

**Results of Qualitative and Quantitative Media Monitoring Conducted by Communications
Commission**
(03.08.2021 – 02.09.2021)

The Communications Commission publishes the media monitoring report on the pre-election period of the 2021 Georgian municipal elections, covering the period between August 3, 2021 and September 2, 2021.

During the reporting period, qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the following six national broadcasters has been carried out: the First Channel of the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV of the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Rustavi 2, Telemedi, TV Pirveli and Mtavari Arkhi. Monitoring was carried out during the prime time period between 19:00 and 00:00 each day, and monitoring of public-political programs was carried out during entire day.

During the monitoring process, the Commission focused on the following:

- a) Pre-election advertising;
- b) Pre-election debates;
- c) News programs and public-political shows;
- d) Pre-election canvassing;
- e) Public opinion surveys.

Media monitoring of the 2021 Georgian municipal elections was carried out by persons specially selected through competition, together with employees of the Communications Commission.

The Communications Commission monitors were trained by the Council of Europe media expert and Executive Director of the media monitoring organization Memo 98, Rasto Kuzel. By sharing international best practices, Mr. Kuzel explained the peculiarities and specifics of conducting qualitative media monitoring during a pre-election campaign. The monitors deepened their knowledge of pre-election media monitoring in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

The monitoring process included a detailed analysis of fair and transparent distribution of paid and free pre-election advertising among broadcasting companies. In the process of monitoring news programs, public-political shows and pre-election debates during the reporting period, attention was paid to the time allotted by broadcasters to the qualified electoral subjects and the coverage of their pre-election activities. Activities of political subjects who are not qualified electoral subjects but are involved in the election process were also examined. In case of failure by broadcasters to fulfil their duties under the current legislation, the Commission studies each specific case and implements measures in accordance with the legislation.

The monitoring of the aforementioned channels included qualitative and quantitative components. The quantitative component includes the time allotted to the subject, direct and indirect coverage, and the tone of coverage. Directly allotted time refers to cases when the electoral subject/candidate directly talks/participates in a program, while indirectly allotted time refers to time spent by the broadcaster

talking about the electoral subject/candidate and their supporters. In case of both direct and indirect coverage, the tone of coverage is assessed by the monitor based on three categories: positive, neutral and negative.

Monitoring results are also categorized by gender, showing the total time allocated by individual broadcasters to male and female politicians.

Six general broadcasters that were subject to qualitative monitoring were assessed by the following broadcasting standards: balance, accuracy, relevance, clarity, variety, important information, hate speech, misinformation, discrimination and visual/audio manipulation.

Key findings:

- It should be noted that the election period coincided with the month of August, when broadcasters are preparing for new broadcasting year and the broadcast network is not usually loaded with public-political content.
- The news program “Moambe” of the Georgian Public Broadcaster covered activities of all main election subjects. In general, all main standards were maintained: impartiality, balance, neutral tone; The Broadcaster covered activities of qualified as well as unqualified electoral subjects. Live coverage was allotted to presentation of candidates by various parties. No visual or audio manipulation was identified.

There were certain cases of less clear stories and opposite opinions have not been presented.

During the reporting period, only one public-political show was broadcasted and the presenter was asking critical questions.

- Adjara TV covered pre-election campaign in accordance with relevant legislation and standards of journalism, without bias and discrimination and with calm tone. Presenters and journalists were objective towards all political parties and candidates. No expression of political sympathy or discriminative terminology was identified. Stories were mainly balanced. Pre-election stories were mainly informative, covering both qualified and non-qualified election subjects.
- TV Imedi was characterized by positive attitude towards the Government and Georgian Dream. Meanwhile, distinct negative tone towards opposition was apparent, in particular against representatives of National Movement. Stories prioritized positions of representatives of the ruling party in connection with particular topics, while opposition representatives were restricted or not represented at all. Stories criticized opposition parties and authors of the critique were persons participating in the story, as well as author of the story and presenters of news programs. During the reporting period, live broadcasts and news programs actively covered presentations of candidates by Georgian Dream in the capital and regions. Briefings and statements of members of Georgian dreams were broadcasted live, while almost no live coverage was allotted to opposition election activities.
- Rustavi 2 mainly covered current events and followed ethical norms. Discriminative or insulting terminology was not used by journalists when covering pre-election activities. During the monitoring period, distinct positive or negative tone against political parties was used mainly by politicians themselves. The Broadcaster widely covered election meetings and candidate

presentations of all qualified subjects. However, it should be noted that most of the time was allotted to coverage of Georgian Dream's election activities. There was a trend of representatives of Georgian Dream using the right of first and conclusive statements when covering current events.

Presentations of candidates of the ruling party and government activities were covered as one story, which could make it difficult for the audience to distinguish government activities from those of Georgian Dream.

Presenter of public-political programs asked critical questions.

- TV Pirveli was characterized by highly critical position against Georgian Dream and Government of Georgia. Besides, loyal attitude towards opposition was apparent. Pre-election was not allotted adequate time in main news programs. Declared negative and ironic attitudes of authors of the stories against Georgian Dream was evident.

There were cases of false news based on assumptions only. Presenters attempting to present information from unverified source remains an issue and may facilitate misinformation of the public. Public-political programs were biased and unbalanced. Time was allotted to opposition parties only. Presenters openly confronted the Government. Texts were full of negative tone and irony, threatening the Government with "elimination", openly supported opposition candidates and wished success in live broadcasts.

- Mtavari Arkhi displayed abrupt positive attitude towards opposition, in particular towards National Movement and negative attitude towards the Government and Georgian Dream. When covering pre-election meetings of Georgian Dream, the channel mainly criticized the party and nothing was mentioned about this particular activity. The Government and Georgian Dream received ironic attitude from presenters. Meanwhile, the channel systematically allotted live broadcast to the opposition, in particular National Movement, Elene Khoshtaria – Droa, European Georgia, Girchi – More Freedom and Lelo.

Stories frequently involved accusations by the opposition against the ruling party, which was not given the possibility to express its position. There were cases of fake news presenting ungrounded accusations and unverified information.

Presenters of public-political shows openly confronted the ruling party, used insulting language, displayed direct support to the opposition and called for the voters not to vote for certain candidates.

Results of Monitoring of News and Public-Political Programs:

Public Broadcaster

First Channel

Newscast – Time allotted to the monitoring subjects: Georgian Government - 23.7% (positive - 11%, negative - 2%), Georgian Dream – 21.9% (positive - 25%, negative - 12%), National Movement – 9.3% (positive - 5%, negative - 5%), Third Force – 7.5% (positive - 33%, negative - 5%), Lelo – 7% (positive - 27%, negative - 1%), Gakharia for Georgia – 6.6% (positive - 10%, negative - 12%), and all other subjects – less than 5% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – News Program Moambe of the Public Broadcaster covered all activities of all electoral subjects. Main standards were generally maintained: impartiality, balance, neutral tone. No hate speech or visual and audio manipulations have been identified.

The Broadcaster covered electoral activities of both qualified and non-qualified subjects. Live coverage was allotted to candidate presentations by various parties.

There were several unbalanced stories. For example: presentation of 10-year development plan by the Government agencies were largely aired and covered governmental plans only.

The story about national museum prepared on August 6 was lacking adequate clearance. The presenter presented only the statement of the Minister of Culture. Nothing was mentioned about earlier processes and problems preceding such statement. Opposite position has not been presented.

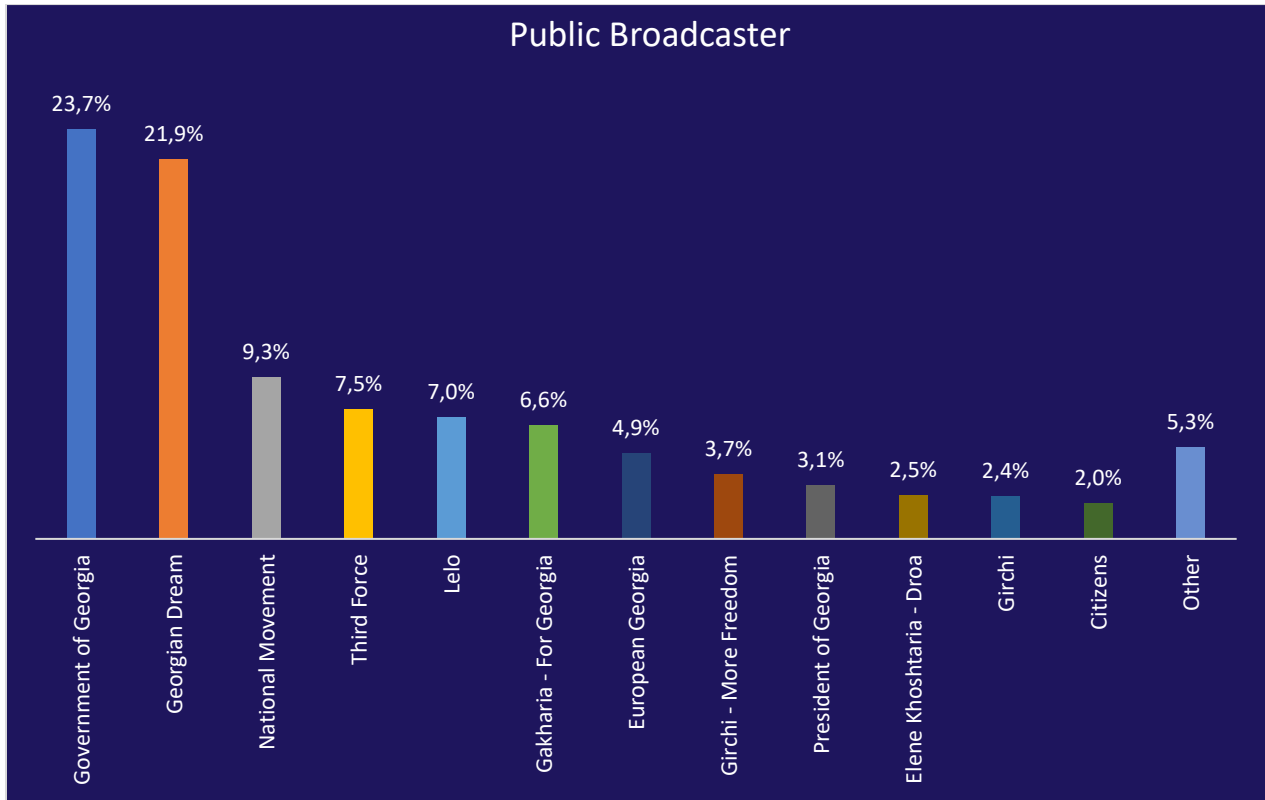
On August 12, the channel stated that the Public Broadcaster was not invited to attend Elene Khoshtaria's Party's presentation and the channel was trying to find out the reason as to why Moambe was not informed about this event. It was established that Elene Khoshtaria was boycotting the Public Broadcaster. On the next day, Moambe prepared information about the event through data obtained by its own sources. Neutral tone was maintained during coverage.

Public-political programs – During the reporting period, the channel aired a single public-political show “Real Space”.

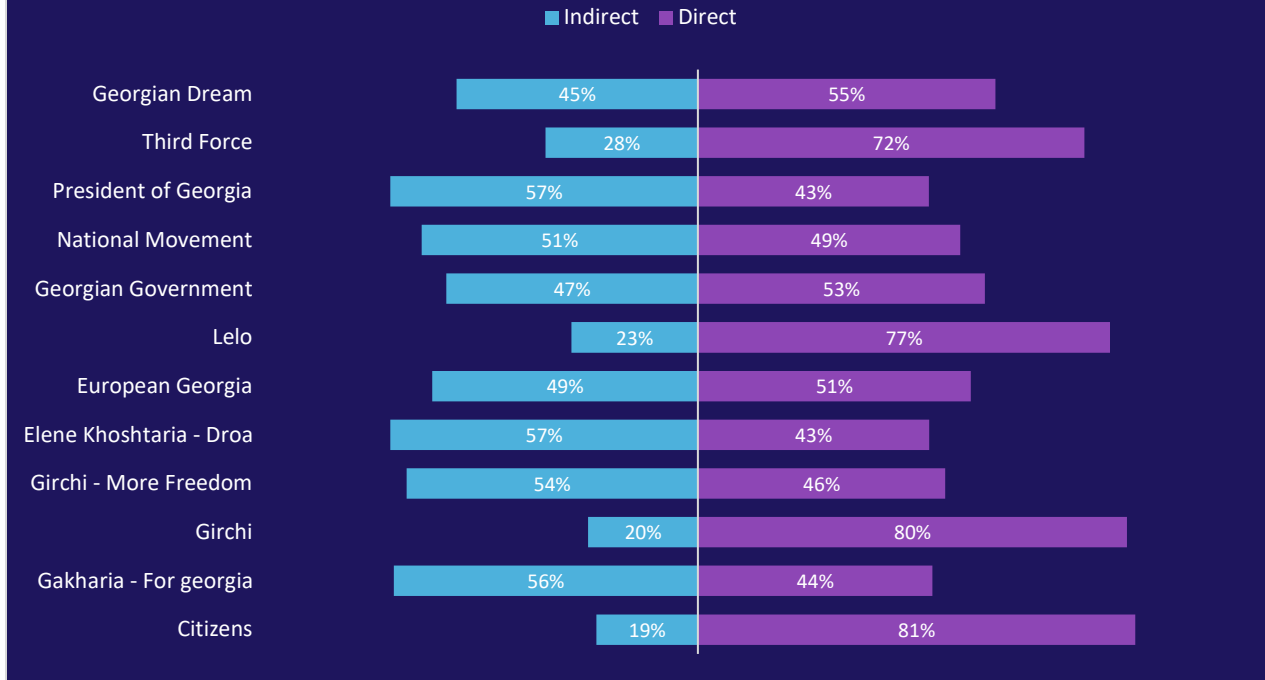
Topic of the August 7 program was the situation in Shalva Amiranashvili museum. Employees of the National Museum participated in the program. As stated by the presenter, Tea Tsulukiani, Minister of Culture and new director of the museum did not participate in the program, therefore the position of the opposing party remained unknown for the public, although the channel ensured submission of information about the process.

