



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

Subagreement # S-12-155

Report for: September 10-16, 2012

Project Period: 11 June 2012 - 10 December 2012

Total Budget: 31 000\$

Results Summary/Impact Statement

Main findings of the sixth phase of monitoring:

- Very few of the monitored subjects are dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- Most of the TV stories contain superficial information about the activities of monitored subjects and lack dissenting or criticizing opinions over the issue;
- The airtime dedicated to the reporting on the activities carried out by the United National Movement (UNM) and the Georgian Dream coalition has gone up;
- In most cases journalists are not neutral in their reporting;
- TV stories on cultural and sports events are mostly politicized.

Background

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of September 10-16, 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 September 10-16 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.

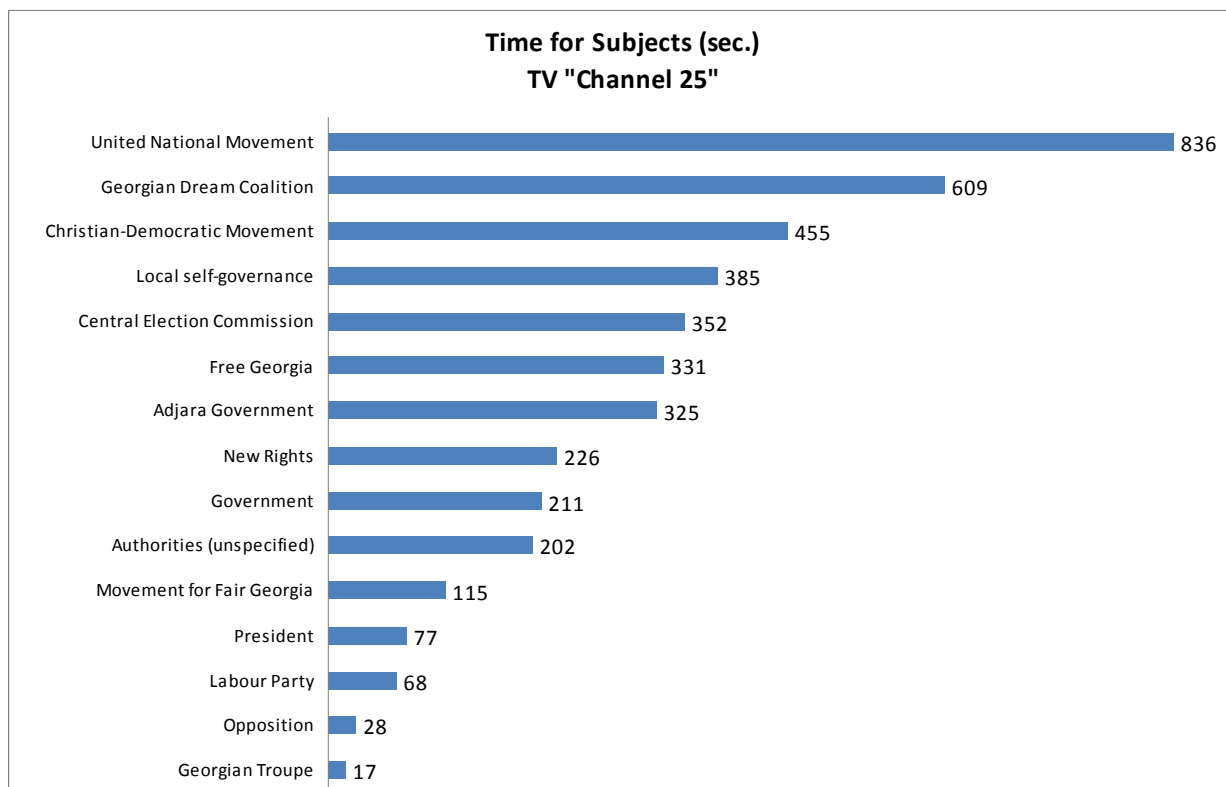
The monitoring subjects include: Parliament (speaker, vice speaker, MPs, committees); President (administration, advisors, press speaker); government (prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers, governors); authorities (when mentioned with no specification); local self-governments (mayors, chairs of 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.

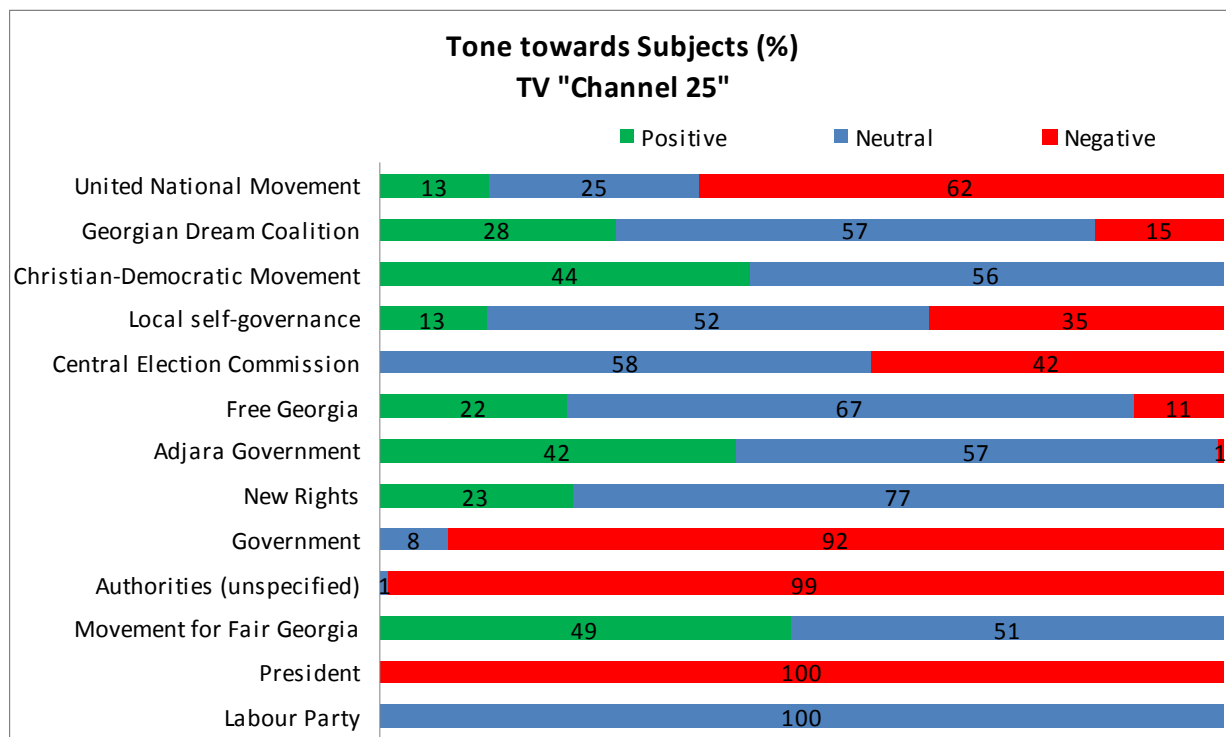
News programs monitoring results per channel:

Channel 25 (Batumi) – News programs dedicated most of the airtime, 14 minutes, to UNM, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 10 minutes and Christian-Democratic Movement with 8 minutes. Local self government, Central Election Commission (CEC), Free Georgia and Adjara government each enjoyed 6-minute coverage.

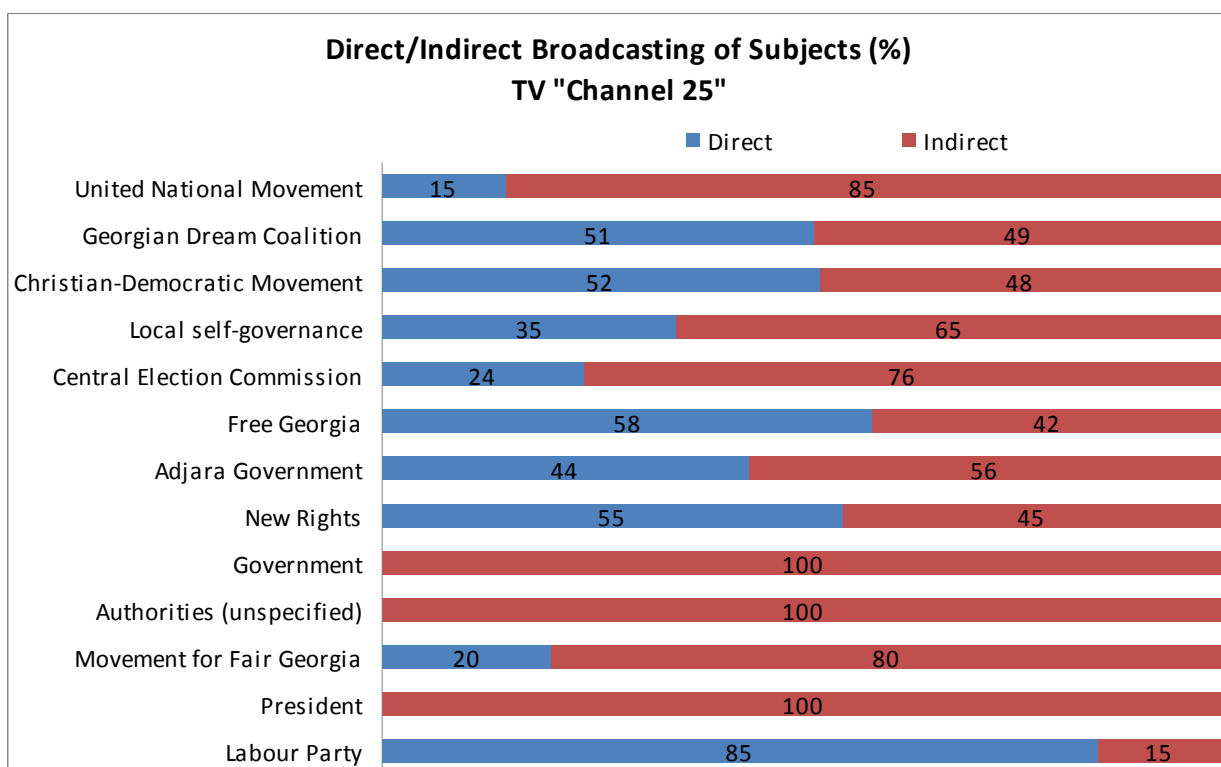
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All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. But reporting tone in regard to some of the subjects (including Christian-Democratic Movement, Adjara government, New Rights, Movement for Free Georgia) was only positive and neutral, or neutral and negative (CEC, government, authorities).

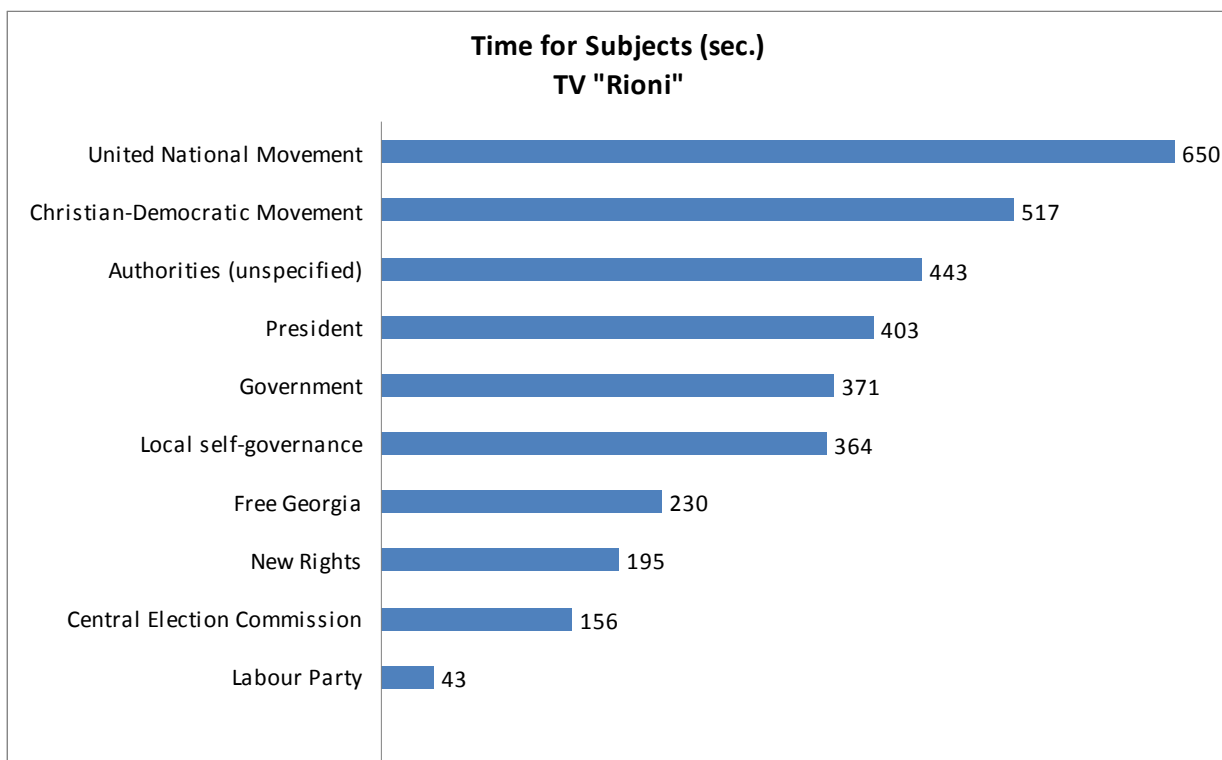


The share of direct/indirect reporting was mostly equal. In UNM’s case indirect reporting (85 percent) greatly prevailed over direct reporting (15 percent). Same applies to CEC – 76 percent / 24 percent. Reporting on the government was 100-percent indirect (4 minute of total coverage).

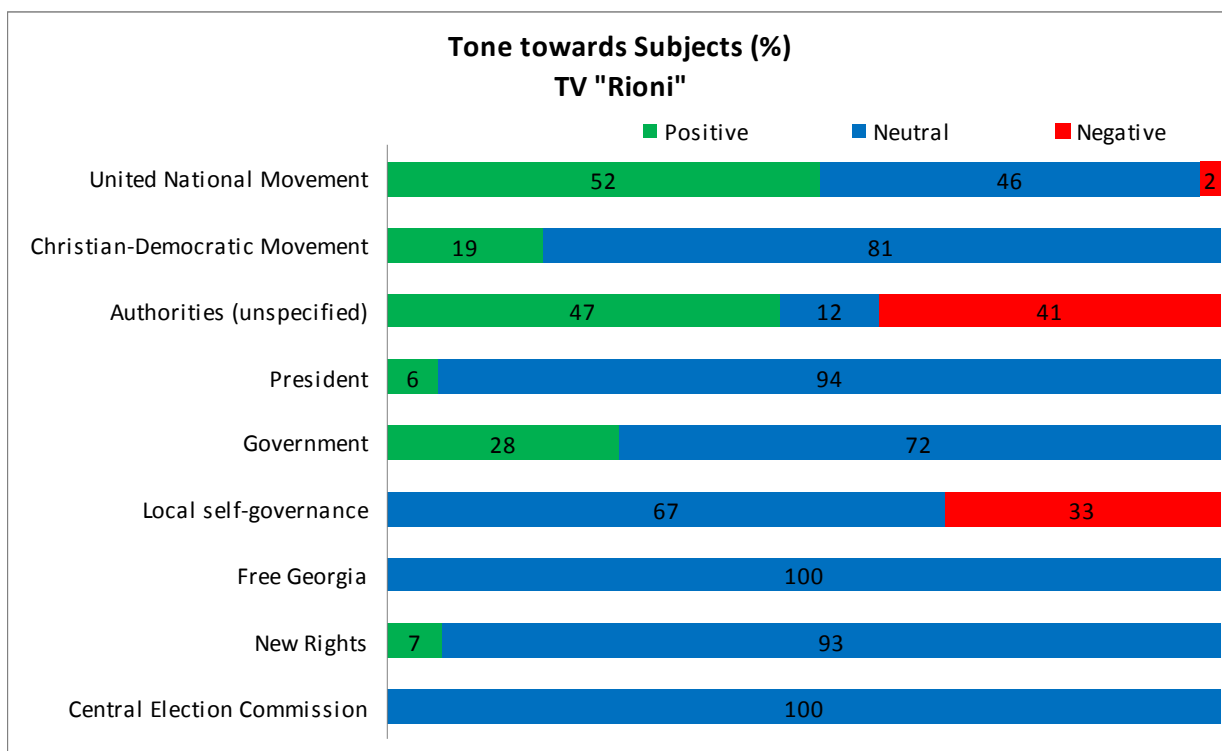


During the reporting period the TV company apportioned airtime to many of the monitored subjects. News stories are mostly balanced. It’s evident journalists are trying to report on the stance of every party. But one story clearly demonstrated journalist’s negative attitude to the respondent. In particular, the September 14 TV story covered the motives for going into politics in case of several female majoritarian candidates nominated by some political parties. The story covered the activities of Rusudan Malakmadze, the Georgian Troupe majoritarian deputy for Khelvachauri region. “Rusudan Malakmadze,” the journalist said, “mainly focuses on healthcare issues, but she is unaware of the ways to tackle problem in case she wins the polls.” The journalist’s subjective opinion was not substantiated during the interview with Rusudan Malakmadze. The respondent does not say she is unaware of the ways to settle problems being in place in the field of healthcare.

