had been selected by lot, answered questions asked by voters from different regions, which excludes bias on the part of the journalist.

The presenter was a moderator, and, proceeding from the format, asked almost no questions. Guests were given a minute and a half to talk, therefore, all political parties had an equal opportunity to express their opinion on the problems that concerned voters at most. The questions asked by people were very relevant and critical.

In addition, it should be noted that in many cases, the candidates were short of time. The format does not provide time for arguing. Therefore, it was difficult for the audience to find out whose position was rather the right one. Without figuring out how realistic the promises were, voters would rather find it difficult to make an informed choice, which was however the main goal of this program. For example, in the broadcast of September 9, all candidates said that Chiatura miners should get exempt of the income tax, but how? At what expense? What was the amount of money they were talking about? - The presenter has never inquired about it.

In rare cases, majoritarian candidates were asked questions about the issues that fell within the competence of the local self-government. For example, on the same September 9, the candidates had to talk about problems related to rural roads, water supply, culture house, library, kindergarten.

Rustavi 2

On “Rustavi 2”, the program “Archevani” was monitored. Since August 29, the show has changed its format and become dedicated to election subjects. This change was reflected in the name as well, which became “Archevani 2016”; also the frequency has changed –it was first broadcasted twice a week, while during the voting week – everyday. In addition, the part of Rustavi 2’s “Shabatis Kurieri”, where the anchors discuss a topic with guests, was also under observation.

“Archevani 2016”

Qualified subjects participated in the show. If an invited guest refused to participate, the presenter informed the audience about it. Before switching to the election format, topics of the show were always relevant; the host asked relevant questions, opposed the guests and allowed them to express their opinions. However, there were cases when a respondent was given much time to express allegations against the government, while there was neither anybody in the studio to respond to the said allegations, nor the presenter requested to provide evidence, nor had he presented counterarguments and the government’s positions, which had been covered by various media outlets. For example, on July 5, the presenter requested no justification, as Tbilisi City Council member Alexandre Elisashvili and director of the “Procurement Monitoring and Training Center” Giorgi Bajelidze were accusing certain individuals of “stealing money from the people”.

In the election format of the “Archevani”, initially there were presentations of political parties, and then the “Rustavi 2” asked the politicians their questions.

Interesting and needful pre-election discussions on regional problems were held with majoritarian candidates. However, there were cases when the invited guests were basically asked questions falling within the competence of self-government. For example, on September 12, the

presenter asked an invited politician why the social assistance of a particular person had been suspended.

One of the blocks of the show was dedicated to panel discussions with the leaders of political parties. This was the most interesting part. Viewers received the maximum information on challenges in the area in question, and had the opportunity to compare the parties' positions and ways of solution.

In the block of the show, where journalists asked representatives of parties their questions, critical questions were designed to show the way they had gone, their mistakes, their real face, which would help citizens in making informed choices. It could be said that this task has been managed poorly by the journalists, because their questions lacked arguments, support by facts. Instead, the journalists tried to "crack" their respondents using persistent questions.

For example, on October 5, Journalist Natia Trapaidze asked the "Georgian Dream" questions in such a wording that practically portrayed an allegation that people were being detained for political reasons as if it were a fact. "Why don't you acknowledge that you have people detained for political reasons?" To confirm this, she said: "...both local and international institutions underline in their reports the fact that political interest is apparent in cases of some prisoners."

After Kakha Kaladze had asked her to specify the issue, the journalist named examples of Gigi Ugulava, Vano Merabishvili and Bacho Akhalaia. This was followed by a sharp response from the "Georgian Dream" to prove that no politically motivated action had been taken towards Bacho Akhalaia. At such times, it is better that a journalist supports his/her question with excerpts from reports, other available evidences, leaving respondents less space for criticism and speculation.

On October 5, the show was marked also by the fact that the respondents and journalists used offensive language towards each other. The program lasted almost 4 hours, but this long discussion ended in a way that voters received almost no new or additional information.

"Shabatis Kurieri"

Mostly qualified subjects were invited to the program to discuss topical issues in a live broadcasting mode. In most cases, the host-journalist was prepared – reminded the guest their past promises, quoted from their speeches. The program was active and dynamic. When respondents were about to begin insulting other candidates or shifted to other issues, the host tried to return them to the discussion topic, did not allow respondents to avoid questions; however, there were exceptions as well.

It should be also noted that on October 15, when individual societal groups expressed their concern about the threats related to the obtaining constitutional majority by a single party, Elene Khoshtaria (from the National Movement) was the only election subject connected live to the show and allowed to address the voters, which may be considered as unfair treatment of other subjects.

Imedi

In the case of the “Imedi” TV, the monitors initially observed two programs – the talk-shows “Politics” and “Chronicle Studio”; they were shut down in early August, and a new program – “Ghia Eteri” (open air) was launched, which also fell within the monitoring scope.

“Politika”

During the monitoring period, election programs were not discussed with representatives of political parties. Several guests participating in the show got connected live to the program one by one, and they mainly discussed current news, or assessed statements made by others. Numerous current issues could be discussed with a single guest. Finally, it became difficult to find out what the focus of the show was. Accordingly, both questions and answers were too superficial.

For example, on July 29, the presenter talked separately to representatives of 8 different areas on various topics. The questions were rather of a general nature. As the Parliament Chairmen David Usupashvili was visiting the show, the legislative body had recently completed its 4-year work. Despite of this, not a single question was posed neither about activities of the Parliament, nor about lawmaking, nor about MPs’ absence, nor about bonuses, no about achievements, nor about fulfillment of political promises or a new program and new promises, nor even about how the respondent had protected interests of residents of Saburtalo district (Usupashvili was a majoritarian candidate for Saburtalo). Instead, the host wondered why Usupashvili’s statements were vague, whether or not he was trusting the surveys, what had he talked to the Prime Minister about, and etc.

“Qronikis Studia”

The “Qronikis Studia” and “Politika” had almost identical formats; moreover, one and the same topic was often discussed in both of the shows. The “Qronikis Studia” was also visited by representatives of different political parties. They were given appropriate time to answer questions, but they did not sit facing each other and no debates were held. Guests had to answer the presenter’s questions separately.

Both in the “Qronikis Studia” and “Politika”, representatives of political parties had to answer questions about current events, which were often not in compliance with their competencies. The presenter has never asked them questions related to the election programs.

There was a case when inappropriate guests were brought to live broadcasting, who had little information about current issues. For example, in the program of July 30, conversation with Gedevan Popkhadze, a member of majority, concerned the issue of replacement of Nana Mchedlidze Eva Gotsiridze in the Court of Strasbourg, which was the government’s decision. In the interview that lasted about ten minutes, Gedevan Popkhadze began his answers to three questions with the words “I don’t know”, and still, during 10 minutes he had to answer the questions he was not aware of.

“Ghia Eteri”

Three broadcasts of the “Ghia Eteri” were dedicated to debates between majoritarian candidates from specific electoral districts (Mtatsminda, Isani, Gori), however, it should be said that in this

case the journalist was unprepared, the questions were too general, they did not serve to better familiarization with the candidates or their programs, and no thematic debate have taken place between them. Consequently, the viewer could not receive the candidates' views on problematic issues, could not become familiarized with their programs and assess their feasibility.

The journalist offered in several broadcasts interviews with the leaders of political parties (Kakha Kaladze, Nino Burjanadze, Paata Burchuladze), however, also in this case the respondents were given the opportunity to freely disseminate only the information desirable to them, because the journalist did not ask any clarifying questions, no real facts were shown supported by documents, and etc. Instead of showing the candidate's vision regarding election programs and other important issues, the presenter frequently asked questions that required a kind of forecast from the respondent - What chances do you have? How many mandates will you obtain? What will do if you lose? Why have not you been able to win in the first round?

Numerous discussions in the show were dedicated to the "possible destabilization". On September 30, both the respondents in studio and the interactive suggested that no such threat existed there, however, the presenter carried on discussing this topic for entire 1.5 hours.

- It should be noted that in the same broadcast, the presenter asked Tamar Chugoshvili, a member of the "Georgian Dream": "One gets an impression that constantly referring to the revolutionary scenario and destabilization, the ruling party has nearly "expelled" the substantial discussion and debates from the pre-election debates", and this was happening at the time when the presenter herself had contributed to it, and instead of political debates between political parties, she devoted many hours to the "possible destabilization" and "revolutionary scenario".

Information already covered in the news was repeated in the talk show, so that the audience did not hear anything new.

GDS

In the case of the GDS-TV company, the monitors observed the part of the show "2030", where various topics were discussed with the guests in a talk show format. Also the show "59 seconds" was monitored every Sunday at 21:00.

2030

Several problems were revealed during the monitoring of the program, including the lack of critical questions, especially towards government officials, as well as irrelevancy of invited guests and questions posed to them. Major part of the guests were representatives of the "Georgian Dream". No members of the main opposition party, "National Movement", have participated in the show; during the second period of the monitoring, the presenter noted that the reason for their absence in live broadcasting was a boycott.

The "Georgian Dream" representatives were given the opportunity to talk practically in a monologue mode, running the conversation in the desired direction. The conversation of the presenter of "2030" with the "Republican Party" majoritarian candidate Tamar Kordzaia and the leader of the "National Forum" Gubaz Sainikidze (16.09), who were practically not allowed by the presenter to complete expressing their opinions and were asked additional questions.

In September, as Bidzina Ivanishvili launched his meetings with journalists and started to arrange press conferences, the program was dedicated to the discussion around Bidzina Ivanishvili's statements. In the same period, the presenter actively discussed the "possible destabilization" topic, though it remained unclear on what it was based apart from suspicions. Through her questions, she also tried to connect the murders occurred in Tbilisi with the National Movement, for example, on September 8, she asked Kakhi Kaladze:

"Criminal cases have become more frequent last few days - I mean the two cases of murder, and one case of wounding. Part of the public believes that the rate of crime has increased in the country, while another part calls these incidents a "managed process". In your opinion, to what extent can this process be managed?"

Useless questions could be often heard in the guests' block of the "2030". For example, on July 11, the presenter started the interview with Gia Volsky with the question as to why the "Georgian Dream" was going to start presenting its majoritarians especially in Imereti? The respondent noted that this question could have been asked in case if any other region had been chosen.

The presenter accepted accusations expressed by respondents against the "National Movement" as facts, asking for no justification; for example, on October 21, the invited guest Alexandre Akhalkatsi said that Sandra Roelofs smuggled medications into a prison, which were then "given to prisoners to destroy them mentally, and they cut themselves their throats and cracked their heads". According to the same respondent, the former Minister of Corrections, Khatuna Kalmakhelidze had ordered to torture him. The journalist, instead of requiring evidences to substantiate this grave accusation, asked him: -"Why? What was the reason?"

When asking one of the questions, the presenter referred Goga Khandrava's movie "Herocracy" and said that the history where prisoners get tied to dead bodies, was based on a real story from Akhalkatsi's life. Then she asked: "What was the cause, i.e., what did they tell you, why did they bring you to the morgue? Why did it happen so that they tied prisoners to dead bodies and left them over night or for several days, what was the cause?"

Through the questions asked in this way, the journalist did not doubt the respondent's narrative, although no evidences had been presented there in the show.

"59 Seconds"

The show was strictly structured; representatives of parties and candidates were invited to (discuss) various topics. The presenter asked questions in turn, and the respondents were given 59 seconds to respond, which put the candidates in equal conditions. The "United National Movement" did not participate in the show due to a boycott.

Proceeding from the format, guests were practically unable to enter a dialogue; one could not see any debates, or a live process of disputing and opposing. The presenter's questions were also pre-determined and they were not derived from the answers. For example, on September 18, one of the guest, Giorgi Mchedlidze ("Patriots' Alliance"), said every possible measures should be taken to uphold safety in the region, however, the presenter has never inquired what specific measures was the respondent considering a way out. One minute long the guest only went on to say that it was necessary to take certain measures. Nor did he answer the question of how he was

going to manage the water-related problems. The respondent just confirmed and said that “the problem is about much more things than just water”, the presenter had no clarifying questions. Merely receiving answers to previously prepared questions without specifying would not help the viewers in making an informed choice.

Maestro

In the case of the “Maestro” TV, the monitors observed the talk shows “Maestros Faqtori” and “Ghamis Kontaqti”. Their broadcasting frequency has changed several times during the monitoring, and, eventually, they were shut down.

“Maestros Faqtori”

The “Maestros Faqtori” was not focused on one particular topic and offered its audiences superficial discussions on various matters. It was not infrequent that the presenter asked every guest the same question regarding different topics (e.g. What is your position?).

During the monitoring period, the “Georgian Dream” representatives visited the show much more frequently, for example, from July 1 to August 30, 25 of its representatives visited the “Maestros Faqtori”, while no other party has participated more often than ten times.

The presenter exercise bias towards the “Georgian Dream”, in fact yielding them the floor. Nor was the presenter critical of the government. She frequently asked quite illogical and superficial questions, and sometimes showed unfamiliarity with the issue. In the show of July 5, the presenter asked the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Nodar Javakhishvili: “Is it interesting to construct roads?” “Do you wish to continue these activities after the elections. She also asked” “It’s a myth that in the period of Saakashvili the roads, the roads... there is a perception in society that the roads had been constructed at that time”. The respondent agreed and spoke about how Saakashvili used to say that there is the best snow in the mountainous Ajara. In addition to the fact that bias had become obvious even in the wording of the question, the presenter has never asked the respondent for justification. It remained unclear why the road construction was a myth, and how was it related to the statement about snow. At the same time, she has never asked anything about the secret tenders, which had been announced.

The show of September 9, which, according to the presenter, had been intended to be dedicated to program debates, although economic visions were discussed in the first and second blocks of the show, while the third one was completely devoted to a new video clip of the “Georgian Dream”. Three members of the aforementioned party (the so-called “fresh faces”) were assessing this video in the studio. When introducing them the presenter said that “the [guests] represent an important acquisition for politics”. The presenter was making no secret out of her positive attitude with regard to the video as well.

One could feel a negative attitude towards the “National Movement” in the show. The show was completely unbalanced on July 15. It concerned an issue of deprivation of businesspersons’ property at the time of the “National Movement” in power. The show was attended only by businesspersons claiming themselves as victims, while there were no representatives of those who were being accused of exercising coercion and pressure on the businesspersons. Nor did the

journalists represent their position; in addition, the presenter did not try to obtain the other party's comments.

The show often gave floor to pro-Russian politicians; an anti-Western statements and skepticism towards NATO could be heard there - including from the presenter. On September 16, when discussing the parties' foreign policy visions, the presenter developed the idea that "We cannot join NATO until the territorial integrity will not be restored", while the guests tried to convince the presenter that what she was saying was wrong, and it was a Russian propaganda message.

"Ghamis Kontaqti"

Representatives of the "Georgian Dream" prevailed also among the "Ghamis Kontaqti" guests. For example, during the period from September 15 to November 2, 16 me representatives of the said party have visited the program, while no more than 9 guests from other parties have attended the show.

One of the blocks of the show was devoted to majoritarian candidates, however, it remained unclear by what criteria had one selected both the Districts - Gldani (6.09), Poti (5.09), Zestafoni (20.09) and the parties, whose candidates were invited to the discussion in the studio.

The topic of discussion with the majoritarians was not focused and mainly general issues and problems were being discussed there. In fact, the show was a free tribune for politicians, where they were allowed to present their views. "What would you tell to the voters", "What do you have to say", "What would be your response to your opponent?" – these were basically the questions that could be heard there.

The presenter remained passive when discussing the parties' election-related visions, asking in fact no questions and not allowing the guest to respond to opponents' allegations (e.g. on September 6). The presenter asked several respondents an identical question of what would be their "maximum in the elections?"

The presenter found it difficult to manage debates as well; for example, she failed to manage the debates between Cesar Chocheli and Dimitri Khundadze (26.08), as well as those between Otar Abesadze and Gia Japaridze (30.08), where the presenter was very passive and it were basically the guests asking each other their questions.

Despite the fact that the abovementioned reappearing respondents made identical statements in each broadcast, journalists showed rather less opponency and awareness. For example, Nino Burjanadze reiterated in every broadcast that the elections had been rigged, and that she had written numerous complaints requesting cancellation of polling stations, but her request had never been satisfied. The presenters could have seen these complaints on the CEC website before the show was broadcasted, and could have shown their viewers on what the party's arguments were based, or whether there were realistic grounds for recounting the polling stations, thus leaving the respondent no opportunity of disseminating only the information desirable for her.

Pirveli

On the “Pirveli” TV, the monitors observed the TV program “Rviani” (Eight), which is aired every weekday at 20:00 pm.

“Rviani”

Diversity of political parties is represented in “Rviani”. There were released TV programs demonstrating views of the parties regarding a certain direction. No subjective attitude towards any political power has manifested itself in the presenter’s questions.

Less discussions and debates were held between representatives of parties, and they mainly visited the program separately. Whenever there were several respondent sitting in the studio at the same time, there were cases when the political debate went beyond the limits of criticism turning into personal insult; at such moments, every respondent was shouting at once, and the audience was practically unable to hear anything. Despite efforts, the presenter failed to manage the process. For example, on August 4, when the situation in the studio became unmanageable and the guests assaulted each other physically.

Sometimes, the presenters allowed respondents to disseminate false information – the “Patriots’ Alliance” member Irma Inashvili (11.07), as well as the “Democratic Movement” member Nino Burjanadze (12,08) disseminated sharply anti-Western ideas, on what the journalist showed no proper reaction; for example, he did not counter them using the argument that the introduction of democratic principles in Georgia had been a result of close cooperation with the West. In fact, the journalists made no further inquiry on any of issues, limiting herself to superficial estimations only.

Xenophobic and homophobic statements were also heard in the broadcast. On August 31, the respondent Guram Phalavandishvili (“Democratic Movement”) repeatedly used such expressions, which was not properly denoted by the presenter. Instead of asking a counterquestion as to what arguments did the respondent have when speaking about of the “depravation” of Georgia on the part of the US, and revealing the reality that did not correspond with the respondent’s narrative, the journalist asked the other guest, Iago Khvichia (“Girchi”) the following question: “What will be your counterbalancing arguments in this case between the bad and the worse enemies, this kind of definition was him who suggested, choose the better of the enemy. Mr. Guram has offered us this formulation, i.e. to choose the better enemy”. By asking a question in such a wording, the journalist “labels” the Georgia-friendly country, the US, as an enemy. “We apologize to the audience, if anything xenophobic or homophobic has been voiced during this broadcast” – the journalist ended the program with this statement, which did not mean that the journalist had dissociated himself from such statements, because he had made it doubtful that such statements had been actually made by one of the invited guests.

There was a case when it remained unclear how the guests invited were related to the topic. For example, on September 6, the first part of the show was devoted to a deal made between Irakli Okruashvili and Kibar Khalvashi concerning the “Rustavi 2” ownership. Manana Nachkhebia (New Rightists), Sevdia Ugrekhelidze (UNM), Nana Kakabadze (Former Political Prisoners - for

Human Rights), and Nicholoz Mzhavanadze (Union of Human Rights) were invited to the studio to discuss the issue. Their relation to the discussion topic remained vague.

Kavkasia

On the “Kavkasia” TV the monitors observed the talk show “Barieri”, (four times a week at 21:15 pm).

“Barieri”

Diverse opinions could be heard in the show; members of various parties were represented there. The presenter informed the audience on anticipated appearance or nonappearance of guests in the studio. The presenters were impartial, but instead of asking guests tough and critical questions, they asked them such questions as “What problems has the local population? What would you do in case of winning the election? How would you assess the election environment?”

The presenters used very rarely quotations from statements made by the politicians. They were not properly prepared. They were not familiar with the subjects’ election programs. Often happened that irrelevant guests appeared in the studio to talk about a discussion topic – e.g. celebrities and not those who could speak knowledgeably on the selected topic.

Hate speech was used in the broadcast of July 25: the guest Guram Phalavandishvili insulted the LGBT community. The presenter stopped him and called for correctness, though not indicating that the guest had used hate speech. Finally, the guests had a clash in the studio. They insulted each other. The journalist failed to manage the discussion properly.

