



ევროკავშირი
საქართველოსთვის
The European Union for Georgia



Study and Research on Media Coverage of 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia

Social Media Monitoring Second Interim Report

June 15 – November 21 2020



საქართველოს
ჟურნალისტური
ეთიკის ქარტია

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Methodology

The Objective of the Study and the Research Questions

The social network monitoring carried out during the period of 2020 Parliamentary Elections (from 15 June through 1 November 2020) aims to explore what type of information reaches users daily through the social network about ongoing political events in the country. Considering the fact that Facebook is the most popular social network platform in Georgia, monitoring has been carried out to find out how this platform is used by the traditional media, government bodies and electoral subjects and what type of information users receive through Facebook during the election period in Georgia.

Correspondingly, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What type of media outlets have access to the widest audiences via Facebook?
- What types of media products reach the widest audiences?
- How reliable is the information which is spread to the widest audiences?
- What is the ratio between more or less reliable information spread via the social network and problematic media products?
- How does the traditional media, in particular, online and TV media use their Facebook pages to disseminate daily information during the electoral period?
- What kind of information is disseminated through most popular pages and largest open groups?
- How is the social media used by government agencies, political parties and individual politicians as a platform for spreading information during electoral period?

Observation method and sampling

To seek answers to the research questions, daily observation of the following sources was carried out:

- 1) Facebook pages of 13 online media outlets;
- 2) Facebook pages of 6 TV channels;
- 3) 60 open groups;
- 4) 137 popular pages;

- 5) Facebook pages of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament, The Mayor of Tbilisi, the head of the Government of Adjara, the Government of Adjara, 11 ministries and 4 ministers;
- 6) Facebook pages of 12 political parties and 25 individual politicians;
- 7) 20 most widespread media products (based on the number of interactions) spread through Facebook daily.

Quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of the media products shared by the selected sources was carried out every day during the monitoring period. During quantitative observation, attention was paid to which political subjects were portrayed in exaggerated media products and the tone of the media coverage of the respective subjects. During qualitative observation, attention was paid to compliance with journalistic standards of the media products shared through Facebook. Particular attention was paid to observing which media outlet materials were published most frequently by various sources.

Analytical platforms Crowd Tangle and Buzz Sumo were used for data collection.

Limitations of the Study

In accordance with the international practice, the spread range of individual materials through Facebook was determined according to numbers of interactions which the materials accumulated in a given time period.

Definition of terms

Source - Facebook page under observation.

Might be a page of an individual, a political party or a government agency, an entertainment page with high numbers of likes and followers, an official Facebook page of a traditional media outlet or an open group, which is observed during the monitoring.

Author – a media outlet, which prepared the media product shared by the source via Facebook.

Media product – In the following report media product refers to materials prepared by the traditional media, such as articles, videos and other types of multimedia products.

Facebook statuses, post comments, original materials prepared by politicians or government agencies, such as press releases, videos, infographics and other types of campaigning materials are not considered as media products for the purpose of this study and are not analyzed quantitatively.

Traditional media – In the following report traditional media refers to a media outlet, which has its own platform, such as a website, a newspaper, radio or television broadcasting, and which publishes materials on its platform.

More or less reliable information – a media product prepared by traditional media outlets which does not contain gross violations of journalistic standards.

Problematic media product – a media product prepared by traditional media outlets which contains gross violations of journalistic standards, such as publishing unverified and unbalanced information, hate speech dissemination, deliberate spread of disinformation etc.

Number of interactions – cumulative number of various types of emoticons, comments and shares accumulated by individual media products on Facebook.

Most widespread media product – individual media products with the highest numbers of interactions accumulated on Facebook in a given period of time.

Popular page – a Facebook page which is not a personal profile of any individual or a page of a specific company or organization and which is liked by many users.

Open group – A group created on Facebook, joined by a certain number of users, joining which does not require confirmation by the group administrator.

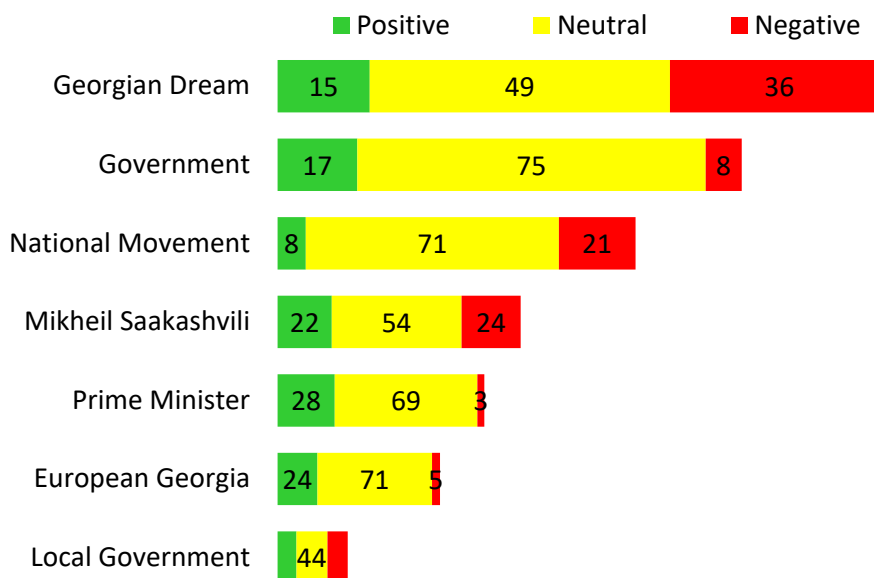
Main findings of social media monitoring

- According to interactions on Facebook, the most widely spread information was media products prepared by television channels and their websites.
- As with broadcasters, political polarization was detected in information spread via the Facebook pages of television channels.
- Popular pages on Facebook rarely shared media products that covered current political events.
- Popular pages very rarely posted especially problematic media products, and interactions linked to such materials remained low.
- Only two problematic pages were identified during the monitoring period—‘Alt-Info’ and ‘Alt-Club’—which were removed by Facebook on the 23rd of October and can no longer be retrieved.
- Users in open Facebook groups were frequently sharing media products that directly or indirectly touched upon political issues.

