

Monitoring of Mass Media in the Electoral Campaign for the Election of the Bashkan of TAU Gagauz Yeri

Report no. 4
11-17 November, 2006



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1. General data

1.1 Project goal: monitoring of and informing the public opinion about the behavior of mass media in the electoral period for the election of the Bashkan of TAU (Territorial Administrative Unit) Gagauz Yeri.

1.2 Monitoring period – 9 October 2006–17 December 2006 – covers the electoral campaign with two ballots.

1.3 Criteria of selection of media institutions subject to the monitoring:

- Type of ownership (public and private)
- Audience/ impact
- Language of coverage

1.4 Monitored mass media:

TV

Moldova 1, NIT, TV Gagauzia

Radio

Radio Moldova, Radio Gagauzia

Print media

“Nezavisimaya Moldova”, “Vesti Gagauzii” (Comrat), “Znamya” (Ciadir-Lunga), “Stolitsa Comrat” (Comrat), Panorama (Vulcanesti), “Nastoiascee Znamya” (Ciadir-Lunga).

1.5 Monitoring schedule

TV

Monday-Friday

06:30 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 22:30

Saturday-Sunday

06:30 – 22:30

Radio

Monday-Sunday

06:00 – 24:00

1.1 Methodological framework

The monitoring methodology was developed by Oxford Media Research for the projects monitored by the international organization Global Campaign for Free Expression (GCFE) “Article 19”. The characteristic features of this methodology are the following: 1) use of a broad spectrum of quantitative indicators, including the type, duration, topic, circumstances of coverage, subjects of news, frequency and duration of appearance of certain individuals in the newscasts, sources of news. 2) the qualitative component is more developed than in other methodologies, which allows to establish the partiality of the monitored station/newspaper in covering the events. This is done through quantitative methods, which include the evaluation of the context and factors influencing the behavior of mass media: each piece of news is subject to a content and context evaluation to

determine if it favors one or another party or political entity. A positive or negative content and/or context does not necessarily indicate the biasness or partisanship of the station broadcasting the news. It is possible that the news favors or disfavors one of the subjects and, nonetheless, be equidistant and correct from a professional viewpoint. Only when there is a tendency to favor or disfavor one of the subjects for a certain period of time, it is considered to be dealing with an imbalance.

1.7 Team

The project is carried out by the Association of Independent Press (API), in partnership with the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), within the project “Monitoring of mass media in the electoral campaign for the election of the bashkan of TAU Gagauz Yeri”.

2. Candidates registered by the Central Electoral Commission of TAU Gagauz Yeri for the election of the bashkan:

Gheorghii Tabunșic, independent
Alexandr Stoianoglo, independent
Nicolai Dudoglo, independent
Mihail Formuzal, independent

3. General conclusions

Radio and TV

Beginning with November, there has been registered a tendency to reduce the involvement of national-coverage audio-visual channels – *TV Moldova 1*, *Radio Moldova*, *NIT* – in supporting the actual bashkan Gheorghii Tabunșic. Throughout the period November 11-17, *NIT* made no direct or indirect reference to any of the candidates, *Radio Moldova* preserved a neutral attitude, and *Moldova 1* indirectly favored Gh.Tabunșic in one single piece of news broadcast both in Romanian and Russian.

The regional channels – *Radio and TV Găgăuzia* adopted a similar attitude one week later than national coverage channels, avoiding broadcasting critical news to the address of Tabunșic’s counter-candidates. Also in the same period, November 11-17, there can be observed a tendency to balance the frequency of electoral competitors’ public appearance, the situation resulting in no addressing to any of the candidates by *Radio Găgăuzia*. This new editorial policy favors indirectly the actual governor, as he, unlike his competitors, needs publicity less.

The only debates from this period were organized on *Radio Găgăuzia* and *TV Găgăuzia* on Monday, November 13, during the noon and afternoon, exactly during the hours of minimal audience. Only two of the four electoral competitors took part in the debates.

Written press

The regional public newspapers also prove a tendency of balance during the last monitoring period. Attempts to favor slightly the actual bashkan can be observed at the newspapers “Znamea” (which negatively depicts Mihail Formuzal), “Vesti Gagauzii” and, more prominently, at the national coverage newspaper - “Nezavisimaia Moldova”. The attitude towards other candidates is generally neutral.

As in the anterior period, an exception presents the independent newspaper „Nastoiascee Znamea” (Ceadr-Lunga), which supports the independent candidate Mihail Formuzal, the actual mayor of Ceadr-Lunga town, reflecting the activity of the actual bashkan from a critical position.

On the whole, as in the previous monitoring periods, the public newspapers avoid presenting critical materials to the address of the candidates. Instead, they publish more and more publicity and electoral education materials.

4. Data of monitoring

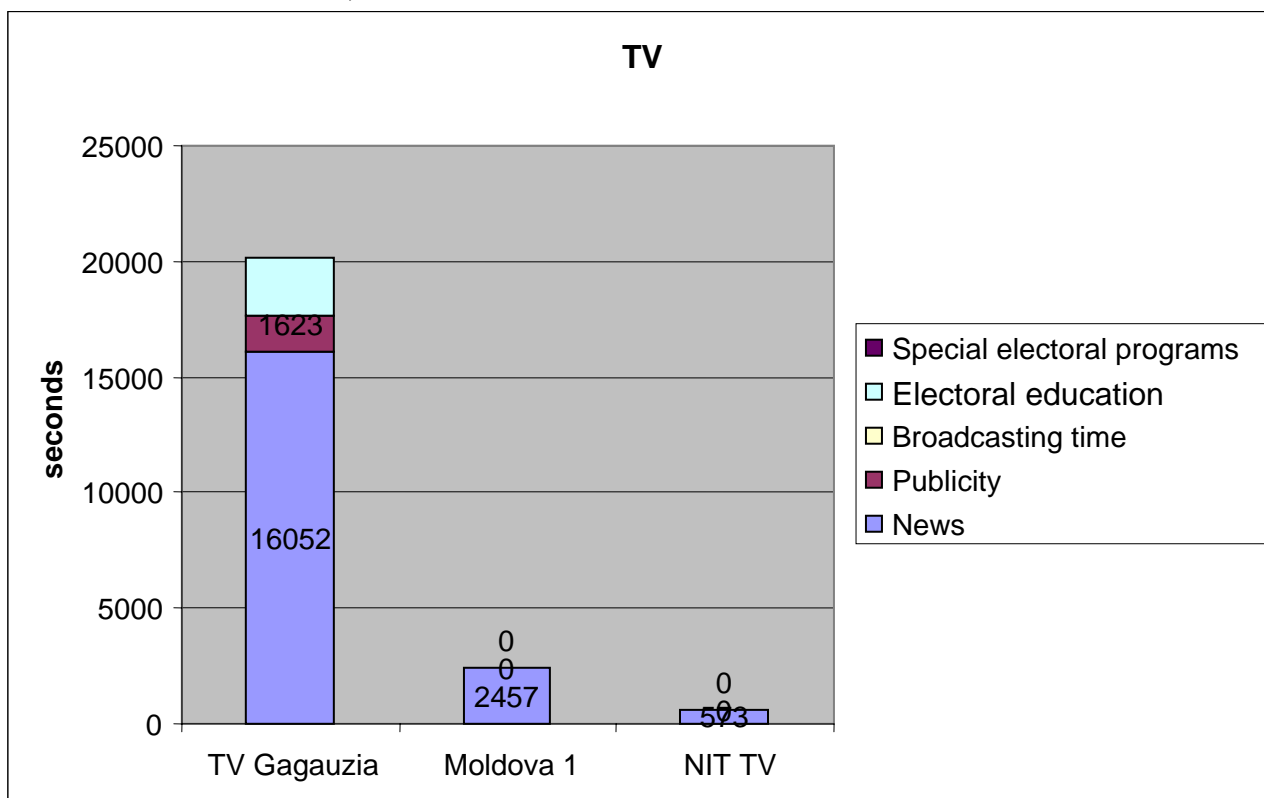
4.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

