

**Guyana Elections Commission**  
**Media Monitoring Unit (MMU)**  
**Monitoring Report: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008– 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

**Introduction:**

This descriptive report is the third for this year, and represents the MMU's observations, analyses, conclusions and recommendations in relation to local media performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

In this report the Unit has highlighted and commented on those instances where it was observed that the media breached the spirit and intent of the **2006 Media Code of Conduct (MCC)**, and generally, those cardinal principles underpinning acceptable journalistic best practices.

Unlike the preceding reports for the first and second quarters of this year, this report is more comprehensive in terms of the number of categories being graphically depicted, analyzed and explained. This time around, in addition to providing information pertaining to the kinds of coverage (positive or negative) allocated to the five (5) Parliamentary Political Parties by the media, outside of an elections period, the category of **Government** has been included. The documenting of this new category is the actualization of a unanimous decision taken sometime ago by monitoring staff of the MMU to expand our observational ambit, but which was put into abeyance due to technical and human resource constraints. However, recent temporary additions to our staff complement, coupled with the acquisition and installation of more modern equipment to conduct monitoring activities has alleviated this limitation, and bolstered the Unit's capacity to report exhaustively on the media's coverage of social, governance, political, and electoral issues.

The inclusion of a category for government conterminous with those that were customarily reported on before, is intended to achieve two (2) objectives: Firstly it is necessary in order to clear up once and for all that grey area surrounding the kinds of coverage the government as a distinct entity from the ruling party (PPP/C) is receiving from the local media. The fact of the matter is that government is generally described as, or usually confused with the PPP/C; but the reality is that government is a body composed of politicians from two (2) political parties - PPP and TUF - along with a significant civilian (or civic) component. Secondly, the government is indubitably the single most important political actor in the body politic of the country, and the decisions they make, and the policies they implement, ultimately affect citizens of this country in one way or another, that is, either positively or negatively; hence the very strong and compelling argument for their inclusion as a category in this and all other quarterly reports originating from the Unit.

For the purpose of this report (and those to follow), the concept of government is defined and limited to the actions and activities of the President, Prime Minister, Government Ministers, and officials of Government Ministries, in the performance of their official duties on behalf of the Government. **It does not include** any aspects of these persons social life outside of their official duties. And, similar to the method applied in determining the tone of coverage given to political parties by the media, the Unit in its analysis of coverage given to government, looked to see in what context government matters were reported through the media, that is, whether the information given was likely to image the government in a positive

or negative light, taking into account which perspective the average reader, listener or viewer is most likely to arrive at after internalizing the said information.

Listed in this Report are the Parliamentary Political Parties whose activities were reported by the media over the past three (3) months, namely: **PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR, and TUF.**

And, the broadcast and print media that were monitored and evaluated during this reporting period are:

**Television**

- GWTV Ch 2
- CNS Ch 6
- WRHM Ch 7
- HBTV Ch 9
- NCN Ch 11
- VCT Ch 28
- MTV Ch 65

**Radio**

- Voice Of Guyana (VOG)

**Newspaper**

- Stabroek News
- Kaieteur News
- Guyana Chronicle
- Guyana Times

## **N.B**

The graphical depictions in this report have been modified somewhat from the norm, in that the heretofore omnipresent Bar-charts have been replaced by matrices, while the Pie-charts have been segued to reflect the percentages generated from the figures in each matrix category. This change in format has been implemented because it is more reader friendly, and gives a clear insight as to which sections of the media numerical coverage was documented from. For example, the matrices constructed for both the print and broadcast media consist of three (3) categories each. In print (newspapers), the categories are: **Editorials, Letters to the Editor, and General News**; while for the broadcast media (TV and radio), the categories read: **News, Talk-Shows, and General Programs**. The term 'General News', as classified within the print media's matrices refer to information contained within the news sections of the daily newspapers – **exclusive of regional, international and sports news**. In the matrices produced for the broadcast media, the category described by the term 'General Programs' refer exclusively to information-giving programs such as Current Affairs programs, Magazine programs, Documentaries, and Commentaries, among others.

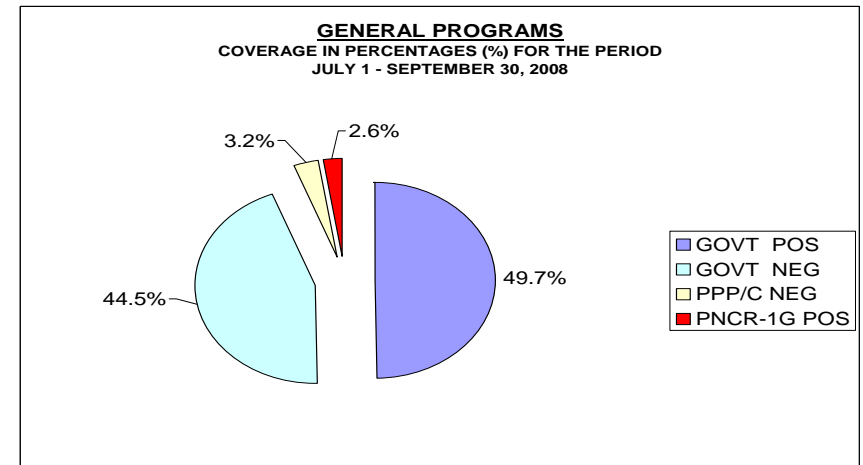
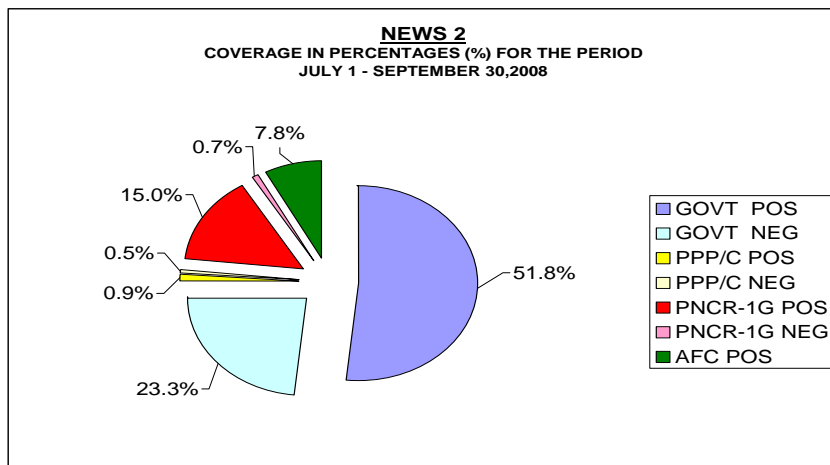
# TELEVISION

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

### FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1-SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

#### GWTV CH 02

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NEWS 2	256.5	-115	4.7	-2.6	72.9	-3	28	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	7.7	-6.9	0.4	-0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

For the current period under review, News 2 gave the government a greater allotment of positive than negative coverage. The newscast's apportioning of coverage to the parliamentary political parties yielded figures which showed that the PNCR-1G garnered the highest amount of positive coverage, followed by the AFC, and PPP/C, in that order. GAP/ROAR and TUF did not accumulate any positive coverage from the newscast and only two (2) parties - PNCR-1G and PPP/C - received negative coverage.

The Channel's output for the period was devoid of any **Talk- Shows**. However, in the **General Programs** category, the government was the only entity that accumulated coverage worthy of an analysis.

## Analysis

### News 2

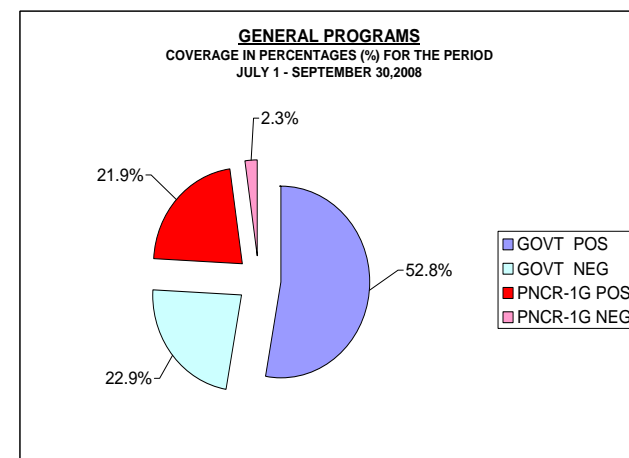
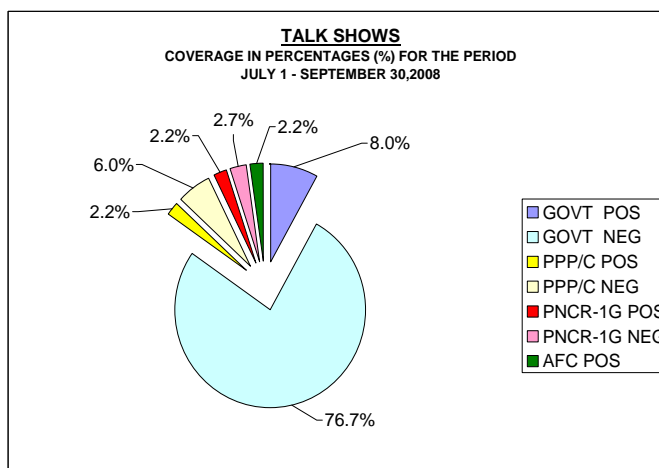
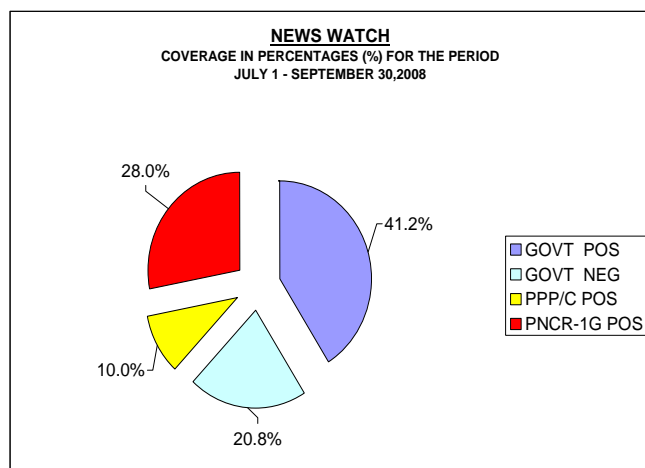
The more than 2:1 positive to negative coverage given to government in the newscast is suggestive of an editorial policy that set out to strike an acceptable level of equity between publicity which can be considered as positive aspects of governance juxtaposed against the negative perceptions and facts associated with the current regime. It is also an unambiguous indicator that the editor and members of the newsteam were somewhat successful in the execution of this agenda, since the ratio of positive to negative coverage accorded to government through the newscast is within the framework of what is internationally accepted as balanced and equitable coverage. Contrarily, the coverage given to the parliamentary political parties did not fit snugly into the same rubric, since the available information from the table and chart pellucidly shows a wide differential between the positive coverage given to the PNCR-1G and the other political parties. The PNCR-1G's positive coverage was more than double the total combined positive coverage given to the AFC and PPP/C – the other political parties that received similar coverage. This disparity in positive coverage in favor of the PNCR-1G detracted from the standard the newscast achieved in its reporting on government. However, even though this may be so, the PPP/C's dismal positive coverage has to be seen against the background of the Unit's implementation of a clear demarcation between coverage accorded to the government, and that given to the ruling party, and when this attendant factor is taken into consideration, the paradoxical conclusion is that the newscast performed creditably for this period, in spite of its 'unbalanced' political reporting.

