



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

**Subagreement # S-12-155**

**Report for: October 22 - 28, 2012**

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

*Total Budget: 31 000\$*

## **Results Summary/Impact Statement**

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

- Very few of the monitored subjects were dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- Reporting on local self-government, government and Parliament considerably went up;
- Reporting was essentially neutral in tone, compared with the previous monitoring periods more time was dedicated to airing dissenting opinions;
- No political parties, apart from the United National Movement (UNM) and the Georgian Dream coalition, were virtually provided TV coverage; And the time dedicated to the aforementioned two subjects has considerably decreased;
- Some of the TV Companies focused on social, cultural and economic issues within the region rather than political developments;
- In absolute majority of TV Companies journalists' texts are unbiased.

### ***Background***

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of October 22-28, 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 October 22-28 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

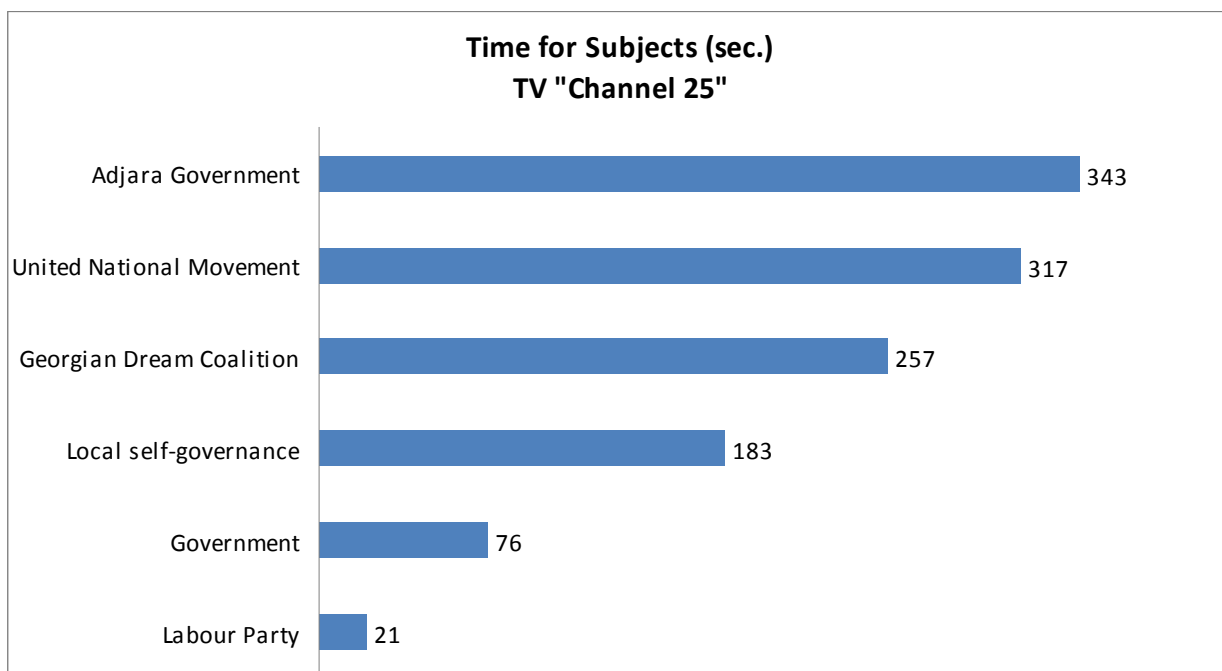
aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. The cases of manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs were also brought into focus.

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).

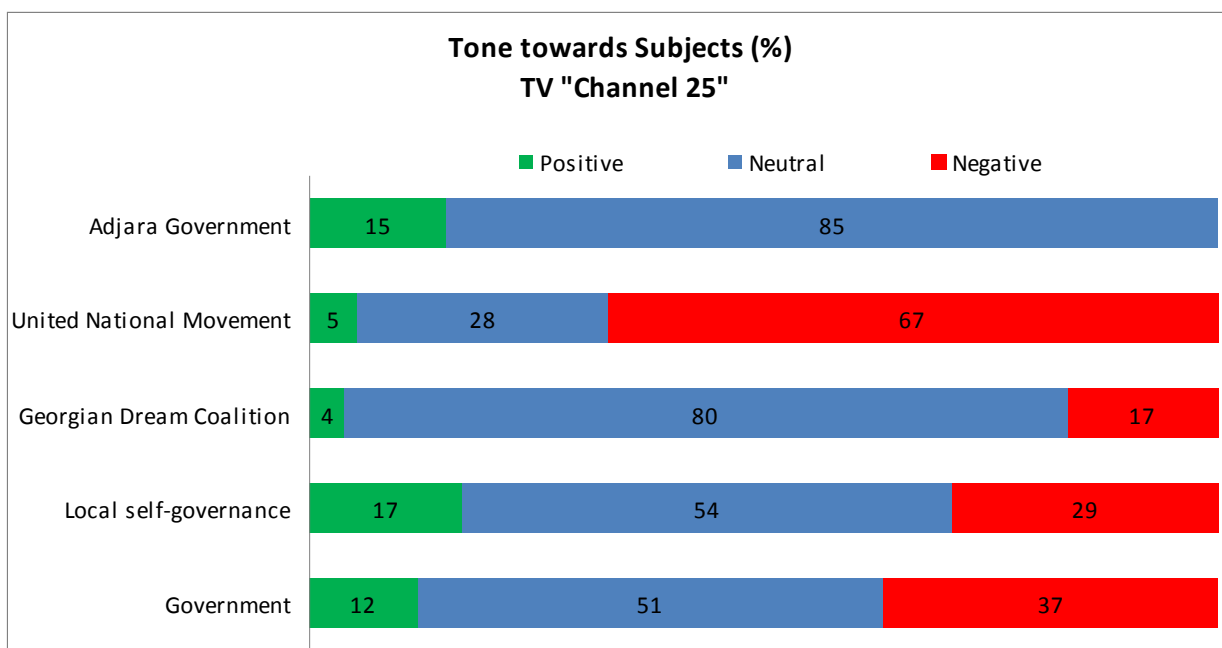
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

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

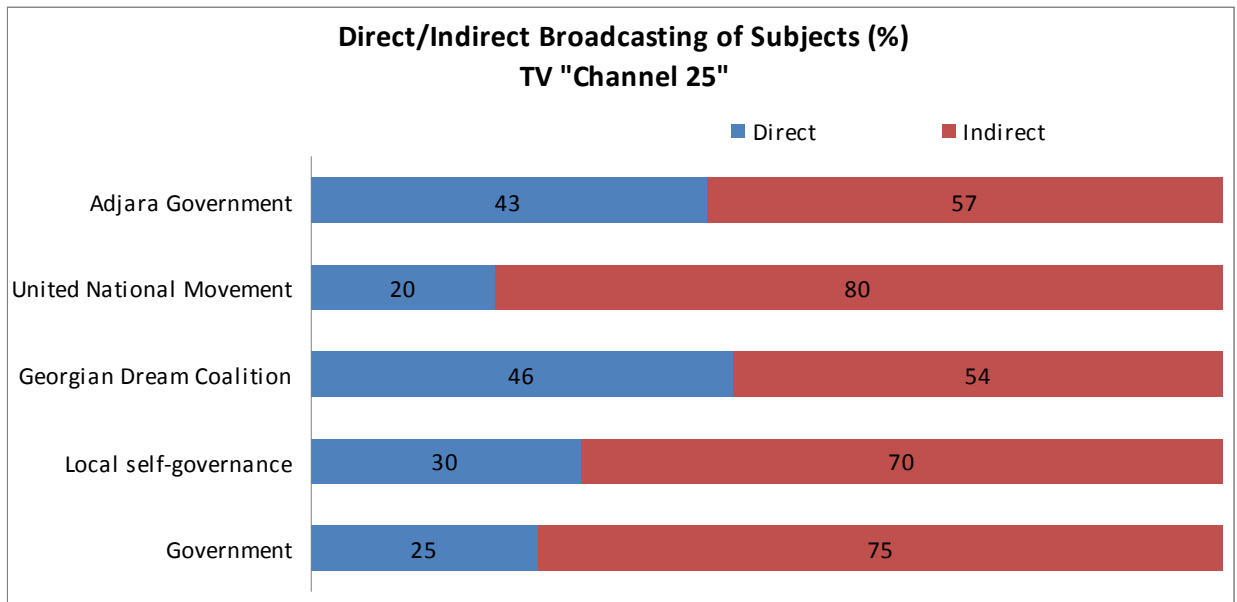
**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – News programs on the channel dedicated the biggest share of airtime 6 minutes, to the Georgian Dream coalition. United National Movement (UNM) comes next with 5 minutes, followed by the local self-government with 3 minutes. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage.



All of the three tones were attached to reporting on the subjects. Neutral and negative tones prevailed though. But in regard to Adjara government only positive (15 percent) and neutral (85 percent) tones were applied. The biggest share of negative reporting falls on UNM.

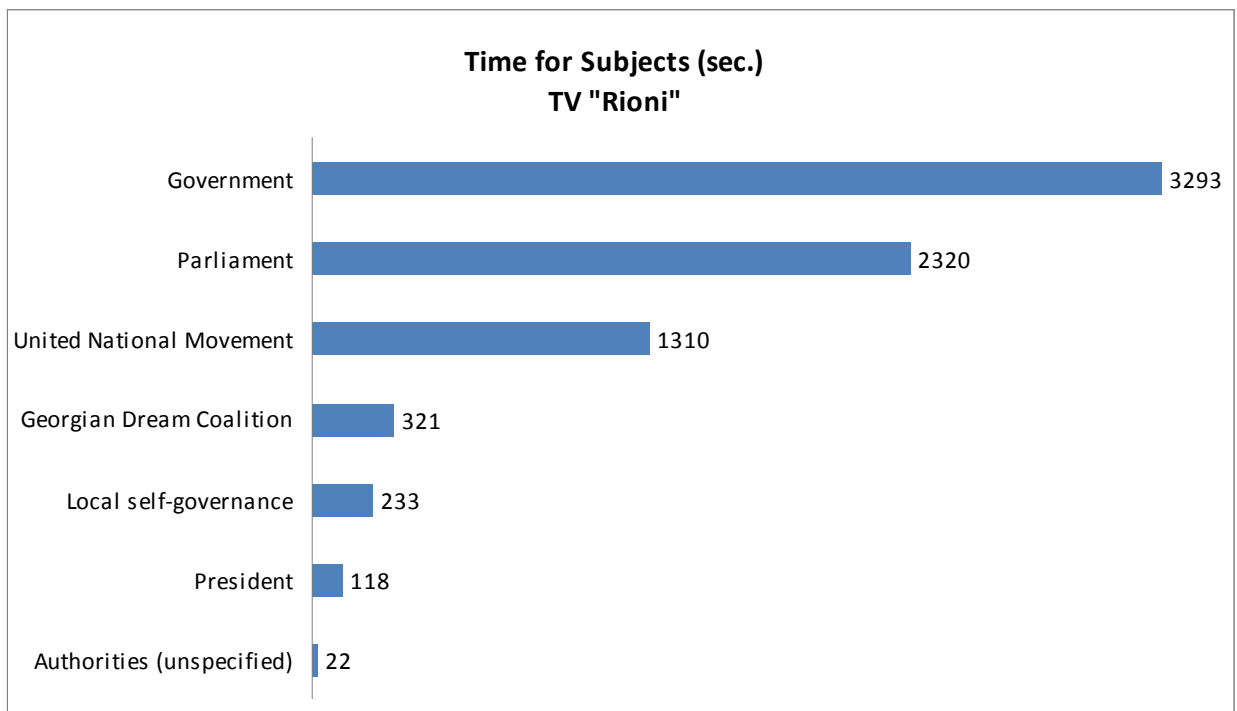


The monitored subjects were essentially talked about but the subjects themselves were dedicated airtime too. The share of direct/indirect reporting looks as follows:

