



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

**Subagreement # S-12-155**

**Report for: September 17-23, 2012**

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

*Total Budget: 31 000\$*

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

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

- Very few of the monitored subjects are dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- Reporting on “government” and “authorities” is strictly negative in tone since all of the TV companies more or less dedicated airtime to the main event of the week – release of the prisoner abuse footage and protest rallies against violence.
- Compared with the previous phases reporting on the local self government has sharply gone down;
- 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;
- Most of the TV stories contain superficial information about the activities carried out by monitored subjects and lack dissenting or criticizing opinions over the issue.

### ***Background***

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of September 17-23, 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).

Within the period of September 10-16 TV companies Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) still lacked self-produced news programs.

TV company Channel 12 (Bolnisi) refused to provide us with the video footage of news programs (the way the company used to), therefore this TV company is missing in the present report. We are trying to find an alternative way to obtain 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.

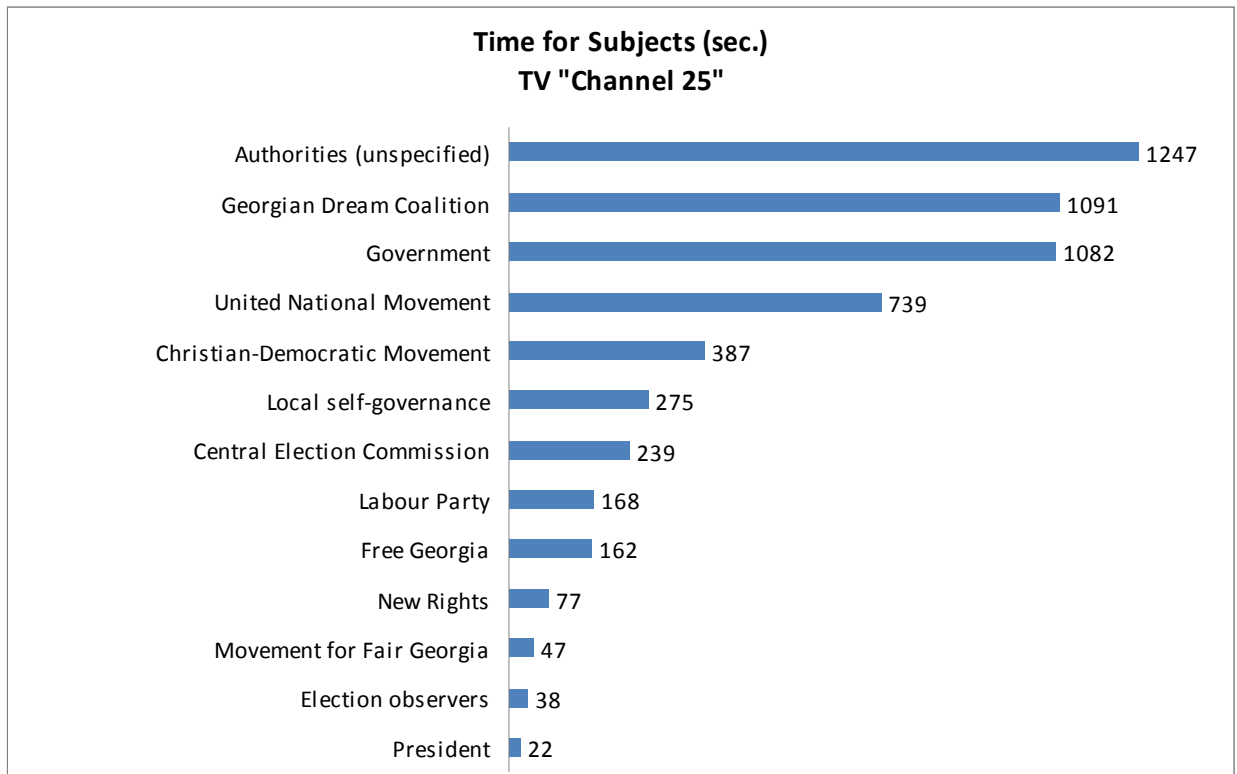
Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards, will be evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as balance or whether diverse opinions over the covered issue are represented in the stories; accuracy or whether mistakes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

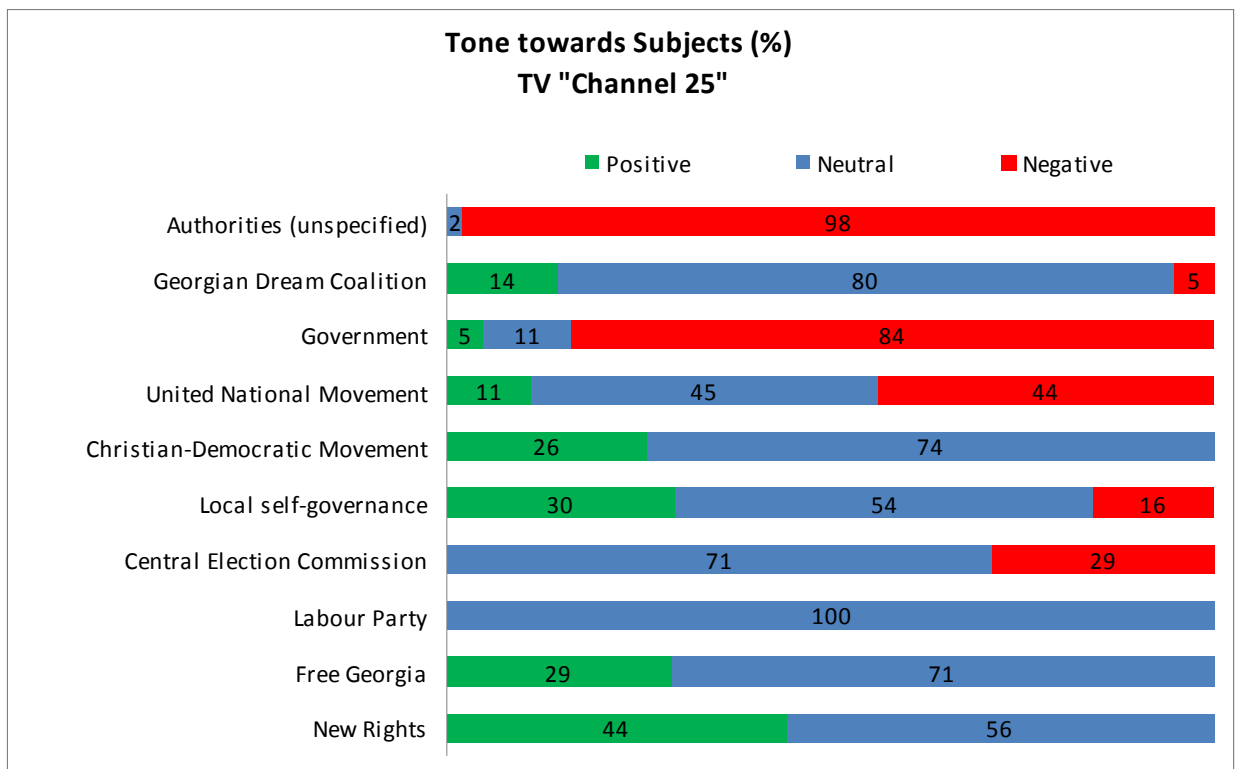
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

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

**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – News programs dedicated most of the airtime, 21 minutes, to the authorities (in general, without specification). The Georgian Dream coalition and government each enjoyed 18-minute reporting. 12 minutes of reporting were dedicated to the ruling United National Movement (UNM).

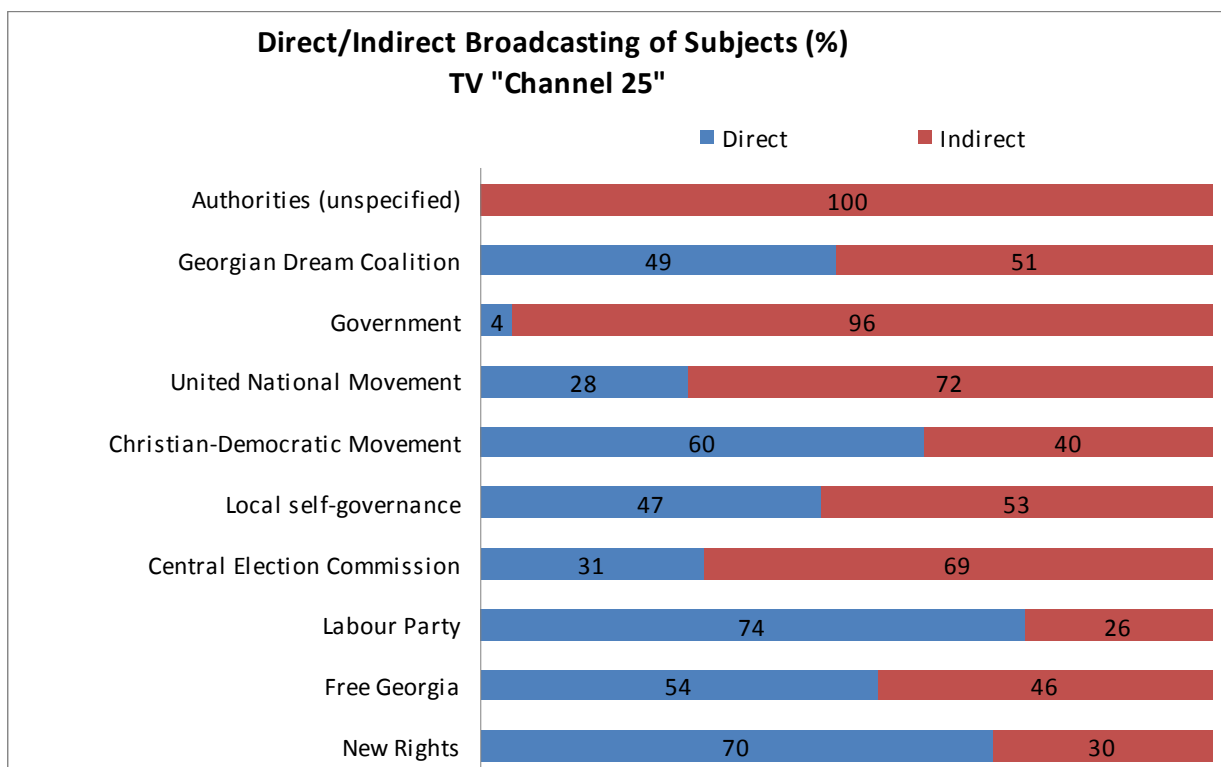


All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. The most negative tone was attached to reporting on the authorities (98 percent) and government (84 percent). In UNM's case neutral (45 percent) and negative (44 percent) tones were almost equal. Reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition was 80 percent neutral in tone.



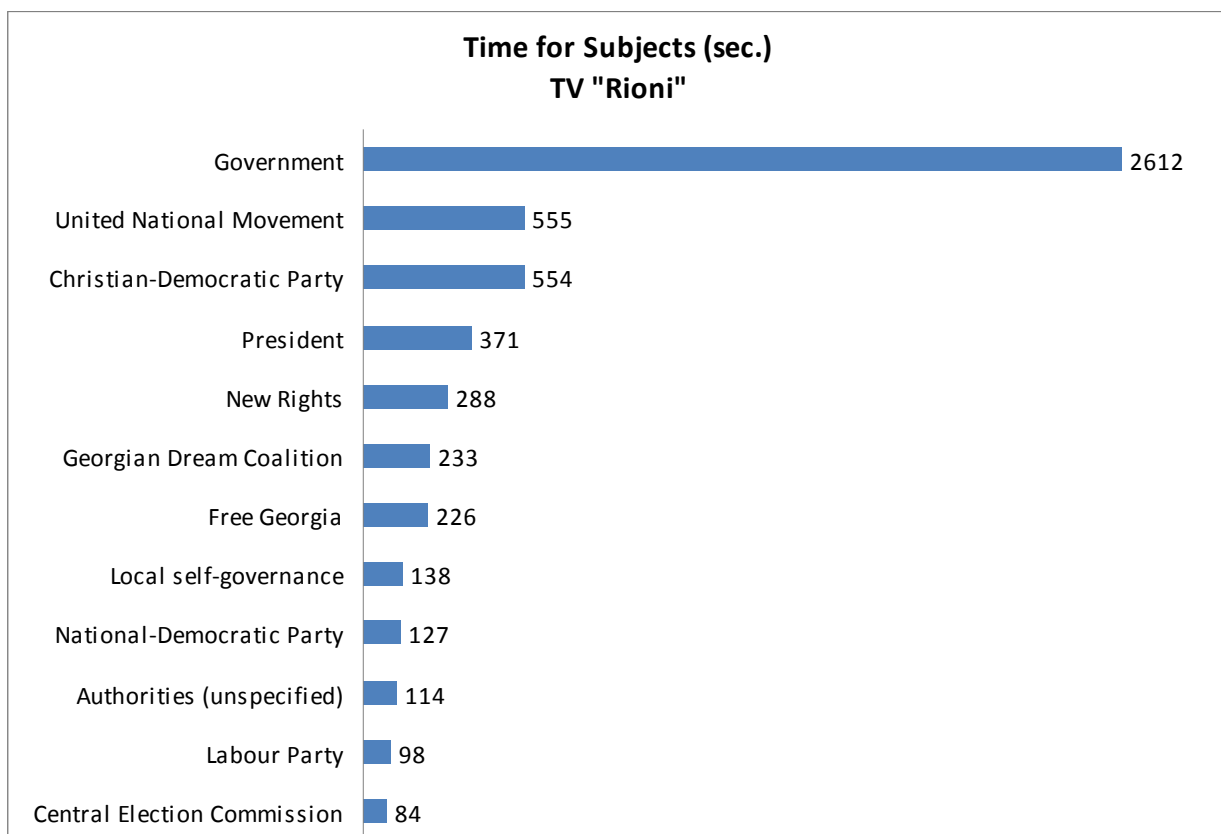
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition.

100 percent of indirect reporting was observed in regard to the authorities, followed by the government with 96 percent and UNM with 72 percent.

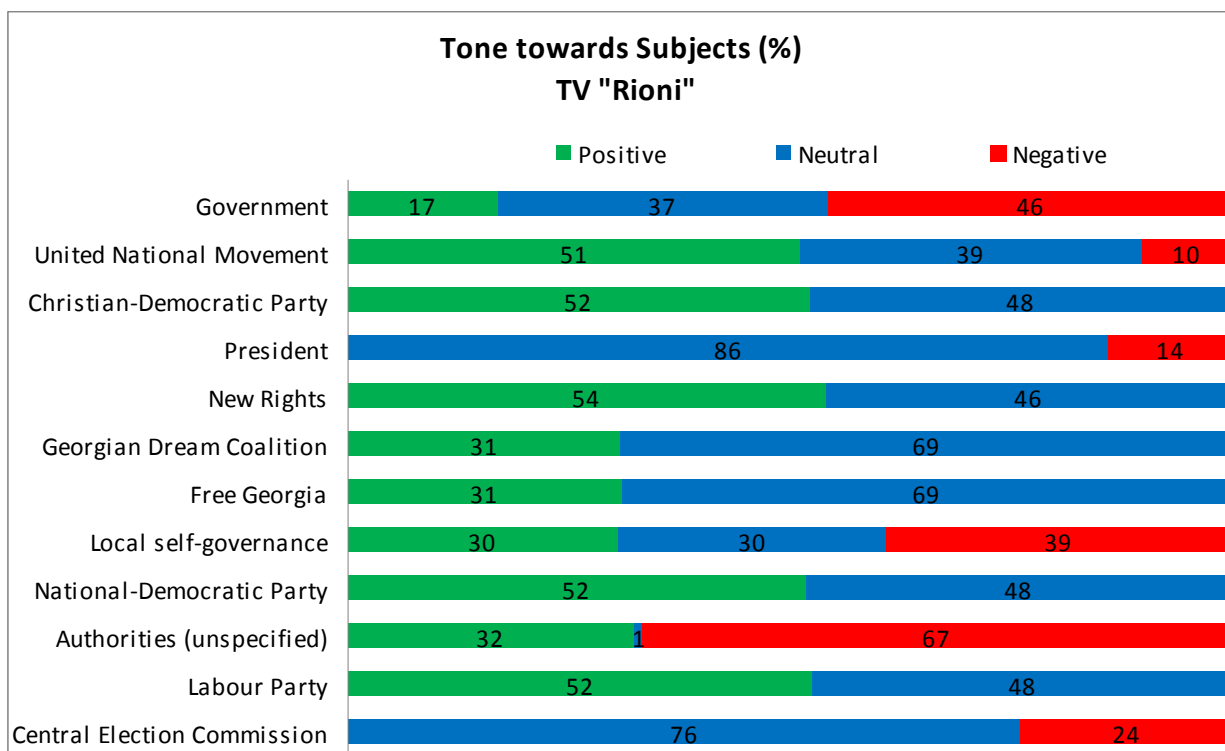


Within the period of September 17-23 TV company Channel 25 was aggressively covering political events ongoing nationwide. TV stories in the news programs were essentially produced about prisoner abuse. Almost all of the TV stories were related to this event. The biggest share of reporting on the authorities and government was negative in tone. The TV company though presented the stance of the ruling team and in general the reporting over the issue was virtually balanced.

