



MEDIA MONITORING

Parliamentary Elections, Albania 2005

Monitoring Period
28 May - 10 June 2005

Second Report

Tirana, 16 June 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Since the first monitoring phase (13-27 May 2005), there have been several positive changes.
- News media TVA and Koha have both made progress in balancing their bias in reporting about the Government and the Socialist Party (PS).
- TVSH still produces biased reporting, actively supporting the Government and the PS, but has made some positive changes since the previous monitoring period.
- According to NDI data, Public Radio continues to support the SP and the Government.
- TV stations TVA, TVSH Klan, Koha, and Vision have broadcasted special programs on the different political parties' activities, during or right after news programs. Although the intent may be to balance their reporting, their coverage continues to present an advantage to certain parties over others. These statistics are not presented in our graphs because the weight of "special programs" differs from regularly scheduled news programs.
- Reporting about LSI is increasing in most media sources.
- There is a group of media which favourably devotes time and space to small political parties, among them Radio + 2 (covering the Green Party) and Panorama (covering the Social Democratic Party (PSD)).
- While the media has increased their coverage of the incumbent government, some of that time is still being diverted to cover the PS.
- Women political candidates are rarely and insufficiently covered in the media.

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INTRODUCTION

While legitimate elections are an essential part of building a democracy, the democratic process extends well beyond Election Day. Democratic governance requires an active and informed citizenry. The media is often referred to as the Fourth Estate, indicating its important role in society. In a democracy, we look to the press to act as a watchdog of events and decisions, so as to keep citizens informed. But this role can only be fulfilled if media coverage follows key principles and practices.

Media monitoring can help journalists report in a more accurate, precise, and balanced way. Media monitoring is a tool that promotes citizen's trust in the media's reporting. Wherever the media exists, it is useful to follow their work and then to analyze media's relationship with different subjects. Media monitoring is a research discipline that includes analytical elements. Its aim is to help media in creating balance while reporting and to identify professional mistakes. During the observation period, the monitoring team will gather data that reflect the genuine feelings of citizen who watch, listen, or read certain media.

The following report is based on the media monitoring project which occurred just prior to the formal election period, from May 28, 2005 until June 10, 2005.

Principles of good journalism

There are key principles that are widely accepted as to what constitutes "good journalism." Among them are:

- Respect for ethical journalistic practices
- Balanced reporting in terms of time, space, and context of information
- Differentiation between government and ruling party officials
- Not using government resources for the promotion of specific candidates and platforms
- Avoid allocating excessive coverage to government activities to the exclusion of other political actors
- Provide access to all groups so they may respond to criticism and comments
- Guide and encourage politicians to respond to citizens' concerns and interests
- Never promote hate speech
- Behave as a public watchdog

Biased and unprofessional reporting will not influence decided voters. It can potentially influence undecided voters because poor reporting distorts perception and that distortion of truth may be all that citizens have to base their decisions. Rather than imposing opinions, the media's role is to inform citizens about relevant events so that they can make an informed choice. This type of reporting is balanced, precise, correct and fair. It offers all parties equal opportunities to express their opinions and ideas. The government has the obligation to not impede the media from fulfilling these functions, as well as to facilitate pluralism in the media so as to expose the public to the widest variety of information sources.

METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

Media monitoring uses two sets of criteria—qualitative and quantitative. Both sets of criteria are highly relevant to present a comprehensive picture of media reporting in an election campaign.

Qualitative Analysis

In qualitative research the main elements are context and presentation.

Context is the timing and setting of the information itself. For example, if political party A speaks in a positive context about itself or in a negative context about some other subject, a media is not partial just because it broadcasts the information. What matters is whether a media broadcasts information with positive or negative context on those subjects in a selective manner over a period of time such that a distinct pattern develops.

Presentation is the extent to which events are reported factually (X happened) versus the amount of editorial comment or influence on those events.¹ For example, particular words can have a positive or negative connotation. The tone of a journalist during news coverage can also influence perception. In addition, facial expressions and body language (for television journalists) may influence the way information is perceived.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis assesses the time or space in which a political party or politician is mentioned, spoken of, quoted, or appears in a particular medium.

Total Time/Space: the amount of time that broadcast media (television and radio) print media (newspapers and journals) devote to reporting on a certain political subject or activity.

Quotation is the time or space given to a journalist to retell someone else's words.

Sound bite (or **printed remark** for print media): the amount of time or space that media give political parties for expressing their own political opinions and represents part of the total time. This category covers direct interviews and announcements from political parties or other political subjects.

Object Time: time during which subject X speaks about politician Y, so that politician Y is the "object" of the content. This covers cases in which journalists mention political subjects in their articles or when others talk about political subjects.

Source: where media get their information, such as news agencies, other media, as well as various press statements, reports, and other announcements.

¹ You will not find that every graph cites analysis about this type of reporting. If there are not major problems in this area, we shall not present them.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Monitoring organizations

The Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC) media monitoring is being conducted by four organizations:

Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC)

The ACAC was created in 2001 to reduce corruption by strengthening the role of civil society and working in coordination with government. It aims to increase awareness about the causes and costs of corruption, and channel to advocate for reforms to combat corruption.

Institute for Polls and Opinions (ISO)

Founded in 2000, the Institute for Polls and Opinions is an independent survey research center that provides services to private and public sector organizations. ISO periodically measures electronic media ratings and legibility of print media in Albania. Along with the permanent staff, ISO employs 25 external experts, and has a panel of 4000 people across 36 districts.

Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA)

IDRA Research is the social and marketing research survey unit at the Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA). It offers its services to public and private clients. They have a network of more than 150 interviewers, covering all the regions of Albania and Kosovo.

Center for Transparency and Free Information (CTFI)

The Center's aim is to increase public awareness of the cruciality of continuing the democratization process in Albanian society. The Center also seeks to inform the public about the enforcement of national policies in the fight against corruption. Among the Center's was a "Media for Transparency" held from May through December of 2003.

Monitoring Structure

The overall project is being conducted under the umbrella of the ACAC. The project is headed by a Steering Committee composed of all four organizations which first defined the precise list of media to be monitored in this project. Media were chosen according to the results of research on the media influence in Albania.

Along with the three coordinators, there are 23 monitors involved in the project, one main coordinator, and other staff such as technicians, a finance team, and IT managers. The staff was selected carefully and screened for any potential political bias. Monitors rotate regularly within each of the three groups (television, radio, and newspapers) in order to get as many diverse opinions as possible.

Television - headed by ISO, and includes TVSH, Top Channel, Klan, Koha, TVA, Vizion +, News 24, Alsat, Teuta, and Egnatia.

Radio - headed by IDRA, and includes Radio Tirana, Top Albania Radio, Radio RASH, and Radio +2.


Newspaper - headed by CTFI, and includes Shekulli, Panorama, Koha Jone, Gazeta Shqiptare, Ballkan, and Korrieri.

Monitoring Periods

Television - 15:00 to 24:00. During that period of time, only **news** and **political advertisements** were monitored.

Radio - 07:00 to 10:00 and 15:00 to 18:00. Only **news** and **political advertising** were monitored.

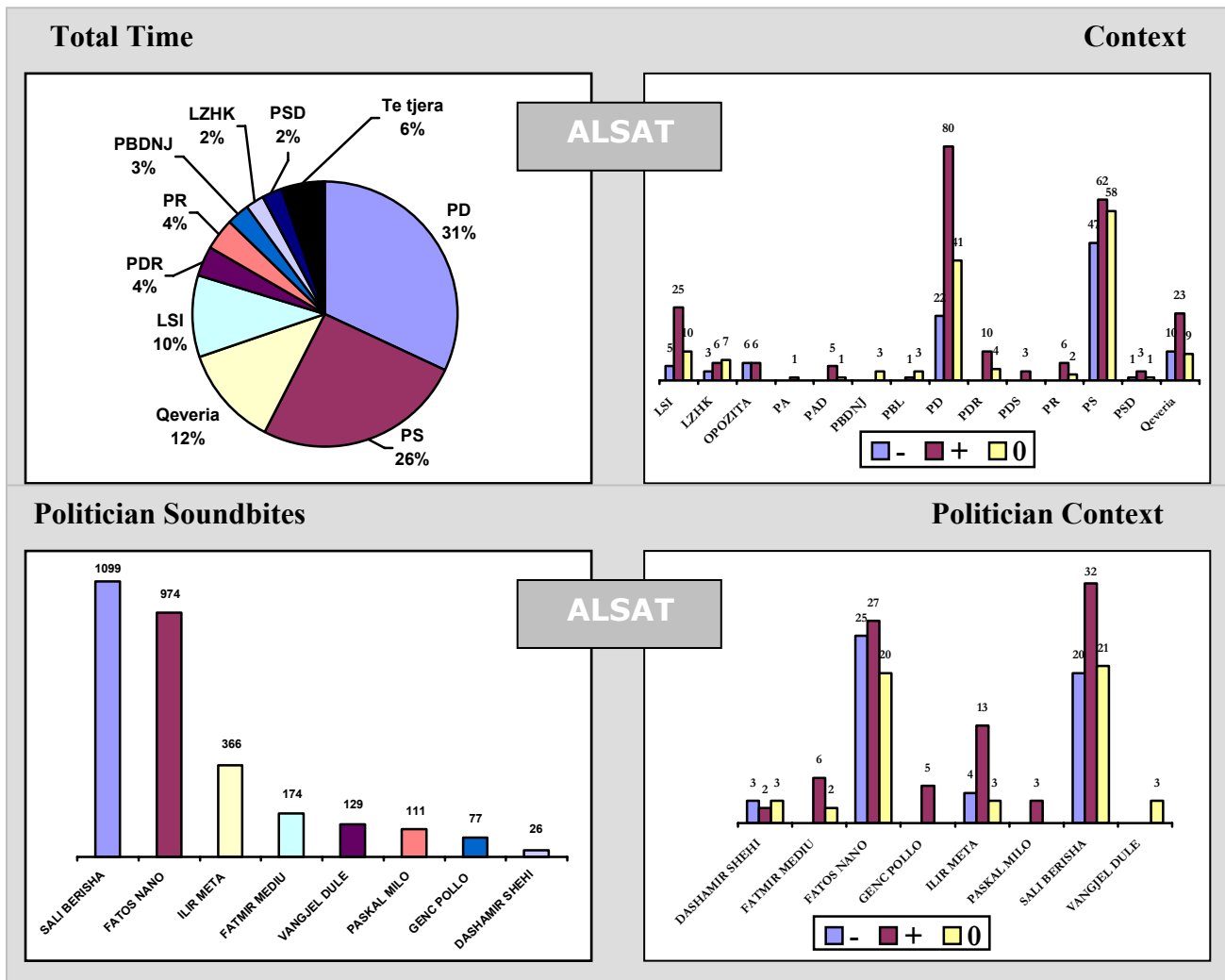
Newspapers - all of political items were monitored without any limits.



