



**Monitoring of Media Content
of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters
during Pre-Elections**

Subagreement # S-12-155

Report for: October 1-7, 2012

Project Period: 11 June 2012 - 10 December 2012

Total Budget: 31 000\$

Results Summary/Impact Statement

Main findings of the ninth phase of monitoring:

- Based on the results of elections almost no airtime was dedicated to the monitored subjects except for the Georgian Dream coalition (GD) and the United National Movement (UNM).
- In reporting on elections there is a sharp decrease in the journalists' bias which ensued increase in the application of neutral tone in regard to the monitored subjects;
- Regional televisions aggressively covered the developments at the local precincts; the election observers had a possibility to speak about voting process.

Background

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of October 1-7, 2012 by the Internews Georgia monitoring team. Media monitoring helps raise standard of professionalism and is conducive to the development of independent unbiased journalism. The goal of our survey is to reveal, through monitoring main news programs aired on Georgian regional TV broadcasters, the proceeding and trends of media coverage of pre-election campaign.

Activities

The survey was carried out on 20 regional broadcasters operating nationwide, including: Channel 25 (Batumi), Rioni (Kutaisi), Kvemo Kartli TV and Radio Company (Rustavi), Odishi (Zugdidi), Tanamgzavri (Telavi), 9th Channel (Alkhaltshikhe), Trialeti (Gori), Guria (Ozurgeti), Imervizia (Chiatura), Argo (Zestaponi), Gurjaani (Gurjaani), Borjomi (Borjomi), Marneuli TV (Marneuli), LTV (Lagodekhi), 12th Channel (Bolnisi), Mega TV (Khoni), Zari (Samtredia), 9th Wave (Poti), Kronika (Dusheti), Egrisi (Senaki).

Within the period of October 1- 7 TV companies Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) still lacked self-produced news programs.

Methodology

Monitoring was conducted on the regional broadcasters' main evening news programs during so-called prime time when the number of viewers is at its peak.

The technique applied in the project is based on quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative monitoring determines quantitative indicators that can be counted and analyzed. While qualitative monitoring is applied to evaluate the efficiency of media outlets' activities in relation to the indicators such as ethical or professional standards whose quantitative measurement is complex. In particular, the distortion of news, unbalanced coverage, bias or anything else that might affect quality news was focused on.

Quantitative data includes the running time (seconds) of the stories produced about our preselected subjects or making mention of them. In the given charts the time dedicated to the subjects is shown in seconds. In case the chart is missing any political party, which is the subject of monitoring, it means no channel dedicated any time to it within the monitoring period.

Direct and indirect coverage shows whether the subject is speaking on one's own or is being spoken about either by a journalist or other respondents. In the given charts direct and indirect coverage is shown in percentage. 100 percent indicates the time dedicated to each subject on a particular channel.

The tone of coverage is attributed to a subject when being indirectly spoken about or when speaking directly about oneself, other subjects or some general issues. Charts illustrate three categories of tones: positive, neutral and negative.

When conducting monitoring on news programs it was interesting to find out which events, either central or regional, were covered by the TV companies.

Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards, will be evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as balance or whether diverse opinions over the covered issue are represented in the stories; accuracy or whether mistakes are in place in the names or numbers; the vocabulary used and all those important

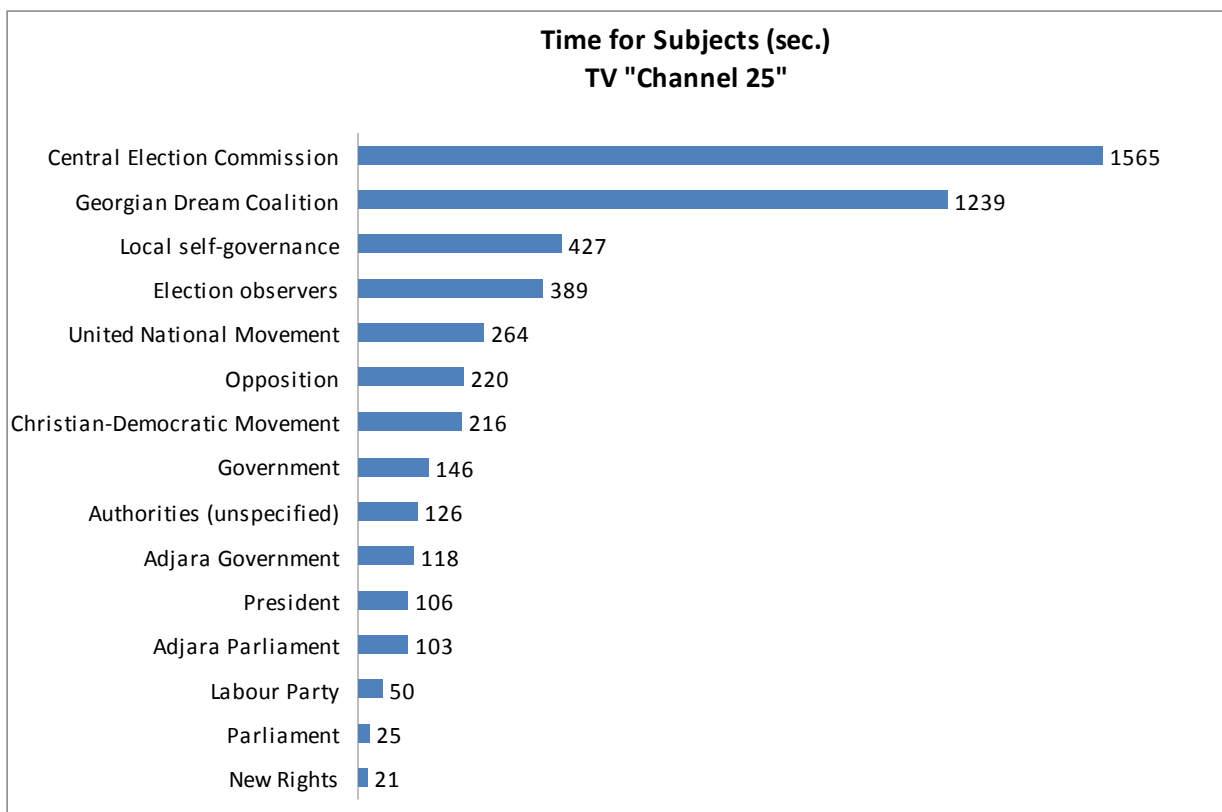
aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. The cases of manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs were also brought into focus.

The monitoring subjects include: Parliament (speaker, vice speaker, MPs, committees); President (administration, advisors, press speaker); government (prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers, governors); authorities (when mentioned with no specification); local self-governments (mayors, chairs of Sakrebulo and Gamgeoba); Central Election Commission; election observers; State Audit Agency (in relation to elections); commission in charge of verifying voters' list; United National Movement; Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia; coalition Georgian Dream; Free Democrats; National Forum; Georgian Republican Party; Georgian Conservative party; People's Party; Georgia's Way; Free Georgia; New Rights; Democratic Movement for United Georgia; National Democratic Party; Labor party; Industry Will Save Georgia; Georgian Democratic Party; Georgian Troupe; Christian-Democratic Movement; European Democrats; Voters' League; People's Assembly; opposition (when mentioned with no specification).

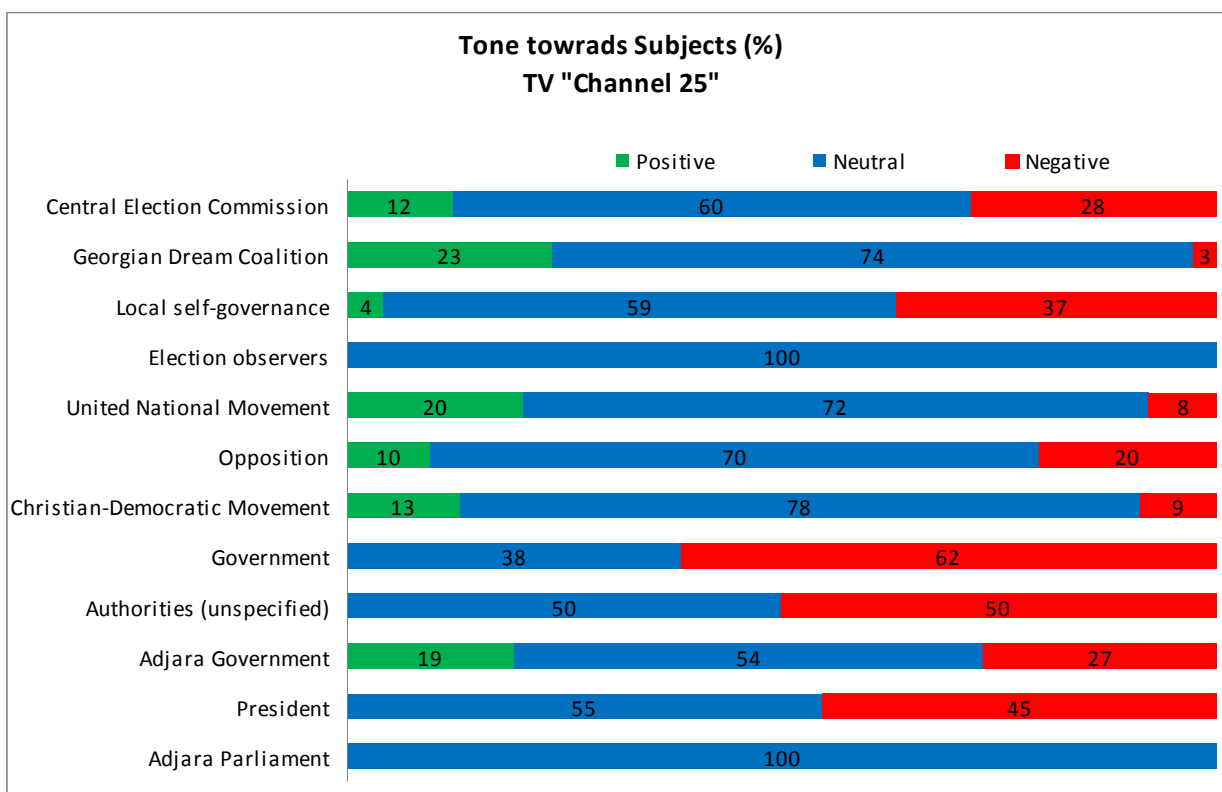
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

News programs monitoring results per channel:

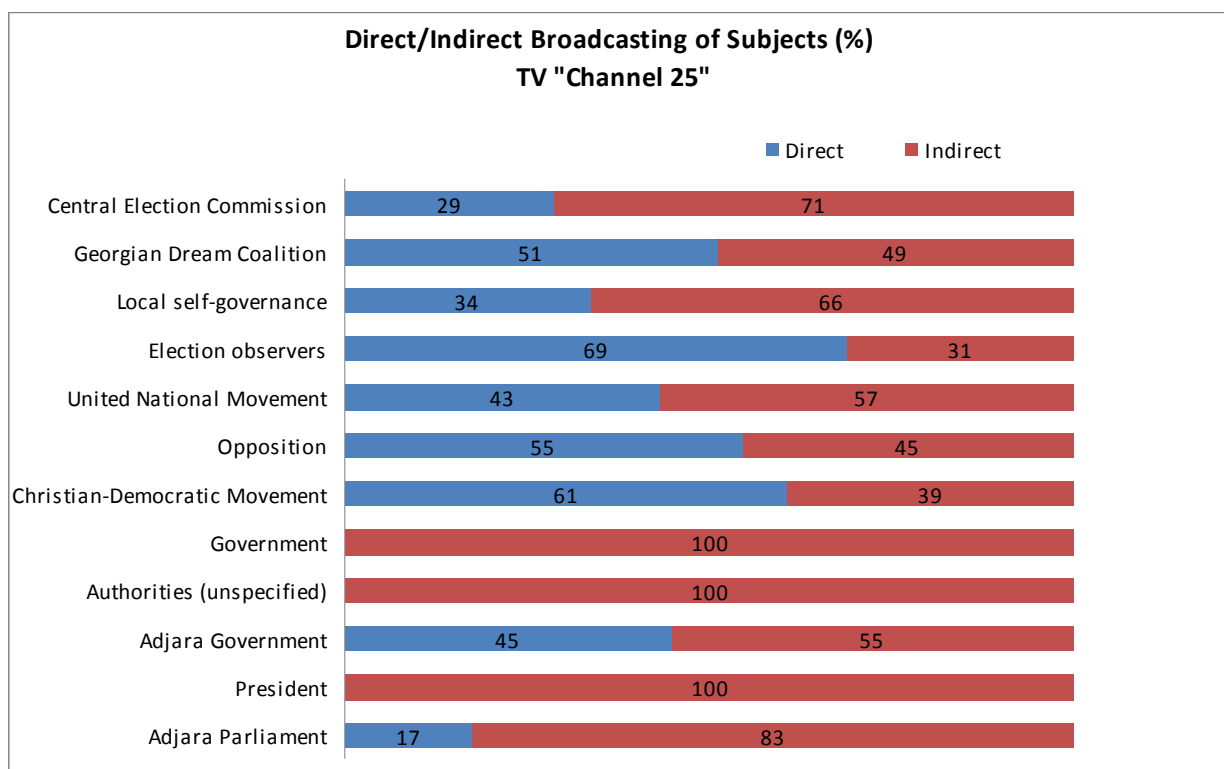
Channel 25 (Batumi) – News programs dedicated most of the airtime to the Central Election Commission (CEC) (26 min) and Georgian Dream coalition (21 min). Reporting on the local self government was 7 min in length. Election observes and UNM received 6 and 4 minutes respectively.



All of the three tones were applied in regard to the subjects. But neutral tone considerably prevailed over positive and negative:



The share of direct/indirect reporting was mostly equal. But when reporting on CEC and local self-government indirect tone prevailed over direct tone.

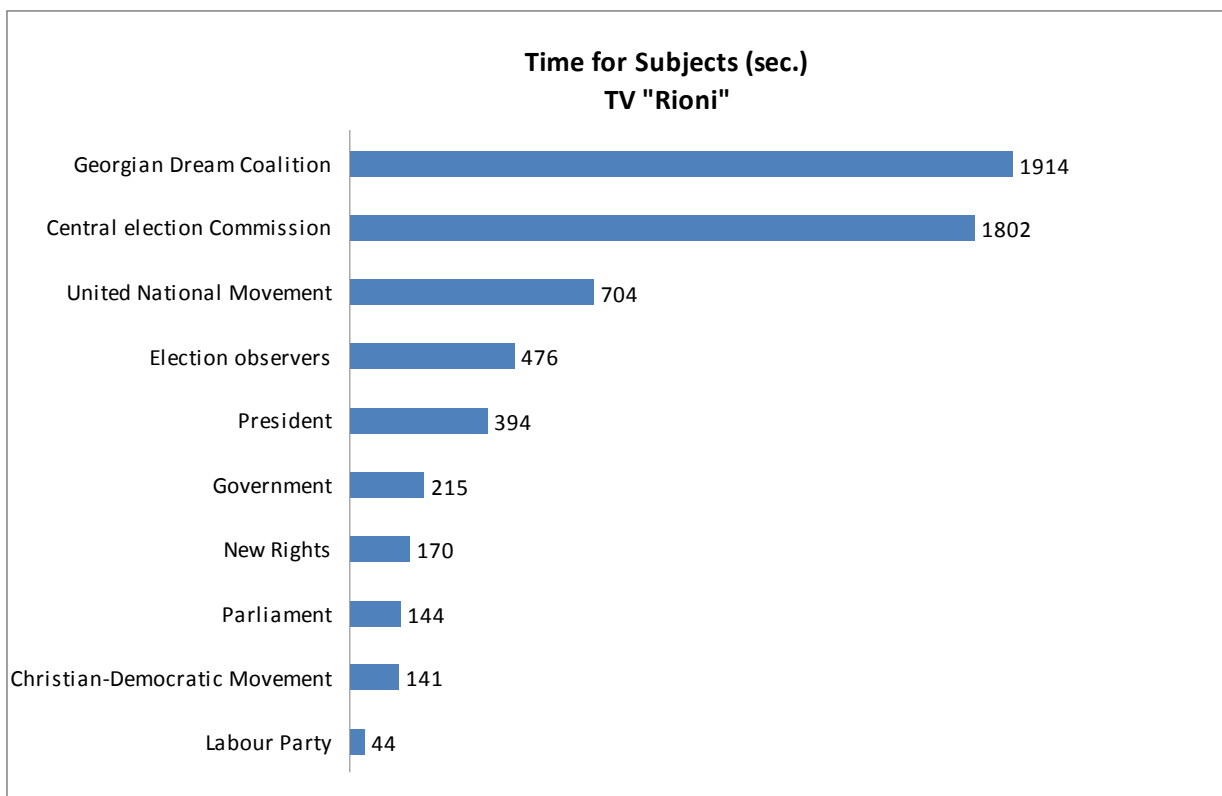


The main event within the reporting period was the October 1 parliamentary elections which was aggressively covered by Channel 25. The TV stories though mainly touched upon the developments in the region. No stories were produced about the electoral processes ongoing nationwide. Journalists were thoroughly discussing voting processes at the precincts in Adjara region. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to reporting on the violations identified during elections. Official results of the elections provided by CEC were also promptly delivered. It is noteworthy that news programs almost always maintained balance when reporting on the main competitive political subjects.

