



The Media Diversity Institute

Media Coverage of Minority Groups in the South Caucasus 2004 – 2006

Media Diversity Institute, April 2006

Key Findings

- The Georgian media coverage is clearly different to that of Armenia and Azerbaijan, who are more similar to each other
- The Azeri Press has the lowest amount of minority news – only 1% in both periods of media monitoring, 2004 and 2005.
- Sexual minorities are covered the least of all in both years
- Minority groups rarely get the chance to speak for themselves – they are much more likely to be spoken for by others, including State officials

Introduction.

The presence of diverse minority groups in the South Caucasus offers the journalists of those regions the opportunity to embrace otherness in society, to promote democratic citizenship and generate profits by selling much-needed information and analysis of those groups. Seeking and faithfully representing the perspectives of minority groups by the media ensures their inclusion into civil society, improving the level of tolerance and humanitarianism across the region as well as securing the human rights of every member of a minority group. The press has the power to create deeper public understanding of ethnic and other minority groups and their human rights issues in the countries of the South Caucasus. By presenting these marginalized and vulnerable groups in fair, accurate and balanced ways, the media can raise public consciousness of minority rights and help combat xenophobia, racism, ethnic discrimination and intolerance. Informed, inclusive, and professional media coverage of ethnic minorities and issues of importance to them are the best bridge between divided ethnic groups.

This study will therefore set the stage by discovering the contemporary state of diversity reporting in the South Caucasus. It will delineate the frequency of coverage of minority groups, showing the extent to which they have access to the media. The nature and amount of minority group sources will be shown; evidence of their access to the press and, importantly, whether news about them allows them to represent themselves, rather than being represented by others. The newsworthiness of this type of coverage will also be assessed, demonstrating the attitudes of the journalists towards reporting these groups and the representational power the groups can exercise, if any.

Methodology

This study was undertaken into five different minority groups in the South Caucasus. The groups consist of: ethnic minorities, religious minorities, refugees and internally displaced persons, disabled people and sexual minorities. All the media monitors used the same methodology on their respective programmes. As this is a study into the workings of representational power through the news media, some regular features of TV news programmes, such as weather forecasts and schedule announcements, were not relevant to the purpose and excluded. Other features, such as commercial advertising, including classified, are an important part of the wider issue, but complicate a small-scale study and would be better treated as part of a study on the world of advertising. They were therefore excluded. The television was monitored during the month of February 2005 and 2006. The Press was monitored during the month of September 2004 and again in September 2005.

All the TV pieces had to be counted to discover how much minority group news is broadcast. A TV piece is defined as a single unit of airtime that can be singled out by theme, composition and appearance, i.e.

- A separate piece in the news programme
- A separate communication reported by the program host
- A thematically distinguished part (section or story) concerning a certain issue
- A thematically distinguished question-and-answer within a TV programme concerning various issues
- A programme/interview concerning an issue that is not separated and is considered to be one piece

- Announcements are considered to be part of the piece to which they refer
- Headlines/sub-headings, the lead, the host's text which opens a piece are considered to be part of the piece

As a result, news programmes are subdivided into autonomous pieces, whereas current affairs programmes can either be one piece, if it is devoted to a single subject, but if it deals with a variety of issues, each issue is counted as a piece.

Each mention of the target groups is counted; in every piece one mention of each target group is recorded.

In each country five stations are monitored, with the programme selection designed to standardise, as far as possible, the audience coverage (local vs. national) and viewer ratings. Due to the death of Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania of Georgia on February 2nd and his funeral on February 6th, there were some changes to scheduled programmes, some were cancelled, and others postponed. During the monitoring period, the programmes *Archevani Tqven* (Imedi channel) and *60 Minutes* (on Rustavi-2) were not broadcast and so could not be included as had been intended.

In Armenia, the programmes analysed were:

On Public Television of Armenia (PTA), *Hailur* (21:00-22:00), news from Monday-Saturday; *360 Degrees* (20:00-21:00), a news and analysis programme on Sunday; *5th Wheel* (22:00-23:00) guest-in-studio programme on Monday and *My Right* (22:40-23:35), a talk-show on Thursday.

On ALM, *Day by Day* (20:00-20:40), the main newscast from Monday-Saturday; *Day by Day* (17:00-17:40) news and analysis on Sunday; *Price of the Question* (21:30-23:10), a guest-in-studio programme on Tuesday and Saturday and *Position* (21:30-23:10) a guest-in-studio programme on Thursday.

On Armenia, *Zham* (20:30-21:00) the main newscast from Monday-Sunday; *Express* (22:40-23:15) news and analysis from Monday-Friday; *In Reality* (19:30-20:30) a guest-in-studio programme from Monday-Thursday and Saturday.

On Second Armenia TV Channel, *Lraber* (23:00-24:00) main newscast Monday-Saturday; *Sunday Lraber* (21:00-21:30, Feb. 6th and 20th; 21:00-22:30 Feb. 13th and 27th), news and analysis on Sunday; *The Right To Say* (21:30-22:30 Feb 6th and 20th), a guest-in-studio programme two Sundays per month, *Sunday Report* (20:40-21:00) news on Sunday; *Ojakh* (21:00-21:50) talk show on Friday.

On Shant, *Horizone* (22:00-22:45) news Monday-Saturday; *Perspective* (22:45-23:15) guest-in-studio programme Monday-Friday and finally *Second Glance* (23:00-00:00), talk show on Sunday.

In Azerbaijan, the programmes analysed were:

On official AzTV-1, the *News Review* (20:00-20:45) and *Pulse of the Time* (20:45-21:00), an analytic programme from Monday to Saturday; and *The Week* (20:00-21:00), an informative-analytic programme on Sunday.

On ANS, *Point of View* (20:30-21:00) analytic programme and *News* (21:00-22:00), Monday-Saturday; *The Past Week* (21:00-22:00) informative-analytic programme on Sunday.

On Lider TV, *News Review* (21:00-21:30) and *Echo* (21:00-22:00) informative-analytic programme on Monday-Saturday; *The 106th Hour* (22:00-23:00) analytic programme on Sunday.

On Space, *News Review* (20:30-21:00) Monday-Saturday and *The Line* (20:00-21:00) on Sunday

On ATV, the entertainment channel, *News* (20:00-20:10), Monday-Saturday.

In Georgia, the programmes analysed were:

On 1st Channel – Public Channel, the first State TV/Radio corporation of Georgia, telecasting since 1956, *Mtavari* (20:00-20:45), news Monday-Friday; *Mediatori* (23:00-23:30) talk show on Thursday.

On Imedi, founded in 2001 and owned by JSC I-Media Holdings, *Kronika* (22:00-22:50), news Monday-Saturday and Sunday (19:00-19:30); *Pirvelebi* (23:15-23:55) a talk show on Tuesday; *Reakcia* (20:30-22:30) an analytical programme on Friday; *Droeba* (21:00-22:30) and information-analytical programme on Sunday and *Nadimi* (0:20-01:35) a talk show on Sunday.

On Kavkasia, founded in 1994 by David Akobardia, *Dges*, the news from Tuesday-Saturday at 20:30-21:00 and Monday at 21:00-22:30; *Talk Show* (19:20-20:30) a talk show from Monday-Friday; *Business and Economy* (22:30-0:00) an analytical programme on Monday

On Mze, founded in March 2004, *Mzera* (20:00-20:45) news from Monday-Sunday; *Archevanis Zgvare* (22:45-0:00) a talk show from Monday-Friday.