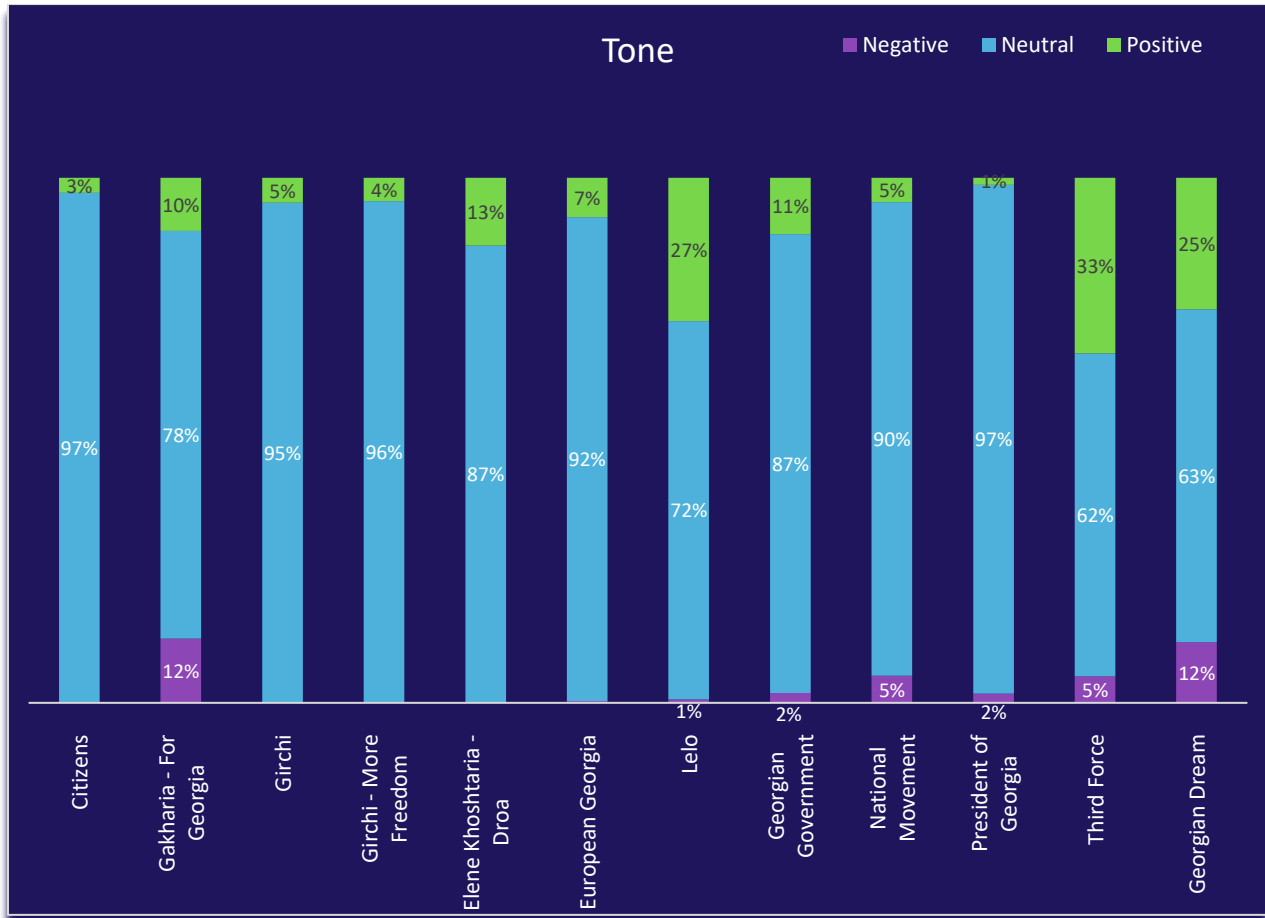
The presenter was quite critical towards the Minister of Culture and the Ministry in general. In particular, the presenter stated that “Mrs. Minister again tried to calm down the situation with regard to the museum's building, the initial state of the building will be restored, although the treasure and unique exhibits shall be evacuated from the building until that time. But how, when and where? answers to these questions remain unclear and unreliable. The public has no reason not to trust the Ministry due to many reasons. Sakdrisi was blown up in this country, Gelati is destroying due to bad roofing. Such distrust is further increased due to the tone and pathos chosen by the Head of such an important Ministry to talk to the public”.

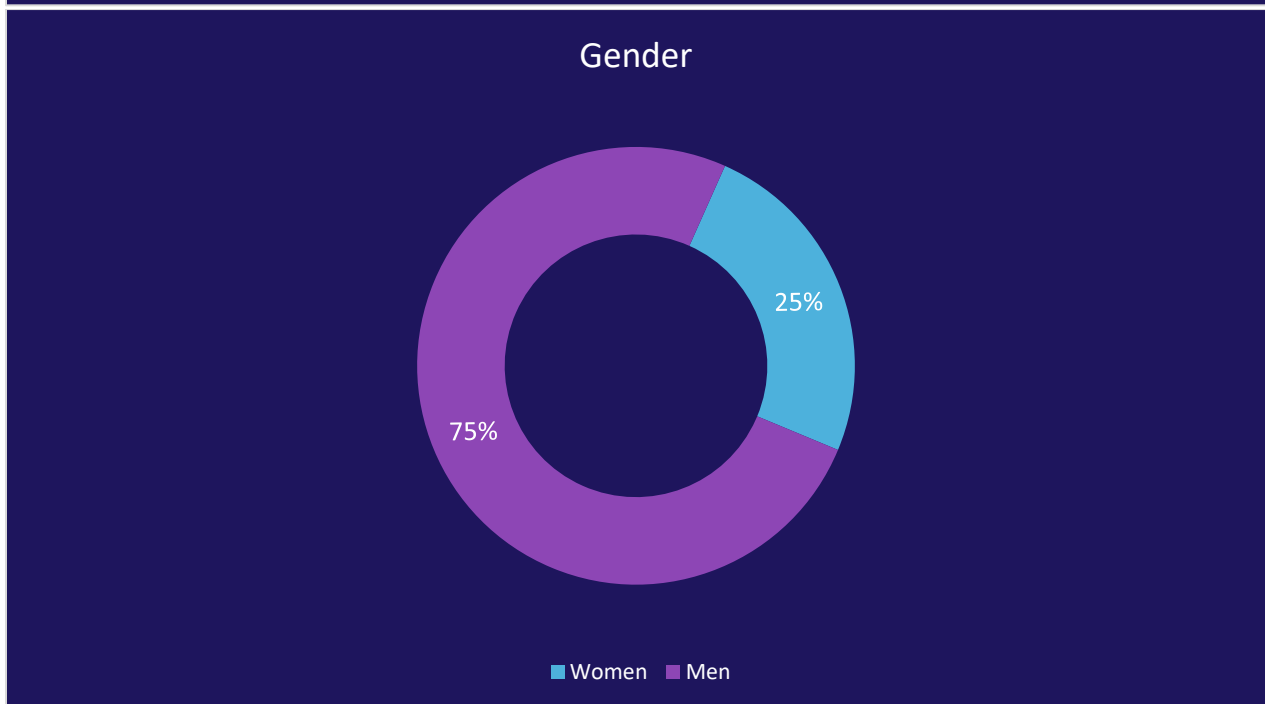
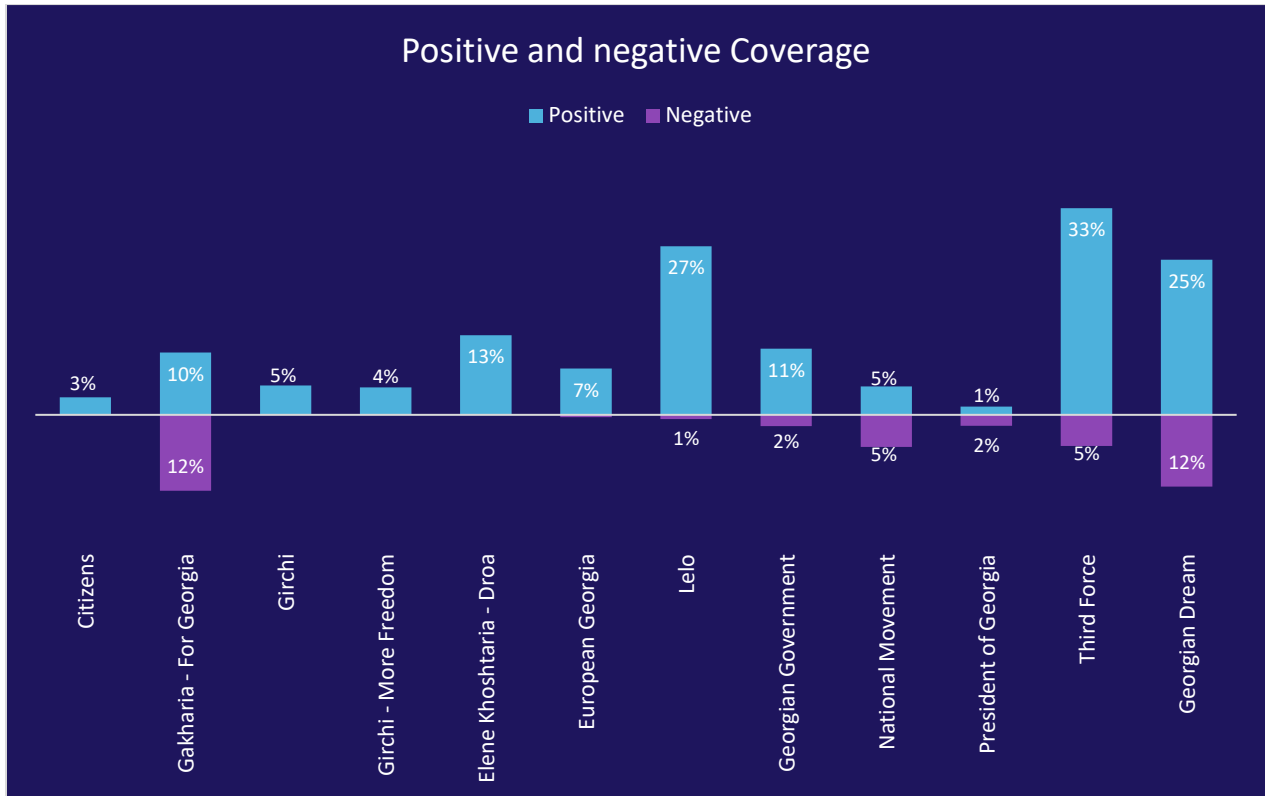
According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of the Georgian Public Broadcaster did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance



Direct and Indirect Coverage







Adjara TV of the Public Broadcaster

Newscast - Time allotted to the monitoring subjects: Georgian Dream – 40.5% (positive - 60%, negative - 24%), National Movement – 22.7% (positive - 71%, negative - 5%), Gakharia for Georgia – 5.8% (positive - 60%, negative - 11%), Georgian Government - 5.6% (positive - 31%, negative - 15%), and all other subjects – less than 5% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – 20:00 News program “Mtavari” of the Adjara TV of the Public Broadcaster covered pre-election campaign without any bias, following relevant legislative norms, in a non-discriminative way and using calm tone.

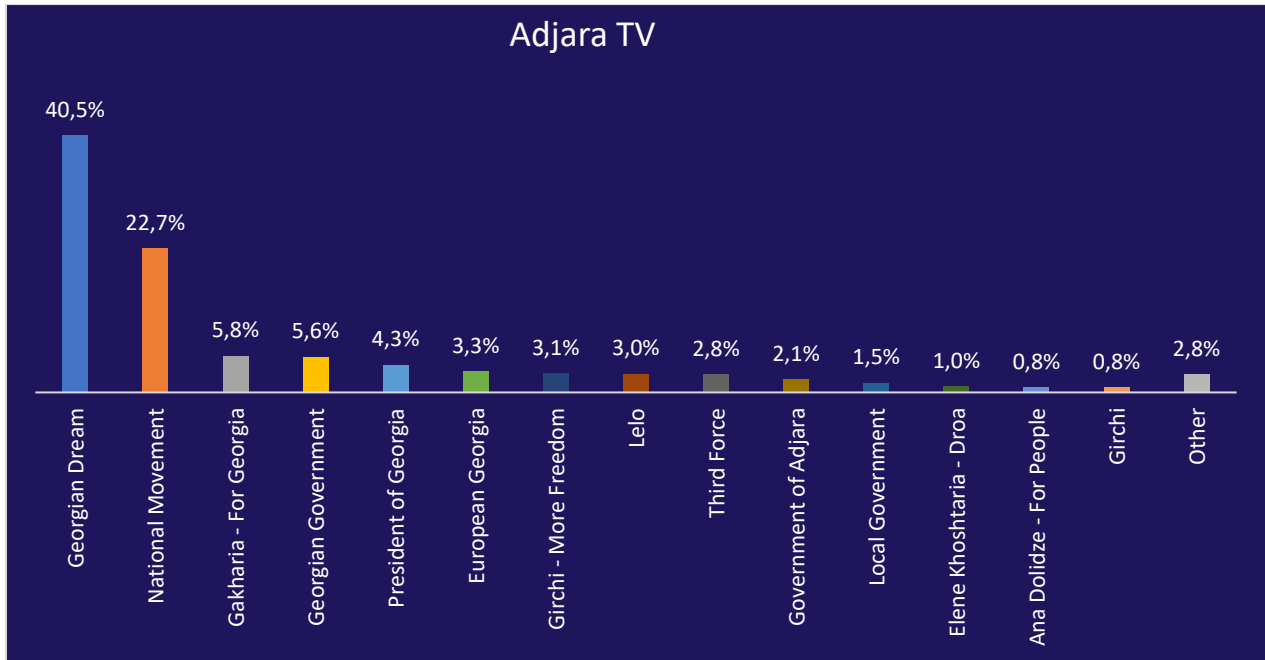
Presenters and journalists largely maintained objective attitude towards all political parties and electoral candidates despite their political affiliation. No political sympathies have been displayed or discriminative terminology used. Stories were balanced. In cases where the coverage of certain events involved only one party, journalists either strictly noted reasons of other parties not participating in the process, or stated the reason of one-sided story. In each story, time was allotted to parties evenly, all participants were allowed to express their critical opinions about other political subjects.

Pre-election stories were mainly informative and activities of both qualified and non-qualified electoral subjects were covered. For the purpose of better information of voters, special 5-6 minute section “Mayor Candidates” was integrated in “Mtavari”, in which the following subjects participated from August 17 to August 31 and answered journalist’s questions: 12 mayor candidates of 7 municipalities of Adjara, from which 6 candidates presented by National Movement, 5 candidates from Georgian Dream, 1 candidate from Girchi – More Freedom. Questions were asked in such a way that each candidate was able to fully present his/her programs and opinions and impression was created for the voters about personal characteristics of candidates. During the coverage of activities of Georgian Government and local Government of Adjara, focus was driven only to presenting events, facts, descriptions, and no subjective attitude has been identified. Same attributes to various experts and representatives of the public sector.

During the monitoring period, protests actions of electoral subjects have been covered both throughout the country and in Adjara region.

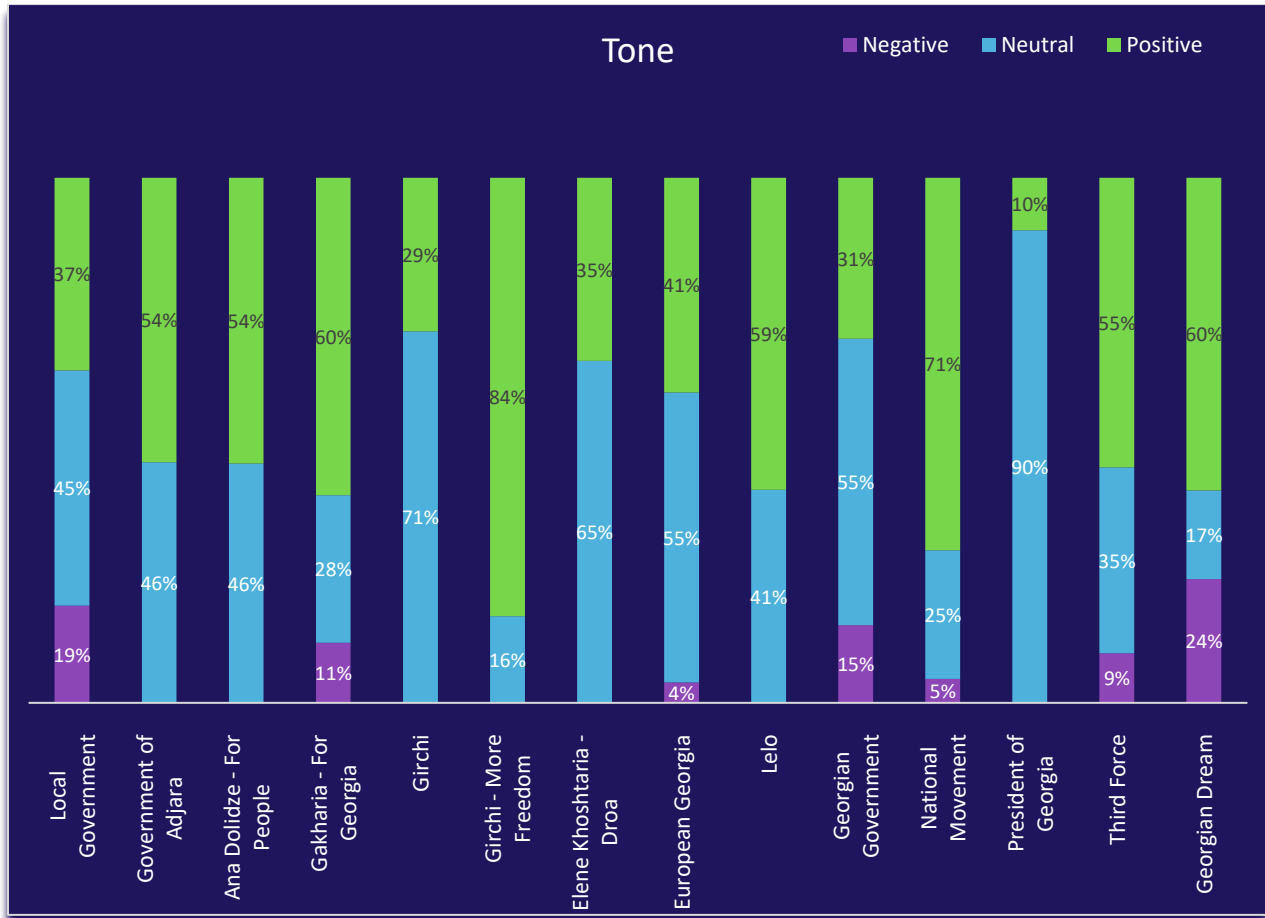
Public-political programs have not been aired on the broadcaster during the reporting period.