The station's General Program's schedule was limited to just one (1) program – **Tape 4 Stories**- and the timings taken from it showed that the government attracted close to parity in positive and negative coverage. In the political realm, only the PPP/C received measurable coverage, which unfortunately was not substantial enough for an analysis. The quantitative spread of positive and negative coverage attained by government and the PPP/C from the program was more or less balanced and does not require an interpretation.

## CNS CH 06

**N.B: The following figures show coverage for the period 11<sup>th</sup> August 2008 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NEWS WATCH	41.7	-21.1	10.1	0	28.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	3.6	-34.5	1	-2.7	1	-1.2	1	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	36.4	-15.8	0	0	15.1	-1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

This Channel resumed broadcast activities from 11<sup>th</sup> August 2008, after four (4) months absence from cyberspace, and as such the reporting period is limited to 11-08-08 - 30-09-08. For the period under review, **News Watch** allotted positive and negative coverage to government and the parliamentary political parties as follows: Government received nearly twice more positive than negative coverage, while the PNCR-1G garnered nearly three (3) times the positive coverage given to the PPP/C – the only other party to receive positive coverage. None of the political parties were negatively covered.

In the station's **Talk-Show** category the government received nearly ten (10) times more negative than positive coverage, and three (3) of the parliamentary political parties –PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC - accumulated equal amounts of positive coverage. On the other hand, only two (2) parties (PNCR-1G and PPP/C) were negatively covered, and the PNCR-1G's negative coverage was approximately twice the PPP/C's.

The government's take of positive coverage from the Channel's **General Programs** category was just over twice the amount of negative coverage it received, and of the political parties, only the PNCR-1G received positive and negative coverage.

## Analysis

### News Watch

This news program is a new addition to Channel's 6 program schedule, replacing the former news program News Today. It was launched on CH 6 from 18-08-08 inclusive, and is the production of a private news service called Guyana News Agency. The delineated timings in the various sections aligned to News Watch's category are representative of a monitoring period of approximately thirty-two (32) program days, which is about half of the normal reporting period. The figures shown on the program's table and chart reflect a fairly successful attempt by the newsteam to provide the government with satisfactory coverage. Moreover, the positive coverage accorded to the political parties - PNCR-1G and PPP/C – of which the PNCR-1G was the largest beneficiary did not readily generate a cause and effect analysis. However, the lack of any meaningful positive or negative coverage for the three (3) smaller parliamentary political parties, that is, AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF, is a glaring omission from the newscast.

### Talk- Shows

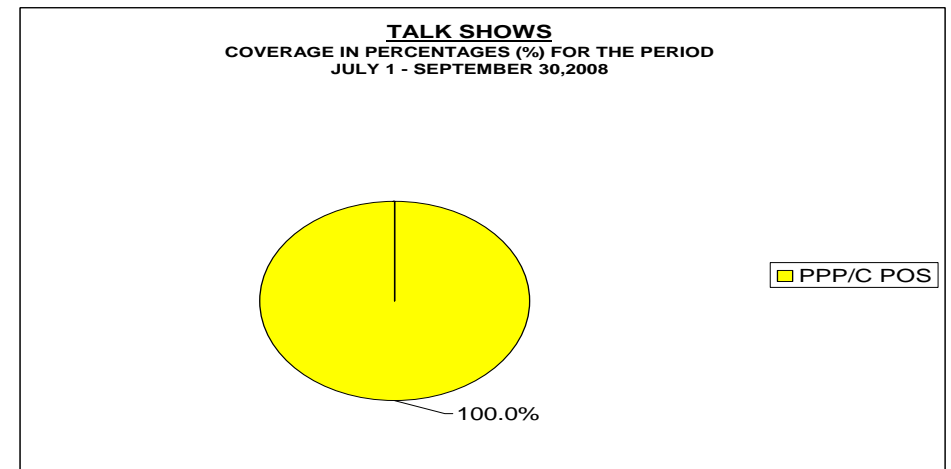
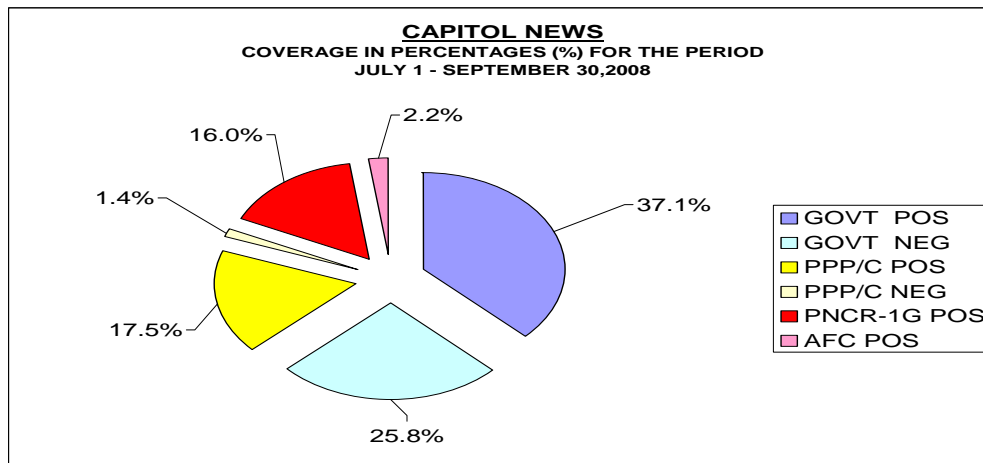
The Channel's Talk-Shows revolved around two (2) programs: **Voice Of the People (VOP)** and **Facing The Nation** (a PNCR-1G program). The AFC was the only political party to achieve net positive coverage in this category, while government, the ruling party (PPP/C), and the main opposition (PNCR-1G) all derived varying levels of net negative coverage. The government's comparatively huge negative coverage is easily explainable since it is traceable to the combined outputs of the aforementioned programs, which are premised on and driven by strong anti-government sentiments.

### General Programs

The station's General Programs category elicited figures showing that government acquired net positive coverage, as did the PNCR-1G for the parliamentary political parties. Apart from the PNCR-1G, none of the other political parties received either positive or negative coverage. A closer look at the timings accumulated by government established that they were extracted from Carifesta activities, and press conferences held by state officials, which reflected positively on the government. Similarly, the PNCR-1G accumulated political coverage from press conferences hosted by its executives which ratcheted up the positive timings documented for the party.. Altogether, the General Programs category was relatively limited in scope and was defined in the main by the reported activities of just two (2) players – Government and the PNCR-1G.

## WRHM CH 07

CATEGORY	POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)											
	GOVT (in minutes)		PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
CAPITOL NEWS	92.5	-64.4	43.5	-3.6	39.8	-0.8	5.4	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	0	1.2	0.2	0.1	9.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

**Capitol News** for this reporting period gave government a greater quantum of positive than negative coverage. The coverage afforded through the newscast to the parliamentary political parties read as follows: The PPP/C attracted the largest share of positive coverage, closely followed by the PNCR-1G, with AFC bringing up the rear. Neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF were given positive coverage. Both the PNCR-1G and PPP/C registered comparatively negligible amounts of negative coverage, while the AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF escaped similar coverage.

In the Channel's **Talk- Show** category, the Government was the recipient of a small amount of negative coverage. For the political parties, only two (2) of them were covered; the PNCR-1G secured only positive coverage, while the PPP/C received a both positive and negative coverage in small quantities.

The station's **General Programs** category was devoid of any local programs.



## Analysis

### Capitol News

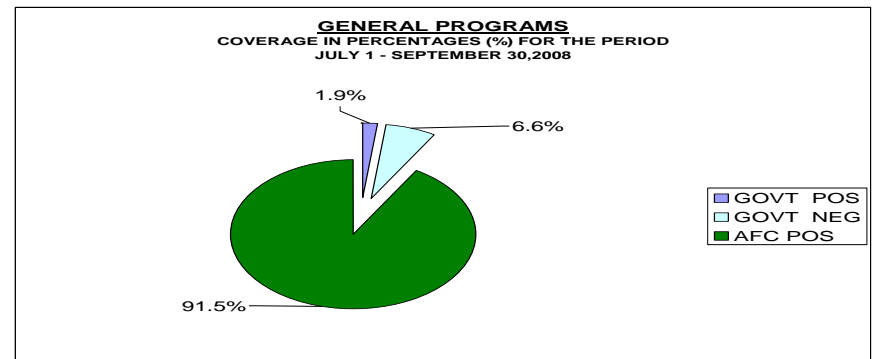
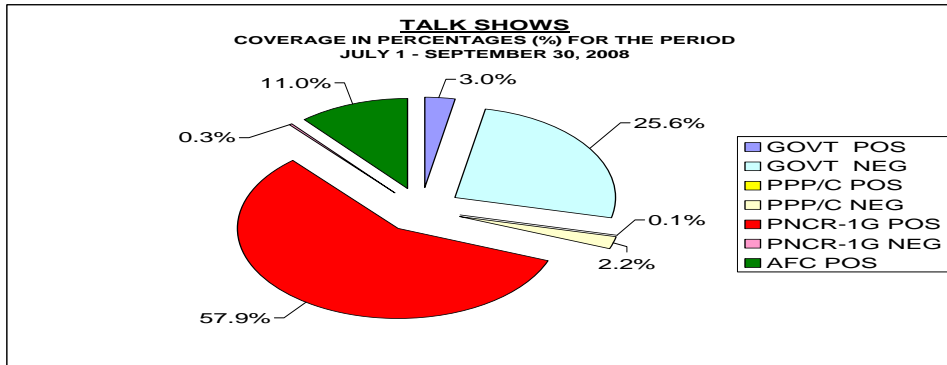
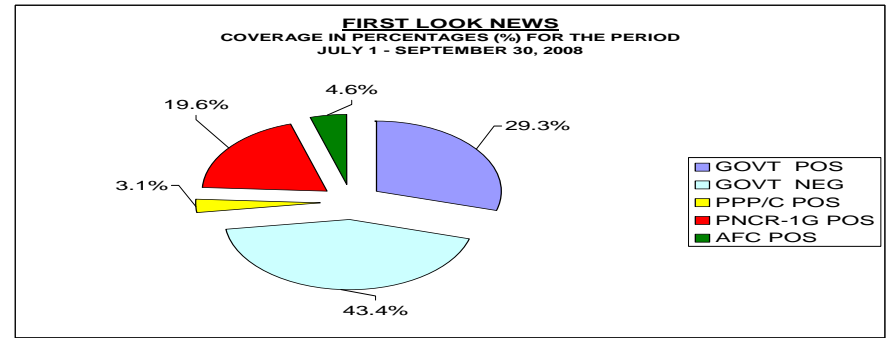
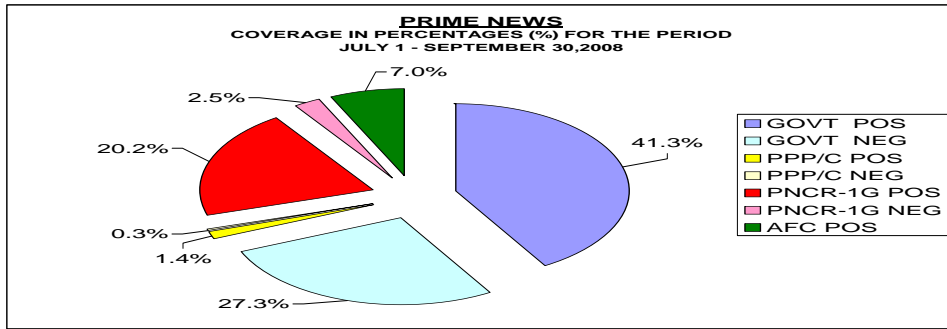
The division of positive and negative coverage apportioned to government by the news team of **Capitol News** was consistent with equitable reporting. In addition, the newsteam's reports on the parliamentary political parties resulted in fairly balanced coverage for those parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC – which by their public and parliamentary activities rendered themselves newsworthy. Further, the figures displayed on the newscast's pie-chart suggests that the newsteam did a skillfully crafted and executed 'balancing act' in their dissemination of news on government and the political parties, resulting in this being the newscast's best performance thus far for the year; bucking a trend that previously exhibited rank partiality by the newsteam in their reporting on the parliamentary political parties.