Debates were held several times in the “Barieri” between majoritarian candidates sharing a certain election district. E.g. they invited majoritarian candidates from Gldani 20th (22.09), Nadzaledevi 19th (20.09), Iasni 9th (14.09) and Isani 10th districts. It remained unclear by what criteria the electoral districts had been selected from which the MP candidates were invited. The presenters made no statements in this regard.

The show was mainly dominated by the guests, and they led the discussion instead of the presenter.

Tabula

At the “Tabula” TV, the monitoring of “Teorema” was carried out. The show is aired every Monday and Thursday.

“Teorema”

The program sought to analyze the developments that had taken place in the election period, though laying less emphasis on the election programs themselves. The presenters were mainly prepared, however noteworthy that no debates or discussions have been held in the block of September, where representatives of parties talked about specific issues (healthcare, economy) – they only presented their visions. For example, in the program of September 26, where they were talking about healthcare, the journalist asked general questions about what their healthcare

program implied, meantime offering no opponency to the guests. Consequently, it remained unclear to the viewers which of the programs would be better, or which one – more realistic.

Representatives of only several parties took part in the show. The presenter informed the public that the “Georgian Dream” had refused to come to the “Teorema”. In case of absence of representatives of the aforementioned party, the presenter did not try to demonstrate their position, especially given that increasingly more allegations were being voiced against the ruling team.

Obieqtivi

The “Obieqtivi’s” “Ghamis Studia”, which was subject to the monitoring, is aired every day from 22:30 pm.

“Ghamis Studia”

It is difficult to identify a typical topic of the program, since so many of them are discussed there. There was a case when they had no guests at all, the presenter read certain information and responded to viewers’ calls in the studio, or just talked himself. The show is practically a propaganda tribune for the “Patriots’ Alliance”, where they were given large portions of time to talk about any issue. The presenters had become majoritarian candidates of the “Patriots’ Alliance” and left the channel, however, after losing the first round, they returned to the live broadcasting.

The “Night Studio” guests and hosts were often associates and friendly conversations took place between them. Part of the show presenters even made no secret of their bias to the “Patriots’ Alliance”. For example, on October 6, the presenter urged the audience directly to vote for the “Patriots’ Alliance” on October 8.

The presenters had sharply negative attitude towards the “National Movement” and the “Republican Party”. The mentioned the “National Movement” with the following words: “walking evil”, “sectarians”, “swallower of Georgians”, “devourers of Georgians”, “evil force”, “nazsect”, “murderers’ and torturers’ sect”, etc.

There were strong anti-Western sentiments at the beginning of the monitoring period. With the approach of the elections, anti-Turkish narrative gained strength. Moreover, if at the beginning of the monitoring such opinions were expressed by presenters themselves, by the end of the monitoring period it were rather respondents talking about it.

Ajara

Two talk shows of the Public Broadcaster were under observation – “Pirispir” and “Factori”. The talk show “Pirispir” was shut down after its anchor got on the election list of the “Georgian Dream”. The “Factori’s” duration and frequency changed frequently, which was confusing to viewers.

“Factori”

The principal problem of the non-election “Factori” was the fact that the anchor was not critical and prepared, asked general questions. For example, on July 29, she asked Mamuka Berdzenishvili, a representative of Ajara Tourism and Resorts Department, about tourists in Ajara: “What about the level of activity? Do you have any statistics?” This data could have been obtained by the creative team before producing the program, and continue the conversation with the respondents referring to this data.

As for the election broadcast, the subjects participating in the election made presentation of their programs. Diversity of parties was maintained, and they were given a lot of time to express their opinion. However, the show gave in fact the podium to the parties, no counterquestions were asked, and voters had no opportunity to assess how realistic the candidates’ promises were. The anchor directed the show, not entering into polemics with party representatives. However, it should be noted that the guests were not allowed to insult their opponents.

“Pirispir”

The show “Pirispir” offered its viewers interviews with various guests. The anchor was more or less prepared, though did not use additional materials, videos, quotes for counterarguments. The conversations had no focus. One drifted quite frequently from one topic to another, returning later to the original topic. Often happened that conversations began without any introduction. The anchor provided the audience no information about the guest. During conversations, the main emphasis was laid on current issues. For example, on August 24, the anchor hosted the “Free Democrats” leader Irakli Alasania, however did not let him talk about his visions regarding the election. As he (Alasani) began to express his opinion on the market regulation, the anchor interrupted the respondent for the reason that the show was rather about “politics”, which, as it appeared, meant that the issue was about who’s percentage in ratings was higher, who was allied with whom, who was whose satellite.

TV 25

Within the broadcasting frameworks of the “TV channel 25”, the monitors observed the talk show “Dialogi” aired twice a week since September.

“Dialogi”

Election subjects from Ajara region used to be invited to the show for discussions. The “Dialogi” gave voters the opportunity to get familiar with their promises and possibilities and shape their own opinion.

It should be noted that despite proposals made by the candidates participating in the second round to get seats in the Supreme Council of Ajara, the “Georgian Dream” no representative did not participated in debates, about which the anchor informed the public repeatedly. In fact, the debate did not take place, and the anchor had to run the show in an interview format with the “National Movement” representative.

The anchor was well prepared almost in every broadcast, asking quite logical and critical questions. He was able to manage the situation in the studio and did not allow guests to insult

their opponents. The journalist presented facts, referred to quotations, etc. He also offered opposition to guests. He was impartial, managed the broadcast properly. He asked viewers to explain vague details to viewers.

Recommendations

- In a pre-election period, broadcasters should pay more attention to the review of election programs, presentation of candidates' visions, and preferably offer the viewers an analysis and information different from those covered in news releases.
- Providing equal airtime to each candidate is not equal to qualified coverage of the election thematic, as it does not serve to the better informing of the audience and mainly promotes dissemination of candidates' messages, including unrealistic promises. It would be better if a broadcaster showed the public how realistic the promises and visions are, and helped making informed choice.
- When there are questions to a respondent, and he/she refuses to participate in the show, the anchor should inform the public about it. If necessary, the anchor should try to demonstrate his/her positions, ask counterquestions in response to accusations, and oppose guests.
- The host has to be better prepared to talk to such a respondent, who is known for disseminating the same misleading information or pro-Russian messages in each of his/her speeches. The journalist should try to correct respondents' factual mistakes every time, and provide the viewers accurate information.
- In case if a respondent uses hate speech, the anchor has to distance himself/herself from it and point out that such a vocabulary is unacceptable.
- The team of a show should try not to set face-to-face respondents, who are expected to have a conflict with each other. This would help avoiding possible physical and verbal confrontation between the guests.

Monitoring of Radio Channels

May 20 – November 2, 2016

Internews – Georgia implemented the 2016 Parliamentary Elections media monitoring within the framework of the project entitled “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring was carried out from May 20 through November 2, 2016 and covered evening news of the following 12 radio Channels: “Radio 1” (Public Broadcaster), “Imedi”, “Fortuna”, “Liberty”, “Palitra”, “First Radio”, “City”, “Maestro”, “Hereti” (Lagodekhi), “Rioni” (Kutaisi), “Atinati” (Zugdidi) and “Ajara” (Batumi).

Key findings

- The most of the time was dedicated to Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”, “United National Movement” and the government;
- Little time was allocated to the third political team, entered the parliament – “Patriotic Alliance – United Opposition”, and the majority of radio channels covered it negatively;
- Time allocated to opposition parties, including parliamentary, was increased compared with 2012 – 2014 years. All important developments related to specific political parties were reported by all radio channels;
- In depth stories on election programmes or visions for the country’s development of political parties were not prepared. The audience basically heard the politicians’ promises made during the meetings with the population;
- Little time was allocated to majoritarian candidates, and, consequently, the audience basically was informed about their affiliation to particular parties. The independent majoritarian candidates did not get any coverage;
- The radio channels actively covered the election days (8 and 30 October) identifying voting irregularities, broadcasting statements of politicians, observers, central election commission, and civil society organisations;
- Competition between the radio channels was small: the journalists rarely prepared analytical, in depth or exclusive stories. Texts of the news releases of different broadcasters often were similar. This trend was especially visible when covering pre-election activities of the parties;
- The journalists followed the agenda provided by the politicians. They rarely asked critical questions, or tried to detect the problem themselves, making it the subject for political discussions;
- Although, the news was not prepared based on anonymous source, there was no attempt to double check the politicians’ statements and develop a fact-based media product;

- The majority of radio channels allocated little time to news from regions, or issues and problems of minorities;
- The radio channels worked impartially; and no cases of violation of the standards of journalistic ethics or manipulation with voice/music and using hate speech, were recorded.

Radio 1 (Georgian Public Broadcaster)

The “Radio 1” actively covered political events and processes developed in the country in the course of first and second rounds of the elections. Biased attitude towards any of political team was not observed on air of Public Broadcaster. The journalists operated in accordance with ethical standards and never made subjective assessments. However, lack of critical questions and proactivity still remained a key problem similarly to previous years.

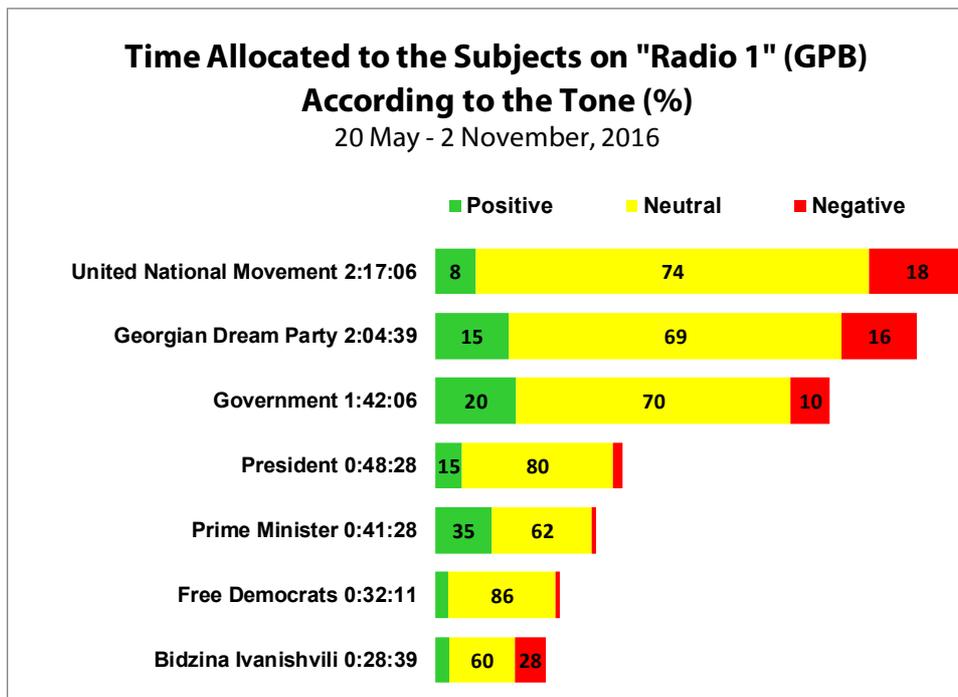
The news releases of “Radio 1” were brief and superficial. It was expected that Public Broadcaster would be more proactive than others and cover the topics not mentioned by other broadcasters. This expectation was not met.

The journalists paid less attention to social issues and the events ongoing in the regions; voice of ethnic minorities or other vulnerable groups was not heard, while this would let the audience to have deeper understanding of political parties with the regard of these issues.

13 hours and 26 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects; just 3% of this time was dedicated to the respondents’ direct speech. The most frequently were covered “United National Movement” (17%) and “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (15%). The prime minister (35%) and the government (20%) were covered in the most positive context. However, like in previous years, empirical coverage and the lack of in depth analyses still remained the problem, which is demonstrated by 80% of neutral tone.

Coming closer to the elections, the journalists started to view the activities of political parties in news releases. Regional meetings were covered as well. The radio channel covered also the activities of oppositional parties. Brief and empirical stories were prepared on pre-election campaign. The “Radio 1” was limited by quoting the politicians’ statements. The journalists basically covered the politicians’ statements given during the meetings with population, without preparing stories providing in depth analyses of election programmes and the journalists summaries of the visions of political teams for solving problems facing the country.

The “Radio 1” was not biased to any of political teams, but this is not enough for enabling the audience to make informed choice, unless identified problems are not solved.



Radio Liberty

The “Radio Liberty” prepared analytical in depth stories. The journalists worked on exclusive stories and covered the topics (economy, agriculture, gender, social issues), not mentioned on air of other radio broadcasters. The number of stories dedicated to the electoral topics, increased with coming closer to the elections: electoral environment and problems of the regions were covered.

The “Radio Liberty”, prepared in depth and analytical news releases, similar to previous years. In total 20 hours and 6 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects. Out of which the most of the time was allocated to the government (24 %), “United National Movement” (12%) and “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (11%). 28% of the time was dedicated to direct speech, the opportunity for which was almost equally provided to the representatives of all political forces.

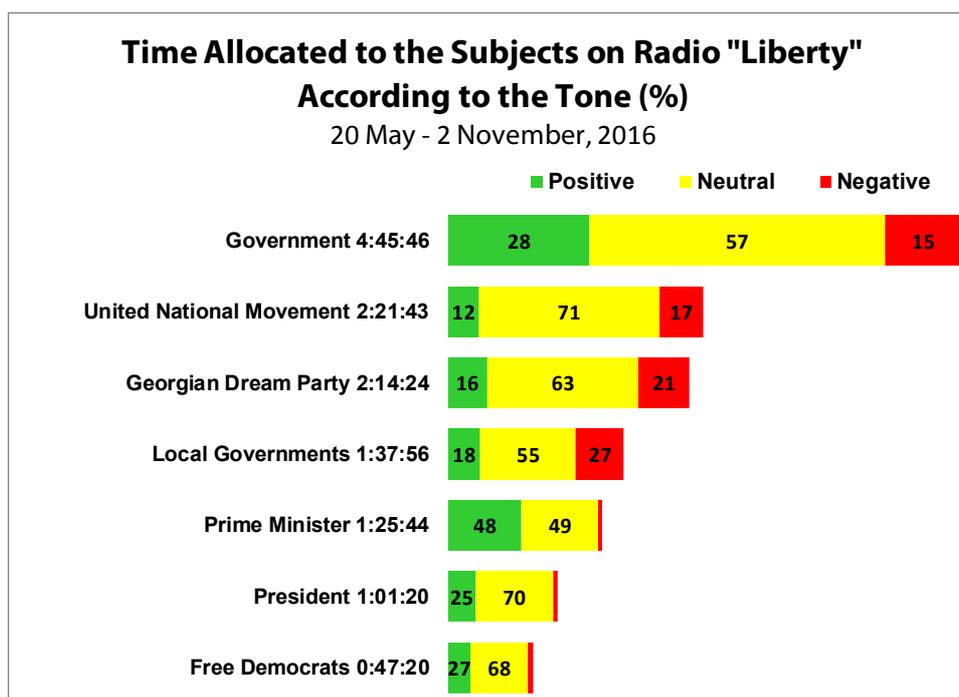
The radiobroadcaster was distinguished by diversity of the tones, which was caused by viewing the issues from different perspective.

In contrast to the majority of radio channels, the journalists asked tough questions, collected information on particular facts and provided their analyses, also engaged non-governmental sector, civil society and ordinary citizens, which prevented the politicians’ use of the air for their PR.

Significant attention was allocated to the events ongoing in the regions and with this regard more stories were prepared than on air of regional radiobroadcasters. The channel paid a great deal of attention to the coverage of the events developed on elections day, however in depth stories were not prepared by the “Radio Liberty” either.

The radiobroadcaster was balanced and unbiased. Although, every day less news were covered than on air of other broadcasters, selected main topics of the day were covered in full and

comprehensive manner, which informed the audience better than many empirical news altogether.



Pirveli Radio

In the news releases of the “Pirveli Radio” political processes were covered actively but empirically, without providing analyses. Particular news was imbalanced. The journalists did not try to obtain additional information. Exclusive news was not provided on air of the radiobroadcaster, much time was allocated to the activities of political parties, however review of election programmes was limited to the coverage of the promises given during the meetings with the population.

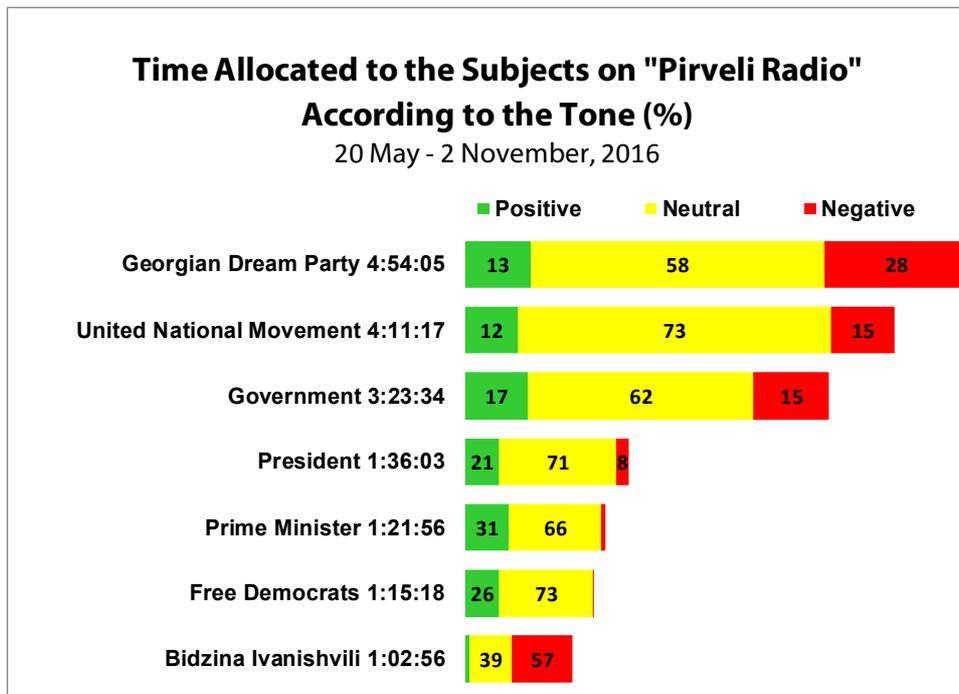
The radiobroadcaster allocated to the monitoring subjects 25 hours and 26 minutes. The most of the time was allocated to: “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (19%), “United National Movement” (16%) and the government (14%). The subjects received almost equal time for direct speech (in average 52%).

On the “First Radio”, much time was dedicated to the coverage of political parties, however in depth stories were not prepared regarding the election programmes. The events developed in the regions and problems of the minorities turned out to be beyond attention of the radiobroadcaster.

The news releases, basically were limited to the politicians’ statements and the opponents’ responses. Single stories were not balanced and presented the ruling team in negative context. The representatives of opposition criticized the government, however the comments made in response were not frequently covered. For example, Bidzina Ivanishvili (57%), local government (45%) and the coalition “Georgian Dream” (68%) were covered extremely negatively. In particular, 8 minutes of 12 minutes’ releases (June 22, 23, 24, 25; July 13; September 6, 8) were

dedicated to one news: conflict in front of the election precinct No 53 in village Kortskheli, Samegrelo; the briefings of Nika Gvaramia – director general of TV company “Rustavi 2”.

In general, ethical standards were adhered in the news releases of “Pirveli Radio”, however great part of the stories was imbalanced. More proactivity of the journalists and finding the topics not mentioned by the politicians during the press conferences would make the programmes more analytical and informative.



