

emergency medical service center accusing the UNM and program Business Courier of deliberately releasing false accusations ahead of elections and demanding from Business Courier team that it present evidence of corrupt schemes and deals within a reasonable time or risk being sued. The article did not contain a position of program Business Courier. Nor did it note how the UNM was related to statements of the respondent. It is worth noting that the respondent is the father of one of UNM leaders and he spoke on the TV program in the capacity of the director of clinic.

Balance. On June 13, the article “GYLA to sue Ministry of Culture for violating the rule on release of public information” did not contain an comment of the Ministry of Culture regarding the publicity of information which concerned budget means.

Reporting public opinion poll results. Netgazeti largely complies with standards when reporting results of public opinion polls. There was only one exception in the reporting period, which concerned results of in-house opinion poll of Georgian Dream. On 30 June, Netgazeti published information titled “According to in-house poll, Georgian Dream has twice as many supporters as UNM,” which rested on a comment of Zurab Bigvava, a representative of the organization having conducted the poll, made in the program Mtavari Tema on Public Broadcaster. It is worth noting that Georgian Dream did not officially release the poll results, making public that part of the poll alone, which concerned Georgian Dream and UNM and ratings of political leaders of these 2 parties (Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and Chairman of UNM Political Council Davit Bakradze, respectively). It is worth noting that two days earlier of the comment on TV about fragments of Georgian Dream poll, on June 28, Rustavi 2 TV channel released results of public opinion poll which it commissioned to US-German organization GFK, showing almost equal ratings of Georgian Dream and UNM. Georgian Dream expressed mistrust towards the GFK poll, linking it to the UNM and questioning the reputation of the organization. Netgazeti did not indicate this in the background information. Given that the information about poll results was based on the comment made on TV, it did not indicate compulsory data required by the law in reporting public opinion polls in pre-election period. The information contained only two data: the organization that commissioned the poll and the organization that conducted it (Zurab Bigvava’s organization). At the same time, information about the organization that conducted the poll was incomplete as it did not name Zurab Bigvava’s organization, Psychoproject.

6.4 Pirveli Radio

About Pirveli Radio. Pirveli Radio⁴⁴ is a private company which, since 30 December 2011, is owned by Vasil Kobaidze who simultaneously holds 65% of shares in Pirveli Stereo. 14 days before (December 16, 2011) the owner of Pirveli Radio was Chemexim International Ltd, the company registered in Marshall Islands, simultaneously holding 20% of the shares in Rustavi 2 TV company. Between 2007 and 2011, the 100% owner of Pirveli Radio was Holding Georgian Media Incorporated Ltd. Before that, in 1999-2007, it was owned by five private persons. In 2013, Pirveli Radio recruited former journalists of Imedi TV company, who were dismissed from their former jobs following the return of the TV company into the ownership of Patakatsishvili family.

Quantitative results

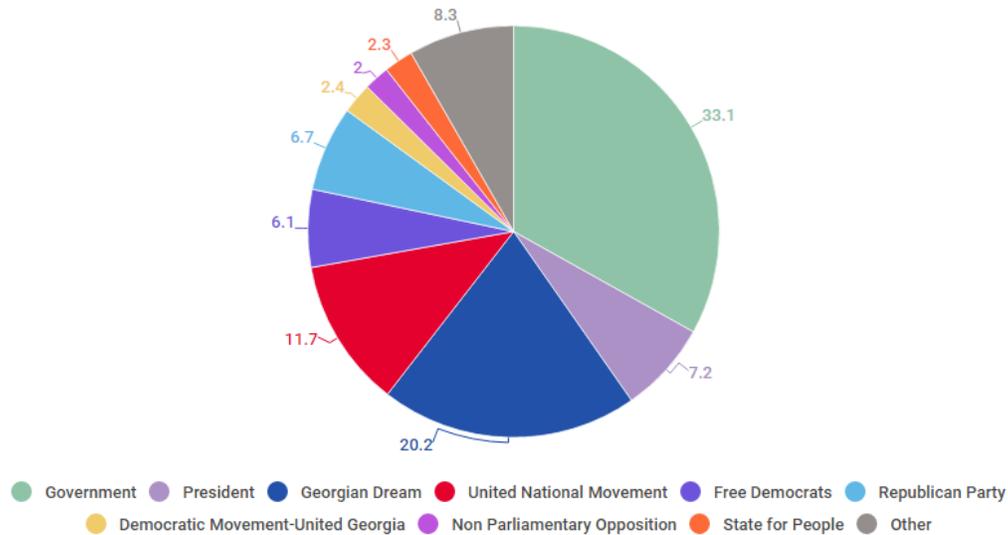
Total coverage. According to the results (In sum, 2 945 articles) of four-month (1 (April – 31 July) monitoring of Pirveli Radio online edition, the largest share of the total coverage accounted for the government (33.1%) and the Georgian Dream coalition (20.2%), which made up 53.3% in total.

