

Election Media Monitoring

(Qualitative Part)

May 11-31, 2012

Election media monitoring implemented by the CRRC consists of two parts: quantitative and qualitative. Components of the qualitative monitoring are: balance, impartiality, accuracy, fact-based coverage, manipulation with footage and music. Based on these components we are presenting the monitoring results for news releases broadcasted during May 11-31, per channels. Contents of the data of the qualitative part may differ from the quantitative section, especially in the part of the tone and overall impression, as far as the quantitative tone is counted only in regards to the specific subjects, and as for the qualitative observation, its main subject is the whole report.

The First Channel

In the beginning of monitoring, mostly the authorities and government subjects were covered in the main evening news releases on the First Channel. For example, the news items of May 11-12 mostly reported about the visits of government members in various regions and abroad, also about the President and the Mayor of Tbilisi. For the next days the representatives of other government structures and opposition parties started to appear one after another.

It is interesting to observe the overall impression left after watching the reports. As it was the case with the quantitative part, the qualitative observations mostly left overall neutral impression towards the subjects, however, in rare cases the stories would leave an overall positive impression concerning the ruling team and the President. The news items are quite balanced from the viewpoint of presented respondents, but there are also other stories where the comments of only one side are provided.

Rustavi 2

As for the main evening news releases of Rustavi 2, during this period the stories are mostly about the politics, and in many cases these are the news items about the reforms being carried out in Georgia, the stories about the rebuilding the country and mostly

they cover the activities of authorities. Second biggest part of the news items is dedicated to the Georgian Dream and their members. In general, the reports were done with neutral tone, and there was a negative impression left only in regards to the non-parliamentary opposition, namely, towards Ivanishvili and the members of his coalition or his party.

In this respect the news item of May 22 “Ivanishvili and Peace Bridge” stands out, where we observe the manipulation with footage. The story is about Bidzina Ivanishvili’s attitude towards the Peace Bridge. First the report shows some footage of the Peace Bridge, and how it has been used for various events: catwalk, exhibition, wedding photos. Then the reporter is saying that Ivanishvili’s statement made the experts recall one of the famous persons and a bridge (implying Aslan Abashidze and Choloki Bridge in 2004). At the same time they show the footage of how the Choloki Bridge was exploded, which ultimately creates negative impression about Bidzina Ivanishvili.¹

Imedi

As observed, there are mostly neutral stories broadcasted by the news releases on Imedi. However, coverage of the President and the government leaves more positive impression, but the reports linked to Bidzina Ivanishvili create more negative impressions.

During the monitoring, there were cases when various subjects were mentioned in a negative way by the journalists:

- For example, in the news item of May 11 “Ivanishvili’s RosCredit – “from pocket to pocket”: a pre-election fiction?” the journalist is saying, - “the oligarch knows well that the origin of money, which he has already spent for coming to the Georgian politics, is one of his main political stains. However, as it seems he’s got lot more left to spent”.
- In the news item of May 28 “Tsagareishvili at the rally of the Dream” a journalist is referring to Levan Gachechiladze as “Veteran of abusive language in politics”.

¹ For watching the news item please follow the link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Sw9u335JA&feature=youtu.be>

In regards to the respondents presented in the news item, the number of balanced and unbalanced stories was the same. However, as for the coverage of political parties and the President's speeches, often only one side would be presented there.

There was no case of manipulation with footage on Imedi during this period. The most eye-catching one was the creation of positive background by chanting and applause.

Maestro

Main evening news releases on Maestro provided equal coverage for the government and also for the opposition representatives during this period. Basically, all the sides are represented in the stories.

Eventually, majority of the news items leaves overall neutral impression about the subjects. However, the observation is that unlike the stories prepared about Bidzina Ivanishvili, coverage of the government tends to be a bit more negative and also some irony is observed as well.

One of the examples can be the news item of May 11 about the business trip expenses of government members, where the journalist refers to the government as "fast and swift-footed" in the very first sentence and says that "the President will study the issue of per diem amounts of the fast and swift-footed government."

Kavkasia

In most cases the stories do not have headlines when broadcasted in the news releases on Kavkasia. Besides, names or statuses of respondents are not indicated in the reports, and often it is difficult to understand who is speaking. In general, the news items leave neutral impression as a whole.

From the viewpoint of the sources used, in many cases the news items were not balanced. Frequently there was only one source provided, and sometimes there was no source specified in the report at all.

Basically, the facts and journalist's narrative provided in the news items on Kavkasia were supported by the respondents' comments or footage. For example, in the news item about the argument between the deputy Gamgebeli of Isani-Samgori and the

member of the Free Democrats Party, there was footage showing the dispute, also physical and verbal abuse.

The Ninth Channel

Stories in the evening news releases on the Ninth Channel are mostly balanced from the viewpoint of presented respondents, and several sides are covered.

Often the stories provide neutral coverage. However, there was a trend of presenting the ruling party, government representatives and Mikheil Saakashvili in an ironic and negative way. Even from the quantitative point of view, there are more news items about the government and representatives of authorities and about their activities, than about other subjects.

For example, in the news item of May 24 about the construction of Poti Airport, they mention that it was Mikheil Saakashvili's idea to build an airport in Poti. There is a negative impression towards the authorities left after watching the news item, as far as according to the story it is confirmed that the environment will be affected if the Poti airport is constructed and if the marshes are dried out.

There were cases identified on the Ninth Channel when the journalist's narrative and the respondents' comments used in the story were not compatible to one another.

In the news item of May 22, the discussion is about a banner in English hung above the houses of Parliament in Tbilisi. The journalist is saying that the publicist Vasil Maglapheridze evaluates the banner as "a political retardation". However, Vasil Maglapheridze is talking about other topics in his comment, and he is concerned that the government's vocabulary is more focused on construction than on freedom, as it was during the Soviet Union.

Real TV

News releases on Real TV mostly provide coverage of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Coalition Georgian Dream and the overall impression is clearly negative. There are often cases of manipulation with editing, footage and music, or mentioning the opposition representatives with irony or cynical adjectives.

Quite often the following phrases are used, such as: “Main Dreamer”, “Much Give&Take around the Oligarch”; a journalist refers to Eliso Chapidze, who is a member of the Georgian Dream, as “woman who can bake Khachapuri and speak English”.

In the news item of May 17 “Meetings of the Dream” Kakha Shartava is saying that this fall will be hot. Then the journalist is mentioning Shartava ironically: “Sweating and excited Kakha Shartava made announcement of hot October for the people of Khashuri”.

One of the good examples of negative coverage and manipulation with footage is the shots about the rally of the Georgian Dream, which took place on May 27 and was broadcasted on May 28, where Kaladze is making his speech and addressing the people. The shots are made in black and white. The video is accelerated, there is an accompanying music from the movie “Peola” and there is a clip from this movie where Ipolite Khvichia is saying: “mind the defense, Khvedelidze, mind the defense”. Then there is footage from old football match of Kaladze, where he is coming and shrugging. After that there is a video of Ipolite Khvichia again, where he is feeling bad and is shouting: “I need a Goal, a Goal!”, which is making reference to Kaladze’s own-goals. The news item provides a very negative coverage of Kakha Kaladze, member of the Georgian Dream.²

² For watching the news item please follow the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbpy7t-CgoQ&feature=youtu.be>