### Talk- Shows

The weekly discussion program, **EYE ON THE ISSUES**, was the only local program within the Channel's Talk-Show category during this quarter, and the timings it generated for the Government, the PNCR-1G and the PPP/C, reflected more positively on the PNCR-1G than the Government and the PPP/C. This was due to the favorable publicity the party (PNCR-1G) received through the appearance of its executives on one of the programs. Generally though, there is nothing conclusive about the figures elicited.

**HBTV CH 09**

CATEGORY	POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)											
	GOVT (in minutes)		PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
PRIME NEWS	96	-63.5	3.2	-0.7	47	-5.9	16.3	-0.6	0	0	0	0
FIRST LOOK NEWS	23	-34	2.4	-0.2	15.4	0	3.6	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	28.5	-243	1.2	-20.5	550.3	-3	104.4	-0.3	0	0	0	-0.3
GENERAL PROGRAM	0.6	-2.1	0	0	0	0	28.9	0	0	0	0	0



**Observations**

For the current reporting period CH 9 hosted two (2) news programs – **Prime News** and **First Look News**. Prime News, which is produced privately but buys air-time from the Channel has been its standard bearer, but with the addition of First Look News, produced and presented by management of the Channel, the status-quo has been altered, with two (2) daily newscasts now on offer to viewers instead of one, as obtained before.

The figures documented for **Prime News** during this quarter showed that government received more positive than negative coverage from the newscast, and the coverage allocated to the parliamentary political parties was as follows: The PNCR-1G soaked up the largest share of positive coverage, followed by the AFC and PPP/C, in that order. Neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF gained any positive coverage. Likewise, only the PNCR-1G, PPP/C and AFC received negative coverage from the newscast, with the PNCR-1G accumulating the highest and AFC the lowest.

The figures from the **First Look News** chart communicated to the observer that the negative coverage accorded to government was more than the positive coverage it was allocated. The coverage given to the parliamentary political parties by the newsteam resulted in the PNCR-1G gaining the most positive coverage, followed by the AFC and PPP/C. The PPP/C was the only political party that registered negative coverage from the newscast.

In the Channel's **Talk-Shows**, the government was allocated an overwhelming amount of negative coverage relative to the positive coverage it was given. And, for the political parties, the PNCR-1G garnered a competitively huge amount of positive coverage, compared to the AFC and to a lesser extent the PPP/C. Neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF was positively covered. Four (4) of the political parties accumulated negative coverage – PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC and TUF – of which the PPP/C absorbed the largest share, followed by the PNCR-1G, with AFC and TUF tied in the cellar position with equal amounts.

The **General Programs** category yielded figures which revealed that government gained slightly more negative than positive coverage, and for the political parties, only the AFC received positive coverage, while none of the parties obtained negative coverage.

## Analysis

### Prime News

Prime News reporting on government, and the parliamentary political parties, showed a commonality in that, both government and the three (3) political parties that were covered, received net positive coverage. The publicity afforded government by the newsteam was fairly equitable in terms of positive to negative coverage, however, the coverage apportioned to the political parties tipped propitiously towards the PNCR-1G. The PNCR-1G's positive coverage was almost thrice the amount of similar coverage accorded to the AFC, and nearly fifteen (15) times that given to the PPP/C. On the surface, this smacks of unbalanced coverage by the newsteam, but a thorough assessment of the information available relative to the newscast's output for this quarter, adumbrated a nexus between the PNCR-1G's healthy positive timings and its publicized public interventions into current social and political issues. In other words, PNCR-1G's bullish activism on issues of public concern catapulted the party to the top of the positive rankings for this reporting period, further cementing a pattern whereby the party is always well patronized through the newscast.

### First Look News

The figures displayed for First Look News showed that government received net negative publicity from the newscast's output, while three (3) of the five (5) parliamentary political parties –PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC - registered net positive coverage. Of note though, is that the PNCR-1G's positive coverage was more than twice the same coverage collectively accumulated by the PPP/C and AFC; a reflection of the larger quantum of PNCR-1G's

public and parliamentary activities captured and articulated on the newscast. Also, a qualitative probe of the statistics generated in the First Look News chart, elicited information which suggested that government's surfeit of negative coverage, though not substantial, was correlated to the tone and slant of the information publicized as 'News' through the newscast. The Unit detected what seems to be a deliberate editorial policy to shape public opinion along the contours of a myopically narrow political agenda, that is from all intent, caustically anti-government and socially divisive. (see comment below)

### Talk- Shows

The Talk Show category evinced figures that essentially depicted the government receiving net negative coverage, and the PPP/C and TUF being the only political parties being similarly covered. The PNCR-1G and AFC were the two (2) biggest recipients of positive coverage in this category, with the PNCR-1G accumulating the largest share. This category was dominated almost exclusively by the PNCR-1G's bi-weekly sponsored Talk Show, **Nation Watch**, the AFC's facsimile of **AFC In Focus**, and WPA's **Walter Rodney Groundings**; and herein lies the connection between the contrasting positive ratings for the PNCR-1G and AFC, on one hand, and the high negative ratings documented for the government and the PPP/C, on the other. The connection is context driven, since the aforementioned programs apart from portraying positive party images, are also stridently anti-government and anti-PPP/C.

### General Programs

The timings displayed in the various sections of this category were taken from three (3) press conferences aired on the station. One (1) of the press conferences was hosted by the government, while the other two (2) were sponsored by the AFC. At the end of the day, after the figures (or timings) were extracted and tabulated, they showed that the government received net negative coverage and the AFC accrued net positive coverage. The government's net negative coverage was due to the fact that the AFC was hugely successful in depicting the government in an unfavorable light to viewers.

### Comment

#### First Look News

When compared to the more established news programs on national TV, this newscast can justifiably be labeled as the 'new kid on the block.' Whilst this may be so, the Unit's observations of the contents of the newscast over the past three (3) months, revealed that the host and reporters of the program displayed a predisposition for recklessly disseminating information to the public that is misleading, conjectural and highly opinionated. It should be noted that the term 'News' implies information that is unbiased, factual, balanced, and free from distortions. However, the newsteam of First Look News are either ignorant of these well-known principles undergirding professional journalism or are arrogantly dismissive of them. This theory was tested and validated by the findings taken from an analysis of randomly selected newscasts of which all were found to be heavily saturated with undisguised insertions of opinions by the host and the program's reporters. Further, a trend was unearthed whereby news is being disseminated to the public in such a way as to obfuscate facts, distort reality, and deliberately nurture resentment against public officials – especially the country's judiciary and security forces.

The following statements which were indiscriminately culled from newscasts aired over the past three (3) months, attest to the factuality of the Unit's findings:

**Taken from First Look News – 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

Host: “The censorship of free speech is becoming a 2008 trend for the current PPP/C administration and the judicial system as harsh penalties are meted out to the persons who attempt to exercise their right to freedom of speech (sic). This year’s muzzling culture began in March 2008...”

**Taken from First Look News – 27<sup>th</sup> August 2008**

Host: “The victimization of young Afro Guyanese men continues as there is a culture of persons being prosecuted because of friendship or association. This part of Guyanese culture is also being displayed for Carifesta 10.”

**Taken from First Look News – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008**

Host: “...Guyana’s judicial system continues to operate above the constitution as it is still being used for oppression and convenience...”

