



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

**Subagreement # S-12-155**

**Report for: July 16- 29, 2012**

*Project Period: 11 June 2012 - 10 December 2012*

*Total Budget: 31 000\$*

### ***Results Summary/Impact Statement***

#### **Main findings of the second phase of monitoring:**

- Very few of the monitored subjects are dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- Most of the regional TV companies dedicate a fair amount of time to the coverage of activities of local self governments. The coverage is always positive in tone;
- Most of the TV companies are loyal to the authorities in general;
- Marginal amount of TV companies covers developments in the country.

### ***Background***

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of July 16-29, 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), 9<sup>th</sup> 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), 9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti), Kronika (Dusheti), Egrisi (Senaki).

It is noteworthy that within the second phase of monitoring (July 16-29), like in the first one (July 2-15), it was impossible to carry out a full monitoring of all 20 TV broadcasters. Due to the reorganization the TV companies 9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti) and Zari (Samtredia) will resume the news production in August. TV companies Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) still lack self-produced news programs.

Within the period of July 16-29 several TV companies, in particular, Mega TV (Khoni), Borjomi TV (Borjomi) and 12th Channel (Bolnisi) were producing a single news program per week.

Due to the July 19 natural disaster Telavi-based TV companies Gurjaani and Tanamgzavri faced problems. As a result of the natural disaster the electricity wires were damaged, hence the region faced total blackout for a few days. Consequently Gurjaani and Tanamgzavri suspended broadcasts.

Accordingly, no news program were produced. Tanamgzavri will resume news production from August 1. The situation looks more dismal at Gurjaani TV. The TV company equipments were damaged. The company is yet unable to resume broadcasting and it is likely to take two more weeks to repair damage. But the TV company finds it hard to tell the exact date of the resumption of broadcasts. TV company LTV (Lagodekhi) was producing only certain TV stories. During the period of July 20-25 Marneuli TV was off the air due to the damage inflicted to the transmitter.

### **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.

## Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters

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

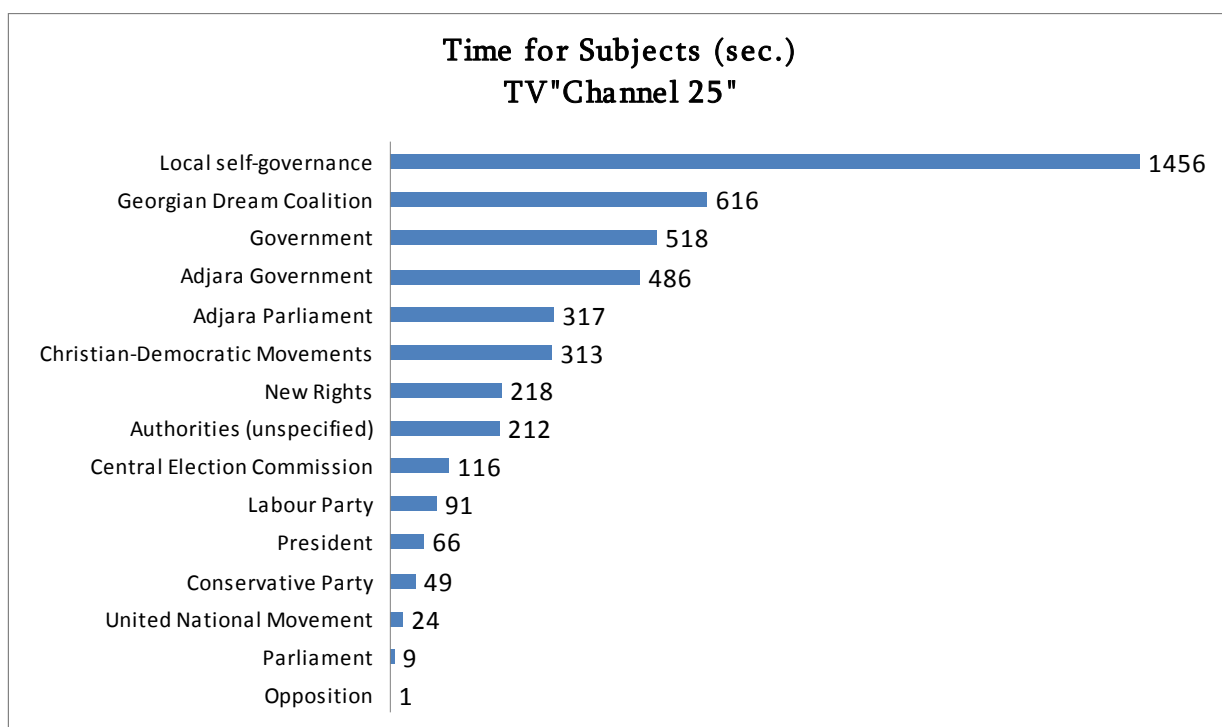
Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards, will be evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as balance or whether diverse opinions over the covered issue are represented in the stories; accuracy or whether mistakes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

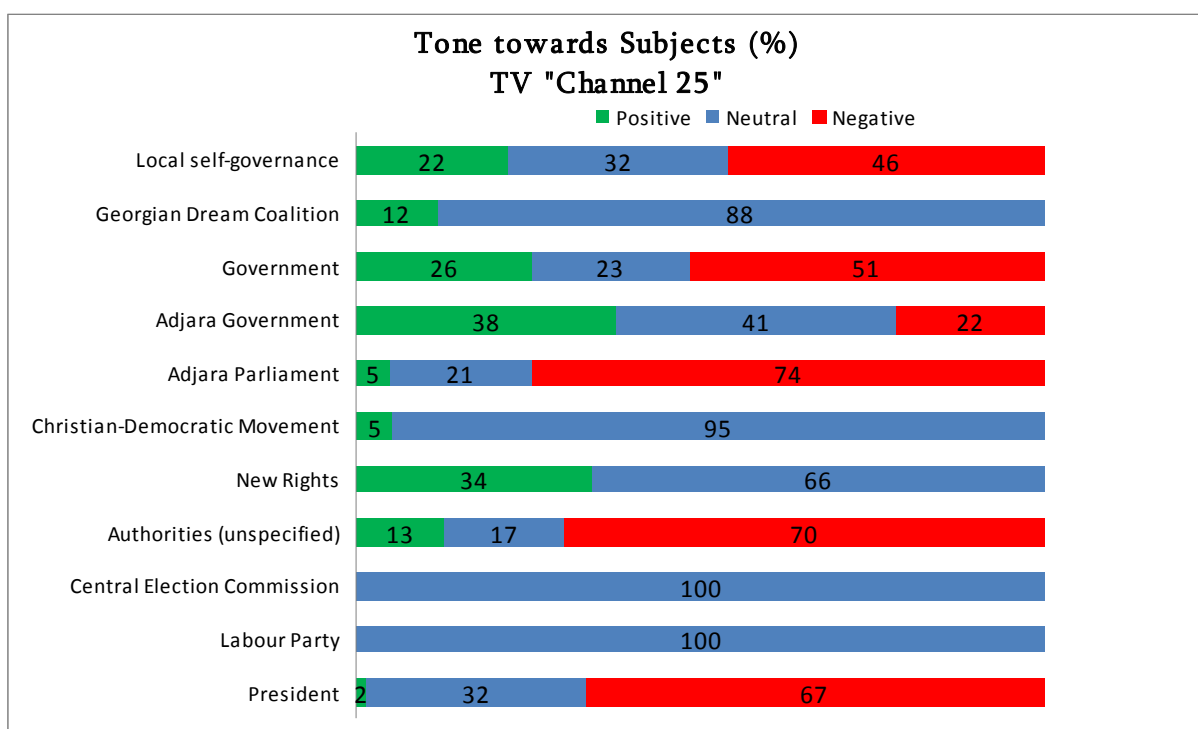
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

### **News programs monitoring results per channel:**

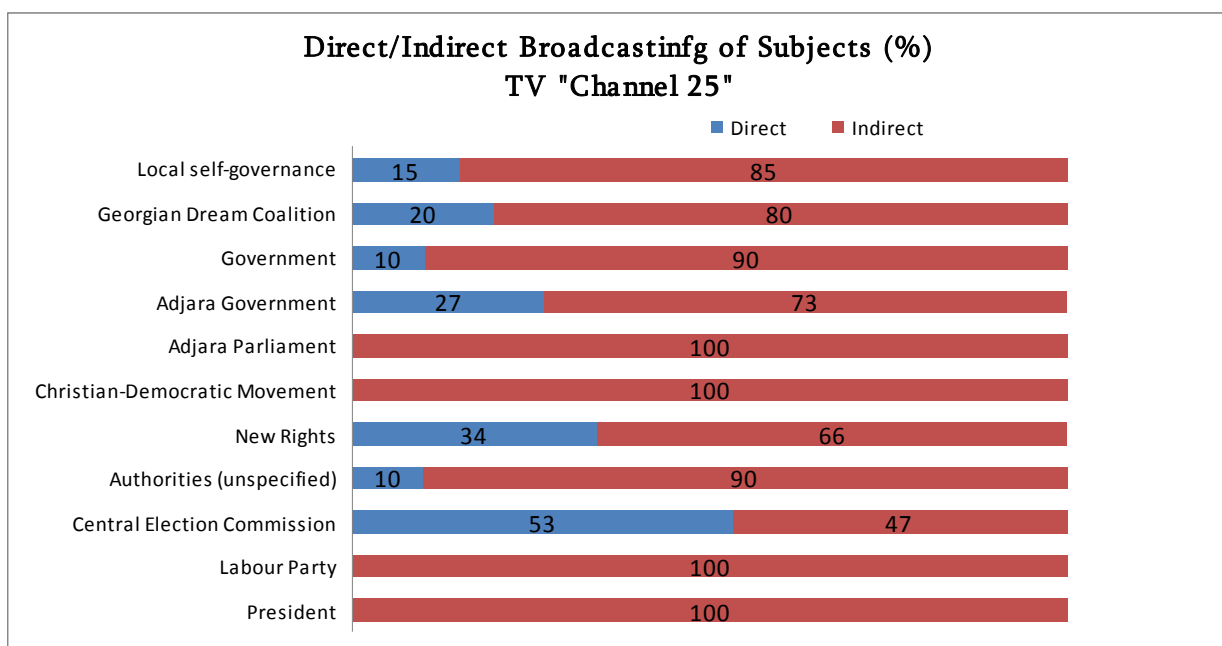
**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – The TV company dedicated most of airtime to the local self government (24 min). Opposition political coalition Georgian Dream was apportioned 11 minutes, followed by government with 9 min and the government of Adjara AR with 8 min. 5 minutes were dedicated to the Christian-Democratis Movement and the Supreme Council of Adjara per each. 4 minutes were dedicated to the New Rights.



74 per cent of the five-minute reporting on the Supreme Council of Adjara was negative in tone. The government of Adjara AR enjoyed most positive coverage (38 per cent). Neutral tone prevailed in case of Georgian Dream (88 per cent), Christian-Democratic Movement (95 per cent) and New Rights (66 per cent).

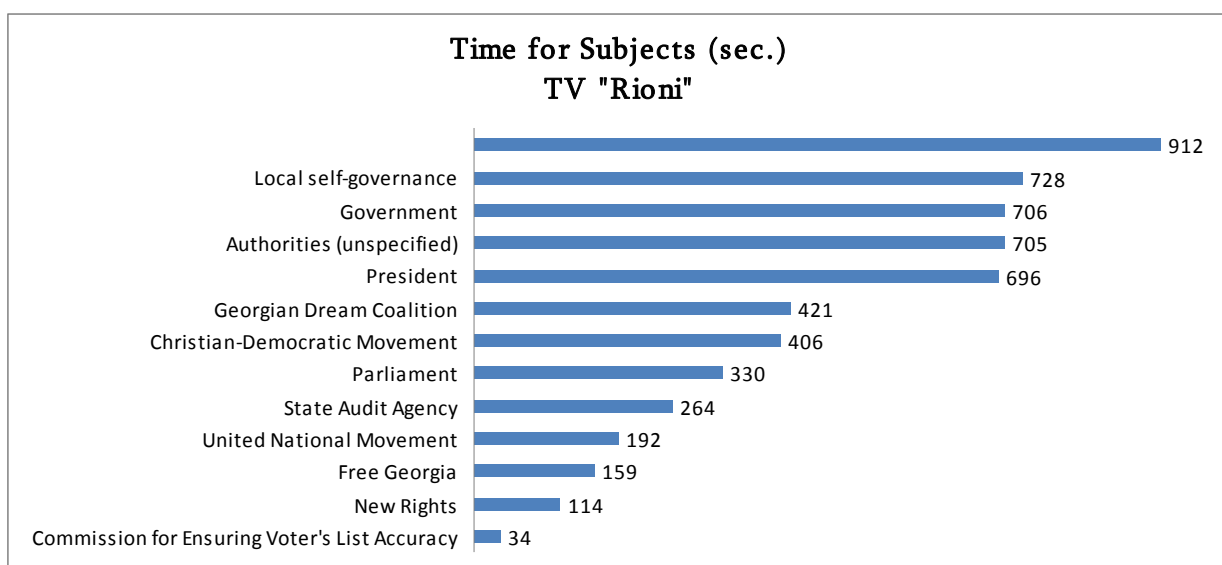


According to the chart on direct/indirect reporting indirect reporting almost always prevails over direct reporting.



