

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

Report no. 5
4 – 15 December, 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

In the second electoral tour for the election of the bashkan of TAU Găgăuz Yeri, the subject-to-monitoring radio and TV channels behaved in a rather balanced way, favoring slightly the independent candidate Nicolai Dudoglo in the context of a very passive involvement of national as well as regional channels.

TV Moldova 1, NIT and Radio Moldova presented, on a large scale, the development of elections in TAU Găgăuzia in the day of December the 3rd, abandoning later the reflection of those elections. *Moldova 1* and *Radio Moldova* spread only the piece of news containing the declaration of A. Stoianoglo in which he had not made an appeal to voters to support M. Formuzal in the second electoral tour, and that piece of news was indirectly not in favor of M. Formuzal.

As soon as the results of the first electoral tour had been made public, the number of pieces of news broadcast on *TV* and *Radio Găgăuzia* referring, either directly or indirectly, to the electoral competitors was reduced in a drastic manner, up to a single piece of news in two or three days. Both channels diffused mainly electoral education shows, prepared by LADOM and ADEPT, and electoral publicity of the candidates. *TV Găgăuzia* broadcast a piece of news about the commissioning of an aqueduct in Comrat municipality that provides water to two sectors of this town. The news favors indirectly the candidate N. Dudoglo, Mayor of Comrat.

Electoral debates were organized on *Radio Găgăuzia* and *TV Găgăuzia* with the participation of both candidates, who were to answer to the questions of radio listeners and TV-viewers. The presenters asked no questions at all.

Written press

Having shown preference for the actual bashkan Gheorghii Tabunșic in the first electoral tour, in the second tour written press took the side of the actual Mayor of Comrat, Nicolai Dudoglo, disfavoring Mihail Formuzal.

