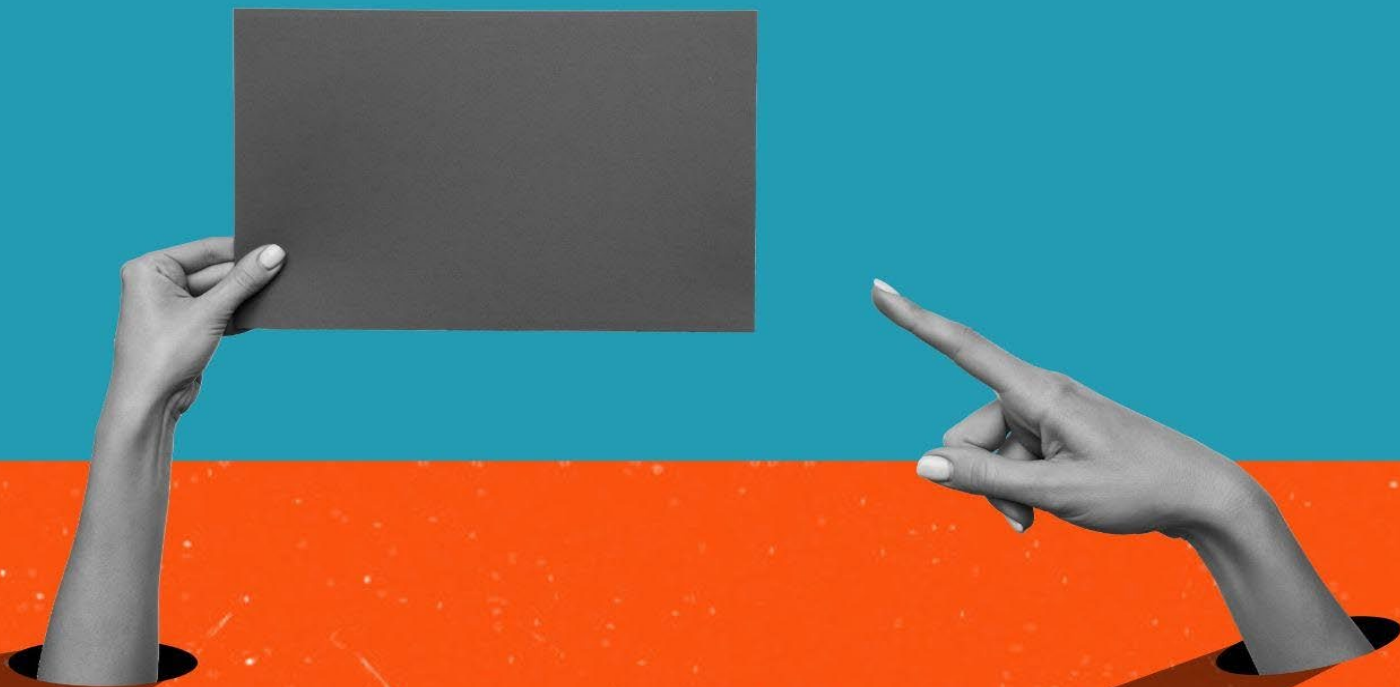


SEXIST HATE SPEECH AND HOMOPHOBIA

Amid 2024 Parliamentary Elections



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Introduction

The instrumentalization and political use of gender and sexual orientation has emerged as a particularly pressing issue in recent years. While in previous years public opinion on these topics was mainly manipulated by pro-Kremlin and far-right actors, recently, the Georgian government has been attempting to mainstream this rhetoric. This effort is not limited to rights-opposing discourse alone. As a result of government-initiated legislative changes, the term “gender” has been removed¹ from the legislation, and a newly adopted law under the pretext of protecting family values aims to restrict the freedom of expression of LGBTQ+ individuals.²

The aim of the following study was to examine sexist and homophobic hate speech and its sources, as well as the targets of these attacks, in the context of the 2024 parliamentary elections.

The report covers the pre-election and post-election period (July 1 – November 30) and is not limited solely to political actors participating in the election or election-related topics.

The first part of the report reviews the general quantitative data on sexist and homophobic hate speech. The second part includes a qualitative analysis of sexist hate speech alongside the quantitative data. The third part presents both the quantitative and qualitative data related to discrimination based on homophobia.

¹ On Amendments to the Law of Georgia "On Gender Equality"; <https://bit.ly/44T3Bbd>

² Law of Georgia on the Protection of Family Values and Minors; <https://bit.ly/3YRTRu6>

Methodology

The research was conducted using a mixed-methodology approach, incorporating both quantitative data and qualitative content analysis. The report covers the period from June 1 to November 30, 2024.

To collect the data, the Media Development Foundation's monitoring team carried out media monitoring. The research field included anti-Western, anti-liberal, far-right, and conservative media platforms, which are primary sources of sexist and homophobic messages, as well as pro-government and opposition-aligned media outlets.

Both traditional media (television, online and print media) and social media actors were selected for monitoring.

The focus of the observation was on identifying: Sources of gender-based discriminatory and stereotypical messages, targets of such messages, terminology used, and types of violations.

The typology of hate speech violations was determined according to the Gender Barometer indicators that were developed by the organization Sapari³ based on expert focus groups. The violations identified through the monitoring are categorized in this study according to the six indicators that previous studies have found to be used most frequently. These are:

1. **Anti-Feminism/Misogyny** – attacking women and women's rights;
2. **Offense/ridicule on the ground of appearance** – offending and ridiculing on the ground of body, appearance, manner of talk, attire;
3. **Offense/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities** – diminishing intellectual capacity, skills, experience, competencies;
4. **Attacks based on moral criteria** – attacking on the grounds of moral values;
5. **Ageism** – discriminating on the grounds of age;
6. **Criticism on the ground of gender stereotypes** – attacking on the basis of stereotyped perceptions of women's role, behavior, function, activity or other traits.

Within the “attacks based on moral criteria” category, a separate classification was created for “slut-shaming”, which refers to the criticism of individuals—primarily women and girls—whose appearance or behavior related to sexuality does not conform to societal gender norms. This includes, for example, sexually provocative clothing, the demand for access to contraception, premarital or casual sex. Slut-shaming often involves blaming survivors of sexual violence—either wholly or partially—for their assault based on their behavior or clothing. It is used to shame and stigmatize women.

³ Giorgi Urchukhishvili, 2020 Georgian Indicators of Sexist Hate Speech, Report on Focus Groups, Sapari, <https://bit.ly/3SDF0ju>

Selection of media monitoring subjects: The study included both traditional media (11 outlets: 7 TV channels, 2 print media, and 2 online platforms) and Facebook accounts (280 in total).

Television: The talk shows of the leading TV channels in terms of viewership: “Imedi Live” on Imedi TV and “Mtavari at Night” on Mtavari TV, which have different editorial policies and represent opposite extremes of polarization (pro-government and pro-opposition). Pro-government PostTV (programs like “Post Analytics” and “Anatomy of Liberalism”), which also follows an anti-liberal editorial policy.

Notably, two pro-government television channels (PostTV and Imedi) were analyzed in both traditional and social media segments. Their respective Facebook accounts (POSTV - Analytics;⁴ POSTV - News⁵, Anatomy of Liberalism⁶ and Facebook accounts of TV Imedi⁷) which published video content and info-cards, were included in the social media data pool.

Talk shows of television channels with anti-liberal and pro-Kremlin editorial policies were also selected. **These platforms are:** Obieqtivi, which is linked to pro-Kremlin “Alliance of Patriots” (program: “Studio N8”), Alt-Info, which is linked to the Conservative Movement (program: “Alt-Analytics”)⁸, and Sezoni TV (program: “Summary of the Day with Nikoloz Mzhavanadze”).

Newspapers: „Kviris Palitra“, Asaval-Dasavali, which has an anti-liberal and anti-Western editorial policy.

Online Outlets: Among the online platforms monitored was “Georgia and the World” (www.geworld.ge), which follows a pro-Kremlin editorial policy. Also included were Marshalpress and the anti-Western portal “Georgia First”, a website launched in 2022 by its founder Vato Shakarashvili in cooperation with Gia Gachechiladze (founder of the organization “Ai la”), pro-government expert and filmmaker Goga Khindrava, and members of the “People’s Power” movement.

In addition to traditional media, the following actors’ Facebook accounts were selected as monitoring subjects:⁹

1. Far-right, anti-Western, anti-liberal/pro-Kremlin groups: a) those affiliated with Alt-Info/Conservative Movement; b) Alliance of Patriots; c) Georgian March; d) Georgian Idea; e) Primakov Russian-Georgian Center; f) Levan Vasadze, the

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/POSTV.Analytics>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/POSTV.News>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Postv.LiberalismisAnatomia>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/tvimeredi>

⁸ Alt-Info Conservative Movement temporarily [suspended](#) broadcasting on October 27

⁹ <https://bit.ly/3Nruf11>

- Georgian representative of the World Congress of Families, and other affiliated actors.
2. Religious groups: individual clergy members' Facebook pages and personal accounts, as well as religious Facebook pages.
 3. Various anti-liberal/conservative platforms.
 4. Accounts affiliated with the government.
 5. Accounts affiliated with the opposition.

The full list of monitored Facebook accounts, which is updated periodically, is available [here](#).

Key Findings

The analysis of media monitoring data on sexist language and homophobia during the 2024 parliamentary elections (July 1 – November 30) revealed the following trends:

- While in previous years public opinion on gender and sexual orientation was primarily manipulated by pro-Kremlin and far-right actors, recently, the Georgian government has been attempting to mainstream these topics. This has manifested not only in rights-opposing rhetoric but also in the adoption of rights-restricting and anti-democratic legislation;
- More than half (53.8%) of the discriminatory statements/posts were homophobic in nature, while 46.2% contained sexist hate speech;
- A total of 1,617 sexist and homophobic comments/posts were identified, with the majority (1,110) disseminated via social media;
- In social media, the volume of discriminatory statements based on gender and those with homophobic content were relatively similar, while in traditional media, homophobic discrimination was predominant;

Sexist Hate Speech

- Sexist hate speech on social media was most frequently disseminated by anonymous Facebook accounts linked to the ruling party, followed by Facebook pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policies. Posts with such content aimed at discrediting opposition figures before the elections and delegitimizing protest movements afterwards;
- Among six identified categories of violations, the most frequent types included attacks based on moral criteria, anti-feminism/misogyny, and insults based on physical appearance;
- Misogynistic campaigns targeting women on social media often featured digitally altered visual materials. Politicians, civil society activists, and journalists were targeted primarily due to their political positions or participation in civic protests;
- Among political parties, members of the “Alt-Info/Conservative Movement” were the most frequent sources of sexist language. However, the number of sexist statements made by representatives of the ruling “Georgian Dream” party and its satellite “People's Power” indicate that the volume of discriminatory content is nearly equal between pro-Kremlin and government-affiliated actors;
- The main targets of sexist hate speech were representatives of opposition political parties. During the pre-election period, anonymous accounts linked to the ruling party published significantly more discriminatory content against opposition women politicians than against members of the “Georgian Dream;”

- Unlike the pre-election period, after the elections, attacks against politicians and civil society organization representatives who spoke out about electoral violations became more intense. Gender-based attacks against female journalists from critical media outlets also intensified as the elections approached;
- Whereas in previous years women politicians and civil activists were accused of anti-state activities by ultra-conservative, far-right, and anti-liberal actors, labeling them as agents of Western conspiracies, this time, the majority of such accusations originated from anonymous accounts linked to the government. In some cases, misogynistic posts with identical content were disseminated in a coordinated manner by government-affiliated pages.

Homophobia

Out of 870 homophobic comments recorded during the monitoring period across traditional and social media, the majority (514) appeared on social media.

- Compared to sexist content, pro-government media outlets were more active sources of homophobia. This tendency included the social media pages of PosTV and TV Imedi, which have pro-government editorial policies. These media outlets often securitized LGBTQ+ issues, framed sexual minority rights issues as threats, and instrumentalized individuals' private lives for political purposes;
- Coverage of LGBTQ+ topics in a way that was incompatible with the local context and legislation appeared to serve two goals: shifting public attention away from pressing local issues and cultivating fear of identity loss in an anti-Western context;
- In the pre-election context, pro-government accounts attempted to discredit political parties and candidates by associating them with LGBTQ+ issues. This included sharing manipulated images, falsified visuals, and AI-generated materials;
- The ruling “Georgian Dream” party also used homophobic rhetoric as part of its pre-election campaign, advocating for the need to win a constitutional majority to ban so-called “gay propaganda;”
- After the elections, TV Imedi, a government-aligned outlet, portrayed Western institutions' criticism of anti-democratic legislation—such as the law banning so-called “gay propaganda” and restricting NGOs—as interference in sovereign affairs and as pressure on the “Georgian Dream” to abandon traditional values;
- In the pre-election context, pro-government accounts tried to discredit political parties and their candidates by linking them to LGBTQ+ themes. Before the elections, this included associating pro-Western and pro-EU integration rallies with LGBTQ+ issues, while after the elections, ongoing protests were misrepresented through the same lens. This tactic aimed to distort the goals and demands of the protests, shifting the focus from political issues to identity and rights-related matters. Such disinformation efforts

included manipulated visuals and intentional misrepresentation of protests as being LGBTQ+-led;

- A notable trend among the Facebook pages of government-aligned media was the instrumentalization of European politicians' personal lives in response to their statements about democratic backsliding in Georgia;
- Among political parties, the most frequent sources of homophobic content were members of the “Alt-Info/Conservative Movement,” followed by representatives of “Georgian Dream” and its affiliate “People’s Power.”

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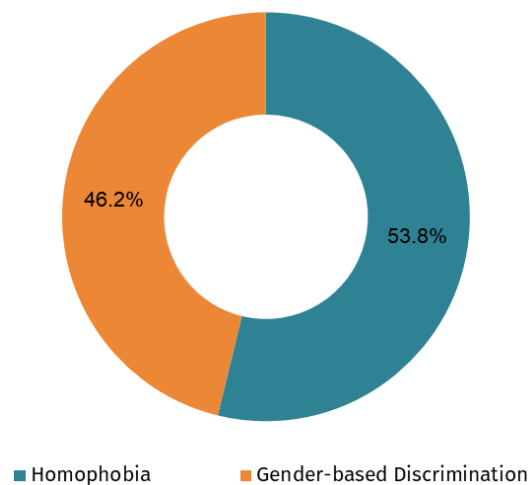
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1. TOTAL QUANTITATIVE DATA

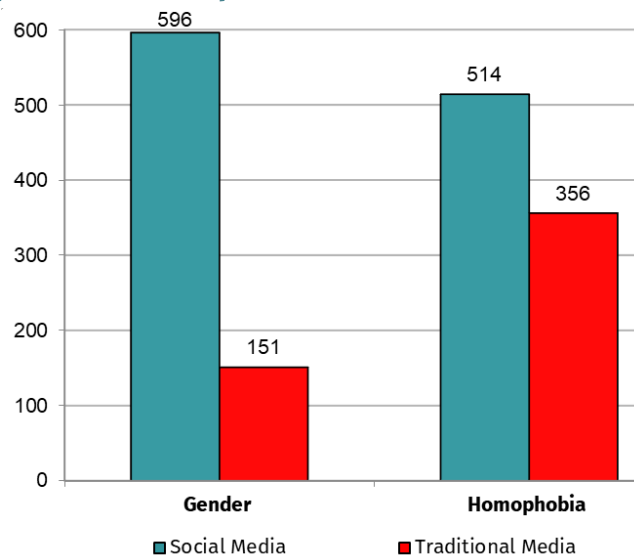
During the five-month monitoring of the pre- and post-election periods (July 1 – November 30), a total of 1,617 discriminatory comments/posts were identified. The majority of these originated from social media (1,110), while 507 were found in traditional media. Over half of the discriminatory content contained homophobic (53.8% - 870) messages, while 46.2% (747) involved sexist hate speech.

