

# Survey of Media Coverage of the 2020 Georgian Parliamentary Elections

## Interim report of TV News Monitoring

15 June - 31 August 2020



საქართველოს  
ჟურნალისტური  
ეთიკის ქარტია

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## About the Project

Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics", within the frameworks of UNDP project "Survey of Media Coverage of Georgian Parliamentary Elections 2020", observes the coverage of the parliamentary elections 2020 by Georgian TV media, with the financial support of EU. The monitoring got started on 15 June 2020 and will be completed by December 2020.

The monitoring is being implemented on the following 12 TV Channels: First Channel, Adjara Public Broadcaster, Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Formula, TV Pirveli, Maestro, Obiektivi, Caucasia, Palitra TV, Post TV

## Methodology of the Monitoring

Pre-election media monitoring of major TV news programs includes both quantitative and qualitative components. Quantitative includes time dedicated to subjects, direct and indirect speech, and tone of coverage. The components of quality monitoring are: balance, accuracy, fact-based coverage, manipulation of footage and music. The tone of coverage is given to the subject when he / she is spoken about indirectly and also when he / she speaks about himself / herself, other subjects or general issues. The diagrams show three categories of tone: positive (green), neutral (yellow), and negative (red). When the time allotted to the subject is counted, the tone of the allotted time is evaluated. Attention is paid to the text of the journalist or respondent, as well as to the whole context of the story. During qualitative monitoring, attention is paid to the balance or the extent to which several different opinions are presented around the issue covered in the stories; as well as to the accuracy with which the monitor observes the relevance of the journalist's conclusion with the materials used in the story (footage, respondents' comments).

## Main Trends

- Most of the time was dedicated to the Georgian Dream among the parties. It is followed by the National Movement and European Georgia;
- Georgian Dream was most positively covered by Imedi (29%) and most negatively by Mtavari Arkhi (72%);
- The most positively the National Movement was covered on the "Mtavari Arkhi", 6% of the allocated time. This party was covered most negatively (79%) on Obiektivi;

- “Formula TV” dedicated the most of the time to "European Georgia". Positive coverage was slightly more than 1% of the allotted time. The party had the most positive coverage on TV Pirveli and Kavkasia (2%). The party got the most negative coverage (38) on Imedi TV;
- TV Pirveli provided the most of the time to "Lelo for Georgia". Positive coverage amounted to 3% of the allotted time. The most positive coverage of this party was on Kavkasia (21%);
- The most of the time to Mikheil Saakashvili was provided by TV Imedi. Negative coverage compiled 74%. The most negatively Mikheil Saakashvili was covered on Post TV (80%);
- “Mtavari Arkhi” has the most critical tone to the government. Critical stories about the government are the most frequently aired on this channel;
- Similar to previous years, Obiektivi is the only channel providing much time to coverage of the “Alliance of Patriots”;
- Similar to previous years, the lack of in-depth, investigative stories, related to election topics and supporting informed choice of the voter, still remains the challenge for all channels;
- Number of facts of ethical violations is increased compared to previous year;
- Similar to previous years, unchanged and non-commenting coverage of the statements containing gender stereotypes and gender based discrimination, still remains the challenge for all channels;
- During the whole period, several cases of reproduction of sexist statements were identified. Together with the politicians, the journalists also were authors of sexist statements.

## Monitoring results of TV Channels

### First Channel

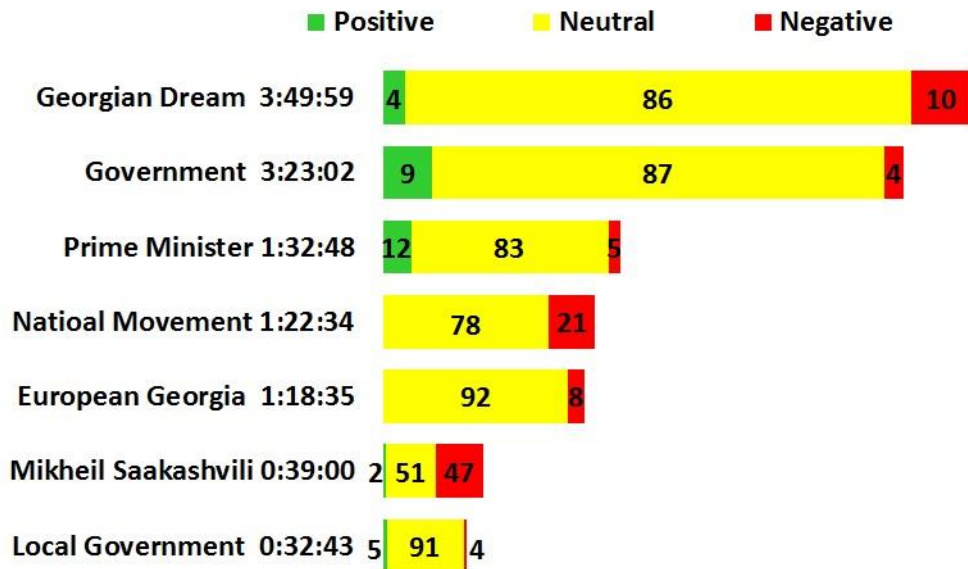
#### Quantitative Results

*In the course of the monitoring, the monitors observed the main news program of the First Channel "Mamba at 21:00" and the program "Akhali Kvira". During the whole period, most of the time in "Moambe" was dedicated to "Georgian Dream". The most positive coverage was given to the Prime Minister, Giorgi Gakharia, 12% of the time allotted to him was positive. The most negatively was covered Mikheil Saakashvili, 47% of the total allotted time was negative.*

## Tone of Coverage of Subjects (%)

### Public Broadcaster

15 June - 31 August, 2020



### Qualitative Results

Ethical standards were mostly adhered during the coverage of the ongoing socio-political news in the news program of the Public Broadcaster. The activity of electoral subjects, political parties was mainly covered in a neutral way. During the monitoring period, the information policy of the Public Broadcaster's First Channel was loyal to the government. At the same time, the main problem remains the superficiality of the stories, the lack of in-depth reports. Channel One had almost no serious exclusive material during the monitoring period - no corruption or human rights violations were revealed. In some cases, the balance was formally maintained. During the monitoring period, there were cases when "Moambe" showed bias towards the "Georgian Dream" and violated ethical principles. For example, a story about a demonstration dedicated to the events of June 20-21. In the story, the journalist presents the events of June 20, 2019 from the position of the government, and the comments of the opposition MPs are followed by the comments made by the representatives of the Georgian Dream a year ago, speaking about organized violence by the opposition.

Although the story cited statistics of injured citizens, including representatives of the media, the viewers did not see footage of the severe injuries received by journalists from various media outlets as

a result of the shooting of rubber bullets at them that night. The focus was still on the attack on the law enforcers and the violation of the law by the protesters. Nothing is said about the use of force by the authorities, targeted shootings and other violations, and no heavy footage of law enforcement officers injuring protesters has been shown. It was also not mentioned that two young people lost sight at the dispersal of the protest. The presenter and the journalist also mentioned about this fact that "two people among the injured completely lost their sight in one eye" The author of the story shows the fact that the police car was damaged by the protesters on the morning of June 21, but does not show how the law enforcers beat the civilians. On the one hand, the journalist does not mention the facts of excessive use of force by the law enforcers and only talks about the violations committed by the protesters. The journalist asks the politicians who came to the demonstration: "Do you agree with the wording that a sincere protest was used for political interests" - this is a repetition of the position of the Georgian Dream. Although, the Public Broadcaster fully transmitted the protest rally, did not invite for the interview any of the participants (their positions were shown later).

The First Channel positively presented executive government, by covering government's decisions and programs in positive tone. The coverage was especially positive in the regard to the prime minister Giorgi Gakharia. For example, on 17 June, 7-minute story was dedicated to Giorgi Gakharia's election messages. The anchors, as well as the journalists were speaking about election messages, promises and plans of Georgia Dream, presenting Gakharia and ruling team in positive context. No critical question was addressed to Gakharia, no problem was raised, appeared during their term in power. "Why Georgian Dream – Gakharia has several arguments, while speaking about the advantages of his team: "The main distinguishing feature of the force that came to power in 2012 is the care, the humanity and the fact that it has given this country a long-term development perspective." At the same time, the opposition is negatively portrayed in the story. "The prime minister has another argument in favor of his own team. As he notes, the Georgian Dream, unlike its opponents, cares more about the state. "Therefore, Giorgi Gakharia is surprised how the opposition can spread information outside the borders due to its narrow party interests in such a way as to strike a blow to its own country along with the government," the journalist said. Despite the journalist's seemingly neutral vocabulary, the focus is on the wrong actions of the opposition, as the Georgian Dream thinks. To balance to the two opposition MPs, in total 40 seconds were allotted and finally, their position was neutralized by the comments of the Georgian Dream leaders, Irakli Kobakhidze and Kakha Kaladze, who focused on the ruling period of the National Movement and the dictatorship of the opposition.

The June 18 6-minute story was dedicated to the presentation of the annual report of the Ministry of Health. Where the work of both the Minister and the Government was presented only positively. The journalist described in a positive tone how the Ministry of Health was effectively fighting the coronavirus. The 6-minute story did not express a different opinion, did not ask a critical question about the shortcomings in the system. "The Ministry of Care," said Giorgi Gakharia, the prime

minister of the Ministry of Health, in the same story. Giorgi Gakharia is convinced that in case of the second wave of the virus, the system will be able to respond as efficiently as before. The story ends with the promise that a total of 2,500 families will be provided with living space during the year.

The manipulative story related to the "Statement Republican Congressman "was aired on the First Channel on June 15. According to the Public Broadcaster, the sentence mentioned in the report of the working group of the Republican Party of the US Congress - "Bidzina Ivanishvili is an ally of Putin" is completely out of context. "

The news anchor and reporter, who tell the details of the story, do not pay attention to the full content of the statement of the American congressman and repeat the message, desirable for the ruling team. They do not attempt to verify or fully show the viewer the statement of the Congressman. The story manipulates the neutralization of Putin's alliance with Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the Georgian Dream, with an emphasis on partnership between the United States and Georgia.

