

Media Monitoring during Elections

May 11 - July 9 2012

During the period of May 11 - July 9, *International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)* conducted press monitoring within the frameworks of Election Media Monitoring. About 2,000 articles of 10 print outlets were evaluated. Following findings were made based on the obtained data:

- In almost all the outlets, the largest space is allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream and to the political subjects included in this coalition, except the magazine *Tbilisebi* where the space allocated to this organization does not exceed 1%. Together with this organization, in most cases the President and the government are among the top three.
- Out of the parliamentary opposition spectrum, Christian-Democratic Movement is most often seen in the print media. Comments of other opposition MPs are seldom used, and none of the media outlets has published any interview with them.
- As for the photos having the most negative disposition in the print media, these are the photos of Mikheil Saakashvili, which is followed by Bidzina Ivanishvili's photos of negative tone. As for the photos with positive disposition, most often these are the photos of Bidzina Ivanishvili. It is noted that the space of positive photos of the leader of the Georgian Dream is more than the total space of his photos with negative tone, and in case of the President's photos, it is vice versa: more space was allocated to the negative photos in the outlets than the positive ones.
- In the majority of observed outlets, there is a clearly expressed negative attitude towards the President personally, also to the current authorities in general. Other than negative tone, the journalists are using unethical expressions in the newspapers "*Alia*", "*Kviris Kronika*" and "*Asaval-Dasavali*", and have an aggressive tone towards the representatives of authorities.
- Often the print media disseminates information, which is not verified and double-checked. In this respect, the journalists of "*Kviris Palitra*" were trying to observe this journalism standard more than others.

Methodology and Analysis

Election media monitoring of the press consists of qualitative and quantitative components. The quantitative component includes the space allocated to the subjects and the tone of coverage. Components of the qualitative monitoring are: balance, accuracy, fact-based coverage, language of the article.

Results of the quantitative analysis are provided in the attached diagrams. The space allocated to the subjects is provided in the diagrams in percentage. 100 per cent is regarded to be the total space allocated to all the subjects in each outlet during the specific monitoring period, which is indicated in the title of each diagram.

The diagrams also show the tone-based distribution of space allocated to the subjects. We have three categories: positive (green), neutral (yellow) and negative (red). For counting the space allocated to the subject, the tone is also assessed at the same time. Emphasis is laid on the text of a journalist or a reporter, also the whole context of the article. On one hand, there is a distribution of total area dedicated to the subject based on the tone, and on other hand the space, where the journalist is writing about the subject, is also evaluated. The data are represented in percentage, where 100 percent is the total area dedicated to the subject in the given outlet, and on the other hand – the space of the text written by the journalist about the subject. The diagram does not reflect those subjects, because there was so little space allocated to them that the public would be misled if their tone were reflected in percentage. For example, there was 10 square centimeters allocated to the National-Democratic Party in the Kviris Palitra, where the neutral tone was used for writing about this party. Expression of this space in tones would create an impression that NDP was always covered with neutral tone by this media outlet. However, this would be a wrong conclusion because 10 cm² is not sufficient space for drawing any conclusion about the general coverage of the subject.

During the qualitative monitoring, the emphasis is laid on the balance, i.e. at what extent the article provides several different opinions about the topic of the article, and whether the reader has an opportunity to have a comprehensive impression about the issue.

Besides, the monitor evaluates accuracy of the article, how the journalist's conclusion is consistent with the facts provided in the article, or if there are mistakes in the names, figures, identities of respondents. It is also evaluated if the article has been constructed based on the facts, which first of all means whether the information provided by one

source has been double-checked, and if the reader has an opportunity after reading the article to know correct information about the happening.

During the monitoring, attached illustrations are also observed, if any of the monitoring subjects are reflected in them. Other than determining the space, tone of the illustration is also assessed based on what kind of disposition it generates for the reader.

Another component of the qualitative analysis is the language of article, which at some extent is similar to the journalist's tone assessed during the quantitative analysis, but the difference is that more emphasis is laid on the journalist's words and phraseology during the qualitative analysis not only in regards to the subjects of monitoring, but also in the whole article. In some cases the journalist is not writing about the subject of monitoring, but the text is still notable and interesting for the qualitative analysis.

Based on these components, findings of the monitoring for the period of May 11 – July 9 are represented below.

Daily publications

24 Saati (24 Hours)

During the period of May 11 – July 9, most space was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream and the President in the newspaper “24 Saati” (22-22%). Besides, most part of the space was dedicated to the Parliament and the government (17% and 16%). It is noteworthy that much less space - only 3% was dedicated to United National Movement - the subject right after the government. However, we should also note here that as far as the subject “Parliament” includes not only the speaker and vice-speakers of the Parliament but also the committee chairpersons, most part of the space allocated to the United National Movement was assigned to the Parliament, because the majority of the committee chairpersons is the representative of this party, including the Speaker of the Parliament. The space was almost equally distributed among other subjects.

While evaluating the material based on the tone, we should note that the subjects were represented with neutral tone. The positive tone was reported in regards to several subjects almost equally (Christian-Democratic Movement, government, President, Georgian Dream, local self-government), and the negative tone was most visible in regards to the authorities (46%). However, it was revealed after separating the

journalist's tone that only a little share of this percentage is related to the journalist, and mostly the negative tone was assigned to the authorities because of the opinions expressed by other subjects.

The qualitative analysis revealed that mostly several different sources are represented in the articles of the 24 Saati, but we should also say that in this outlet, which is published on a daily basis and provides small articles to the readers about current events in the form of brief news, there is a lack of in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the events.

The 24 Saati is distinguished from other outlets with little number of photos. The articles are seldom accompanied with illustrations, which makes the provided information look drier. The photos provided in the newspaper are neutral and does not create any impression or disposition among readers.

The language used in the articles of the 24 Saati is neutral, as far as the journalists neither praise any of the subjects, nor refer to abuse or humiliation.

The Resonance

The most amount of space in the Resonance was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream (35%). It is followed by the government to which twice as less space was allocated than the Coalition (17%). The President is also among the top-three, to whom 10% of the space was allocated. All other subjects got 7% or less.

As for the tone-based evaluation of the time allocated to the subjects, it is notable that the negative tone is prevailing in regards to the subjects of authorities. 50% or more negative coverage was observed in regards to the space allocated to the President, authorities, local self-government, Chamber of Control and the National Movement. The positive tone is observed in regards to the Georgian Dream, Government, President, self-government and National Movement, but their amount is very insignificant (1-2%).

The tone of subjects when a journalist is speaking/writing about them, is not significantly different from the data revealed by the analysis of total space. Negative tone, from the quantitative point of view, is quite much in regards to the above-mentioned subjects. Most of all, the National Movement was covered by the journalists of the Resonance with negative tone (73%). Insignificant amount of positive tone was revealed in regards to the Coalition Georgian Dream and the National Movement (1-1%).

As for the overall evaluation of outlets, we can say that unlike the 24 Saati, the Resonance dedicates the whole issue (except several pages) to the political issues; the journalists try not to be limited only to giving information and they are providing the analysis to the readers as well.

There are several different positions/opinions observed in the articles and we can say that in this respect the articles of the Resonance in some cases are quite balanced, but frequently there are also some cases when the provided facts are not verified or confirmed. Consequently, the only thing a reader can do is to believe the journalist's story without sources or based on one source only. Besides, there were articles published during the monitoring period, which had several sources, but they were not distinguished with many different positions. For example, we should note the article dated May 16 about passing the exams in physics, chemistry and biology at schools. There are several different sources in the article, but all of them are saying one and the same thing and this way there is an impression created that the journalist is sharing this position and by providing similar positions she also expresses negative attitude about this initiative.

Journalists of the Resonance mostly write the articles in a neutral language, but sometimes they are using the negative tones as well for stating their positions in regards to the issue.

Weekly Newspapers

The Kviris Palitra

The largest space in the Kviris Palitra was dedicated to the Georgian Dream (42%), and 26% of space was allocated to the next subject right after it – the President. There is quite a big percentage difference between the second and third subjects. Only 8% of the total space was allocated to the third subject – the authorities.

As for the tone-based distribution of space, it is interesting that the picture in the Kviris Palitra is similar to the Resonance. Namely, the negative tone was reported in regards to the subjects of authorities, such as the President, Parliament, authorities, local self-government and National Movement. The neutral tone is prevailing in regards to all the other subjects. There was a little positive tone used in connection to the party Democratic movement – for United Georgia (the leader Nino Burjanadze) (90%), also to the Georgian Dream (3%) and the President (1%).

After separating the journalist's tone it is clearly seen that the data, which were obtained from distribution of general spaces based on the tones, still remains in the part of the journalist's tone. This means that the journalists themselves talk about these subjects with negative tone. Here a small clarification should be provided in connection to the issue that the Kviris Palitra has several columns where the personal opinions and positions of several journalists are published. Correspondingly, the journalists are critical and sometimes even cynical towards the authorities in these columns.

The balance is mostly observed in the articles written on political topics in the Kviris Palitra, except the interviews, when there is only one respondent and opinions of only one person is provided. The facts are double-checked in most cases.

The Kviris Kronika

Top three subjects in the Kviris Kronika are: Coalition Georgian Dream – 45%, the President – 21% and People's Council – 9%. As for other subjects, 7% and less space was allocated to them, which leads us to the indication that the space is unevenly distributed.

The tone towards the subjects is very different. 90% of negative tone for the authorities and 71% negative tone for the President is eye-catching, while the tone distribution in regards for the Coalition Georgian Dream is following: positive – 41%, neutral 44% and negative 15%. There is much negative tone towards the National Movement, local self-government and government. As for the Voters List Verification Commission, it has 100% of negative tone. Although judging from the number of square centimeters, it is less (83 cm²), than the space allocated to other subjects, but this space is completely attributed to the journalist. Christian-Democratic Movement is also represented with positive tone as well (24%).