On Rustavi-2, founded in 1994, *Kurier* (21:00-22:00), news on Monday-Sunday

In order to compare press coverage of minority groups fairly, the sample newspapers must be as similar as possible, although exact likeness is, of course, impossible. In each of the three countries, five newspapers were chosen according to the following criteria: national audience coverage, frequency of publication, print runs, language and political position. All were founded in the few short years since the fall of the Soviet Union – the oldest newspaper in 1989, the youngest in 2002. All are commercial ventures, financially independent of their governments. All provide their own circulation figures, there being no independent audit. Despite this, no newspaper claims a circulation of more than nine thousand – the lowest claim a mere three thousand. Circulation claims average at around five and a half thousand. In each country the sample includes government-supporting and opposition-supporting positions, Russian and native language publications. There is also a selection of both weekday and weekend papers, as well as those which publish on both weekdays and weekends.

The newspapers in the sample are: in Armenia, ‘Azg’, ‘Hayatsani Hanrapetutin’, ‘Hayots Ashkhar’, ‘Aravot’ and ‘Golos Armenii’.

In Azerbaijan, ‘Yeni Musavat’, ‘Azadlig’, ‘525th Gazet’, Ekho’ and ‘Zerkalo’.

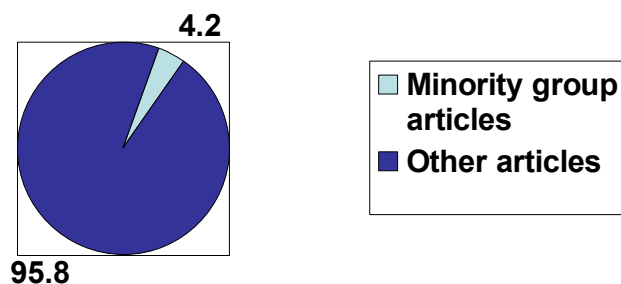
In Georgia, the selected newspapers are ‘24 Saati’, ‘Alia’, ‘Akhali Taoba’, ‘Resonance’ and ‘Svobodnaya Gruzia’.

The Findings.

Overall Totals and the Story Behind Them.

Fig. 1

Caucasus Media 04-06 average % minority group articles



The percentage of minority group articles published in Caucasus media from September 2004 to February Feb 2006 is 4.2%.

The context is however of considerable monolithicality. Approximately 4% of the Armenian population is not ethnically Armenian; over 5% not the mainstream Armenian Apostolic religion.

Under 10% Azeri residents are not Azeri ethnicity; under 7% are not Muslim. The Azeri government claims there are 1 million internally displaced people (Figures according to the government of the United States of America give 571,000 IDPs).

Georgia is the most ethnically mixed country with over 16% of the population not ethnically Georgian. Although it maintains close population links with the other two countries – 6.5% of Georgian residents are Azeri, and 7.5% Armenian.

Fig. 2.

Comparison of % minority group articles in Caucasus media, Feb 04 – Sept 05 to Sept 05 – Feb 06

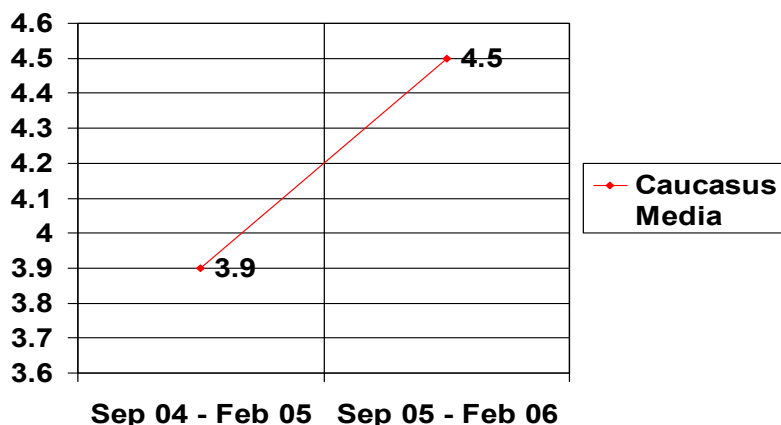


Figure 2 shows the percentage of minority group articles/items in media over time; which raw number has increased from 3.9% in 2004-05, to 4.5% in 2005-06. This indicates that the newsworthiness of minority groups increased in the Caucasus over the period of monitoring. Whether this is a positive development or not depends on the reasons for the increase. Minority groups would be empowered by a true recognition of their role and contribution to their respective societies; they would be damaged by being the targets of hate speech, sensational or politically motivated reporting.

Comparison TV vs. Press across the Caucasus 2004 – 06

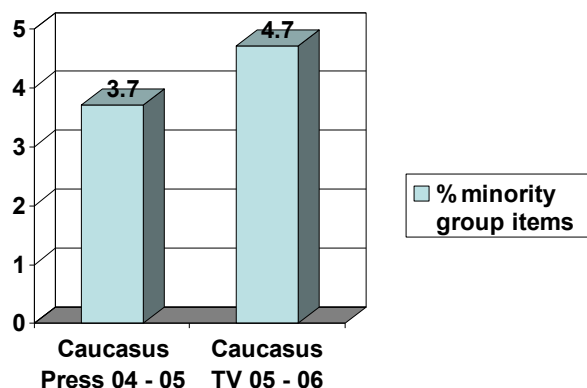


Fig. 3.

The comparison in percentage terms, between the amount of minority articles in Caucasus Press and on TV – 3.9% of the press coverage across both monitoring rounds 2004-05 is on minority groups; 4.5% of TV coverage across both monitoring rounds 2005-06.

This might be good news for minority groups, because there is a far greater audience penetration by TV than the press. However, this would again depend on the nature of the representations – if the TV items are predominantly negative, this would be damaging to them.

Fig. 4.

% minority articles 2004-06 per country



After looking at the headline figures for the Caucasus as a whole, it is necessary to break down figures to compare and contrast each country's performance.

This chart shows the percentage of minority group articles 2004-06 per country; Armenia 2.4% Azerbaijan 2.4% Georgia 7.8%. Thus Georgia is significantly different in both monitoring periods compared to the other two countries, a finding it will be important to bear in mind across the analysis.

Fig. 5.

