"THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY"

The Ethnographic Content Analysis of the Negative Political Ads in the Post-Soviet Hybrid Democracy

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Abstract

Keywords: *Negative Campaigning, Attack ads, Post-Soviet, Hybrid democracy*
                                 Personalization of Politics, Ethnographic Content Analysis

Research in field negative campaigning has demonstrated an anglophone nature. Little is known about strategies of negativity beyond American and the Western European scope. Purpose of this paper is to investigate types of negative ads produced by political parties in post-Soviet, hybrid democracy and determine if well-established findings and theories of negativity can be used to explain dynamics of the negativity in multi-party political system, where political parties as a democratic institutions are weak, political culture is low and personalization of politics is highly demonstrated.

An extensive literature review is done to derive theories and finding from already existed academic knowledge in regard to phenomena of negative campaigning. This study touches upon different aspects of negative ads and examines the types of negative ads produced to attack the competitors during parliamentary race. The impact of context characteristic, such as personalization and the extent to which negativity is targeted to downplay election completions to political leadership. A step further, diverse techniques to design audio-visual content to transmit negative messages is explored.

To reach the objective of the presented study, rarely used qualitative approach compared to the functionalist approach dominating the field of the negative political advertising is implemented. With the flexible nature of the Ethnographic Content Analysis and construction of unique guiding framework inspired by the M.I.T.S method for studying screen media it became possible to remain sensitive to the yet unexplored political and cultural context and at the same time ensure systematic analysis to account for the scientific credibility.

The results show that types of negative ads produced to attack competitors in hybrid democracy is fully in line with the strategies used in other countries. That is, incumbents attack less compared to parties in opposition with poor poll standings. Due to personalization of politics in the country under investigation, attacks instead of ideological stances target politicians and their characteristics; this tendency was detected in both types of negative ads, whether attacking policy or image of the opponent parties. Lastly, study found that negativity in attack ads is conveyed through different dimensions of the audio-visual content and negativity is embodied in the cues and symbols rooted in the historical and cultural knowledge of the nation.

Foreword

Firstly, it should be clearly and proudly stated that this publication is a part of my research work at the Gothenburg University, funded by a Swedish Institute scholarship. Studying and living in Sweden would be unimaginable without the possibility gifted by Swedish people, for what I will forever remain grateful.

Last two years have been turbulent not only for me personally, but also for the whole world, as the Covid-19 pandemic has taken lives of many individuals and the part of our precious time to be spent on the campus. Regardless of the hardships, studying at the JMG has contributed to my personal and academic growth and gave me possibility for building the lifetime friendships.

I would like to thank my international friends from the Gothenburg University for opening the doors to their hearts for me with the kindness and respect. Everyday discussion at the library and talks at the pubs on Friday evenings have made a huge impact on my academic and cultural understandings. It would be impossible to maintain any joy during a cold Swedish winters, far away from the family without warmth received from them.

I also would like to show a paramount gratitude towards Nicklas Håkansson, the best supervisor I could wish for during the nerve-racking process of the thesis writing. Thank you, dear Nicklas for your generous patience and guidance when my self-confidence was at the bottom.

Finally, I would like to take a well-deserved credit for at least not giving up, although serious mental uncertainty and anxiety I have been constantly dealing with during those two years.

I hope the knowledge gained in Sweden will lead a way to contribute to building the better future for beloved homeland of mine, Georgia.

Tamar Samkharadze

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In any part of the world, politics is often described as a dirty game. This widespread belief is significantly reinforced during election campaigns, when political parties and candidates implement negativity as a campaign tactic. The origins of negative campaigning probably concur with the emergence of political competition and electoral processes even before the French Revolution, many of which's ideas are considered as the fundamental principles of the western liberal democracy as we know it in present. Sources tracing of negative campaigning go back to 64 BC, when Quintus Tullius Cicero, in his letter to his brother Marcus Tullius Cicero, who run for consulate in Roman empire advice to implement 'negative campaigning' and remind the people '(…) of what scoundrels your opponents are and to smear these men at every opportunity with the crimes, sexual scandals, and corruption they have brought on themselves' (Cicero, 2012; p. 79).

Centuries later, political consultants are still acknowledging the power of negative campaigning as a recipe to bring political competitors down during election race. Employment of negativity against the political opponents has been solidified as a communicative tactic used by politicians since the late 70s (Ridout and Smith, 2008). According to academic scholars, employment of the attack messages as a tactic to diminish positive feelings about the competitors is a rational strategy and refers to the concept *Negative Campaigning* (Ridout and Smith 2008; Lau and Pomper, 2004). Negative campaigning can be found in many areas of political communication; in political advertisements, the news, TV debates, talk shows, party manifestos, the press releases and on the Internet (Crigler, Just and Belt, 2006).

But the interest of this paper lays in political advertisements, more specifically in the process of implementation of negative messages through audio-visual content to give voters reasons for not voting for the certain party, candidate, or issue position. Use of the attack ads starts as candidates and their political strategists, with the rapid spread of television in late 1950s to mid-1970s and decrease in partisan affiliation, realized that campaigning through television can attract a wider attention of voters (Iyengar, 2019; p. 154). In USA, campaign managers spent tremendous money to pursue airtime and broadcast negative advertisements (Belt, 2017).

Negative advertisements may have been called with different names in different political systems. In the US context as the time is pursued negative ads are referred as paid media. In other countries it might be referred as controlled or unmediated content or simply as attack ads (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid, 2006). But there is a wide consensus among academic scholars, that those ads basically are "opponent-

focused, rather than candidate-focused. That is, negative ads concentrate on what is wrong with the opponent, either personally or in terms of issue or policy stances" (Kaid, 2004; p. 163). In present, negative messages and ads are also triggering free media coverage for American candidates (Ridout and Smith, 2008).

Another consensus among academics is that negative campaigning is inherently integrated part of the American political discourse (Mark D, 2007). Therefore, the interest of scholars investigating negative campaigning phenomena emerged to explore its potentially negative consequences on citizens and democracy. Empirical research on negative campaigning starts to flourish since 1990s in the USA and tackles majority of questions in the last decades (Haselmayer, 2019). However, the phenomena to 'go negative' during campaigning is not a tactic used only in the USA. Regardless, the research on negativity dynamics in political communication has demonstrated an overwhelming American bias and beyond this scope research mainly falls into the category of a single case studies of Western advanced democratic countries (Nai and Walter, 2016).

According to the prominent scholar Benoit (1999) more work needs to be done to see whether the theorization from hegemonic academic literature on negative campaigning can be generalized to other countries. After his call, several case studies investigated negative campaigning in the Western multiparty systems (see, for example, Holtz-Bacha, 2001; Walter and van der Brug, 2013; Walter and Vliegenthart, 2010; Walter, 2014; Elmelund-Præstekær and Mølgaard Svensson, 2014; Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010), but post-Soviet political realities in relation to negative campaigning are mainly still unexplored — If research mentions negative campaigning at all, it has mainly interested in television debates (Lenka Hrbková and Jozef Zagrapan, 2014; Benoit and Klyukovski, 2006) is not done in English (Haramija and Poropat, 2014) or barely mentions negative campaigning at all (Hobolt et al., 2008; Nikolaynko, 2007, 2017).

Considering the scope in the field literature, this paper attempts to bring the focus from the US two-party political context and apply the theories of negative campaigning with the multi-party hybrid democracy context. By exploring negative ads produced by three major political parties during parliamentary elections of 2020, in Georgia, this study on negative ads covers yet unexplored political context and attempts to relate its finding to the broad academic field of the negative campaigning and well-established findings from the field literature. The qualitative nature of this study puts political ads under scrutiny to firstly distinguish between positive and negative advertisements of the campaign and moreover, explore the types and features of those negative ads in relation to the context characteristics.

1.2. Research Objective and Significance

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, republics faced challenges to incorporate third stage of political communication. Political parties as an institution in those countries were weak, while entering the area of free competition at a time, when in Western democracies parties had taken the fundamental steps before adapting to the technological advances and other societal and media changes slowly (Eibl and Gregor,2019). The rapid and forced implementation of political communication characteristics from the West created even more fertile grounds for negativity, personalization and emotionalization of politics in young democracies. Whereas, elections are important in any type of democratic functioning, it has been described as especially crucial in stabilization and democratization of emerging democracies (Kuhne, 2010). In this regard election campaigning gains, even more importance.

The international monitoring missions and local NGOs often voice fears that elections in Georgia are characterized with "frequent negative campaigning and at times take a confrontational tone" (OSCE, 2020). In yet another OSCE report the election campaigning in Georgia were described as "marred by harsh rhetoric" (OSCE, 2018). In this sense, considering the lack of academic research on campaign strategies in Georgia, negative campaigning is often labelled simply as election malpractices, which hurts the path of democratization and triggers societal worries. Whereas, using "harsh rhetoric" might be a thoughtful practice of the negative campaigning advised by political consultants and used by candidates or parties with very particular electoral aims. Moreover, we can assume that negative campaigning is rather imported phenomena in hybrid democracies, than a heritage from the times of the Soviet Union, as in terms of globalization Americanization of election campaigns, which constitutes to the act of borrowing ideas, tools and campaign expertise from the US is seen worldwide (Kavanagh ,1995; Newman, 1994; Plasser, 2001).

This paper is academically justified as it attempts to contribute to the broad research field by taking step forward into the investigation of the negative campaigning in hybrid democratic context in a relation to the unique local political culture and characteristic. Moreover, by applying the theories of negative campaigning derived from the American political system, this paper attempts to demonstrate that negative campaigning strategies, types and features are more or less in line with the well-established academic finding. By putting Georgian context into the wider picture of negative campaigning academic field it can shed some light on worries of interest groups and society as well.

In the next section, the research questions are specified to guide this paper and investigate different aspect of negative ads produced during election campaigning in hybrid democratic, multi-party system

of the post-Soviet Georgia. Next to achieve the objective of the study this study discusses changes contributing to the emergence of the negative campaigning phenomena in the first place. After the theories of negative campaigning, its definition, measurement ways and other academically relevant areas of the filed are discussed. Following, the case of Georgia in regard to political landscape is described to give the reader better understanding of the context under scrutiny. Methods to analyze political ads, coding procedures and results are put just before the final part of the paper, in which results will be connected to the academic literature and concluding summery will be presented.

1.3. Research Questions

To meet the objective of the study, this thesis suggests research on political ads produced for Georgian 2020 parliamentary elections by three biggest parties who have overcome 3 percent barrier to enter the parliament. It is worth emphasizing that suggested qualitative method design is infrequently used compared to the huge number of quantitative studies conducted in the researched field. Regardless, this approach is justified by the objectives of the study and the flexibility of this approach while putting the context under scrutiny for the first time.

First, according to Benoit's (2017) Functional theory, (which will be discussed in more details in following chapter) a distinction can be made between negative ads which exposes an opponent's weaknesses or disadvantages in regards of who they are and what they stand for. Two dimensions attack ads can be addressed to is character and policy. Among those two dimensions, negative messages can target three forms of policy: the past deeds, future plans, or general goals and two forms of character like personal traits, abilities, and values/principles. Differentiate between the types of attacks is important as Benoit's functional theory has been used as a theory and method to drive numerous studies, therefore generated well established academic findings. In this regard, first research question addresses the types of ads used by all three parties to connect the results with the literature.

RQ1: What types of the negative ads can be identified among political parties' negative campaigning strategies for 2020 parliamentary elections in Georgia?

As already mentioned above, personalization of political communication is widely demonstrated in new democracies. The core idea of the personalization of politics is that personalities are more important at the expense of political parties (Eibl and Gregor, 2019; p.13) This might mean that although election competition during parliamentary race should be focused on parties and policies, the leaders will be put in the center of campaign communication.

RQ2: To what extend negative messages in attack ads produced by political parties were personified?

Lastly, it is known that negative advertisements are designed to provoke fear and anxiety; feelings that can diminish positive evaluation of the opponent in voters' perception (Holtz-Bacha and Just, 2017). Narrative, image, text, and sound are all undivided dimensions of videos produced as attack ads to mitigate negativity. Therefore, this qualitative study looks at negative ads to describe the diversity of techniques used in order to convey negative emotions through the audiovisual content.

RQ3: How negativity is conveyed in attack ads?

With clear research questions in mind, the next chapter digs into the literature to discuss certain important aspects of the negative campaigning academic field relevant for this study.

Chapter 2

Understanding the Emergence and Spread of the Negative Campaigning Phenomena

Political parties are adapting their political communication to the influences of the societal changes brought by decrease in partisan affiliation, mediatization and become more professionalized to win more votes (Dalton, 2013; Strömbäck and Esser, 2011). Several scholars have argued that personalization, de-ideologization and negative campaigning are identified as strategies of professionalized political communication (Holtz-Bacha, 2002; Vliegenthart, 2012).

Following sections give readers a wider contextual understanding of the negative campaigning phenomena by describing two important notions in relation to modern election campaigning: Mediatization of politics and Professionalization of the election campaigns.

2.1. Mediatization of Politics

The world has witnessed dual democratic transformation in the last few decades; waves of democratization in Post-Soviet countries and the setbacks in advanced democracies with increased dissatisfaction of citizens (Norris, 2011), decrease of institutionalized participation (Dalton, 2008) and lower trust in political institutions (Franklin, 2004). Importance of volunteers and party members compared to the situation in early decades has also reduced (Stromback, 2008). In this context, together with technological progress and globalization, media has gained a highly influential role in the transformation of established democracies and politics as democratic world knew it. According to Hjarvard (2008; p. 113) media acquired the status of social institution on its own right and moreover, became integrated into the operations of other social institutions. Key concept to blame here is Mediatization — term first used by Asp (1986), arguing that political systems adjusted to the demands of mass media in their coverage of politics. Mazzolini and Schultz (1999) take this definition one step further and describe the process of media domination as the loss of autonomy for politics; '(Politics)… has become dependent in its central functions on mass media and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media' (p.250). All definitions refer to a wide societal process in which media logic is not only dominating, but also becomes integrated into the different spheres of society (Stromback, 2008). News organizations became central in the mediatization process of politics (Esser, 2013).

It is worth emphasizing that the influence of the mediatization process is significantly evident on contemporary campaigning as well. In election settings, media logic dictates the rules in formation of campaign structures and therefore, again dominates political logic. Integration of media logic in politics leads political parties and campaign organizations to the adaption of rules, structures and messages as the mechanisms of effective campaigning (Stromback, 2008; Stromback and Esser, 2014). It's important to understand that media logic not only dictates the rules to political candidates and parties who look for the channels of communication with the electorate, but media also frames elections autonomously. All due respect, the media take advantage of the privilege being central domain for political parties and candidates for winning attention of voters and uses certain approaches of reporting about politics, as media also struggles to keep the substantial audience due to commercial interests. As Stromback (2008; p.233) evaluates relying on diverse scholars of the field "these storytelling techniques include simplification, polarization, intensification, personalization, visualization and stereotypization and the framing of politics as a strategic game or horse race".

There are several reasons to why journalists act in this manner. First, above already mentioned commercialization, which puts business model superior to the quality of information. Second, journalists with the increased professionalization of political campaigns see their job as exposers of those strategies to public. Moreover, it is a self-defense mechanism for journalists in two regards, not to be accused of taking sides or manipulated by 'spin doctors' into serving electoral interest and stay as an objective observer of the election race. Another important factor in increased tendency to frame politics as a strategic game is the rise of election polls, reflecting on which in news reportages is a faster way with a scientific flavor. This approach once again reinforces sense of objectivity for journalists, but provides stories without any deep and subsequent research into complex policy proposals. Finally, a focus on personalities and competitions has high entertaining value and catches bigger attention of the wider audience (Iyengar et al., 2004). Therefore, framing politics as a strategic game typically involve more drama, negativity and personalization of political news.

