



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

**Subagreement # S-12-155**

**Report for: July 30 - August 12, 2012**

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

*Total Budget: 31 000\$*

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

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

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

### ***Background***

The report represents the results of the survey carried out within the period of July 16-29, 2012 by the Internews Georgia monitoring team. Media monitoring helps raise standard of professionalism and is conducive to the development of independent unbiased journalism. The goal of our survey is to reveal, through monitoring main news programs aired on Georgian regional TV broadcasters, the proceeding and trends of media coverage of pre-election campaign.

### ***Activities***

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

During the third reporting period too the full monitoring of broadcasters was impossible to carry out. TV companies such as Kronika (Dusheti) and Egrisi (Senaki) are still missing news programs. 9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti) is going to resume news production on August 15.

TV company Zari (Samtredia) resumed broadcasting but it has refused to deliver us news programs. We are trying to find an alternative way to get the footage.

Within the period of July 30 – August 12 the broadcasting load was not full at several companies, in particular Mega TV (Khoni), Borjomi (Borjomi) and Channel 12 (Bolnisi), producing a single news outlet per week. In August, due to staff holidays, one news program per week will be aired on Marneuli TV. The same applies to Lagodekhi-based TV company LTV.

Due to the July natural disaster in Kakheti region TV companies Tanamgzavri (Telavi) and Gurjaani (Gurjaani) faced some problems. Tanamgzavri resumed news production on August 7. From August 6 Gurjaani TV news production was resumed but during the reporting period no news programs were aired.

## **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.

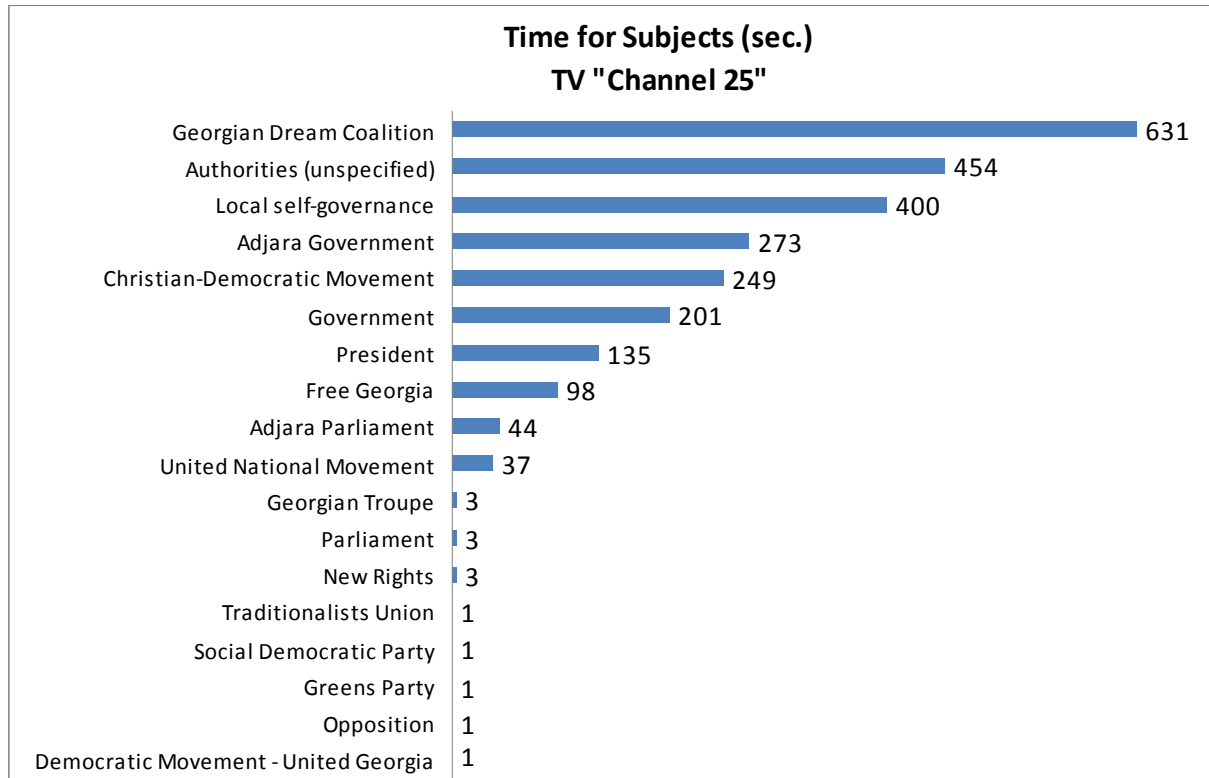
Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards, will be evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as balance or whether diverse opinions over the covered issue are represented in the stories; accuracy or whether mistakes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

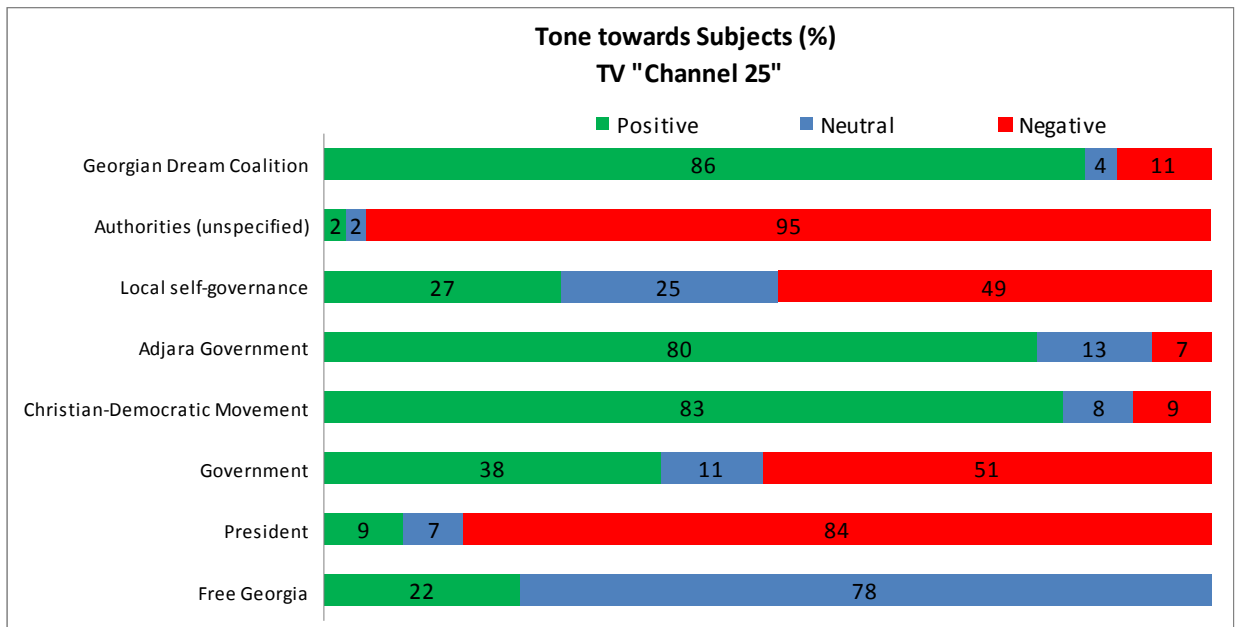
The list is not final and might change in case a new election-related appears.

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

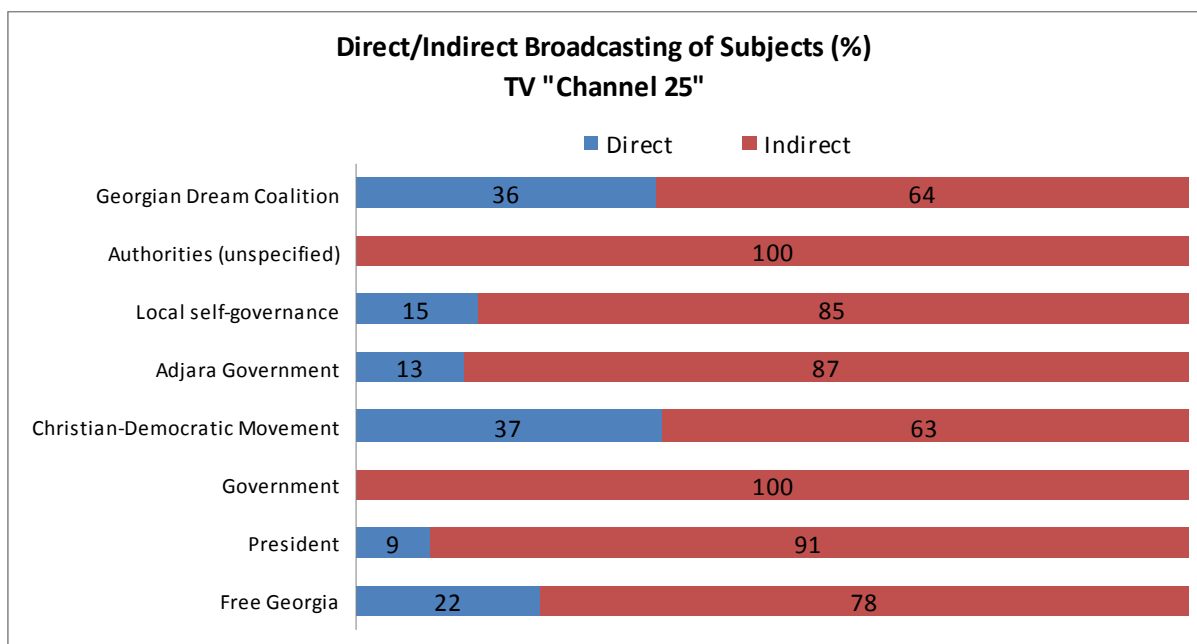
**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – The news programs dedicated most of airtime to the Georgian Dream coalition (11 min). 8 minutes were dedicated to reporting on the authorities, 7 minutes to the local authorities, 5 minutes to Adjara government, 4 minutes to the Christian-Democratic Movement.



The Georgian Dream coalition is leading the chart in terms positive reporting tone (85 per cent), followed by Christian-Democratic Movement and Adjara government (80 per cent). The most negative tone was observed in regard to the authorities (95 per cent).



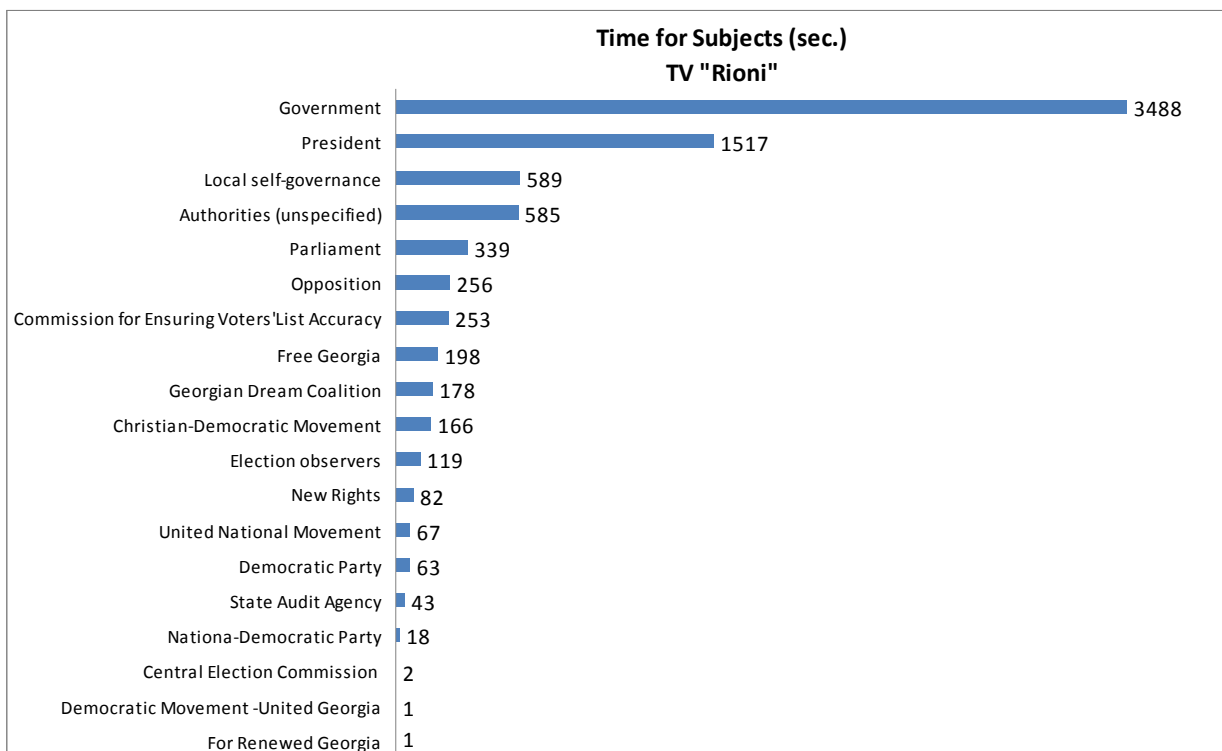
In the news programs indirect reporting prevailed over indirect reporting.