"I did not write this letter, we had technical experts invited - this is the opinion of one of the 13 congressmen on a 180-page document that has no legal and official force at the moment," the journalist said in the text. The full quote from the Republican congressman is as follows: "I did not write this part, we had technical experts who helped us in the creation. I accept the responsibility for this document at the strategic level. We want close relationships with Georgia, Georgia is our friend, Georgian people are our friends, as well as Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We want them to be members of the Western team. We want a team with Western values and countries that stand by us and we stand by them - such as Georgia and Ukraine, but we also know that Putin and Russian officials in these different countries have allies who seek to undermine the values we believe in. "

#### Gender stereotypes on Channel One

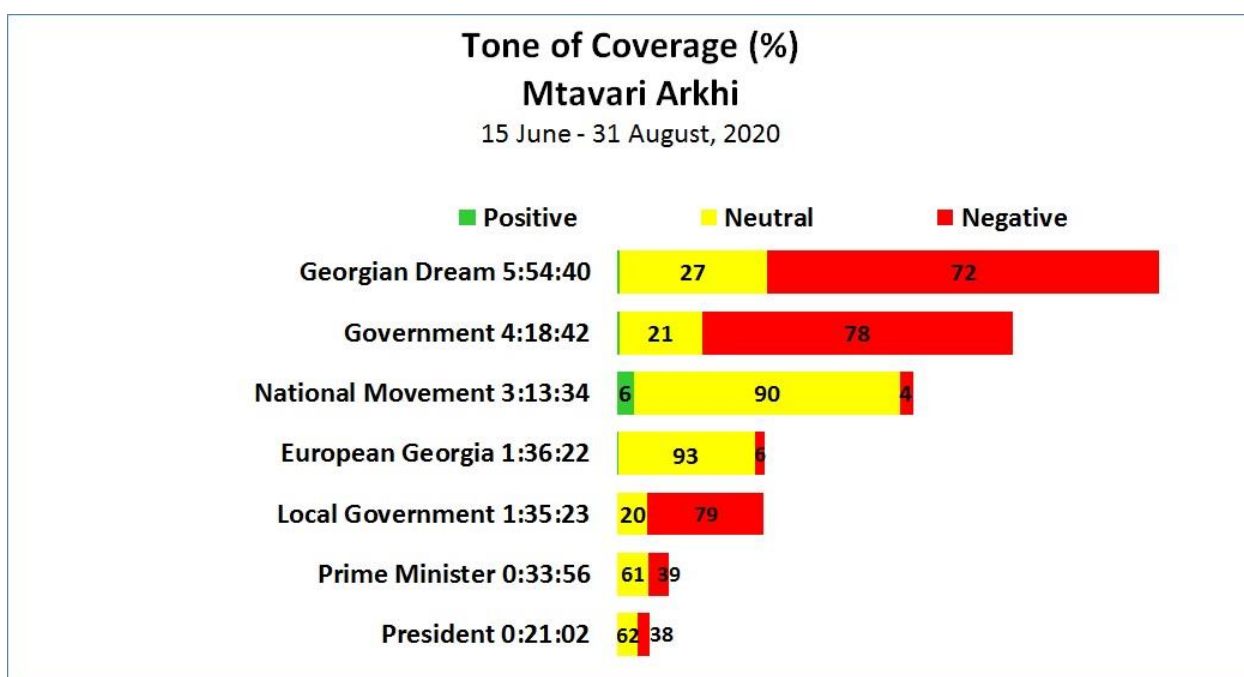
On August 17, the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) aired a story about the Georgian Dream election campaign, more specifically, the story was about the nomination of Nino Latsabidze, the majoritarian candidate in Rustavi. The author of the story, while speaking about Nino Latsabidze, said something like this: "Finally, she is a mother of 4 children." **"Nino Latsabidze is from Rustavi, born and raised in Rustavi, this time she is a member of the Tbilisi City Council. She is a diplomat by profession and says that she is well aware of the problems of the people of Rustavi and is ready for challenges, and finally, she is a mother of four children. "**

Although, the author of the story was not focused on Nino Latsabidze as a mother of many children, as was the case when she was nominated, when the Georgian Dream nominated candidates, saying in the list of her qualifications, "Finally she is a mother of 4 children" is sexism and reinforces the stereotype that the main duty of a woman is motherhood.

## Mtavari Arkhi

### Quantitative Results

On the Mtavari Arkhi, the monitors observed the main news program at 9 o'clock, "Saturday's Main" and "Post Factum". Most of the time aired on this channel was dedicated to the government and 72% of this time was negative. The Mtavari Arkhi most negatively covered the local government - 78% of the allotted time. The Mtavari Arkhi covered the National Movement the most positively - 6% of the time allotted to it in was in positive tone.



### Qualitative Results

The Main Channel often and severely criticizes the government and ruling party. In pre-election period, main focus of the Mtavari Arkhi is on negative coverage of Bidzina Ivanishvili, "Georgian Dream" and the government. Besides, it covers almost all activities of ex-president of Georgia – Mikheil Saakashvili and call the National Movement – main opposition force. It provides exclusive and in depth reports, often covers the facts of the government's corruption and violation of human rights. Special focus is made on the Ministry of Interior and uninvestigated facts. However, functioning as watchdog, is accompanied by the facts of ethical violation.

Mtavari Arkhi journalists do not shy away from evaluating government officials using cynical, derogatory, often offensive terminology. The Museum of Wax Figures is what the Georgian Dream

party congress was like. "Smiling wax figures, which are only decorative and fill the void," the journalist's text was so cynical and ironic on July 25, in the program "Saturday's Main" in the story "I washed my hands", dedicated to the "Georgian Dream" party congress. Material, saturated with lyrics, footage, music, and excerpts from animated or feature films dramatically negatively portrays members of the ruling party and guests attending the congress. "Bidzina Ivanishvili is still searching in Georgia's cultural and political second hands" - According to the author of the story, Bidzina Ivanishvili has been in power for 8 years and never has taken responsibility for the starving and miserable people killed due to the inaction of his government.

Stories, on the Mtavari Arkhi are often imbalanced and assessments and allegations of the representatives of the opposition are presented as facts. For example: on 20 June, in the programme "Saturday's Main" was a story on possible falsification of COVID status. In the introduction of the story, the anchor in affirmative manner says that the government tries to falsify the statistics of deaths due to coronavirus. "on the one hand the government is proud of effective combatting coronavirus, and on the other hand tries to increase the death statistics artificially, and some people even pay money for this. In some regions, Mtavari found the families, relatives of dead persons, who were offered money for registering their newly died family member as a victim of coronavirus. This points to only one thing, that the government will lead political processes to dead end, the ruling team will try to strengthen its positions namely with corona hysteria, will re announce the state of emergency and will carry out the elections in form and way, suitable for it or will not conduct at all". This information was not respectively checked and verified, no reliable source or evidences were seen in the story to prove truthfulness of the said. Although, the stories told by the respondents gave impression of roomers, the journalist did not try to verify the information with official source and on the contrary, presented the representatives of political parties as experts.

In the news program of the Mtavari Arkhi, it is noticed that the journalists are repeating so called "message boxes", which were initially voiced by representatives of opposition parties, that "the Georgian Dream signed a contract with the criminal world in 2012", due to that the government protects and cooperates with criminals. "Georgian Dream" started the election campaign, nominated candidates and announced casting on "zonders" as well. "Violence, intimidation and blackmail will be Ivanishvili's mainstay in this election as well," the journalist said in a report on August 1, telling that the Georgian Dream had hired so-called zonder athletes to be used to physically persecute the opposition during the election. The story is based on one person who says that the ruling team, specifically the father of the head of the Adjara government, police officer Davit Rizhvadze, tried to recruit and bribe Tsulukidze brothers, but after being refused, they were arrested. The story is not properly supported by facts and relies on only one source. Nevertheless, the story was aired without proper verification with the addressee of the accusation.



## Gender Stereotypes on Mtavari Arkhi

On 1 July, in the story of "Mtavari" - "More Women in Politics", the main topic of which was the issue of women's quotas, the journalist said that the leader of the "Labor" party, Shalva Natelashvili, was radical, assessing the initiative of the ruling party as discrimination:

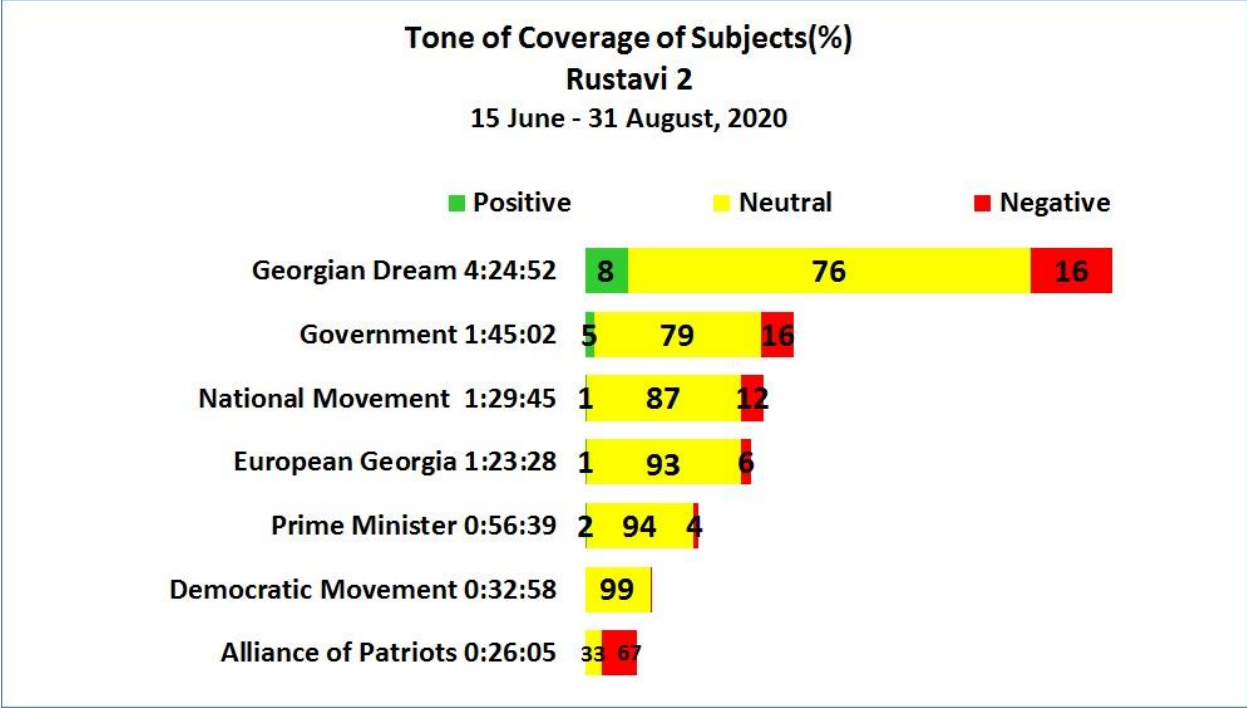
"Other representatives will come to us - the neuter gender, LGBT, bisexual, transsexual and tell us - you are discriminating, if you give quota them, what we have done wrong. That would be complete madness. Can you now imagine someone in the US Congress introducing a sex variant of the Congress and Senate quotas? "Such a document will not be allowed to the Chancellery, but in a country where Kiladzes, Guguli Maghradzes, Endzelas or Cyclamen (Endzela is a name of woman meaning the name of a flower – snowdrop that's why he mentions cyclamen here) are MPs, of course, everything is expected," said Natelashvili on the Mtavari Arkhi. The media shall not replicate such statements. If a statement is made by a public figure, it may be aired, but the editorial office should dissociate itself from it, telling the viewer that it is a homophobic and sexist statement and unacceptable. The main channel did not act in this way and that violates ethical principles

