



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

**Subagreement # S-12-155**

**Report for: September 24-30, 2012**

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

*Total Budget: 31 000\$*

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

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

- Very few of the monitored subjects are dedicated airtime on regional TV channels;
- Reporting on the activities carried out by the local self government body sharply went down;
- Reporting on the activities carried out by the United National Movement (UNM) and the Georgian Dream Coalition went 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.
- Great majority of TV companies attached negative tone to reporting on the Central Election Commission (CEC) since the recent CEC Resolution on the restriction of photo and video shooting at precincts was aggressively covered.

### ***Background***

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of September 24-30, 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 24-30 TV companies Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) still lacked self-produced news programs.

## **Methodology**

Monitoring was conducted on the regional broadcasters' main evening news programs during so-called prime time when the number of viewers is at its peak.

The technique applied in the project is based on quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative monitoring determines quantitative indicators that can be counted and analyzed. While qualitative monitoring is applied to evaluate the efficiency of media outlets' activities in relation to the indicators such as ethical or professional standards whose quantitative measurement is complex. In particular, the distortion of news, unbalanced coverage, bias or anything else that might affect quality news was focused on.

Quantitative data includes the running time (seconds) of the stories produced about our preselected subjects or making mention of them. In the given charts the time dedicated to the subjects is shown in seconds. In case the chart is missing any political party, which is the subject of monitoring, it means no channel dedicated any time to it within the monitoring period.

Direct and indirect coverage shows whether the subject is speaking on one's own or is being spoken about either by a journalist or other respondents. In the given charts direct and indirect coverage is shown in percentage. 100 percent indicates the time dedicated to each subject on a particular channel.

The tone of coverage is attributed to a subject when being indirectly spoken about or when speaking directly about oneself, other subjects or some general issues. Charts illustrate three categories of tones: positive, neutral and negative.

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

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

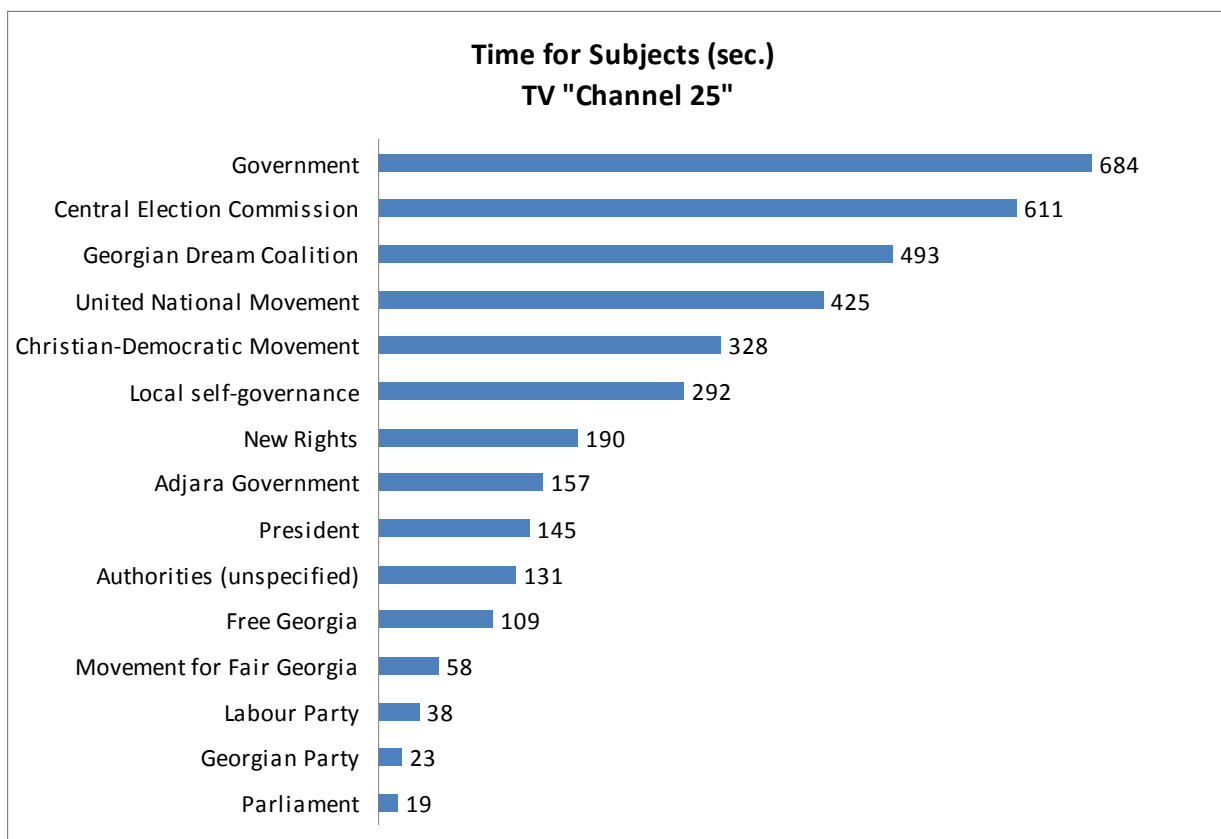
aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. The cases of manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs were also brought into focus.

The monitoring subjects include: Parliament (speaker, vice speaker, MPs, committees); President (administration, advisors, press speaker); government (prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers, governors); authorities (when mentioned with no specification); local self-governments (mayors, chairs of Sakrebulo and Gamgeoba); Central Election Commission; election observers; State Audit Agency (in relation to elections); commission in charge of verifying voters' list; United National Movement; Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia; coalition Georgian Dream; Free Democrats; National Forum; Georgian Republican Party; Georgian Conservative party; People's Party; Georgia's Way; Free Georgia; New Rights; Democratic Movement for United Georgia; National Democratic Party; Labor party; Industry Will Save Georgia; Georgian Democratic Party; Georgian Troupe; Christian-Democratic Movement; European Democrats; Voters' League; People's Assembly; opposition (when mentioned with no specification).

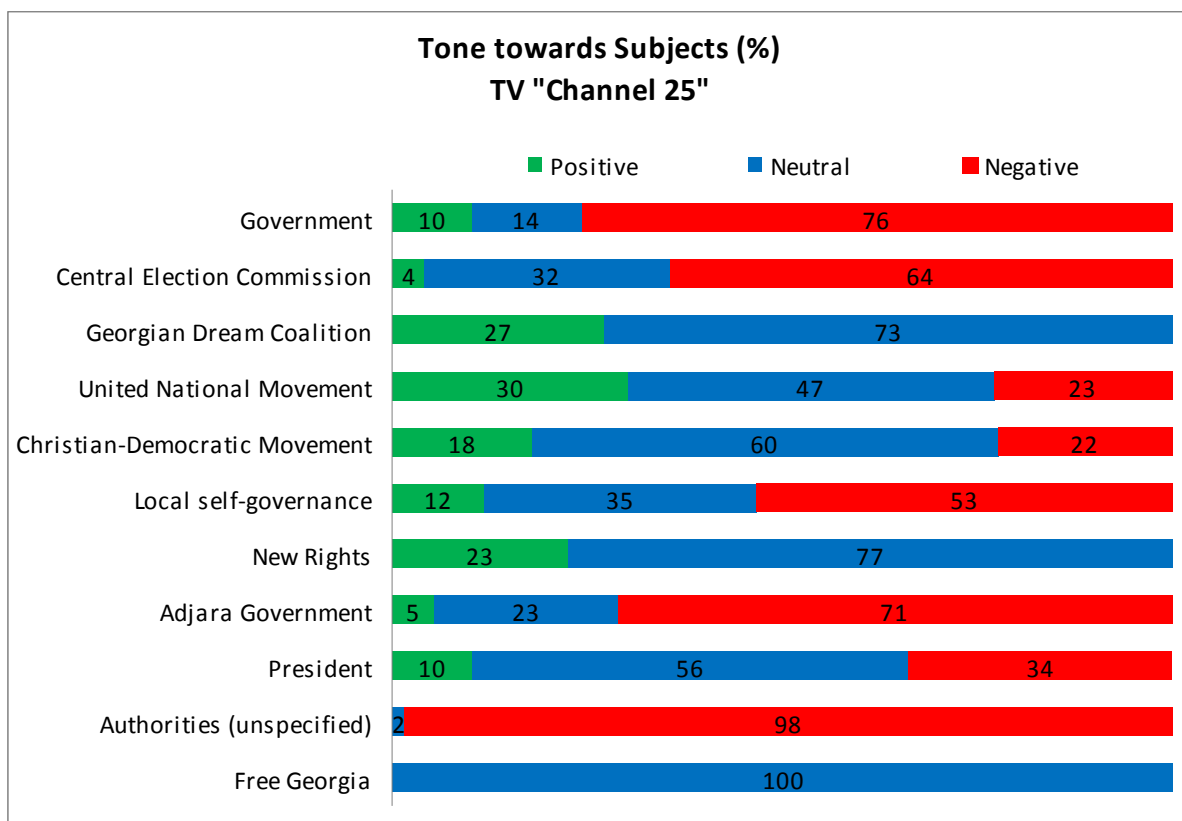
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

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

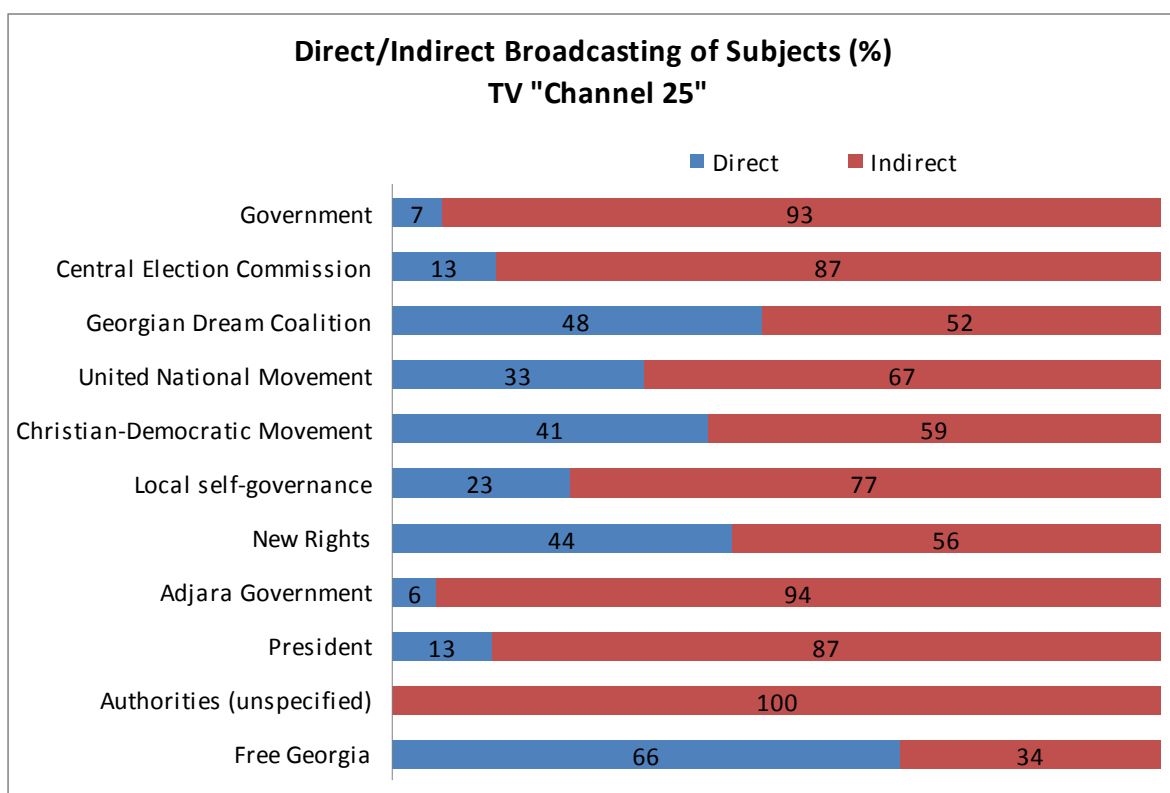
**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – News programs dedicated most of the airtime, 11 minutes, to the government. The Central Election Commission (CEC) comes next with 10 minutes. The Georgian Dream coalition and the United National Movement (UNM) were dedicated 8 and 7 minutes respectively.



All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. The most negative tone was attached to reporting on the government (76 percent) and CEC (64 percent). 71 percent of 3-minute reporting on Adjara government and 98 percent of 2-minute reporting on the authorities was negative as well. Neutral and positive tones were attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition and New Rights.



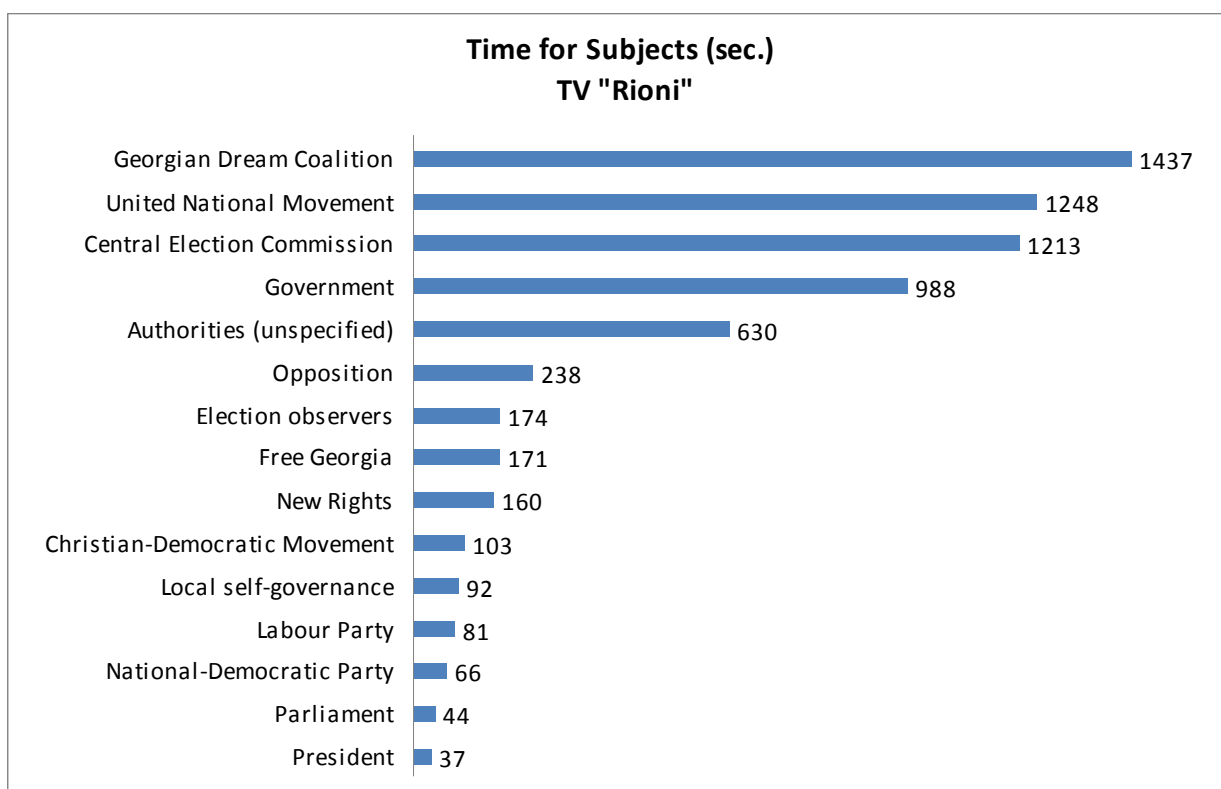
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:



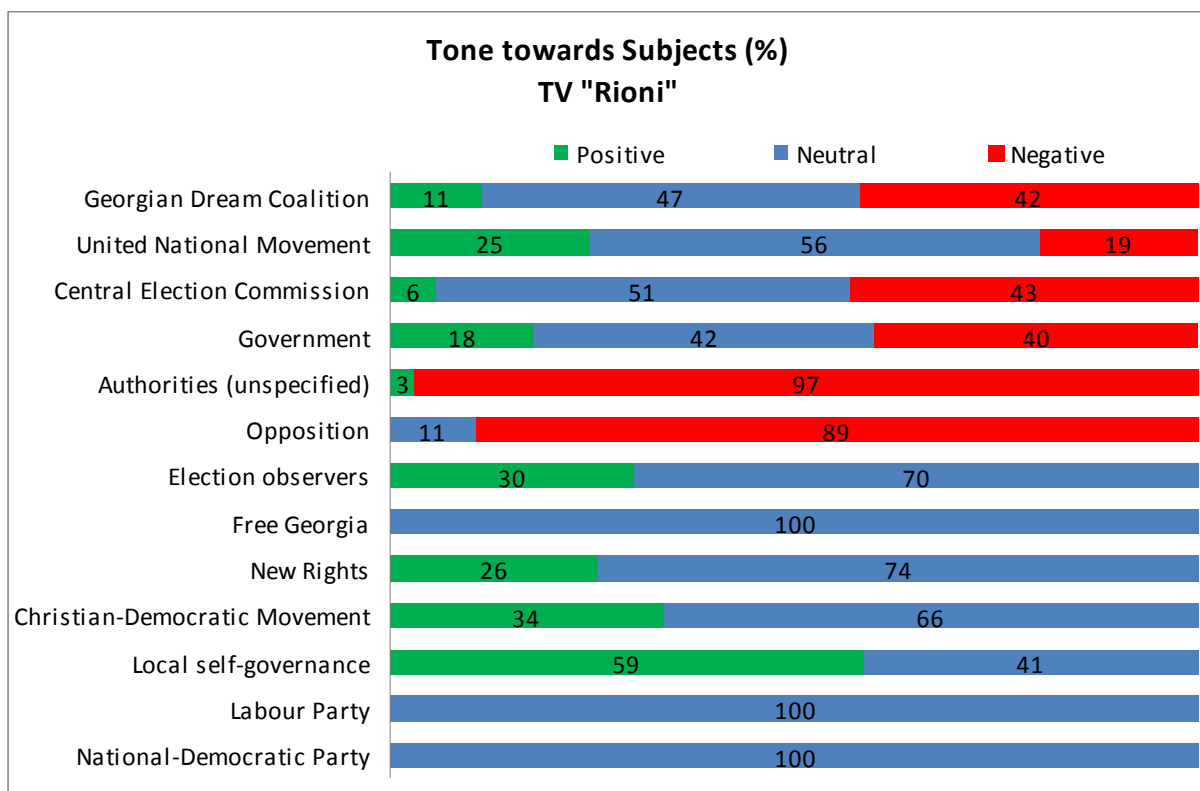
Within the reporting period the TV Company Channel 25 was aggressively covering political events ongoing nationwide. The bigger share of reporting on government, CEC, Adjara government and

local self government was negative in tone. It is noteworthy that negative tone (64 percent) in regard to CEC was due to the Commission’s latest resolution on the restriction of photo and video shooting at precincts. Certain stories were dedicated to the violations in the penitentiary system, prisoner abuse and protest rallies. 76 percent of negative reporting falls on these very stories.