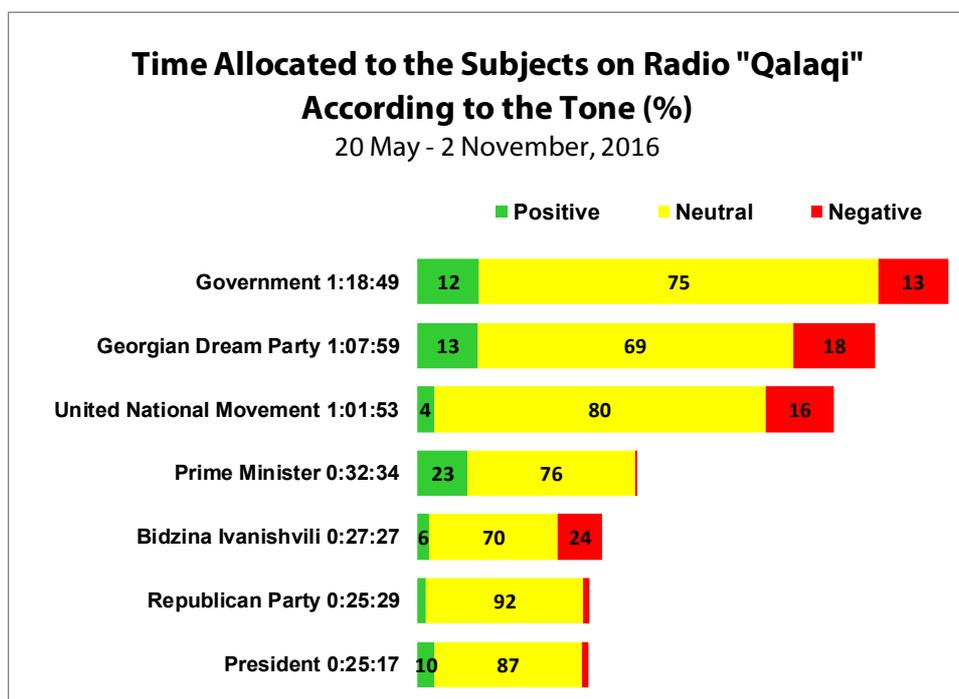
Radio Qalaqi

The “Radio Qalaqi” prepared brief information releases, the journalists covered the main topics of the day in a manner of information agencies; analytical stories were not provided and the journalists did not try to obtain more information than given by the politicians.

In total 7 hours and 32 minutes were dedicated to the monitoring subjects. The most time was given to the government (17%), “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (15%) and “United National Movement” (14%). The respondents did not have opportunity for direct speech. Almost 80% of the time dedicated to them was used for indirect speech. Prevalence of neutral tone can be explained by empirical coverage, lacking the journalists’ critical questions. This conclusion is strengthened by qualitative data: no analytical story is prepared during the monitoring period, while particular news often was based on just one source. Besides, the journalists covered the politicians’ statements without making respondents to respond to tough questions. However, the journalists did not make subjective assessments and the ethical standards were adhered as well.

Election programmes of political parties were not covered in depth, in news releases of the radiobroadcaster. The election information basically was related to the politicians’ meetings with the population. In the beginning of monitoring the radio channel allocated more time to the coverage of pre-election activities of the parties, then in later periods.

Brief and empirical coverage of news on air of “Radio Qalaqi”, did not help to rising awareness of the audience. Preparation of analytical stories might not be possible due to brief format of news releases, however balanced stories and coverage of the opinions of the specialists and civil sector could support the audience in making conclusions.



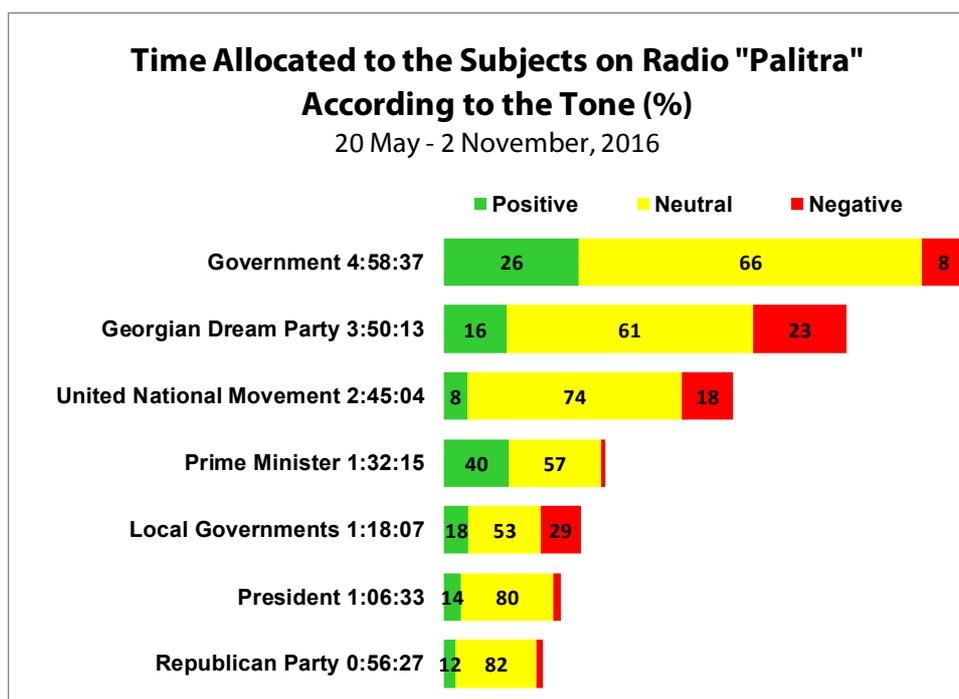
Radio Palitra

The radio “Palitra” covered ongoing events in balanced and comprehensive manner. The news releases were distinguished by diversity of the topics. The journalist worked to obtain additional information. However, this less applied to the coverage of pre-election process, which was as empirical so in case of other radiobroadcasters.

Time allocated to the monitoring subjects on air of the radio “Palitra” compiled 22 hours and 5 minutes. Out of that the most of the time was given to the government (24%), “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (17%) and “United National Movement” (12%). In average, just 37% of the time was allocated for the subjects’ direct speech. Opposition parties almost were not covered in positive tone, since they were mostly focused on criticising the government. In contrast to that, the ruling political parties responded to the criticism by talking about their merits, thus positive tone was prevailing in case of authorities.

In the beginning of monitoring, the news releases were not distinguished by in depth coverage of pre-election campaign. Just the information provided by the politicians during the meetings with population was covered. The number of the stories prepared on election programmes of political parties was increased together with coming closer to the elections, providing the audience with information regarding educational, healthcare and economic programmes of the parties. The assessments of politicians, political analysts and non-governmental sector were also provided in the stories.

The radiobroadcaster was distinguished by balanced stories. The journalists worked proactively, used to find topics independently and prepared exclusive stories.



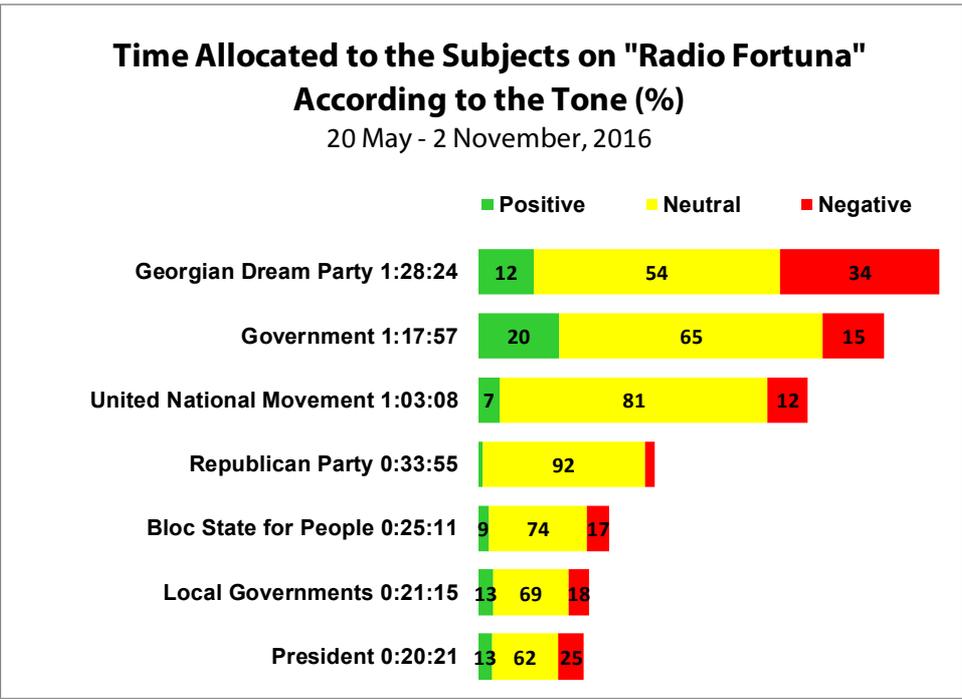
Radio Fortuna

The radio “Fortuna” covered the events briefly and in imbalanced manner. Great part of the news releases was dedicated to the interviews with guests, where urgent topics were discussed. However, on this background less attention was paid to preparation of the news. Besides, invited guests often criticised the ruling party, without giving to the latter the opportunity for making comments in response.

The radio broadcaster allocated 7 hours and 25 minutes to the monitoring subjects. 20% of the time was used for speaking about “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”, 18% - the government, 14% - “United National Movement”. This especially applies to September, when 66% of the time was used for negative tone. The problem of balance became obvious when the government and “Georgian Dream” each got just 15 % of time for direct speech, while the next the most frequently covered subjects more than 40%. The mentioned, left question marks regarding unbiased editorial policy of the radio broadcaster.

The journalists empirically covered pre-election campaign as well. The news releases were rarely prepared on this topic. Actually, pre-election programmes and electoral environment were viewed several times, but just this was not enough for promoting informed decision of the voter.

Similar to the monitoring results of previous years, the scarcity of sources, lack of the journalists’ proactivity and balance still remained the problem.



Radio Imedi

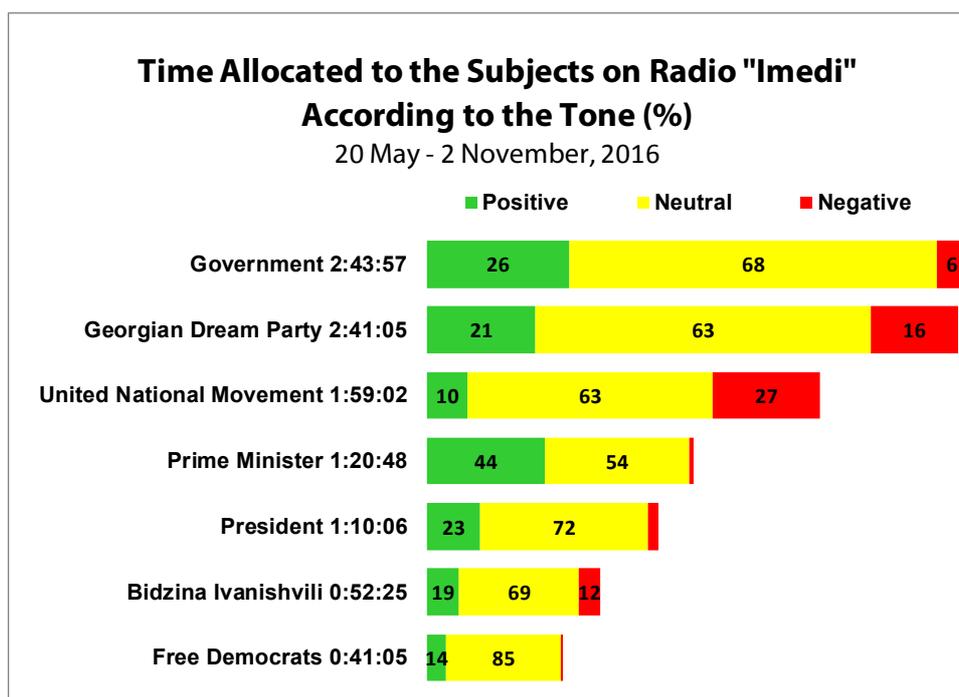
The radio “Imedi” actively covered political events, however misbalance in the news releases was in favour of the ruling team. The journalists did not ask critical questions and less tried to obtain additional information. Consequently, the news releases were empirical and did not give the audience opportunity for making justified conclusions.

The radiobroadcaster allocated 16 hours to the monitoring subjects, out of which 17% - 17% were allocated to the government and “Georgian Dream – democratic Georgia” and “United National Movement” – 13%. The most of the time given to the ruling party and authorities was in positive tone, while to “United National Movement” – negative. This trend was identified in all reporting periods, however when the elections came closer, the situation became even worse. 15 minutes’ news releases were decreased to 5 minutes, the stories became even more imbalanced and positive tone of the ruling party increased (from 22% to 37%) in parallel with dramatic increase of negative tone of “United National Movement” (from 17% to 59%). The mentioned political party got almost no time for direct speech from September until the Elections, while the voice of other political subjects was often heard (in average 40%). Thus, impartiality of editorial policy was under question mark.

The radiobroadcaster was not distinguished by in depth analyses of pre-election campaign. Little information was distributed regarding the election programmes and electoral environment was covered superficially.

After the first round the situation was relatively improved and the number of news prepared based on one source was decreased. The journalists covered actively the possible violations identified on election days.

The situation got worse compared to the results of monitoring of previous years. The journalists had difficulty in finding reasonable balance, they were lacking proactivity and were limited by the coverage of unvaried topics.



Radio Maestro

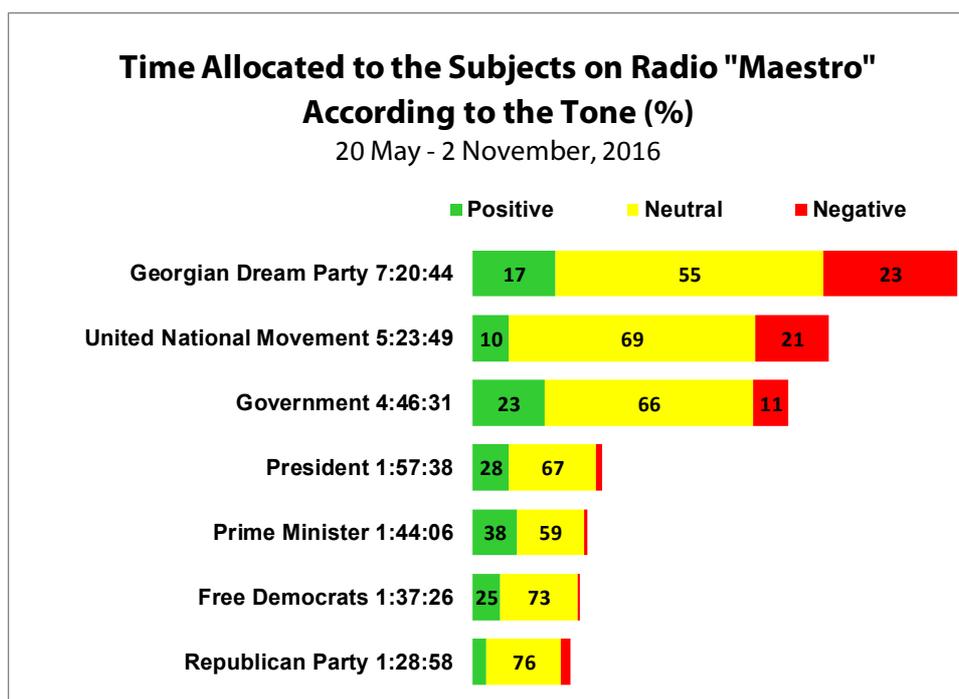
The radio “Maestro” prepared the longest news releases and actively covered political events developed in the country. Despite of this, acute deficit of analyses and critical questions was obvious on air of the radiobroadcaster. However, the journalists covered the events impartially and never expressed biased attitude towards any of political teams.

The radiobroadcaster allocated more than 33 hours to the monitoring subjects, 22% of which was dedicated to “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”, 16% - to “United national Movement” and 14% - to the government. Although, more than 10 minutes were allocated to other 11 political parties, pre-election campaign still was covered briefly and superficially. The stories were limited to quoting of the politicians’ general statements and their meetings with the population, instead of reviewing election programmes of the parties. The majoritarian candidates almost were not covered.

Scarcity of the sources was obvious in first and second reporting periods, however the stories became more balanced when coming closer to the elections. The radiobroadcaster actively covered the election days as well, providing the assessment of the CEC, politicians and non-governmental sector regarding the identified violations. In general, none of the subjects were covered in fully positive or negative context. Political teams got equal opportunities for direct speech (in average 43% of time).

Improvement is obvious compared to the results of the monitoring of previous years, which is reflected in more balanced stories and increase of the share of the respondents’ direct speech.

However, the stories lacking analyses and less attention paid to the issues related to the regions or minorities, as well as the lack of exclusive materials still remain acute problem.

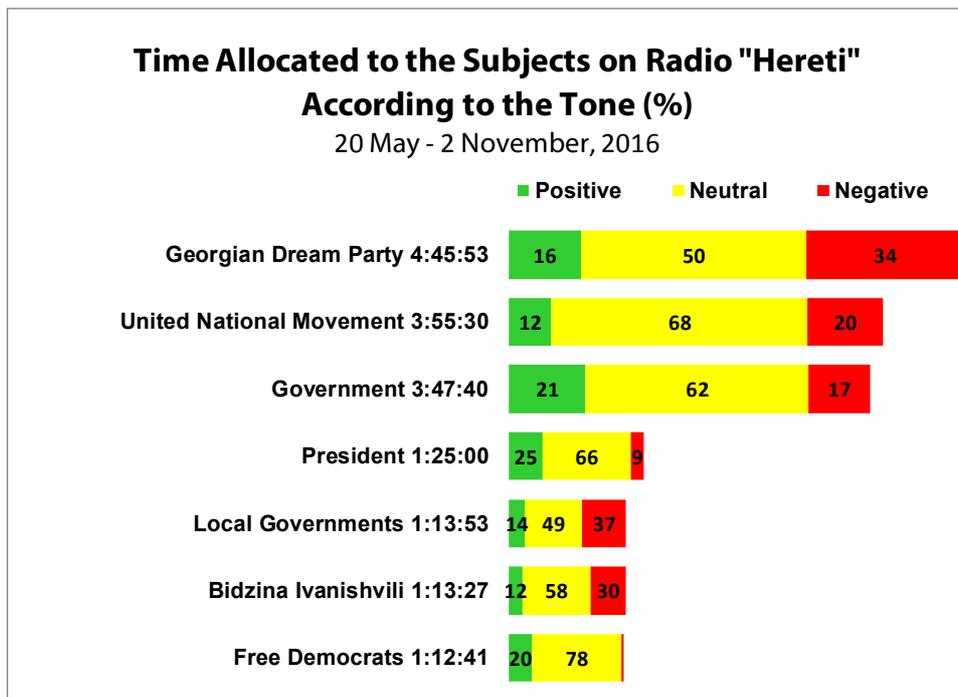


Radio Hereti (Lagodekhi)

The radio “Hereti” actively covered the events ongoing in the country. The journalists were distinguished by the proactivity from the majority of regional as well as central media companies. They prepared several exclusive stories per week, asking critical questions and trying to verify the respondents’ students. However, the same cannot be said regarding the coverage of pre-election campaign, which was as empirical so in case of other radiobroadcasters.

In total 26 hours were allocated to the monitoring subjects. 18% of this time was dedicated to “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”, 15% - to “United National Movement”, and 14% - to the government. The most of the subjects got time in negative tone, which could be explained by the journalists’ critical attitude, and coverage of the same subjects in positive tone- by balancing the stories, since the parties had opportunity for presenting their positions. Besides, in average 47% of the time was used for direct speech.

Although, central news still was covered superficially, the focus of local news was on particular economic topics instead of general ones. However, it would be desirable if the share of such stories was increased and stories were covered in depth in case of pre-election campaign as well. The radiobroadcaster operated impartially, adhering ethical standards. Compared to previous years the quality of news releases was improved. The radiobroadcaster provided information that was not covered by others. However, empirical coverage of pre-election campaign and the politicians’ promises still remained a problem.



