

BISS POLITICAL MEDIA BAROMETER (January-March 2013)

Preamble

Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) presents the fourth issue of its quarterly report, **"BISS Political Media Barometer (January-March 2013)"**. This report completes the annual cycle of studies and contains information about communications of political forces and their reflection in the media.

Following our mission of an independent Belarusian analytical center, we created this product to pursue one principal goal, i.e. scientific analysis of the quality of political communications between Belarusian political forces and the society and to facilitate their improvement.

To achieve this goal, "BISS Political Media Barometer" conducts objective quantitative evaluation of Belarusian political forces (and 30 individual politicians) representation in the media on the basis of systemic monitoring of open information sources.

The analysis of political communications during the year allowed us to formulate a whole range of recommendations to improve communication strategies of political forces and identified some "tight spots" in the relations between media representatives and independent politicians. In general, one can state some progress in the field of political communications; in the opinion of research authors, "BISS Political Media Barometer" also partially contributed to that.

The authors of "BISS Political Media Barometer" would like to thank the members of international project council for their advice and recommendations; they are also open for discussion on research methodology, directions of analysis and data interpretation. However, the responsibility for any mistakes and inaccuracies rests solely with BISS.

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Summary and Recommendations

This report of "BISS Political Media Barometer" completes the annual cycle of research in the field of political communications in Belarus. The first period of research pertains to April-June (second quarter) of 2012. During this year, BISS evaluated the dynamics in the volume and content of messages sent by political opposition before, during and after parliamentary elections. This allowed not only to describe the main trends but also to track down the patterns in the structure and content of communications among political forces.

The last quarter can be viewed, on the one hand, as a "benchmark" period during which no significant events (e.g., the liberation of political prisoners in April 2012 or a parliamentary election campaign) changed the picture of political communications. This period encompasses the "bottom" of election cycle (after holding parliamentary election campaign in September 2012 and before the start of actions to prepare for local elections in 2013 and presidential elections in 2015). On the other hand, traditional opposition campaigns such as the Freedom Day occurred specifically in this period. The presence of such important dates in political and oppositional traditions also confirms the need for evaluation of annual dynamics in the communication field.

If we look at specific events in the country's political life, we can draw a conclusion about positive changes in planning program activities and their realization, which is also confirmed by relative success of communications. An important recommendation to political forces from the experts and analysts was the need to be more active in the periods between elections, when the authorities mobilize less efforts to attract the electorate. Independent political forces used this recommendation to their benefit.

The year was started from discussing plans, including those for presidential elections. In January, press conferences of UCP, BCD and LDP were held (the latter was included in the list of evaluated political forces for the first time), a range of leaders were interviewed, BCD presented its program for discussion. In February, active campaigns dedicated to the Year of K. Kalinovsky and the discussion of Freedom Day celebration are initiated. TTT holds a press conference on its work plans for local elections and on its strategies for the presidential. The central event in March was the manifestation and procession on Freedom Day.

To be more visual, the main results are presented in the table in comparison with the previous period. After the table, some general conclusions are formulated to sketch annual trends and the main patterns identified during the four stages of research.

Previous waves of research of "BISS Political Media Barometer"	Evaluation of changes in "BISS Political Media Barometer" in the first quarter of 2013 (January-March)
Sources of political communications	
<p>In the third and fourth quarters of 2012 the share of communications through offline resources increased: independent Belarusian press amounted to nine and 15 percent of political communications respectively.</p>	<p>According to the results of the first quarter of 2013, the share of offline resources is significantly decreasing; only four percent of communications pertain to independent Belarusian press. This can testify to the fact that due to lack of significant informational causes (elections in the third quarter or the first interview of A. Sannikau in emigration in the fourth quarter of 2012) political subjects have a hard time striving to be presented in offline media. At that the specifics of offline media is a more significant role in the regions (due to less penetration of the Internet). By losing their share of representation in online media the politicians do not only increase the "virtual" effect of Belarusian politics but also lose their access to channels significant for the regions. Regional media are not directly analyzed in the research due to the need for evaluating politicians' images formed at the national level. (see Appendix 2. Methodology Description).</p>
Use of own communication channels	
<p>During the first three periods of research it was hard to single out a tendency for the share of own communications among politicians and political forces: if in the second quarter of 2012 own communications amounted to only five percent, in the third quarter they attained 27 percent and in the fourth one fell to 25 percent.</p>	<p>The first quarter of 2013 showed that the common trend towards the increase of own communications exists and carries on; they amounted to 34 percent of political communications in total. Own communications are positively rated by media as they are actively used as informational causes. Thanks to those the political forces get an opportunity to manage the agenda, including the one in the media.</p>
Diversity of political forces representatives in the media	
<p>The structure of political forces representatives gradually changed in the direction of greater diversity during the first three periods of research. A party or movement leader spoke as its representative in the media in 57 percent of cases in the second quarter of 2012, in 50 percent in the third quarter of 2012 and in 48 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. National-level events were presented in 60 percent of communications in the fourth quarter of 2012.</p>	<p>We can state that the structure of political forces has stabilized: it is practically identical to the structure in the previous period; the party leader is a representative in the media in 48 percent of cases. We can also state stabilization of the level of covered events. Mostly those are national-level events (58 percent). The low share of regional events is explained by the fact that the research sample includes only national resources (see Appendix 2. Methodology Description) as they form the general image of political forces for all regions and in Minsk. However, more active inclusion of significant events in the regions into the common agenda may correct the image of forces in the direction of more active and real, lowering the "virtual" effect of independent politics.</p>
Women's representation in political media	
<p>The share of "female voices" in political communications during the first three periods has gradually grown and achieved 19 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012.</p>	<p>In comparison with the previous period, the share of women has somehow decreased (to 16 percent), which testifies to certain stabilization of this index and the end of growth trend. Still, top twelve politicians include a record number of women: I. Khalip, N. Radzina, A. Palazhanka-Dashkevich, and M. Adamovich.¹ At that their qualitative characteristics of communications are worse than among male politicians; they do not propose any initiative and manifest low activity in the "political action" dimension (see Qualitative index). The most publicized female figures in the political field still do not speak out as representatives of political forces, they rarely propose program initiatives; they are mentioned mostly from the point of their private life or to present politicians with limited access to media space.</p>

¹ In the next report issues, the list of female politicians will also include O. Karach.

Content of political communications	
<p>The subjects of messages constitute one of the most dynamic indices. Their structure changes significantly depending on the general situation and the events not only in the political life of the country but also in the private life of politicians. If in April-June 2012 most messages were associated with repressions, in the next period the main subject was elections, and the last quarter of 2012 was characterized by a splash of interest towards social issues.</p>	<p>According to the results of the last quarter of 2012, one might have assumed that social issues became more attractive for politicians and political journalists due to the lack of political events. However, the results of research in the first quarter of 2013 show that the interests towards social issues among politicians and political forces remains stable and even grows: social issues are mentioned in 75 percent of messages (against 53 percent in the previous quarter). We can also state growing interest in internal political issues (47 percent of messages against 31 percent in the previous quarter). Despite the dynamic content of political communications the issues associated with economy are still beyond the focus of political forces. If in the previous quarter the share of messages associated with economy issues achieved seven percent, this quarter it dropped to six percent.</p>
Activity of political communications	
<p>During the post-election period, one could observe significant decrease (only five percent) of proactive communications share due to the growth of passive communications share (which achieved 45 percent, while during the previous periods their share never exceeded 30 percent); the media took up the initiative.</p> <p>During all three previous quarters, the main form of offline activities was the statements of politicians. Meetings with voters constituted a very small share of politicians' activities even during the pre-election period (they did not exceed 8 percent); naturally, meetings with voters referenced in the media are meant.</p>	<p>Political forces managed to somewhat restore their level of activity; the share of proactive communications amounted to 15 percent. However, the growth of reactive communications share (up to 61 percent) is also observed.² These data testify to the fact that political forces do not succeed in maintaining their image of active subjects and managing informational causes. This situation has two negative aspects: 1) on the one hand, the image of less active subjects, i.e. "followers" is formed; 2) on the other hand, due to a high share of "reactive" communications they have less opportunities to manage their image in the eyes of the audience (e.g., to form the agenda and to define the topics covered in messages).</p> <p>However, as for the activities of politicians reflected in the media, in the first quarter of 2013 we can notice significant changes. The most popular form of mentioned activity is a press conference; meetings with voters are referenced in 39 percent of communications. On the one hand, it is associated with Freedom Day organization; on the other hand, it demonstrates the growth of own communications share which mostly concerns real everyday events of political forces.</p>
Identity of political subjects	
<p>In the third quarter, the share of messages where party affiliation of politicians was not indicated slightly increased (up to 15 percent) after the fall in April-July 2012 (from 30 to 11 percent). This allowed us to assume that politicians speak more willingly in the media indicating their party affiliation.</p> <p>However, during all three previous periods politicians mostly commented on events or provided their general opinions on this or that subject, which strengthened the image of "virtual" independent political field having nothing in common with real life of the country.</p>	<p>In the first quarter of 2013, the hypothesis of gradual growth of the share of mentions as political forces representatives was not confirmed: politicians were mentioned without party affiliation in 28 percent of communications.</p> <p>At the same time, we can observe positive changes in the identity of political subjects: politicians spoke out more often as event participants (44 percent of mentions) than with general statements (32 percent of mentions).</p>

² "Reactive" communications are events in which politicians act or speak out in reply to some statements or events; they do not exhibit proactive character in their communications (see **Appendix 2. Methodology Description**).

Positive and negative changes of the informational field

Therefore, we observe the following positive changes in political informational field:

- The increase in the share of own communications,
- More attention towards socially significant topics,
- The decrease in the share of "passive" communications,
- Politicians speaking out as event participants,
- Significant growth of mentions of meetings with voters as a form of offline activities;

and some negative trends:

- The decrease of the general amount of mentions in comparison with the previous quarter (2,965 mentions against 3,331 in October-December 2012),
- The decrease of share for printed media,
- The decrease in the amount of messages on economic issues,
- The growth of share for "reactive" communications,
- The growth of share for mentions of politicians without referencing their political structure affiliation.

Besides, among political forces those that are active inside the country become more significant; if we look at the index of each political force (see **Quantitative Index**).

In general, we can state that communications of political forces between January and March of 2013 were relatively successful.

Labile and stable characteristics of informational field

The annual analysis of dynamics for the main characteristics of political communications allows us to conclude that some parameters are very rigid to the change despite external conditions and the efforts of political forces; some parameters can change thanks to the activity of parties and certain politicians.

We can state that in the current relations between media and political subjects politicians can influence the following parameters of the informational field:

1. Message subjects;
2. Offline activity level referenced in the media; to what extent the communications are passive, reactive or proactive;
3. Types of offline activities presented in the media;
4. The role of the politician (whether s/he actively participates in events or just comments on those).

On the other hand, the following parameters are stiff, formed and rigid to the change:

1. Media resource type (politicians can increase the amount and share of their communications but cannot influence the referencing of independent political field by printed media; messages on independent online resources still constitute about 60 percent of communications);
2. The level of referenced events (the media pays its principal attention to national-level events; the level of presentation of regional events is very low);
3. The type of political force representative (the lion's share of attention is allocated to the leader; the growth of diversity among forces representatives and, even more, of the share of regional leaders and representatives has stopped);

4. The share of female representatives of independent political field stays stable; the low indices of activity and initiative for female voices are also stable.

The presence of these stable, stiff parameters rigid to change even with time shows the need for structural change in the relations between the media and political subjects. Thanks to their efforts politicians are able to correct the agenda according to their interests and those of voters. However, the diversity of political forces representatives in media space leaves much to be desired; the problem of referencing real activities in the regions also remains unsolved.

Two "dichotomies" of informational field

Apart from changes in certain parameters, quantitative and qualitative analysis of communications activities of political subjects allows to single out certain patterns, which impact the profile of political communications during the period as a whole.

First of all, the configuration of informational field is changing from quarter to quarter depending on issues in the spotlight: "*personal story*" or *program political activities*. Belarusian independent media are ready to actively reference the events in personal life of politicians, that is why top mentioned politicians are not always the same and constantly change. The first place by quantitative index also constantly shifts from Andrey Sannikov to Anatoliy Lebedko and back. The informational field of political communications significantly changes by many parameters depending on which of these "poles", i.e. "personal story" or program political activities, influenced the reporting period more. The impact of "personal story" is manifested in the following: 1) which topic ranks first (and then traditionally the role of repressions topic becomes more significant; 2) how the shares of proactive, reactive and passive communications change (most often with the emergence of significant informational cause from "personal story" the volume of passive communications grows immensely), etc. The "personal story" is covered mostly upon initiative of the media and in the form the media choose themselves; that is why this topic has low potential for productive use in the interests of political forces.

Second, there are significant differences between communication profile of forces acting in Belarus and forces acting from abroad (due to external non-Belarusian registration or emigration of their leaders), in other words, *the forces "inside" and "outside" the country* (see **Methodology: Units of analysis**). They have different degrees of communication activity, message topics and the diversity of representatives. Depending on forces or politicians in the spotlight for the reporting period, the picture of communication activities for independent political subjects changes as a whole. Most often, the first positions in the rating are occupied by forces "inside the country", but as for the ranking of individual politicians, the prevailing referencing of a "personal story" may impose its influence, which allows the politicians outside the country to rank among the first by their representation in the media.

Top-12 Individual Politicians

For a more detailed analysis and detailed description of communications, top twelve politicians by "quantitative index" are singled out (the index is calculated from the number of mentions in the media and also from an average evaluation of the audience for the given media resources; detailed description of calculation methodology is provided in **Quantitative index**). Quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the whole informational field are in many respects defined by messages associated with the names of top twelve politicians.

The evaluation of their communications allows us to draw the following conclusions. In general, communication activity in January-March 2013 decreased: if in the previous quarter the index of top twelve politicians was never lower than 460 points, now it has dropped to 360. However, in

the conditions of general (and legitimate for inter-election period) drop of media interest one can still state the success of communication activities among political forces for the given period. They demonstrated significant growth of offline activities (see **Correlation between practical activities and political communications**), established and maintained their agenda, putting forward social and internal political problems. The activity of communication strategies allows making the informational field more manageable.

Among top twelve politicians one can single out three groups by characteristics of qualitative index (an index characterizing saturation and balance of communication structure, see **Qualitative index**): A. Liabedzka, U. Niakliayeu and A. Sannikau are leaders by quantitative index but have average results by qualitative one (the share of their communications in all referenced initiatives, expert assessments and political actions is relatively small); A. Yanukevich, A. Milinkevich, A. Dzmitriyeyu, and V. Rymasheusky have high qualitative indices, their communications look balanced and content-oriented; the group of female politicians makes it to top twelve by quantitative index but ranks very low by qualitative index with full absence of any political initiatives presented in the media.

Methodology: Units of Analysis

This report analyzes the media presence of independent political forces of Belarus in both party-affiliated and independent media outlets. Our sample includes (and clearly distinguishes between) various forms of media, ranging from Facebook accounts of the politicians and party web-sites to the major news portals.

Over the reporting period we identified, catalogued and interpreted more than 2'965 references to 30 individual politicians and 14 political forces in the political media space. Our sample is limited to the independent political forces and political actors³ only (the incumbent elites remains outside the scope of this project).

A few remarks on the units of analysis need to be made before we proceed with the analysis (for a full outline of methodology, please see relevant chapters of the report and the Appendix 2). The BISS Political Media Barometer's ratings include the following units of analysis:

- a) individual politicians,
- b) political parties/movements, and
- c) coalitions.

Political forces are conditionally divided into two groups: those acting inside and outside the country. Those acting outside the country include forces the leaders of which are in exile or forces with foreign registration. Their collection in a separate group is explained by certain limitations to their activities.

Every communication subject is described with political affiliation, sex and position in the political structure indicated. Qualitative and quantitative indices presented in this report (*detailed explanations to follow in the text*) allow us to single out trends, identify tendencies and compare actors - as a result we are able to form a media portrait of each political force and individual politician. The politicians and political forces, which have become a focus of this research, are listed below.

³ Please note that we use a very broad notion of politicians/political actors. In the Belarusian context it does not necessarily mean only those who are publically competing for a public office. In a situation in which the opposition has been deprived of any kind of decision-making on any of the state levels for a decade, those who are considered to be politicians may have various roles in society.

Table 1.
Categories analyzed in "BISS Political Media Barometer"

Politicians⁴	Political forces
1. Anatol Liabedzka	United Civic Party (UCP)
2. Siarhei Kaliakin	"Just World" party
3. Viktor Ivashkevich	European Belarus
4. Vital Rymasheuski	Organizational committee on creating of the party "Belarusian Christian Democracy" (BCD)
5. Uladzimir Niakliayeu	"Tell the Truth" civic campaign (TTT)
6. Aliaksey Yanukevich	BPF
7. Aliaksandr Milinkevich	"For Freedom" movement
8. Aliaksandr Feduta	"Tell the Truth!" civic campaign (TTT)
9. Yuras Hubarevich	"For Freedom!" movement
10. Andrey Dzmitriyev	"Tell the Truth!" civic campaign (TTT)
11. Rygor Kastusiou	BPF
12. Andrey Sannikau*	European Belarus
13. Zmicer Bandarenka*	European Belarus
14. Iryna Khalip	Charter 97 ⁵
15. Stanislau Shushkevich	Belarusian Social Democratic Assembly
16. Paval Seviarynets	Organizational committee on creating of the party "Belarusian Christian Democracy" (BCD)
17. Maryna Adamovich	Nikolai Statkevich's wife
18. Ales Mikhalevich*	No affiliation
19. Dzmitry Vus	The legislative initiative to change the Electoral Code
20. Nasta Palazhanka	"Young front" (YF)
21. Mikalai Khalezin*	Charter 97
22. Volha Bandarenka*	Dzmitry Bandarenka's wife
23. Natallia Radzina	Charter 97
24. Aliaksandr Kazulin	No affiliation
25. Zianon Pazniak	Conservative Christian Party BPF (CChP-BPF)
26. Iryna Veshtard	Belarusian social-democratic party "Hramada"
27. Uladzimir Baradach*	Belarusian Government in Exile
28. Viktor Karniayenka	"For Fair elections" campaign
29. Siarhei Haidukevich	Liberal Democratic Party
30. Aleh Haidukevich	Liberal Democratic Party

A few important points need to be made regarding the 30 persons who appear in our report. Firstly, not all of them would label themselves as 'politicians'. Yet, for us it was much more important to analyze the political communications of those news-makers and public actors, who are directly associated with the Belarusian independent politics and could and should be interpreted as the 'voices' within the political sector. Such persons as Maryna Adamovich, Iryna Khalip, Mikalai Khalezin, Natalia Radzina and Volha Bandarenka are included in this report for this reason. While these individuals are not declared politicians that compete for public office, they possess a political voice that impacts the political sphere within Belarus. Furthermore, we also included the politicians residing in exile and made an ad hoc exception for Paval

⁴ In the next issue of the report the list will be corrected, amongst others O. Karach will be added.

⁵ Charter'97 is treated as a movement, charter97.org refers to its informational portal.

* Refers to politicians living in exile.