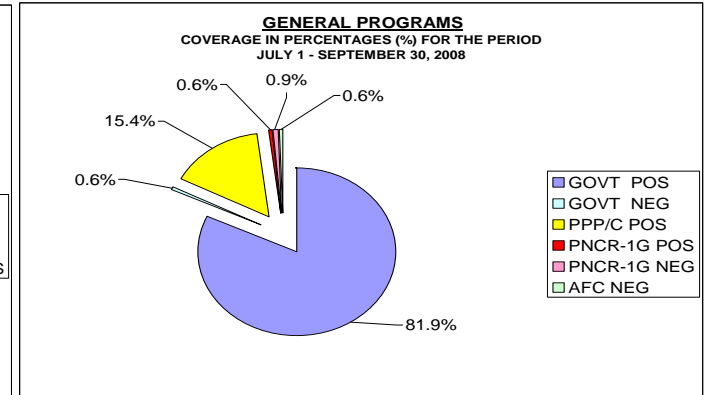
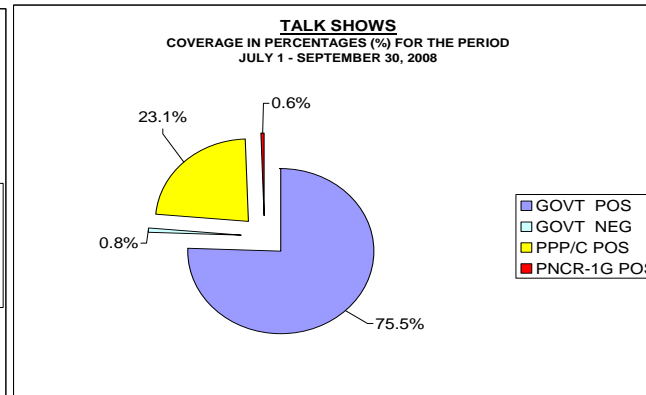
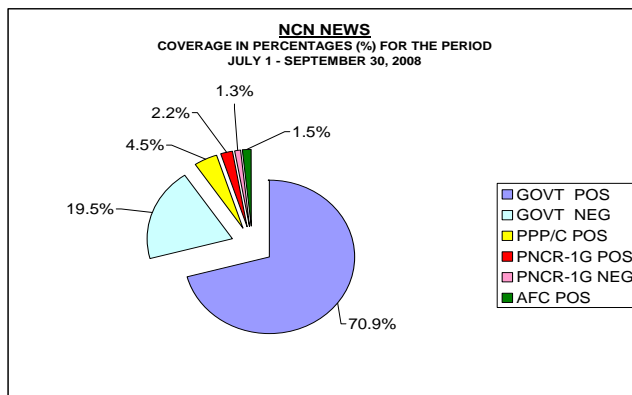
The Unit takes the principled position that the above excerpts cannot be defined as News, rather, they are unattributed statements, which are dangerously inciting, socially divisive, and a clear indication that the newsteam makes no differentiation between ‘Commentary’ and ‘News.’ This is an unacceptable shortcoming for a news program, and needs to be peremptorily addressed by the Channel’s management, if the newscast is to be regarded as credible, professional and objective.

**N.B**

**The Editor of First Look News was written to by the MMU, and informed of our observations. And, in keeping with the Unit’s mandate to positively influence media standards, the editor was politely advised to prioritize improving the quality of the newscast, in terms of content and presentation. The Advisory Committee on Broadcasting (ACB) was also sent a copy of the correspondence for possible follow-up action.**

## NCN CH 11

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NCN NEWS	730.5	201.1	46.4	0	22.5	-13.5	15.8	-0.3	0	0	0.9	0
TALK SHOWS	153.1	-1.6	46.8	0	1.2	-0.1	0.3	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	555.7	3.9	104.7	0	4	-6.1	2	-4	0	0	0	0



### Observations

**NCN News** coverage of government was more positive than negative, and its coverage of the parliamentary political parties resulted in the PPP/C gaining the largest slice of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC and TUF, in that order. Only the PNCR-1G and AFC were negatively covered, and GAP/ROAR did not accrue either positive or negative coverage.

In the Channel's **Talk- Show** category, the government was allocated an immense amount of positive coverage relative to the negative coverage it received. And, amongst the parliamentary political parties the PPP/C topped the positive coverage list, trailed distantly by the PNCR-1G and AFC, in that order. The PNCR-1G was the only political party to accumulate negative coverage in this category, while, neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF registered any form of coverage.

The **General Programs** category spawned figures which revealed that the overwhelming positive coverage government received outweighed the negative publicity it was accorded. Likewise, the PPP/C's positive coverage in this category, dwarfed the same coverage apportioned to the PNCR-1G

and AFC – the other parties positively covered. Both the PNCR-1G and AFC received disproportionate amounts of negative coverage relative to the positive coverage they accumulated, with the AFC’s ratio being the larger of the two.

## **Analysis**

### **NCN News**

Government’s share of positive coverage from NCN News was thrice the amount of negative publicity it received through the newscast. This is not odd since it is a phenomenon that is premised on the fact that government uses this forum (NCN News) to highlight its achievements and successes packaged as ‘News.’ However, to the newsteam’s credit, the evidence embedded in the newscast figures for this reporting period implied that they were not averse to disseminating information to the general public that was unfavorable to the incumbent. The mere fact that government was given copious negative publicity bespeaks a desired level of impartiality in the newsteam’s coverage and propagation of news during this quarter. Similarly, the spread of coverage given to the parliamentary political parties by the newsteam was appreciable because even though the PPP/C received the largest amount of positive coverage, compared to the other political parties, the timings for all the other parties (that were covered) indicate that the positive coverage each received was fairly equitable relative to their parliamentary proportions. The PNCR-1G’s allocation of most negative coverage from the newscast is situated within the context of the mostly favorable coverage the government commands from the newscast which sometimes intentionally or unintentionally redounds to the negative portrayal of the opposition parties, chiefly the PNCR-1G. However, in spite of these nuances, the Newscast’s performance for this quarter was good, on a scale ranging between the extremes of bad and excellent.

### **Talk-Shows**

From the Talk-Shows aired on CH 11, the government’s take of positive coverage was gargantuan when equated with the infinitesimal negative coverage it attracted. In like manner, the PPP/C’s proportion of positive coverage relative to the other political parties was uncompetitively lop-sided in the PPP/C’s favor. The figures graphically depicted in the Talk-Show chart relate a situation whereby the PPP/C garnered approximately 31 times more positive coverage in this category than the PNCR-1G and AFC combined. A perusal of the Unit’s documents to ascertain the influencing factor(s) behind this trend uncovered that from the many Talk- Shows proliferating the Channel’s Talk-Show category, the bulk of positive timings for government and the PPP/C were recorded from the program **Close-Up**. This is instructive because it is an interview program that over time has metamorphosed into the exclusive preserve of the government and PPP/C officials; to the exclusion of opposition elements. It is a program that cries out for balance, a feat that is doable, through the opening up of the forum to views on social and political issues that are outside those perspectives presently being conveyed through the program to the general public.

### **General Programs**

In the Channel’s General Program category, the government secured tremendous positive coverage, and comparatively minute negative coverage, reflected in a ratio of just over 142:1. Coverage given to the parliamentary political parties conveyed a similar pattern, with the PPP/C accruing positive coverage relative to the other combined political parties in a ratio of approximately 17:1. A salient feature of this category is that both of the opposition parties – PNCR-1G and AFC - that received coverage, ended up with net negative coverage, when their ratios of positive to negative

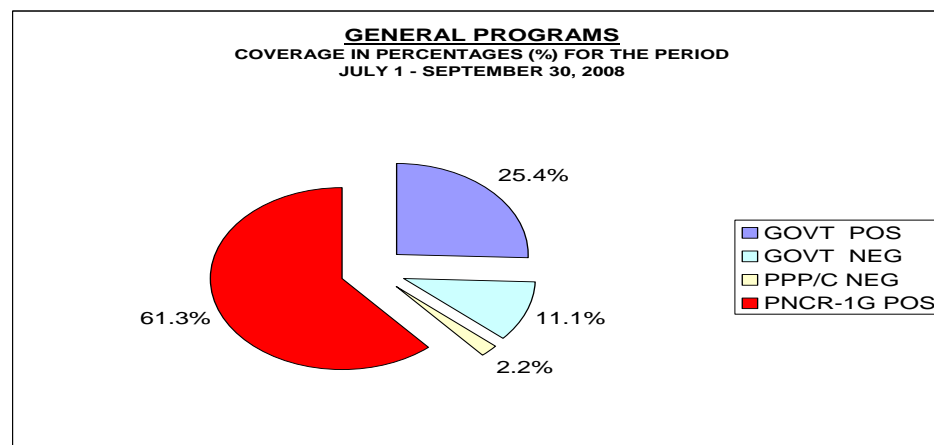
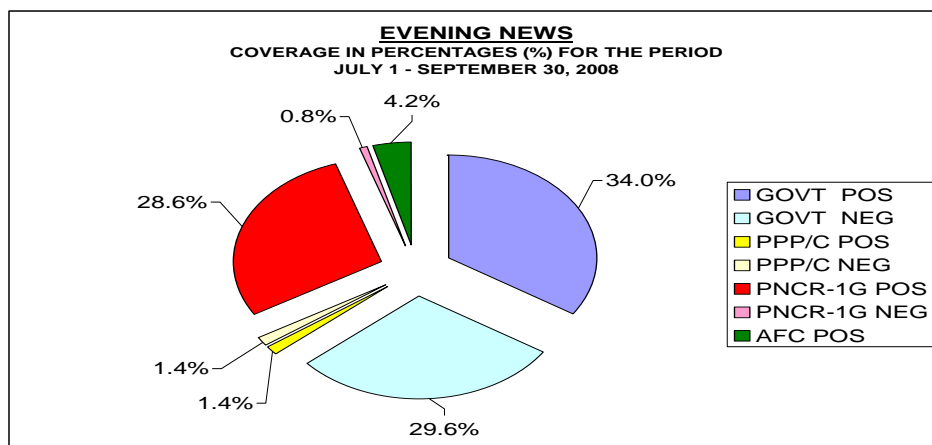
coverage are taken into account. Government's good showing in this category was driven largely by the maximum positive coverage it received through GINA produced programs such as, **The Diary, Weekly Digest, and Perspective of the Week**. Also, there was an observed causal connection between the PPP/C's commanding lead in positive coverage amongst the political parties and the abundance of GINA produced programs that are niche in this category.

The common thread running through two (2) of the categories –Talk-Shows and General Programs – is the extremely high levels of positive coverage the government and PPP/C were afforded, which contrasted starkly with the disproportionate levels of negative coverage the opposition political parties attracted. With the exception of the Channel's news program, the ideal of equitable coverage did not resonate within the Talk-Shows and General Programs categories.



## VCT CH 28

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EVENING NEWS	114.7	-99.9	4.6	-4.6	96.5	-2.6	14.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	11.7	-5.1	0	-1	28.2	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

During the current reporting period, **Evening News** portrayed government more positive than negative, while coverage for the parliamentary political parties was as follows: the PPP/C received even scores of positive and negative coverage; the PNCR-1G was the beneficiary of significant positive coverage compared to the trifling amount of negative coverage the party absorbed; and the AFC collected a fairly decent amount of positive coverage as against zero negative coverage. Neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF realized any positive or negative coverage from the newscast.

The station's **Talk-Shows** category was devoid of any local programs.

In the **General Programs** category, the government received a distinctly larger percentage of positive coverage relative to the negative publicity it attracted, while coverage apportioned to the parliamentary political parties resulted in the PNCR-1G attaining the largest share of positive coverage, and the PPP/C being the only party securing negative coverage, though, not in a substantial quantity.

