



Negative representation of ethnic Armenians in the Georgian print press (the Asaval-Dasavali; Liberali; the Kviris-Kronika) and online publications (Netgazeti) following amendments to the civic code.

A Research project

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore negative representation of the Armenians in Georgian media, namely in the print (weekly newspapers the Kviris-Kronika and the Asaval-Dasavali; weekly magazine Liberali) and online publication (Netgazeti) as well as the amendments to the civic code. The second largest minority group (248, 929) still have problems with integration. Encouragement of stereotypical thinking, publishing hate speech and xenophobic remarks in the media make the integration process even slower.

Armenia and Georgia have had a long historical relationship. Due to a number of problematic issues, hidden rivalry exists between the neighbouring countries, which apparently have affected the media's attitude as well.

Political processes taking place in Georgia also have a big influence on the attitude of the Armenians. The amendments to the civic code of Georgia (2011, July 5) are the best example of this.

To explore the context of the research topic deeper, different chapters will provide some information about the historical context of the Armenian-Georgian relationship.

The methodological approach applies content analysis. It is the main method used in the research process investigating the negative representation of the Armenians in the above-mentioned publications. The material includes primary and secondary sources.

The key findings showed that Georgian print publications do not follow journalistic standards when writing news about the Armenian minority. They often use xenophobic and discriminatory language against this ethnic group. Tolerance and acceptance of differences is a major problem for such media publications.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Georgia is a multi-ethnic country made up of several distinct groups. Ethnic minorities still have some problems affecting their integration into Georgian society. The stereotyping of different ethnic groups have deep roots going back long before Georgia's independence. This remains a major obstacle to the integration process (Minority Rights Group International, 2009).

According to the data of the most recent (2002) National Census: "The largest minority community in Georgia is Azeri (284, 761), followed by Armenians (248, 929). The Russian community numbered 67,671. There are also smaller communities of Abkhazs, Assyrians, Greeks, Jews, Kists/Chechens, Kurds, Ossetians, Roma, Ukrainians, and Yezidis" (Minority Rights Group international, 2009, p.1). But as a range of research shows, Armenians face the most discrimination (Internews Georgia's 2nd Quarterly report, 2011).

It must be also mentioned that the vast majority of the Georgian population (83.9 %) belongs to the Georgian Orthodox Church, followed by Muslim- 9.9%, Armenian Apostolic 3.9% and Catholic 0.8% (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2011).

On July 5, 2011 amendments were made to the Georgian civic code affecting the legal status of non-Georgian Orthodox religious organisations. According to which, all religious groups in Georgia are now allowed to be registered as legal entities in their own right. As the Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia and one of the initiators of acceptance of the amendments, Giga Bokeria explained, the amendments, gives these groups the chance to be registered as legally recognised religious organisations. This means: such groups can now buy property, build new churches or directly own (privatize) already existing churches (Bregvadze, 2011).

Before the amendment, in order to receive a legal status, religious groups, other than the Georgian Orthodox Church (whose special role and status is recognised by the 2002 concordant with the state), had to be registered as a non-commercial entity of private law. Such form of

registration, however, triggered protests from some religious minorities, who argued that this rule was depriving them of the privilege of being formally recognized as religions in Georgia (Civil Georgia, 2011a).

The Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church protested against the quick adaptation of the amendments without any consultation with the church and public. He urged the president Saakashvili, to execute his right of veto and to abolish the amendments. The issue led to widespread demonstrations (Latatia, 2011a).

To be more aware of the context of the latest tension it must be mentioned that shortly before the parliament of Georgia voted for the amendments in the regulations governing religious minorities, the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church - Karekin II visited Georgia. As the Georgian media reported, he urged the Georgian President to pass the amendments. The action was perceived by most Orthodox people as a sign of the president of Georgia's willingness to bow to pressure from the Armenian Church leader. Georgian people, opposition leaders and the church protested against the amendments in the streets of the country. Therefore the protest could also be understood in an anti-government context.

One month before the amendments were passed, the highly-respected director of the Rustaveli Theatre in Georgia, Robert Sturua, mentioned in one of his interviews that he considered the Georgian President to be an ethnic Armenian. He also stated that he has no desire to have a president belonging to any other ethnic group other than Georgian. Some days later the Minister of Culture of Georgia, Nika Rurua dismissed Sturua from his position for what he perceived to be a xenophobic pronouncement (Nodia, 2011).

Expressions from other members of the Georgian elite show that Sturua is not an exceptional case. There are also other cases of xenophobia by the leadership of Georgia:

“Are we black?! Then why we do behave like wild people?” This quote from a speech by the Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili drew widespread criticism from the Georgian media (Batumelebi, 2011).

Research objectives:

- Defining negative media representations of Armenians in Georgian media, after the amendments to the civic code.
- Analysing Georgian online (Netgazeti) and print publications (the Asaval-Dasavali; the Kviris-Kronika; Liberali) and their approach to publishing news about Armenians during this period.
- Making comparative analysis of the research results of the Kviris-Kronika; Netgazeti; the Asaval-Dasavali and Liberali.

The main research question is: Negative representations of ethnic Armenians in the Georgian print press (the Asaval-Dasavali; Liberali; the Kviris-Kronika) and online publications (Netgazeti) following amendments to the civic code.

Chapter 2 Literature review

Ethnic Minorities, including Armenians, often have difficulties accessing information from the Georgian media, because news is not broadcast in their native languages. Only the public broadcaster has some programs in other languages than Georgian but the time allocated to these programmes is very limited. The situation is no better in the print media. Only two minority publications are supported by the government: The Armenian-language newspaper “Vrastan”, of which frequency of publication is too low and Russian-language newspaper- “Svobodnaian Gruzia” (Minority Rights Group international, 2009).

In additions, Georgian media outlets in most cases are reluctant to cover issues related to ethnic minorities. Different research results clearly indicate there is a lack of articles concerning minority issues in the media. In most cases they become the subjects of media interest only in the context of different political situations in the country. Journalist- Nana Sajaia monitored coverage of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities in the Georgian media in May-July, 2011. In the conclusion she argues: "... Results show that the ethnic, religious and sexual minorities do not enjoy equal access to the media, their voices are not heard. This demonstrates that the Georgian media fails to fulfil one of its fundamental missions: to give a voice to the voiceless" (Sajaia, 2011, p.15).

In November 1992, the Commission of Radio and Television Policy in the United States and in the republics of the former Soviet Union agreed that "a large audience should receive information on minority issues."

It is critical to cover minority issues on the stations with the largest audiences, in order to assist both minorities and their relations to the larger system and the major group's comprehension of ethnic minorities. From the latter should spring tolerance, a new understanding of and empathy for minority group's perspectives (Levo-Henriksson, 2007, p.23).