4.1.1 Radio and TV

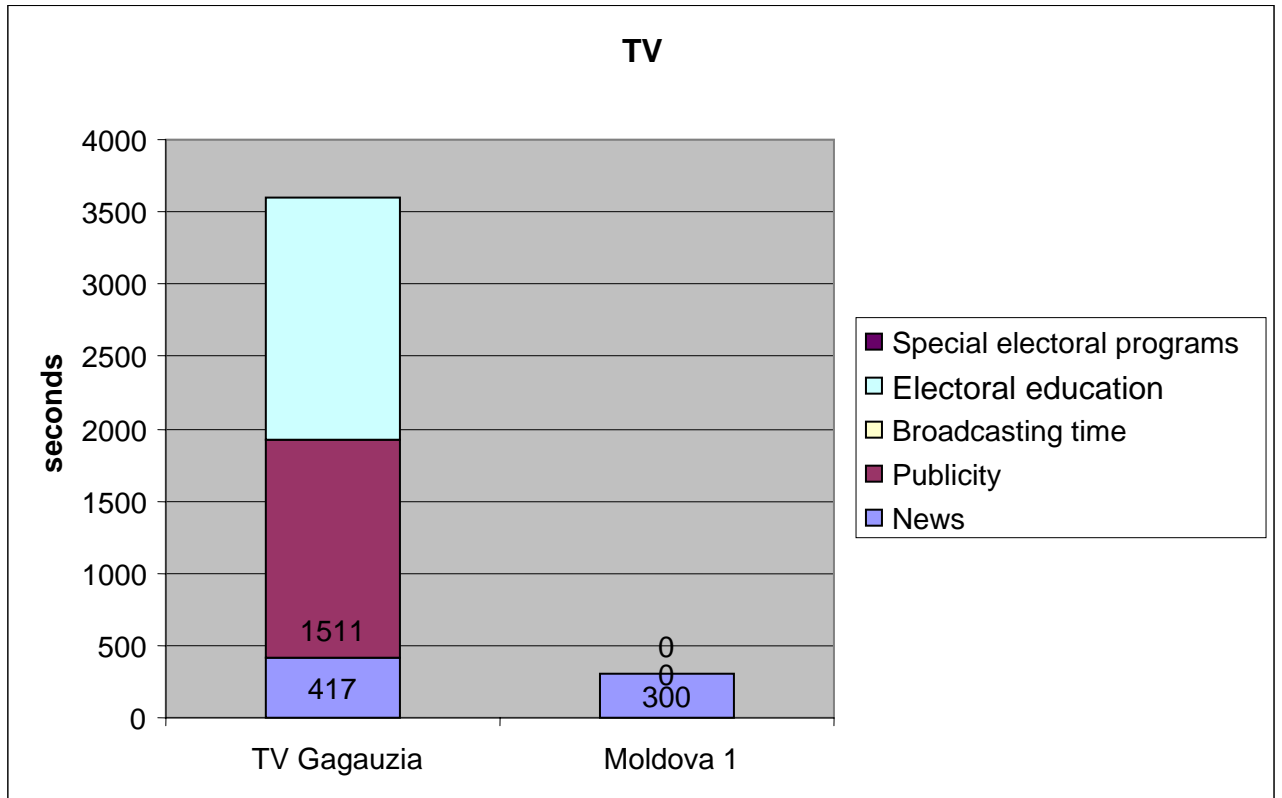
In comparison to the previous monitoring periods (October 9 – November 10, 2006), during this period November 11-17, 2006, the national coverage channels *TV Moldova 1*, *NIT* and *Radio Moldova* register a symbolic involvement in the electoral campaign from Gagauz Autonomy.

Over the respective period, the frequency of news on *TV Găgăuzia* and *Radio Găgăuzia* has been reduced in favor of publicity and electoral education. It should be mentioned that, in a few cases, the electoral publicity on *TV Găgăuzia* has been included in cultural shows (movies, one music show).