Annexes: Diagrams

Diagram 1

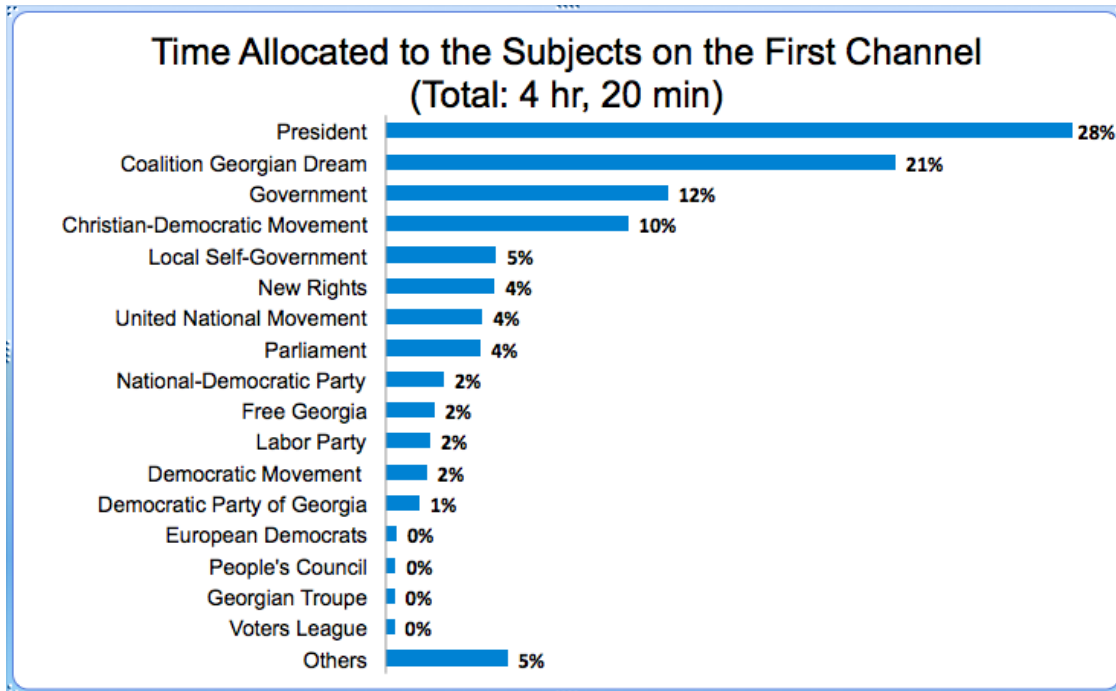


Diagram 2

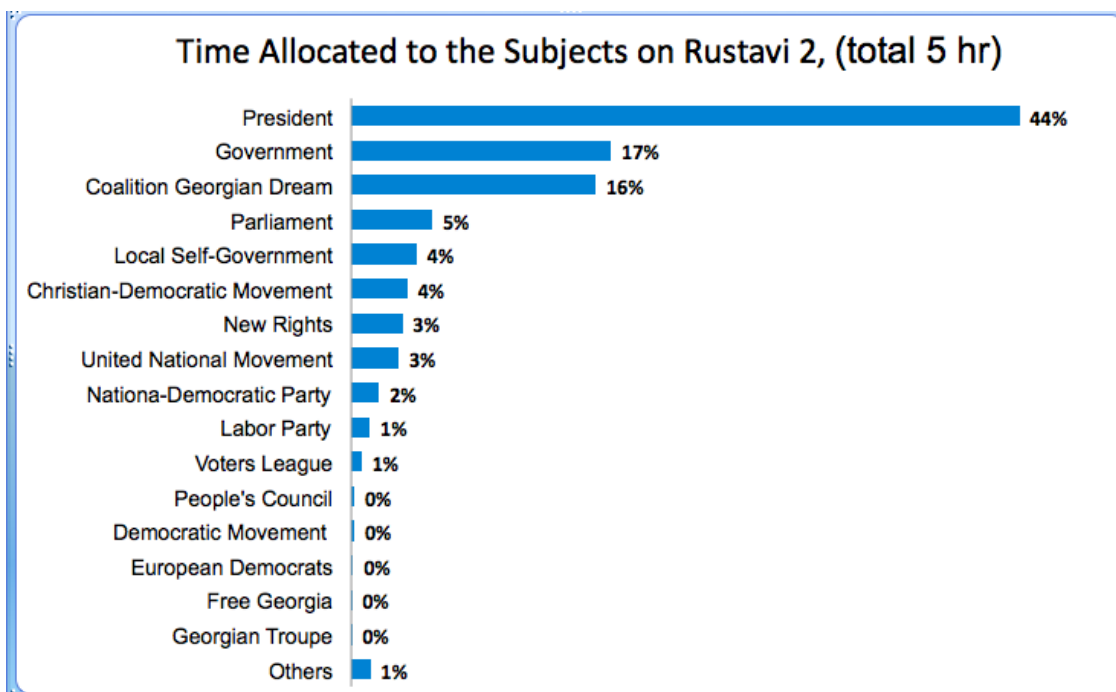


Diagram 3

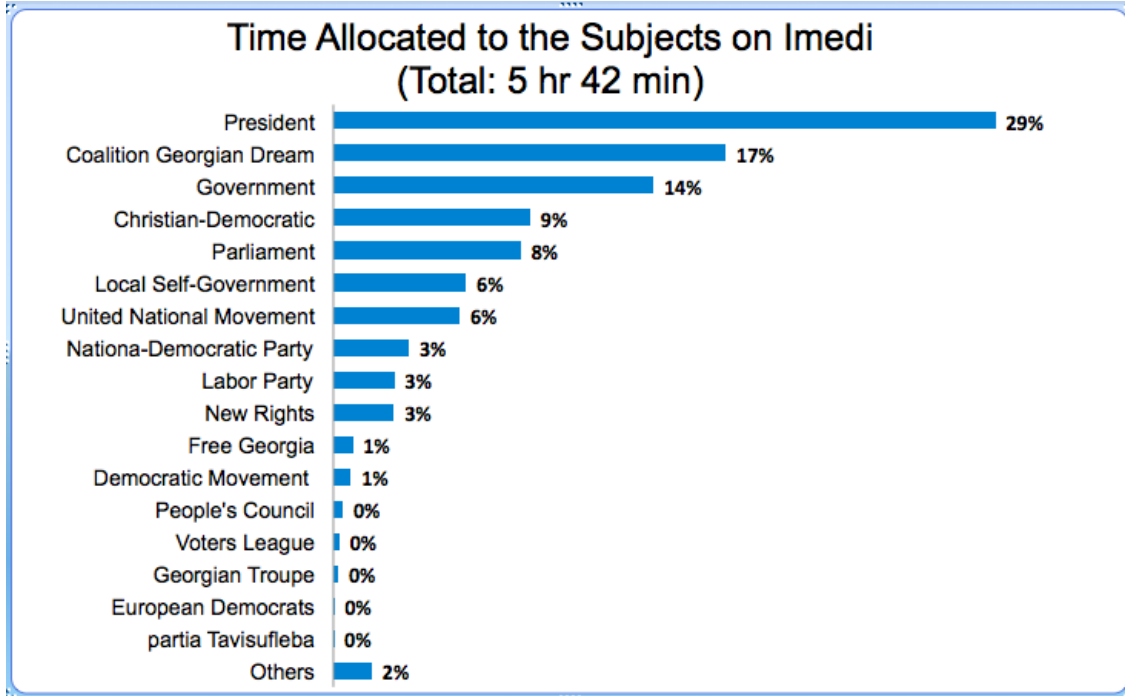


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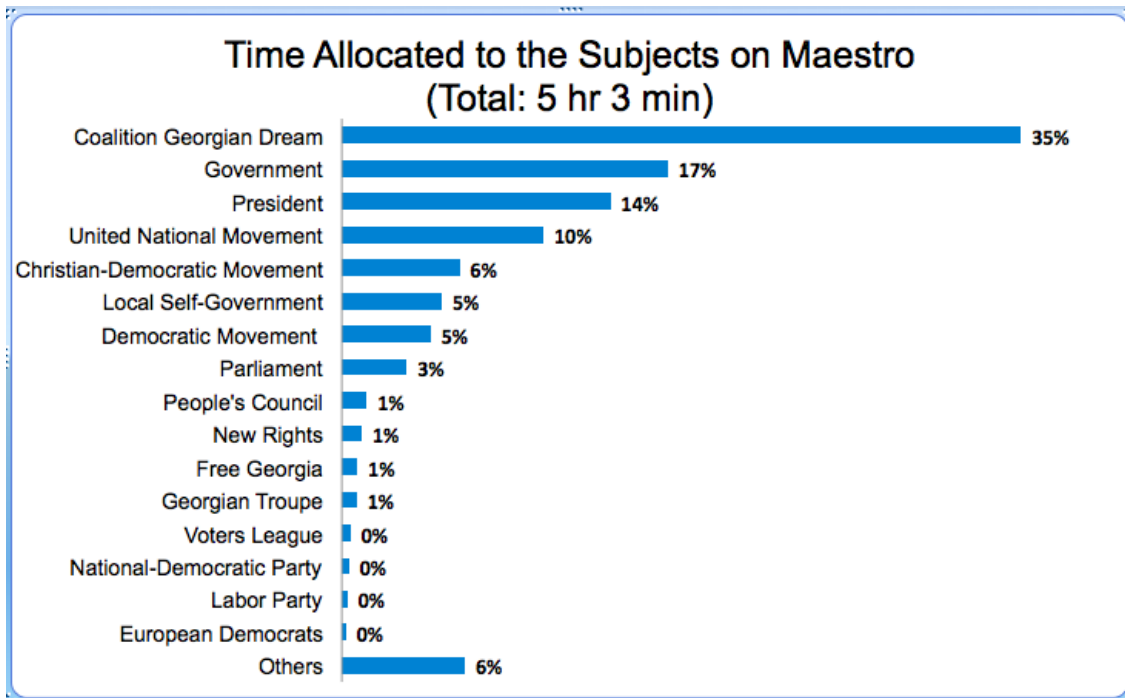