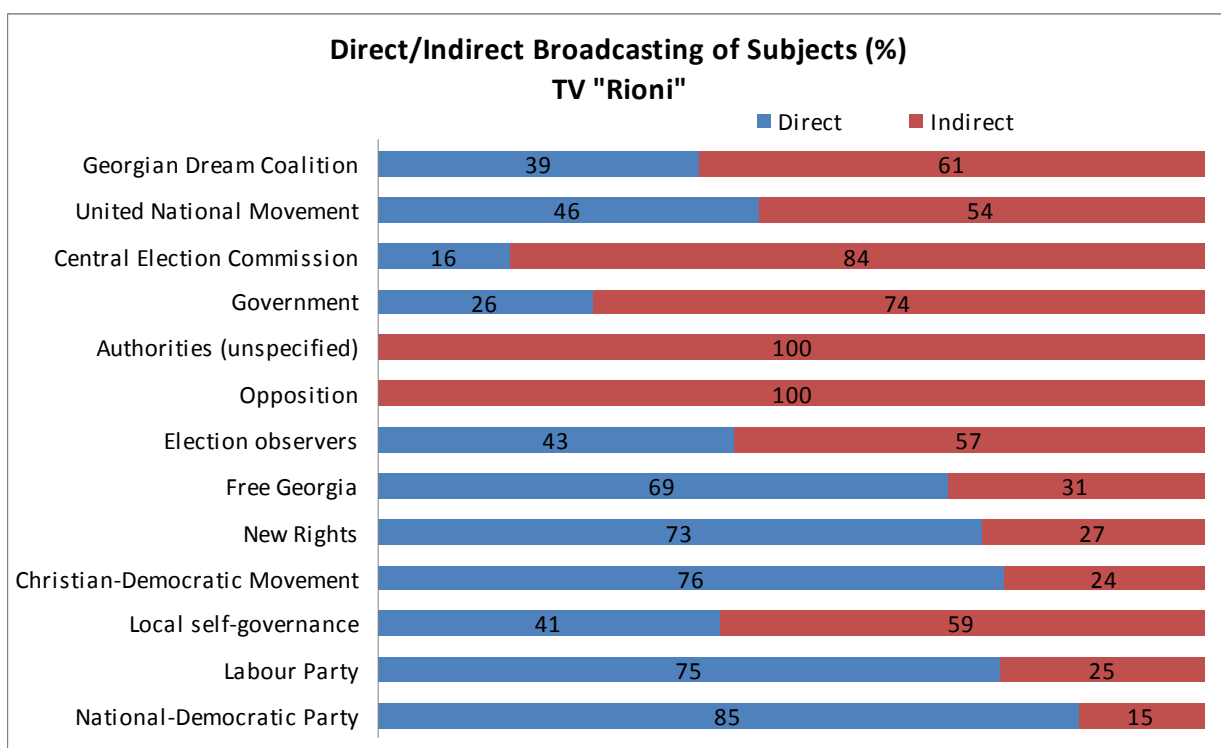
**Rioni (Kutaisi)** – The biggest share of airtime - 24 minutes - was dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition, followed by UNM and CEC with 21 and 20 minutes respectively. Reporting on government was 16 minutes in length and authorities enjoyed 10-minute coverage.



All of the three tones were applied when reporting on the monitored subjects. Neutral (47 percent) and negative (42 percent) tones were almost equally applied in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition. Same applies to reporting on the government – 42 percent neutral and 40 percent negative. The highest percentage of negative reporting was observed in regard to the authorities (97 percent).



Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. High percentage of indirect reporting was observed in regard to CEC (84 percent) and government (74 percent).

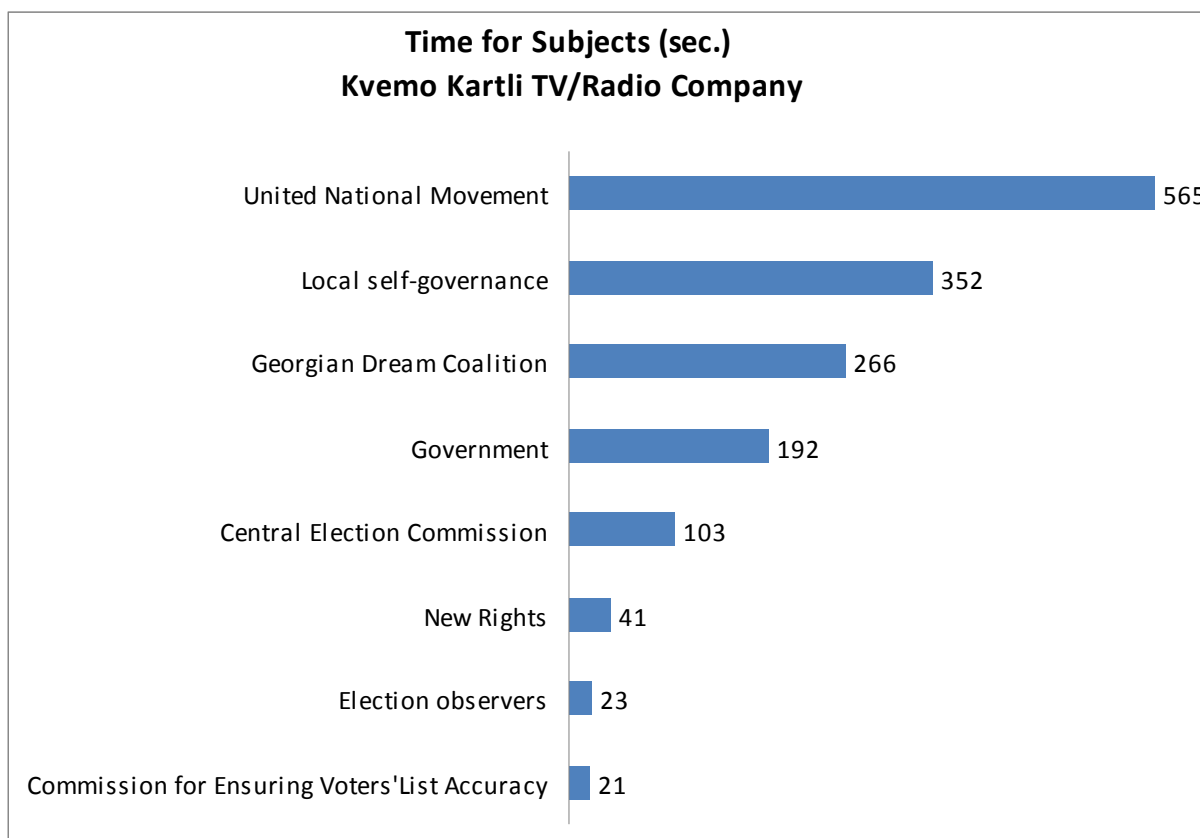


During the reporting period the TV Company Rioni aggressively covered monitored subjects. Airtime was dedicated to both UNM and State agencies as well as opposition parties. It is noteworthy that

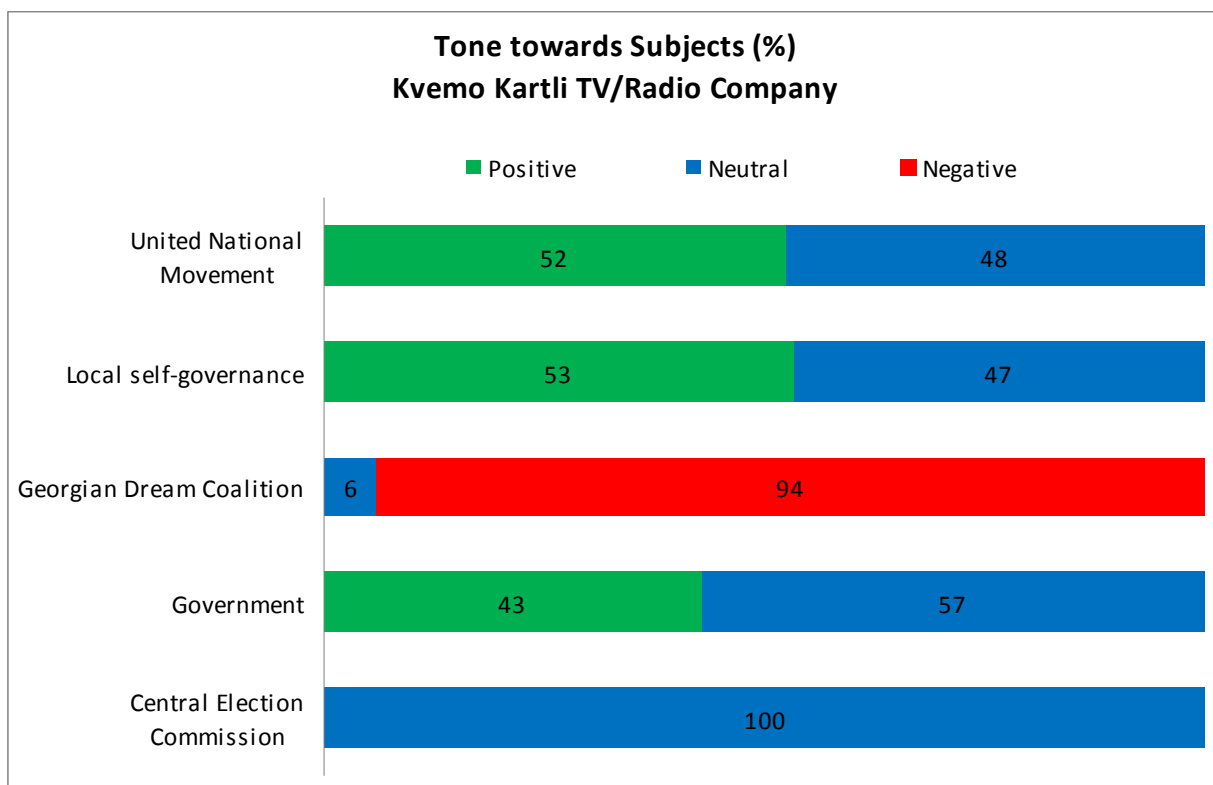


journalist’s text is unbiased, TV stories are mostly balanced. No bias was observed in regard to any subject.

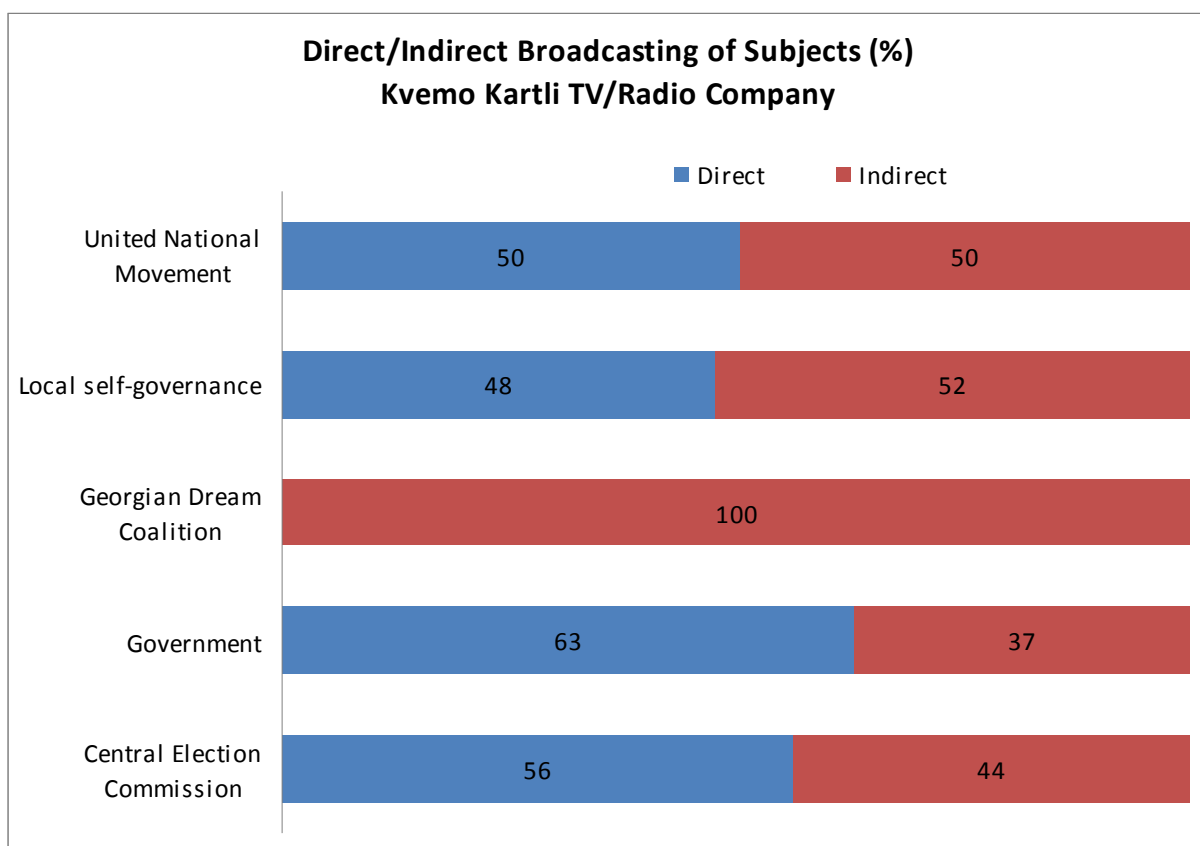
**Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi)** – The TV company dedicated 9 minutes to reporting on UNM. Reporting on the local self government was 6 minutes in length. The Georgian Dream coalition and government enjoyed 4 and 3-minute coverage respectively.



Subjects were equally covered in positive and neutral tones. Negative and (94 percent) and neutral (6 percent) tones were observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition.

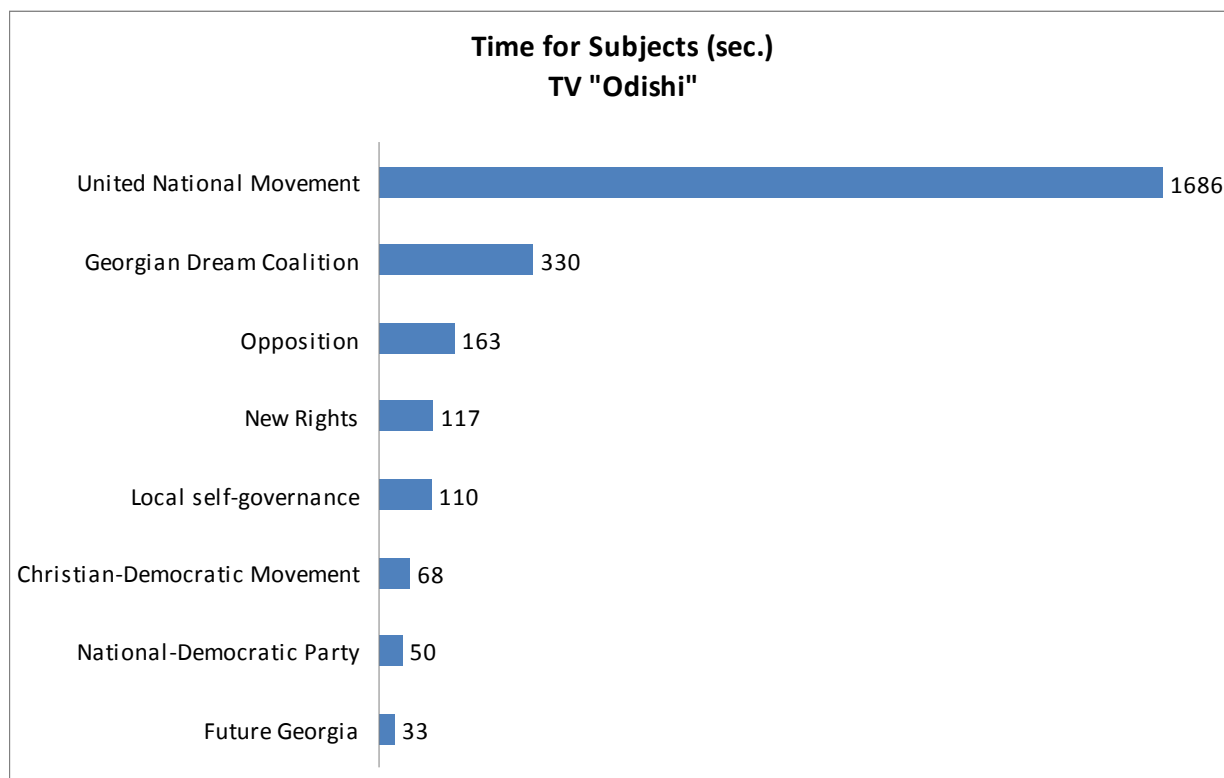


The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Solely in case of the Georgian Dream coalition reporting was 100 percent indirect.

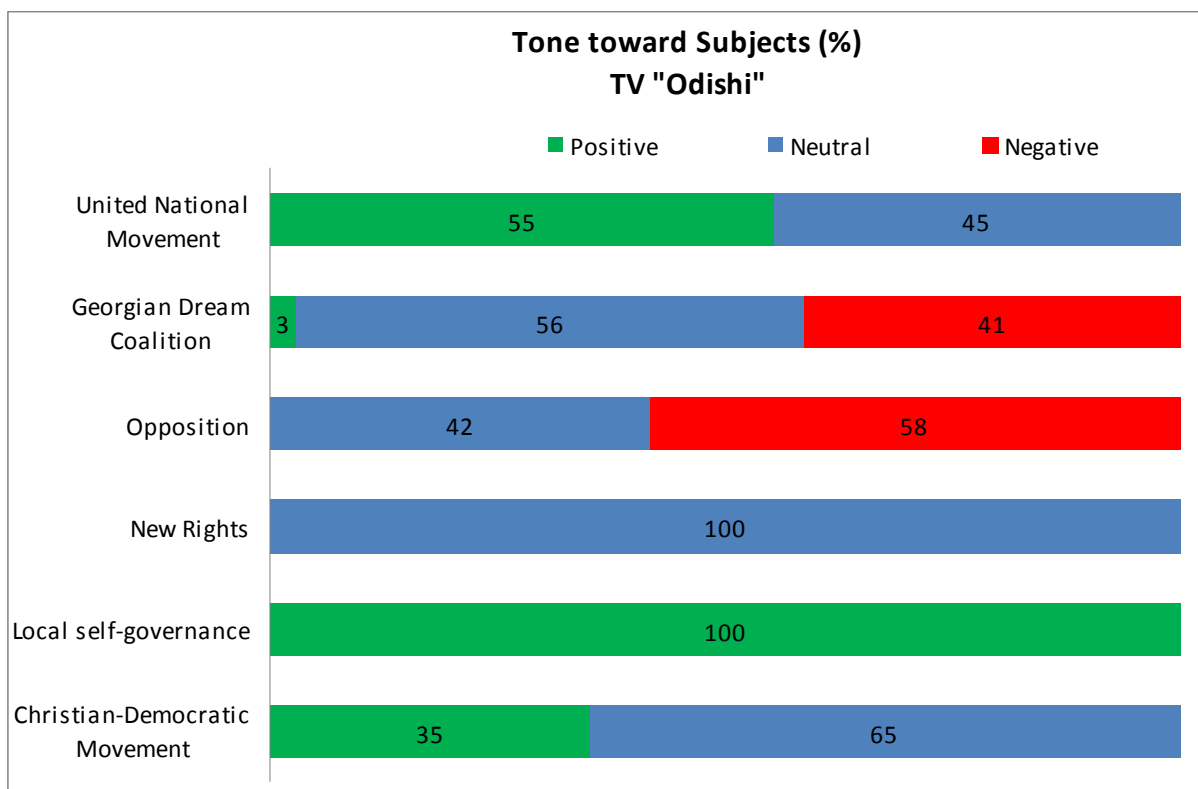


Within the period of September 24-30 the news programs of Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company mainly covered regional news. Almost all of the news outlets mainly focused on the activities of the local self-government essentially portrayed in a positive tone (53 percent).