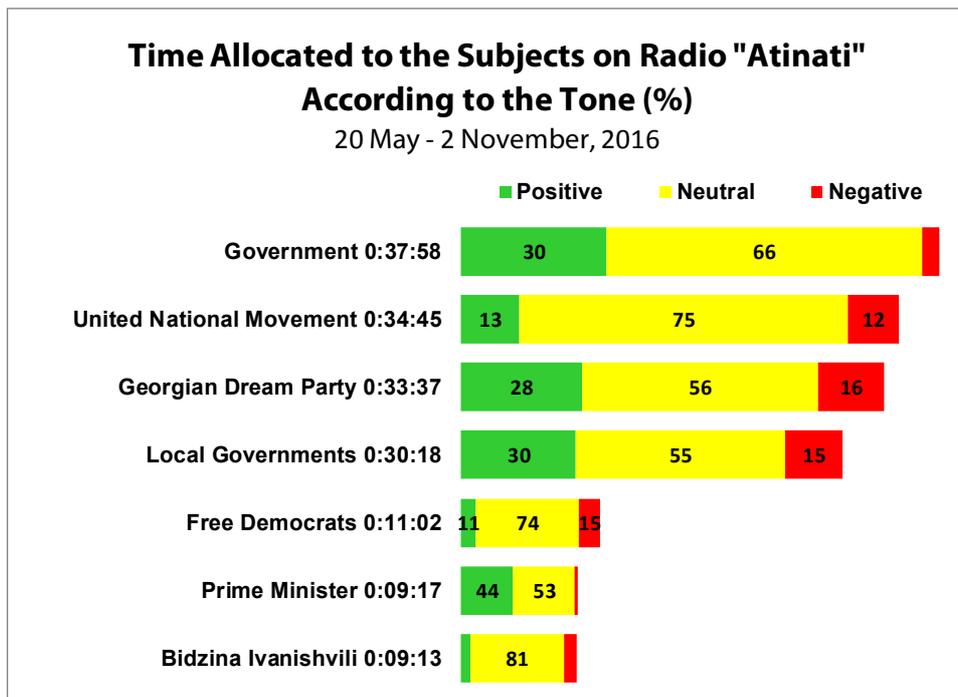
Radio Atinati (Zugdidi)

Brief news releases of the radio “Atinati” basically were about the events ongoing in the region. The journalists covered political and cultural educational activities. However, superficial and brief coverage still remained acute problem.

In total 3 hours and 36 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects. 18% of this time was dedicated to the government, 16% - 16% - to “United National Movement” and “Georgian Dream -Democratic Georgia” and 14% to the government. The anchor was quoting the respondents’ statements and just 10% of the time was used for direct speech.

“Atinati” actively covered social problems and pre-election activities of political parties and majoritarian candidates. However, the lack of proactivity was obvious. Probably the radiobroadcaster was not able to prepare analytical stories, due to small running time, but the journalists could provide diverse coverage by verifying the information with other sources and obtaining additional material.

The journalists did not make subjective assessments and adhered to ethical standards. However, brief and superficial releases could not give the audience the opportunity for having justified opinion. It is important, for regional radiobroadcaster having short news releases, to allocate more time to coverage of the events ongoing in the region and provide the audience with diverse information by ensuring balance and finding additional information.



Radio Rioni (Kutaisi)

“Rioni” actively covered both central and local news. In the programmes, great deal of time was allocated to political issues, however the lack of critical questions and scepticism towards the politicians’ statements still remained the problem.

“Rioni” allocated 14 hours and 41 minutes to the monitoring subjects. Out of this time 16% of was dedicated to “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”, 15% - to “United National Movement”, 14% - to the government and 12% - the local government. In average 25% of the time was dedicated to direct speech of the majority of the subjects. However, in case of the local government this indicator was 50%. Consequently, this subject was presented in dramatically positive context.

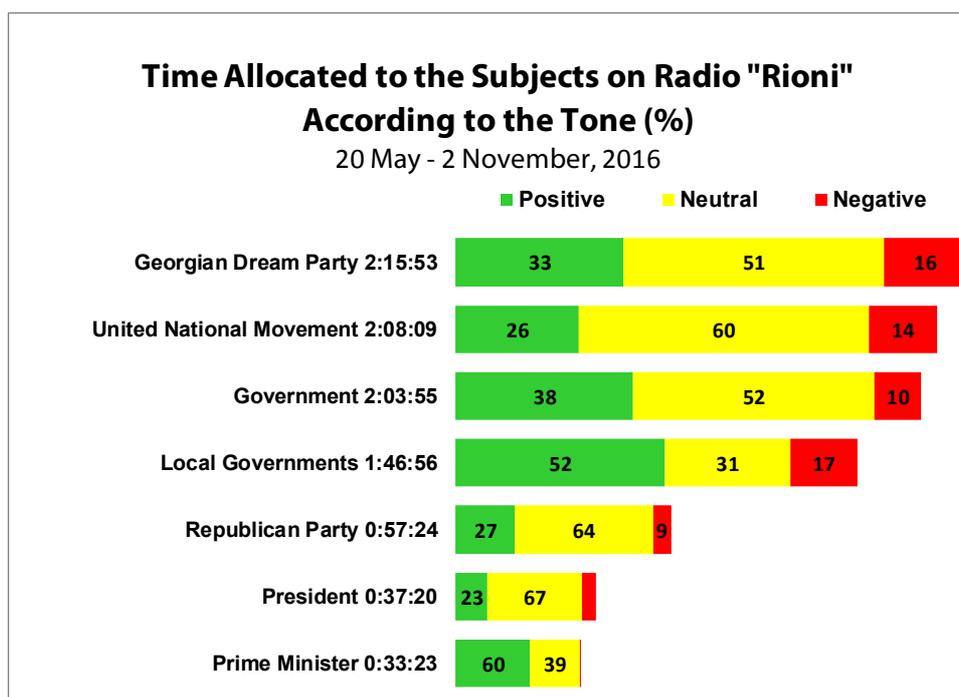
Main problem of the radiobroadcaster was empirical coverage of the problems, without necessary analyses. The journalists actively tried to get comments from the respondents, however their questions were less acute and the politicians had opportunity to present themselves in positive context. This was reflected in misbalance of tones – the indicator of positive tone was prevailing in cases of all respondents.

The coverage of local government was special problem. In the beginning of monitoring, the journalists allocated a great deal of attention to the mayor of Kutaisi. The mayor’s interviews related not just to political but cultural issues were covered actively. Thus, he got 53% of time in positive context.

The radiobroadcaster actively covered pre-election campaign, the news was about the activities of political parties and majoritarian candidate nominated in Imereti.

The journalists of “Rioni” were much more active than in case of the majority of other broadcasters, which was proved by great number of comments recorded and events covered.

However, the lack of critical questions and analytical stories was identified as key problem of this radio channel.



Radio Ajara

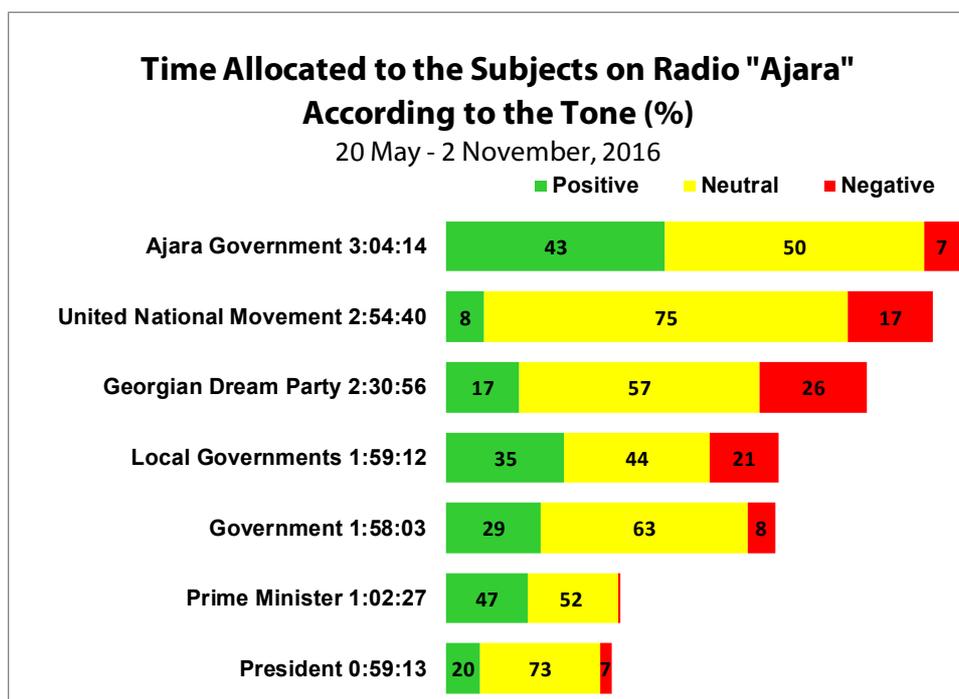
“Ajara” prepared extensive news releases, providing information about the events developed in Ajara and central level. Despite of long running time the radiobroadcaster covered the events briefly and superficially, similarly to the radiobroadcasters having short news releases. Consequently, main problem of the coverage was preparation of in depth stories.

The news releases were focused on the events developed in Autonomous Republic of Ajara. The journalists covered political, social, economic and cultural events. In total 19 hours and 27 minutes were allocated to monitoring subjects. 26% of the time was allocated to the government of Ajara, 15% - to “United National Movement”, 13% - to “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”. Local and central governments, each got 10% of the time. In average 34% of the time allocated to the subjects was used for direct speech and with this regard there was no misbalance between the political teams. The radiobroadcaster prepared brief stories. The journalists’ attempt to obtain additional materials and ask tough questions was less felt. Positive tone demonstrated on the chart indicates the same, especially in cases of the government of Ajara (43%) and local government (35%). The comments of ruling team were often heard not in relation to just political and economic, but also to sport and cultural activities. The trend of positive coverage of the government was continued by the end of the first round, while the situation was relatively improved in second round.

The coverage of opposition parties was increased when the elections came closer. However, the stories about the election programmes of political parties were not prepared.

Similar to previous years, ethical standards were adhered on the radiobroadcaster. However, the lack of the journalists’ proactivity and critical questions still remained the gap. Long news

releases of the radiobroadcaster give opportunity for covering the events from different prospective and leave less unanswered questions; since there is the expectation towards public broadcaster, that it will cover diverse topics, ask critical questions and put in the agenda the problems which could not be mentioned by private broadcasters.



Recommendations

Similar to the results of the media monitoring of 2012 – 2014 election cycles, the monitoring of 2016 demonstrated that the radio is not polarized media segment and the majority of radio broadcasters did not display biased attitude towards any political force. This is good precondition for assuming that the radio broadcasters may significantly facilitate informed choice of the audience, but only if they:

- are more proactive and try to cover additional topics/information;
- are more critical, ask tough questions, and not allow politicians to use the air for their PR;
- pay more attention to social problems and issues of minorities and present positions of officials and politicians with this regard;
- pay more attention to assessments of non-governmental sector and specialists, which will improve their possibilities for in depth analyses;
- pay more attention to the development in the regions of Georgia and are not limited by the coverage of central news;
- pay more attention to political visions and programmes of parties and are not limited by the superficial coverage of their meetings with the population;
- avoid or express critical attitude towards the coverage of the politicians' in such events (as sports, cultural, religious, educational) that are not directly related to their political activity but nevertheless may present them significantly positive light.

Monitoring of Print Media

May 20 – November 2, 2016

Internews – Georgia implemented the 2016 Parliamentary Elections media monitoring within the framework of the project entitled “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring was carried out from May 20 through November 2, 2016 and covered the following 7 newspapers: “Rezonansi”, “Akhali Taoba”, “Asaval-Dasavali”, “Alia”, “Guria News”, “Qronika+”, and “Kviris Palitra”.

Key Findings:

- “United National Movement” and the “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” parties received the most coverage of all political parties;
- Monitored publications actively covered activities of the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili and the ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- Materials printed in six out of seven pre-selected publications were dominated by negative tone indicators towards “United National Movement” and the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili to varying extent;
- Only one publication (“Qronika+”) was demonstrated explicitly negative attitudes towards the ruling team and ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- Two publications (“Alia” and “Asaval-Dasavali”) exhibited extremely high percentage of negative tone indicators towards both the ruling team as well as to the parliamentary opposition while no political subject was spared distinctively high percentage of positive tone indicators;
- “Alia”, “Qronika+” and “Asaval-Dasavali” tended to frequently and severely violate journalistic standards and ethical norms;
- Journalists working for “Alia” and “Asaval-Dasavali” systematically used extremely derogatory and insulting language;
- Materials containing unverified information were published in “Akhali Taoba”, “Qronika+”, “Alia”, and “Asaval-Dasavali”;
- Independent majoritarian candidates drew little attention in the coverage of the second round of elections by the selected newspapers;
- The publications paid little attention to candidates of the second round while political parties have been spared most of their attention. However, “Alia” departed from the pattern by publishing an extraordinarily positive portrayal of Valeri Gelashvili, a majoritarian candidate from “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party;

- Procedures related to the second round of the elections received little coverage in printed media;
- “Alia” and “Asaval-Dasavali” stood out with their frequent use of an insulting language in their coverage of the election results.

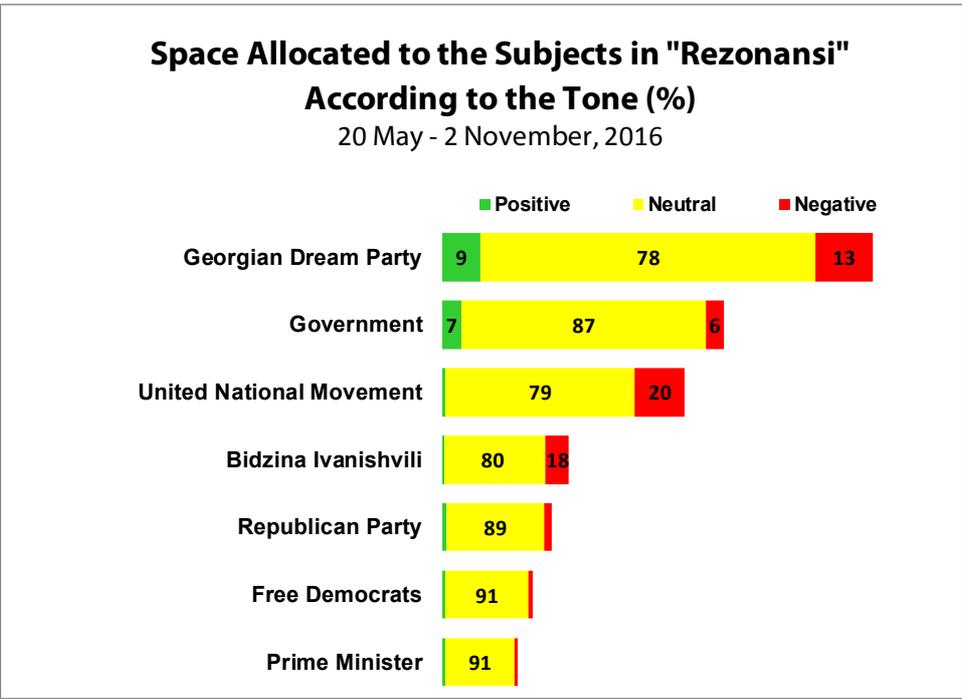
Rezonansi

“Rezonansi” maintained considerable impartiality and neutrality while covering political processes taking place in the reporting period. However, the publication would often demonstrate criticism towards the “United National Movement” and the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili. No severe violations of journalistic ethical norms by “Rezonansi” were observed. On the other hand, articles prepared under commercial contracts were difficult to tell apart from those prepared by staff journalists.

“Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party (24%), the Government of Georgia (16%), and “United National Movement” (13%) received the most coverage during the reporting period while materials concerning ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, local self-governments, “State for People” bloc, and “United National Movement” contained high percentage of negative tone indicators (46%, 26%, 25% and 20% respectively). The strongest positive tone indicators were observed in the materials concerning “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party (9%).

It should be noted that articles prepared under commercial contracts which “Rezonansi” publishes are difficult to tell from those prepared by the editorial staff. Commercial materials are typically put in a frame while a note that this type of materials are paid by clients and therefore the editorial board cannot be held responsible for facts, is printed with rather small fonts on the last page of the newspaper. It is recommended that this kind of information be provided for each of articles prepared under commercial contract.

The findings of the monitoring suggest that “Rezonansi” maintained impartiality and neutrality while covering both the election run-up as well as the electoral processes and the results. However, commercial articles are difficult to tell apart from materials prepared by editorial staff.



Alia

Negative tone indicators dominated the materials covering almost all political subjects by “Alia” during the monitoring period. The publication systematically and severely violated journalistic standards and ethical norms as journalists working for the publication often resorted to the use of extremely derogatory and abusive language towards politicians.

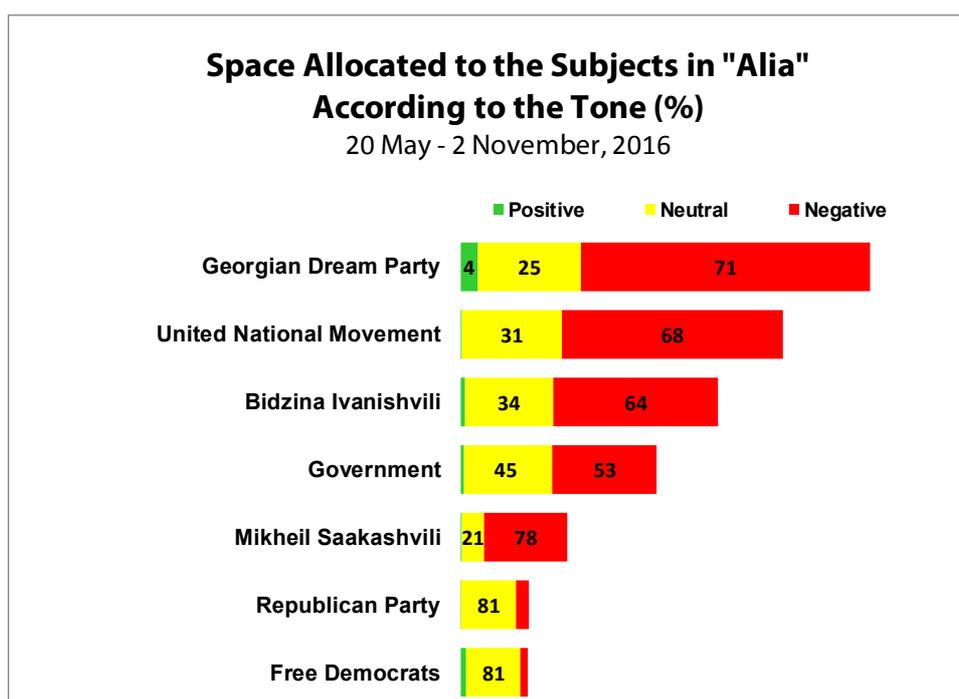
“Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party (20%) and “United National Movement” (16%) received the most coverage during the monitoring period. Extremely high percentage of negative tone indicators were observed in materials concerning the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia (71%) and ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (64%) as well as the “United National Movement” (68%) and ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili (78%). High percentage of negative tone indicators were observed in materials covering activities of the Prime Minister (64%), “People for State” bloc (58%) and the Government of Georgia (53%) while the “Georgian Hall“ was spared the strongest positive tone indicators (11%).

Staff journalists working for “Alia” have been using extremely abusive language in their coverage of various politicians. For instance: “Do you know why Khaduri has no hair on his head?! He is lubricated by Vaseline to the extent that not a single hair can grow on his head which is constantly stuck in someone’s arse...” (“Georgian Dream” cheated on you”, 15-21 August, P.9); “Do not you have the slightest doubt that this team, if successful of course, will finish all anti-Georgian deeds initiated by Usupov’s three-percent Parliament?, - they will legalize the same-sex marriage, incest, pedophilia and all immoralities which dominates the West today...” (“A conspiracy against Georgia”, 1-7 August, P.12).

It should be noted that “Alia” published three articles about majoritarian candidates during the monitoring period. The journalist who had authored these articles demonstrated extraordinarily positive attitude while characterizing these candidates. For instance: “As soon as you meet Tsezar Chocheli for the first time, you immediately find yourself in turbulence. He is an

extraordinary personality, a man of great energy who resembles a mythical Phoenix with the faculty of self-combustion. The bird rises from its own ashes every time after it has burnt down.” (“He worked, fought, sued, got acquitted and rose victorious!”, 12-18 September, P. 8); “Goal-oriented, risky, dynamic, courageous, an optimist who sees opportunities for development in every challenge, a perfectionist, who kills every single task and always leave the door open to changes.” (“Gocha Enukidze: “We will win together and bring life back to mountains!”, 19-25 September, P.6).

The findings of the monitoring suggest that “Alia” repeated and severely violated journalistic standards and ethical norms. The newspaper stands notorious for its frequent use of extremely abusive language and choices of words while covering activities of politicians.