TELEVISIONS

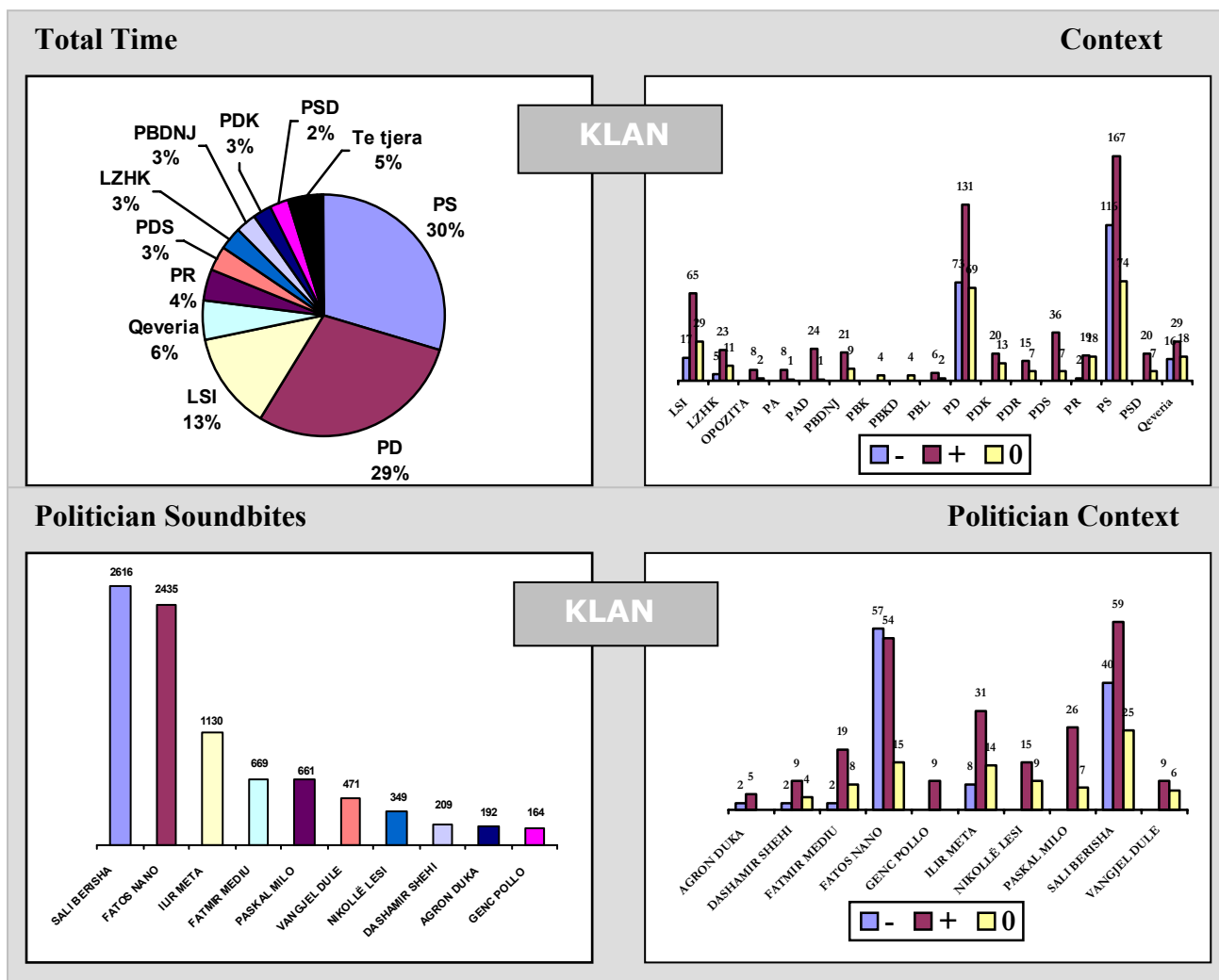
ALSAT

Alsat TV showed visible improvement in balanced coverage since the first monitoring phase. At that time there was more time allocation for SP plus the Government and the reporting was often negative. Recently, there has been a better time balance, with more positive reporting on the SP, the government, and the DP. In the sound bite chart, Sali Berisha has been given greater time and more positive reporting. Meanwhile Nano has less time, with an equal portion of negative and positive reporting.



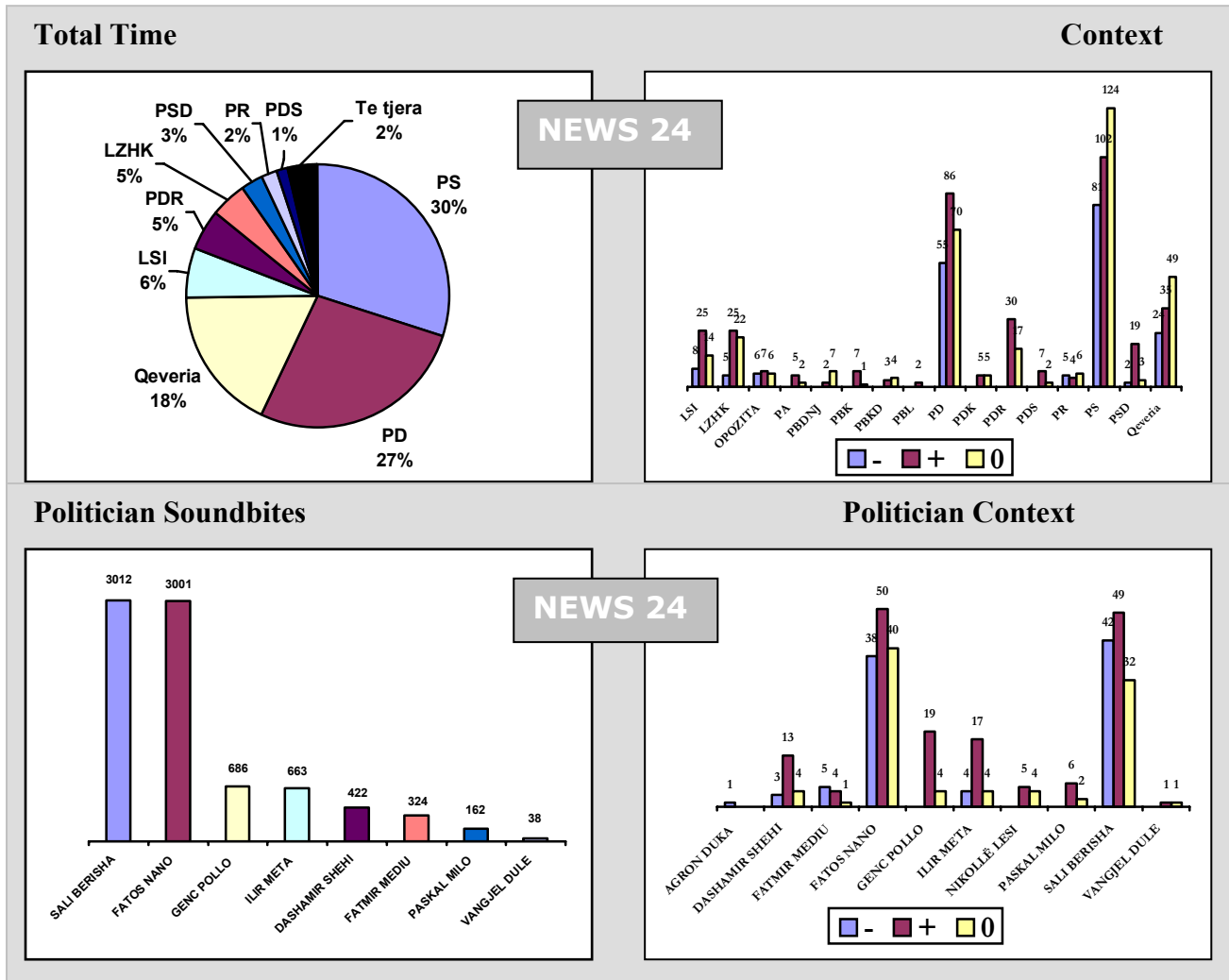
KLAN

Klan's time allocation for the DP is 29% and 30% for the SP. Compared to the first monitoring phase, there has been a 4% increase for the SP and a 4% decrease for the DP, with the reporting mainly positive. SMI receives 13%, a 5% increase with generally positively reporting. Sali Berisha coverage is reported more positive than Nano, who has been receiving more negative coverage. Advertisements have shown that the 142 SP spots are filled first, followed by the 60 SMI spots, and lastly the 2 RP spots. Klan TV has begun broadcasting special programs for the SP, which if this included in the total timing would increase SP's time to 35%.



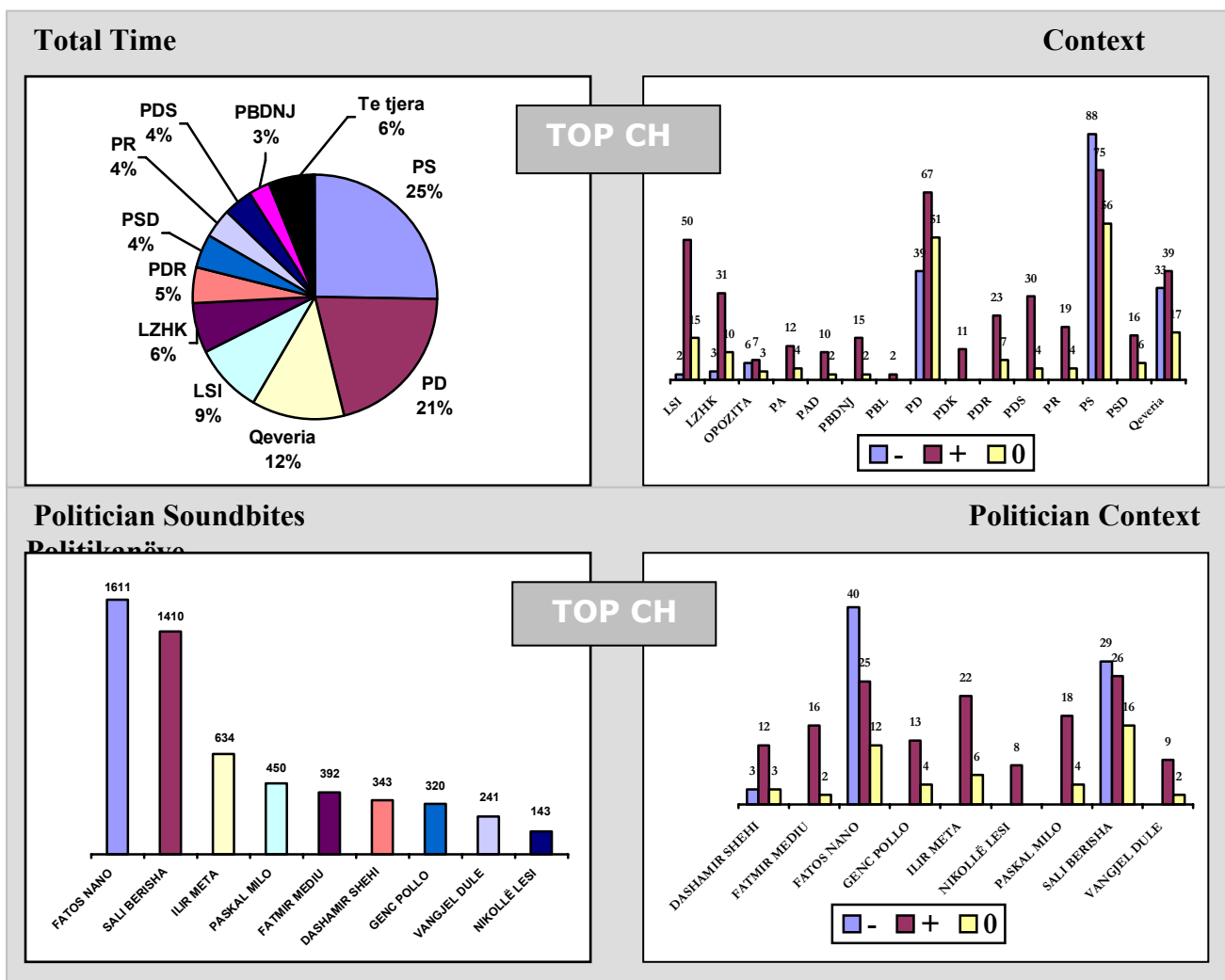
NEWS 24

Despite the fact that during the first monitoring period SP received the most coverage from News 24, the ratio of time allotted to the SP and the government to the DP has not significantly changed. Reporting is mainly positive with almost the same proportional distribution among the SP, DP and the Government. Time given to SP and DP leaders in sound bites is almost balanced, with a tendency to negatively cover Nano. News 24 has exclusively broadcasted 75 SP TV spots.