Those media practices for sure are in conflict with the nature of the political logic by itself. According to Meyer, (2002) political logic consists of both a policy dimension—"the effort to find solutions for politically defined problems by means of programs for action"—and a process dimension—"the effort to gain official acceptance of one's chosen program of action" (p.12). In both these dimensions, the primary actors are parties and politicians, located in political institutions, and the primary focus is on issues—that is, societal problems and suggestions with respect to how these can or should be addressed. Whereas media logic broadly corresponds to what Croteau (2006) labels as the market model. Politicians and political parties aware that policy promises can't generate media spotlight with the need of obtaining regular exposure in news adapt to explained media logic (Strömbäck, 2008). In

this regard, political attacks are known to have high news value and negativity receives disproportionately large amounts of coverage. Therefore, when stocks are too high for candidates, election strategy is shaped mainly by the media logic to render politics newsworthy. Consequently, when political actors adapt politics to media logic, they supply the media with numerous newsworthy attacks as a way of staying in the media spotlight (Kepplinger, 2002). Benoit (2017) in his functional theory, which is prominent academic theory and method to analyze negative campaigning, building on the mediatization process of politics derives important hypothesis and argues that "News coverage will overrepresent attacks and defenses and underrepresent acclaims, will focus on the horse race between parties and overrepresent character and underrepresent policy."

All discussed above is well known to the political consultants and campaign managers. Therefore, to bypass the media and as Patterson (1993) put it "stand alone before the electorate" (p.37) they often advice tactic of crafting negative political ads on own terms, which is both mediated from the "old" media – television and is also communicated directly through "new" media, like the social network platforms or websites. In the era of mediatization, professionals with the particular knowledge of media logic and communication know-hows gain huge importance and election campaigns become more professionalized.

This notion is to what next section is dedicated to discuss.

2.3. Professionalization/Americanization of Election Campaigning

Election campaigns are central for political communication, as it significantly influences the outcome of elections. With the irrevocable globalization, social cleavages of political behaviors loosened analytical importance and partisan attachments in advance democracies decreased, consequently voters became more vulnerable to the strong influence of campaigning. During election times, parties/politicians, journalists and public all concentrate on the process. Thus, parties/politicians need thoughtful communication not only with the electorate, but strategy not to obey to media logic and manage using media for better representation. This need of politicians of the barrier from constant media pressure gave a birth to the modern characteristic of political communication, 'spin doctors' (Scammell, 2015). 'Spin doctors' is a nasty word given to political consultants and PR gurus administrating election campaigns of parties or politicians with modern advanced tools to analyze voters attitudes and technologies to engage politicians with electorate effectively. The roles of campaign strategists were acquired by professional PR consultants and political marketers from party representatives managing the campaigns in the past. This trend first appeared in American context, therefore in academic literature this phenomenon regularly appears with the term *Americanization* (Negrine, 1996). However, the term is not as important as the common acknowledgment that with

Americanization (professionalization) of the election campaigning, the process became dominated by a television-driven media agenda with the focus on political personality and character. If political PR is about building beneficial relationships, managing reputations and communicating information to the public for political purposes, (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011) political PR in election campaigns is about winning electoral support by influencing public opinion and voting behavior. Partly this is achieved by emphasizing parties' policy proposals and positively frame party's leadership, partly by damaging the credibility of the opponents' policy platform and leadership aspirations (Baines, 2011 in Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011)

Americanization and professionalization are often used as synonymous terms. Basic difference is that professionalization might not be seen with such a negative connotation as Americanization, especially when campaign tactics and political consultants are imported from the U.S. to the Western European countries (Eibl, O. and Gregor, M., 2019). Americanization of election campaigning is controversial especially in advanced Western democracies with a long history of traditional party systems. Boyd-Barrett, have discussed Americanization as a result of American cultural imperialism (Boyd-Barret, 1977). It's believe that Americanization of the election campaigns can have a negative impact on local traditions of political communication. As the influence might have a potential to bring about the "deterioration of the quality of public debate and the substance of politics itself as an inevitable consequence of the oversimplification of political issues and the excessive reliance upon vague and consensual vote-seeking arguments" (Michel, 2005; p. 293). Great example of this claim is illustrated when Americanization is brought in a country with long tradition of democratic pluralism. During 1994 elections in Sweden, the Social Democratic party hired three American political consultants. After successful campaigning dominating media and public debates, they obtained the governing power, after being three years in an opposition. Regardless, in the beginning of 1998 election race, Goran Persson, the leader of the Social democratic party, then Prime Minister of Sweden stated: "No more American PR consultants!" – considering the internal criticism with the use of American consultants in the past, with this uncompromised statement he expected to gain public trust back (Nord, 2001). Such a radical view has later changed. It became obvious that Americanization did not mean that this process has always and everywhere occurred with the same effects and intensity (Swanson and Mancini, 1996; p. 6). Negrine and Papathanassopoulos have argued that a transformation of a political campaign is mostly conditioned by the ongoing (political, media and social) processes in the country (Negrine & Papathanassopoulos, 1996; p. 59).

As mentioned above, there is lack of academic evidence to support the claim that negative ads and attacks are effective to win voters, regardless this remains popular belief of political consultants and practitioners of the field (Lau and Rovner, 2009). Therefore, attacking opponents and creating

negative political ads still remains the primary tone of both; presidential and parliamentary election campaigns among different countries and party systems (Nai and Walter, 2016) In this regard, professionalization of election campaigning can be one of the reasons behind parties' adaption of diverse attack strategies as political consultants highly influence on parties'/politicians' decision to go negative, regardless the electoral circumstances and is an important factor to be kept in mind (ex. Grossmann, 2012).

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The field of negative campaigning has been dominated with the data mostly from the United States, as negativity is undivided from American historical discourse. Scholarly interest to investigate negative campaigning rose in the 90s, due to concerns about its impact on citizens and democracy. In several areas of the field findings are contested and research debates has not been resolved. Disagreements occurs regarding definitions of negativity and operationalization. In present research field has been moved from analyzing mainly negative spots on television, to more modern tools of communication across different campaign channels, like social media platforms. This chapter is divided into different sections to provide comprehensive literature review of the Negative Campaigning research field.

3.1. Research Field of Negative Campaigning

Since the pathbreaking work of Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995), which marked the research area of the negative campaigning, academic interest only grew. According to Karen A. Hartman (2000) if we look at types of research that have been done with the focus on negative campaigning by themes, three significant directions can be highlighted. Great number of articles focus on political advertisement (Kahn, K.F. and Geer, J.G, 1994; Kaid and Johnston, A.1991; Benoit, W.L., Pier, P.M and Blaney, J.R., 1997). Its effects on general public and democracy (Garramone, G.M., Atkin, C.K., Pinkleton, B.E. and Cole, R.T. 1990; Kahn, K.F. and Geer, J.G. 1994; Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A. and Valentino, N. 1994). Sufficient amount of scholarship can be found on negative campaign phenomena with specific focus on voter turnout, gender and media role in it (Ansolabehere S, Iyengar S, Simon A. 1999; Pfau, M. and Louden, A. 1994; Ansolabehere, S. and Iyengar, S. 1996). Moving next on the candidate's election strategies, main theoretical question asks when and why candidates may use negativity (Pfau, M. and Kenski, H.C. 1990; Pfau, M., Parrott, R. and Lindquist, B. 1992). It's also worth emphasizing that research field has a tendency of an anglophone nature, with most of the articles investigating primarily the U.S elections. (Geer, 2004. Geer, 2006. Andolabehere and Iyengar, 1995. Andolabehere and Iyengar, 1999. Garramone, 1990. Lemert, J., Wanta, W., & Lee, T. 1999. Finkel, S.E. and Geer, J.,1998. Kahn and Kenney, 1999. Freedman, P. and Goldstein, K., 1999. Lau, Richard R; Sigelman, Lee; Heldman, Caroline; Babbitt, Paul.,1999. Kim L. Fridkin and Patrick J. Kenney Source, 2011).

3.2. Defining the Concept of Negative Campaigning

Mayer (1996; p. 440) simply stated, "Negative campaigning is campaigning that attacks or is critical of an opposing candidate." But it's not as simple and straightforward, rather defining negative campaigning can be tricky as it constitutes to different terms from diverse perspectives. As David Mark puts in his book, "Going Dirty - the art of negative campaigning — "Negative campaigning, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder" (p.2). What this means is that perceptions differ and therefore, emphasis can stretch out different aspects of the term. But first, it should be stated that negative campaigning is not election malpractices, cheating or dirty tricks without any seed of truth implied. Rather it refers to actions a candidate takes to win an election by using a tactic of attacking the opponent (Mark, 2009).

Regardless, for public's perception negativity constitutes to the overall tone of "loaded words and nasty implications" (Nai and Walter, 2016; p. 111). For political consultants in defense of accusations for advising "going negative", negative messages can only be considered those which contains untruthful or deceptive information (Swint, 1998). Academic scholars reject the judgmental approach to negative campaigning, whereas journalists often evaluate the discourse of negativity with moralistic approach as nasty, bad or dirty (Mayer, 1996; Jamieson, 1992). Regardless, some scholars argue that using directional dimension of the concept excludes the interpretations of voters to who it is communicated and overall fails to reflect negativity as perceived (Brooks and Geer, 2007; Mutz and Reeves, 2005).

According to Crigler, Just and Belt (2006) researchers regarding negative campaigning may reach different conclusions as they focus on different aspects and dimensions of the phenomena. Regardless, three main broad areas of communication can be highlighted from the literature; (1) candidate attacks on candidates, which is mostly found in negative ads. (2) Cynical news about politics, candidate strategies or motives, typically found in news coverage with the emphasis on race game. (3) Fear-arousing messages from candidates or in the press that trigger anxiety or fear among citizens, regardless of such an intention. The latest can be found in both, news coverage and political ads.

After decision is made about which aspect of the negative campaigning phenomena is put under scrutiny and how to define it, variety of methodological approach and operationalizations comes into sight. Scholars derive qualitative data to analyze content from a wide range of communication channels. As rhetoric is a compound element of the negative campaigning, research often also conducts qualitative analysis of the content like party manifestos (Curini, 2011; Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010), press releases (Norris et al., 1999; Haynes et al., 2002; Rußmann, 2012), newspaper advertisements (Nai 2013, 2014a; Nai and Sciarini 2015), television spots (Benoit, 2007; Martin, 2004; Walter, 2014a), campaign posters (Vliegenthart, 2012), political debates (Glantz et al. 2013; Benoit 2007; Walter and Vliegenthart, 2010), letters in newspapers (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010),

websites (Hooghe and Vissers, 2008; Schweitzer, 2010; Druckman et al., 2010), newspaper reports on campaigns (Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Lau and Pomper 2004; Wicks and Souley, 2003) and social media (Carlson and Strandberg 2008; Salmond 2011). In digital age websites and social media as sources for qualitative data has also raised in its significance (Nai and Walter, 2015).

In core, academic scholars widely concur that the aim of negative campaigning is to diminish the positive feelings for the opponent by directly attacking them on either issue based or trait-based characteristics. Moreover, this is a rational decision with a particular electoral aim (Lau *et al.* 2007; Lau and Pomper, 2004; Geer, 2006; Benoit, 1999). In short, from the theoretical perspective, the phenomena of attacking the opposing candidate on the *record, policy, values, or personal characteristics* during election campaigning has been defined as a concept of *Negative Campaigning* (Lau and Pomper, 2004).

Figure 1: *Dimensions of Negative Campaigning*
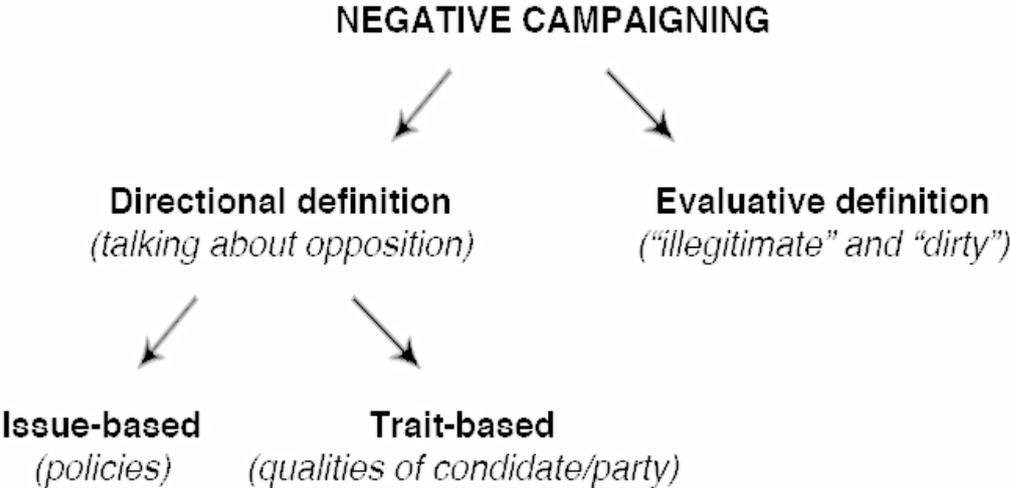
 Source: Classification modeled according to Lau and Pomper, 2004.

Considering already established consensus between academic scholars on the matter of the concept definition, this paper incorporates only directional dimension of negative campaigning and excludes any subjective evaluations used mainly by journalists, political consultants or public.

All said above about the perspectives and aspects of negative campaigning, one remains certain, it has become a common feature of modern politics around the globe to "go negative" during election campaigns — *Negative Campaigning* thus is a universal phenomenon, but its history starts earlier in

the US, back in late 60s. Following public worries, enormous academic literature on negative campaigning emerged since the 1980s and has researched ontological and epistemological questions around the phenomena, but mainly in the US context. From methodological standpoint, field of negative campaigning is still dominated by scholars who have used ways of systematic content analysis, rhetorical analysis, and survey analysis among voters from a functionalist approach to ensure validity and reliability of the studies.

3.3. Measuring Negativity

How researchers have measured "negativity in political ads is an important methodological question to be answered in the interest of this paper. Accordingly, in this section operationalization of negativity by different scholars are discussed. Kaid and Johnston (1991) look at the focus of the ad and simply code them as negative or positive. The unit of analysis in their study were the political spots aired during the Presidential campaigns, 1960-1988. After Kaid and Johnson categorized ads according to candidate name, election year, and sponsorship of the ad they add five more categories such as 1. **The speaker in the ad.** These included the candidate, an anonymous announcer, or some surrogate speaking for the candidate. 2. **The type of appeal used**-logical, emotional, or ethical. Logical appeals present facts in order to persuade viewers that the evidence (statistics, logical arguments, examples, etc.) favors a particular position. Emotional appeals are designed to evoke particular feelings or emotions in viewers, such as happiness, good will, pride, patriotism, anger, and hope. Ethical appeals use source credibility to enhance the candidate's appeal by suggesting his or her own qualifications or relying on the ethos of a surrogate speaker's endorsement. 3. **The use of fear appeals**. These are designed to make the voter fear that some negative consequence would occur if the candidate were not elected or if his or her opponent were elected. 4. **The type of ad content-image and issue**. Issue ads emphasize specific policy positions or express the candidate's concerns about particular matters of public concern. Image ads, on the other hand, **stress the candidate's characteristics, personality, human qualities, etc. Such ads** might **proclaim a** candidate's honesty and integrity or suggest his or her "caring, compassionate nature." An ad could contain both types of information. 5. **The use of special effects.** These included computer graphics, slow motion, freeze frames, montages, and stills. For negative ads two additional categories were coded: 6. **Strategies used in negative ad.** These included humor and ridicule, linking the opponent with undesirable issues or images, negative labels for the opponent (name calling), and implying guilt by association with undesirable persons or groups. 7. **Purposes of negative ad.** These included attacking the opponent's personal characteristics, issue positions, and group affiliations.

