

“Female couch warriors are no Belarusian ladies”. State-run TV celebrates the Women Day and Police Day

Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus

(01/03/2021 – 07/03/2021)

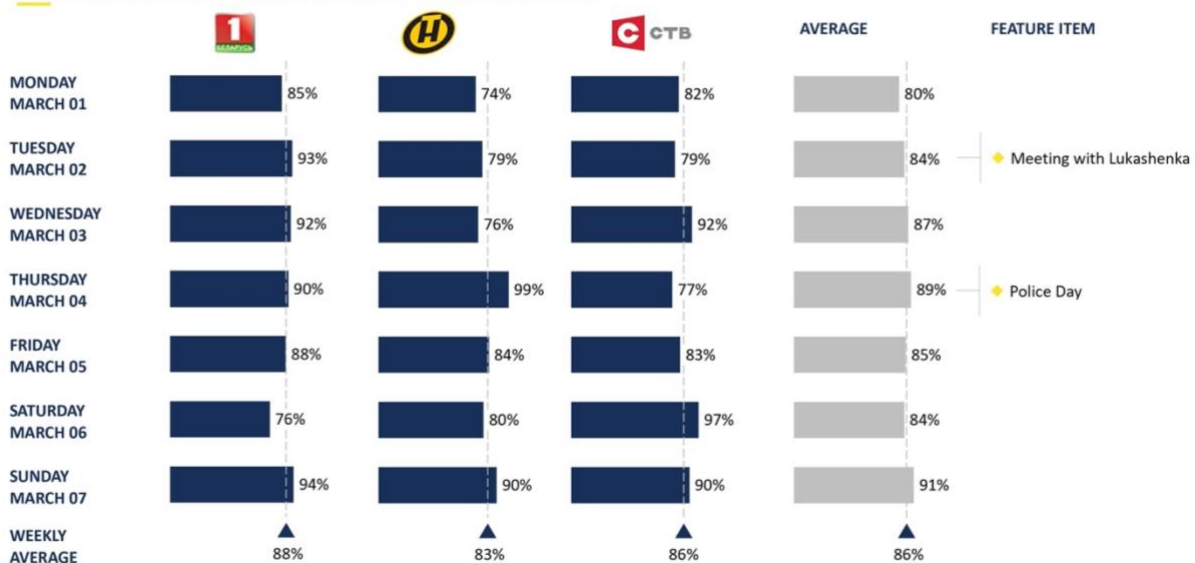
The purpose of this monitoring is to study how the Belarusian state conveys its ideological narrative. The most important mechanism for conveying its narrative is the evening broadcast. Then the informational function of media is complemented, and sometimes replaced by, the broadcasting of official ideological messages. We monitor the outputs of the Agency of the Television News (ATN), which prepares the news broadcasts for the **Belarus-1** channel (“Panorama” and Sunday’s “Main Airtime”), the channel **ONT** (“Our News”, “Saturday’s Edition” and “Contours”), and the channel **STV** (“24 Hour News” and “The Week”).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Police Day and March 8 gave the state channels reasons to continue praising the heroism of people in uniform and tell viewers about the role of women in preserving the country. State-run

THE KEY NARRATIVES WERE LUKASHENKA’S MEETING WITH PUTIN AND THE HEROISM OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT. UPCOMING MARCH 8TH LED TO DIVISION OF BELARUSIAN WOMEN INTO REAL WOMEN AND TRAITORS

THE SHARE OF STORIES WITH STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE*



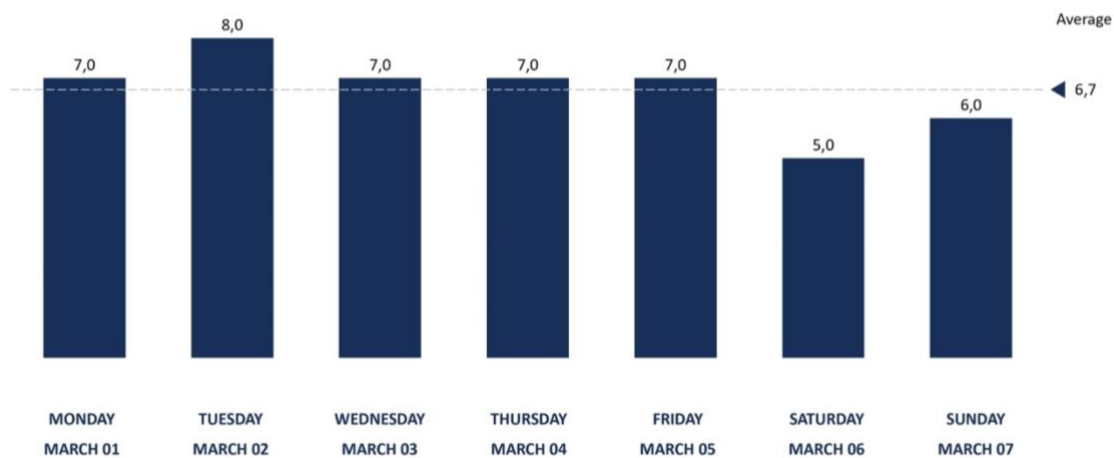
*STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE - one or more key ideas that define the content of a news story (e.g., the inadmissibility of destabilizing the political situation).