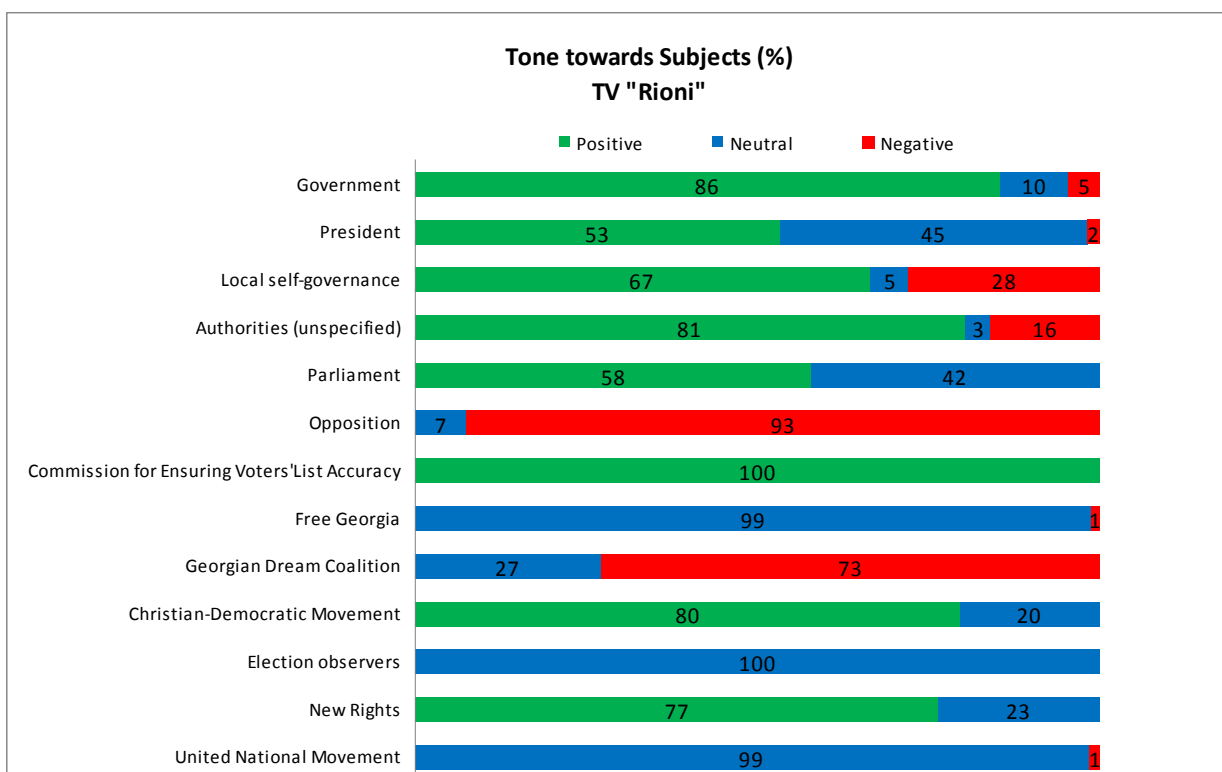
Within the reporting period the TV company essentially covered regional news. Since the majority of staff is on holiday the news programs were not produced and only certain stories were on air. The reporting is more or less balanced but in some cases journalists provide some unsubstantiated allegations. For example in the August 9 story about nominating Giorgi Baramidze of the United National Movement for the Batumi majoritarian deputy the journalist, referring to two citizens, says: “Batumi citizens think Gia Baramidze does not deserve to be nominated as a majoritarian deputy.”

**Rioni (Kutaisi)** – News programs dedicated most of the airtime, almost an hour, to reporting on the government. President was covered for 25 minutes, 10 minutes were dedicated to the local self government and the authorities each, 6 and 4 minutes were dedicated to the Parliament and the opposition respectively.

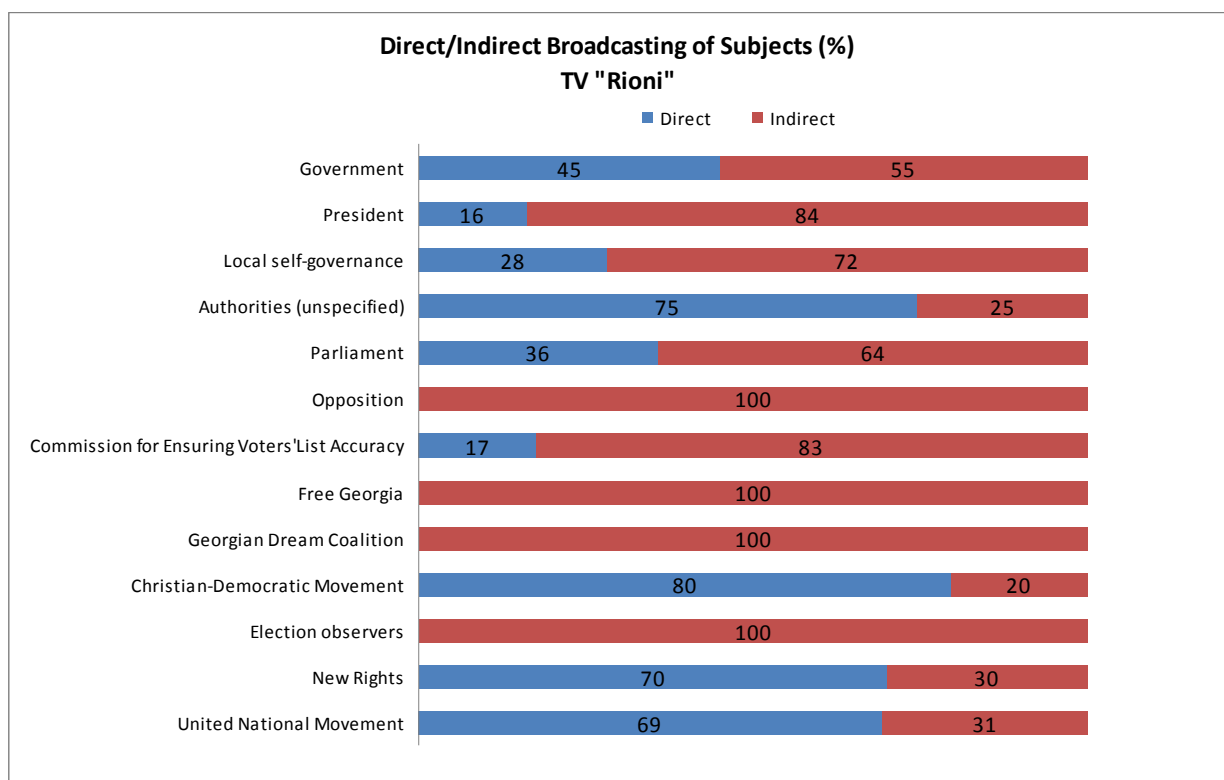
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The biggest share of positive coverage falls on the government (86 per cent), followed by the authorities (81 per cent), local self government (67 per cent), Parliament (58 per cent) and President (53 per cent). The most negative tone was attached to reporting on the opposition (4-min reporting) – 93 per cent and Georgian Dream coalition (3-min reporting) – 73 per cent.



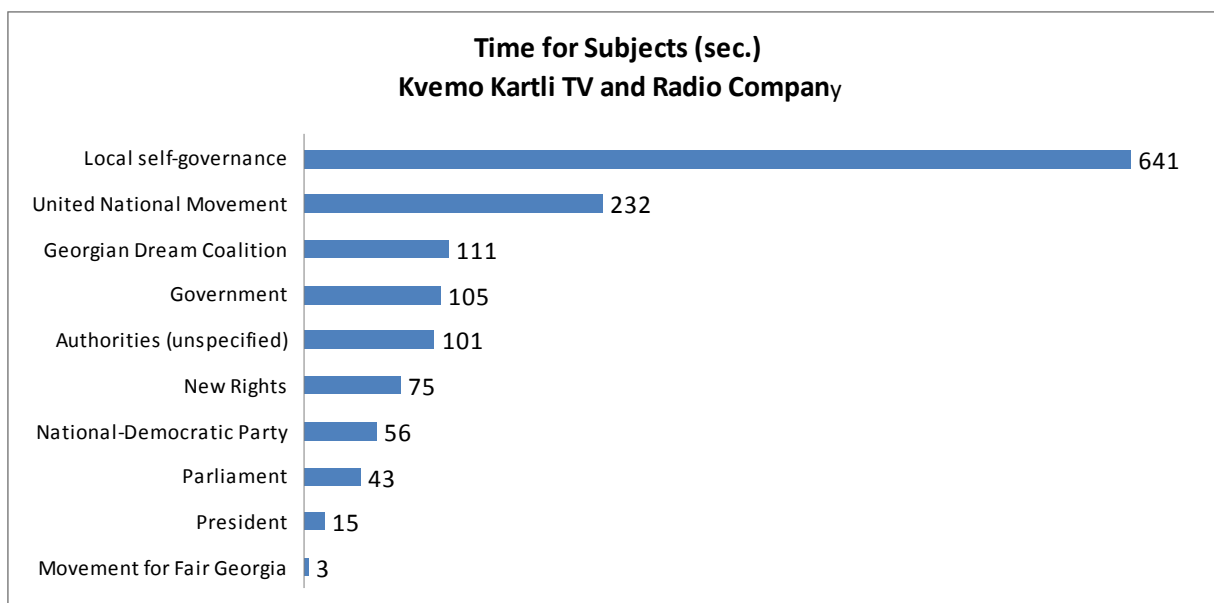
When covering the subjects indirect reporting almost always prevailed over direct reporting. Authorities have the highest rate of direct reporting - 75 per cent.



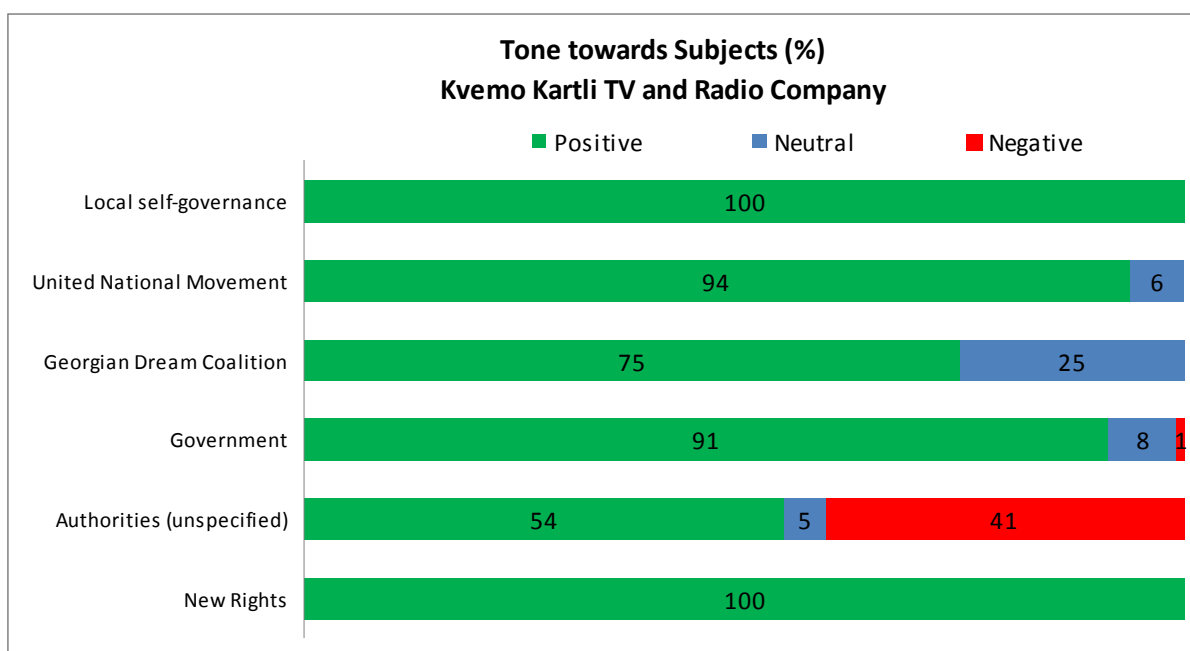
During the reporting period TV company Rioni aggressively covered the events ongoing nationwide as well as in the region. According to the quantitative analysis most of the airtime (one hour) was dedicated to reporting on the government, in the main PM Vano Merabishvili's meetings held in different regions. The journalist, as a rule, refrains from demonstrating his/her stance but the news are delivered in positive context and no dissenting opinions are provided.

**Kvemo Kartli TV/Radio Company (Rustvi)** - The TV company dedicated most of the airtime, 11 min, to the reporting on the local self government. 4 minutes were dedicated to the United National Movement, and 2 minutes were dedicated to the Georgian Dream coalition, government and the authorities in general each.