Karen Johnson-Cartee and Gary Copeland (1991) identify three main modes of negative appeal: (1) **the direct attack**, to decrease the opponents' positive evaluation score. (2) **the direct comparison ad**, to compare sponsor and opponent in regard to records, issue positions and values and (3) **the implied comparison ad**, to demonstrate sponsors advantages without focusing on the sponsor or the opponent. Jamieson (1992) while measuring negativity in American presidential campaigns used comparative approach and labelled ad as negative if it contained majority of such information. But, in his later work (2000) changed the method and divided discourse of spots into idea units of "advocacy", which emphasizes own position, "attacks" which is directional criticism to the opponent and "contrast" in which the two positions are compared. Another code "contrast" is brought in analysis by Goldstein and Freedman (2000; 2002) to distinguish mixed ads from positive or negative ones which are other two codes used. In their earlier work (1999) they have implemented more complex method of coding according to five-point scale - "Advertisements with positive and negative appeals were split into three further categories of 'balanced', 'predominantly negative, with a token mention of the sponsoring candidate' and, by implication – the third category is not explicitly mentioned in the article (Nai and Walter, 2016). Kahn and Kenney (1999a: 879-880) described their method in categorizing negativity tone in three categories: No negative messages, a minor emphasis on negativity and a major emphasis on negativity. This method from their perspective better deals with mix or "contrast" ads. West (2005) considered that political ad is negative if it contains any sentence disapproving the opponent. Another prominent scholar Geer (2006) follows Jamieson's path and divides ads into "appeals" that are directed at issues, traits, or values, both positive and negative in tone and coding them accordingly for analysis.

Still, the most significant work in the field of negative campaigning remains prominent scholar Bennoit's contribution. His theorization and method, known as Functional Theory (2017) has been used by many other scholars in the field of negative campaigning. Research driven by this theory has investigated different level US elections for variety of communication means like, TV spots, news coverage, political debates, announcement speeches, newspaper articles and more.

According to theory, Benoit (2017) argues that the goal of political campaign for parties and politicians is to convince majority of voters to vote in support. No party or candidate can get every vote, therefore there is no need to appear perfect, rather preferable. So that, citizens are able to compare and make their minds accordingly. Those appearances play a crucial role in creating perceptions about the candidate or a political party. Although no candidate or party eagers to avoid discussing salient societal issues and make political promises, finding ways to distinguish from others is vital. This the moment where political communication enters the scene.

To achieve those goals three main functions are utilized through producing the political messages (utterances). Benoit (2017) argues for three rhetorical ways to appeal to the electorate – ***acclaim, attack or defend***; ***Acclaims*** emphasize on positive credentials of own as a better choice by attributing traits of experience, integrity, honesty, and leadership potential. ***Attacks*** downgrade the compotators as worse choice and ***defends*** respond to attacks from the opponents. Functions in this regard address two topics: ***policy (issue) or character (images).***

Policy (issue) may address past achievements (deeds), future plans or encourage hope, or general goals. On another hand, character statements are concerned with personal qualities, leadership ability and ideals (values, principles). It is not mandatory for every election campaign to use all three functions. While it is impossible to imagine political campaign without positive communication, some candidates or parties refuse or strategically might unwill to attack or defense. Reason for not engaging in attacks could vary from concerns about possible backlash, reputation to poll standing.

3.4. Demobilize vs Mobilize Hypothesis

One of the main concerns scholars have been raising questions regarding negative campaigning is its impact on citizens and democracy. We can divide scholars investigating impacts of negative campaigning into four groups; the demobilization claimers, it has no effect claimers, the ones who argue that negative campaigning can actually mobilize citizens and those, who argued that it depends on other factors in relation.

Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) were prominent scholars of the negative campaigning field who conducted series of experiments and exposed participants to negative ads. Their work became highly cited due to the finding that negative ads reduce voter turnout and demobilize citizens. Those finding triggered concerns that negative campaigning might have corrosive effect on democracy and inspired other scholars to continue research in this direction. There was criticism towards their work among scholars, therefore in 1999 with Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon the study was once again replicated but reached the same conclusion. Moreover, Ansolabehere et, al. (1994) also claimed that negative campaigning can increase voters' cynicism towards politics.

Between those who believed that negative campaigning does not mobilize citizens was another prominent scholar of the field John Geer. J. Geer (2006) with his work changed the debate, arguing about possible beneficial effects of the employment of the negativity. As in the most attack ads, publics are presented to the evidence of the wrongdoings of the politicians who look for the electoral support to obtain high level political positions. In short, publics have the right to know, not only

positive features of the candidate, but any controversies or misbehaviors of the past. Later conducted meta-analysis on the academic literature of the negative campaigning field neither support the claims of its destructiveness on democracy, not reject it, moreover the debate was finally resolved when Debora Brooks replicated yearly study of Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) to find the measurement problem which led scholars to the demobilization conclusion. (Lau and Pomper, 2004; Brooks, 2006; Lau and *et, al*. 2007; Lau and Rovner, 2009;).

Scholars who argued that negative campaigning might demobilize (Kahn and Kenney, 1999; Min, 2004) suggested that the character of the attacks influence on demobilization. Citizens do not tolerate "mudslinging" and personal attacks in politics.

3.5. Drivers of Negative Campaigning

Another logical question regarding the phenomena of negative campaigning has also been raised by scholars; What drives negativity and the decision to attack the opponent? — Although some factors are already established in academic acknowledgment, this question still widely remains unsolved. One is agreed upon, that negative campaigning is a risky, but strategic decision from politicians and parties to adapt (Riker 1996; Lau and Pomper 2004). Moreover, the risk is cost-beneficial as attacks are more likely to trigger counterattacks and might "backlash" negative feelings toward the attacker instead of the target (Garramone 1984; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1991; Roese and Sande 1993). If the attacking is the ultimate choice for a candidate, the optimal strategy is to attack the stronger opponent. As there is no benefit in attacking the weaker in the context of the political competition (Skaperdas and Grofman, 1995). In deciding who to attack, policy stands also play a crucial role. For Doron-On (1983) attacking requires accurate targeting, as attacking the party with the similar ideology or stance can prevent your supporters to fly to attacked party and ensure undecided voters to vote for your party. This approach especially works in multi-party systems where, attacking the front-runner still does not guarantee that voter won't float to the third party.

We can highlight three significant drivers of negativity from the studies already done as; *attackers characteristics, target characteristics and contextual characteristics*. In first driver category the most significant is the gender of the prime figure. As mentioned above, American scholars have investigated gender aspect in negative campaigning and concluded that female candidates might expect less from negativity strategies, for the reason that general patriarchal stereotypes frame women as less aggressive (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Fridkin and Kenney 2009; Kahn and Fridkin, 1996). Another important candidate characteristic to affect decision is race. As minority group candidate's aim is to transcend race and appeal to a wider electorate, those are less likely to attack (Krebs and Holian, 2007). Candidate's party affiliation is also considered as personal trait worth looking into as a

factor to impact on the decision. Findings suggest that Republican candidates are more likely to go negative than Democrats (Lau and Pomper, 2001). Another well-established finding from the US context by Kahn and Kenney (1999) is that challengers are more negative than incumbents, because incumbents have more resources and can afford to adjust their rhetorical strategy. Moreover, central determinant in race competition is a theory that front-runners are less alike to go negative, which means that poor poll standing is a trigger to engage in negativity strategies more (Skaperdas and Grofman, 1995).

Target characteristics is another category intertwined with the first one. The decision to attack can be motivated due to several attributions of the opponent. First of all, competing political ideology and stands on policy (Nai and Sciarini, 2018). Social stereotypes play a significant role in this category as well. Several studies have shown that male candidates are less likely to go negative if they face a female opponent than a male opponent, as no man candidate wants to appear to an audience as misogynist (Nai and Walter, 2016).

Mentioning audiences leads to another important finding; the media aspect of campaigns and the degree of publicity a candidate desires to acquire compared to an opponent. In the US election context earned media coverage is free for a candidate, therefore desirable. As we all know, the media is often going after conflict and amplifies negativity through their own communication channels (Ridout and Smith 2008; Nai, 2020; Lau et. Al 2007; Iyengar, 2019). The core idea is that the news media now cover negative ads so extensively that they have given candidates extra incentive to produce and air them. Candidates want to get their message out. They want to control the terms of the debate. They can air a positive ad and try to influence voters with that spot. But the news media will likely ignore it. Nothing is newsworthy in such a spot. A negative ad, however, can generate controversy and conflict, drawing attention from journalists. This same argument of the media influence on negative campaigning is argued by prominent scholar (Walter A. S., 2014) in her competitive study of the negative campaigning in Western Europe — "In addition, parties increasingly have to compete with one another and with other actors in the public domain for the attention of the mass media. To increase the odds of being considered newsworthy it is likely that parties adapt their communication to the mass media's standards. Conflict is one of those criteria used for news selection and the practice of negative campaigning can be regarded as a way for parties to create conflict." Thus (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999) evaluate the reason behind the adaptation and growing role of mass media, which stimulates the use of negative campaigning due to Mediatization. Lastly, not only poor poll standings, but also financial poverty of the candidate or party can be an important precondition to "go negative", as positive campaigning is way more expensive and less memorable (Nai and Walter, 2016).

3.6. Election Context

Election context has a huge impact on decision to "go negative". For candidates or parties who have poor poll standing, the risk to employ negativity strategies is easily overweighted by potential benefits (Maier & Jansen, 2017). More factors which can drive negativity in campaigns are competition for votes (Nai, 2020), and salience of election (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010). However, Lau and Pomper (2004) could not detect any positive correlation between employment of negativity and race competitiveness.

Scholars studying negative campaigning beyond the US scope argue that party systems significantly matter for decision of "going negative" As mentioned before, US two party system is inherently negative compared to multi party systems (Walter, 2014). The possible explanation for this might be that parties would employ less attacks to avoid the discomfort in case of coalition governments (Hansen & Pedersen, 2008). Although, according to some scholars, there is a correlation between party fragmentation and negativity: Increasing the number of parties, negativity decreases first, only to start increasing again once the party system becomes very fragmented (Papp and Patkos, 2019). Nevertheless, the literature also makes a contradicting argument in connection with the effect of party system fragmentation. Evidence suggests that the higher the number of quality competitors (Peterson and Djupe 2005), and the closer the race, the more parties are willing to go negative (Desposato 2008). Others, on the other hand, find no evidence regarding fragmentation at all (Walter et al. 2014).

Attacking competitors along valence characteristics creates a moral advantage, which can be crucial when there are otherwise little differences between parties (Carraro et al. 2010; Curini 2011). Thus, in countries where the electorate is not polarized, in other words, where parties must compete for the votes of the same voters (Doron and On,1983 in Walter, 2014), negativity is expected to increase. Conversely, with increasing polarization, the market for votes spreads out, which makes negativity unnecessary as there is no overlap between the "hunting grounds" of the competing parties.

3.7. Negative Political Advertisements

Research on negative political ads takes a significant part in the field of negative campaigning and mostly, negative ads are understood in contrast to positive ads, therefore, this section starts with the general definitive introduction to political advertisements.

Political advertisements are the most visible and expensive form of carefully crafted political communication with the electorate. In democratic systems, where parties and political candidates

compete with each-other during elections. As Holtz-Bacha and Kaid (2006, p.16) define it "political advertising is a means through which (…) political parties present themselves to electorate, mostly through the mass media." Unlike free media coverage, where parties and candidates have less control to how journalists cover and frame issues, political advertisements are fully controlled by the political parties or candidates. Political ads are often referred as paid media, as parties or candidates and interest groups can purchase airtime for political spots. Those terms are generated in the USA, but in many other countries, due to different regulations, it's restricted to buy airtime, so other terms like controlled and uncontrolled media might be more accurate to use (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid, 2006). We also know from the literature that different context characteristics influence on the nature and the role of political advertisements in election campaigns, such as political system, electoral system, and media system (Roper, Holtz-Bacha and Mazzoleni, 2004). Moreover, how electoral messages are designed and integrated in political advertisement is highly dependent on political culture and history of the given country. In this regard, we can argue that political advertisements are internationally comparative by the nature and should be understood in political structures and processes (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

In this sense, political advertisements are unmediated campaign products, through which political actors communicate certain messages, images, and issues. In modern world, parties and candidates beyond traditional press, television and radio have different means to reach voters, therefore the broad definition of political advertisement is suggested as following; "Any controlled messages communicated through any channels designed to promote the political interests of individuals, parties, groups, governments, or other organizations." (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid, 2006, p. 4). Research has shown that political advertisements serve many functions for parties and candidates, such as establishing name identification, connect the candidate or party with certain demographic groups, attract new supporters, help raise money or attack the opponent (Devlin, 1986 in Holtz-Bacha and Kaid, 2006).

Attack ads can be better understood in contrast to positive ads, as the most important decision for political actors, regarding political ads is weather to promote own policy pledges, personal strengths and accomplishments in a positive light or instead attack the competitors on issues, character, or policy proposals (Lau and Rovner, 2009). The aim of negative political ads is seen to win the election. Hence and not surprisingly, the conventional wisdom among the political consultants advising to "go negative" is its effectiveness (Kamber, 1997 in Peterson and Djupe, 2005; Swint, 1998). Although, academic evidence does not support those claims (Lau et al., 2007). Especially, producing negative ads should be avoided by unknown candidates for name recognition. One of the clear findings about negative ads is that they tend to be more issue oriented than do positive ads (Kaid and Johnston, 1991;

West, 1993). Another well-established finding from different studies is that attacks that focus on the opposing candidate's issue positions are more effective than those attacking the character or image of the opponent (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1989; Kahn and Geer, 1994; Kaid and Tedesco, 1999c; Pfau and Burgoon, 1989; Roddy and Garramone, 1988; Schenck-Hamlin, Procter, and Rumsey, 2000; Sonner, 1998). However, a personal attack on a character of the opponent is necessary, Homer and Batra (1994) suggest that it should target competence or experience. A comparative ad may be a better solution to implement negativity as a strategy in the ad, as it may lower evaluations of the targeted candidate with lower risk of backlash on the sponsor (Pinkleton, 1997; 1998). With the experimental study, Kahn, and Geer (1994) found out that, if unknown candidate uses negative ad to attack opponents' stances, evaluation of his action is viewed as more positive rather than if the unknow candidate attacks opponent on personal characters. Moreover, finding suggested that running more positive ads is better for unknown candidates to enter the election race. While running negative ads have a high risk of backlash for unknown candidates.

In contemporary political campaigning history, the great example of such memorable negative ad is considered 'Daisy'. During 1964 presidential campaign of Lyndon Johnson attacking his republican opponent Barry Goldwater (Daisy,1964). Media attention, public reactions, and discussion the ad has triggered in the U.S. was hard to over-look. Media consultant Tony Schwartz, who produced the famous "Daisy Girl" spot for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, observed long before others seemed to understand that political parties are not a medium to communicate with voters, instead television opened straight forward door in the homes and heads of millions of Americans (Schwartz, 1984). In 2011, Robert Mann wrote an academic article calling spot 'Daisy' the ad that has changed American politics. What Daisy spot has done to the audience is triggering pure negative emotions such as fear and anxiety about the future. Hart (2000) has in fact argued that;" . . . one must never underestimate the importance of that which advertising most reliably delivers–political emotion" (p. 138). Kaid and Johnston (2001) in their study on the presidential ads, also came to the finding that spots contained more emotional proof than logical or ethical proof.

By aim, content of the ad differs in style and techniques used to evoke certain emotions. Belt (2017) claimed that there are several techniques to craft negative ads and they consistently differ from positive ads including in color, music, speed, narration, and associations made in the ad. Therefore, the next section looks at the features of negative advertisements and how negative messages are conveyed in attack ads.