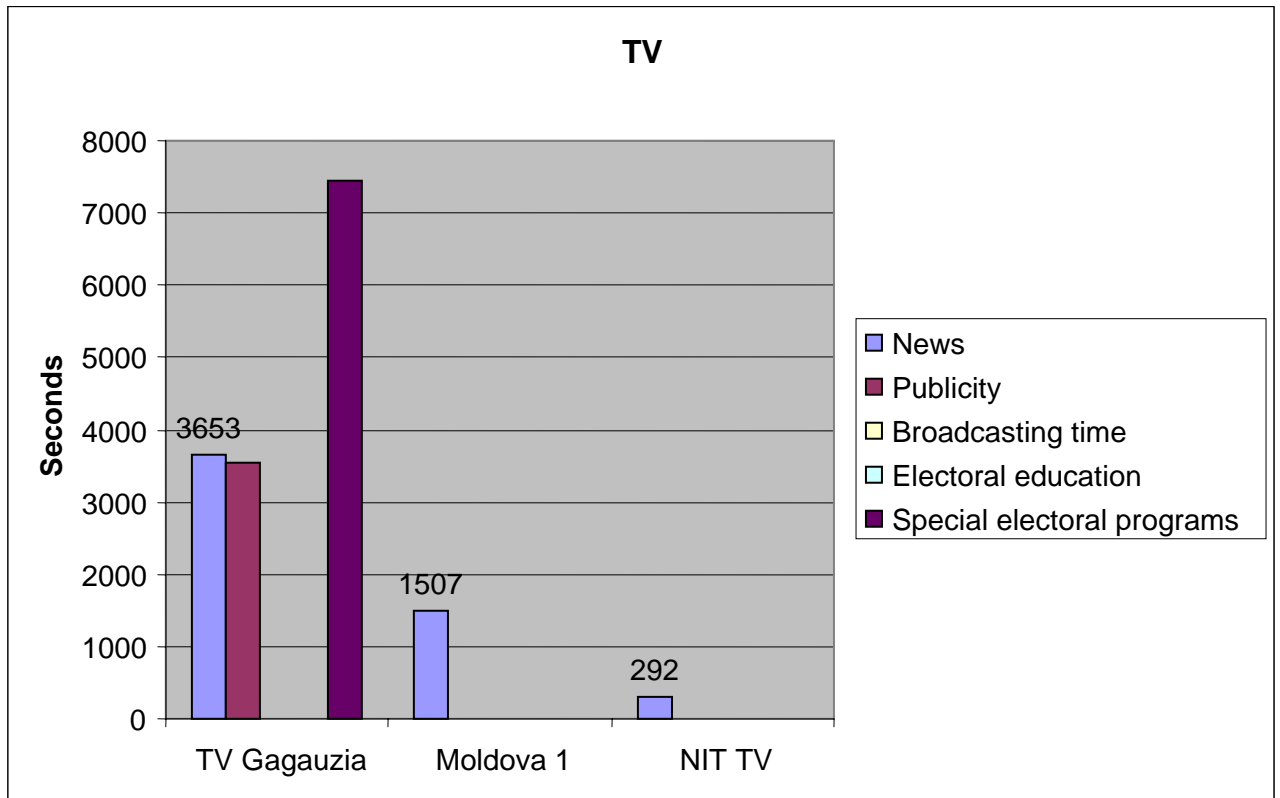
4. Data of monitoring

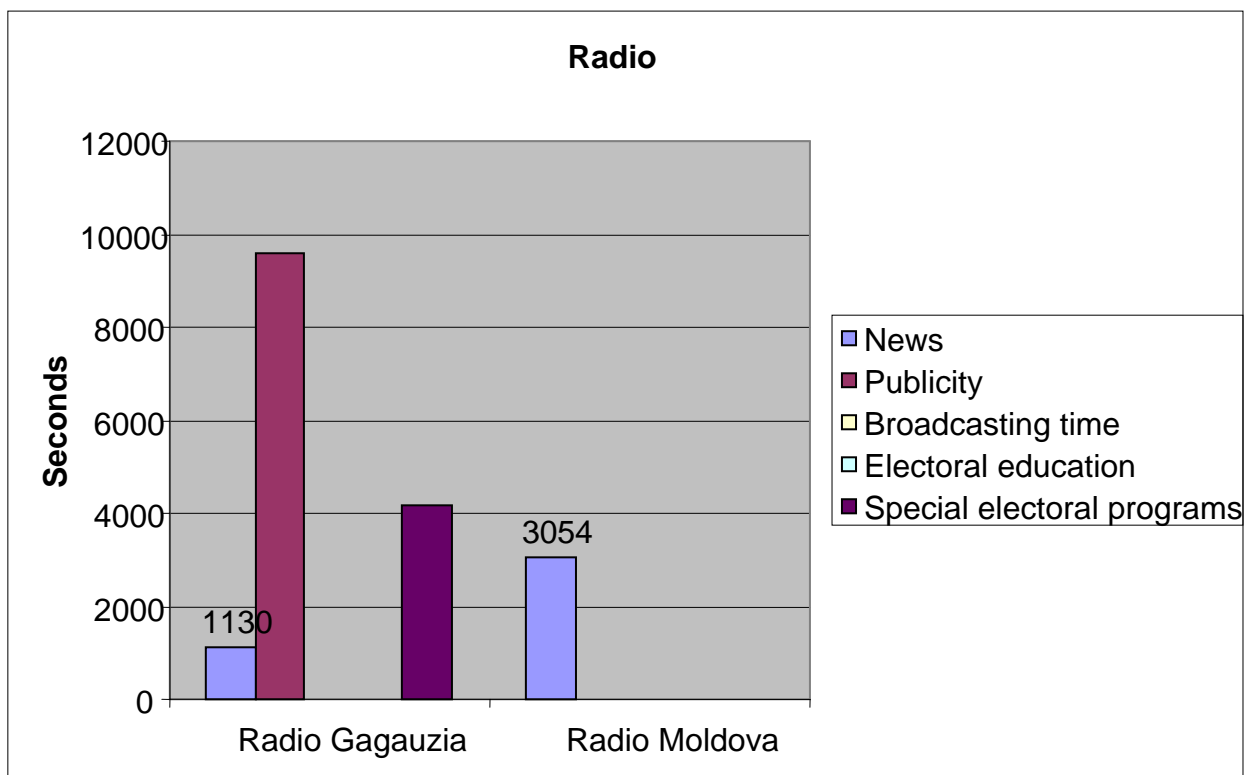
4.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

4.1.1 Radio and TV

Throughout the period December 4 – 15, 2006, the involvement of national-coverage channels *TV Moldova*, *Radio Moldova* and *NIT* resumed mainly to the presentation of results of the first electoral tour.