But the problem of media tolerance still exists in Georgia. There is no law or charter regulating coverage of ethnic minorities. That is why journalists of "tolerance" media organizations try to follow universally recognized media standards or recommendations about coverage of minorities.

According to two main conclusions of Internews Georgia's monitoring report: (Monitoring of media coverage; Ethnic, Religious and Sexual Minorities in Georgian Printed Media, 1 September 2011 – 30 November 2011)

- *An interest of the Georgian printed media towards issues related to sexual and ethnic minorities are mainly determined by the amount of scandal contained in the topic;*

- *Political processes influence considerably editorial policy, which in turn affect frequency of coverage on minorities; (Internews Georgia's 2nd Quarterly report, 2011, p.6).*

Results also indicated that Armenians were the most represented ethnic minority group in the Georgian print media, but usually in negative context. "Armenian" still remains the most frequently used swear word in certain Georgian printed media outlets such as: newspapers the Alia, the Kviris-Kronika and the Asaval-Dasavali" (Internews Georgia's 2nd Quarterly report, 2011, p.17).

Chris Frost argues: "If democracy and free expression rests on the third leg of equality in order to deliver civil rights to all in our protection of natural rights, journalists should be doing all they can to prevent insensitive and discriminatory reporting" (Frost, 2011, p.142).

There has been only one study based on how media covers the amendments to the civic code (Basilaia, 2011). This event is a good example of what has been discussed above – that the media covers the issue of ethnic minorities when only important political processes take place around them. But the coverage did not follow the universally recognized journalist standards (Robakidze, 2011b). According research conducted by Merab Basailaia, the media violated ethical regulations during this period. More specifically, it violated article 7 of the Georgian Charter (Civic Development Institute, 2009) (See Appendix 1). There were cases of using hate and xenophobic speech by the journalists of several Georgian broadcast channels and print outlets including the publications which will be analysed by this research.

"There is also low level of the professionalism and awareness of minority issues among journalists resulting in inadequate coverage of minority-related problems and news and this contributes to the creation of stereotypes about ethnic minorities" (Public Movement "Multinational Georgia", 2007, p.11).

So minorities in Georgia do not find adequate representation in mainstream media; neither do they have mediated space-minority media of their own, in which they could exchange opinions

in their native language. The above-mentioned publications are exception in this respect. The normative function of the media as a public sphere is therefore undone. Jurgen Habermas defined this function as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens” (Siapera, 2010, p.97).

Chapter 3 Historical background of the study

3.1 Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the ethnic composition of Georgia changed. In the early 1990s, the first elected president of Georgia Zviad Gamsaxurdia openly declared his negative attitude towards ethnic minorities (Freedom House Europe & United Nations Association, 2007-2008). Zviad Gamsaxurdia is evaluated as a radical nationalist as his slogans - “Georgia only for Georgians” caused the “invisible” oppression of minorities (Komaxia, 2008, p.44). To avoid problems many members of these ethnic minorities in Georgia decided to change their surnames to Georgian surnames; most of them were Ossetians. It is said that many representatives of ethnic minorities had lost their jobs and were humiliated by the Georgians (Maisuradze, 2009).

Because of that attitude conflict firstly flared up in the autonomous Republic of South Ossetia (1990-91) and later in Abkhazia (1993-94). Those territories became breakaway regions in Georgia and were recognized by four countries as independent states after the Russian-Georgian war (2008). Nowadays they are de facto Russian-controlled areas.

There are a range of assessments of the situation in Caucasia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Former Deputy Secretary of State for the United States, Strobe Talbott, said in a speech in Bucharest in 1998:

We can all say good riddance to Marxist-Leninist dictatorship, to the Iron curtain and to the self-styled geniuses who ruled by brute force and primal fear. But the collapse of these modern

evils has, in many parts of the post-communist world, been accompanied by the eruption of medieval struggles over blood and culture. From Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, and Kosovo in the Balkans to Chechnya, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nvagovo-Karabakh in the Caucasus, more Europeans have died violently in the last five years than in the previous 45 (Barrington, 2006, p. 250).

He also compared Georgian nationalism with US nationalism. From his point of view those types of nationalism are very different but the “civic” form of nationalism is more superior (Barrington, 2006).

Current Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia, Giga Bokeria also discussed nationalism in Georgia. In one of his interviews he stated that it is important to underline that civic nationalism is a healthy thing, but ethnic nationalism is a big sickness (Bregvadze, 2011).

3.2 Armenians in Georgia

In 1989, Armenians were the largest ethnic minority group in Georgia. But in the 1990s, as a result of rising nationalism and migration, the number of Armenians decreased (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Association of Georgia, 2003).

Armenian communities are spread out in all regions of Georgia nowadays but Georgia’s second largest minority constitutes a majority in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti. After Georgia won its independence, Javakheti became more dependent on bordering Russia in socio-economic terms and on Armenia in cultural terms. The territory was considered as “potential hot-spot” region in the Caucasus likely to seek independence (Lohm, 2007).

The first settlement of Armenians in Javakheti was established in the 19th century after the Russian- Ottoman war, when Russia ejected the Ottomans from the South-West Caucasia. Ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population took place; the territory was settled by the Armenians, migrating from the Ottoman Empire. “Empire-driven policy aimed to settle the

Christian Armenians at the border of the Ottoman Empire, since they were enjoying the status of a reliable ally in contrast to the Muslim population” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Association of Georgia, 2003, p.5).

3.3 Religion and Culture

Armenians’ good relationship with Russia is one of the causes of what is perceived to be the negative attitude of Georgians towards the Armenians (Noble et al. (2008)). But there are other reasons for tension between these two nations: culture and religion.

Religious disputes between Armenians and Georgians began in AD 609 when the Armenians chose a different form of Christian expression:

At the Council of Dvin in 506, the Georgians, Armenians and Albanians accepted the Henoticon of Zeno (476-91), which attempted to set aside the divisive terms of the Caledonian council, but in 609, at the time of Catholicos Kirion I (ca. 614) the Georgians rejected their adherence to the non-Caledonian Christology(which they formerly accepted under the pressure of political exigency, since they were under treat from the Persians, and king Vakhtang Gorgasali (ac. 52/3) tried all means at his disposal to show loyalty to the Byzantine Emperor.), accordingly accepting the Henoticon in 482 (McGukin, 2011, p.267).

Since then, the religious issue has been the primary source of tension between the two nations. The Georgians adopted negative attitude towards anti-Caledonian Christology and disputes continued for years (McGuckin, 2011). This became a root cause for poor Georgian-Armenian relations. (That will be discussed later)

Cultural issues are also a significant basis of disputes. There are issues surrounding the ownership of several architectural and cultural artefacts which have remained unresolved for centuries (Komaxia, 2008).

