

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report, like any other, has a long ancestry. Many people were involved and consumed in producing this document. In this regard, it is honest and accurate to say that work on this report began since November when our project started with a team of sixteen members.

Despite this qualification, what follows is primarily the product of a number of experienced and distinguished professionals who willingly worked with the eight-member Media Monitoring Unit. We have profited immensely from them, although they cannot be held responsible for anything we have written. Their names follow: Bob Norris, Hugh Chomondeley, and of course Chairman Joseph Sing. The staff of the Guyana Elections Commission Secretariat who provided invaluable administrative support for the project also honoured us. Tom Bartlett and Karen Davis spent long tedious hours proofreading our drafts of this report. We want them to know that we are deeply grateful for their help and candour.

However, we would be remiss if we did not mention the Canadian International Development Agency and United Nations Development Programme and the other members of the donor community for their interest and financial support, which allowed a cadre of young people to serve our democracy.

Above all we want to thank the members of the media sphere for the endorsement of our Unit both during and after Guyana General and Regional Elections 2001. This undertaking would not have been contemplated, let alone completed without the Media Code of Conduct. In addition, the support of the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation and the various television newscasts producers who facilitated our need for tapes of missed broadcasts.

We must make mention of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences – Mark Kirton who opened the doors for us to contribute to democratic practices in our nation.

To others who left their mark on these pages, we extend our appreciation and hope that you know that you have contributed to the role of the media in Guyana.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFG	ALLIANCE FOR GUYANA
EU	EUROPEAN UNION
GAP-WPA	GUYANA ACTION PARTY/ WORKING PEOPLE’S ALLIANCE
GBG	GOD BLESS GUYANA
GDF	GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE
GDP	GUYANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY
GECOM	GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
GGG	GOOD GREEN GUYANA
GGRE	GUYANA GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS
GFAP	JUSTICE FOR ALL PARTY
MCC	MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT
MMU	MEDIA MONITORING UNIT
NFA	NATIONAL ALLIANCE FRON
NIP	NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PARTY
OAS	ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES
PNC/R	PEOPLE’S NATIONAL CONGRESS/REFORM
PPP/C	PEOPLE’S PROGRESSIVE PARTY / CIVIC
PUP	PEOPLE’S UNITED PARTY
ROAR	RISE ORGANISE AND REBUILD
TUF	THE UNITED FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The timely presentation of news and information in the public media and accuracy, objectivity and balance in reporting events are essential dimensions in the practice of democracy, anywhere. During periods of electioneering, the presentation of news and information must aim to accomplish a higher objective. Its purpose must be to inform voters about current events as well as the plans and programmes of political parties and candidates contesting elections so that voters can make informed choices on the day of Elections.

Guyana has had an unfortunate the past of inaccurate, biased, unbalanced, uncritical and uninformed reporting of news and information during periods of campaigning for elections. In an effort to create the most favourable conditions for media, performance owners and practitioners participated in a series of working Roundtable discussions that reached consensus on a Media Code of Conduct and Guidelines (see Annex) for reporting and coverage of the General and Regional Elections in 2001. In summary, the essential purpose of the Code was 'to contribute to a fair, peaceful and well regulated election and avoidance of the aggravation of ethnic tension and unnecessary political discord'.

The backdrop to this voluntary effort by media owners and practitioners was the absence of a formal regulatory framework to guide the performance of radio and television stations; the non-existence of a broadly representative and effective media association; the absence of collaboratively developed codes of practice. And, most important, the absence of an agreed and effective Electoral Code of Conduct that guided the behaviour of contesting political parties and candidates. These chronic deficiencies provided enormous constraints and colossal challenges for media performance during an election considered crucial to Guyana's political, economic and social development.

The Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) was established within the Guyana Elections Commission with the assistance of external donors. Its purpose was to monitor and analyse the capacity of Guyana's newspapers, radio and television stations to meet these challenges. During the election period, the MMU prepared and presented five periodic reports to the public. Using the voluntarily agreed Media Code of Conduct as the objective basis for analysis, the MMU assessments were made available to other monitoring bodies, the media, political parties, special interest organisations and the public at large.

These assessments analysed the extent to which media fulfilled their agreed obligations to cover and report on the election period in a free, fair and balanced manner. The selection, content and presentation of news and information received attention. Content Analysis techniques were used to examine how the main broadcast outlets presented political parties, policies and candidates; the amount of attention that each party attracted; the balance between positive and negative comment; and comparisons between different media outlets to provide a gauge of the bias in reporting.

METHODOLOGY

The monitoring period ran from 13 December 2000 and ended 31 March 2001. The MMU monitored and evaluated both private and state-owned media in the run-up to the GGRE and the post election period on a daily basis. The information was entered into a database to produce the graphical presentations.

The following media monitored were:

Newspapers	Radio	Television/Newscasts
The Guyana Chronicle	Voice of Guyana	CNS Ch 6 – Prime News
The Stabroek News		WRHM Ch 7 – Capitol News
The New Nation		GTV Ch 11 – 6 O'clock News
The Mirror		VCT Ch 28 – Evening News
The Kaieteur News		MTV Ch 65 – News Update

On a daily basis, two different monitors evaluated each newscast and newspaper according to the criteria below. Team leaders were required to verify accuracy of summaries before data entry. The newscasts monitored for television were Prime News, 6 O'clock, News Update, The Evening News, and Capitol News. For radio, three newscasts were monitored each day, one in the morning, midday and the evening. While monitoring was restricted to VOG, it is notable that other government radio channels have abbreviated news programs, which seem to have a primary source.

Summaries of news items captured:

- The date and time
- A brief summary of the item
- The party leaders and the representatives which were accessed
- The overall category that the item best fit stated, to ensure accuracy and reliability, the acronyms of political parties and the following categories were used:

GECOM – Guyana Elections Commission integral to the electoral process, given its administrative role in fostering an enabling environment for the elections.

GENERAL – Relevant election content but cannot be attributed to a specific category

GOVERNMENT – took account of the activities of the incumbent government. These include stories about the President, the Prime Minister, and other government ministers/functionaries in their official capacity, ministries, and agencies. Consideration of the Guyana Defence Force and the Guyana Police Force is relevant to the extent that they maintain public order and protect the

rights of citizens during the election period. The relevance of this category is that voters relate the achievements of any incumbent to the party they represent. It is also true that the incumbent political party will campaign on its achievements while in office.

- The **access** determined by the amount of time and space allotted to each category, measured by square inches (in²) for print and seconds for television and radio. The placement of subjects on the front page in newspaper or information conveyed in headlines and photographs versus the inside of the paper are strong indications of access. Another dimension of access is the identification of the sources or parties quoted or cited for veracity or opinion in a news item.
- **Fairness** is the impartial presentation of an event or issue by the reporter seeking to obtain all points of view with the primary value placed on significance and relevance. Cognisance was taken our diverse society thus information should be offered without bias or stereotype. The public could be misled because omission, rumour or unsubstantiated statements, thus fairness would allow them to draw their own conclusions.
- Whether the journalist was **responsible** in relating an event was another consideration. A journalist should resist distortions that obscure the importance of events. In assessing this, considerations of the potential to incite race hate, contempt, promote public disorder or threaten the peace and stability of the nation was important.
- Whether the **tone** of the coverage caused the viewer/reader/listener to regard the subject in a positive, negative or neutral manner.

TALK SHOWS

Talk shows should be a forum for free discussion of political issues in a balanced and reasonable manner. These programmes cannot be held to the same rigour as the newscasts or newspaper monitoring. Nevertheless, we feel strongly that there must be the same responsibilities in this aspect of the media sphere. The practitioners in the Media Code of Conduct (MCC) agreed upon the broad standards used to monitor these shows. The MCC highlights the need:

- To refrain from broadcasting any matter with the potential for promoting or inciting racial hatred, bias or contempt or any matter with the potential for promoting public disorder or threatening the security or the nation.
- To refrain from ridiculing, stigmatising or demonising people on the basis of gender, race, class, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and physical or mental ability.
- To be independent of any or all government and political opposition control and direction
- To be independent of any or all control and direction of any political party
- To be free of any party, individual, group with a vested interest in the elections.¹

In order to do so our monitors took copious notes of the infractions of the MCC. To this end, the summaries took account of the political views and posture of the host/ moderator. The instances of moderator bias were of particular concern to us. The affiliation of guests and how they expressed their views was also another important consideration. Equal opportunity for political parties or candidates to reply to statements, which misrepresent their views or activities, is integral during elections campaign. Therefore, instances where this was absent caught our attention. There is the obvious difficulty of quantifying the above; hence, our analysis will mainly utilize examples over time.

Our monitoring was restricted to **Region 4**. However, this limitation will not compromise our findings since the access to television and print media are restricted in terms of geographical reach. In addition, radio is the only medium that reaches all 10 geographic regions of Guyana. There was a notable absence of election reporting from Regions **1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10** except for political rallies. The media largely ignored the needs of these constituencies from the people's perspective.

¹ "A Media Code of Conduct" Le Meridien Pegasus, Georgetown, 9th October, 2000 p.1

GENERAL COMMENTS

After conducting news analysis for more than three months, we observed general trends, the most significant of which we present for a brief discussion below. These trends were analysed in terms of their comparability with findings at various periods throughout the election. The data has been categorised by Pre-Nomination, Pre-Election, and Post-Election periods, for more meaningful analysis. Our charts and graphs show percentages to allow comparison between the various outlets.

In the coverage of all news worthy items, the privately owned media seemed aligned with a particular political tendency or another. Our charts and graphs of the government owned and controlled media shows overwhelming political tendency towards the incumbent PPP/C. during the course of our monitoring period, the MMU entered into the fray about the role of the state-owned media. Our analysis of the GTV Channel 11, Voice of Guyana and the Guyana Chronicle reinforces our considered view that the state-owned media should not mean state-controlled media. The obvious complication of these two concepts in Guyana is problematic. In fact, it is the MMU's view that the obligation to provide citizens with the most diverse, objective and balanced coverage regardless of the party power is more compelling for the state-media than for privately owned media especially in election reporting.

Some of the private media were not without their shortcomings. It must be noted that prior to 19 March 2001, the Stabroek News offered diverse, balanced and comprehensive coverage of most of the contesting parties. Similarly, Prime News and Capitol News were mostly honest and sought balance in their stories. On the other hand, News Update displayed strong political tendencies toward the incumbent PPP/C. By the time we reached the Post-Election stage the media seemingly lost ability for analysis, depth, complexity and good taste. It favoured arousal through emotionally charged images. In story selection, emotional and ethnic arousal was favoured over orienting or informing the audience. Most media outlets completely ignored the Media Code of Conduct; this was disappointing and dangerous for our fragile society.

Generally, many news items exhibit limited investigation. It is apparent that most journalists need to rely on a wider range of sources other than party spokespersons, the government information service or their agents. As will be revealed in this discourse, the media seemed unaware of subtle attempts to gain campaign advantages through what can be considered the requisite functions of government. A lack of diversity characterized by both the content of news reporting and the sources accessed. Concerning the latter, this may not be a clear of bias towards one party or another, but instead can be seen as a concerted media strategy by the major stakeholders.

As a prerequisite to informative reporting, the media must avail itself of disciplines that allow for in-dept analysis of issues. The media could have aided in the schooling of the population on the new electoral process, but the media gave scant attention to this aspect of the election. Instead, the media's coverage of the new electoral system was limited to the GECOM's Voter Education Programme. The greater concern was the inadequacy and misrepresentation shown in the coverage of the Chief Justice's ruling on the GGRE 1997, which made the word

‘vitiate’ popular. This lack of requisite skills and diversity, which the media displayed, resulted in an over-reliance on attorneys for the parties involved for an explanation on the ruling. This became problematic when each side had their own ‘spin’.

As a vital mechanism in influencing public opinion, one can expect the media to make adequate use of the extensive power at their disposal to educate the public on issues of vital concern. The virtual exclusive focus on events to the detriment of the issues characterized the election coverage. The concern for events was most evident in the coverage of party speeches, manifesto launches, rallies and walkabouts of the major players. This is not to say that such events were not news worthy, but could have provided the background to analytical and critical discourse on the promises and pledges as presented by the various candidates on their campaign trail. The Letters column of the newspapers particularly the Stabroek News provided the only forum for public discussion due to the paucity in presidential debates.

In this regard, the media was integral to fashioning opinion about the character of the major political contenders, particularly Bharrat Jagdeo and Desmond Hoyte. Discrimination was evident in the coverage of the smaller political parties and their candidates as will become clearer later by a cursory look at our charts and graphs. The media largely failed in their educative and informative role to impart sufficient information to provide alternatives for citizens in the voting process. It is also incumbent on the members of the media sphere to determine the precise nature of the election coverage. As far as the period under consideration was concerned, the incidence of journalists determining and covering stories according to their own agenda were rare.

Of further concern was the extent to which events during this period were dramatised by the media. It is generally expected that the media cover all election related news, especially those of a potentially controversial nature – as pervade an election period – in a manner that minimises sensationalism and ensures the fairness of coverage. However, election coverage seemed to indicate that the media in an attempt to add excitement to an otherwise mundane process latched on to certain dramatic incidents and accorded them a credibility they did not deserve. This practice was most notable in the week before the election and post-election period. Although dramatisation obviously appeals to some sections of the society, the thriving media community in Guyana should keep this practice to the necessary minimum, especially given the socio-political climate and their own commitment to the MCC.

In the week preceding the GGRE, paid political advertisements pervaded the airwaves to the point that the viewer/ hearer/ listener was disgusted with messages, which moved along a spectrum from humorous, to malicious, to downright denigrating. This was indeed problematic. The impact of the advertisements on the undecided voter and/or the effectiveness of attracting a first time voter to any particular party are unknown in this election.

The talk shows were really talkback shows. The environment created the incredible opportunity for journalists to forge new ideas and to be the conscience of the politician. They had the freedom to investigate government actions and the omissions of the political forces at play in the nation. Instead, they squandered this opportunity at the footstool of partisanship, rumour, innuendo, and political hostility. Channel 9 and Channel 65 were mostly disappointing in its

post-election coverage. However, one particular programme “Nation Watch” hosted by Sherwood Lowe (NBTv 25/03/01, 1:00) must be commended for the attempt to address the post-election trauma in an intelligent, diverse and progressive manner. Nevertheless, this is only one example.

NEWSPAPERS ANALYSIS

For the purposes of the final comprehensive report of the MMU’s findings on the electoral coverage of the two daily newspapers, the temporal dimensions – pre-nomination, pre-election and post-election- have been selected. Further, the analysis considered the amount of space allocation and portrayal of subjects in the front-page headline, front-page article, and front-page photograph and inside headline, article and photograph. The total coverage was also analysed.

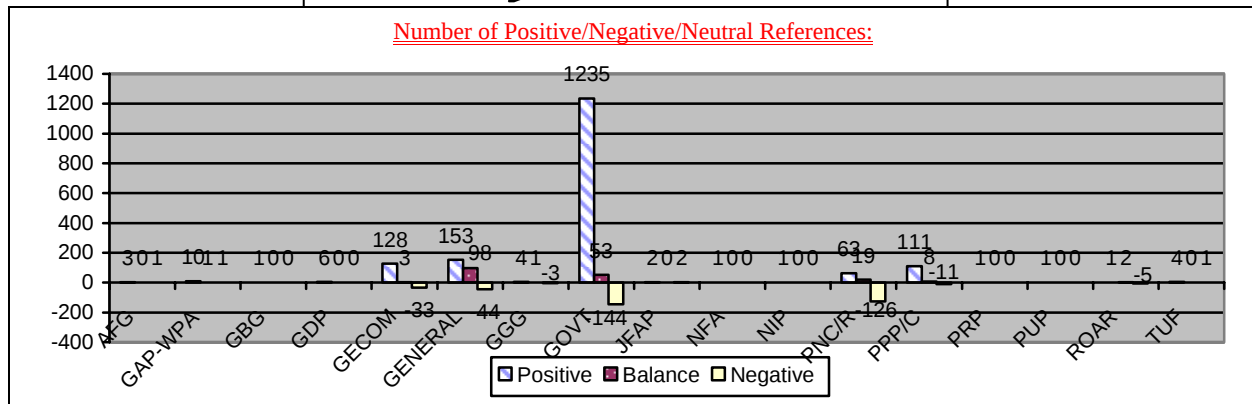
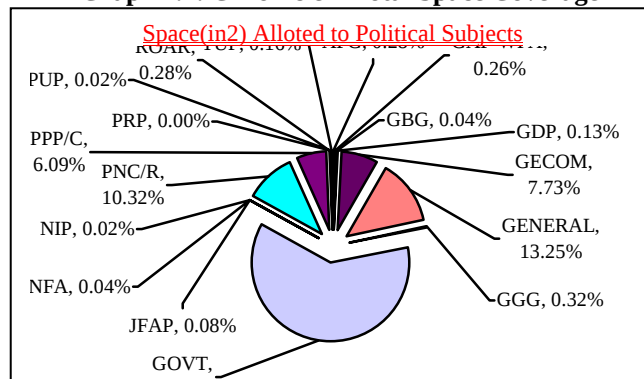
The analysis of items which appear on the front page, be it headlines, articles or photographs, is the reader sees and on many occasions, it is the only page that a reader. Bearing this in mind this page more often than not leaves a lasting impression in the minds of its readers. It must be here stated that headlines, articles and photographs, which appear on the front page, are by the sole discretion of the editor(s). A fair idea of a newspaper’s political tendency can be noted from the trend of items on this page. It is indeed inappropriate for the MMU to posit on the political tendency of any print outlet, but the graphical presentations that follow below illustrate the facts.

THE GUYANA CHRONICLE

PRE-NOMINATION: 11/12/2000 – 14/02/2001

Graph 1.1 reveals that 60.97% of the election related news in the stat-owned Guyana Chronicle highlights government personalities and activities, in an overall space of 32, 425.49 in². The vast majority of the coverage as positive with 1,235 positive references when compared with its negative – 144 and neutral 53 references. Fifteen relevant categories shared the remaining 39% of total coverage, with PNC/R receiving 10.32%, GECOM – 7.73%, and PPP/C – 6.09%. The smaller political parties – JFAP, NFA, NIP, PRP, ROAR, TUF, AFG, GAP-WPA, GBG and GDP – all received negligible coverage of less than 1%.

Graph 1.1: Chronicle – Total Space Coverage

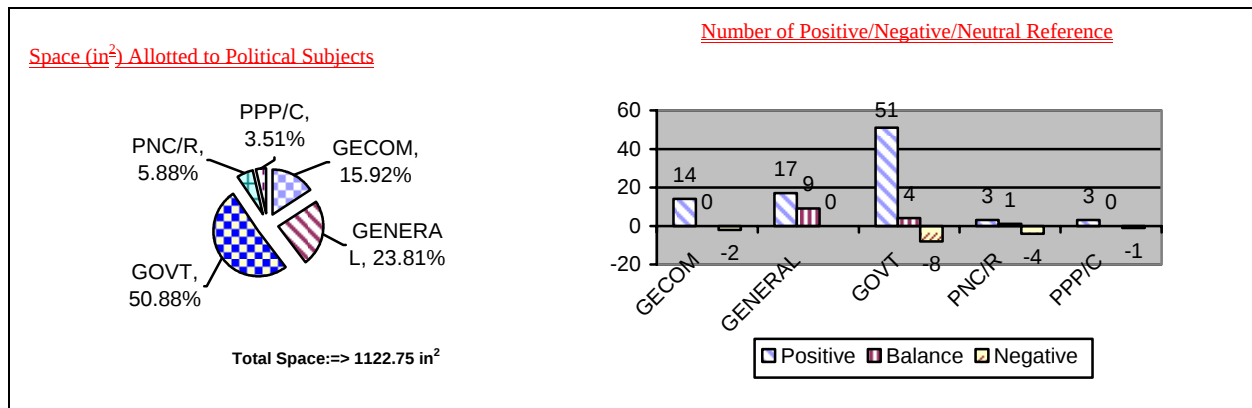


The tone of the remaining categories was generally positive with the exception of the opposition parties PNC/R and ROAR. Of the total 208 references for the PNC/R 126 negatively bias the part, 63 were positive coverage and the balanced references were 19. Over this period ROAR was referred 7 times, more than half of which (4) were negative, 2 – neutral and only a single positive comment. References for this party were primarily by way of letters to the editor.

Front Page Headlines

During the pre-nomination period (**Graph 1.2**), government received 50.88% of coverage of the headlines in the Chronicle. The next relevant category was GECOM with 15.92%. The other categories that received coverage were the PNC/R with 5.88% and the PPP/C with 3.51%.

Graph 1.2: Chronicle – Front Page Headlines Coverage

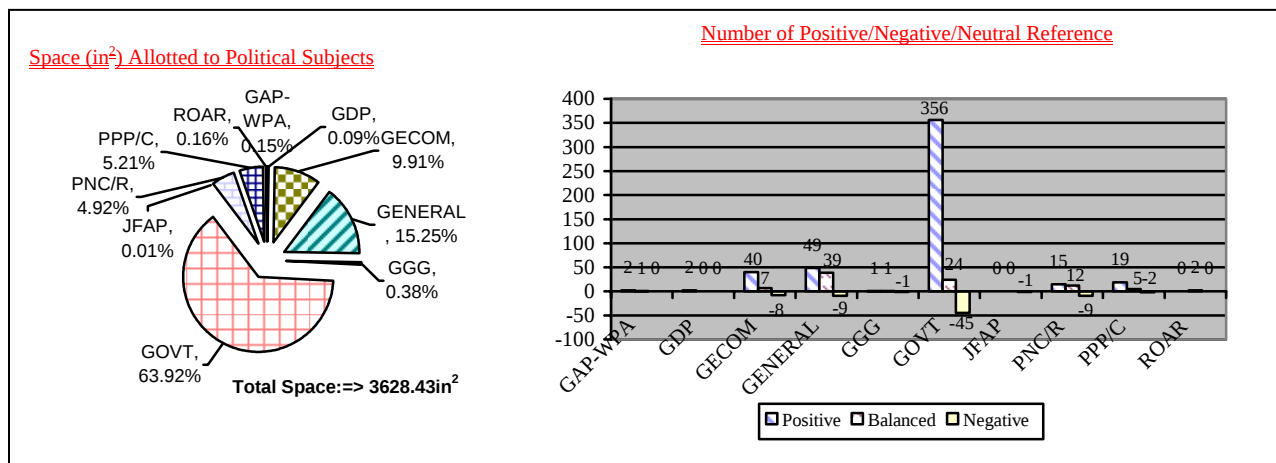


When the tone of the coverage was looked at, the coverage of government activities and officials were predominately positive (51 positive, 8 negative and 4 neutral). This was also true for two other relevant categories, GECOM, PPP/C. The PNC/R however received mixed coverage; three items being positive while four were negative.

Inside Headlines

It should be noted that although more categories were covered in this segment (See Graph 1.3) the Government still received the lion's share of the coverage getting 63.92%, most of which were positive. GECOM, PPP/C, PNC/R, GGG, ROAR, GAP-WPA, GDP and JFAP followed the government in that order. The latter five categories received less than one percentage combined of the total coverage. GECOM and PPP/C's tone were mostly positive while the PNC/R received mixed coverage.

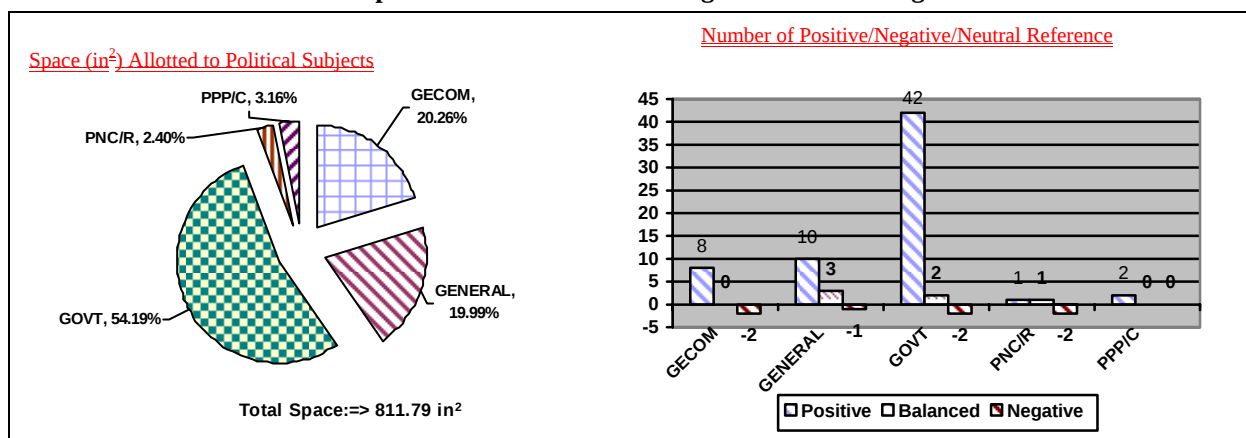
Graph 1.3: Chronicle – Front Page Headlines Coverage



Front Page Articles

In the front-page articles **Graph 1.4**, the Government's coverage was a little more than half at 54.19% with the vast majority of that coverage being positive (42 positive, 2 negative and 2 neutral). The next categories to receive the highest coverage were GECOM with 20.26%. The tone of the coverage was mostly positive. The PPP/C was next with 3.16% of the coverage while the PNC/R got the least of the coverage of articles appearing on the front page, attaining 2.40%. The PPP/C coverage was all positive while the PNC/R received mixed coverage with 2 being negative and 1 positive.

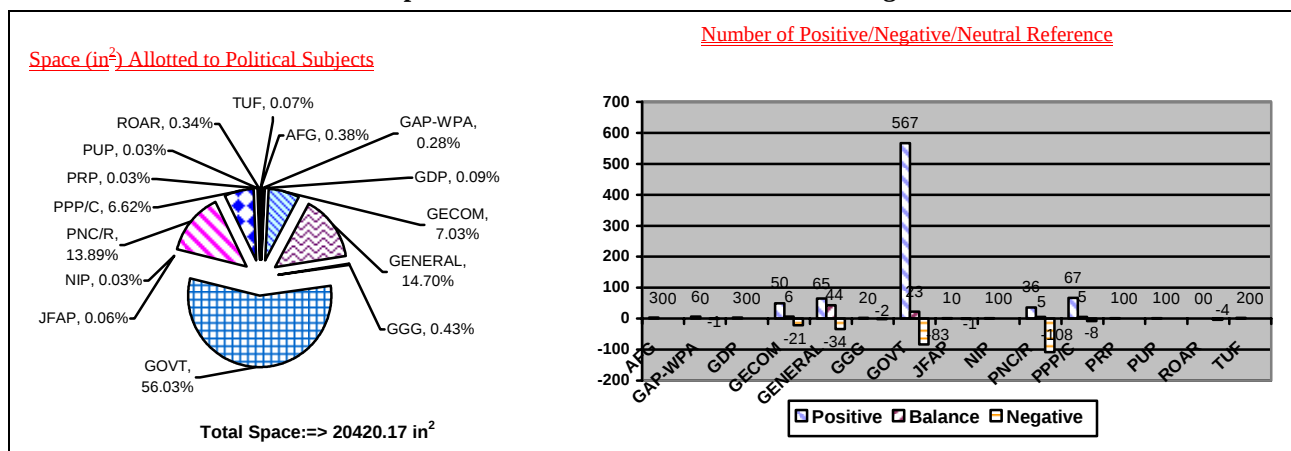
Graph 1.4: Chronicle – Front Page Articles Coverage



Inside Articles

Unlike with the inside headlines, **Graph 1.5** reveals that more categories were given space in the articles that were inside the newspapers. The government again got more than half – 56.03% of 20,240.17 in² devoted to inside articles having electoral content, most of which was positive. Of the 673 references for the Government, the majority 567 references were positive as against 83 being negative and 23 neutral.

Graph 1.5: Chronicle – Inside Articles Coverage

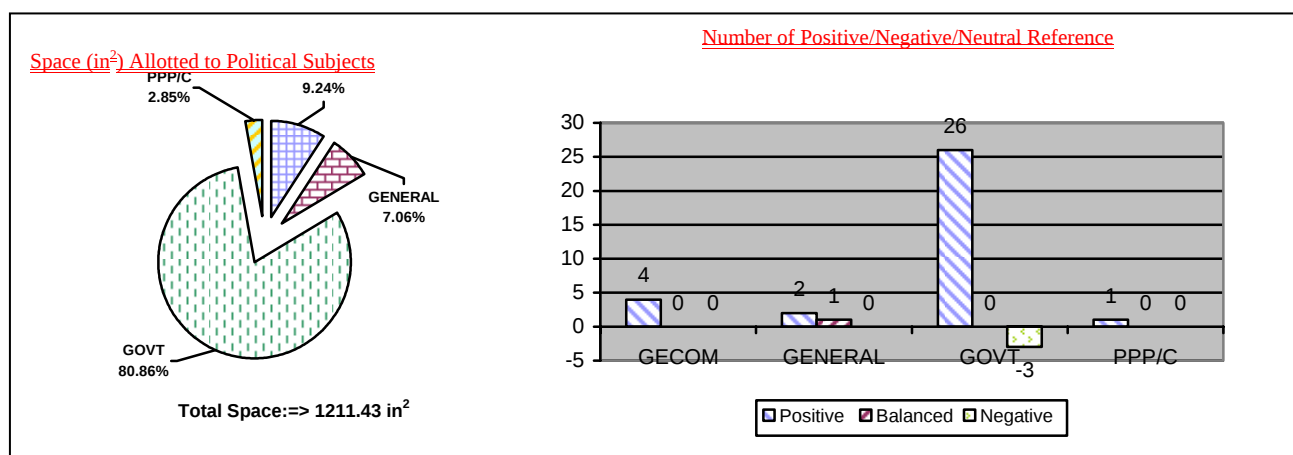


The categories that gained the next highest space were the PNC/R with 13.89%, GECOM 7.03% and the PPP/C 6.62%. The other categories JFAP, NIP, PRP, PUP, ROAR, TUF, AFG, GAP-WPA and GDP all received negligible coverage of less than 1% each. Chronicle's coverage of inside articles of the PNC/R was mostly negative with it being allotted 108 negative references as against 36 positive ones. On the other hand, coverage of the PPP/C was generally positive attaining 67 positive references as against only 8 negative ones. GECOM's coverage was mostly positive.

Front Page Photograph

The government dominated the Chronicle's front-page photographs as shown by **Graph 1.6**. During this period they received 80.86% of the coverage, most of which was positive. GECOM came a distant second with 9.24% followed by the PPP/C. The tone of the aforementioned categories was positive.

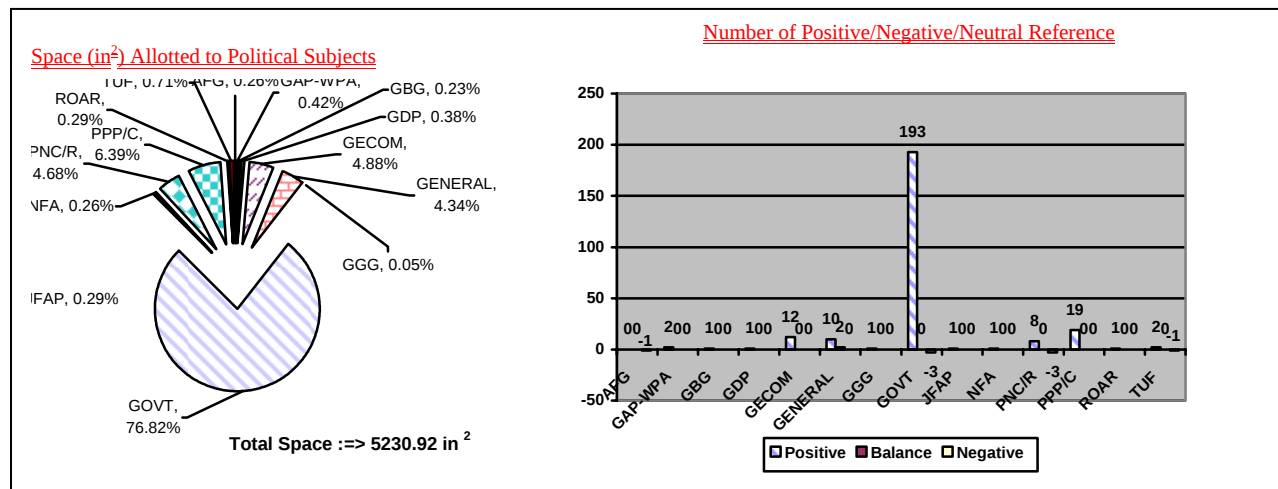
Graph 1.6: Chronicle – Front Page Photos Coverage



Inside Photographs

Of the 5,230.92 in² that were allocated to inside photographs in the Chronicle (**See Graph 1.7**), the Government received the majority – 76.82% with all but three of its 193 references being positive. Following the government in terms of space were PPP/C, PNC/R, and GECOM all of which received single digit percentages. The smaller parties namely, JFAP, NFA, TUF, AFG, GAP-WPA, GBG, GDP and the GGG again received less than 1% each. Concerning tone of the photographs carried in the inside pages of the Chronicle, all but four of the thirteen categories received positive coverage. Other than the government, the categories receiving negative coverage were the PNC/R, which received 3 negative references, and the AFG whose only reference was negative.

Graph 1.7: Chronicle – Inside Photos Coverage



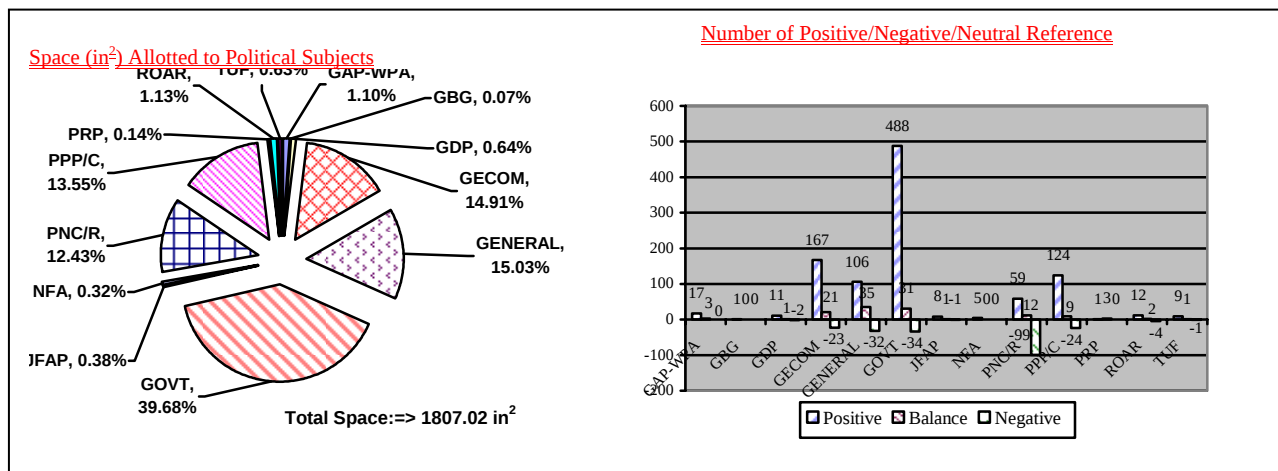
Violations of either the Media Code of Conduct or the ethics of professional journalism that particularly caught our attention during this period include the following:

- This paper covered the launching of the main opposition PNC/R campaign rally on January 14th, which was a major news event on page 10 of January 16th edition of the newspaper. However, instead of covering all that transpired objectively, the paper chose to zero in on a statement by PNC/R leader, Desmond Hoyte, who was critical of St. Lucia's Prime Minister, Dr. Kenny Anthony (16/01/01, p.10),
- In addition, in this edition of the paper Chronicle published misleading front page headlines of Justice Claudette Singh's ruling. This will however be discussed in depth when we make a comparison at the end of this section with the Stabroek News (16/01/01, p.1)
- Chronicle published a photograph of GECOM's MMU handing over its fist report to Chairman Joe Singh. The picture and caption left the mistaken impression that T. Earle was part of the MMU, which was not the case (23/01/01, p.9)
- On the evening of 27th January 2001, the PNC officially launched its REFORM component at the Le Meridien Pegasus. This event was published in the Stabroek News Monday 29 edition, in the case of the state-run Chronicle this event appeared on Tuesday 30 January pages 10 and 11. On the other hand, the PPP/C's official launching on the Sunday 4th February received front-page coverage and extensive inside articles in the next day's newspapers. (30/01/01, pp.10, 11; 05/02/01, p. 1.2)
- Article on the front page entitled "Minister's Name Not on Voters' List" also violated the Media Code of Conduct. While criticizing GECOM for an alleged mistake and asking in print for an explanation the article offered no opportunity for a response from GECOM (04/02/01, p.1). This was an unbalanced story.

PRE-ELECTION: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

During the Pre-election period, the space given to government reduced from 60.9% in the previous period to 39.68%. We posit a number of reasons for this alteration. First of all the Pre-Nomination period considers performance over a ten week span while this period covers approximately four weeks. The other notable reason is that space distributed to other categories increased mainly because polling day was fast approaching. **Graph 1.8** indicates that the PNC received 12.43% of the total coverage, a 2% increase from the previous period.

Graph 1.8: Chronicle – Total Coverage

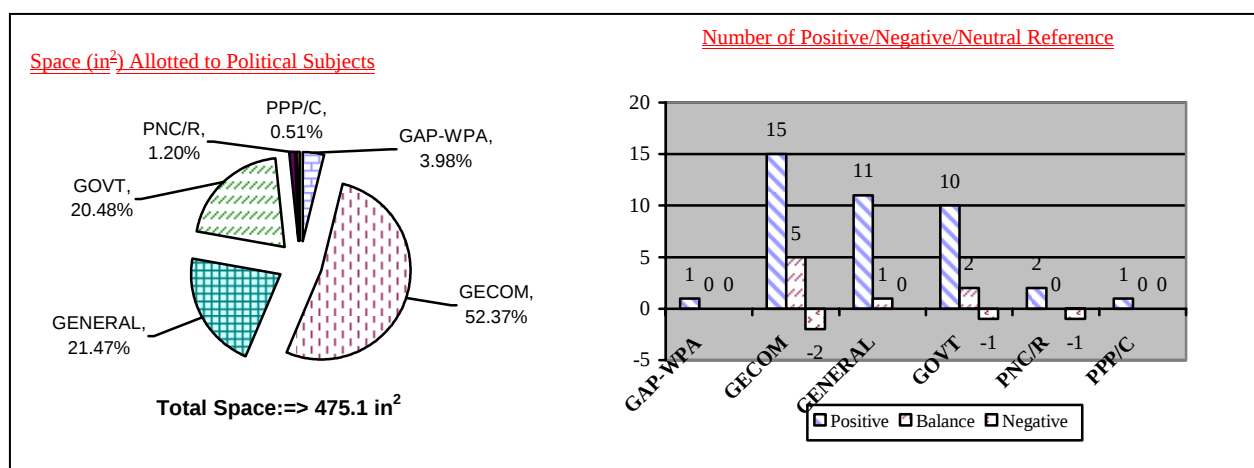


This is telling when compared to the increase the PPP/C shows from 6.99% to 13.55%, GECOM from 7.73% to 14.9%. Although slightly more space was allocated to the smaller parties, they still received negligible coverage. In spite reduction in government's space allocation in terms of percentage, its portrayal was continually positive. Of the 553 references that were made of the government, 488 were positive, 34 negative and 31 balanced or neutral. This observation also holds true for PPP/C and GECOM. The PPP/C received 124 positive references out of 157, and received only 24 negative references. GECOM got 167 positive references, 23 negative ones and 21 neutrals. On the other hand, the PNC/R continued to receive more negative than positive references by the state owned paper. Out of 169 total references, the PNC/R received 98 negative ones, 59 positive and 12 neutral. This could be favourable when compared with the 126 negatives, 63 positives and 19 neutrals out of 208 they received during the pre-nomination period. The smaller parties generally received positive coverage. It is important to note however, that of the smaller parties ROAR continued to receive more negative coverage than the other political opponents did.