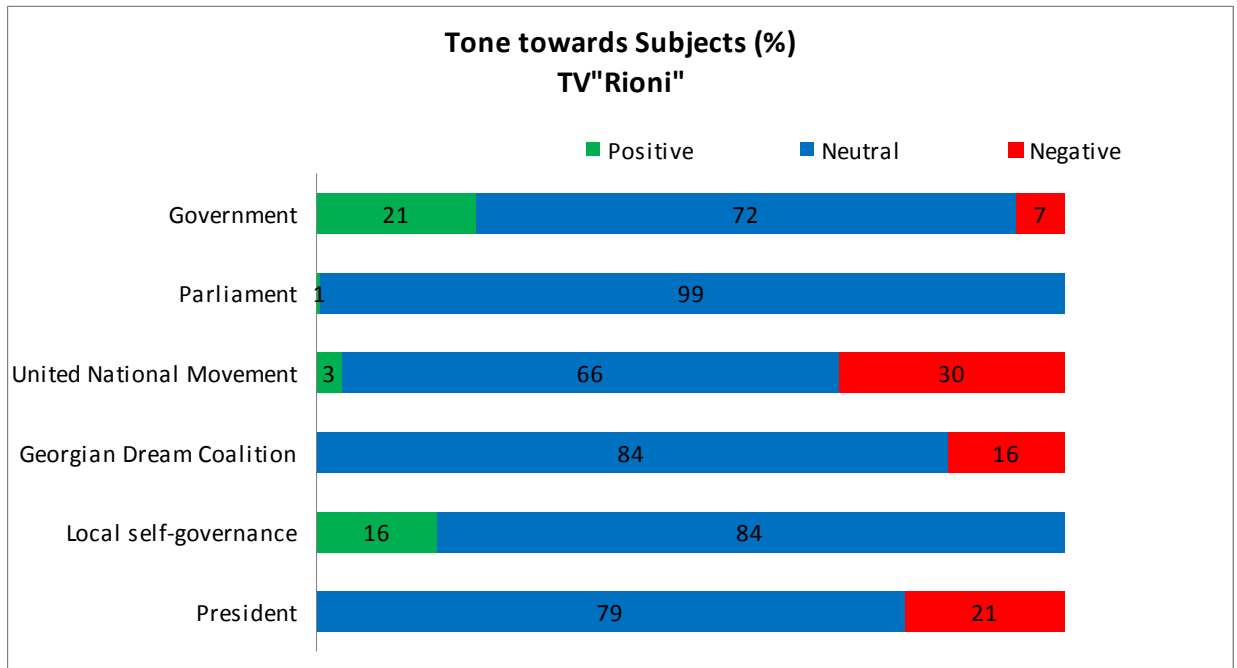


Within the reporting period the TV Company mainly covered local news. Out of the monitored subjects the biggest share of reporting was dedicated to the recruitment of staff by Adjara government and their approval. When reporting journalists bias to any political party or policy maker was no evident. All of the interested parties had a possibility to express their opinions.

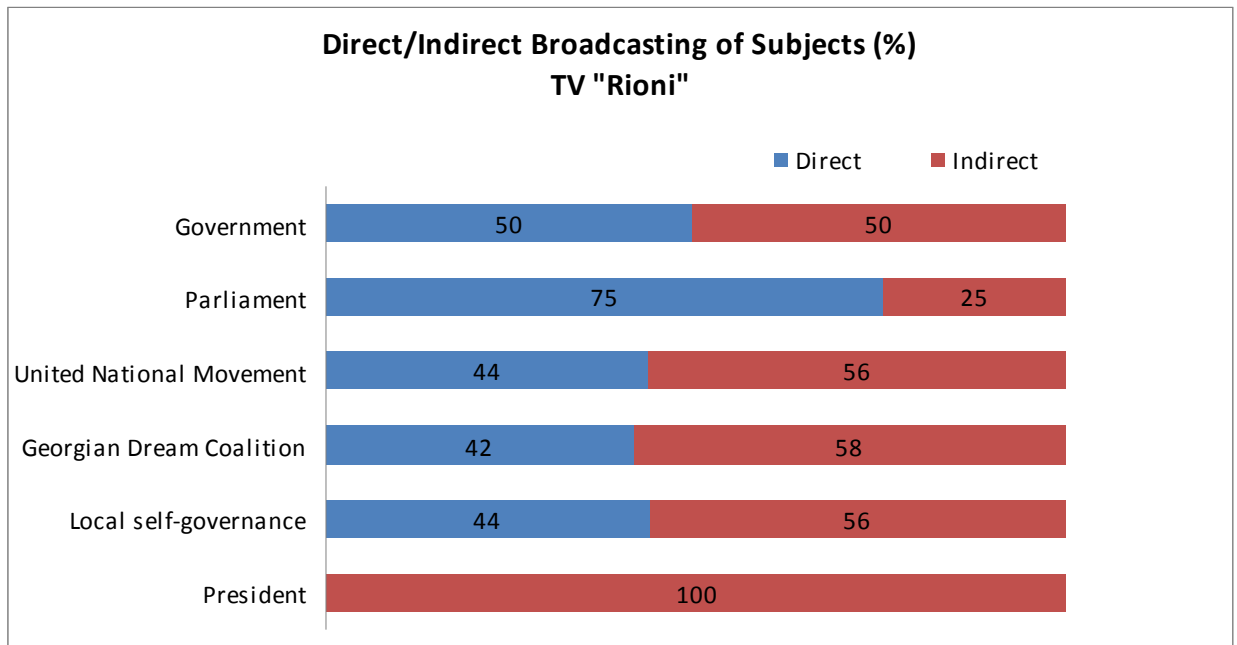
**Rioni (Kutaisi)** - The news programs on the channel dedicated the biggest share of reporting, 55 minutes, to the government. Parliament comes next with 39 minutes, UNM enjoyed 22-minute reporting. 5 and 4 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition and local self-government respectively.



All of the three tones were applied when reporting on the subjects. Neutral tone though considerably prevailed over positive and negative. The biggest share of positive reporting falls on government (21 percent). UNM, with 30 percent, leads the chart in terms of negative reporting.



Subjects were provided equal amount of direct/indirect reporting. Only in President's case reporting was 100 percent indirect (2-minute coverage).

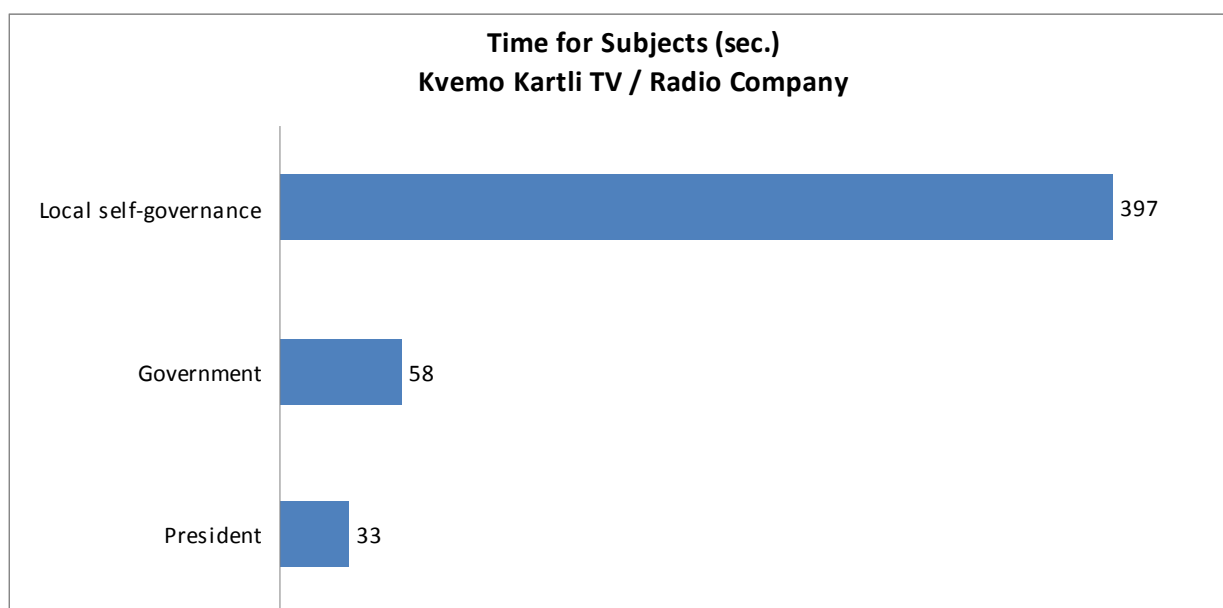


Within the reporting period TV Company Rioni aggressively covered the sittings of the new Parliament as well the issues of government formation. As we have mentioned above the share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Journalists' texts were neutral and balanced apart from the

cases of citing of the sources by the correspondent or the news presenter, e.g. “All of the promises given to people will be fulfilled,” statement by the Georgian Dream coalition representative.

It is noteworthy that an inaccuracy was observed in the October 24 news outlet. In particular, the presenter mentioned the UNM representative as the member of the majority: “The meeting was evaluated by the majority members too, alleging that the PM candidate had no certain plan outlined.” The statement was followed by the UNM members’ comments.

**Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi)** – The news programs dedicated approximately 7 minutes to the local self-government. Two more subjects of our interest (government, President) were dedicated less than one minute. The rest of the subjects were provided no coverage at all. The share of positive (45 percent) and neutral (55 percent) tones attached to reporting on the local self-government was almost equal. Direct reporting (81 percent) considerably prevailed over indirect reporting (19 percent).

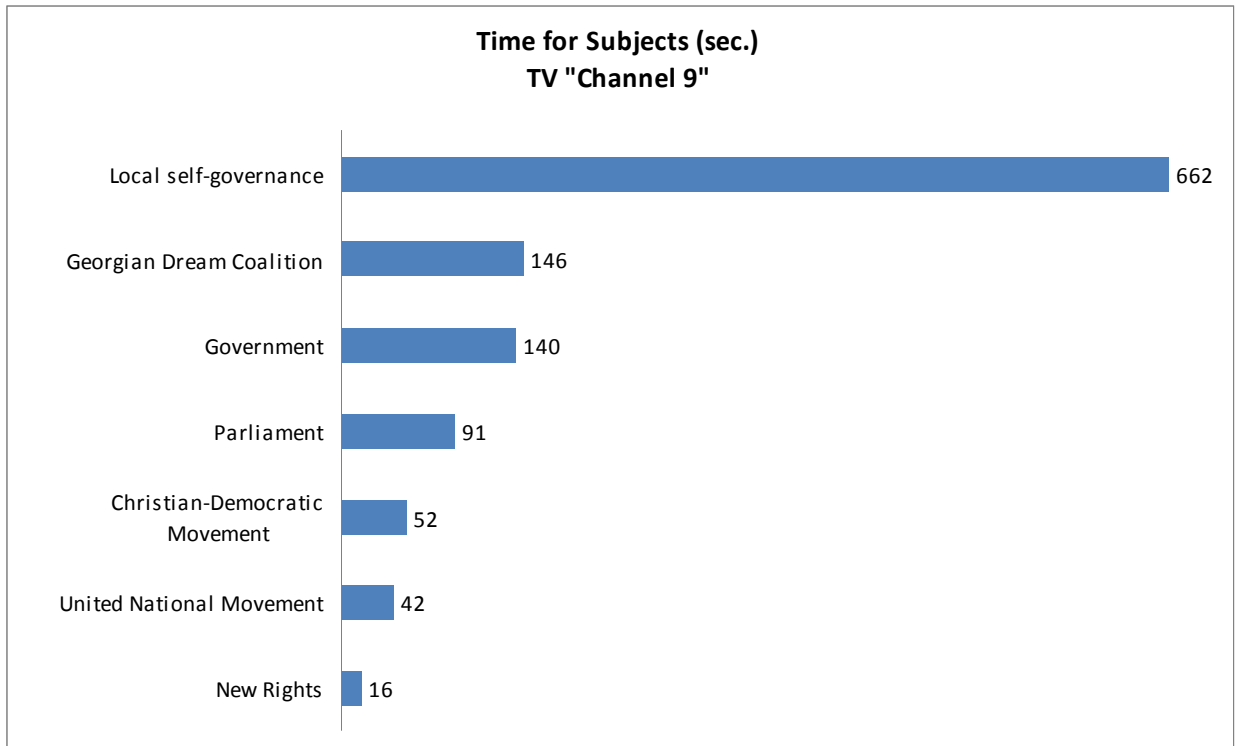


During the period of October 22-28 Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) mainly covered local news. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the infrastructural activities (arrangement of patios, construction of parks and so on) carried out by the local self-government) as well as cultural-amusement events having taken part in the region.