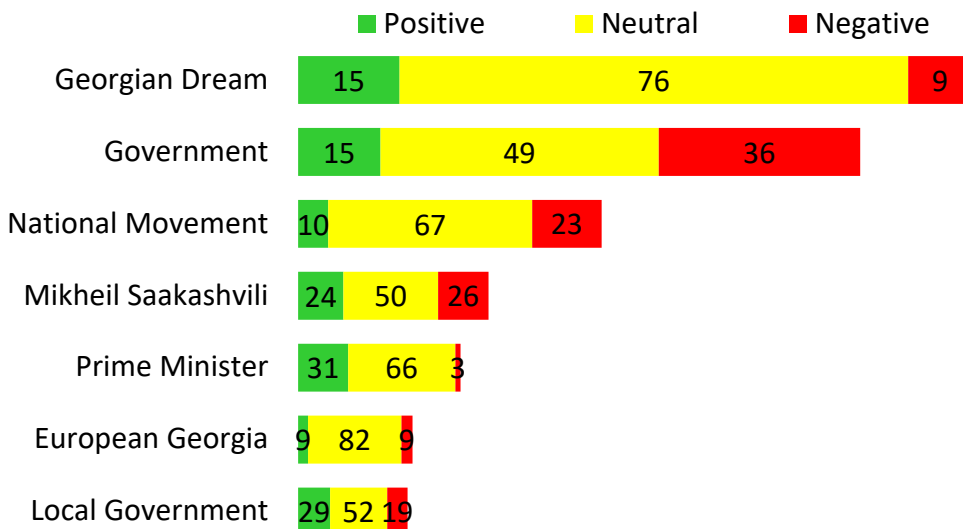
- There were cases when users shared content created by problematic webpages in open Facebook groups, but such content only generated low levels of interaction among users.
- During the monitoring period, Government officials and state institutions were using their Facebook pages in order to publish information about their activities and not to discredit their political opponents.
- There were cases of political parties and politicians publishing materials that insulted or mocked their political opponents on their Facebook pages, but especially problematic content containing hate speech, encouraging violence or spreading disinformation was exceptionally rare.
- In the run-up to the elections, coverage of the Government's attempts to fight the economic crisis caused by the pandemic was also shared through social media pages, and the majority of these widely shared media products were favourable to the Prime Minister. This was primarily due to the fact that during the monitoring period it was the Prime Minister who was informing the public of the financial aid that the Government was granting them, resulting in his widespread positive coverage on social media.
- Most shared on Facebook were media products created by well-known and top-rated media platforms, and especially problematic material only generated low interaction among users.

ANNEX. Charts.

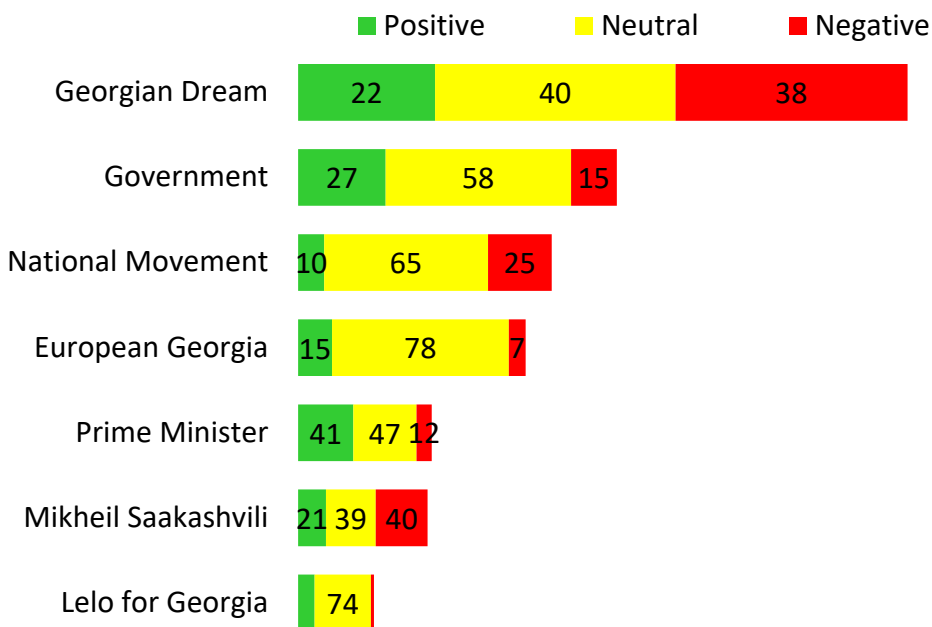
Coverage of subjects on ambebi.ge Facebook page (%)
July 15 - November 21, 2020



