

2004

# Media coverage of the 2003 parliamentary election in the Republic of Georgia

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**MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 2003 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana  
State University and Agricultural and Mechanical  
College in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree  
Master of Mass Communication

in

Theanship School of Mass Communication

by

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December, 2004

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## ABSTRACT

The November 2, 2003, parliamentary election caused a significant political crisis in the Republic of Georgia. During the election campaign, the political parties questioned the desire of the government to carry out a fair election. They blamed President Edward Shevardnadze for fabricating the election.

After the election, the opposition parties did not recognize the results and claimed that there were massive fabrications (the number of people who voted was much more than the number of people who were in voters' list). The public supported this position, and several huge demonstrations demanded the resignation of President Shevardnadze. Two weeks after the election, under the pressure from all parts of Georgia, Shevardnadze stepped down. Since the main symbol of the opposition was rose, this event was called the "Revolution of the Rose."

This study analyzes the media coverage of the parliamentary election. The aim of the study is to examine the extent the government and opposition were able to affect news coverage.

The study involves the descriptive content analysis of the stories published by three of the highest circulated Georgian newspapers – *24 Hours*, *Resonance*, and *Alia* from September 25, 2003 when the election campaign officially started, to the election day November 2, 2003.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The November 2, 2003, parliamentary election caused a significant political crisis in the Republic of Georgia. During the election campaign, the political parties questioned the desire of the government to carry out a fair election. They blamed President Edward Shevardnadze for fabricating the election.

After the election, the opposition parties did not recognize the results and claimed that there were massive fabrications (the number of people who voted was much more than the number of people who were in voters' list). The public supported this position, and several huge demonstrations demanded the resignation of President Shevardnadze. Two weeks after the election, under the pressure from all parts of Georgia, Shevardnadze stepped down. Since the main symbol of the opposition was rose, this event was called the "Revolution of the Rose."

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### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Republic of Georgia, a former Soviet republic, declared its independence in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the same year, Edward Shevardnadze, former Communist Party leader and former foreign minister of the Soviet Union, became

the president of Georgia. In the beginning, the majority of Georgians supported him. It was considered by the general public that his experience and international contacts would help Georgia overcome the political and economic crisis the country faced after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Shevardnadze announced new policies for Georgia, encouraging participatory democracy and market-oriented reforms. Many young and Western-educated people were involved in governmental bodies. The young generation of politicians, called “reformers” and “radicals,” took several crucial positions in the different branches of the government such as chairman of parliament, ministers of justice, finance and economy, head of Supreme Court, etc.

At the same time, President Shevardnadze also supported the representatives of the old communist bureaucracy. They controlled all law enforcement and security agencies. The reformers demanded radical changes in the political and economic life of Georgia, abandoning communist-styled governing and reforming of law enforcement agencies to protect civil rights.

Shevardnadze was in the center of the battle between these two groups and tried to maintain the balance. However, the disagreement became public in 1998-2000, and finally Shevardnadze announced that he was disappointed by the reformers. Consequently, the reformers were forced to resign from all governmental positions. They formed an opposition political alliance that became the main threat to the power of President Shevardnadze.

At the same time, with help of western organizations, the non-governmental groups such as Liberty Institute and Young Lawyers’ Association emerged in Georgia.

These voluntary groups were focused on civil liberties and criticized the government for human rights' violations. They also were active regarding fairness of the elections and monitored all elections conducted in Georgia

These two groups, the reformers and non-governmental organizations, were in close relationship. In fact, they created an informal joint movement which questioned the fairness of the local elections conducted in 2002 and announced that they would not allow the government to fabricate the results of parliamentary election in 2003. The fairness of the elections became the main issue in the political battle that ultimately caused the resignation of President Shevardnadze in fall 2003.

As a result, the political leader of the reformer's movement, Michael Saakashvili, was elected as the new president of Georgia, while many activists of the civil groups took seats in the parliament. Since the main symbol of the opposition was the rose, this event was called the "Revolution of the Rose."

Officially, Georgia has more than fifty political parties. However, most of them do not have any significant influence on the political life of the country. Only five or six parties dominated the political stage before the Revolution of Rose. These parties are:

National Movement. This political organization was established by Michael Saakashvili, the former minister of justice in the Shevardnadze administration, who became the most prominent opponent of president Shevardnadze. Saakashvili resigned from his post in 1999, claiming that the government was corrupt. He was the leader of the Revolution of Rose and was elected president in January 4, 2004.

Democrats. The leader of this organization was Zurab Zhvania, the former chairman of parliament, who also resigned from his post in 1999 as a sign of protest

toward president Shevardnadze. Zhvania was considered a more moderate opponent of Shevardnadze than Saakashvili. Since January 2004 he has been the prime minister of Georgia.

National Movement and Democrats had led the anti-government movement. After the resignation of President Shevardnadze, these parties were united.

For New Georgia. Progovernmental political block established by President Shevardnadze. The majority of party activists were representatives of old communist bureaucracy and high level government officials.

Union of Revival. The political party led by the governor of one of the regions of Georgia, Aslan Abashidze, which supported President Shevardnadze. After the Revolution of Rose, the Union of Revival was disbanded.

Labor Party. Radical, left-wing political organization that opposed President Shevardnadze as well as the National Movement and Democrats.

New Rights. Right-wing political party supported by business groups and corporations. Although New Rights was considered an oppositional political organization, it did not support Revolution of Rose.

## **Media**

New, independent media emerged in Georgia in the early 1990s. In Soviet times, Georgian media did not even exist. It was part of the Soviet propaganda machine. The authoritarian system used media as a tool to achieve its goals and objectives.

Unlike many former Soviet countries, the government of Georgia recognized constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and abolished any kind of censorship. Since then, laws regarding freedom of expression came under strong attention from the

Western and European countries and international organizations such as Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, etc. Such scrutiny prevented the government, as well as the political groups, from limiting freedom of expression. Even more, the new law regarding freedom of expression adopted by the parliament of Georgia after the Revolution of Rose sets the highest liberal standards.

Despite the liberal constitutional framework, Georgian media have faced many problems. Two types of difficulties may be identified: lack of professionalism among Georgian journalists and the undeveloped business side of the media industry. A study conducted by the Georgian non-governmental organization Center of Democratic Innovations (2003) found that 38 percent of the examined stories had problems with sources and verification of information; facts and opinions were not distinguished in 50 percent of the stories; moreover, headlines did not correspond with content in 20 percent of the stories.

There are more than 100 officially registered independent newspapers, magazines and TV stations in Georgia. Although the level of advertising is low the majority of media outlets manage to operate regularly. Newspapers especially suffer from lack of advertising revenue and rely only on income from circulation. This is one reason some newspapers are affiliated with certain political groups and parties – for the financial support they provide.

