



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

Subagreement # S-12-155

Report for: August 27 - September 9, 2012

Project Period: 11 June 2012 - 10 December 2012

Total Budget: 31 000\$

Results Summary/Impact Statement

Main findings of the fourth 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 airtime to reporting on the activities of local self governments. The reporting is almost always positive in tone;
- The programs initiated by the authorities are covered in a superficial manner without any additional substantiation; Reporting provided by the majority of TV companies is positive in tone;
- Marginal amount of TV companies cover developments in the country;
- The airtime dedicated to the reporting on the activities carried out by the Central Election Commission (CEC) has gone up. Reporting is mainly neutral in tone and is of informative nature.

Background

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of August 27 - September 9, 2012 by the Internews Georgia monitoring team. Media monitoring helps raise standard of professionalism and is conducive to the development of independent unbiased journalism. The goal of our survey is to reveal, through monitoring main news programs aired on Georgian regional TV broadcasters, the proceeding and trends of media coverage of pre-election campaign.

Activities

The survey was carried out on 20 regional broadcasters operating nationwide, including: Channel 25 (Batumi), Rioni (Kutaisi), Kvemo Kartli TV and Radio Company (Rustavi), Odishi (Zugdidi), Tanamgzavri (Telavi), 9th Channel (Alkhaltshikhe), Trialeti (Gori), Guria (Ozurgeti), Imervizia (Chiatura), Argo (Zestaponi), Gurjaani (Gurjaani), Borjomi (Borjomi), Marneuli TV (Marneuli), LTV (Lagodekhi), 12th Channel (Bolnisi), Mega TV (Khoni), Zari (Samtredia), 9th Wave (Poti), Kronika (Dusheti), Egrisi (Senaki).

Within the period of August 26 – September 9 TV companies Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) still lacked self-produced news programs. Mega TV (Khoni) was producing a single news program per week.

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

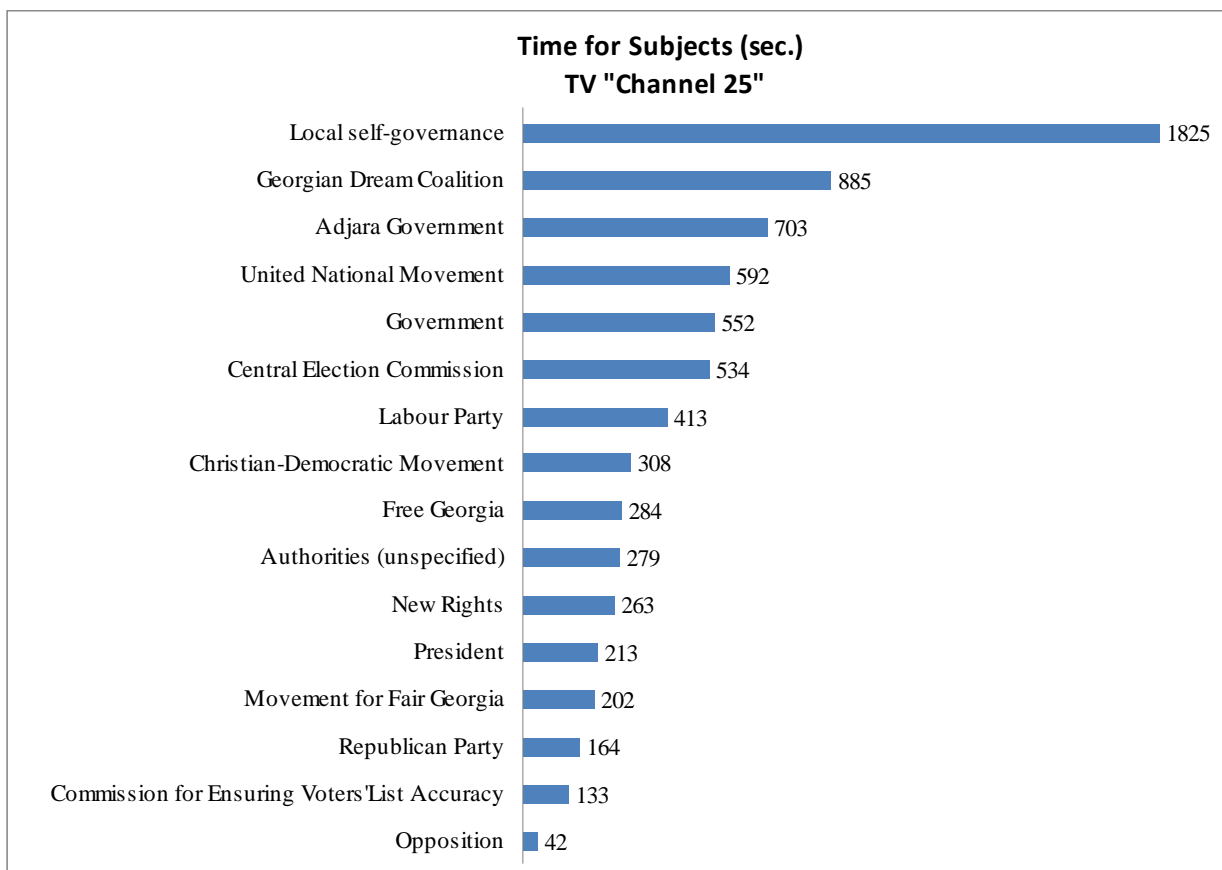
aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. The cases of manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs were also brought into focus.

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).

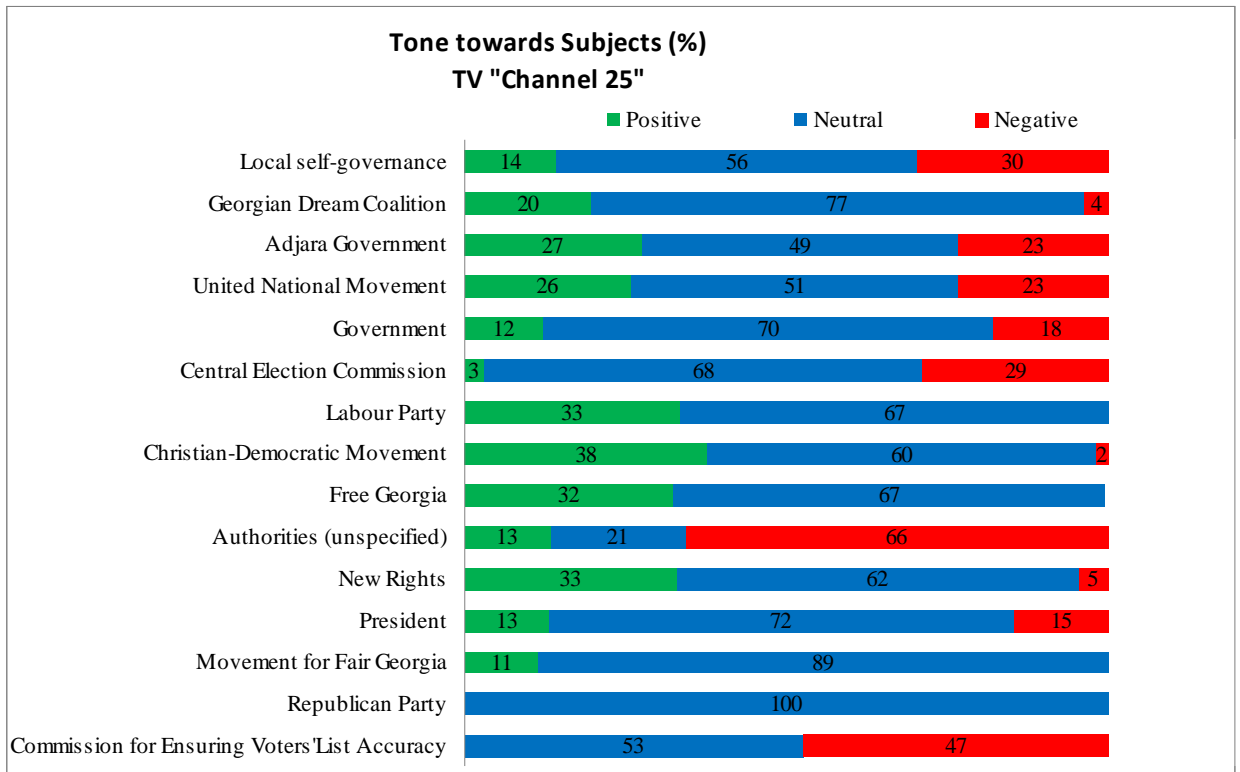
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

News programs monitoring results per channel:

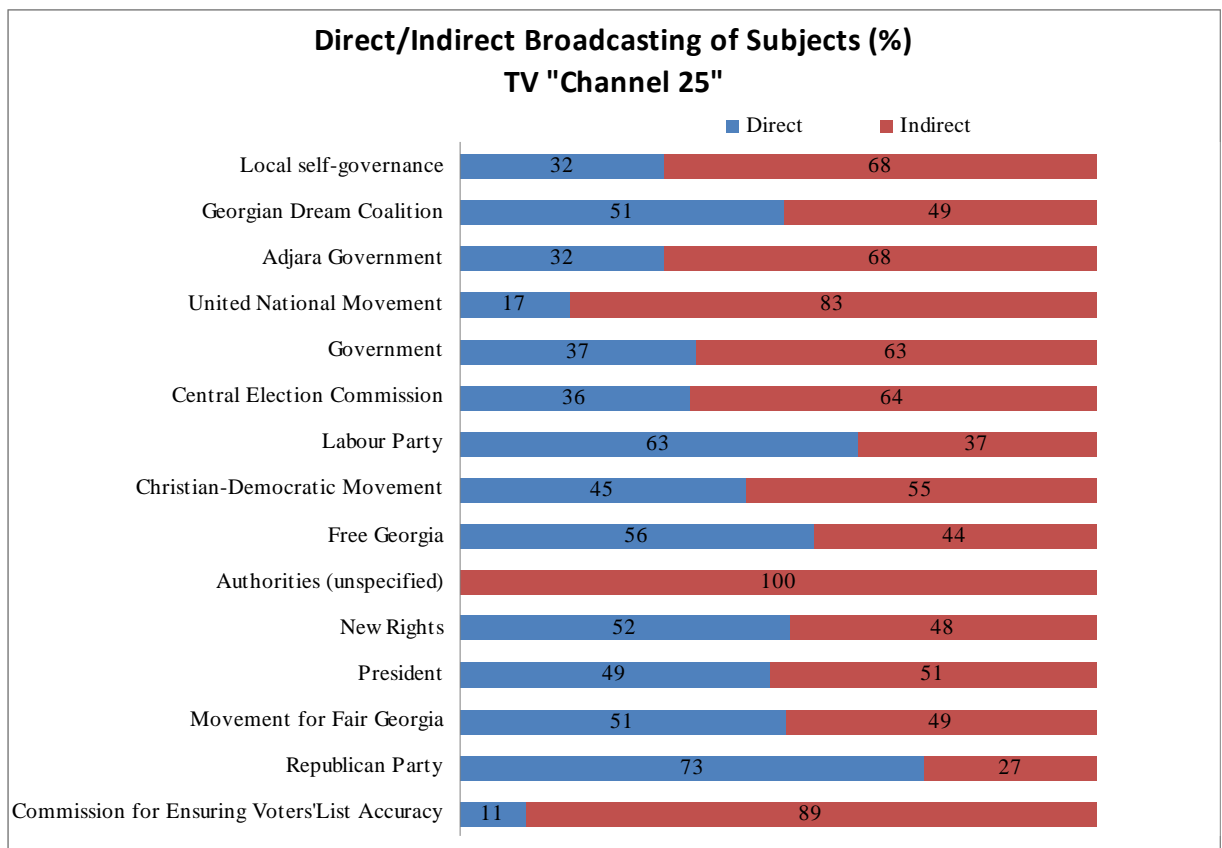
Channel 25 (Batumi) – News programs dedicated most of the airtime, 31 minutes, to the local self-government. 15 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition, followed by Adjara government with 12 minutes. The United National Movement (UNM) and the government was each dedicated 10 minutes. The Labor Party and Christian-Democratic Movement enjoyed 7 and 5-minute coverage respectively.



All of the three tones were applied in regard to the monitored subjects. The least of the negative tone was observed to the Georgian Dream coalition (4 percent). The most negative tone was applied in regard to the authorities in general – 66 percent. Neutral tone mostly prevailed over positive and negative tones.

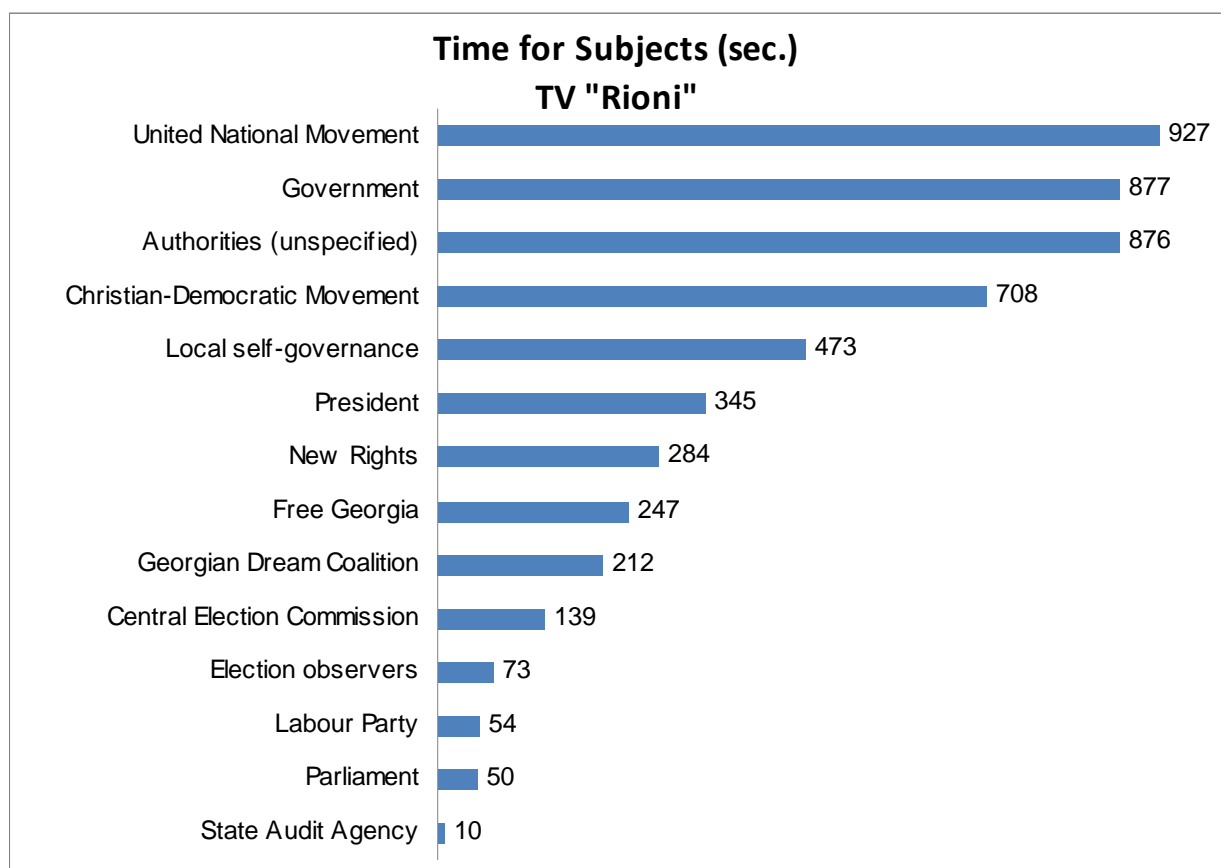


In most cases direct reporting prevailed or was equal to indirect reporting. But in UNM's case indirect reporting (83 percent) considerably prevailed over direct reporting (17 percent).