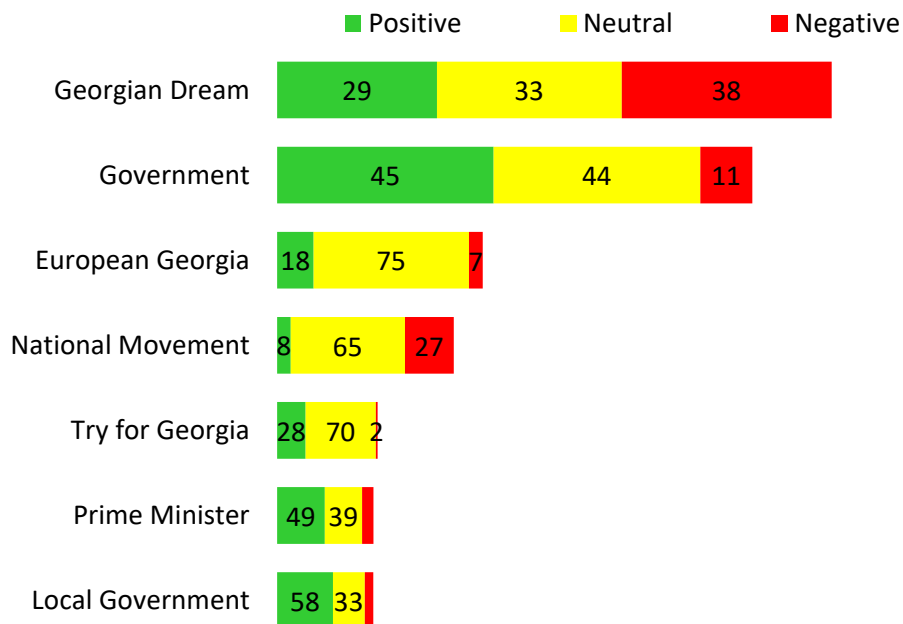
Coverage of subjects on ambebi.ge website (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



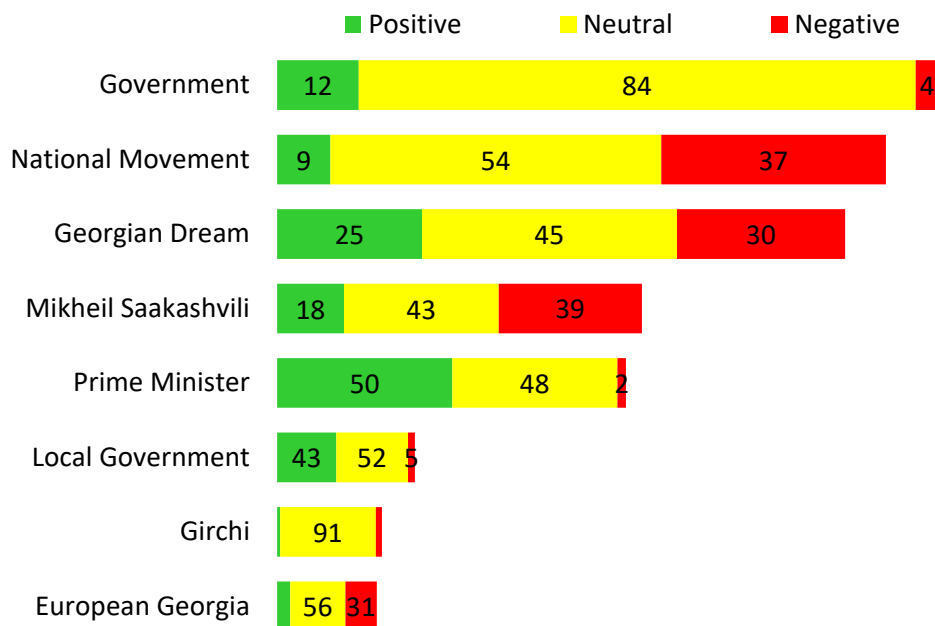
Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of interpressnews.ge (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



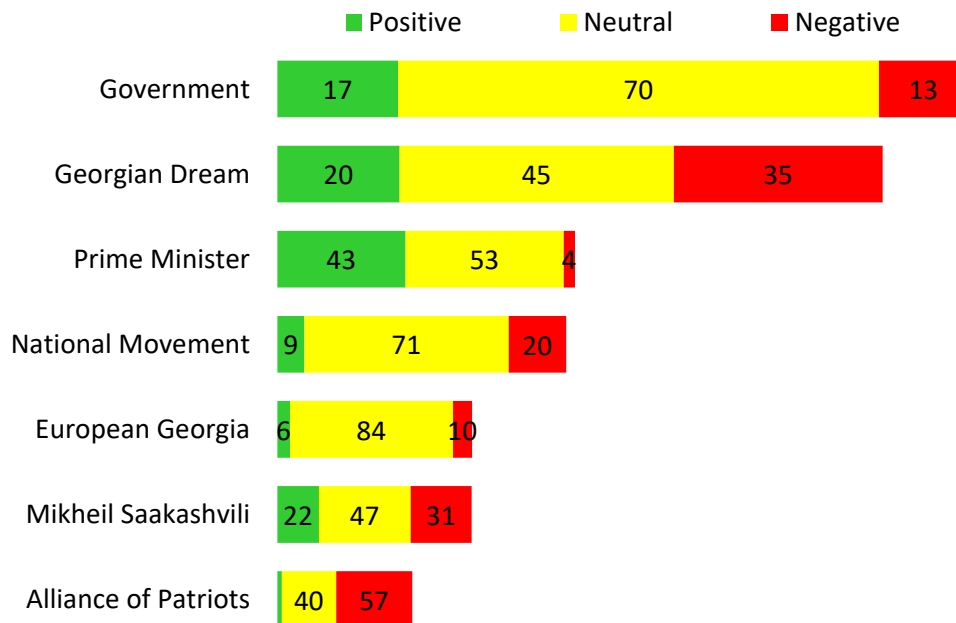
Coverage of subjects on the website of interpressnews.ge (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