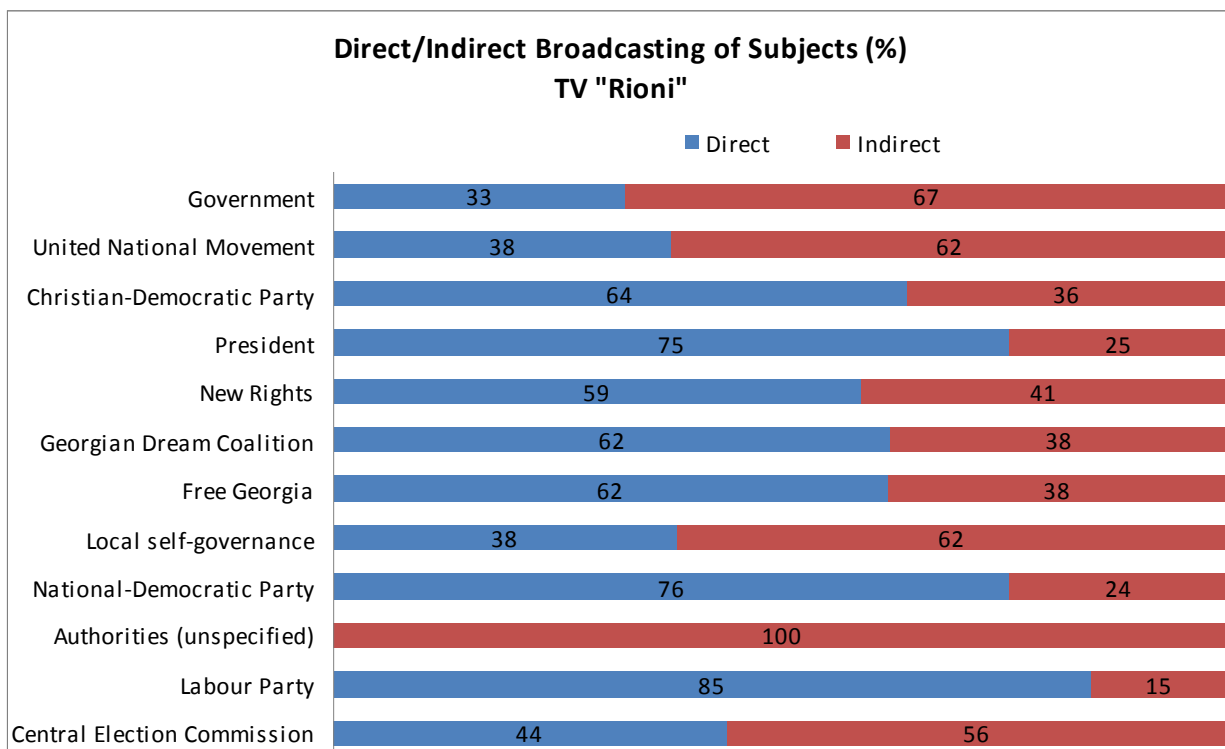
**Rioni (Kutaisi)** – The biggest share of airtime - 44 minutes - was dedicated to the government. UNM and Christian-Democratic Movement each enjoyed 9-minute reporting, followed by President with 6 minutes.



All of the three tones were applied when reporting on the government. The highest percentage – 46 percent – of negative tone (46 percent) was observed in regard to government. The biggest share of neutral reporting (86 percent) was identified in relation to President. The latter was covered only in neutral and negative (14 percent) tones. Christian-Democratic Movement and UNM were equally covered in positive tone. In relation to the latter 10 percent of negative tone was attached as well. Georgian Dream coalition and Free Georgia enjoyed the same share of positive (32 percent) and neutral (69 percent) reporting (4-4 minutes).



President ranks first in terms of direct reporting (75 percent). The share of direct/indirect reporting was similar in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition and Free Georgia. The index was almost equal in case of government and UNM.

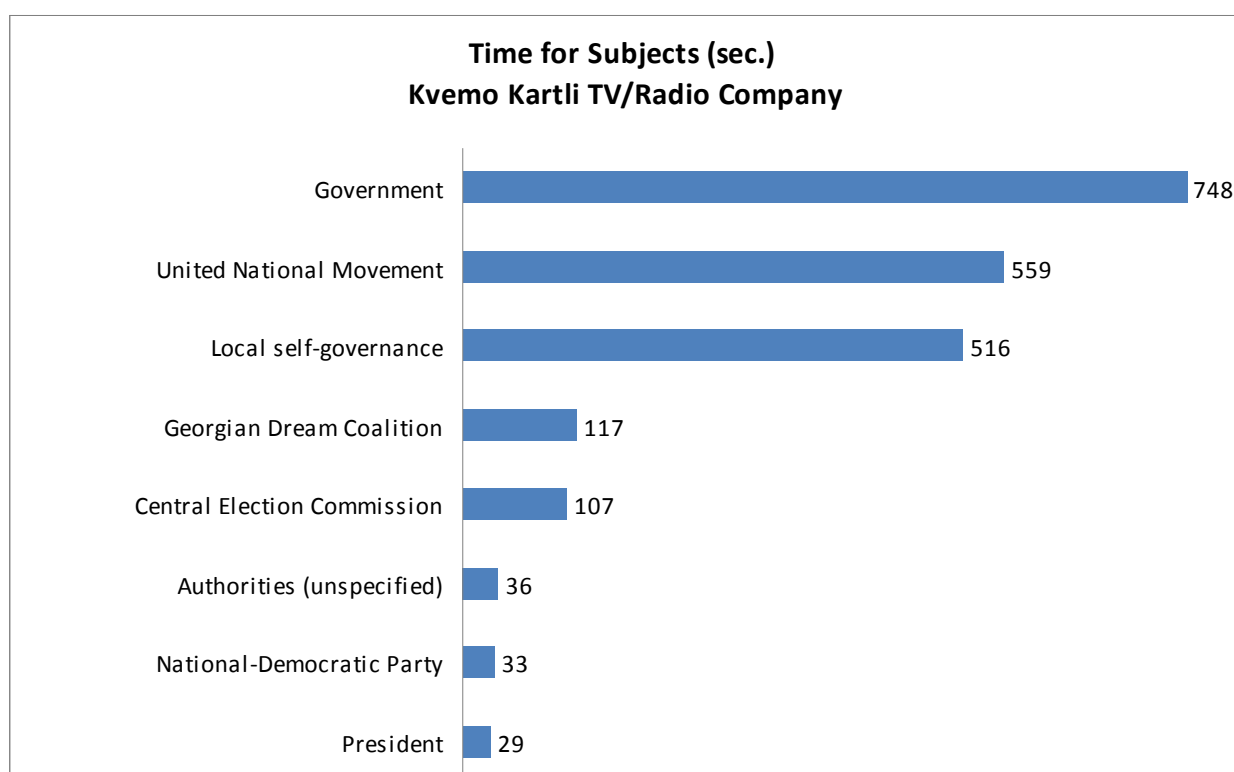


It is noteworthy that the running time of the news program produced by TV company Rioni has gone up. The news programs reported on the local as well as national events. During the reporting period the TV Company dedicated the most of airtime to government. The time dedicated to the

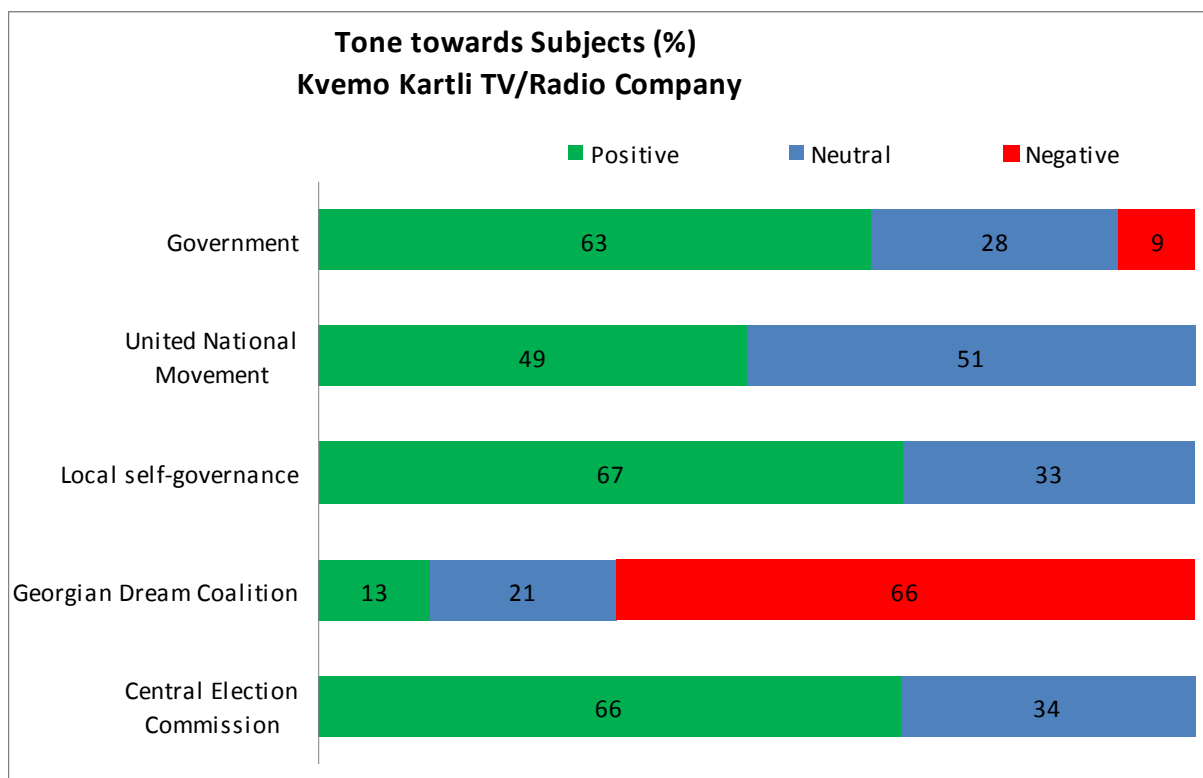


government was five-fold more than the time dedicated to UNM which ranks second. It is noteworthy though that lengthy reporting (44 min) on the government was due to the release of the prisoner footage, the same reason applies to negative reporting (46 percent). The TV Company dedicated a fair amount of airtime to the protest rallies held in Kutaisi.

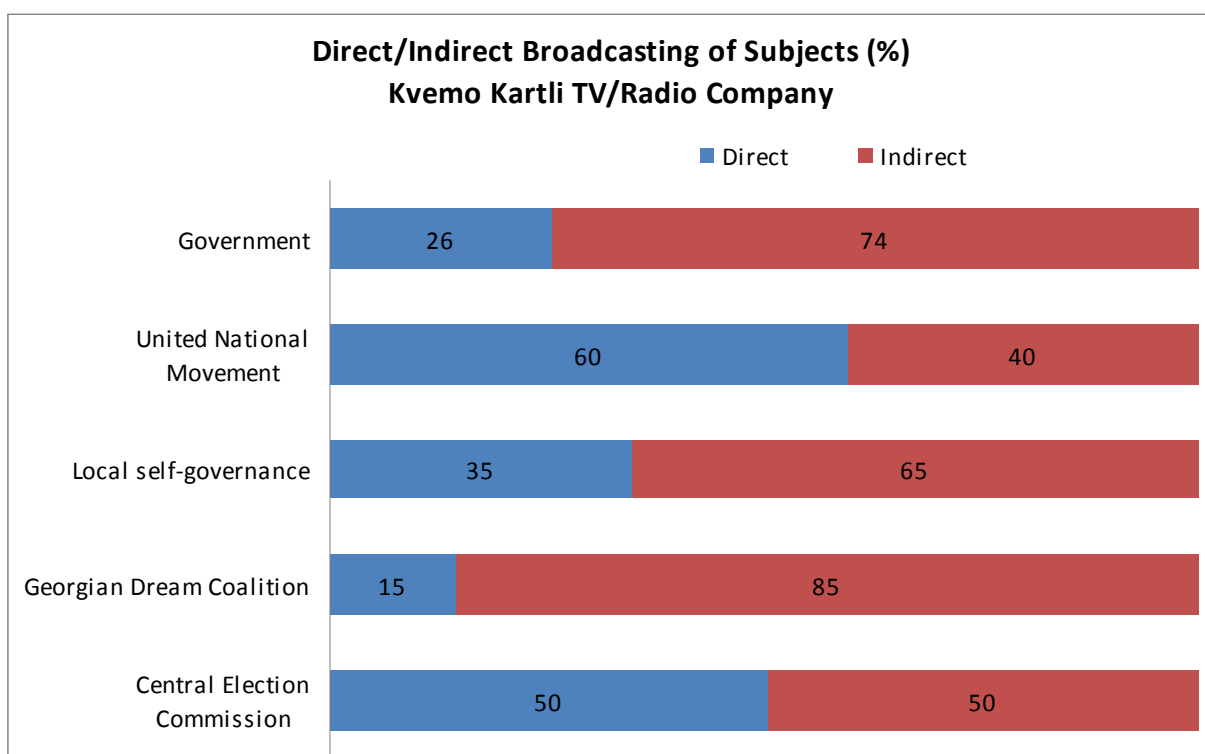
**Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi)** – The TV company news programs dedicated the most of the airtime (12 min) to the government. UNM and local self-government each enjoyed 9-minute reporting. 2 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage.



Monitored subjects were equally reported in positive and neutral tones. The biggest share of negative reporting was observed in relation to the Georgian Dream coalition (66 percent). Negative tone was attached to reporting on the government as well (9 percent).



UNM ranks high in terms of direct reporting (60 percent) while government and the Georgian Dream coalition enjoyed 74 and 85 percent of indirect reporting respectively.

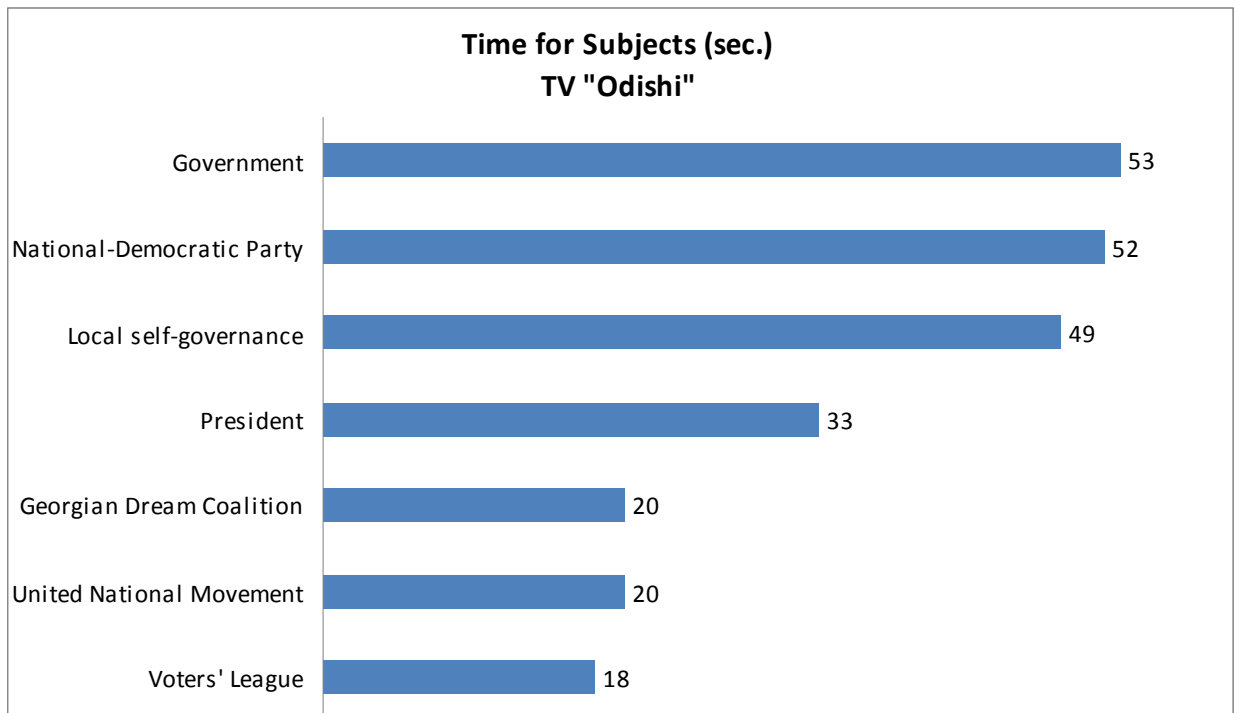


Within the reporting period Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company essentially reported on the activities carried out by the State agencies and ruling party in positive tone.

The TV Company, compared with the rest of the channels, dedicated less time to the prisoner abuse issue (within the given period this topic was most covered topic). It is noteworthy that the TV stories produced about the topic mainly demonstrated the stance of State agencies. The TV Company neither reported on the rallies organized by students demanding government representatives to be held responsible. The news program aired the only 40-second story. In the given story the journalist said the youth organized a rally to show solidarity to prisoners. Respondents included two ladies who do not belong to the social group of youngsters.

Moreover, in one case the journalist’s text and the source of information were contradictory. In the September 22 TV story, for example, the journalist says another violation by the Georgian Dream coalition was identified. The coalition members were papering election posters through the breach of law. The head of the supervision service points out that the offender is not identified. It is noteworthy that the biggest share of negative reporting was observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition (66 percent).

