



"Openly about 8th Saeima Election Campaign Finance"
Joint Project between the Soros Foundation Latvia and the Society for Openness "DeIna"

Analysis of Possible Occurrences of Hidden Advertisements in the Media before the 8th Saeima Elections

Riga, Latvia, October 31, 2002

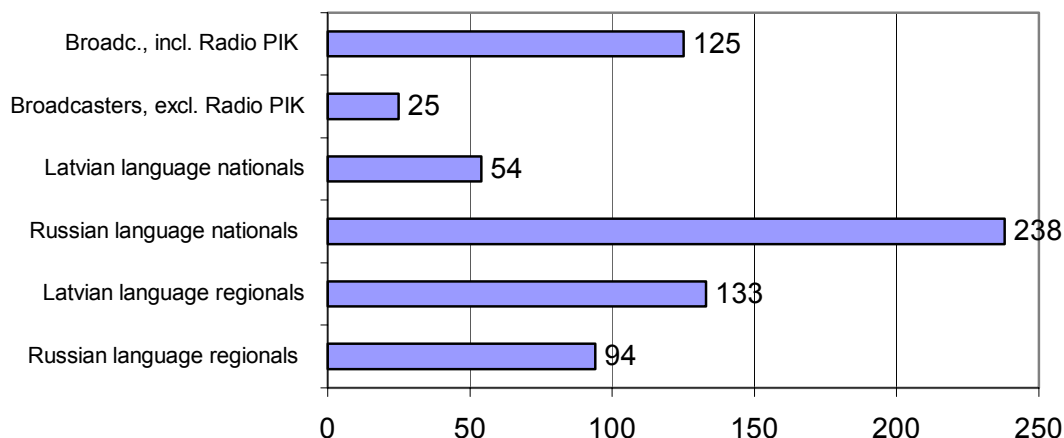
INTRODUCTION. BACKGROUND AND IMPRESSION OF PROJECT.....	3
DEFINITION OF HIDDEN ADVERTISEMENT	6
DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY	8
METHODOLOGY FORMATION PROCESS	8
SEQUENCE OF PROJECT EVENTS.....	8
<i>Press</i>	8
<i>Broadcasters</i>	9
ANALYSIS WORKGROUP:	9
PROJECT COUNCIL:.....	10
SUMMARY. BROADCASTERS.	11
DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL TENDENCIES	13
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BROADCASTERS.....	13
STANCE TOWARD PARTIES	18
NRTP'S ACTIONS TO IMPROVE BROADCASTERS' WORK QUALITY	19
SUMMARY. LATVIAN NATIONAL PRESS.....	21
DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL TENDENCIES.....	22
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS	26
STANCE TOWARD PARTIES	28
SUMMARY. RUSSIAN NATIONAL PRESS.....	30
DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL TENDENCIES.....	32
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS	35
STANCE TOWARD PARTIES	38
SUMMARY. LATVIAN REGIONAL PRESS.....	41
DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL TENDENCIES.....	42
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS	47
STANCE TOWARD PARTIES	49
COMMENTS ON OTHER EVENTS	52
SUMMARY. RUSSIAN REGIONAL PRESS.	54
DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL TENDENCIES.....	54
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS	56
<i>Regarding anti-advertisements</i>	58
NEWSPAPERS' STANCE TOWARD PARTIES.....	58
CONCLUSIONS	60
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
APPENDIXES.....	64
REPORT OF THE NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION COUNCIL ON MONITORING OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR THE 8 TH SAEIMA ELECTIONS	64
REPORT OF NOTED POSSIBLE HIDDEN ADVERTISEMENTS	67

Introduction. Background and impression of project.

Under the confines of the "Openly about 8th Saeima Election Campaign Finance" project, analysis of possible occurrences of hidden advertisements in the media and its influence on the quality of the coverage of the election campaign permits several conclusions to be drawn:

1. Significant changes in the quality of how the pre-election period is covered, i.e., lessening of the occurrence of possible hidden advertisements is possible if a debate on the harmful effect of this phenomenon is begun in a timely manner and openly;
2. The supervisory organisation of broadcasting organisations—The National Radio and Television council (NRTP) can play an important role in improving the quality of campaigning. In co-operation with the project, the NRTP had the opportunity actively and meaningfully to involve itself in the battle against hidden advertisements and significantly to lower the amount of possible hidden advertisements on broadcasting organisations. As one exception, radio PIK may be cited, which only partially reacted to NRTP's instructions and at which Latvia's Social Democratic Welfare Party's (LSDLP) advertisement continued to play an active role;
3. The media is conscious of its reputation in the eyes of society, and some media exhibit a tendency to change their pre-election coverage principles and to refrain from hidden advertisements by appropriately indicating articles paid for by parties;
4. With regard to the number of possible hidden advertisements, there has been a significant difference between regional and national, and Latvian and Russian language, newspapers, as well as between broadcasters and the press.
5. In accordance with new legislation that regulates the procedure of the financing of political parties, political parties were required for the first time to submit detailed reports on their expenditures. For this reason providing explanations for hidden advertisement expenses became more difficult.

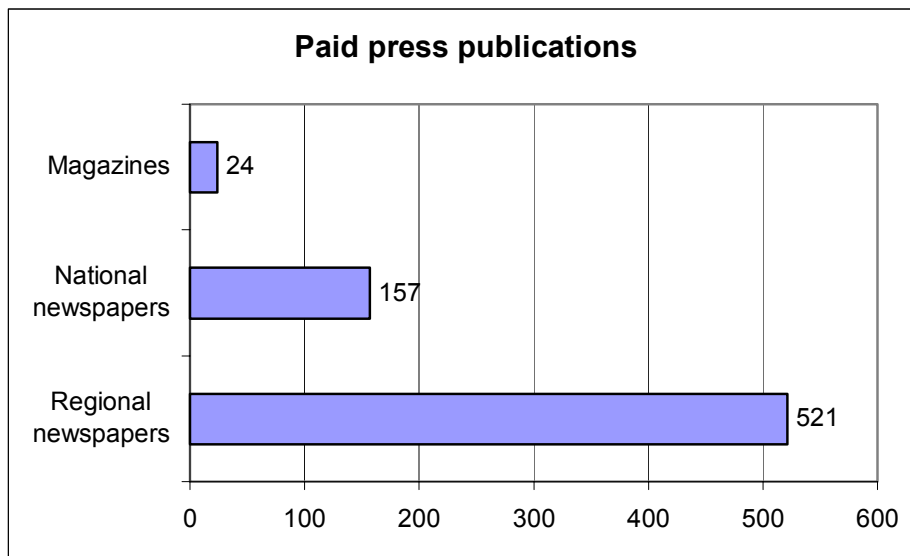
Number of possible hidden advertisements, Aug. 5 to Oct.5



From the above-mentioned it may be concluded that the presence of regulatory institutions and the threat of real sanctions significantly disciplines the media in portraying the pre-election period. Here the difference between broadcasters and the press is underscored. If broadcasters that utilise a frequency belonging to the general public are permitted to set specific broadcast regulations, then, by contrast, the press is a fully private business, whose activities and desire to present the public with a balanced and objective message is determined by the newspaper's free choice and by the functioning principles of the media accepted by society. For this reason, observing the 8th Saeima election campaign, it seems that the tendency may be pointed out that advertisements paid for by political parties are designated as such and appear less often (than last year) as the newspaper's daily reporting.

If in the 30 days before the 2001 municipal elections, by analysis of 12 newspapers 232 possible instances of hidden advertisements were found, then before the 8th Saeima elections, in the 60 days of analysing 56 newspapers, a total of 524 occurrences were found. By approximate calculation this means that in 2001 the amount of possible hidden advertisements was approximately six times greater. The persons conducting the study believe that this may largely be explained by the fact that before the 8th Saeima elections newspapers and magazines indicated paid-for material as a paid-for political advertisement.

In total during the period analysed, in the press there were 702 articles, broad interviews or articles on a deputy candidate that were designated as political advertisements.



Designation of such articles also provided the possibility more precisely to determine the amount of funds political parties use to finance their campaigns. If it is assumed that previously “hidden advertisements” were paid for from political parties’ “black boxes,” then this year the respective designation of such articles has provided the opportunity to estimate how much funds parties have spent to pay for such publicity. According to the estimates of “Openly about 8th Saeima election campaign finance,” in the time period from August 15 to September 30, paid articles for all parties together may have cost LVL 177 468¹.

At the same time it must be noted that this shift meant a more honest stance toward viewers, listeners or readers. Considering this development, the not-particularly-clearly drawn boundary between hidden advertisements and professionalism in journalism becomes even more problematic. It is possible that the occurrences in newspapers and some broadcasters identified in this report are materials of poor quality that have arisen from unprofessional behaviour, sloppiness or hurry. This largely indicates a new series of questions—the necessity for development of professionalism in journalism and the need for healthy mutual criticism in the media.

¹ This calculation was prepared by media research company *Observer* upon order by the project. Total expenditures were determined according to indicated pricing for newspaper advertisements.

Definition of Hidden Advertisement

The “Openly about 8th Saeima election campaign finances” project attempts to cast light on existing financing available to political parties by conducting an analysis of funds that political parties spent on campaigning. In accordance with the project’s estimates, political parties spend 60-70% of their election-year budget on election campaigns. This means that information on political parties’ election campaign expenses makes it possible to determine amounts of funds available to parties.

However, these numbers only help in calculating funds officially reported and spent by political parties. Political parties’ declarations and the actual amount of financing available to them have not in fact been checked by any institution, and even politicians and media representatives themselves unofficially admit that a part of funds does not appear in official political party reports, which is spent on so-called hidden advertising. This means that without a study on hidden advertising, the picture of parties’ actual finances spent on campaigning could be incomplete.

Hidden advertising is a very effective campaigning instrument, because it is presented as daily newspaper/radio/TV coverage. The public has a very high amount of trust in mass media. The voter does not recognise a hidden advertisement as a politician’s wish with the help of money to polish his image or damage another party’s reputation, but sees it as an independent piece of journalism and believes this message. From this we may conclude that parties’ desire to advertise in a hidden manner could be very great.

This means that it is not possible to gain a full view of election campaign finance by analysing only official political party reports and by counting officially designated political parties’ advertisements that appear in the media. For this reason the project focuses also on possible hidden advertising issues, with the aim of identifying in media coverage cases that indicate the flow of illegal money. Simultaneously, the authors of the project recognise that the project’s methodology will not permit estimates to be made on the amount of funds spent on placing hidden advertisements and particular instances of money being given and received. The discussion on possible occurrences of hidden advertising is tied to the broader series of issues on professionalism and ethics in journalism. For this reason the report discusses *possible* occurrences of hidden advertisements.

For the purposes of this project a hidden advertisement is the advertisement of a political party, deputy candidate, party name, manner of activity, viewpoint or logo, without appropriately designating the informative material and portraying it

as daily newspaper/radio/TV coverage with the intent of increasing or decreasing the popularity of some political power.

For the purposes of the project and the draft Law on Campaigning, the word "advertisement" is understood as a paid-for or otherwise compensated public notice of the manner of activity, views or other issues of some political party, union of parties or some deputy candidate, or if this political organisation, union of political organisations or a name, deputy candidate's name or logo is demonstrated with the aim of increasing or decreasing its popularity.

Under the confines of the project it is not possible to point out specific instances of money or other compensation being paid, thus only specific articles in the press/TV clips, and radio may be analysed by applying the criteria defined in the project, to conclude whether an article/clip includes indications that leaves the impression of a possible hidden advertisement.

Description of Methodology

Methodology Formation Process

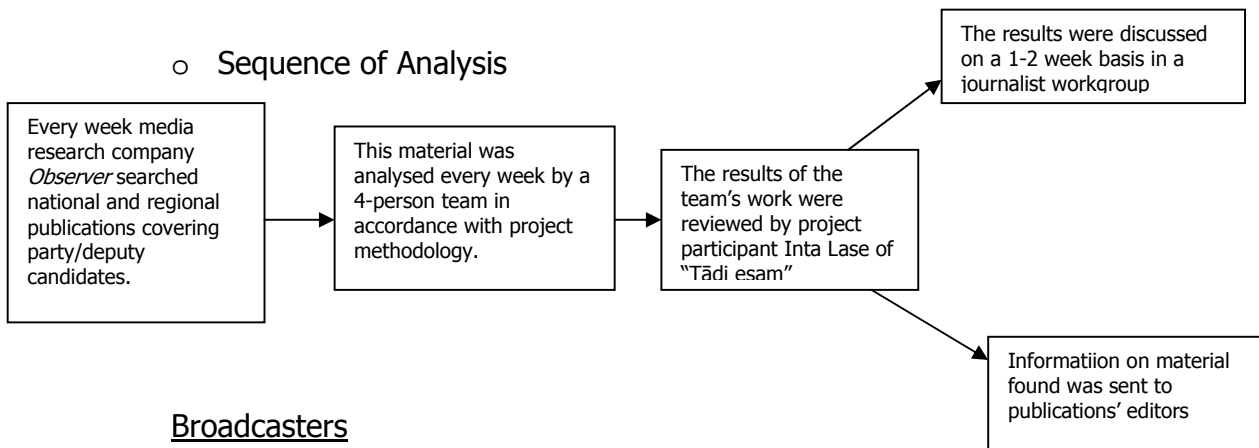
The project began discussions on hidden advertising and criteria for analysis thereof one month before the analysis began, i.e., on July 8th. The aim of these discussions was to involve as many people working in media and experts as possible, in order to make the project methodology accepted, known and understandable. The project's methodology, aims and criteria in finding hidden advertisements were discussed in individual conversations with the media, representatives from media organisations and experts in media issues, as well as discussed in broader, public events. The methodology for studying possible hidden advertisements was enhanced, improved, altered and developed, taking into consideration a wide range of recommendations. Anyone was free to express his opinion on the project's methodology. Under the confines of the project, precise criteria were formulated, according to which analysis of possible occurrences of hidden advertising was conducted. One of the most important tasks of methodology formulation was to prove that hidden advertising is definable, measurable and subject to analysis.

Sequence of project events

Press

- Analysis was conducted from August 5th till October 5th
- Editorial pieces were not subject to analysis
- Seventeen national press publications were analysed: *Biznes & Baltija; Chas; Diena; Rīgas Balss; Vakara ziņas; Vechernaya Riga; Dienas Bizness; Vesti Segodnya; 7 Sekretov; Lauku Avīze; Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze; Subbota; Vesti; Panorama Latvii; Telegraf; Jaunā Avīze*
- Thirty-nine regional newspapers were analysed: *Alūksnes ziņas, Auseklis, Bauskas dzīve, Brīvā Daugava, Dinaburg Segodnya, Druva, Dzirkstele, Ezerzeme, Jaunais Vēstnesis, Kapital Latgalij, Kursas laiks, Kurzemes vārds, Kurzemnieks, Latgales Laiks, Liepājas Acis, Liesma, Ludzas Zeme, Madonas ziņas, Million, Nasha gazeta, Neatkarīgās Tukuma ziņas, Novadnieks, Novaya Gazeta, Ogres Vēstis, Ogres Ziņas, Panorama Rezekne, Rēzeknes Vēstis, Rīgas Aprīņa avīze, Saldus Zeme, Seichas, Staburags, Stars, Tukuma ziņotājs, Vaduguns, Ventas Balss, Vietējā, Zemgale, Zemgales Ziņas, Ziemeļlatvija.*

o Sequence of Analysis



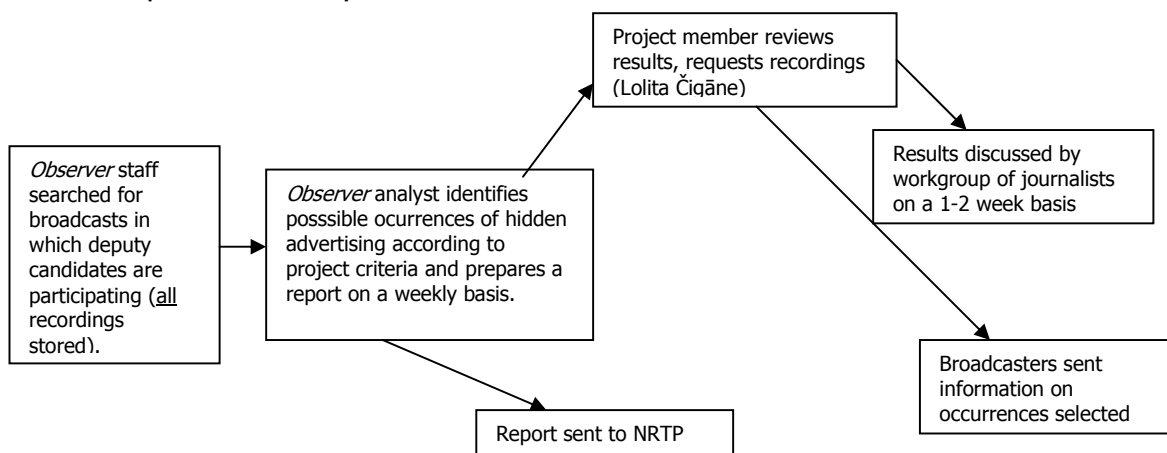
Broadcasters

o Period of Analysis:

From August 5th till September 3rd—by random selection

From September 6th till October 6th—comprehensive analysis of all programs

- o The following were analysed: the news, interviews, discussions, informative broadcasts, entertainment broadcasts
- o Television stations analysed: LTV 1; LTV 2; TV 3; LNT; TV 5
- o Radio stations analysed: Latvijas Radio 1; Latvijas Radio 2; Latvijas Radio 4; SWH; SWH +; Radio Skonto; Mix FM; Radio PIK
- o Sequence of Analysis



Analysis workgroup:

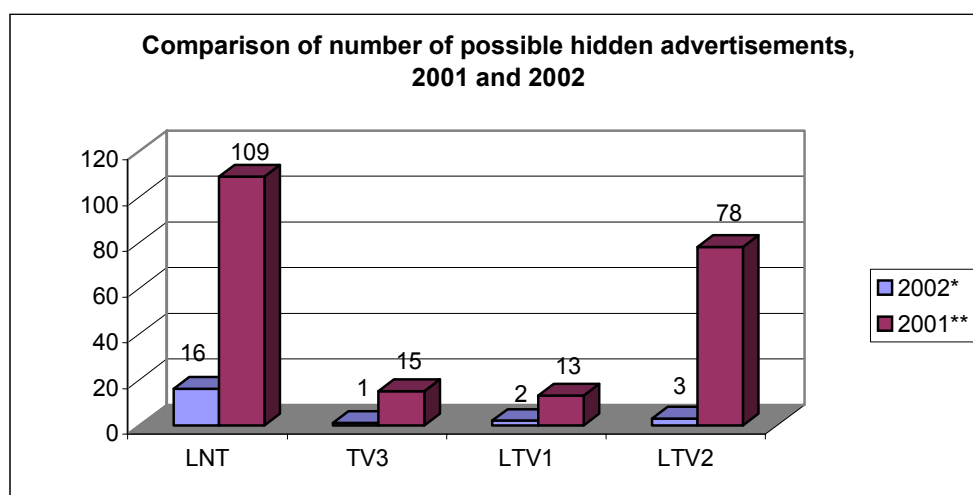
Elīna Gņedovska, RSU; Zanda Martņuka, RSU; Līga Mence, LU; Airisa Ādamsone, LU; Irina Jesina, "Telegraf"; Anna Novicka, "Telegraf"; Dmitrijs Seļikovs, lawyer; Anna Pridanova, RSU; Inta Lase, "Tādi esam"; Lolita Čigāne, project director.