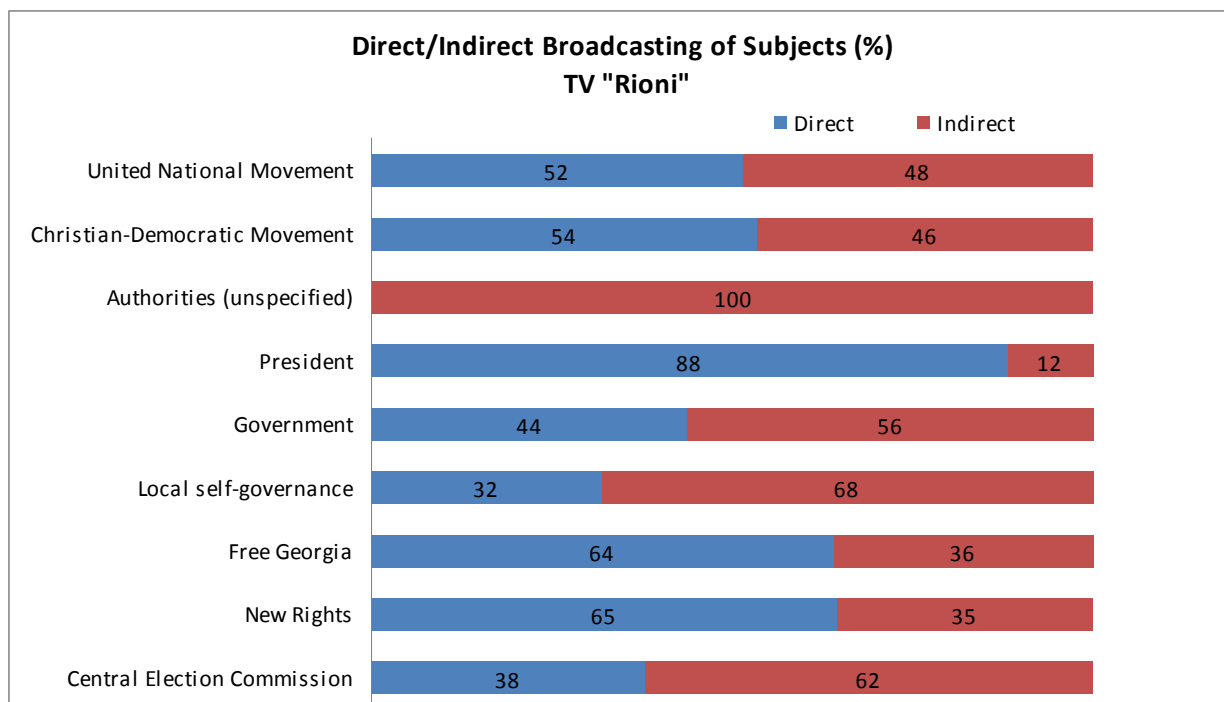
Rioni (Kutaisi) – The most of the airtime in the news programs was dedicated to the United National Movement (12 min) and Christian-Democratic Movement (9 min). 7-minute coverage was enjoyed by the authorities and President each, followed by government and the local self government with 6-6- minutes.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone was applied to reporting on the authorities (41 percent) and the local self government (33 percent). It is noteworthy that reporting on the local self government was only neutral and negative in tone.



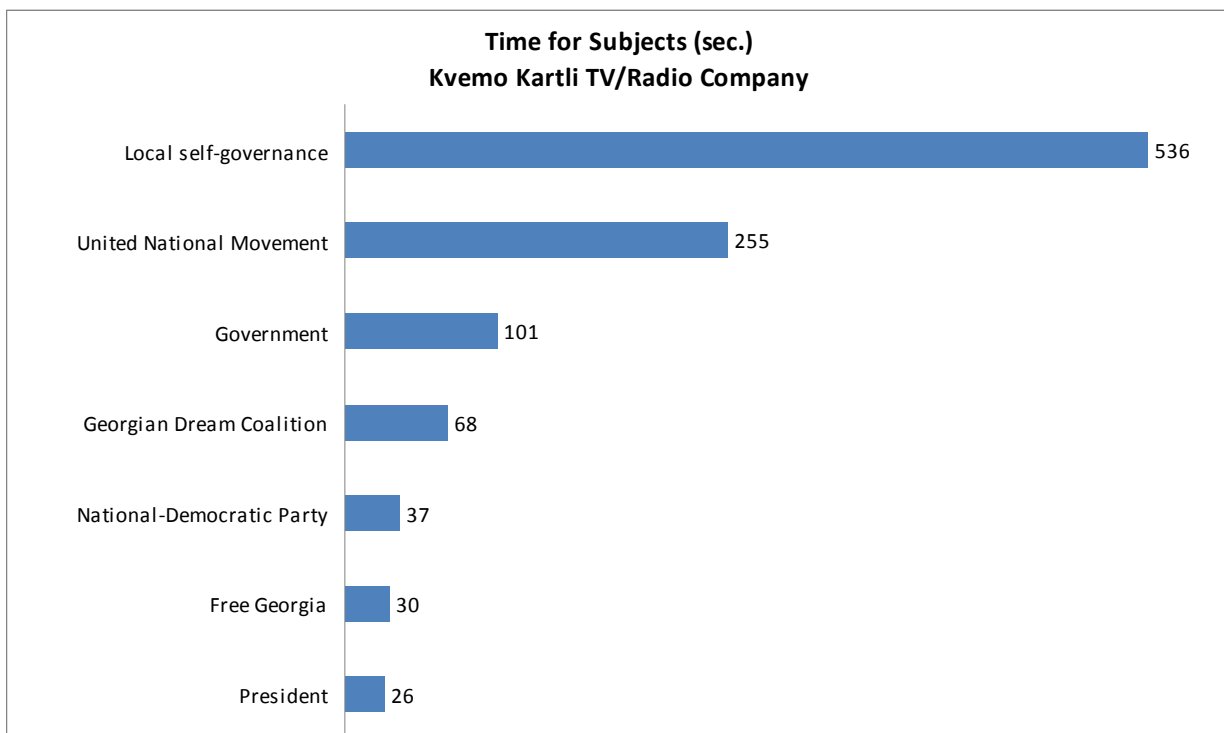
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Only in case of President direct reporting (88 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (12 percent).



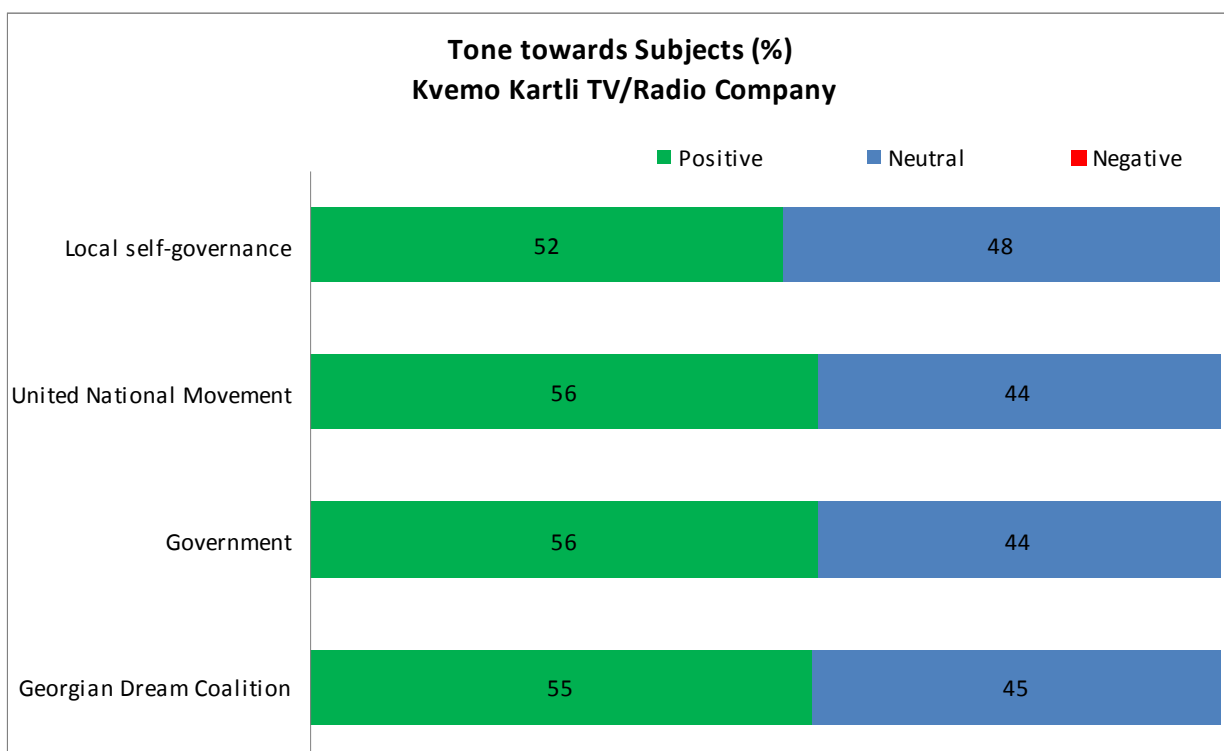
Within the reporting period TV company Rioni news programs aggressively covered political events ongoing in the region as well as across the country. When reporting on the pre-election campaign conducted by political subjects the most of the airtime was enjoyed by UNM activities. Pre-election campaigning conducted by Christian-Democratic movement, Free Georgia and New Rights enjoyed 9, 4, and 3-minute coverage respectively. It is noteworthy that journalists were almost always unbiased, refraining to provide their own stance but some facts are portrayed in a positive context, without introducing dissenting opinions.

Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) – The TV company news program dedicated the most of the airtime (9 min) to the local self government. 4-minute reporting was enjoyed by UNM followed by government with 2 minutes. Other subjects of monitoring were almost never covered.

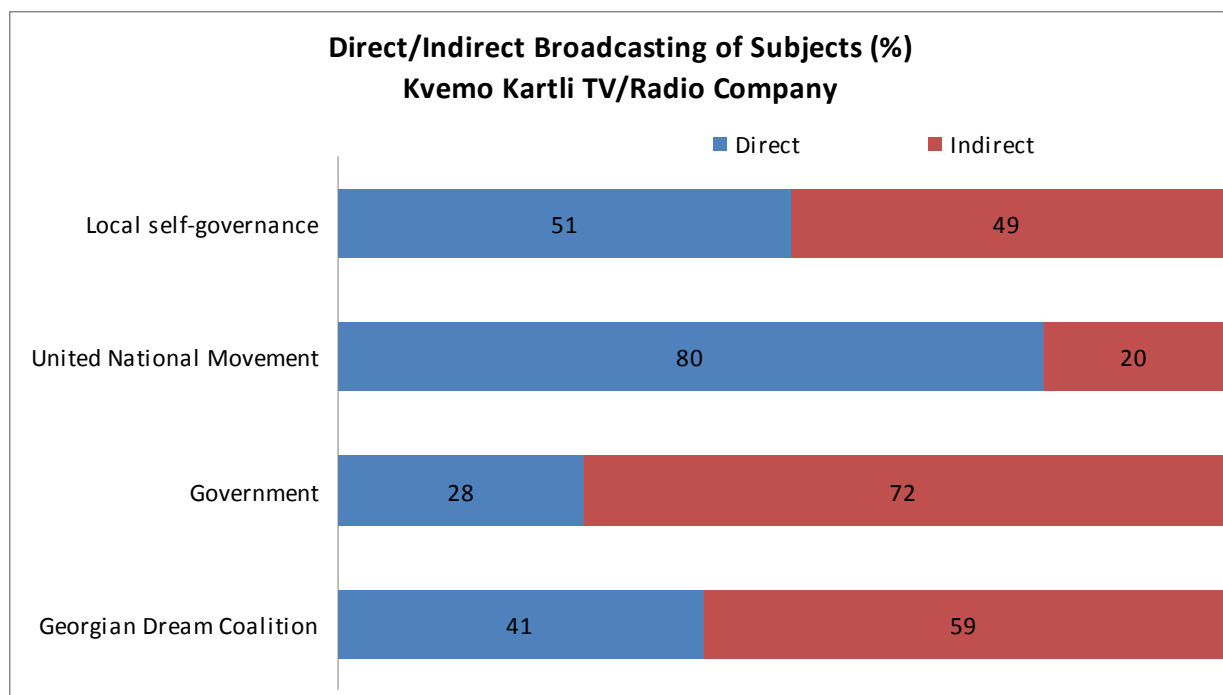
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Positive and neutral tones were equally attached to reporting on the monitored subjects.

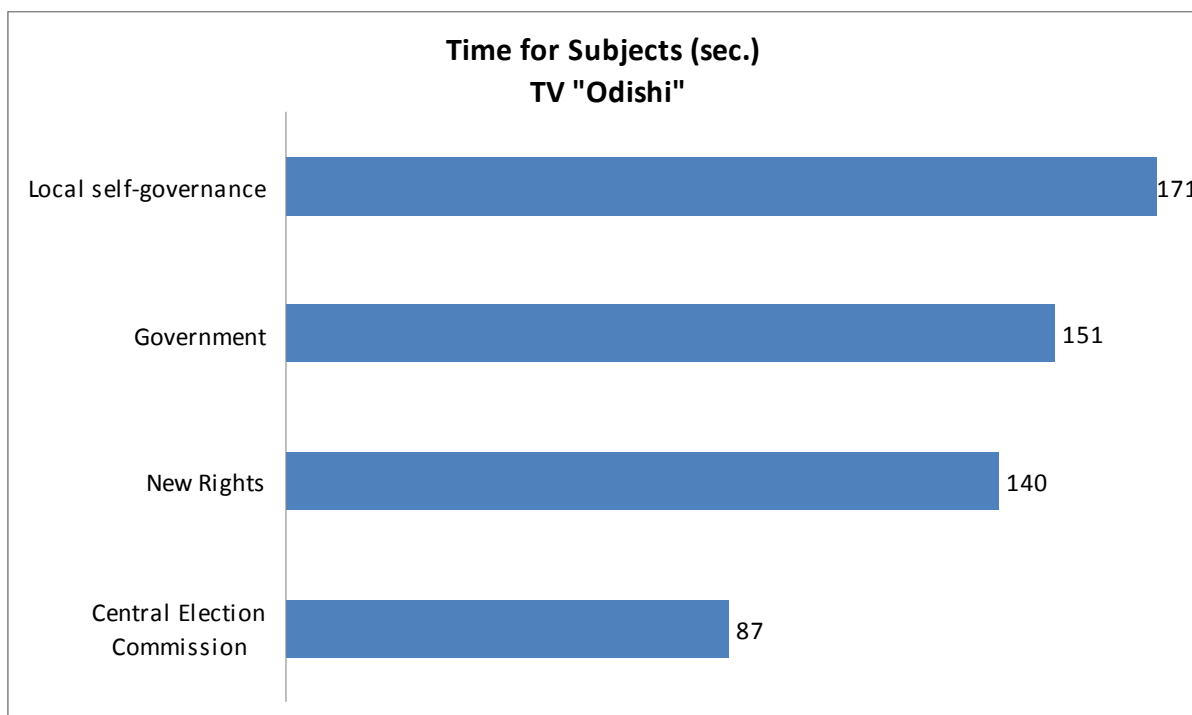


UNM enjoyed high percentage of direct reporting – 80 percent.

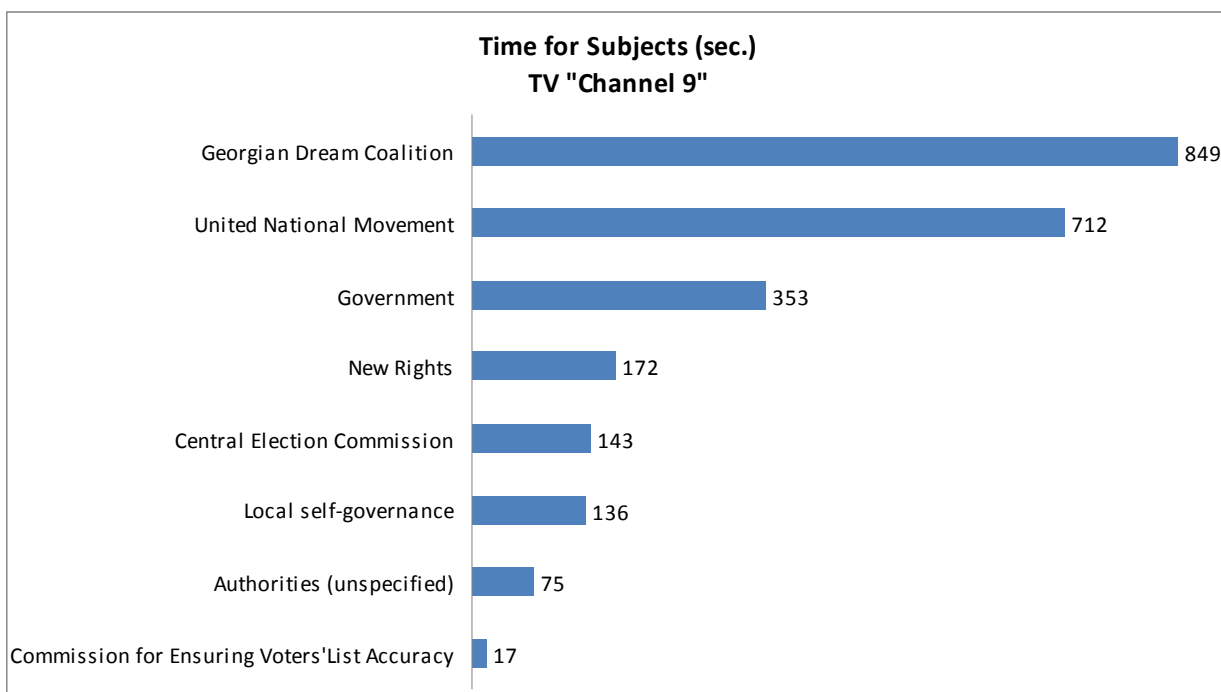


During the reporting period the TV company essentially covered infrastructural projects being on in Rustavi. In particular rehabilitation of gardens and squares, arrangement of patios and road construction. Hence the local self government was dedicated the same amount of time as the rest of the subjects in total. It is noteworthy that during the reporting period the representatives of opposition parties were apportioned very little time. For instance, the 7th story in the September 14 news program which featured the Georgian Dream coalition majoritarian deputy Zviad Dzidziguri's meeting with Rustavi public figures disrupts all of a sudden, the moment Zviad Dzidziguri starts speaking.