Tone-based distribution of the space allocated to the subjects gives even more negative picture. Here it is clearly seen that when a journalist speaks about the President, 89% of the speech is negative. National movement and the authorities have 90% and 82% of negative tone.

In regards to keeping the balance it should be noted that Kviris Kronika often violates it, and presents the viewpoint of one person only. This person sometimes is a journalist or a respondent, consequently, information is provided to the reader only from one side.

As for the accuracy, the journalist of Kviris Kronika often uses an anonymous source when there is no such need. Often the disseminated information is not verified, consequently, while analyzing the article there is an impression that the reader should just trust to what the journalist is writing, because frequently there is no documented on fact-based confirmation about the information provided in the article, which is disseminated by the journalist. Besides, there is no specifically designated column in the newspaper or a journalist's article/work, which significantly hindered the qualitative analysis of articles.

While performing the qualitative analysis of Kviris Kronika, the language used in the article was one of the most important categories. As we have already seen, tone negativity was also revealed in the Resonance and the Kviris Palitra as well, but the negative tone identified in the Kviris Kronika falls under the abusive category rather than sound criticism. The respondents who are supporting the opposition express negative attitude towards the current authorities, but other than this, the journalists use unethical expressions in reference to the authorities, especially to the President and members of the National Movement even more. Except these unethical expressions, they refer to the members of current government to be the criminals and this way they violate the presumption of innocence, because they refer to the people as criminals though they have never been convicted, or pronounced guilty at the court.

Asaval-Dasavali

Like other print outlets, in the Asaval-Dasavali the most space was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream (44%) followed by the President of Georgia with 28%, and the third one is the authorities with only 5%, which indicates on uneven distribution of space as it was in case of the Kviris Kronika. 5% or less was allocated to other subjects.

According to the tones, the most notable subject is the President, as 83% of the space allocated to him is provided in the negative tone, and 63% of space allocated to the Georgian Dream provides positive coverage. The authorities, National Movement and the government are the subjects, which were covered with a clearly negative tone.

Tone of the subjects, when a journalist is speaking about them, does not provide a very different picture. There is a difference in regards to the Labor Party, where the journalist's positive tone is clearly seen while speaking about this political movement.

As the result of the qualitative analysis, results of the Asaval-Dasavali were similar to the Kviris Kronika. In regards to the balance, there are interviews in this outlet as well, where only one source is indicated and only one position is stated. Even in other kinds of articles there are frequent cases when the journalist is writing about the source, and neither is it clear whether it is a column, a particular article or the work of the journalist.

Accuracy is not often observed by the Asaval-Dasavali, either. The journalists often provide information from an anonymous source, even then the provided information is not that valuable to necessarily have an anonymous source. Often the facts are not double-checked in the articles of this outlet, which may consequently mislead the reader.

Journalist's language in the Asaval-Dasavali is even more critical and aggressive than in the Kviris Kronika. The journalists often not only use unethical expressions, but also use photos as well for expressing their negative attitudes.

Alia

The Alia has allocated most space to the Coalition Georgian Dream, and this totaled 35% (91,404 cm²) of the total space of subjects. Other than the Coalition, the President (16%) and the government (12%) were among the top three. 8% or less was allocated to other subjects.

Tone-wise, the negative tone prevails in regards to the President (70%), government (47%), authorities (67%), National Movement (71%) and local self-government (51%). Neutral tone is observed in regards to other subjects. We do not come across with positive tone almost ever.

Neither do we see the positive tone while distributing the space allocated to the subjects according to the journalist's tone. Alia's journalists have not expressed positive attitude to anyone.

It was determined after the qualitative analysis that in many cases the balance is not maintained in the Alia, which means that the issues provided in the articles were not discussed from different angles and neither were there different positions. In most cases there is a broad interview with various politicians who share their opinions, assumptions and concerns with the journalist. The articles written by the journalists are not distinguished with numerous sources.

Facts of disseminating unverified information were revealed after analyzing the articles in the newspaper Alia. As it was the case with Kviris Palitra, here we see information provided by an anonymous source, which has not been double-checked by the journalist.

Negative, unethical and humiliating vocabulary is eye-catching in the Alia, which is used by the Alia's journalist towards the current authorities. For example, they refer to the President as "Mikheil the First", "Mikheil Agmashenebeli (Builder)"; and National Movement as "Natsmatsuna" (from the derogatory Katsmatsuna meaning a weak and little man).

Other than the vocabularies mentioned above, for showing the government representatives in negative context, the Alia also refers to illustrations. Consequently, there are photos published in its papers, which leaves a negative impression on the reader in regards to the President and other officials.

Weekly Magazines

Tabula

In total, 10,750 cm² were allocated to the subjects selected within the frameworks of media monitoring in the magazine tabula. Their list is not very big in this outlet and this space was distributed among them with the following percentage: Coalition Georgian Dream - 50%, government - 24%, President 18%, Labor Party - 2%, Parliament - 2%, National Movement - 1%, local self-government - 1% and People's Council - 1%.

Neutral attitude prevails in the subjects' tones. In case of almost all the subjects, the neutral tone is more than 70%. Positive tone was revealed only in regards to the Parliament. There was much neutral tone while distributing the subjects' space according to the journalist's tone. The neutral tone is dominating in case of all the subjects.

Majority of articles has more than one source and it is evident that the journalist is trying to provide double-checked and confirmed facts. Mostly, there was no balance observed during the interview, when one respondent was talking and evaluating this or that event, and the journalist seldom provided different positions towards the discussed issue.

Unlike several other issues, there were no unethical expressions, humiliating tone or aggressive position in the articles of Tabula.

Tbiliselebi

The magazine Tbiliselebi mostly writes about entertainment and apolitical topics, but still we find some political articles and politicians concerning the non-political topics there. This outlet revealed a significantly different result, as far as out of the space allocated to the subjects only 1% was dedicated to the Coalition Georgian Dream, whereas quite much space was allocated to this political organization in all other outlets. Most share of total space in Tbiliselebi, which is 1,638 cm² is allocated to the Parliament (36%), which is followed by the government with 31% and the Labor Party – 11%.

From the viewpoints of the tones, sharply negative attitude is revealed towards all the subjects except the Coalition Georgian Dream, to which small space was allocated, but even in this small space there was a positive tone revealed towards the coalition members. There was no positive tone observed towards any subject. The journalist's tone is mostly negative towards the subjects.

Those articles of Tbiliselebi that were about the monitoring subjects were quite unbalanced. Mostly there was only one position provided. Tbiliselebi was not distinguished from the standpoint of verification of facts, either, as far as in some cases the article was written with one or no source at all.

Negative attitude of journalists towards the subjects was reflected in the criterion of the language of article, which showed that the journalists often refer to a cynical tone and ironic expressions, which were mostly targeted to the authorities.

Gza (the Road)

In total, 2,487 cm² was allocated to the political subjects in the newspaper Gza, where from the largest space was allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream (35%), the President (26%) and the government (17%).

The magazine Gza is distinguished with its negative tone towards the subjects, such as those representing the authorities (President, government, authorities), and reveals little positive tone (10%) towards the political organization that was mentioned most of all.

Tone of the journalist, like the general tone of subjects, is negative towards the subjects. Almost equal percentage of negative tone is used for the government, authorities, President, National Movement and local self-government.

In the articles dedicated to the politicians, mostly the journalist is a source herself, and the facts are seldom verified. In some cases the information is taken from other agencies.

Section "Provoker" is distinguished with its special criticism in the magazine Gza, which evaluates the current events every week and quite severely criticizes the authorities of the country or the opposition because of the happenings.

Sarke (Mirror)

The magazine Sarke, like the Gza and the Tbiliselebi, is a non-political outlet, which is mostly focused on providing entertainment topics and articles to the public. However, it does not disregard actual events going on in the country and publishes small articles about political issues and politicians.

The magazine Sarke allocated 4,393 cm² to the subjects of interest for the media monitoring, from which the largest space was allocated to the Christian-Democratic Movement (53%) unlike other outlets. Other than the Christian-Democratic Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream (20%) and the President (9%) were among the top three.

The tone towards Christian-Democratic Movement is neutral with 98%, and a positive tone prevails towards the Coalition Georgian Dream (54%). We find positive (31%) and neutral (50%) and negative (19%) tones towards the President.

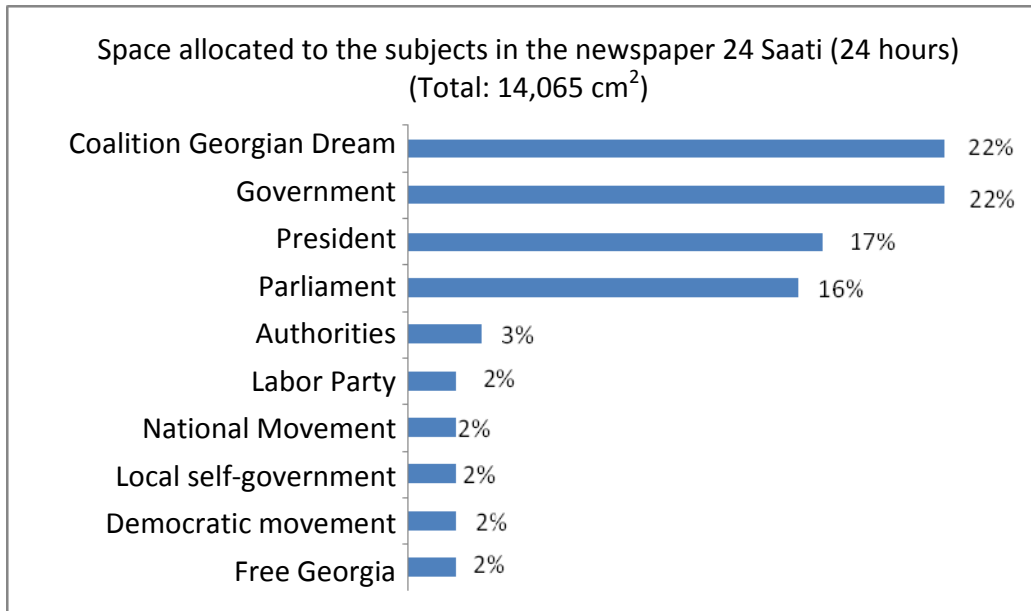
Political articles are unbalanced in most cases and have only one source or the journalist is a source himself. The facts are seldom double-checked.