Project council:

Jānis Ikstens, Vidzemes College; Valts Kalniņš, Foreign Policy Institute of Latvia;
Nellijs Ločmele, www.politika.lv; Richards Berugs, Vidzemes College; Kārlis
Streips, journalist; Vita Tērauda, SFL; Inese Voika, "Delna".

Summary. Broadcasters.

In order to detect possible occurrences of hidden advertising by broadcasters, 39 days were analysed in total. Compared with the 2001 municipal elections, the number of possible hidden advertisements found by the analysis was significantly lower this year. Before the 2001 municipal elections in 2001, in 13 days, 215 possible occurrences of hidden advertising were discovered on TV. Before the 8th Saeima elections only 25 such instances were found to have been broadcast (103 on the radio, where the mast majority—100—were on Radio PIK).



* Period of Analysis – 39 days

**Period of Analysis – 13 days

Several reasons may be cited why the number of possible hidden advertisements before the 8th Saeima elections has decreased significantly:

1. The large number of possible hidden advertisements in the 2001 municipal elections report and conclusions drawn started an open discussion about the scope and significance of the problem. This fostered the understanding of both the public and the media about hidden advertisement issues;
2. In debates and discussions on hidden advertisements begun a month before the analysis began, and journalists themselves were actively involved in drafting criteria and increasing journalists' understanding about the principles of pre-election coverage and the significance of hidden advertising;
3. Already in early August, LTV defined its pre-election coverage principles, which were analysed in events when the project discovered possible hidden advertisements. This step greatly enlivened the debate on hidden advertising;
4. The public became more informed and was able to recognise hidden advertising, thus fostering a critical stance;

5. The National Radio and Television Council, the supervisory institution of broadcasting organisations, became involved in the hidden advertising project and the discussions on it. The council received informative reports and reacted strategically to the violations committed by broadcasters.

Radio PIK exhibited particular prominence with regard to the number of possible hidden advertisements, by advertising the Social Democratic Welfare Party of Latvia (LSDLP) the entire pre-election period. Upon receipt of a warning from NRTP, the station began to designate the party's advertising clips as a political advertisement paid for by LSDLP, but LSDLP representatives continued to spend an inordinate amount of time on the air, and Radio PIK only rarely allowed another party's—PCTVL (For Human Rights in a United Latvia)—representatives to appear.

Although the number of instances was much lower, LNT exhibited a similar pattern, inviting deputy candidates as the only commentators on certain events or broadcasting an event solely to permit a deputy candidate to appear, usually either from TP (People's Party) or LSDSP (Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party). Altogether 15 such cases were discovered on LNT and, compared to the 2001 elections, this number is significantly lower (last year there were 109 cases over 13 days).

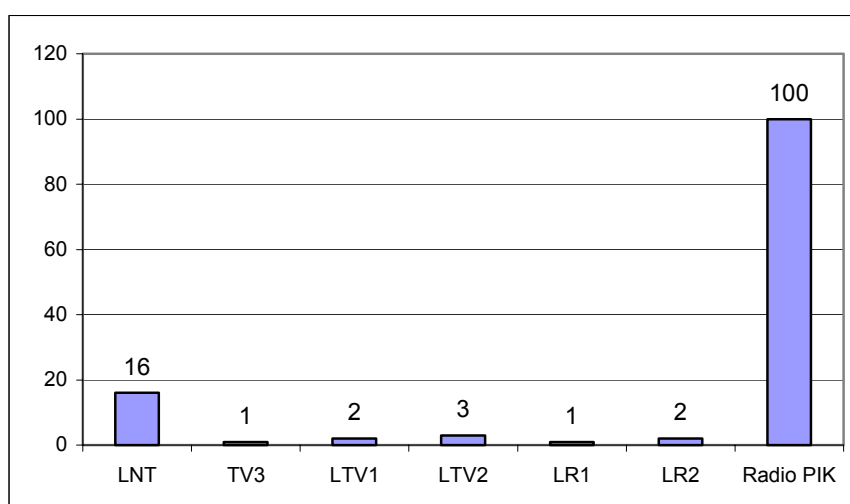
Finally, it must be concluded that often possible hidden advertisement broadcasts and programs, especially compared to the 2001 municipal elections, have become exceptions more than daily events.

Description of General Tendencies

The most widespread cases of possible hidden advertisements by broadcasters are related to a deputy candidate supposedly “accidentally” happening to visit the studio to comment on some event, which in the hidden-advertising-analysis criteria is designated as “Deputy candidate appearing without clear reason” (2nd criterion—2a pseudo event providing deputy candidate with reason to appear, 2b—deputy candidate as only commentator). Mostly such party advertising strategies were utilised by Radio PIK, where deputy candidates visited the studio to comment on various events and campaigns (e.g., commentators and interpreters of the “alternative sociology questionnaire”). In a similar manner deputy candidates visited LNT to comment on some rather insignificant (V. Lausks, A. Kalnins—new Saeima Commission initiative) or media-created event (S. Golde commenting on educational issues on the basis that the program host has children).

Although comparatively less often, this year deputy candidates took part in entertainment programs this year as well. On the programs they were allowed to tell about themselves in detail, of their personal life, childhood, parents, as well as politics. Altogether five such cases were noted—three in the program “Balsam for the Soul” (Ainars and Inese Slesers (LPP—Latvia’s First Party), Andris Skele (TP), Raimonds Pauls (TP) (channel LNT) taking part) and on two “With a Song about Life” shows (Andris Argalis (TP) and Andris Berzins (radio SWH) taking part). Although it is important to note that the “With a Song about Life” shows noted that the program was paid for.

Comparative Analysis of Broadcasters



Most cases of possible hidden advertisements were noted on Radio PIK, which during the entire pre-election period actively campaigned for the Social Democratic Welfare Party of Latvia. In accordance with the Lursoft database, LSDLP's president is also the owner of Radio PIK, and Radio PIK was utilised to advertise LSDLP. Beginning August 26th, the station broadcast LSDLP advertisements, which, contrary to law, were not initially so designated. Only after the NRTP filed a complaint, beginning September 14th, at the end of the advertising material the listener was informed that LSDLP had paid for the advertisement.

Afterwards, LSDLP representatives regularly visited the studio during the program "Weekly review with...", during which broadcast time was used to publicise the LSDLP and criticise other parties. The studio also hosted a contest "LSDLP against radio listeners," where listeners were given various questions and offered prizes. In total such skits praising LSDLP appeared 98 times. During the period PCTVL candidates appeared along with LSDLP candidates a couple of times in the studio.

In terms of hidden advertisements, Radio PIK held a unique place before the 8th Saeima elections; no other broadcaster came close in terms of amount of such advertising and sympathies expressed towards one party.

In second place among all broadcasters was LNT. On LNT there were noted 15 possible hidden advertisements, three on the "Balsam for the Soul" show, 11 on "LNT Breakfast," and one during the Riga News.

It could be argued that the "Balsam for the Soul" program is an entertainment broadcast whose format permits that a deputy candidate—a public personality—participates on the program and talks about his life, family, work and politics. However, it is a symptomatic indication that deputy candidates began to appear on this show only shortly before the elections (A. Slesers, I. Slesers—15.09; A. Skele 22.09; R. Pauls 29.09). Previously the broadcast did not display any particular interest in deputy candidates.

Furthermore, on this broadcast, which provided deputy candidates the opportunity to appear in a particularly favourable light, this privilege was granted only to two candidates from the People's Party (TP) and one from Latvia's First Party (LPP). This leads one to conclude that the selection of whom to cover was not determined solely by the wishes of the broadcast creators, because other parties too have interesting personalities. The determinative factor is more likely how much a party is willing to pay for the broadcast. In addition, not only were the broadcast hosts engaging toward the deputy candidates being interviewed, but were particularly flattering, citing from memory various events from their

childhood or youth and paying the candidates compliments. Such observations cause the researchers to suspect that the broadcast, perhaps, was paid for by the political parties whose candidates appeared on the broadcast.

Additionally worthy of mention is deputy candidates' guest appearances on LNT Breakfast. In total, 11 such cases were noted. Usually they ranged from 3 – 9 minutes in length. Deputy candidates were permitted freely to express themselves on issues of their choice (Viola Lazo (LSDSP) on the song festival) or regarding topics that relate directly to candidates (Valdis Gilis (TP) – on medicine, Silva Golde (TP) – on education). These skits were alike in that the journalist did not interject during the story, permitting the deputy candidate to speak about whatever he wished. Discussions of politics turned to stories about family and personal life (e.g., V. Muizniece) or about popularising the party's campaigning activities (O. Kostanda, Centre Party). When the journalist did interject, it was to raise a suggestive, simple question. The skits, which appeared on LNT Breakfast during election week, were broadcast two times.

Also noteworthy are broadcasts of the thematic remakes on LNT of the films "We Love this Country" (TP) and "Time" (JL—New Era) during election week (October 1st and 4th). Due to technical reasons these films were not included in the report on possible hidden advertisements and were not discussed at NRTP or at the project or journalist's workgroups. For this reason the project currently chooses to forego drawing conclusions regarding possible hidden advertisements. Nevertheless, if the films have been prepared by parties and LNT broadcast them at no charge (as JL representatives informed the project), this free broadcast time should be reported by the party as a received donation.

On the day before elections LNT conducted a live broadcast from a LSDSP-sponsored concert ("Together we will succeed"). During the broadcast of the concert one party's symbols and campaign slogans were visible, yet the broadcast was not designated as a political advertisement. Such interest one day before elections regarding one particular party's election campaign activities raises suspicion of possible hidden advertising.

Radio Skonto appropriately designated paid materials (People's Party deputies visited the Skonto studio as newspaper observers). Regarding radio Skonto, the issue arises whether programs on which deputy candidates took part as newspaper observers and on which contests were announced that indubitably indicated that a TP representative was visiting the studio were designated in a manner sufficiently visible and easily noticeable to the public.

For example, on the program where Vineta Muizniece (TP) was a guest, the designation that the broadcast was paid for was only announced after a song was played, which makes it unclear what exactly the People's Party has paid for.

Similarly, when the studio guest was Helena Demakova (T), the designation that the deputy candidate's participation was paid for was announced before a song was played. The two noted cases on Radio SWH were of a similar nature. Although the broadcast "With a Song about Life" with Andris Argalis and Andris Berzins participating was designated as a paid broadcast, the issue arises how clearly this was done; the designation was announced either at the end or beginning of an hour-long program. In the discussion with A. Berzins the designation was announced before the jingle introducing "With a Song about Life" and A. Berzins' favourite songs, which, when listeners hear them, they, possibly, have already forgotten the designation that the broadcast is paid for.

Finally, LTV 2 must also be mentioned, on which four possible hidden advertisements were noted. Atis Slakters (TP) appeared two times on LTV 2, and Baiba Brigmane (JL) appeared once. Both of Atis Slakters' appearances were related to a display of grocery products. Both broadcasts were prepared by the "Labvakar" production group, and in the beginning the designation "Shop Window" appeared, leading the viewer to believe that the broadcast is paid for. During the "Current Events" broadcast, while other speakers were addressing the public, subtitles appeared indicating "broadcast paid for." However, while Atis Slakteris was speaking, these subtitles did not appear. In similar fashion, in the broadcast covering the graduation ceremony of the Banking College of Latvia, this celebratory event was commented by its dean B. Brigmane (JL). During the comprehensive coverage the graduates themselves are not provided any chance to express themselves, and they appear behind B. Brigmane. Also noteworthy is the Zebra broadcast, on which A. Gorbunovs appears to comment on a new passenger train being introduced. During the extensive coverage, no other person, a passenger, for example, is provided any chance to express himself.

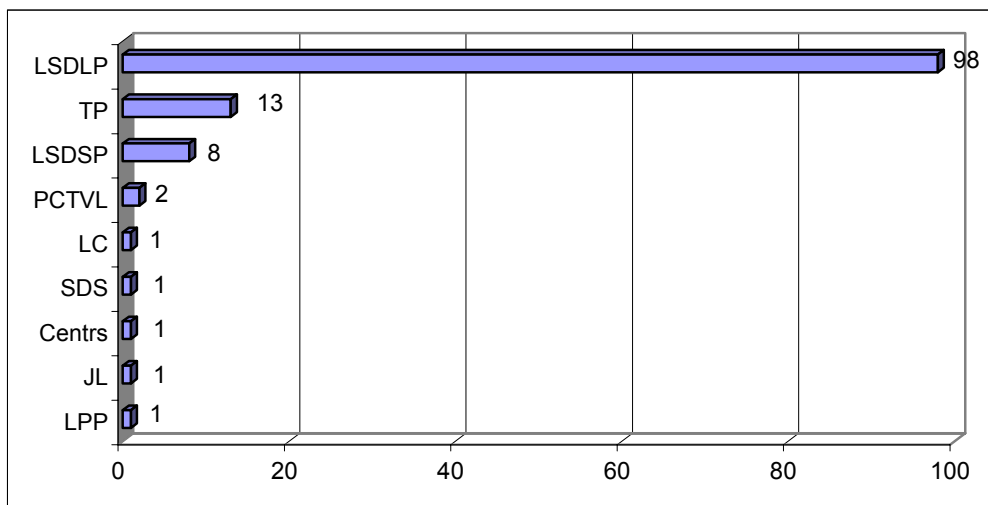
One occurrence was noted on LR1, two on LR2, and two on LTV 1. These occurrences, most likely, stem from a lack of journalistic professionalism or competence. A news report on LR1 on September 25th that was broadcast three times depicts voters being polled on their choice in the elections. However, the only voter who has clearly made up his mind intends to vote for the People's Party and decisively says so. The other voters do not state their preferences.

In one instance on LR2, while describing a march by striking medical workers, the narrator stresses that Egils Baldzens (SDS) was taking part. Similarly, on election day the LR2 narrator notified viewers that that a voter informed him that he would vote for Raimonds Pauls (TP). On its "Life in the Garden" program, LTV1 allowed TP representative Andris Argalis thoroughly to express himself (for about 3 min.). To be sure, Argalis is the chairman of the competition committee, but his TV appearance seems very long, even taking his position into account. As LTV lawyer Ingrida Veiksa explained to the project, Andris Argalis' participation in the exhibit and awards ceremony was deemed to be a violation and the producer was issued a warning.

Finally, worthy of note is a TV 3 skit where Viola Lazo (LSDSP) took part. The skit is a typical pseudo-event, and the viewer gets the impression that the journalists who prepared this material had an ironic stance toward Lazo's participation. The deputy candidate is filmed in conjunction with the visit of a delegation of Chinese journalists to Riga. It turns out Lazo is a leader in the Journalists Union of Latvia. She is filmed walking along the Daugava River and, among other things, discussing similarities between Chinese and Latvian cooking.