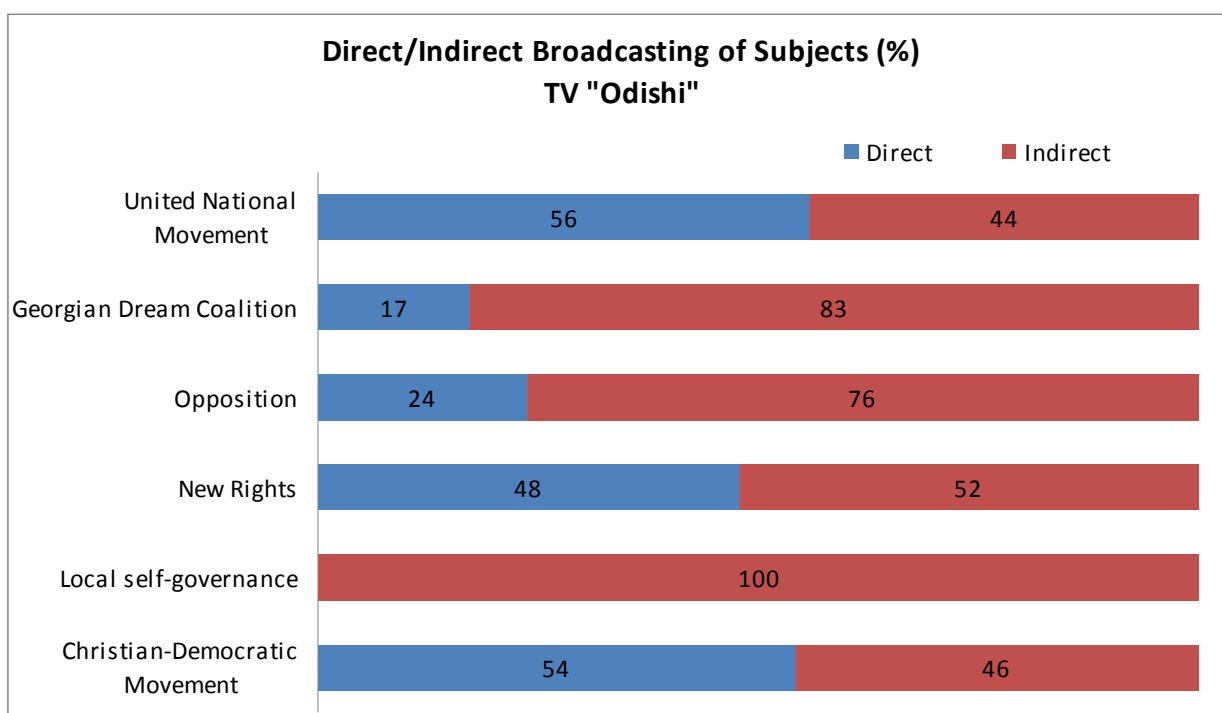
**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – UNM received the biggest share of airtime - 28 min. 5 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition, 3 minutes to opposition, reporting on New Rights and local self-government was about 2 minutes in length per each.



The monitored subjects were mainly covered in two tones. Positive (55 percent) and neutral (45 percent) tones were attached to reporting on UNM. Reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition and opposition was negative and neutral in tone.



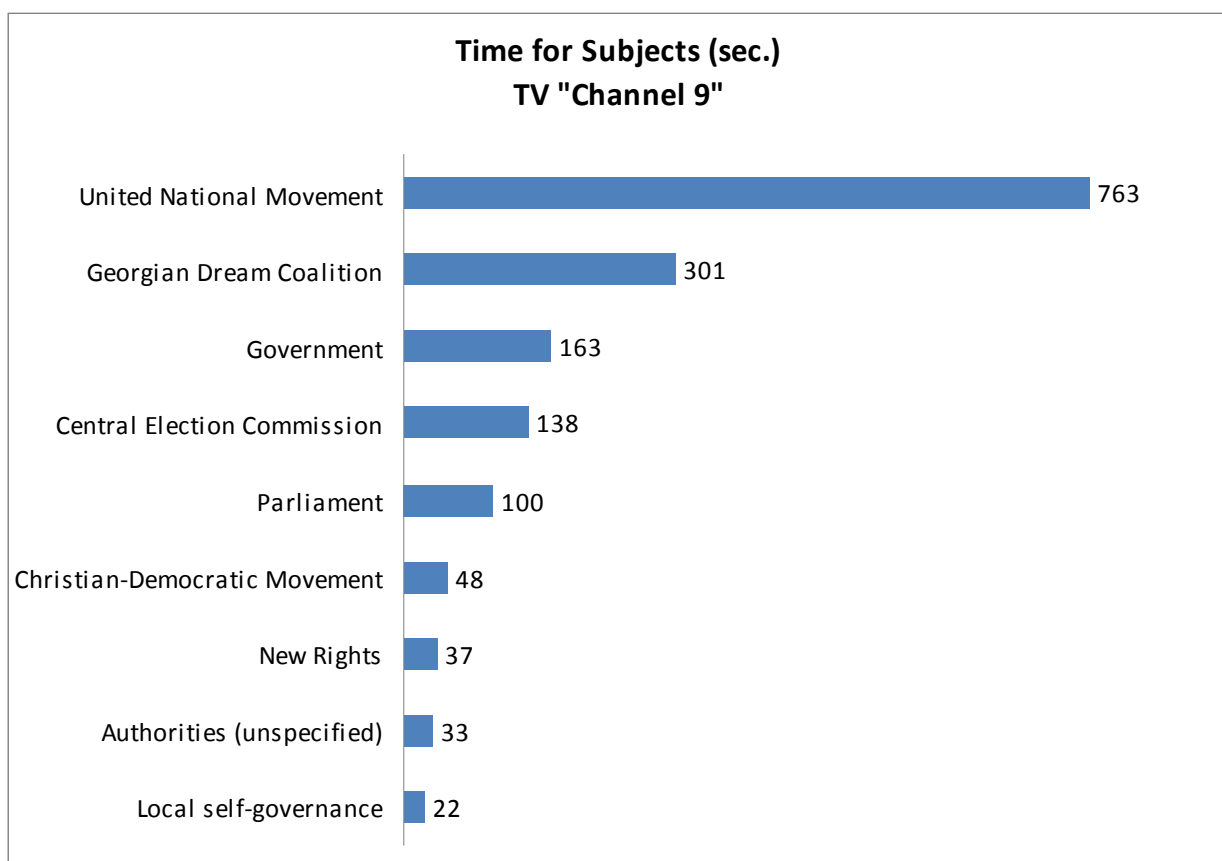
In UNM's case the share of direct (56 percent) / indirect (44 percent) reporting was almost equal. In case of the Georgian Dream coalition indirect (83 percent) greatly prevailed over direct reporting (17 percent).



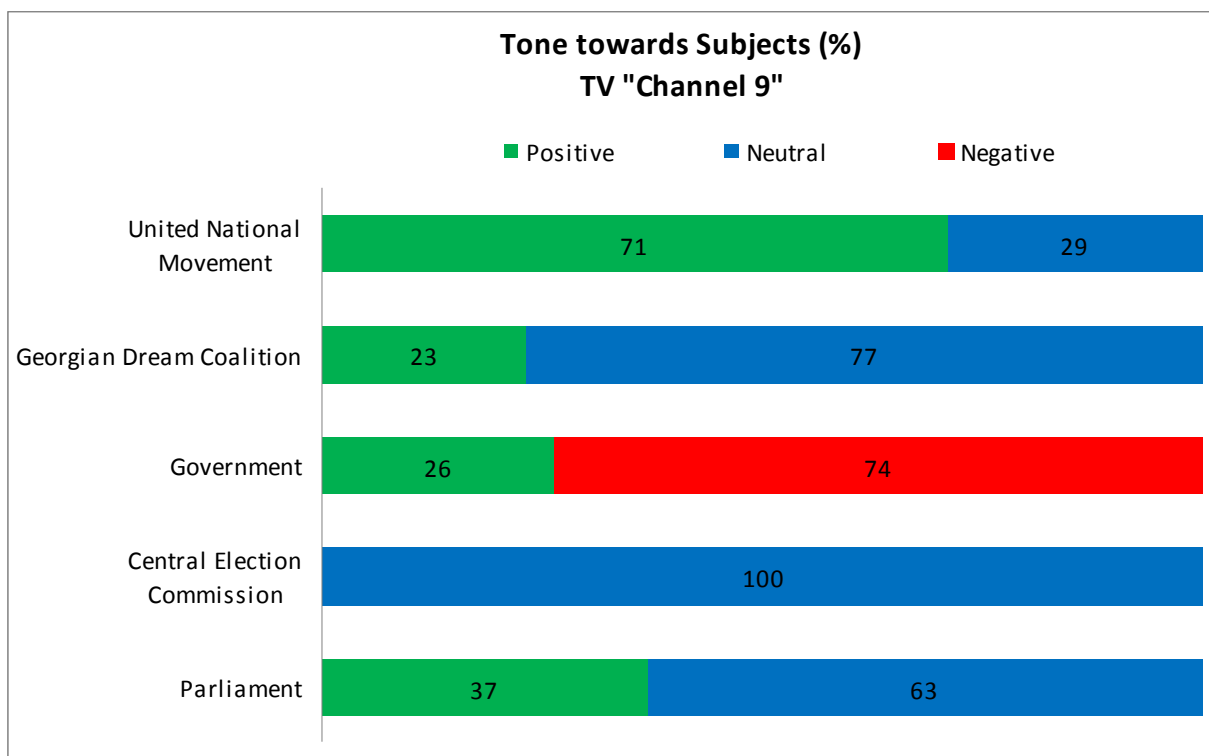
Within the reporting period TV Company Odishi mainly covered the UNM's pre-election campaign, essentially in positive tone. It is noteworthy that the journalist's text was almost always biased. When reporting on the ruling party the journalist's personal positive attitude is apparent. In addition to the

text, the selected shots demonstrate the party in a positive light. The TV story about Mikheil Saakashvili's visit to Zugdidi, for instance, featured, for two minutes, a song Strike Hard accompanied with hoisted flags and applause. While the story on the Georgian Dream coalition was one minute in length. During the reporting period some inaccuracies were observed too, e.g. the subtitle for majoritarian candidate Soso Korkelia of For Free Georgia was presented as Free Georgia representative.

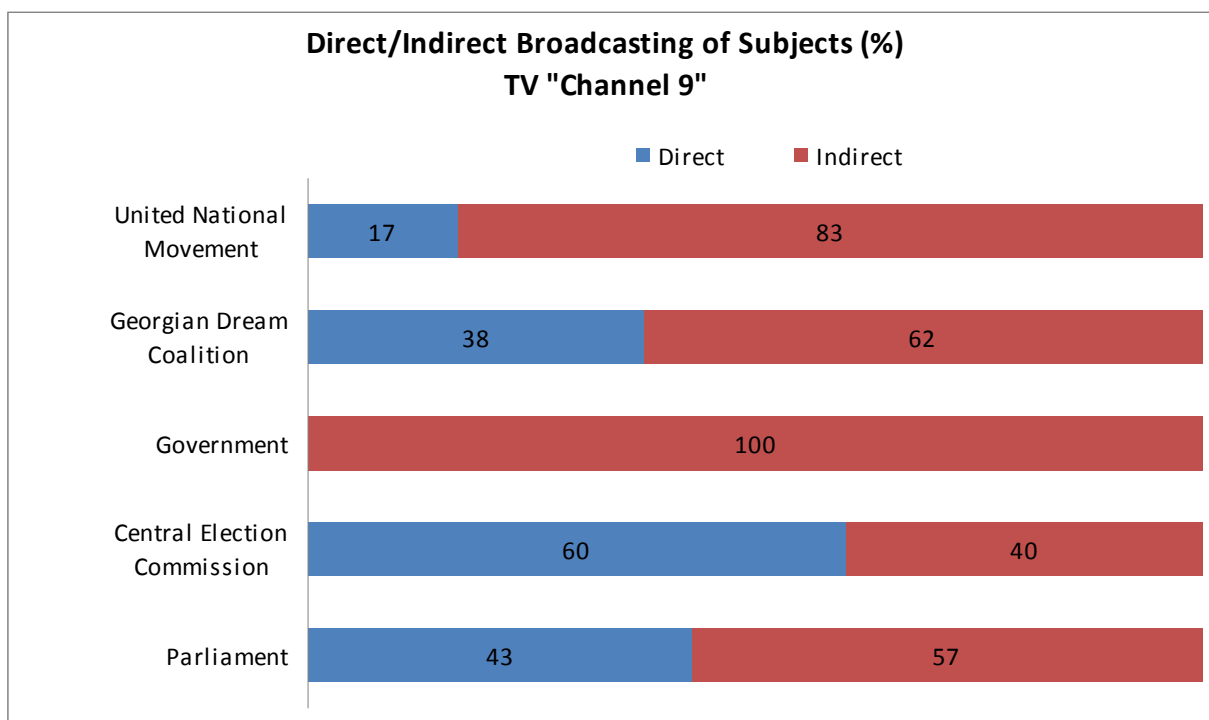
**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Akhaltsikhe)** – The news programs on the channel dedicated about 13 minutes to UNM. 5 and 3-minute reporting was enjoyed by the Georgian Dream coalition and government respectively.



Reporting on the most frequently covered subjects was positive and neutral in tone. Only in regard to government positive (26 percent) and negative (74 percent) tones were applied.

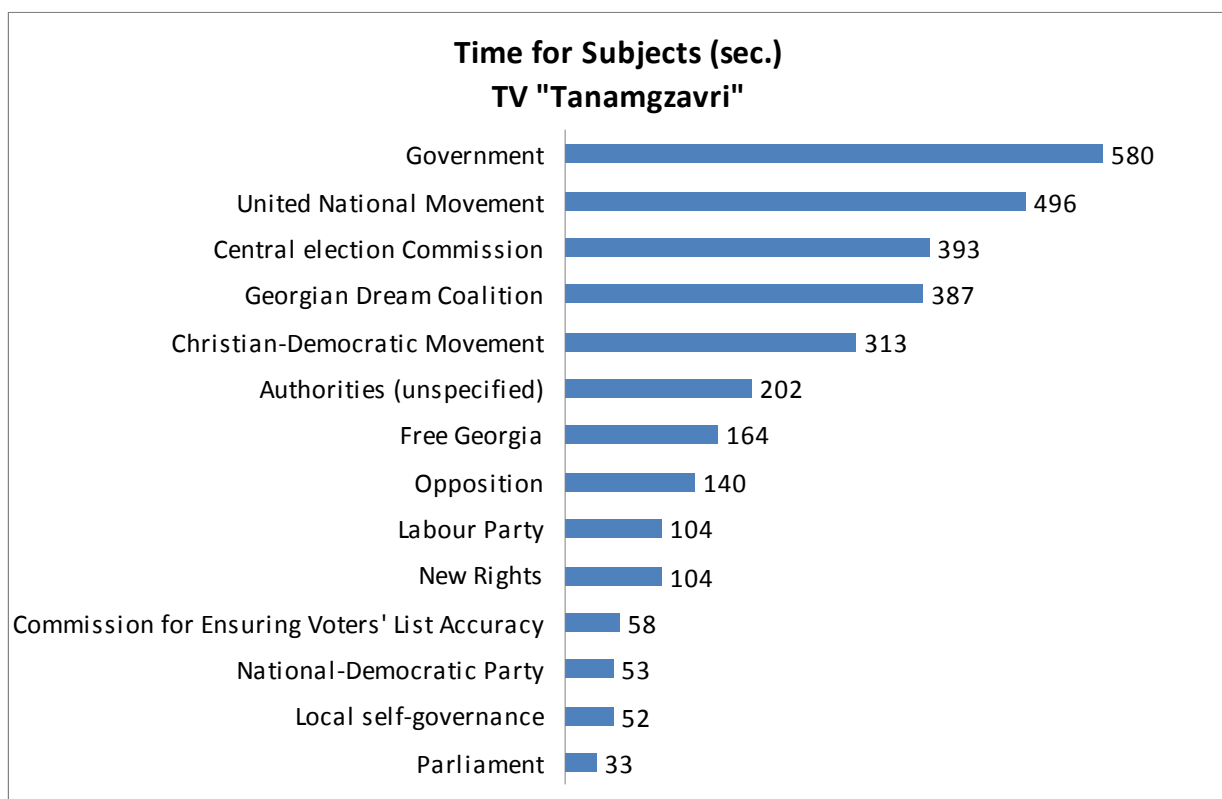


Indirect reporting greatly prevailed over direct reporting:

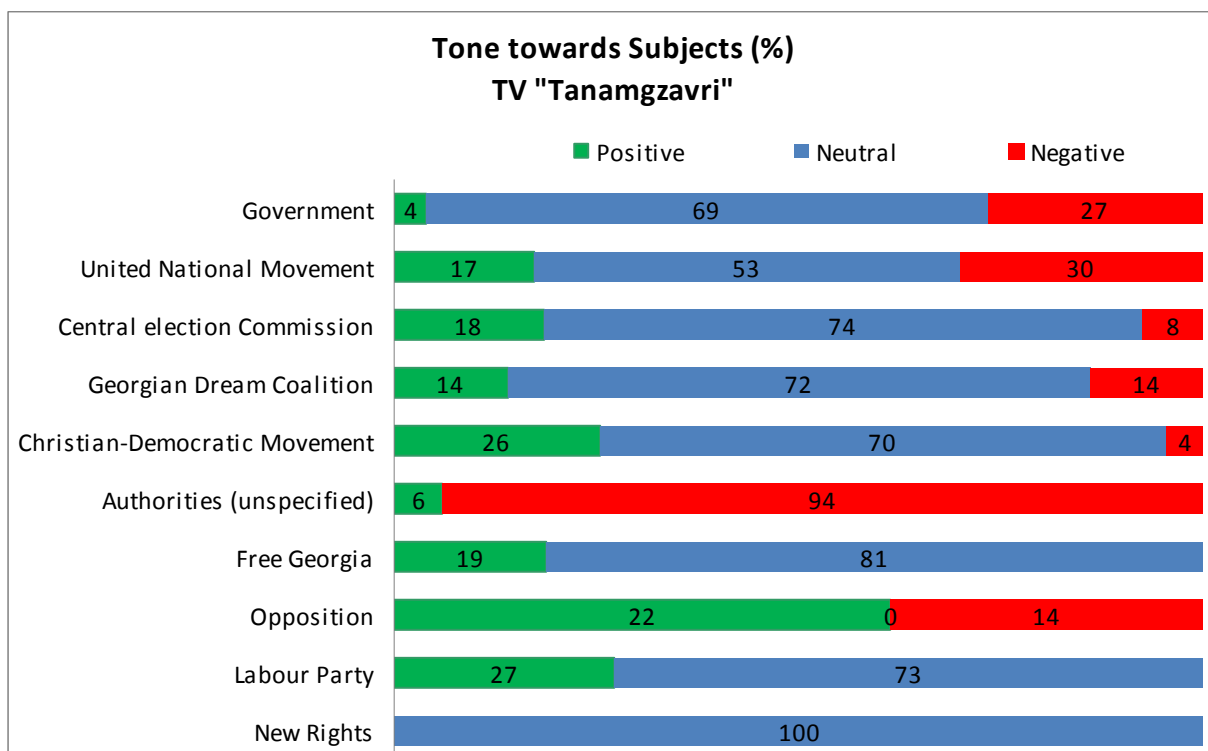


Within the reporting period 9th Channel covered the events ongoing across the country as well as in the region, in particular students rallies held in Tbilisi and Akhaltsikhe to protest prisoner abuse. Due to reporting on the aforementioned issue the tone of reporting on the government is mostly negative (73 percent). A fair amount of time (13 min) was dedicated to the UNM's pre-election activities.