Seviarynets, by including him in the list (it should be taken into consideration that Paval is actively using the mass media as a channel to address the electorate even while imprisoned). In this period of research the list was complemented by leaders of Liberal Democratic Party Siarhei Haidukevich and Aleh Haidukevich. The list will be revised in the future depending on changes in the field of independent political structures and their representatives.

Detailed Research Results

Quantitative Index

1. Total presence of individual politicians and political forces in the media by the number of mentions

The Quantitative index calculates a numerical score for each political force and individual politician based on the size of the resource audience, utilizing Gemius Audience01-03/2013 (see **Appendix 1**), and the number of articles that mention a politician or political force (each article is treated as an individual number regardless of how many times the name of a political force or a politician appears). There are three parts of the index:

1. Media presence (online media and printed press),
2. 'Own communications' (political party websites, affiliated informational portals, Facebook and Live Journal accounts), and
3. Total presence – combining both media presence and own communications.

According to the results of research, in January-March 2013 Anatol Liabedzka ranked first by quantitative index, who was also a leader according to the results of July-August 2012. Thanks to 197 mentions in the media he received 1,241 points. Uladzimir Niakliayeu ranks second thanks to 244 mentions in public space; his index is 1,210 points. Andrey Sannikau, the leader of the rating during the previous measurement, ranked only third. Therefore, the focus of the media was on politicians actively working inside the country and not politicians whose index is defined by external circumstances and increased interest of media in personal events.

It is also confirmed by shifts in the rating for 6. Aliaksey Yanukevich (from the 12th to the 5th, with 731 points) and Aliaksandr Milinkevich (from the 7th to the 6th, with 601 points).

Still, top twelve by the index include A. Sannikov, I. Khalip and A. Palazhanka-Dashkevich traditionally drawing the interest of the media towards themselves due to events in their personal lives. Aleh Haidukevich, who was included in the rating for the first time, ranked the 13th. Siarhei Haidukevich ranked only the 25th.

Table 2.
Total individual presence in the media by the number of mentions

Politician	Number of mentions	Total index	Ranking
Liabedzka	197	1,241	1
Niakliayeu	244	1,210	2
Sannikau	132	935	3
Khalip	110	783	4
Yanukevich	130	731	5
Milinkevich	127	601	6
Rymasheusky	100	581	7
Radzina	49	400	8
Palazhanka	72	396	9
Dzmitriyeu	87	374	10
Adamovich	63	369	11
Hubarevich	74	365	12
Aleh Haidukevich	46	356	13
Seviarynets	61	354	14
Ivashkevich	36	322	15
Pazniak	53	322	16
Shushkevich	52	314	17
Kaliakin	37	216	18
Kastusiou	35	212	19
Baradach	36	206	20
Bandarenka	22	190	21
Feduta	32	148	22
Mikhalevich	22	132	23
Vus	18	121	24
Siarhei Haidukevich	18	109	25
Kazulin	19	93	26
Karniayenka	9	52	27
Volha Bandarenka	5	40	28
Khalezin	3	20	29
Veshtard	5	18	30

2. Individual politicians: media coverage and 'own communications'

The share of politicians' own communications in the general representation in the media grows in this reporting period. The share of own communications for Anatol Liabedzka has increased (from 18 to 22 percent); the same was observed for Uladzimir Niakliayeu (from 29 to 34 percent). The intensification of own communications can also explain the growth of A. Yanukevich (the share of own communications increasing from 16 to 43 percent) and A. Milinkevich (the share of own communications increasing from five to 44 percent).

If even own communications of the politicians do not impact very significantly the growth of quantitative index (due to small weight of own resources by audience), for total results and strengthening of positions in the communication field (higher ranking position) the intensification of communication efforts is really efficient. It can be explained by greater manageability of interest from media, the possibility to put forward an agenda and define the structure of communications. It also influences the relative success in communications of politicians for the reviewed period.

Table 3. Media coverage and 'own communications' of individual politicians.

Politician	Referencing in the media		Own communications		% of mentions in the media thanks to own communications
	Number of mentions	Total index	Number of mentions	Total index	
Liabedzka	153	1,197	44	44	22%
Niakliayeu	161	1,127	83	83	34%
Sannikau	118	921	14	14	11%
Khalip	102	775	8	8	7%
Yanukevich	74	675	56	56	43%
Milinkevich	71	545	56	56	44%
Rymasheusky	64	545	36	36	36%
Radzina	46	397	3	3	6%
Palazhanka	54	378	18	18	25%
Dzmitriyev*	42	329	45	45	52%
Adamovich	55	361	8	8	13%
Hubarevich*	29	320	45	45	61%
Aleh Haidukevich	36	346	10	10	22%
Seviarynets	48	341	13	13	21%
Ivashkevich	29	315	7	7	19%
Pazniak	50	319	3	3	6%
Shushkevich	47	309	5	5	10%
Kaliakin	29	208	8	8	22%
Kastusiou	23	200	12	12	34%
Baradach	31	201	5	5	14%
Bandarenka	22	190	0	0	0%
Feduta*	17	133	15	15	47%
Mikhalevich	16	126	6	6	27%
Vus	17	120	1	1	6%
Siarhei Haidukevich	14	105	4	4	22%
Kazulin	17	91	2	2	11%
Karniayenka	7	50	2	2	22%
Volha Bandarenka	5	40	0	0	0%
Khalezin	3	20	0	0	0%
Veshtard*	2	15	3	3	60%

* - Leaders by the share of own communications

3. Total media presence, media coverage and 'own communications' of political forces

"Tell the Truth!" civic campaign (with the index of 2,063) again (as in July-September 2012) overtook BCD (with 1,907 points) in the rating of representation. One can see the connection of this fact with the intensity of own communications: the campaign has the biggest share (54 percent of all mentions) among political forces. The second place by the share of own communications is occupied by "For Freedom" movement (52 percent). In general, one can state the growth of own communications share for political forces as well as for politicians. The share of own communications has increased for TT (from 46 to 54 percent), for BCD (from 40 to 47 percent) and especially significantly for "For Freedom" movement and BPF (from 26 to 52 and from 18 to 45 percent respectively). On the one hand, we see growing intensity of own efforts; on the other hand, this dynamics is the reason of relative decrease of media interest in the political field.

This fact can also be associated with relative success of "For Freedom" movement (it shifted one position up and finished the 6th) and significant movement forward for BPF party (from the 8th it became the 4th). At the same time, the structures from "outside the country" group attracting great attention of the media in the previous quarter (European Belarus, Young Front) lost their positions.

Liberal democratic party occupied its place in the middle of the rating. The structure of its communications the share of one's own constitutes 24 percent, which is a relatively low result. As for correlation of party and leaders indices, the number of party mentions is higher than that of individual representatives; according to the results of three previous quarters it became a pattern for the field of political communications.

Table 4. Total media presence of political forces

Political force	Number of mentions	Index of total presence
"Tell the Truth!" civic campaign (TTT)	495	2,063
BCD	382	1,907
"United Civic Party" (UCP)	288	1,726
BPF	294	1,477
European Belarus	177	1,299
"For Freedom" movement	249	1,146
Charter 97	72	608
Liberal Democratic Party	72	513
"Young Front" (YF)	80	451
No affiliation	74	434
Conservative Christian Party BPF (CCP-BPF)	55	402
"Just World" party	55	313
Belarusian Social-Democratic Party "Hramada"	40	254
"For Fair Elections" coalition	12	59
Belarusian Social-Democratic Assembly	10	47

Table 5. Media coverage/own communication of the political forces

Political force	Referencing in the media		Own communications		% of total mentions in the media thanks to own communications
	Number of mentions	Total index	Number of mentions	Total index	
"Tell the Truth!" civic campaign*	227	1,795	268	268	54%
BCD*	204	1,729	178	178	47%
"United Civic Party" (UCP)	206	1,644	82	82	28%
BPF*	161	1,344	133	133	45%
European Belarus	146	1,268	31	31	18%
"For Freedom" movement*	119	1,016	130	130	52%
Charter 97	70	606	2	2	3%
Liberal Democratic Party	55	496	17	17	24%
"Young Front" (YF)	57	428	23	23	29%
No affiliation	62	422	12	12	16%
Conservative Christian Party BPF (CCP-BPF)	50	397	5	5	9%
"Just World" party	41	299	14	14	25%
Belarusian Social-Democratic Party "Hramada"	28	242	12	12	30%
"For Fair Elections" coalition	8	55	4	4	33%
Belarusian Social-Democratic Assembly	8	45	2	2	20%

* - Leaders by the share of own communications

4. Accumulation of the 'Total Presence' of individual politicians and political forces over time

The following Charts present the dynamics of quantitative index for politicians and political forces. Chart 6 shows temporal range for politicians from top twelve (with the result of 360 points and over, because the threshold for inclusion in top twelve continues decreasing from 460 in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 460 points).

The dynamics of the rating testifies to close interrelation between the number of messages and significant days (Freedom Day on March 25) during the period. The preparation and holding of Freedom Day triggered a sharp increase in the index for A. Liabedzka and allowed him to overtake U. Niakliayeu (it also significantly impacted the accumulation of index by A. Yanukevich and V. Rymasheusky). One can also observe the sharp growth of Niakliayeu's index, i.e. after press conference on February 27 entitled "Not Who Instead of Lukashenka But What Instead of Lukashenka". The growth looks very significant, but even without it the politician could have ranked second as he had been among the index leaders during the whole quarter.

Chart 7 shows the dynamics of rating accumulation by political forces. The profile of accumulation Chart for political forces mostly corresponds to the profile of index accumulation by their leaders: a great increase of TTT index after February 27 looks even more significant than for its leader Vladimir Neklyayev. Until this moment "Tell the Truth!" campaign conceded its first place to UCP and BCD from time to time. A great leap of the index allowed it to stay among leaders until the end of the period despite the significant growth of representation index for the main competitors after March 25.

The accumulation of index by LDP looks rather dynamic; this party was included in the list for the first time. The profile of index accumulation corresponds to the schedule of press conferences where party representatives did not only share their plans for presidential elections (S. Haidukevich is again to run for President) but also engaged in distance discussion with other political forces (in particular, the strategy of "Tell the Truth!" campaign at local elections).

The leap in the accumulation of index due to campaign on Freedom Day is more noticeable for political forces than for individual politicians. Among those UCP, "For Freedom", BPF and BCD particularly stand out.

Chart 6. Accumulation of 'Total presence' index (individual politicians)

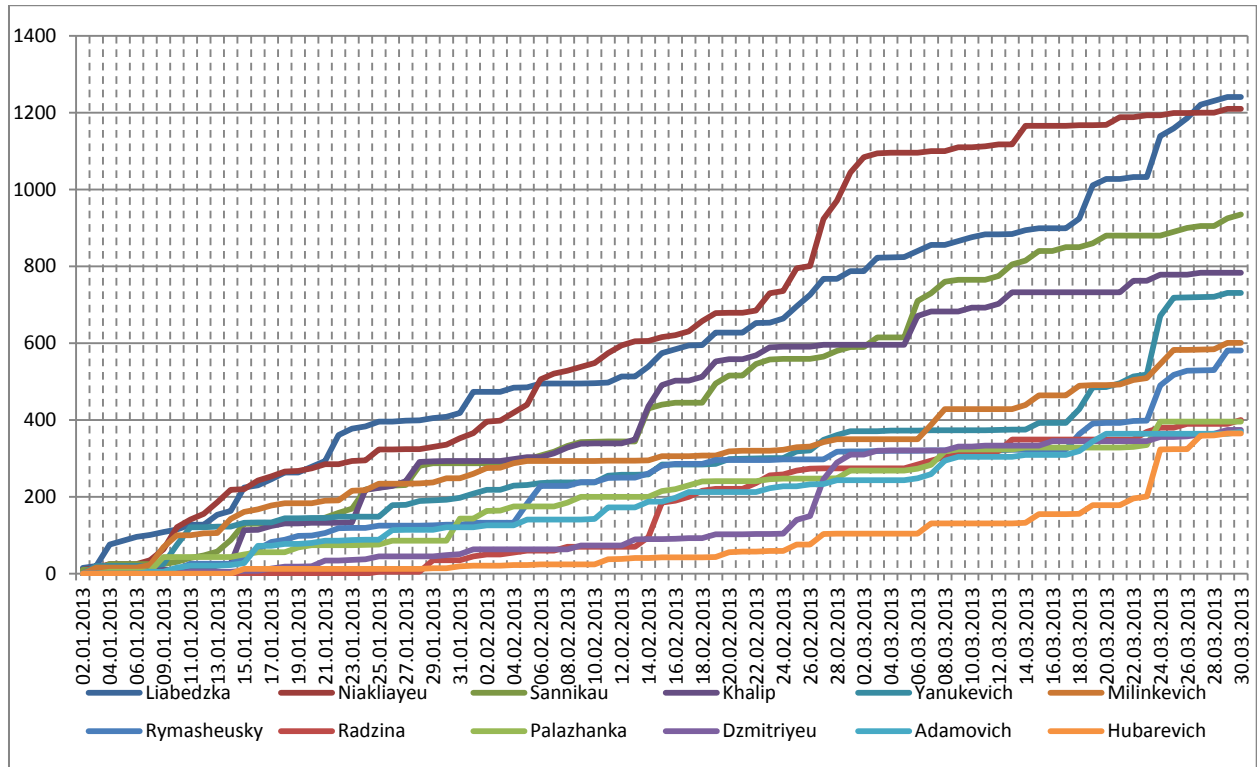
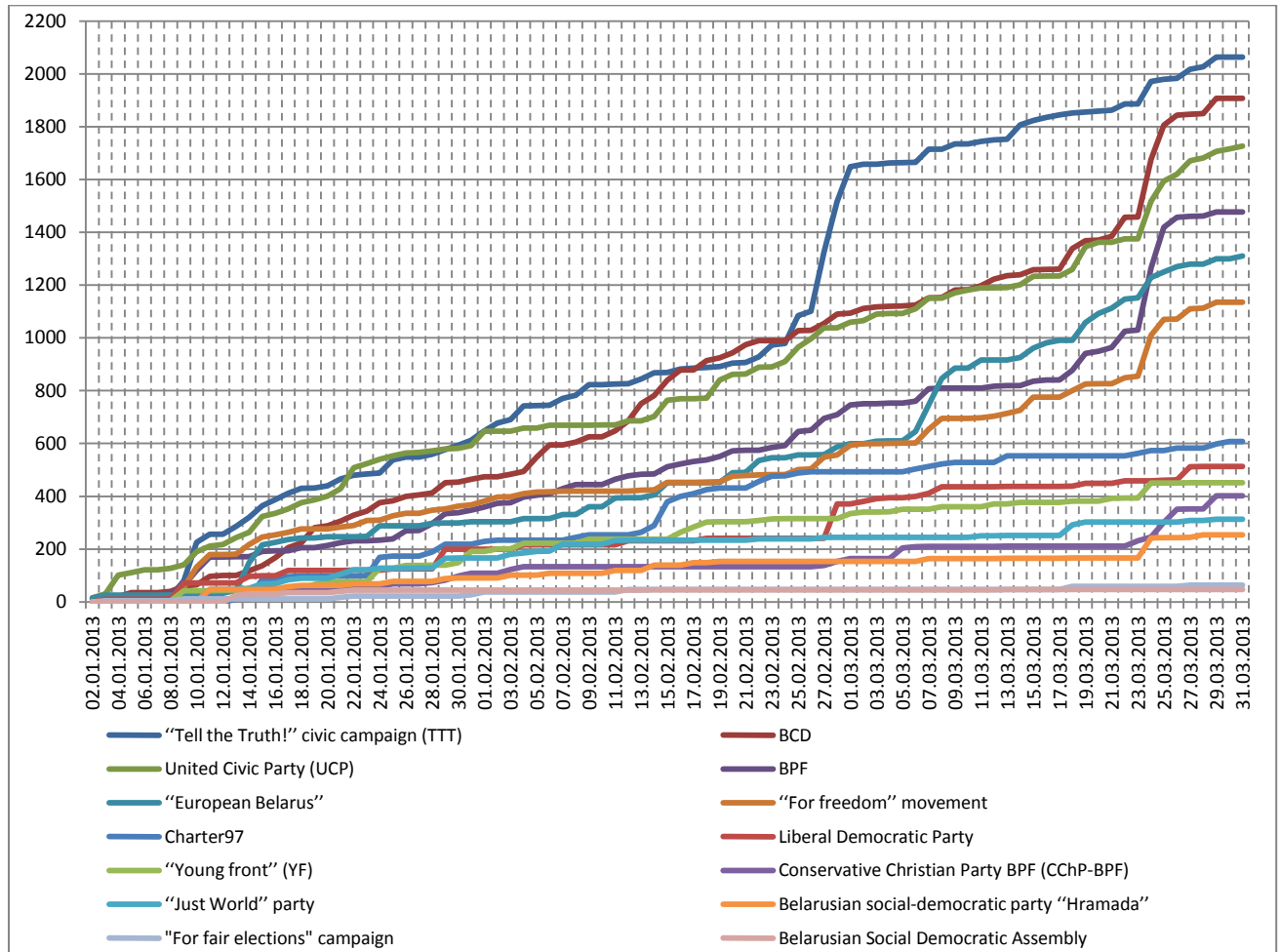


Chart 7. Accumulation of 'Total presence' index (political forces)



Qualitative index

A **qualitative index** was introduced to compare how politicians were referenced in the media. The qualitative index is composed of 3 sub-indexes:

- *Expertise* (includes mentions in the media as an expert, commentator or author of analytical materials);
- *Initiative* (includes mentions in the media where politicians present new programs, projects or tactic/strategy of the activity); and
- *Action* (coverage of specific actions being taken by a politician or political force during the evaluated period, for example participation of a leader in a roundtable or a rally).

The individual index for 'Expertise', 'Initiative' and 'Action' shows the share of definite participation in the media coverage in this identity and along this direction⁶. Below are the plots for Top-12 politicians (selected by Total quantitative index).

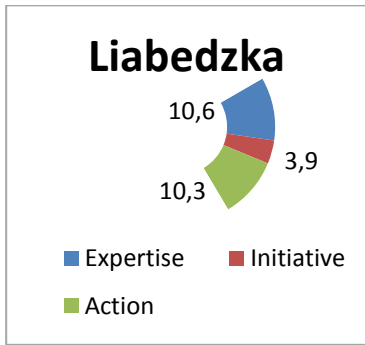
The main feature of communications content in this quarter is high results of A. Dzmitriyev and A. Yanukovich by the "initiative" parameter. It happened because initiatives connected with the economy were vocalized only by these politicians: the address from BNF on owner supervision in open joint-stock companies and the plans of "Tell the Truth!" to require publishing of budgets and reports on their execution. Therefore, these politicians become leaders by qualitative index: A. Dzmitriyev with 40.6 points and A. Yanukovich with 53.4 points. It is worth noting that rating leaders by quantitative index have lower results by qualitative one. Anatol Liabedzka has a rather low initiative index for this period, the total result is 24.8 (just as for the closest runner-up by quantitative index Uladzimir Niakliayev).