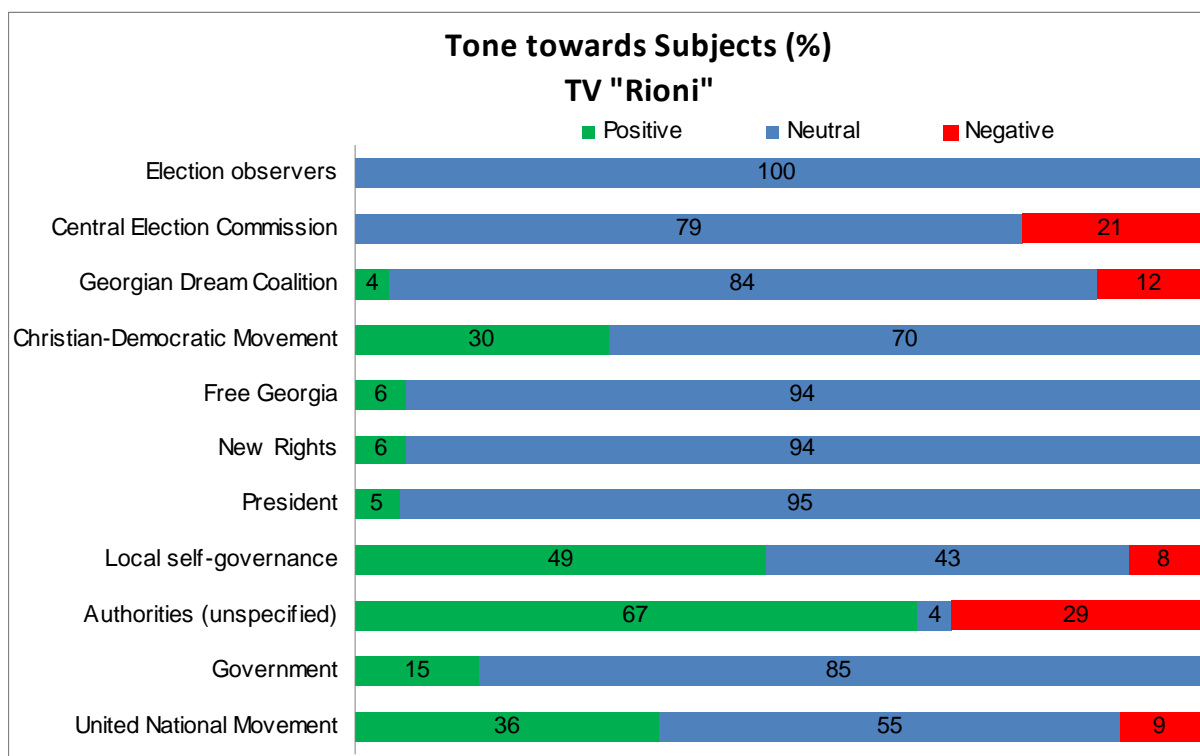


The news programs produced during the reporting period dedicated airtime to relatively more monitored subjects. Airtime was more or less equally distributed among political parties – 15 minutes max and 3 minutes minimum. It is noteworthy that when reporting journalists were trying their best to provide viewers with different opinions and reasoning over either topic.

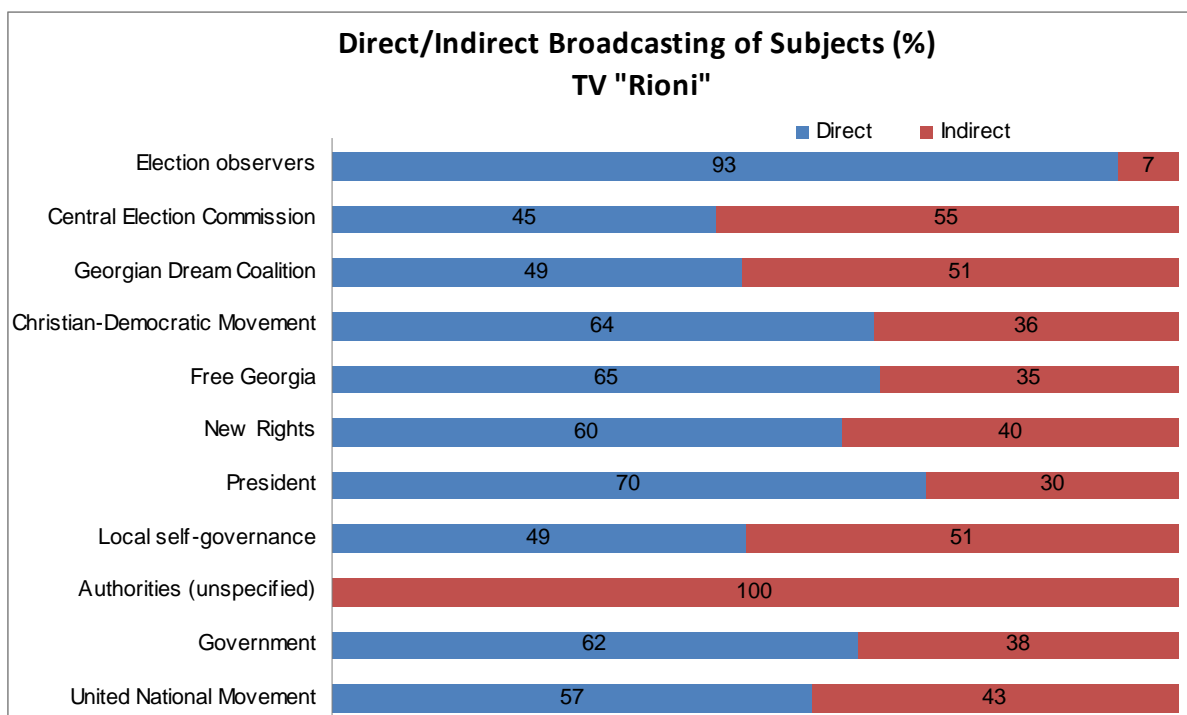
Rioni (Kutaisi) - The most of the airtime in the news programs was dedicated to UNM (16 min), government (15 min), authorities (15 min), and Christian-Democratic Movement (12 min).



Reporting on the monitored subjects was neutral in tone. The most of the negative and positive tones were attached to reporting on the authorities in general.



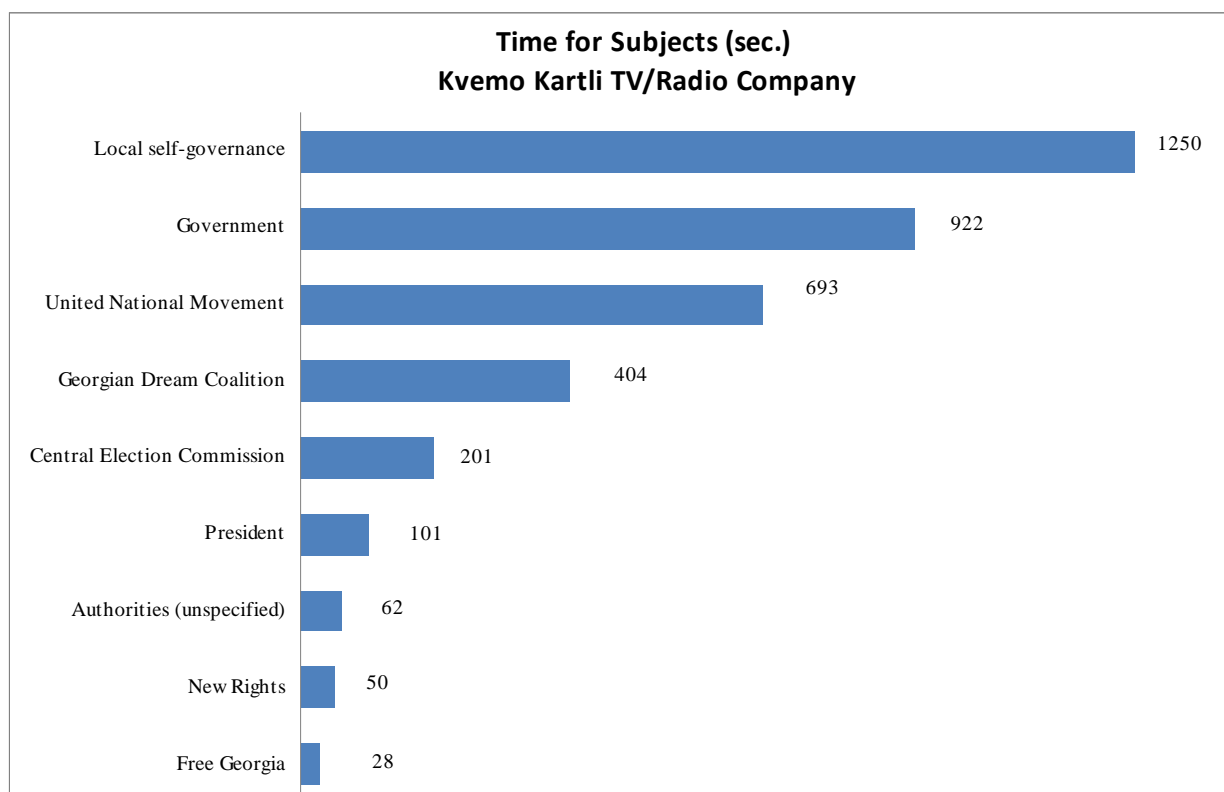
Direct reporting mostly prevailed over indirect reporting or was almost equal:



TV company Rioni aggressively covered the activities carried out by the monitored subjects. In the past two weeks the main topic was the special operation carried out in Lopota gorge. The TV company steadily produced stories about policy makers' briefings and meetings with the population.

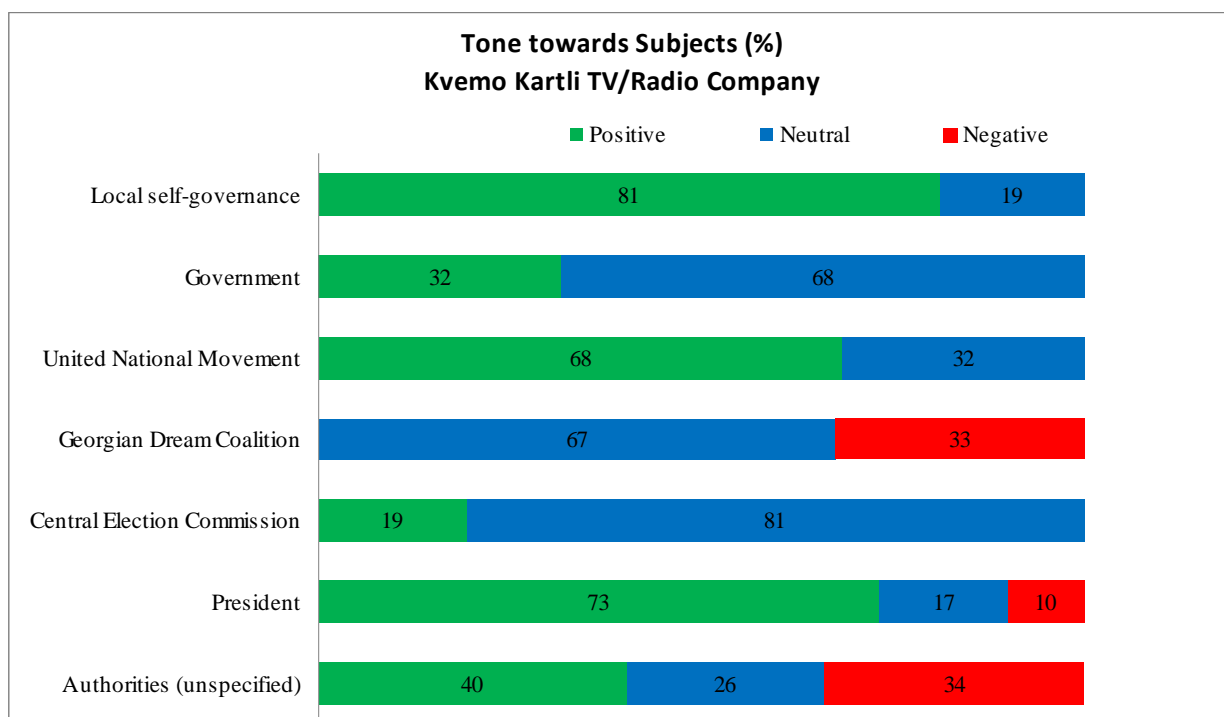
The most of the airtime was dedicated to the ruling party and governmental agencies. It is noteworthy that the journalist's text is almost always unbiased and his/her personal stance is not observable in regard to either topic or subject.

Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustavi) – The TV company dedicated the most of airtime - 21 min - to the local self government. 15 minutes were dedicated to the government, 12 minutes to UNM and 7 minutes to the Georgian Dream coalition.

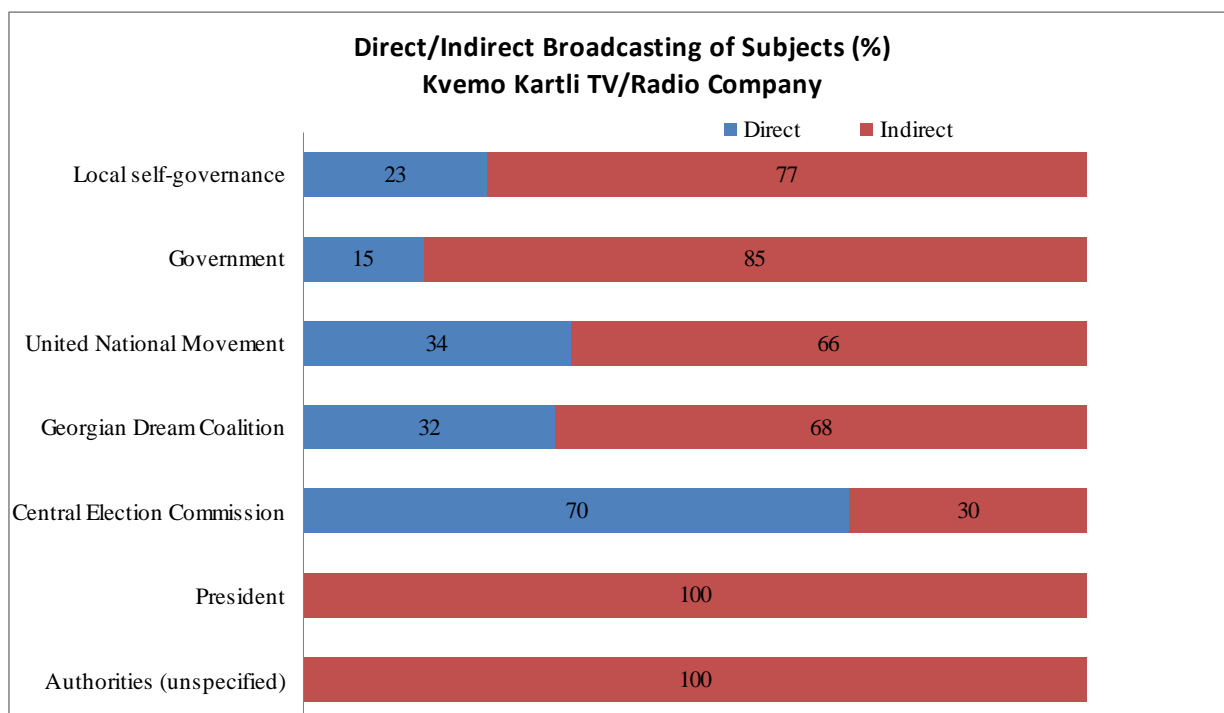


Neutral and positive tones were mainly attached to reporting on subjects. Neutral and negative tones were applied when reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition. All of the three tones were observed when reporting on President (2 min) and the authorities (1 min).

Monitoring of Media Content of Local/Regional Television Broadcasters



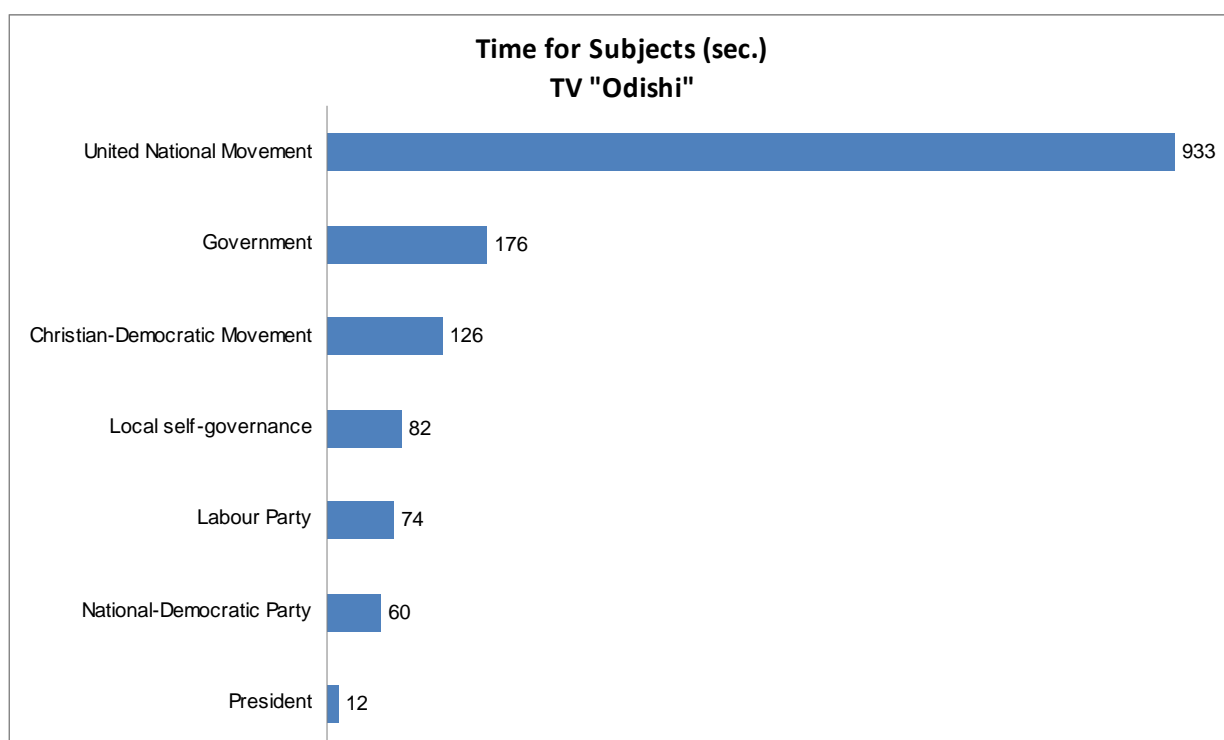
Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting. Only in case of CEC direct reporting (3 min of total coverage) considerably prevailed over indirect reporting (70 percent / 30 percent).