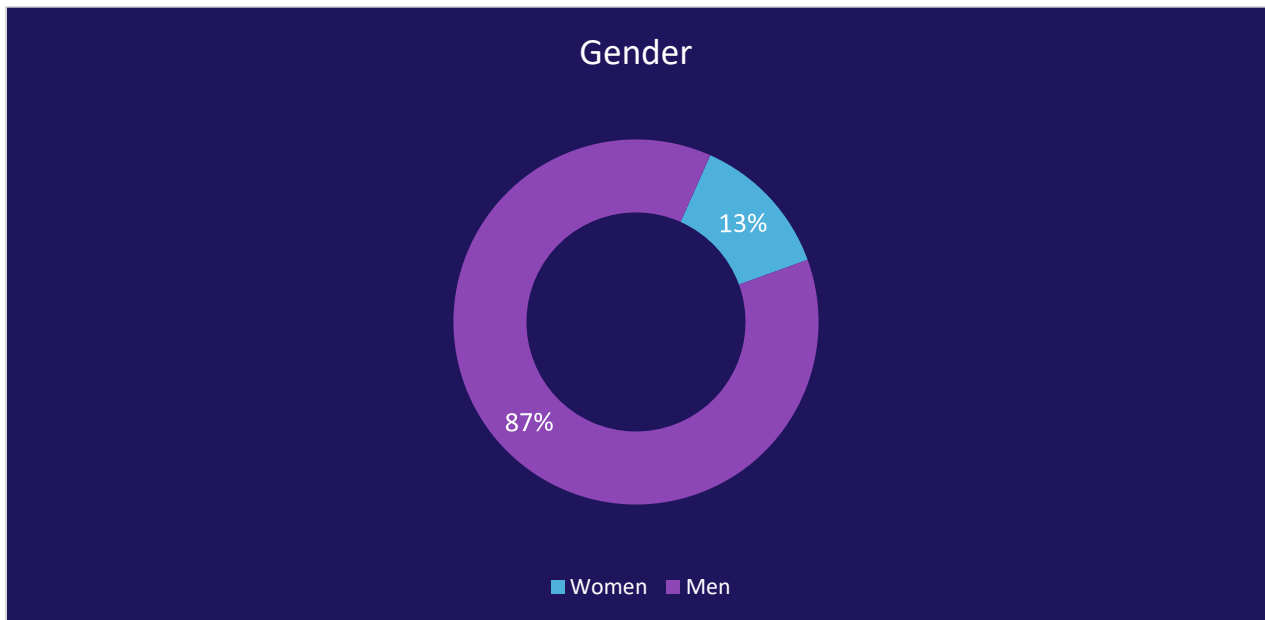
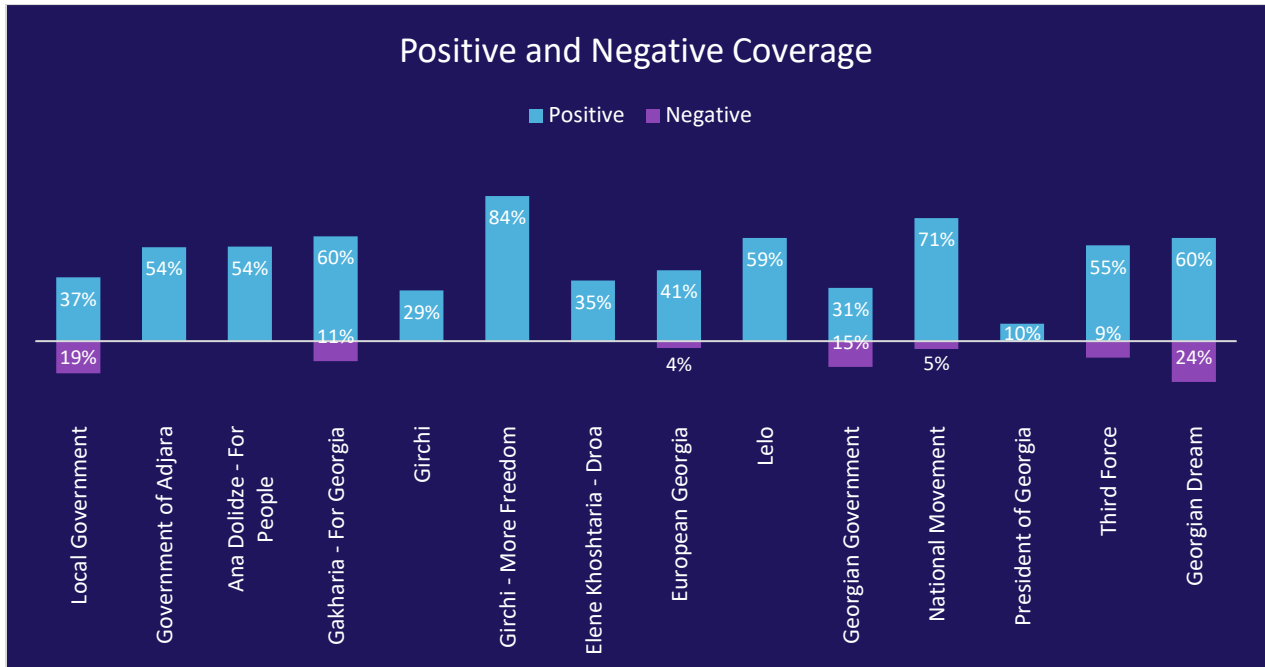
According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of Adjara TV did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance.



Direct and Indirect Coverage







Teleimedi Ltd

Newscast – Time allotted to monitoring subjects: Georgian Dream- 48.2% (positive - 71%, negative - 3%), Georgian Government - 20.1% (positive - 31%, negative - 1%), National Movement – 11.3% (positive - 2%, negative - 64%), and all other subject – less than 10% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – During the monitoring period, main news program displayed positive attitude towards the Government and Georgian Dream. Besides, apparent negative tone was displayed towards opposition representatives, especially National Movement and Gakharia - for Georgia. While there was a trend to present the position of several representatives of the ruling party, the opposition was restricted or not represented at all. It should also be noted that National Movement was frequently called by the presenters as “radicals”.

Opposition parties have been frequently criticized in the stories by the participants as well as by the authors of the story and presenters of news programs. Such stories were unbalanced and critics were allotted much more time as compared to those being critiqued. For example: in the story of September 2 regarding signature of Charles Michel’s Document by National Movement, more than 7 minutes were allotted to comments about National Movement by the presenter, representatives of Georgian Dream and other parties, who mainly spoke in negative context, while only 35 seconds were allotted to comments of representatives of National Movement and such comments did not respond to criticism.

During the reporting period, the stories prepared and aired by the broadcaster in the news programs emphasized unpreparedness of opposition parties for self-government elections, talks about conflicts within the opposition, while the preparedness of the ruling party and coordinated pre-election campaign was discussed in parallel, presenting Georgian Dream in a positive context. For example, in the main news program of August 9, at the end of the story, at 20:26 the journalist stated: “while the opposition is looking for and fails to nominate candidates, Kakha Kaladze and other candidates are meeting with voters and preparing for October 2 elections”. Besides, on August 13, at 20:21, the news program presenter stated: “early parliamentary election is discussed by opposition parties which can not start the campaign and do not have mayor candidates, while the leaders of the Party have simply disappeared”.

August 19 story was dedicated to the nomination of Gigi Ugulava. The presenter emphasized Ugulava as an inadequate candidate, noted the conflict with European Georgia, as well as his previous conviction. The candidate was negatively assessed by the representatives of Girchi and Citizens, and clearly negative attitude was displayed in the tone of the presenter and the author of the story: “former and acting faces of Saakashvili’s regime, together with united persons, presented Ugulava as the candidate for Poti Mayor. It is interesting that National Movement chose Gigi Ugulava, who first dumped Saakashvili and then left Bokeria’s party in a demarche move”.

It should be noted that when presenting the results of pre-election social surveys ordered by the parties and speaking about the reliability of National Movement’s survey, the presenter emphasized that “the survey was conducted by active members of National Movement”, while the journalist did not mention that Georgian Dream’s survey was also conducted by sociological group of Georgian Dream.

The broadcaster actively covered and allotted live coverage to important developments such as the statement of the President, the Government meeting, the Prime Minister's speech at Crimean Platform Summit and the briefing of the Prime Minister of Georgia and the Prime Minister of Ukraine, as well as other important events and meetings.

News regarding Covid pandemic and vaccination were covered on a daily basis. Tone of such stories was mainly neutral and informative.

During the reporting period, the broadcaster actively covered presentation of candidates by Georgian Dream in the capital and regions in live stories and news. Live coverage was allotted to briefings and statements of Georgian Dream members. It should be noted that live coverage was almost not allotted to election events of opposition parties.

It should be noted that during the reporting period, Imedi TV prepared a cycle of sketches about 17 electoral candidates of Georgian Dream, which involved assessment of their activities, personal lives, future plans and relations with family members, where each candidate was presented in a positive context. No such stories have been prepared about opposition candidates.

Public-political programs – During the reporting period, the program Imedi's Factor was visited by: Georgian Dream (once).

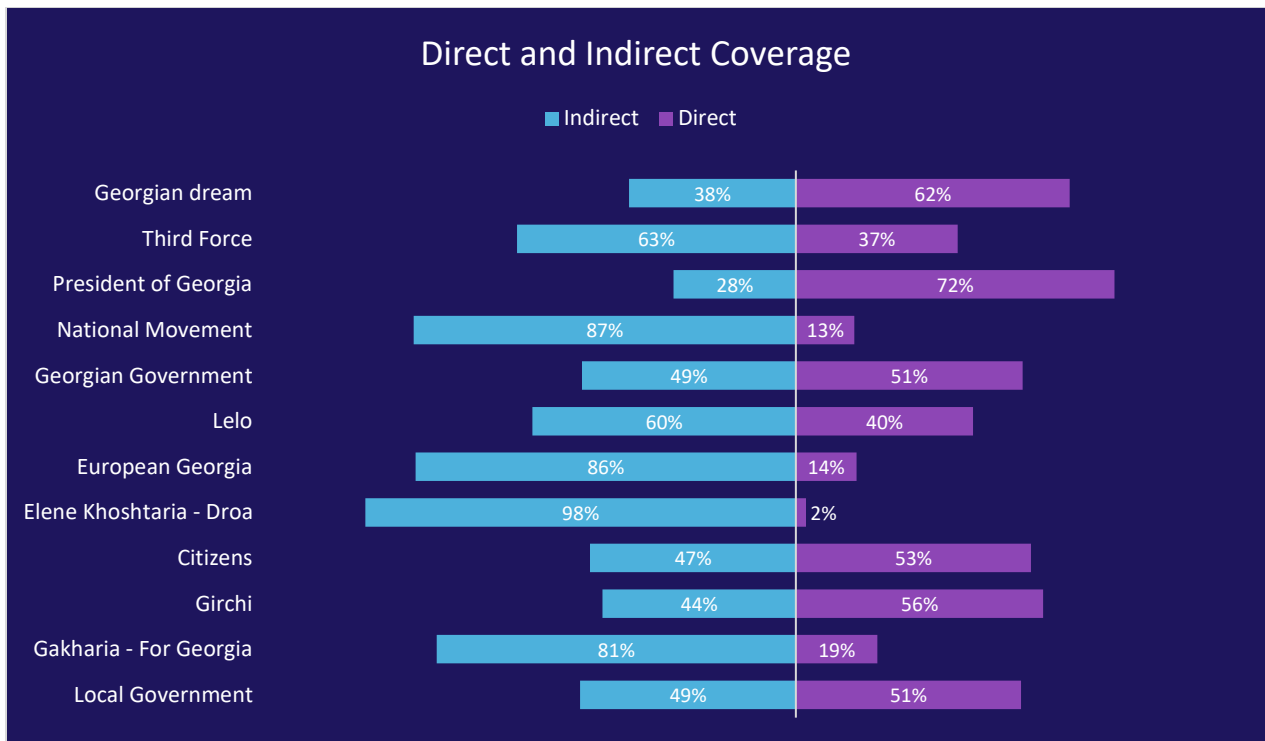
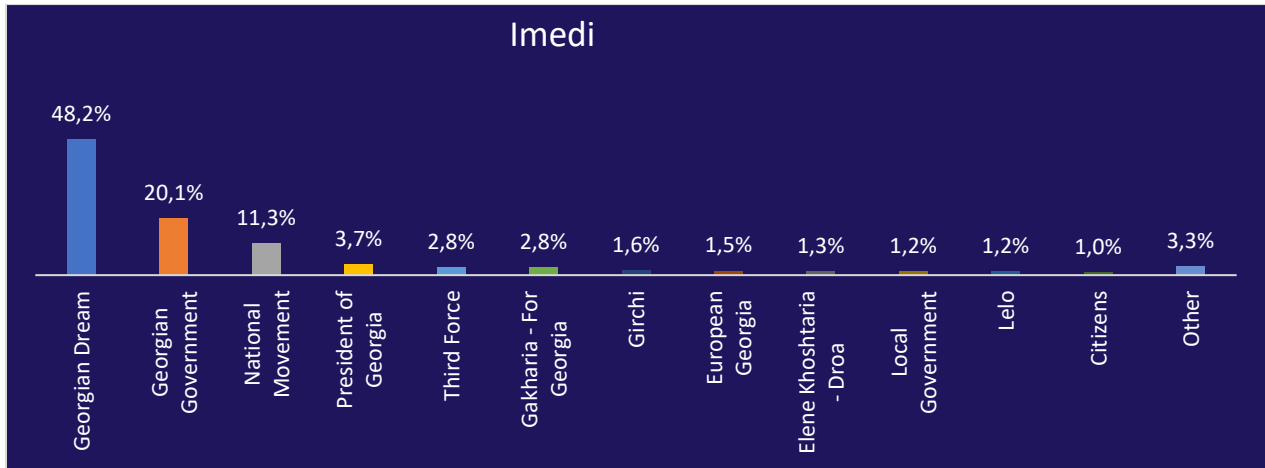
The topic of August 3 Imedi's Factor was 2021 elections. Representatives of Georgian Dream were invited to the program to discuss annulment of the so-called Charles Michel Document and assessment of Salome Zurbishvili's statement. None of the opposition representatives participated in the discussions. Therefore, the discussion of the topic was one-sided. Opposition parties were assessed by the presenter as "radicals".