Front Page Headlines

The front page headlines (See **Graph 1.9**) during this period saw GECOM receiving over half (52.37%) of the total space and in the process more than tripling its 15.82% received in this segment during the previous period. The government, which received half of the space for front page during the last period, received only 20.48% of space; nevertheless, its coverage remained overwhelmingly positive.

Graph 1.9: Chronicle – Front Page Headlines Coverage

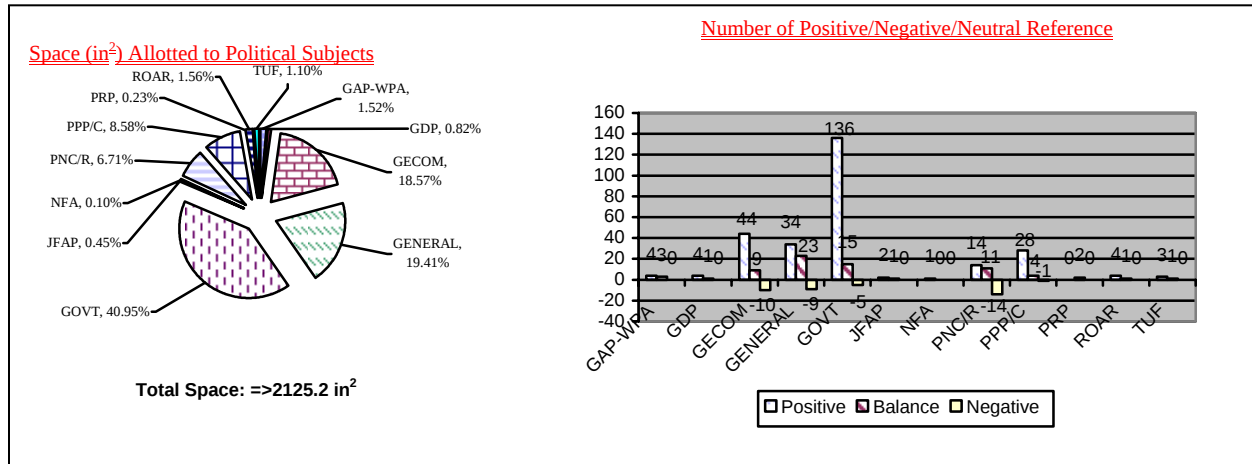


GECOM's large amount of coverage in the headlines was because of its pivotal role in the administration of the GGRE. The tone of GECOM's coverage remained positive when compared with previous period. GAP-WPA came in a distant third with 3.9% followed by the PNC/R with 1.2%. The ruling PPP/C received the least amount of space in the front-page headline for the period with 0.5%. Generally, the front-page headlines were positive.

Inside Headlines

Unlike the front page headlines, which indicated that GECOM received the largest coverage, the inside headline Graph 1.10 showed the general trend of government receiving the highest amount of coverage, 40.95% of 2125.2 in². However, the percentage was much smaller than that of the same category during the pre-nomination period when the government received 63.98% of the total space. What remained the same however was that the tone for the government's coverage continued to be overwhelmingly positive. Out of 156 articles, 136 were positive, 15 neutral and only 5 negative. It would be remembered that most of the parties utilised the free space that was offered by this paper in accordance with the Media Code of Conduct, which specified that the newspapers should offer free space to the political parties.

Graph 1.10: Chronicle – Inside Headlines Coverage

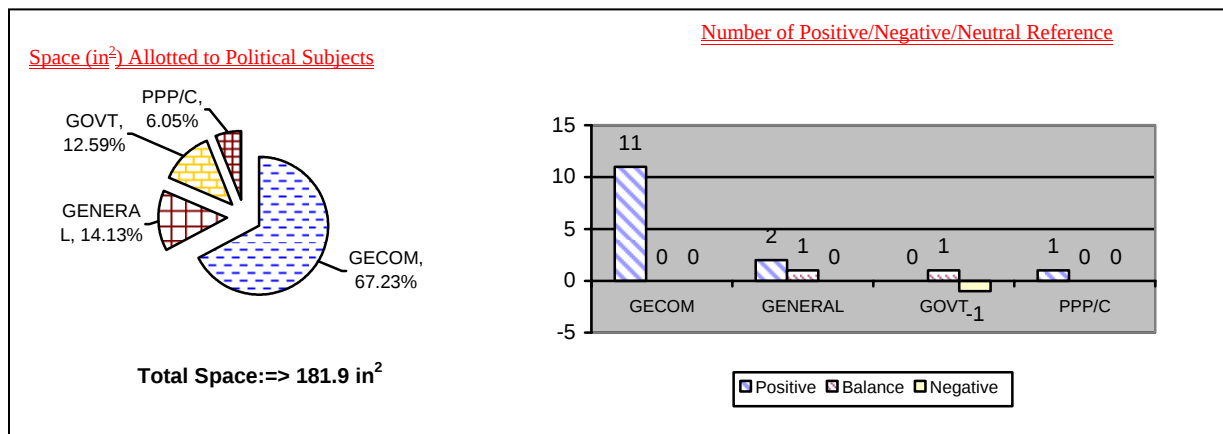


The, GECOM, PPP/C, PNC/R followed by the Government in that order attaining 18.57%, 8.58% and 6.71% respectively. The smaller parties again received negligible coverage. The Chronicle continued to cover GECOM and the PPP/C in a positive light while the PNC/R again receive mixed coverage, gaining 14 positive, 14 negative and 11 neutral references (See Graph 1.10)

Front Page Articles

GECOM as shown in Graph 1.11 received 67.23% of 122.22 in² out of 197.9 in². Following GECOM were the Government, PPP/C, in that order attaining 12.59% and 6.05% respectively. All but one of the references that appeared in the front-page articles received positive coverage and this was to the Government.

Graph 1.11: Chronicle – Front Page Articles Coverage

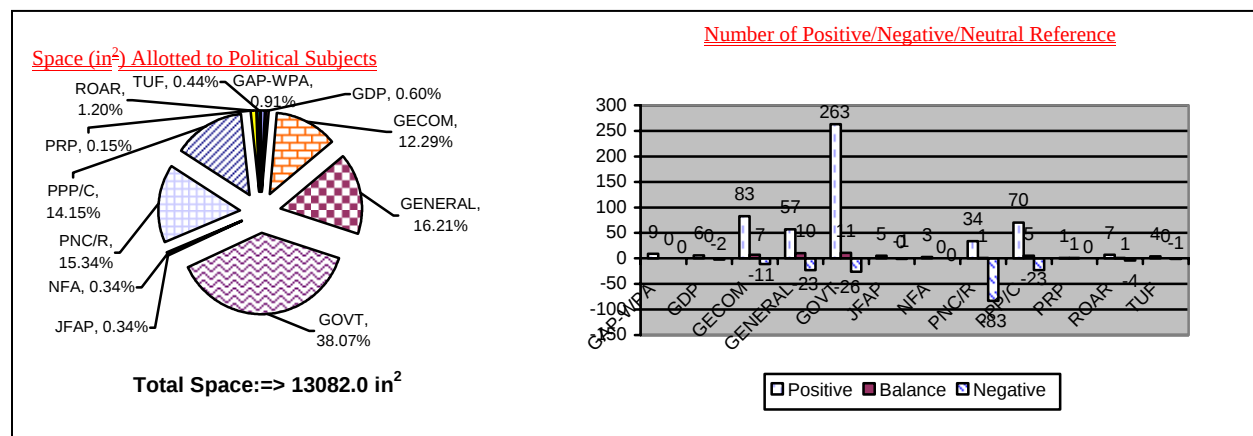


Inside Articles

Because the Chronicle during the period gave free space to all the contesting political parties, there was more than the usual number of categories when compared to the previous period. This meant that no one category took the lion's share of the available space as shown by **Graph 1.12**. Government with 38.07% 4,980.3 in² of a possible 13, 082.01 in² received the highest followed by PNC/R, PPP/C and GECOM in that order receiving 15.34%, 14.15% and 12.29% respectively. This segment again showed that the small political parties hardly receive any substantial coverage with all but one, (ROAR), of them receiving less than 1% of the total space.

It is important to note here that when compared with the previous period, the PPP/C coverage for this period rose dramatically from a mere 1.9% to 14.15%. One reason for this increase was that the Chronicle extensively covered the various political rallies of the incumbent PPP/C that were held in various parts of the country. In addition, the letters, column of the paper saw an increase in the number of letters that praised the incumbent for various reasons. Such letters highlighted the restoration of democracy since 1992, the building and rehabilitation of hospitals, schools and roads. Others expressed appreciation for water and electricity.

Graph 1.12: Chronicle – Inside Articles Coverage

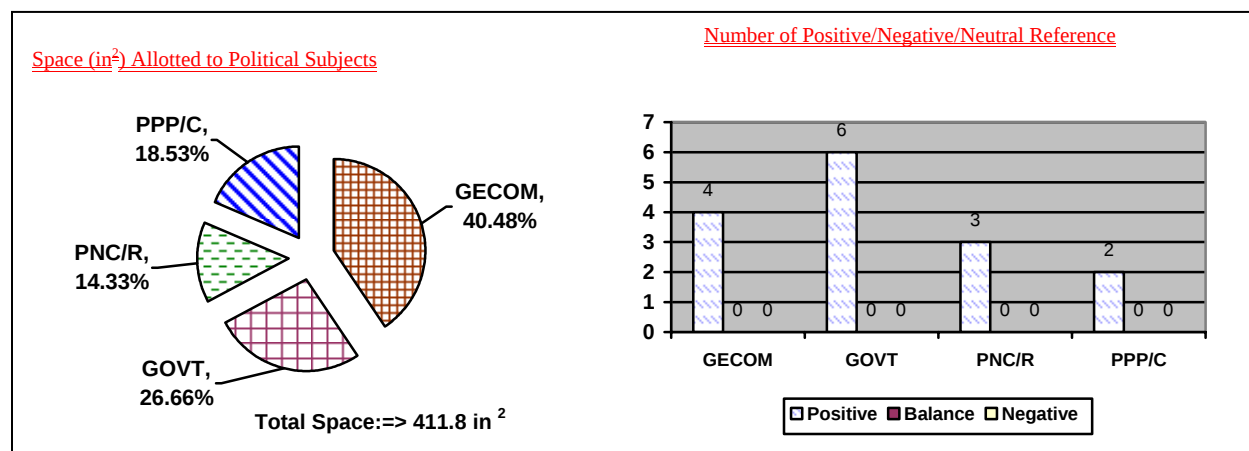


When one looks at the tone of articles found within the Chronicle for this period, it was discovered that the government received far more positive than negative coverage (263-26) while the opposite was true for the main opposition PNC/R, which received more negative than positive references (83 – 34). This general coverage kept the trend of government stories being mostly positive and stories of the PNC/R being mostly negative. It is interesting to note that all the smaller parties received positive coverage with the exception of ROAR, which received more negative than positive coverage (7- 4).

Front Page Photographs

Like the front-page headlines and articles, GECOM again received the most space for one category, 40.48% or 166.6 in² out of 411.8 in². However, unlike the previous two front-page categories, the margin of difference was smaller. Following GECOM's 40.48% was Government with 26.6%, PPP/C 18.53% and PNC/R 14.33%. The tone for all the photographs appearing in the front page was very positive. (See graph 1.13)

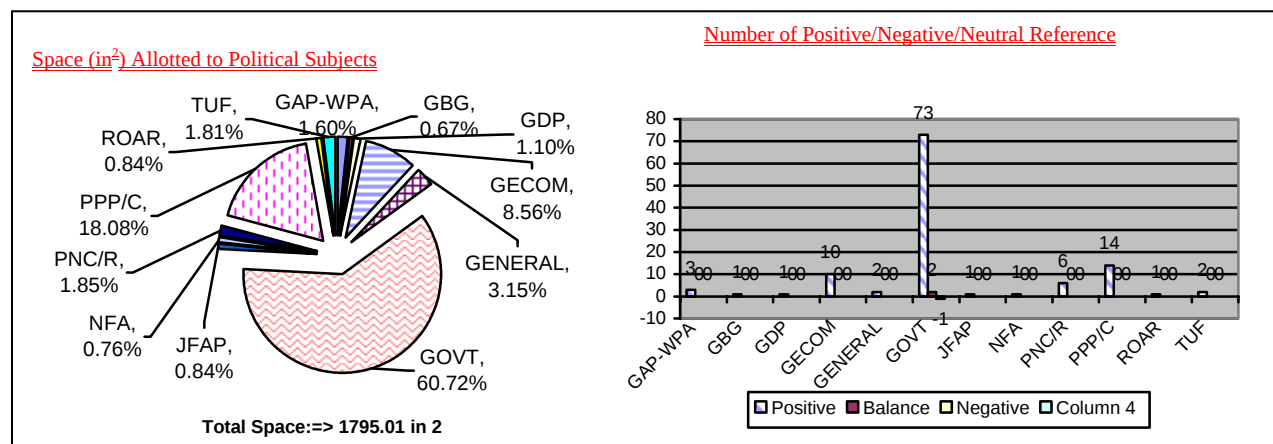
Graph 1.13: Chronicle –Front Page Photos Coverage



Inside Photographs

All of the political parties and GECOM received coverage in the photographs that were inside of the newspapers. The Government again received the bulk of the coverage with 60.72%, 6% less than that, which was received in the previous period for photos. Following the Government was the ruling PPP/C and GECOM. All the other parties, including that of the main opposition party received between 0.76 – 1.85 percentage of the coverage. Most of the photographs of the candidates of the political parties were taken from activities relating to Nomination day 15th February 2001. Generally, candidates appeared in a positive mode in the photographs with the Government category receiving the only negative reference (See Graph 1.14)

Graph 1.14: Chronicle – Inside Photos Coverage



In addition to the space and tone of the various categories, a few instances when the Chronicle may have been less than completely balanced, accurate, complete or fair caught our attention.

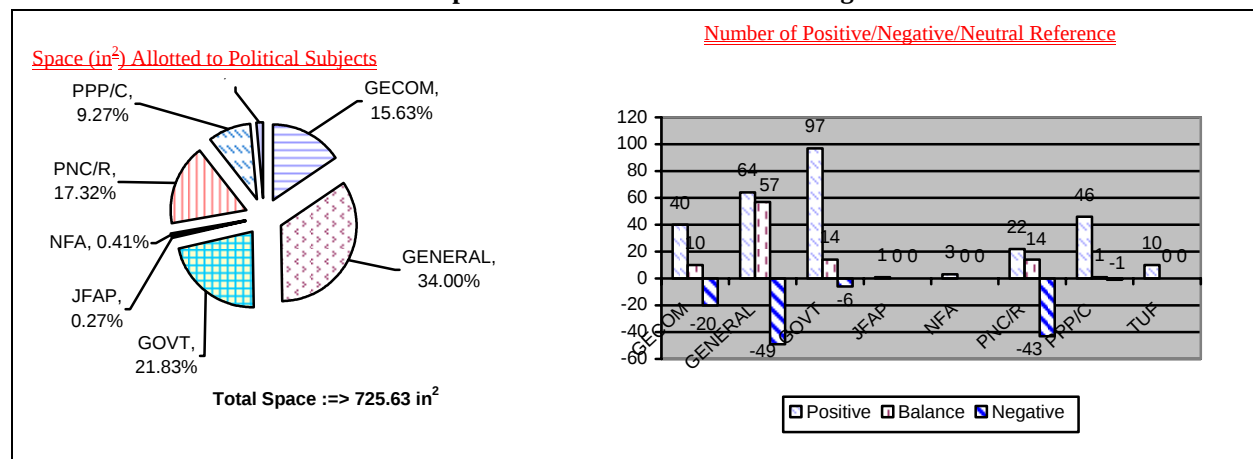
- The Chronicle printed photograph of various political party leaders submitting their list on Nomination Day. All photographs except three named the political parties corresponding to the photograph. The three exceptions were the NDF, GNC, and Horizon and Star, which showed individual but did not identify their party's affiliation (16/02/01, p.14)
- The Chronicle gave PPP/C additional coverage for stories relating to the events of Nomination Day – 15th February 2001. While all of the 13 parties were fairly covered in articles the day following Nomination Day, the PPP/C list of names which is called 'winning' was given in-depth analysis. No other party received such coverage in the newspaper that day. (17/02/01, p.12)
- A photograph captioned "Pupils of the Queenstown Primary School listen to an address by Education Minister, Dr. Dale Bisnauth" since the Minister is not shown in the photograph and was not even in an inset this news item cannot be deemed factual. A supporting article would have lent credibility to the photograph. (20/02/01, p.9)
- During this period, it was a common occurrence for the Chronicle to publish articles, which report on the 'good' work that Government is doing and at the same time criticizing previous administrations and the Government's political opponents. An example of such an article appeared on page 9 of the 25 February 2001 edition under the headline 'Food Security'. Including articles of this nature gives the government an unfair advantage over the other parties. (25/02/01 p.9)
- An article under the title 'Mattress squatters outside President's residence were organised – Housing Minister', in which the Minister opined that it was the PNC/R who organised them, offers no factual evidence to support the Minister's claim. The article, which continues on another page, also lacked balance since no one from the PNCR was given the opportunity to respond to this allegation. (10/03/01 pp.10, 12)
- In a letter by Timothy Singh titled 'Shameful Support' (Chronicle 13th March, 2001), the writer emphatically states that GECOM's MMU lends support to a television station accusing the PPP/C of utilizing an expletive in its campaign song. It should be noted that the MMU never pronounced on this issue. This letter is very mischievous to say such and what is even more surprising is that this inaccuracy escaped the attention of the editor who was in possession of all the MMU's reports (13/03/01, p.6)

POST-ELECTION: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

This period is the shortest of the three periods that we have analysed since it covered just under two weeks or 12 days. The highlight of this 12-day period was the uncertainty of the results of the elections which took four days to be announced and the non-swearing in of the President. The latter activity occurred until March 31st, after the main opposition party – PNC/R's – the court cleared challenge. These aforementioned uncertainties resulted in rising tensions in the capital city and in many villages on the lower East Coast of Demerara.

The total space as indicated by **Graph 1.15** that was allotted to the various categories during the post elections period indicated that no individual category received the lion's share.

Graph 1.15: Chronicle – Total Coverage



The Government finished second with 21.83% followed by GECOM, PNC/R and PPP/C in that order. Of the smaller parties, only TUF, JFAP and NFA received coverage, although minimal. The tone of the coverage followed the previous trends, Government and PPP/C mostly positive and the PNC/R mostly negative with the exception of GECOM. The positive – negative ratio of the latter was much closer than the previous periods, 40 – 20 compared with 128 – 33 during the pre-nomination period and 163-23 in the period Nomination – Election. The General category on the other hand received mixed coverage for the first time, (64 positive, 49 negative and 57 neutral). Most of the articles in this category dealt with the disturbances and uncertainties during the period and the court case that challenged the results of the elections. Some of these examples were:

- Haslyn Parris attack – GECOM's Chairman, President and others deplore assault (24/03/01, p.1)
- Unrest disrupts city calm – Amy on containment patrols, minibus attacked, periods robbed in city unrest (27/03/01, p.1)

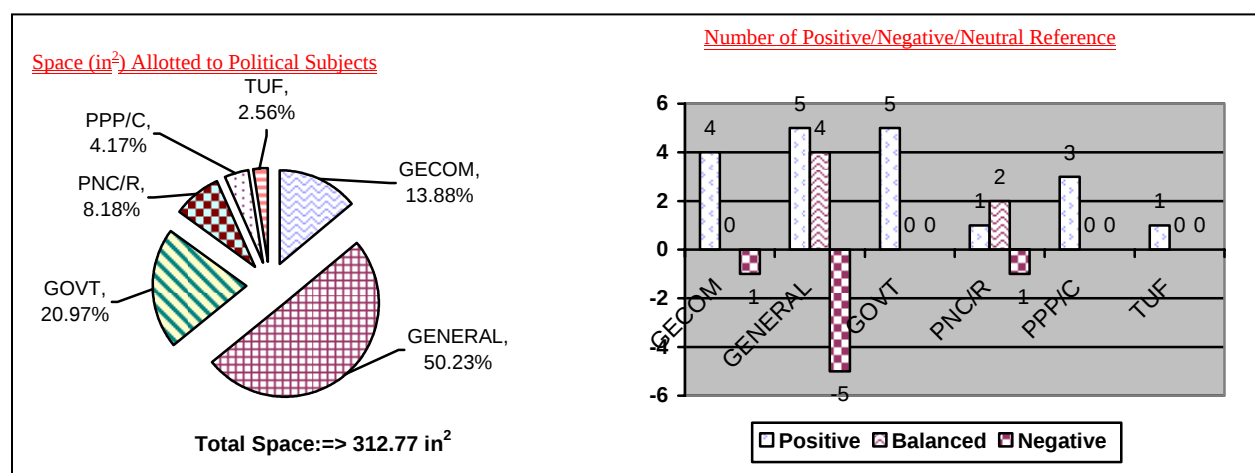
- Protestor stoned cops as unrest continued (28/03/01, pp.1,12,13)
- Sabotage at Belladrum bridge (29/03/01, pp. 1, 2)
- PNC/R tries to block swearing-in of President Jagdeo (24/03/01, p.1. 10)
- PNC/R legal challenge to President's swearing-in to continue today (28/03/01, pp. 1, 3)
- Hearing of writ to block swearing in of President ends "Chief Justice reserves decision" (29/03/01 pp.1, 2)

Front Page Headlines

In this period, the General category took over from the Government in terms of receiving the most coverage in the different segments. This was explained, in the brief introduction to this period that most election related items focused either on the many disturbances in and around the city, and the court case brought by the PNC/R challenging the results of the election.

The General category in front-page headlines as indicated by **Graph 1.16** received half of the 312.77in². The tone on the coverage was mixed with both the positive and negative receiving identical number of references with 5 each while getting 4 neutral references. The remaining 50% of the total space for front-page headlines was shared between seven categories. The Government were GECOM, PNC/R PPP/C and TUF receiving 13.88%, 8.18%, 4.17%, and 2.56% respectively. The tone of the coverage for all of the categories was generally positive with the exception of the General category, which was because of reports on the post-election disturbances.

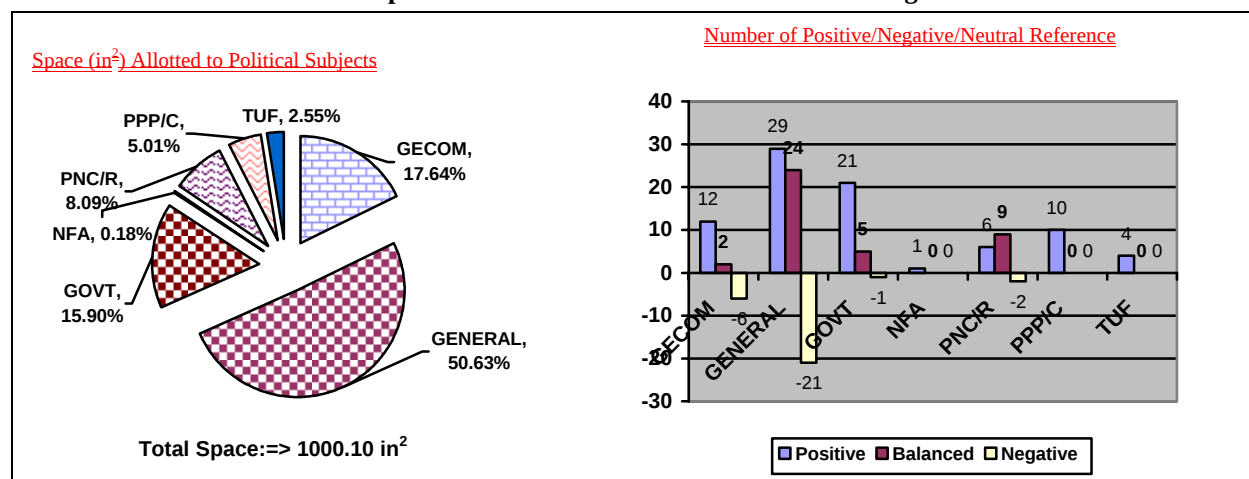
Graph 1.16: Chronicle – Front Page Headlines Coverage



Inside Headlines

According to **Graph 1.17**, the General category, for the second time in this period, received the lion's share of the space with 50.63% of the 1,000.10 in². GECOM received a distant second with 17.64% while Government with 15.90% received the third highest space. The other three of the four categories that followed GECOM all received single digit percentages while the fourth with the NFA received less than 1% of the space. With the exception of the General category, which received, mixed coverage in terms of tone (29 positive, 21 negative and 24 neutral, and the other six categories received generally positive coverage.

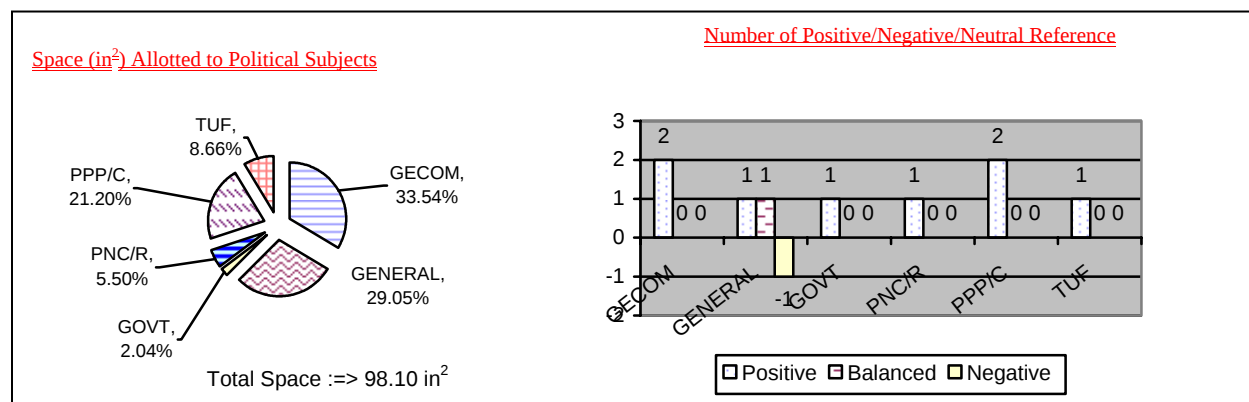
Graph 1.17: Chronicle – Inside Headlines Coverage



Front Page Articles

The headlines that appeared on the front pages of the Chronicle during this period showed that no one category received the lion's share of the 98.10 in². For the first, time GECOM led the way gaining 33.54% of the total space or 32 in². Following GECOM were the ruling PPP/C with 21.20%, the main opposition PNC/R with 5.50% and the TUF with 8.66%. (See **Graph 1.8**)

Graph: 1.18: Chronicle – Front Page Articles Coverage



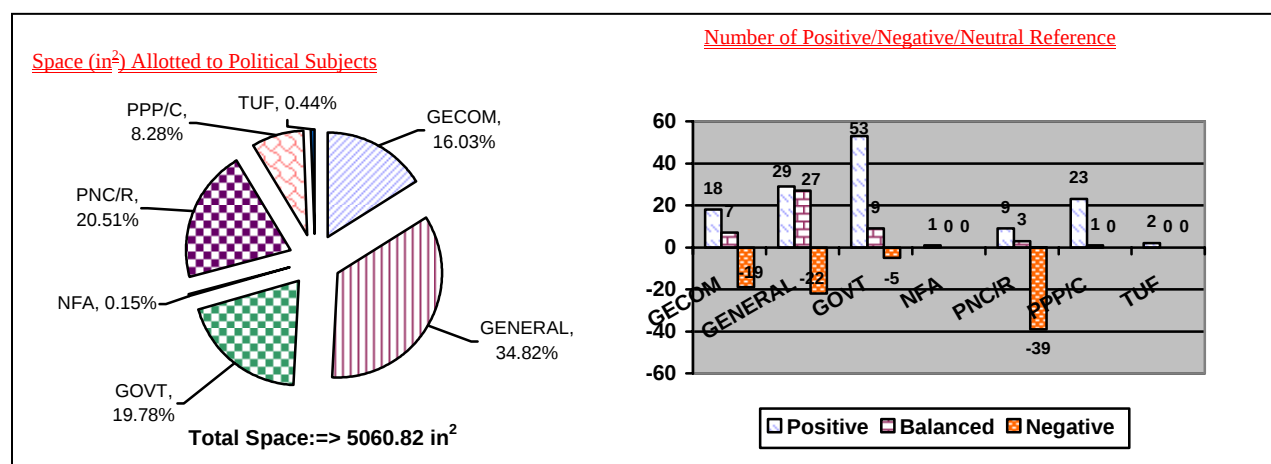
The Government got the least amount of space in the front page articles attaining an uncharacteristic 2.04% when compared with the Pre-Nomination period 54.19% (See **Graph 1.4**) and the Pre-Election (See **Graph 1.11**) period for the same segment. One possible explanation for the vast reduction in Government's coverage in the front page article was the virtually uncertainty in the leadership of the country because of the continuing court case involving the parties contesting the elections at that time. However, it is notably that the PPP/C attained its highest coverage ever. Generally, the front page articles had a positive tone while only the General category receiving negative coverage.

Inside Articles

The inside articles highlighted by **Graph 1.19** returned to the general trend of the paper's coverage of the Post-Election with no one category receiving more than half of the total space allocated for a particular subject. The category to receive the most of the 5,060.82 in² was the General category with 34.82%, followed by the PNC who received the second highest coverage with 20.51%. The Government followed the PNC/R with an uncharacteristic third place showing with 19.78%. GECOM, PPP/C, TUF, JFAP and NFA received the least coverage in that order. The latter three categories received less than 1% each.

Unlike the uncharacteristic showing of the both the Government and the PNC/R in the space allocated to them, its tone was comparable to the general trends that showed the latter generally positive and the former generally negative coverage. In this segment, of the 67 references the Government received, 53 were positive, 5 negative and only 9 were neutral. On the other hand, the PNC/R received 39 negative references, 9 positive and 3 neutral from 51 total references.

Graph 1.19: Chronicle – Inside Articles Coverag

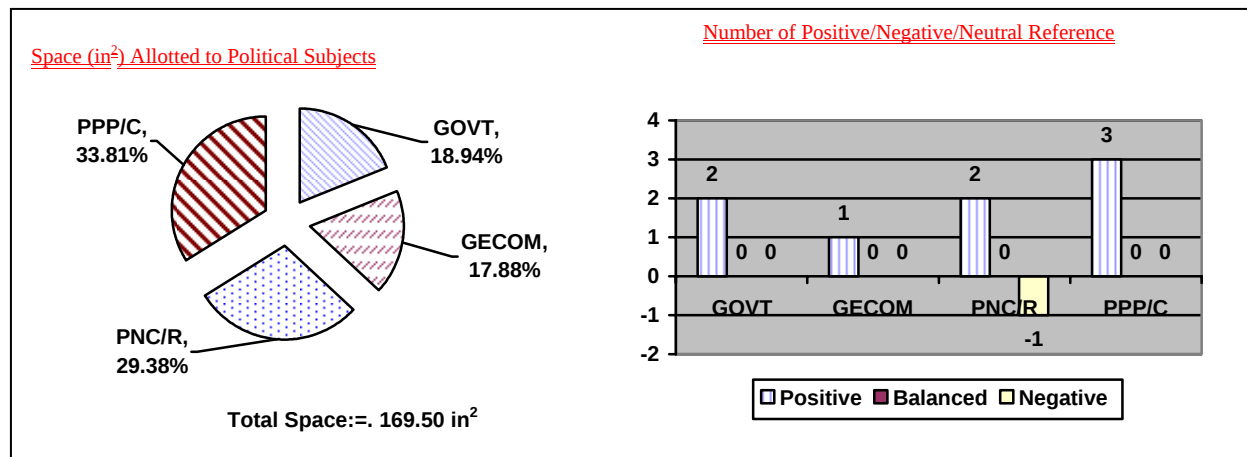


GECOM, which usually received positive coverage from the Chronicle, for the first time, received mixed coverage with 18 positive references, 13 negative, and 7 neutral references. This increase in negative references for the Commission was because of much criticism levelled against it over the conduct of the March 19 elections. The General category received mixed coverage while the PPP/C continued its run of mostly positive references.

Front Page Photographs

Like the front page headlines and front page articles in the period no single category received the bulk of the coverage of the photographs that appeared on the front page (**See Graph 1.20**). Of the four categories that received coverage, PPP/C received the most with 33.81%, followed by PNC/R 29.38%, Government 18.94% and GECOM 17.88%. All relevant categories received positive coverage with the exception of the PNC/R, which received the only negative references.

Graph 1.20: Chronicle – Front Page Photos Coverage

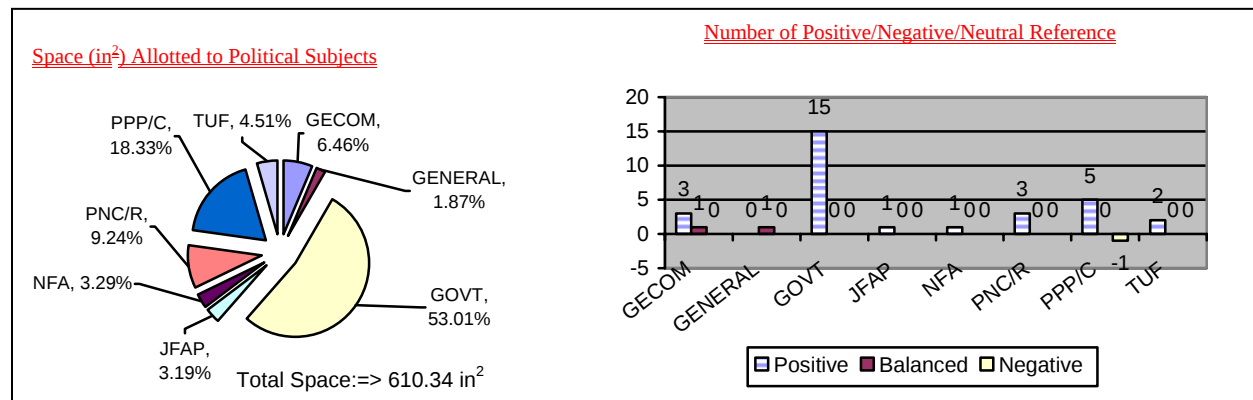


The percentage in this period for in the government category reflects photos of Government agents – the Guyana Defence Force and the Guyana Police Force who were shown patrolling the streets in an attempt to maintain public order during protests.

Inside Photos

The Government for the first time in the post-elections period received more than half of the space gaining 53.01% or 323.5 in² of the 610.34 in² allocated inside photos. The remaining 47% was shared among seven categories. The PPP/C received the most with 18.33% followed by the PNC/R with 9.24%, GECOM 6.46%, TUF 4.51%, NFA 3.29% and JFAP 3.19%. Every category with the exception of the PPP/C received positive coverage (See Graph 1.21)

Graph 1.21: Chronicle – Inside Photos Coverage



During this period, there were a few stories that caught our attention since they violated both the Media Code of Conduct and the rules of professional journalism.

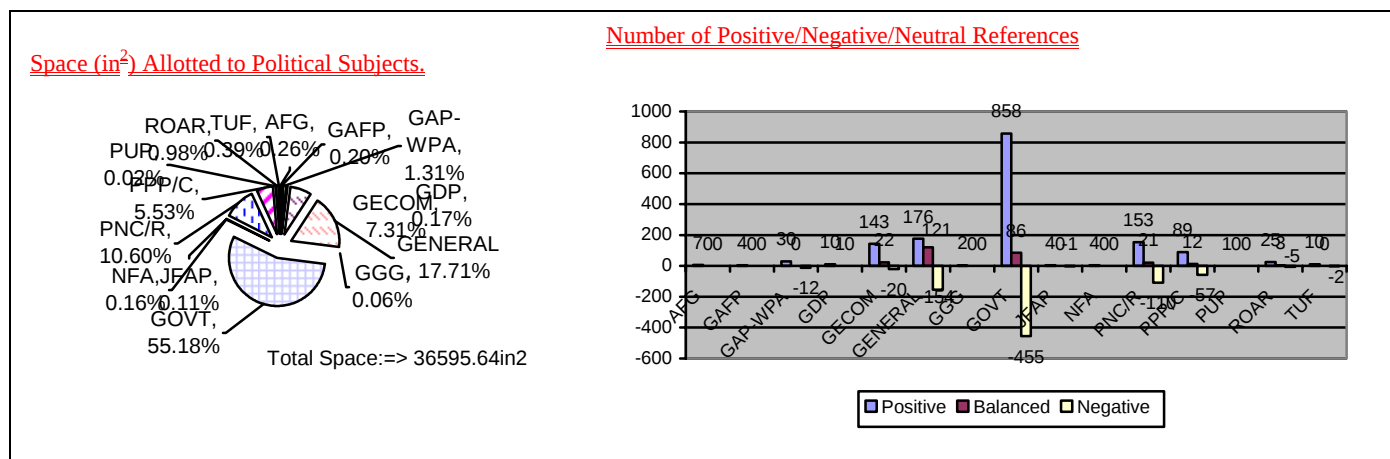
- On the front page of the Tuesday Chronicle, there was the juxtaposition of two headlines. The first headline said, “PNC/R challenges GECOM results” while just below it was an article headlined “PPP/C pleased with preliminary results”. Using this technique portrayed the PNC/R as intransigent, while the PPP/C is seen as compliant. While both headlines are newsworthy, the placement affords ready comparison. (22/03/01, p.22)
- In addition, on the Front Page headline read ‘EU Observers say polls met international benchmarks’. This headline was misleading and a misrepresentation of what the EU Observers said. According to the EU Observers, the polls **‘broadly’** met which was stated in the text of the article. The omission of this word, gives the headline a different meaning. (22/03/01, pp. 1, 9)
- In addition, there was a misleading photograph, which followed the headline “Unrest disrupts city calm – Army on containment patrols”. The photograph that followed that headline was of police officers and not of GDF soldiers as the headline claimed. (27/03/01, p.1)
- Photograph under the caption “Who’s in charge?” queries if the person in charge of the group of protestors is PNC/R leader Desmond Hoyte or controversial talk show host Mark Benschop. This is a mere conjecture that the group of protestors represent the PNC/R. (28/03/01, p.9)

STABROEK NEWS

PRE-NOMINATION: 11/12/2000 – 14/02/2001

The Government received the most space of the 15 categories that appeared in the Stabroek News during the pre nomination period, which began for us on the 11th December 2001, attained 55.18% or 20, 127.25 in² of 36,595.64 in² allocated to political subjects. Getting a distant second was the PNC/R with 10.6% of the total space. These two categories Government and the PNC/R received double-digit figures, while GECOM, PPP/C and GAP-WPA received single digit percentages. All the other small parties received less than 1 percent each of the total. **Graph 2.1**

Graph 2.1: Stabroek News – Total Coverage

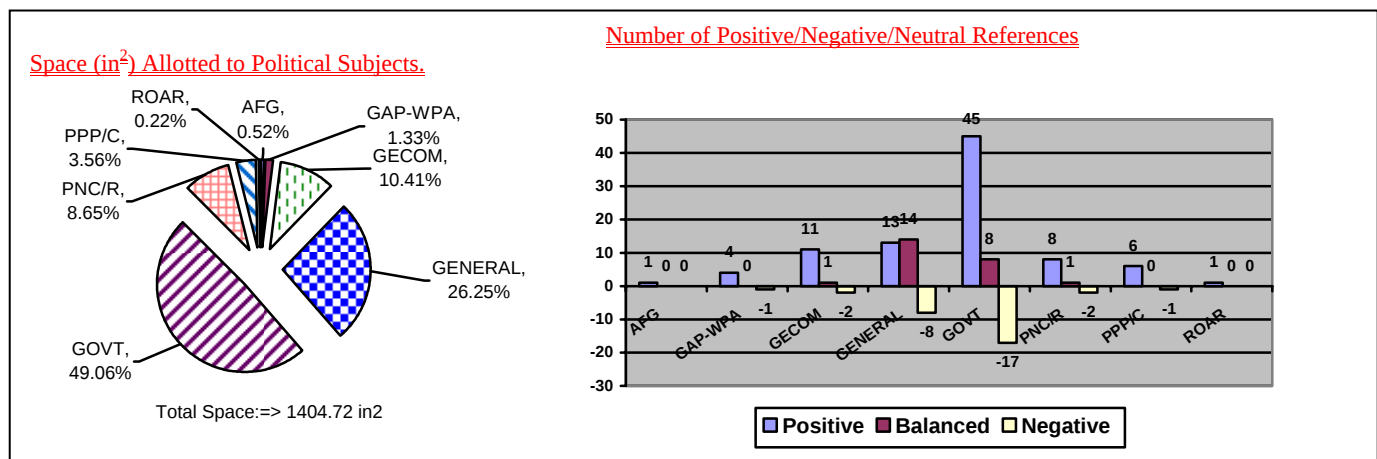


Generally, all of the categories were mixed coverage from the Stabroek News. GECOM was the only exception to this since they received mostly positive coverage (143 positive, 20 negative and 22 neutral). Those categories attaining mixed coverage were the government (856 positive, 455 negative and 8 neutral). Both the PNC/R and the PPP/C also received mixed coverage, being allotted 153 positive, 117 negative and 21 neutral references and 89 positive, 57 negative and 12 neutral references respectively. The smaller parties received generally positive coverage. (See **Graph 2.1**)

Front Page Headlines

Eight categories appeared on the front page of the Stabroek News during the pre nomination period. During that period, the Government appeared the most times receiving a total of just fewer than 50% or 688.3in².