## Rustavi 2

### Quantitative Results

Monitors on the air of "Rustavi 2" observed the 9-o'clock "Courier".

Most of the time was dedicated to the Georgian Dream, the Alliance of Patriots was presented the most negatively, with 67% of the time in negative tone.



Qualitative Results

The news program of "Rustavi 2" covered the ongoing socio-political events mainly neutrally, in compliance with ethical norms. Journalists did not use abusive, derogatory language against politicians. The negative or positive tone observed on this channel mainly comes from the respondents, basically when one politician speaks about another.

As it is known, in 2019 the owner of Rustavi 2 TV was changed and, consequently, the editorial team was changed, which was reflected in the monitoring results. An important trend was revealed during the monitoring period, if during the previous monitoring the government denouncing news was the opener of the news program, now the main topics are the coverage of exclusive details of high-profile criminal cases.

Exclusive, in-depth reports are almost no longer found in news releases. The events are mainly covered, including of content critical to the government, but the viewer practically is not offered the findings on corruption, nepotism officials' unhealthy business interests and the channel follows the agenda created by politicians. Although it is more or less able to formally adhere to ethical principles, there are still problems.

In the course of the monitoring, several cases of the balance violation were identified on Rustavi 2. The balance was mainly violated in the so-called synchronies and in favor of the government. For example, a news release on August 27 reported on a government initiative stating that "no construction will be left unfinished." Only the comments of the members of the government about the 100 million grant auction were presented, assessing positively the initiative and neither the opinion of the

opposition nor the experts on the new initiative was presented. The balance was also not maintained in the story, aired in "Courier" on July 8. According to the journalist, he has information about the possible dissolution of the coalition "Power is in Unity" and the possible partnership of the National Movement in the parliamentary elections. Paata Burchuladze, Nato Chkheidze and Giorgi Kapanadze are expected to be on the coalition parliamentary list, to be formed by the United National Movement. According to the "Courier", Burchuladze is guaranteed with the place in the list, he is the chairman of the movement "State for People". It should be noted that after naming all the candidates, the journalist provides us with only negative information about them.

"World Bass" and founder of the movement "the State for People" appeared in politics in 2015, however in 2016 left both the party and politics. The party participated in the elections, and was supported by 3,45 % of the voters. Meanwhile, the investigation got interested in Burchuladze's "Fund Iavnana" and the case is still not closed. The prosecutor's office accused the World Bass of misappropriation and embezzlement of funds, the journalist said. The second candidate, Nato Chkheidze, also received unequivocally negative information: "Nato Chkheidze is currently an independent member of parliament, before that she was a member of the Alliance of Patriots and visited the Russian Federation several times, she met with Duma deputies who have Kremlin views on Georgia's sovereignty. "Nato Chkheidze is also a co-founder of Iberia TV, whose employees have been talking about management contract violations since 2018, and journalists are still demanding payment of their salary arrears." Nato Chkheidze did not comment on the allegations, despite the fact that she seems to have given an interview to the journalist. The journalist, also did not mention about Okuashvili – the owner of TV company, who stated that "Iberia" was closed due to the pressure of the government and hi had to leave the country. The journalist also provided the material compromising the head of presa.ge Giorgi Kapanadze: "the journalist, who is ready to come to politics, confirms with "Currier" that when well know events of Rustavi 2 were being developed and security service entered the building, he was the head of PR office of this Agency". Among the addresses of the allegations expressed in the story, just Giorgi Kapanadze responded, due to which the balance was violated to the detriment of Paata Burchuladze and Nato Chkheidze.

On Rustavi 2, the formal maintenance of the balance was much more systematic, when the comments and opinions of almost all subjects were provided on the given issue, although the opinions of the government or the ruling party were of indirectly dominating. Against this background, there is a case when on 30 August the discussions about Mikheil Saakashvili on one of the Ukrainian channels were covered and from the show were translated the phrases "Saakashvili changes countries like wandering gypsy"; "He is chaser of two rabbits, and lost adventurer" and so on, without making clear why translation of namely these two phrases of analysts was important.

## Gender Stereotypes on Rustavi 2

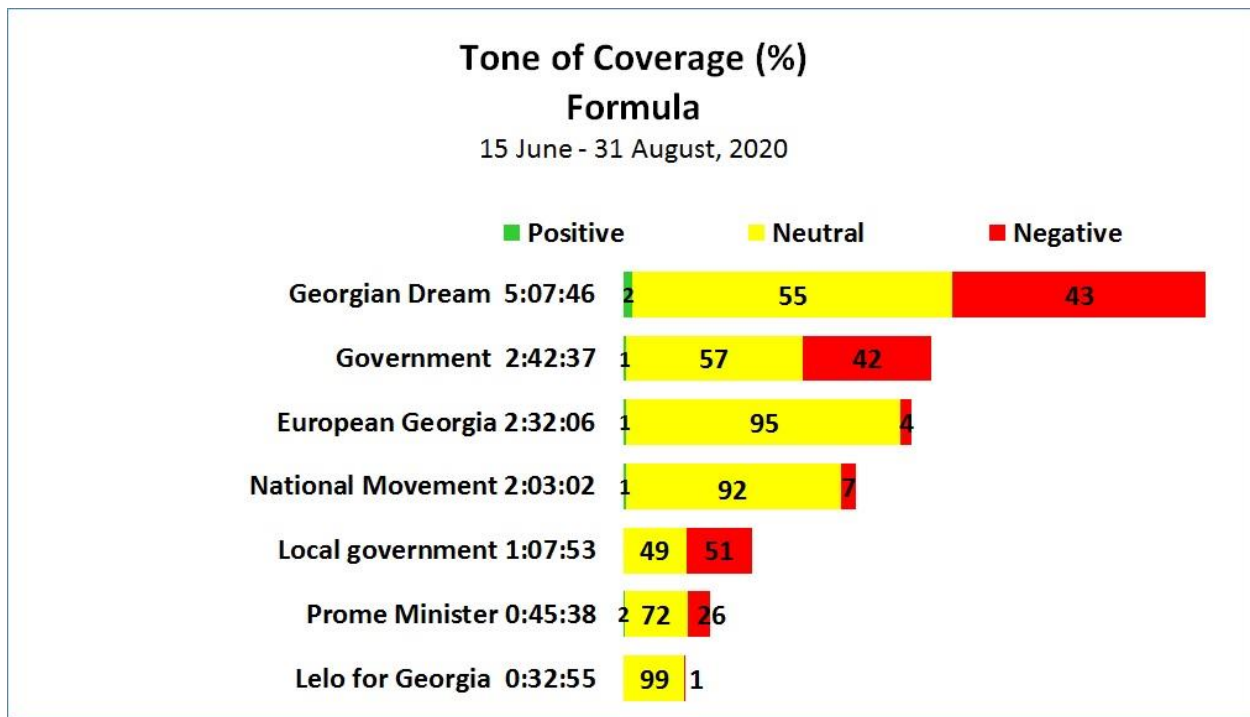
In the course of the monitoring, no statements containing gender based discrimination or gender stereotypes were covered on Rustavi 2.

## Formula TV

### Quantitative Results

During the monitoring period, the monitors observed the main news program of TV Formula "Formula News", "Saturday Formula" and the program "Droeba"

During the whole period, most of the time on the formula was dedicated to "Georgian Dream" and 43% of this time was negative. The local government received the most negative coverage, as 51% of the time allocated to it was negative.



### Qualitative Results

Almost all the important events were covered in the main news program of the TV company Formula, for the most part ethical standards were adhered. However, in-depth exclusive materials are rare. The formula is a critical channel for the government. Loyal attitude towards "European Georgia" is also

obvious. Bidzina Ivanishvili is covered especially negatively in news programs. There is a feeling that Ivanishvili is behind all the events that take place in the name of the "Georgian Dream" or the government. He is often referred to as the oligarch and the executive branch as the government of Bidzina Ivanishvili. Even when the topic is not directly related to the chairman of the ruling party, Ivanishvili is represented as the main responsible person. Bidzina Ivanishvili and "Georgian Dream" sometimes are the subject of unsubstantiated stories, where accusations have been voiced against "Georgian Dream" and Bidzina Ivanishvili, for which there are no arguments or evidence in the story. One such story was aired on August 9, where, according to the opposition, the rise of crime in the country was triggered by a contract between members of an organized crime group and the state. "When the state is contracted with crime, when you use the black world to settle accounts with political opponents, you use it to get votes through the black world in elections, we have what we have as a result. "Bidzina Ivanishvili created a violent environment in this country." However, the report did not show relevant evidence of this allegation and the information was not substantiated by facts, which is a violation of ethical standards.