## Analysis

### Evening News

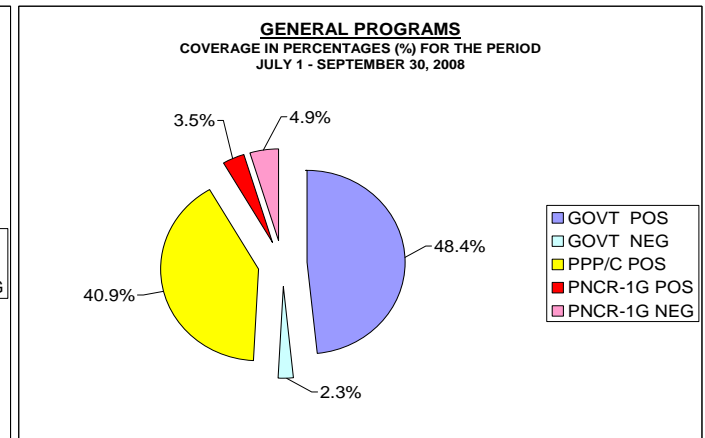
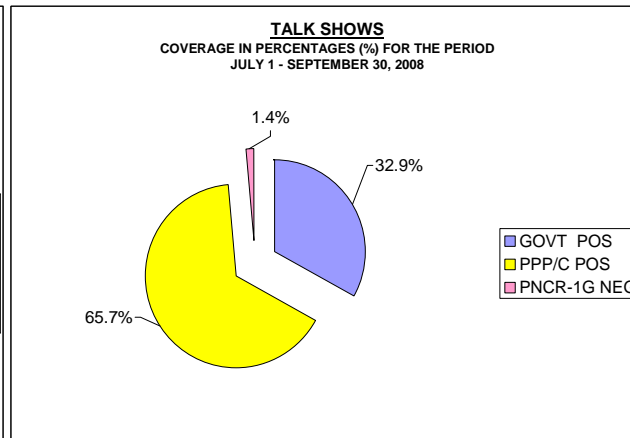
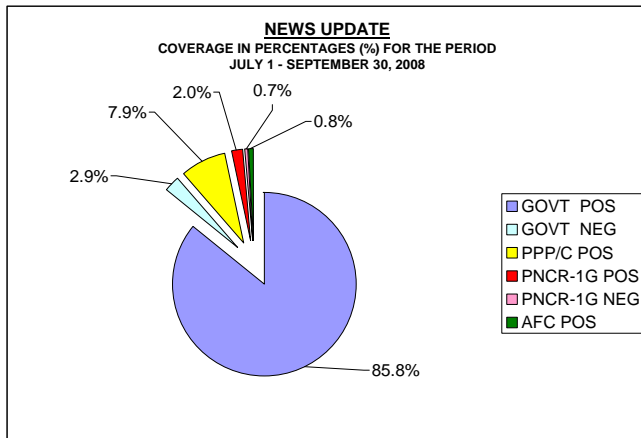
The newscast generated figures which showed that reportage of news by the newsteam redounded to net positive coverage for the government. However, the figures displayed for the parliamentary political parties, inauspiciously let slip that the PNCR-1G received positive coverage that was five (5) times more than the combined positive coverage of the PPP/C and AFC. The PNCR-1G's larger proportion of positive coverage was not by any chance preternatural or an unexpected phenomenon, rather, the replay of a time-worn script that remains unchanged from one reporting period to another. This script has its genesis in an editorial policy that allows for generous air-time being allotted on the newscast to the dissemination of information that projects the opposition parties in a favorable light; a gratuitous facility to which the PNCR-1G and to a lesser extent the AFC are the main contributors. The obvious pursuit of partisan political reporting by the newsteam served to undermine their inherent capacity and ability to deliver equitable news coverage that strikes a balance between the PPP/C and the opposition political parties (primarily the PNCR-1G and AFC).

### General Programs

The General Programs category consisted in its entirety of just one (1) program – **GUYSUCO Special Report** – and from this program the government's ratio of positive to negative coverage was a little over 2:1. Amongst the political parties, the PNCR-1G's siphoned off the highest amount of positive coverage. Incidentally, the statistics from this category do not show a trend requiring serious evaluation, since the program was broadcast only on two (2) occasions over a span of three (3) months.

## NCN CH 65

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)										
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
NEWS UPDATE	712	-24.1	65.2	-1.5	16.8	5.6	6.3	0	0.6	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	115.4	0	230.1	-1	0	-4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	141.6	-6.8	119.5	0	10.2	-14.2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

**News Update's** coverage of government and the parliamentary political parties resulted in government receiving notably more positive than negative publicity.

All the parliamentary political parties, with the exception of TUF (which did not receive coverage of any sort), received sizable amounts of positive coverage relative to the negative coverage they individually accumulated. The PPP/C gained the largest share of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR, in that order. The PPP/C's positive coverage was nearly three (3) times the combined positive coverage given to the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR. The PNCR-1G and PPP/C were the only parties that attracted negative coverage, with the PNCR-1G gaining the larger slice.

In the **Talk- Shows** category, government's coverage was confined exclusively to the positive column. The PNCR-1G and PPP/C were the only two (2) political parties that acquired coverage in this category, with the PPP/C dominating the positive coverage column, and the PNCR-1G performing similarly in the negative column.

The **General Programs** category churned out figures which established that the government scored expansively more positive than negative coverage. The PPP/C fared the best amongst the parliamentary political parties, accruing an appreciable amount of positive coverage, and no negative publicity. Contrastingly, the PNCR-1G achieved more negative than positive coverage, while the AFC realized an insignificant amount of positive coverage, only.

## Analysis

### News Update

The enormous positive coverage the government received virtually negated the negative attention it attracted from the newscast. This pattern repeated itself in the coverage that the newsteam assigned to the parliamentary political parties, with all of them, bar the TUF, accumulating more positive than negative coverage. Interestingly though, the PPP/C's share of positive coverage tripled that of the combined opposition parties, while the PNCR-1G's negative coverage quadrupled the PPP/C's, even though its (PNCR-1G) positive coverage was nearly four (4) times less than the positive coverage the PPP/C garnered. The figures from News Update made for an informative analysis, since a trawl of our records pinpointed that the lop-sided amounts of positive coverage the government and the PPP/C received was hitched to the preponderance of news items favorable to the government and PPP/C that are disseminated daily through the newscast. Paradoxically, the limited number of news items favorable to the opposition parties, namely, the PNCR-1G and AFC, reflected unfavorably on the government and the PPP/C, hence the documentation of negative coverage to the two (2) entities. However, in fairness to the newsteam, they endeavored to present the varying perspectives on current issues by the government, ruling party (PPP/C), and the opposition parties, but as is their wont, the government and ruling party received disproportionate amounts of air-time relative to the other aforementioned political parties. The newscast's performance for this quarter can be objectively evaluated as average, with potential to attain excellence in the future, if the identified 'grey area' of inequitable coverage given to the opposition parties is assiduously addressed.

### Talk-Shows

The Channel's Talk-Show category consisted of a single program – **Getting It Right** – a PPP/C sponsored discussion and call-in show. This program's raison d'être is to publicize the ruling party and government's achievements and successes, and as such, the favorable figures compiled for the government and the ruling party, on one hand, and the negative publicity accorded to the PNCR-1G, on the other, is self-explanatory.

### General Programs

The programs projected from within this category were limited exclusively to GINA productions, such as **The DIARY, DIGEST and PERSPECTIVE OF THE WEEK**. This being the case, the trend of coverage analyzed from the figures which showed that the PNCR-1G received

net negative coverage, the other opposition political parties virtually excluded from coverage, and the government and PPP/C amassing huge positive coverage, is directly linked to the content of the aforementioned programs, which are primarily produced and presented with the foremost objective of burnishing the government's image.

## **General Observations – Television**

The Unit's evaluation of the local TV sector's performance for the current period under review, honed in on three (3) pertinent aspects of news reporting that stood out noticeably. Firstly, the coverage given to government by the TV newscasts, bar First Look News, uncannily, was always many times more positive than negative, and this trend manifested even in the figures for those newscasts that over time have developed reputations as refuge of the opposition political parties. This observation, which was objectively and scientifically arrived at (using our time-tested methodology), proves yet again that perception can either be debunked or proven through empirical analysis. Secondly, the coverage accorded individually and collectively by the newsteams, was distributed in the main amongst just three (3) of the five (5) parliamentary political parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC. The absolute minimal, and in most cases zero coverage that showed up in the columns of the other two (2) parties – GAP/ROAR and TUF – from all the newscasts, on the face of it, suggests discrimination by the newsteams, but this is far removed from the truth, because the reality is that these parties, unlike the PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC, were virtually sterile, mute on public issues, and by extrapolation were un-newsworthy. In this regard, it was simply a case of the figures describing the moribundity of the two (2) political parties. Thirdly, First Look News was the only newscast cited for unprofessional behavior, proving to be the only outlier. The program was totally out of sync with the general trend exhibited by the other newscasts.

Outside of this aberration, the performance of TV during this reporting period was of a commendable standard, deserving of an encomium, to which the Unit unreservedly subscribes. Even the reintroduction of CH's 6 controversial VOP program did not in any way negatively impact the medium's overall positive image; a desideratum, that the "Tube's" practitioners should be proud of, and motivated to maintain into the final quarter of the year, and beyond. It would be counterintuitive should they faltered to deceive.

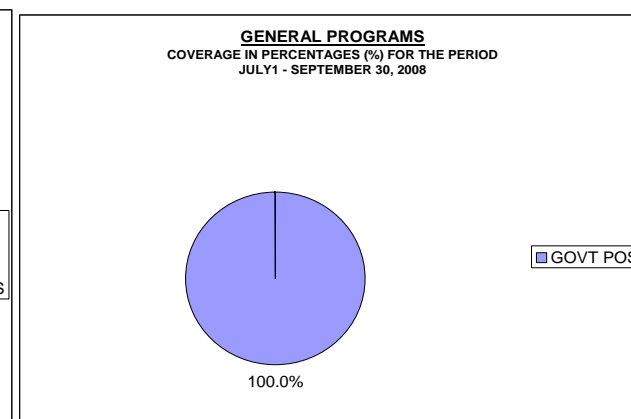
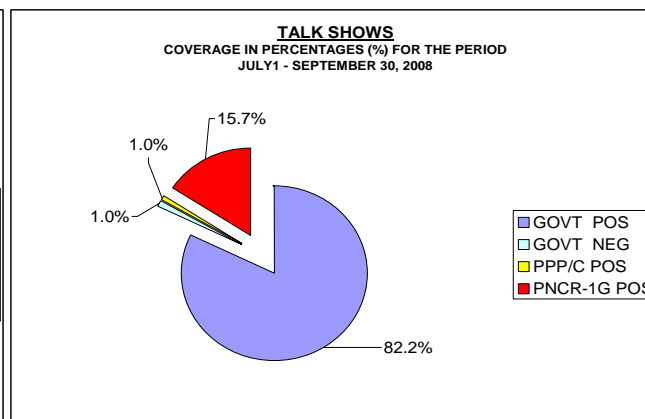
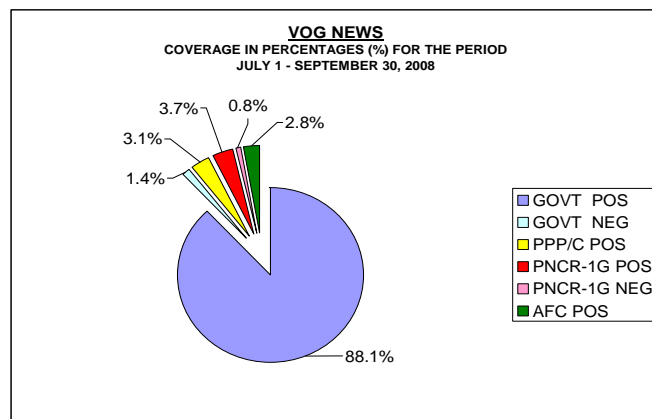
# RADIO

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

### FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1-SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

#### VOG

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
VOG NEWS	279.5	-4.5	9.8	0	11.8	-2.6	8.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	17.1	-0.2	0.2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	6.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations

The coverage given by **VOG News** to government and the parliamentary political parties resulted in government obtaining significantly more positive than negative coverage. Three (3) of the five (5) political parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G and AFC - received coverage, with the PNCR-1G gaining slightly more positive coverage than the PPP/C, and AFC. The PNCR-1G was the only party that attracted negative coverage.