Diagram 5

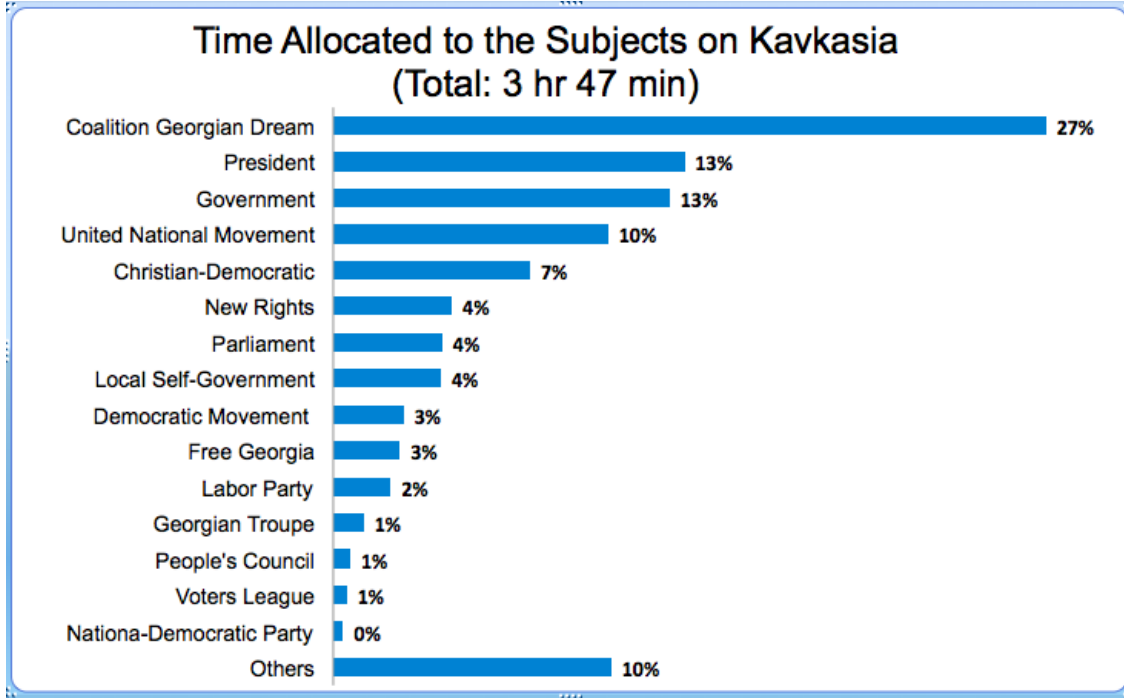


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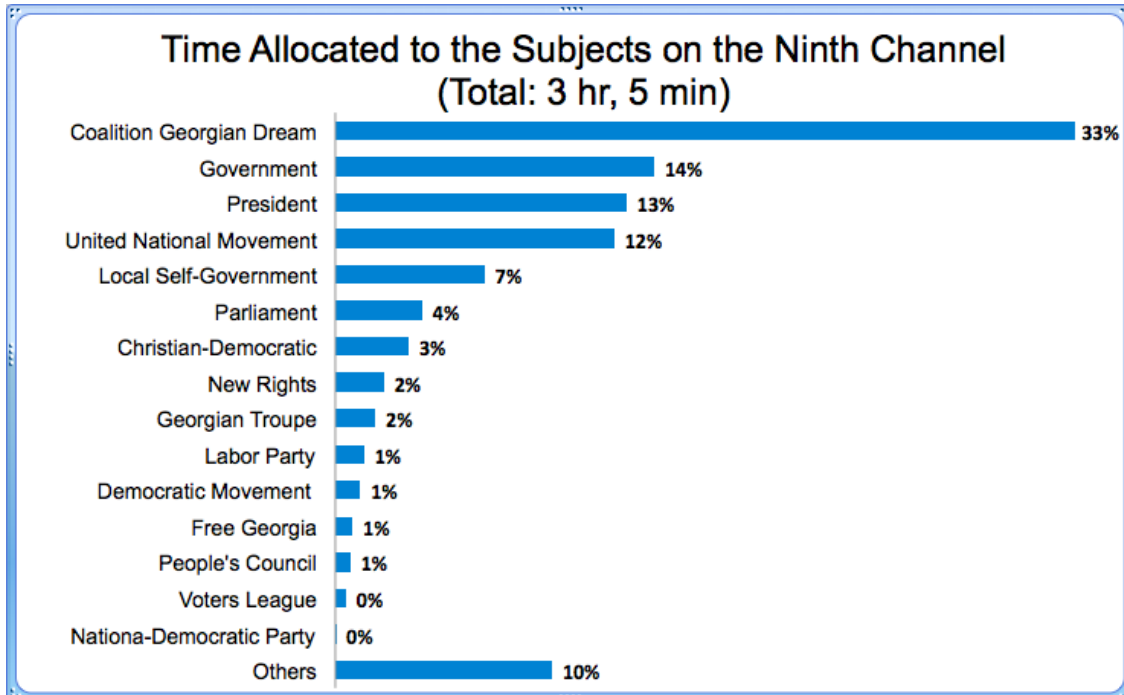
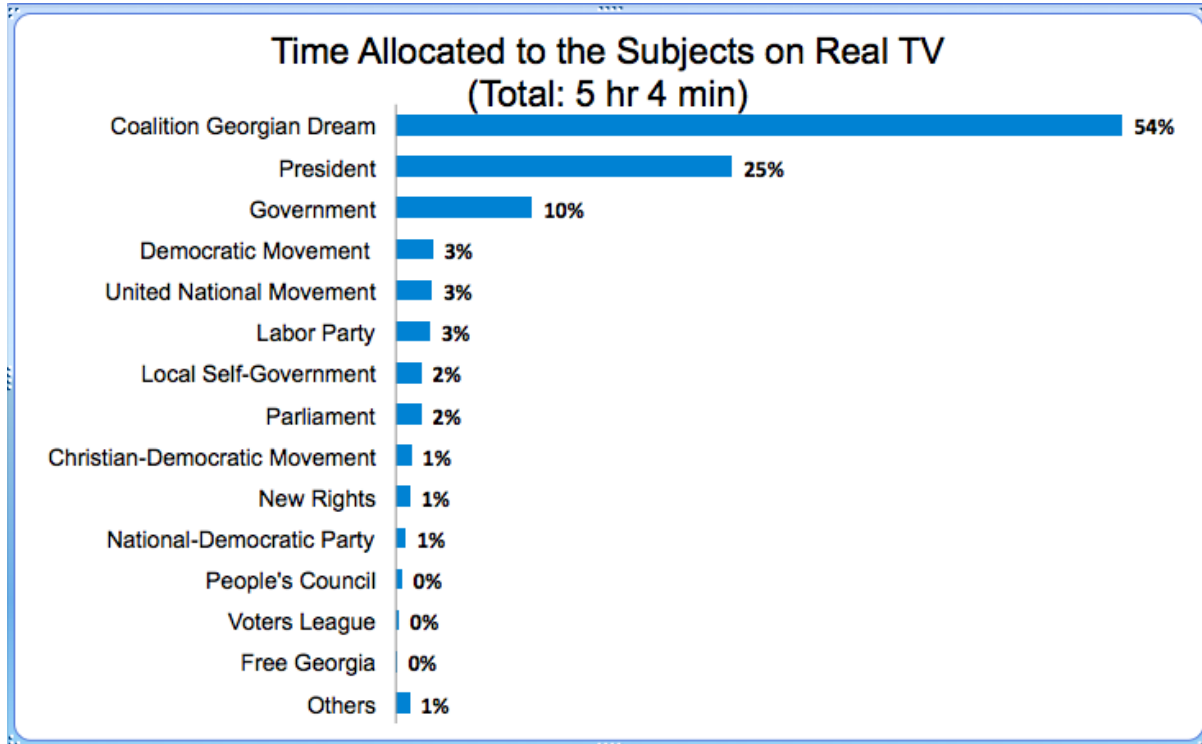


Diagram 7



Time allocated to the Coalition Georgian Dream per Channels

Diagram 8

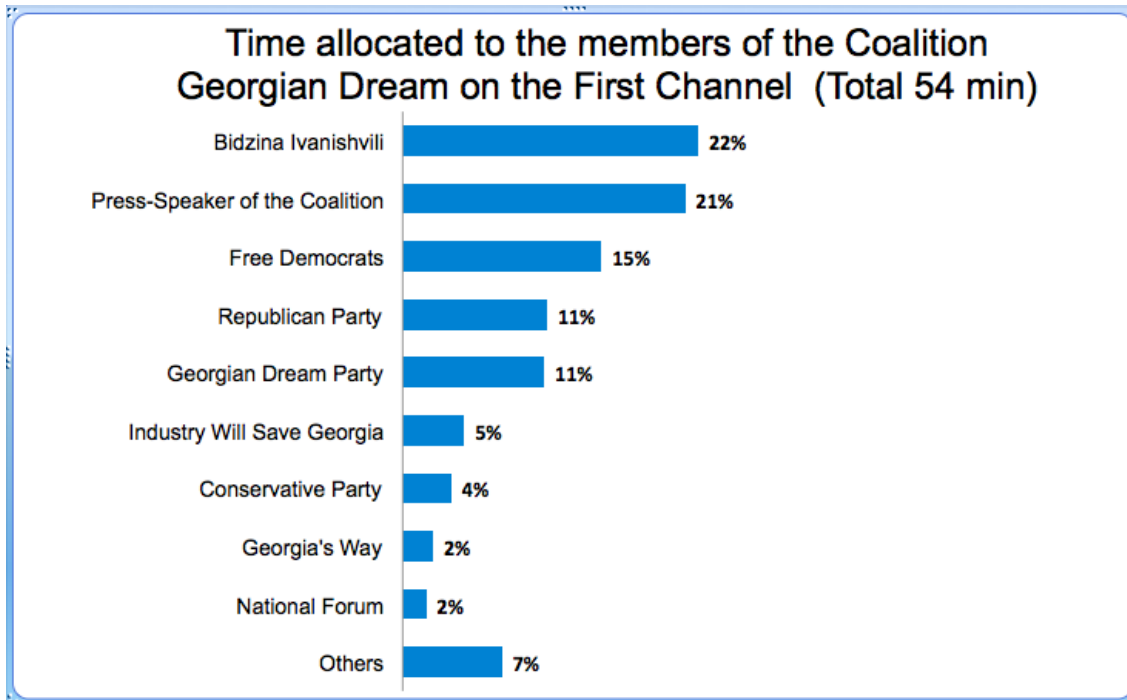


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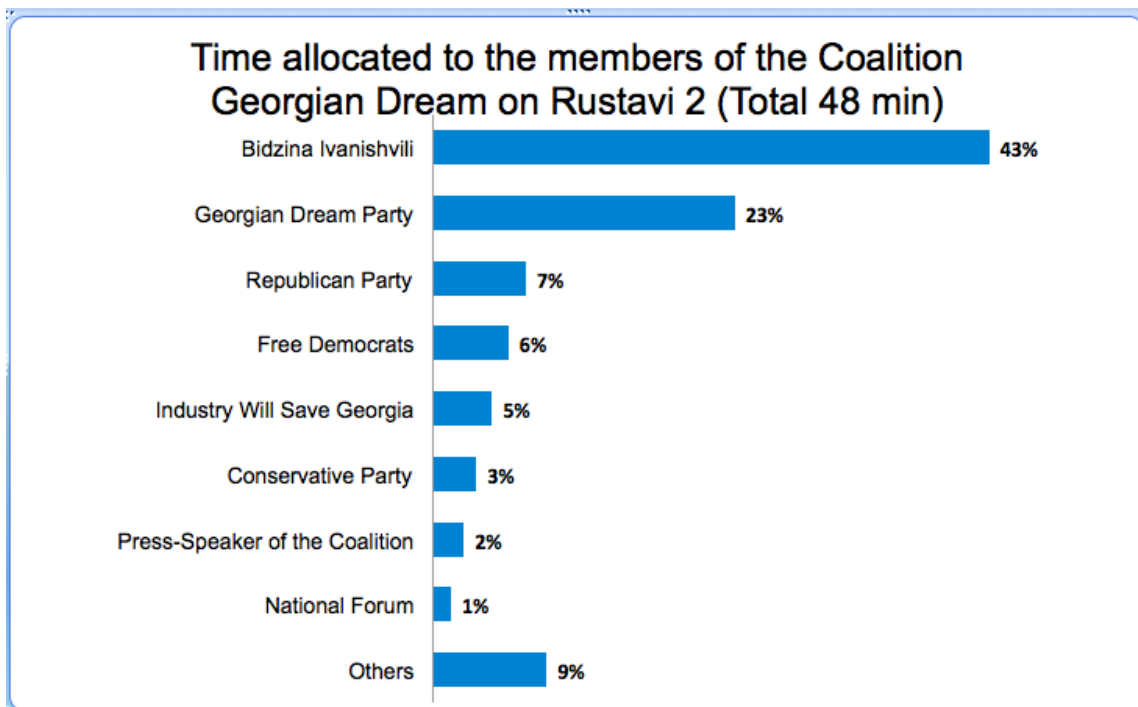