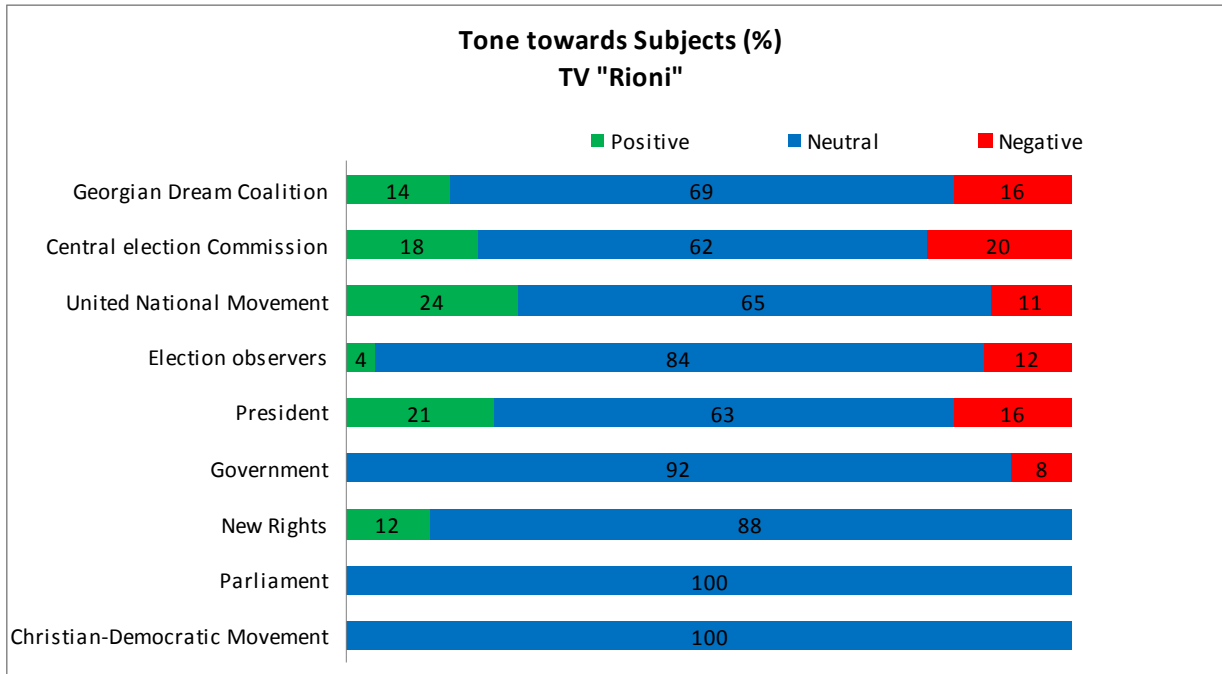
But it is also worth to note that the channel provided no coverage of President Saakashvili's address (on UNM's defeat and going into opposition) which was the main event to cover by almost all of the TV Companies. Neither Bidzina Ivanishvili's statements made after the elections (except for the construction of the Lazika city) were covered.

Rioni (Kutaisi) – Out of the monitored subjects the biggest share of airtime (32 min) was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. CEC and UNM enjoyed 30 and 12 minutes of reporting respectively.

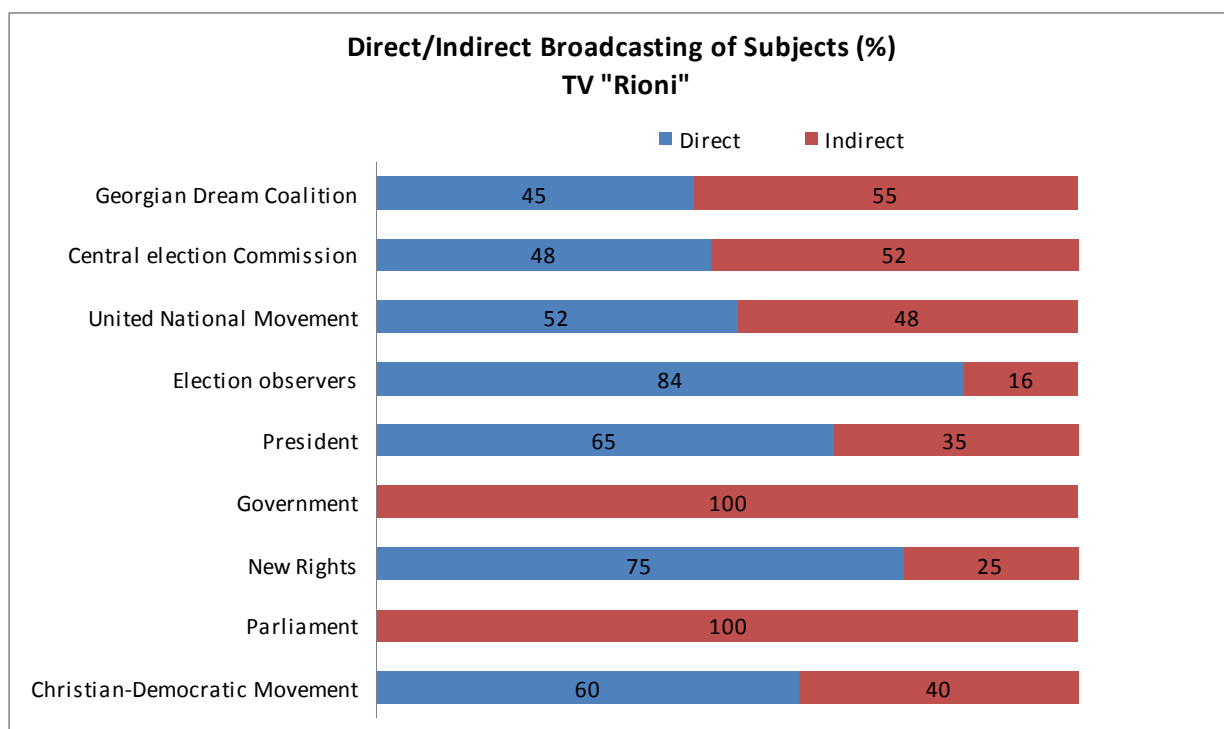
Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters



All of the three tones were applied when reporting on the monitored subjects. Neutral tone prevailed though:

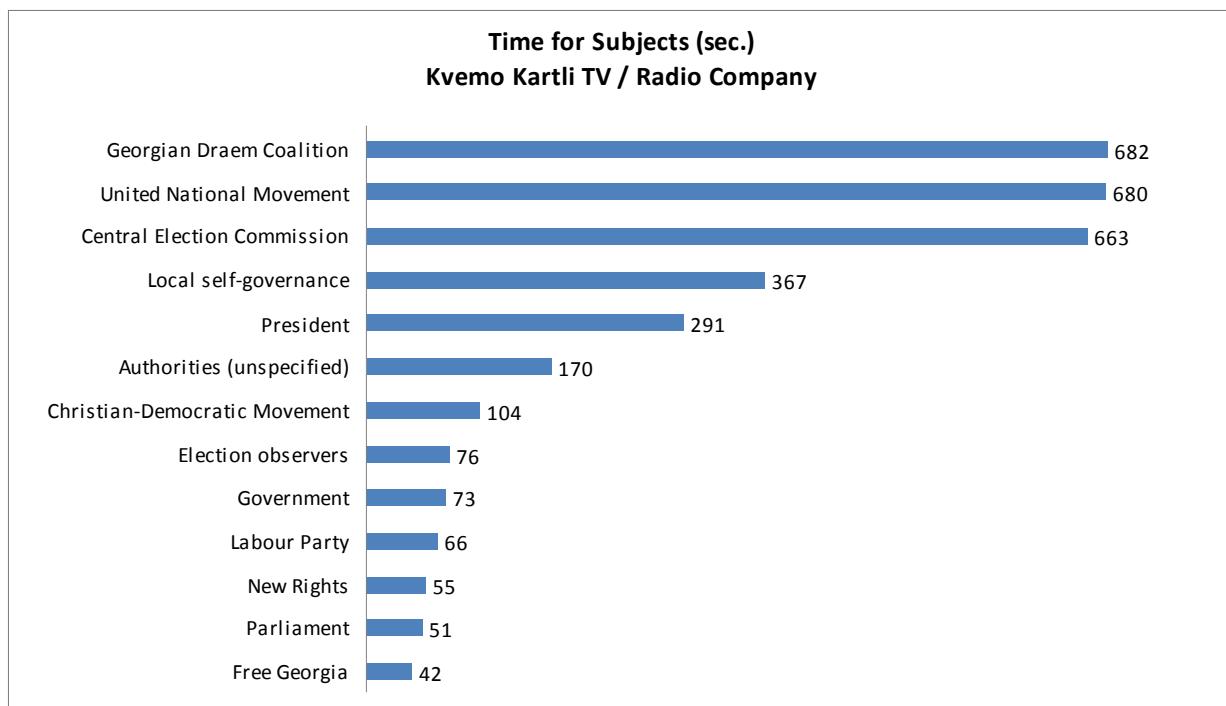


The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal:

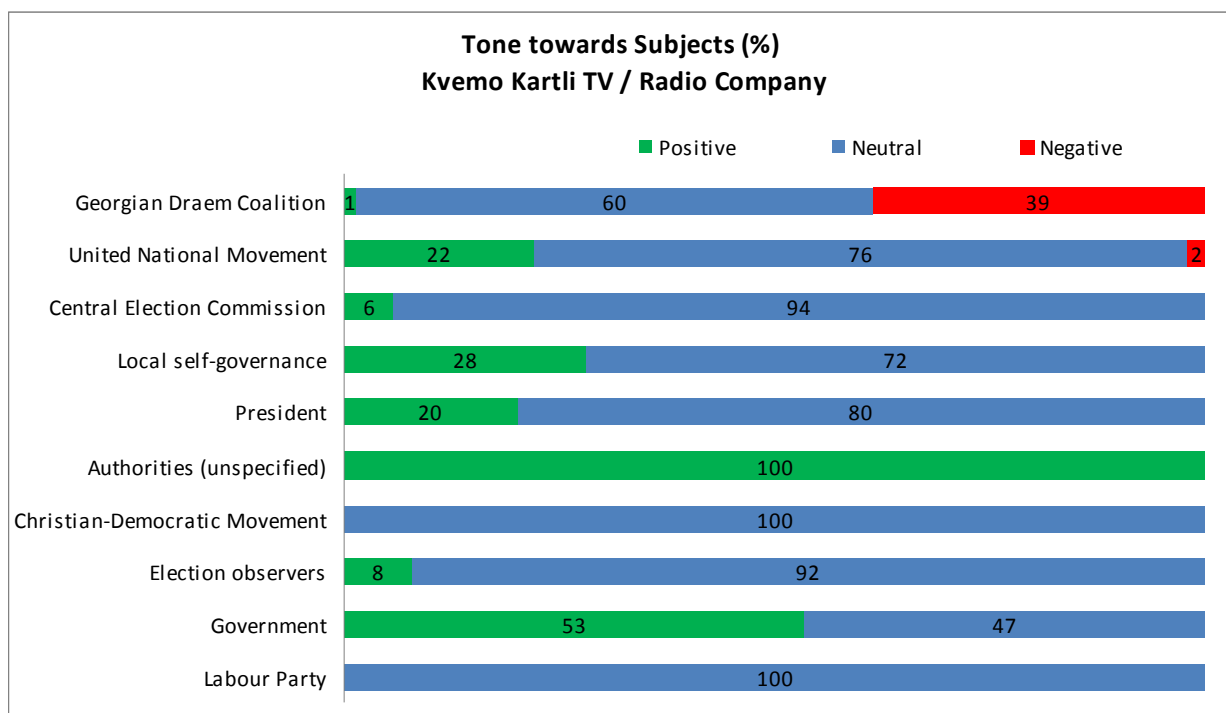


During the reporting period TV company Rioni was characterized with a wide range of election-related processes. Along with the developments in the region the events taking place nationwide were covered. On the E-day, October 1 a special 43-minute news outlet was produced to provide complete information about the developments at the precincts in Imereti region. Journalists were trying to report in an unbiased and balanced manner. Hence neutral tone prevails in the results of quantitative analysis. It is noteworthy that 20 percent negative tone identified in regard to CEC mainly falls on the violations observed at precincts. The channel, based on the election results, dedicated minimal airtime to other political subjects along with the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. It is noteworthy that at times the journalist reiterated interviewer's text.

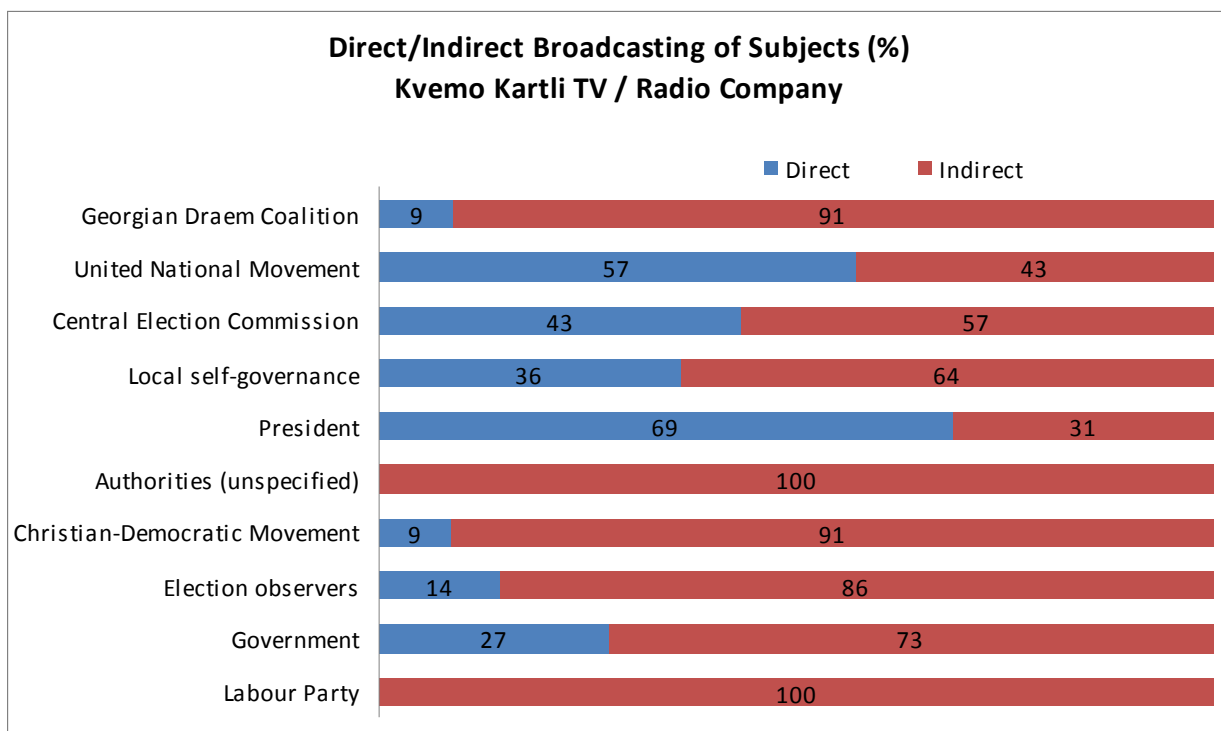
Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) – The TV company news programs dedicated equal airtime (11-11 min) to the Georgian Dream coalition, CEC and UNM. Local self-government and President each enjoyed 5-min coverage.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was mainly neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone (39 percent) was solely applied to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition.