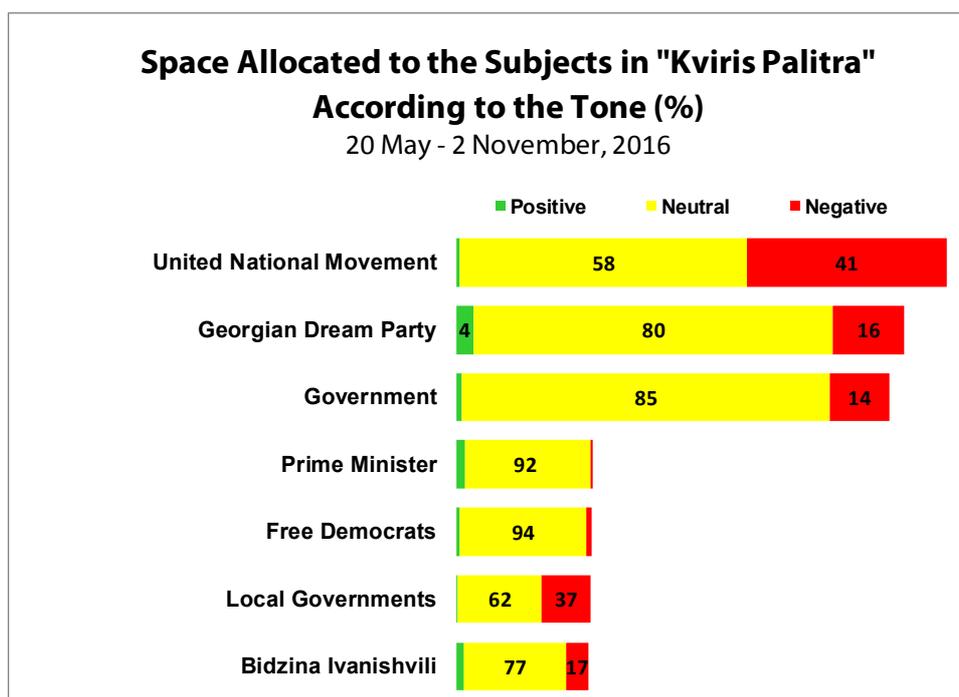


Kviris Palitra

Criticism of “United National Movement” and ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili dominated materials published by “Kviris Palitra” in the monitoring period. However, it should be noted that the criticism was mostly expressed in statements of respondents rather than in materials prepared by journalists per se. There have been no cases of violating journalistic standards and ethical norms observed during the reporting period by journalists working for “Kviris Palitra”.

In the given period of the monitoring the following political subjects received the most coverage in “Kviris Palitra”: “United National Movement” (18%), “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia (17%), and the Government of Georgia (12%). High percentage of negative tone indicators were observed in materials concerning the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili (54%), “State for People” bloc (49%), “United National Movement” (41%), local self-governments (37%), and the Republican Party (31%) while the highest percentage of the positive tone indicators was observed in materials dedicated to the Prime Minister and the ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (6% in each of the cases).

The findings of the monitoring suggest that “Kviris Palitra” demonstrated stronger criticism towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President as compared to other political subjects. The publication follows the journalistic standards and ethical norms.



Asavali-Dasavali

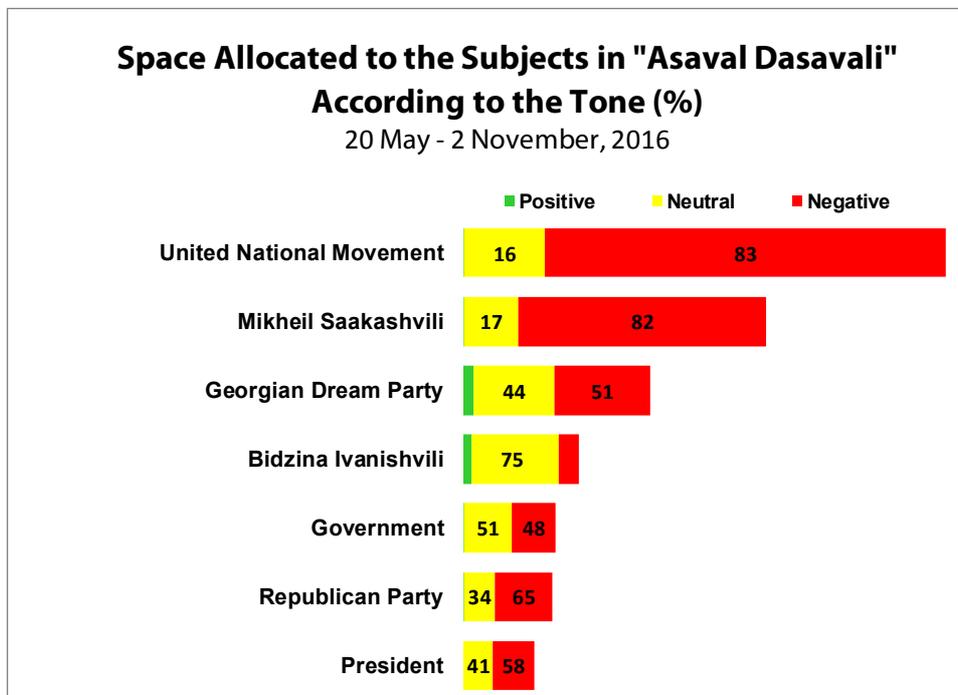
In the monitoring period “Asavali-Dasavali” stood out with its frequent and severe violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms. Journalists working for the publication systematically used extremely derogatory and abusive language in their coverages of politicians. Materials published in “Asavali-Dasavali” demonstrated extremely negative attitude towards the “United National Movement”, ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, the Republican Party, “State for People” bloc and the President of Georgia.

The following political subjects received the most coverage in “Asavali-Dasavali” during the reporting period: “United National Movement” (26%), Mikheil Saakashvili (16%) and “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (10%). Extremely highest concentration of negative tone indicators was observed in materials covering “United National Movement” (83%), Mikheil Saakashvili (82%), and the Republican Party (65%) while materials concerning the “Centrists” party, ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili and “Democratic Movement – United Georgia” demonstrated strongest positive tone indicators (11%, 7%, and 6% respectively).

Examination of materials published in “Asavali-Dasavali” had revealed consistent and frequent violations of journalistic standards. The newspaper’s staff journalists systematically resorted to extremely derogatory and abusive language in particular in relation to the “United National Movement”, ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, the Republican Party and the President of Georgia. The latter is referred to by an “Asavali-Dasavali” journalist as an ‘inflatable man’ (for instance, in an article with the title “No to gay marriage!!!”, 15-21 August, P.1). “Asavali-Dasavali” often printed materials which contained poor judgement of journalists. For instance: “It is the very “Chergoleishvili and the company” who call on Giorgi Margvelashvili to not agree

to a referendum! They are backed up by the whole international gay-mafia!” (“Mister President, you have to choose: Either Georgia or Chergostan!”, 8-14 August, P.7).

The findings of the monitoring suggest that “Asaval-Dasavali” systematically violated journalistic standards and ethical norms. The newspaper stands out with its one-sided storylines and biased accounts of events.



Akhali Taoba

Throughout the monitoring period the publication demonstrated negative attitude towards the “United National Movement” and the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili. However, the criticism was mostly observed in statements made by respondents rather than in texts prepared by journalists working for the publication. Publication of unverified information in “Akhali Taoba” was also observed on several occasions.

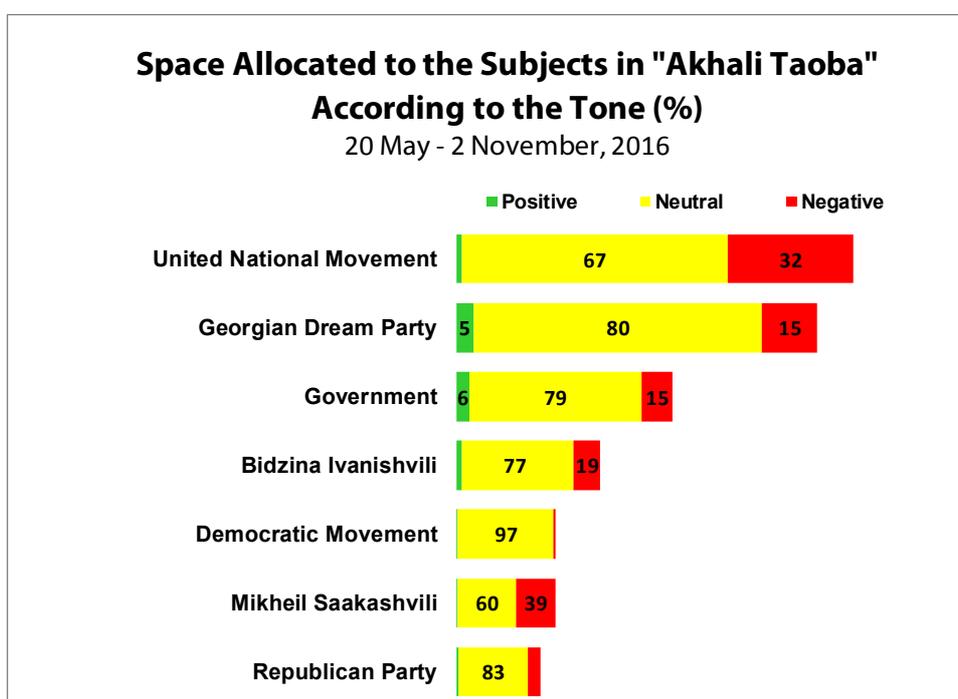
The “United National Movement”, “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” and the Government of Georgia received the most coverage in “Akhali Taoba” with 18%, 16% and 10% respectively. Strongest negative tone indicators were observed in materials concerning the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili (39%), local self-governments (38%) and the “United National Movement” (32%). No political subjects were spared particularly high percentage of positive tone indicators.

The monitoring found that “Akhali Taoba” would occasionally publish materials containing unverified information. For instance: “they say that the idea of creating a messiah from Gharibashvili ran down the whole dinner...”, “according to the source, the same issue was discussed at the dinner in an restaurant.” (“Is Gharibashvili coming back to politics?”, 19 July, P.4). “According to the unverified information the list had already been made ready but Bidzina Ivanishvili tore it down over the heads of those who put it together.”; “the rumors have it that an ex-National Forum member will be on the list...”; “according to the popular information Zakaria

Kutsnashvili will be high and dry on the list...”; “according to the popular information the “Georgian Dream” had been negotiating with the Republicans regarding majoritarians.” (“Dreamers left outside the list threaten with revealing scandalous information”, 12 July, P.3).

It should be noted that eight articles printed in the second period of monitoring (from 11 July to 30 August) provided quite lengthy interviews with just one person – Zviad Chitishvili, a member of “Our Homeland”. The respondent was very explicit in criticizing the “United National Movement (for instance, “signatures will be soon collected demanding the ban over the National Movement”, 13 July, P.4; “Saakashvili will be burnt in effigy in every region”, 1 August, P.5).

The findings of the monitoring suggest that “Akhali Taoba” demonstrated negative attitudes towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-president in comparison with other political subjects. The publication had repeatedly printed materials containing unverified information during the monitoring period.

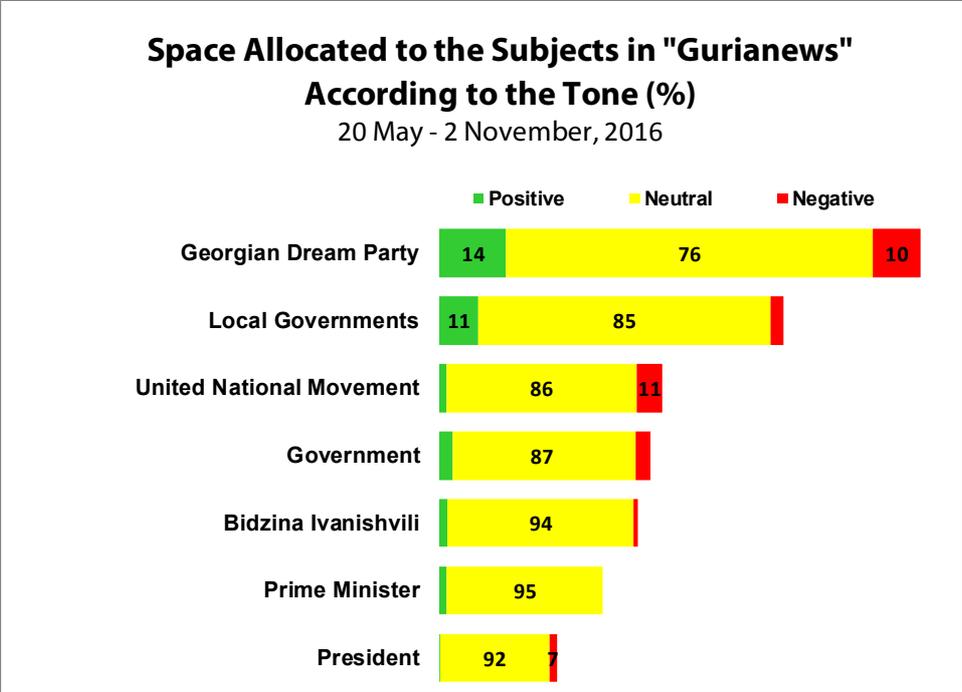


Guria News

Positive tone indicators towards the local authorities and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” slightly prevailed in materials offered by “Guria News” during the monitoring period. “There had been no cases of violating journalistic ethical norms observed during the reporting period in “Guria News”. The newspaper frequently published paid commercial articles.

“Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia”, the local authorities and the “United National Movement” received the biggest coverage by “Guria News” in the reporting period with 21%, 15% and 10% respectively. The highest percentage of negative tone indicators was observed in materials concerning the ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili (18%), the Republican Party (11%) and the “United National Movement” (11%). The strongest positive tone indicators dominated materials in relation to the “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” (14%) and the local authorities (11%).

The findings of the monitoring suggest that positive tone indicators in “Guria News” were slightly stronger in materials concerning the ruling team while negative tone indicators were more prominent in the coverage of the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President. However, criticism was expressed mostly in statements made by respondents rather in texts written by journalists. The newspaper follows journalistic standards and ethical norms.



Qronika+

Throughout the monitoring negative tone indicators were explicit in the coverage of the government team and the ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili by “Qronika+” with journalists often violating journalistic standards and ethical norms in their article concerning these political subjects. In addition, the newspaper also published unverified information on several occasions.

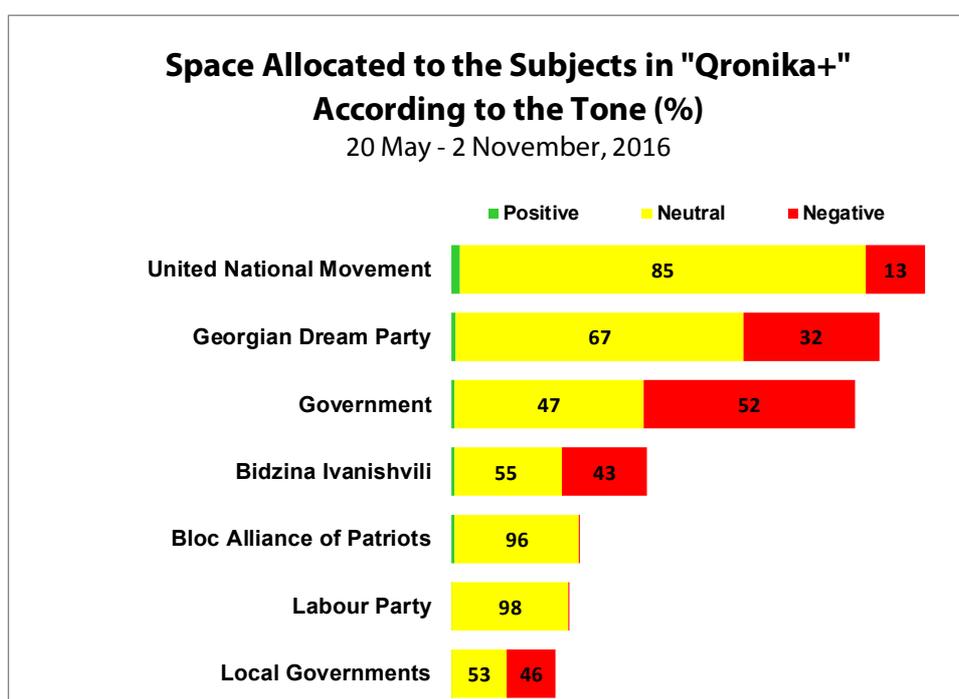
The monitoring revealed that “United National Movement” (18%), “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” (16%), and the Government of Georgia (15%) received the most coverage in “Qronika+”. The coverage of the following political subjects contained the highest percentage of negative tone indicators: Government of Georgia (52%), the local self-governments (46%), Bidzina Ivanishvili (43%), and “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (32%), while no selected political subject were spared explicitly high percentage of positive tone indicators.

The findings of the monitoring point out to the use of groundless judgement and derogatory language by “Qronika+” journalists towards the various political subjects and in particular towards members of the ruling team. It is worth noting that all editions of the publication throughout the monitoring period published materials serving to criticize one specific person – Ioseb Gogashvili, a deputy head of the State Security Agency. These materials often contained derogatory and abusive language used by the journalist, for instance, in the following articles: “Soso nicknamed as Antricota” (28/May/2016, P.7), „Joseph, special forces will put you to an end“ (5/July//2016, P. 7), “Soso’s Dream“ (27/September, P.7), “The country where Antricota

organizes elections for us...” (4 October, P.7); “Crisis facing the country is also called Soso!” (18 October, P.7).

During the monitoring period a staff journalist of “Qronika+” was explicitly sympathetic of Levan Vashalomidze, a member of “United National Movement”. In an article with a title “Chairs are going to bulge out in Batumi, or Misha’s test N1” (5/July/2016, P.15) the journalist writes that “in their background Levan Vashalomidze looks quite confident and academic and that is what voters miss in the authority - not bended chairs but confident individuals who are perfectly capable of building”.

In conclusion, the findings of the monitoring suggest that “Qronika+” exhibits negative attitude towards the ruling team while journalists writing for the publication often violate journalistic standards and ethical norms.



Conclusions

The findings of the monitoring suggest that the selected publications chose to cover the activities of the ruling team and the parliamentary opposition while paying less attention to other political parties. All seven publications selected for the purpose of monitoring had demonstrated either positive or negative perception of political subjects to varying degree. Three publications occasionally resorted to the use of derogatory language by the journalist while the practice of publishing articles based on dubious or suspicious sources of information and unjustified and poor judgement by the journalists were also observed.

Majoritarian candidates participating in the second round of the elections were not much in the focus of the publications which chose to keep a stronger emphasis on political parties. Journalists writing for “Alia” and “Asaval-Dasavali” tended to often use abusive language while covering results of the elections. Procedures related to the second round of the elections received poor coverage by the printed media.

The findings of the monitoring suggest that the bias of journalists as they covered activities of political subjects, the frequent use of insulting language towards politicians, judgement on poor grounds and single-sided account of events represent the key challenges of the Georgian press in the election run-up.

Recommendations

- The print media should pay more attention to the review and coverage of election programs of political parties in the pre-election period.
- It is desirable that articles show different opinions, especially when they voice allegations against specific individuals.
- Journalists should tell their opinion without using offensive and discriminatory terminology.
- Judgments and conclusions of journalists should be based on promptly checked information from reliable sources, especially when grave charges are presented against a particular politician.
- Editorial content should be clearly differentiated from that prepared under contractual agreements.

Monitoring of Online Media

May 20 – November 2, 2016

Internews – Georgia implemented the 2016 Parliamentary Elections media monitoring within the framework of the project entitled “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring was carried out from May 20 through November 2, 2016 and covered publications on the following 17 websites: “allnews.ge”, “ambebi.ge”, “droni.ge”, “etanews.ge”, “info9.ge”, “interpressnews.ge”, “marshalpress.ge”, “netgazeti.ge”, “newposts.ge”, “news.ge”, “palitravt.ge”, “pirveli.com.ge”, “presa.ge”, “reportiori.ge”, “tabula.ge”, “civil.ge”, and “dfwatch.net”.