Graph 2.2: Stabroek News – Front Page Headlines Coverage

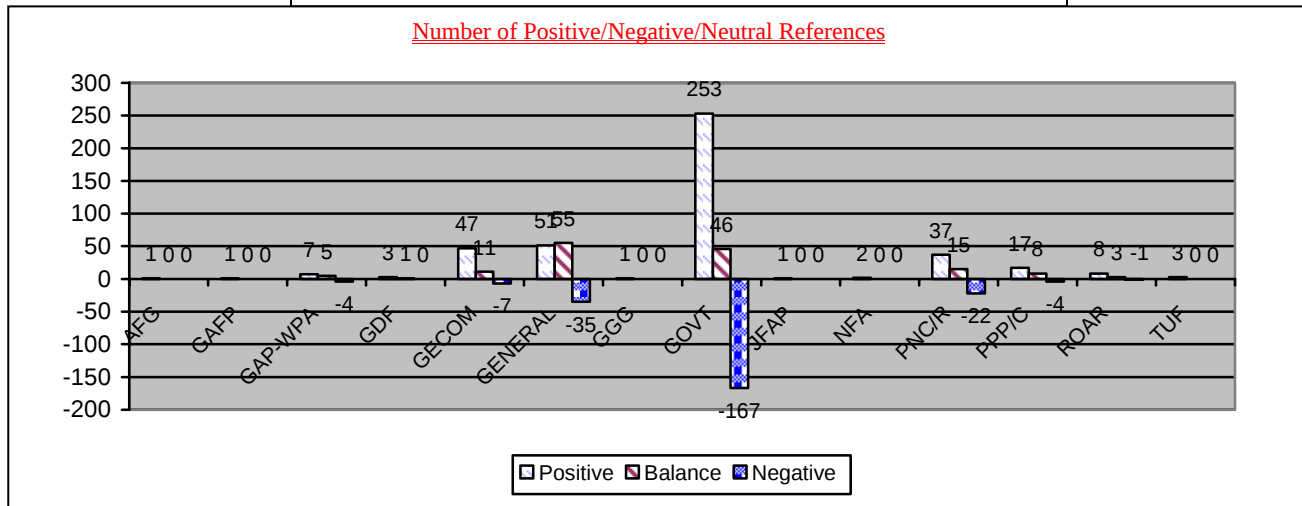
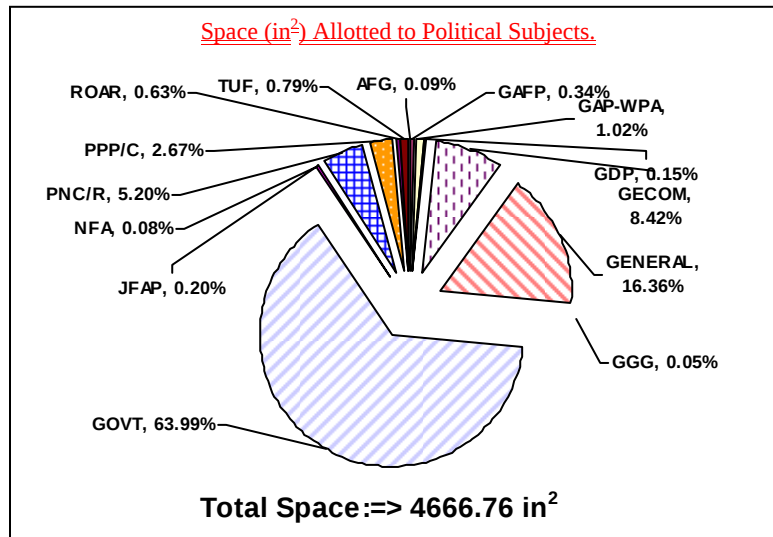


Graph 2.2 illustrates that GECOM, PNC/R, PPP/C and GAP-WPA followed the Government attaining 10.41%, 8.65%, and 3.56% respectively. The other two categories AFG and ROAR both received less than 1% combined. Stabroek News generally covered all the categories appearing in its front-page headlines favourably with all of the eight categories receiving more positive than negative coverage.

Inside Headlines

The inside headlines **Graph 2.3** found within the Stabroek News during this period saw fifteen categories receiving coverage. The largest amount of the coverage went to the Government who got 63.99% of the 4666.76in² allotted to inside headlines. Although the smaller parties received coverage in this segment, it was very negligible with the exception of GAP/WPA who received 1.02% while the others less than 1% each. At a distant second followed GECOM with 8.42%, PNC/R 5.20% and PPP/C with 2.69%.

Graph 2.3: Stabroek News – Inside Headlines Coverage

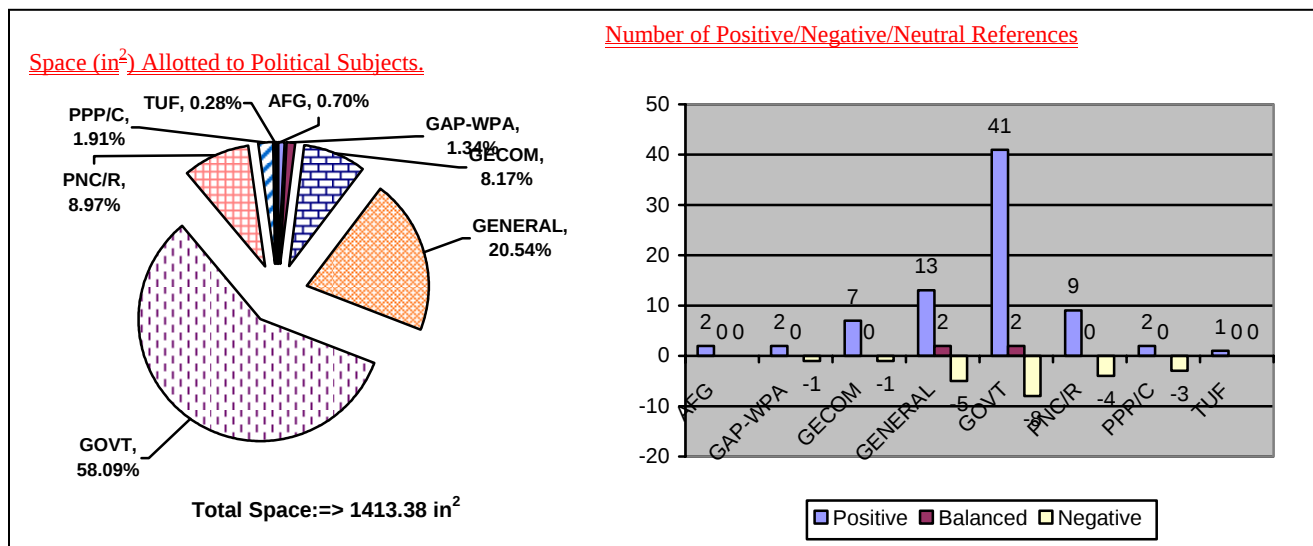


All of the categories that received over 20 references were given mixed coverage with the exception of GECOM (47 positive, 7 negative) by the Stabroek News. Of the Government's 466 references, 253 were positive, 167 negative and 46 were neutral. The PNC/R's 74 references were broken down to 37 positive, 22 negative and 15 neutral.

Front Page Articles

As with headlines **Graph 2.4** indicates that Government again received the majority of the front page article space attaining 58.09% or 819.7 in² out of a total 1, 4413.38 in².

Graph 2.4: Stabroek News – Front Page Articles Coverage

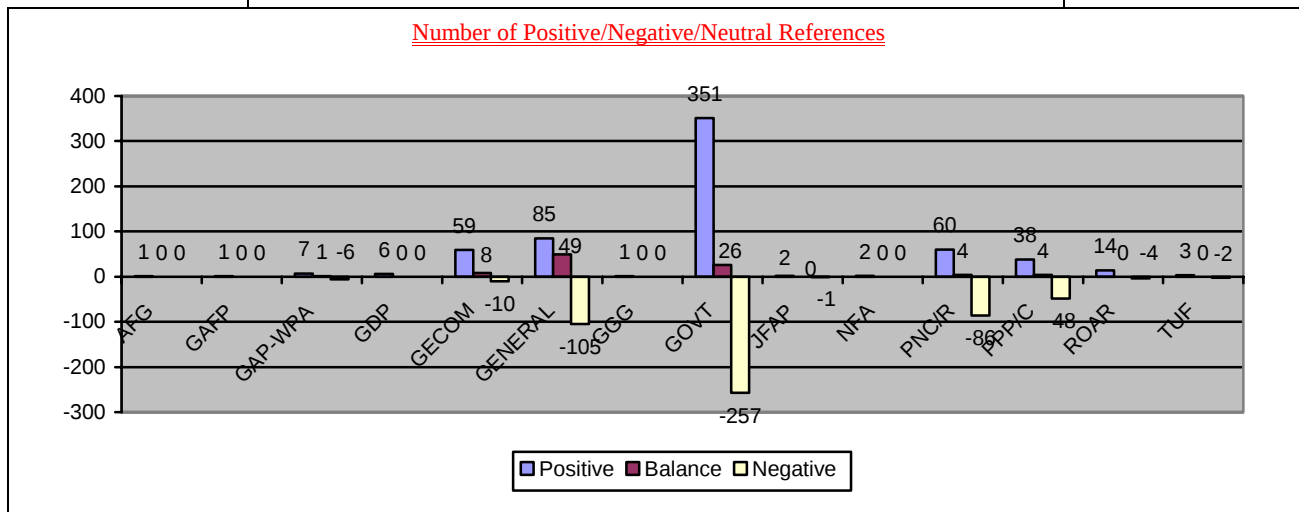
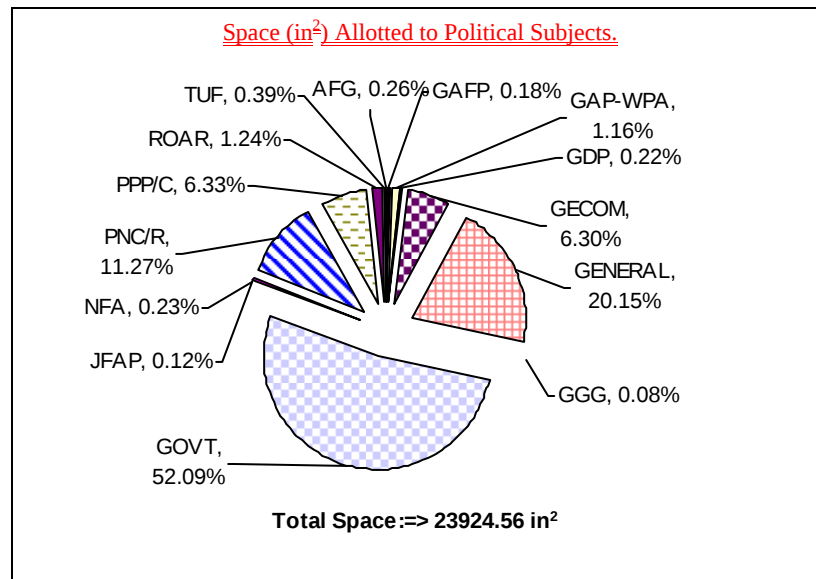


Generally, the tone of its coverage was positive with only 8 of its 51 references being negative and 2 being neutral. Seven categories shared the remaining 42% allotted to front page articles. The PNC/R, GECOM, PPP/C and GAP/WPA, all received single digit percentages. Both the TUF and AFG received less than 1 percentage of the total space allotted to front-page articles. All the categories with the exception of the PPP/C received more positive than negative references. PPP/C received 3 negative references and no balanced news articles.

Inside Articles

One again, Government followed the trend of the previous segments receiving more space than the other fourteen categories combined. (See **Graph 2.5**) The government's total space was 12,462.3 in² or 52.09% of the 23, 924.56in² total. The only other category receiving a double-digit percentage was PNC/R with 20.15%. Those receiving percentage in the single digits were PPP/C, GECOM, ROAR, and GAP/WPA in that order. The smaller parties JFAP, NFA, TUF, AFG, GAFF, GDP, and GGG again received less than 1 percent each of the total space.

Graph 2.5: Stabroek News- Inside Articles Coverage

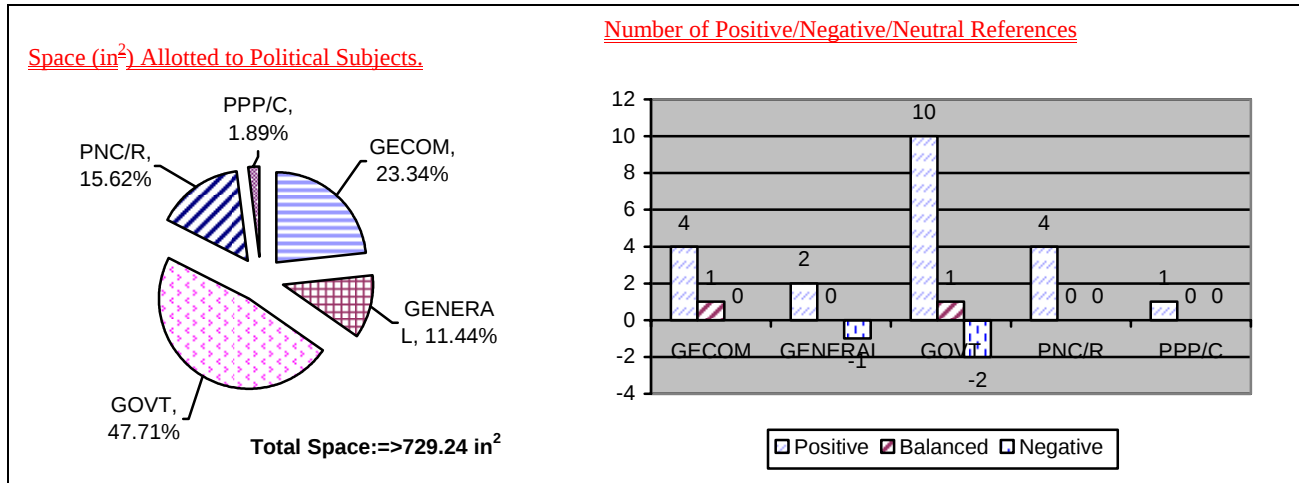


The only category with over 20 references to receive positive coverage was that of GECOM that got 59 positive, 10 negative and 8 neutral references while the others was mixed coverage. Both major players had more negatives than positive references. The PPP/C received 86 negatives, 38 positive and 4 neutral references while the PNC/R received 86 negative, 60 positive and 4 neutral references. Of the Government's 634 total references, 351 were positive, 257 negative and 26 neutral. All the smaller parties received positive ratings with the exception of GAP/WPA, whose tone was nearly eve, with 7 positive, 6 negative and 1 neutral references.

Front Page Photographs

The Government continued to receive the most of the coverage in this segment. Although they did not gain their usual 50% or more of the space, they received 47.71% or 347.9in² out of a possible 729.24in².

Graph 2.6: Stabroek News – Front Photos Coverage

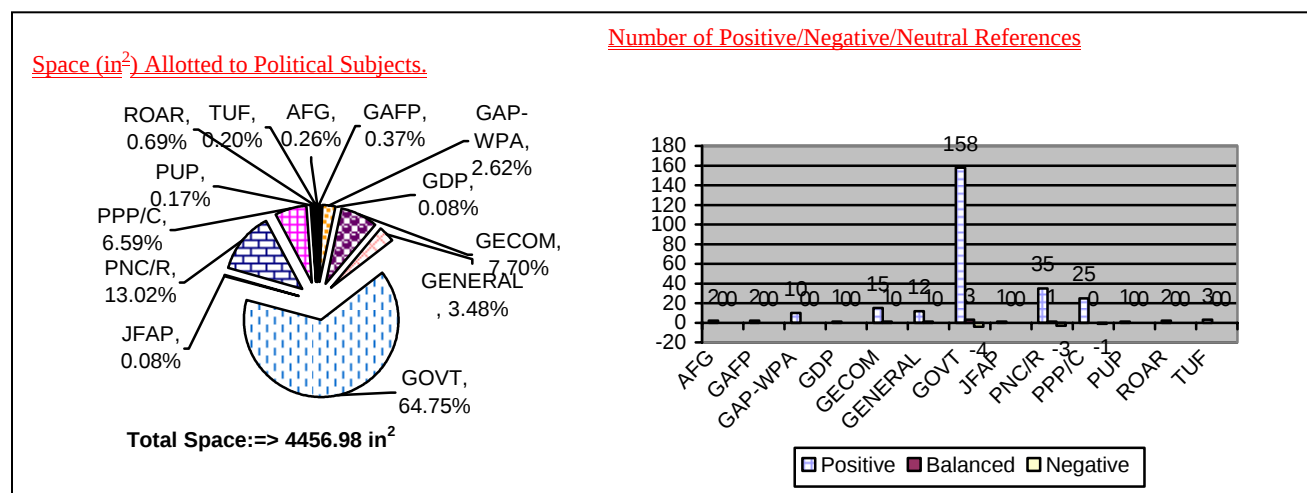


Three relevant categories shared the remaining 52.29% - GECOM, PNC/R and PPP/C attaining 23.34%, 15.62%, and 1.89% respectively. As far as the tone of the front page photograph was concerned, coverage was generally positive with only the Government receiving negative references. (See **Graph 2.6**)

Inside Photographs

The final set of charts for the Stabroek News **Graph 2.7** again shows the Government category receiving most of the 4,456.98 in² available with 6.75% or 2, 885.8 in².

Graph 2.7: Stabroek News – Inside Photos Coverage

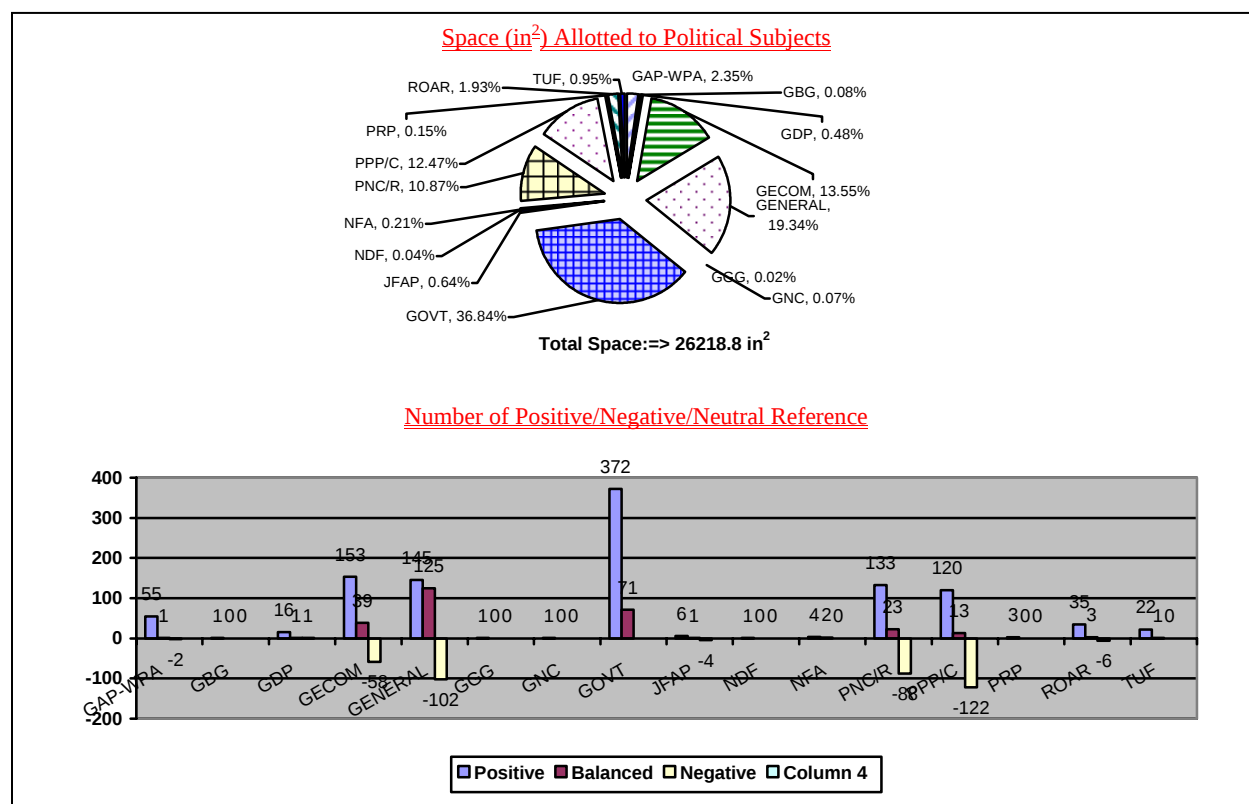


The PNC/R, the only other category to receive double-digit percentages, placed a distant second to the Government with 13.02%. GECOM, PPP/C and GAP/WPA received single digit percentage while the smaller parties again received negligible coverage. The tone of the Stabroek News inside photographs was generally positive with only Government and PNC/R receiving negative references.

PRE-ELECTION: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

The pre-election period saw a reduction for space allotted to the Government and an increase in space percentage wise for most of the other categories. Government's 55.18% during the pre-nomination period was reduced to 36.84% during the pre-elections period. Some of the relevant categories receiving increases were GECOM from 7.31% to 13.55% while the PPP/C's space increased from 5.53% to 12.47%. (See Graph 2.8)

Graph 2.8: Stabroek News – Total Coverage



The PNC/R on the other hand was the only major category that did not show an increase in space but remained more or less constant attaining 10.6% in the previous period and 10.87% in the present period. ROAR and TUF coverage also increased, albeit minimally. The smaller political parties also received coverage, however, this coverage continued to be minimal. (See Graph 2.8)

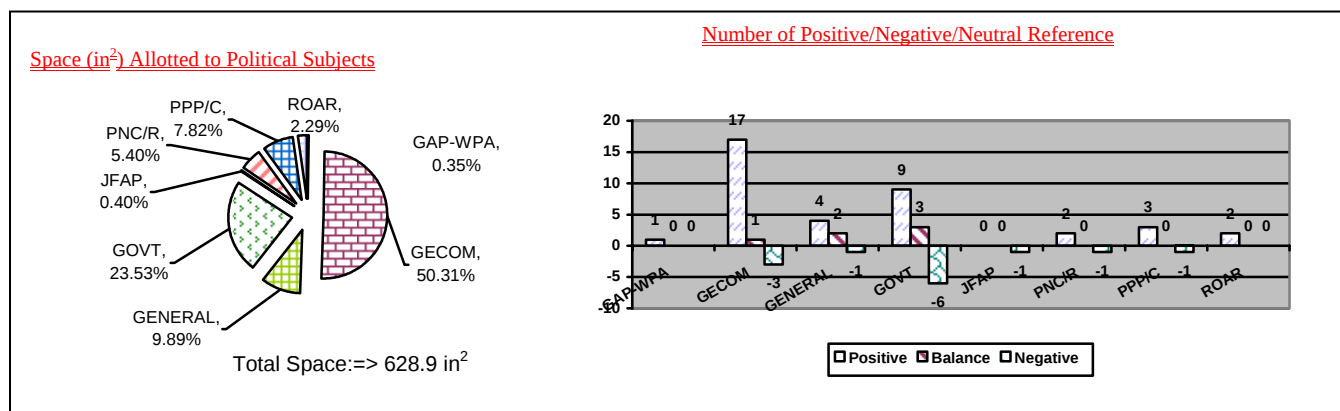
The obvious reason for the increase in percentage of the categories was that the election campaign was at its peak.

The tone of the coverage by the Stabroek News during this period mirrored that of the previous period in the sense that all of the major categories were given mixed coverage while the PPP/C received positive coverage. Stabroek News, like the Chronicle lived up to its pledge to provide political parties with limited free space in the week leading up to the elections. It is noteworthy that unlike the Chronicle, Stabroek News offered a more detailed discussion and analysis of party positions.

Front Page Headlines

Headlines concerning the activities of GECOM appeared on the front page more than any single entity resulting in it receiving 50.31% of the 628.9 in² allotted to the front page headline, up from 10.41% (See Graph 2.2) during the pre-election period. While GECOM increased over the previous period, all the other categories had a reduction in their percentages with the exception of PPP/C and ROAR, whose percentages increased from 3.96% and 0.22% to 7.82% and 2.29% respectively. (See **Graph 2.9**)

Graph 2.9: Stabroek News – Front Page Headlines Coverage

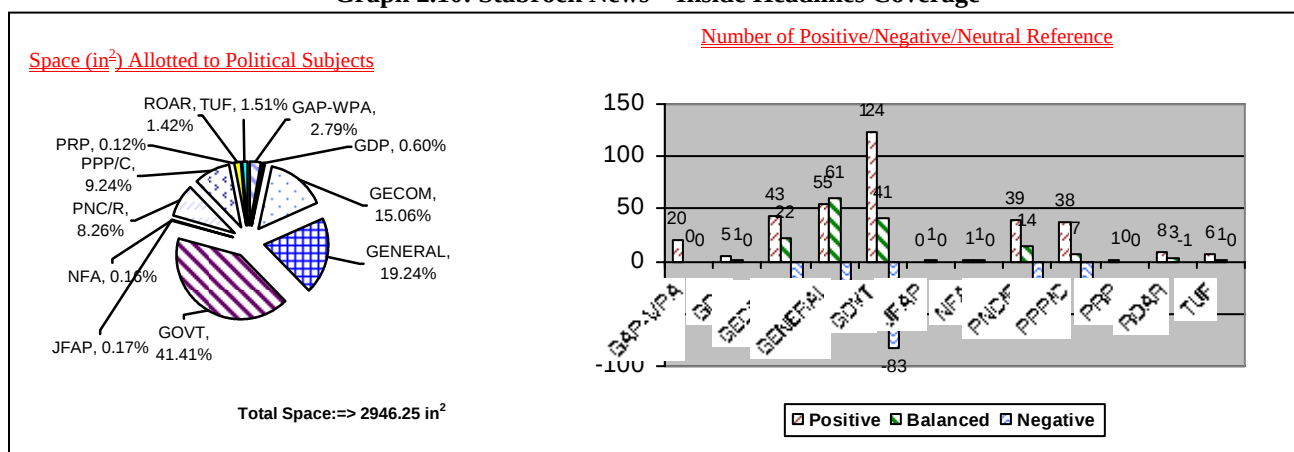


The Government, which had the majority of the space for a single category during the last period, approximated half from 49.06% to 23.53%. PNC/R's coverage reduced from 8.65% to 5.41% while GAP/WPA coverage reduced to less than 1% from 1.33%. (See Graph 2.2) JFAP appeared for the first time on front-page headlines of the Stabroek News, while during this period there was no place for the AFG. The reason for the non-showing in Graph 2.9 of this party is that WPA which formed part of that alliance joined with GAP to contest the 2001 elections. The tone of the front-page articles was generally positive.

Inside Headlines

Despite receiving a 22.5% reduction to 41.41% from the identical segment of the previous period, (See **Graph 2.10**) the Government still received most of the 2946.25 in² allotted to inside headlines. GECOM, PPP/C and PNC/R received 15.06%, 9.24% and 8.26% respectively. The remaining seven categories – JFAP, NFA, PRP, ROAR, TUF, GAP/WPA and GDP received between 0.17% and 2.79% once again indicating the minimal coverage the smaller parties received. The two main parties received a nearly identical number of positive to negative references, PPP/C 38 and PNC/R 39 to 25. Interestingly, the PNC/R had twice the amount of balanced headlines than the PPP/C. GECOM again received positive coverage while that for the Government category was mixed – 124 positive, 83 negative and 41 neutral references.

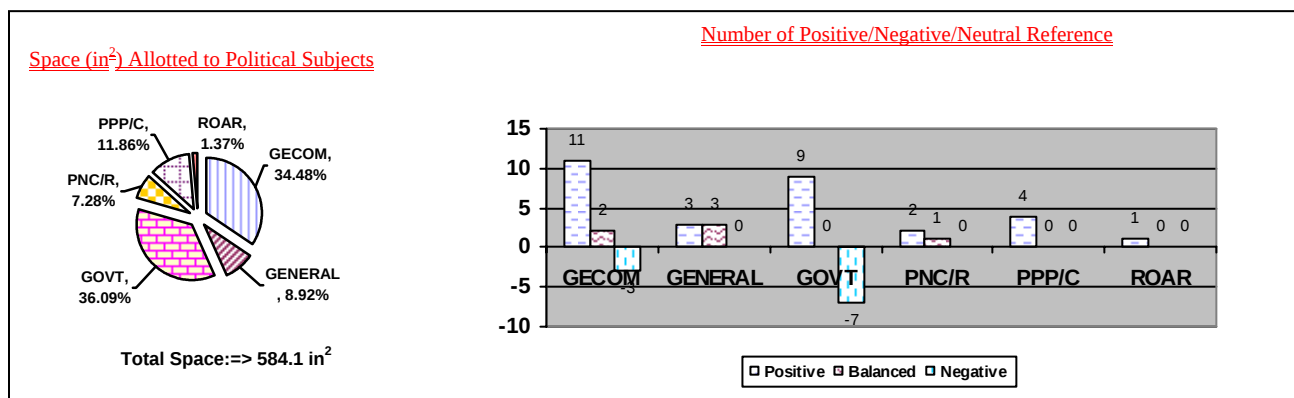
Graph 2.10: Stabroek News – Inside Headlines Coverage



Front Page Articles

Unlike the previous period that saw Government receiving most of the space – 58.90% allotted to front page articles, the space allocation in this period was even. Government and GECOM received the first and second highest respectively with 36% and 34.48% of the available 584.1 in² followed by PPP/C and PNC/R. ROAR received the least coverage attaining 1.37% (See **Graph 2.11**)

Graph 2.11: Stabroek News – Front Page Articles Coverage



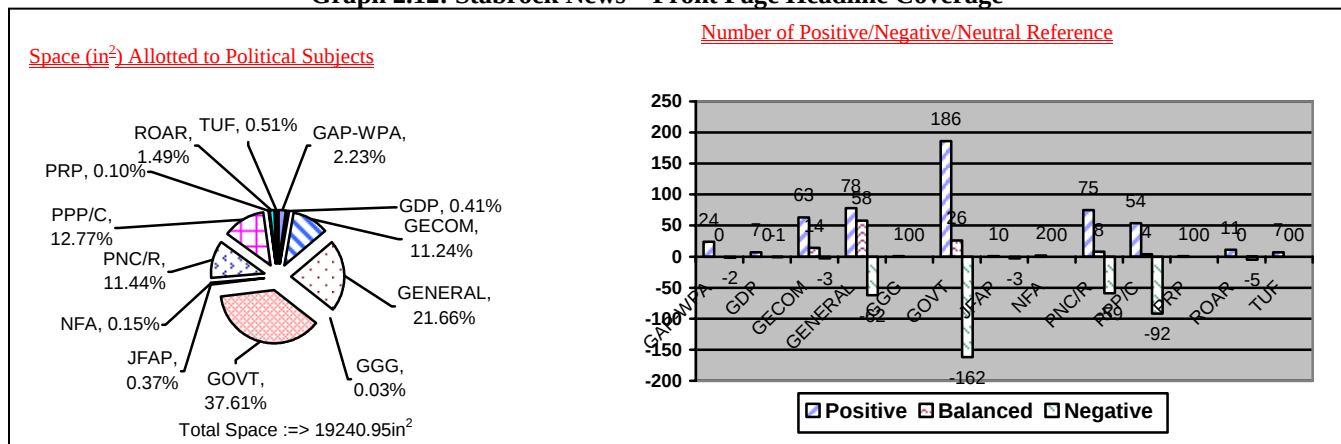
All the categories generally received positive coverage with the exception of GECOM and Government. The latter received nearly an equal amount of positive to negative references with a ratio of 9 to 7. When compared with the previous period (see Pre Nomination period, **Graph 2.4**), Stabroek News articles were generally favourable to the categories monitored except Government.

Inside Articles

In the articles appearing inside of the Stabroek News during this period, no single category received more than half of the 19,240.95 in² with the largest category Government, receiving 37.61% of that amount. (See Graph 2.12) The PNC/R remained consistent when compared with the identical segment of the previous period. On the other hand, the PPP/C and GECOM percentages virtually doubled from the previous period. Of the smaller parties, only ROAR and GAP/WPA received more than 1% attaining 1.49% and 2.23% respectively while the other parties received less than 1% each.

With the exception of the PPP/C, all the other categories received more positive than negative references. The PPP/C received 92 references as against 54 positive ones. It is notable that for this segment in the previous period, the PPP/C and the PNC/R received more negative than positive references. During this period however, it was the reverse for the PNC/R -75 positive, 59 negative references. Many of the references for both of the major parties were by the way of letters to the editor.

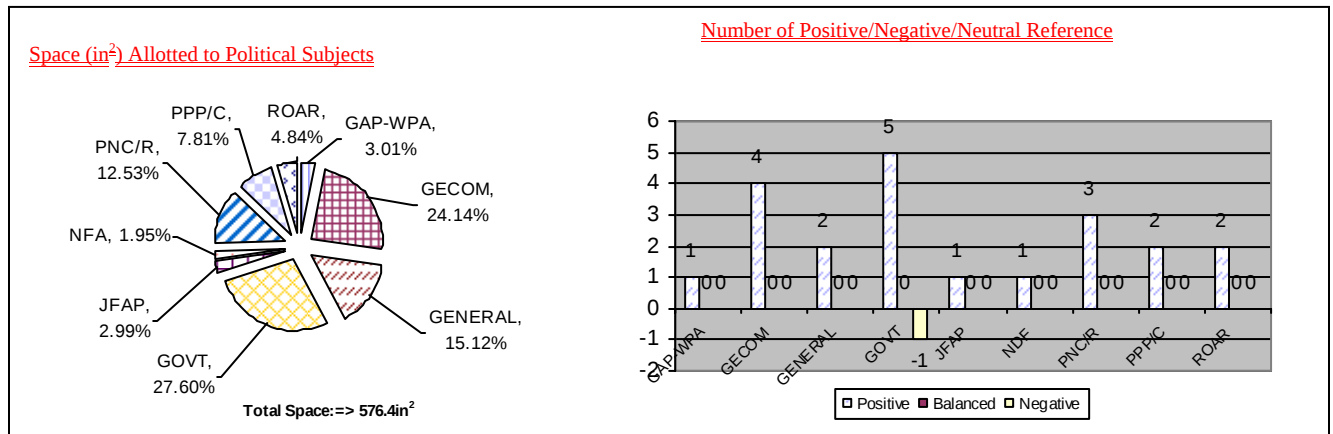
Graph 2.12: Stabroek News – Front Page Headline Coverage



Front Page Photographs

The 576.4 in² allocated to front-page photographs in this period, was more evenly distributed than all of the other segments analysed so far. The category receiving the most space for a single entity was Government once again, attaining 27.6% or 158.5 in². Following the Government's 27.60% was GECOM with 24.14%, PNC/R 12.53% and the PPP/C attaining 7.81%. The smaller parties – ROAR, GAP/WPA, JFAP and NDF received less than 5% but more than 1.5%. (See **Graph 2.13**)

Graph 2.13: Stabroek News – Front Page Photos Coverage

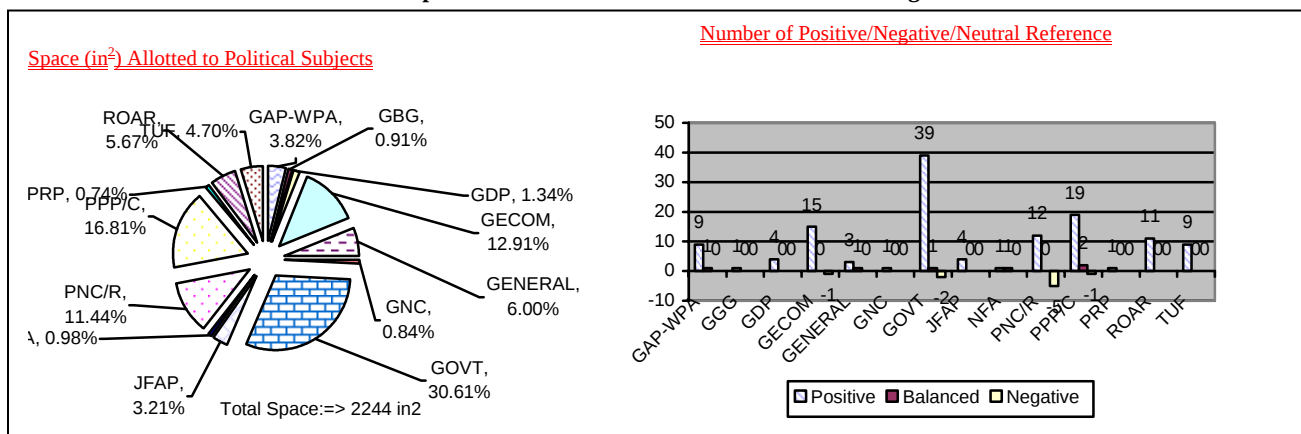


It should be noted, here that most of the photographs appeared just after nomination day – 15th February, 2001 – when the candidates presented their party’s lists to GECOM’s officials at The Cit Hall. The tone of photographs would have been all positive but the Government category that received the only negative reference.

