

# Media Monitoring Results of the 2012 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia



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გამოცემულია ევროკავშირისა და გაეროს განვითარების პროგრამის (UNDP) მხარდაჭერით „პროფესიონალური მედია არჩევნებისთვის“ პროექტის ფარგლებში.

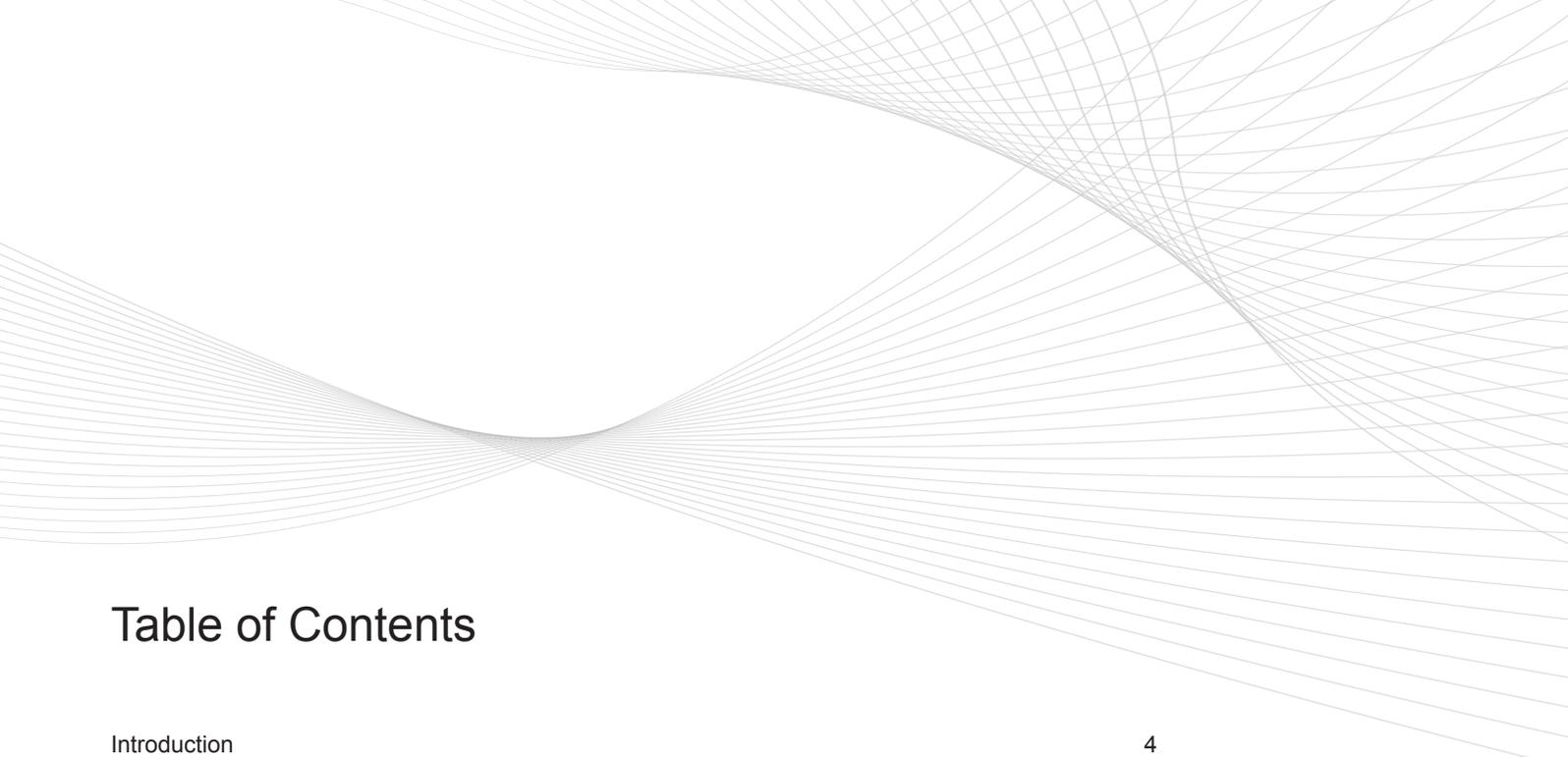
წინამდებარე გამოცემაში გამოთქმული მოსაზრებები ავტორისეულია და შეიძლება არ ასახავდეს ევროკავშირისა და გაეროს განვითარების პროგრამის (UNDP) თვალსაზრისს.

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# Introduction

Large-scale media monitoring of the 2012 parliamentary elections of Georgia was implemented with the support of the European Union and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This research is a part of the ongoing project “Professional Media for Elections” aiming at, inter alia, supporting the professional, impartial and balanced media coverage during elections through monitoring.

Qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the Georgian TV, Radio, Print and Online media outlets was performed by the Georgian civil society organizations organizations trained by the authoritative Slovak organization Memo98:

- The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) – monitoring of TV channels
- Internews–Georgia – monitoring of radio stations
- International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) – monitoring of print media
- Civic Development Institute (CDI) – monitoring of online media

# Methodology and Analysis

During the monitoring process the organizations were guided by the methodology approved in more than 35 countries of the world, which consists of two main parts of the research – quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative component consists of: time/space allocated to the subjects, direct and indirect speech and the coverage tone. Components of the qualitative monitoring are: balance, accuracy, facts-based coverage, manipulation with frames and music, language of the journalist/article, etc.

Coverage of particular political subjects were observed, the list of which is attached to the presented reports (Annex #1).

Findings of the final reports have been analyzed according to four periods:

- May 11 – September 5, from the beginning of monitoring until the registration of electoral subjects;
- September 6 – October 1, from the registration of electoral subjects until the elections;
- October 2 – October 20, from the elections until the approval of the new government;
- October 21 – November 30, since the approval of the new government, until the end of the monitoring.

Final summary reports describe key trends. Midterm monitoring reports with detailed methodology, analysis and examples can be found on the website [www.mediamonitor.ge](http://www.mediamonitor.ge).



# Monitoring Results of TV Channels

## News Releases

The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) monitored the main evening news releases of several TV channels from May 11, 2012, until November 30, inclusive. The monitoring was divided into four stages: May 11 – September 5<sup>1</sup>, September 6 – October 1, October 2-21, October 22 – November 30. This report presents the monitoring results of the following TV channels: Channel One of the Public Broadcaster, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia, Channel 9, Real-TV.

It is notable that the news releases of two monitored channels ceased broadcasting after the elections. News releases of Real TV were no longer broadcasted since October 8, and those of Imedi – since October 17.

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

- ✓ At the beginning of the monitoring, there was almost no coverage provided for the United National Movement as a party. As the elections got closer, the coverage of the ruling party increased significantly. Parallel to this, very much time was dedicated to the President since May. However, after the elections the coverage of the President has decreased significantly.
- ✓ After the elections, during the period of October 2-21, out of the total time dedicated to the subjects, from 42 to 64 percent was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream on all the channels, which is a very high indicator during the monitoring period. The United National Movement ranks second based to the allocated time (from 13 to 19 percent). We should also mention here that the neutral tone prevailed towards the key subjects on all the channels during this period.
- ✓ Since the second half of October, after the establishment of the new Parliament and government, the most time was dedicated on the TV channels to the subject 'government'.
- ✓ From May to October, the list of the subjects covered on Imedi and Rustavi 2, also the time allocated to them and the coverage tone were similar to one another.
- ✓ In total, the subject coverage tone tended to be like this before the elections: the subjects were basically covered with neutral tone on the Channel 1 and Kavkasia; positive coverage for the governmental subjects and negative coverage for the Coalition Georgian Dream was observed on Rustavi 2, Imedi and Real TV; as for Maestro and Channel 9, here the governmental subjects were covered relatively with more negative tone.
- ✓ After the elections, the number of monitoring subjects decreased significantly in the news releases. Almost all the subjects used to be covered before the elections, but since October the time was dedicated to only three of them– the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government and the United National Movement. Starting from the second half of September until the end of the monitoring, the existing trends were maintained and even more intensified on all the channels.

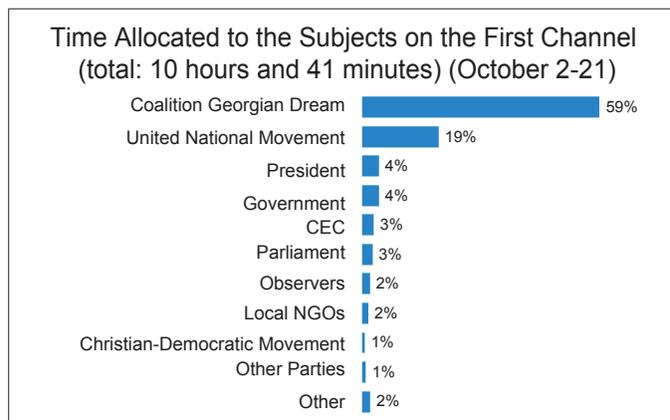
## Channel 1

In total 76 hours and 18 minutes were dedicated to the monitoring subjects in the main evening news releases on the Channel 1 during the period from May 11 until November 30. The interesting thing is that compared to other channels, the Channel 1 was distinguished with a big number of the monitoring subjects from May to October. Majority of the monitored subjects were almost

<sup>1</sup> For this period, the subject coverage tone has been calculated since June 19 because of the changes made to the methodology.

always covered in the evening release of Moambe, especially in September, when all the parties, which were participating in the elections, were represented in the news air. Number of the covered subjects decreased significantly since the elections. Besides, the time allocated to the subjects used to be distributed quite evenly before the elections, but the picture changed sharply after the elections (see the Diagram – Time 3.1).

Diagram - Time 3.1



Besides, it needs to be pointed out that according to the allocated time the Coalition Georgian Dream used to rank first until October. The President was among the top-three only during the period from May to September, and he used to be covered actively. However, the share of his coverage decreased significantly since September. Contrary to this, the United National Movement enjoyed relatively less time during the first period, but then it was always among the top-three since September.

Distribution of the direct and indirect speech does not make it possible to identify any trend. During all the four periods, the subjects had almost equal share of the direct and indirect speech.

During all the four periods, coverage of subjects with neutral tone prevailed on the Channel 1. However, various trends were identified in different periods. From June 19 until September 15, the President was covered with positive tone for more than a half of the time allocated to it. Positive presentation of the President was also observed in case of the journalist's tone (32%) (see the Diagrams: Tone 1.1 and JTone 1.1). Almost all the subjects had some share of positive coverage in September. Relatively bigger share of negative coverage was observed for the government and the President, which is explained by the release of prison videos at the end of September. After approving the new composition of the Parliament and the new government, the three main subjects: the government, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement were mostly covered with negative tone on the Channel 1 as compared to other periods. It is interesting that during the same period the President had a positive coverage of 30 percent. Headlines of the reports broadcasted on the Channel 1 during the monitoring period were neutral and descriptive. Reports on the Channel 1 mostly left neutral impression during the whole monitoring period. However, at the beginning of the monitoring, there were some stories of positive contents in regards to the President and other representatives of the authorities, which was reflected basically in the direct speech of the subjects and the footage shown on the screen. Positive coverage of the President totaled 56 percent from June until September for the second half of September. Besides, there were positive reports prepared about the families and lives of the leaders of various political parties from the rubric "Politicians beyond politics". During the period from May until the first half of September, we relatively seldom encounter the stories of negative contents. However, there were more number of negative reports in the programs broadcasted in September about the government and the President. This period coincided with the release of prisoner torture videos on September 18. That day Moambe was not broadcasted on the Channel 1 at all. During that time there was a live transmission of the election debates among the political parties. Correspondingly, the Channel 1 did not cover these events in the evening airtime. There were reports made about this topic during subsequent days, which created a negative impression about the government representatives, and this was basically created by the speeches of the respondents.

Diagram – Tone 1.1

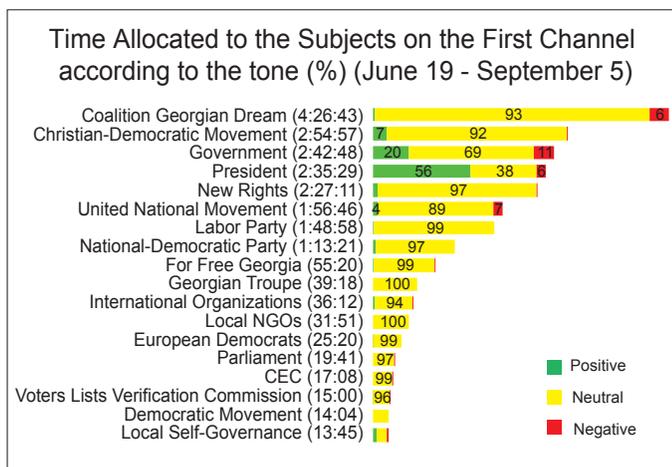
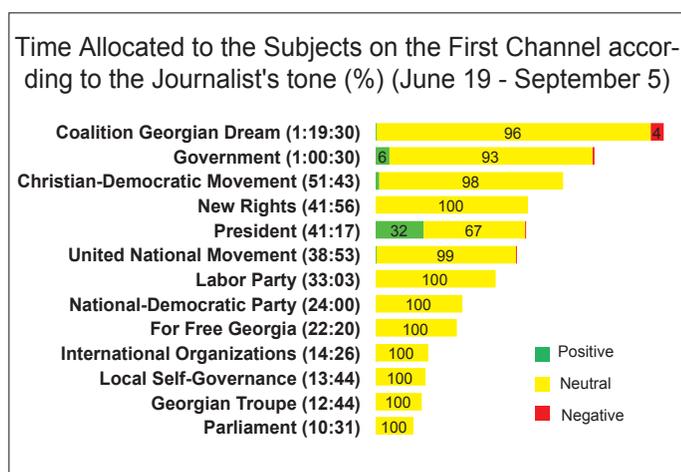


Diagram – Jtone 1.1



Neutral reports prevailed after the elections until October 22, and the positive coverage was rare. General negative impression was created by the reports broadcasted during the days after the elections, where the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream prevailed, and the facts were shown about the interference in the activities of the election commission by the Coalition members, also the facts of influencing the commission representatives and their physical abuse.

Reports of negative contents became more frequent on the Channel 1 in November. Majority of these stories were about the new government, the Prime Minister, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the local government. However, the reports with positive contents were relatively rare during this monitoring period and they were mostly dedicated to the President of Georgia.

In regards to the respondents shown in the reports, the news items on the Channel 1 are mostly balanced and there are various opinions presented about the covered subject. However, sometimes there were reports where the comments of the other side were needed for creating a comprehensive picture.

Information provided by the journalist in the reports on the Channel 1 was always supported with facts (the respondent's comment, the footage, source of information). Rarely we encounter the reports where the journalist's opinion did not correspond to the presented material. Such cases were most of all observed during May-June.

Within the frameworks of the election campaign, the Public Broadcaster started to have live broadcasts with the invited politicians in its news releases, mostly with the members of the opposition parties. Representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement were invited to the live broadcasts from October until the end of November. The journalist was moderately demanding to the guests and mostly let them finish what they were saying.

## Rustavi 2

In total, 94 hours and 50 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects in the main evening news releases of Rustavi 2 during the monitoring period. The coverage of subjects was more diverse on this TV channel before the elections, than after the elections. However, according to the allocated time, one and the same subjects were among the top-five during all the periods. Interesting thing is that during all the four monitoring periods the coverage of the President tended to decrease gradually. For example, according to the allocated time he ranked first from May until September (24 percent), but then he moved to the fifth place during October-November. The Coalition Georgian Dream used to be on the first or the second place during all the periods. As for the allocation of time among the subjects, the time has been more or less equally distributed on Rustavi 2. This is not applicable to the period of October, when more than 40 percent was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream and less than 20 percent to all the remaining subjects on all the channels.

Direct and indirect speeches were distributed the following way from May until October: share of the President's direct speech exceeded 70 percent during quite often and broad coverage. Besides, during the first period (May 11 – September 5), almost 12 hours were dedicated to the President and 73 percent (8 hours and a half) of this time was his direct speech (see the Diagrams – Speech 1.2 and Speech 2.2). While covering the Coalition Georgian Dream, the distribution of direct-indirect speech was mostly equal, but during the first period, compared to other subjects, they had less direct speech (41%).

Diagram – Speech 1.2

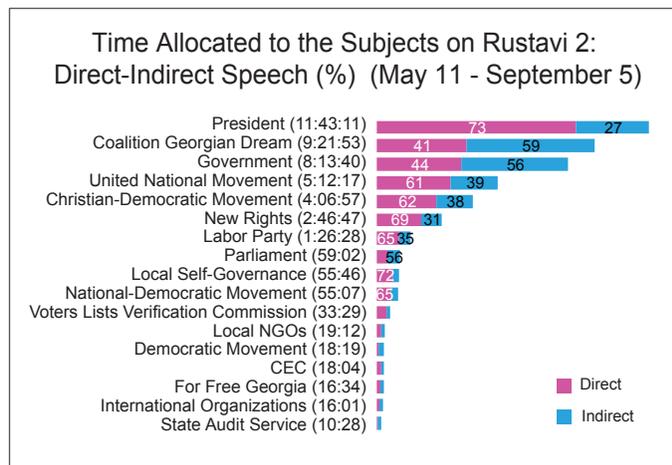
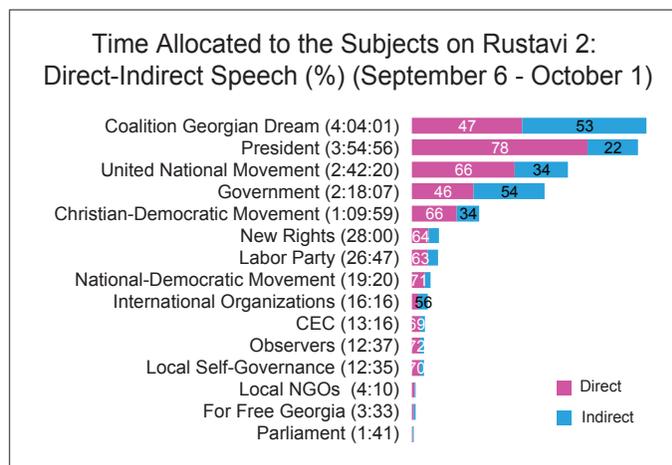


Diagram – Speech 2.2



From the viewpoint of the subject coverage tone, the whole monitoring period can be divided into two parts: from May until the elections and from the beginning of October until the end of November. The Coalition Georgian Dream was covered with negative tone for almost the half of the allocated time from May until the end of September. The President had an exceptionally big share of positive tone: 79 percent from June 19 until September 5, and 69 percent during September. Despite the prison torture videos were released during September, because of which the share of negative coverage increased on some channels in regards to the government and the President, the picture remained unchanged on Rustavi 2. Relatively big share of positive tone was observed in regards to the government, the United National Movement and the Christian-Democratic Movement as well. All these trends are replicated in case of the journalist's tone (see the Diagrams – Tone 1.2 and Tone 2.2).

Diagram - Tone 1.2

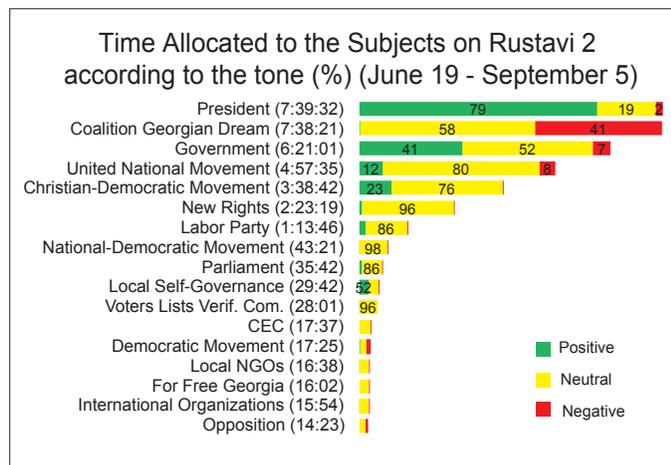
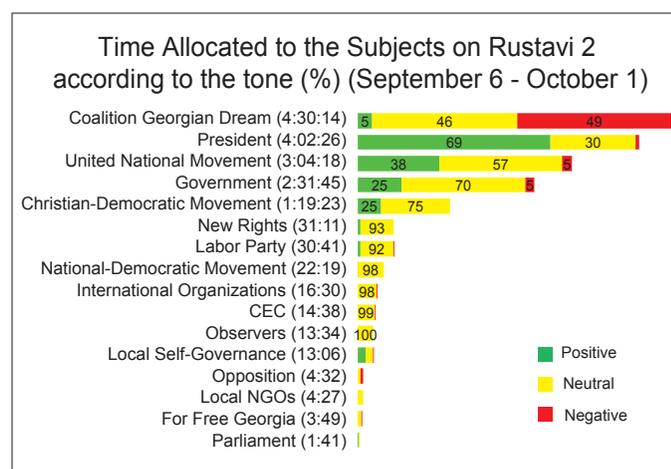


Diagram - Tone 2.2

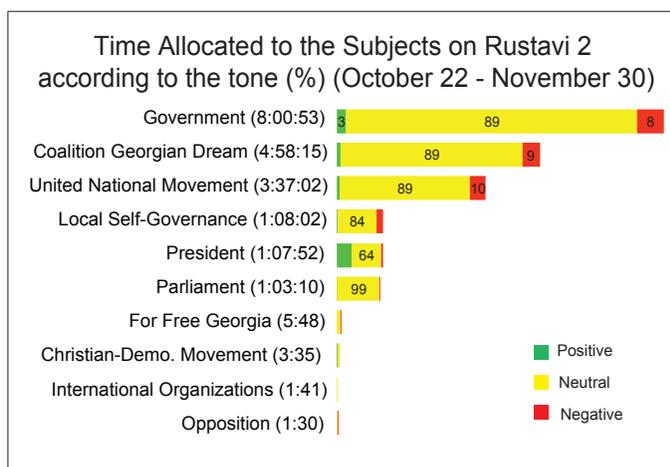


The picture is radically different in October and November. Coverage of the subjects was done mostly in a neutral way. There was a slightly negative tone observed in regards to the key subjects. As for the President, relatively less time was allocated to him, but in more than 30 percent of time he was presented positively (see the Diagram – Tone 4.2).

Headlines of the stories on Rustavi 2 are mostly informative and neutral. The headlines sometimes contain some inclination towards negative or positive tone, but we almost never observed any headlines with clearly positive or negative tone.

There was a trend identified before the elections that the news reports, where the overall impression was positive, were mostly about the President, the government, the United National Movement and the Christian-Democratic Movement. The reports about the President consisted of applauses, chanting and sometimes the positive music was also used, which created a positive background. As for the negative reports, they were mostly about the Coalition Georgian Dream. Sometimes we see the cases of manipulation with footage in the reports, which intensified the overall impression.

Diagram – Tone 4.2



It is notable that in connection to the prisoners torture videos released in the second half of September, the reports prepared on Rustavi 2 laid a main emphasis not on the facts of torture itself, but on the scheme elaborated by the members of the Coalition Georgian Dream and the prompt reaction on the authorities of that time, which negatively presented the Coalition and positively depicted the authorities. In addition to this, there were positive reports about the activities of the President and those of the Prime Minister. Negative stories about the Coalition Georgian Dream was even more intensified by the emphasis laid on the publicized covert audio-recordings, where the main focus was shifted on the negative talks of the Coalition members about one another, and their linkages with so called “thieves in law”.