TV Găgăuzia increased the bulk of electoral debates, while electoral publicity predominated on *Radio Găgăuzia*.





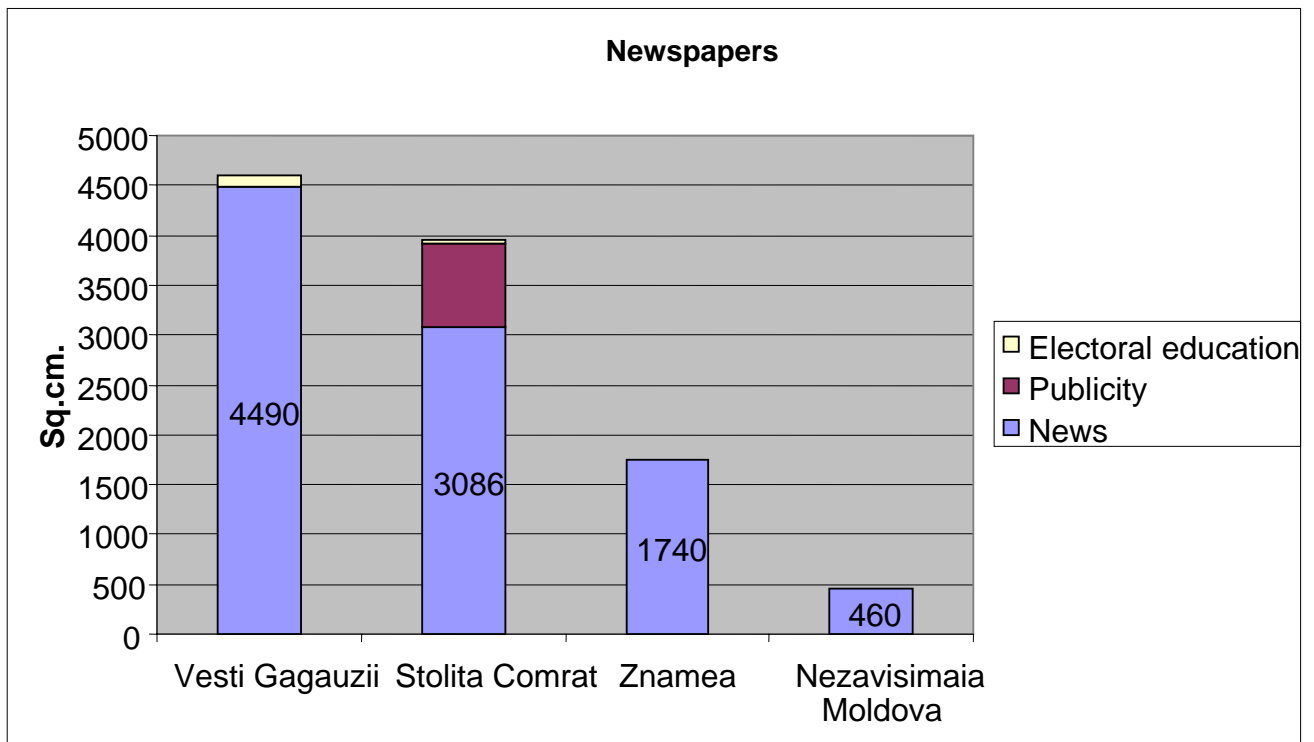
4.1.2 Newspapers

During the first week since the elections from December the 3rd, the newspaper „Vesti Gagauzii” published a single piece of news, announcing the results of the first electoral tour to the inhabitants of Gagauz Yeri. It should also be mentioned that, during the period of monitoring, the publication „Vesti Gagauzii” was issued only twice, while previously it appeared twice per week.

The national newspaper „Nezavisimaia Moldova” was the newspaper that wrote the least about the elections from TAU Gagauzia. In the first week after the elections from December the 3rd, „Nezavisimaia Moldova” published 3 pieces of news of electoral nature, writing neutrally or disfavoring both candidates. Last week, the concerned publication „NM” did not publish any word about the elections from the autonomy.