3.4 Amendments to the civic code of Georgia

Disputes between Georgia's Orthodox Church and Armenia's Apostolic Church have become more apparent since the amendments to the civic code of Georgia were enacted, according to which religious groups in Georgia can register as legal entities of public law and are subjects to less restriction by the Government (Embassy of Georgia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, n.d) (See appendix 2)

The situation is as follows: religious groups in Georgia supported the changes. The head of the Evangelistic Baptists Church in Georgia, Rusudan Gociridze, said she felt that with the new status her church became a part of Georgian society. She also stated that the Georgian population now recognizes the Baptists' participation in the process of building Georgian society.

The issue was also discussed by the spokeswoman of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Mariam Arkelova. According to her, before the amendments to the code their church found it difficult to operate properly in Georgia and added it was unfair to make a religious organization pay the same duties as private entity of public law, to say the least. Before this status they did not even have a bank account and they even had difficulties when paying telephone bills (Kupreishvili, 2011).

But the amendments polarised opinions between politicians and the wider public. It also resulted into the first open disagreement between the Georgian authorities and the Georgian Orthodox Church. The Patriarch of Georgia wanted the Government to veto these amendments before it would be discussed widely, but his wish was not taken into account (Netgazeti, 2011a).

According to the opinions of the members of the Georgian Church, the amendments were violating the Concordat – a special constitutional agreement between the government and the Orthodox Church. Until this agreement ceases to exist, the government is not allowed to make any decision about religious issues without church's consent. The Orthodox church of Georgia was therefore disappointed it was not asked to participate in the decision-making process in the drafting of the amendments. Moreover, the opinion and request of the Patriarch of Georgia, Ilia II was completely ignored.

The Georgian clergy appear to think that these amendments are dangerous for Georgia for one main reason: now other religious groups will have ambitions to get back disputed churches, or to build new churches in their own legal property. Before amendments to the civic code, religious groups needed special permissions to do so. But nowadays other religious organisations have opportunities to reach out to the Georgian population (Netgazeti, 2011b).

Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia, Giga Bokeria, tried to clarify the meaning of these amendments. He said in one of his interviews, that if religious organizations can now register as legal entities of public law, it does not mean that for example, the Armenians can get the disputed churches automatically and that “our church will lose its belongings”. As he explained, each religious group has a right to own property despite these amendments as they could register as non-commercial organizations and they could enjoy all the opportunities the other organizations have in Georgia. From Bokeria’s point of view every person has the right to own property, even non-registered organizations in Georgia and these amendments will change nothing in this case (Bregvadze, 2011).

Chapter 4 Armenians in the Georgian media

4. 1 Karekin II in Georgia and the issue of property

On July 10, 2011 the head of the Armenian Apostolic church, Karekin II visited Georgia. During the meeting with the Patriarch of Georgia, he listed monuments he considered to be Armenian, asked to register them (Armenian churches) as legal entities of public law and to return Armenian churches situated on Georgian territory. The head of the Georgian church responded to these demands in a way that could be interpreted as confrontational: “Whatever status Georgian churches have in Armenia, the same status will Armenian churches have in Georgia” (Papaskiri, 2011). The Georgian Patriarch emphasised there are a lot of Georgian churches in Armenia needing reconstruction and added these monuments are in danger of ruin.

Ilia II also raised the issue of commissions. He demanded the setting up of independent commissions to research and verify the ownership of churches which are the subject of disputes (Papaskiri, 2011).

After this meeting the heads of the Armenian and Georgian churches released a communiqué but it has not been signed by both countries yet. According to this document it is the beginning of a new stage in the relationship between the Armenian and Georgian churches, which is defined by the equal, legal status in public law of Georgian churches in Armenia and for Armenian churches in Georgia.

An expert in Historical Science, Dr Guram Margulia, cannot explain Armenian concerns on mentioned churches. He said, all these churches were built by Georgians between the 14th and 19th centuries (Kaxadze, 2011).

But the head of Georgia's Tolerance Centre, Public Defender Office – Beka Mindiashvili, has a different view. According to him, all of these monuments originally belonged to Armenians but the Georgian Church does not want to return them to their rightful owner. He also stated that there are Georgian Churches in the territory of Armenia, but with a difference: there are no Georgian communities in the area where churches are situated (B. Mindiashvili, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

4.2 Hate speech and discrimination in the Georgian media

Despite Georgia being a multi-ethnic country, difficulties with tolerance to minorities still exist. The Georgian media can play an integral role in this case because it has a big influence on the population and can improve the existing situation by raising public awareness (Internews Georgia's 2nd Quarterly report, 2011). However, according to the research mentioned at the beginning; the media itself uses hate and discrimination speech against minorities.

The media expert Zviad Koridze explains the situation by the stereotypes of the Armenians in Georgia. The Georgians consider this ethnic group an enemy who is seeking to “steal” their national values such as culture and history. Many Georgians believe the Armenians strive to destroy Georgia, because they are “agents” of Russia. As Koridze said Georgia found an equal enemy in the form of Armenians and has tried to draw a picture where all the Georgian weaknesses are their fault. He thinks that the best solution would be to launch a serious scientific research seeking the roots of the problem: Why are the Armenians enemies of Georgia? (Z. Koridze, personal communication, January 10, 2011)

A member of the National Minorities’ Council and the representative of the organization- “European-Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, Slava Mejdoyan, said the problem became more obvious in July, 2011, when the amendments were made to the civic code of Georgia. He estimated the Georgian media used hate and discriminatory speech against minorities in 90% of the cases, especially against the Armenians (Mecxarishvili, 2011).

Following are the examples of the Georgian media reporting the amendments to the civic code:

“If it becomes possible for all sects to register as religion organizations, Georgia will be destroyed.”

“Karekin II and Armenians are the enemies of Georgia, they are ruled by Russia, they are against Georgia.”

“Why do Armenians have priority in our country? Because our President is one of them...”
(Basilaia, 2011, p.5).

As Zviad Koridze mentioned such claims were pretty common in Georgian newspapers prior to the amendments but the political context in Georgia made the issue more visible (Z. Koridze, personal communication, January 10, 2011).

Slava Mejdoyani thinks that the Georgian government must follow European practice by criminalizing the use of such expressions against ethnic minorities. According to his opinion, the self-regulation mechanisms of the media are not enough in such cases. Mejdoyan thinks both must work: state regulation plus self-regulation because the Government's intervention without a mechanism of self-regulation could be perceived as a rude intervention and restriction of the freedom of speech (Mecxarishvili, 2011).

The Public Defender of Georgia, Giorgi Tugushi thinks that Georgia is not ready to criminalize the use of discriminatory, insulting and xenophobic terminology against ethnic minorities. He believes there is a high level of the freedom of expression in Georgia guaranteed by legislation and possible criminalization may lead to problems of other kind.