The news programs produced within the reporting period dedicated a considerable amount of time to screening various infrastructural projects being on in Rustavi. Stories are mostly similar, failing to provide dissenting opinions over the topic. The August 28 news stories, for instance, covered the following stories: salaries paid for students employment, roads rehabilitation works being on, Ministry to distribute books at schools.

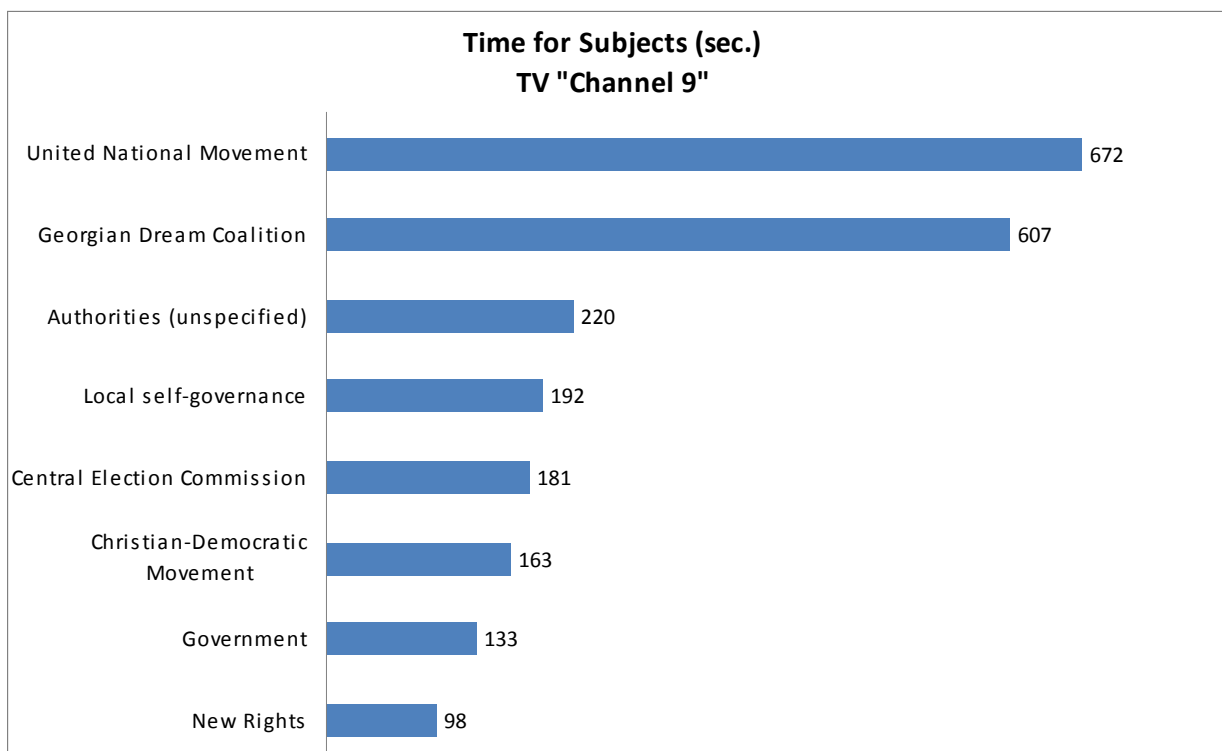
As of mentioned above in the stories produced about the UNM activities positive tone prevails, while in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition negative tone is observed. One of the stories in the August 2 news program the journalist says: “Georgian Dream coalition thinks the aid provided to the population affected by the natural disaster is felonious.” The story does not provide full information, therefore it is obscure on what basis the journalist makes the conclusion.

Odishi (Zugdidi) – Out of the monitored subjects UNM leads the chart with 16 minutes. 4 minutes were dedicated to the government and 2 minutes to Christian-Democratic Movement.

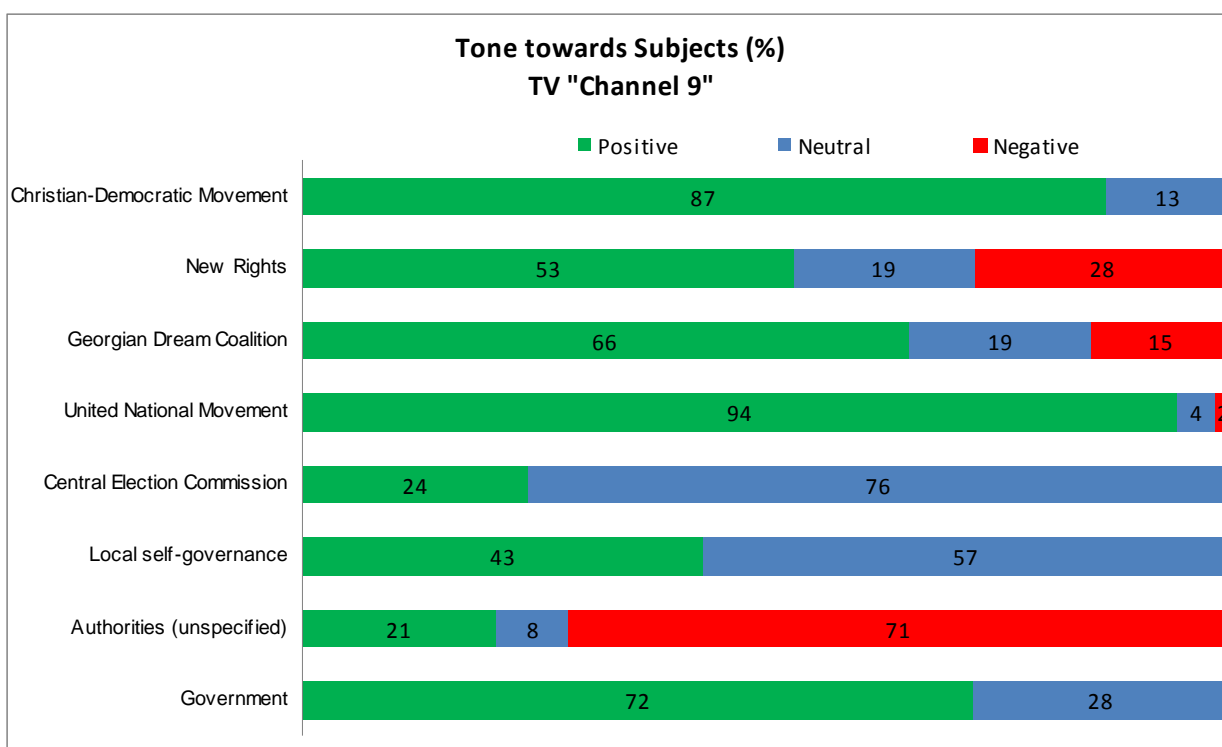


The reporting tone was positive and neutral. The percentage share of direct and indirect reporting was equal. TV company Odishi dedicated twice more time to UNM than to the rest of the subjects in total. Occasionally journalist’s subjective attitude was evident. For instance, in regard to the ruling party meeting the journalist says: “An unprecedented amount of people was observed.”

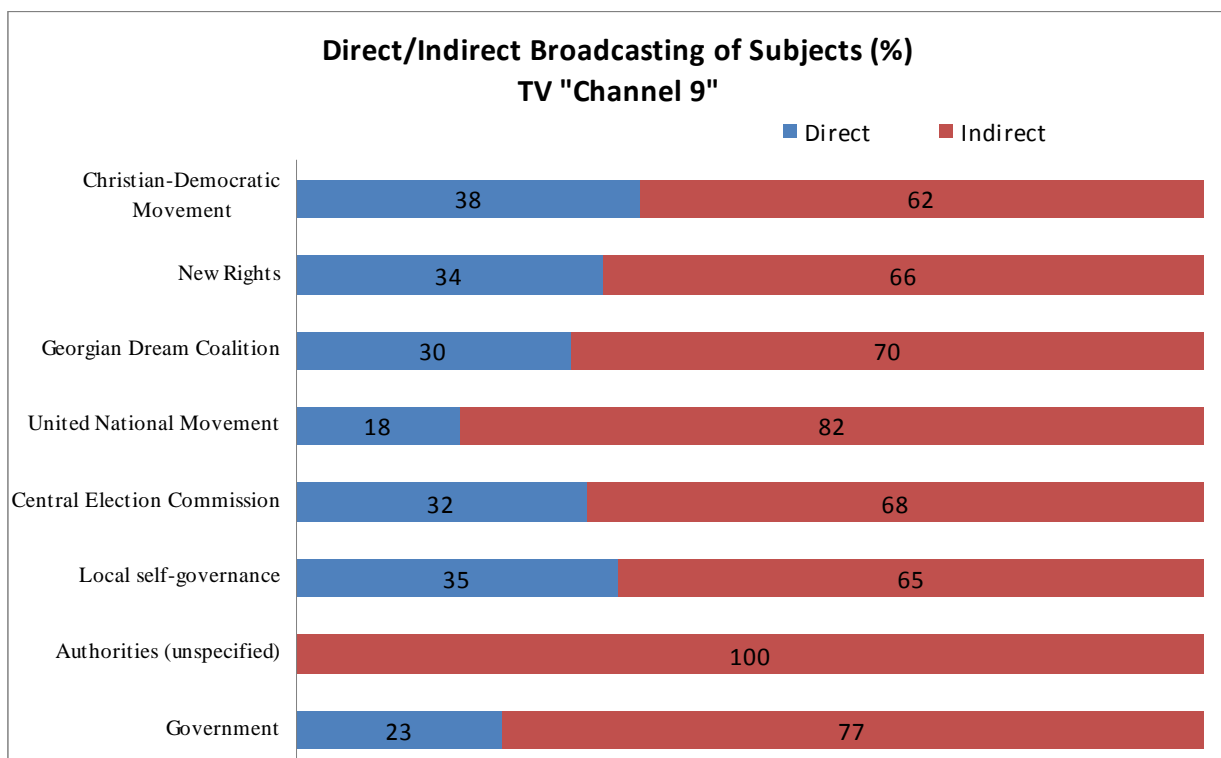
9th Channel (Akhaltiskhe) - News programs dedicated most of airtime (11 min) to UNM, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 10 min and authorities with 4 min. Three minutes were dedicated to the local self government, CEC and Christian-Democratic Movement each.



Subjects were mainly covered in positive and neutral tones. The most positive coverage was enjoyed by UNM (94 percent). All of the three tones were observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition, New Rights and the authorities. The most negative tone (71 percent) was attached to reporting on the authorities.



Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:

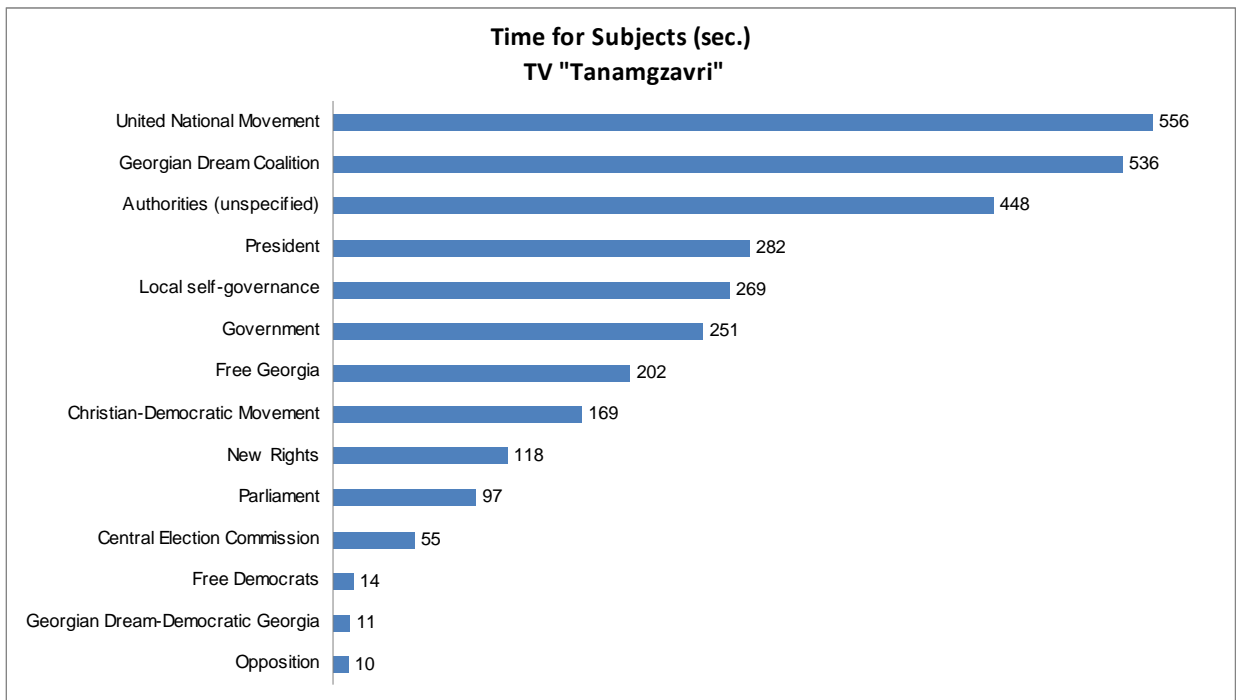


9th Channel mostly covered the activities carried out by UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition. Compared with the previous reporting periods more time was dedicated to reporting on the CEC activities.

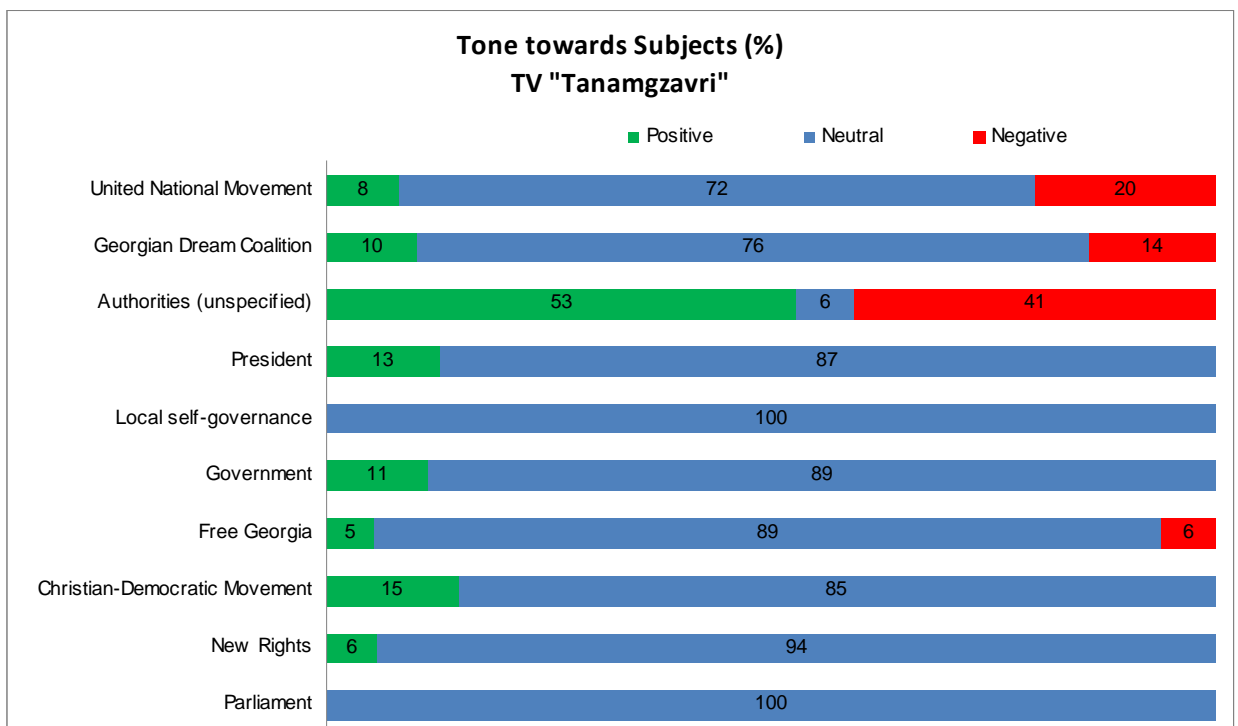
The September 4 TV story, demonstrating journalist's negative approach to New Rights, is the one to note. In particular the TV story discussed the CEC rules on a permit to paper pre-election political posters. The TV story repeatedly featured the same shot, a citizen removing the New Rights' pre-election agitation poster from a pole.

Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – Out of the monitored subjects the news programs dedicated the most of airtime (9-9 min) to UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition each. The authorities in general were dedicated 7 minutes, President and the local self-government each enjoyed 5-minute coverage.

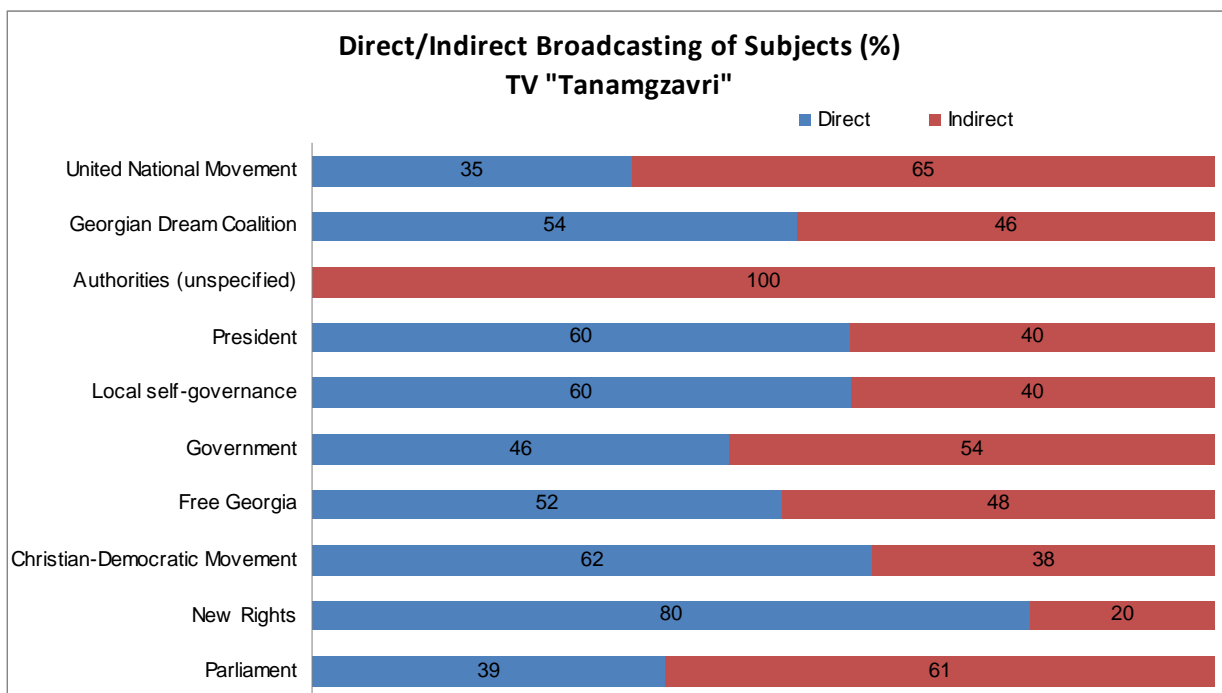
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In regard to the monitored subjects all of the three tones were applied. Neutral tone considerably prevailed over positive and negative. Only in regard to the authorities positive (53 percent) and negative (41) tones were observed.

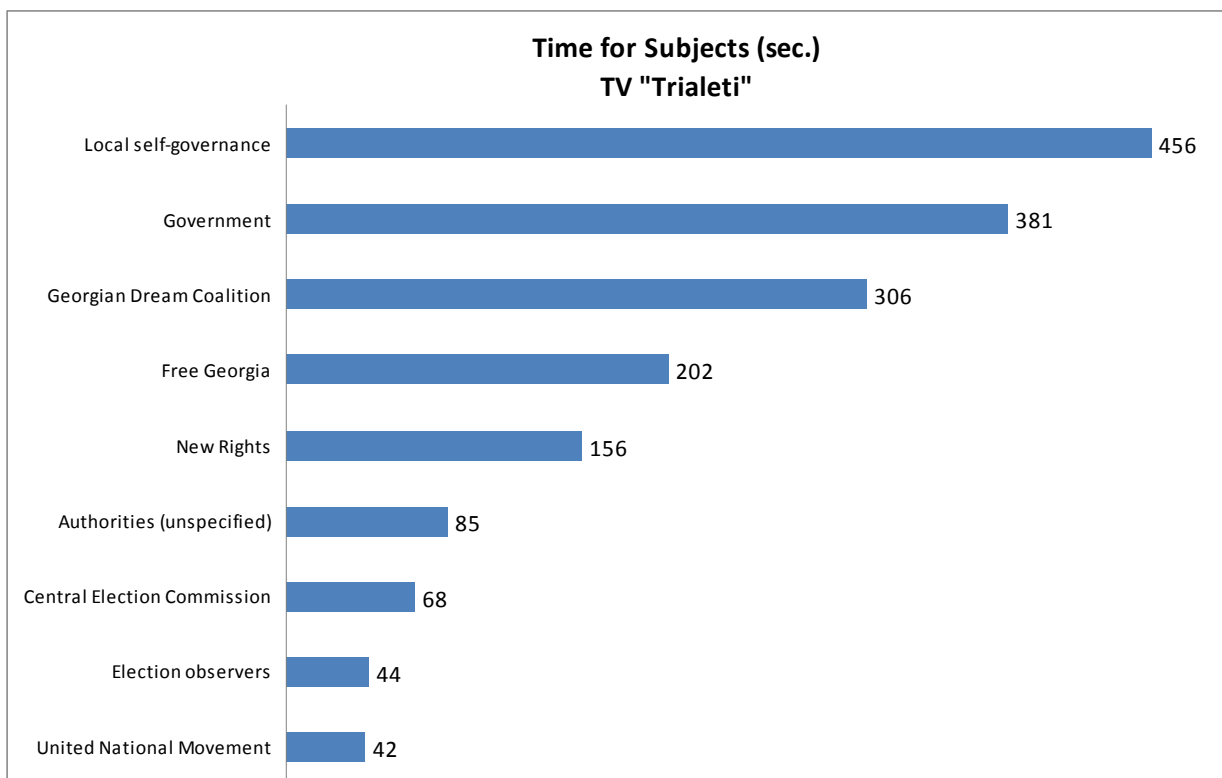


Direct and indirect reporting was almost equal. Only in case of UNM indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.

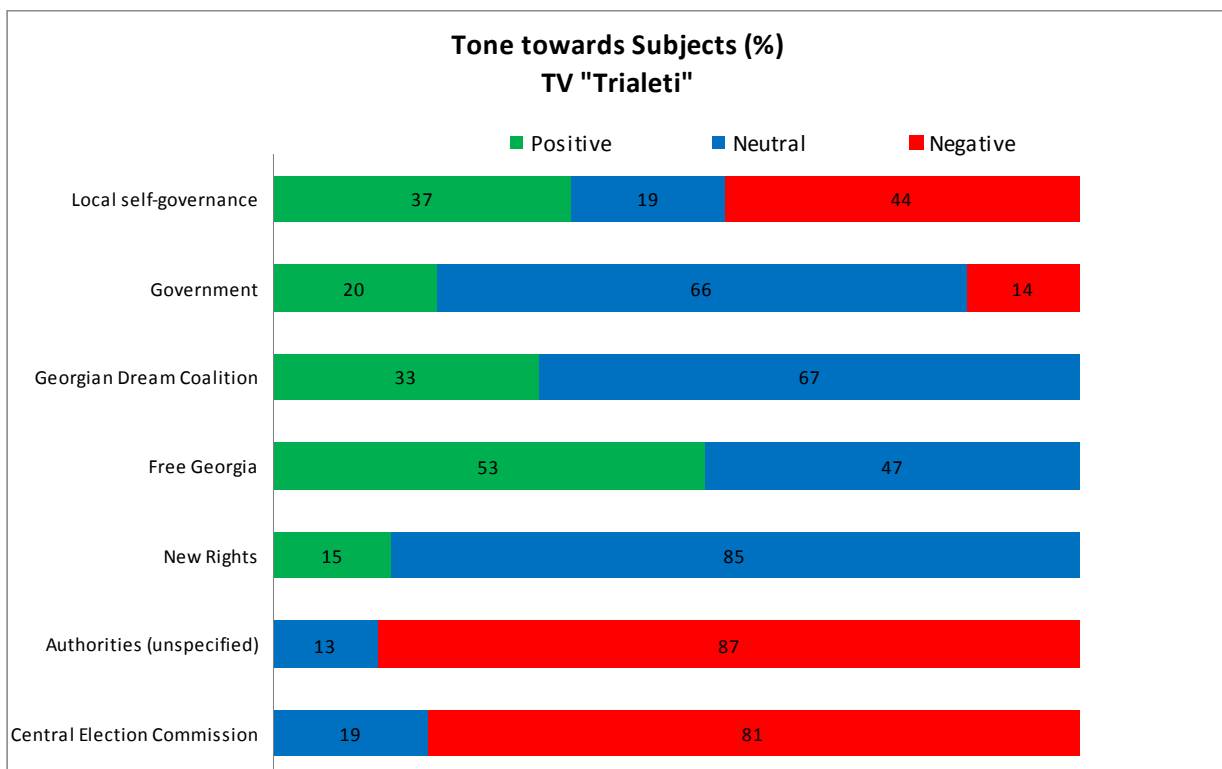


TV company Tanamgzavri dedicates most of airtime to the pre-election issues. TV stories are produced about the ruling as well as opposition parties. Moreover, the journalists demonstrate no bias to either topic.

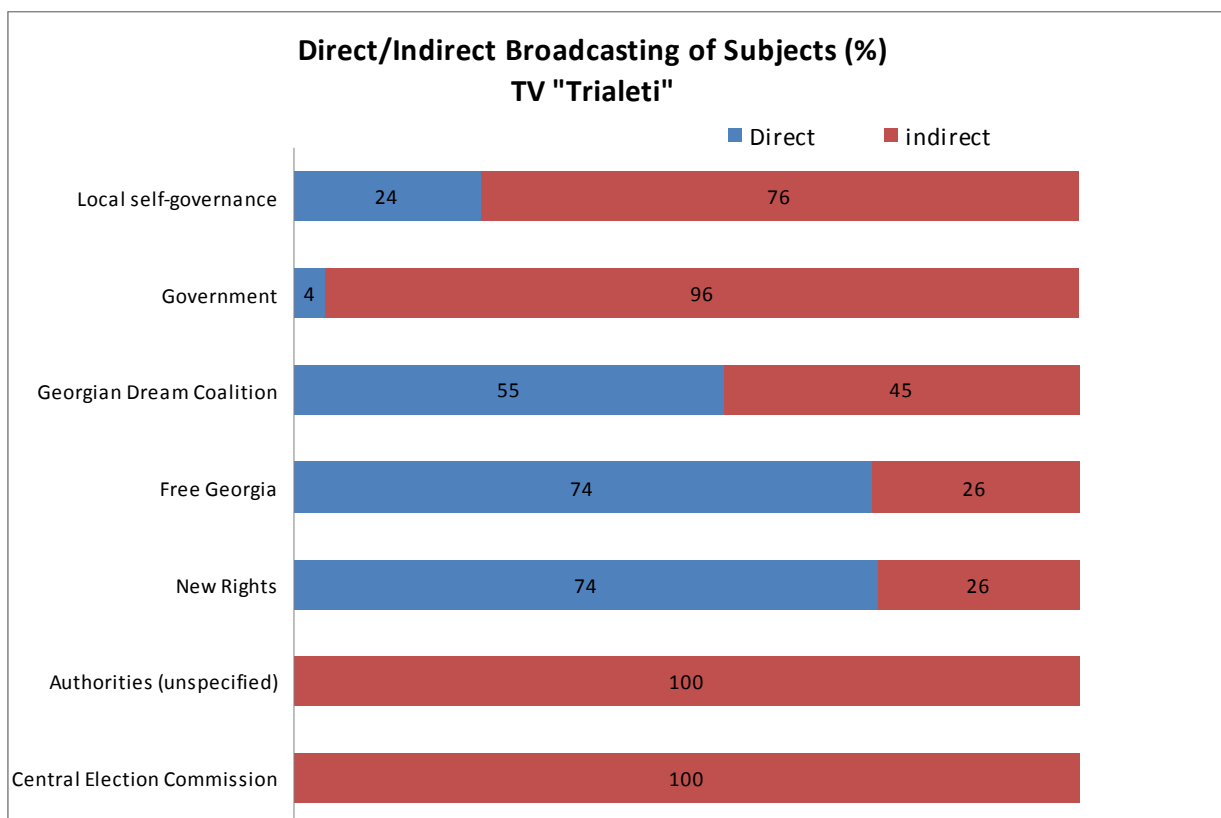
Trialeti (Gori) - News programs dedicated most of airtime to the local self government (8 min). 6 minutes of reporting was enjoyed by the government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 5 min and Free Georgia and New Right with 3 minutes each.



All of the three tones were observed when reporting on the subjects. Only positive and neutral tones were attached to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition, Free Georgia and New Rights.

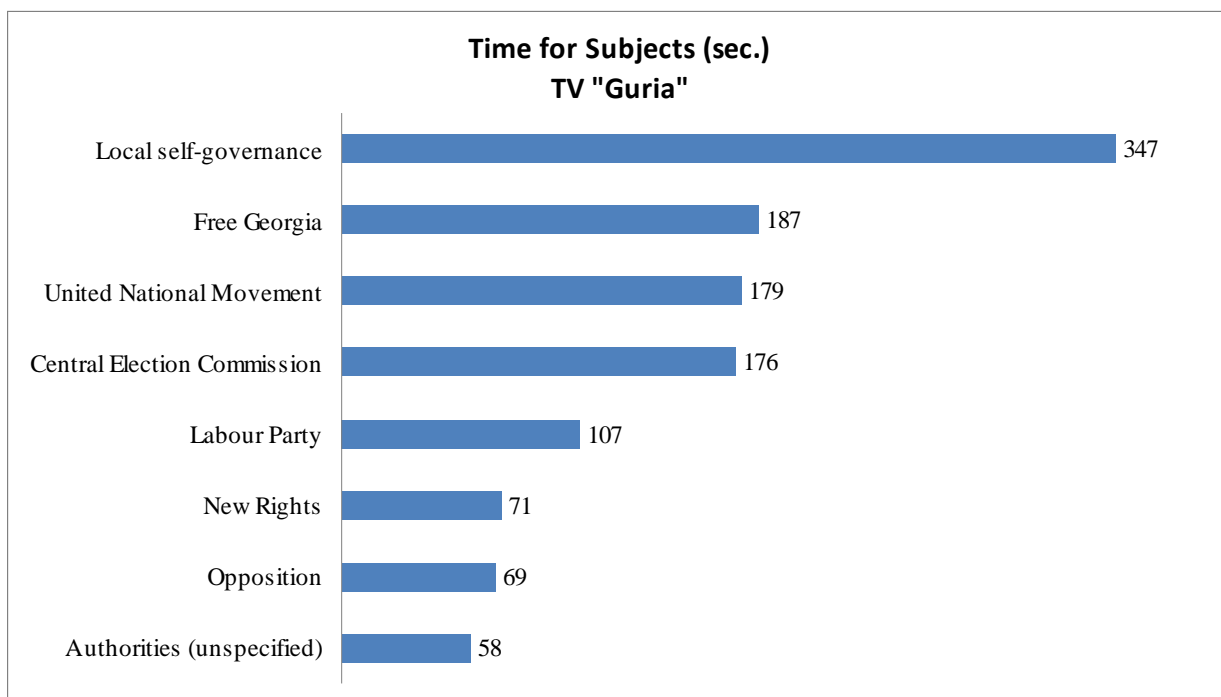


Free Georgia and New Rights enjoyed equal high index of direct reporting (74 percent). In case of the Georgian Dream coalition the index of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. In regard to the rest of the monitored subjects indirect reporting greatly prevailed over direct reporting.

