

# **Representation of Agrotopics in the Public Broadcaster's First Channel Social Advertisements: A Narrative and Functional Analysis**

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## **Abstract**

*Social advertising is recognized as an effective instrument for shaping public consciousness and influencing behavioral patterns, with each initiative aiming to contribute to the improvement of the social environment.*

*The present study analyzes the representation of agrarian themes in the social advertisements broadcast by the First Channel of the Georgian Public Broadcaster. It identifies the relevance of this communicative format not only in terms of its functional and substantive dimensions but also with respect to its audiovisual forms and means of expression.*

*The research was conducted through narrative analysis and coding methods, which enabled a detailed examination of plotlines, symbolic elements, and value-based messages embedded in the advertisements. The theoretical foundation draws on agenda-setting and framing theories, as well as cultivation theory and the theory of the public sphere. These approaches allow for the examination of social advertising within a discursive framework.*

*According to the findings, the First Channel's social advertisements present agrarian themes as ideas associated with national identity, tradition, and prospects for development.*

*Although agrarian-themed social advertisements produced by the First Channel appear with relatively low frequency, they nonetheless encompass not only informational and reminder functions but also educational and cognitive ones, thereby generating valuable content for interested audiences.*

**Keywords:** *Social Advertising; Agricultural Sector; Society; First Channel of Georgia.*

## **Introduction**

In the modern world, media serves not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a powerful instrument for shaping value orientations and transforming behavioral norms. Social advertising, as a specific genre of media content, occupies a special place in this process. Its purpose extends beyond commercial interests and is directed toward enhancing public welfare. The effectiveness of such video spots is determined by multiple factors - social advertising integrates emotional, cognitive, and motivational components, facilitating the modification of viewers' consciousness and encouraging proactive behavior.

The topic gains particular relevance in the Georgian context, as the agrarian sector represents not only an economic foundation but also remains an integral component of national identity, cultural heritage, and traditional values.

The social advertisements aired by the First Channel of the Georgian Public Broadcaster aim to popularize agrarian activities and raise public awareness on agricultural development issues. At the same time, they fulfill a preventive and warning function, serving as a means of avoiding ecological disasters.

## **Methodology and Methods**

The present research was carried out using narrative analysis and coding methods, which led to relevant findings.

The goal of the narrative analysis method is to examine how the story is structured, what audiovisual constructions are used, and what value-based messages it conveys (Riessman, 2008). Essential components of this instrument include identifying the plot architecture, pinpointing thematic-content units, unveiling symbolic and metaphorical layers, and interpreting authorial assessments.

Applying the narrative analysis method in this study enabled an in-depth exploration of agrarian-themed social advertisements aired on Georgia's First Channel. Each advertisement is analyzed in thematic-content, audiovisual, and functional dimensions, offering a comprehensive picture. With its help, we addressed the following qualitative questions: how messages of public importance regarding agrarian policy, agricultural development, or environmental issues are constructed; to what extent the social advertising format ensures adequate representation of the field; and what the content-technical characteristics of relevant materials are.

The coding guide is based on the systematic analysis of thematic, content-based, aesthetic-technical, and evaluative codes, aiming at a multidimensional interpretation of environmental, social, and informational materials (Saldana, 2009).

Thematic codes include broad areas such as environmental protection, agriculture, natural resource restoration, biodiversity conservation, climate and energy efficiency, urban planning, tourism, and eco-popularization.

Content-based codes differentiate forms of problem representation, suggestions for preventive actions, and the stimulation of prosocial behavior. Aesthetic-technical codes cover formats and genres, whether artistic, documentary, or graphic-animated. Verbal elements include narrative sequences, slogans, and textual messages.

Evaluative codes consider the social effectiveness of the material, the potential for raising awareness, and the likelihood of behavioral change. Innovative codes reflect contemporary approaches in the production of social advertising.

The methodology is based on qualitative content analysis, where the coding process begins with repeated observation of the material and detailed study of texts, visual elements, and audio features. Open coding first identified the main themes and content units. Axial coding then linked thematic, content-based, aesthetic-technical, and evaluative codes, forming structured categories. Selective coding, the final stage, ensured the articulation of the overarching narrative and the creation of a cohesive interpretative framework.

## **Literature Review**

References to the significance of advertising and its role in society are found in the works of numerous prominent philosophers and scholars. Whether an advertisement is aimed at promoting social welfare or driven by mercantile objectives, its primary mission is to capture the attention of society.