Besides, according to the results of this measurement it is possible to single out a group of politicians present in top twelve but with low "quality" characteristics of communications. These are first of all women: I. Khalip, N. Radzina, A. Palazhanka-Dashkevich, M. Adamovich.

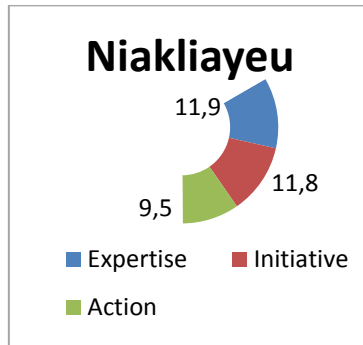
The communications of A. Milinkevich, A. Yanukovich, A. Dzmitriyev, and V. Rymasheusky look relatively balanced.

⁶ Thus the maximal index for each direction is 100 points, the maximal qualitative index can achieve 300 points.

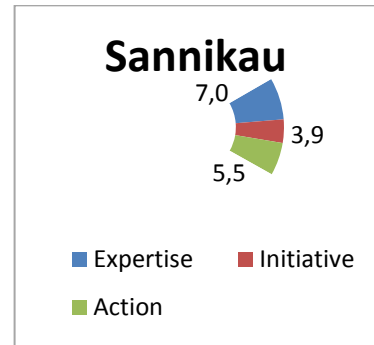
Chart 8. Distribution of the parameters of 'qualitative index'



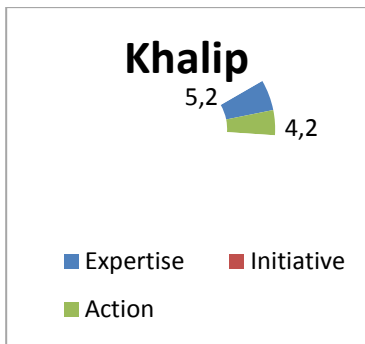
Ment.=197 Quant.=124 Qual.=24,8



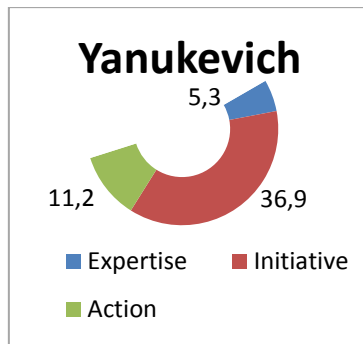
Ment.=197 Quant.=1241 Qual.=24,8



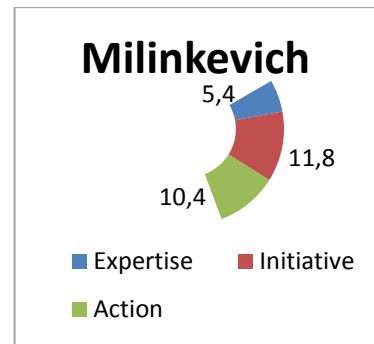
Ment.=132 Quant.=935 Qual.=16,5



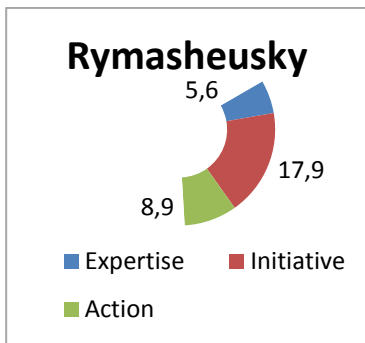
Ment.=110 Quant.=783 Qual.=9,4



Ment.=130 Quant.=731 Qual.=53,4



Ment.=127 Quant.=601 Qual.=27,6



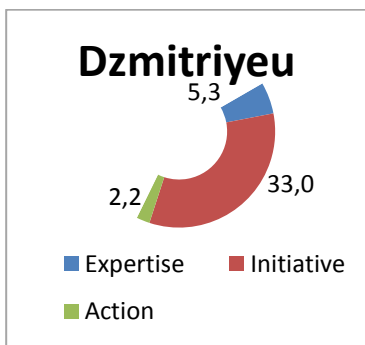
Ment.=100 Quant.=581 Qual.=32,4



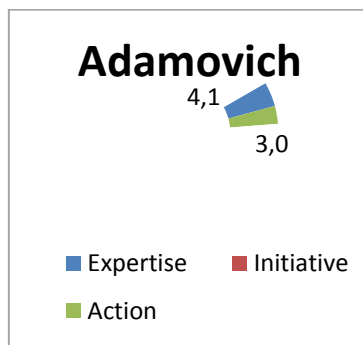
Ment.=49 Quant.=400 Qual.=4,3



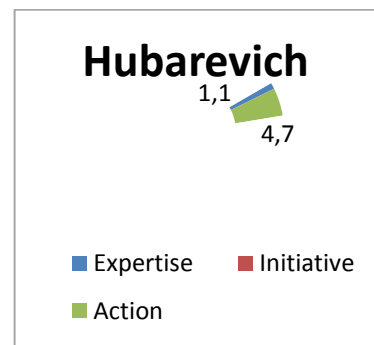
Ment.=108 Quant.=613 Qual.=8,3



Ment.=87 Quant.=374 Qual.=40,6



Ment.=63 Quant.=369 Qual.=7,1



Ment.=74 Quant.=365 Qual.=5,7

Representation in the Media: Where and How the Opposition Speaks

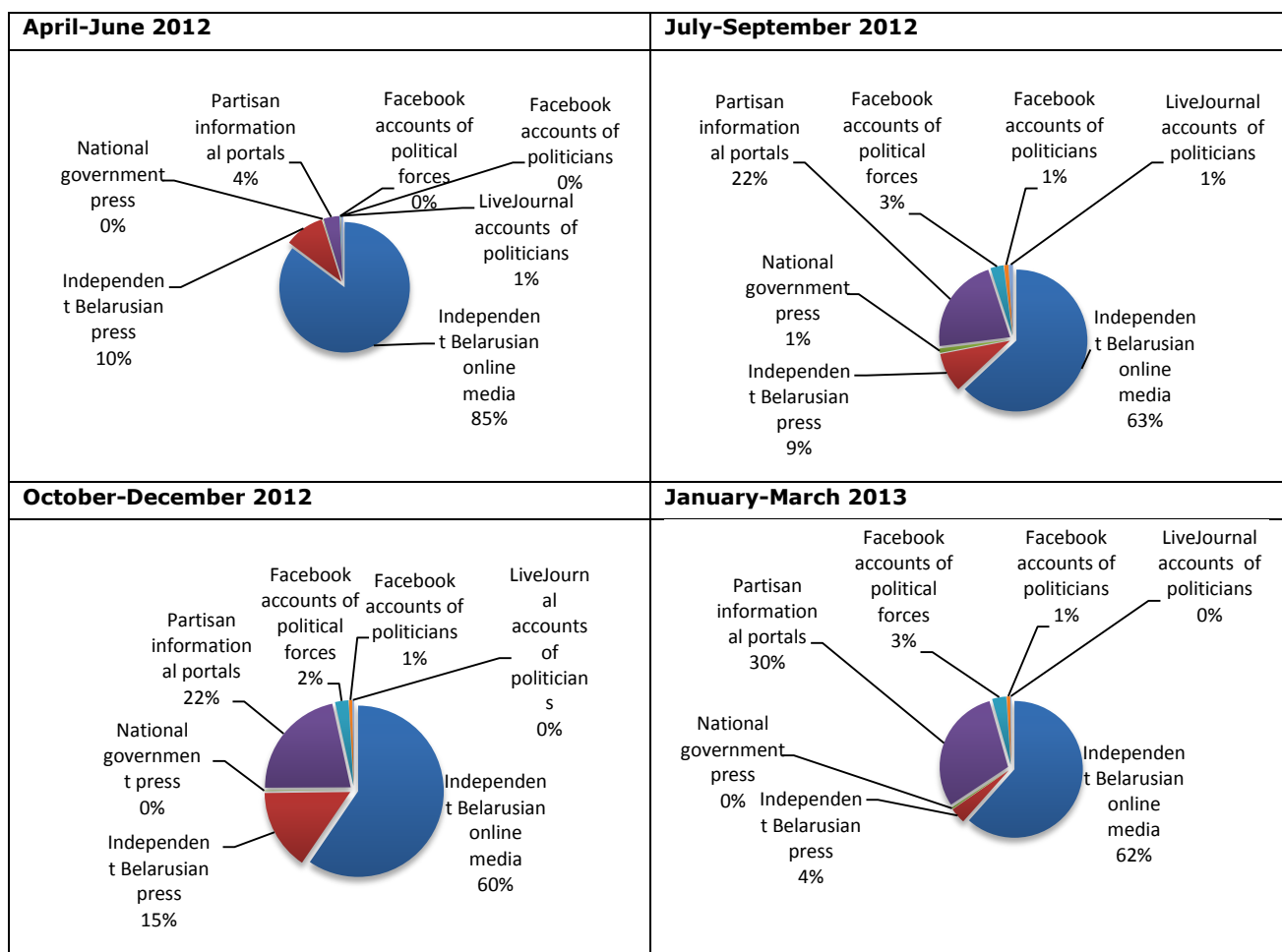
1. Distribution of media appearances

In the structure of channels used for political communications there are no great changes. One can say that this parameter stays rather stable, to increase/decrease the share of these or those informational sources it is necessary to use some effort and change the structure of interaction with the media.

A feature of the reviewed period is a certain decrease of the share of independent press. The negative side of this trend is the risk of losing regional audiences in case of lower representation in offline media and further aggravating the "virtual" nature of independent political field.

A positive change is the increase in the share of own resources in the communication structure. By dynamics of individual politicians rating one can observe how the increase in the share of own communications leads to the advancement of a politician in the rating and a relative growth of his/her position. However, the reasons for growth of own communications share can be both intensification of politicians' and political forces' efforts and a certain decrease in the number of mentions by the media.

Chart 9. Distribution of media-appearances



2. The usage of available media space by the Belarusian independent political forces

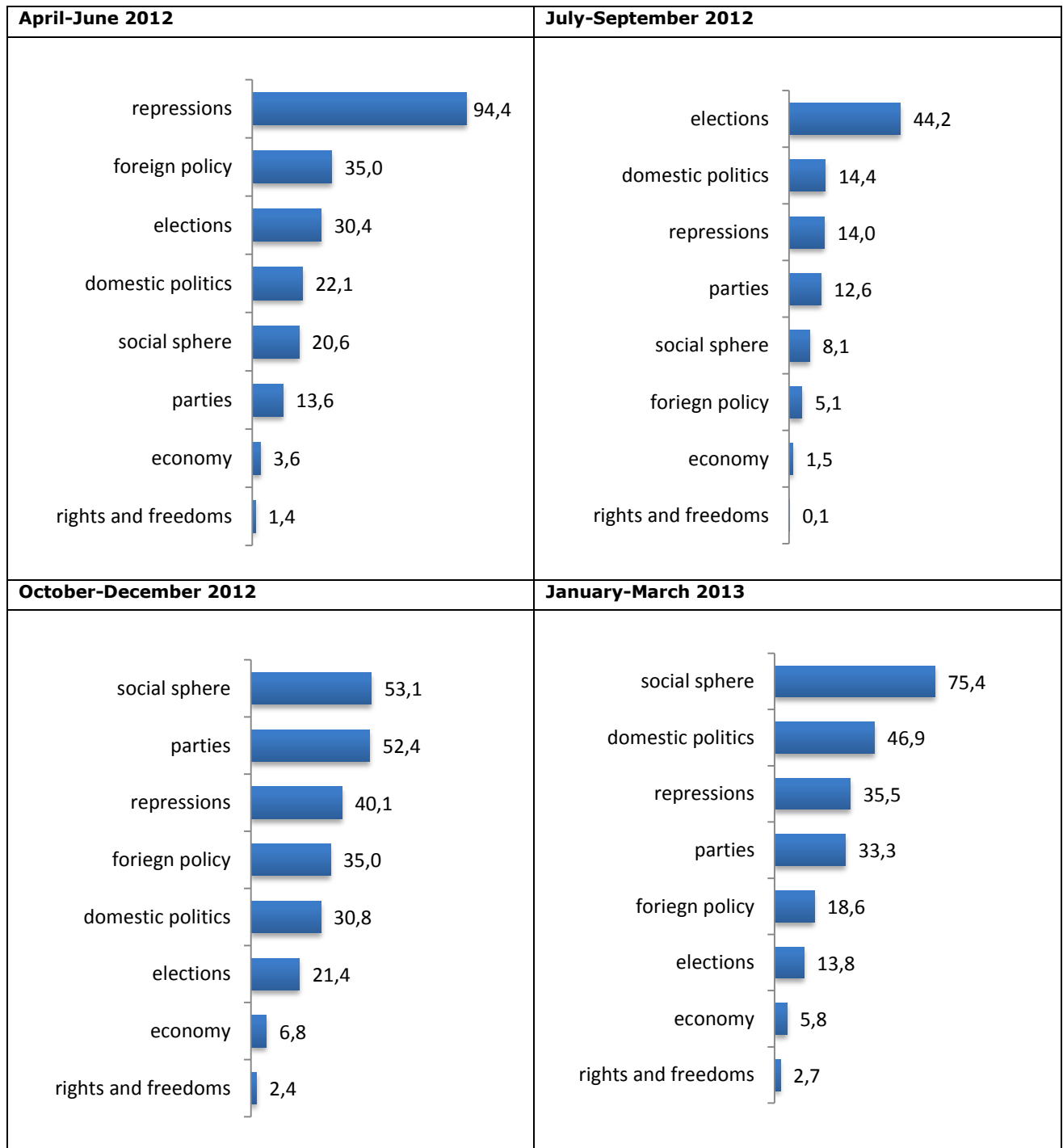
As for the subjects of messages, several positive conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the significance of social field in communications keeps growing. Among the topic pertaining to social problems new agenda for political field emerges: pension reform, family legislation, youth policy, domestic violence, LGBT community rights. The active discussion of a Year dedicated to K. Kalinovsky also influenced the growing weight of social topics as culture issues pertain to social field according to our methodology.

The issues of internal politics rank second overtaking internal party problems and processes. This can also be considered a positive trend as these discussions touch upon issues relevant for the whole population and not disputes among representatives of different forces about problems in the work of parties not relevant to population interests. In the framework of this discussion such issues were raised as local elections and administrative reform (i.e., the topics are proposed both by political forces and formed thanks to general situation in the political life of the country). The issues of administrative reform are also probably raised due to the agenda of international organizations on Belarus. However, the main directions for discussions among international organizations (budget efficiency, economic reforms) are not taken by political forces that often.

Traditionally, economy issues are covered seldom; the share of economy-related messages constitutes 5.8 percent. Despite the decrease by 1 percent in comparison with the previous quarter, we can state gradual growth of importance for economic issues (in comparison with the first two measurements). However, if we look at economic agenda in more detail, we can see that most messages (4.4 percent from all politicians' mentions) pertain to the criticism of the authorities' economic policy. Constructive proposals are practically not referenced in a clear way and are not actively discussed. The reason of a small share of economy-related issues can be that party representatives speaking in the media on economic issues are positioned as experts and not political forces representatives.

In general one can state the similarity of topics for the messages in this and previous quarters. It is worth noting that relative "normalization" of topics distribution can testify to the fact that there were no events significant for the political field during the "benchmark quarter"; otherwise, those would distort the topic focus. On the other hand, when politicians have an opportunity to set their own agenda, the rating of topics (except insufficient attention towards economy issues) looks adequate and mostly corresponds to the concept of work (including communications) with the electorate in the period between political campaigns. Besides, political forces stopped focusing on internal issues and discussions, which often pertains to behavior strategy during elections (common candidate, boycotting or participation in elections). If we turn to detailed distribution of topics, presidential elections interested politicians in 12.3 percent of cases, common candidate for elections in 8.2 percent of cases, and primaries in 4.2 percent of cases.

Chart 10. Topics of communication



Social field increases its weight in communications of all political forces, both in the country and beyond. A peculiarity of "external political forces is that one of the key roles is played by the issue of repressions. The features of topics discussed inside the country are the following: great diversification, interest towards elections, and mentions of economic issues. Ignoring economic issues is a feature of political communications field. The explanation to this may be that economic experts representing the parties do not indicate their affiliation (or it is not indicated by media representatives).

The correlation of topics important for forces inside the country and beyond preserves its structure: for forces outside the country, repressions are more important; the top choices for forces in the country are elections, domestic policy, internal party issues. It is also remarkable

that attention towards social issues that was manifested by external forces was not smaller but even somewhat greater than among the forces inside the country.