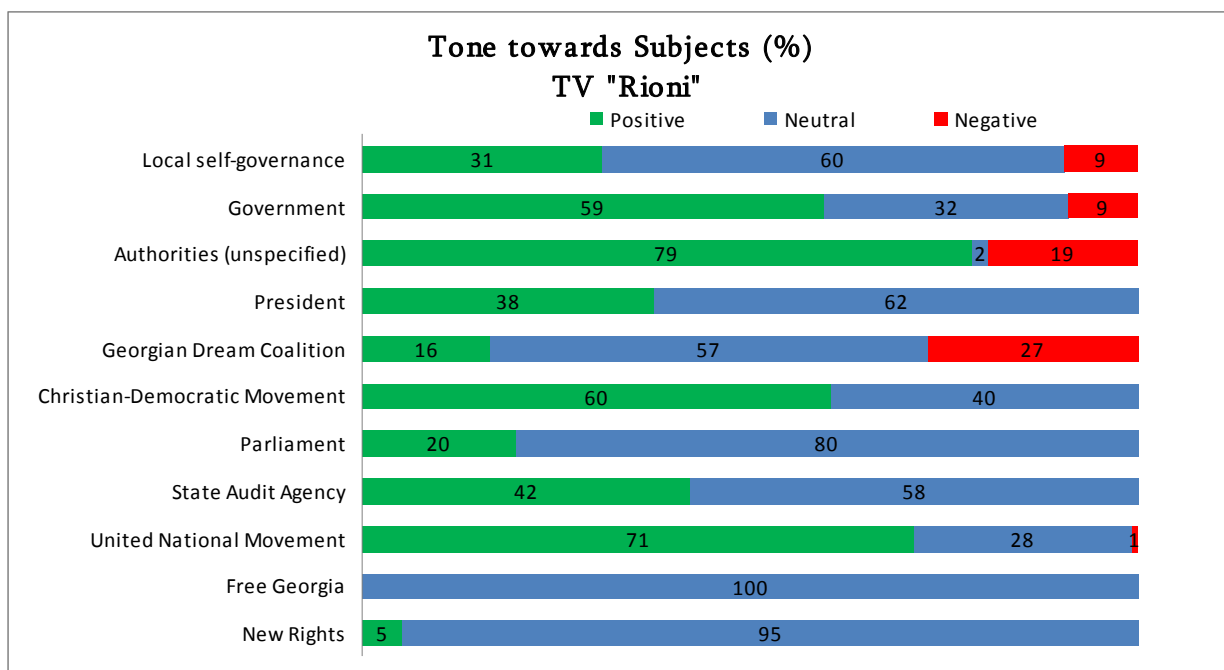
In the Channel 25 news programs journalists mostly covered political subjects in neutral tone which enables viewers to evaluate either event themselves. In general the TV company is trying to provide impartial and objective coverage of events. But it is noteworthy that in the given reporting period the diversity of subjects is not observable.

**Rioni (Kutaisi)** - In the news programs the channel dedicated most of airtime to the local self-government (15 min), followed by government, authorities (not specified), and President with 12 minutes each. The share of airtime apportioned to the rest of the subjects looks as follows: coalition Georgian Dream – 7 min, Christian-Democratic Movement - 6 min, United National Movement – 3 min, Free Georgia – 3 min, New Rights - 2 min.

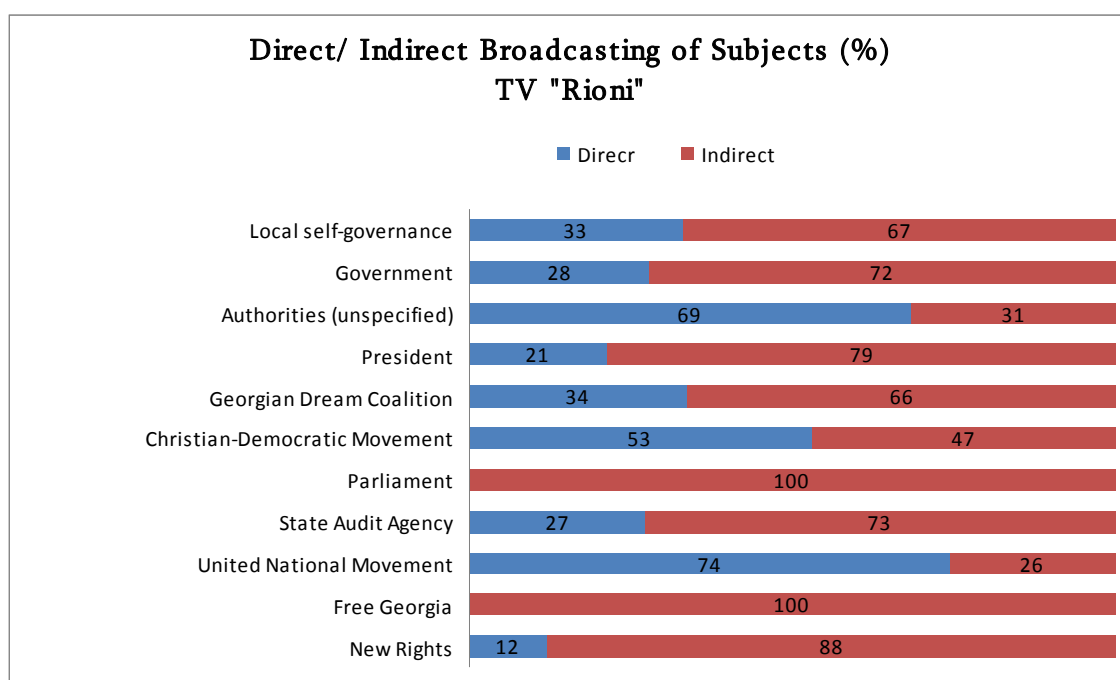


## Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters

The biggest share of positive reporting falls on the authorities (79 per cent), United National Movement (71 per cent) and Christian-Democratic Movement (60 per cent). All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the coalition Georgian Dream, authorities, government and local self-government. The most negative tone was attached to the reporting on coalition Georgian Dream (27 per cent) and authorities (19 per cent).



Taking into account the airtime apportioned indirect reporting on subjects prevails. But high percentage of direct reporting was observed too in regard to the authorities (74 per cent), United National Movement (69 per cent) and Christian-Democratic Movement (53 per cent).



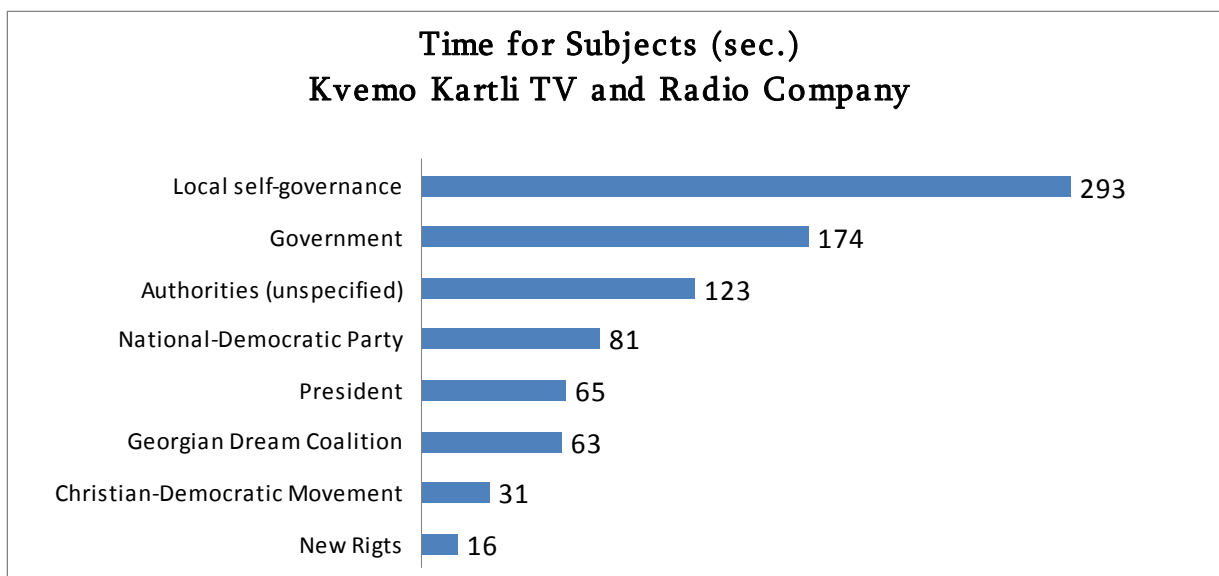
The TV company was aggressively covering news at the regional as well as national levels. In the past two weeks one of the main topics of news programs was the natural disaster in Kakheti, with the majority of airtime dedicated to President's and the government's members visits to Kakheti. Accordingly, governmental structures enjoyed most of TV coverage.

Greater majority of TV stories lack balance and are biased. For instance the July 26 news program started with the appointment of the new head of the State Audit Agency. According to the TV story some of MPs voted against Laha Tordia for the position of General Auditor. Nevertheless the positions of the opponent party were not covered.

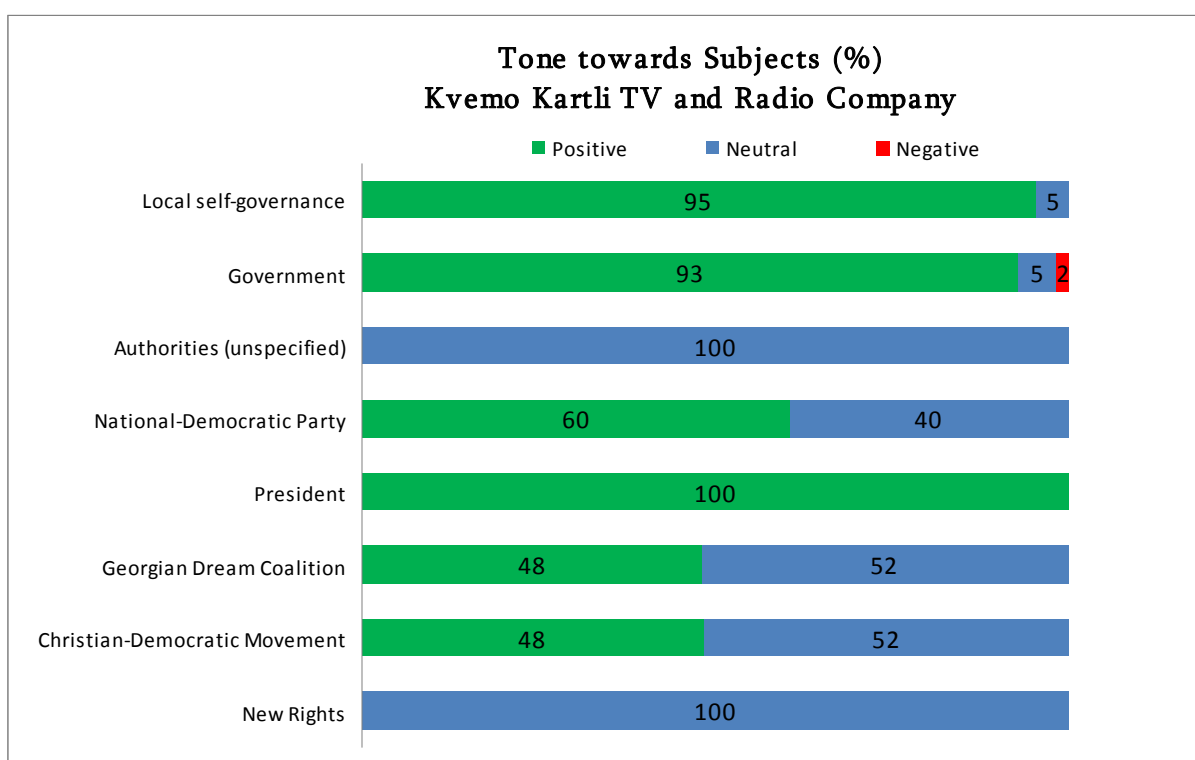
It is noteworthy that Rioni TV the percentage of negative reporting is minor. News programs mainly provide news about recent developments but evaluation, critics or case-related interpretations are missing.