The Channel's **Talk-Show** category produced figures showing that only government and two (2) of the parliamentary political parties - PNCR-1G and PPP/C – were covered and reported on by the newsteam. From this coverage, the government attracted a large quantum of positive coverage, and minimal negative coverage. Amongst the political parties, the PNCR-1G netted the greater share of positive coverage. None of the two (2) parties was allocated negative coverage.

Government was the only entity that accumulated any kind of coverage from the **General Programs** category of the Channel; and the coverage given was exclusively positive.

### **Analysis**

The distribution of coverage by VOG News to government, and the parliamentary political parties, indicated that news favorable to the government was unsparingly disseminated through the newscast. The figures also inferred that the activities of the more active parliamentary political parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G and AFC – were equitably publicized through the newscast, and none of them, was discriminated against in having their positions on current issues presented to the listening public. This is yet another overt manifestation of impartial and equitable coverage given by the newsteam, and caps another good period for the newscast in terms of performance.

The Station's Talk-Shows were comprised almost entirely of GINA produced discussion programs, while its General Programs output resided in GINA features. As such, the majority of favorable (positive) timings documented for the government in both categories are easy to fathom.



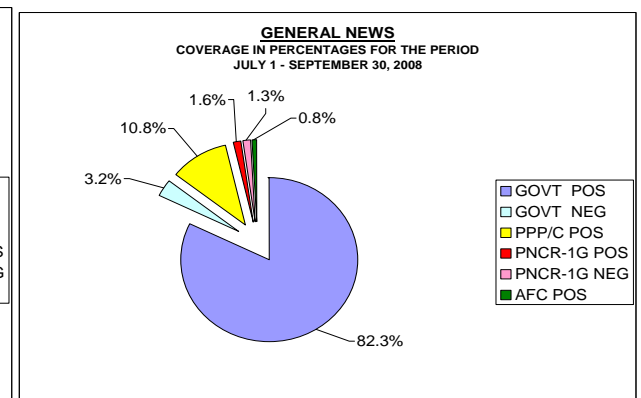
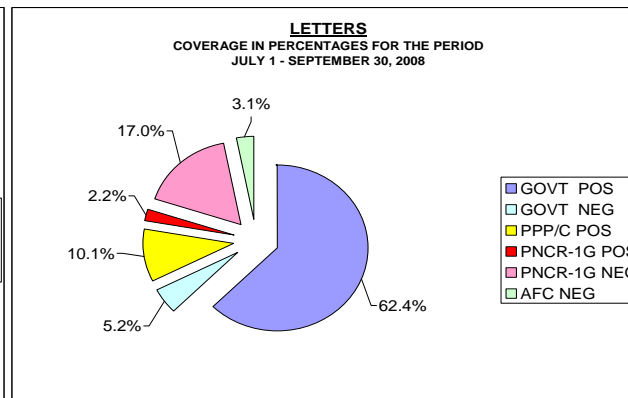
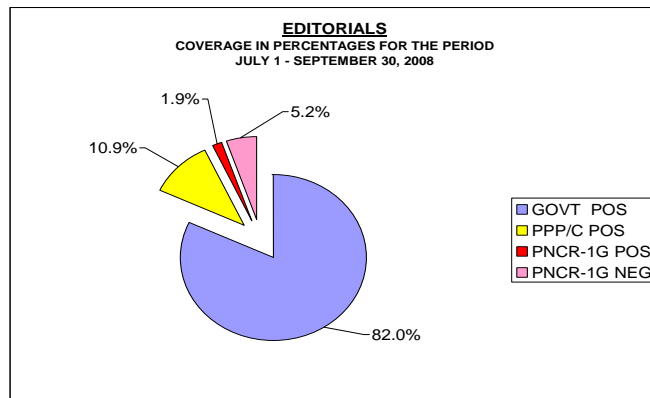
# NEWSPAPERS

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

### FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1-SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

#### GUYANA CHRONICLE

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
EDITORIALS	191	0	25.5	0	4.5	-12	0	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	330.4	-27.6	53.7	-2	11.4	-89.8	1.5	-16.5	0	0	0	-0.8
GENERAL NEWS	2729.8	-106.1	360	0	51.7	-42.8	27.9	-1.5	3.9	0	0	0



### Observations

From the **Guyana Chronicle (GC) Editorials**, the government accumulated strictly positive coverage. For the parliamentary political parties, the PPP/C and the PNCR-1G were the only parties that attracted coverage, with the PPP/C amassing positive coverage only, while the PNCR-1G was bestowed with more negative than positive coverage.

The **Letters Column** of the newspaper produced figures showing that government's positive coverage was quantitatively larger than the negative it attracted, while for the parliamentary political parties, the PPP/C dominated the positive column, trailed by the PNCR-1G and AFC, in that order. Four

(4) parties received negative coverage; however, PNCR-1G was apportioned the most, followed by the AFC, PPP/C and TUF. The negative coverage absorbed by the PNCR-1G, AFC and TUF was significantly larger than their positive column inches.

In the **General News** category, the government fared exceptionally well, receiving substantially more positive than negative coverage. Similarly, the PPP/C's share of positive coverage was manifestly sizeable relative to the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR. The PNCR-1G and AFC were the only parties covered negatively, with the PNCR-1G receiving the greater amount.

## Analysis

The figures taken from the editorials indicate quite clearly that government was not subjected to any negative coverage from this section of the newspaper over the past three (3) months. For the political parties, the PPP/C received similar coverage like the government, but with a lesser amount of positive column inches. The PNCR-1G, on the other hand, acquired both positive and negative coverage, while the other opposition parties, including the AFC, did not receive neither positive nor negative coverage. The PPP/C attained almost six (6) times more positive coverage than the PNCR-1G and the party's (PNCR-1G) negative coverage was approximately thrice the positive coverage it was given. These figures leave little doubt that the editorial content of the newspaper was one-dimensional, wholly favorable to the government and ruling party, and miserly of information likely to spotlight the opposition political parties in a positive way.

## Letters

Government attracted positive coverage from the Letters to the Editor Column that was approximately twelve (12) times more than the negative coverage it was accorded. The coverage delineated for the parliamentary political parties conspicuously showed that the PPP/C obtained net positive coverage, and its (PPP/C) positive coverage was nearly twenty-seven (27) times more than the negative coverage it attracted. The PNCR-1G, AFC and TUF were all recipients of net negative coverage. The PNCR-1G's negative to positive coverage was roughly 8:1, and the AFC's was 11:1. The PPP/C's positive coverage quadrupled the combined total positive coverage secured by PNCR-1G and AFC.

The pattern that emerges from the breakdown of these figures implied that government was given both positive and negative publicity in the newspaper's letter pages, though the information published within the accredited space tilted the balance heavily towards the projection of a favorable government image. The coverage given to the political parties was a study in contrasts. The pronounced negative coverage given to the opposition political parties varied diametrically from the positive coverage allocated to the PPP/C. It is pellucid from the trend deduced from the displayed figures that the parliamentary opposition parties, in particular the PNCR-1G and AFC were the main targets of 'bad' publicity from this section of the newspaper. That the opposition parties received even meager amounts of positive coverage is somewhat surprising since their hugely disproportionate negative coverage was inextricably intertwined with the genus of the great majority of letters published in the newspaper, which were biting censorious of the opposition parties [read PNCR-1G and AFC], and unremittingly supportive of the government and ruling party. As such, the amounts and types of publicity afforded the opposition parties in the Letters Column of the GC for this quarter is not by any yardstick a stunning revelation, since it is in keeping with an observed mode of 'copy and paste' consistent from one reporting period to another.

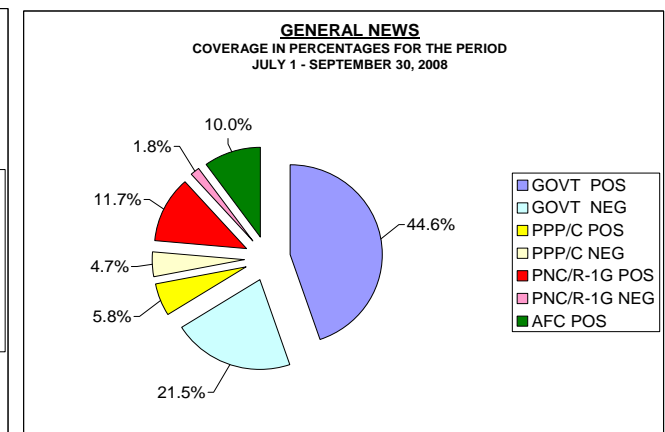
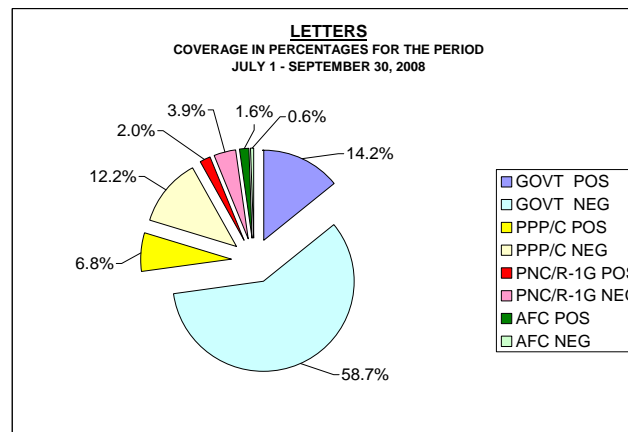
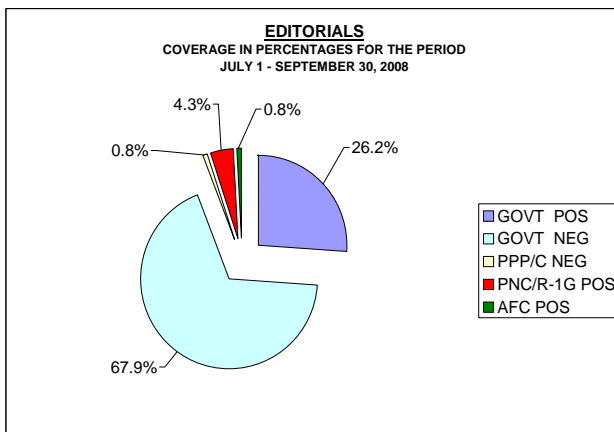
## **General News**

The figures available from the newspaper's General News output underlined that government's positive coverage was nearly twenty-eight (28) times the negative coverage it absorbed. All the parliamentary political parties that received coverage recorded net positive coverage, albeit in varying levels. The PPP/C accumulated the bulk of positive coverage, quadrupling the amount scored by the combined opposition; and, the PNCR-1G's huge negative coverage stood out like a monolith because it dwarfed the combined negative coverage apportioned to the other political parties.