Stance Toward Parties

As stated earlier, most possible cases of hidden advertising were observed on Radio PIK, which utilised its airtime before the elections to praise the LSDLP. Even on the radio display, where the radio frequency usually appears, Radio PIK invited listeners to vote for the LSDLP and List 3.



In second place in terms of possible hidden advertising events broadcast was the People's Party. Seven TP deputies were guests on radio Skonto, though the station indicated that the appearance was paid for. However, this indication could be easily misunderstood by listeners. When in similar fashion TP representatives were guests on LNT breakfast, the notation that participation was paid for does not appear.

In third place is LSDSP, whose deputy candidates appeared on LNT Breakfast beginning the first week of September. Interestingly, when introducing each social democrat in turn, the journalist says, "Our guest, as usual is this time, is a social democrat."

	LSDLP	SDS	PCTVL	TP	LC	LPP	JL	Centre Party	LSDSP	Total
PIK	98		2							100
LR1				1						1
LR2		1		1						2
LTV1				1	1					2
LTV2				2			1			3
LNT				7		1		1	7	16
TV3									1	1
Total	98	1	2	13	1	1	1	1	8	

NRTP's actions to improve broadcasters' work quality

Every week the NRTP received reports on noted possible cases of hidden advertising. Since the project and council acted with regard to these reports according to their own views, the project and NRTP's conclusions on the presence of signs of hidden advertising in specific cases may not coincide. Nevertheless, on the basis of the information provided in the analysis, the NRTP filed a complaint against radio PIK for misleading the public. The complaint was submitted to the Consumer Rights Defence Centre for review. The NRTP also deemed the presence of deputy candidates on LNT Breakfast to be misleading to viewers and filed a complaint, on the basis of which the Council issued a warning. The Council also noted violations regarding advertising amounts on LTV 1, LNT, TV3 and TV 5 RIGA. Complaints will be filed with regard to these violations.

From the NRTP's 8th Saeima election campaign monitoring report

The National Radio and Television Council, in co-operation with the Soros Foundation Latvia and the Society for Openness "Delna" joint project "Openly on 8th Saeima election campaign finance" and media study company "Observer," conducted random monitoring from July 22nd to September 3rd and full-time analysis of all programs from September 6th to October 6th. The following broadcasting programs were monitored: LTV 1, LTV 2, TV3 – Latvija, LNT, TV-5, Latvijas Radio -1., 2., 4., SWH, SWH +, Radio Skonto, MIX FM and Radio PIK.

During the monitoring, in the program distributed by SIA "Pikal un partneri," Radio Pik was found on numerous occasions not to have separated advertising (campaigning for the Social Democratic Welfare Party) from other programming. Further, neither before, nor after the advertisement was any notice given which political organization, union of political organizations or deputy candidate had paid for the election campaign, or whether the payment had been made through a third party. As a result, Article 22, Section 1 of the "Law on Radio and Television" was violated, as well as Article 7, Section 3, Subsections 10 and 17 of the law "On Campaigning before the Saeima elections." A program broadcast on September 24th entitled "Weekly review with Jurijs Zuravlovs (LSDLP)" was in essence campaigning, and thus listeners were misled, which in accordance with Article 2, Section 13 of the Law on Radio and Television is considered a hidden advertisement, as a result of which Article 22, Section 3 of the Law on Radio and Television was violated. For these transgressions a citation was issued, which was submitted to the Consumer Rights Defense Centre for review.

Interviews with 8th Saeima deputy candidates broadcast by A/S Independent Television of Latvia's LNT program on September 3, 10, 17 and 24 may essentially be considered campaigning. Taking into account that the interviews are not identified as advertisements, and that neither before, nor after the interviews is there any indication which political organization, union of political organizations or deputy candidate has paid for this campaigning, or whether payment had been made through a third party, viewers were misled, which in accordance with Article 2, Section 13 of the Law on Radio and Television is considered a hidden advertisement, as a result of which Article 22, Section 3 of the Law on Radio and Television was violated. For these transgressions a citation was issued, on the basis of which the Council issued a warning.

Under the confines of monitoring conducted by the National Radio and Television Council, the Council conducted an analysis of the amount of advertisements on six television stations: LTV 1; LTV2; LNT; TV 3; TV5 RĪGA; and TEM TV. Simultaneously the Council conducted a week's analysis of these six TV stations, utilizing Baltic Media Facts' study on the amount of advertising. The following stations were found to have exceeded advertising amounts: LTV 1; LNT, TV3 and TV 5 RĪGA. Citations were issued for the violations.

Summary. Latvian National Press.

Analysing Latvian-language national newspapers, it may be concluded that many defined their pre-election working principles so that, working in accordance with them, journalists would be able to provide readers with a comprehensive insight into the programs and candidates of various parties, as well as to provide other useful information to enable a better-informed political choice to be made. Such standards were set by *Diena*, *NRA*, *Rīgas balss* and *Dienas Bizness*. Pre-election policy in *Vakara Zinas* and *Jauna avīze* could only be inferred, as is evident reviewing these newspapers during the pre-election period. In these two newspapers the editors did not address letters to readers informing them of the newspaper's basic principles during the pre-election period.

Nevertheless, a firm declaration of principles did not protect newspapers from articles (in the news section) where the newspaper's preference for a certain political power was noticeable, without criticism or, on the contrary, critically covering events without any documented basis or inclusion of the opinions of involved parties. In the course of the analysis, it was concluded that coverage of events, without listening to all involved parties, is one of the most common ways in which, in accordance with the criteria of the analysis, the respective articles were singled out. One of the basic principles of quality journalism is interviewing all involved parties and covering these points of view in the article. Further, if one of the involved persons has refused to respond to a journalist's questions, the reader should be informed of this. In the selected articles, nevertheless, there is frequently no indication whether the journalist has even sought to ascertain the points of view of all the parties. In this situation it is the reader who suffers, because he is not capable of forming his own conclusions about events, which is particularly important in the pre-election period.

On a positive note, no newspaper in its news section blatantly called upon voters to vote for any particular party, or, on the contrary, called upon voters *not* to vote for any party. Also, the national newspapers were successful in avoiding publishing "pseudo-news," i.e., not publishing news about events that have attained the status of news, owing to the participation of politicians.

Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that some newspapers, in publishing interviews with party leaders, or covering meetings between parties and voters, have not critically evaluated parties' replies to questions, or have posed questions that permit parties to engage in campaigning. Here again it is the reader who suffers, because he was not reminded of parties' promises in previous years and does not analyse their fulfilment. Also, there is lacking analysis on the conformity of these promises with the basic principles of a democratic and lawful state, as well as the possibility of their implementation under free-market conditions.

After analysis of newspapers' news sections, the authors of the study have not concluded that journalists or newspapers have received undeclared payment for the

articles that were selected based on the established criteria. However, these articles did at least exhibit unprofessional journalism.

Description of general tendencies

In two months' time in seven Latvian-language national newspapers, 55 cases of possible hidden advertisements were noted.

Most often articles were selected according to the 3rd criterion—points of view on the deputy candidate or party were formed on the basis of affirming the intention of the initial coverage. In total, 17 such articles were found. Most of these—nine—were found in Lauku avize, followed by NRA with six such articles. The 3rd criterion is most often found in one of two types of articles:

1. Articles where the party or deputy candidate is depicted in a positive light. For example, the candidate is provided space in the newspaper to exhibit his party, or blatant campaigning where the journalist has not evaluated the plausibility of the promises made. For example, the article "The ninth wave of the First Party" (LA) may be considered blatant First Party of Latvia propaganda, where the party's platform and promises are not critically evaluated for the voter, and where new promises are not compared to promises made by the party's representative four years ago. Often material including a deputy candidate or party's viewpoint is reported as news, and not as an interview. A poignant example of such an article is the 17.09 LA article "G. Berzins is concerned about Latvia's independence," where 2/3 of the article comprises Gundars Berzins' point of view, which is not compared to the facts.

Such articles may also be found among news covering actual events. The most poignant example of such an article is coverage of a concert dedicated to defending deputy candidate Janis Adamsons (LSDSP). From the news reports selected, it is understood that the journalists have only attended one news conference while preparing the story. The press conference was organised by LSDSP. The coverage reflects the news conference, but the journalists do not delve into whether the one-sided statements about the court decision are founded, as expressed by people representing the same party as Adamsons. For example, LA *Rock for Adamsons* 27.08., NRA *Concert organised for a lawful Latvia* 27.08., VZ *Rock concert organised to defend deputy* 27.08.

Evaluating the articles in this category, one particular JA article stands out—*Politicians take advantage of the drought* 13.09. It is a word-for-word reprint of the Ministry of Agriculture's press release. Naturally, the facts of the press release will be presented so as to present the performance of Minister of Agriculture Atis Slakters (TP) in a positive light.

2. The second type of article in this category is where a party is portrayed in a particularly negative (not critical) light, where the journalist's negativity lacks a factual basis, and which is most often based on assumptions.

For example, there was an article published by NRA on 20.09, "TP municipalities privileged in receiving subsidies," where the headline and first paragraph are based only on assumptions. Only one of the municipality heads has had something refused him. In addition, the Ministry of Finance's opinion on the reason for the refusal is not included, and there is no expert opinion included, just the subjective comments of the municipality head. Further, the article does not include a single municipality head who could confirm the suspicions expressed by the journalist. More significantly, no comparative analysis of financing granted has been conducted in order to understand the problem more clearly, which would enable the reader much better to understand the events, rather than the subjective thoughts of various municipality heads.

Also in this category of articles are pseudo-analytical articles on the achievements of the Saeima and government, where facts are portrayed one-sidedly, in order to reinforce, for example, the positive image of one prime minister, and the negative one of two others (In the swamp of the 7th Saeima, NRA). According to this article the reader may conclude that everything good that has happened in the country is due solely to ex-prime minister V. Kristopans (ZZS). At the same it is indicated that along with other failures, even a solar eclipse took place while A. Skele was prime minister.

A similar situation or selection of one-sided facts can be seen in NRA coverage of the accomplishments of the Ministry of the Interior ("The orange tomcat by the interior cream jar," NRA 16.09, or "The Departing," NRA 28.09). In truth these articles belong in the newspapers' editorial sections, where the newspaper evaluates a party or minister's performance, not in the news section, where the reader hopes to receive analytical, objective information.

The second-most not-observed criterion is the absence of the point of view of the involved parties. Thirteen such articles were noted altogether. Most of these were in NRA (7), followed by RB, with four such articles. These articles are usually about current events or violations discovered by the journalist in the performance of a party or its leaders. Such articles, where the topic being reported is interesting and significant to the reader, are flawed if the journalist has failed to ascertain the viewpoints of all involved parties. For example, there was an article "Municipalities may remain without compensation from drought damage," NRA 10.09. This article fails to clarify to the reader which municipalities will receive compensation, and which will not. The article also doesn't contain the government's opinion, although it is supposedly at fault that compensation is to be unevenly distributed.

Also in this category are articles where a specific official is accused of crimes before a court has found them to be guilty, and in which the accused are not provided with a chance to comment. For example, there was an article "The prime minister possibly earned back yacht trip," NRA 19.08, where the prime minister's opinion is not included, or "Laksa overpaid for publicity," RB 04.10, an article that does not contain the opinion of A. Laksa, accused of wastefulness and illegal utilisation of funds.

The third most common type is failure to comply with criterion 5. That is, interviews containing questions unrelated to the topic, or where the journalist has not sought to pose follow-up questions, permitting the party's deputy candidate to engage in

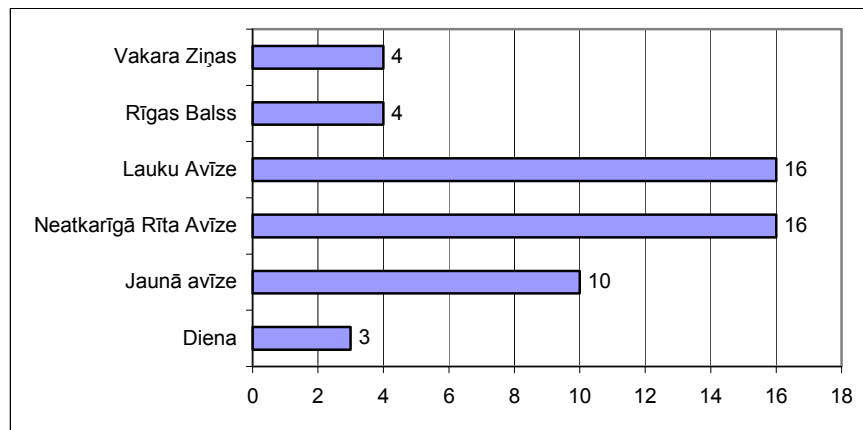
propaganda. Such articles were noted 11 times, eight of which were published in JA. A poignant example of such an article was in an interview with I. Berzins (LC—Latvia's Way) on 30.03, where, along with questions on the foreign minister's performance, there are also questions on where the minister likes to vacation and what his principles [in life] are. Additionally, the questions posed permit Berzins (and other deputy candidates interviewed by JA) to engage in campaigning.

In evaluation of the national newspapers according to the criteria of the analysis, it was concluded that on four occasions a deputy candidate was utilised as the only commentator on the main event. For example, in Diena's *Bojars not barred from purchasing Kukuls' land*, 15.08, the article includes comments from several independent lawyers on the possibility of violation of the "Law on conflicts on interest," as well as from Saeima deputy and competing party representative Janis Lagzdins (TP). To be sure, the Saeima committee led by Lagzdins took part in drafting this law, but, following the deputies' debates, it is clear that deputies from other parties also had many significant recommendations in drafting the law. Thus, it would have been more objective either to ask other deputies, or to ask yet another independent lawyer or the head of the Saeima Legal Office, who could explain the intent of the Saeima in drafting the law. Such information would heighten the article's credibility. Also, on four occasions the national newspapers published news about so-called pseudo events. The most poignant examples of pseudo news are long descriptions about books issued by deputy candidates, which permit the politicians to be portrayed in a positive light (LA, "Theoretician Bojars and romantic Pantelejevs," 06.08), or books about politicians (NRA, "Good Evening," Edvins Inkens 16.08).

Finally, in evaluation of newspaper articles, on two occasions national newspapers published paid materials that were similar to materials prepared by journalists and where it was not clearly stated that the material was paid for ("NRA Minority education must be fostered together, not be politicised," 27.09. Note: the material was written in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, but the reader is not clearly informed that the article has been paid for, thus it is beneficial to the MofE), or cases where the notation that the space has been paid for is located at the end of an article that concludes on a different page (LA "Professional Godmanis and his Marshall Plan," 08.08).

Comparative analysis of newspapers

Most cases that fall under the analysis criteria were found in NRA (16) and Lauku avīze (16).



The cases found in LA most often were one-sided, non-critical stances toward a party or deputy candidate. Most often (5 times) LC or its deputy candidates were portrayed in a positive light in this newspaper, followed by New Era with three articles and TP with two positive articles. The newspaper provided JL leader E. Repše with the opportunity to publish his call to vote for his party in the news section, not separately as an advertisement.

In NRA, in which 16 possible hidden advertisements were also found, most often opinions from only one side are presented (6), or news that lacks the involved party's opinion (7). Most often during the period of analysis the People's Party was portrayed in a negative light (8 times), followed by Latvia's Way (LC) (2 times). In the case of TP, the party itself, its ministers and the former prime minister were presented in a negative light. The only LC representative covered in a negative light is prime minister Andris Berzins. On two occasions the newspaper published articles where the prime minister is accused of serious wrongdoing, but where the prime minister's opinion is not included ("*The prime minister possibly earned back yacht trip,*" NRA 19.08, and "*The prime minister possibly influenced Central Election Committee members*"). On two occasions LPP received negative publicity in the news section, where the party's leader Arnolds Lakss, similar to the prime minister, in one article (*Former management of Latvijas Krajbanka accused of fraud*, 03.10) he is accused of a crime, but his opinion regarding the events is not sought out. The second article about LPP is similar. In it the party is accused of cheating a photographer. The article includes the photographer's opinion, but not that of other parties. Thus the reader is not able to evaluate the party's action and cannot make any conclusions based on the facts, only on the journalist's assumptions.

In third place with 10 cases is JA. This newspaper on eight occasions published interviews in which deputy candidates were able to showcase themselves in a positive light. LC had the most such interviews (5). Also, the topics included in the interviews (with I. Godmanis—security, K. Libane—self-confidence) correspond neatly with the

party's election campaign themes, in which Godmanis expressed his preparedness to head the Ministry of the Interior, and Libane spoke of national pride. In addition, this newspaper published LC deputy candidate Peteris Apins' self-praising interview (04.10) about himself, in which he tells of publication of his book.

This newspaper also included descriptions of two future deputies' (A. Garda (Latvian Party) and D. Ivans' (LSDSP)) homes, permitting the deputy candidates to make an impression of themselves as nice people who live in interesting homes.