% Minority articles/items by period and by country

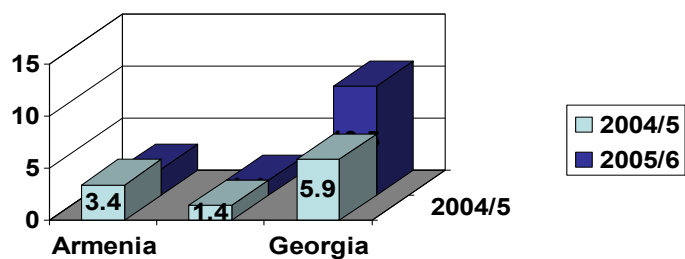
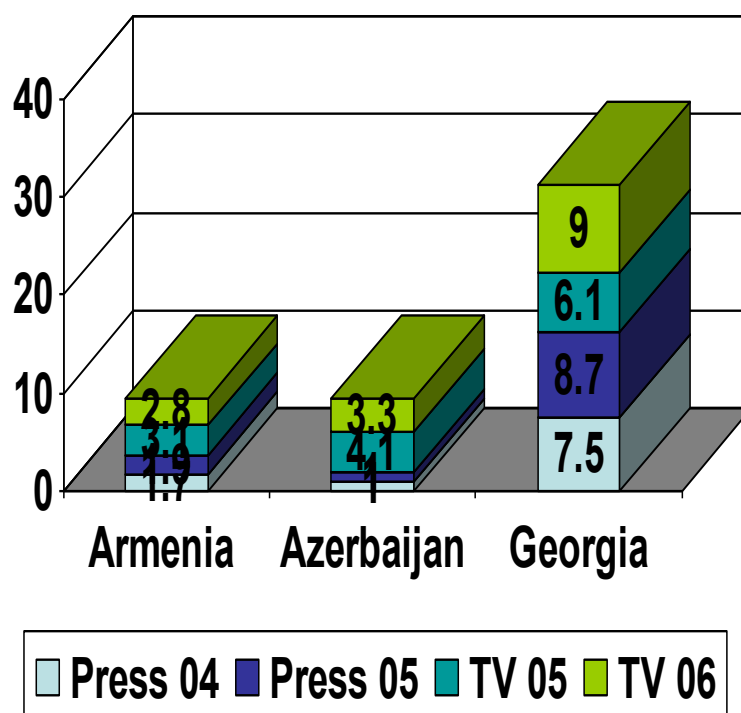


Figure 5 demonstrates the number of minority group articles/items in the media across time (both monitoring rounds) per country. It shows that the increase recorded overall (figure 2) is in fact solely due to Georgia. Azerbaijan has remained the same, Armenia has even declined, but Georgia's totals nearly doubled.

	2004/5	2005/6
Armenia	3.4	2.5
Azerbaijan	1.4	1.4
Georgia	5.9	10.5

Fig. 6.

Minority articles as % of total output by media, time, country



Press 04	TV 05	TV 06	Press 05
Arm 1.7	3.1	2.8	1.9
Az 1	4.1	3.3	1
Geo 7.5	6.1	9	8.7

Figure 6 shows the amount of minority articles as a percentage of the total per country, per time and per media.

The most interest in minority groups is from Georgian TV in February 06; the least is the Azeri press, in both 04 and 05. All the results from Armenia and Azerbaijan are BELOW the mean average.

Armenia has the least coverage twice (TV 05, TV 06), Azerbaijan least coverage twice (Press 04, press 05). The fact that these are both within the same media may indicate 'structural' reasons within the media of these countries; examples of 'structural' reasons include a politically driven censorship or a business-driven entertainment function, both of which may increase a monolithic function in the media.

However, Georgia always has the most coverage.

Fig. 7.

% of Caucasus media references
per minority group 2004-05

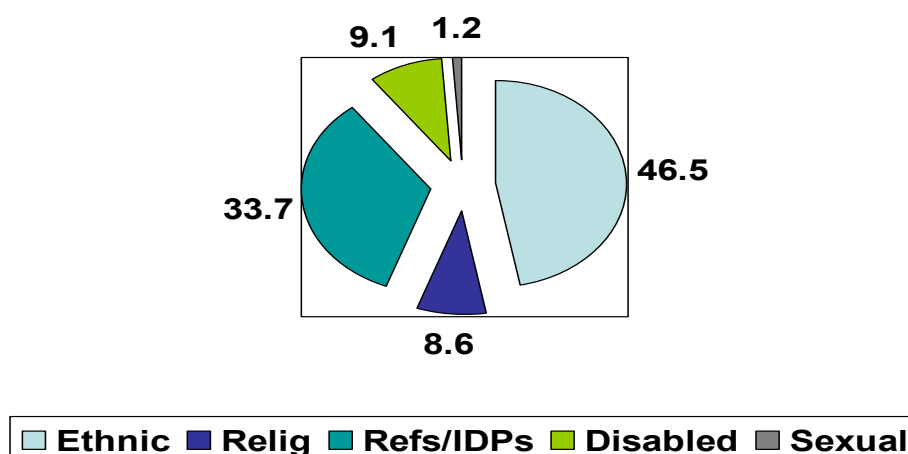
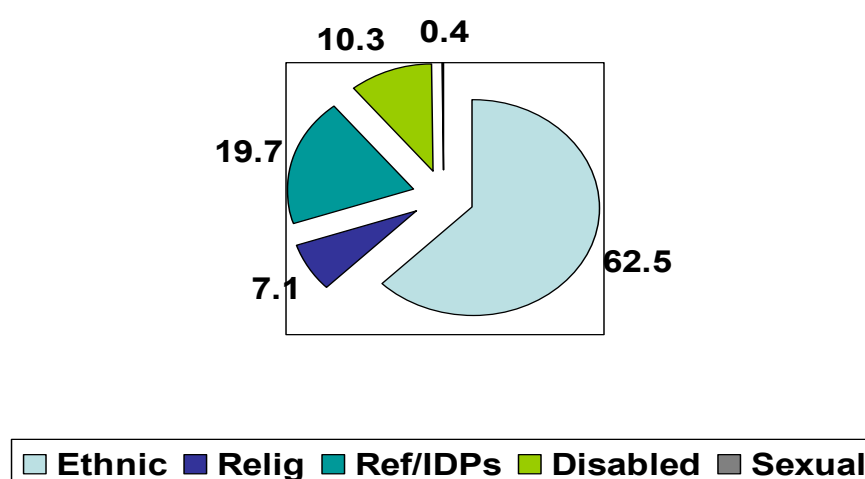


Fig. 8.

% of Caucasus media references
per minority group 2005-06



These tables (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8) begin to examine differences in the amount of reporting of minority groups, in order to find out which groups are covered the most and which the least.

The method has changed in second round of monitoring. The first round scored what type of minority group, but only recorded ONE mention of the minority group per report. Thus first round monitoring *represent* the proportion of reports devoted to each minority group. The second round was made more accurate; it recorded each mention of the minority groups.

So the totals are NOT comparable, as the first round figures are not the true totals. However, the proportions of references that each minority group receives are comparable by assessing the percentages of totals from each round: this gives an estimate (in the first case) and the true figure in the second case of how many times each minority group has been mentioned in the Caucasus media. Both media monitoring rounds measured the number of references to any of the five minority groups in the corpus of articles selected as being about the subject of minority groups

Caucasus media 2004-05 – representative totals only, do not quote.

Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
46.5%	8.6%	33.7%	9.1%	1.2%

Caucasus media 2005-06 – these are true totals and can therefore be quoted.

Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
62.5%	7.1%	19.7%	10.3%	0.4%

Fig. 9.