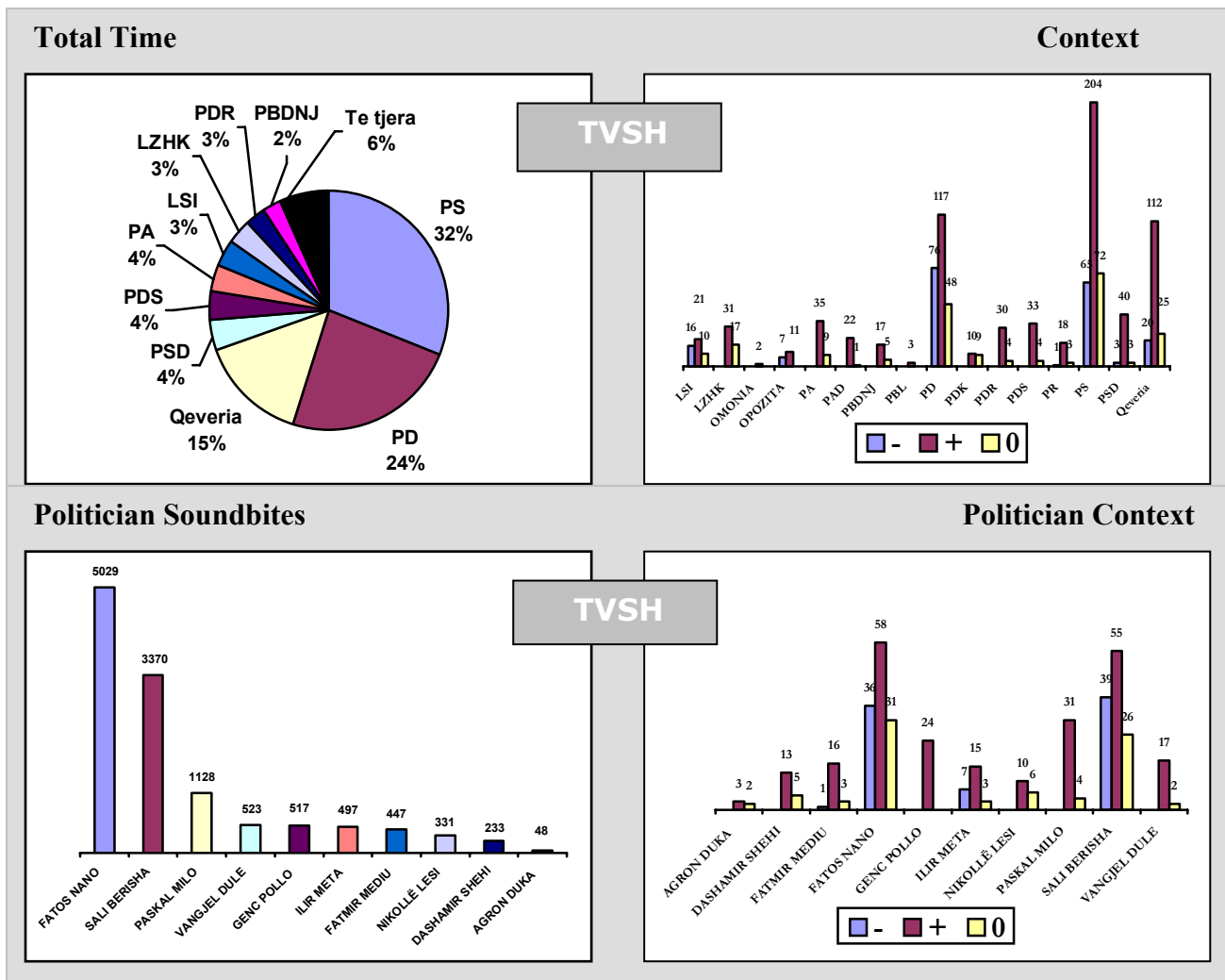
TOP CHANNEL

The SP and the government have received a bigger time share and more positive reporting than the DP in Top Channel broadcasting, but receive even more negative reporting than the DP. However, compared to the first monitoring phase, the ratio of total SP time plus government as compared to the DP has become more balanced (from 1.7 to 1.3). On the sound bites chart, Nano is ranks first, followed by Berisha; meanwhile, both receive negative reporting, showing that Top Channel is very critical. This contrasts with the fact that Ilir Meta has received generally positive reporting, and that SMI's time has increased from 6% to 9%. Regarding the political spots in Top Channel, SP is ranked first with 73 spots, followed by SMI with 34 and the RP with only 1.



TVSH

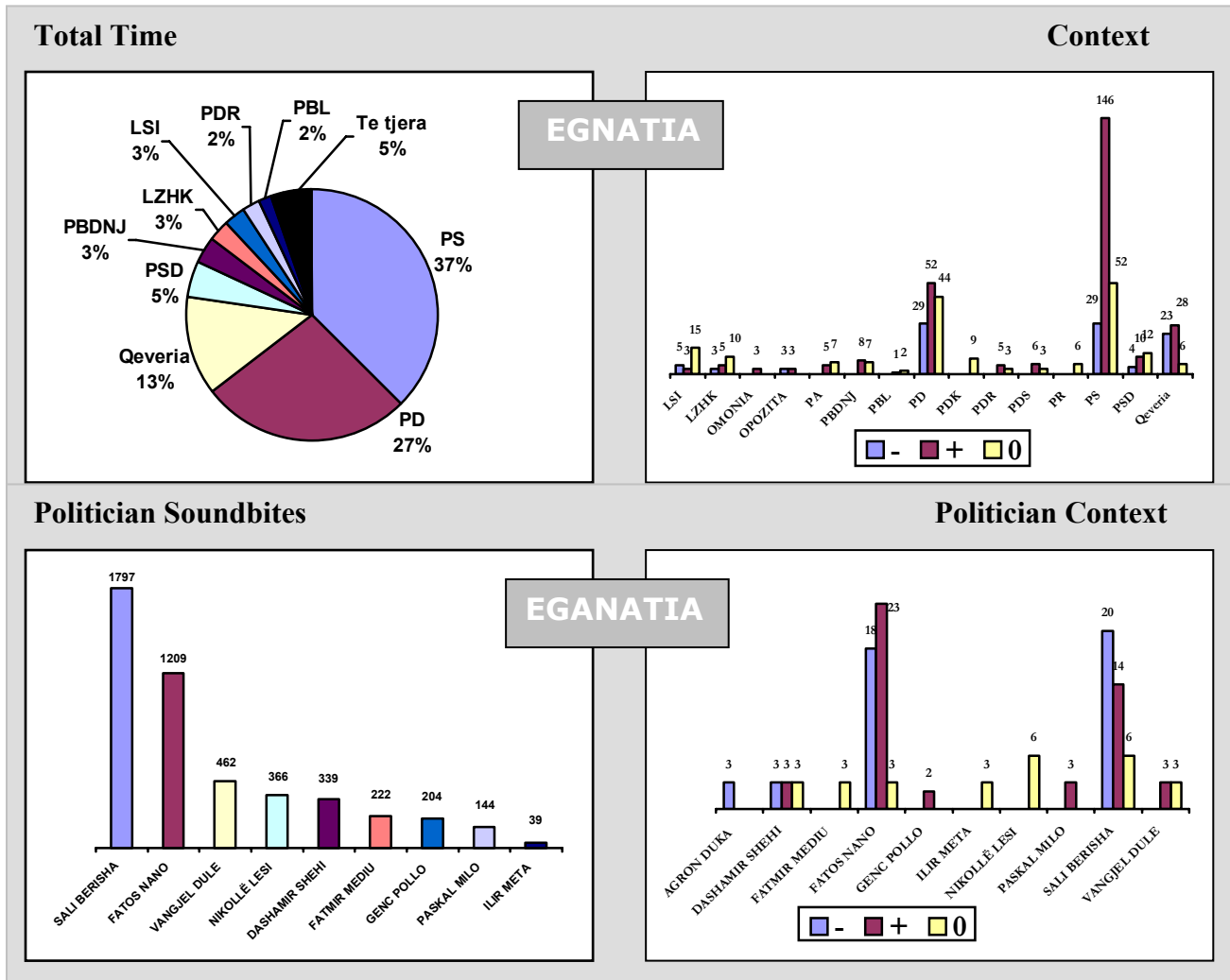
The reporting from TV station TVSH has not been balanced, however it is now doing better than in the first monitoring phase. The time ratio among the SP, the government and the DP has changed since the first monitoring phase. Previously, the DP had one fourth of the SP and government time, whereas during this phase it has one half. TVSH remains positive towards the SP, the government, and the DP, but had become slightly more negative in its coverage of the DP of late. TVSH has made clear efforts to balance its reporting, but it still is half way to its goal. Regarding sound bites, Fatos Nano has 1.5 times more than Berisha, but, compared to the first monitoring phase when such discrepancy was four times more, the changes are optimistic. SMI has begun to receive greater broadcasting time allocation (3%), but still remains far behind the allocation by other stations. Quite frequently, TVSH broadcasts specials not included in the news, which affects the time allocation for parties. The DP's coverage in specials has increased from 24% to 28%, but this does not coincide with NDI's monitoring methodology in regards to the number of audience attending the specials and the news content.



EGNATIA

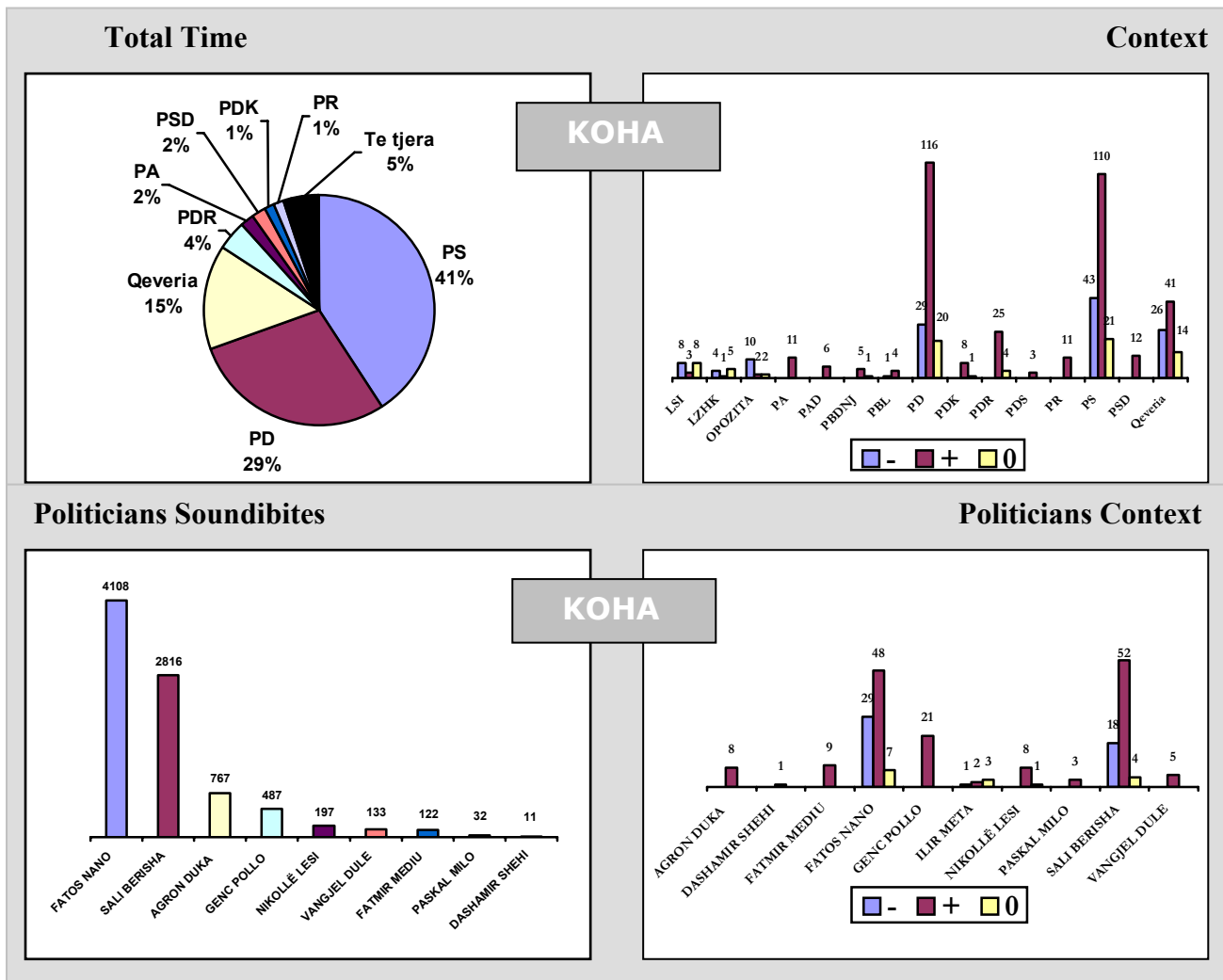
Compared to the first monitoring phase, Egnatia TV increased the total for SP by 6% (which now stands at 37), and decreased the time for DP by 5% (currently 27%). The positive reporting for SP in general has increased since the first monitoring phase.