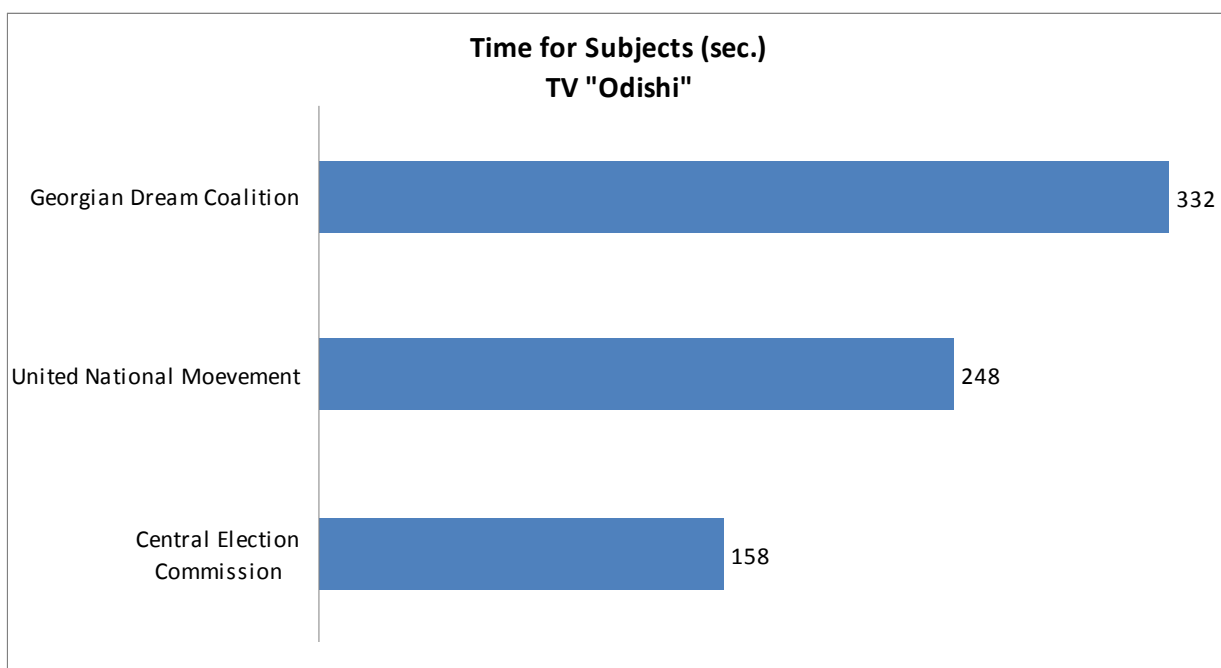


The highest percentage (91) of indirect reporting was identified in relation to the Georgian Dream coalition. In President's case direct reporting (69 percent) prevailed over indirect reporting (31 percent).

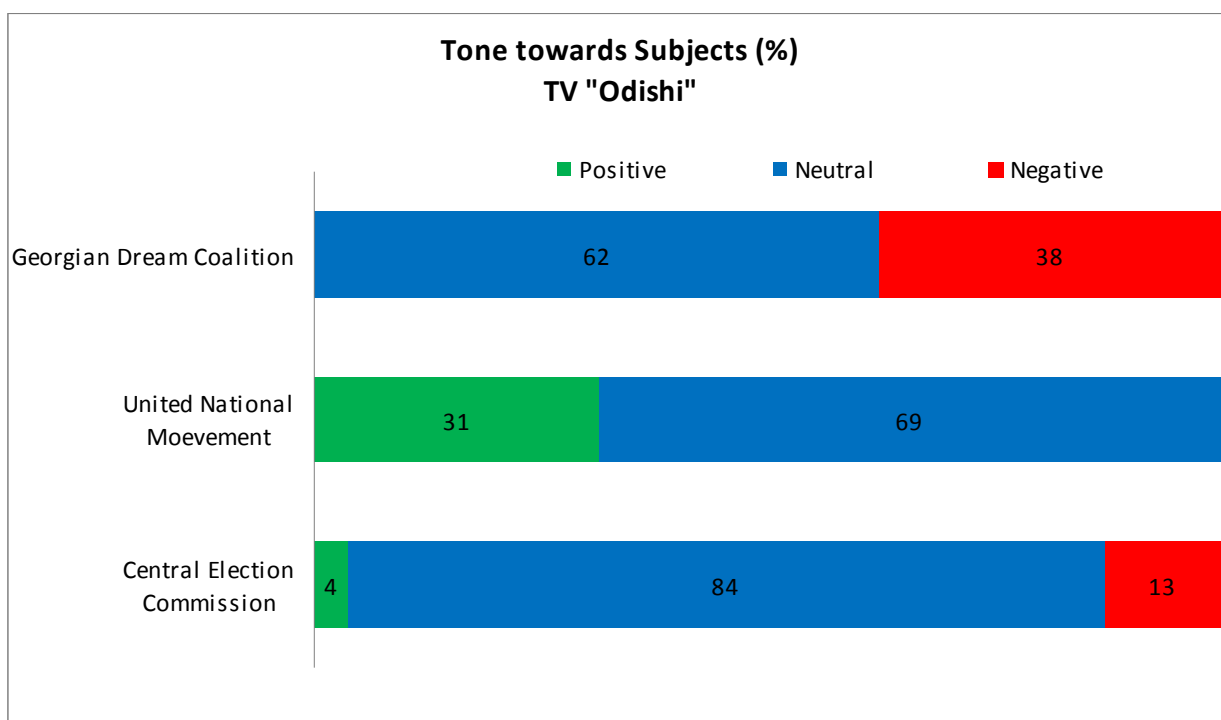


Within the period of October 1-7 Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) aggressively reported on the monitored subjects. It is noteworthy that compared with previous reporting periods the Georgian Dream coalition was dedicated more airtime. It is also noticeable that news programs were incompletely balanced, e.g. the share of direct reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was 9 percent and 57 percent on UNM. Besides the GD is the only subject covered in negative tone.

Odishi (Zugdidi) – During the reporting period the channel reported on three subjects only including the Georgian Dream coalition (5 min), UNM (4 min) and CEC (3 min).



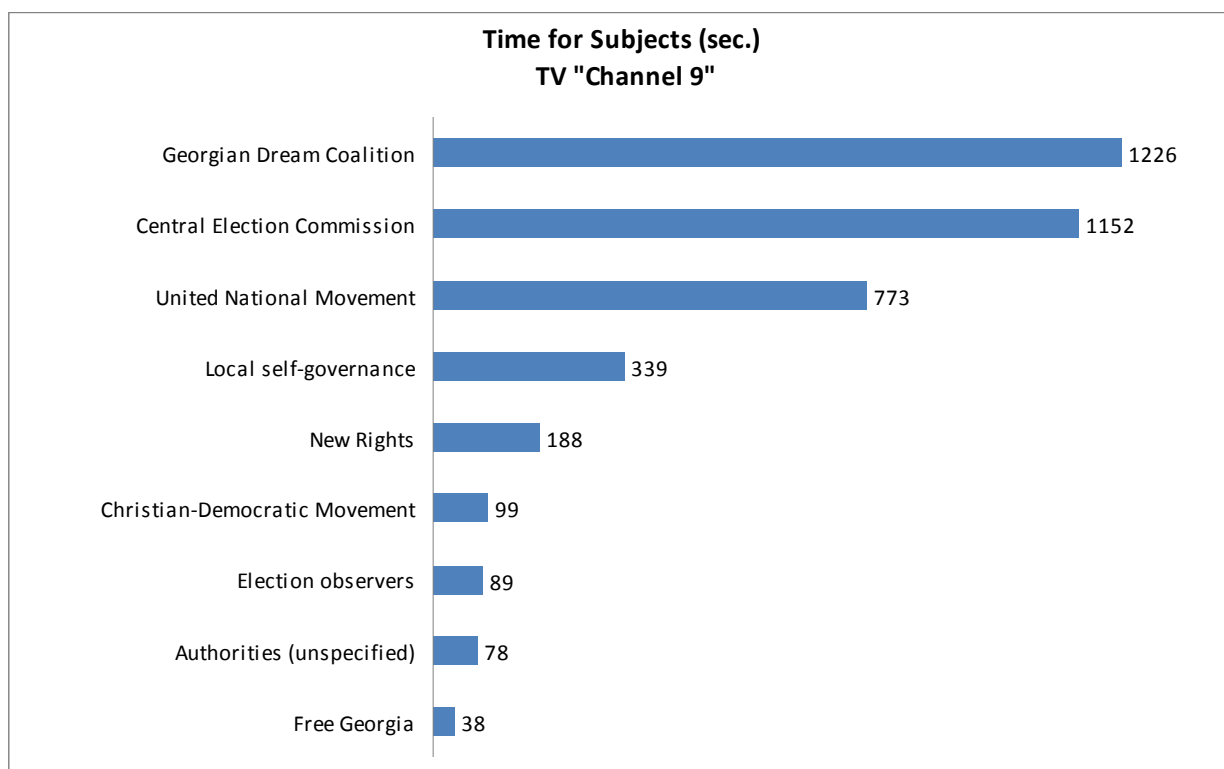
All of the three tones were applied when reporting on the monitored subjects. But in regard to UNM only positive (31 percent) and neutral (69 percent) tones were observed, while reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was 62 percent neutral and 38 percent negative.



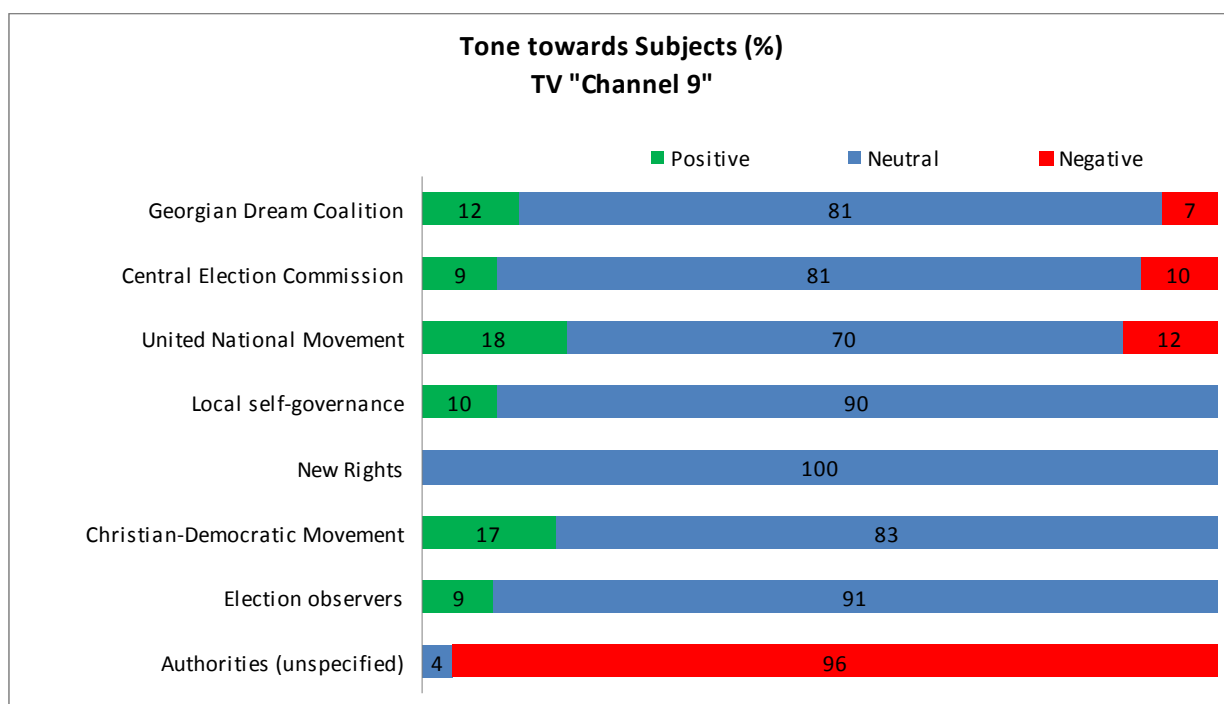
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. During the reporting week the TV company produced four TV stories which mainly focused on the Georgian Dream coalition rallies held in Zugdidi against voting-related violations and rigged results. Along with that the rally to support the winning UNM's majoritarian candidate Roland Akhalaia was covered. TV stories were biased and lacked balance.

9th Channel (Akhaltzikhe) – The news programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 20 min, to the Georgian Dream coalition, followed by CEC with 19 min and UNM with 13 min.