TV highlighted the characteristics of "real women" who would cover their man's back and "turn the flashlight on themselves" instead of going protesting.

The presenters spent a significant part of their airtime covering the schedule of Lukashenka, other officials and deputies (receptions of citizens, visits to companies).

STATE CHANNELS DEMONSTRATE THE MAXIMAL UNIFORMITY DURING THE DAYS OF LUKASHENKA'S ACTIVITY

THE LEVEL OF INFORMATION POLICY COORDINATION*



*THE LEVEL OF INFORMATION POLICY COORDINATION – an indicator evaluating coordination across the air. This is inferred from news stories having similar structures, as well as the duplication of opinions, positions and ideologemes among state TV channels.

As before, the principle of hierarchy was strictly observed. The sequence and duration of the plots depends on the position of the key figures.

Another narrative was industrialism, the need to preserve the production, despite dim prospects and economic costs. In some cases, it was explicitly admitted that it would be more expedient to shut down such companies as Motovelo, but their "brand-name" status turned out to be more important.

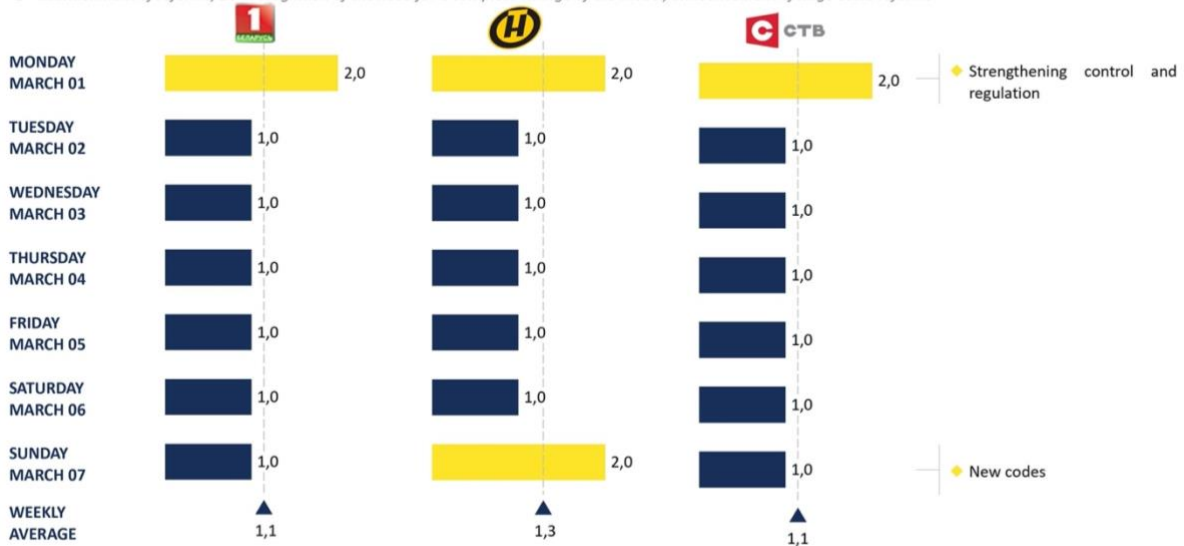
Key narratives can be found in [APPENDIX 1](#).

The Russian vector was one of the key topics of the week, since Lukashenka used his meetings to present the results of his talks with Putin.

THE MAIN REFORM NARRATIVES NARROWED DOWN TO THE STRENGTHENING OF STATE REGULATION, CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES CODE AND CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

REFORM-ORIENTATION INDEX*

1 - abandonment of reforms; 10 - recognition of the need for a complete change of the model, announcement of large-scale reforms



*REFORM-ORIENTATION INDEX – an indicator evaluating the presence of news stories with reformatory proposals or decisions.