Among political parties, the highest amount of reporting was dedicated to the UNM (11.7%), followed by the Republican Party and the Free Democrats - at 6.1% each. Other parties trailing were Democratic Movement for United Georgia (2.4%) and the newly-established State for People (2.3%). All those political parties that received less than 1% of the total coverage, comprised 8.3% altogether. Among the latter are qualified electoral subjects: Industry Will Save Georgia (0.9%), Conservative Party (0.3%) as well as newly established parties: Tamaz Mechiauri – United Georgia (0.9%), Girchi (0.7%) and New Georgia (0.5%).

⁴⁴MediaMeter.ge, MDF, Media Profiles. <http://mediameter.ge/en/media-profiles/pirveli-radio>

As for the institutions, the President received 7.2% and the Central Electoral Commission 0.3% of the total coverage.

Chart 6.4.1: Total coverage of political subjects , Pirveli Radio

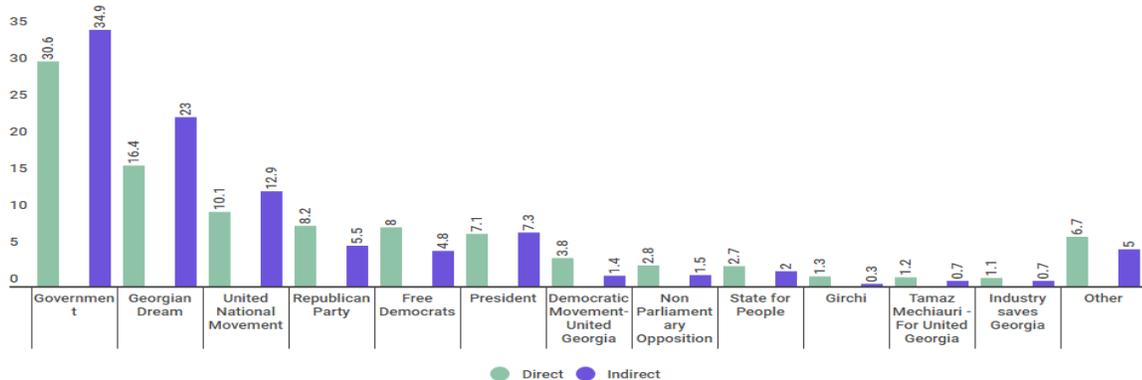


Direct/indirect coverage. The largest gap between direct and indirect coverage by Pirveli Radio was seen in case of Georgian Dream (direct – 16.4% and indirect – 23%). This gap was narrower in the reporting about the government (direct – 30.6% and indirect – 34.9%) and the UNM (direct – 10.1% and indirect – 12.9%).

The results were opposite in regards with other qualified political parties where direct coverage exceeds the indirect coverage: Republican Party (8.2% and 5.5%, respectively), Free Democrats (8% and 4.8%, respectively), Democratic Movement for United Georgia (3.8% and 1.4%, respectively), Industry Will Save Georgia (1.1% and 0.7%, respectively).

Indicators of direct and indirect coverage of President was almost identical (7.1% and 7.3%, respectively). As regards to other subjects, any stark difference between corresponding two indicators was not observed.

Chart 6.4.2. Direct/indirect coverage of political subjects, Pirveli Radio



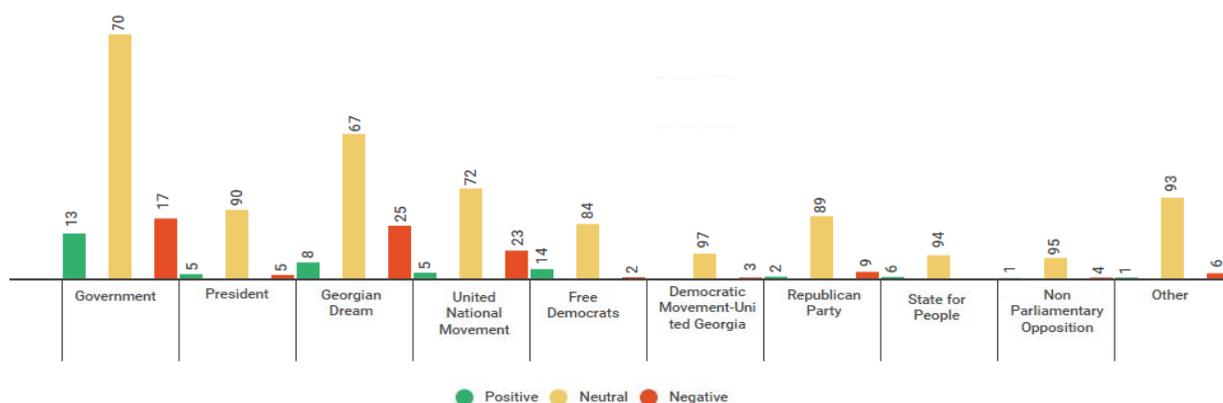
Tone of content in covering subjects. The highest positive content in tone was seen in the reporting by the Pirveli Radio about Free Democrats (14%) and the government (13%). Relatively lower were corresponding indicators for Georgian Dream (8%), State for People (6%) and UNM (5%).