There was an unbalanced story aired on TV Formula on August 7, which referred to the ongoing investigation in The Hague. Mikheil Saakashvili submitted a report of independent experts to The Hague Criminal Tribunal. At the same time, experts and representatives of the opposition accused the government of negligence and inaction on the current case. The government representative did not comment on the serious accusation made in the story that the government deliberately did not provide important documents to the investigation to the detriment of the country's interests.

The cynical and ironic text, music and footage were used by the journalist in the July 26 story "Elite Immobility". The story, which was dedicated to the nomination of majoritarian candidates of the "Georgian Dream", was ironic and mocking." This is how Beka Odisharia and Davit Songhulashvili protect their property. Unfortunately, every second Georgian knows what does interest debt mean and how many people have lost the shelter because of it. Loan –sharking is not unfamiliar for Odisharia and Songulashvili. Both lend 100 thousands of dollars and get benefit of interests. Why do rich people need to be in the parliament”, said journalist.

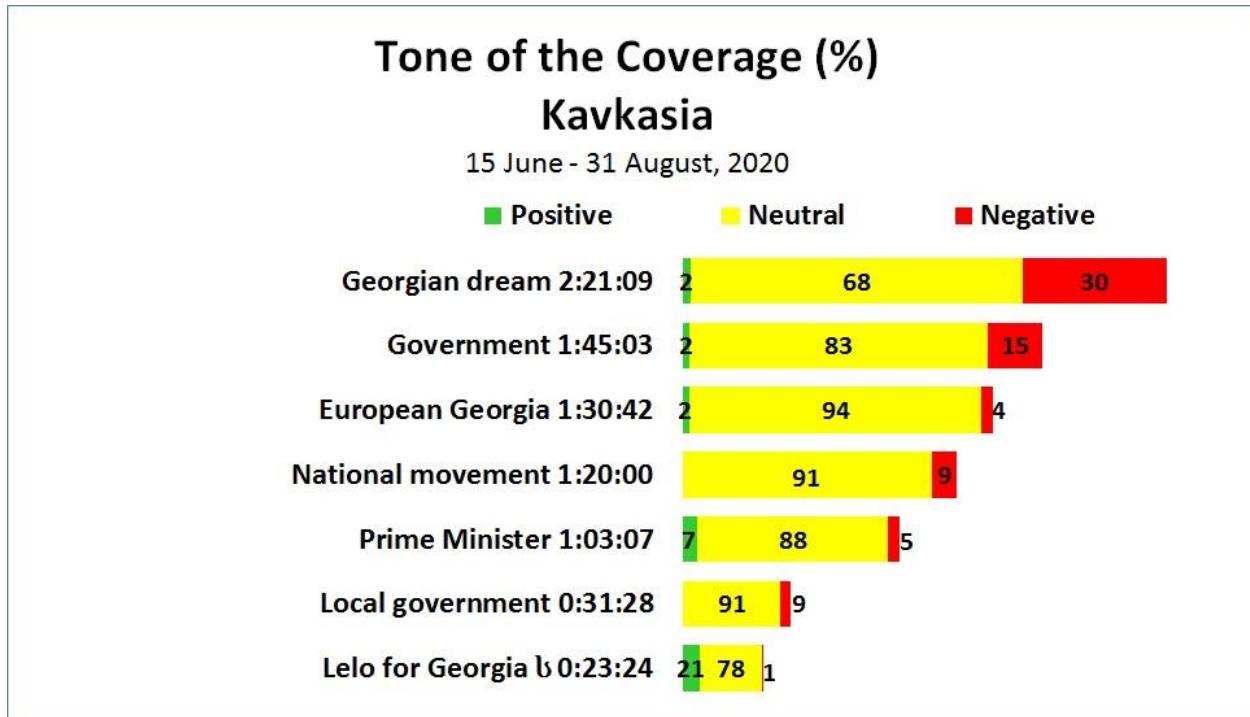
#### Gender stereotypes on Formula TV

In the course of monitoring, no statements containing gender-based discrimination or gender stereotypes were covered.

## Kavkasia TV

### Quantitative Results

On Kavkasia the monitors, on daily basis observed 19.00 News “Day”. In the course of the monitoring, the most frequently was covered Georgian Dream and 30% of the time dedicated to it was negative. The most positively was presented Lelo for Georgia, 21% of time dedicated to it, was positive.



### Qualitative Results

Kavkasia is critical to the government. It basically covers ethically ongoing political and social events. Kavkasia almost does not have own topics, does not have exclusive, in depth materials, where particular problems will be fully presented. In the news programmes the most time is dedicated to coverage of criminal stories and materials distributed by different agencies. In the news, quite frequent are so called synchronies, where ethical violations are revealed some times. Kavkasia sometimes provides unjustified stories.

On 13 August was covered the briefing of “European Georgia”, with so called synchrony, where the representative of “European Georgia” blamed the government for manipulation with subsistence allowance. According to him, the citizens are warned that if they don’t circle Georgian Dream, their allowance will be cancelled. Although, the material did not contain respective evidences and information was not reinforced with facts, the journalist did not try to verify the information with the addressee, which is ethical violation. The June 16 story was also unfounded and one-sided. European

Georgia criticizes the new decree of the Ministry of Health, which, in their opinion, will deepen financial problems and increase corruption. The story does not show what the specific resolution is and what this decision means, we only hear the opinion of the opposition party on this issue, it does not show the journalist's attempt to find additional evidence on these allegations, nor the explanation of the Ministry of Health.

An unbalanced story was aired on Kavkasia on July 23. Ana Dolidze met with the residents of Navtlugi settlement, where she and the local population spoke about infrastructural problems and said that the local government is doing nothing to solve them. The position of the local self-government is not shown in the mentioned story. The balance is not maintained in the story aired on 15 June, about the arrest of the founder of Mtavari Arkhi – Giorgi Rurua. During almost 7 minutes the interviews of views opposition representative and their rephrasing of Rurua's arrest are heard. There is no interview with the representatives of the government of prosecutor's office. There are no justifications or evidences for the arrest.

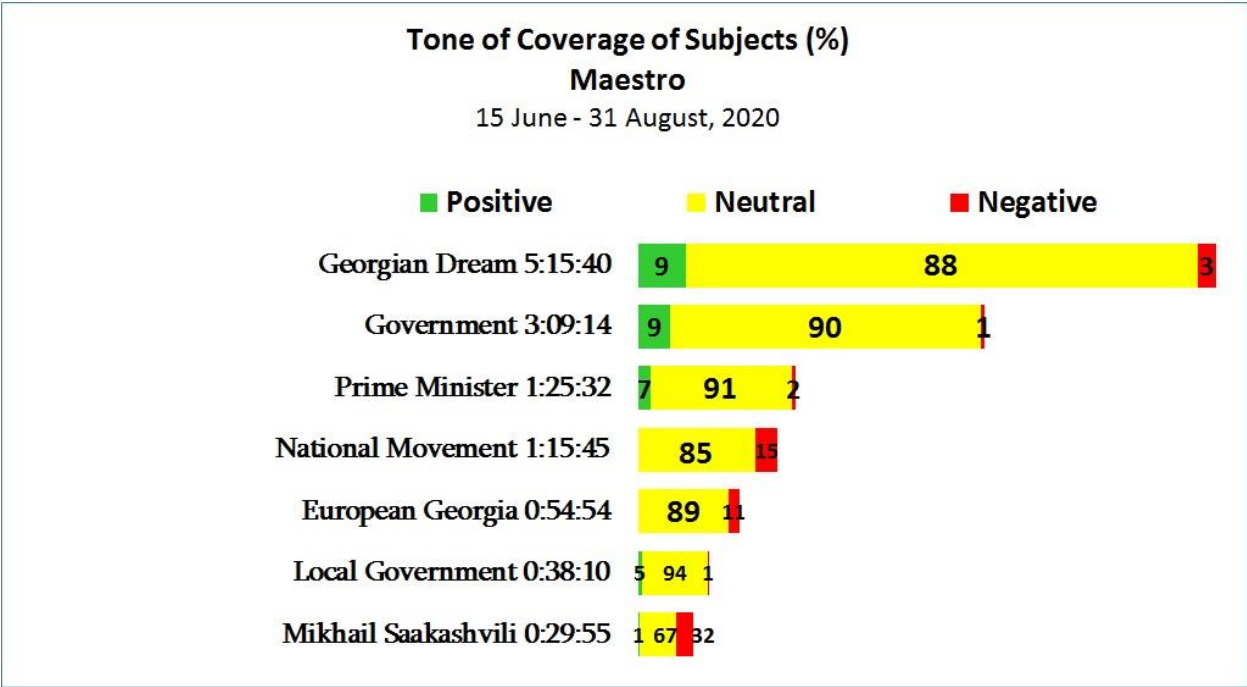
#### Gender Stereotypes on Kavkasia

In the course of the monitoring, no statements containing gender based discrimination or gender stereotypes were covered on Caucasias.

## Maestro TV

#### Quantitative Results

On Maestro the monitors observed the main news program at 9 a.m. Most of the airtime was dedicated to Georgian Dream coverage. The government also presented the most positively, 9% of the time allocated to it was positive. The most negatively was covered Mikheil Saakashvili, 32% of the time allotted to him was negative.



Qualitative Results

According to the stories in the news programs during the reporting period, we can say that the tone of the journalists was mostly neutral. Attempts to critically cover various topical issues are not found on the channel.

The TV company dedicates most of its time to positive coverage of the ruling party and government. In news programs, we often find stories that cover the activities of members of the government, such as the opening of various centers, the renewal of the fleet of emergency medical services with new vehicles, and so on.

The monitoring period coincided with the nomination of majoritarian candidates by Georgian Dream; On July 20, the channel dedicated a lot of time to covering the majoritarian nomination event, and in the following days, news stories about Georgian Dream majoritarians were also provided.

There is impression that the positive steps of the government are purposefully emphasized in the news programs. For example, on 7 August, after 12 years from the August war, when in Georgia and beyond it people were remembering the 2008 five days’ war, Maestro dedicated to opposition just 24 seconds is 16 minutes’ material. The rest of the respondents, were western partners (with the posts on Twitter). After overiewing the statements related to the 2008 War, the channel offered the viewers the comments of the prime minister and the minister of health from the place where the government provided more than 250 IDPs with residential apartments.