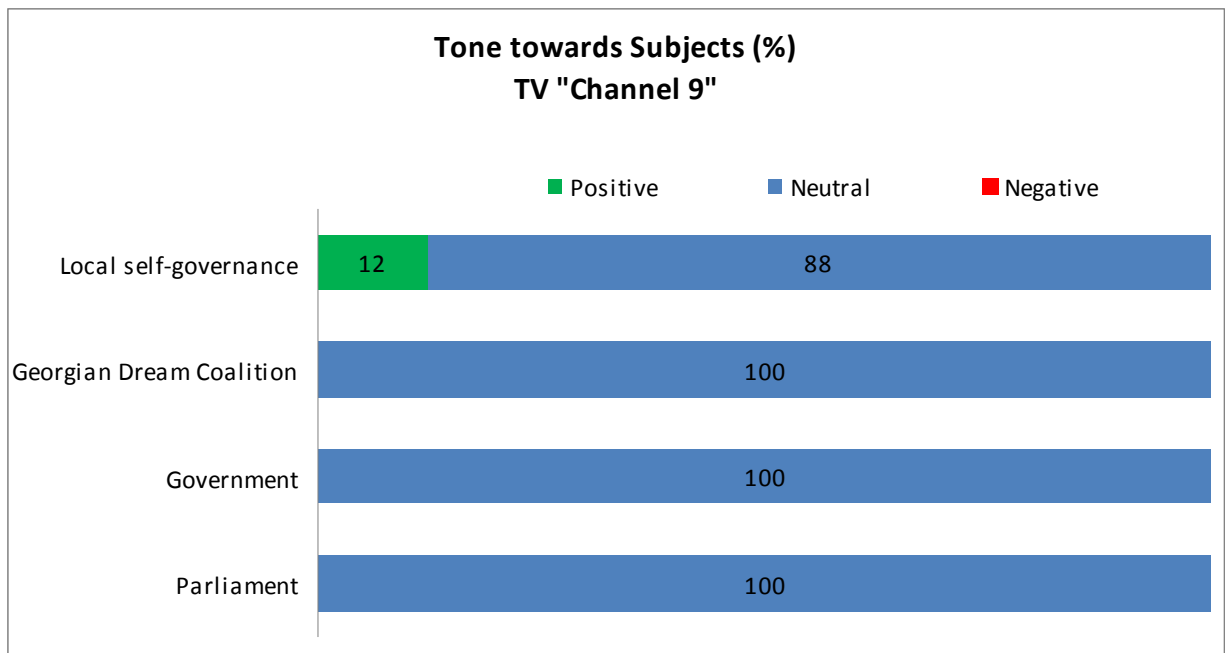
**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – During the reporting period no TV story was dedicated to the monitored subjects in the news programs.



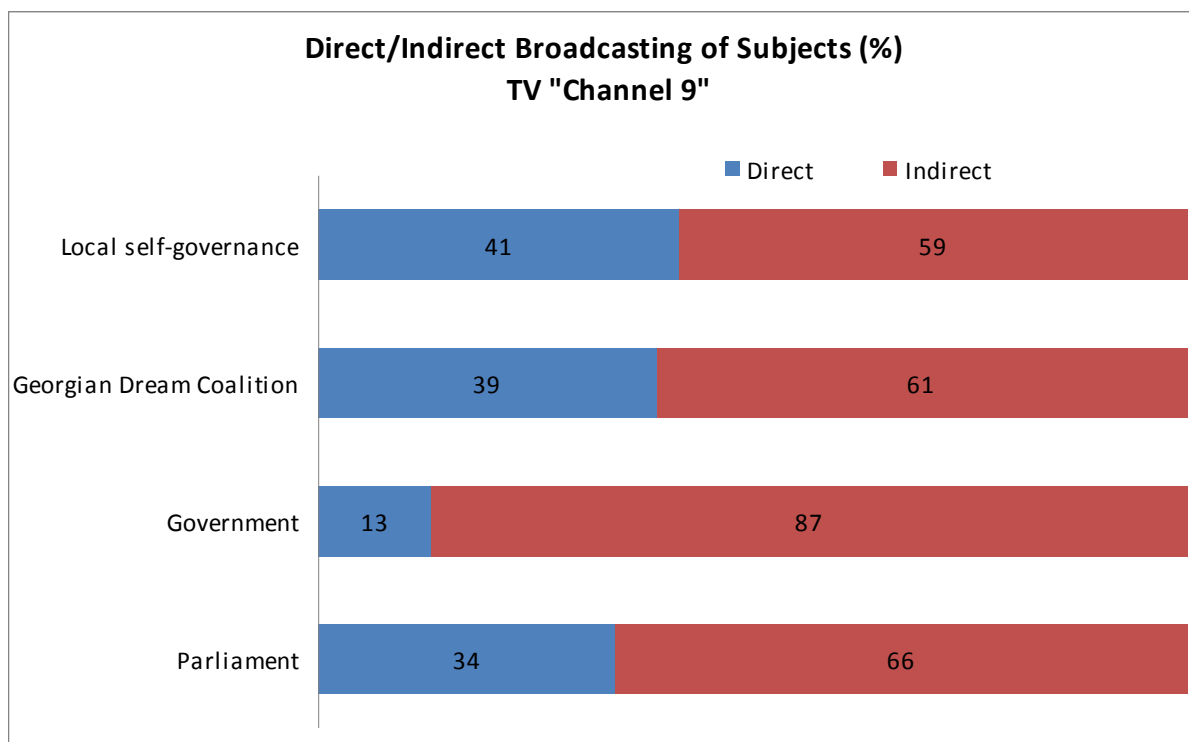
**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Akhaltsikhe)** - The channel dedicated 11 minutes to the local self-government. The Georgian Dream coalition and government each enjoyed 2-minute reporting. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage.



Solely neutral tone was attached to reporting on the subjects. Positive tone was attached to reporting on the local self-government (12 percent).

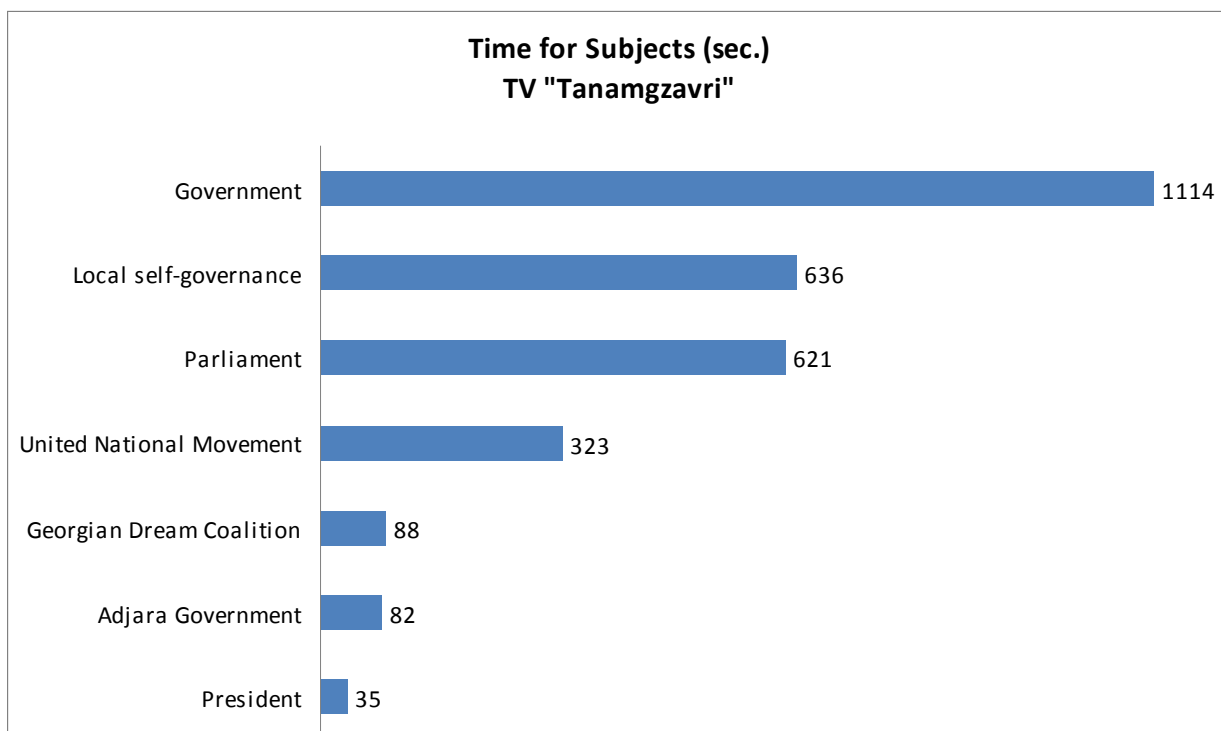


Both, direct and indirect tones were observed when reporting on the monitored subjects. The biggest share of indirect reporting falls on government (87 percent).

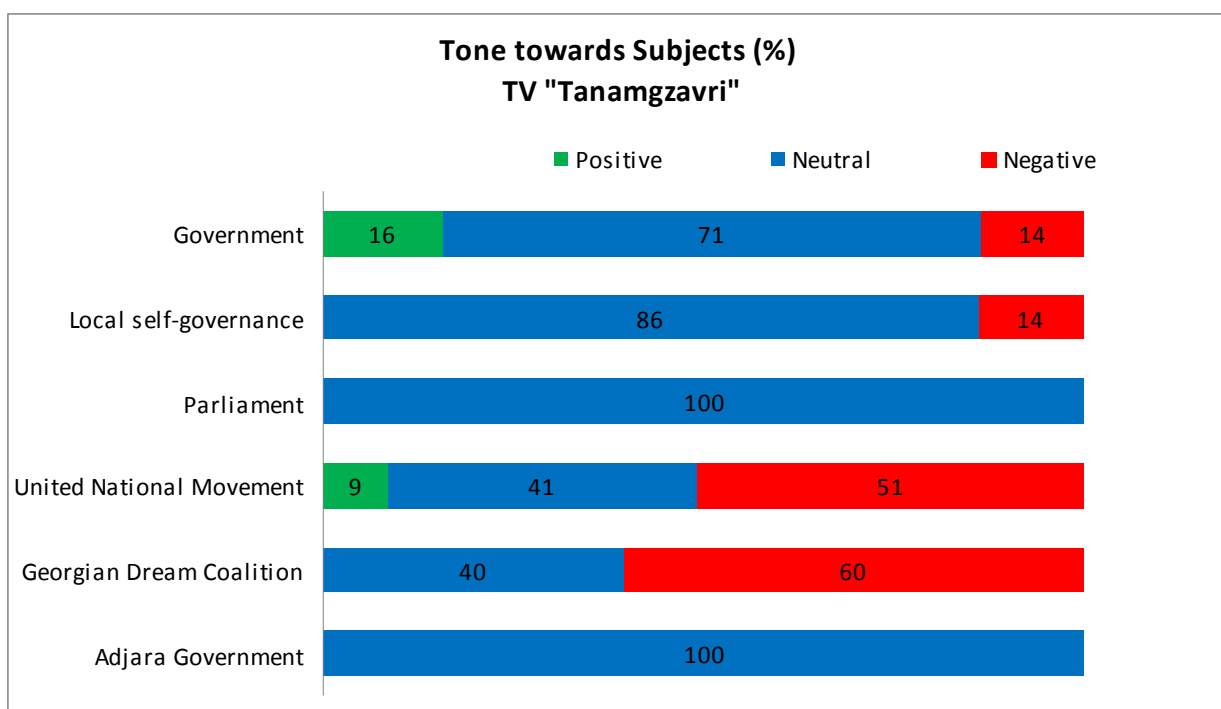


During the reporting period TV Company 9<sup>th</sup> Channel dedicated four times more time to the local self-government than the Georgian Dream coalition coming next in the chart. In total the TV company reported on the few of the monitored subjects. During the reporting week journalists made no subjective evaluations and the lack of balance was not observed.