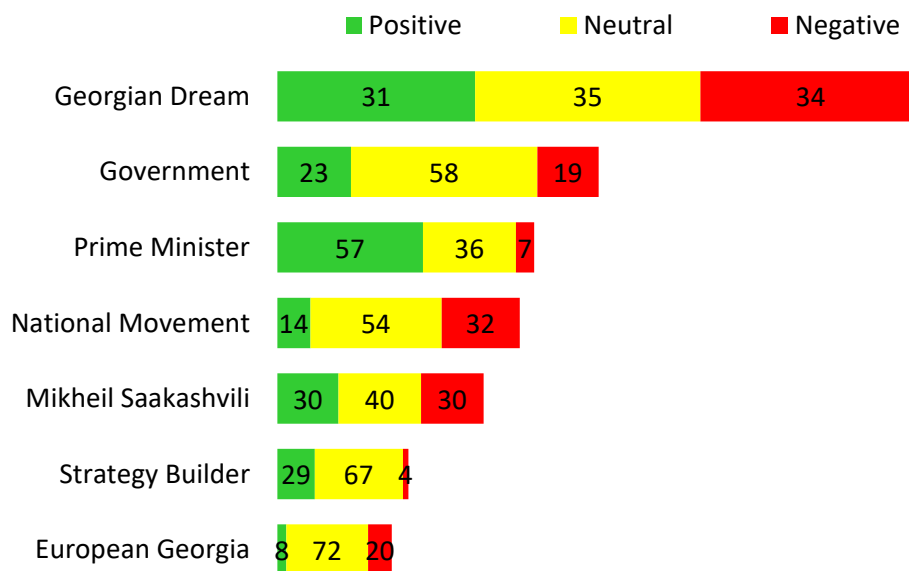
Coverage of subjects by tone (%) on the Facebook page Gogaggg July 15 - November 21, 2020



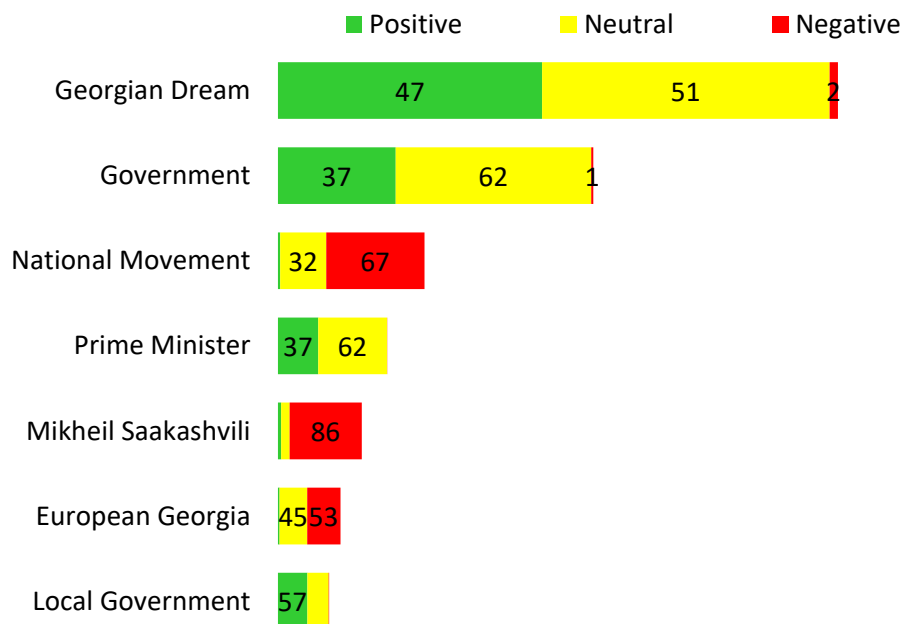
Coverage of subjects in open Facebook groups (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



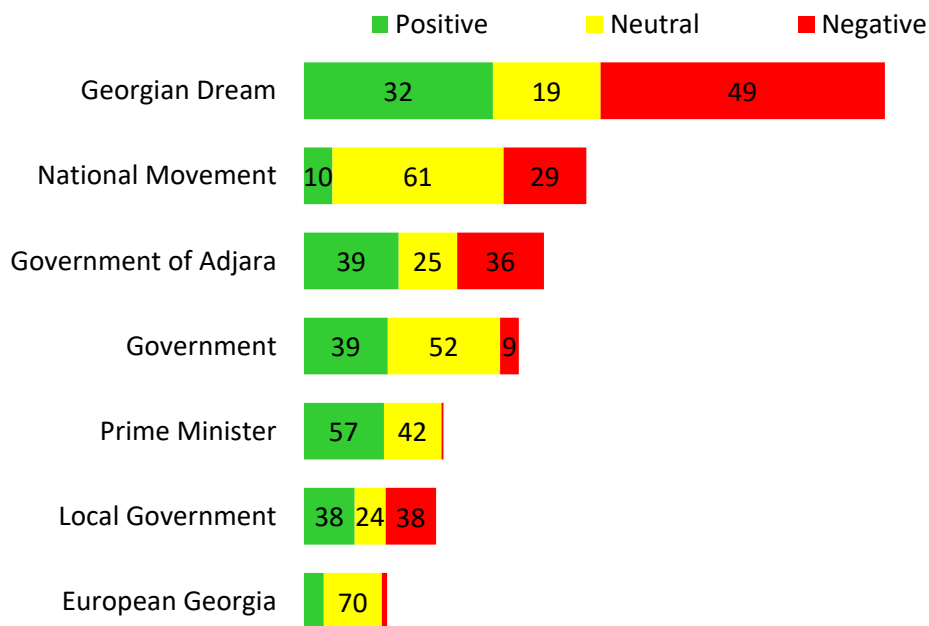
Coverage of subjects in the most interacting media products on Facebook (%) (General data of 2600 media products) July 15 - November 21, 2020