It is obvious that journalists have a relatively soft attitude towards the Georgian Dream and critical - towards the opposition. For example, we hear from a story on July 24 that Frontera accuses the government of spreading misinformation, but after that in the 3-minute story we see only the comments of the speaker of the parliament and the prime minister and we do not understand why the company accuses the government of misinformation. Also, in the story prepared on Mikheil Saakashvili's statement on July 17, the journalist says that Saakashvili directly interferes in Georgia's domestic politics and emphasizes his position in Ukraine. Only one UNM member's comment is presented just for the formal balance, while in the same story, four members of the Georgian Dream talked about Saakashvili and recalled the actions of the UNM government.

In the course of monitoring the trend, of avoiding negative coverage of the members of Georgian Dream, mostly Giorgi Gakharia and Bidzina Ivanishvili became obvious, which was revealed in provision of incomplete information on covered topic or ignoring the topic. Such "sensitive" topics were the dispersal of the June 20-21 demonstration and criticism of the Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili by American congressmen.

It turned out that the TV channel speaks about the opposition when it comes to the controversy between the parties - disagreement over the majoritarian lists. It speaks about the opposition mostly in neutral tone, however, boldly points out their mistakes.

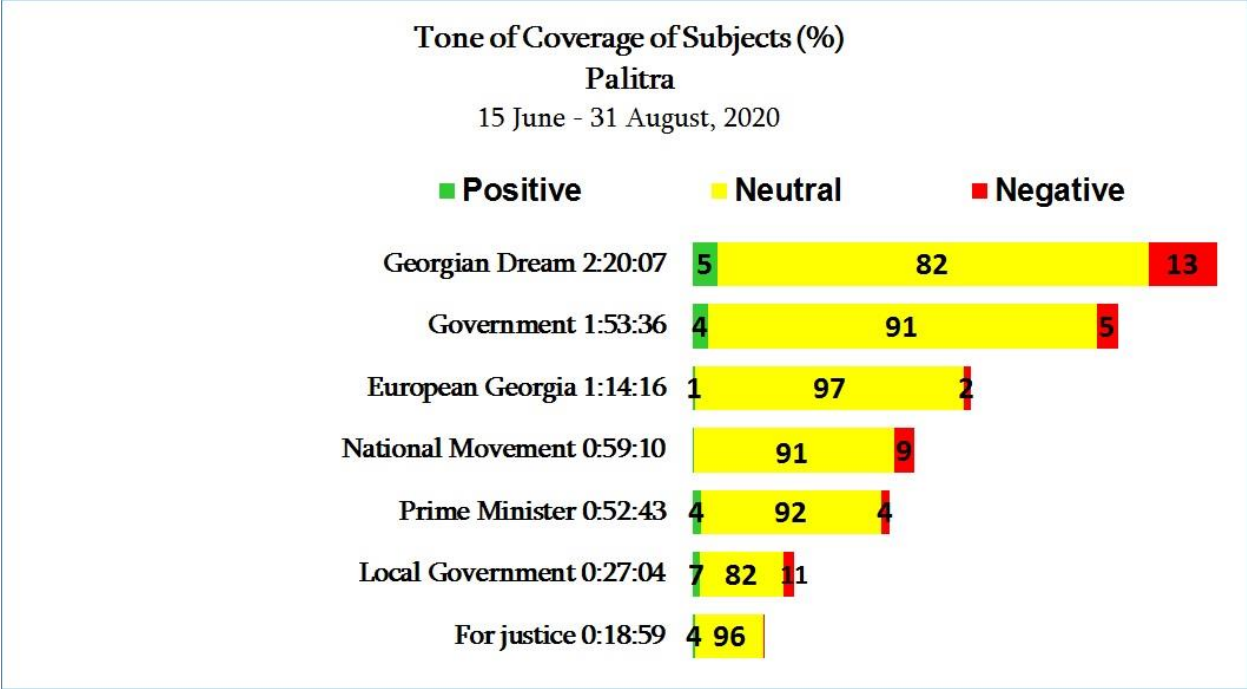
#### Gender Stereotypes on Maestro

In the story about the wounding of Gogi Topadze's grandson, presented in the monitoring period, the woman was blamed for the crime, which encourages deepening gender stereotypes and discrimination – "the probable cause of the contradiction is a woman, visited Topadze's family, who seems to be a friend of Topadze and with whom Zhvania had some kind of relationships in past" – said the journalist; while on 2 August the anchor mentioned on Maestro that the cause for bloody events was the girl who was in Topadze's house late at night".

## Palitra TV

#### Quantitative Results

On "Palitra TV" the monitors observed main news on 19.00. In the monitoring period "Palitra TV" dedicated the most of the time to "Georgian Dream and 13% of this time was negative. The most positively the channel covered local government, with 7% of positive tone.



Qualitative Results

"Palitra TV" news program covers ongoing news. The channel largely adheres to ethical standards. The lack of in-depth, analytical material is especially felt on the channel. Palitra TV often broadcasts materials about the activities of various state agencies and politicians, developed by the PR services of these agencies and advertises them. However, editorial and advertising stories are not clearly distinguished for the viewer. For example, the June 27 news release aired some such material, including a visit to the village Rukhi of the Acting State Minister for Reconciliation and the French Ambassador. It is about how the government cares about the people living along the conflict line and that they will continue to help every family, which is kind of a positive coverage of the government. On the same day, was presented the material, related to the initiative of the Minister of Defense, on to the training program for cooks in the army and describing how the training of personnel by experienced and famous chefs would improve the daily menu of soldiers. Ethical violations were sometimes reported on Palitra TV while covering current political news. An unbalanced story was spread on July 28 – “Who does not give up the majoritarian constituencies in the opposition”, which was about the redistribution of the constituencies for nominating the candidates by "European Georgia" and the "National Movement". In the story, the representative of "European Georgia" accuses the "National Movement" of breaking the promise and acting in a non-pragmatic way against the opposition. We do not have the position of the National Movement in the story and the balance is disturbed to its detriment.

## Gender Stereotypes on “Palitra TV”

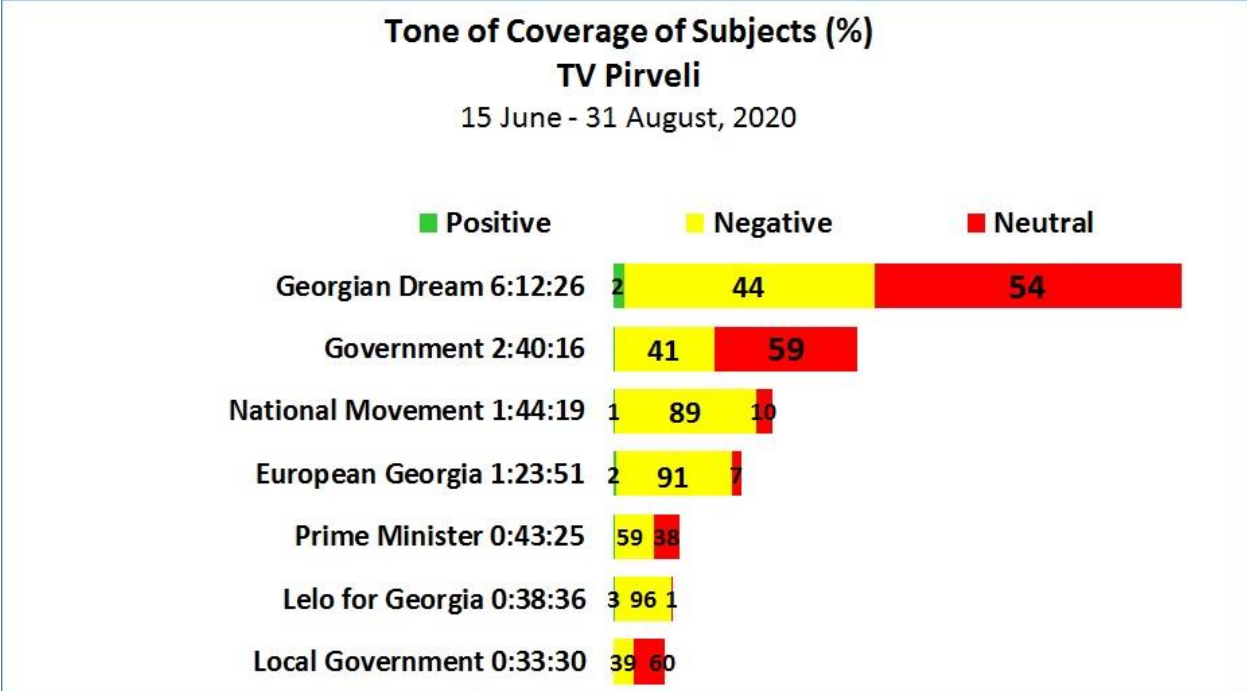
On July 17, a story about Nino Latsabidze, a female majoritarian of the Georgian Dream, was aired. The story contains Irakli Kobakhidze's statement about the candidate and providing that Nino Latsabidze has experience in public service and focused on her as a mother of many children: "Today she is an active member of the Tbilisi City Council and, most importantly, she successfully combines this with motherhood of four children."

The channel aired Kobakhidze's sexist statement without explaining that it was sexism, discriminatory against a female politician and unacceptable. Roman Gotsiridze's gender-discriminatory phrase in the July 31 story about the president's flag was also passed without explanation by the journalist: " Wants to create an island of separatist power. As if it has own kitchen, where women gather, or man I don't want to look as violating gender rules."

## TV Pirveli

### Quantitative Results

On “TV Pirveli” the monitors observed main daily news “Pirvelebi” (the Firsts) and Nodar Meladze’s Saturday”. This channel the most frequently covered “Georgian Dream”. The most negatively was covered local government – 60%. The most positively “TV Pirveli” covered “Lelo for Georgia”, with 3% of positive coverage.



Quantitative Results

TV Pirveli's main news programs are marked by a sharply critical, negative attitude towards the government. This is reflected in the issues covered in the news program, as well as in the texts of the journalists - often with ironic or mocking assessments: "Georgian MPs' appetite comes with eating, they eat, but with our money," said in one of the stories TV Pirveli journalist.

TV Pirveli news programs often cover topics about the officials' corruption or unhealthy commercial interests. The ruling party and its leader Bidzina Ivanishvili are generally portrayed negatively, and a significant portion of journalistic material is aimed at exposing Bidzina Ivanishvili's hidden or overt interest behind any illegal actions. A similar critical tone is not felt towards the opposition.