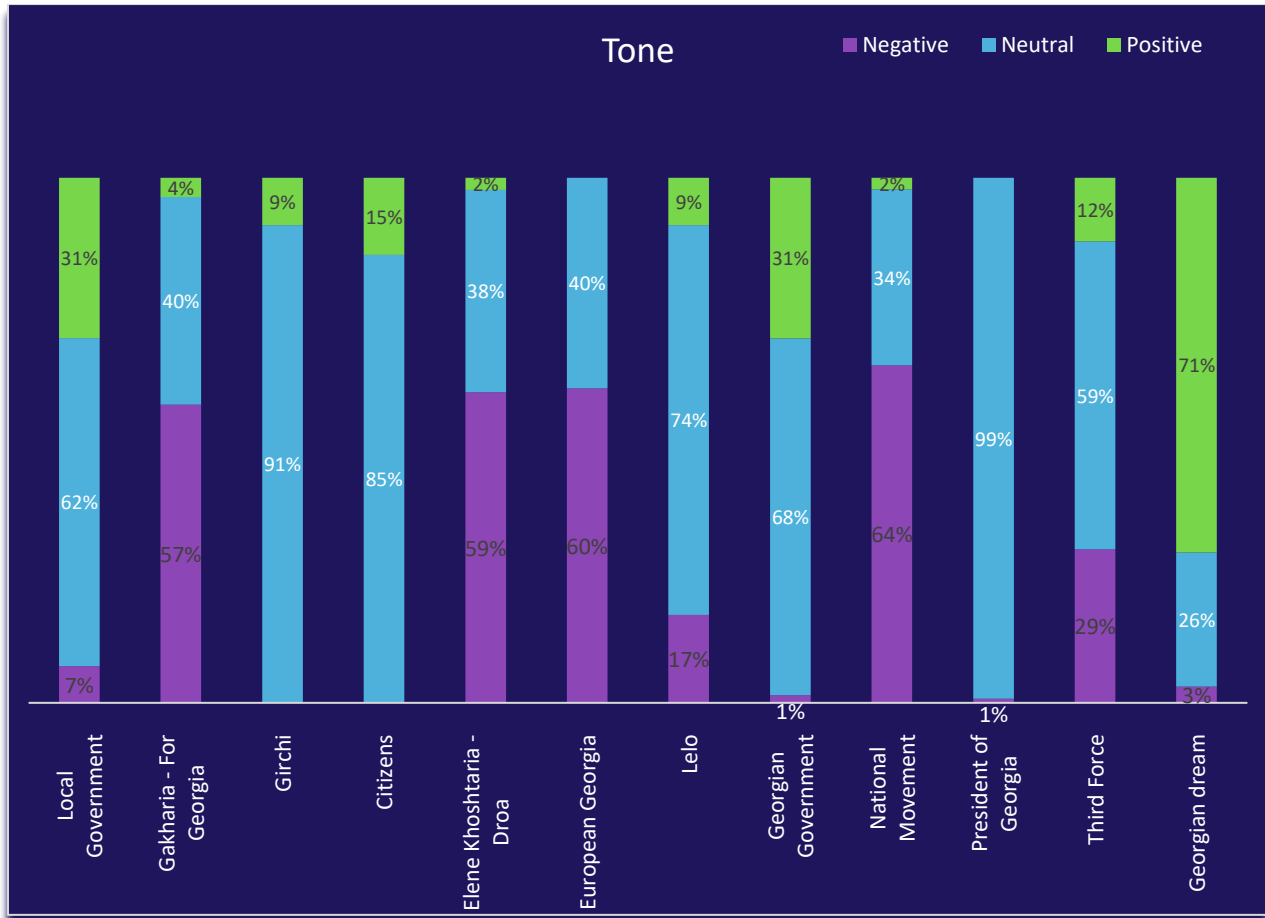
Representatives of the following subjects participated in the Stories of the Imedi's Week program: Georgian Dream (once), National Movement (once), European Georgia (once) and Georgian Government (once).

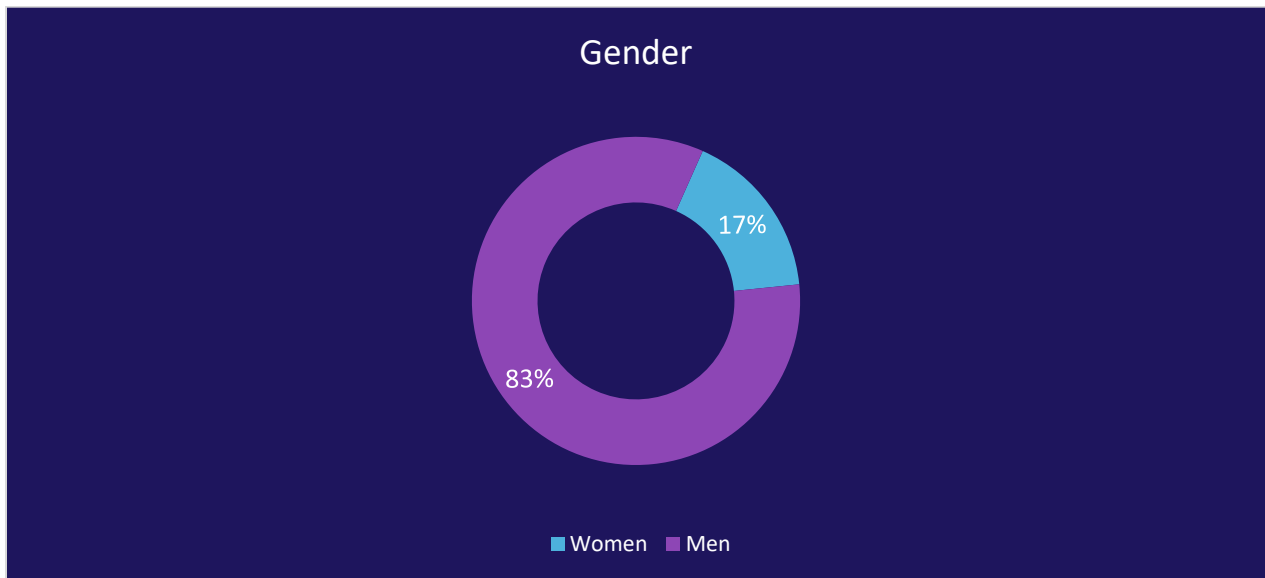
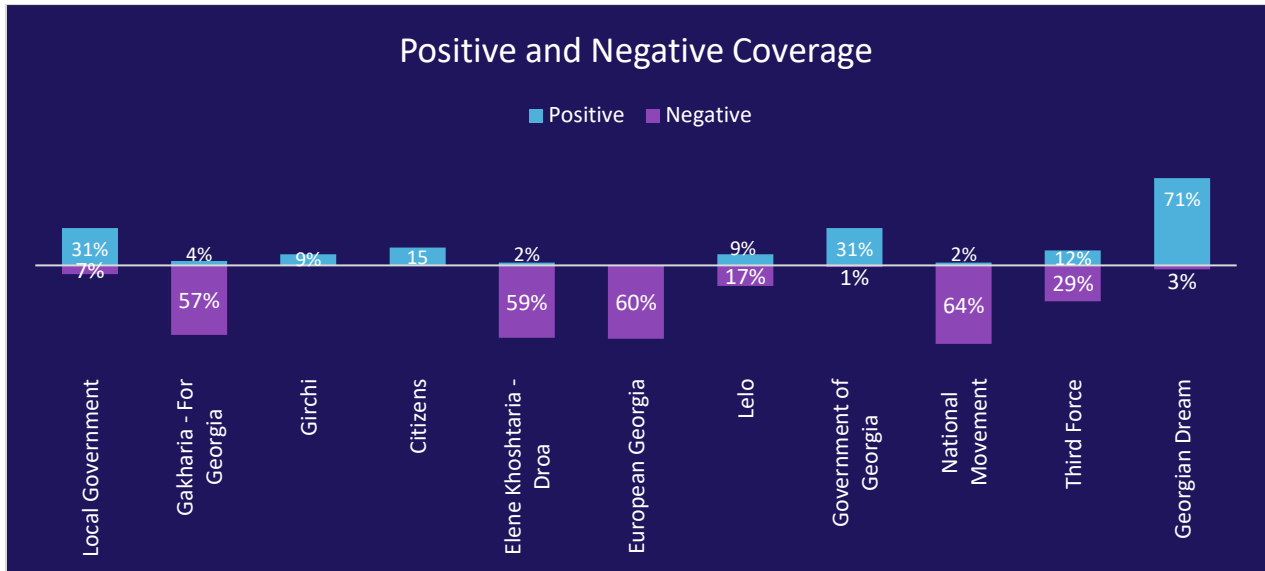
During the reporting period, interviews with Georgian Dream (thirteen times) were integrated in the news program Kronika in the format of a talk show.

During the reporting period, Imedi TV has not aired any pre-election political debates.

According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of Imedi TV did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance







Broadcasting Company Rustavi 2 Ltd

Newscast – Time allotted to monitoring subjects: Georgian dream - 38.4% (positive - 51%, negative - 6%), Georgian Government - 21.6% (positive - 39%, negative - 2%), National Movement – 11% (positive - 16%, negative - 34%), and all other subjects – less than 10% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – Journalists of the main daily news program Courier mainly covered the events following ethical standards.

No discriminative or insulting terminology was used by journalists when covering pre-election developments. Distinct positive or negative tone against political parties during the monitoring period was mainly displayed by politicians themselves.

During the reporting period, the news program mostly started with the review of Covid situation, the journalist tried to present newest information to the public. Stories were balanced and aimed at proper information of the public.

Courier mainly covered important public-political events of the country. The broadcaster widely covered election meetings and candidate presentations of all qualified subjects. However, it should be noted that relatively more time was allotted to election activities of Georgian Dream.

The ruling party was criticized by the government opponents. When covering ongoing developments, representatives of Georgian Dream frequently exercised the right of first and conclusive statement.

For example, on August 4, at 21:30, the story about unofficial meeting of Zygimantas Pavilionis, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Lithuania, started with the comment of Georgian Dream MP, followed by assessments of the opposition and further statement of the representative of Georgian dream.

On August 6, at 21:14, the story titled “Political Statement” started with the comment of the Chairman of Georgian Dream, followed by the assessments of representatives of various parties and conclusive interviews with Georgian Dream MPs.

During the reporting period, pre-election activities of Georgian Dream were actively covered mainly in a positive or neutral context and the channel allotted regular live coverages to them. When covering presentations of Georgian Dream candidates, meetings of the Prime Minister and other government members with population were positively covered at the same time, as well as visits to infrastructure projects, which could make it difficult for the viewers to distinguish Governmental activities from those of Georgian Dream.

During the August 11 story (21:18:17) in connection with presentation of the candidates, the journalist stated: “Before presenting Tetrtskaro and Gardabani candidates, the Prime Minister visited the recently built public school in Village Kokhta, Tsalka Municipality, together with other representatives of the Cabinet. Equipment works are currently ongoing”. Despite the fact that the second part of the story was

devoted to activities of the Prime Minister Gharibashvili, the story was still titled as “Presentation of Candidates”.

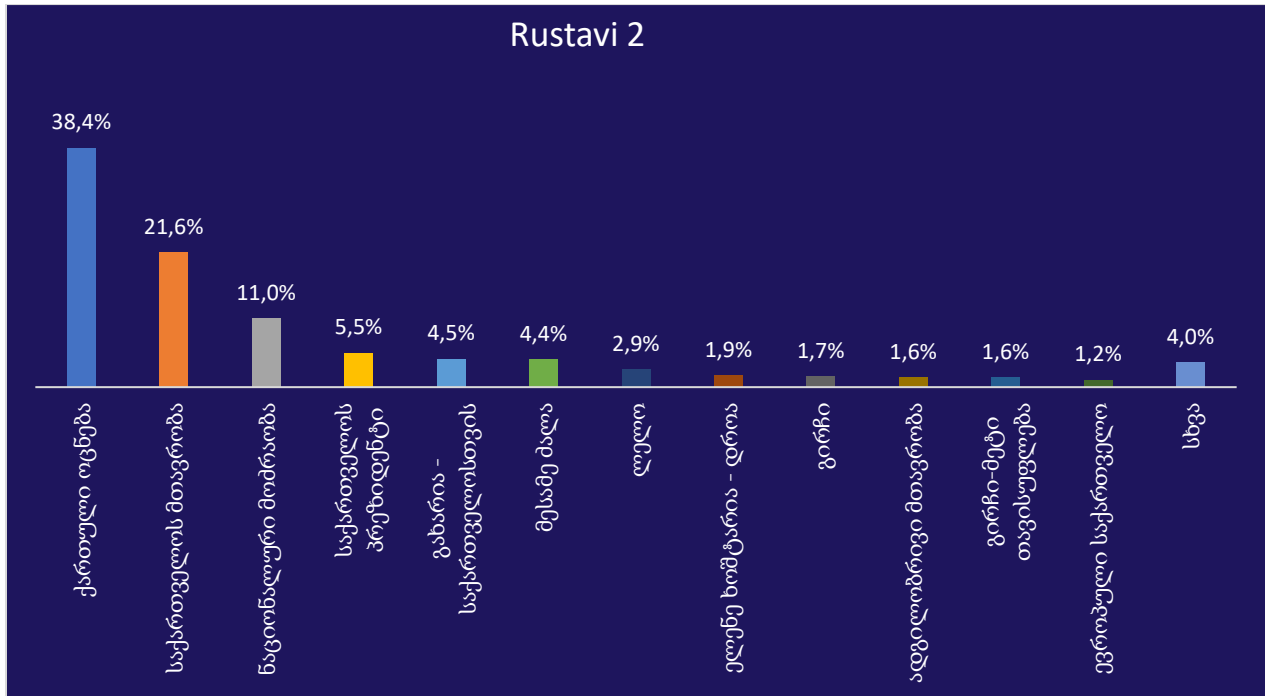
On August 27 (21:30:47) the story titled “Presentation of Candidates” first covered official presentation of Georgian Dream’s candidate for Poti Mayor. Later, however, the journalist stated in the same story: “during the presentation, the Prime Minister met with the fishermen and fishing license holders”. It was also stated in the same story that: “the Prime Minister also visited village Tskhemi of Abasha Municipality, the BMSB center and met with center employees”. Here as well, although the second part of the story was dedicated to the Prime Minister’s activities, the story was still titled as “Presentation of Candidates”.