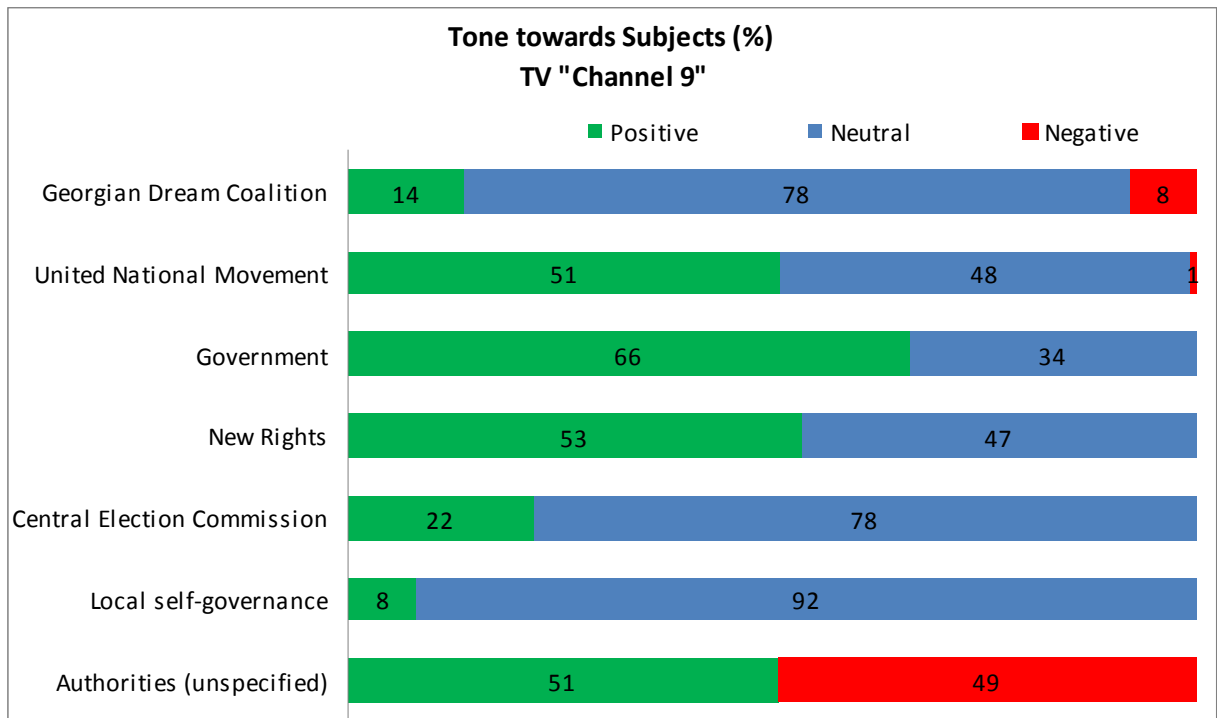
Odishi (Zugdidi) – Out of the monitored subjects the most of the airtime, around 3-3 minutes, was dedicated to the local self government and government, New Rights received 2-minute coverage. Reporting on the monitored subjects was positive and neutral in tone. It is noteworthy that due to the scarce time dedicated to the subjects the analysis of the date in terms of the tone and the share of direct/indirect reporting makes no sense. The results of the monitoring conducted within the reporting period do not provide a possibility to make a qualitative analysis.



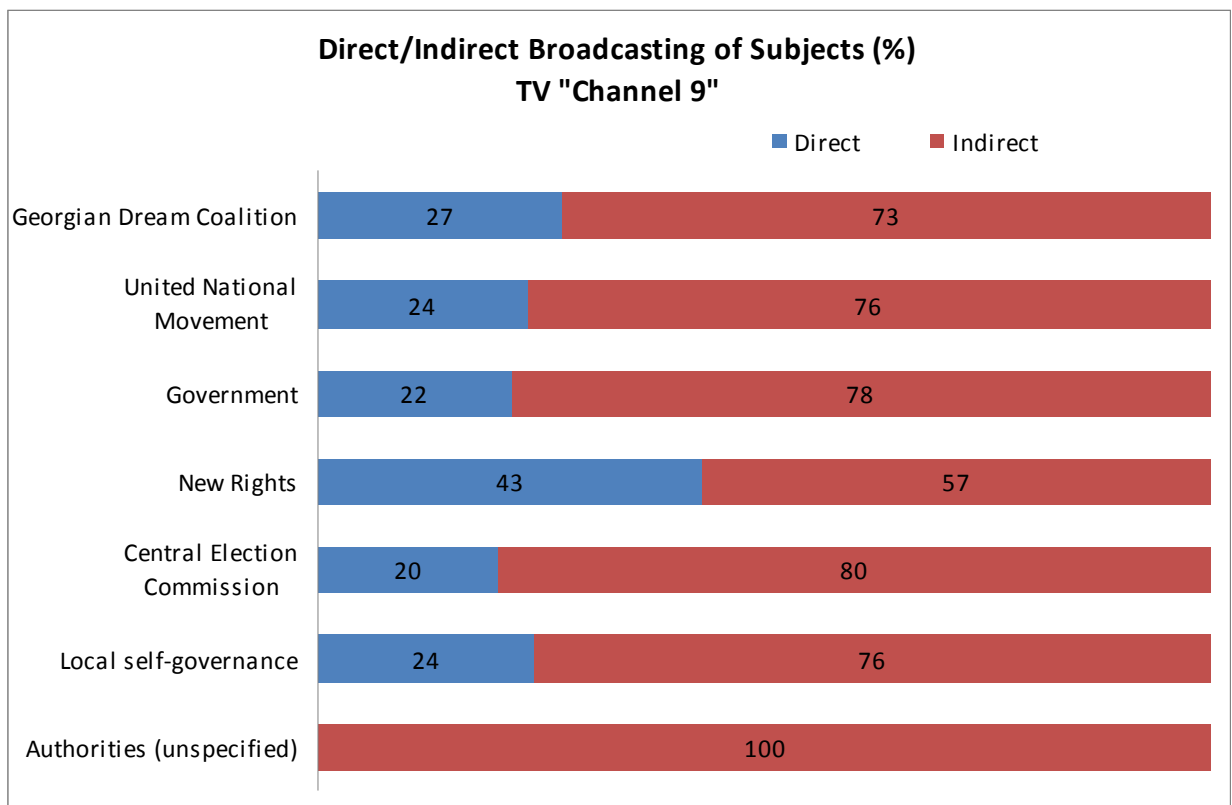
9th Channel (Akhaltsikhe) – The most of the airtime in the news programs was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition – 14 minutes. 12-minute reporting was enjoyed by UNM, followed by government and New Rights with 6 and 3 minutes respectively.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was essentially neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone was observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition (8 percent).



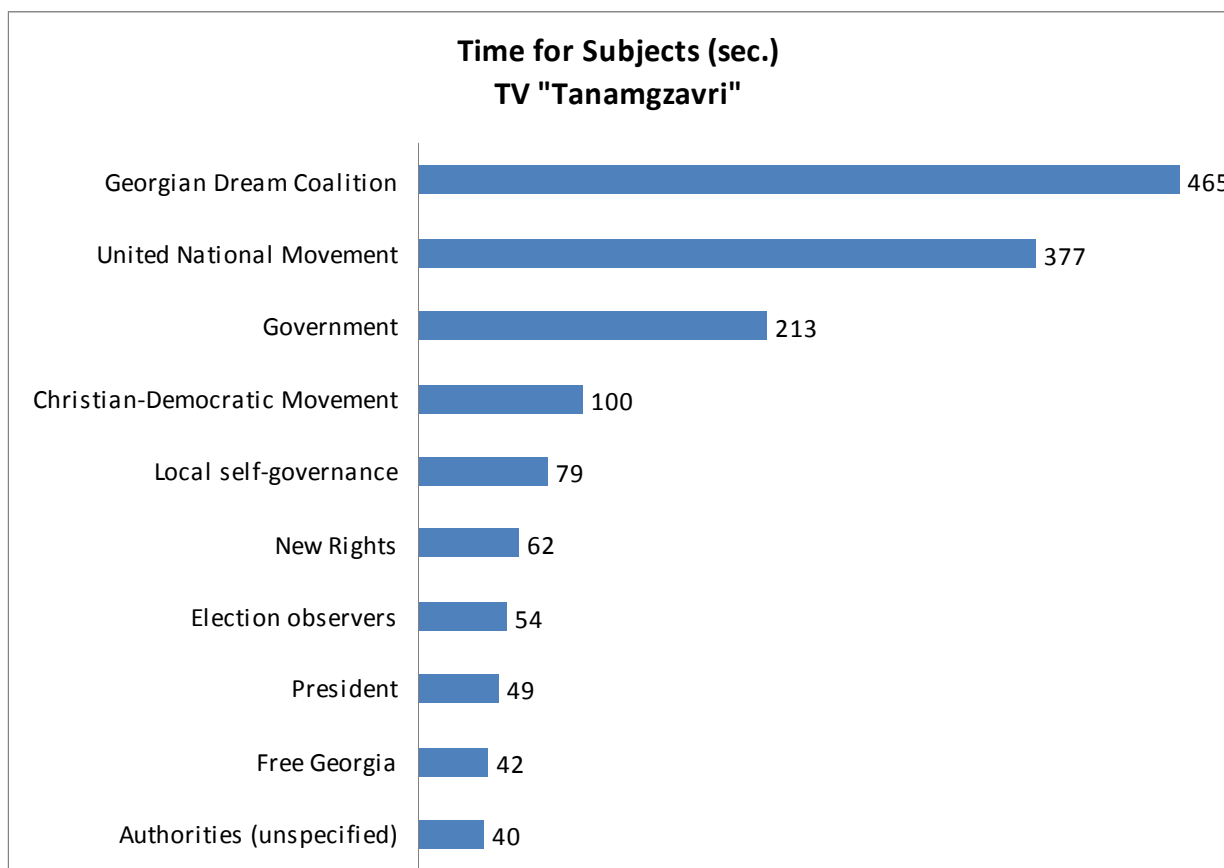
Indirect reporting considerably prevailed over direct reporting:



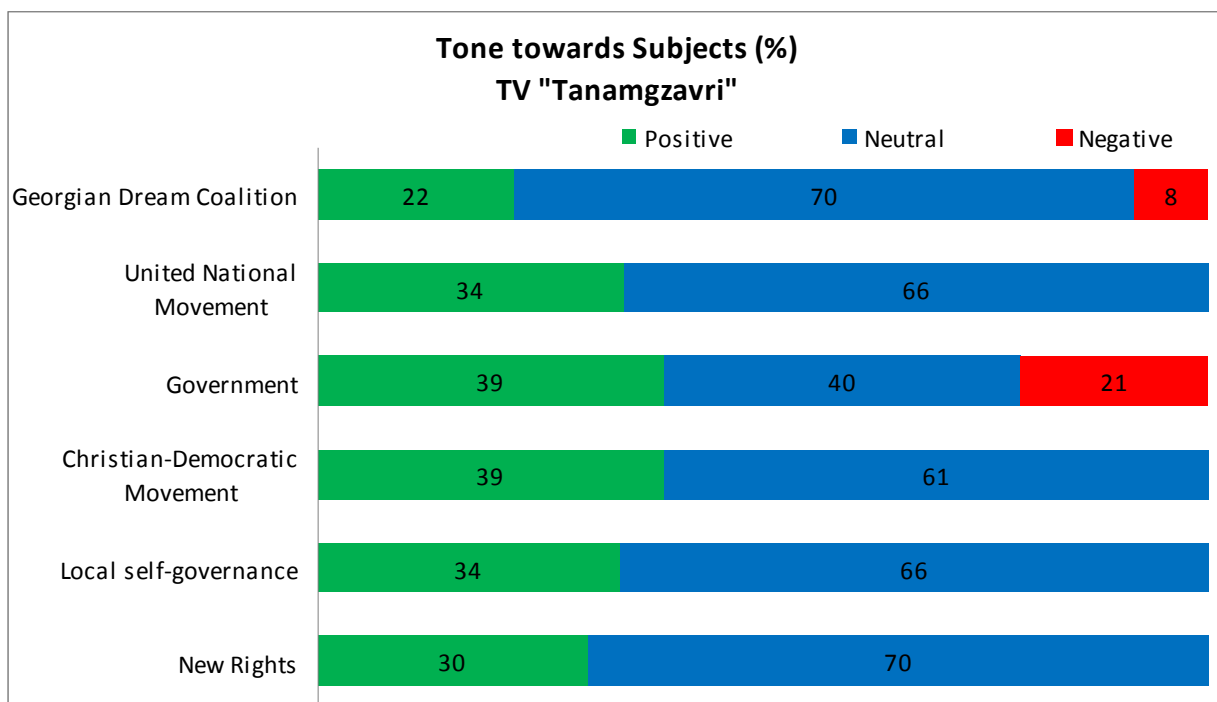
During the reporting period TV 9 was providing an active coverage of monitored subjects. 63 percent of time was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. Reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was mainly neutral in tone. The greater portion of reporting on the ruling party was positive in tone. When reporting on the UNM majoritarian candidate the channel focused on the aspects

which helped stir up additional positive attitude. In the first story of the September 10 news program the journalist says: “Vazha Chitashvili, when delivering a speech, was interrupted with applause several times.” Stressing similar aspects, when neither applause are visible nor sound is audible, give an impression that the journalist is not neutral.

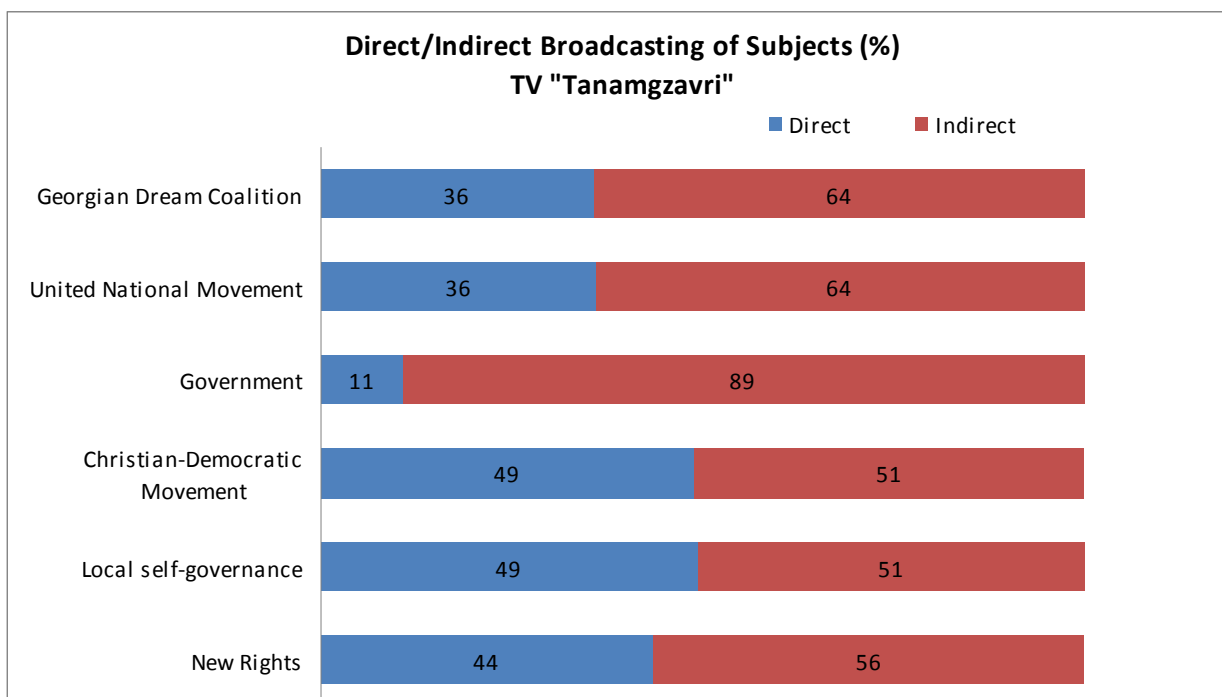
Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – The TV company dedicated the most of airtime, 8 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition, 6 and 4 minutes were dedicated to UNM and government respectively.



Reporting on the most frequently covered subjects was mainly neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone was observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition (8 percent) and government (21 percent).