Rank order of proportion of references to each minority group, Caucasus media 2004/5 vs. 2005/6

2004/5	2005/6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethnic• Refugees/IDPs• Disabled• Religious• Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethnic• Refugees/IDPs• Disabled• Religious• Sexual

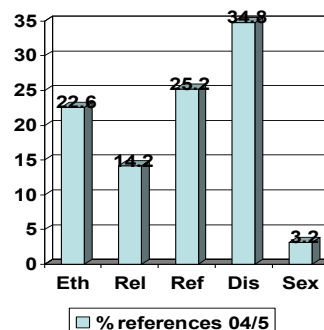
Rank order is used because the two totals are not comparable; but rank order shows that there has apparently been no change in the proportional number of references to minority groups in the first and second rounds of monitoring. So remembering the earlier findings that Georgia can be very different from the other two, these will now be broken down by country.

Fig. 10.

Ranked % media references to each minority group in Armenia, 2004/5 and 2005/6

2004/5 –

1. Disabled
2. Refugees/IDPs
3. Ethnic
4. Religious
5. Sexual



2005/6 –

1. Disabled
2. Refugees/IDPs
3. Religious
4. Ethnic
5. Sexual

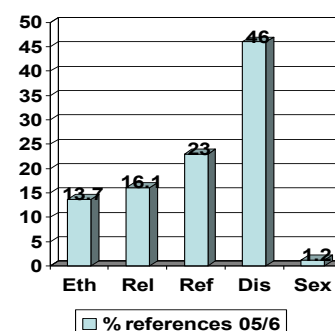


Figure 10 shows the percentage of references in the Armenia media that are on each minority group in 2004/05 compared with the same in 2005/06. Armenia's top two most covered minority groups are refugees/IDPs and the disabled, whilst sexual minorities receive the least attention. Ethnic and religious minorities swap places – in 2004/5 the ethnic group receives more mentions than the religious group, in 2005/6 it is the other way round.

The minority group considered the most newsworthy is disabled people, and they get more newsworthy. The least newsworthy is sexual minorities, and they become less newsworthy. Only the ethnic and religious minorities change direction.

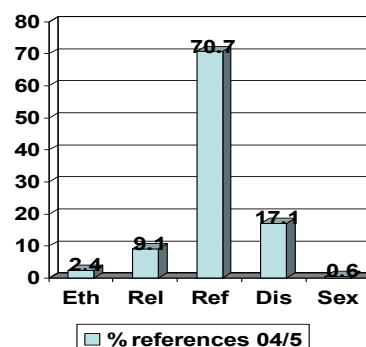
	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	22.6%	14.2%	25.2%	34.8%	3.2%
2005/06	13.7%	16.1%	23%	46%	1.2%

Fig. 11.

Ranked % media references to each minority group in Azerbaijan, 2004/5 and 2005/6

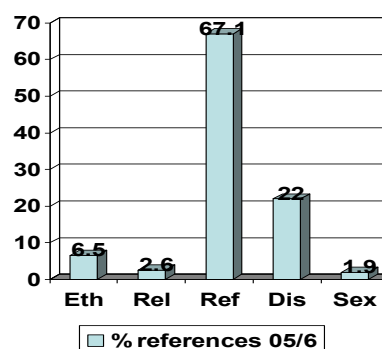
2004/5 –

1. Refugees/IDPs
2. Disabled
3. Religious
4. Ethnic
5. Sexual



2005/6 –

1. Refugees/IDPs
2. Disabled
3. Ethnic
4. Religious
5. Sexual



In Azerbaijan the top two most covered minority groups also remain the same between the two rounds of monitoring – refugees are referenced the most, disabled people the second most. Sexual minorities are mentioned the least. Religious and ethnic minorities swap positions – religious minorities are more spoken about in 2004/5, whilst ethnic minorities are ranked third in importance in 2005/6. Again the most newsworthy group, the disabled, become more newsworthy. However the least newsworthy, sexual minorities, actually increased its newsworthiness by a factor of 3. At these low totals, however, it would not take many events related to this group to cause such an increase.

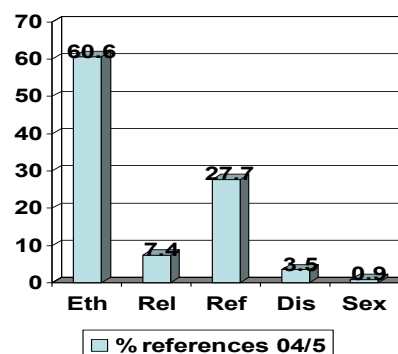
	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	2.4%	9.1%	70.7%	17.1%	0.6%
2005/06	6.5%	2.6%	67.1%	22%	1.9%

Fig. 12.

Ranked % media references to each minority group in Georgia, 2004/5 and 2005/6

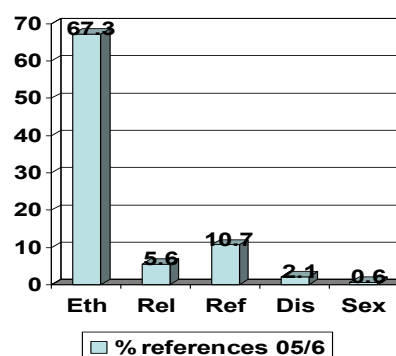
2004/5 –

1. Ethnic
2. Refugees/IDPs
3. Religious
4. Disabled
5. Sexual



2005/6 –

1. Ethnic
2. Refugees/IDPs
3. Religious
4. Disabled
5. Sexual



In Georgia, the rankings stay exactly the same throughout, suggesting that there were no major minority-group related events relevant for the Georgian media during the period. Ethnic minorities have the most mentions; refugees/IDPs number two; the third position is taken by religious minorities and the fourth by the disabled. Sexual minorities are also the least commented on, just as in the other two countries. Its newsworthiness quotient decreases over time, whereas the most newsworthy group, ethnic minorities, enjoys a rise in media attention.

So as the charts show, the ranking of the proportions of references made in each countries media are very similar in 2004/5 and 2005/6, meaning that there was no great change in the journalists' assessment of the topics' newsworthiness.

	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	60.6%	7.4%	27.7%	3.5%	0.9%
2005/06	67.3%	5.6%	10.7%	2.1%	0.6%

Fig. 13.

Proportions of media references to each group by country (not true figures)

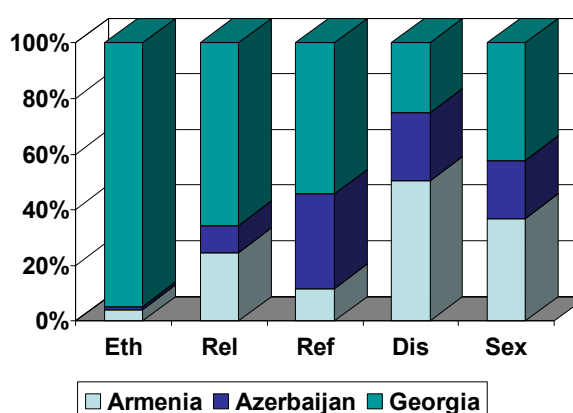


Figure 13 is a visual representation of the broad trends seen in the previous charts, in order to illustrate this further strong evidence of differentiation in the Caucasus media market. In fact, these figures, alongside the amount totals shown earlier, suggest that it is not appropriate to treat Caucasus media as an entity. The Georgian media is very different from the Armenian and Azeri, which are similar to each other. This chart DOES NOT show the TRUE numbers, it is ONLY a visual representation of the proportions of media attention given to each minority group by each countries media, to demonstrate the differences between each countries media.