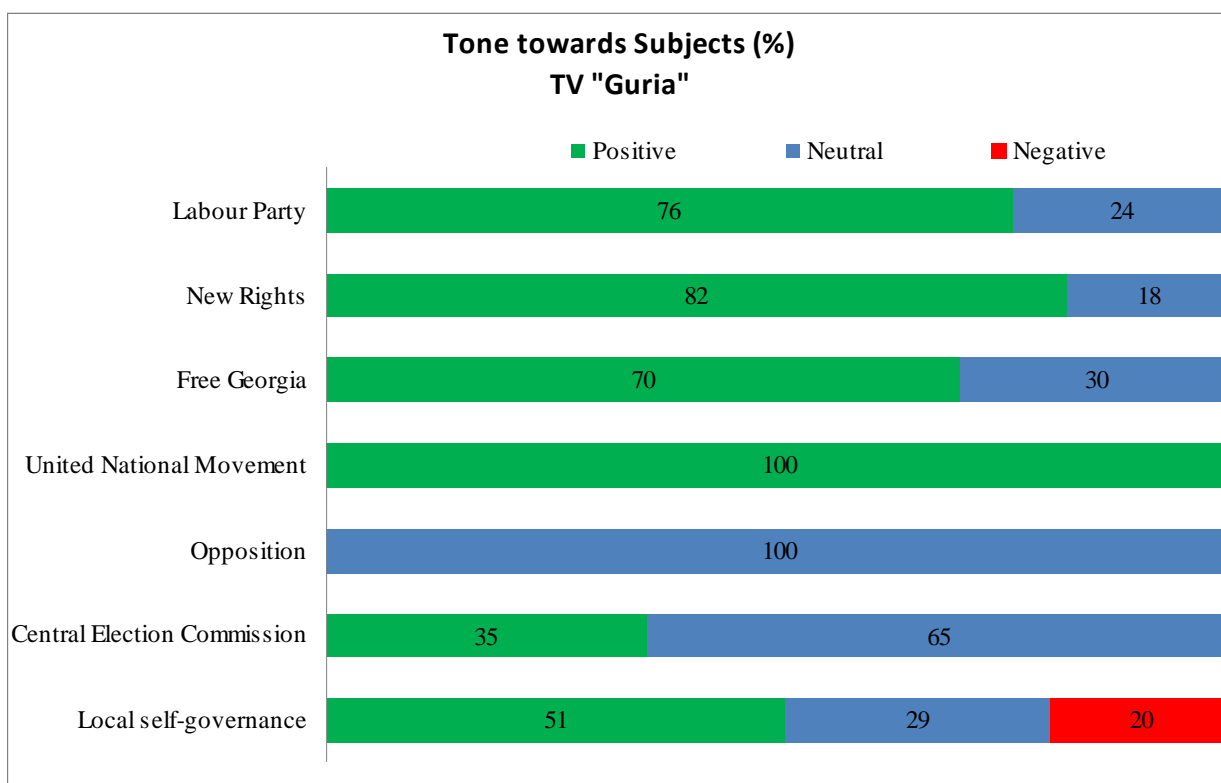


Due to the staff changes within the reporting period (August 27 – September 9) no news programs were produced for three days. To some extent it affected the results of the monitoring. Compared with the previous periods less subjects have been covered. It is noteworthy that when reporting journalists were trying to provide the viewers with dissenting opinions.

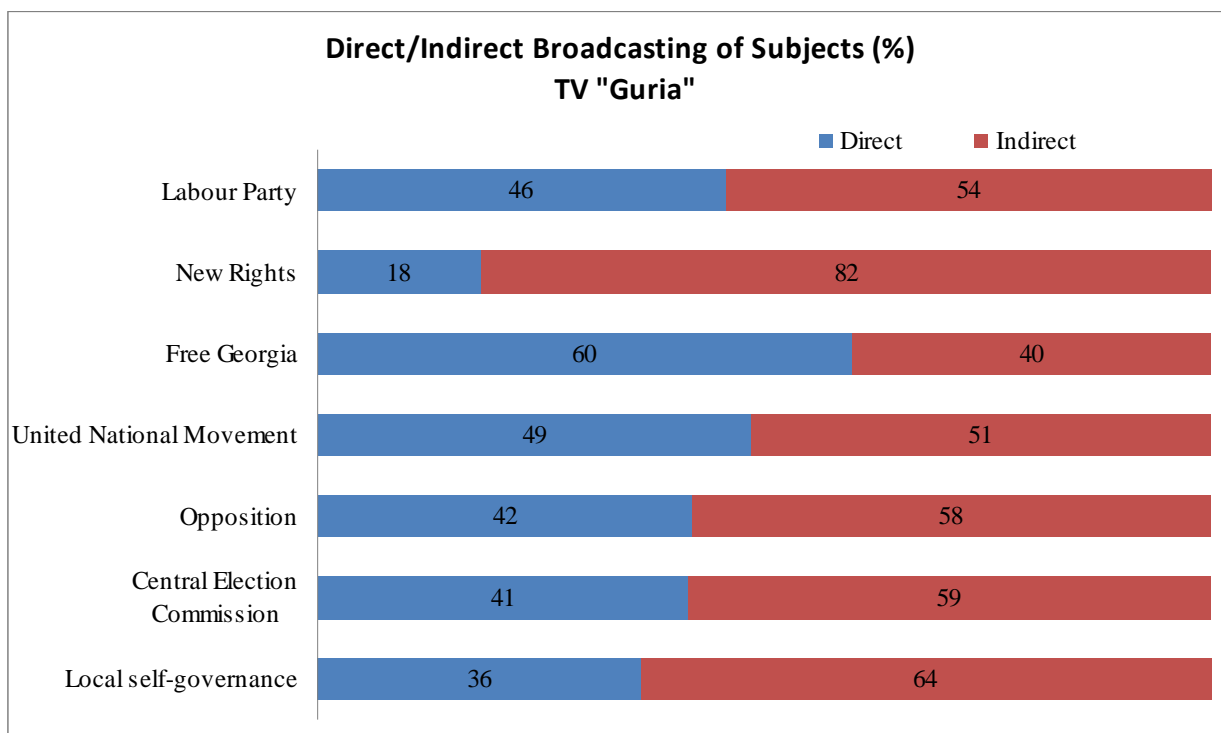
Guria (Ozurgeti) – The biggest share of reporting was enjoyed by the local self government – 6 min. 3 minute were dedicated to Free Georgia, UNM and CEC each. The Labor Party enjoyed 2-min coverage.



Reporting tone in regard to subjects was positive. Negative tone was solely applied to the local self government (20 percent).

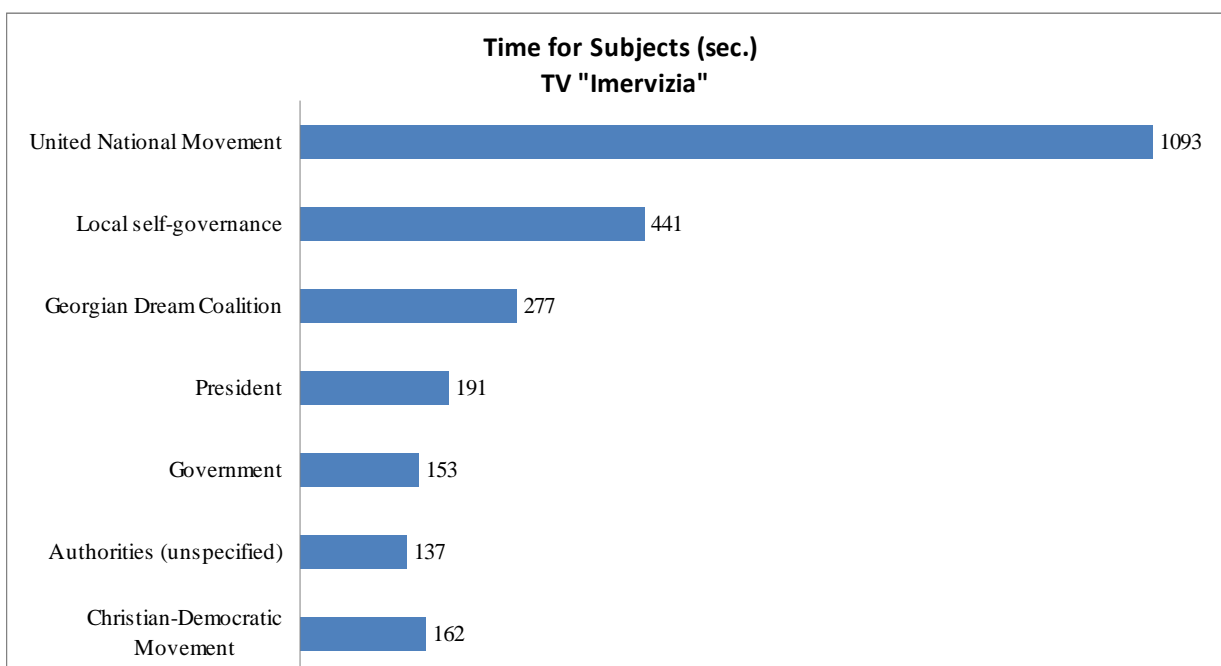


According to the findings the share of direct/indirect reporting looks as follows:

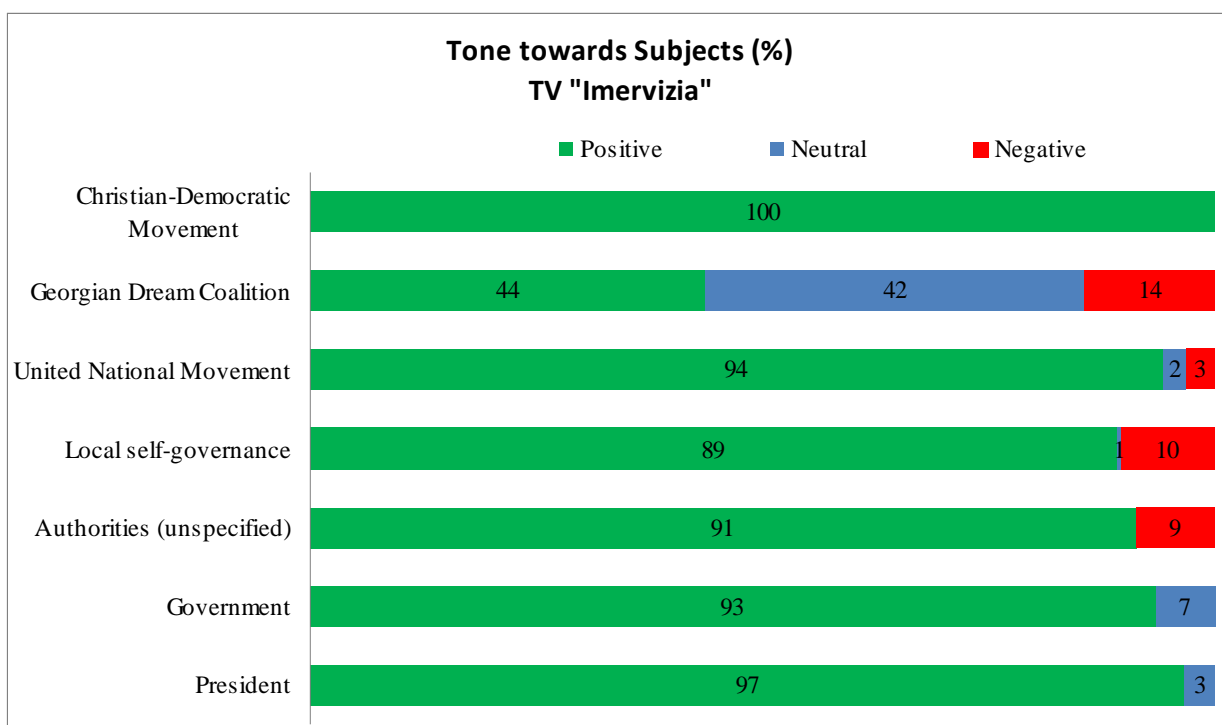


The TV company mainly covers local news, dedicating biggest share of reporting to the local self government. It is also noteworthy that compared with previous reporting periods more time was dedicated to the CEC activities.

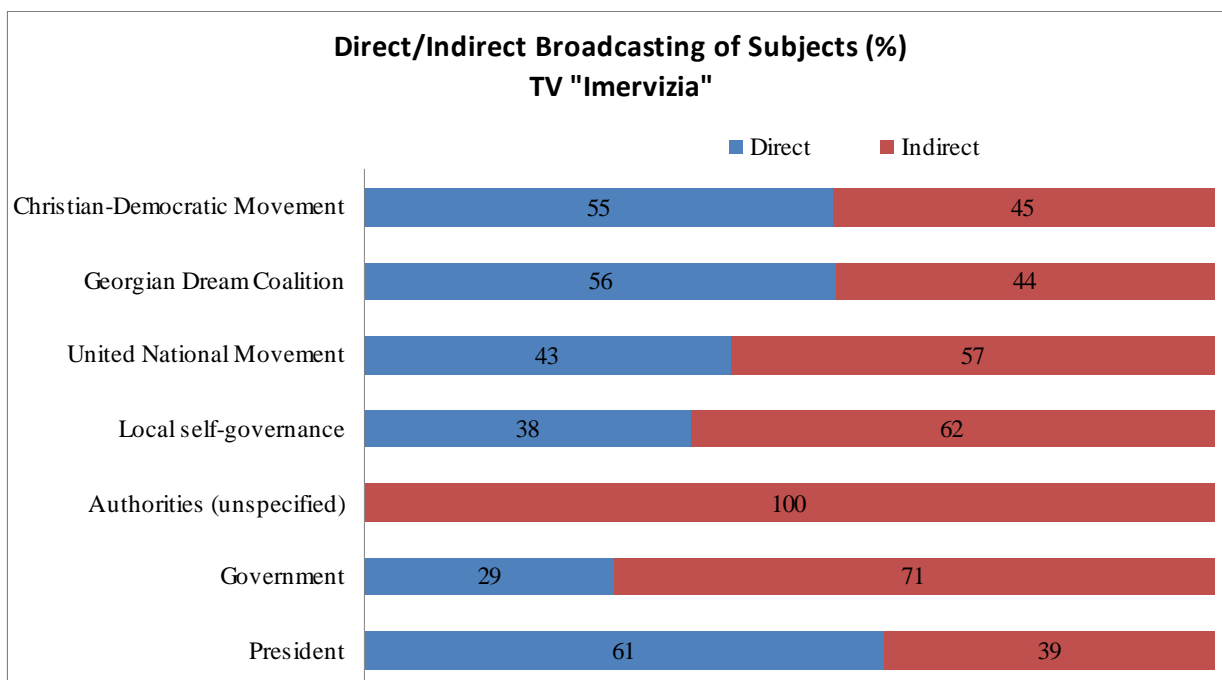
Imervizia (Chiatura) – UNM enjoyed the biggest share of reporting of 18 minutes in length. 7 minutes of reporting was dedicated to the local self government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 5 minute and President and government with 3 minutes each.



Reporting on the local self government was only positive (89 percent) and negative (10 percent) in tone. Highly positive tone was attached to reporting on UNM (94 percent) and government (93 percent). All of the three tones were applied to reporting on the Georgian Dream coalition.



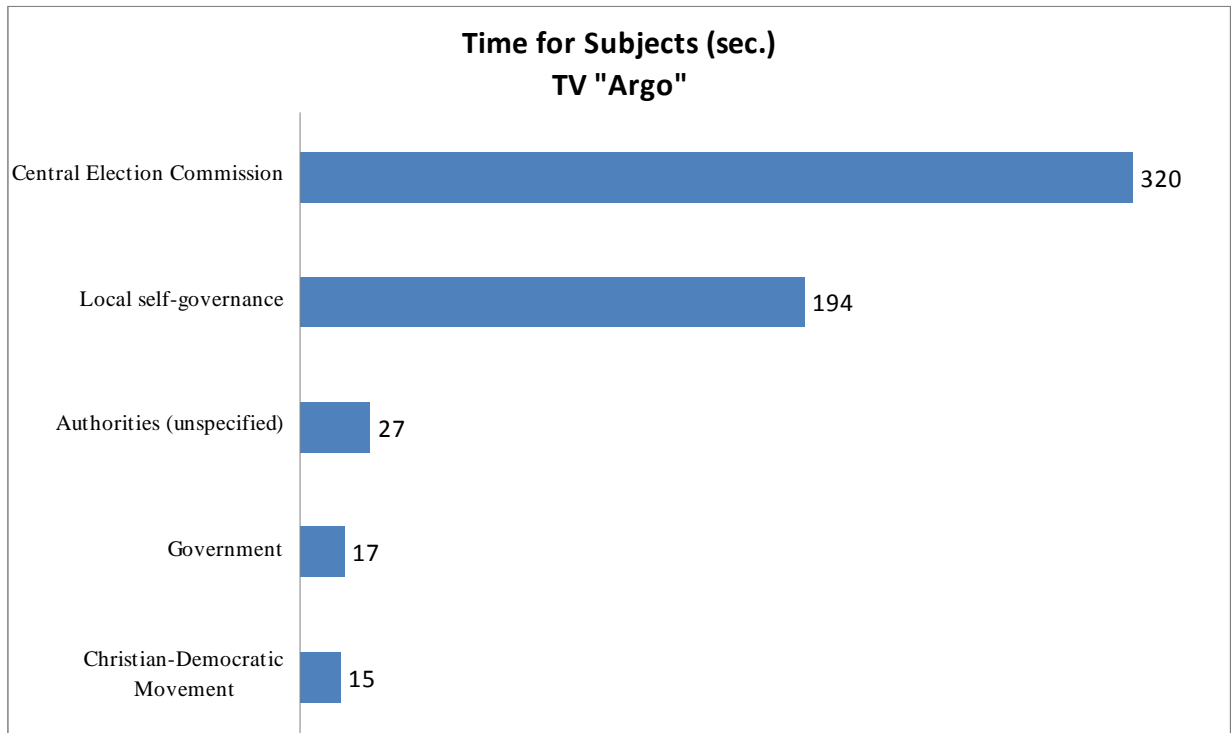
The share of direct/indirect reporting was mostly almost equal.