**Kvemo Kartli TV and Radio Company (Rustavi)** – The majority of airtime was dedicated to the local self-government (5 min), followed by government (3 min), and authorities (2 min). The rest of the subjects were provided no coverage they were just mentioned.

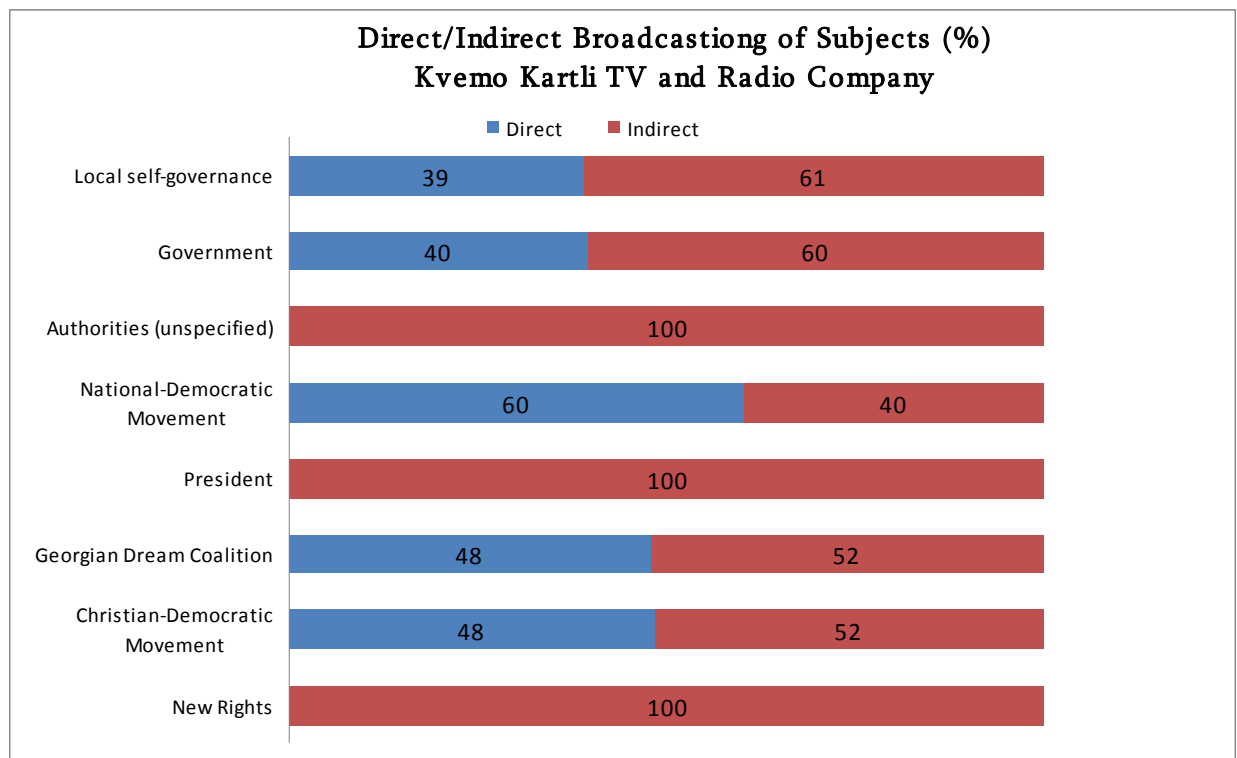




High percentage of positive tone was observed in regard to the most reported subjects: local self-governance – 95 per cent, government – 93 percent and authorities -100 percent.



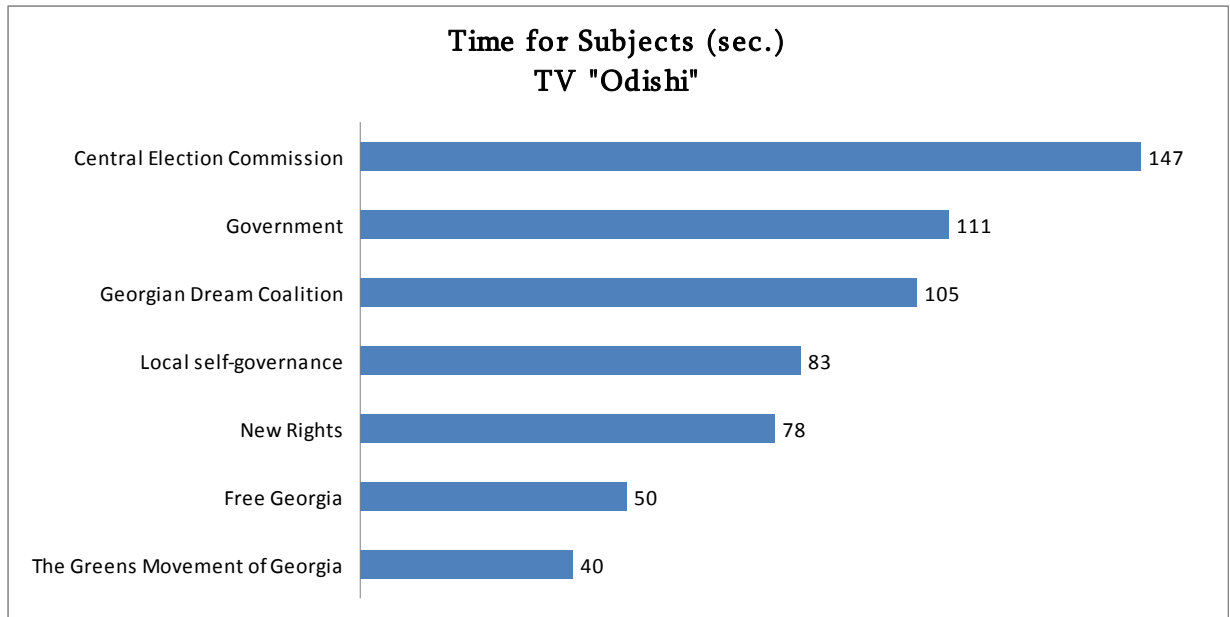
Indirect reporting prevails over direct reporting in regard to subjects.



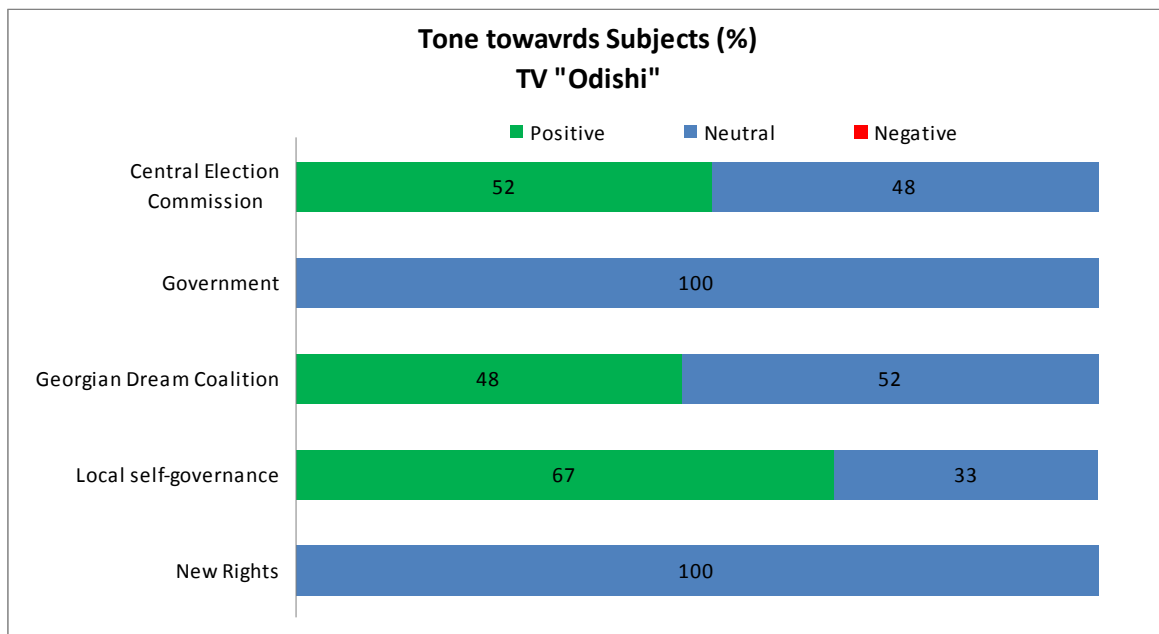
The TV company provides the coverage of regional events. The activities carried out by local self-government are rather aggressively covered, mostly in a positive manner. For instance, in the July 23 news outlet no in-depth coverage or demonstration of dissenting opinions was provided to the problems the population faces. The time dedicated to the subjects of our interest is too little to make certain evaluations. The rest of the monitored subjects were dedicated very little airtime. Therefore the survey finds it hard to provide a qualitative analysis.

**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – The TV company dedicated most of airtime (2 min) to the reporting on the Central Election Commission, government and the Georgian Dream coalition per each. The rest of the political subjects were provided almost no coverage.

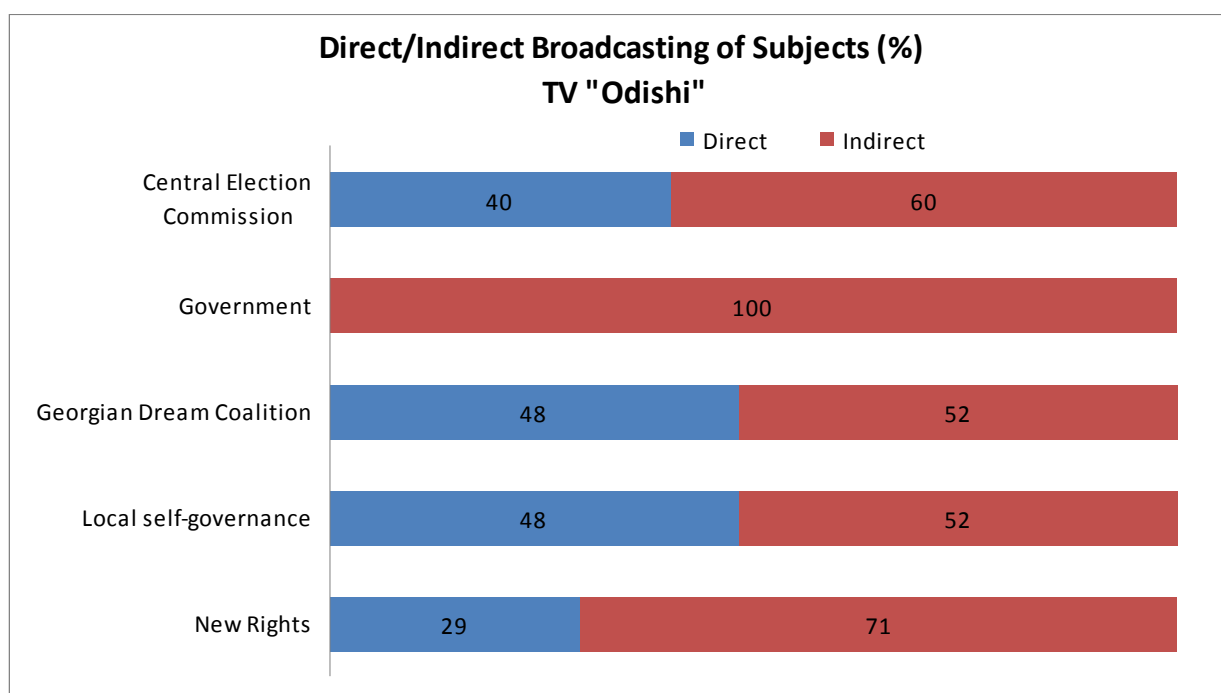
## Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters



The reporting on the monitored subjects was positive and negative in tone.