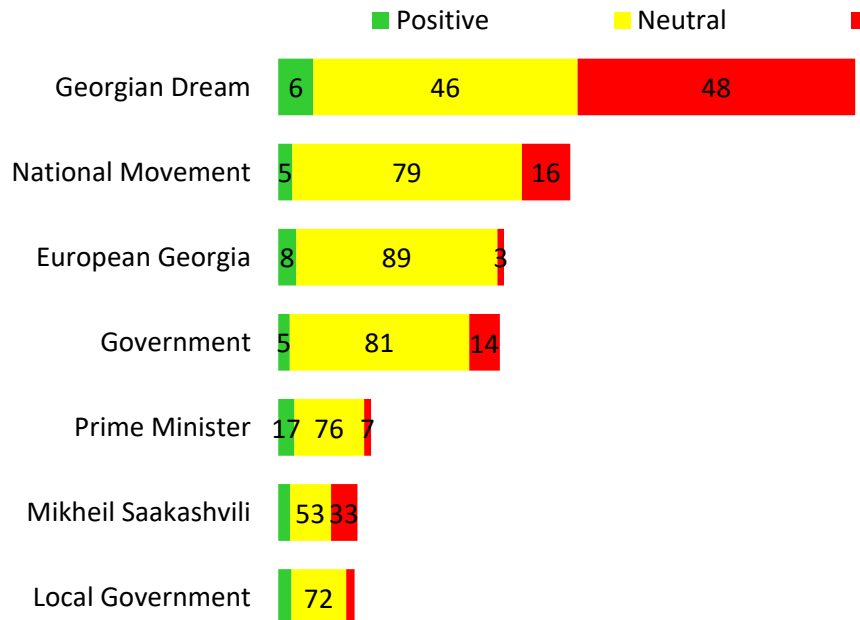
Coverage of subjects on Imedi Facebook page (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



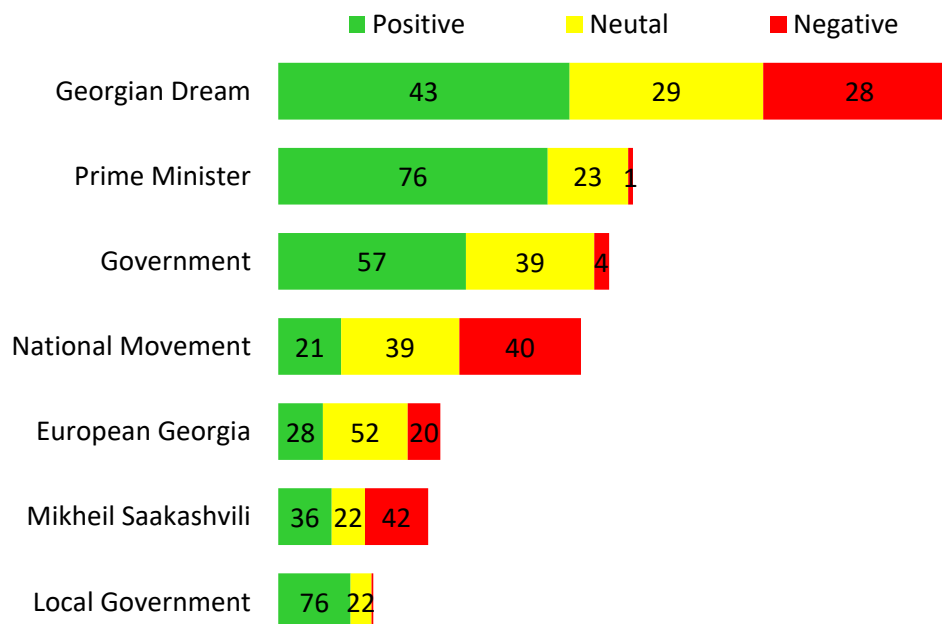
Coverage of subjects on Adjara TV Facebook page (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