Following him, the state channels undertook to refute the allegations of undisclosed experts and telegram channels, arguing that the negotiations were not about the transfer of power, loans or surrender of sovereignty.

EDITORIALS RETAIN THE DISTINCTION OF MEDIA PRESENTATION AND TOPICS, BUT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF PRO-GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES

PLURALISM INDEX*

1 - absence of alternative viewpoints; 10 - diversity of opinions, journalistic and expert approaches

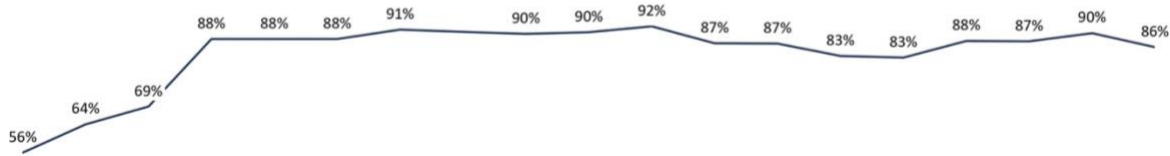


*PLURALISM INDEX - an indicator evaluating the share of critical reports and news stories citing opposing, critical, and other opinions alternative to the official rhetoric.

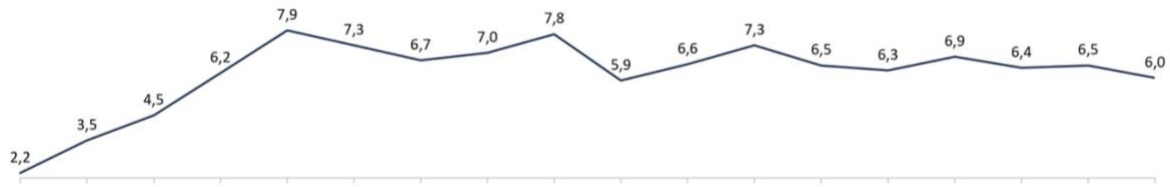
Coordination of efforts in the information sphere is expressed in the fact that State-run TV are increasingly promoting a historical, symbolic and geopolitical theme that is common with the Russian Federation. So, for example, the Belarusian channels showed solidarity with Moscow on the issue of denouncing Navalny and condemning Western sanctions.

THE CHRONICLE OF THE DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE OPPOSITION CONTINUED. PROTEST MOODS WERE EXPLAINED BY THE EXAGGERATED DEMANDS OF YOUTH

AVERAGE SHARE OF STORIES WITH STRONGLY ARTICULATED IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE, by weeks



AVERAGE CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX, by weeks



29.06 - 05.07 06.07 - 26.07 27.07 - 02.08 10.08 - 16.08 17.08 - 30.08 31.08 - 20.09 21.09 - 04.10 05.10 - 18.10 19.10 - 01.11 02.11 - 08.11 09.11 - 22.11 23.11 - 06.12 07.12 - 20.12 11.01 - 24.01 25.01 - 07.02 08.02 - 21.02 22.02 - 28.02 01.03 - 07.03

Conflict messages were targeting Poland, its historical policy and punitive operations led by Romuald Rajs. Tur and Azarenok would routinely expose the squabbles of the "fugitive" oppositionists.

Actively promoted was the topic of Tsikhanouskaya's involvement in the organization of militant actions, an attempt to seize institutions in Gomel based on the recording of discussions with the Gomel activists.

■ THE ANTI-WEST NARRATIVE WAS TRANSLATED ON STATE CHANNELS. ACTIVELY PROMOTED WAS THE TOPIC OF TSIKHANOUSKAYA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION OF MILITANT ACTIONS IN GOMEL

CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX*

1 - no threats; 10 - full of threats, attacks and compromising materials



*CONFLICTOGENITY INDEX - an indicator measuring the percentage of news stories that intensify political tension and conflicts (through accusations and threats towards opponents, equating protests to violence, and similar).

The project “Monitoring of State TV Narratives in Belarus” is implemented by Sense Analytics in partnership with Press Club Belarus. The author of the weekly reports is Maxim Stefanovich, the editor and coordinator of the project is Artyom Shraibman.

To see the full version of the report in Russian [click here](#).