It is clear how preponderant Georgia's numbers are: its coverage of minority groups averages at over 56% across the categories. Armenia contributes the second most amount of references, but a mere half of Georgia's at approximately 25% and Azerbaijan's contribution is smaller again at around 18%

	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
Armenia	4.1%	24.6%	11.7%	52.2%	36.8%
Azerbaijan	1%	9.7%	34%	25.3%	21%
Georgia	94.9%	65.6%	54.3%	26.1%	42.1%

Audience Impact.

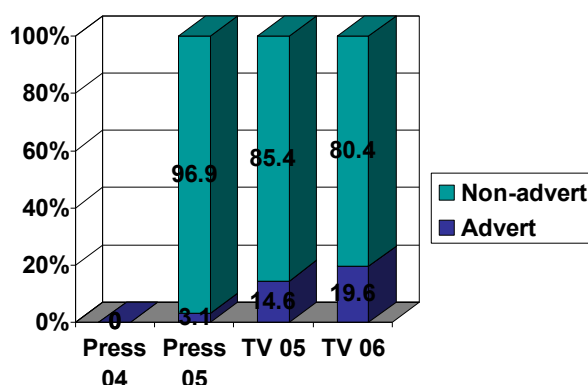
The front page of a newspaper, and the announcement at the beginning of a TV programme, act as advertisements for the rest of the media product. As such, they are where the most newsworthy, interesting and entertaining items of the day are placed. By measuring how many articles on minority groups are used as adverts for media products, it is possible to gain another perspective on journalists' assessment of their newsworthiness.

It also introduces the topic of audience impact. Using a minority group item/article as an advert increases the visibility of the issue; even readers/viewers who choose not to consume the full article/item itself after seeing the front page or TV announcement will have a greater awareness of minority group issues.

As it has already been established the Georgia seems to have a different media climate, these are done by country.

Fig. 14.

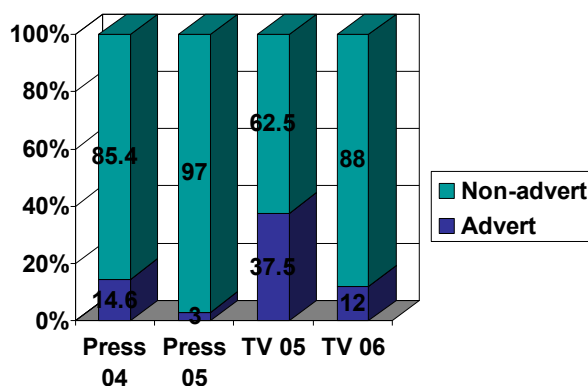
% minority news used on announcement/front page, Armenia 2004-06



Armenia's figures for the first round of press monitoring in 2004 are missing. The figures available show that Armenian TV uses more minority news in its announcement, and that this has increased by 4% in the second round of monitoring to nearly one in five items (19.6%) being used in this way.

Fig. 15.

% minority news used on announcement/front page, Azerbaijan 2004-06



The Azeri media has unusually high proportions of items/articles used in the announcements or front pages. In the first round of TV monitoring, Azeri TV produced the highest total over all the three countries, publicising 37.5% of minority news or features. Yet this figures dropped to only 12% in the second round of TV monitoring, a decline of over two-thirds. The press is even more volatile, posting a 14.6% measure in 2004, but in the 2005 placing only 3%, a four-fold decline.

Fig. 16.

% minority news used on announcement/front page, Georgia 2004-06

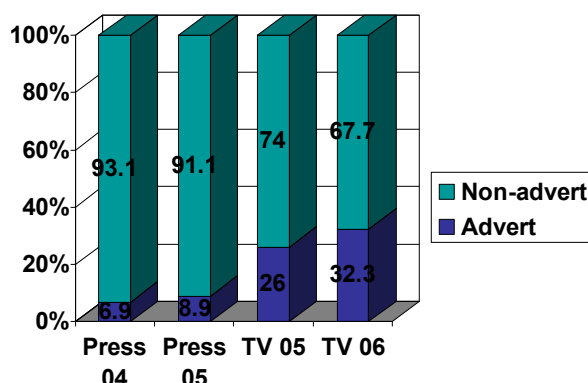


Figure 16 shows that Georgia has a similar pattern to Armenia, in that the TV uses more minority items than the press in their announcements. There was also an increase in both forms of media from 2004 to 2006.

These figures indicate that minority group news and features may have a greater audience impact than the bare amount of minority items and articles suggests. Placing this reporting on front pages and in announcements foregrounds it to the readers and viewers. This finding is a significant one because it indicates an issue that the minority group leaders in each country need to address.

There are two main possible theories for a disparity between the extent to which a subject is covered, and the extent to which it is advertised. Either it is considered to be important to that society, and is therefore prominently displayed, whilst the rest of the media product does the job of entertaining and covering the rest of the news; or, it is being sensationalised and used as an advertisement because it is seen as entertainment. A qualitative study would be required to evaluate the nature of this coverage. If this were undertaken, it would benefit minority group leaders in each of the Caucasus countries by informing their media-handling strategies; for example, whether to concentrate their efforts on increasing the amount of coverage of their issues, or by tackling the quality of the reporting.

Another statistical way of gathering data on audience impact is counting the number of press articles which are accompanied by a picture. Visual representations are, some academics suggest, even more important than written representations. A picture can give an instant and powerful impression of a news topic. Cognitive schema and dual-coding theories argue that pictures accompanying articles have an important impact on the reader's perception of the issue. Over time, this influence becomes more pronounced, with readers' recollections of the written

article and accompanying picture merging in their memories. Pictures of minority groups make them literally more visible to the general public.

Fig. 17.

% Press articles on minority groups accompanied by a picture, by country and year.