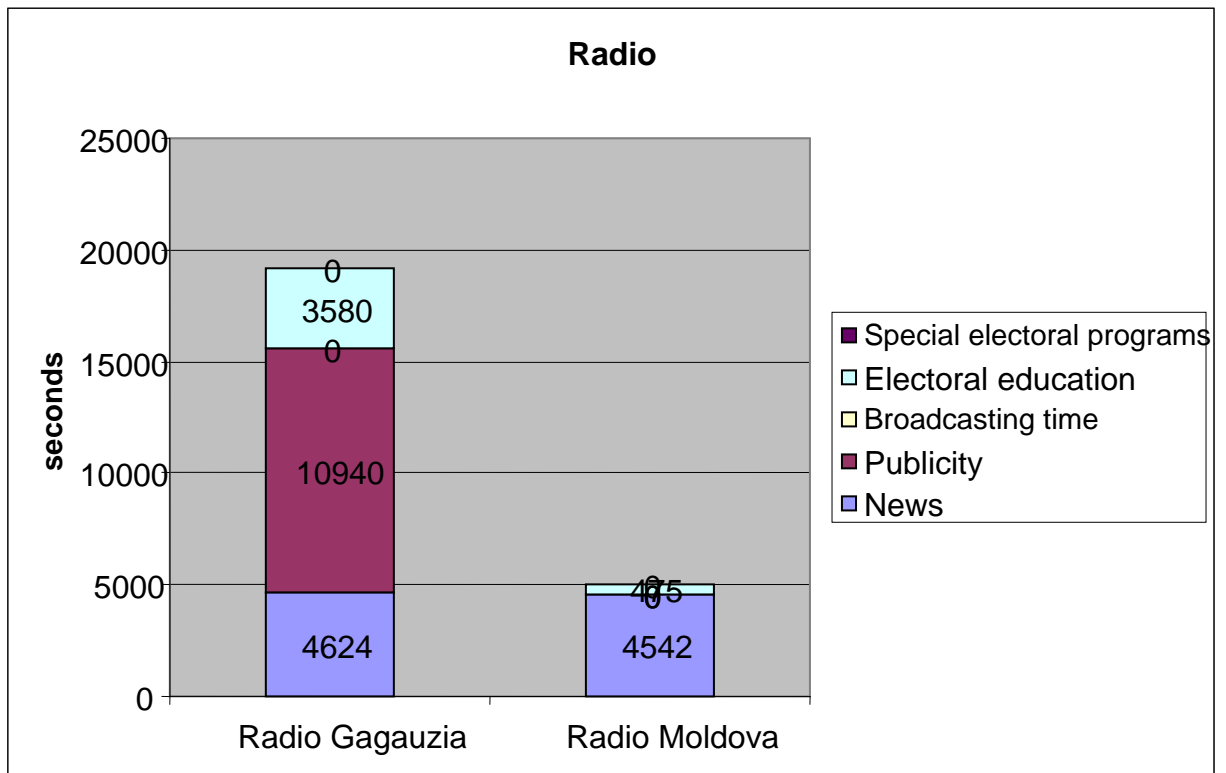
October 9 – November 17, 2006



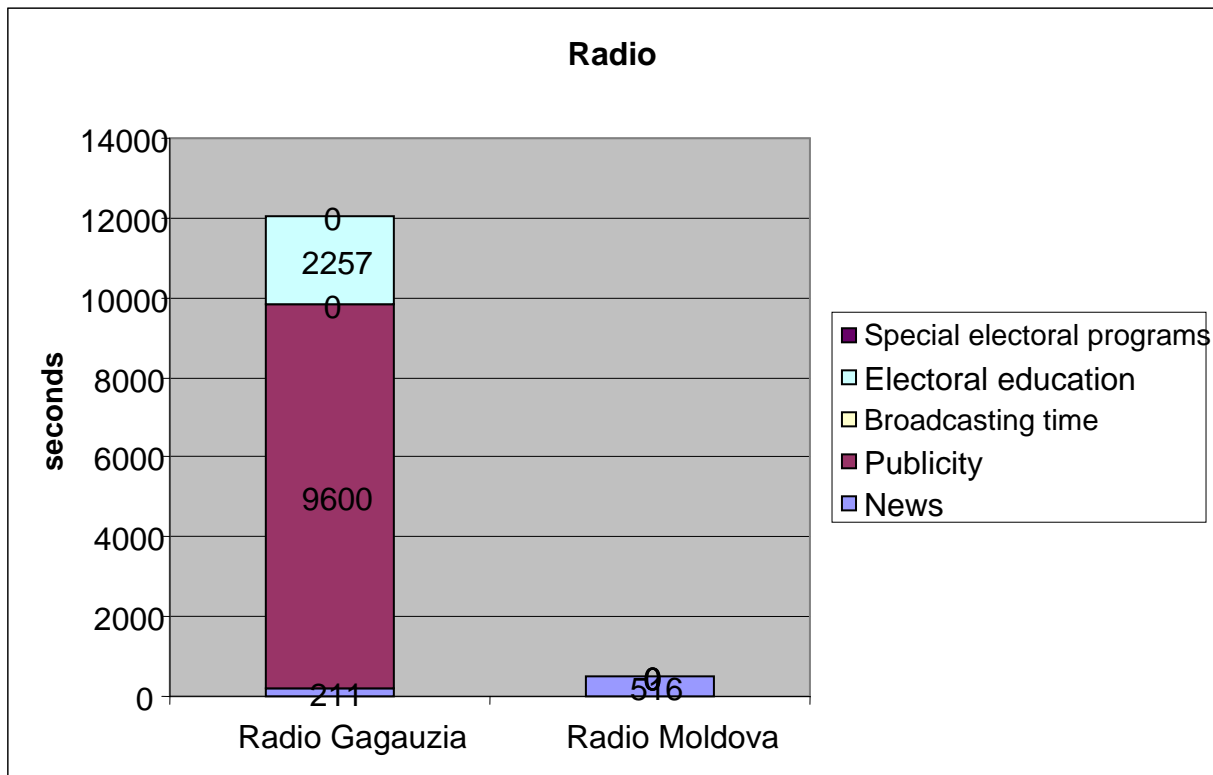
November 11-17, 2006



October 9 – November 17, 2006



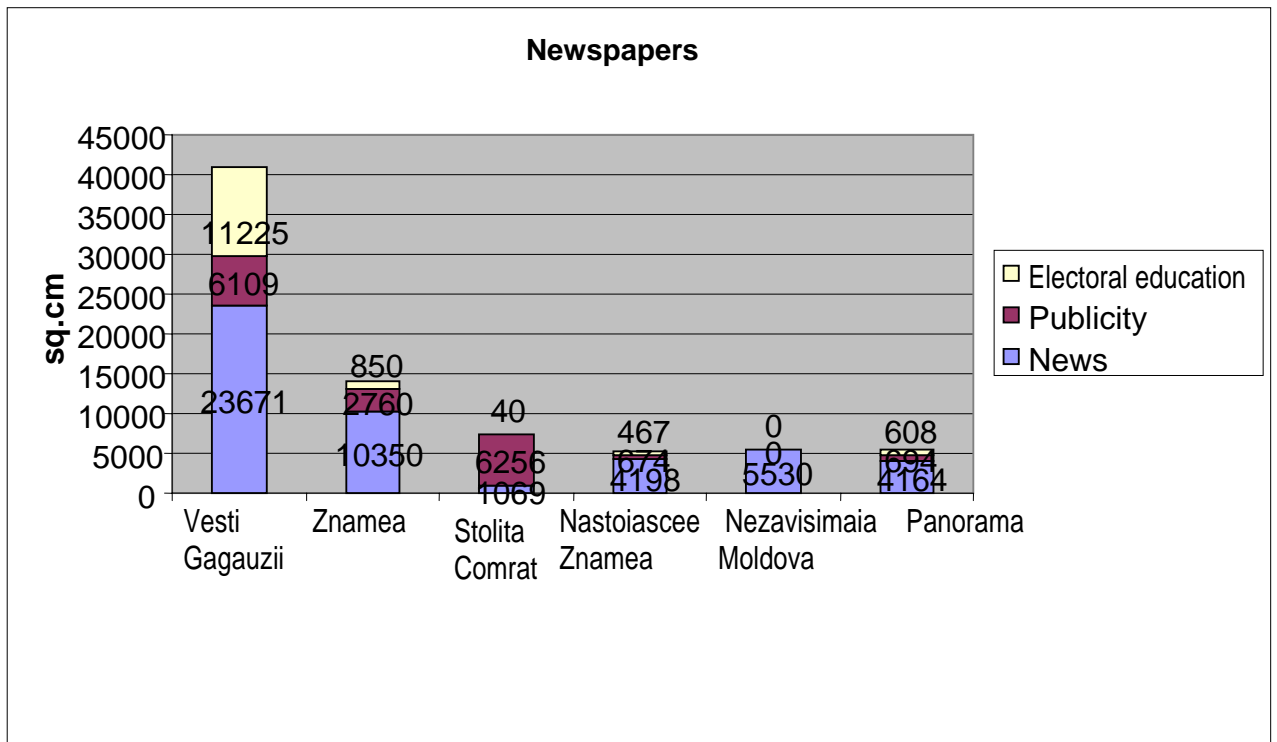
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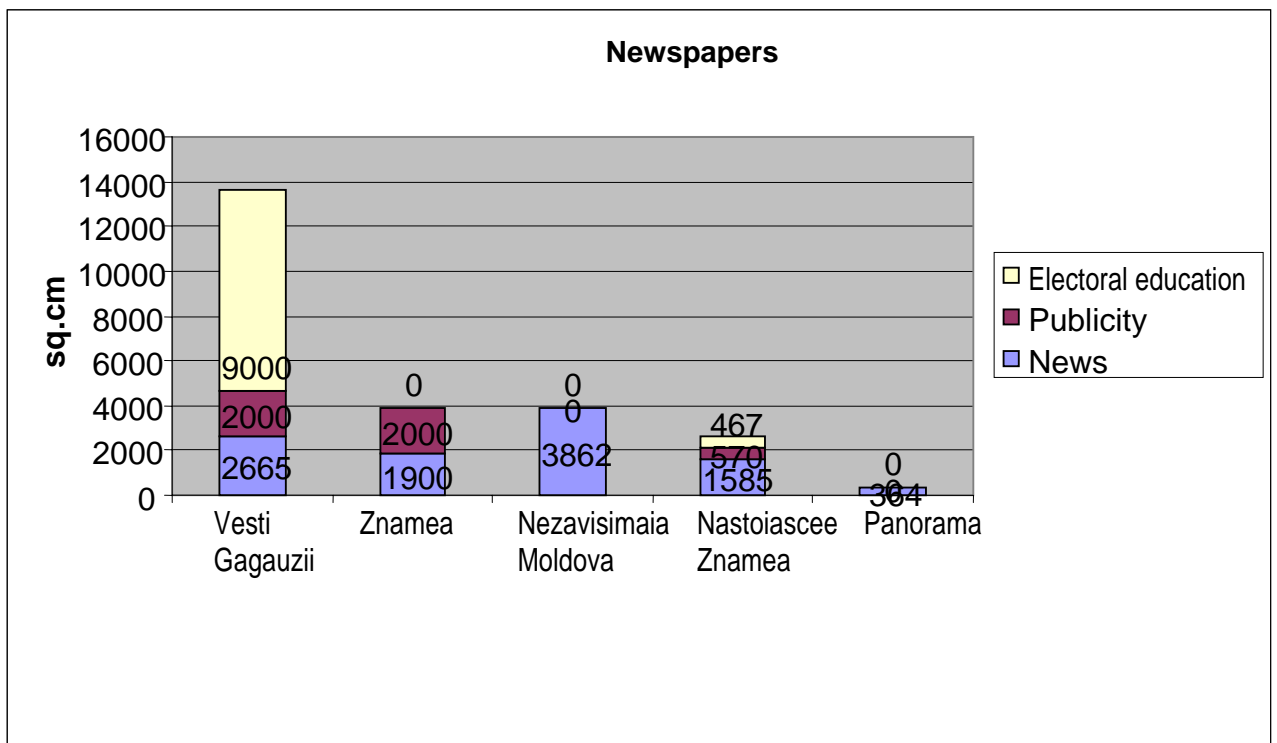
4.1.2 Newspapers

Over the last monitoring period, „Vesti Gagauzii” published most of its electoral education materials. As well, „Vesti Gagauzii” and „Znamea” offered the utmost of space for electoral publicity to the candidates.