Figure 1. Share of Homophobia and Sexist Hate Speech (Social and Traditional Media)



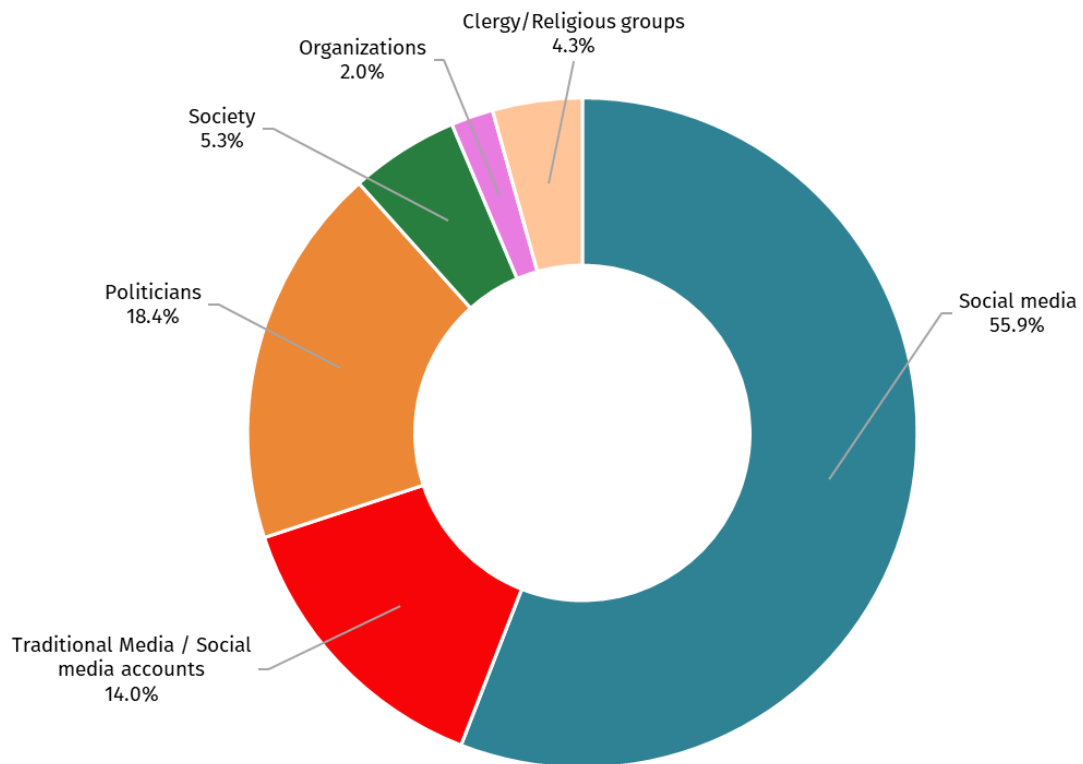
Among the violations identified on social media, posts containing gender-based discrimination (596) slightly outnumbered homophobic content (514). In traditional media, the trend was different — homophobic statements (356) were more than double those related to gender-based discrimination (151).

Figure 2. Sexist Hate Speech and Homophobia in Traditional and Social Media



As shown in the figure below, in more than half of the identified discriminatory comments/posts, the source was social media (55.9%), followed by politicians (18.4%) and traditional media (14%). Statements made by individuals from the public (5.3%) and clergy (4.3%) were relatively lower, while civil society organizations accounted for the smallest share (2%).

Figure 3. Sources of Sexist Hate Speech and Gender Identity-Related Narratives (Social/Traditional Media)

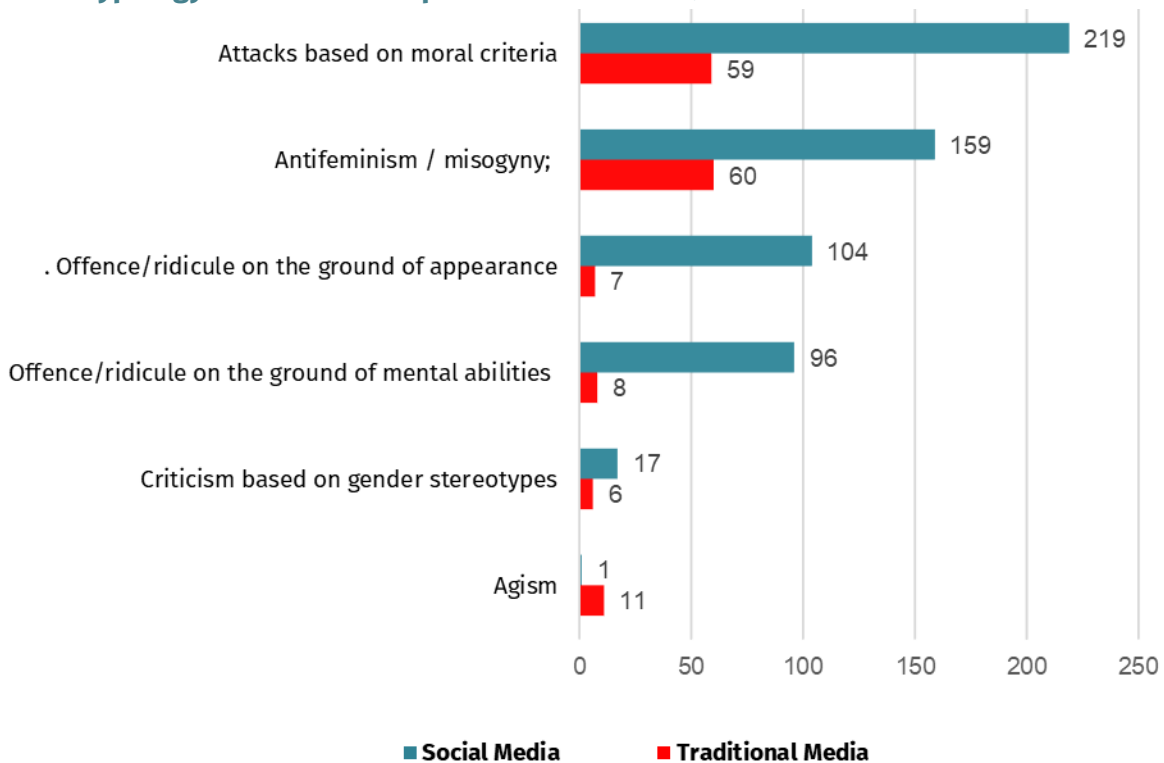


2. SEXIST HATE SPEECH AND GENDER STEREOTYPING

2.1 Typology of Sexist Hate Speech

Out of the 747 instances of sexist hate speech recorded during the monitoring period, 596 occurred on social media and 151 in traditional media. Across all six categories of violations, social media recorded the highest number of instances, with the exception of ageism, which appeared more frequently in traditional media (12). The most common form of attack was based on moral criteria (social media – 219, traditional – 59), followed by anti-feminism/misogyny (social – 159, traditional – 60), and insults based on physical appearance (social – 104, traditional – 7). Cases of offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities were also more frequent in social media (96) than traditional media (8). Criticism based on gender stereotypes was recorded 17 times on social media and 6 times on traditional media. Ageism was recorded 1 time on social media and 11 times on traditional media.

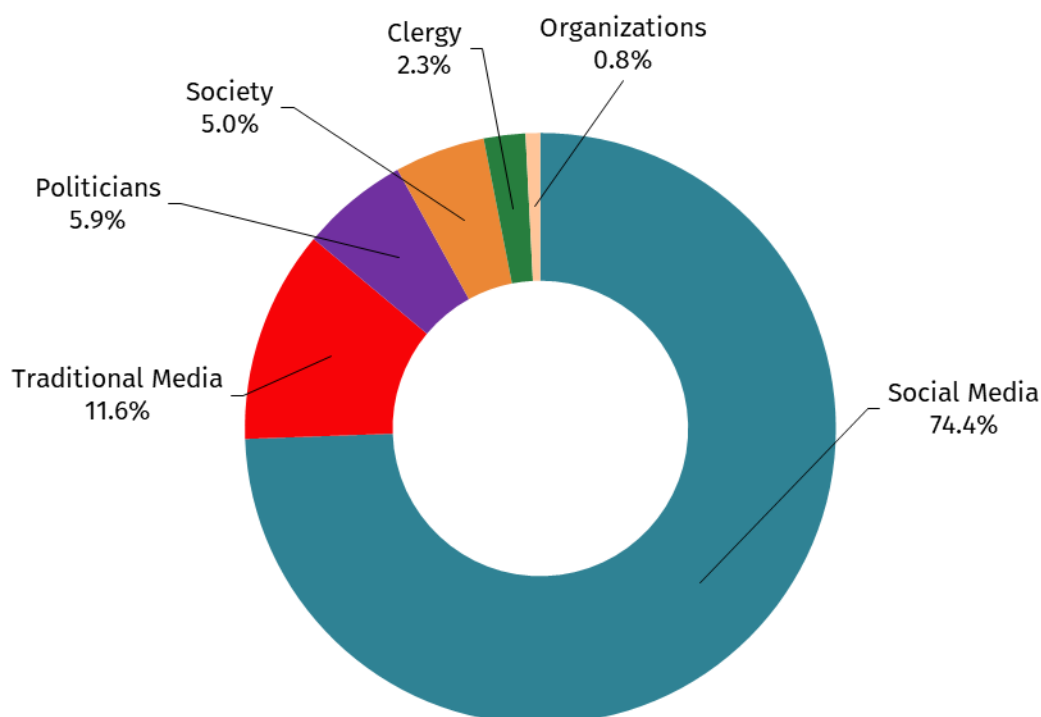
Figure 4. Typology of Sexist Hate Speech in Traditional/Social Media



2.2 Sources of Sexist Hate Speech

Of the 747 instances of gender-based discrimination, 596 originated from social media, and 151 from traditional media. The largest share of sexist hate speech sources came from the monitored media itself — both on social (74.4%) and traditional platforms (11.5%), which together accounted for 86.1% of all cases. Discriminatory statements made by political party representatives (5.9%) and members of the public (5.0%) were almost equal in number. Statements from clergy made up 2.3% of gender-based discriminatory comments.

Figure 5. Sources of Sexist Hate Speech (Social/Traditional Media)



On social media, gender-based discriminatory posts/comments were most frequently disseminated by anonymous accounts linked to the ruling party (419). These accounts most often discredited women based on appearance (88), moral criteria (78), and mental abilities (72). The most active individual Facebook account in this context was "Mikheil Ganubazhebeli" (124 posts), which mainly targeted female politicians, civil society activists, and NGO representatives, relying on "moral criteria" (40) and appearance-based insults (41).

Following the anonymous pro-government accounts, the Facebook pages of pro-government media outlets were also significant sources of sexist hate speech. Among them, PosTV's social media pages¹⁰ and the online outlet Publicist.ge were the most active. PosTV's multiple pages

¹⁰ As indicated in the methodology, the Facebook pages of the pro-government television channel PosTV, which publish not only videos but also informational cards, are categorized under social media.

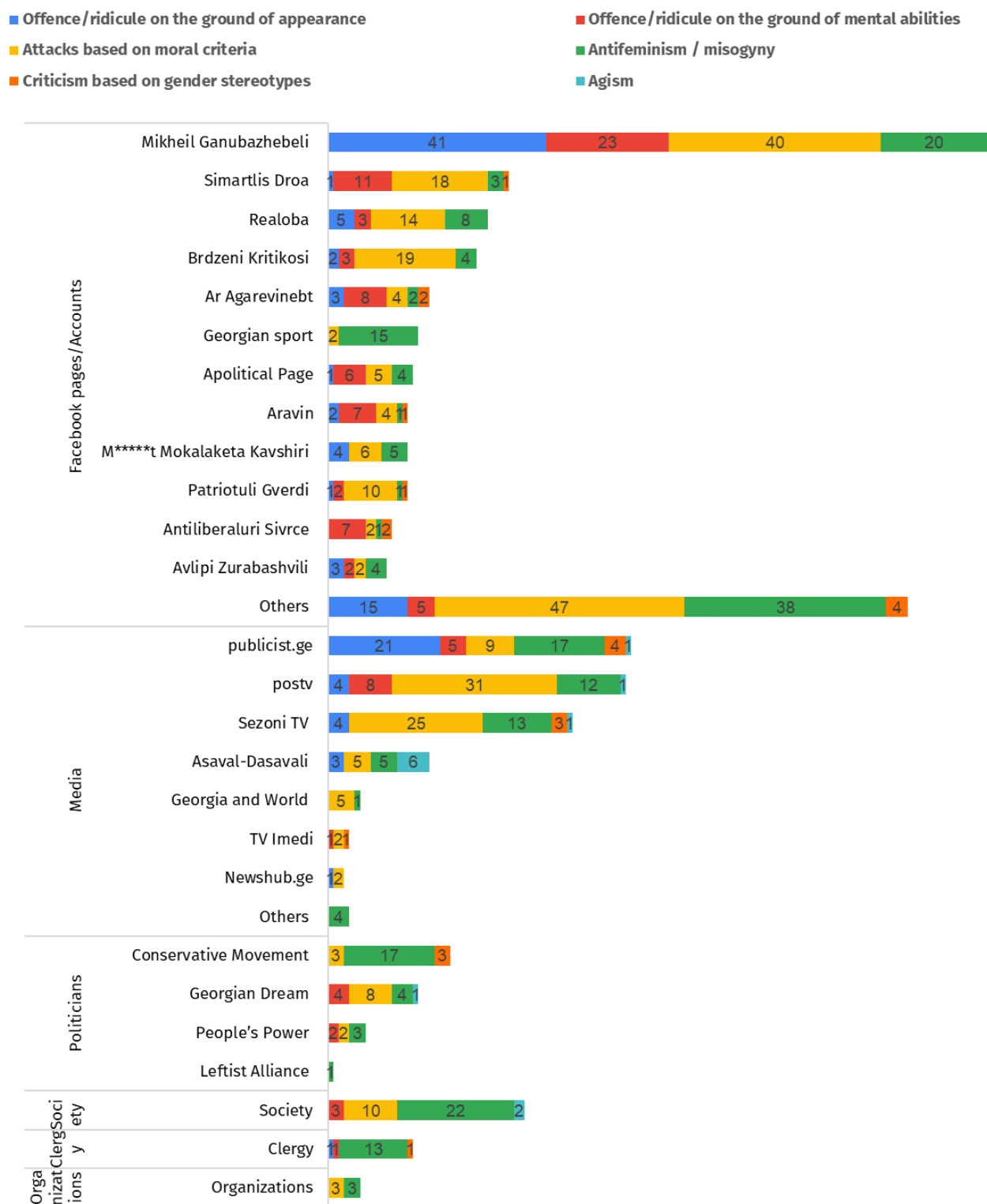
published 40 posts attacking mostly female politicians, activists, and NGO representatives, with 25 of these being attacks based on moral criteria. Across its TV and social media accounts, PostTV was responsible for a total of 56 sexist posts. Another pro-government outlet, [Publicist.ge](https://publicist.ge) published 57 discriminatory posts, with a high frequency of appearance-based insults (21) and individual attacks on women politicians (16). Among pro-government media outlets, TV Imedi (4 posts) and Newshub.ge (3 posts) had the fewest sexist contents identified on their Facebook pages.

When it comes to traditional media, more than half of the sexist statements (46) were made by Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, host of his program on pro-Kremlin Sezoni TV, who mostly targeted women based on moral criteria (25) and disseminated misogynistic messages(11). These numbers were comparatively lower in Asaval-Dasavali, the pro-Kremlin outlet Georgia and World (6), and Alt-Info (1). In the case of Alt-Info, since its media platform is not clearly separated from the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info political party, the data was categorized under party-based statements — explaining the lower number attributed to the media outlet itself.