Number of neutral reports increased on Rustavi 2 after the elections, in the first half of October. However, starting from the end of October, the reports with negative contents were again prepared about the new government, the Prime Minister and the Coalition Georgian Dream. Positive and negative impressions about the subjects were often intensified by the journalist’s text.

It is notable that during the long news release dedicated to the polling day on October 1, they transmitted the statement of Chiara Taktakishvili, representative of the United National Movement four times, where she was saying that the National Movement is winning “with stable majority”, which was misleading the audience and created positive impression about the party.

There were news items on Rustavi 2, where the journalist’s conclusion was irrelevant to the material presented in the report, and the provided information was not sufficiently supported by the facts. These cases were especially frequent from May until September.

As for presenting various sides and opinions, during the whole monitoring period, the reports were mostly balanced. However, little number of comments by the coalition members was observed in the reports about the Coalition Georgian Dream. Besides, there is a lack of different opinion about the positive reports prepared about the authorities. Within the frameworks of the election campaigns, the number of reports increased where it was difficult to speak about the balance, as far as the pre-election activity of one particular party/subject was covered.

As of August, Rustavi 2 started to have live broadcasts in its news releases, where they were inviting one or several politicians representing the authorities or the opposition parties. Quite much time was allocated for such live broadcasts, sometimes even 42 minutes. There were cases observed, then the journalist was too demanding towards some guests, mostly those from the opposition parties, and acted in less opposition to the subjects representing the authorities.

## Imedi

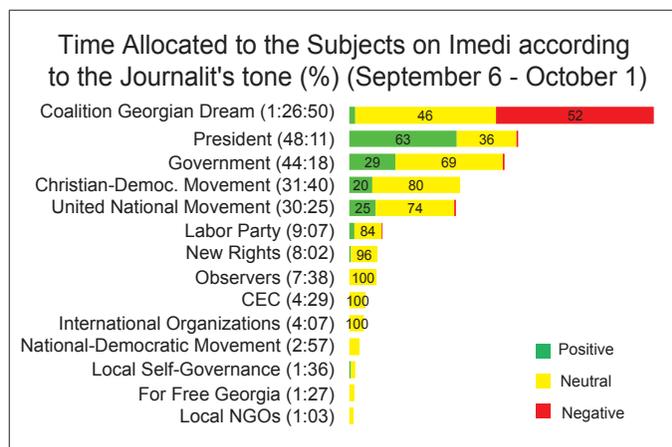
During the monitoring period, in total 74 hours and 40 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects in the main evening news releases on Imedi. It is noteworthy that after the TV Company was given back to the family of Badri Patarkatsishvili, the news releases on Imedi ceased broadcasting since October 17, this is why the results of the fourth monitoring period are not provided in this report for this channel.

There were 5 subjects identified on Imedi from May until the elections, to which the most time was allocated: the President, the government, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement, Christian-Democratic Movement. However, the percentage distribution is dissimilar. The President and the Coalition Georgian Dream are always among the top three, even after the elections, but in October, like it was the case on other channels, mostly the Coalition Georgian Dream was covered. 64 percent of total time was dedicated to it on Imedi.

Before the elections, the President has the highest share of direct speech on Imedi, compared to other main subjects – more than 70 percent, and the Coalition Georgian Dream – the lowest, 45 percent or less. Other subjects had more than 50 percent of the share of direct speech.

The picture is very different from the viewpoint of the coverage tone before and after the elections. From May until October, the Coalition Georgian Dream had the highest share of negative coverage (June 19 – September 5 – 40%, September 6 – October 1 – 55%), whereas the President, the government, the United National Movement and the Christian-Democratic Movement had quite high share of positive coverage. We need to single out the President, who was presented positively during 78 percent of time out of the total time allocated from May to September. The share of positive coverage was 68 percent in September. These trends were also clearly revealed in the Journalist's tone (see the Diagram JTone 2.3). It should be pointed out as well, that in the second half of September, after the release of prison videos, share of negative coverage of the representatives of authorities increased on some channels. However, there was no such trend observed on Imedi.

Diagram - JTone 2.3



The reports broadcasted on Imedi during the monitoring period often had unneutral headlines. The reports, which were about the Coalition Georgian Dream, almost always had the headlines of negative tone. However, the reports prepared about mostly about the President, the United National Movement and the representatives of the former authorities had the headlines with positive contents. Correspondingly, the majority of news items created negative impression about the Coalition Georgian Dream. During the whole monitoring, emphasis was laid on its members' linkage with Russia and with the criminal world, on its past, cooperation with the government of Shevardnadze, and the absence of unanimity within the Coalition. These reports often contained manipulation with footage and music in order to intensify the overall negative impression.

There were reports made about the President and the United National Movement during the whole election period, where the election campaign activities of the party were actively covered, and these subjects were quite positively represented. It is worth mentioning that the reports about the President's visits in various regions and voters meetings looked like one another. They would show a long speech by the President, many people with smiling faces and party symbols. There were applauses and chanting, thanks and comments of positive contents heard in the report. Biased texts of the journalists intensified both the positive and negative impressions.

This trend became even more evident before the elections, even after releasing the prisoners torture videos. In the reports linked to this topic, the emphasis was laid on the criminal scheme investigated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was about ordering these videos by the people associated with the Coalition. It was also described how the President and the government were trying to correct this situation. However, in some reports the representatives of the authorities were shown in a relatively negative context, mostly at the expense of the respondents' speech.

It is interesting that the materials prepared about the Christian-Democratic Movement were similar to those prepared about the President and the government. This was especially evident since July, when the Christian-Democrats started an active election campaign, which was quite broadly covered on Imedi.

The news items are more or less balanced according to the presented respondents. There were some reports from August until October, where it is difficult to evaluate balance, because they are about the meetings of various parties with the voters before the elections. Besides, in the majority of the unbalanced reports, we feel that the comments of the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream are needed.

During the first monitoring period, there was irrelevance observed between the journalist's opinion and the facts presented in the news item.

In the second half of August, like the Channel one and Rustavi 2, Imedi started to have live broadcasts in its news releases, to which quite much time was dedicated, about 15-25 minutes. The guests of the live broadcasts were mostly the representatives of the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream and the Christian-Democratic movement. The journalist's question to the guests were in general less demanding, but more strictness and sometimes ironical attitudes were observed towards the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream, especially in September.

## Maestro

From May 11 until November 30, in total 52 hours and 24 minutes were dedicated to the monitoring subjects in the main evening news releases on Maestro. The Coalition Georgian Dream ranks first according to the time allocated during all the monitoring periods. However, the new government occupied the first place from October 22 until the end of November. With the various allocations of time for the whole 7 months, the following subjects were among the top four: the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the United National Movement. Like on other channels, the especially much time – 47 percent - was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream on Maestro during October 2-21, and only 17 percent or less was dedicated to other subjects.

The time of direct and indirect speech is equally distributed among the subjects on Maestro, and the share of direct speech is almost less than a half. we need to point out the results of September, where the President had 67 percent of direct speech out of total time allocated to it, which is a quite high indicator and that we seldom see on Maestro (see the Diagram - Speech 2.4).

During all the monitoring periods, negative coverage of main subjects was observed on Maestro. However, unlike other channels, such coverage was of more creative nature. It should be pointed out that a more share of negative coverage was reported for the President, the United National Movement and the government. The positive tone is less encountered on Maestro. However, the four main subjects were covered not only negatively, but also positively in September (see the Diagram – Tone 2.4). The negative tone is proportionally reflected in the journalist's tone, but this does not apply to the positive one. After staffing the new Parliament and the government, the same subjects were negatively covered, as before, among them the new government as well (see the Diagram – Tone 4.4).

Diagram - Speech 2.4

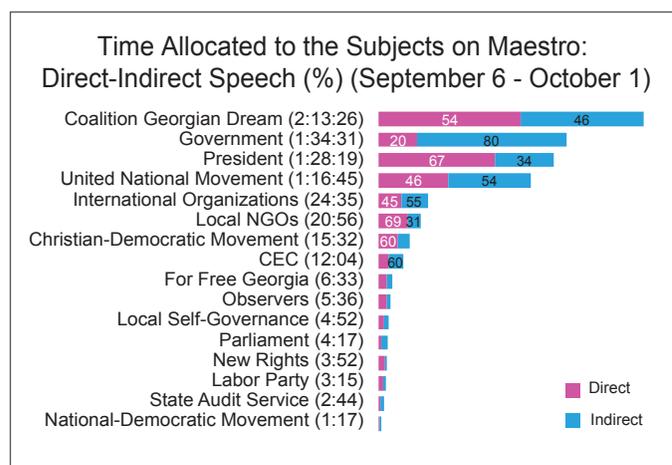


Diagram - Tone 2.4

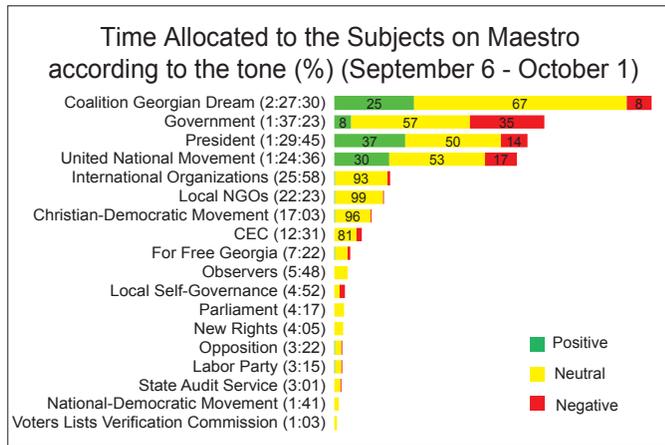
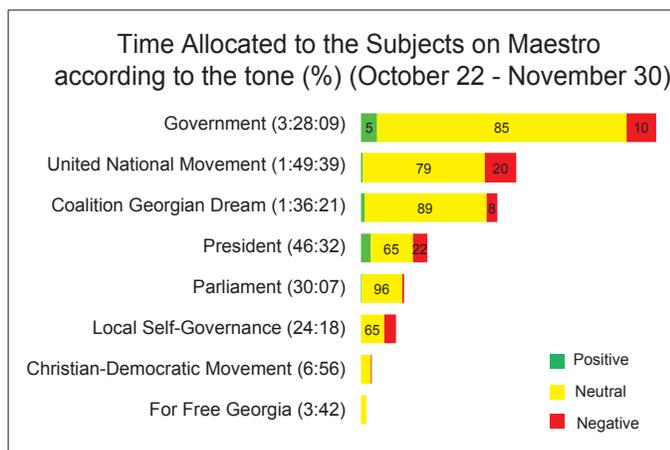


Diagram - Tone 4.4



The news items presented on Maestro mostly have descriptive and neutral headlines. However, the materials prepared about the government, the President the local government and the United National Movement are accompanied with the headlines of critical contents, which leaves negative impression about these subjects. This trend started to decrease after the elections.

In total, the majority of news items on Maestro created neutral overall impression about the subjects. However, the negative tone was observed while covering the United National Movement, the President, the government and the local authority representatives, but in a more critical light. It should also be pointed out here that often the negative impression was created by the respondents' comments and less frequently – by the journalist's texts and footage. This trend increased right during the run-up to the elections, especially after publicizing the prisoner torture videos. Majority of the news items broadcasted at the end of September contained critical and negative contents about the government and the authorities. This trend continued after the elections and even after electing the new government there were other reports broadcasted, where the representatives of the previous government were represented in a negative way.

From May until October 1, there were news items on Maestro, where the President was presented positively. The election campaign of the United National Movement was covered broadly.

In regards to the respondents and different opinions, the news items on Maestro were mostly balanced. However, it needs to be pointed out that the unbalanced reports are mostly about those issues where the comments of the representatives of the authorities and the United National Movement are clearly needed. However, the journalist often points out that they tried to contact the respondent but were unable to get any comment.

There were very rare cases when the journalist's opinion was irrelevant to the material presented in the news item. Same way, we seldom see the cases of manipulation with footage and aggravating the contents of the reports this way.

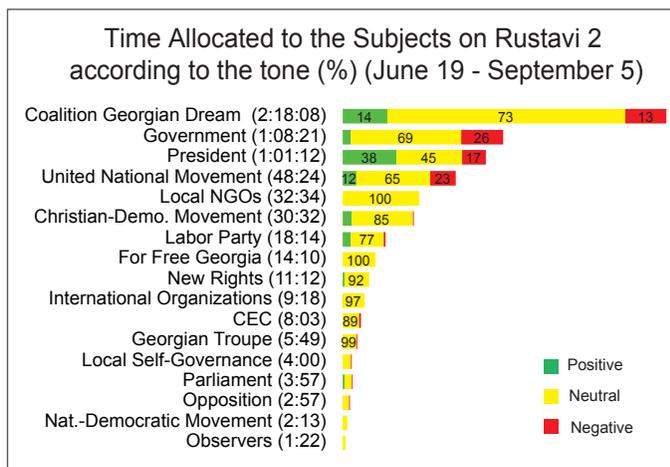
## Kavkasia

In total, 50 hours and 17 minutes were dedicated to the subjects in the main evening news releases on Kavkasia during the monitoring period. According to the allocated time, there was quite a big difference (from 10 to 30 percent) between the first-raking subject and other remaining subjects during all the four monitoring periods. As for the first three periods, from May until October 21, this subject was the Coalition Georgian Dream, but then, after the new government was established, the government shifted to the first place. According to the allocated time, the following subjects were always among the top four during all the four monitoring periods: the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government, the United National Movement and the President with different allocations of time. It is also noteworthy that during the three monitoring periods the local NGOs were ranking number five based on the time allocated to them.

As for the distribution of direct and indirect speech, the so called old government always had a low share of direct speech (maximum 36%) compared to other subjects until October 21, but starting from October, the share of the government's direct speech increased and then the distribution of direct and indirect speech almost got equal. In the run-up to the elections, the share of President's direct speech increased and reached its maximum 57%, but then decreased after the elections and was reduced to 35% during the last period. The Coalition Georgian Dream, which was mostly ranking first during the monitoring period according to the allocated time, was always equally covered from the standpoint of the distribution of direct and indirect speech. During the first monitoring period, the United National Movement had exactly the same share of direct and indirect speech (50%-50%); however, during the next period, e.g. in September and October, its direct speech became less than 40 percent.

News releases on Kavkasia were mostly distinguished with neutral coverage of subjects. Nevertheless, during all the four periods, the subjects to which the most time was allocated, always had some share of negative coverage, and the positive tone was relatively less. In this respect the President stands out, who had more than 25 percent of positive tone during both periods before the elections, mostly at the expense of footage and direct speech. Large amount of positive and negative coverage was especially observed in September directly during the run-up to the elections (see the Diagram – Tone 2.5). Observation on the journalist's tone creates a more neutral picture during all the four periods, but repeats the major trends.

Diagram – Tone 2.5



During the whole monitoring period, the news items did not have headlines on Kavkasia. Moreover, in most cases, the respondents presented in the reports were not identified.

During the whole monitoring, in general, neutral impression is left on the subjects in the news items. However, there are many reports where the overall impression tends to be more positive or more negative towards a certain subject. In this respect we need to point out that shift of the overall impression to the negative is more observed in case of the United National Movement, the old government, the President and the local government. This impression was mostly created by the comments of the respondents

presented in the reports. However, there were some reports before the elections, where the positive impression was created about the President while covering his visits and activities in the regions. In general, deviation to the positive impression was quite rare, and was mostly observed in case of the Coalition Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili. As the elections got closer, these tendencies grew.

Cases of negative presentation of the previous authorities were reported even after the elections. In November, there was a relatively little number of negative reports about the Coalition Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili and new authorities. This impression is often created by the respondents presented in the news items.

According to the sources used in the news items and diversity of the presented opinions, the reports are more or less balanced on Kavkasia during the monitoring period. However, there are cases when the news items are based on one source only. In case of unbalanced reports, we often feel the lack of the comments of the government, the United National Movement and sometimes of the local authorities. Like other channels, we encounter the reports about the election campaign on Kavkasia starting from the second half of August, where it is difficult to speak about any balance.

The reports are mostly supported with footage and comments of the respondents. Irrelevance between the journalist's opinion and the material presented in the news item was not frequent, and correspondingly, it was not create any pattern, but nevertheless we still came across with several cases like this during the monitoring period.

## Channel 9

During the period from May 11 until November 30, in total 42 hours and 17 minutes were dedicated to the subjects in the main evening news releases on Channel 9. From May until October, the most time was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream. Besides, during the period of September-October, the time allocated to this subject was 37 percent and even more. According to the allocated time during almost all the monitoring period, there is at least a 20-percent difference between the first-ranking subject and other subjects. In the first period only, according to the time allocated from May until September 5, the first two subjects (the Coalition Georgian Dream and the government) have similar distribution of time, and the third and fourth subjects (the United National Movement and the President) – also have the similar distribution (14 and 12 percent). After the establishment of the new Parliament and the government, the most time was allocated to the government on the Channel 9 (43%).

Distribution of direct and indirect speech among the major subjects was quite unequal. We need to especially single out the subject Government during the period of May - October 21, as far as the share of its direct speech was always 21 percent or less. Besides, the United National Movement also had a relatively less share of direct speech (maximum 37%). During the monitoring period, the share of the President's direct speech is also low (maximum 37%). It was only in September, during the run-up to the elections, the distribution of the President's direct and indirect speech became almost equal, and this indicator decreased to 24 percent after the elections.

The Channel 9 was distinguished with high indicator of negative coverage of the subjects that represented the authorities (the government, the United National Movement, the President and the local government). The negative tone towards the subjects was also very often observed by the journalist as well. Besides, the percentage of negative tone was often more than the neutral one, and we almost never encountered the positive tone. Only before the elections, from September 6 until October 1, the Coalition Georgian Dream was the only subject, which had a positive coverage of 30 percent. Besides, the most time was dedicated to it during this period (more than 3 hours). It is worth mentioning that during the same period positive tone was reported for the President and the United National Movement (14% and 16%), but the difference was that the positive coverage of these subjects were not reflected in the journalist's tone, whereas the author of the report referred to the Coalition Georgian Dream with positive tone (see the Diagrams – Tone2.6 and Jtone 2.6).

At the beginning of the monitoring, the reports on the Channel 9 mostly had informative headlines. However, as the elections got closer, the number of critical and ironical headlines increased towards the President and the United National Movement. Even after the elections, in October-November, we quite often encountered negative headlines in the news items about the members of the previous government. Besides, during the whole monitoring period, there were positive headlines observed in the reports, which were mostly about the Coalition Georgian Dream and the new government.

There was a trend identified after observing the overall impressions that the President, and various representatives of the government and the authorities and also the United National Movement are mostly covered in a negative context in the news items

Diagram - Tone 2.6

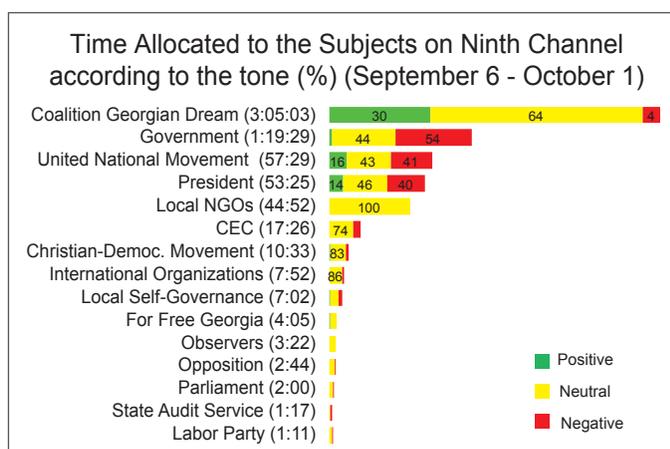
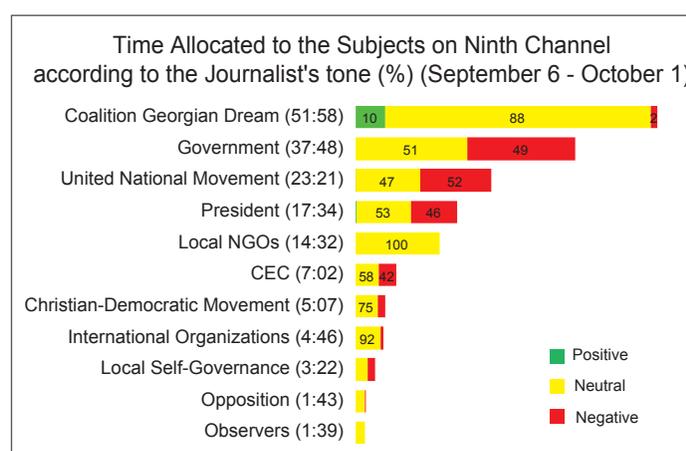


Diagram - JTone 2.6



on the Channel 9, which is the result of the respondents comments, also of the general context and the journalist's text. Negative presentation of these subjects increased since the second half of September, especially after releasing the prisoner torture videos. News releases of September 19, 20 and 21 were almost completely dedicated to the topics on the torture facts.

We rarely encountered overall positive impression, but when this was the case, it was always about the Coalition Georgian Dream. Right before the elections, the Coalition's rallies, meetings and speeches were actively covered. Such reports showed many people with flags, T-shirts or other symbols of the party; there were chanting and ovations heard, and all the respondents always spoke about the Coalition with positive tone. It should be pointed out that the mimics and intonation of the anchor of the main news release on the Channel 9 left positive or negative impression about this or that subject right at the introduction of the news item. We should also emphasize that there were several cases during the whole monitoring period, when the President was positively presented. In such cases the positive impression in the reports was the result of Mikheil Saakashvili's speech.

Different opinions were more or less balanced in the news items. However, we should point out that in most cases the unbalanced materials did not show the comments of the government, various state structures and those of the United National Movement. Besides, as the elections got closer, we came across with the news items, where the election activities of the parties are covered and it is difficult to evaluate the balance.

It was revealed in all the monitoring periods that the journalist's words and the materials presented in the report did not match. It was also observed that sometimes the journalist's reference was given as a fact, which in some case aggravated the situation and misled the audience.

# Real TV

During the monitoring period, in total 49 hours and 44 minutes were allocated to the monitoring subjects in the main evening news releases on Real TV. We need to point out that 1 week after the elections the news service of Real TV stopped functioning, and this is why the results of the third monitoring period only cover the period of October 2-5, and correspondingly, there is no results of the fourth period in this report.

During all the monitoring periods, the Coalition Georgian Dream is the first-ranking subject on Real TV according to the allocated time and there is a big gap between it and the subsequent subjects. The indicator of the time allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream is minimum 37 and maximum 52 percent. Before the elections, the President and the Government were the second and third-ranking subjects with almost the same percentage indicators (22-23% and 15-12%) (see the Diagrams – Time 1.7 and Time 2.7).