October 9 – November 17, 2006



November 11-17, 2006

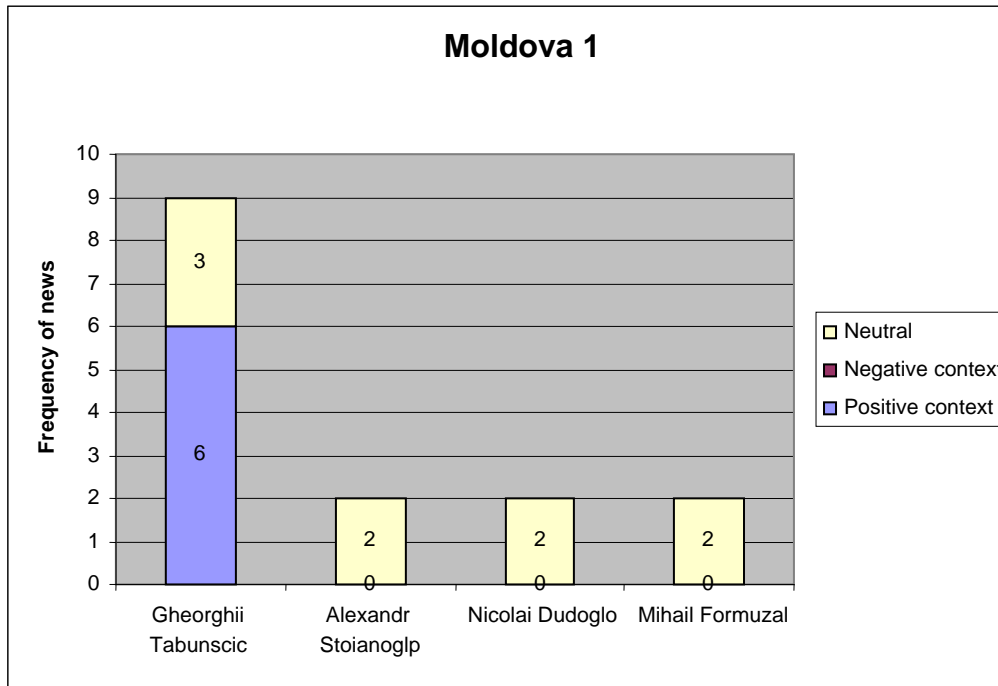


4.2 The candidates addressed to, either directly or indirectly, in newscasts, the frequency and context of media appearance.

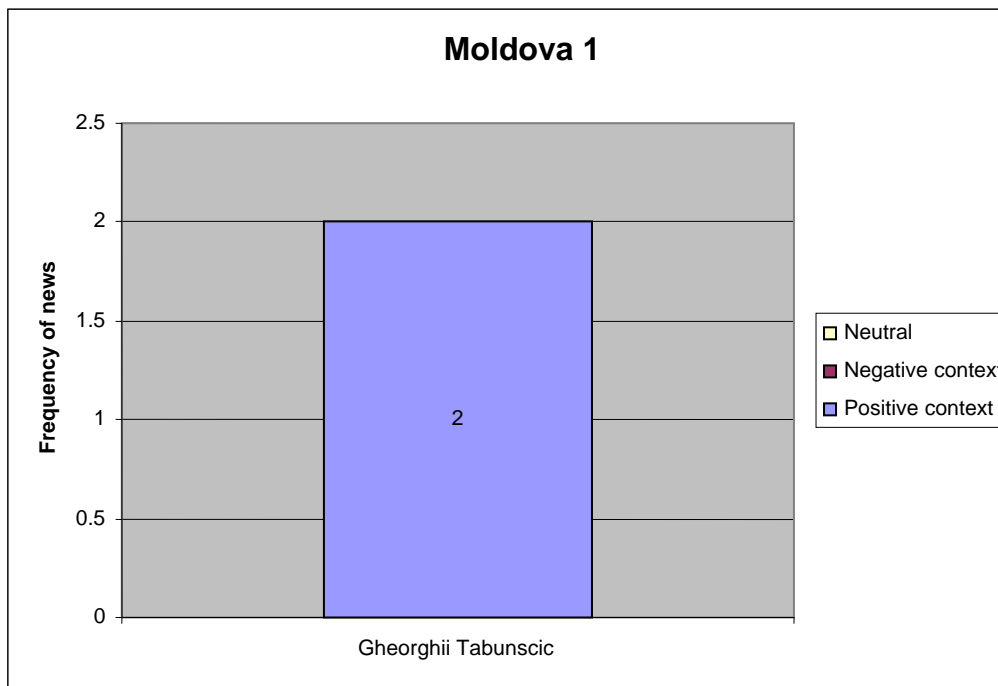
4.2.1 TV

Unlike the preceding periods, during November 11-17, *TV Găgăuzia* presented only neutral news with reference to all candidates. *Moldova 1* broadcast one reportage about the plantation of new forests in Gagauz Yeri, praising the results of the last years and indirectly favoring the actual bashkan. *NIT* did not broadcast any piece of news about the elections from the Gagauz Autonomy.