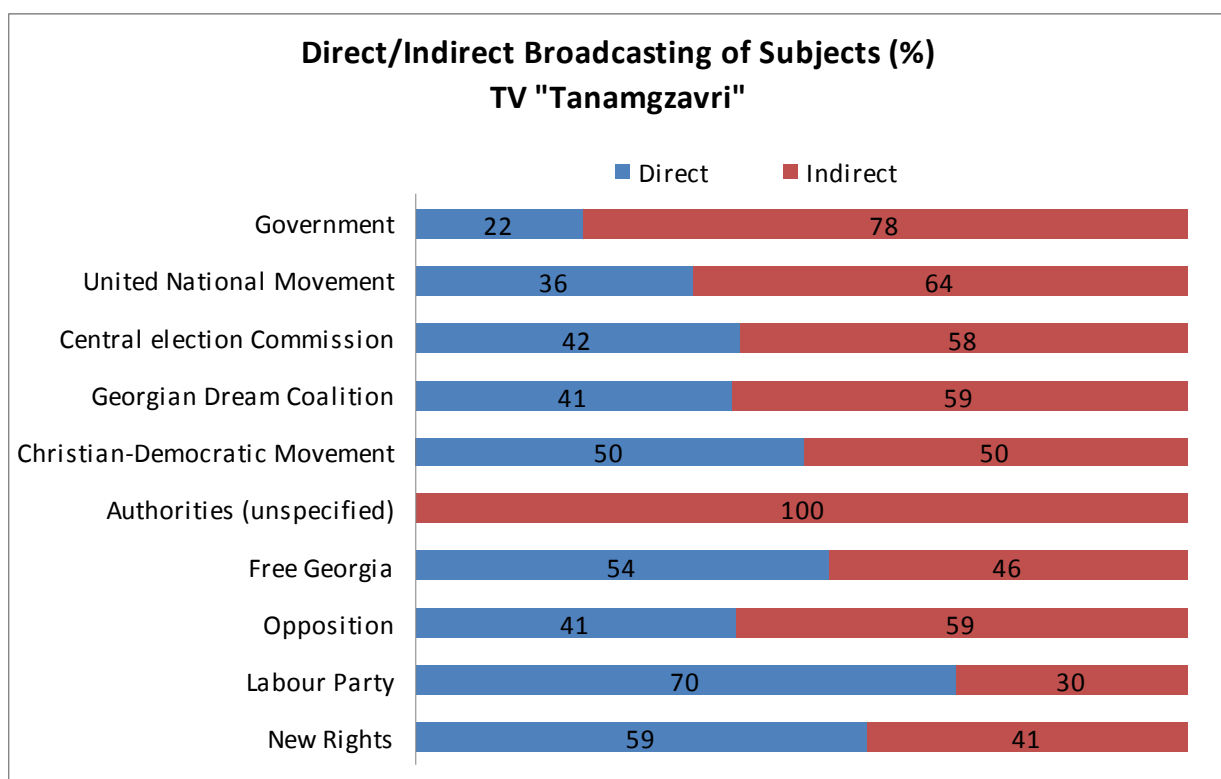
**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – News programs dedicated 10 minutes to government, followed by UNM with 8 min, CEC and Georgian Dream coalition with 6 min each, Christian-Democratic Movement with 5 min.



Subjects were covered in all three tones. But neutral tone prevailed over positive and negative tones in every case. Solely in regard to the authorities (3-min coverage) negative tone was observed - 94 percent.



The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Only in case of the authorities indirect reporting prevailed with 78 percent.

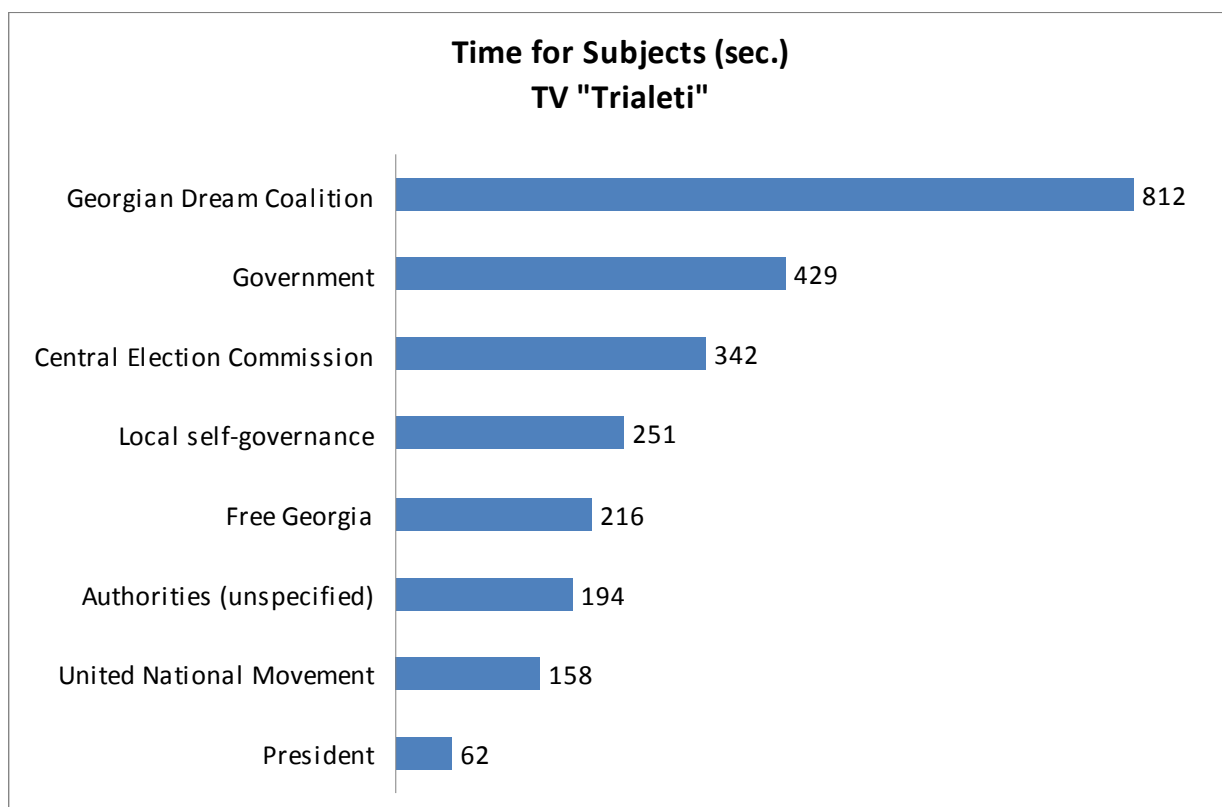


TV Company Tanamgzavri reported on the monitored subjects in an aggressive and unbiased manner.

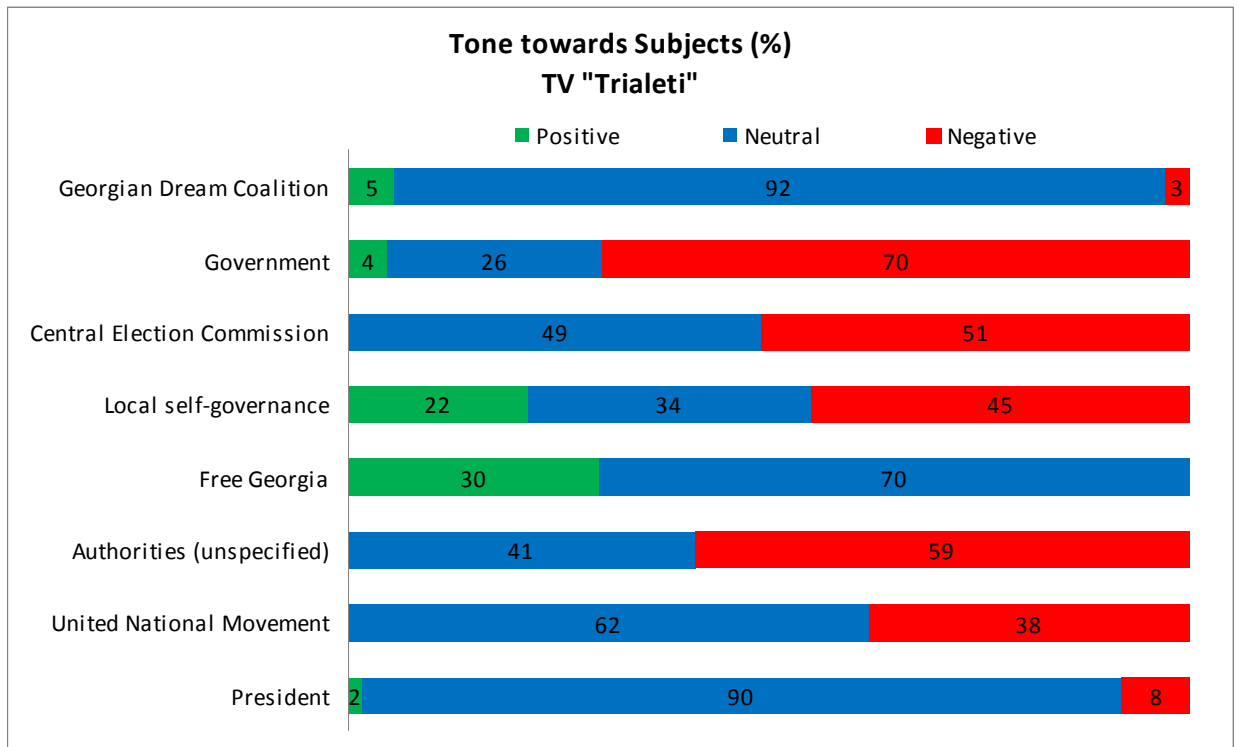


During the reporting period regional as well as national political developments were covered. No single case of bias was observed in regard to any subject. Journalist's text was always unbiased, most of the stories were balanced.

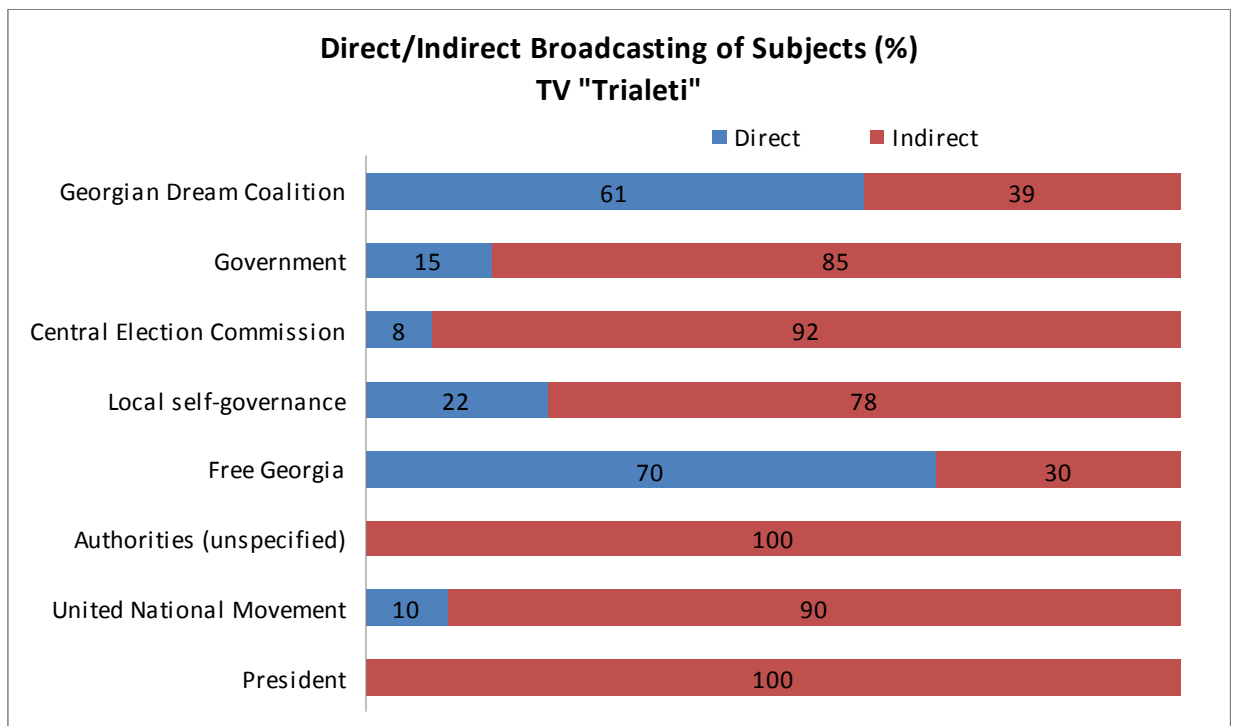
**Trialeti (Gori)** – Out of the monitored subjects the Georgian Dream coalition received the most of the airtime – 13 min. News programs dedicated 7 minutes to government, followed by CEC with 5 min and local self government with 4 minutes.



Monitored subjects were covered in all three tones. High percentage of negative tone was observed in regard to government (70 percent), CEC (51 percent) and local self-government (45 percent). The Georgian Dream coalition ranks first in terms of neutral reporting.



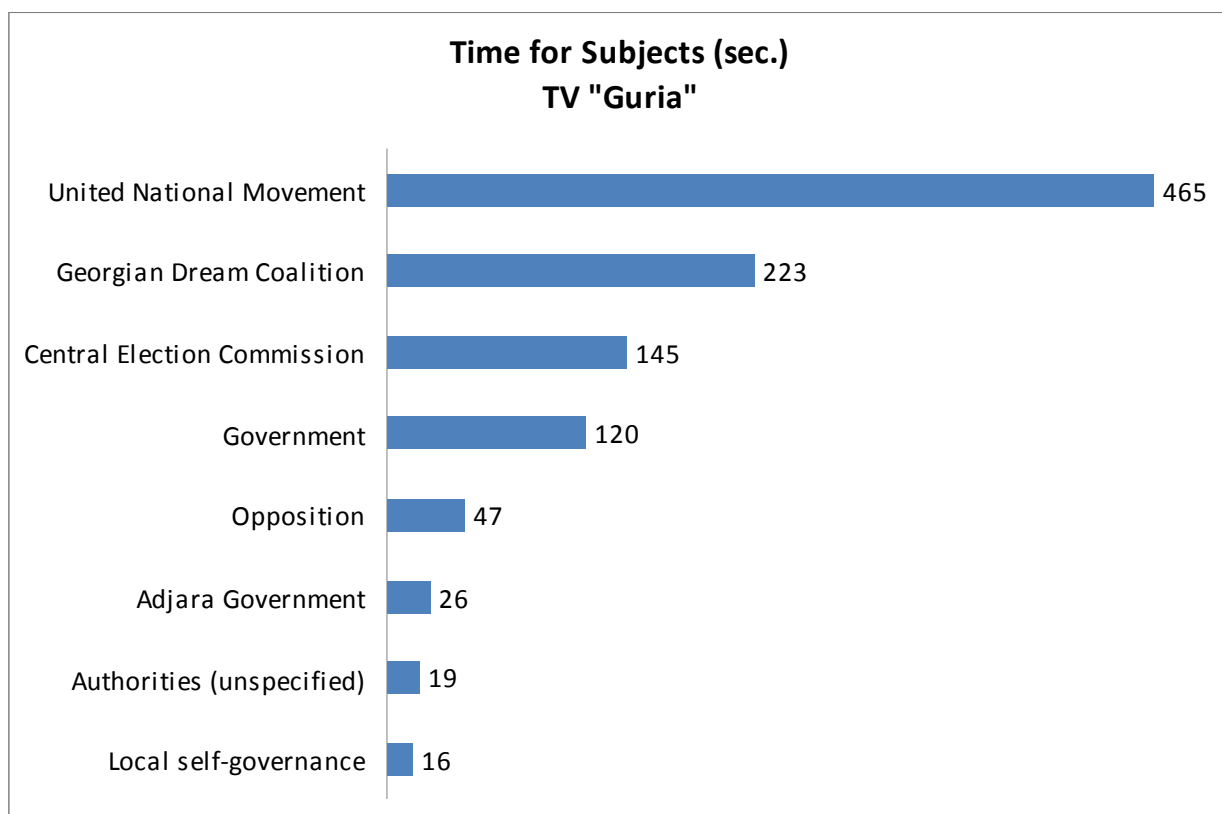
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. In case of the Georgian Dream coalition direct reporting (61 percent) prevailed over indirect reporting (39 percent). Direct reporting prevailed in case of Free Georgia as well with 70 percent of 4-minute reporting.



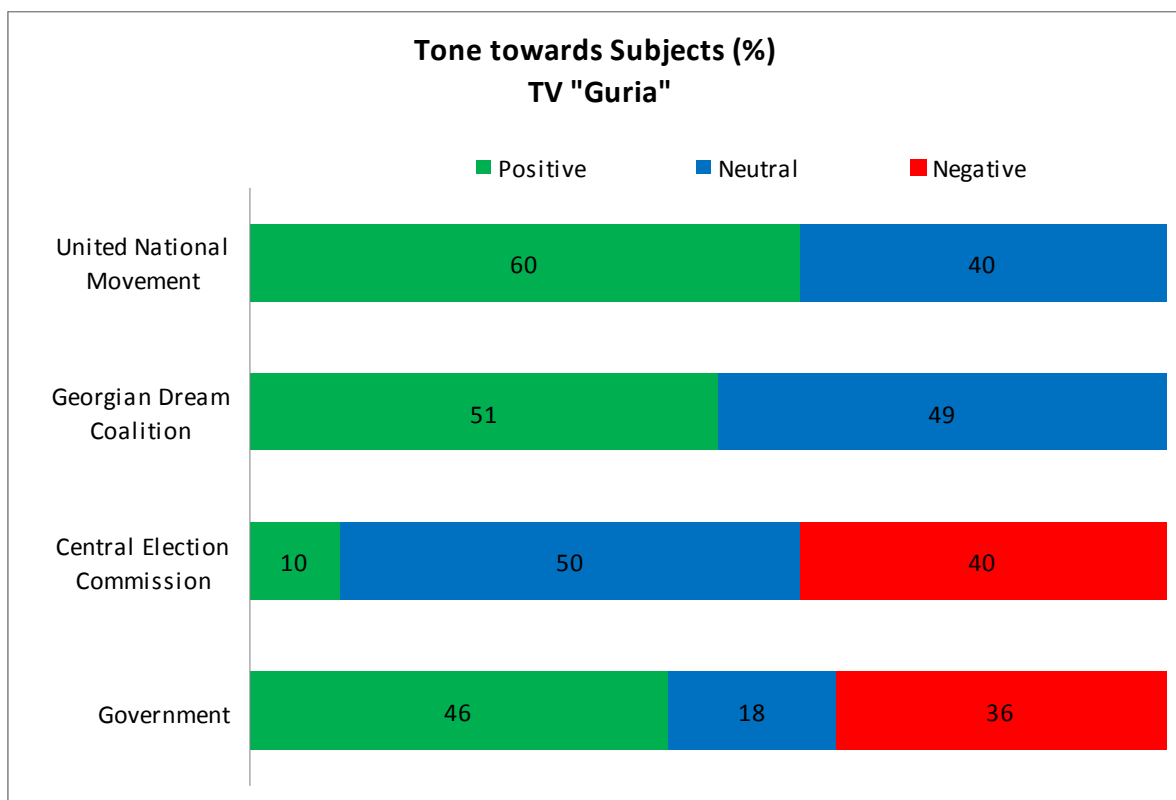
Within the period of September 24-30 TV company Trialeti dedicated the biggest share of airtime, 13 min, to the Georgian Dream coalition. Attacks on the Georgian Dream coalition HQs and arrests of the coalition members were covered. 92 percent of reporting in was neutral in tone. Approximately 3

minutes were dedicated to the UNM activities. Occasionally personal stance was evident in the journalist's text. In one of the TV stories about the UNM's sitting the journalist says: "Once again they got the population arrive from regions free of charge."