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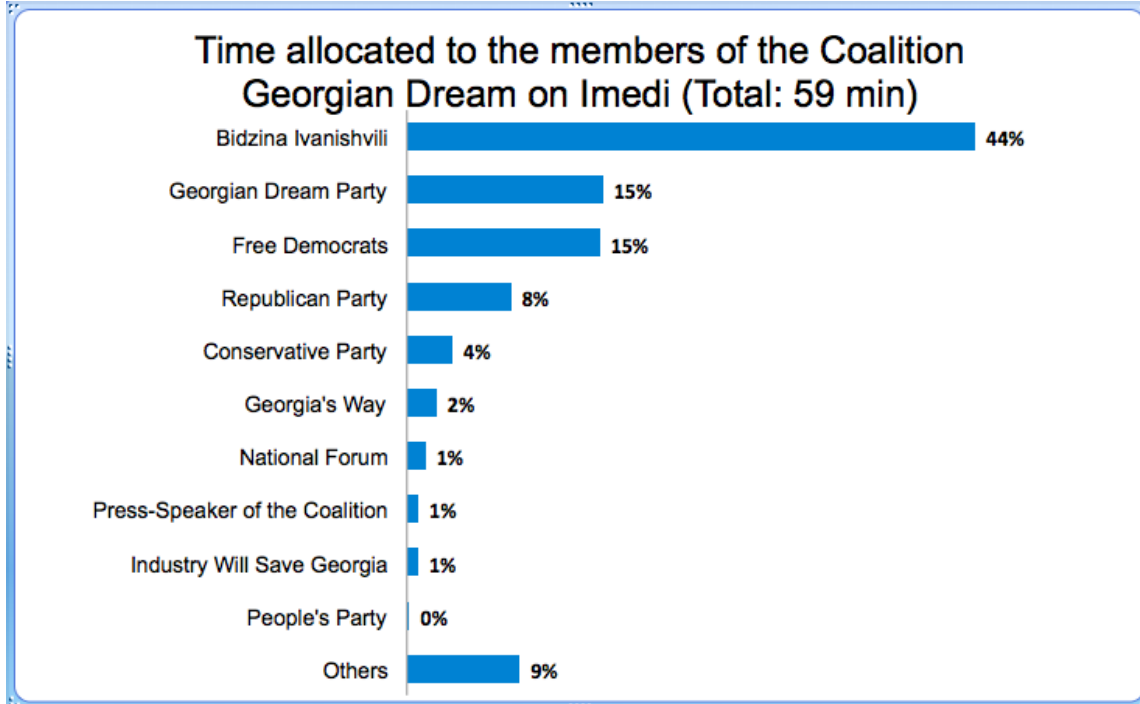