The highest negative content in tone was observed in the reporting about Georgian Dream (25%) and the UNM (23%) as well as the government (17%).

Overwhelmingly neutral in tone was the reporting about the Democratic Movement for United Georgia (97%) with the negative content comprising 3% and positive content at 0%. A similarly high indicator of neutral tone was seen in case of newly established party State for People (94%) with the positive content tone standing at 6% and negative content tone nonexistent. The coverage of President was also dominated by neutral tone (90%) with negative and positive coverage standing at 5% each.

Although the amount of coverage of Central Electoral Commission (CEC) was insignificant, the share of negative tone in it was 14%.

Chart 6.4.3. Tone of content in reporting about political subjects, Pirveli Radio

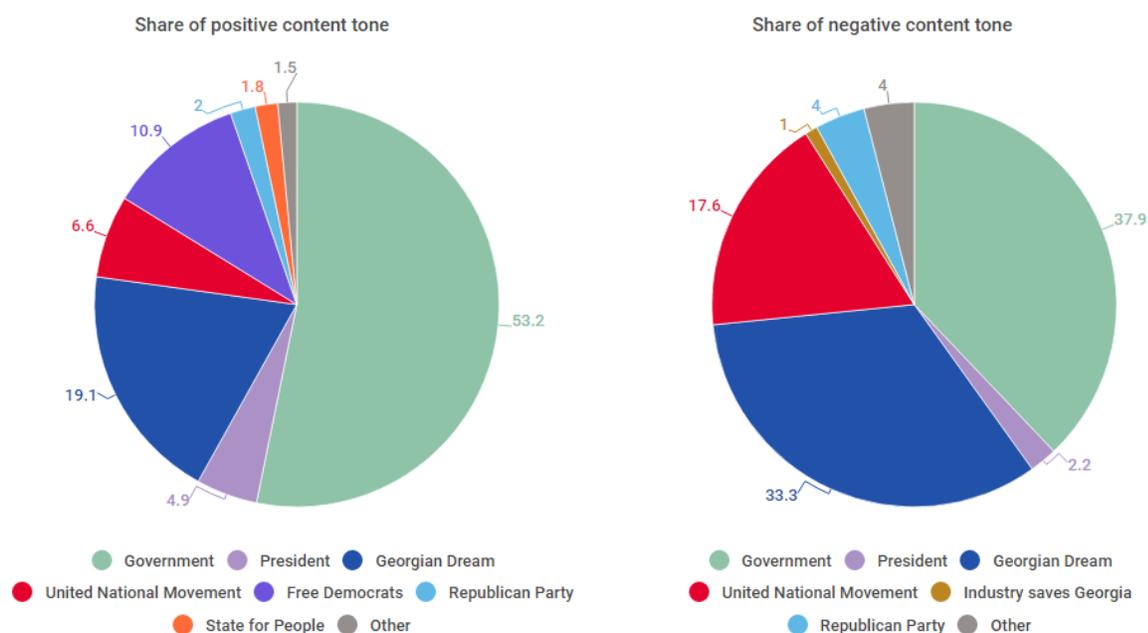


Share of subjects in the edition's content of positive and negative tone. The coverage by Pirveli Radio in terms of positive as well as negative content showed the highest share of reporting about the government (53.2% and 37.9%, respectively). The share of negative content exceeded that of positive in the coverage of three most reported political parties: Georgian Dream (negative – 33.3% and positive 19.1%), the UNM (negative – 17.6% and positive 6.6%), and Republican Party (negative – 4% and positive 2%). Conversely, the coverage of Free Democrats showed a notably higher share of positive tone (10.9%) compared to the share of negative tone (0.8%). The newly established party State for People received 1.8% of positive coverage with negative coverage not observed at all whilst neutral comprising 94%.