Inside Photographs

This period saw a number of the categories receiving significantly higher percentages of the space allotted to the photographs within Stabroek News than in the previous period. For example, in the preceding period the percentages for JFAP, ROAR and TUF were 0.08%, 0.16% and 0.20% respectively. In this period however, they were 3.21%, 5.67% and 4.70% respectively. The space allotment for the Government reduced from 64.75% to 30.61% but in spite of this it still received the most space for a single category. The PNC/R’s space remained virtually consistent with 13.02% to 11.44% while that of the PPP/C almost tripled from 6.59% to 16.81%. The tone of this coverage was similar to that of the previous period with nearly all of the categories recording a perfect positive rating. (See **Graph 2.14**)

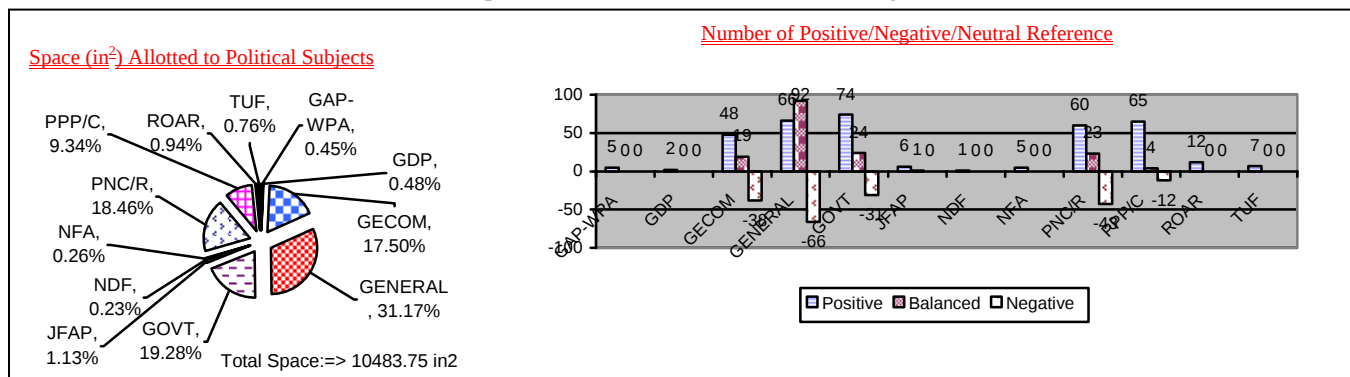
Graph 2.14: Stabroek News – Inside Photos Coverage



POST-ELECTION: - 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

The post-election period – the shortest of the three periods monitored showed the 10, 483. 75 in2 allocated to the 13 political subjects was shared somewhat evenly. No single category received more than 35% of the total space with the General category receiving the highest with 31.17%. Government with 19.28% of the space, the lowest it received during the periods under analysis (55.1% Pre-nomination and 39.68% Pre-election). Government received the second highest amount of space. The significant reduction in space allocated to the Government was due to a lull in government activity, a direct result of the non-swearing in the President, because of the court challenge to the election results made by the main opposition PNC/R. (See **Graph 2.15**)

Graph 2.15: Stabroek News – Total Coverage



Following the Government in terms of space was the PNC/R with 18.46%, an increase from the last period, then GECOM – 17.50% up from 14% from the last period. The PPP/C's space on the other hand reduced to 9.34% from 13.55% during the last period. Of all the smaller parties only JFAP received over 1 percent (1.13%), while the others – NDF, NFA, ROAR, TUF, GAP/WPA and GDP each received less than 1 percent. (See **Graph 2.15**)

For the first during our monitoring GECOM received mixed coverage (48 positive, 38 negative and 19 neutral) as against mostly positive during the first two periods. GECOM's mixed coverage was a direct result of the stories that highlighted problems with the March 19th polls and GECOM's response to them. Some examples were stories headlined:

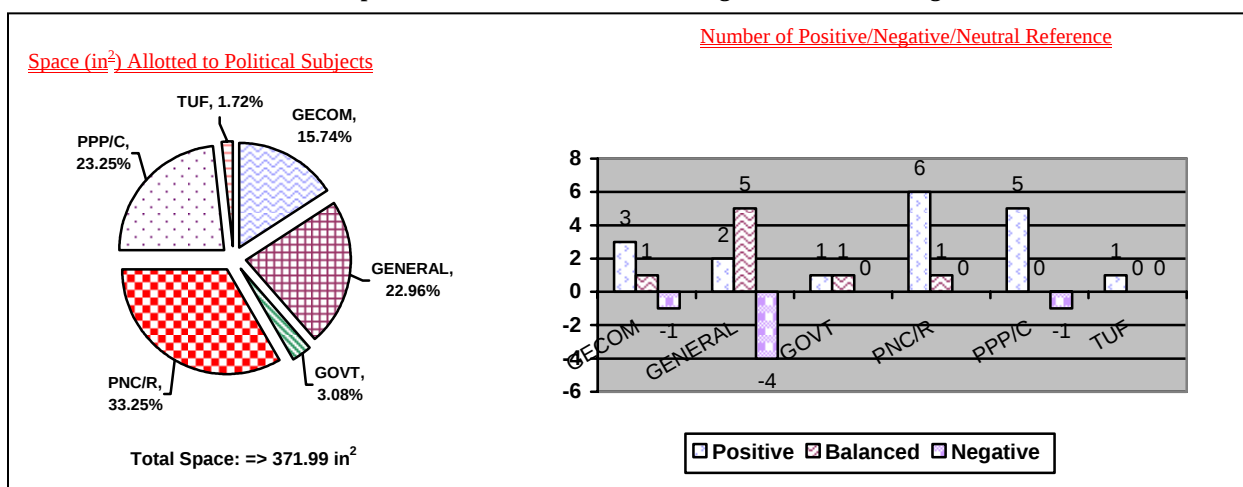
- “Would-be voters experienced a variety of problems unclear how many were eligible” (20/03/01, p.8)
- “Still no final results declaration by GECOM” (23/03/01, pp. 1, 2)
- “Election Commission probing alleged discrepancy with polling and tabulation of results in which the PNC/R faulted the Commission over the latter's tabulation of results” (22/03/01, p.8)

The tone of the coverage the PNC/R received this period was mixed – (60 positive, 43 negatives and 23 neutrals) up from more negatives than positives references during the past period. Government received mixed coverage while the tome of the PPP/C's references was generally positive. The coverage for all of the smaller political parties was positive.

Front Page Headlines

The headlines that appeared on the front page of the Stabroek News gave prominence to four main categories. The largest of the four categories, the PNC/R, received 33.25% followed by PPP/C with 23.25% and GECOM with 15.74%. The Government for the first time in any of the segments received single digit percentage due to reasons mentioned earlier. The 33.25% and the 23.25% that the PNC/R and the PPP/C received respectively were much higher than they received for Front Page Headlines during the Pre-Election period when they received 5.42% and 7.8% respectively. The increased percentages of both the PNC/r and the PPP/C were because of the court challenge mounted by the former, when the Elections commission declared the PPP/C winners of the March 19th GGRE 2001. The tone of the coverage for the six categories was generally positive with the exception of the General category that received mixed coverage with 5 positive, 4 negative, and 2 neutral references. (See **Graph 2.16**)

Graph 2.16: Stabroek News – Front Page Headlines Coverage



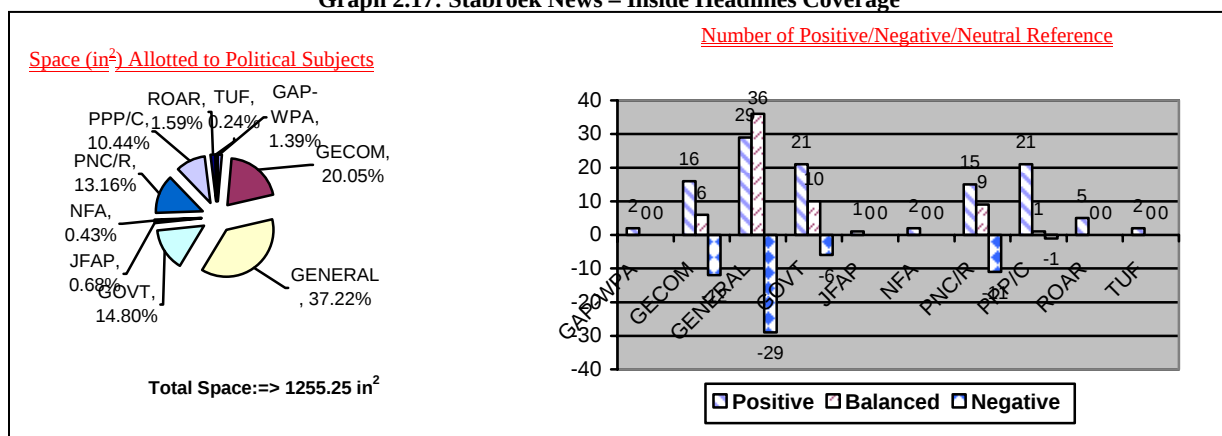
The increase in the negative references for the General category resulted from the numerous reports of the disturbances that followed the March 19th GGRE 2001.

Inside Headlines

The category receiving the most of the 1,255.25 in² allocated to Inside Headlines was General with 37.22%. Following General was GECOM with 20.05%, Government with 14.8%, PNC/R with 13.16% and the PPP/C with 10.44%. The little difference between the amounts of space the major categories received with the exception of Government continued to reflect the roles they played in the events that followed March 19th GGRE. Unlike the Front Page Headlines where one of the smaller parties, the TUF, received space, there were four in this segment: - JFAP, NFA, TUF, and GAP/WPA. However, the trend of them receiving negligible coverage continued. Three of the four relevant categories – GECOM, PNC/R and Government, received

mixed coverage while the PPP/C nearly gained all positive, receiving 21 positive, 1 negative and 1 neutral reference (s). (See **Graph 2.17**)

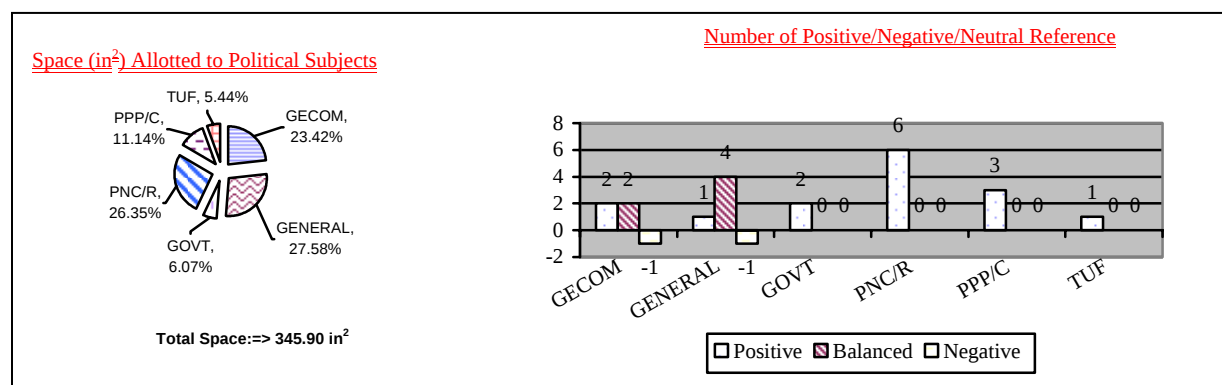
Graph 2.17: Stabroek News – Inside Headlines Coverage



Front Page Articles

All the major categories with the exception of Government received most of the space for articles appearing on the front page. When the front page articles for this period were compared with that of Pre-Election, Government's space was reduced by 30% from 36.09% to 6.07% in this period. (See **Graph 2.18**)

Graph 2.18: Stabroek News – Front Page Articles Coverage



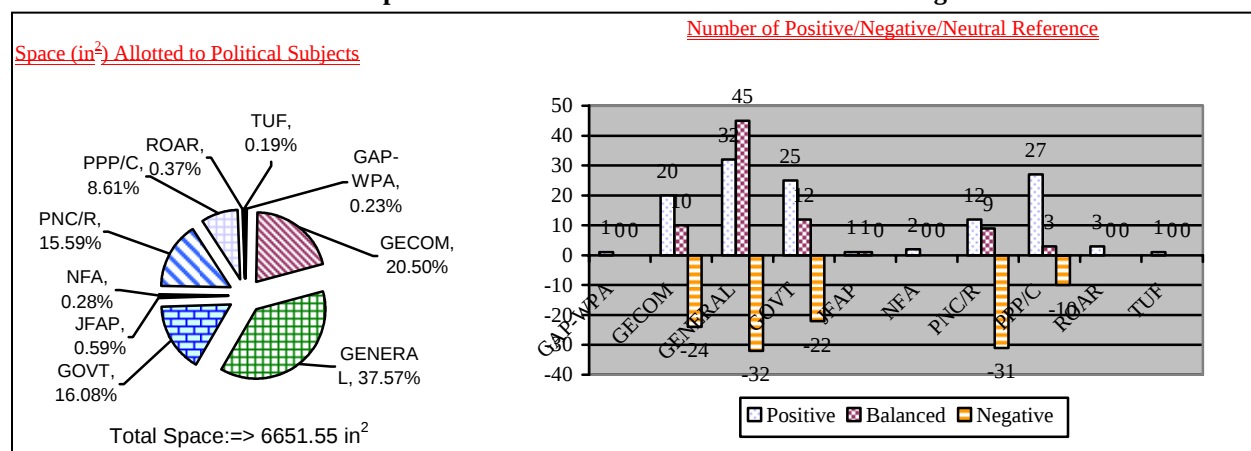
The PPP/C's space virtually remained the same at 11.14% while that of the PNC/R increase nearly 4 times from 7.28% to 26.35%. That of the General category increased more than three times from 8.92% to 27.58%. The coverage by the Stabroek News of the Front Page Articles was generally positive with only GECOM and General receiving negative references. (See **Graph 2.18**)

Inside Articles

The categories receiving the most of the 6,651.55 in² during this period were General, GECOM, Government, and the PNC/R, receiving 37.57%, 20.5%, 16.08% and 15.59% respectively. The PPP/C received the only single digit figure percentage while the trend of the smaller parties receiving negligible coverage continued.

The tone of the PNC/R's coverage was mostly negative while that of the PPP/C was mostly positive. Of the 52 references for the PNC/R, 31 were negative, 12 positive and 9 neutral. Of the 40 references for the PPP/C, 27 were positive, 10 negative and 3 neutral. The tone for the two categories was a reverse from that of the previous period where the PPP/C received more negative than positive references while the PNC/R received more positive than negative. (See Graph 2.19)

Graph 2.19: Stabroek News – Inside Articles Coverage

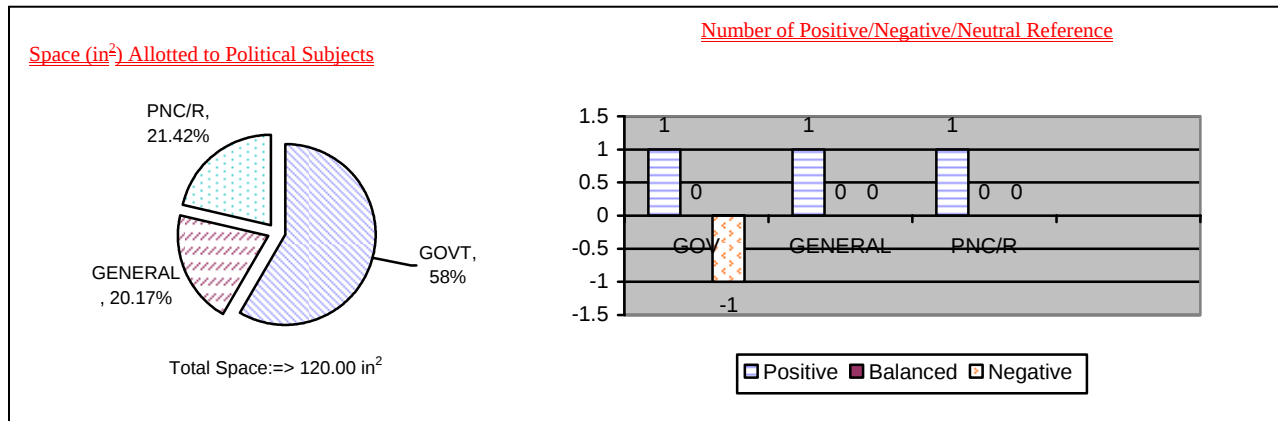


GECOM like the Government and General received mixed coverage, however, Government received slightly more negative than positive references with 24 negatives, 20 positives and 10 neutrals.

Front Page Photographs

Only four photographs of election related activity appeared on the front page for this period with Government receiving more than a half (58.42%) of the available 120in² followed by PNC/R and General receiving 21.42% and 20.17% respectively. General and PNC/R's single only reference received positive ratings while the two for the Government were rated one positive and one negative. (See Graph 2.20)

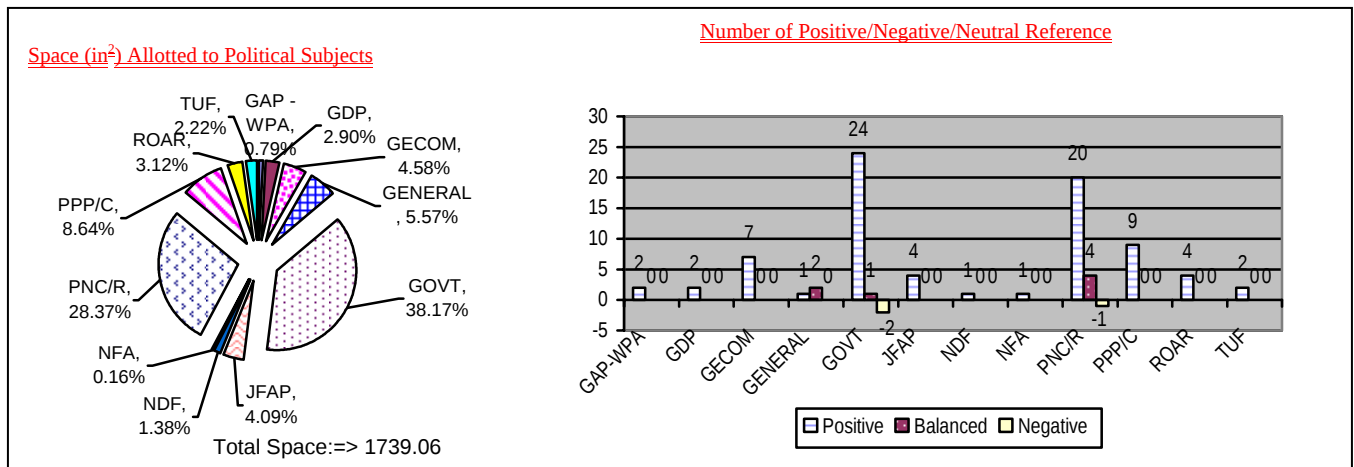
Graph 2.20: Stabroek News – Front Page Photos Coverage



Inside Photographs

The number of categories appearing in the photographs within the Stabroek News for this period could be favourable compared with that of the identical segment of the previous period. The percentages for the various categories during this period were relatively similar to the last with the exception of the two major political parties, the PPP/C and the PNC/R. Approximated half from 16.81% to 8.64% reduced the PPP/C's percentage, while that of the PNC/R increased significantly from 11.44% to 28.3%. The single category receiving the most of the 1,739.06 in² was the government with 38.17%. Generally, the tone of all the photographs was positive. (See **Graph 2.21**)

Graph 2.21: Stabroek News – Inside Photos Coverage



POST – ELECTION COMMENTS

In one of the few instances where Stabroek News violated the Media Code of Conduct:

- In a story, headline “Eight injured in East Coast fracas”, there was a recount of what transpired at Buxton the previous day between residents and some members of the Guyana Police Force. However, the entire account was taken from the point of view of a number of residents who were in unanimous in their view that the police acted in an unprofessional manner. At the same time, no indication was given by the reporter that she attempted to get the police’s side of the story. Due to this, the story was unbalanced since only the residents (one of the two parties involved in fracas) were given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The police, the other party involved was not given an opportunity to present their side of the story. (23/03/01, p.15)

Comparative Analysis – Guyana Chronicle versus Stabroek News

During our monitoring of the two daily newspapers, the Guyana Chronicle and the Stabroek News, the difference in tone and style of coverage of the GGRE 2001 was stark. The Guyana Chronicle, the state owned and controlled newspapers, as the various charts show were generally biased to the Government and against the main opposition PNC/R. in addition, this state-owned newspaper favourably advances the PPP/C. although the Stabroek News on the other hand, had allocated the most space to the Government category, there were a number of criticisms and/ or negative references.

The Stabroek News also facilitated a divergence of viewpoints particularly in the letters segment. As the campaign intensified, the Stabroek News increased its letters pages from three to four, and on a few occasions to as many as six pages. Although the Chronicle choose not to go the same route as the Stabroek News by not increasing their letters column, they continued to publish letters that mainly praised the Government or castigated the main opposition PNC/R.

Another unique feature of Chronicle’s election coverage was the allotment of space to independent columnists all of whom were either Government functionaries or pro-PPP/C, and who showered glowing praises on the Government and the ruling PPP/C. At the same time some columnists launched scathing attacks on the opposition in general and the PNC/R in particular. This in actuality is a clear violation of the Media Code of Conduct that stated among other things that all Media Houses should afford equal access to all contesting parties. What is more disturbing that by virtue ownership the Guyana Chronicle is precluded from such partisan action.

There were a few instances where the two daily newspapers covered a single event differently or placed less importance to a particular event or not covering it at the closest possible time. The most prominent example of this was the way both papers covered the initial ruling by Judge Claudette Singh on the 1997 election petition case brought by the PNC/R that challenged the results of the GGRE 1997. The headlines in the Stabroek News and the Guyana Chronicle on

January 16th 2001 seemed to report completely different versions of what the Judge had ruled. Those who read the front-page headlines of the Guyana Chronicle were told that the High Court upheld the results of the 1997 elections. Those who read the Stabroek News were told that the 1997 Elections were ‘voided’.

The MMU’s job is not to conduct an independent investigation into the truth but if we agree that the ruling might have been confusing and subjected to various interpretations, we hope that a newspaper would at least present the several different arguments completely and honestly. The Stabroek News did a better job at this on January 16th 2001. Its front page included headlines that summarize the reactions of both the main political parties and GECOM and pointed the reader to several stories dealing with a variety of aspects of this important decision. The Guyana Chronicle on the other hand, kept to a consistent message on the front page that left unmentioned various important implications. It is difficult to avoid the conclusions that the Guyana Chronicle was reporting the news in a way that defended the attitude of the PPP/C government as much as possible under the circumstances. Their only story about the ruling did include responses from both main parties; but the PNC/R statements were given much less space and left to near the end of the story. The Stabroek News stories of which there were eight, hardly answered all the questions raised by the ruling, but did offer readers a great deal more information in a more balanced and comprehensive manner.

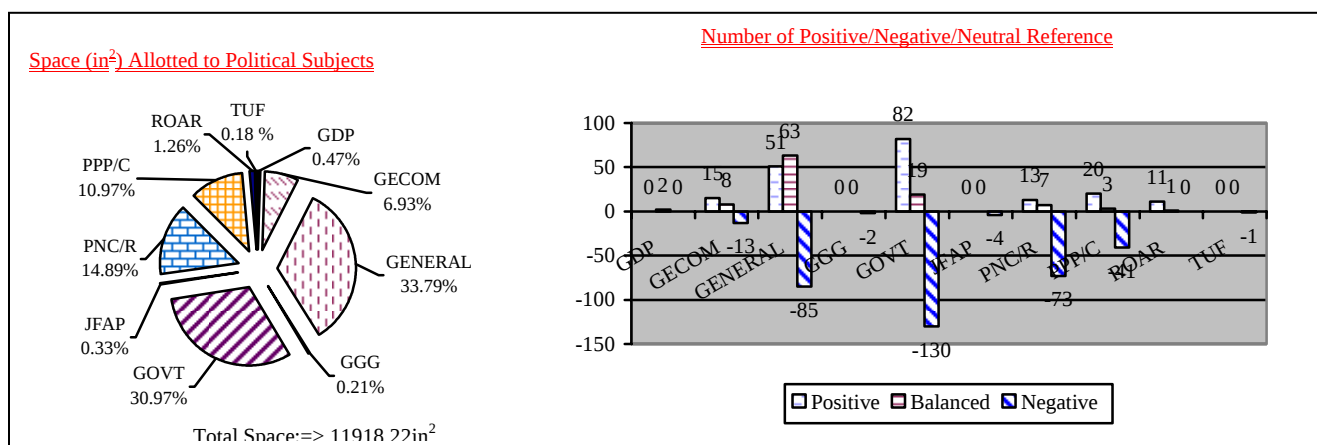
In addition, on January 16th 2001, both newspapers covered the PNC/R official campaign launching at the Square of the Revolution on Sunday 14th Jan 2001. While in both newspapers this event did not make the front-page headlines due to coverage of the election ruling, both newspapers covered it differently. The Guyana Chronicle in their coverage of the rally focused on a statement by the PNC/R leader, Mr. Desmond Hoyte, which was critical of St. Lucia’s Prime Minister, Dr. Kenny Anthony. The headline and lead-in to the story was vastly different from those relating to the same event covered in the Stabroek News. The Stabroek News gave a comprehensive report of what transpired at the rally. Although cognisance is taken of the inappropriateness of positing on the newsworthiness of any item, it is expected that the reporter and or editor should seek to present the truth for public consumption. These were just a few examples of instances when Guyanese voters received significantly different view of the news depending on which daily newspapers they read.

Throughout all of our monitoring periods, the evidence placed before us leave us to conclude that the Guyana Chronicle unequivocally supports the Government and the ruling PPP/C while at the same time it severely attacks the PNC/R’s policies, leaders, members and supporters. In addition, ROAR the newest party on the political landscape who purportedly nibbles at the PPP/C support base got its fair share of criticism from the Guyana Chronicle, leading many voters to believe that they were singled out by the paper for attack. On the other hand, although the privately owned Stabroek News devoted a great deal of space to the Government category, one is much more likely to find criticisms of the Government in this independent newspaper than one would in the Guyana Chronicle. The likelihood of diverse viewpoints and perspectives in the Stabroek News must be underscored.

THE KAIETEUR NEWS

During the period 1 December to 30 March 2001, we have also monitored the performance of the Kaieteur News. One of the things we have noticed generally about this paper is that it has a different style and approach to news reporting. It is more tabloid in style and contains more entertainment than hard news. Graph 3.1 shows that of the total space (11,918.22 in²) devoted to news that was relevant to political subjects or had political content 33.79% of space was devoted to the General category. Government was allotted 30.97% of the space. The other interests and parties came in this order – PNC/R – 14.89%, PPP/C -10.97%, GECOM – 6.93%, ROAR – 1.26%, GDP, JFAP, GGG and TUF received less than 1%. Here again we see that tone of the coverage becomes an all-important factor. (See **Graph 3.1**)

Graph 3.1: Kaieteur News – Total Coverage



The **Graph 3.1** above illustrates that this newspaper is immensely critical of most stakeholders. Government was mostly portrayed negatively with 130 negative, 19 balanced and 82 positive references, the General category was given 51 positive, 63 balanced and 85 negative references, this was also the same for the PPP/C who obtained 20 positive, 3 balanced and 41 negative references. GECOM received 15 positive, 8 balanced and 13 negative references, ROAR – 11 positive and 1 balanced, GDP – 2 balanced; and of the insignificant amount of coverage that was given to JFAP, GGG and TUF all of it portrayed these small parties in a pessimistic manner.

Regardless of the objectives and interests of private media practitioners, the imperative for accuracy, balance and responsibility cannot be understated. Many instances of dramatization found in the newspaper that can be deemed malevolent. A few instances are highlighted here:

- A headline appeared that said “Hoyte charged with molesting schoolboys”, the Hoyte in question was a school teacher – Eon Hoyte. This headline, however, can easily be read as the Opposition PNC/R leader, Desmond Hoyte. (15/12/01, p.9)

- Further, in the follow-up to the same story the headline read “Hoyte spends Christmas in jail”, (29/12/01, p.14)

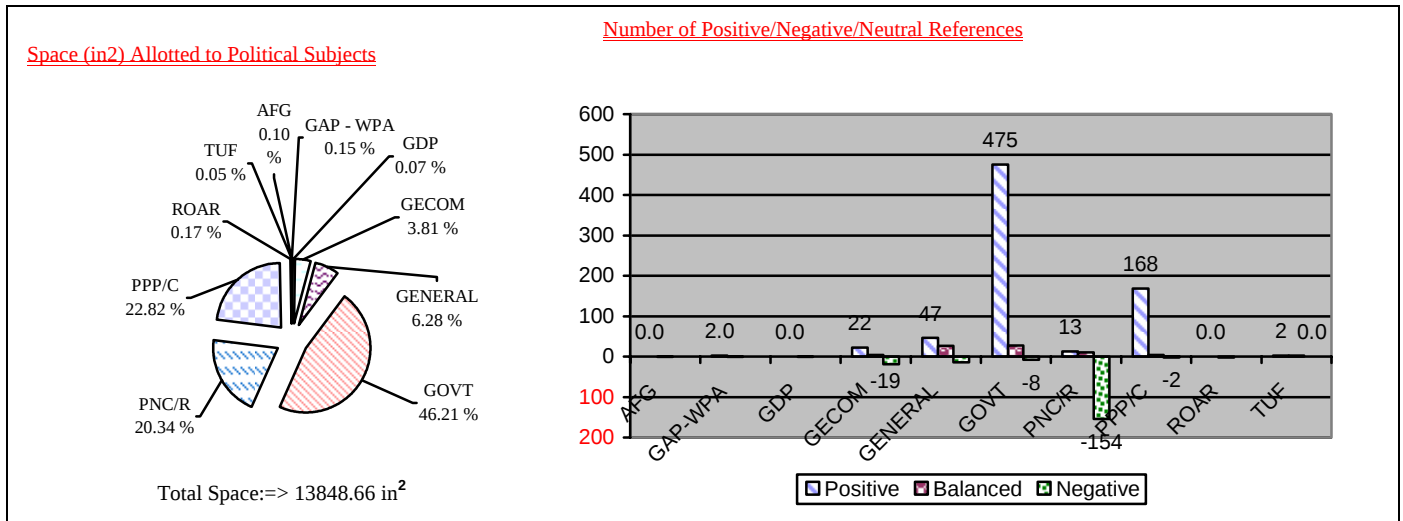
THE PEOPLE’S PAPER MIRROR AND NEW NATION

We have monitored the performance of the New Nation and the Mirror newspapers during the period 1 December to 30 March 2001. It was proven that these two papers appeared to be – ‘party organs’ and ‘mouthpiece’.

THE MIRROR

It is quite clear that the Mirror is a strong advocate for the PPP/C and the Government, a fact that **Graph 4.1** illustrates. Out of a total 13,848.86 in² space devoted to political subjects, Government led the way with close to half (46.21%) of coverage – more than 2 times the other categories. Government portrayal is mostly favourable 75 positive, 28 balanced and only 8 negative references. PPP/C followed with 22.82% of coverage, again the majority (168 positive references) of it being positive and only 4 balanced and 2 negative references. Even though PNC/R got a significant amount of coverage (20.34%), the PPP/C’s main rival was consistently portrayed in a bad light, getting 154 negative, 13 positive and 10 balanced references. The General category and GECOM were next with 6.28% and 3.81% of coverage respectively. The General category was given 47 positive, 27 balanced and 14 negative references. GECOM got 22 positive, 4 balanced and 19 negative references. The coverage of small parties was negligible with less than 0.5% of coverage, all of which was critical of the ideas, performance and candidates of these parties.

Graph 4.1: Mirror – Total Coverage



In addition, the content of this newspaper was looked at very carefully. While the expectation of balanced reporting from a party newspaper may be improbable, responsibility to the public is not. Many negative articles about the PNC/R were directed to the character of the leader Desmond Hoyte. The following samples provide evidence of unbalanced items:

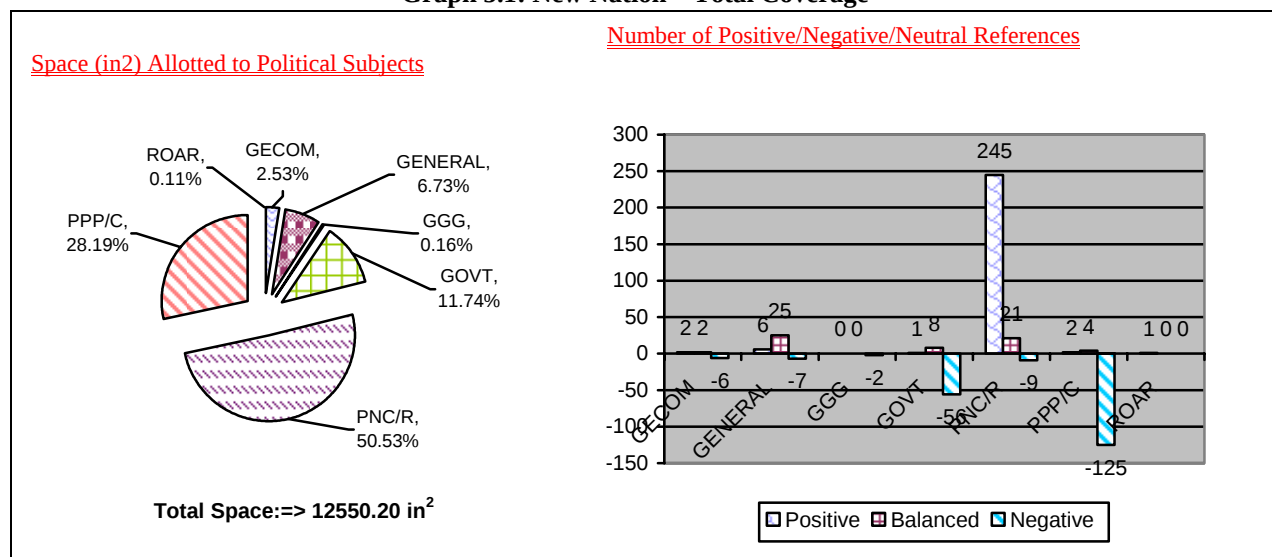
- An article entitled “Issues of Amerindians still to be photographed”. Numerous accusations were made against GECOM and its officials and procedures and alleged statements and activities, but no individual at GECOM was identified as having said or done the various actions, and at no time did the article in question indicate that an official of GECOM was offered an opportunity to respond in anyway. (30/12/01, p.9)
- One article states as fact that “the PNC/R made use of children to try to break up meetings of the PPP Civic as happened at the Tucville meeting...” further “indications are that the attacks were centrally directed and aimed at inducing fear in the Guyanese people...” (04/03/01, p.12)
- “Voters have a duty to scrutinize Hoyte’s appalling record and make an informed choice on March 19” (04/03/01, p.13).

THE NEW NATION

The New Nation and the Mirror have several similarities; among them bias in coverage of news relating to other political subjects, lack of balance in news reporting and both remain flagrant party organs. **Graph 5.1** illustrates that out of a total of 12, 550in² of space allotted to political subjects, the PNC/R received just over half (50.53%) of total coverage. Of this amount the majority of it portrayed the PNC/ R in a very positive light, as would be expected, it got 245 positive, 21 balanced and 9 negative references. This paper as with the Mirror also give the main rival-in this case the PPP/C – a significant amount of coverage 28.19%. Just like the Mirror where the PNC/R was portrayed negatively, the New Nation did the same for the PPP/C, referring to it 125 times in a negative light, only 2 positive and 4 balanced references.

Government was next in line with 11.74% of coverage, most of which was pessimistic (56 negative, and 8 balanced references). The others followed in this order General – 6.73% of coverage with 6 positive, 25 neutral and 7 negative references, GECOM – 2.53% with 2 positive, 2 neutral and 6 negative references. The other contenders the GGG and the ROAR obtained less than 1% showing in this newspaper. (See **Graph 5.1**)

Graph 5.1: New Nation – Total Coverage



Not only did we pay a close attention to the percentage of space given to stakeholders and tone of the coverage, but also our focus was to monitor the adherence to the Media Code of Conduct. Like the Mirror, we cannot say that the New Nation was balanced, fair or accurate, in fact it was far from that. For instance one columnist pen-named Philo spewed hate each week against the incumbent PPP/C. These examples underscore our findings:

- The reporter gives the view that the PPP/C is importing guns into Region 9. No one from the PPP/C was allowed to respond. (29/01/01 – 03/02/01)
- “Odinga Lumumba in trouble again” (28/01/01 – 03/02/01, p.8)

- “PPP/C regime terrorizing Amerindian residents in Region 9” (28/01/01 – 03/02/01, p.8)
- Concerned public servants complain of PPP/C regime burning documents because they fear removal from office (21/02/01 – 27/02/01, p.4)

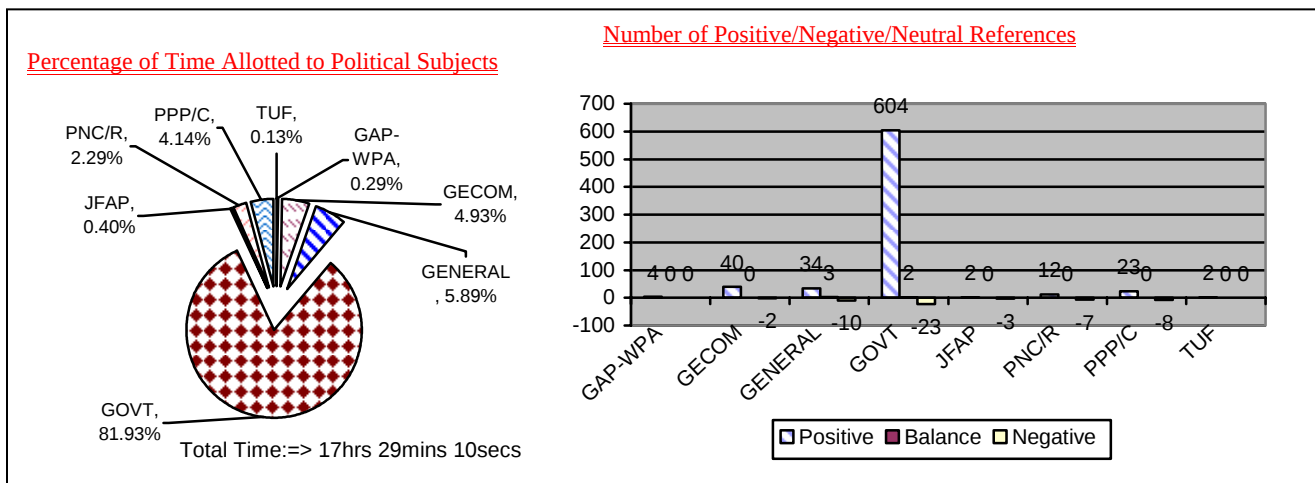
RADIO NEWS – VOICE OF GUYANA

Radio broadcast is unique in terms of both ownership and geographical reach. Our analysis of this outlet is different from that of the print and television, since there is really, only one radio station the opportunity for comparisons was prohibited. Nonetheless, the following observations tell their own story.