Four cases were found in Rigas Balss, all related to excluding the viewpoints of involved parties. However, it can be concluded that the newspaper has not specifically chosen to "ignore" a given party's representatives. The following opinions are omitted: LPP (A. Laksa, who had supposedly overpaid for publicity (04.10)); TP (A. Skele, who was said to be killing spirits businesses (26.08); and the Social Democratic Welfare Party (which failed to ask why J. Zuravlovs invited "weird people" to join his party (05.08)). Also, on one occasion in coverage of J. Adamsons' court proceedings, Adamsons was permitted to express himself expansively, permitting him to complain of having been coerced, but without permitting the coercers to express themselves.

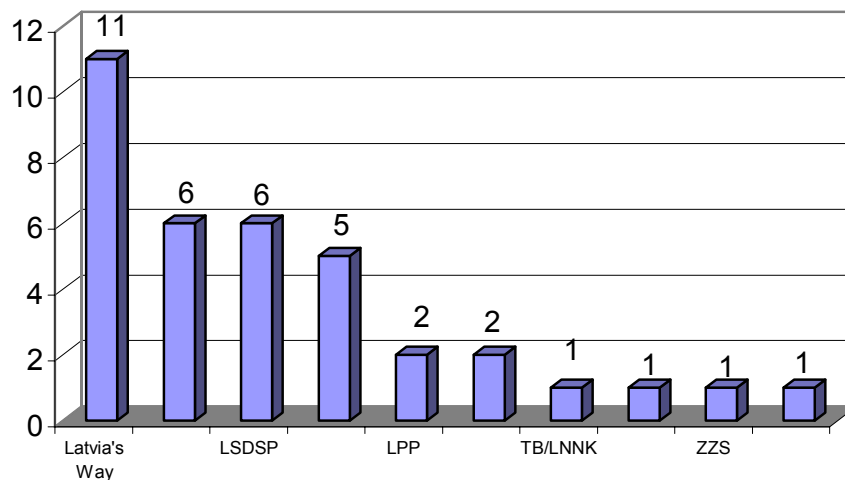
VZ included four cases, each one falling under a different category. Each time a different party benefited or suffered as a result. The article "Sects are drawing teens," 14.08, cites only one Saeima deputy, A. Slesers (LPP), who has only a rather distant relation to religious sects, though the reader is led to believe that he is knowledgeable about such issues. The newspaper's study of E. Repse's (JL) ex-wives (07.09) was a typical instance of a pseudo-event, because, firstly, such information had been published earlier, and secondly, the newspaper did not manage to interview either Repse, or his ex-wives, thus the occurrence does not appear to be objective, because none of the persons directly involved commented on the events. An article on the rock concert supporting J. Adamsons (27.08) singularly indicates one party's press conference becoming an event, without even providing the reader any critical evaluation of the party's activities. The article "Sajuzplodimport chief sponsors TP" lacks the viewpoint of the parties involved, in this case where someone (A. Skele) is accused of questionable behaviour.

Diena published three articles that constituted possible violations, two where the deputy candidate is the only (main) commentator on the event, and one where a party's logo is clearly visible. On two occasions this newspaper cited a TP deputy candidate as the main commentator. The first event with J. Lagzdins is described in detail above. The second, "A Barbie red threat on Basteja Boulevard," cites as the suffering party deputy candidate R. Pauls, who lives on the first floor of the affected building. Such publicity permits the deputy candidate to showcase himself in a positive light and permits the voter to understand that deputy candidates have the same problems as any other resident. Considering that it is rather unlikely that Pauls is the only first-floor resident of this building (if this is the case, the journalist should have indicated this, so as to erase any doubt), it is not clear why he was chosen to comment during the pre-election period. The third case is related to publicising the number of a party's candidates' list. It is not clear why the person depicted with a drawn number is A. Kantane, who is also visibly displaying the party's list number (JL) (10.08).

Stance Toward Parties

LC had the most positive articles (11). These articles typically featured uncritical JA interviews with party leaders, as well as LA's positive articles on the accomplishments of party leaders and the non-critical reporting of their viewpoint, in particular, when reporting on the party's pre-election activities.

Parties that received positive coverage



In second place in terms of positive publicity is TP (6) and LSDSP (6). Analysing this news by content, it may be concluded that LSDSP's positive publicity was essentially secured by the incident with J. Adamsons—news of his being stricken from the list of deputy candidates and news of the rock concert organised in his support, which was reported in various newspapers.

In turn, TP's positive publicity was ensured by effective utilisation of ministries' press agencies (one report in JA, which was a reprinted Ministry of Agriculture press release, as well as the Ministry of Education's paid space in NRA, which failed clearly to indicate that the space was paid for). The other cases are difficult to classify as similar. For example, LA published a story extolling a TP election event, and on two occasions Diena utilised various TP representatives as the primary commentators on events.

In third place in terms of positive publicity is JL (5). Three such articles were published in LA. Furthermore, these are articles (an interview, a news report, and Repse's call to the polls) where in the news section parties were permitted to engage in propaganda and campaigning without any critical evaluation by a journalist. One positive article is an interview with A. Kantane (JA 06.09), another was a photograph where the party's ballot list number was readily recognisable (Diena 10.08).

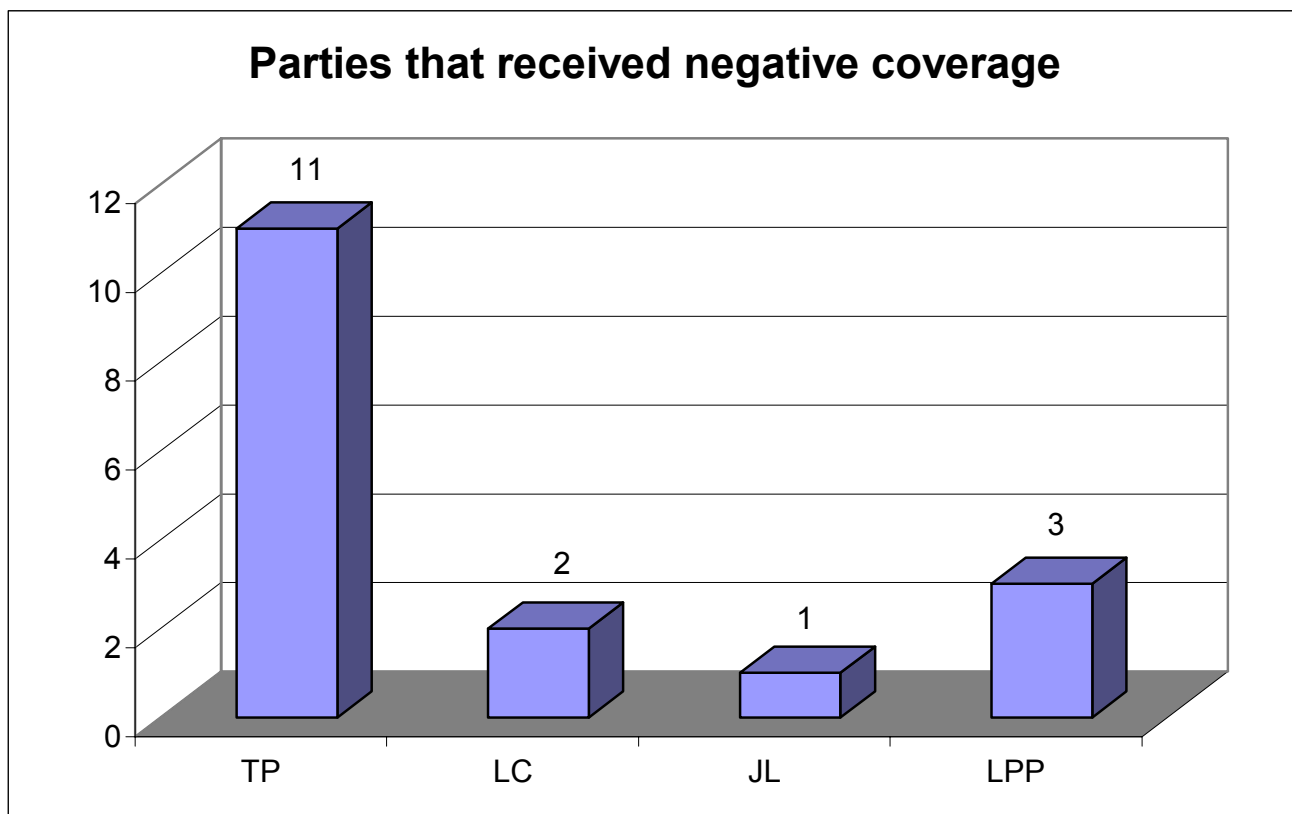
In fourth place in terms of positive publicity is LPP (2). One positive article was in LA (news of the party's pre-election activities and campaign), the other was in VZ, where a party representative was the only deputy to comment on an event.

The Centre Party political union also enjoyed two positive articles. Both of these (one in LA, one in JA) were related to an uncritical approach toward the party's campaigning.

The uncontested leader in terms of negative publicity was TP (11). Eight of these articles were published in NRA. As stated above, these articles have included viewpoints where the party or one of its ministers is portrayed in a negative light, or the articles accuse the party or its leaders of questionable or illegal activities without asking party representatives their opinion. One negative article was published each in LA, RB and VZ. The publicity included in these newspapers relates to the fact that the journalists failed to ask TP's opinion in a situation where the party or its representative is accused of questionable behaviour.

Second place in terms of negative publicity went to LPP with three articles, two of which were published in NRA. These articles also fail to inquire about the opinions of the persons involved. One such article was found in RB. Upon analysis of the articles by their content, it may be concluded that two of them are related to A. Laksa (one in RB, one in NRA), whose opinion the journalists did not seek out.

Two negative articles were written about LC, as described above (2 NRA articles omitting prime minister A. Berzins' point of view).



	People's party		Latvia's Way		LSDSP	News	Era	LPP		Centre Party	TB/LNNK	Latvians'	ZZS	SDS	LSDLP	Total
	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+			
Diena	2					1										3
Jaunā avīze	1		5		1	1				1		1				10
Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze	1	8	1	2	1			2					1			16
Lauku Avīze	2	1	5		2	3		1		1	1			1		17*
Rīgas Balss		1			1			1							1	4
Vakara Ziņas		1			1		1	1								4
TOTAL	6	11	13	2	6	5	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	

*One article that mentions both J. Bojars (LSDSP) and A. Panteļējvs (LC)

Summary. Russian national press.

Critically evaluating the results, the frequent instances of problematic articles in the Russian national press may perhaps be explained by insufficient professionalism by the respective journalists. If a newspaper chooses to support a certain party or political movement, it should clearly state this, so as not to mislead readers who make their political choice based on the information received.

Of course, every newspaper has the right to form and express its own opinion, as well as publicly to announce its political stance and/or tie to a political group or party. However, it is important in these cases to safeguard the reader from being misled, i.e., the newspaper must clearly point out that it is presenting not objective news, but a certain party's point of view.

During the pre-election period Russian newspapers were staffed by journalists who were simultaneously deputy candidates or municipal deputies. Such articles lead one to question the newspaper's ability and desire to remain objective and provide the reader with multifaceted information, as well as the newspaper's ability to assemble the necessary content by itself and with sufficient qualification to analyse various issues.

Russian-language newspapers were also not immune to "pseudo-events," citing a deputy candidate as the only commentator on an event, and covering events with the sole aim of providing a deputy candidate with a chance to showcase himself. By contrast, only the Russian-language press reported on deputy candidates who had no tie to the event being covered.

The Russian press also included interview-like articles on deputy candidates that were one-sided, where the journalist relies only on the answers of the interviewee, and where no additional analysis is made, thus interviews, which are a very interesting genre and suitable for critical analysis, are not fully utilised in Russian national newspapers.

Finally, articles often fail to include an involved party's opinion. As a result, an article questioning the basis of a political decision or a political actor's honour does not attempt to ascertain the "guilty" or involved party's opinion on the events described. This lessens the article's credibility, and poses a problem of potential interest to a journalist, a problem the resolution of which might change something in the political process becomes nothing more than an attempt to besmirch a party.

Description of general tendencies

The public largely trusts mass media, and repetition is one of the most powerful methods of influence utilised in communications. Thus, unfounded mention of a deputy candidate may significantly influence the audience's impression of the real balance of political power in the country, as well as the actual input of political actors, both positive and negative. Thus journalists in particular should attempt to avoid mentioning deputy candidates without a clear reason, whether in a context of positive or negative deeds.

However, this very mistake was the most common to appear in the news analysed. This criterion, Criterion 2 (a sum of 2a, 2b, and 2c) relates to cases where an event becomes noteworthy and reported in the newspaper precisely because a deputy candidate is participating in it or commenting on it.

Most articles to match this criterion were ones in which a deputy candidate was the only or main commentator or describer of an event (2b). One example is "Vesti segodnya's" article "Is Daugavpils on the verge of bankruptcy?", published on September 24. The author relies on one person to comment on the relevant event—the organisation of Daugavpils' credit obligations. In this case Ilja Podkolzins of the PCTVL political union comments on the performance of Daugavpils mayor Rihards Eigims (*Latgale's Light*). This choice of source leads one to doubt the author's wish completely and objectively to cover, particularly with regard to voters, the conflict between PCTVL and Latgale's Light in Latgale. Such articles covering the battle between these two political powers appeared over and over in the course of this study in "Vesti segodnya," where Ilja Podkolzins was the only source for several articles about Latgale's Light, as well as in Panorama Latvii, which in expressing full support for the PCTVL union, wrote only negative things about the Latgale's Light party and its leader Rihards Eigims.

Regarding journalists' approaches to sources of information or commentators, a dangerous tendency was observed, which, in our opinion, threatens the newspapers' credibility. During the election campaign certain newspapers published articles where the authors were either Riga City Council or Saeima deputies. On numerous occasions newspapers printed Jakovs Pliners' reports on education issues, Daugavpils City Council deputy Ilja Podkolzins' articles on R. Eigims and Daugavpils City Council events, as well as certain comments by Riga City Council deputy Aliks Gilmanis on Latvian politics, in which he calls upon readers to support PCTVL.

Such articles lead one to doubt the newspapers' ability and will to remain objective and provide the reader with multifaceted information, as well as to doubt the newspaper's ability to generate the necessary content and analyse various issues with sufficient qualification. This last characteristic of the newspapers—the inability to resolve problems analytically and in a qualified manner in their pages—is the only argument that offers an alternative explanation for the tendency to delegate journalists' work to deputies or deputy candidates.

Also observed were “pseudo-events” (2a), articles containing no news, as well as articles about a “created” event that is part of a campaign. In total, 40 such articles were found. For example, the article “Bee videos: not a single politician!” published in “Vesti segodnya” on September 10th. The article does not contain news. It contains only observations, all of which are positive with regard to the PCTVL political union; there is no underlying event. The article looks more like an editorial, but the editors have published it as news.

A similar criterion is Criterion 2c, which is coverage of an event in which a deputy appears, though he has no tie to the event covered. Such cases are the most blatant examples of either a hidden advertisement or poor journalism. A good example, in our opinion, is an article published in Chas on August 13, “Chas receives 12,000 letters in five days,” which tells of a lottery that the newspaper organised, which is a pseudo-event. The person chosen to select the winning letters was 8th Saeima deputy candidate and the newspaper’s sports news section editor Valerijs Karpuskins. Taking into account that this selection had no logical basis (the lottery had nothing to do with the sports news section) and Karpuskins’ appearance in the article, including picture, it may be considered that it is related to the newspaper’s efforts to polish Karpuskins’ political image, which may thus be classified as a political advertisement.

In similar fashion, on September 10, under the rubric of “trends,” “Vesti Segodnya” published a small piece entitled “Smoke over Daugavpils,” where the author (not named) tells of thick smoke that covered the city and surrounding area, the source of which was, according to available information, most likely, a peat bog set ablaze. The article also states that currently the city is not registering complaints from residents with breathing difficulty, and the last sentence of the article asks, “And you ask what does Daugavpils city leader Rihards Eigims have to do with this?”. The implied relation between the source of the smoke and Eigims’ performance is not clarified in the article.

In second place in terms of frequency (53) of possible hidden advertisements are Criterion 4 instances². For example, Subbota’s August 15th article “Mayors played in the ‘Zarnica,’” which describes municipalities’ sporting games. The wealth of information that was available notwithstanding, only the winners’ achievements—those of the Daugavpils City Council’s team—were provided coverage, with particular emphasis on Rihards Eigims’ achievements. It may be concluded that the author’s aim was to cover Latgale’s Light’s chairman in a positive light. Another example is a September 9 article in Vesti Segodnya, published under the rubric of “Trends.” It is a composition of readers’ feedback on an article published earlier about Eigims entitled “Eigims – ‘kidala’ parasite?”. In this selection of readers’ points of view once again the newspaper revealed its general stance toward the Latgale’s Light party and its leaders: the newspaper provides the negative evaluations of six people on Eigims and only one positive evaluation, which is immediately rebutted. In this manner the newspaper expresses its negative attitude toward Latgale’s Light.