It should also be noted that among political parties, members of the Alt-Info/Conservative Movement were the most frequent source of sexist hate speech on both social and traditional media (23 cases). Not to mention, when combining the data for the ruling "Georgian Dream" party (17) and its satellite "People's Power" (7), the number of statements from pro-government and pro-Kremlin parties is nearly identical.

Among statements made by members of the public (37) in both social and traditional media, most (22) were misogynistic, followed by attacks based on moral criteria (10), Offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities (3), and ageism (2). In the case of religious groups, most posts (11) focused on the topic of abortion. Statements made by organizations were equally split between misogynistic messages (3) and morality-based attacks on women (3).

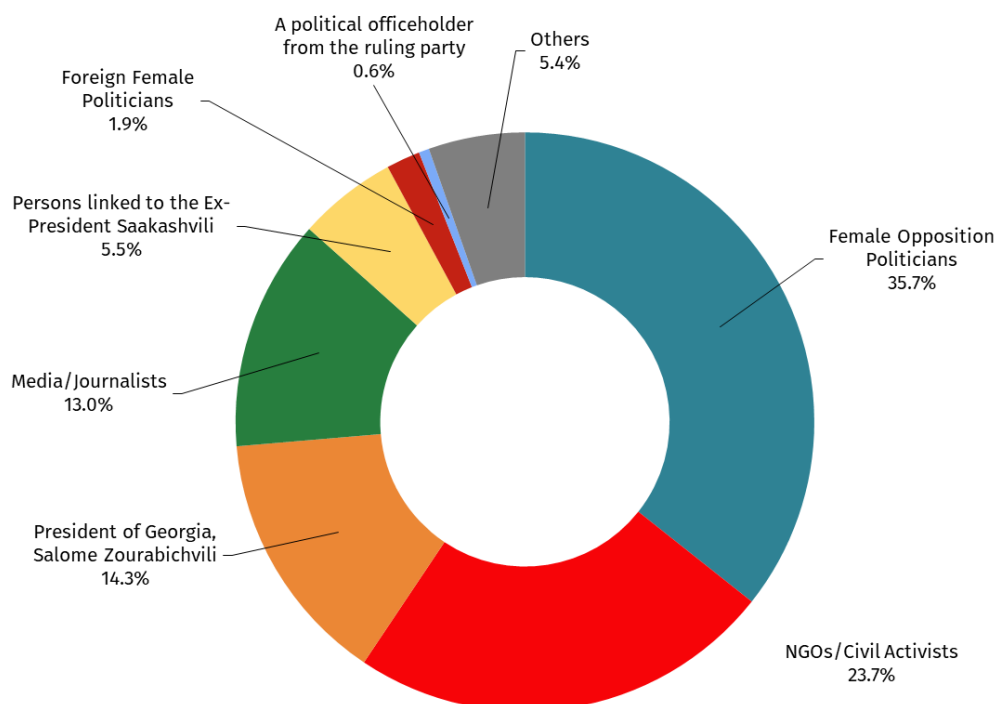
Figure 6. Sources and Typology of Sexist Hate Speech



2.3 Targets of Sexist Hate Speech

Pre-election monitoring showed that the most frequent targets of sexist hate speech were representatives of opposition political parties (184), followed by statements made against representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil activists (163).

Figure 7. Female Targets of Sexist Hate Speech by Institutional and Other Affiliations



Unlike the pre-election period, after the elections, attacks intensified against politicians and NGO representatives who made statements regarding violations observed during the election process. Among politicians, sexist hate speech in both traditional and social media was most frequently directed at the President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili (98), followed by members of the “Unity - National Movement” party: Sopho Japaridze (41) and party chair Tina Bokuchava (36), as well as Ani Tshitlidze (21), and Khatia Dekanoidze (10). Among female politicians, Ana Dolidze from the “Strong Georgia” coalition was also targeted (29), with attempts to discredit her intellectual abilities. Tamar Chergoleishvili, founder of the “Federalists” party, was the target of 26 discriminatory statements, which included mockery based on appearance, intellectual capabilities, and slut-shaming. Attacks against Natia Mezvrishvili, member of the party “For Georgia,” were relatively less frequent (9).

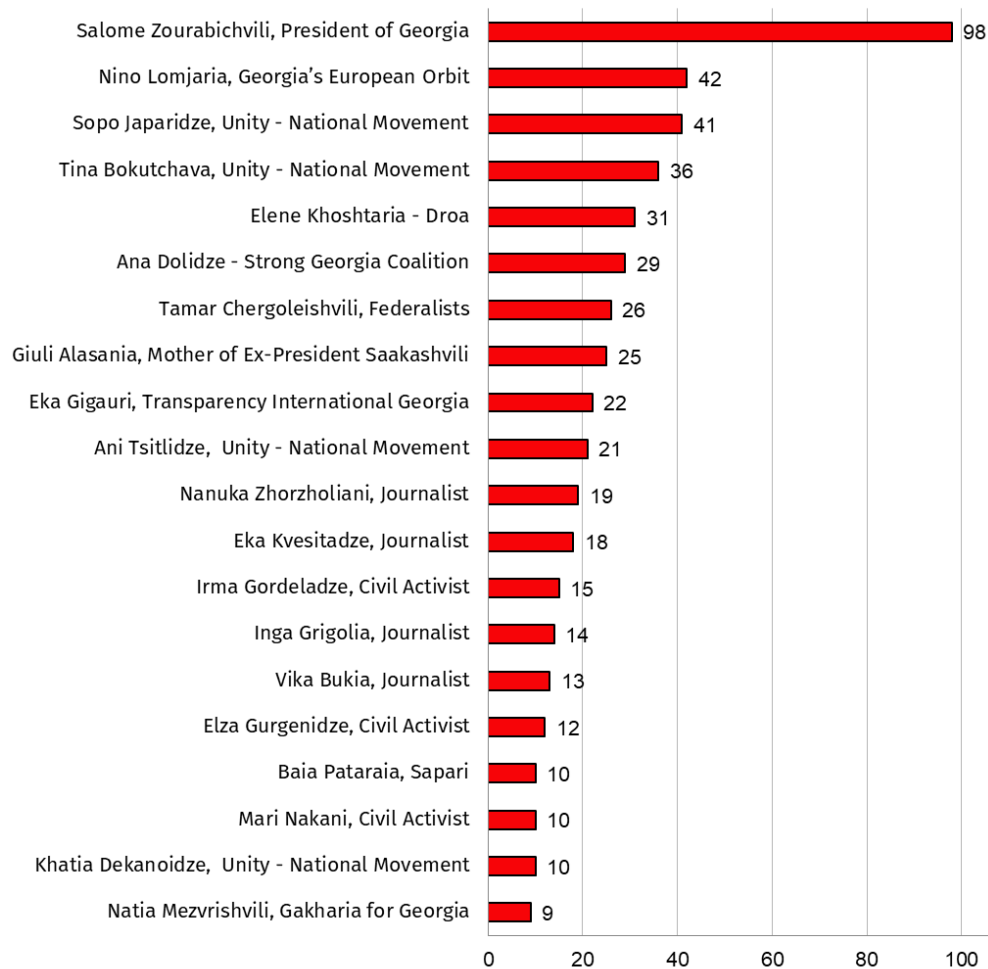
Among NGOs and civil society activists, most attacks were directed at the former Public Defender and founder of “Georgia’s European Orbit,” Nino Lomjaria (42); Eka Gigauri, director of Transparency International Georgia (22); and civil activist Irma Gordeladze (15).

As the elections approached, gender-based attacks on female journalists from critical media outlets also increased significantly (89 cases), with the most frequent targets being Nanuka Zhorzholiani (19), Eka Kvesitadze (18), Inga Grigolia (14), and Vika Bukia (13).

As noted in previous reports, individuals associated with former president Mikheil Saakashvili (38) were also frequently targeted with sexist hate speech, most commonly subjected to slut-shaming. Among foreign politicians, 13 sexist comments were recorded, with the majority (6) directed at Member of the European Parliament Markéta Gregorová. She became a target after making public statements about violations she observed during the elections and criticizing the electoral environment.

Another target of sexist hate speech was Elza Gurgenidze, the wife of Magistrate Judge Vladimir Khuchua of Tetrtskaro Court, who publicly supported her husband's decision¹¹ regarding a violation of voting secrecy during the elections.

Figure 8. Most Frequent Targets of Sexist Hate Speech



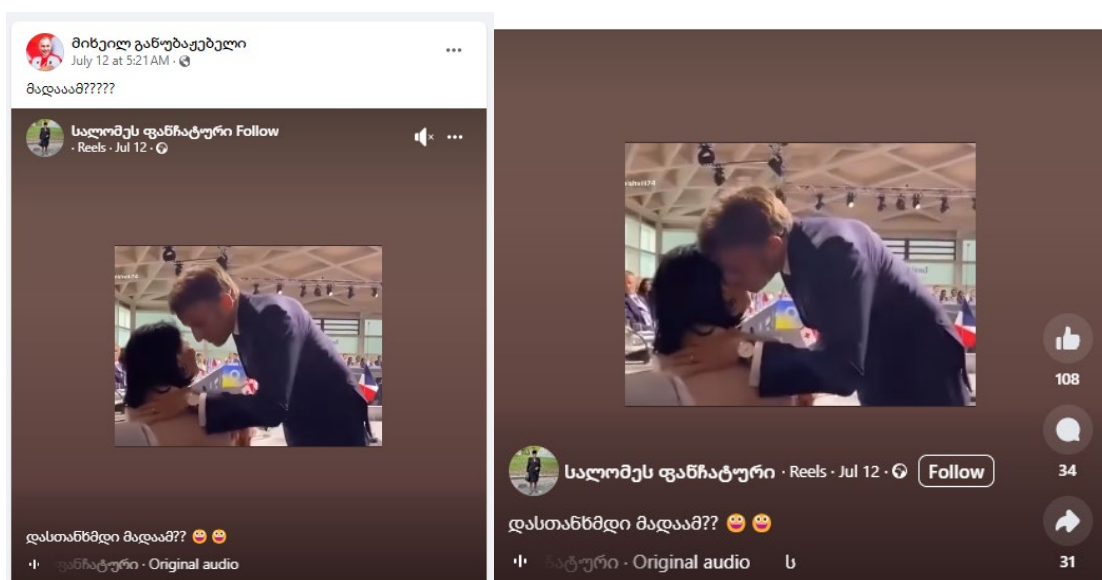
¹¹ Radio Liberty, 5 November - Who is Judge Khuchua, who established the breach of secrecy of the vote in the elections? <https://bit.ly/4jWln1G>

2.4 Attacks based on Moral Criteria

Out of 278 cases of attacks based on moral criteria identified in the monitored media, 219 were found in social media and 59 in traditional media. When using sexist hate speech, female politicians and civil activists were labeled with terms such as “female Orjonikidze,”¹² “homeless agent,”¹³ “5-GEL whore,”¹⁴ “shameless woman,”¹⁵ “women of loose morals,”¹⁶ and others.

Slut-shaming. Attacks based on moral criteria on social media often (95 cases) took the form of slut-shaming. These posts targeting politicians and civil activists were mostly disseminated by anonymous pro-government pages and frequently used digitally altered images or videos. The most frequent targets of slut-shaming were: Tina Bokuchava, chair of the “United National Movement,” President Salome Zourabichvili, Giuli Alasania, mother of former president Mikheil Saakashvili, Journalist Inga Grigolia.

On July 12, the Facebook account “Salome’s Panchaturi [Balcony]”¹⁷ – which often posted sexist content targeting the President – published a video clip from Salome Zourabichvili’s meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, edited with an added intimate audio overlay. The post included the comment “Did you say yes, madam?” attempting to portray diplomatic relations between the two presidents as an intimate affair. On the same day, the pro-government Facebook page “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” shared the same video.¹⁸



¹² Marshallpress, 3 October; “She’s a female Orjonikidze, this genetically modified one” – Zurab Kadagidze about Salome Zourabichvili” <https://mpn.ge/archives/55553>

¹³ Terenti Gldaneli, 13 September; <https://bit.ly/42wm9wr>

¹⁴ Mogityant Mokalaketa Kavshiri, 13 September; <https://bit.ly/4IRdaxi>

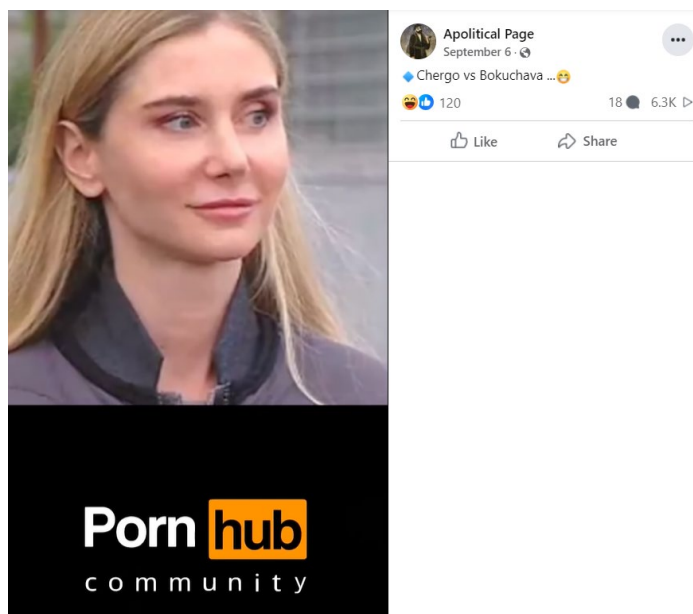
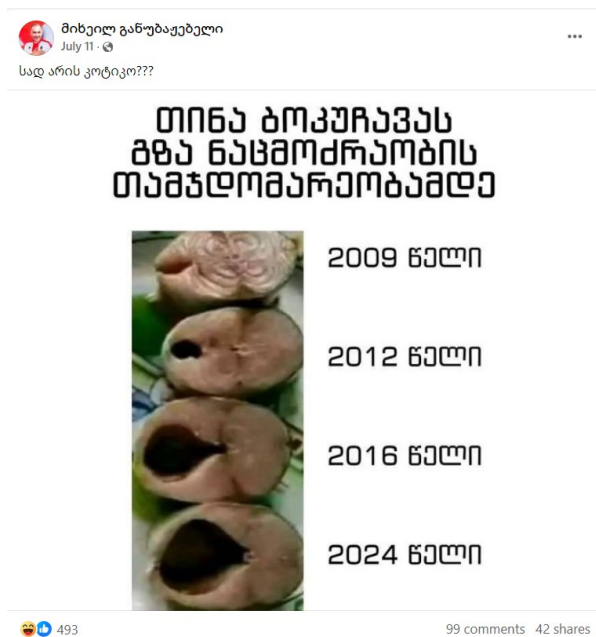
¹⁵ 19 September, Sezoni TV, Sumamry of the Day; <https://bit.ly/42R6ypY>

¹⁶ Sezoni TV, 21 October; <https://bit.ly/42IZe1b>

¹⁷ Salome’s Panchaturi, 12 July; <https://bit.ly/4IQ3UJV>

¹⁸ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 12 July; <https://bit.ly/4iVvGSR>

Posts containing slut-shaming content targeting Tina Bokuchava were published at various times by anonymous Facebook accounts linked to the ruling party. On July 11, the Facebook account "Mikheil Ganubazhebeli"¹⁹ shared a photo with the caption "Tina Bokuchava's Path to UNM Chairwomanship" and a note saying "Where is Kotiko?". The image insinuated that her rise to the position of chair of the Unity-National Movement was due not to her professional achievements but to her intimate relationships. On September 6, the page "Apolitical Page" posted a video²⁰ in which one frame included Tina Bokuchava's photo with the Pornhub logo attached to it.