As Giorgi Tugushi mentioned in the interview, the Georgian media ignored the amendments itself during the coverage of the July events. It was said in almost every article, that Georgia will lose everything due to the amendments but there were no arguments or deep analysis presented as to why the predictions have been so dramatic.

He also criticized journalists who were more aggressive against the ethnic minorities. As he said everyone has a freedom of expression but the Georgian media went beyond these boundaries. He thinks journalists seriously violated the European Convention of Human Rights, currently the second part of article 10 (Netgazeti, 2011c) (See Appendix 3).

Contrary to Georgia, many countries criminalize the use of hate speech. One example is the UK Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006. Hatred against persons on racial or religious grounds is criminalized by this law (Racial and Religious Hatred Act of UK, 2006) (See Appendix 4).

Helen Darbshire explains that the use of hate speech by the media is a big problem for ethnic minorities. "It is also a very difficult issue for those who want to promote the right to media freedom and at the same time to protect members of minority groups from incitement to hatred" (Cahn, 2002, p.57).

Chapter 5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The research will be based on qualitative research methods, because the main research question of the project requires content-analysis of the relevant articles published in the Georgian media. The project aims to analyse cases of suspected hate speech and discrimination of ethnic minorities. A quantitative analysis which can sometimes be too narrow, especially for contextual media research, may prove to be inappropriate here. The main limitation of such a method is that it can be too specific when elements which cannot be quantified are more important (Berger, 2000).

Research will be based on secondary (using secondary sources) and primary research, (content analysis and interviews) to answer the main question of the project.

5.2 Content analysis

There are different methods of qualitative analysis that are widely used by text researchers. For example, discourse, normative and critical analyses are often used by media research. But these methods are more specific. They are concentrated on one main issue of the texts and research is based only around it. Unlike these methods, "all message characteristics are available to content analysis." It is the most widely used method (Neuendorf, 2002).

Berenson defines content analysis as: "A research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Krippendorff, 1984, p.21).

Wimmer and Domenic identified 5 main purposes of content analysis:

- *Describing patterns or trends in media portrayals;*

- *Testing hypotheses about the politics or aims of media procedures;*
- *Comparing media content with the real world;*
- *Assessing the representation of particular groups in society*
- *Drawing inferences about media effect (Gunter, 2000, p. 61).*

These purposes are close to the project objectives of identifying more easily the relevant issues concerning the Georgian media. That is one of the reasons for opting for this research method.

After formulating the research questions of the research, it is necessary to analyse media texts to find information about the coverage of the ethnic minorities in the Georgian media. The focus will be on sampling specific media articles because it is one of the most important stages of the research.

Being aware that the print media uses hate and xenophobic speech against minorities often, the decision was made to conduct the research of the articles published in the two of the most popular Georgian weekly newspapers (the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris –Kronika) and one magazine (Liberali), which is regarded as one of the most reliable publications when it comes to the coverage of minority issues. In addition, one online newspaper (Netgazeti) was among the samples. Focusing on one medium only would have been much easier but in that case, publications better covering this issue would have been ignored (Gillespie & Toynbee, 2006).

The research period is 1 month: July 5 - August 5; the amendments were made on July 5. Analysis will be based on the criteria which will be mentioned below. Thirty-two articles will be analysed from the Asaval-Dasavali (32 interviews); Netgazeti (25 articles); Liberali (5 stories); the Kviris- Kronika (15 interviews).

Content analysis is a good way to find material, including from the past, especially in the case of newspapers, because their complete archives are always available. It is also an inexpensive method because the information is free (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005).

But the approach is not without any limitations either. Choosing samples is a difficult task; in addition, one sample cannot give the full picture of media attitudes. That is why a variety of the media outlets has been selected (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005).

5.3 Interviews (Primary research)

The results of content analysis will be checked with competent people having a thorough knowledge and appropriate experience in this field. The research is based on the interviews with Zviad Koridze - Media Expert; Beka Mindiashvili - The head of the Tolerance Centre in Georgia, Public Defender Office; Nana Sajaia- leading journalist of Liberali.

These interviews will be helpful to analyse the issue in depth. It must also be mentioned that all the disadvantages of the interview method were taken into account. For example, people do not always tell the truth and remember things accurately. They do not always have useful information and sometimes tell you what they think you want hear. The interviewer should account for all these potential pitfalls (Berger, 2000). Therefore the interviews have been prepared in advance to minimise the potential limitations of the chosen research method.

This interview method relies on a semi-structured approach. The questions are open-ended, which makes the answers more effective (Berger, 2000). But there were difficulties with planned interviews with the editors and journalists of the above-mentioned publications; upon hearing what the title of the research was the editors of the Asaval-Dassavali and the Kviris-Kronika refused to comment on the issue. The reasons for such responses may be explained by the results of previous research. According to the recent research conducted by the Internews-Georgia, in 2011, the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris- Kronika were publications using hate speech against ethnic minorities more often than others (Ediberidze, 2011). Thus, the original approach to this

study was changed due to the reluctance of the two editors. There were also difficulties with interviewing the editor of Netgazeti.

5.4 Using Secondary Sources

Before the completion of the primary research, secondary source data was used. This includes previous media research and reports, (Robson, 2007, Collins, 2010) which helped me a great deal to gather very important information about the topic of the research.

The main advantage of secondary data - to collect useful information quickly worked well in my case (Collins, 2010). Quoting the secondary sources supportive arguments were identified but the most problematic issue with this method was accuracy. You never know how accurate the secondary data is (Kumar, 2010).

The documentary sources, which is one of the types of secondary sources, were also used in the research. It includes: academic books, magazines, newspapers, online information, reports, etc. (Collins, 2010)

5.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are important elements of the research. It was explained to all the respondents where their quotes would be used. They were made aware of the objectives and goals of this project. For more accuracy these interviews were recorded and then accurately transcribed to a Microsoft Word document. Nothing was changed in the context of these interviews.

Quotes, dates and titles of the articles, which are used for content analysis, are accurate. All the information taken from the secondary data are referenced.

Chapter 6 Research Criteria

At a glance none of the researched publications had their own self-regulation mechanisms when covering news about ethnic minorities. Also no anti-discrimination law exists in Georgia. So only the self-regulatory mechanism - the Journalistic Ethics Charter was there when the amendments were made to the civic code (Civil Development Institute, 2009) (See Appendix 2). The charter was launched with the support of European experts. It was signed by 140 Georgian journalists but it does not work in reality. It applies only to those journalists and media organizations who signed the charter; who do make fewer mistakes during the coverage of such sensitive issues as they are more responsible professionals so this regulation mechanism has limited influence (Robakidze, 2011a).