3.8. Style and Format of Attack Ads

According to Holz-Batcha and Just (2017) negative advertainments aim to provoke fear and anxiety to diminish positive feeling about the competitors. To reach the goal several different techniques might be used in production of the content evoking negative feelings via audiovisual ads. It is believed that those techniques have a significant impact on audience and therefore are effective. There is a common acknowledgment that visual images are worth of million words and more memorable, especially if visual images are negative (Lang, 1991). Characteristics of wide range is implemented in audiovisuals to persuade voters. Usually, in attack ads the opponent is shown in black and white, whereas sponsor of the ad is portrayed in bright colors (West, 2014). The use of grey image arouses fear and anxiety (Brader, 2006). As visuals, music and sound effects can also amplify the effects of ads. As an example, patriotic music can be used as in positive, as in negative ads, where context directs the interpretation of the audio stimuli. But eerie or distracting music is exclusively used in negative ads to appeal to feelings of fear and tension. Voiceover in negative ads can also be seen as a technique to provide a context and tell a story with a narrator's voice. Narrative directs certain focus and associations to interpret images on the screen. Often gender of the narrator's voice is a male to ensure "seriousness" of accusations is legit, while female voice might be used to soften the potential backlash. Visuals, images, and symbols are also undivided part of the audiovisual content. In positive ads, visual imaginary aims to inspire enthusiasm, hope and happiness. On the other hand, the same images and symbols in attack ads can serve to link opponent to a negative action or idea. Other times, images are chosen for their humorous content to ridicule the target candidate (West, 2014). Subjects to attack the opponent beyond policy stance, issues and ideas are personal characteristics, or even relatives to whom candidate should not be hold responsible at all. This means that, in negative advertising ethics is not a limitation.

Chapter 4

In this chapter the reader is introduced to the background information of the country Georgia as without historical and political context it is impossible to understand characteristics of election campaigning and design of political ads. In the first section modern history of the country is discussed in relation to electoral system. In the next sections, hybrid democracy concept is explained before moving to political landscape and election campaigning tradition. Those sections are designed to draw the general contours of political life in post-Soviet Georgia and put the emphasis on the challenges country faces to maintain strong democratic institutions.

Georgia

After collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia finally regained own independence on 9 April 1991 after brutal suppression by Soviet forces of a peaceful demonstration on the central street of the capital, leaving twenty people dead. A year later, in 1992 Georgia implemented its 1921 pre-Soviet constitution. After further legislature work of Constitutional Commission, a new version of constitution was adapted in 1995. Later, the power of the President was reduced by amendments made in 2013 to expand the role of the Prime Minister and the governmental cabinet. According to the planned changes, the rule of the direct voting to elect the President of the country will be replaced by the electoral college of lawmakers in 2024. Under constitutional changes approved in 2017, the President elected in 2018 is to serve a six-year term, after which a 300-member electoral college comprising national lawmakers and regional and local officials will choose presidents (Freedom House, 2021). At the given moment, Georgia has a dual executive government of Georgian Dream (GD) with the prime minister serving as the head of government and the President as head of the state. The members of the parliament serve four-year terms and are elected by mixed electoral system of half Majoritarian and Proportional lists. This mixed system of the electoral process was adopted in 2020 for the first time and is intended to be replace by fully Majoritarian system in 2024 (Britannica, 2021)

Georgia with the strong support of public attitude has declared foreign policy and within the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EAP) is on the path to become a full member of the European Union (Georgian Journal, 2020) The European Union and Georgia's close relationship is based on the EU Georgia Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which entered into force in July 2016 and strives for political association and economic integration (EU, 2016) In this regard, Georgia is working on its transaction to the representative democracy model to apply for the EU membership by 2024 (Jam-news, 2021)

The existing Georgian electoral system is mixed. 77 seats of Parliament are decided with proportional electoral vote, while other 73 with majoritarian. This electoral rule makes Georgian system transactional to coalition government.

Until 1980s the only political party was The Communist Party of Georgia, controlled by the Communist party of the Soviet Union. With the increase in nationalist sentiment and the reforms of the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov, many diverse political groups emerged. In 1988, Zviad Gamsakurdia became one of the founders of the Society of Saint Ilia the Righteous (SSIR), which later played crucial role in the political process of the country and was elected as a first President with 86 per cent of the vote. Gamsakhurdia's rule embodied a paradox typical of many young and immature democracies: it had a strong popular mandate but was very soon denounce as authoritarian. (author) Zviad Gamsakhurdia escaped Tbilisi due to the Civil conflict over the power struggles and died in an unclear circumstance. The major political party the Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) with the leader Eduard Shevardnadze in alliance National Democratic Party came into power. Eduard Shevardnadze remained the President of the country until 2003 "Rose Revolution" by the former minister Mikheil Saakashvili (UNM). The government of The United National Movement (UNM) was opposed and defeated in 2012 parliamentary elections by the party coalition the Georgian Dream (GD) formed by the oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. The United National Movement (UNM) remains the biggest opposition party in present Georgia.

Regardless that more than fifty political parties registered to participate in 2020 parliamentary elections, which indicates fragmentation of political party system in Georgia, high level of polarization to the GD and the biggest opposition party UNM remains existing. Fragmentation is an important dimension of political party systems. It concerns the proliferation of minor parties and the willingness of voters to vote for them. High fragmentation is frequently demonstrated in countries with proportional representation (Coleman, 1995) This polarization towards GD and UNM is demonstrated by share of electoral support with 48.22% and 27.18%, while other parties struggled to overcome the 3% barrier to gain seats. In relation to negativity theories this means that if the party system is very fragmented negativity increases (Papp and Patkos, 2019). Nevertheless, as the literature is contradicting on correlation of party system fragmentation and negative campaigning, other factors should also influence type of election campaigning.

4.1. Level of Democracy

Georgia has been a country notorious for its political instability with multiple transactions to democracy. Transitions toward democracy in post-Soviet countries often are described as troublesome,

sometimes accompanied with "colored revolutions". Georgia is not exception from this historical trend with its 2003, so called "Rose Revolution". Obviously, degree of the quality of democracy seen in old Western democracies is not achieved once and fast. In present, Georgia is a great example of the sub-type of democracy, Freedom House (2020) report labels Georgia as a partially-free, the concrete term close to the notion of hybrid regime. By definition "A hybrid regime is always a set of ambiguous institutions that maintain aspects of the past. […] lacking as it does one or more essential characteristics of that regime but also failing to acquire other characteristics that would make it fully democratic or authoritarian" (Morlino, 2008; p, 7).

It is worth mentioning that most of the countries which falls into the category of partially-free are medium-small or small countries, like Moldova and Ukraine. Both share the Soviet past with Georgia. Prominent scholar Hale (2011) argues that hybrid regimes must be studied on their own because they possess some characteristics that have to be considered peculiars. Although, hybrid regimes hold competitive elections, incumbents often abuse state resources to win elections. Sometimes harassing opposition candidate, denying adequate media coverage for opponents and in worst cases manipulate election results. Tested methods to stay in power for incumbents in post-Soviet countries are diverse, nevertheless we can distinct three types of electoral misconduct: manipulation of the rules governing elections, the manipulation of voters and the manipulation of votes (Levitsky and Way, 2002). Post-communist transitions, although "troubled," still can be regarded as transitions to democracy. Regardless, some theories derived from Western acknowledgments of democracy might fail to explain election processes in hybrid systems (Nodia,1996).

Georgia has volatile party system, it means that classical Lipset and Rokkan (1967) theory of social cleavages, which is useful tool to analyze party systems and voting behavior in advanced democracies, fails to give a full understanding of the societal divisions of hybrid contexts. In relation to election campaigning, this means that political parties are constantly campaigning and fighting for the attention and approval of voters. As in hybrid democracies there is a lack of traditional voting blocs, flying voters often make voting decisions under the influence of intense emotions triggered by political scandals. Great example to support this theoretical claim is significant election of 2012 in Georgia, when so called 'Gldani prison scandal', just two weeks before the elections has turned possible outcome upside down and ruling UNM lost the ruling power (BBC, 2012). The saga of secret tapes accompanies Georgian elections permanently. In the already mentioned analysis by Hale (2011), he also categorizes and lists several other methods, which are used by the incumbents against opposition. This includes media manipulation, coercing or buying votes, supporting informal groups to attack opposition, creation of the fake opposition movement as a way of challenging or diverting opposition votes), selective prosecution, falsification (stolen elections) pressuring, co-opting, or blackmailing.

Moreover, in modern times, incumbents often use social media to penetrate certain information with an aim of opinion influence. This theoretical know how has also been demonstrated in the empirics of Georgian political life; — In May 2020, Facebook has removed over 500 pages and more than 100 accounts as well for "coordinated domestic politics". Pages were run by the firm associated with the governmental party and posted edited content about the political opposition in Georgia and highlighting governmental figures in positive light (Agenda.ge, 2020). Responding to the report, governmental party was forced to held press conference and deny any connection with the firm. From this we can assume that negative campaigning in hybrid democracy might be demonstrated not only during official election campaign time in political advertisements, but also through other means of communication like party manifestos, news and press conferences held by parties on different political issues.

4.2. Political Landscape

Understanding how party systems evolve over time and who supports particular parties is crucial to analyze democratic reality. Academic scholars believe that in the post-Soviet countries stabile and representative party system has a significant importance for the consolidation of the democracy (Diamond, Linz and Lipset, 1990). Political parties in post-Soviet realities are often described as volatile. Due to the high party volatility, every next election sees how parties disappear from the political arena. Moreover, parties that are in opposition as political institutions are weak and unstable have no influence over the majority seats, which usually is acquired by incumbents, which creates the problem of power concentration, which triggers constant conflicts and clashes (Melikidze, 2018). Another problem in post-Soviet democracies, due to party volatility is political personalization, whereas politicians have become the main anchor of interpretation and evaluation of the political process (Melikidze, 2020). Or, as Olson and Iionski (2012) puts it; "leaders become more important in regimes where rules are unsettled" and politics is played in terms of persons, rather than party platforms. Fragile and unstable party systems are prerequisites for voters to transfer from one party to another over round of electoral cycles and create electoral volatility as well (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Consequently, politicians often don't act loyal to strategical political rational, have weak programs and citizens have hard time to identify with parties (Mainwaring, Torcal, 2006, in Katz and Crotty, p. 204). As Jones (2014) reckoned 'Leaders, heroes, and actions, rather than parties, grassroots activity, and ideology, are still the stuff of Georgian politics' (p. 311).

Those characteristics influence how citizens view political parties. Public confidence in the national legislature and political parties is consistently at the bottom of the list of all institutions. According to

the polls of the independent NGO 'National Democratic Institution' trust in Georgia's institutions and political leaders is in decline from year to year. In 2020, just before the election, compared to the last year, evaluation of the parliament was at it's an all-time low with 57 percent considering performance of it poor, and only 9 percent had ranked it positively. Most Georgians, 64 percent, do not think parliament takes into account their opinions, and 68 percent believe that members of parliament (MPs) serve only their own interests (NDI, 2020). The public trust towards parties is usually measured in single or lower double digits too. Public widely considers that political parties in Georgia rarely reflects of country's ideological or social divisions. Rather it represents the elites and serves to fulfilment of personal agendas over policy promotion.

Political parties and their leaders intensely accuse each other and use verbal attacks. In the Georgian case, such "all or nothing" political logic fuels even more polarization — "This made the electoral stakes excessively high and banished the culture of compromise, coalition-building, and power-sharing. Genuine cooperation has not been part of the game plans unless at a time when a common enemy had to be confronted. Political fights have been personalized by political leaders and never sufficiently checked by the internal institutional filters of parties. The ever-elusive consensus over key national matters, the fear of retribution by opponents, and the lack of trust in an impartial judicial review did little to thwart this renewable cycle of political polarization" (Kobalia in Nodia and Scholbach, 2006).

In 2017 a report about polarization of Georgia went so far to claim that; "Rough contests between the opposed political camps have made Georgia one of the most politically polarized countries in Europe (GYLA, DRI 2017)." Those claims where not supported by any data, but the CRRC Georgia in 2020 still researched if there was any truth to those claims. Rather the finding suggested that what divides society is "explicitly political, such as partisan victories and politician themselves". Therefore, the societal division is more in relation to personalization of politics, rather than policy preferences. Thus, we can assume that personalization of politics might determine the type of negative attacks. Due to low political culture in the country, citizens know less about policies, but can recognize party leaders who have gained huge recognition from the mediatization of politics, as news puts race between candidates in the center of politics more, rather than policy discussion. Consequently, assumption is that election campaigns although parliamentary regarding negative campaigning should demonstrate higher degree of character attacks, rather than policy attacks.

4.3. Election Campaigning

In post-Soviet Georgia, the weak institutionalization of the party system and the fragile ideological grounds has played a determining role in the transformation of political campaigning as well (Melikidze, 2020). The ongoing political and societal changes in the new democracies create a favorable basis for the "adaptation and introduction of experience of American election campaign (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001). But, mainly due to the trauma of communist propaganda, which controlled any communication messages and did not allow the independence of press, challenges to implement patterns of the third stage of political communication occurred. Consequently, process of adaptation to the Western ways of communication without fundamental development steps taken by advanced democratic systems gave a birth to a "middle way" model of hybridization (Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995; Blumler and Gurevitch 2001; Plasser and Plasser 2002). The rapid and forced implementation of mediatization and Americanization of political communication in young democracies created even more fertile grounds for negativity, personalization and emotionalization of politics. Political campaigns focused on personal confrontations between candidates rather than policy debates. Significance of political parties as a crucial institution for strong democracy were downplayed to personality cults.

We can argue that transformation of election campaigns in Georgia starts in late 90s, but with internal political process of changes after 2003 Rose Revolution becomes more vivid. With the rise of trust towards commercialized media outlets, political parties realized the significant importance of media instrumentalization to set the agenda and reach own political goals. Therefore, considering the specific case of Georgia, the Americanization of election campaigning beyond its features in advanced democracies demonstrates "the political instrumentalization of television." (Melkidze, 2020) or to use another term, high level of "political parallelism" (i.e., the extent to which the media advance political and partisan goals) (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). We know from the literature that the Americanization of political campaigns reached its peak during the "colored revolutions" (Anable, 2006). The peak of mediatization of Georgia politics was also reached during Rose Revolution (Melkidze, 2020). As David Anable (2006) describes events of 2003, Rose Revolution beyond tens of thousands of people gathered on the main avenue of the capital, "in homes throughout much of the rest of the country, hundreds of thousands were glued to Rustavi-2 television". This was a revolution televised.

Regardless, demonstrated Americanization of election campaigning in Georgia, academic research about negative campaigning is nonexistence. The only policy memo on the tone of negativity during election campaigns accessible is done by the request of Georgian Institute of Politics in 2019.