Overall, the media outlets are owned by individuals who invested their own funds. However, there are differences among the media. Unlike newspapers, the majority of TV stations (four of five) are controlled by big corporations and business groups. Media chains and conglomerates, however, are weak. Actually, there are only two media holdings, *Rustavi 2* and *Imedi*, which include TV station and daily newspaper.

Revolution of Rose was the first real case among the former Soviet republics when the representatives of the old communist bureaucracy were replaced by the opposition. The former communist party leaders and bureaucrats still dominate in the post soviet republics. In some countries they have even restored the totalitarian style of governing. That is why, after Revolution of Rose international media supposed that the Georgian case could serve as a precedent for other governments. It is not surprising that some leaders of former soviet republics expressed their anxiety regarding outcomes of the Revolution of Rose. For instance, Askar Akaev, the president of the former Soviet republic Kyrgyzstan and communist party former leader characterized the Revolution of Rose as “the challenge for all of us.” Therefore, the scrutinizing of the events linked with the Revolution of Rose seems to be important not only in terms of Georgian politics, but to other former Soviet republics and new emerging democracies around the world.

Many political observers and commentators questioned the role of media before and during Revolution of Rose. Most believe that media coverage, especially television coverage, of the parliamentary elections set good background for the opposition to demand the resignation of President Shevardnadze. Even more, the former opposition leaders, now government officials, admit that the independent TV stations were their unique ally.

These judgments go along with political scientists’ belief that media are a key elements of the political process. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) in their books *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, argue that a major source of instability in politics is the shifting attention of the media. The media play an integral role in the policy process by directing attention ultimately to different aspects of the same issues over time and by

shifting attention from one issue to another. Based on the empirical research, they suppose that the political process quite often makes reporters useful allies to politicians seeking to alter the prevailing conception of an issue and to move from one venue to another. By portraying issues in particular ways, politicians attempt to move their issues more receptive venues.

Since there are no studies or data that look into the media treatment of the Revolution of Rose, the aim of this study is to examine the stories published in the three of the highest circulated Georgian newspapers, *24 Hours*, *Alia*, and *Resonance*, during the elections campaign before of the Revolution of Rose.

Valentino, Beckman, and Buhr (2001) argue that during the election campaign the public relies on the press not only as a source of information about candidates but also for the context in which to place that information, and readers are prone to adopt the particular frame used by the reporters.

The researchers suppose that the basic critique of the way the press covers American political campaigns states that the press interprets campaigns as games. Journalists view candidates as strategic players who position each other on issues in politically expedient ways, devoid of sincere desire to identify and solve important societal problems.

Patterson (1994) believes that the mind-set of most journalists drives strategic coverage. His analysis of *The New York Times*' coverage demonstrates that campaign news "framed within the context of strategy and electoral success" has substantially replaced "policy"-oriented coverage framed within the context of policy and leadership

problems and issues. Many other studies also indicate that strategic coverage has become dominant (see, for example, Fallows, 1997)

Cappella and Jamison (1998) found that strategic news frames activate cynical responses to political process, inviting the attribution of cynical motives to political actors in campaigns. Cynicism toward particular candidates might then get transferred onto the system as a whole, leading to a public less confident in its democratic institutions and less willing to participate in the selection of its representatives. They consider absence of trust as the center of political cynicism; Therefore, they suppose that press coverage is an important factor which influences public's confidence in government.

These findings are extremely important in to the present study. The events occurred after the election in the Republic of Georgia indicated Georgian citizens' distrust in their government across the country. Therefore, a frame analysis of the election stories gives us the opportunity to discuss the media's contribution to this process. In addition, as Entman (2004) argues, developing an understanding of framing helps deepen our theoretical insight more generally into the political influence of the news media and into the relationship among elites, media, and the public.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Media scholars found the concept of framing a very useful way to examine news. Severin and Tankard (2001) even argued that to a certain extent, the concept of media framing presents a new paradigm to replace the older paradigm of studying the “objectivity and bias” of the media. Watzlawik, Beavin, and Jackson (1967), in their book, *The Pragmatics of Human Communications*, made a distinction between the command and report aspects of communication – with command referring to what is said and how it is said. The distinction emphasized the assumption that how messages are understood depends on how messages are formatted. Gitlin (1980) linked the frame to news text by identifying the persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion. Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) defined media framing as the central organizing idea from news that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration.

According to Entman (1993), a frame is determined in large part by its outcome or effect: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p.52)

McCombs (1997) considered framing as an extension of agenda setting - framing is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion in the media agenda when a particular object is discussed. McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, and

Liamas (1997) suggested that framing as a term should be replaced by attribute agenda setting or second level agenda setting.

The existence of multiple definitions of framing is considered by researchers as a problem. Cappella and Jemison (1997) pointed out that the concept of framing had been used in different ways in several different disciplines to mean different things and this produces conceptual indeterminacy.

Neuman, Just, and Criger (1992) proposed that the way news is framed by media and how the audience frames the news must be distinguished. Scientists argue that the effects may be either similar or different.

Scheufele (1999) specified two concepts of framing: media (news) frames and individual frames. Scheufele considers the definition by Gamson and Modigliani (1987) as a basis to describe the media frame: a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue. He also pointed out that Entman's (1993) definition of news framing is similar in meaning but more detailed.

### **Do frames matter?**

Cappella and Jamison (1997) argued that frames are not just ways of representing news content; they have implications for processing news and are the predictive basis for observed effects of news formats on citizens.

Nelso, Oxley, and Clawson (1997) looked into psychological aspects of framing and suppose that framing is a process which is distinct from traditional persuasion via belief changes. They argued that framing effects derive not from the presentation of new information but from the activation of portions of recipients' existing knowledge

structures. The results of the study suggested that the mass media, and other institutions of mass political communication, can profoundly influence public opinion even without any overt attempt at persuasion or manipulation.

Several studies indicated that the framing of news stories influences the ways people receive and interpret information about certain issues. In experiential studies, Rhee (1997) showed that the framing process involves not only the ability of message properties to alter the interpreter's understanding of a message, but also knowledge that the interpreter brings into the interpretive process. The results of the study demonstrated the existence of framing effects for both print and electronic media.

The analysis conducted by Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan (2002) revealed that news media framing of certain issue regimes explained changes in mass evaluation of President Clinton throughout his presidency, including surprising trends in the Lewinsky period.

There are two possible approaches to content analyzing frames in the news. The inductive approach involves analyzing a news story with an open view to attempt to reveal the array of possible frames; the deductive approach involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news. The deductive approach makes it necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of frames likely to be in the news because frames that are not defined a priori may be overlooked.