Chart 11. Topics distribution (political forces)

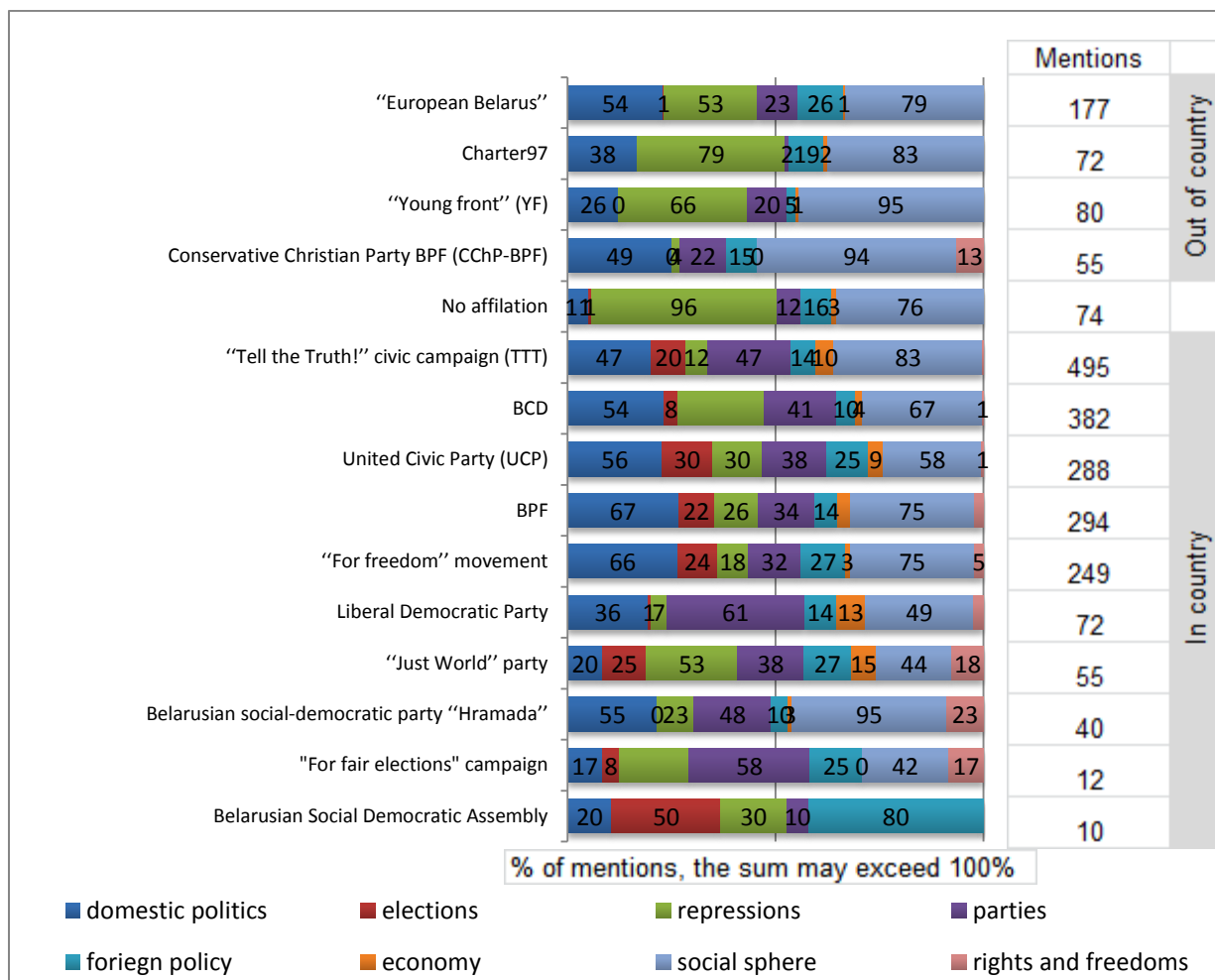
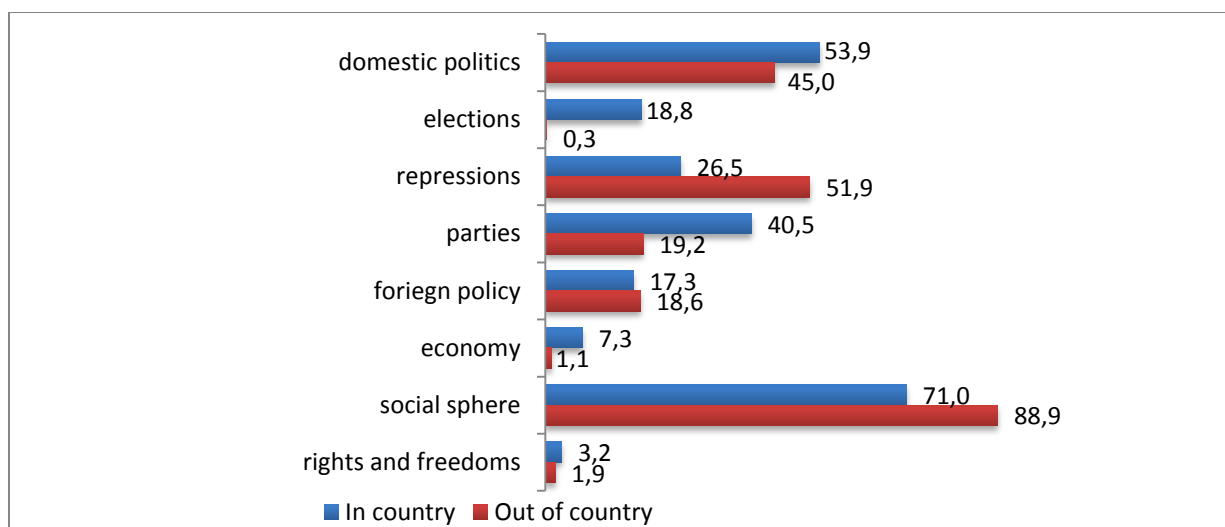


Chart 11.1 Topics distribution (groups of political forces⁷)

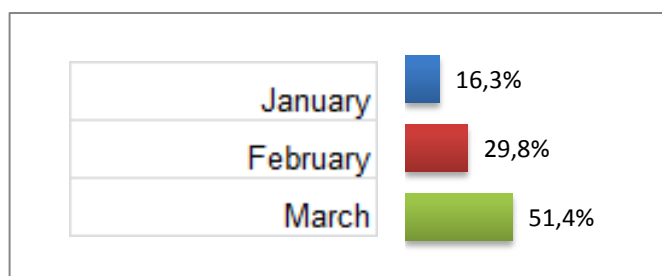


⁷All forces were divided into two groups. The group of forces inside the country includes political forces registered in Belarus the leaders of which also live and work in Belarus. The group outside the country includes forces registered abroad or the forces of which work from abroad ("European Belarus", "Charter 97", Initiative on creation of Belarusian government in exile, "Young Front", BNF Conservative Christian Party).

3. Correlation between political communication and real-life activities

The correlation between media presence and offline activities was measured with the help of comparing the presence in media space with real actions of the politicians. Here we work on the basis of information from the media, i.e. we count how many times the media mention something pertaining to "real actions". Among such actions are media activities of political forces (statements, press conferences and interviews), internal party events, activities directed at the electorate and other targeted activities (trips abroad, meetings with foreign politicians) (see **Appendix 2**). The research includes only offline activities mentioned in the media or promoted in the media by political forces themselves. That is why, for example, the activity in the regions which did not move forward or was not covered has not been included in the results of this report.

Chart 12. Correlation of media presence with 'activity'



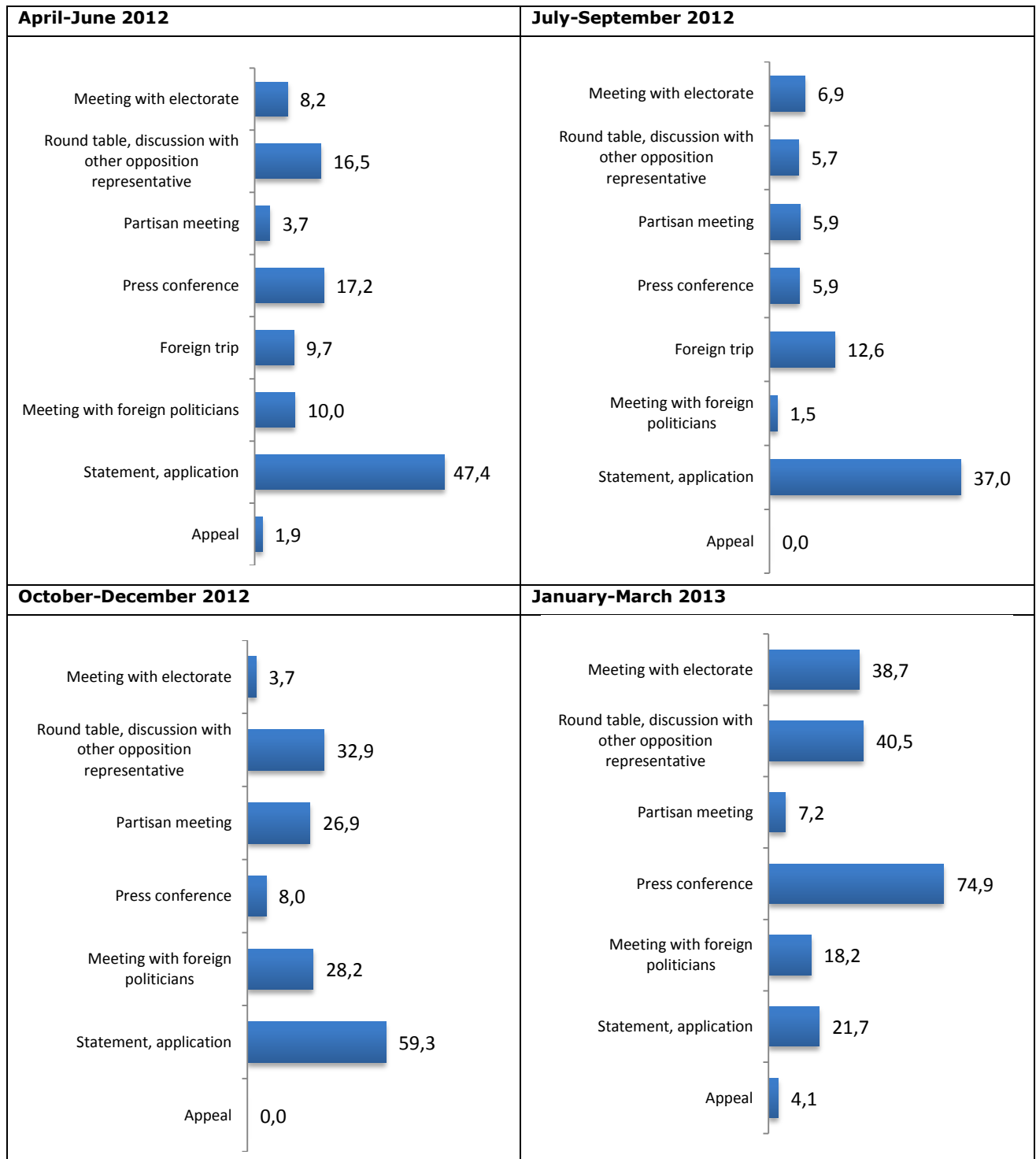
Despite the wide definition of "activities", the correlation of media presence with offline activities was very low in January (only 16.3 percent of mentions for forces pertained to real actions). However, gradual growth was noted in February, and the top level for the year was achieved in March, 51.4 percent (it was only in July 2012 that the index achieved

almost the same level, i.e. 49.8 percent). The unprecedented growth in the share of offline activities mentions is associated with two factors. First of all, there is a great share of communications pertaining to organization and holding of Freedom Day (it was possible to see the growth of index accumulation rate among all principal political forces inside the country after this event was held).

The second factor is a big number of press conferences. The share of press conferences constitutes 74.9 percent of all offline events. They were organized by many political forces, and they were actively discussed in the media: UCP on January 4, BCD on January 17, BPF on February 25, TTT on February 27. The growth of this type of activities was also heavily influenced by inclusion of LDP in the sample: during this period party members gave several press conferences; the period is also special because normally at this time of the year politicians define their stands and share their plans for this year. During the reviewed period press conferences replaced traditional "press statements", which can be considered a positive trend, because thanks to press conferences the statements are referenced more widely, and the political force is singled out as a subject active in offline space.

In many respects thanks to the traditional campaign on Freedom Day the share of activities associated with manifestations and meetings with voters has grown. It is unprecedentedly high: 38.7 percent of forces' mentions in the informational space.

Chart 13. Type of activity⁸



In comparison with the previous quarter the level of messages associated with offline activities has grown both inside and outside the country. At that it is necessary to take into account a very conditional division into "internals" and "externals": the feature of external forces is not their total alienation from the country and its political life, but certain limitations in their work. In general, similar level of offline activities testifies to the convergence of communication portrait of forces inside and outside the country. On the other hand, the growing share of messages covering offline activities can testify to general decrease of mentions in the media and

⁸The sum exceeds 100 percent, because one publication can contain references to several events.

the lack of events defining the media's interest in certain topics and distorting the general picture of communications.

Chart 14. Coverage of activity

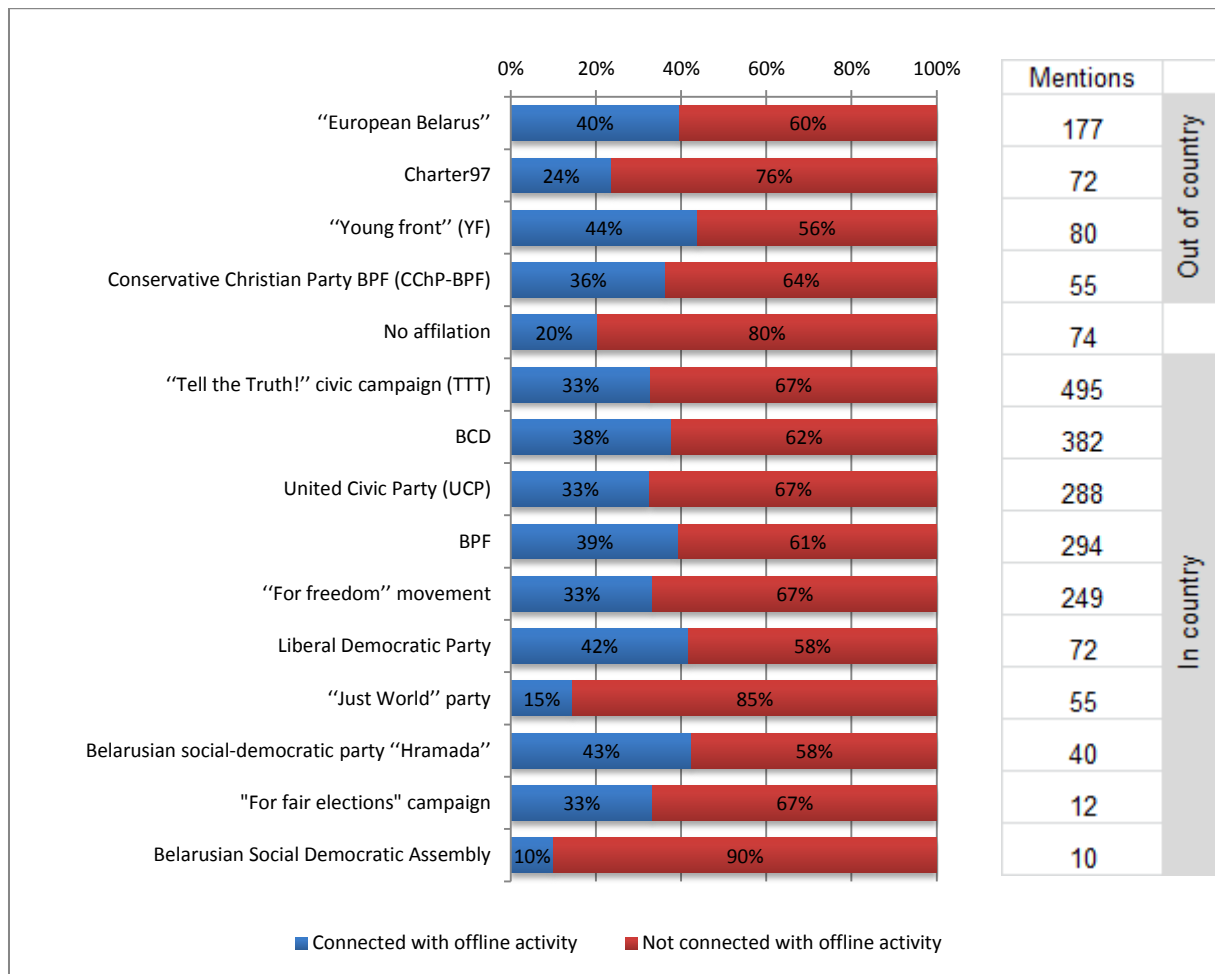
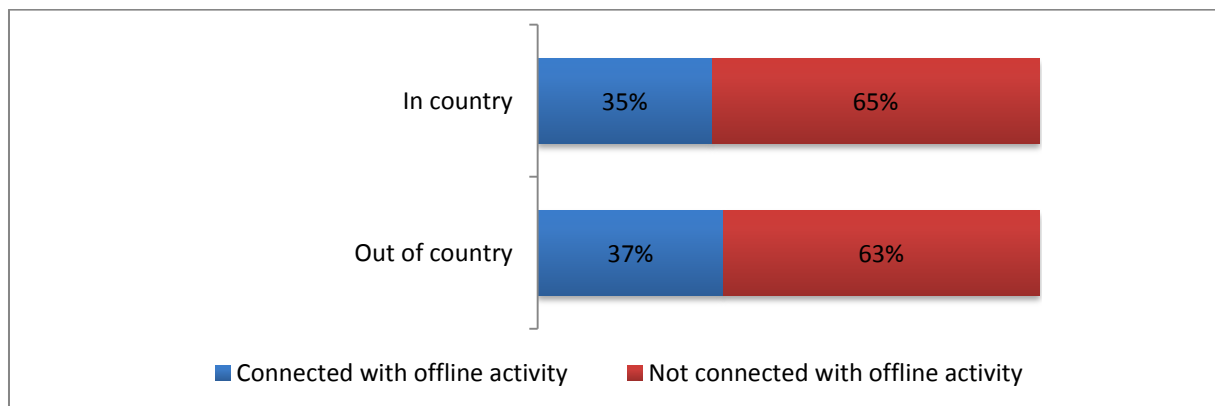


Chart 14.1. Coverage of activity (by groups of political forces)



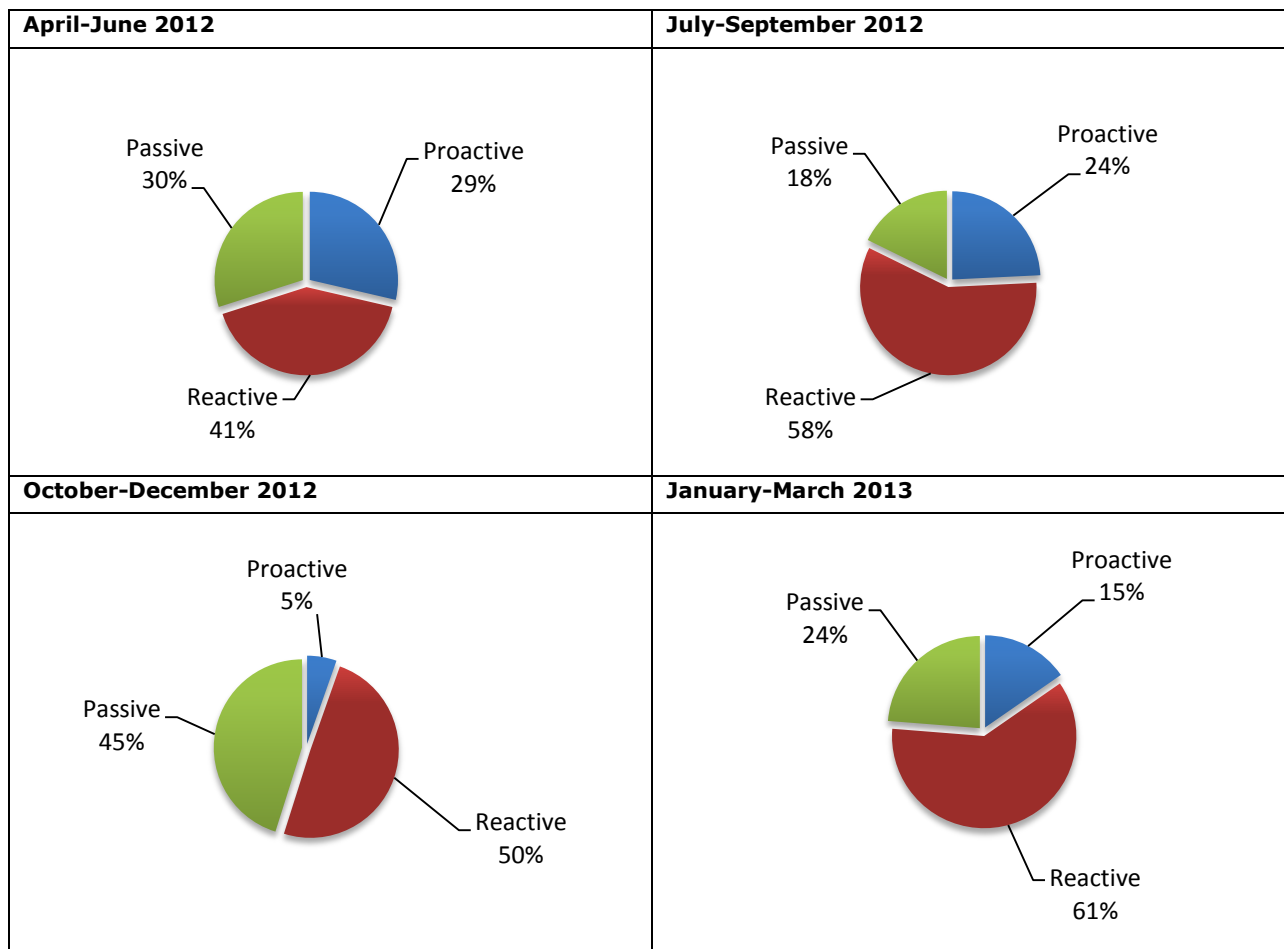
4. The Level of Activity of Politicians and Political Forces in the Media

When analyzing the level of forces' activity in the reflection of political communications we single out proactive, reactive and passive activities. "Proactive" here means the initiation of something new and informing the media about it. "Reactive" includes cases when politicians react to external circumstances (e.g., the reaction of LDP to the initiative of putting forward 1,000 candidates by "Tell the Truth!" campaign). "Passive" means the mentions of politicians upon the initiative of the media, which include a political force or a politician in their stories without specific proactive or reactive actions by the given political figure.

