



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

Subagreement # S-12-155

Report for: October 15-21, 2012

Project Period: 11 June 2012 - 10 December 2012

Total Budget: 31 000\$

Results Summary/Impact Statement

Main findings of the eleventh phase of monitoring:

- Very few of the monitored subjects were dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- No political parties, apart from the United National Movement (UNM) and the Georgian Dream coalition, were virtually provided TV coverage;
- The amount of time dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition further increased;
- The trend of neutral reporting was maintained;
- Some of the TV companies focused on social, cultural and economic issues within the region rather than political developments.

Background

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of October 15-21, 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 15-21 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.

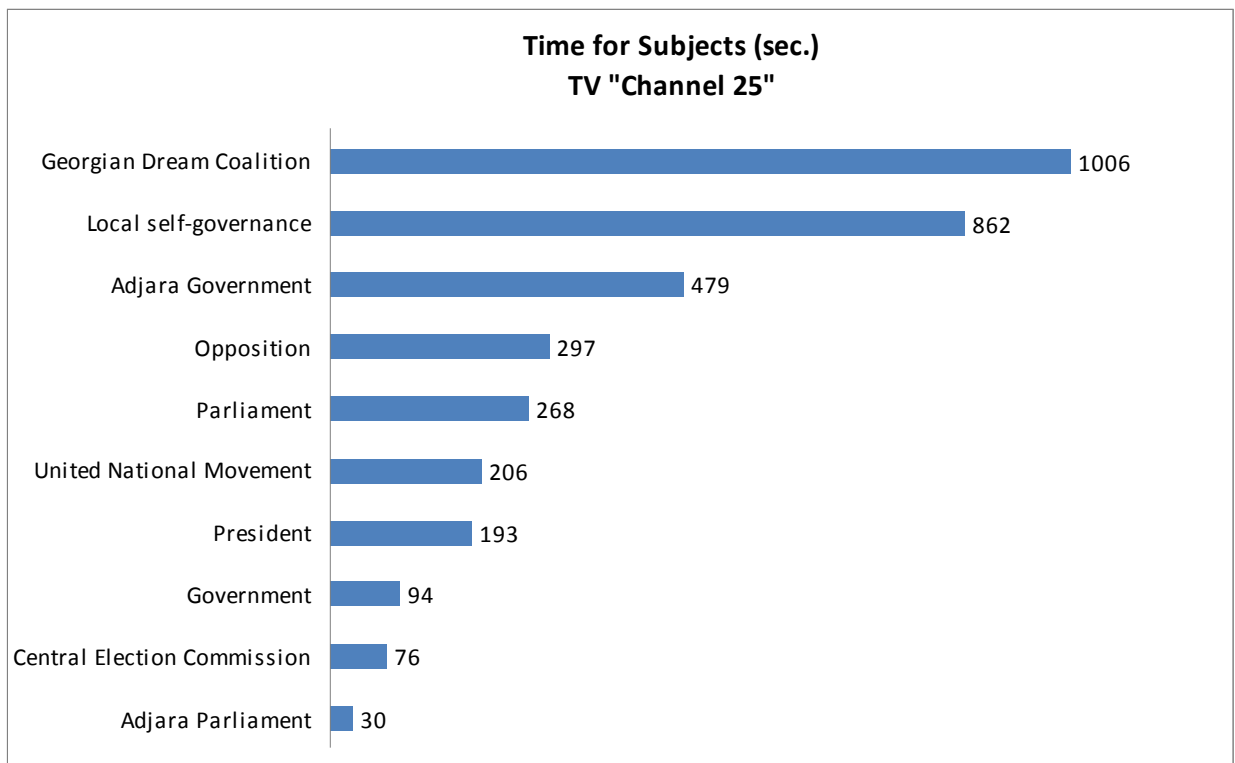
The monitoring subjects include: Parliament (speaker, vice speaker, MPs, committees); President (administration, advisors, press speaker); government (prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers,

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.

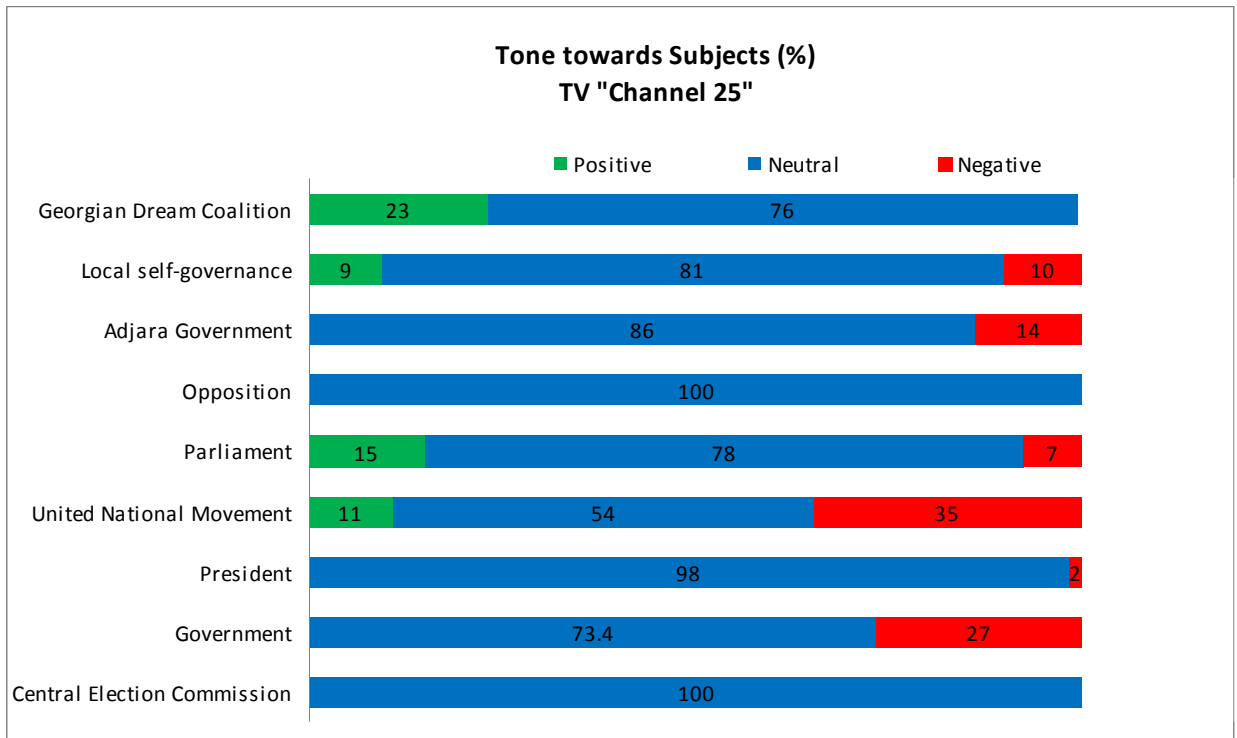
News programs monitoring results per channel:

Channel 25 (Batumi) – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime,17 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. Local self-government comes next with 14 minutes followed by Adjara government with 8 minutes.

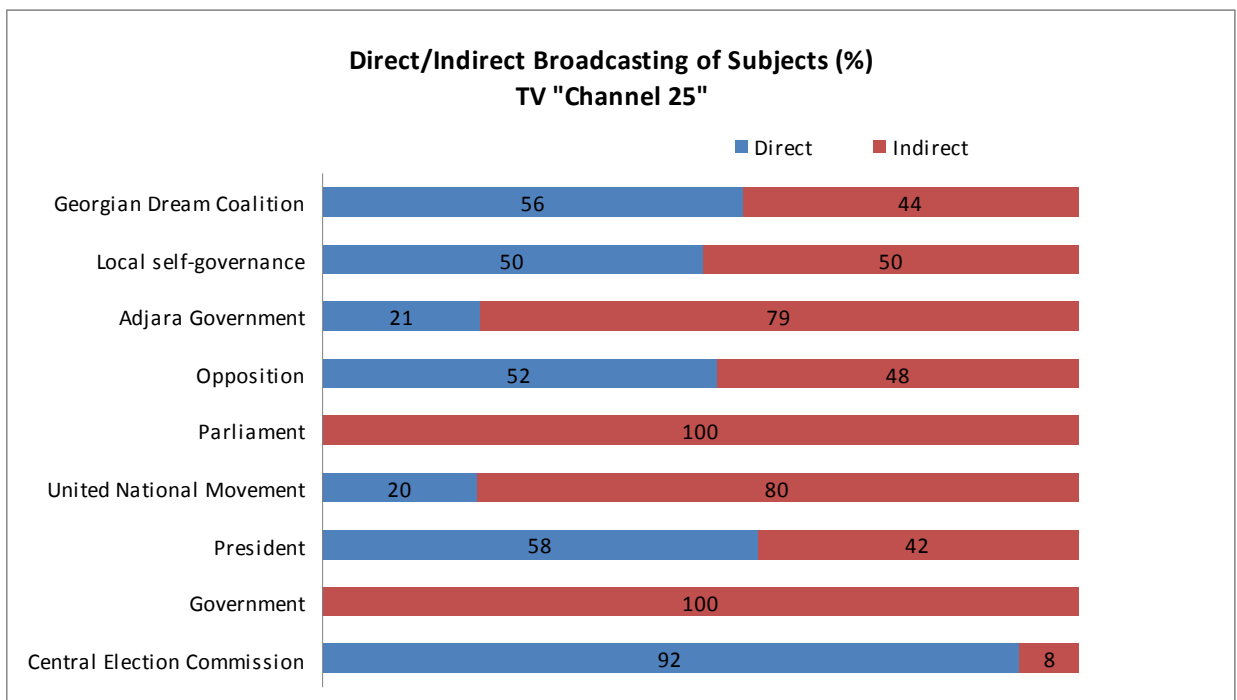


Reporting was mostly neutral in tone. Positive and negative tones were applied too though. The biggest share of negative reporting (35 percent) was observed in regard to UNM (3-minute reporting), the most of the negative tone (23 percent) was attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition

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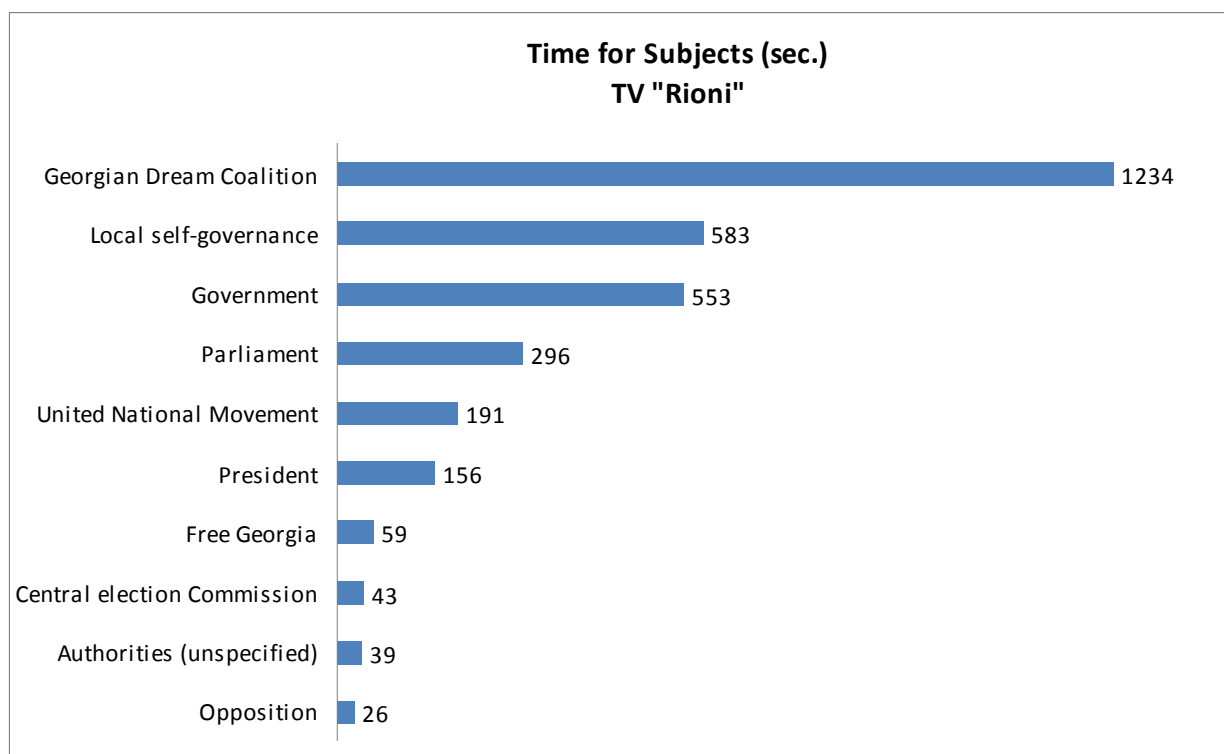
The share of direct/indirect reporting in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition, local self-government and President was almost equal. 100 percent of indirect reporting was observed in relation to Parliament. The share of indirect reporting was high when it comes to UNM (80 percent) and Adjara government (79 percent).