Based on the content analysis of news, as well as in-depth interviews with journalists and public opinion surveys, Neuman, Just, and Criger (1992) identified several different news frames most commonly used by the American media.

Conflict frame. This frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest.

Economic consequences frame. The frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country.

Responsibility frame. This frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group.

Morality frame. This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions.

Human interest frame. This frame brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event.

Cappella and Jemison (1997) developed a system of framing analysis for election campaigns by identifying the two main (strategy and issue) frames. Strategy coverage may include the following phrases: winning and losing as the central concern; the language of wars, games, and completion; a story with performers, critics, and audience; centrality of performance, style, and perception of the candidate; heavy weighing of polls and the candidate's standing in them. Issue-oriented coverage, on the other hand, emphasizes problems that matter to citizens and the proposed solutions to those problems.

In terms of election campaigns, conflict and responsibility frames may be considered as the ingredients of a strategic frame. Along with horse race frame they cover all aspect of strategic coverage. At the same time they are more informative and detailed

and allow researchers to not only to identify the type of coverage but also to go deeper in explanations. Therefore, the five general frames seem to be more useful for understanding of election process.

However, both approaches are based on the American political system in which usually only two major political parties go through the election process. Hence, it is less valuable for the countries with a multi-party system. For instance, conflict frames as well as responsibility frames may have several dimensions. Conflict frames in terms of American politics mean conflict between Republicans and Democrats while in the case of other countries conflict frames may occur between the ruling party and oppositional parties as well as among the oppositional parties. It is especially true regarding Eastern European countries where the political landscape is under formation and sometimes, instead of criticizing the ruling party, oppositional parties fight and blame each other. Therefore, the conflict frame can be more suitable if we break it down into two subgroups.

- conflict with ruling party: conflict between ruling party and oppositional parties
- inter-party conflict : conflict among oppositional parties

By stressing the component of government responsibility, the responsibility frame may be redefined to a government responsibility frame. Consequently, there will be seven categories of framing – government responsibility, inter-party conflict, conflict with ruling party, horse race, morality, human interest, economic consequences. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1: What news frames did Georgian newspapers use during the elections campaign?**

**RQ2: Did the use of frames vary by newspapers?**

**RQ3: How was each frame associated with major political parties?**

As discussed above, the coverage of the parliamentary elections not only was bounded by the issues of campaigning, the fairness of the election also received significant media attention. During the election campaign, both the government and the oppositional parties tried to influence the public perception of this issue.

The oppositional parties claimed that government did nothing to improve election law and procedures. Georgian and international non-governmental organizations tried to demonstrate to the Georgian public that government deliberately avoided any change to improve the election procedures. The government was not going to carry out a fair election, the oppositional parties argued. People in the government sought to use their power to prevent the opposition from winning the election.

Although the representatives of the government admitted that the questions about the fairness of the election had some legitimate ground, they blamed the oppositional parties in playing politics with the issue of election's fairness. The president and his supporters declared that the main aim of the opposition was to undermine stability and redirect responsibility for the possible disorders.

The controversy between the government and the opposition attracted attention of the international community as well. A group of American politicians led by Senator John McCain visited Georgia to help work out a reasonable plan for the settlement of the conflict. The representatives of the Counsel of Europe and other international

organizations also tried to facilitate this process. However, these attempts did not have any tangible results.

The disagreement regarding the election's fairness, of course, was one of the main topics of Georgian media during the election. Since citizens protested mostly because of the belief that government disregarded their choice and fabricated the results of the elections, the stories concerning possible falsification should be discussed deeper and frame analysis alone will not be enough to achieve this goal.

As Lawrence (2000) points out, understanding the shifting representation of groups, events, and issues in the news requires thinking of the news as socially constructed representations of reality and as an arena of problem construction in which struggles to designate and define public problems are waged.

Therefore, the questions of what kinds of "realities" are represented in news coverage of policy issues remain a key. Scholars argue that examination of sources distribution and recurring key words and terms can provide substantial background for understanding the process of news construction.

Hall, Chas, Jefferson, Clark, and Roberts (1978) contended that the media do not autonomously create news items; rather, they are cued to specific news topics by regular and institutional sources. They suggested that in a critical sense, the media are frequently not the primary definers of news events at all, but their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in reproducing the definitions of those who have privileged access to the media as accredited sources.

Schudson (2003) pointed out that news organization are constrained by limitations on time and money, and both of these are controlled by the requirement of deadlines for

putting out a news product on a daily basis. Therefore, the regularity of news publication means news organizations have a thirst for a readily available and reliable flow of information. Government agencies and politicians, correspondingly, are eager to satisfy the cravings of the news organizations, and they make information, on a regular basis in a form that the media can easily digest (Schudson, 2003).

According to Gans (1980), sources' successful access to the journalists is shaped by at least four interrelated factors: (1) incentives; (2) power (3) the ability to supply suitable information; and (4) geographic and social proximity to the journalist. Of the four, the ability to provide suitable information is crucial, but the other three factors enhance that ability. Gans noted that although sources potentially can include anyone, their recruitment and their access to journalists reflect the hierarchies of nation and society.

Gitlin (1980) supposed that the routines of journalism, set within the economic and political interests of the news organizations, normally and regularly combine to select certain visions of reality over others. Day by day, normal organizational procedures "define" the story, identify the protagonists and the issue, and suggest appropriate attitudes toward them.

As Tuchman (1978) explained, each newspaper story is a collection of facts assessed and structured by journalists. The meaning of objectivity tells reporters that, in a world full of competing sources making competing claims, it is best to report what can be officially verified and make less use of sources and claims that are most likely to invite charges of bias. Since elites are in the best position to create verifiable claims and activities for reporters, the news is often biased in favor of official voices and views.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) defined sources as external suppliers of raw material, whether speeches, interviews, corporate reports or governmental hearings. Therefore, they have a tremendous effect on mass media content, because journalists cannot include in their news reports what they do not know. Scholars also argued that the media's over-reliance on government officials is because of officials' availability, authority, and credibility.

Official's interest in routinizing the daily business of governing and communicating with the public, combined with journalists' interest in routinizing news production, creates a symbiotic relationship between reporters and official sources. Consequently, the news usually quite faithfully reflects the views, concerns, and activities of political elites. As Graber (1993) pointed out, journalists select the sources, mostly official, through whose eyes the public views the world.

Bennett (1996), who outlined the five preliminary rules for representing politics in the news, supposed that the first rule of political reporting is the imperative to build a story line – whenever possible – upon official or at least authoritative viewpoints. The “get an official reaction” rule is formally institutionalized in the beat system that links reporters to officials who are presumed to occupy powerful authoritative positions in decision-making or policy-implementations processes.