„Stolița Comrat” was the single newspaper to publish electoral publicity during the period of monitoring, the financial sources for it coming from the electoral fund of the candidate Nicolai Dudoglo. In addition, only „Stolița Comrat” quoted the two final candidates from the electoral race. The duration of intervention of Nicolai Dudoglo constituted 48 sq.cm., while that of Mihail Formuzal – 39 sq.cm.

Just as „Vesti Gagauzii”, in the first week after the first tour of elections the newspaper „Znamea” published very little about the elections from the autonomy.



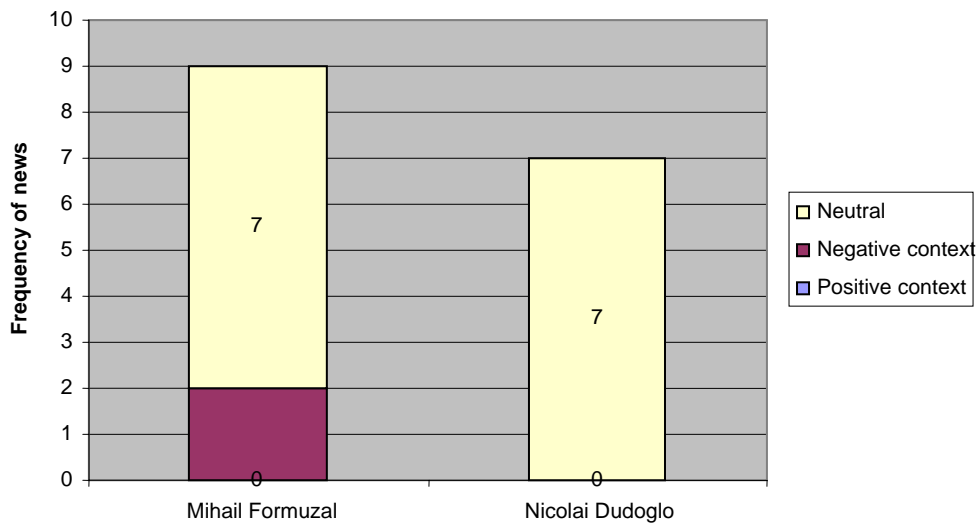
4.2 The candidates addressed to, either directly or indirectly, in newscasts, the frequency and context of media appearance.

4.2.1 Radio and TV*

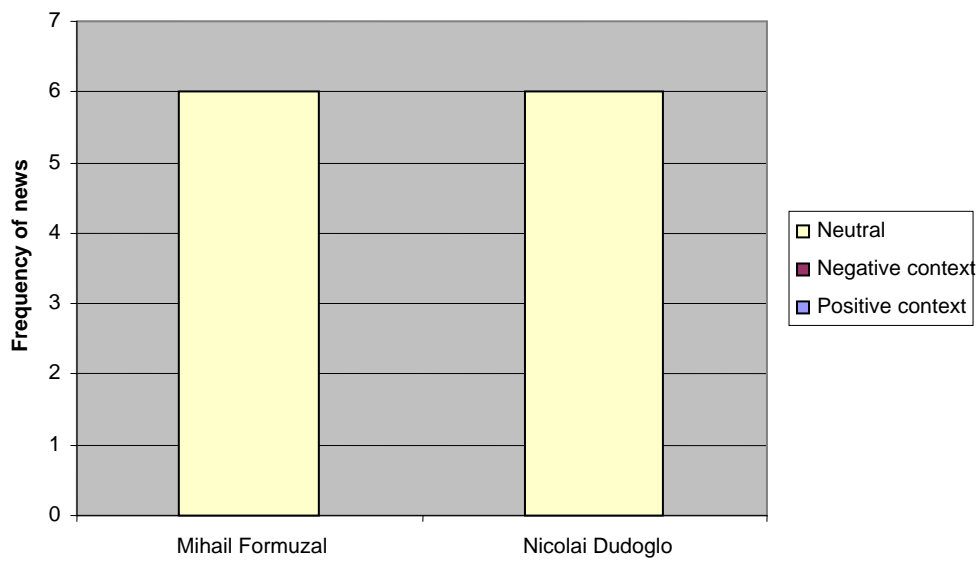
TV Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova favored indirectly the candidate Nicolai Dudoglo, broadcasting the declaration of A. Stoianoglo regarding his refusal to support Mihail Formuzal in the second tour of elections.