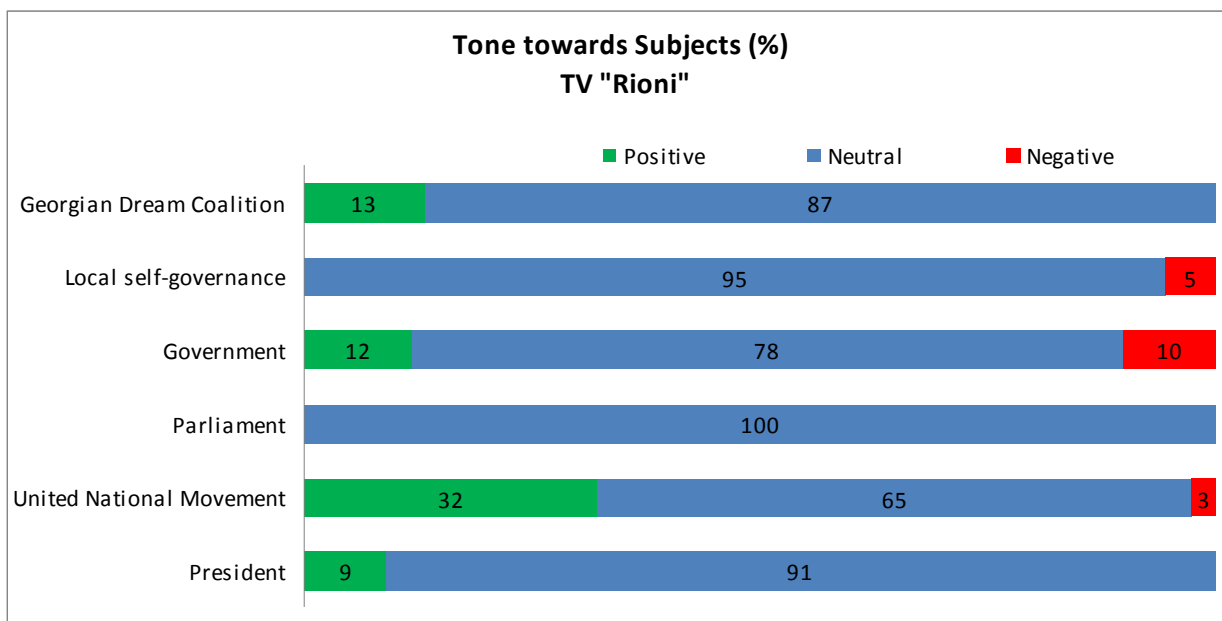
Within the reporting period TV Company Channel 25 dedicated a fair amount of airtime to reporting on the developments in the country. Equal airtime was dedicated to social, economic and

political issues. It is noteworthy that journalists frequently focused the public issues and were trying to get certain answers from the representatives of local self-government and Adjara government.

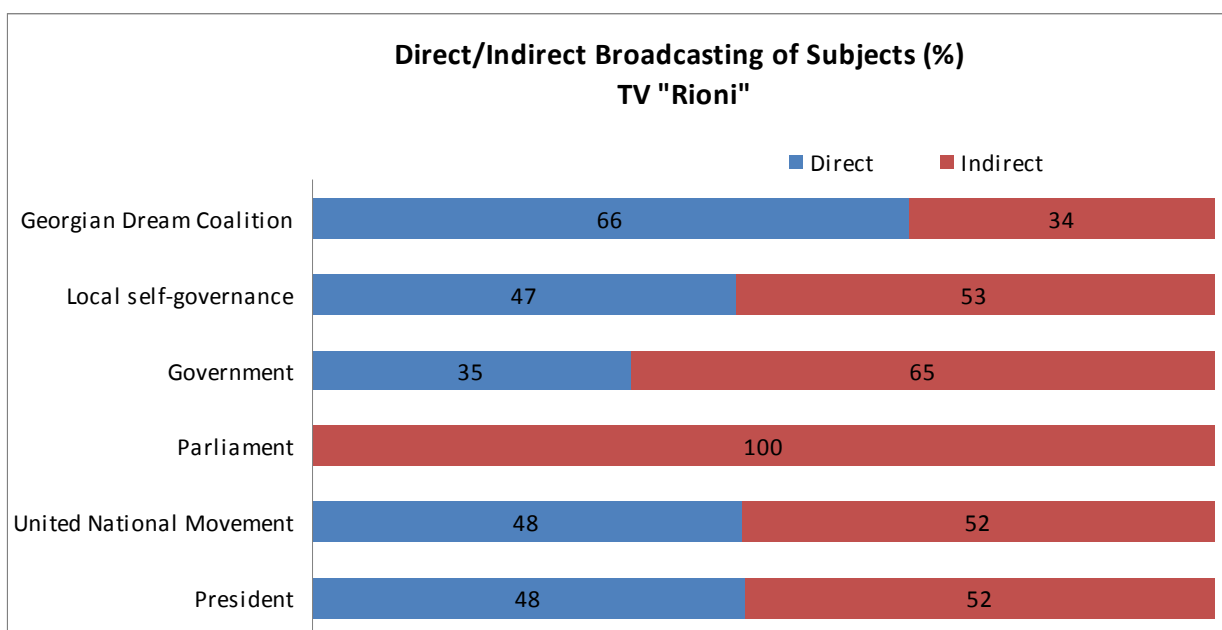
Rioni (Kutaisi) – The biggest share of airtime, 21 minutes, in the news programs was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. Local self-government comes next with 10 minutes, and government with 9 minutes.



The bigger share of reporting on the monitored subjects was neutral in tone. The percentage of positive and negative reporting was very low. The biggest share (32 percent) of positive reporting was attached to UNM (3 minute of reporting), 10 percent of negative tone was attached to reporting on the government.



In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition direct reporting (66 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (34 percent) and was equal in UNM case.

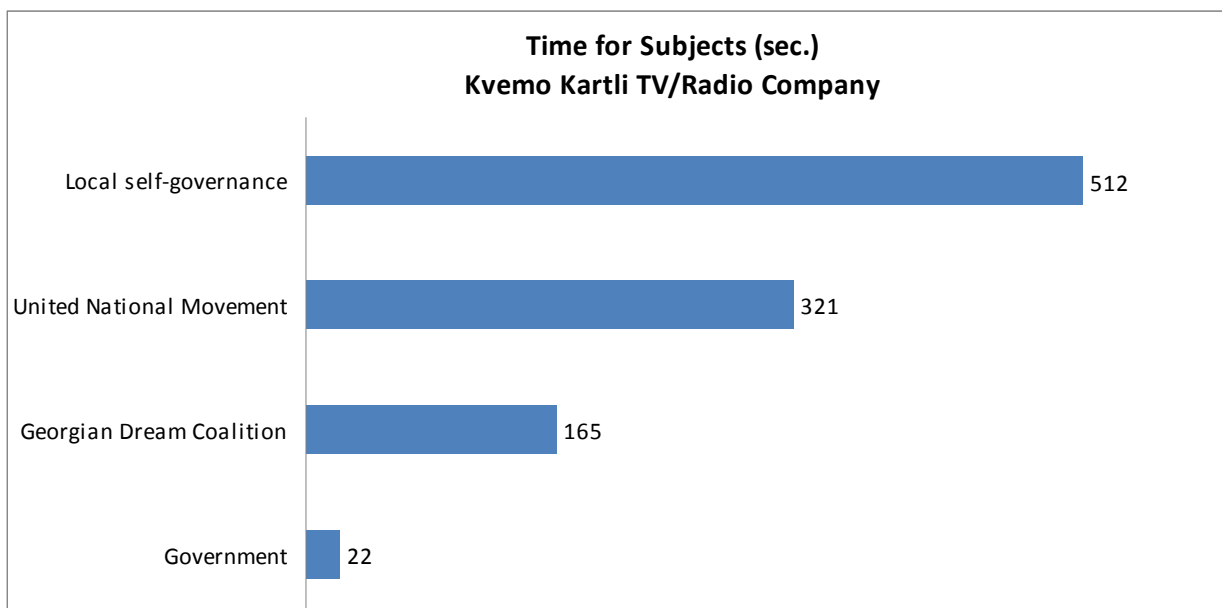


As for the rest of the monitored subjects the share of indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting but in Parliament's case (5-min reporting) only direct reporting was observed.

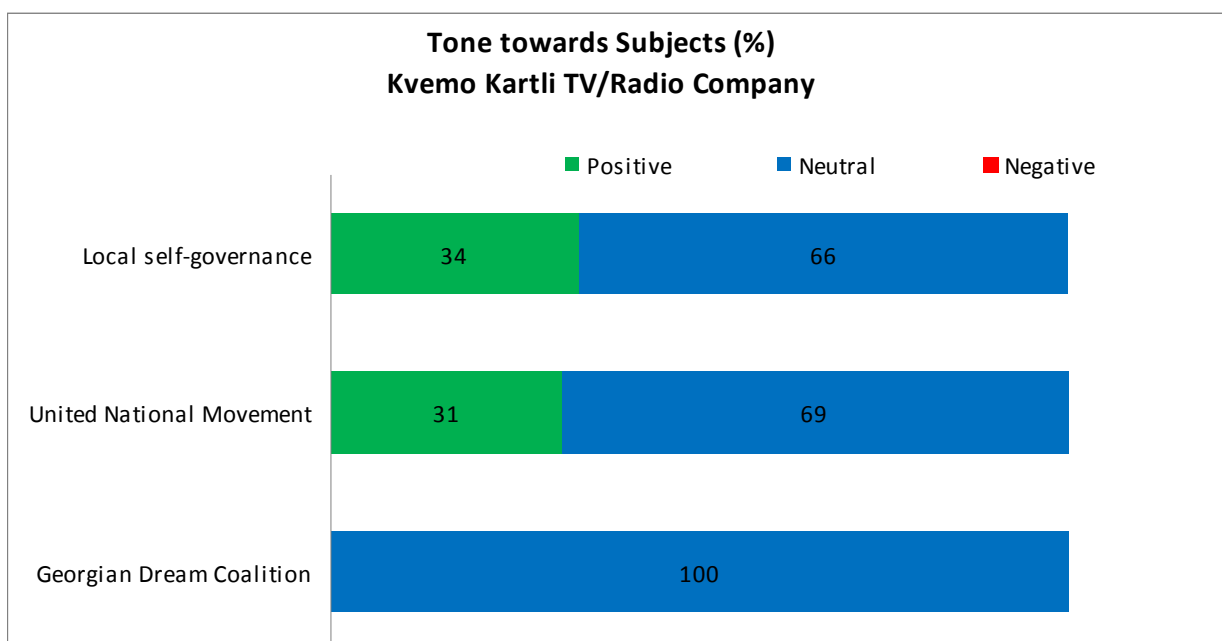
The main topics of the news programs focused on the handover of the power and preparatory works for the first Parliament sitting. As we have mentioned above TV Company Rioni dedicated twice more time to the Georgian Dream coalition than the local self-government which comes next in the ranking. Compared with the rest of the monitored subjects the share of direct reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition is also high – 66 percent. No negative tone was attached to reporting on the coalition.

On TV Company Rioni neutral tone prevailed in regard to every single monitored subject, which essentially reasoned from the journalist’s unbiased text. During the reporting period no subjective evaluation by the journalist or bias in reporting was identified.

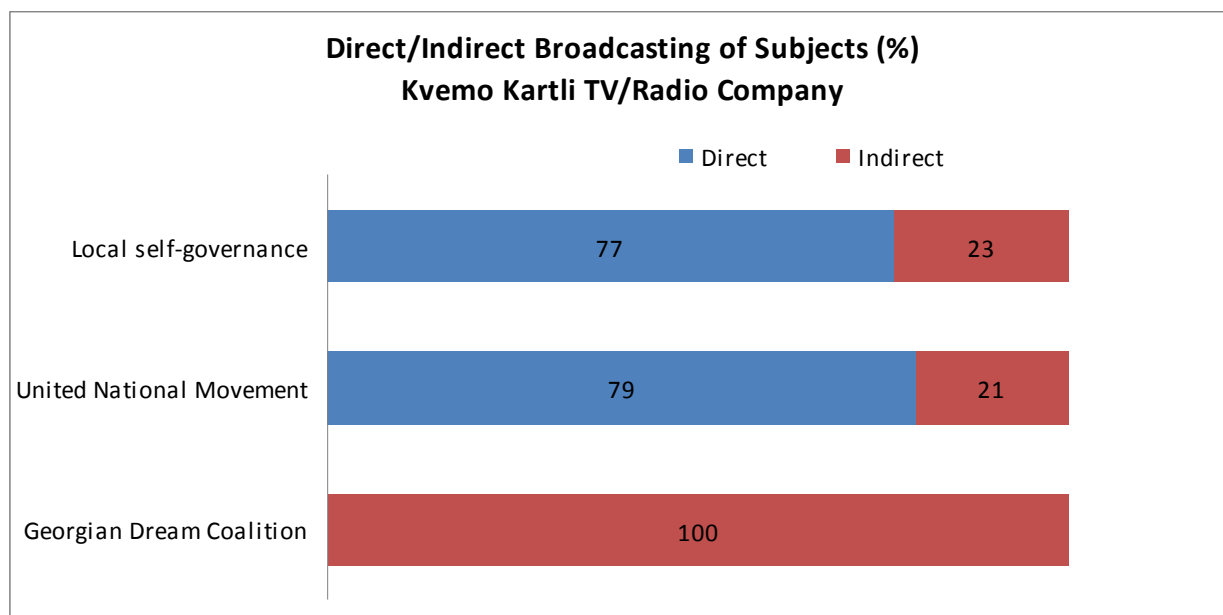
Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) – The news programs on the TV Company dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 9 minutes, to the local self-government. 5 and 3 minutes of reporting was dedicated to UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition respectively.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was only neutral and positive in tone:



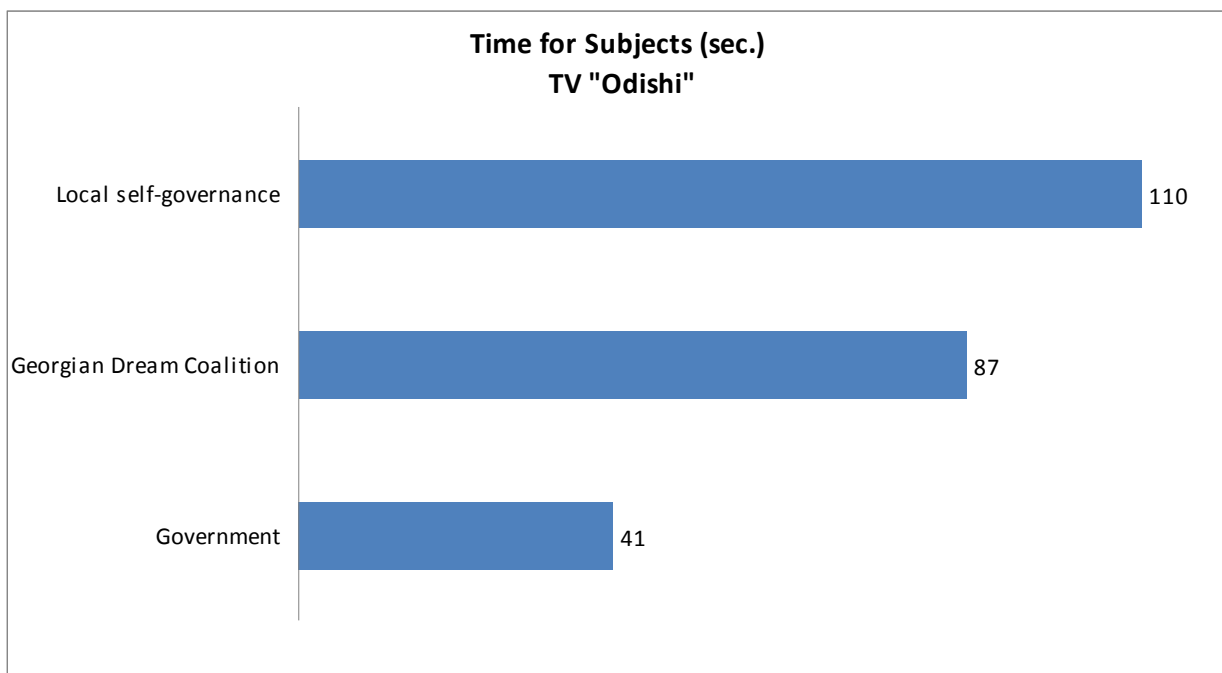
Reporting in regard to the Georgian Dream was 100 percent indirect. While in relation to the local self-government and UNM direct reporting greatly prevailed over indirect reporting.



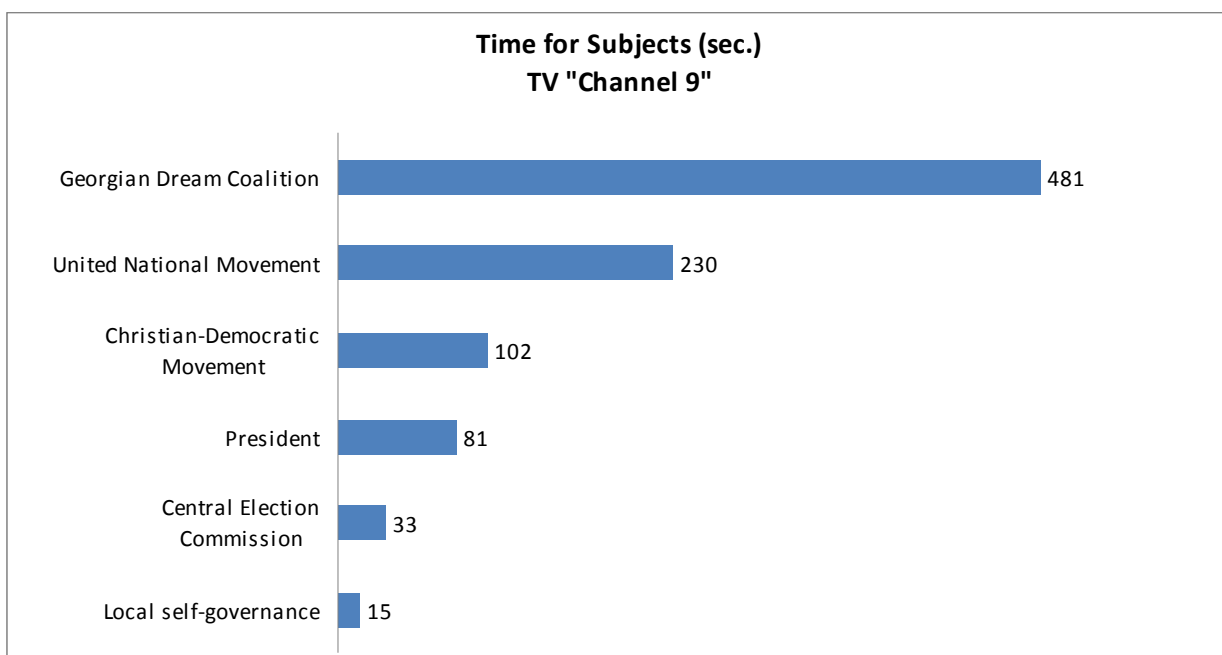
Within the reporting week Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company produced six main news programs. The running time of the news programs was approximately 20 minutes.

The programs produced within the given period dedicated a fair amount of airtime to the implementation of various infrastructural projects in the region. It is noteworthy that the journalists focused on the implementation of the project funded by the local self-government. The preparatory works and the activities dedicated to the celebration of the Day of City “Rustavkalakoba” was dedicated a considerable amount of time. Even though the main event of the week was the formation of the new government and preparation for the first sitting no attention was devoted to the recent developments.

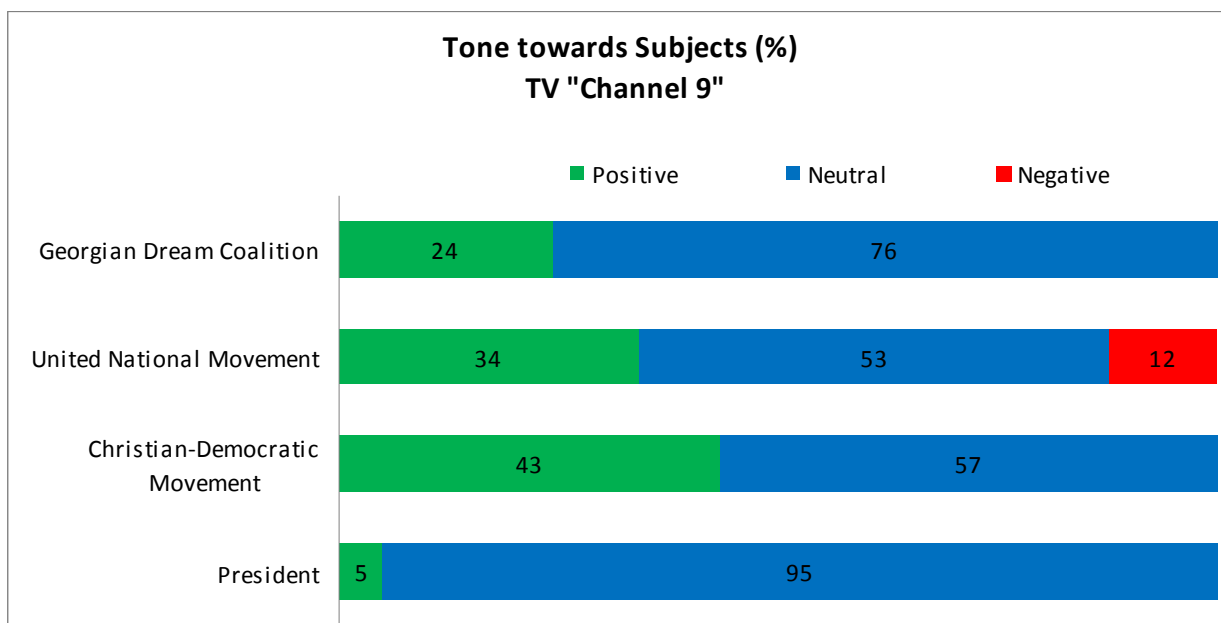
Odishi (Zugdidi) - The channel dedicated 2 minutes to the local self-government. The time apportioned to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was a bit more than one minute. The rest of the monitored subjects were not mentioned at all. Within the reporting period nine TV stories were produced in total. Only one story out of the given figure was dedicated to political processes. Based on this result it’s hard to provide any kind of analysis.



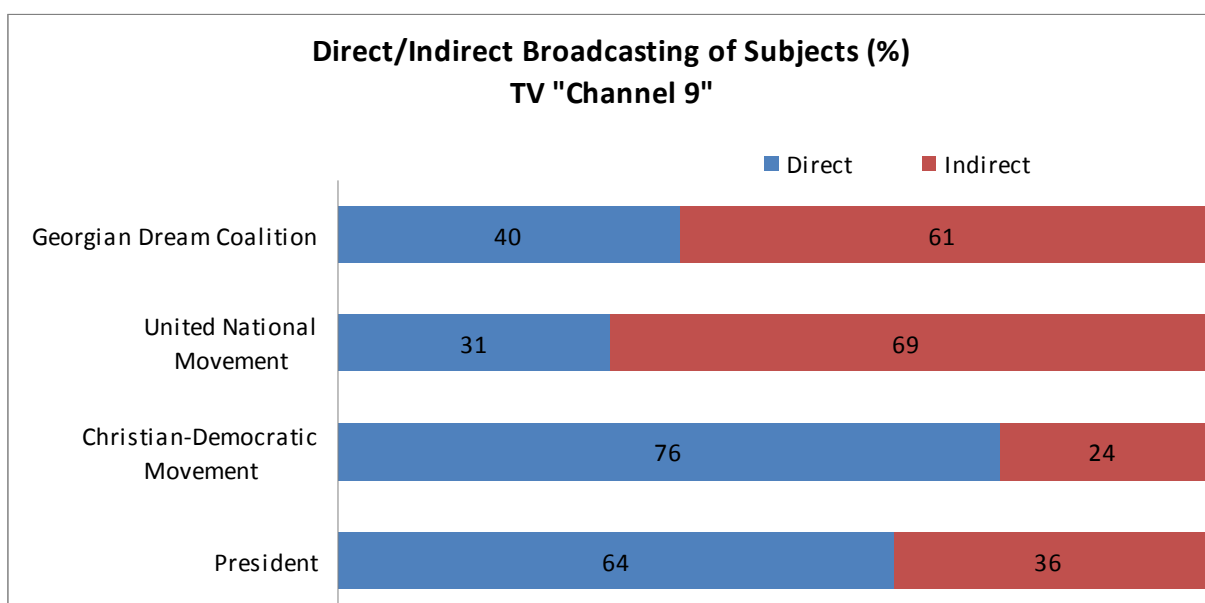
9th Channel (Akhaltsikhe) – News programs produced on the channel within the reporting period dedicated about 8 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition, UNM comes next with 4 minutes and Christian-Democratic Movement with 2 minutes.



The tone of reporting was essentially neutral and positive. Negative tone (12 percent) was solely attached to reporting on UNM.