Gitlin (1980) suggested that only episodically, in moments of political crisis and large scale shifts in the overarching hegemonic ideology, do political and economic managers intervene directly to regear or reinforce the prevailing journalistic routine. According to him, the closer an issue is to the core interests of national political elites, the more likely is a blackout of news that effectively challenges that interest. But if an issue

is contested at an elite level, or if an elite position has not yet crystallized, journalism's more regular approach is to process social opposition, to control its image and to diffuse it at the same time, to absorb what can be absorbed into the dominant structure of definitions.

Scholars have recognized that an important variable determining activists' entrance into the news is their ability to give reporters something newsworthy to report. They must create unusual or dramatic events to gain news attention. Bennett and Lawrence (1995) found that dramatic, unsettling news events can provide journalists with story material while encouraging them to seek out sources who can contextualize those events.

The study conducted by Lawrence (2000) showed that the news about police use of force is usually structured around official claims, but some dramatic "accidental events" encourage journalists to open news gates to more critical voices and views. Official responses to accidental news events have to contend with the narratives suggested by those events.

The way officials respond provides clear story cues to journalists. Staging public appearances and making public promises are signals that officials have recognized (if not validated) the problem. Such responses cue journalists that a major news story may be at hand, a story that satisfies all journalistic standards simultaneously.

The second rule formulated by Bennett (1996) involved keying a story to disagreements among officials – particularly officials with the power to affect the outcome of the developing news event. Such conflict serves as a signal for journalists to

expand a story to the views of experts, social groups, opinion polls and other sources that reflect the observed differences among powerful politicians.

Many studies show the dominant role of governmental sources. For example, Brown, Bybee, Weardon, and Murdoch (1987) examined news sources and news channels appearing in *the New York Times*, *the Washington Post* and four North Carolina newspapers. They discovered that front page and wire stories relied very heavily upon governmental routine. Stephen and Coulson (2000) found that governmental sources dominate in coverage of the Clean Air Act. Consumers and environmentalists were seldom used as sources. Research by Powell and Self (2003) shows that governmental sources dominate business crisis reporting, and data provided by Li and Izard (2003) indicate that official sources dominated in coverage of the 9/11 attack.

Stempel and Culbertson (1984) suggested that the role of certain types of news sources in press coverage may be indexed. Frequency of mention in the media may be said to reflect prominence. Tendency to be quoted rather than simply be reported on might tap a kind of dominance. Prominence and dominance might both reflect assertiveness, credibility, accessibility, quotability, and other factors.

Analysis of the distribution of sources may be considered as one of the important factors in examination of the extent the government and opposition were able to affect news coverage of fairness of the election in the Republic of Georgia.

As Lawrence (2000) suggested, the way the news media frames events and problems depends largely on the claims provided by the sources on whom journalists rely most heavily. Which problems are either designated or warded off depends upon how the

news simultaneously confers and denies power to different groups' perspectives on reality.

Social scientists suggest that when policy concerning controversial issues is being developed, policy actors with vital interests in those issues use the news media to sway public opinion to support their points of view.

As Elder and Cobb (1983) pointed out, successful groups may achieve media attention largely through the effective manipulation of symbols. They argued that symbolism can be understood as “socially shared coding system used to process, simplify, and give meaning to the deluge of incoming stimuli and information every individual constantly confronts” (Elder and Cobb, 1983, p.55-56)

Davis (1995) proposed that communication and the effective use of symbols are crucial and often overlooked aspects of the political competition among interest groups. Therefore, “a group’s real power should be measured by its skill at defining and redefining an evolving issue to its advantage as circumstances warrant” (Davis, 1995, p. 29).

Andsager (2000) supposed that such symbols may be visual, but are more often verbal. “In competing to shape policy, interest groups develop rhetoric to garner media coverage. Over time, policy actors can create a terminology that not only clearly conveys their stance on an issue, but serves as well to define and categorize them” (Andsager, 2000, p. 578). She argued that rhetoric combined with news framing can be an influential tool in shaping public opinion and, in turn, public policy.

Since one of the aims of the present study is to examine the extent the government and opposition were able to affect news coverage of fairness of the election in the

Republic of Georgia, recurring key words and terms should be identified. Based on the sample of the news stories the following key words and terms can be named: “Fabrication of election,” “imperfect voters’ list,” “destabilization,” “suppression of human rights,” “political games,” “improved voters’ list,” “Failure of election,” “Defense of people’s choice.”

Four of recurring key words and terms can be considered anti-governmental:

- 1. Imperfect voters’ list :** The opposition activists blamed the government that the list of voters contained the names of non-existent voters, so called “ghost voters,” and demanded verification of the voters’ list. For example: “The voters’ list is imperfect and should be revised.”
- 2. Fabrication of election:** The opposition activist claimed that the government had fabricated the previous local election and was going to do the same during the parliamentary election. Example: “We should not allow government to fabricate the results of the election.”
- 3. Suppression of human rights:** This represented the opposition’s generalizations of the battle and expresses the meaning that the fabrication of the election’s results should be considered as a violation of human rights. Example: “The government once again tries to suppress our right to carry out the fair election.”
- 4. Defense of people’s choice:** The anti-governmental groups threatened that they would question the results of the election if there were massive fabrication. Example: “The government should know that we will defend the choice made by people.”

The following key words and terms may be considered pro-governmental:

1. Improved voters' list: The representatives of government claimed that the voter's list had been improved and that the oppositional parties had no reasons for complaining. Example: "Voters' list has been improved as much as possible."
2. Destabilization: President Shevardnadze and his supporters argued that the demands of the oppositional parties aimed to undermine the situation in the country. Example: "The government will not allow anybody to destabilize the political situation in Georgia."
3. Political games: Pro-governmental activists used this term to accuse the opposition parties of playing politics with the issue of fairness of the election. Example: "It is all about political games by stressing the fairness of the election the opposition parties are trying to attract more voters."
4. Failure of the election: Pro-governmental activists claimed that the opposition parties did not have a chance to win the election, and they were trying to make the election fail. Example: "The only way for them to avoid political death is to fail the election."

Based on the presented literature, the second set of research questions can be formulated in the following ways:

**RQ4: What type of sources did newspapers use in stories regarding fairness of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Georgia?**

**RQ5: Did the use of sources vary by newspapers?**

**RQ6: What keywords and terms were used by media to construct the debate regarding the fairness of the election?**

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The study involves a descriptive content analysis of stories published by three Georgian daily newspapers – *24 Hours*, *Resonance*, and *Alia* from September 25, 2003, when the election campaign officially started, to the election day November 2, 2003. These newspapers are most circulated daily papers in Georgia. They share 60 percent of daily papers' entire market (*24 Hours* – 14 percent, *Resonance* - 18 percent, *Alia* - 28 percent).