Cases of manipulation are sometimes found in criticism of the government and the ruling party. The monologue of the anchor of "Nodar Meladze's Saturday" on June 27 was saturated with manipulation, dramatic music was used to enhance the effect, accompanying almost the entire program in the background. In the introduction, the anchor mentions rugby players arrested in Shakarashvili's case and directly links them to the actions of the government, interference in the elections: "members of the ruling party used to write that police cannot be present on every birthday party to maintain public order. It is true, police cannot control all gatherings of young people and cannot be defender of rights at every birthday party; but the responsibility of the state starts where it allows itself and its supporters

to do whatever they like to. The responsibility of the state and ruling party starts where appears the precedent of setting up punitive detachments. Police arrested 17 people yesterday, including rugby players whose faces we have not seen for the first time. At various events in Tbilisi, they chased in the streets people of different opinions with almost crooks. They stand at polling stations at every elections and try to control the will of the voters. They go door to door at E- Day, take out of the houses the citizens, bring them to polling stations and force to circle 41. The government in return gives these people certain privileges. For example, they simply do not respond to their misbehavior. Gives the privilege that when these people commit crimes, they simply will not be punished. When the syndrome of impunity develops and when people get the feeling that they can do everything because they enjoy the protection of the ruling team, that is when life begins in a state where people are not equal before the law. TV Pirveli often aired unsubstantiated stories, with accusations against the government and the ruling party, the evidence of which were not in the story. One such story aired on June 20th. The story was about the dispersal of a rally on June 20, 2019, namely, who gave the direct order to use rubber bullets. The journalist said in the story that the former head of the Special Assignments Department "fled" or "was helped to flee" to France and is seeking political asylum. However, this information has not been verified, nor does it appear that the journalist is trying to verify it with official agencies - the story is not sufficiently substantiated by the facts.

Sometimes unbalanced stories were aired on TV Pirveli. For example, such was the story, presented on June 29<sup>th</sup>, where unfounded accusations are heard from the opposition that the "Georgian Dream" is protecting criminals in order to have their support in the elections. There appears to be no attempt by the journalist to substantiate or balance the allegations in any way.

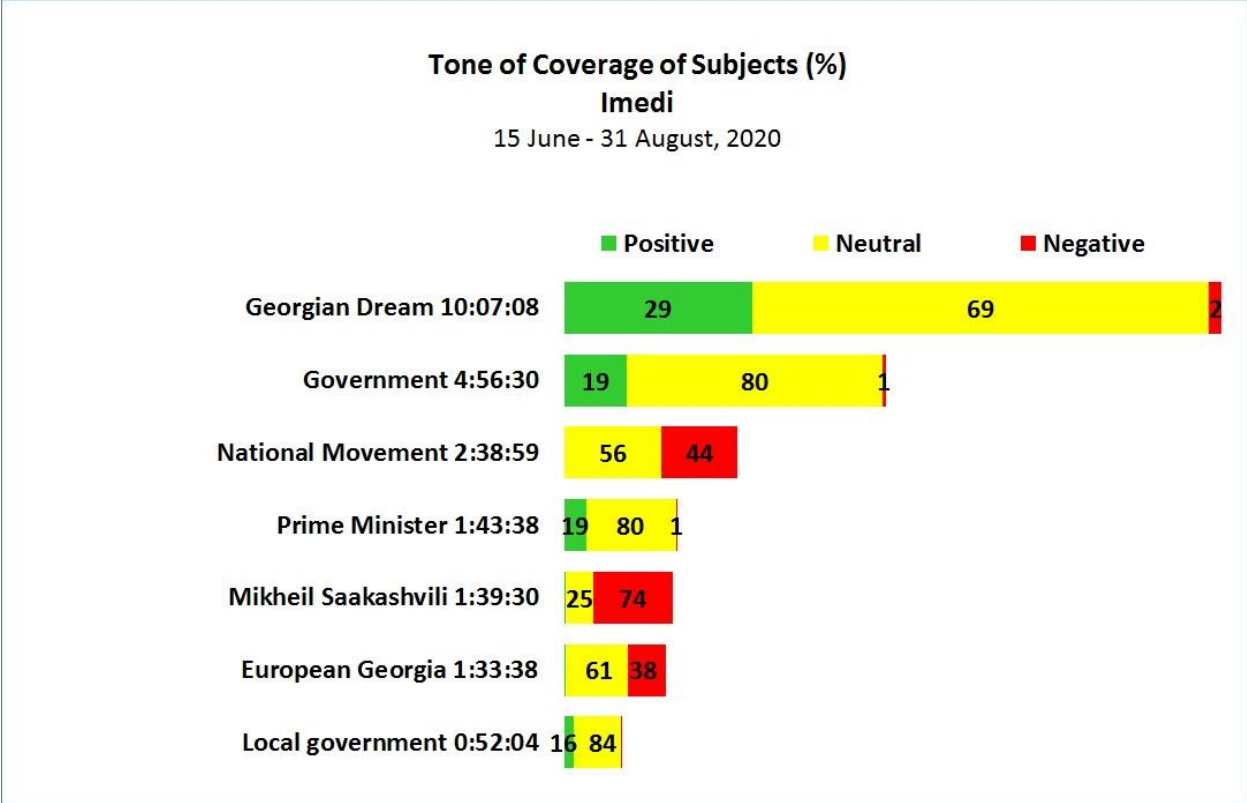
#### Gender Stereotypes on "TV Pirveli"

During the monitoring period, TV Pirveli did not cover the statements, containing gender discrimination or gender stereotypes.

## Imedi TV

#### Quantitative Results

On Imedi, the monitors observed main news "Kronika" at 8 o'clock and "Imedi Week". Most of the time on Imedi was dedicated to the Georgian Dream, and the government received the most positive coverage with 29% of the allotted time. Mikheil Saakashvili (74%) and the National Movement (44) received the most negative coverage.



Qualitative Results

Most of the time on Imedi TV was dedicated to the coverage of the Georgian Dream.

The pathos of the TV company’s news program almost completely coincides with the rhetoric of the Georgian Dream and the government. There are practically no exclusive and in-depth stories on the topics that cause criticism towards the government and are important for the society. The channel constantly repeats how successful the infrastructure projects are: "Despite the global challenge - COVID pandemic, large-scale infrastructure projects in the country are not stopped"

Imedi expresses openly negative attitude towards the opposition, especially the United National Movement and European Georgia. For example, the story of June 29, with the focus on the adoption of constitutional amendments, with the ruling team fulfilling its commitments to international partners and the public and taking a historic step against the background of political bargaining by opponents. It was also said that several months of attempts by the National Movement and European Georgia ended in failure. This part of the opposition violated the March 8 agreement and did not participate in the third ballot despite the calls of the moderators, thus being out of the game.

It should be noted that the negative attitude towards the opposition parties is often expressed in referring to them with such epithets: “The so-called United Opposition ’, "Saakashvili-Bokeria Cluster", the so-called Unity, Radical Opposition ", "Radicals ", and so on. Manipulative materials can also be

found on Imedi. In the June 18 story, the opposition's agreement on the majoritarian candidates in Tbilisi was presented as if the nominated candidates did not have the full support of the opposition gathered in the format of Natelashvili's office. Girchi, Lelo, Eka Beselia, Aleko Elisashvili and Nino Burjanadze were named to support the discussion and it was said that they will not attend today's discussion at all. However, all the named subjects said from the very beginning that they would be separated from the other opposition parties, in the part of the agreement on the common majority, and that their cooperation at that moment was only around the constitutional changes necessary for the reform of the electoral system. Consequently, their non-attendance of meeting is not new, and it is incorrect to argue that the nominated candidates do not have the full support of the opposition union. The whole series of stories was dedicated to the neutralization of the sentence – “Bidzina Ivanishvili is Putin’s ally”, mentioned in the report of the working group of US Congress Republican Party (15, 17, 18 June). The story tells that this phrase is just the result the manipulation of lobbyists, hired by National Movement: “The National Movement tried to show that the country has problems on the international arena and with a strategic partner. "The narrative of this party and the work of their lobbyists were read out by the ruling party as soon as the document was published; however, the Congressman Bacon's explanation, in their estimation, is the end of speculation" – says the anchor and attempts to present the mentioned report as insignificant document: “it’s obvious that the position of Congress is based on their legislative acts, while 120-page report is not the document of this level of legitimation”.

At first glance, the TV company tries to maintain a balance in terms of respondents just for formality, but the whole tone of the stories is arranged in such a way that it is mostly saturated with critical assessments towards the opposition. There are often cases when the balance is not formally maintained. For example, the story on July 3, which was dedicated to the accusations of the Georgian Dream; the material was prepared to justify why the National Movement was a criminal party. The balance was not maintained in the story. Just Roman Gotsiridze was recorded from the National Movement, while from the majority – Mamuka Mdinardze, Irakli Kobakhidze and Archil Talakvadze. Besides, in “Kronika” of 1 July, one material was about the approval of the changes to regulation and the comments of just majority were presented, assessing positively the changes and no critical opinion was heard, even one comment of a representative of opposition. Although NGOs had previously reported on why the new regulations were worsening the powers of MPs. Neither "European Georgia" nor "National Movement" were presented in the material.