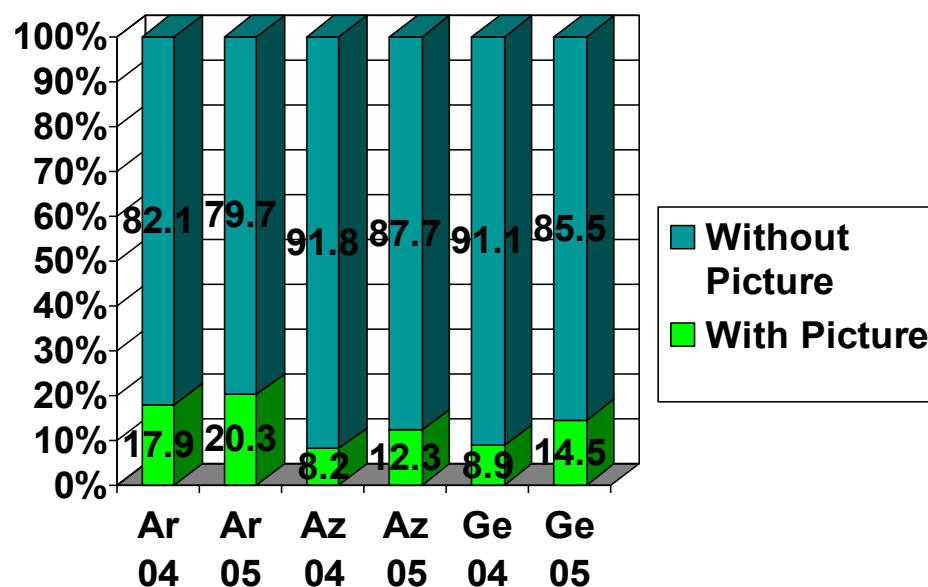


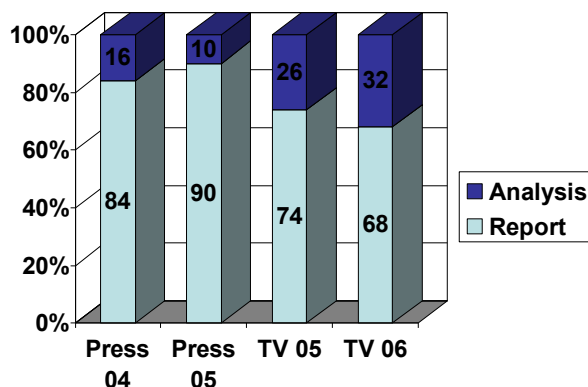
Figure 17 demonstrates that newspaper coverage of minority groups anywhere in the Caucasus is unlikely to be particularly memorable for the audience. On average, only 13.7% of articles are accompanied by any sort of visual presentation. Armenia's results are the best – it has the largest proportion of articles accompanied by a picture, and this increases in the second round of monitoring to one-in-five of all Armenian articles being carried with a picture. In fact, all the countries show an increase over time, which is a positive sign. Azerbaijan has the least articles accompanied by a picture, in both years.

Production - Minority Access to the Media

It is useful for minority groups who are attempting to raise their media profile to know the extent to which coverage about them is in report or feature form. Reports are event-based, so a lack of these would suggest that the group should stage some events. Features tend to include more comment and analysis, and so can be more extreme in their production – the journalist may choose to condemn or support the minority group. Getting sympathetic features published requires different, and longer-term strategies than simply creating events.

Fig. 18.

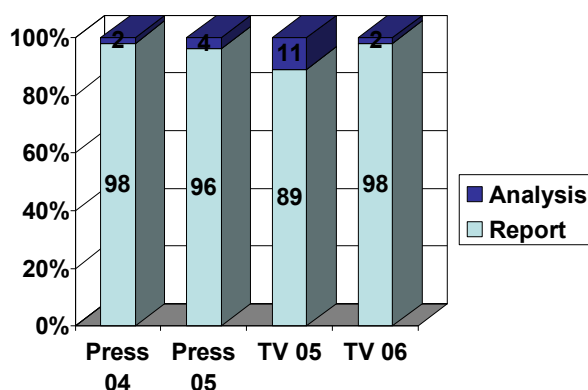
% Minority Reports vs. Analysis, Armenia Media 2004-06



Armenian TV has more analysis of minority groups than the press, and the two media forms also take different directions; in the second round of monitoring, there is 8% more analysis on TV, but 6% less in print. The Armenian media overall has the most analysis of minority issues, averaging at 85.5% event reporting, compared to 14.5% features.

Fig. 19.

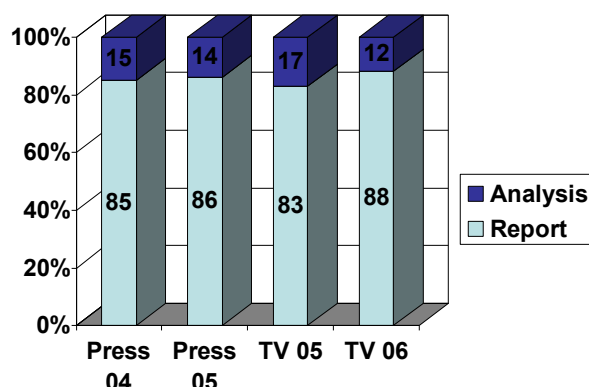
% Minority Reports vs. Analysis, Azeri Media 2004-06



In contrast, the Azeri media overall has the least analysis – only 4.7% of its total coverage across both rounds of monitoring. Its TV coverage is more volatile, however, going from 11% analysis to 2%.

Fig. 20.

% Minority Reports vs. Analysis, Georgian Media 2004-06



The Georgian press and TV coverage are very similar – in fact the average amount of analysis and hard news over the two years is the same – 14.5%. Both formats are heading in the same direction – the amount of analysis is declining, but there is a steeper decline in TV than in print.

Production continued – Sources.

Sources are very important in helping frame the news. There are a number of theories about the extent of their influence. The ‘primary definer’ theory (most popular in the 1970s and 80s) argues that the source is the strongest influence on a journalistic text. They decide the narrative framework within which others have to fit – counter-arguments then appear weaker. More recent theories in the 1990s have argued instead that news is a site of cultural conflict, where journalists and sources struggle to make a truth claim to the ‘real’ definition of the issue at hand; they note that journalists have some autonomy over their choice of sources, and have the last word when they write their stories. Whichever theory most accurately describes the situation of a working journalist and their sources, it is clear that sources are crucial to the production of news – they are in fact where news comes from. It is vitally important, therefore, for minority groups to have access to the news media, in order that they have the opportunity to put across their point of view. Minority group sources are the only appropriate representation for news about that minority group; they may also be able to raise issues of which no other group in society is aware. Minority groups in society also have a cultural right to self-expression – they must be allowed to speak for themselves. In addition, relations between minority groups and the rest of society are best – and most fairly - served by allowing minority groups to speak for themselves.

Fig. 21.

% Minority Group Guests appearing in TV Studios

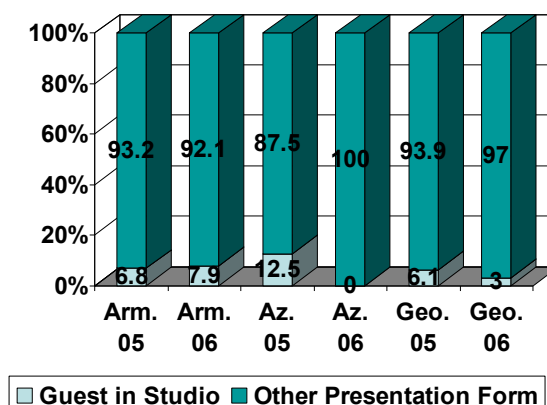


Figure 21 demonstrates the limited extent to which minority sources are invited as guests into TV studios to represent their group in discussions about it. The average percentage of guests (across the countries and monitoring periods) is only 6.1%. So minority groups have had a representative speaking for them in a television studio in only 6.1% of the news about them.

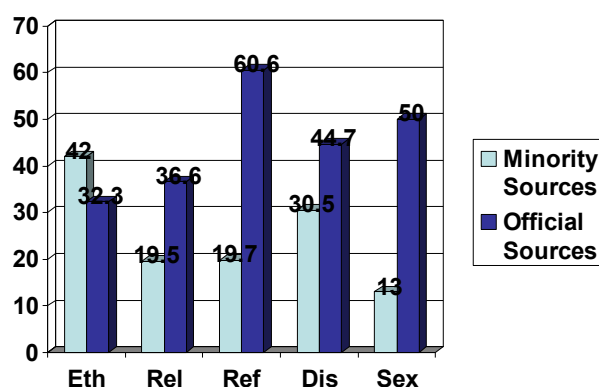
There is not a great deal of difference between the countries, which is particularly significant in Georgia's case, because it has the best record on publishing the largest amounts of minority group news. However, from these figures, it appears that although the Georgian media may recognise to a certain extent the newsworthiness of minority groups, it does not allow them to represent themselves to the same extent. These implications will now be explored with the help of more detailed figures.