It is noteworthy that other than the article on political topics, Sarke also offered interviews with various political leaders and their family members on private topics to the readers, after which the Christian-Democratic Movement and Coalition Georgian Dream were depicted with positive tone.

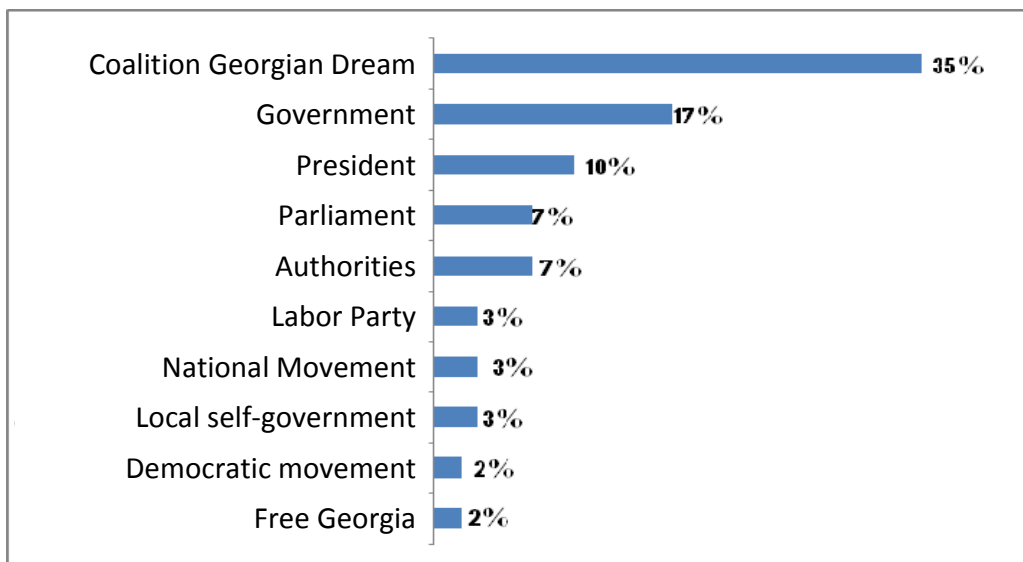
Language of articles is neutral in most cases in regards to the journalist, but we should note that the journalist sometimes refer to the cynical tone. For example: "Misha whipped the government", "Shaliko is against Nato" (Shaliko is diminutive from Shalva, leader of the Labor Party).

Annex

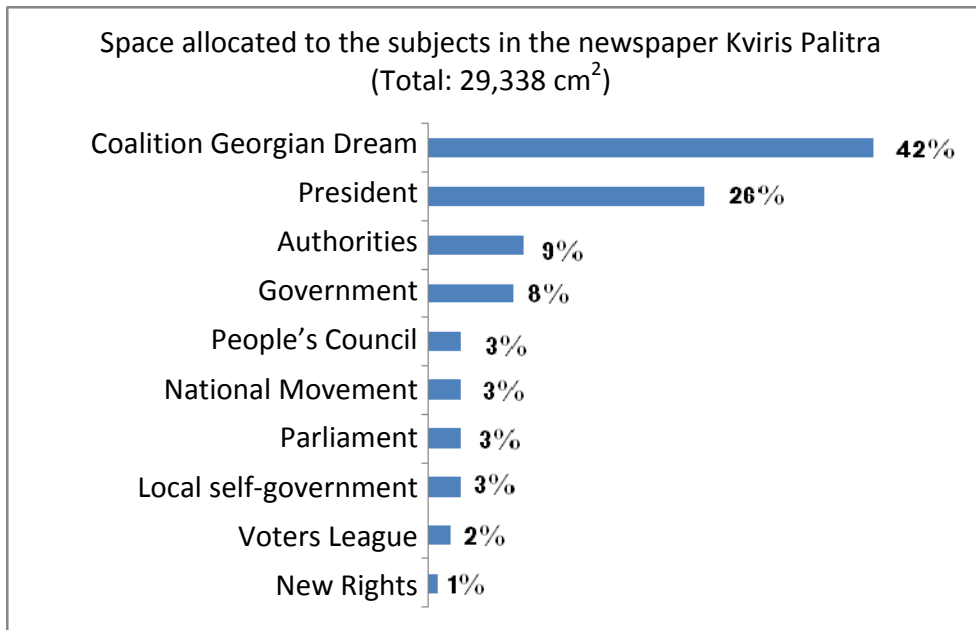
24 Saati (24 Hours)