APPENDIX 1 KEY NARRATIVES

ALL STAKES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, PRAISING THE POLICE

- “Our program is at the junction of two significant dates. We recently congratulated those whose service is both dangerous and difficult. ”
- “Ladies, who are already preparing to celebrate International Women's Day tomorrow, are also successfully helping their male colleagues in this difficult task.”
- “It is a good tradition to celebrate significant dates with a motor rally. They decided to say thanks to the security officials in Mogilev. In honor of the Belarusian Police Day, a convoy bearing the state symbols drove through the streets.”
- “And if we continue with the topic of security, then answer this — to whom we turn for help, when something happens, and who helps us. What number are we dialing?”
- “This time the police protected us, not only the current government, not only the state, the country. Protected from post-freedom, post-morality, post-democracy. In short and more specifically, it protected the right of our women to remain women and be mothers.”
- "Letters of commendations from the president, medals "For impeccable service" and "Excellence", new titles and certificates of the city and regional level.
- “The Belarusian army does sit idle. In particular, the rearmament of the air defense units was just announced.”
- “A meeting with the families of those killed in the line of duty took place today in the Church of All Saints. It was held like this for the first time in the crypt where the remains of the Belarusian heroes are kept”.

PERSONALISM

- “The female cadets were given a tour of the building, they attended the museum exposition on the history and activities of the Council of the Republic, after which the fair sex were scheduled to have a constructive dialogue with Natalia Kochanova. The conversation turned out to be lively and relaxed.”
- "The lawful husband gave the would-be Casanova a knuckle sandwich, and not his beloved one."
- “You can't retell a six-hour talk in one fell swoop. But it seems that Alexander Lukashenko tried to today. First of all, in order to dispel all rumors.”
- “The President communicated congratulations on the anniversary to the Prime Minister of Russia. Today Mikhail Mishustin turns 55.”
- “Alyaksandr Lukashenka presented the state awards and promoted several generals today. It is already a tradition of the beginning of spring: to honor ladies on the eve of March 8 and promote those who stand on the wall.”

- “To a large extent, such success also depends on a strong master's hand. All orders of the head of state in the agricultural sector are meticulously calculated.”

PATERNALISM, DIRIGISME

- “Any anti-crisis manager would say that the simplest thing in this situation is to vacate the lucrative site virtually in the center of Minsk and give it to developers, thus making instant profit. But then we won't have "Aist" bicycles and "Minsk" motorcycles anymore. But these are still our brands. And we are not abandoning our own people, the president will say later.”
- “We also need a clear, well-developed business plan for the development of the motorcycle plant. The government is counting on the Minsk Technopark.”
- “I would like “Aist” to be truly Belarusian. As of now, it has a bit too many imported parts.”
- “To start from scratch, one cannot do without the help of the state, and this means advisory services, and, which is important, financial support”.
- “The topics of this meeting in many respects echoed the messages of the All-Belarusian People's Assembly. In particular, the under-the-counter wages. Alexander Lukashenko believes that not only employers, but also employees should be held liable.”
- “Social justice and maximum efficiency in addressing urgent problems of the people. Managing people's requests was discussed today in the House of Representatives.”
- “Double salary growth, flexible working hours for large families and endowment insurance. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection summed up the results of the work and announced further plans.”
- “This year Belarusian retirees will receive about 15 billion rubles. This amount has been 9% of GDP for several years now, which is comparable to many EU countries.”
- “Belarus has significantly improved its position on food security”.

TIGHTENING THE ANTI-PROTEST REGULATIONS

- “Starting today the country has the updated Code of Administrative Offenses. The new edition has become more liberal and proactive. The changes are primarily aimed at preventing violations.”
- “Fine up to 100 base units. In addition, community service or administrative arrest may be imposed. 15 days for participating in unauthorized rallies. Double that for repeated offence.”
- “Hear this, couch warriors still seeking trouble, specifically for your incredible spring and the march of pain, the legislators revised the Administrative Code, the changes have already been enacted. Now the liability for unauthorized rallies is much tougher. An updated Criminal Code is on its way. Don't act a fool, observe the law.”

ANTI-WESTERN NARRATIVES

- "However, from the point of view of the authorities, quarantines have one undoubted advantage — those disgruntled can be detained and sent under arrest without fear of accusations of human rights violations."
- "Vaccination is still the most sensitive topic for the European authorities."
- "A well-known Ukrainian epidemiologist Andriy Alexandrin doubts the effectiveness of this vaccine."
- "Andrei Savinykh noted that the actions of the Polish authorities are aimed at distorting the history of World War II and the historical memory of these events."
- "And we knew no grief, but after the Crimea and the Maidan, the Americans decided to make Poland a rampart of democracy".
- "Indeed, on the very day when the head of the Ukrainian Security Council Danilov was talking about the down-to-earth truth of democracy in the company of his Polish colleague and the fugitive Belarusian official Latushko, an illegal nursing home burned down in Kharkov".
- "The dictatorship saved you, the free ones, from freezing to death. Does it take only Russian tanks to cool your head? "
- "Alarming data on the situation of the elderly come not only in Spain. In the UK, as of early May last year, more than 12 thousand people died of coronavirus in nursing homes."
- "The people of Myanmar have no time for songs. The number of victims from clashes with the police is growing."

GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESSFUL ANT-COVID STRATEGY

- "Thanks to this approach, it was possible to avoid the tragedy, which, alas, is still unfolding in a number of European countries."
- "Belarus is returning to a pre-COVID lifestyle: first of all, it concerns medical institutions".
- "Two departments of the Vitebsk Regional Clinical Hospital started admitting patients as they used to."
- "Today a batch of 40 thousand doses of the second component of the vaccine arrived from Russia. Another one-hundred-thousand batch is on the way — this was announced by the Minister of Health Dmitry Pinevich."

RUSSIAN VECTOR

- "Minsk does not trade in sovereignty, and Moscow does not raise the issue of the transfer of power."
- "To put it simply, the president is sorting out the negotiations in Sochi. The experts quickly rushed to conclusions. However, nothing new. "
- "Minsk and Moscow have built a defense system that has never ever failed."

- “Indisputable fact. Those who like to look for flaws in relations between the two countries always ignore the military component of interaction.”
- “Lukashenka and Putin discussed how the countries could cooperate more closely and with greater benefit for both Belarusians and Russians, which is important — while realizing the inviolability of the sovereignty of states.”
- “The talks between Viktor Khrenin and Sergei Shoigu took place in Moscow today. The ministers considered a plan of joint military cooperation exercises for 2021.”
- “Belarus has started delivering oil products to the ports of the Russian Federation. The first batch was sent the day before from the Mozyr Oil Refinery — more than five thousand tons of gasoline.”

ANTI-PROTEST NARRATIVES

- “For more than half a year a minor part of Belarusians showed their “blue bottoms”. Cringy as hell! Blue-mooning the entire world, truly shameful. Most of the real Belarusians are ashamed of the actions of their fellow citizens.”
- “The revival of Nazism is the collapse of everything that was done after his victory in 1945. And how convenient it is today to use this for those who have the itch to come to power, because in this case traditional values will be simply trampled to pieces. And cover everything up with the collaborationist flag.”
- “In the presence of Tsikhanouskaya they were discussing the coup plan, its financing and the selection of a team from among the former military, police and first responders.”
- “By this time, 800 people have already been identified who, in one way or another, participated in the protest movement. Among them are the so-called anons from social media and messengers.”
- “This spring can also be hot and it's not about the ambient temperature. The public sentiment needle is far from zero. These moods are again actively incited externally. Various scenarios are already being deliberated and new fake news churned out.”
- “She is often seen drunk. This makes her incredible. But the most incredible thing is that they are trying to help this drunk hag.”
- “An online media staffer was sentenced to six months of imprisonment. The physician was sentenced to two years of imprisonment with one-year suspension.”
- “I saw Tsikhanouskaya's face close up without makeup — she is still an immature, stupid girl, a bitter child. A minor who early took a man, in every sense of this phrase. ”
- “Yes, there are still several problems on the way to the presidency for Tsikhanouskaya. First, not everyone is ready to break the law for free, they need money.”

UNDERMINING WOMEN'S MARCH 8 PROTEST

- “And, unfortunately, on the eve of March 8, we must talk about such feminine qualities as hopeless stupidity, ingratitude and shamelessness.”
- “However, the topic of women was actively exploited by political intriguers and adventurers. The leadership of the rebellion is also widely represented by women.”
- “But they need something to show for, these alternatively thinking female Belarusians torn between Warsaw and Vilnius. Here come their second try at disrupting the contract between Belaruskali and Yara.”
- “Already the enlightened men Spengler and Institoris noticed that sometimes a scaly tail is hidden under the skirt and makeup. And today we have seen with own eyes: witches do exist.”
- “Female couch warriors are not at all like Belarusian women. They tried to overthrow our state. Destroy the established order of things. Al this to be able to shower in champagne while prancing on the ruins of the country, like their predecessors on Mount Brocken during the Walpurgis Night.”
- Anna Kolmogorova, a supporter of the “Country for Life” movement, is a living example of the fact that the best friends of a protest girls are depressants, which includes alcohol. She has repeatedly participated in rallies, taking a minor along. She was fined for calling for illegal rallies.”