On a continuum ranging from tabloid, on the one hand, to elite, on the other, *Alia* is closer to the sensationalist, *24 Hours* is the elite and *Resonance* is in the middle. Overall, 177 stories covered election issues (the stories were selected by browsing all stories published in that period of time). Each story is a unit of analyses. Newspaper, source, placement, frame of the story, political party, and key words were considered as key variables. Categories of the variables were defined as the following:

**Sources:** Official source were defined as any representative of governmental institutions; opposition source as any representative of oppositional political movements; Non governmental organizations (NGO) source as any representative of non-governmental civil rights groups. Categories of source also included Citizen and Other

**Placement:** Front page, inside.

**Newspapers:** *24 Hours*, *Resonance*, and *Alia*.

**Party:** For New Georgia, Union of Revival, Labor, Democrats, National Movement, New Rights

Key words and Terms: Fabrication, improved voters' list, suppression of humans rights, defense people's choice, destabilization, improved voters' list, political games, failure of election

Nominal level of measurement was used to measure newspaper, placement, political party, and key words

Frame: Government responsibility, Inter-party conflict, Conflict with ruling party, Horse race Morality, Human interest, Economic consequences

### **Frame measurement**

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) to measure the extent to which certain frames appear in stories developed a series of questions to which the coder has to answer *yes* or *no*. Based on the approach grounded by them the following sets of the questions were formulated:

#### Government responsibility frame

1. Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
2. Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/ problem?
3. Does the story suggest solution (s) to the problem/issue?
4. Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

#### Conflict with the ruling party

1. Does the story refer to two or more sides of the problem or issue?
2. Does the story reflect disagreement between ruling party and oppositional parties?
3. Does one party reproach another?

### Inter-party conflict

1. Does the story refer to two or more sides of the problem or issue?
2. Does the story reflect disagreement between oppositional parties?
3. Does one party reproach another?

### Horse race frame

1. Does the story contain the results of public opinion polls?
2. Does the story establish ranking among the political parties?
3. Does the story monitor the progress in ranking?

### Economic consequences frame

1. Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?
2. Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?
3. Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?

### Human interest frame

1. Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
2. Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?
3. Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
4. Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
5. Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?

## Morality frame

1. Does the story contain any moral message?
2. Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?
3. Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

The coefficient of frame's presence was evaluated by the value calculated in the following way: The number of "yes" answers is divided by the total number of the questions in the corresponding set. Thus the value of frame presence was ranged from .00 to 1. If the coefficient of frame's presence was more than 0.5, the frame was present and the nominal level of measurement was used.

The author of this study and another Georgian language mass communication graduate student carried out the coding. Intercoder reliability was measured for each key variable by using Holsti's formula.

$$\text{Reliability} = 2 * M / (N1 + N2)$$

M is the number of coding decisions with which two coder agree

N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder

The results of the test showed the high level of intercoder reliability for all variables: newspaper = 1.0; placement = 1.0; topic = .94; official source = 1.0; opposition = .95; NGO = .1; citizen = 1.0. Anti governmental key words and terms: fabrication = 1.0; imperfect voters' list = 1.0; suppression of human rights = .93; Defense of people's choice = .94. Pro-governmental key words and terms: destabilization = 1.0; improved voters' list = 1.0; Political game = 1.0; failure of the election = 1.0. Frames: government responsibility frame = 1.00, inter-party conflict = .92; ruling-party conflict = .94;

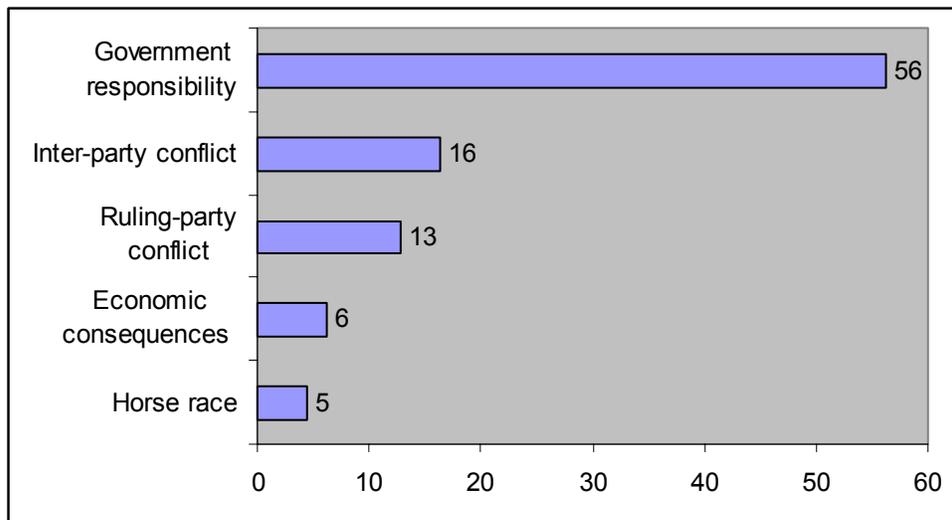
economic consequence = .91; horse race = 1.00. Political parties: Revival Union = 1.0; Labor party = 1.0; Democrats = 1.0; National Movement = 1.0; New Rights = 1.0.

Morality and human interest frames could not be computed since they did not appear in any of the stories during the inter-coder reliability test. Based on this the final results do not contain data regarding those frames.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

There were 177 stories regarding the election during the time period, 98 (56 %) of which dealt with the campaigning and 79 stories (44 %) focused on the fairness of the election.

The first research question asks what major news frames Georgian newspapers used when covering the campaign. Chart 1 shows that the government responsibility frame was the most often used. Fifty-six percent of the stories contained the main characteristics of this frame. Inter-party conflict and ruling-party frames appeared in 16% and 13% of the stories. The number of stories with economic consequences, horse race, morality, and human interest frames respectively was small.



The chart does not include the percentage of frames that rarely appeared.

Chart 1 – percentage of frames used by the newspapers

The distribution of the frames across the newspapers indicated the dominance of the government responsibility frame. For all newspapers, regardless of their editorial policy, differences of target markets, and the level of circulation, government responsibility frame was central (Table 1). Fifty-nine percent of the stories with government responsibility frame were published on the front pages of the newspapers

Table 1 – percentage of frames across the newspapers

	<i>24 Hours</i>	<i>Resonance</i>	<i>Alia</i>
Government responsibility	61	54	55
Inter party conflict	13	15	22
Ruling party conflict	5	13	20
Economic Consequences	3	7	8
Horse race	0	8	5

The coding approach used for the study allowed us to identify how each frame was associated with major political parties. The results showed that government responsibility and ruling party frames mostly were associated with National Movement, the most prominent opponent of President Shevardnadze. Sixty nine percent of the stories that mentioning National Movement contained the key characteristics of the government responsibility frame, the ruling-party conflict frame occurred in 24% of the stories. These were highest percentage among all the parties.