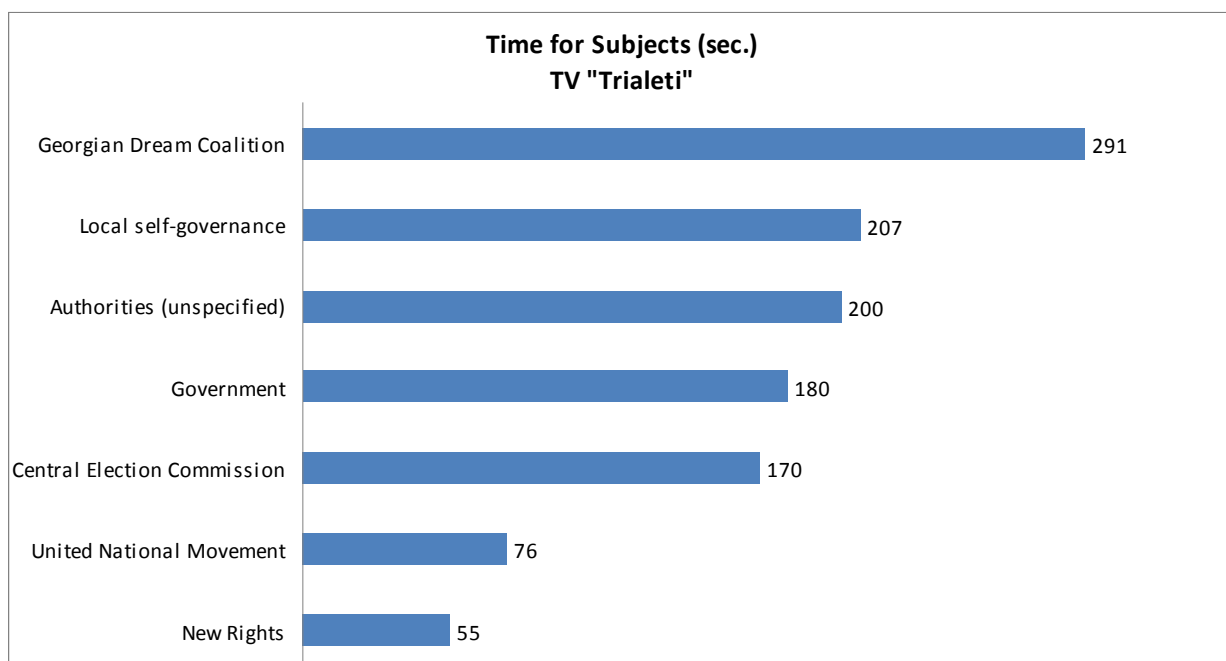
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:



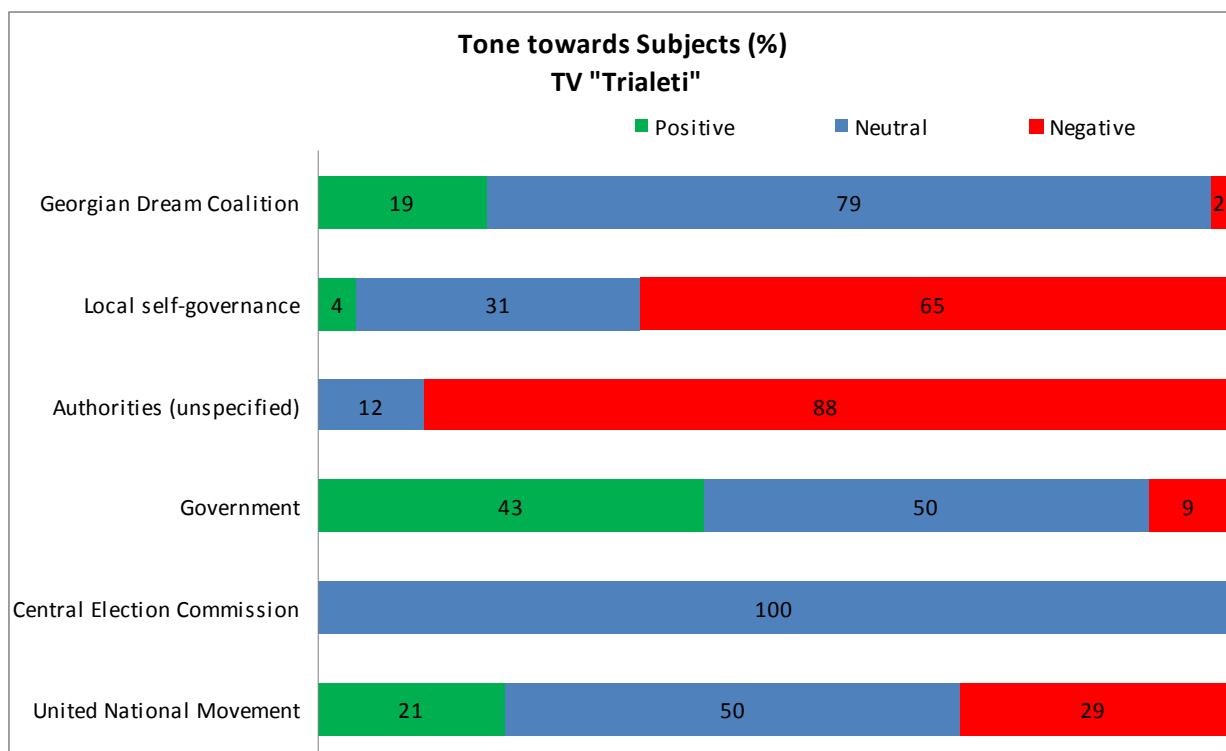
During the reporting period the TV company essentially covered the events ongoing in the region. TV stories were produced on the pre-election campaign conducted by several political subjects. Journalists were trying to provide balanced and comprehensive information about either issue.

Trialeti (Gori) – The most of the airtime, 5 min, was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. 3-minute coverage was enjoyed by local self government, authorities, government and CEC.

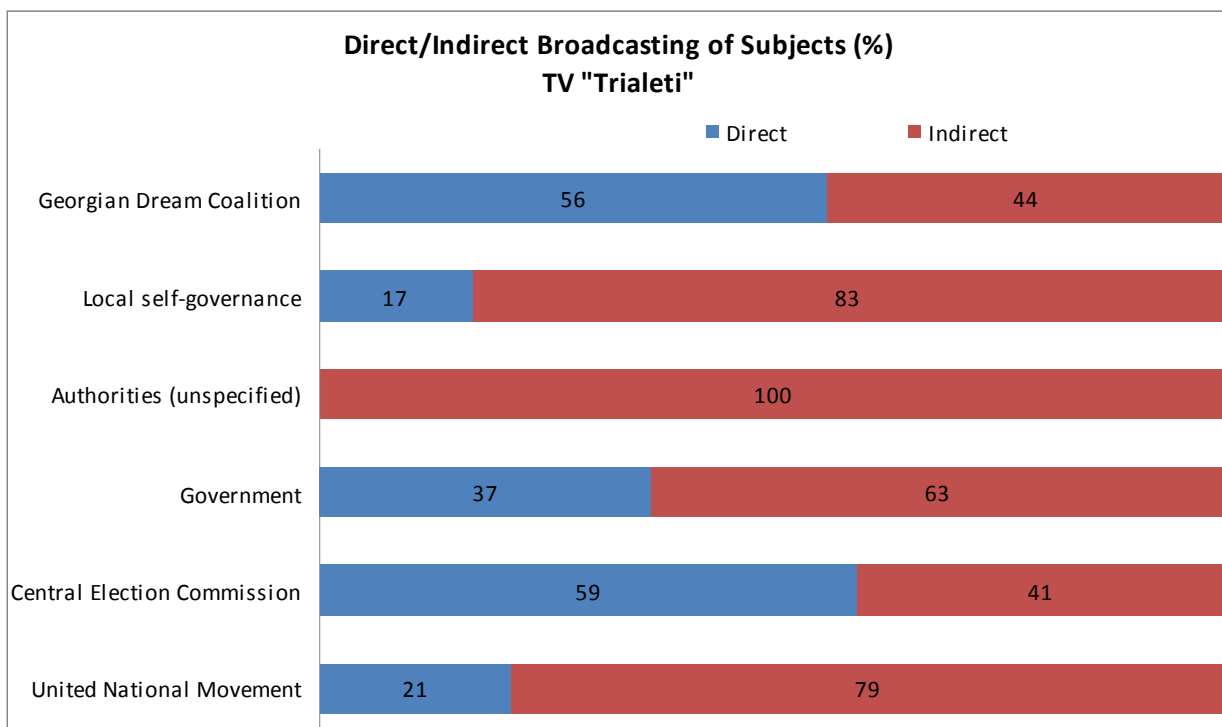
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When reporting on the monitored subjects all of the three tones were observed. The highest rate of negative reporting was observed in regard to the authorities (88 percent) and local self government (65 percent). The highest rate of neutral reporting falls on the Georgian Dream coalition (79 percent).

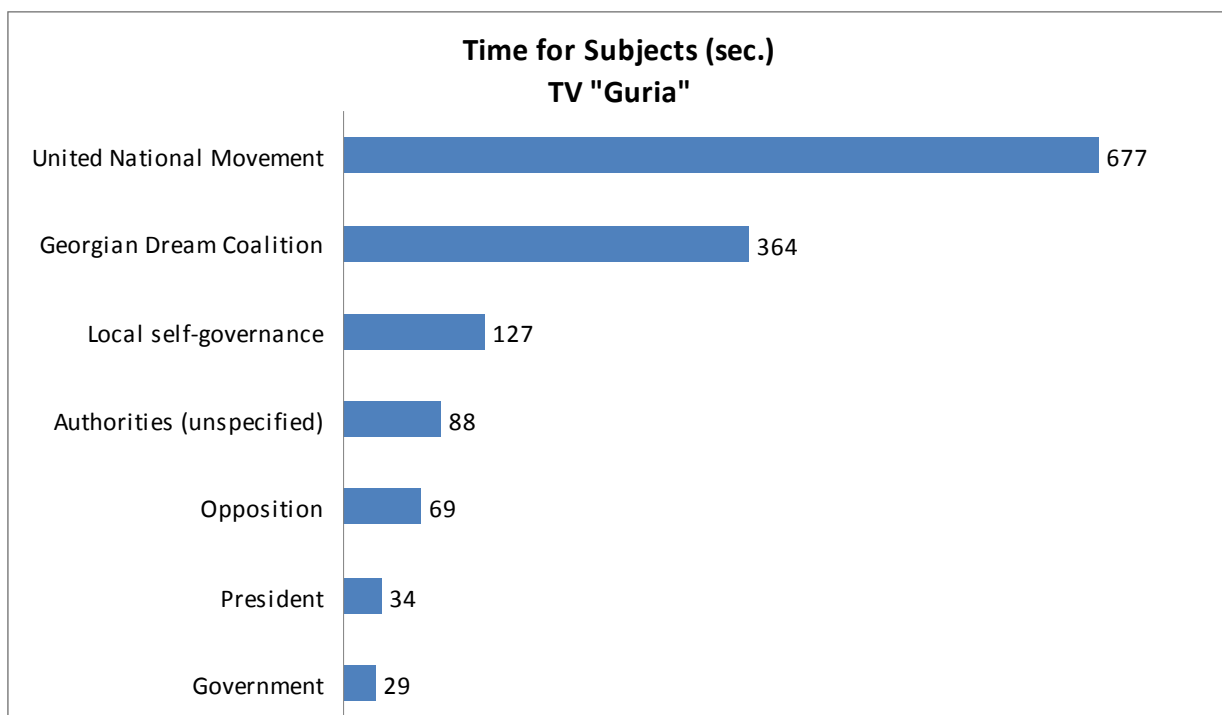


The share of direct/indirect reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition and CEC was almost equal. For the rest indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.

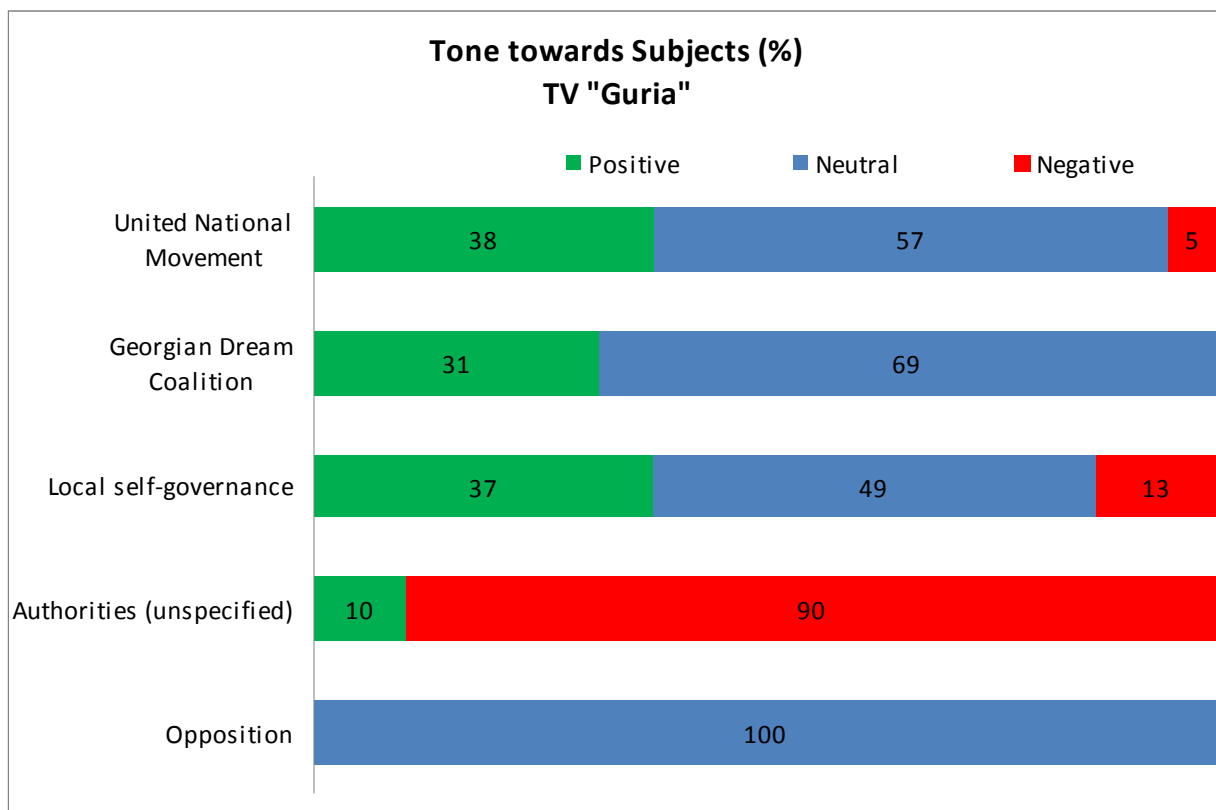


During the reporting period the TV company mainly reported on the activities carried out by the State agencies and the Georgian Dream coalition. The complaints made by the local population troubled with different infrastructural problems (bad roads, water supply and electricity) were aggressively covered.

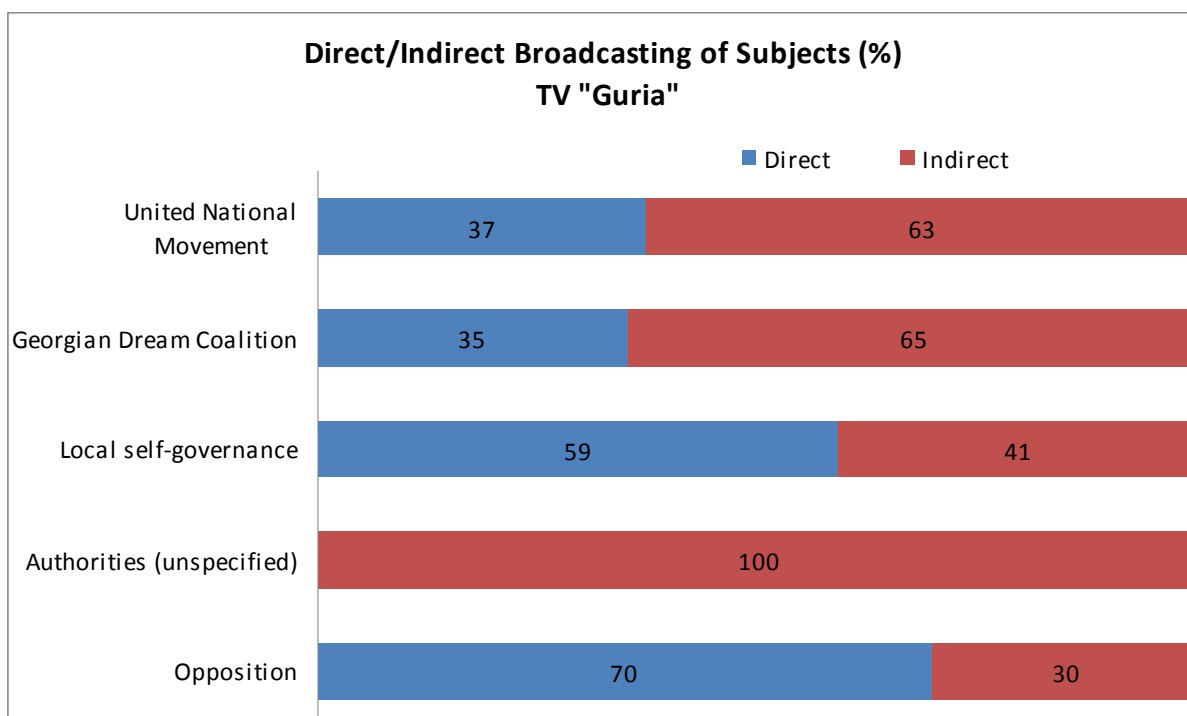
Guria (Ozurgeti) – The most of airtime (11 min) was dedicated to UNM, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 6 min and the local self government with 2 minutes.