The shares of both negative and positive content is insignificant in the reporting about the political parties which received the coverage of less than 1%.

The coverage of President was positive in tone in 4.9% of the total reporting about him and negative in 2.2%.

Chart 6.4.4: Tone of coverage of political subjects, Pirveli Radio



Qualitative Data

The online edition of Pirveli Radio extensively covered qualified parliamentary subjects. It provided mainly pluralistic coverage of developments, though information was based on one source alone, lacking double checking with another source and opinions of opposite sides. Consequently, one could see instances of bias, manipulation, breach of balance and accuracy in the coverage by Pirveli Radio.

Accuracy/photo-manipulation. On April 6, the online edition published a comment of political analyst Soso Tsiskarishvili under the title “Georgian Dream’s Carousel, Vanga and Prime Minister,” in which the respondent gave a negative assessment to possible government reshuffle. The material did not provide a position of the government either negating or confirming expected reshuffle in the cabinet. Although a day before, on April 5, the chairman of Georgian Dream parliamentary faction, Gia Volski, denied reports about such reshuffle,⁴⁵ the April 6 publication of Pirveli Radio presented this probability as a real fact and the respondent’s negative assessment of this alleged change. The respondent’s comment in which he spoke of “government carousel” and a newspaper “becoming Vanga”⁴⁶ was illustrated with a photomontage portraying the Prime Minister, clairvoyant Vanga and a carousel, thereby trying to prejudice readers. The material did not specify either the newspaper which the respondent implied or the expected changes he was talking about.



⁴⁵Liberali (5 April 2016), “GiaVolski: No government reshuffle is planned.” <http://liberali.ge/news/view/21892/gia-volski-mtavrobashi-sakadro-tsvlilebebi-ar-igegmeba>

⁴⁶Vanga - Bulgarian blind clairvoyant.

Balance/photo manipulation. On April 6, Pirveli Radio published the information of non-governmental organization Mediator, concerning an excessive consumption of fuel by Tbilisi Mayor's Office, titled "75 tons of fuel for Narmania's mayor's office." The material was based on the information and assessments of only one source, the head of NGO, Levan Khabeishvili, and did not cover the position of Tbilisi Mayor's Office.



Alongside the photo featuring the process of filling the car tank, the material was also illustrated with a photo of Davit Narmania against the background of symbols of Olympic Games at the 2015 youth Olympic inauguration event. This photo was not relevant to the content of the article and represented an attempt of ridiculing the Mayor.

Photo manipulation. On 15 June, Pirveli Radio published a comment of expert Gia Khukhashvili concerning a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the case of pretrial detention of former Prime Minister Vano Merabishvili, in which the Court found the violation of the Convention on Human Rights. The material titled "Ostrich and mirror – Tsulukiani is looking for a scapegoat to dodge blame" was illustrated with a photomontage featuring an ostrich looking into a mirror. The photo was manipulative resting on one sentence of the respondent, in which he recommended the government to look into the mirror instead of burying the head in the sand like an ostrich.



Manipulation of religious feelings. On 26 July, Pirveli Radio published a material titled "New members include people known for their clearly radical, aggressive attitude towards the Georgian Orthodox Church." This material was a fragment of an article from a tabloid newspaper *Alia*, in which a lawyer, Valer Gelbakhiani, spoke about anti-Orthodox and anti-national actions of several new members in the list of parliamentary candidates from the Georgian Dream. According to him, the parliament must not have members who advocate for the legalization of same-sex marriage and fight against Georgian values. The material provided a generalized comment of only one side, in which the respondent neither specified the actions he evaluated as anti-national nor the new members of Georgian Dream he spoke about. The online edition's choice of title as well as of the material for publication represented manipulation of religious feelings and unfounded generalization of a proposition that new members of Georgian Dream fight against Orthodox Church.

Balance. The material titled "Rally of Free Democrats in Gldani – political party leader speaks about interests of Narmania's brother in ongoing construction works," which was published on 31 July, concerned the protest rally against the construction works in Davit Jabidze Street, Tbilisi's Gldani district, in which a candidate from Free Democrats for Gldani constituency, Amiran Giuashvili, participated alongside population. The material quoted a rally participant, without identifying this participant, speaking about interests of Tbilisi Mayor Davit Narmania being behind those construction works. Amiran Giuashvili himself expressed doubts about interests of Narmania's brother in ongoing constructions. The information lacked a position of another side or any evidence proving the interests of Narmania's brother.