Pre-Nomination: 28/12/2001 – 14/02/2001

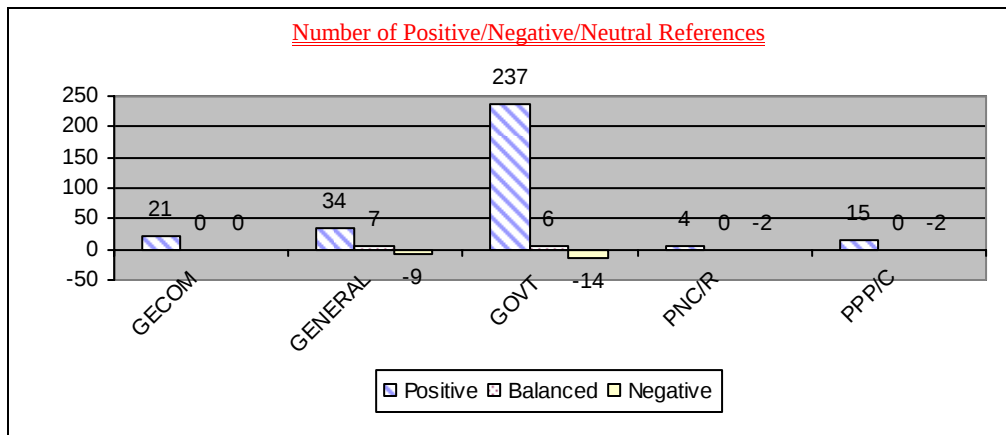
During the pre-nomination monitoring period 28 December through 14 February, 2001, **Graph 6.1** shows 81.93% of the news coverage by the Voice of Guyana (VOG) that was relevant to the upcoming elections was devoted to stories of the incumbent government (PPP/C), further these stories presented the government almost entirely in a positive light. Among the parties, running the election the PPP/C received the most coverage – 4.14%, PNC - 2.29%. News about the incumbent was mostly positive, on the other hand, the main opposition PNC/R is portrayed negatively half of the time. The other parties – JFAP, TUF, and GAP-WPA received less than 1% of the relevant coverage. The other smaller parties received no attention.

Graph 6.1: VOG – News Items Coverage



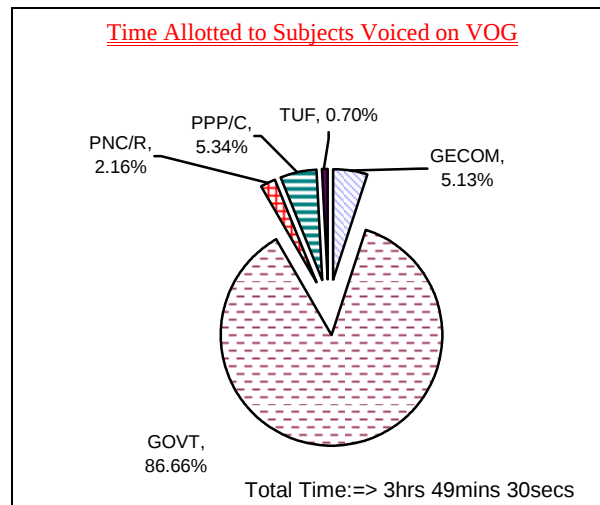
News headlines were a major consideration for precisely what they are worth. The fact is that this is integral to capturing the attention of the listener, viewer, and hearer. In the period, **Graph 6.2** indicates that the news headlines were mostly favourable to the government and generally about the affairs of the incumbent.

Graph 6.2: VOG – Headlines Coverage



We also examined the question of who is allowed to speak in their own voice, regardless of the subject of their comments. Our **Graph 6.3** points out that of a total time of **3hours 39minutes**, government officials or their representatives were all allowed 3hours 18minutes, to speak in their own voice. Of three political parties allowed to speak, the PPP/C representatives were allowed 12 minutes, 16 seconds followed by the PNC/R with 4 minutes, 57 seconds and the TUF 1 minute, 37 seconds. GECOM officials were also allowed the opportunity to speak on the air for just over 11 minutes during the newscasts.

Graph 6.3: VOG – Individuals Voice Coverage



In this period monitored, some attention was given by VOG to the PNC/R and their campaign. However, a number of items negatively biased the PNC/R. Verification of incidents noted and comments from individuals is integral to balanced coverage. Samples of noteworthy items are present below.

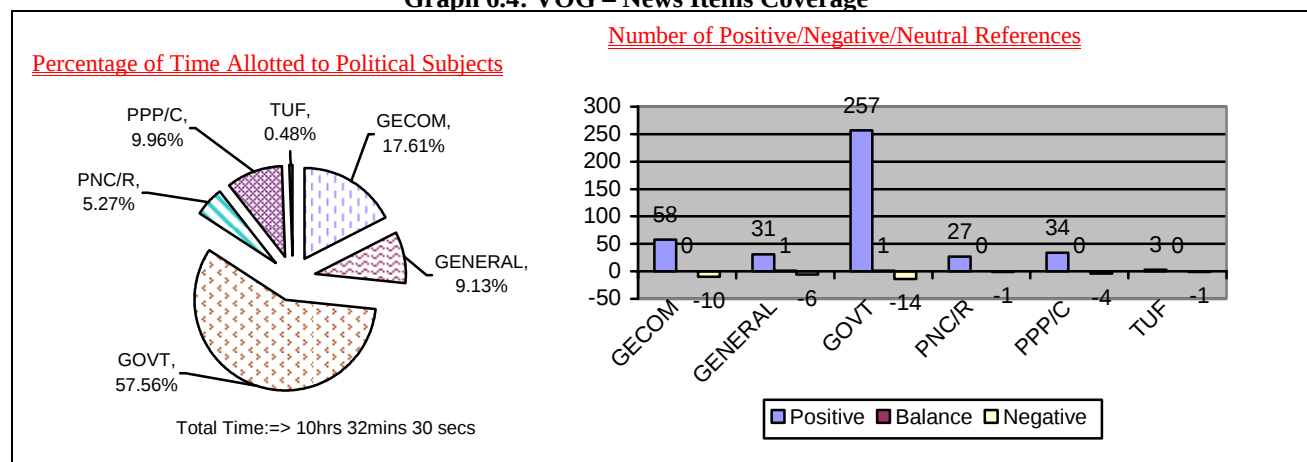
- PPP/C refuted claim by PNC/R leader that the judge's ruling is an act of extreme generosity (17/01/01, 07:00, item 1),

- President Jagdeo pointed out that PNC/R parliamentarian Winston Murray had unreservedly supported the decision for the use of voter ID cards in the 1997 GGRE (17/01/01, 7:00, item 2),
- “The leader of the PNC/R launches a verbal attack on St. Lucia’s Dr. Kenny Anthony for what he calls unwarranted interference” (VOG 15/01/01, 12:00, item 2).

Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

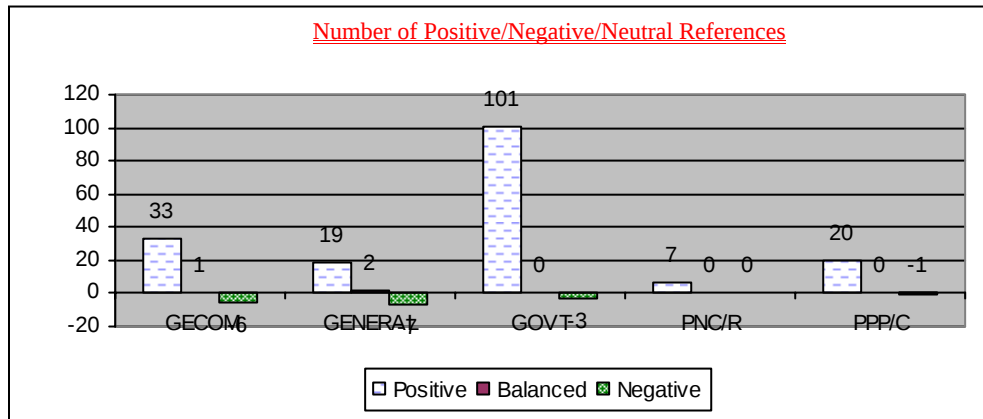
By this time, our unit had published two reports on the compliance with the Media Code of Conduct for GGRE 2001. A cursory view of Voice of Guyana shows significant changes in time allotted to relevant political subjects (See **Graph 6.4**). The time that the government received reduced by 24.37% when compared to the previous period. While the overall time devoted to elections related news reduced from 17hrs 30mins, to 10hrs 32mins, political parties PPP/C (1:02:59), PNC/R (33:19), TUF (03:01) and the GECOM (1:51:22) were awarded coverage that is more generous than previously seen. In this period, subjects received mostly positive coverage.

Graph 6.4: VOG – News Items Coverage



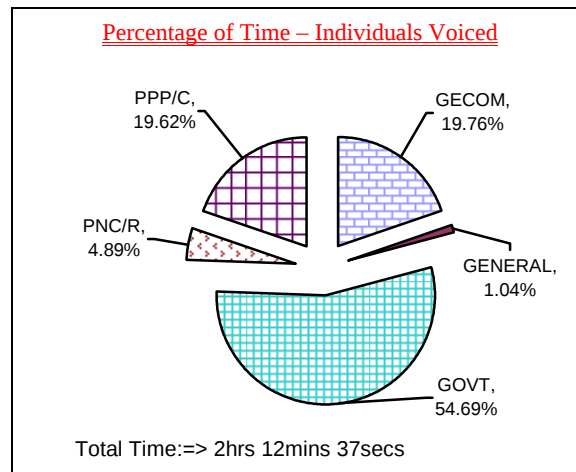
Headlines were overwhelmingly in favour of the government, and otherwise distributed over the PPP/C, PNC/R, and GECOM. There was also less negative news about the government (See **Graph 6.5**)

Graph 6.5: VOG – Headlines Coverage



Similarly, the total time allotted to subjects to present their views was changed as indicated by **Graph 6.6**, with Government receiving 54.69% (1:12:32), a significant reduction from the pre-nomination period. As a result, increases were noted in the time for GECOM (0:26:12) and the ruling PPP/C party (0:26:01). The change was not significant for the main opposition but indeed doubled from 2.16% to 4.89%, in terms of time to give their side of the story.

Graph 6.6: VOG – Individuals Voiced Coverage



If one expected to hear discussions of crime, the provision of water, job creation, the establishment and/or improvement of infrastructure as well as issues of economic and social development, there were largely absent from pre-election coverage over the 5 weeks of monitoring radio. When such matters were included, they tended to be as election promises of the main political parties covered in an uncritical, un-analytical fashion.

The following examples provide a sample of such coverage:

- “the PPP/C pledges 64,000 new jobs once re-elected” (18/03/01, 12:00, item 1)

- “PNC/R says it will restore full education and re-capitalize the Guyana Defence Force once it got into office” (18/03/01, 12:00, item 2),
- “Ministerial Adviser on Empowerment, Odinga Lumumba, says sports facilities and a multipurpose Hall are among the many projects approved on the President’s Youth Choice Initiative. (10/03/01, 18:00, item 4),
- “Guyana is proud to become the chief exporter of rice to the CARICOM market” (10/03/01, 12:00, item 1),
- “Region 6 spends G\$3.4M to develop area” (06/03/01, 12:00, item 5),
- “G\$23M water project to come on stream soon” 04/03/01, 12:00, item 2)
- “President Bharrat Jagdeo says Guyana is ready to benefit from further debt relief after elections would have been held” (01/03/01. 7:00, item 1),
- “President Bharrat Jagdeo says the construction of the Berbice River bridge should begin in the next two months” (26/02/01, 12:00, item 1)
- “President Bharrat Jagdeo commits his government to giving out 50,000 house lots over the next 5 years” (20/02/01, 18:00, item 1)

Although much attention was given to the Police Force given their integral role for peace and stability, such discussions failed to address crime and violence as an election issue. Rather, there was an ardent attempt to heighten the image of the Guyana Police Force. Thus, we see:

- “The overall pre-election so far has been relatively calm, so says the top cop” (12/03/01, 18:00, item 6),
- “Police in Berbice say they are investigating every claim of intimidation of political party workers, but insist they cannot chase ghost” (08/03/01, 18:00, item 1),
- “Police in Berbice to stop threats against persons because of political affiliation” (09/03/01, 7:00, item 5),
- “Police to get tough with persons caught vandalising road signs and reflectors” (07/03/01, 6:00, item 5),
- “The police top cop says there is no new claim of double registration” (06/03/01, 18:00, item 2)

“ The Media in the exercise of their constitutional right of free expression, and in recognition of their consequential social responsibility to the society which they serve, will at all times

endeavour to: present and clarity, as far as possible, the goals and values of the constituent groups, organisations and parties contesting the elections and of the society in general.”²

However, monitoring of the radio, revealed an absence of any exploratory coverage necessary to build public confidence in the Elections Commission. The Chairman of GECOM and its Public Relations Office primarily undertook this task. Other coverage resulted from statements by the main political leaders. A sample of such coverage is included here:

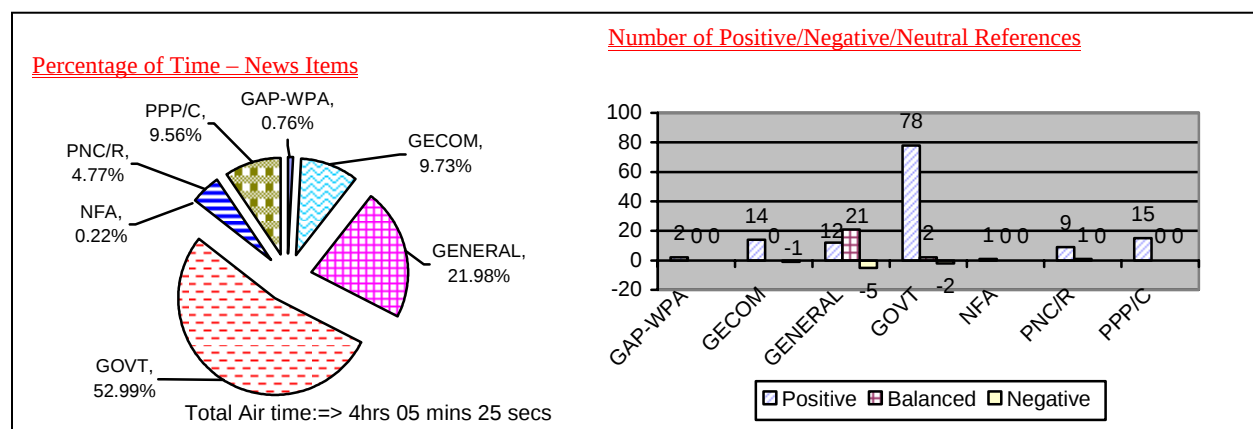
- “The Guyana Elections Commission says modern technology in place for an efficient reporting system” (19/03/01, 18:00, item 3),
- “Elections Commission says mechanisms are in place to deal with electoral officers who do not comply with instructions on polling day” (17/03/01, 18:00, item 1),
- “Elections Commission is confident that Monday’s General Elections will be in keeping with internationally accepted standards” (17/03/01, 12:00, item 1),
- “The ruling PPP/C is not impressed with the conduct of yesterday’s voting by the disciplined services” (13/03/01, 07:00, item 1),
- “PNC/R calls on GECOM to address flaws in Final Voters’ List (09/03/01, 7:00, item 2),
- “PPP/C satisfied with the Official List of Electors but expresses concern about some administrative aspects of the Elections Commission” (08/03/01, 18:00, item 1)
- “The Elections Commission Chairman, Major General Joe Singh is assuring the electorate that elections will be held on March 19th” (05/03/01, 18:00, item 2).

² Ibid, Guidelines Clause 2 (iv), p.2

Post-Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

In this brief period, much of the radio coverage presented the elections as running smoothly, however similar trends as the previous periods persisted as shown by the following **Graph 6.7**. The government received excessive coverage 52.99% (2:10:03) of total time. Due to the elections results, GAP-WPA, and NFA entered the airwaves of VOG, even though their coverage was less than 1%. The PPP/C maintained its dominance among the political parties, in the midst of the uncertainty that pervaded this period. The Elections Commission was allotted as much time as the PPP/C, 9.73% (0:23:27) and 9.56% (0:23:27 respectively. The election results dominated GECOM's coverage.

Graph 6.7: VOG- News Items Coverage

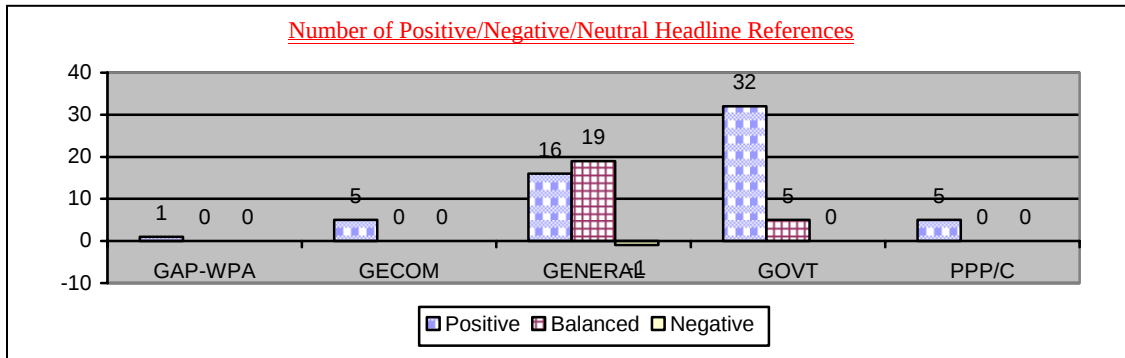


In the coverage of government, many news items were about the efforts of the Police Force to curb the perceived threats of political violence which often accompany elections, for example:

- “The Commissioner of Police assures that the police are in control of the situation on East Coast of Demerara” (23/03/01, 12:00, item 2),
- “The police arrest 14 persons as they continue to restore order in villages along the East Coast Demerara” (23/03/01, 18:00, item 2)

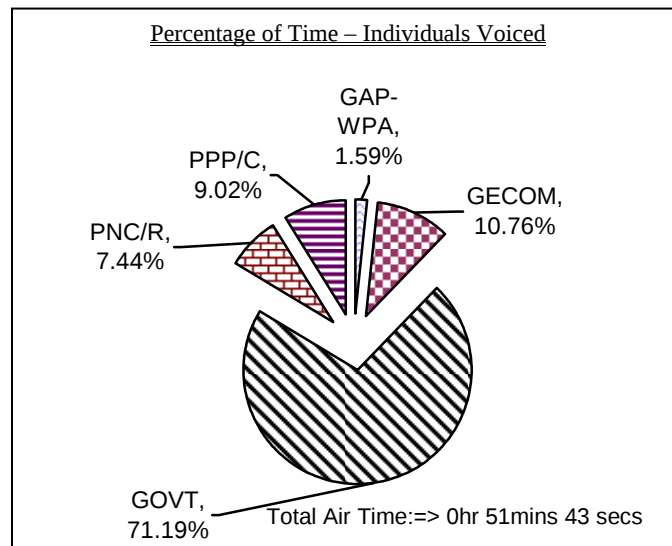
A significant amount of time was also devoted to congratulatory messages. Another factor attributing to the amount of time to Government was the concern among education officials about the impact of the disturbances on public schools. The items in the general category were noteworthy for the attention given to the comments by the various observer groups on the conduct of the elections and the motion filed by Joe Hamilton (PNC/R Candidate) in the High Court to block the swearing in of the President elect Bharrat Jagdeo. As such in this category, most of the stories portrayed the subjects in a positive and neutral manner. At the same time, there were stories that are more negative in the general category than in others.

Graph 6.8: VOG – Headlines Coverage



Commensurate with the wide coverage attributed to Government, was the time given to Government officials and representatives to speak on air. Such individuals included President Jagdeo, the Police Commissioner, Laurie Lewis, Chief Education Officer, Ed Caesar and other senior officials of the Public Hospital Georgetown. The representatives of GECOM allowed to speak in their own voice were Chairman Major General Joe Singh, CEO – Gocool Boodoo and Media Consultant, Hugh Chomondeley. The persons representing the political parties were Rupert Rooppnarine, Haslyn Parris and Robert Corbin respectively.

Graph 6.9: VOG – individuals Voiced Coverage



An eventful and turbulent atmosphere provided much news for the adept journalist. However, the challenge the media operatives face in this period is to be the eyes and ears on Guyana and to filter and edit massive amounts of information into a balanced package. Nevertheless, our monitoring of radio revealed many bland items. Broadcasters displayed limited creativity but instead relied on the statements of various stakeholders to comprise the news of the day; as is evident in the following examples:

- “Guyana Trade Union Congress says it is prepared to work with President Bharrat Jagdeo and PNC/R leader, Desmond Hoyte in putting Guyana First” (31/03/01, 7:00, item 2),
- “Guyana’s Ambassador to the OAS calls upon the international community to condemn acts of violence and intimidation in Guyana” (29/03/01, 18:00, item 1),
- “ROC is calling on youths not to be separated by racial tension. Political leaders and media houses need to desist from promoting racial separation” (29/03/01, 07:00, item 5),
- “The Guyana is First group condemns the attack on Mr. Haslyn Parris...” (29/03/01, 7:00, item 3)
- “The people’s National Congress Reform has blamed GECOM for present unrest in Guyana...” (28/03/01, 18:00, item 6),
- According to the Commonwealth Observer Group, “Guyana can only move forward if ethnic politics is removed.” (26/03/01, 07:00, item 2)
- “PNC/R says that it is concerned about unwarranted attack on Mr. Haslyn Parris...” (25/03/01, 18:00, item 5)

TELEVISION NEWSCASTS

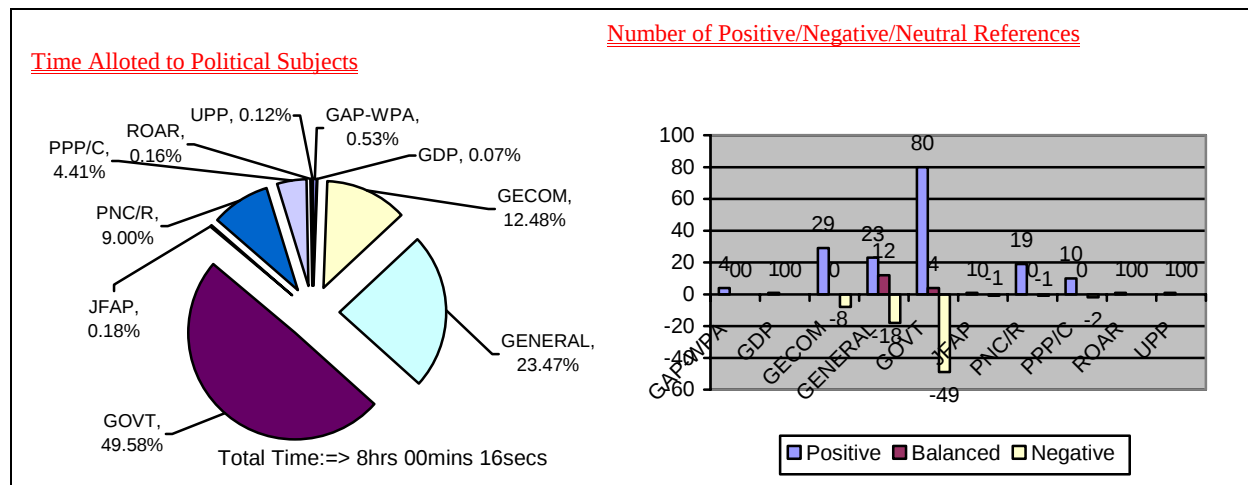
“Editorial judgements therefore continue to rest solely with the respective organizations. These judgements aim to subscribe to the highest principles of impartiality, fairness and integrity, always separating fact from inference in matters of political and other controversy and supported by eye-witnessed and attributable official statements and other sources to corroborate facts in particular stories.”³

CNS – CHANNEL 6: PRIME NEWS

Pre-Nomination: 02/01/2001 – 14/02/2001

During the pre-nomination monitoring period 02 January to February 02, 2001 **Graph 7.1** below shows, that just under half (3:58:08) of the total 8 hours regarding election related news concerned the Government. This was followed by 23.47% time devoted to general issues that clearly affected the elections, but did not solely affect a specific party. GECOM received 12.48 % (0:59:56) of coverage and the PNC/R with 4.41% (0:21:12). The smaller parties – JFAP, ROAR, UPP, GAP-WPA and GDP – all received coverage under 1%, a trend that remained consistent during this period.

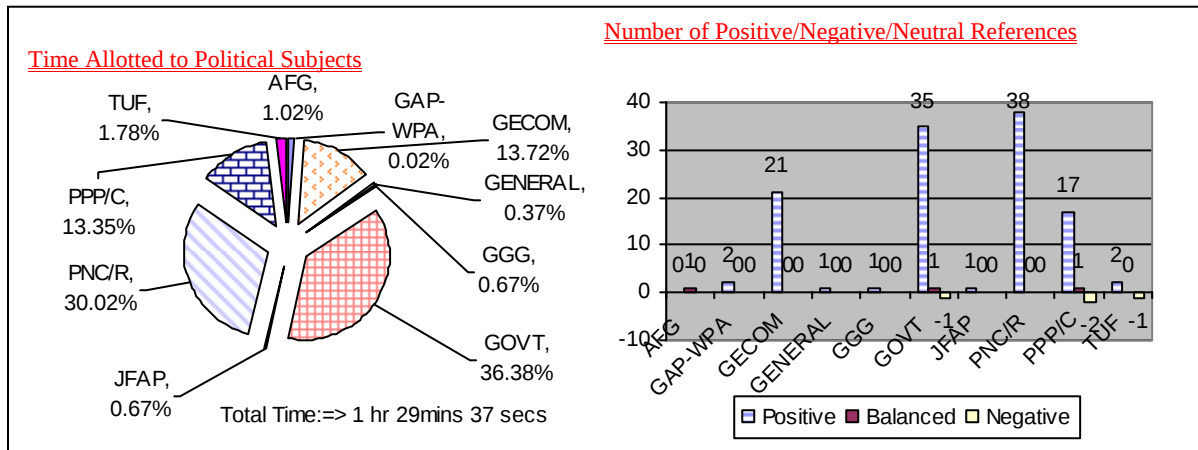
Graph 7.1: Prime News – News Items Coverage



When compared to other subjects the Government received considerably high positive coverage. On the other hand, more than one-third of the references are negative. Total references tripled the references given to any other political subject under review. Only 4 of the references were balanced coverage where both sides of the story were examined and portrayed in an objective manner. The General category came second with a more balanced approach where more emphasis was placed on reporting events in a more objective manner.

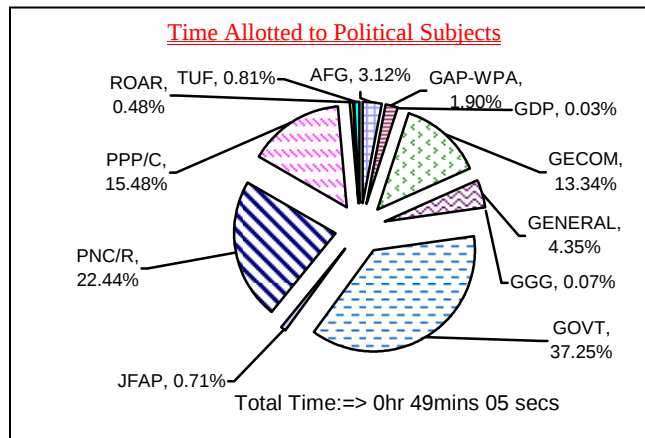
³ Ibid., Guidelines Clause 4, p.4

Graph 7.2: Prime News – Picture & Video Coverage



Graph 7.3 highlights our monitors' examination of the sources accessed for verification of news items by media personnel. There is strong indication that the Government was a main source of information. Of the total 49 minutes of news time allocated to quotes and citations, the government shows up at 37.25% (0:18:17) followed by the PNC/R – 22.44 % (0:11:01), PPP/C – 15.48% (0:07:36) and GECOM with 13.34% (0:06:33). The GGG, GDP, GAP-WPA, AFG, TUF, ROAR, JFAP and the General category all received less than 5% each of total access time.

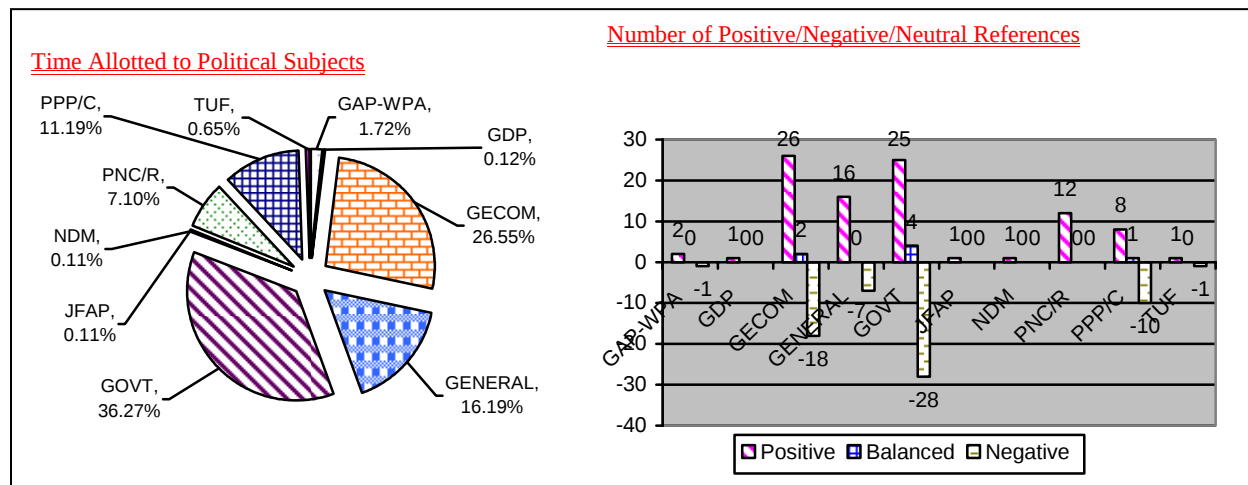
Graph 7.3: Prime News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

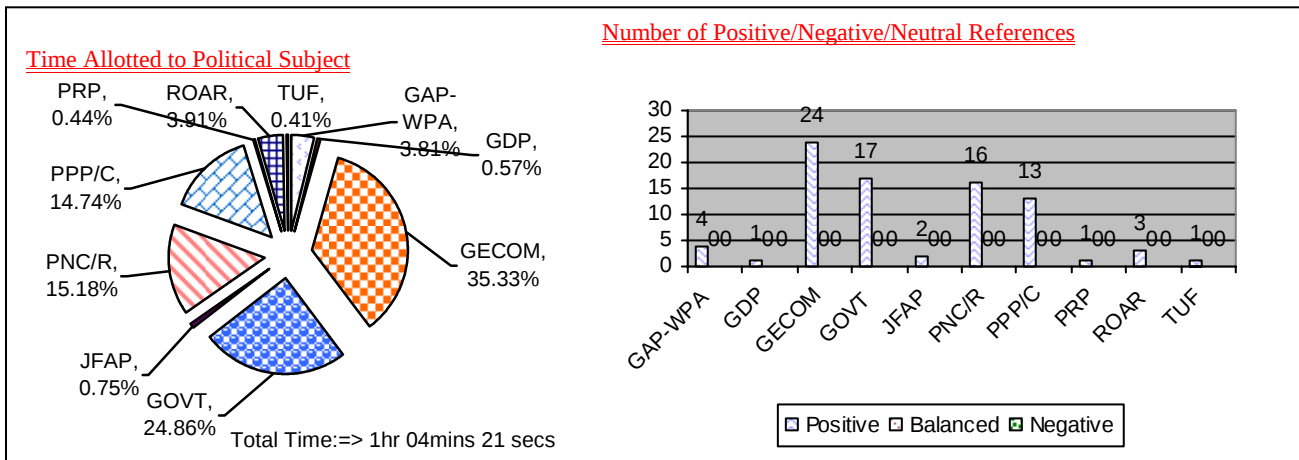
Once more, as several media monitoring teams opine on the performance of the media in the run-up to the GGRE 2001, there are notable changes in Prime News coverage as highlighted by **Graph 7.4**. Immediately, attention is drawn to the reduction in government related news to 1hr 48minutes 49seconds. Further, the distribution of positive and negative stories evens out over the entire period. A little over a quarter of the total time (1:19:39) was about the GECOM; again there is a significant change from the previous period, here a clear attempt was made to air more balanced stories. In this period the coverage for the main political parties was reversed: the PPP/C gained approximately 4% more coverage than the PNC/R. However, all the items about the PNC/R were positive, this was not the case for the PPP/C who received ten negative items compared to eight positive and only one neutral. All the other political parties continued to enjoy significantly less coverage as before in the pre-nomination period.

Graph 7.4: Prime News – News Items Coverage



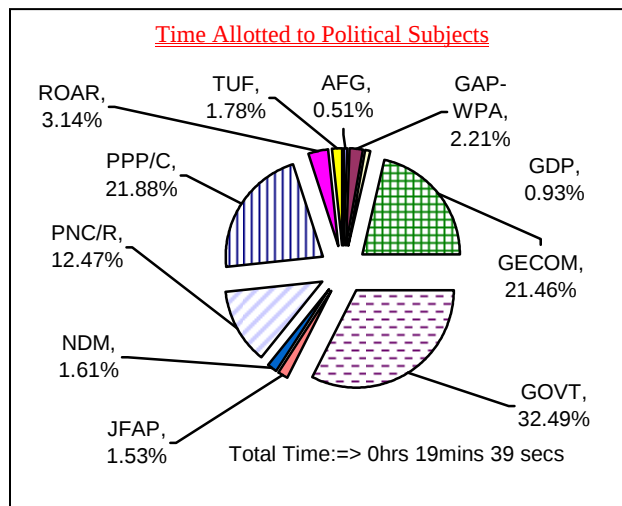
For the audio/ visual time allotment displayed by Graph 7.5, GECOM personnel were allowed more time on camera to explain their views, shown by an increase from 13.72% to 35.33% (0:22:44); the Government decreased from 36.38% to 24.86% (0:16:00), and the PNC/R decreased from 30.02% to 15.18% (0:09:46). All the rest of parties received the same marginal coverage as in the pre-nomination period. The degree of support for one or another party was reflected more clearly in the ratio of positive/neutral/negative references to that party in the actual volume of coverage that the party received. A notable exception from the last period is Prime News' absolute positive portrayal of all the individuals allowed airtime.

Graph 7.5; Prime News – Picture & Voice Coverage



In **Graph 7.6**, for persons quoted during this period, the Government, PPP/C, GECOM and the PNC/R still stood out as the major parties accessed for news.

Graph 7.6: Prime News – Individuals Quoted Coverage

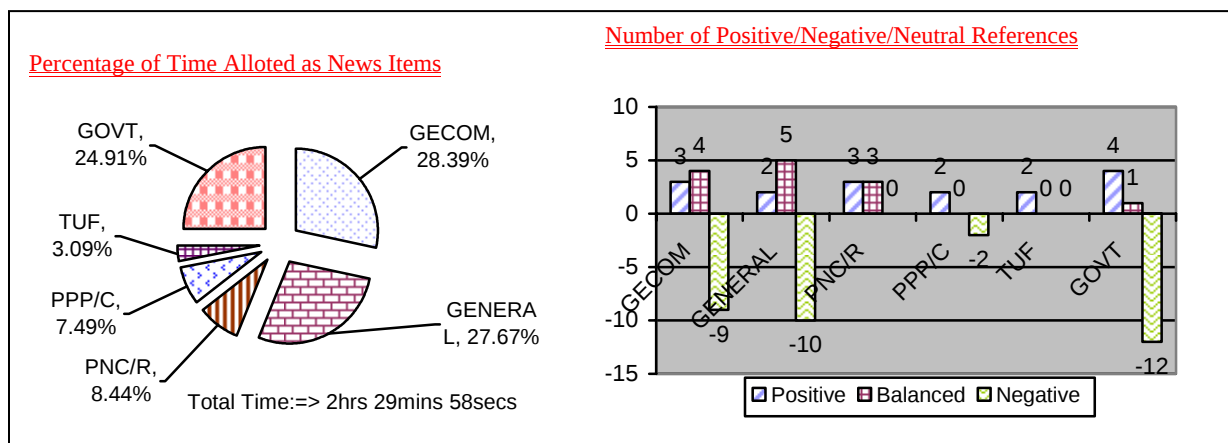


It may be fair to say that the government's importance decreased in this electioneering period as the emphasis shifted to sources for the PPP/C. This period also witnessed a decline in PNC/R sources accessed from 22.44% to 12.47% and a predictable increase in GECOM sources accessed. The general trend of minimal attention to smaller parties persisted. This can be explained as by this time it was probably inferred that PPP/C, PNC/R and GECOM were the major players in the 2001 elections, and so commanded the majority of attention for the period under review.

Post-Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

The Prime News broadcast Graph 7.7 illustrates the prominent subjects in this period. Interestingly, the government still maintained a strong showing in this period with 24.91% (0:32:39)

Graph 7.7: Prime News – News Items Coverage



Considering the role of the Guyana Police Force in maintaining public order the government coverage bears this out. In fact, the importance of the government declined from a lavish 50% shown in the pre-nomination period to 24.91%. The main opposition PNC/R and the GECOM still ranked among those receiving major coverage shown by 8.44% (0:11:04) and 28.39% (0:37:12) respectively. The other political parties besides the TUF mentioned in the previous periods were attributed miniscule coverage if any at all. It may be fair to say that the activities of the major players crowded out the performance and opinions of the small parties. Our analysis by no means ignores the limited time in which broadcasters must fit the news of the day. The views of the Carter Centre, The European Union, the Commonwealth, the Caricom, and other Local Observer Groups are a significant weight in the General category.

The amount of coverage attributed to one particular category cannot be isolated from the tone of that coverage. Hence, our review of the Government and the GECOM categories above demonstrates that they were consistently advanced in a negative manner. This portrayal may have served to enforce negative perceptions and otherwise raise doubts. Not much has been said in the news item to explain or tell the other side of the story. Some items that depicted this tendency are highlighted below:

- PNC/R supporters and leaders march through the streets of Georgetown they claim they were disenfranchised, says GECOM to blame (18:30, 28/03/02, item 6),
- “A child among those shot by the Police this afternoon in the city” (18:30, 26/03/01, item 1),

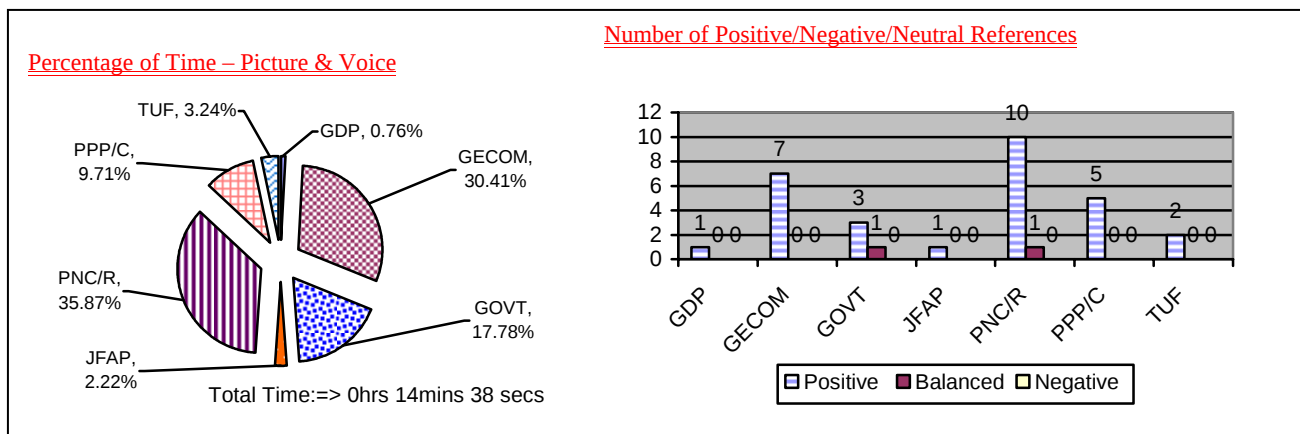
- The United Force is contending that the quality of the computer staff at the Elections Commission leaves much to be desired (18:30, 21/03/01, item 5),

While all the political subjects received some amount of positive and negative coverage, it is interesting to note the references for the major contenders. The stories about the PNC/R when compared with those about the PPP/C indicate bias in favour of the former. Further, there is a strong indication of unbalanced reporting with respect to the PPP/C. This is borne out by the illustrations below:

- A PPP/C candidate has had to seek police protection after he allegedly beat a young man with a gun” (18:30, 20/03/01, item 7). Neither the alleged perpetrator Odinga Lumumba nor the PPP/C was not sought for comment.
- Insert of disenfranchised Chateau Margot residents, unrelated to the overall story about the PPP/C accusing other political parties for their supporters’ disenfranchisement rather than GECOM (18:30, 20/03/01, item 4).