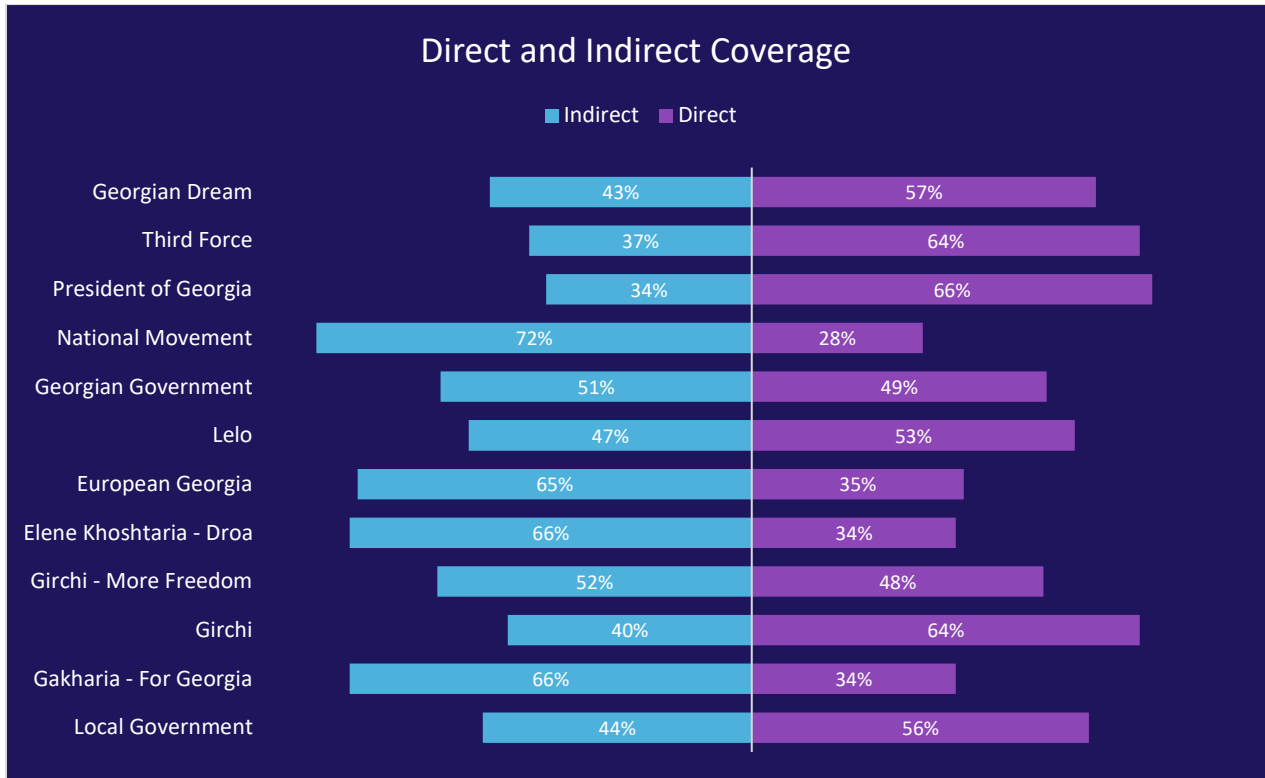
Public-political programs – the program “Daily Courier” aired by the channel was visited by representatives of Georgian Dream (once), National Movement (once), Government of Adjara (once) and Georgia Government (five times). The program was aired daily (on working days), from August 3 to August 13, although majority of time was allotted to representatives of the Government of Georgia and health sector.

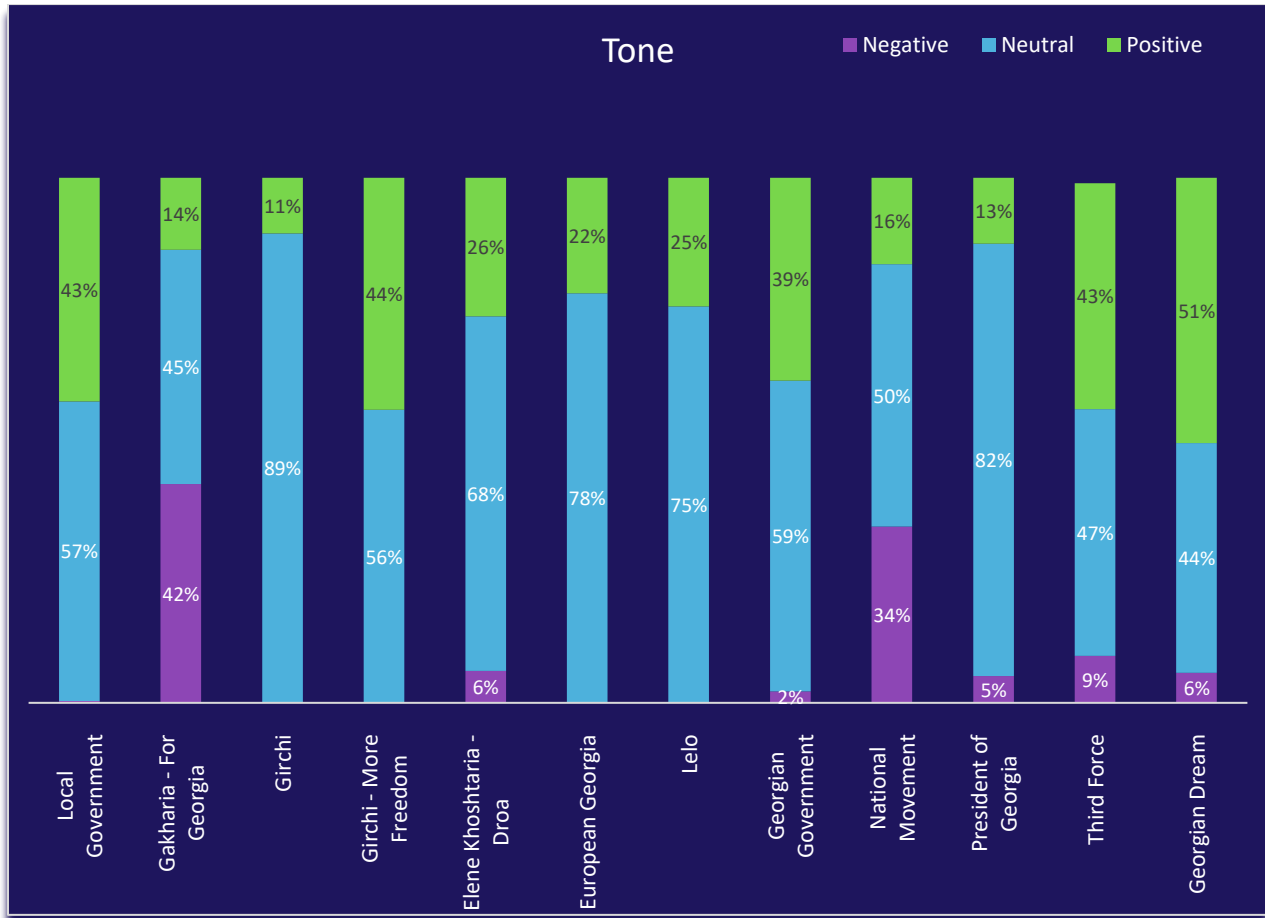
During the reporting period, Daily Courier was the only public-political program aired, although no debates between electoral subjects have been conducted in connection with current urgent topics.

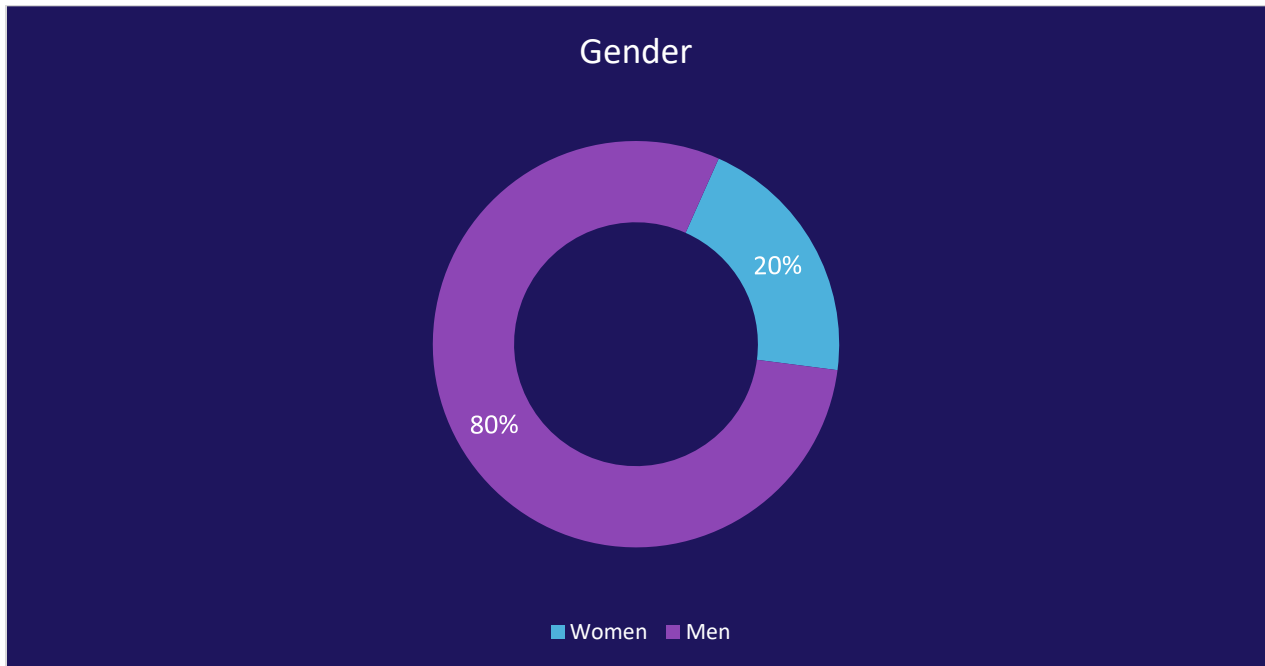
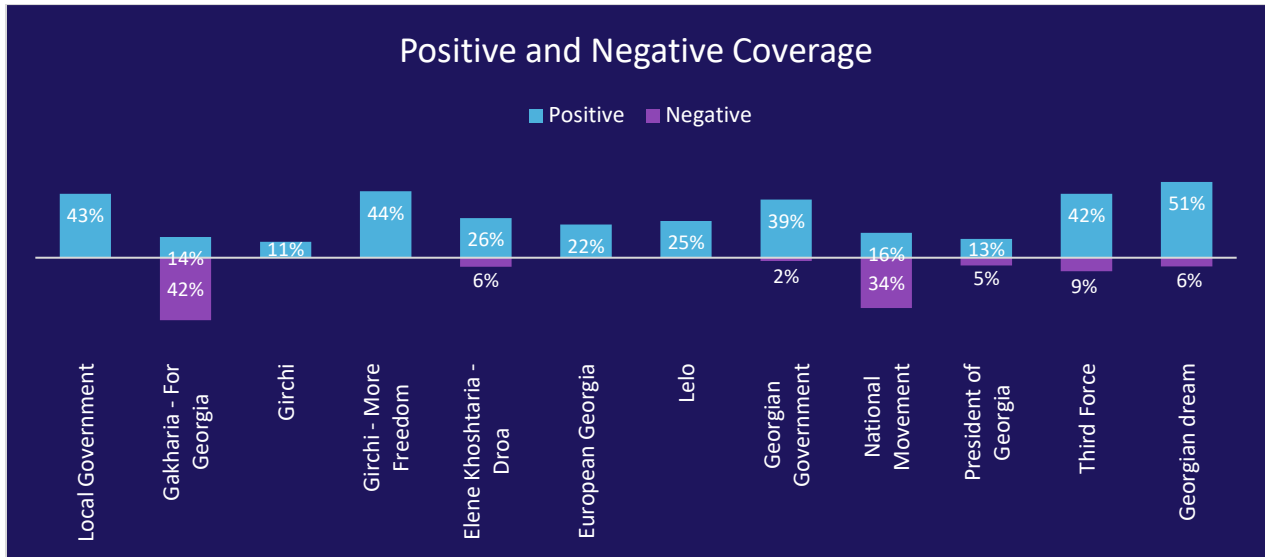
Representatives of political parties visited the program only once and individually. Main topic of the program was the survey published by IRI. The journalist asked critical questions both to the ruling party and National Movement.

According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of Rustavi 2 did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance.









Television Company Pirveli Ltd

Newscast – Time allotted to monitoring subjects: Georgian Dream - 28.8% (positive - 2%, negative - 64%), Georgian Government - 18.8% (positive - 3%, negative - 47%), National Movement – 10.6% (positive - 2%, negative - 16%), and all other subjects – less than 10% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – Editorial policy of TV Pirveli is abruptly negative towards Georgian Dream and the Government. Notwithstanding that the broadcasters are obliged to ensure fair and unbiased coverage of the election campaign, loyal attitude of the channel towards the opposition was apparent during the reporting period.

Main news program focused on criminal topics and crisis caused by Covid pandemic.

The main news program did not allot much of the time to pre-election topics. Almost no coverage of daily activities of electoral candidates and presentation of pre-election offers to the public was conducted, considering that one of the main purposes of the media during the pre-election period is to inform the voters in order to enable them to make informed decisions on the election day. Main news program rarely covered activities of the opposition candidates. As for Georgian Dream’s meetings and presentations of candidates, they have almost never been covered.

One-sided coverage of events at TV Pirveli can be considered as one of the main problems. Critical reporting about the Government and Georgian Dream was mainly based on information/materials provided by representatives of opposition parties and information about violations were reported mainly based on single source. Journalists did not search for additional facts and evidences in support of accusations.

August 29, “Pirvelebi”, 20:00 – “the Office of “Droa” was damaged in Zugdidi, (20:32). The presenter stated: “...Elene Khoshtaria’s office was attacked. Façade of “Droa’s” office was damaged by supporters of Georgian Dream. Insulting imprints were made on the office of opposition, agitation materials were also damaged. “Droa” believes that violence of Georgian Dream’s active members are supported directly by the Prime Minister...”

Information presented by the journalist to the public was displayed as truth based on accusations of the opposition exposed Georgian Dream in violence, although the journalist neither presented the position of the accused party nor additional facts.

August 25, “Pirvelebi”, 20:00 – “Terror of Gakharia’s team”, (20:25). The presenter: “after tracking and blackmailing, Georgian Dream has commenced once another season of fight against Gakharia’s team. Supporters of the former Prime Minister, who left the party in a manner of demarche, are being fired from the public sector one by one. This is mainly due to their sympathies for Gakharia. Georgian Dream targeted everyone who had any contact with Gakharia’s team. Local high officials in the regions fulfill central office’s orders scrupulously... police personnel are also being fired. Gomelauri’s office fired everyone who has ever greeted Gakharia’s team members. Adjara Police Department employees – Leri Katamadze and Mirian Katamadze found out a few hours ago that they can no longer go to work. They

were fired due to friendship with former Head of Adjara Police Department... the less time left till decisive elections, the harsher are the methods of the Government to fight opponents”.

The journalist spoke about the Government’s terror based on the statements of Gakharia’s team members only, displaying this as the fact and announced harsher methods of the Government to fight opponents as the election day approached. Besides, the audience did not have possibility to listen to the position of the accused political party and investigative bodies.

Presenters of the main news program openly displayed their own ironic attitude towards the Government and the ruling party during reporting. For example, Eko Maghradze stated: “as usual, Georgian Dream struggles to perceive the reality” (August 31, 20:08).

There were cases of clear negative attitude of authors of reporting towards Georgian Dream.

September 2, “Pirvelebi”, 20:00 – “National Movement signed Charles Michel Agreement” (20:19). The Journalist completed the reporting with the following words: “... after 4 months of waiting, National Movement signed the Michel Document, but Georgian Dream is not planning to rejoin the agreement and once again creates a new political dead-end and crisis for the country...”

The Journalist made all efforts to criticize Georgian Dream’s actions. Meanwhile, during the reporting, the journalist tried to positively display the signing of the document by National Movement in delay of 4 months. “...National Movement joined Michel Document after 4 months of thinking, to save Western orientation of the country”.

Besides, attempts of the presenters to display the events as factual reality remains problematic and may contribute to misinformation of the audience.