Key Findings

- The online media most actively covered activities of the two political parties, the “United National Movement” and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”;
- Out of the 17 web sites selected for monitoring, the negative tone towards the “United National Movement” was prevalent on 10. Three websites had a prevalently negative attitude towards the ruling political team;
- Positive tone indicators towards the ruling political team were prevalent on 8 websites. None of the websites revealed high indicators of positive tone towards the “United National Movement”;
- The online media reveals the lack of critical analysis. Journalists’ views and in-depth analyses of issues are not common. In most of the cases the websites cover only declarations made by political actors and activities performed by different state agencies;
- Majority of the websites have more or less adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms. Actually the cases of journalists using hate speech and offensive or discriminatory language are rare;
- Insufficient separation of editorial content from ones prepared under commercial contacts remains the biggest challenge for the online media;
- During the monitoring period the cases of the websites publishing the articles obtained from the websites of different State Agencies without making relevant references were quite frequent;
- During the period of the second round of the elections, the material published on all the websites focused more on the political parties rather than on particular candidates;
- During the period of the second round of the elections, the websites: droni.ge and presa.ge displayed an explicit support for an independent majoritarian candidate (Tsezar Chocheli) and some attempts to discriminate his opponent (Dimitri Khundadze);

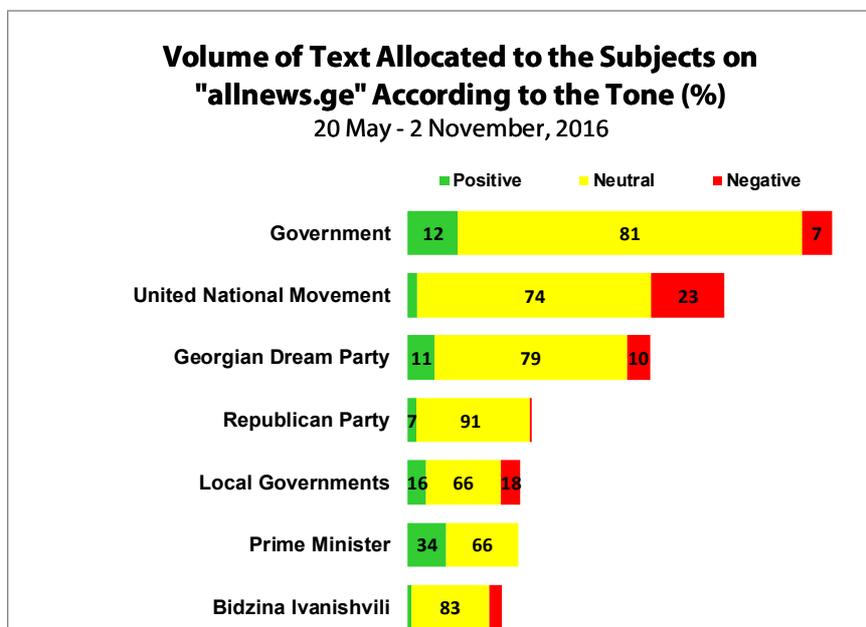
allnews.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “allnews.ge” displayed a positive attitude towards the ruling team and a relatively negative attitude towards the parliamentary opposition. No cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website “allnews.ge”.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (22 %), and of the political parties the “United National Movement” (17 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (13 %) were most extensively covered on the website “allnews.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the political parties: the “Centrists” (58%), the “United National Movement” (23%), the political block "The State for People" (23%), and the “Georgian Labour Party” (21%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (34%).

In the period preceding the parliamentary elections, the positive attitude towards the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” displayed by the website “allnews.ge” was detected and revealed through both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The website “allnews.ge” was actively covering the pre-election promises made by the political party as part of its election campaign; for example: “The promises made by the “Georgian Dream” to be fulfilled during the next four years” –published on September 9; “50 Road Tunnels are planned to be constructed during the next four years” – published on September 17.

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude, that during the period preceding the parliamentary elections the website “allnews.ge” displayed positive attitude towards the ruling political team.



ambebi.ge

During the monitoring period, the negative tone indicators towards the “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili, in the process of covering the

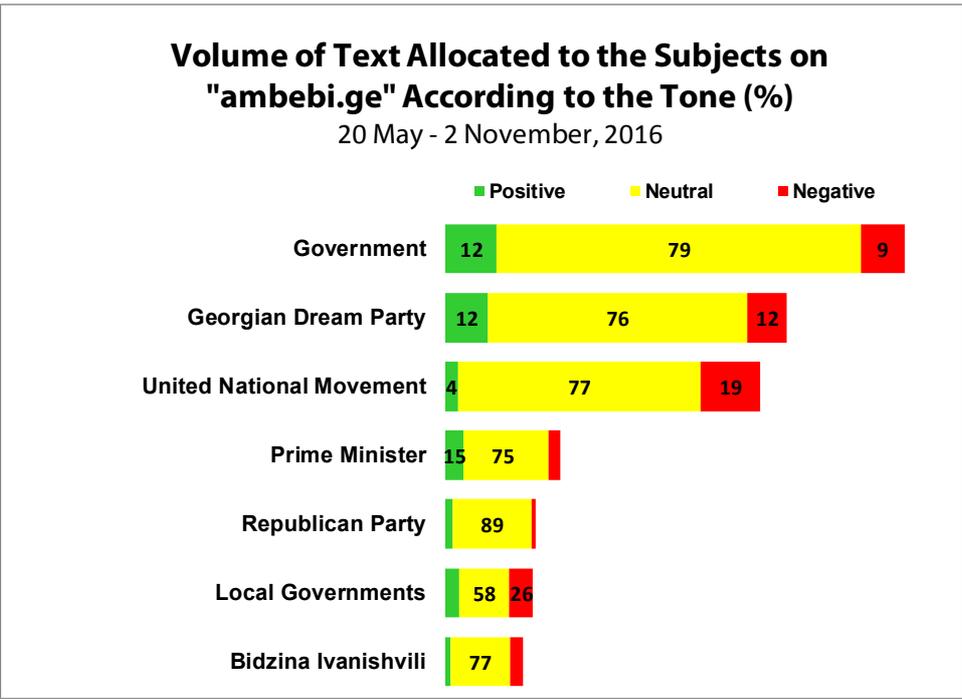
issues related to them, were shown to prevail on the website “ambebi.ge”. Several articles published on the website disclosed violations of journalistic standards and ethical norms.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (24 %), and of the political parties the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (18 %) and the “United National Movement” (16 %) were most extensively covered on the website “ambebi.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed in the coverage of the activities of the political party “Centrists” (61 %), of local self-governments (26%), of the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (25 %) and of the political party “United National Movement” (19 %). No highest rate of positive tone was observed towards any political party or actor in the coverage of the pre-election period during the monitoring period.

The website “ambebi.ge” extensively covered pre-election promises made by the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (for example: the article entitled “What will the “Georgian Dream” Change if it Remains in Power – 6 Major Promises Made by the Ruling Team” published on September 9. It should be noted that the pre-election promises made by other political parties were not so extensively covered by the website.

During the monitoring period an article published on the website “ambebi.ge” portrayed the political party “United National Movement” in an extremely negative light. In the article entitled “An Obituary Notice on the “National Movement”” published on November 1, the author uses insulting language and hate speech while speaking about this political party. It is noteworthy that the article had been prepared by the website “ambebi.ge” as it was indicated. Besides, the website “ambebi.ge” published an advertorial entitled: “How Kezerashvili Seized "Senta Petroleum" Depriving the Owners of their Property – Some Details from the Courtroom Proceedings on the High-profile Case” -published on May 19, in which the norms of journalistic ethics were flagrantly violated. The above mentioned article had a notice at the top indicating that it was an advertorial and not an article; though a media should ensure that material published on the website meet journalistic standards and ethical norms.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “ambebi.ge” displays negative attitude towards the parliamentary opposition. Several articles published on the website disclosed violations of journalistic standards and ethical norms.



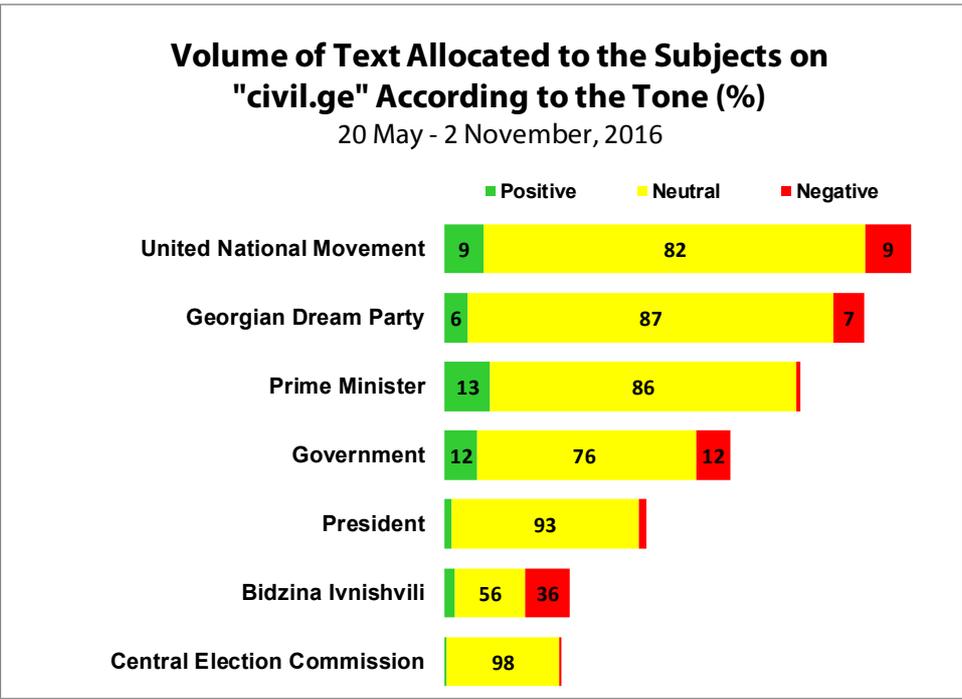
civil.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “civil.ge” displayed neither positive nor negative attitude towards any political party. High Journalistic standards and ethical norms are upheld on the website. The website “civil.ge” was distinguished for its in-depth coverage of issues and a variety of sources of information the articles published on the website were based on.

Activities of the political parties the “United National Movement” (18 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (16 %), as well as the activities of the Prime Minister of Georgia (14 %) and of the Government of Georgia (11 %) were most extensively covered on the website “civil.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (35 %) and towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (22 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (13 %).

The website “civil.ge” actively covered the developments unfolding around the elections. The website provided its readers with detailed information on election procedures (for example, in the following articles: “CEC Summarizes Proportional, Majoritarian MP Election Results” – published on October 24; “Preliminary Runoff Results Give Big Lead to GDDG” – published on October 31.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “civil.ge” actively and impartially covered the ongoing political process in the country.

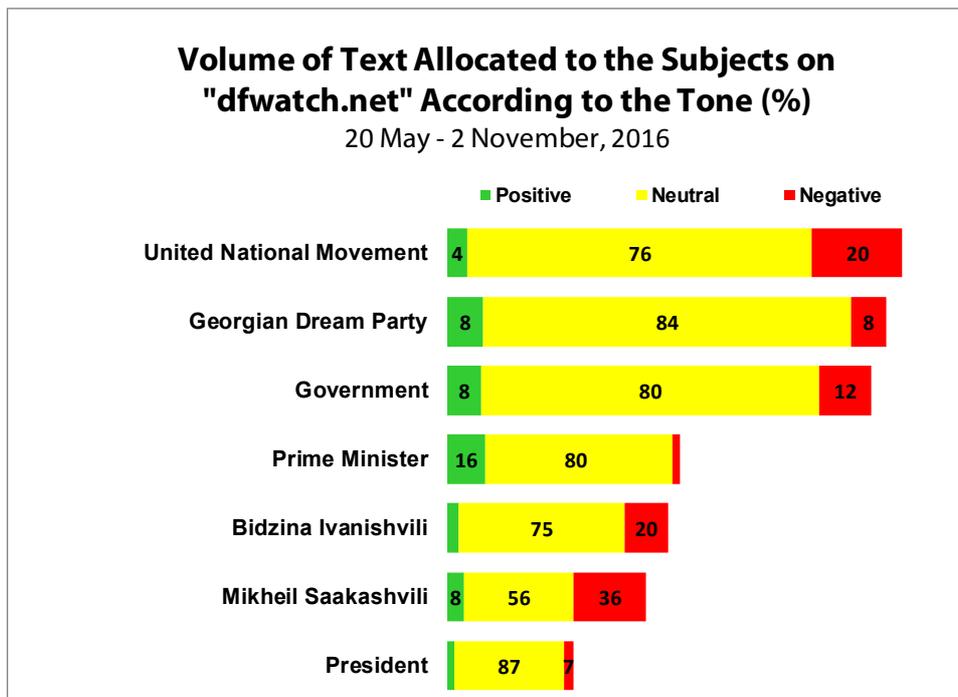


dfwatch.net

During the monitoring period, negative tone towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili prevailed on the website “dfwatch.net” to a certain extent. Though, the tone was expressed in the statements made by the respondents rather than in the comments made by the journalists. No cases of the violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website “dfwatch.net”.

Activities of the political parties the “United National Movement” (15 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (15 %), as well as of the Government of Georgia (14 %) were most extensively covered on the website “dfwatch.net” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (36 %), local self-governments (34 %), the political block "The State for People" (30 %), and the political parties: the “Centrists” (26 %), the “United National Movement” (20 %) and ex-Prime Minister of Georgia – Bidzina Ivanishvili (20 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (16 %).

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “dfwatch.net” objectively and impartially covered ongoing political processes in the country. The website adheres to journalistic standards and ethical norms.



droni.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “droni.ge” displayed an explicitly positive attitude towards an independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli and extremely negative attitude towards his opponent Dimitri Khundadze during the second round of the parliamentary elections. While covering the events and developments related to these two candidates, journalistic standards and ethical norms were violated. The majority of the articles published on the website “droni.ge” were advertorials.

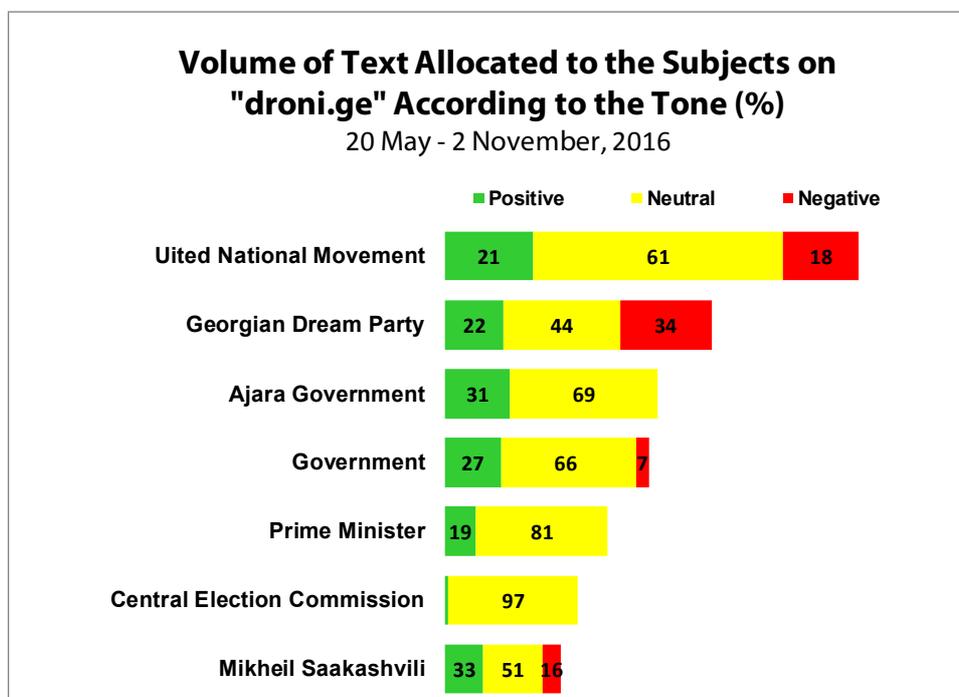
Activities of the political parties: the “United National Movement” (20 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (13 %) as well as the activities of the Government of Adjara (10%) were most extensively covered on the website “droni.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (48%) and the political party the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (34%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli (40%).

During the monitoring period a number of articles published on the website “droni.ge” revealed flagrant violations of journalistic standards and ethical norms. For example: the website published quite a long article on June 22, entitled “Millions Misappropriated by Kezerashvili and Justice not been Upheld – Court Proceedings in the Case of “Senta Group” Continues”, in which serious charges were brought against former government officials. The comments made by the journalist were unsubstantiated.

The website “droni.ge” was dominated by support for the independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli. During the monitoring period a number of articles published on the website “droni.ge” viewed the above mentioned candidate in a highly positive light, whereas his opponent was viewed in an extremely negative light. These articles manifest flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms (for example, the article entitled “Tsezar Chocheli’s

Victory is Our Victory – the Victory of our People – a Keynote Meeting in Tserovani” – published on October 3; “Political Wallop against Khundadze: What the Votes for “Georgian Dream were Exchanged for in Mtskheta?” published on October 26.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “droni.ge” violated journalistic standards and ethical norms while covering the pre-election as well as second round election processes. The website attempted to explicitly discredit Dimitri Khundadze – the candidate of the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”.



etanews.ge

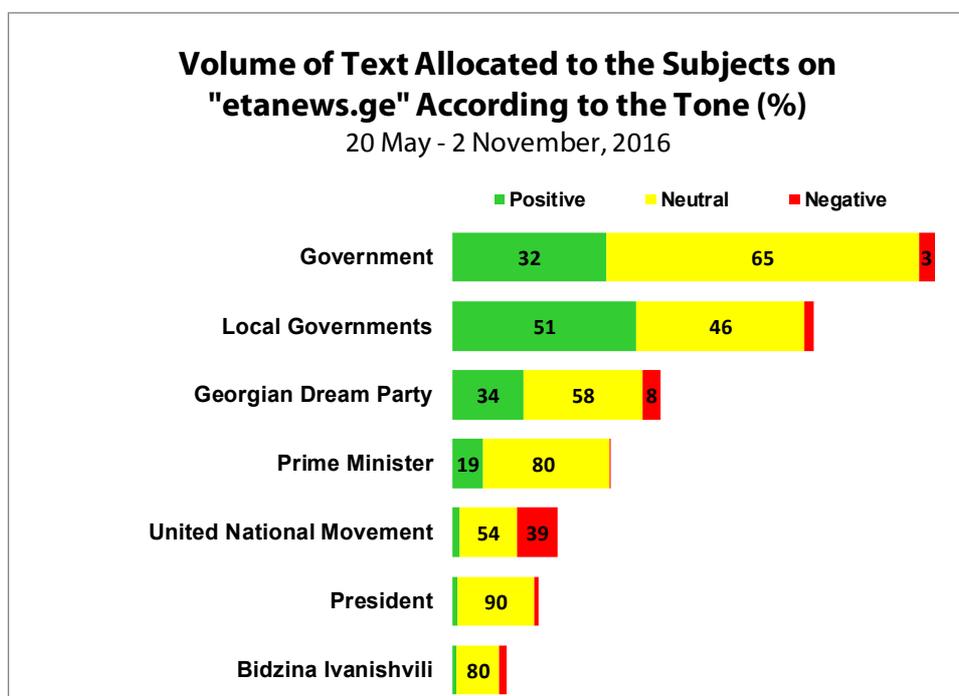
During the monitoring period, the website “etanews.ge” displayed a positive attitude towards the ruling team and a negative attitude towards the political party the “United National Movement”. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial staff of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (29 %), of local self-governments (22 %) and of the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (13 %) were most extensively covered on the website “etanews.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the “Georgian Labour Party” (52%), the political block "The State for People" (52 %), and the political party “United National Movement” (39%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the local self-governments (51%), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (34%) and the Government of Georgia (32%).