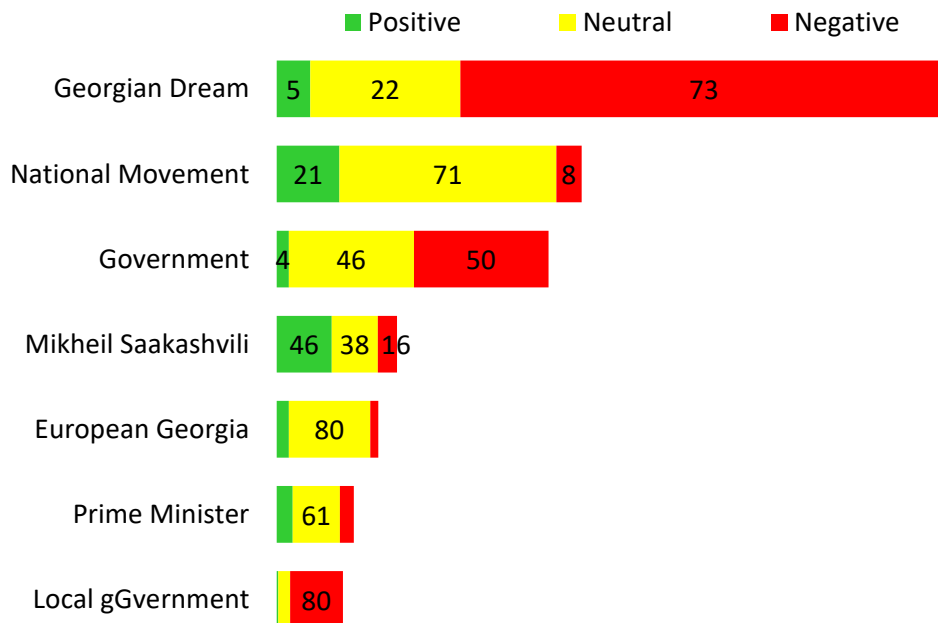
Coverage of Subjects on Formula Facebook page (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



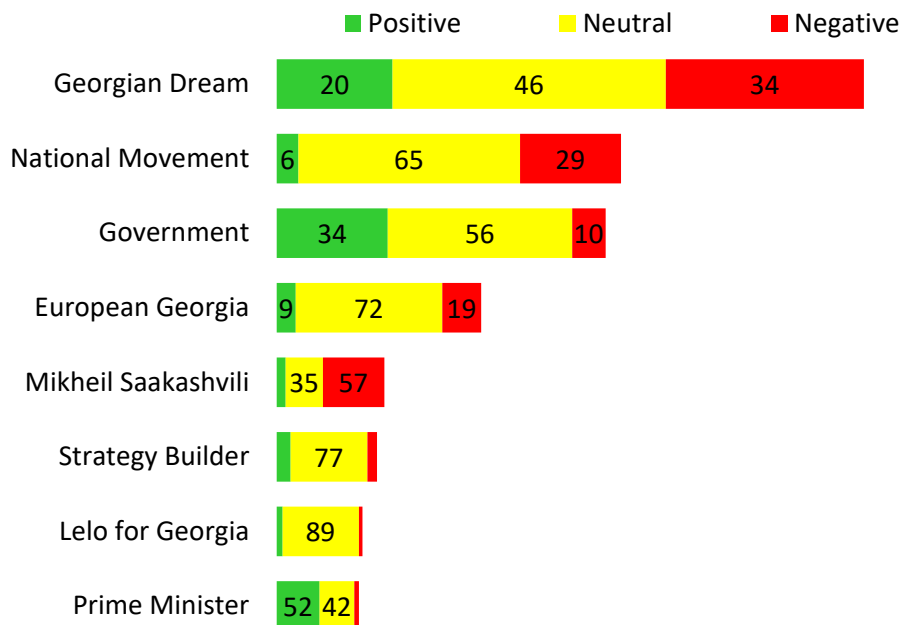
Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of the First Channel of the Public Broadcaster (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



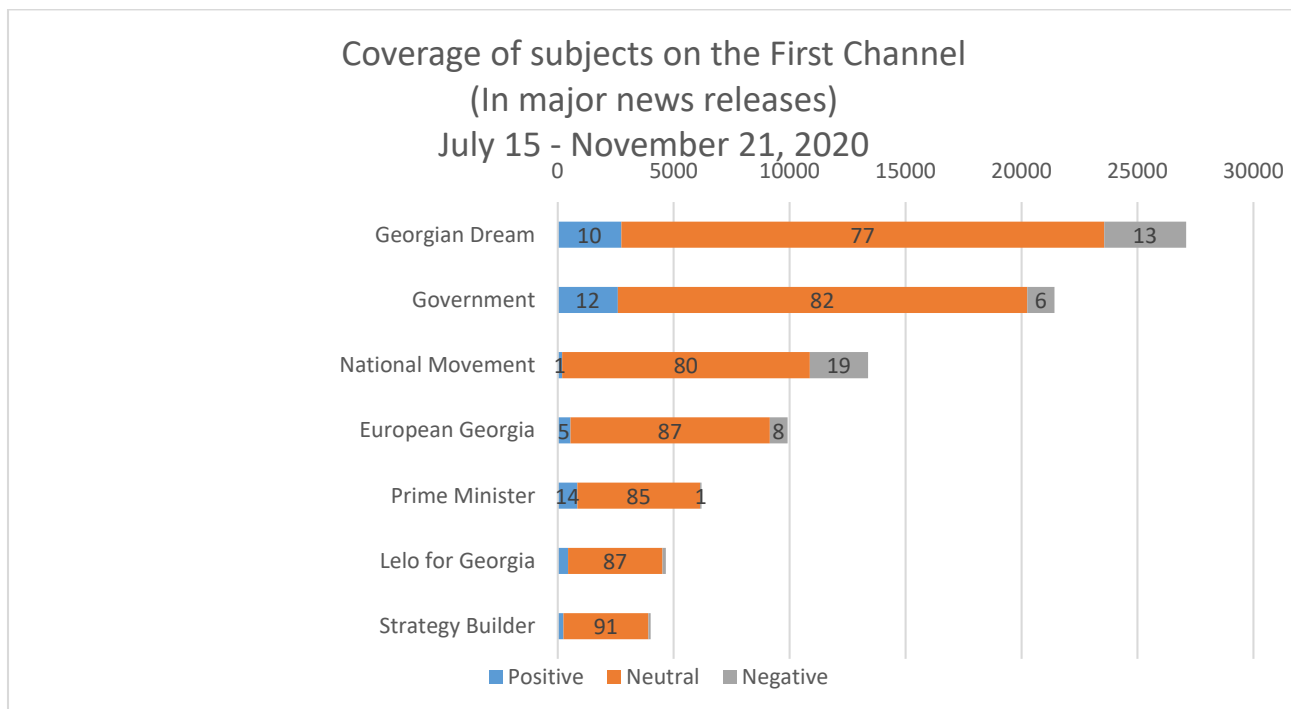
Coverage of subjects on the main channel Facebook page (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