A feature of this period is the decreasing share of passive communications (this can be connected with the already mentioned decrease of communications and lesser interest of the media due to the lack of especially significant or scandalous events). In comparison with the previous quarter, noticeable growth of proactive communications is observed. In general reactive communications dominate, but this can be explained by the growth of the proactive share: if one political force puts forward a program or a project or makes a statement, many (upon their own initiative or upon initiative of the media) speak out with comments and express their opinion about it. As for passive communications, their decrease is associated first of all with the forces inside the country (amounts to only 14 percent), which also confirms the relative success of communication strategy of political forces for the reporting period.

If one could diagnose the post-election "drop" by the level of communications in the last quarter of 2012, in the reporting period the structure of communications reminds more of a pre-election one, when the share of passive communications amounted to about 20 percent. Unfortunately, the reason for this is most probably not an attempt to continue active work in the period between elections. This situation indicates that in the period between elections, due to the lack of informational causes, the media lose interest in the political field, which decreases the share of passive communications.

Chart 15. Level of news making



The political forces outside the country demonstrate a lower level of proactiveness. If the shares of reactive communications remain more or less equal, the forces inside the country have greater proactive, and the forces outside the country, passive communications. It is remarkable that the change of general informational field and the situation therein changes the nature of communications both for internal and external forces (the growth of the share for reactive and proactive communications); on the other hand, the differences between characteristic of the previous period persist.

Chart 16. Distribution of the level of news making

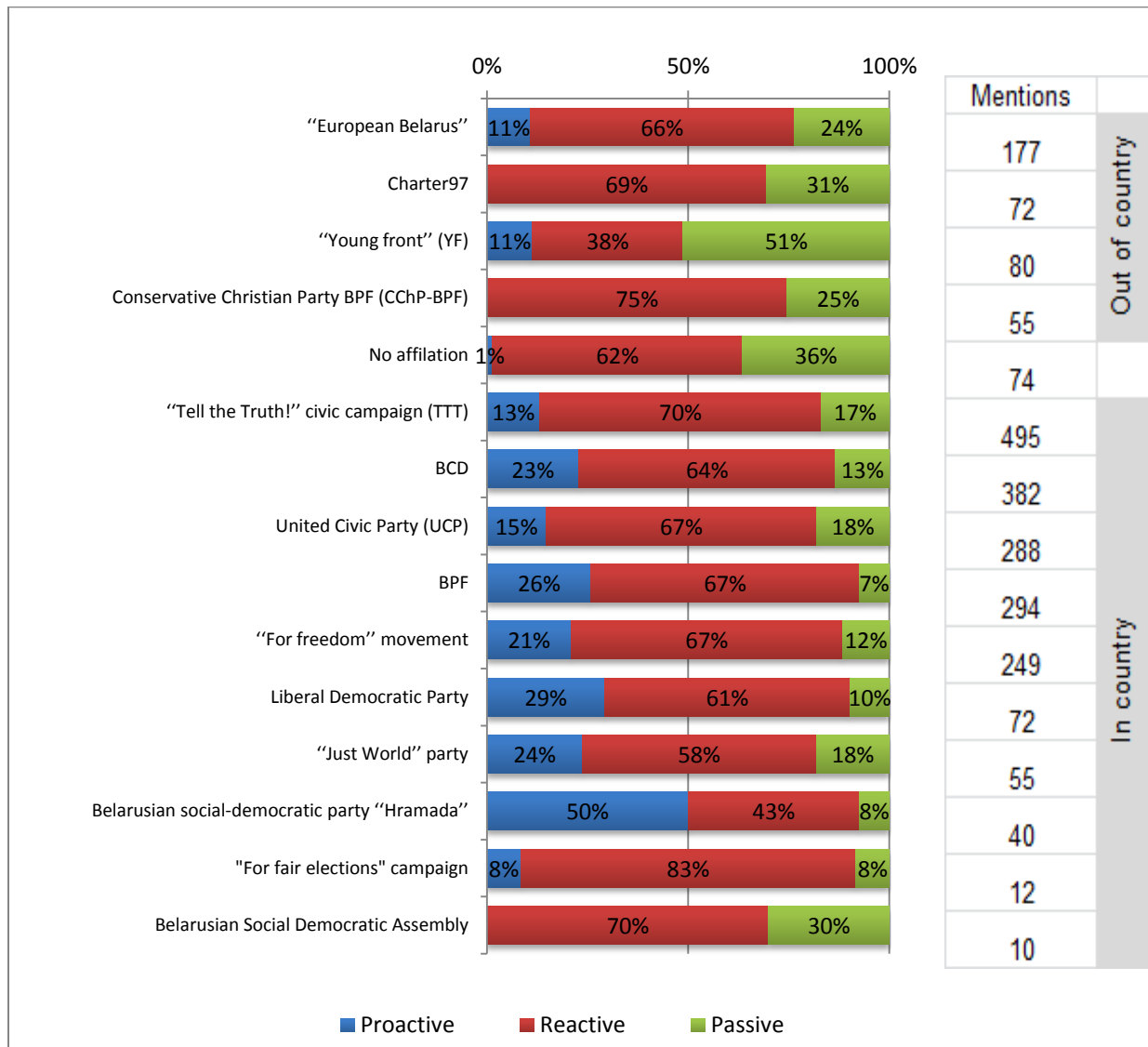
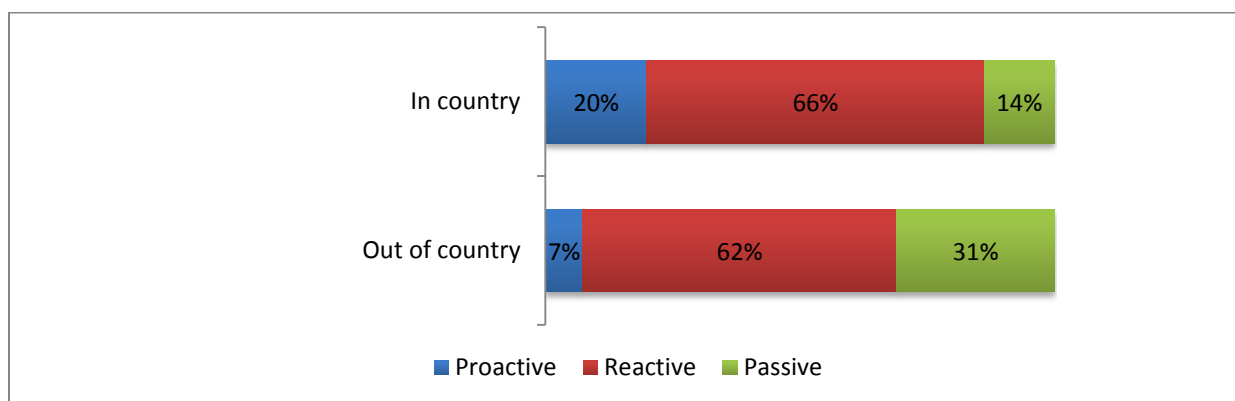


Chart 16.1. Distribution of the level of news making (group of political forces)

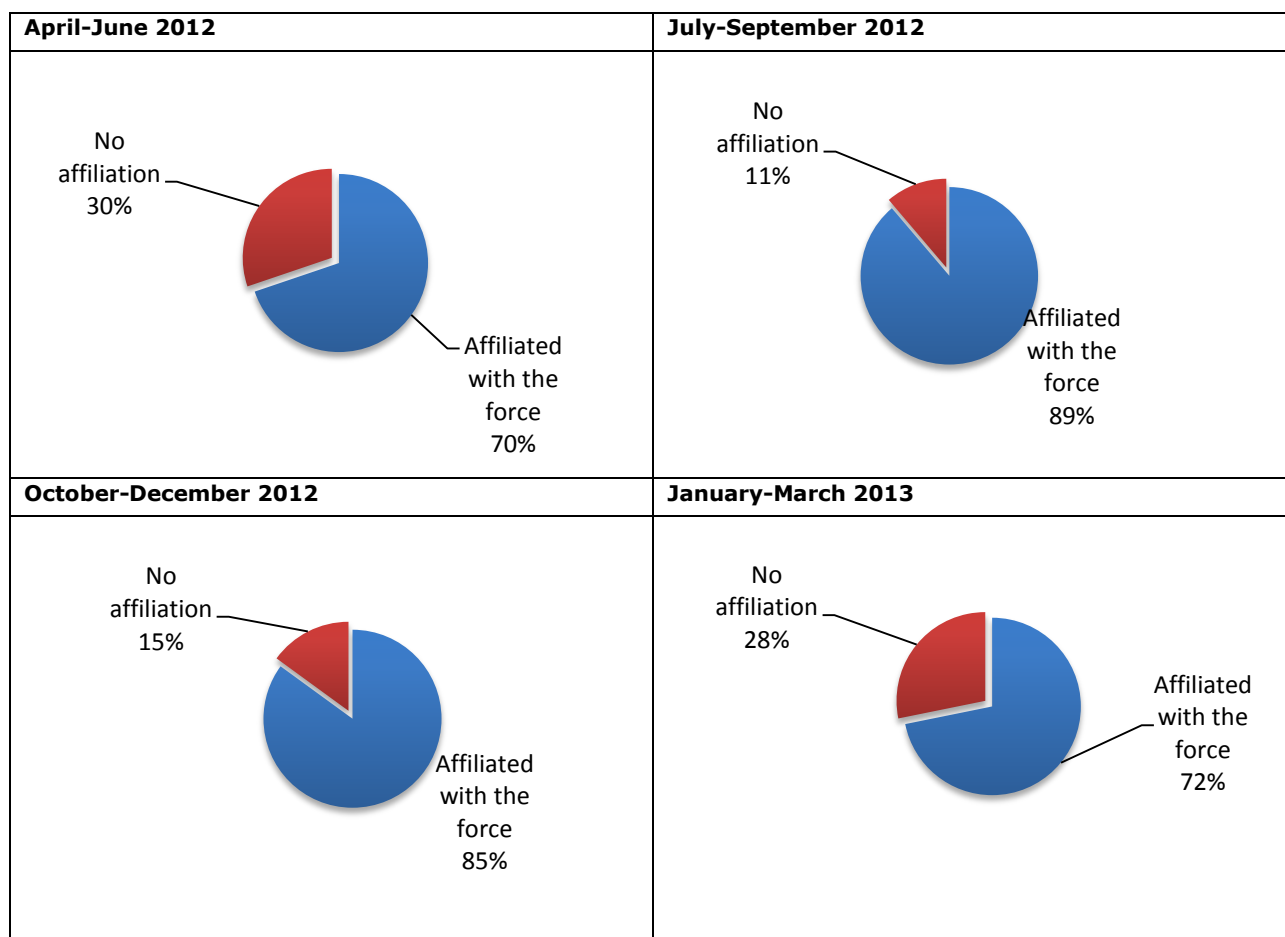


5. Representation of political forces in the media

The "portrait" of a representative of political forces in the media is a more stable and less manageable side of political communications than the subjects of messages, level of offline activities or the degree of communication activity. The indices describing representation of forces in the media are less dynamic. Still, one can observe certain changes in those.

The growth of the share of mentions without affiliation with a political force is partially explained by a great number of mentions for female politicians (many made it to top twelve), who often do not speak as representatives of political forces: I. Khalip, N. Radzina, M. Adamovich, A. Palazhanka (they constitute 24 percent of politicians' mentions without affiliation). Besides, the growing share of politicians' mentions without connection to a political force can be supported by the growth of index for Uladzimir Niakliayeu who appears in the media more often than other leaders without party affiliation indicated (he is a leader among politicians mentioned without affiliation, among those the share of U. Niakliayeu constitutes 14.2 percent). Besides, the dynamics is also associated with the fact that media often do not mention the affiliation of A. Sannikau (his share among politicians mentioned without any affiliation with a political force constitutes 13.8 percent).

Chart 17. Type of messenger



As for the types of political forces representatives, their structure has stabilized and we can hardly expect great changes without targeted efforts to restructure relations with the media. The leaders still occupy about a half of media space; some increase of diversification is evident, but regional structures are scarcely represented. With the exception of BCD, the forces inside the country are represented as more centralized than those outside. One the one hand, the general diversification is increased by two co-presidents of BCD; on the other hand, a noticeable speaker from BCD is Dzianis Sadousky, which influences the indices for this political force. Own

communications provide more opportunities for putting forward new figures; the share of “non-leaders” in communications with regard to own resources is somewhat higher. It testifies to the fact that the structure of representation in the media is established by the media themselves.

As for gender distribution, we can also note that it has been formulated and become stable. However, among politicians acting inside the country the share of women is very small.

The structure of political force types represented in the media can also be called stable. Political parties prevail. The movements overtook them only in the first period reviewed due to the active discussion of Sannikau's and Bandarenka's liberation.

Chart 18. Type of representative

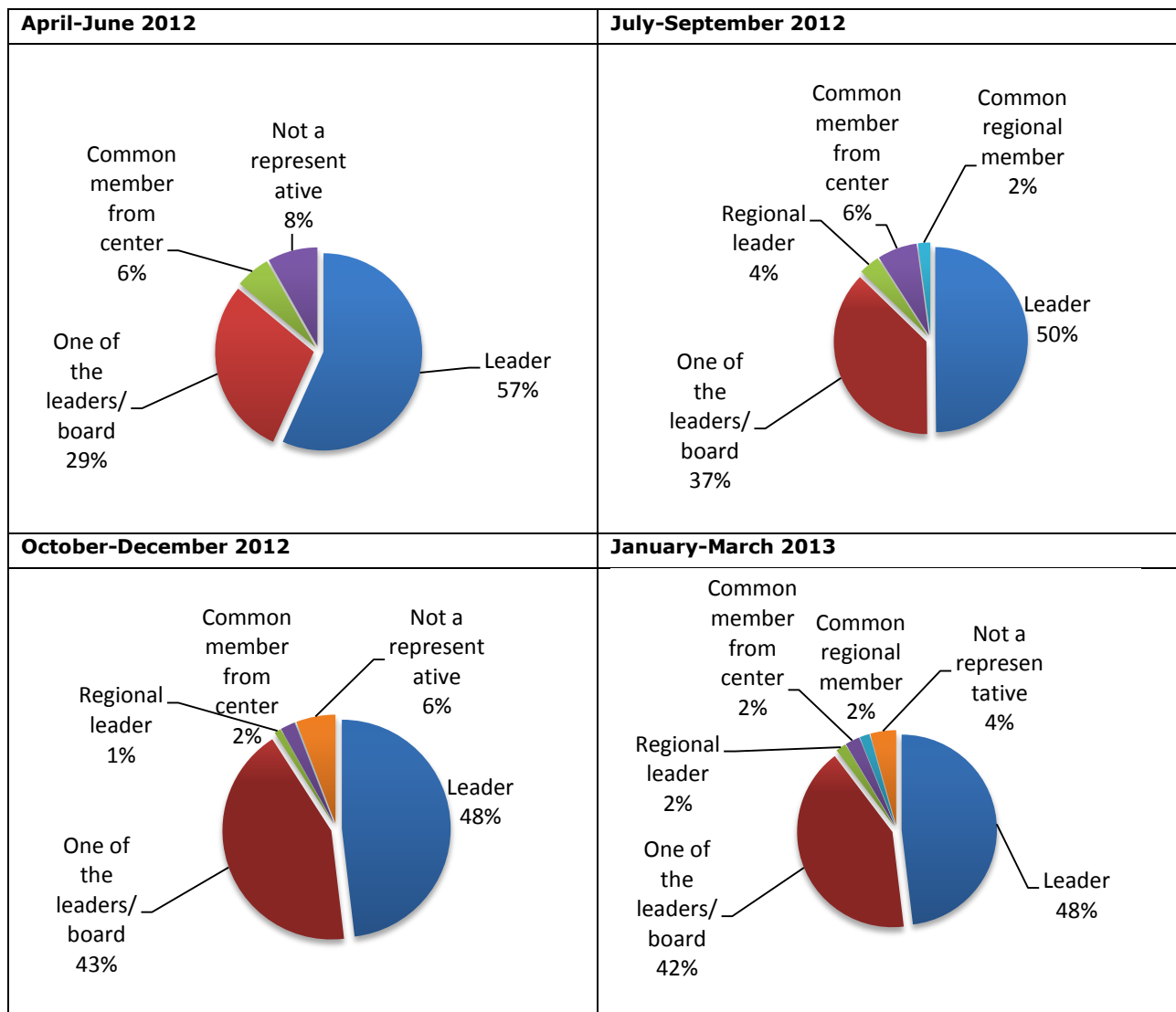


Chart 19. Type of representation

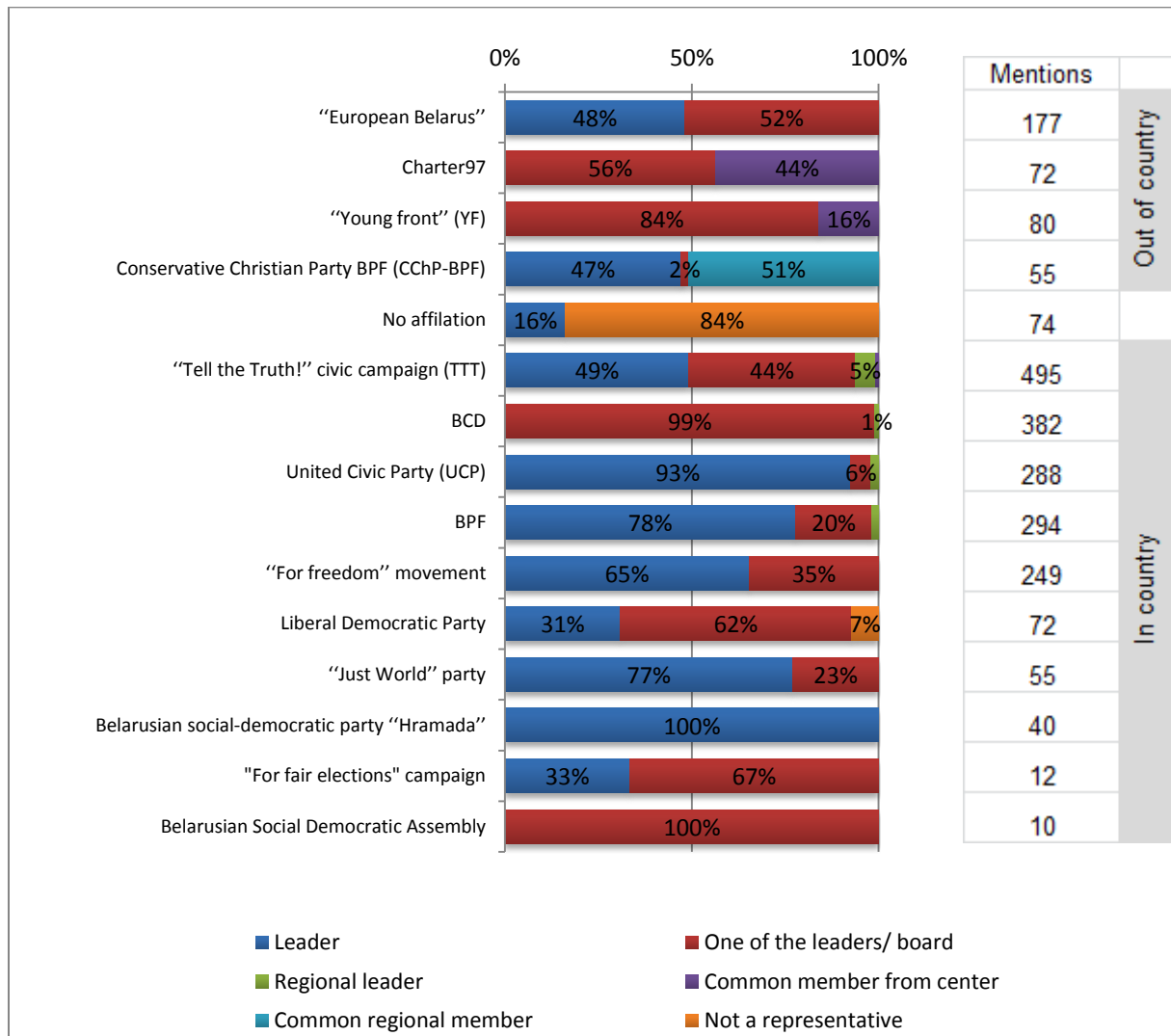


Chart 19.1. Type of representation (group of political forces)