Diagram – Time 1.7

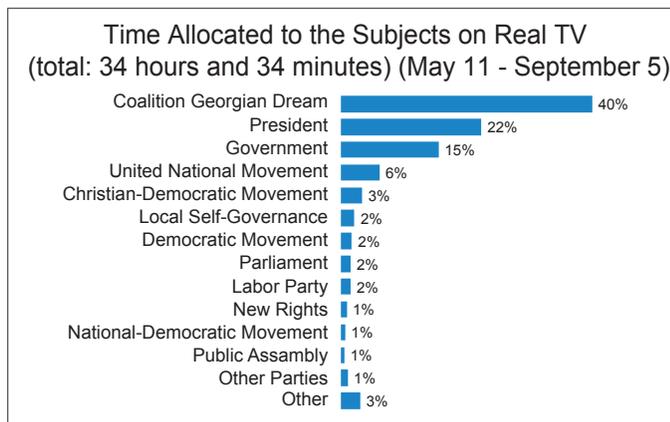


Diagram – Time 2.7

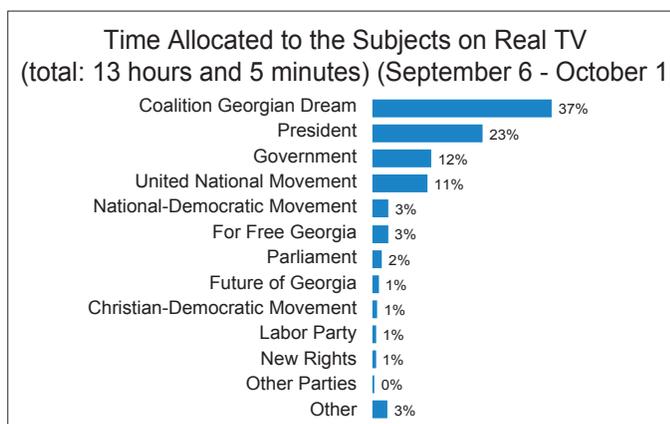
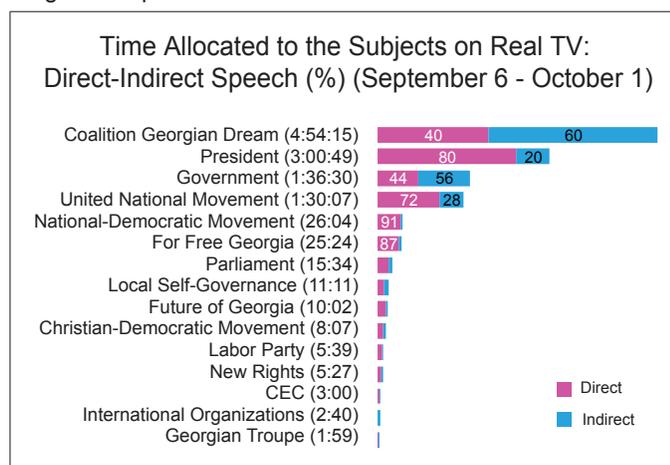


Diagram – Speech 2.7



During the run-up to the elections, there has been a big difference among the direct speech indicators of the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the United National Movement. The President had 80 percent of direct speech before the elections (out of the allocated 3 hours), and the United National Movement had 72 percent (out of the allocated hour and a half), and the Coalition Georgian Dream had only 40 percent of direct speech out of almost 5 hours dedicated to it. As for the government, the distribution of direct and indirect speech was almost equal during the period before elections (see the Diagram – Speech 2.7)

In regards to the coverage tone, there is a different picture on Real TV if compared to other channels. During the elections, the Coalition Georgian Dream had the biggest indicator of negative tone (69% and 74%), and the President's share of positive tone was very high (72% and 76%). Besides, the government and the United National Movement were also positively covered positively and also quite intensively. We should emphasize that the percentage indicators of the journalist's tone on Real TV (texts and the footage shown in the reports) provides the same picture as the overall tone, and sometimes exceeds it (see the Diagrams – Tone 2.7 and Jtone 2.7).

Diagram – Tone 2.7

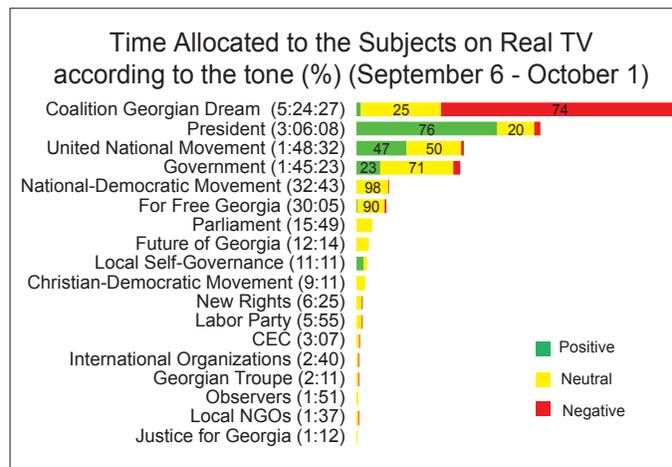
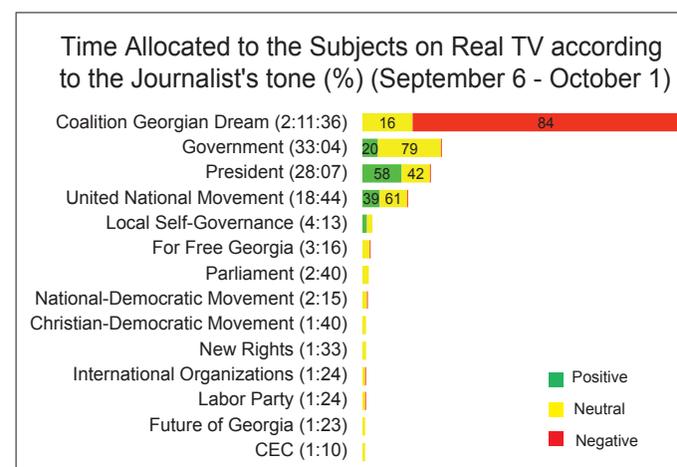


Diagram – Jtone 2.7



News items on Real-TV mostly did not have neutral headlines. The headlines of negative contents were basically dedicated to the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream, and the positive ones – to the President and the National Movement.

Rarely were there any reports with overall neutral impression on Real TV. Majority of positive reports were about the President, the government, the United National Movement and the Mayor of Tbilisi. Besides, it should be pointed out that a very much time was dedicated on this TV channel to the coverage of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Coalition Georgian Dream, and the overall impression was always sharply negative. The materials were often edited, and there were cases of manipulation with footage and music, or ironical and cynical mentioning of the opposition representatives. The impression was often exacerbated by the journalist's text. As the elections got closer, these trends became even more intensive. However, the neutral reports prevailed after the elections.

Although the negative reports about the Coalition Georgian Dream were still broadcasted, but the journalist's text was not that sharp as before. As for the President and the government, there were several positive news items about them as well during this period, but an important change was observed in the coverage style as well.

Like Rustavi 2 and Imedi, Real TV covered the prisoner torture videos covered as a part of the plot connected to the Coalition Georgian Dream, and emphasized the reaction of the government and the authorities about the ongoing events.

The reports were sometimes balanced on Real TV, sometimes – not. Besides, the majority of unbalanced reports were caused by the lack of the comments of the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream. It is also noteworthy that we encountered not only the unbalanced reports, where we felt the lack of the comments of various sides, but also the reports where the balance was observed in regards to the respondents' affiliation, but diverse opinions were not presented.

During the whole monitoring period, journalist's opinions and the comments or footage shown in the reports were irrelevant. Besides, there were frequent and cases of too much manipulation with footage and music.

Like Rustavi 2 and Imedi, Real TV started to have live broadcasts in the news releases since September. Members of the ruling and opposition parties participated in these broadcasts except the representatives of the Coalition Georgian Dream.

## Conclusion

There were two main subjects identified (the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream) right after the beginning of the monitoring; all the channels regarded them to be the key participants of the elections and allocated the most time to them. Monitoring results revealed that during the elections the TV media was quite polarized. There were channels identified, where the main emphasis was laid on positive presentation of the authorities in main news releases; these channels were: Rustavi 2, Imedi and Real TV. The authorities were portrayed in a critical and negative way by Maestro and the Channel 9. However, it should be pointed out that while covering the events, Maestro's criticism was based on the comments of several sides and the respondents, whereas the Channel 9 provided not only criticism, but also negatively presented the former authorities at the same time, and this was often done on the expense of the journalist's text and the overall context of the reports. Main news releases of the Channel 1 and Kavkasia, basically were the least biased. However, during the period from June until September the positive presentation of the President was evident on Channel 1.

After the Coalition Georgian Dream won the elections, some changes were observed among the news releases in their way of covering the subjects. The number of monitoring subjects significantly decreased in the news items. Almost all the subjects used to be covered before the elections, however, since the beginning of October the time was dedicated mostly to three subjects: the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government and the United National Movement. Neutral tone increased towards all the subjects from the elections until the first session of the Parliament. However, after the Parliament started its operations, all the trends, which were identified before the elections, were resumed in the news releases.

Based on the attitude to the major subjects, there were cases when the facts and events taken place during the monitoring period were covered differently on various channels. Sometimes it was even hard to establish, which piece of information was true on which channel, because often there were cases of manipulation with footage and music, interpretation of events with the help of cutting and editing, and creating false impression with the texts of journalists.



## TV Talk Show Monitoring Results

July 9 – November 30, 2012

From July 9, 2012 through November 30, 2012, the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) carried out election monitoring of all primetime political talk shows on four television channels: Channel One; Maestro; Kavkasia; and Channel Nine.<sup>1</sup> Talk show monitoring consisted of the qualitative component only. Journalists were monitored against several criteria: their roles and involvement; the way they managed the process, that is, whether they were mere moderators or tried to state their positions; to what degree they ensured a level playing field for their guests. The monitoring process also included use of hate speech, derogatory or humiliating phrases and statements, by journalists and their reaction to politically incorrect verbal expressions by their guests.

The following basic findings were reached as a result of monitoring:

- ✓ The range of political talk shows on Channel One, Maestro, Kavkasia, and Channel Nine proved to be very diverse in terms of both content and format;
- ✓ Generally speaking, these channels implemented their overall policy through their talk shows, and the results of newscast and talk show monitoring revealed similar trends. In some cases, however, the primetime newscast would be quite balanced, while talk shows would be biased against the previous government, as was the case with Kavkasia, for example;
- ✓ In terms of political balance, a part of the talk shows maintained balance between their guests during the monitoring period, that is, representatives of both the previous government and the National Movement, on one hand, and the Georgian Dream coalition and the new government, on the other, appeared on the shows. This type of balance was maintained on the Dialogue and Accents shows on Channel One; and the Politmeter and Arguments shows on Maestro. The Kavkasia talk shows also featured both parties, yet representatives or loyal supporters of the coalition prevailed. The previous government and the National Movement were not present on the Subjective Opinion and We shows on Maestro and all three Channel Nine talk shows: Counseling; Main Question; and Akhalkatsi's Matrix;
- ✓ Before the election, especially in September, the hosts of talk shows in discussion were more active in terms of stating their opinions, while switching to the moderating role to a greater degree thereafter;
- ✓ Hate speech and unethical expressions were most frequently and explicitly used by Davit Akubardia and Alexander Elisashvili on Kavkasia talk shows and Shalva Ramishvili on the Maestro talk show Subjective Opinion.

### Channel One

Two Channel One talk shows were subjected to monitoring, Dialogue with Davit Paichadze and Accents with Eka Kvesitadze. Both shows featured members of the ruling party and the National Movement, as well as representatives of the opposition, members of the new government, and experts. Both journalists were quite actively engaged in the show, trying to extract exhaustive answers to their questions and, for the most part, giving their guests enough room to state their opinions. It could be said about both journalists that their attitude drastically changed depending on the political affiliation of a given guest, which clearly showed in their questions, facetious disposition and remarks. The hosts opposed representatives of the new government more actively and often scrutinized them, while engaging in debates with representatives of the previous government with a lesser degree of intensity and restraining their demanding tone. These talk shows were invariably contained within moderate and correct boundaries. Accordingly, no use of politically incorrect statements or hate speech by the hosts or guests was recorded.

<sup>1</sup> No primetime political talk shows aired on Rustavi 2, Imedi, or Real TV during the monitoring period. Therefore, not all channels subjected to newscast election monitoring were part of talk show monitoring.

## Dialogue with Davit Paichadze

Dialogue with Davit Paichadze airs three times a week on Channel One, at 10 pm, every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Until October, the show usually aired twice a week. In mid-October, however, one episode was added. As a rule, two – one or three on rare occasions – guests were invited to the studio. Each episode of the show lasted sixty minutes on average.

In terms of topics, the show was diverse. The following issues were discussed in the studio:

- ✓ The election (election period; election results; prohibition of photo and video recording at electoral precincts);
- ✓ Sequestration of Maestro satellite dishes;
- ✓ Sociological studies (NDI; IRI);
- ✓ The media;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ State of affairs in prisons and prison torture;
- ✓ The judiciary and courts;
- ✓ State of affairs in various ministries and future plans;
- ✓ New parliament;
- ✓ Political retaliation (arrests of Bacho Akhalaia and Giorgi Kalandadze);
- ✓ The Ombudsman issue;
- ✓ Changes in the government;
- ✓ Cultural policy and ongoing processes therein;
- ✓ Current and future policies on the occupied territories;
- ✓ Georgian foreign affairs, etc.

The episodes of this show airing during the monitoring period featured members of the opposition, the new and previous ruling parties, experts, members of the government, representatives of international and local non-governmental organizations, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, Chairperson of the Supreme Court, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission, public figures, media representatives, etc.

On the whole, it should be noted that Dialogue proved to be a quite balanced show. Political balance between guests was almost always observed, and two different opinions could be heard on main topics discussed.

The journalist himself tried to receive exhaustive information from his guests and asked lengthy and yet explanatory questions in an attempt to allow for unequivocal answers. Paichadze mainly played the role of a moderator and did his best to abstain from stating his opinion, opposing his guests at the same time. His questions were often preceded by vast, and to some extent rhetorical, introductions. However, it should be noted that the level of the journalist's activity and the nature of his questions varied by guest. If his views did not match those of his guests, Paichadze became more demanding and actively engaged in debates, showing more criticism, facetiousness and sarcasm. There were instances when the host practically prevented his interviewee from speaking.

Although the host would not state his opinion openly, he was explicitly critical of representatives of various opposition parties before the election. He was also being skeptical and critical of non-governmental organizations that actively criticized the National Movement and its activities in the electoral environment. Paichadze, however, would not prevent them from expressing their opinions.

The host's critical attitude, this time toward the new ruling party, did not change after the election either. The host criticized representatives of the Georgian Dream as members of the government and demanded from them answers to sharp questions, while failing to be as tough on their opponents as usual.

Dialogues were invariably contained within moderate and correct boundaries. Accordingly, no use of politically incorrect statements or hate speech by the host or his guests was recorded. Conversations always revolved around previously announced topics, and no deviations from these topics were observed. It should be noted that the journalist always identified his sources of information.

## Accents with Eka Kvesitadze

Accents is a Channel One show hosted by Eka Kvesitadze. This show airs at 10 pm, every Tuesday and Friday. It should be noted that prior to October 14, the show aired only once a week, every Sunday, while airing twice a week from the end of October through the completion of the monitoring period. As a rule, several guests appear on the show. Standup reports are frequent as well. Each episode of the show lasts about ninety minutes on average. During the monitoring period, the following topics were discussed on the show:

- ✓ The election (election campaign; summary of the electoral environment);
- ✓ Governmental plans to aid the victims of the Kakheti disaster;
- ✓ Lapankuri special operation;
- ✓ State health insurance program;
- ✓ Political plans of Bidzina Ivanishvili and his team;
- ✓ Prison torture;
- ✓ Election of the Ombudsman;
- ✓ Religious confrontation in the Nigvziani village;
- ✓ Problems in the Rustavi Penitentiary;
- ✓ 2013 state budget;
- ✓ Illegal audio surveillance and arrests of former senior officials;
- ✓ Postponement of a visit by NATO Military Committee;
- ✓ Georgian-Russian relations;
- ✓ Criticism by international press and Georgia's international image;
- ✓ Presidential election in America, etc.

During the monitoring period, debates on one or another topic on the show featured both parties: the ruling party and members of the opposition, as well as experts, representatives of the government, local self-government, and media, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, representatives of non-governmental organizations, former members of the diplomatic corps, students, etc. The Georgian Dream Coalition prevailed among the parties invited to the show. In the period following the election, the opposition was represented by the National Movement.

As a rule, different views were voiced on discussed topics on the show. Heated debates ensued quite often, and the host engaged in debates with her guests regardless of their political affiliations. Her questions were rather sharp, and she often insisted on receiving more information from her interviewees.

In most cases, the journalist gave her guests enough time to express themselves. However, there were instances when she actively debated with guests, preventing them from making their point in full.

The journalist tried to assume the role of a mere moderator. In some cases, however, it became directly or indirectly noticeable that she was not being absolutely objective. She seemed to be more critical and demanding of the new government and the Georgian Dream Coalition and less critical of the previous government. Her position showed in her questions as they were not equally sharp in the case with every guest, as well as in her way opposing some guests, her rhetorical questions, facial expressions, and facetious tone.

The host of the Accents show did not use hate speech, and neither did her guests. Eka Kvesitadze frequently identified the source of her information and tried to rely on facts.

## Maestro

Five Maestro talk shows were monitored, namely Subjective Opinion by Shalva Ramishvili and Diana Trapaidze; Politmeter hosted by Nino Zhizhilashvili; Arguments and Arguments Weekly with Teah Sichinava; and We hosted by Tamar Chikovani. Top four shows on this list aired on Maestro on a daily basis, while the show We only once a week. The hosts of the Subjective Opinion show often voiced their opinions, depriving their guests of a level playing field. The majority of the guests comprised loyal supporters of the Georgian Dream Coalition and the new government. The hosts of the Politmeter and Arguments (Weekly) shows, on the other hands, mainly appeared as moderators, inviting representatives of various sides and ensuring the diversity of views on their shows. As for the We talk show, no representatives of the National Movement or the previous government visited

it during the monitoring period. The opinions of the journalist and her guests often matched, primarily implying a critical attitude toward the previous government. Nonetheless, Tamar Chikovani was not radical in her assertions and criticism as her comments mainly contained corrections and recommendations.

## Subjective Opinion

The Subjective Opinion show aired in the evening, Monday through Friday. This talk show consisted of two parts. During the monitoring period, the show was hosted by Shalva Ramishvili and Diana Trapaidze. The first part of the show had a cohost and involved online communication. The second part featured a guest. During the monitoring period, the following topics were covered:

- ✓ The election (election period; electoral campaign; election day; results; international assessments);
- ✓ Karaleti incident;
- ✓ Disaster in Kakheti;
- ✓ August 2008 war;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Prison torture and student protest rallies;
- ✓ Secret audio recordings and other compromising materials;
- ✓ Media (must-carry and must-offer; freedom of the media; changes on Channel Nine; closure of the Peak television company);
- ✓ New government; new parliament;
- ✓ Previous government;
- ✓ The Ombudsman issue;
- ✓ Various political and economic issues;
- ✓ Changes in the penitentiary system; mass amnesty;
- ✓ Post-election arrests (Bacho Akhalaia);
- ✓ Problems of the refugees;
- ✓ Education system;
- ✓ Foreign affairs (relations with NATO; relations with Russia), etc.

Throughout the monitoring period, no one from the National Movement or the previous government visited this show. This trend was visible both before and after the election. Before the election, other opposition parties besides the Georgian Dream Coalition were represented on the show to a lesser extent. After the election, the opposition became virtually absent altogether.

The bias of the hosts revealed itself in a number of ways. Representatives of the new government or persons critically disposed toward the previous government – whom the hosts never opposed – were invited to appear on the show. The hosts themselves were actively involved in the process of evaluation of ongoing processes and delivered their objective opinion in accordance with the name of this show.

Although topics to be discussed on the show were announced in advance, discussion of one particular topic almost never took place as the hosts and their guests covered several topics. There were instances when the main topic of the show changed in accordance with the developing stories of the given day. Discussions mainly covered wider issues rather than particular events, which made focus on one particular topic impossible to maintain. It should also be noted that throughout the monitoring period, topics quite often remained unannounced altogether.

The first segment of the show, during which journalists communicated with the cohost, featured relatively relaxed conversations without any debates. Diana Trapaidze almost never interfered with conversations and abstained from asking questions. Shalva Ramishvili was more active in this regard. Shalva Ramishvili was the main initiator of discussions and debates on the show. He was always active during the show and constantly spoke up his mind, especially in the cohost segment of the show. It should be noted that during the election period Ramishvili spread propaganda, making different types of appeals and carrying out PR campaigns, which was primarily present in his monologues. The journalist openly stated he was an interested party and Ivanishvili's supporter, and constantly criticized Mikheil Saakashvili.

Ramishvili voiced his views in the second segment of the show to a lesser extent. He let his guests formulate their opinions and

give exhaustive answers to questions asked. However, there were instances when Ramishvili answered Trapaidze's questions in place of the guest.

As for Diana Trapaidze, due to the show's format, her primary function consisted of moderating. Her role was mainly limited to asking questions. Trapaidze did a better job trying to meet journalistic standards and abstaining from stating her opinion. There were instances when she reminded Ramishvili of the presumption of innocence and appealed to his correctness.

It should be noted that the behavior of Trapaidze varied at different points during the monitoring period. For example, she was very passive on the July shows. Toward the end of August and through the election, she became active, reasoning on one or another issue more openly, voicing her political position and asking more questions. After the election, however, she reclaimed her moderating role.

Unlike Shalva Ramishvili, Diana Trapaidze almost invariably tried to deploy particular types of documentation and disseminate particular information or ask questions on the basis of this documentation. The shows hosted exclusively by Diana Trapaidze were less controversial. Shalva Ramishvili also seemed more relaxed when running the show on his own.

Questions by the hosts seemed to be more merciful to Georgian Dream representatives or supporters, while excessive criticism was voiced against those opposing this party. This mainly applies to Shalva Ramishvili.

The hosts would not oppose their guests who voiced opinions similar to their own, and neither would they inform their guests about different views. For the most part, they agreed with everything that had been said in the studio and even backed up their guests' critical speeches with concrete examples.

The show almost never involved use of hate speech, though Shalva Ramishvili often used unethical and politically incorrect words and phrases. The show on prison torture stood out in terms of the number of such words and phrases.

## Politmeter

The Politmeter show aired on the Maestro channel every evening, Monday through Friday, hosted by Nino Zhizhilashvili. The following topics were covered on the show during the monitoring period:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment; voter list; results);
- ✓ President's speeches;
- ✓ Maestro's antennas sequestered;
- ✓ Levy imposed on Cartu Bank;
- ✓ Karaleti incident;
- ✓ Disaster in Kakheti;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Media (must-carry; must-offer; pressure on the media; changes at Channel Nine);
- ✓ Lay-offs on political grounds;
- ✓ Prison torture and protest rallies;
- ✓ Evaluation of the publicized secret video and audio recordings;
- ✓ Meeting between the president and the prime minister;
- ✓ Future plans of the new government;
- ✓ First parliamentary session;
- ✓ Changes in the penitentiary system;
- ✓ Arrests of senior officials, etc.

During the monitoring period, the Politmeter guests included members of the government and the parliamentary majority, as well as representatives of the previous government and the parliamentary minority and other opposition parties. Besides politicians, the show hosted experts, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, representatives of non-governmental organizations and media, businessmen, public figures, etc.

This talk show always addressed politically active events at a given moment. Zhizhilashvili tries to invite competent people to the studio to discuss relevant issues. Guests were selected in such a way as to ensure the representation of different sides on the

show and provide society with all opinions on the issue in discussion. When there were no guests holding a different opinion, the journalist always pointed out that her offer to appear on the show had been turned down. Such refusals involved mainly National Movement members.

Heated debates on top stories often ensued on the show, and different opinions were frequently voiced. On the whole, it could be said that the journalist of Politmeter, one of the most balanced political shows, played the role of the moderator, almost never voicing her own position and being invariably objective. Zhizhilashvili always tried to oppose her guests despite their political affiliations.