Regarding the sound bite, Berisha is facing negative reporting whereas Nano has begun to receive more positive coverage. These are clear indicators of a shift in editorial preference.



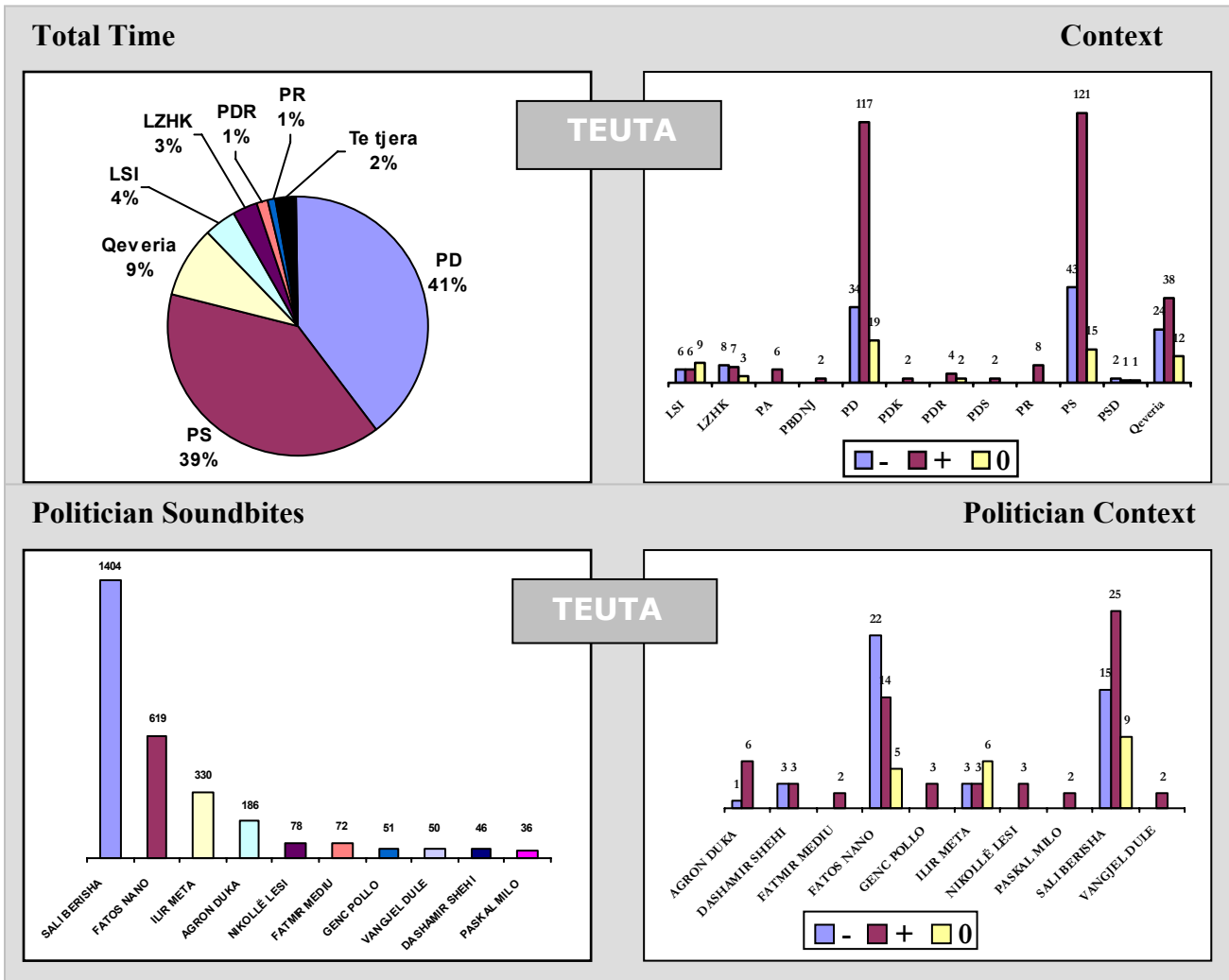
KOHA TV

Koha TV has demonstrated a huge change from the first monitoring phase. Regarding the space it has allocated 30% to SP, 18% to the Government and 19% to DP; if compared to the first monitoring phase Government had 35%, SP 27% and DP 23%. Nano is been given about 1.5 times more in sound bites than Berisha, whereas reporting is for both positive, quite visible for the latter mentioned. Koha TV has broadcasted spots only for SP (92). An important feature is been noticed as Koha TV broadcasts specials not included at the news, which mainly are DP ones and as it can be observed the SP time with no specials is increase notably (36% to 41%), whereas DP time decreased from 39% to 29%. Specials do not make the focus of our news and "primetime" time; however we have measured and reflected the difference in the above figures.



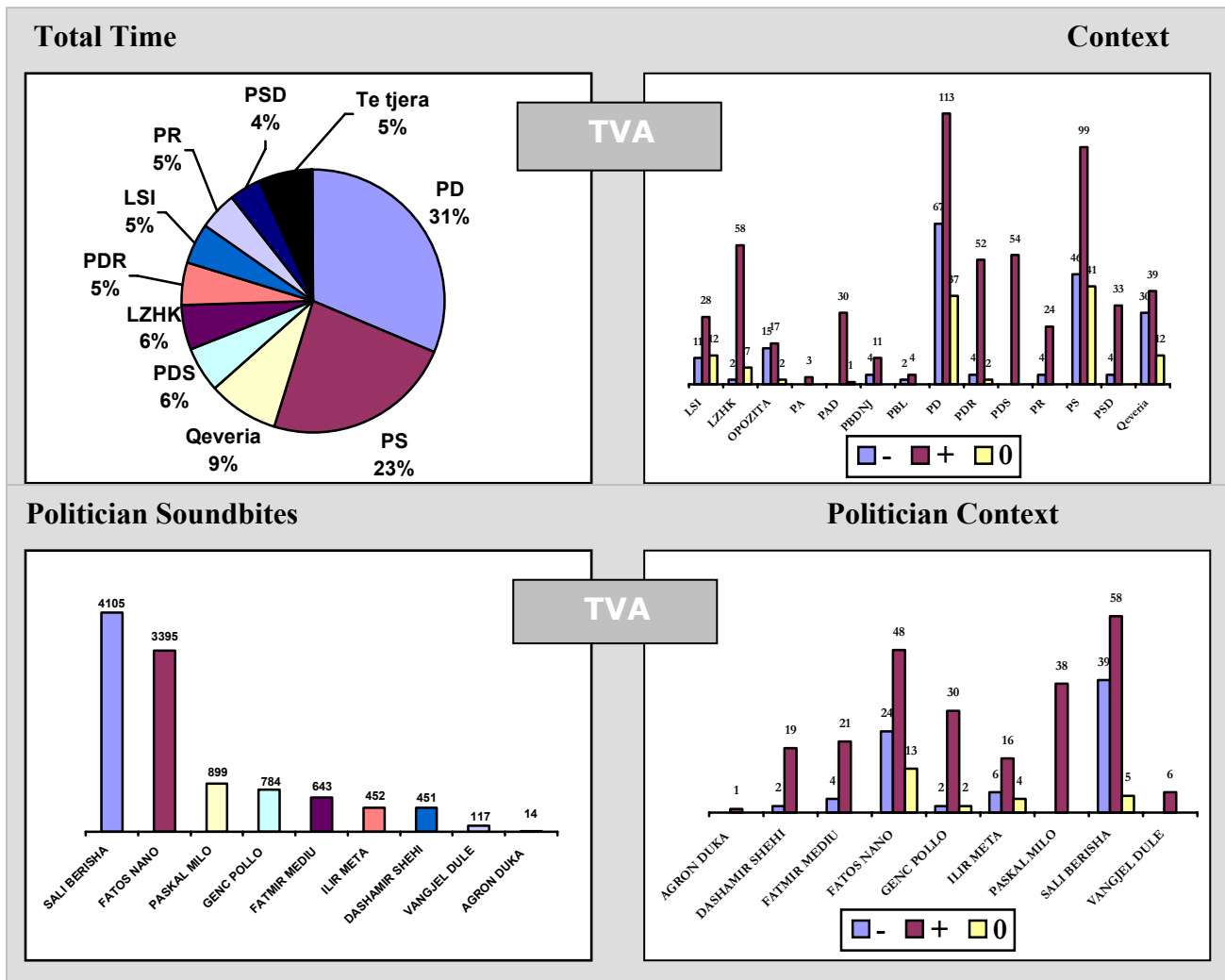
TEUTA

Teuta showed more balance in total timing compared to the first monitoring phase, thus giving 41% of the time to DP, 48% SP plus Government and all reporting was positive. In this reporting period there was an increase of positive reporting about SP and Government. Regarding the sound bite the DP leader was allocated more time and positive reporting but if compared to the first monitoring phase is at lower degree.