In several instances, visual materials and sexist language used for the purpose of slut-shaming female politicians were identical. For example, on July 11, the Facebook page "Salome's Panchatouri"²¹ posted a photo of the President with the caption "When everything reminds you of your ex." On July 22, a video with the same caption was published on the page "Reality,"²² showing Tina Bokuchava's footage overlapped with a clip of former President Mikheil Saakashvili.

¹⁹ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 11 July; <https://bit.ly/44eQwsv>

²⁰ Apolitical Page, 7 September; <https://bit.ly/3YSh5jw>

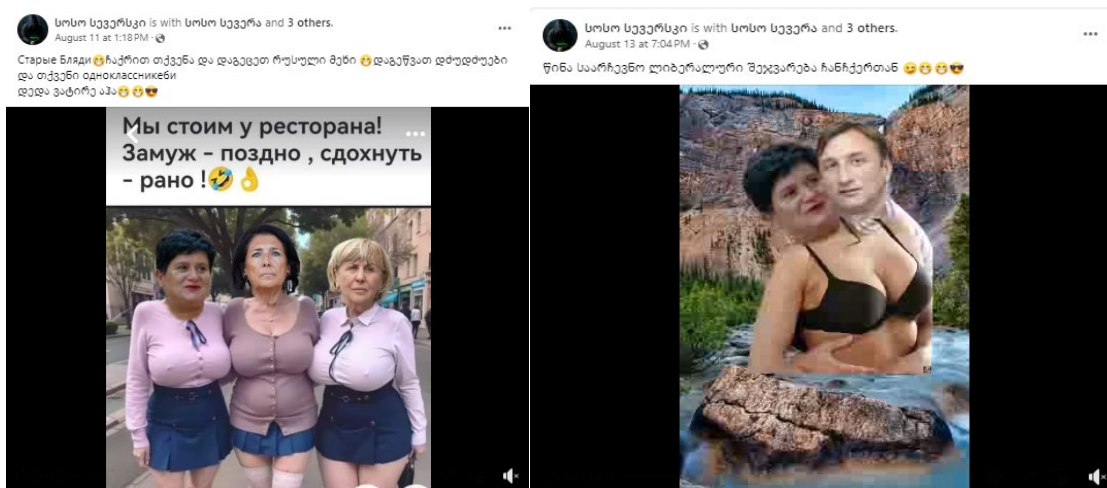
²¹ Salome's Panchatouri, 11 July; <https://bit.ly/42RaJSM>

²² Realoba, 22 July; <https://bit.ly/3EILSIQ>



It is noteworthy that digitally altered images were also used for attacks based on moral criteria targeting politicians and civic activists who expressed critical opinions about ongoing political developments.

On August 11 and 13, the Facebook account “Soso Severski” posted altered photos of civic activist Irma Gordeladze. One image depicted her with Lado Afkhazava near a waterfall,²³ captioned “Pre-election liberal mating by the waterfall.” In another image, Irma Gordeladze, President Salome Zurbashvili, and Giuli Alasania were shown with the Russian phrase “Старые Бляди” (“Old Whores”) written across it.²⁴



²³ Soso Severski, 13 August; <https://bit.ly/3ESTXdY>

²⁴ Soso Severski, 11 August; <https://bit.ly/3ESTXdY>

2.5 Anti-Feminism / Misogyny

Of the 143 anti-feminist statements identified by the monitoring, 92 were found on social media and 51 in traditional media. Some of these statements related to domestic violence laws, promoting the idea that such legislation led to the unjust persecution of men.

Feminism as an ideology was portrayed as a mechanism for the destruction of the traditional family. Messages concerning gender quotas were linked, on the one hand, to the Georgian Parliament's decision to abolish quota legislation²⁵ and, on the other hand, to the perceived dangers of quotas, using the case of an attack on Donald Trump to argue that female bodyguards hid behind men during the incident.

● Quota laws led to the inclusion of incompetent women in politics

Tea Tsulukiani, Georgian Dream: You [addressing opposition politician Ana Dolidze, leader of “For the People” party] were still an embryo in politics when Bidzina Ivanishvili started appointing women as candidates and introducing quotas. But after witnessing the likes of [Ana] Tsitlidze, the ungrateful and talentless Kordzaia, the pretty Tinikos, loser Salomes (this time I mean the MP), and such wonders — no man would want to support women in politics anymore, or support quotas. That’s just how it is.”²⁶

Tea Tsulukiani, Georgian Dream: „...those of you women who still have some sense on that side [the opposition], get to work. Because the quotas initiated by Georgian Dream no longer exist, maybe a few of you will at least stick your pretty noses into the legislature... Shame to the quota that brings someone like [Ana] Tsitlidze — maybe I’m even getting the surname wrong — into Parliament...”

The repeal of gender equality and domestic violence legislation was also part of the campaign promises of the “Alt-Info – Conservative Movement,” which was in coalition with the “Alliance of Patriots.”

● Domestic violence law facilitates the unwarranted persecution of men

Shota Martinenko, Conservative Movement, Alliance of Patriots: “They’ve passed absurd laws on domestic violence. The approach is so strict that people are being thrown in jail just for shouting at home... Law enforcement should be staffed with patriotic conservatives... If you appoint a radical feminist as a judge, it’s clear that no

²⁵ On.ge, 4 April, Parliament abolished gender quotas; <https://bit.ly/4jW4jsx>

²⁶ Marshallpress, 27 August; “Shame to the quota that brings someone like [Ana] Tsitlidze and withered-yet-still-beautiful rose-like lady Tako Charkviani into the parliament” – Tea Tsulukiani; <https://bit.ly/3GrfjQ8>

matter how objective the system is supposed to be, she'll make feminist-leaning decisions."²⁷

- **Feminism as an ideology is aimed at destroying the institution of the family**

Shota Martinenko, Conservative Movement: There's aggressive promotion of feminism... New educational approaches are being introduced where children are not to be exposed to gender roles or stereotypes — as they call them — and the idea is being planted that being a housewife or mother is a sign of failure. A successful woman, they say, must work, must be independent from her family and husband — financially and in every way — and the law backs her up, so she can throw her husband in jail at the slightest raise of voice. That's what they can do now, and that's why motherhood has been turned into something shameful.²⁸

Memes, edited videos, and reels were used in misogynistic campaigns targeting women on social media. Female politicians, civil society activists, and representatives of NGOs were primarily targeted by anonymous accounts linked to the ruling party, due to their political positions, election campaigns, and activism. In some cases, identical posts with the same visuals and text were disseminated in a coordinated manner by pro-government accounts.

Anonymous accounts such as “Ar Agarevinebt” [“We won't let you mess it up again”] and “Simartlis Droa” [“Time for Truth”], which are affiliated with the ruling party, simultaneously published identical visuals and similar captions targeting members of the Unity - National Movement — Sopho Japaridze, Ana Tsitlidze, and Tina Bokuchava — as well as Salome Samadashvili from the “Lelo” party and former Public Defender Nino Lomjaria. The visuals included captions such as “When you finally found your place”²⁹ and “They've found the place where they belong.”³⁰

On August 29, the pro-government Facebook page “Sirtskhvilis Koridori” [Corridor of Shame] published photos of “For Georgia” party members Teona Akubardia and Natia Mezvrishvili with

²⁷ Alt-Info. Alt-Analytics, 3 October; <https://bit.ly/434VbMv>

²⁸ Alt-Info. Alt-Analytics, 2 August; <https://bit.ly/4jy7pDk>

²⁹ Ar Agarevinebt, 22 July; <https://bit.ly/4IQPBol>

³⁰ Simartlis Droa, 22 July; <https://bit.ly/42wSQKc>



the caption “Gakharia’s Mdedrioni”³¹ (a gendered and dehumanizing term in Georgian, as it is a wordplay on Mkhedrioni - an infamous paramilitary group in Georgia in the 90s).



Following the elections, women who spoke out about electoral violations or participated in protests also became targets of misogynistic comments. The pro-government account “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli”³² posted an image of protesters holding a black circle on a white background — a symbol of vote secrecy violation. The image was captioned: “Mothers-in-law the morning after the wedding night.” This symbolic protest later became the subject of misogynistic disinformation, which is documented in the Media Development Foundation’s report on “Gender- and Identity-based Disinformation.”³³

³¹ Corridor of Shame, 29 August; <https://bit.ly/435hEJm>

³² Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 13 November; <https://bit.ly/3S8fFxl>

³³ Kintsurashvili T, 2025. Gender- and Identity-Based Disinformation. Media Development Foundation, <https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/263/>

2.6 Offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance

Out of 111 instances of offence/ridicule based on physical appearance identified during the monitoring period, 104 occurred on social media and 7 in traditional media. Opposition politicians, civic activists, and journalists — most of them women — became targets of appearance-based attacks by anonymous pages affiliated with the ruling party.

Among the politicians ridiculed for their physical appearance were representatives of the “Strong Georgia” coalition, Ana Dolidze and Ana Natsvlishvili. The Facebook account “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” posted photos of Ana Dolidze with captions such as “Usurer’s teletubbies”³⁴ and “Is she really like this or did she accidentally use a filter?”³⁵ A photo of Ana Natsvlishvili taken in Parliament was shared³⁶ by the page “Publicist” with the caption “Lelo’s female tank driver.”³⁷



Members of the “Unity- National Movement” — Ani Tsitlidze and Sopho Japaridze — were also targets of ridicule. The page “Publicist” posted several photos of Ani Tsitlidze, including one where she is placed next to a monkey, with the caption “Ani Tsitlidze in the jungle,” and another with the caption “Ani Tsitlidze has been directly touched.”³⁸ The account “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” published a video multiple times showing a man with dwarfism dancing, accompanied by the caption “Sopho’s election campaign”³⁹ — referring to UNM member Sopho Japaridze.

³⁴ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 26 August; <https://bit.ly/435jutQ>

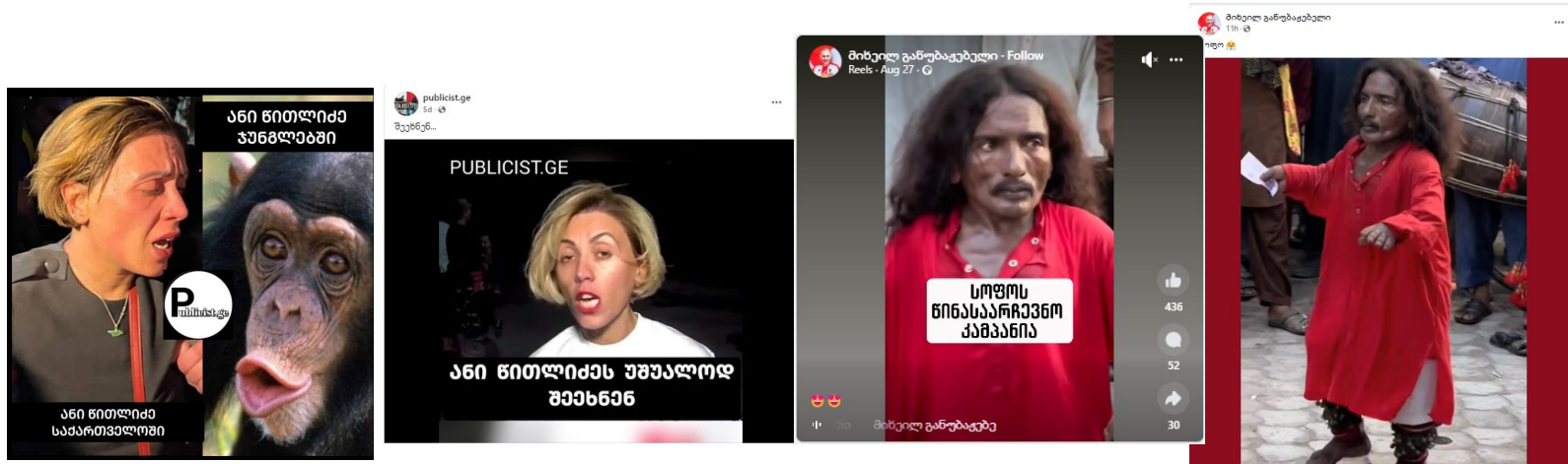
³⁵ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 22 August; <https://bit.ly/435jutQ>

³⁶ publicist.ge, 17 August; <https://bit.ly/4jEW7gz>

³⁷ publicist.ge, 17 August; <https://bit.ly/4jEW7gz>

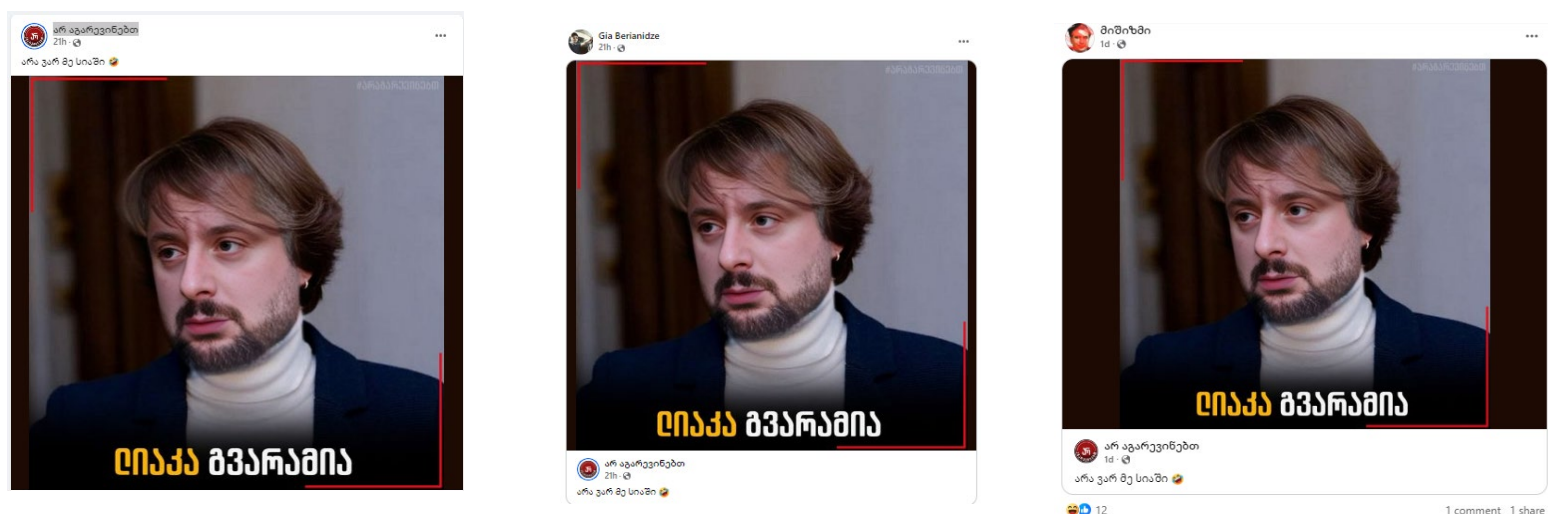
³⁸ publicist.ge, 20 September; <https://bit.ly/42GKI8A>

³⁹ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 27 August; <https://bit.ly/4IRa900>



During the pre-election period, announcements of coalition-building among political entities became a pretext for ridicule based on appearance. While previous reports showed how gender roles of politicians were distorted through merged facial visuals, in this case, digitally altered images aimed to ridicule political cooperation. Photos combining the faces of political figures were disseminated — in some cases, in a coordinated manner — by anonymous pro-government accounts.