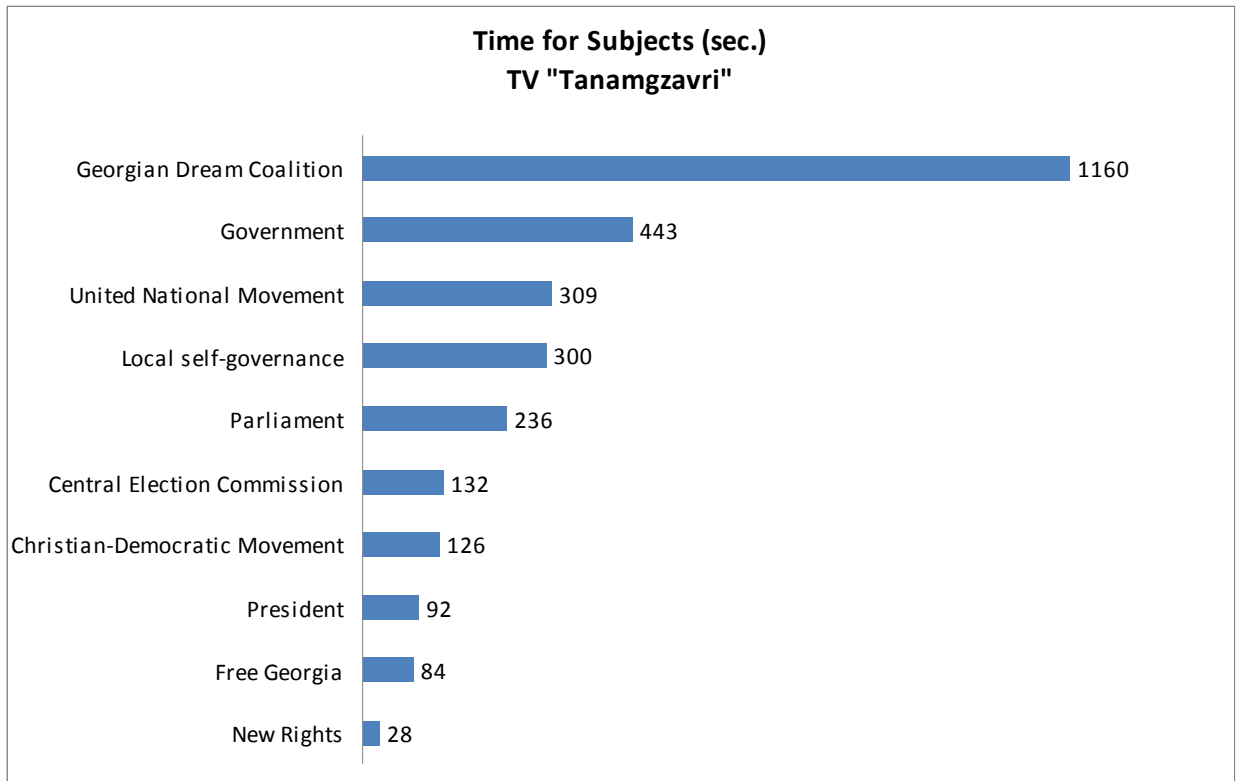
The share of direct/indirect reporting looks as follows:



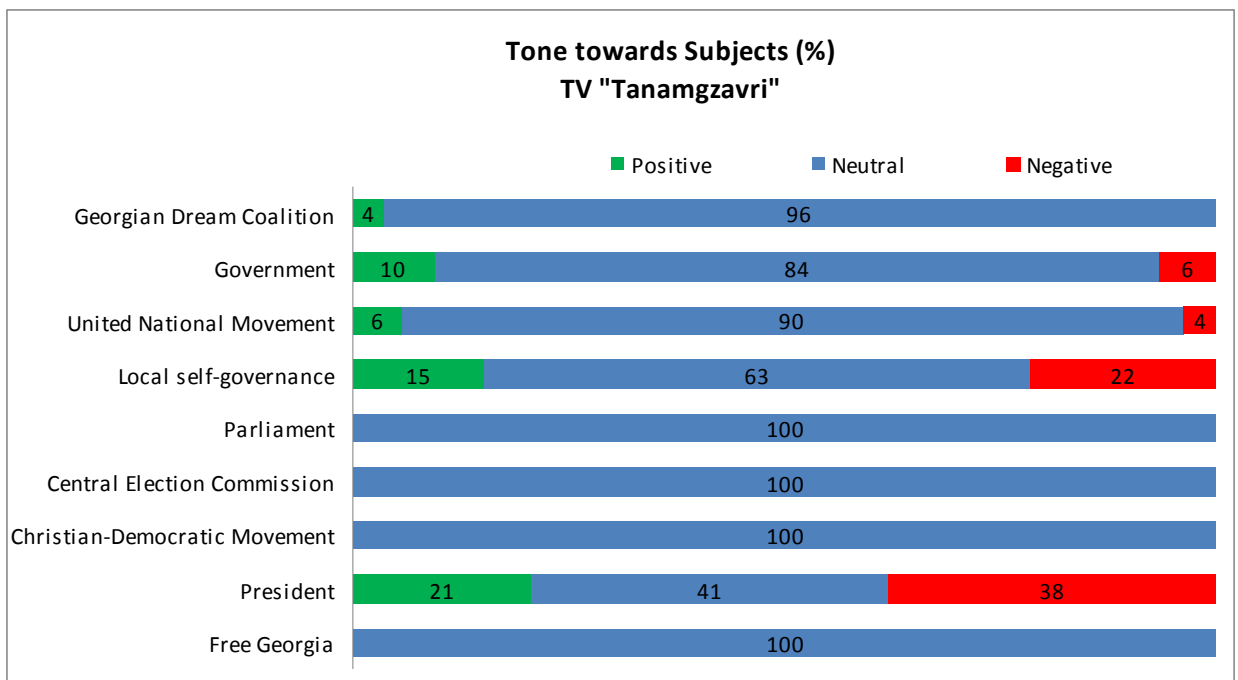
Within the reporting period the TV Company aggressively covered not only political but cultural and sports events ongoing in the regions as well as nationwide. The events (debates for school children in Rabati, Akhaltsikhe, premiere at Meskheti State Drama Theatre, football championship at Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University) were dedicated a considerable amount of airtime in the news programs. It is noteworthy that the TV stories of the kind did not make a mention of the monitored subjects.

9th Channel's news programs were balanced, journalists' attempts to cover all of the parties is evident, no bias was demonstrated to any subject.

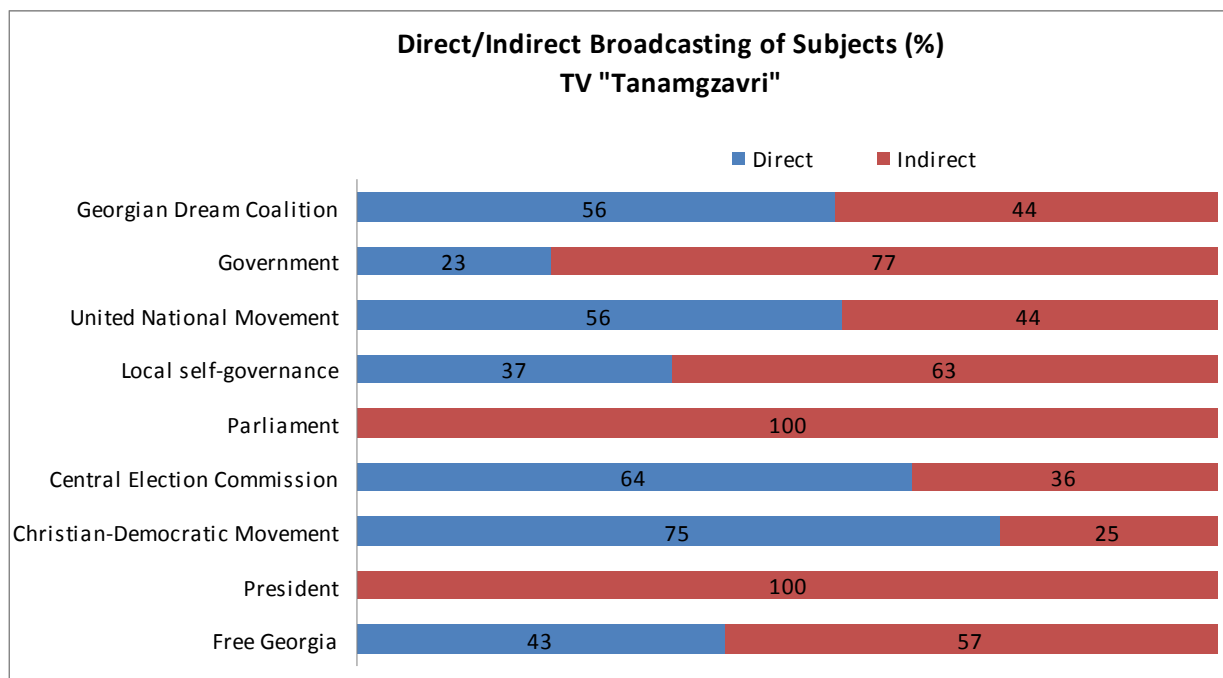
Tanamgzavri (Telavi) - The news programs on the channel dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 19 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. Government received 7 minutes of reporting. UNM and local self-government each enjoyed 5-minute coverage.



Reporting was mostly neutral in tone. The most of the negative tone was attached to reporting on the local self-government (22 percent). The biggest share of positive tone was applied in regard to President (21 percent).



The share of direct/indirect reporting was mainly equal. The index of indirect reporting was high in relation to Parliament (100 percent), President (100 percent), government (77 percent), and local self-government (63 percent). Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting in regard to the Central Election Commission (64 percent) and Christian-Democratic Movement (75 percent).

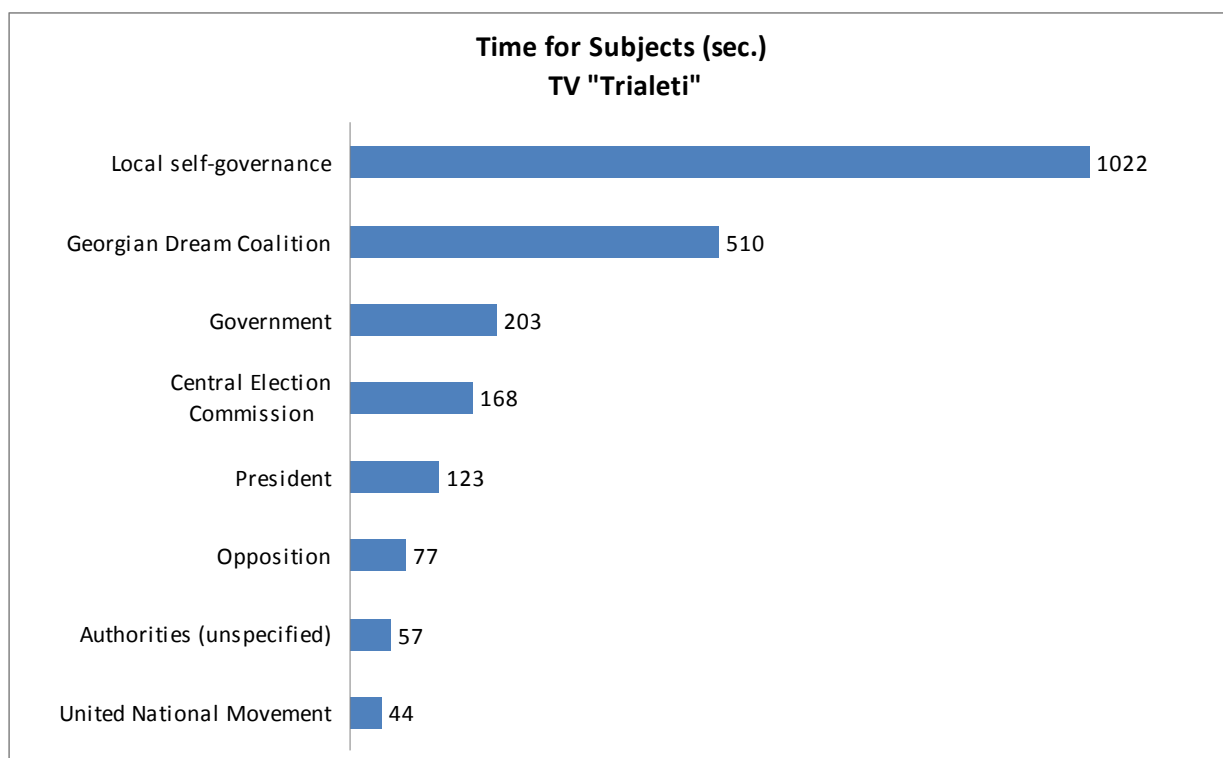


Within the reporting week TV Company Tanamgzavri mostly reported on the activities carried out by the Georgian Dream coalition – 19 minutes. Government comes next with 7 minutes. No negative tone was attached to reporting on the coalition activities. The main topic of the news programs was the handover of power.

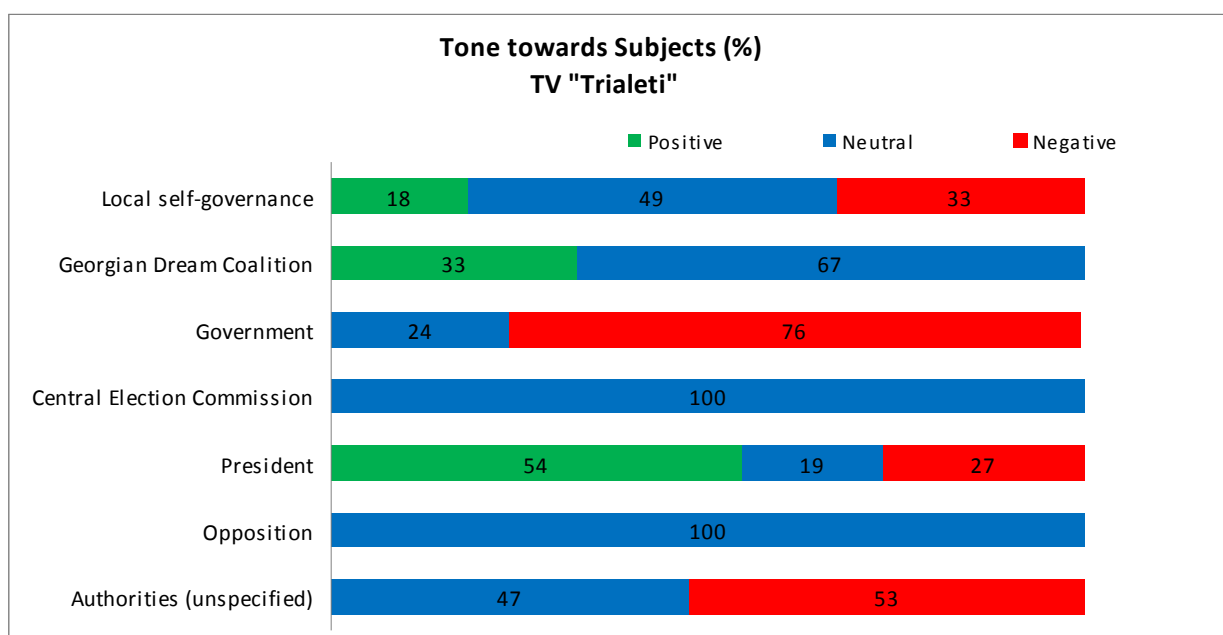
It is noteworthy that within the reporting period no bias and subjective reporting was observed.