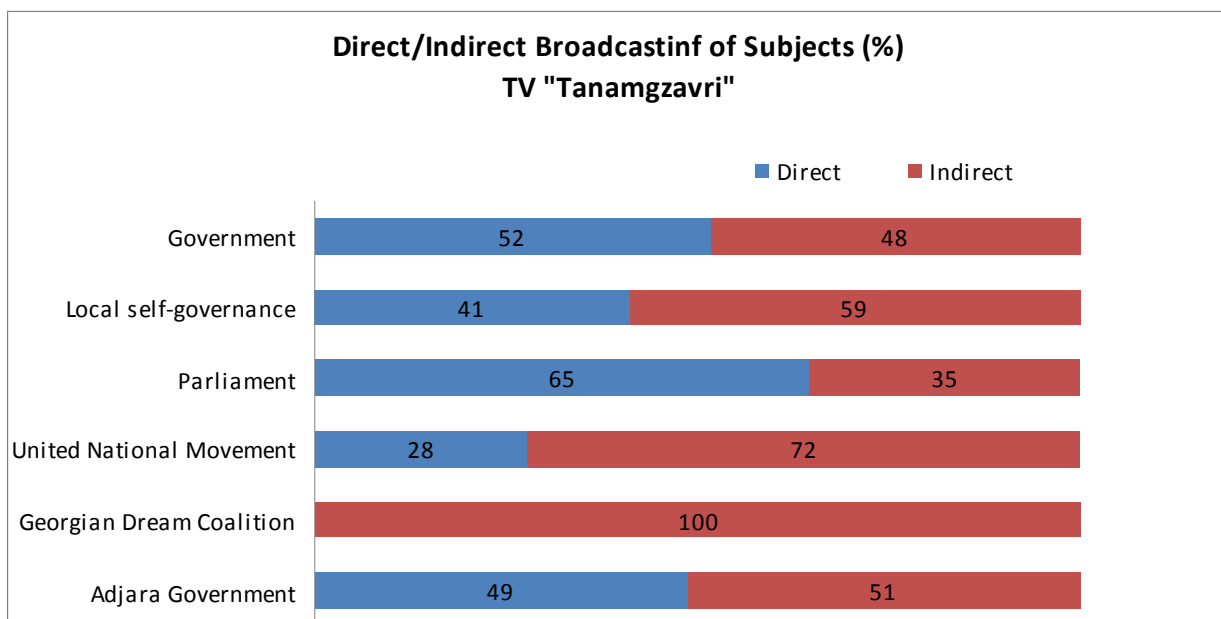
**Tanamagzavri (Telavi)** - The news programs dedicated 19 minutes to government. Local self-government and Parliament each enjoyed 10-minute coverage. UNM received five minutes.



All of the three tones were applied to reporting on the subjects. But neutral, and in some cases, negative (UNM, Georgian Dream coalition) tones prevailed over positive:

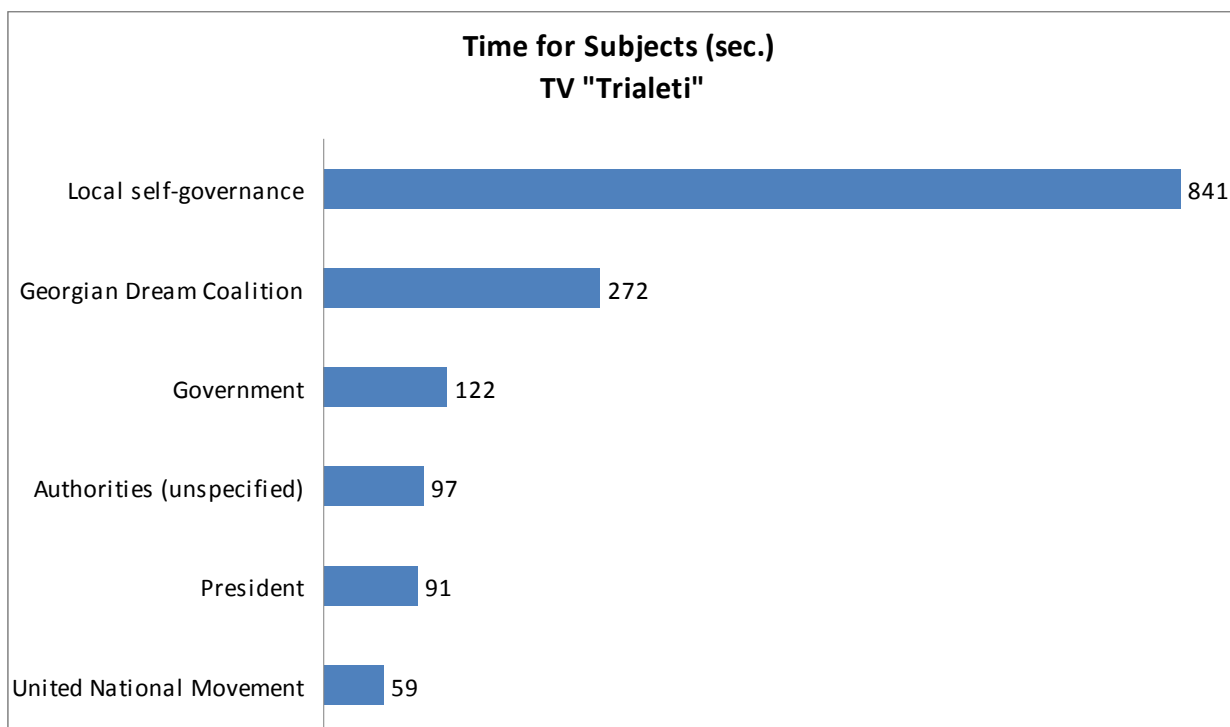


The share of direct/indirect reporting was mostly equal. Only in case of UNM (5-minute coverage) and Georgian Dream coalition (1,46-minute coverage) indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.

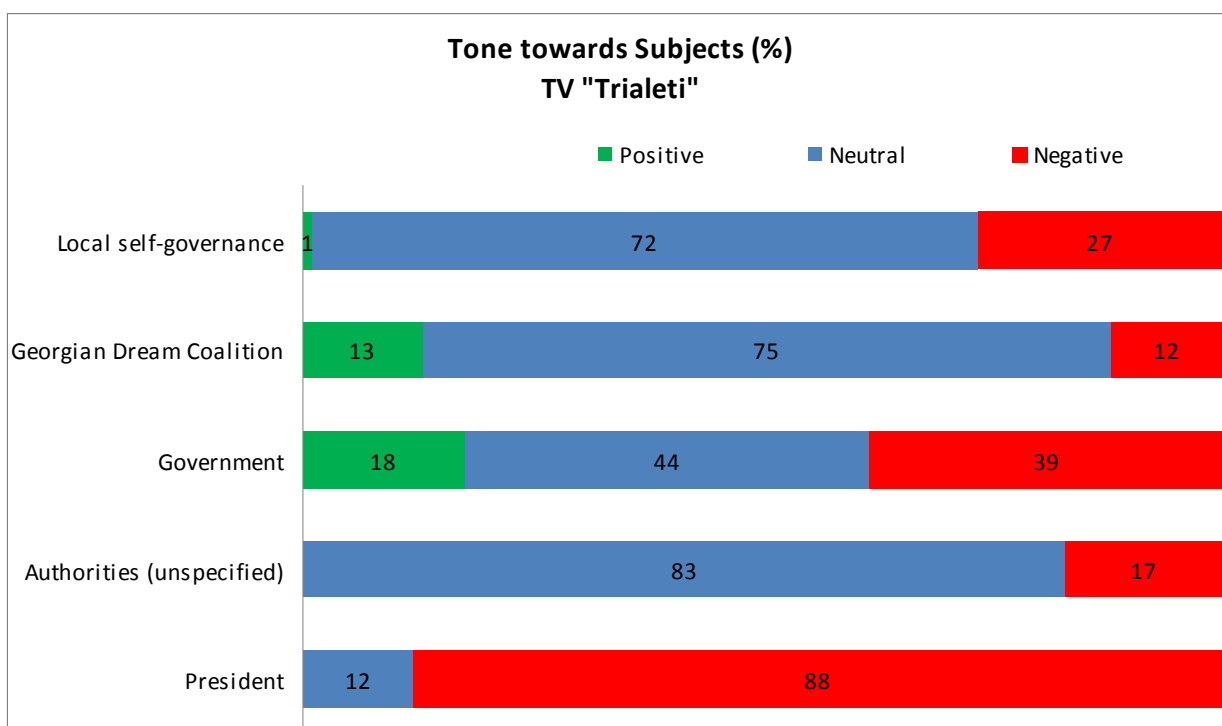


Within the reporting week TV Company Tanamgzavri covered the events ongoing in the region as well as nationwide on a daily basis. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the sittings of the new Parliament and the government formation issues. It is also noteworthy that the share of reporting on the local self-government considerably went up. TV stories are balanced and journalists' texts are unbiased and neutral.

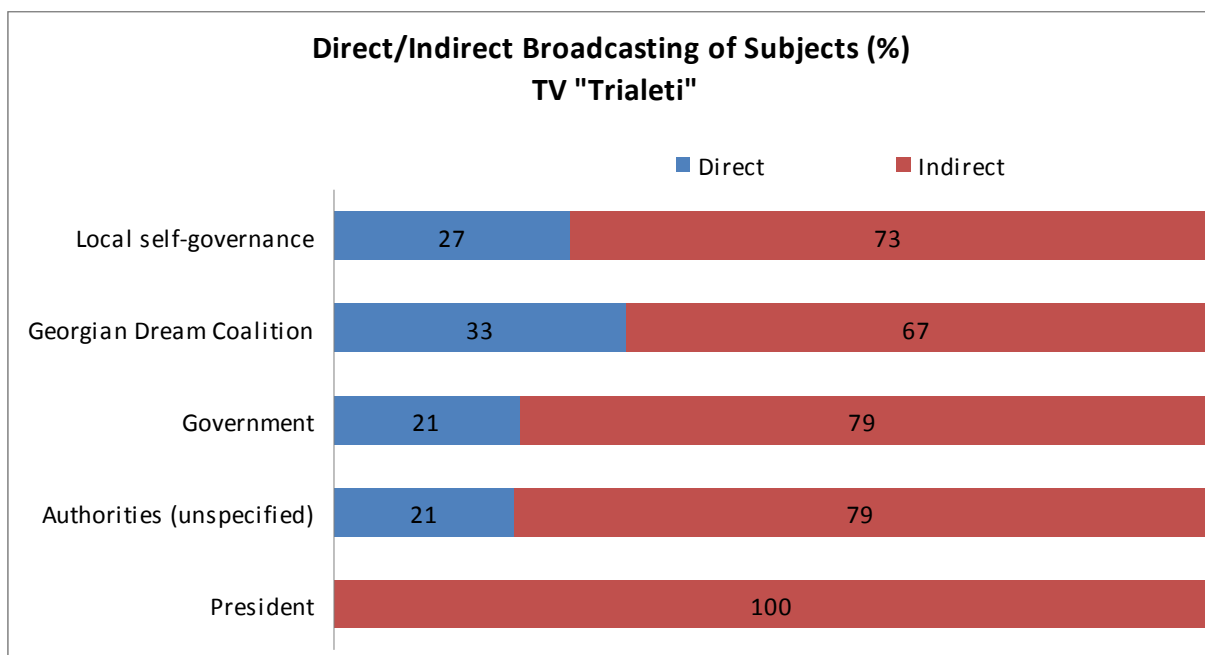
**Trialeti (Gori)** – The new programs on the channel dedicated 14 minutes to the local self-government. The Georgian Dream coalition comes next with 5 minutes, followed by government with 2 minutes. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage - a bit more than one minute was dedicated to the authorities, President and UNM.