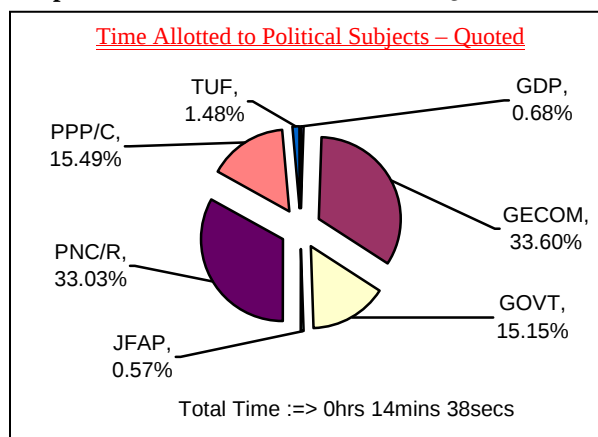
Speaking time on camera continued to feature four main categories – PNC/R 35.87% (0:09:25), GECOM 30:41% (0:07:59), Government 17.78% (0:04:40) and the PPP/C 9.71 (0:02:33). The TUF, JFAP and GDP were also allowed less than 4% each speaking time on camera. The representatives of the Parties, government institutions and agencies were allowed to air their views and opinions in an assured and confident manner. During this Prime News exercised much caution in the way subjects speaking on camera were portrayed, in that no person was shown in disturbing mode, as indicated by **Graph 7.8** below:

Graph 7.8: Prime News – Picture & Voice Coverage



Interestingly, the PNC/R and the GECOM are the most prominent sources accessed for information and comments. The Commission's role in the announcement of the votes cast unsurprisingly shows up at 33.60%. Another contributory factor is that the Media Centre established by the Commission allowed journalists ready access to the Commission's personnel and spokespersons. The preponderance of the PNC/R can be accounted for by their several objections on the conduct of the electoral process and the filed injunction to block the swearing in of President-elect Bharrat Jagdeo. This was based on the premise that due process did not obtain concerning the statement of polls. The PPP/C and Government sources were accessed less than half the times of the PNC/R, a significant decline from the previous period. Graph 7.9 illustrates that small parties that remained in focus – the TUF, GDP, and JFAP – show up less than 2% each.

Graph 7.9: Prime News – Individuals Quoted Coverage

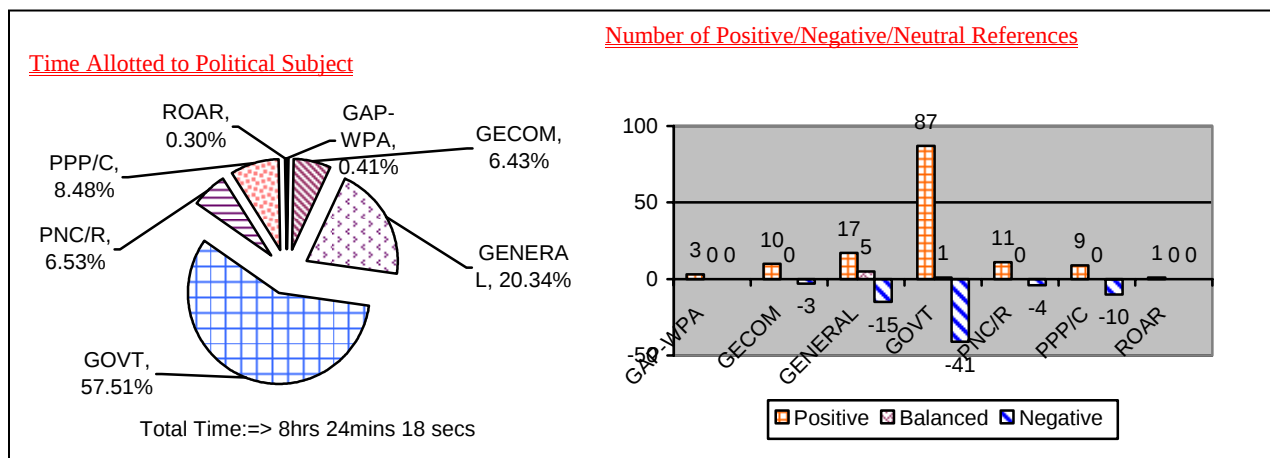


CHANNEL 7 – WRHM CAPITOL NEWS

Pre-Nomination: 02/01/2001 – 14/02/2001

During the pre-nomination monitoring period, of the total time (8 hours 24 minutes 18 seconds) allotted to political subjects, Government enjoyed the major share of the coverage with 57.51% (4:50:02). The General category followed with 20.34%, PPP/C – 8.48%, PNC/R – 6.53%, GECOM – 6.43%. The GAP/WPA and ROAR barely made the news with less than 1% of the relevant airtime time. (See Graph 8.1)

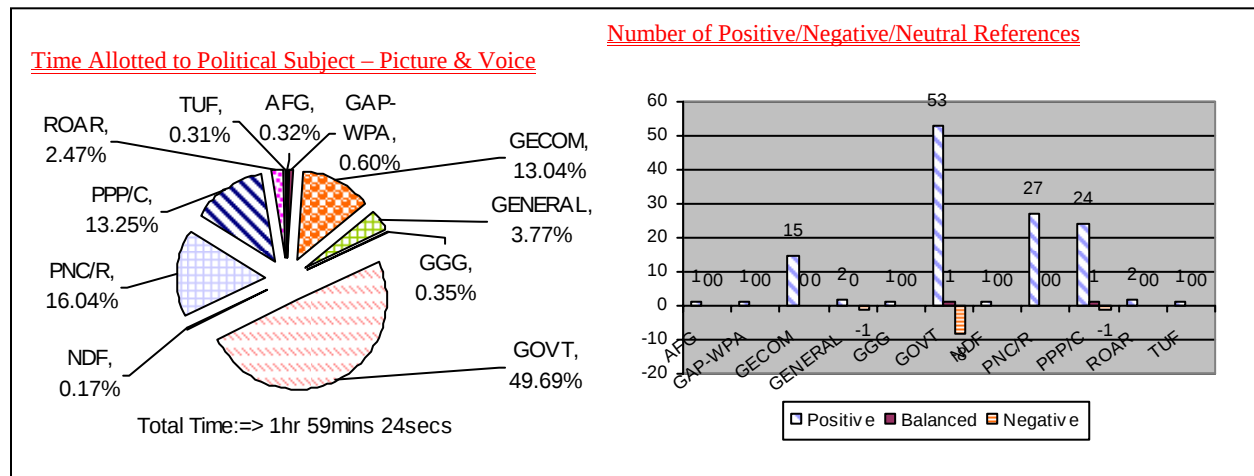
Graph 8.1: Capitol News – News Items Coverage



More than twice as many items portrayed the Government in a positive light than a negative light. GECOM received mostly positive coverage, as did the PNC/R. The PPP/C obtained nearly equal amounts of positive and negative coverage.

Of the total time (1:59:24) allotted to representatives of the various categories to speak on camera, Government fell just below the half mark with 46.69% (0:59:20). The PNC/R got 16.04% of the time allotted to such speakers, which is far less the time allotted to government but slightly more than the PPP/C. GECOM was also allowed as much time as the PPP/C.

Graph 8.2: Capitol News – Picture & Voice Coverage



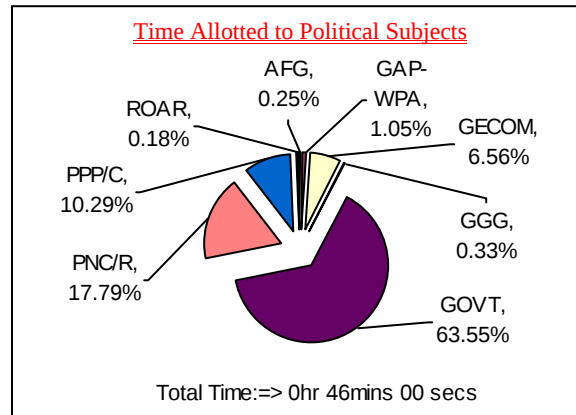
Upon examination (Graph8.2) of how the political parties, GECOM and Government representatives were portrayed when allowed to on camera, Government is the most favoured. Interestingly too, our findings show that the PNC/R was consistently portrayed in a positive light and PPP/C though mainly positive, also received 1 neutral and 1 negative reference. The positive coverage of the small parties is barely noticeable. During this period, Capitol News consistently portrayed the GECOM in a very positive manner.

As it relates to the time allotted to political subjects when political parties, Government or GECOM representatives were quoted, we found that representatives of Government were quoted 3 times (63.55%) more than the amount of time given to the other categories (**See Graph 8.3**). The PNC/R, PPP/C and GECOM followed with 17.79%, 10.29 and 6.56% respectively. Except for GAP/WPA with 1.05%, the small parties received less than 1%. Generally, subjects were portrayed in a positive and constructive manner that lent to the veracity of the story or offered a different perspective on an issue. Yet there are a few instances where the party in question should have been given an opportunity to respond, these are singled out:

- A story that the PPP/C's use of the song "Togetherness" by Square One in their campaign was in their campaign was illegal, offered no PPP/C comments (20:30, 24/01/01, item 5)
- In a story about Ronald Waddell a guest of "Straight Up" being arrested because of statements made on this show, was lopsided in that only Waddell was allowed to air his side of the story (20:30, 19/01/01, item 4)
- Similarly, a story about police lethargic response to an accident in which Ravi Harrinarine was killed only aired criticisms by Harrinarine's family (20:30, 09/01/01, item 6)

- The Guyana Sewerage and Water Commissioners (GS&WC) were criticised for a sewage overflow on a Tucville residence, without a comment from this government agency (20:30, 08/01/01, item 5)
- In a story about the all-Party committee, Capitol News did not allow a member of the PNC/R, WPA or the TUF to air his or her views. Only a PPP/C representative Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport – Gail Teixeira spoke (20:30, 08/01/01, item 2).

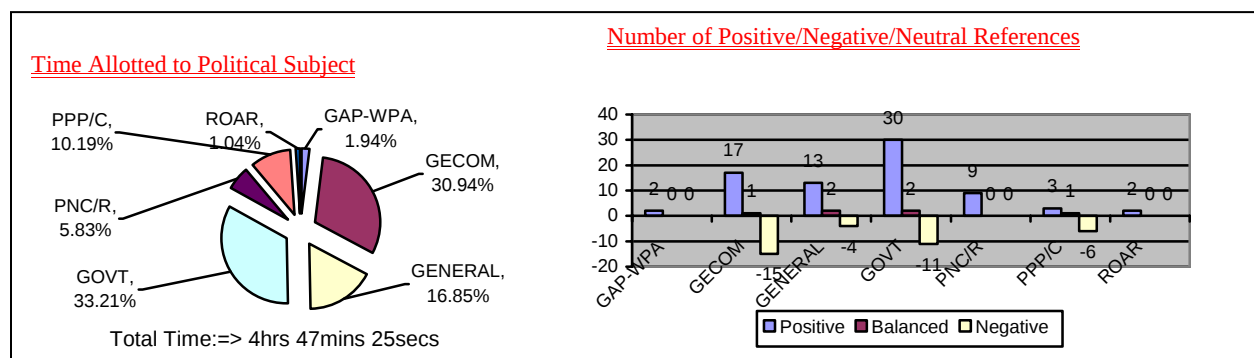
Graph 8.3: Capitol News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

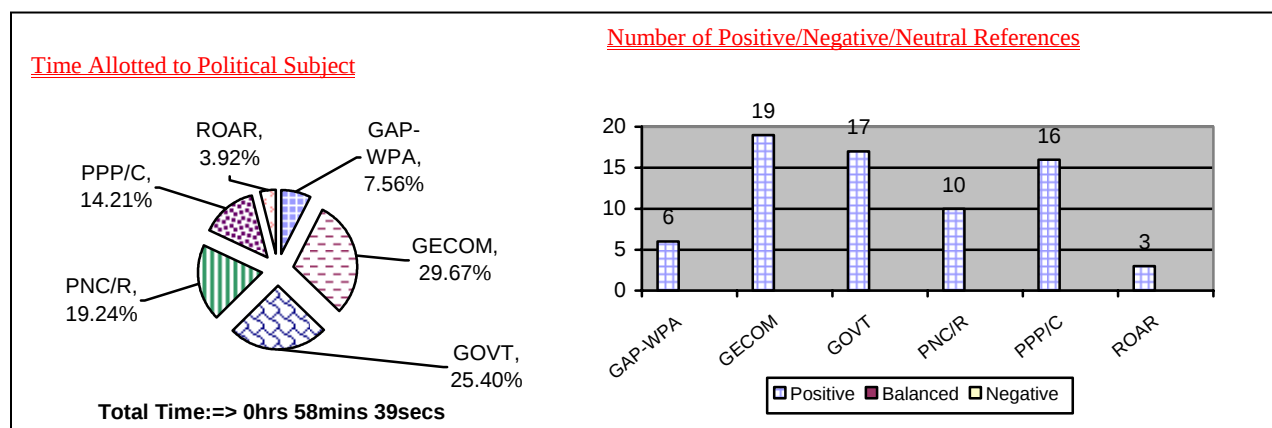
During the pre-election period, the bulk of the relevant news coverage went to the Government and again most of these stories were positive. Stories about GECOM took 30.94% of the relevant time with almost evenly divided positive and negative portrayals. The PPP/C enjoyed more coverage than the PNC/R, but the PPP/C was more often negative whereas the PNC/R was consistently positive. The other parties GAP-WPA and ROAR received significantly less coverage. (See Graph 8.4) Stories about the Nomination Day claimed their stake in the 16.85% General Category. In this regard, the Capitol News displayed exemplary coverage of this even as they offered the public a full view of the parties and/or candidates.

Graph 8.4: Capitol News – News Coverage



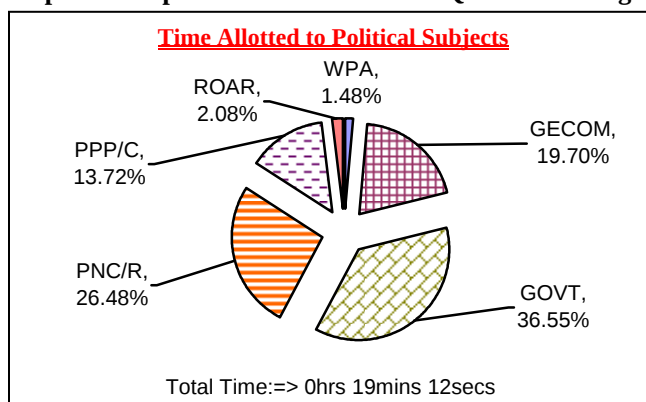
A look at who is allowed to present their views in their own words reveals GECOM and Government representatives were given a little more than one fourth of the total time (0:58:39). The PNC/R enjoyed an advantage of 19.24% over the 14.21% allotted to the PPP/C. The other parties enjoyed significantly less opportunity to present their views directly – GAP-WPA, 7.56% and ROAR, 3.92% as shown on **Graph 8.5**. The opportunity to speak on camera depicts the party representatives positively throughout this period.

Graph 8.5: Capitol News – Picture & Voice Coverage



With respect to how much time in a newscast was devoted to evidence of a facts or a different perspective (**Graph 8.6**) the Government 36.55% and PNC/R 26.48% were the most sought after for comments. At the same time, the Government and the PNC/R may have been primary source of the stories in this period through press briefs and conferences. The Capitol News subjects quoted and cited GECOM, 19.70% and PPP/C 13.72% of the total 19minutes 12 seconds devoted to providing evidence of accuracy.

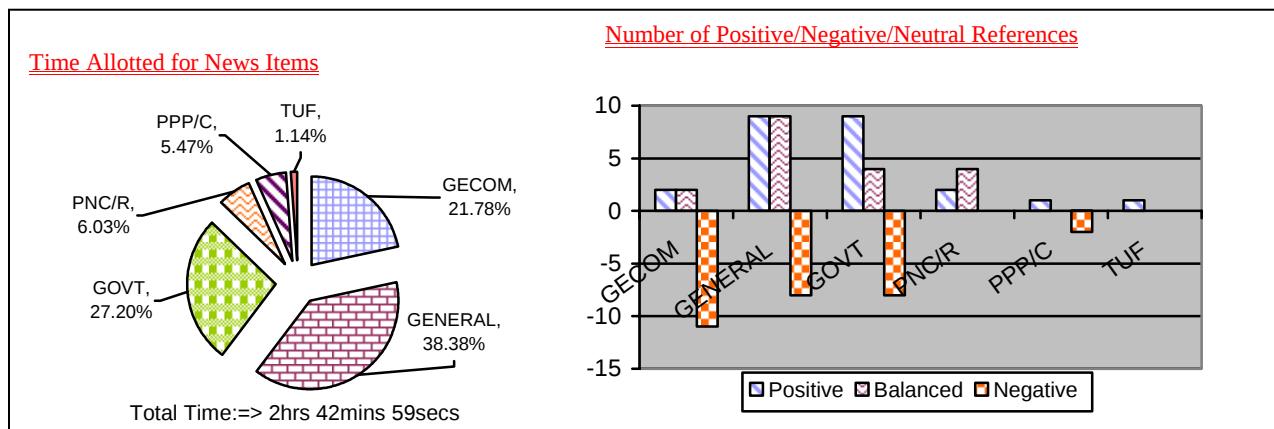
Graph 8.6: Capitol News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Post-Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

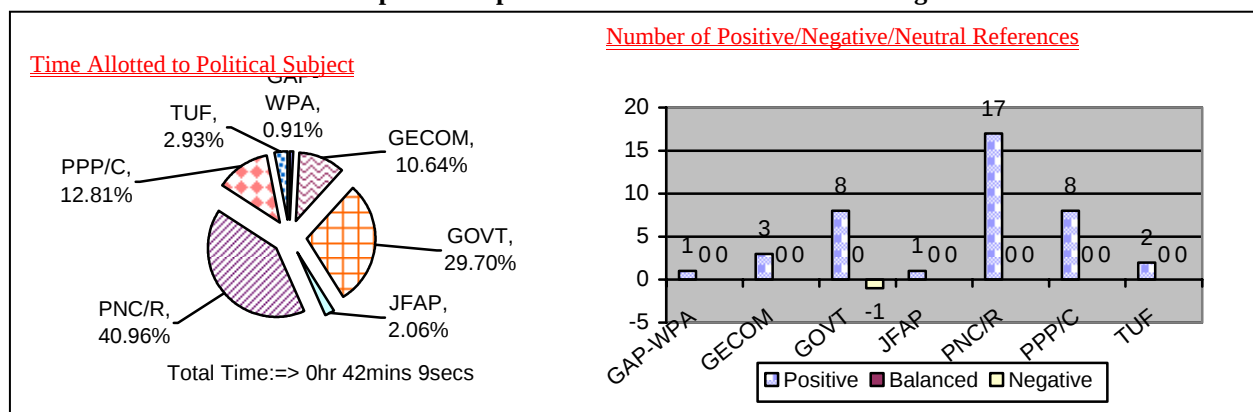
In this period, the General category cut into the Government and the GECOM's share of the total relevant news items (**Graph 8.7**), with 38.38% (1:02:33), reducing the Government and GECOM to 27.20% and 21.78% respectively. By this time, the ROAR did not receive specific attention by this newscast, but was mentioned in stories considered as General. More information was offered about the PNC/R than about the PPP/C, by 55 more minutes. At the same time twice the amount of stories about the PPP/C were negative as were positive. The tendency to depict the PNC/R in a positive light persisted in this brief period. Similarly, the practice of maligning GECOM also continued from the pre-election period, this is notable as the instances of positive or balanced stories are few. Largely we found that in this period a genuine attempt was made to air balanced stories as the graph 8.7 reveals.

Graph 8.7: Capitol News – News Items Coverage



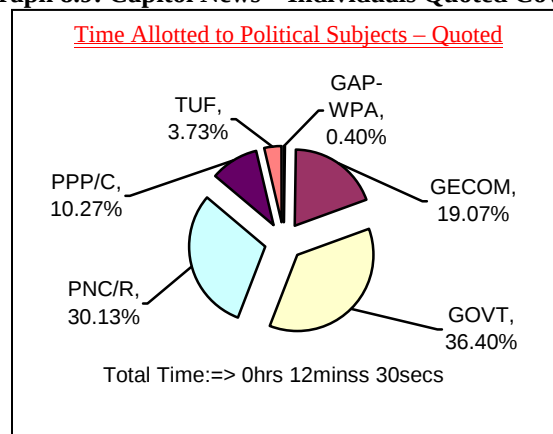
In this third period the percentage of time devoted to political subjects speaking on camera increased by five percent, this may simply have been the recognition of the need for news that is more balanced. The representatives of the PNC/R offered this opportunity took the bulk of the time with 40.96%. Government officials and representatives followed with 29.70%, the PPP/C 12.81% and GECOM 10.64%; there is a noticeable decline in the latter from previous periods. (See **Graph 8.8**)

Graph 8.8: Capitol News – Picture & Voice Coverage



As it relates to the total percentage of time given to quotations of the different stakeholders, the Government had the majority of the time – (36.40%). The Graph 8.9 below indicates that the PNC/R and GECOM followed with 30.13% and 19.07% respectively. Next were PPP/C – 10.27%, TUF -3.73%, and the trend continued for GAP/WPA, which received the least percentage of time as in the other periods despite its showing in the elections. Quotes and citations were generally positive and balanced.

Graph 8.9: Capitol News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Throughout this period, stories about the Police were less than complimentary. A few negative stories are noteworthy for the insensitive portrayal of subjects. Furthermore, these items could not contribute to an enabling environment, which was integral to peace and stability in Guyana at this particular time.

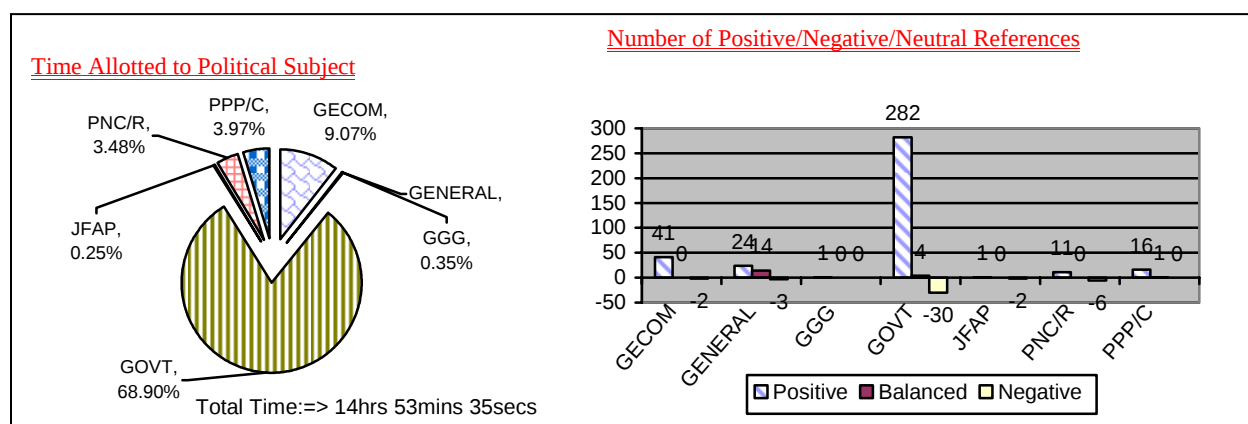
- A story about police against “inadequate food and poor working conditions” showed ranks protesting. In concluding the reporter opines, “it is unclear who will arrest the ranks for disturbing the peace and disorderly behaviour. I guess Mark Benschop should have been there” (20:00, 28/03/01, Item 4)
- Story points to similarity between errors in the GT&T directory and the Officials List of Electors. The viewer/listener is positioned to think that the call for an audit of GECOM’s database by the Observer group is because of the similarities pointed out. (20:30, 30/03/01, item 2)

GTV CHANNEL 11 – 6 O’CLOCK NEWS

Pre-Nomination: 02/01/2001 -14/02/2001

During this period, GTV favoured the government by apportioning their activities and affairs mammoth coverage as demonstrated by **Graph 9.1** the government received an overwhelming 68.90% (10:15:04) of the total airtime (14:53:35), while the other major subjects General and GECOM were allotted 14.05% (1:21:04) and 9.07% (2:05:33), respectively. Political parties, which received the state media’s attention, were the PPP/C, PNC/R, GGG and JFAP, received less than 4% each.

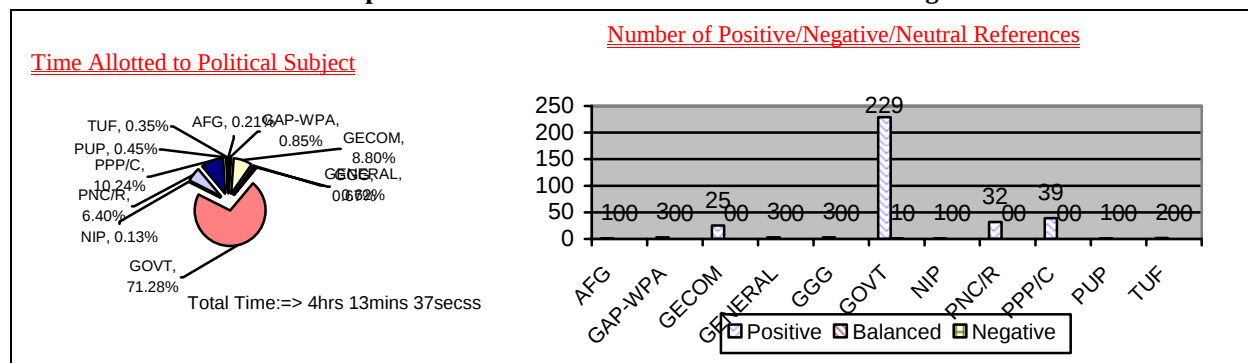
Graph 9.1: 6 O’clock News – News Items Coverage



GTV 11 consistently portrayed the government in a positive manner; the instances of negative coverage were mostly stories about the Police Force, the escape of prisoners and the lack of compensation to owner of Toucan Suites destroyed by the Police Force. The portrayals of the GECOM and the General category were generally positive, even though holistically almost insignificant. GTV 11 portrayed the other political parties in a negative manner more often than the PPP/C. The following analysis will indicate if this inadequacy persists.

In terms of who was allowed to air their views on camera during this period **Graph 9.2** reveals that the government was favoured again.

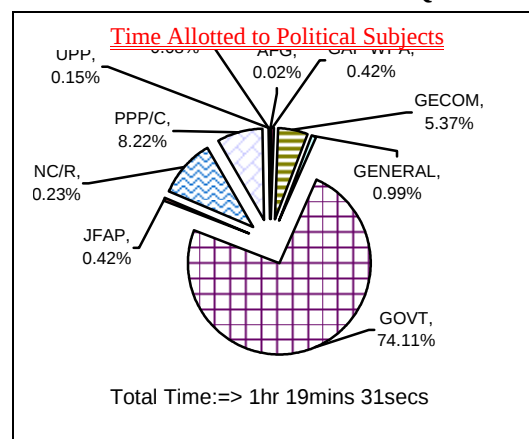
Graph 9.2: 6 O’clock News – Picture & Voice Coverage



Government officials were allotted 71.28% (3:00:46) of 4 hours 13 minutes 37 seconds to speak on camera and given the bulk of positive coverage. In comparison, GECOM 8.80% (0:22:19) PPP/C 10.24% (0:25:58) and even PNC/R 6.40% (0:16:24) and the other groups such as TUF, PUP, AFG and GGG received less than 1% of the total time. The images of individual government functionaries bombarded the newscasts appealing to the public through audio/visual inserts in their official capacities. The prominent ministers include Gail Teixeira, Geoffrey Da Silva, Shaik Baksh and Henry Jeffrey.

According to Graph 9.3, 74.11% (0:58:56) of all the quotes and citations on GTV 11 supported government news.

Graph 9.3: 6 O'clock News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



In this regard, members and representatives of the PPP/C and PNC/R were also accessed for comments. The news anchor was careful to reference the PNC/R more than the PPP/C shown by 10.23% (0:08:08) and 8.22% (0:06:32) respectively. However, some of the PNC's coverage was negative whereas the PPP/C was all positive. Similarly, GECOM officials were also quoted 5.37% of the total time selected by GTV 11 for references. Other political parties – GAP/WPA, UPP, AFG, TUF, and JFAP – whose representatives may have commented on a political issue not related to election were referenced, less than 1% of the time allotted to JFAP was negative.

The most outstanding features in the GTV 11 newscast that are worthy of comment are the insertion of opinion, lopsided and even erroneous news reporting which has compromised the claim to fair and balanced reporting. The following examples illustrate some specific examples that could have been improved by more diligent reporting, editing and/or writing.

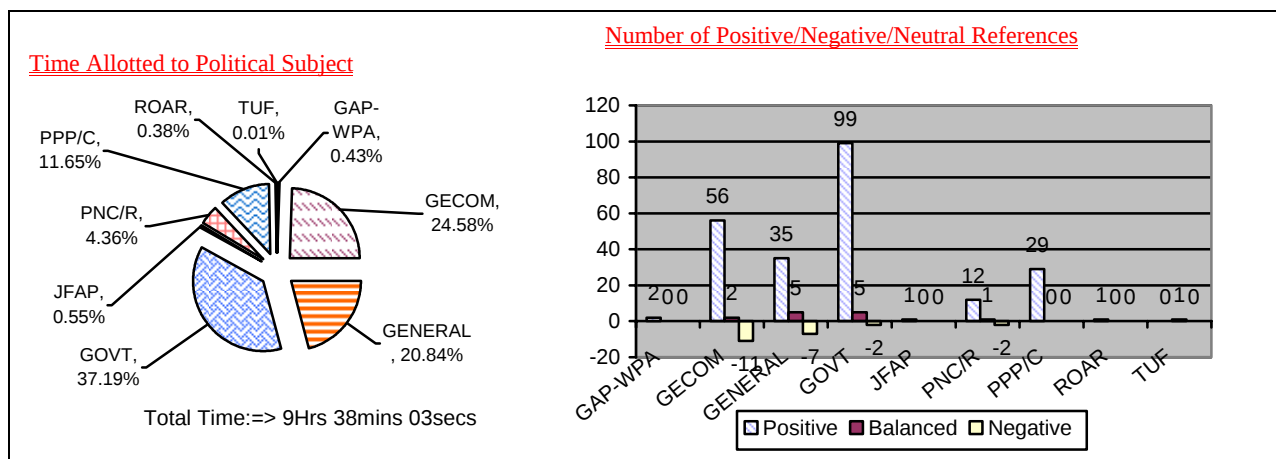
- First, he was Father Christmas, now he is the giver of the New Year, Shaik Baksh. What better way to start it than with a new house lot? Many in Grove, East Bank Demerara who received their house lots from Housing and Water dynamo Shaik Baksh are on their way to owning their own home, their own little bit of Guyana' (18:00, 21/01/01, item 5)

- “Ninety-one new housing schemes since taking office. It is a record of pride for the government. The man behind that now, Shaik Baksh, deserves a great deal of praise” (18:00, 16/01/01, item 7)
- “To sign up to a Caricom Accord not once, but twice and then not accept the results of their audit of the poll, that would have been as far as anyone could push loyalty within Caricom. But on Sunday night at his first campaign rally opposition leader Desmond Hoyte went further slamming into Caricom’s lead Prime Minister. Dr. Kenny Anthony, about his letter on the future governance of Guyana which had been written in response to one from Hoyte” (18:00, 16/01/01, item 9)
- “Both parties for the case are claiming victory” (18:00, 15/01/01, item 2), only PPP/C spokesman-Ralph Ramkarran was afforded the opportunity to claim victory on this newscast.
- “As President of this Nation he has always allowed the nation’s needs to guide him in his leadership role”(18:00, 12/01/01, item 1)

Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

GTV 6 O’clock News continued to devote most of the relevant news time to positive stories about the Government, allotting 37.19% (3:35:00) of the total time to them. This is problematic, as most of the items bordered on electioneering. The distinction between Government and incumbent party became all too blurred. It is also fair to say that an incumbent will always campaign on its achievements while in office. Considering the added responsibility of the GTV as a public broadcaster, it is not only disappointing but suggests an unfair advantage over other parties contesting the elections. However, in this period more time was also given to other categories such as GECOM 24.58% (2:22:05) and General 20:84% (2:00:28) as seen in **Graph 9.4**

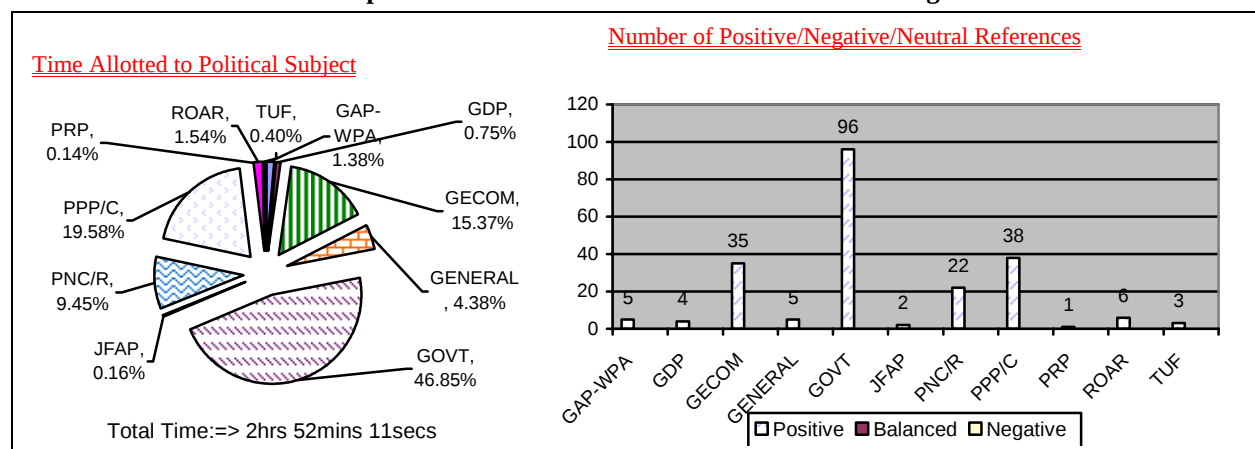
Graph 9.4: 6 O’clock News – News Items Coverage



However, for the political parties PPP/C again received the most coverage of 11.65% (1:07:22) all of which is positive, compared to PNC/R 4.36% (0:25:12) some of which was negative. Other political parties JFAP, GAP-WPA, ROAR, and TUF all received less than 1% positive coverage though this was positive or balanced.

It terms of who was allowed to present their story in their own voice regardless of the subject of their comments the government was given favourable time of 46.85% (1:20:02) of the total time with PPP/C in tow with 19.58% (0:33:43) and GECOM 15.37% (0:26:28) while ROAR and GAP/WPA enjoyed an increase to 1.54% and 1.38% respectively.

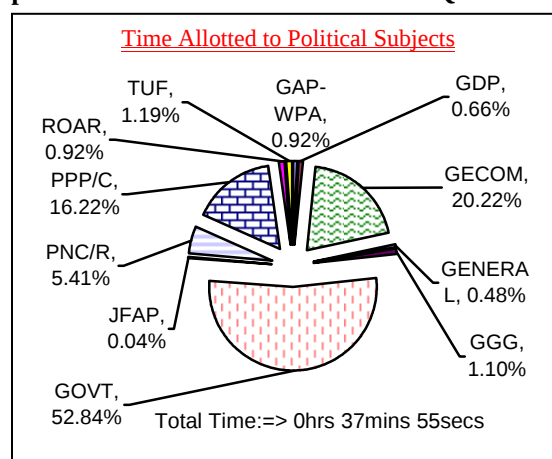
Graph 9.5: 6 O'clock News – Picture & Voice Coverage



The PNC/R received 9.45% (0:16:16), other parties the PRP, TUF, GDP, and JFAP remained at an insignificant amount or under 1%. (See Graph 9.5)

Quotations and citation were also in favour of the government though as reflected in Graph 9.6 the government sources declined to 52.84% (0:20:01) of the total 37 minutes 55 seconds dedicated to substantiation of news items.

Graph 9.6: 6 O'clock News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



The PPP/C sources were accessed three times less than Government and the PNC/R were accessed approximately one-fourth of the time allowed GECOM. The GGG though not a contesting party to the GGRE was quoted more often than the JFAP, GDP, GAP-WPA and ROAR. This may have been because of the fact that statements made by the leader of the GGG were mostly negative about their leaders' former party – the PNC/R.

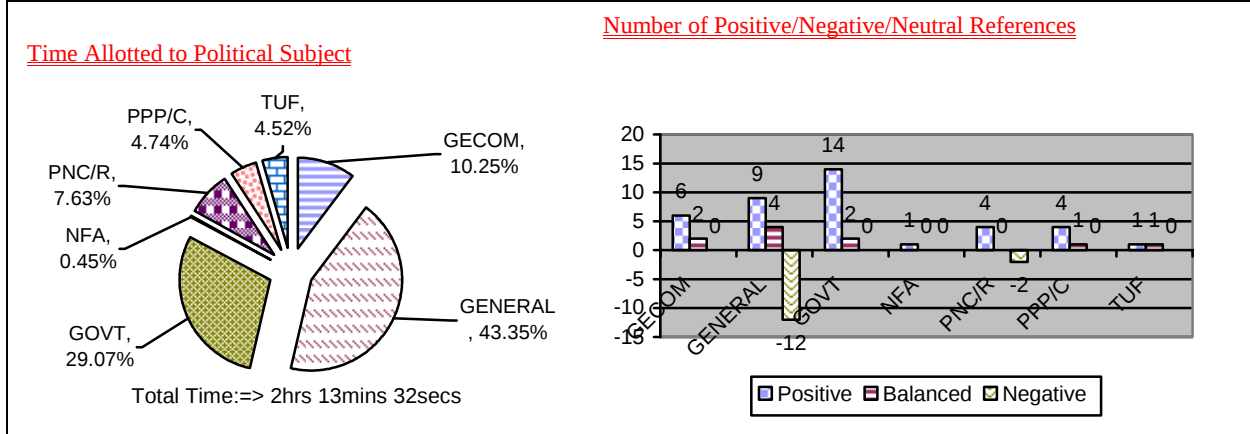
The preponderance of PPP/C news in this period is most notable. Daily newscasts covered many party activities and visits of the President around the country. One particular news item about the PPP/C rally showed footage for 159 seconds while the rally of the PNC/R had 69 seconds of coverage (26/02/01 & 27/02/01). GTV never aired the rallies for other parties; this is unfortunate. This outlet also aired many non-news programs that hailed the accomplishments of the government and ministries, indeed an unfair advantage. Nevertheless, this broadcast advanced GECOM in an enabling manner. News items consistently focused on the preparedness of the Commission for the March 19 Poll. The illustrations below represent the above scenario:

- “PPP Civic launches its manifesto and promises continued progress in the years ahead” (09/03/01, item 5)
- “PPP/C urges GECOM to select polling day staff based on merit” (07/03/01, item 6)
- Memorial for Cheddi Jagan – former President and PPP/C leader (06/03/01, item 5)
- “The Presidential candidate for PPP/C condemns storming and disruption of his political party meetings ...” (26/02/01, item 1)
- “More time to check for your name on the Voter’s List” (20/02/01, item 3)
- “GECOM caravan takes Voter list” (14/02/01, item 2)

Post – Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

During this period, the focus on government news declined slightly. The general category as seen in Graph 9.7 received (43.35%) nearly 1 hour of the **2hours 13minutes 32seconds** devoted to the elections news.