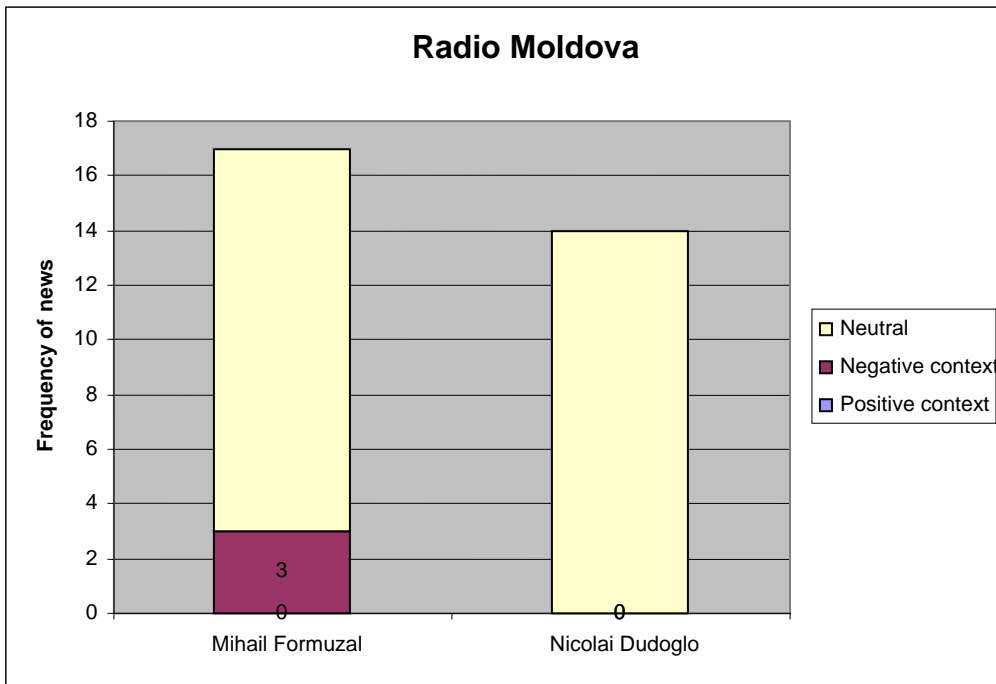
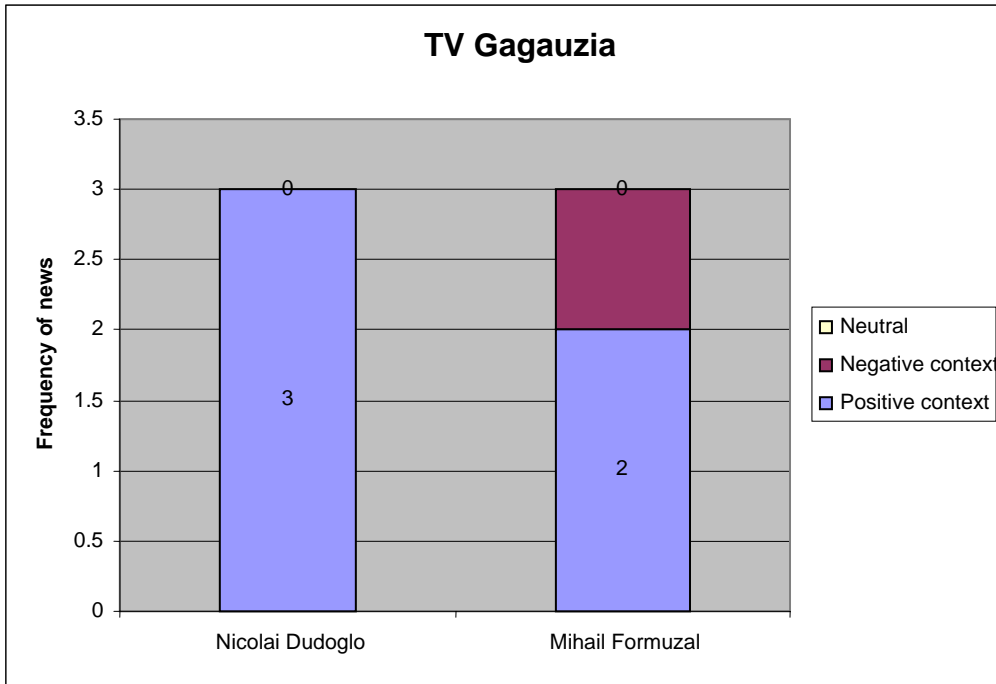
TV Găgăuzia spread the piece of news about the commissioning of an aqueduct in Comrat municipality (N.Dudoglo is the Mayor of Comrat) that provides water to two sectors of this town.