Marshall McLuhan, a prominent Canadian philosopher and media critic of the last century, assigns this kind of significance to advertising in his book *Understanding Media*. Moreover, he described advertising as the greatest art form of the twentieth century.

*"One day historians and archaeologists will discover that the advertising messages of our time are the richest and most reliable daily reflection among all the forms ever created by humankind throughout its entire life cycle"* (McLuhan, 1964).

Public service advertising, as an instrument of prosocial activism in the media, is addressed, directly or indirectly, in the publications of the following authors: Nargiza Karkashadze, Vazha Zubashvili, Ekaterine Chalaghanidze, Nargiza Kankia, Suprun V. M. and Suprun L. V., Tobias Greitemeyer, Beatriz Casais, João F. Proença, Douglas A. Gentile, Ruben Enikolopov, Maria Petrova, James O. Prochaska and others.

One of the most recent works on social advertising belongs to Ekaterine Chalaghanidze, Professor at Caucasus International University, entitled *Social Advertising during the COVID Pandemic through the Example of Contemporary Georgian Media (2020-2022)*.

In Chalaghanidze's research, attention is focused on the importance of social advertising during the pandemic period, as well as on the channels and means through which this type of content is disseminated by the media.

The author notes that social advertising plays an important role in the process of raising public awareness, especially in crisis conditions.

*"Social advertising firmly occupies its place in the system and process of public relations. During the COVID pandemic, through the media it influenced public awareness and levels of understanding, which was to some extent reflected in the decisions and choices of individuals and social groups," the author states, thereby confirming her hypothesis in the study (Chalaghanidze, 2024).*

A useful and interesting academic article on the importance of social advertising is offered by Nargiza Karkashadze, Associate Professor at Akaki Tsereteli State University, entitled *The Importance and Effectiveness of Social Advertising in Contemporary Georgia (Karkashadze, 2017)*. The article discusses the essence of social advertising effectiveness and the relevant approaches.

To examine the purpose of social advertising, Karkashadze conducted an expert survey and presented a quantitative analysis. In response to the question of what determines the demand for social advertising, the majority of respondents, 43.8 percent, named "to attract public attention". According to 27.1 percent, social advertising contributes to "the formation of social opinion". A further 16.7 percent believe that its purpose is "to help society solve social problems" (Karkashadze, 2017, p. 4).

In the work of Professor Vazha Zubashvili, *The Formation of Television Advertising in Georgia*, one subsection is devoted to an issue relevant to this study, namely social advertising (Zubashvili, 2017).

*"Social advertising is information that reflects the interests of society and is constructed and formulated in such a way as to exert targeted influence on mass, corporate or individual consciousness in order to elicit a predetermined reaction within the target audience," the author notes (Zubashvili, The Formation of Television Advertising in Georgia, 2017, pp. 164-165).*

A noteworthy study on the tone of social advertising is presented by researchers Beatriz Casais and Aline da Costa Pereira. Their publication, entitled *The Prevalence of Emotional and Rational Tone in Social Advertising Appeals* (Casais and da Costa Pereira, 2021), aims to analyze emotional and rational appeals used in social advertising campaigns.

Based on the results of the study, the authors concluded that social marketers tend to prefer the use of rational tone in social advertising campaigns. The research revealed a certain gap between theory and practice, which speaks to the originality and value of the work.

*"Social marketers must consistently evaluate the effectiveness of campaigns in order to determine how effective informational and rational appeals are in contributing to changes in people's attitudes and behavior," the authors note in the conclusion of the article, in the form of a recommendation (Pereira and Casais, 2021, pp. 292-293).*

The academic article *Effective Spokespersons in a Public Service Announcement: National Celebrities, Local Celebrities and Victims* by Mark Toncar, Jane S. Reid and Cynthia E. Anderson highlights other important circumstances. Specifically, the researchers sought to determine the effectiveness of personalization in social advertising by using different types of spokespersons (Toncar, Reid and Anderson, 2007).

To conduct the experiment, the authors created a social advertisement that called for assistance for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. It was one advertisement, but presented with three different spokespersons: a national celebrity, a local celebrity and a real victim.

The results showed that the message was significantly more effective when the story was told directly by the victim. The local celebrity turned

out to be less convincing, and the national celebrity (Ashlee Simpson) was completely unconvincing.

The researchers also agree in the conclusion that the use of celebrities may yield successful results in commercial advertising but is less effective in social advertising. The work reveals original and innovative approaches. The sharing of experimentally confirmed findings creates an important theoretical foundation in this regard.