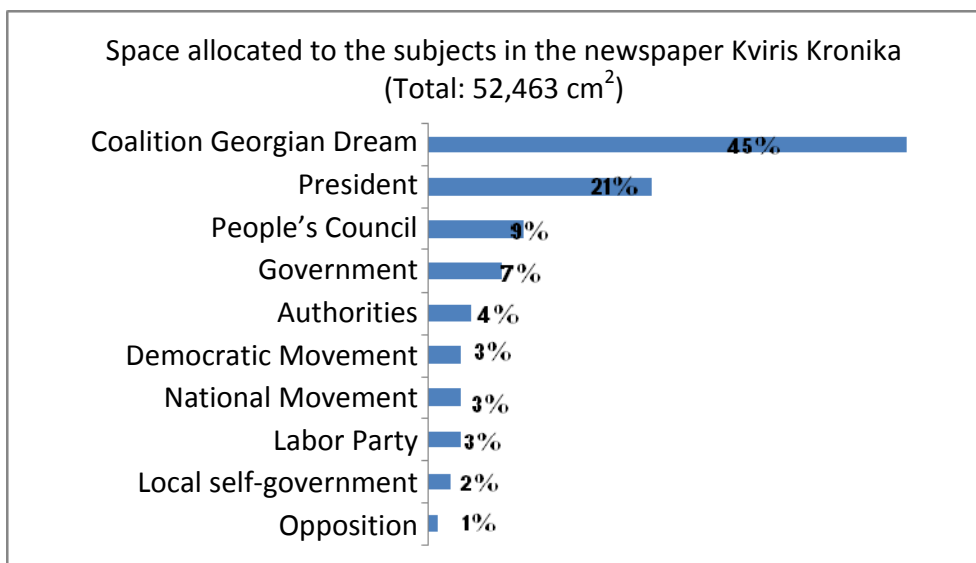
Resonance



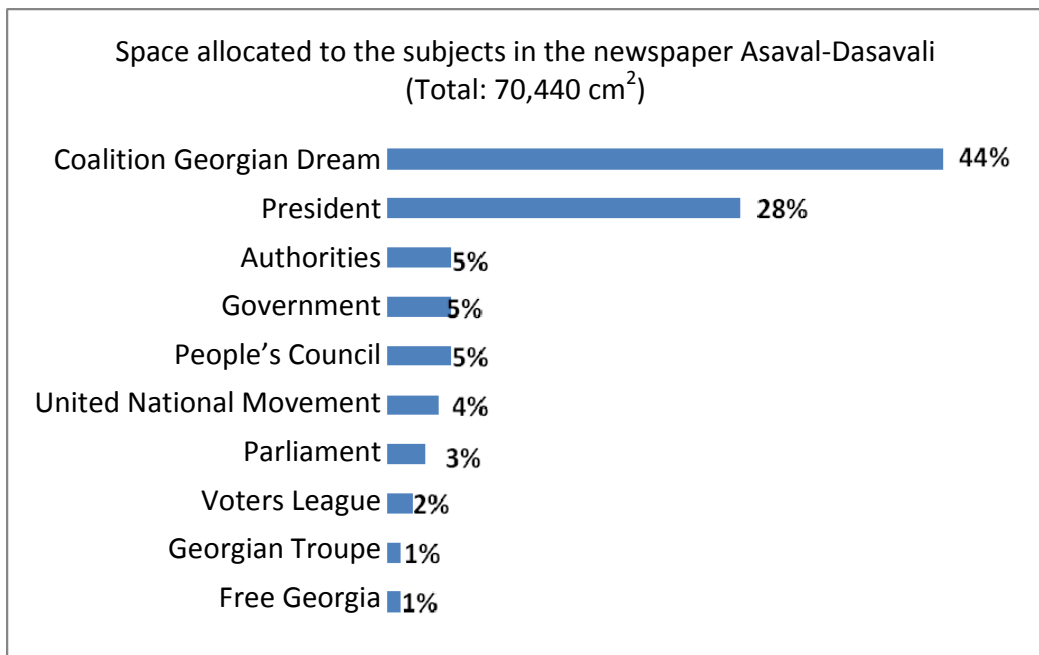
Kviris Palitra



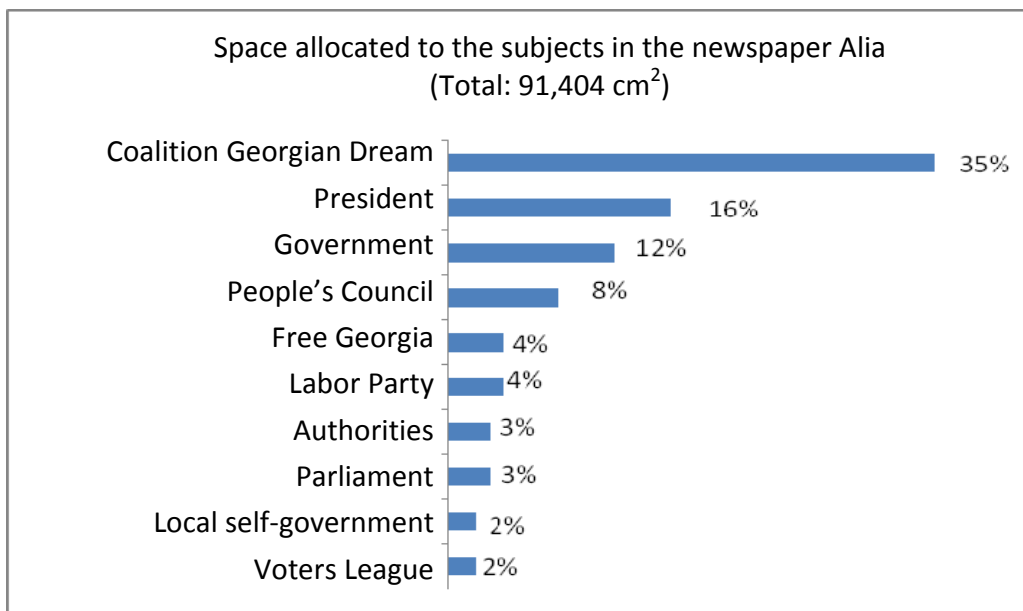
Kviris Kronika



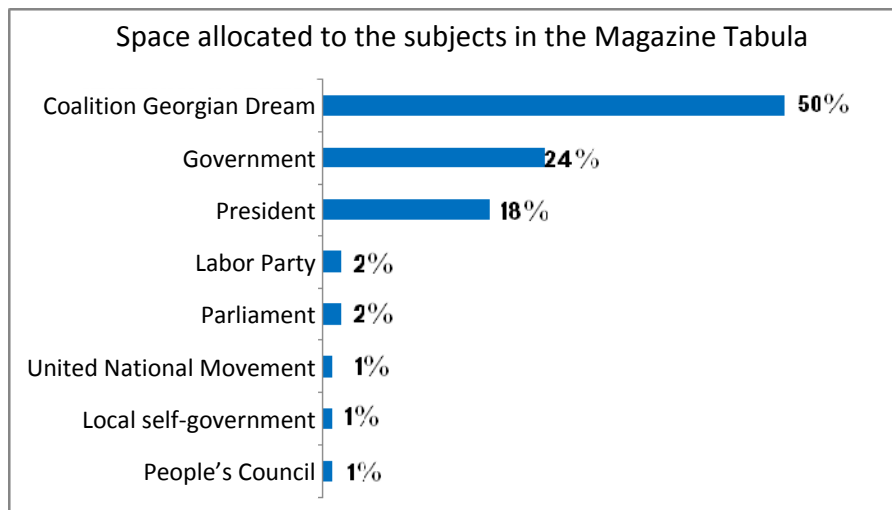
Asaval-Dasavali



Alia

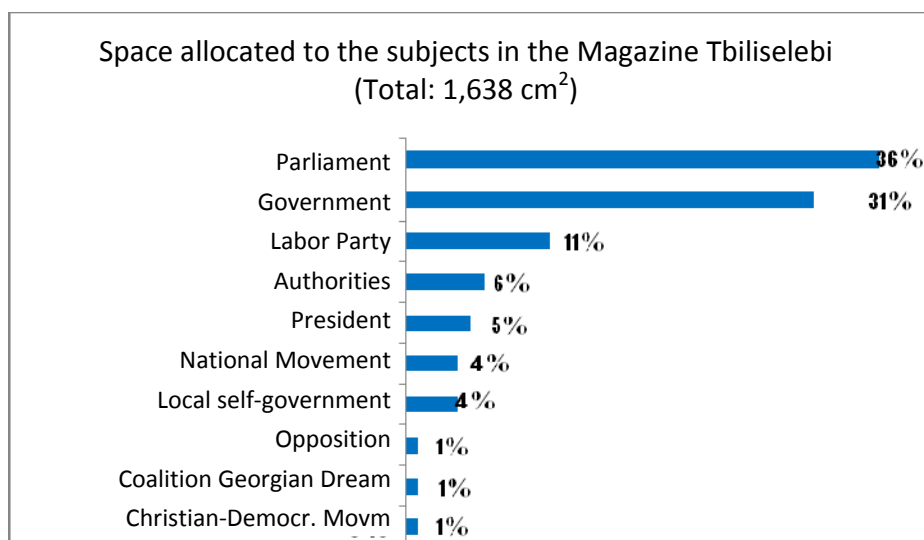


Tabula

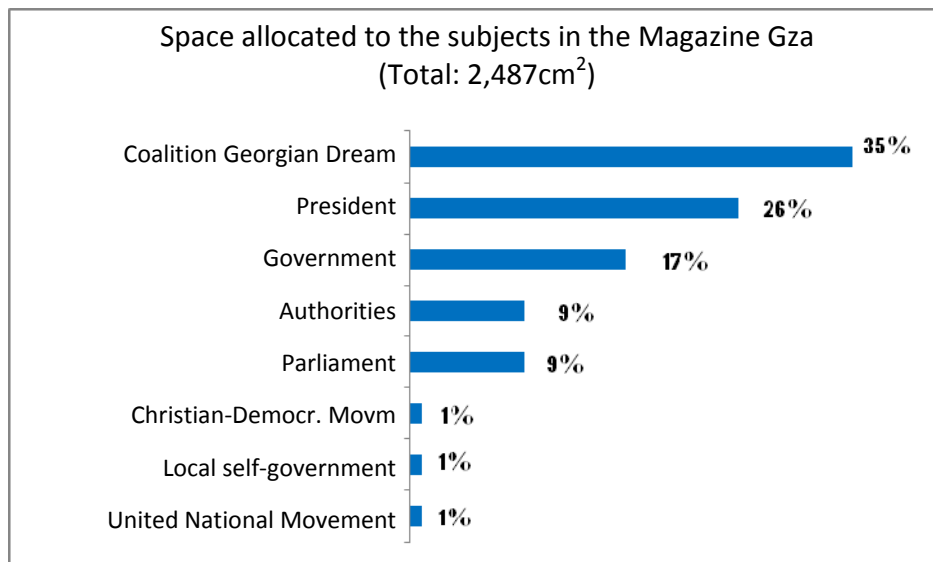


Tbiliselebi

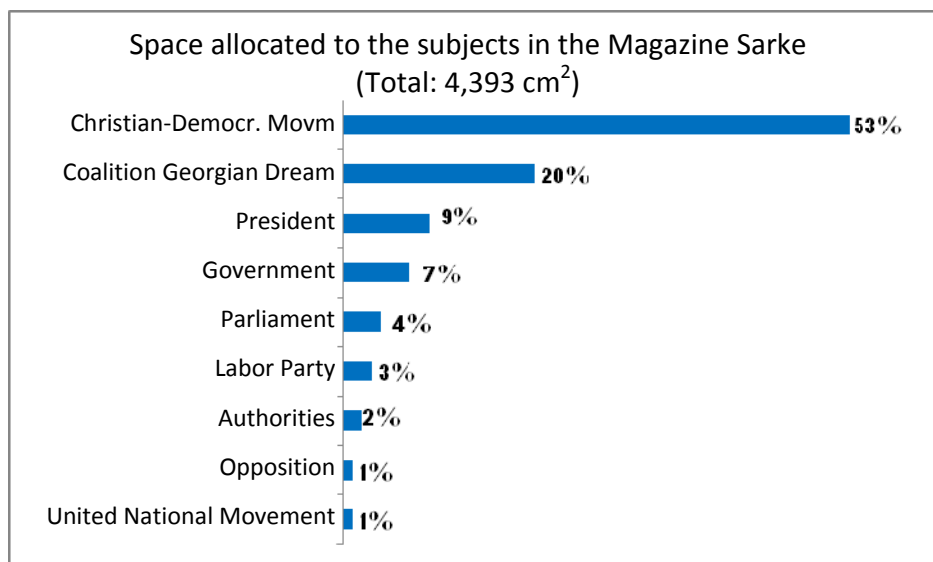
Space



Magazine "Gza"