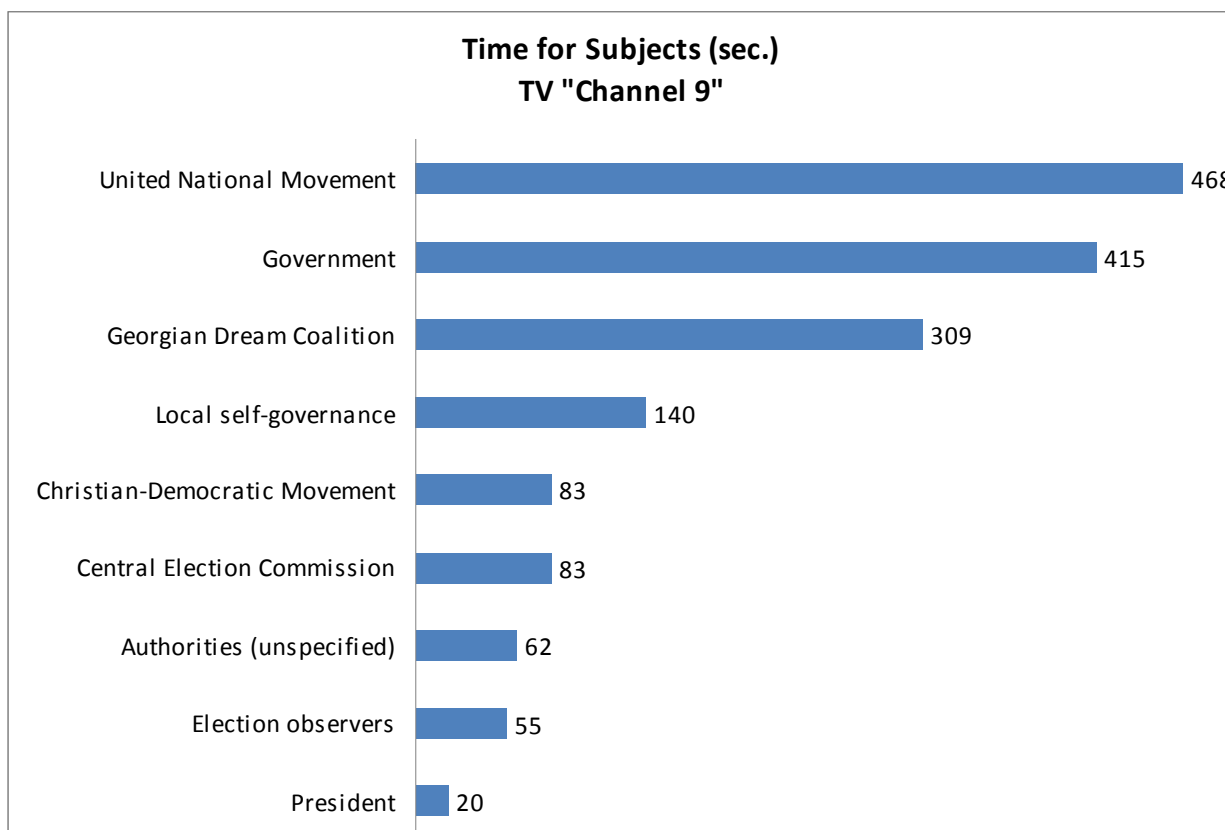
**Odishi (Zugdidi)** - During the reporting period none of the monitored subjects were virtually covered. Each was dedicated less than one minute. Due to the lack of time it is impossible to provide full quantitative analysis.



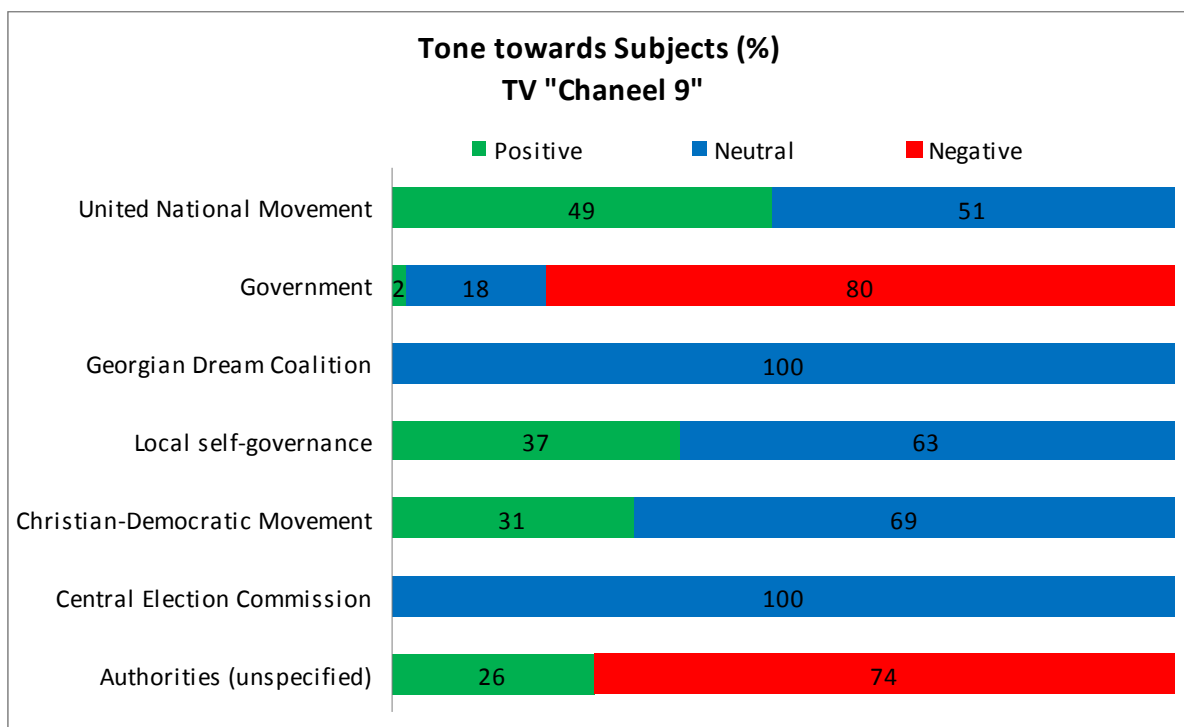
As we have mentioned above the length of reporting on the monitored subjects was less than one minute. Journalists’ loyal approach to the authorities is evident. For instance, in the September 28 TV story about municipality chief Alexander Kobalia’s meeting with the population in Zugdidi the

journalist says: “Last night streets were full of citizens’ hubbub, locals were pleased with the meeting with Gamgebeli.”

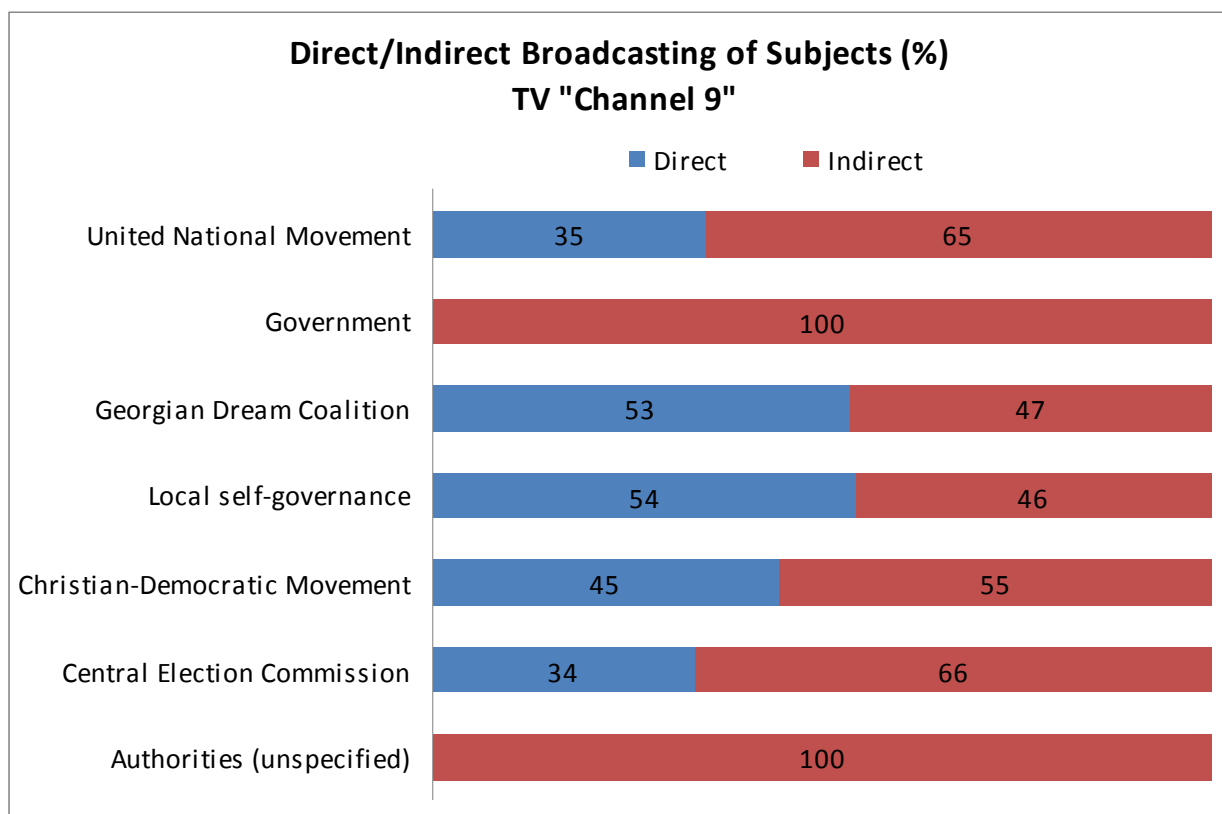
**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Akhaltsikhe)** – News programs dedicated most of airtime, 8 minutes, to UNM, followed by government and the Georgian Dream coalition with 7 and 5 minutes respectively.



Neutral and positive tones were attached to reporting on the subjects. All 100 percent of reporting was neutral in tone. High percentage of negative reporting was observed in relation to the government (80 percent).



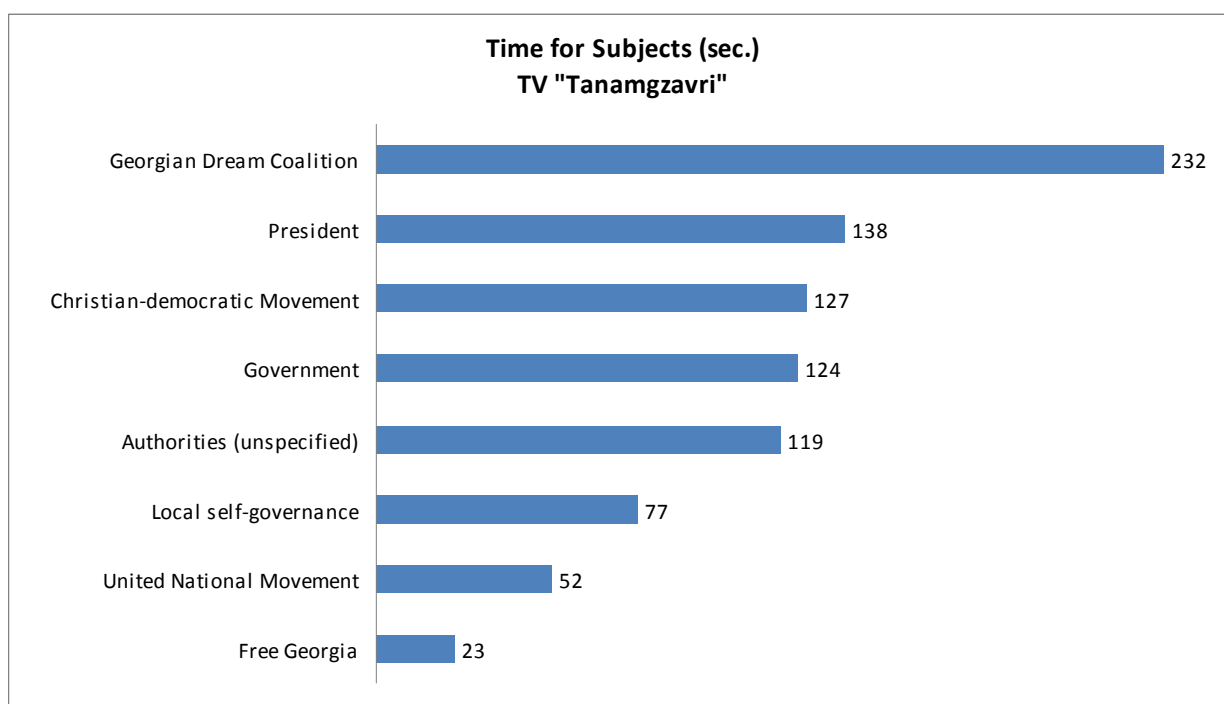
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. 100 percent indirect reporting was observed in regard to the government only.



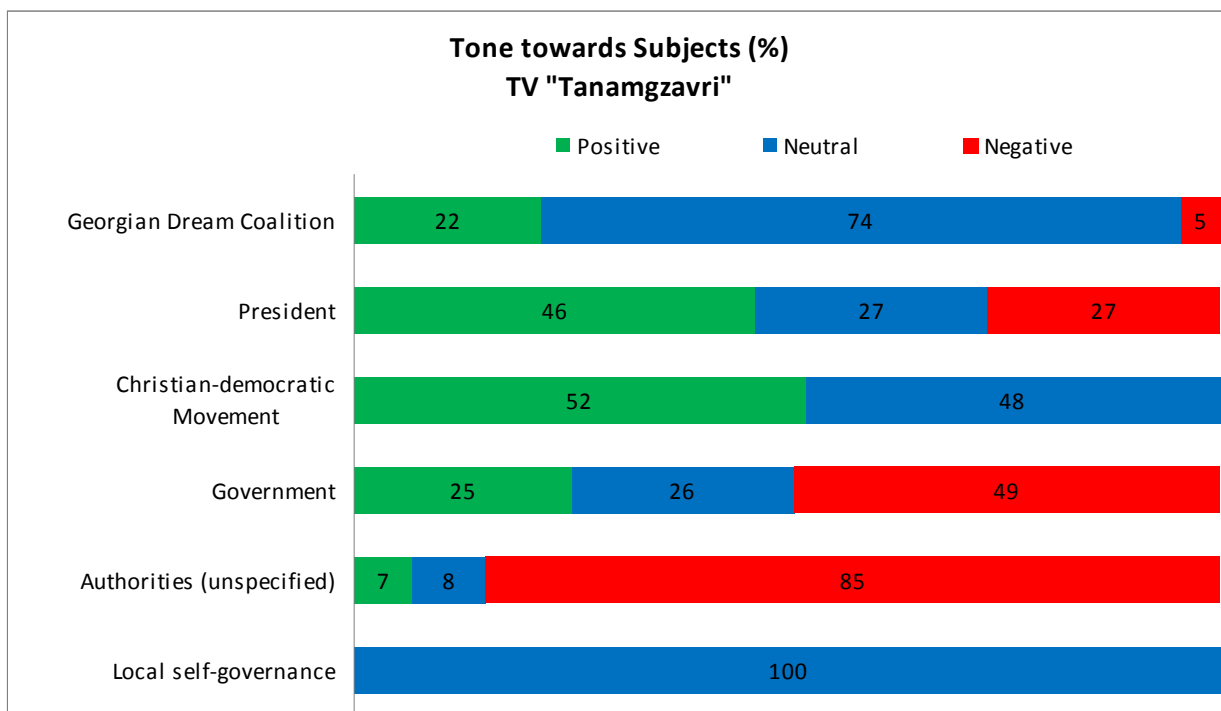
TV Company 9<sup>th</sup> Channel was aggressively covering the events ongoing in the region. News programs dedicated a fair amount of airtime to the main topic of the week (prisoner abuse). But the channel mainly focused on the protest rallies against torture of inmates, in particular the story feature the

meeting organized by the Akhaltsikhe-based UNM’s HQ representatives who condemned prisoners’ abuse. The solidarity rally organized by the Georgian Dream coalition was covered too. When reporting journalists were trying to reflect reality in an unbiased manner. But in regard to UNM positive approach was still obvious.