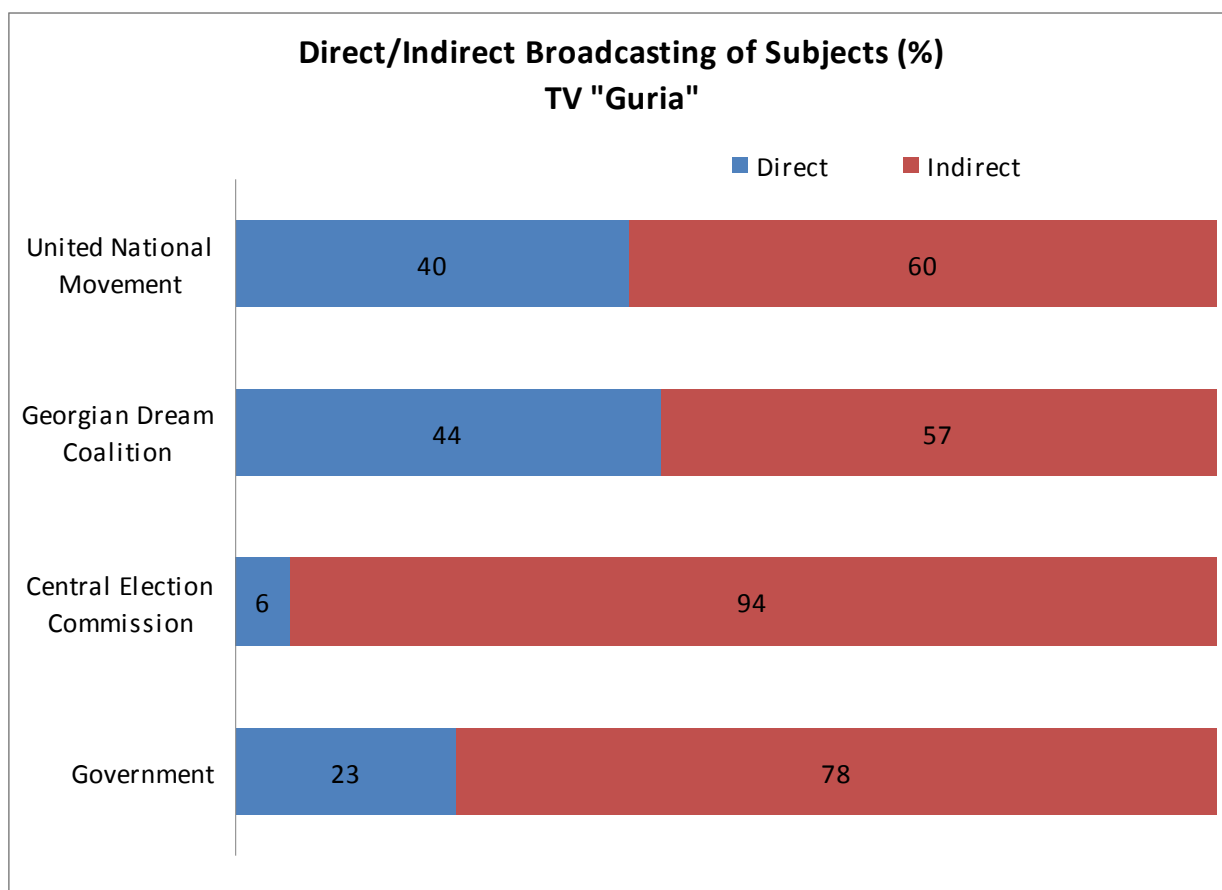
**Guria (Ozurgeti)** - The biggest share of airtime (8 min) was dedicated to UNM. 4 minutes of reporting was received by the Georgian Dream coalition. CEC and government each enjoyed 2-minute reporting.



Reporting on the monitored subjects was positive and neutral in tone. Negative tone was attached to reporting on CEC and government:

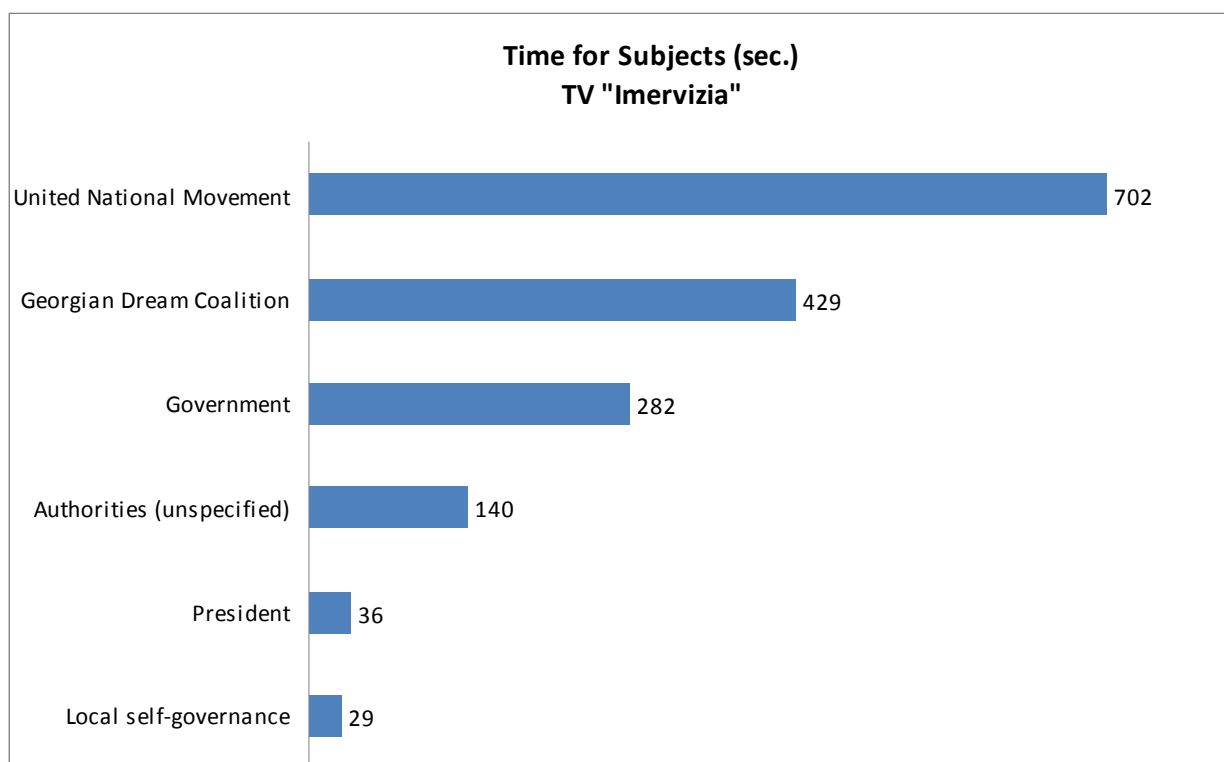


The share of direct-indirect reporting in regard to UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition was almost equal. CEC and government received high percentage of indirect reporting:

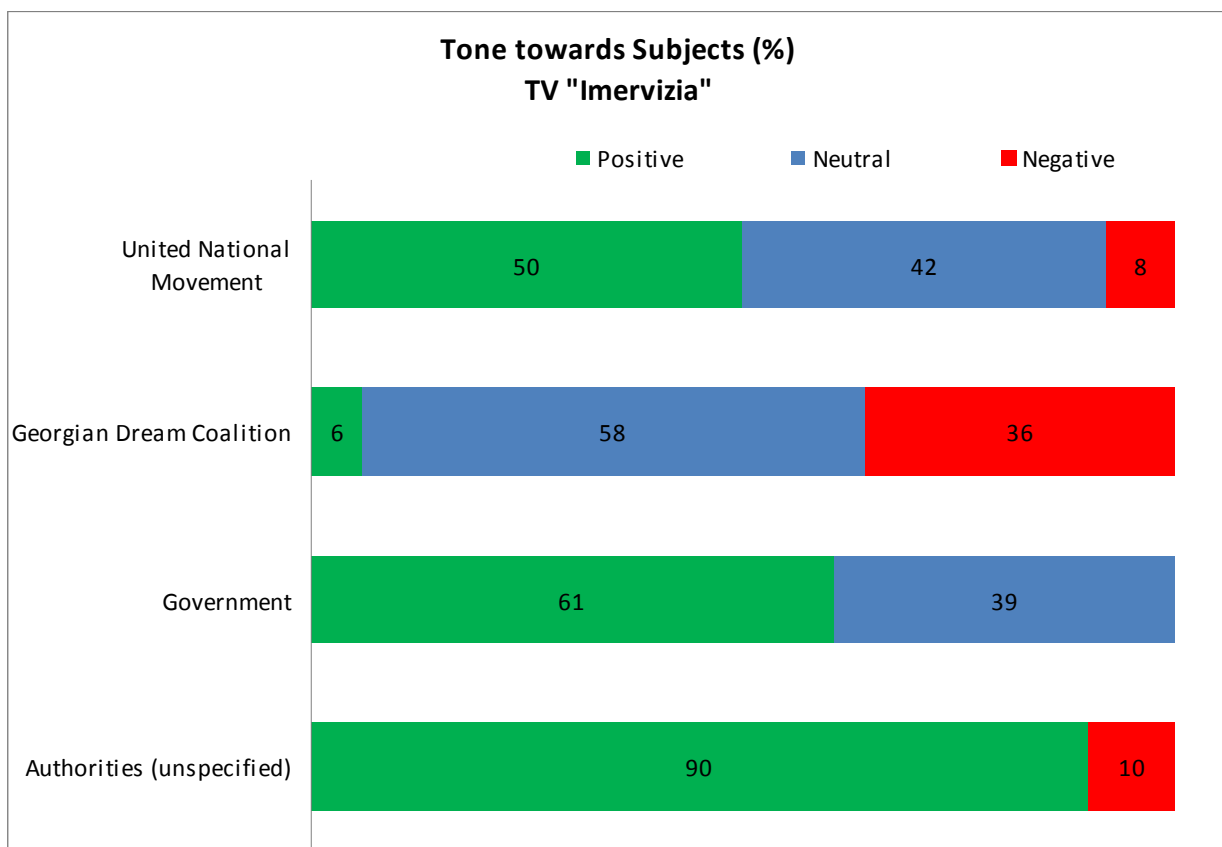


During the reporting period the TV Company mainly covered local events. Compared with the previous reporting periods the news programs looked more balanced. Most of the TV stories were dedicated to the activities carried out by Ramaz Nikolashvili, the UNM's majoritarian candidate in Ozurgeti. Reporting on the activities of the Georgian Dream coalition went up too.

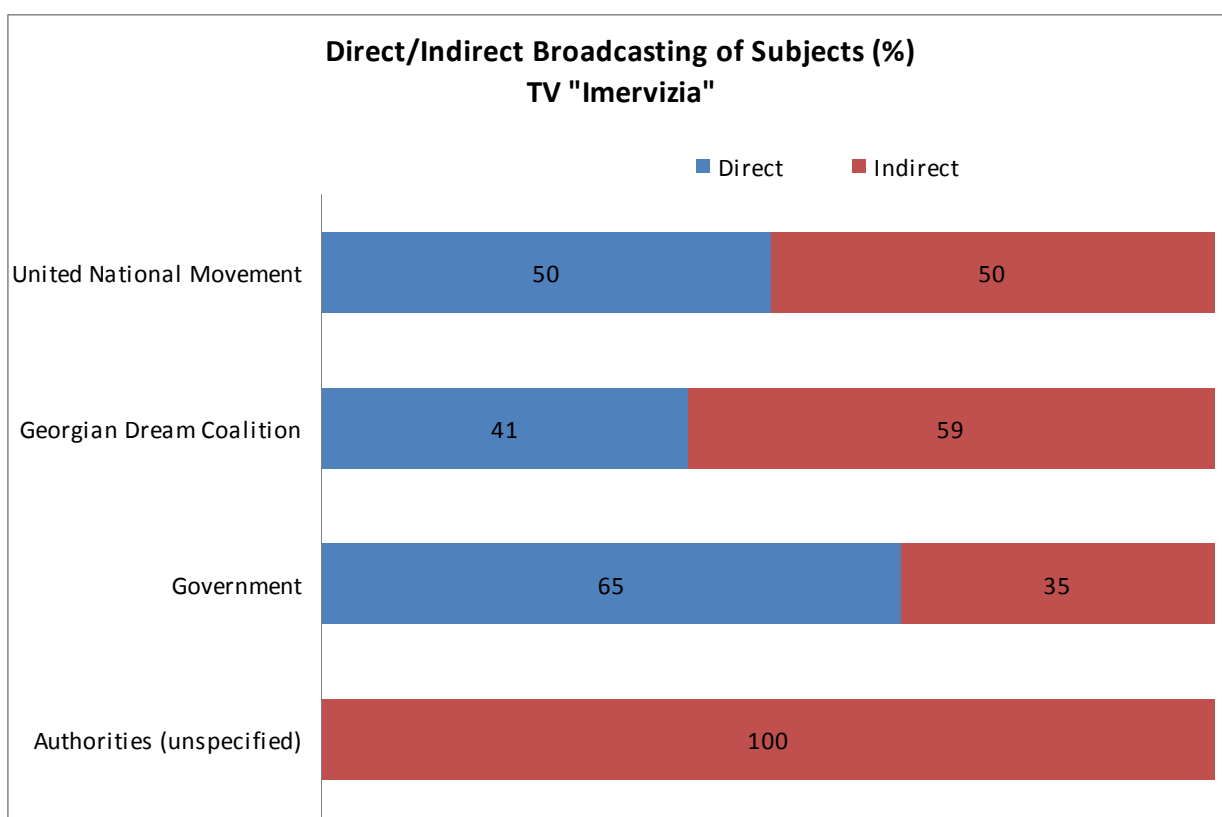
**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – The channel dedicated the most of airtime – 12 min – to UNM. 7-minute TV coverage was enjoyed by the Georgian Dream coalition – 7 min and government – 5 min.



All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the monitored subjects. The biggest share negative tone was observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition (36 percent). Government was covered in positive (61 percent) and neutral (39 percent) tones.

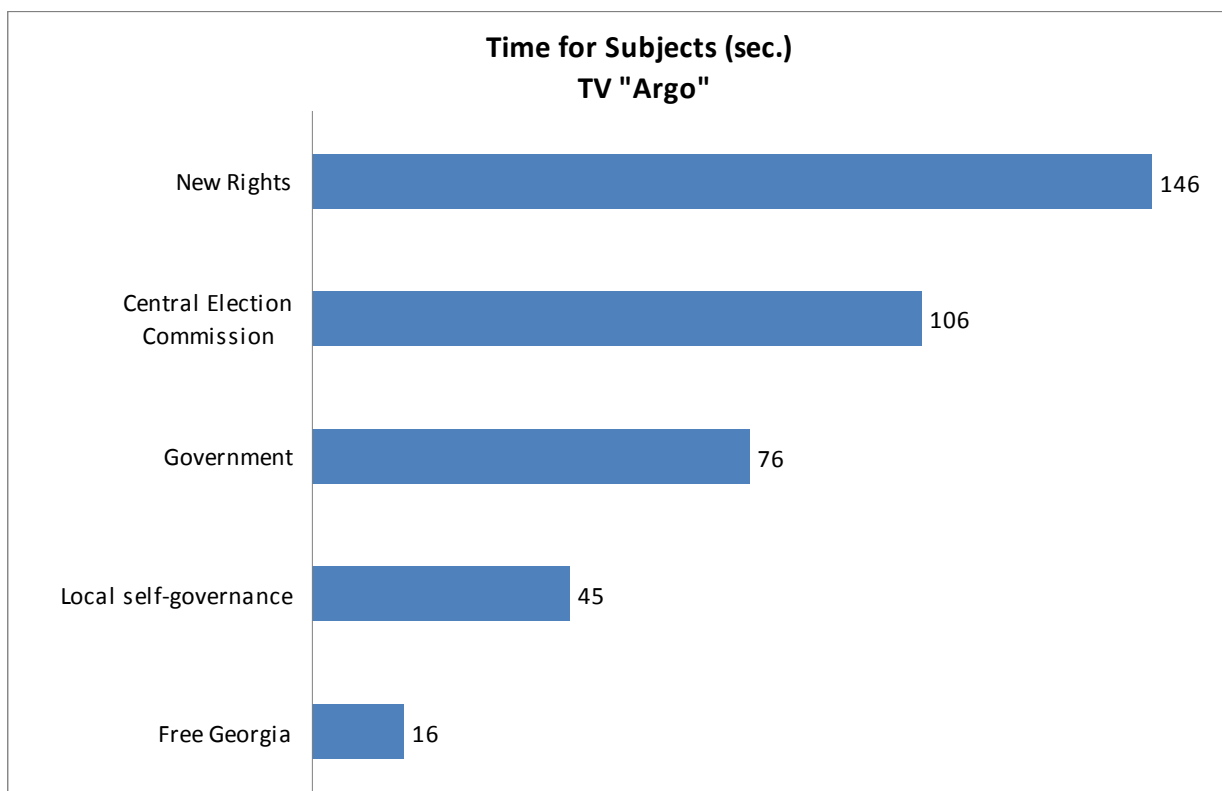


The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal:

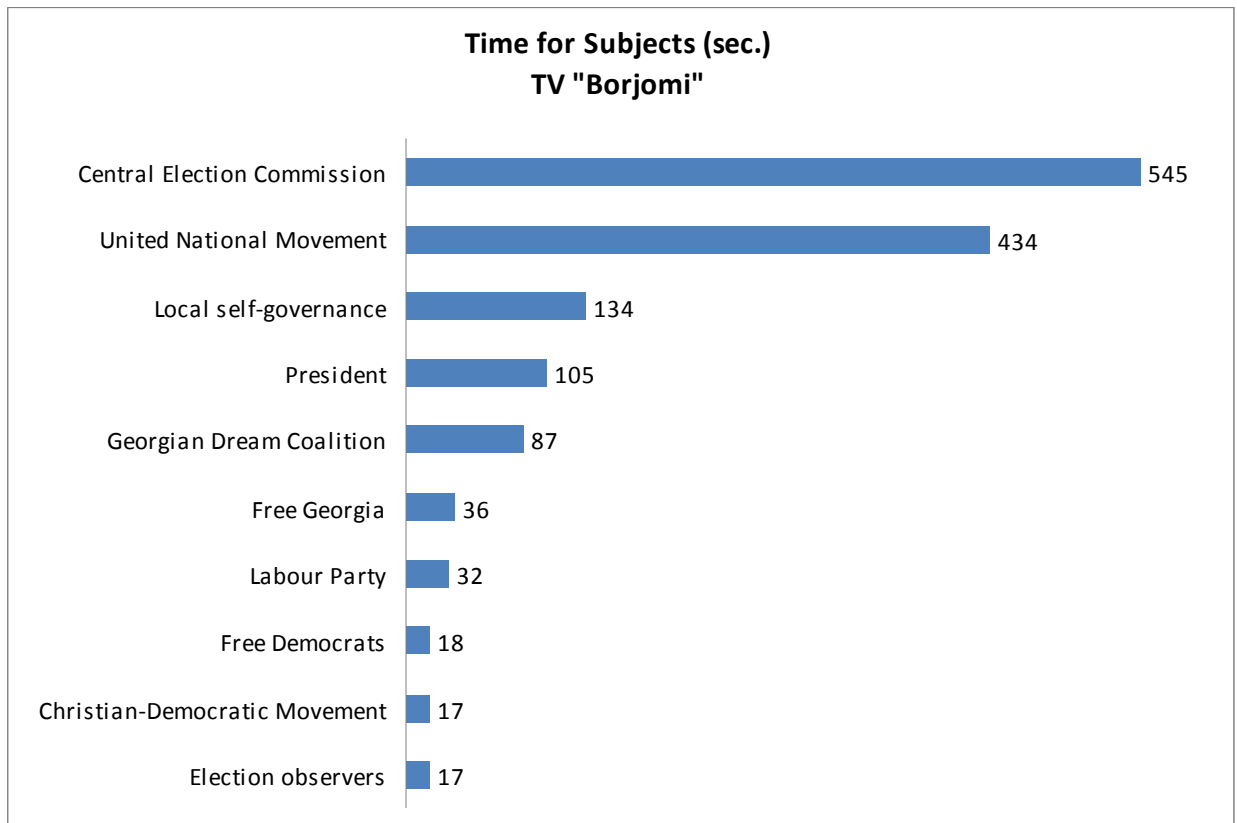


During the reporting period TV Company Imervizia essentially covered the activities carried out by UNM's majoritarian candidate Gogi Chikviladze. Loyal approach to the ruling party is evident in the TV story.