When reporting on the monitored subjects negative tone was observed in relation to the local self government (13 percent) and UNM (5 percent).

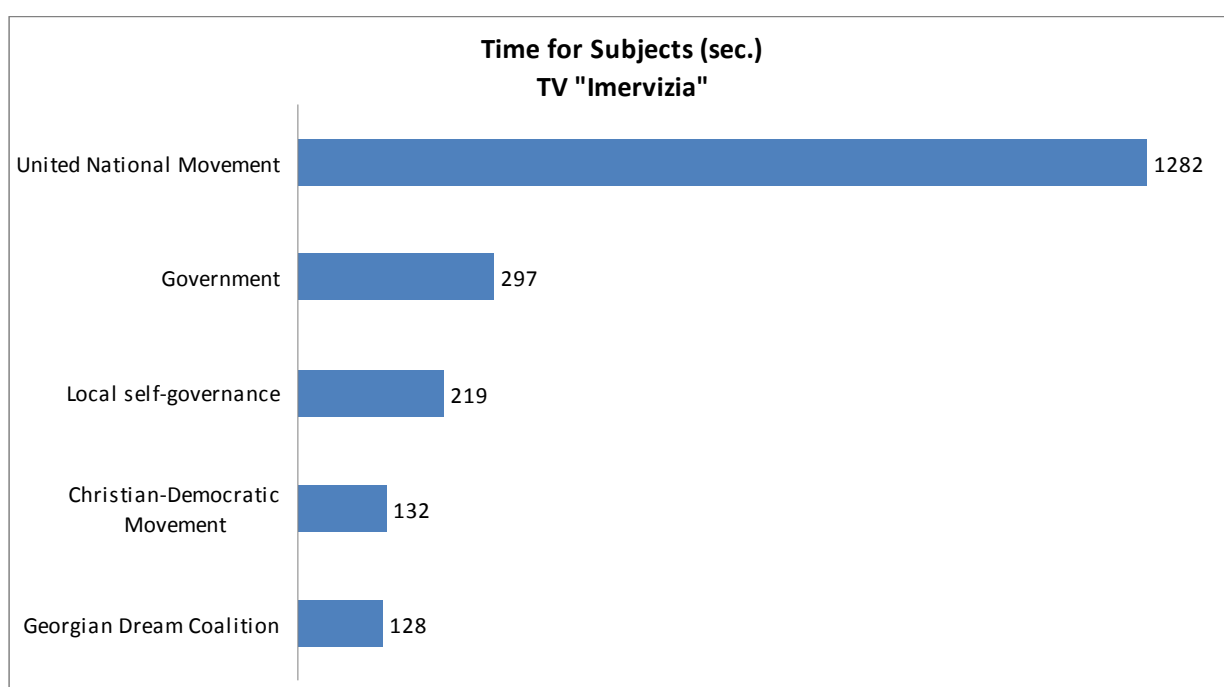


In case of UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. But in case of the local self government the share was almost equal.

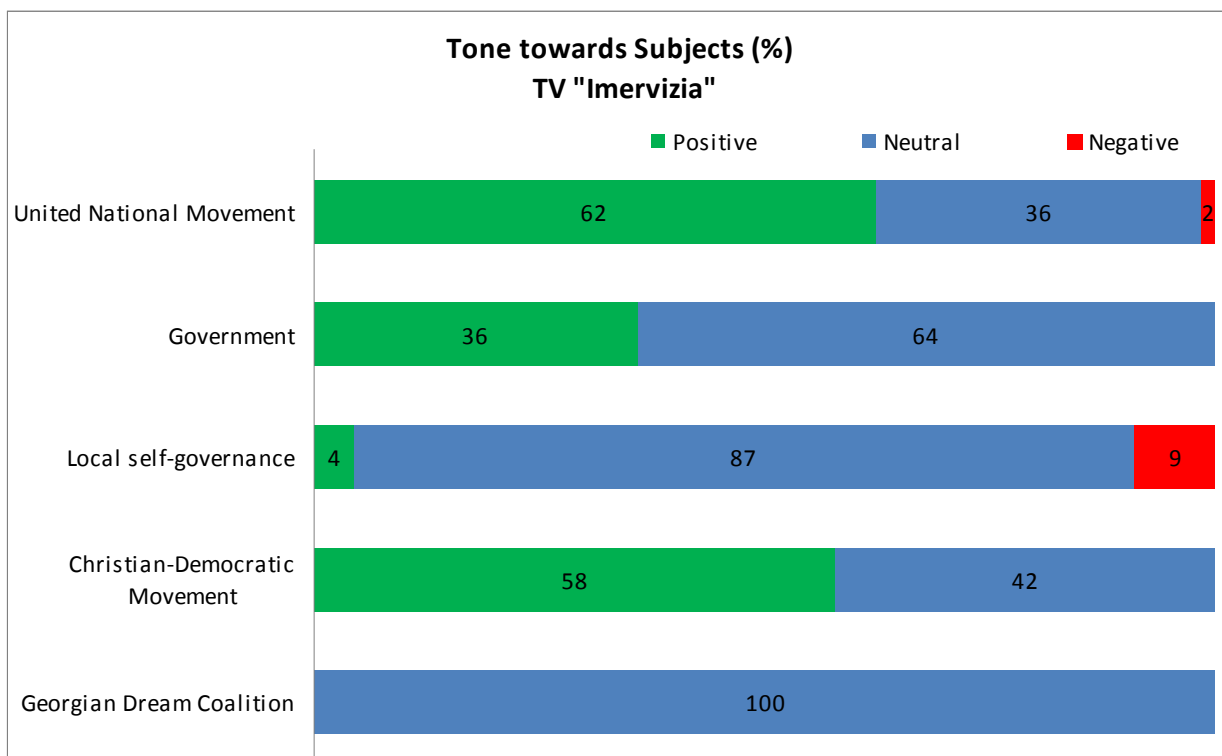


Within the reporting period TV company Guria reported on the pre-election campaign conducted by the ruling as well as the of the opposition parties. Out of the political parties the biggest share of airtime was dedicated to UNM. TV stories were mainly produced about pre-election meetings and policy makers' briefings. It is noteworthy that the journalist provided a superficial coverage of the meetings planned to be held by policy makers. The stories lacked additional information or dissenting opinions.

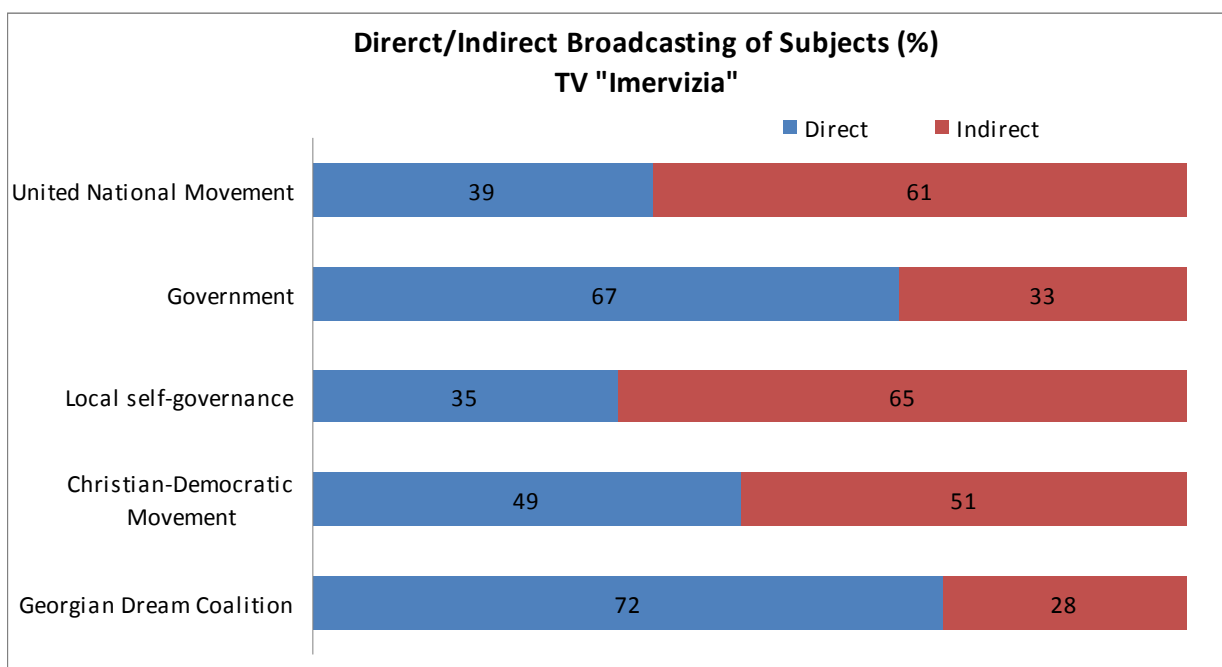
Imervizia (Chiatura) – News programs dedicated the biggest share - 21 min - to UNM. Government and local self-government received 4 and 5-minute reporting respectively. Christian-Democratic Movement and the Georgian Dream coalition was each dedicated 2 minutes.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was essentially neutral and positive in tone. Solely in regard to the local self-government 9-percent of negative tone was observed.



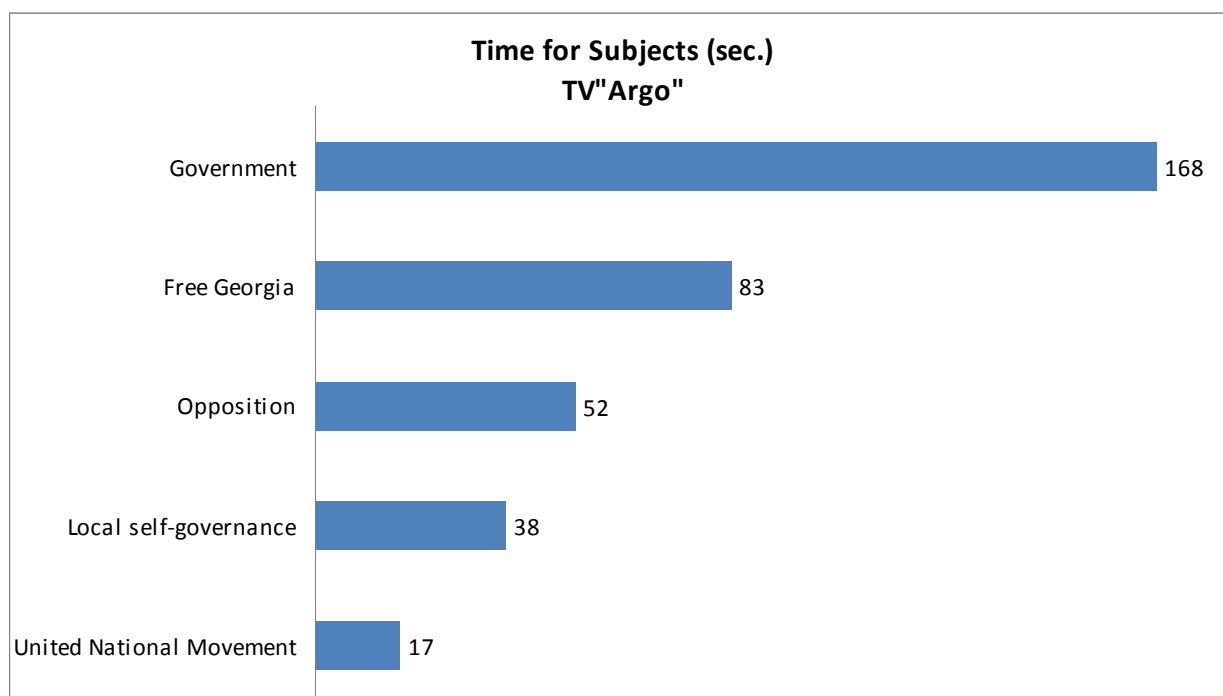
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal:



Within the reporting period TV Company Imervizia essentially covered the UNM's pre-election campaign. Out of the monitored subjects 62 percent of the airtime was dedicated to the ruling party, mostly in positive tone. Additional positive attitude is due to non-representative generalizations, e.g. the journalist, based on the comments provided by several citizens says: "Locals show confidence to the UNM candidate."

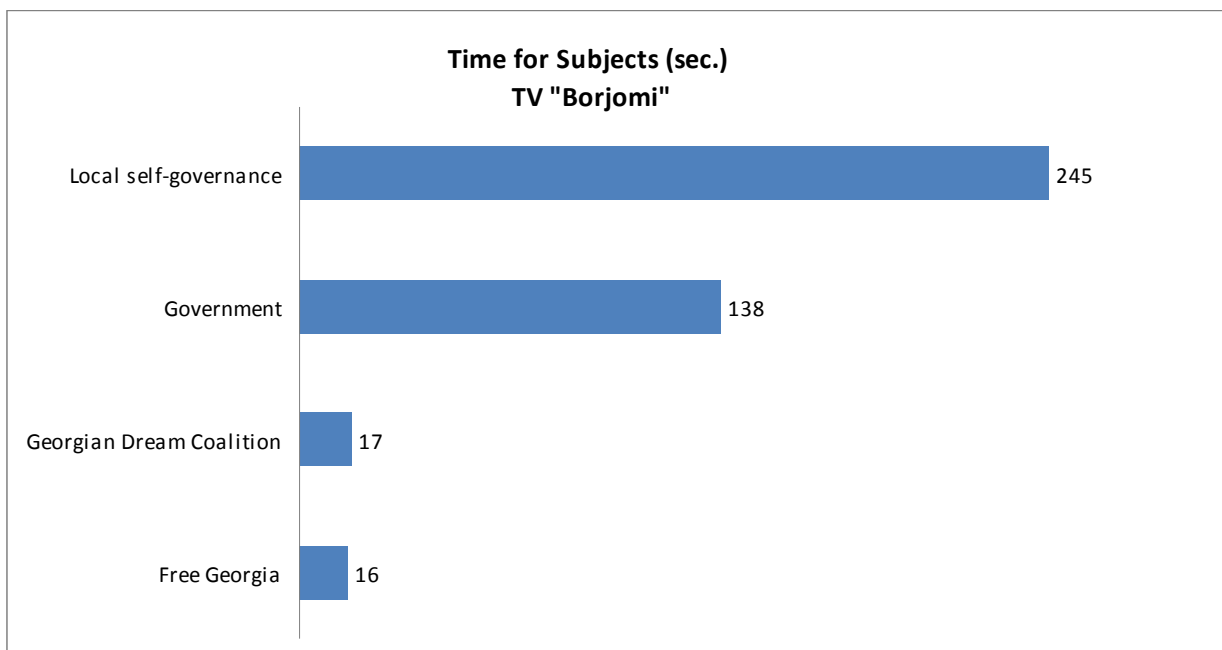
In addition to the TV story about pre-election campaigning the UNM majoritarian candidate's comment is covered in the TV story about sports event. The September 10 TV story, for instance, features the comments provided by the ruling party members attending the sports festival as supporters.

Argo (Zestaponi) - The news programs dedicated the most of airtime, 3 min, to government. The rest of the subjects were provided no coverage. The 100-percent indirect reporting on the government was positive in tone. Due to the little time and scarce number of covered subjects the analysis of the data in terms of tone and the share of direct/indirect reporting makes no sense. The findings neither give a possibility to provide qualitative analysis.

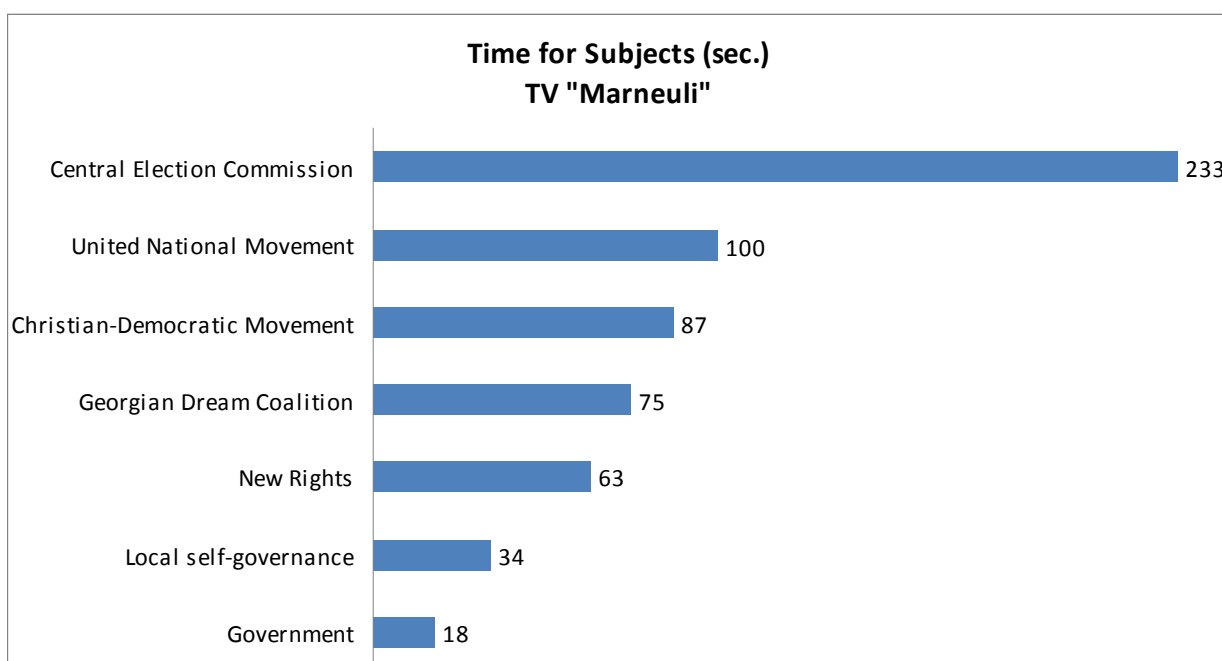


Borjomi (Borjomi) – The biggest share of airtime dedicated to the monitored subjects falls on the local self-government – 4 min. 2 minutes were dedicated to the government. Both of the covered subjects were discussed in neutral and positive tones. In case of the local self government direct reporting (75 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (25 percent). During the reporting period the rest of the subjects were virtually provided no coverage. The results of the monitoring carried out within the reporting period give no possibility to provide qualitative analysis.