During the monitoring period, several articles published on the website “etanews.ge” were not authored by the editorial staff of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from. For example, on June 27, the websites “interpressnews.ge” and “etanews.ge” simultaneously published identical articles concerning the finalization the sidewalk

works in Borjomi. The website “interpressnews.ge” had indicated that the article was prepared in the framework of a commercial contract, whereas the article published on the website “etanews.ge” had no reference of this kind. On August 29, six websites, selected for the monitoring, published an article about the visit of the Minister of Defense of Georgia to Afghanistan. Four out of the six websites actually copied the information from the website of Ministry of Defence of Georgia, whereas the websites “interpressnews.ge” and “etanews.ge” incorporated minor changes into it. It should be noted that the articles published by these two websites are absolutely identical including the titles. Neither of these websites had made any reference to the source it had been obtained from or whether the article was prepared by the editorial staff of the website.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that editorial material published on the website “etanews.ge” is not clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts. The website revealed comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team.



info9.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “info9.ge” displayed an explicitly positive attitude towards the ruling team and a relatively negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial board of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

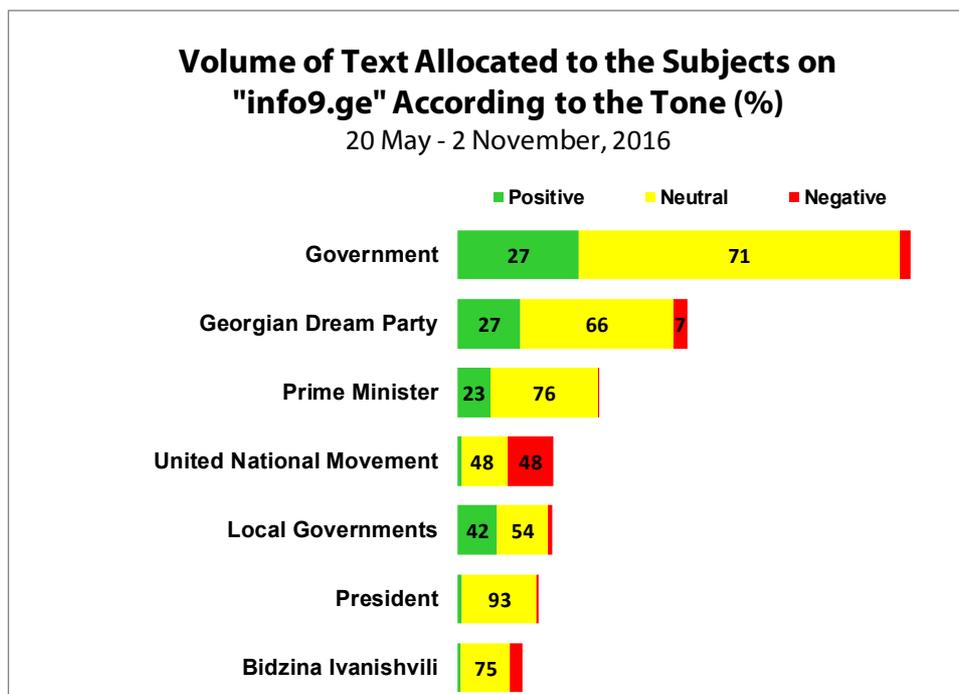
Activities of the Government of Georgia (33 %), and of the political party “United National Movement” (17 %) and the Prime Minister of Georgia (10 %) were most extensively covered on the website “info9.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (63 %), the “Georgian

Labour Party” (55 %), the political party “United National Movement” (48 %) and the political block "The State for people" (38%). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards local self-governments (42 %), the government of Adjara (29 %), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (27 %), the Government of Georgia (27 %) and the Prime Minister of Georgia (23%).

During the monitoring period the website “info9.ge” copied a number of articles from the websites of different State Agencies without appropriate references to the sources the material had been obtained from. For example, the website “info9.ge” was one of the five websites which copy-pasted the material posted on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia concerning the opening a renovated building of fire and rescue service in Gory by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia. None of the five websites indicated that the material had been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. It is noteworthy that the same article was published on the website “interpressnews.ge” as well, though it was indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contact.

The same was the case with the article concerning the construction of a new kindergarten in the Nadzaladevi district. The websites “info9.ge”, “pirveli.com.ge”, “newposts.ge” and “interpressnews.ge” published the same article with the same title. The single website out of the above mentioned, which had indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contract, was “interpressnews.ge”.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that editorial material published on the website “info9.ge” is not clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contacts. The website revealed comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team and unfavorable attitude towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President of Georgia.



interpressnews.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “interpressnews.ge” displayed a positive attitude towards the ruling team and a relatively negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial board of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

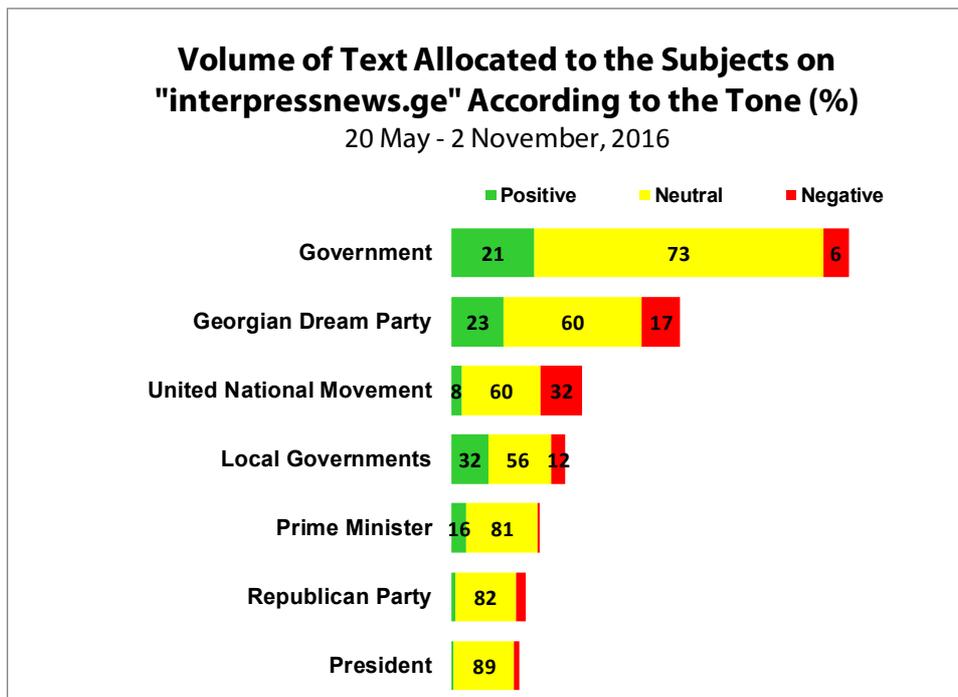
Activities of the Government of Georgia (27 %), of the political parties: the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (16 %) and the “United National Movement” (9 %) were most extensively covered on the website “interpressnews.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (46%), the political parties: the “Centrists” (45 %), the “United National Movement” (32 %) and the “Georgian Party” (32 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards local self-governments (32 %), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (23 %) and the Government of Georgia (21 %).

In the monitoring period the website “interpressnews.ge” published several articles (for example, “Valeri Gelashvili Continues Meeting with the Population” – published on October 24; “Zaza Gabunia Continues Meetings with the population of Temka and Sanzona Districts” – published on October 24; “Valeri Gelashvili and Sozar Subari Met the IDPs in Khashuri” - published on October 25), which were identical to the articles published on the website “presa.ge”. It is noteworthy that the articles published on the website “presa.ge” were marked as published in the framework of commercial contracts, whereas the same articles had not been similarly marked when published on the website “interpressnews.ge”.

It is noteworthy that the website “interpressnews.ge” was one of the five websites, subject to monitoring, which copy-pasted the material posted on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on June 5, 2016, concerning the employees of law enforcement bodies donating blood. None of the five websites had indicated that the material had been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

In majority of the cases studied, the website “interperssnews.ge” marked articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts appropriately. Though, it should be noted, that the symbols used by the website might not be easily understandable for every reader, as the notes are provided in Latin symbols (the symbol “NS” which reads as “News from Subscriber” (in English)). It would be preferable if the website used the symbols which could be easily understandable for the reader.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that editorial material published on the website “interpressnews.ge” is not clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts. The website revealed comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team.



marshalpress.ge

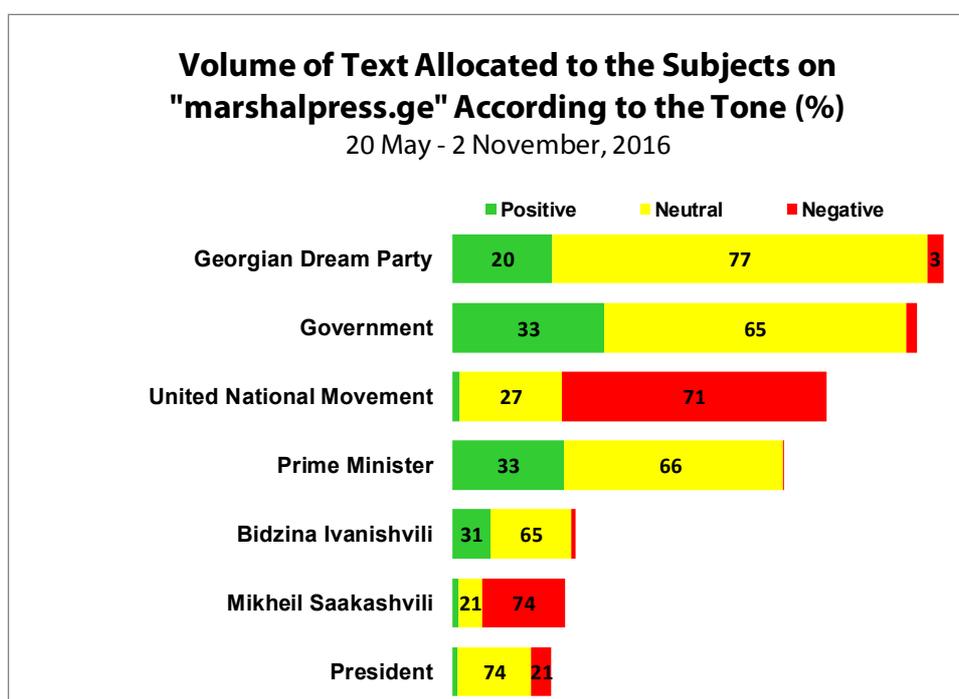
During the monitoring period, the website “marshalpress.ge” displayed an explicitly positive attitude towards the ruling team and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili, and a relatively negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili. Some cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website “marshalpress.ge”. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial board of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

Activities of the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (19 %), of the Government of Georgia (18 %) and of the political party “United National Movement” (14 %) were most extensively covered on the website “marshalpress.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (74 %), the “Georgian Labour Party” (72 %), the political parties: the “United National Movement” (71%), the “Centrists” (71 %) and the political block "The State for people" (61 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards local self-governments (50 %), the Prime Minister of Georgia (34 %), the Government of Georgia (33 %) and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (31 %).

The cases of unsubstantiated judgment and hate speech were revealed in the articles published on the website “marshalpress.ge”. The violations of the journalistic standards and ethical norms predominated in coverage related to the parliamentary opposition, ex-President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, Paata Burchuladze (for example, in the articles: "Margvelashvili is not Going to Hold a Referendum - President Completely Ignores the People's Opinion" – published on August 9; “Expensive Jeeps Purchased by the Fund “Iavnana” and 5 Million Lost” – published on July 25).

The website “marshalpress.ge” was one of the five websites, subject to monitoring, which copy-pasted the material posted on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia concerning the employees of the Patrol Police Department of Adjara donating blood. None of the five websites had indicated that the material had been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. It should be noted that the same article was published on the website “interpressnews.ge” as well, though in this case it was indicated that the article had been copied from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “marshalpress.ge” revealed unfavorable attitude towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President of Georgia and comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team. Editorial material published on the website “marshalpress.ge” is clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contacts.



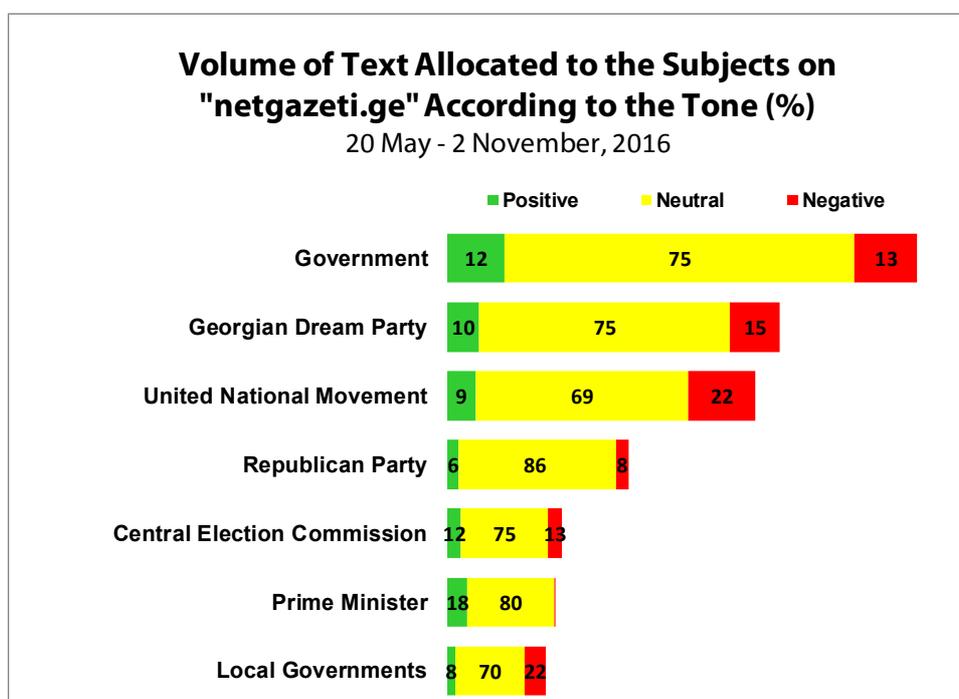
netgazeti.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “netgazeti.ge” displayed neither positive nor negative attitude towards any political party or political actor. High journalistic standards and ethical norms are upheld on the website. It is noteworthy, that editorial material published on the website “netgazeti.ge” is clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (19 %), and of the political parties: the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (14 %) and the “United National Movement” (13 %) were most extensively covered on the website “netgazeti.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the political party “Centrists” (31 %), the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (23 %), local self-governments (22 %), the political party “United National Movement” (22 %) and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (21 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (18 %).

During the monitoring period the website “netgazeti.ge” provided the reader with detailed information concerning election procedures. The website actively covered the issues concerning the day of election as well as the second round election (for example, “The Results of the Second Round Elections [Infographics]” October 31).

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “netgazeti.ge” actively and impartially covered the ongoing political process in the country. The website “netgazeti.ge” was distinguished for its in-depth coverage of issues and a variety of sources of information on which certain articles published on the website were based.



newposts.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “newposts.ge” displayed a positive attitude towards the ruling team. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial staff of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

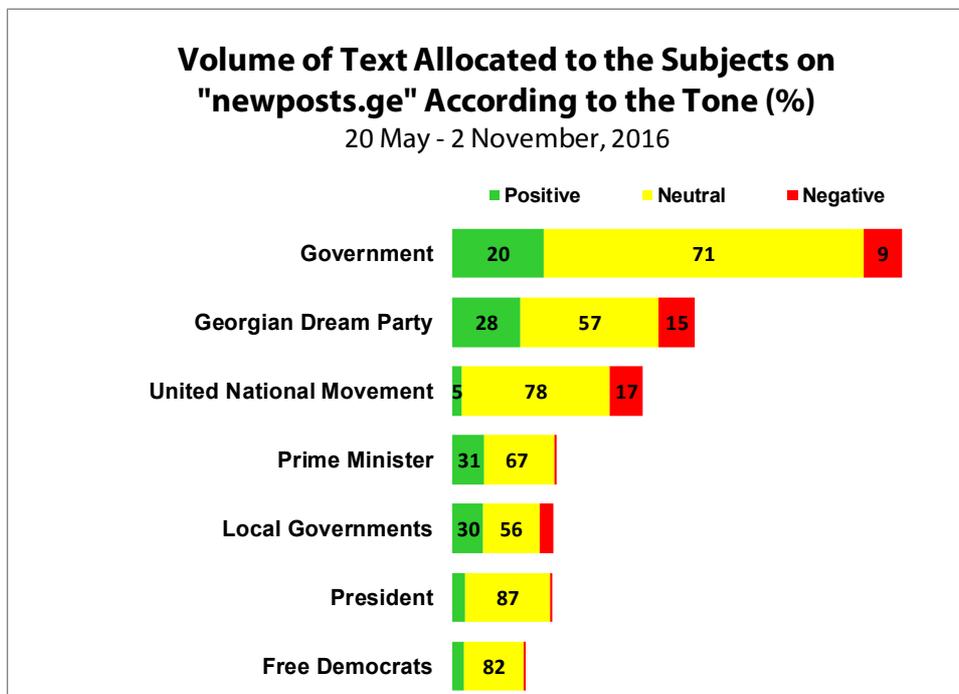
Activities of the Government of Georgia (28 %), and of the political parties: the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (15 %) and the “United National Movement” (12 %) were most extensively covered on the website “newposts.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (31 %), local self-governments (30 %), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (28 %) and the Government of Georgia (20 %). No high rate of negative tone was observed towards any political party or any political actor.

During the monitoring period, the website “newposts.ge” published a number of articles and material posted on the websites of different State Agencies without appropriate references to the sources the material had been obtained from. For example, the website “newposts.ge” was one of the five websites which, on October 12, published the material posted on the website of the

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia concerning the opening a renovated building of fire and rescue service in Gory by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia. None of the five websites had indicated that the material had been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. It is noteworthy that the same article was published on the website “interpressnews.ge” as well, though it was indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contact.

The same was the case with the article concerning the construction of a new kindergarten in the Nadzaladevi district. The websites “info9.ge”, “pirveli.com.ge”, “newposts.ge” and “interpressnews.ge” published the same article with the same title. The single website out of the above mentioned, which had indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contract, was “interpressnews.ge”.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that editorial material published on the website “newposts.ge” is not clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts. The website revealed comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team.



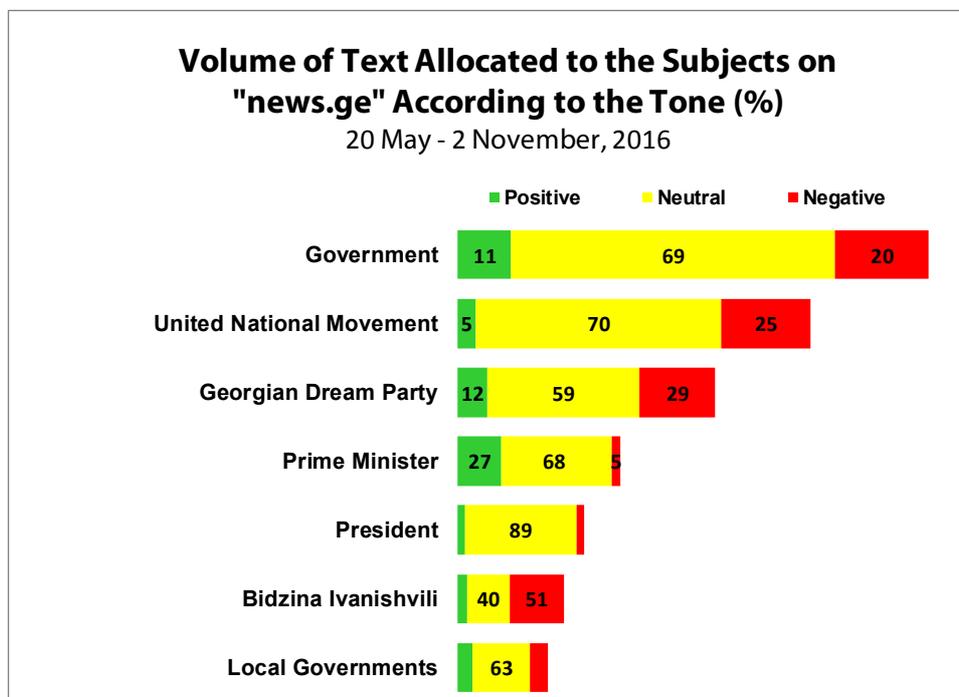
news.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “news.ge” displayed neither positive nor negative attitude towards any political party or political actor. No cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website “news.ge”.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (22 %), and of the political parties: the “United National Movement” (17 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (12 %) were most extensively covered on the website “news.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (51 %) and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (41 %). The highest

rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (27 %) and the Government of Adjara (21 %).