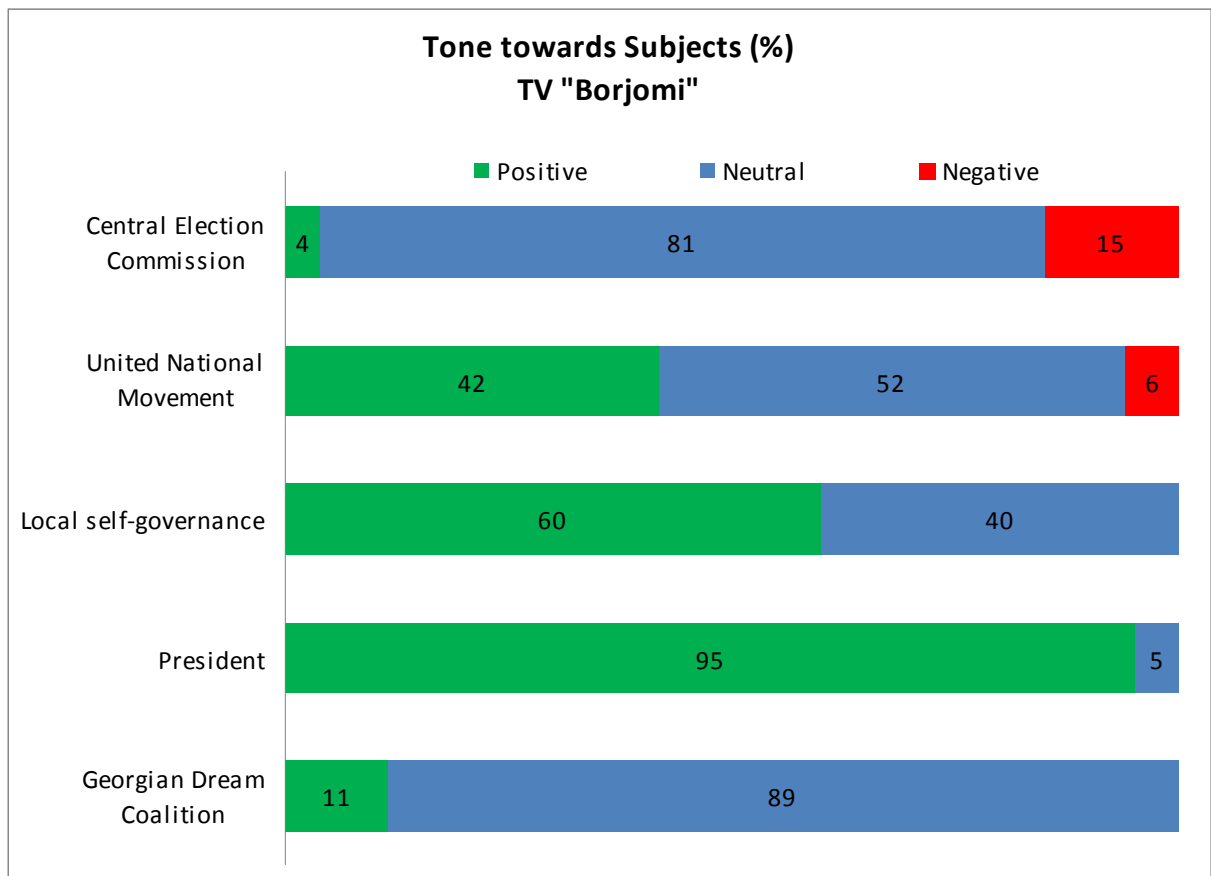
**Argo (Zestafoni)** - The channel dedicated 2-2 minutes to New Rights and CEC. The rest of the monitored subjects were virtually provided no coverage. Therefore the qualitative analysis of the results makes no sense.



**Borjomi (Borjomi)** - The TV company dedicated the most of the airtime (9 min) to CEC. 7-minute coverage was enjoyed by UNM. Local self-government received 2 minutes.

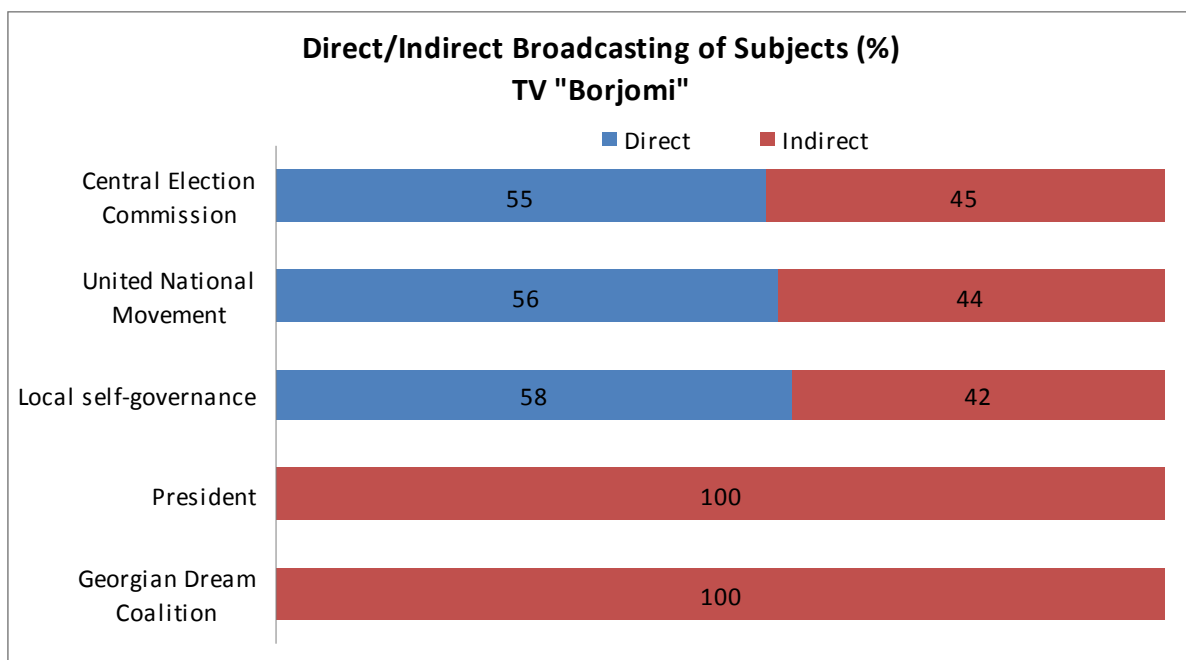


Subjects were essentially covered in neutral and negative tones. Negative tone was attached to CEC (15 percent) and UNM (6 percent).



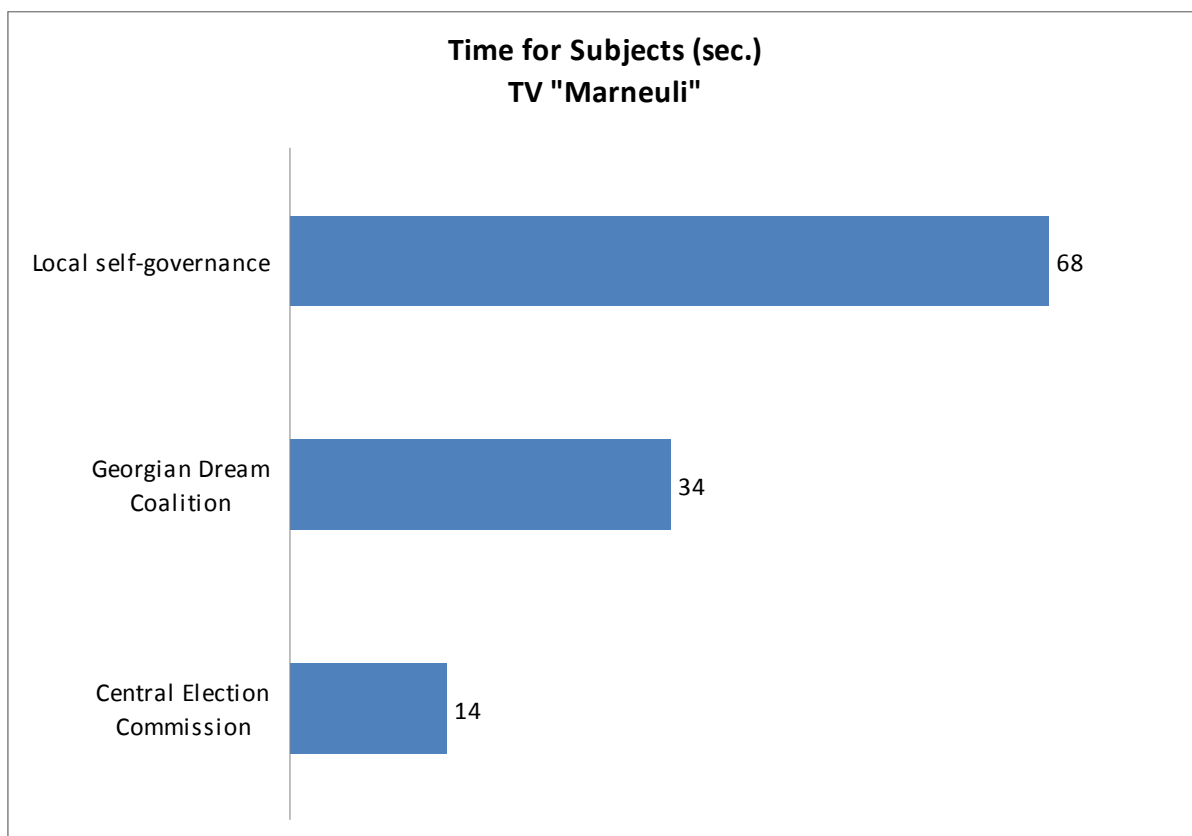


The share of direct/indirect reporting in case of the three most covered subjects was equal:

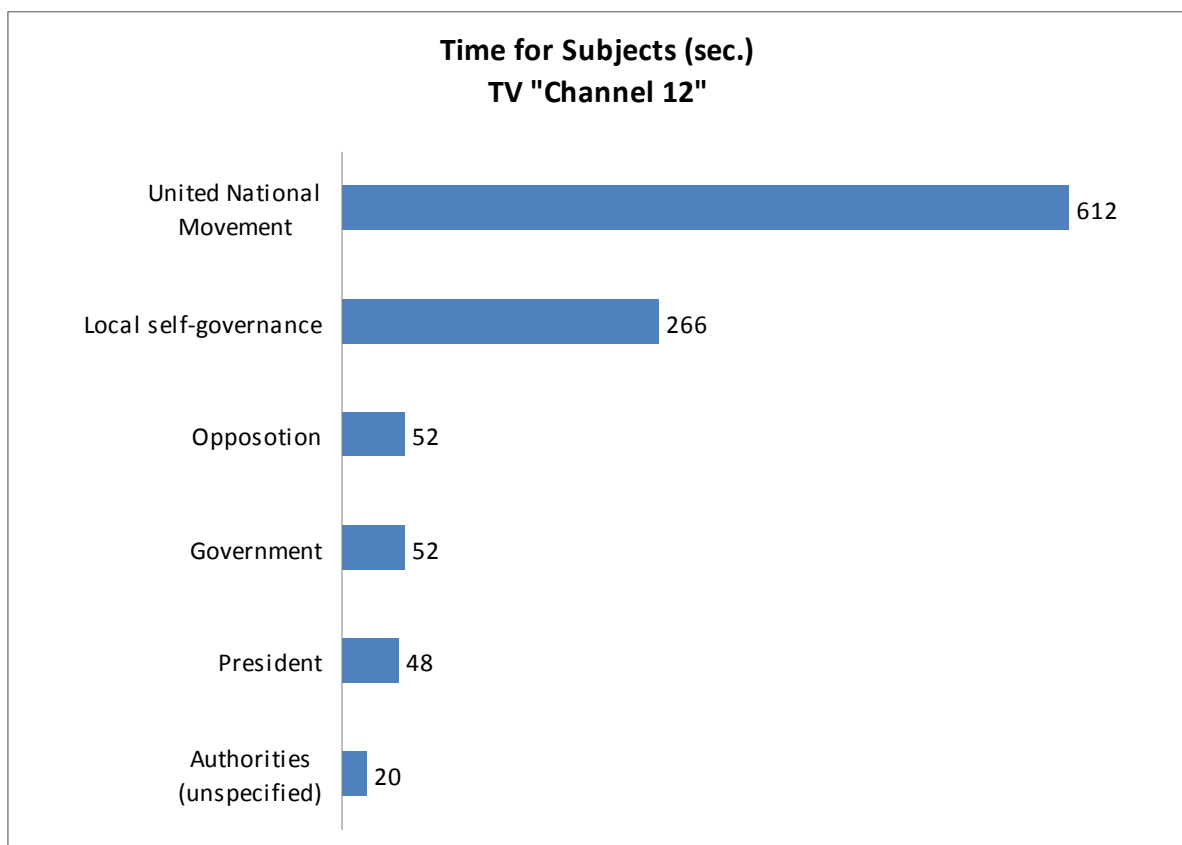


During the reporting period TV Company Borjomi dedicated the most of airtime to CEC and UNM. TV stories were produced on the activities of different political parties, but the time dedicated to UNM was twice more as the rest of the parties together. In general TV stories lacked balance. The journalist's text though is not biased and does not demonstrate subjective stance.

**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** – Within the period of September 24-30 the TV channel's new programs provided no coverage of monitored subjects. Approximately 1 minute was dedicated to the local self-government. Hence any kind of analysis of the results is impossible to provide.

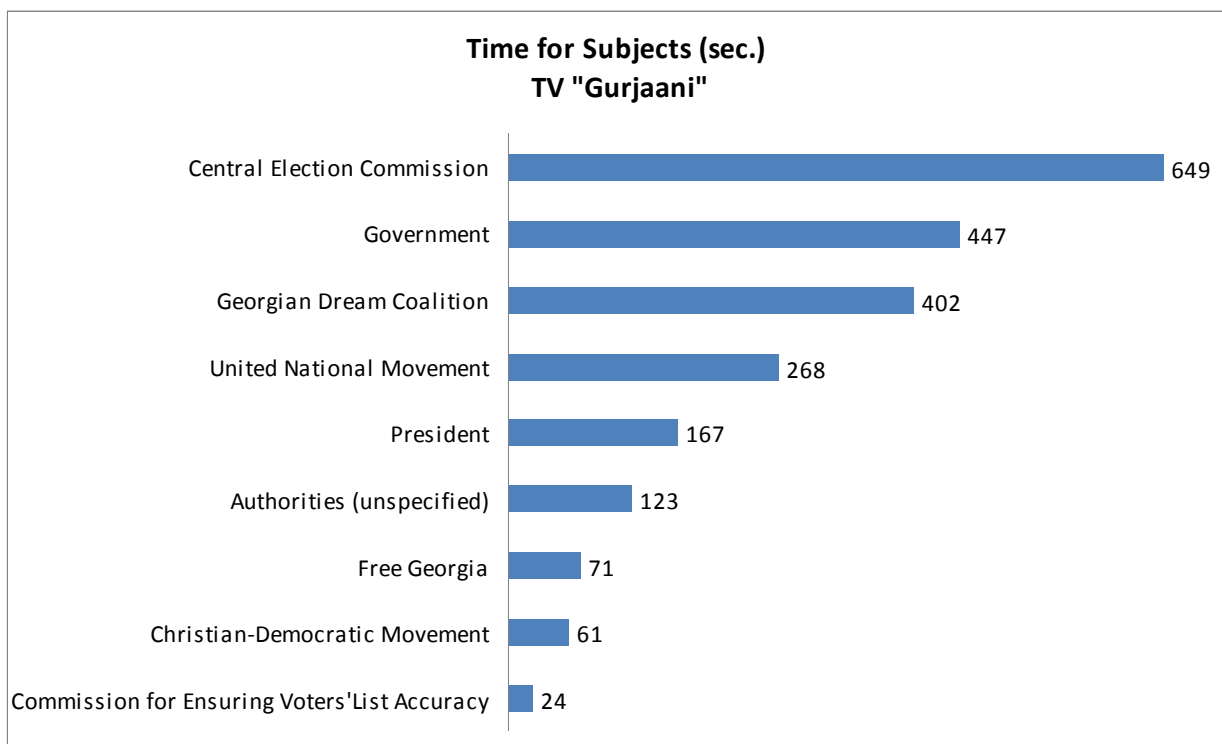


**12<sup>th</sup> Channel (Bolnisi)** – The channel dedicated about 10 minutes to UNM, 4 minutes to – local self-government. The rest of the monitored subjects received no coverage. Reporting on both of the subjects was positive and neutral in tone. The share of direct/indirect reporting was equal as well.

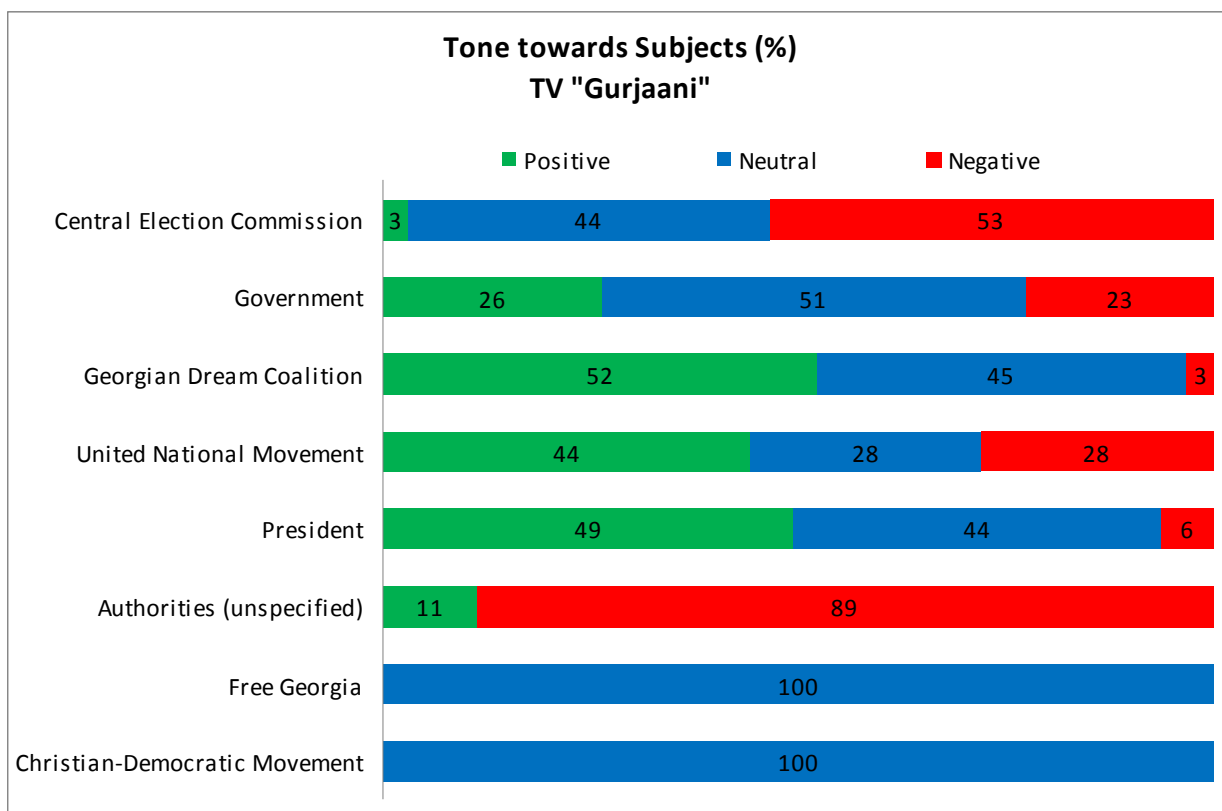


During the reporting period 12<sup>th</sup> Channel solely covered the activities carried out by UNM and State agencies. The most of the airtime was dedicated to the pre-election campaign conducted by the ruling party's majoritarian deputy Koba Nakopia. The candidate's comments were covered in relation to sports events. He commented on the football game Sioni (Bolnisi) vs Baia (Zugdidi).