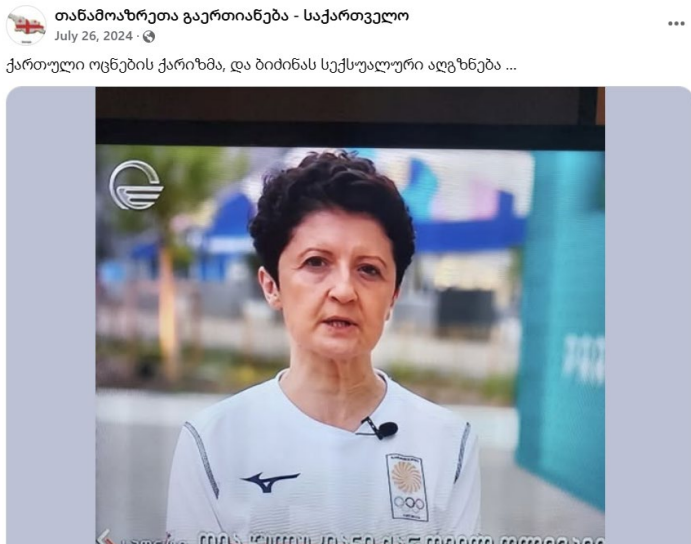
For example, after the union between “Droa” party leader Elene Khoshtaria and the “Akhali” party, government-affiliated pages circulated an altered photo that merged Elene Khoshtaria’s and Nika Gvaramia’s faces, with the caption “Liaka Gvaramia.”⁴⁰



Female politicians from the ruling party were also targeted with offence/ridicule based on appearance. Posts mocking the physical appearance of Georgian Dream members Nino Tsilosani and Tea Tsulukiani were published by accounts affiliated with the opposition.

⁴⁰Ar Agarevinebt, 25 September; <https://bit.ly/4iHewrU>

On July 26, the opposition-linked account “Union of Like-Minded People – Georgia”⁴¹ posted a photo of Tea Tsulukiani with a caption mocking her looks: “The charisma of Georgian Dream and Bidzina’s sexual arousal...” On November 1, another opposition-affiliated account, “I Didn’t Sell Georgia,”⁴² shared a screenshot of a comment on Nino Tsilosani’s post with the caption “Botox Nina, whoever let you into Europe...!”



It is worth noting, however, that during the pre-election period, discriminatory posts targeting opposition female politicians published by anonymous pro-government accounts far outnumbered similar posts directed at members of the Georgian Dream party.

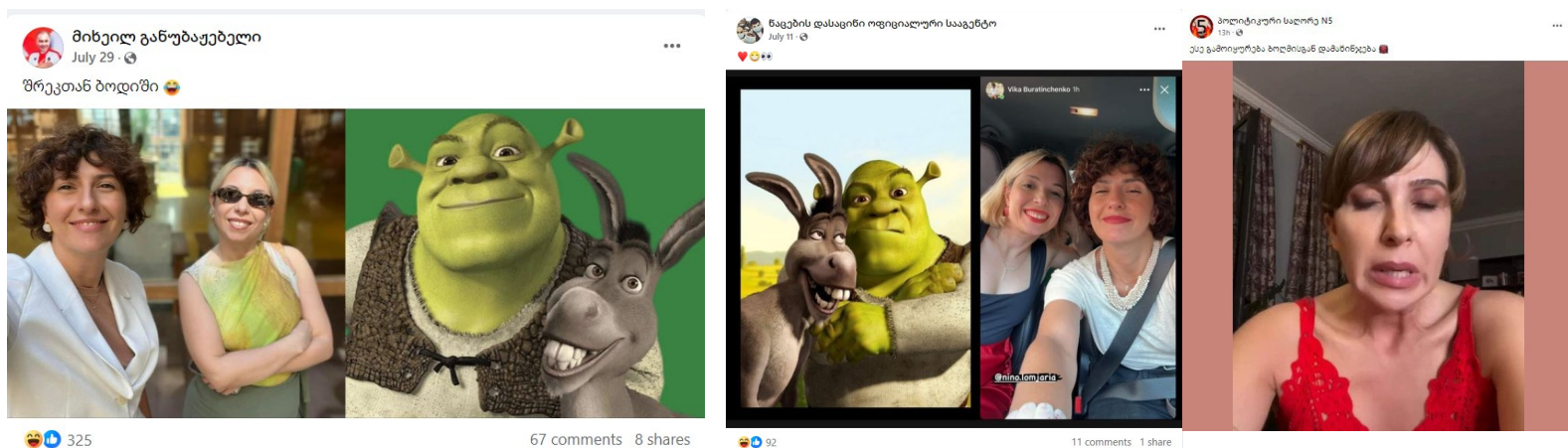
Among journalists, those from TV Pirveli were most frequently targeted with appearance-based ridicule. TV anchors Vika Bukia of TV Pirveli and Eka Kvesitadze of Mtavari Channel were common targets, and former Public Defender Nino Lomjaria was also featured alongside Bukia.^{43 44}

⁴¹ Union of Like-Minded People – Georgia; <https://bit.ly/44MfOhL>

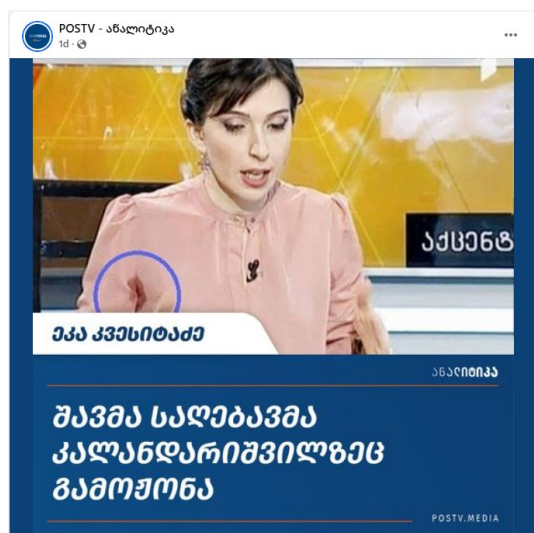
⁴² I Didn't Sell Georgia, <https://bit.ly/4jvlC3V>

⁴³ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 29 July; <https://bit.ly/4lWXvNk>

⁴⁴ Politikuri Sagore N5, 15 August; <https://bit.ly/42ynaUN>



On November 16, an image of Eka Kvesitadze showing a sweat stain near her armpit was simultaneously published by a PostTV-affiliated Facebook account and the pro-government page “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli.” The PostTV account paired the image with Kvesitadze’s quote: “The black paint leaked onto [Giorgi] Kalandarishvili too,”⁴⁵ referencing the symbolic protest involving black paint thrown at the head of the Central Election Commission over suspected vote secrecy violations. “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” shared the same image with the caption “Leaky Eka Kvesitadze.”⁴⁶



In addition to ridicule based on appearance, the account “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” posted⁴⁷ an Armenophobic image of Nino Lomjaria, where her nose had been digitally altered. The caption featured a technique often used to incite anti-Armenian sentiment — altering

⁴⁵ POSTV - Analytics, 16 November; <https://bit.ly/42xrrrv>

⁴⁶ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 16 November; <https://bit.ly/3EJtNdM>

⁴⁷ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 1 August; <https://bit.ly/3SgTUvz>

surnames to resemble Armenian endings — aiming to portray Armenian ethnic identity in a negative context. The caption read: “Tsavt tanem.” The same image, without commentary, was also shared by another government-affiliated account titled “F*ck Citizen’s Union.”⁴⁸



2.7 Offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities

On social media, there were 98 instances of offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities. The main targets included Tamar Chergoleishvili, founder of the “Federalists” party; Ana Dolidze, leader of the “Strong Georgia” coalition; and President Salome Zourabichvili. Individuals who pointed out irregularities in the election monitoring process were also targeted by pro-government Facebook accounts.

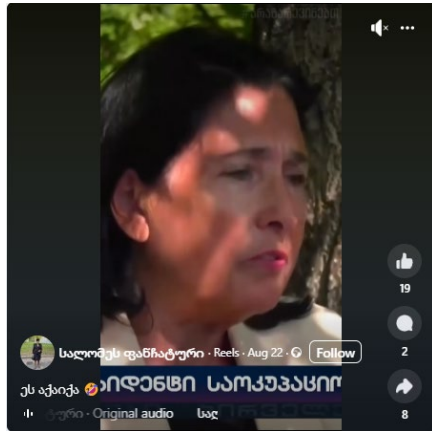
President Zourabichvili was mocked based on her manner of speech. Reels mocking her mental capacity were posted by pages such as “Ar Agarevinebt”⁴⁹ (“We Won’t Let You Mess It Up Again”), “Simartlis Droa”⁵⁰ (“Time for Truth”), and “Salome’s Panchaturi,”⁵¹ with captions like: “We have a great one,” “What kind of plague is this,” and “She’s all over the place.”

⁴⁸ Mogityant Mokalaketa Kavshiri, 23 October; <https://bit.ly/3GpBrdF>

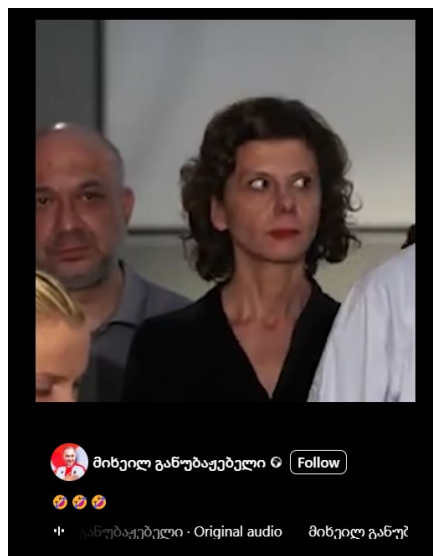
⁴⁹ Ar Agarevinebt, 22 August; <https://bit.ly/42RLakD>

⁵⁰ Simartlis Droa, 25 August; <https://bit.ly/4cSC9MR>

⁵¹ Salomes Panchaturi, 22 August; <https://bit.ly/3S95Z63>



Before the elections, various accounts — including “Avlipi Zurabashvili,”⁵² “Ar Agarevinebt,”⁵³ “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli,”⁵⁴ and “Realoba”⁵⁵ — published posts mocking Tamar Chergoleishvili for her intellectual abilities. Identical videos were shared that showed her facial expressions in fast-forward format, accompanied by mocking comments like: “Neighboring ward,” “Gishtamara,” [Crazy Tamara] and “She won’t bite, she wants to play.”



⁵²Avlipi Zurabashvili, 1 August; <https://bit.ly/4iBJPpo>

⁵³ Ar Agarevinebt, 5 August; <https://bit.ly/4jvW32w>

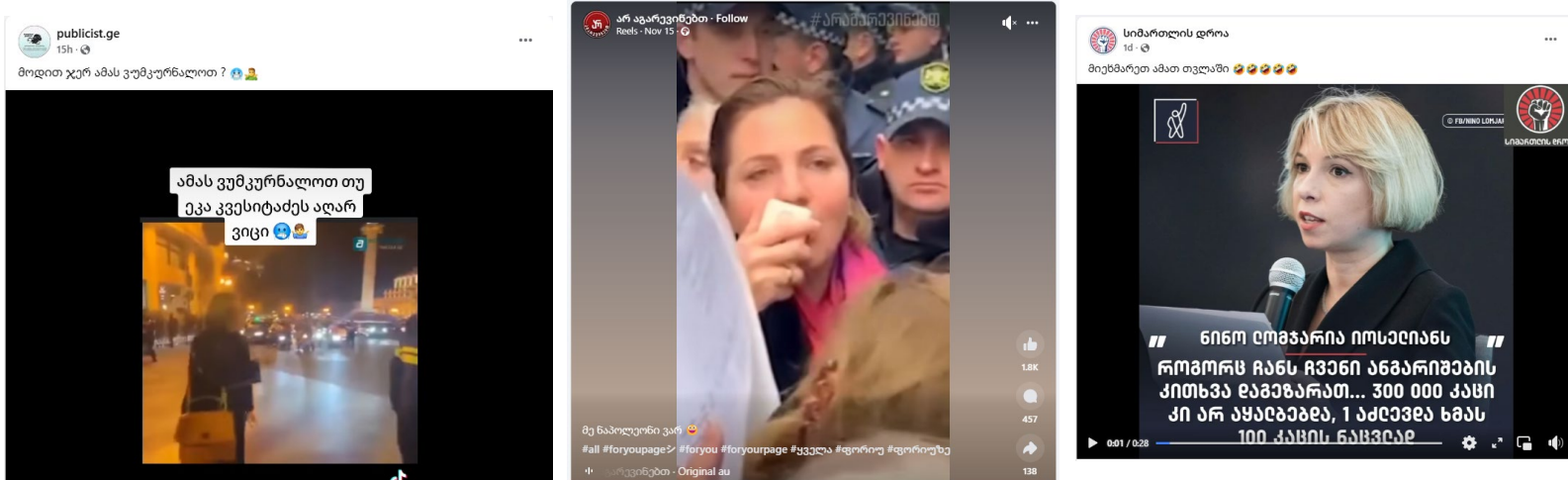
⁵⁴ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 3 August; <https://bit.ly/4ilcckl>

⁵⁵ Realoba, 5 August; <https://bit.ly/3RB385N>

Attacks targeting intellectual capacity also targeted Ana Dolidze from “Strong Georgia” and Nino Lomjaria, founder of the “European Orbit” movement, in relation to their protests over alleged election violations.

On November 12, the page “Publicist”⁵⁶ posted a video of Ana Dolidze trying to block a road with the caption: “Let’s treat her first.” On November 15, the page “Ar Agarevinebt” published another video of Dolidze at a protest, captioned: “I am Napoleon.”⁵⁷

On November 2, the page “Simartlis Droa”⁵⁸ shared a quote from Nino Lomjaria about possible election fraud schemes, accompanied by the mocking caption: “Help them with the counting.”



Offence/ridicule based on mental abilities was also directed by the page “Aravin”[Nobody],⁵⁹ “Mikheil Ganibazhebeli”⁶⁰ and “Publicist” at Ana Natsvlishvili, a member of the “Strong Georgia” coalition, and Khatia Dekanoidze, a member of the “Unity - National Movement.” A video clip of Dekanoidze shared by the page “Aravin” was captioned “Moron,” while a video of Ana Natsvlishvili came with the caption: “How many geniuses like this do you have in Lelo?”⁶¹

⁵⁶ publicist.ge, 12 November; <https://bit.ly/44IYdHw>

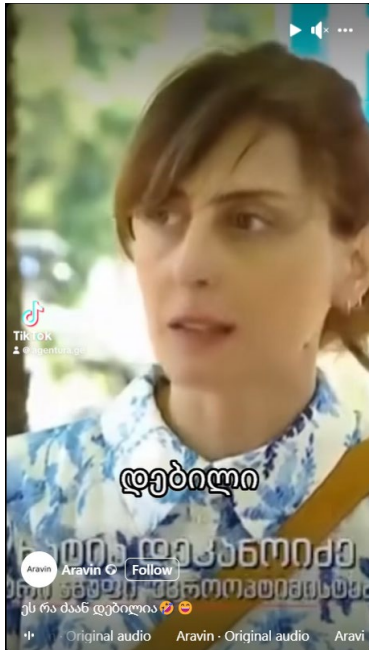
⁵⁷ Ar Agarevinebt, 15 November; <https://bit.ly/3GpoNLZ>