Diagram 11

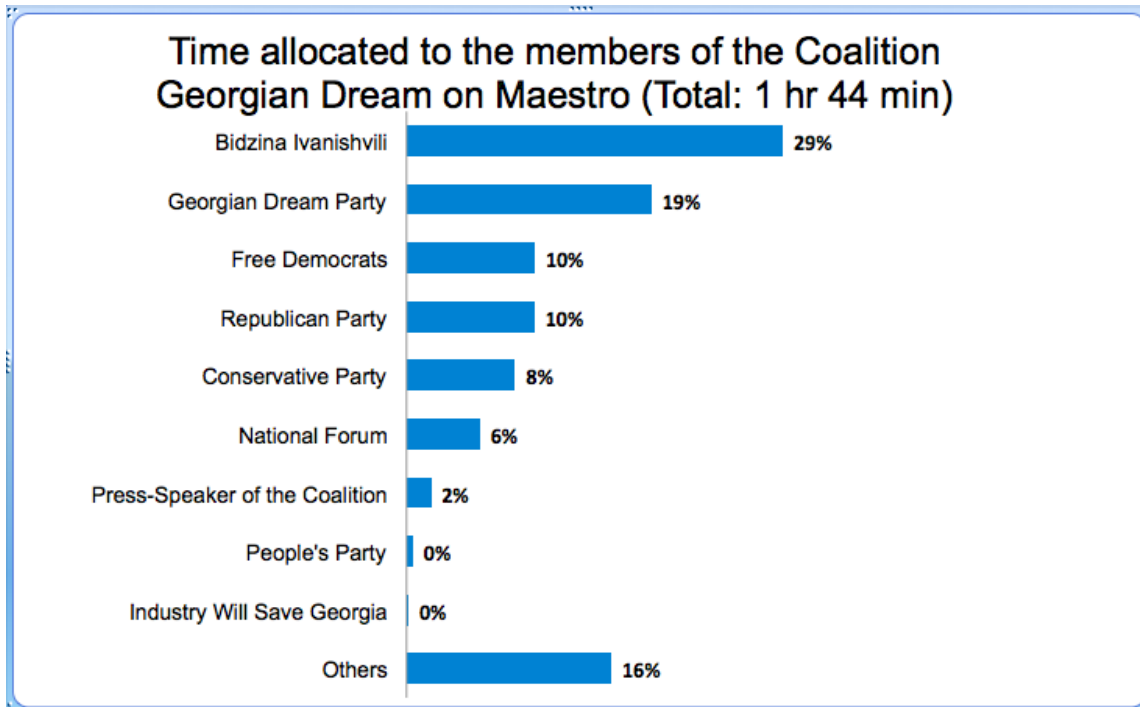


Diagram 12

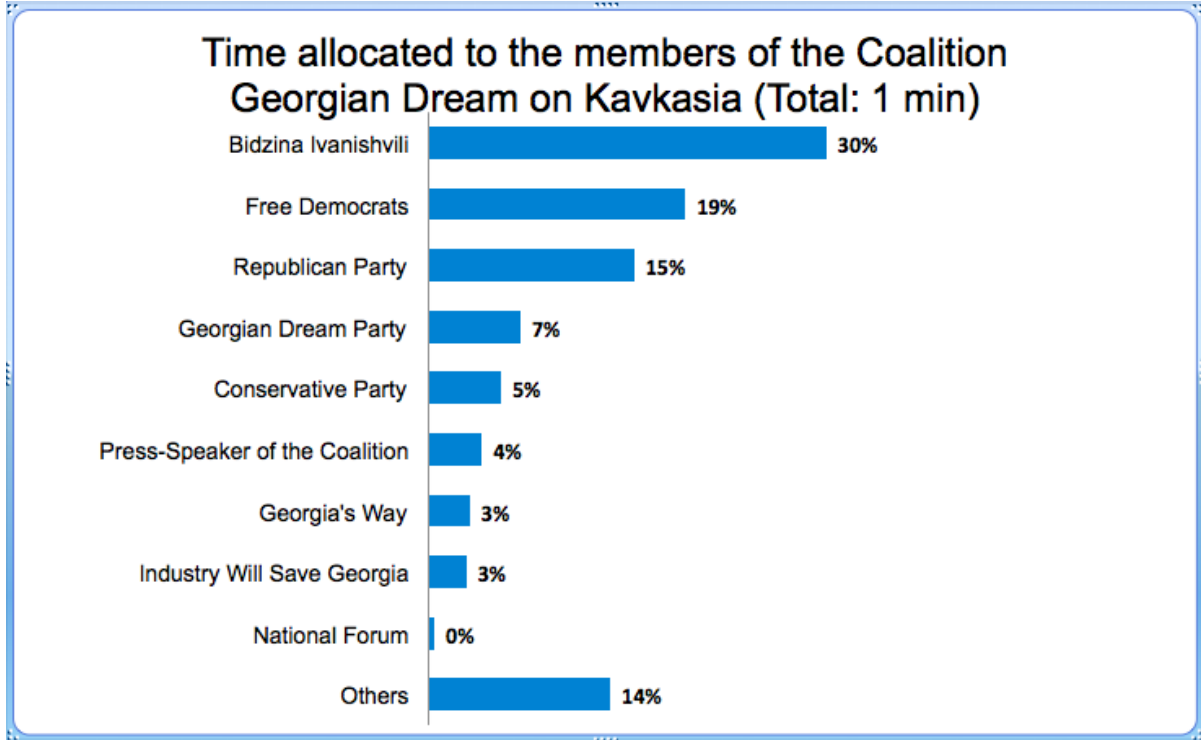


Diagram 13

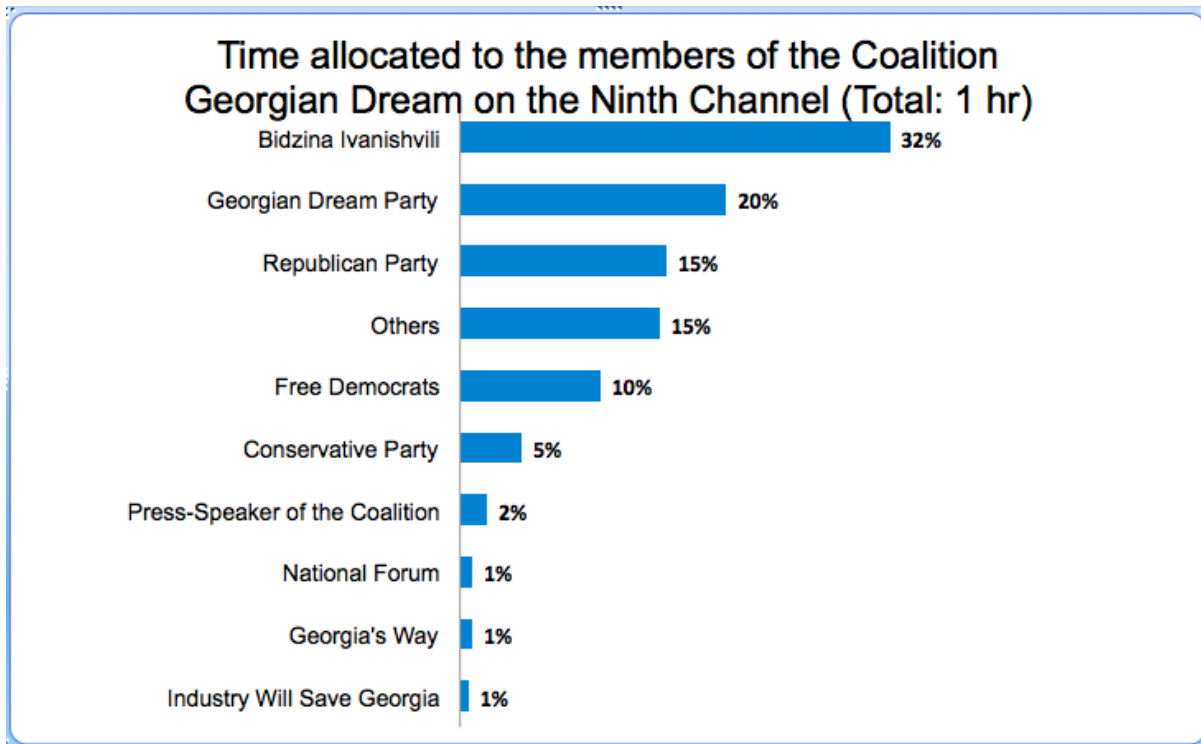


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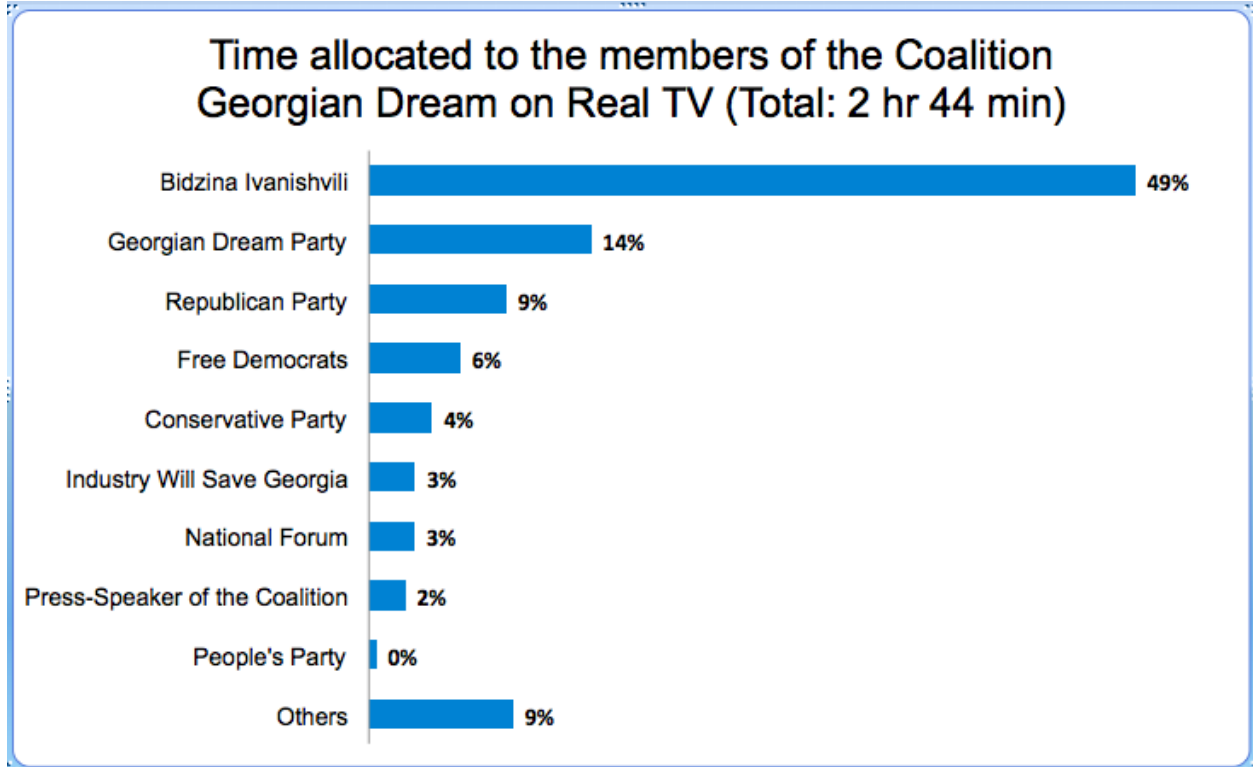


Diagram 15

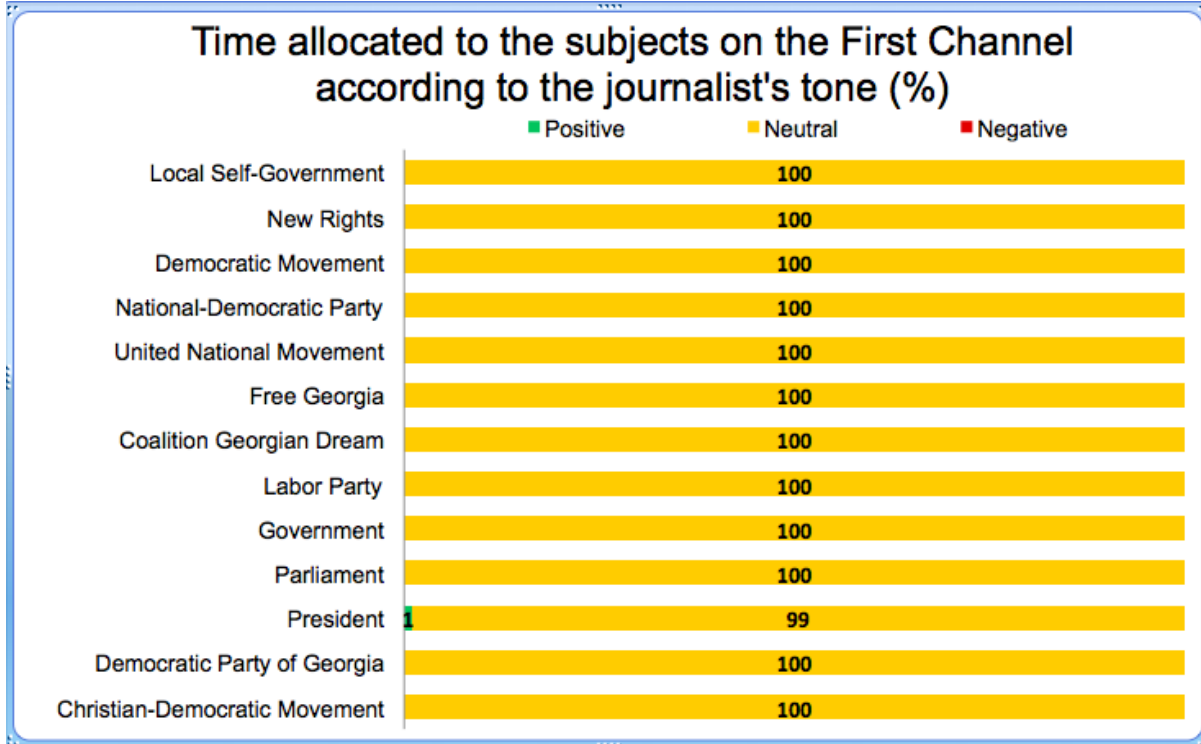


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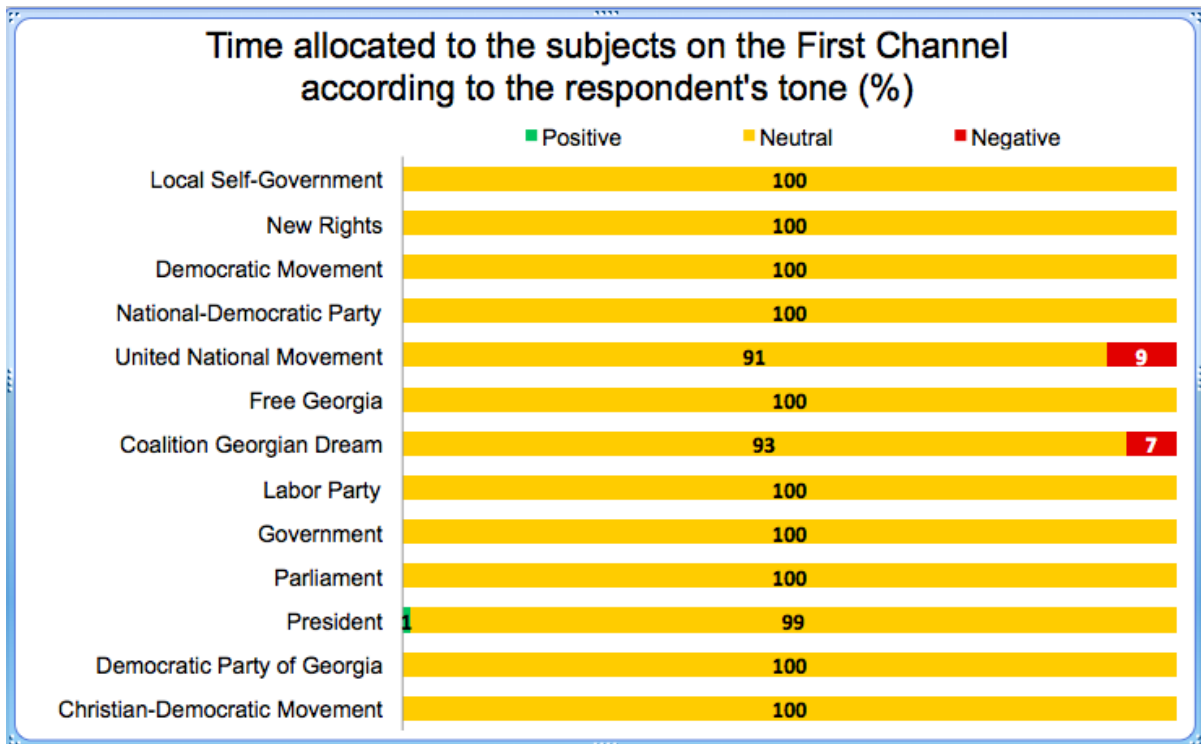


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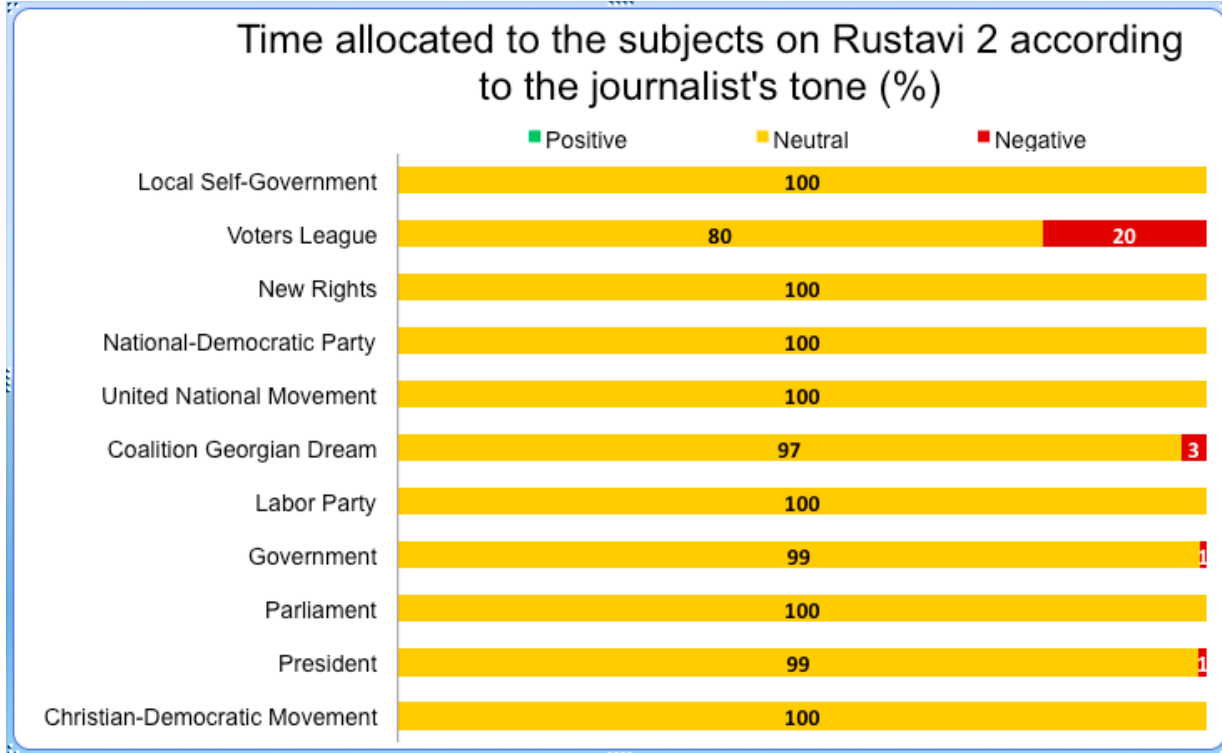