Reporting on the subjects was essentially neutral and negative in tone. Positive tone was attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition (13 percent) and government (18 percent).

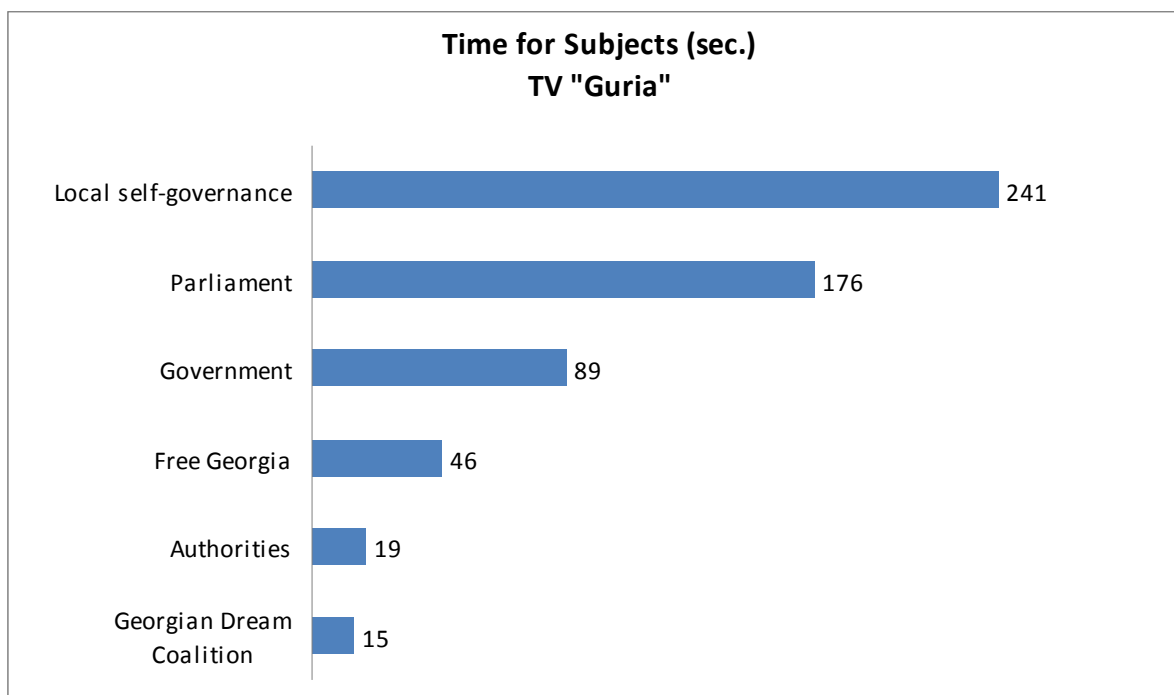


Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:



During the reporting week the TV Company mainly covered local news. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to reporting on the local self-government. In some stories criticism was evident. For example: “Infrastructural problems in the village of Mejvriskhevi and locals’ complaints,” “Money spent on the repairs of the bridge in the village of Barnabiantkari,” and so on. It is noteworthy that journalists are trying to provide equal coverage of every party.

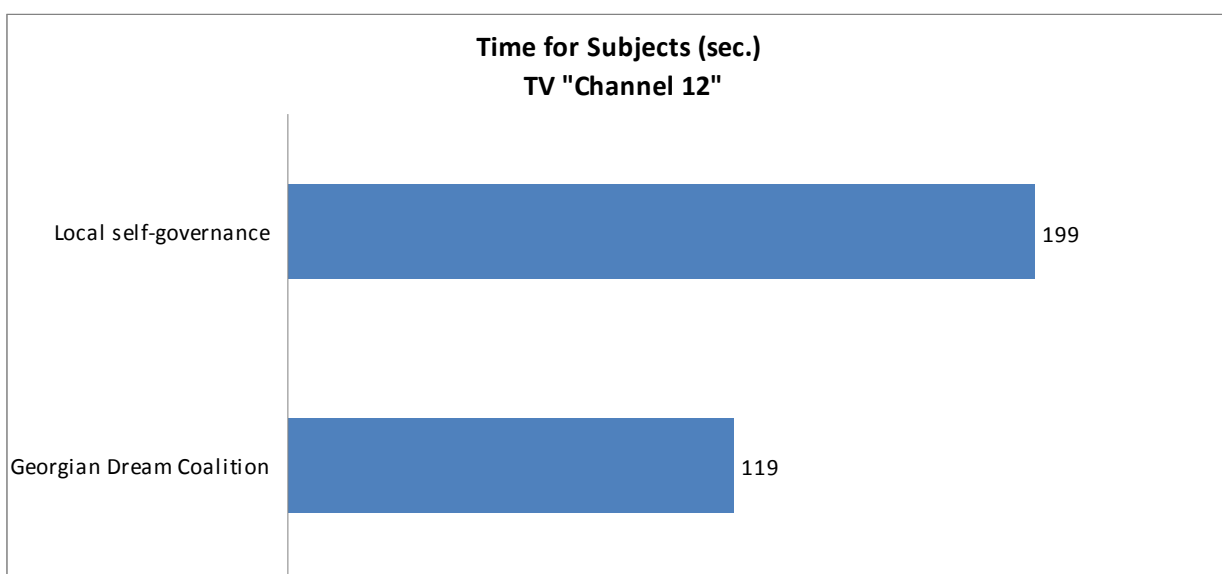
**Guria (Ozurgeti)** – The channel dedicated approximately 4 minutes to the local self-government. Parliament comes next with 2 minutes. News programs provided no coverage of the rest of the subjects.



Reporting on both of the monitored subjects was neutral in tone: local self-government – 59 percent, Parliament – 61 percent. In parliament’s case 100 percent of the dedicated time was indirect. But in regard to the local self-government the share was almost equal.

TV Company Guria covered only few of the monitored subjects. The total time of reporting on the subjects was 10 minutes maximum. Therefore we lack data to provide qualitative analysis.

**12<sup>th</sup> Channel (Bolnisi)** – Within the reporting week the TV Company covered only two of the monitored subjects: local self-government (3 minutes) and the Georgian Dream coalition (2 minutes).

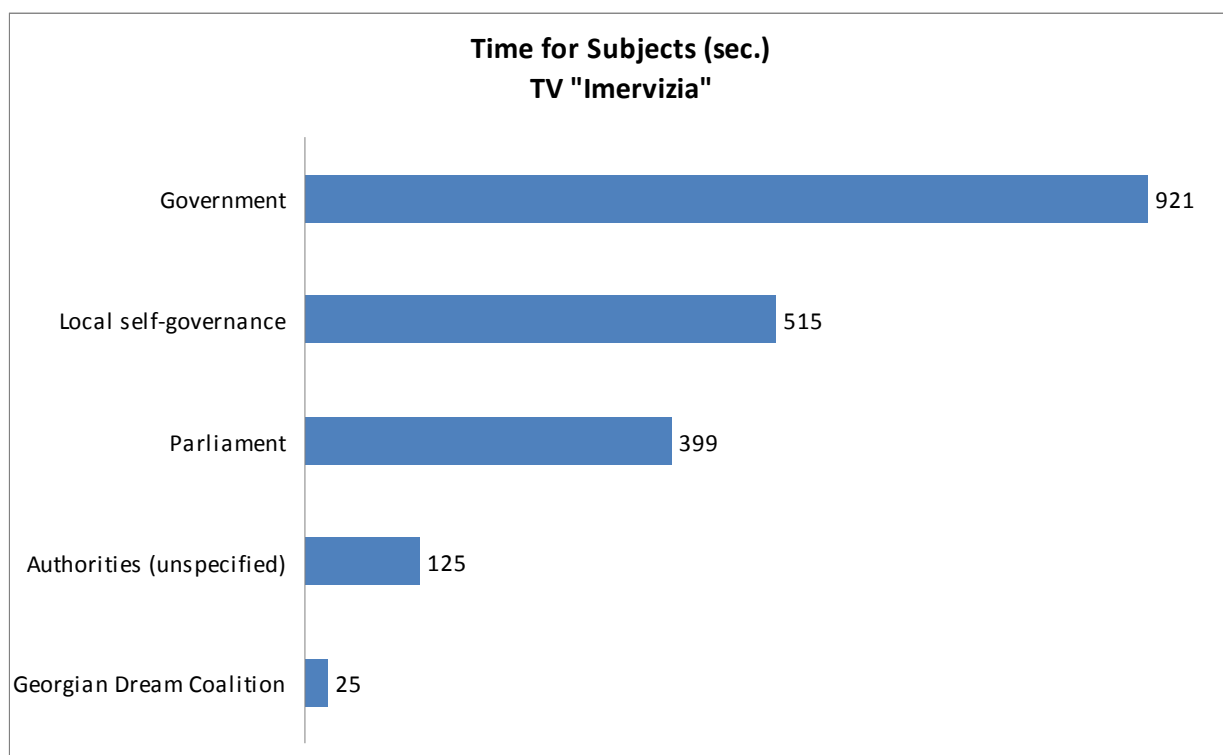


Reporting tone was neutral and positive. Neutral tone considerably prevailed though: local self-government – 86 percent and the Georgian Dream coalition – 73 percent. In regard to the latter the

share of direct reporting was 71 percent and in case of the Georgian Dream coalition indirect reporting made up 64 percent.

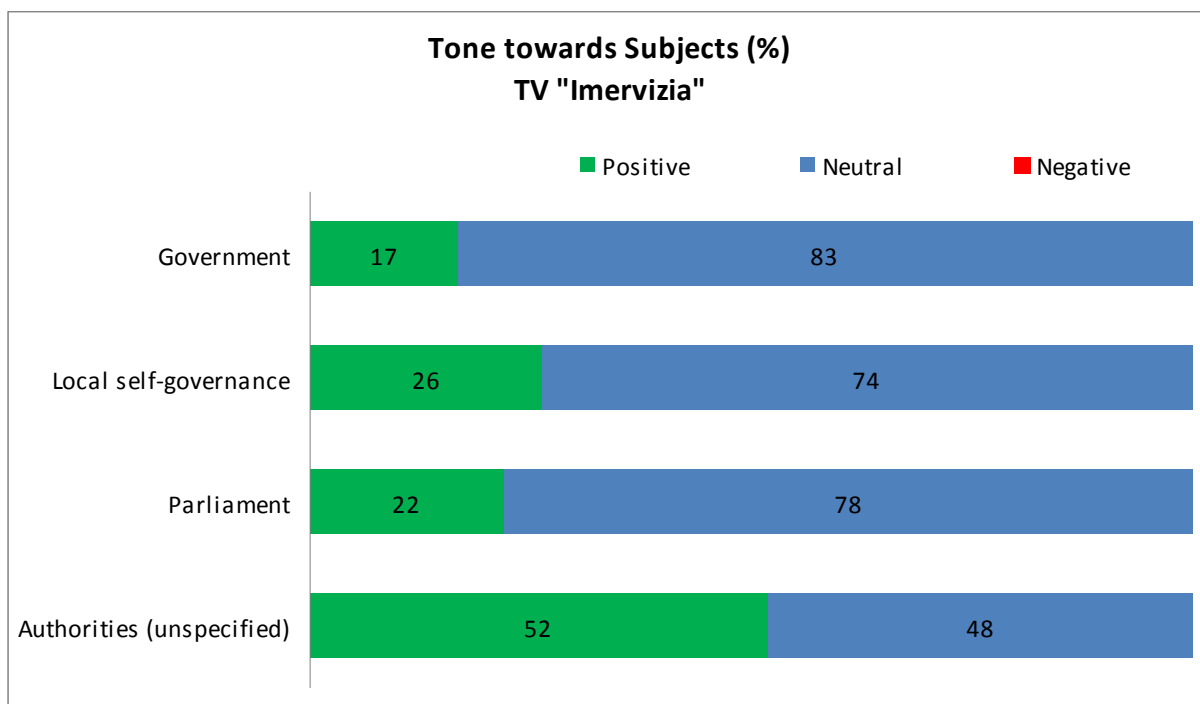
Based on the given data the qualitative analysis is impossible to provide.