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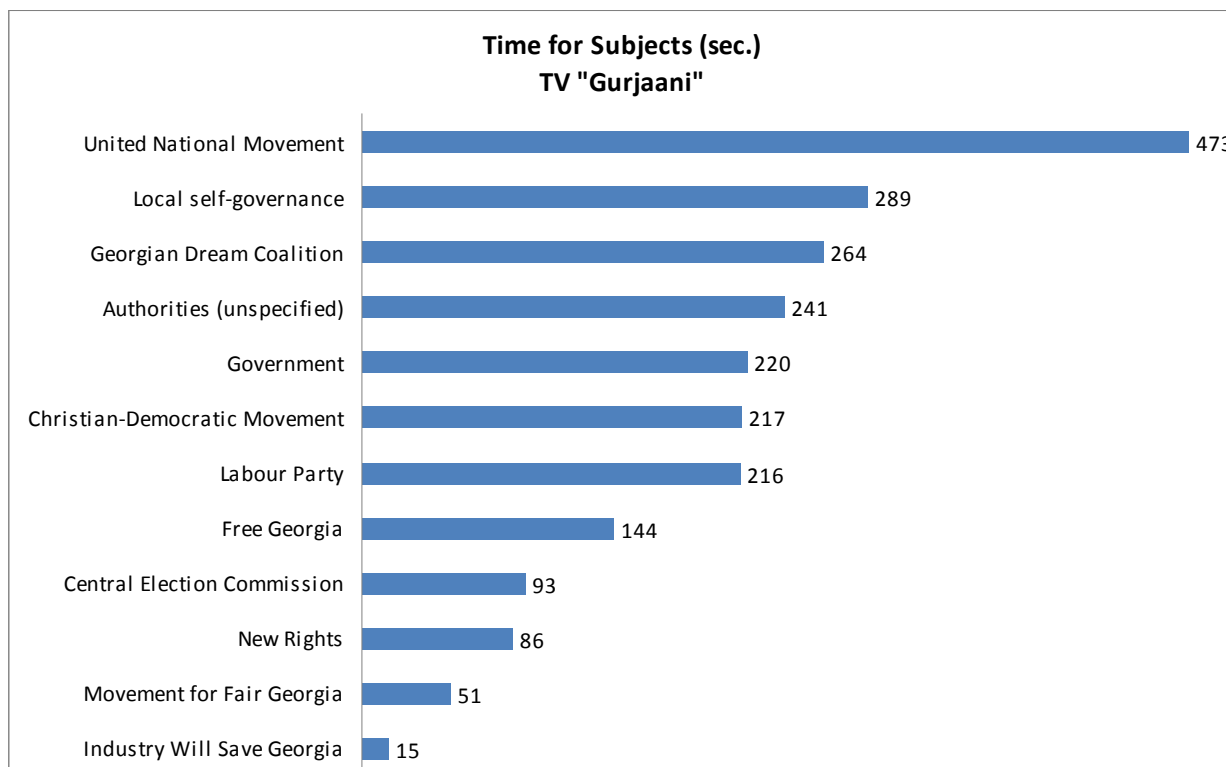


Marneuli TV (Marneuli) – During the reporting period CEC was the only monitored subject covered – (4 min). The rest of the subjects were dedicated very little time: UNM – 2 min, Christian-Democratic Movement – 1,5 min, Georgian Dream coalition – 1,25 min.

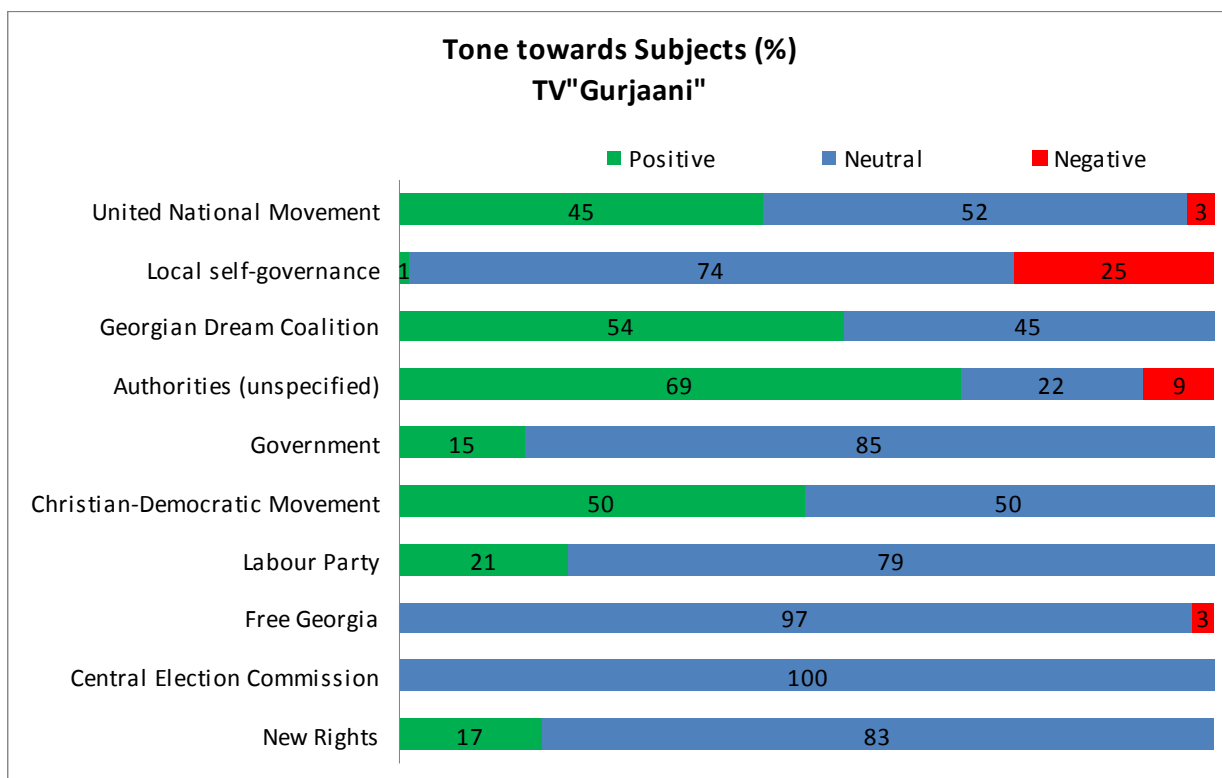


Reporting on CEC was totally neutral. Reporting tone was 100-percent indirect. Due to the lack of time dedicated to the rest of the subjects the analysis of the data in terms of tone and direct/indirect reporting makes no sense. Qualitative analysis is similarly impossible to provide.

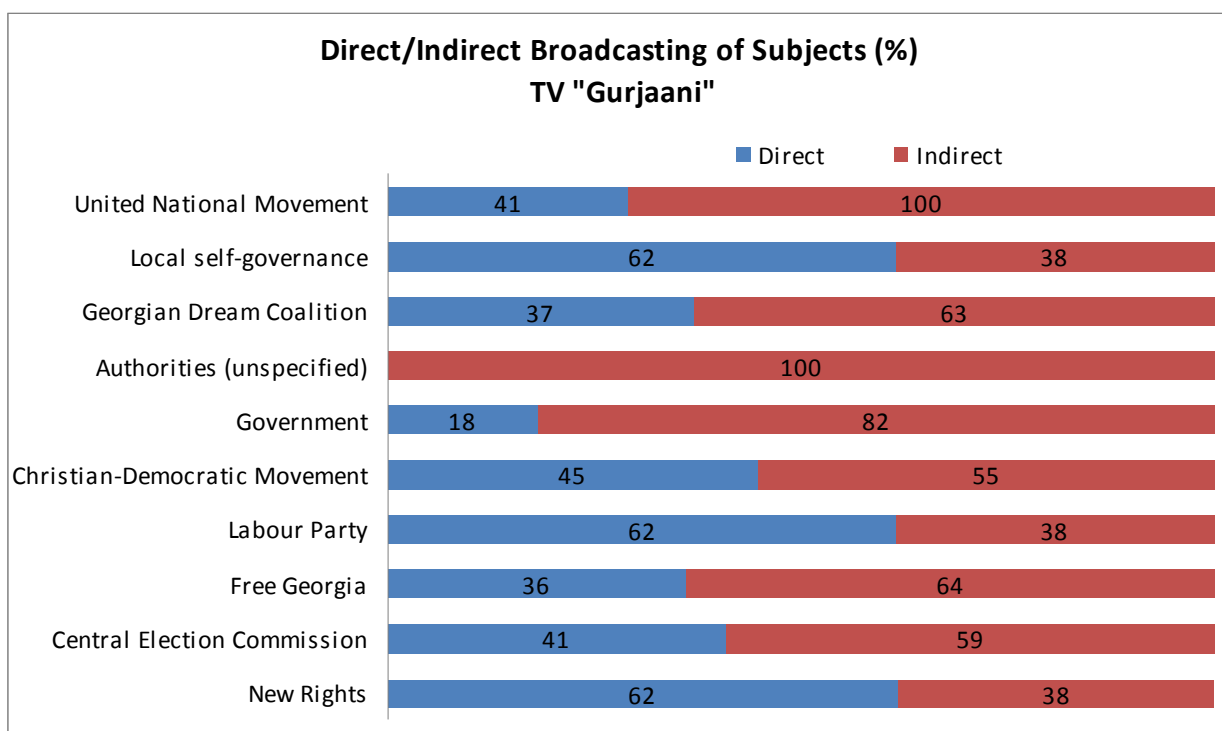
Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – The most of the airtime (8) was dedicated to reporting on UNM. 5-minute coverage was enjoyed by the local self government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition and authorities with 4 min each. Government and Christian-Democratic Movement each received 3-minute coverage.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was essentially neutral and positive in tone. The highest rate of negative tone (25 percent) was attached to reporting on the local self-government. The biggest share of positive tone (69 percent) falls on the authorities. The share of neutral and positive reporting tone in regard to Christian-Democratic Movement was equal. The picture looks similar in case of the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. But in regard to the latter negative tone (3 percent) was observed too.



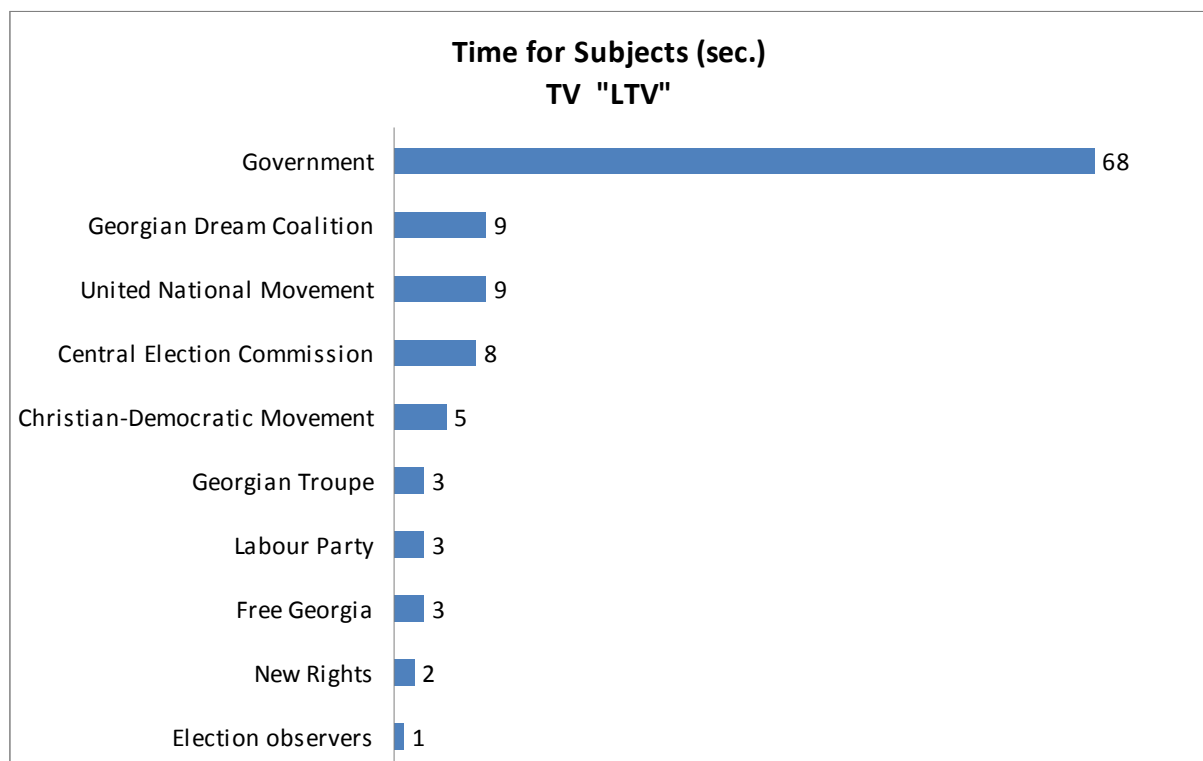
According to the findings indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. The local self government enjoys the highest rate of direct reporting.



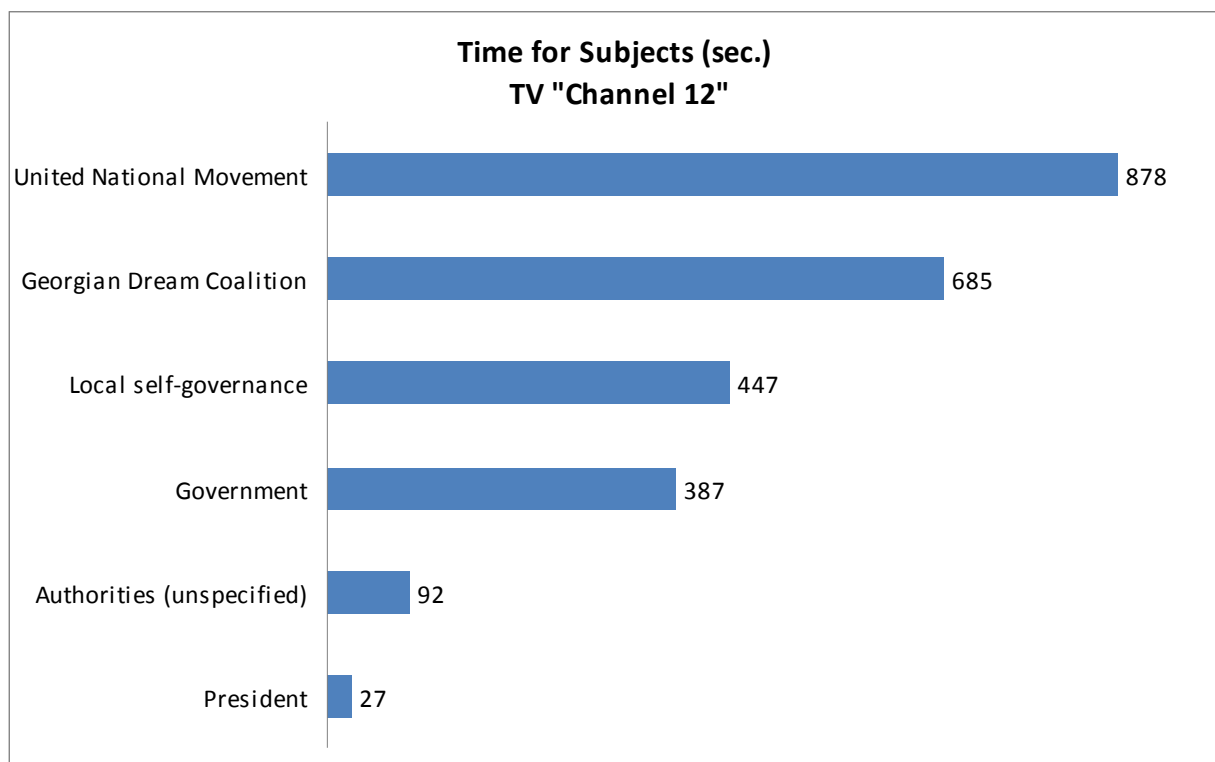
During the reporting period TV company Gurjaani covered political events ongoing nationwide. In general news programs are balanced, TV stories are produced about the opposition parties as well as UNM and State agencies. But some of the TV stories contains superficial information about the activities carried out by monitored subjects and lacks information about dissenting or criticizing

opinions. But it is noteworthy that in general the TV company is not characterized with bias to any political party.