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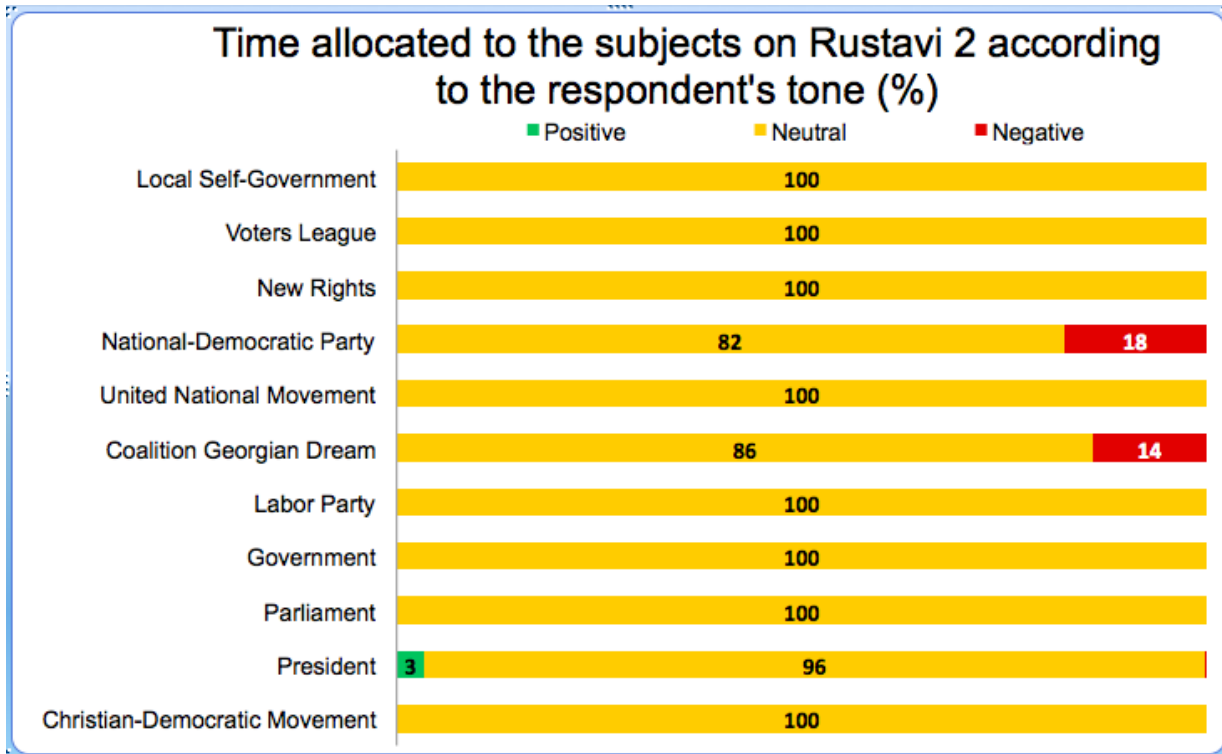


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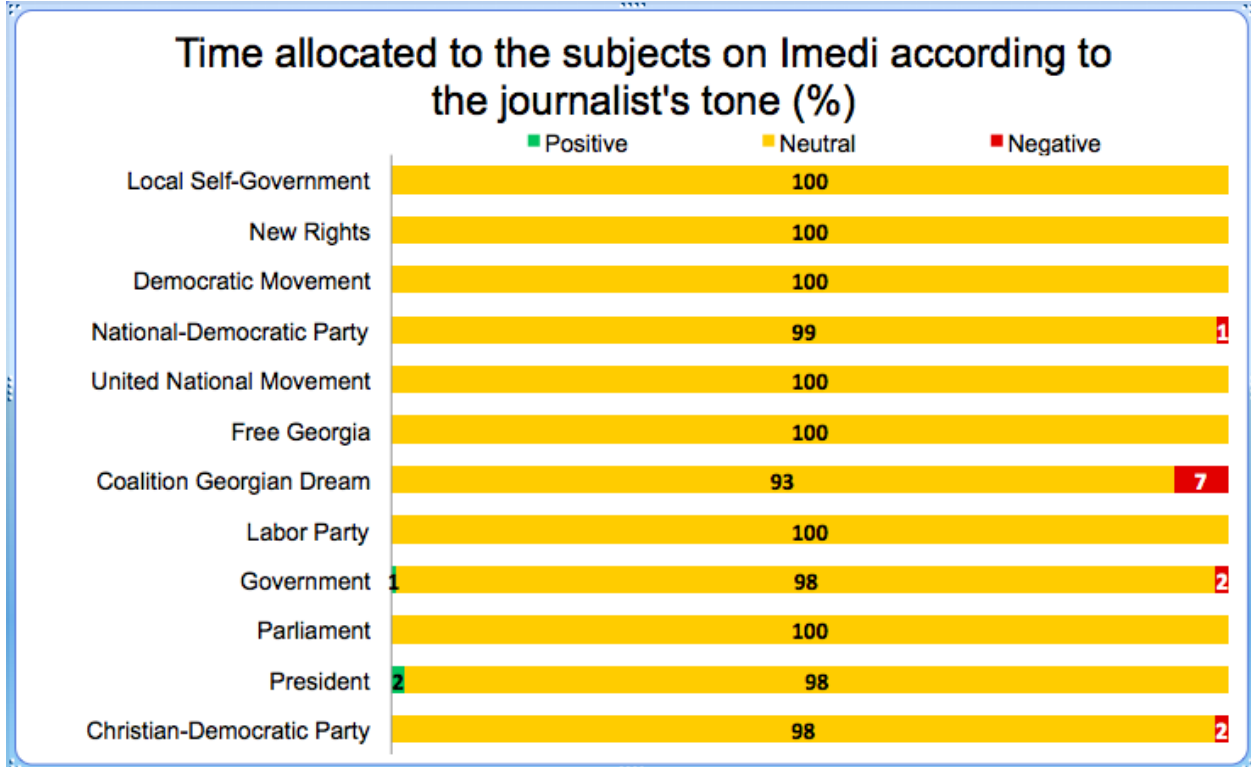


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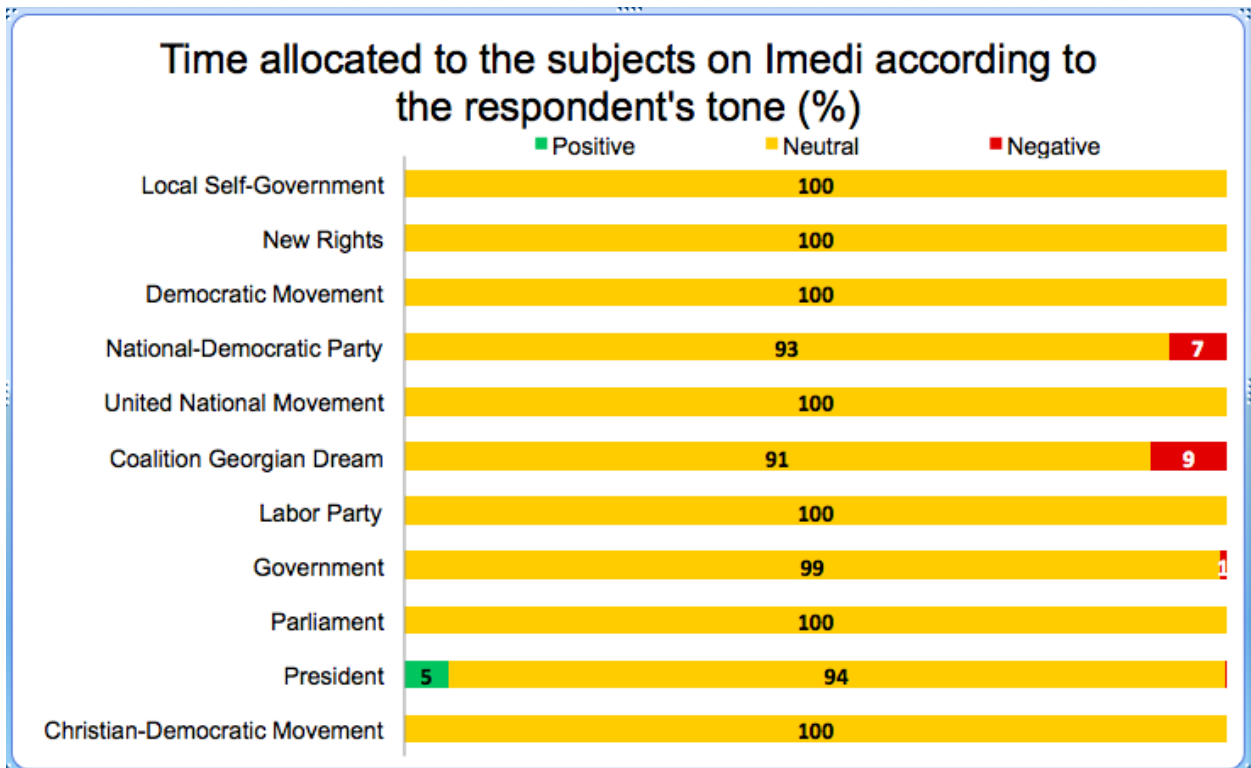