The journalist was always actively involved in the process of the show, frequently asking questions to her guests and enabling them to voice their opinions exhaustively on one or another issue. During debates, the host was objective in her attempts to provide opponents with each other's arguments and hear opposite opinions from them as well. She tried to extract exhaustive answers to questions asked, often repeating questions several times for this very reason. She asked both sharp and relatively mild types of questions. On the whole, however, one would say that the journalist's questions were rather sharp than merciful. A level playing field was ensured for all the guests of the show.

In the first segment of the show, when the journalist met face to face with the interviewee, the host was constantly engaged in dialogue with the guest, being demanding and, despite the guest's political affiliation, opposing him/her without having to state her own opinion. In the second segment, when the show proceeded in the form of discussion, she distanced herself from conversations, enabling opposing parties to answer one another and, as a rule, abstaining from supporting either party.

The journalist stated her opinion very rarely, mainly before the election, while discussing the issues of pressure on journalists, the sequestration of Maestro satellite dishes, and prison torture. When discussing the majority of topics, Zhizhilashvili maintained her integrity. Toward the end of the monitoring period, her goodwill toward the new government was sometimes evident.

The host never used hate speech or politically incorrect phrases. Moreover, she always corrected her guests if they used unethical language. There were instances when the journalist had the guest's microphone turned off in similar situations.

Zhizhilashvili did not disseminate a single piece of information without referring to its source and demanded from her guests to do the same. She always asked additional questions to verify the source of information.

## Arguments

Arguments is a Maestro talk show hosted by Teah Sichinava. The format of the Arguments show is debates between two guests in the studio. During the monitoring period, an additional weekly show, Arguments Weekly, was produced, featuring several guests in the studio in addition to the audience actively engaged in the talk show. Each episode of the Arguments and Arguments Weekly shows lasts 40-50 minutes on average.

During the monitoring period, this talk show discussed a variety of topics:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment; election results; exit polls);
- ✓ Sequestration of Maestro antennas;
- ✓ National Movement's Election Code of Conduct;
- ✓ Disaster in Kakheti;
- ✓ 80 million dollars paid to the Georgian budget by Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- ✓ Media (access to information; must-carry; must-offer; Channel Nine journalists harassed);
- ✓ August 2008 war;
- ✓ A series of fines and levies;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Social polarization;
- ✓ Prison torture;
- ✓ Protest rallies;
- ✓ Secret recordings against the Georgian Dream;
- ✓ The new ruling party;
- ✓ Illegal actions by the Chamber of Control;
- ✓ The issue of the election of the Ombudsman;

- ✓ State of affairs in penitentiary facilities;
- ✓ Abolition of public aid;
- ✓ Arrests of former senior officials, etc.

Both before and after the election, the Arguments and Arguments Weekly shows were distinguished by the diversity of their guests, while political balance was maintained in the majority of cases. The shows featured representatives of the National Movement, the Georgian Dream Coalition, the new and the previous governments, and other opposition parties. The guests of these talk shows also included experts, representatives of media, non-governmental organizations, and local self-governments, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, students, public figures, etc.

It should be noted that at the initial stage of monitoring, the Arguments show managed to strike a close balance between the government and the opposition. As election day approached, visits by Georgian Dream representatives and goodwill toward them intensified. After the election, the number of representatives of the coalition and the new government grew even further. The host, however, always pointed out that the National Movement and various agencies of the previous government had refused to appear on the show.

On the whole, the Arguments and Arguments Weekly shows are very different despite being hosted by the same journalist. This difference is evident not only in terms of format but because of the behavior of the host on the shows as well. In the Arguments Weekly show, Teah Sichinava is a mere moderator, and the show's format implies intensive answers and questions between the hosts and her guests, on one hand, and experts and the audience, on the other.

Although as the host of the Arguments show, Teah Sichinava tried to maintain her integrity and abstain from openly voicing her views, her position was nonetheless noticeable in her questions, comments, and non-verbal communication. One trend was evident: in the period prior to the election, the journalist's questions to members and loyal supporters of the National Movement were sharper than those to representatives of the opposition. After the election, this trend grew weaker, and the host became more balanced in relation to representatives of the National Movement among others. In addition, in the period prior to the election, the journalist voiced her opinion and expressed her views more frequently, while becoming less active in this regard after the election.

Teah Sichinava was always actively engaged in the show, often scrutinizing her guests and opposing them from different points of view. This opposition and sharp questions, however, were directed for the most part against representatives and supporters of the previous government (the National Movement). The journalist maintained her integrity fully when hosting representatives of the civil and non-governmental sector.

The host never used hate speech. Other political entities were described by her guests in politically incorrect and derogatory terms on several occasions during her shows. The host sometimes reacted to these incidents and called on her guests to restrain themselves, while sometimes ignoring them altogether.

It should be noted that Teah Sichinava was very active during her shows in terms of facial expressions and often deployed nonverbal communication to express her negative attitude even stronger. Her attitude was also evident in her facetious tone and rhetorical questions to representatives of the National Movement.

## We

The show We aired on Maestro at 11 pm, every Saturday, hosted by Tamar Chikovani. Each episode of this show features one guest.

During the monitoring period, this show covered the following topics:

- ✓ The election (Voter lists; electoral fraud);
- ✓ Social and political problems in Georgia;
- ✓ Russia and territorial disputes;
- ✓ Sociological studies;
- ✓ State of affairs in Georgian prisons;
- ✓ Analysis of future political developments;
- ✓ Law and restoration of justice;
- ✓ Promises by the new government and their feasibility;

- ✓ Constitution of Georgia;
- ✓ Art and society;
- ✓ Crime and punishment (state of affairs in prisons), etc.

During the monitoring period, no representatives of the National Movement or the previous government visited the show. Members of the Georgian Dream Coalition and separate opposition parties appeared on this talk show. However, experts, journalists, public figures, and lawyers prevailed among the show's guests.

The format of the We show implies dialogue, during which the host converses with her guests in a quiet and relaxed setting. During conversations, generalization of urgent issues is more frequent than discussion of particular facts. Accordingly, the show is an informative and analytical rather than active show.

The host rarely voiced her opinion, though her position could be seen in her questions that contained a touch of rhetoric to some extent. It should also be noted that her assertions were not radical and resembled comments and recommendations more than anything else. The journalist's attitude toward one or another issue was revealed in her nonverbal communication: facial expressions, gestures, etc. Before the election, the host's attitude contained more criticism of the previous government and the National Movement, while showing relative loyalty to the Georgian Dream Coalition. After the election, this trend was not as striking.

The host was engaged in the program to a lesser extent and would not cut off her guests. Her attitude toward her guests was quite benevolent. Their views on issues discussed often matched. As a rule, Chikovani did not try to oppose her guests or present them with a different position.

Deviation from the topic occurred occasionally. Tamar Chikovani made moderate assertions without having used hate speech, derogatory or humiliating phrases or politically incorrect statements.

## Kavkasia

Three Kavkasia talk shows were monitored, namely Studio Spectrum hosted by Davit Akubardia; Barrier hosted by Alexander Elisashvili and Nino Jangirashvili; and Hotline alternately hosted by Alexander Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze, and Natia Orvelashvili.

Studio Spectrum is a rather loose format talk show with "fireplace" conversations taking place between the host and the guest. Guests of Davit Akubardia's show mainly express opinions acceptable to him, and the host agrees with them. Akubardia frequently voices his ideas which are often unethical and contain hate speech, especially when the president, former ministers, and the National Movement are being discussed. On the other hand, Akubardia does not conceal his sympathy for the new government.

At first glance, balance seems to be maintained in Barrier as two different sides are always present. However, Elisashvili's bias is evident. He constantly criticizes the National Movement and the so-called old government in an unequivocal manner, while failing to ask critical questions to Georgian Dream representatives, and openly expressing his critical and often politically incorrect assessments in relation to one or another issue. Shows hosted by Nino Jangirashvili are different, proceeding in a more relaxed and dynamic atmosphere. The journalist is actively involved in the show, yet attempts to assume the role of a moderator.

The pattern of Hotline shows hosted by Alexander Elisashvili is similar to that of Barrier, while the other hosts of this talk show – Natia Orvelashvili, Zviad Koridze, and Merab Metreveli – mainly play the moderating role and abstain from expressing their views clearly.

## Studio Spectrum

Studio Spectrum is a daily Kavkasia television channel show hosted by Davit Akubardia. This talk show consists of two or three parts and features several guests in the studio.

During the monitoring period, Studio Spectrum covered the following topics:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment; the Central Election Commission; results; violations at election precincts; international opinion);
- ✓ Imposition of fines upon parties;

- ✓ Ksani Penal Colony and Gldani Penitentiary events;
- ✓ NDI research;
- ✓ Georgian Dream Coalition (visits to the regions; rallies);
- ✓ Karaleti incident;
- ✓ Agriculture;
- ✓ Disaster in Kakheti;
- ✓ The August 2008 war;
- ✓ Human rights;
- ✓ Media (sequestration of Maestro antennas);
- ✓ Torture of prisoners and student rallies;
- ✓ First parliamentary session;
- ✓ Transfer of power;
- ✓ Priorities and prospects of the new government;
- ✓ Diarchy in Georgia;
- ✓ Election of the public defender;
- ✓ Justice, the judiciary system, etc.

During the monitoring period, the representation of the Georgian Dream Coalition prevailed among political parties invited to appear on the show both before and after the election. Members of the National Movement and other opposition parties were relatively rare guests on the show. Among others, guests of the show included experts, representatives of media and non-governmental organizations, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, public figures, students, etc.

The format of this show was quite casual. Conversations proceeded in a rather informal manner. Dialogues between the journalist and interviewees did not involve questions and answers, both sides simply discussing their own views. Akubardia asked occasional questions. He and his guests exchanged ideas and shared opinions. The talk show mainly discussed a variety of topics. The journalist would not announce topics to be discussed in advance. For the most part, however, these topics were dedicated to the criticism of the government and the governing team.

Before the election, the guests of the show represented either opposition politicians or representatives of the civil or voluntary sector disloyal to the government. Akubardia pointed out frequently that he had been inviting representatives of the authorities as well, yet they kept refusing to participate in debates.

The journalist's attitude toward his guests was unambiguously benevolent, which he even pointed out openly. Equally identical were their positions and political views. Accordingly, he never challenged his guests from a different angle, neither did he voice different opinions. On the contrary, guests and the journalist constantly agreed with one another.

The journalist's involvement in the show depended on a given invited guest and his/her activity. Sometimes the journalist would not become engaged in the show at all, leaving the guest as the sole speaker. On the other hand, there have been instances when Akubardia would not let the guest talk in the studio, taking over the show for the most part.

If the guest's ideas were in full agreement with those of the host, the latter gave the guest enough room to speak up his/her mind, cutting him/her off nonetheless to give his own opinion.

According to overall assessment, this show is very biased. Throughout the show, the journalist openly voiced his negative attitude toward the previous government, often deploying hate speech and being politically incorrect in relation to the National Movement and the government. He frequently used such words and labels as "moron", "schmuck", "idiot", "Vanichka", "Soviet government", "bureau", "Madam Mogeladze", "bullshit", etc. Akubardia would not appeal to his guests either to abstain from using foul language and derogatory terms against others. Moreover, he agreed with his guests and frequently repeated their words. It is worth noting that viewers too frequently used foul language when calling the studio.

In the wake of the prison scandal, the journalist became even more radical in his judgment and the number of statements of this nature doubled. Akubardia's behavior, however, when he cursed at Roland Akhalaia on the air, was wide open to criticism. On the other hand, Akubardia was very well disposed toward the Georgian Dream Coalition and Bidzina Ivanishvili, and would not even hold it back, describing Ivanishvili's statements as "patriotic" and "reasonable".

At the final stage of monitoring – that is, after the election – Davit Akubardia asked questions to his guests more frequently. It also

became evident that he was making critical assessments regarding the Georgian Dream Coalition. Whenever he was unhappy with one or another development during the day, he openly spoke about it, never hesitating to give advice either.

It is important that Davit Akubardia never identifies the source of information he cites in his show. Quite often, he not only provides us with unverified information, but also presents rumors as a piece of information.

## Barrier

Barrier airs at 10:30 pm every Tuesday and Friday on the Kavkasia channel, alternately hosted by Alexander Elisashvili and Nino Jangirashvili. This show proceeds in the form of debate, several guests being invited to the studio and representing two different sides.

During the monitoring period, the following topics were discussed on the Barrier show:

- ✓ The election (election period; results; Central Election Commission);
- ✓ Levy imposed on Bidzina Ivanishvili's property;
- ✓ Karaleti incident;
- ✓ Relations between Bidzina Ivanishvili and the government;
- ✓ Sequestration of Maestro satellite dishes;
- ✓ Media (persecution of journalists; electoral environment);
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Torture of prisoners;
- ✓ Relations between the new and the previous governments;
- ✓ New political reality (new government; new parliament);
- ✓ Amnesty;
- ✓ Post-election arrests, etc.

Guests invited to appear on the show during the monitoring period included members of the Georgian Dream Coalition and the National Movement as well as other opposition parties. It should be noted, however, that Georgian Dream members prevailed among them. The Barrier show also hosted representatives of media and non-governmental organizations, experts, candidates for the office of Ombudsman, human rights advocates, public figures, etc.

Barrier always addresses pressing developments in the country. During the monitoring period, however, there were instances recorded when all guests represented one side, accordingly leading to one-sided debates on a given issue.

Whenever hosted by Alexander Elisashvili, the show was more biased. The journalist was mainly active during the show, often openly voicing his opinion on one or another issue, "Let us talk about the majority. Criticizing them is my favorite topic." The journalist asked questions and facilitated debates between guests. It should be noted that quite often the journalist himself actively participated in these debates. Persons critically disposed toward the pre-election government prevailed among the guests. The journalist would not limit his guests, always enabling them to provide lengthy discourses on issues in discussion. As a rule, his questions were not sharp, and Elisashvili made sure that every guest was given an opportunity to answer questions. It should be noted that he voiced his own opinion from the very onset, immediately after asking questions.

Whenever striking a balance on the show, the journalist opposed guests who held different views from his more than the others. In such a case, he would repeat the question several times and even scrutinize the interviewee. It was evident that the journalist was being demanding and critical toward the guests who were loyal to Saakashvili's government.

It could be said with all assuredness that Alexander Elisashvili did not serve the role of a mere moderator on the show, always making known his position on the main topics. He often engaged in debate with guests and defended his own arguments, expressed his concerns, indignation, and criticized the previous government.

Especially emotional was the host before the election, after the publication of the video material on torture in prisons. He often used the words "sadist" and "murder" to describe particular individuals.

During heated debates on the Barrier show, use of hatred speech was not as prevalent as that of politically incorrect statements by both the journalist and his guests.

It should also be noted that the host's critical attitude toward the National Movement subsided after the transfer of power, yet it did not take place against the background of criticism of the new government. On the contrary, while emphasizing mistakes by the previous government, a tendency to present the new government in a positive context was visible.

Elisashvili often failed to identify the source of his information. He often built his discourse upon his own opinion and revealed unverified facts.

The Barrier show was sometimes hosted by Nino Jangirashvili. At the final stage of the monitoring period, she hosted the show once a week. Jangirashvili enabled every guest to voice his/her opinion. She tried to avoid heated discussions and debates between guests and to ensure that the show proceeds in a lively manner. The journalist showed great interest in discussed topics and listened to her guests attentively. There were instances when the host shared her guests' opinions, neither opposing them nor voicing a different opinion. There were, however, instances when Jangirashvili actively voiced opinions contradicting those of her guests and defended the views of those absent from the studio. Nonetheless, she never managed to maintain her integrity and eventually expressed her subjective opinion against the previous government.

Both Barrier journalists announced if one or another party was not represented on the show and provided relevant explanations.

## Hotline

The Hotline talk show airs on Kavkasia at 10:30 pm on Mondays, Wednesday, and Thursday, alternately hosted by Alexander Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze, and Natia Orvelashvili. Merab Metreveli and Dachi Grdzlishvili hosted the show on several occasions. As a rule, there are two or three guests on the show. The first part of the show is dedicated in its entirety to viewer call-ins. The average duration of the show is sixty minutes.

Hotline covered the following issues:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment; exit poll results; electoral fraud);
- ✓ Georgian penitentiary system;
- ✓ Disaster in Kakheti;
- ✓ Code of conduct for political parties;
- ✓ Possibility of a civil war;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Prison torture;
- ✓ Secret recordings;
- ✓ War of compromising materials;
- ✓ New government and future plans;
- ✓ Relations between business and the state;
- ✓ Problems in the judiciary;
- ✓ Feasibility of utility rate reduction;
- ✓ Large-scale strikes;
- ✓ Arrests of former government officials;
- ✓ Large-scale amnesty;
- ✓ Illegal surveillance;
- ✓ Policy toward the occupied territories, etc.

The Hotline show guests included representatives of the new government and the Georgian Dream Coalition as well as the National Movement and other opposition parties. Accordingly, at most two sides and two different opinions were represented on the show, for the reason of which this show often facilitated debates, in which members of the new ruling party and the new government nonetheless prevailed. Among others, the guests of this talk show included experts, representatives of non-governmental organizations and media, human rights advocates, public figures, etc.

The hosts of this show differed with one another. Their views were expressed mainly during the first part of the show when, while reviewing the news, they analyzed ongoing developments and offered their views. Alexander Elisashvili would speak his mind and engaged in lively debates with guests whose opinions were unacceptable to him. The same cannot be said of Natia Orvelashvili and Zviad Koridze who tried to maintain objectivity when hosting the show. However, when hosting the show in company with Elisashvili, Natia Orvelashvili often seconded his facetiousness. Merab Metreveli too was distinguished by his

statements containing subjective views to a lesser degree. Nonetheless, some of his rhetorical questions and remarks did betray his position on different issues. Similarly, Dachi Grdzlishvili sometimes spoke his mind when asking rhetorical questions.

The hosts of this show – especially Alexander Elisashvili – harshly criticized the United National Movement in the election period. Representatives of the then opposition actively criticized the government on the show, attempting to put the blame on the authorities and encountering no objections from the hosts more often than not.

The post-election period abounded in examples of Zviad Koridze and Natia Orvelashvili becoming somewhat more demanding toward representatives of the new government and attempting to extract from them information on the ways deployed to solve various problems in the country. Merab Metreveli raised a number of questions serving public interests. Elisashvili's attitude toward the National Movement did not change.

The hosts' questions to representatives of the Georgian Dream and those criticizing the National Movement were neutral, while members of the previous government and their sympathizers encountered more critical questions and stronger opposition from the hosts. Nonetheless, guests always voiced their opinions, and the journalists never created any obstacles for them. Elisashvili was the only host to use incorrect statements, badmouthing particular people, and made known his subjective, negative attitude. Shows often proceeded against the background of Elisashvili's facetiousness.

As a rule, deviation from the topic was peculiar to shows hosted by Alexander Elisashvili. In addition, he often failed to identify the source of information.

## Channel Nine

Three Channel Nine shows were monitored, namely Akhalkatsi's Matrix; Counseling with Vasil Maghlaperidze; and Eka Beridze's Main Question. All three shows aired every weekday. It should be noted that none of the monitored Channel Shows hosted representatives of the United National Movement or the previous government. In all three cases, the guests mainly consisted of people loyal to the Georgian Dream Coalition and the government. Accordingly, during the monitoring period, no political balance was maintained on this channel, and neither did these shows host politicians or other representatives of society holding fundamentally different positions and views. In addition, the hosts of these shows almost never provided any explanation as to why these people were not present, whether interviewees themselves refused to participate, or there were some other reasons.

## Akhalkatsi's Matrix

The Channel Nine show Matrix airs at 7 pm, Monday through Friday, hosted by Giorgi Akhalkatsi. As a rule, Matrix is divided into two or three parts, each dedicated to one particular topic and featuring one guest. The duration of this talk show is 40-45 minutes on average.

During the monitoring period, this show covered the following topics:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment; violations; vote buying);
- ✓ Statement by Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- ✓ More Benefits for People (National Movement election promises);
- ✓ The new and the previous governments;
- ✓ 2013 government budget;
- ✓ The government and the Patriarchate;
- ✓ New public policy;
- ✓ Prison torture;
- ✓ War of compromising materials;
- ✓ Arrests of senior officials;
- ✓ General amnesty;
- ✓ The judiciary;
- ✓ Candidates for the office of Ombudsman;
- ✓ Political analyses and their results;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ August 2008 war;

- ✓ Georgian law on controlled substances;
- ✓ The media (must-carry; role of the media in the election; persecution of journalists), etc.

Throughout the monitoring period, diversity of guests was a rare phenomenon on the Matrix show. Not a single representative of the United National Movement or the previous government appeared on the show. The opposition was rarely featured on the show after the election as well. Accordingly, only one side was represented on the show as a rule and issues were covered from a different perspective to a lesser degree. Before the election, mainly Georgian Dream Coalition representatives were invited to the show by the host who joined them in criticizing the then government and the ruling party, which became especially evident in the period directly before the election, after the publication of the prison torture videos. As for the coalition, there was virtually no criticism of the Georgian Dream before October 1. However, the host became slightly tougher on the new governing team after the transfer of power, actively requesting from new ministers to present action plan drafts and information on various changes.

The Matrix host often went beyond the role of a mere moderator. His questions and discourses betrayed his position, that is, his negative attitude toward the United National Movement and loyal approach to Bidzina Ivanishvili and the coalition. The position of the host was frequently in concert with those of his guests on the show. Hence, the host rarely opposed his guests, never cutting them off and allocating enough time for them to voice their opinions. For the most part, his questions were not critical either as he was more inclined to request evaluation of ongoing processes. The guests were provided with a level playing field as only one opinion was invariably present in the studio on issues in discussion, being often shared by the journalist.

Despite his bias, Giorgi Akhalkatsi fully met journalistic standards on some of his shows, abstaining from speaking his mind and trying to extract in-depth information and present a given problem from several different perspectives. Shows of this type mainly aired after the election.

The host never turned to hate speech. Before the election, however, his facial expressions sometimes betrayed sarcasm toward the National Movement and the previous government.

## Counseling with Vasil Maghlaperidze

During the monitoring period, the Counseling show aired at 8 pm, Monday through Friday, hosted by Vasil Maghlaperidze. The show consisted of several parts, so-called segments. As a rule, one, two, or three interviewees visited the show. During the monitoring period, this show covered the following topics:

- ✓ The election (electoral environment and campaign; exit polls; electoral fraud; international feedback);
- ✓ Georgian Dream Coalition and Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- ✓ The president and the Georgian government;
- ✓ Politics in Georgian show business;
- ✓ Prison torture and student protest rallies (political responsibility);
- ✓ The new cabinet;
- ✓ Sociological studies;
- ✓ Ethnic minorities;
- ✓ The Kintzvisi case;
- ✓ August 2008 war;
- ✓ Georgian sports;
- ✓ Drug addiction and legislation;
- ✓ Architecture without legislation;
- ✓ Demand to prohibit gambling business;
- ✓ New concept of the judiciary, etc.

The initial format of the Counseling show implied a political show without politicians, yet this format was violated on several occasions. At first, mainly experts, public figures, and other famous persons were invited to appear on the show. However, as election day approached, members of the Georgian Dream Coalition started to abound among the guests. National Movement representatives did not appear on the show before the election. Members of other opposition parties were very seldom invited as well. After the election, the format of this show changed to some extent, and on several occasions airtime was allocated to former government officials who discussed the pressure exerted on them by Saakashvili's government and the moral or material damage they subsequently suffered.