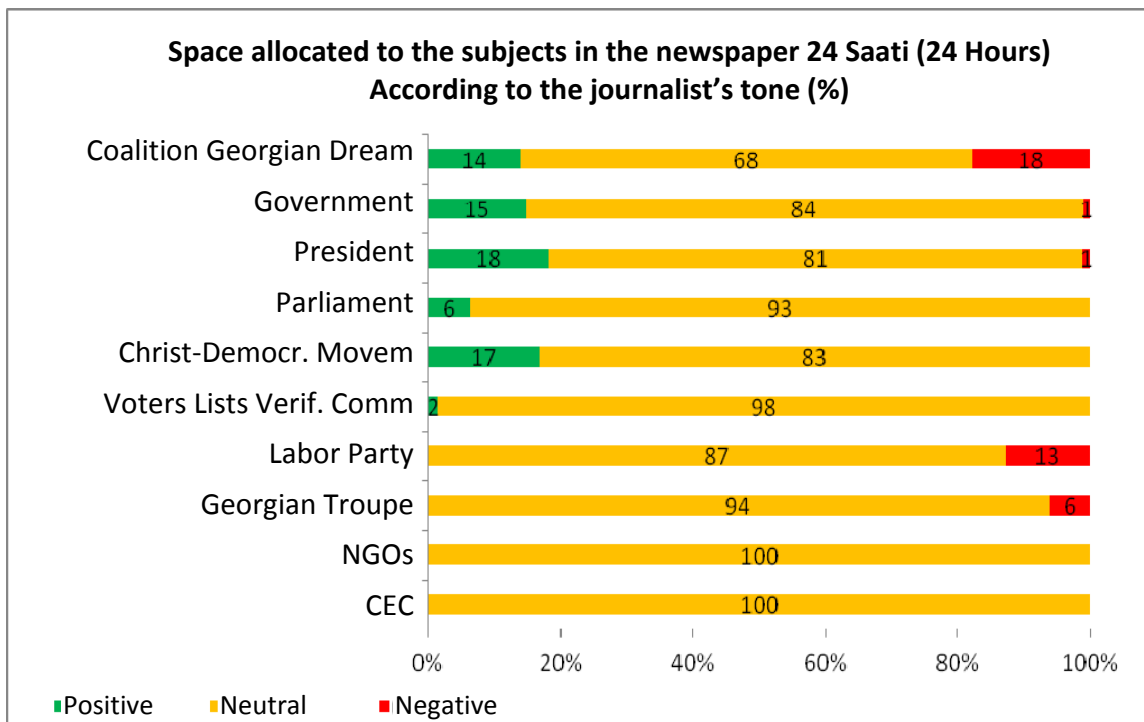
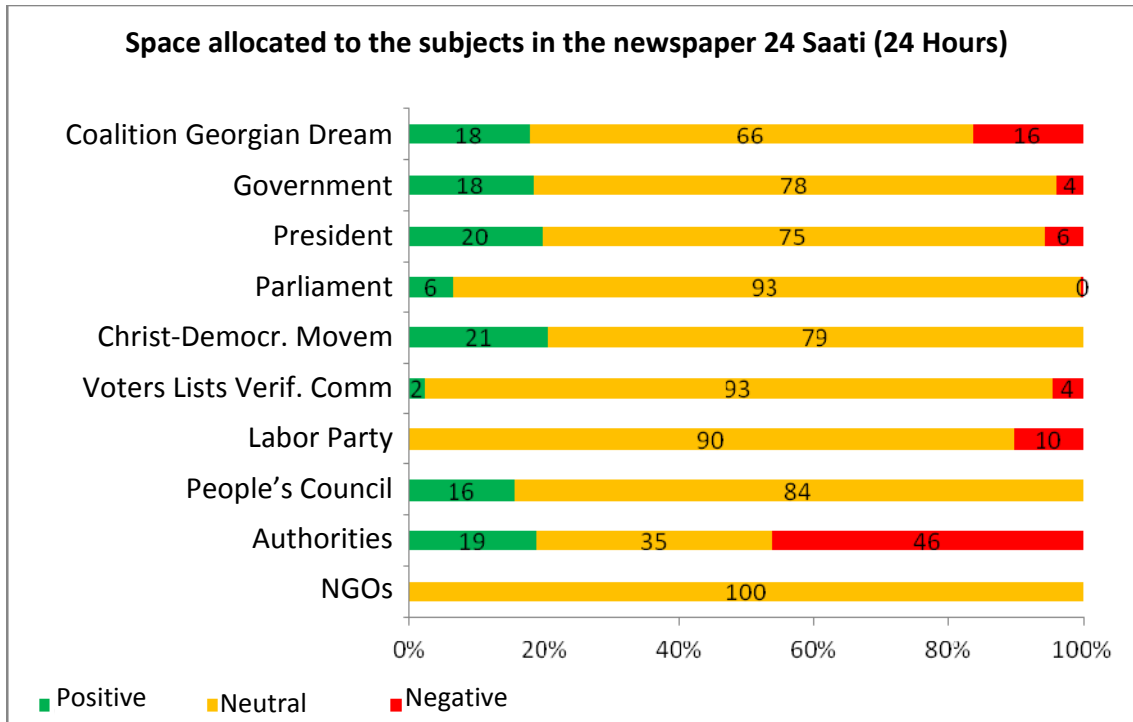


Magazine "Sarke"

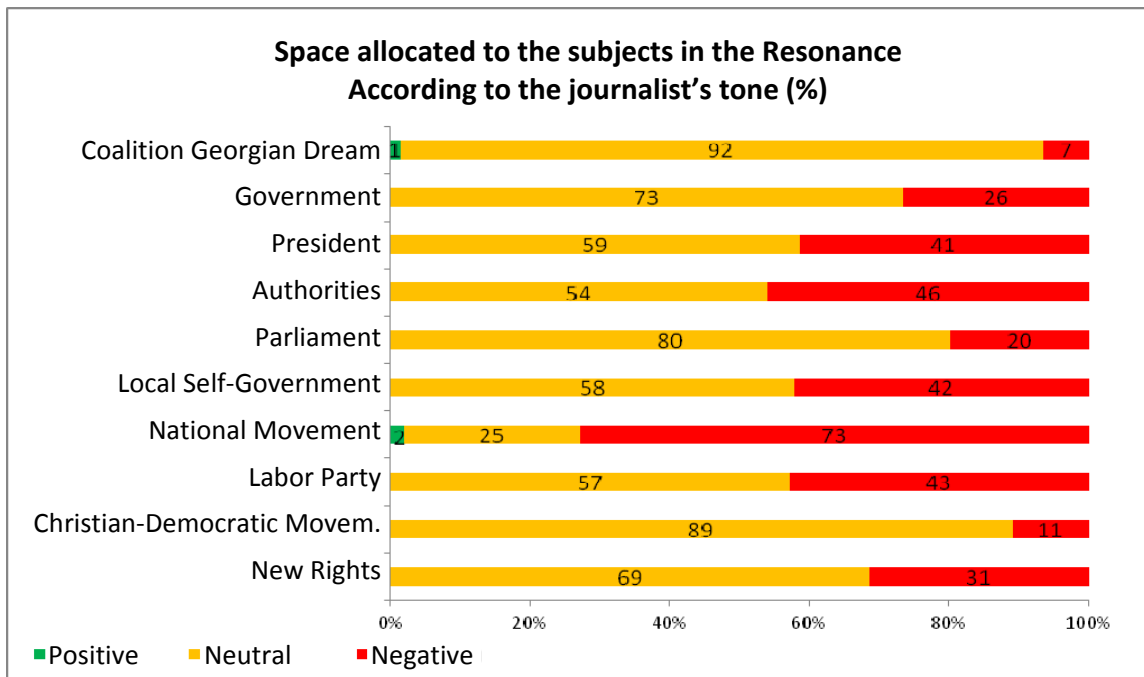
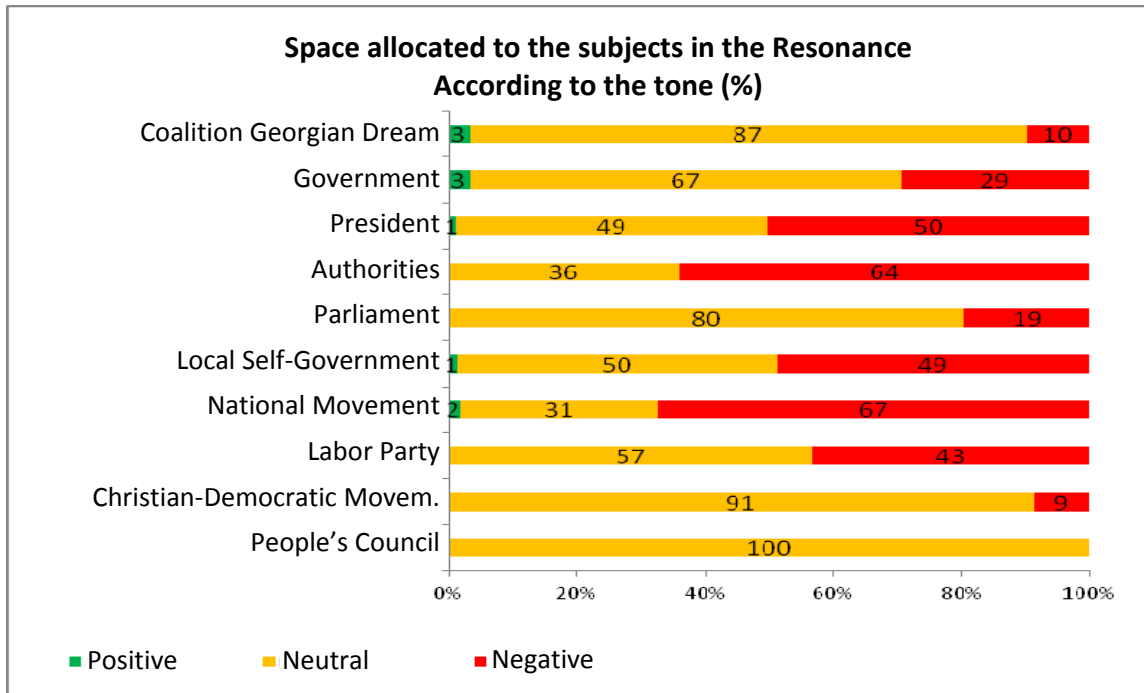