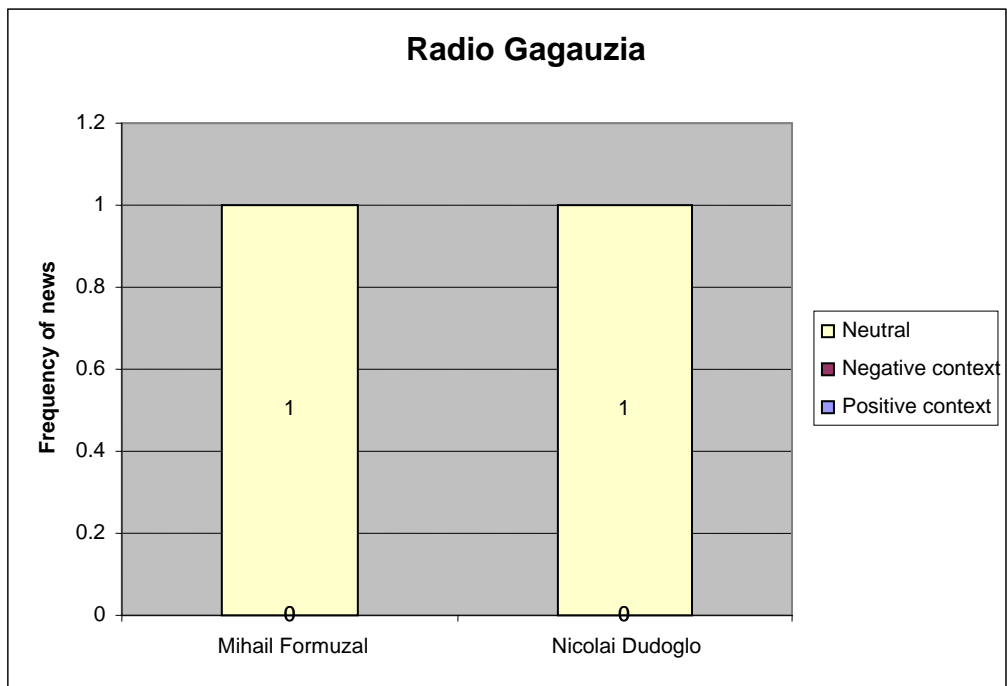
Moldova 1



NIT TV