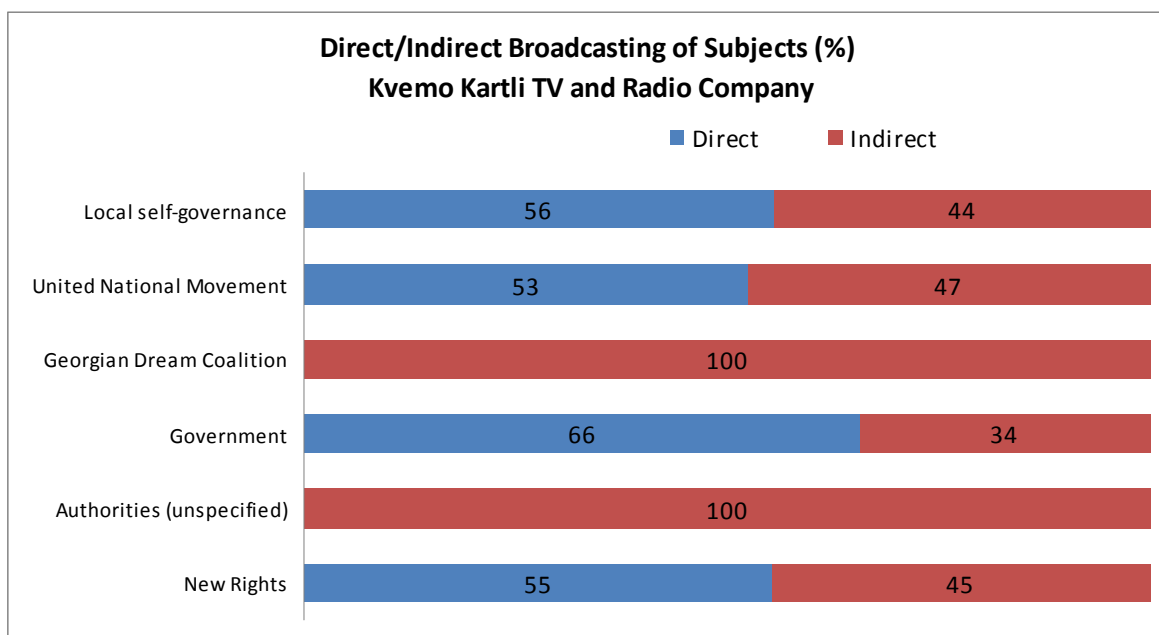




Negative tone was observed in regard to the authorities only (41 per cent). Reporting on the rest of the subjects was positive and occasionally neutral in tone.



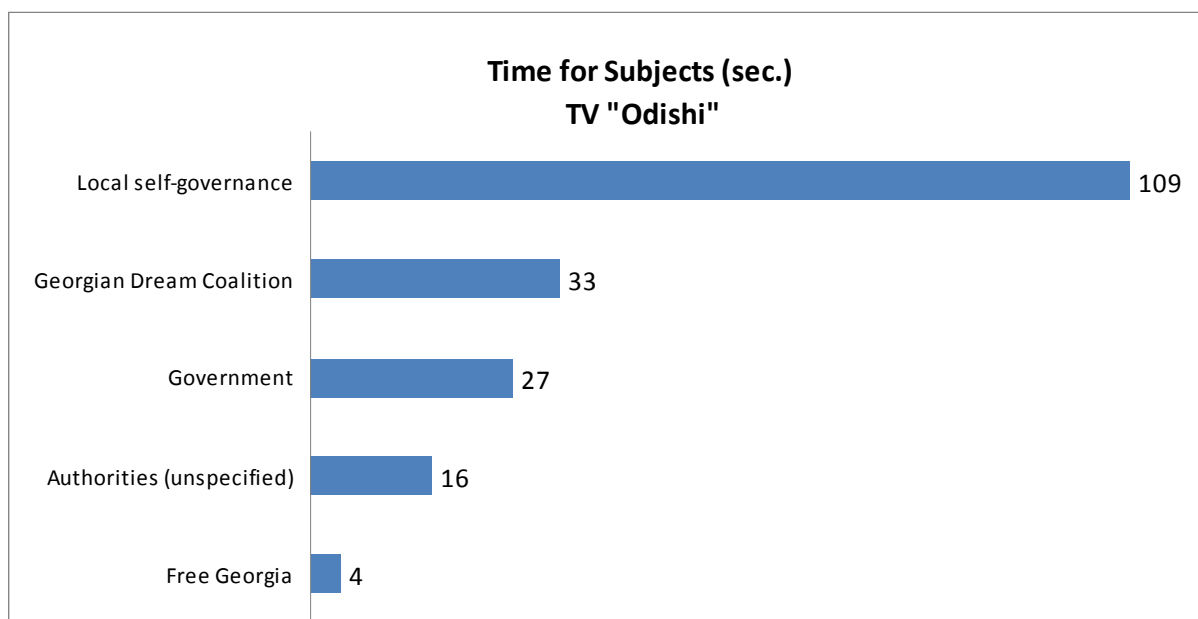
Percentage share of direct and indirect reporting on subjects was almost equal. Only in case of the Georgian Dream coalition and the authorities 100 percent of coverage was indirect



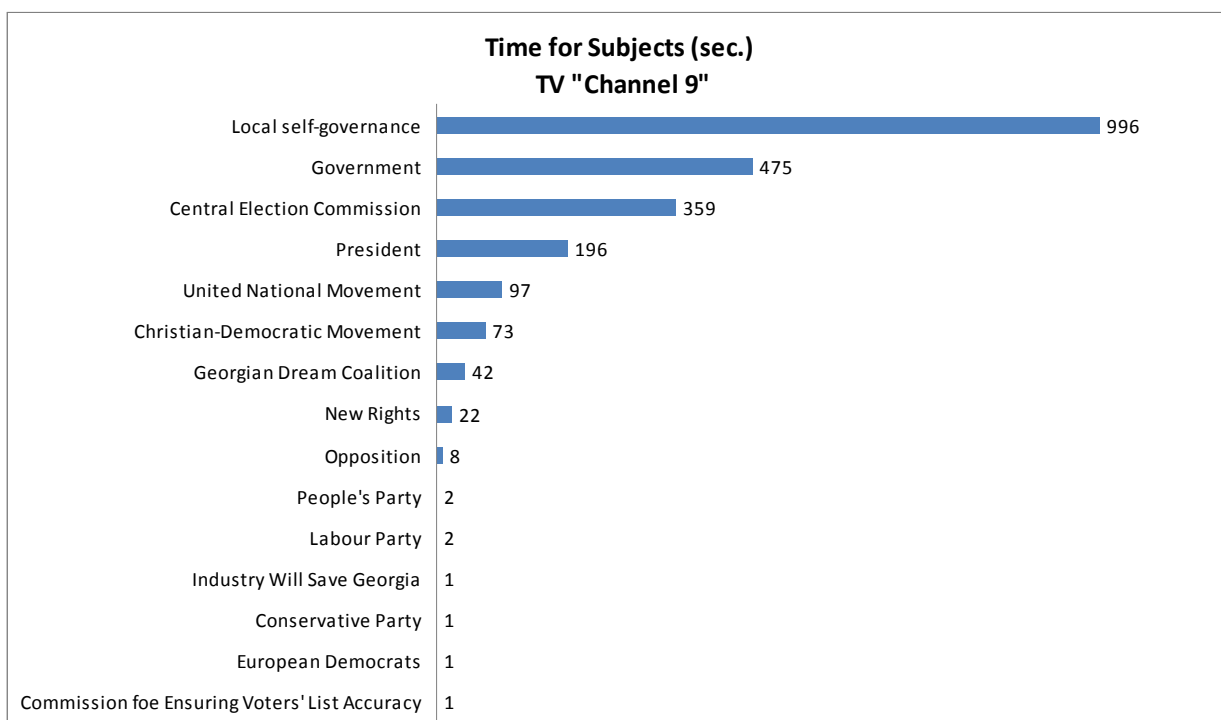
The TV company mainly reports on local events. The most of the airtime was dedicated to the local self government. The tone of coverage is 100 per cent positive. The most covered topic is roads, elevators, roofs rehabilitation works being on in Rustavi. In some cases the journalist’s positive stance to the ruling party is evident. The third story in the August 1 news outlet was dedicated to the cleaning campaign organized by the youth wing of the United National Movement. The journalist says: “With this campaign the youth responded to the renovation of the city.”

**Odishi (Zugdidi)** - Out of the monitored subjects only local self government was covered for 2 minutes. The TV company provides minimum coverage of monitored subjects therefore the analysis of the data in terms of direct/indirect reporting as well as qualitative analysis makes no sense.

The TV company reports little on election subjects. Due to the lack of material it is difficult to provide qualitative analysis.

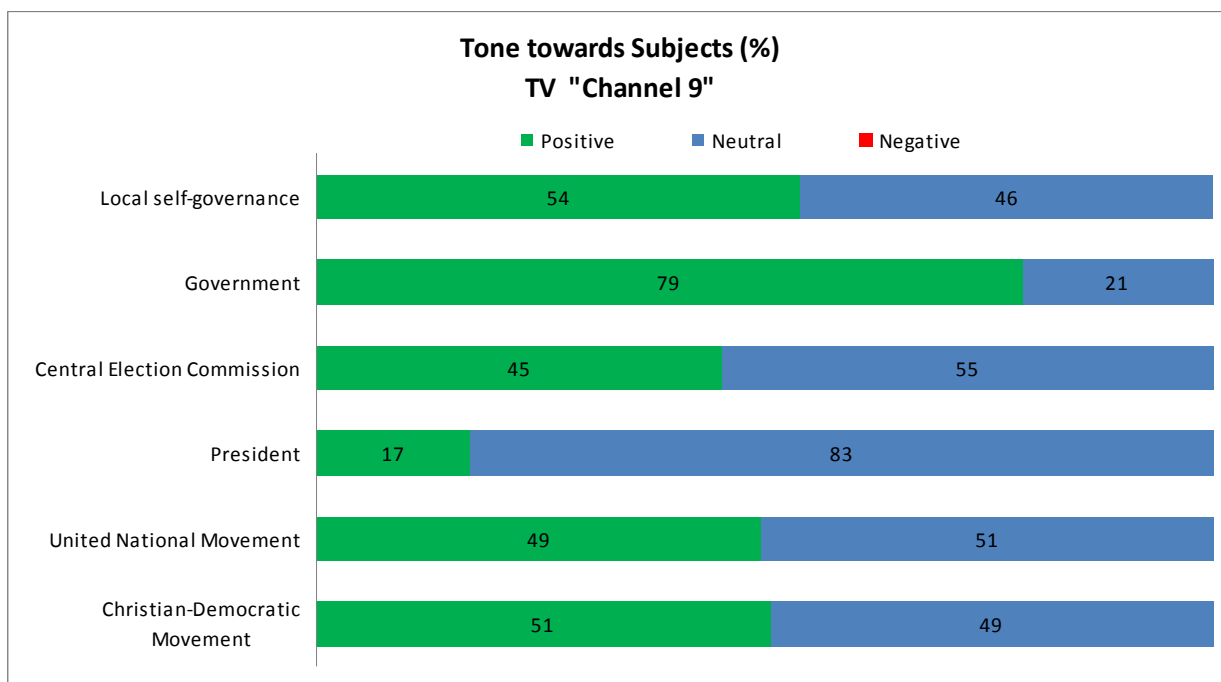


**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Akhaltsikhe)** – New programs dedicated most of the airtime to the local self government – 17 min. 8, 6 and 3 minutes were dedicated to the government, Central Election Commission (CEC) and President respectively.

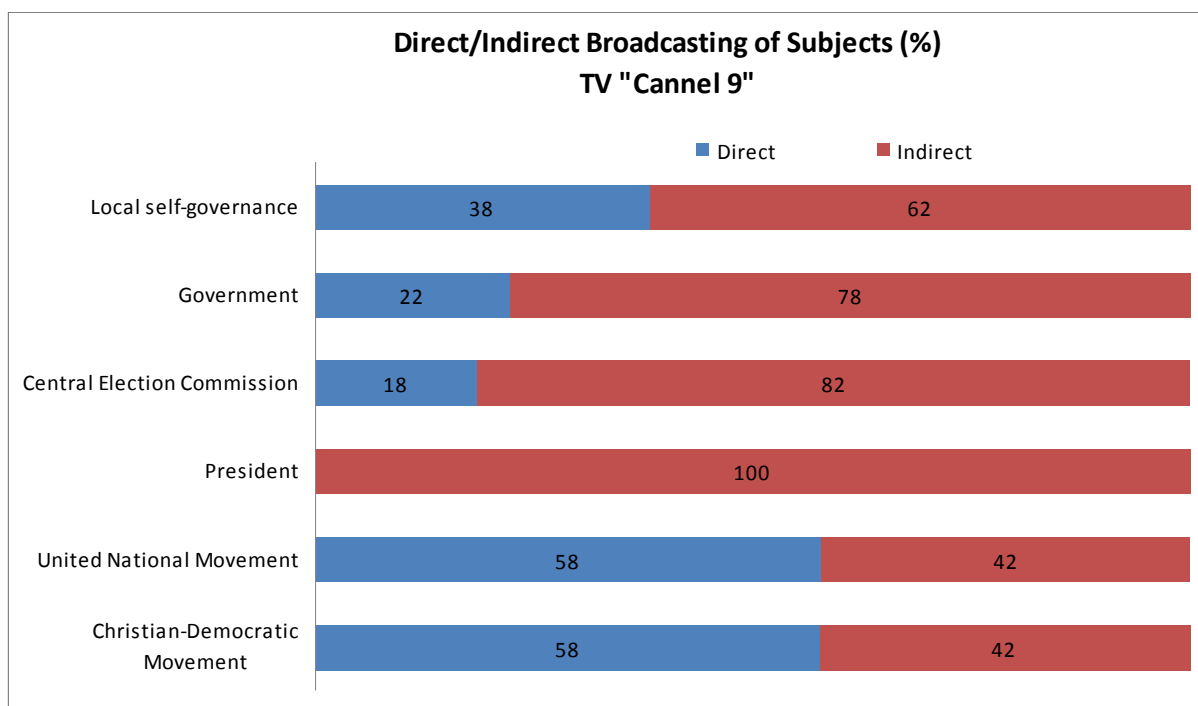


Negative tone was not observed to any of the election subjects:

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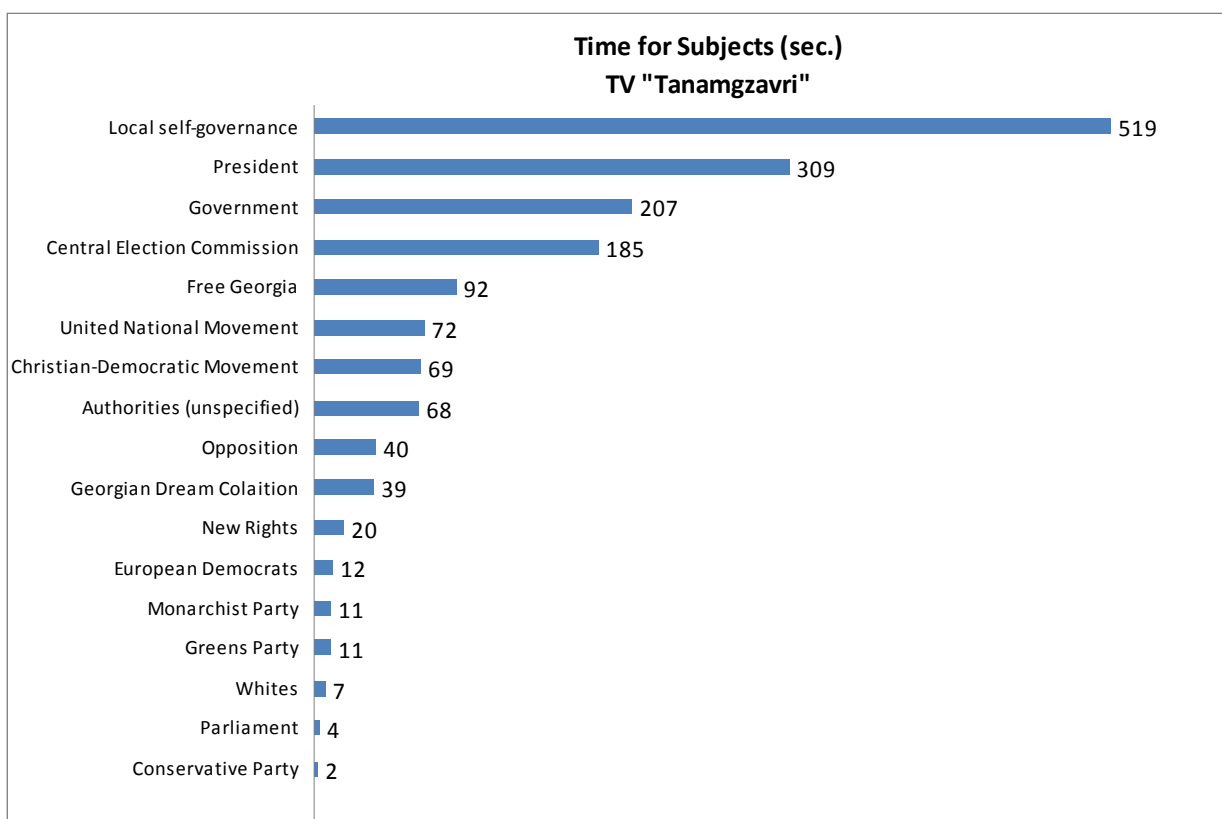


Monitored subjects were mainly talked about. In regard to UNM and Christian-Democratic Movement direct reporting slightly exceeded indirect reporting.

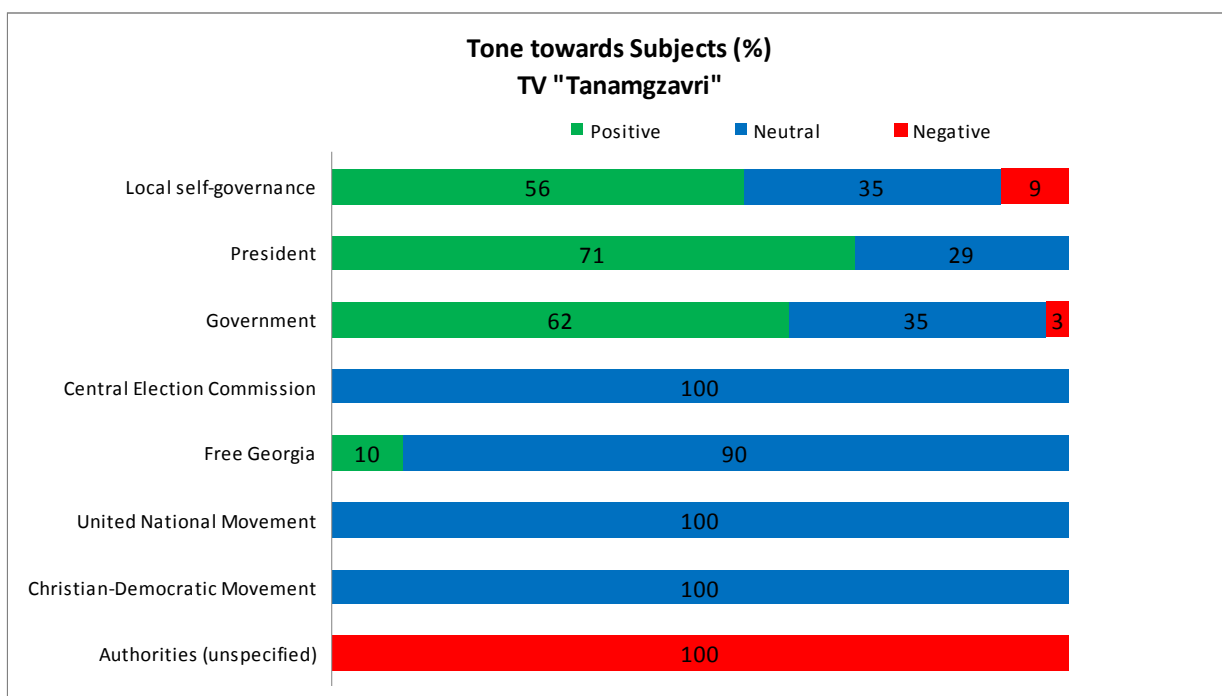


In the past two weeks the 9<sup>th</sup> Wave news mainly covered the activities of the local self government and government. 9<sup>th</sup> Wave provided a modest coverage of the activities of the opposition parties. Accordingly, in the case-related TV stories the minimum of time was given to the evaluations and opinions.

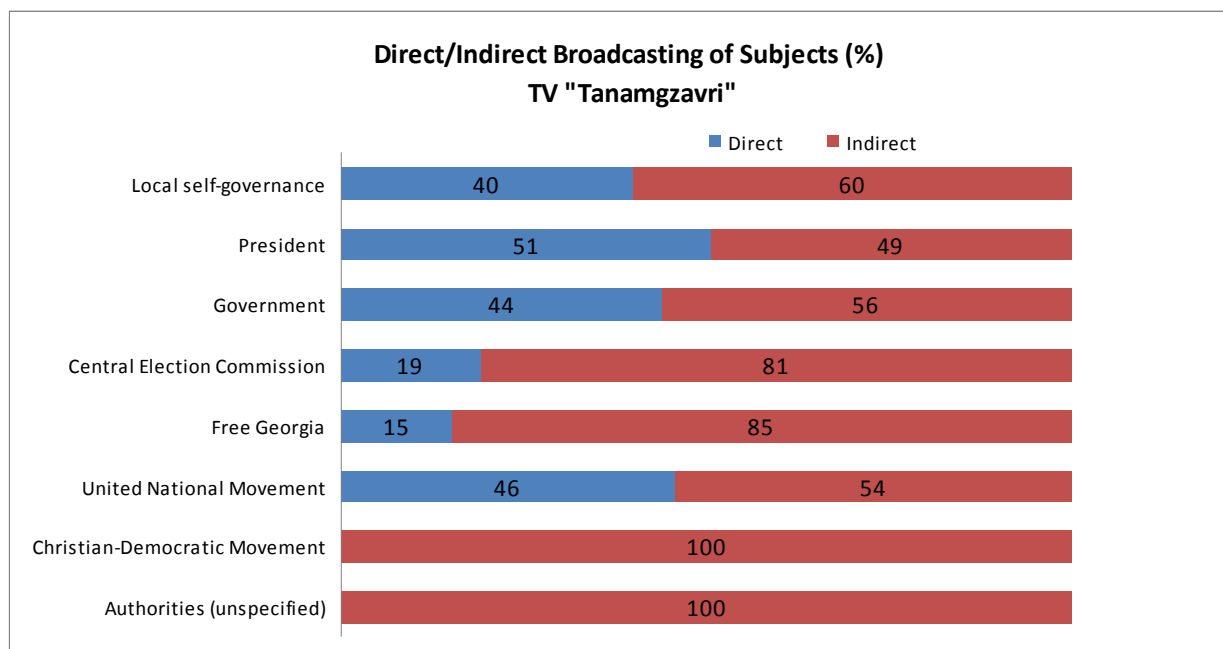
**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – Out of the monitored subjects the most of the airtime (9 min) was dedicated to the local self government, followed by President (5 min), government (Appr. 4 min), and CEC (3 min). The rest of the subjects of our interest were virtually never covered.



In regard to the covered subjects the tone was positive and neutral. Minimum of negative tone was attached to the reporting on the self government (9 per cent) and government (3 per cent).



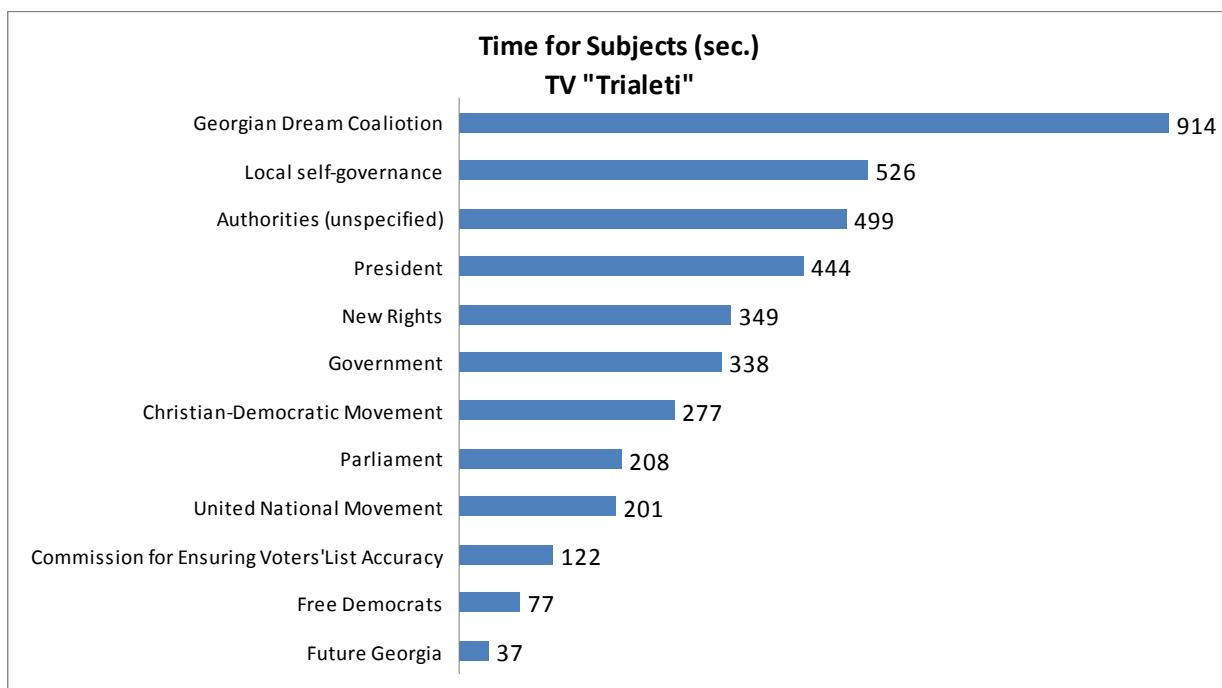
The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. Only in case of CEC indirect reporting prevails over direct reporting.