Apolitical topics were also discussed frequently on the show. Even then, however, the political implications of the show became evident toward the end of the show, these implications implying criticism of the National Movement and Saakashvili's government.

The format of the show did not change after the election either. After October 1, the host tried to present it as an apolitical show, yet the topics selected involved politics directly or indirectly. The host himself voiced his own political views. After the election, the host expressed certain comments and recommendations to the new government as well.

The host was engaged in the show quite actively. He was not a mere moderator, often interfering with guests' discourses and voicing his own ideas and views. His questions and monologues frequently betrayed his subjective views, negative and critical attitude toward the National Movement and the president and positive attitude toward the Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili. As a rule, Maghlaperidze did not attempt to present a view that would differ with the position of his guests. He mainly discussed various issues together with his guests, voiced his position, agreed with the show's guests, and almost never engaged in polemics with them. In addition, as mentioned earlier, most of the guests were disloyal to the previous government and held no radically different positions. Accordingly, the show almost never featured different views on topics in discussion.

The guests were provided with a level playing field. The host tried to allocate enough time for everyone to voice his/her opinion. However, the amount of time allocated for the host's discourse often equaled – and sometimes even exceeded – the amount of time given to the guest. To some extent, it was caused by the journalist's habit to make a vast introduction to questions he was about to ask, during which he voiced his own position.

The presence of the host's facetiousness in his views or questions deserves a special mention. His sarcastic attitude was mainly directed toward the previous government. This facetious and cynical background remained throughout the whole show. Despite this facetious background, no hate speech was recorded on the Counseling show.

## Eka Beridze's Main Question

The Main Question show aired on Channel Nine at 10 pm, Monday through Friday, hosted by Eka Beridze. As a rule, the Main Question is divided into two parts, each dedicated to a particular topic and featuring one guest. The duration of the show was forty minutes on average.

During the monitoring period, this show covered the following topics:

- ✓ The election (voter lists; electoral environment; results; immigrant voter turnout; exit polls; photo and video restrictions);
- ✓ Georgian Dream Coalition and Bidzina Ivanishvili;
- ✓ Levy imposed on Cartu Bank, Elita Burji, and Kakhi Kaladze's property;
- ✓ Lapankuri incident;
- ✓ Media environment;
- ✓ International and non-governmental organizations;
- ✓ Role of the church in politics;
- ✓ Prison torture;
- ✓ Secret video and audio recordings;
- ✓ The new cabinet;
- ✓ Meeting of the president's and Bidzina Ivanishvili's working groups;
- ✓ Education and academic reform;
- ✓ Relations between the new parliamentary majority and minority;
- ✓ Changes at the Imedi television company;
- ✓ Details of the 2006 special operation in Kodori;
- ✓ Constitutional amendments;
- ✓ Possible future plans of the United National Movement;
- ✓ List of political prisoners;
- ✓ Upcoming presidential election;
- ✓ Foreign relations (relations with Russia), etc.

Both before and after the election, the guests invited to appear on the Main Question show mainly represented the Georgian Dream Coalition and the new government. Throughout the monitoring period, National Movement or previous government representatives hardly ever visited the show. As for the other guests on the Main Question show, they included experts, public

figures, representatives of non-governmental organizations and media, lawyers, students, and others.

Accordingly, only one position was presented on the show. For the most part, the guests of the show were Georgian Dream representatives or persons loyal to the coalition. The host would not explain why there were no National Movement representatives, for example, appearing on the show. The guests often voiced criticism of the previous ruling party and its policy, expressing their relative loyalty to the Georgian Dream Coalition.

The journalist mainly served as the moderator who would not speak her mind openly and clearly. By formulating her questions and failing to oppose her guests, she often showed her attitude as well. Prior to the election, she was more actively involved in dialogue with guests holding pro-government views, being active to a lesser degree when hosting, for example, Bidzina Ivanishvili, Eka Beselia, and other Georgian Dream representatives. She only asked them a few questions and then let them take over airtime to speak.

Generally speaking, the journalist was relatively active on the show before the election. As election day approached, as well as after the election, she became very passive, letting her guests take over airtime for the most part.

The guests were provided with a level playing field in terms of time allocated and sharp questions. The journalist's questions were moderately sharp. However, given the absence of people holding different positions from the show, it is difficult to assess these questions as there is no way to make a comparison. Otherwise, for the most part, the host asked all questions that were related to the topic in discussion.

Neither the journalist nor the guests used hate speech. As a rule, conversations were contained within very moderate and correct boundaries. No deviations from topics announced in advance were allowed on the show. In addition, the journalist always identified the source of her information.

## Summary

The picture differed significantly by primetime talk show on the channels monitored. There were shows and hosts inclined toward one or another political force to a greater extent, and there were relatively objective shows the hosts of which attempted to limit themselves to the moderator role and abstain from voicing their own opinions. Generally speaking, the range of the talk shows is quite diverse in terms of content and format, which makes it difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to compare them.

As a rule, the talk show is the overall policy advocate of a given channel. However, talk shows on some channels were quite balanced and neutral – and sometimes, quite the opposite, unbalanced and biased – in comparison with regular newscast trends. For example, the Kavkasia primetime news present a quite balanced picture, while the political talk of shows thereof – especially the Spectrum show – exclusively feature a negative attitude toward the previous government and a pro-Georgian Dream Coalition approach, and voice the hosts' personal opinions.

Despite the position of the hosts, it is interesting to observe balance between the political affiliations of the guests of these shows. During the monitoring period, none of the Channel Nine talk shows or the Maestro Subjective Opinion and We shows hosted a single representative of the National Movement or the previous government. The We show, a quite different format talk show frequently featuring experts and other representatives of society as opposed to politicians, deserves a special mention. As for balanced shows in terms of their guests' political affiliations, we should point out the Dialogue and Accents shows on Channel One; the Politmeter and Arguments shows on Maestro. All three Kavkasia talk shows featured representatives or loyal supporters of both the Georgian Dream Coalition and the National Movement and the previous government. The representation of the coalition side prevailed, however.

Thus, some talk shows served the purpose of providing the voter with information and different opinions, while others solely aimed to discredit a particular side or person participating in the election.

It is interesting to note that as election day approached, the hosts/anchors of talk shows/newscasts voiced their personal opinions with increasing frequency, especially in the second half of September when the issue involving prison torture was widely covered by the media. After the election, however, the controversy subsided to some extent, and some of the talk shows turned into platforms for voicing one's opinion as opposed to facilitating debates.

Use of hate speech by hosts was not recorded on many shows. Especially frequent were hate speech and derogatory or unethical statements by Davit Akubardia and Alexander Elisashvili on Kavkasia talk shows, as well as by Shalva Ramishvili on the Maestro Subjective Opinion show.



INTERNEWS  
GEORGIA

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## Results of Monitoring of Radio Stations

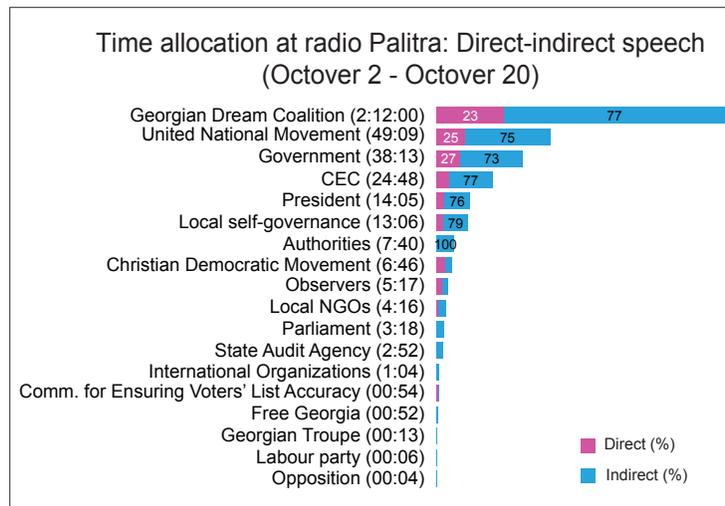
May 11 – November 26, 2012

During the period of May 11 – November 26 (inclusive) 2012, Internews-Georgia carried out the monitoring of evening news releases of 12 radio stations. These are: *Radio-1 (Public Broadcaster), Fortuna, Tskheli Shokoladi (Hot Chocolate), Tavisupleba (Liberty), Imedi, Utsnobi, Palitra, Voice of Abkhazia, Mtsvane Talga (Green Wave), Hereti, Atinati, Dzveli Kalaki (Old City)*.

The monitoring was held in four stages: May 11 – September 5 (from the beginning of monitoring until the registration of electoral subjects); September 6 – October 1 (from the registration of electoral subjects until the elections); October 2 - October 20 (from the elections until the approval of the new government); October 21 – November 26 (from the approval of the new government until the end of the project). It should be pointed out that the trends revealed during the monitoring were similar almost in all the radios. According to the summary results, the following key findings were made:

- ✓ Monitoring of the evening news releases clearly showed that the radio is a quite balanced and impartial media-segment;
- ✓ Evening news releases on the radios are characterized with the lack of direct coverage of monitoring subjects. Big part of the radio stations paraphrase the respondents' evaluations, or the journalists read out the quotes themselves (see the Diagram 1);

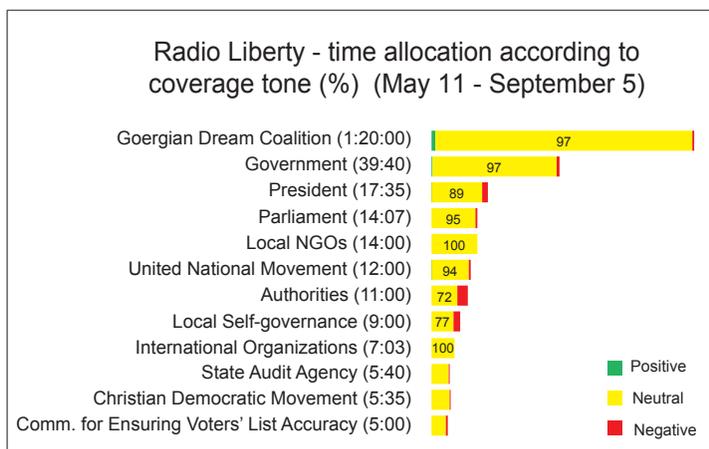
Diagram 1



- ✓ Most part of the radio stations are limited to brief news releases only and often the audience is not able to get exhaustive and analytical information;
- ✓ Reporters of the news releases make little evaluation about the topics covered in the report or about any particular subject, and mostly they are limited to facts reporting only. During the monitoring period, except for a few cases, there was no case of violating the journalistic standards, hate speech or biased coverage. This trend is equally applicable to all the twelve radios;
- ✓ According to the monitoring results, the radios are divided into two categories: radio channels distinguished with relatively diverse coverage (reports, direct coverage, footage with voice, live broadcasts): *Hereti, Liberty, Old City, Atinati, Green Wave, Palitra*, and those radios, which are characterized with their frequent usage of the "news" style coverage in the mode of "what, where, when" and indirect speech: *Radio 1, Imedi, Utsnobi, Voice of Abkhazia, Fortuna and Hot Chocolate*;

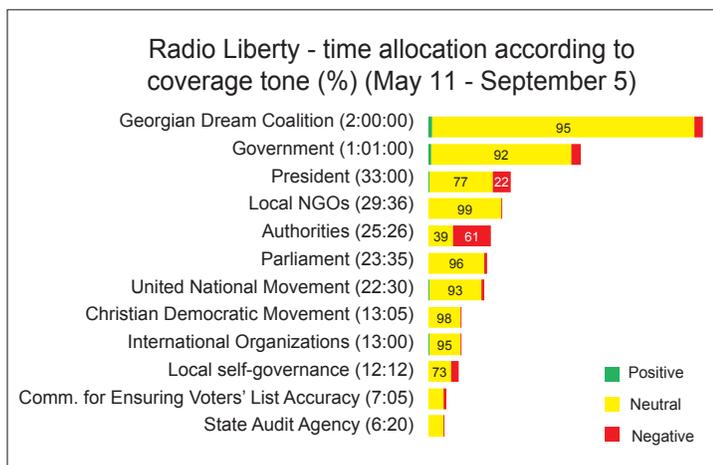
- ✓ There is a general feature among the radios: voices of respondents are less heard in the sound bites. Instead of letting the audience hear the quotes from speeches directly from the authors of statements, the anchors of news releases read them out themselves;
- ✓ *Utsnobi* is the only radio, where the anchors of news releases use the following presentation method before reading the quotes: “beginning/end of the quote”. Due to the lack of such style of presenting the quotes at other radios (this particularly applies to the radios with a little number of sound bites, and where the journalists read the statements made by the respondents themselves), it is often hard to differentiate the reporter’s text and the quote. It creates an impression that a statement by a certain political subject is a fact or a journalist’s opinion;
- ✓ Such style, which is characteristic to the news releases of the radios – when the reporters tell the news in a paraphrased way – often creates difficulties in regards of differentiating the facts from references made by others. Such approach of the media outlets contain a threat of hidden propaganda;
- ✓ It is notable that the average duration of the evening news releases is 3-7 minutes on the radios (the Radio Liberty is an exception with its 1 hour). Some radios manage to broadcast the reports, live coverage and sound bites with the respondents’ voices in short programs of several minutes. This means that 3-7 minutes is sufficient time for providing far more in-depth coverage to the audience;
- ✓ Intensity of coverage of political subjects on the radios is mostly linked to the ongoing processes in the country. During the period of May-November, such events were: shifts within the government, natural disaster, publicizing the covert recordings, prison scandal and elections;
- ✓ Tones used by the journalists were often neutral (see the Diagram 2), although cases of coverage of subjects with negative and positive tone were also observed during the monitoring period. To be more precise, it was not a biased coverage but rather a paraphrase of negative and, in general, critical evaluations and interpretation of facts, when the journalist was regarded to be a source of coverage;

Diagram 1



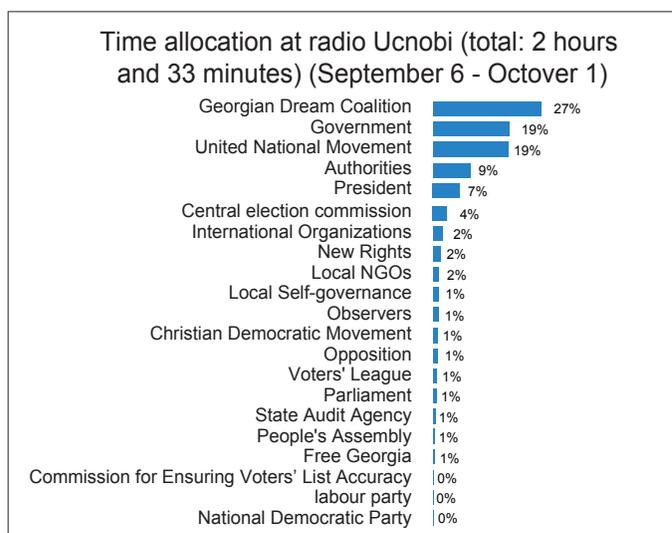
- ✓ Coverage with neutral tone prevailed at all the stages of the monitoring (see the Diagram 3); however, during the second monitoring period (September 6 – October 1), which coincided with the publication of covertly taped videos of prisoners torture and the prison scandal, significantly big dose of negative tone was observed. Such tone was used in regards to a particular subject through quotation or when one subject was talking about the other one;
- ✓ It is notable that the *authorities* is the only monitoring subject, which was mostly covered with negative tone;
- ✓ Positive tone was less used as compared to the neutral one. This was predominantly observed in the evaluations made by a subject about political activities and achieved results of his own or those of a certain political group. The positive tone was most often used for the *President*, *government*, *the United National Movement* and *the Coalition Georgian Dream*;

Diagram 3



- ✓ *Radio Imedi* and *Radio 1* allocated especially big time to the election activities of political parties. Besides, time distribution was mostly equal among the qualified political parties and main actors;
- ✓ The radios: *Palitra*, *Liberty*, *Green Wave* and regional radios *Atinati*, *Old City* and *Hereti* most often offered live broadcast;
- ✓ The regional radios *Hereti*, *Atinati* and *Old City* were distinguished with diversity of topics and they also allocated much attention to the large-scale events, also to the local social problems as well. The regional radios were distinguished with the frequency of direct coverage of subjects, sound bites of respondents and reports;
- ✓ As the elections got closer, it was more and more difficult to draw the line among the *United National Movement*, *the government* and *the Parliament*. The monitoring team laid special emphasis on the context in order to determine whether a particular subject represented a party or the government in this report;
- ✓ From the viewpoint of the allocated time, the *Coalition Georgian Dream* ranked first during May-November, which was usually (with different order) followed by the *United National Movement*, *the Government* and *the President*; *Radio 1* is the only exception, which allocated the largest portion of airtime directly to the political parties (see the Diagram 5);
- ✓ Compared to the *Coalition Georgian Dream* and the *United National Movement*, less airtime was allocated to other political parties. In most cases, cumulative time allocated to all the other parties could not even reach 5% of the total time at some radio stations during a particular monitoring period (see the Diagram 4).

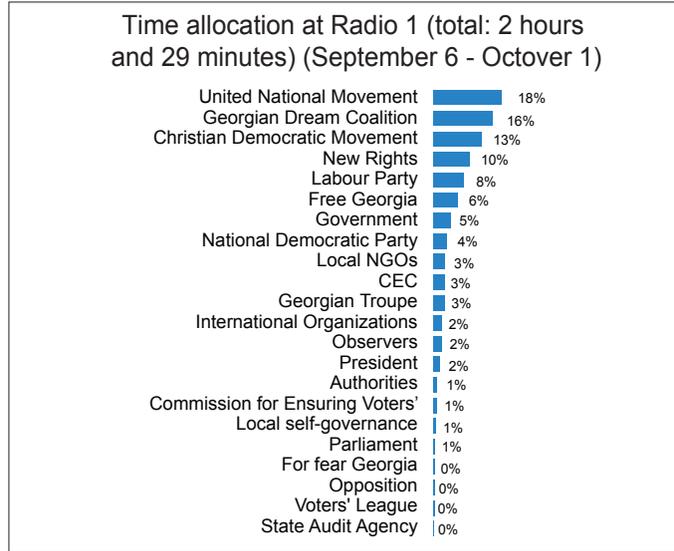
Diagram 4



# “Radio 1”

During the monitoring period, reports on the *Radio 1* are mostly descriptive and provide brief information to the audience mostly in the mode of “what, where, when”. The radio of the Public Broadcaster is the only one, where according to the allocated time other political parties (*New Rights, Christian-Democratic Movement, Labor Party, Free Georgia*) are leaders as well together with the *Coalition Georgian Dream* and the *United National Movement* (see the Diagram 5).

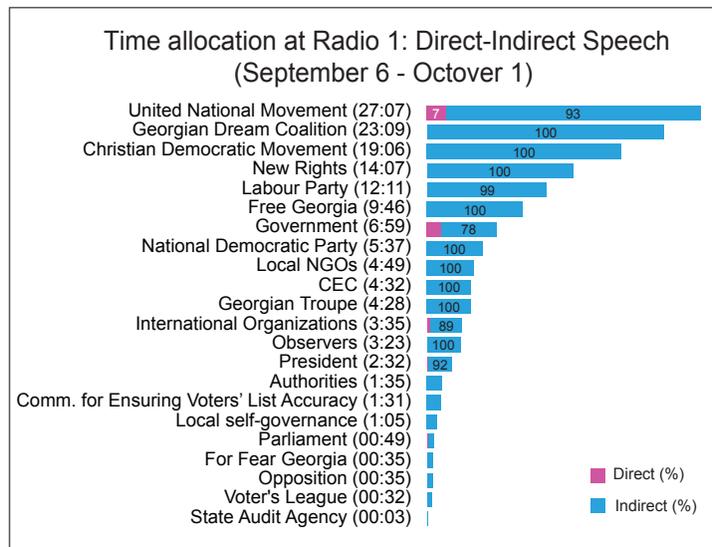
Diagram 5



There was no case of the violation of journalistic standards or biased reporting during the monitoring period. However, it should be pointed out that in fact, the respondents' voices were never heard in the evening news releases of *Radio 1*, and they were mostly covered indirectly (see the Diagram 6). The journalists provided information to the audience by reading out the quotes or by paraphrasing them.

There was an attempt in the news releases to allocate the airtime to the political parties with arithmetical precision, however, often only information of dry contents would be broadcasted in the reports and there was no possibility of getting any analytical information. There were cases when the attempt of artificial balancing was clearly evident.

Diagram 6



## Radio Fortuna

During the monitoring period, *Radio Fortuna* prepared 5-minute news releases, where the daily news was briefly reviewed. *Fortuna* is among those radios, where the coverage is done in a news format and the “what, where, when” kind of information is provided to the audience.

Despite the radio is quite balanced and there has not been any biased coverage during the monitoring period, there is an eye-catching tendency – very frequently used indirect speech. Besides, the anchors never inform the audience about when they are starting to read out the quote, and like the majority of radios, it is very difficult to distinguish among the fact, journalist’s text and quotation.

*Radio Fortuna* allocated the largest portion of airtime to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the government, the President and the United National Movement*, where the coverage tone was mostly neutral. In general, the *Radio Fortuna* was not distinguished with any biased attitude towards any political subject.

## Radio Hot Chocolate

This radio allocated quite little time to the coverage of political subjects. This trend was eye-catching from the very first monitoring period. According to the allocated time, the top subjects on the air of *Hot Chocolate* are: *the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government, the President and the United National Movement*; however, the speech was mostly indirect and the tone was neutral. Despite there was no biased reporting at the radio, it was difficult to distinguish among the fact, quote and the journalist’s text while reading the paraphrased statements and quotes by a journalist.

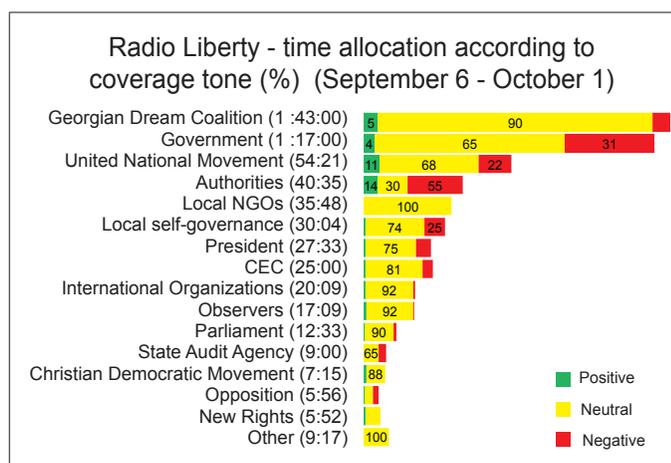
## Radio Liberty

*Radio Liberty*, due to the duration of its program, allocated the most time to the political subjects. As it was the case among the majority of other radios, *the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government and the United National Movement* are leaders here according to the allocated time. It is also noteworthy that the total time allocated to other parties often made only 5% of the total time allocated to the subjects.

Indirect speech prevailed in the evening news releases of the Radio Liberty. As for the coverage tone, it was mostly neutral (see the Diagram 3). However, the events taken place during the elections (covert wiretapping, prison scandal) caused the increased share of the negative tone (see the Diagram 7). Besides, it should be noted as well that this happened not because of the violation of journalistic standards and biased coverage, but rather due to the increase of negative and, in general, critical evaluations, which were provided by the journalists through the respondents’ sound bites, quotes or periphrases (see the Diagram 2).