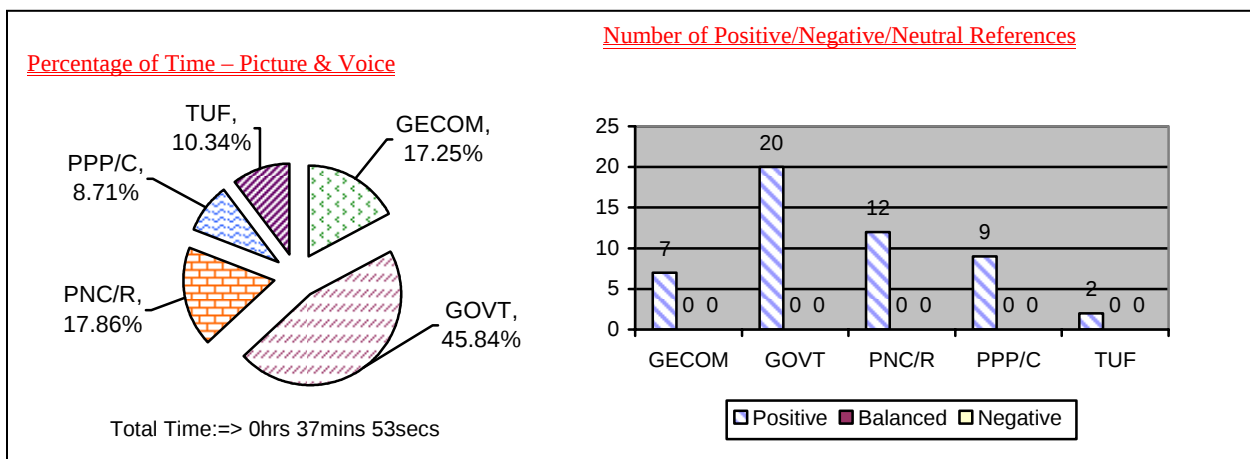
Graph 9.7: 6 O'clock News – News Items Coverage



Politically themed stories that were not election-specific such as the East Coast unrest, the burning of Belladrum Bridge, and the filed injunction blocking the swearing in of President-elect, claimed their stakes in the General Category. The tone of the coverage reflects a mostly negative scenario. The government follows with 29.07% (0:38:49), GECOM 10.25% (0:13:41) PNC/R 7.63% (0:10:11), PPP/C 4.74% (0:06:20), and TUF 4.52% (0:05:02) in GTV's coverage of the daily news. While there is a noticeable decline in the coverage of the PPP/C, many public affairs programmers were used to the party's advantage. The coverage of the NFA is close to negligible but even worse; GAP does not seem to be covered despite becoming the third party.

Again, government officials received the largest block of time to air their side of the story, to defend their action and/or offer a different perspective on the issue. Hence, **Graph 9.8** shows Government with 45.84% obtaining (0:17:22) of the total **37 minutes 53 seconds**.

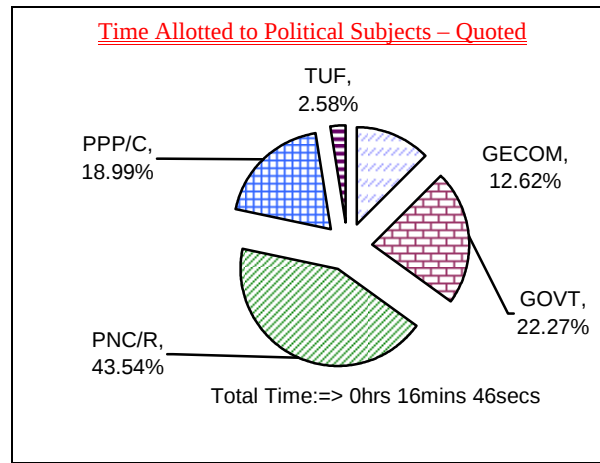
Graph 9.8: 6 O'clock News – Picture & Voice Coverage



In terms of who is allowed to speak and for how long Graph 9.8 shows that the government was allotted 45.84% of the total time, PNC/R 17.86%, GECOM 17.25%, TUF 10.34% and PPP/C 8.71%. However, only three political parties were given coverage. All categories were given positive coverage but TUF's coverage when compared to that of the government, PNC/R and PPP/C seems insignificant.

During this period, also there was a difference in the time allotted to the various categories in that the PNC/R received a significant amount of 43.54% for representatives cited or quoted as evident in Graph 9.9 while the government enjoyed 22.27%, PPP/C 18.99%, GECOM 12.62% and TUF 2.58%.

Graph 9.9: 6 O'clock News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



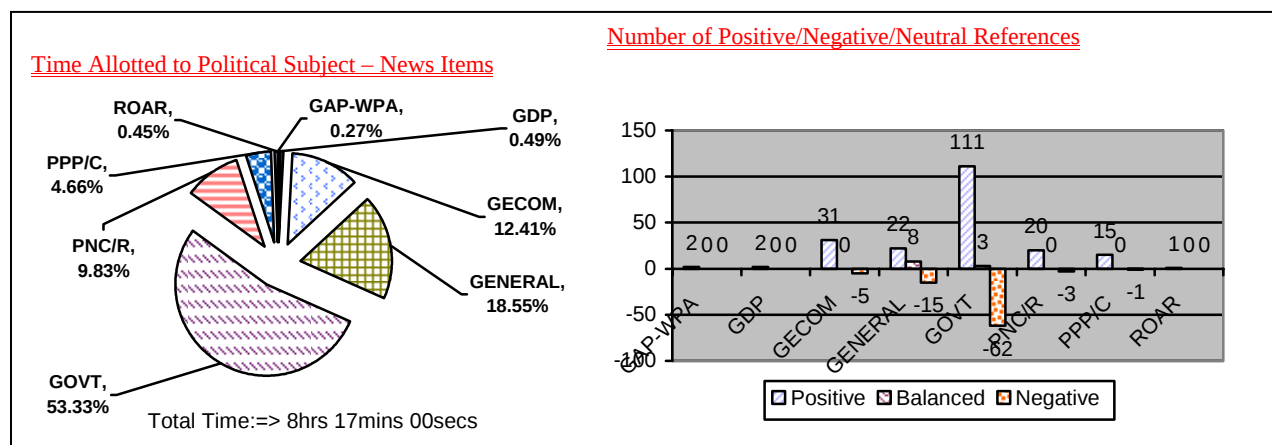
Although the attention to the incumbent was downplayed, the lack of coverage accorded to smaller parties is of concern; it is interesting to note that the small parties that did receive coverage were parties that seem aligned to the ruling party. There may have been a few exceptions, but generally, this outlet media failed to give equitable coverage to the multiple parties. GTV 11 attempted through its program “Guyana Decide” to offer the public a timely update of the Poll count and events as they unfolded. This was an encouraging and brave attempt, except that this programme never mentioned the difficulties and problems that other stations broadcasted. Most of the guests were sympathetic to the PPP/C; a balanced program should have offered a diverse group of specialists and analysts.

VCT CHANNEL 28 – EVENING NEWS

Pre-Nomination: 02/01/2001 – 14/02/2001

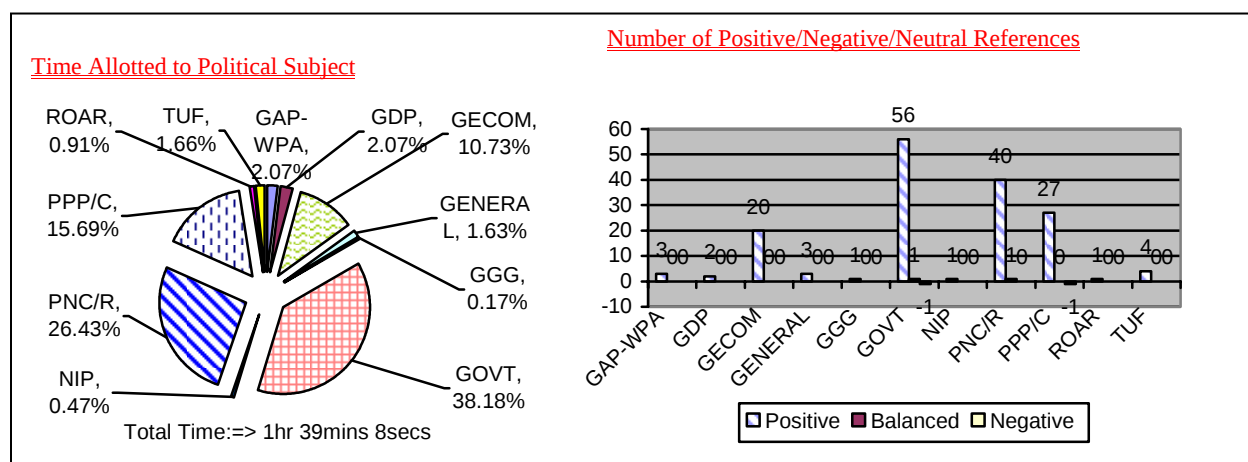
Graph 10.1 represents categories covered in percentages for VCT Channel 28. The graph shows that the Government received the most coverage of all the parties with 53.33% of the total relevant time. Second to the government was the General category, which received a substantial amount of coverage 18.55%. Notable is that the Government received more than half of the relevant time, with a substantial amount of negative coverage. GECOM (12.41%) received thrice the coverage as the ruling PPP/C (4.66%), but its main rival the PNC/R got more than twice (9.82%) the coverage received by the PPP/C. According to the graph, the focus on the PNC/R and the PPP/C was to the exclusion of the smaller political parties.

Graph 10.1: Evening News – News Items Coverage



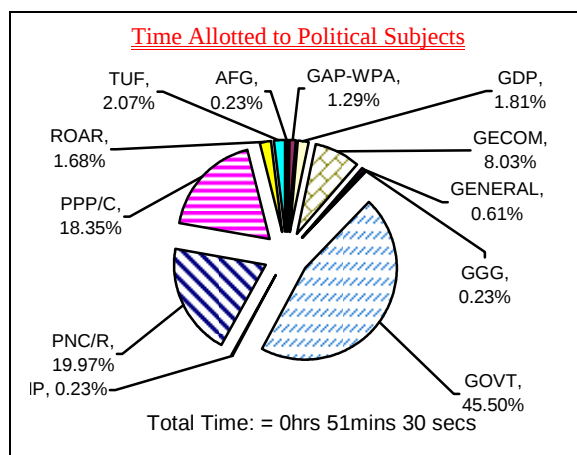
Concerning who is allowed to speak on camera on The Evening News as seen in Graph 10.2, persons affiliated with the government received 38.18% (0:37:51) of the time. The members of the PNC/R enjoyed a considerable advantage over the PPP/C, 26.43% compared with 15.69%. A wider range of other parties was also afforded some speaking time on camera. The members of the small parties were singled out when commenting on the performance of the government, or another political party or the Commission. The analysis concludes that the image of these representatives to the public was consistently in a positive mode.

Graph 10.2: Evening News – Picture & Voice Coverage



Commensurate with the airtime coverage of the government, the quotes and citations Graph 10.3 reveals that the government sources were accessed 45.50% (0:23:26) of the total 51 minutes 30 seconds devoted to evidence of facts or verification of a story. It must be underscored that the higher percentage of access does not necessary suggest a diversity of sources accessed. The political parties were also accessed more often than GECOM. There were citations and quotations about the PPP/C's reaction to the High Court deliberations on the consequential orders but no stories covered the efforts of this party of this party in the GGRE 2001. Trivial attention was given to the sources for the other political parties.

Graph 10.3: Evening News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



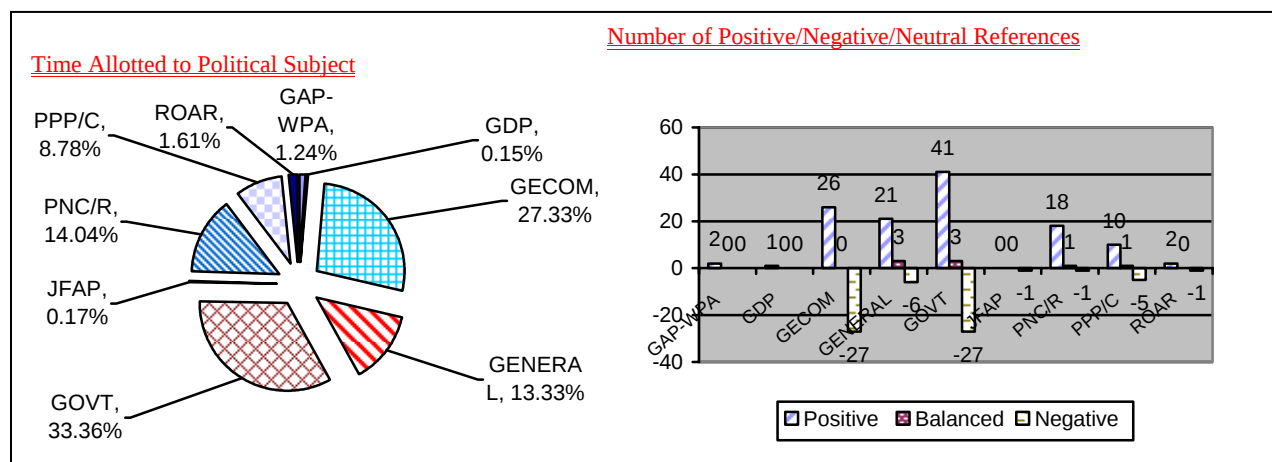
The examples below point to instances of bias and presupposition:

- A story about the PNC's complaint of inadequate coverage of its rally by the Guyana Chronicle, aired no comment from the Chronicle official (19:00, 18/01/01, item 2),
- "The judge also has give legal effect to all acts one and laws passed by the present illegal government" (19:00, 18/01/01, item 1)

Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

During this period, the Evening News reduced government's coverage by some 20% as is evident in **Graph 10.4**. Yet the Government maintained its dominance with 33.36% (1:58:20) of the total time of **5 hours 54 minutes 40 seconds**, followed by, GECOM 27.33% (1:36:56). The main political parties PNC/R (14.04%) and PPP/C (8.78%) received a fair deal of attention to the virtual exclusion of the other smaller parties.

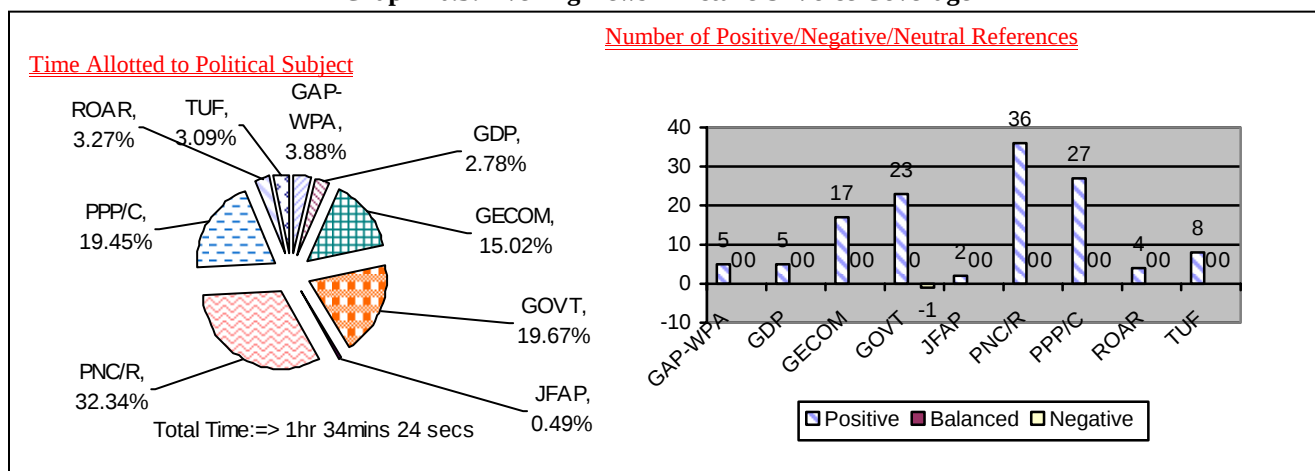
Graph 10.4: Evening News – News Items Coverage



The negative references were distributed between Government and GECOM with far less going to the ruling PPP/C. The treatment of GECOM in this period failed to contribute to an enabling environment for dispensing the election. The graph above indicates that the coverage was overly pessimistic. Overall, more stories portrayed the other subjects in a positive and optimistic manner. The PNC/R was shown in a much more favourable light than the other political rivals.

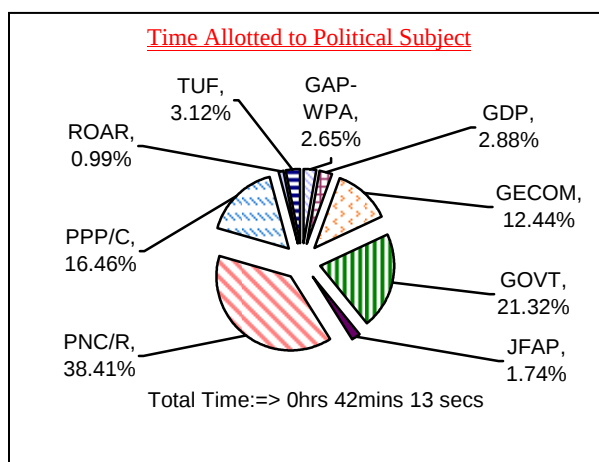
A look at who is afforded speaking time on camera on the Evening News is especially interesting. While the activities and affairs of the Government received more attention, the main opponent the PNC/R was allowed the bulk of the time to their views (see Graph 10.5). The PPP/C and the Government were attributed the same amount of time and GECOM got less than the both of them did. The other parties, ROAR, TUF, GAP-WPA, GDP and the JFAP had less than 5% speaking time on camera. These images were overwhelmingly positive for all the parties.

Graph 10.5: Evening News – Picture & Voice Coverage



In terms of sources accessed as in Graph 10.6, again the PNC/R dominated with 38.41% of the total time. The government sources followed with 21.32%, PPP/C 16.46%, GECOM 12.44%. In proportion to the coverage given the TUF, GDP, JFAP and ROAR, the quotes and citations also reflect a meagre percentage for all these parties.

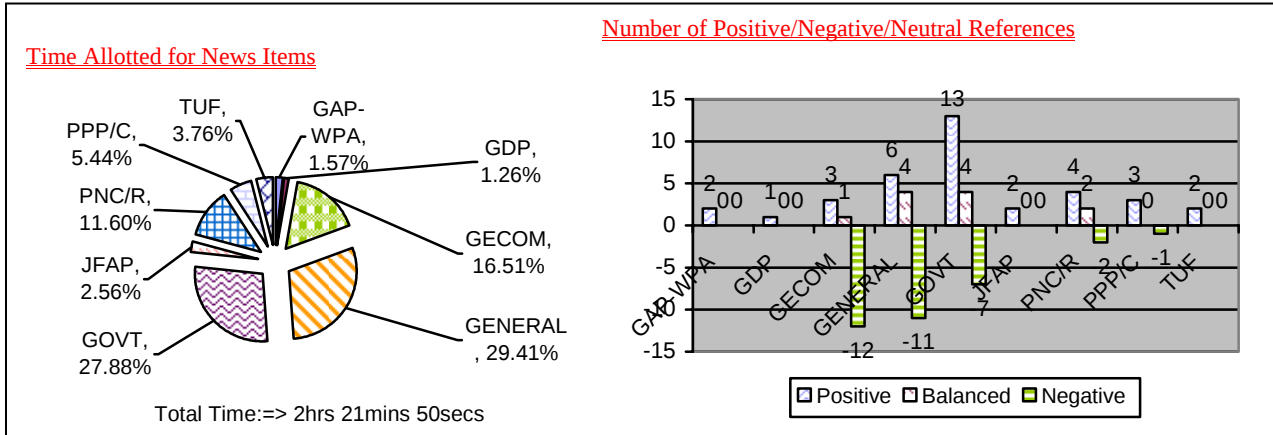
Graph 10.6: Evening News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Post-Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

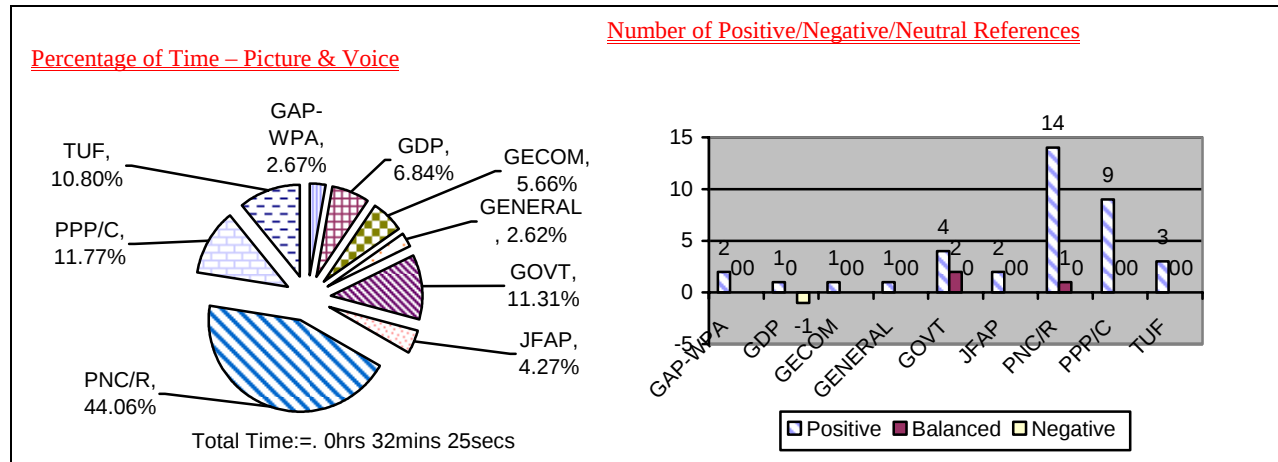
During this period, it is notable that the coverage for government declined to a near one-fourth of the total relevant political news and as expected GECOM gained prominence. (See Graph 10.7) The PNC/R maintained a dominant position over the PPP/C (11.60% compared with 5.44%). The same minuscule coverage was attributed to the smaller parties. A cursory look at Graph 10.7 illustrates that Evening News made genuine attempt to air more objective stories than in any other period under review, however there were still shortcomings.

Graph 10.7: Evening News – News Items Coverage



At the same time, one sees a proliferation of positive and negative references across the various categories. The Commission is continually maligned with a mere 3 positive references versus 12 negatives reference.

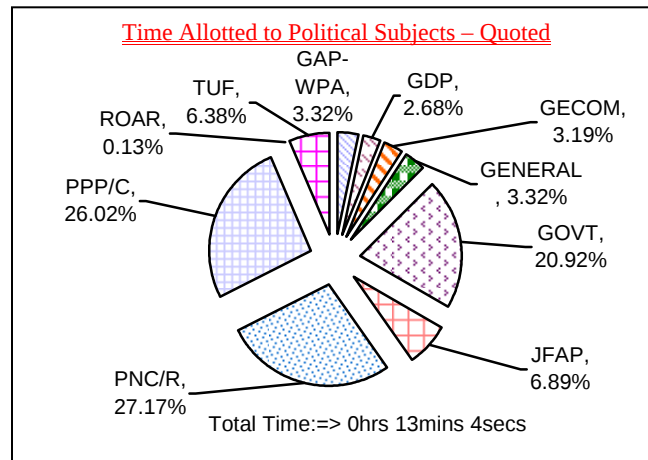
Graph 10.8: Evening News – Picture & Voice Coverage



With reference to who is allowed to air their views on camera, Graph 10.8 reflects that the PNC/R enjoyed the advantage of 44.06% of positive portrayals when speaking on camera. This newscast distributed the rest of the speaking time between Government, GECOM, General and other political parties. The candidates of the PPP/C (11.77%) and the TUF (10.80%) were afforded more time than the Commission. The TUF was allowed less time than the Government but still more time than GECOM. This is disturbing since the candidates were criticising GECOM without a corresponding comment from this body. The tone of the representatives in this period was generally positive except GDP who received one negative reference in its two meagre references.

As election period culminates, the Evening News as pointed out in **Graph 10.9** accessed more political party sources than in the previous periods. The representatives of the two main contenders were quoted and cited more than one-fourth of the total times. The Government and the JFAP closed up the third quarter while the smaller parties and GECOM closed the last round.

Graph 10.9: Evening News – Individuals Quoted Coverage



On this channel, the smaller parties enjoyed a great amount of coverage; however, there were instances where there was no balanced reporting in that both parties involved were not given an opportunity to air their views. This outlet like most others developed the tendency of citing an anonymous source when the item bordered on mere conjecture. The examples below highlight out comments above:

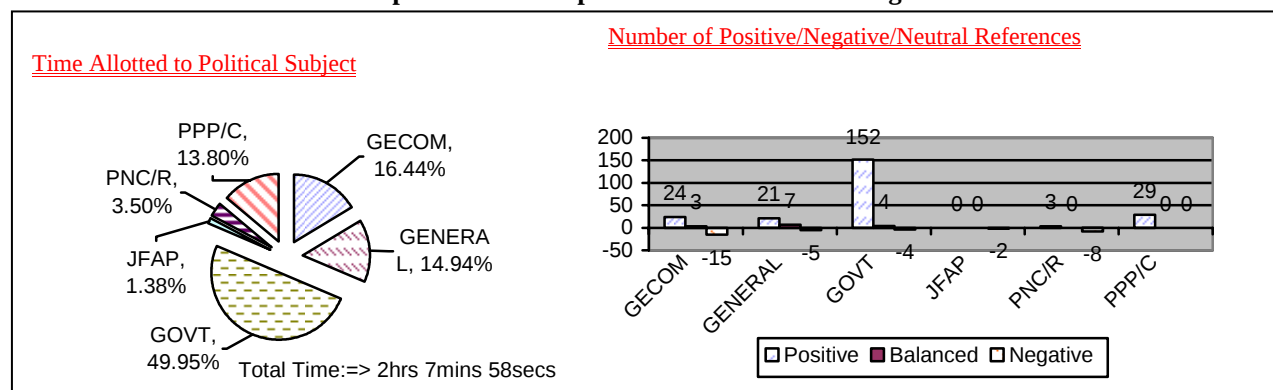
- “An inside source confirms that there was a falling out between the Chief Elections Officer and the Chairman of the Elections Commission” (19:00, 22/03/01, item 5)
- The lead-in read “The Guyana Trade Unions Congress and the Private Sector Commission are threatening to shut down the country”. The story only aired the opinions of the GTUC; no PSC representative was allowed to comment. (19:00, 30/03/01, item 7)

MTV CHANNEL 65 – NEWS UPDATE

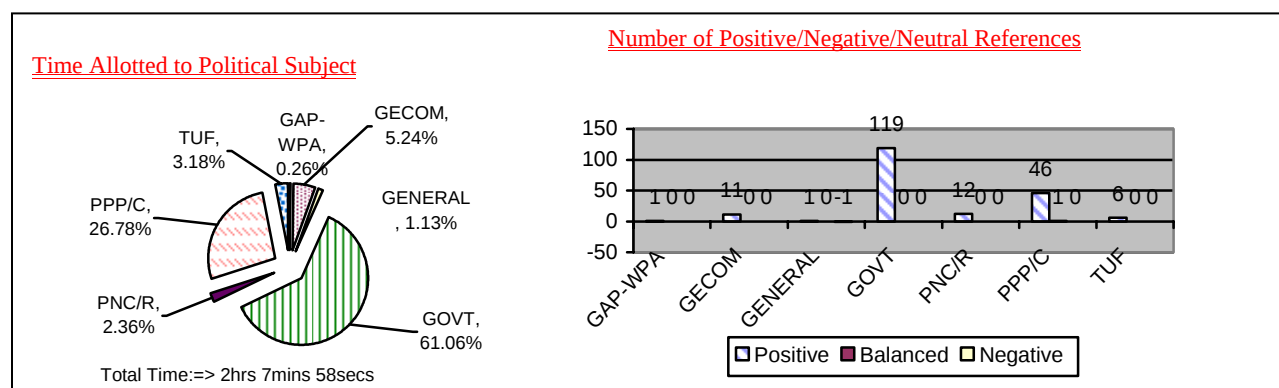
Pre-Nomination: 02/01/2001 – 14/02/2001

During the pre-nomination period, **Graph 11.1** shows that of the total time 10hours 2minutes 22seconds a near half is devoted to stories about the incumbent PPP/C 49.95% (5:00:52), which were considerably positive. GECOM also had a fair share of mixed coverage. However, the PPP/C got 13.80% of the time, and it was all positive. PNC/R got 3.50% mixed coverage, and finally the miniscule coverage of JFAP was entirely negative

Graph 11.1: News Update – News Items Coverage



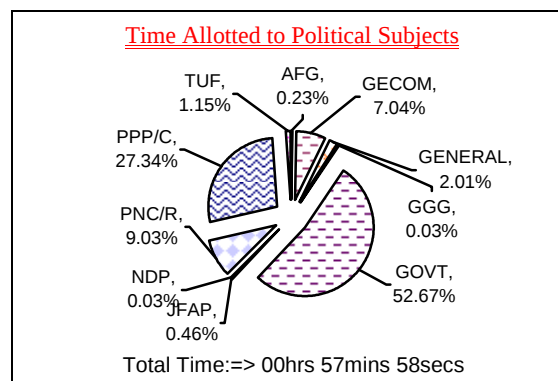
An evaluation of the stakeholders afforded time to articulate their views **Graph 11.2** shows such time advantageous to the Government 61.06% (1:18:08). Among the political parties, the PPP/C (0:34:15) had the bulk of the 2 hours 07 minutes 58 seconds. This outlet barely afforded GECOM officials 6 minutes 42 seconds speaking time on camera. The interest in other parties was negligible. Regardless of the amount of time allotted to the subjects, their appearance ranged between positive and balanced.



Here again we examined the care taken to quote and cite sources in news reporting. **Graph 11.3** is consistent with the foregoing analysis thus; the Government and the PPP/C (0:30:32 & 0:15:51 respectively) maintain their dominance with regard to sources accessed as a premise for news items. The scant attention attributed to the Commission is surprising given its importance in the

GGRE 2001. Interestingly too is the fact that more PNC/R sources were quoted more than those of the Commission were.

Graph 11.3: News Update – Individuals Quoted Coverage



The analysis above depicts this outlet as a surrogate of the ruling party; the following sampled bear this out and point to clear infractions to the Media Code of Conduct.

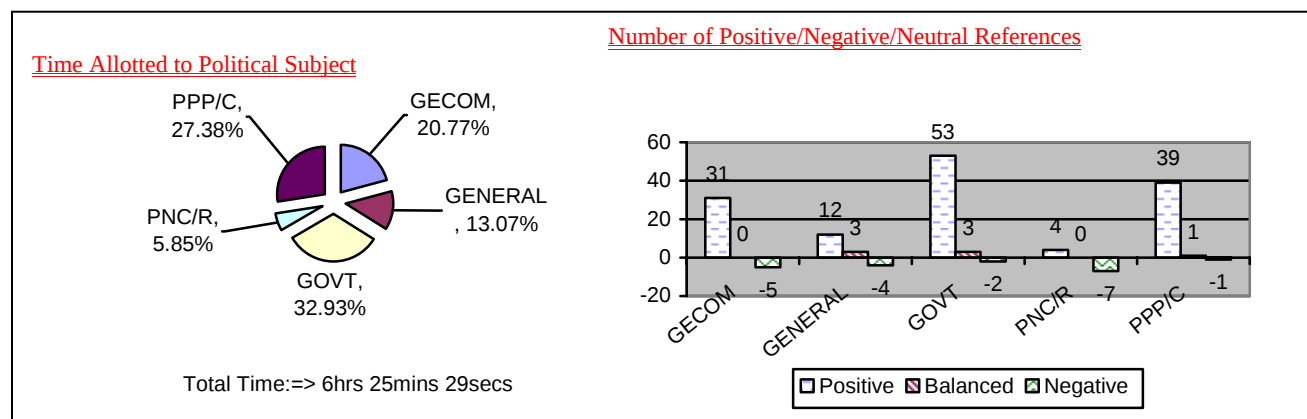
- In a story about the High Court Election Petition, it was mentioned that lawyers for both sides disagreed. The report also acknowledged that there were two opinions as to the legitimacy of the government, but only PPP/C lawyer Khemraj Ramjattan presented his views (19:30, 10/02/01, item 2)
- A story purported to be about the PPP/C campaign launching aired an entire PPP/C political advertisement (19:30, 30/01/01, item 2)
- A story criticizing GECOM alleged that “observers” in the field who had with the alleged existence of a preliminary voters’ list; party scrutineers faced problems with the content of this list and that GECOM had failed to provide the major parties with this list. (19:30, 22/01/01, item 1)
- This story raised questions about the racial composition of GECOM and further that the Region 4 office may be relocated to Sophia near to the PNC/R headquarters. This story did not indicate that any GECOM official had been contacted for confirmation. (19:30, 18/01/01, item 2)
- Another story about the political Parties responses to the High Court decision only allowed Attorney for Janet Jagan – Khemraj Ramjattan – ample time to explain his arguments. The attorney for the petitioner was simply cited. (19:30, 16/01/01, item 1)
- In the second week of January, there were reports that PNC/R had informed the police that a named PPP/C activist was planning to incite public disorder. A news item aired the PPP/C’s denial of this charge, however the bulk of the item consisted of charges being levelled against the PNC/R. again, the absence of PNC/R comment offered a lopsided picture to the public. (19:30, 11/01/01, item 4)

Pre-Election: 15/02/2001 – 19/03/2001

During this pre-election period, **Graph 11.4** shows that the News Update devoted less coverage to Government news and more to the PPP/C compared with the previous period. News about GECOM grew from 16.44% in the previous period to 20.77% in this period. The PPP/C grew 27.38% from 13.80% in the last period, and the PNC/R had a marginal increase of 2.35%. The coverage of other political parties was limited to comments, quotations and citations about the GECOM and election-related issues; there was no discussion of their policies and campaign issues.

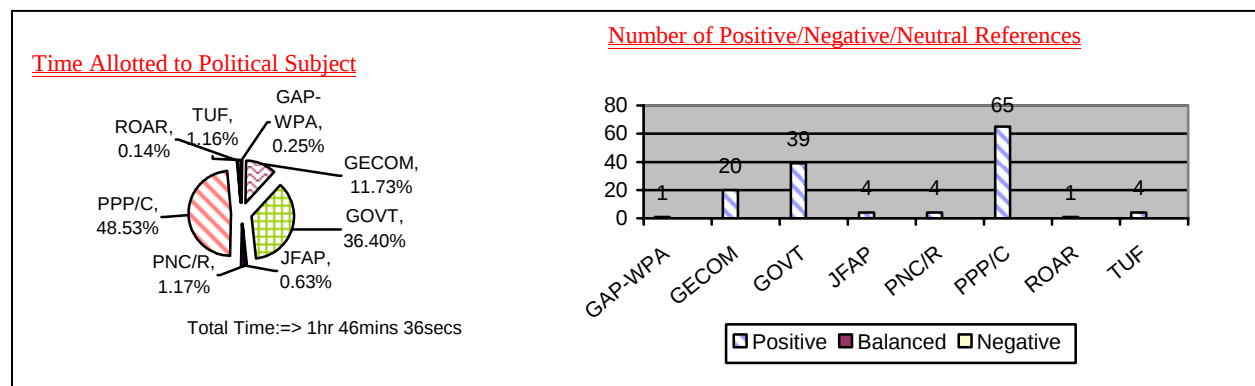
Again, the coverage of Government and PPP/C news was overwhelmingly positive and hopeful, while coverage of the main opposition PNC/R although limited was mostly negative. The image of GECOM improved during this period, with a decline in negative references and a converse increase.

Graph 11.4: News Update – News Items Coverage



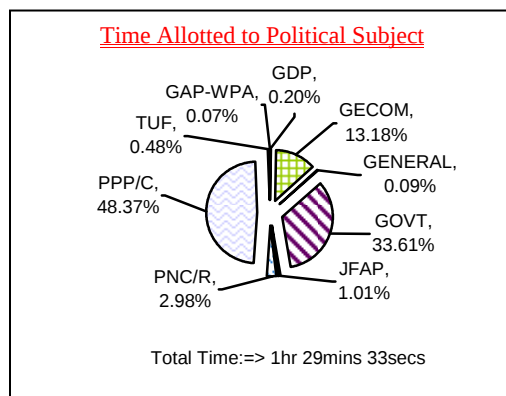
In relation to the time given to stakeholders to speak on the camera and how they were portrayed when given the opportunity, **Graph 11.5** shows the PPP/C leading the way with 48.53% (0:51:44) followed by Government with 36.40% (2:06:56) of the total time **1 hour 46 minutes 36 seconds**. The appearance GECOM officials doubled in this period. All the portrayals were positive.

Graph 11.5: News Update – Picture & Voice Coverage



The time allotted to quotes and citations in **Graph 11.6** are almost identical for the Government and the PPP/C in the last period. These two subjects continued to be the main sources of information for this newscast. Of the total time, 1 hour 29 minutes 33 seconds, Government had 33.61% (0:30:32) and the PPP/C got 48.37% (0:15:51)

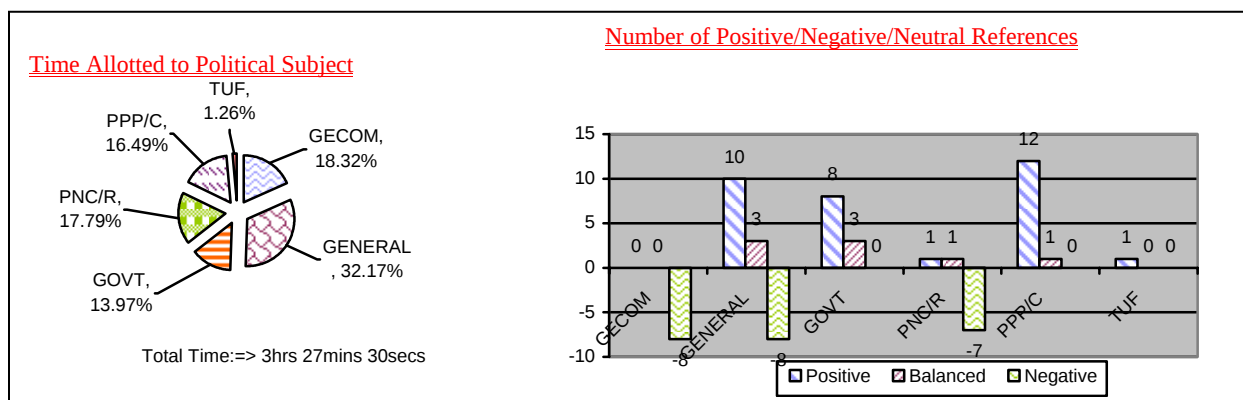
Graph 11.6: News Update – Individuals Quoted Coverage



Post-Election: 20/03/2001 – 31/03/2001

In this ten-day period, our results confirm trends noticed in the last two periods. News Update continues to give a large amount of positive coverage to the Government affairs and much more to the PPP/C than the PNC/R or any other political party.