The reasons for government and the PPP/C's comparatively mammoth allotments of positive coverage, and the PNCR-1G's accumulation of most negative coverage, resided in two (2) interconnected factors: the pro-government positions that are uniformly churned out from the pens of the newspaper's Columnists, and the surfeit of GINA articles that dominate the General News pages of the newspaper. Government and the ruling party's command of positive coverage within the General News section can be considered as 'par for the course' since the newspaper is state-owned and comes under the stewardship of the government; however, what is unreasonable, is the paucity of 'good' coverage disseminated to the public on behalf of the opposition parties.

## KAIETEUR NEWS

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
EDITORIALS	31.9	-82.8	0	-1	5.3	0	1	0	0	0		0
LETTERS	76.8	-317	36.8	-66.0	10.6	-21.3	8.6	-3.3	1.1	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	2024.6	-975.8	261.5	-212.8	532.8	-79.6	453.5	-4.3	15.9	-0.5	0	-0.8



### Observations

For the current reporting period Kaieteur News (KN) **Editorials** were more negative than positive in the portrayal of government. Coverage given to the parliamentary political parties from this section of the newspaper was sparse; only two (2) of the parties received positive coverage with the PNCR-1G obtaining the most generous amount. The PPP/C was the only party that accumulated negative coverage.

From the **Letters to the Editor** Column, the government received extensively more negative than positive publicity. The figures depicted for the political parties showed that the PPP/C and PNCR-1G attracted considerably more negative than positive coverage. The PPP/C garnered the highest amount of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR, in that order. The PPP/C also led the field in negative coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G and AFC.

In the **General News** section of the newspaper, the government accumulated conspicuously more positive than negative coverage; likewise, all the parliamentary political parties, with the exception of TUF, received greater amounts of positive publicity than the negative coverage they were accorded. The PNCR-1G obtained the largest portion of positive coverage, followed by the AFC, then the PPP/C, and lastly by GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C commanded the most negative coverage, followed in order by PNCR-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF.

## **Analysis**

### **Editorials**

Government received both positive and negative coverage from the Editorials, but its negative was more than double the positive it accrued. The figures revealed that government fared badly from the daily publications that stemmed from this section of the newspaper. Nevertheless, despite the coverage being unbalanced, the positive publicity accorded the government was sizeable and this to some extent served to erase any perception of bias. The coverage given to the parliamentary political parties was minimal, and did not indicate any trend or pattern deserving of an evaluation.

### **Letters**

The figures produced for the Letters to the Editor category exposed that government's unpopularity was highly pronounced within this section of the newspaper. Government's negative publicity was more than four (4) times its positive coverage, meaning that the government suffered net negative coverage. The PPP/C and the PNCR-1G attracted net negative coverage from amongst the four (4) parliamentary political parties that gained coverage, with the PPP/C's proportion being the greater of the two. The AFC and GAP/ROAR were the only parties that attracted net positive coverage; while the PPP/C and PNCR-1G's negative coverage was just around twice their positive.

The configuration of the figures documented for this category presupposes that there was no editorial preference towards or against either the government or the parliamentary political parties. That the government, the ruling party (PPP/C), and the main opposition party (PNCR-1G), all obtained net negative coverage was more a result of coincidence rather than design, and a strong indicator that for this reporting period, this forum of the newspaper was not captive to any partisan interest.

## **General News**

The documented figures from the General News section of the newspaper showed that government's positive coverage doubled its negative. The coverage accorded to the parliamentary political parties bared the fact that all the parties, minus TUF, individually accumulated net positive coverage from within this section of the newspaper. The AFC achieved one hundred times more positive than negative coverage, followed by GAP/ROAR with a ratio of around 32:1, then the PNCR-1G at just over 6:1, and the PPP/C whose positive coverage did not considerably exceed the negative it received. And, the PPP/C's negative coverage more than doubled the combined total negative coverage of the other four (4) political parties.

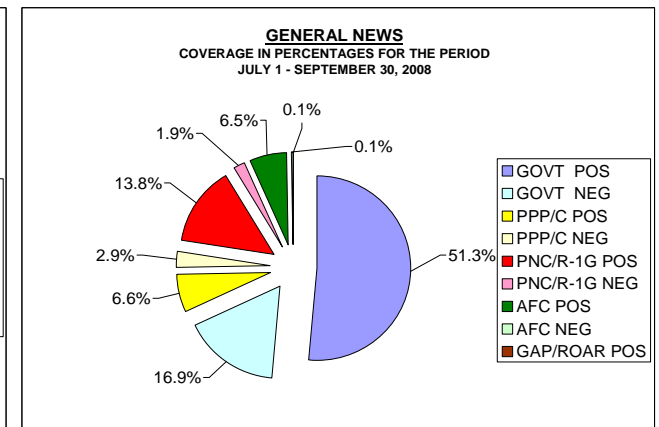
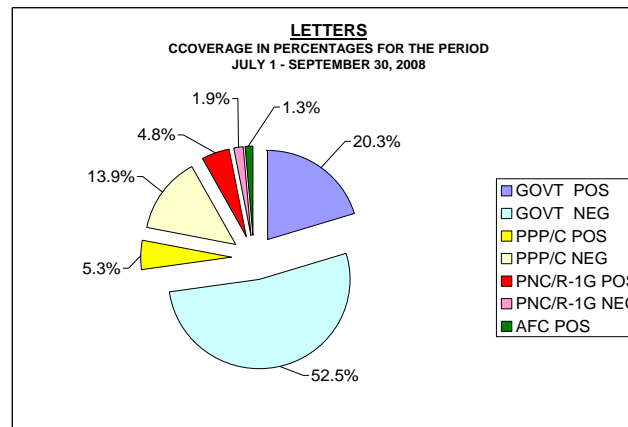
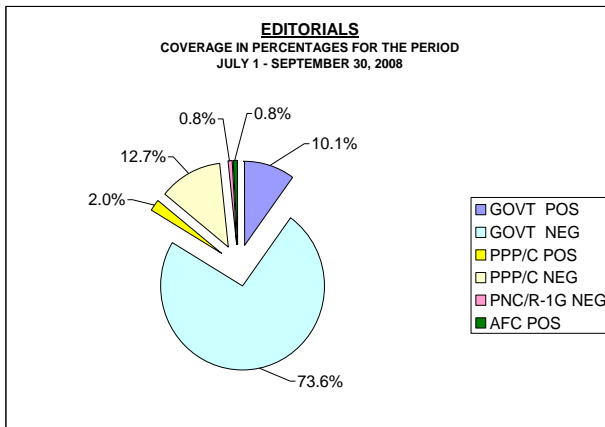
The coverage given to government can be described as fair, and even though it was in their (government) favor, the ratio of positive to negative coverage was within the acceptable boundary of democratic journalism. The positive and negative coverage apportioned to the political parties were

more or less article specific, meaning that the documented coverage for the parties was generally influenced by the contents of certain articles that make the daily and weekly rounds of this section of the newspaper. For example, the AFC's positive coverage was tied mainly but not exclusively, to the contents of the Party's weekly column. The government and the PPP/C's positive coverage came mainly from GINA articles, BLAME THE GOVERNMENT and PARROT columns, while negative coverage flowed copiously from the daily FREDERICK KISSOON and PEEPER columns. The PNCR-1G's positive coverage was rooted primarily in the publicity accorded to the party's weekly press conferences, and parliamentary activities; while negative publicity for the party emanated mostly from BLAME THE GOVERNMENT, PARROT, PEEPER and RAVI DEV'S (weekly) columns.

A summarization of the foregoing leads to the ineluctable conclusion that this section of the newspaper was essentially balanced in the provision of information to the public that was both favorable and unfavorable to both the government and the contending political parties.

## STABROEK NEWS

CATEGORY	POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)											
	GOVT (in column inches)		PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
EDITORIALS	23.8	-174	4.8	-30	0.3	-2	1.8	0	0.3	0	0	0
LETTERS	97.3	-251.5	25.5	-66.4	23	-9	6.2	-0.3	0.3	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	1591.6	-523	204.4	-89.3	428.7	-58.1	202.7	-2.5	1.9	0	0	0



### Observations

From Stabroek News (SN) **Editorials**, the government received more negative than positive coverage; and for the political parties that were covered, the PPP/C was the only one to register more negative than positive coverage. Also, the party (PPP/C) received the largest portion of positive coverage.

In the **Letters to the Editor** Column, the government was allocated substantially more negative than positive coverage. The figures for the parliamentary political parties showed that the PPP/C obtained the biggest amount of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR, in that order. The PPP/C also led the field in negative coverage (which was considerably more than the party's positive coverage), followed by the PNCR-1G and AFC.

The General News category exposed figures showing government on the credit side in the amount of positive coverage it was afforded relative to the negative publicity it recorded. All the political parties, except TUF, which was not covered, achieved more positive than negative coverage, with the

PNCR-1G being the beneficiary of the highest amount, followed by the PPP/C, AFC, and then GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C was apportioned the most negative coverage followed by the PNCR-1G and AFC.