August 27, “Pirvelebi”, 20:00, “Terror in the name of Georgian Dream” (20:07). The Presenter stated: “...Terror in the name of Georgian Dream. The ruling party attacked businessmen in the pre-election period. Businessmen are threatened and forced to contribute large sums to Georgian Dream. Local high officials perform orders unconditionally. Governor of Samtskhe-Javakheti was exposed in terrorizing businessmen. According to online publication “Gate of the South”, the high official first studies property declarations of the businessmen, then calls them to his office and forces to transfer sums to Georgian Dream’s account. During two weeks, 87 businessmen contributed to Georgian Dream around GEL 700 000 just from Samtskhe-Javakheti region ...”

The presenter displayed information about terror and blackmailing of businessmen as an unconditional fact, although later, as it was found from the source named by the journalist – the article placed on Gate to the South (<https://sknews.ge/ka/news/33494>), that terror and blackmail accusations were mainly based upon doubts and assumptions and not on a single evidence. The journalist did not try to contact the businessmen named as victims of the terror. Accusations were made based on assumptions and not supported by evidences.

August 29, “Pirvelebi”, 20:00, “Misappropriated State property”, 20:27. The presenter stated: “Mayor of Gori involved in a scandal. Plates designated for sidewalks were found in Kote Tavzarashvili’s yard. Exclusive coverage by TV Pirveli. Now, the member of Georgian Dream shall explain Gori population as to why he stores materials purchased for the city streets in his own house. The opposition argues that plates were obtained by the Mayor from the company winner the tender...”.

In the final section of the report, the journalist conveyed his own opinion to the audience “...apparently, Kote tavzarashvili is angry with the ruling party for presenting the sportsman Khinchagashvili as the candidate for Mayor of Gori and tries to use his final days in office in his favor...”.

The Story also displayed that TV Pirveli did not personally observed the above plates in place and did not establish the identity of the plates with sidewalk materials, and accused the mayor of Gori in corruption only on the basis of information submitted by opposition parties and certain doubts. The journalist did not try to contact the Mayor to obtain his comments. False information was disseminated based on assumptions. Besides, conclusive speech of the Journalist again revealed the aim of the journalist to discredit the Mayor.

According to information spread in the media, Kote tavzarashvili presented purchase documents to journalists at the briefing held on October 30, evidencing that the plates were personally purchased by the Mayor together with other construction materials and that the given plates differ in size and color from those being installed in the city.

TV Pirveli actively covered crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic, including vaccination-related issues, which is indeed important for the audience. However, there were cases when information in connection with the pandemic were displayed in such a way which could eventually contribute to increased panic within the public.

During 20:00 news of August 11, the presenter spoke about government plans in an affirmative manner stating that “field hospitals will be arranged directly in the streets”.

(20:19:03) The presenter stated: “...Ministry of Health is preparing for the worst scenario. Large buildings will be remade into hospitals and field hospitals will be arranged directly in the streets – this is the plan of the Ministry of Health, as confirmed today by the Deputy Minister. The Ministry plans to make this harsh decision due to epidemic situation in the country. For a week already, the State fails to deter the virus ...”.

During the same story, it was established from the Ministry of Health’s comment (Tamar Gabunia: field hospital decision is under discussion) that decision of “arranging field hospitals directly in the streets” has not yet been made and the journalist was trying to convey incorrect information to the public, in order to dramatize the situation.

The Prime Minister's August 21-23 visit to Ukraine was aired by the channel in a negative aspect only. As it was found from official sources and various media means, the Prime Minister held numerous meetings in Ukraine and participated in the Crimea Platform Summit which was attended by leaders of more than 40 countries, and made a speech as well.

Nothing was mentioned in the main daily news about three-day visit having state importance. Minor information about the visit was conveyed on August 22, during 17:00 program's last story. Later, during 20:00 program of August 24 (20:32), the report was prepared titled "Michel warned Gharibashvili", with only negative focus about the visit.

Public-political programs – During the reporting period, the channel aired TV programs Daily News and First Line. Daily News is aired four times a day and main time is allotted to covering important developments in the country. The program has several presenters with abruptly negative attitude towards the Government, often reflected in the content of the program.

During the reporting period, public-political programs were generally biased and unbalanced.

The presenters mainly followed the agenda of the opposition parties, as the representatives of the Government and Georgian Dream did not participate in public-political programs. The presenters asked virtually no critical questions to the representatives of United National Movement and Droa. It should also be noted that during the reporting period, presenters have not openly displayed readiness to offer the broadcast to the representatives of Georgian Dream and the Government.

Journalists frequently displayed their own political preferences. Inga Grigolia stated many times during live broadcasts that she was supporting the opposition, raising questions with regard to her impartiality.

On August 3, Inga Grigolia stated in Daily News: "...I, as a voter and a journalist, want opposition to win..." (21:46:55).

August 5, Inga Grigolia's Daily News, 21:00 (22:09:56). Inga Grigolia: "I openly declare that this Government shall leave!" (22:18:44). Inga Grigolia: "I am voting for opposition and openly declare after July 5 that I will do my best for changes to occur in this country".

Despite the large number of parties and candidates participating in the elections, TV Pirveli allotted time mainly to well known public faces. Same guests have frequently been invited to different programs of similar format during the day, further limiting the diversity of information for the audience, which could not hear opinions and promises of new subjects participating in the elections.

Invited candidates were limited to general promises and mainly criticized Government activities and election campaign of Georgian Dream.

Daily News was actively allotting live coverage to presentation of candidates of certain opposition parties. In some cases, journalists displayed loyal attitude towards specific candidates.

August 12, Eka Mishveladze's Daily News (21:00:55), Eka Mishveladze: "We will soon meet members of Droa. It is very interesting. I support this party to a great extent and Elene in particular, and I am very interested who these people are, who will fight together with you to defeat Bidzina Ivanishvili's regime and hold early elections in the country."

Eka Mishveladze openly confronted the Government. Her speeches were full of abrupt negative tone and irony. She frequently spoke about Irakli Gharibashvili in a negative context:

August 9, Eka Mishveladze's Daily News (20:50:51). Eka Mishveladze: "...Mr. Prime Minister, you were appointed for the second term for this purpose and you fulfill your patron's - Bidzina Ivanishvili's orders flawlessly, while not caring about people and this country. Some will die of hunger, Covid, beating, maybe you also hope that the remaining people will be forced to leave the country, while you, and those like you, will stay alone together with your "patron" and govern this country. This is your dream, although not realistic..."

August 10, Eka Mishveladze's Daily News, 21:03:32. The presenter: "this is the Prime Minister who lies to you impudently every day, who said a new lie today and thinks you are such fools that he managed to convince you that he brought in the Pfiser vaccine..."

August 16, Eka Mishveladze's Daily News, 20:52:34 – the program was opened by Eka Mishveladze's speech at the protest meeting: "...you are indeed shameful. I don't know what to say. I left 1 week old grandchild at home, because he has no future, and no one has, not a single person, child, young people have any future in this country under your governance, and you will be gone, we will surely make you go. Now accept our threat just as you threatened people, and see how we fight till the end".

During public-political shows, similarity of respondents' and journalists' positions was apparent which prevented them to ask critical questions and hold discussions.

It should be noted that Daily News actively allotted time to the Covid-19 crisis and discussions of topics related to vaccination. Representatives of the health sector were invited to programs, however, people frequently presented as health experts included representatives of opposition parties, therefore the statements were mainly political.

However, Diana Trapaidze's Daily News of August 28, hosting doctors, was free from political bias and ensured in-depth information of the public about the pandemic. Live answers to questions of the public were provided by professionals.

The program First Line was aired several times a week, at the end of the day, discussing most important daily events. The program seemed to serve as the tool to further dramatize information presented during

the day and repeated topics which have already been discussed at TV Pirveli several times. Presenters were biased, displaying negative attitude towards the Government.

August 23, (00:02:42) Giorgi Nioradze informed the public that: „... the country may be left without oxygen and people may suffocate...”, Healthcare expert Vakhtang Kaloyan replied: the country will not lack oxygen, but such constant tension creates problems...

Despite the fact that the healthcare representative assured the presenter that the country would never lack the oxygen, the presenter constantly tried to dramatize events in such a way to contribute to increased panic in the audience.

Besides, Giorgi Nioradze expressed open political sympathies:

August 18, (00:19:25), Giorgi Nioradze addresses to Kakha Tsiskaridze, candidate for the Mayor of Batumi: „...I wish you success in winning. Honestly, if I was from Batumi, I would have supported you...”

The journalist also expressed open support to Anzor Melia, candidate for the Mayor of Zugidid.

August 16, (23:43:41) Giorgi Nioradze: „...I would state in a subjective and objective way that if I was a citizen of Zugididi, I would definitely vote for Mr. Anzor Melia and I can justify this: cardio intervention prevents death due to heart deceases and he managed to develop this service in Samegrelo region without delay and saved many people, many Megrelians from death....”

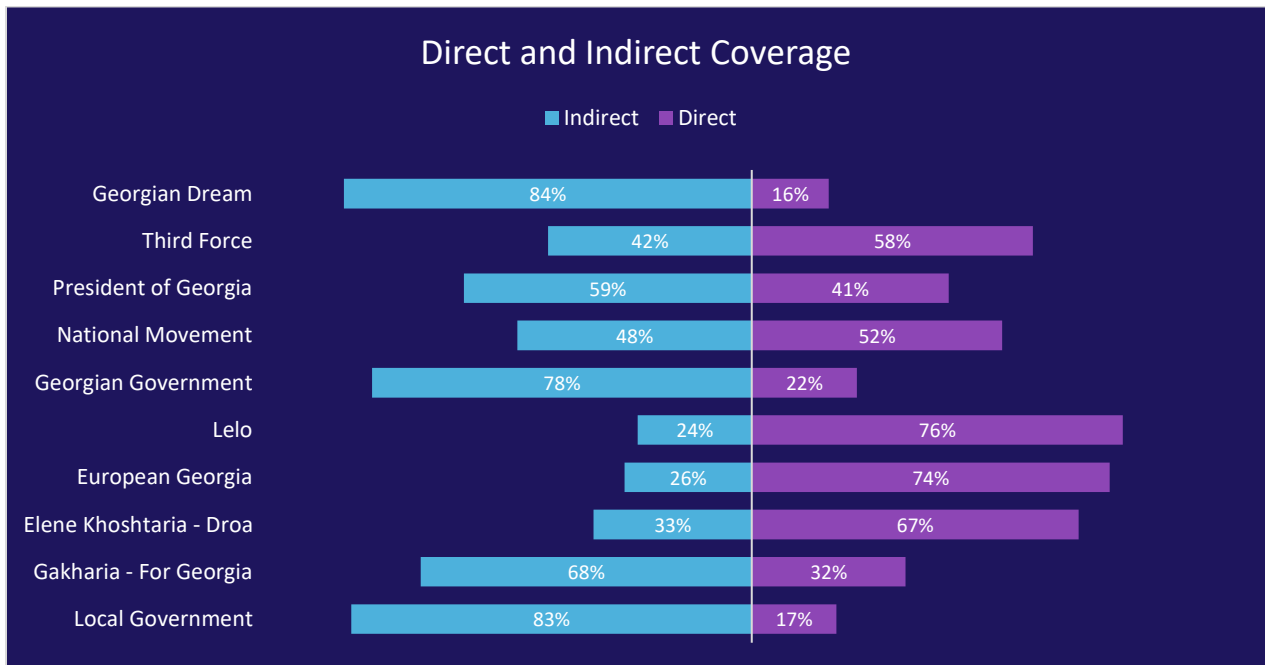
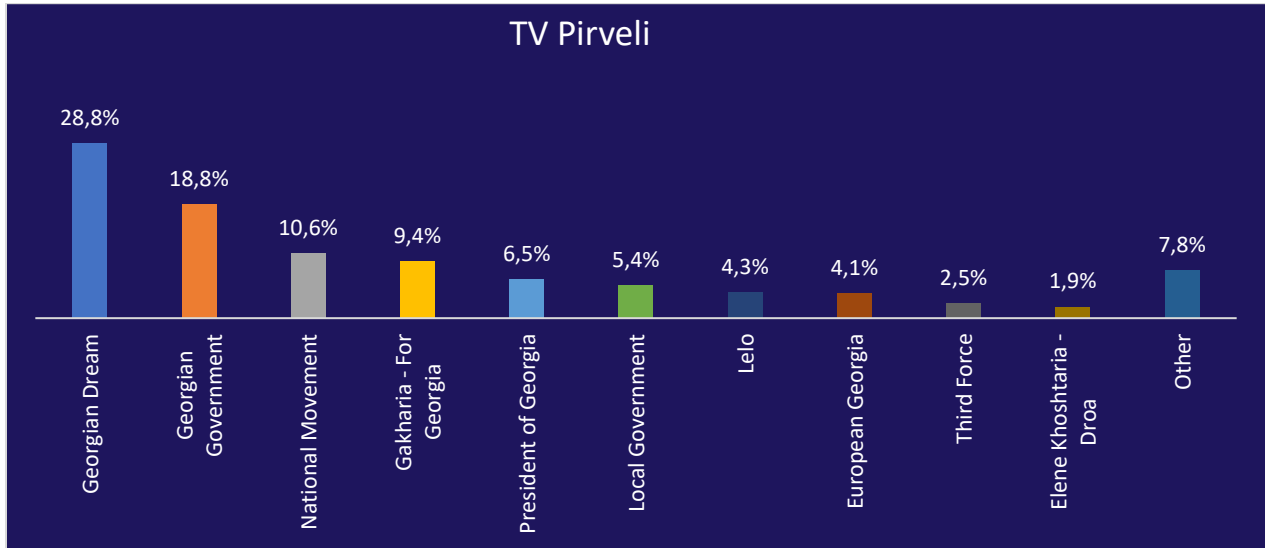
In general, in-depth discussions are not held in the program. The audience does not obtain additional information and different analysis of daily events.

Daily News were most frequently visited by representatives of United National Movement, European Georgia, Gakharia for Georgia and Lelo: European Georgia (thirty four times), National Movement (seventy two times), Gakharia for Georgia (thirtynine times), Lelo (thirty eight times), Girchi (ten times), Girchi – More Freedom (ten times), Strategy Agmashenebeli (twenty three times), Labour Party (eleven times), Elene Khoshtaria – Droa (eleven times), Democratic Movement (three times), Free Democrats (once), Ana Dolidze – for People (seven times), Tribune (eight times), Citizens (three times), Political Party For Justice (seven times), European Democrats (once), Law and Justice (nine times), progress and Freedom (twice), Republican Party (three times), People’s Party (once) and Serve Georgia (twice).

