

Research Article

THE ROLE OF GEORGIAN MEDIA IN TURNING THE POLITICAL PROCESS

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Abstract.

The article discusses the features of media outlets in Georgia. The author analyzes the role of the media in transforming the political processes of independent Georgia. The article emphasizes the role of society in the existence of independent and objective media outlets. It emphasizes that the public itself must protect the interests of the independent media in order the latter to be able to fulfill its obligation in good faith.

Key words: Political processes, Georgia, free media, high degree of democracy.

Media outlets in Georgia have always played a major role in shaping public opinion, as Georgian society blindly accepts the informational content offered by media outlets. Often Georgian media outlets are characterized by negative features and make it difficult to understand the events or facts. It is difficult when the public receives information about the same fact / event that confuses them and makes it difficult to understand the real content. It should also be noted that the media has played a major role in the transformation of the Georgian political process. This is a feature of Georgian media. It does not enjoy great credibility on the part of the public, although at crucial moments it still forms and consolidates public opinion. Any "propaganda" through the media (the term is still relevant in Georgia as a Soviet legacy) is very effective, and every government that has come to Georgia so far has tried to use the media as its own weapon to inform the masses. The interpreted presentation of the facts helped to arouse "managed" positions among the masses. The example of Georgia's experience shows that in modern international relations, the media play a vital role in the formation of both international public and political life.

Representatives of the state and the media should be aware that there are instances where co-ordinated co-operation between the media and the state is needed. This is not reprehensible if this refers to the avoidance of potential threats connected to national security issues. Even a small fact that is spread through the media can cause international tension. In this case the state and the media share responsibilities equally (the examples of this case are: the issue of Davit Gareji, the issue of using the territory of Georgia for the transit of arms during the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan) (Aladashvili, 2020; Vakhtangashvili, 2019).

The state is obliged:

- To control media outlets that threaten the national interests of the country at the domestic and foreign levels;
- Provide timely prevention of all existing threats.

This will allow us to avoid the development of the country's public and political life in the wrong direction and to promote the building of a dignified, traditional state that carries western values (Gorgodze, 2018).

On the other hand, there is the issue of media freedom and the development of a high level of democracy. How critical can objective media be? And how acceptable is this criticism to the existing authorities?

All serious political upheavals in Georgia began with the active involvement of the media. Television, which was almost the only source of news in the early 1990s, did not really play a positive role in preventing armed civil strife. He was unable to do so due to biased positions and was unable to contribute to the consolidation of society.

In 2003 the Rose Revolution could not have taken place without TV channel - Rustavi2. At first, it actually declared an information war with the government of that time, and then played a major role in its overthrow (Dabrundashvili, 2013).

The United National Movement government would have stayed in power longer if TV Imedi had not launched the anti-government campaign (Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, 2009; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pc1Ehzi8qlk>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQO9AFIImTg>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZn3UkhhbKe0>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNp4PHysh6k>).

However, modern political circles still make the same mistakes and still stubbornly try to utilize unconstitutional methods and use the media as a source of their own "propaganda". Unfortunately, the Georgian society and the civil sector are getting used to this.

Any opposition force tries to use the media in bad faith and to spread the pseudo-reality seen with its own eyes. Since coming to power these political forces are forming state media outlets and the same thing continues again. The civil sector always encourages oppositional sentiments and not justice. However, the specifics of the Georgian civil sector are another research topic.

In terms of media democracy, Georgia still maintains its leading position compared to neighboring countries, but this is not enough and it is time for the society to demand a fair and objective media. It is important for the public to refrain from acting as an instrument for any political force and, conversely, to force the media to cover events with more objectivity. Without media pluralism, it would be impossible (Robakidze, 2019).

Any political force will always try to impose its own interests on the society through the media if the society does not have a clear and sharp reaction to it. If we look at the history of Georgia's independence, all the government forces first deceived the society, then exploited it, which was followed by undemocratic processes. The society first ousted Gamsakhurdia from Georgia, then organized the Rose Revolution, then democratically changed the government in the 2012 elections, but the desire to support an independent and objective media still did not arise. The rules of fair play are not acceptable to Georgian political circles, which is a cause for concern. Scientific circles, together with civil society, need to take effective steps to raise public awareness with the help of educational and community engagement activities. Qualified and conscientious journalists should enjoy high support from the public. In other words, the society itself must become the guarantor of an objective and independent media and a free media will be the achievement of society. In this case, the impact on the political process will be positive and the degree of democracy will increase significantly.

So the Georgian society should think and answer the following questions:

1. What type of media does it need?
2. What kind of influence should the media have on the political process?
3. How can society support the free media?
4. What role should businesses play in supporting free media?

These questions need answers from scientific and civil society. They must be coordinated, achievable in a short time and must precede the election cycle. In this way the civic self-awareness will develop and all participants of the political process will take more responsibility for their own actions.

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