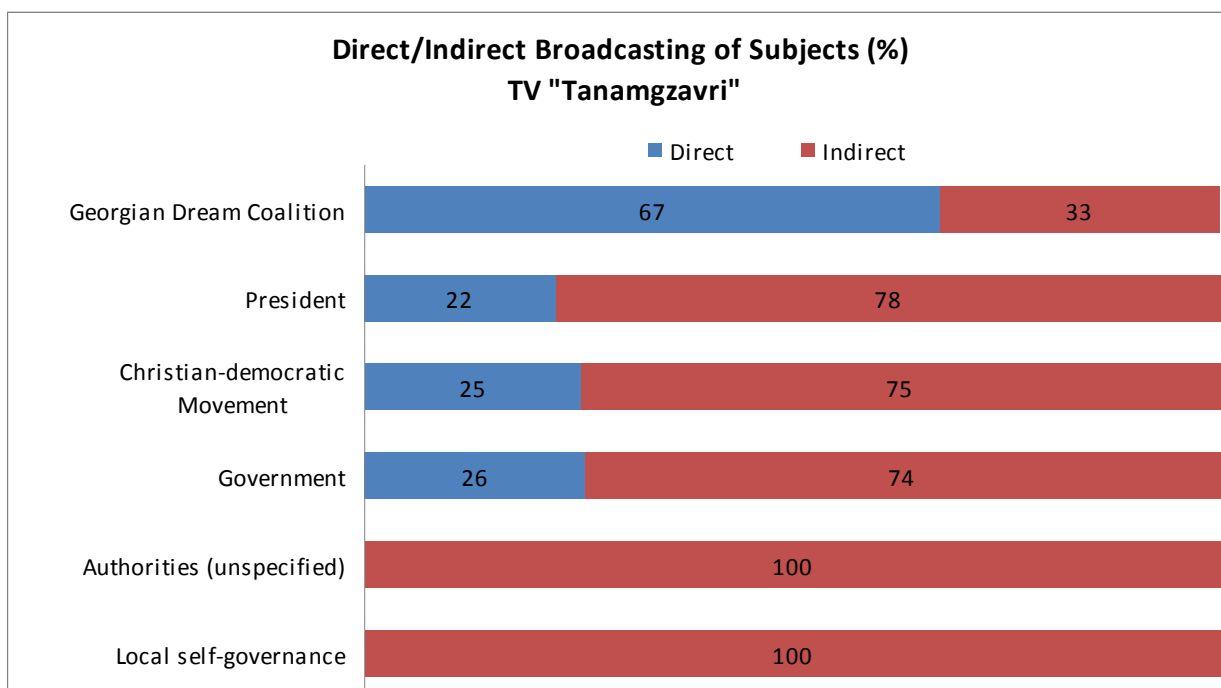
**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – Out of the monitored subjects 4 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition. President, Christian-Democratic Movement, government and authorities was each dedicated 2 minutes.



Monitored subjects were reported in all three tones. Solely in regard to Christian-Democratic Movement positive and neutral tones were applied. Biggest share of negative reporting was observed in regard to the authorities (85 percent) and government (49 percent); neutral tone was attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition (74 percent).



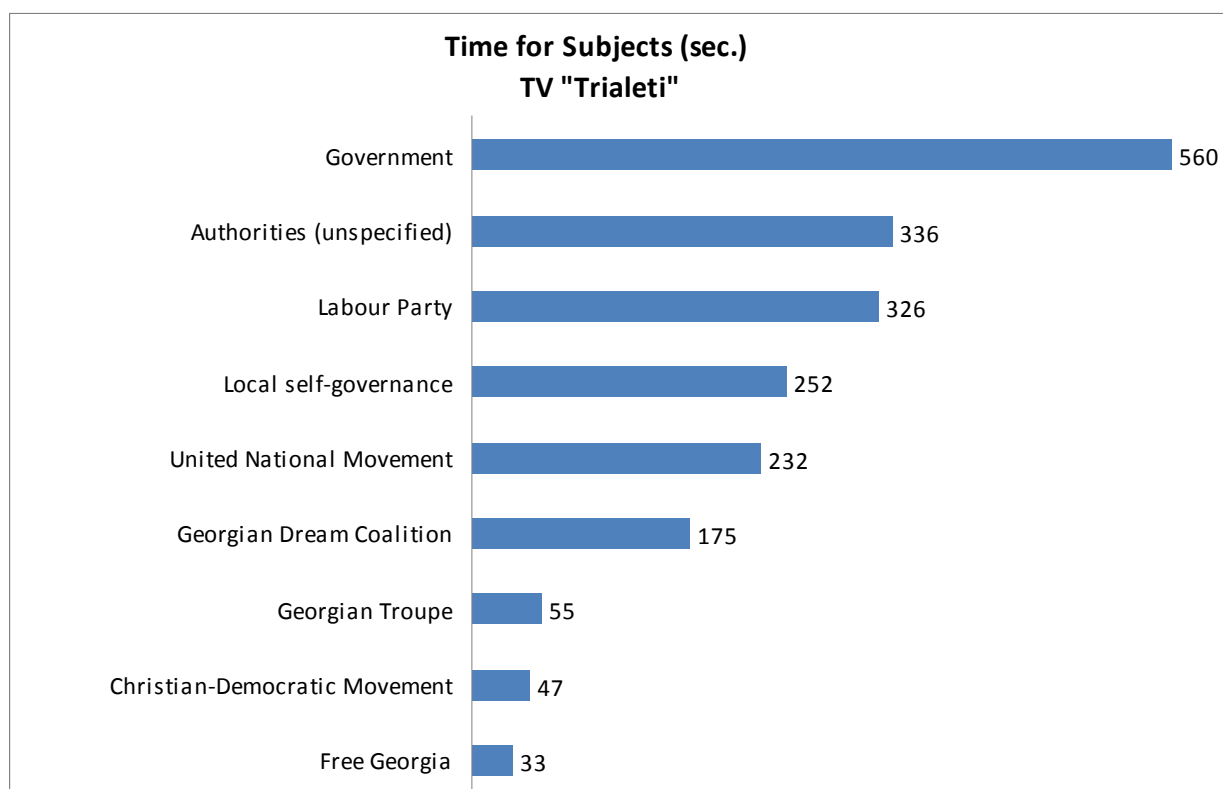
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. Only Georgian Dream coalition enjoyed 67 percent of direct reporting.



Within the reporting period TV company Tanamgzavri dedicated the most of airtime to the Georgian Dream coalition. The prisoner abuse-related events and protest rallies held in Telavi were aggressively covered as well.

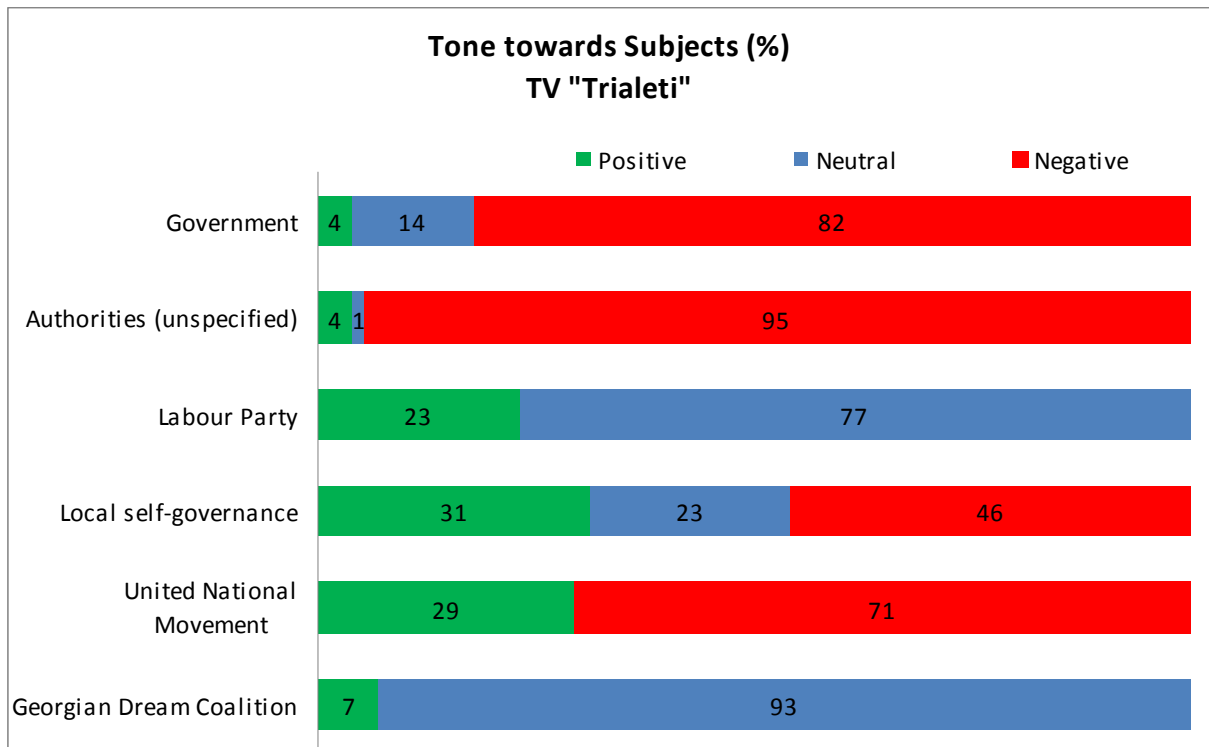
**Trialeti (Gori)** – News programs dedicated the most of airtime (9 min) to government, followed by authorities with 6 minutes and Labor Party with 5 minutes. As regards the rest of the monitored

subjects the chart looks as follows: 5 min – local self-government, 4 min – UNM, 3 min – Georgian Dream coalition.

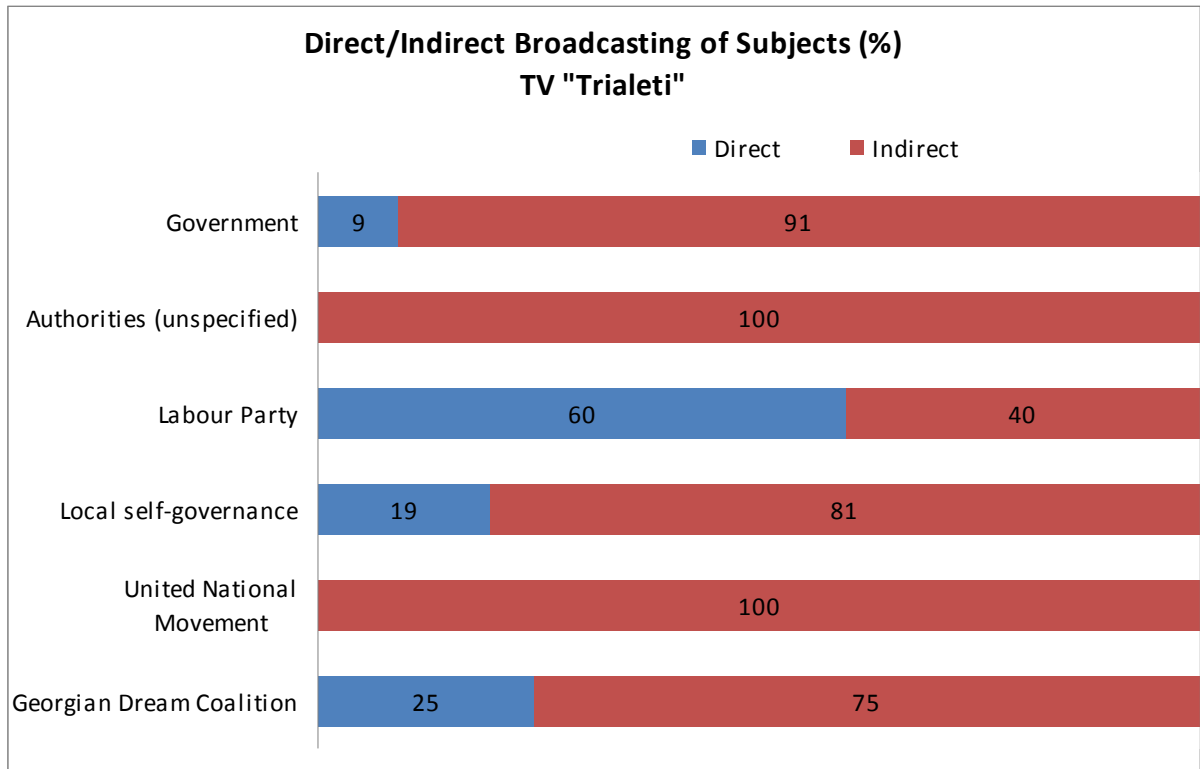


All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. Authorities rank high (95 percent) in terms of negative reporting followed by government and UNM with 82 and 71 percent respectively. It is noteworthy that in regard to the latter only positive (29 percent) and negative tones were applied. Positive (35 percent) and neutral (77 percent) tones were attached to reporting on the Labor Party.





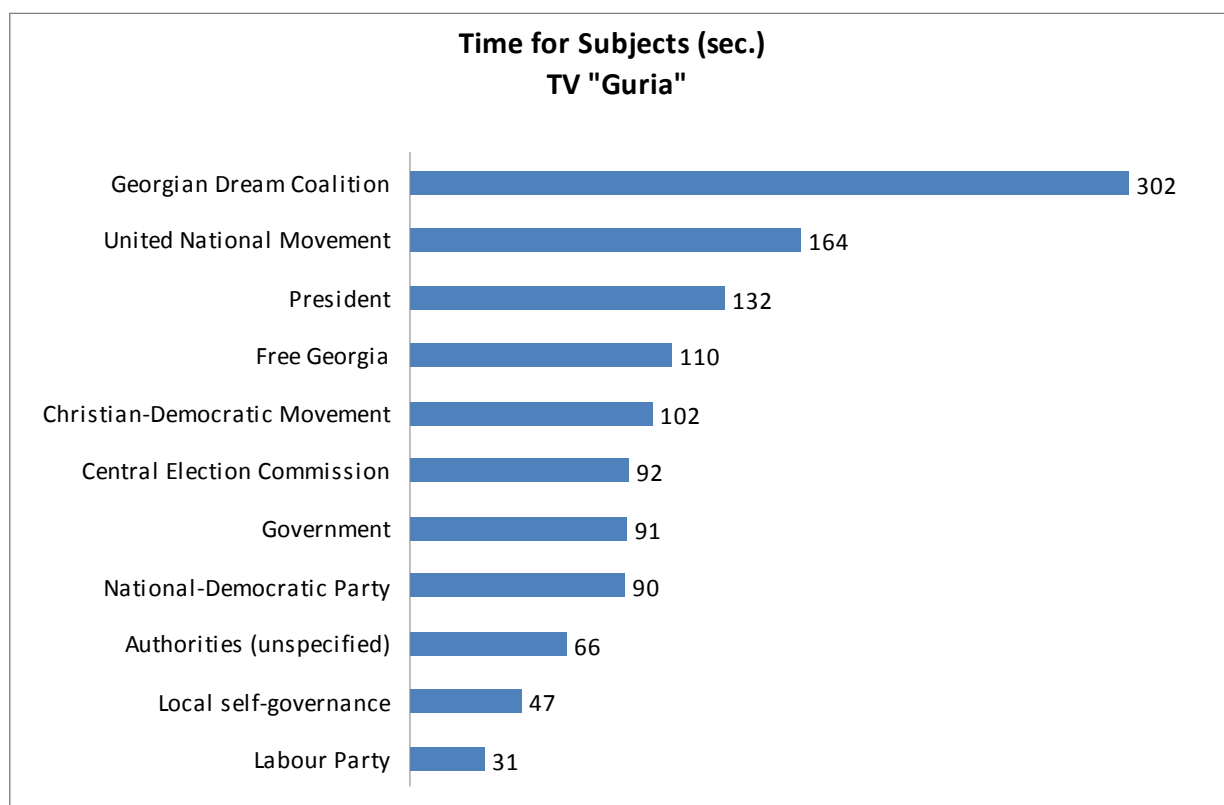
Indirect reporting almost always prevailed over direct reporting. Only in case of the Labor Party direct reporting prevailed.



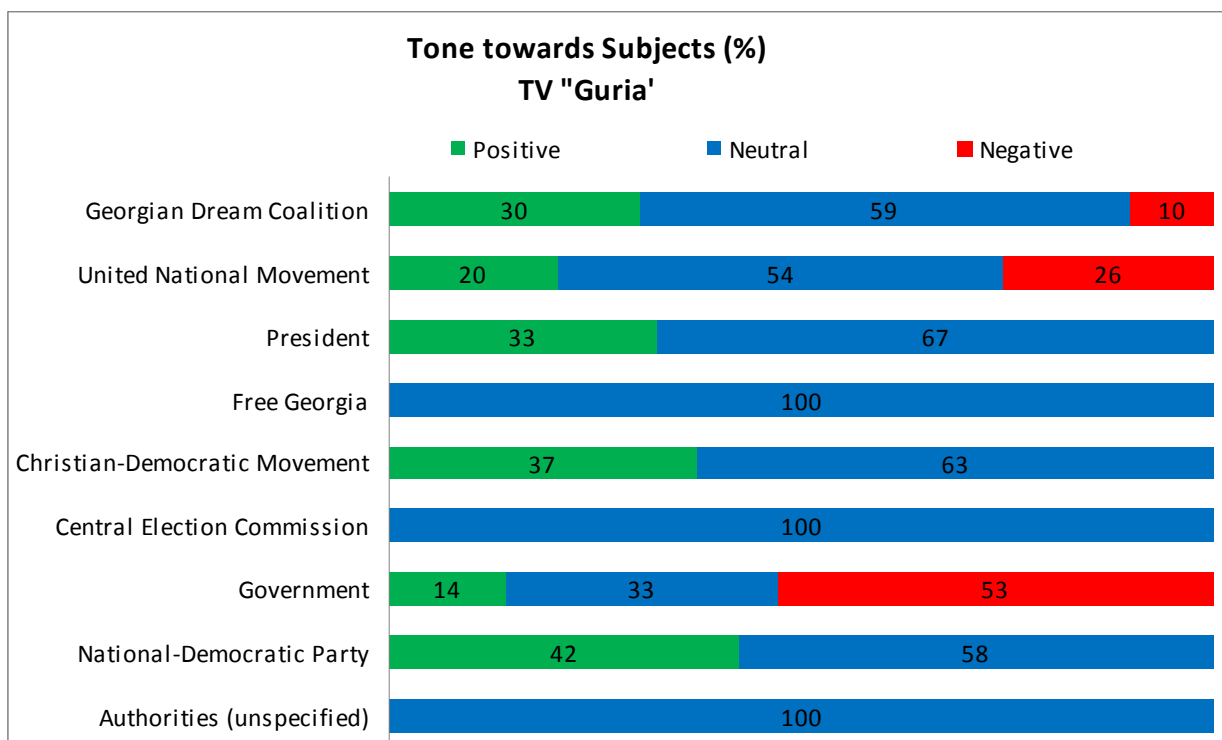
The main topic within the reporting period was prisoner abuse and the case-related events. Reporting over the issue essentially included criticizing statements, accordingly negative tone was attached to the monitored subjects.