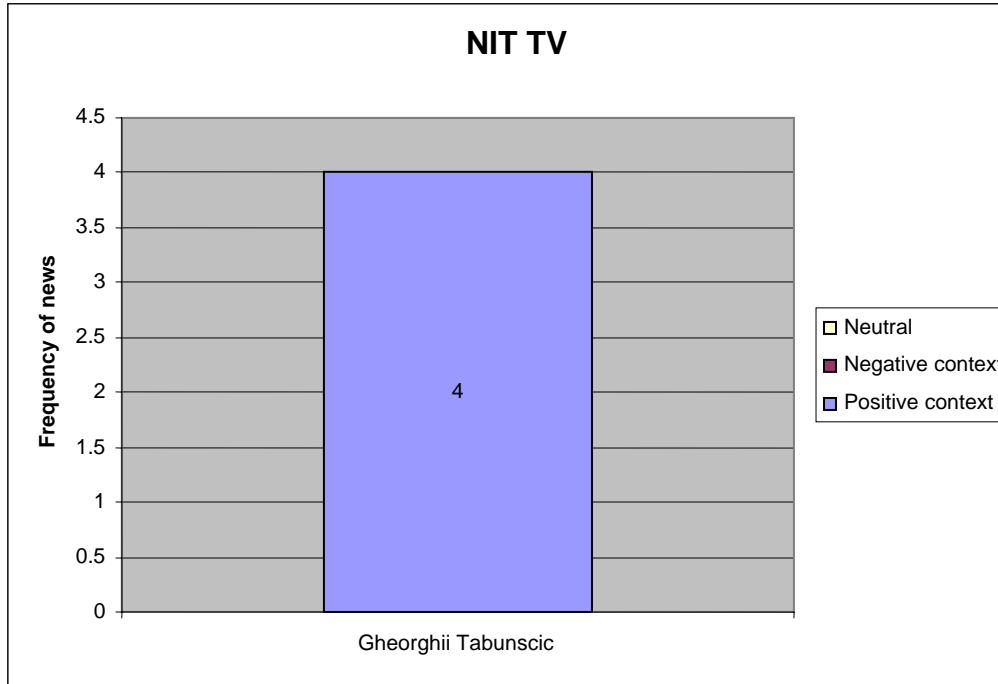
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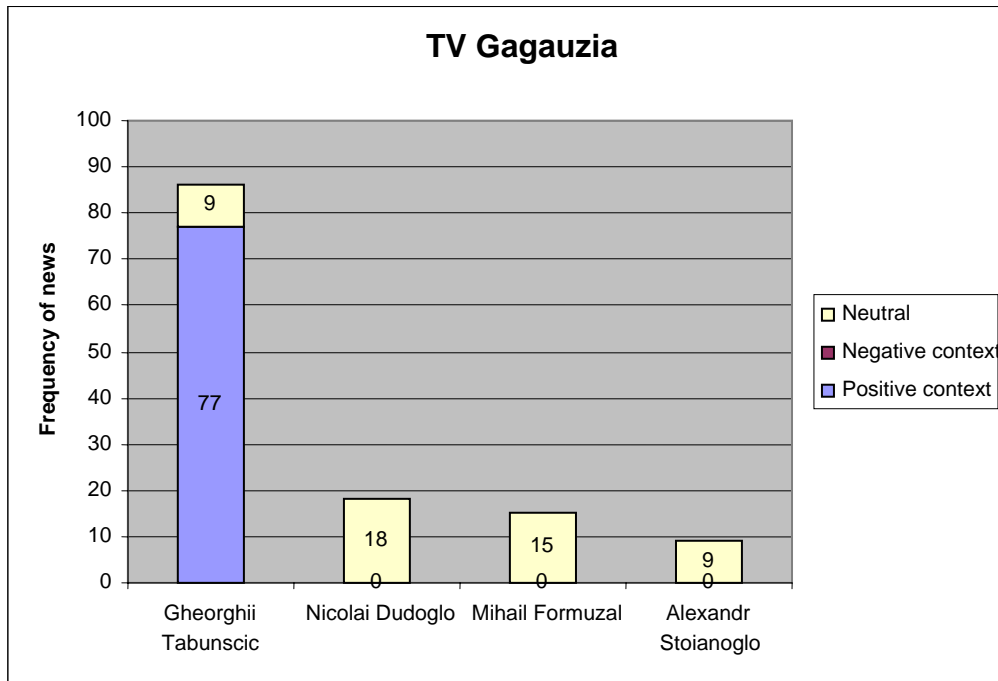
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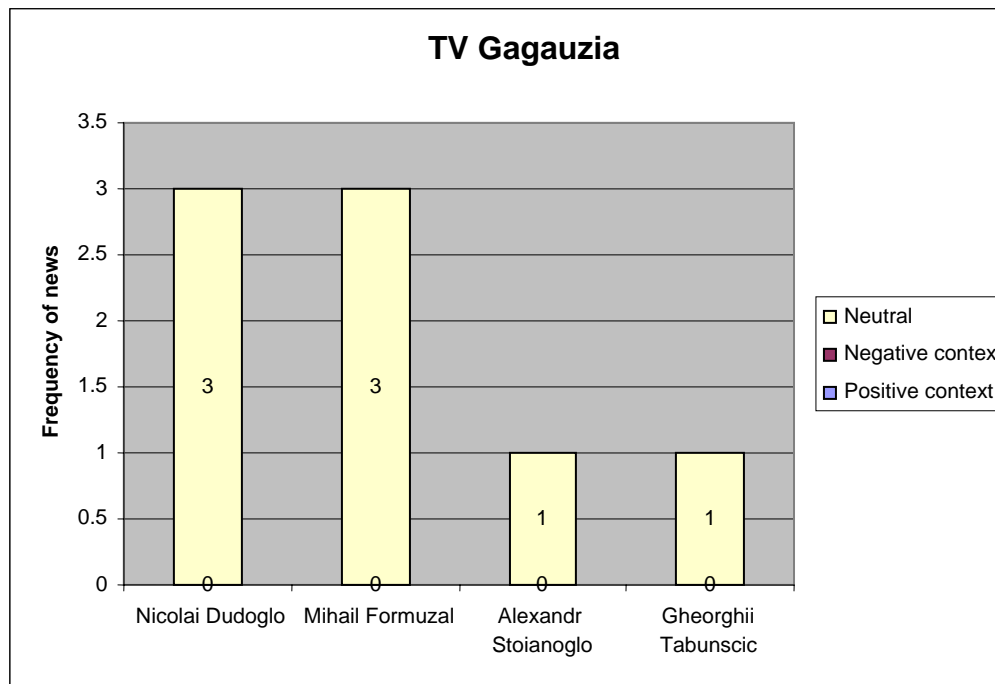
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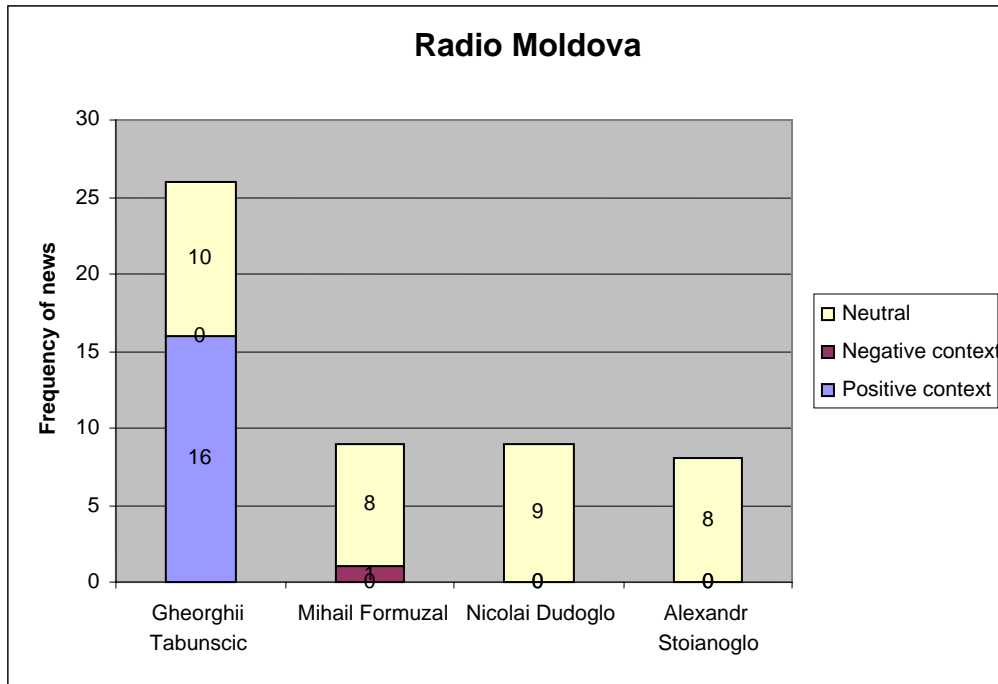
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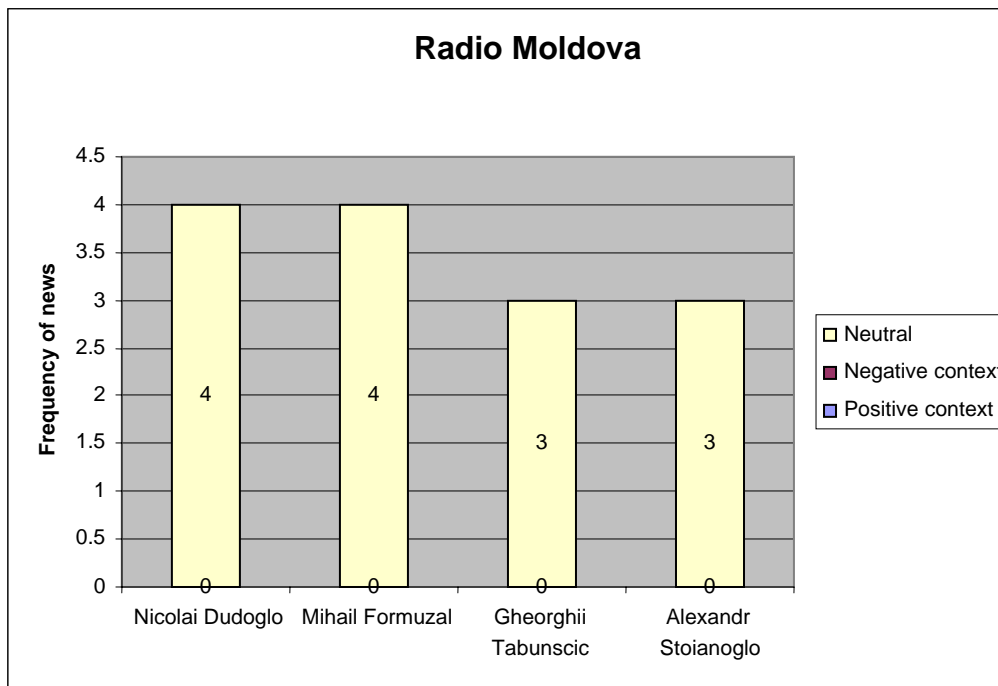
4.2.2 Radio

During the period November 11-17, 2006, *Radio Moldova* does not favor Gh. Tabunscic in its news, broadcasting only a few neutral pieces of news. As compared to the previous periods while making public the activity of the actual bashkan, all competitors to the post of bashkan are ignored in the newscasts of *Radio Găgăuzia*. This disengagement is done more in favor of Tabunscic and less in favor of the other competitors that are less known to the public.