In the course of the monitoring, ex-president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili was covered sharply negatively. Sometimes, the stories about him were even manipulative: on 15 July, in the material dedicated to Irina Enukidze’s birthday, was used Michael Saakashvili’s archive material about Sandro Girgvliani, which the journalist presented as recent and said: “no regret – Michael Saakashvili is irritated even by the question asked about Sandro Girgvliani, Moreover, he says that he was fed up with talking about this topic. ”

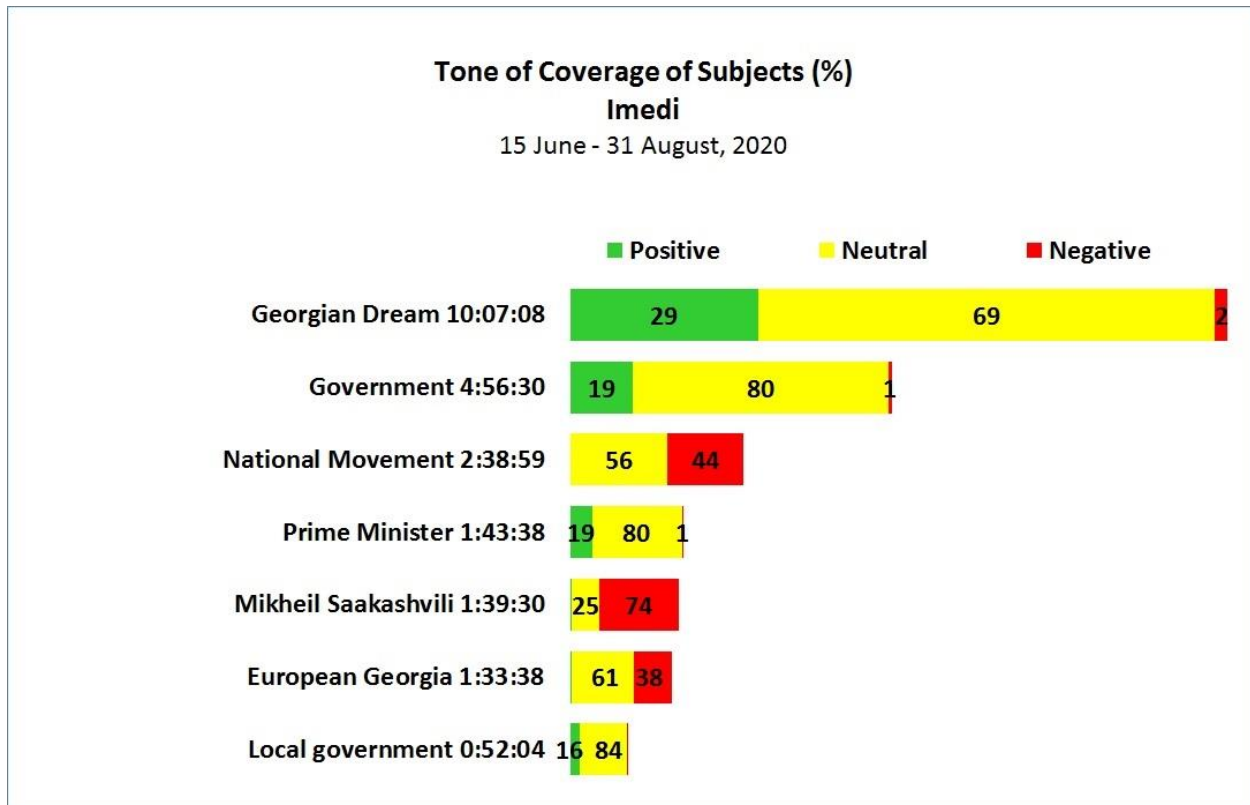
## Gender Stereotypes on “Imedi”

During the monitoring period, Imedi did not cover the statements, containing gender discrimination or gender stereotypes.

## Adjara TV - GPB

### Quantitative Results

Adjara TV news program "Mtavari" dedicated the most of its time to "Georgian Dream". "Georgian Dream" got both positive and negative tones (10%) equally. The government got the most negative coverage on Adjara TV, 10% of the time allocated to it was negative.



### Qualitative Results

During the monitoring period, the program of Adjara TV was full of stories about local problems and challenges, with active coverage of ongoing political events, mainly in accordance with the ethical standard. According to the quantitative results, most of the airtime of Adjara TV was dedicated to "Georgian Dream". It should be noted that the positive and negative tone of the ruling party's coverage was evenly distributed over time, although it was noted that in most cases the negative tone was



indirect, meaning the ruling party was referred to negatively by others, while the positive tone prevailed in the direct form, which means the direct positive appearance of "Georgian Dream" on the air.

Adjara TV's main news program more or less maintained the diversity of parties and opinions, however, in some cases the impression was created that the editorial policy was biased towards the government team and the ruling party. This trend was especially evident in the second half of the monitoring period, in August. For example, the August 29 news program started with the nomination of majoritarian candidates by the Georgian Dream in Adjara, and lasted almost 26 minutes in a live broadcast. On August 31, nomination of the majoritarian candidates of the Georgian Dream in Kobuleti and Khelvachauri was covered; however, nothing was said about the candidates' activities and no critical questions were asked by journalists. Despite the fact that Transparency International, a non-governmental organization, published a study on the economic interests of one of the candidates, Anzor Bolkvadze, the August 12 nomination of majoritarians for "Lelo Georgia" was covered without showing any images of the candidates. The main challenge of Adjara TV remains the lack of analytical, in-depth materials and superficial coverage of important socio-political events. There is almost no sharp, exclusive, government-denouncing material on the air. While, examples of superficial coverage are quite common.

On August 14, Adjara TV was covered a story about a citizen who was quarantined in one of the hotels in Batumi and jumped from the 4th floor. The journalist only showed the comment of the victim's family member, requesting the participation of the Ministry of Health in the process, and allegedly pointing to the violation of the rules for placing people in quarantine. Although there is a number of questions around this fact, the journalist was limited to a two-minute story and the main questions were about how the incident happened, what the investigation knows, why he was placed with another person, and so on. The journalist never tried to answer the questions. On August 15, another story was reported on this topic - the victim's wife still complains that the rules of quarantine may have been violated, but the journalist does not try to check with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the quarantine enforcement oversight body whether the hotel violated the rules for placement in quarantine. Instead of asking critical questions to collect information, this story was followed by a story with the testimony of satisfied citizens already placed in quarantine spaces. With such coverage, the journalist created the impression that the allegations of violation of quarantine rules may not be a reality.

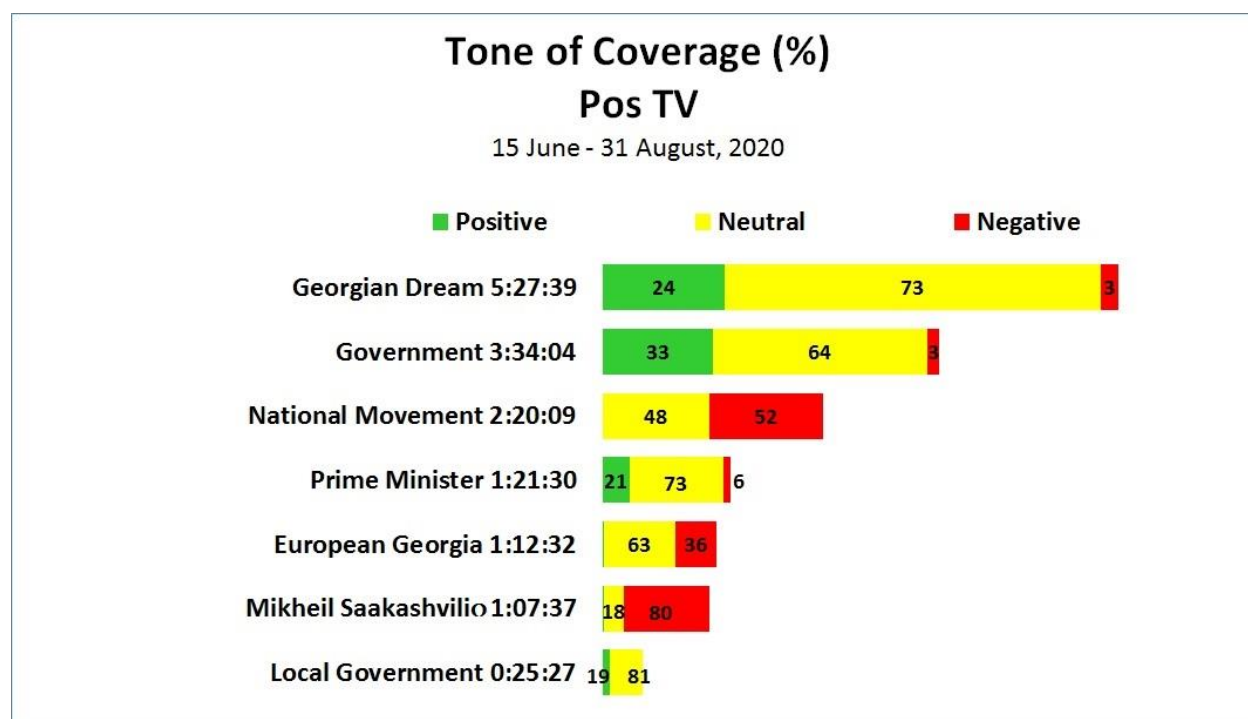
#### Gender Stereotypes on Adjara Television of the Public Broadcaster

In the course of monitoring, no statements containing gender based discrimination or gender stereotypes were covered on Adjara Television of the Public Broadcaster.

## Pos TV

### Quantitative results

In the course of the monitoring, the monitors on Post TV observed main news on 19.00. in the monitoring period, the most of the time was dedicated to “Georgian Dream” and 24% of this time was positive. The most negatively was covered Mikheil Saakashvili, with 80% negative tone of the dedicated time. Post TV positively covered the government, with 13% of positive time.



### Qualitative Results

The TV channel "Post TV" is pro-government and could be said is a propaganda tool of the ruling party. The channel consistently portrays the ruling party positively and seeks to discredit the opposition, regardless of which opposition party is involved. In order to belittle the opposition, journalists use mocking tones and texts, mainly referring to the opposition as "radicals".

"Post-TV" positively presents the policy of the "Georgian Dream" - emphasizes the steps taken by the ruling team, its good deeds, promises. For example, during the period 21-27 August, three stories were prepared on the channel about the 200-GEL government aid. The 21 August story was about the government's initiative to provide 200-GEL aid to persons under 18 years of age. The whole story was

about presenting the government in a positive context - what a successful program it is, what maximum the government has done to tackle child poverty, and what positive feedback they have, including in the UNICEF and Fitch reports. Apart from the UNICEF representative and expert (who also praised the government's steps), only Georgian Dream representatives (Deputy Minister of Health, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Mamuka Mdinaradze, Dimitri Khundadze) appeared in the story, who also spoke about the importance of the government's program and praised the government's decisions. The journalist also spoke in a positive tone about this initiative of the government. There was no balance at all in the story, even for a formal balance we did not hear any opposition assessment on this initiative. The theme of helping children under the age of 18 continued in this positive tone on August 26-27 as well.