According to the 'primary definer' theories, the media most often goes to official – i.e., governmental – sources for information about events, even when the story is about a subject other than the government, such as minority groups for instance. They argue that this is the worst place journalists could look for information, because official sources are the most likely to misrepresent and misinform, for their own political purposes. The best source of information about issues and events involving minority groups are, of course, the minority groups themselves. Thus, wherever the figures show that official sources are more consulted than minority sources, it is reasonable to be suspicious that these articles or items may contain misrepresentative, misleading or inaccurate information. They are also articles which have contravened those minority groups' cultural rights by preventing them from self-representation, which may also harm social cohesion.

The following charts show what percentage of the reporting about each minority group was sourced from that group itself, and what proportion from official sources (these will not add up to 100% because there are also, less important, 'other' sources). These charts are taken by country due to Georgia's difference from Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Fig. 23.

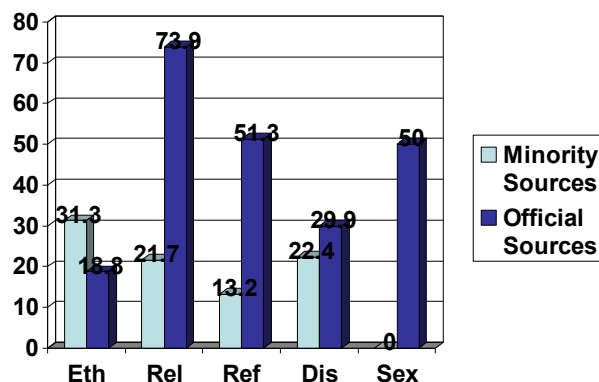
% Minority Group Sources vs. Official Sources, Armenia 2004-06



In the Armenian media, four out five minority groups are in the unfortunate position of being represented more by officials than by themselves. Only the ethnic group has more of its own representatives giving its story. The worst-sourced group is refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), where there are 40.9% more official sources than refugee/IDP sources. This is a significant finding within the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and indicates that the Armenian public may not know the truth about the refugee/IDP situation.

Fig. 24.

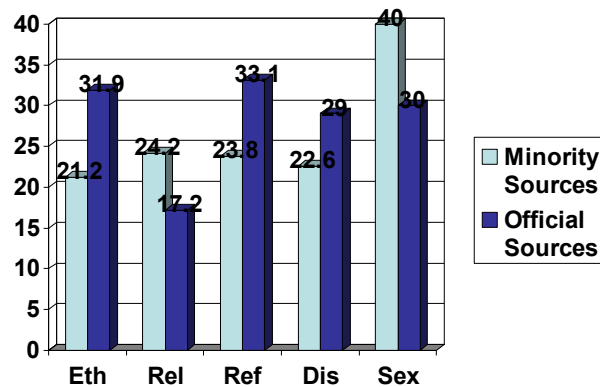
% Minority Group Sources vs. Official Sources, Azerbaijan 2004- 06



In the Azeri media, the same results are found – four groups are badly represented because there are more official sources than minority group sources. The only group which has the opportunity to speak for itself is the ethnic group again. The unluckiest group, whose news is sourced most from officials, is the religious minority. 73.9% of their news comes from officials, which is 52.2% more than comes from themselves. The sexual minorities are little better reported, having none of their own sources at all, and 50% of their news sourced from officials.

Fig. 25.

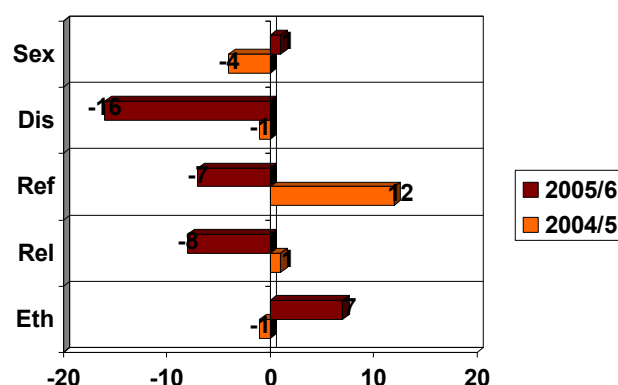
% Minority Group Sources vs. Official Sources, Georgia 2004-06



The Georgian media has the best-sourced minority news of the Caucasus region, as only three instead of four groups are represented more by officials than their own members. The two lucky groups who are enabled to speak for themselves by the Georgian media are religious minorities and sexual minorities. The least well-represented group is ethnic minorities, whose news is sourced from officials 10.7% more than from group members. This is a significant finding because this group is the most covered of all five target groups in Georgia.

Fig. 26.

Disparity between Minority and Official Sources, Armenian Media 2004/5; 2005/6



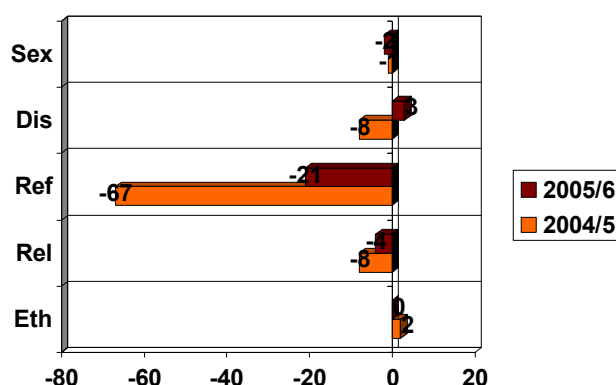
These three charts (fig.s 26, 27 and 28) show the difference between the number of minority group sources and the number of official sources in the first round of media monitoring, Sept. 2004 and Feb. 2005, compared to the second round of monitoring in Sept. 2005 and Feb. 2006. Where there are more minority group sources than official, the difference is expressed as a positive value. Where there are more official sources, it is expressed as a negative number.

It is clear that the quality of coverage in Armenia is quite volatile – only one group, the disabled, are treated similarly in both years. Unfortunately the numbers are both negative – ie, there were more official sources than minority group sources in both years. There are two groups in each year that are sourced well – in other words there are more minority than official sources. However these are different groups in each year – Religious minorities and refugees/IDPs in the first year, and ethnic and sexual minorities in the second year. This means that the impact of good sourcing would have been dissipated, and more easily gone unnoticed.

	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	-1	1	12	-1	-4
2005/06	7	-8	-7	-16	1

Fig. 27.