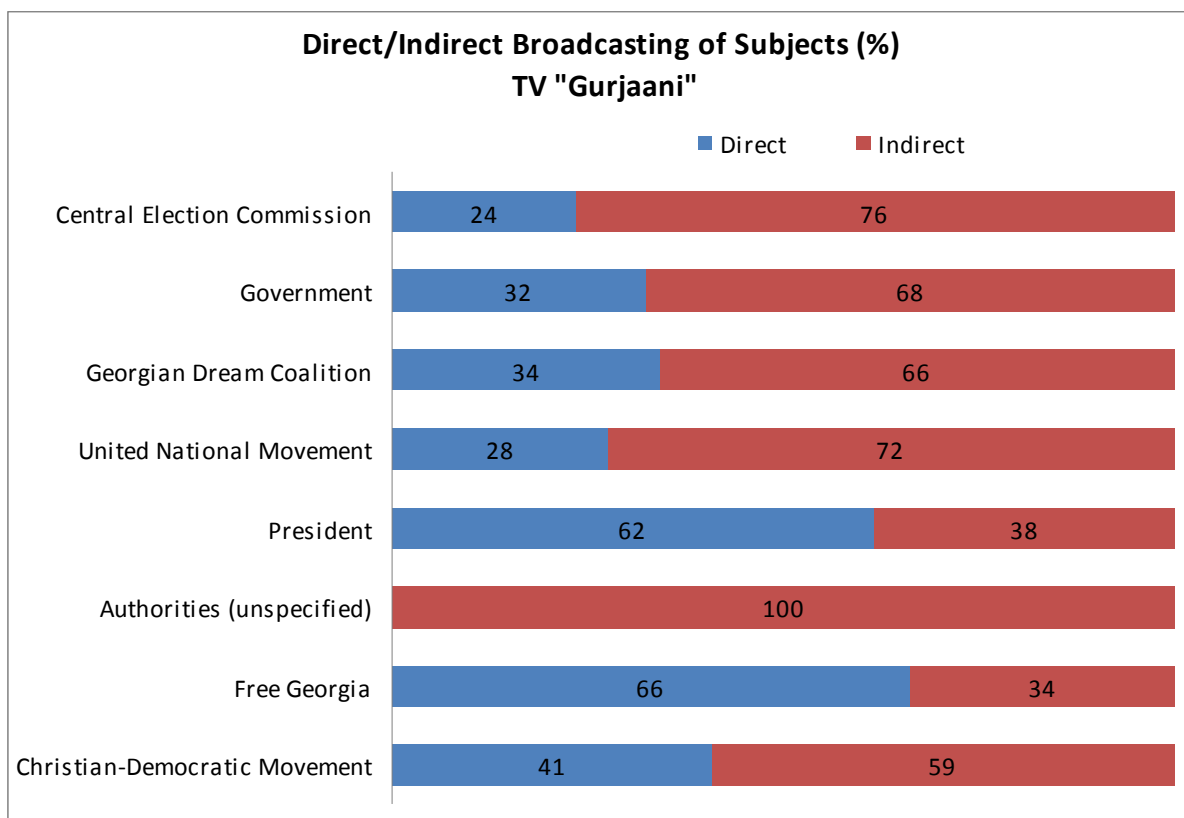
**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – Out of the monitored subjects 11 minutes were dedicated to CEC, followed by government with 7 min, Georgian Dream coalition with 6 min and UNM with 4 min.



All of the three tones were observed in regard to the monitored subjects. 89 and 53 percent of negative tone was attached to reporting on the authorities and CEC respectively. Equal share of neutral and negative reporting was observed in regard to UNM.

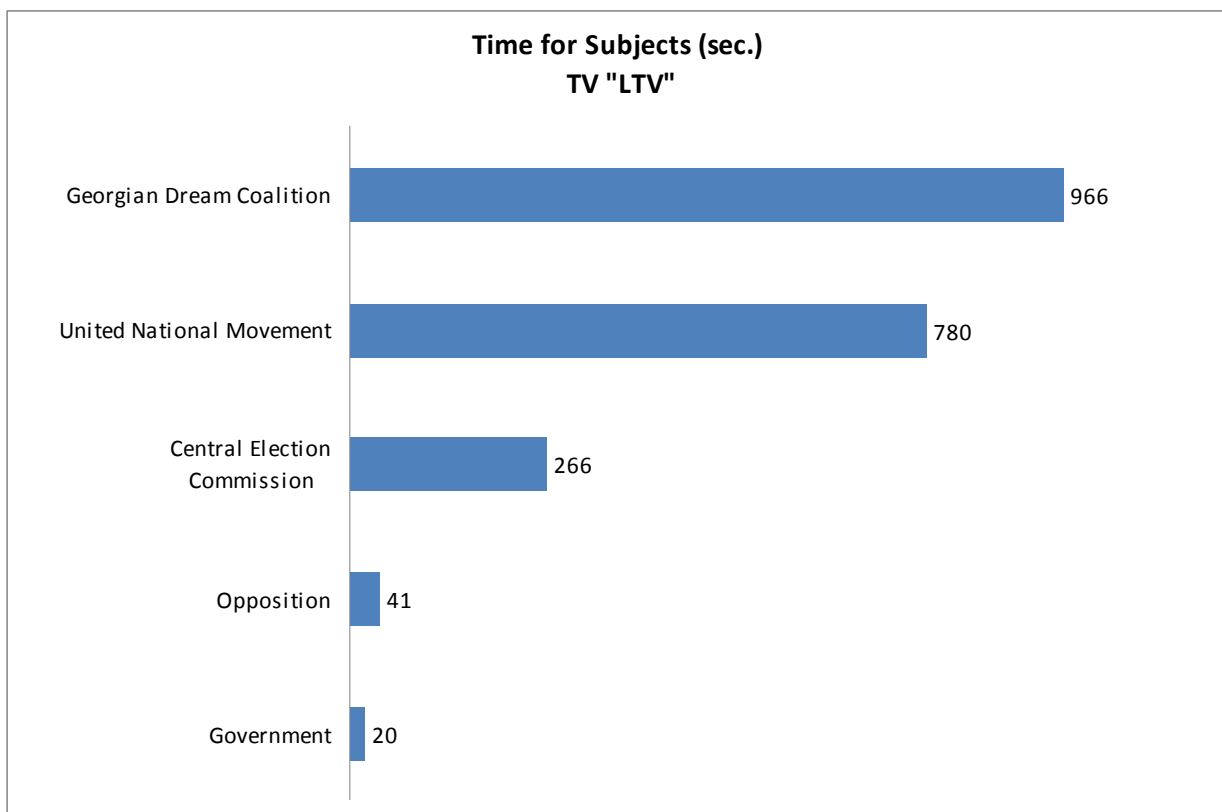


The share of indirect reporting greatly prevailed over direct reporting. Only in President's case direct reporting exceeded indirect reporting.

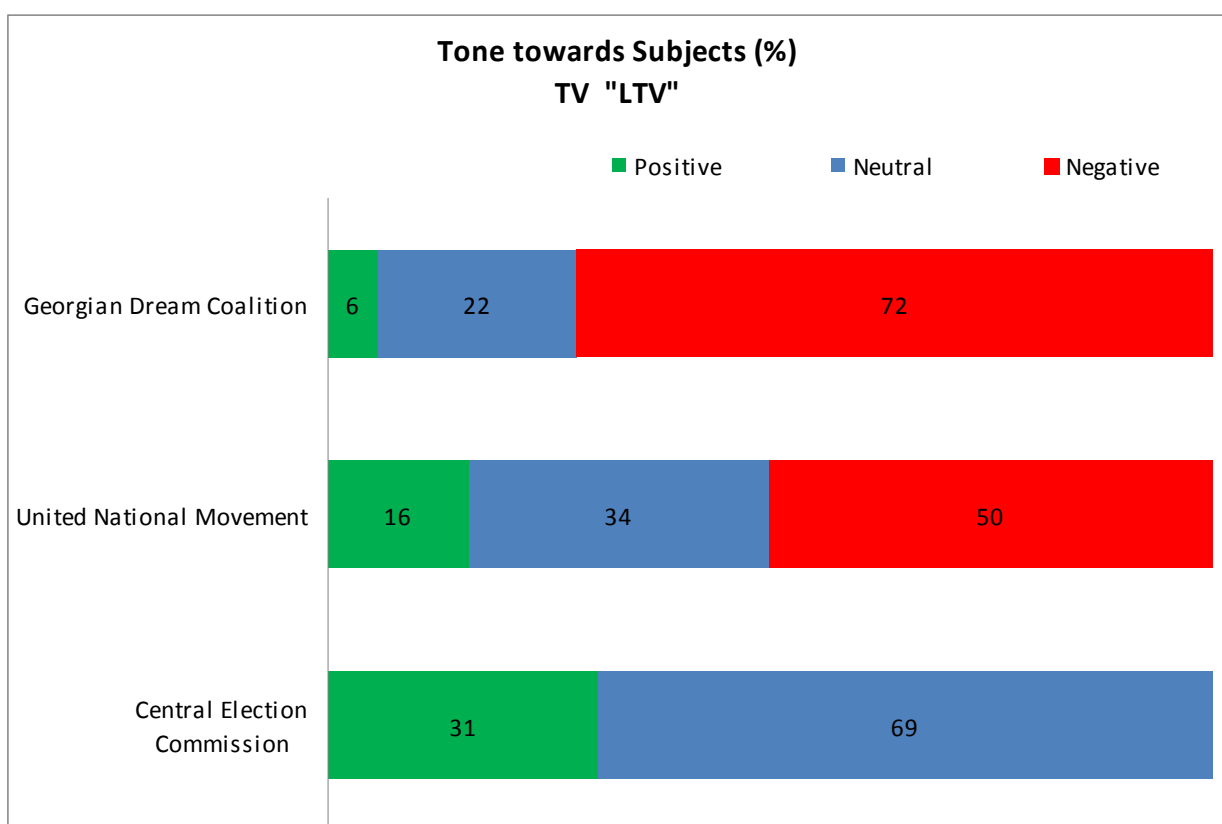


During the reporting period TV Company covered local as well as national events. News programs were more or less balanced. Almost equal time was dedicated to reporting on UNM (7 min) and the Georgian Dream coalition (6 min). A fair amount of airtime was dedicated to reporting on the CEC Resolution on the restriction of photo and video shooting at precincts. Reporting in regard to CEC was 53 percent negative in tone. It is noteworthy though that the TV stories are mainly balanced and journalists are trying to cover dissenting opinions.

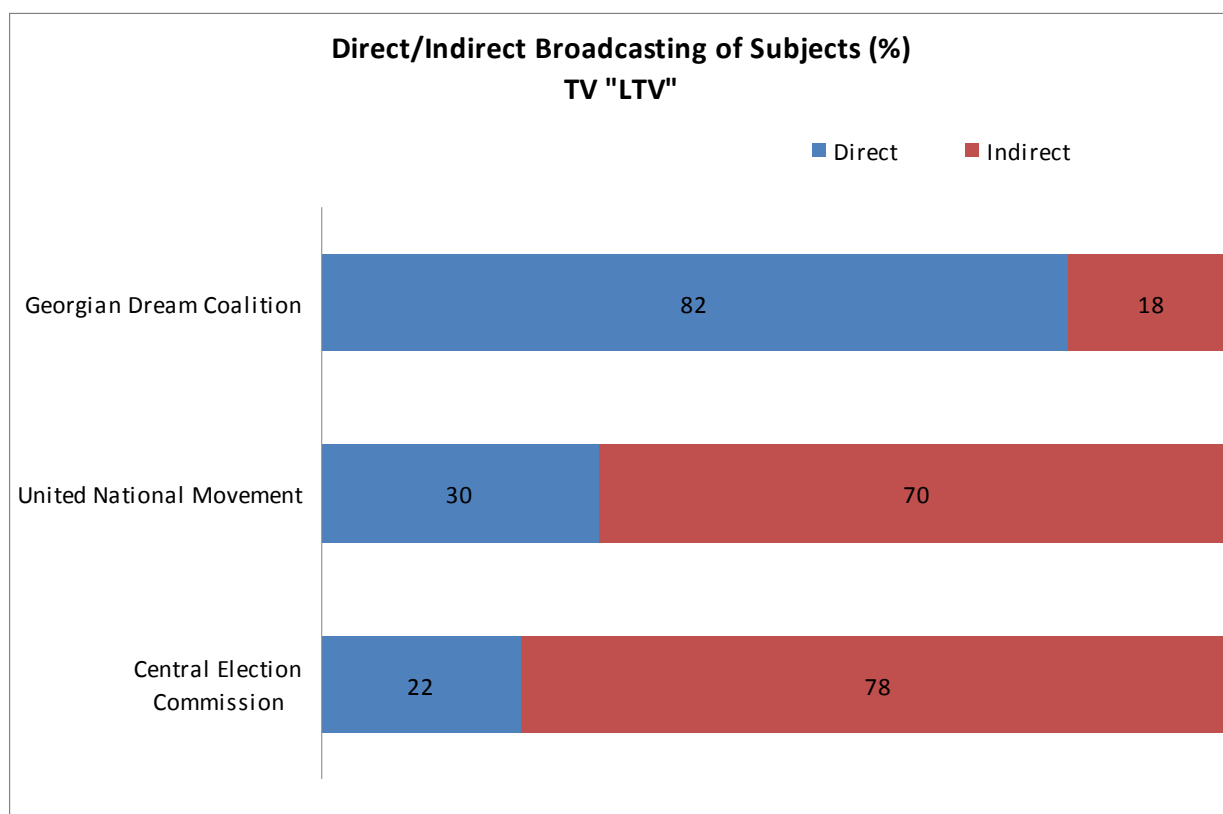
**LTV (Lagodekhi)** – The channel dedicated the biggest share of airtime to the Georgian Dream coalition – 16 min. UNM received 13 minute-coverage. CEC was dedicated 4 minutes. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage at all.



All of the three tones were identified:

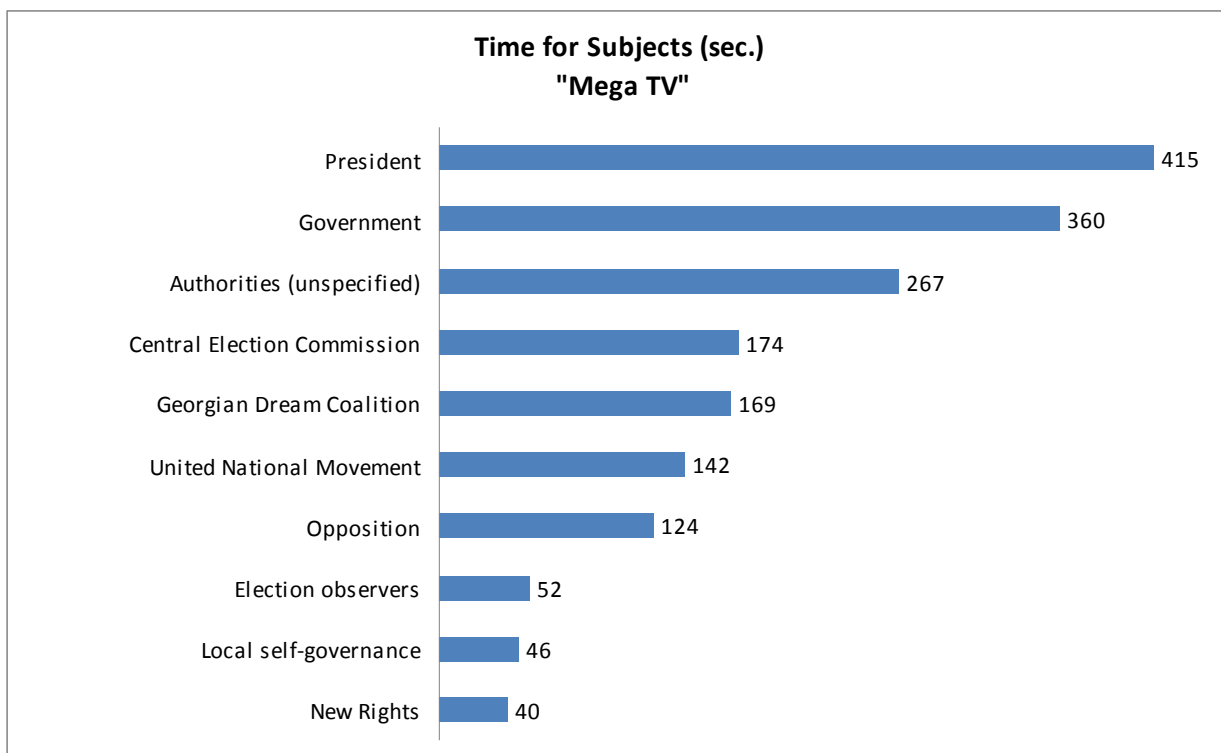


In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition direct reporting (82 percent) greatly prevailed over indirect reporting (12 percent). The picture looks contrariwise in UNM's case - 30- percent direct and 70 percent indirect.