The Post TV channel covers almost all of the Georgian Dream's pre-election activities: "Focus on education, focus on economic prosperity, de-occupation, other modern challenges, and Georgia's Western choice - with these messages, the ruling party opened the 2020 election marathon. "Georgian Dream has nominated majoritarian candidates in Tbilisi and regions" - this is how the news program started. On July 20, the anchor of the program dedicated 36 minutes to the nomination of Georgian Dream majoritarian candidates. The texts of the anchor and the journalist, the music, the footage, the positive evaluations of the citizens presented the ruling party in a completely positive light. "Weak criticism of the incompetent opposition - only the Georgian dream can be seen in the election ring. The opposition is trying to cover up its own failures with harsh assessments. "What are the radicals hiding and what is their agenda - are they preparing for an election or a riot?" - with this text, the comments of as they call "radical" opposition were presented from the parliament - although the story was entirely dedicated to the nomination of majoritarian candidates by the ruling team, both the announcement and the headline were aimed at discrediting the opposition.

In the reports prepared about the representatives of the opposition, the channel does not shy away from publishing unverified and false news. For example, the story "Facade Agreement of Opposition", aired on 18 August. The anchor says in introduction: "Once in Shalva Natelashvili's yard, the opposition named the arrested criminal Zhorika Rurua as a political prisoner. This time, in the second round of meetings, they will unite around one of Saakashvili's former law enforcement ministers. For some reason, the opposition is convinced that the support of Irakli Okruashvili as a majoritarian in Saburtalo will bring them success, prestige and rating. It is about a minister who, after resigning, cooperated with the Russian special services and passed secret information to the Kremlin. "The way from being an agent to opposition political leadership may be dangerous for the opposition." - no evidence was presented in the story, proving the delivery of secret materials by Irakli Okruashvili to Kremlin or his cooperation with Russian special services. The information was not verified and confirmed, besides there was no credible source or evidence in the story that would prove its truthfulness, Irakli Okruashvili was not allowed to respond to this accusation.

Unverified information was spread in the August 5 story. The movement on Chavchavadze Avenue, which connects traffic jam on the newly rehabilitated avenue, with Zurab Adeishvili: "The new traffic scheme on Chavchavadze Avenue is also being discussed on the social network. One part of the citizens thinks that one group is deliberately aggravating the issue and is trying to artificially stop the traffic on Chavchavadze. The citizen writes that Zurab Adeishvili instructed the assets of the National Movement to paralyze the traffic on Chavchavadze Avenue: Yesterday, on August 4, at about 2:30, my girl and I entered the Italian cafe "Buffalino" on Moscow Street and ordered pizza. The two people sitting at the table next to us spoke in Georgian quite loudly and emotionally. One of them said to the other: "Oh brother, Zura is really brain" - "who is Zura?" - the second one asks, - "Adeishvili, do you know what he thought? Our assets in Tbilisi were instructed to drive often on Chavchavadze and stop 2-3 cars every day as if they broke down, to stop the movement and cause dissatisfaction of as many people as possible."

According to the Platform – Who is Who – the Facebook user Davit Gelashvili is false account, created for distribution of this story. The person on profile picture is not Davit Gelashvili, he is a Marsel, who lives in Moldova.

Post TV especially negatively covers Mikheil Saakashvili. Namely in the stories about him, the most of ethical violations were observed.

On Post TV, Mikheil Saakashvili is mentioned as: “escaped president”, “accused president”, “the president given asylum by Ukraine”. Materials, prepared about him are sharply negative and cynical. In such stories irony and cynicism are heard in the journalist's texts as well. Post TV dedicated several stories to the video address of Mikhail Saakashvili, about his return and in all materials was attempt for discrediting them, revealed in the texts of journalists and images selected for materials. An example of this is the August 31 story dedicated to Mikheil Saakashvili's video address on his return. This material was in fact the text of the journalist from the beginning to the end, with small footage from Saakashvili's video. Against the background of classical music, we mostly listened to the text of the journalist, with Saakashvili's manipulative and degrading footage (running in the fountain, running on the roof, lying on the beach, walking in the trunk of a car, and so on). In addition, the journalist used inappropriate epithets and proverbs, such as "the dog did not make any use at home, he ran away hunting."

#### Gender Stereotypes on Post TV

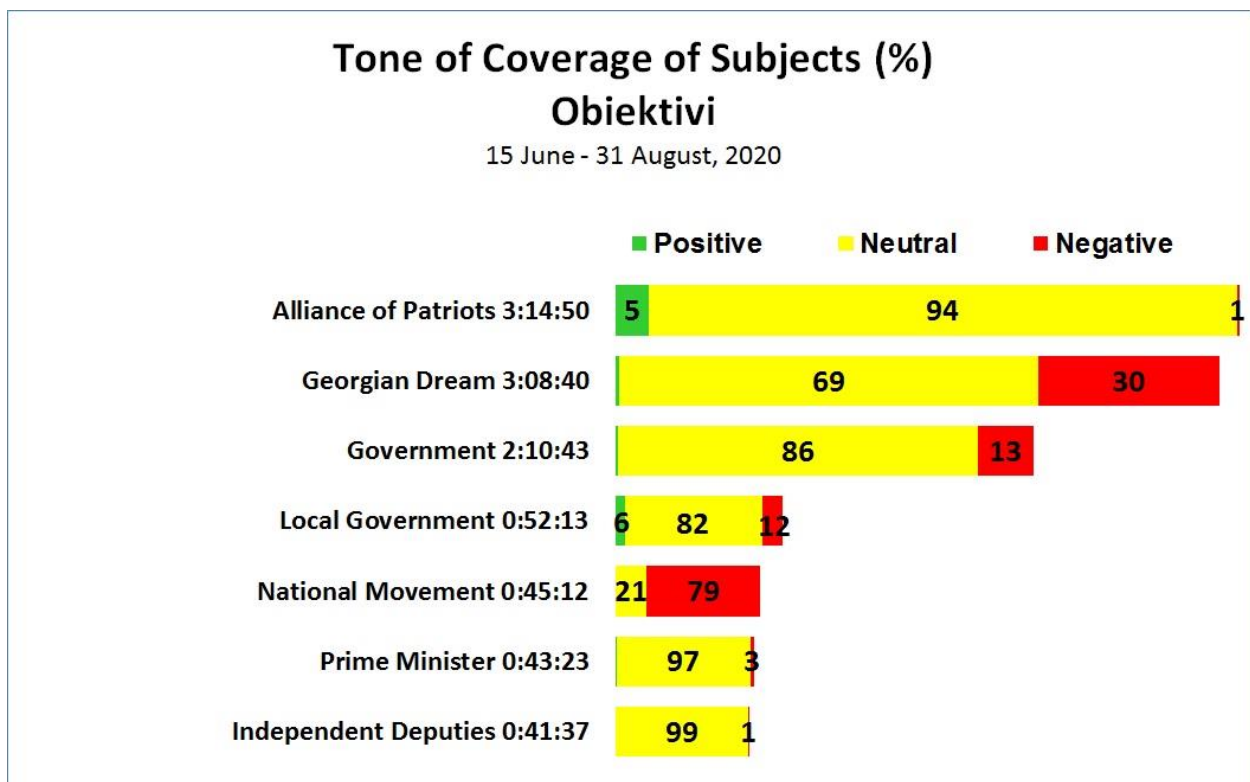
In the course of the monitoring, on statements containing gender based discrimination or gender stereotypes were observed on Post TV.

## Obiektivi TV

### Quantitative Results

On “Obiektivi” the monitors observed main news – “Namdvili Ambebi” (True Stories).

In the news, the most of the time was dedicated to the Alliance of Patriots. The most positively was covered local government, 6% of the time dedicated to it was positive. The most negatively was covered the National Movement, with 79% of negative time. 5% of the time dedicated to the Alliance of Patriots was positive, which is an exception from the other channels. It is known, that the founders of “Obiektivi” are the leaders of the Alliance of Patriots and maybe this preconditions special attention to this party.



### Qualitative Results

The news program on "Obiektivi" is obviously biased and set up according to the agenda of the Alliance of Patriots.

On “Obiektivi” the Alliance of Patriots is called “main opposition force of the country”. In almost all news releases the opinion of the Alliance of Patriots is presented, without any comment of others.

The news program "Obiektivi" almost does not cover the activities of political parties other than the ruling party. The "National Movement" and the "European Georgia" are mostly mentioned in negative context, with the term "Saakashvili-Bokerias" or as a destructive force, and there are constant ethical violations in the stories about them. Based on the results of the monitoring, it could be said that the “Obiektivi” still remains media platform of the Alliance of Patriots. On 13 August, was presented a story about the pre-election poll of ratings of political parties, conducted by the Alliance of Patriots, in which the credibility of the research organizations, IRI and NDI, and Edison Research, which also publish pre-election polls, has been doubted through manipulation, because the results of the Patriots Alliance poll did not match theirs. *"Due to the exposed lie, John Deepo, the director of IRI, who recently arrived in Georgia and started his activity with a lie, should be recalled from Georgia. IRI director should be recalled, NDI director Laura Thornton, was" Irma Inashvili applied to the US government. This speech is also manipulative, as if Laura Thordton was recalled because the researchers conducted by her did not match the reality Traditionally, xenophobic statements have been repeated on Obiektivi this year as well.* One of the stories, "Turkey's Economic Expansion", was aired on August 19. In this story the journalist speaks about commercial facilities owned by Turkish businessmen in Adjara. "Food, transport, hotels, supermarket chains, construction businesses and shopping malls in the Adjara region best reflect Turkey's policy or economic expansion,", offering even more Turkophobic comment from the founder of the Muslim and Christian Brothers for Georgia: "Turks have been and will be our enemies. *Today, stupid Georgians are praying for Turks, as if for their fathers, they want Georgia to be of Turks, without Georgians in it.*"

The media should not to replicate xenophobic statements. If a statement is made by a public figure, the statement may be aired, but the TV station should distance itself from it, indicating to the viewer that it is xenophobic and unacceptable. "Obiektivi" did not act in this way that violates ethical principles.

#### Gender Stereotypes of “Obiektivi TV”

In the course of the monitoring, no statements containing gender-based discrimination of gender stereotypes were observed on “Obiektivi TV”.