Trialeti (Gori) – The channel dedicated 17 minutes to the local self-government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 9 minutes. Government and CEC each enjoyed 3-minute reporting.

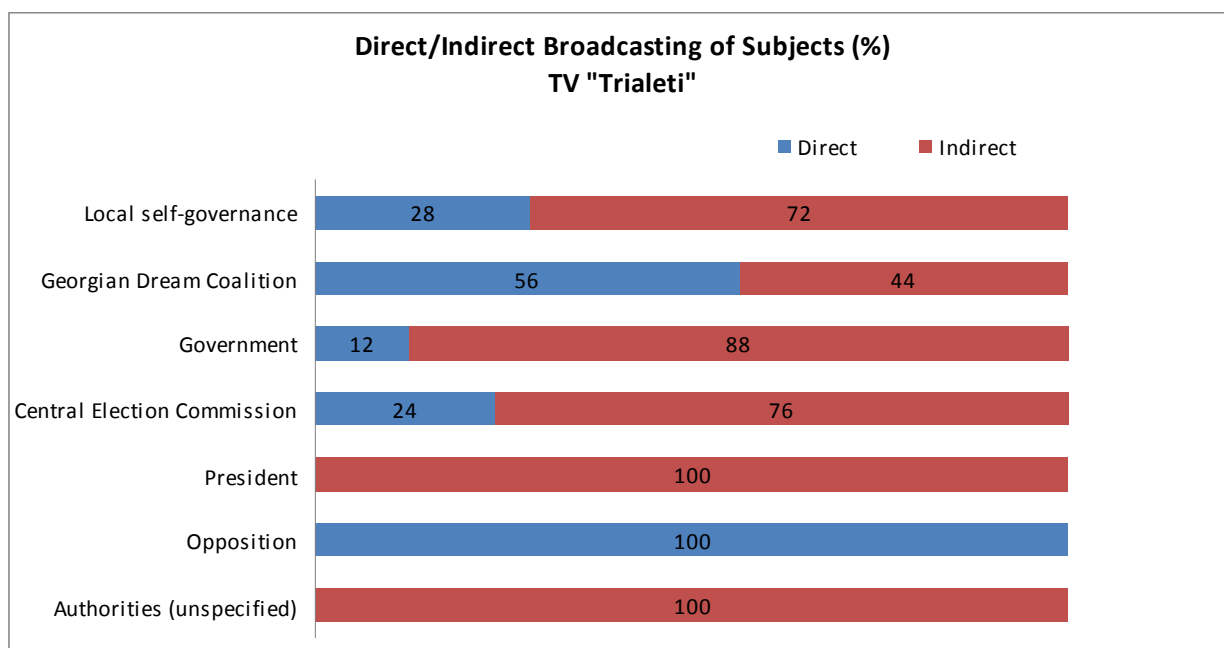
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All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the monitored subjects. Only positive (33 percent) and neutral (67 percent) tones were applied in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition, while government was covered in neutral (24 percent) and negative (76 percent) tones. 100 percent of neutral reporting was observed in regard to CEC (3 minute coverage) and the opposition (1,28 minute of coverage).



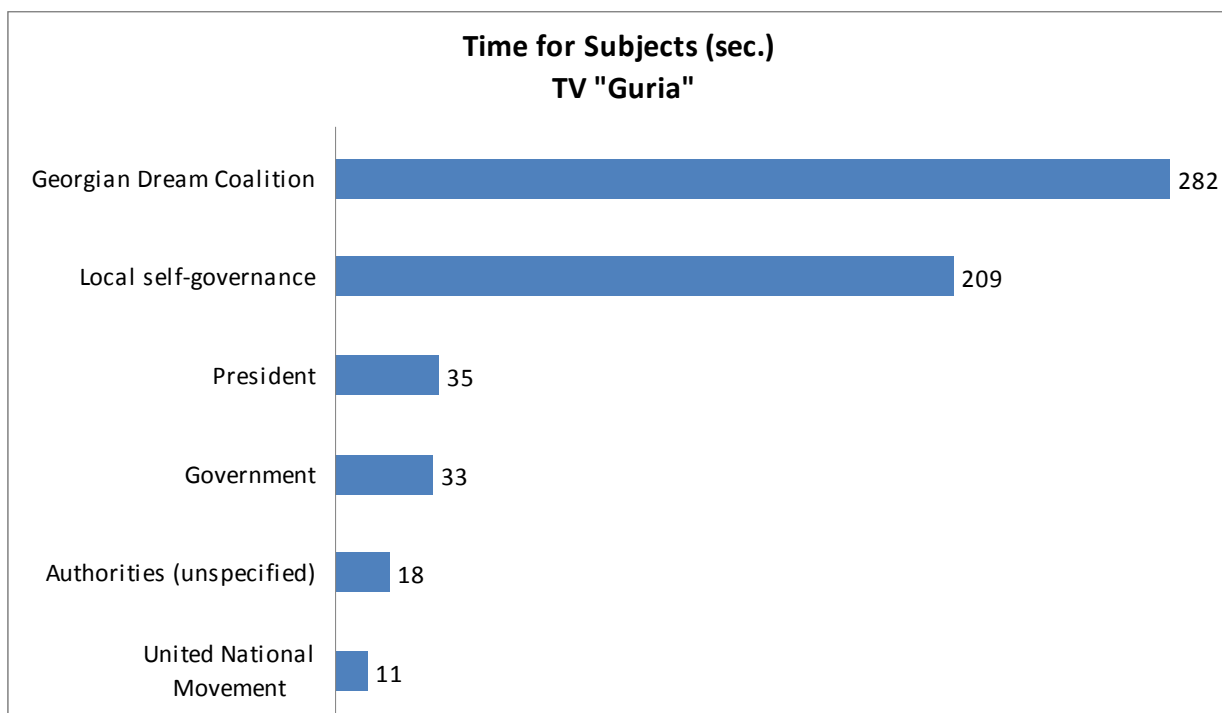
In most cases indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. Only in case of the Georgian Dream coalition the share was almost equal.



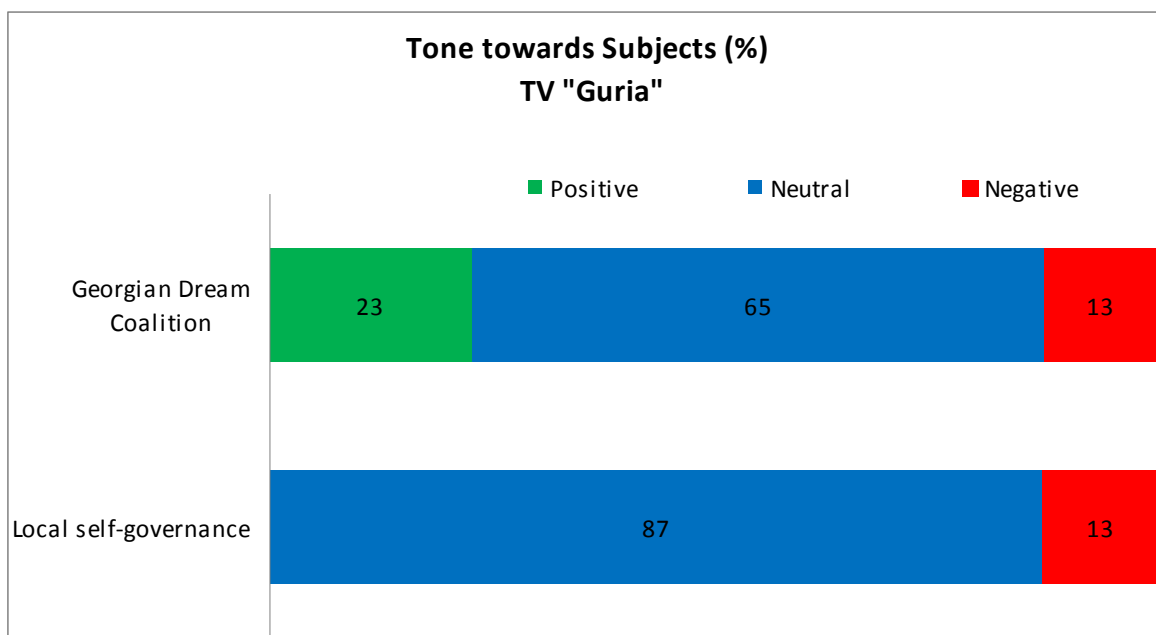
Within a week TV Company Trialeti aggressively covered the events ongoing in the region as well as nationwide. The topics covered in the news programs were diverse, regional events though were focused on. The share of direct reporting in regard to the local self-government considerably went up, the share of indirect reporting was still 72 percent. It is noteworthy that TV story on the distribution of food to the population was re-aired in the October 16 and 17 news programs.

The news programs on the channel are more or less balanced. It is also important to mention that no bias was demonstrated in the journalists' texts.

Guria (ozurgeti) – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 5 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. The local self-government received 3 minutes. The time dedicated to the rest of the monitored subjects is less than five minutes.



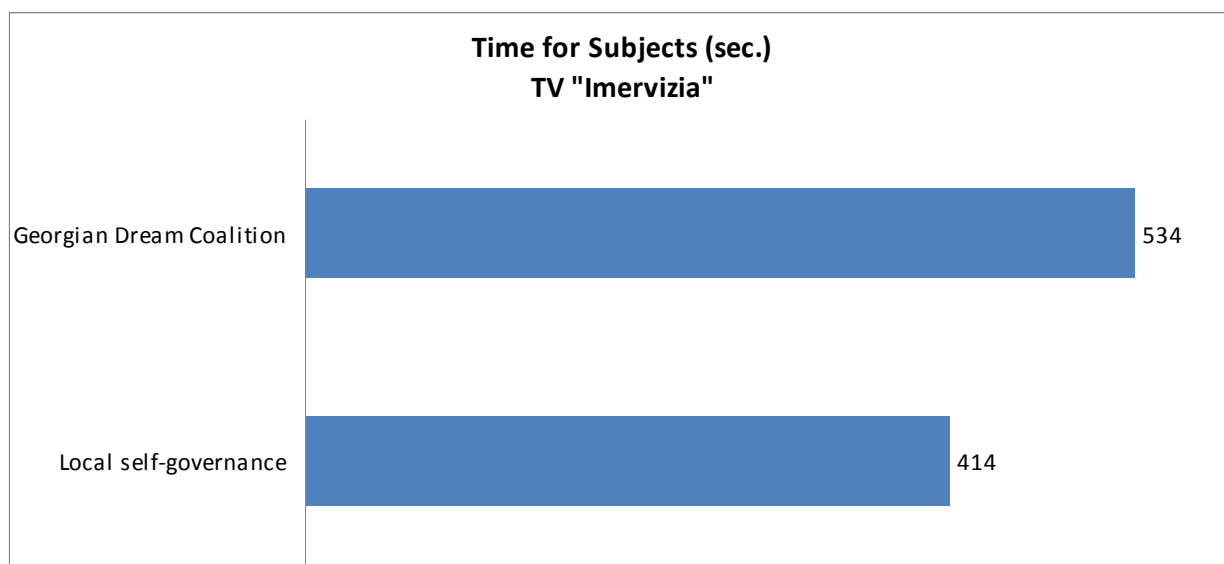
All of the three tones were observed when reporting on both of the subjects, neutral tone prevailed though:



In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition direct reporting (79 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting, but with the local self-government indirect reporting was more – 69 percent. During the period of October 15-21 TV Company Guria mainly covered local news. In addition to political developments cultural and sports events were focused. In TV stories no bias was observed in regard to the monitored subjects.

12th Channel (Bolnisi) – During the reporting period the TV Company produced the only news program including no single story about the monitored subjects.

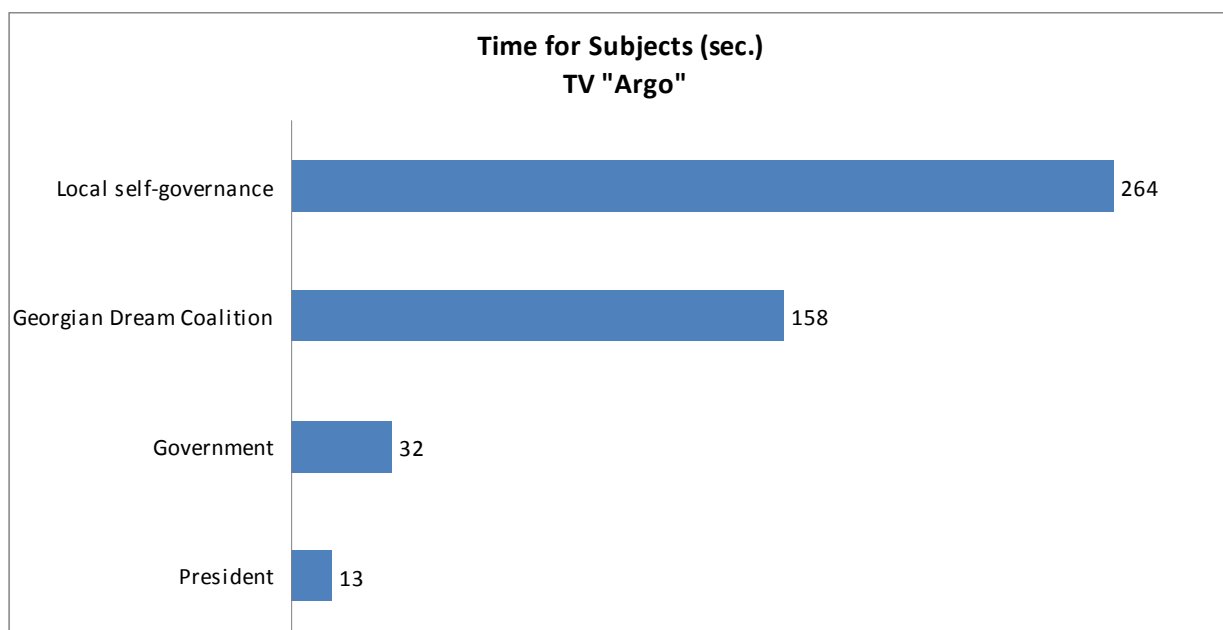
Imervizai (Chiatura) – The TV Company covered only two of the monitored subjects: 9 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and 7 minutes to the local self-government.