The TV company dedicates a considerable amount of airtime to reporting on Gela Chikviladze, the UNM majoritarian candidate in Chiatura (94 percent of positive coverage). Interviews with the ruling party representatives are dedicated a fair amount of time too. For instance one of the TV stories of the

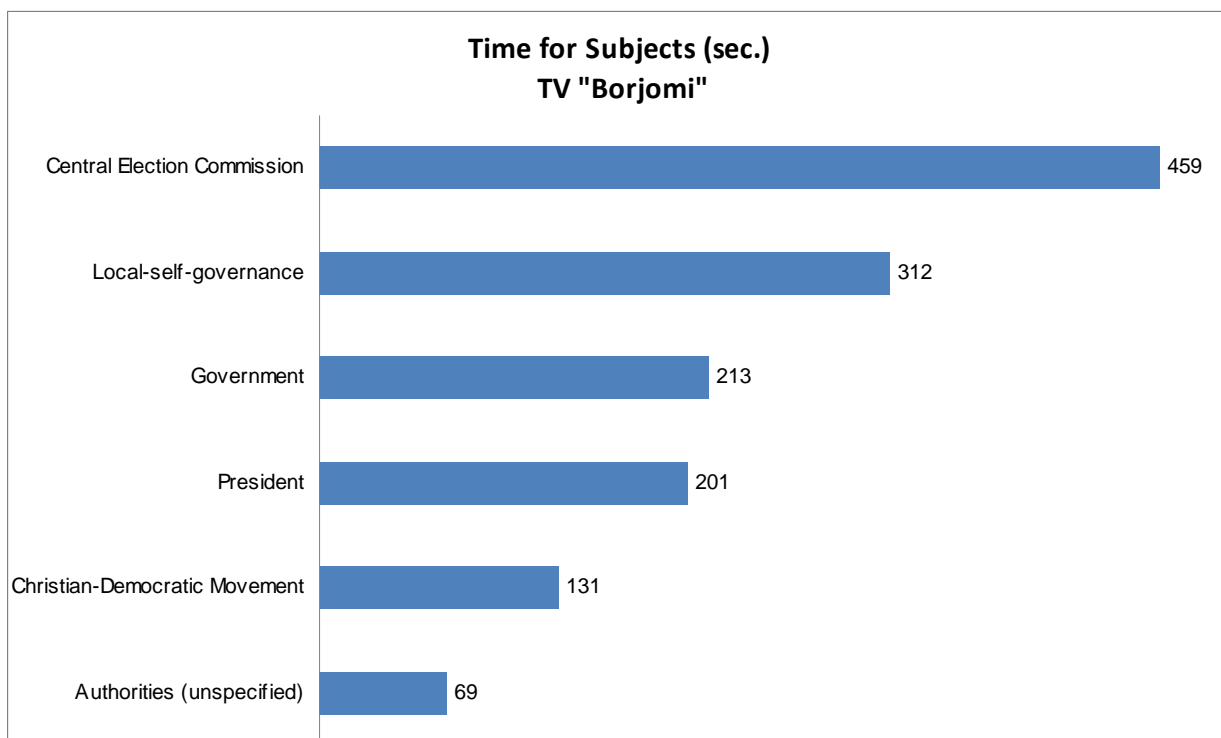
September 6 news program aired 3-minute interview featuring Gigi Tsereteli meeting people together with Chiatura majoritarian candidate.

Argo (Zestaponi) - News programs solely reported on CEC (5 min) and local self government (3 min). Reporting on CEC was 100 percent neutral in tone and positive in regard to the local self government. In both cases direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting: CEC – 75 percent /25 percent; local self government - 85 percent /15 percent.

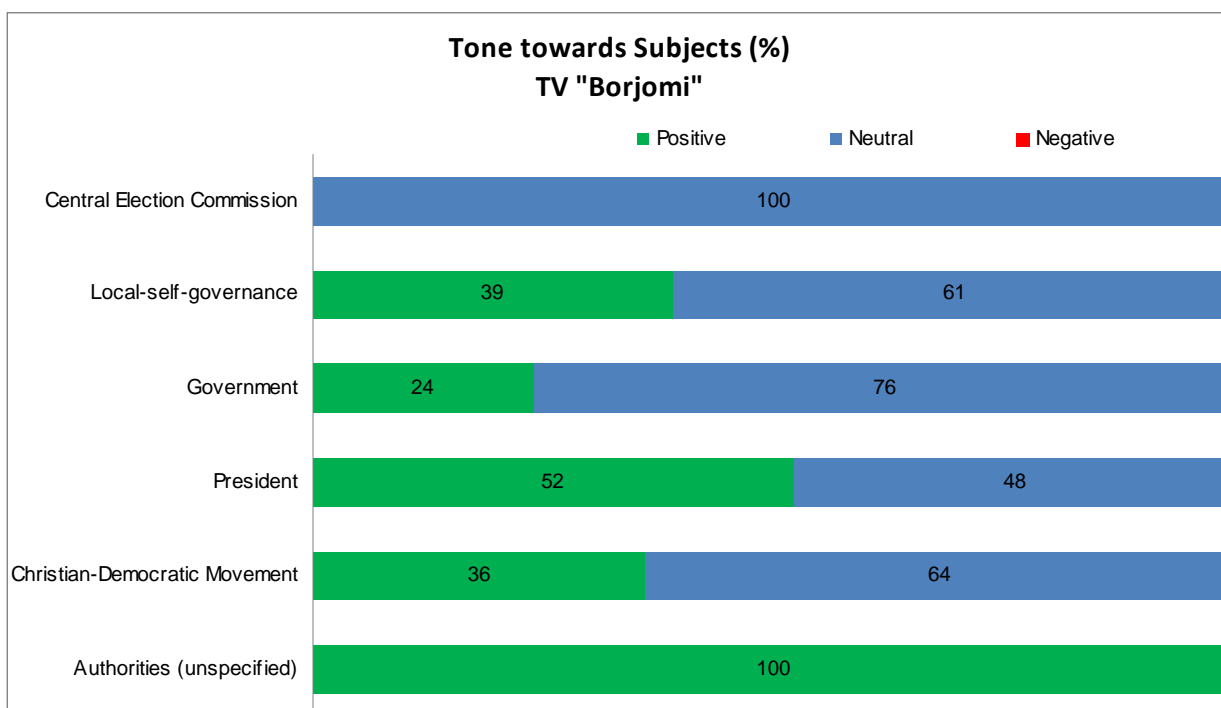


TV company Argo covers only local events. The subjects of our interest are never covered in the news programs. During then reporting period over a minute was dedicated to the local self government and CEC.

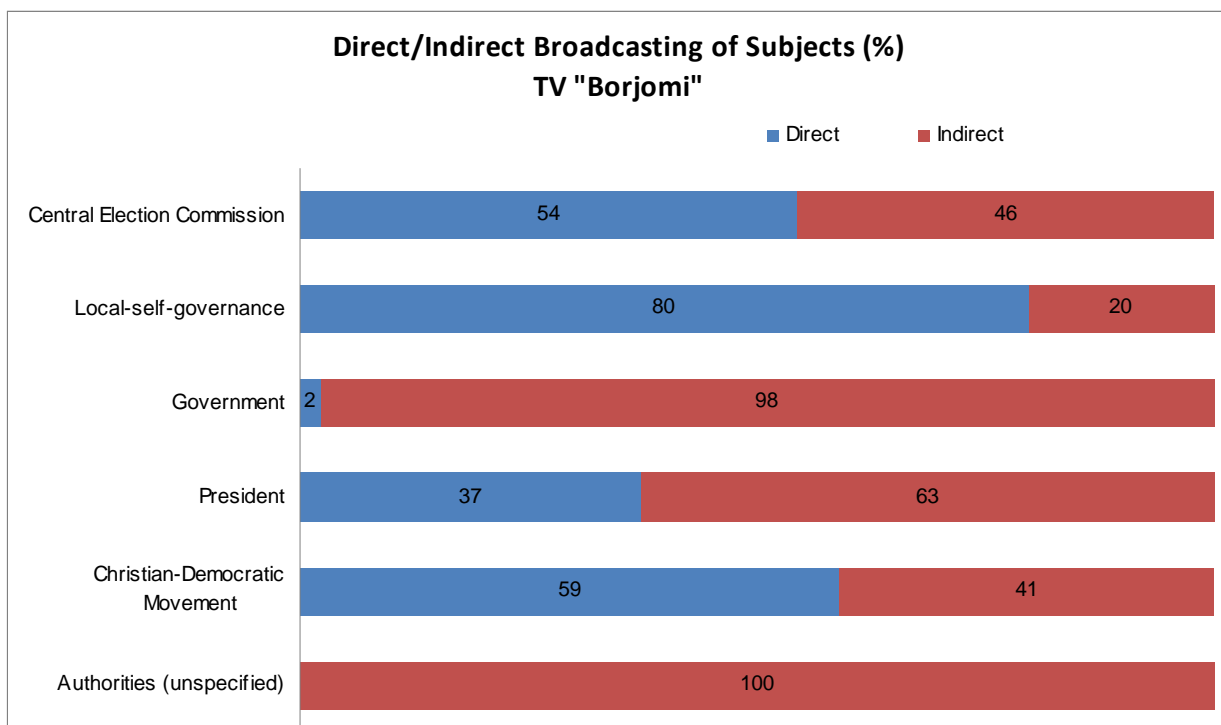
Borjomi (Borjomi) – Out of the monitored subjects the most of airtime, 8 min, was dedicated to CEC, followed by local self government with 5 minutes and government and President with 4 minutes each.



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

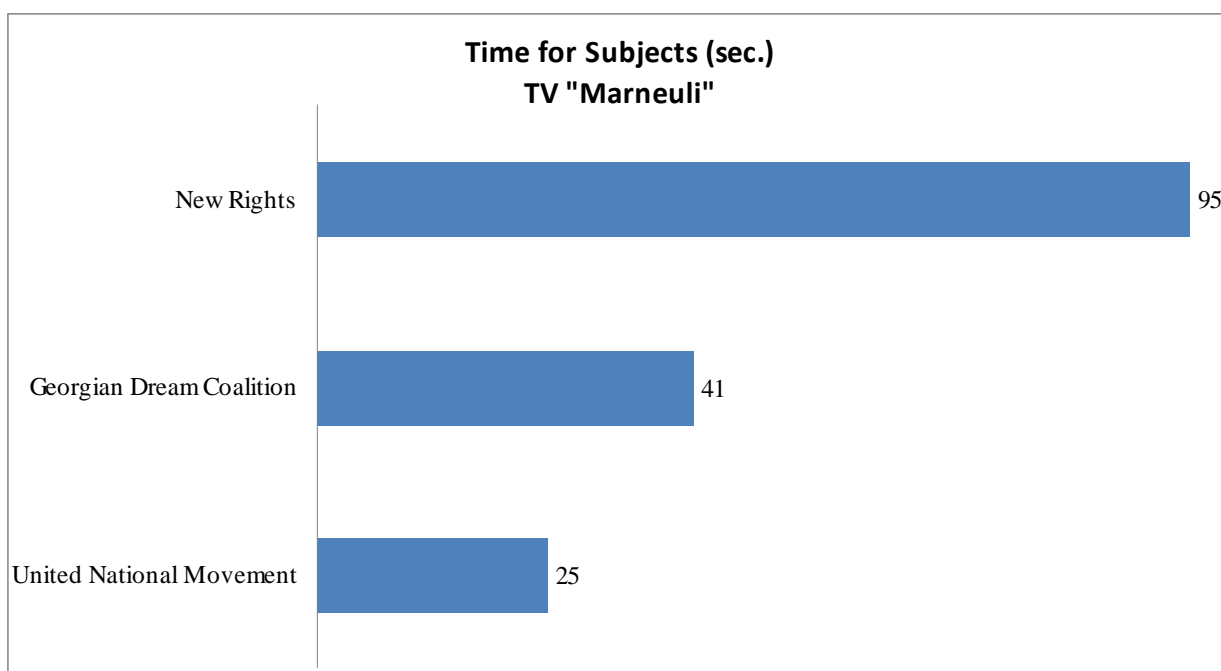


Reporting on the subjects was essentially direct, but in case of the government high percentage (98) of coverage was observed.



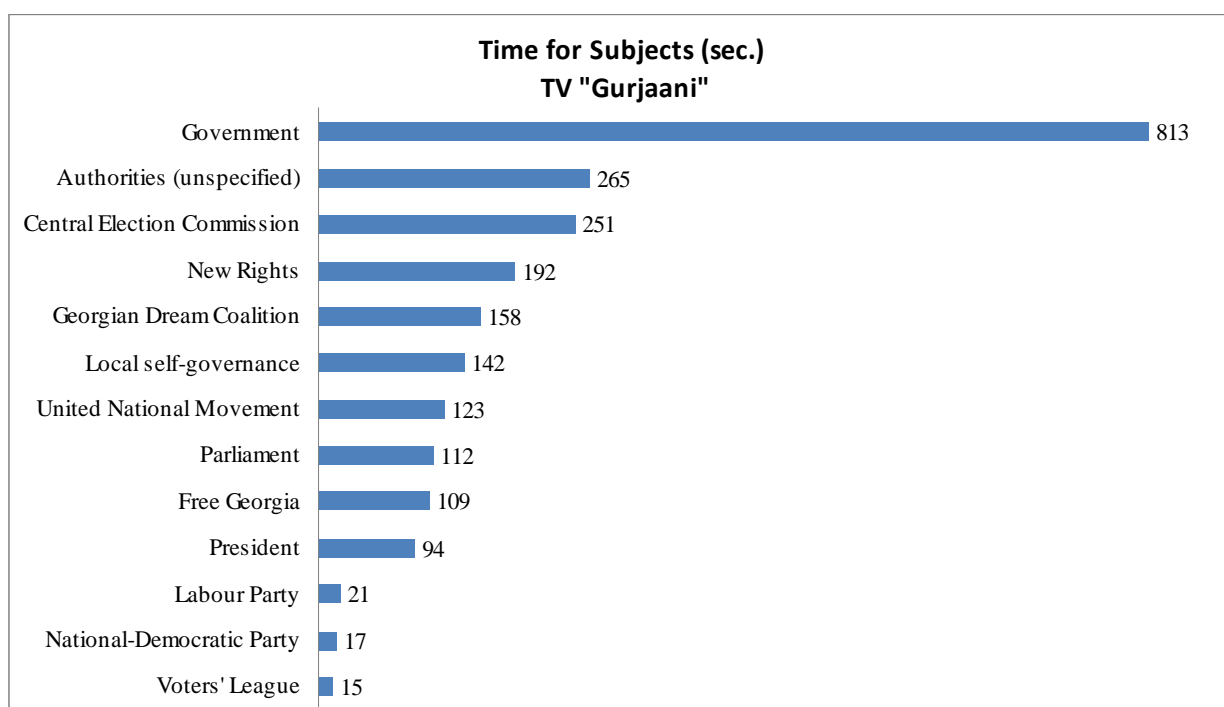
TV company Borjomi provides minor coverage of political parties. For the past two weeks the only TV story was produced about Christian-Democratic Movement. The rest of the parties were not even mentioned. TV stories essentially touched upon the projects carried out by State agencies.

Marneuli TV (Marneuli) – The news programs within the reporting period dedicated 2 minutes to New Rights. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage.