During the monitoring period the *Radio Liberty* covered not only the events developed in the capital city, but also the stories of the local government. News items of *Radio Liberty* were usually balanced, however, one case of bias was revealed. It was the live broadcast from Ozurgeti on June 17, where the journalist covered the rally of the *Coalition Georgian Dream* in a very positive and biased way.

Diagram 7



## Radio Imedi

Monitoring on *Radio Imedi* was finished earlier than other radios (October 16). This was the consequence of replacing the owner of the organization, and suspending the radio operations due to the reorganization as well.

However, the monitoring of May 11 – October 16 showed that *Imedi* almost equally covered the *Government, the Coalition Georgian Dream* and *the President*.

*Imedi* belongs to the type of radios, where the events are covered in the mode of “what, where, when”. *Radio Imedi* allocated especially much time to the coverage of election activities of political parties. Besides, time was in most cases equally distributed between the qualified political parties and main actors. However, the coverage did not often provide possibility to get an in-depth analysis. Like the majority of radios, *Imedi* was characterized with the lack of sound bites and with the indirect coverage of respondents.

## Radio Utsnobi

In 5-minute news releases on *Utsnobi*, the largest share of airtime was dedicated to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the government, the United National Movement, the President* and *the authorities* (see the Diagram 4). There were instances of both direct and indirect coverage on this radio, but the indirect one was still most often used. The coverage tone was mostly neutral, although the picture became a little more diverse as the elections got closer.

During the monitoring period, there were not many sound bites with the respondents voices heard in the air of *Utsnobi*. Instead of transmitting the respondents' sound bites, the journalists of news releases would read the quotes from their speeches.

However, unlike other radios, *Utsnobi* is the only radio, where the anchors of news releases use the following method of presenting the quotes before reading them out: “beginning/end of the quote”. It is notable that this approach provides a possibility to differentiate among the journalist's text, quote and the fact, and also to avoid hidden agitation as well.

## Radio Palitra

During the monitoring period *Palitra* allocated quite much time to the coverage of political subjects. In total, the radio allocated the biggest share of time to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement, the President* and *the government*.

In regards to the direct and indirect speech, the picture on *Radio Palitra* was diverse; however, the indirect speech was still most often used one (see the Diagram 4). As far as the anchors delivered most part of the information at the news releases by paraphrasing or reading the quotes, it was difficult to draw a clear line between the journalist's text and reference of others.

There was a very diverse situation observed even in regards to the tone. There were cases of positive, neutral and negative coverage. During the monitoring period, the radio most often used negative tone for covering the *government, the President, the authorities* and *the Coalition Georgian Dream*.

## Radio Voice of Abkhazia

*Voice of Abkhazia* is among those radios which are characterized with brief news releases and there we did not encounter many reports, live broadcasts and comments with respondents' sound bites during the monitoring period. The journalists were limited to the paraphrases and reading of quotes.

From the viewpoint of the allocated time, *the Coalition Georgian Dream* is a leader on *Radio Voice of Abkhazia* together with *the United National Movement* and *the government*.

In regards to the direct and indirect speech, the indirect one prevailed in the news releases of *Voice of Abkhazia*. During the monitoring period, the coverage was mostly neutral. As for the reporters, their tone was actually neutral in 99% of cases.

## Radio Green Wave

During the monitoring period the *Radio Green Wave* was characterized with quite a balanced coverage. There were live broadcasts in the news releases and also the comments by the respondents were heard as well. Correspondingly, compared to some other radios, the share of direct coverage was high. However, in total, the indirect coverage was still prevailing.

According to the final results, the largest airtime was allocated to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement and the President*.

After the elections, as it was the case of other radios, the number of covered subjects decreased here too. For example, at the last monitoring stage (October 21 – November 26), which coincided with the detention of high-rank officials, there was no coverage at all about the activities of political parties other than the *Coalition Georgian Dream* and the *United National Movement*. During this monitoring period, most part of the news releases were dedicated to the issues of detaining the officials, although both sides were usually presented in the reports. There was no case of biased coverage at any of the monitoring stages.

## Radio Atinati

Like other regional radio stations, *Radio Atinati* paid much attention to the events taken place in the region. Parallel to the election processes, *Atinati* intensively covered the regional activities of political parties and their election campaign. In regards to the total allocated time, the radio provided the most airtime to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement, the government and the New Rights*.

Besides, the share of direct speech was relatively big, which became a characteristic feature of regional radios.

Journalists of the news releases make little evaluation about the topics or particular subjects covered in the report and they are mostly limited to the fact reporting. There was no case of violating the journalistic standards, hate speech or biased coverage during the monitoring period.

## Radio Hereti

*Radio Hereti* was distinguished with its diversity of topics right from the very beginning of the monitoring. Alongside with the election campaign, the radio paid much attention to the local news, also the processes developed in the region and at local municipalities. Correspondingly, out of the monitoring subjects, *Hereti* allocated the most time to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the President, the United National Movement and the local authorities*.

Unlike the majority of radios, there were frequent cases of direct speech by the monitoring subjects in the air of *Hereti*. The coverage tone was mostly neutral, but some cases of negative and positive coverage were also observed.

Other than thematic diversity, *Hereti* was also characterized with a big number of analytical reports, live broadcasts and sound bites with the respondents' voices. Besides, the *Radio Hereti* allocated much time to the topic of wiretapping and broadcasted the wiretap of Luka Kurtanidze twice, where he used evaluations containing the hate speech several times.

## Radio Old City

During the monitoring period, *Old City* was characterized with quite balanced releases. The radio allocated much airtime to the large-scale events and to the local social problems as well. In total, the biggest share of time was allocated to the *Coalition Georgian Dream, the United National Movement and the government*. *Old City* was also distinguished with the frequency of direct coverage of subjects, sound bites of respondents and reports.

Journalists of the news releases of *Old City* provided less evaluation to the topics covered in the news reports or to any particular subject, and they were only limited to the facts reporting.

## Conclusion

Seven-month monitoring of evening news releases enables us to boldly conclude that compared to other media, the radio is the most balanced and impartial segment.

However, as it was shaped during the monitoring, there turned out to be the other side to this positive fact among the radios – superficial coverage of news releases of “what, where, when” type, and the lack of stories, where the audience cannot listen to sound bites with the respondents’ voices. Majority of the radios provided evaluations with periphrases or the journalists read out the quotes. However, the journalists of news releases on the radios did not make their own evaluations for the topics covered in the report or for the particular subjects and were mostly limited to the facts reporting, still, the superficial nature of coverage and the lack of sound bites can be observed.

It is noteworthy that during the monitoring period, except for several few cases, there was no violation of journalistic standards, usage of hate speech or biased coverage. Despite this, it is important for the news services of the radios to pay attention to the findings revealed by this monitoring. First and foremost, this relates to the lack of sound bites. The whole beauty of radios is that they can give opportunity to the audience to listen to the comments of main actors of events directly, instead of reading quotes, or voicing the news provided to them by the news agencies.

Another important finding is about the difficulty of making difference between the journalist’s text and quote during the news releases on the radios. Sometimes the statement of any political subject would be delivered during the monitoring period so that it created an impression as if it were a fact or a journalist’s reference. *Utsnobi* is the only radio, where the anchors of news releases made the following presentation method before and after the quote: “beginning/end of the quote”. It is important to mainstream this style as a part of daily operations of all the other radios, because this will enable the media outlets to avoid the threat of hidden propaganda.

There are no arguments to support the widespread opinion that the short duration of news releases is the main cause for “what, where, when” type of coverage, lack of the reports and sound bites in the news releases of radios. This opinion is false which is also confirmed by the monitoring results as well. Average duration of evening news releases is 3-7 minutes on the radios (*Radio Liberty* is the exception – 1 hour). The monitoring has revealed that some radios manages to broadcast the reports, live shots and sound bites with the respondents’ voices in their few-minutes-long news releases. Thus, we can assume that 3-7 minutes are sufficient for delivering far more in-depth coverage to the audience. The radios should do their best to make their news releases much more diverse, and even if they are unable to prepare analytical reports, they should at least provide sound bites with the respondents’ voices to the audience.

Impartial and balanced policy of the news services of the radios clearly deserves appreciation. However, taking the above recommendations into consideration will help the radio segment to strengthen reliability among the public and to become even more important source of information.



# Results of the Monitoring of the Print Media

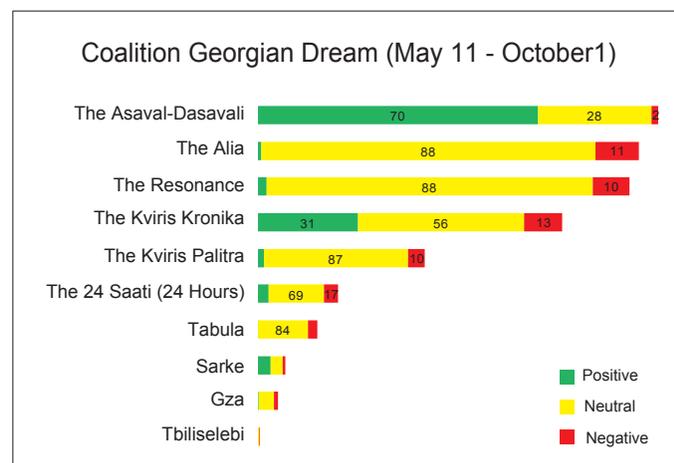
May 11– November 30, 2012

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) monitored the print media from May 11 until November 30 in regards to the coverage of political subjects. The monitoring was held in four stages: from May 11 until September 5; from September 6 until October 1; from October 2 until October 20; from October 21 until November 30. In total, 10 print media outlets were monitored: daily newspapers – The Resonance, The 24 Saati (the 24 Hours), weekly newspapers – the Kviris Palitra, the Kviris Kronika, the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali and the weekly magazines – Tabula, Gza, Tbiliselebi, and Sarke. The magazine Tabula had a break for a month in August, and it became a monthly publication as of November.

## Key Findings

- ✓ During the whole monitoring period, the most actively covered subject was the Coalition Georgian Dream in almost all the publications. The elections did not really affect its coverage tone. The neutral tone prevailed towards it both before and after the elections (see the Diagrams 1, 2). They also actively covered: the Presidents, the government, and the United National Movement. During all the four monitoring periods, relatively less attention was paid to other political parties participating in the elections. The space allocated to them is significantly less than the space allocated to the Coalition and to the United National Movement in almost all the publications.

Diagram 1



- ✓ In various outlets, the coverage tone of the subject 'government' was affected by the changes within the composition of the government (see the Diagrams 3, 4), and the negative tone has been prevailing towards the President both before and after the elections (see the Diagrams 5, 6).
- ✓ Cases of unethical expressions and hate speech were revealed in the outlets: the Alia, the Kviris Kronika and the Asaval-Dasavali. There were also cases observed, when the private information of individuals was used without permission, and when the politicians were directly blamed of particular violations without referring to any reliable evidences. In these outlets the cases of hate speech started to prevail particularly after the release of videos about torturing people at prisons.
- ✓ Other than vocabulary, the illustrations were also actively used for expressing the negative disposition as well.
- ✓ Despite the change of authority, the criticism of the United National Movement and its representatives still continued after the

Diagram 2

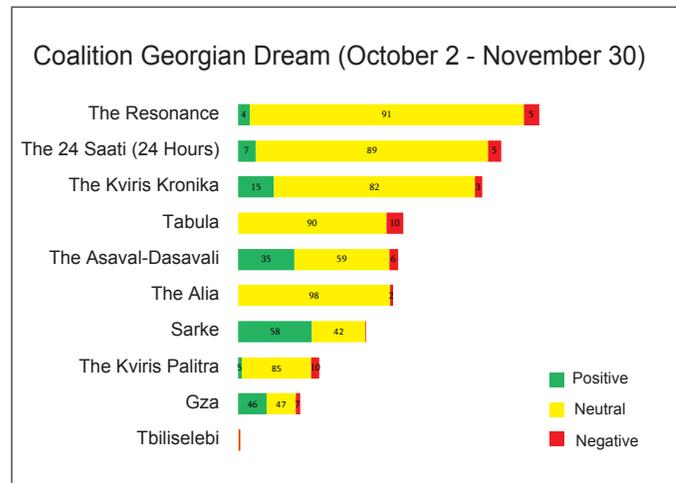


Diagram 3

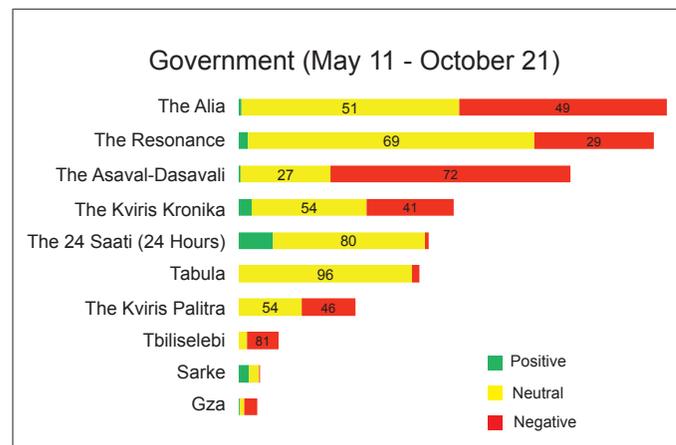
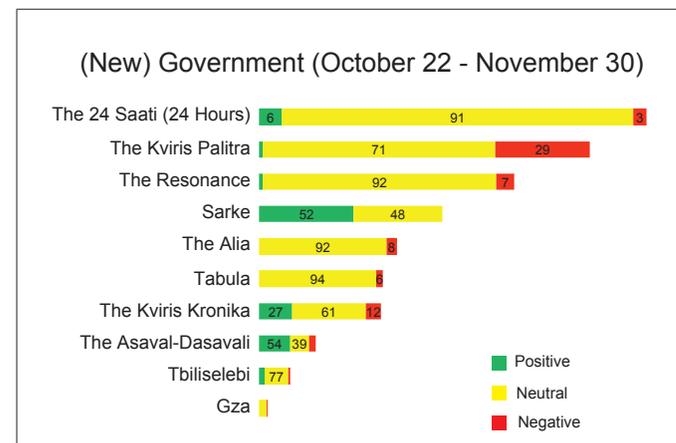


Diagram 4



elections in the Alia, the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris Kronika. The particular hate was expressed towards the first official of the country for the whole 7 months.

- ✓ The newspapers: the Resonance, the 24 Hours, the Kviris Palitra and the magazine Tabula were trying to cover the political events taking place in the country from different angles and by observing the journalistic standards.
- ✓ In some outlets it is difficult to differentiate between the author's column and the article.
- ✓ Not only the newspapers, but also the weekly magazines used irony and negative tone when writing about politicians and political events in their author's rubric. The number of personal interviews with various political leaders increased slightly during the election period.

## Daily Publications

### The Resonance

According to the distribution of space among the subjects, there is a similar tendency from the beginning of the monitoring until the approval of the new government. During the whole monitoring process before the elections (May 11 – October 1), also during the next period after the elections until the activation of the Parliament (October 2 – October 21) the largest space was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream and then to the so called subjects representing the authorities: the government, the parliament, the President and the United National Movement. The distribution of spaces changed only after the approval of the government (October 22 – November 30), as far as those members of the Coalition, who were actively covered before the elections, now had their statuses changed, and the space allocated to them is now assigned to the subject 'government' instead the party. Correspondingly, after the approval of the government, the largest space among the subjects was allocated to the government.

Neutral tone prevails in regards to the subjects in the Resonance. However, there is also the negative tone observed and the scarcity of positive tone is eye-catching as well. This tendency is maintained during the whole monitoring period even after separate tabulation of the data regarding the journalist's tone. It is noteworthy that the critical opinions expressed in reference to the politicians never go beyond the ethical norms. This was the result identified during the qualitative analysis while observing the language of the journalist/article.

The Resonance also tried to provide the readers with verified information and facts covered from different angles. The newspaper clearly tried to ensure that the published materials met basic journalistic standards, although some violations were observed during seven months of the monitoring. The author's columns published in this outlet were always separated from the works of journalists, which can be appreciated positively, as far as in this case the bias is avoided and the reader knows from the very beginning that s/he will get familiar with the thinking of a particular person in the presented material.

### The 24 Hours

As the result of 7-month monitoring period, the neutral tone towards the subjects was revealed to be a key trend in the 24 Hours. However, the positive tone towards the political parties increased during the period just before the elections. This can be linked to the fact that during that period of time all the political parties were conducting their election campaigns, and while covering their meetings, positive tone was expressed by the political subjects themselves towards their political organizations.

There are almost always a big number of positions in regards to certain issues in large articles, and the article always has more than two sources.

It should be pointed out that the 24 Hours did not omit any significant event taking place during these months. However, we also need to say that the 24 Hours is limited to the provision of facts only and it does not offer an in-depth analysis of the issue to the reader. During the project, the outlet only published several analytical articles. Moreover, neither do we see any columns in the newspaper.

# Weekly Publications

## The Alia

The Coalition Georgian Dream and old authorities (the government, the Parliament and the United National Movement), also the President were covered with almost equal intensity in the Alia during the elections. During the post-elections period, the new cabinet of ministers and its activities were more actively covered instead of the Coalition, although quite much attention was paid to the United National Movement and the President. This outlet is distinguished with its critical attitude to almost all the political subjects. In this outlet the positive tone is very scarce both during and after the elections. The prevalence of negative tone is eye-catching towards the old authorities and the President. The attention and negative tone to the United National Movement and the old authorities did not decrease even after the change of authorities.

The negative attitude towards the subject is revealed not only by the respondents also by the journalists as well. For expressing the negative attitude, the authors of the articles were not limited to the criticism only and referred to unethical expressions too, which can be evaluated as usage of hate speech. There were many insulting expressions observed in the Alia for 7 months, which were addressed to certain politicians. Other than the vocabulary, illustrations were also used for stating the negative attitude.

In regards to the qualitative analysis, it is noteworthy that the information published in the Alia is sometimes based on the source, which is unfamiliar to the readers. Such sources are referred to by the journalist as “reliable” or anonymous. On doing this, we fail to see the journalist’s attempt to double-check this information with other public sources. Dissemination of unverified materials, which had been received from unidentified sources, at certain extent, supports spreading of rumors within the public, because the information received this way gives opportunities to the readers for more interpretations.

## The Kviris Palitra

The newspaper Kviris Palitra offers not only the brief news to the readers about the ongoing political events, but also their analysis and columns as well, where the journalists give subjective evaluation to the facts. Various types of publications are clearly separated from one another, which makes it easier for the reader to make a choice.

In regards to the coverage of monitoring subjects, results of the Kviris Palitra after the elections were different from those of the pre-election period. Namely, the most actively covered subject was the Coalition Georgian Dream before the elections, but during the days right after the elections, the most covered subjects were the President and the CEC; after the approval of the new government the main emphasis was laid on the new cabinet of ministers. We need to point out as well that the significant part of the space allocated to the CEC after the elections, is attributed to the advertisements of the Election Commission.

In regards to the subject coverage tone, the Kviris Palitra does not stand out by positive mentioning of any of them. Such positive tone was observed towards the new government, but after separating the journalist’s tone it was revealed that other subjects or the government members themselves talked positively about the government. In other cases, the tone towards politicians is either neutral or negative. It should be pointed out that before and after the elections the most share of the negative tone was attributable to the President and to the old composition of the government and to the United National Movement as well.

As the result of the qualitative analysis during the monitoring process, it is possible to say that the journalists of the Kviris Palitra tried to observe the journalistic standards both before and after the elections. However, we need to stress that there were some articles published in this newspaper during the monitoring period, which were distinguished with scarcity of sources.

The language of articles is neutral in the Kviris Palitra, and sometimes the journalist is writing about a certain event or a fact with a critical tone.

## The Kviris Kronika

The Coalition Georgian Dream was the most actively covered subject in the Kviris Kronika before the elections. The newspaper prepared large reports about every rally organized by this political organization in the regions. Before announcing the Election Day, this newspaper published a multi-page interview with Bidzina Ivanishvili, which significantly affected the total amount of the space allocated to the Coalition. There has not been any such large interview published during the monitoring period with any of the political leaders, which represented the monitoring subject. The President and the United National Movement were also actively covered in the Kviris Kronika, but unlike the Coalition Georgian Dream, the tone was sharply different towards them. Whereas

the Coalition Georgian Dream was covered in most cases with neutral and sometimes with positive tone, in case of the President and the United National Movement the dominating tone was negative during all the stages of monitoring, both before and after the elections. Other political organizations were more or less depicted in neutral context in this outlet.

According to the qualitative characteristics, it is noteworthy that the outlet often referred to anonymous and 'reliable' sources for disseminating some information. The material provided this way are mostly scandalous, but the information is not or could not be verified with any other identified source, because of which we are dealing with the dissemination of unverified information.

The language of journalist/article is unethical in the Kviris Kronika quite often. There were also the cases of hate speech by the respondents and the journalists as well.

In this newspaper, sometimes only the journalists are the sources of some articles and in some cases the article does very much look like the column, but as far as it is not indicated anywhere, it was impossible to isolate them during the monitoring process or to evaluate them with respective criteria.

There were many articles published in the newspaper that provided one-sided coverage of the fact. However, we should also point out that the journalist almost always states readiness to allocate space to other sides related to this issue.

## The Asaval-Dasavali

The largest space was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream in the Asaval-Dasavali during the whole election period. Even after the elections this party was more actively covered than other subjects, but after the approval of the new government, this outlet allocated the most attention to the government. Significant share of the space allocated to the monitoring subjects is dedicated to the President, the United National Movement and the former government.

In regards to the subject coverage tone, there is an eye-catching prevalence of positive tone for the Coalition Georgian Dream and the negative coverage for the President and the former authorities. Such tendency of tone distribution is revealed in the diagrams of both overall tone and the journalist's tone.

The qualitative analysis revealed that the language of journalist/article is often unethical, especially towards the President and the representatives of the United National Movement.

Various journalists have stated before the elections that there was a chance for the country to be saved if the Coalition came into power. After the authorities were changed in the country through the elections, the Asaval-Dasavali has been actively requesting the court trial and prohibition of the United National Movement in the country.

For some part of the articles published in the Asaval-Dasavali, the journalist is the only source of information and the facts are not double-checked. Such publications often look like the columns, but there is no such reference made anywhere, and they are evaluated as other journalistic works.

Other than the above-mentioned, the Asaval-Dasavali is often using an anonymous source, but the information received from such sources is not or could not be verified with other identified sources. Sometimes the newspaper publishes scandalous information without referring to any source, which at certain extent supports the dissemination of unverified information.

## Weekly Magazines

### Tabula

Among the monitoring subjects, the Coalition Georgian Dream was most actively covered in Tabula, but then it was the government that was covered most of all after the approval of the new government. The outlet also paid significant attention to the President. Among other political parties, the magazine covered the following ones during the elections: the United National Movement, the People's Assembly, the Labor Party, the New Rights and Christian-Democratic Movement.

In regards to the tone, Tabula is distinguished with its prevalence of neutral tone. In regards to certain subjects, namely, the former government, the new government and the Coalition Georgian Dream, there were also positive tone reported from time to time,

but after separating the journalist's tone it was revealed that such attitude was not attributed to the journalist, but to other sources instead: politicians, authors of the columns or the experts.

Tabula stands out with its numerous analytical articles and columns. The journalists tried to observe standards in the articles and to provide multi-faceted coverage and analysis for various political events.