This category also includes examples that reveal a tendency toward individual possible hidden advertising, which is characteristic of the Russian national newspapers as a

² Opinions on the deputy candidate or party, or the opinions of the deputy candidate himself, that are selected serve to confirm a pre-existing aim of furthering or harming a party’s or deputy candidate’s popularity.

whole. The case in point is interview-like articles about deputy candidates with a tendency toward one-sidedness. The journalist relies only on the answers of the interviewee, and does not engage in any additional analysis in order to ascertain what the deputy's political experience is, and what the viewpoints of opponents and colleagues are. The second peculiarity of such interviews is that the journalist permits the interviewee to control the course of the discussion and to answer posed questions broadly, frequently also changing the course of the conversation. The third peculiarity typical of such interviews with deputy candidates before elections is the lack of pointed criticism. Journalists ask only questions that permit the deputy candidate to display himself in a positive light. Thus, in summary, it could be concluded that interviews, which are very interesting and by their nature conducive to critical analysis, are not fully utilised by Russian language newspapers.

Such an approach or failure to utilise an opportunity was particularly characteristic of two national newspapers—Vesti Segodnya and Panorama Latvii (20% of all articles). For example, in Vest Segodnya there are interviews in the manner described above with PCTVL deputy candidates Dainis Turlais (September 7) and Gita Frolova (September 10). Panorama Latvii has such interviews with Tatjana Boguševič, Natālija Elkina, Jānis Jurkāns, Vitālijs Orlovs, etc. Exhibiting the same tendency are articles on deputies that are based on interviews, but that are formulated as news. These may be found, for example, in Vesti Segodnya, which published Aleksejs Arkadjevs' article about PCTVL deputy candidate Valerijs Angesins.

In third place in terms of frequency is the criterion "The related party's(ies) opinion(s) are lacking/have not been sought out and/or the related party's/deputy candidate's opinion is lacking." This criterion identifies those cases where the article questions whether a political decision or the honour of a political actor is supported, and no attempt is made to ascertain the "guilty" or involved person's opinion regarding the event described.

Such coverage of events is not fair to the reader, because it does not permit him to form his own opinions by analysing the opinions of the parties involved in the conflict. Such an coverage thus has no objective reason, though it must be taken into consideration what Anna Novicka,³ political news section editor of Telegraf, said as part of a Russian language newspaper discussion, namely, that deputies on the right side of the political spectrum (Juris Dobelis of TB/LNNK is mentioned as an example) refuse to provide comments to the newspaper, because they do not agree with the newspaper's political stance. Though even in such cases it would be advisable to indicate that the newspaper has attempted to ascertain the opinion of this deputy.

As an example may be taken Vechernaya Riga's August 27 article "Skele is killing alcohol businesses," where the author does not seek to ascertain Andris Skele's opinion of this stance toward the state of the alcohol market, although Skele is described as being at fault for crippling and monopolising the alcohol market in Latvia.

³ A discussion took place on 25.09.2002, to which, in co-operation with the portal www.politika.lv, BNS news agency and the project "Openly on 8th Saeima election campaign finance," representatives from all Russian-language newspapers were invited.

In fourth place in terms of frequency were cases that met Criterion 8—advertisement of a political nature that is presented as news. Deemed to have met this criterion was news that appeared to be an advertisement, but that was not designated as a political advertisement. For example, *Vesti segodnya* in the last week before elections published a notice calling upon readers to vote for deputy candidate Nikolajs Kabanovs (September 30, October 1, 2, 3, 4 with the title “Your candidate in Riga”), which clearly looked like a political election advertisement, but was not appropriately designated. The same is true for PCTVL deputy candidate Andrejs Jakovlevs’ article in *Panorama Latvii* on September 14, entitled “How I participated in the creation of Latvia’s image,” where the author describes his professional experience, as well as its political content. This article was considered problematic, because it cannot be classified as news. Further, the newspaper does not designate it as commentary or as a political advertisement.

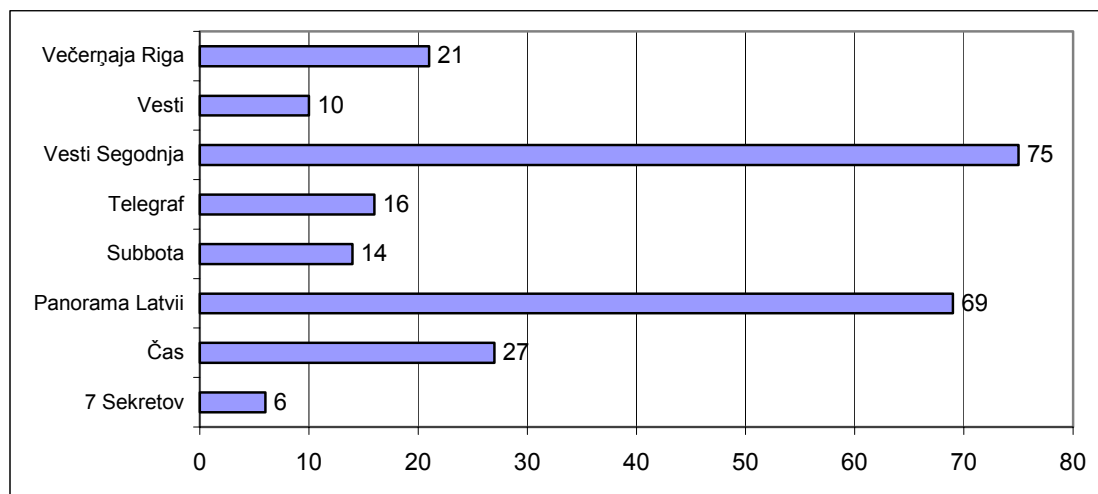
Also worthy of mention are 19 articles meeting Criterion 6, which openly expressed the journalist’s call to vote for or against a list or candidate. Articles that were deemed to meet this criterion were such that in news articles stated the journalist’s or commentator’s open call to vote for a certain list. For example, on October 4th *Panorama Latvii* published an article entitled “Who are ‘friends of the people’ and how this assists rightists,” in which the author claims that in Latvia’s political system small leftist parties, which will not receive enough votes to surpass the 5% threshold, are actually “giving away” their votes to rightist parties, which will hold a majority in the Saeima. For this reason, the author maintains that people should vote for PCTVL, because this party is the only leftist party that will be represented in the 8th Saeima. Another good example is Riga City Council deputy Aliks Gilmanis’ articles published in *Panorama Latvii*, which conclude with a call to vote for PCTVL as the only political power accessible to minorities.

Finally, there are articles that meet the first criterion, where the “Party’s logo/deputy candidate’s picture is clearly visible in an article not related to the event being covered or the topic described.” This category includes articles where a deputy candidate appears in a published picture along with a news article, but where the candidate is not directly related to the event covered, is not mentioned in the article analysed, or is not the only person directly related to this event. For example, on September 26th, Chas presented parties with five “Russian questions.” Along with the article was a picture of Janis Jurkans. Considering that Jurkans was selected from the leaders of 20 parties and political unions, one must ask what motivated this selection in a case where the picture was not necessary to support the article, and where the event itself did not add any additional value that could be grasped visually.

Comparative analysis of newspapers

Upon analysis of newspapers before the elections, in all, there are three “leaders” that stand out in terms of possible hidden advertisements. In first place is *Vesti Segodnya*, in which 75 problematic articles were found during the period of analysis. This indicator, in our opinion, may be explained first of all by the fact that one of its journalists, Nikolajs Kabanovs, was simultaneously also a deputy candidate, and the articles related to him comprise a significant portion of the total number of articles.

Second, it may be explained by agreements with political forces regarding a financially supported development of a certain political discourse in the newspaper's articles. Third, it may be explained by a general posturing by the newspaper on the left side of the



political spectrum, thus viewing parties representing minority rights and views (PCTVL and other small parties) as their ideological allies. The fact that among the leftist forces only PCTVL enjoyed positive coverage is an indication, in our opinion, that the newspaper is not only expressing its political opinion, but possibly made an agreement with PCTVL to publicise this list of candidates.

In second place is Panorama Latvii, with 69 articles. The main reason for this indicator is the newspaper's indisputably expressed support for the PCTVL political union. In a sense this newspaper is one of the most conservative in Latvia, and the only one that may be advised openly to declare its expressed support for one political force. As stated earlier with regard to this newspaper, there was possibly some undeclared financial tie with PCTVL representatives.

In third place is Chas, with 27 articles. A small portion of these, as with Vesti segodnya, were written about its own deputy, V. Karpuskins, though there were other instances as well. For example, the rubric of "Open microphone" is not entirely clear. By this means several PCTVL deputies express their view, but representatives from the rightist parties never appear. The second indicator of possible hidden advertising the selection of sources—expert opinions among the selected newspapers are expressed by deputy candidates from the PCTVL union: B.Cilēvičs, A.Klementjevs and J.Pliners. The newspaper should make its source-selection criteria more open, so that in future not only leftist party deputies from the Saeima and Riga City Council appear as commentators on political events.

Twenty-one articles were found in Vechernaya Riga. In this newspaper there are both positive, as well as negative, articles about the same political party, namely, Latgale's Light. This inconsistency would indicate the presence of hidden advertising, i.e., if some political force is paying, both positive and negative news about one and the same political force are published.

Sixteen possible hidden advertisements were found in Telegraf. On August 16 it published an article by Andrejs Musatovs entitled "State Control prepared to announce verdict," which includes sections that are identical to those published in another newspaper (see previous section about Chas). This leads one to conclude that the author prepared the article on order. Also noteworthy are the expression of personal opinion by the authors (Tatjana Strugar and Olga Kontus) (e.g., besmirching Viktors Jaksons in articles about P.Stradina Hospital and healthcare reform).

Comparatively few articles—14—were found in the weekly Subbota. As a weekly publication, Subbota is more geared toward apolitical news and does not usually delve into politics in great depth. Nevertheless, before elections Subbota took particular care to publicise Latgale's Light, publishing seven positive articles about it, where were classified in the report as possible hidden advertising.

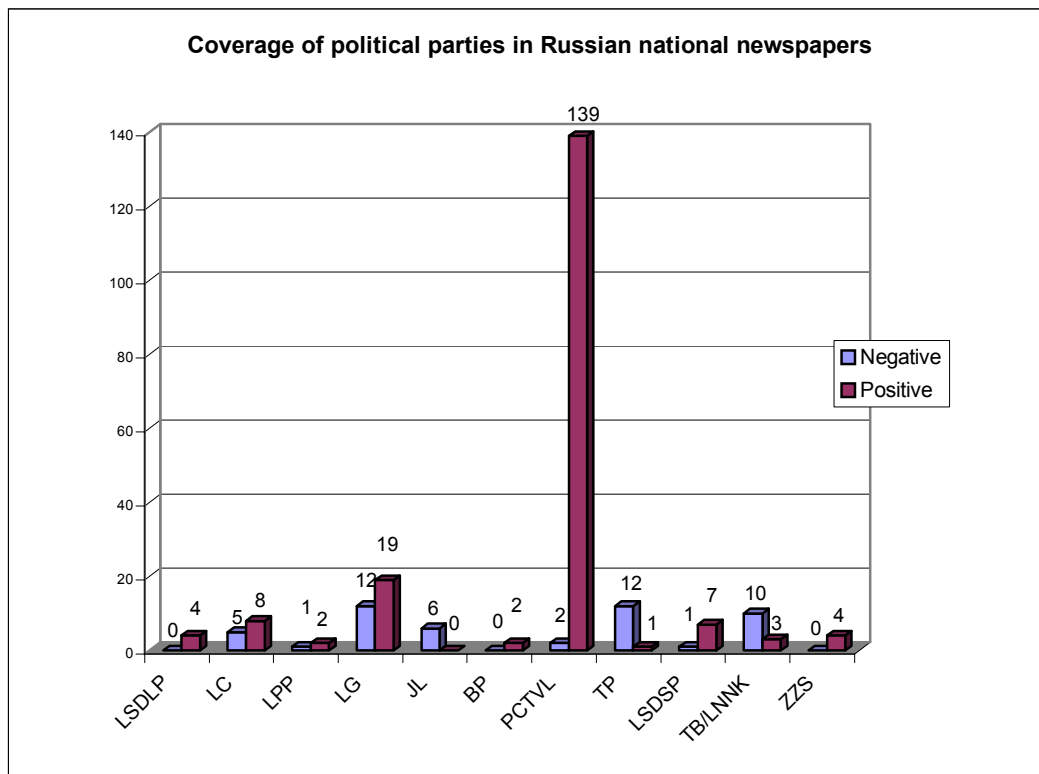
In the weekly Vesti, one tendency was exhibited by a few separate instances. The visible tendency was the support expressed for the PCTVL union (its deputy candidates appear as commentators and interview subjects, and are mentioned in passing).

With regard to particular instances, two are worthy of note—an article praising R. Eigims and an interview with First Party leader Eriks Jekabsons. Both in terms of genre and content, these articles appeared more like advertisements and do not comply with the newspaper's overall stance—support of PCTVL.

"7 sekretov" is a thick weekly publication with a focus on entertainment. Before elections it did not exhibit any particular interest in politics, and for this reason the sudden favourable articles published about R. Eigims (Latgale's Light) and A. Rumjancevs (First Party) raise the question of why they appeared. The same is true for N. Kabanovs' political advertisement, which was published in one issue without the designation "paid political advertisement." Upon analysis it may be concluded that the newspaper inconsistently published articles about political parties and deputy candidates that had nothing to do with news, balance, or previously expressed political stance. Thus it may be concluded that, possibly, on various occasions the newspaper had undeclared financial relations with interested politicians.

Stance toward Parties

In terms of polishing a party's political image, PCTVL political union was first. In over 73% of all possible hidden advertising events, PCTVL was portrayed in a positive light; PCTVL was covered in a negative light only 4% of the time.



With regard to a clearly discernable political stance, of all daily and weekly Russian national newspapers, two stand out. During the entire election campaign Panorama Latvii wrote positively only about PCTVL and representatives of this union of parties. The newspaper also organised a separate "Non-election," in which PCTVL claimed almost all the votes. It also organised an interactive campaign to improve PCTVL's campaign, inviting readers to provide suggestions and comments. In addition, PL actively criticised Rihards Eigims and his party, which was an obvious competitor to potential votes for PCTVL. By contrast, the weekly Subbota openly supported Rihards Eigims and the party he leads. All articles classified as problematic and that were selected during the study were aimed toward popularising R. Eigims and Latgale's Light.

In total, all newspapers (except Subbota, which openly supported the Latgale's Light party) supported the PCTVL political union. Two explanations are possible—possible

hidden advertising favouring this party, or support for the largest leftist and "Russian" political bloc.

One of the most significant tendencies among the Russian national newspapers was that journalists-deputy candidates continued reporting before elections and in some cases used their journalism work for political campaigning. Nikolajs Kabanovs, a PCTVL candidate, continued to write political articles and commentary. In this manner the candidate-journalist was provided with additional opportunities to praise his party and besmirch opponents, thus possibly significantly influencing voters' opinions.

Notwithstanding the fact that during the study a fairly large amount of "very and openly positive" material appeared about various political forces and candidates, in the last week of the study there was an increase in the amount of materials in which were visibly designated as part of a party or political union's election campaign. While this is indisputably worthy of praise, the issue arises of why this approach was not exhibited earlier.

	7 Sekretov	Čas	Panorama Latvii	Subbota	Telegraf	Vesti Segodnja	Vesti	Večernāja Rīga	TOTAL
LSDLP									
negat.									0
posit.				3		1			4
LC									
negat.		1				4			5
posit.					4	2	1	1	8
LPP									
negat.					1				1
posit.	1						1		2
LG									
negat.		1	7			3		1	12
posit.	2	4		7	2	2	1	1	19
JL									
negat.		2		1		3			6
posit.									0
BP									
negat.									0
posit.				1		1			2
PCTVL									
negat.		1				1			2
posit.	1	11	58	2	4	47	6	10	139
TP									
negat.	1	4			1	2		4	12
posit.		1							1
 LSDSP									
negat.	1								1
posit.			2			3	1	1	7
TB/LNNK									
negat.		1	1		3	2		3	10
posit.					1	2			3
ZZS									
negat.									0
posit.		1	1			2			4
Total	6	27	69	14	16	75	10	21	

Summary. Latvian regional press.

Upon evaluation of the performance of Latvian-language regional newspapers before the elections, it may be concluded that many newspapers sought to provide the reader with multifaceted information about all political forces by interviewing deputy candidates and reporting parties' election events. However, upon evaluation of the newspaper overall, many articles were lacking journalistic analysis—parties' promises were not compared to performance, follow-up questions were not asked, and no facts were presented that might cause one to doubt the truth of deputy candidates' promises.

In their coverage of parties' campaigning events on a parish level, where indisputably significant events took place, journalists frequently did not seek to ascertain the public's point of view, and did not analyse the point of the event. The same is true for articles about gifts from parties. Perhaps to the recipient of the gift it was very important, but to average readers no comparative information was provided about how useful the gifts were, how long the recipient had waited for them, how they had been requested, etc. Thus it is difficult for the reader to gain an objective impression of the party's intent.

Also, in the course of the analysis it was concluded that newspapers often covered an event solely because a deputy candidate was taking part, referred to as pseudo-events in this report. The fact that before elections parties organise various activities and events is a normal component of a party's public relations. It would be desirable if newspapers would more thoroughly analyse which events have a broader socially political meaning and which do not. Should the newspaper then decide nevertheless to cover a party's PR activities, it would be advisable to evaluate them critically.