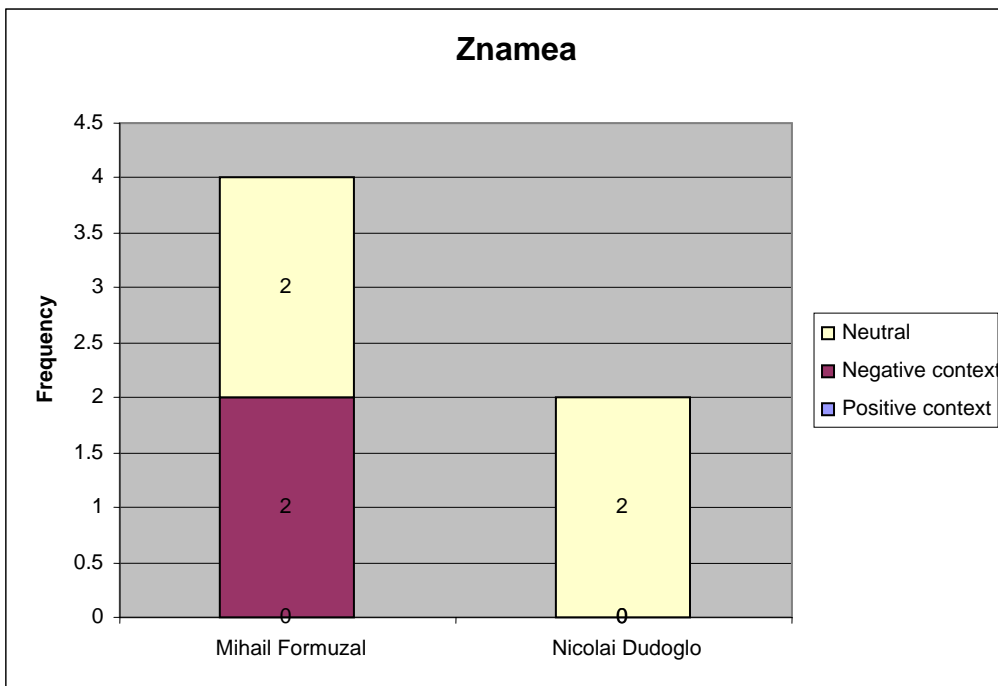
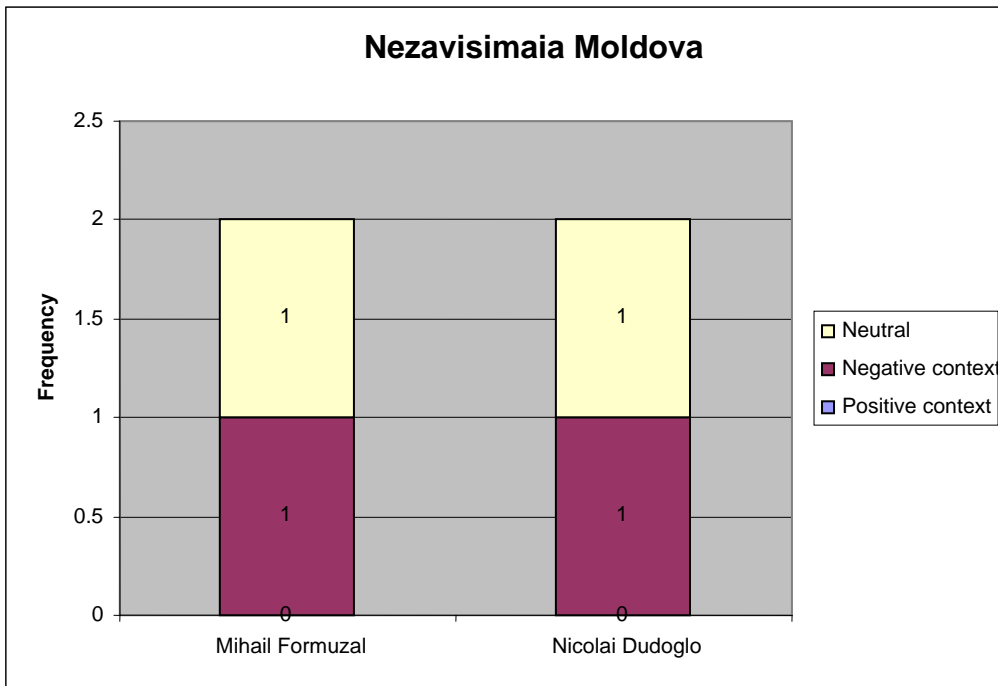