According to NEGex -- the negative campaigning comparative expert survey – by Alessandro Nai (2019) Georgia in international comparison scores for Legislative election (October 2016) and

Presidential election (October 2018) stood somewhere in the middle of international distribution, with an average tone of 3,5 **(figure 2).**
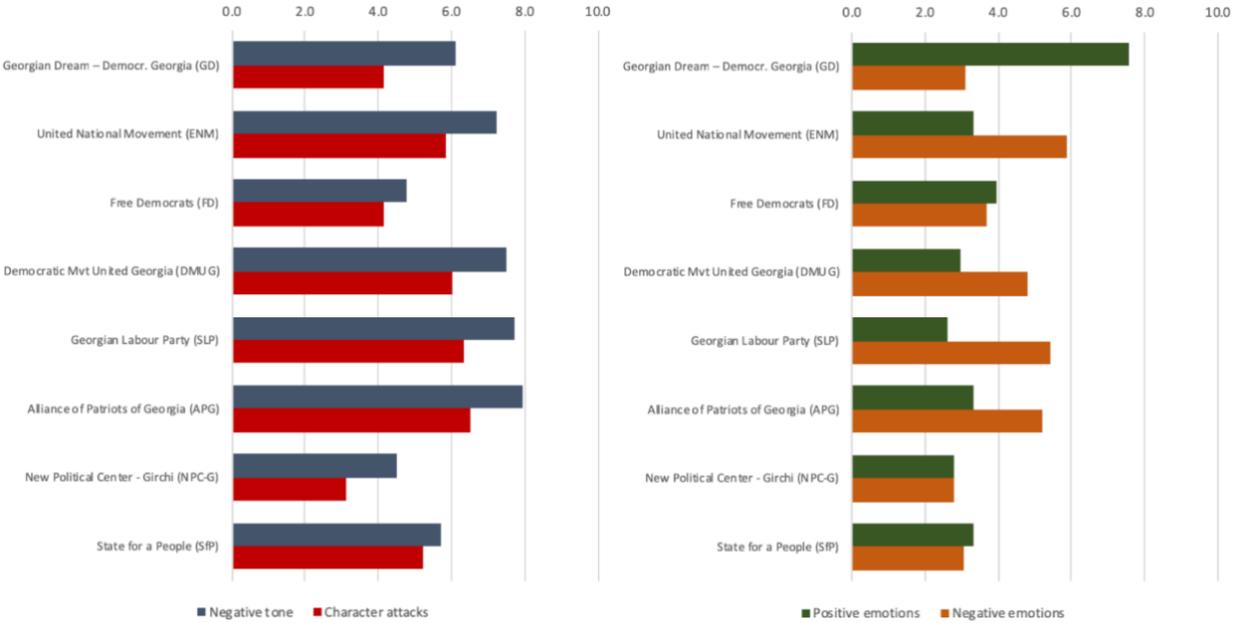
Figure 2*: The infographic is taken from GIP policy memo 2019 by Alessandro Nai*

In 2016 legislative election **(figure 2)** a radically different patterns emerged for the two main competing parties; the Georgian Dream (GD) and the United National Movement (UNM). The GD used relatively fewer negative attacks than opposition party the UNM. Although the GD campaign was still negative in absolute terms, the party overall made a lower use of negative messages and character attacks (left-hand panel of figure 2) and used a discourse intended to elicit more positive emotions during their campaigns (right hand panel). The UNM, on contrary used more harsh rhetoric evoking fear and anxiety and frequently attacked on character.

4.4. Media Landscape

Georgian media landscape is mainly described as robust, competitive, and pluralistic, but "highly polarized" with television channels being affiliated with different political parties (Freedom House, 2016). As already mentioned above, this is what Hallin, and Mancini (2004) called political parallelism in their significant work "Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics". Hallin and Mancini (2004) offered standardized framework for comparison of systems of Western Europe, the USA and Canada. Hallin and Mancini (2004) framework has been used as a standardized measurement models in Western democracies. Several studies have applied their

framework to countries beyond the West as well (e.g., Hallin and Manicini, 2012b; Dobek-Ostrowska and Glowacki, 2008; Trpevska and Micevski, 2014; Balčytienė, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012). All those case studies and theoretical approaches tell us that CEE media systems' development cannot be separated from own cultural backgrounds and political systems and therefore, can't be labeled as any of three categories given by Hallin and Mancini (2004). In CEE countries, the media inherited certain structural elements of the former communist state rule and although regulated on the paper, still are highly dependent on the ruling political party. In most of the CEE countries professional journalistic values are suffering and political and business elites influences often "colonize" media channels. Finally, the economic vulnerability of the media due to the small market which brings less revenues than financial gain intensifies media ownership concentration into the hands of closely tied with politics and stronger governmental control, especially over PSB (L. Castro Herrero et al., 2017). Although CEE countries cannot be treated as homogeneous in regard to media systems, due to the shared communist past, political parallelism is widely demonstrated in less or more extent.

Therefore, trust in media among citizens of Georgia is low, with less than one third fully or partially trusting media. Although media literacy skills in general is weak, public is widely aware of biases and disinformation. It is common for Georgians to read multiple sources and use diverse sources, like family members, friends and co-workers to fact-check and critically filter information. 84% of Georgians cite friends, co-workers, and family members as primarily source of information. Those exchanges frequently take places in person, or via social media private chats. Compared to television, print media and traditional radio stations have limited circulation and reach – Only, 14% of Georgians read newspapers and 13% listen to radio to consume the news (IEA, 2021). Regardless trust issues, according to Internews' Information Ecosystem Assessment Report (IEA) on Georgia (2021) television is a leading source for citizens to get informed on public affairs – 90% of households own TV. There are more than 100 TV stations and 45 radio stations available in the country.

In Georgia, as around the world, social platforms have a rapidly changing role in the production, distribution, and consumption of information. Facebook is the most popular platform, followed by messenger and YouTube and other platforms for the exchange of information. In contrast to European countries, Twitter is less used by Georgians. As mentioned above, citizens use Facebook to exchange information. Political actors use Facebook groups to align with supporters and push polarization with intensively promoting preformulated political messages. All major political parties obtain a number of these groups and group admins often are the same.

Although Georgia can be described as "television-centric" country, for younger generation the main source of consuming tele-content remains social media. The Facebook is the most popular social network in Georgia. 81% of citizens using social networks say they use Facebook (IEA, 2021).

Therefore, all major political parties obtain official social media platforms, where they communicate with the electorate and share political advertising. Especially, during election campaigning.

Before moving to methodology chapter, let me first sum up context characteristics of Georgia, which might be determine the nature of election campaigning and have an impact on negative campaigning. Firstly, Georgia has multi-party-political system and is in the phase of transitional electoral system from majoritarian rule to fully proportional. In relation to negative campaigning this can be interpreted that as proportional rule might lead to coalitions and parties usually keep the political temperature low and attack less. Second, level of democracy in Georgia is suffering due to diverse election malpractices and weak institutions. Therefore, as rules are still unsettled, negativity might be taking place beyond election campaigning as it is characterized for hybrid democracies. This assumption becomes even realistic considering media parallelism and instrumentalization of media, which serves as agenda setter for political parties and favoring certain types of information to persuade voters for the benefit of incumbents or opposition. Moreover, due to low political culture and weak media literacy skills politics in Georgia is more about political leaders put in the center of political debates by media, rather than ideologies or policy stances. Therefore, during election campaigning attacks might be addressed to character rather than issues and appeals should target emotions rather than be rational.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Advocates of qualitative methods argue that qualitative and more inductive approach to social world is crucial to create local and practical knowledge. Sensitivity of the social researcher to study empirical world and issues is more relevant than ever (Flick, 2014). It has been claimed that any kind of research involves researcher's observation at some stage of academic inquiry. Although, some research methods embrace the process of interpretation process by putting researcher in the center of investigation – ethnography is such (Altheide, 1987).

Through the lenses of negative campaigning theory and implementation of Ethnographic Content Analysis as a method, the aim of the paper is to connect the findings of the negative campaigning field from two party political system of the United States and advance democratic countries and apply it to yet unexplored hybrid democracy political context. Use of such strategy is justified as political communication in every setting is complex by the nature and is the result of cultural and historical developments. Moreover, to expand the knowledge and challenge the scope of geographical and academic nature of the negative campaigning theory, political context and its influence should be considered into the study. Therefore, I have chosen to conduct this study of an election in a multiparty system of Georgia, fully aware of the advantages of own predominant knowledge of the political context, language, and culture under investigation.

This research paper aims to construct a rare qualitative methodological design to investigate political communication through negative political ads, produced, aired, and published on the social network platforms of the three major political parties during 2020 parliamentary elections, held in Georgia. The analysis takes part in three steps, first with the use of ECA all political advertising is analyzed in regard to topics and types to distinguish positive political advertising from negative political advertising. These pre-determined categories are based on the previous research and aims to answer RQ1 posed. On the second step of analysis, the ads which were found negative are analyzed again to incorporate theoretical framework of negative campaigning and derive new categories if its applicable.

On the third step of analysis, with the flexible nature of ECA and inspiration from the M.I.T.S framework for screen media, guiding framework is designed and used to create new dimensions for further analysis. New categories look at four main elements of audiovisual material, such as: ***Main Idea, Images, Text, and Sound***. This decision gave possibility to answer another two research questions posed and gain deeper understanding about how the dynamics of negative messages in

political ads are conveyed and if the context characteristic, personalization of attacks could be determined.

Political ads to be analyzed are collected from the official Facebook pages of the political parties. Regardless, it needs to be stated for clarification that this study does not investigate social media use or content published on social media to communicate with the electorate. Social media pages are used to derive commercial political ads, as an archive of televised political ads, as well as the national media archive with free access does not exists in the country.

5.1. The Ethnographic Content Analysis

The Ethnographic Content analysis (ECA) was first proposed by Altheide (1987) to incorporate qualitative methods of ethnography with quantitative methods of content analysis within a single study. The ECA method has been less widely recognized as a distinctive method, although various facets of this approach are apparent in document analyses by historians, literary scholars, and social scientists (cf. Plummer, 1983; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As Altheide (2004) describes it, the method is situated on a methodological spectrum halfway between participant observation and quantitative content analysis. Drawing from Mead, Blumer, Schutz, and Berger and Luckmann's theoretical and methodological positions, as well as Glaser and Strauss' conceptualization of constant case comparison, ECA method is a systematic and analytic approach to studying media content with the goal of understanding not just standalone media content, but also how it was produced.

Altheide (1987) argues that ECA is a "reflexive" and "highly interactive" method "used to document and understand the "communication of meaning" as well as verify theoretical relationships. Unlike quantitative content analysis, which is used to verify or confirm hypothesized relationships by previously constructed protocols and random or stratified samples, ECA is oriented to check, supplement, and supplant prior theoretical claims by simultaneously obtaining categorical and unique data for every case studied" (p. 68). In case of ECA researcher is always central, constantly reflecting during data collection and analysis to emerge new variables. Thus, ECA is embodied in constant discovery during the research. To this end, ECA draws on and collects numerical and narrative data, rather than forcing the latter into predefined categories of the former as is done in quantitative content analysis.

Once categories and a coding system are derived from ethnographic data, a quantitative content analysis design provides a set of procedures to code the categories systematically with reliability checks to analyze, validate, and report the results (Altheide, 1987). The aim here is to be systematic

and analytical, but not rigid. Categories that emerged from ethnographic scanning of the data can guide the study, but other categories are expected to connect analysis with the theory.

5.2. The M.I.T.S Framework for Guiding Questions

As political advertisements are produced with the purpose to persuade and to be delivered by screen, therefore it uses combination of images, written text, and sound effects to communicate certain narratives and ideas to the audience. Postman and Powers (1992/2008) build on the assertion of McLuhan (1964), stating that the sensory immersion of television encourages immediate emotional reactions, in contrast to more reflective, analytical responses characteristic of print media. The sensory stimuli of screens overwhelm the senses, making it extremely difficult to reflect on the content while in the midst of a viewing experience. While one may reflect on their impressions of screen media messages, the multiple camera techniques and other stimuli of the screen move too quickly to fully examine without specific approach to it.

The M.I.T.S. questioning framework stands for *Main Ideas, Images, Text, and Sounds* and is designed to isolate each dimension of screen media, so it can be examined separately.

The intended purpose of implementing M.I.T.S. framework here is to examine beyond content and rhetoric and understand how negative messages are conveyed in political ads. With the use of ECA method on the first stage of data coding, this paper has already separated negative ads as the main interest of the study from the samples of different political parties. A good way to start with the further analysis is to gain a basic idea of the content and the narrative of the negative ads by watching and observing them again. In political ads, the assumption about the image is that candidates will be put in the environments or scenarios favorable for positive impressions. Moreover, as Mason (2015, p.76) has stated "in political commercials, the image sequence will often carry the narrative structure, with support from written text and spoken language." Camerawork and editing techniques also play a significant role to address viewers focus on particular details; fast editing penetrates feeling of intensity or speed. Zooming can emphasize distance or certain images for the viewer (Butler, 2012). As (Hezfallah, 1987; p. 29) puts it, the power of the screen is "in its ability to intensify, abridge, and reorganize the world, focusing attention of an audience on significant details, moving the spectator through an arranged and selected sequence of visual cues. Analysis on images and its role in the political ad can help to gain deeper and further inside into the rationale of emphasis.

Written text is generally used in screen advertisements to highlight the main points, often in conjunction with sounds, which may include spoken language, music, and sound effects. Repetition of certain terms is commonly used to reinforce key campaign messages (Butler, 2012; p. 183). In this

regard, ads can be examined for rational descriptions as well as emotional appeals within the written text and spoken language. The aim is not to separate dimensions of rationale and emotional appeals from text, rather to understand that screen media products and in this case, political ads are influencing multi-sensory perceptions, which might be hard to separate analytically (McLuham, 1964). Music, another dimension of sound, is also important in crafting the emotional dimensions of political ads, setting a particular tone, and offering hints to viewers as to how the ad creators would like them to feel about the information being presented. Screen media is largely image-driven; thus, screen imagery offers connotative messages that depend upon the common cultural understandings of viewers. The M.I.T.S is a great guide with given questions to be posed to each element of the political ad and separate them into dimensions for analysis. (**Table.1.**)

Table 1: The M.I.T.S framework guiding questions.

Dimensions of Analysis	Key Concepts to Identify*	Guiding Questions for Analysis
Main Ideas	• Creation & Purpose • Audience • Narrative Structure • Appeal • Demonstration • Association • Humor • Testimonial	• Who created this ad and for what purpose? • How are specific audiences targeted? • How does the commercial tell a story? • How does the ad make rational or emotional appeals? • How is the product shown in action? • How is the product associated with specific attributes? • How is humor used to increase ad's effectiveness? • How do individuals express what product or service does for them?
Images	• Camera angles • Editing techniques • Close-ups • Focusing • Image sequence • Other camera techniques – panning, zooming	• How do camera angles contribute to the ad's message? • How is fast editing or slow motion used? • How are close-ups utilized? • Why are certain images focused upon or magnified? • What story do the images tell? • How do panning and zooming contribute to the ad's message and effectiveness?
Text	• Repetition • Description	• Why are certain terms or ideas repeated in the ad? • How do written claims offer rational descriptions or make emotional appeals?
Sounds	• Spoken language • Music • Sound effects	• How does spoken language reinforce images and text? • How does music contribute to the ad's message? • How and why are sound effects used?

*Not all concepts or techniques will be present in every example.

Note. Framework adapted from "Analyzing the Hidden Curriculum of Screen Media Advertising," by Lance E. Mason, 2015, The Social Studies, 106(3), 104-111.

The M.I.T.S method of analysis appears similar to how Kaid and Johnson (1991) have categorized spots as unites of analysis in their study. So, what I have done for this study is used the flexible nature of the ECA to build a coding scheme by keeping in mind operationalization from the literature by Kaid and Johnson (1991), context characteristic of high-level personalization and merging it with the M.I.T.S framework to derive categories for the further analysis of negative ads. Therefore, on the

second round of coding under dimension of **main ideas** key concepts to identify incorporates categories of the speaker in the ad, the type of appeals, including fear appeals and image vs issue. Dimensions to analyze three other features of audiovisual content, images, text, and sounds are kept the same.