We do not encounter unethical expressions in this magazine. The negative tone by the journalists is mostly revealed in the columns. This trend was observed before the elections and was maintained after the elections as well.

It is noteworthy that the outlet used to be a weekly magazine at the beginning of the monitoring. They announced a break for a month in August, and then shifted to monthly publishing after November.

## Tbiliselebi

From the viewpoint of the space allocated to the subjects, results of the magazine Tbiliselebi are different from other outlets in almost all the periods. Before the elections, the largest space was dedicated to the Christian-Democratic Movement, but after the elections the most active coverage, like other outlets, was provided for the Coalition Georgian Dream and then to the government. The tone was mostly negative towards the subjects, which was also observed after making a separate analysis of the journalist's tone. The negative tone mostly is attributed to the author's rubric "Press of the Week", where the author is using humor and irony to write about the political events of previous week. Positive tone towards the subjects is expressed as the result of the face-to-face interviews, but we need to mention here as well that the journalist's tone is neutral in such articles.

As far as the rubric "Press of the Week" belongs to a particular author, it could not be evaluated with standard qualitative criteria.

## Gza

Materials in the magazine Gza are mostly published in the author's rubric "Provocateur". The journalist writes about the current events with irony, and criticizes both the representatives of the authorities and the opposition as well. The most frequently covered subject in this outlet was the Coalition Georgian Dream both before and after the elections, but quite much space was allocated to other subjects as well, for example, to the United National Movement and to the President.

The tone towards the Coalition was neutral during the elections, but as for the subjects among authorities (the President, the government, the authorities), here the negative tone prevailed. After the elections the negative tone still prevailed only in case of the President, and basically the neutral tone was observed in regards to all the remaining subjects.

As for the journalist's tone, it should be noted that they did not express any positive tone towards any subject.

## Sarke

There is little material published on political topics in Sarke, but this outlet presents the politicians in different and non-political highlight, which is quite important during the elections period.

The Coalition Georgian Dream was the most often covered subject in Sarke among others both before and after the elections. After the approval of the new government, the largest space was allocated directly to this very subject. Other than the Coalition, no less attention was paid to the President, the Parliament and the United National Movement, and also to the Christian-Democratic Movement during the first period (May 11 – September 5).

The tone towards the Coalition Georgian Dream was mostly neutral, but there was also quite high rate of positive tone as well, which was related to the face-to-face interviews, which the magazine took from various members of the Coalition.

In regards to other subjects, the tone was diverse in different periods. For example, there was positive tone observed towards the Christian-Democratic Movement before the elections, but no space was allocated to them at all after the elections. The neutral tone prevailed towards the President before the elections, but during the days right after the elections the negative tone increased. We need to say as well that this negative tone did not belong to the author, which was confirmed after separate tabulation of the data on the journalist's tone. In regards to the United National Movement the neutral tone prevailed before the elections, but then the positive tone increased after the elections.

Journalists of the magazine Sarke tried to provide multifaceted coverage of events, but there were articles published during the 7-month monitoring period, where the facts were not verified and neither was there numerous sources observed.

## Conclusion

Monitoring of the press in 2012 revealed that the Georgian print media outlets, which were being monitored, enabled the readers to get familiar with diverse information and different visions in regards to various issues. The publications did cover almost all the significant events taken place in the country.

According to the quantitative analysis, almost all the media outlets unequally covered the political parties participating in the elections. This is especially important directly during the election period, when the voters should be provided with the maximum extent of exhaustive information about every candidate and the programs of political parties participating in the elections, so that they can make an informed choice.

In regards to the qualitative observation, the most considerable thing is the unethical vocabulary, which the journalists are using in reference to the political subjects. Dissemination of unverified and undoublechecked information created another hindrance in regards to informing the readers in a right way, because many facts like this was uncovered in various print outlets.

As far as the media outlets play a very big role in enabling the voters to make their final choice during the elections, it is desirable for the printed media to publish facts without any bias and to allocate more attention to the verification of information available to them.

Diagram 5

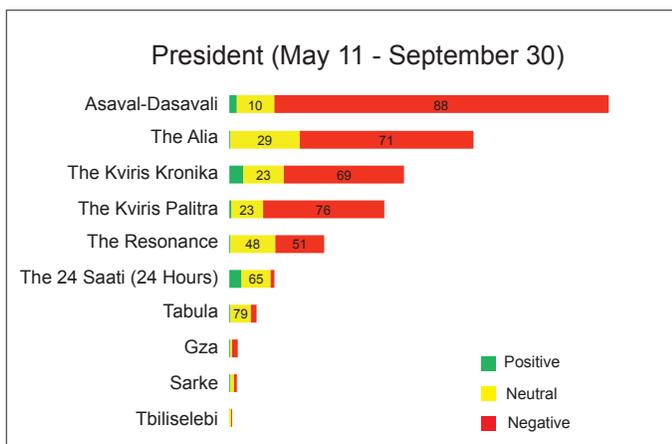
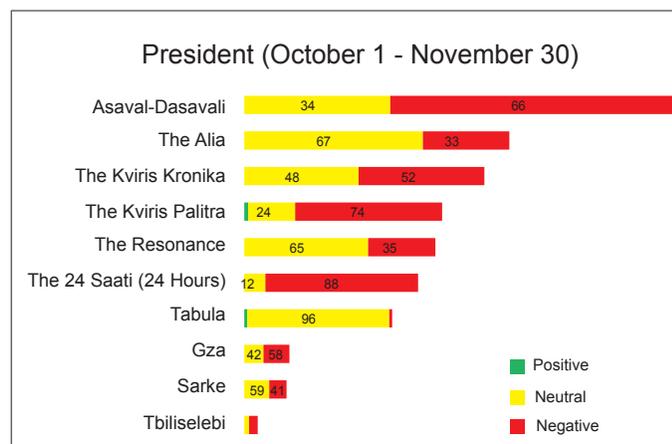


Diagram 6



# Results of Monitoring of Online Media

July 16 – November 30, 2012

Civic Development Institute has monitored 12 news portals from July 16 until November 30, 2012. Monitoring of online media was carried out in four stages: from July 16 until September 5; from September 6 until October 1; from October 2 until October 20; from October 21 until November 30. Following websites were selected for the monitoring: netgazeti.ge, droni.ge, internet.ge, liberali.ge, news.ge, presa.ge, civil.ge, tabula.ge, tribuna.ge (the website was shut down on August 29), onlinenews.ge (from August 29), for.ge, dfwatch.net, and palitratv.ge.

The monitoring resulted in the following key findings:

- ✓ During the monitoring period the online media actively covered the election campaign of political parties, also the polling day and subsequent events as well.
- ✓ The online media provided the most intensive coverage for the activities of the government, the President, the National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream.
- ✓ Except some cases, the websites provided more or less impartial and balanced coverage of the news.
- ✓ Frequent cases of violation of ethical norms and those of journalistic standards were observed only on droni.ge, for.ge and presa.ge; other websites observed the journalistic standards at some extent.
- ✓ The polling day and subsequent events were regularly covered by all the selected websites.
- ✓ Since the polling day until the approval of the Parliament (October 1-21) the ratio of neutral tone towards the electoral subjects has significantly increased.
- ✓ Number of subjects covered on the website has significantly decreased after the elections; the political parties, which lost the elections, were hardly covered, e.g. the New Rights, Christian-Democratic Party, etc.
- ✓ The focus of coverage on the websites was changed after the elections, and the online media started to lay more emphasis on the coverage of activities of the government instead of covering the parties. As a consequence, unlike other monitoring periods, it was the government that had more frequent coverage compared to other subjects after the elections.
- ✓ The most widespread form of violation of journalistic standards was the subjective reasoning of journalists, and deficit of differentiating the comments from references or the lack of accuracy of facts. Often there was no balance of sources either.
- ✓ During the monitoring period, there was a tendency identified when the statements made by public officers in social networks were used as a source of articles on some websites. These statements did not often have any public significance and referred to an 'adventure', or personal matter of a particular public figure. There was also a problem of differentiating the facts from references, which was observed when the website used the particular public or non-public person's so called Facebook status as an official opinion. News.ge was especially distinguished with the articles written based on the social networks and particularly Facebook statuses.

## Netgazeti.ge

Basically, the analytical articles were posted on netgazet.ge during the monitoring period, with news and press releases as well. While covering the news, the articles were accompanied with the comments of a journalist or respondents. The articles mostly provided in-depth coverage of events. The editorial board covered the issues of current significance from different angles. Journalistic ethics and balance were observed in the materials and numerous sources were used. Netgazet.ge tried not to use unverified information. The website provided different positions. Critical articles of the journalists did not go beyond the ethical norms and was based on grounded judgment. In total, the editorial board of the website tried to provide information in a timely manner and to analyze the events as well.

During the elections, editorial board of netgazeti.ge actively covered the election programs of leading political parties, e.g. "agriculture – a real priority or an election PR-strategy?" (September 8). The events were provided on the site in an exhaustive and balanced way.

Netgazet.ge adequately covered the release of prison videos and subsequent events. The editorial board paid due attention to the primary and secondary information about this issue. Sharp increase of news materials was observed on the website during this period. Journalists of netgazet.ge laid main focus on the condition of prisoners and a public protest. This topic was covered in an impartial and coherent manner.

The website provided a neutral and balanced coverage of the polling day. Often the facts provided in the article were supported by the video materials.

After the approval of the new government, critical attitude towards the new government increased on netgazet.ge. Despite this, we did not observe any unethical expressions or unbalanced information in the materials.

From the viewpoint of the volume, the Coalition Georgian Dream was a leader during the first monitoring period, mostly with a neutral tone. After the elections, the Coalition remained to be actively covered from the standpoint of the volume, and again with neutral tone. However, the negative tone increased towards the members of this party, now as representatives of the new government, as compared to previous periods. As for the United National Movement, the negative tone was used towards them when they had power, but then this indicator decreased, although in general the criticism towards them was still high.

The headlines on the website were neutral and descriptive, and adequately expressed main essence of the article. Often the articles did not have any visual material attached, and only the texts were posted. However, in case of illustrations, the website used neutral photo and video materials.

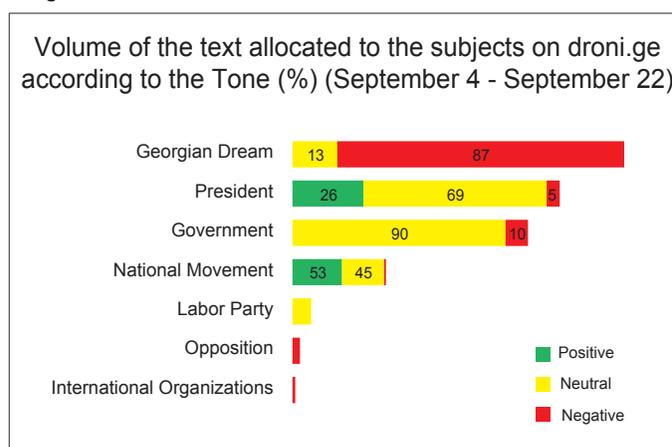
Mostly, the materials posted on the website were based on facts, and the main topics were presented in a constructive and balanced way. The journalists tried as much as they could to use multiple sources and to present different positions. Their criticism was often based on well-grounded reasoning.

## Droni.ge

During the monitoring period, we mostly encountered evaluative articles on droni.ge, where the bias of journalists was evident. News articles were seldom posted and the number of materials was low. The website did not comprehensively reflect the ongoing events. Journalistic standards were regularly violated on droni.ge during the monitoring period; and selective attitude towards facts was revealed, also hate speech was used by the journalists, and cynical illustrations were posted among the visual materials, and aggressive headlines and subjectivism were also observed. Little number of sources on the website and inability to verify the facts was something that characterized during the whole monitoring period. We often encountered the materials, which were completely based on the statuses posted by unofficial persons in social networks. Lately, even similar rubrics appeared, e.g. "Facebook-photo of the day" (November 4). The website tried to identify the Coalition Georgian Dream with Russia, which was not supported with arguments and represented the journalist's subjective opinion only. This website had clearly expressed attitudes while covering the political subjects, namely: positive – towards the United National Movement and negative – towards the Coalition Georgian Dream (see the Diagram 1).

The elections period was especially distinguished with an imbalanced material. The negative tone prevailed towards Bidzina Ivanishvili (with cynical and unethical photo materials and headlines). The editorial board subjectively selected and reviewed the facts about the opposition of that time; however, they covered the election campaign of the United National Movement in a completely neutral or positive tone.

Diagram 1



It is noteworthy that after disseminating the prison violence videos, droni.ge mostly laid its focus on the administrative measures and statements made by the authorities. The website showed very little information about protest rallies or conditions of prisoners. On the polling day the increased number of news materials was observed on the website. The editorial board of the website was biased while providing facts or making focus, but no more bias was observed on the polling day and during the subsequent short-term period.

After electing the new government, materials of various sizes were posted on droni.ge, which were mostly of evaluative nature. We should note that the articles were not supported with facts or respondents' arguments, and they were often based on anonymous sources. During the last monitoring period there was a change observed in the journalists' tone: during the election days the journalists' tone became softer for some time towards the Coalition Georgian Dream, but then it became unethical and aggressive again.

During the whole monitoring period, the main subject was the Coalition Georgian Dream on droni.ge, which was mostly covered with negative tone. After the elections, the negative tone sharply increased towards the Coalition Georgian Dream as a government. As for the President and the United National Movement, mostly the neutral and positive tone prevailed towards them during the whole monitoring period.

During the whole monitoring period we often encountered the respondents' quotes or journalists' evaluations used as headlines. The editorial board was using politically incorrect and insulting headlines, basically towards the Coalition Georgian Dream, e.g. "Dreams instead the change" (November 22); "Play Ossetian, Bidzina has come!.." (September 14)

During the monitoring period, the website often used photos or videos as visual materials. Unethical photos were posted in the articles written about the Coalition Georgian Dream. Besides, the unbalanced information also prevailed on the website together with one-sided and unverified facts, which would often become the subject of the discussion for the whole article, and was misleading the reader.

During the monitoring period, opinions of the journalists of droni.ge were distinguished with their clear bias. It was characterized with aggressive and cynical tone towards particular political subjects, because of which the website became one of the clearest examples of violation of journalistic ethics and principles.

## Internet.ge

Brief news, press releases of official structures and small-size articles prevailed on the website during the monitoring period. Analytical articles were quite rare. Internet.ge was distinguished with its diversity of topics in connection to the electoral subjects, e.g. nomination of majoritarian candidates, meetings during the elections, initiatives of the CEC, activities of the NGOs.

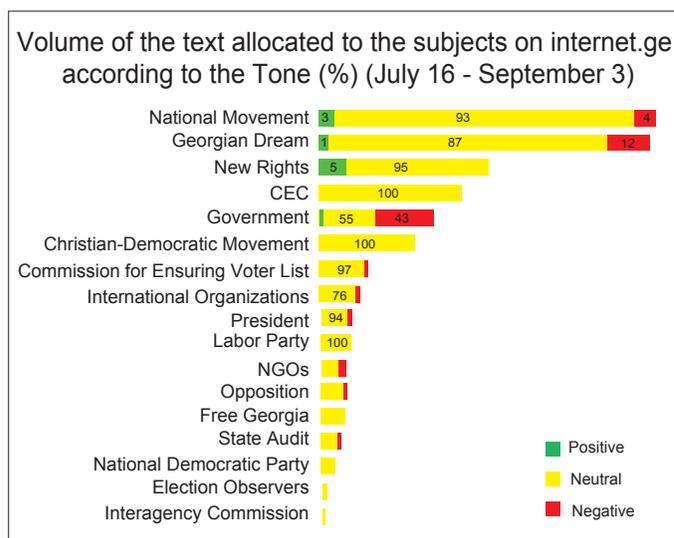
Tabulation of quantitative data resulted in identifying two electoral political subjects: the National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream. Other subjects were represented with quite a low ratio. The journalists mostly used neutral tone during the election period (see the Diagram 5), but there were some exceptions – while covering the rallies and meetings with the population, the journalist's negative tone was observed towards the leaders of the Georgian Dream. After the elections, the negative tone sharply increased towards the new government. The President was regularly covered with neutral tone.

Diagram 5.

On spreading the videos about prisoners torture in the prison, on September 18-22, the information was covered only according to the press releases provided by the official structures, and we did not observe any evaluations made by the representatives of the opposition parties. It was only on September 20, when the statement of Bidzina Ivanishvili was spread, who addressed the public and called for peace. During subsequent days, the President's appeals and statements of official structures were regularly spread on the website.

Coverage of the polling day was of informative nature on internet.ge. The website was limited to providing brief news from the CEC. It also provided the news from the regions about the voter turnout, party leaders and the choice made by them. It should be pointed out that on the polling day, in the evening, a clearly expressed negative tone was observed towards the opposition parties on the website.

Diagram 5



We often encountered the accusations expressed towards the Coalition Georgian Dream not only on the polling day, but also afterwards. These facts were not verified with sources.

After the polling day, the information on staffing the new government was covered with much intensity, together with the activities of the National Movement, their evaluations and comments regarding the ongoing events. During this period the negative tone became more frequent on the website towards the members of the new government.

## Liberali.ge

Monitoring on the website liberali.ge was performed in regards to the sections of the news and articles. Journalists of the website tried to provide multifaceted and exhaustive coverage of current events and to observe the journalistic standard.

The articles are based on the facts and they have more than one source. Different positions are provided on the website. The articles are free from the bias, and the facts and comments are clearly differentiated. Critical articles of the journalists do not go beyond the ethical norms and they are based on the grounded reasoning. Journalists of Liberali often provide information in the news section from the hotspots of events. Editorial board of the website especially tried to provide timely information and analysis of events in the second half of the monitoring.

Out of the monitoring subjects, during the monitoring period the website liberali.ge allocated almost equal volume to the Coalition Georgian Dream, the National Movement, the old and new composition of the government and also to the Central Election Commission. However, the Coalition Georgian Dream was the most actively covered subject.

After summing up the data of the journalist's tone in the articles of liberali.ge, it was revealed that they were preparing the materials only with neutral tone. We only have different tone where the respondents and authors of the quotes are speaking. In these cases, mostly the negative and rarely the positive tones are identified.

Photo materials and headlines are mostly neutral and descriptive on the website. We often see the collection of photos about various interesting events, which gives quite exhaustive information to a reader.

In the news section we mostly see the materials about new events. In the beginning of the election period, the themes were quite dissimilar. Liberali.ge provided information to the readers about the election campaigns of electoral subjects. However, there was one leading topic that stood out – electoral violations (usage of administrative resource by the authorities, unpurposeful spending of budgetary funds, facts of influencing the voters, etc.). During this monitoring period, we did not encounter any discussion of the programs of electoral subjects or any in-depth analysis.

As the elections got closer, the website opted for a different mode of operations and became more diverse. This trend continued even on the polling day and was maintained for subsequent days. Number of the news increased about the activities of the CEC

and NGOs, party ratings, international observers and voter lists. Main emphasis was shifted to the electoral issues, violations and possible rigging of the elections.

During the last days of September (September 18-22), after the release of prisoner torture videos, there were more intensively published pieces of information about the conditions at prisons. While covering the processes taking place within the penitentiary system, there were also other materials, which needed additional verification.

On the polling day, on October 1, the website shifted to an emergency mode of operations. Liberali.ge intensively covered the elections, and had its correspondents sent to several regions, and disseminated diverse information directly from the precincts during the day. Current events taken place during the days were completely and exhaustively covered in the summary article posted at the end of the day.

An important change was observed in regards to the respondents after staffing the new government – comments of the representatives of state structures (minister, deputy minister) were more frequently encountered than during the election period. Liberali's journalists paid much attention to the discussion of specific points in the electoral program of the Coalition Georgian Dream with the support of experts – issues on education, draft law on amnesty, issue of halving the tariffs, etc.

In regards to the language of the article, we did not encounter any unethical or discriminating terms on the website. The qualitative monitoring showed that the journalists mostly provided a holistic coverage of this or that issue. In some cases it is possible to see that the author of the article gets information from different sources. Second part of the monitoring period was distinguished with a big number of subjects. Journalists of liberali.ge, compared to other websites, provided information from a clearly different angle, and a topical event of the day was often followed by a summary article at the end of the day, which enabled the reader to get exhaustive information about a certain event.

## News.ge

The website news.ge looks like news agency, where the information is gathered in various rubrics. Correspondingly, during the monitoring period we mostly used to see brief informative articles, which rarely contained analysis/review. As far as the website is operating in the mode of a news agency, the facts and events-based coverage was the main tendency. However, we need to point out that at some point of time we observed a big number of articles which the journalists prepared based on the statuses of some people in the social network Facebook, and, correspondingly, the information was not double-checked. In addition, we also came across with some instances during the monitoring period, where the accuracy of facts and/or their interpretation could have been disputable.

For the last stage of the monitoring, the frequency ratios of subjects coverage on the website is sharply different from the picture we had at the beginning stage of the monitoring. At the beginning of the monitoring, the total volume of coverage, basically, was distributed between two political forces: Georgian Dream and the United National Movement. The government, Parliament and the President, also the local governance occupied only a small portion of total coverage. However, at the end of the monitoring, the government has the biggest share in the total volume of coverage, and then comes the United National Movement and the Georgian Dream with a little difference in their respective percentage indicators. This tendency is easy to explain: the whole efforts were focused on the activities of parties before the elections, but after the elections the whole emphasis was laid on the approval of the new government and then – to their performance.

As for the coverage tone, during the monitoring the increased negative tone was observed towards the United National Movement, which was largely caused by the release of prison videos before the elections, and after the approval of the new government – coverage of the detention of high-rank officials and the statements given against them. Mostly the neutral tone was observed towards the government, which was the most frequently covered subject during the last period of the monitoring.

After spreading the scandalous videos about the torture of prisoners, the journalist's tone did not become sharply negative towards the authorities (which was often clearly seen on other websites). It is notable that in the very first article dedicated to this topic, more emphasis was laid on the video materials released initially by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, than on the videos spread by the TV companies at a later stage.

The website provided a broad coverage of events on the polling day. Compared to other days, the frequency of articles was evident. Special emphasis was laid on the electoral violations. It should be mentioned that the authors were more referring to the

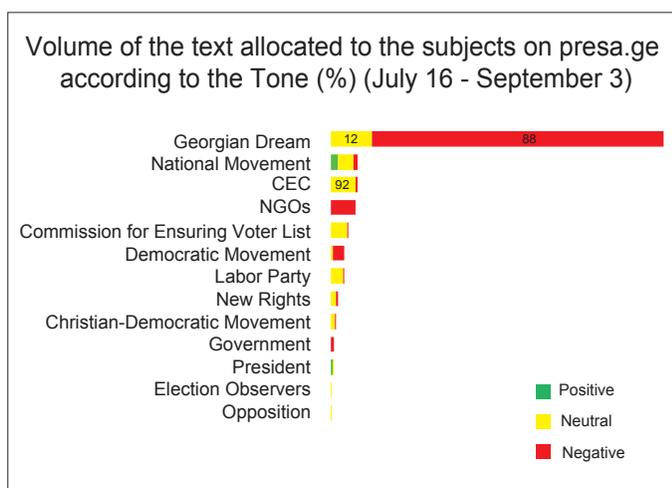
violations stated by the National Movement or the Georgian Dream, and not on the facts revealed by the observer organizations. In regards to the violations, there was a defensive manner of coverage for the favor of the National Movement. For instance, some of the articles related to the electoral violations, presented only one side – the National Movement, which was proving they were right, and there was no mentioning of the fact itself, because of which so called “self-justification” was needed, or the opposite opinion either.