In addition, the authors of this analysis have concluded that when covering an event related to a party or a minister representing one, newspapers do not interview the parties involved in the event. News is presented one-sidedly, reflecting only the party or minister's accomplishments. This does not enable the reader to garner complete information about the purpose of the event.

Finally, regional newspapers frequently publish information about a party's planned pre-election activities or a minister's visit to some parish in the news section. The manner in which the information is presented more likely indicates that it is an advertisement, thus it is incomprehensible why it appears in the news section.

In the course of the analysis it appears that the newspapers are more likely guilty of being unprofessional, lazy, or ignorant, rather than of having pecuniary relations with a politician. The authors hope that this analysis of regional newspapers will provide these newspapers with the opportunity to formulate their pre-election coverage principles, avoiding their own and their colleagues' shortcomings. It can be hoped that upon review of an alternative and comprehensive analysis of specific articles, editors or regional newspapers will contemplate how to provide readers with a broader and more critical evaluation of political parties. In the course of the analysis the most poignant examples were selected to illustrate each instance best. At the end of the analysis there are tables

that summarise the possible hidden advertising in each newspaper and indicate which analysis criteria they meet.

Description of general tendencies

In two months' time in 33 regional newspapers, 138 possible hidden advertisements were detected. There was no newspaper in which no possible hidden advertising was found. Most often these articles were selected according to Criterion 3.⁴ The opinions in the article about the party or deputy candidate were selected to support a pre-existing purpose. Altogether 65 such articles were found. This criterion is most often applicable to three types of articles:

1. *Articles that inform of a party or candidate's pre-election activities*—such articles often describe a party or deputy candidate's meeting with voters.

Such articles contain little or no information about the course of events, lack the opinions of event participants on politicians' answers, and lack a critical approach to evaluating deputies' promises.

For example, frequently well-founded doubts about the possibility of fulfilling promises are not expressed, even when the deputy candidate's promises or statements contradict market economics or the basic principles of creating the state budget, the ignoring of which is unthinkable in a democratic country. Such articles often include the journalist's view on events, which is always positive ("Impressive. Just as during the awakening period" by Z. Kozlovs in "Stars," 27.09. There is no critical stance toward the activities of the Centre political union. Further, the reporter expresses his own positive stance regarding events in the article.)

2. *Interviews with deputy candidates* – in these interviews journalists usually pose questions, permitting deputies to advertise their party's platform. These interviews are placed in the news section and do not contain questions about the candidate's private life or questions that are not appropriate for a political interview. However, these interviews rarely include critical questions. This applies in particular to parties that have already been in power.

The journalist has not attempted to confront the party's promises this year with its accomplishments in the past four years or to pose thorough questions that permit the reader to make an informed decision about the party or deputy candidate. (In the article "Regarding priorities" in the Riga Regional Paper on 01.10, J. Smilzdziņš asks only questions that V. Lausks wants to hear. It is not clear what this deputy has accomplished in the past four years in the Saeima.)

⁴ Opinions on a deputy candidate or party, as well as opinions of the deputy candidates themselves, were selected with the aim of supporting the initial goal of the coverage of increasing or decreasing the popularity of a party or deputy candidate's popularity.

This section reflects interviews with deputy candidates only in cases where it was found that the newspaper had a critical approach toward other deputy candidates or parties, or if other deputy candidates or parties were not asked questions that permit them without hindrance to praise a given political party, or if the newspaper has interviewed only representatives from one party. ("LC addresses those who make their own life," "Tukuma Zinotajs," 01.10.—questions permit LC representatives to engage in party campaigning. The newspaper posed only critical questions to other parties.)

3. *Publishing press releases from ministers, parties or the prime minister –*
 In the newspapers there are a number of reprinted press releases from various ministries, in which a minister or party's accomplishments are portrayed in a positive light. By reprinting such information, the reader is not provided with objective information about the relevance and importance of the ministry's accomplishments. In these releases information is always presented in a light favourable to ministries, and the opinions expressed are beneficial to the decision maker, minister or party. Perhaps the newspaper or journalist did not receive payment for publishing this "pseudo" news, and it was reprinted for the sake of simplicity, or due to laziness or lack of time. Most often regional newspapers published press releases from the Ministry of Agriculture (5) or Finance (2), whose ministers are from the People's Party.

In second place are articles selected according to Criterion 1.⁵ A total of 24 such cases were found, where a deputy candidate was mentioned without any obvious reason. The most common indication of this type of news is when the event has only become news because a deputy candidate is taking part or a "pseudo-event" is taking place (1a). Poignant examples of a pseudo-event are articles about Smaidis Orders being awarded. It is important to note that the founder of this order, Smaidis Auzpurietis, was a deputy candidate from the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK party, and among Order recipients were his party members, such as Minister of Defence Girts Valdis Kristovskis. Also, this is the first year that the Orders were awarded. It is interesting that they were awarded just before the Saeima elections, enabling the creator to receive additional positive publicity. Though the journalists did not mention these facts in their articles. Positive articles about Aizpurietis were published in six newspapers altogether – Brīvā Daugava (1), Dzirkstele (1), Druva (1), Ventas Balss (1), Zemgales Ziņas (1), and Ziemeļlatvija (1).

Other typical pseudo-events are news of a party's sporting event (e.g., "Bauskas Dzīve" 05.08., "Greetings to the prime minister on his birthday" – news of a sporting event

⁵

Deputy candidates mentioned for no obvious reason		
a) pseudo-event providing candidate with a reason to appear	b) deputy candidate used as only/main event commentator	c) appearance unrelated to event covered

organised by Latvia's Way during Andris Berzins' birthday)⁶ or other party events (Kurzemnieks 24.08. "Latvia's Way opens office in Kuldiga's old city).

Also included under pseudo-events is news covering party activities without any broader public meaning (Bauskas dzive, 19.08, "Talks on agriculture in castle" – news of a LSDSP meeting, the significance of which is not explained to the reader), news of a party's gifts to residents (Vaduguns, 21.08, "Social Democrats present gifts to Berzpils residents" – news account does not explain how many persons received the gifts, the value of the gifts, and similar information permitting the reader to judge the event). The information allows party representatives to appear in a positive light, but does not permit readers to judge the purpose of the event—how useful the gifts are, how important the party meetings are, and other issues of importance before the elections.

The first criterion also encompasses articles where a deputy candidate is the only person to characterise an event, or, compared to other persons describing the event, the deputy candidate is allotted a lot more space (1b). In all there were 16 such cases. Most often such articles were found in news about a party's efforts to popularise itself. For example, in the article "Talsu vestis," 27.08, "Politics, beer, Kostanda and cakes," only deputy candidates were used to describe the event, although such events are usually frequented by many people, and it would not be difficult to ascertain other opinions. Also, Criterion 1b is applicable to news of a minister's visit to the respective region. In the descriptions of such visits, one often gets the impression that the journalist was unable to find a single person who could tell of his impressions of the importance of the minister's visit, or, on the contrary, the unimportance. ("Minister of Culture meets with city cultural workers," "Kurzemes Vards, 30.09." From the article it may be concluded that the minister simply arrived in the region, explained her party's platform, informed locals of her future plans, and headed back to Riga. What the article does not inform the reader of is whether the minister spoke the truth, whether her promises can be fulfilled, and how relevant the visit was.)

Finally, there is Criterion 2—articles that ignore the opinion of an involved party.⁷ In 11 articles journalists failed to ascertain the opinion of an involved party, which bars the reader from getting an objective impression about the event. (Kurzemes vards, 09.08, "N. Terentjevs rejected"—in a news report on disputes within a party (PCTVL) that tells of the party's negative evaluation of a deputy's performance, this deputy's opinion has not been sought out.) Criterion 2 was also frequently not heeded in articles about a decision made by a ministry or minister. (Staburags, 13.08, "Foreign equipment may be purchased"—the article provides positive information about a decision made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister Atis Slakters (TP), but farmers were not asked whether their evaluation of the ministry's decision is as optimistic as presented by Slakteris.)

In many regional newspapers, the news section included information about a party's anticipated pre-election events, as well as about a minister's planned visit. The manner in which the information is presented and the content are similar to an advertisement,

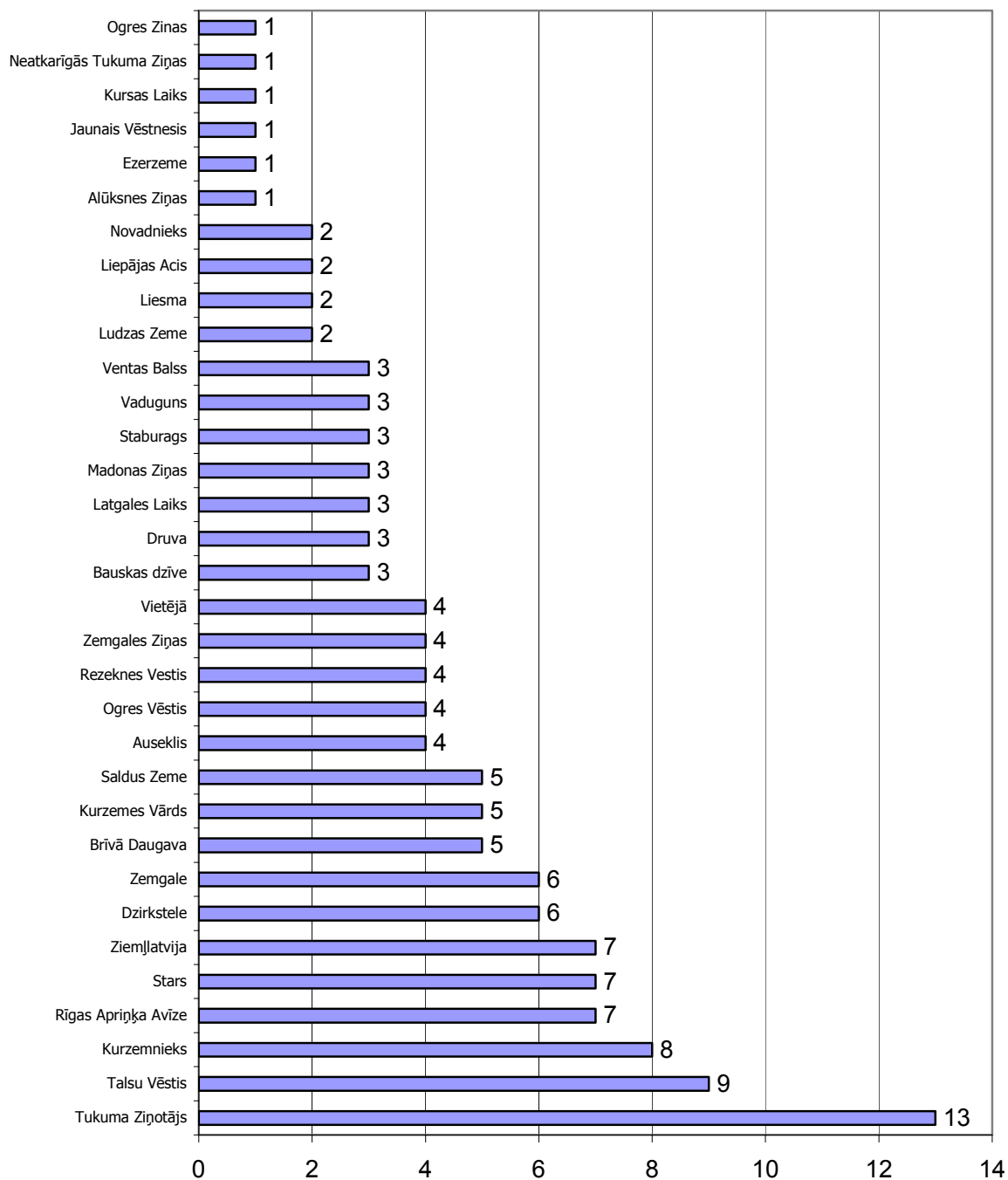
⁶ Only one example cited. The remainder are listed in Table 1.

⁷ The related party's(ies) opinion(s) are lacking/have not been sought out and/or the related party's/deputy candidate's opinion is lacking.

thus it is not clear why it is in the news section. The appropriateness of these notices becomes even more questionable when one considers that regarding notices on upcoming visits of ministers, this information is superfluous for many people, because they were not afforded a chance to ask the minister any questions. Such notices may instil in the voter a sense that the minister is an industrious individual responding to the needs of the region. In addition, in these advertisement-like news there was no indication about when the minister had been in the region or city last, a note that would be of interest to the reader.

Comparative analysis of newspapers

Table 1: possible hidden advertisements in regional newspapers



Most instances were noted in "Tukuma zinotajs" (13) (see comparative table). The newspaper was generally uncritical of particular political parties and deputy candidates. As indicated in Table 2, the newspaper sympathised in particular with the Latvia's Way party (LC) (5 positive articles) and Latvia's First Party (LPP) (4 positive articles). In particular, extensive interviews with LPP leaders Eriks Jekabsons and Oskars Kastens were published, with no indication that they were paid for. The questions posed permitted the politicians freely to portray themselves in a positive light. The newspaper also expressed sympathies toward LSDSP and New Era (JL), one time each.

Second in terms of instances found is Talsu vestis, with nine possible hidden advertisements. Upon evaluation of this newspaper, researchers found that LC had the most positive articles (3), followed by TB/LNNK, with two positive articles. Also in this newspaper the most common type of case was one-sided presentation of opinions, portraying the party or deputy candidate in a positive light. Particularly worthy of note are two articles or problems with the land guards (17.09 and 12.09). These were published in the same week, based on a speech by Minister of Defence G.V. Kristovskis and the minister's point of view. Such articles do not permit the reader to get an impression of the problems with the land guards or to understand whether the reform proposed by the minister is necessary at all. The only impression afforded is of Kristovskis as a competent land guard reformer.

In third place is Kurzemnieks with eight instances. On two occasions the newspaper expressed its sympathies toward the People's Party and LSDSP; sympathies were expressed toward other parties on one occasion. In the last week before elections the newspaper permitted influential businessmen from the local city to openly campaign for TP. One article by D. Biteniece is particularly worthy of note. The article presents the views of all _____ on 26.09. After reading the article one is compelled to feel pity for the deputy candidate from the rightist Freedom Party, with whom few people were interested in meeting. The journalist, who attended this campaign event, could have, for example, posed critical questions to Z. Cevers, R. Karnite and M. Kostanecka, thus permitting the reading to judge the party objectively.

The newspapers "Stars" and "Ziemeļlatvija" had an equal number of possible hidden advertisements. Ziemeļlatvija published five positive articles on the TB/LNNK party in two months. In total, eight possible hidden advertisements were found in the newspaper. The newspaper's sympathies toward TB/LNNK are also characterised by the fact that party representatives were permitted to comment on news with regard to which the presence of deputy candidates was unfounded. For example, in coverage of an artists' group opening the theatre season on whether the city council would acquire a slightly used bus, thanks is expressed to TB/LNNK, although the article does not clarify the party's role in these events. Also, in reading residents' opinions on which party to choose, a photograph appears next to TB/LNNK party member Velga Graumane's opinion. The article also expresses a blatant invitation to vote for the party, which makes it resemble a paid advertisement, not an opinion that is of importance to the reader.

"Stars" contained three instances of news, the content of which is favourable to the Centre political union. On 19.09, in an article on displaying advertisements in the city, an

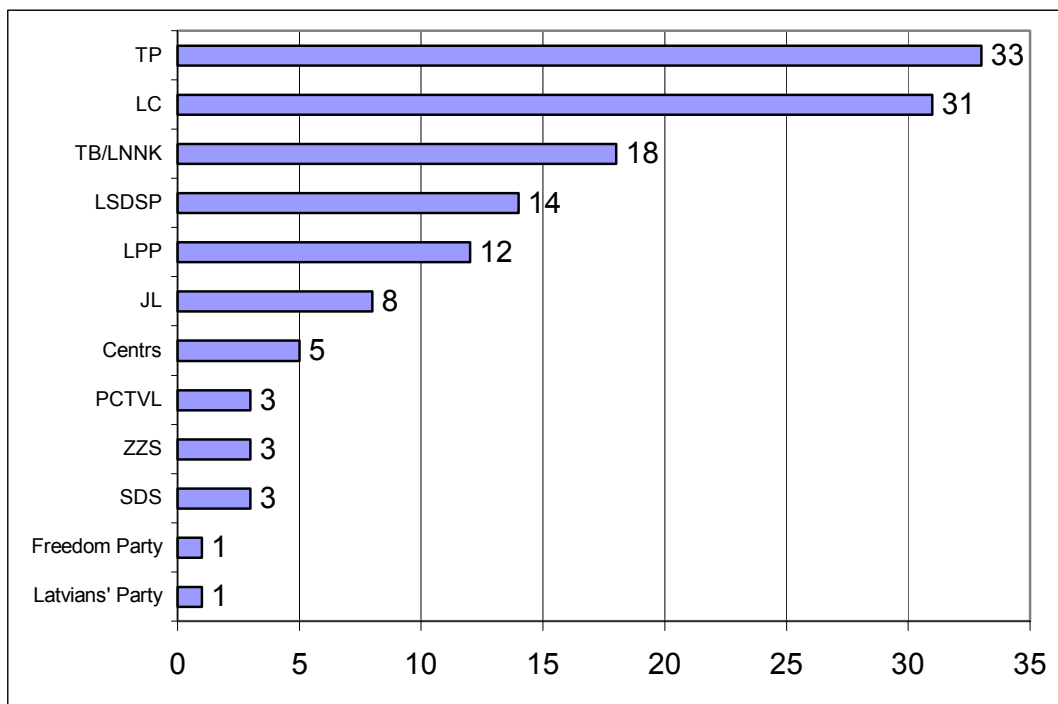
upcoming Centre election meeting is emphasised, including date, location and time, making the news report resemble a political party advertisement. Two weeks later (27.09) two news items were published about an event, which was covered uncritically, with no analysis of the credibility of promises made and one-sided points of view. Finally, the journalist expresses his view on the matter.