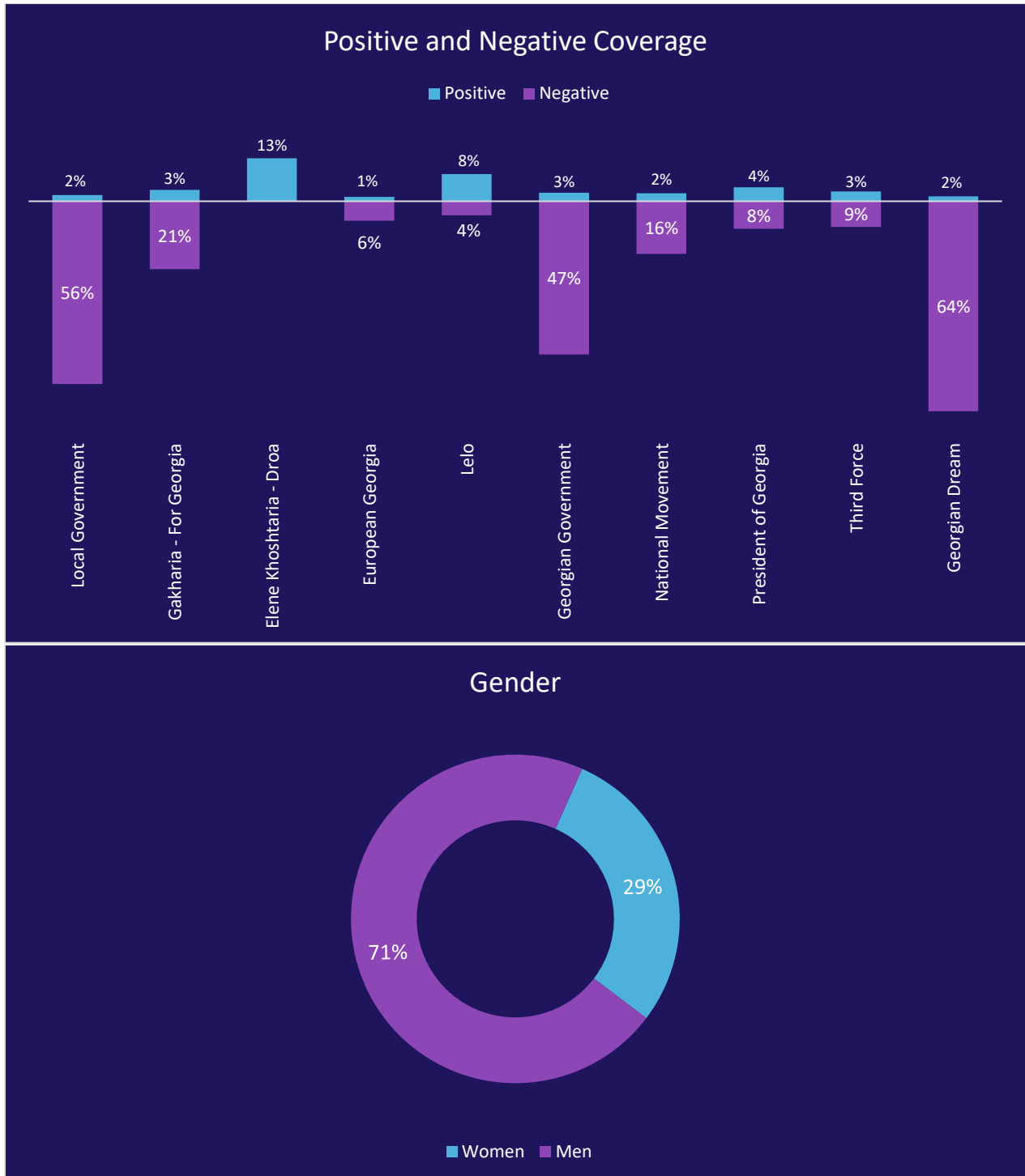
Following subjects participated in First Line: European Georgia (four times), National Movement (nine times), Gakharia for Georgia (five times), Lelo (four times), Girchi (once), Girchi – More Freedom (once), Labour Party (once), Democratic Movement (once), Law and Justice (once), Our United Georgia (once) and Kakha Tsiskaridze, independent candidate for Mayor (once).

During the reporting period, no debates between electoral candidates have been held at TV Pirveli.

According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of TV Pirveli did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance.







Mtavari Arkhi Ltd

Newscast – Time allotted to monitoring subjects: National Movement – 27.6% (positive - 26%, negative - 3%), Georgian Dream – 20.2% (positive - 0%, negative - 79%), Georgian Government - 19.8% (positive - 0%, negative - 64%), and all other subjects – less than 10% (see the diagram).

Qualitative Assessment – During the monitoring period, Mtavari Arkhi displayed abruptly positive and subjective attitude towards the opposition. The channel covered opposition in a neutral or positive context, in particular National Movement, and covered Georgian Government and Georgian Dream activities in a negative context and did not avoid insulting wording.

Mtavari Arkhi covered representatives of the Government and Georgian Dream in a negative context in the program “Mtavari at 9”, with special focus on Irakli Gharibashvili and overall criticism of the Government and Georgian Dream. Ethics of journalism have frequently been violated.

On August 13 (21:12:24), Mtavari Arkhi aired a story titled “Belarus and the Prime Minister’s sentiments to the Soviet Union”, discussing Mutual Cooperation Agreement between Georgia and Belarus. The presenter stated: “This type of political partnership is not surprising, when the Prime Minister of Georgia has sentiments towards Soviet Union, just like Putin and Lukashenko”.

While covering Georgian Dream’s pre-election meetings, the channel mainly criticized the party and did not overview the electoral activity. The presenters were frequently ironic, for example:

News Program of August 18 (21:48:53) aired a story named “Gharibashvili’s Threats, Campaign of Hatred”. The presenter’s introduction: “Same methods of Georgian Dream’s 9-year governance and same pre-election campaign messages. Head of the Government, Irakli Gharibashvili, conveys Ivanishvili’s wishes and his team’s election messages”. The story itself displayed Irakli Gharibashvili’s visit to Keda, meeting with voters, where the Mayor was presented, and the channel covered the Prime Minister’s speech in such a way that the election topic was entirely avoided and main focus was driven on Irakli Gharibashvili and his conflict with National Movement.

August 27 (21:41:30) “Trade with deceased political leaders still remains in the pre-election arsenal of Georgian Dream”. “Irakli Gharibashvili’s speculations today were so cheap that it was laughed at by opponents and former members of Gamsakhurdia’s government“ – the presenter used these words when presenting the story named “Political Speculation”. Afterwards, the journalist used ironic expressions towards Irakli Gharibashvili: “the Prime Minister of the country once again inspected the quality of Georgian hazelnut, shared the experience with Americans as to how successfully Georgian Government defeated BMSB and declared that only Georgian ships will conduct fishing in our waters from now on and sent Georgian water to Taliban. These actions more attributable to Kim Jong-Un’s government under other even circumstances, the only goal of Irakli Gharibashvili is to speculate on patriotic-national motives and attract specific voters”. Pre-election meeting of Georgian Dream was displayed on the screen, although the author of the story still decided to criticize the Prime Minister and the ruling party while the pre-election meeting was not covered.

Mtavari Arkhi has not aired pre-election meetings of Georgian Dream and introductions of candidates during the reporting period. These events were covered only once within the program “Guest of the Day”, on September 1 (19:00), when presentation was held to introduce local municipality member candidates in Kakha Kaladze’s headquarters, which was allotted live time of 15 minutes and 52 seconds by the channel.

Meanwhile, the channel allotted considerable amount of live time to the opposition, in particular to National Movement, Elene Khoshtaria – Droa, European Georgia, Girchi – More Freedom and Lelo.

On August 12 (21:01:12), news program allotted 15 minutes and 48 seconds to introduce of Elene Khoshtaria – Droa.

On August 15 (21:00:14) live introduction of National Movement’s candidate lasted 24 minutes and 12 seconds.

On August 21 (21:22:20) „Introduction of Opposition Candidates in Batumi“, linked with Khatia Dekanoidze’s introduction, lasted 21 minutes and 37 seconds, and introduction of opposition candidates in Tbilisi took 27 minutes and 19 seconds.

On August 22 (21:00:16), 27 minutes and 19 seconds were allotted to introduction of opposition candidates.

On August 23 (21:06:31), Introduction of Lelo Candidates on Mtavari Arkhi lasted 17 minutes and 24 seconds. On August 31 (21:28:09) Introduction of Lelo in Adjara lasted 10 minutes and 6 seconds.

On September 1 (21:01:33) Nika Melia’s Special Statement live coverage, in connection with the signature by National Movement of Charles Michel Documents, lasted 13 minutes and 18 seconds.

On September 1, Gakharia for Georgia introduced Tbilisi Mayor candidate during the talk show Guest of the Day which lasted 34 minutes and 6 seconds in Mtavari Arkhi’s live coverage.

During the reporting period, many stories covered only opposition’s accusations against the government and the ruling party not allowed to provide their respective positions.

August 3, 21:00 News Program’s first story “Responsibility for the Annulment of the Document” included no comments of members of Georgian Dream or the Government and was limited to opposition’s criticism. Neither the channel nor the author of the story mentioned that the Government or Georgian Dream were boycotting the channel or refusing to comment.

Besides, August 15 (21:39:26) story named “Georgian Dream Preparing to Falsify” was one-sided, time was allotted to representatives of National Movement only to criticize Georgian Dream and no comments from the ruling party were aired.

During the reporting period, Mtavari Arkhi covered unverified and false news including ungrounded accusations and unverified information.

August 10 (21:01:31) “Preparation for Position Changes” discussed the topic of Irakli Gharibashvili’s resignation. The journalist mentioned that as informed by the source, and appealing on the international society’s opinion, democratic world was requesting resignation of the Prime Minister. None of the international partners’ comment were aired in connection with Gharibashvili’s resignation. The story aired on Mtavari Arkhi presumed appointment of the Chairman of the Parliament as the Prime Minister, although Kakha Kuchava denied the same.

Public-political programs – Mtavari Arkhi hosted the Talk Show Guest of the Day, Main Accents and Your Voice.

Guest of the Day was visited by – National Movement (thirty five times), Law and Justice (twice), European Georgia (twenty times), Girchi – More Freedom (nine times), Tird Force (six times), Lelo (nine times), Elene Khoshtaria – Time (eight times), Tribune (three times), Eka Beselia – For Justice (four times), Gakharia for Georgia (three times), Laour Party (once), Georgian Dream (once).

Talk Show Guest of the Day is aired three times a day and invites guests based on the urgency of the topic, mainly opposition representatives, public faces or political scientists. The presenters have been prepared for the show, but have not opposed the respondents. No representatives of Georgian Dream or the Government have been invited to the show and the presenter has not mentioned, during the reporting period, that they refused to visit the program or boycotted the channel.

During the reporting period, talk shows of Mtavari Arkhi identified cases of insulting wording, mainly by the presenters, and callings for voting anyone except Georgian Dream.

On August 3 (19:00) Guest of the Day discussed terminated negotiations with the EU, where the expert Gia Khukhashvili (21:25) called Irakli Kobakhidze an “overmature teenager”, (20:26) and later the “last idiot”. The presenter did not call the respondent for correctness.

Main Accents was visited by National Movement (four times), European Georgia (once), Girchi – More Freedom (once), Elene Khoshtaria – Droa (once).

August 15 – the program Main Accents: this day, the list of national Movement was presented and all members were present at the show. The presenter of the talk show was not impartial and neutral and openly stated her support to National Movement and antipathy towards the Government at the start of the show: “To be honest, I used to lack some energy. I have always wondered as to where they are, when they will start and more importantly what will they start with, what will be the first impulse that would give me, a very optimistic person, the desire and energy to believe that in this united fight against the worst government in the history - October 2 referendum, would give me an impulse and energy which

I am lacking”. (00:44:22) The presenter makes following statement at the end of the show: “I wish success to everyone, make your choice on October 2 and vote for anyone except N 41, and gain, together with us (while pointing at the guests of the program) freedom of our homeland and your personal freedom.”

On August 22 (22:47) “Main Accents” hosted presentation of national Movement’s candidates in the regions. The presenter has invited the candidates and openly supported the opposition through her statements: (22:47:22) “Lots have been drawn and Rubicon has been overcome, the war for the independence of Georgia has started, for freedom, wealth, and surprisingly for free breathing as well”.

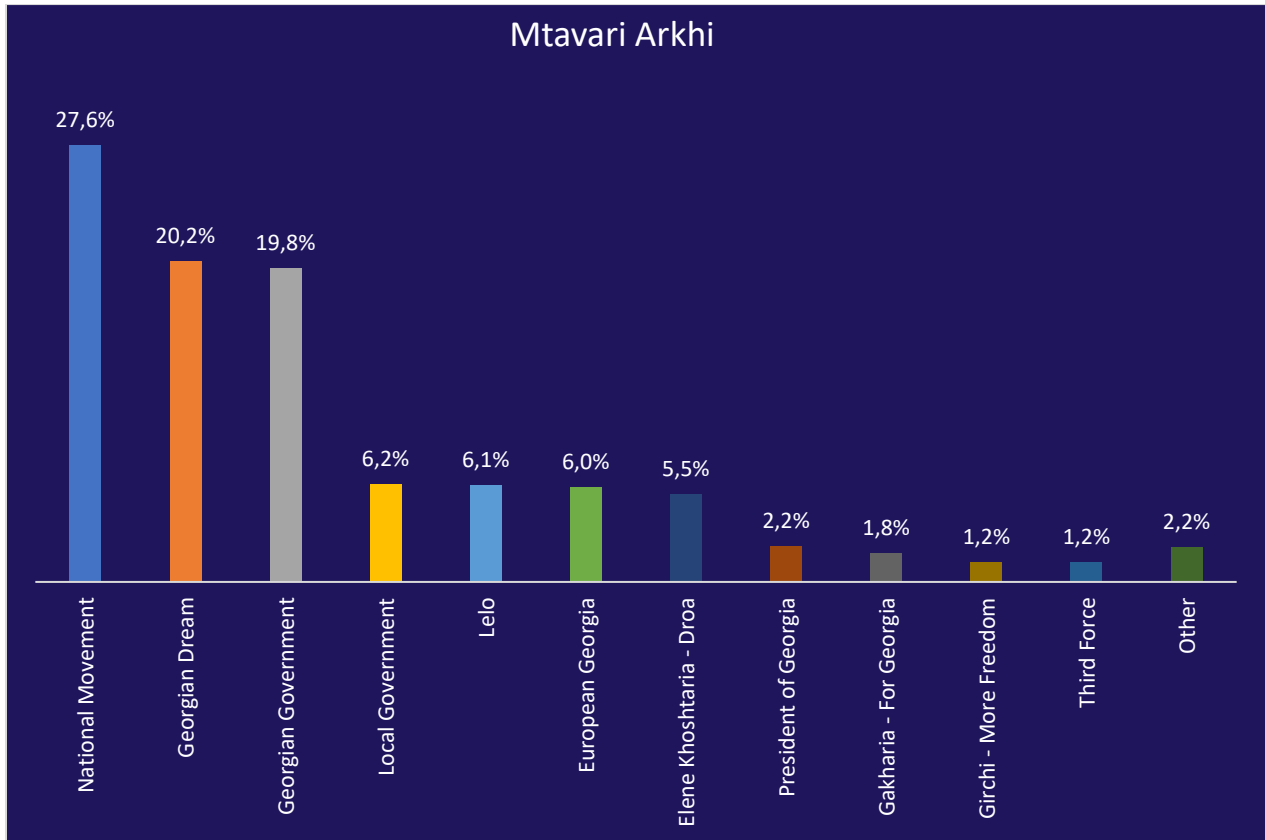
In the same show: (22:49:29) “I have conducted a phone interview for 24 hours regarding Prime Minister Gharibashvili. The question was: has Irakli Gharibashvili read at least one book? not to count school books. Votes ended an our ago. 575 persons believe that he has read at least one book, 4500 believe that he has not. Total of 5100 people participated in this vote. This interview is not representative, however we can verify it. I am offering Prime Minister Gharibashvili an interview with me, where I will not ask a single question about politics or any other topic. I will ask the only question: which books he has read and ask him to tell us the short story of books through selective method. I am inviting Prime Minister Gharibashvili in the live program if he believes that he has read many books and can even play “Mtavari Chkviani”, which is my show as well.” The presenter openly insults the Prime Minister and uses ironic tone, noting that he is not knowledgeable, does not maintain neutrality and ethics of journalism.