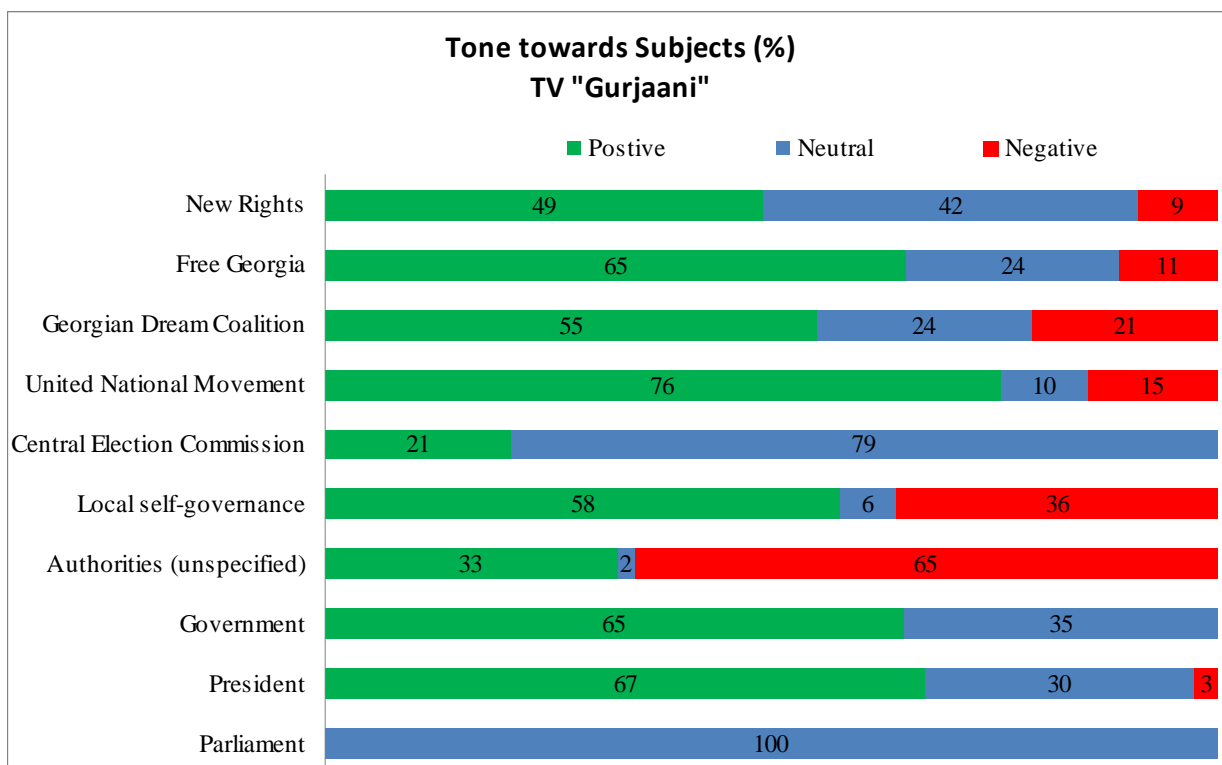


During the period of August 27 – September 9 the TV company produced only three news outlets. The running time of the Georgian part of the program was 5 minutes on average. Only three of the monitored subjects were mentioned in the news programs. Only one of them was dedicated approximately 2 minutes.

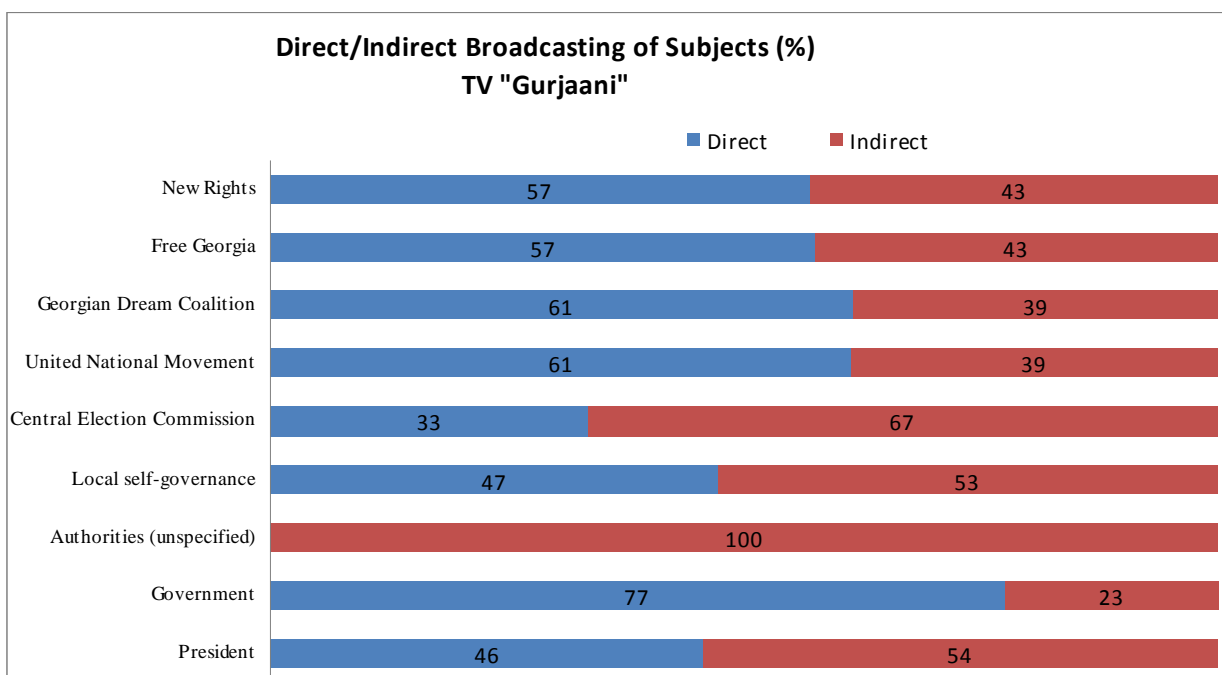
Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – The biggest share of airtime (18 min) was dedicated to reporting on the government, followed by authorities with 5 minutes, CEC with 4 minutes and New Rights and the Georgian Dream coalition with 3 minutes each.



Monitored subjects were covered in positive and neutral tones. But negative tone too was applied. The most of the negative tone was attached to the authorities (65 percent).

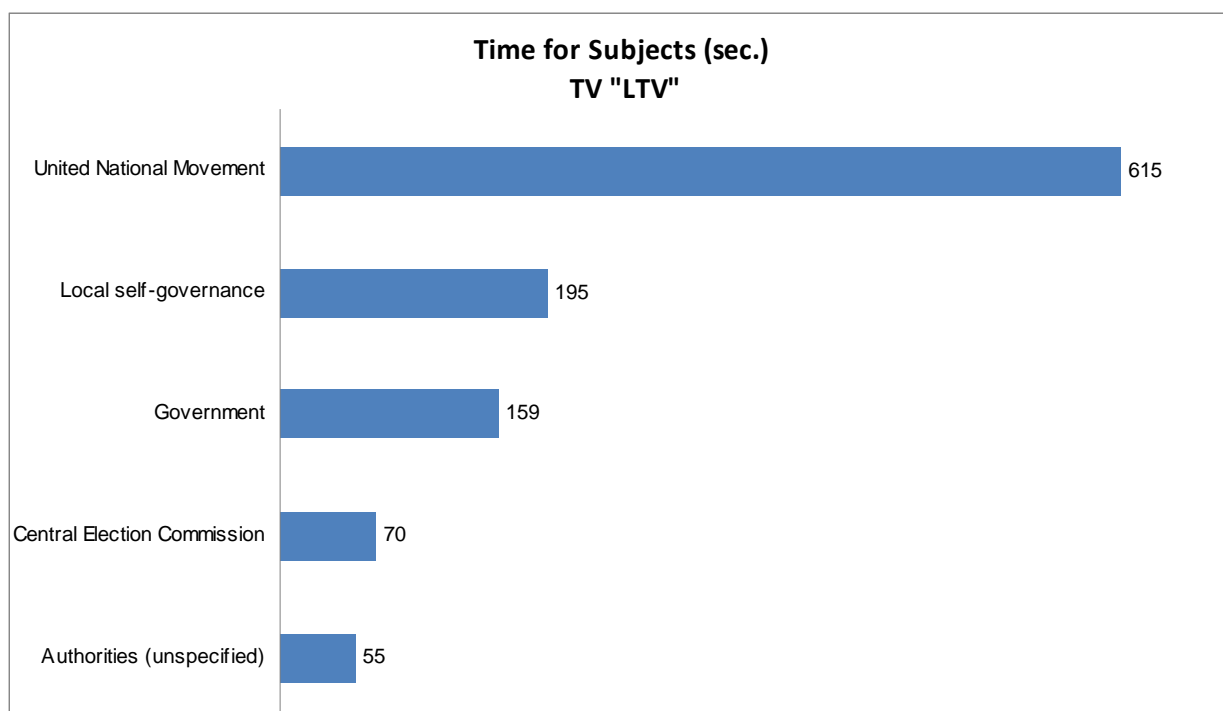


Direct reporting either prevailed over indirect reporting or the share was equal:



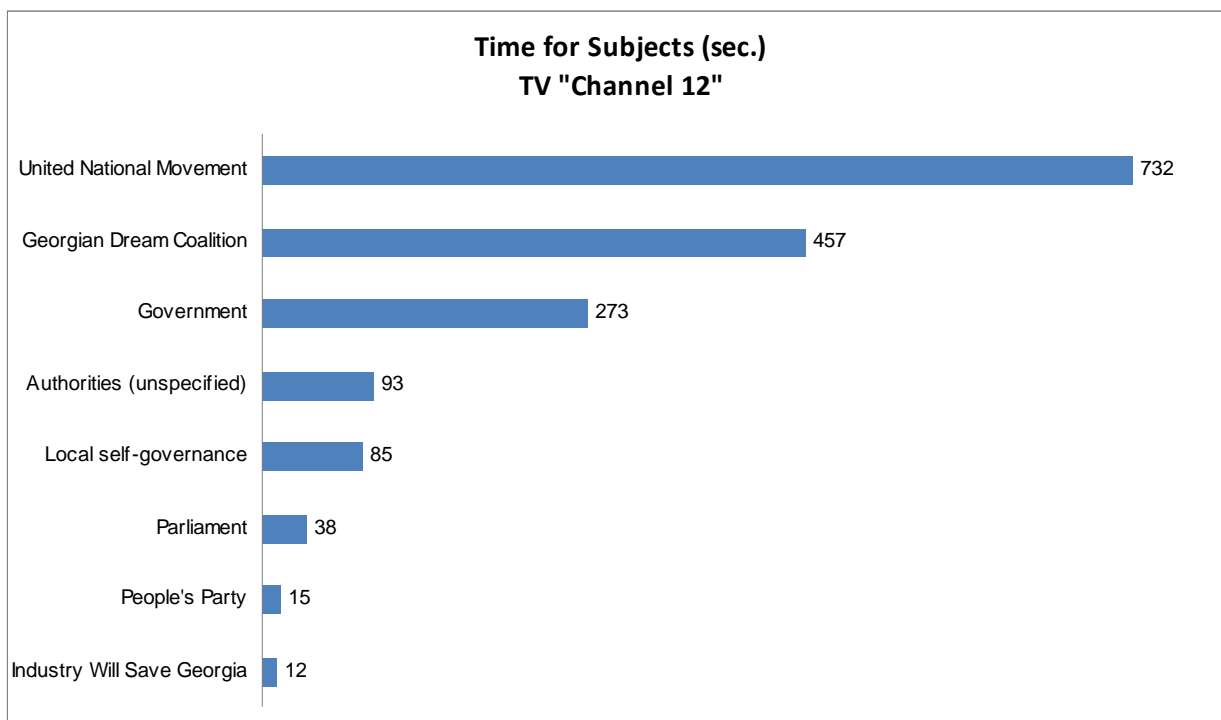
The TV company Gurjaani news programs started with the nationwide events followed by local news. News programs reported on the activities carried out by State agencies as well as the meetings held by opposition parties. It is noteworthy that unlike previous reporting period more time was dedicated to the CEC activities.

LTV (Lagodekhi) - The TV company dedicated the most of the airtime, 10 min, to UNM.3 minutes were dedicated to the local self government and government each. The rest of the monitored subjects were provided no coverage.

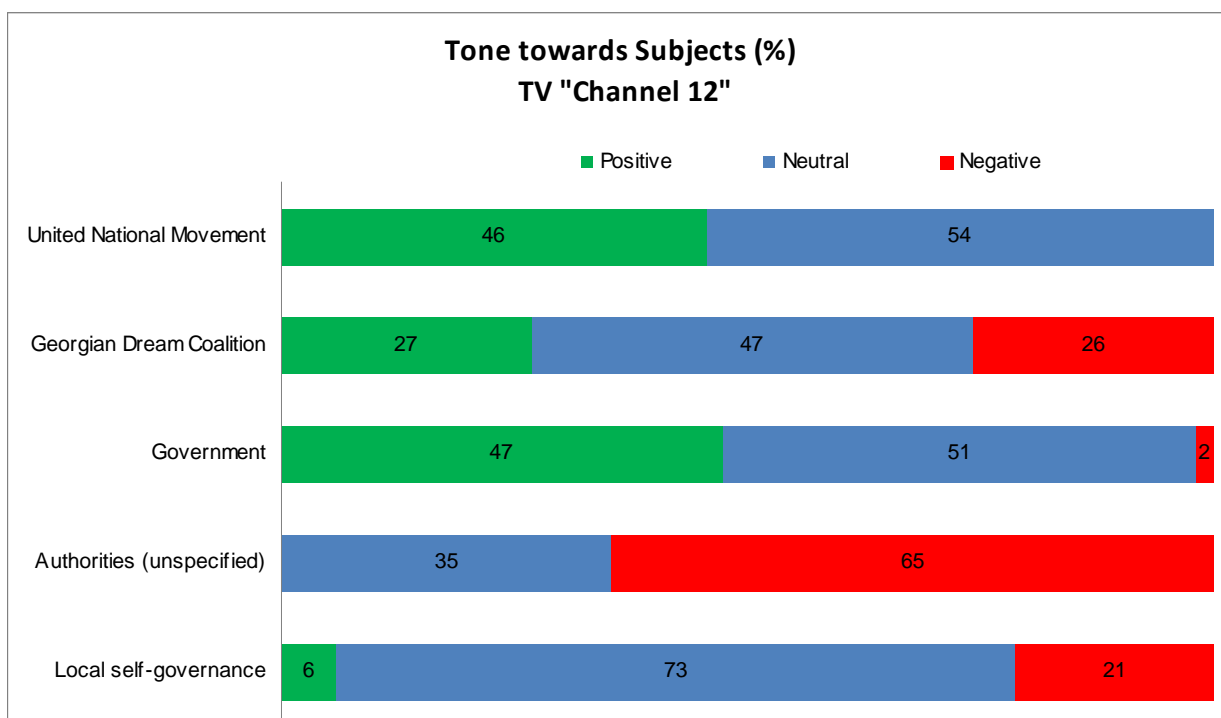


Reporting was only positive and neutral in tone. The highest percentage of positive tone was observed in regard to the government (99 percent). Also government enjoyed 100-percent of indirect reporting. In case of the rest of the monitored subjects direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting.

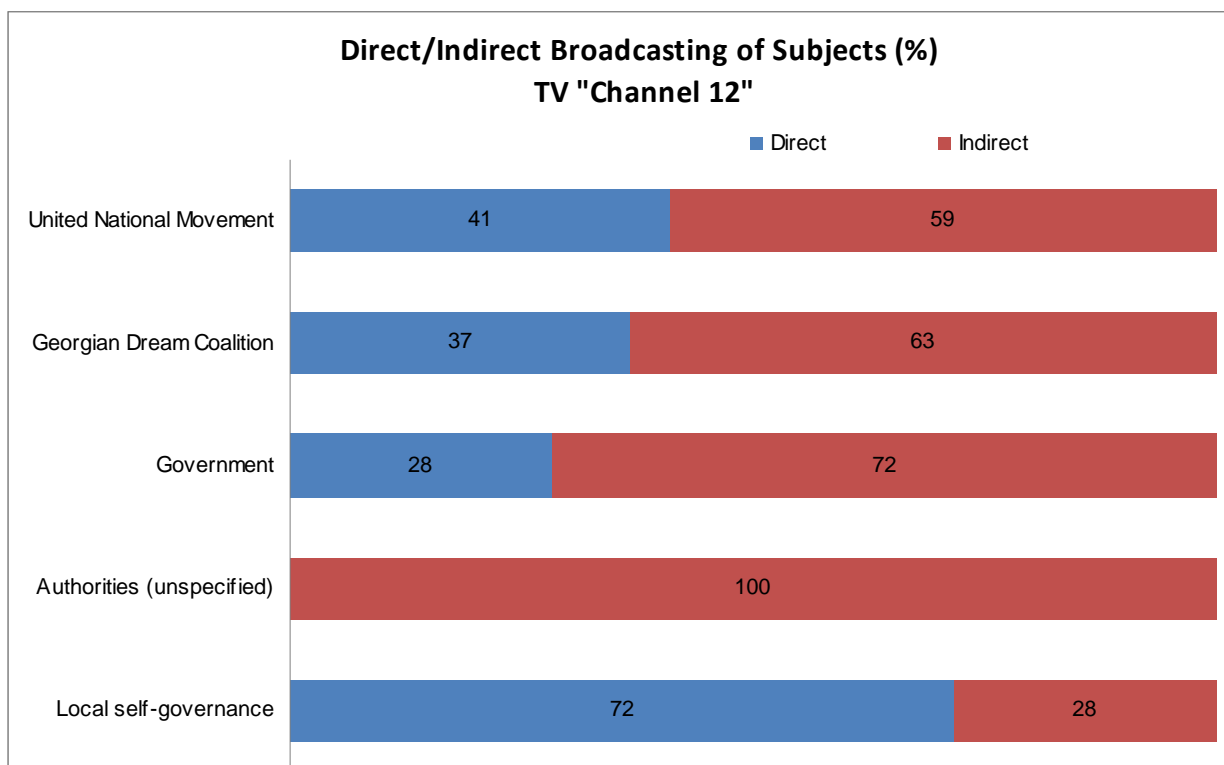
12th Channel (Bolnisi) - During the reporting period the channel dedicated most of its airtime (12 min) to UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition (8 min). Government enjoyed 5-min coverage.