Stance toward parties

TP received more positive coverage than any other party (33), though Latvia's Way followed with 31. Judging by news content, TP was most successful in taking advantage of its ministers' (particularly, Agriculture, Finance and Education) accomplishments, and journalists did not critically evaluate these accomplishments and did not analyse whether "good deeds" were evident only just before the elections, and how many of the ministries' decisions favoured farmers or teachers.

The newspaper "Zemgale" exhibited a preference for the People's Party with four positive articles. This newspaper published two positive rights about LC. The ministers from the People's Party enjoyed positive coverage of their performance. For example, on two occasions the Ministry of Finance's press release was published, casting the performance of Minister Gundars Berzins (TP) in a positive light. One article covered a visit by Minister of Education Karlis Greiskalns (TP) and did not contain a single critical opinion of the minister's performance. A blatant example of a pseudo-event is an extensive article on TP's bicycle marathon stopping in Dobeles.

In comparison to newspapers' coverage of various parties, TP enjoyed a positive stance from Madonas zinas, in which all three cases favoured TP, as well as from Ogres vestis, where three out of four found cases cast TP in a positive light.



In evaluation of articles on TP, also worthy of note is positive coverage of the party's municipal leaders. For example, in coverage of the mayor of Kuldīga, Edgars Zalans, the reader is always reminded of Zalans' party affiliation. Also, Kurzemes vards, in compiling information on the accomplishments of a Saeima deputy from Liepāja, included positive descriptions of three TP deputies' accomplishments and mentioned a LC representative, though representatives from other parties were not mentioned at all.

Latvia's Way took successful advantage of its prime minister's accomplishments, though journalists only reported a few of the PM's press conferences in a light favourable to him. Newspapers contain a great deal of news of gifts LC bestowed upon residents, though most often journalists did not interview gift recipients, and did not evaluate the usefulness of the gifts or remind the reader if such gifts had been received from the parties in other years. Most possible hidden advertising favouring Latvia's Way were noted in the Tukuma zinotājs, with five such articles. Talsu vestis also heaved praise on LC with two such articles. Of particular note in Talsu vestis is an article "For order in the city and safety for residents" (01.10), where K. Libane suddenly appears in article about stairs that have been repaired, and who then proceeds to campaign for her party, LC. In all, LC was covered in 31 instances of articles with possible hidden advertising.

TB/LNNK was third in terms of frequency of being mentioned. Taking the greatest care to ensure that this party received publicity was Ziemeļlatvija, as described above, and which published five articles about TB/LNNK containing possible hidden advertising. Altogether, TB/LNNK appeared in possible hidden advertising articles 18 times.

On 14 occasions LSDSP was mentioned in a positive manner without reason. Regarding this party, no newspaper expressed sympathies toward it; possible hidden advertising articles regarding LSDSP appear in various newspapers. Most often the party gained publicity through positive interviews with its leader Valdis Lausks, news of the party's campaign events and journalists' uncritical stance toward deputy candidate Janis Adamsons being stricken from the ballot. Worthy of note is an article published in Staburags entitled "One must choose the right party" (22.08), signed by reporter A. Grinvalde and which clearly indicated the reporter's view of events, rendering the material commentary, not news.

A similar situation exists in LPP, positive publicity for which was created by articles about the party's leader and voter discussions, which were dominated by opinions of party representatives that do not reflect the opinions of those present. Also worthy of note are extensive interviews with party leaders Eriks Jekabsons and Oskars Kastens. Altogether 12 possible hidden advertising articles about LPP were written. Tukuma zinatājs had the most with four articles.

	TP	LC	TB/LNNK	LSDSP	LPP	JL	Centre Party	PCTVL	ZZS	SDS	BP	LP	Total
Auseklis	1	1			1		1						4
Alūksnes Ziņas		1											1
Bauskas dzīve		1		1		1							3
Brīvā Daugava		2	1			2							5
Dzirkstele	3	2	1										6
Druva	2		1										3
Ezerzeme		1											1
Jaunais Vēstnesis									1				1
Kurzemnieks	2	1		2	1	1					1		8
Kurzemes Vārds	1	2						2					5
Kursas Laiks			1										1
Latgales Laiks		1		1	1								3
Ludzas Zeme		1				1							2
Liesma	1	1											2
Liepājas Acis	1		1										2
Madonas Ziņas	3												3
Novadnieks	1	1											2
Neatkarīgās Tukuma Ziņas	1												1
Ogres Vēstis	3	1											4

Ogres Zinas												1	1
Rīgas Aprīnķa Avīze	1	1		2	2					1			7
Rēzeknes Vēstis	1			1	1			1					4
Saldus Zeme			1	1	1	2							5
Stars	1		1	2			3						7
Staburags	1		1	1									3
Tukuma Zīnotājs		5		1	4	1			2				13
Talsu Vēstis	1	2	2		1		1			1			9
Vaduguns	1	1		1									3
Vietējā	2	1								1			4
Ventas Balss.			2	1									3
Zemgale	4	2											6
Ziemeļlatvij a	1	1	5										7
Zemgales Zinas	1	2	1										4
Total	33	31	18	14	12	8	5	3	3	3	1	1	

Comments on other events

During the course of the study several instances were found deserving of additional commentary. For example, in the newspaper "Ludzas zeme," in the last week so-called interviews were published with deputy candidates from various parties (LC, LPP, Centre Party, TP, LSDSP and PCTVL). Following the interviews there is a notation that only interviews from those parties were printed that paid for advertising space in the newspaper. This indicates that during the entire pre-election period the newspaper exhibited a biased approach toward parties—only those that paid to advertise received coverage. This notation leads the reader to doubt whether during the pre-election period the newspaper contained credible, objective coverage of the political parties.

A second instance that piques the interest is newspapers' Kurzemnieks and Ziemeļlatvija calls upon voters to vote for a certain party. In Kurzemenieks (03.10), a local influential businessman clearly states that people must vote for TP only. In Ziemeļlatvija (21.09), TB/LNNK members openly campaign for their party. In addition, in both instances photographs of these persons are attached. This is not the case where an opinion on whom to vote for is expressed by some other person.

Before the election many newspapers decided (as indicated by notations by interviews with deputy candidates) that all deputy candidates from a specific city or region would be interviewed, or persons heading the ballot in the district (as indicated by notations by the respective interviews). Only a few newspapers asked the potential deputies critical questions or organised discussions by which the reader could make his political choice.

One such example was Zemgales zinas. By contrast, Auseklis, Druva and Ogres zinas' interviews with deputy candidates do not provide the reader with an objective impression of the candidate or the party—all candidates are portrayed as equally good and all promises as equally credible. Also, newspapers did not evaluate promises made, or pose follow-up questions to assertions that seemed farfetched.

An unusual instance was noted in Vaduguns on 31.08 in the form of Saeima deputy Janis Urbanovics' reply to a reader. What is interesting is that under Urbanovics' surname there is a notation: "Paid for by R. Klavina." Such third-party paid advertisements are against the spirit of the law on financing of political parties, which states that all donations, including free advertising space, must be given directly and without intermediaries to the party.

Another interesting category is notations of thanks in newspapers to a party for gifts. This often borders on a party advertisement, though in cases where the expression of gratitude is under a separate section and it was not written by the journalist, it was not considered a hidden advertisement. Also, there were many instances of thanks expressed to parties for having sponsored events, where the gratitude was woven into an article. These instances were singled out as possible hidden advertisements ("TP treats ice cream at railway celebration," Dzirkstele, 14.09. This expression of thanks was an article in favour of TP, which treated children to ice cream, and about the fact that Vaira Paegle is a very sympathetic individual. There was also an article about the city council having purchased a slightly used bus—Ziemellatvija, 21.09—the article expresses thanks to TB/LNNK, though it is not clear what the party has done to enable the city council to acquire the bus.).

Summary. Russian regional press.

The most frequent cases found in the Russian regional press constituted pseudo-events, i.e., they were events that would not be covered in a non-election period. Second most frequent were where a deputy candidate was used as the sole commentator, and third most often was when a deputy candidate was the only to comment on an event.

More cases of possible hidden advertising were found in the newspaper Million. In second came Dinaburg segodnya, and third was Nasha gazeta. To popularise parties, newspapers often utilised non-traditional methods—Million announced that subscription prices were being reduced, thanks to the support of the Freedom Party of Latvia. Dinaburg segodnya established columns with the aim of popularising a certain deputy candidate.

Of all parties, Latgale's Light was the subject of the most cases of possible hidden advertising. This is essentially due to the fact that five of the publications analysed were in Daugavpils, one was in Rezekne, and only one was in Jelgava. It is interesting to note the three parties that were most often the subject of possible hidden advertising: LG, Latvia's Freedom Party and Latvia's First Party.

Description of general tendencies

The most common cases fell under the following analysis criteria:

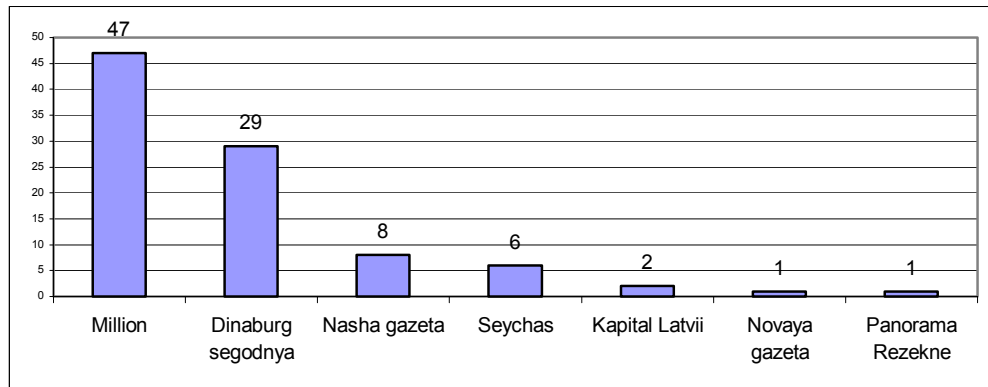
1. A pseudo-event permitting the candidate to showcase himself; an event that would not be covered in a non-election context;
2. deputy candidate is the only or main commentator of an event;
3. opinions about the deputy candidate or party, or the opinion of the deputy candidate himself, selected to confirm the pre-existing aim of furthering or harming a party or deputy candidate's popularity

A blatant calling upon voters to vote for a certain party was noted in articles on two occasions in Dinaburg segodnya in favour of LSDSP in the next-to-last week before elections. Violations found in the form of campaign advertisements without any designation that they are advertisements were least frequent. It was also rather rare for journalists to mention in an article a candidate unrelated to an event being covered.

Finally, the Russian-language regional press is particularly regionally based—six of the newspapers analysed were located in Latgale, and only one was in Jelgava. Thus the sympathies expressed for Latgale's Light may at least be

explained, if not accepted. Anti-advertisements were relatively common in the Russian regional press, e.g., a publication's extensive series of negative articles about Latgale's Light. It is interesting to note that Latvia's Freedom Party, which was subject to few significant possible hidden advertisements in other newspapers, came in second place in Russian regional newspapers in frequency of possible hidden advertising, followed by Latvia's First Party in third. This may be explained by parties' tendency with the help of possible hidden advertising to address a narrow, specific potential electorate.

Comparative analysis of newspapers



The table of final results indicates that the leader among regional publications in terms of number of possible hidden advertisements is the Daugavpils newspaper *Million*, in which in two months' time 47 articles were found, giving rise to suspicion of possible hidden advertising. *Million* was the only Latgale newspaper that covered Ziedonis Cever's Freedom Party. The table indicates that no "ordered" articles about this party were published in any other Russian regional newspaper.

In order to boost its popularity, the party utilised not only traditional genres—interviews, news, etc.—but also created its own unique tactics. For example, *Million* began a subscription campaign with the slogan "Freedom Party." The newspaper invited readers to express their thanks to the party for its financial support, which lowered subscription costs. Thus, the party is cast in a positive image before the reader, because due to the party's assistance, subscription is much cheaper. This tactic may be included in the category of "pseudo-events."

The second most common type of article, which was typical not only of *Million*, but of all newspapers analysed, is coverage of a candidate's radio or television appearance. Usually these "interpretations" do not contain pointed, uncomfortable questions that affect problematic manifestations. Most of the questions are formulated so that the deputy candidate can manipulate the question so as to answer it as suits him best. For example, "How will your party resolve the serious economic situation in Latgale?", or "What can be done to prevent theft of the state's assets?", and many other such questions, permitting the candidate to rely on slogans and to set forth his election program and ideology.

Million also contains journalists' interviews with candidates, but these are usually full of compliments for candidates. Without ascertaining the details or delving into the subject matter, journalists posed basic questions, permitting the candidate to express himself generally about the party's platform.

Practically all publications that contained possible hidden advertisements could be differentiated by their rubrics and headlines. Typical of Million and Dinaburg segodnya were such rubrics as "Meet the candidate," "Whom to vote for," etc. In most cases the headline was borrowed from an election campaign. For example, "Gundars Prolis: 'Family doctors in absurd situation' " (Million, September 5), or "R. Karnite 'I invite all to participate in creating a respectable life' " (Million, September 12).

Finally, it was quite popular in the regional press to employ the tactic of publishing surveys and letters, with the aim of influencing the beliefs of the public. For example, one survey asked, "Should the number of women in the Saeima be increased?" In the column next to the survey was an article stating that the Freedom Party had nominated the Director of the Economics Institute, Raita Karnite, for prime minister. Surveys and letters were also utilised as anti-advertisements.

In second place in terms of frequency of possible hidden advertising was the Daugavpils newspaper "Dinaburg segodnya," which favoured city mayor Rihards Eigims, leader of the Latgale's Light party. Of the 29 articles analysed, 16 call upon voters to vote for Eigims' party.

A typical rubric in Dinaburg segodnya was "Meet the candidate," featuring party members of Latgale's Light, though not Eigims. The newspaper focuses great attention on Eigims' call upon voters that they strike his name from the ballot; surveys of passers-by were also used for this story. In answer to the question "Should voters strike Eigims' name from the ballot?", all those surveyed unanimously answer that Eigims should remain in his current position, because he does so much for the city's welfare.

Each week Dinaburg segodnya offered readers a column entitled "Ask Imants Bekess your question," which may be explained by readers' greater interest in this Latgale's Light candidate and chief of city police.

In some publications possible hidden advertisements for LSDSP and SDS were found. SDS candidate Aleksandrs Kalnicks' name was particularly prominent, but on the whole the newspaper's campaign efforts for Latgale's Light were not much different from other newspapers' propaganda.

Fewer cases of possible hidden advertising were found in the newspaper Seychas (6). During the pre-election period, newspapers such as Panorama Rezekne and Novaya gazeta were rather reticent—in each one only one instance of possible hidden advertising was found.

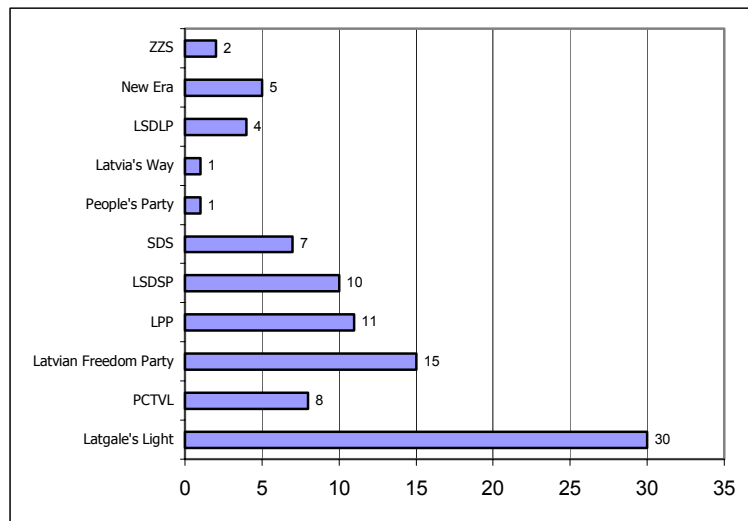
The magazine Kapital Latgalii contained only two suspicious articles, one in August, the other in the September issue, thus one in each issue, a rather high indicator. In August the New Era party was advertised; in September it was SDS.