Tone-based distribution of space allocated to the subjects

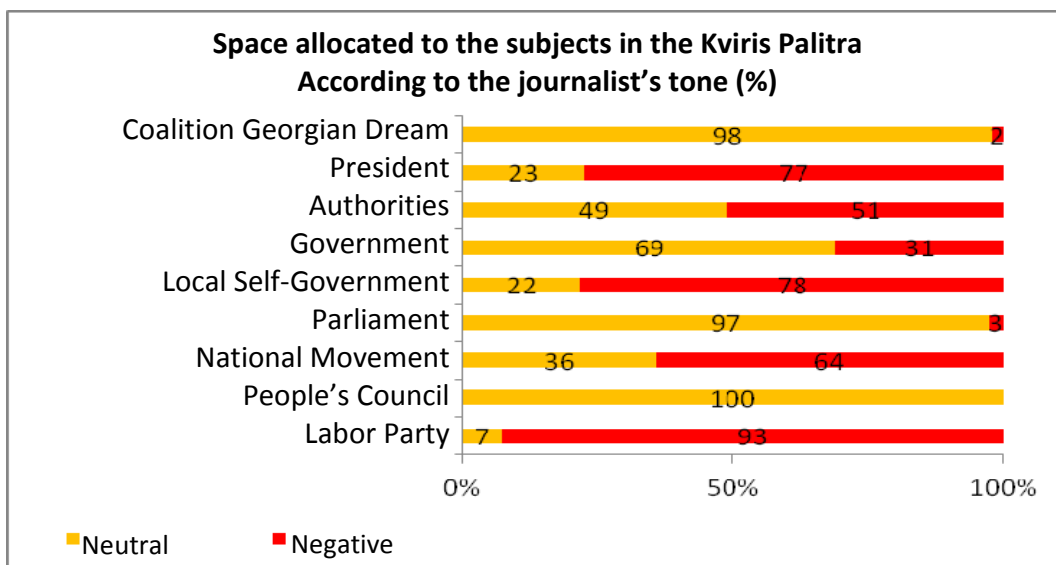
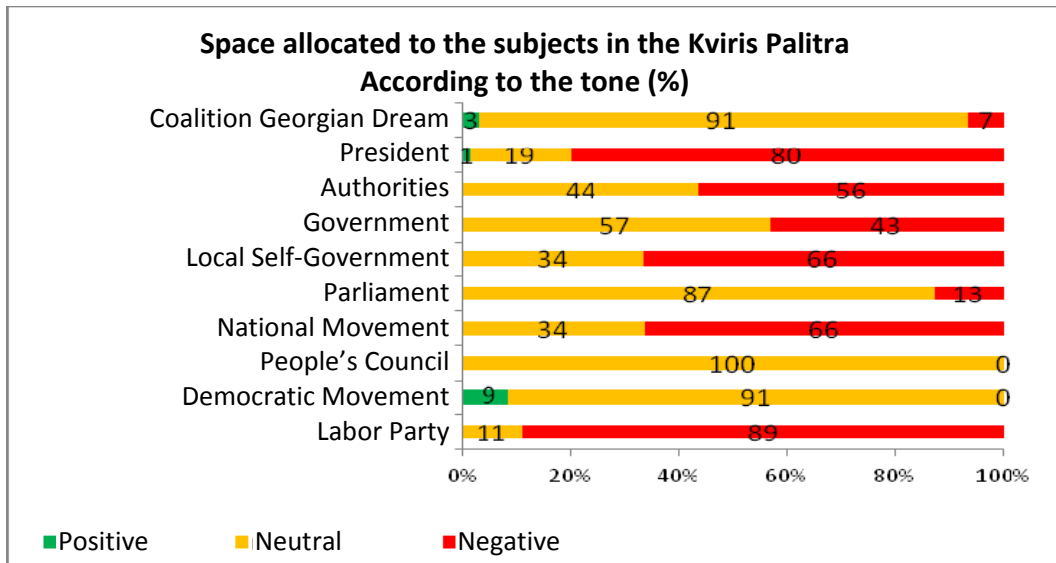
24 Saati (24 Hours)

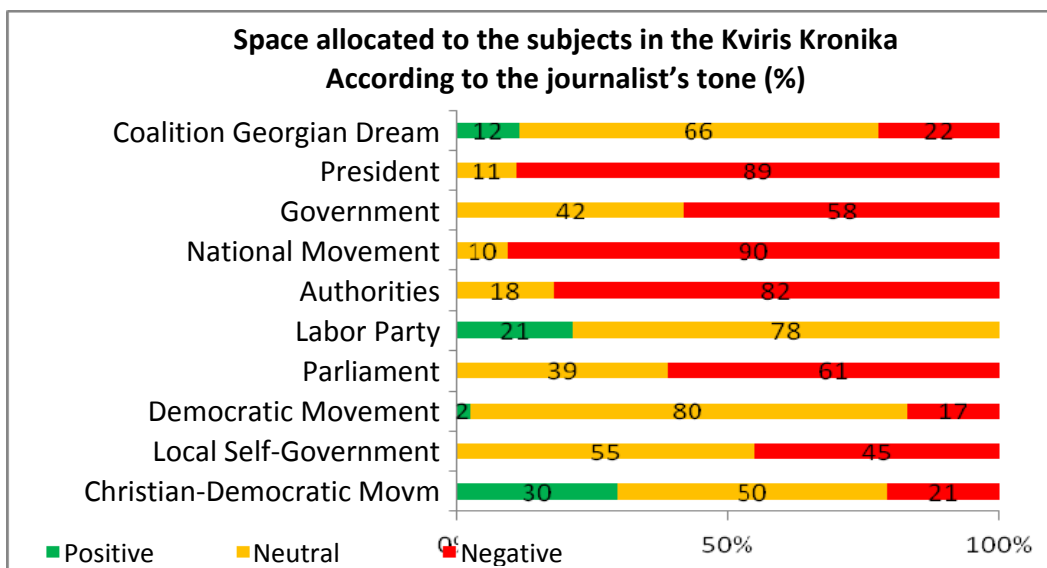
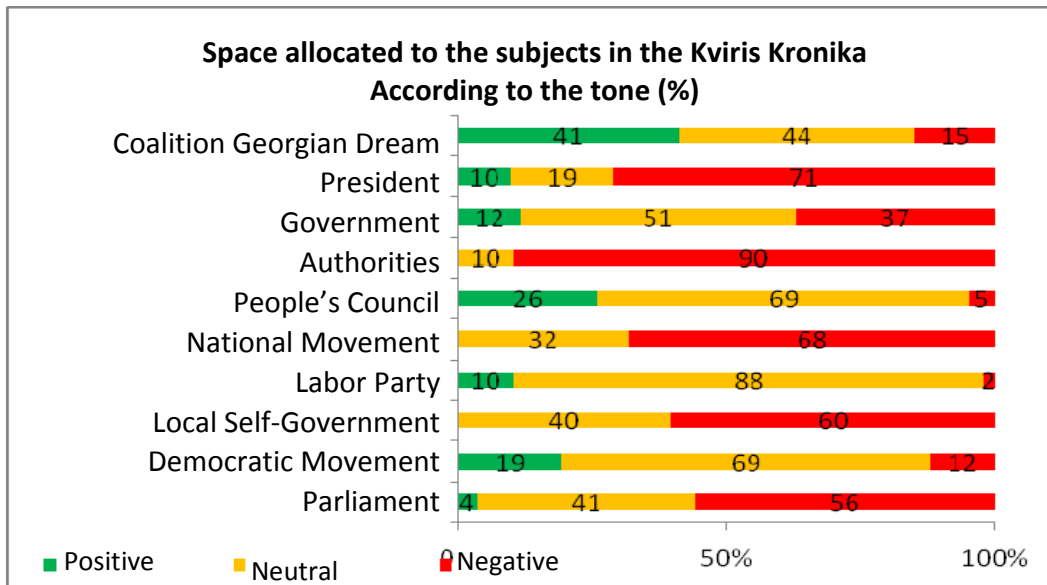


Resonance

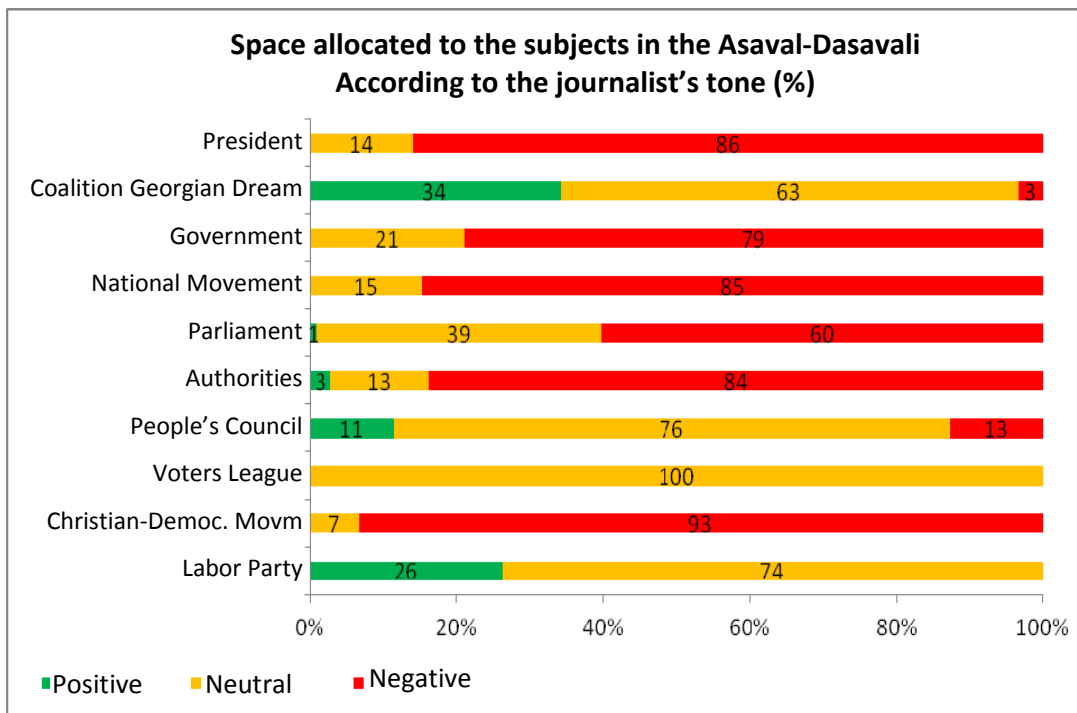
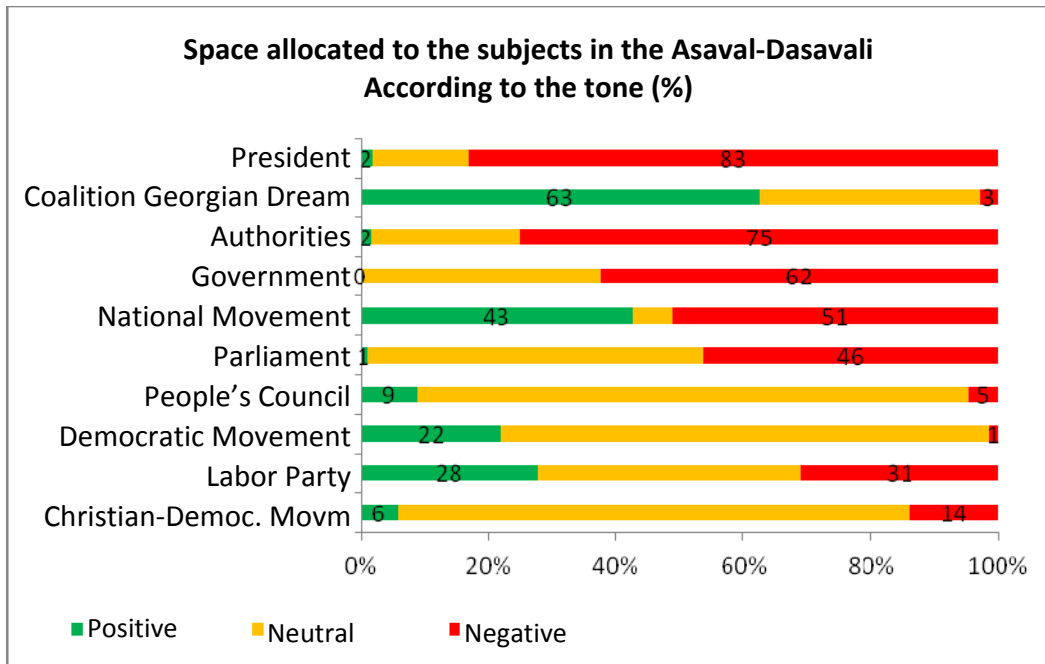