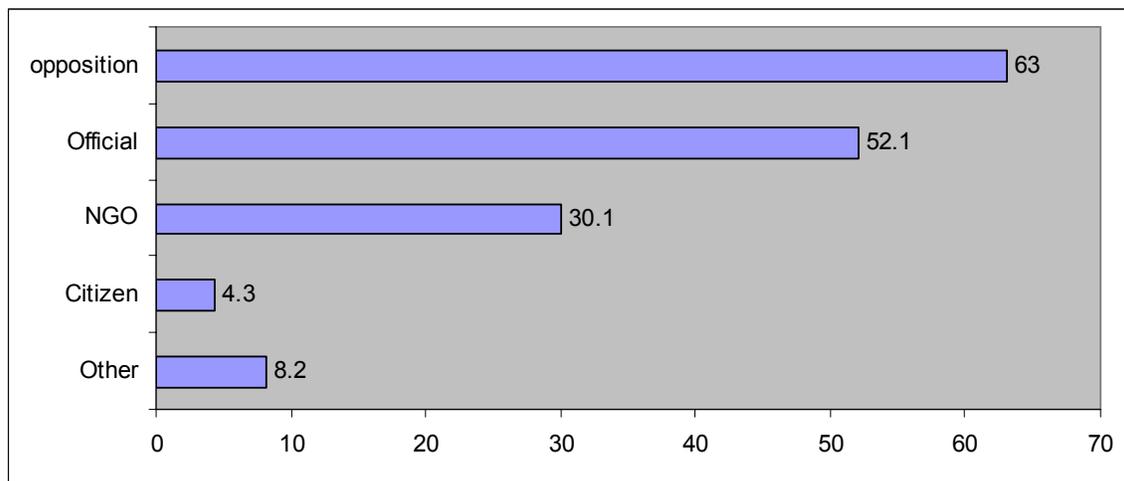
The findings illustrate the government responsibility frame was prominently associated with at least four of five major political parties (Table 2), most notably with National Movement. The highest percentage of inter party conflict was found in the stories mentioned Revival Union (49%).

Table 2 – Major political parties and frames (percentage)

	National Movement	Democrats	Labor Party	Revival Union	New Rights
Government responsibility	69	54	61	31	57
Inter-party conflict	31	18	9	49	28
Ruling-party conflict	24	18	13	10	13
Horse race	12	11	8	13	22
Economic consequences	0	10.7	22	0	4

Research questions four, five, and six examine the stories regarding fairness of the election. The findings indicated the overwhelming use of the government responsibility frame – 71% of stories being attached to questions regarding government responsibility. The newspapers used the front pages for the placement of these election stories in the vast majority of cases (71%).

The distribution of sources is reflected in chart 2. Although official sources occurred in a majority of the stories (52%), the use of the oppositional sources was more frequent (63%). Non-governmental organizations served as the principal source in 30% of the stories.



Since many the stories contained more than one source, the sum exceeds 100 percent

Chart 2 – Distribution of sources (%)

Unlike the frames, there were some differences among the newspapers (Table 3). The use of official sources was the lowest in *24 Hours* – only 39 % percent of the stories being attributed to representatives of the government, while *Resonance* and *Alia* used government source far more often, roughly 62% in each case. The low level of NGO sources was the second prominent feature of *24 Hours*. It also is remarkable that

moderate newspaper *Resonance* never used citizens as sources in the stories regarding the fairness of the election. *Alia* demonstrated the highest use of oppositional sources.

Table 3 – distribution of the sources by newspapers (%)

	<i>24 Hours</i>	<i>Resonance</i>	<i>Alia</i>
Official	39	62	62
Opposition	65	55	77
NGO	19	41	31
Citizen	7	0	8

The last research question examines the use of the political rhetoric in describing fairness of the election (Table 4).

Table 4 – keywords and terms (%)

Anti-governmental		Pro-governmental	
Fabrication	80	Destabilization	25
Imperfect voters' list	51	Improved voters' list	11
suppression of human rights	30	Political game	22
defense people's choice	12	Failure of the election	14

Since many the stories contained more than one keyword, the sums of columns exceed 100 percent.

The results illustrated that anti-governmental keywords (“fabrication,” “imperfect voters' list,” “suppression of human rights,” “defense people’s choice”) appeared in 80% of the stories while the elements of pro-governmental rhetoric (“destabilization,” “improved voters' list,” “political game failure of the election”) were found only in 25 % percent of the stories. “Fabrication” and “imperfect voters’ list” were the most used anti-governmental keywords appearing in 80% and 51% of the stories; 30% contained “suppression of human rights.” The most used pro-governmental key word “destabilization” occurred only in 25% of the stories. The findings revealed that anti-governmental rhetoric dominated in almost all respects.

Table 5 regarding the distribution of the key words and terms by newspapers shows the dominance of anti-governmental key words across all newspapers. The

prevailing anti-governmental key word, “fabrication” was occurred in 87 % percent of the stories published by *24 hours* and in eighty-five percent of the stories published by *Alia*. *Resonance* used this word less frequently (69%). On the other hand, highest percentage of pro-governmental key words was found in this *Resonance*. For instance, 41% of the stories contained the main pro-governmental key word “destabilization,” while *24 Hours* and *Alia* used this word in only 13% percent of the stories. *Resonance* was the leader in the use of other pro-governmental key word and terms as well.

Table 5 – Keywords and terms by newspapers (%)

	<i>24 Hours</i>	<i>Resonance</i>	<i>Alia</i>
Pro-governmental keywords			
Fabrication	87	69	85
imperfect voters' list	48	52	62
suppression of human rights	45	25	20
defense people’s choice	16	7	15
Anti-governmental keywords			
Destabilization	13	41	13
Improved voters' list	6	35	5
Political game	19	24	20
Failure of the election	16	17	6

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the government responsibility frame was the dominant across all newspapers (56%). Inter-party conflict appeared in 16% and ruling-party frames 13% percent of the stories. The government responsibility frame was associated with at least four of the five major political parties, most notably with National Movement, the main opponent of President Shevardnadze. Media were particularly anti-government when covering the fairness of the election; Moreover, the government responsibility frame appeared more often in those stories (71%).