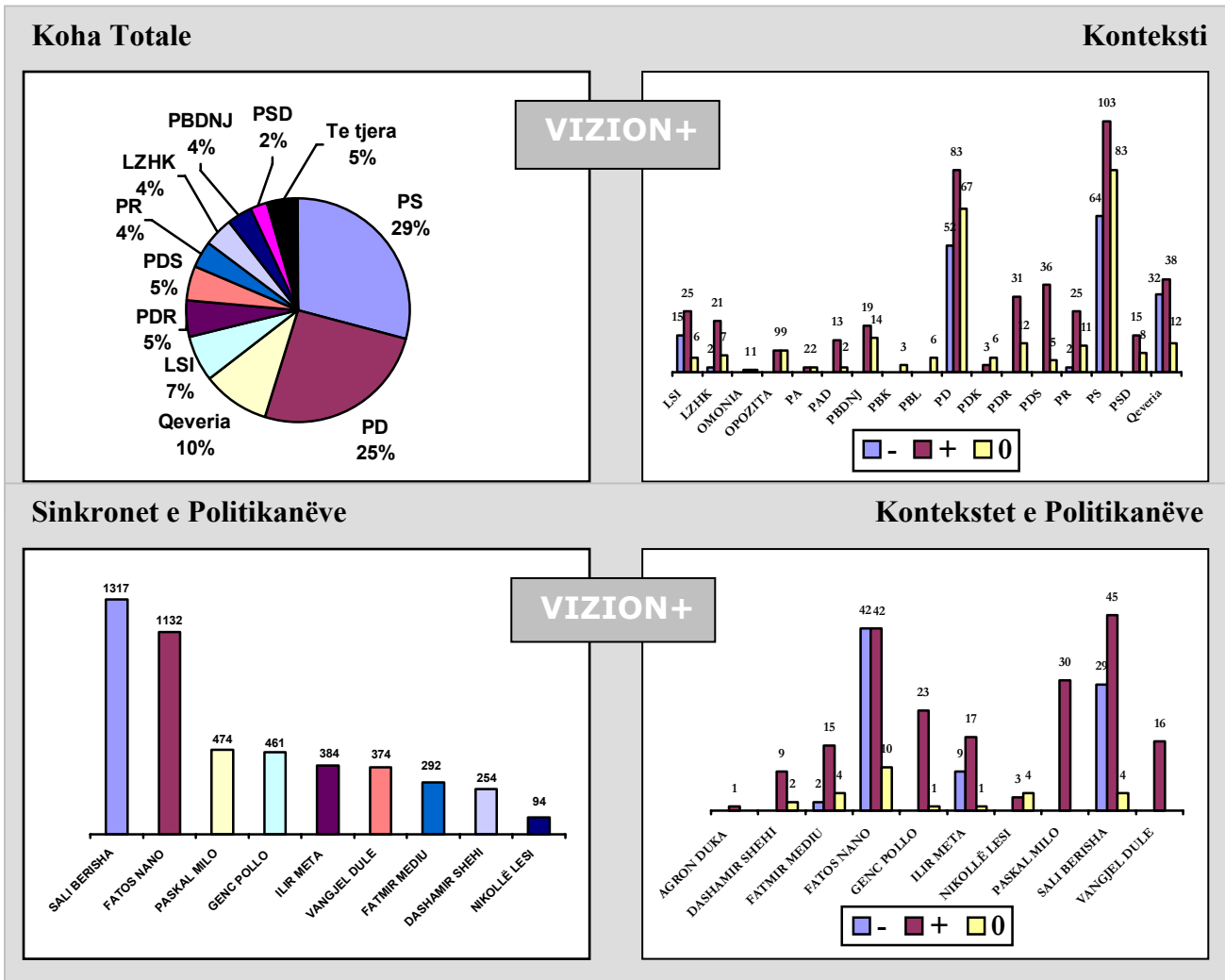
TVA

TVA gave 31% of the airtime to the DP and 32% to the SP and the government, reporting positively for both parties and showing more balance than before. Such a considerable change is good, especially taking into account the first monitoring phase. The greater time in sound bite is allocated to Berisha being reported mainly positively. During this phase TVA has broadcasted 159 advertisements for SP; frequent specials of DP and such trend can be noted at the chart in which DP shifts from 31% with no specials to 36% with specials



VIZION +

During this period Vizion + has lessened the difference between SP and DP, so DP has 25% and SP 29%. SMI's time is increased with 3% thus reaching at 7%. Reporting is mainly positive for the position and opposition. Sali Berisha received greater time in sound bites, mainly receiving positive reporting, whereas Nano is portrayed as balanced. Broadcasted ads in Vizion + are 3 for SP, 8 for Green Albanian Party and 7 for SMI. Vizion + has also aired specials for SP and as it is mentioned before this is different from the "primetime" time.

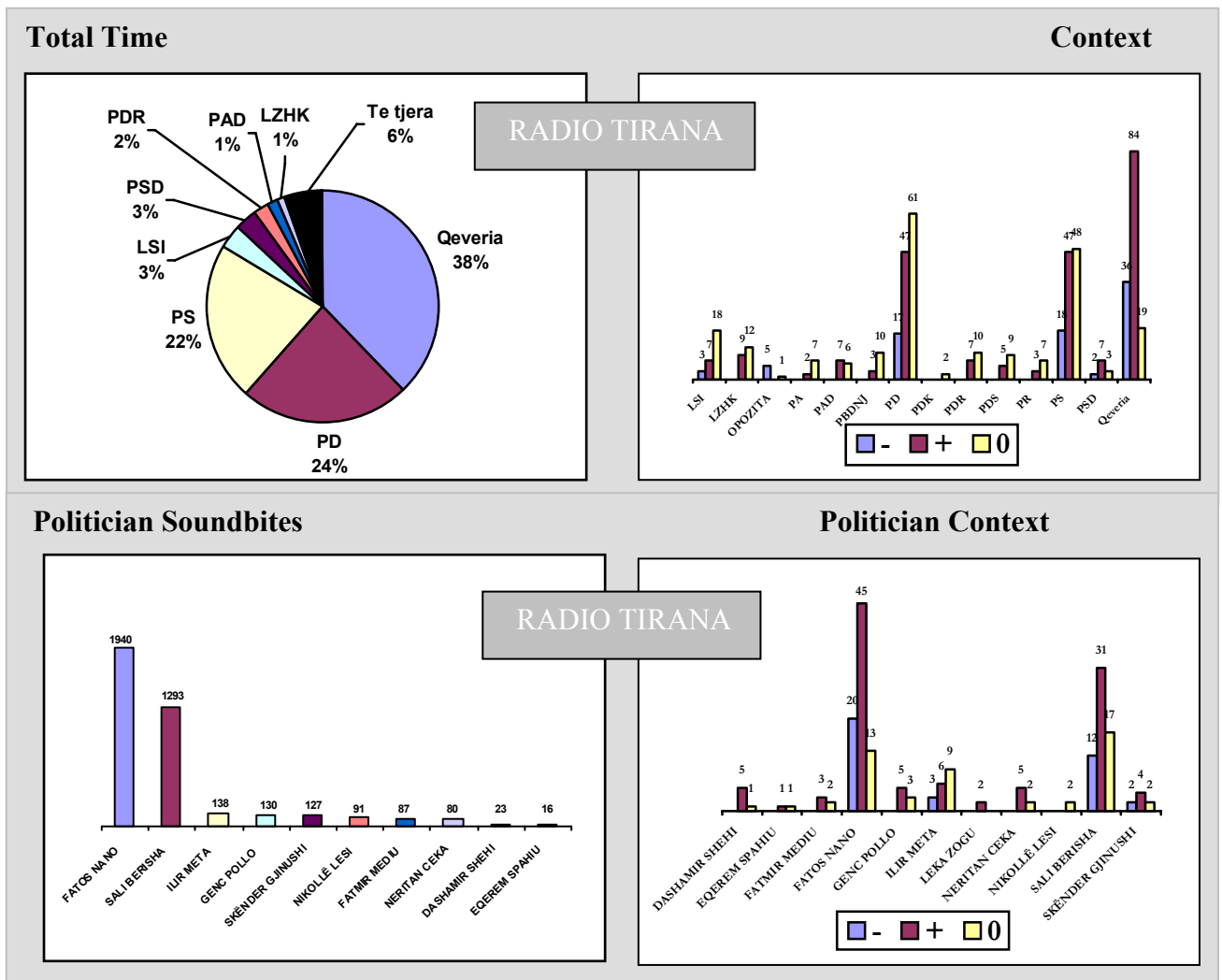


RADIO

RADIO TIRANA

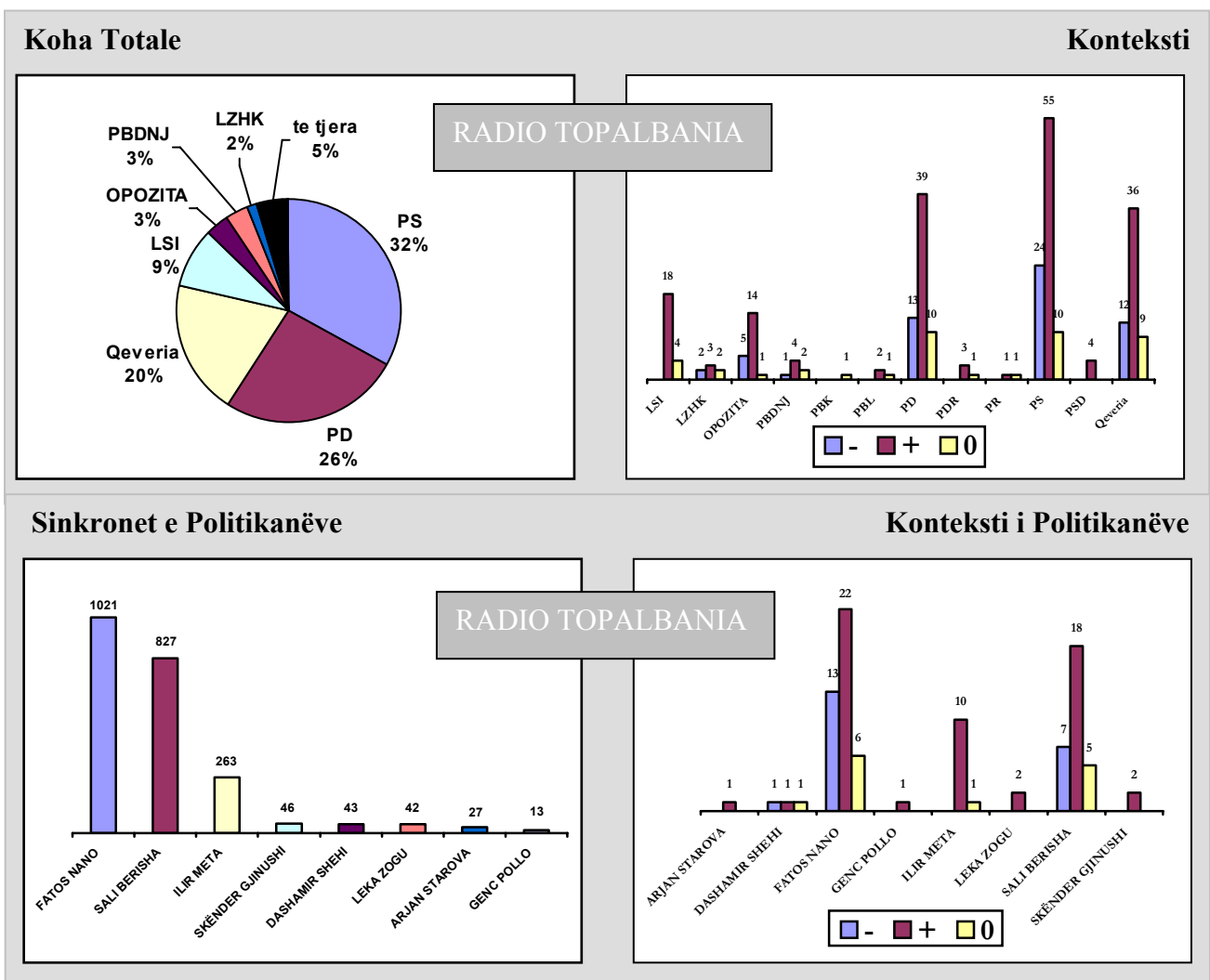
Radio Tirana's coverage was dominated by coverage of the SP and the Government, the same situation as in the first monitoring phase. Time allocation for SP and DP continues to be balanced (respectively 22% and 24%) but including the government's time makes 60% of the total.

If compared to the first monitoring phase (pre-election campaign) it can be stated that there is no big changes with regard to political parties coverage. It is to be noted that in this phase SMI shares 3% of the space meanwhile in the first phase such figure was scarcely 1%. During the monitoring phase 60% of the information about the incumbent government received positive reporting, whereas such reporting for DP covered only 37.5%. Fatos Nano still has the advantage at Radio Tirana with 1.5 times more airtime than Sali Berisha. However, this amount has actually declined compared to the first monitoring phase, when Nano had 2.5 times more airtime than Berisha. In general Radio Tirana remains not balanced in the coverage of election campaign for political parties allocating more space and portraying more positively the incumbent government and the SP.