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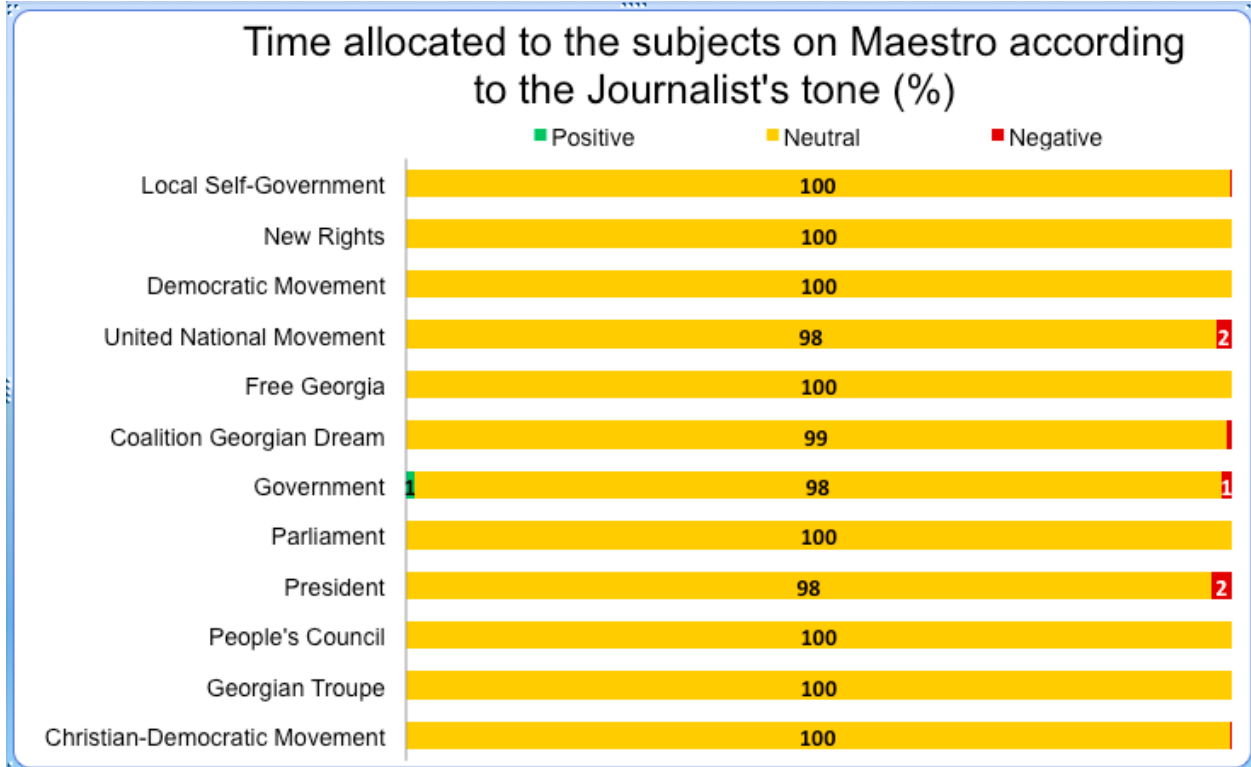


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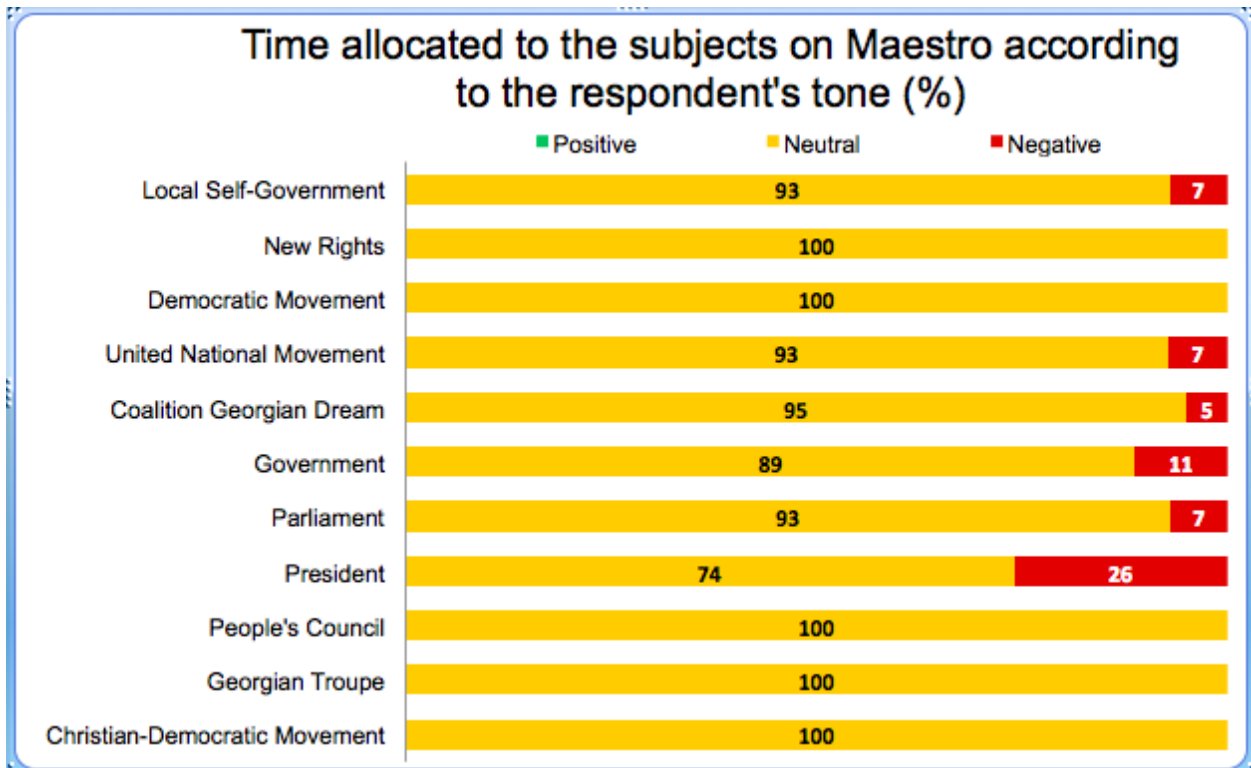


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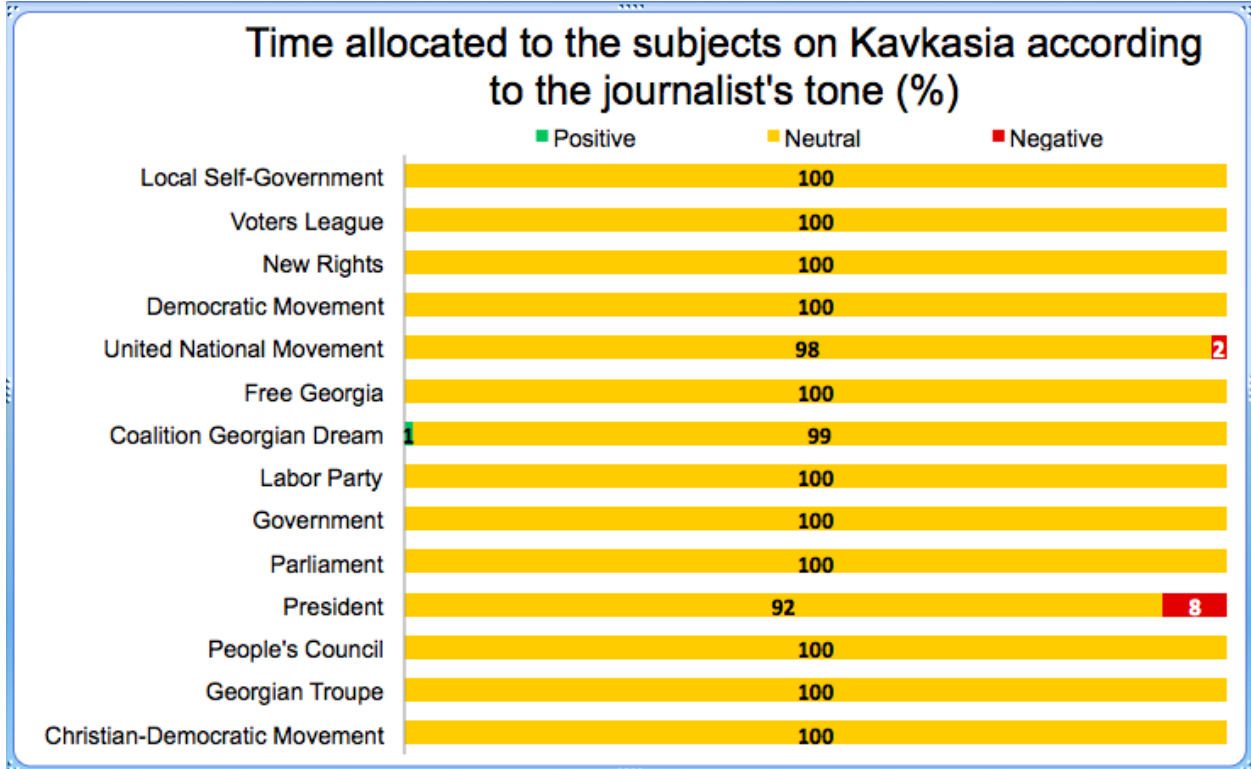


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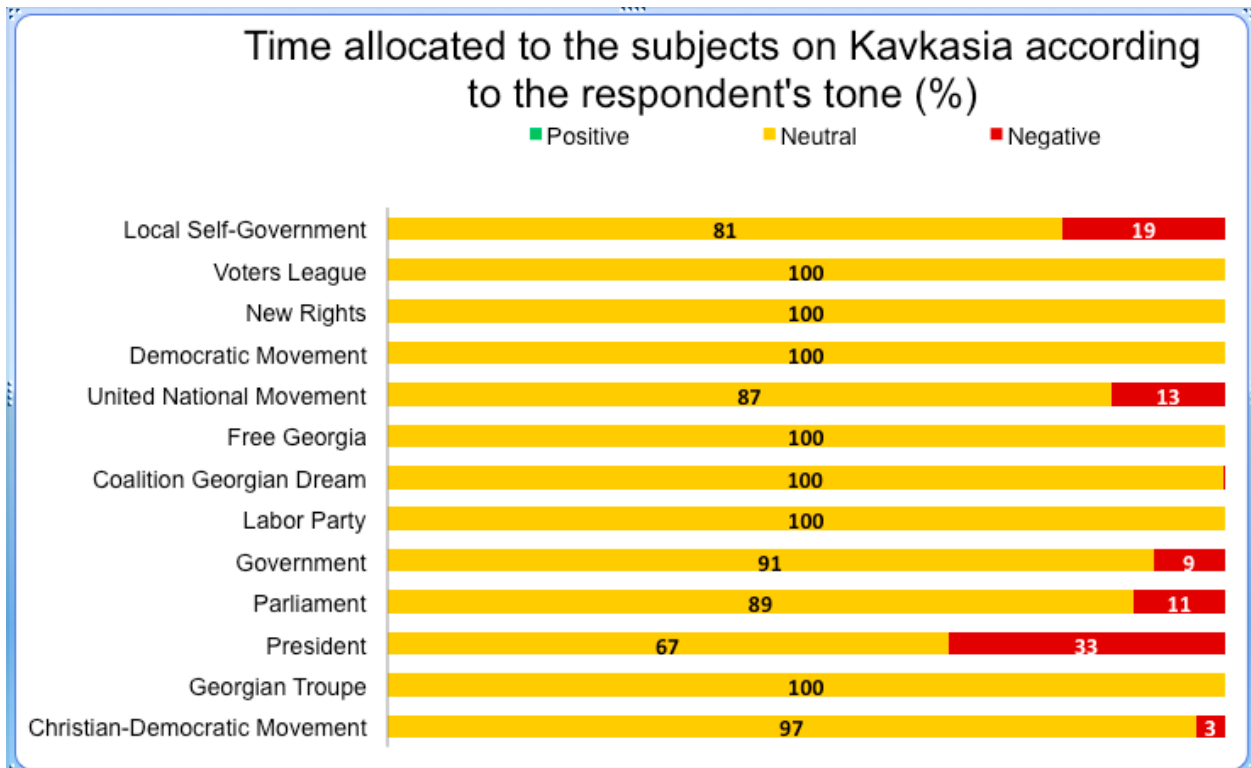