Regarding anti-advertisements

Although the newspaper Nasha gazeta contained only eight possible hidden advertisements, this was the only publication that utilised anti-advertisements. This may be explained by the newspaper's commercial ownership: it is owned by Olegs Guscins, owner of Guron Trast. Mr. Guscins is a long-time rival of Rihards Eigims. This was evident not only from coverage of events before elections, but also in descriptions of daily problems in the city. Any event that was in any way related to the mayor's performance was mercilessly and often unfoundedly criticised.

Newspapers' stance toward parties

Possible hidden advertising coverage of parties in publications



It may easily be explained why in the Latgale region Rihards Eigims' party Latgale's Light was most frequently the subject of possible hidden advertising. At the same time it is quite possible that many of the articles singled out as

meeting the possible hidden advertising criterion were not. Compliments to parties may also be explained by whether or not a publication is economically dependent on the city's (usually Daugavpils) power.

In second place was Latvia's Freedom Party, which was covered by Million. In third place by number of articles singled out was Latvia's First Party. This party's advertising technique differed from other parties' methods. If Latvia's Freedom Party or Latgale's Light sought to focus the attention of readers on a candidate's professional or political experience or economic views, then Latvia's First Party's top priority was its leaders. Frequently party leader Eriks Jekabsons didn't say much about his party's platforms, focusing instead on himself and his "spiritual path."

LSDSP and SDS advertisements for the most part introduced a specific candidate, who explained the party line. Photographs of candidates were always placed next to the articles.

	LG	PCTVL	BP	LPP	LSDSP	SDS	TP	LC	LSDLP	JL	ZZS	Total
Million	11	3	15	8	5	2	1		1	1		47
Dinaburg segodnya	16			3	4	4				2		29
Nasha gazeta	1	3						1	2	1		8
Sychas	2	1			1						2	6
Kapital Latvii						1				1		2
Novaya gazeta									1			1
Panorama Rezekne		1										1
Total:	30	8	15	11	10	7	1	1	4	5	2	

Conclusions

The discussion surrounding hidden advertising that was initiated before the elections, an increase in understanding among the public about it, as well as the broadcasters' supervisory institution's (NRTP) involvement in the analysis of possible hidden advertisements, ensured that the number of possible hidden advertising instances decreased.

Before municipal elections in 2001, as a result of analysis of hidden advertising on television, a total of 215 instances of possible hidden advertising were found. This year during a time period almost three times as long (39 days), 22 instances of possible hidden advertising were found. This sum was obtained excluding 100 instances on Radio PIK, which the project researchers considered an exception. Further, analysis of newspapers leads to the conclusion that frequency of possible hidden advertising before the 8th Saeima elections may have decreased by a factor of six times. Essentially this development may be explained by the fact that the media began to monitor articles and interviews paid for by political parties. In total from August 5th to October 5th, 702 such articles appeared, indicative of a new genre—the paid political broadcast, interview or article in journalism. This raises a new series of questions regarding how much airtime and newspaper columns should be devoted to such material. For broadcasters this amount is regulated by regulation, namely, advertising during the election campaign period may not exceed 18 minutes per hour. No such limitation can be set for newspapers, owing to their nature; the only limits are reasonableness and an honourable relation to the reader.

The greatest number of possible hidden advertisements was found on Radio PIK, which contained very many possible hidden advertisements and which significantly stands out among broadcasters. In second place was TV station LNT, though this year the number of possible hidden advertisements decreased by a factor of seven. Last year in 13 days 109 possible hidden advertisements were recorded, compared to 16 this year. The fact that possible hidden advertisements have decreased in numerous media by several times is due to discussions that were undertaken early, as well as the fact that the NRTP received informative reports of possible hidden advertisements weekly. The NRTP has the right to impose various sanctions, though these rights are limited. Based on the information in the analysis, the NRTP submitted a complaint regarding Radio PIK misleading listeners to the Consumer Rights Defence Centre for review. The NRTP also deemed the appearance of deputy candidates on LNT Breakfast as misleading to listeners, for which a complaint was also filed by the Council, on the basis of which the Council adopted a decision to issue a warning.

The analysis also demonstrated that the number of possible hidden advertisements has significantly lessened in Latvian language national newspapers. Most of the occurrences relate to journalistic quality, professionalism or other factors. One of the main problems in the Latvian national press is that the opinion of one of the involved parties is not included. In articles in which the basis for a political decision or a politician's honour is questioned, no attempt is made to include the opinion of the "guilty" or involved person with regard to the event reported. This lessens the article's credibility, and a problem of

potential interest to a journalist, a problem the resolution of which might change something in the political process, becomes nothing more than an attempt to besmirch or praise a party.

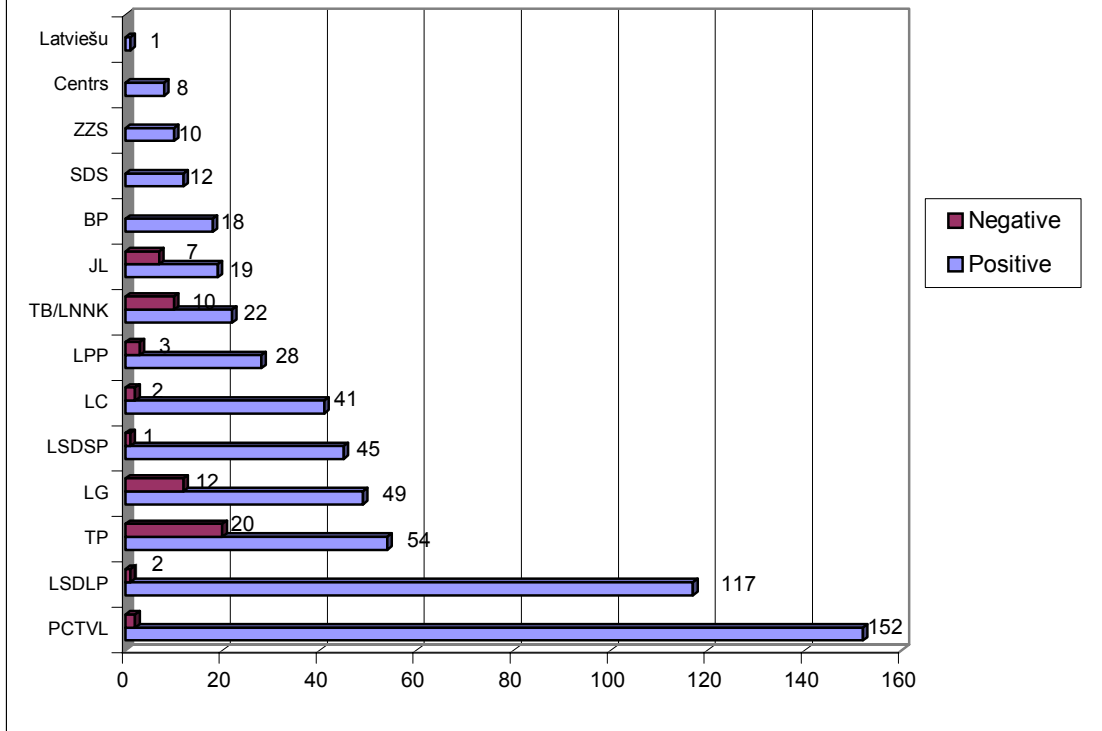
A similar conclusion may be drawn about Latvian language regional media. The number of cases found here was relatively large—138 occurrences. However, most often these were cases where journalists did not critically evaluate political parties' advertising campaigns, had "fallen for" a "pseudo-event," or portrayed political parties' notices about their good deeds uncritically, without ascertaining the opinions of involved persons or parties. In the seminar for regional newspapers organised by the project on September 12, several editors of regional newspapers admitted that before elections, when the activity of political parties increases significantly, it is often difficult to select criteria by which to cover political parties. For this reason comprehensive discussions among colleagues about these issues are very important. The authors hope that the notification prepared in this regard will serve as a worthy source of information.

In terms of content, different conclusions may be drawn regarding the Russian-language national press. The number of possible hidden advertisements was quite high. Among the newspapers themselves, however, there were significant differences—75 possible hidden advertisements were noted in *Vesti Segodnya*, and only 16 in *Telegraf*. On the whole it could not be said that the Russian press (with the exception of *Telegraf*) does not maintain high standards of journalism, i.e., having an aim of providing readers with balanced, objective and multifaceted news. It is the voter who reads the Russian press who suffers, and who receives a distorted impression of political forces, their programs, and available political alternatives.

Unlike the Russian national press, the Russian regional press was dominated by a completely different triumvirate—*Latgale's Light*, Latvia's Freedom Party, and Latvia's First Party. This appears to indicate that at least the two last parties are seeking to address a specific electorate in a specific region with the assistance of Russian-language regional newspapers.

It is necessary to draw some conclusion regarding coverage of parties in possible hidden advertisements. The top three in this regard are comprised by an unusual combination—PCTVL (152), LSDLP (117) and the People's Party (54). PCTVL was first primarily due to the fact that there were very many positive articles for this party in the national and regional media. This leads one to conclude that PCTVL's political profile creates a comparative advantage in terms of publicity. In second place, owing to active campaigning by Radio PIK (100 instances), was LSDLP. The People's Party was third and had the greatest election campaign expenses, as well as the most saturated advertising campaign, part of which, possibly, was earmarked for the financing of possible hidden advertisements. In addition, TP was the leader among negative possible hidden advertising articles; a total of 20 such articles were found about TP.

Depiction of parties in possible hidden advertisements



Recommendations

1. Further discussion is needed about advertising materials designated as paid and that occupy a large part of a newspaper or magazine's content, but which resemble a journalistic article and are designated in a way that is not easily discernable visually. This discussion should provide an answer to the question of whether this constitutes an honest stance toward the reader. Among broadcasters this problem is resolved by limitations on advertising time. Among newspapers, however, the amount of advertising is not regulated by any legislation. For this reason, this debate should most likely be resolved among the media.
2. It is necessary to conduct an analysis of hidden advertisements during at least the next two elections, first engaging in broad discussion about the problems, characteristics and indicators of hidden advertisements. Media representatives admit that being included in such a report as this is far less palatable than foregoing additional income from placement of hidden advertisements.
3. A significant role in preventing hidden advertising is played by professional journalists, the importance of whom in the formation of media content cannot be overstated. An increase in the self-confidence and professionalism among professional journalists can ensure the further development of a quality media.
4. It is possible that upon the elimination of hidden advertising in the media, that other, more refined methods of praising/damaging political parties will arise (e.g., "black PR"). For this reason it is necessary to develop methods of analysis and apply them to new circumstances. Continued discussion of these topics is also necessary. Perhaps in future it will be necessary to find a method for analysis of news agencies' materials.
5. It is necessary to foster efforts for journalists and the media to organise amongst themselves, so as to form a discussion forum, as well as self-regulating organisations, of which there is currently a particularly acute shortage in the media. It would be highly advisable to involve in such an organisation to a high degree representatives of Russian-language newspapers.
6. In the Law on Campaigning it is necessary to include and define the concept of a hidden advertisement.

Appendixes

Report of the National Radio and Television Council on Monitoring of the Election Campaign for the 8th Saeima Elections

Upon evaluation of the election campaign process before the 8th Saeima elections, the NRTP noted that existing legislation (the Law on Radio and Television, the law "On Campaigning before the Saeima elections") still does not provide for effective detection and prevention of violations in campaigning on radio and television. It is the NRTP's view that the causes of these problems stem from shortcomings in the law. The Law on Radio and Television defines hidden advertising, but this definition is incomplete, too general, and difficult to apply in the identification of hidden political advertisements.

The law "On Campaigning before the Saeima elections" does not state which institution is required to supervise compliance with the law and has the right to impose sanctions for its violation. The competency of the NRTP is set out in the Law on Radio and Television, and in accordance with the law the NRTP may only adopt a decision based on a violation set forth in the Law on Radio and Television.

The NRTP views political campaigning on election day as another significant problem. The law "On Campaigning before the Saeima elections" states that Latvia's Television and Latvia's Radio are not permitted to make public the results of sociological surveys on election day. However, considering the popularity (market share) of other broadcasters, the application of this restriction on public broadcasters is unfounded. It is the view of the NRTP that, in order to protect the public from possible political influence on election day, this legislation should be applied to all broadcasters. In addition, the possibility of a ban on political campaigning on election day should be considered.

Aside from the problems stated and in comparison to campaigning by broadcasters in March, 2001 before municipal elections with 8th Saeima campaigning, the NRTP concludes that the situation has improved significantly. The decrease in possible hidden advertising by broadcasters may be explained by changes in the law, because a method for separating political campaigning from other programming was determined, and discussions on hidden political campaigning began before the amount of advertising permitted by broadcasters was increased by 10%, this amount being earmarked for campaigning. As a result of discussions, the National Radio and Television Council concluded a co-operation agreement with the Soros Foundation–Latvia, under the confines of which the NRTP received important information regarding possible violations by broadcasters.

From September 2nd to October 1st, the National Radio and Television Council monitored 35 local, regional and national broadcasters' programs in Latvia, recording

broadcasters' programs 24 hours a day, and checked their compliance with the Law on Radio and Television and the law "On Campaigning before the Saeima Elections."

A violation of Article 22, Section 3 of the Law on Radio and Television (on hidden advertising) was noted on September 2nd on the programme Daugavpils TV, broadcast by "SIA Daugavpils televizijas studija," where the Daugavpils City Council's broadcast on events in the city of Daugavpils turned into campaigning for p/o Latgale's Light's Chairman R. Eigims.

With regard to this fact—misleading the public—a complaint was drafted, and on October 10, 2002 a decision was adopted to issue a warning for the use of hidden advertising.

On its September 10th Radio Skala program, SIA Super FM Kuldiga failed to state before or after broadcasting political campaigning material which political organisation, union of political organisations, or deputy candidate paid for the campaigning, or whether payment was made through a third party. As a result, Article 7, Section 3 of the law "On Campaigning before Saeima Elections" was deemed to have been violated. A complaint was drafted regarding the discovered violation, but the Council could not take any action, because in accordance with Article 45 Section 5 of the Law on Radio and Television, the Council can only adopt a decision on the basis of a violation set forth in the Law on Radio and Television.

In co-operation with the Soros Foundation–Latvia, the Society for Openness Delna's mutual project "Openly on 8th Saeima election campaign finance," and media research company "Observer," from July 22nd to September 3rd the National Radio and Television Council conducted random monitoring and complete analysis of all programs from September 6th to October 6th. Under the confines of the monitoring, the following broadcast programs were monitored: LTV 1, LTV 2, TV3 – Latvija, LNT, TV-5, Latvijas Radio -1., 2., 4., SWH, SWH +, Radio Skonto, MIX FM and Radio PIK.

During the monitoring, on SIA "Pikal un patneris" program on Radio Pik, on numerous occasions it was noted that advertising (the Social Democratic Welfare Party's election campaign) was not separated from other aspects of programming. Also, neither before, nor after the advertisement was notification given which political organisation, union of political organisations or which deputy candidate had paid for the campaigning material, or whether payment was made through a third party. As a result, Article 22, Section 1 of the Law on Radio and Television was violated, as well as Article 7, Section 3 of the law "On Campaigning before Saeima Elections." A program broadcast on September 10, 17 and 24th—Weekly Review with Jurijs Zuravlovs (SDLP)—may essentially be designated as campaigning, thus listeners were misled, which in accordance with Article 2, Section 13 of the Law on Radio and Television constitutes hidden advertising, which constituted a violation of Article 22, Section 3 of the Law on Radio and Television. With regard to these violations a complaint was drafted and submitted to the Consumer Rights Defence Centre for review.

On September 3, 10, 17 and 24, A/S Latvijas Neatkariga Televizija's program LNT broadcast interviews with 8th Saeima deputy candidates, which constitutes campaigning. Considering that the interviews are not identified as advertisements and that neither before, nor after the advertisement was notification given which political organisation, union of political organisations or which deputy candidate had paid for the campaigning material, or whether payment was made through a third party, the public was misled, which in accordance with Article 2, Section 13 of the Law on Radio and Television

constitutes hidden advertising, which constituted a violation of Article 22, Section 3 of the Law on Radio and Television. With regard to these violations a complaint was drafted, with regard to which the Council adopted a decision to issue a warning.

Under the confines of the National Radio and Television Council's monitoring, the Council conducted an analysis of the extent of advertising on six television broadcasters – LTV 1; LTV2; LNT; TV 3; TV5 RĪGA and TEM TV. Simultaneously the Council a week-long analysis of these six television broadcasters, utilising Baltic Media Facts' research on amounts of advertising. Violations of advertising amounts were noted on LTV 1; LNT, TV3 and TV 5 RĪGA. Complaints will be prepared with regard to these violations.

In accordance with Article 26 of the law "On Campaigning before Saeima Elections," broadcasters have submitted a review of campaigning to the NRTP. Summarising the information provided in the reports reveals that during the pre-election period, broadcasters received LVL 1,517,999.96. The Council has not received reports from SIA Tornis from the city of Rujiena, Talsi City Council PO BO Talsu Televizija, and B. Indrans' IU TV studio, and Spektrs educational broadcasts.

Appendix : Broadcasters' income reports – 4 pages.

National Radio and Television Council
Desk Officer Andris Kēniņš
7221848

Report of noted possible hidden advertisements