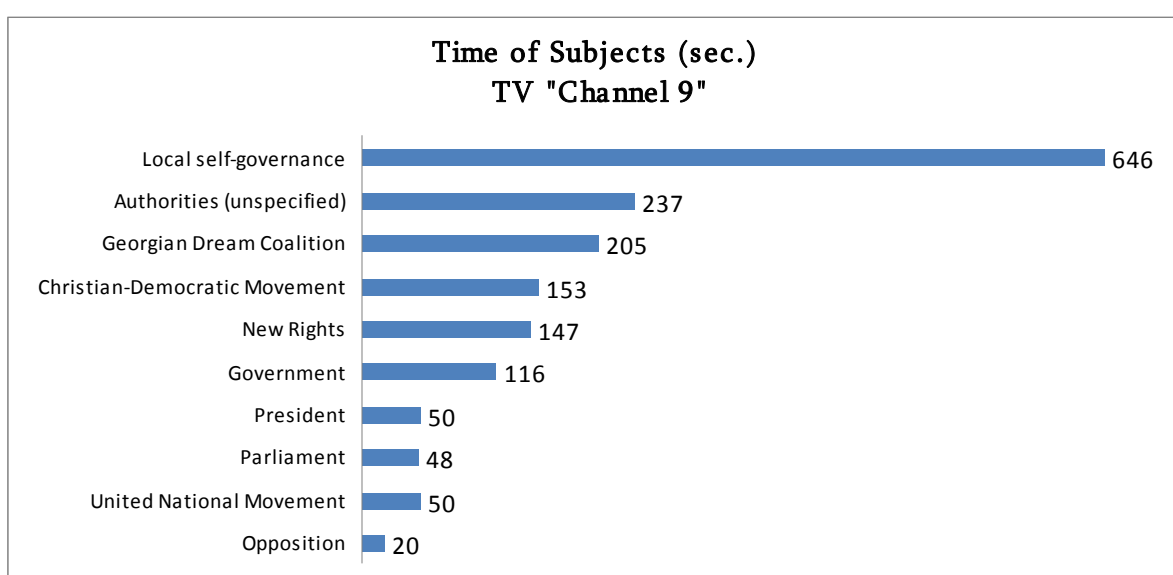
The percentage of direct-indirect reporting looks as follows:



The TV company reports little on the monitored subjects. In the past two weeks six news programs were aired, in the July 24 and 26 outlets the subjects of our monitoring were not mentioned.

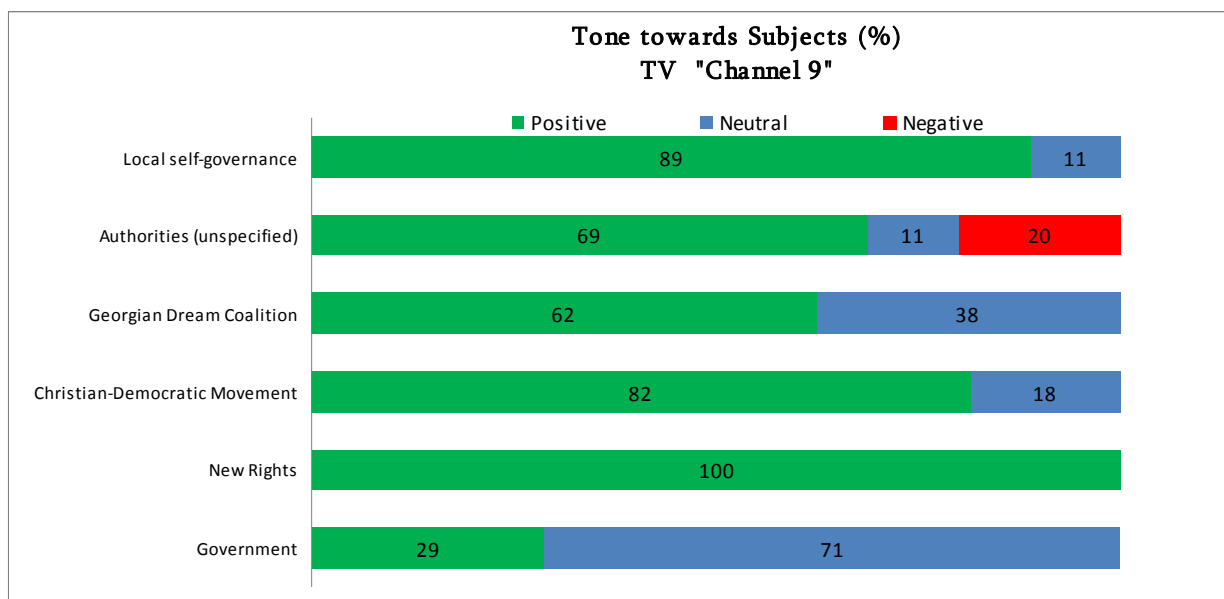
Nevertheless the little time (10 min) dedicated to the subjects of our interest was almost equally distributed for the reporting on governmental structures and opposition parties.

**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Alkhaltsikhe)** - The distribution of airtime dedicated to the subjects looks as follows: 11 minutes – local self-government, 4 minutes – authorities (unspecified), 4 minutes – coalition Georgian Dream, 3 minutes – Christian-Democratic Movement and 3 minutes – New Rights.

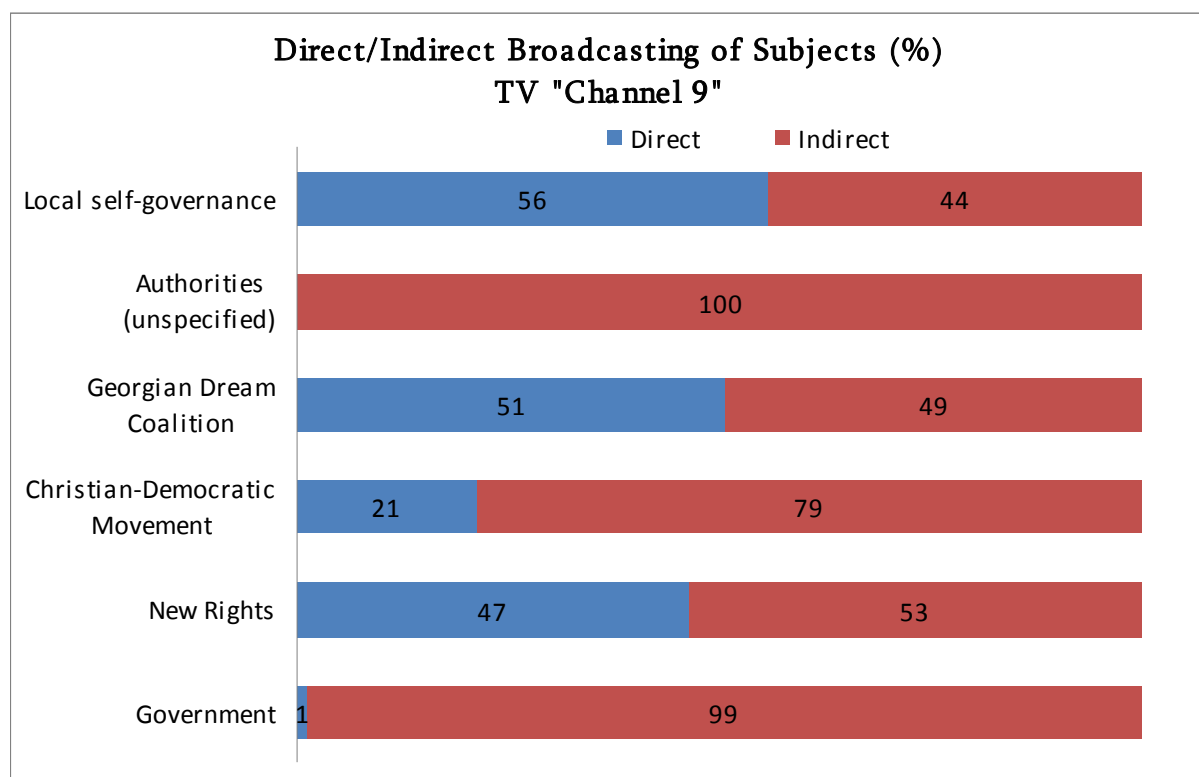


The tone of reporting was mainly neutral, only 20 per cent of negative tone was observed in regard to the authorities.

## Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters



According to the chart indirect reporting on the authorities, government and Christian-Democratic Movement prevailed greatly over direct reporting. In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition (51 per cent / 49 per cent), local self-government (54 per cent / 44 per cent) and New Rights (47 per cent / 53 per cent) indirect and indirect reporting was almost equal.

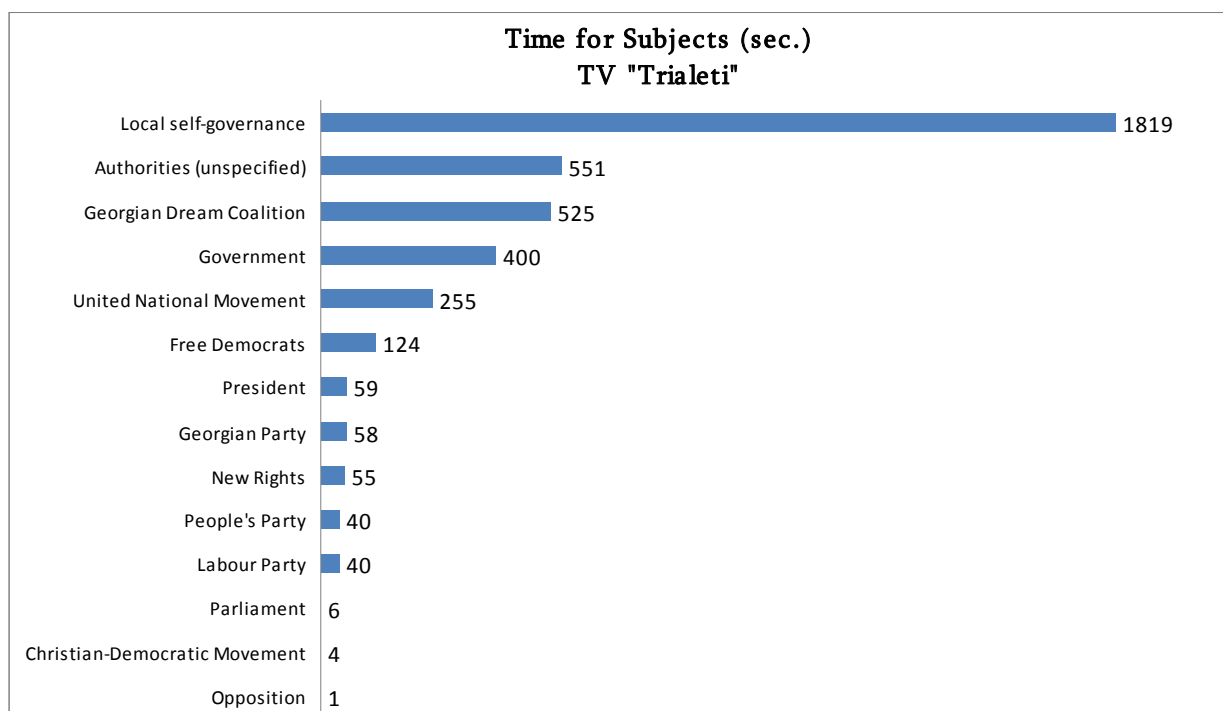


Within the reporting period the main topic of news programs was the aid provided by the local self-government to population affected by the natural disaster. The first TV story in the July 19 news program demonstrates journalists' stance in favor of the local self government. The journalist says:

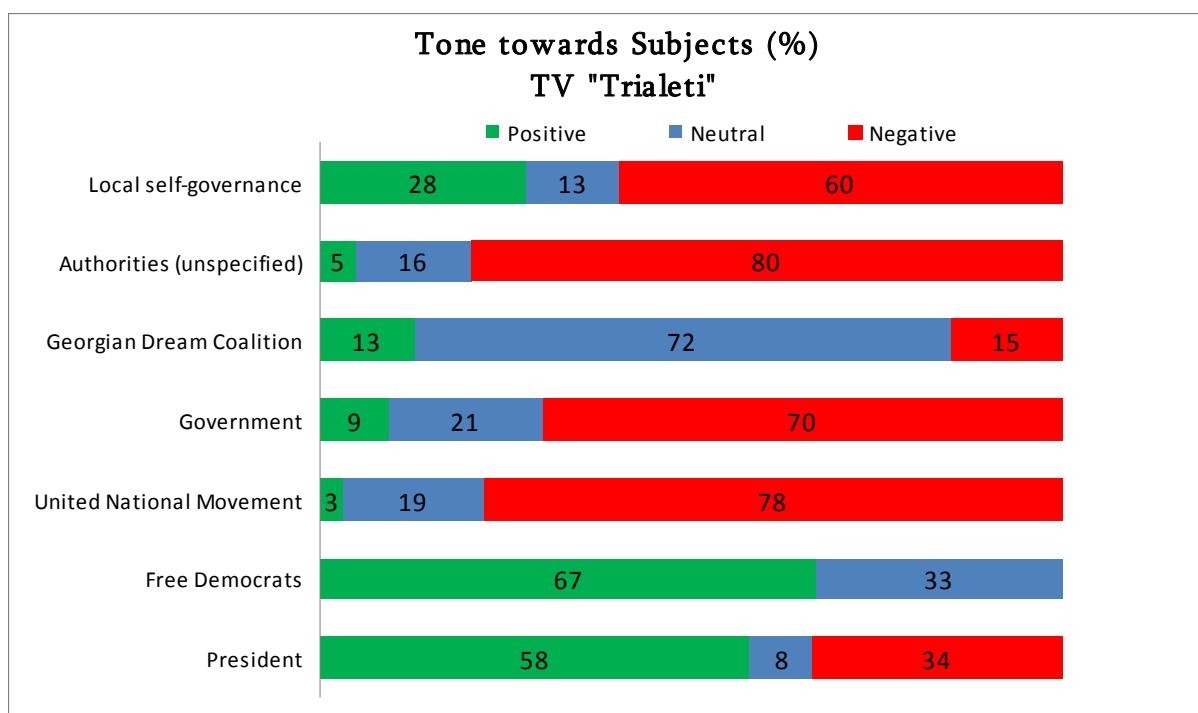
“Aspindza Municipality calculated damage in the shortest period and the provision or compensations will be launched in a short while.” The third TV story in the July 26 news program features State aid provided to three villages in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The journalist’s position is very much evident here too when pointing out “aid to the aforementioned villages was delivered in full quantities.” The TV stories feature the delivery of compensation to the population by the local municipality, the government representatives are visible as well. The story contains the comments by the citizens stating how important this aid is to them and they way they are expressing their gratitude to the government.

It is noteworthy that within the reporting period 9<sup>th</sup> Wave virtually did not provide a negative coverage of the monitored subjects.

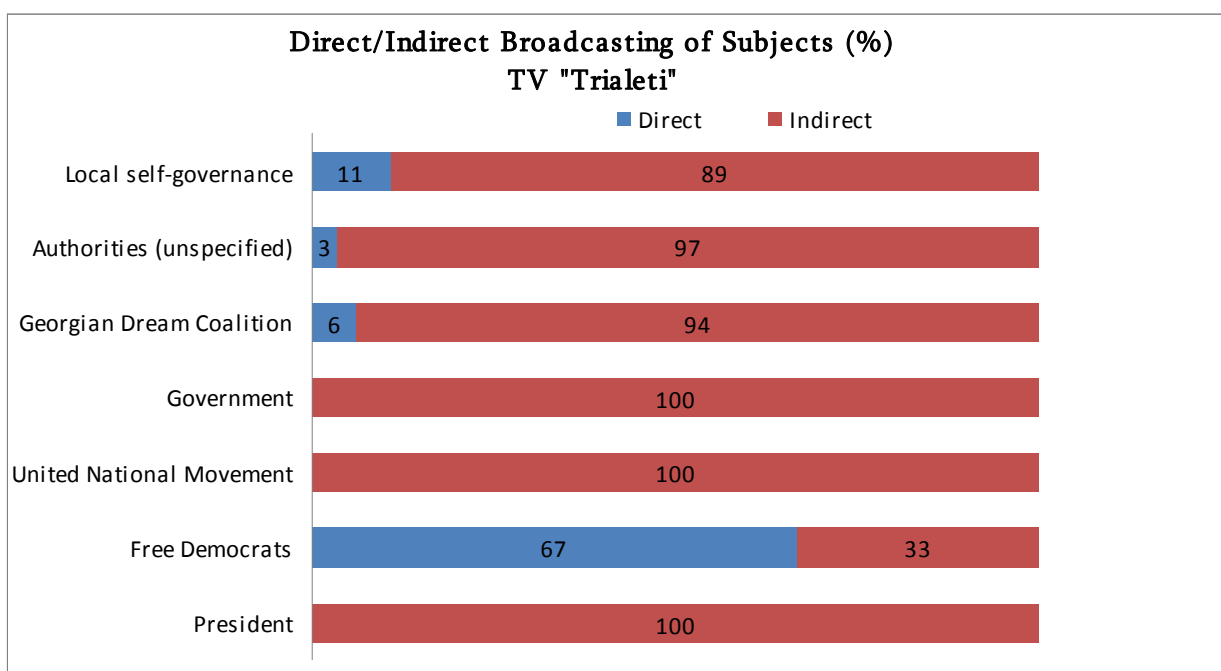
**Trialeti, (Gori)** – The TV news airtime dedicated to the monitored subjects was distributed in the following way: the biggest share - 30 min - falls on the local elf-government, followed by the authorities and the Georgian Dream coalition with 9 minutes each. 7 and 4 minutes were dedicated to the government and the United National Movement respectively.



All of three tones were observed when reporting on the subjects of our interest. The highest percentage of negative tone was observed in regard to the authorities - 80 per cent, followed by government with 70 per cent and local self-government with 60 per cent. The highest percentage - 72 per cent - in terms of neutral coverage was observed in regard to the coalition Georgian Dream.



Indirect reporting prevails direct reporting in relation to every subject.

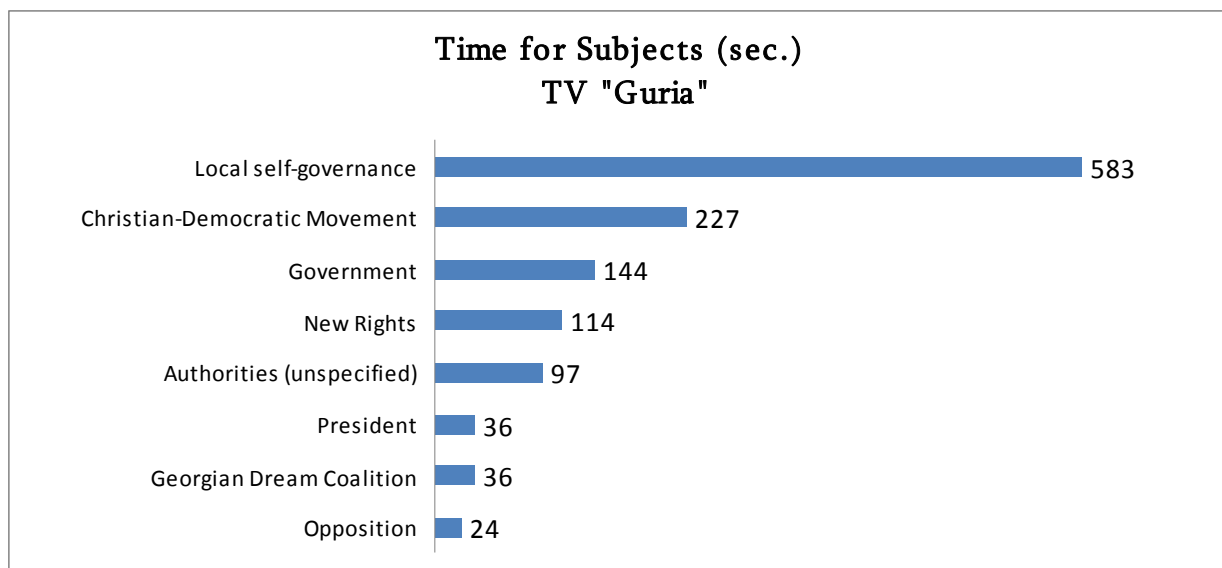


The TV company aggressively covers current problems and events ongoing in the region. TV stories often contain journalists allegations that the representatives of the local self government and the authorities in general do not respond to their questions.

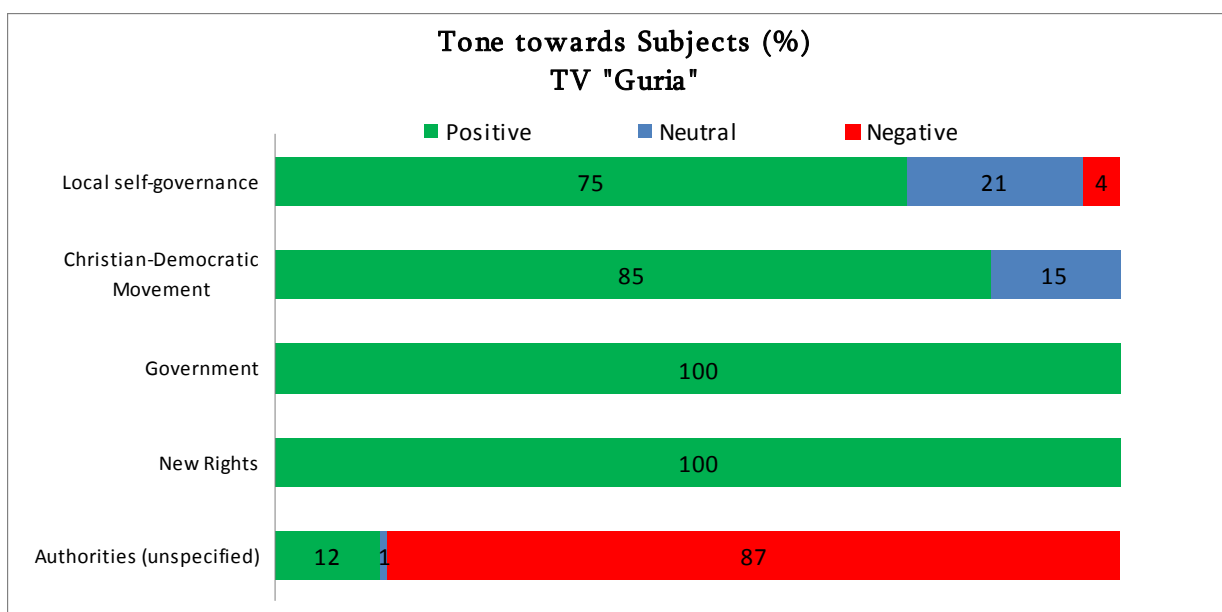
Within the reporting period the coverage of the subject of our interest was not diverse. The activities carried out by the local self government were covered in the main. The coverage was mostly negative in tone - citizens expressed their discontent. In the July 20 TV story about the problems in the village

of Nikozi demonstrated the journalist’s stance to the authorities: “The Nikozi village dwellers have been asking for the attention of the authorities for years now.”

**Guria, (Ozurgeti)** - Local self-government enjoyed the biggest share of coverage (10 min), followed by Christian-Democratic Movement (4 min), government (3 min) and New Rights (2 min).