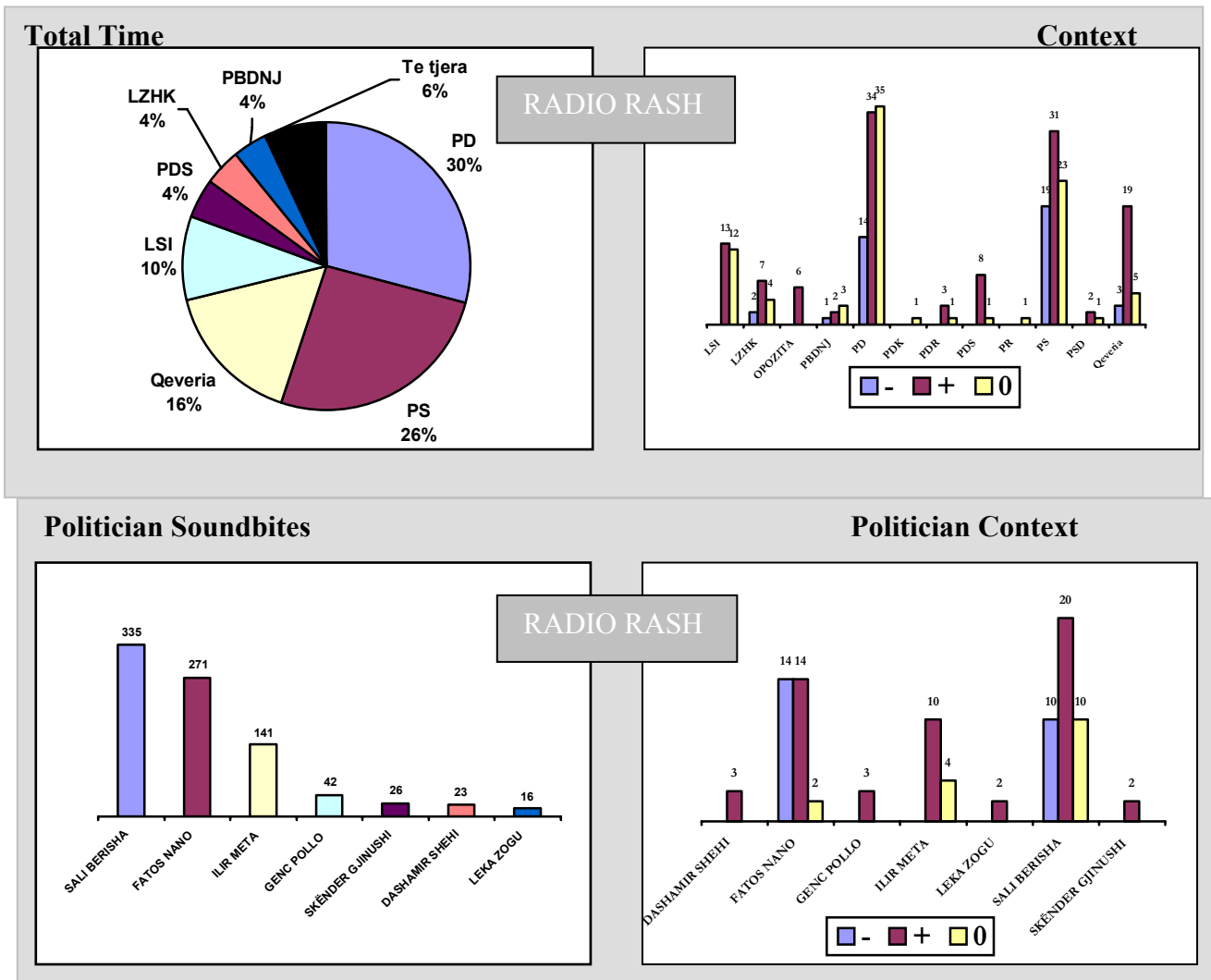
RADIO TOPALBANIA

During this phase, Top Albania Radio allocated 20% of the airtime to the government, 32% to the SP and 26% to the DP. If compared to the first monitoring phase there is an increase of 14% of airtime for SP. This change resulted by reducing the government's airtime with 15%. However the total airtime for the government and the SP has not changed compared to the first monitoring phase. The airtime for DP remains in the same quotas. The coverage for SP and DP is relatively balanced respectively 63% and 62% of sequences in positive light. It's worth noting that both parties and the government are portrayed in positive light. Regarding the coverage airtime of politicians Nano received 25% more than Berisha but from performance point of view both of them received positive reporting. During this phase SP has presented 9 spots.



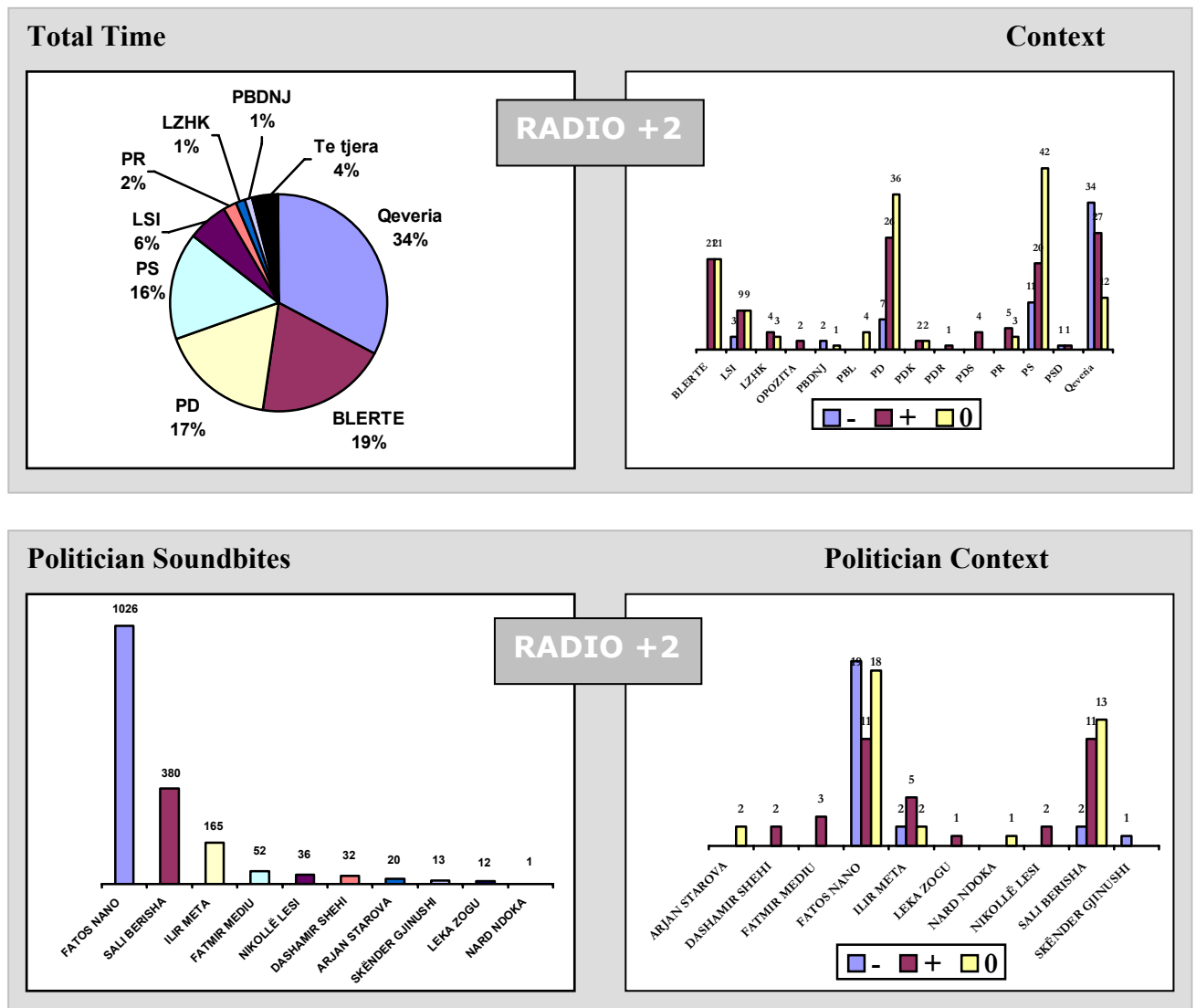
RADIO RASH

Rash Radio has increased the general airtime allocated to DP with 8% thus totaling in 30%. Government airtime has suffered a decrease from 28% to 16%. SP has still 26% of the total airtime but summing it up with the government one makes 42% of the total one. The sequential reporting of SP and DP are almost the same and mainly positive whereas for the government is being reported visibly positive (in 70% of the time). As in the first monitoring phase SP and the government are visibly in the lead. This radio is still not broadcasting short statements from various politicians of Albanian political class thus not “interviewing them in the field”.



RADIO +2

The Government's airtime covered 34% of the total time (there is a decrease of 6% compared to the first monitoring phase). The DP airtime has been reduced to 17%, marking a 8% decrease compared to the first phase. It's worth noting that this radio station has allocated 19% of the total time to the Albanian Green Party, which is an interesting fact as in the first phase the latter mentioned party had less than 1% of the total time. Regarding the reporting both political parties received positive reporting whereas for the government this is not the case as it received more negative sequences than positive ones; in the first phase government received twice the amount of positive sequential reporting than negative ones. However the amount of positive and negative sequences for the government is quite balanced. The Green Party has no negative sequences in this radio station's coverage. Regarding the politicians' total airtime, Nano has 3 times more than Berisha. Once considering the reporting it can be stated that the number of negative sequences is higher for Nano; meanwhile Berisha is portrayed in a more positive light.

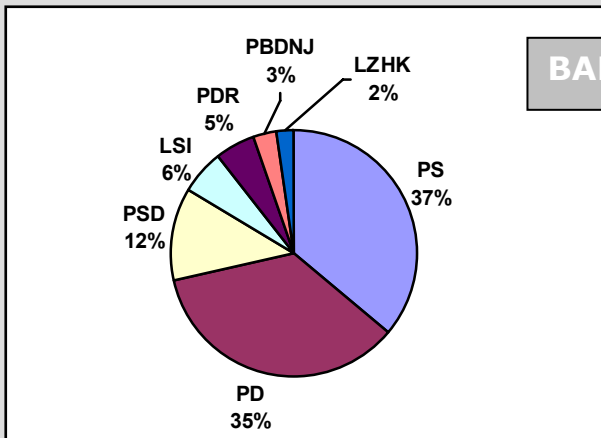


NEWSPAPER

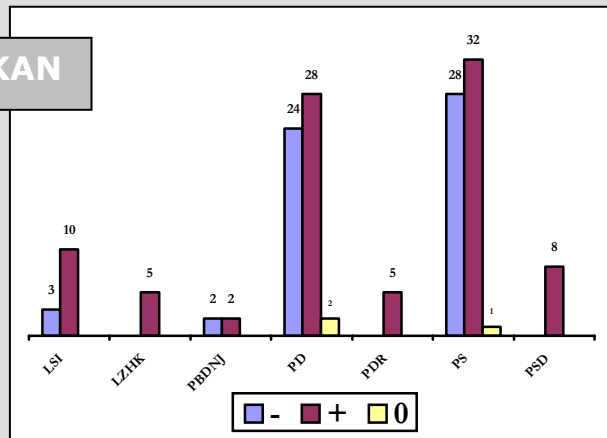
BALLKAN

Ballkan newspaper's coverage is almost balanced for the two main political parties different from the first phase when the tendency was to report SP in a favorable light. The space shared for the two parties is almost the same and the performance received is balanced. SDP covers the third position in this newspaper which shares 12% of the space, leaving behind the SMI with 6%. SDP received fully positive performance. The fifth party is NDP, followed by HRUP, NMD whereas the other ones share insignificant space. Even at politician's level, the chairman of SDP Skender Gjinushi is rated as second receiving fully positive performance followed by Genc Pollo as the third one receiving the same performance.