Reporting on the subjects was neutral and positive in tone. Direct tone greatly prevailed over indirect reporting: the Georgian Dream coalition – 79 percent and local self-government – 86 percent.

During the reporting period the TV Company aggressively covered the miners on strike in Chiatura. 15-15 minutes were dedicated to the aforementioned events in the October 15 and 16 news programs. It is noteworthy that a fair amount of airtime was dedicated to direct reporting. In the second story in the October 15 news program, for instance, three minutes were dedicated to the majoritarian MP Malkhaz Tsereteli of the Georgian Dream coalition talking to the miners on strike. The third story in the same news program, discussing the particulars of Chiatura Sakrebulo sitting, dedicated six minutes to the acting Gemgebeli.

Argo (Zestaponi) – The channel dedicated 4 minutes to the local self-government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 3 minutes. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage.

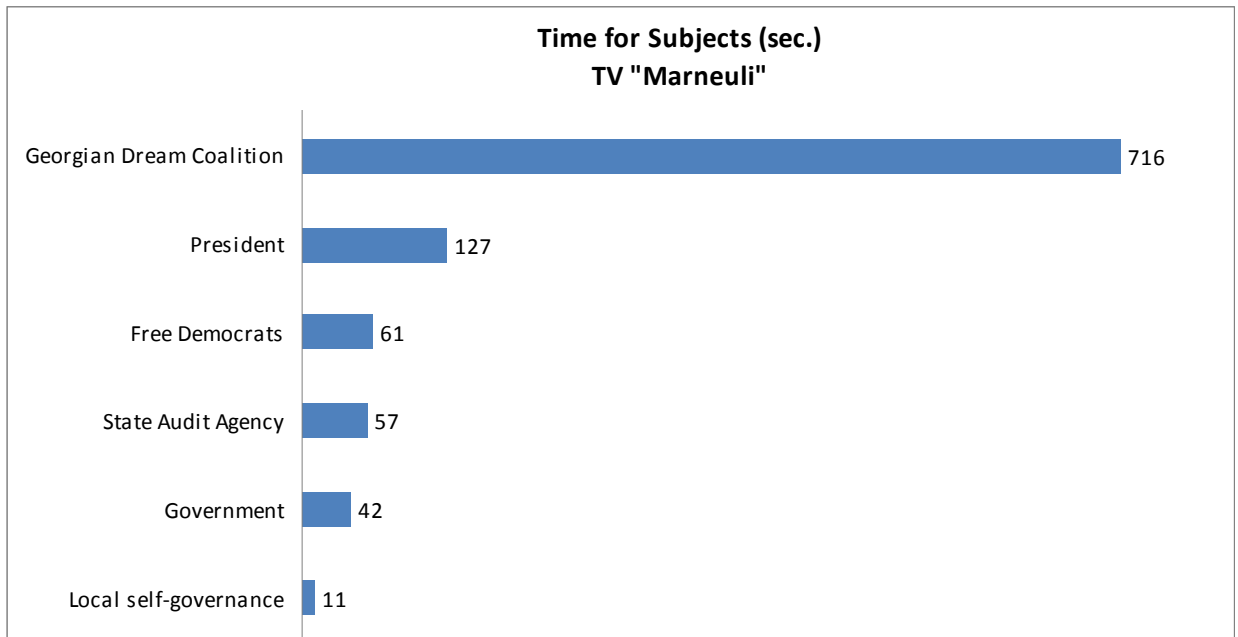


Reporting on both of the subjects was neutral in tone. In regard to the local self-government the share of direct/indirect reporting was equal. Reporting was 100 percent indirect in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition. Within the period of October 15-21 the TV Company essentially covered local news. Accordingly news programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime to the local self-government. During the reporting period no breach of standards was observed, TV stories were balanced.

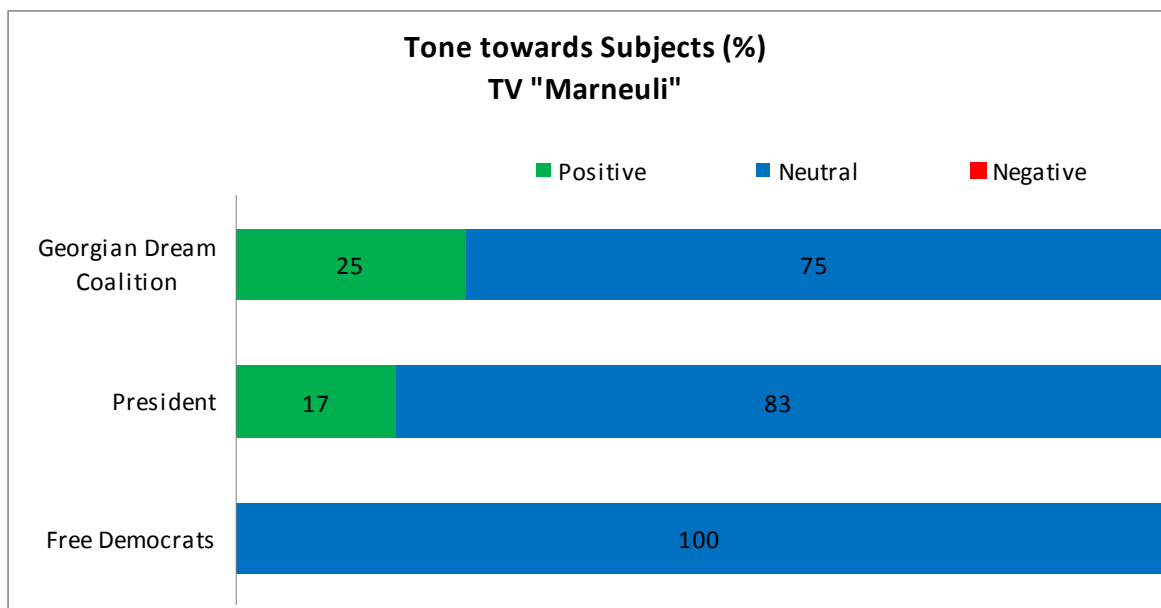
Borjomi (Borjomi) - Within the reporting period the TV Company produced the only news program including no story about the monitored subjects. No more than 15 seconds were dedicated to either subject, accordingly no material has been gleaned to provide either qualitative or quantitative analysis.

Marneuli (Marneuli) – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 12 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. The 2-minute reporting was enjoyed by President, the rest of the subjects received less than one minute.

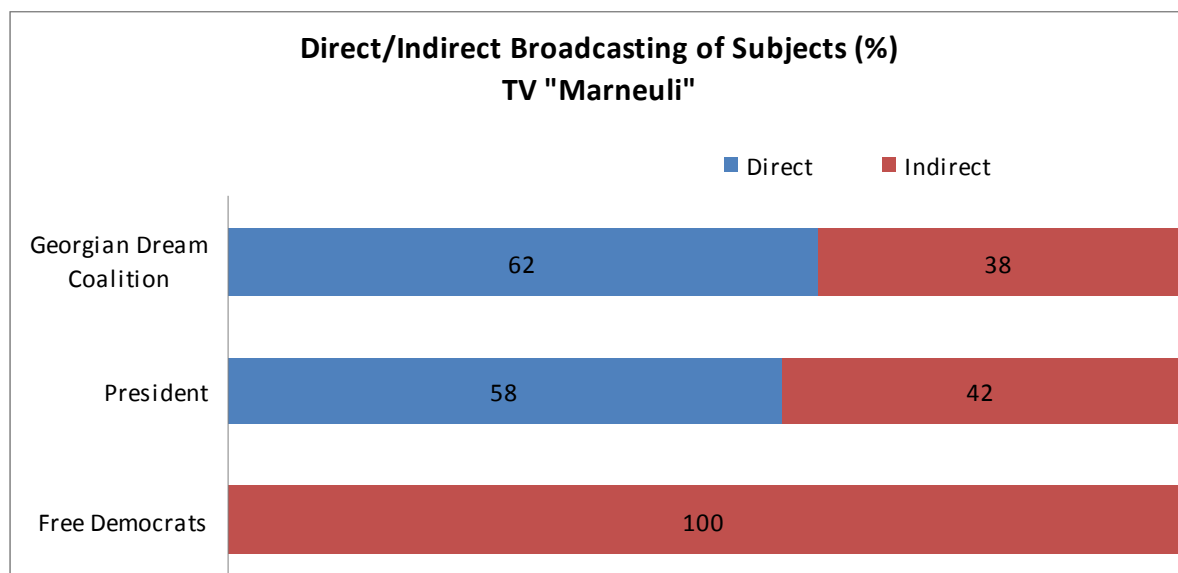
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Reporting on the monitored subjects was neutral and positive in tone:



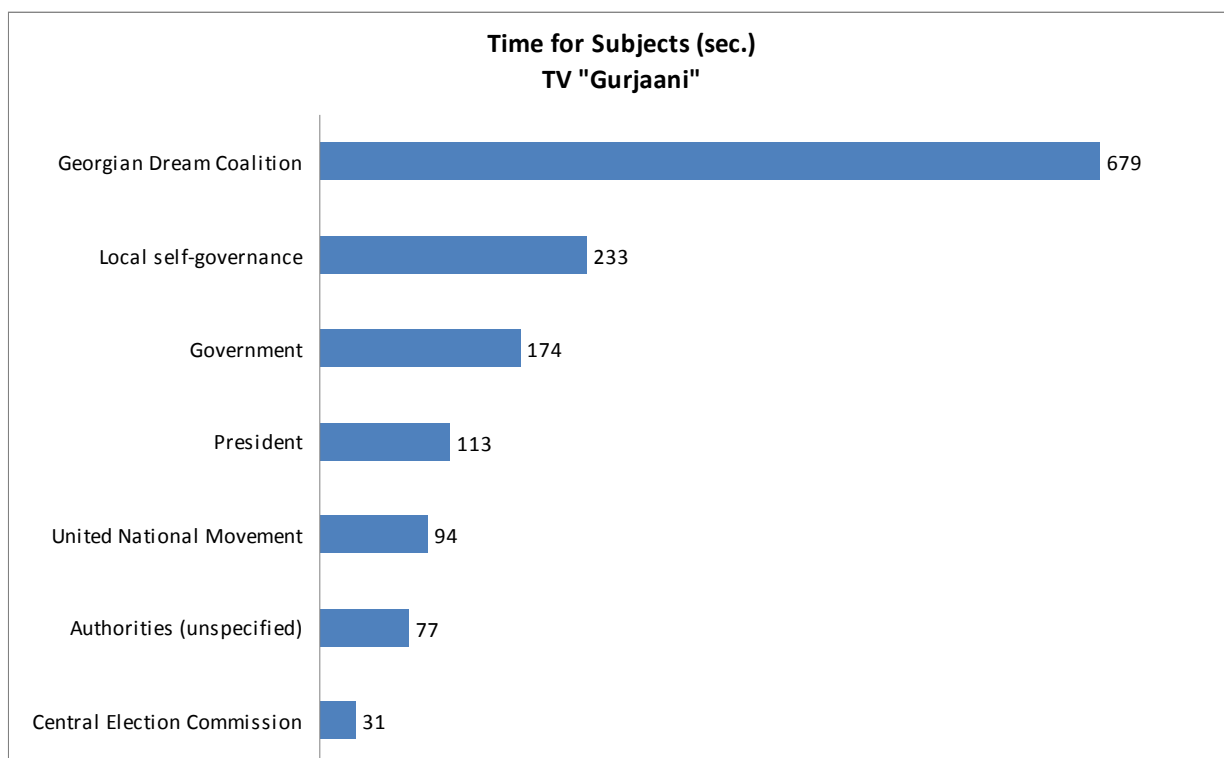
The share of direct reporting on the monitored subjects prevailed over indirect reporting. Free Democrats enjoyed 100 percent indirect reporting (61-second coverage).