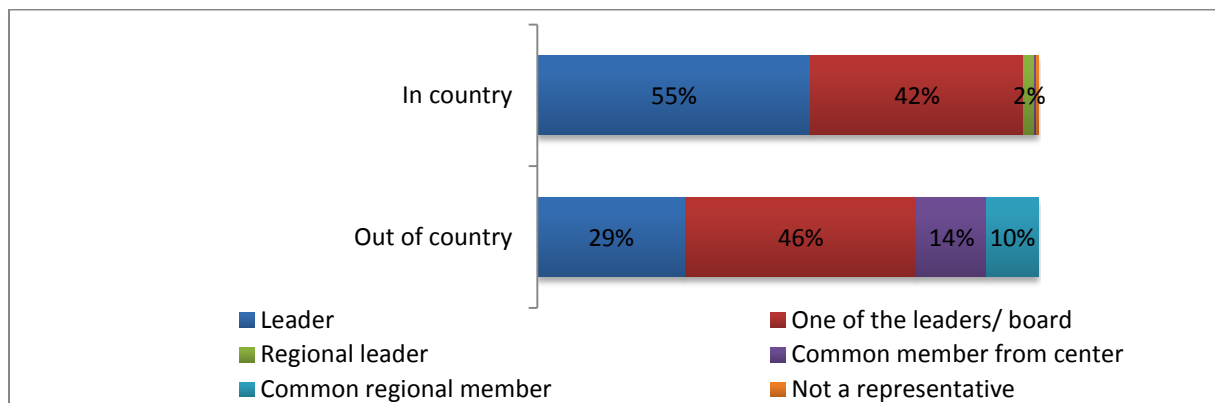


Chart 20. Type of representation by resource

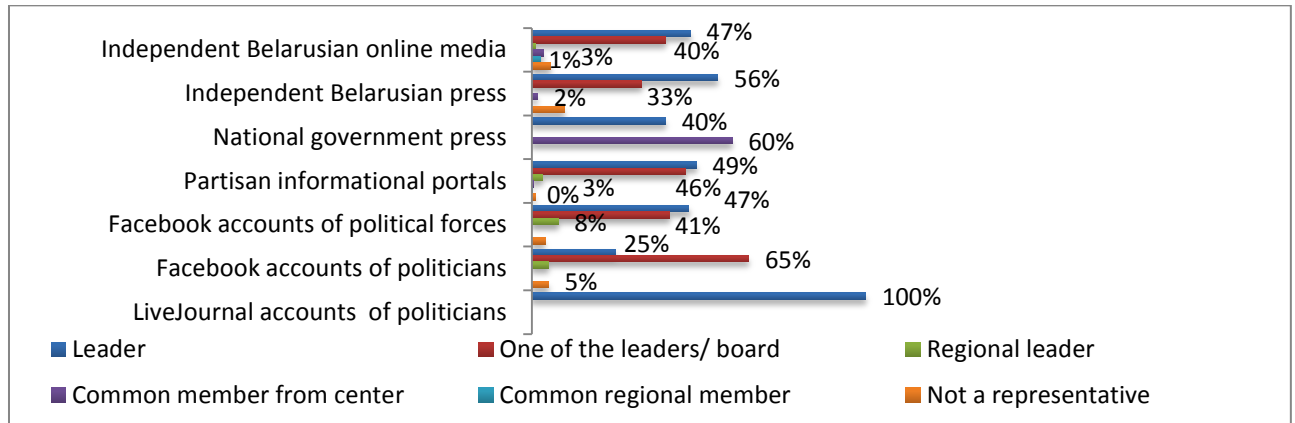


Chart 21. Gender of character of mentioning

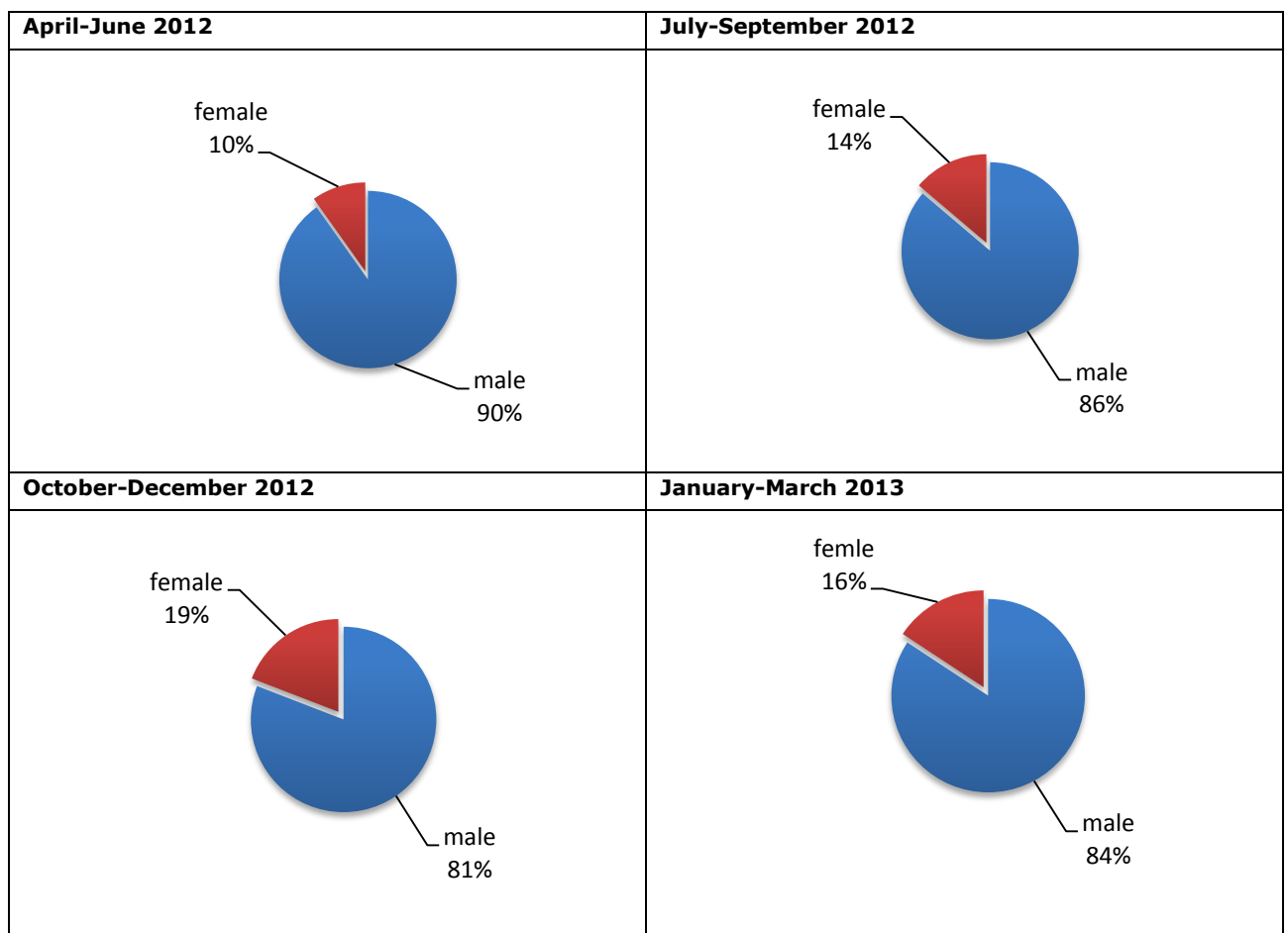


Chart 21.1 Gender of character of mentioning (group of political forces)

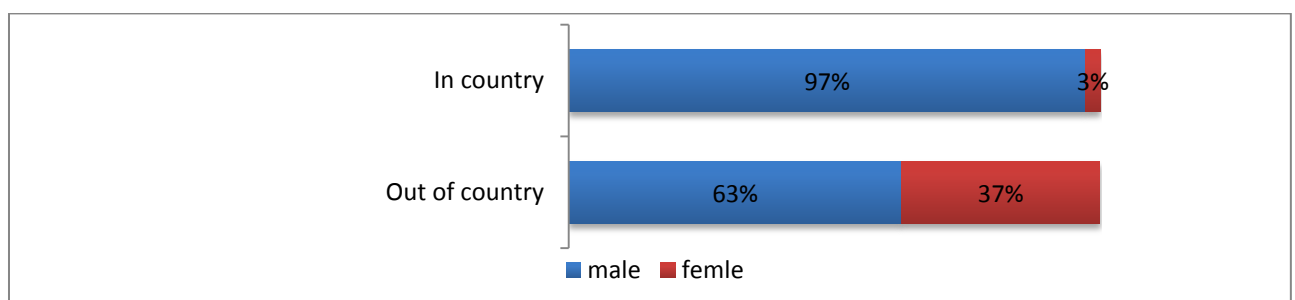


Chart 22. Type of political force



6. Political media coverage

A feature of the level of covered events is also the stability and rigidity of its structure (in April-June 2012 it was significantly impacted by the liberation of A. Sannikau and D. Bandarenka, but later it had acquired permanent form). The level of events covered in the media is obviously determined by the media themselves. However, the parties also do not really try to widely publicize regional events even on their own resources. There is potential in this direction for diversification of communications. By dynamics of distribution one can state that it is only in a very limited way that it is subject to the influence of personal story or program activities as the main topic for communications for the given period (the influence can be observed only in the first quarter reviewed).

Chart 23. Level of event

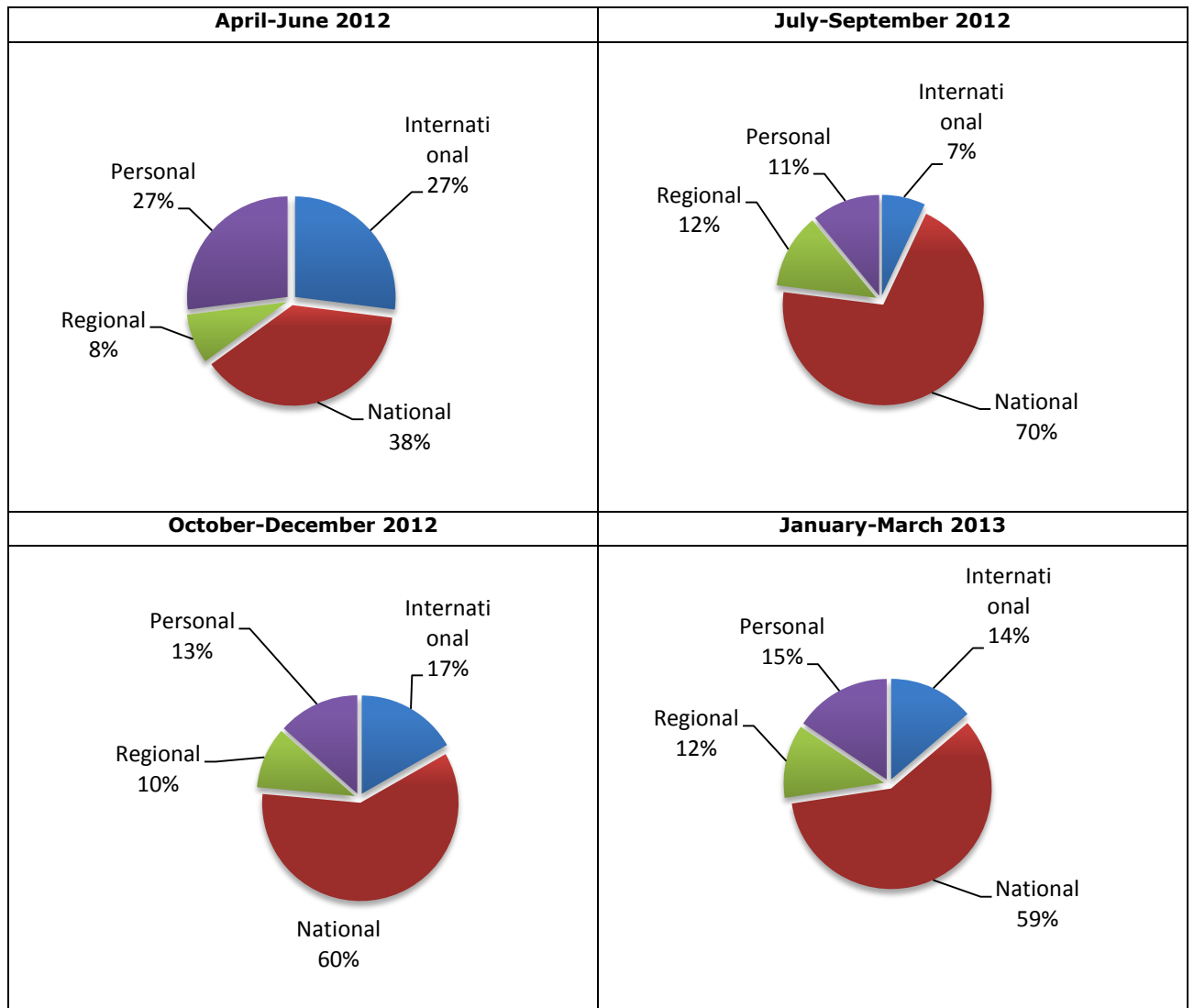
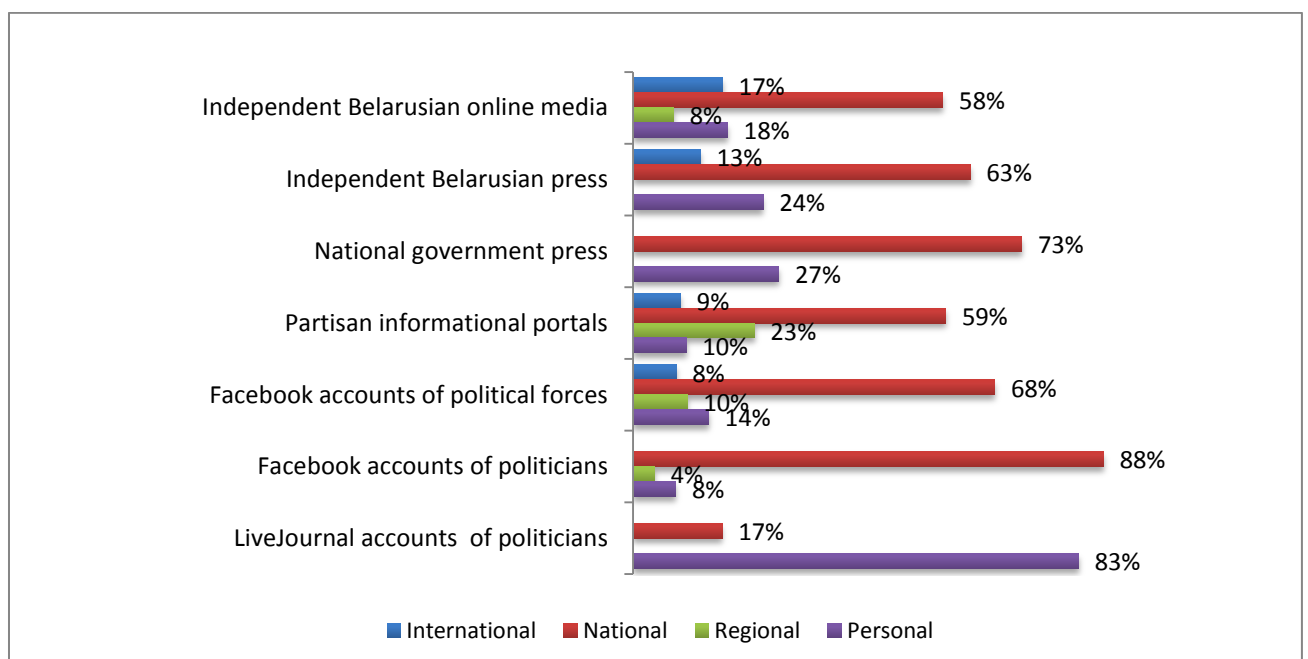


Chart 23.1. Level of event (by source)



7. How politicians are referenced in the media

A noticeable increase of offline activities, a great amount of press conferences, the traditional campaign on Freedom Day significantly influenced the type of politicians' mentions: in most cases they are portrayed as event participants. The initiative aspect is preserved on the level of the previous quarter. The share of general discussions is decreasing, which can positively correct the image of politicians as more active. The decrease in the share of general discussions is associated with a greater contribution of own communications in which the politicians bring up the issues of their everyday work more often. The role of own communications must not be underestimated as the media views politicians' own resources as a full-fledged information source; such messages can become and actually become informational causes for the media.