Graph 11.7: News Update – News Items Coverage



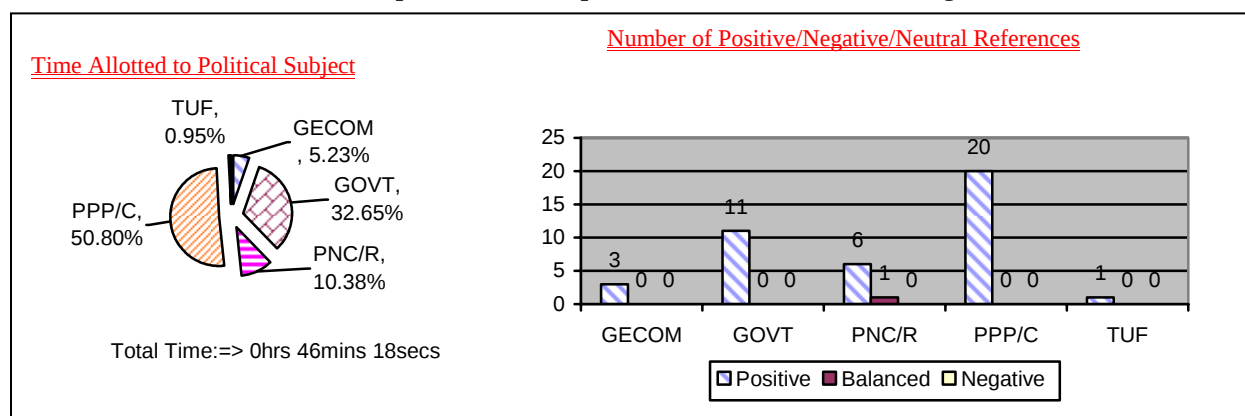
Graph 11.7 shows that of the total time 3 hours 27 minutes 30 seconds, the General category received the majority of the coverage 32.17% (1:02:45) that related to post-elections issues. Stories focused on the calls for peace by various groups, the anticipation for the poll results, and press releases of the observer groups and the concerns of the business community. The civil unrest in the East Coast Villages was also a subject of attention. It is notable that the PNC/R got slightly more coverage than the PPP/C, but a look at the bar graph 11.7 reveals that coverage for the PPP/C is consistently positive while the PNC/R portrayal remains negative. Stories about the

latter alleged that the PNC/R supporters created mayhem in the city of Georgetown. At the same time all the stories about GECOM portrayed this body in a less than positive light, such stories had the potential to exacerbate an already tense environment. A sample of such items are presented below:

- “GECOM taking immediate steps to meet demands of PNC/R” (19:30, 21/03/01, item 4)
- “International Observers express disappointment over GECOM’s unwillingness to issue partial results” (19:30, 20/03/01, item 1)

As it relates to how much time the different stakeholders were given to speak on camera, **Graph 11.8** shows the PPP/C had just over half of the total time (0:22:21) of the total time 44 minutes. Here the viewing public had the advantage of the actual voice of the PPP/C candidates and representatives, while the voice of the reporter or commentator was used on reports about the PNC/R as shown in Graph 11.9

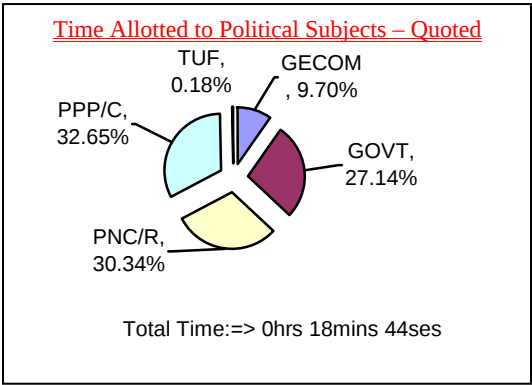
Graph 11.8: News Update – Picture & Voice Coverage



The other half of the time was distributed among the Government 32.65%, PNC/R 10.38%, GECOM 5.23% and the TUF 0.95%. Nonetheless, all the persons shown actually speaking were positive.

Again, we looked at the percentage of time the reporter quoted the different stakeholders. Graph 11.9 shows that of the total time 18 minutes 44 seconds, the PPP/C led the way with 32.65%, PNC/R followed with 30.34%. The volume of reported PNC/R coverage compared to actual time on camera is indicative of a preference by this newscast to report the speech of this party rather than air the candidates on camera. Further, the graph points out that three of these citations were negative. The PNC/R criticisms of the Commission were often quoted by this newscast. Citations when taken out of context can mislead and distort. The officials of the GECOM were the only other interest, which received significant access time in this period.

Graph 11.9: News Update –Individuals Quoted



TELEVISION TALK SHOWS

During the Pre-Nomination and the Pre-Election Periods that the monitored four talk shows, “Straight Up” with Mark Benschop, “At Home with Roger” with Roger Moore on Channel 9; “The Sunrise Show” with Clem David on Channel 6; and “Squire Talk” with Kwame McCoy on Channel 69. In our final monitoring period – Post-Election – we have included some comments on “Nation Watch” with Sherwood Lowe and “Issues and Answers” with Ravi Dev. Unfortunately, our archives do not permit us to comment on the show “University on 9” with Ronald Waddell for this particular time.

It must be reiterated here that, the unit had no expectation that talk shows would necessarily be forums for presentation of facts or news; but rather our expectations were they might present opportunities for the open discussion of issues and presentation of opinions. However, none of the shows we monitored lived up to any standards of balance or even fairness. They were openly partisan programmes that advocated one particular posture or another with regard to the elections. In addition, these shows were platforms for the dissemination of rumour and destructive debate. Clem David the Prime Ministerial candidate for the JFAP openly promoted his own agenda while castigating opponents. Kwame McCoy is an unabashed supporter of the government and the PPP/C. Roger Moore and Mark Benschop were both harsh critics of the government and the PPP/C. In addition, they more often times than not advocated PNC/R views points on their shows. The two political candidates Sherwood Lowe and Ravi Dev of the PNC/R and ROAR respectively, also took this as a forum to advocate their party positions. However, the temperature and tone were civil and one heard the discussion of issues from vastly different intellectual frames of references. During the periods mentioned, viewers who relied on any of these shows for a balanced, fair and accurate presentation of facts or news soon became disenchanted.

We understand that these shows are not perceived as fora for fair and balanced presentation of different perspectives, but we took careful note of various instances when opinions, rumours or unsubstantiated allegation were presented as fact without the presentation of evidence or the opportunity for a response from the accused. The unit also noted times when the language used was not encouraging to a civilised debate about important issues. The talk show host in the pre-election period evolved into a potent force with the ability to influence what happened in the streets, to the detriment of the many voices of reason. One particular host Mark Benschop became an idol of the crowd.

CNS CHANNEL 6 “THE SUNRISE SHOW” WITH CLEM DAVID

“Media organizations agree that individual owners, full-time staff members, part-time employees or other individuals contracted to write, produce or present articles, scripts, programmes, commentaries or other material intended for public dissemination and who (a) are publicly identified as candidates for election to Parliament; or (b) hold office in a political party, are likely to be open to charges of bias.”⁴

Pre-Nomination Period 22/01/01 – 14/02/01

“The Sunrise Show” hosted by Clem David during this period was a blatantly partisan effort that severely criticized the PPP/C and the government. Because David was a candidate for the elections, it came as no surprise that he attempted to advance his views and criticized his opponents who were for the most part the ruling PPP/C. It also follows that the activities of the government were severely criticized. He often asserted as matters of fact opinions and allegations for which he offered no evidence or support. Additionally he did not air responses to accusations from the accused. Some of our early findings of irresponsible behaviour by this host are presented below:

- C. David asserted that more government projects would lead to more money to steal. He alleged that some monies could not be accounted for in Region 3 (Essequibo Islands, West Demerara), The host identified the source of this allegation as “Auditing of Books and Accounts for 1996 and 1998”. However, he failed to explain its origin and neglected to seek responses from the accused. (07:00, 25/01/01)
- He alleged that the Ministry of Local Government was missing money. Again, no proof was offered nor any response aired. (07:00, 13/02/01),
- On this occasion David spent a great deal of airtime reading an unidentified document vaguely referred to as a form from the Court of Appeal, listing “59 reasons” why the High Court decision on the Election Petition was not right. During this show, he named individuals who he accused of massive fraud and wrongdoing. No evidence was presented and no responses from these named individuals were aired. (07:00, 0/02/01).

Pre-Election Period 15/02/01 – 19/03/01

The Sunrise Show continued to be a blatantly partisan effort that criticised the PPP/C and the Government and at the same time was sympathetic to the PNC/R; however, this was not at the expense of advancing the JFAP. He continued to assert as fact matters for which he offered no evidence. In this period, this host consistently undermined the integrity of GECOM, by dramatic stories for which he offered no evidence. The list of instances when C. David aired material that clearly violates the Media Code of Conduct is disturbing. Moreover, David claimed to believe

⁴ Ibid., Clause 3,p.4

that he has no professional or moral responsibility to seek any evidence for any outlandish rumour he wanted to broadcast. He was openly contemptuous of the Media Code of Conduct of which he said that he was happy not to sign (05/03/01). The many media monitoring reports from the different groups published by this time had not altered Clem David's behaviour. In fact, David argued that "the role of the talk show host is not to produce evidence but to inform the police and government and for them to investigate", he further stated another misconception that "the manager signed the Media Code of Conduct for the Channel but not for the party (JFAP)". (Voice of the People, 13:00, 03/03/01).

The general tone of David's tirades tended to foster mistrust of and aggravation with the incumbent PPP/C. Following are some of the many instances that Clem David made allegations without presenting any evidence or giving the accused an opportunity to respond:

- JFAP presidential candidate to meet with GECOM's Chairman; election should be cancelled due infiltration (19:00, 15/03/01)
- The host asks GECOM's Chairman if he is aware that some of the people who work with him want to derail the elections (19:00, 08/03/01)
- "GECOM must understand that these elections are about Guyana not meeting a deadline" (19:00, 08/03/01)
- "GECOM computers must be de-linked from certain places in Georgetown" (19:00, 08/03/01)
- The elections should be put off as discs which have people's name and addresses have been stolen from the Commission (19:00, 08/03/01)
- There are moles inside GECOM (19:00, 07/03/01)
- He also charged that a local doctor Bhiri Harry told clerks at the Georgetown Hospital for whom they must vote (19:00, 28/02/01)
- PPP/C does not want people to own radio stations (19:00, 27/02/01)
- He claimed that the police acknowledged a plan to incarcerate people on the eve of the election to prevent them from voting (19:00, 27/02/01 & 01/03/01)
- He asserted on several occasions that there was a plot to kill leader of the JFAP CN Sharma referring vaguely to a television owner and head of a security service as the conspirators (19:00, 26/02/01 & 01/03/01)
- He charged that the PPP/C had enlisted a group of people to pull down the posters of other political parties (19:00, 22/02/01)

- David stated that GBC records reveal that the PPP/C had not paid for political ads in 1997. Evidence in this regard was absent. (07:00, 15/02/01)

Post-Election Period 20/03/01 – 31/03/01

David's first programme after the elections (22/03/01) began on a very positive note. Viewers were encouraged to keep the peace in the tense environment that prevailed in this time. However, the fact that David continued, on this programme and others that followed, to pronounce on activities and made allegations for which he had little or no substantial evidence, negated these positive remarks. Some of the examples below show that David exercised no restraint in broadcasting allegations and unproven statements with the potential of further destabilising an already volatile society; furthermore his vested interest in the elections did not contribute to unbiased stories or statements about the conduct of the poll or the results.

- "Ballot boxes were removed and no poll statements are there for them" (07:00 28/03/01)
- He claimed that GECOM's computer changed General votes from 56 to 6 and Regional votes from 12 to 2 for the JFAP in the GGRE 2001. This according to him was the result from an Albouystown polling station. (07:00, 28/03/01)
- "There is a sinister plan for Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad to be called 'Bharriatadesh' – put them together it will become a strong economic base with a strong Hindu bias" (07:00 27/03/01)

NTN CHANNEL 18/69, “SQUARE TALK” WITH KWAME MCCOY

Pre-Nomination Period 22/01/01 – 14/02/01

This show offered the PPP/C and government’s view at the expense of any opinion from the opposition. During this period, Kwame McCoy hosted mostly PPP/C representatives who along with him espoused PPP/C positions. Comments and responses to allegations were routinely overlooked and were rarely, if ever, aired. McCoy frequently ridiculed and insulted callers; those with whom he disagreed, he cut off with remarkable speed. One could not have relied on this show for accuracy, balance or fairness. Some instances of this follow:

- One of his guests, Minister of Youth Sport and Culture Gail Teixeira, said among other things that the PNC had a legacy of rigged elections, and that the army played a role in the country’s elections of 1968, 1973 and 1985. No evidence was offered and no responses were aired. (21:00, 22/01/01)
- The topic for discussion on one show was the REFORM component of the opposition PNC, which was portrayed, by him and his guest, Minister of Foreign Affairs Clement Rohee as merely political cosmetics. No member of the REFORM was allowed to defend his or her position or views. 921:00, 29/01/01)
- Ministerial Adviser on Empowerment Odinga Lumumba when he appeared as a guest on this show charged that Ravi Dev and his party ROAR was planning a coalition with the PNC/R. This contradicted other reports and thus there should have been evidence to confirm this allegation. However, as in the previous instances there was none. (21:00, 31/01/01)

Pre-Election Period 15/02/01 – 19/03/01

“Square Talk” during this period continued to proffer both the PPP/C and the Government’s points of view at the expense of any opposition opinion: the majority of McCoy’s guests were affiliated with either the ruling PPP/C or the Government. These guests were given the opportunity to display their campaign activities, accomplishments in government and plans for future governance. A great deal of time was also spent maligning the main opposition PNC/R. As was done in the preceding period, the host of Square Talk continued to insult and disconnect callers with whom he disagreed. This “talk back show” proved to be advantageous to the ruling PPP/C, as campaign ads were consistently aired during the show and the footage of rallies received considerable coverage. Of interest was the fact that the launching of the PPP/C manifesto was aired on this show less than one hour after that event took place (08/03/01)

- Kwame McCoy claimed that the person that threw stones at a rally hosted by the PPP/C was a supporter of the opposition PNC/R. He offered no substantial evidence to support his claims nor did he afford the PNC/R an opportunity to respond. (21:00, 1/03/01)

- McCoy claimed that members of the PNC/R abused him. No evidence of this was produced. (21:00, 01/03/01)
- McCoy accused the opposition of transporting people to a PPP/C meeting in Louisa Row to disrupt it with stones, bottles and palm trees (21:00, 01/03/01)
- He disagreed with a caller who says Hoyte is trustworthy, points out debt increase and fee-paying at the University to support his view (21:00, 05/03/01)
- Guest of this show Minister of Foreign Affairs says his party has no major problems with the voters list, but the main opposition is creating problems. (21:00, 07/03/01)

Post-Election Period 20/03/01 - 31/03/01

“Square Talk” remained an outlet for the Government in general and the PPP/C in particular to air their views on the political climate. The programme did not come close to adhering to the guidelines proclaimed in the Media Code of Conduct. More times than not, the host Kwame McCoy was extremely critical of the main opposition PNC/R’s leadership and supporters for acts that he had no evidence to substantiate. There was also the tendency of the host to make assertions and accusations without giving the other party any opportunity to respond. In addition, he continued to insult or disconnect callers who did not share his or the PPP/C’s point of view. Those who were verbally abusive to him had their numbers published. McCoy’s views and positions displayed an unequivocal lack of objectivity and balance. Examples where McCoy did not afford the opportunity for a response or gave information without credible evidence were:

- He asserted that the PNC/R supported mobsters and thieves that attacked persons in Georgetown. (21:00, 27/03/01)
- He claimed that the pandemonium that occurred in the capital city was instigated by some members of the PNC/R. (21:00, 26/03/01)
- Footage was shown of persons who alleged that members of the PNC/R beat them up (21:00, 26/03/01)
- McCoy claimed that the reasons why the lawyers who regularly represented the PNC/R refused to accept its case to prevent the swearing in of President-elect Bharrat Jagdeo was because “the entire thing is a mockery” (21:00, 23/03/01)
- Host alleged that Stanley Ming, leader of the REFORM component, was leaving the party with his equipment because he was embarrassed by the way, the PNC/R behaved. (21:00, 23/03/01)
- He said, “three persons are trying to overthrow Mr. Hoyte that is why he is not in the media” (21:00, 23/03/01)

- He alleged that “Polling Agents of the PPP/C were beaten-up, kidnapped and taken to Sophia (PNC/R headquarters)” (21:00, 23/03/01)

NBTV CHANNEL 9, “AT HOME WITH ROGER” WITH ROGER MOORE

Pre-Nomination Period 22/01/01 – 14/02/01

“At Home with Roger” during this period was a continuous campaign for the main opposition PNC/R. The host, Roger Moore openly defended his partisan efforts to criticise the government and the ruling PPP/C while at the same time, promoting the campaign of the PNC/R. What was more disturbing than his partisan efforts to promote the views and vision of one particular party were the many instances when he presented as fact matters for which he offered no proof and gave no opportunity for a response. He said on many occasions that members of the PPP/C were invited to his programme but they refused. Some instances where Roger Moore violated the Media Code of Conduct were as follows:

- Moore alleged that the government shredded documents, moved documents and that a Minister took G\$10 million and shipped it out of the country. No evidence for these allegations was given. The allegation about document shredding was repeated on two other shows and, again, he offered no supporting evidence. (18:00, 26/01/01, 12/02/01, 15/02/01)
- He accused the PPP/C of spying on PNC/R rally with no proof. Later, also with no evidence, he accused GA2000 of flying to Trinidad to bring people to vote in the March 19 GGRE 2001. (18:00, 29/01/01)
- He alleged, “the PPP/C threatened some of their people who did not want to attend party rallies” during electioneering. He also claimed that others were paid to attend the rallies. He then went on to say that Dr. Roger Luncheon had said that women supporters of the opposition were prostitutes. Moore did not show any supporting evidence to verify these allegations. (18:00, 06/02/01)
- He accused the PPP/C of pulling down political posters of opposition parties. He said that the PPP/C had a legacy of burning down rice fields. Again, he offered no evidence. (18:00, 13/02/01)

Pre-Election Period 15/02/01 – 19/03/01

During this period, it is notable that this host placed emphasis on educating the public or his supporters on the voting process. For instance, one noticed many cautionary statements about the individuals retaining voter identification stubs; he also urged citizens to check the Preliminary Voters List (PVL), the Revised Voters List (RVL) and the Official List of Electors (OLE). Moore also hosted officials of GECOM – Gocool Boodoo and Elizabeth Hughes.

At the same time, Moore's show remained a continuous advertisement for the opposition PNC/R; with excerpts from their manifesto, an outline of the PNC/R agenda and footage of various rallies. He continued to spread rumours and stated as fact matters for which he offered no proof or gave opportunity for response. The most glaring infraction of the MCC that was observed is the aligning of this host with the main opposition party. Some examples of these follow:

- He stated that citizens had called his house and the Headquarters of the PNC/R to complain about the inefficiencies of GECOM (18:00, 12/03/01)
- "PNC/R ads portray peace and harmony; PPP/C ads want to jump out at you" (18:00, 12/03/01)
- Footage shown of Desmond Hoyte's last birthday luncheon held in his honour. (18:00, 09/03/01)
- "The PPP/C this wicked regime moved down on people mainly blacks but particularly I want to talk about the "Civic" guy, whom I'm sure as well won't be voting Civic anymore...they singled him out from a particular area not only broke his house down but deliberately broke down furniture, cutlery, wares and everything." (18:00, 09/03/01)
- He said that the PPP/C were connected to criminal elements. (18:00, 09/03/01)

Post-Election Period 20/03/01 – 31/03/01

Like the other talk shows during this period, the underlying theme of the "At Home with Roger Show" was the perceived problems with the administration of the elections by GECOM. His shows during the post-election period followed the trends of the earlier periods in the sense that he continued to air allegations and make assertions without creditable evidence to support them. Airtime was spent announcing vigils organized by the PNC/R to protest the alleged disenfranchisement of its supporters. Some attention and contempt was also perpetuated against the Police Commissioner and the troops, which maintained public order in the streets in this period.

Moore displayed ambivalence towards the happenings of the post-election; hence, on any given show he may share opposing opinions on the measures frustrated citizens should take. At the initial stage of this period, Moore appealed to the more sensible judgement of his viewers by imploring callers who expressed frustration with the election process to remain calm. However, the allegations about malpractice in the conduct of the elections and the subsequent results without supporting evidence negated his earlier efforts to keep the peace. Instances where Moore violated the Media Code of Conduct were:

- He alleged that there were deliberate manipulations at GECOM's computer room. (18:00, 21/03/01)
- He responded to a caller who asked if they (PNC/R) had to wait five more years to be in office that he was of the knowledge that the elections were already rigged (18:00, 21/03/01)

- He claimed that “it is a core group of persons within the PPP/C who are corrupt”(18:00, 22/03/01),
- Host asserted that there was a plan to keep the JFAP out of parliament. This same statement came after the TUF gained one seat in parliament after a correction by GECOM. (18:00, 28/03/01)

NBTV CHANNEL 9, “STRAIGHT UP” WITH MARK BENSCHOP

Pre-Nomination Period 22/01/01 -14/02/01

To summarise the “Straight Up” Show with Mr. Benschop in a sentence one could say that it tended towards sensationalism, accusations and negative references. More than the other Talk Show Hosts that we have mentioned earlier, Mark Benschop allowed a fair share of criticism of himself and his views.

In the pre-nomination period, he vehemently opposed the PPP/C and the incumbent government, a government, whose legitimacy he repeatedly did not recognise. Benschop and most of his guests frequently espoused the positions of the main opposition PNC/R. It is important to note that on some occasions the guests of this show were of a different political persuasion. On ‘Straight Up’ February 6th 2001 Odinga Lumumba of the PPP/C appeared on his programme. He publicly offered on many occasions to show a tape of the PPP/C if they had sent it to him. While he repeatedly invited other PPP/C leaders on his show and made the point that they refused to or were afraid to go on his show, this may have been disingenuous since on occasion he treated his guests badly, disrespectfully and unfairly. Following is a small sample of such incidents:

- He charged that Trinidadians were coming to Guyana to vote. On the same show, he said that the PPP/C was manipulating the voter database. He offered no proof, no facts and no substance to verify these allegations. (21:00, 22/01/10)
- On another show a caller sang a song with the lyrics “Desi don’t cry no more, government is run by fassy-hole”. Rather than disconnecting the caller who made these pejorative and denigrating statements, Benschop allowed the caller to go on without making any statements discouraging such bad taste and intolerance. (21:00, 29/01/2001)
- Another show was rife with allegations concerning the corrupt practices of Minister of Housing and Water Shaik Baksh. No evidence was presented concerning the corruption of this minister nor was he given the opportunity to respond. (21:00, 30/01/010)
- Benschop accused the “regime” of forcing people to commit suicide. This accusation was made during an interview with a young woman who alleged that she had suicidal thoughts after being treated unfairly by the Ministry of Housing. No response from the Housing Ministry was aired. (21:00, 14/02/01)

Pre-Election Period 15/02/01 – 19/03/01

During this period, “Straight Up” with Mark Benshop continued to rely on sensationalism, innuendo, accusations and negative references. He was vehemently opposed to the incumbent government. He also insulted a number of officials from the government and others with whom he disagreed. Incidences when Benshop presented rumour as facts or did not offer opportunity for a response from the accused follows:

- He accused Bharrat Jagdeo of being racist because Sam Hinds was not included on a party T-shirt. (21:00, 19/02/01)
- He stated that the government wanted to incarcerate persons to prevent them from voting in the March 19 GGRE 2001.
- He accused the Ministry of Health of registering Brazilians to vote under the pretext of testing them for malaria. (21:00, 5/03/01)
- He showed a tape where he said that a PPP/C supporter was caught destroying PNC/R posters. However, he did not show actual footage of this act. (21:00, 05/03/01)
- He stated that the regime had killed a supporter of Ravi Dev. (21:00, 09/03/01)

Benshop even made public illegally recorded telephone conversation between The Police Commissioner Laurie Lewis and himself. The act was clearly a violation of ethical journalistic practices.

Monday 19 March to Tuesday 20 March 2001

These days must be underscored for the novel journalism, which permeated these talk shows at this time. As such, our On Election Day 19 March 2001, Channel 9 aired Mark Benshop in the morning and again for most of the afternoon. During this period, he and his callers spoke primarily of unsubstantiated problems with the elections. While later reports discussed some examples of disenfranchisement and other matters, Benshop depicted these problems as massive and insinuated that there was a sinister rigging of the elections. He offered no evidence to substantiate his allegations. He stated on more than one occasion that 100,000 people had been disenfranchised with no substantiation. This and much of what he said had the potential to produce chaos in an already polarised society.

After all, of the Monday’s evening newscasts, Benshop was on the air again for most of the evening into the morning hours. By this time, Benshop’s rhetoric was approaching the hysterical. He urged “**peace for the time being**” yet, he played songs about war and showed footage of a military aircraft storming a beach. He said that he is “prepared to stay and battle”. Later in the evening, Mark Benshop spoke of ‘revolution’ as the way to go. A “revolution is good” stated Benshop. “We have to have a revolution to move things forward”. He also continued his past practice of attacking specific individuals with defamatory charges with absolutely no evidence to support his claims. Specifically he made detailed charges about a GECOM official purchasing a multi-million dollar vehicle and implied that he must be guilty of unjustly enriching himself to afford such a lavish expense. He had no evidence about the vehicle, its cost or any improprieties committed by the named official.

Post-Election Period 20/03/01 – 31/03/01

Benschop's rhetoric during this period reached alarming and frantic proportions, more than it has ever been; this was especially during the few days after the elections. Most of his statements during this period had the potential to create public disorder. To his credit however, he had some guests on his programme that appeared to be objective in their analysis of the post-election uncertainties. On March 28, 2001, he hosted trade unionist Lincoln Lewis, businessman L.P. Singh and journalist Cathy Hughes and two days later, he hosted attorneys-at-law Vic Pooran and Anande Trotman. Apart from this, his show continued to be one that openly flouted virtually every paragraph of the Media Code of Conduct. Some of the many violations to the Media Code of Conduct were:

- He continued his call for a revolution, which he made on election day/night. These statements were made when only 10% of the votes had been counted and announced. (20/03/01)
- He questioned the sexual orientation of a major public leader. (20/03/01)
- He entertained a caller who said that the "black clothes police" were shooting women who were PNC/R supporters. Instead of verifying these charges and cautioning the caller, Benschop added some of his own allegations without any supporting evidence. (22/03/01)
- He continued his allegation without supporting evidence that a senior GECOM official illegally acquired a vehicle. (26/03/01)
- He asserted that people were paid to go into Congress Place (PNC/R Headquarters) to physically attack persons. He offered no supporting evidence. (26/03/01)

CNS CHANNEL 6, "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" WITH RAVI DEV

In the post-election period, Dev – a presidential candidate – proved to be a very careful listener who accommodated opposing viewpoints. ROAR political ideology was continuously advanced in clear breach of the MCC. However, Dev showed concern for the non-acceptance by the main opposition PNC/R for the elections results; the prior refusal of this party to the notion of power-sharing and what he called the PNC/R's bullyism. Dev took a more thoughtful approach to the post – elections problems and in this regard advanced two main arguments:

- The proposed dialogue between Hoyte and Jagdeo should not be pursued until the society was free from threat (26/03/01)
- That constitutional amendment to the political process is imperative to a more equitable election result whereby all ethnic groups are represented (26/03/01)

Dev displayed much wariness with GECOM who he claimed had little regard for small parties. Overall this mostly monologue programme is designed to appeal to the East Indian population who Dev purports to represent. Every program was strategically designed to point out the shortcomings of the incumbent and posit reasons for ROAR, as a more suitable political representative ID|F given the East Indian support.

NBTV CHANNEL 9, “NATION WATCH” WITH SHERWOOD LOWE

This show also breached the MCC, as the host and guests were all candidates for the PNC/R. The host attempted to more often than not to rekindled hope in the PNC/R supporters and “all” Guyanese in the post-election period of uncertainty. At other times, Lowe served as a facilitator who probed the guests for answers and/or solutions to the election – related problems that the viewer/listener/hearer could easily assume he already knew. Generally, the question posed during the programme sought to bring clarity where rumour or in cases of contending viewpoints existed.

Nonetheless, the apparent objective of this programme was to forge a strong PNC/R perspective on the issues at hand and malign its main opponent the PPP/C and to a lesser extent the TUF. The Police Commissioner also came in for a fair share of ridicule. A cursory analysis finds that Lowe’s programme attempted to be voice of reason in a search of a resolution to the election conflicts that plagued Guyana in 1192, 1997 and again in 2001.

- PNC/R committed to its promise of development (28/03/01)
- The days of partisanship must end since Guyana is at a crossroad (25/03/01)
- All must be willing and genuine to move Guyana forward (25/03/01)

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

“Media Organizations acknowledge their obligation to provide equal access and opportunity to all political parties without discrimination, to purchase space in newspaper and prime time on radio and television stations to promote their respective views during the period of electioneering”⁵

Electoral campaigning employing the use of advertisements (ads) via the media has become a common feature in all-major elections throughout the world, thus the March General and Regional Elections in Guyana were no exception. Throughout the nomination-day to Election Day period, the Guyanese population was inundated with advertisements from the various political parties and the GECOM from the three mediums, television, radio and newspaper. It should be noted that we were unable to give a quantitative analysis of the advertising disseminating from the electronic media because of the unusually large volume. Nevertheless, this factor allows for adequate qualitative analysis.

Generally, the ads that appeared in the electronic media lacked substantive content in the sense that the majority did not deal with the pertinent issues related to the elections but thrived on personal attacks of the opposing candidates. In such an important election to Guyanese, political advertisements that were issue-based would have left voters more informed rather than humoured or otherwise disgusted. One only hopes that for the next general election in 2006, all

⁵ Ibid., Clause 3, p.4

the political parties would focus their attention on issue-based ads instead of those, which personally discredit political opponents.

A quantitative analysis of the advertisements that appeared in the daily newspapers revealed that the number of advertisements appearing in the second two weeks of the official political campaign (1-18 March 2001) did not show any significant increase to those appearing in the first two weeks 16 – 28 February 2001. It could be expected that ads would increase in this period. One thought that there would have been a significant increase in advertisements over the second two weeks since the closer the polling day got the more intense would be the parties' ad campaign trying to persuade undecided voters. However, it should be noted that one possible reason why the ads did not increase significantly in the daily newspapers in the final two weeks of the election campaign was that the parties chose to utilize the electronic media instead because of its apparent potency. An example of this inundation of the airways was seen during the radio coverage of the first test match in the Cable and Wireless Series between West Indies and South Africa that took place in Guyana from 9 – 13 March 2001. In the coverage of this match, the two major political parties or the Guyana Elections Commission either sponsored nearly all of the commercial segments much to the disgust and annoyance of many listeners who felt that the ads were unbearable because of their frequency.

When the two daily papers were compared with each other it was found ruling PPP/C preferred to use the state-owned Guyana Chronicle to the privately owned Stabroek News to disseminate its message (54:34). With the PNC/R on the other hand it was the reverse, it preferred to utilize the Stabroek to the state-owned Guyana Chronicle (29:13). Added to this it should be noted that out of the Chronicle's 86 campaign advertisements, 62% or 52 were from the PPP/C while the PNC/R sponsored 13 or 15.1% of the advertisements. GECOM was responsible for the remaining 23% of the advertisements. In the Stabroek News on the other hand, both parties virtually had the same number of advertisements. Out of that newspaper's 80 advertisements, the PPP/C and the PNC/R accounted for 34 and 29 ads respectively. The reasons for this apparent preference of the two parties are widely accepted and need not be expounded.

It is important to note that GECOM, which was not a contesting party in the elections, had more advertisements than all of the political parties combined with the exception of the PPP/C and the PNC/R. What is even more surprising was that throughout the official campaign period only two advertisements from the smaller parties appeared in the daily newspapers. The advertisements in question were a full page one sponsored by the ROAR that appeared in the February 20th, 2001 edition of the Stabroek News and a full-page ad by the JFAP, which appeared in the March 11th 2001 edition of the Stabroek News. From this one clearly sees that all the political parties with the exception of the main parties in general and the PPP/C in particular did not have the financial capabilities to mount a rigorous ad campaign in the newspaper.

Unlike the political parties who did not step up their ad campaign in the daily newspapers in the final two weeks before the elections GECOM intensified theirs in this very medium and in the process contributed to the argument of which of the media reach more of the Guyanese population, electronic or print. For example, the first two weeks of the campaign, GECOM had four advertisements (2 strip, 2 full page) in the Stabroek News. However, in the second two

weeks, in this very newspaper GECOM nearly tripled their ads from 4 to 11 (6 strip, 4 full page and 1 center page).

Table 1: Ads for the Period February 15 – 28 2001

Category	Guyana Chronicle			Total	Stabroek News			Total
	Centre	Full Page	Strip Ads		Centre	Full Page	Strip Ads	
PPP/C	2	3	17	22	6	2	10	18
PNC/R	0	4	4	8	0	3	13	16
ROAR	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
GECOM	0	2	2	4	0	2	2	4
TOTAL	2	9	23	<u>34</u>	6	8	25	<u>39</u>

Table 2: Ads for the period March 1- 18 2001

Category	Guyana Chronicle			Total	Stabroek News			Total
	Centre	Full Page	Strip Ads		Centre	Full Page	Strip Ads	
PPP/C	5	18	9	32	6	9	1	16
PNC/R	0	3	2	5	0	7	6	13
JFAP	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
GECOM	1	3	11	15	1	4	6	11
TOTAL	6	24	22	<u>52</u>	7	21	13	<u>41</u>

Note: For the purpose of this report, strip ads are those that are less than one full newspaper page in size.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion reveals the trends observed during the four months of monitoring coverage across a representative selection of Guyana's print and broadcast media of the GGRE 2001. As revealed, overall the media was largely unsuccessful in adherence to the Media Code of Conduct. While restricted to discussing the media's role in enlightening and educating the public on the issues involved, we recognise that the media is but one actor in bringing such issues to the attention of the public at large. The other organs of civil society must be encouraged to participate at this level in elections.

A coherent and thorough process of daily monitoring of election related items revealed general patterns in the amount and nature of coverage, as reflected in the foregoing discussion which is prefaced by general comments, to specific performance of the various medium – print, broadcast and television – in three specific time frames (Pre-Nomination, Pre – Election, Post – Election).

As is evident throughout the report, the media coverage was largely undertaken within a discourse established by the political parties themselves. Not only did the media allow their coverage to be dictated by the agendas of political parties, it failed to actively engage the complex issues brought up by the election fervour. The media landscape was characterized by a concern for events at the expense of critical, evaluative and analytical presentation of items. The preponderance of the government category in every newscast is indicative of clear limitations to investigative journalism.

The evidence of bias and inaccuracy has been presented, revealing the negative impact on the quality of election coverage. The instances of irresponsible journalism further diminished an otherwise peaceful election process.

Summarily, it can be maintained that the media's coverage of the GGRE 2001 failed to meet its own resolution as set out in the MCC, particularly in the post – election period. It is clear that some media practitioners have still not come to grips with their educative and informative role, in providing the public with adequate alternatives. In the interests of a balanced and more dynamic media, it could be expected that the reporting would be done in a manner sensitive to the complexities and divergences of the Guyanese society.

The only notable difference in the way in which the different medium covered the political parties was that the print media accorded smaller parties more coverage than radio and television. However, the monitoring period revealed a lack of full compliance with the Media Code of Conduct by all of the newspapers monitored.

Both of the two daily newspapers, the privately owned Stabroek News and the state controlled Chronicle newspapers made genuine attempts to correct past deficiencies in the pre-election period. Still, one could find commentary that is more objective and detailed in the Stabroek than the Chronicle. Indeed the latter being owned by the state should be held to accountability that is more stringent. While it is expected that government and the PPP/C would attract excessive attentions at election time the exclusion of other political parties and their views was a clear infraction of the MCC, but did not by itself reveal any intentional bias. Nonetheless, the Stabroek

news can be commended for inclusion of items both critical of the various parties' policies as well as editorials and opinion pieces calling for the potential voting public to cast their votes in light of the importance of GGRE 2001.

The weekly and biweekly Kaieteur, Mirror and New Nation displayed absolute disregard for the spirit of the MCC (as indicated in foregoing discussion). Several reports by the various media monitoring groups failed to extract positive change in the manner of reporting by these print outlets. While the Mirror and New Nation are widely regarded as party papers, which thrive on propaganda, innuendo and misrepresentation of the facts, once they enter the public domain, professional journalistic standards is not an option.

Radio broadcasts revealed a clear absence of exploratory coverage. The stat-run broadcaster relied mainly on the activities and events of the day for stories. This over-reliance on institutionally-generated news and the concomitant bulk of government related items are of concern. The radio given its broadcast capacity missed the opportunity to highlight the issues of concern to outlying communities often bypassed in terms of development. Radio VOG also served to enhance the image of government agents particularly the Guyana Police Force in the post-election period.

Like the rest of the media, television newscast coverage focused extensively on government. Further. The nexus between state-run outlets and favouritism towards government cannot be understated. At the same time privately – owned television also displayed strong political tendency towards one party or another. However, it is not clear whether any of these newscasts were deliberately biased. The sources consistently accessed for information were government functionaries and other politicians; hence, most news items were bland due to lack of expert or other professional opinion. Again, it is impossible to determine to what extent this tendency reflects lack of professionalism on the part of TV journalists involved that were working under considerable time pressure.

News items on TV lacked an evaluative dimension. The content of reports was limited across the give newscasts. Often there was little analysis of the election issues and little discussion of party policies. Not even the PPP/C and the PNC/R who received extensive coverage, had their policies analysed and explained. In addition, the lack of diversity was stark in terms of the number of parties that received coverage. In many cases there seemed to be only two parties participating in these elections. There has been some attention to other parties across the political spectrum but generally; the television newscasts did not cover the various parties equitably to sufficiently inform citizens of the various issues at stake.

The internationally guaranteed standards of freedom of expression within the framework of adherence to professional and ethical standards of journalism should be the foundation pillars for talk shows in Guyana. The monitoring of television talk shows revealed an incredible disregard for the MCC and the stability of the nation. While this forum is the most uninhibited in the media sphere and provides the opportunity for journalists to challenge political, social and economic norms, policies and even discuss of the prospects for change, the shows became surrogates of the various political parties. The viewer/listener/hearer was treated to a menu of party agenda, and

denigration of political opponents and wariness of GECOM. A few exceptional programmes were diminished by the attitude of talk shows during and immediately after the elections.

With respect to paid political advertisements the evidence reveals a lack of issue – based ads that often appealed to the public’s sense of humour and bashed political opponents. The resource capacity of the main political parties PPP/C and PNC/R offered another distinct campaign advantage in the television blitzkrieg. Other parties could not adequately compete with the financial and logistical constraints.

The shortcomings noted in the discussion underscore the need for an ongoing effort on the part of the media to improve professional standards in general. Specifically improvement needs to be made with the media’s approach to election reporting. This effort would be facilitated by the adoption of new broadcast legislation alongside a robust Press Association. This would strengthen the autonomy of the state owned media and the broadcast and print media in general, thus enabling them to play a more effective role in building a democratic society.