During the period after the elections, when the process of power handover started, the frequency of coverage of the Georgian Dream increased significantly. The coverage tone was mostly neutral. After the government was finally approved, the most coverage was done for the new government, mostly with a neutral tone. In general, accuracy of facts was actually observed in the articles posted on the website, but the balance of sources was quite often distorted. Although comments of the other side follows some articles in the materials posted later, this does not change the situation that much, because the readers would not obviously start to look for the opinions of various sides about a particular event in subsequent articles.

## Presage

During the monitoring period, we encountered not only the news review on the website, but also the interviews and analytical articles. The larger articles, saturated with the reasoning and opinions of the journalists were posted more frequently. The biggest volume was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream and its leader. In most cases the negative tone was observed in regards to the Coalition Georgian Dream (see the Diagram 3). As for the period after the elections, now sharp criticism has been reported towards the new government.

Diagram 3



In some cases, the journalists of this website used unethical expressions, mostly in regards to two leaders of the Georgian Dream – Bidzina Ivanishvili and Kakhi Kaladze. Presage openly expressed its negative attitude towards the Coalition Georgian Dream. The website was distinguished with the gross violation of the journalistic standards and ethical norms.

The journalist’s tone is sharply negative towards three subjects: the Georgian Dream, the Democratic Movement and the local NGOs. The local NGOs imply those organizations, which according to the journalist’s opinion, were linked to the Coalition Georgian Dream. In regards to other subjects, in general, the journalist’s tone is neutral.

Positive tone was observed only while covering the party National Movement and the President. As for the elections period, after the release of prison torture videos, the negative tone was reported towards the government, which was basically caused by the comments and evaluations of the opposition representatives.

After the elections, the negative tone was observed towards the Georgian Dream and the new government. In regards to the illustrations, the website was quite diverse. All the photos related to the Georgian Dream, which were neutral as such, were always accompanied with negative comments. Same cannot be said about other subjects, as their photos and accompanying comments were of neutral tone only.

The headlines, which are about the Coalition Georgian Dream, are mostly negative; they contain irony and insulting analogies and metaphors in regards to the Georgian Dream.

It was revealed during the monitoring period that presa.ge was interested in all the other subjects only in reference to the Georgian Dream. We often saw interviews with the representatives of various parties, who mostly stated their negative attitude towards the Coalition Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili, e.g. Labor Party, the New Rights; however, we seldom encountered interviews with the leaders of the Georgian Dream.

On September 18-22, after disseminating the prisoner torture videos, the information was covered on the website only according to the press releases provided by the official structures. There was some material of negative contents, where the opposition leaders were talking, but the main emphasis in the articles was laid on the quick remediation of the situation in prisons and on the changes within the government.

Presa.ge covered the elections of October 1 in quite a biased way. The website was limited only to the information of several regions and spread unverified information about the defeat of the majoritarian candidates of the Georgian Dream.

After the elections, there appeared sharp criticism about the new government on the website; however, more articles with positive tone were posted about the National Movement and the President. Besides, there was increased number of pieces of information about the reports of international organizations.

According to the qualitative analysis, the cases of hate speech by the journalists were quite often revealed on presa.ge. Language of articles was often unethical, and we also observed discriminatory terminology; the presumption of innocence was violated as well. Politically incorrect epithets in the articles, which were written by different journalists, often coincided with one another.

## Civil.ge

During the monitoring period, civil.ge published brief informative articles, also relatively large analytical letters. In most cases, the articles of civil.ge represent an overview of the news, which is accompanied with the comments of the journalist and respondents. In some cases, civil.ge offers only dry and brief news about important events throughout the whole country. Its articles are prepared in adherence with the journalistic standards and ethical norms, at a highly professional level. The website is distinguished with its balanced and impartial coverage of issues. Here the election period, also the parliamentary elections and the subsequently developed events were covered impartially and professionally.

During the monitoring period, civil.ge was most intensively covering the activities of the government, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the United National Movement. It should be pointed out that the website paid much attention to the coverage of activities of the NGOs, international observers missions and the Central Election Commission. Civil.ge covered the subjects mostly with neutral tone and there was no case of sharply negative or positive coverage for any of them (see the Diagram 4). However, it should be noted that since the second half of September, the indicator of negative tone towards the authorities increased, which was basically caused by the release of prisoner torture videos. During this period, the majority of respondents talked with negative tone about the authorities. We should also say that the tone of journalists on civil.ge is mostly neutral and actually the positive or negative tone towards a certain subject was reported by the respondents.

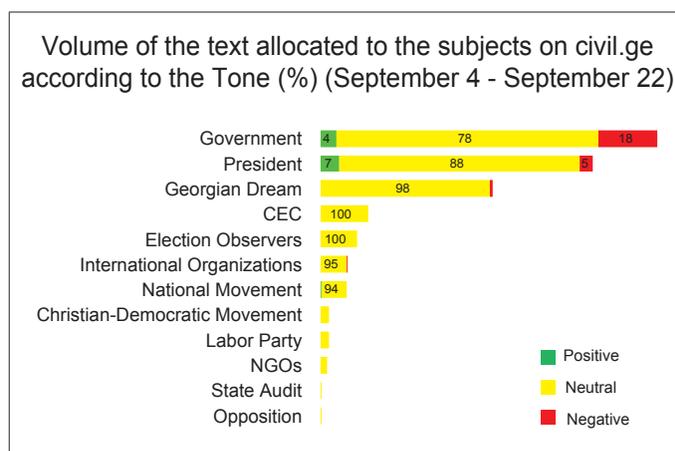
Headlines of the articles published on civil.ge were written in neutral tone. During the monitoring period, there was almost no case of expressing any biased attitude towards any subject in the article's headline, or using discriminating or unethical terms.

Articles of civil.ge mostly observe the balance of sources on a high level. During the monitoring period we did not really encounter any article that would contain any one-sided criticism of any particular subject. Articles on civil.ge are mostly based on reliable information. During the monitoring period, there was no case of providing information about any important event by anonymous or suspicious sources. We should especially point out that there were many articles posted on the website during the monitoring period, which provided exhaustive information about the events going on in the country. It should be noted that civil.ge actively and impartially covered all the events of major significance that took place during the monitoring period.

We should especially underline that during the monitoring period we did not encounter any case of violation of ethical norms at all by a journalist on civil.ge, neither did we see any cases of using discriminating terminology or so called hate speech.

Based on our observations we can conclude that articles of civil.ge were distinguished with the highest professional and ethical standards. Besides, reserved reasoning by a journalist about this or that subject was always observed in its articles; of course, there were cases of criticism of a particular event or personality by a journalist, but it should be pointed out that it was always based on specific facts, it was not exaggerated and neither did it insult any individual.

Diagram 4



## Tabula.ge

Majority of the materials posted on tabula.ge during the monitoring period were informative and neutral. However, with the agenda and accents, certain sympathies were still observed towards the authorities. We seldom encountered evaluative and analytical articles in the news section. The materials on the website were based on one source, on some official statement during the monitoring period, and the other side was rarely represented.

During the first phase of the election process, the journalists' biased attitude towards the United National Movement was evidently felt. The editorial board tried more to maintain the neutral tone in the second phase of the election period, but in parallel to the coverage of main topics, we should point out the accents identified in the articles, which supported the positive representation of the activities of the authorities. At first glance, this is an unnoticed form of strengthening the positions of authorities, and it was not clearly shaped out in the quantitative research.

Release of prisoner torture videos was not reflected on the agenda of tabula.ge. There are no special changes in regards to the number and volume of articles. If we look at the materials posted on tabula.ge on September 18-22, we will see that the statements of the authorities and those of international organizations prevail, where the words "urgent investigation" are the ones to express the whole content. During this period there was a lack of information in regards to the expressed public protest. The rallies were covered in the form of brief news, but there are some critical articles regarding the authorities. It should be pointed out that during this period there were several articles posted on tabula.ge, which made reference to the threat of Russian intrusion.

We can also provide an example where the journalist is trying to lay emphasis on the old times and thus mitigate the public reaction that followed the videos on violence at prison.

The number of articles increased on the polling day. The editorial board tried to cover the events in a neutral and diverse way, but still, the editorial board's positive attitude was somehow expressed towards the United National Movement. Compared to the general picture, the editorial board is more neutral during this period. The articles are of informative nature, but we also come across with analytical materials as well. The visual materials are seldom provided with the articles.

After the approval of the new authorities, tabula.ge completely shifted to the information materials and covered the events in a neutral way.

From the quantitative viewpoint, the Coalition Georgian Dream had the highest ratio during the election period, and in most cases it was mentioned with a negative tone. After the elections, the maximum indicator was observed in case of the new government from the viewpoint of the volume. The negative tone was seldom observed during this monitoring period.

Headlines were neutral and informative during the whole monitoring process and they exactly expressed the contents of the provided material. The articles were written briefly and in a neutral tone. Materials of tabula.ge were not characterized with numerous sources, and the journalists were mainly based on the official statements and seldom presented any confronting opinion about the event. We should point out that the norms of journalistic ethics were always observed in the articles of tabula.ge. In some cases the reasoning of journalists contained criticism towards a certain subject, but this criticism never went beyond the norms of journalistic ethics.

## Onlinenews.ge

During the whole monitoring period, onlinenews.ge was limited to brief and neutral articles. Almost all the articles had a neutral photo with it. The website was mostly operating in the mode of news agency, and spread information based on press releases and official statements, without any comments. There was no negative tone or unethical attitude observed. There were cases, when the editorial board did not comprehensively reflect the events (e.g. release of prison videos), where it expressed some bias. Positive attitude of the editorial board towards the United National Movement was especially evident during the election period. Main subject on the website was the United National Movement during this period, mostly in a positive or neutral tone. However, there were some critical materials about it as well.

Onlinenews.ge did not provide comprehensive coverage of the prison videos. The website provided little information about the rallies and prisoners. During this period again the position of the government prevailed, which emphasized the changes made as the result of state interference.

Onlinenews.ge provided a balanced and diverse coverage of the electoral process. Ethical norms were not violated during this period. The journalists maintained the neutral tone. There was no hate speech revealed. In total, more volume was dedicated to the old government and the United National Movement on the website during the monitoring period, than to other subjects. Before the elections, the majority of research subjects were covered with neutral tone. After the elections the changes became evident. Namely: more time was dedicated to the new government – the Coalition Georgian Dream, and basically, it was covered with neutral tone. However, we should point out that there is also negative tone revealed towards the Coalition in the qualitative research. Onlinenews.ge tried to provide information in a balanced way, but often the articles prevailed about the United National Movement. Headlines and visual materials generally corresponded to the contents of information. The journalists reported official information dryly and did not try to show the opinions of other subjects of the article.

## For.ge

Articles posted on the website are basically large and of analytical or evaluative nature. We often encounter the translated articles during the monitoring period, which were shared from [www.foreignpress.ge](http://www.foreignpress.ge). These articles are translated from various reputable foreign publications and represents a follow-up for the topical events taking place in Georgia. Interviews are also often posted on the website. During the whole monitoring period, more criticism towards the National Movement and more loyalty towards the Georgian Dream was always observed on the website (see the Diagram 2). However, after the approval of the new government, we can say that the criticism increased towards the ruling team, but alongside this, the critical tone did not decrease in regards to the National Movement. It is noteworthy that during the monitoring, the discriminating terminology by the authors was often observed in the articles posted on the website.

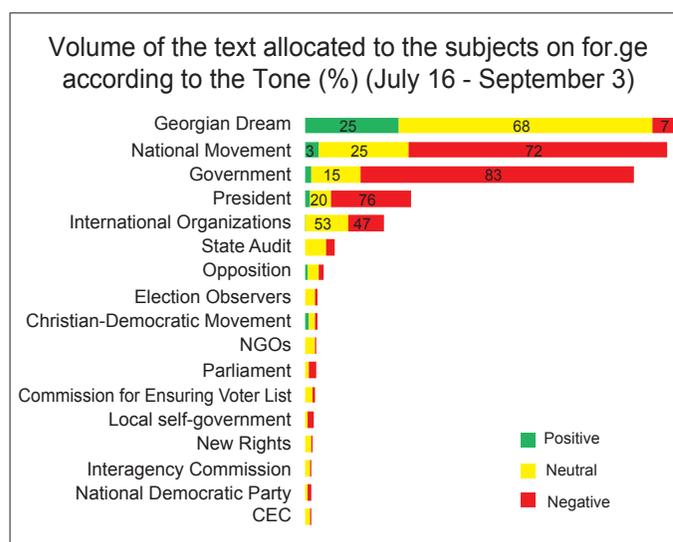
Unlike other websites, which were covering the activities of the government in the new political reality more than the activities of the parties, for.ge maintained its coverage dynamics without almost any changes, and it covered the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement with the same frequency at the end of the monitoring, as it was at the beginning stage of the monitoring. Tone-based evaluation of the articles reveals that the National Movement was frequently covered with negative tone. The journalist's positive tone was seldom reported while covering a particular subject, but the negative tone was often observed mostly for the government, the President and the authorities.

The internet edition was distinguished with its scandalous statements on the polling day, and it was traditionally critical towards the authorities. The website laid special emphasis on the electoral violations taking place in the regions, and tried to post exclusive materials in this respect, as it was relying on its own correspondents. For.ge did not cover the exit-poll results on the polling day and information about these results appeared on the website only on October 2.

It is notable that before the elections the negative coverage tone was accumulated on the website towards the Georgian Dream often because of foreign articles translated into Georgian. However, after the elections and especially after the approval of the new government, the negative, and at certain extent a disappointed tone was often observed in the articles directly from the side of the authors of articles. Such tone was basically observed when the article talks about certain expectations that existed in regards to the new government, although the authors of the articles cannot see any steps taken forward in this respect yet.

Balance of sources was seldom observed in the articles published on for.ge. However, we need to take into account that the interviews and translated articles are often posted on the website. There are quite many articles, where it is quite possible for the

Diagram 2



reader to question the accuracy of facts. Besides, often the authors of the articles rely on anonymous sources, trustworthiness of which can be doubted by the readers.

We encountered quite many visual materials and photomontage, which were sometime insulting and contained comic subtext mostly towards the National Movement. Problem of relevance is evident in the majority of articles of for.ge. Articles are often based on the assumptions of the author and not on the facts. Correspondingly, the subsequent opinions are based on the assumptions and thus are not credible. In most cases, the journalist is represented as a side and this is especially well shaped in the articles, which are made in the form of interviews.

In most cases, the articles posted on the websites are distinguished with the irrelevant language of a journalist; more precisely, towards certain political parties. Besides, we have encountered articles, where the discriminating attitude was observed, sometimes explicitly, but sometimes implicitly, towards a particular national minority.

## Dfwatch.net

Dfwatch.net is distinguished with diversity of articles; other than political parties, the website pays quite much attention to the coverage of activities of international organizations, local NGOs and the Central Election Commission. Besides, quite much attention is allocated to the problems of the media, e.g. discussion of 'must-carry' and seizure of the satellite dishes of the TV company Maestro. Dfwatch.net is quite balanced and there was no case of gross violation of journalistic standards at all during the monitoring period. The website mostly covers the electoral subjects with neutral tone. However, in some cases there is a critical disposition observed towards the authorities, but this criticism is always politically correct.

During the monitoring period, dfwatch.net was most intensively covering the activities of the government and those of the Coalition Georgian Dream. Besides, as we have already pointed out, much attention was paid to the international organizations and the Central Election Commission. The website mostly covered the electoral subjects in a neutral tone, although from time to time higher ratio of negative tone was observed towards the authorities and the National Movement.

In most cases, we observed the medium-size articles on the dfwatch.net during the monitoring period, which basically provided an overview of the news, which was accompanied with the comments of journalist and respondents. Headlines of the articles posted on dfwatch.net mostly had neutral tone. The articles often did not have any photo materials; but if there was any, it would always be neutral and did not express any positive or negative attitude of the editorial board towards any subject. However, there were cases when the headlines of articles contained negative tone towards the authorities. There was not a single headline on dfwatch.net during the monitoring period, where the opposition forces would be mentioned with negative tone.

It should be pointed out that the coverage balance was maintained on dfwatch.net on a highly professional level. Based on our observations we can conclude that there was no bias or violation of journalistic standards. We also need to point out that there was no case of violation of journalistic ethics during the monitoring period at all, for example, usage of a discriminating terminology, so called hate speech or exaggerated criticism of any subject. However, we should especially single out the article posted on October

1, which is about the death of a 10-month baby in Kakheti. The balance of sources is grossly violated in this article, because the respondents are blaming the members of the National Movement of a very serious crime in their comments, and the other side is not represented, which should have been provided with an opportunity to respond to such grave accusations.

We need to point out that dfwatch.net actively and impartially covered all the events of special significance taken place during the monitoring period, such as: release of prisoners torture videos and subsequent events, process of parliamentary elections, gathering of a new parliament, etc.

As the result of our observations we can conclude that dfwatch.net covers the events in a more or less impartial way. If we don't take into consideration several exceptions, the articles of this website are mostly prepared on a highly professional level. There was actually almost no case of gross violation of journalistic standards and those of ethical norms during the monitoring period. Dfwatch.net provided a quite impartial and professional coverage of the election period, also the parliamentary elections and events developed after the elections.

## Palitratv.ge

This web portal is different from other media outlets in a way that it posts brief and basically informative videos, which contain the comment of one or several sides. More often, the videos are the records of briefings / press conferences.

During the whole monitoring period, the content of the website was distinguished with diversity and it reflected the spectrum of opinions of the authorities and the opposition as well. We should also point out herein that often the materials posted on the website are the products of other television (Channel 9, Maestro, Rustavi 2, etc.).

Unlike other websites, there was not any clear tendency observed on palitratv.ge in regards to the frequency of coverage during the whole monitoring period. If the largest volume was dedicated to the Georgian Dream during one monitoring section, then such subject would be the government during the other section, etc. This provides the grounds for assuming that the media outlet does not have any prejudice about any side and it merely follows the events, and it tries to provide impartial material to its users as much as possible.

Monitoring subjects were mostly covered with neutral tone on the website. The subject, which had the least neutral tone, was the government (see the Diagram 6). While summing up the data of journalist's tone towards the subjects, the negative tone was reported periodically from the side of the authors of video materials. Here as well, the negative tone was used more often towards the government. However, we should point out that after the elections and after electing the new government, the negative tone towards the government has decreased significantly, but increased towards the United National Movement.

The news portal provided an active coverage of the polling day. We especially encountered a big number of videos about the registration of voters by the activists of the National Movement on this website. There were also videos posted about the violations of other types, such as wearing the symbols of the National Movement, and making appearance in the videos this way. There were many videos about the statements made while voting by the officials (Mikheil Saakashvili, Bidzina Ivanishvili, Iliia II, Kakhi Kaladze, Vano Merabishvili, Salome Zurabishvili, etc.).

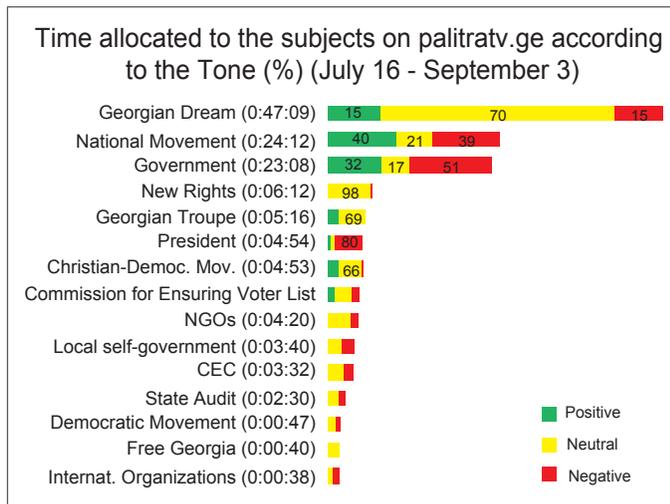
It is interesting that the website allocated special attention to the coverage of ongoing elections in Georgia by the foreign media, and posted several videos in this connection.

Palitratv.ge also covered the visits of Mikheil Saakashvili in the region on the polling day and disseminated the videos about these visits. Besides, the website posted the exit poll results on the first of October, also the pictures depicting the celebration of the victory of the Georgian Dream, and intrusion of SWAT team in the precinct in Khashuri, and comments related to these facts.

As for the period after the elections, the videos about the first session of the Parliament of new convocation were posted on the website, also the procedures of approving the new government and handover of authorities by the ministers. The website did not omit the protest rallies of vulnerable groups at the Tbilisi City Hall or the complaints/applications, with which the particular persons were blaming the previous authorities of committing certain crimes.

In general, we did not actually encounter any material during the monitoring period, about which it would be possible to say that they were not balanced. However, we still see the videos, where it would be not only desirable but also necessary to observe balance and to state a position of the other side for providing more credibility to the information.

Diagram 6



As far as mostly short informative videos are uploaded on the web portal, where the ratio of analysis/review/evaluation is minimized, the problem of relevance is not raised in this respect.

Absolute majority of the materials presented on the website are based on facts. We do not see any effect-targeted or purposefully edited materials.

## Conclusion

The Georgian online media quite actively covered the election period, also the polling day for the parliamentary elections and subsequently developed events. We need to point out that other than a few exceptions, there was no polarization observed among the Georgian online media and the majority of websites provided a more or less impartial coverage of current events.

Violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were often expressed in a way that it was difficult to differentiate the journalists' references and facts. Besides, there were cases when the journalist's text contained insulting expressions concerning a certain electoral subject. Except for some instances, the electoral subjects were mostly covered with neutral tone on the website. We also need to point out that since the polling day until the day of approving the government, the indicator of neutral tone significantly increased on all the selected websites (even on the websites which were usually distinguished with high rate of positive or negative tone). After the polling day the frequency of coverage of some electoral subjects changed on the websites – those political parties, which failed to overcome the minimum threshold in the elections and consequently could not enter the Parliament, were no longer covered.

As the result of the monitoring we can conclude that the main problems of the Georgian online media are: mixing the facts and references of journalists, violation of ethical norms and in some cases, open and clear bias of journalists towards certain political forces.

# Annex 1

## List of the monitoring subjects:

1. Parliament (Speaker, vice-speakers, members of the parliament, committees, the staff);
2. President (Presidents' administration, advisors, press-speaker);
3. Government (Prime-Minister, ministers, deputy ministers, governors);
4. Authorities (without specification, i.e. when mentioned without specifying them);
5. Local Government (mayors, heads of Sakrebulo and those of the Sameobas (local authorities));
6. Central Election Commission;
7. Local Non-Government Organizations (in the electoral context);
8. International Organizations (in the electoral context);
9. Election Observers;
10. United National Movement;
11. Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia;
12. Coalition Georgian Dream;
13. Free Democrats;
14. National Forum;
15. Republican Party of Georgia;
16. Conservative Party of Georgia;
17. People's Party;
18. The Way of Georgia;
19. Free Georgia;
20. New Rights;
21. Democratic Movement – For United Georgia;
22. National-Democratic Party;
23. Labor Party;
24. Industry Will Save Georgia;
25. Democratic Party of Georgia;
26. Georgian Troupe;
27. Christian-Democratic Movement;
28. European Democrats;
29. Voters' League;
30. People's Assembly;
31. Opposition (without specifications, i.e. when they are mentioned without any particular specification);
32. Chamber of Control / State Audit Service (in the electoral context);
33. Commission for Ensuring Voter List Accuracy (SIA).