## **Analysis**

The outlay of figures documented from the SN Editorials served up information which showed that government was accorded just over seven (7) times more negative than positive coverage. From the coverage given to the parliamentary political parties, the PPP/C and PNCR-1G were the only parties that sustained negative coverage; while the AFC and GAP/ROAR gained net positive coverage. The PPP/C accumulated just about six times more negative than positive coverage, while its (PPP/C) positive coverage was doubled that acquired by the combined opposition parties. A probe of the editorials extracted a trend that linked government and the PPP/C's amassment of negative coverage to a seeming editorial bias that is inelegantly anti-government. This conclusion is premised on a content analysis done by the Unit on the editorials published over the past three (3) months, which revealed that a disproportionate amount of the contents were unfavorable to the government and the PPP/C. This inferred bias, however, did not translate into support for the parliamentary opposition parties, as exemplified by the figures which unambiguously indicated that the positive coverage accorded to the opposition parties was at best minimal; and the PNCR-1G was similarly covered like the PPP/C – that is, both received net negative coverage.

## **Letters**

From the Letters to the Editor column, the government captured net negative coverage; its (government) negative to positive ratio hovered in the vicinity of 3:1. For the political parties, the PPP/C was the only party to acquire net negative coverage, while the PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR attracted net positive coverage. The PPP/C received the largest amount of positive coverage, but its negative coverage outweighed its positive by more than 2:1, and was approximately seven (7) times more than similar coverage given to the combined opposition parties.

A trend that is immediately discernible from the statistics adduced from the letters category is that government though accorded lengthy positive coverage was assailed by a larger amount of negative publicity. Also, the PPP/C was similarly accorded the same coverage like government (that is, more negative than positive coverage). A survey to determine the cause(s) for the picture presented, discovered that the explanation resided in the volume of published letters that were unfavorable to both the government and PPP/C, which fuelled the unbalance in the documented figures. This scenario could either be redolent of the genre of missives sent to the editorial staff for publication, or a case of partisan editorial selections.

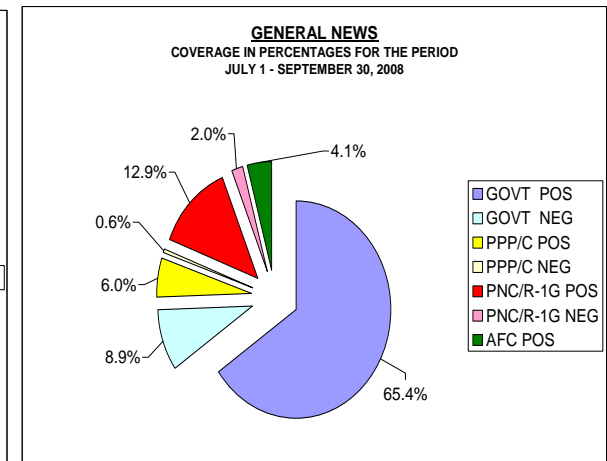
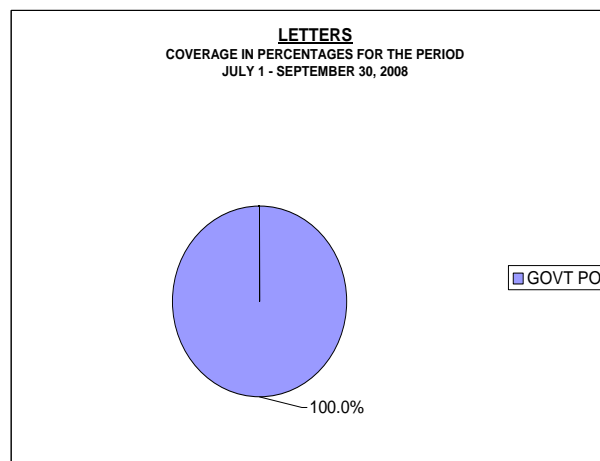
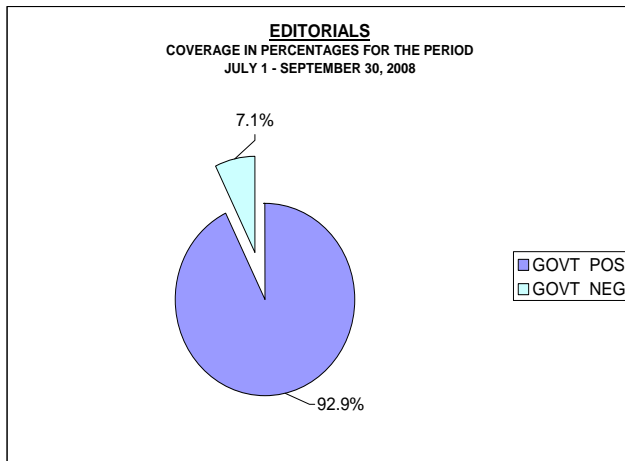
## **General News**

In this category, the government collected majority positive coverage, securing thrice more positive than negative coverage. Amongst the parliamentary political parties, the PNCR-1G received roughly twice the amount of positive coverage calculated separately for the PPP/C and AFC. Of particular interest, is that government and all the political parties on the radar, recorded net positive coverage; and notwithstanding the fact that the PPP/C absorbed the most negative coverage, the coverage afforded to government and the political parties within this category was appreciably equitable.



## GUYANA TIMES

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNC-R-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EDITORIALS	26.1	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	1790.2	-244.1	163.6	-17.5	352.9	-55.7	113.1	-2.5	5.1	0	0	0	0



### Observations

The Guyana Times (GT) newspaper is the most recent addition to the country's print media, and this is the first reporting period for the entity, which actually started operations in June, 2008. For the current reporting period, the newspaper's **Editorial** category elicited figures for the government, showing that they accumulated more positive than negative coverage. None of the parliamentary political parties received either positive or negative coverage within this section of the newspaper.

The newspaper's **Letters to the Editor** Column is nascent, and for the duration of this reporting period, only two (2) published letters were observed from which the government secured a paltry amount of positive coverage.

In the **General News** category, government recorded noticeably more positive than negative coverage. The coverage documented for the parliamentary political parties conveyed that the PNCR-1G obtained the most positive coverage, followed by PPP/C, AFC and then GAP/ROAR. Similarly, the PNCR-1G commanded the largest portion of negative coverage, followed by the PPP/C and AFC. TUF did not register any coverage.

### **Analysis**

During the course of this reporting period it was observed that the contents of the majority of editorials opined on international issues, rather than local themes, and from the sparse content dedicated to local issues, government acquired approximately thirteen (13) times more positive than negative coverage; figures that unmistakably point to the transmission of a distinctly favorable government image, albeit not at the expense of any of the opposition political parties.

In the General News category, government accrued massive positive publicity, which was seven (7) times more than the negative coverage it attracted. All the political parties that received coverage, ended up with net positive coverage. However, when the ratio of positive to negative coverage given to the political parties is calculated, the AFC received the best overall net positive coverage with a ratio of 45:1, followed by the PPP/C – 9:1, then PNCR-1G – 6:1.

The figures adduced from the General News chart evolved a trend whereby both government and the political parties generated net positive coverage in varying degrees; an indication that the coverage given was impartial.

## **General Observations –Newspapers**

The Unit's observations of the print media's output for the current reporting period concluded that two (2) of the dailies – Kaieteur News and Guyana Times – were exemplary in their propagations of news and information to the public; the Stabroek News failed to live up to its usually high standards of impartiality and professionalism; and the Chronicle typified stasis in its unchanging pattern of biased news reporting.

Kaieteur News and Guyana Times stood out like leviathans among the dailies for the quality of journalism they exhibited during this quarter. The entry of Guyana Times proved to be salutary for both the media fraternity and the consuming public, and the Unit hopes that its entry into the print arena will serve to stimulate and maintain healthy competition; in the process, raising the bar amongst the other dailies.

The Stabroek News overall output was spoilt by an overzealous and misplaced editorial ardor to depict the government and the PPP/C untowardly; an agenda tidily executed through the medium of the editorials. This observation is somewhat discomfiting, since the newspaper did not in the past show a predilection for partisanship, which raised its ugly head for the first time. The newspaper's ostensible editorial drift had a gravitational effect on its standing and subtracted from its otherwise good showing in the General News category.

The Chronicle's editorials and letters column were hopelessly one-sided, and comprised mainly of two (2) types of publications: panegyrics favorable to the government and PPP/C, and pejoratives dismissive of the opposition political parties, primarily the PNCR-1G and AFC. These two sections of the newspaper have over time been transformed into veritable staging grounds for salvos aimed at the opposition political parties, and from the available evidence it is a policy being executed to the detriment of the newspaper's credibility.

Deviating from the critical assessments of Stabroek News and the Guyana Chronicle, the Unit befittingly gives kudos to Kaieteur News and Guyana Times for uplifting performances during this quarter, and advises the managements of Stabroek News and Guyana Chronicle to take their cue from the standards achieved by their contemporaries, through adherence to the basics of non-partisan journalism.

## Conclusion

The current reporting period produced the best overall media performance so far compared to the first and second quarters of the year. Only one significant breach of the MCC was identified in the broadcast media, and resulted in the citing of First Look News for reporting inflammatory and opinionated news which the Unit adjudged to be at variance to the tenets of good journalistic practices. The newscast's entry into the local broadcast sphere has been rather obtrude, setting a whole new low in broadcast journalism, which if not arrested now in its incubation stage, can become a real and present danger to the maintenance of law and order and a stable democracy. This aside, the other television programs that were monitored by the Unit's team of Media Monitors, passed the mean grade, though, none achieved full marks due to their (over) indulgence in the perennial 'sin' of unbalanced and inequitable political coverage relative to the parliamentary political parties.

The print media's performance for this quarter was variable. On the positive side, Guyana Times made a welcome entry to the local media environment. The newspaper's reporters exhibited a distinctly high level of professionalism in their reporting of local news, setting the tone for, and raising the competitive stakes for the rest of the print fraternity. Kaieteur News also comes in for its fair share of compliments for the enviable level of objective and balanced reporting it managed to consistently maintain over the past three (3) months. However, counterpointing the appreciable strides made by Guyana Times and Kaieteur News was the discordant performances of Guyana Chronicle and Stabroek News. In the case of the Guyana Chronicle, it was simply a case of "same old, same old!" The figures documented for the newspaper's editorial and letter columns provided potent corroboration to the view that the newspaper's management is stubbornly taking the newspaper down a pathway that is insidiously self-destructive. And, not to be outdone, the Stabroek News during this quarter earnestly duplicated the Guyana Chronicle in exhibiting partisan journalism. This was evidenced by the figures screened from its editorials, which were heavily loaded against the government and PPP/C. As stated before, the majority of the newspaper editorials for this reporting period were scathing rebukes of the government, and this relentless assault (justified or unjustified) has logically raised questions about the agenda of the newspaper's editorial contributors.

In summary, the Unit concludes that although there have been legitimate reasons for excoriating certain sections of the media for inappropriate behavior, there was only one serious breach of the MCC, and this was a great improvement on the media's performance, taking into consideration the amount of major infringements documented for the first and second quarters of the year.

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