**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – Within the reporting period the channel dedicated about 15 minutes to the local self-government, followed by local self-government with 8 minutes Parliament with 6 minutes and the authorities with 2 minutes.

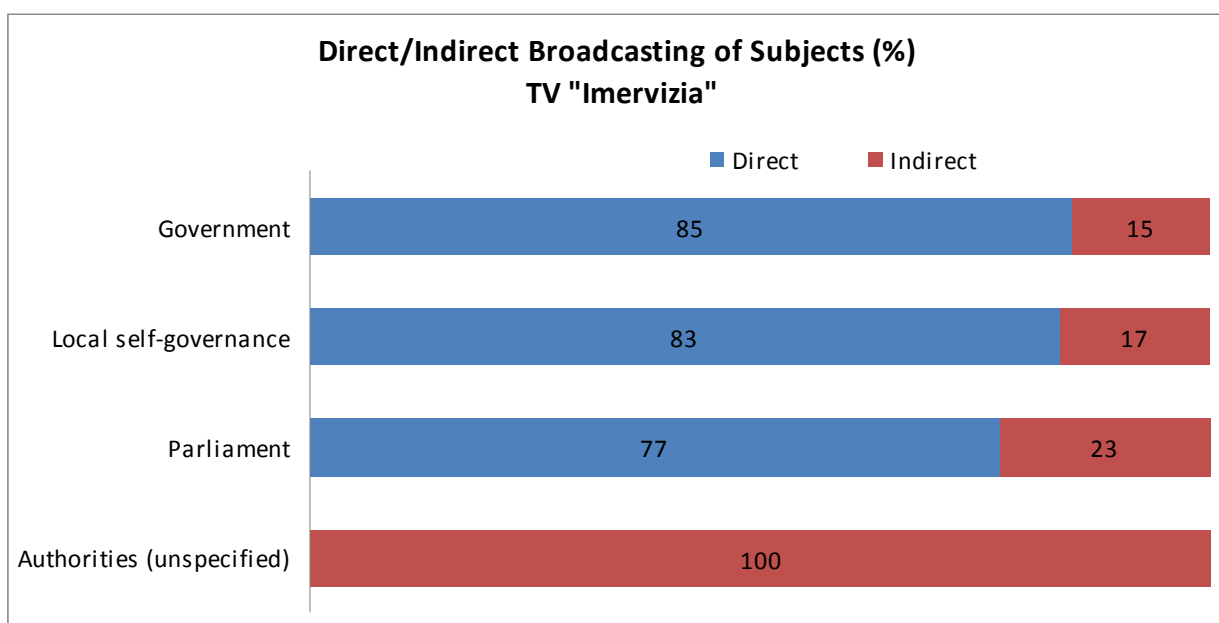


Only neutral and positive tones were applied when reporting on the monitored subjects:





The share of direct reporting greatly prevailed over indirect reporting. Only in regard to the authorities the reporting was 100 percent indirect.



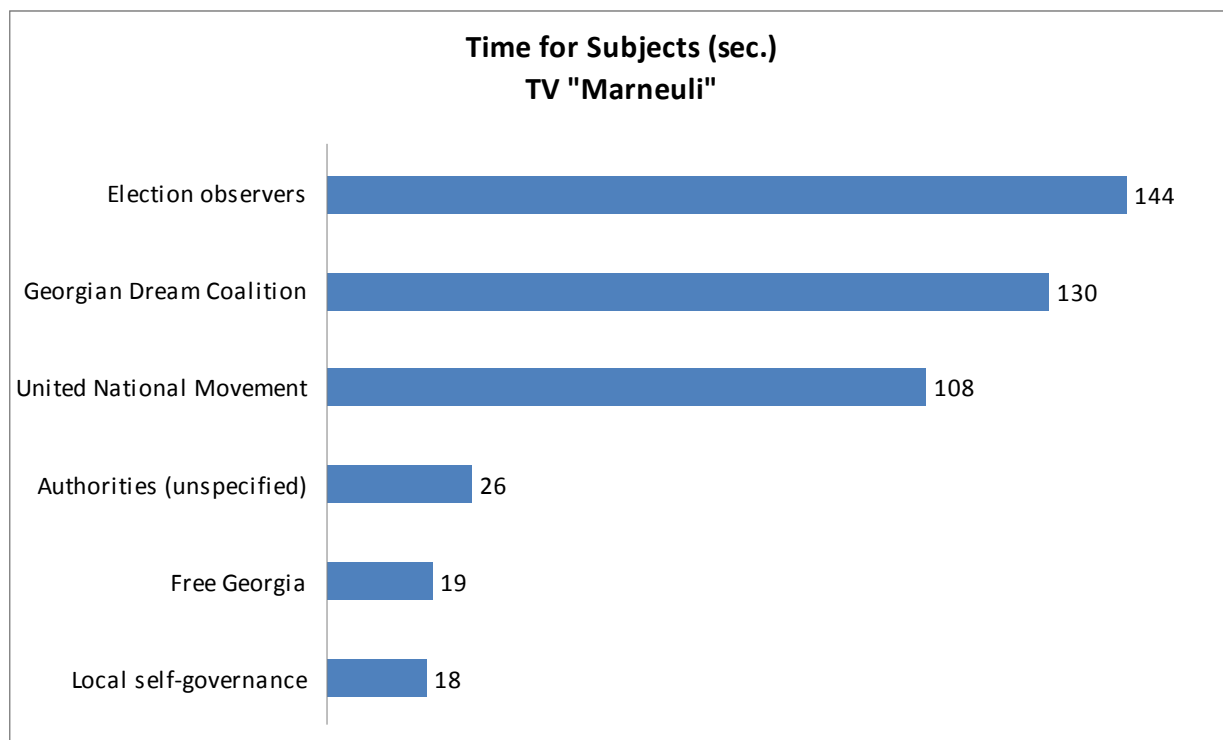
Within the reporting period TV Company Imervizia covered miners on strike in Chiatura. Some special reports were produced, with 25 minutes dedicated to miners' protest. In addition to that the news programs covered few of the monitored subjects. The data gleaned during the reporting period is insufficient to provide qualitative analysis.

**Argo (Zestaponi)** - During the reporting period the news programs on the channel dedicated around 6 minutes to the local self-government and less than one minute to UNM. The TV Company

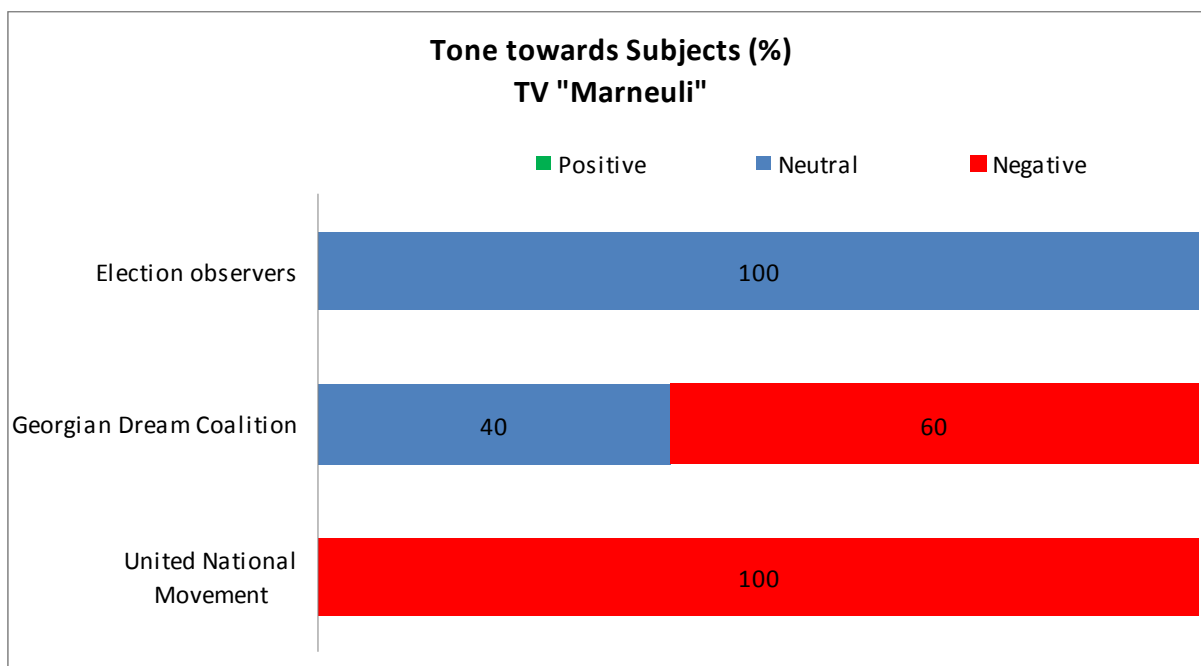
aggressively covered the developments in the region. TV stories essentially focused on cultural, sports or social issues. The only subject provided more than one-minute coverage the local self-government: a balanced and unbiased TV story was produced about Sakrebulo sitting.

**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – Even though the TV Company produced only three news program within the reporting period no story about the monitored subjects was aired. Within the period of October 22-28 the main topic of the news programs was the Borjomi staff on strike. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the US Ambassador’s visit to Borjomi.

**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** – The channel dedicated about 2 minutes to the election observers and the Georgian Dream coalition per each. Less than 2 minutes (1,8 min) were dedicated to UNM. The time received by the rest of the monitored subjects is less than one minute.



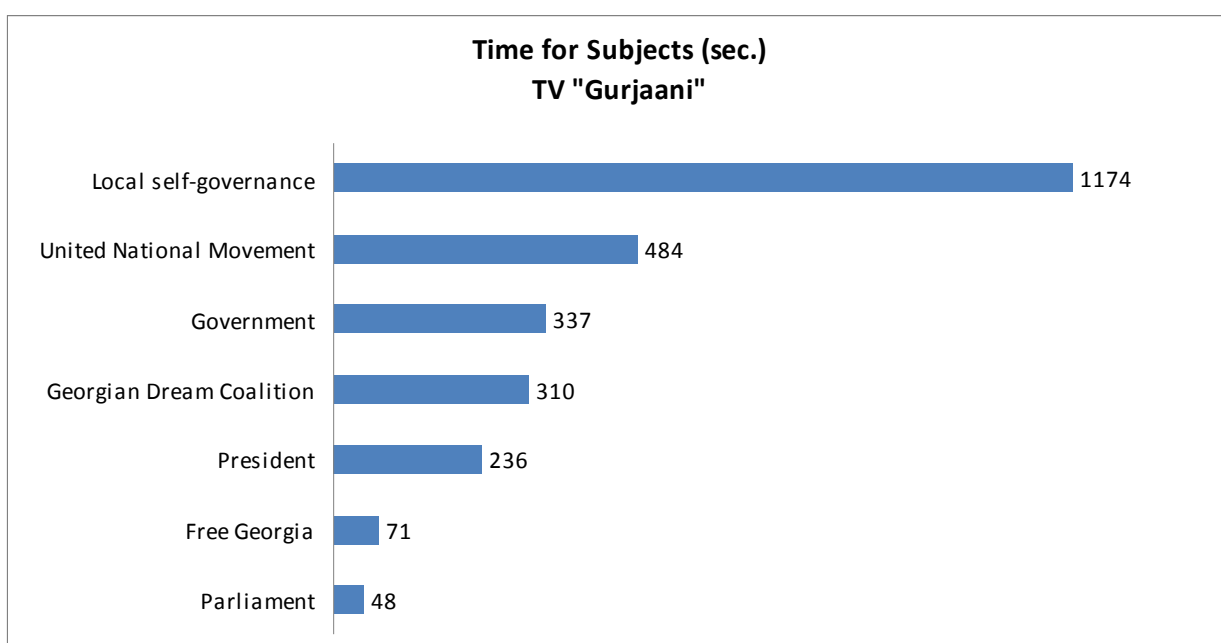
Reporting was only neutral and negative in tone:



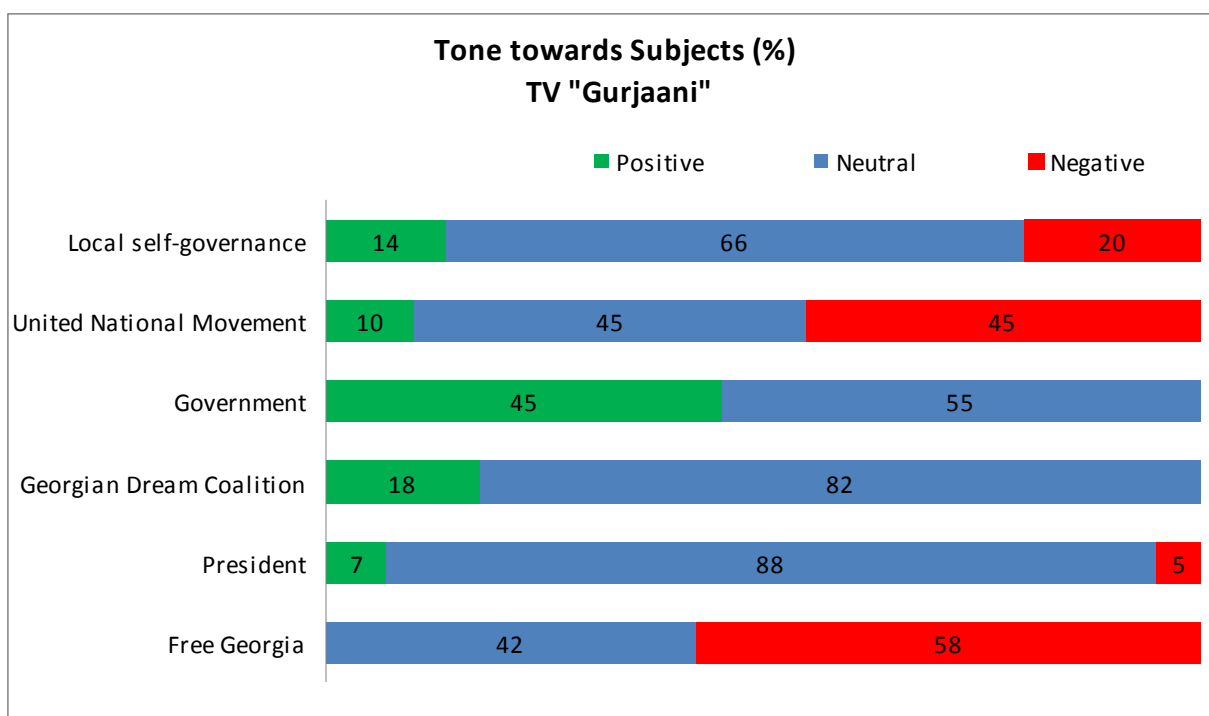
In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM reporting is 100 percent indirect. Reporting on the election observers was 84 percent direct.

Within the reporting period the TV Company covered only few of the monitored subjects. The total time dedicated to the subjects does not exceed 10 minutes. Therefore, there is no efficient data to provide qualitative analysis.

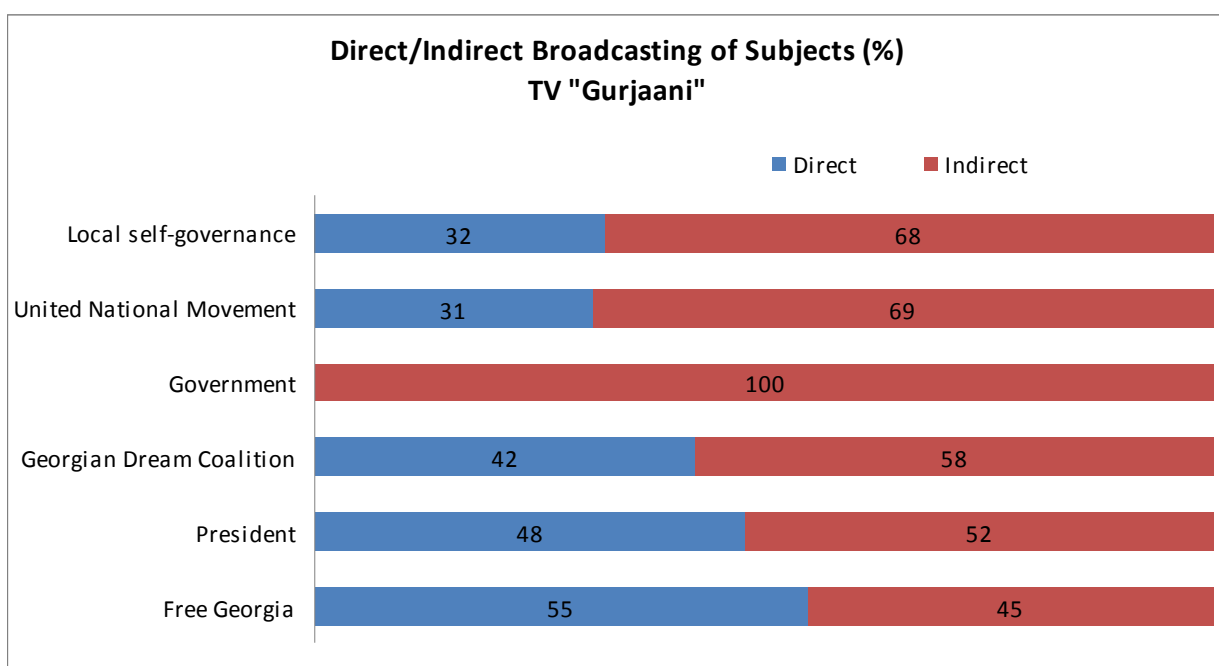
**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – News programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 19 minutes, to the local self-government. UNM comes next with 8 minutes, government with 6 minutes, Georgian Dream coalition with 5 minutes and President with 4 minutes.



All of the three tones were applied to reporting on the subjects. Neutral tone though greatly prevailed. The biggest share - 45 percent - of negative reporting falls on UNM, while government received 45 percent of positive reporting.



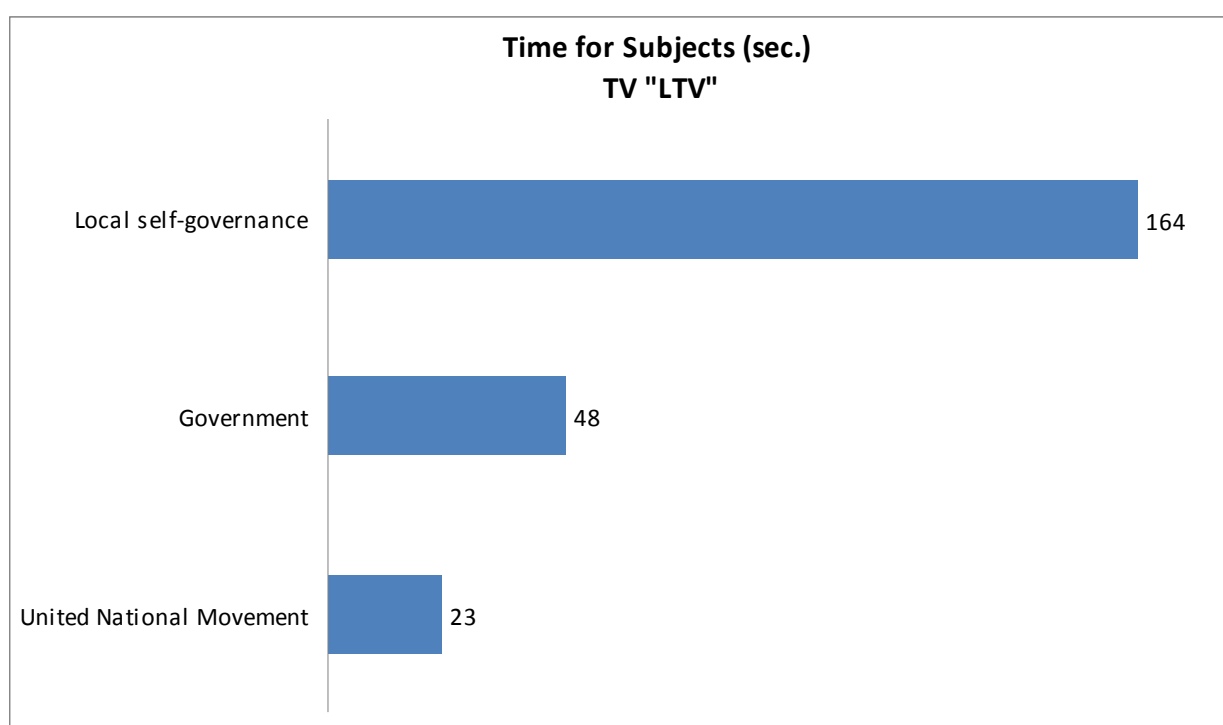
In regard to the local self-government and UNM indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. Reporting on government was 100 percent indirect. As for the rest of the subjects the share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal.



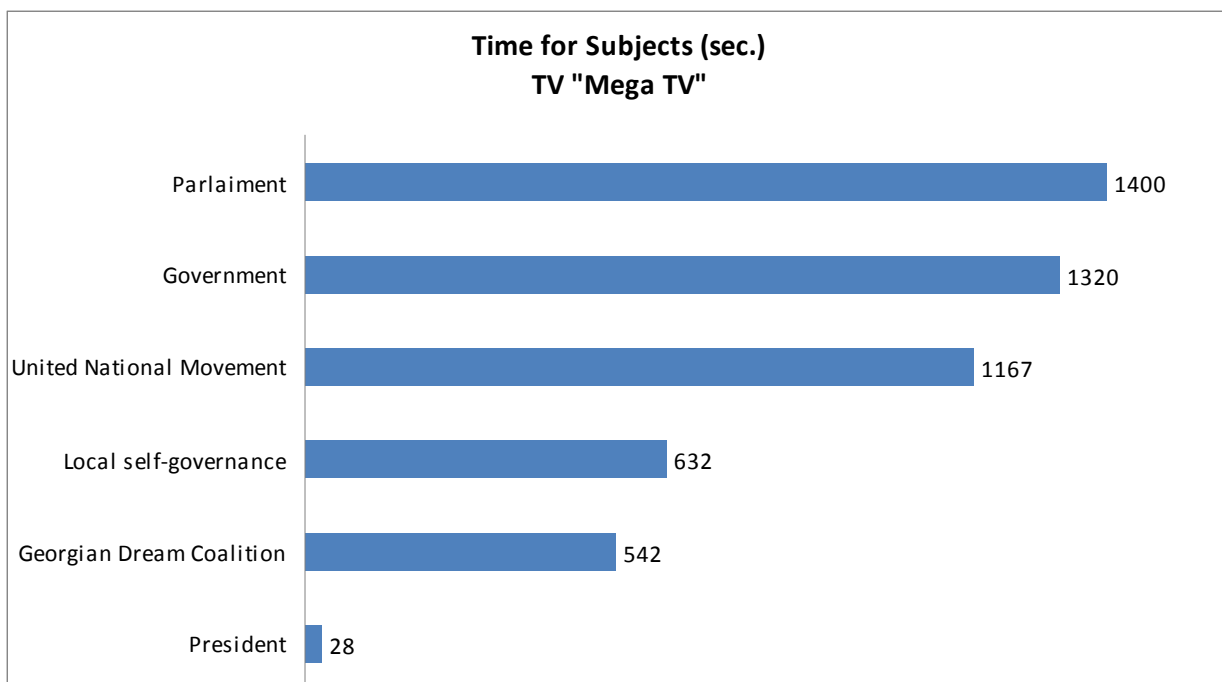
During the reporting week TV Company Gurjaani covered political developments in the region as well as nationwide. Most of the stories are balanced, journalists' texts are unbiased. No case of subjective evaluation was observed.

It is noteworthy that negative tone was not attached to the Georgian Dream coalition and recently appointed State agencies.