Chart 24. Type of mentioning

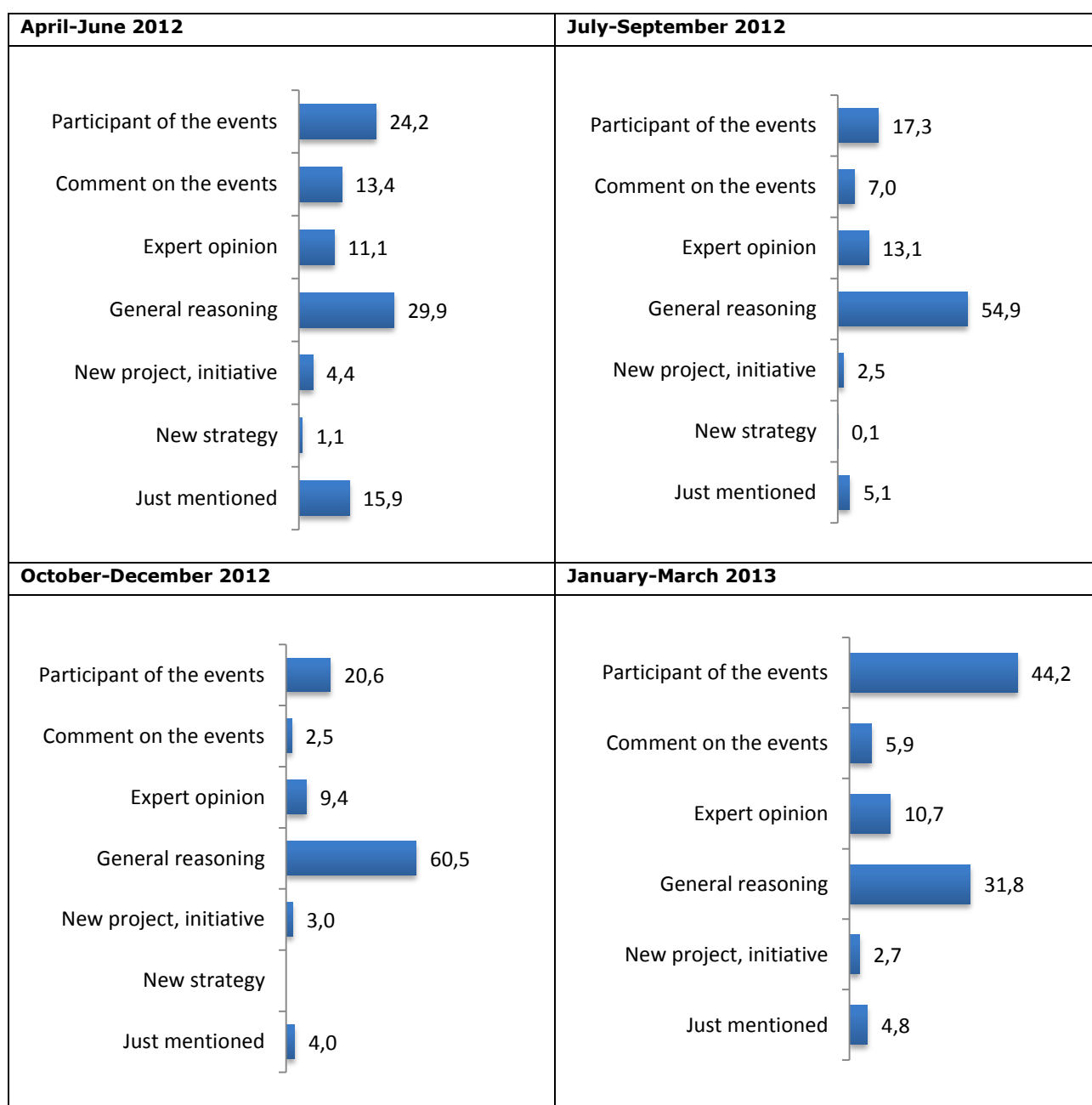
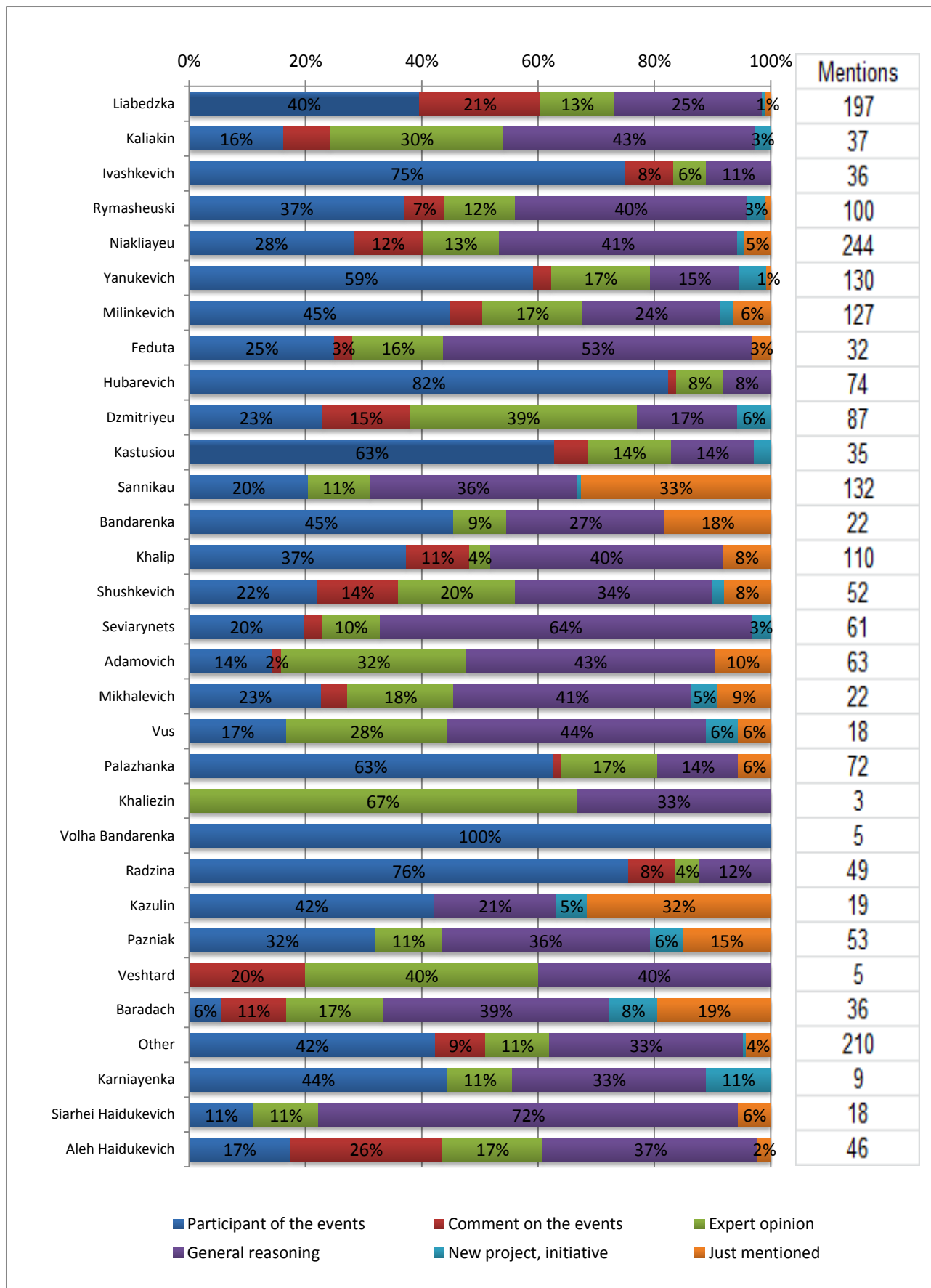


Chart 25. Distribution of the type of mentioning



8. Media evaluation of the parties and political forces

There are no significant changes in the evaluation of portrayed political forces. However, we can see some changes in the evaluation of covered force in the structure of informational sources: in the national state press, neutral mentions appeared (even though in the previous quarter 100 percent of materials evaluated independent political forces in a negative way). It is probably associated with the inclusion of LDP in the sample towards which the state media do not have a formed negative stand.

Chart 26. Evaluation of a politician

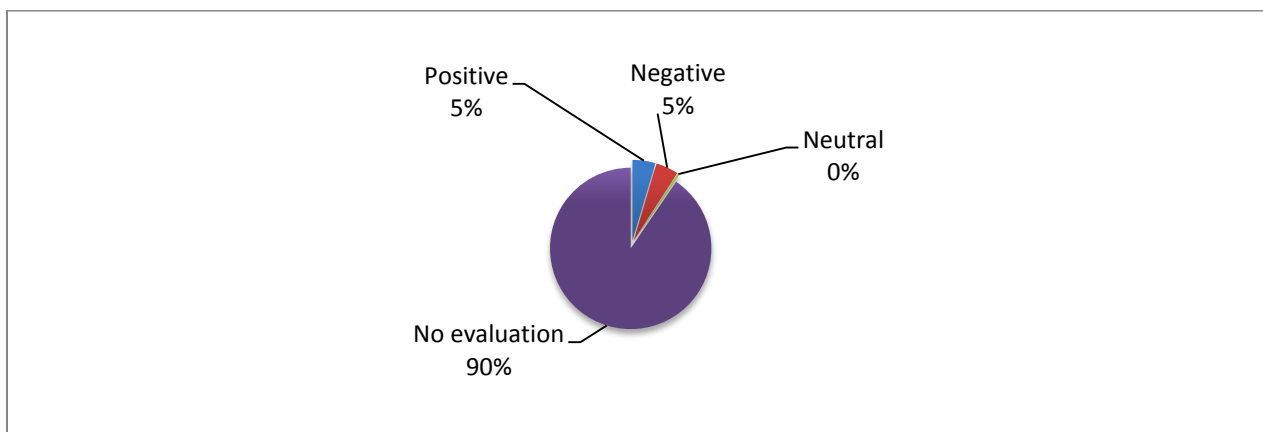


Chart 27. Evaluation of a political force

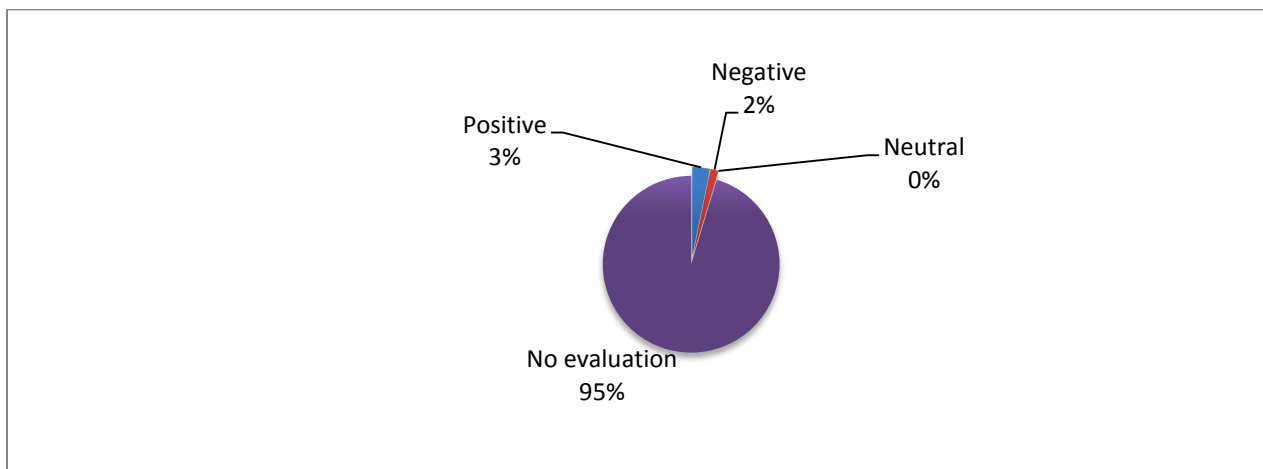
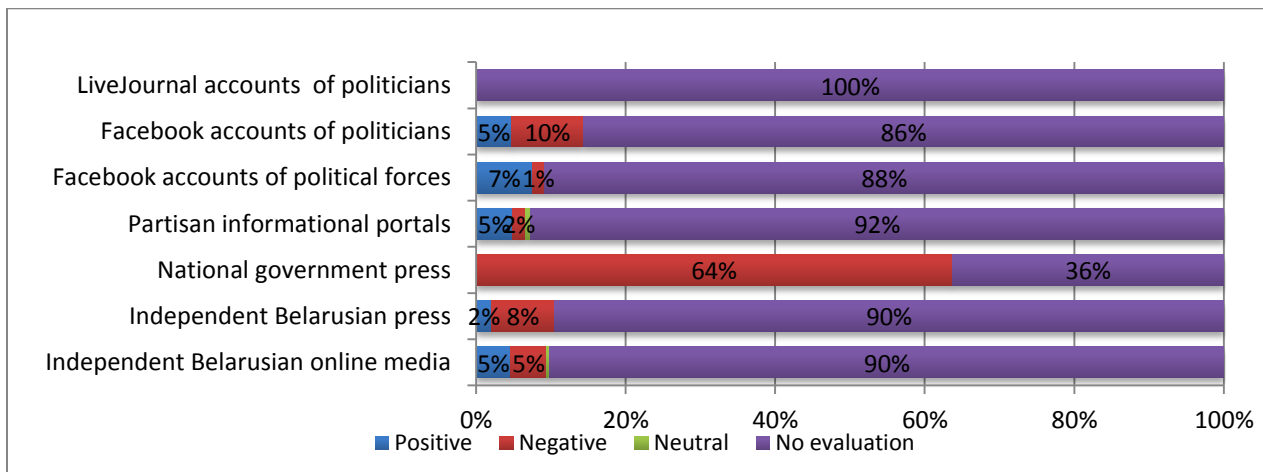


Chart 28. Evaluation of a political force by sources



Appendix 1. Media consumption in Belarus

1.1. Internet usage (urban population, 18-64 y.o.)

How often do you use the Internet?	Amount	%
I don't use the Internet, and I am not connected	251	25.10%
I don't use the Internet, and I am connected	117	11.70%
Every day	446	44.60%
3-5 times a week	69	6.90%
1-2 times a week	82	8.20%
1-3 times a month	25	2.50%
Less than once a month	10	1.00%
Total	1,000	100.00%

1.2. Audience coverage

	Audience	Coefficient
Independent Belarusian online media		
(audience reach in percent: information source is a research by gemiusAudience 01-03/2013)		
belaruspartisan.org	-	5
charter97.org	6.3%	10
ej.by	2.3%	5
naviny.by	6.5%	10
news.tut.by	22.8%	25
udf.by	1.8%	5
svaboda.org	-	5
nn.by	2.3%	5
Independent Belarusian press (number of copies)		
Nasha Niva	7,000	1
Belgazeta	20,500	1
Narodnaya Vola	27,700	1
Belarusy i rynek	14,000	1
National state press (number of copies)		
SB. Belarus segodnya	400,100	1
Respublika	40,000	1
Zviazda	34,200	1
Narodnaya gazeta	30,000	1
Parties' informational portals		
ucpb.org	-	1
camarade.biz	0.2%	1
narodny.org	-	1
bchd.info	-	1
zapraudu.info	-	1
europeanbelarus.org	-	1
statkevich.org	-	1
mfront.net	-	1
sieviarynets.net	-	1
bsd.org	-	1

narodnaja-partyja.org	-	1
pyx.by	-	1
Facebook accounts of political forces (number of subscribers)		
UCP: http: facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003120752626	-	1
"Just World": facebook.com/groups/ck.smir/	393	1
"Tell the Truth": facebook.com/zapraudu	1,500	1
"Young Front": facebook.com/mfront.net	285	1
Belarusian social-democratic party "Gramada": facebook.com/groups/152445731538229/?ref=ts	14	1
Facebook accounts of politicians (number of subscribers)		
Dmitriyev: http://www.facebook.com/Belarusian	-	1
Rymashevsky: http://www.facebook.com/rymasheuski	-	1
Livejournal accounts of politicians (number of subscribers)		
rymaseuski.livejournal.com	208	1
niakliaeu.livejournal.com	975	1
feduta.livejournal.com	1,628	1
hubarevich.livejournal.com	244	1
mikhalevich.livejournal.com	129	1
kilgor-trautt.livejournal.com	2,354	1

Appendix 2. Methodology Description

2.1. Sample

As sources for evaluation of representation in the media the following types of media are used (see Appendix 1):

1. Independent Belarusian online media;
2. Independent Belarusian press;
3. National government press;
4. Partisan informational portals;
5. Facebook accounts of political forces
6. Facebook accounts of politicians (only those that are used for communication on relevant topics);
7. LiveJournal accounts of politicians (only those that are used for communication on relevant topics).

All the news, even repeated by different sources, is evaluated because they are contact-points with the audience and are aggregated in the Total Rating Points. It is not applied to just links to other sources or video.

2.2. Methodology of index composition

The quantitative index is calculated for each political force and individual politician based on the size of the audience of the source (see Appendix 1) and the number of mentions in the articles of that source (one article with any number of the name repeated assumed as one mention). There are three types of index:

1. Media coverage (online media and press);
2. Own communications (affiliated informational portals, Facebook and LJ accounts);
3. Total presence.

The audience coverage is measured as the coverage of the universe (according www.audience.by).

Possible intersections of the audience of each politician are not taken into consideration. The index is formed as a result of accumulated media rating points. This result correlates to the number of contacts with the audience. These contacts can refer to different people (in the case of non-intersected audience) and reflect the scope of influence, and to the same people (in the case of intersected audience) and reflect the strength of influence (repeated contacts provide better memorization; increase the effect of the presence).

Audience coverage, which is used to calculate the index is digressively proportional where the minimal coverage is taken for one percent and maximal coverage is taken for 40 percent. The principle of digressive proportion is used because of low penetration of independent online media. Usage of straight proportion could lead to insignificant results and there is a danger of getting the result not much different from zero. The principle of smoothing the differences between audience coverage allows having a comparable index. The audience coverage of individual resources is assumed as one percent as well. Total index of presence in the media is divided into 'Media coverage' (Independent Belarusian online media, Independent Belarusian press, National government press) and 'Own communications' (Facebook and LiveJournal accounts of political forces and politicians, which are used for communications on relevant topics).

Thus, the quantitative index is supplemented with a content analysis of the media mentioning each politician and/or political force. This composition will help to understand the topics, genres and type of representation index that has been gained wherewith.

To compare politicians with respect to the type of mention and the range of discussed topics a comparative **qualitative index** is used. The qualitative index is composed of 3 sub-indexes:

- *Expertise* (includes mentions in the media as an expert, commentator or author of analytical materials),
- *Initiative* (includes mentions in the media where politicians present new programs, projects or tactic/strategy of the activity), and
- *Action* (based on the activity presented in the media during the evaluated period).

The Qualitative index shows the share of mentions of certain politician in all the news in each of three directions (expertise, political process, political/engagement initiative, political action) and in what extent the topics of mentionings are balanced. The requirement to have balanced topic of news is actual for Belarus because the absence of initiatives and projects in the directions relevant to electorate interests is a weak spot of political forces. Each topic has the same weight for the value of sub-indexes.