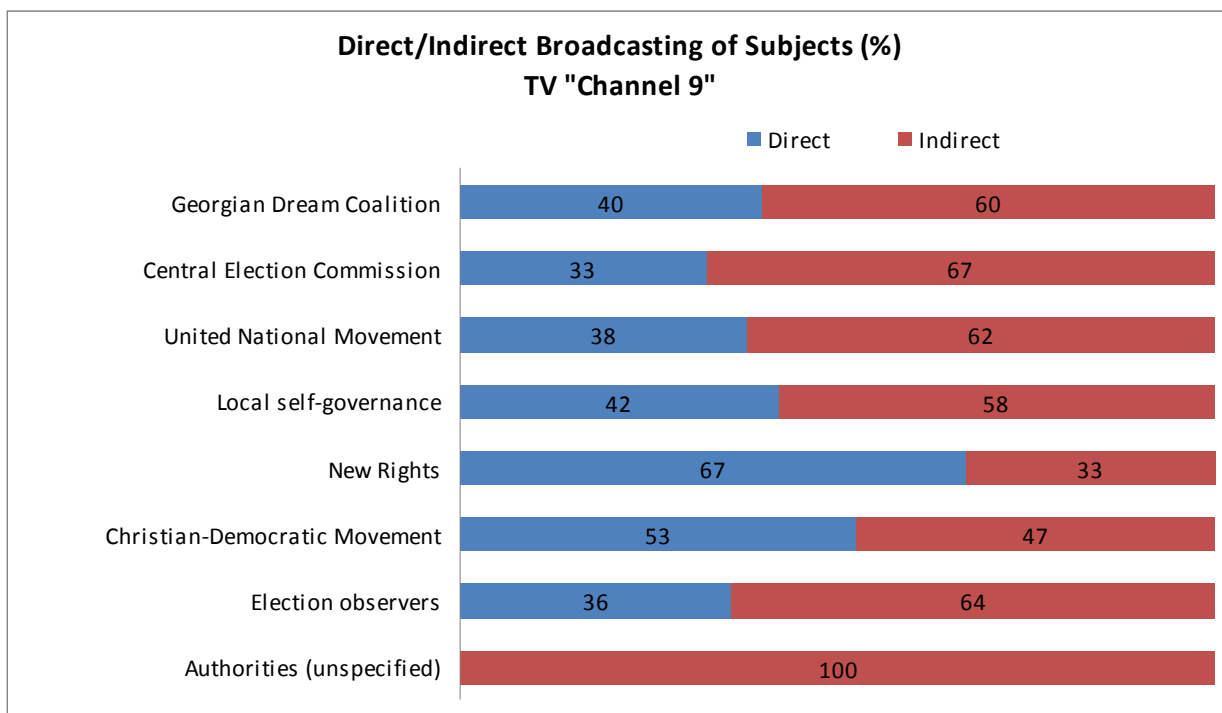
Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters



All of the three tones were identified when reporting on the monitored subjects but neutral considerably prevailed over negative and positive tones:



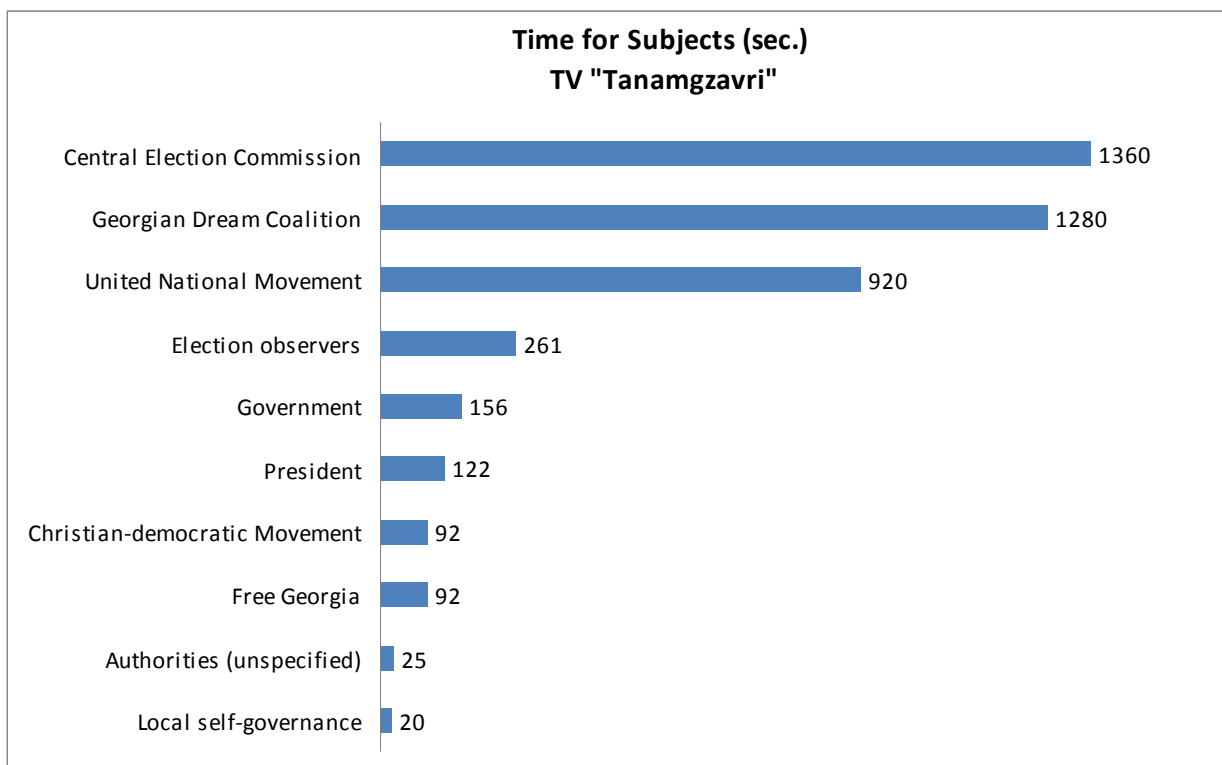
The share of indirect reporting mostly prevailed over direct reporting. But in case of the local self-government (6-min coverage) the share was almost equal. According to the findings reporting on New Rights (3-min coverage) direct reporting (67 percent) prevailed over indirect reporting (33 percent).



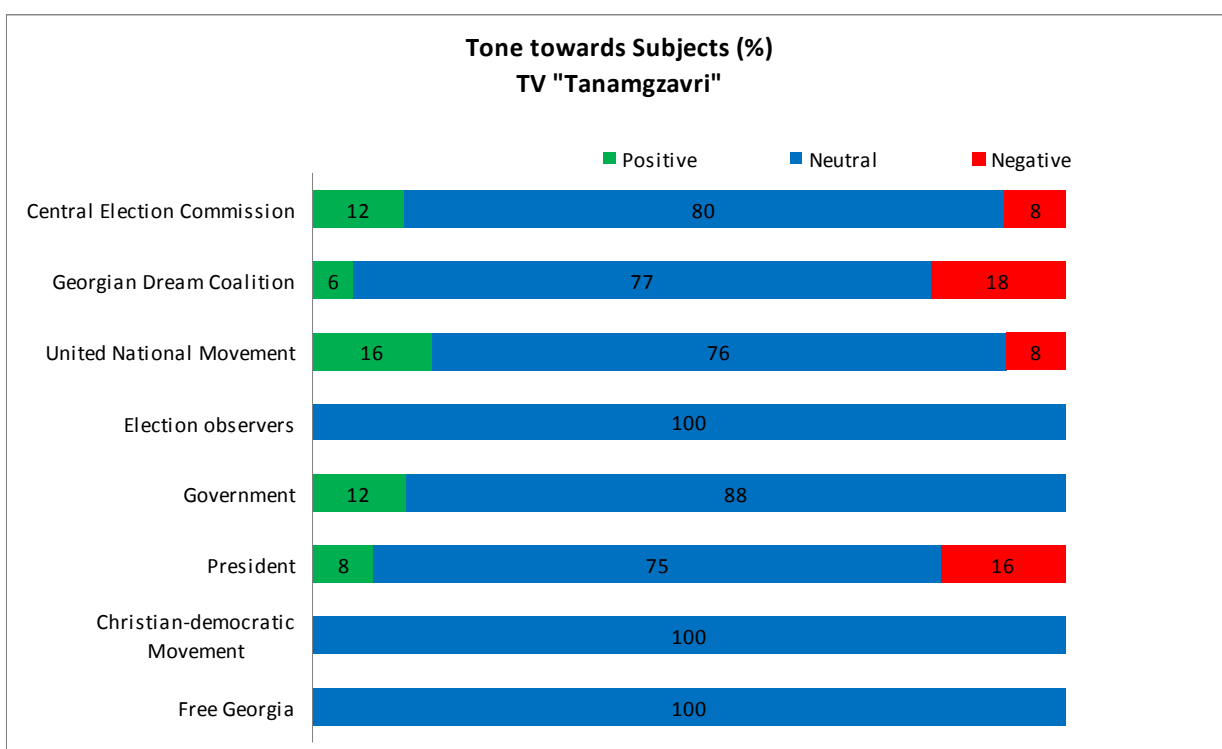
TV Company 9th Channel aggressively covered the E-day and the developments in the aftermath of elections. Journalists were found unbiased and TV stories – balanced. Journalists represented dissenting opinions over the issue and almost equal airtime was dedicated to reporting on the opinions of the case-related subjects.

During the past week a minor shortcoming was found too: the first and second stories in the October 5 news outlet featured same comments provided by Davit Bakradze and Irakli Alasania.

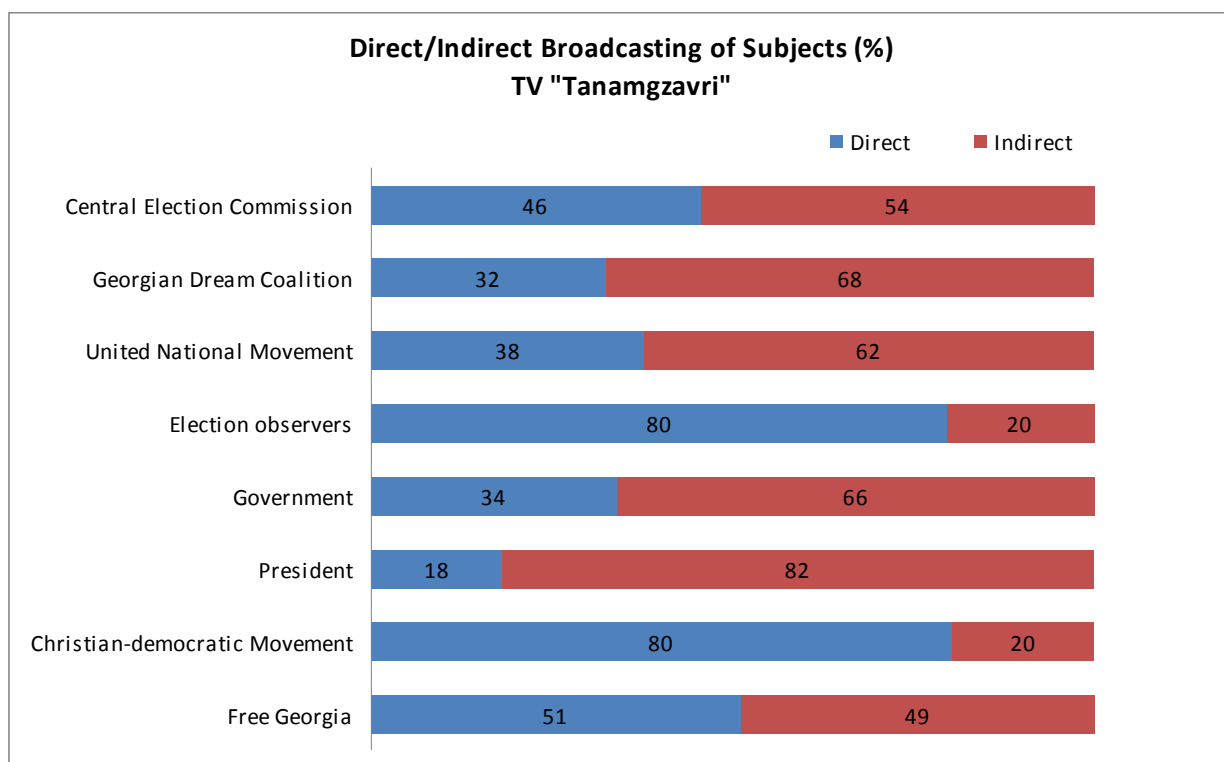
Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – The TV company dedicated the biggest share of airtime (23 min) to reporting on CEC. 21 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and 12 minutes to - UNM.



In the main subjects were reported in neutral tone, though positive and negative tones were observed too:



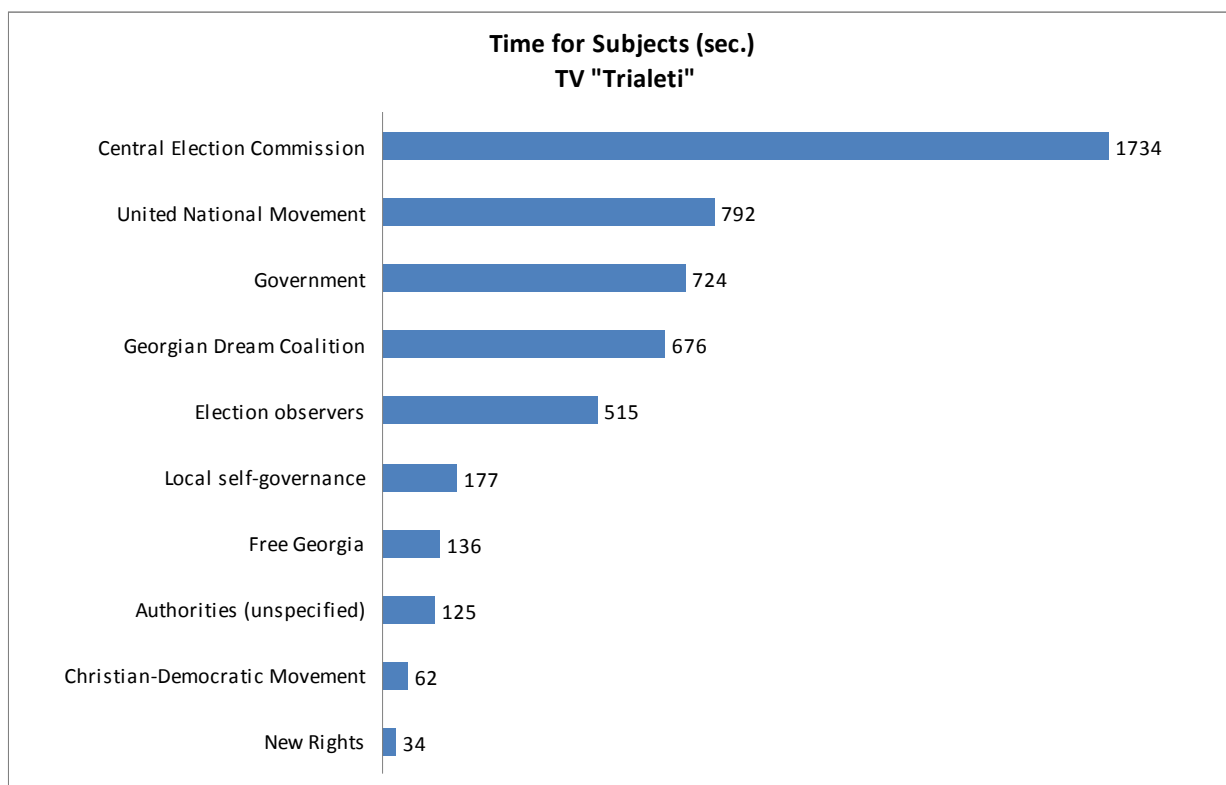
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. Only in case of the election observers direct reporting (80 percent) prevailed over indirect reporting (20 percent).



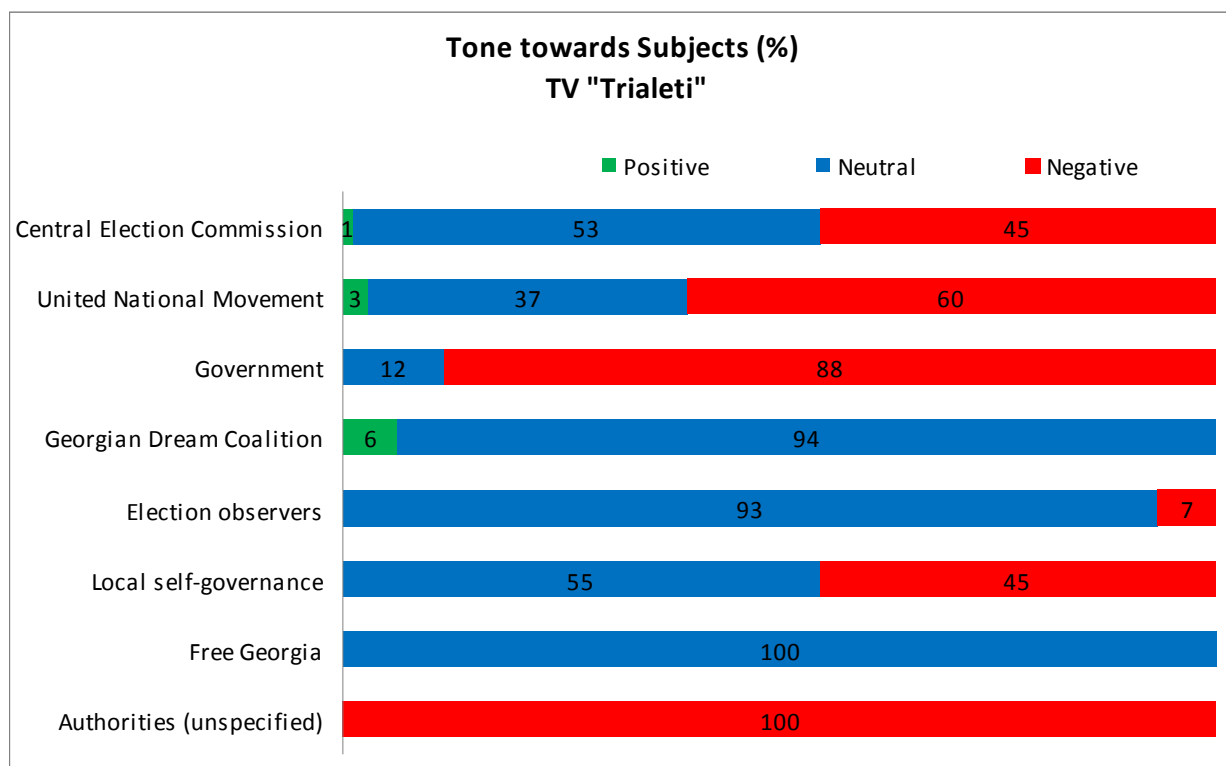
During the reporting period the main topic of the TV Company Tanamgzavri news programs was the parliamentary elections of October 1. Within a week the situation at precincts was thoroughly covered. The October 3 news program showed a detailed chart featuring nationwide preliminary results publicized by CEC. The Tanamgzavri news stories are balanced, journalists refrained from demonstrating their opinions. It is also noteworthy that in some cases journalists reiterated correspondents.