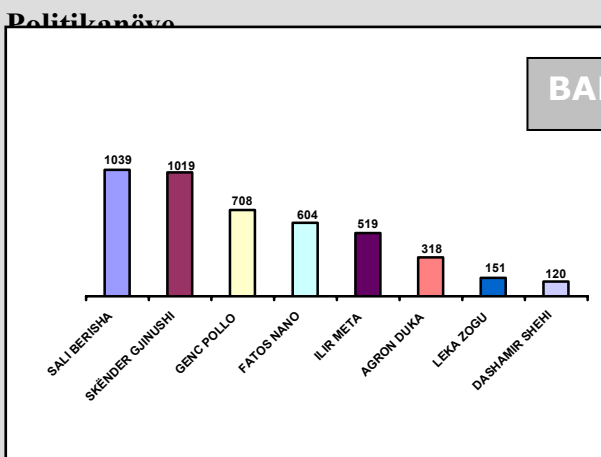
Total Time



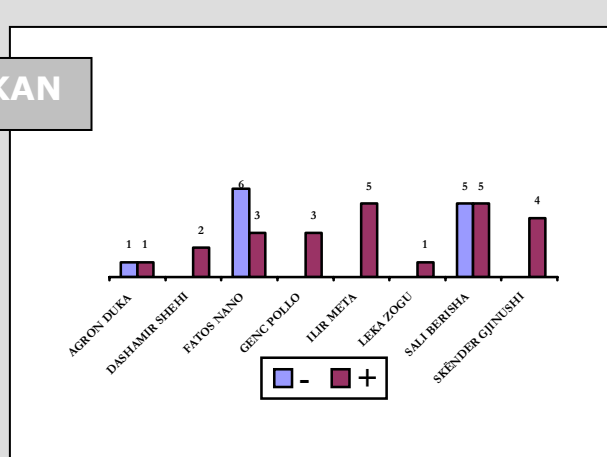
Context



Politician Soundbites

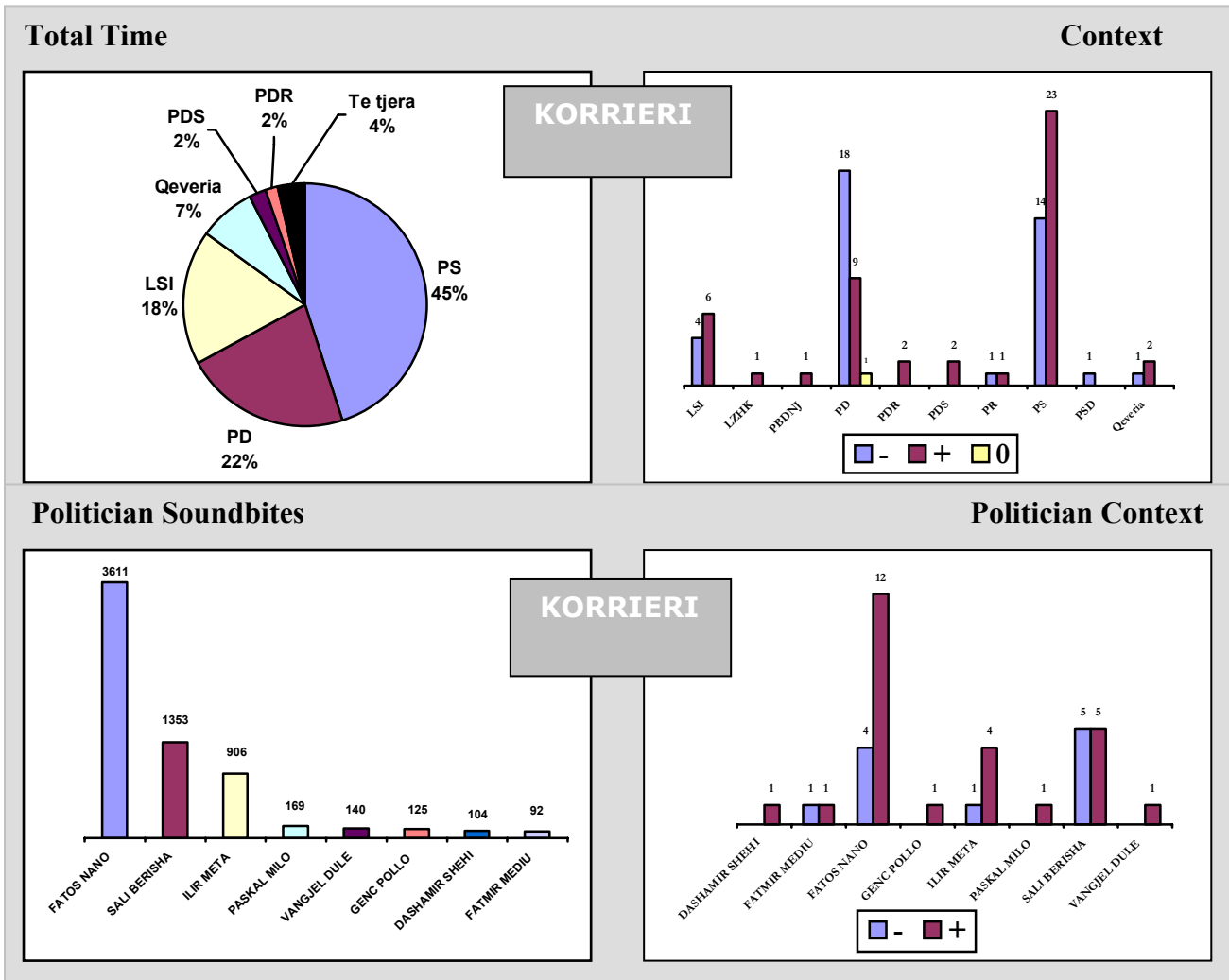


Politician Context



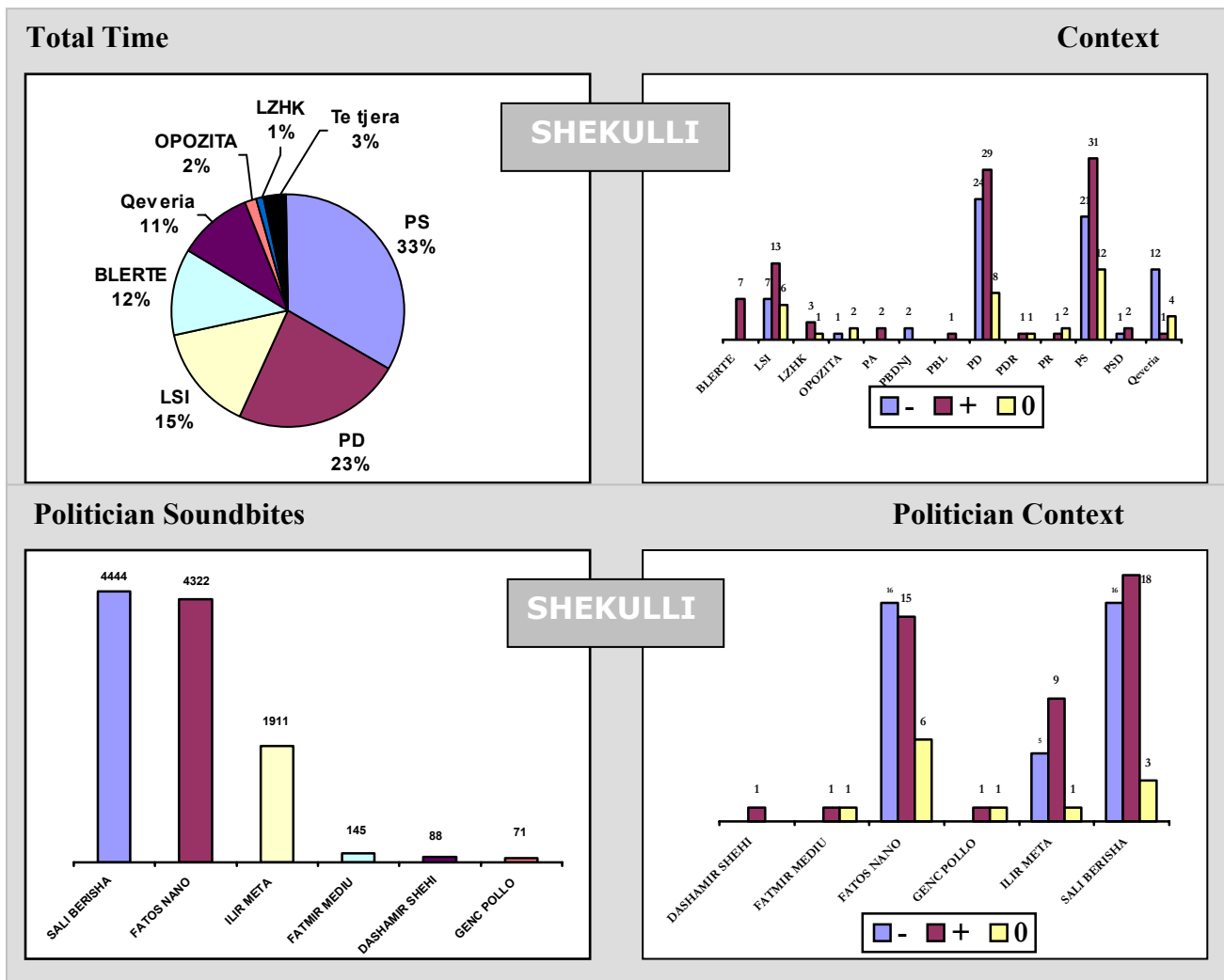
KORRIERI

At Korrieri newspaper there is a visible shifting from being a supporter of the opposition to the SP side but not changing preferences for the SMI. SP and Nano are being increased in the space share compared to the two weeks before, and are mainly reported positively whereas DP and Berisha have less space and visibly reported negatively. Other parties share insignificant space.