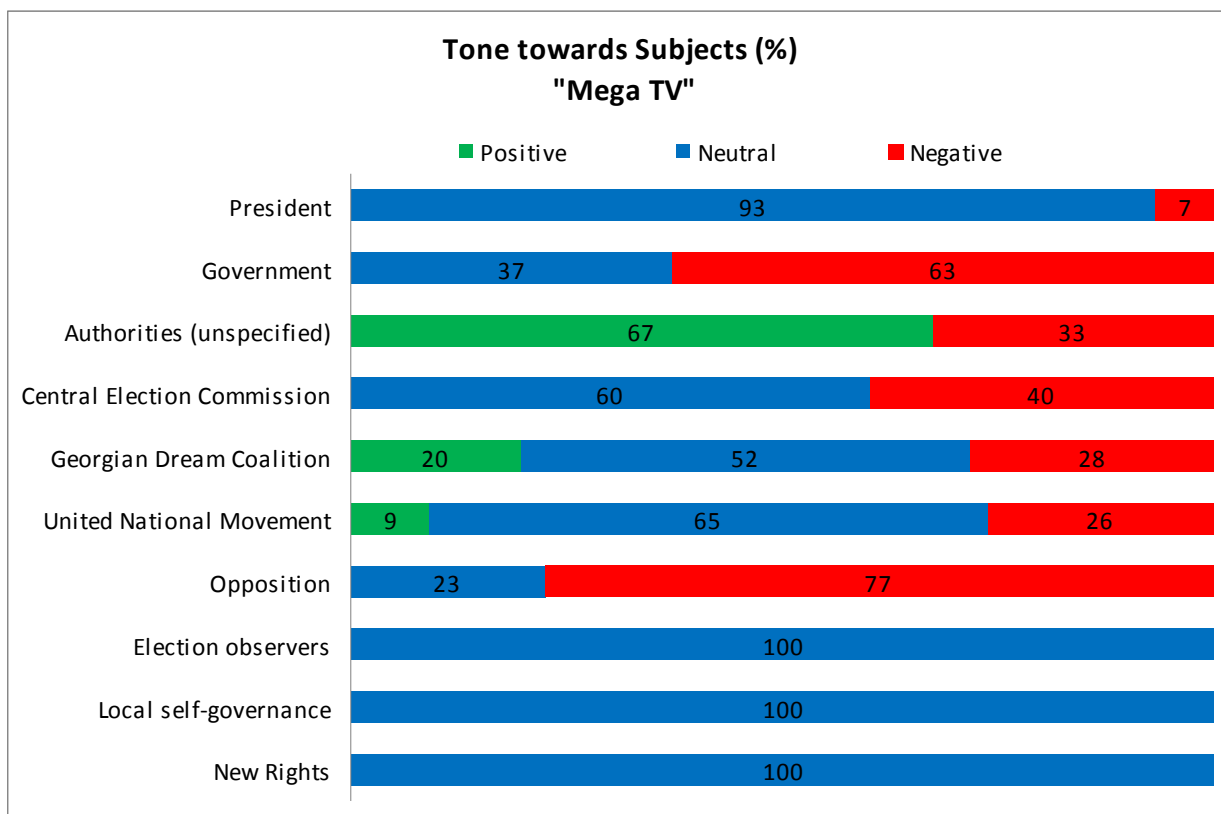


Within the reporting period the TV channel produced stories only about the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM. The 10-minute covert video featuring coalition’s majoritarian deputy Luka Kurtanidze using bad language against President and demanding public official’s resignation was fully aired. It is noteworthy that apart from this story the monitores subjects were not dedicated much time, hence we lack material for qualitative analysis.

**Mega TV (Khoni)** – News programs dedicated approximately seven minutes to President. government comes next with 6 min, followed by authorities with 4 min and CEC with 3 min.

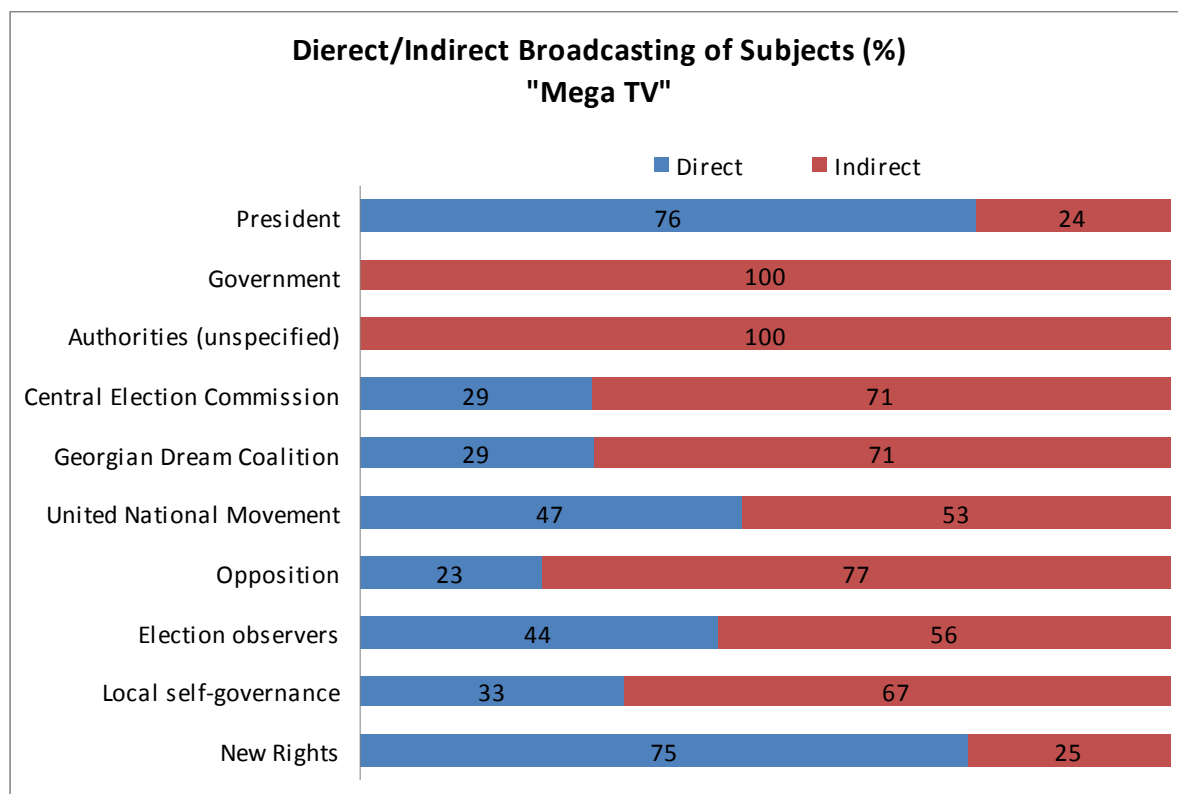


Reporting tone was essentially neutral and negative. Solely in regard to authorities positive (67 percent) and negative (33 percent) tones were applied. All of the three tones were attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition and UNM.



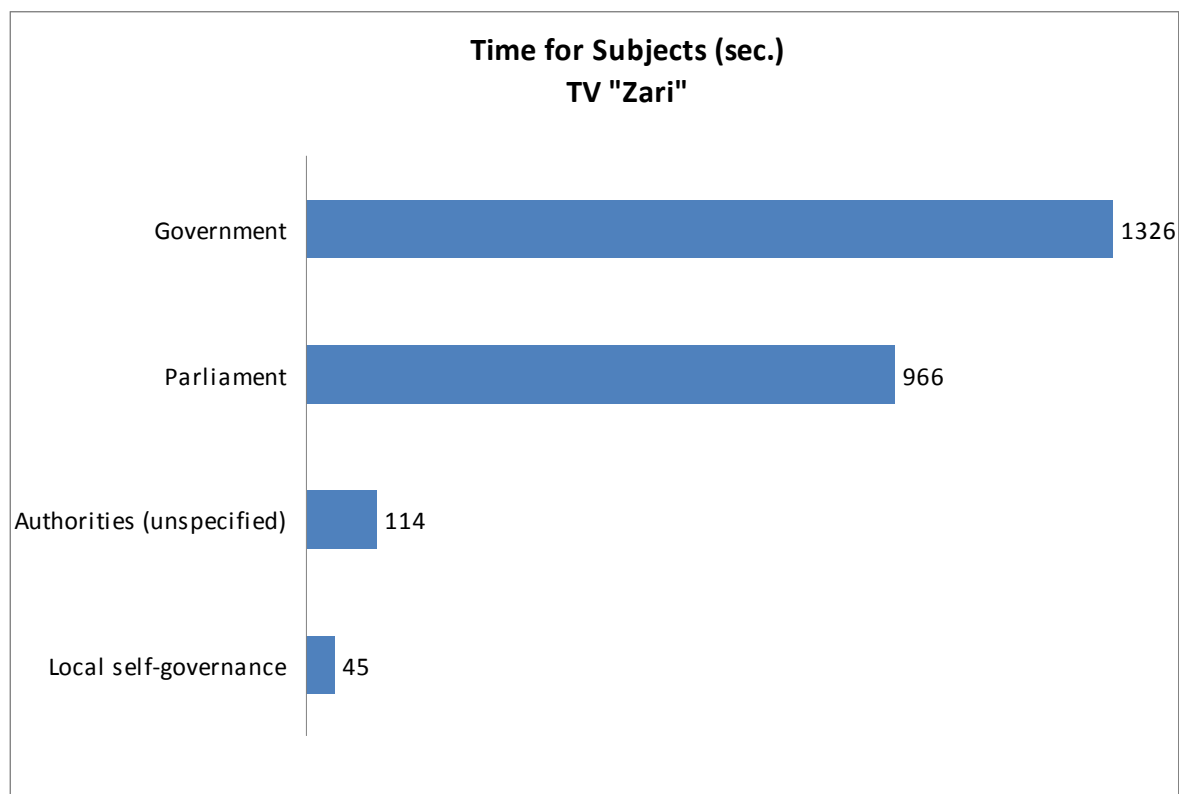
Indirect reporting considerably prevailed over direct reporting. Only in President's case high percentage of direct reporting was observed – 76 percent.





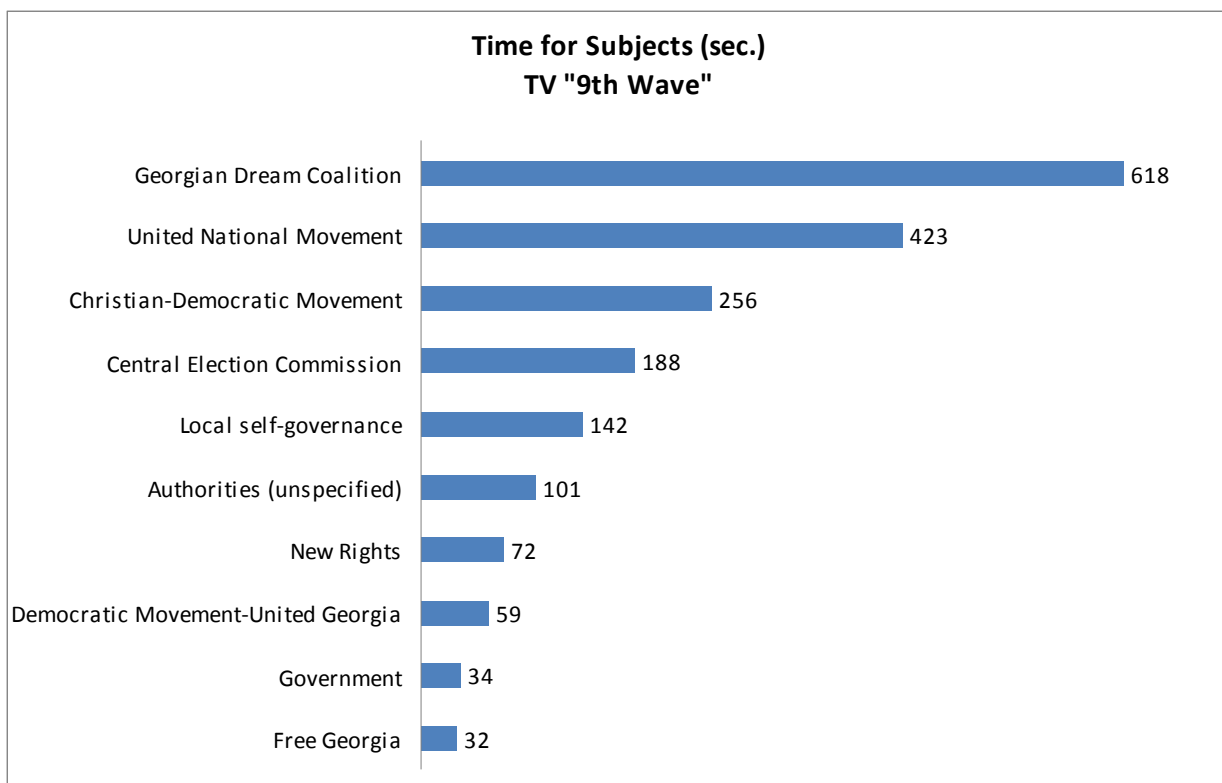
Within the reporting period TV Company produced daily news (from Mon to Fri). The running time of news programs was 10-12 minutes max. The local and national events were dedicated equal time (news programs mainly re-broadcast video footage aired by central channels). In the past week some violations in the penitentiary system were still found important to cover, hence the share of negative tone in regard to the government was high again – 63 percent. It is noteworthy that news programs are more or less balanced and they demonstrate dissenting opinions. But in the main TV stories offered viewers the evaluations provided by a particular party.

**Zari (Samtredia)** – The news programs reported on government for 22 min, Parliament - 16 min and authorities – 2 min. Reporting on the covered subjects was positive and neutral in tone. Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting.

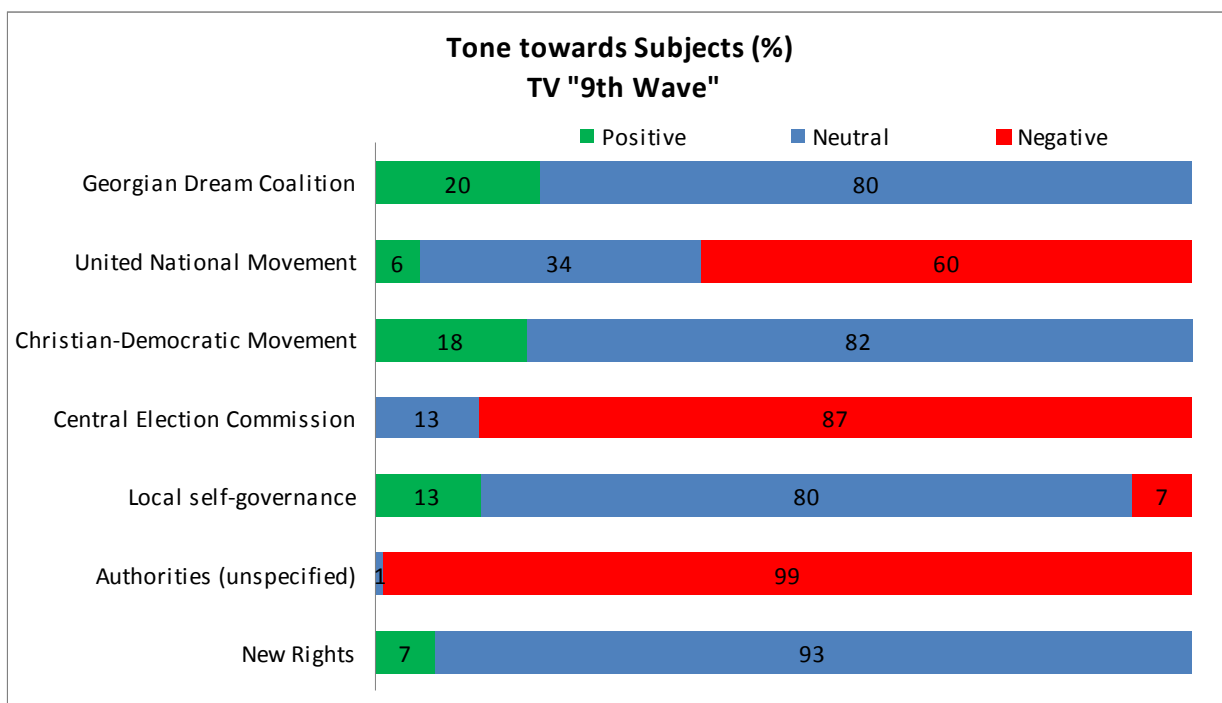


During the reporting period TV company Zari dedicated airtime to only two monitored subjects including government and Parliament. News programs reported on the events ongoing in the region. The TV stories (like the news programs in general) lack balance. For instance the visits of the Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Lado Vardzelashvili and his deputy as well as the projects implemented by the Ministry were dedicated five TV stories (stadium rehabilitation, rehabilitation of the school stadium, rehabilitation of sports complex, and so on). News programs also dedicated a fair amount of time to the UNM's majoritarian deputy Avtandil Sturua, e.g. his meeting with journalists was covered for 10 minutes.

**9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti)** – The news programs dedicated the biggest share of time – 10 min – to the Georgian Dream coalition. UNM, Christian-Democratic Movement and CEC enjoyed 7, 4 and 3-minute coverage respectively.

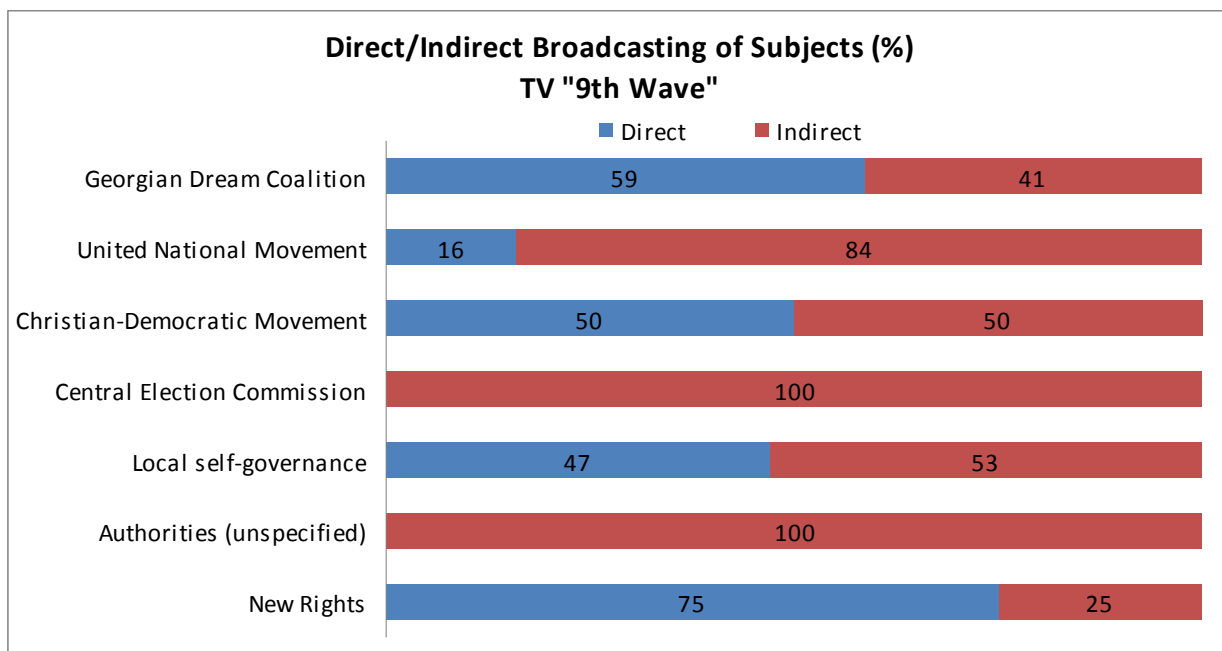


In regard to UNM and local self government all of the three tones were applied. Reporting tone in regard to the rest of the subjects (Georgian Dream coalition, Christian-Democratic Movement) was neutral and positive or neutral and negative (CEC).



When covering the subjects direct as well as indirect reporting was observed. In case of the Georgian Dream coalition, Christian-Democratic Movement and local self government the share was equal.

Reporting on CEC was 100 percent indirect. In UNM’s case the share of indirect reporting was big as well (84 percent).



During the reporting period TV Company 9<sup>th</sup> Wave aggressively covered political developments. Airtime was dedicated to the ruling as well as opposition parties. But compared with the rest of the parties UNM received low percentage of direct reporting and that in negative tone. Even though the journalist’s text was unbiased negative tone was attached to reporting on the authorities and CEC due to the topic covered.

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

Within the period of October 1-7 the ninth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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