Trialeti (Gori) – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime (29 min) to CEC. UNM received 13-minute coverage, followed by government with 12 minutes, and the Georgian Dream coalition with 11 minutes.

Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters

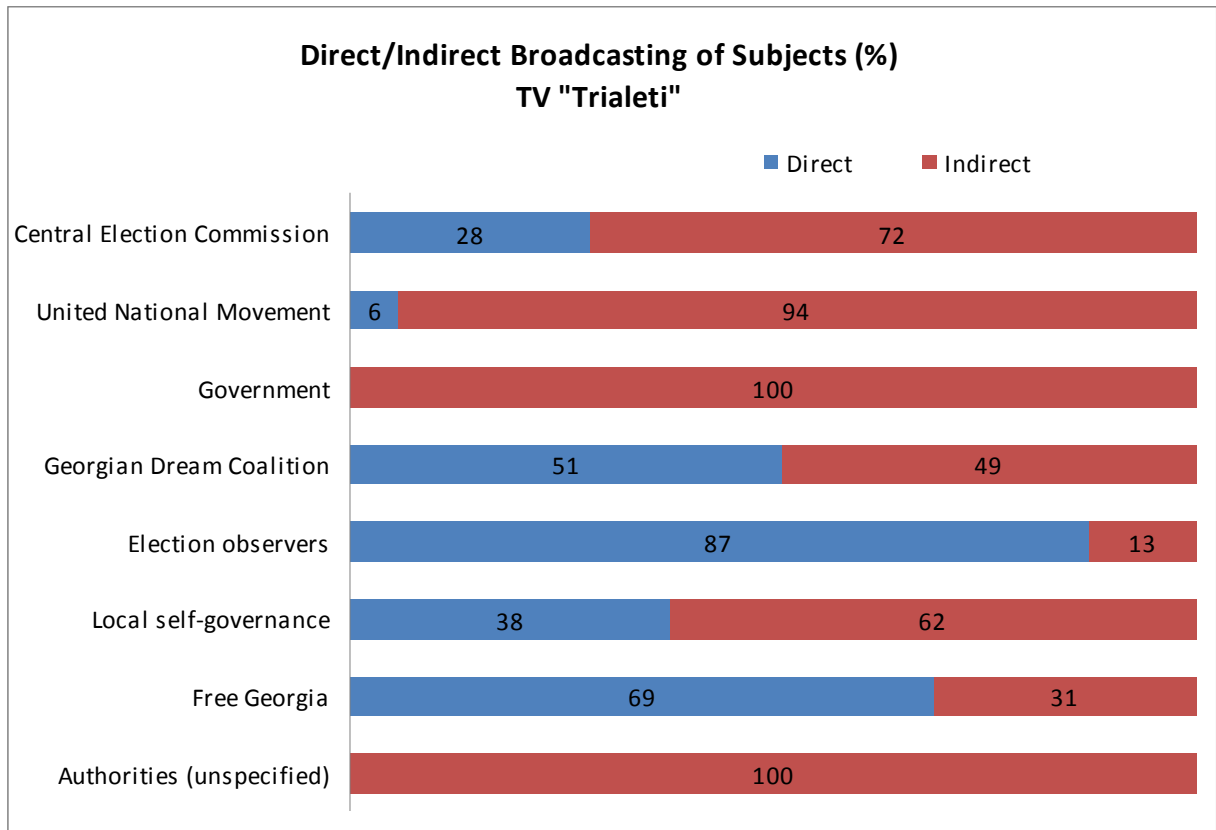


Subjects were mainly discussed in neutral and negative tones. Positive tone was hardly observed in regard to few of the monitored subjects.



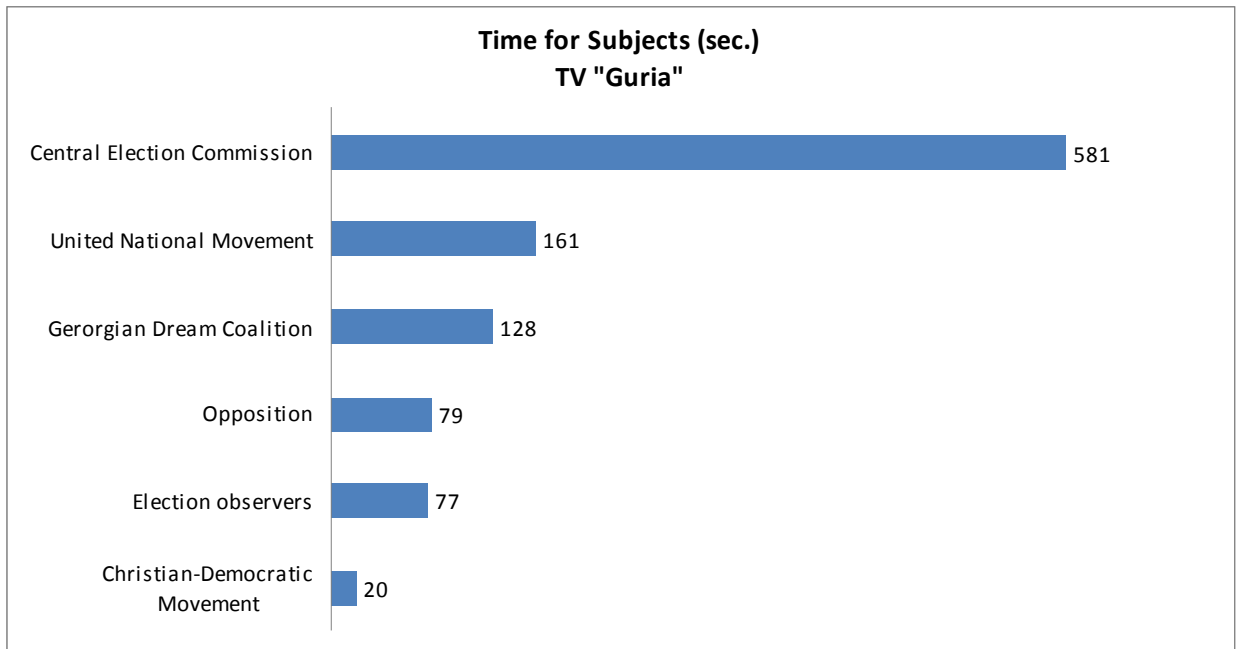
Indirect reporting mostly prevailed over direct reporting. In regard to government reporting was 100 percent indirect. The share of indirect reporting was rather big in relation to UNM (94 percent) and CEC (72 percent). Election observers enjoyed the biggest share (87 percent) of direct reporting (9-

minute coverage). In case of the Georgian Dream coalition the share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal.

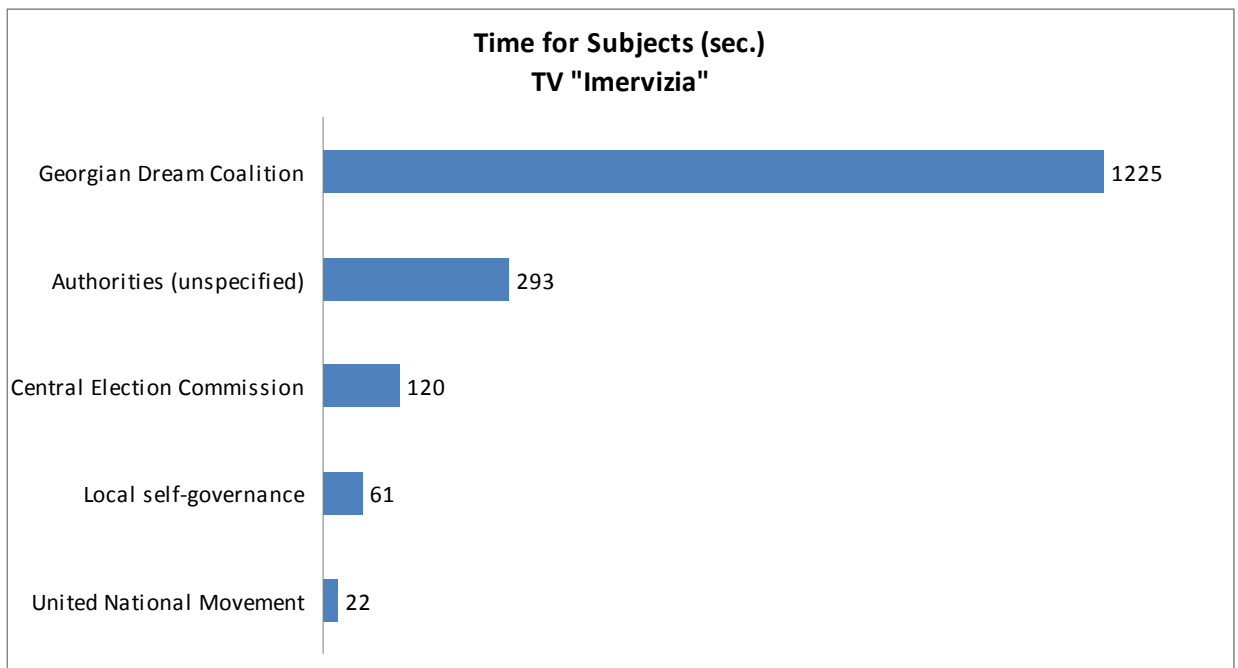


Within the reporting week news programs reported on the pre-election situation at different precincts. On the E-day the high tension was observed at Khashuri and Kaspi precincts (mobilization of riot police, armed person’s pressure upon PEC members, seizure of the ballot box) which ensued 88 negative reporting tone. But 45 percent negative tone in regard to CEC is the result of the data on the violations identified at precincts by observers and political subjects. But in one case the journalist (October 3 news outlet) asked the citizen, being neither eyewitness nor the person aware of the case, the following question: “What are they saying, who made a mess?” It is also noteworthy that at times the journalist was reiterating correspondent.

Guria (Ozurgeti) - News programs dedicated approximately 10 minutes to CEC. UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition received 3 and 2-minute coverage. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage. Reporting was mainly neutral in tone. Indirect reporting greatly prevailed over direct reporting. The results give no possibility to provide qualitative analysis.



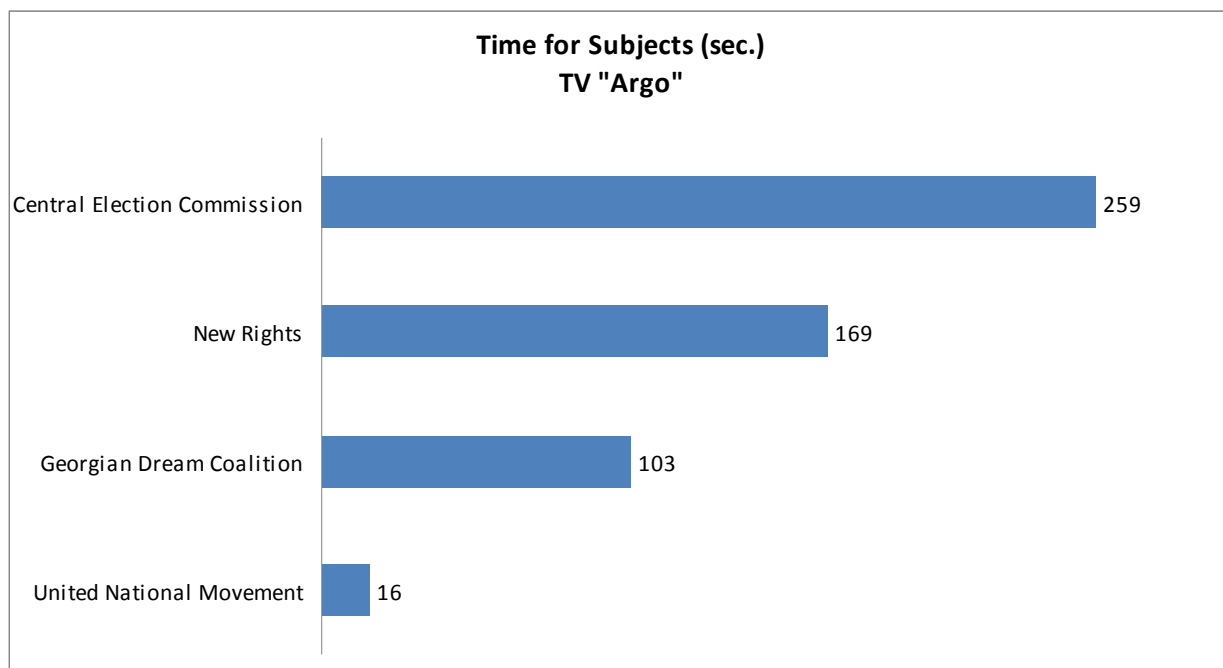
Imervizia (Chiatura) - Within the reporting period the channel dedicated about 20 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition, 5 minutes to – authorities and 2 minutes to CEC. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage. Reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was 100 percent neutral in tone. 100 negative tone was attached to reporting on the authorities. 98 percent of reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was direct.



During the reporting period TV Company Imervizia dedicated 71 of reporting to the Georgian Dream coalition and only 1 percent to UNM. The 25-minute news program featured GD's winning candidate

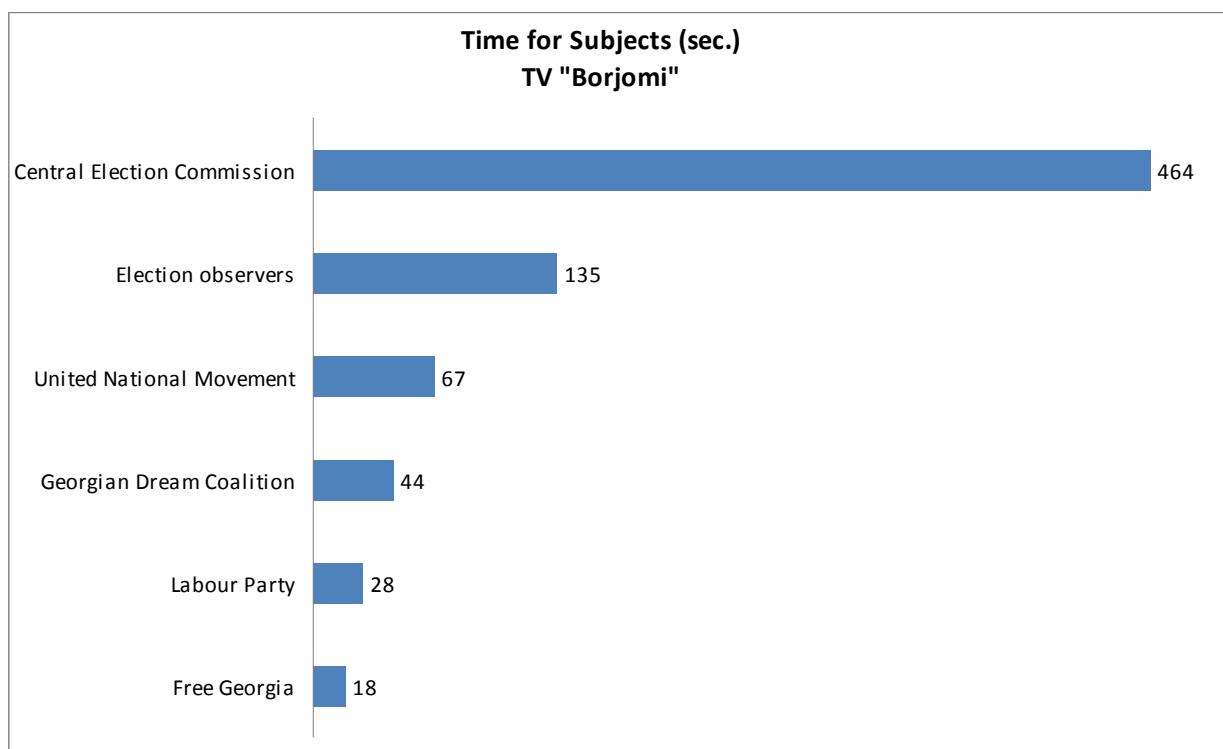
Malkhaz Tsereteli's comment of 20 minutes in length. Hence, we can say the news format was breached.