It is noteworthy that journalist's text was mainly unbiased. The stance of the authorities – evaluations by President and ministers - was less covered.

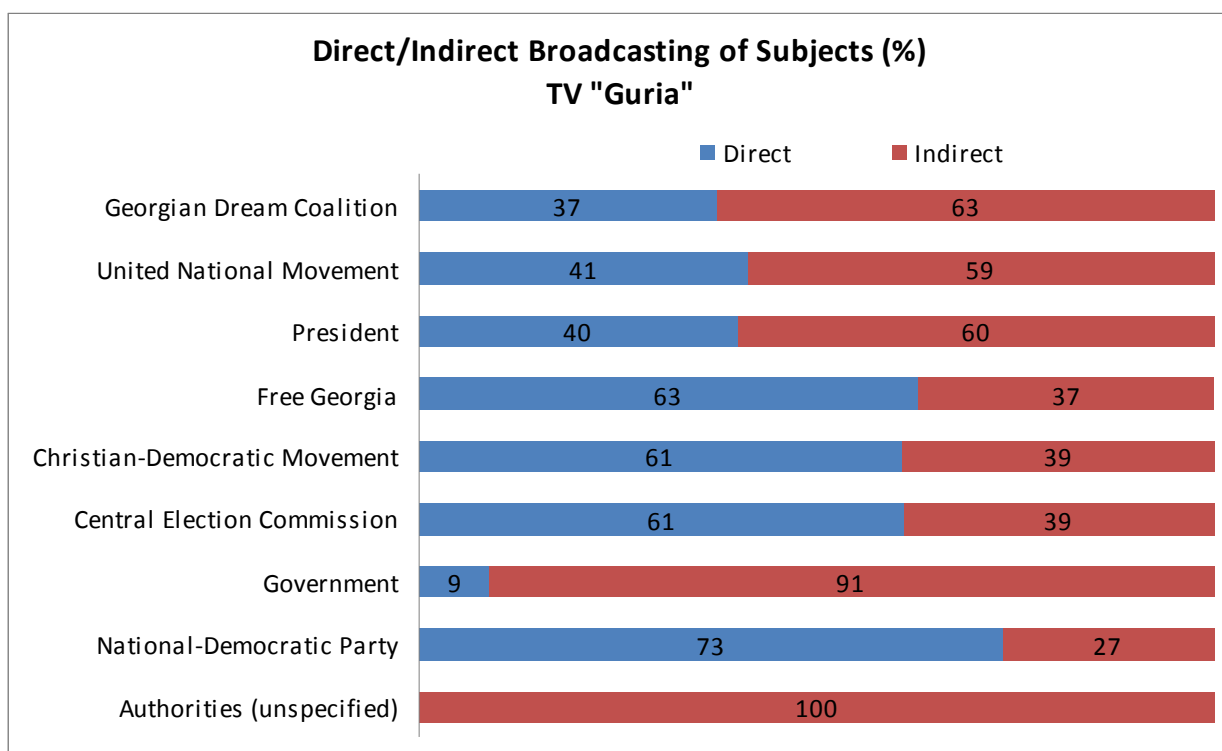
**Guria (Ozurgeti)** – News programs dedicated 5 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition, followed by UNM with 3 min and President with 2 min. Almost 2 minutes of reporting was received by Free Georgia and Christian-Democratic Movement.



All of the three tones were applied to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. But in both cases neutral tone prevailed. In regard to the rest of the subjects neutral tone prevailed over positive and negative.



Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:

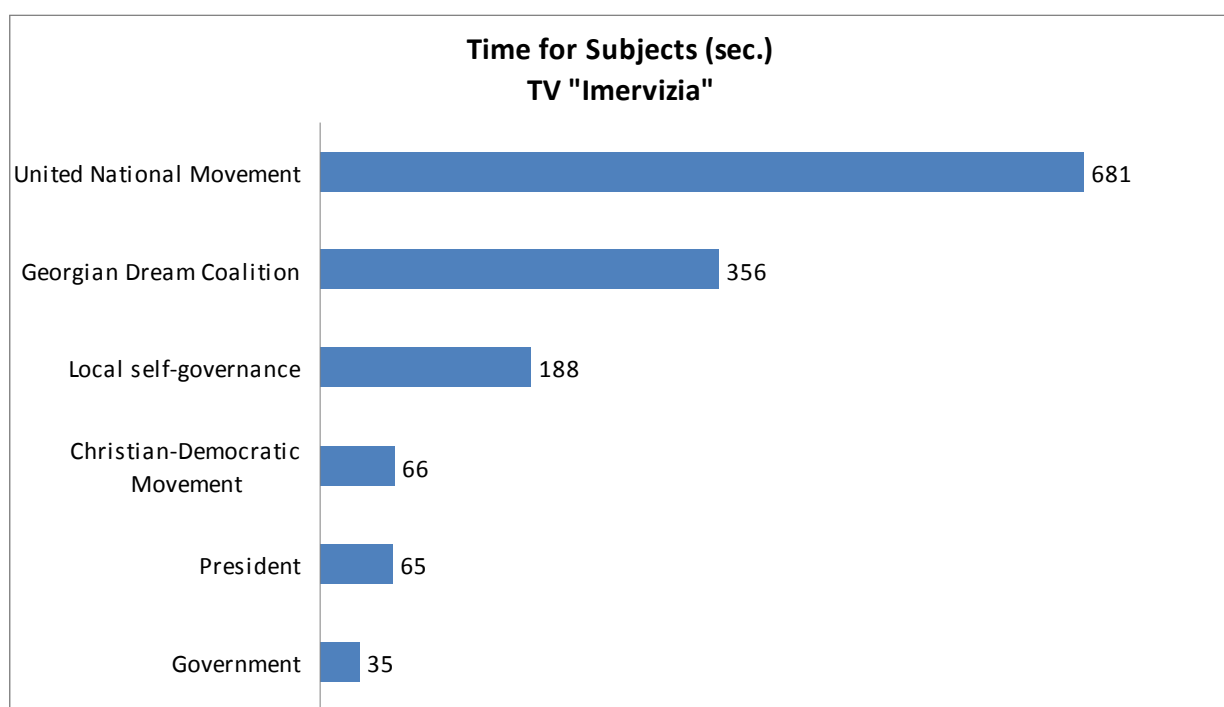


During the period of September 17-23 the TV company aggressively covered the developments related to the prisoner abuse. TV stories were balanced. Journalists were trying to equally cover the opinions expressed by the authorities and the opposition. Time was dedicated to the stance voiced by NGOs too.

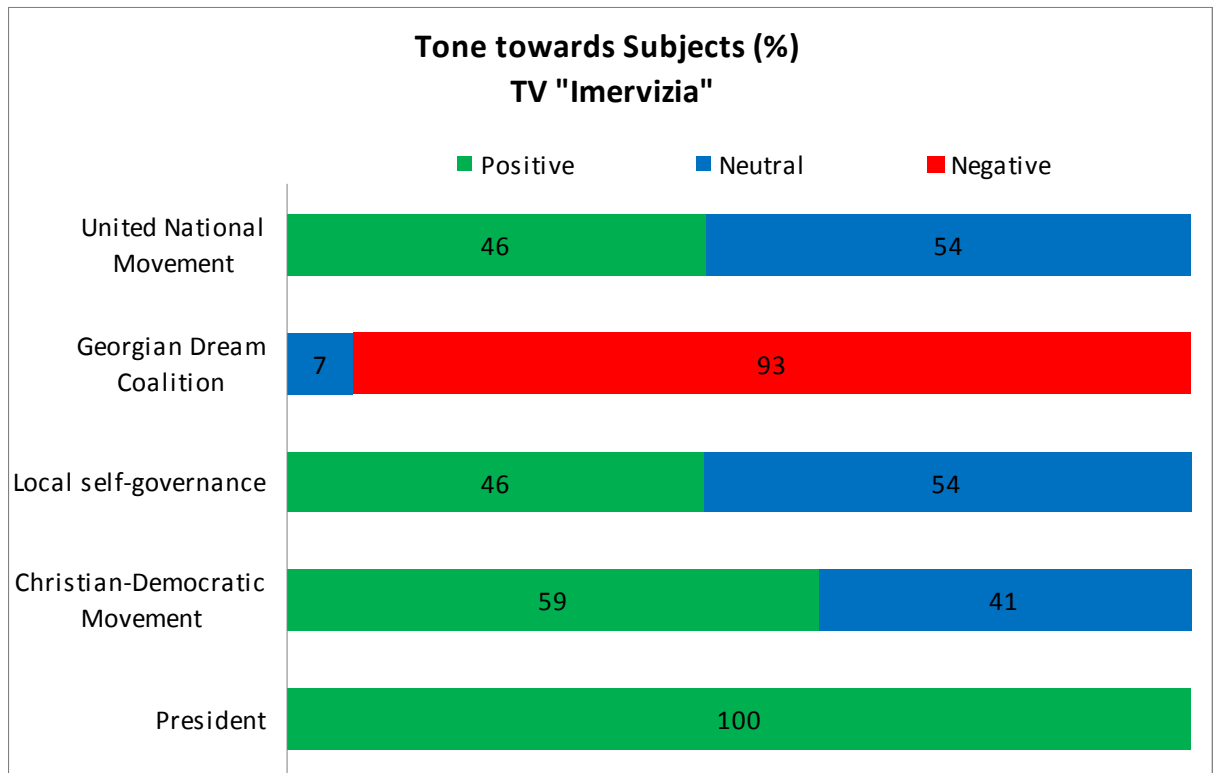
Due to coverage of the aforementioned events negative reporting on the government increased to top 53 percent. Unlike previous reporting periods the share of negative reporting in regard to UNM went up.

It is also noteworthy that unlike previous reporting periods the share of reporting on the activities carried out by the local self-government considerable decreased. Within a week reporting on the local self-government was less than one minute.

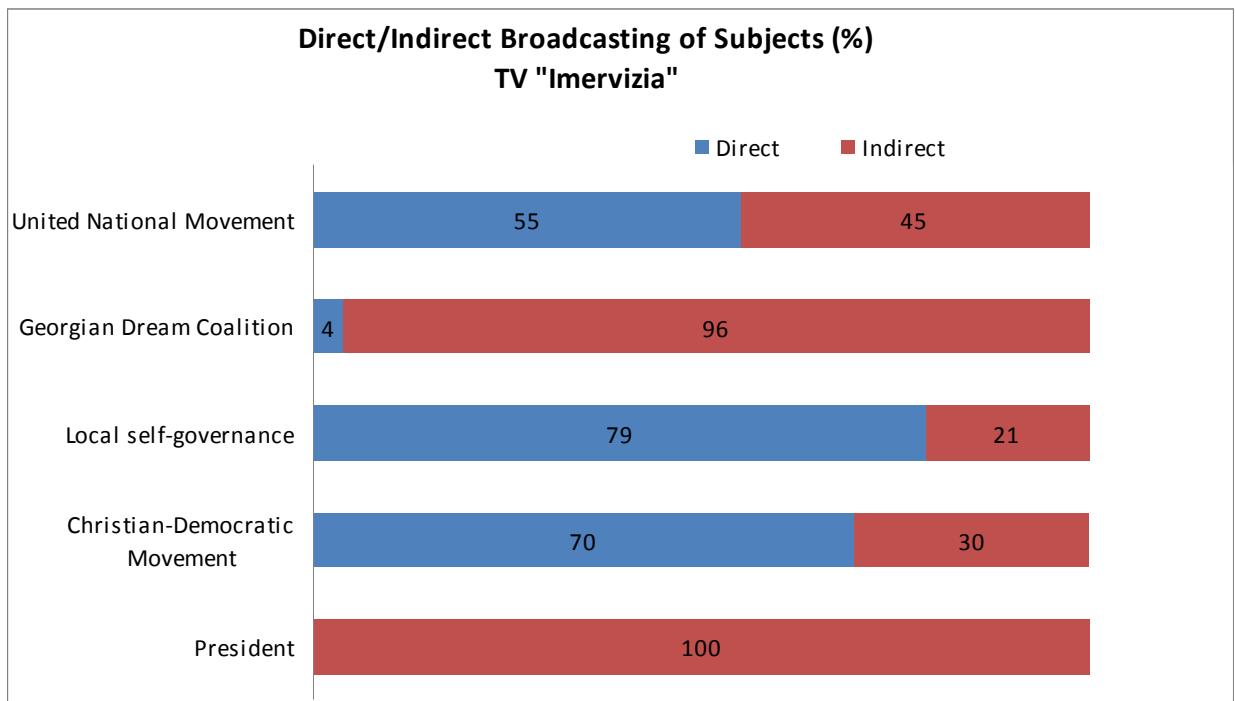
**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – The news programs dedicated the biggest share of reporting to UNM (11 min). The Georgian Dream coalition and local self government enjoyed 6 and 3-minute reporting.



Monitored subjects were covered in neutral and positive tones. Negative (93 percent) and neutral (7 percent) tones were attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition.

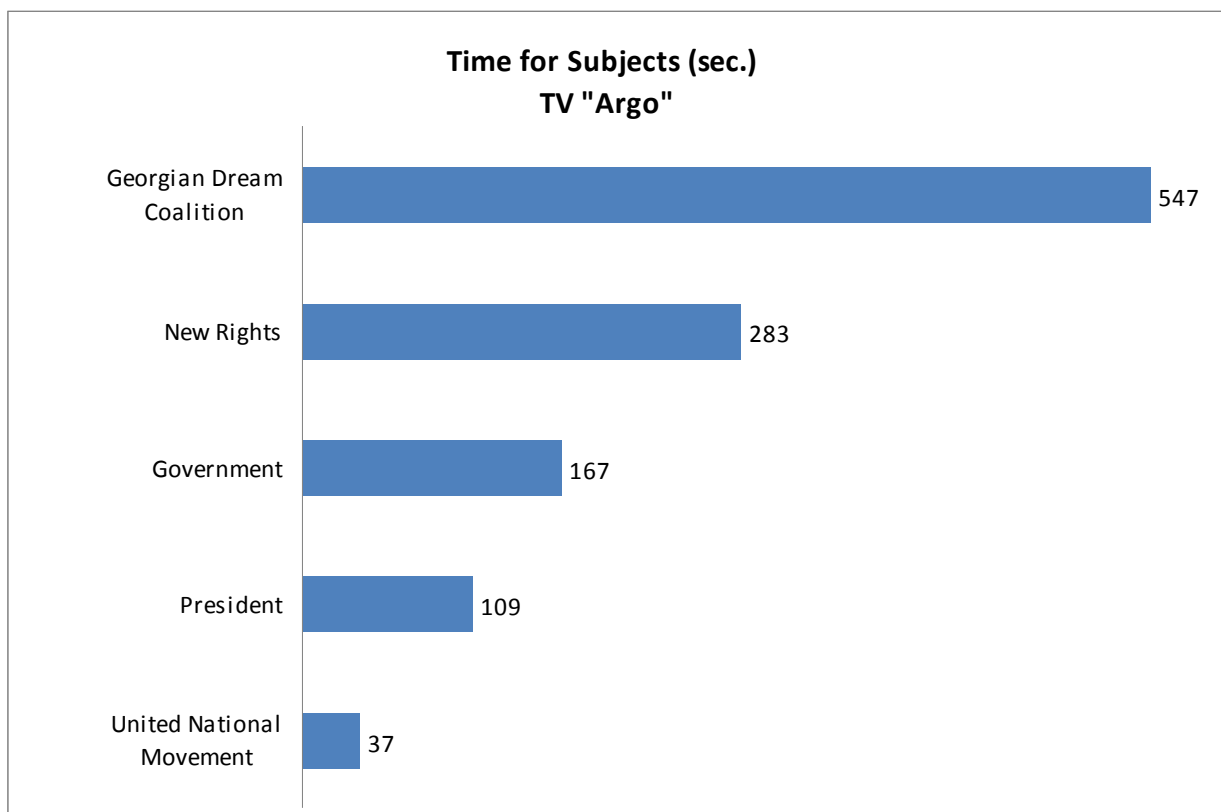


The biggest share of indirect reporting was observed in relation to the Georgian Dream coalition – 96 percent. As for the rest the share was either equal (UNM) or direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting (local self-government).