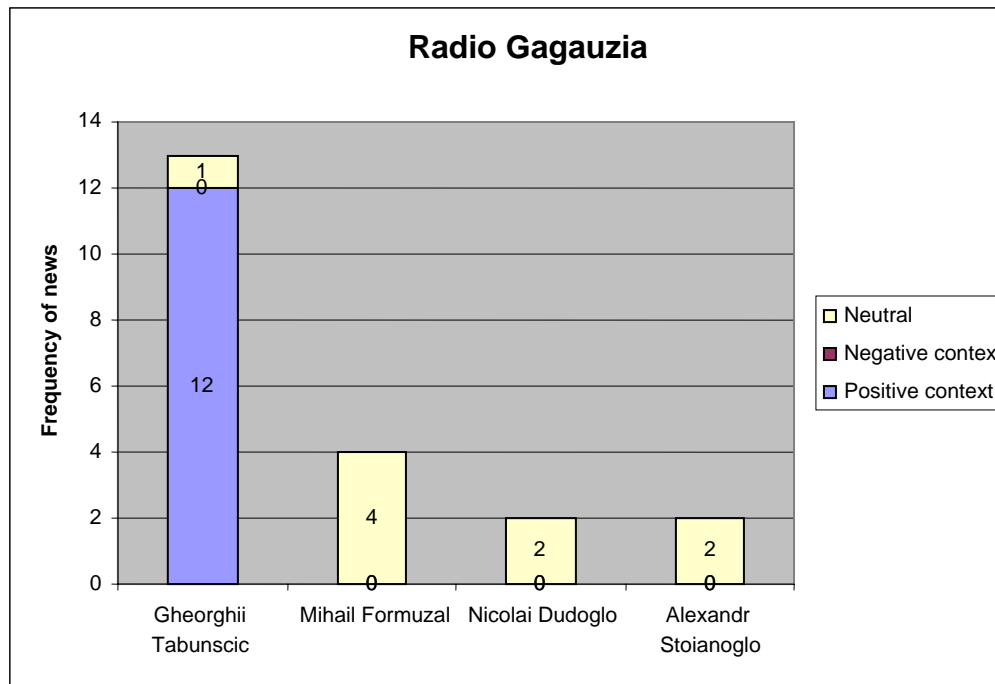
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November 11-17, 2006



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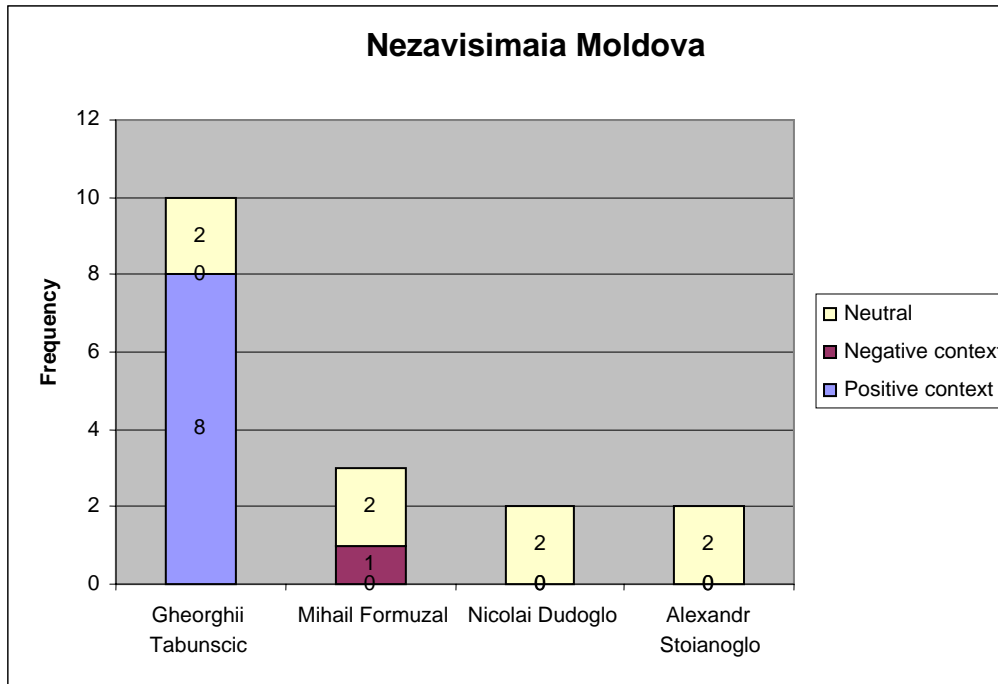


4.2.3 Written press

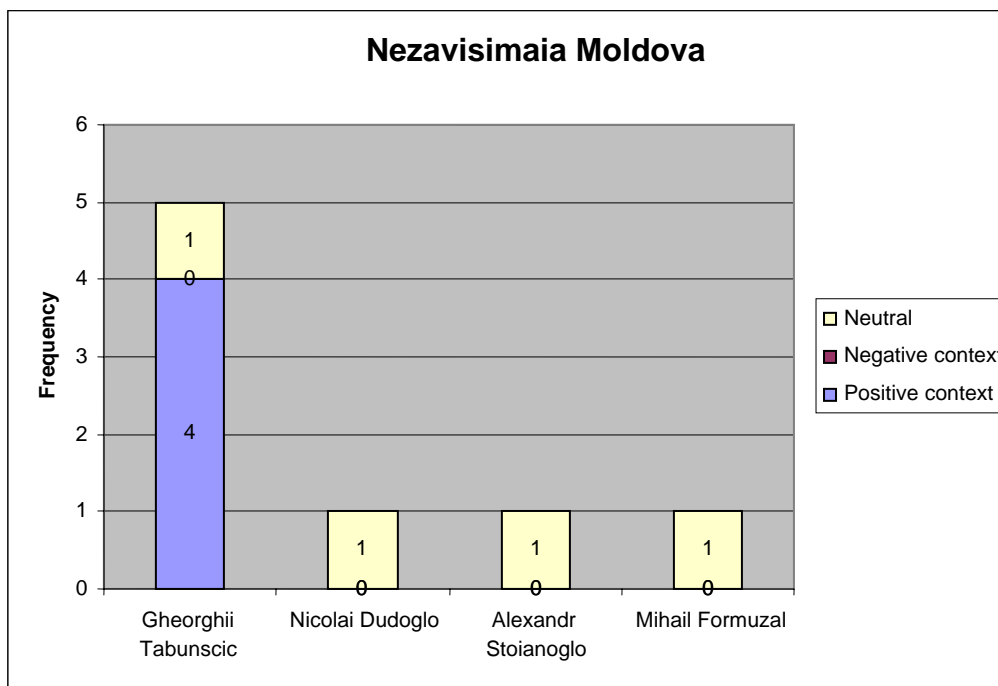
During the period November 11-17, 2006, the newspapers „Nezavisimaia Moldova” and „Znamea” (Ceadâr-Lunga) have maintained their position of favoring the actual bashkan and disfavoring his counter-candidate Mihail Formuzal. „Vesti Gagauzii” presented Gh. Tabunșic in bright colors only once. „Panorama” (Vulcănești) kept a neutral position, mentioning only N. Dudoglo and A. Stoianoglu in a neutral context over the news and completely ignoring other candidates.

The independent newspaper „Nastoiășcee Znamea” continued supporting Mihail Formuzal and negatively depicting the candidate supported by the Communist Party from Republic of Moldova—Gh. Tabunșic.