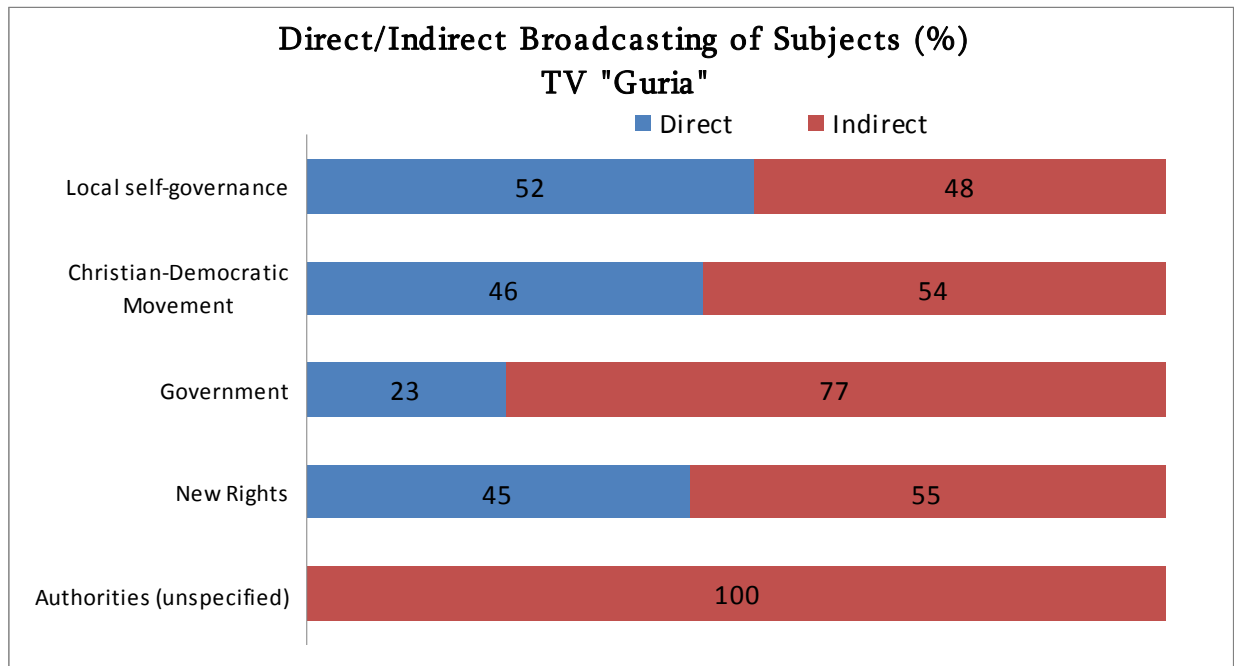


All three tones were observed in regard to the local self-government: 75 per cent positive, 21 per cent neutral and 4 per cent negative. 85 percent of reporting on Christian-Democratic Movement was positive in tone, 15 per cent – neutral. The coverage provided in regard to the government was positive throughout three minutes dedicated.



Direct/indirect reporting was observed in regard to all of the subjects covered.

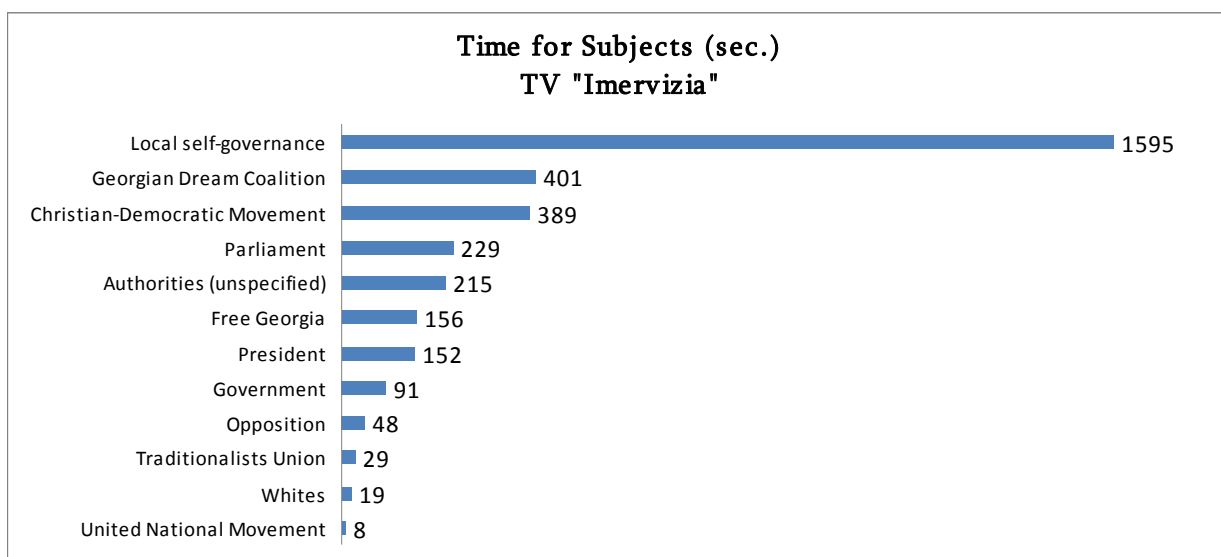




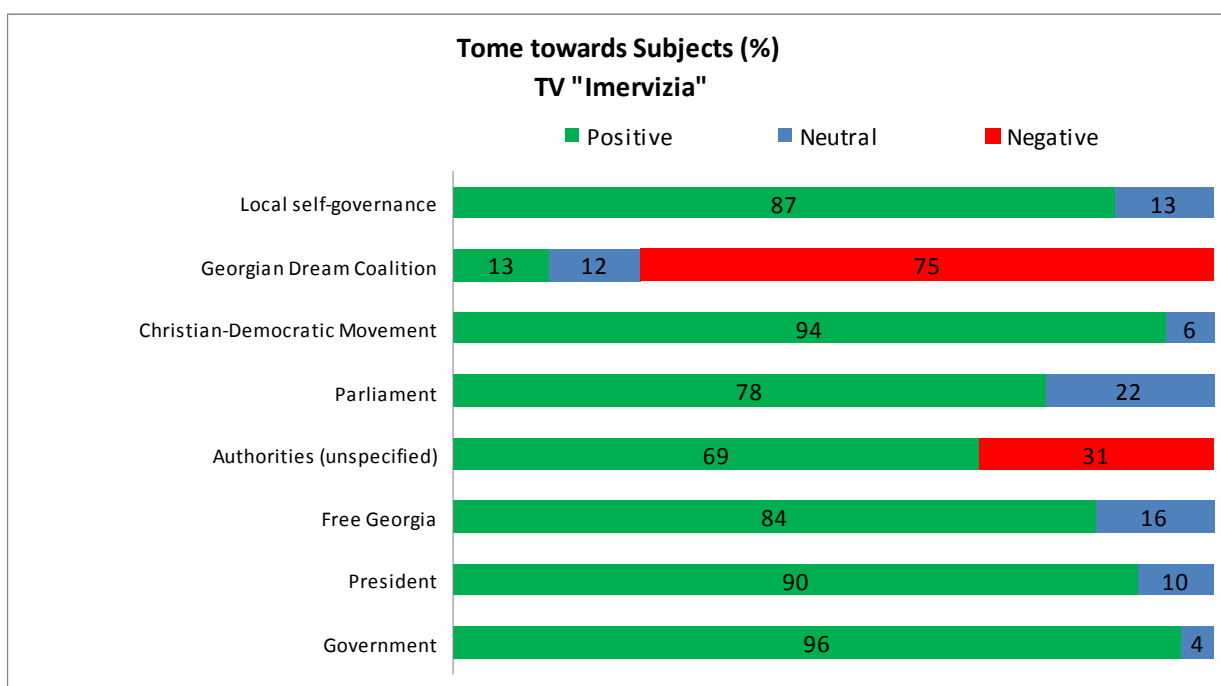
The TV company essentially reports on local news. Journalist's loyal stance is evident to the local and central authorities. At the end of the July 24 news program about the road pavement in the village of Makvaneti in Ozurgeti region the journalist provides a direct conclusion: "A lot has been done for the village."

The terms used by the journalist (e.g. a set of the events funded, the team promised to be supported by the authorities) mostly demonstrates support to the local self-government. In the TV story of the July 27 news program about the support demonstrated by the authorities to the Guria football team the journalist says: "The team being promised to be supported by local authorities is ready for future success."

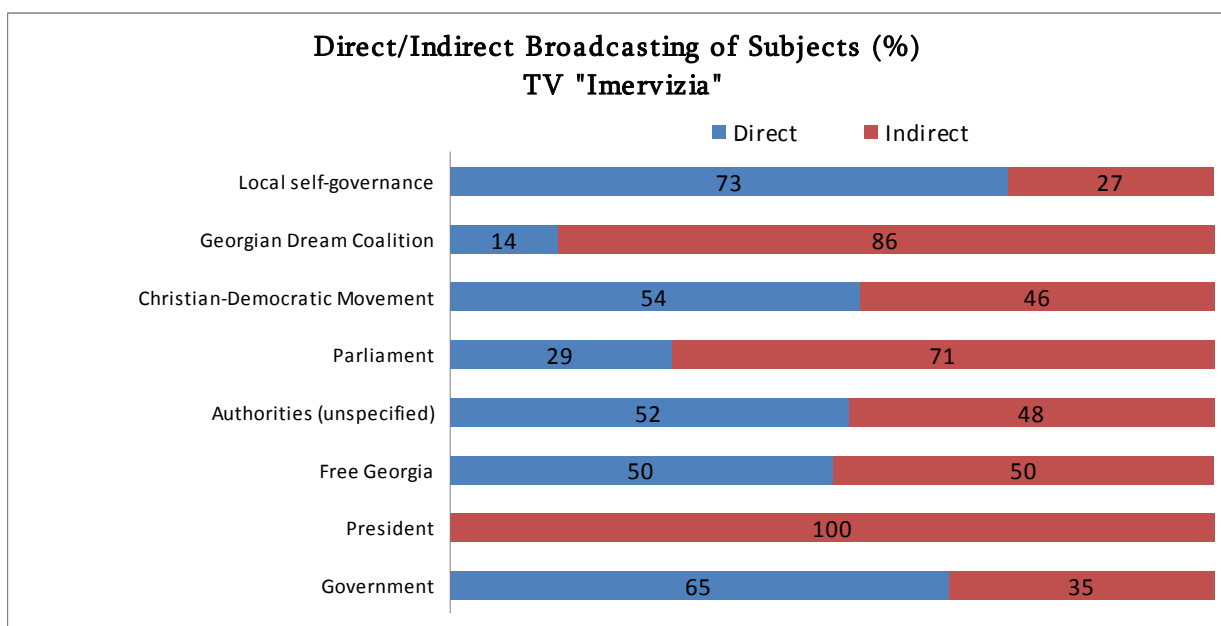
**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – In the news programs the TV company dedicated most of airtime (27 min) to the local self-government. 7-7 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and Christian-Democratic Movement. 4-4 minutes were apportioned for reporting on the Parliament and the authorities (unspecified), 3-3 minutes to the President and Free Georgia.



Out of the monitored subjects the most of the negative tone was attached to the Georgian Dream coalition (75 per cent). The tone of reporting on President, local self-government, Parliament, authorities was clearly positive. High percentage of positive tone was observed in case of Christian-Democratic Movement (94 per cent) and Free Democrats (84 per cent).



The highest percentage of direct reporting was observed in case of local self-government (73 per cent) and government (65 per cent). Indirect reporting was observed in relation to President (100 per cent), the Georgian Dream coalition (86 per cent) and Parliament (71 per cent).