⁵⁸ Simartlis Droa, 2 November; <https://bit.ly/4IVr3ul>

⁵⁹ Aravin, 21 August; <https://bit.ly/435kUVc>

⁶⁰ Mikhiel Ganubazhebeli, 12 August; <https://bit.ly/4cX5FB4>

⁶¹ publicist.ge, 26 August; <https://bit.ly/4cQca8C>



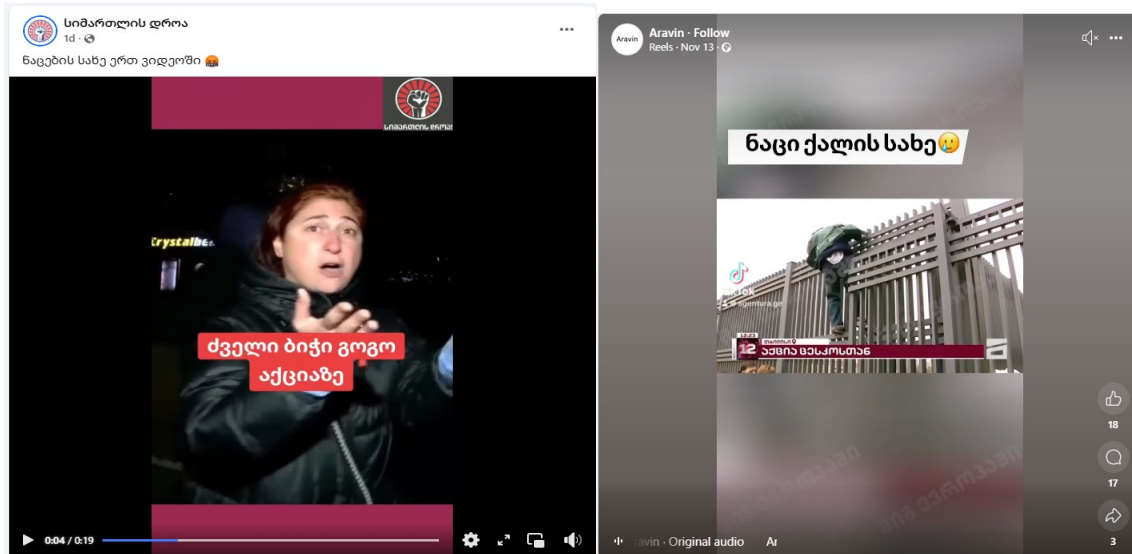
2.8 Criticism based on gender stereotypes

Out of 23 documented instances of criticism based on gender stereotypes, 17 were identified on social media and 6 in traditional media. Gender stereotypes were used to judge female politicians across party lines, criticizing their appearance, manner of expression, or a perceived lack of “femininity.” As in previous years, most of the gender-based stereotypical attacks on social media were directed at Elene Khoshtaria, who was repeatedly labeled as “manly” or “boyish” due to her appearance. During the pre-election period, the Facebook page “Publicist” published several such posts.⁶²



⁶² publicist.ge, 26 August; <https://bit.ly/42Vmk3g>

After the elections, participants of ongoing protest rallies also became targets of gender-stereotyped mockery. Various pro-government accounts criticized the ways in which these women expressed themselves or behaved during protests. Pages such as “Simartlis Droa” (Time for Truth) and “Aravin” published posts with captions like “Old-school guy girl at the protest”⁶³ and “The face of a UNM woman”.⁶⁴



Another method of gender-stereotyped criticism involved **highlighting the sexuality** of female politicians—either to accentuate or ridicule their attractiveness. In several instances, visually altered images were used to emphasize sexual appeal or, conversely, a perceived lack of it.

Targets of this kind of discrimination were female members of opposition political parties, particularly the Unity - National Movement (UNM) and the Federalist Party. The Facebook account “Soso Severski” posted a video featuring a digitally altered photo of UNM member Ana Tsitlidze, with the caption: “Single. She's looking for you.” The video was shared with the comment: “If you can satisfy her, consider yourself living like a sultan!!!”⁶⁵ The same account posted a video of Tamar Chergoleishvili, leader of the Federalist Party, featuring an altered image and the sarcastic caption: “Giga Bokeria’s Marilyn Monroe.”⁶⁶ Another photo targeting Ana Tsitlidze’s sexuality was published by a government-affiliated Facebook page called “Apolitical Page.” The image included a satirical comment: “According to Edison Research, Ana Tsitlidze ranks first among the sexiest women politicians.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Simartlis Droa, 5 November; <https://bit.ly/4jS9d9Q>

⁶⁴ Aravin, 13 November; <https://bit.ly/4jW76Sx>

⁶⁵ [Soso Severski, 19 August](#)

⁶⁶ [Soso Severski, 9 September](#)

⁶⁷ [Apolitical Page, 9 August](#)



2.9 Ageism

Most ageist discrimination cases (11 in total) were found in traditional media, with President Salome Zourabichvili being the primary target. She was referred to as an “old woman,” “crone,” and “hag.”

Shalva Ramishvili, anchor on pro-government PosTV: “Now this old woman [Salome Zourabichvili] is supposed to go to the center of the protest.”⁶⁸

Goga Khaindrava, Movie Director: “The next two months will be very dangerous — one lunatic old man, Joe Biden, will sit in the White House, and another lunatic old hag, Salome Zourabichvili, in the Orbeliani Palace!”⁶⁹

One ageist remark from a Georgian Dream member, Tea Tsulukiani, targeted opposition politician Tako Charkviani:

Tea Tsulukiani, Georgian Dream: “I almost forgot: Ana Natsvlishvili... Screaming well does not mean political success, otherwise our withered-yet-still-beautiful rose-like lady Tako Charkviani would be the most successful of all.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ PosTV, Samni and Co, 28 November; <https://bit.ly/3RB7BW7>

⁶⁹ Asaval-Dasavali, 25 November- 1 December

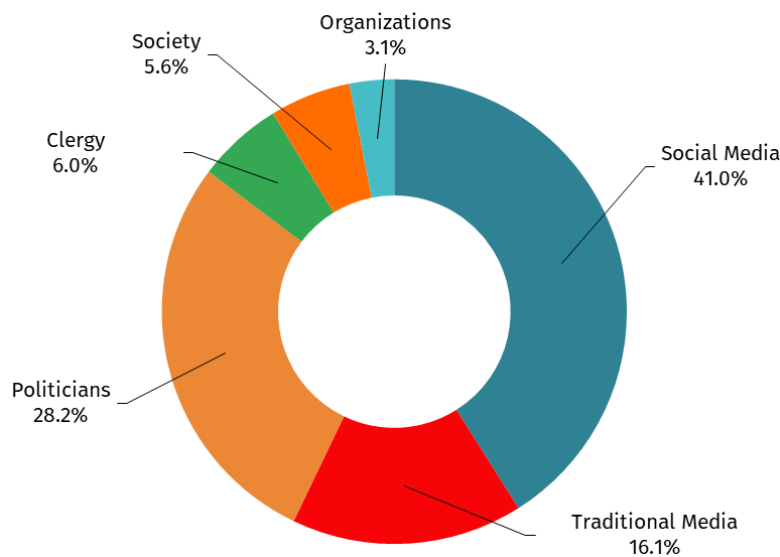
⁷⁰ Marshallpress, 27 August; <https://bit.ly/3GrfjQ8>

3. HOMOPHOBIA

3.1 Sources of Homophobic Messages

During the monitoring period, a total of 870 homophobic comments were identified across both traditional and social media, with 514 found on social media and 356 in traditional media. The most frequent source of homophobic discrimination was social media (41%), followed by politicians (28.2%) and traditional media (16.1%). Clergy (6.0%) and the general public (5.6%) contributed nearly equally, while the lowest number of homophobic statements came from civil society organizations (3.1%).

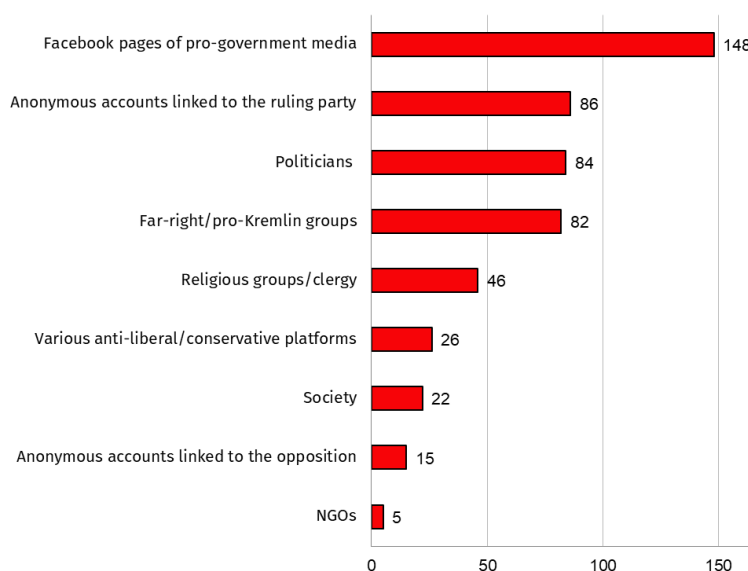
Figure 9. Sources of Homophobic Messages in Traditional and Social Media



The activity of government-affiliated media social accounts (148 instances) in sharing homophobic content was notably higher than in the category of sexist content. This category includes social media pages of government-aligned media outlets such as PosTV and TV Imedi, which frequently featured excessive coverage of LGBTQI+ topics framed as threats and instrumentalized aspects of individuals' private lives for political purposes. In addition to these Facebook pages, government-aligned online media, particularly Publicist.ge and Newshub.ge, were also prominent in spreading such content.

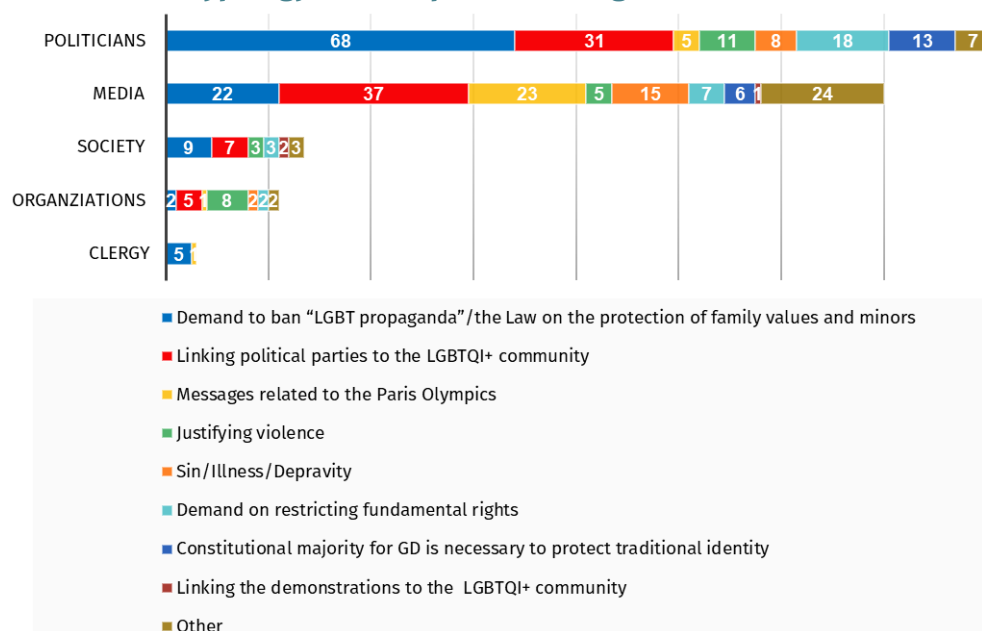
Following the pages of government-aligned media outlets, homophobic content on social media was also widely shared by pro-government anonymous Facebook accounts (86), politicians (84), and far-right pro-Kremlin groups (82).

Figure 10. Sources of Homophobic Messages on Social Media



Out of the 356 homophobic statements disseminated through traditional media, 161 came from politicians, followed by media outlets (140), members of the public (27), and civil society organizations (22). Clergy members made a total of 6 homophobic statements.

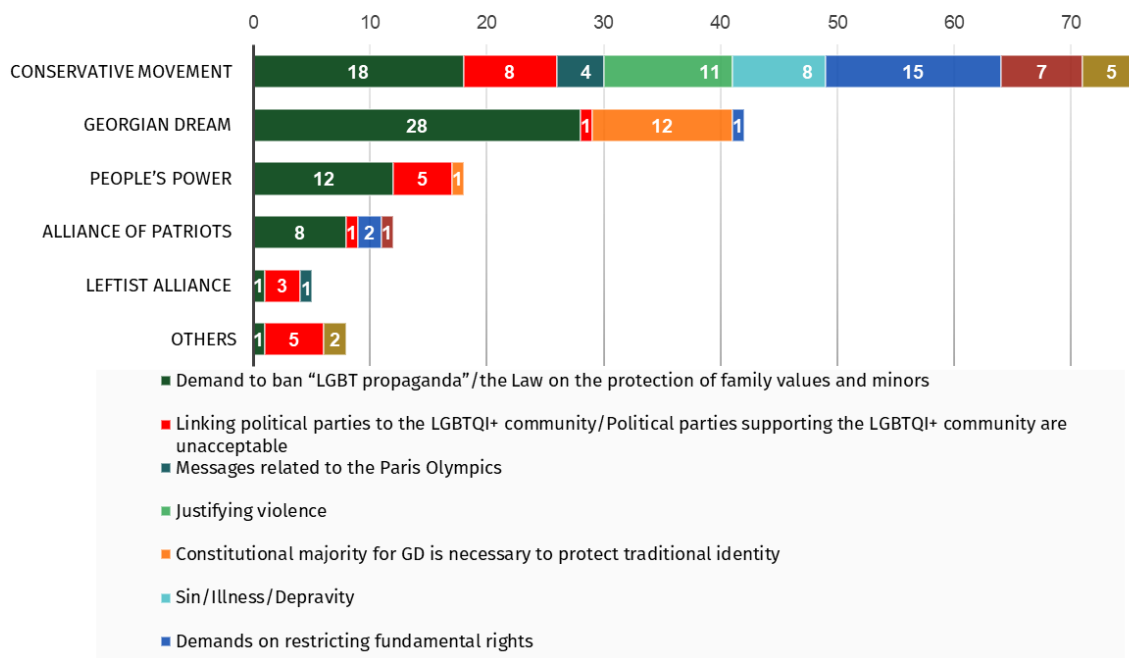
Figure 11. Sources and Typology of Homophobic Messages in Traditional Media



Among the 161 homophobic statements made by political party representatives, the highest number (76) were made by members of the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info. Members of the ruling Georgian Dream party were responsible for 42 cases, while individuals affiliated with the "People's Power" movement (a satellite group of Georgian Dream) made 18 statements. Fewer

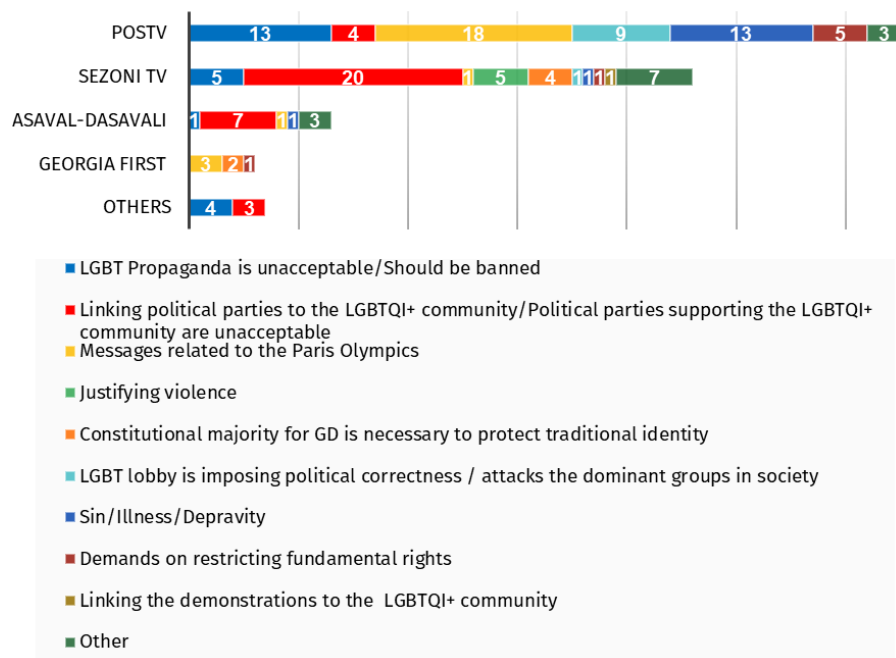
statements (12) were made by members of the Alliance of Patriots, a pro-Kremlin party within the same electoral bloc as Alt-Info.