Argo (Zestafoni) - The channel dedicated approximately 4 minutes to CEC, 3 minutes to – New Rights and 2 minutes to - the Georgian Dream coalition. News programs provided no coverage of the rest of the subjects. The tone attached to the covered subjects was neutral, and direct reporting greatly prevailed over indirect reporting.



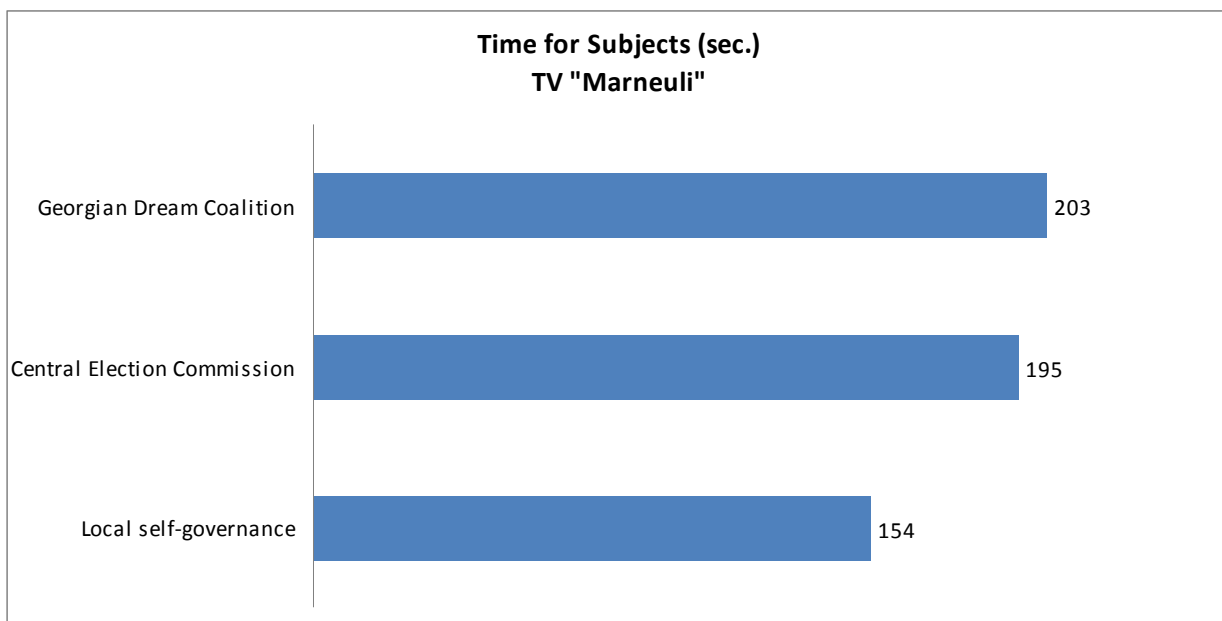
Within the reporting week TV Company Argo provided little coverage of monitored subjects. For a week, starting from the E-day (October 1) the airtime was dedicated to four monitored subjects. Moreover, the information provided is essentially superficial: there is no analysis, criticism or diverse coverage provided in the stories.

Borjomi (Borjomi) – News programs dedicated the biggest portion of airtime, approximately 8 minutes, to CEC, followed by the election observers with 6 minutes. Virtually the rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage. Reporting on both of the covered subjects was neutral and positive in tone. When reporting on CEC indirect reporting (64 percent) prevailed over direct reporting (36 percent), the picture though looked opposite in regard to the election observers.

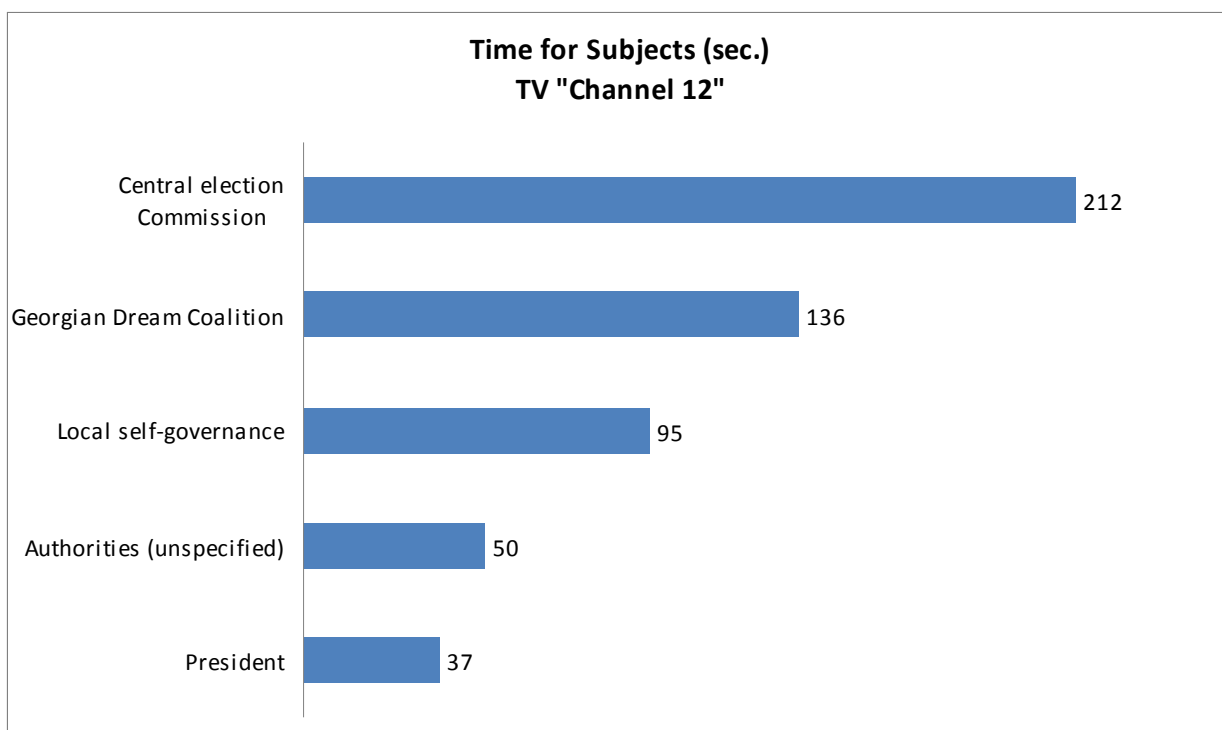


During the reporting period the TV Company produced two news outlets, the running time in total did not exceed 20 minutes. The stories featured the situation at precincts. Journalists were mainly reporting that voting process was on in a peaceful and stable atmosphere. Reporting on political subjects was essentially neutral in tone. To express their viewpoints a fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the election observers. It is noteworthy that the TV story produced on the E-day was repeatedly shown in the October 2 news program.

Marneuli (Marneuli) – The TV company dedicated about 3-3 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition, CEC and local selfgovernment. All three tones were observed in regard to the monitored subjects, but neutral tone prevailed. The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. During the reporting period only three of the subjects were covered, hence we lack material to provide qualitative analysis.



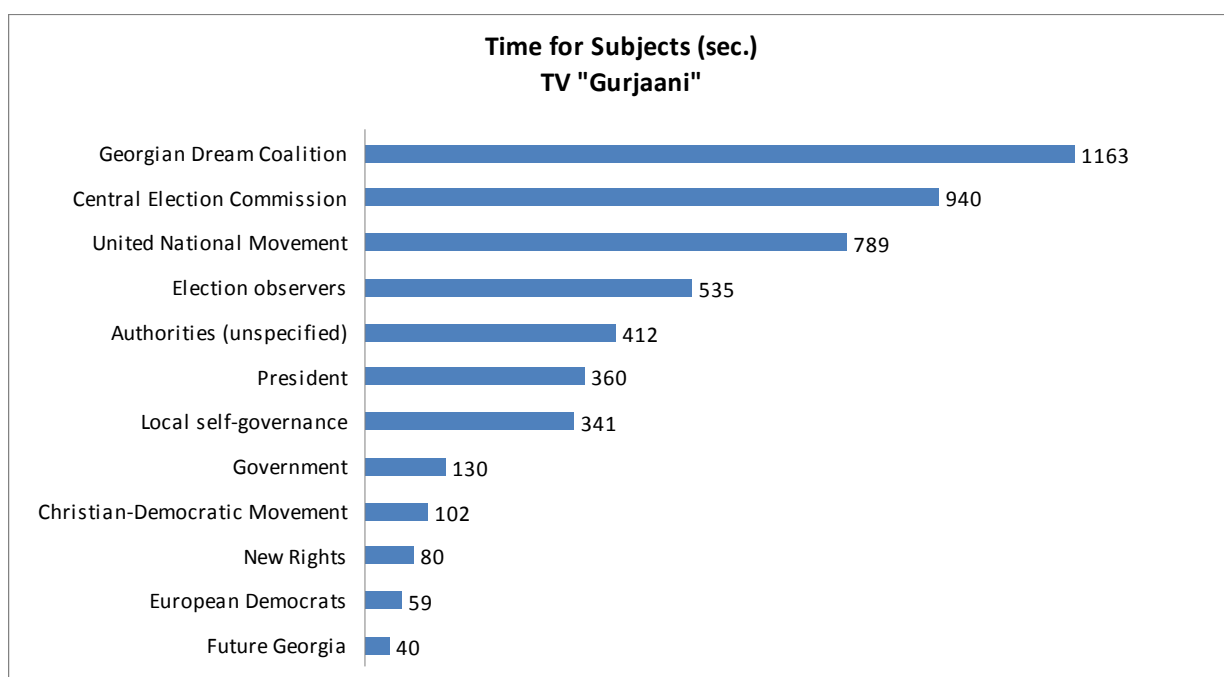
Channel 12 (Bolnisi) – The TV company dedicated about 4 minutes to CEC and 2 minutes to to the Georgian Dream coalition. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage. All of the three tones were applied in regard to CEC: positive – 20 percent, neutral – 54 percent and negative – 26 percent. 68 percent of reporting was indirect.



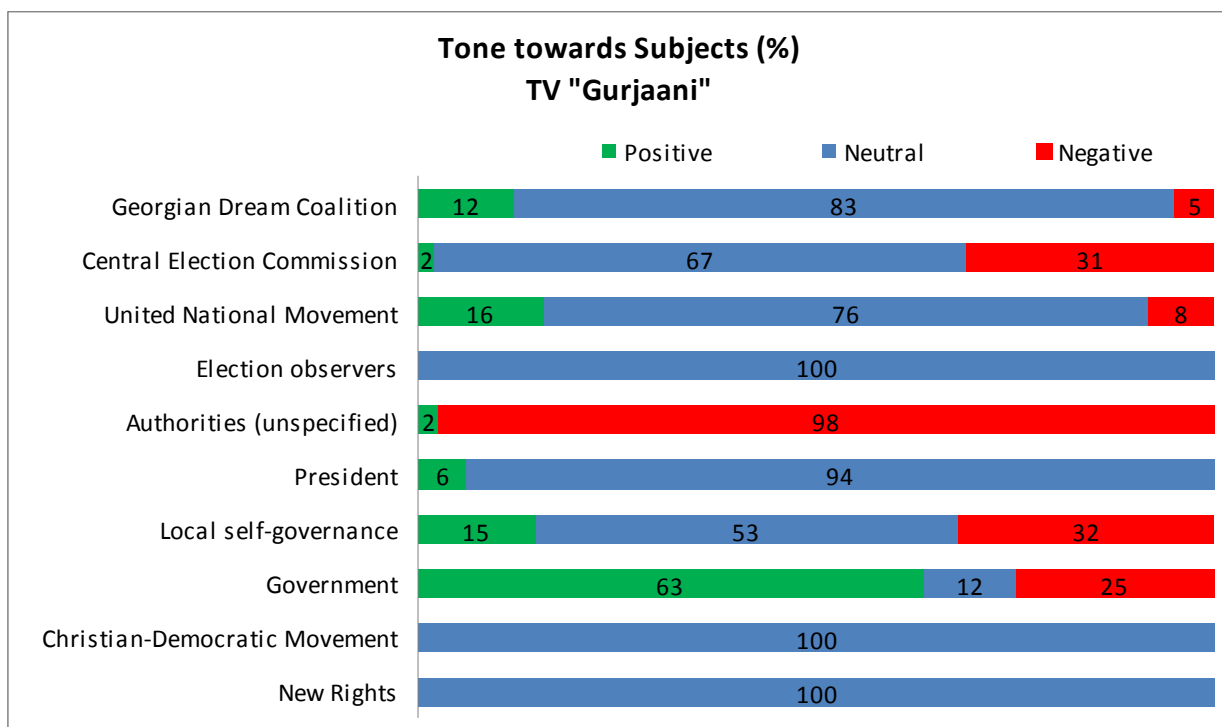
TV Company Channel 12 produced two stories on the parliamentary elections. The stories were repeatedly re-aired within the reporting week. The stories covered the rally organized by the Georgian Dream coalition at the DEC. A fair amount of time was dedicated to the opinion poll survey

locally. Surveying the population the journalist focused on President’s statement (admission of UNM’s defeat in the elections), the population voices happiness over the peaceful completion of electoral processes. Another story (1,6 min) was produced about road rehabilitation works. The story featured comments provided by the local self government and citizens.