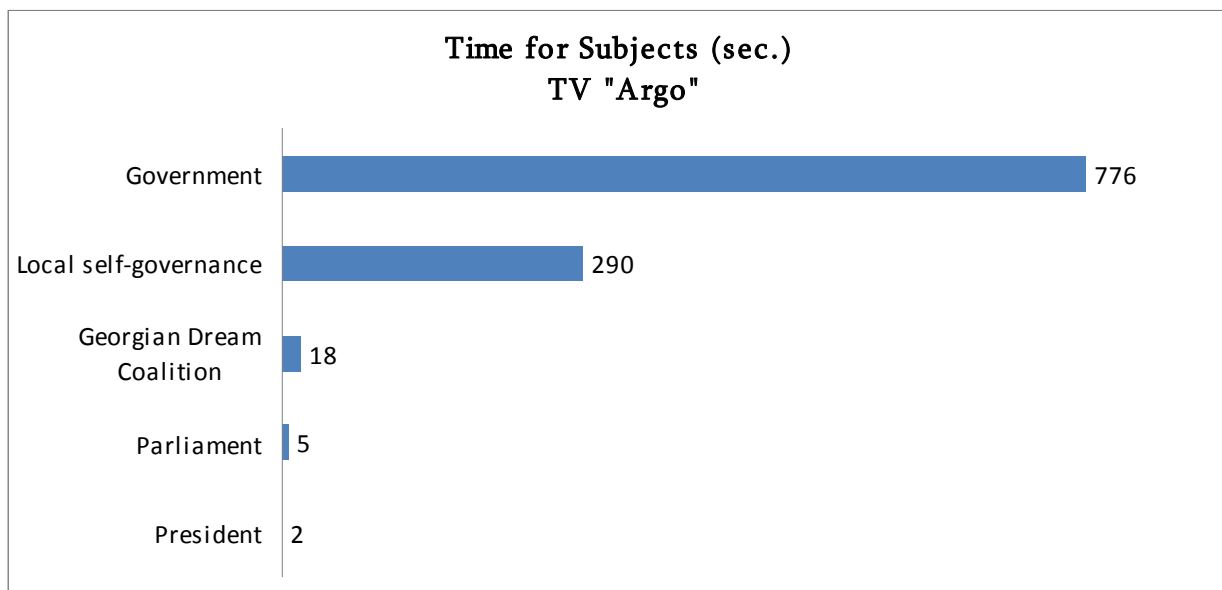


The TV company is dedicating a fair amount of airtime to the reporting on the representatives of the local self-government and especially the coverage of the Chiatura Municipality Gemgebeli activities. A considerable amount of airtime is apportioned to the interviews with the local self government representatives. Even with the idea being clear and the previous statement being reiterated the interview still goes on uninterrupted. The first TV story in the July 24 news program discussed the sitting of the local self-government featuring Gangebeli speaking for over four minutes. In the same report the sitting of the local Municipality Sakrebulo was on air for 15 minutes.

The July 26 news program discussed the debates held at the Parliament over the GEL 80 mln fine imposed on the Georgian Dream coalition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili. The story features the viewpoints of the minority and the majority in relation to the aforementioned case and only at the very end of the TV story the journalist clarifies what the debates were about. The person unaware of the case would be confused since the beginning of the TV story features the representatives of the authorities making a negative mention of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the response provided by the parliamentary opposition. While the main reason of the debates (the motive for the payment of fine imposed on Bidzina Ivanishvili) is clarified at the end of the TV story in a few words. Viewers may have the impression that the journalist is trying not to present the activities carried out by the Georgian Dream coalition in a clear manner.

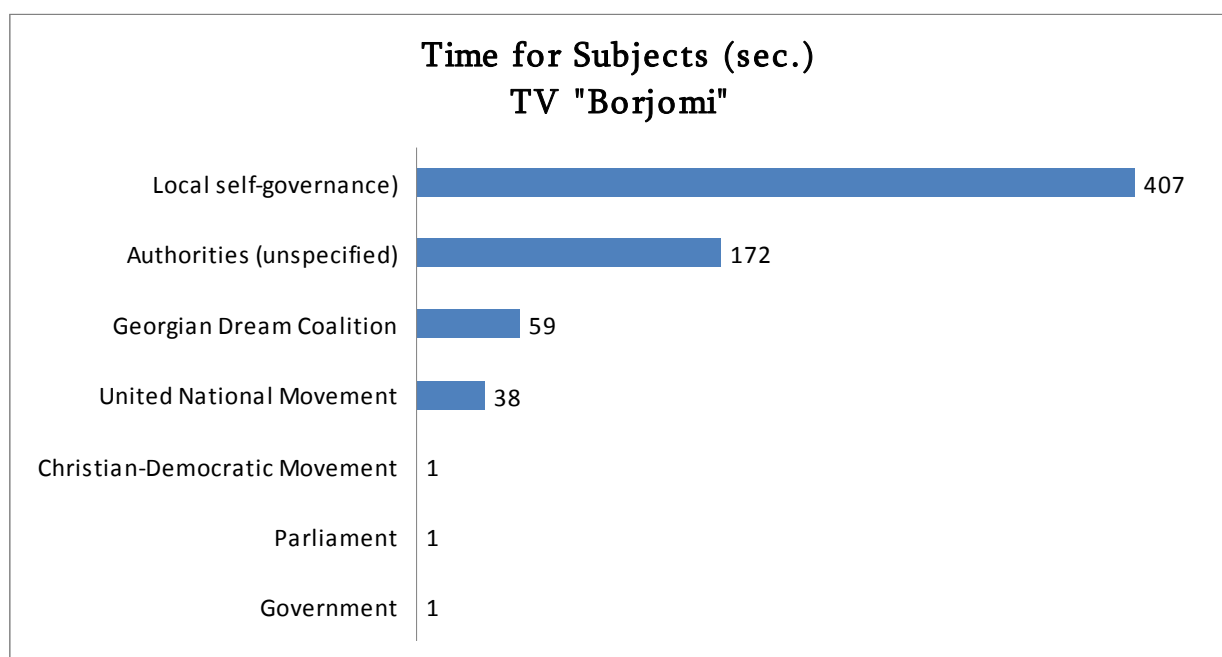
**Argo (Zestaponi)** – The news programs mostly covered the government – 13 min. The local self government was dedicated 5 minutes. Both subjects were covered in a positive tone (government - 95

per cent and local self government – 98 per cent) through direct reporting (government - 85 per cent and local self government – 87 per cent)



TV company Argo limited itself to reporting on local news. News programs are brief. Monitored subjects are often never mentioned. In the reporting period only two subjects were talked about: government (13 min) and local self-government (5 min). The whole news outlet of July 24 was dedicated to the interview with Imereti governor.

**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – Almost no coverage was provided for the subjects of our interest. Only local self government (7min) and authorities (3 min) were covered.



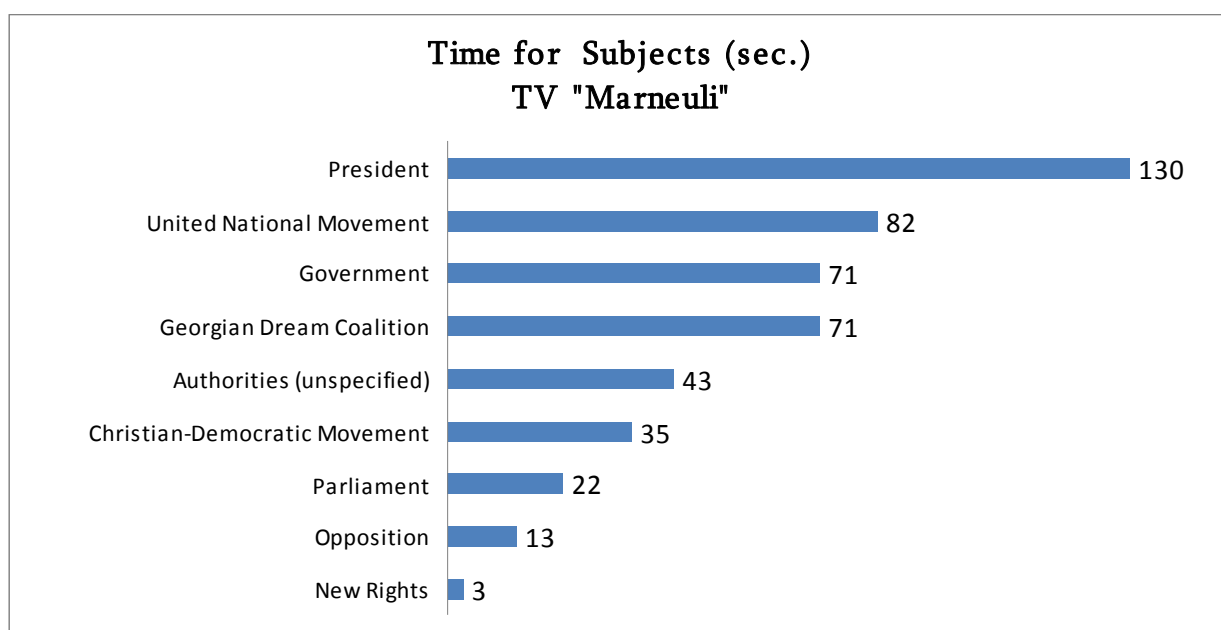
Due to the little airtime dedicated to the subjects the analysis of the data makes no sense in terms of tone and direct/indirect reporting.

Within the reporting period the TV company produced three main news programs. But political events were provided minor coverage. Accordingly, a bit more than one minute was dedicated to two monitored subjects including local self government and authorities.

The TV stories within the news programs mainly covered social issues through the interviews obtained from the representatives of the local self government. It is noteworthy that the tone of coverage in regard to the authorities and the local self government was positive and neutral.

**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** - The most of airtime (2 min) in the news programs was dedicated to reporting on President. 95 per cent of reporting was neutral in tone. The rest of the subjects were not covered.

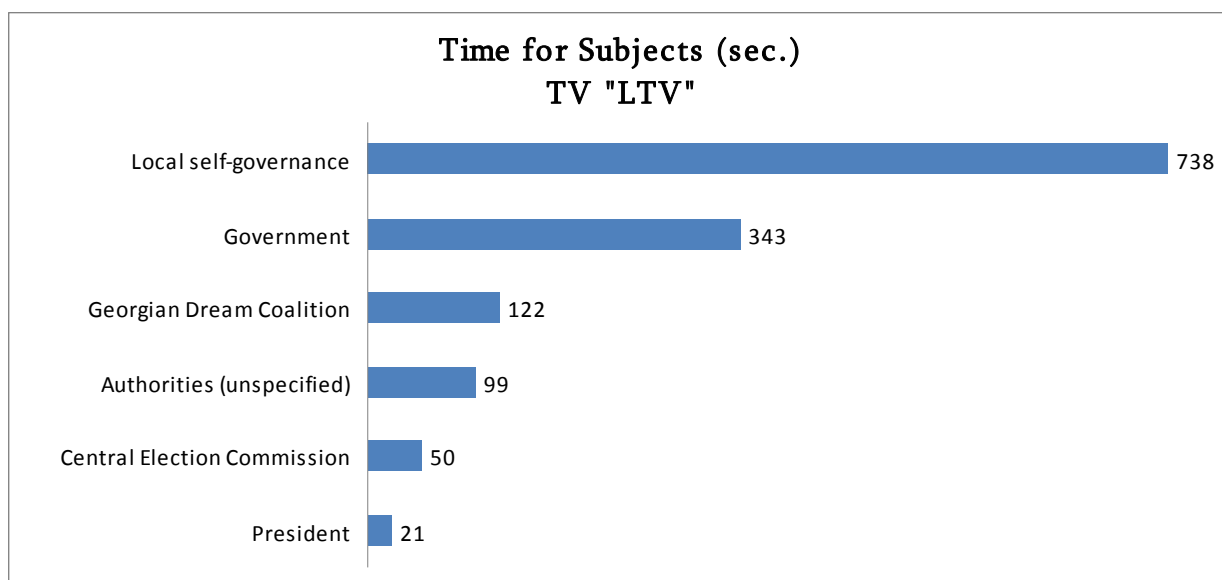
Due to the scarce time dedicated to the subjects it is difficult to discuss the tone and trends of direct/indirect reporting.