Figure 12. Sources of Homophobic Messages – Politicians



In traditional media, the most frequent source of homophobic messages was the pro-government outlet PostTV (65), followed by the pro-Kremlin Sezoni TV (46) and the anti-Western newspaper "Asaval-Dasavali" (13).

Figure 13. Sources of Homophobic Messages – Media Outlets



3.2 Homophobic Messages

In the pre-election context, pro-government accounts attempted to discredit political parties and their representatives by associating them with LGBTQI+ topics. A total of 94 posts included altered images featuring homophobic insinuations related to the identity of candidates, some of which used AI-generated or manipulated visuals.⁷¹ Traditional media published 80 homophobic items or comments. In several cases, opposition parties were criticized for supporting LGBTQI+ rights, with narratives suggesting that, if elected, they would impose values deemed unacceptable by society.

190 homophobic posts/comments (84 on social media, 106 in traditional media) were identified in relation to the demand to ban so-called “LGBT propaganda.” Some messages called for a ban on “propaganda,” while others praised the “Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors”⁷² adopted by the Georgian Parliament on September 17, which aims to restrict LGBTQI+ rights.

Facebook accounts monitored during the research often published (101) posts that portrayed identity issues in the context of threats. On the one hand, restrictive laws against LGBTQI+ communities abroad were framed positively; on the other, laws and decisions protecting LGBTQI+ rights were covered negatively and excessively. Such content was misaligned with Georgia’s legal and social context, and its prioritization in the media agenda often aimed to divert attention from local issues or to cultivate the idea of identity loss in an anti-Western context.

A total of 62 posts related to identity issues contained anti-Western sentiments, with 26 accusing the West of promoting homosexuality and moral corruption. The European integration process was often portrayed as equivalent to the loss of traditional identity (36 cases). A detailed analysis of such narratives in traditional media can be found in the Media Development Foundation’s report on “Anti-Western Propaganda and Disinformation Amid 2024 Parliamentary Elections.”⁷³

Some of the messages addressed the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics, where both on social media (51 posts) and traditional media (30 posts) the organizers were accused of promoting LGBTQI+ propaganda and insulting religious sentiments. Several messages negatively assessed the participation of transgender women in the opening ceremony and in the Olympic Games more broadly.

⁷¹ Kintsurashvili T, 2025. Gender- and Identity-Based Disinformation. Media Development Foundation, <https://bit.ly/4jvUIJ2>

⁷² Radio Liberty RFE, 17 September, Parliament adopted the LGBT rights-restricting bill in the third and final reading, <https://bit.ly/3ECgf3N>

⁷³ Media Development Foundation, 2024. Anti-Western Propaganda and Disinformation Amid 2024 Parliamentary Elections, "<https://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/257/>

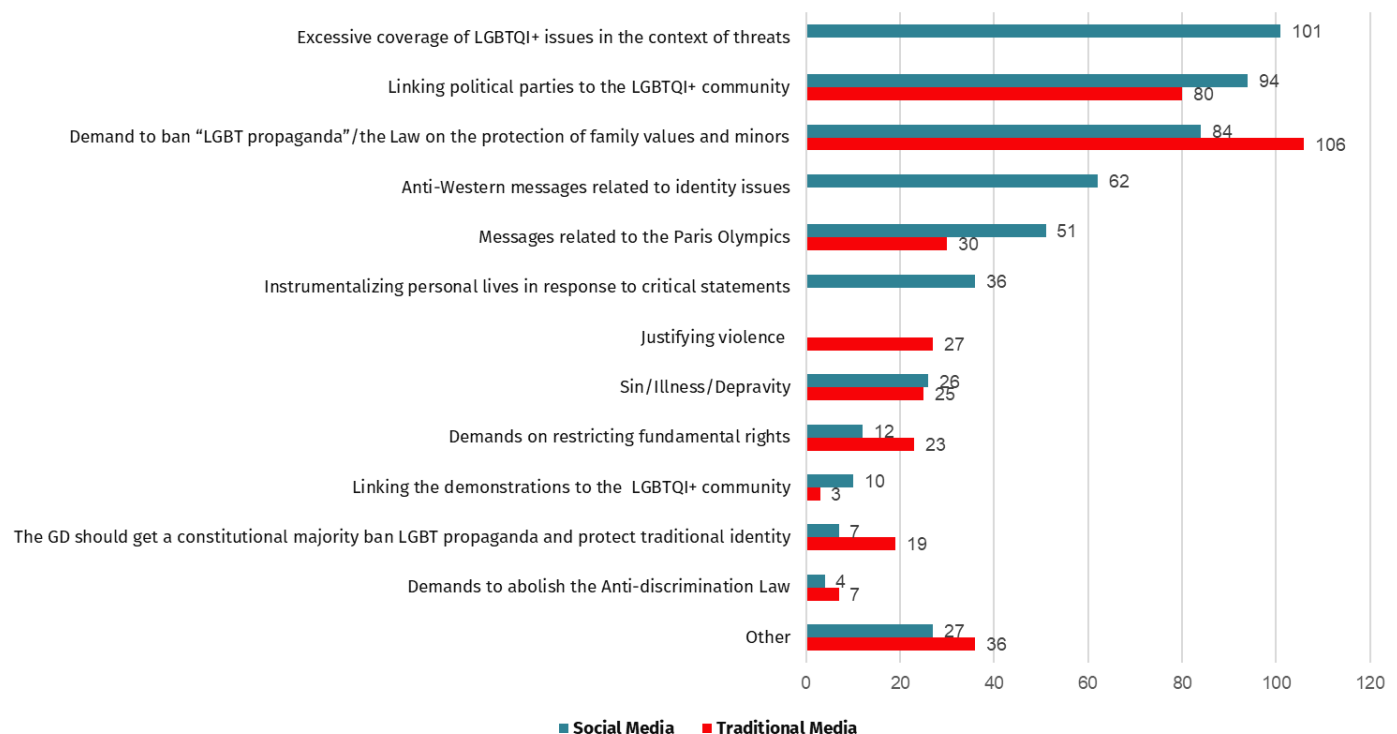
Another trend observed on the Facebook pages of pro-government media outlets involved the instrumentalization of personal lives of European politicians in response to their statements on democratic backsliding in Georgia (36 instances).

Homosexuality was portrayed as a disease, sin, or perversion almost equally across social (26) and traditional (25) media. Demands to restrict fundamental rights of the LGBTQI+ community appeared 12 times on social media and 23 times in traditional media.

Both traditional media (19) and social media (7) propagated the idea that to preserve traditional identity and ban “LGBT propaganda,” Georgian Dream needed to secure a constitutional majority in the upcoming elections.

In the homophobic statements made by politicians, there was repeated emphasis on the necessity of banning “LGBT propaganda.” The law on Family Values and Protection of Minors, adopted by Georgian Dream, was portrayed positively, while opposition parties were targeted with discrediting narratives. The need for Georgian Dream to secure a constitutional majority to permanently ban “propaganda” and preserve “traditional identity” was also stressed.

Figure 14. Homophobic Messages on Social Media



3.3 Coverage of identity issues in the context of threats / Irrelevant and excessive coverage of LGBTQI+ issues

The framing of identity issues as threats was most frequent on PostTV (34 posts), where the existence of LGBTQI+ rights in Western countries was discussed as a danger. On one hand, the media spotlighted LGBTQI+-related topics from various countries that had no relevance to Georgia; on the other, they positively portrayed restrictions on LGBTQI+ rights abroad.

A similar pattern was noted across Newshub, TV Imedi, and various Postv social media accounts. In some cases, these Facebook pages shared identical visuals and texts. For example, on September 7, the Facebook pages of TV Imedi,⁷⁴ PostTV,⁷⁵ Newshub,⁷⁶ and Publicist⁷⁷ published identical content about a teacher arrested in Ireland for refusing to use a transgender student's preferred pronouns.



⁷⁴ TV Imedi, 7 September, <https://bit.ly/3EK2C2m>

⁷⁵ POSTV -News, 7 September, <https://bit.ly/3GptrJV>

⁷⁶ Newshub.ge, 7 September, <https://bit.ly/42RXukO>

⁷⁷ publicist.ge, 7 September, <https://bit.ly/42RXvVU>

3.4 Linking Political Party Candidates to LGBTQI+ Issues

In traditional media, 84 instances were recorded where political parties were linked to the LGBTQI+ topics—primarily to discredit them. Some messages claimed that the victory of pro-LGBTQI+ parties in elections would lead to unacceptable legal changes for the Georgian public and empower the LGBTQI+ community.

During the pre-election period, traditional media emphasized Georgian Dream’s “superiority” over other parties regarding the LGBTQI+ topic, often framing the opposition’s support for LGBTQI+ rights in a negative light.

Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream: “The main reason for the [opposition’s] boycott in parliament is this bill. They do not want to support a law that opposes LGBT propaganda in the country. They have received instructions not to support such a law, and instead, they are expected to promote pseudo-liberal propaganda. This is categorically unacceptable to us. That’s why we often say this election is a referendum, a referendum about what the Georgian society chooses—pseudo-liberal propaganda and LGBT propaganda, or traditional values. On the radical opposition’s side, we have pseudo-liberal propaganda, and we, Georgian Dream and our supporters, stand for traditional values.”⁷⁸

Davit Kartvelishvili, People’s: “Let’s update the United National Movement cult’s election program... Once this sect [UNM] comes to power: minors will be allowed to change gender, same-sex marriage will be legalized, and they will be allowed to adopt children.”⁷⁹

On social media (94 instances), pro-government accounts disseminated altered videos and photos of politicians with homophobic context and insinuations related to identity in an attempt to discredit them. The Facebook page “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” published a video targeting members of the “Akhali” party, featuring party leaders Nika Melia and Nika Gvaramia, with the caption “How Melia was persuaded,”⁸⁰ carrying an intimate connotation. Similar content was posted by the Facebook pages “Realoba”[Reality]⁸¹ and “Brdzeni Kritikosi”[Wise Critic]⁸², where a clip from Nika Gvaramia’s interview—where he speaks about how he met his

⁷⁸ Marshallpress, 6 September, “On the side of the radical opposition is pseudo-liberal propaganda; we, ‘Georgian Dream,’ and our supporters choose traditional values” <https://bit.ly/4lYgOpt>

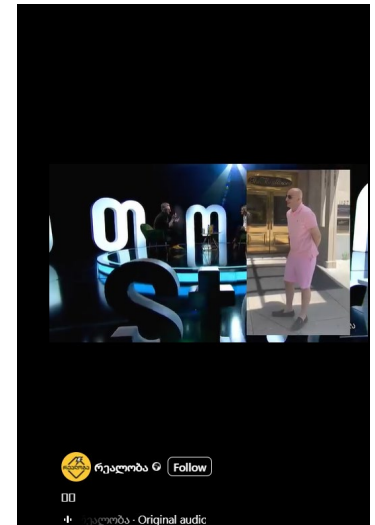
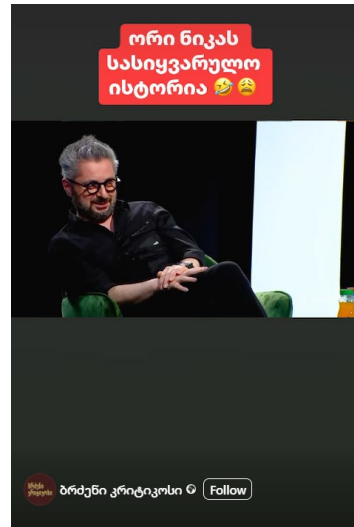
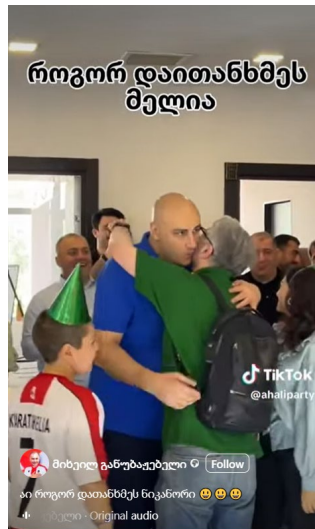
⁷⁹ Marshallpress, 7 September, The electoral program of the “UNM-sect” is so shameful that even they are embarrassed to remind us of it themselves. <https://bit.ly/4cVmyMn>

⁸⁰ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 11 July; <https://bit.ly/42UYFQx>

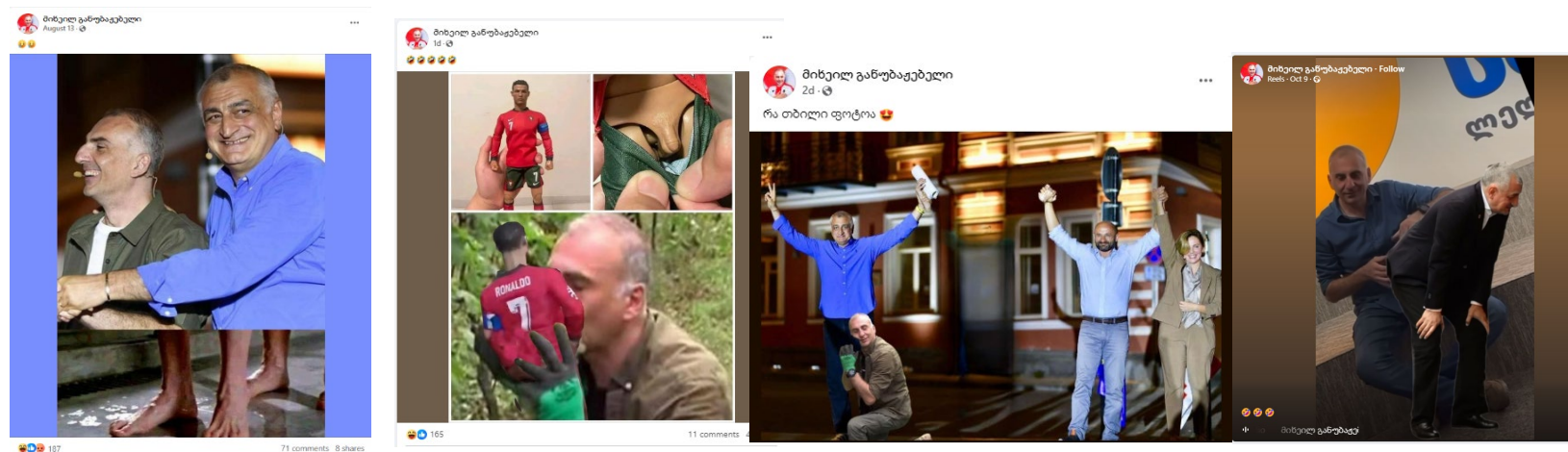
⁸¹ Realoba, 6 August; <https://bit.ly/4keb21l>

⁸² Brdzeni Kritikosi, 6 August; <https://bit.ly/4lRz43E>

spouse—was edited to create the false impression that he was recounting how he met fellow party member Nika Melia.



A similar trend was observed regarding the leaders of the “Strong Georgia” coalition, Mamuka Khazaradze and Aleko Elisashvili, with the account “Mikheil Ganubazhebeli” posting intimate photo manipulations targeting them as well.⁸³



⁸³ Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 23 September; <https://bit.ly/3GAMtgq>
Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 26 September; <https://bit.ly/42GfQQL>
Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 13 August; <https://bit.ly/42YqQ0W>
Mikheil Ganubazhebeli, 9 October; <https://bit.ly/4iO9ZUC>

Targets of homophobic content also included civil society activists. On September 20, the Facebook page “Publicist” posted a visual that had previously circulated widely. The edited photo⁸⁴ showed Aleko Elisashvili, leader of the “Citizens” party, alongside Nika Melia from “Akhali,” civil activist Giga Makarashvili, and Misha Mshvildadze, a co-founder of TV Formula, with the caption: “A gay revolution is approaching.”