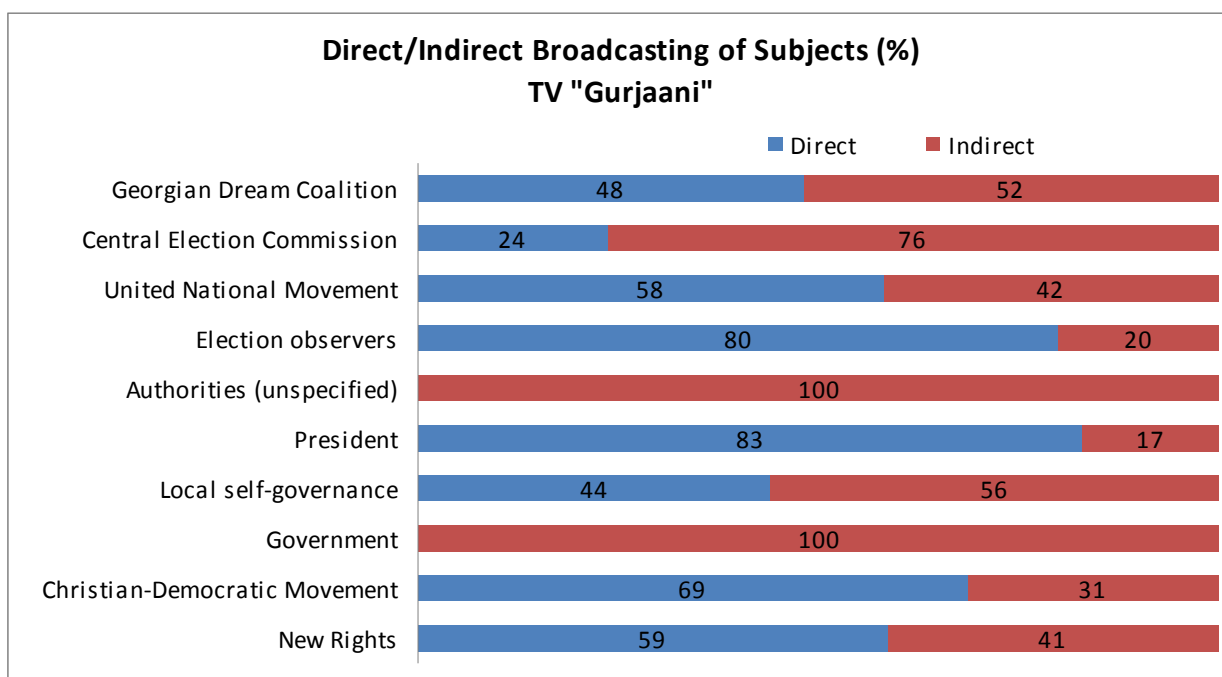
Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime (19 min) to the Georgian Dream coalition. CEC received 16 minutes, followed by UNM with 13 minutes and election observers with 10 minutes.



All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. The biggest share of negative reporting falls on the authorities (7-minute coverage). As for the rest of the subjects neutral tone prevailed over positive and negative. The share of negative tone was a little bit higher in regard to CEC (31 percent), local self government (32 percent) and government (25 percent).



The share of direct/indirect reporting in regard to UNM and Georgian Dream coalition was almost equal:

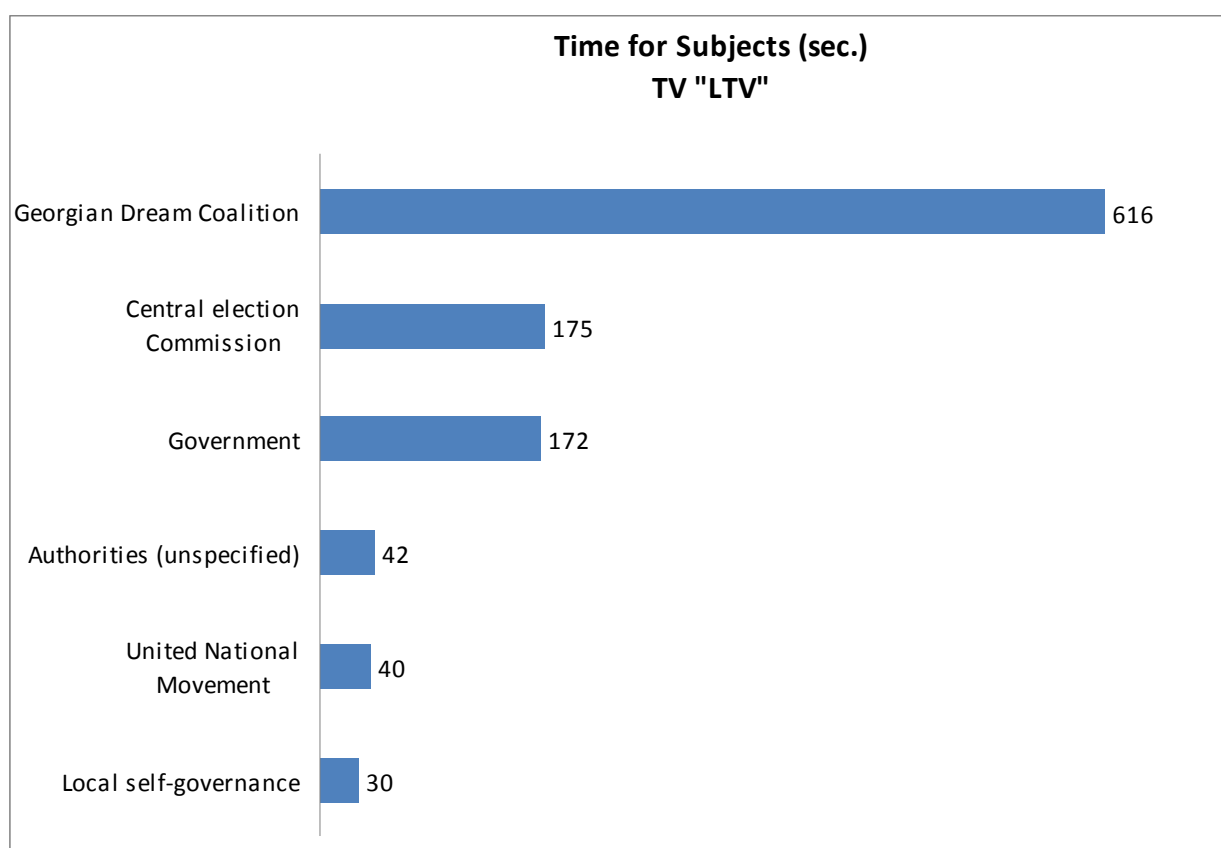


TV Company Gurjaani aggressively covered Election Day (October 1) and post-election period. The greater majority of TV stories were balanced, the journalist covered the comments provided by the subjects with dissenting stance.

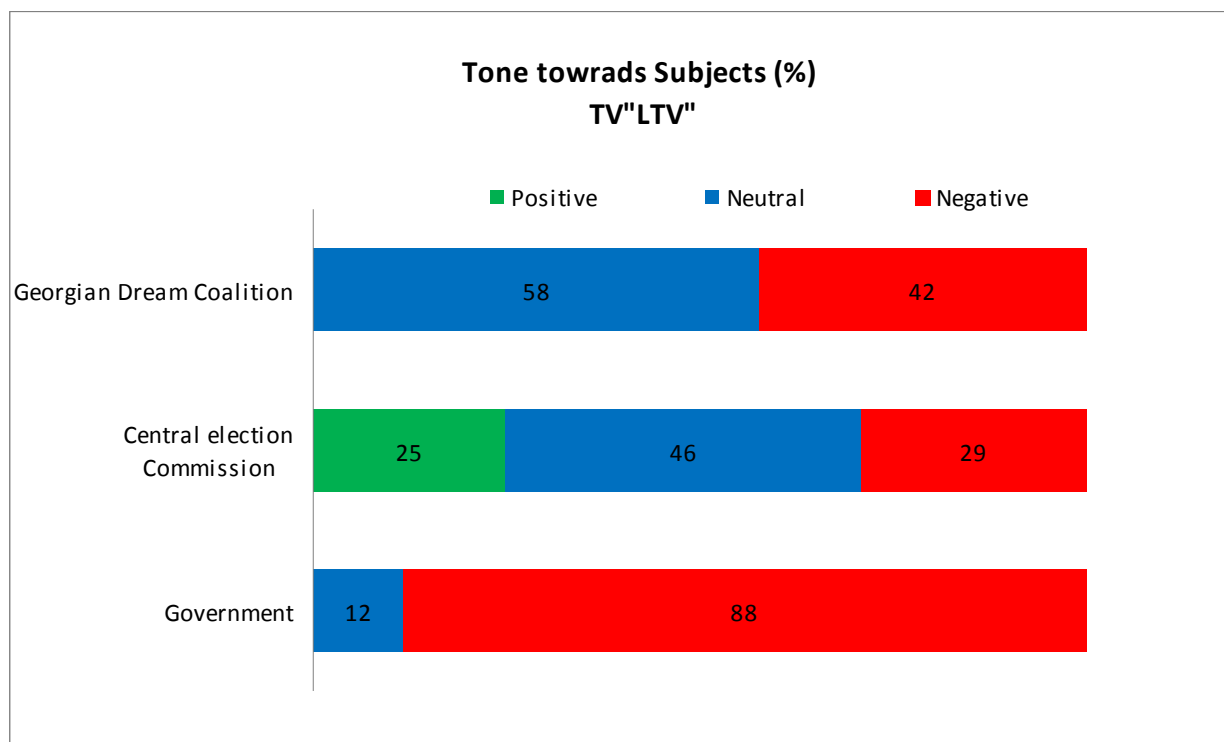
In one story produced during the reporting period the journalist's text was subjective: in the October 3 news program the journalist is making a negative preface to the subject's negative comment: "Unfortunately the State representative's comment sounds like that." Afterwards the State

representative to the village speaks about one of the projects to be implemented by the local self government but he fails to provide the exact date of the launch of the project. The journalist makes the following evaluation thereupon: “We think, there is no need for further evaluation, but we would like point out that the State representative to the village should be able to give a more precise answer.” In this particular case the journalist’s evaluation obstructs unbiased and objective coverage of facts.

LTV (Lagodekhi) – The biggest share of airtime, 10 min, was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. CEC and government each received 3-minute coverage.

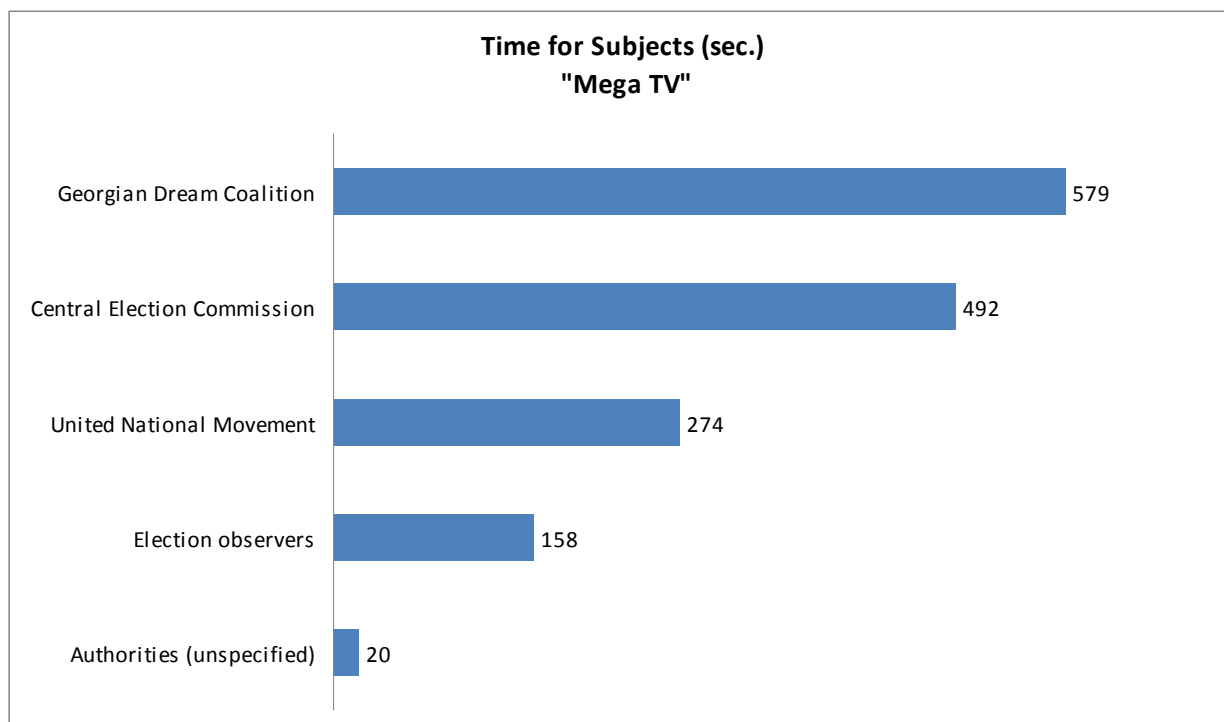


Subjects were discussed in neutral and negative tones. 25 percent of negative tone was observed in regard to CEC.

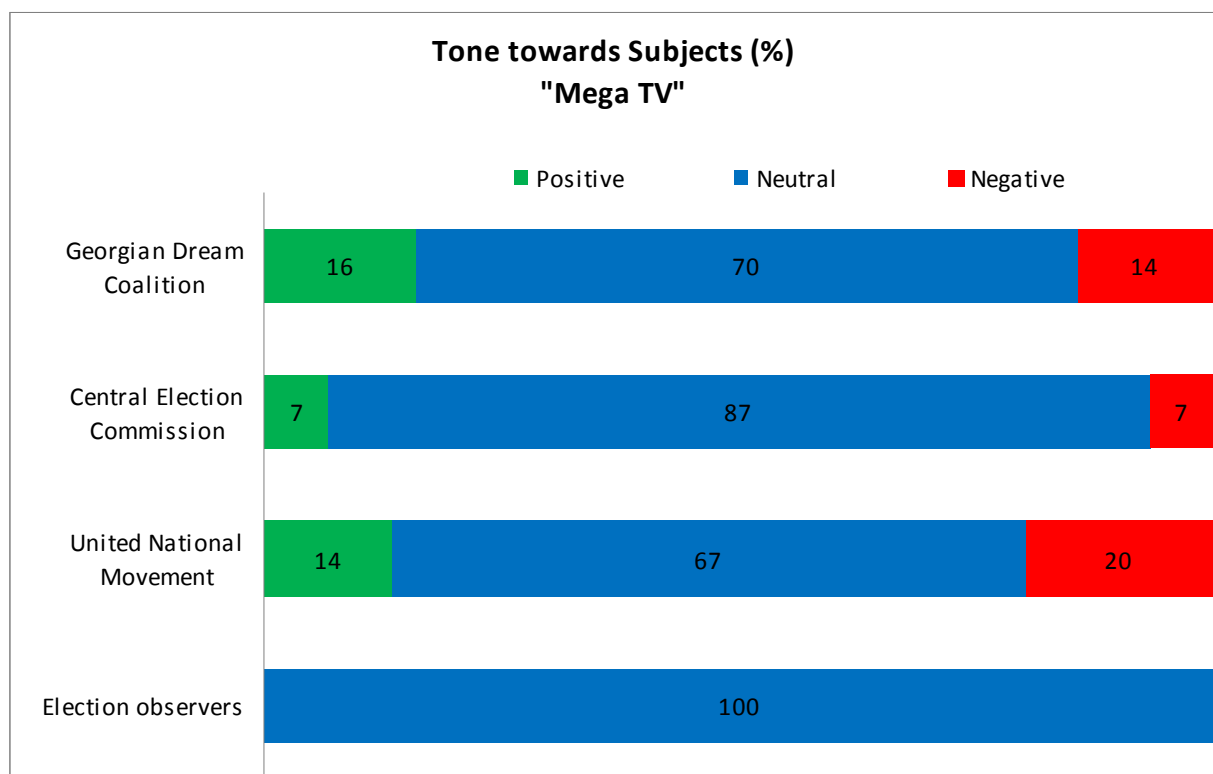


Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. In case of the Georgian Dream coalition the share of direct (44 percent) and indirect (56 percent) reporting was almost equal. Due to the lack of time dedicated to the monitored subjects we find it little but hard to provide qualitative analysis. Throughout a week 7 stories were produced over the election processes. The stories essentially touched upon the developments at several precincts. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to incident related to the Georgian Dream coalition majoritarian deputy Luka Kurtanidze (clash at the precinct, the Georgian Dream coalition beating an old lady). Even though both of the parties were provided equal possibility to express their opinions the TV stories still give the impression of bias and lack of balance.