The distribution of sources also indicated the dominance of opposition sources. Although official sources occurred in a majority of the stories (52%), the use of opposition sources was more frequent (63%). Non-governmental organizations served as the source in 30% of the stories. However, unlike the overall frames, there were some differences among newspapers. Opposition sources dominated in *24 Hours* and *Alia*, while *Resonance* used government sources more often. Despite this fact, the government responsibility frame was dominant for *Resonance* as well.

The results also showed that the anti-government key words and terms were used much more often than pro-governmental rhetoric – they prevailed in all newspapers. “Fabrication of the election” was the most prominent anti-government term (85%).

To evaluate the importance of the findings they should be put in the context of the whole political situation in the country. As discussed above, the conflict between reformers and President Shevardnadze had a long history. In the first stage, reformers tried to transform the government from inside. However, the reforms launched by them met an enormous resistance from the old communist bureaucracy. That is why reformers

decided to use the last resort – direct appeal to the public. The opposition formed a broad movement to challenge President Shevardnadze.

Glenn (2003), in his study of the impact of social movements on the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, identified two possible scenarios to transform political institutions – bargaining followed by mobilization and mobilization followed by bargaining.

In case of Georgia, the years reformers spent in the government may be considered as bargaining. The 2003 election campaign was the starting point of mobilization. As Glenn (2003) argued, the key to the ability of the movements to form a new government in a matter of weeks is successful mobilization for the general strike.

In this light, the findings of the study have some very important implications. The framing results showed the predominance of strategic news frames - government responsibility and conflict frames. This phenomenon can be observed in all newspapers regardless of their editorial policy, differences of target markets, and circulation. This fact seems to indicate that there were quite similar approaches across the Georgian paper.

This kind of coverage seems to resemble that of American counterparts. As the literature review suggests, strategic news frames may lead to cynical responses toward the political process. Cynicism toward particular candidates might then get transferred onto the system as a whole, leading to a public less confident in its democratic institutions and less willing to participate in the selection of its representatives. Whether the Georgians may develop a similar apathy toward the political system is a research question that is worth examining in the future.

Cappella and Jamison (1998) considered absence of trust as the center of political cynicism. Therefore, they argued that press coverage is an important factor in influencing the people's confidence in government. Valentino, Beckman, and Buhr (2001) supposed that news frames have a particular influence on people who are less involved in the political process.

This study indicates that Georgian newspapers' coverage of the parliamentary election provided substantial background for the opposition parties. By stressing government responsibility, the media facilitated oppositional parties' efforts to spread their anti-governmental messages, to reduce trust in government, and hence to succeed in supporters' mobilization across the country.

Along with the government responsibility frame, the results show the frequent use of opposition and non-governmental sources in the stories. Sixty-three percent of the stories concerning fairness of the election used opposition sources. Sixty-six percent of the stories in which opposition sources occurred did not contain any reference to the representatives of the government. Gitlin (1980) provided one of the potential explanations of this tendency. He argued that dominance of governmental sources may be questioned only in moments of political crisis and large-scale shifts. The findings also support Lawrence's (2000) suggestion that the way media frame events and problems depends largely on the claims provided by the sources.

However, as discussed above, there were differences among Newspapers. Unlike other newspapers *Resonance* showed quite homogeneous use of the sources. Although government sources appeared in sixty-two percent of the stories, the difference between

use of government and opposition sources was only seven percent (government source sixty-two percent, opposition source fifty-five percent).

It seems that *Resonance*, the oldest daily newspaper in Georgia, tried to provide more balanced coverage and followed the tenet of objectivity much more than the other newspapers. As Tuchman (1978) points out, one of the main reasons for reporters to follow the objectivity tenet is fear of legal lawsuits. The media should be held accountable for any mistakes in the stories.

It is likely that lawsuits may cause much more trouble for media in the transitional countries than it may for media in the countries with solid democratic system. Imperfect judiciary system in transitional countries could allow government to influence court decisions in favor of the government officials. Since 1990, *Resonance* has experienced government pressure and lawsuits many times (especially in early 1990s when democracy was starting to emerge in Georgia). Fifteen-year experience has made *Resonance* more cautious about legal liability. Therefore, whether a paper uses balanced sources could be determined by the background of the newspaper.

In addition, the results illustrated the prevalence of the anti-government keywords and terms. The most frequently used key word “fabrication” appeared in eighty percent of the stories while the major pro-governmental key word “destabilization” reached only twenty-five percent. Other anti-government key words and terms enjoyed dominance positions as well – “improved voters’ list” occurred in forty-five percent of stories, “suppression of human rights” in forty-one percent.

The predominance of the government responsibility frame and the frequent use of the anti-governmental sources and keywords indicate that the opposition influenced the

news construction much more than the government. During this time period media not only designated the problem, shaped it favorably to the opposition, but also identified the directions of the responsibility for the cause of the problem.

The Georgian case may not be an exception. Many studies indicate the influence of political players on media during the elections. For instance, Brandenburg (2002), who looked into the impact of parties on media agenda formation in the 1997 British general election, found that major political parties were the driving forces of the media.

Branderburg's study, as well as other studies, did not indicate such predominance of the particular political players and frames as was found in the case of the Georgian election. For instance, the study of newspapers in Netherlands conducted by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the responsibility frame was heavily present mostly in the serious news outlets while government responsibility frame was dominant in case of Georgian newspapers.

Therefore deeper explanations of the findings should be based on the particular patterns of Georgia media.

Gans (1980) emphasized the role of social proximity in relationships between politicians and journalists. Social proximity (closeness in background, education, etc) , which is influenced by all the structural and demographic factors that shape social relationships, enables people of similar backgrounds and interests to make contact, and obstructs those who differ. As Gans argued, journalists also are members of society and behave similarly with other members of society.

Social proximity may be a key element in discussion of the relationship between Georgian journalists and the young generation of Georgian politicians called "reformers."

They represented the same generation that did not experience the communist regime; they shared the same values and the same principles whereas there was huge gap between journalists and representatives of the old communist bureaucracy. This factor might have led the journalists to act as members of Georgian society, as people who felt the same way as former opposition activists. Hence, media deliberately chose a role as the opposition's political ally in the fight against President Shevardnadze.

Both journalists and reformers understood that fabrication of the election would undermine the future of democracy in Georgia. They also realized that only joint effort of all groups in society could prevent the government from fabricating the election. That is why during that time period symbiotic relationship between media and the opposition seems to be formed to ensure the democratic process. The peaceful resignation of President Shevardnadze indicated that their goal was achieved.

The Revolution of the Rose changed the country dramatically. Members of The former communist elite were forced to leave Georgian political scene and the opposition took all crucial positions in the government. The leader of the Revolution of Rose was elected president on January 4, 2004, and many oppositional and non-governmental activists became government officials. The new government abolished the results of the parliamentary elections and set a new election on March 28, 2004.