1. 3. Table of content analysis

Category	Value
1	Date
2	Type of the source
	1. Independent Belarusian online media 2. Independent Belarusian press 3. National government press 4. Partisan informational portals 5. Facebook accounts of political forces 6. Facebook accounts of politicians 7. LiveJournal accounts of politicians
3	Name of source
4	Audience coverage
5	Link
6	Politician
7	Gender
	1. Male 2. Female
8	Type of representation of a political force
	1. Leader 2. One of the leaders/ board 3. Regional leader 4. Common member 5. Common regional member 6. Not a representative 7. Other
7	Political force represented
8	Type of a political force
	1. Political party 2. Movement 3. Coalition 4. Party as a member of a coalition 5. Other
9	Genre
10	Language ⁹

⁹ **Language** of the articles at bilingual sources is defined as the language of the site used by default.

11	Role of a politician	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The main character 2. One of the main characters 3. The character among others 4. Main expert, commentator 5. One of the experts, commentators 6. Other
12	Evaluation of a politician	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive 2. Negative 3. Neutral 4. No evaluation (in case when a politician is him/herself the author)
13	Evaluation of a political force	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive 2. Negative 3. Neutral 4. No evaluation (in case when a politician doesn't represent a political force)
14	Type of mentioning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participant of the events 2. Comment on the events 3. Expert opinion 4. General reasoning 5. New project, initiative 6. New strategy 7. Just mentioned 8. Other
15	Activeness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactive 2. Reactive 3. Passive
16	Level of the events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International 2. National 3. Regional 4. Personal
17	Topic	
18	Correlation with offline activity	
20	Concrete event	
19	Type of offline activity ¹⁰	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting with the electorate 2. Round table, discussion with other opposition representatives 3. Partisan meeting 4. Press conference 5. Foreign trip 6. Meeting with foreign politicians 7. Statement, appeal 8. Appeal 9. Other
20	Direction of activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electoral 2. Inner 3. Outer 4. Media 5. Own communications 6. No activity reflected

¹⁰Type of offline activity includes the types of activity which are initiated by politicians (does not include activity initiated by the media such as interviews, comments, participation in TV-/radio-programs as an expert etc.)

Appendix 3. Detailed Data

Chart 29. Topics

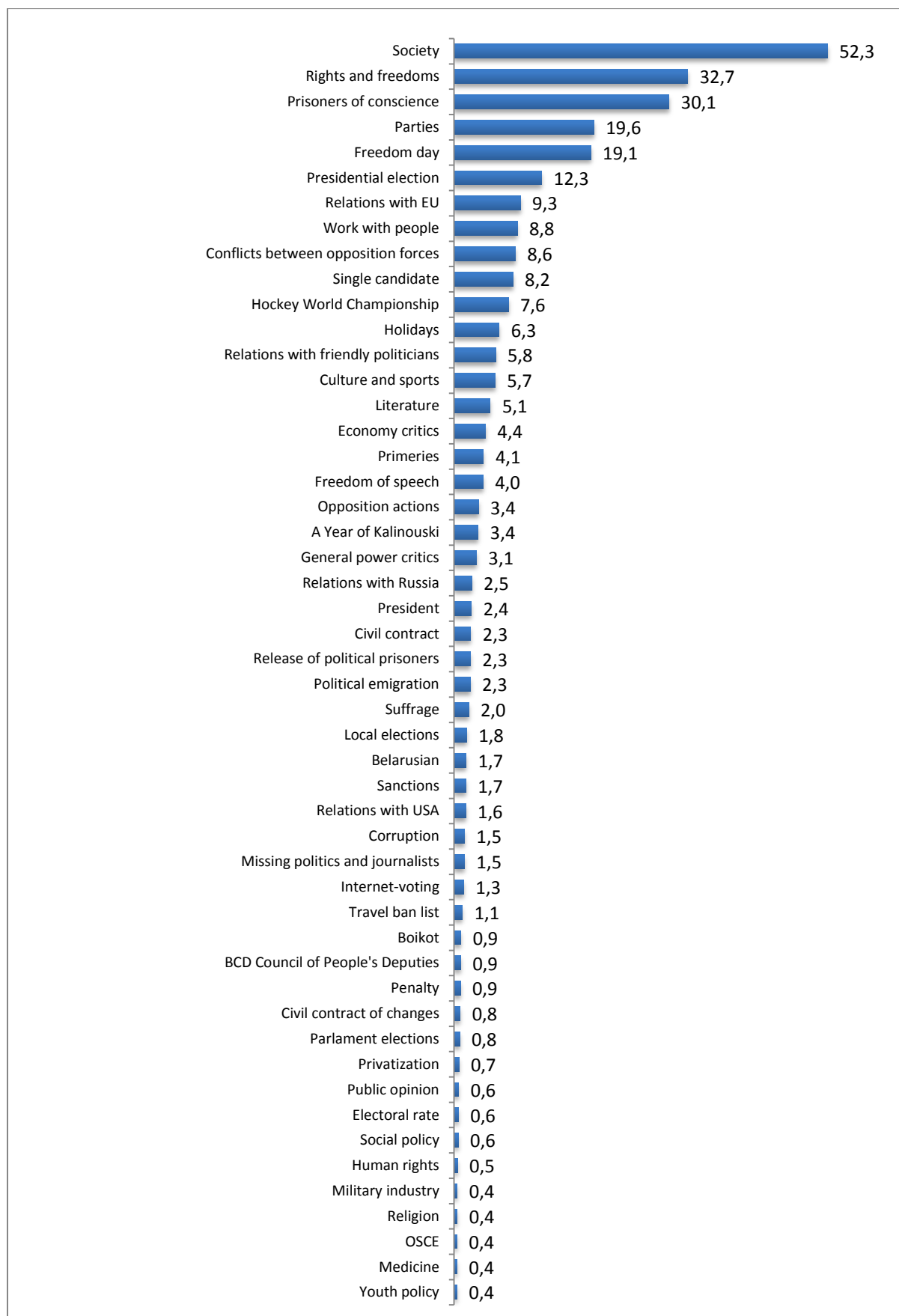


Chart 30.1. Distribution of total representation index by dates (individual politicians)

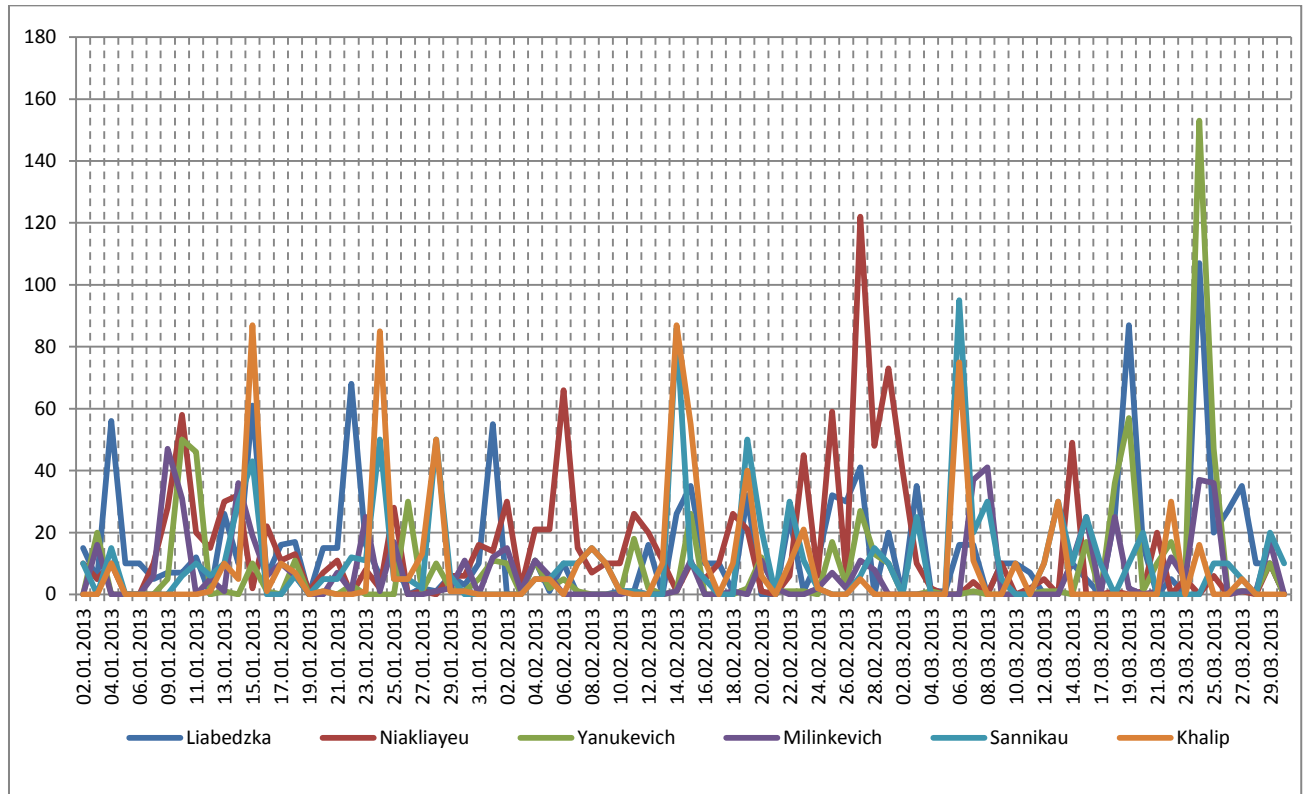


Chart 30.2. Distribution of total representation index by dates (individual politicians)

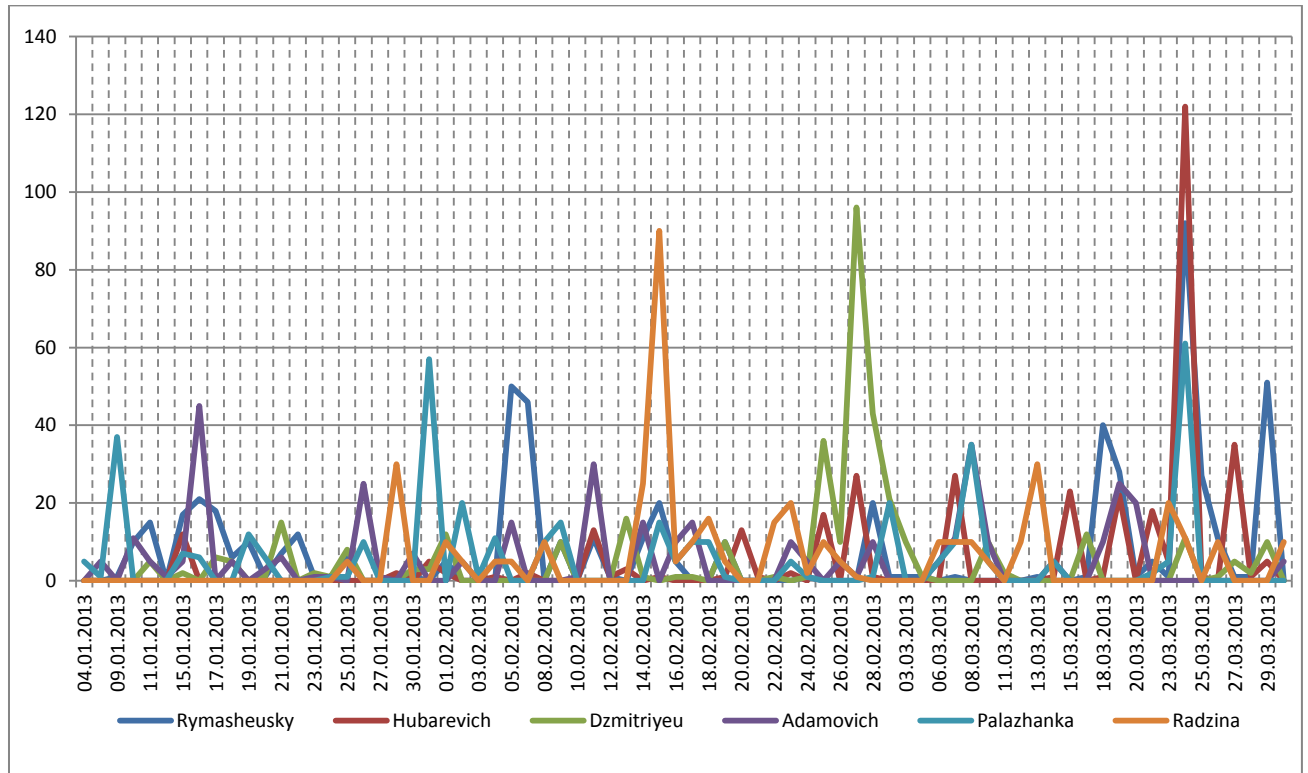


Chart 31.1. Distribution of total representation index by dates (political forces)

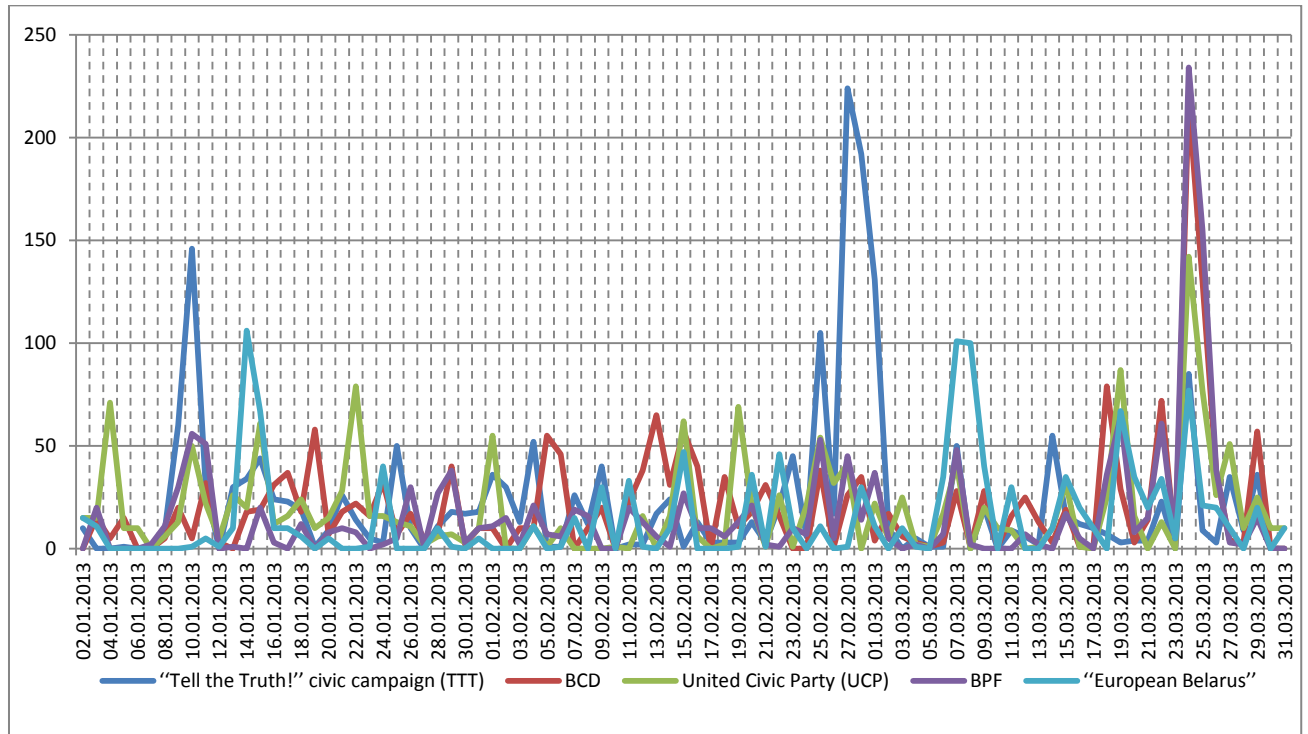


Chart 31.2. Distribution of total representation index by dates (political forces)

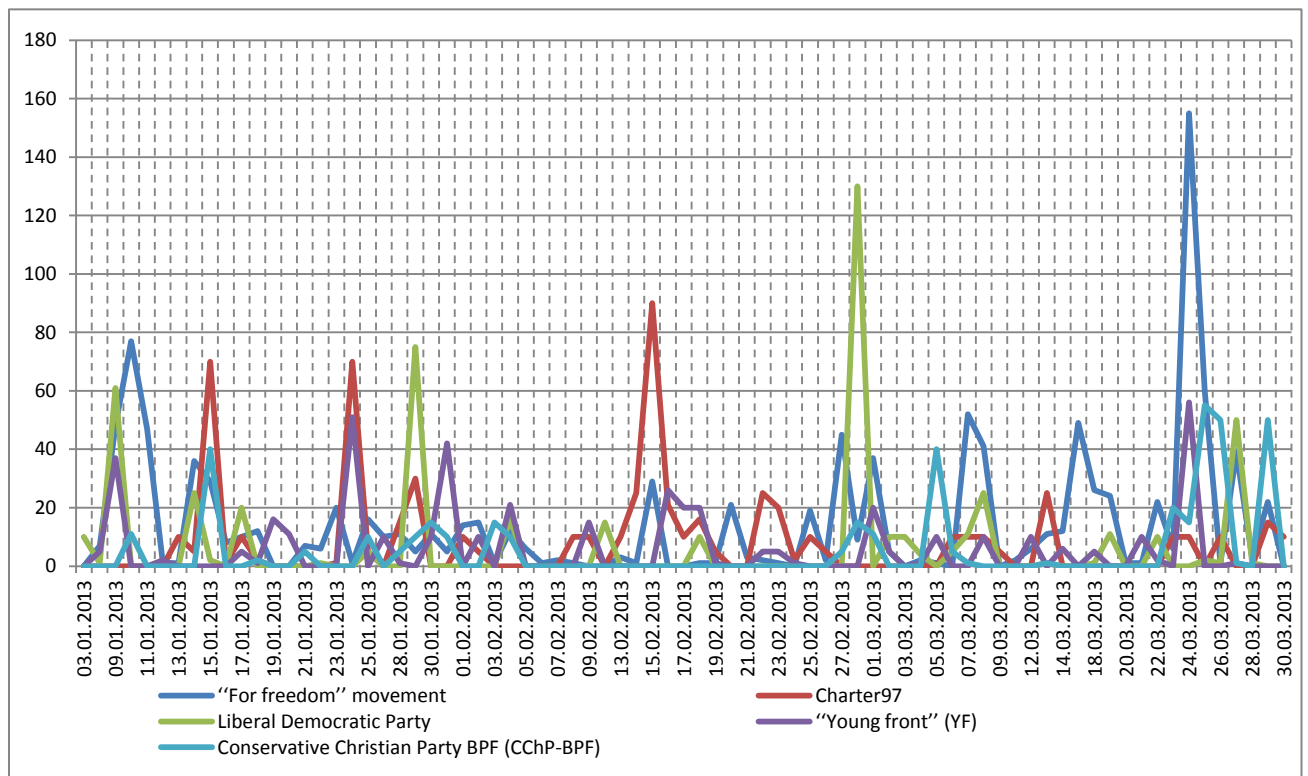


Chart 31.3. Distribution of total representation index by dates (political forces)