Dimensions of analysis	*Key concepts to identify*	*Guiding questions for analysis*
Main ideas	• The speaker in the ad • Appeals • Image vs Issue • Personalization • Strategies to attack	• Is the speaker in the ad party representative, surrogate, or voiceover? • Does the ad use logical or emotional appeals? • Does the ad criticize opponents' values or policy? • Does the ad attack opponent party's member? • Does the ad use humor, associations with negative issues, image or persons and groups?
Images	• Camera angles • Editing techniques • Close-ups • Focusing • Image sequence • Other effects	• How do cameras angles contribute to the ad's message? • How is fast editing or slow motion used? • How are closed ups utilized? • Why are certain images focused upon or magnified? • What story do the images tell? • How do panning and zooming contribute to the ad's message and effectiveness?
Text	• Repetition • Description	• Why are certain terms or ideas repeated in the ad? • How do written claims offer rational descriptions or make emotional appeals?
Sounds	• Spoken language • Music • Sound effects	• How does spoken language reinforce images and text? • How does music contribute to the ad's message? • How and why are sound effects used?

Table 2: *Updated M.I.T.S framework to guide analysis in-depth analysis*

Chapter 6

6.1. Data Collection and Coding

On the first stage of data gathering 143 political ads were collected from the official social network Facebook pages of the three biggest political parties in Georgia. Social network platform Facebook was used to derive audio video material for two reasons; – Firstly, as mentioned above Facebook is popular among the citizens as a source of information, therefore political parties engage in political communication through this platform heavily. Secondly, due to the lack of secondary data available in political context under investigation generally and due to the absence of national media archive from where political spots could be reached. A time scope was estimated according to official starting day of campaigning announced on the first of September by CEC (Election Administration of Georgia), as parties producing political ads usually promote them through different communication means at the same time. Moreover, to justify the assumption beyond data collection decision through the official social media platforms, that posted political ads broadcasted through TV, were also all posted on the social media platforms, I have contacted PR and press department of every party under investigation and got confirmation. In sum, sixty days of campaigning before the election day on October 31 were investigated. In this regard, I ensured that data gathered, and samples generated for each political party contained all the produced political ads available. (One limitation might be political ads deleted or unpublished on the platform for some unknown reason by the page administrator). During data gathering, videos of television press conferences, TV news and political talk shows were excluded manually, as those means of communication is not in the focus of this study.

The Georgian Dream, the governmental party has posted 61 videos during 60 days of the campaign time. Under the hashtag "Together for the success of Georgia", "What has been done" and "Reporting". First political ad on the official social media page after the announcement of the beginning of the official campaign date appeared on September 12. This video marked the slogan of GD for the 2020 election campaign "Together for the success of Georgia". Individuals and their stories were used in the political ads to communicate progress in the country during Georgian Dream government. Other videos under the theme "What has been done" demonstrated achievements and policy reforms, as well as the focus of content produced under "Reporting" was past deeds of the incumbent party. On the first stage all of 61 videos were watched twice with attention to give a unit number, date posted, descriptive name, topic, and type **(Appendix1.1).** Keeping in mind theoretical agreement of different scholars, broad core definition of negative campaigning – "the phenomena of attacking the opposing candidate on the record, policy, values, or personal characteristics during election campaigning (Lau and Pomper, 2004) – political ads were categorized simple according to

focus as either positive or negative, labeling suggested by West (2005). In this way, data was structured and reduced to relevant material, negative ads to be posed with main research questions. The same procedure of gathering, categorizing, and generating samples was repeated for other two political parties: "The United National Movement" and "The European Georgia". **(Appendix1.2; 1.3)**

After first round of coding ads into categories of positive and negative spots by focus, as suggested by West (2005), I went back to watch negative ads again with pre-determined two new categories: policy attacks and image attacks. **Policy** (issue) may address past achievements (deeds), future plans or encourage hope, or general goals. On another hand, **character** statements are concerned with personal qualities, leadership ability and ideals (values, principles) (Benoit,2017). Some of the attack ads failed to match those two pre-determined categories, therefore with the circular nature of ECA method, I looked back in literature to derive a new category. According to Khaid and Johntson (1991) negative ads can be fear arousing**,** these ads are designed to make the voter fear that some negative consequence would occur if the candidate/party were not elected, or if his or her opponent were elected. An example of such attack ad is "Daisy". Therefore, new category of **fear** was generated.

6.2. Results

From the political ads gathered from the social network platforms of three parties, 1 negative ad out of 61 was produced by GD and none by UNM. In case of EG 18 spots were negative, although under the hashtag of "Top50attack" which represented parts of the debates from legislative assembles cut out from different news and live streaming represented more than 20 percent (28 videos). Although those videos clearly demonstrated attacks from EG members to the competitors, it failed to meet the criteria to be considered as negative ad by its nature. Therefore, the decision not to include those ads in the analysis was made**. (Table 3)**

Positive vs Negative Ads

Legend: ■ Positive ■ Ngetaive ■ Top50attacks

	Georgian Dream	UNM	EG
Top50attacks			28
Ngetaive	1		18
Positive	61	5	74
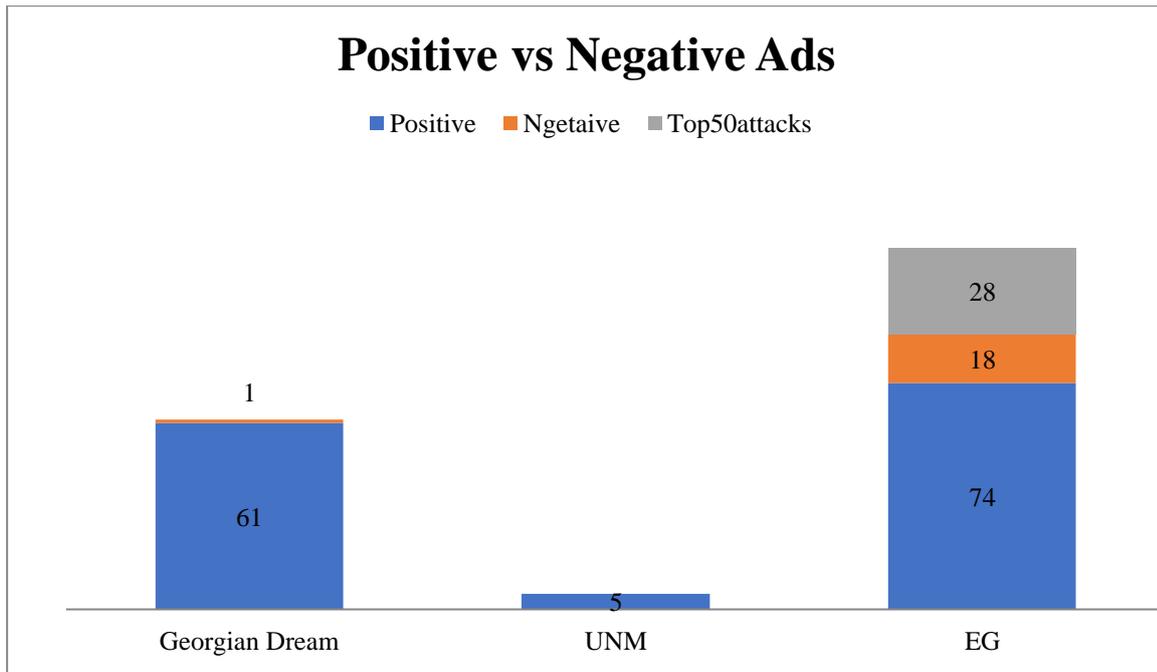
Table 3: Share of negative ads by parties

Second stage of analysis in regard to type of negative ads produced three main categories: policy attacks, image attacks and fear arousing ads. GD has produced 1 negative ad, which attacked past deeds of the UNM and was labeled as policy attack. The UMN has not produced any of negative ads to analyze in regards of types. EG has produced 8 ads to attack competitors on policy stands, 8 ads were targeting image of opponent and 2 ads were fear arousing about the future of the country without any explicit mentioning of the concrete topic or the opponents to whom it was addressed to. **(Table 4)**

Types of Negative Ads

	GD	UNM	EG
Policy	1	0	8
Image	0	0	8
Fear	0	0	2

Table 4: *Results of negative ad types by parties.*

Moving forward, on the third stage of the analysis with the M.I.T.S. method implemented, this paper went in-depth description **(Appendix 2.1; 2.2)** of negative ads one by one to isolate four dimensions,

main ideas, image, text, and sound. Questions from **table 2** has guided analysis to answer posed research questions. **Table 5** has five columns from which first **ADS** indicates party name abbreviature, GD for the Georgian dream and EG stands for the European Georgia. The number resonates with the video content description from **appendix 2.1; 2.2**. Under **MAIN IDEAS** the speaker in the ad, type of appeals, type of negative ad (**Image vs Policy/Issue**) personalization and strategies to attack are identified using the M.I.T.S question guide. Under **Image** camera angles, editing techniques, close-ups, focusing, image sequence and other effects are analyzed in a relation to the video content. Columns **TEXT** and **SOUND** looks at the videos to determine what functions or aims those dimensions serve.

In result, the table of negative videos were generated **(Table 5).** Personalization was detected in 8 ads produced by EG. 6 of them were attacking opponents on image and 2 of those were attacking policy of the opponent.

Table 5: *The M.I.T.S applied to negative ads.*

Ads	Main Ideas	Image	Text	Sound
GD14	Surrogate	Long-shots on prison to locate scene	To introduce surrogate	Sirens to alter viewer
	Emotional	Eye-level angle on surrogate to create sense of objectivity	To frame surrogate	Party anthem to link ad with sponsor
	Issue attack	Close-ups on camera and photos to direct attention	To make emotional appeal to the sense of unfairness	
	No personalization	Zooming on face features to create sense of honesty		
	Negative associations			
EG23	Male voiceover	Computer graphics	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce claims by voiceover
	Emotional appeal	Dynamic sequence	To make emotional appeal to the sense of uncertainty	Tensed music changes into melodic music to create contrasting feeling
	Fear arousing			
	No personalization	Close-ups on text and election number		
EG25	Male voiceover	Computer graphics	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce statistics by voiceover

	Logical appeals	Dynamic sequence	To make emotional appeal to the sense of empathy	Unpleasurable noise changes into dynamic melody to create sense of action
	Policy attack			
	No personalization			
	Negative association Visual images			
EG30	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce claims by voiceover and action shown
	Logical appeal	Dynamic sequence	To emphasize act of swindle	Melodic music changes into weird noises to create sense of alertness
	policy attack	Images tell story of swindle		Harmony and is disturbed with sound effects used
	No personalization			
EG32	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce claims by voiceover and action shown
	Logical appeal	Dynamic sequence	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Melodic music changes into weird noises to create sense of alertness
	policy attack	Images tell story of swindle		Melodic music changes into weird noises to create sense of alertness
	No personalization			
EG33	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	
	Logical appeal	Dynamic sequence	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce claims by voiceover and action shown
	policy attack	Images tell story of swindle		Melodic music changes into

	No personalization			weird noises to create sense of alertness Melodic music changes into weird noises to create sense of alertness
EG34	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Repetition to reinforce claims by voiceover and action shown
	Logical appeal	Dynamic sequence	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Melodic music changes into weird noises to create sense of alertness
	policy attack	Images tell story of swindle		Harmony and is disturbed with sound effects used
	No personalization			
EG40	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	
	Combination of logical and emotional appeals	Close-up on negative images		
	Policy attack	Images tell story of poverty		
	No personalization			
EG45	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To link claims by voiceover to character in the ad	Slow minor music changes into melodic music in the end
	Combination of logical and emotional appeals	Fast editing to create dizziness	Black and red text to reinforce claims by voiceover	Sound effect used to direct attention on the text
	Image attack	Close-ups on angry faces to trigger negative emotions		
	Personalization			
EG46	Leaders of GD and UNM. Members of EG	Close-up on faces of targets. Long-shot on members of EG to create sense positive action	Text to link positive action with election number	Spoken language makes pledges for change
	Combination of emotional and logical appeals	Fast editing to demonstrate consistency in time.		Dynamic music to appeal to the

				emotion of enthusiasm
	Image attack	Magnified faces to create sense of discomfort for viewer		
	Personalization			
EG53	Party leader of EG	Eye-level angle to create sense of objectivity		No sound effect
	Combination of logical and emotional appeals Image attack	Close-ups on face features to create sense of honesty	To reinforce claims by EG leader	No music
	Personalization			
EG58	Surrogate	Eye-level angle to create sense of objectivity		Sound effects to emphasize actions on the image
	Emotional appeal	Computer graphic		
	Image attack	Animation		
	Personalization	Images to reinforce spoken language		
	Humor to attack			
EG59	The male voiceover	Computer graphics	To reinforce claims by voiceover	
	Logical appeals	Close-up faces of targets		Sound effects to emphasize text and claims by voiceover
	Policy attack	Dynamic sequence		
	Personalization			
EG61	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Tensed music to appeal to negative emotions
	Emotional appeal	Close-ups on faces of UNM and GD leaders		
	Image attack	Dynamic sequence		
	Personalization			
EG63	The male voiceover	Computer graphic	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Alarming music changes into melodic music in the end

	Emotional appeal	Close-up on faces of UNM and GD leaders	Make emotional appeals	
	Image attack	Negative associations triggered by images		
	Personalization			
EG66	Scene from a popular western	Computer graphic to integrate political logos		Original music
	Emotional appeal			
	Image attack			
	No personalization			
	Humor to attack			
EG69	The male voiceover	Eye-level angle to create sense of classness and intimacy	To reinforce claims by voiceover	Dynamic music to create motion
	Emotional appeal	Close-ups on face features to create sense of openness		
	Image attack			
	No personalization			
EG72	Combination of voiceovers	Long-shot on the empty city to create sense of catastrophe	To deliver message and reinforce narrative by voiceover	Sirens on the background
	Emotional appeals	High angle of the camera creates sense of distance and hopelessness		Tensed music to create sense of alertness
	Policy attack			Music changes into dynamic melody
	Personalization			Voices used triggers associations to concrete people
EG74	Surrogate	Computer effects	No text is used	Spoken language reinforce sense of pessimism
	Emotional appeal	Eye-level angle to create sense of honesty		Minor music creates sense of sadness
	Fear arousing	Close-ups to face features to trigger empathy		Irritating music changes into melodic music
	No personalization	Editing technique of reversing back gives viewer sense of power		

Chapter 7

Discussions

This study analyzed the content of negative political ads produced within election campaigning for 2020 parliamentary elections from three biggest political parties operating in Georgia. With the implication of the ECA methodology and M.I.T.S framework negative political ads were put under scrutiny to answer research questions posed in this paper.

Firstly, the results show that GD party produced only one negative ad to attack the competitor the UNM on past deeds. This result is fully in line with the well-established findings from the two-party US political system, that incumbents are less likely to use negative campaigning, as they have more resources than challengers and can afford positive campaigning, which is more expensive Kahn and Kenney (1999). Another reason why front runners are less likely to "go negative" is poll standings (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995), so considering the Americanization of election campaigning in Georgia (Melikidze, 2020) we can assume that the decision not to attack opponents was intentional strategy built on the strong poll standings. As there is no benefit in attacking the weaker in the context of the political competition (Skaperdas and Grofman, 1995). In regard to research question, type of negative ads the GD has produced attacked the UNM on policy and addressed past deeds of the party while in government. This was accomplished by a surrogate speaker in the ad recalling memories of his arrest and torture for the espionage. Different production techniques were used to influence the viewer. Firstly, the narrative of the surrogate directed the focus and attention on certain images. As (Hezfallah, 1987, p. 29) argues, the power of the screen is "in its ability to intensify, abridge, and reorganize the world, focusing attention of an audience on significant details, moving the spectator through an arranged and selected sequence of visual cues." In this ad building of a prison and photos magnified through camera zooming of the riot held in Georgia during UNM government aimed to trigger associations. Although UNM has not been mentioned in the ad explicitly, for the citizen of Georgia with the right to vote and familiar with the historical and political reality of the context, (Belt, 2017) the responsible target in "tortures" of the speaker in the ad is easily interpreted. The complexity of cues and symbols used in the ad is in correlation to the meanings unique to the context where ad was produced. The sirens used as sound effect in the ad is another dimension of the audiovisual content which appeals to the emotions of the viewer and amplifies anxiety by intensively rousing audio receptors. Although the ad is not black and white as usually negative images are conveyed in attack ads, unity of other dimensions, like images, narrative and music still achieve the goal of delivering negativity to the audience.