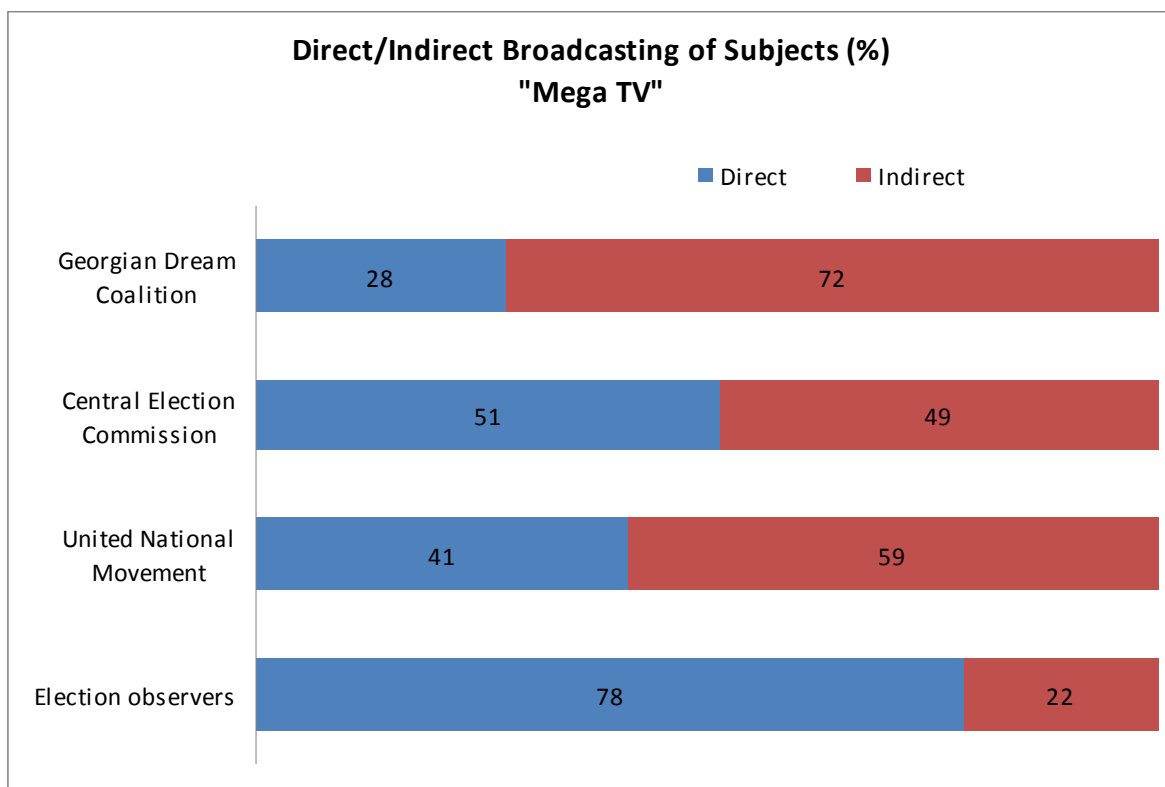
Mega TV (Khoni) – The channel dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 10 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. CEC comes next with 8 minutes, and UNM with 4 minutes.



Neutral tone prevailed when reporting on the monitored subjects. Positive and negative tones were observed too:



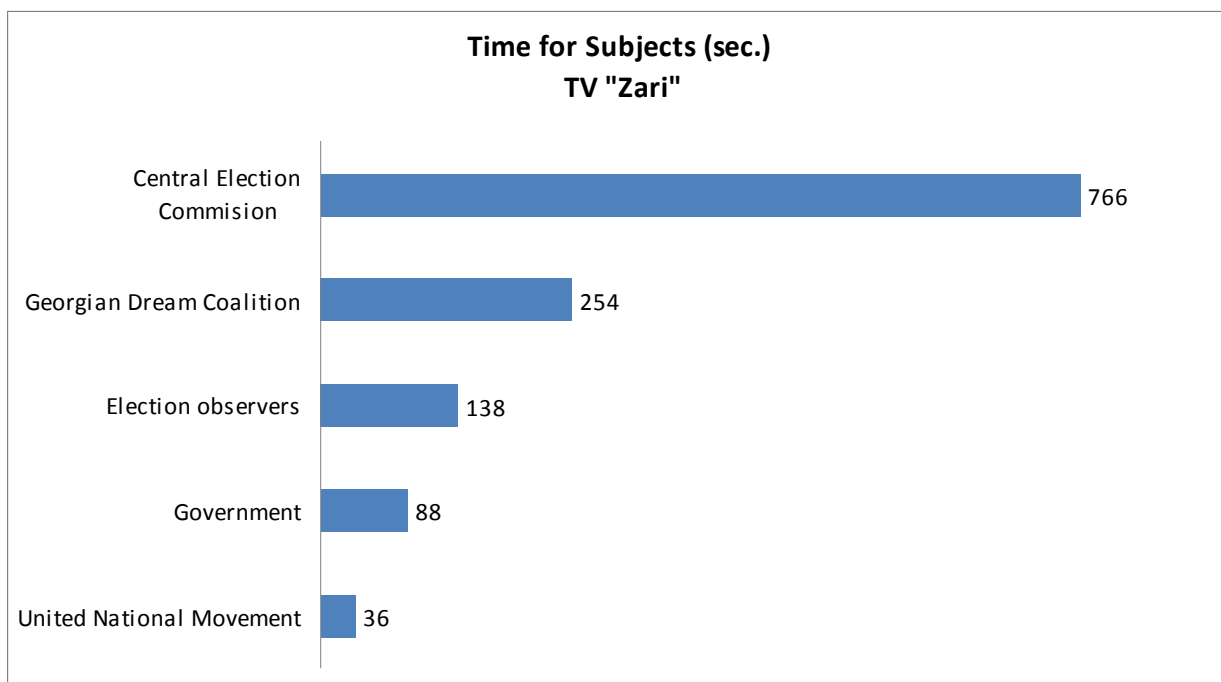
72 percent of reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was indirect. As for the rest of the monitored subjects the share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal.



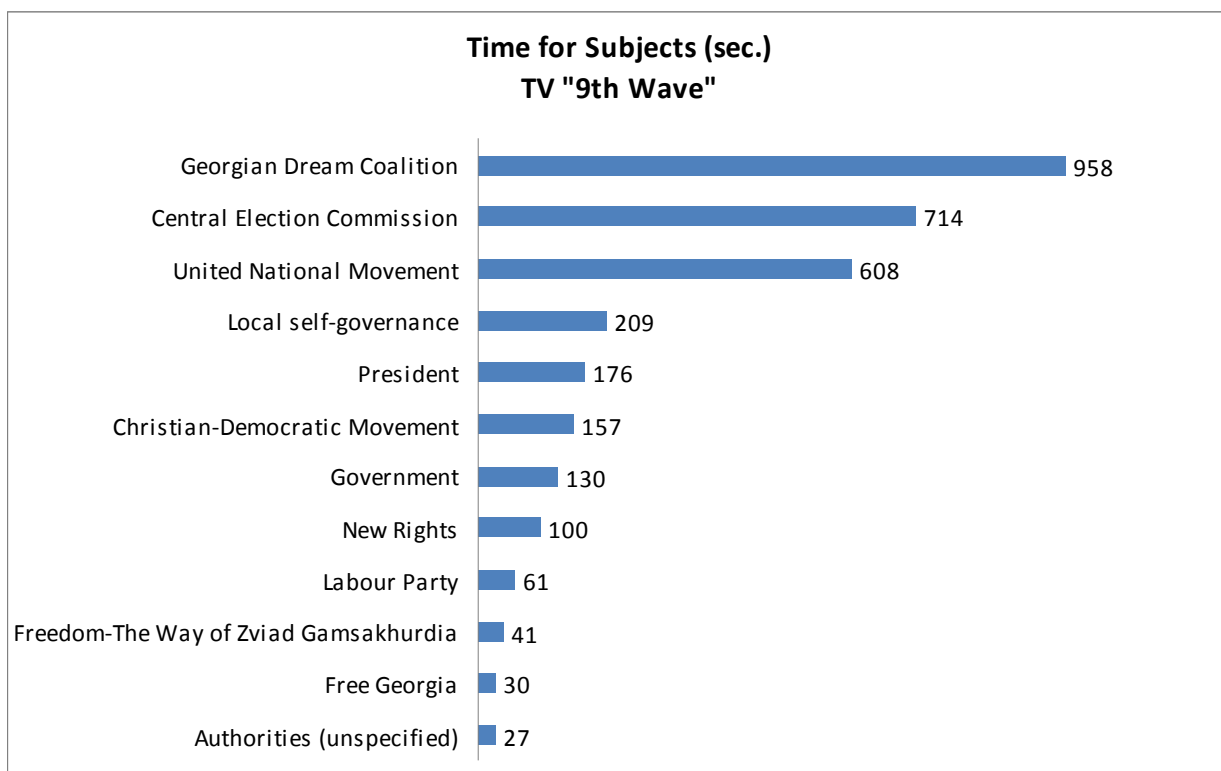
The main topic of Mega TV news programs was the October 1 parliamentary elections. During the reporting period the channel produced three news programs. At times bias was evident when reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition. In the October 5 news outlet, for example, the journalist asks respondent: “So nothing is going to change in the country in the future?”

Within the reporting week the agency referred to the INFO 9 material to report on the developments in different regions.

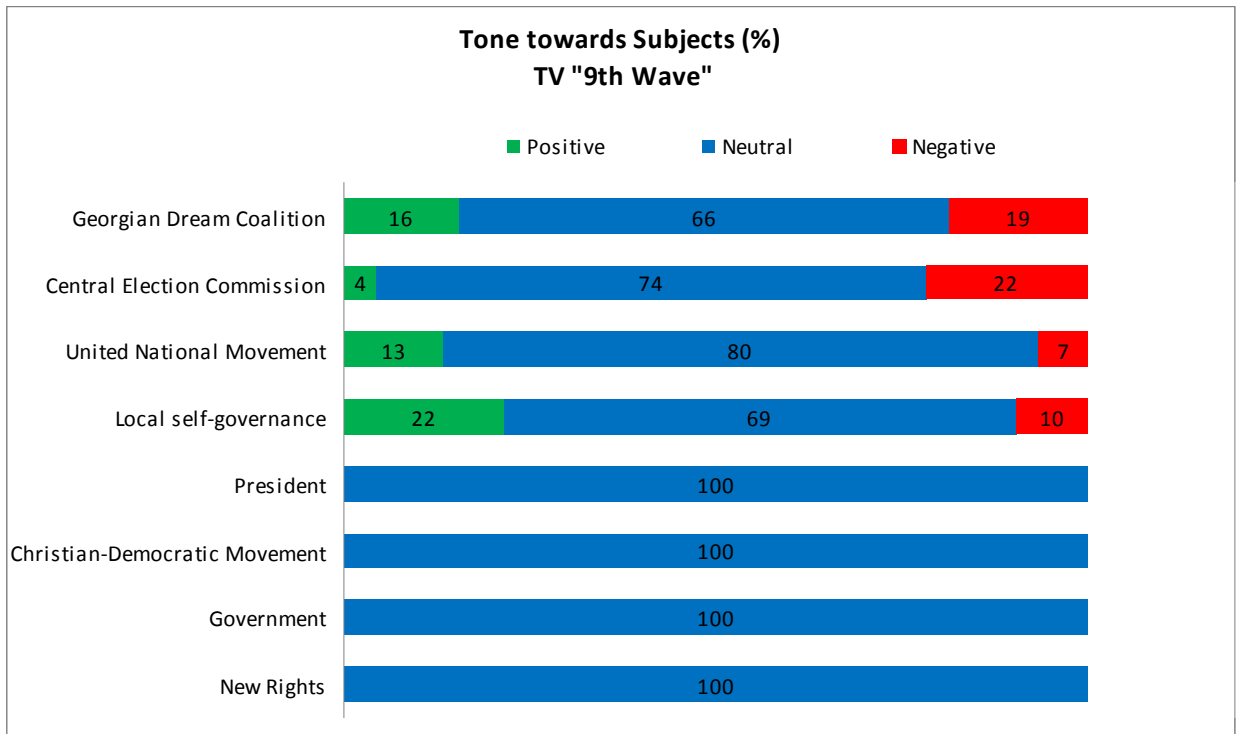
Zari (Samtredia) – CEC enjoyed the biggest share of reporting – 13 minutes. The Georgian Dream coalition enjoyed 4-minute coverage. Election observers received 2 minutes of TV air. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage. The reporting tone was neutral in the main. Solely in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition negative tone (19 percent) was identified. In GD’s case the share of indirect reporting was less (43 percent) compared with the rest of the subjects. The results of monitoring give us no possibility to carry out qualitative analysis.



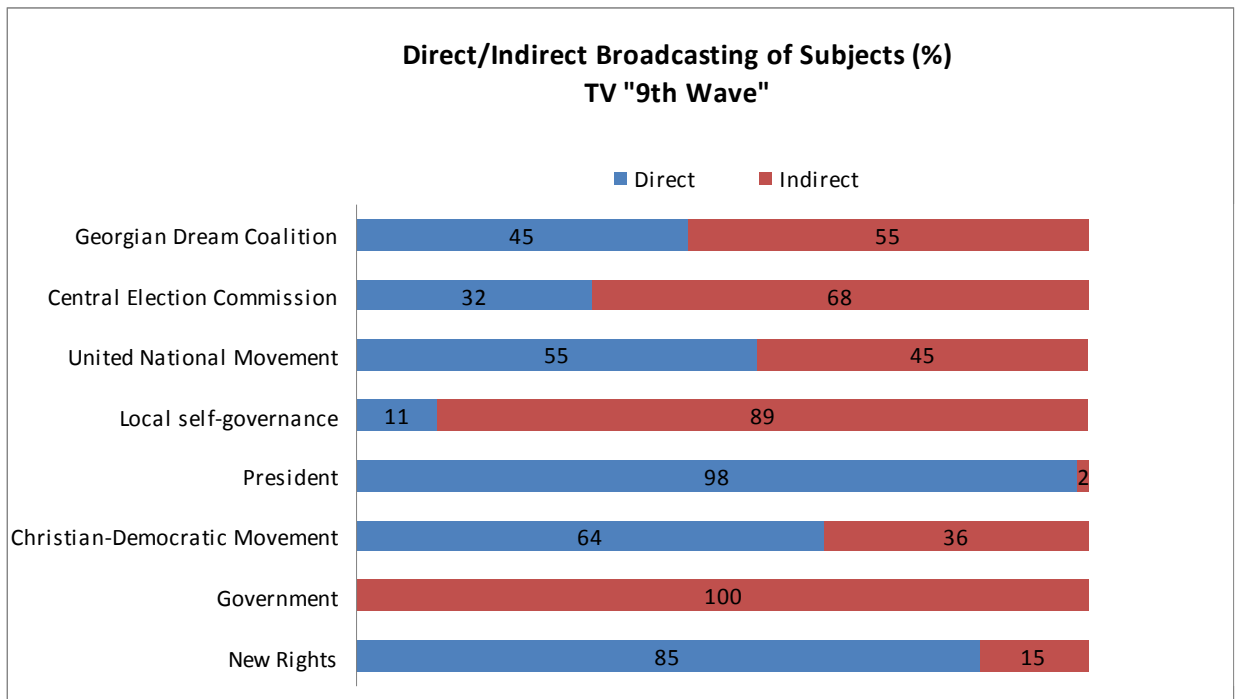
9th Wave (Poti) - The Georgian Dream coalition enjoyed the biggest share of reporting – 16 minutes. CEC and UNM received 12 and 10 minutes of reporting respectively.



Reporting tone was essentially neutral. Negative and positive tones were observed too though:



High parentage (89%) of indirect reporting was observed in regard to the local self-government (3-minute total coverage). Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting in CEC's case as well. A for the rest of the monitored subjects the share was almost equal.



During the reporting period the bigger portion of airtime in the news programs produced on the channel wad dedicated to the October 1 parliamentary elections. A fair amount of airtime was received by CEC, the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. They were provided almost equal possibility to report directly. Reporting on the election-related issues was unbiased and balanced.

Activities to be carried out:

Within the period of October 8-14 the tenth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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