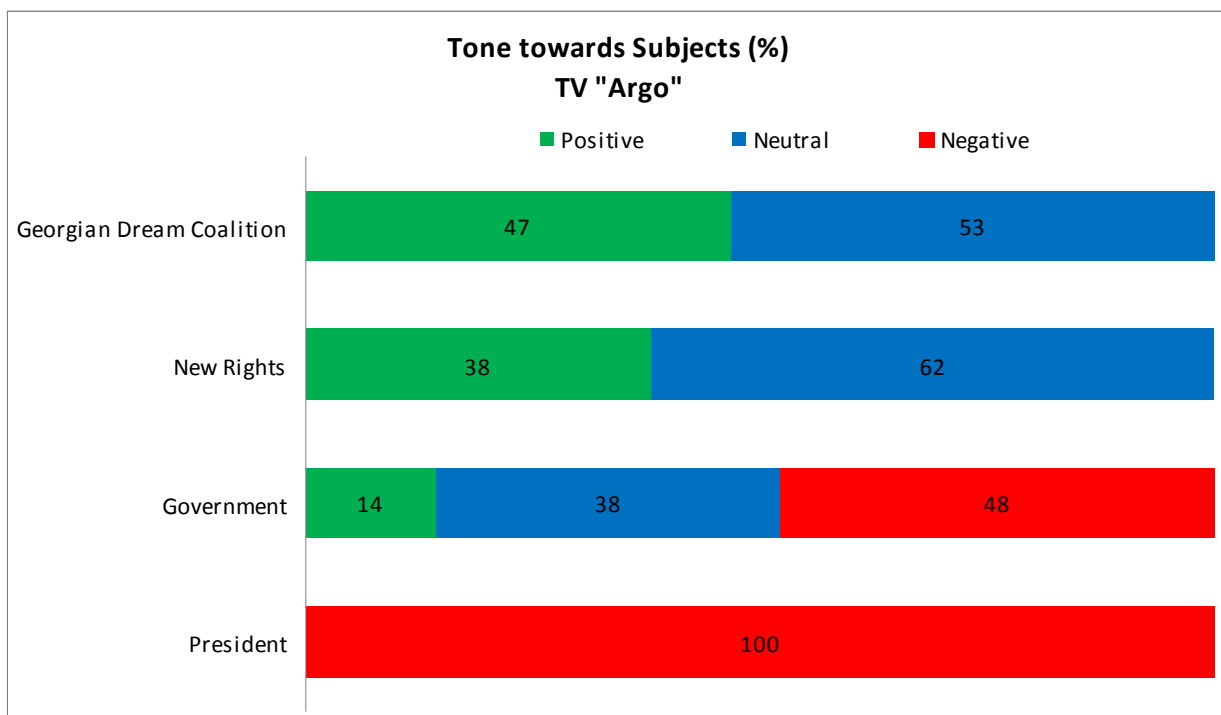


One of the main topics of the news programs produced within the reporting period was an attack against the UNM HQ. The channel provided reporting in a superficial unsubstantiated manner. Due to the lack of time dedicated to the monitored subjects qualitative analysis is impossible to provide.

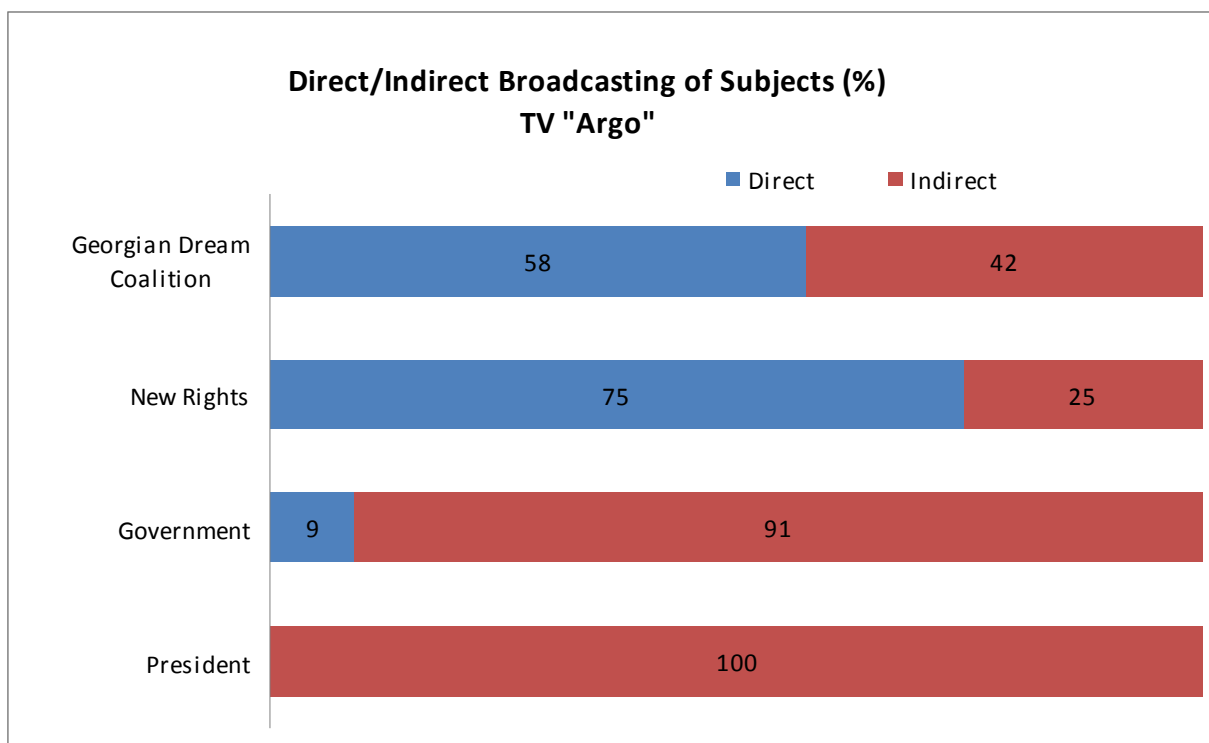
**Argo (Zestafoni)** – News programs dedicated 9 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition, followed by New Rights with 5 minutes and government with 2 minutes. The rest of the subjects were provided no coverage at all.



Negative tone was attached to reporting on President (100 percent) and government (48 percent).



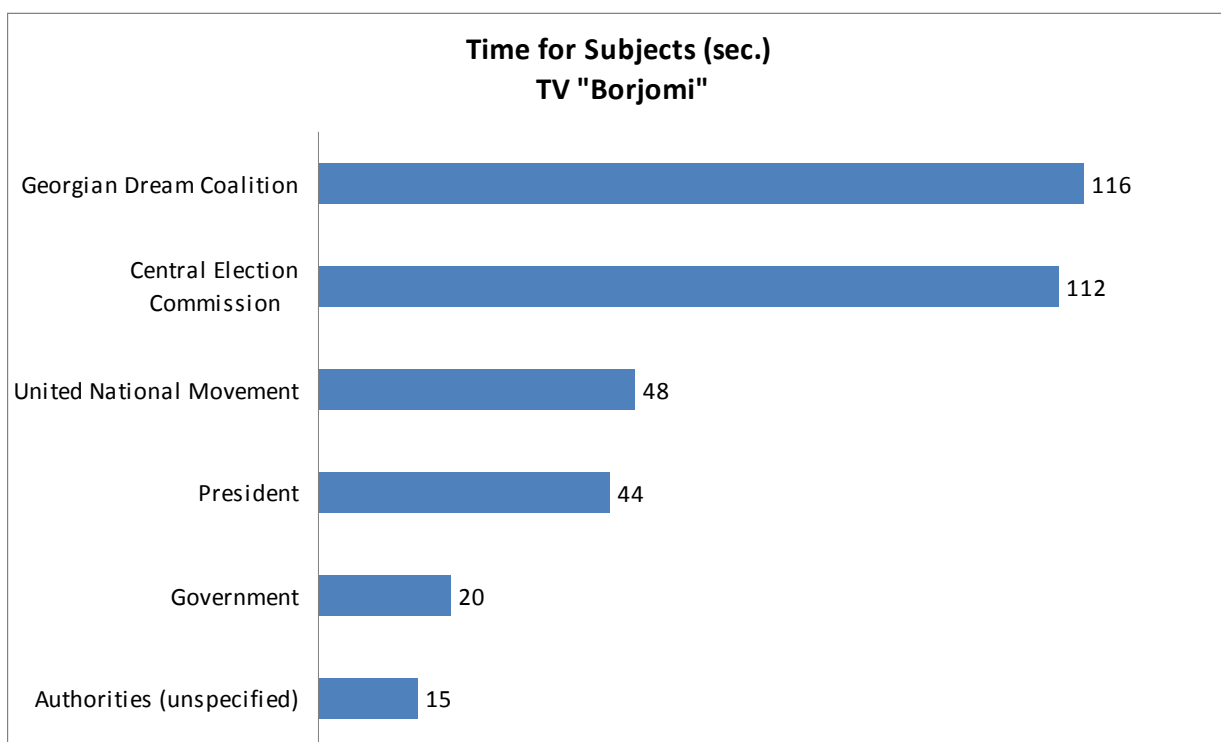
Reporting on President was 100 percent indirect, the share of indirect reporting was rather high in government's case as well – 91 percent.



Within the reporting week TV company Argo produced news on a daily basis. But their running time did not exceed 10 minutes and only four of the monitored subjects were covered. It is noteworthy that due to reporting on the main event of the week (prisoner abuse) the share of negative tone in regard to government and President went up.

The September 2 news program covered the Georgian Dream coalition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili's visit to Zestafoni. The reporting was 53 percent positive in tone.

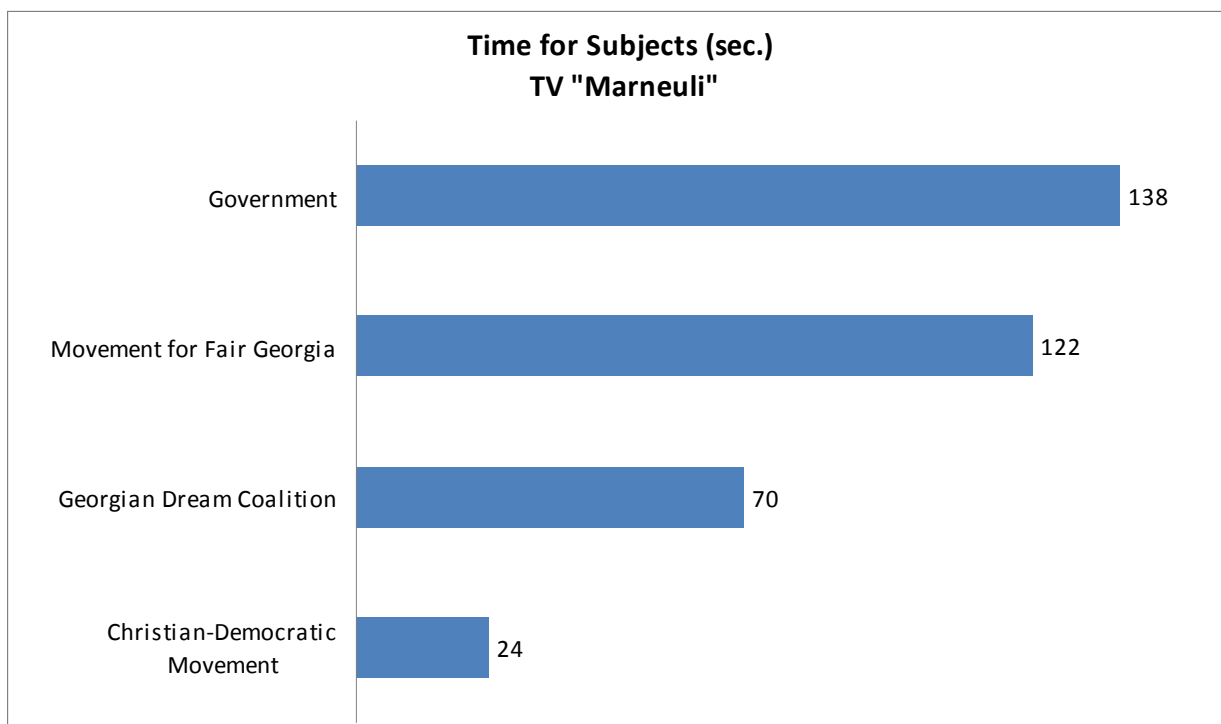
**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – During the reporting period the Georgian Dream coalition and CEC enjoyed 2-minute reporting. Virtually the rest of the subjects were not covered. Reporting on the aforementioned two subjects was mainly neutral and the share of direct reporting was 70 percent.



Even though the TV company Borjomi produced three new outlets within the reporting period very few of the monitored subjects were covered. Accordingly it is hard to provide qualitative analysis.

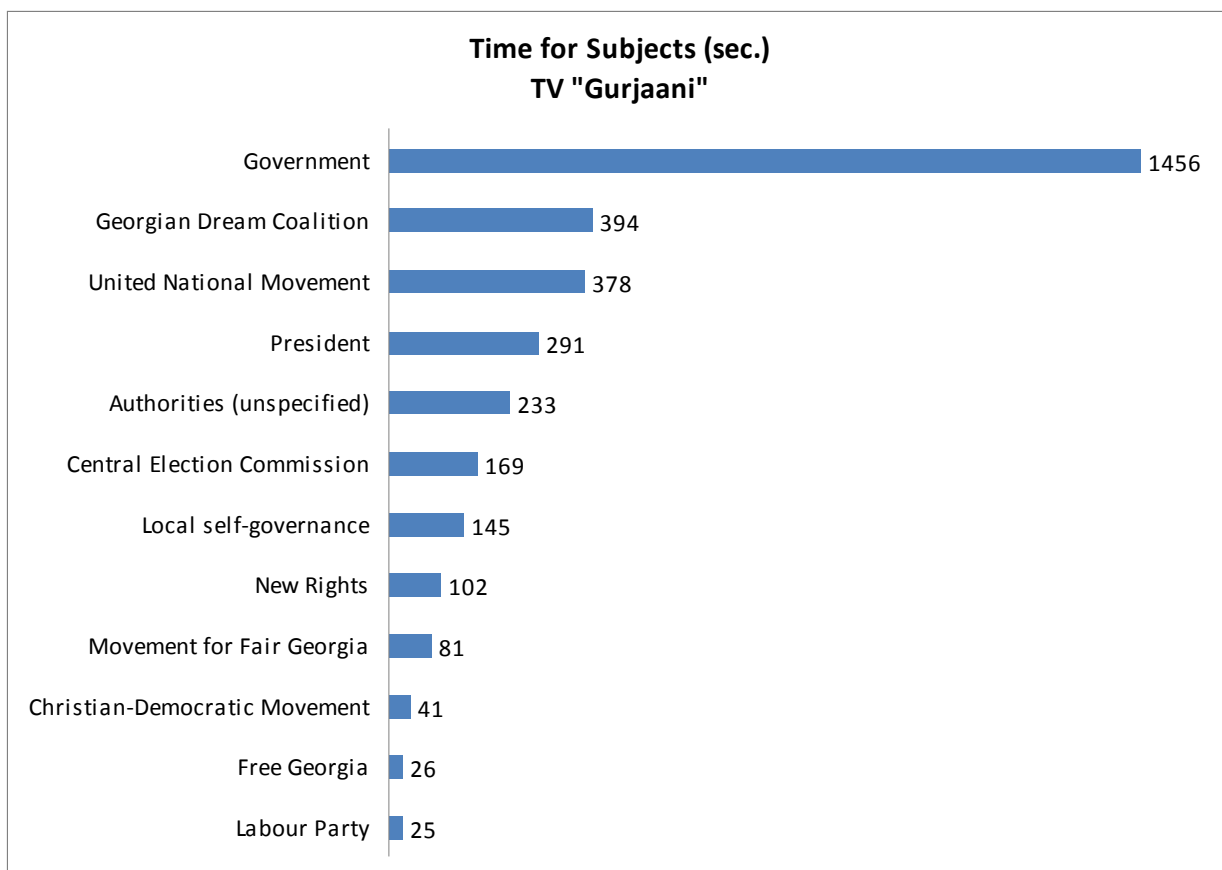
**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** - During the reporting period 2 minutes were dedicated to government and the Movement for Fair Georgia per each. The rest of the monitored subjects were not covered. Reporting was positive and neutral in tone. 100 percent of reporting on the government was indirect.