This project's criteria will be based on universal media-standards of broadcasting diversities:

- Journalists should not support the formation of fear of difference, aggressive and xenophobic attitudes.
- When a journalist writes an article on an ethnic or other minority group, it is necessary to take the interview from representatives of that group, thus he represents them not as "objects" but "subjects".
- The group's view on any other group must not be based on stereotypes. But sometimes these stereotypes contain elements of truth. The duty of a journalist is to represent the difference between stereotypical conception and the true picture.
- When reporting events it is necessary to explain to the audience the issue, or problem, or a happened context. There is no ethnic conflict which started without reason. As a rule, the conflict has a long prehistory, and the interpretation of the past by can be very different.
- A journalist has no right to repeat xenophobic and violent expressions of any politician, public or religious figure, or insulting words towards other minorities. In such times the paraphrase of quote is necessary and to note that these expressions are insults to the representatives of minorities.

- The journalist should try to interview people who do not share the views of the majority (Robakidze, 2011b).

Cases of publishing hate speech and xenophobic remarks; the encouragement of stereotyping thinking by the journalists of the researched publications will be analysed according to these definitions:

Definition of hate speech:

“Hate speech is a humiliating form of communication used against a private individual or a group of people based on their identity, ethnic difference, religious conviction and sexual orientation” (Internews Georgia’s 2nd Quarterly report, 2011, p.4).

Definition of xenophobia:

“Xenophobia means hostility toward strangers and all that is foreign. But xenophobia can also mean “hatred of strangers” as it is in the case with the German word used as synonym to xenophobia- “Fremdenfeindlichkeit” (Kotthoff&Moutsios, 2007, p.183).

Definition of a stereotype:

“A stereotype can be defined as a standardized mental picture that is held on in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment” (Al-Rodhan, 2006, pp. 21-22).

Chapter 7 Results of content analysis

7.1 The Asaval-Dasavali

The Asaval-Dasavali is one of the most circulated newspapers in Georgia. 20 000 copies of this publication are sold immediately as soon as they appear on the first day of the week. The newspaper is one of the two best-selling of the Georgian print publications. Based on its sales figures experts estimate that about 40 000 people read the Asaval-Dasavali each week (Robakidze, 2011c). For a country with a population of 4.6 million of which 55% are newspaper readers, it seems a good result.

But the newspaper also vies for first position in the ratings of the most xenophobic and discriminatory newspapers (Multinational Georgia, 2011). According to the press monitoring project which was established by Internews Georgia in 2011, the Asaval-Dasavali is “one of the newspapers that often publishes homophobic and xenophobic statements” (Media.ge, 2012). The Asavad- Dasavali refuted these accusations:

“If you think and speak out that a gay parade must not be allowed in Georgia and that faggots wearing lipstick and earrings must not march nude on Rustavi Avenue, does it mean you are a homophobe speaking hate speech?” (Media.ge, 2012).

But this quote is also example of xenophobic attitude against sexual minorities because underlined words expresses hatred against them (See definition of xenophobia, p. 24).

7.2 Results of content analysis – the Asaval-Dasavali

It was easy to get the archive of the newspaper for content analysis but there were a lot of difficulties as well. It was almost impossible to understand the topic of the articles from the headlines alone. For example, despite some interviews about the recent political situation in Georgia journalists asked questions related to the amendments to the civic code. So there was no choice but to read all the articles in the publication.

This case also suggests that the two issues: the political situation in Georgia and religion cannot be separated. The controversy around the amendments to the civic code of Georgia serves as a proof. This issue was considered in the context of different political situations in the country (That will be discussed later).

During the research period - July 5 to August 5 (2011) 32 interviews were published about Armenians in the context of the amendments in the Asaval-Dasavali. The sources of those interviews were only people who were against the amendments and appear to have negative, aggressive attitudes against Armenians. This ethnic group is represented as “objects” rather than “subjects” of the material, because none of these interviews includes the opinions of Armenians, as defined for the criteria of this research (See pp. 23-24). In this respect the balance is obviously lost (Frost, 2011). It must be also mentioned that 50% of the sources are representatives of the social and political elite seen as having a major influence on Georgian society.

In addition, quotes given below can be considered as hate speech used by the respondents of the Asaval-Dasavali because they include offensive words against Armenians, based on their ethnic difference (See research criteria p. 24) (Internews Georgia’s 2nd Quarterly report, 2011):

“It is an insult to Christianity, that the guards of the grave of the Christ are Armenian priests” (Xubua, 2011a)

“Stepanian is a typical Armenian! Stupid and idiotic!” (Xubua, 2011b)

The second quote can be considered as xenophobic attitude against Armenians because these words: “stupid and idiotic” expresses the respondent’s hatred against this nation (See definition of xenophobia p.24). The use of the word “typical” suggests the respondent considers all Armenians “stupid and idiotic.”

The standardized mental picture about Armenians existing in Georgia was encouraged by the Asaval-Dasavali (See research criteria p.24). The quote mentioned below includes oversimplified opinions and prejudicial attitudes against this ethnic group (Al-Rodhan, 2006).

“From the Armenians point of view, Shota Rustaveli is Armenian; the Georgian alphabet was created by an Armenians as well. Alaverdi was built by the Armenians and of course they are the owners of Tbilisi. All of these must be finished! The Armenians do not like the Georgians and the Georgians do not like Armenians. This is a fact” (Mamacashvili, 2011).

This is also an example of cultural stereotyping which exists among the Georgians about the Armenians. This ethnic group is considered to be the “enemy” of Georgia who seeking “to steal” Georgian history, territories and all the national values. One of the respondents Beka Mindiashvili thinks that the Georgian media supports such stereotypes by circulating the message that Armenians are supposedly trying to “steal” Georgian culture. According to him, majority of the articles say Armenians have a desire and aim to get back 600 churches in Georgia. But in fact only six churches are the subject of disputes. He extensively spoke about a case:

Last year on the front page of the New Year’s publication of one newspaper there was a picture of an Armenian with the title – “SOS! Armenians try to take away our traditional food.” Can you imagine how important this Anti-Armenian issue is for some people in Georgia, that the most popular newspaper decided to put this issue on the front page during New Year (B. Mindiashvili, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

Despite the cultural stereotypes, Armenians are considered as minor citizens enjoying few rights in Georgia. Journalists encourage the aggression between these nations. Their sources instigate Georgian people to raise protest:

“Why has the Georgian Government adopted these amendments so quickly? People are saying they did it for the Armenian Church; Karekein II visited Georgia before these amendments” (Asatiani, 2011).

“One million people are not enough; two million people must go out to defend our church” (Mamacashvili, 2011).

“We must protect our nation and religion! We must realise the future results of these amendments! Apocalypse is near!” (Xubua, 2011c).