As for the textbooks that significantly enriched and strengthened our theoretical knowledge, the following can be singled out: Advertising (Katsitadze, 2006), Print Advertising (Uplisashvili and Kipshidze, 2009), Advertising and Promotion (Belch and Belch, 2013), Marketing Communications (Feradze, 2010) and others.

The literature review has shown that academic steps in the field of social advertising are being taken with a certain dynamic both at the local and international levels. However, in our view, this effort is still insufficient to activate broader discussion in this direction.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The development of agriculture, environmental protection and ongoing processes in the agrarian sector are among the most important issues for contemporary society. Despite their objective significance, public attention to these areas largely depends on the communicative reality constructed by the media. It is in this context that four classical media theories come to the fore: agenda setting, framing, cultivation and the public sphere. Social advertising, as one of the essential components of prosocial media activism, functions as an important instrument for information exchange, encouragement and the revision of existing approaches, especially in the agrarian sphere.

Agenda setting theory implies the prioritization of news according to its perceived relevance. A media outlet defines its own agenda, which is a reflection of the particular features of its editorial policy. Information elevated to the status of a priority by the media persuades the public that this issue is indeed the most important one.

The themes of social advertising are often built around issues that have repeatedly appeared in the media spotlight. For example, if environmental topics occupy a leading place in the flow of information in news bulletins, this fact itself indicates the topicality of the problem.

When it is necessary to direct public attention from a general topic toward specific details, framing theory becomes the mechanism that governs this process. By using so called frames, it further "complicates" the situation for members of the public. If, according to agenda setting theory, their main concern was what to think about, the concept of framing creates a kind of framework for how to think.

Framing theory was first proposed by American sociologist Erving Goffman. In his work *Frame Analysis*, the author notes that there are two types of frames, natural and social. Natural frames identify events as physical phenomena, whereas social frames interpret them as socially conditioned. These frames exert considerable influence on the interpretation, processing and communication of data (Goffman, 1974).

Researchers Gamson and Modigliani argued that frames direct public attention toward one particular issue. They offer the audience the opportunity to focus on an important detail within a larger story. As Gamson and Modigliani write, a frame is a set of interpretations that assigns specific meaning to a given issue (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987).

The campaign based and multi channel nature of social advertising reflects cultivation theory. According to this concept, constant media messages over time create a long term perspective for the perception of reality. For example, if citizens regularly watch social videos in which farmers use modern technologies to produce environmentally clean products, a cultivated perception emerges that agriculture is a promising, safe and progressive sector. The same mechanism can be used to focus on negative realities. If the advertisements talk about problems such as depopulated villages, severe environmental conditions and so on, society develops the sense that there is a sort of collapse in this area and that timely intervention is needed (Gerbner and Gross, 2006).

This is also the result of cultivation. Social advertisements not only provide information but also shape concrete social representations.

The public sphere theory presents agro themed social advertising in yet another dimension, as a mechanism or instrument for dialogue, debate and collective decision making. Social advertising is not merely a message. It is a kind of platform for public discussion. For example, if a campaign concerns the return of young people to the regions, it may become the basis for public meetings, online debates and discussions of strategic policy. Accordingly, agro themed social campaigns contribute to the process of generating a common civic position (Habermas, 1989).

The theoretical concepts presented above are closely interconnected. Taken together, they highlight the importance of creating and implementing agro themed social advertisements and campaigns. First, the issue enters the media agenda, after which it may become the basis for the creation of social advertising. The latter sets specific frames for it, shapes a constant perception through cultivation and, finally, promotes the transformation of the raised topic into a subject of public discussion. This chain of processes establishes the following logic: socially significant problems, challenges and opportunities must ultimately be addressed by society itself.

## **Discussion and Results**

A certain group of social advertisements broadcast at various times on the First Channel of the Public Broadcaster are united around themes that are relevant to the agrarian sector. At the same time, they address ecological problems and environmental issues.

It is noteworthy that the ecological situation in Georgia is full of serious challenges. Among them, particular attention should be paid to air and water pollution, solid waste management, the reduction of biodiversity and so on. Raising public awareness in this area is an important precondition for the effective management of environmental problems. Social advertising has assumed precisely this function.

During the research period, the social advertisements broadcast on the First Channel in this area covered the following thematic

directions: environmental protection, forest restoration, trout farming, energy efficiency, climate and urban planning.