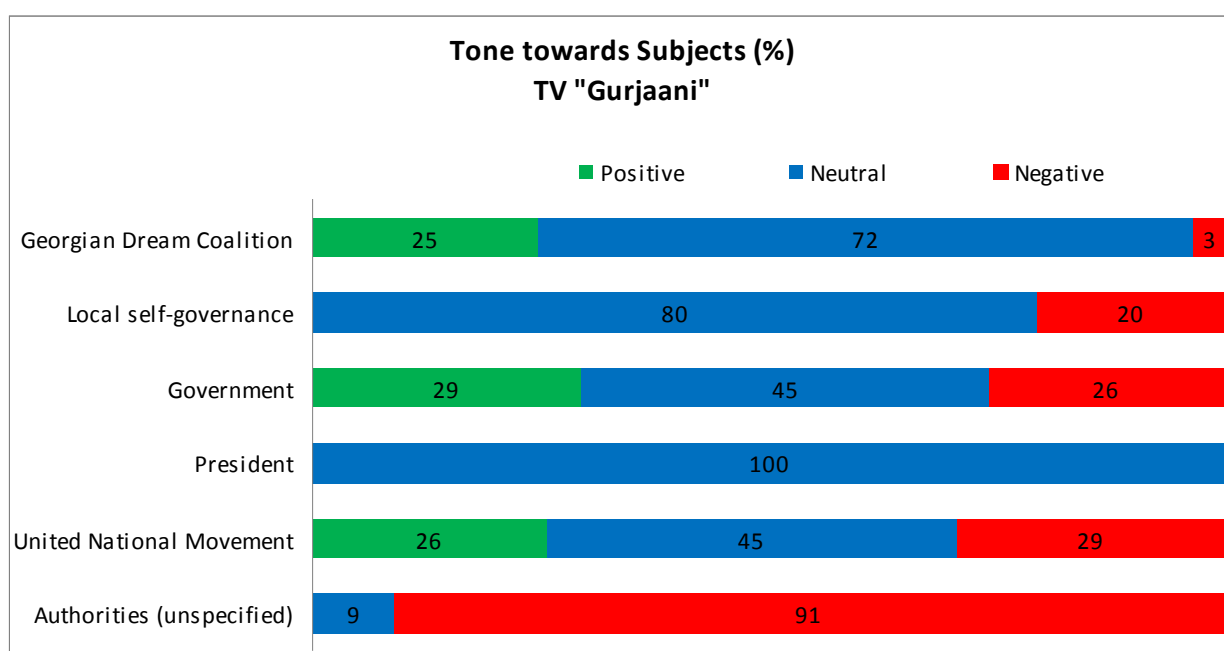
During the reporting period TV Company Marneuli mainly reported on the events ongoing in the country. Less time was dedicated to local news. The biggest share of reporting (12 min) was enjoyed by the Georgian Dream coalition. The given figure is six-fold more than the time dedicated to the President who ranks second in the chart. It is also noteworthy that during the reporting period the level of the activities carried out by the Georgian Dream coalition was high. As regards certain TV stories they are balanced and no bias is demonstrated in the journalist's text.

Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – The channel dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 11 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. The 4-minute coverage was received by the local self-government, followed by government and President by 3 and 2 minutes respectively.

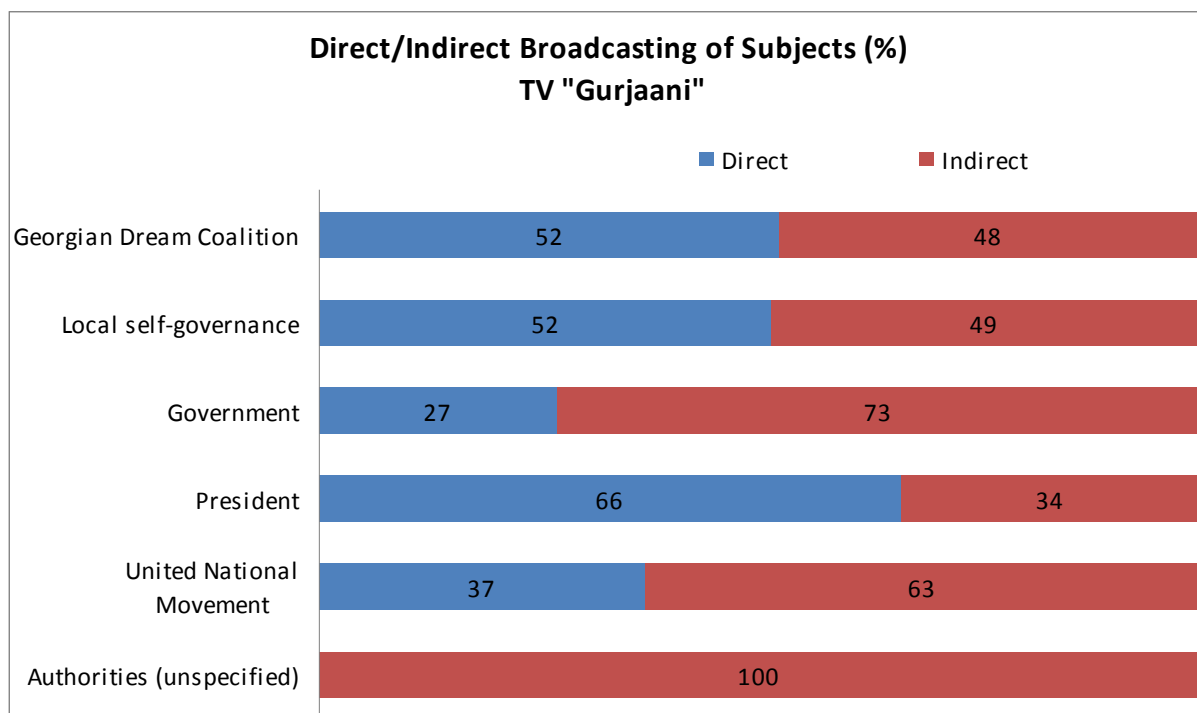
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All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the monitored subjects. Neutral tone though prevailed over positive and negative:

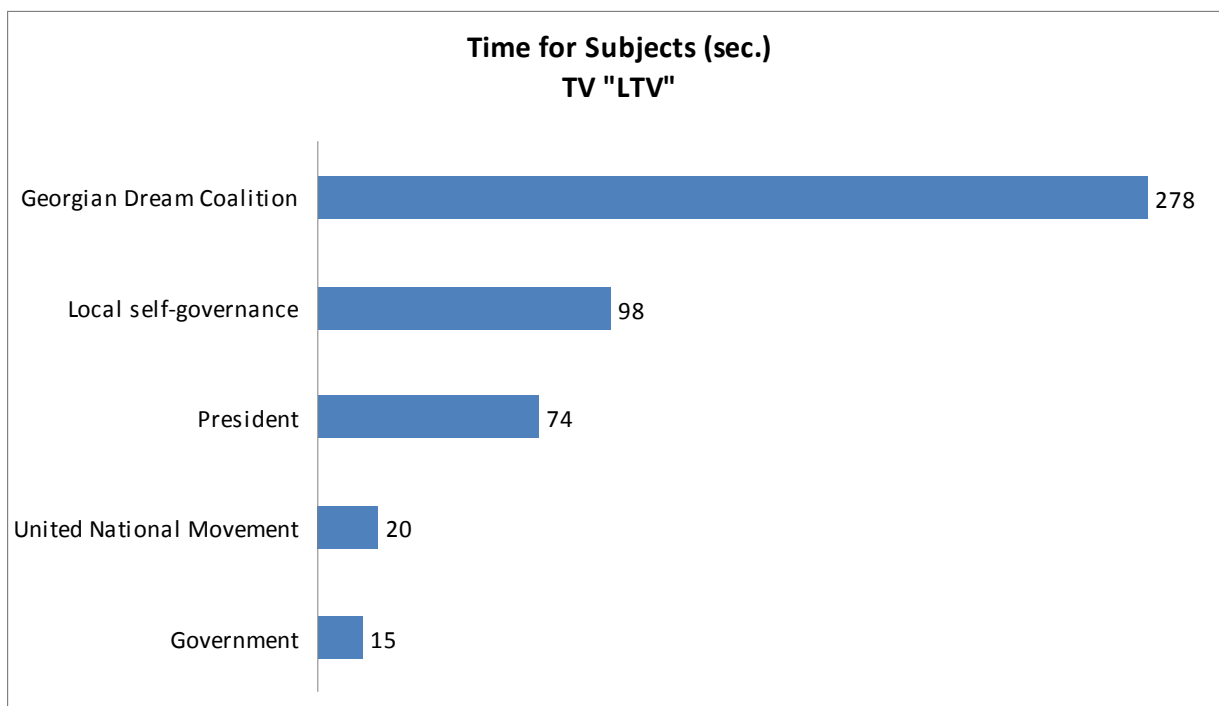


The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal:



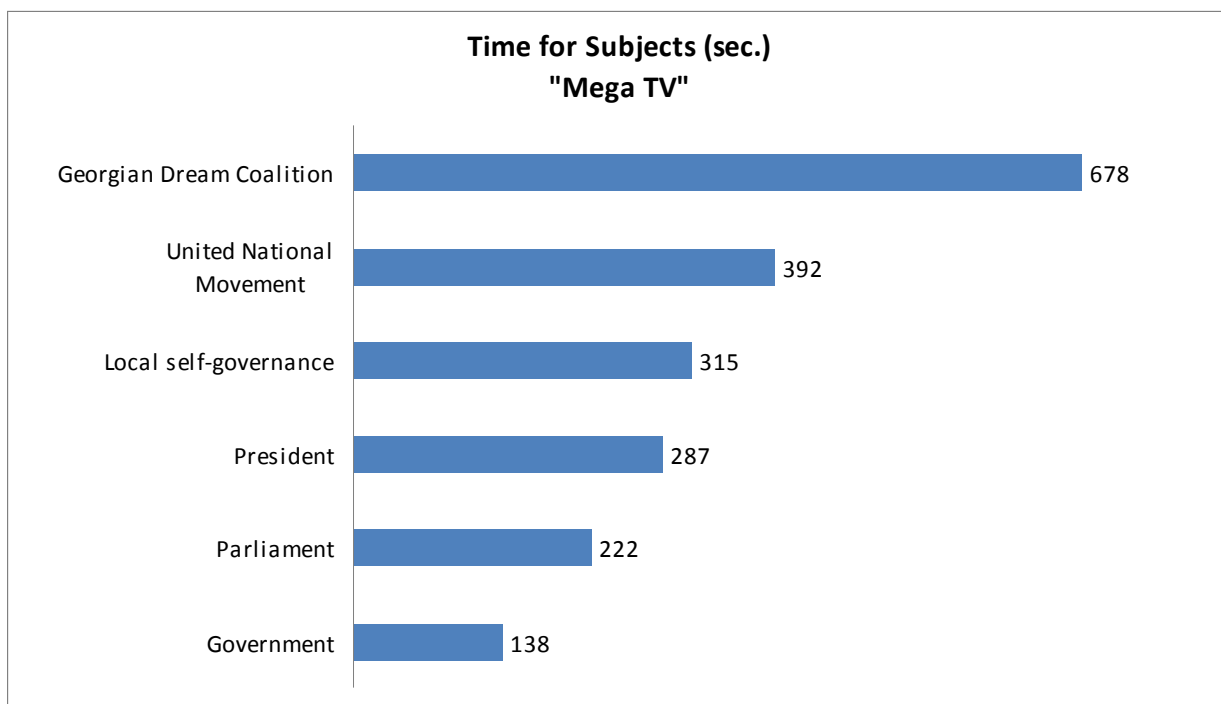
Within the reporting period TV Company Gurjaani covered the events ongoing in Kakheti region as well as nationwide. The programs would start with the developments across the country, followed with local news. News programs tended to be balanced. Journalist's text did not demonstrate bias to any subject.

LTV (Lagodekhi) - The channel dedicated about 5 minutes the Georgian Dream coalition. The 2-min coverage was received by the local self-government and a bit more than one minute was dedicated to President.

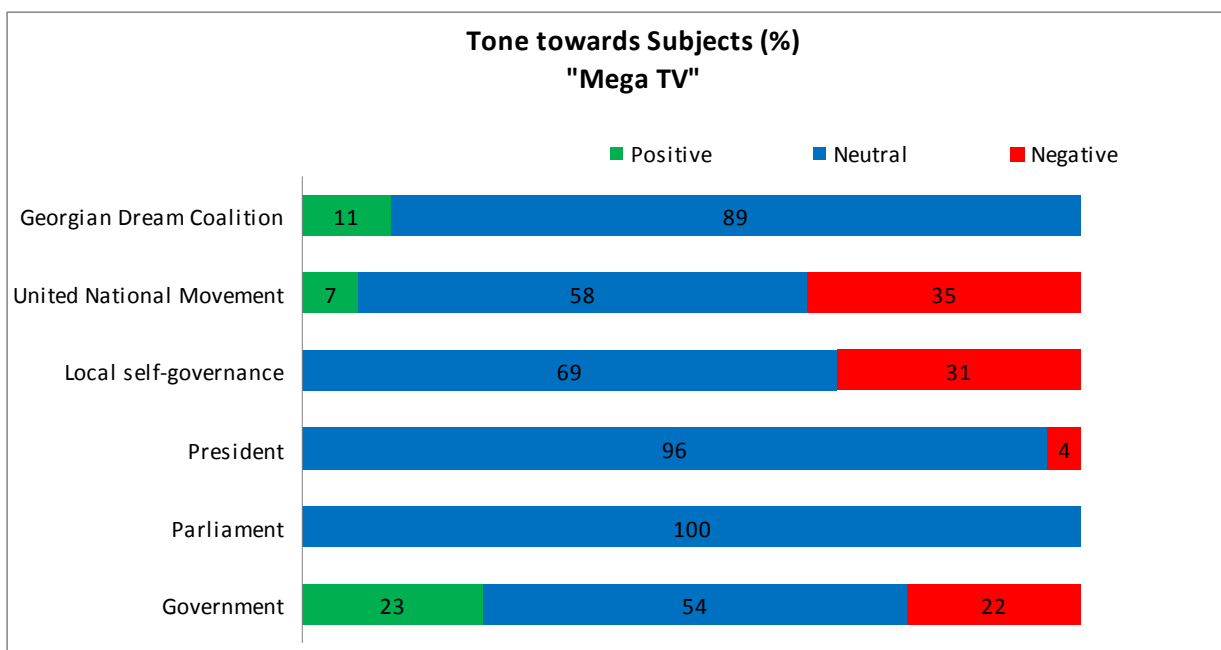


100 percent of the airtime dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and local self-government was neutral in tone. In regard to President the reporting tone was 93 percent negative and 7 percent neutral. The share of direct/indirect reporting in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition looks as follows: 33 percent / 67 percent. As regards the rest of the covered subjects 100 percent fell on indirect reporting. Based on the results of the survey it is hard to provide qualitative analysis. It is noteworthy though that no bias was shown to any subject.