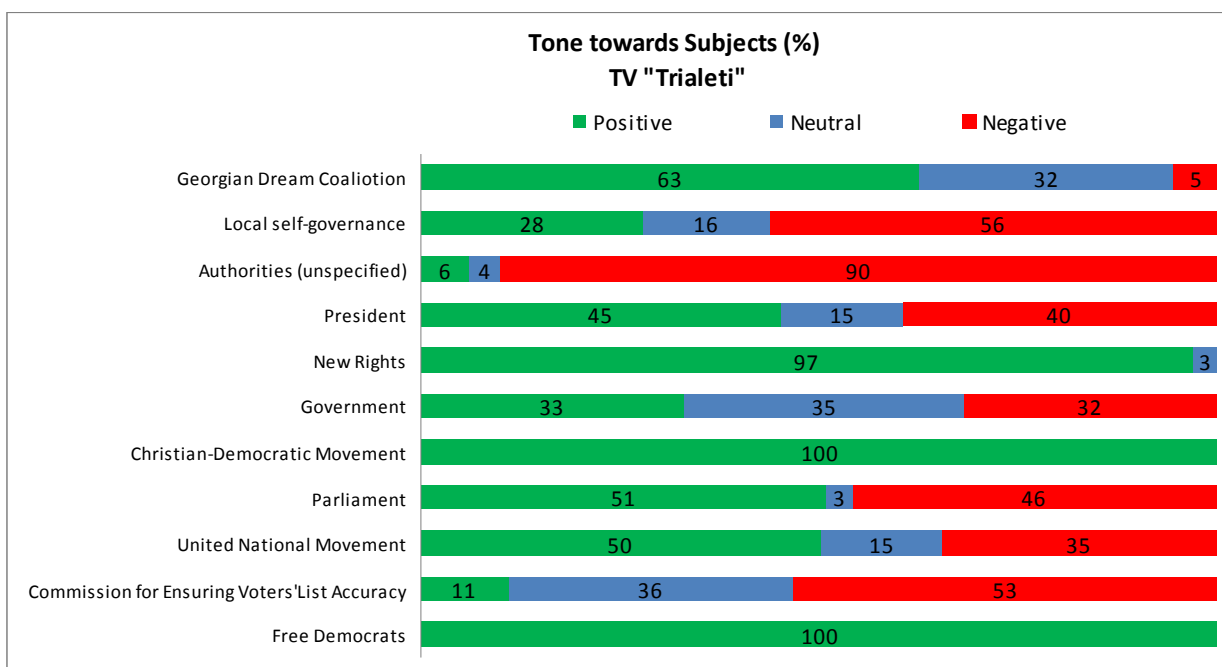
The broadcasting suspended due to the 19 July natural disaster was resumed on August 7. Therefore, the report includes the news programs produced within the 4-day period (August 7-10). Accordingly, the time dedicated to the monitored subjects is scarce and we neither enjoyed the plurality of subjects.

It is noteworthy that the August 8 news outlet (unlike other channels) presented the full list of political subjects registered by CEC. Up to 40 political unions were dedicated 1 sec per each. Due to the lack of time and the plurality of subjects the aforementioned data was not included in the chart.

**Trialeti (Gori)** – The share of time dedicated to the subjects in the news programs looks as follows: 15 minutes – Georgian Dream coalition, 9 minutes – local self government, 8 minutes – authorities, 7 minutes – President, 6-6 minutes – New Rights and government, 5 minutes – Christian-Democratic Movement.

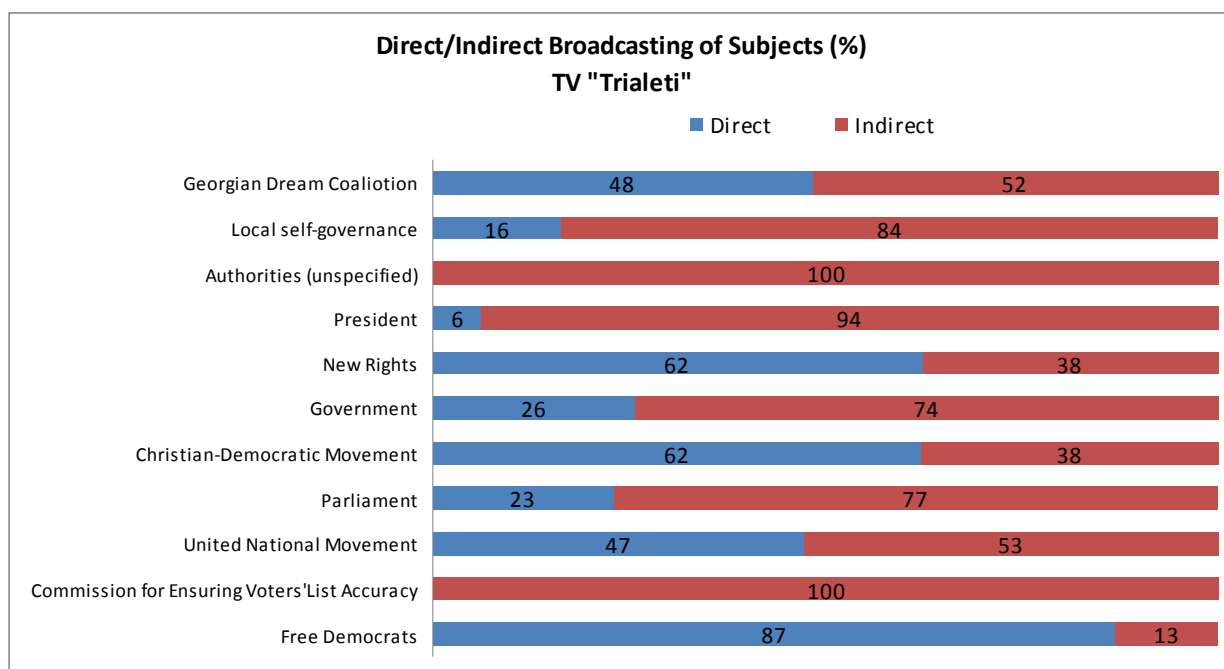


All of the three tones were observed in regard to the subjects covered. The coverage of the Christian-Democratic Movement was 100 per cent positive in tone. The coverage tone was highly positive in regard to New Rights – 97 per cent and Georgian Dream coalition – 63 per cent. The biggest share of negative reporting falls on the authorities in general – 90 per cent. The tone of coverage in regard to President was 45 per cent positive and 40 per cent neutral.



Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting in regard to New Rights and Christian-Democratic Movement and in both case this index was similar 62 per cent / 38 per cent. In regard to the

Georgian Dream coalition the ratio was almost equal. As regards the rest of the subjects indirect reporting prevailed.

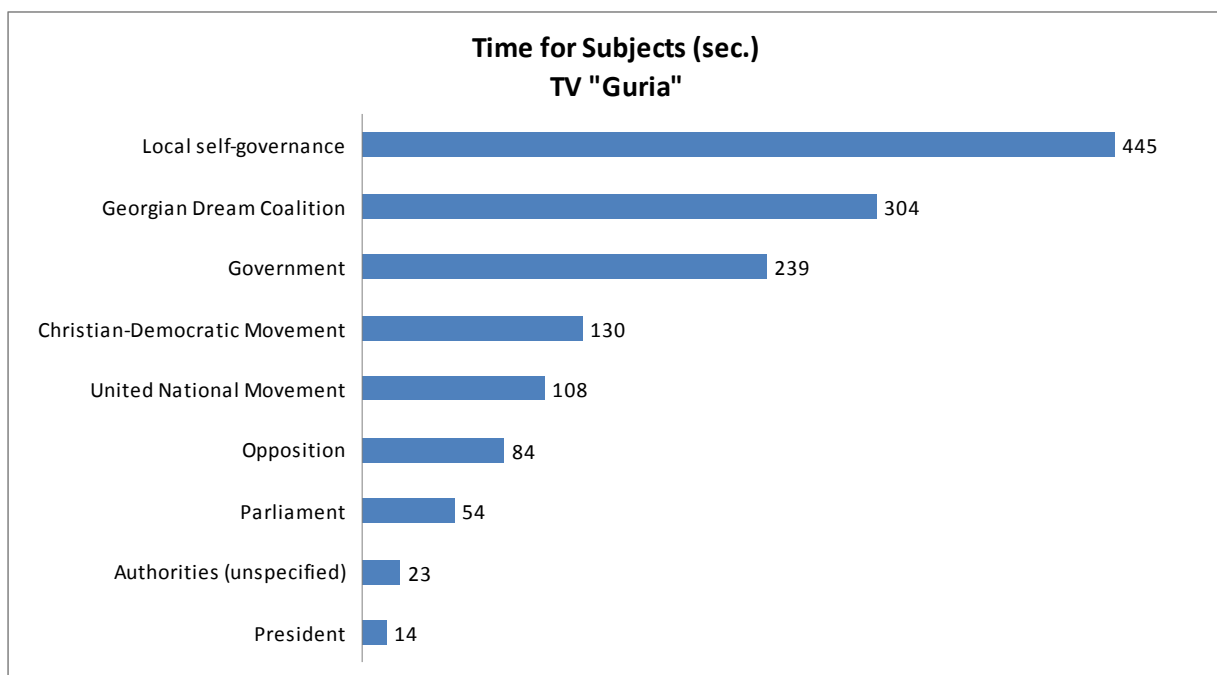


Trialeti TV news programs essentially covered regional news. Occasionally journalist's negative approach to the ruling team and the authorities was evident. For example, the second story in the August 1 news outlet featured Kaspi Municipality Gamgebeli's meeting with the dwellers of the Noste and Akhaltsikhe villages. Almost the whole story features a local reprimanding Gamgebeli for unsettled issues. The story ends up in a way that it is missing Gamgebeli's conversation with the population as well as his response to the accusations voiced by the local. But according to the shots we can make a guess that Gamgebeli talked to the locals and responded to the annoyed local as well. Also, the third story of the same news outlet features journalist's phone conversation with Badri Basishvili of the United National Movement. The graphics on the one side shows the TV logo and on the other side Badri Basishvili and photo collage of his so called "Zonder brigade" that was handed out by the representatives of the Georgian Dream coalition youth wing during the rally.

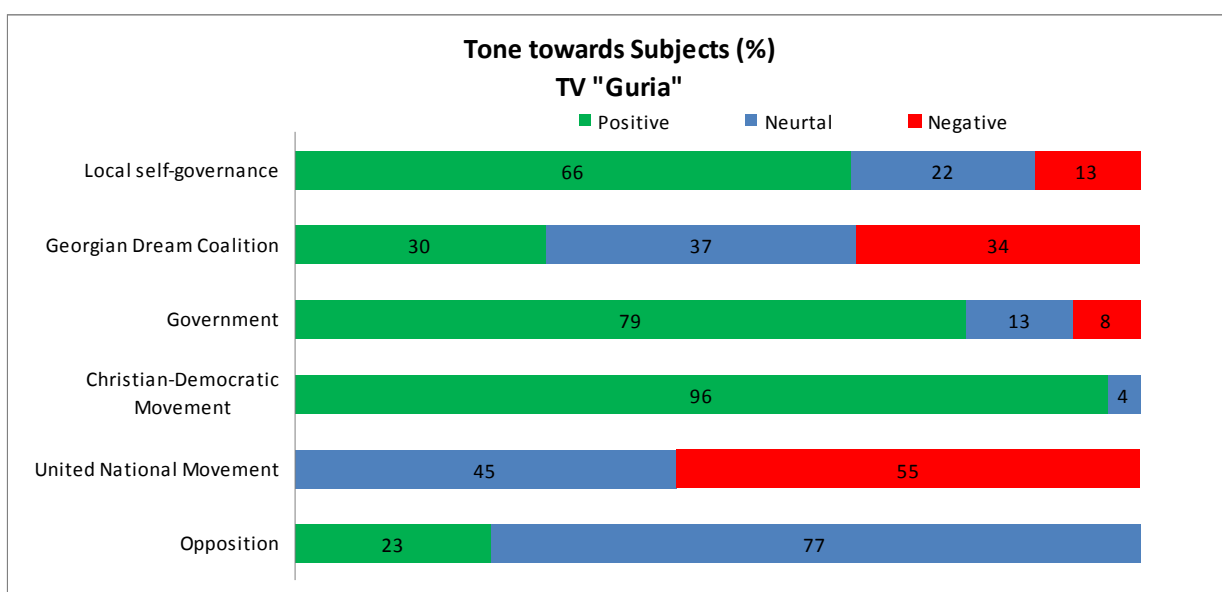
It is also noteworthy that according to Trialeti TV journalists the representatives of the authorities avoided to talk to them. For instance, the August 10 news story features a journalist running after PM Vano Merabishvili to obtain an interview but the latter is paying no attention to the media worker. In the same story the journalist is trying to obtain an interview from the representative of the local self government but in vain.



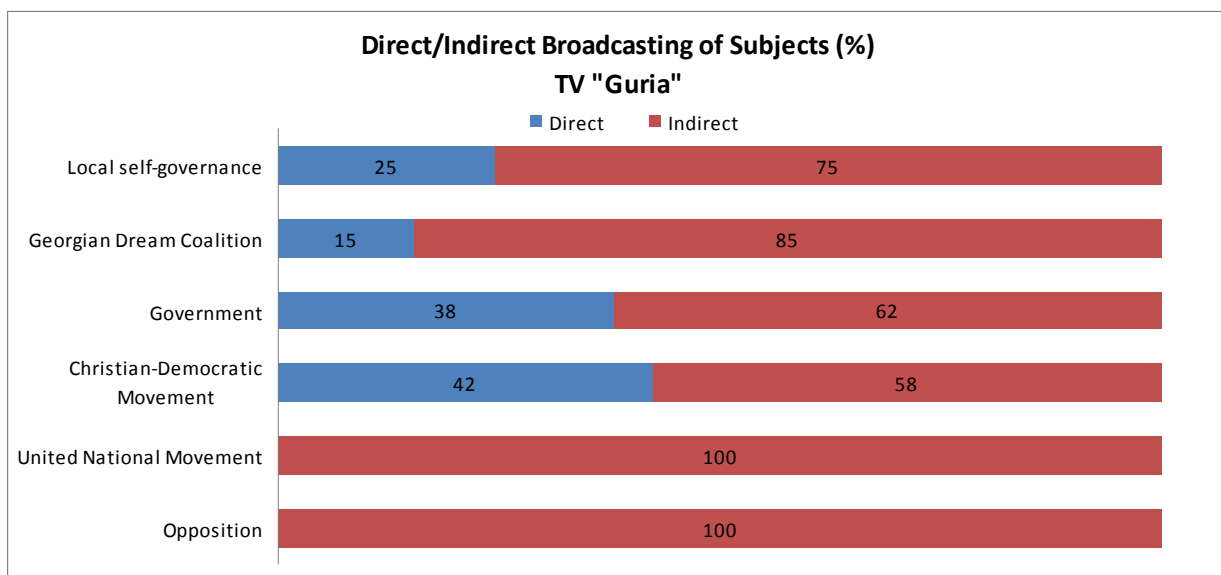
**Guria (Ozurgeti)** – The most of the airtime (7 min) was dedicated to the local self government followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 5 minutes, government with 4 minutes and Christian-Democratic and United National Movements with 2 minutes each.