One of the main problems that appeared during this research is that the amendments itself were not clarified. Journalists have been writing only about the “dangers” this action implies; however, their fear seems to be groundless as these “dangers” are not based on facts of any kind. This issue was used for discussing other topics, having nothing common with amendments, the newspaper was criticising the actions of the Georgian president and the most common word for censuring him was – Armenian.

“I do not think that Armenians would be happy to have a Georgian president” (Xubua, 2011b).

There was lack of factual articles in the Asval-Dasvali which was important when writing about such a problematic issue. The public did not have the opportunity to get comprehensive coverage of the topic following only interviews and opinion. Universal standards of reporting diversity, which was defined earlier, were violated by this media outlet (Robakidze, 2011b). In the word of a journalist of the newspaper, Giorgi Mamacaashvili, the newspaper has its own ethical charter:

“We have our own ethic charter which is not written on the paper but borne by each of our journalist. Our newspaper is popular, sells well, people read it because we adhere to our main principle- write about everything that is true” (Robakidze, 2011c).

7.3 The Kviris-Kronika

The Kviris-Kronika is a weekly newspaper. Like the Asaval-Dasavali it is known as one of the most xenophobic print publication in Georgia (Ediberidze, 2011).

Despite the higher price for the Georgian market the Kviris-Kronika has a good circulation (Pirveli News, 2011a). These two newspapers are also similar in their style of story coverage – interviews are a favourite genre of the Kviris-Kronika too. During the research period 15 interviews were published about the issue of amendments to the civic code of Georgia in which there was not a single opinion of the people who do not share the attitudes of the majority. Sources and therefore, the reliability of information are the main problem of this publication too. The newspaper features the Armenians as “objects” rather than “subjects”, i.e. people who have certain rights in Georgia (See research criteria pp. 23-24).

During the content analysis, it was difficult to find the articles about the clarification of the amendments. In most cases they have been discussed in the context of different issues having nothing in common with this one.

There were also cases of using hate speech against Armenians by the respondents of the newspaper. The quotes below are good example of hate speech used by the newspaper:

“I know that you were in Batumi. What is happening in Adjara? It is filled by the „ravens“? (Journalist means Armenians with the use of the word – *raven*- because most Armenians are dark-complexioned people) (Chubinidze, 2011a)

“Georgian and Armenian churches must not be given equal rights. If they are, the Armenians will destroy our country. You see how disrespectfully and rudely this person (Karekin II) met our patriarch. If there are a hierarchy with high and low positions, how can Georgian and Armenian churches have the same status? They have more money, more parishes and influence than the Georgian church. With this status they will begin to destroy our country. It is not the first attempt of theirs” (Samxaradze, 2011).

Underlined words bear abusive attitude against Armenians which means they can be considered as hate speech (See research criteria p.24). But the second quote is also a good example of a cultural stereotyping which was already discussed in the case of the Asaval-Dasavali. Media expert Zviad Koridze also talked about such a standardized mental picture existing among Georgians about the Armenians:

.....The Georgian media tries to show that Armenians are trying to take good positions in the Georgian Government to do the anti-Georgian job; that all Armenians who live in Georgia and are the citizens of this country are trying to destroy Georgia and of course it is not true. This attitude is the result of stereotypes again. Maybe there is one Armenian, who thinks that Georgia must not exist or it must become the part of Armenia, but not all the Armenians think so. Unfortunately this issue has been reported differently in the Georgian media (Z. Koridze, personal communication, January 10, 2012).

This quote is also example of such stereotyping: “Our ‘neighbouring’ nation always tries to seize our territories. Everything finished between us in 506, when they chose a different type of Christianity” (Chubinidze, 2011a).

Journalists were writing stories unprepared, with a lack of knowledge about the issue as well. In most articles Karekin II is called the patriarch of Armenians but in actually he is a bishop of the Armenian Church.

Besides, they are not explaining the problem and context of the issue. They rely only on their imaginations and provide predictions of people who are not qualified enough to comment on the controversy. The main point of every article was that, the amendments were adopted because Karekin II, who has a big influence on the Georgian president, willed so. However, no evidence has been found to prove such claims. A clear example of this is an interview with Shalva Natelashvili, leader of an opposition party in Georgia.

Question: “Mr. Shalva you mentioned our church and anti-Georgian law. What happened actually? Did Saakashvili adopt these amendments by the order of Karekin II?”

The answer:

“This is the result of an obligation taken by the president Saakashvili in 1993-1995 before American Government. During these years Saakashvili was financed by an Armenian magnate, which helped him to make contacts in the US Congress. That is why different sects were dragged into Georgia” (Chubinidze, 2011b).

7.4 Netgazeti

Netgazeti is an online newspaper, which is regarded as an objective publication. In 2011, this newspaper was lauded by the public defender of Georgia as a “defender of tolerance” (Pirweli News, 2011b). As one of the respondents, Beka Mindiashvili argued, Netgazeti is the only newspaper which covered the amendments to the civic code of Georgia objectively (B. Mindiashvili, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

During the targeted period of the research 25 articles were written in Netgazeti and most of them were analytical. There were days when several different stories were published about this issue. For example, on July 5 alone, when the amendments were finally adopted, Netgazeti published eight articles. Readers had opportunities to get the most updated information about this topic since the debates began between the Georgian Government and people.

The newspaper publishes different comment pieces and varieties of opinion from government representatives, members of parliament, opposition leaders who were for and against the law amendments, also the positions of Georgian church and heads of other religious groups were widely represented. Journalists were following the standards of impartiality, balance and accuracy by providing point of views of all the sides of the story (Potter, 2010).

Up to 5 pages of analytical articles appeared in Netgazeti from July 6 for example, article: *“Religious Minorities and Equality in Georgia”* was divided into four parts:

- changes in the civic code of Georgia (each point of the amendment and its meaning was discussed in this part supporting by quotes from lawyers);
- what these amendments meant for minorities (this part was provided opinions of the heads of different churches);
- The speech in which the amendments to the civic code of Georgia were passed and discrimination of some religious groups (first version of the amendments did not concern all religious groups in Georgia, but then the Georgian Government amended the draft. This part also provided the comments of the Georgian Patriarch who was against the quick adoption of the law without wide discussion. It must be also mentioned that according the Netgazeti the Patriarch was not against the amendments itself.); the disagreement was between the Georgian church and Government (Netgazeti, 2011f).

Unlike the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris-Kronika, the issue was assessed only by experts in this field, such as theologians and lawyers. Besides, this web newspaper was not focused on Armenians only, especially in a negative context; on the contrary, one of the main questions asked by it was why the focus was only on the Armenian Church? (Netgazeti, 2011d).

Two interviews with Slava Mejdoian, the member of the National minorities Council and the representative of the organization- “European-Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy” (Netgazeti, 2011d) and Arnold Stefanian, the head of the movement- “Multinational Georgia” (Netgazeti, 2011e) were published in Netgazeti. They were talking about the problems of anti-Armenian sentiments in Georgia.