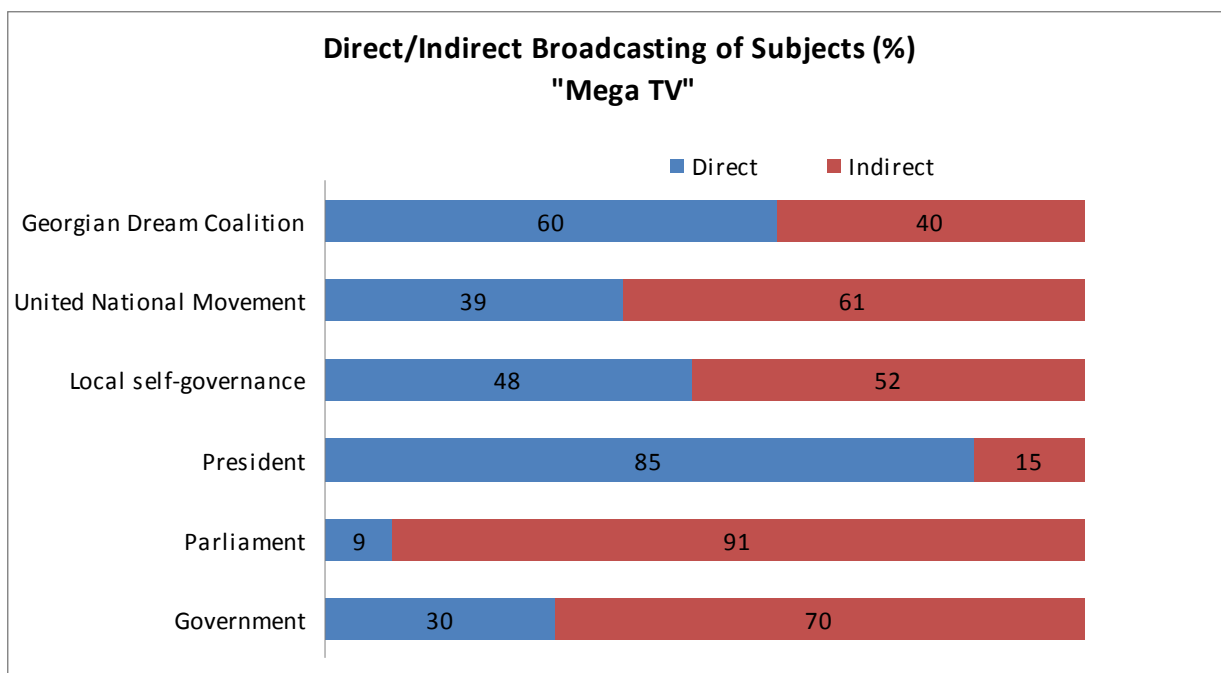
Mega TV (Khoni) – News programs dedicated 11 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition. UNM comes next with 7 minutes, followed by local self-government and President with 5 minutes each.



The reporting tone was neutral in the main. Negative and positive tones were observed too. 35 percent of negative reporting falls on UNM and 31 percent on the local self-governance.



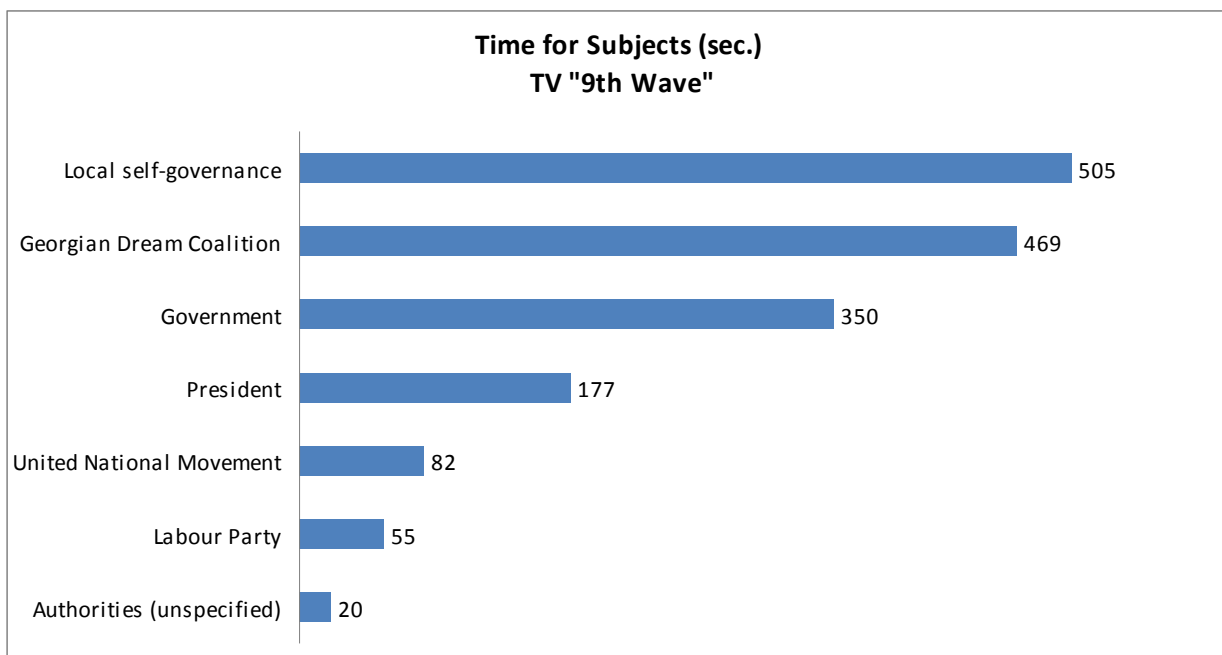
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Only in President's case (5-min coverage) direct reporting (85 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (15 percent).



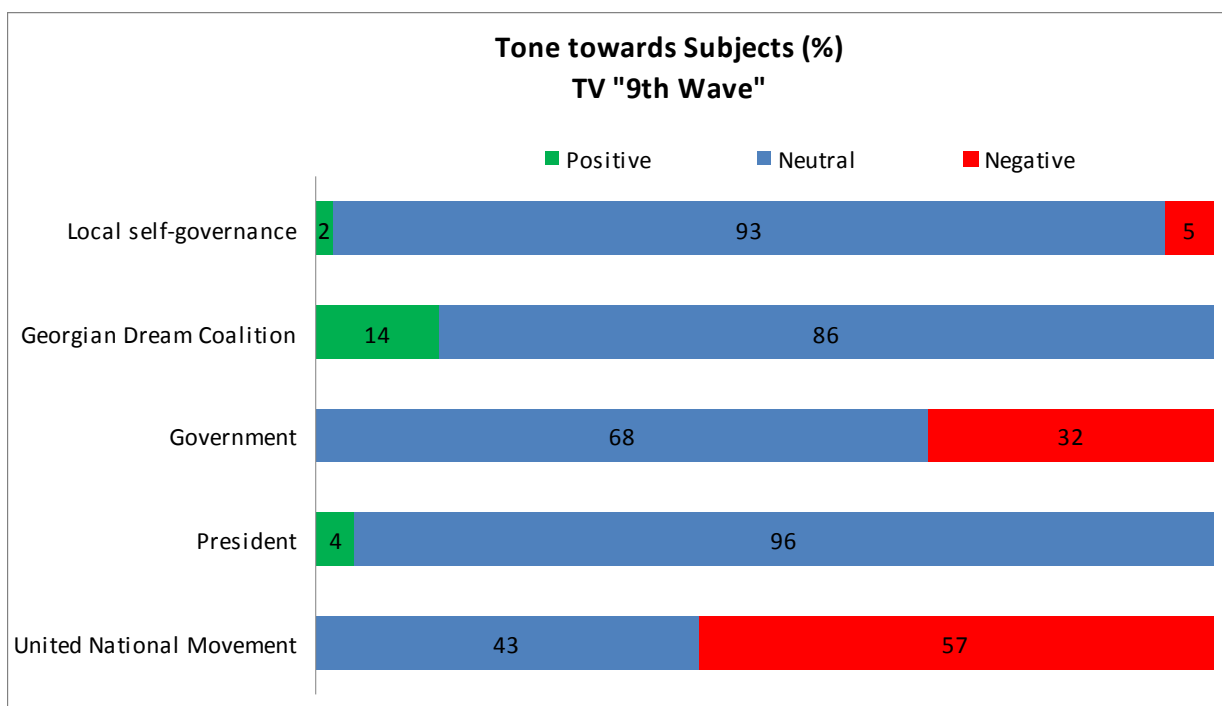
Within the period of October 15-21 TV Company Mega TV broadcast faultily. Since the communication system in the building housing the TV Company was damaged because of fire. The TV Company was able to resume broadcasting on October 17, five news programs though were still aired. The news outlets covered the events ongoing in the region as well as nationwide. TV stories are balanced; journalists' texts are neutral in tone.

Zari (Samtredia) – During the reporting period the TV Company produced two news programs with no single story about the monitored subjects.

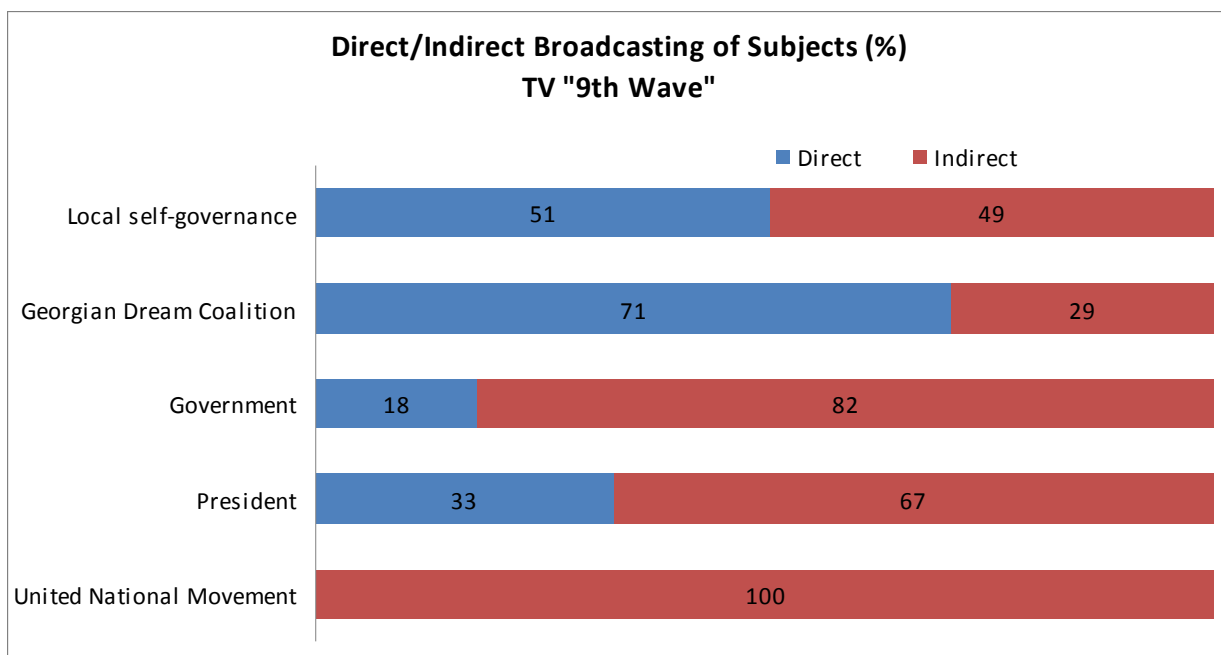
9th Wave (Poti) – The news programs on the channel dedicated the biggest share of reporting, 9 minutes, to the local self-government. The Georgian Dream coalition comes next with 8 minutes and government with 6 minutes.



All of the three tones were observed in regard to the monitored subjects, neutral tone prevailed though. 57 percent of negative tone was attached to reporting on UNM (1,35-min coverage), 14 percent of reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was positive in tone.



In regard to the local self-government the share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. When reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition direct reporting (71 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (29 percent). As for the rest of the subjects the percentage of indirect reporting was much higher.



Within the reporting week TV Company 9th Wave covered local events taking place in Poti, and also transmitted the stories produced by other regional TV Companies and the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB). The greater majority of stories were balanced; neither journalists' bias was demonstrated.

Activities to be carried out:

Within the period of October 22-28 the twelfth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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