Reporting public opinion poll results/confidential source. On 14 April, Pirveli Radio published the opinion poll results, which were made public by the news agency GHN, under the title "In-house poll of Georgian Dream: Georgian Dream – 33.2%, UNM – 30.7." It should be noted that the Georgian Dream itself did not officially publicized that poll; assumedly, the information was exclusively obtained by GHN⁴⁷ from a confidential source. Although Pirveli Radio named GHN as the source, it did not indicate how the news agency obtained the in-house opinion poll results. The online edition did not seek to verify the authenticity of the poll from Georgian Dream. Even was the poll authentic, the online edition should have provided the position of the Georgian Dream as well as the information on how GHN obtained it. Neither did Pirveli Radio provide important data required by the law in reporting public opinion poll results, such as the organization which commissioned the poll, the exact formulation of

⁴⁷GHN (14 April), "In-house poll of Georgian Dream: Georgian Dream – 33.2%, UNM – 30.7." <http://ghn.ge/com/news/view/151752>

questions, margin of error, the number of respondents, methodology, et cetera. It is worth noting that titles of information of Pirveli Radio and GHN were identical, focusing on an insignificant difference between two political subjects – the Georgian Dream (33.2%) and the United National Movement (30.7%).

6.5 Marshalpress

About Marshalpress. The news agency Marshalpress⁴⁸ appeared in the Georgian media landscape on February 18, 2015. Marshalpress.ge is managed by private company Marshalpress Ltd, which, as of 6 May 2015, was wholly owned by Otar Stepanishvili, former journalist from Info 9. As a result of changes carried out on November 24, 2015, the shares were redistributed between Otar Stepanishvili (49%) and Luka Antidze (51%).

Quantitative Data

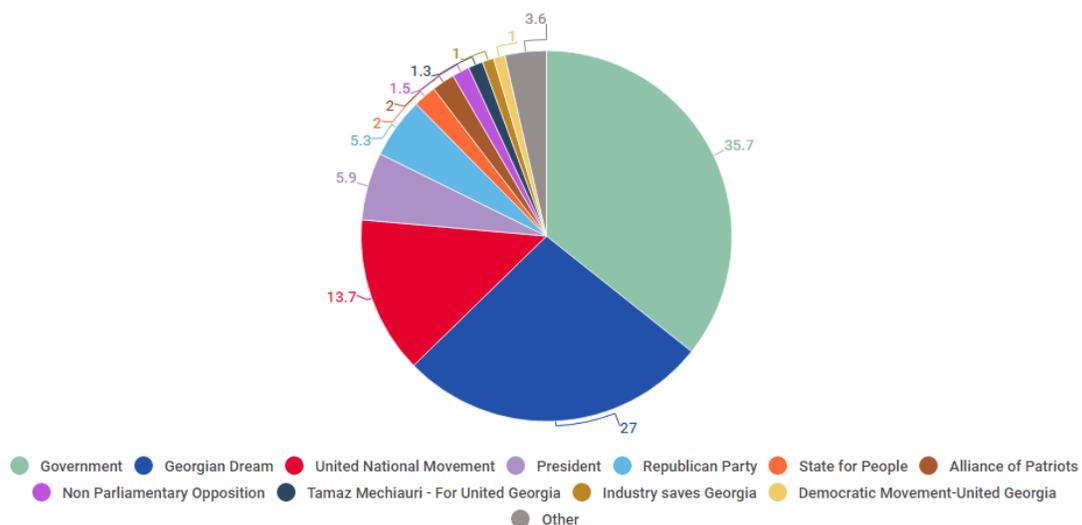
Total coverage. In the reporting period (1 April – 31 July), out of the total coverage (2738 articles) the news agency Marshalpress most extensively reported about the government (35.7%) and the Georgian Dream coalition (27%), making up 62.7% in total.

Among opposition political parties the highest share of coverage was received by the United National Movement (UNM) – at 13.7%. Following by the share of coverage were electoral subjects Republican Party (5.3%), Alliance of Patriots (2%) and a newly-established party, the State for People (2%).

The total coverage of all other qualified subjects comprised either 1% or less: the Industry Will Save Georgia and the Democratic Movement -United Georgia (1% each), Free Democrats (0.4%), the Conservative Party (0.4%), the National Forum (0.3%) and the Labor Party (0.3%).

As regards the coverage of institutions, the share of President comprised 5.9% whilst that of the Central Electoral Commission was at 0.2%.

Chart. 6.5.1: Total coverage of political subjects, Marshalpress



⁴⁸ Mediameter.ge, MDF, Marshalpres, <http://mediameter.ge/en/media-profiles/marshalpress>