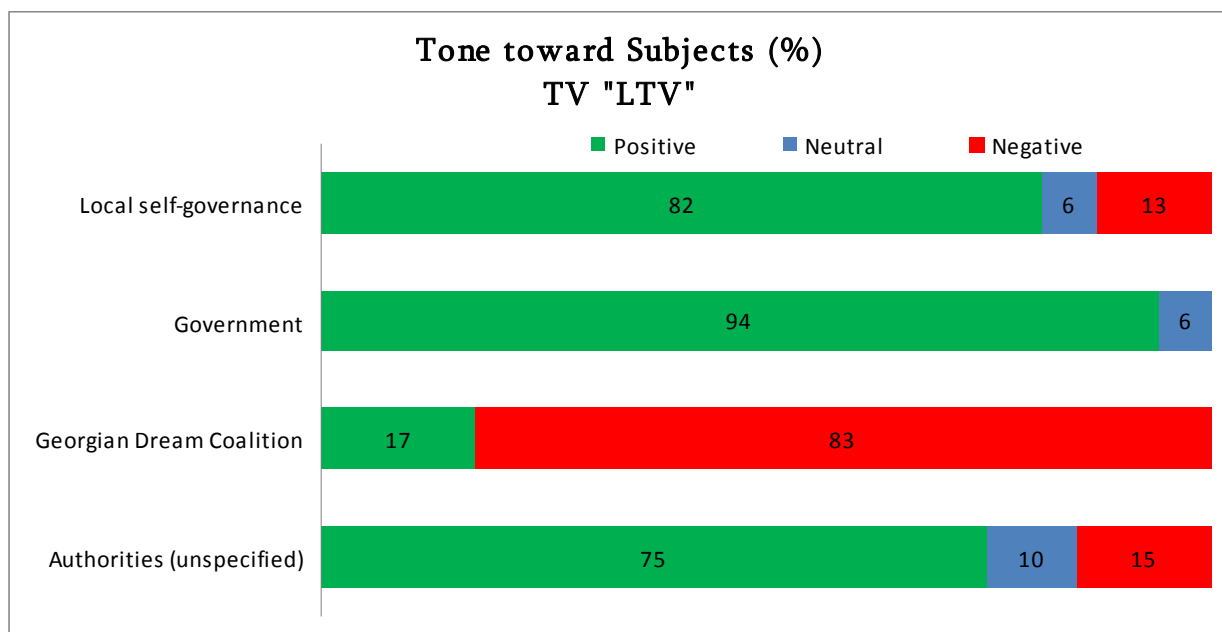
Due to the damage of the transmitter during the reporting period only six programs were produced. Political events ongoing in the country were mostly covered. Some stories were dedicated to the natural disaster in Kakheti. But the monitored subjects were provided almost no coverage. Therefore it's a little but hard to make a qualitative analysis. It is noteworthy that in most cases the TV story is suddenly interrupted and it's hard to get the idea. For instance, the interview aired in the July 17 news program was sharply interrupted when the head of the Open Society Georgia Foundation was talking about a politically sensitive topic such as pre-election environment in Georgia. Same with, the

July 16 interview with the head of International Society for Fair Election and Democracy gets interrupted in a way.

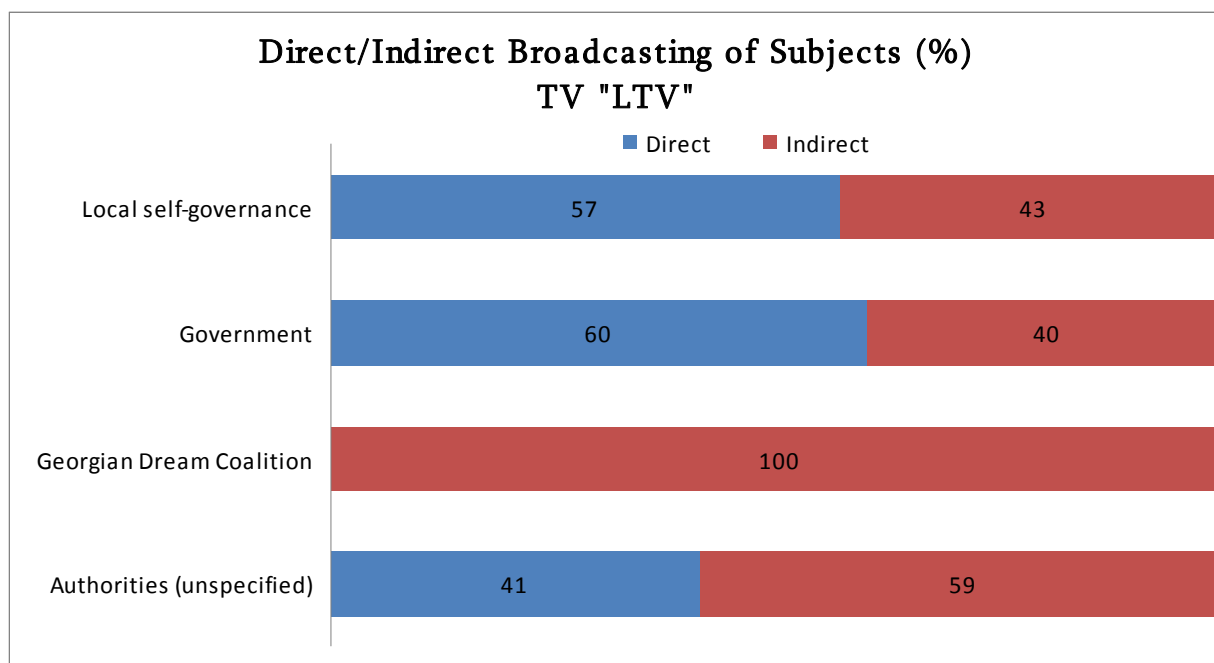
**LTV (Lagodekhi)** – The most of the airtome was dedicated to the local self government (12 min). 6 and 2 minutes were dedicated to government and the Georgian Dream coalition respectively.



94 per cent of positive tone was observed in regard to the government as well as local self government (82 per cent) and the authorities (75 per cent). The most negative tone was attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition.



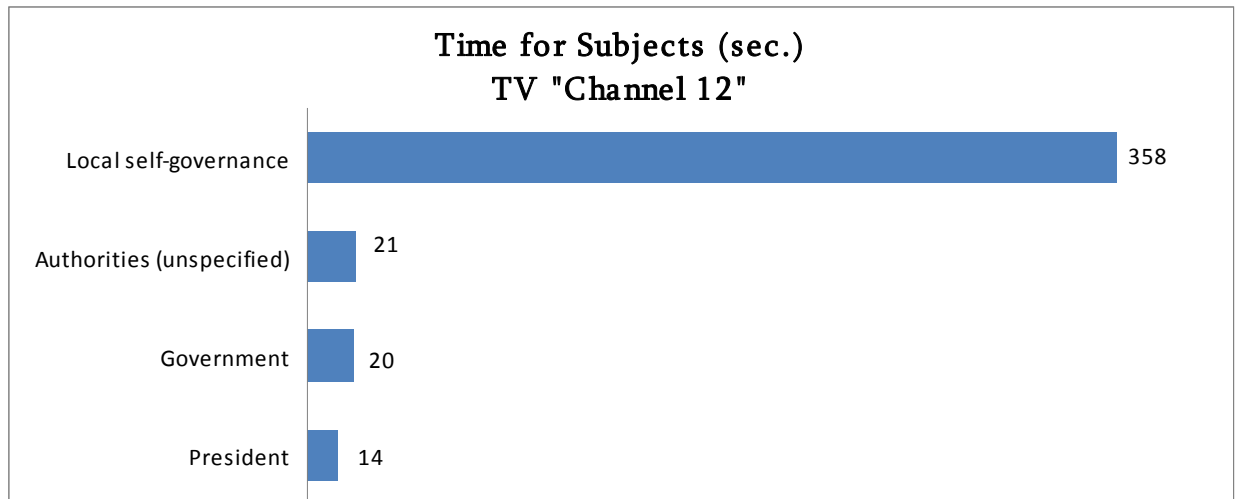
Out of the covered subjects only the Georgian Dream coalition was presented through indirect reporting. In case of the rest of three subjects the reporting was indirect too but they also had a possibility to talk about themselves.



In the past two weeks the main topic of the news programs of the given TV company was the natural disaster in Kakheti. In regard to this issue a fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the coverage of the local self government. The reporting on the activities carried out by State structures was mostly positive in tone. Interviews with the government representatives are considerably longer than the standard applicable. For instance the July 20 TV story features Giga Khachidze, the Minister of Environment for 4 minutes.

The July 23 TV story too lacks balance. The given TV story was produced in regard to the statement made by Lagodekhi Municipality Sakrebulo Chair: Giorgi Gozalishvili is accusing Bidzina Ivanishvili of lies, alleging the Georgian Dream leader is providing no aid to Kakheti affected by natural disaster. To enquire about the stance of the Georgian Dream the journalist visited the coalition office and as of mentioned above managed to glean info in response to Gozalishvili's statement. But the coalition's viewpoint is demonstrated in the TV story in regard to a totally different issue: the activities of the Georgian Dream's press service are being concerned instead of the aid for Kakheti affected by the natural disaster.

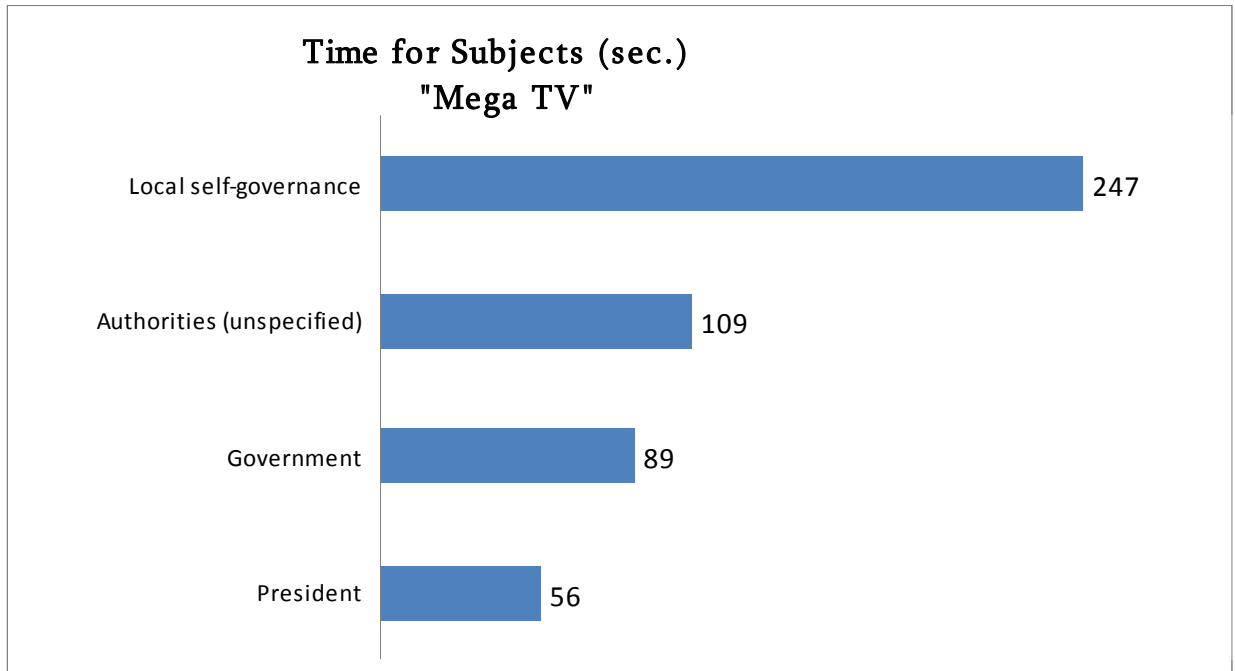
**12th Channel (Bolnisi)** – News programs reported on the activities carried out by the local self government. 6 minutes were dedicated in total. The rest of the political subjects were not covered. 85 percent of reporting on the local self government was positive in tone and 15 per cent - negative. They were mainly talked about by others (62 per cent).



In the past two weeks 12<sup>th</sup> Channel produced only two news programs but out of the monitored subjects the local self government was the only one covered. 12<sup>th</sup> Channel is not reporting on political events accordingly the results of the monitoring are not enough to provide a quantitative analysis.

**Mega TV (Khoni)** – Only local self-government was covered – 4 minutes. Two minutes were dedicated to the authorities. All three tones in regard to the local self-government was almost equal: 39 per cent positive, 34 per cent neutral and 27 per cent negative.





Within the reporting period two 15-minute news programs were aired. Almost no coverage was provided for the subjects of our interest, only the activities of local self government were covered. Therefore, the qualitative analysis is impossible to provide.

***Activities to be carried out:***

Within the period of July 30 – August 12 the third phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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