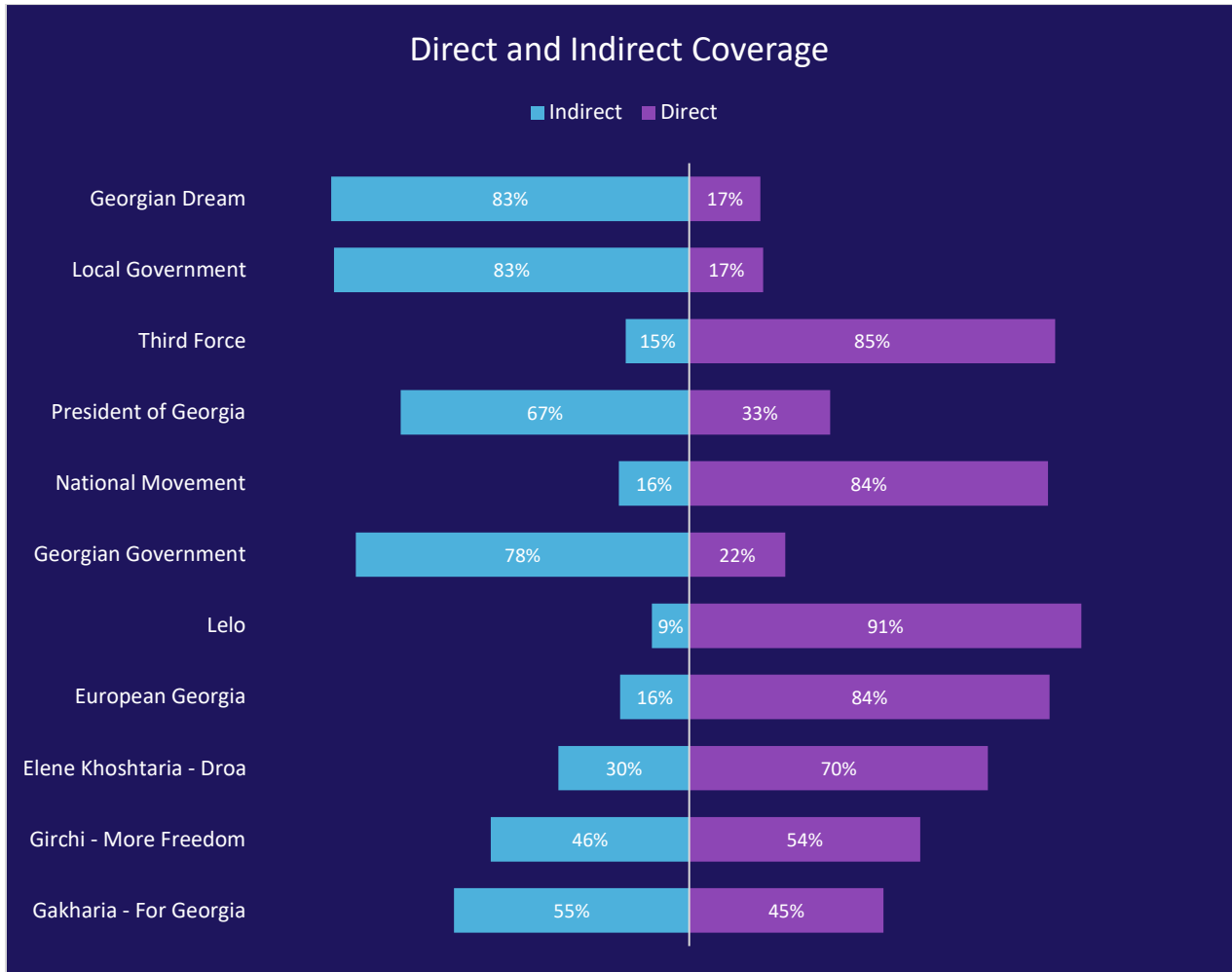
August 31 (22:00) Night Mtavari – discussions about Covid pandemic and its management. Doctors have been invited to the show. The presenter made following statement in her introduction: (22:04:13) “Gharibashvili, Bidzina Ivanishvili’s marionette, happily continues to be a Prime Minister, and proceeds with the pre-election campaign while we are hardly counting coffins. I hope one day a victim family will sue the killer Government and Gharibashvili for losing loved family members due to his reckless decisions.”

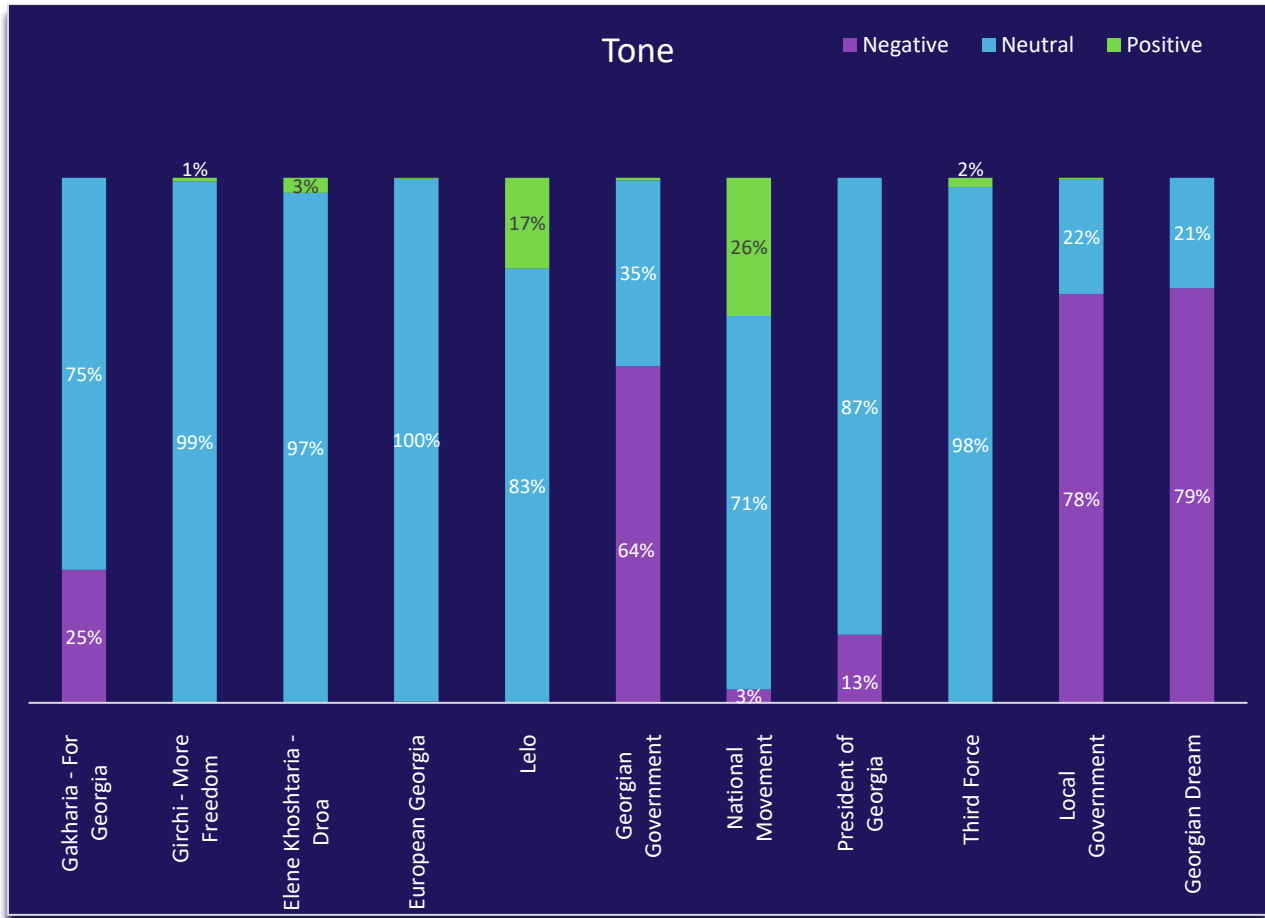
During the reporting period, the program Your Voice has been aired just once at Mtavari Arkhi, where the journalists visited all regions of Georgia separately and asked the question if the Government was managing the pandemic correctly. Majority of the interviewed criticized the Government and gave negative response to the question.

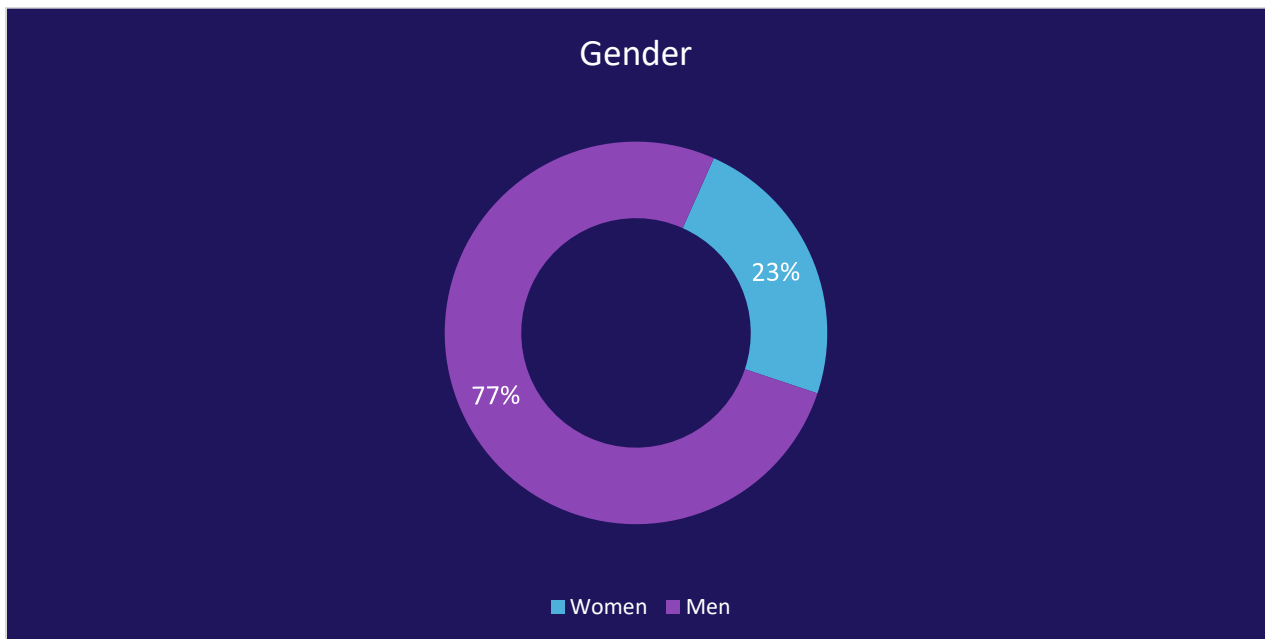
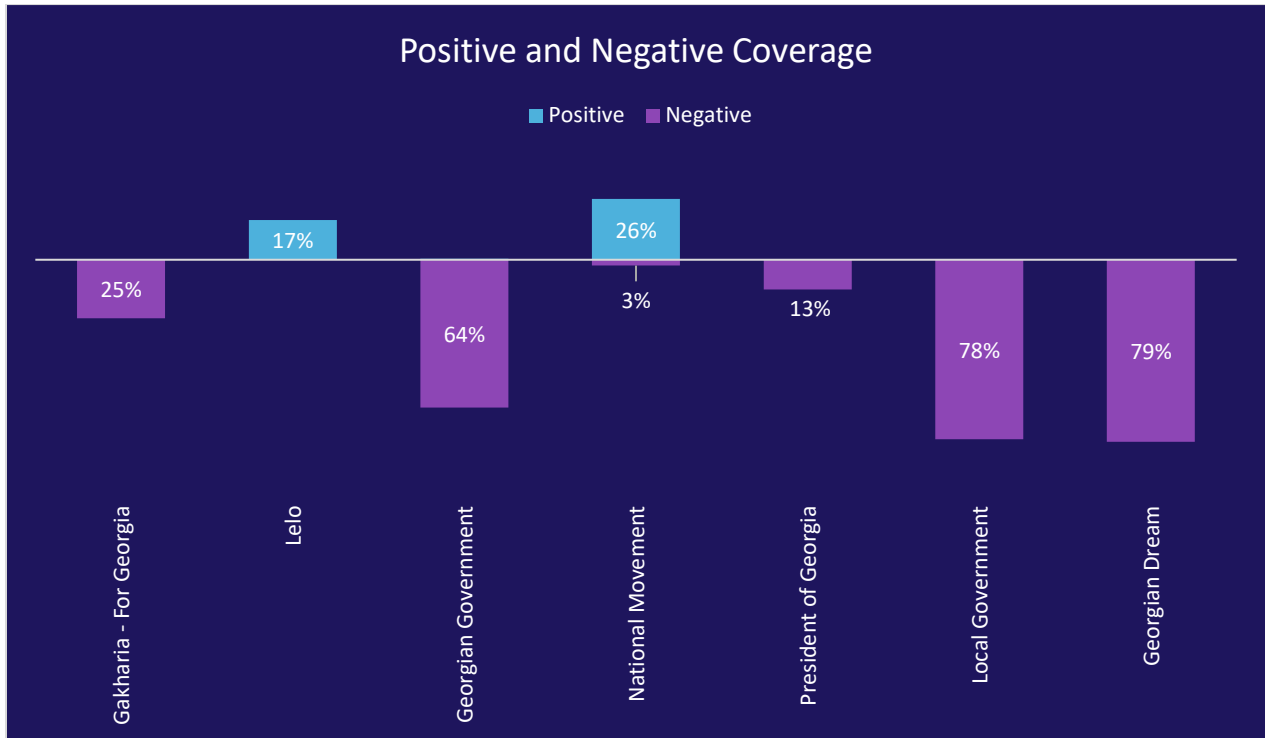
During the reporting period, political debates have not been held at Mtavari Arkhi.

According to the weekly information released by the broadcaster, the self-regulating mechanism of Mtavari Arkhi did not receive any complaints regarding bias or violation of the principles of fairness and balance









Pre-election Environment, Violations and Recommendations:

Monitoring of the six above mentioned broadcasters during the reporting period has shown that: Public Broadcaster and Adjara TV of the Public Broadcaster aired news programs maintaining standards of ethics of journalism, events were covered using calm tone, stories were dedicated to activities of various electoral subjects for proper information of the audience.

In case of Rustavi 2, impartiality was maintained to some extent. Time was allotted to election activities of various parties. Stories in connection with elections facilitated information of the public, although coverage of Georgian Dream's election activities were allotted most of the time and there were cases when balance was not fully maintained.

Stories and programs aired by TV Imedi, TV Pirveli and Mtavari Arkhi were clearly biased and unbalanced. Newscasts as well as public-political programs have been characterized by violations of standards of journalism.

TV Pirveli and Mtavari Arkhi programs included misinformation and fake news, serious accusations not supported by evidences. Journalists frequently violated ethical norms, used ironic and insulting wording.

Note that examples identified through monitoring represent gross violation of the Code of Ethics of broadcasters. Under applicable legislation, such violations can be responded and reviewed only within self-regulation mechanism of broadcasters, while decisions made by the broadcasters self-regulatory body are not subject to appeal neither before Communications Commission nor the Court.

At the public meeting held on August 26, 2021, the Communications Commission reviewed issues of violation of Election Code by 7 broadcasters during parliamentary elections. In particular, the Communications Commission drew up violation protocols for TV Imedi, Maestro, Rustavi 2, Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV of the Public Broadcaster, Formula and TV Pirveli. They have covered results of public opinion surveys in connection with elections without providing mandatory information, therefore violating Section 5, Article 50 of the Law of Georgia – Election Code of Georgia (hereafter Election Code).

During the reporting period, the above 6 broadcasters have not invited political subjects to non-political programs.