Among these, the following social advertisements stand out for their focus on the idea of freeing the environment from harmful pollutants:

1. "You dropped it" (2012)
2. "Do not leave waste, take care of the environment, let us clean Georgia" (2014)
3. "Do not throw it away, recycle it" (2024)

The first and second of these advertisements are satirical in nature and in fact "mock" those who pollute the environment. In the first social advertisement, which uses a fictional and artistic style of shooting, we see the attitude of young people, including children, toward the issue. "You dropped it" is how a little girl addresses a middle aged man who throws litter on the ground.

As for the second satirical video, its main idea is that the waste we throw away ultimately harms us ourselves. The video consists of fictional scenes and serves to visualize the message directly. It is noteworthy that this type of social advertising creates a kind of moral "terror" for the viewer. At the same time, it develops creative vision and illustrates both the severity of the problem and the need to resolve it.

One social advertisement in the ecological category tells the story of a special Wasteless recycling bin, which helps prevent waste from ending up in the environment. The visual sequence provides viewers with a step by step guide for action.

It is significant that this device is placed within private spaces. Nevertheless, the advertisement is completely free of commercial subtexts, and the focus is placed solely on the importance of the equipment. While the previous two videos served to represent the problem, this advertisement offers an effective way to solve it.

In ecological social advertisements, in addition to environmental pollution, attention is drawn to the following issues:

1. "Green Holidays" (2014)
2. "Become a Friend of the Forest" (2023)

3. "Trout Restoration Project" (2024)
4. "Urban Planning" (2024)

The first and second social videos from this list have two main objectives. On the one hand, to promote the development of domestic tourism, and on the other hand, to encourage citizens to protect the environment. The goal of the volunteer campaign is to create ecological well being.

In the social advertisement created about forest restoration, a specially written musical composition is used, which, importantly, easily captures the viewer's attention. The lyrics are rhythmic and easy to remember.

As for the social advertisement whose aim is to inform society about the trout restoration project, it leaves the impression that it is a kind of public relations campaign for a particular state agency, in this case the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. Although the project itself clearly has a prosocial purpose, it is debatable to what extent such advertisements should be broadcast under the status of social videos.

The social advertisement prepared on the topic of urban planning is similar to the previous video in terms of authorship and production. Nevertheless, instead of acting as a public relations campaign for the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, it shifts the focus to the importance of the issue itself. The main message of this video is expressed in one of the phrases of the verbal sequence: "Today's urbanism is tomorrow's geography". The advertisement emphasizes the necessity of preserving ancient cultural and historical buildings and of pursuing a policy of greening the environment. It is arguable that the advertisement lacks a slogan and any narrative sequence in the form of captions.

Social advertisements devoted to energy efficiency, climate and the importance of taking care of an automatic meteorological station are presented with the following slogans:

1. "Take a step toward energy efficiency" (2014)
2. "Restore the balance" (2013)

### 3. "Let us take care of the station" (2022)

The first video presents the possible consequences of climate change. To make them more visible, it uses relevant drawings. It is noted that "developing countries are vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters". In addition to the risks, the advertisement also provides information on preventive measures. It is noteworthy that the audio track, namely the musical composition used in the clip, appears to violate copyright, which reveals a somewhat unserious attitude toward the issue.

"Energy efficiency is a reasonable choice", we are assured in the second social advertisement. It shows how replacing various electronic devices with alternative solutions can increase the efficiency of energy use. It is significant that energy efficiency is important because it helps to achieve sustainable development goals. The visual component of this clip is also noteworthy. It is composed of rapidly changing shots and dynamic actions.

The importance of taking care of the automatic meteorological station is discussed in the third social advertisement from this thematic sequence. Its goal is to prevent damage to the mechanism. In this part, it is noted that if the station is damaged as a result of human interference, it will become impossible to collect information and to avoid disasters.

The social advertisement is presented in the form of 2D animation using graphic techniques. The audio track consists of natural sounds. It is noteworthy that the content of the advertisement is also explained in sign language.

A kind of continuation of the ecological theme is found in social advertisements that are aimed at the development of domestic tourism and promote travel within the country:

1. "Travel in National Parks" (2012)
2. "Become a tourist in your own country and discover Georgia" (2014)
3. "Come Up to the Mountains" (2024)

These videos show various attractions of Georgia. The entire series of image based clips aims to increase the number of Georgian visitors in national parks and high mountain regions as well as in the lowlands. The visual sequence, composed of attractive shots, is very likely to arouse interest among viewers.