All of the three tones were observed in regard to the subjects covered. It is noteworthy that the tones were almost equal in case of the Georgian Dream coalition. The coverage was positive (96 per cent) and neutral (4 per cent) in tone in regard to Christian-Democratic Movement. Neutral (45 per cent) and negative (55 per cent) tones were observed in regard to UNM.

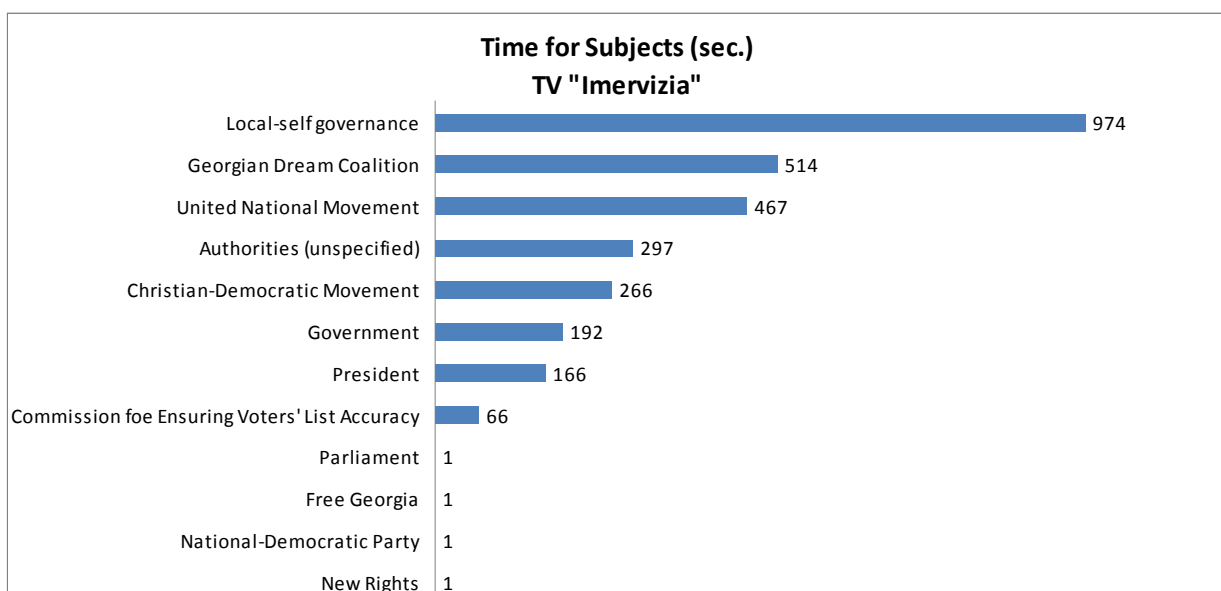


Indirect reporting always prevailed over direct reporting:



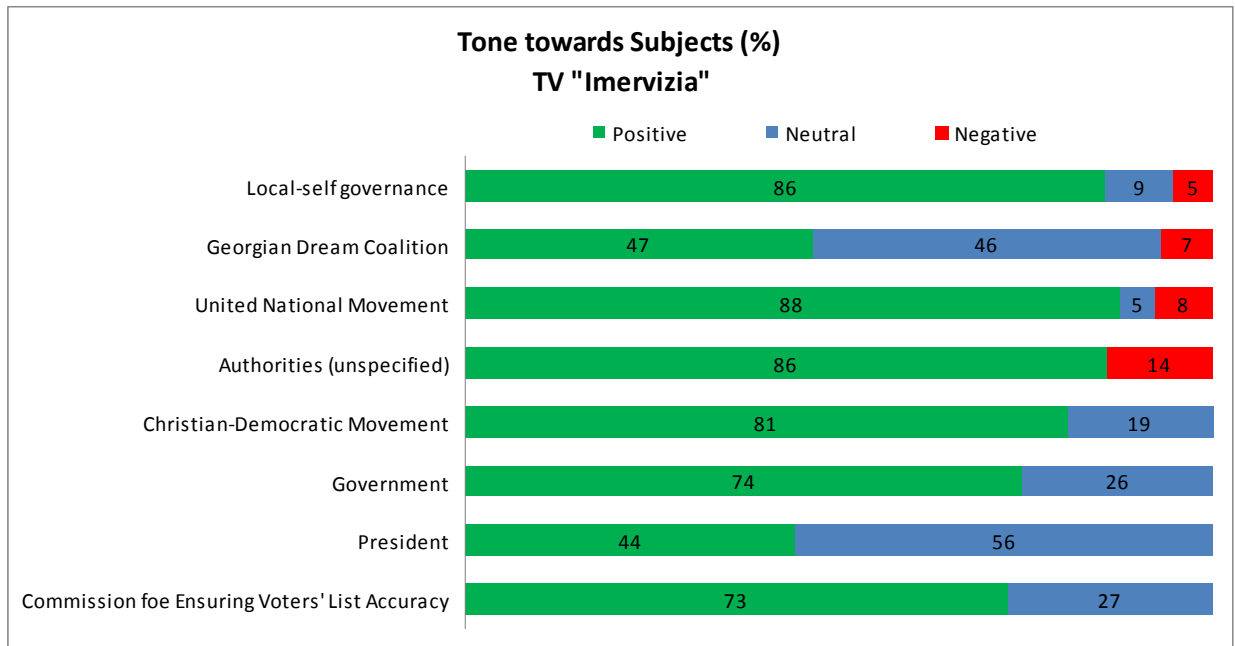
The TV company mainly covered regional news. But some of the nationwide events were covered too. TV stories were more or less balanced. For example when reporting on the Sakrebulo sitting the opinions of the ruling team as well as the opposition Sakrebulo members were presented. But some stories featured the stance of one party without providing comments in response.

**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – Out of the monitored subjects the most of the airtime (12 min) was dedicated to the local self government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition (9 min) and UNM (8 min). Authorities and Christian-Democratic Movement had each 5 minutes given.

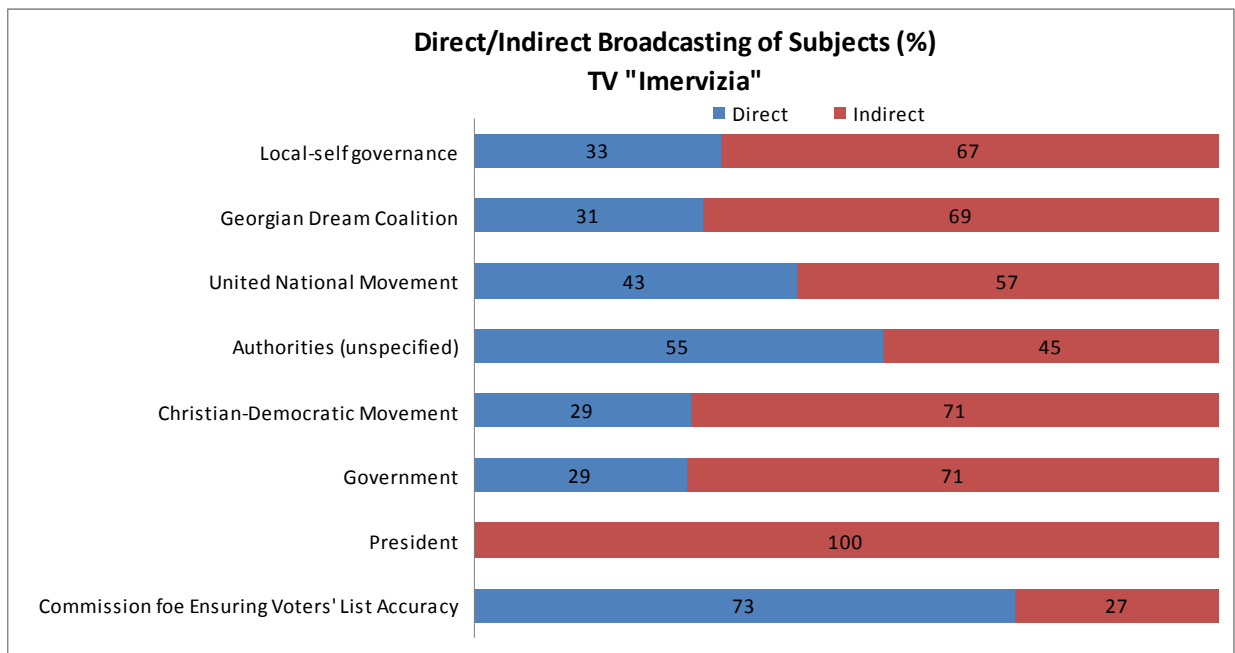


The most negative tone was attached to the reporting on the local self government (5 per cent), Georgian Dream coalition (7 per cent), UNM (8 per cent) and authorities (14 per cent). When

reporting positive tone prevailed over neutral. In regard to the Georgian Dream coalition the ratio was equal.

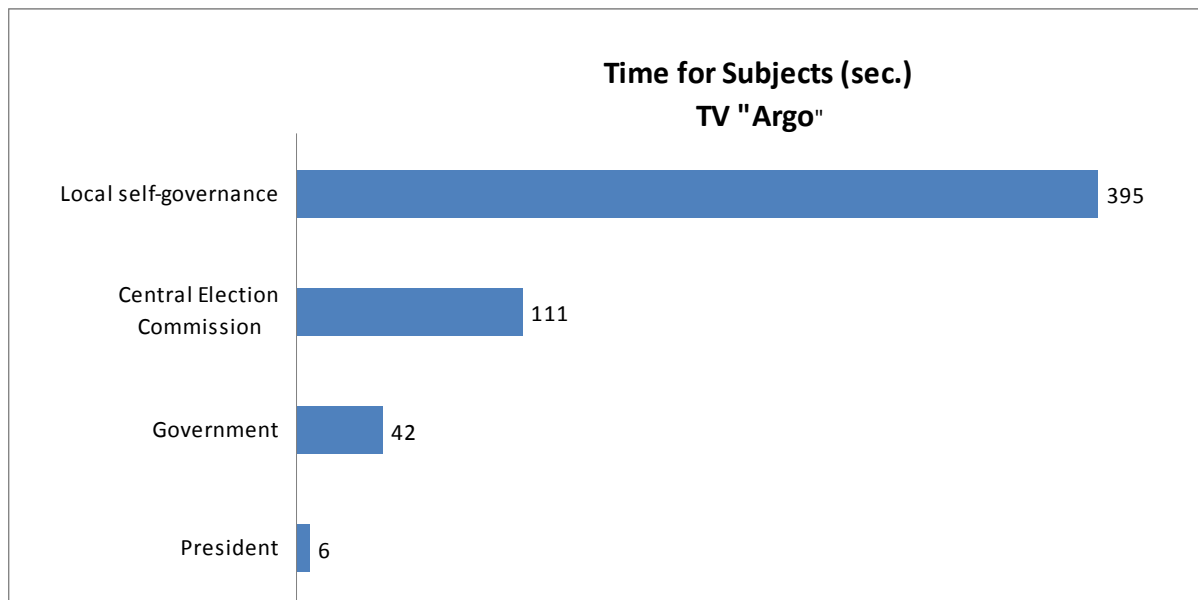


When covering the subjects indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting:



TV company Imervizia aggressively reported on the political developments in the region. The activities of the local self government enjoyed essential coverage. It is noteworthy that certain TV stories on Imervizia presents the stance of only one party substantiated by similar comments provided by respondents. A good example to that is several stories aired in row in the August 7 news program featuring the meetings of the government and local self government with the dwellers of different villages.