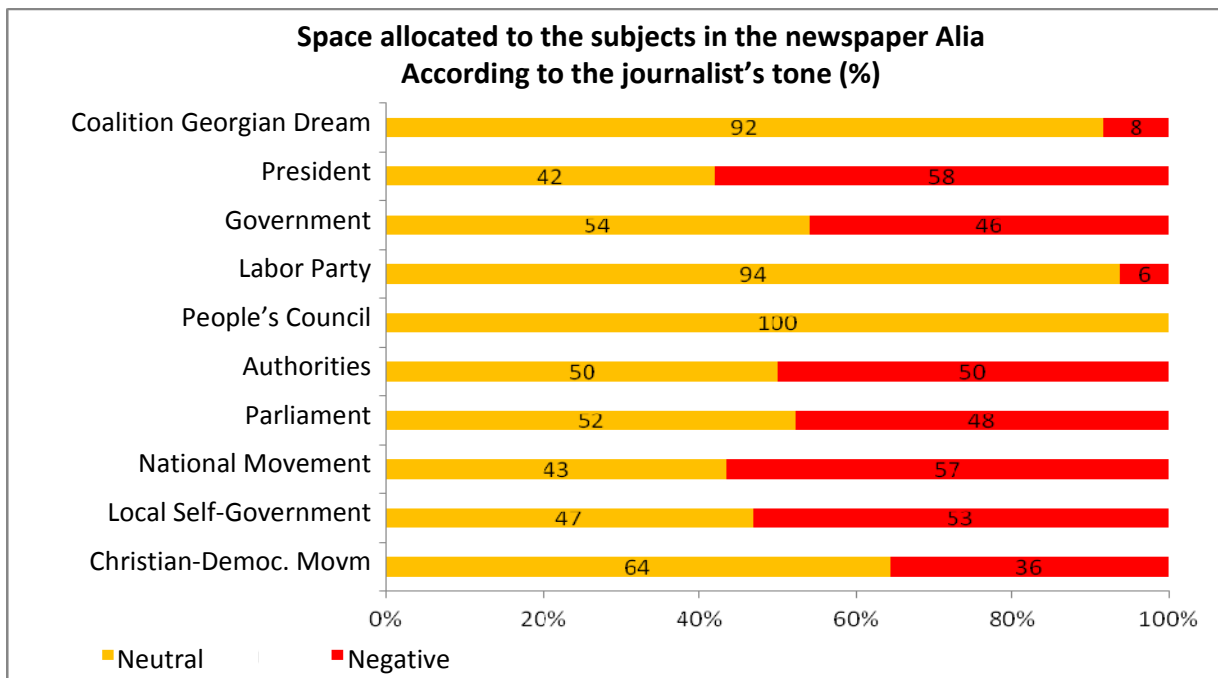
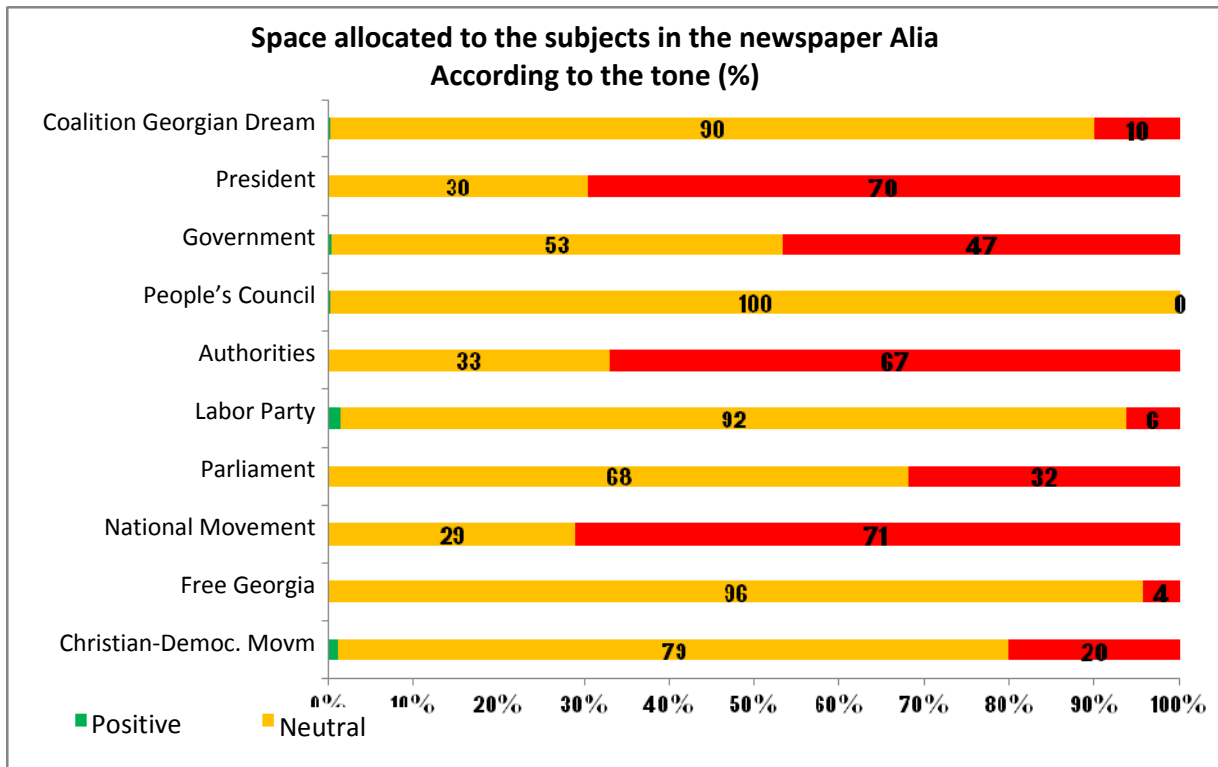
Kviris Palitra