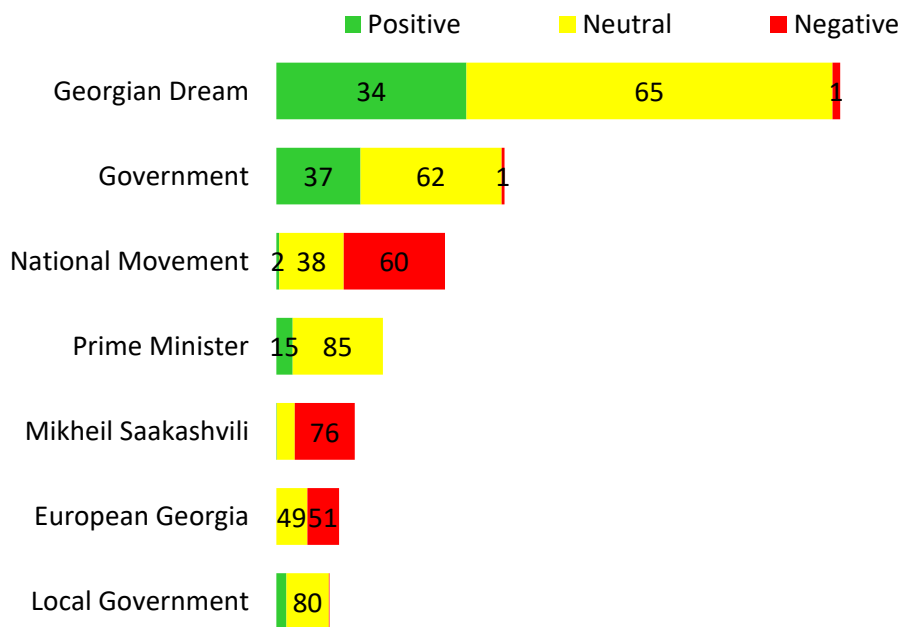
Coverage of subjects on Rustavi 2 Facebook page (%) July 15 - November 21, 2020