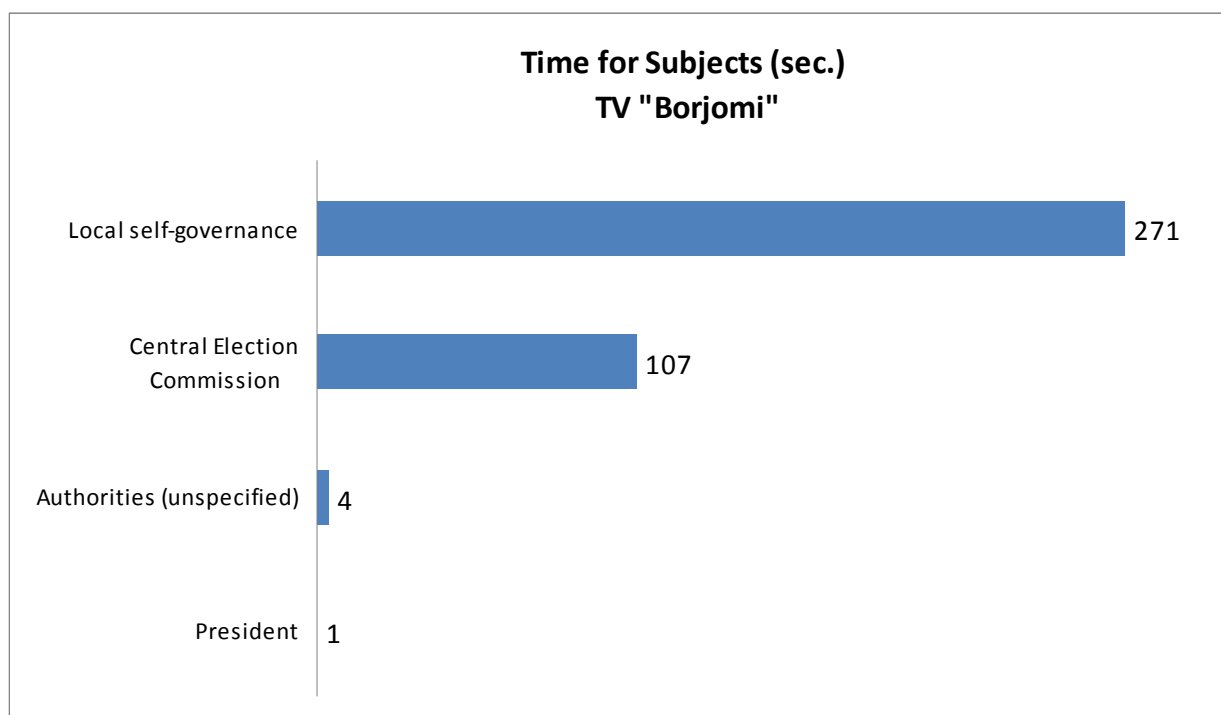
**Argo (Zestaponi)** – News programs dedicated most of airtime (6 min) to the local self government. 2 minutes were dedicated to CEC.



No negative tone was observed in regard to the subjects. The coverage of the local self government was negative (92 per cent), and neutral (8 per cent) in tone. It is noteworthy that the share of direct/indirect reporting is almost equal 58 per cent / 42 per cent in regard to the local self government.

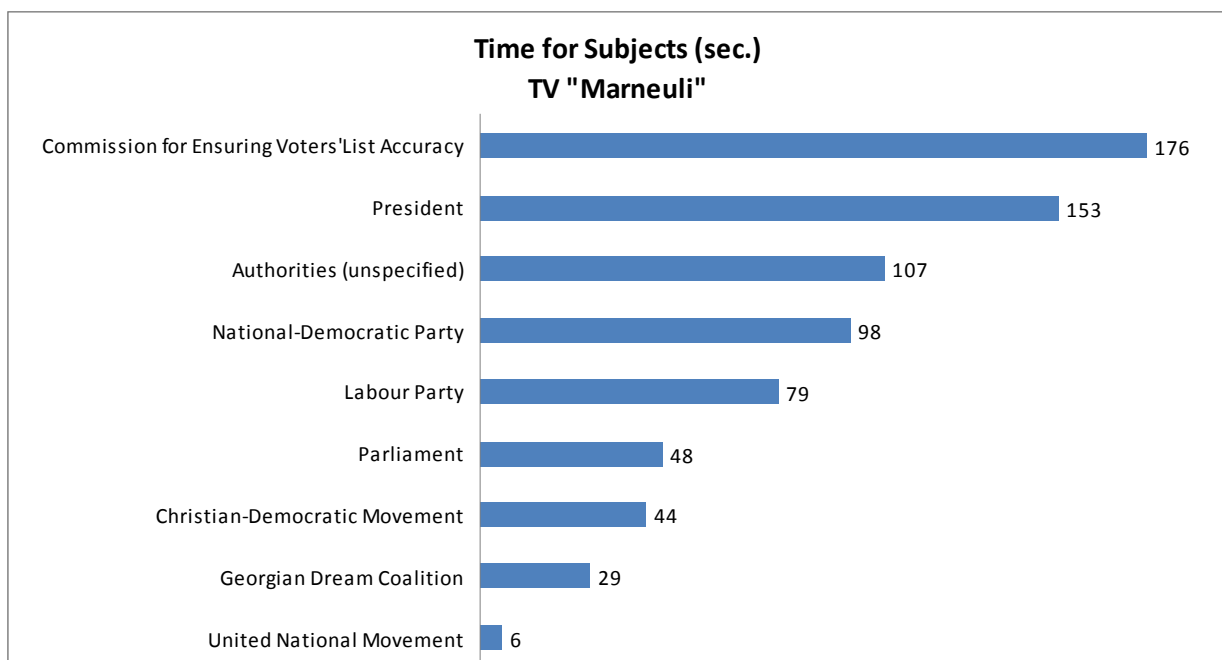
The TV company mainly covered cultural and sports events ongoing in the region. During the reporting period the subjects of our interest were not even mentioned. Only four monitored subjects were dedicated some airtime. Only local self government and CEC enjoyed over 1-min coverage. Accordingly the present material is insufficient to provide quantitative analysis.

**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – Out of the monitored subjects only local self government (6 min) and CEC (2 min) were dedicated airtime. It is noteworthy that positive (74 per cent) and negative (26 per cent) tones were observed in regard to the local self government. Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.

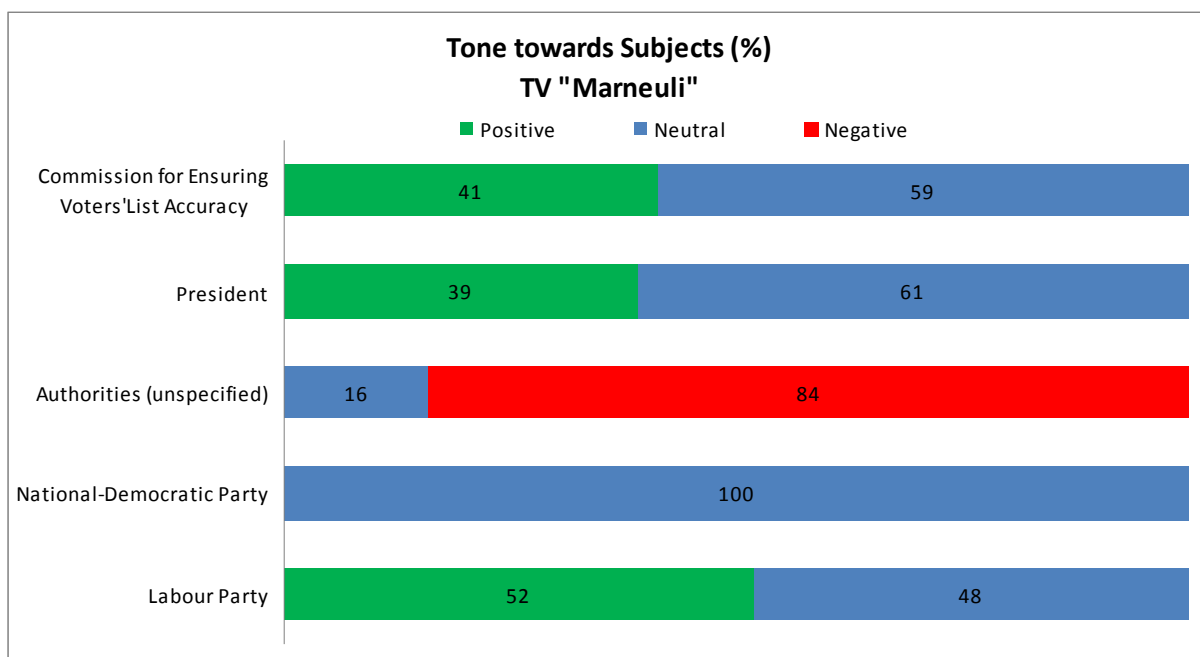


TV company Borjomi was limited to the local news coverage. Due to the repair work (new studio being set up) during the reporting period no news programs were produced, only certain stories were aired. For two weeks only four subjects were covered. 8 minutes in total were dedicated to them. The scarcity of material gives us no possibility to provide qualitative analysis.

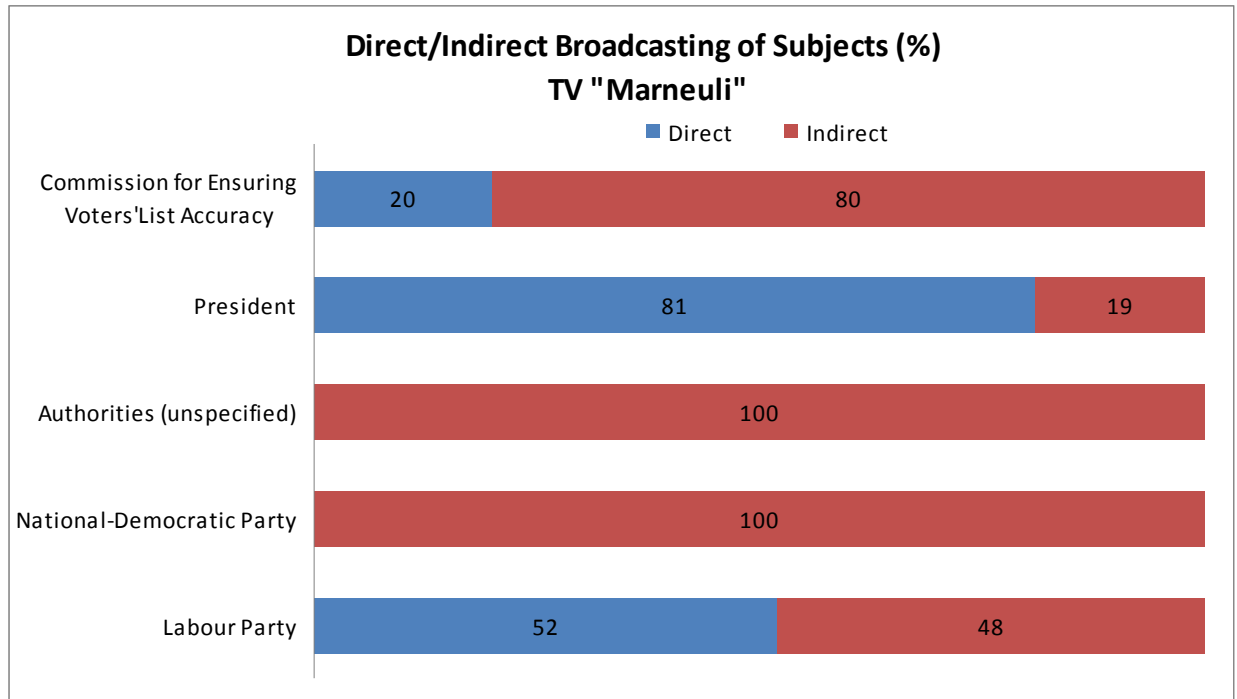
**Marneuli (Marneuli)** – The most of the airtime (3 min) was dedicated to the Commission in charge of verifying voters' list and President per each. The authorities in general and National-Democratic Party was provided 2-minute coverage each.



Mainly positive and neutral tones were observed in regard to the covered subjects. Negative tone was attached to reporting on the authorities (84 per cent).



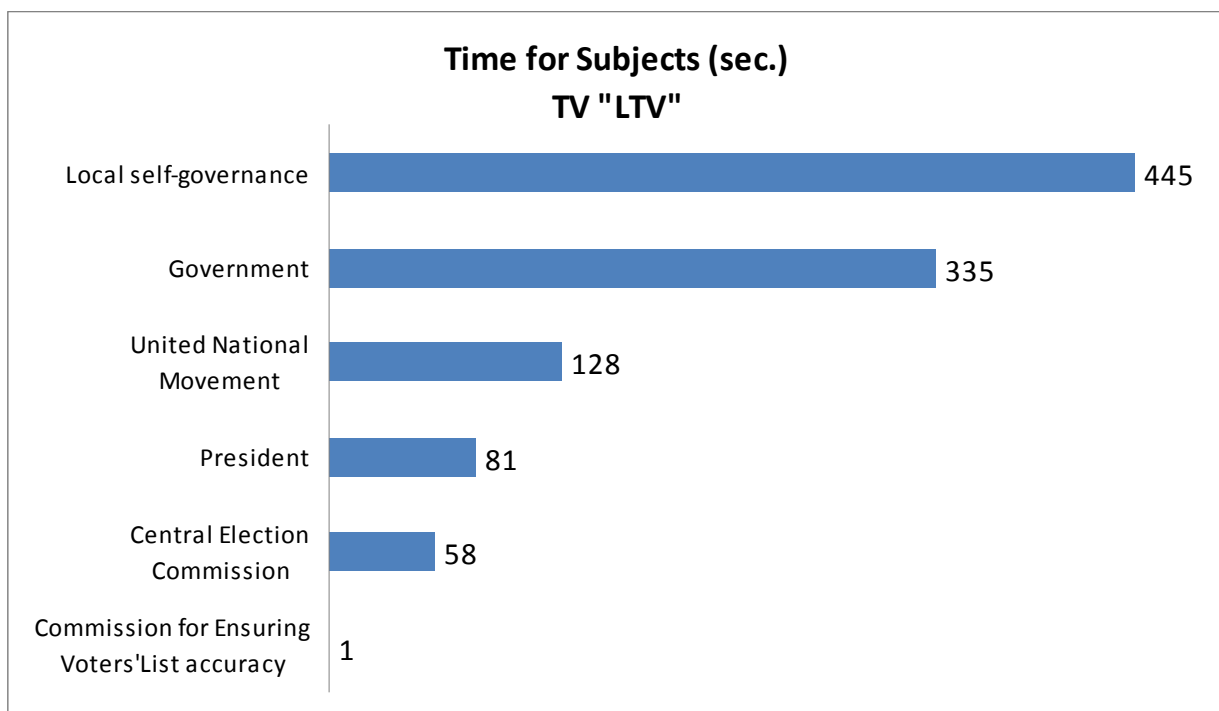
Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting only in case of President (81 per cent).