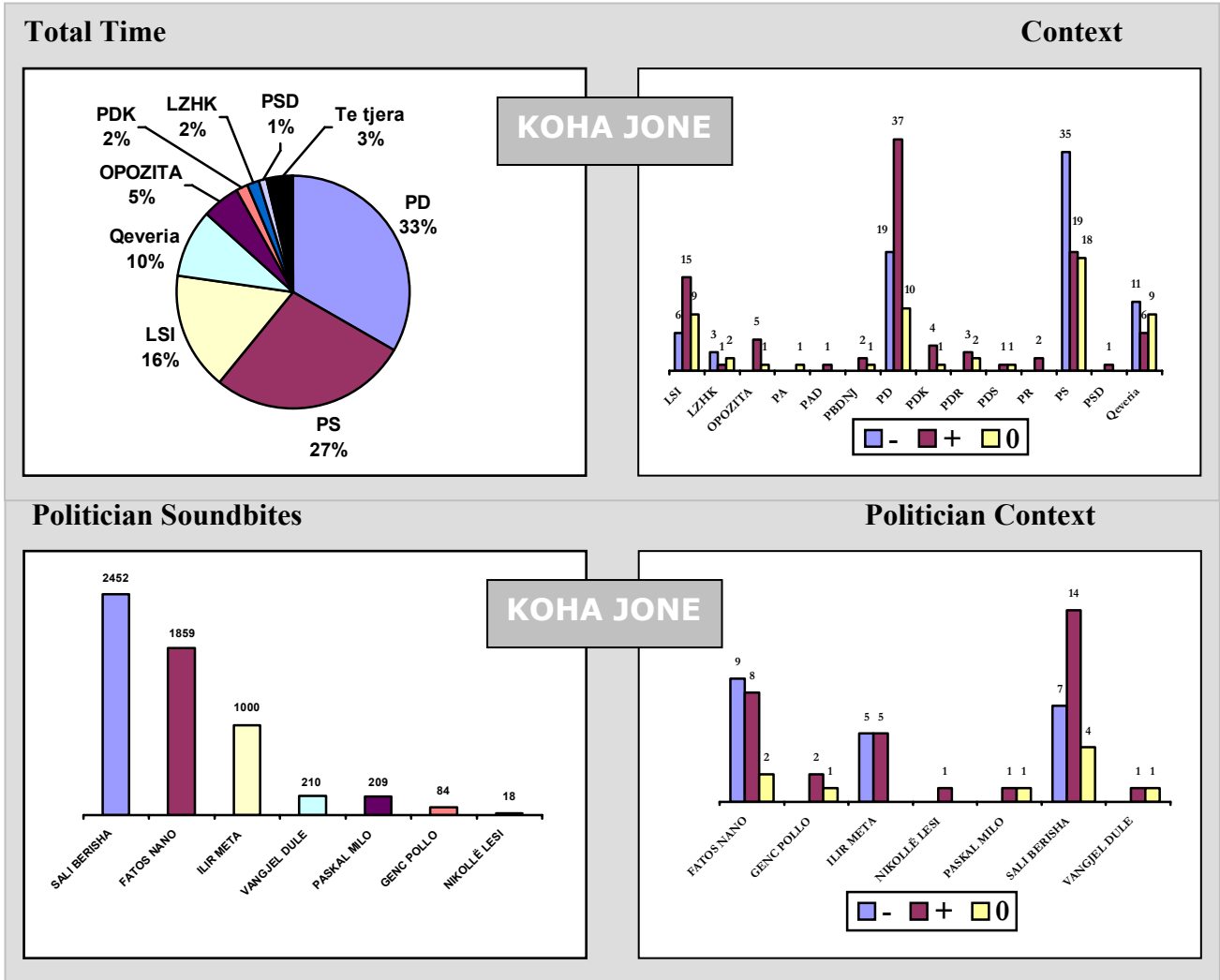
SHEKULLI

Shekulli continues to be highly critical of the government. Generally the coverage among political parties in power and the opposition was relatively balanced. Share of space: SP 33%, Government 11% (of the total), DP 33% and SMI 15%. The other small parties share insignificant space. The fourth party is the Green Albanian Party sharing 12% thus 5% more than two weeks before. The performance is relatively balanced between SP and DP; the coverage of SMI was highly positive, the Green Party fully positive whereas the government largely negative. The performance between the main politicians Nano and Berisha was markedly different from that of the two weeks before in balance related terms even though tendency to report slightly negatively for SP chair Nano was clearly visible.



KOHA JONË

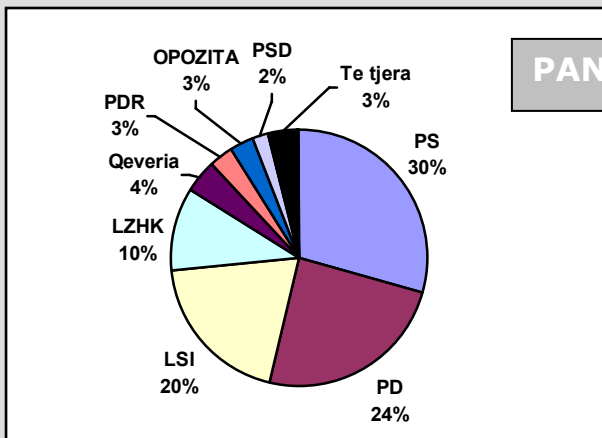
Koha Jone newspaper remains critical towards the incumbent government and SP as reported in the first monitoring phase. DP covers the main part mainly portrayed in a positive light whereas SP rendered as 2nd mainly portrayed in a negative light. The same ratio is applied even when it comes to two chairmen of the parties, Berisha and Nano. The government shares a greater space than two weeks before and mainly portrayed negatively. The SMI remains the third party whereas the other parties share insignificant space.



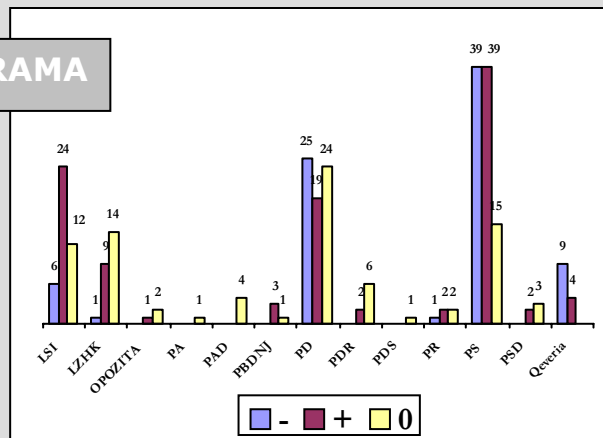
PANORAMA

Panorama's coverage is mainly balanced among two main parties with a slight tendency to support SMI. The allocated space for the two parties is quite close, but SMI has received more space compared to the first phase which increased from 18% to 20%. Albanian National Movement for Development is the fourth party whereas the other parties share insignificant space. SP received balanced reporting, SMI mainly positive and the government mainly negative. For Sali Berisha there is a negative increase in tone compared to Fatos Nano, whereas the space is almost equal. Ilir Meta is receiving mainly positive performance.

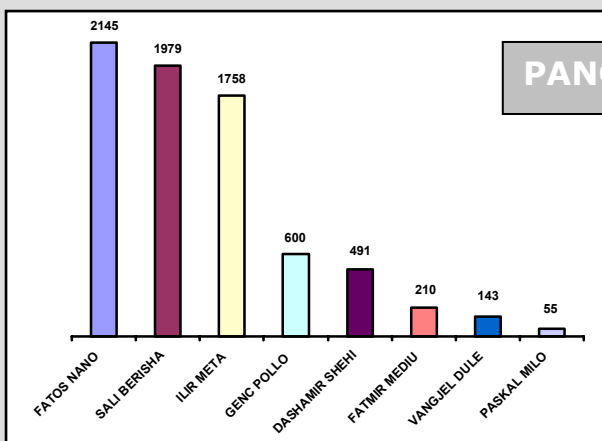
Total Time



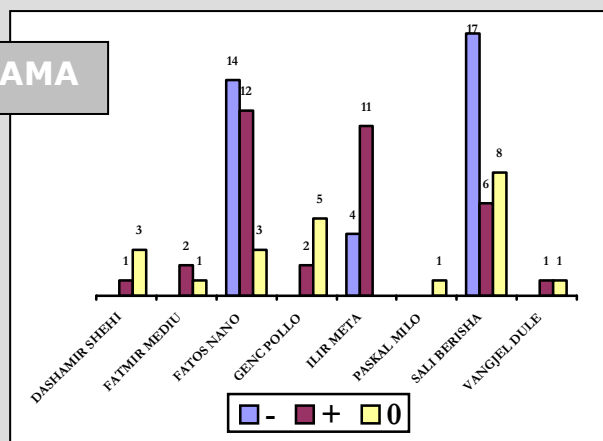
Context



Politician Soundbites



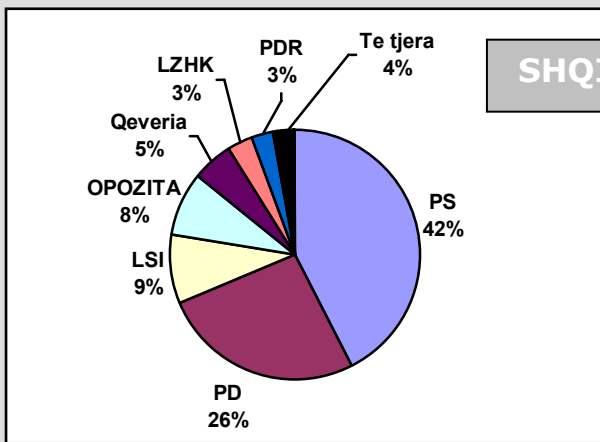
Politician Context



GAZETA SHQIPTARE

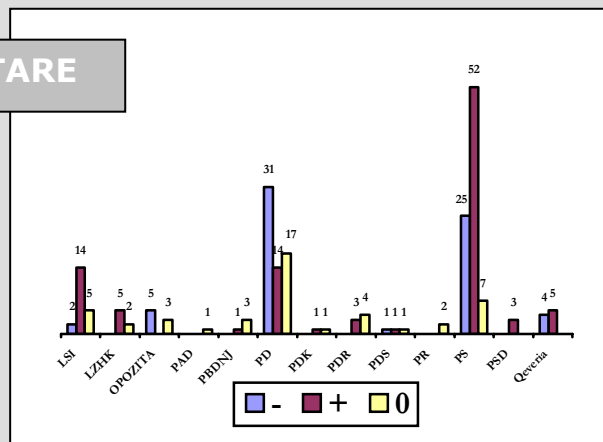
Gazeta Shqiptare has increased the tendency to present SP in a favorable light and it has not changed much the allocation of space share for the two main parties. SP has been portrayed in a positive light while DP mainly the opposite, especially when compared to the situation of the two weeks before when such a difference was less noticeable for the two main parties. Nano is portrayed positively while Berisha the opposite.

Total Time

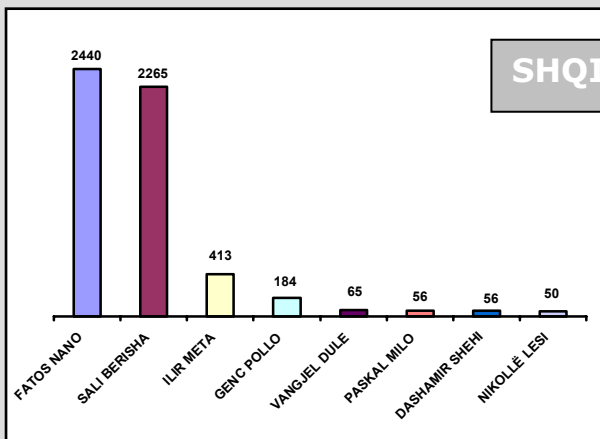


SHQIPTARE

Context

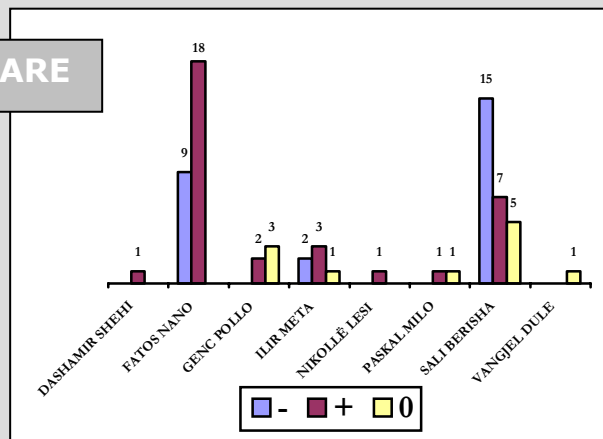


Politician Soundbites



SHQIPTARE

Politician Context



Media Coverage of Women Politicians in the Electoral Campaign

In trying to provide an accurate analysis of the time devoted to women and men during coverage, the monitors designed a special method. On the graphs in this section we can see compare the list of five men and women who got the most significant time in television, radio and newspapers as separate categories. We chose this method because if we would present all men and women in graphs and then compare them, result would be influenced by number of men in politics and in candidates list, and it would not show the impact of media reporting about women's opinions.

If we see the total time dedicated to women in politics, we will see an imbalance in the time allotted to men and women. In analyzing the total time dedicated by media for the five top women in politics we see that these women have 2% of the total time, while the men have 98%. If we see the first politicians in total time and sound bites we will not note any woman. In newspaper and radio coverage monitored, 95% of the coverage is dedicated to men, with only 5% for women. We do not know if the blame for not giving the right place to women falls to the media or to politics as usual in Albania.

Men	Time (sek)
FATOS NANO	46703
SALI BERISHA	46608
ALFRED MOISIU	13377
ILIR META	9657
PASKAL MILO	6525
MEN (total)	122870

Women	Time
NATASHA PACO	1792
MONIKA KRYEMADHI	215
MAJLINDA KETA	204
ERMELINDA MEKSI	176
MIMI KODHELI	134
WOMEN (total)	2521