The UNM have produced none of the negative ads, this can be interpreted as the risk management and cost-beneficial strategy, as attacks are more likely to trigger counterattacks and might "backlash" negative feelings toward the attacker instead of the target (Garramone 1984; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1991; Roese and Sande 1993).

As results show, the EG has implemented negative campaigning heavily during election race. In attacking both, the incumbent party (GD) and the opposition party (UNM) the EG has produced three different types of negative ads: policy, image and fear arousing spots. Moreover, under the hashtag of #Top50attacks, EG has constantly posting part of different debates between his representatives and member of GD and UNM. It's worth emphasizing that EG is a split party from UNM, therefore attacking strategy beyond the aim to diminish positive feelings about the UNM as main opposition competitor, it could also serve to establish the name recognition for a younger party and attract new voters (Devlin, 1986; Sabato, 1981).

Moving to the next research questions results show that during parliamentary election race, the EG has produced equal number of policy and image attack ads, with eight of them demonstrating personalization in both types of ads. Therefore, we can argue that personalization of politics was highly demonstrated in negative campaigning. Instead of ideological and policy negative evaluations, in attack ads politicians are put in the center of politics. As Olson and Iionski (2012) have argued leaders of the parties in hybrid regimes become more important and political competition is downplayed to personal cults. In this case the main targets of attack ads produced by EG were the leaders of the GD and UNM parties and their personal traits and values. Negative messages in those ads blamed Mikheil Saakashvili and Bidzina Ivanishvili of being "power hungry", "egocentric" and "careless". In one of the negative ads, the leader of the EG has even compared Mikheil Saakashvili to a "traitor" and Bidzina Ivanishvili to the "king of darkness". Fear arousing ads by the EG has been made to trigger general hopelessness and anxiety by emotional appeals and persuade voters into disastrous scenarios if the EG would not win the elections. Those ads by nature were negative but have not explicitly attacking any of two competitors.

In the ads produced by the EG results indicate that variety of techniques are used to transmit negativity. Male voiceover in several videos makes accusations mainly in the direction to the incumbent party (GD), with the use of emotional appeals and different strategies to attack as for example associations with negative issues like poverty and unemployment. Those ads trigger the anxiety and create sense of crises. The strategy in those ads is clear and in line to literature, by association issues like poverty and unemployment with the GD, it is framed as a source of threat to

well-being of society (Jones 1971; Weiner 1982). As EG is smallest party in this group, using negative campaigning and triggering anxiety creates more attention towards their campaign both from voters and media (Marcus and MacKuen 1993 In Crigler, Just and Belt, 2006). When it comes to image attacks, negative ads are produced in black, white, and red colors. The use of those colors in images reinforces fear and anxiety already aroused by emotional appeals by voiceover (Brader, 2006). Texts on the images mainly repeat the main ideas of the narrative, therefore encouraging visual and hearing stimulus simultaneously. On another hand, sound effects serve as additional source of creating the tension, trigger anxiety or link imagery with spoken language. On contrary, in the ads attacking tax policies of the GD party, image is kept colorful, and negativity is conveyed with spoken messages, actions and special computer graphics. This means that in attack ads touching upon policy stances, negativity is conveyed through messages which requires cognitive respond (Hugnes, 2018; p.34.). It must be emphasized separately that complex nature of political ads contemplated with visual cues, symbols, images of particular building, places or events, and the use of music associations can only be understood by collective consciousness of the nation with the historical memory and cultural knowledge. Therefore, the design of electoral messages and political advertisement is highly dependent on context characteristics of the given country and should be understood holistically (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

Overall, results of the investigation on the attack ads produced by political parties in hybrid democracy is in line with the general knowledge and finding of the field from the US and advanced democratic countries. The research question posed about the personalization of negativity in attack ads is detected as expected.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate negative campaigning in post-Soviet hybrid democratic country, Georgia. The research questions guiding the research were addressing three aspects of negative ads produced by three biggest parties during 2020 parliamentary elections. Firstly, this study distinguished between positive and negative ads according to negative campaigning theory, considering any political ad as negative if by focus it was attacking the competitor instead of pulling out reasons for voters to get a support. Results from the research clearly demonstrated that negative campaigning can be detected in hybrid democracy due to "Americanization" of election campaigning and by nature those strategies to attack the opponents is fully in line with the literature. Moreover, the types of ads crafted to attack competitors targeted both, policy and image of opposing parties and served as utilities to

create general fear and anxiety by arousing negative feeling among citizens. Secondly, personalization of politics as a context characteristic had its impact on the content of attack ads. Although, parties were competing to enter the parliament, therefore the emphasizes must have been on policy issues and ideological stances, attack ads put party leaders in the focus, holding them responsible for failed policies.

Lastly, this study explored four dimensions of audiovisual content to shed light how negativity is conveyed in attack ads with the use of diverse technological and psychological mechanisms. Influencing on several sensory feelings simultaneously, audiovisual content transmits verbal, visual and sound stimuluses to persuade, direct and arouse feelings without necessarily being aware of the effect of sensory experience.

The significance of this study is exploring new geographical scope and concluding that the theories of negative campaigning applied to the hybrid democracy context can explain types and the features of attack ads. From societal perspective, the significance of this study can be used to argue that negativity and attacks is part of the politics around the world and in any type of democracy and it's should not be understood as a threat to democratizations. Rather, studies on elections and the reasons of politics perceived as being "a dirty game" should be explored in other aspects of hybrid democracy, like media manipulation, coercing or buying votes, supporting informal groups to attack opposition, selective prosecution, falsification (stolen elections) pressuring etc. as indicated by Hale (2011).

As any scientific study, this paper also has its limitations. The interpretive nature of content analysis often puts replicability of the study questionable, especially in case of the ECA methodology, which gives the researcher possibility of wider interpretations (Altheide, 1987). As Braun & Clarke (2006) warn, much flexibility of the ECA method in analysis can negatively impact the focus of the researcher and casts a doubt to repeatability of the research. Another limitation of the study is the absence of the additional coders to discuss categorization of units regarding positive and negative ads. Although, as the study has significantly relied on the categorizations in relation to other peer reviewed studies, according to Krippendorff (2004) it can be defined as empirical validity. Empirical validity examines research evidence to support that the data collection, research process, and results were based on definable and defendable arguments and that the research could be reliably repeated.

With globalization trend on the rise, erasing borders for technological advances and the rapid spread of Americanization and mediatization of politics all over the world, it does not seem likely for negative campaigning to disappear. Some would even argue that conflict is a constant force in politics and negative campaigning has its benefits to "enrich the prospect for democratic governance" (Geer, 2006:

15). Still, some are way more concerned about conflicts in politics, claiming that attacks are nasty, and it compromises culture peaceful deliberation and consensus. Regardless, studies show that people exposed to negativity are more likely to take an interest in politics and make informed decisions (Geer,2006).

This study is a drop in the academic ocean, but defiantly has contributed to the literature on negative campaigning especially considering lack of academic research on this geographical scope. To further those topics, it would be interested to explore negative campaigning across different communication channels and analyze negativity on the Internet. Furthermore, it would be interesting to take a functionalist approach and compare negative tone of two election campaigns hold in one country after full transaction from majoritarian to proportional electoral system. Such a study would allow to argue what is the impact of electoral system on negativity in countries with low political culture and general emotionalization of politics.

At the end, I would like to take a defense on behalf of negativity with a long quote discovered during my research for this study: "Negativity draws attention both to the instability of every form and to the contingency of all boundaries. It delivers the radical message that things could be different and that the way they are bounded or limited, divided up and identified, is not ontologically, naturally or normatively given." (Coole, 2000; p. 231)

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Appendix 1.1

The Georgian Dream

#	Date	Descriptive Name	Topic	Type
v1	12.09.2020	"For success of Georgia"	image	positive
v2	16.09.2020	Kaspi municipality	policy	positive
v3	17.09.2020	Mtskheta municipality	policy	positive
v4	18.09.2020	C hepatitis illumination	policy	positive
v5	22.09.2020	Imereti municipality	policy	positive
v6	23.09.2020	Bagdadi municipality	policy	positive
v7	24.09.2020	"What has been done"	policy	positive
v8	25.09.2020	Terjola municipality	policy	positive
v9	30.09.2020	"What has been done"	policy	positive
v10	30.09.2020	Atskuri church	policy	positive
v11	1.10.2020	Patient	image	positive
v12	1.10.2020	"What has been done"	policy	positive
v13	2.10.2020	Ozurgeti municipality	policy	positive
v14	2.10.2020	Gia Abdaladze	policy	negative
v15	3.10.2020	"My Georgia is here"	musical clip	positive
v16	5.10.2020	migrant	image	positive
v17	5.10.2020	Future plans	policy	positive
v18	6.10.2020	School and infrastructure	policy	positive
v19	6.10.2020	Owner of social industry	image	positive
v20	8.10.2020	Football fan	image	positive
v21	8.10.2020	Social justice	policy	positive
v22	9.10.2020	Oni municipality	policy	positive
v23	9.10.2020	Lentekhi municipality	policy	positive

v24	9.10.2020	Cageri municipality	policy	positive
v25	9.10.2020	Ambrolauri municipality	policy	positive
v26	10.10.2020	Ozurgeti municipality	policy	positive
v27	12.10.2020	Akhaltsikhe municipality	policy	positive
v28	12.10.2020	Zarzma	image	positive
v29	13.10.2020	Aspindza municipality	policy	positive
v30	13.10.2020	Akhalkalaki municipality	policy	positive
v31	13.10.2020	Ethnic minority	image	positive
v32	14.10.2020	Policeman's wife	image	positive
v33	14.10.2020	Soldier's mum	image	positive
v34	16.10.2020	Lanchkhuti municipality	policy	positive
v35	16.10.2020	Chokhatauri municipality	policy	positive
v36	17.10.2020	Chkhorotskhu municipality	policy	positive
v37	17.10.2020	Tsalenjikha municipality	policy	positive
v38	17.10.2020	Zugdidi municipality	policy	positive
v39	17.10.2020	zugdidi municipality	policy	positive
v40	18.10.2020	Foti municipality	policy	positive
v41	18.10.2020	Senaki municipality	policy	positive
v42	18.10.2020	Abasha municipality	policy	positive
v43	19.10.2020	Compositor	Image	positive
v44	19.10.2020	Old couple	image	positive
v45	19.10.2020	Social politics	policy	positive
v46	20.10.2020	Education and science	policy	positive
v47	20.10.2020	Engineer		
v48	21.10.2020	Culture and Sports	policy	positive
v49	22.10.2020	Economy	policy	positive
v50	23.10.2020	Veteran rugby player	image	positive
v51	24.10.2020	Infrastructure	policy	positive
v52	25.10.2020	Teacher	image	positive

v53	25.10.2020	Student	image	positive
v54	26.10.2020	Farmer	image	positive
v55	26.10.2020	Foreign policy	policy	positive
v56	26.10.2020	Conflict resolution policy	policy	positive
v57	26.10.2020	Democratic advancments	policy	positive
v58	27.10.2020	Peacekeeping policy	policy	positive
v59	27.10.2020	Farmer	image	positive
v60	28.10.2020	Hotel owner	image	positive
v61	30.10.2020	Fund "Qartu"	Image, personified	positive

Appendix 1.2

The United National Movement

#	Date	Descriptive Name	Topic	Type
v1	23.09.2020	"5 step plan"	Policy	positive
v2	29.09.2020	Nika Melia	Policy	positive
v3	29.09.2020	Grigol Vashadze	policy	positive
v4	29.09.2020	Levan Varshalomidze	policy	positive
v5	30.09.2020	Khatia Dekanosidze	policy	positive
v6	30.09.2020	Salome Samadashvili	policy	positive
v7	09.10.2020	Tamar Kordzaia	policy	positive
v8	26.09.2020	"Georgia's better days are ahead"	image	positive

Appendix 1.3

The European Georgia

#	Date	Descriptive Name	Topic	Type
v1	3.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v2	4.09.2020	Making of political ads	humour	positive
v3	6.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v4	7.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v5	8.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v6	9.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v7	10.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v8	11.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v10	12.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v11	14.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v12	15.09.2020	Young spokesperson	image	positive
v13	16.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v14	16.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v15	17.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive

v16	17.09.2020	Young spokesperson	image	positive
v17	17.09.2020	Kobakhidze vs Kapanadze	Debate part	negative
v18	18.09.2020	Young spokesperson	policy	positive
v19	19.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v20	19.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v21	19.09.2020	Young spokesperson	comparison	positive
v22	20.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v23	20.09.2020	crisis	fear	negative
v24	21.09.2020	Saakashvili VS Bokeria	Debate part	negative
v25	21.09.2020	Change economy	policy	negative
v26	21.09.2020	Change for better	policy	positive
v27	21.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v28	22.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v29	22.09.2020	Young spokesperson	image	positive
v30	23.09.2020	Lower taxes	policy	negative

v31	23.09.2020	Top50 attacks	Debate part	negative
v32	24.09.2020	Lower taxes	policy	negative
v33	24.09.2020	Young spokesperson	image	negative
v34	25.09.2020	Lower taxes	policy	negative
v35	25.09.2020	Supporters	migration	positive
v36	26.09.2020	Top50 attacks	policy	negative
v37	26.09.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v38	28.09.2020	Top50 attacks	debate	negative
v39	1.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate	negative
v40	1.10.2020	Georgia is in poverty	fear	negative
v41	3.10.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v42	4.10.2020	Supporters	policy	positive
v43	5.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v44	5.10.2020	Young spokesperson	image	positive
v45	6.10.2020	Bidzina VS Misha	image	negative

v46	8.10.2020	Me VS We	image	negative
v47	8.10.2020	Ralf Fiennes	image	positive
v48	8.10.2020	Top50 attacks	Debate part	negative
v49	9.10.2020	Support for change	policy	positive
v50	10.10.2020	Change is easy	image	positive
v51	10.10.2020	To50 attacks	debate part	negative
v52	11.10.2020	Support for change	policy	positive
v53	12.10.2020	Gigi Ugulava	image	negative
v54	12.10.2020	Top50 attacks	Debate part	negative
v55	13.10.2020	Supporters	Policy	positive
v56	14.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v57	14.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v58	15.10.2020	Young spokesperson	image	negative
v59	15.10.2020	Three questions everyone should ask	image	negative
v60	15.10.2020	Numbers	image	positive

v61	16.10.2020	Two egos	image	negative
v62	17.10.2020	Top50attacks	debate part	negative
v63	19.10.2020	Vote for change	policy	negative
v64	19.10.2020	Top50attacks	debate part	negative
v65	19.10.2020	Vote for change	policy	positive
v66	22.10.2020	Popular wester	image	negative
v67	23.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v68	24.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v69	25.10.2020	Sometimes it's enough	Policy, image	negative
v70	25.10.2020	Top50 attacks	debate part	negative
v71	26.10.2020	Pandemic	policy	positive
v72	26.10.2020	Think	policy	negative
v73	26.10.2020	Vote for change	vote for EG	positive
v74	29.10.2020	This might be you	Fear arousing	negative

Appendix 2.1

The Georgian Dream

V14 Gia Abdaladze

The speaker in the ad is a surrogate, a photographer known for the wide public in Georgia after being arrested for espionage with three other photographers during previous, UNM party government. The narrative tells the story of his politically motivated case and appeals to the emotion of fear. Ad aims to criticize autocratic and injustice rule of law during previous government. The surrogate recalls memories of the past and blaming previous government in permitting torture and inhumane treatment of the prisoners to get confession. The image is colourful, although frequently used close-ups in video on photos taken by the photographer of the protests taking place during previous government contributes to triggering negative associations from the past. Certain images in the video, like city prison and photo camera are in the focus to reinforce story and frame the surrogate as professional which had no place in the prison with the criminals. Written title of the person in the video as political prisoner, once again reminds audience of the struggles innocent man has gone through due to political reasons. The sound of police sirens on the background create tone to feel altered. At the end of the video, narrative sets contrast between previous and present government and the surrogate argues that fear is replaced with peaceful times, hope and enthusiasm. The music used at the end, links spoken language with the GD party, as it represents party anthem composed for campaign purposes. Image of the surrogate with close-up on his face is once again repeated at the end to remind the audience about name and credibility of the source, his label of being political prisoner. As a last image, the sponsor of the ad is revealed by written text and election number on the background of national flag.