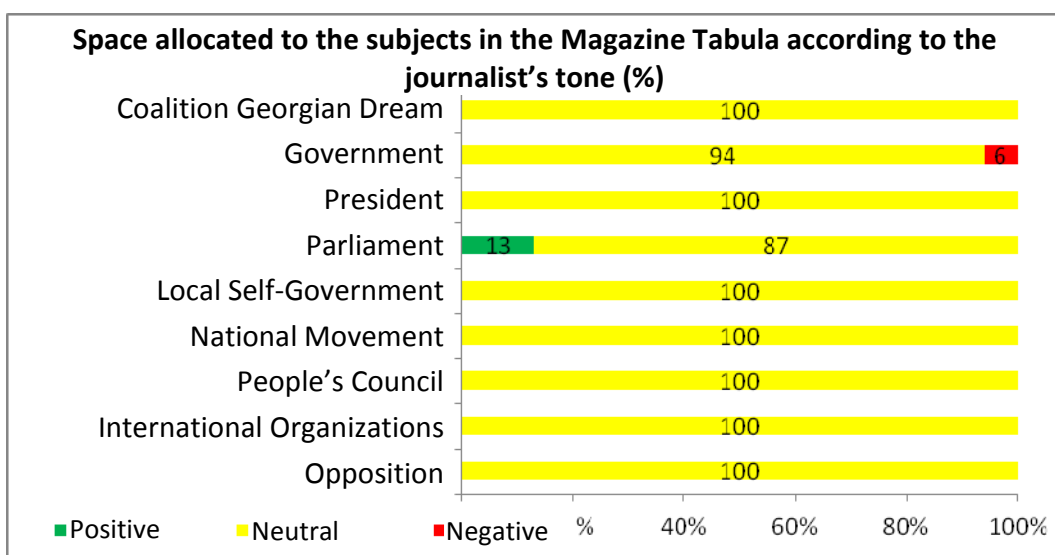
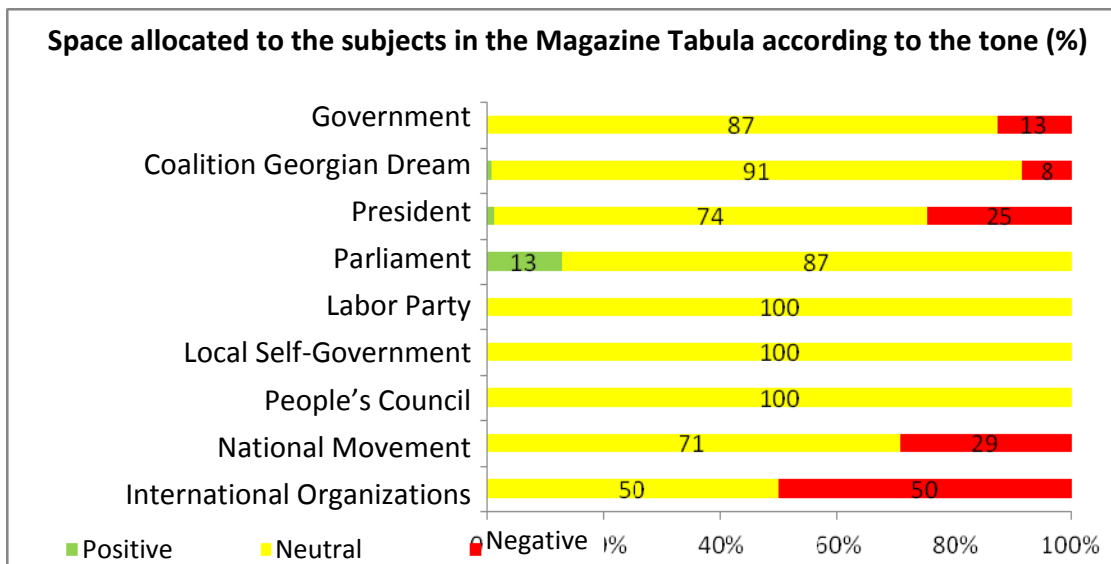


Asaval-Dasavali

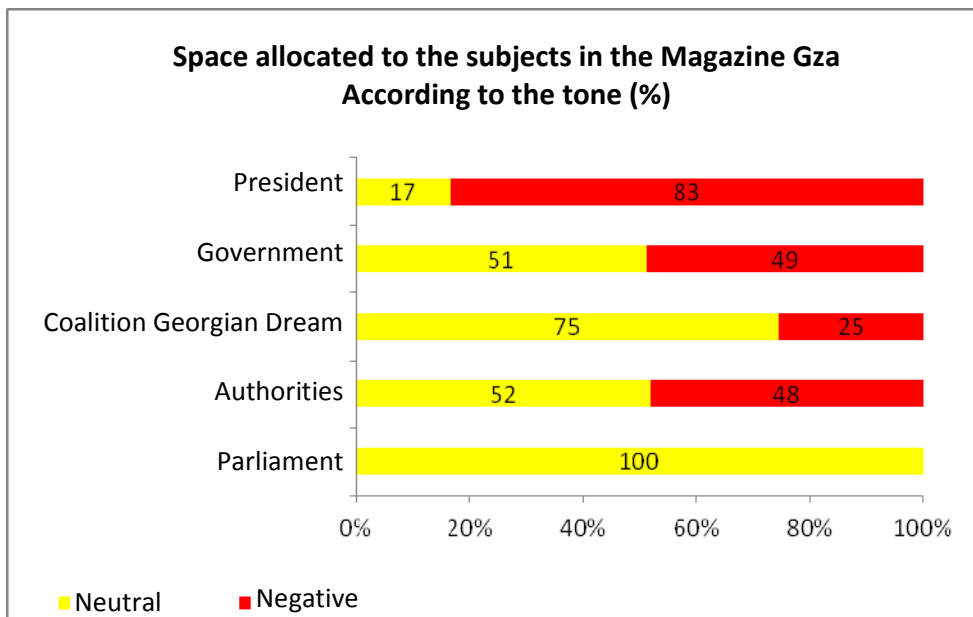
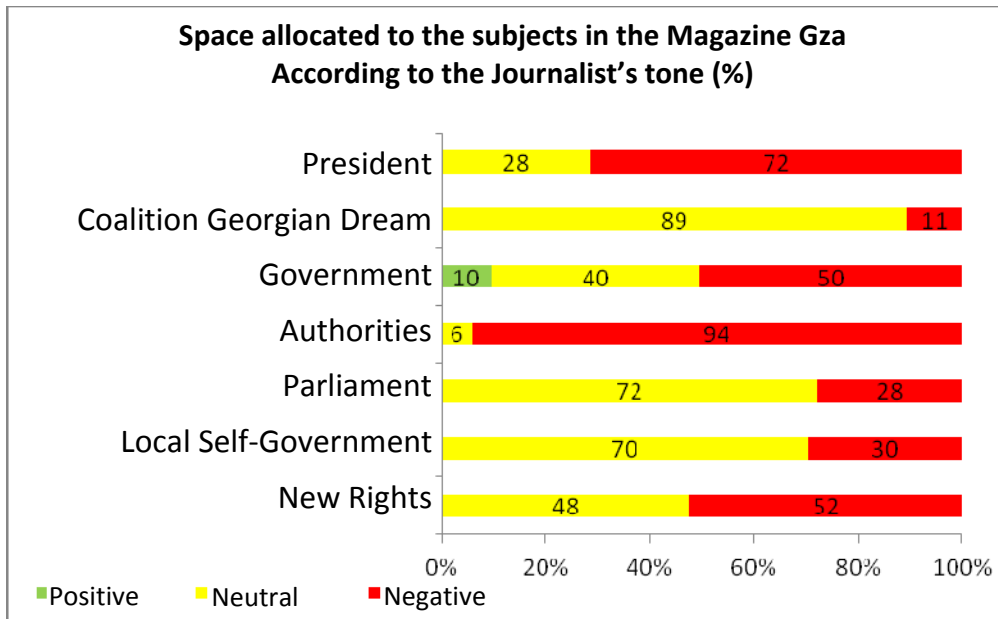




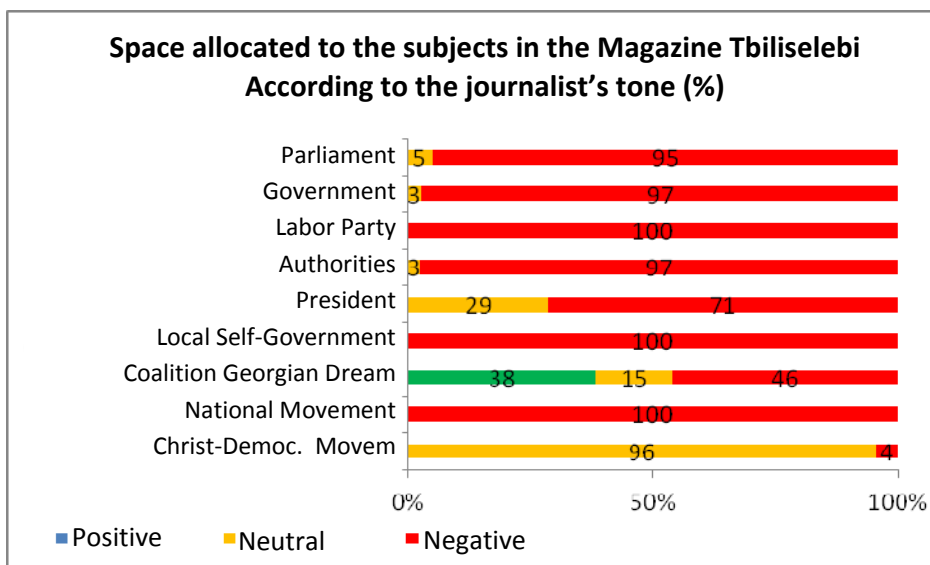
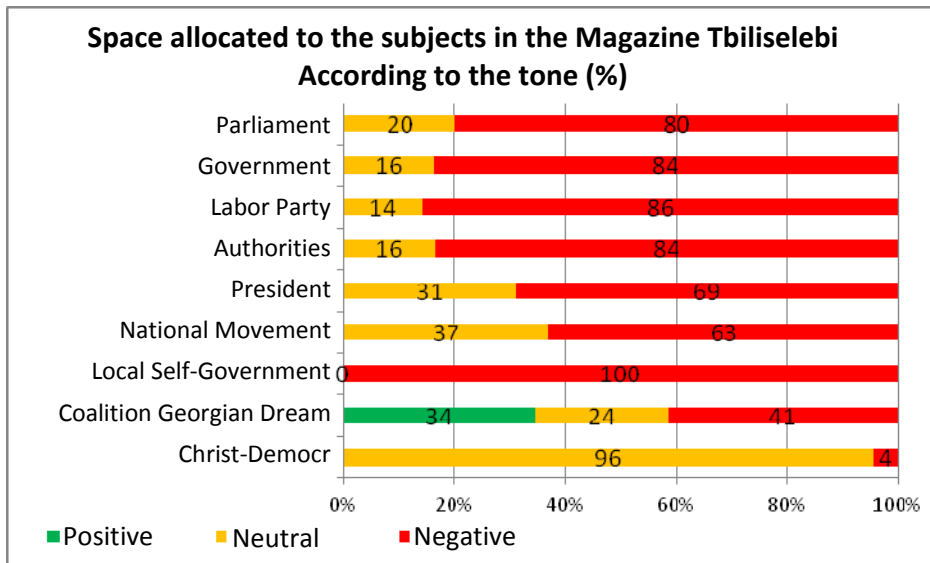
Tabula



Magazine "Gza"



Tbiliselebi



Sarke