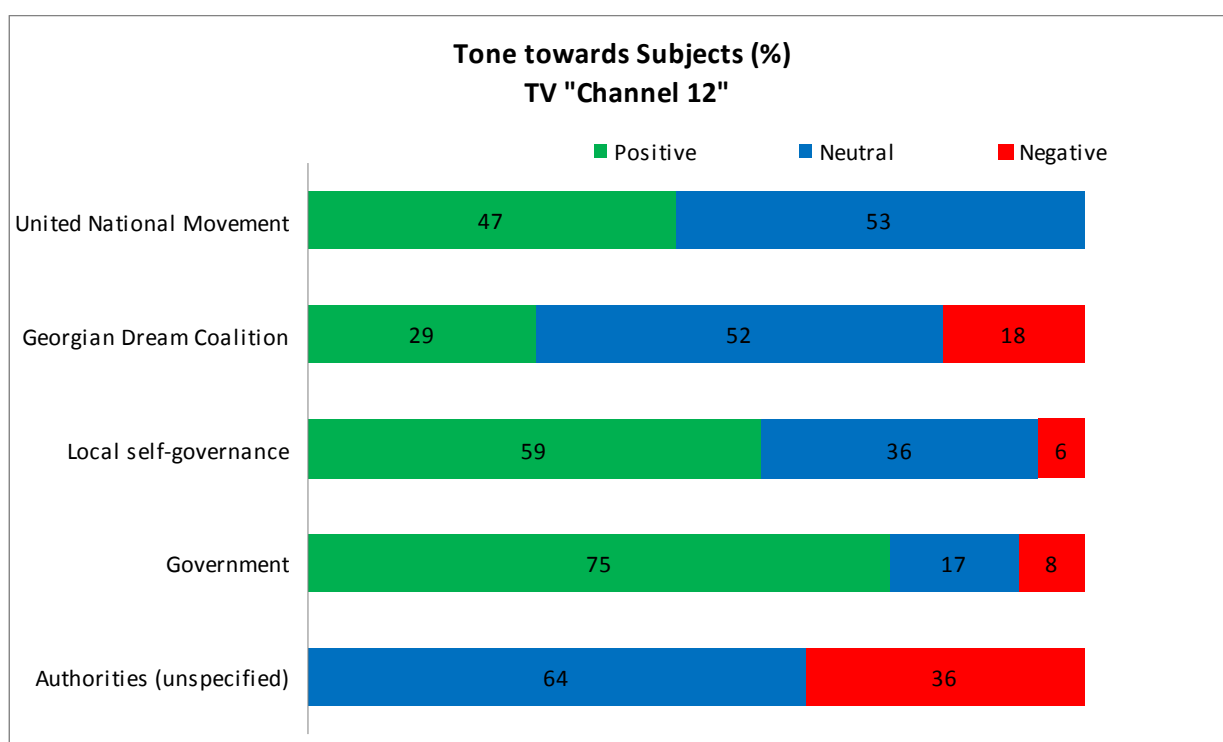
LTV (Lagodekhi) – Within the reporting period the TV company virtually provided no coverage of monitored subjects. Only few of them were mentioned in the TV stories. Accordingly the analysis of data in terms of tone and direct/indirect reporting makes no sense. Quantitative analysis is similarly impossible to provide.



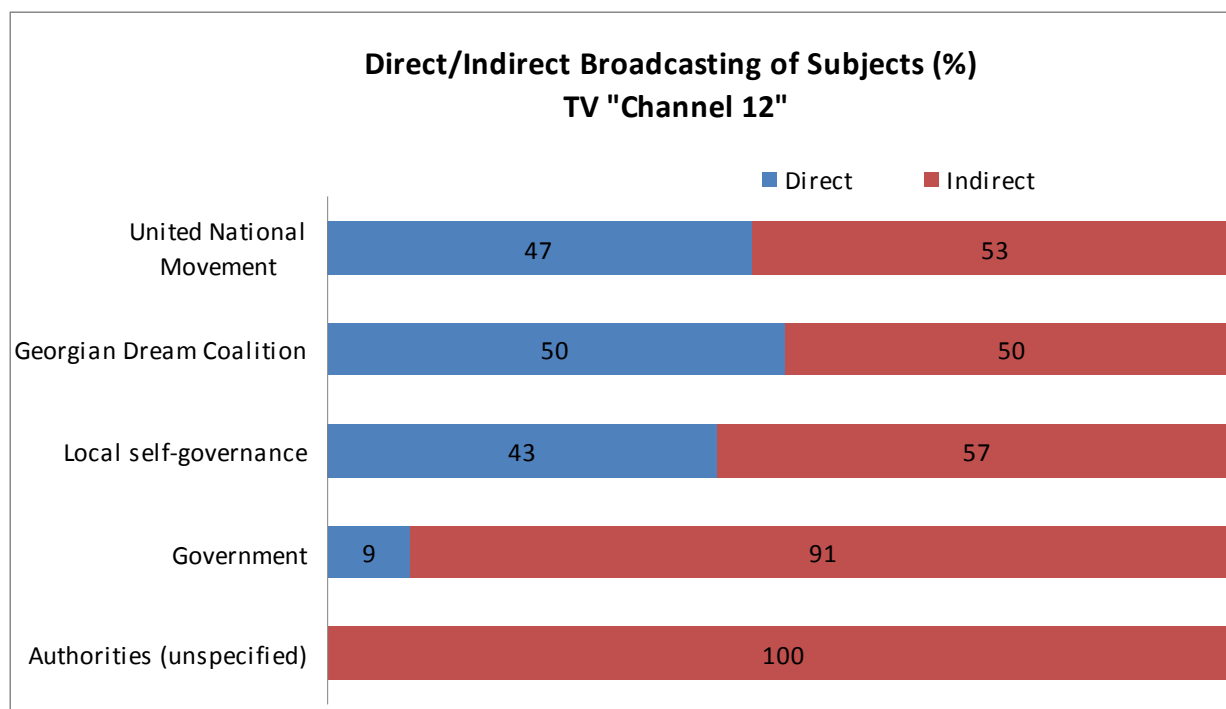
12th Channel (Bolnisi) - During the reporting period the channel dedicated the most of the airtime to UNM (17 min) and the Georgian Dream coalition (11 min). 7 minutes of reporting was enjoyed by the local self-government and 6 minutes by government.



All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the subjects. Only positive (47 percent) and neutral (53 percent) tones were attached to reporting on UNM.



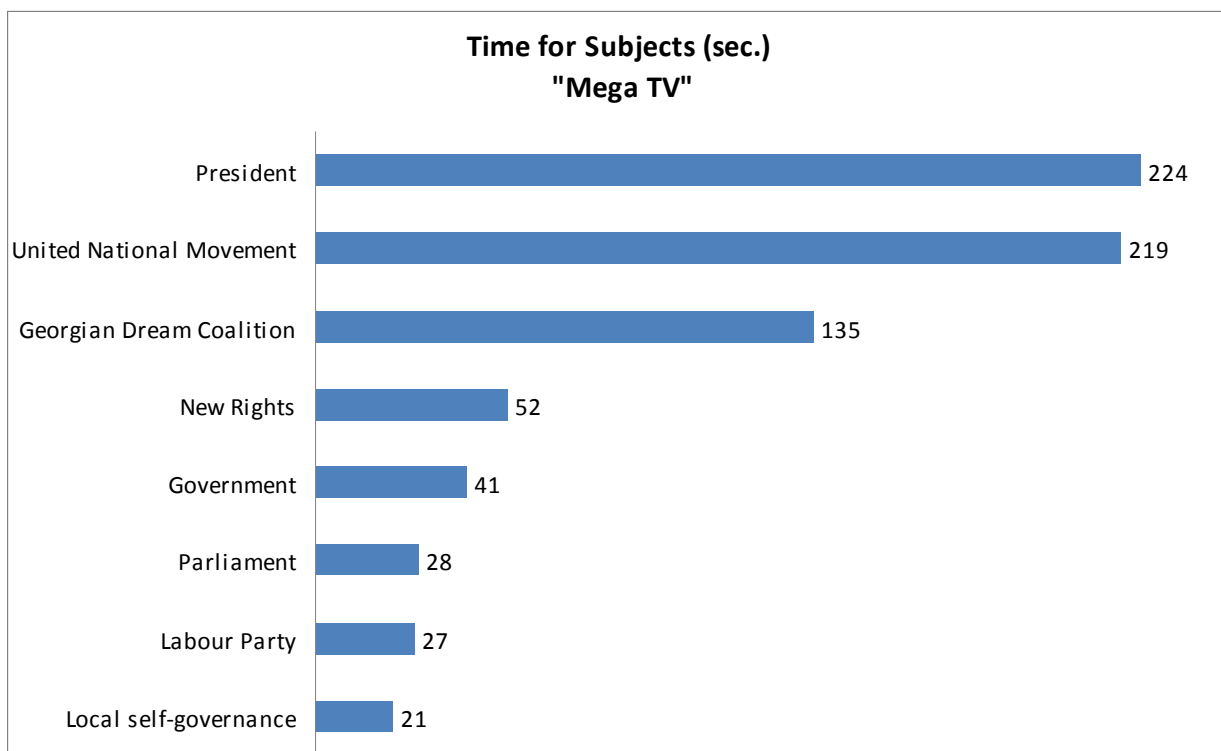
The share of direct and indirect reporting was almost equal in every case. Within the 6-minute reporting on the government indirect reporting (91 percent) prevailed over direct reporting (9 percent).



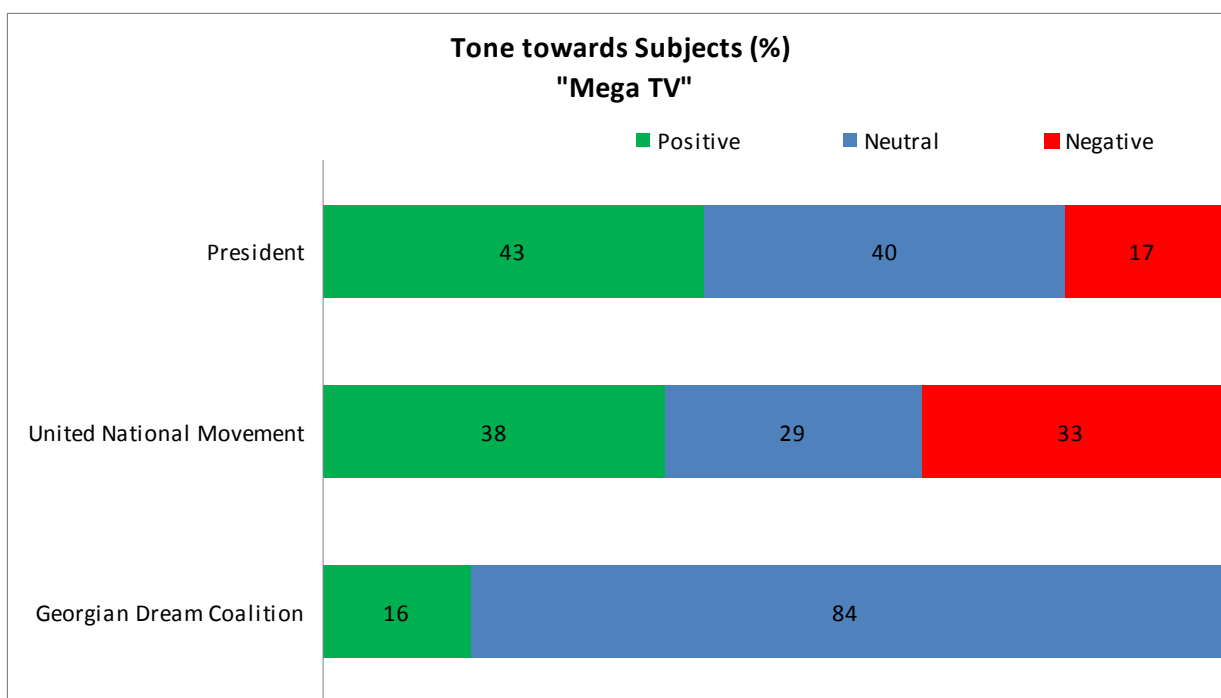
During the reporting period the TV company news programs mainly reported on the UNM's majoritarian candidate Koba Nakopia's pre-election campaign. On September 11 two stories were produced about his meetings with the population. It is noteworthy that the same text was replicated in the TV stories.

News programs dedicated approximately 11 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition. For instance the September 10 TV story reported on the book about Bidzina Ivanishvili (the publication tells about the criminal past of the Georgian Dream coalition leader). The TV story did not clearly mark off the writer's stance from facts and the journalist's conclusive statement was general and unsubstantiated. It is noteworthy that some TV stories were produced about the Georgian Dream coalition leader's meetings with the population. Reporting was positive and neutral in tone.

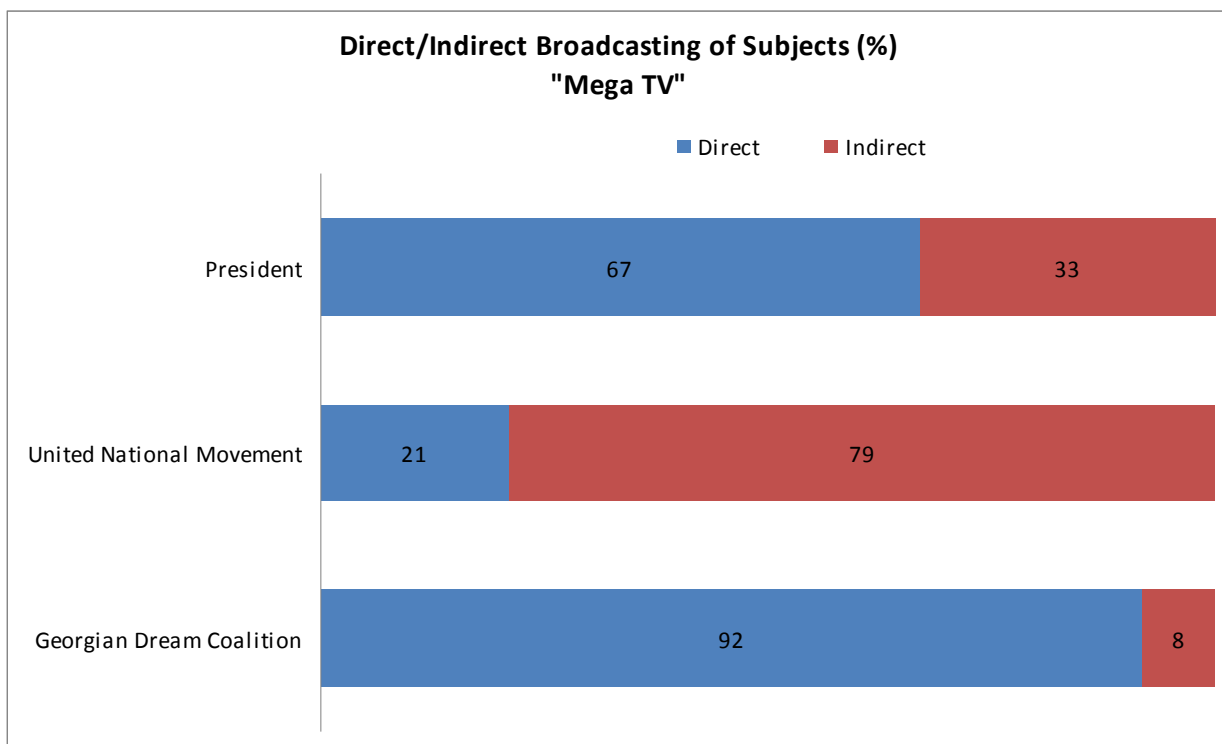
Mega TV (Khoni) – During the reporting period the news programs dedicated the most of airtime 4-4 minutes – to President and UNM. 2 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. Virtually no coverage was provided in regard to the rest of the monitored subjects.



All of the three tones were observed when reporting on President and UNM. Only positive (84 percent) and neutral (16) tones were attached to reporting on Georgian Dream coalition.