In Netgazeti there were no instances of hate or xenophobic speech used by the journalists or their sources, as defined for the criteria of this research (See pp.23-24). Even the quotes of demonstrators against the amendments did not include it.

7.5 Liberald

Liberald is a weekly magazine, often covering the ethnic minorities. The magazine does not have any self-regulatory mechanism but journalists try to adhere to responsible journalism standards when writing news about minorities. Nana Sajaia, a journalist of this publication said the main principle in this case is: give a voice to the voiceless. Unlike other Georgian publications, Liberald consistently covers the social lives of ethnic minorities; while other publications pay attention to the issue only if some controversy arises (N. Sajaia, personal communication, January 11, 2012).

It was difficult to get the material for content analysis. The online archive of this publication is badly structured, which is why it is almost impossible to collect the articles by dates. Besides, the results of the research were significantly different from what was expected.

During the research period, Liberald published five stories about the amendments to the religious law; three of which were opinions and two were articles. Publication was more focused on other actual topics in Georgia:

Three issues were leading during this period:

- 1) Amendments to the civic code of Georgia
- 2) The case of arrested photojournalists accused of espionage. They “were accused of providing, to the detriment of Georgia’s interests, various sort of information through their professional activities to an organization” working for “one of the foreign country’s special services” but detainees rejected the accusations (Civil Georgia, 2011b).

- 3) Events of May 26: It was reported that peaceful demonstrations and opposition leaders gathered in the city centre of Tbilisi and were attacked by the police on the eve of Georgia's Independence Day (May 26). Some of them were arrested and a few of them died. Water cannon, rubber bullets and teargas were also used during this operation. The main reason of using the force by the government was that, the president was going to hold the military parade for Independence Day on that territory. The celebration went ahead, but without the Georgian Patriarch who did not attend that event. That is why the Georgian media supposes that the quick change to the civic code is the president's revenge on the Patriarch (Latatia, 2011b).

The issue of the amendments to the civic code of Georgia appeared in *Liberali* on July 11. The publication stated the main reason for making the amendments was the events of May 26. Only one article was written about this issue as a main topic, in which the author –Sopho Bukia spoke about a fight for influence between the Georgian Government and the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox church (Bukia, 2011).

The main source of the article was an anonymous person holding a position in the Georgian church. Based on this source the journalist claims that the parliament adopted the amendments in revenge of the Patriarch's action on May 26. This source tells how one of the law makers in the Georgian government- the Mayor of Tbilisi, Gigi Uglava, commented on the issue when visiting the Patriarchate of Georgia. "When we asked him why Georgian Government adopted these amendments so quickly, he answered: "Why did the patriarch not attend the military parade for Independence day?"(Bukia, 2011).

Besides, the journalist writes, the amendments are less important for religious groups as it does not give any special rights to them. The article clarifies that the amendments gives the representatives of religious minorities a right to buy new property or build new churches; however, it cannot solve the problems of the disputed churches. Therefore, the journalist concludes that the subject matter of the amendments is not the reason for the disagreement between the church and the government; the reason is Patriarch Ilia II's resentment at not being consulted before making the amendments. The article ends with the following statement: "The

reason for disputes between the church and the government is not a religion issues. It is a fight for influence” (Bukia, 2011).

In the aforementioned long article (10 pages) all the sources and arguments were against the amendments. The journalist used only one quote from current secretary of National Security Council, Giga Bokeria to support her argument that the amendments are not important for religious groups. Giga Bokeria is one of the initiators of acceptance of the amendments. These are the words of the journalist Sopho Bukia:

According the amendments to the civic code religious organizations in Georgia from now on are entitled to register as legal entities of public law. Government recognized religious minorities as religious organizations, but did not give them any other privileges.... Amendments to the civic code do not imply budgetary privilege and opportunities to return disputed churches (Bukia, 2011).

The article discussed only the environment in which the amendments were adopted and possible reasons of its rash adaptation. It did not cover diverse opinions.

After the content analysis I discovered that, Liberali is not the best example of covering the issue according to the universal journalistic standards outlined earlier (See pp. 23-24). There was not a vivid violation of journalist standards, cases of using hate and xenophobic speech, but the publication had a problem with balance. Opinions of ethnic minorities were also ignored.

Chapter 8 Main findings of the research

The Kviris -Kronika and the Asaval-Dasavali:

- The amendments to the civic code are not clarified in the articles. Journalists are mainly focused on coverage the people’s reactions; as a result the articles do not provide adequate information

about the amendments itself. Readers are not given a chance to understand the meaning of the amendments.

- The opinions of ethnic minorities are ignored. Thus journalists represent them like “objects” rather than “subjects” of the material.
- Sources of the articles are only the people who are against the amendments. Balance is lost in the articles.
- The amendments to the civic code are discussed in the context of threat to Georgia. But the facts allowing making such prognosis are not given.
- The amendments were made not for only Armenians; however these newspapers put major emphasis only on this particular ethnic group.
- The existed stereotypes about Armenians are supported by journalists and media outlets. The context and background of ethical conflict (between Georgians and Armenians) are not explained.
- Most journalists are biased when writing articles about Armenians. The Journalistic product does not support the clarification of context; just the opposite: articles encourage readers to develop hostility against religious minorities, especially against the Armenians.
- A lack of analytical articles (See research criteria pp. 23-24).

Liberali:

- Balance is lost in some articles of the publication. Most of the sources are against the amendments.
- There was no opinion of religious minorities in the stories for whom amendments were made.
- Suggest the controversy surrounding the changes is about the relationship between the Georgian government and the church and not about religion or culture (See pp. 23-24).

Netgazeti:

- Most of the articles were analytical and well-balanced. Journalists provided opinions of all people who were in some way related to this issue, including religious minorities, people against and for the amendments.

- All the articles were objective and supported by facts.
- The amendments to the civic code were clarified deeply. The sources of journalist in most cases were lawyers.
- The context of the conflict around the issue was explained deeply by the journalists. Netgazeti followed universally-agreed media standards of coverage of minorities as defined earlier (See pp.23-24).

Chapter 9 Conclusion

Negative representation of the Armenians, which includes: hate speech, stereotypical thinking and xenophobic attitudes appeared in the Kviris-Kronika and the Asaval-Dasavali. The research results clearly indicate these publications are the most xenophobic at all. Journalists often violate all the journalist standards, which were defined by the research. They encourage the conflict between Georgians and Armenians by supporting stereotypes. Armenians are portrayed as a nation who encouraged by Russia want to harm Georgia. The publications made major emphasis on the relationship of Russia and Armenia:

“Of all the countries of the Caucasus Armenia has the best relationship with Russia, which enhances the influence of Russia on Georgia. If Armenians’ influence is enhanced in Georgia, Russia will destroy us“(Xubua, 2011c).