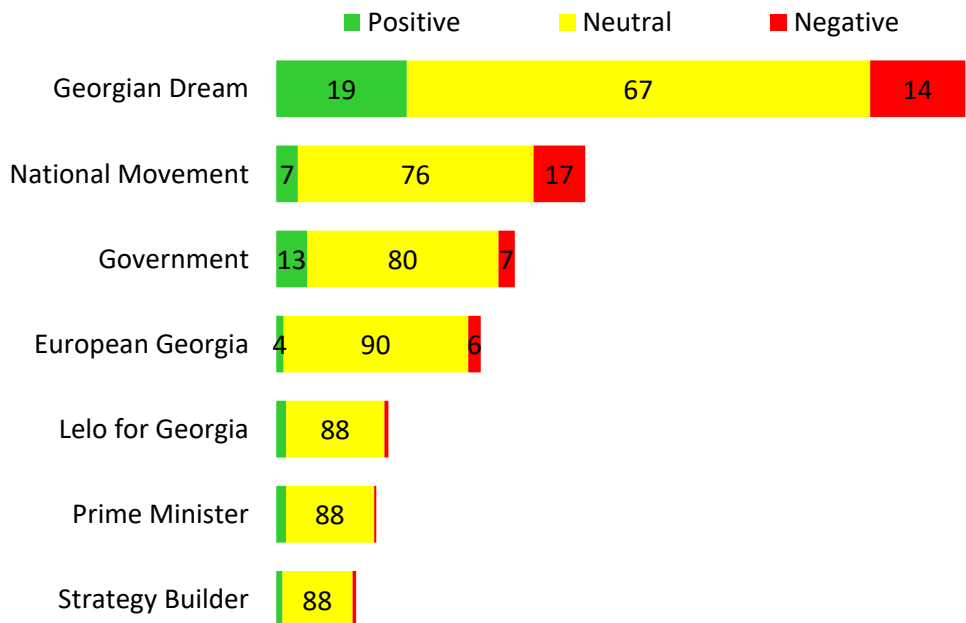
TV Charts



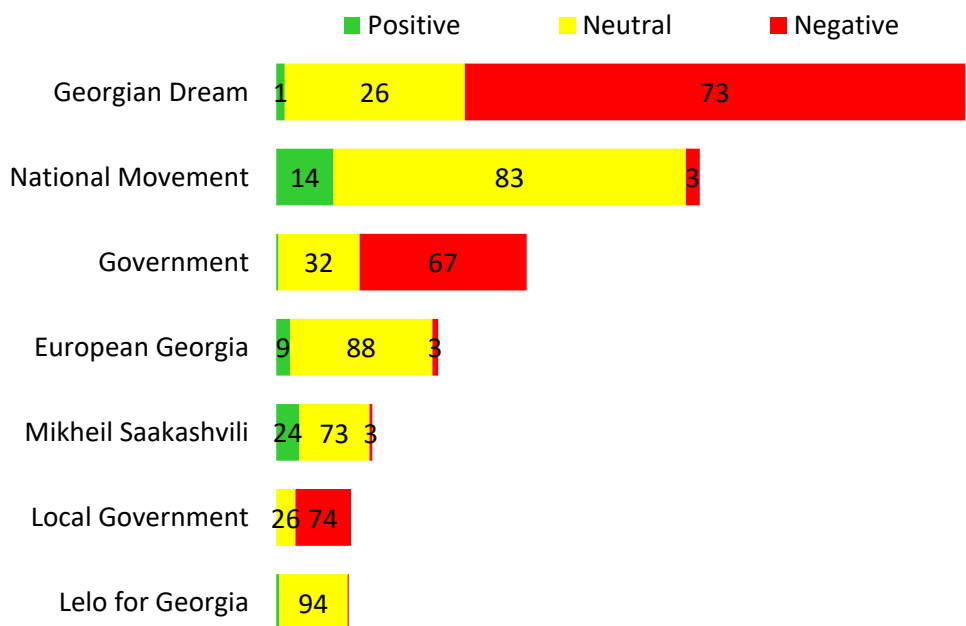
Coverage of subjects on Imedi TV (In major news releases) July 15 - November 21, 2020



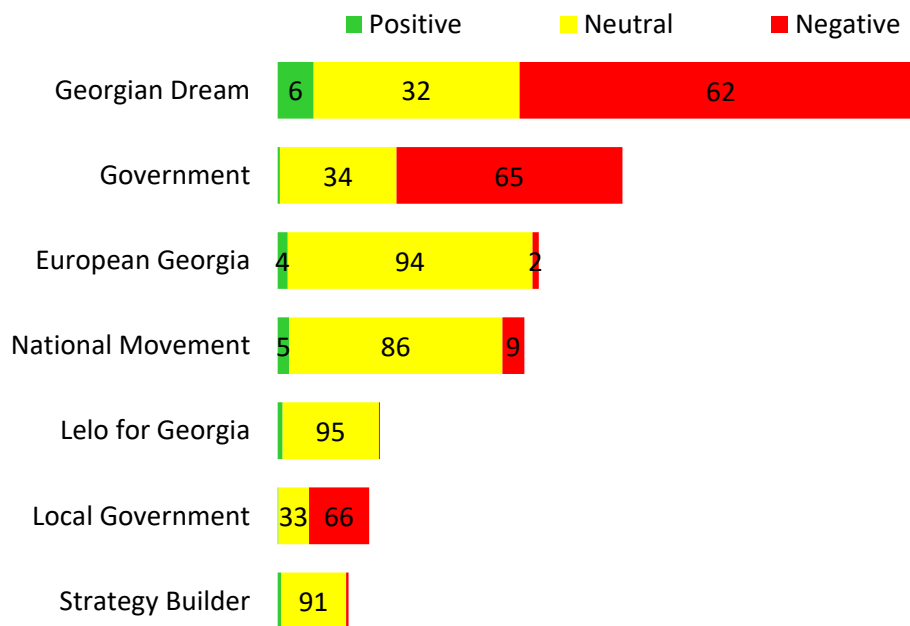
**Coverage of subjects on Rustavi 2
(In major news releases)
July 15 - November 21, 2020**



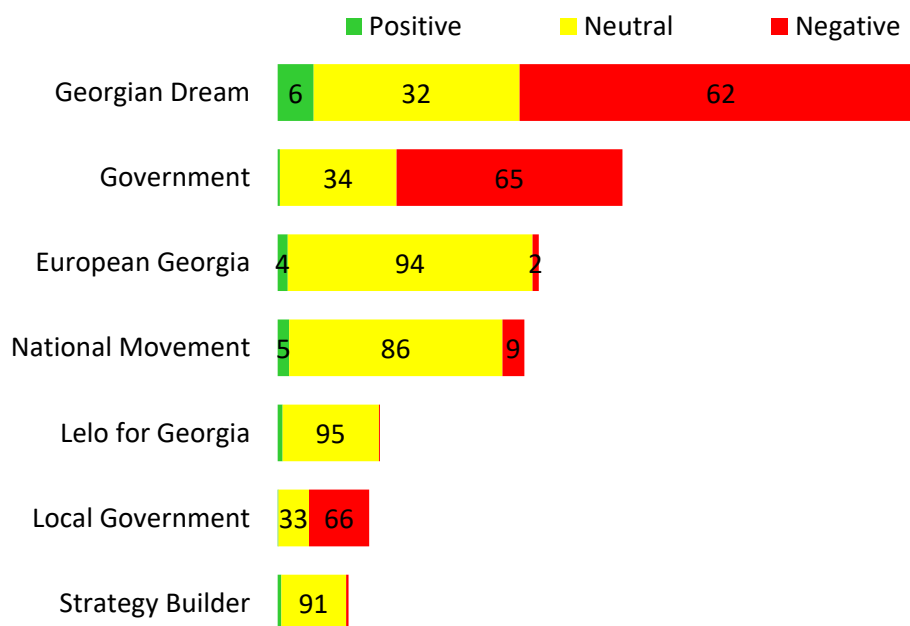
**Coverage of subjects on Mtavari Arkhi
(In major news releases)
July 15 - November 21, 2020**



**Coverage of subjects on Formula TV
(In major news releases)
July 15 - November 21, 2020**



**Coverage of subjects on Formula TV
(In major news releases)
July 15 - November 21, 2020**



Coverage of subjects on Adjara TV (in main news programs) July 15 - November 21, 2020