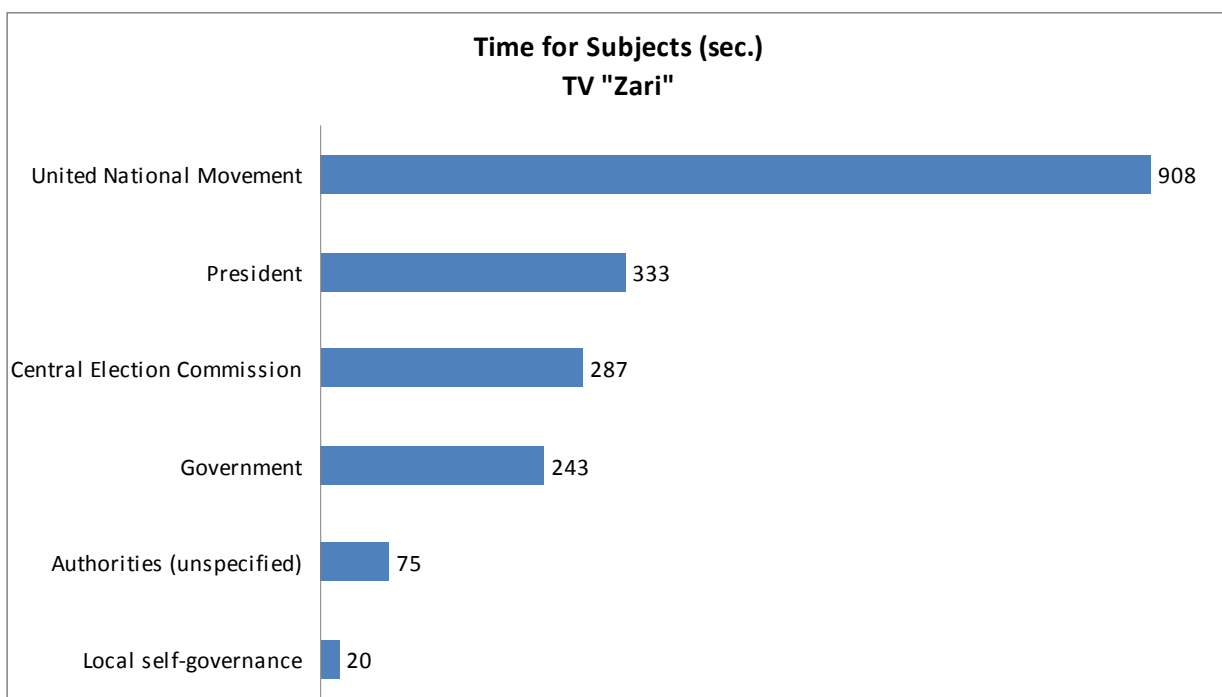


Out of the covered three subjects Georgian Dream coalition (92 percent) and President (67 percent) received high rate of direct reporting.

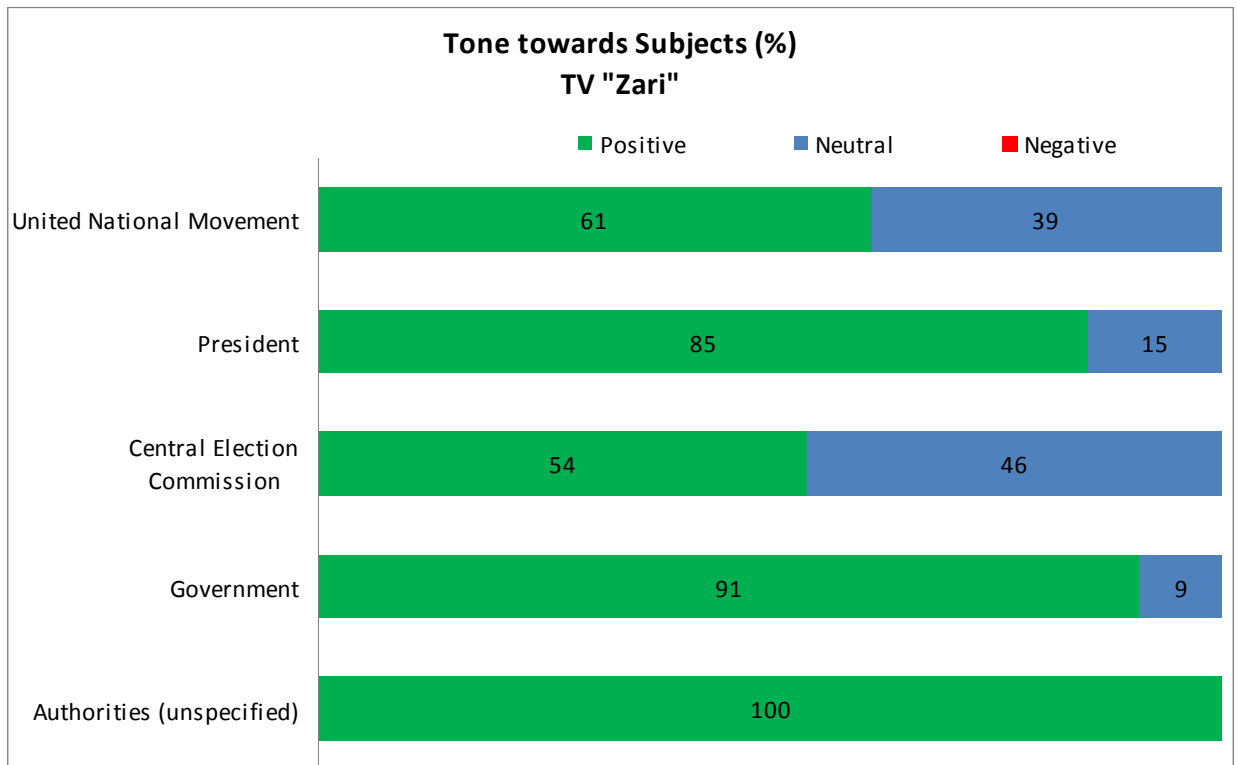


The results of the monitoring give no possibility to provide qualitative analysis.

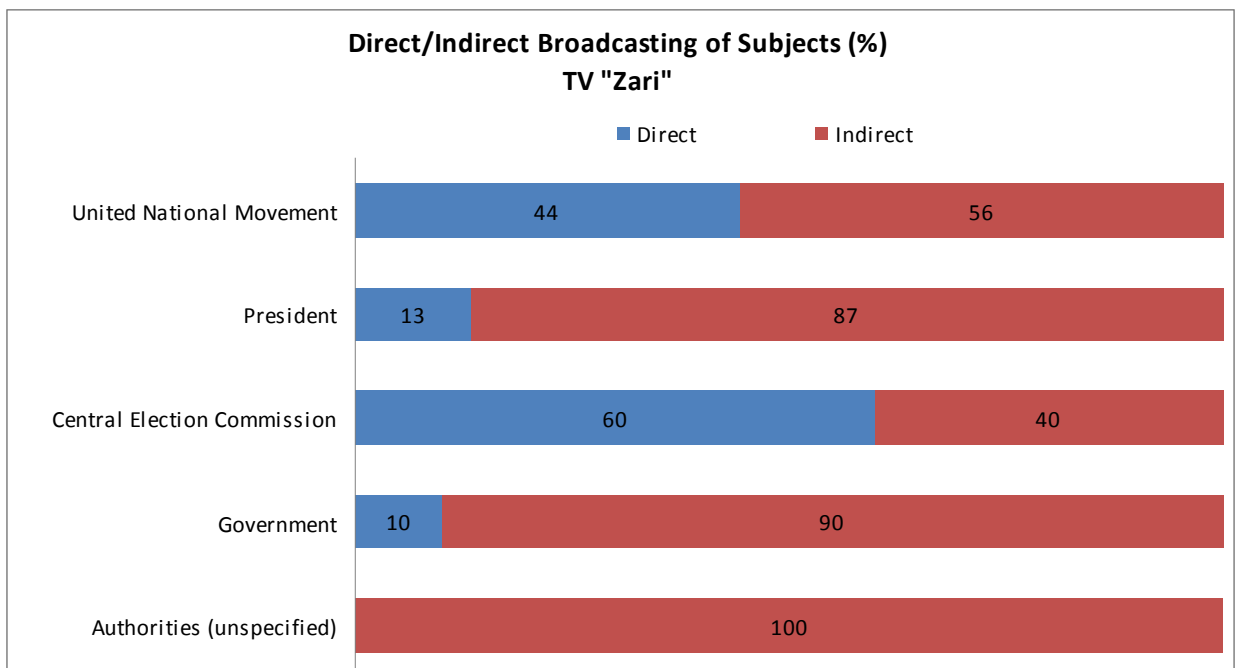
Zari (Samtredia) – The most of the airtime - 15 min – was dedicated to UNM. The 6, 5 and 4-minute coverage was received by President, CEC and government respectively.



High rate of positive reporting was observed when reporting on the subjects. Negative tone was not applied to either monitored subject.



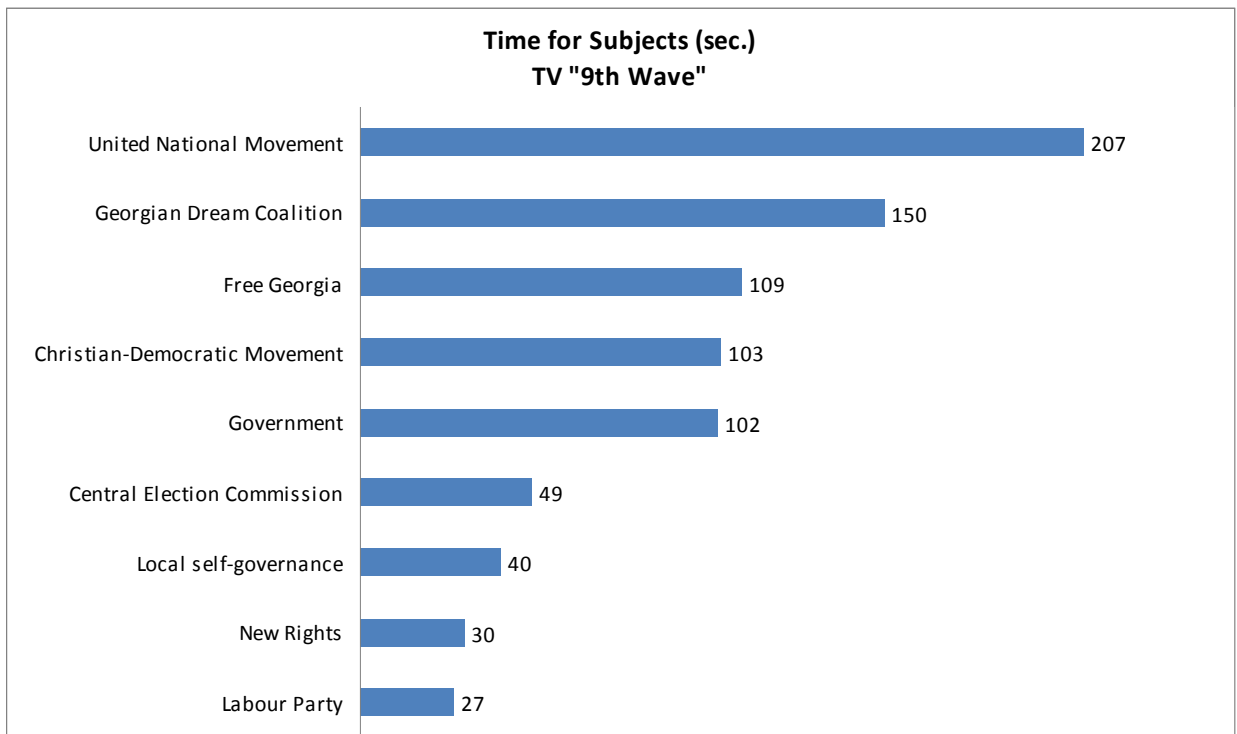
President (87 percent) and government (90 percent) rank high in terms of indirect reporting. In UNM's case the share was almost equal.



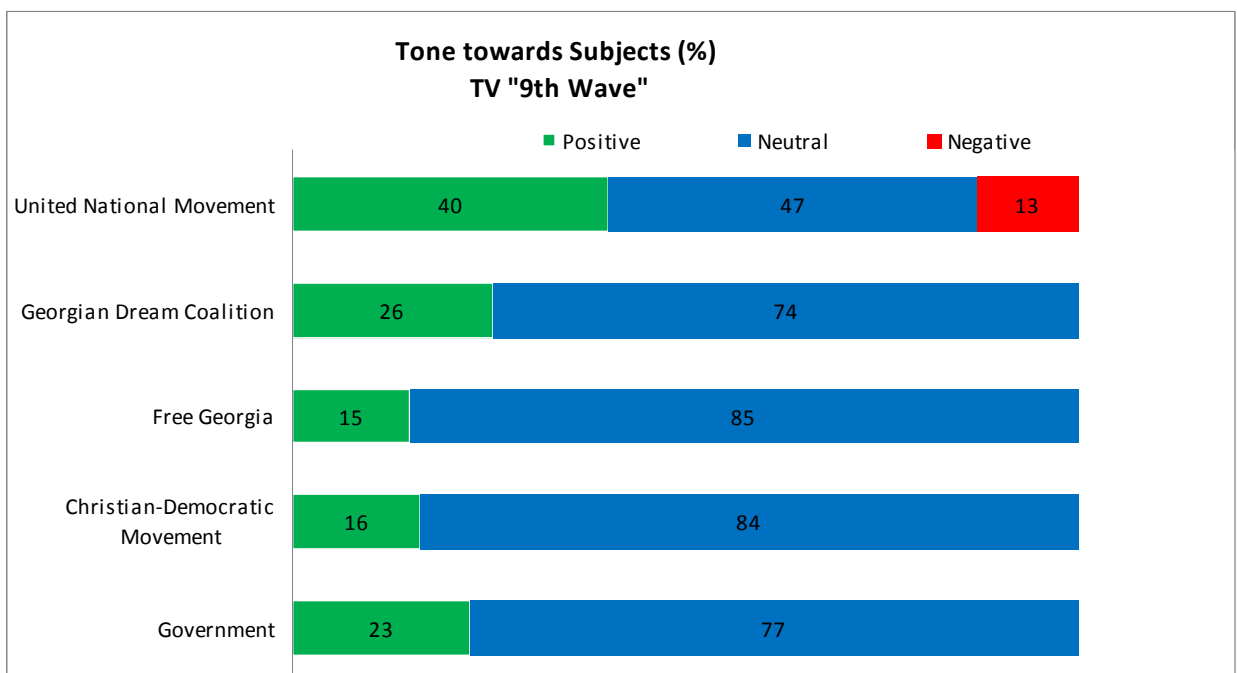
During the reporting period the TV Company Zari covered the events ongoing in the region. The news programs dedicated a big share of airtime to UNM, President, government, CEC. TV Company's positive stance to UNM and the authorities in general is evident. For instance the September 11 news outlet, which covered Samtredia dwellers' preparation to attend UNM's meeting and screened the rally held in Kutaisi, dedicated a fair amount of time to the interviews with locals favorable to UNM

and President Saakashvili. The TV stories also dedicated much time to the interviews Parliament Member Avtandil Sturua. During the reporting period none of the rest of the subjects was covered.

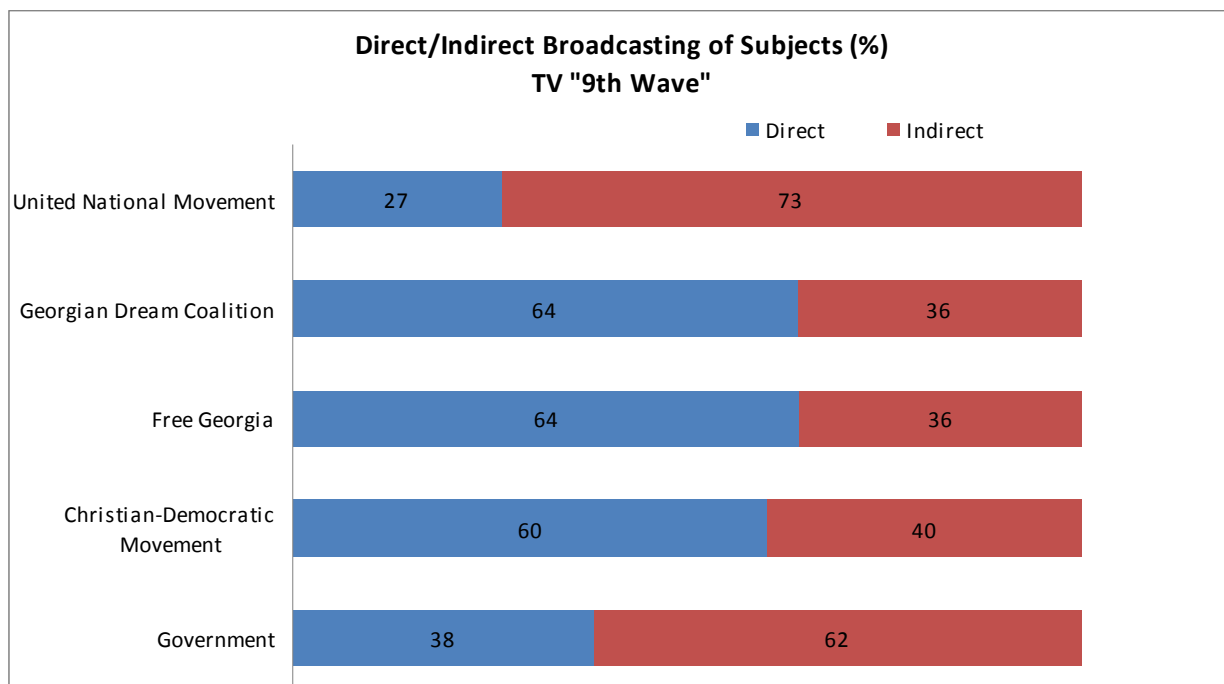
9th Wave (Poti) – The TV Company dedicated the most of the airtime, around 3-3 minutes, to UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition. 2-minute TV coverage was received by Free Georgia, Christian-Democratic Movement and government.



Reporting was mainly neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone (13 percent) was attached to reporting on UNM.



Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting apart from UNM (73 percent of indirect reporting).



In the given reporting period 9th Wave covered pre-election campaigns conducted by several monitored subjects. It is noteworthy that the balance in TV stories is mainly observed, journalists do not demonstrate bias to any issue or subject. It is also worth to note that in the most of the stories interviewers are missing subtitles, and even though the journalist mostly gives the names sometimes it is still impossible to identify the speaker. The TV company news programs also dedicate time to the TV stories produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB).

Activities to be carried out:

Within the period of September 17-23 the seventh phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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