New political realities are challenging for Georgian media. They have to adjust their attitudes toward the new government - to keep the symbiotic relationship with former opposition leaders and current government officials or to go back to the watchdog function of press and provide full and thorough discourse in society. This is not an easy task for Georgian journalists who used to think of opposition leaders as their allies.

Unfortunately, the present tendencies in Georgia's media show that a symbiotic relationship between media and current government officials remains steady. For instance, before the new elections on March 28, 2004, major TV stations announced the shut down of all political talk-shows and debates. The top managers of the stations declared that there was no government pressure and the main reason was "reorganization of the stations." However, it was strange that all rival TV channels launched "reorganization" before the election and all of them began by abolishing public debate, one the main tools to provide thorough discourse in society. The position of TV channels seemed in line with government officials' claims about consolidation of society.

Sulkanishvili (2003) studied Georgian media coverage of the conflict between the government and independent TV stations in 2001. He argued that Georgian media are ready to defend their freedom *from* external restraints, but they are weakly equipped with an understanding of how to achieve freedom *for*. However, present trends in Georgia media seem to question journalists' readiness to defend their freedom *from*.

If this symbiotic relationship between government officials and media remains stable, Georgian media, which after the collapse of Communist regime started experiencing libertarian concepts of the press, after the Revolution of the Rose, appear to be turning to developmental media model.

The developmental theory argues that until a nation is well-established and its economic development well under way, media must be supportive rather than critical of their government. Journalists should not directly participate in government's efforts to promote development but should be instrumental to governmental policies. The

development concept describes systems in which government and media work in concert to ensure beneficial development of a given nation.

In the developing world, political leaders often argue that a free press can too easily restrain government from functioning and lead to internal chaos. Since the developmental theory puts the interest of government and society at the top, there is more governmental involvement in the operation of the media under the developmental theory than there is in Western concept.

In some way, developmental theory seems similar to social responsibility concept of the free press, which argues that press, besides its privilege, has the duties and responsibilities in its community. Both concepts emphasize media's obligations to meet the needs of society. However, there are two critical points.

The first, the developmental theory questions the main principle of the freedom of press – the absence from governmental restraints on the media. Freedom *from* is the main premise of freedom of expression. Any speculation regarding freedom *for* without freedom *from* is just attempt to camouflage the authoritarian point of view.

The second, the developmental theory equates the interests of government and society. Under the developmental concept media should be open to restriction according development needs of society determined not by society itself but by government. Therefore this concept implies that media's support to government, should be qualified as service to society.

That is why many scholars argued that developmental theory ought to be considered as an updated version of authoritarian theory. In the case of Georgia it means that the outcomes of the Revolution of Rose, which has been considered by the general

public as a healthy event, may threaten one of the main achievements of the Georgian democracy -- independence of the Georgian press from the government. This is an obvious case that whenever media, regardless of motives, start to play in concert with government, it always sets ground for decreasing the level of press freedom. As the result Georgian media once again may face the most important challenge – to defend their freedom *from* the government.

However, presented discussion would be meaningless if there is no clear answer to the question raised by International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (MacBride's Commission) in early 1980s – should we expect that the concepts of freedom developed by Western society fit the countries with different cultural, economical, and historical background? Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his classic work *Social Contract* argued man is born free, but is everywhere in chains. Therefore, if Georgian society wants to maintain the Western standards of freedom, every action and step of the media and government must be evaluated in terms of those standards. This study assumes that Georgian society has made its choice, otherwise all the discussion and speculation presented above do not make any sense at all.

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**APPENDIX**

**Coding Sheet**

**Media Coverage of Parliamentary Election in Republic of Georgia**

Name of the coder:

ID \_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (MM/DD/YY)

**Story topic** \_\_

1. Campaigning      2. Fairness of election      3. Other

**Newspaper** \_\_

1. 24 Hours      2. Resonance      3. Alia

**Placement of the story** \_\_

1. Front      2. Inside

**Sources**

If source is occurred in the story indicated its presence and how many times it was mentioned.

1. Official

Yes \_\_\_\_      Number \_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_

2. Opposition

Yes \_\_\_\_      Number \_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_

3. NGO

Yes \_\_\_\_      Number \_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_

4. Citizen

Yes \_\_\_\_      Number \_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_

5. Other:

Yes \_\_\_\_      Number \_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_

**Key words:**

Anti -Government:

Fabrication of election: In Title: Yes No      In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Imperfect voters' list: In Title: Yes No      In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Suppression of human rights: In Title: Yes No      In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Defense of people' choice: In Title: Yes No In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Pro-Government:

Destabilization: In Title: Yes No      In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Political games: In Title: Yes No In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Improved voters' list: In Title: Yes No In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Failure of election: In Title: Yes No In Lead: Yes No

Other : \_

### **Political party**

If political party is mentioned in the story indicate "yes" and the number of paragraphs regarding this party

For New Georgia

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

Revival Union

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

Labor Party

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

National Movement

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

Democrats

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

New Rights

Yes \_\_\_      Number \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

## Frame

For each frame answer the questions from the corresponding set.

Under "coefficient" put the number of "yes" answers

If majority of the answers are "yes" indicate the presence of the frame

1. Gov. Responsibility

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

2. Ruling party conflict

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

3. Inter party conflict \_\_\_\_\_

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

4. Horse race

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

5. Economic consequences

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

6. Morality

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

7. Human interest

Coefficient \_\_\_\_ Presence \_\_\_\_

8. Other \_\_\_\_

## VITA

Baadur Koplatadze was born on September 15, 1971, in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. In 1988 he entered Tbilisi State University, Department of Applied Mathematics. After graduation with honors he started to work at Tbilisi Institute of Applied Mathematics as a junior fellow. In 1993 he joined the staff of the daily newspaper *Resonance*. From 1993 to 1996 he was a political reporter, local news editor, and political editor. From 1996 to 1999 he worked for the daily newspaper *Alia* as deputy of editor in chief. During 2000 he was the anchor of the political show *Starting Point* on the 1<sup>st</sup> channel of Georgian television. From 2001 to 2002 he served in the research department of Georgian parliament. In 2003 he was a political columnist of a daily newspaper *24 Hours*.

At the same time he actively collaborated with the Georgian non-governmental organization Center of Democratic Innovations. He managed several projects regarding Georgia media such as monitoring the adherence to professional standards by Georgian Press, publishing the brochure *Regulatory and self regulatory measures for media professionals*, translating and publishing Judgments of the European Court of the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 10, Freedom of Expression), etc.

In March 2003 he was selected as a teaching assistant at the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management. The same year he received a scholarship from International Center of Journalists to earn a master's degree in mass communication at Louisiana State University.