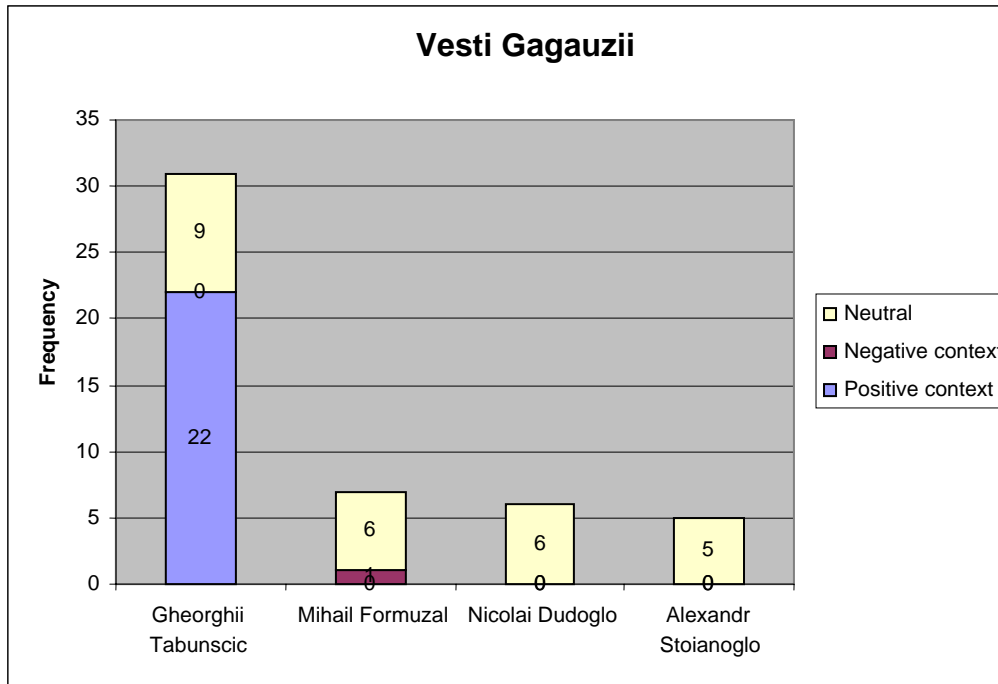
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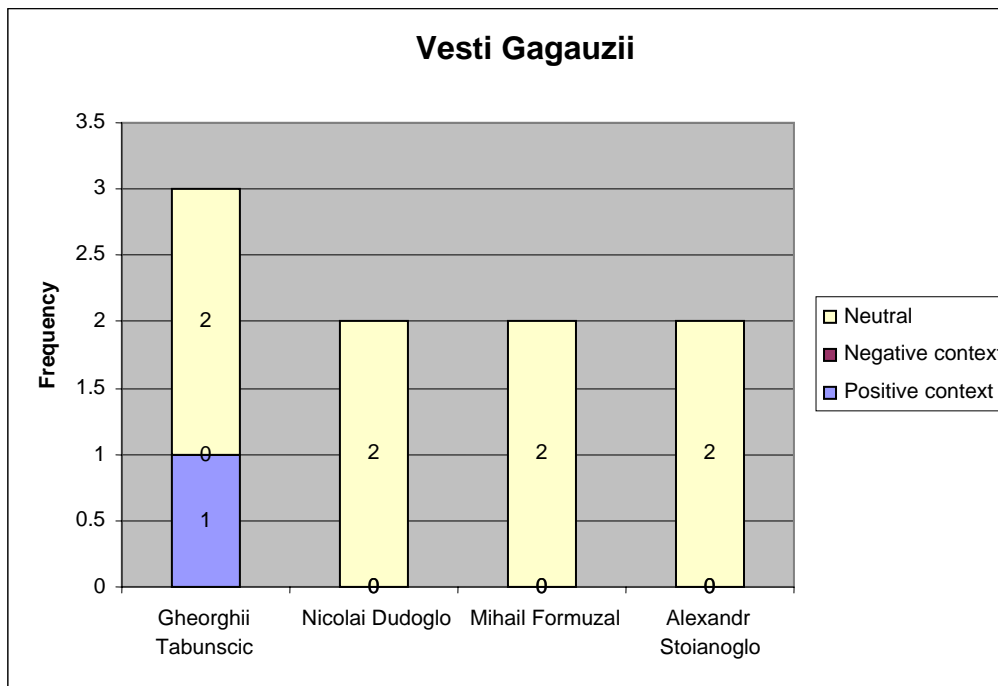
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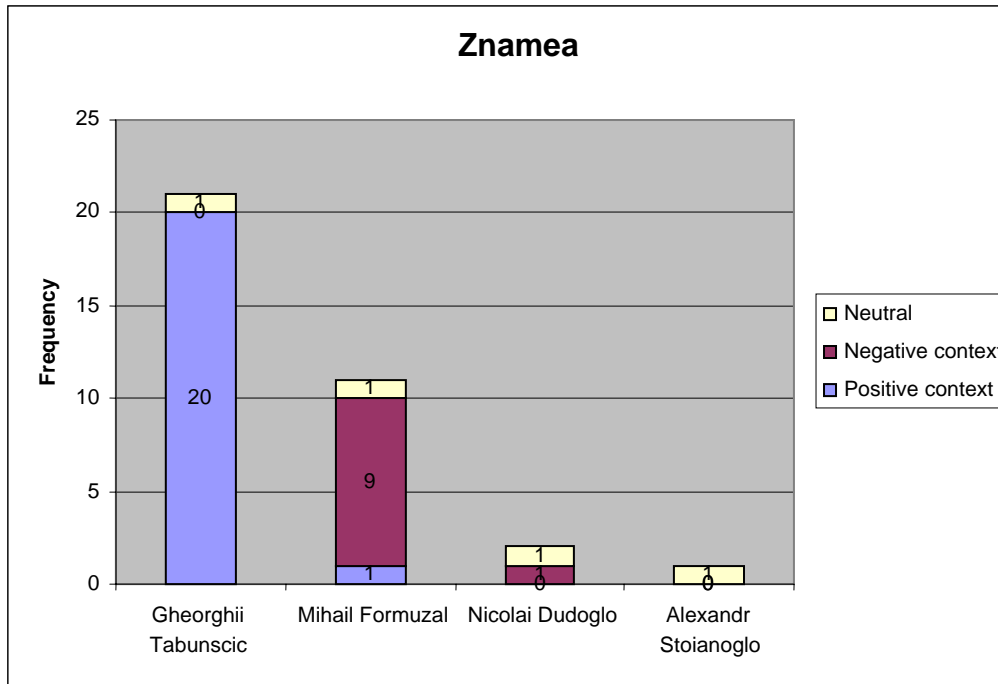
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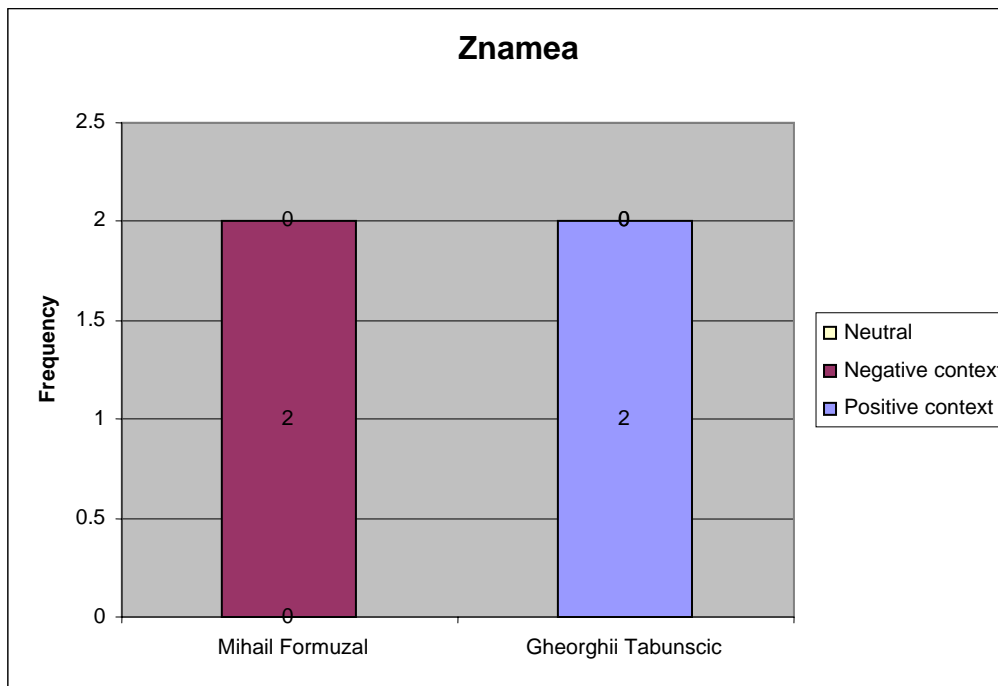
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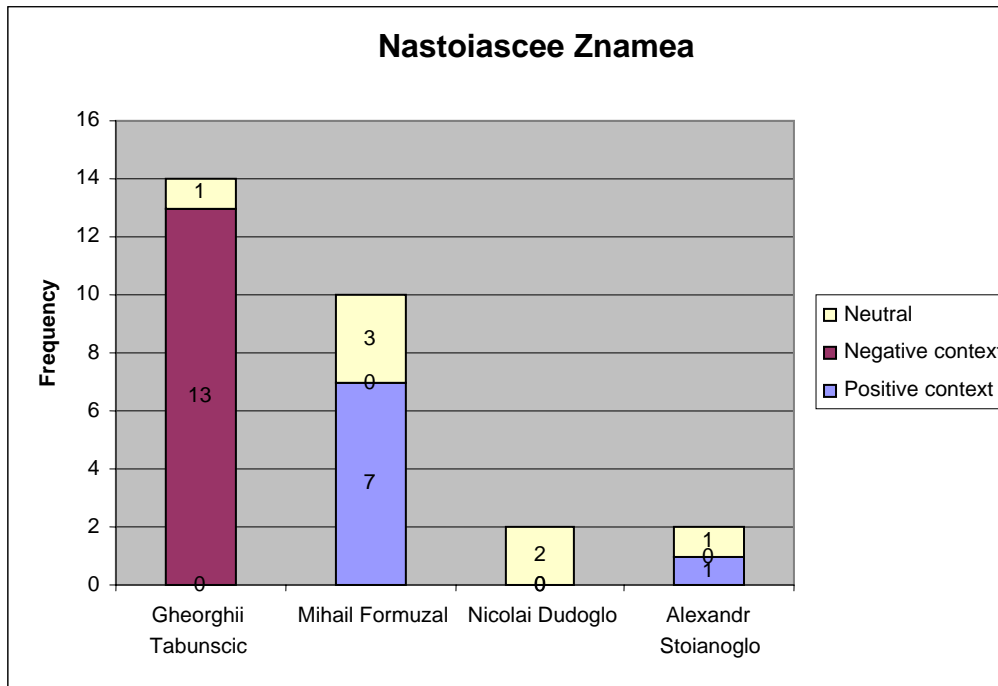