Disparity between Minority and Official Sources, Azeri Media 2004/2005; 2005/6

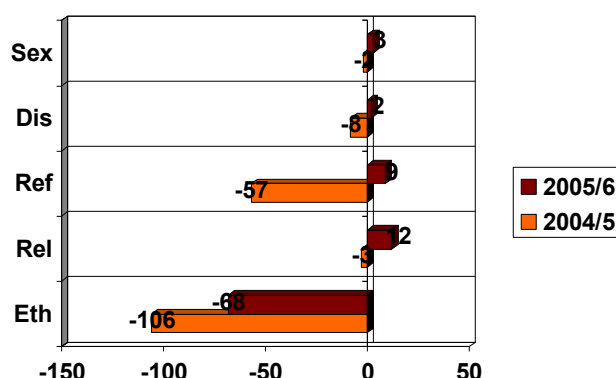


The Azeri numbers show greater consistency – in four of five groups there are more official than minority sources, in both years. The extent to which coverage of these groups is based on information given by officials does change quite significantly in the case of refugees and internally displaced people. Considering the context that this group were the most reported of minority groups in Azerbaijan in both years, the reduction in the disparity between the usage of official and minority sources can be seen as a positive development in the Azeri media, although only a minor one as these are still negative numbers.

	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	2	-8	-67	-8	-1
2005/06	0	-4	-21	3	-2

Fig. 28.

Disparity between Minority and Official Sources, Georgian Media 2004/5; 2005/6



Georgia's media has improved the most of all three countries. In the first round of monitoring, there were no minority groups able to but across their point of view more than officials. But just a year later, four out of five had this opportunity. It would be very interesting to do a production study to discover the reason for this, however we can only hope it is not an anomalous year.

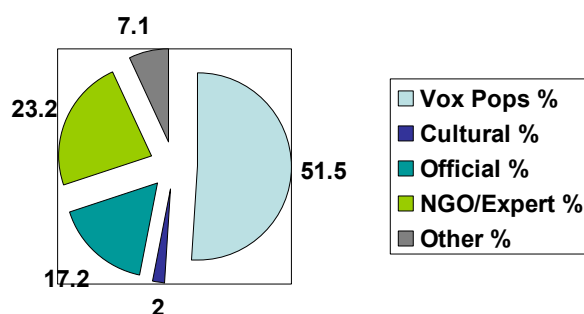
	Ethnic	Religious	Refugees/IDPs	Disabled	Sexual
2004/05	-106	-3	-57	-8	-2
2005/06	-68	12	9	2	3

Stereotyping.

Stereotypes are damaging to minority groups because they place limitations of social expectations on individuals. The media can be a powerful creator of stereotypes, and when it does this it may restrict the possibilities of minority members to fulfil their life chances as well as damaging society as a whole through the loss of that potential. These charts demonstrate a particular form of stereotyping known as role-modelling. The minority group sources that were used by journalists are analysed by occupation, to discover the range of socio-economic roles for minority groups that are portrayed in the media. The wider the range of roles, the more reasonably the reporting reflects society, and the narrower the range, the more likely it is that the reporting contributes towards stereotyping. This analysis also includes an examination of positively- and negatively-connotated roles.

Fig. 29

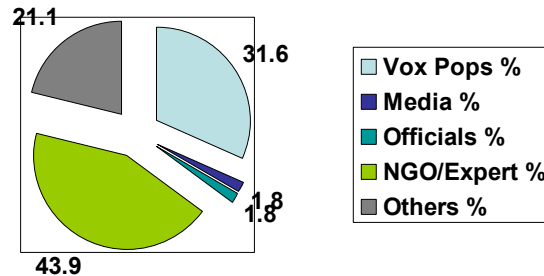
Range of roles performed by Minority group Sources, Armenia 2004/06



Armenia's coverage has a range of only 5 possible roles, of which two – the cultural and other – are small percentages (less than a fifth added together). So in effect there are just three main categories of occupation for minority group members in Armenian reporting. The categories themselves are Vox pops, Officials and NGO/Expert. These are fairly unhelpful as representations – Vox pops are often not named or described in detail, nor are they given status, although they may be experts on issues around their minority group. The preponderance of minority group officials and NGO/Experts may convey the impression to an audience that minority group members and leaders are mainly involved in working for their minority and not for the rest of the nation.

Fig. 30.

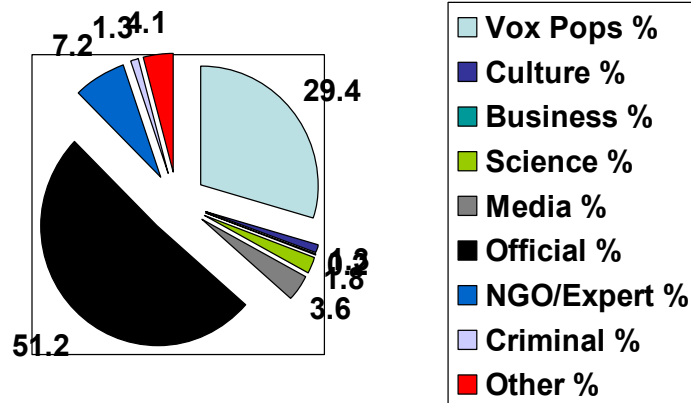
Range of roles performed by Minority group Sources, Azerbaijan 2004/06



The Azeri depiction of the range of roles performed by minority group sources – the number of portrayed roles is the same as in Armenian reporting, and it shows the same clustering in Vox Pops and NGO/Experts. However, the third significant category is ‘other’, the analytical non-category so this aspect cannot be compared with Armenia directly. It would be an interesting direction for further research to discover the contents of this category.

Fig. 31.

Range of roles performed by Minority group Sources, Georgia 2004/06



The Georgian depiction of the range of roles performed by Minority group Sources is the widest of all the countries. Nine categories are portrayed, and there is a little less clustering - the categories of Vox pops and Official are large (nearly one in three and over a half respectively), but the proportion in the NGO/Expert category is a reasonable 7.2%. This chart also introduces one of the dilemmas for minority group workers – there is a negative category here of ‘criminals’. Clearly, if all minority members were portrayed as criminal, there would be a serious problem of representation. However, here there is only 1.3% of criminal sources, the same figure as that of cultural sources and the second lowest category in the range. Thus it should be pointed out that all groups contain undesirable elements as well as the majority of ordinary law-abiding people, and although there is no qualitative evidence, the presence of this category may very well be fair comment.

Conclusion – Directions for Further Research.

The core utility of a quantitative study is to map the field, in order to uncover trends, spikes and inconsistencies. The research so far clearly reveals a number of questions about the coverage of minority groups in the Caucasus, and thus directions for further research in alternative modes. Based on the evidence, the following suggestions are made for further research into this field.

- Georgia should be treated as a separate media environment rather than as part of a ‘South Caucasus’ collocation. A key concern should be the way in which ethnic minorities are reported, because it is the most covered minority group in Georgia, but has very poor quality sourcing.
- The impact of the war over Nagorny-Karabakh on the media coverage of refugees and internally displaced people is clearly highly political. Production studies should establish the extent to which the respective governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan have attempted to influence coverage of this sensitive issue.
- The inconsistencies between measures of newsworthiness and audience impact, such as the differences between the amount of coverage of minority groups and the amount that are used in TV announcements and front pages should be investigated qualitatively. Key issues are whether there is sensational or responsible reporting, and to what extent are minority groups visible to the general public.
- The question of visibility should also be studied in relation to the lack of pictures accompanying articles in the Press.
- Finally, production studies must be undertaken to empower minority groups to access the media. A key issue is how to broaden the range of sources used for minority group coverage, and by analysing the problems that journalists’ currently encounter using minority group sources will empower minorities to overcome these and provide the media with newsworthy stories.