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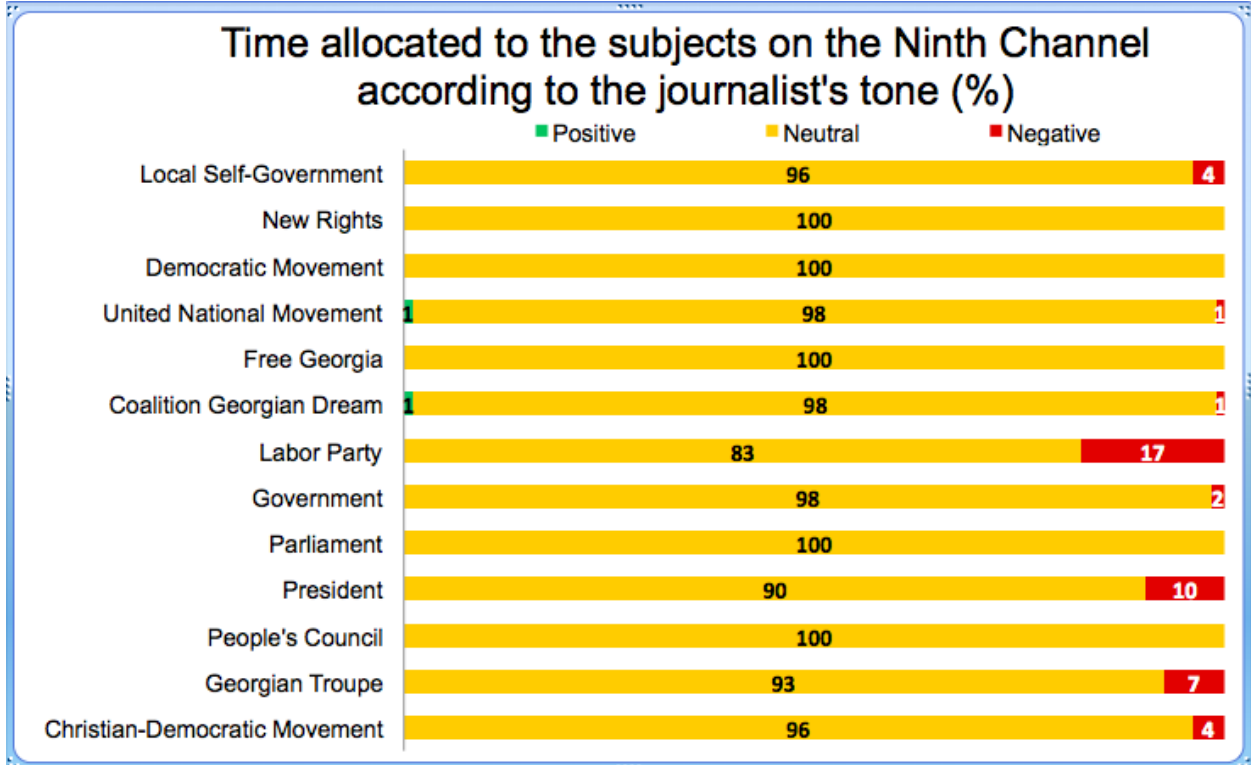


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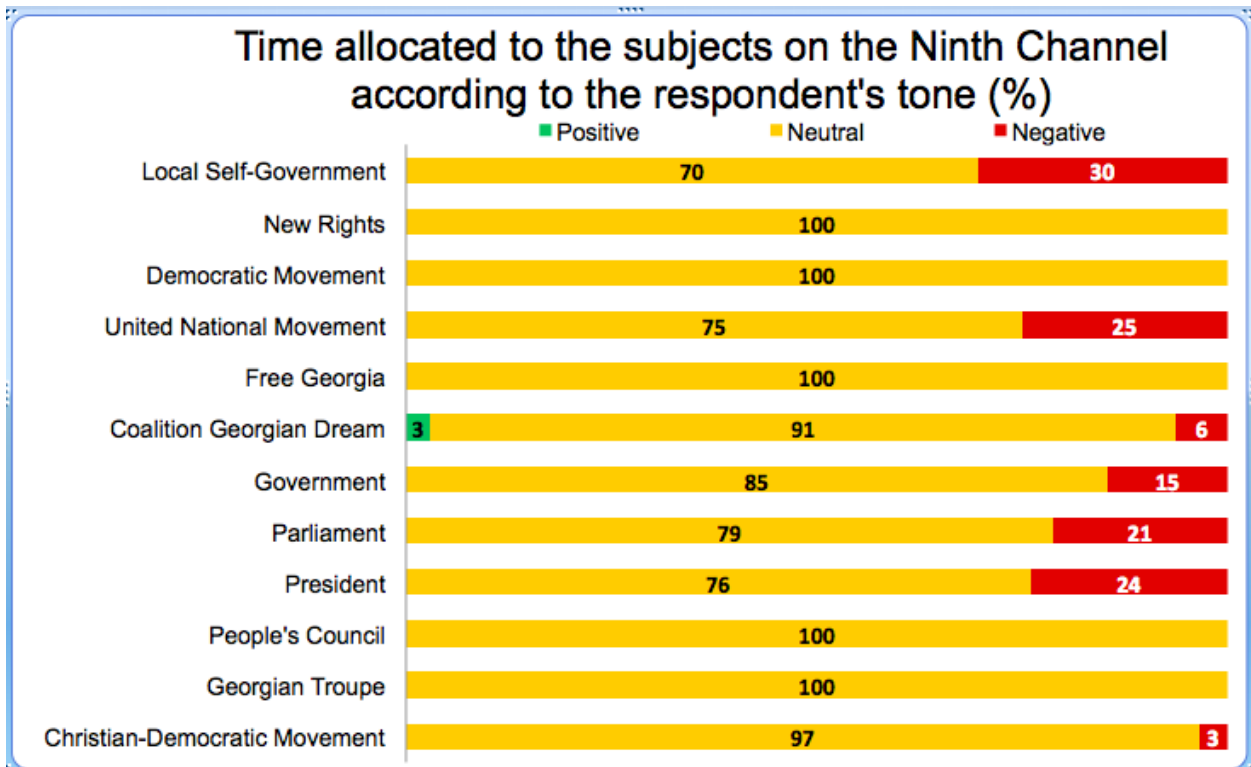


Diagram 27

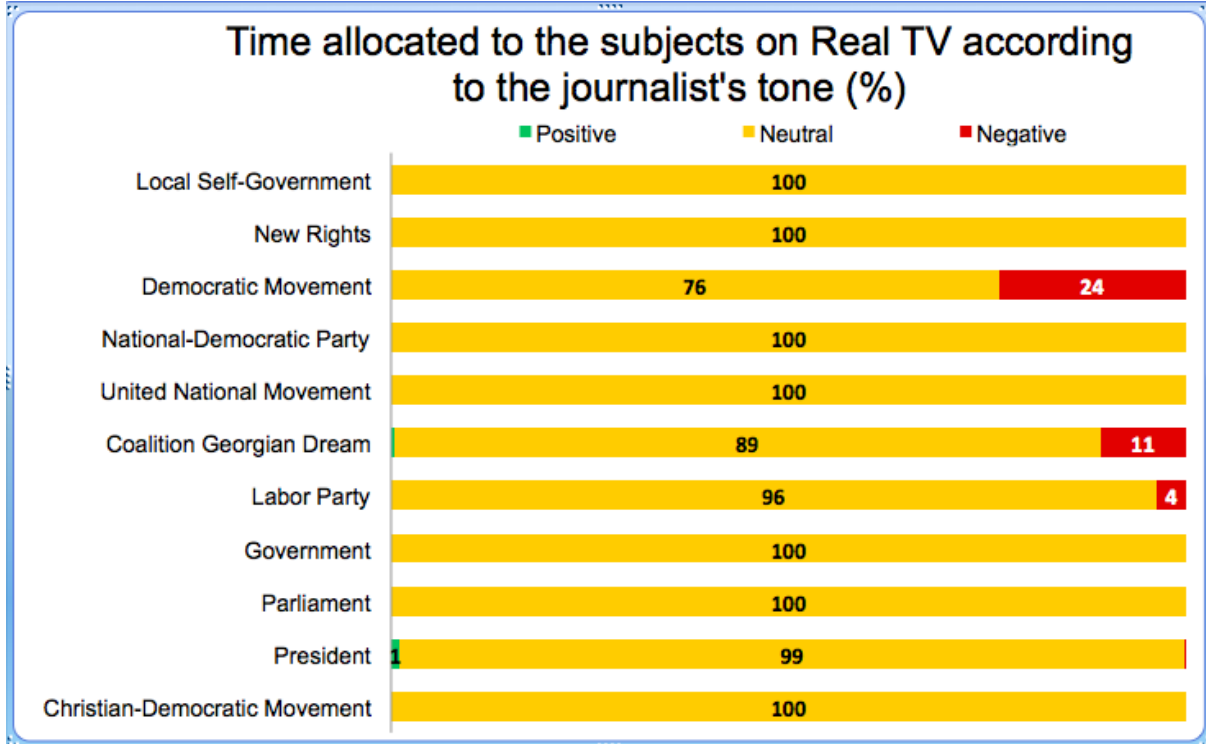


Diagram 28