It can be concluded that anti-Armenian attitudes still have deep roots in Georgian society and that tolerance is still a problem in the country. In the words of Media-Expert Zviad Koridze- this is the most long-standing anxiety. Georgians fear losing their national identity and believe that Armenians are the main reason of their troubles. Koridze said that every nationalistic country could have such a fear but Georgians must finally realize that Armenians are the equal citizens of Georgia (Z. Koridze, personal communication, January 10, 2012).

The methodology was helpful and adequate for studying the issue in depth; however, there is a need to mention that there occurred some problems. Archives of print publications were difficult

to access. The results of analysis of the articles in Liberali were unexpected, which absolutely changed the direction of the research. This publication was regularly covering issues around ethnic minorities, providing their opinions and discussing their problems. It was surprising that during the research period the publication completely ignored opinions of ethnic minorities, including those of Armenians. Journalists failed to fulfil one of the main principles in the case of Liberali: give a voice to the voiceless. In some cases, there was also a problem of balance. That is why it was difficult to compare this publication with other. This publication was chosen to show the positive side of coverage ethnic minorities.

But it seems that Liberali took this approach not because of its Anti-Armenian attitudes. At a glance publication preferred to focus on the Anti- Governmental tensions because of one reason: all the leading political issues mentioned above (See pp. 33-34) had a big influence on the disputes around the amendments. Liberali decided that at that moment it was more important to explain the context of this event, but missed other important elements of minority coverage.

Netgazeti followed all the criteria of the research. Only in this publication were ethnic minorities represented as “subjects” rather than “objects” of the material. Netgazeti highlighted the problems of the Armenians. It gave them the chance to speak about their problems and provide their opinions. Analytical articles which are important when covering problematic issues were only found in Netgazeti.

In democratic society the media independence and journalist’s responsibility before the people is one of the most important tasks. That is why many authoritative media organizations have their own self-regulation mechanisms or mandatory ethic codes for their journalists. Besides the principles of accuracy, objectivity and fairness, these codes demand from journalist not publish material which includes discrimination, hate and xenophobic speech against ethnic minorities. Georgia also made certain attempts to create journalism standards which would be a text book for all kind of media organizations, but unfortunately Georgian media still do not have such a document. (Media development fund, n.d)

Why is media self-regulation good for democracy? :

Democracy is not only about disputes. It is also about a shared culture of disputing in a rational and fair manner. Governments, even if freely elected, are participants in the political contest and therefore are not best-suited to enforce rationality and fairness. Besides, democracy is incompatible with state custody of the press. Media self-regulation is an effort to impose democracy's political culture, independent of political forces. It also advances the transition from a government-owned, state-controlled press to one (Harazsti, 2008, pp. 11-12).

The media self-regulation helps organizations to minimize state interference in their activity. Editors control the activities of their journalists themselves and protect their publications from the influence of the government (Harazsti, 2008). Because the governmental media control such as, criminalization of hate speech, can limit the freedom of expression which is unacceptable for the democratic principles of the media, one of the respondents, Beka Mindiashvili argues:

“The criminalization of hate speech is unacceptable for me, because the government can use it for its benefit any time. In this case, government is free in limitation of freedom of the speech which is fundamental principle of the media. Besides, it is not an easy task to formulate what is meant under the hate speech” (B. Mindiashvili, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

This research has explored the negative and very narrow representation of Armenians in the small sample of Georgian print and online publications. It does not give the full picture of coverage of the Armenians in the Georgian media, but shows the tendencies and problems which occurs in some of the popular publications of the country.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

1. A journalist must have respect for the truth and the right of the public to accurate information;
2. A journalist cannot be compelled to perform a professional act or to express an opinion contrary to his/her convictions or his/her conscience;
3. The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents;
4. The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents;
5. The media have a duty to rectify a substantially inaccurate information have been published which could mislead the public;
6. The journalist has the moral obligation not to reveal the source of information obtained in confidence;
7. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins;
8. The journalist has the duty to protect the rights of the child; attach special importance to the interests of the child while fulfilling his/her professional duties, not interview or photograph children under the age of 16 on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a parent or similarly responsible adult consents.

9. Journalists and media shall maintain a clear distinction between editorial content and marketing, advertisements or sponsored material;
10. Journalists and media shall respect the right to privacy of the individual and not interfere into private life if the special public interest isn't present;
11. The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following:
12. Malicious misrepresentation;
13. Acceptance of bribe, gifts and favours in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression;
14. Plagiarism.

Appendix 2: Civic Code of Georgia Article 1509¹

1. Religious associations can register as legal entities of public law.
2. First paragraph of this article does not restrict the right of religious associations to register as non-profit (non-commercial) legal entities as defined by this Code, as well as to operate as nonregistered unions as defined by this Code.
3. Religious associations are registered by the National Agency of Public Registry - legal entity of public law operating within the field of governance of the Ministry of Justice.

4. The National Agency of Public Registry - legal entity of public law operating within the field of governance of the Ministry of Justice – is authorised to register as legal entity of public law the religious group, which has close historic ties with Georgia or which is recognized as a religion by the laws of members states of the Council of Europe.

5. The law on Legal Entity of Public Law does not apply to religious associations registered as legal entities of public law.

6. The procedure for the registration of non-profit (non-commercial) legal entities extends to the registration of religious associations as provided by the first paragraph of this article and their powers are defined by the second chapter of the first section of this Code.

Appendix 3: The European Convention of Human Rights, Article 10

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

Appendix 4: Racial and Religious Act 2006 of United Kingdom (Only the part which was discussed in the dissertation)

“Part 3A”

Hatred against persons on religious grounds

29B Use of words or behaviour or display of written material

(1) A person who uses threatening words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, is guilty of an offence if he intends thereby to stir up religious hatred.

(2) An offence under this section may be committed in a public or a private place, except that no offence is committed where the words or behaviour are used, or the written material is displayed, by a person inside a dwelling and are not heard or seen except by other persons in that or another dwelling. .

(3) A constable may arrest without warrant anyone he reasonably suspects is committing an offence under this section. .

(4) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to prove that he was inside a dwelling and had no reason to believe that the words or behaviour used, or the written material displayed, would be heard or seen by a person outside that or any other dwelling. .

(5) This section does not apply to words or behaviour used, or written material displayed, solely for the purpose of being included in a programme service. .

29C Publishing or distributing written material

(1) A person who publishes or distributes written material which is threatening is guilty of an offence if he intends thereby to stir up religious hatred. .

(2) References in this Part to the publication or distribution of written material are to its publication or distribution to the public or a section of the public.