Issues related to agriculture appear in social advertisements in much smaller doses. The presented videos mostly have informational purposes:

1. Agricultural cards (2013)
2. "Let Us Take Care of Beekeeping Together" (2022)

The first social advertisement, which concerns the use of agricultural cards, was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and explains the positive aspects of their use. The second video, presented in a graphic and animated format, covers a specific branch of agriculture, namely beekeeping. Its goal is to present important recommendations that must be followed when treating bees. To visualize the lengthy narrative sequence, an effective tool is used, namely infographics.

For the sake of summarizing and offering more clarity, we present a table compiled using the method of coding the empirical field, where the social advertisements studied by us are divided into thematic, content based, aesthetic technical and evaluative categories, each accompanied by relevant codes and descriptions.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
Thematic codes	Environmental protection and pollution	Problems of air and water pollution; waste management; prevention of environmental contamination; recycling; raising public awareness
Thematic codes	Restoration of natural resources	Forest restoration; preservation of biodiversity; trout restoration

Thematic codes	Climate and energy efficiency issues	Climate change; energy efficiency; sustainable development; preservation of meteorological stations
Thematic codes	Urban environment and planning	Urban policy; preservation of cultural heritage; greening of cities
Thematic codes	Tourism and eco popularization	Promotion of domestic tourism; popularization of travel in national parks
Thematic codes	Agriculture and biodiversity	Use of agricultural cards; preservation of beekeeping
Content based codes	Presentation of the problem	Visualization of pollution; demonstration of negative consequences
Content based codes	Proposal of preventive action	Presentation of solutions; stimulation of environmentally responsible behavior
Content based codes	Irony and satire	Emotional engagement; ironic response to the problem
Content based codes	Modeling of positive behavior	Presentation of environmentally responsible behavior; emphasis on personal responsibility
Content based codes	Informational PR campaign	Presentation of activities of public institutions; positive popularization of administrative projects

Aesthetic technical codes	Form and genre	Fictional; documentary; graphic; animated
Aesthetic technical codes	Audio track and music	Original compositions; natural sounds; copyright observation or violation
Aesthetic technical codes	Verbal elements	Slogan; textual message; integration of sign language
Aesthetic technical codes	Emotional impact	Moral pressure; inspirational tone; call to action
Evaluative codes	Social effectiveness	Raising awareness; potential for behavior change
Evaluative codes	Social vs. commercial subtext	Absence of commercial goals; signs of state PR campaign
Evaluative codes	Innovativeness	Presentation of new technology or approach
Evaluative codes	Narrative structure	Consistency of content; direct or symbolic messaging

## Conclusion

The narrative analysis of social advertisements has shown that agro themed videos constitute an important component of the media agenda. This approach reflects an attempt to raise public awareness of such challenges as environmental pollution, waste management, the reduction of natural resources and climate change.

The content of the social videos broadcast on the First Channel is diverse. Some of them aim to demonstrate the problem, while others attempt to present possible solutions.

The audio visual forms and genres used in the advertisements, including fictional, documentary and graphic animated formats, serve to communicate the message effectively. Particular attention is paid to emotional impact, which should, as a rule, foster a sense of moral responsibility and motivation in the viewer.

It has been revealed that social advertisements are an important instrument for raising public awareness in the field of agriculture and related environmental issues. They perform not only an informational but also an educational and motivational function.

As for the coding scheme, it reflects the multilayered structure of the analysis of environmental social advertisements. This structure is based on four main categories, thematic, content based, aesthetic technical and evaluative. Each of these defines a specific aspect that influences the content, perception and effectiveness of the message.

The presented scheme forms a powerful analytical framework that makes it possible to evaluate environmental media content, in this case social advertising, from both a substantive and a social perspective.

Although agro themed social advertisements are broadcast on the Public Broadcaster with varying intensity, the existing efforts remain insufficient both for the development of this field and for overcoming ecological and environmental challenges. An important recommendation is to intensify activities in this direction, which should be expressed in more frequent broadcasting of prosocial videos on issues relevant to this sphere.

The research also established that the effectiveness of the message depends on the depth of elaboration of the topic, the accuracy with which audio visual forms are selected and the emotional impact that ultimately creates real opportunities for raising awareness and changing behavior.

In order to improve the quality of content, it is necessary for the media, in this case the First Channel of the Public Broadcaster, not only to provide free airtime but also to increase its interest and motivation in relation to the creation of social advertising.

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