All of the three tones were observed in regard to the Georgian Dream coalition. The coalition was equally covered in positive (27 percent) and negative (26) tones. The 2-percent negative tone was applied to the government.

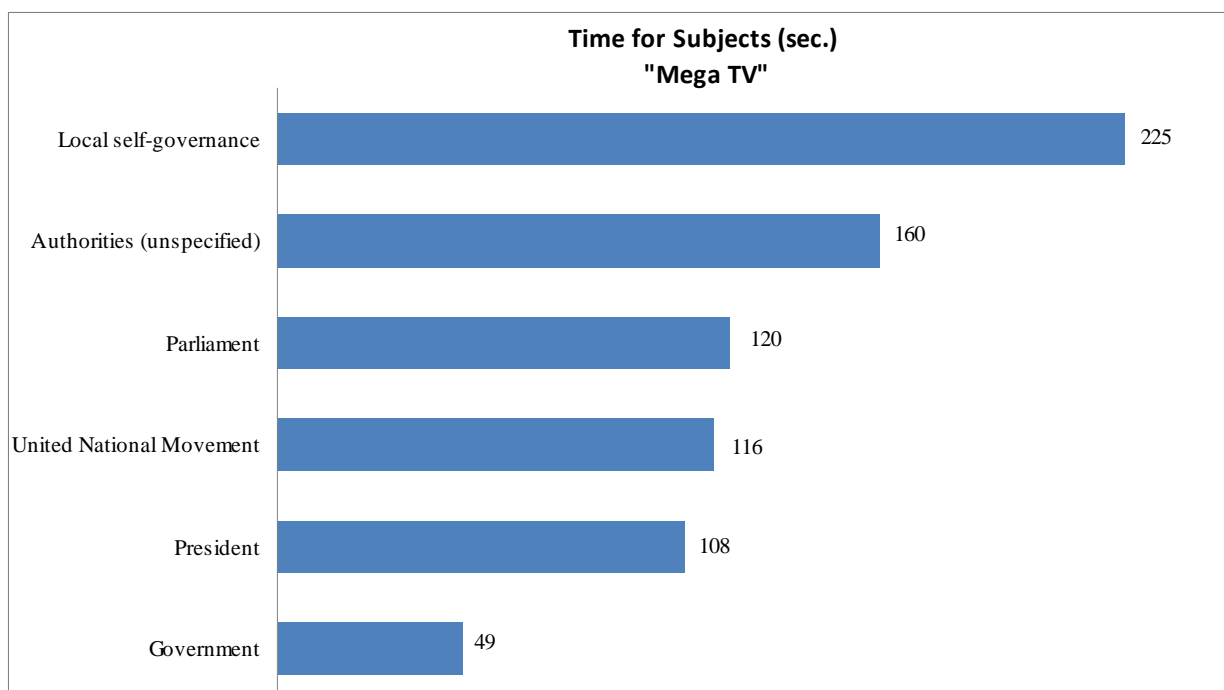


Direct/indirect reporting was almost equal in regard to UNM but in case of the Georgian Dream coalition and government indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.



12th Channel dedicates the greater part of airtime to UNM. The ruling party majoritarian deputy's meeting with the population is covered in positive tone. Along with that the TV story covered the presentation of Giga Liparteliani's book which discusses criminal past of the Georgian Dream coalition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili. The story does not provide dissenting opinions. It is also noteworthy that another TV story was produced about the pre-election campaign which covered the coalition in positive tone and the authorities in negative tone.

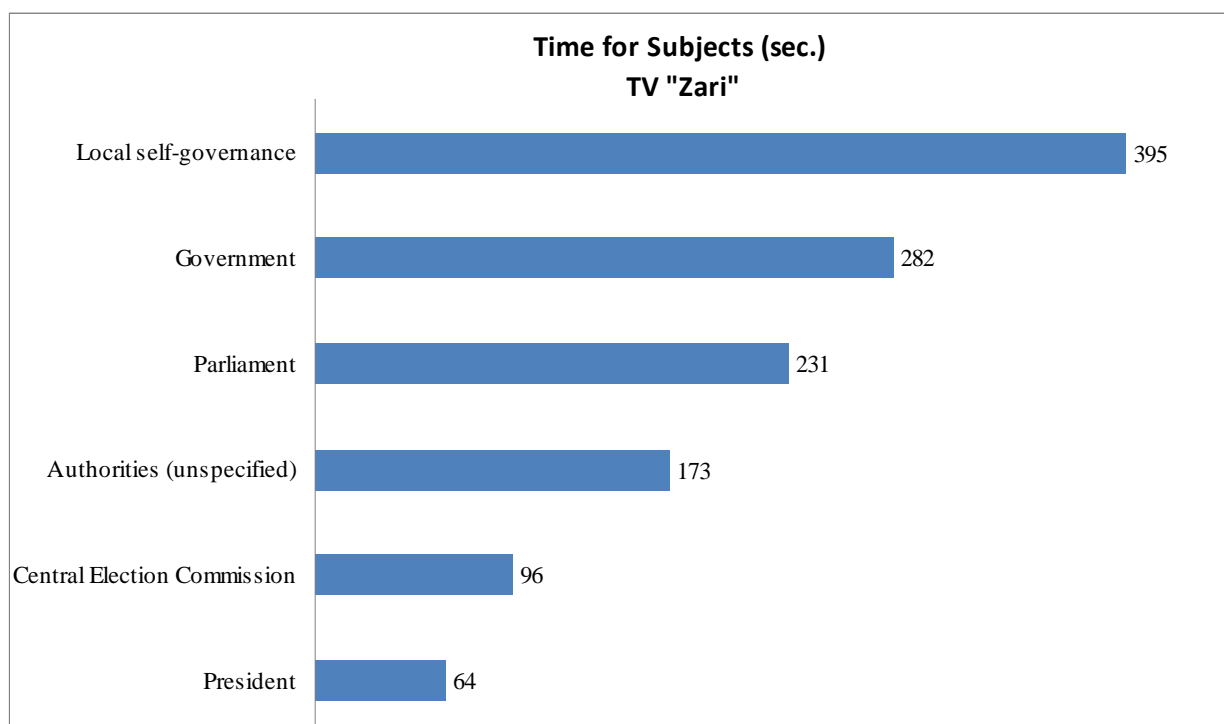
Mega TV (Khoni) - During the reporting period news programs dedicated the biggest share of airtime (4 min) to the local self government. 3 minutes were dedicated to the authorities, UNM and President each enjoyed 2-minute coverage.



Positive tone prevailed over neutral. Negative tone was not observed at all. When reporting on UNM direct reporting considerably prevailed over indirect reporting (91 percent / 9 percent). For the rest the share was almost equal.

During the reporting period two news programs were produced. The TV stories essentially reported on the activities carried out by the local self government and other ongoing infrastructural projects. The interviews of similar content positively evaluating the activities of the authorities were rather frequent.

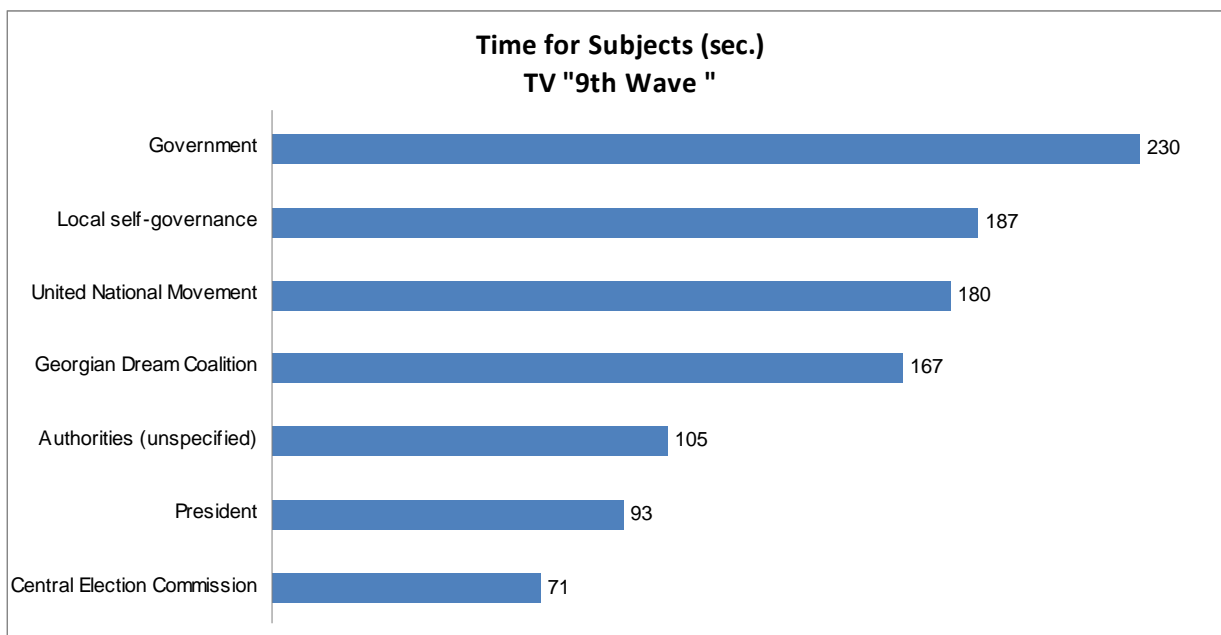
Zari (Samtredia) - The biggest share of airtime (7 min) was dedicated to the activities of the local self government. Government, Parliament and the authorities enjoyed 5, 4 and 3 minutes of coverage respectively.



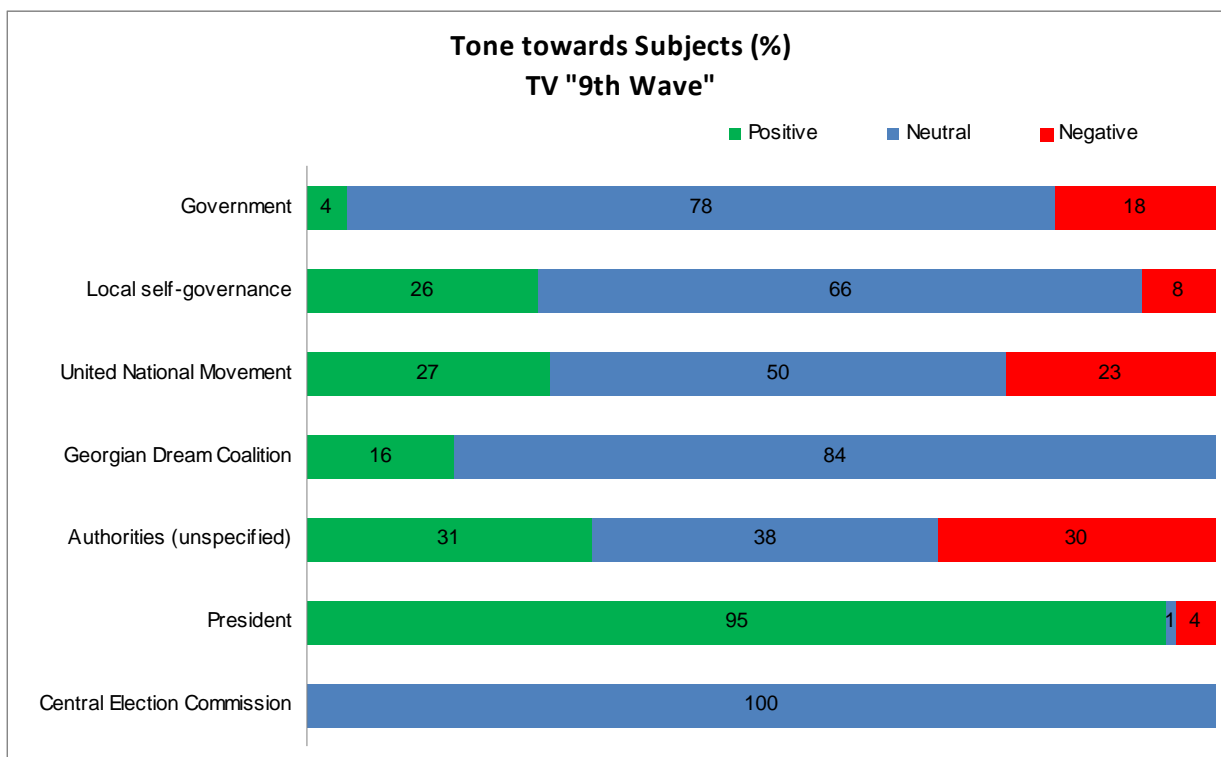
Subjects were covered in positive and neutral tones, with the positive tone prevailing over neutral. The share of indirect reporting was far ahead of direct reporting. Direct reporting prevailed when reporting on Parliament – 96 percent.

TV company Zari mainly reported on different developments in the region, and especially infrastructural projects being on. News programs did not provide the coverage of pre-election activities of political parties. Out of the monitored subjects local self government, government, Parliament and the authorities in general were covered.

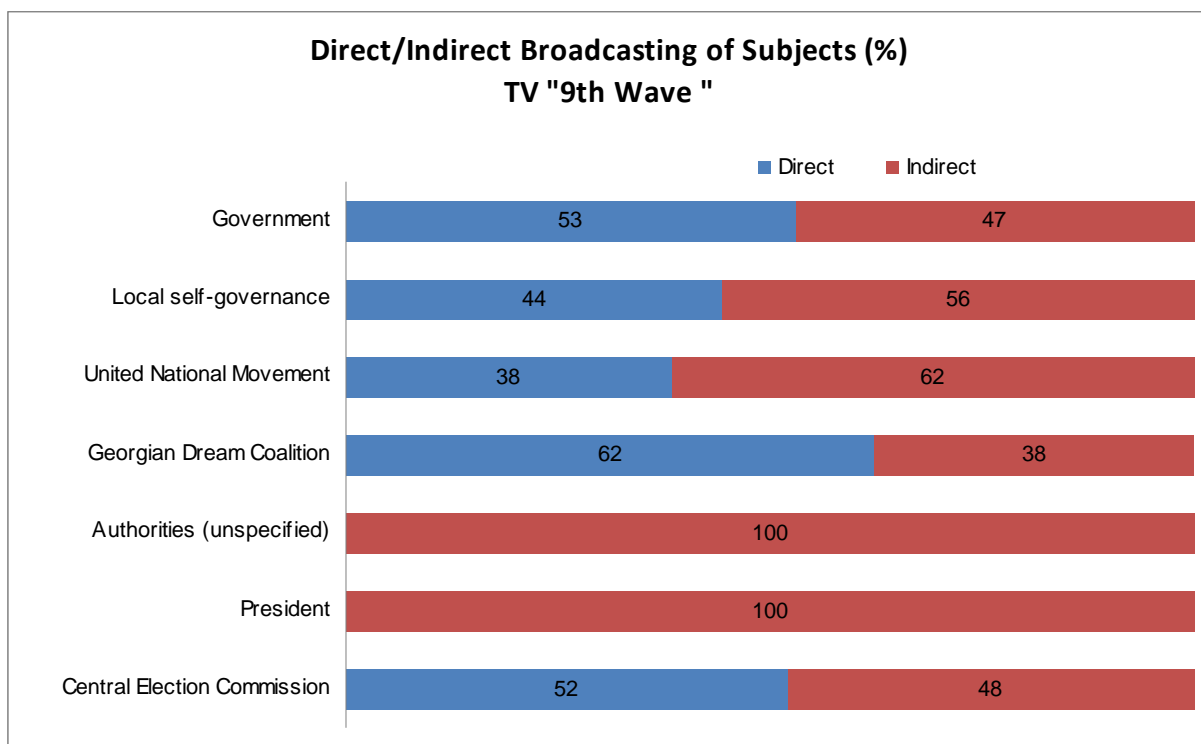
9th Wave – The TV company dedicated the biggest share of airtime (4 min) to the government. 3 minutes were dedicated to the local self government, UNM and the Georgian Dream coalition each.



All of the three tones were attached when reporting on the subjects. The Georgian Dream coalition was the sole subject covered in neutral (84 percent) and positive (16 percent) tones. The share of the tones applied in regard to the authorities was almost equal.



When reporting on UNM indirect (62 percent) reporting prevailed over direct (38 percent). In case of the Georgian Dream coalition the picture looks contrariwise. The share was almost equal in case of other monitored subjects.



TV company 9th Wave resumed news production on August 31. Thus far we lack the material to provide qualitative analysis. But at this stage we daresay the balance in the TV stories is mainly preserved, journalists are not biased, demonstrating no subjective opinion in regard to either topic.

Activities to be carried out:

Within the period of September 10-16 the sixth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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