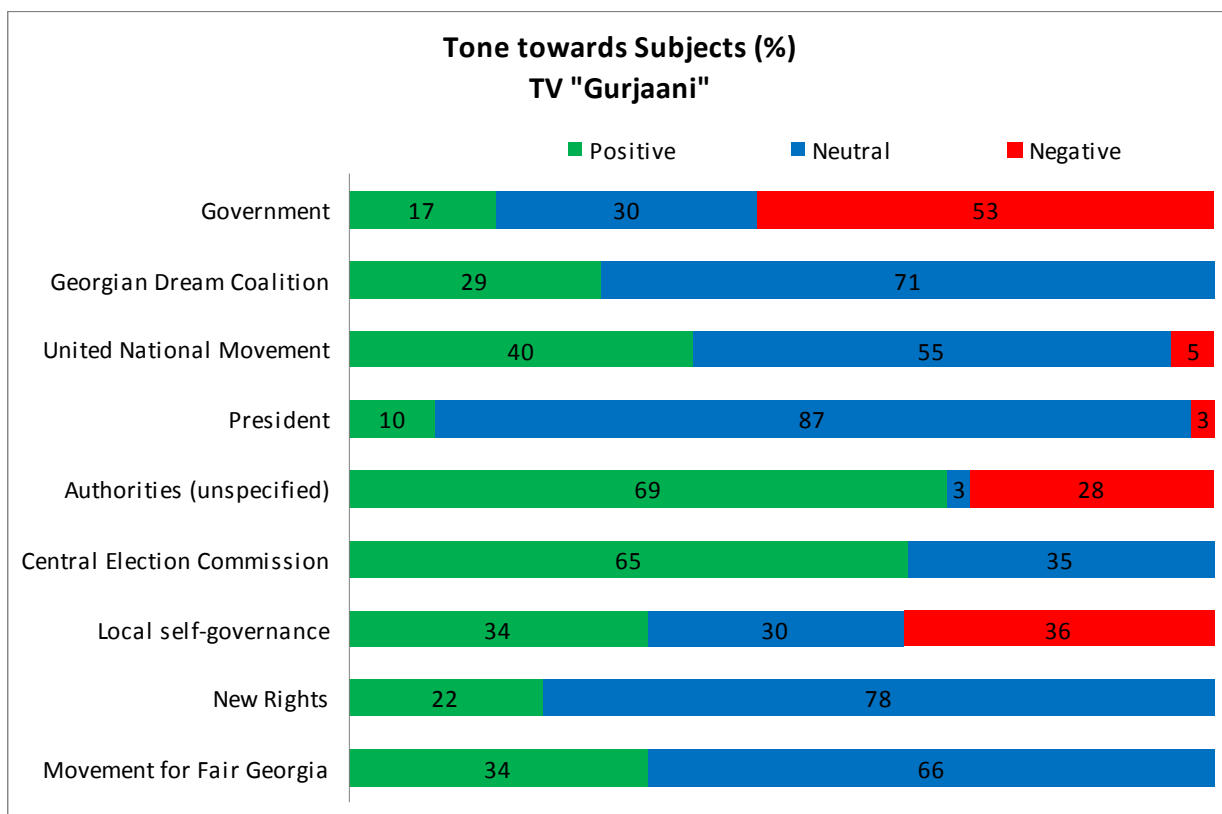


Within the reporting period three news outlets were produced. The running time of the Georgian language news outlet did not exceed 5 minutes. Hence the news programs were not characterized with diversity. It is noteworthy that the only story was produced about the main event of the week (prisoner abuse and solidarity rallies).

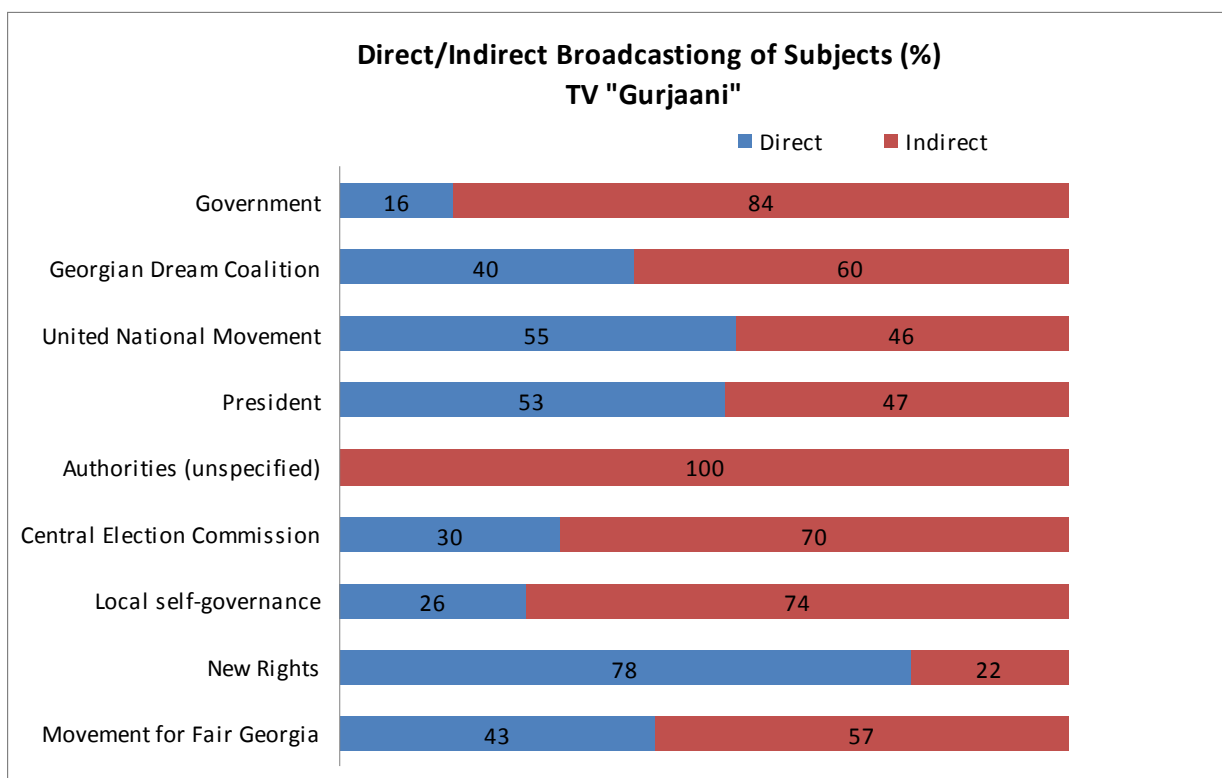
**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – The news programs dedicated most of airtime - 24 min - to government. The Georgian Dream coalition enjoyed 7-minute coverage, UNM – 6 min, President – 5 min, authorities – 4 min.



All of the three tones were observed during the reporting period. The highest index of negative reporting was observed in regard to government - 53 percent. The reporting on the monitored subjects was neutral and positive in tone. The biggest share - 87 percent - of neutral reporting falls on President.



Indirect reporting (84 percent) greatly prevailed over direct reporting (16 percent) in government's case. In regard to the rest of the monitored subjects the share was almost equal.

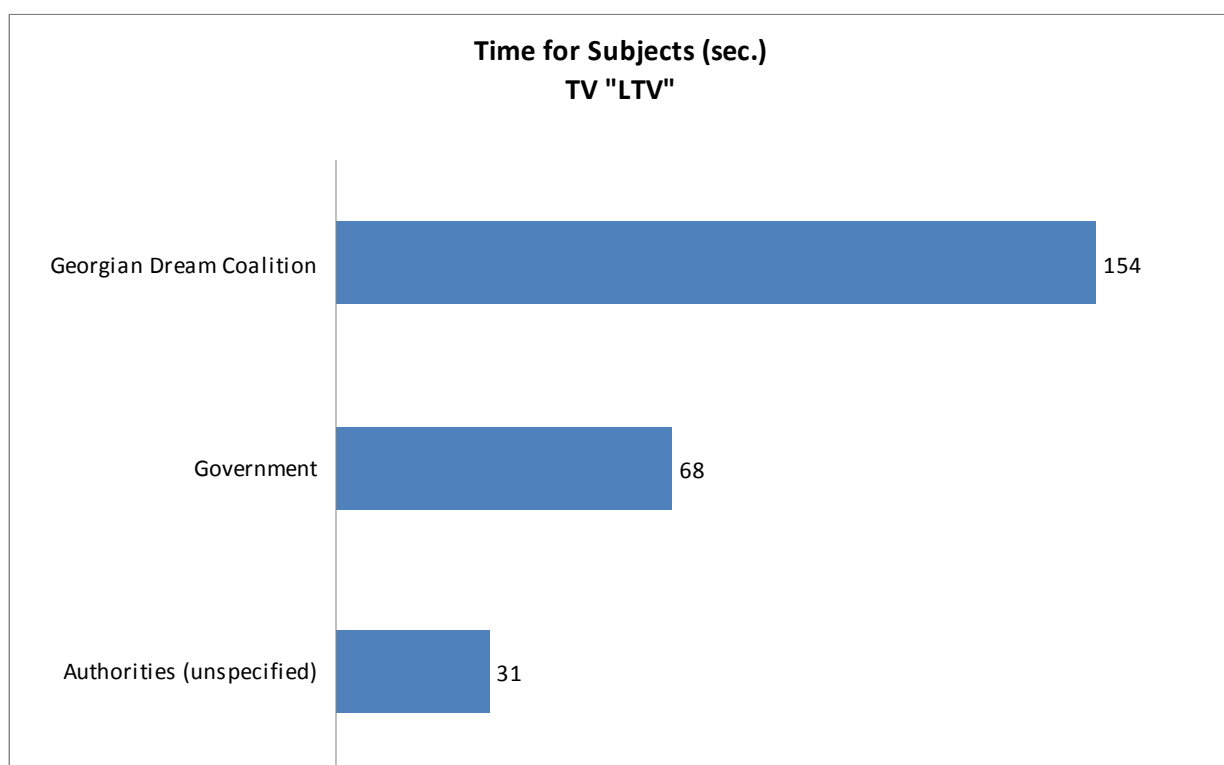


Within the reporting period TV company Gurjaani aggressively covered the main event of the week – the release of prisoner abuse film and the protest rallies that ensued. For the whole week solidarity

rallies were the main topic of news. The aforementioned topic has fully overlapped reporting on pre-election campaign conducted by the monitored subjects, which naturally affected the results of the monitoring. In particular for the past week the government was dedicated the greater share of airtime – 25 minutes. 53 percent of the reporting was negative in tone. The share of negative tone in regard to the authorities and local self-government got bigger as well. It is noteworthy that journalists were trying to provide viewers with comprehensive and balanced information over the topic. During the period of September 17-23 news programs dedicated almost equal airtime to the pre-election activities of the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. It is worth to note though that the first three TV stories in the September 17 news program were dedicated to the presentation of infrastructural projects implemented in the region. The reporting on the authorities, President and UNM was positive in tone.

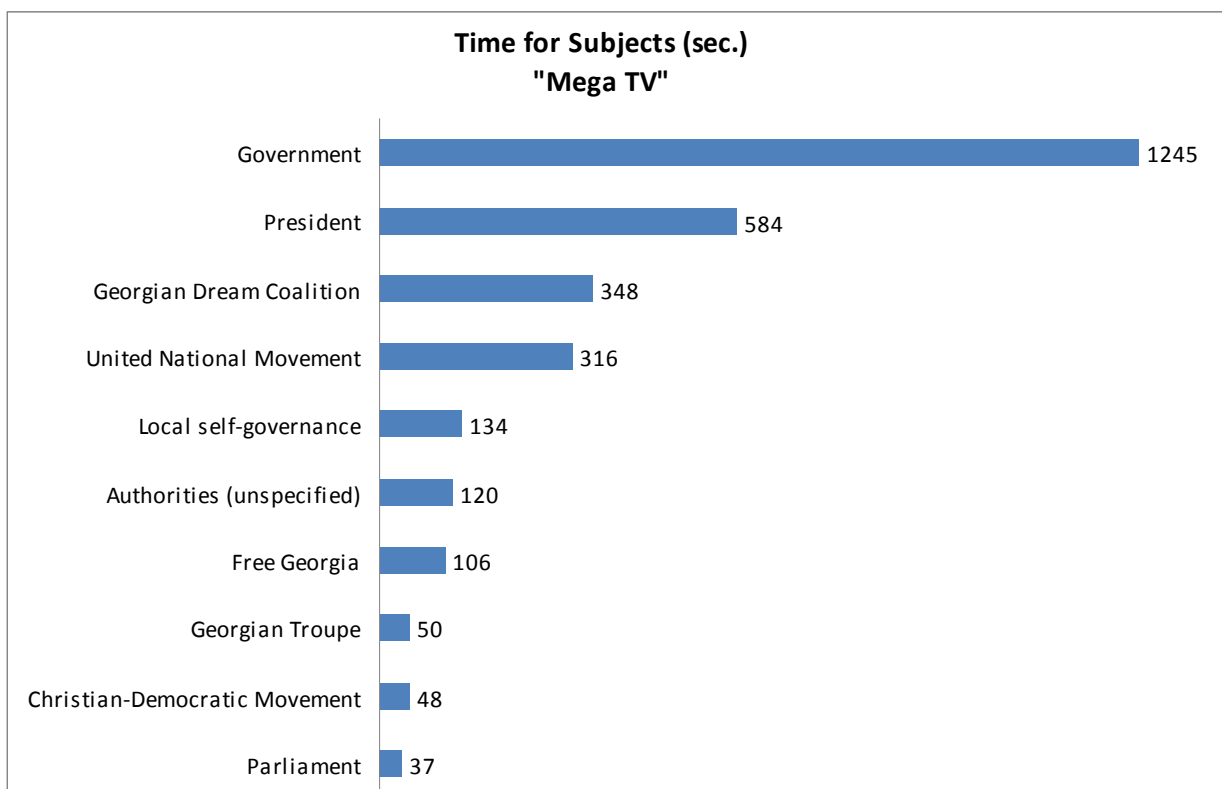
The time of reporting on the rest of political parties including New Rights, Christian-Democratic Movement and Movement for Free Georgia were dedicated less than three minutes in total.

**LTV (Lagodekhi)** – During the reporting period the TV company dedicated around 3 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage. The tones of reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition were neutral (72 percent) and positive (28 percent). 73 percent of reporting was direct.

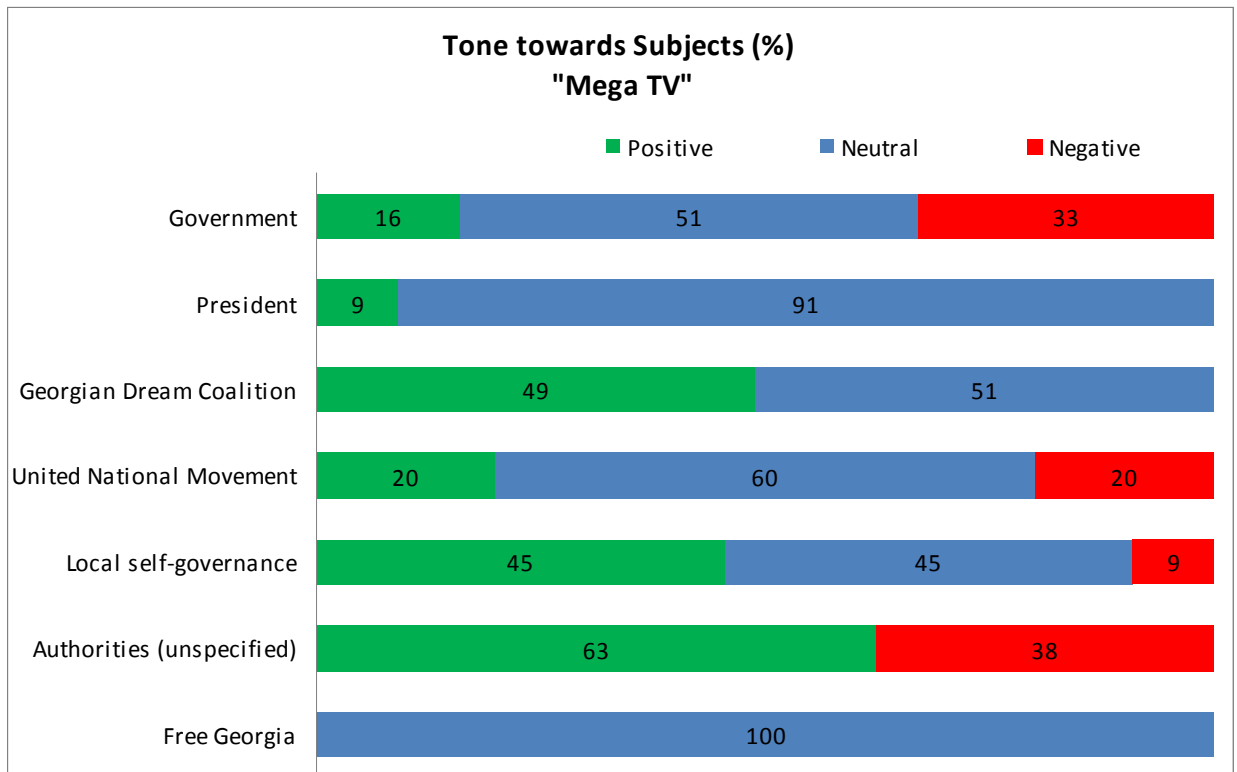


During the reporting week TV company Lagodekhi provided almost no coverage of the monitored subjects. The briefing conducted by the Georgian Dream coalition was dedicated approximately 3 minutes. One of the stories was produced on the dissemination of books at schools by the Ministry of Education (appr 1 min). Due to the lack of the material any kind of analysis is impossible to provide and ultimately makes no sense.