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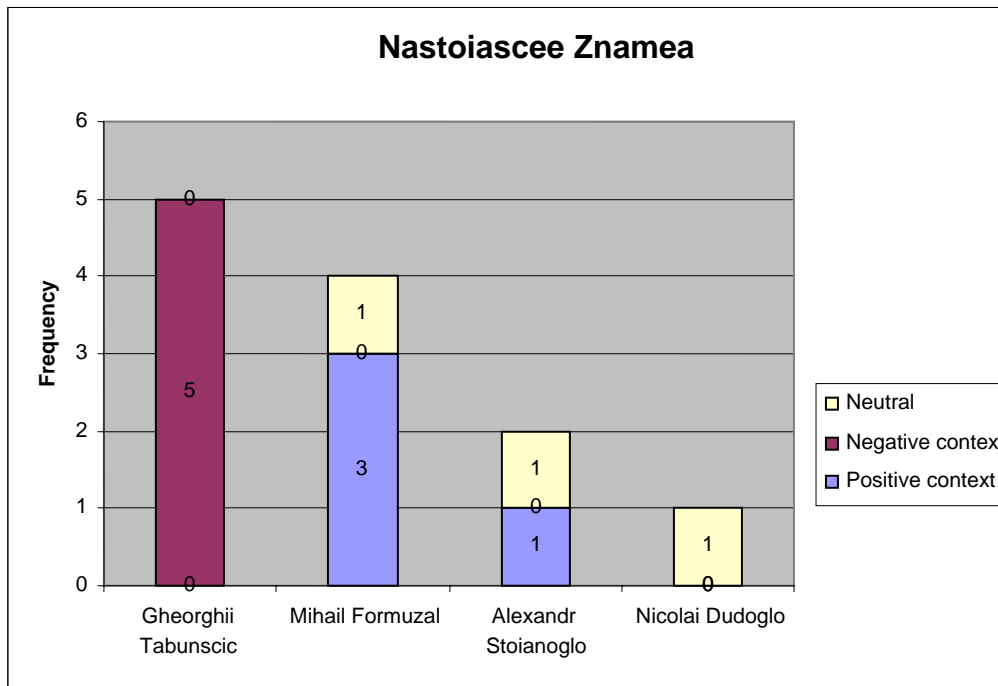
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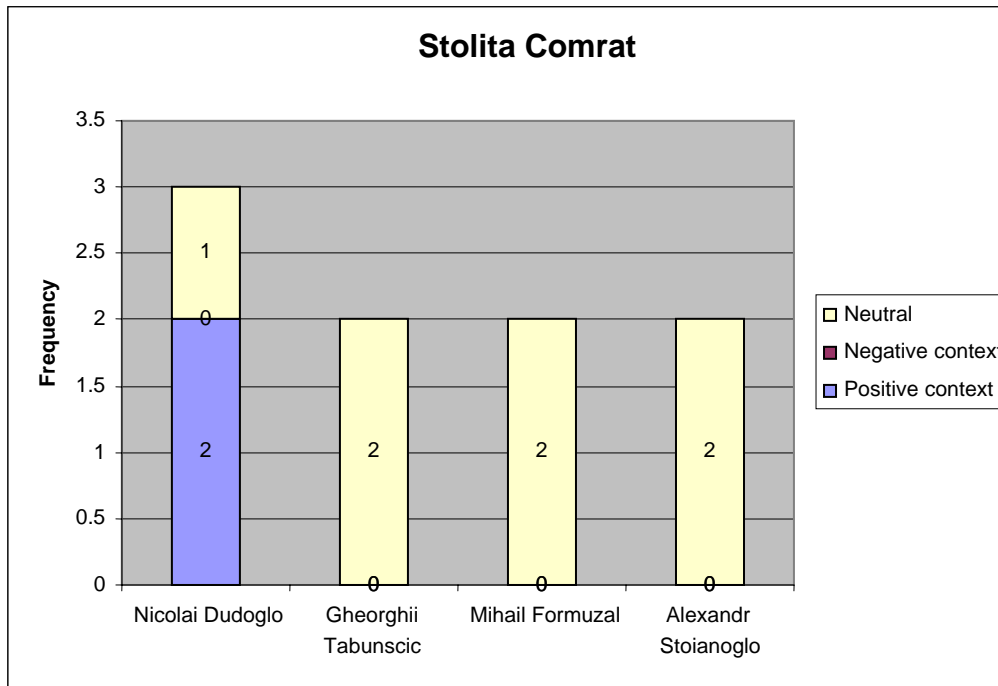
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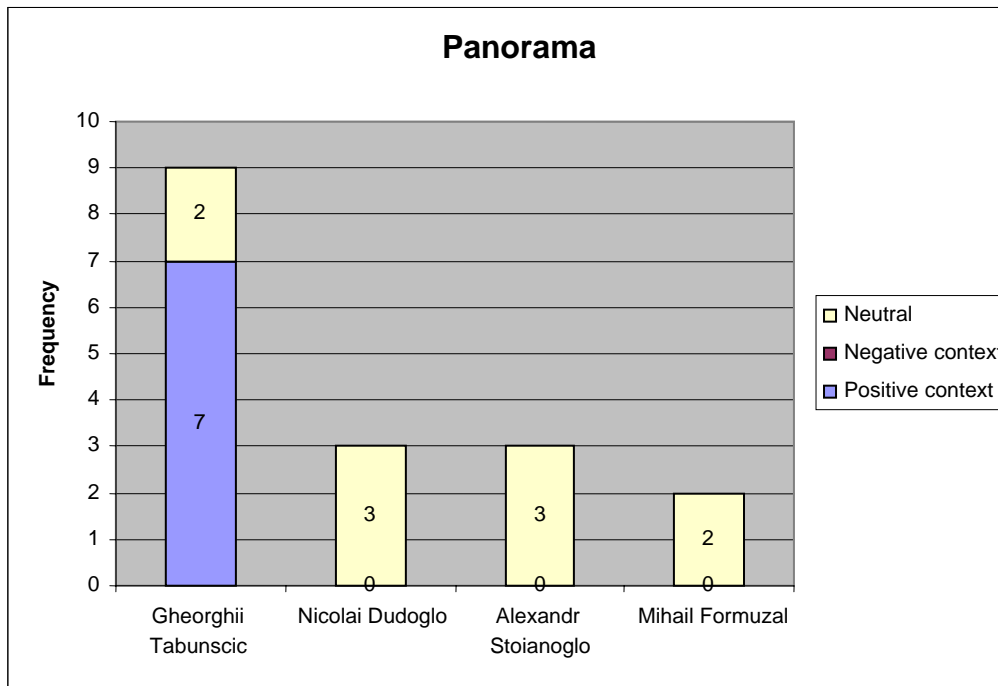
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