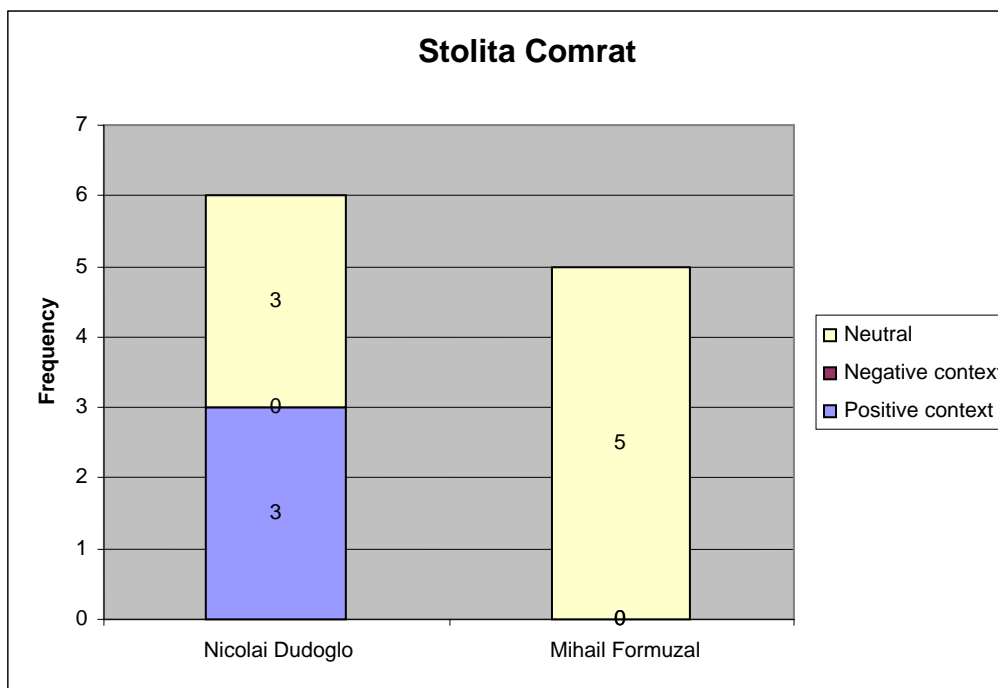
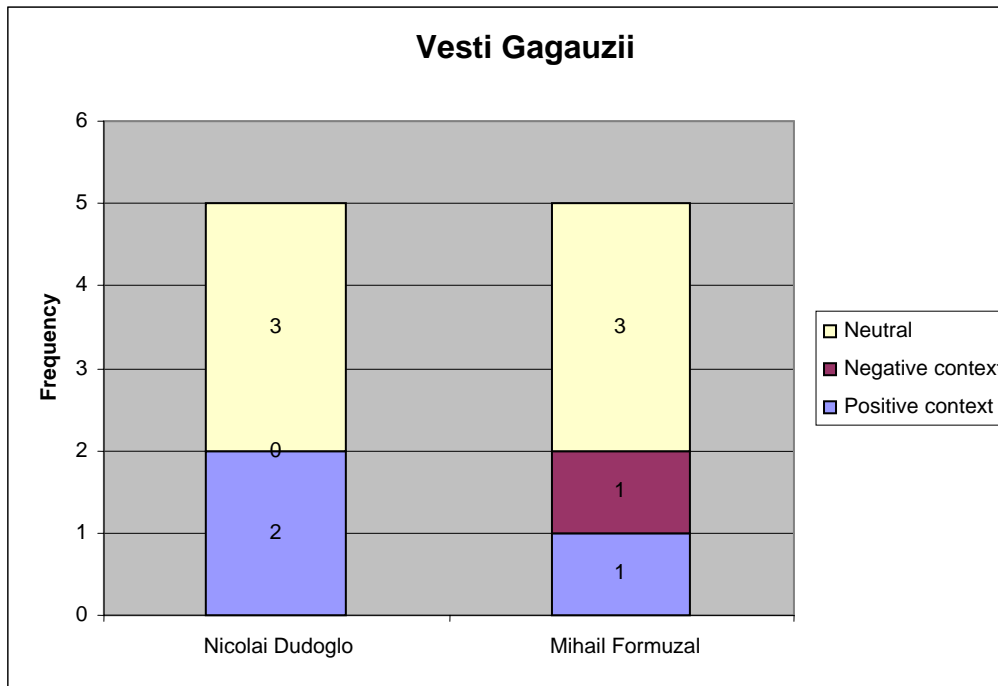
4.2.3 Written press

The independent candidate Nicolai Dudoglo benefited from positive articles in local public newspapers „Stolița Comrat” (Comrat) and „Vesti Gagauzii” (Comrat). „Znamea” (Ceadr-Lunga) maintained a neutral position towards the Mayor of Comrat, criticizing Mihail Formuzal. On the other side, the national newspaper „Nezavisimaia Moldova” did not favor any of the two final candidates for the position of bashkan.

„Vesti Gagauzii” published two articles supporting the actual Mayor of Comrat and presented Mihail Formuzal in dark colors in one piece of electoral news.

„Stolița” showed preference for the actual Mayor of Comrat town, simultaneously presenting Mihail Formuzal in a neutral context.





*For technical reasons, the data from December 2-6 for *Radio Găgăuzia* are missing. The lack of such data in no way modifies the general conclusions.