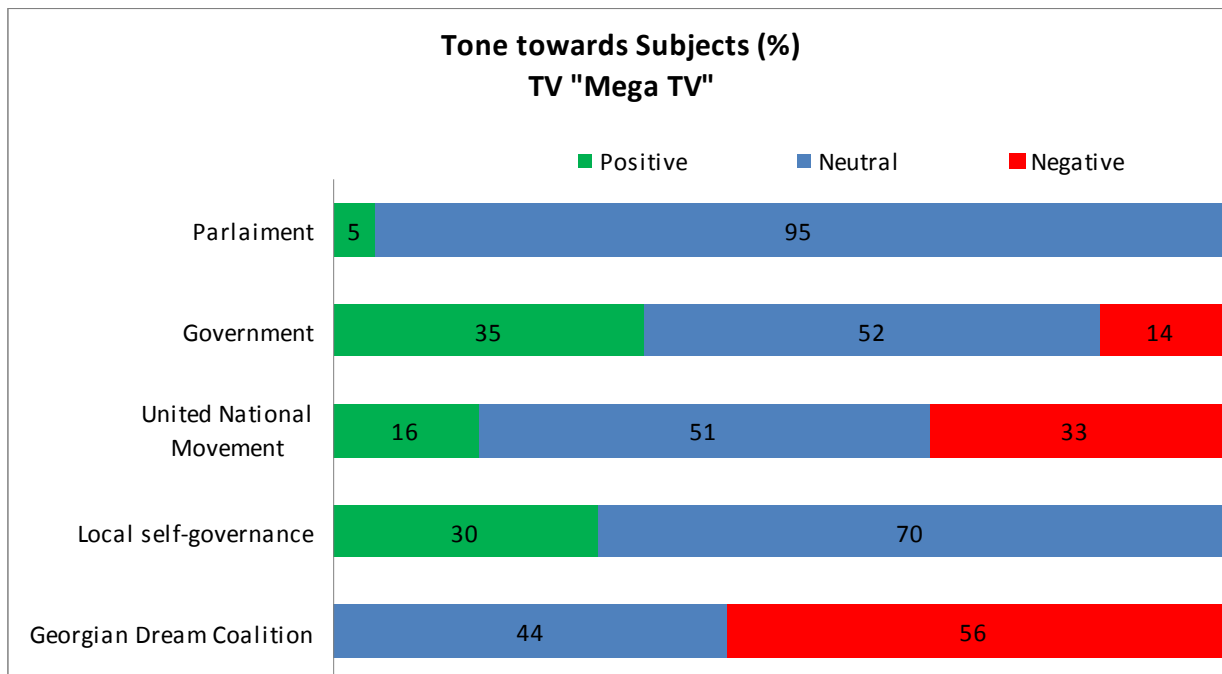
**LTV (Lagodekhi)** – News programs dedicated approximately 3 minutes to the local self-government. Reporting tone was neutral. 62 percent of reporting was direct. The channel provided no coverage of the rest of the monitored subjects. The findings give no possibility to provide qualitative analysis.



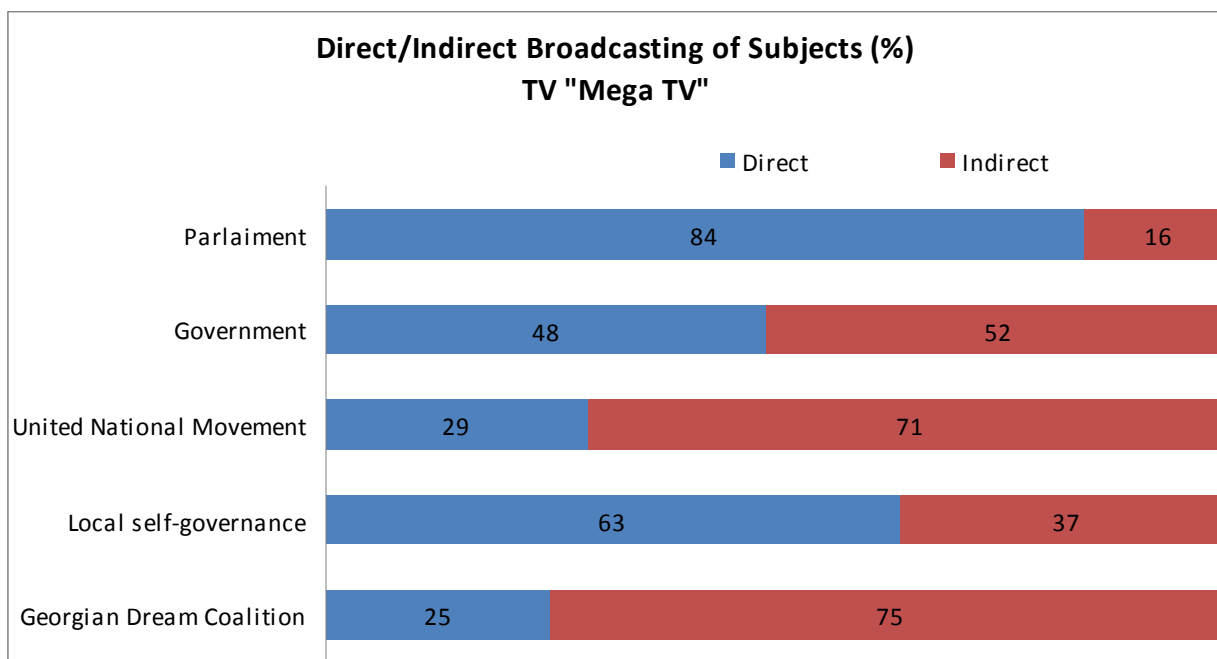
**Mega TV (Khoni)** – The news programs dedicated 23 minutes to Parliament, 22 minutes to government and 19 minutes to UNM. Local self-government and the Georgian Dream coalition received 10 and 9-minute reporting respectively.



All of the three tones were applied to reporting on the monitored subjects. Neutral tone prevailed though. The biggest share of negative tone (56 percent) was attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition while government (35 Percent) and local self-government (30 percent) excelled in terms of neutral tone.

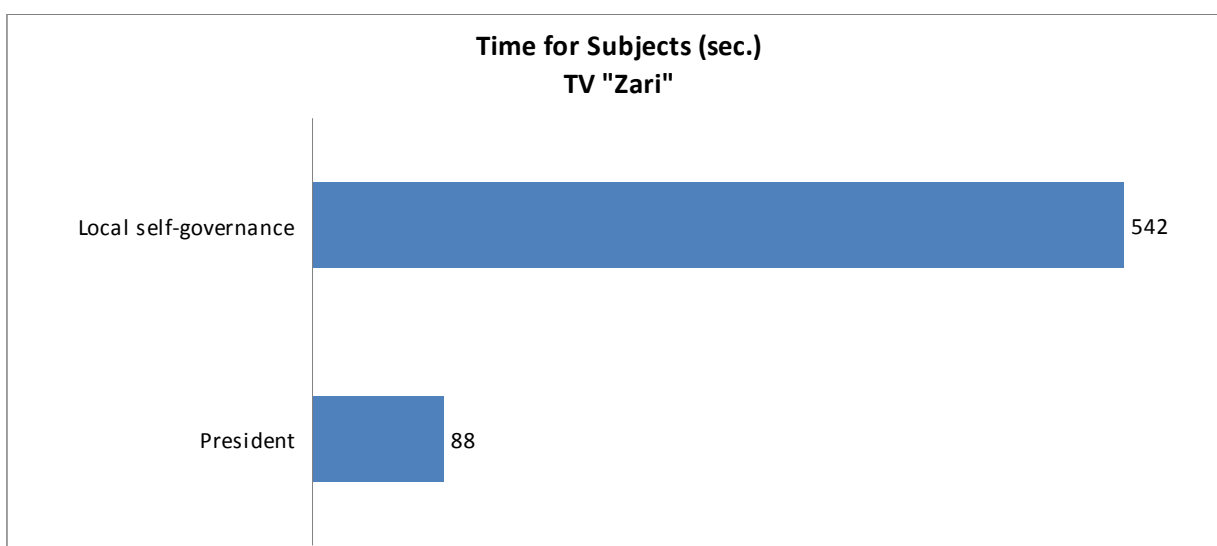


Both direct and indirect reporting was observed. Parliament leads the chart in terms of direct reporting with 84 percent. The share of indirect reporting was biggest in relation to the Georgian Dream coalition (75 percent) and UNM (71 percent).



Within the reporting period the TV Company dedicated a fair amount of airtime to the recently elected Parliament activities. All of the news programs started with the developments at the parliament (sittings, debates, approval of candidates). The TV stories were mainly of informative character and were aired with no comments. Journalists' texts were unbiased and neutral.

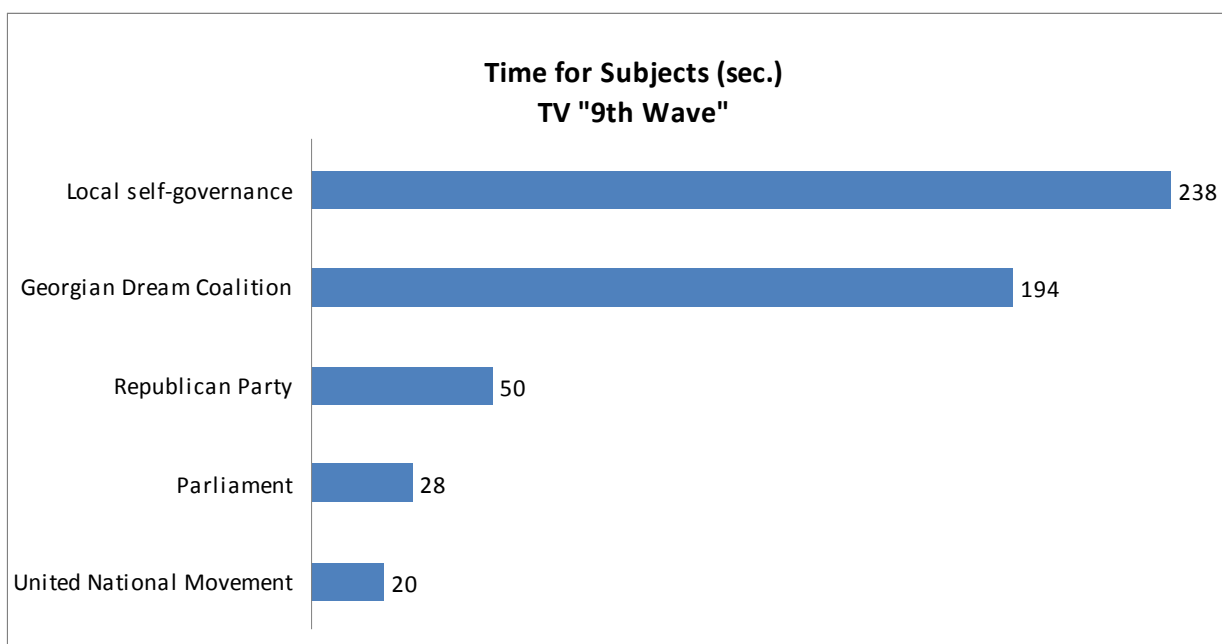
**Zari (Samtredia)** – News programs dedicated 9 minutes to the local self-government, 1,46 minutes were received by President.



When reporting on the local self-government all of the three tones were observed: positive (36 percent), neutral (52 percent), negative (13 percent). The share of direct (54 percent) and indirect (46 percent) reporting was almost equal.

TV stories demonstrate journalist’s bias to local self-government and especially former majoritarian MP, incumbent municipality chief Avtandil Sturua.

**9<sup>th</sup> Wave** – The TV news programs dedicated 4 minutes to the local self-government. The Georgian Dream coalition comes next with 3 minutes. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage.



Reporting on both of the subjects was neutral in tone. In regard to the local self-government neutral tone (4 percent) was observed too. The share of indirect reporting was a lot more than direct reporting: local self-government – 64 percent, the Georgian Dream coalition – 89 percent.

Within the reporting period daily news programs essentially covered the developments in the region in addition to some social issues. A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to the protest rallies organized by trade unions (the protest touched upon the violation of the remuneration terms by the employer and failure to fulfill labor obligations).

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

Within the period of October 29- November 4 the thirteenth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.





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