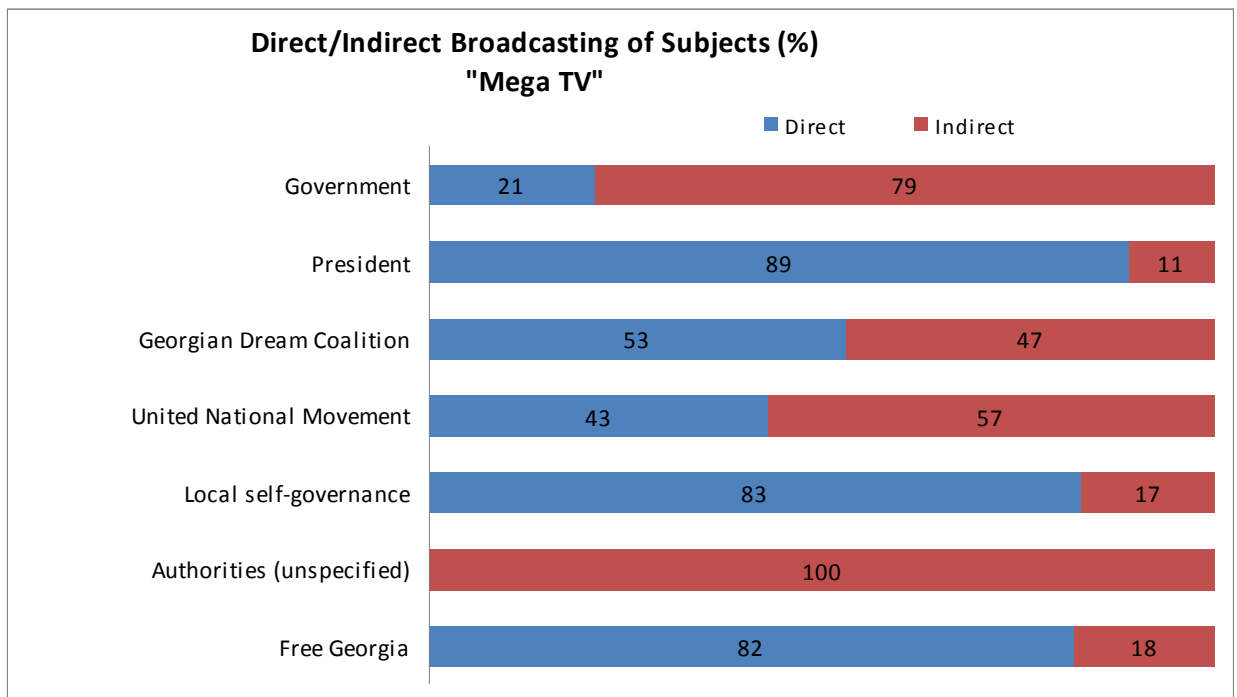
**Mega TV (Khoni)** – During the reporting period the news programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime (21 min) to reporting on government, followed by President with 10 minutes, Georgian Dream coalition with 6 minutes and UNM with 5 minutes.



All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the monitored subjects, neutral tone prevailed though. Negative tone was attached to reporting on the government (33 percent) and UNM (20 percent).



Out of the three monitored subjects President and local self government had the highest indexes of direct reporting – 89 and 83 percent respectively while government excelled in terms of indirect reporting – 79 percent. In case of the rest of the subjects the share was almost equal.

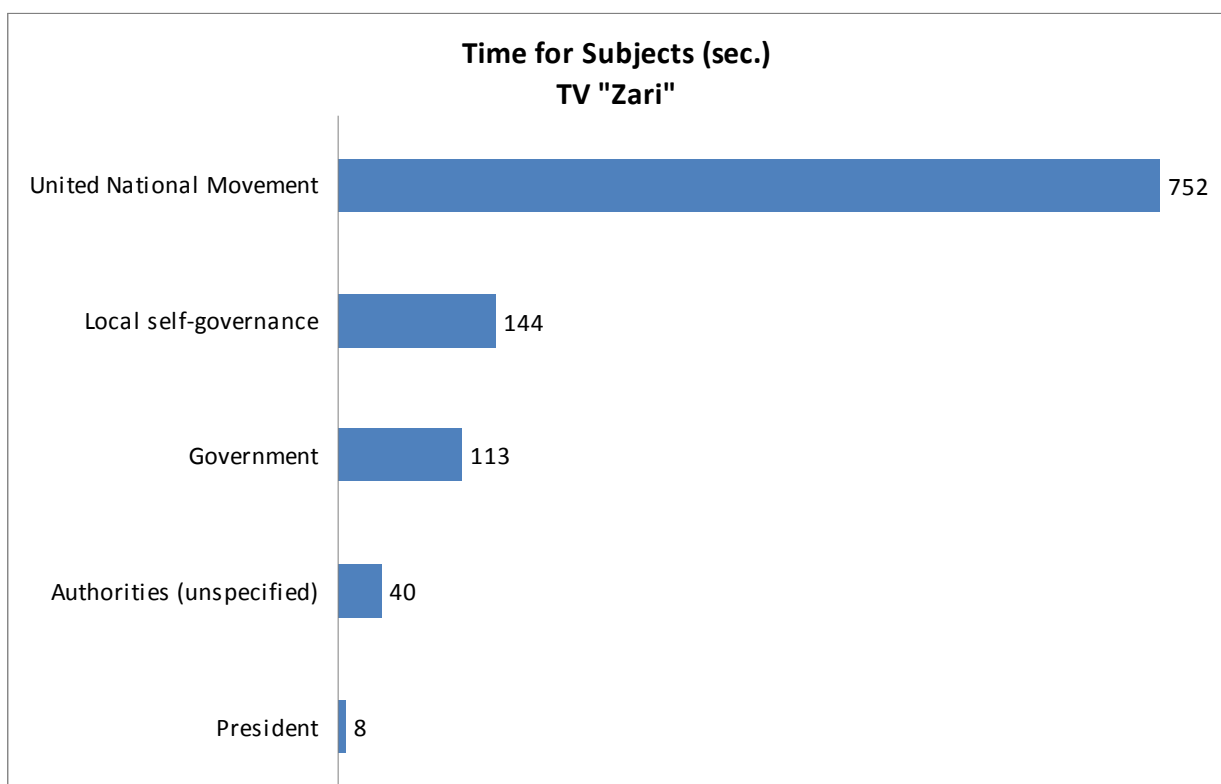


During the reporting week TV company Mega TV was aggressively covering monitored subjects. TV stories were produced about the activities carried out by the State agencies as well as opposition parties. Within the period of September 17-23 the main topic was the release of prisoner abuse

footage. Two stories were produced over the issue: one of the stories demonstrated the stance of the authorities and the second one of the opposition.

In general the news programs produced within the reporting period are balanced, demonstrating the positions of different parties, but the stories separately lack balance since they demonstrate the evaluations provided by just one party.

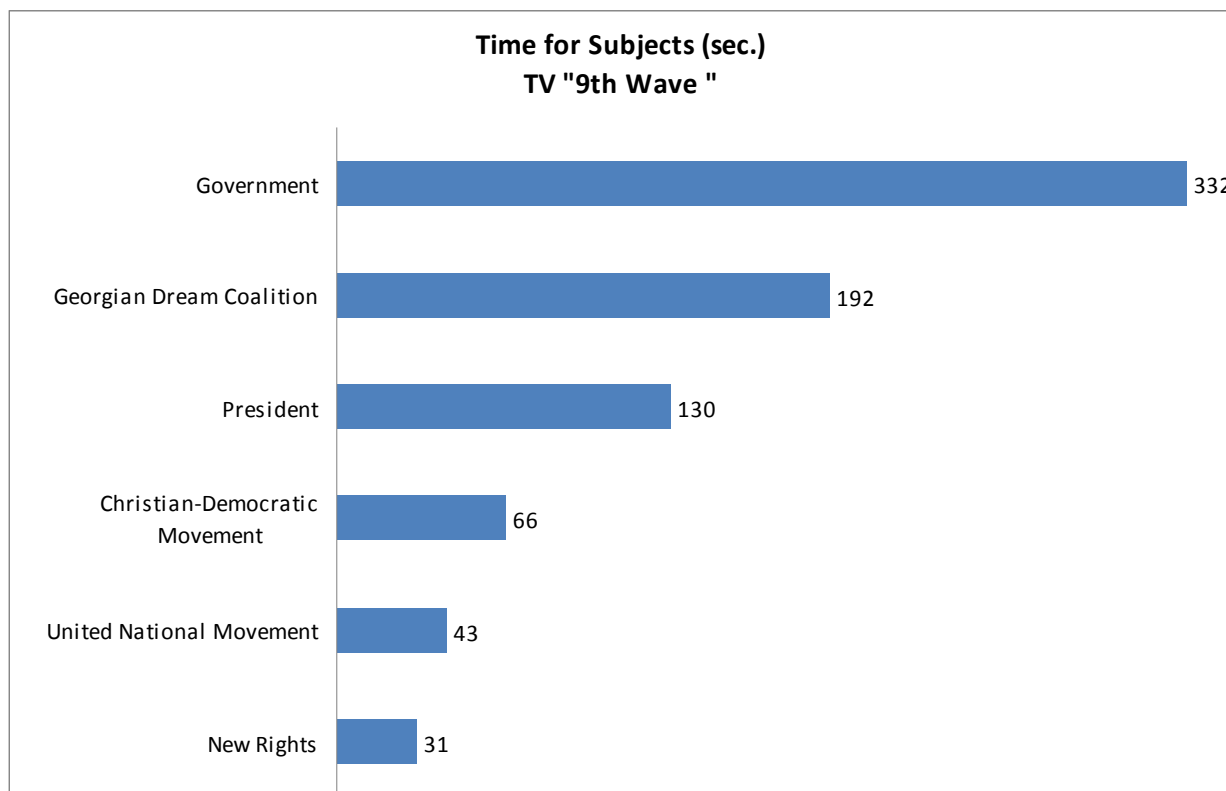
**Zari (Samtredia)** – Out of the monitored subjects the biggest share of airtime - around 13 min - was dedicated to UNM. 4 minute of reporting was enjoyed by local self-government. Government received 2-minute coverage. Reporting on the monitored subjects was only neutral and positive in tone. Direct reporting greatly prevailed over indirect reporting.



Within the reporting period TV company Zari produced two news programs. Some of the stories extremely lacked balance, bias was evident. Journalist’s text was subjective. It is noteworthy that the channel dedicated a huge time for covering the member of parliament, UNM majoritarian deputy Avtandil Sturua. Moreover, the comments provided by the deputy was the main part of non-political stories. The September 18 news program for instance aired the stories featuring UNM’s deputy congratulating students on the beginning of the new school year and also visiting a kinder garden. The TV stories contained a fair amount of comments expressing strictly positive attitude to the majoritarian deputy. “We have been gifted two DVD players and now kids are enriching their minds with that,” says the director of the kinder garden. The comment over the opening of the repaired

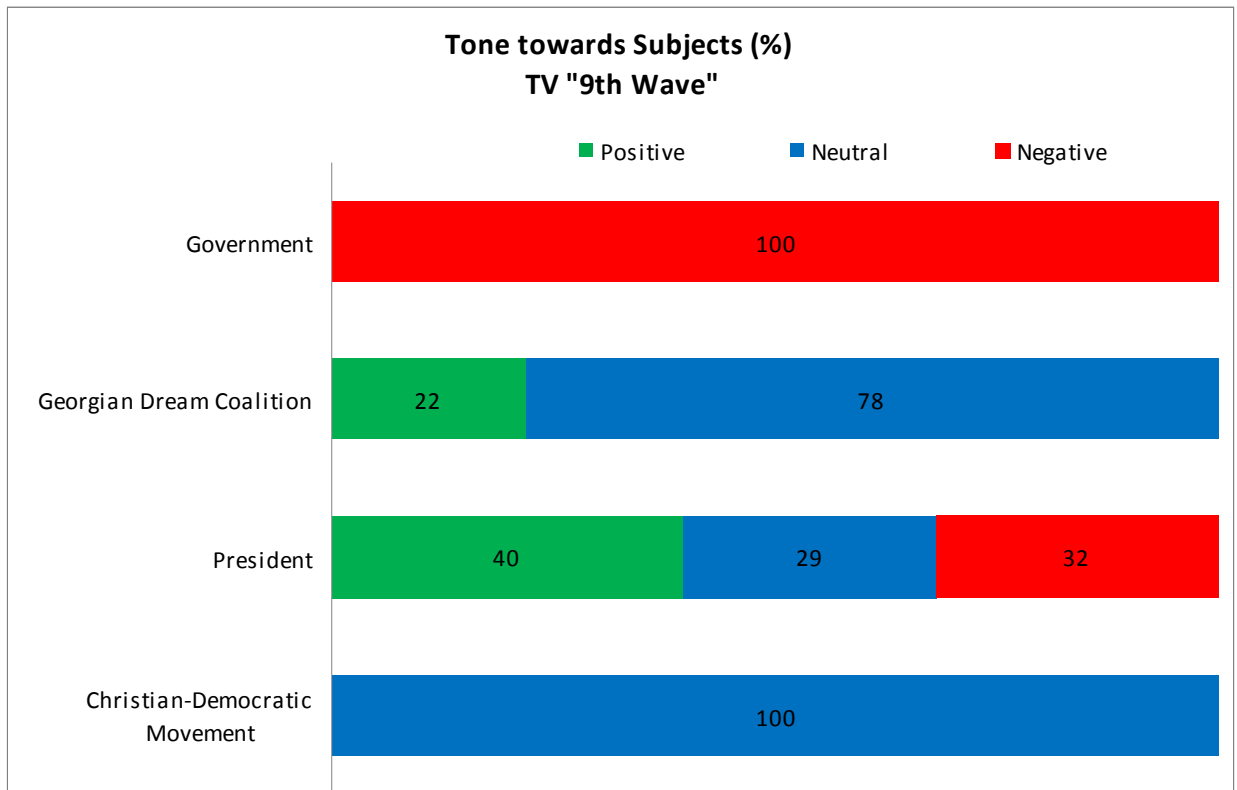
kinder garden sounds interesting as well: “Kids were glowing with happiness following the rehabilitation of the kinder garden.”

**9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti)** – The TV company dedicated the biggest share of airtime – around 6 minutes – to government. The Georgian Dream coalition and President enjoyed 3 and 2-minute reporting.

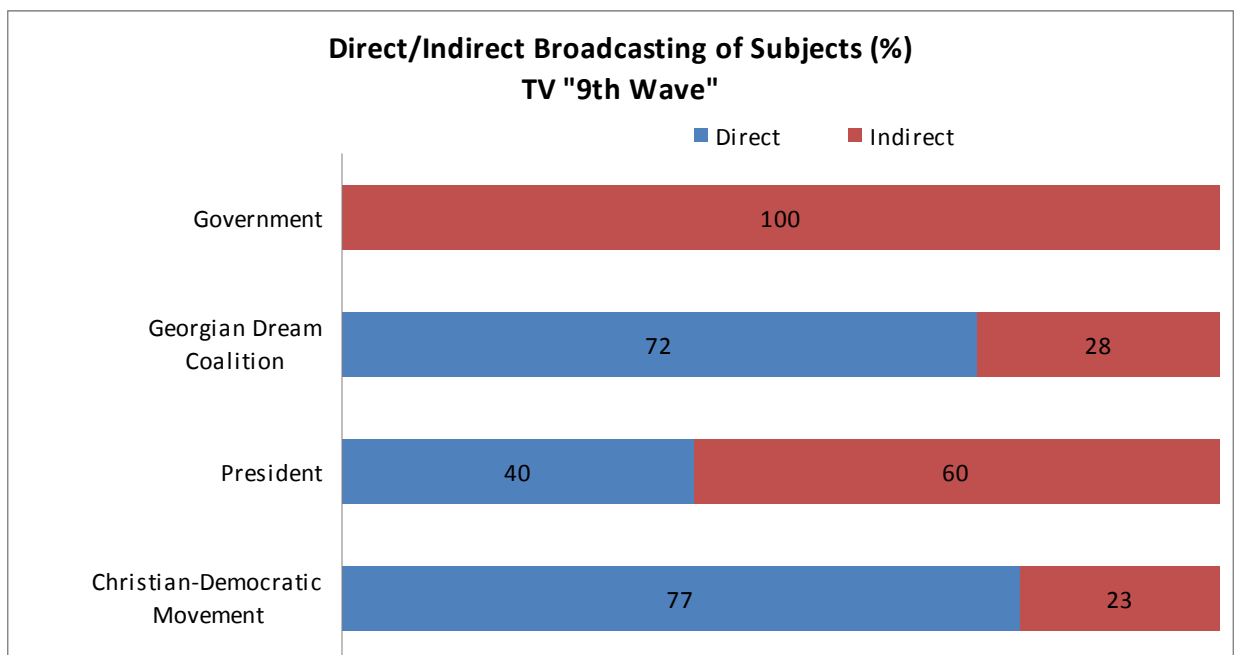


100 percent of reporting on the government is negative in tone. Negative tone was also attached to reporting on President (32 percent).





It is also noteworthy that 100 percent of the time dedicated to the government is indirect.



During the reporting period TV company 9<sup>th</sup> Wave dedicated airtime to few of the monitored subjects. In most cases interviewers in the TV stories lack subtitles therefore it is hard to identify whether the speaker is a subject of our interest. One of the main topics of the news programs is the release of the prisoner abuse footage and protest rallies held against violence. 100 percent negative tone of reporting is the result of the stories produced about the aforementioned topic.

It is also noteworthy that the TV company rather often apportioned second parts of the news programs to air the stories produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB). The company repeatedly aired the TV stories produced by Batumi-based Channel 25.

*Activities to be carried out:*

Within the period of September 24-30 the eighth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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