3.5 Anti-democratic and Rights-restricting Legislation and Homophobic, Anti-Western Messaging

Two pieces of legislation, which the ruling party and pro-government media framed in a homophobic and anti-Western context, involved a pre-election legislative initiative that restricts rights, and anti-democratic laws targeting civil society organizations.

Messages related to the ban on so-called “gay propaganda” (106 in traditional media, 84 in social media) began prior to the initiation of the “Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minors” and negatively portrayed any public discussion of LGBTQI+ rights, while arguing for legislative restrictions. After the Georgian Parliament passed the law in its third reading on September 17,⁸⁵ positive evaluations of the law increased.

The ruling Georgian Dream party used homophobic rhetoric as part of its pre-election campaign, emphasizing the need for a constitutional majority in the elections to ban so-called “gay propaganda.” In doing so, the pro-government propaganda employed the technique of a

⁸⁴ publicist.ge, 20 September; <https://bit.ly/42PCwmv>

⁸⁵Radio Liberty/RFE, 17 September, Parliament adopted the LGBT rights-restricting bill in the third and final reading, <https://bit.ly/3ECgf3N>

false dilemma, presenting voters with a binary choice between family values and LGBT propaganda, or between respect for religion and blasphemy.

Bidzina Ivanishvili, Georgian Dream: „After securing a constitutional majority, Georgian Dream will adopt a constitutional law on 'the protection of family values and minors' that will counter LGBT propaganda and other manifestations of pseudo-liberal ideology. Same-sex so-called civil partnerships, adoption by LGBT couples, gender reassignment surgeries, and LGBT propaganda in the media or schools will be banned in Georgia at the constitutional level..“⁸⁶

Shalva Papuashvili, Georgian Dream: „On October 26, the Georgian people must declare so powerfully that they choose peace over war, family values over LGBT propaganda, respect for faith over blasphemy of the Church, that no one dares to speak on behalf of the Georgian people against the government they elect.“⁸⁷

Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream: „...Gay] propaganda is unacceptable, and the proposed bill is specifically about banning propaganda.“⁸⁸

It is noteworthy that TV Imedi, which follows a pro-government editorial policy, framed Western institutions' criticism of both the so-called “gay propaganda” ban law and the anti-democratic legislation restricting NGOs as interference in sovereign matters, pressure on the ruling party Georgian Dream, and an attempt to undermine traditional values.

Magda Anikashvili, Anchor at IMEDI Live: “The radicals’ active election campaign continues abroad, in the European Parliament, where the opposition has once again found a lifeline—this time in the form of a resolution. Foreign politicians have now made three ‘wishes’: sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili, freedom for Mikheil Saakashvili, and the suspension of visa-free travel for the Georgian people. On top of that, they are persistently urging us to impose economic sanctions on the Russian Federation and are outraged by the law on family values and the protection of minors. Right before the elections, such blatant interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state is unacceptable and deeply un-European—as some colleagues pointed out to the resolution’s authors and supporters...”⁸⁹

Irakli Chikhladze, Anchor of Imedis Kvira: “It’s an attack on values—values that so greatly unsettle and frighten the so-called friends and their obedient

⁸⁶ Asaval-Dasavali, August 26 – September 1; Marshalpress, August 21: After securing a constitutional majority, "Georgian Dream" will adopt a law "On the Protection of Family Values and Minors," which will oppose LGBT propaganda and other manifestations of pseudo-liberal ideology.; <https://bit.ly/3GqXhbb>

⁸⁷ Asaval-Dasavali, 2 – 8 September

⁸⁸ PosTV, Anatomy of Liberalism, 19 September; <https://bit.ly/4jQME5t>

⁸⁹ Imedi, ImediLIVE, 9 October, <https://bit.ly/4jXq7nN>

executors in the radical opposition. The two laws adopted by Georgian Dream, combined with a national position demanding equal treatment from Western bureaucrats, have become our Achilles' heel. They've moved to a new level of bargaining: if you withdraw the laws—that is, if LGBT propaganda is not banned and the NGO sector remains untransparent—then no one will question the legitimacy of the elections. In fact, countries will line up to send congratulations and recognize the results. The blackmail over visa liberalization will stop, and major financial support will follow.⁹⁰

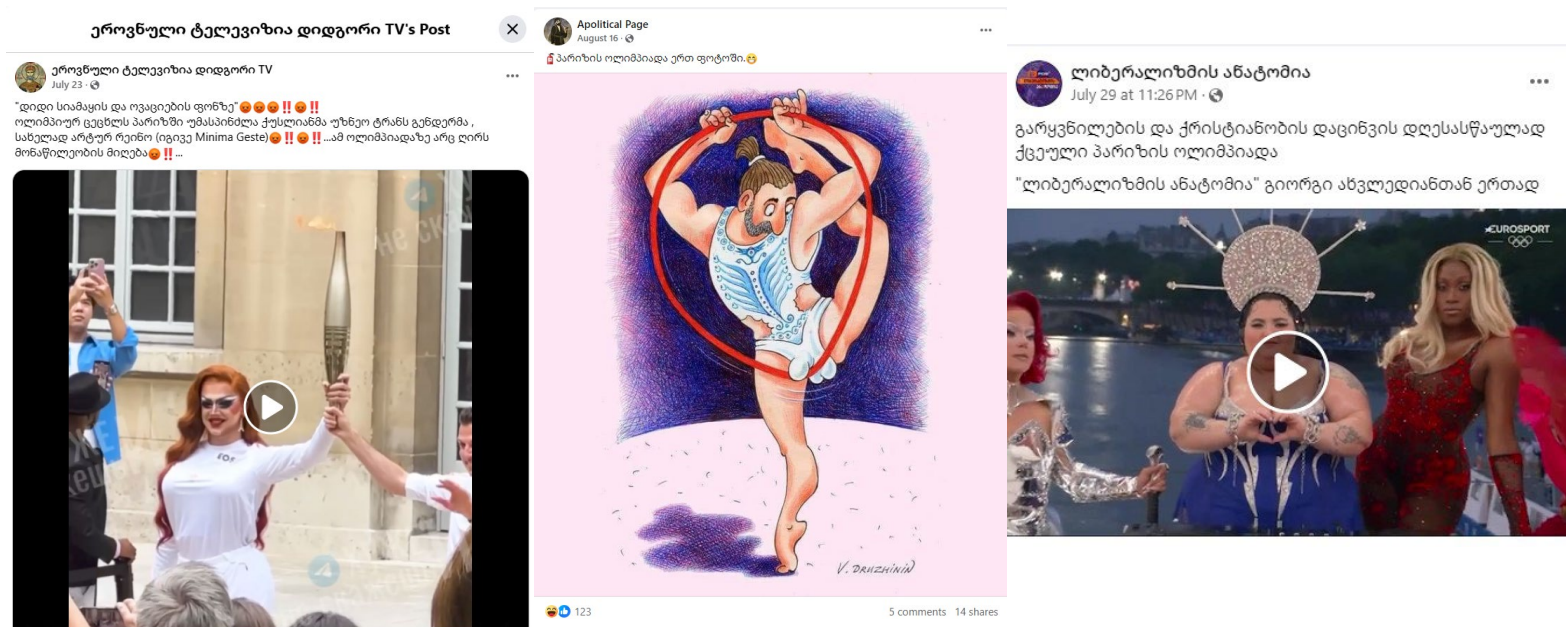
In addition to the legislation, anti-Western messages were also linked to the threat of losing national identity (62 instances). A growing narrative claimed that EU integration was impossible without the loss of traditional values. This message was most frequently promoted by the pro-government organization “United Neutral Georgia,” which was established in the lead-up to the elections. Their statements were amplified via information leaflets and heavily covered on Facebook by pro-government media outlets such as TV Imedi, Postv, and Newshub.



⁹⁰ Imedi, Imedi's Kvira, 10 November, <https://bit.ly/3GwagxU>

3.6 Messages Related to the Olympics

Messages related to the Olympics (81 instances) were mostly transphobic, targeting transgender women and promoting the notion that transgender individuals should not be allowed to participate in sports. Some messages were linked to the Olympic Games opening ceremony, where homophobic remarks followed the torch relay involving a transgender woman, as well as a specific scene in the ceremony, which was perceived and mocked as a reenactment of the Last Supper by LGBTQ+ people.^{91 92}



One example of manipulative coverage involved a statement by the President of France. On July 28, PostTV⁹³ and Publicist's⁹⁴ Facebook pages published a photo of Emmanuel Macron with the caption: "Macron changed the French national motto to: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Pride." This referred to a July 27 post on Macron's X (Twitter) account, which read: "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité. Fierté." The President added the word "Fierté" (Pride) to France's national motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

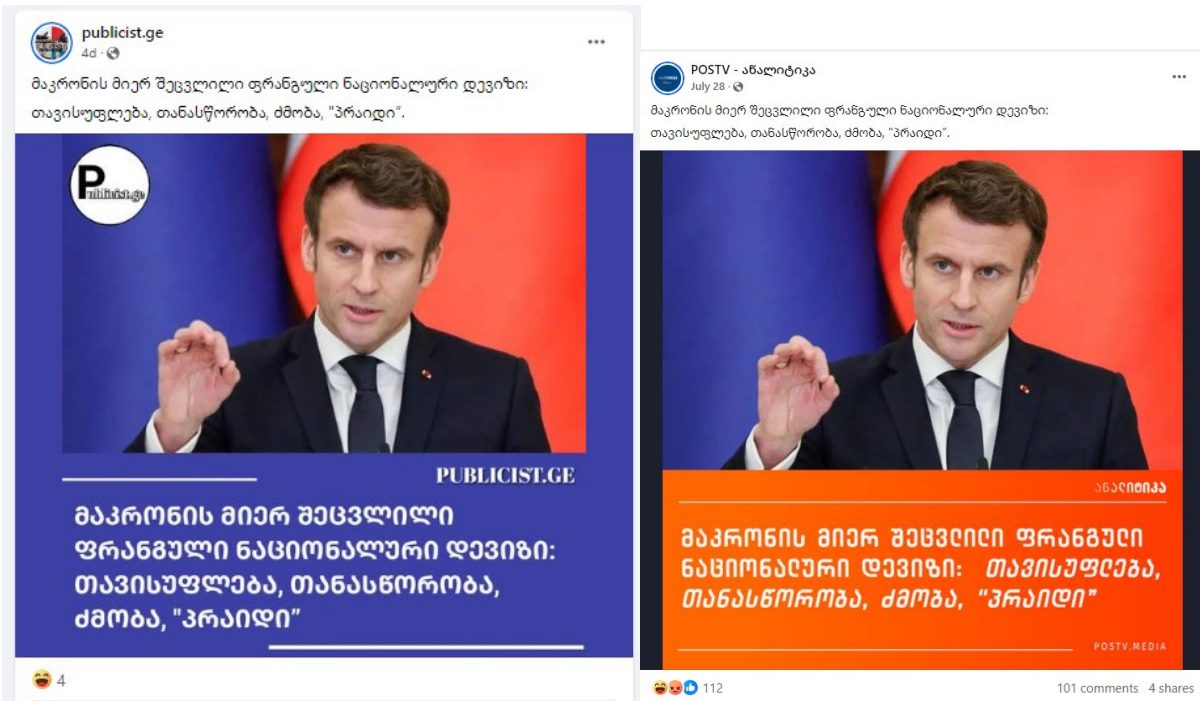
Pro-government editorial policy media intentionally translated "Fierté" as "Pride" in English, which is commonly associated with LGBTQ+ pride celebrations both in Georgia and internationally, instead of translating the word into its neutral Georgian equivalent "სიამაყე" (pride/proudness).

⁹¹ National TV Didgori, 23 July; <https://bit.ly/448jWbM>

⁹² Apolitical Page, 17 August; <https://bit.ly/4IPfx3F>

⁹³ POSTV - Analytics, 28 ივლისი; <https://bit.ly/42yXPKs>

⁹⁴ publicist.ge, 29 July; <https://bit.ly/437ogqA>



3.7 Instrumentalization of Personal Lives for Political Purposes

Social media monitoring revealed a new trend: the instrumentalization of the personal lives of Western politicians who criticized the Georgian government for its democratic backsliding. Facebook pages of pro-government media frequently attached these politicians' public statements to photos from their personal lives that were unrelated to the content of their remarks or current events. In some cases, political commentary by critical voices was accompanied by photos depicting their private lives or visuals of them participating in equality-related activities. The primary target of this type of discriminatory messaging was Michael Roth, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag, whose statements were often illustrated with images of his wedding or LGBTQ+ symbols.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ TV Imedi, 12 November; <https://bit.ly/4iDt37V>



In addition to Roth, pro-government media amplified stories with limited relevance to Georgia's context, such as the marriage of UK Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard to his male partner. Identical texts were shared across various government-aligned Facebook pages, featuring a wedding photo of the politician, accompanied by the caption: "British MP got married," and the quote: "I'm a happy man because I get to call him my husband." ^{96 97 98}



⁹⁶ TV Imedi, 2 September; <https://bit.ly/4d2xCaD>

⁹⁷ POSTV - News, 2 September; <https://bit.ly/4cPBADj>

⁹⁸ Newshub.ge, 2 September; <https://bit.ly/44eZ8iP>

3.8 Incitement to Violence – Labeling Homosexuality as a Sin / Illness / Depravity

In 51 cases, homosexuality was labeled as a sin, illness, or depravity across various Facebook platforms. Among LGBTQ+ community members, transgender women were most frequently targeted. This was especially evident after the murder of transgender woman Kessaria Abramidze in Tbilisi on September 18. Following her death, the victim was subjected to posthumous attacks by various ultranationalist, anti-liberal, and conservative platforms. In one instance, individuals who attended the funeral to express solidarity also became targets of online attacks.

On September 23, the Facebook page Publicist published a post titled “The mourning elite of Kessaria’s 'beso'”, featuring photos of President Salome Zourabichvili, former Ombudsman Ucha Nanuashvili, and journalist Inga Grigolia.⁹⁹



Ultranationalist and pro-Kremlin groups attempted to justify the violence committed against Kessaria Abramidze:

Zurab Makharadze, Conservative Movement, Alliance of Patriots: „Kessaria]—a gay-trans person—was killed by another gay person, and they’re saying it’s because of homophobia. No, it’s not because of homophobia, it’s because of homophilia. That guy

⁹⁹ publicist.ge, 23 September; <https://bit.ly/42NrFts>

wasn't mentally healthy, and neither was the one who was with him. Two mentally unhealthy people together led to one killing the other."¹⁰⁰

Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, Host on Sezoni TV: „This lady [Kessaria Abramidze], okay, she wasn't a criminal, but she was living in sin. This woman lived in sin, and that's why I can't say 'may God rest her soul.' How could I say 'rest in peace' when she was in sin? May God, I don't know... forgive her sins.¹⁰¹

3.9 Linking Protest Rallies to the LGBTQ+ Community

During the monitoring period, both pre- and post-election protest rallies were deliberately framed as being associated with the LGBTQ+ community by various sources, shifting the focus from political issues to rights-related topics. This included intentional disinformation, where altered visuals and manipulations were used to falsely link protests to the LGBTQ+ community. Such portrayals aimed to misrepresent the actual demands and objectives of the rallies. For instance, pre-election demonstrations in support of Georgia's pro-Western course and EU integration, as well as post-election continuous protests, were reframed to suggest they were organized around LGBTQ+ issues rather than political concerns. These tactics were intended to distort public perception of the protests and their legitimacy. The Media Development Foundation's report "Gender- and Identity-Based Disinformation" provides a detailed account of these cases.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Alt-Info, Alt-Analytics, 19 September; <https://bit.ly/3Sh01Qx>

¹⁰¹ Sezoni TV, Summary of the Day with Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, 19 September, <https://bit.ly/44eZiGX>

¹⁰² Kintsurashvili T, 2025. Gender- and Identity-Based Disinformation. Media Development Foundation, <https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/263/>