Appendix 2.2

The European Georgia

V23 Crises

In the ad, male voiceover states that huge crises should be solved with fundamental changes. In the image, a viewer sees a huge compass and the text "huge crisis demands change" in black and red. On the next image, colours are bright red and blue, and the compass becomes colourful as well. The voiceover claims that the fundamental changes can be brought by EG. The text repeats claim by voiceover. The tensed music on the background of the first image is changed into a melodic music on the background of the second image. On the third image, election number is circled, the slogan "two

for fundamental changes appears to the viewer, while voiceover ask a viewer to vote for EG, vote for changes.

V25 Economy

The ad starts with the image of hands in white gloves, taking a plastic ball from the bowl. The bowl has a title, "8 years of dreaming" and the logo of GD party on it. Hands open the ball and show the piece of paper with the text "economy" written on it. The male voiceover claims that, in present Georgia every 6 citizen out of ten is unemployed. The text and use of special computer graphic reinforce the claim by voiceover in red colour. On the second image the viewer sees a beggar in black and white, sitting in the street and asking money with a paper glass. His head looks down and evokes a feeling in a viewer that a person is ashamed. Next image is divided in four part and the viewer sees two more beggars, man and woman in a hard labour and hands of an old woman with white pills and coins. The voiceover claims that every third citizen in the country is poor. The text highlight "poverty" in red colour. The voiceover continues appealing to a viewer and claiming that poor people have just 4 GEL per day to survive. On the next image, pictures of the children asking for money in streets are shown to the viewer and the voiceover claims that 80.000 children are in hunger. The text once again repeats the statistics. After the voiceover asks a question to a viewer if they want to continue living in this absolute disaster for next 50 year. Numbers on the image reinforce fifty years and shows the year of 2070. The irritating sound on the background creates tension and appeals to negative emotions. After black and white images are changed to colourful images of enthusiastic young people on the riot. The voiceover states that EG pledge to make fundamental changes, reduce taxes, create more than 100.000 jobs, raise salaries. Images accordingly show families, workers, and money in the wallet. The text on every image repeat pledges by voiceover and show logo, name, and election number of the EG party. Unpleasurable tensed noises on the background is replaced with dynamic music. At the end of the ad, voiceover states a slogan "EG, your compass for fundamental changes." The election number and name of the party appears once again.

V30 Lower taxes

In the ad male voiceover criticizes tax policies of the GD government. On the image a viewer sees a cake. The text on the image claims that this cake belongs to a viewer. In the shot a hand appears, taking biggest part of the cake out of image. The voiceover claims that with high taxes a government is taking away the biggest part form what should belong to a viewer. The text on the image repeats the same idea. Using computer graphic what is taken away is contoured to reinforce the claim by voiceover visually. The text appears in white and red for the repetition of the idea once again. The melodic music on the background is replaced with weird noises. The voiceover at the end of the

encourages a viewer not to surrender what is belonged to them. At the end of the ad, the election number and logo of EG appears. The voiceover states the slogan "Low taxes, more money to your family".

V32 Lower taxes

In the ad male voiceover criticizes tax policies of the GD government. On the image a viewer sees a cup full of orange juice with a straw. The background is colourful ocean and palm tree. The text on the image tells the viewer that the juice belongs to them. In the shot a hand appears, putting another straw in the juice and drinking more than half of it. The voiceover claims that with high taxes government is taking away the biggest part from what should belong to a viewer. Using computer graphic empty part of the glass is contoured to reinforce the claim of the voiceover, for repetition of the idea stated by voiceover is also put on the image in white and red colours. Sound effects used on the background is birds singing, which is interrupted with the irritating sound of drinking. The voiceover at the end of the encourages a viewer not to surrender what is belonged to them. At the end of the ad, the election number and logo of EG appears. The voiceover states the slogan "Low taxes, more money to your family".

V34 Lower taxes

In the ad the image of bread appears which is cut in parts and the bigger part is taken away from the image by a hand. Voiceover of the male claims that something which belongs to people is taken away by government with high taxes. The text and computer graphic both contributes to the repetition of the claim. The voiceover encourages people to defend what belongs to them and not let the government robbing citizens. As a solution voiceover suggests a party EG who's election pledge is to reduce taxes. At the end of the ad the logo, slogan, and election number of the EG appears. The music on the background is melodic and only accompanies second part of the ad, where the logo and election number of EG appears.

V40 Georgia is in poverty

The voiceover says word "unemployment" "poverty" "hopelessness" and arouses negative emotions, while image shows a compass and photos of a beggar, hand palms with coins, and a child asking for money. The voiceover claims that we are regressing but changing this is dependent on a viewer's choice. The text with the use of computer graphic breaks down photos. The compass starts rolling on different side and becomes colourful. The voice argues that the right choice can reduce taxes, employee more than 100,000 citizen and bring 2000 GEL to every family. Voiceover claims that right choice, which is EG can bring fundamental changes. Tensed music on the background is changed with

dynamic music. At the end of the ad, election number of the EG party is circled and the slogan "Your compass to fundamental changes" appears on the screen.

V45 Bidzina VS Misha

In the ad the voiceover demonstrates the statistic of poverty in the country. On the first image, which is used as background to the statistics repeated with the text, the homeless person is shown. The voiceover continues to claim that for the political head of the GD party those stats are ridiculous. On the image, we see the laughing face of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the GD party and former prime minister of the country. The negative message by voiceover is reinforced with the same text in black and red colours. Next, the voiceover claims that the ex-President of the country, the founder of the opposition party UNM care only about the power. The Image shows Mikheil Saakashvili with angry face. The text once again repeats the message by voiceover. On the next image, where we see people in hard labour, voiceover claims that none of those politician's care about people. Once again, the message is reinforced with the text in black and red. On the next image, we see two photos of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Mikheil Saakashvili side by side and the text and voiceover repeats the message that, both only care about their selves. This negative ad is highly personified attacking two political leaders at the same time from incumbent party and the biggest opposition party. At the end of the ad, the slogan "vote for changes" is stated by the voiceover and the viewers sees the election number of the EG party.

V46 ME vs WE

The ad starts with the fast editing of images where GD leader and UNM leader say only one word "Me". Images are changing but the word stays the same. In contrast, images and "Me" is changed with the faces of EG's leaders saying "We" and making pledges how the party can bring crucial changes. At the end of the ad election number and logo of the EG appears. Text on the images, repeats and therefore reinforces statements by party leaders.

V53 Gigi Ugulava

In the 6-minute-long video, the speaker Gigi Ugulava, one of the leaders from the EG party sheds some light by sharing insides of the inside discussions on the fact that opposition unity disintegrated. The speaker in the ad blames the leader of UNM party, Mikheil Saakashvili and attacks his personal characteristics of being power hungry and egocentric politician. The speaker in the ad also mentions name of another founder of UNM, Vano Merabishvili who executed Mikhel Saakashvili's will of non-cooperation with other opposition parties. The speaker makes parallels of inside processes to a widely

celebrated tv series "Game of Thrones" and compares Bidzina Ivanishvili to the king of darkness and his party members to "white walkers". He describes elections as a war between zombies of darkness and opposition political leaders. In this scenario, Mikheil Saakashvili is labelled as Cersei Lannister, the traitor. As a conclusion, the speaker argues that the leader of the biggest opposition party UNM, Mikheil Saakashvili is a buffer for Bidzina Ivanishvili to stay in power. The leader of EG claims that those two leaders, both deserve a punch and that is the only formula to win the elections. The text on the images repeats main arguments of the speaker.

V58 Young spokesperson

In the ad, the surrogate, young girl appears in silence, while the female voiceover claims that one action can solve the regress and hopelessness. On the image, with the computer graphic technique appears two faces of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Mikheil Saakashvili, founders of incumbent and UNM parties. Voiceover claims that there is no need of "golden fish" to end the collective pessimism in the country. The computer graphic of crossed golden fish, repeats claim of the voiceover. The surrogate at end of the ad suggests solution to the presented dilemma by offering EG as a best choice to vote. The background music is dynamic and evokes feeling of enthusiasm and hope. The logo and election number repeated at the end of the ad once again repeats the idea of voting for EG as a solution for crucial changes.

V59 Three questions every voter should ask

In the ad the male voiceover encourages voters to ask three most important question before making decision how to vote. First question addresses If the leader of GD, Bidzina Ivanishvili can pull country out of economic crises and on the image, we see his face which is soon covered with the text in red "FAILED" while voiceover reinforces image by giving the right answer to the viewer that Bidzina Ivanishvili is not capable of solving economic crises. The Second question is asking if the leader and ex-President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili is someone worth of trusting and values his words or keeps own pledges. The voice over once again answers the question and attacking personal characteristics of Mikheil Saakashvili. In both cases sound of "failure" contributes to reinforce claims made by voiceover and the text on the images created by computer graphic. The last question is asking which party can bring crucial changes and the answer to the question is EG, the green symbol ticks election number of the party and the sound effect is changed to the sound of "correct". Voiceover continues to define "crucial changes" making pledges to reduce taxes, bring 2000 GEL to every family, create more than 100 000 jobs and double pension for elderly people. The voice is

accompanied with text, computer effect and dynamic music to reinforce the message. At the end of the ad the sponsor's election number and logo appears with the slogan "vote for changes".

V61 Two sides of one coin

The voiceover in the ad claims that Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of GD party and Mikheil Saakashvili, the founder of the UNM party, both are chiefs with autocratic tendencies who's words are depreciated and pledges unfulfilled. On the image, faces of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Mikheil Saakashvili in black and white appears. The text, highlighted in red repeats the words of the voiceover. The voice claims that those two leaders are two sides of one coin, who only care about their power. The voice argues that Georgian people deserve better. The better is moving forward rather than being stuck in swamp and looking behind. On the next image, the election number is circled and compass with slogan "European Georgia for fundamental changes" appears. Tensed music on the background is changed to a dynamic melody.

V63 Georgia is in crises

The male voiceover in the ad on the image of crying man covering own face makes an emotional appeal that Georgia is in crises. Red text on the black and white image, repeats this claim. Next, the image of GD leader appears, and voiceover argues that Bidzina Ivanishvili does not care about people in need. Another political leader of UNM, Mikheil Saakashvili's angry face in black and white is covered with the text stating that he only cares about the power. Next image is a man in the street asking for help and voiceover continues repeating the idea that those two leaders do not care about citizens, rather only about their selves. Text once again contributes to the reinforcement of this idea. At the end of the ad, alarming music is changed with a nice melody and the election number and logo of EG party appears in colourful image. The voiceover asks the viewer to vote for EG.

V66 The good, the bad and the ugly

In the ad we see the duel scene from the famous 1966 western 'The good, the ad and the ugly' by Sergio Leone. In the scene three gunfighters, Angel Eyes, Blondie and Tuco Benedicto are confronting each other in Mexican standoff. With the help of computer graphic the background behind every character is replaced by the flags of political parties. In the scene, Blondie, which kills Angel Eyes represents EG. Tuco (UNM) who's gun does not shoot also aimed to kill Angel Eyes, which in the ad is GD. The music accompanying the scene is Ennio Morricones's composition "The Trio". The ad delivers a message to the audience that the party, who can win (kill) GD is the EG and not the UNM.

V69 Sometimes it's enough

In the ad the voiceover technique is used to make emotional appeal to a viewer. "The voice on the background starts arguing that sometimes it's enough to just open the eyes to understand each other and see that children are in hunger, there are no jobs, that we are constantly hearing lies, pandemic is used for the sake of "their" interests, people are arrested for Russia, failure of people is their success and all the ways lead to hopelessness, it might be easy to believe that there is nothing to be done, but there is a way to use the anger about the past 8 years of the country translate into motivation and change the future of the country for the better. Therefore, the voiceover makes an individual statement for us that if we believe that changes are needed and if we believe that future must be better than the past, everyone should go and vote for EG." The ad attacks the government, but the attack is more implicit not mentioning the GD party at all. Rather just linking the narrative to the eight years of GD in power. Images are diverse people, just standing in the centre of the shot with sad faces. The text as subtitles at the end of the images repeats and reinforces claims made by male voiceover. The fast music contributes to create more dynamic to static images.

V72 Pandemic

The video represents a criticism of the Covid 19 pandemic management by the GD government and the speaker in the ad is a voiceover collage of voices of the Prime minister, head of National Center for Disease Control and Public Health Diseases, several news anchors talking about rise of covid statistics and restrictions and how resources mobilized by the government is not enough to manage the pandemic. The ad aims to appeal to the fears of population and trigger sense of hopelessness to evoke negative emotions. Images used in the ad are shots of empty streets of the capital city Tbilisi. Those images are designed to show that dynamics of the city life is disturbed by disaster in contrast to how life in city should be nourishing during the daytime. High angles of the camera create the feeling of distance and expectation of the worst yet to come. Images showing night in the city and only police cars patrolling in the city are used to reinforce the feeling of horror. The texts put in red on the images, encourages a viewer to think if they want to live in those strict restrictions and who can manage the covid pandemic better, as lives of the citizens are just statistics for the current government. The text reinforces once again the narrative already stated by the voiceover that the GD government is not capable to deal with the pandemic situation effectively. The music with the sound effect of the sirens on the background in unison creates the feeling of negative and alarming aura in the city shown on the images. The images of empty streets with fast editing are changed with the images showing streets full of cars and people and the text demands from the viewer to vote for the EG party and therefore, save lives of thousands of citizens. In the end with the election number and the name of party one should vote for, as they have a plan how to manage pandemic effectively, the voiceover reminds the slogan "vote for a change" and completes the narrative by offering the solution.

V74 this might be you

In the ad a surrogate with the face of an old man claims that it's been a year he has not received pension from the government and his son can't help him financially after the family was robbed. He would never imagine that for food he might have to visit free dining organizations. The ad appeals to the emotions of fear and hopelessness through negative messages, image design with computer effects and narrative. Camera zooming out from the sad face and old face creates feeling of tension. Slow and irritation music on the background also amplifies the general tense. The second part of the ad becomes colourful, the face of the surrogate transformed into a young man, claiming that the story told by an old men could happen to anyone. Narrative changes and encourages a viewer to see the solution to avoid living in the scenario told before by taking responsibility and change the future now. The ad asks the viewer to act and vote for changes. Irritating music on the background is changed to enthusiastic melody evoking hope and action. At the end of the ad the election number and EG logo appears on the image associating

#Top50attacks

Under hashtag #top50attacks EG has shared parts of debates in different committees of parliament of Georgia, where the members of the EG party attack members of GD party on different issues. #Top50attacks represent a great example of personified attacks taking place in the parliament between EG opposition representatives and incumbent GD party members who held different high-level positions in government. Those videos although included in the appendix as negative, do not represent political ads and fail to meet the criteria used in this paper to distinguish between negative political advertainments and other means of communication posted on social media platform to communicate with the electorate. Moreover, those videos have not been broadcasted on television during campaign period. Rather it represents parts of working debates in the parliament on different policy issues.