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “news.ge” actively and impartially covered the ongoing political process in the country. High Journalistic standards and ethical norms were upheld on the website.



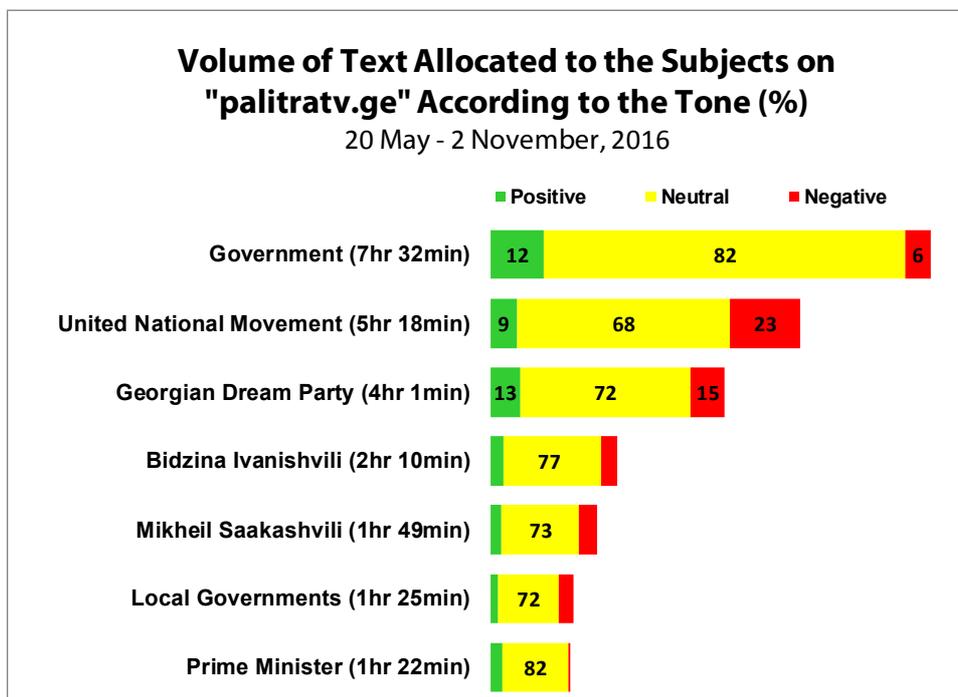
palitravt.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “palitravt.ge” displayed neither positive nor negative attitude towards any political party or political actor, though there were a few cases when the website displayed a relatively negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement”. No cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website “palitravt.ge”.

Activities of the Government of Georgia (23 %), and of the political parties: the “United National Movement” (16 %) and the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (12 %) were most extensively covered on the website “palitravt.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the political party “United National Movement” (23 %) and local self-governments (19 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (15 %).

During the monitoring period the website “palitravt.ge” posted special political programs prepared by the website as well as excerpts from other programs. The balance was preserved while selecting respondents for the programs and for the excerpts; and the readers were enabled to learn about the positions of the ruling party representatives as well as representatives of both parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition through the lengthy speeches delivered by them.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “palitratv.ge” actively and impartially covered the ongoing political process in the country. Though, the website revealed comparatively more critical attitude towards the parliamentary opposition.



pirveli.com.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “pirveli.com.ge” displayed an explicitly positive attitude towards the ruling team and a relatively negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili. There were a number of articles published on the website, which were not prepared by the editorial staff of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

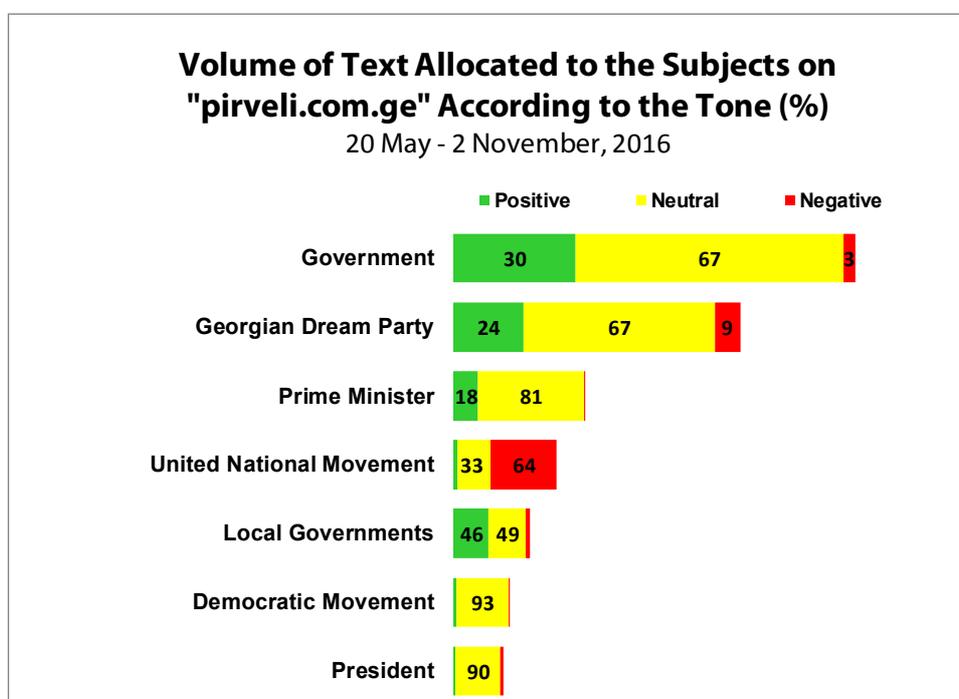
Activities of the Government of Georgia (29 %) and of the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (21 %) were most extensively covered on the website “pirveli.com.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (72 %), the “Georgian Labour Party” (69 %), the political party the “United National Movement” (64 %) and the political block "The State for people" (48 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards local self-governments (46 %), the Government of Adjara (44 %), the Government of Georgia (30 %) and the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (24 %).

During the monitoring period, the website “pirveli.com.ge” published a number of articles and material posted on the websites of different State Agencies without appropriate references to the sources the material had been obtained from. For example, the website “pirveli.com.ge” was one of the five websites, subject to monitoring, which copy-pasted the material posted on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia concerning the employees of the Patrol Police Department of Adjara donating blood. None of the five websites indicated that the material had

been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. It should be noted that the same article was published on the website “interpressnews.ge” as well, though in this case it was indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contact.

The same was the case with the article concerning the construction of a new kindergarten in the Nadzaladevi district. The websites “info9.ge”, “pirveli.com.ge”, “newposts.ge” and “interpressnews.ge” published the same article with the same title. The single website out of the above mentioned, which indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contract, was “interpressnews.ge”.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that editorial material published on the website “pirveli.com.ge” is not clearly demarcated from the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts. The website revealed comparatively more favorable attitude towards the ruling team and unfavorable attitude towards the parliamentary opposition and the ex-President of Georgia.



presa.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “presa.ge” displayed a negative attitude towards the ruling team and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili. While covering the events and developments related to the political party and the political actor, journalistic standards and ethical norms were violated. The website “presa.ge” displayed an explicitly positive attitude towards an independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli and extremely negative attitude towards his opponent Dimitri Khundadze during the second round of the parliamentary elections.

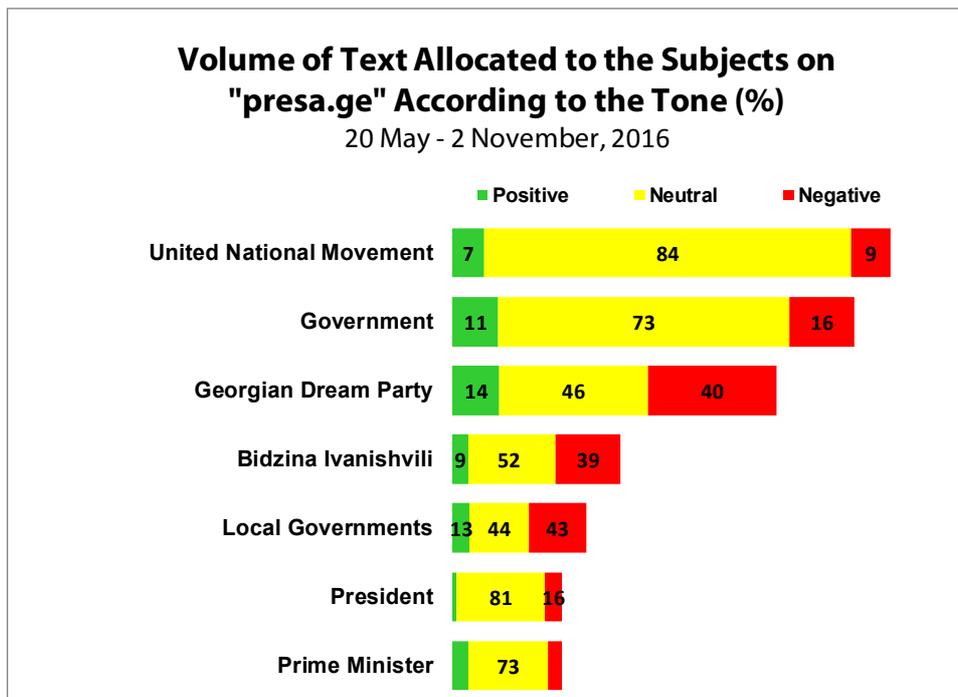
Activities of the political party “United National Movement” (18 %), of the Government of Georgia (16 %) and of the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (13 %) were

most extensively covered on the website “presa.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of negative tone was observed towards local self-governments (43 %), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (40 %) and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (39 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards an independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli (35 %).

As a result of qualitative analysis, unfavorable attitude of the website “presa.ge” was revealed towards the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”. In the article entitled „Election Districts, Where Majoritarian Candidates of “Georgian Dream” are Losing Elections” published on the website on September 22, the journalist considers a possibility of failure of the ruling party to win votes in certain election districts, though the discourse is not substantiated by adequate arguments and is therefore not clear what the journalist’s assumptions are based on. In the article entitled: “Provocations plotted in Mtskheta Municipality” published on the website on September 20, the journalist talks about some provocations allegedly plotted by the ruling party in Mtskheta Municipality, though the journalist fails to substantiate the discourse by facts proving an existence of such a plot. The journalist writes: “If you can’t win the elections, you are left with nothing but to rig them – presumably, the Mtskheta Municipality officials were guided by this motto when plotting provocations”.

The website “presa.ge” displayed explicit support to an independent majoritarian candidate Tsezar Chocheli. During the monitoring period, a number of articles published on the website portrayed the above mentioned candidate in an extremely positive light, simultaneously displaying an extremely negative attitude towards his opponent Dimitri Khundadze. Cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed in these articles covering the events and developments related to these two candidates. (For example, in the articles entitled: "My Family and Relatives, All the Locals I Know Will Vote for Tsezar Chocheli... Tsezar Chocheli is Better" published on September 26; “We – Thousands of Us Support the Political Party “Georgian Dream” but We Won’t Vote for its Candidate Dimitry Khundadze” published on October 3).

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “presa.ge” violated journalistic standards and ethical norms while covering the pre-election as well as second round election processes. The website attempted to explicitly discredit Dimitri Khundadze – the candidate of the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”.



reportiori.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “reportiori.ge” displayed a positive attitude towards the ruling team and the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili, and an extremely negative attitude towards the political party “United National Movement” and the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili. Some cases of violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website. There were a number of articles published on the website “reportiori.ge”, which were not prepared by the editorial board of the website, though, no references were found to the sources the material had been obtained from.

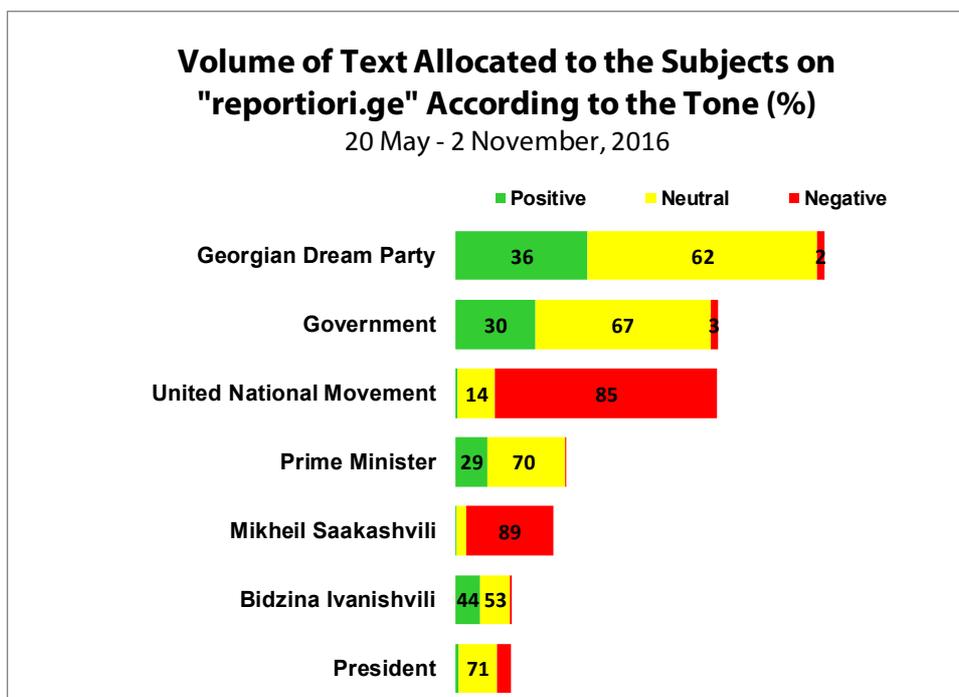
Activities of the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (24 %), of the Government of Georgia (17 %) and the political party “United National Movement” (17 %) were most extensively covered on the website “reportiori.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest rate of extremely negative tone was observed towards the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (89 %), the political party “United National Movement” (85 %), the “Georgian Labour Party” (84 %) and the political block "The State for people" (79 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (44 %), the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (36 %) and the Government of Georgia (30 %).

During the monitoring period, the website “reportiori.ge” was actively covering the pre-election promises made by the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”. The promises in the titles of certain articles sounded like facts without any indication that these were quotes from the election program of a certain political party. For example: ““Georgian Dream" will Create 200 Thousand New Jobs” - published on September 9; ““Georgian Dream" will Implement Significant Land Reforms” - published on September 9; “The Government of Georgia will Continue Effective Policy Aimed at Providing Accommodations for IDPs” - published on September 11; "Unprecedented Changes in the Infrastructure of Georgia – Where New Roads,

Bridges and Tunnels are Planned to be Constructed in the Next 4 Years” - published on September 17;

During the monitoring period, the website “reportiori.ge” published a number of articles and material posted on the websites of different State Agencies without appropriate references to the sources the material had been obtained from. For example, the website “reportiori.ge” was one of the five websites which, on October 12, published the material posted on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia concerning the opening a renovated building of fire and rescue service in Gory by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia. None of the five websites had indicated that the material had been obtained from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. It is noteworthy that the same article was published on the website “interpressnews.ge” as well, though it was indicated that the article had been prepared in the framework of a commercial contact.

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “reportiori.ge” explicitly revealed favorable attitude towards the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”. The cases of violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were quite frequent in the material published on the website.



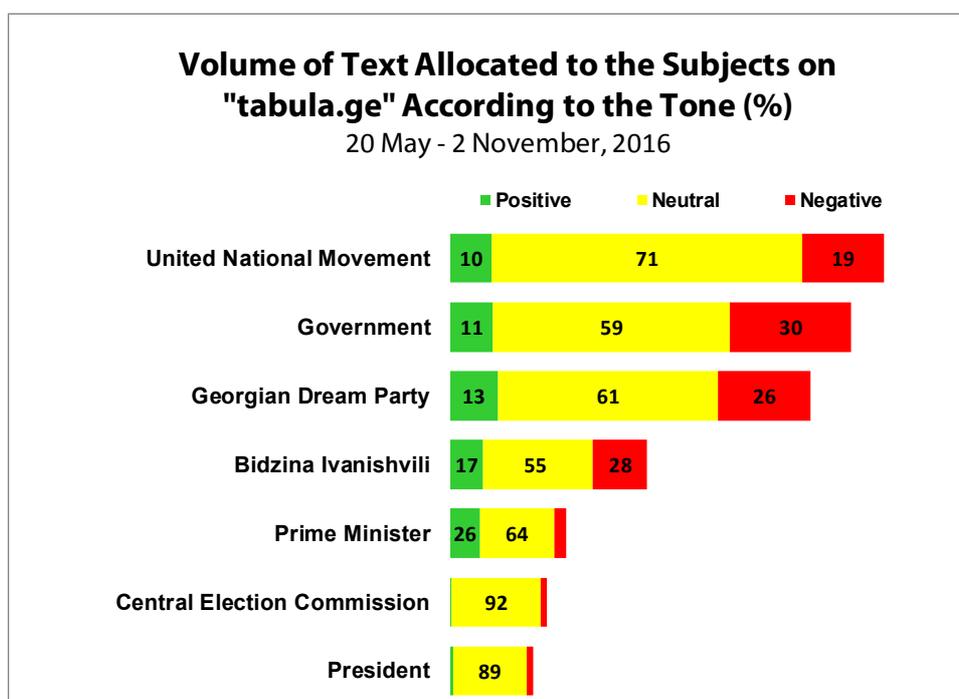
tabula.ge

During the monitoring period, the website “tabula.ge” displayed a relatively negative attitude towards the ruling team. Though, the tone was expressed in the statements made by the respondents rather than in the comments made by the journalists. No cases of flagrant violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were revealed on the website.

Activities of the political party “United National Movement” (20 %), of the Government of Georgia (19 %) and the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (17 %) were most extensively covered on the website “tabula.ge” during the monitoring period. The highest

rate of negative tone was observed towards the political party “Centrists” (68 %), local self-governments (45 %), the ex-President of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili (35 %), the Government of Georgia (30 %), the ex-Prime Minister of Georgia - Bidzina Ivanishvili (28 %) and the political party “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” (26 %). The highest rate of positive tone was observed towards the Prime Minister of Georgia (26 %).

Based on the data collected in the process of monitoring, it can be summarized that the website “tabula.ge” actively and impartially covered the ongoing political process in the country. Though, the website revealed comparatively more critical attitude towards the ruling team.



Conclusions

Lack of critical analysis is significant in the Georgian online media. The majority of websites posts declarations made by different politicians and activities performed by state structures without any comments. We rarely come across an in-depth coverage and analyses of different issues. Presentation of differing points of view and opinions in separate articles is also very infrequent. It should be noted that the cases of fragrant violations of norms of journalistic ethics are rather rare.

The lack of proper demarcation between editorial materials and the articles prepared in the framework of commercial contracts still remains as one of the challenges of online media. During the monitoring period, there were frequent cases when the websites published articles obtained from the websites of different State Agencies without relevant references to the sources of the material.

Online media actively covered not only pre-election campaign of the political parties but also the developments on the day of election and the process of counting votes. It should be noted that after the announcement of the election results by the Central Election Commission, the number of articles providing in-depth analysis published on the websites increases as some of the

websites were actively covering the procedures associated with a new composition of the Parliament.

Recommendations

- It is desirable for the online media to more often offer readers in-depth analyses of issues.
- Journalists have to strive to prepare articles based on diverse sources. This would allow readers to learn differing opinions and draw their own conclusions.
- Journalists need to be more critical to statements of politicians. More effort should be made to check and verify facts before relaying these statements.
- Online media should not rely entirely on unidentified sources, especially when information includes grave allegations against specific politicians or government bodies.
- Online media should avoid quoting allegations against specific politicians in article titles if their commentary is not provided.
- Online media should verify ethical and journalistic standards of paid articles posted on their web sites.
- Online media should clearly indicate if a particular article is prepared by third parties.
- Online media should clearly differentiate between the editorial and the paid content.