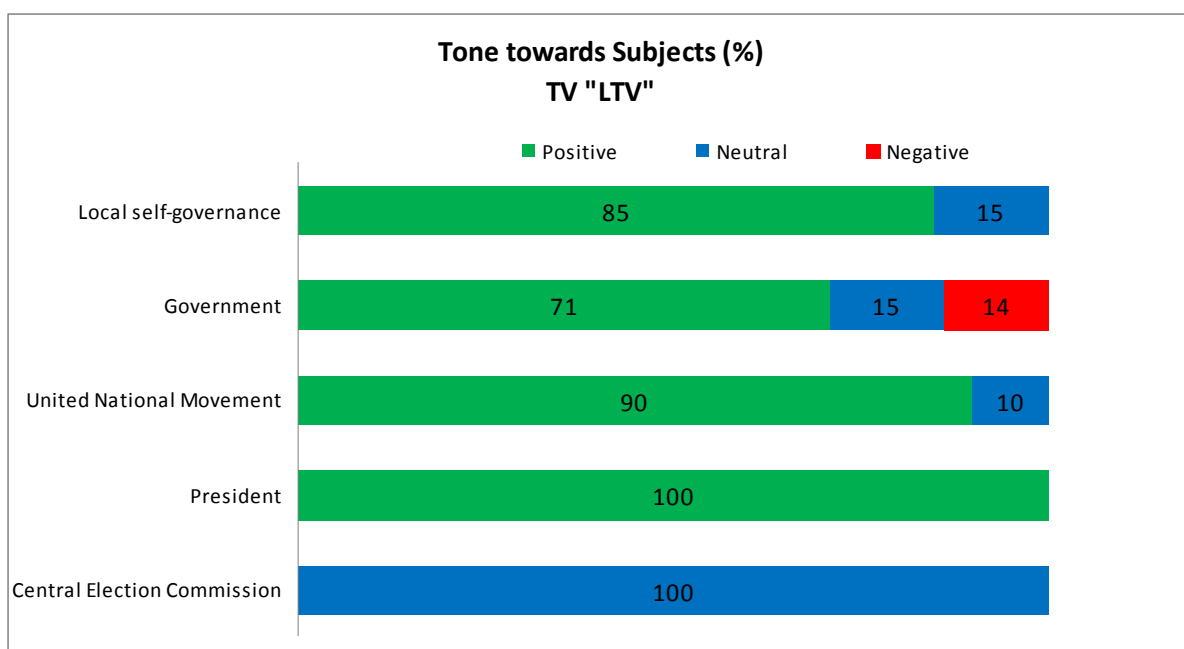
Along with regional news the TV company reported on the events ongoing nationwide. During the reporting period political developments were not dedicated much time in the news programs.

The news outlets were limited to just reporting the facts without providing diverse opinions or comments over either issue. For instance the August 3 news program starts with Bachuki Kardava's statement. The leader of the National-Democratic Party is accusing the Georgian Dream coalition activists of provoking possible military aggression. Nevertheless the story offers no response or different opinion to the statement. But it's noteworthy that the TV company was not biased to any political subject. The reporting on monitored subjects was mostly positive or neutral in tone.

**LTV (Lagodekhi)** – The TV company dedicated most of airtime, approximately 8 minutes, to the local self government. Reporting on government and UNM took 6 and 2 minutes respectively.

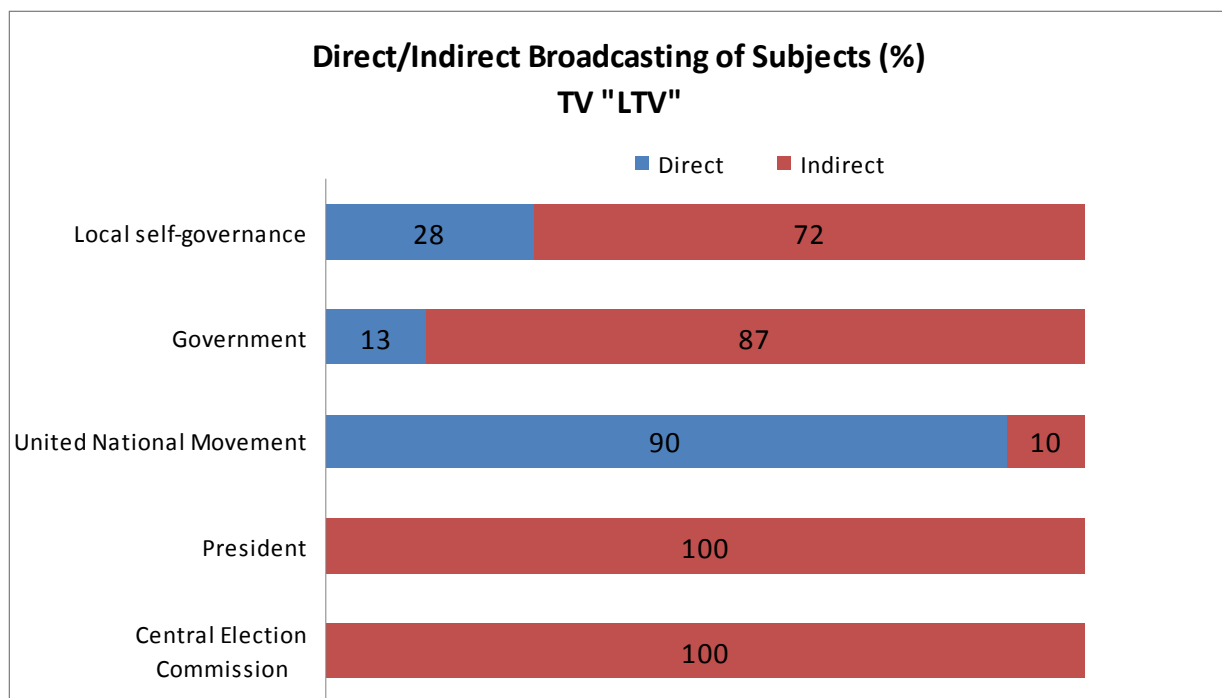


The subjects were essentially covered in a positive tone. Negative tone was observed in regard to the government only (14 per cent).



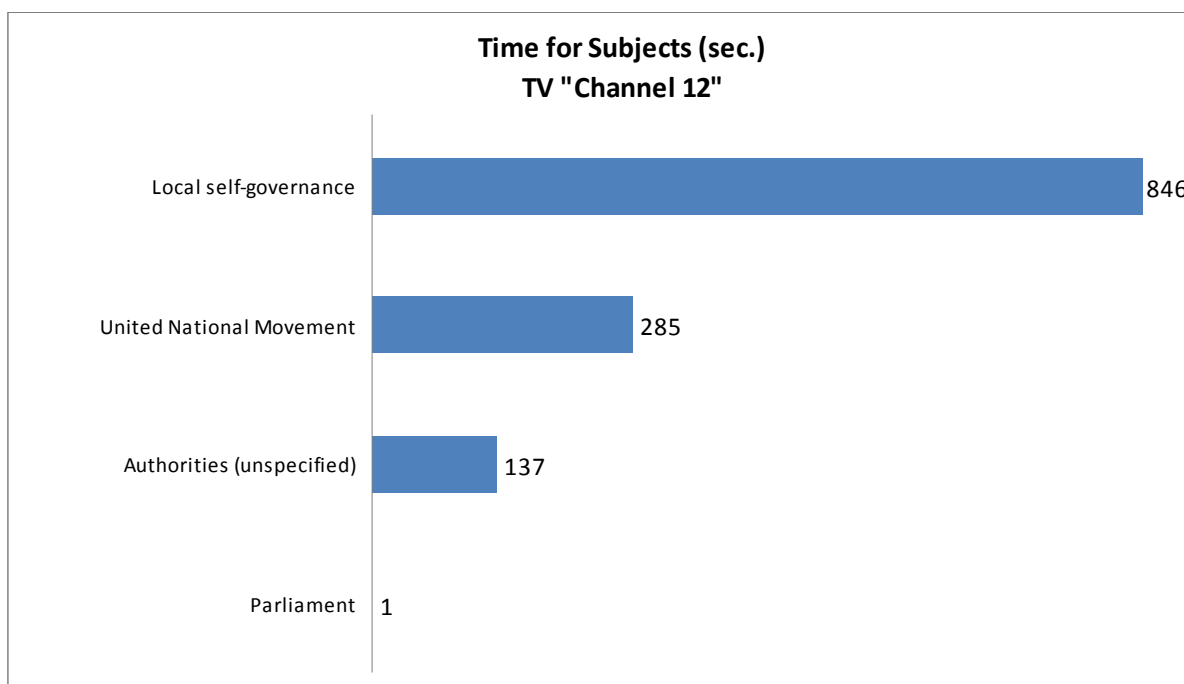
Monitored subjects were mainly talked about. Only UNM enjoyed high index of direct reporting - 90 per cent.





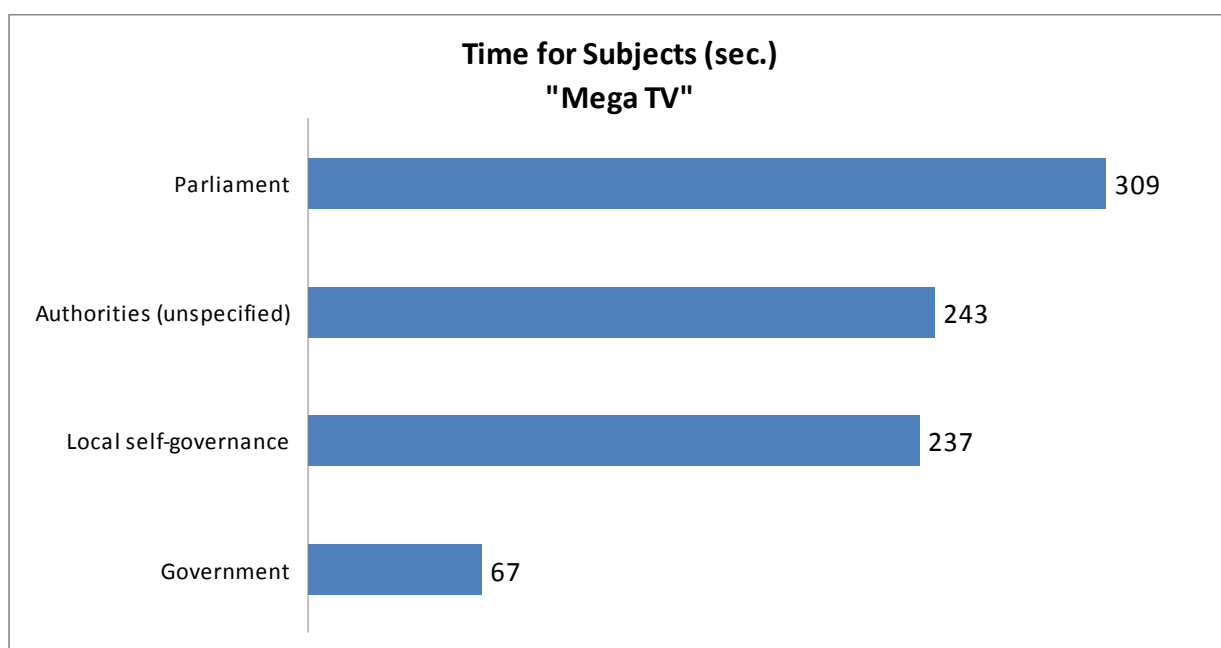
During the reporting period Lagodekhi TV did not work with full load. Due to the staff holidays only certain TV stories were aired. The activities carried out or planned by the local authorities were discussed in the main.

**12<sup>th</sup> Channel (Bolnisi)** – Within the reporting period the channel produced two news programs. Out of the monitored subjects only local self government (14 min), UNM (5 min) and authorities (2 min) were covered.



100 per cent negative tone was observed in regard to the authorities only. The coverage of the rest of the subjects was positive and neutral in tone: local self government – 77 positive, 23 per cent neutral; UNM – 81 positive, 19 per cent neutral. With the local self government direct reporting prevails over indirect reporting. In regard to UNM the ratio is almost equal 41 per cent direct /59 per cent indirect. During the reporting period two news programs were aired. The activities carried out by the local self government and UNM majoritarian candidate were covered in the main. The coverage tone was mainly positive.

**Mega TV (Khoni)** – During reporting period two news programs were aired. 5 minutes were dedicated to the Parliament, 4-4 minutes were dedicated to the authorities and local self government. Coverage was always positive in tone, negative tone (2 per cent) was observed only in regard to the authorities, neutral tone (6 per cent) was attached to the reporting on the local self government. Indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.



The TV company covers only local events, dedicating a fair amount of airtime to the government representatives' visits to Khoni region. The first story (7 min) in the August 3 news program was dedicated to the parliamentary chair Davit Bakradze's meeting with the local population. The second story (4 min) in the same news program is dedicated to PM Vano Merabishvili's meeting with the Khoni population.

*Activities to be carried out:*

Within the period of August 13 - 26 the forth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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