



TOLERANCE IN ARMENIAN MASS MEDIA TELEVISION MONITORING

Caucasus Institute

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Introduction

Project Objective

The UNDP project on **Tolerance in the Armenian Media: Pilot Monitoring** implemented by the Caucasus Institute Foundation aimed at studying tolerance in Armenian mass media. The main objectives of the project were to develop a tolerance assessment tool for Armenian media, to reveal the most burning tolerance-related issues reflected in mass media, to raise the awareness of both the society and mass media to tolerance issues, and to encourage society to reflect on them.

Project Structure

The project consisted of two phases. In the first phase, we analyzed the content of print and electronic media, and in the second phase, of TV broadcasts.

Methodology

Throughout the project, the Caucasus Institute applied methods and approaches proposed at the Media Tolerance Monitoring Methodology Workshop organized by UNDP on 20-24 October 2008.

Monitoring Period

The coding work was carried out during 10 randomly chosen days in February 2009.

Monitoring Principles

The focus of monitoring was the form rather than the content of media reports; the goal was to establish whether the information was presented in a tolerant or intolerant way.

The Sample

The sample is not representative; the resulting data applies only to the analyzed programs of seven TV stations and only to the time period in question. The results are not directly applicable to other TV stations, TV programs or other time periods.

The sample includes so-called prime-time programs and main editions of news programs. The monitoring was carried out from Monday to Friday. The following TV stations were selected for the pilot monitoring:

- H1 /Հ1/
- H2 /Հ2/
- Armenia /Արմենիա/
- ALM /ԱԼՄ/
- Yerkir Media /Երկիր մեդիա/
- Kentron /Կենտրոն/
- Shant /Շանթ/

The following programs were analyzed:

News (main edition)

1. *Oretsor (ALM)/Օրեցօր (ԱԼԱ)*
2. *Haylur (H1) /Հայլուր (Հ1)*
3. *Lraber (H2)/Լրաբեր (Հ2)*
4. *Yerkirn Aysor (Yerkir Media) /Երկիրն այսօր (Երկիր մեդիա)*
5. *Zhamy (Armenia) /Ժամը (Արմենիա)*
6. *Zarkerak international news (ALM) /Զարկերակ (ԱԼԱ)*
7. *Epikentron (Kentron) /Էպիկենտրոն (Կենտրոն)*
8. *Horizon (Shant) /Հորիզոն (Շանթ)*

TV interviews

9. *Urvagic (Sketch)(Kentron) /Ուրվագիծ (Կենտրոն)*
10. *Herankar (Perspective) (Shant) /Հեռանկար (Շանթ)*
11. *Ajtseqart (Visit card)(ALM) /Այցեքարտ (ԱԼԱ)*
12. *25 ropeh (25 minutes) (H1) /25 րոպե (Հ1)*

Entertainment programs

13. *My big fat Armenian wedding (Armenia) /Իմ մեծ, չաղ, հայկական հարսանիքը (Արմենիա)*
14. *Small Talk (Yerkir) /Դեսից դենից (Երկիր)*
15. *Bustle (Kentron) /Իրարանցում (Կենտրոն)*

Information programs

16. *02 (H1)*
17. *Press Review (Kentron) / Ինչ են գրում թերթերը (Կենտրոն)*
18. *Special commentary (H1) /Հատուկ ռեպորտաժ (Հ1)*

A total of 133 different broadcasts of 18 programs on seven TV channels was analyzed. During each program, various topics mentioned in the program were coded separately. The total number of topics was 1619.

Table 1. The Sample

TV channel	Program	Number
H1/Հ1	Haylur/Հայլուր	10
	25 ropeh/ 25րոպե	4
	Special Commentary /Հատուկ ռեպորտաժ	4
	02	2
Armenia/Արմենիա	Zhamy /Ժամը	10
	My Big Fat Armenian Wedding Իմ մեծ չաղ հայկական հարսանիքը	9
H2/ Հ2	Lraber/Լրաբեր	10
Kentron/Կենտրոն	Epikentron/Էպիկենտրոն	10
	Urvagic/ Ուրվագիծ	10
	Press Review/ Ինչ են գրում թերթերը	8
	Bustle/ Իրարանցում	2
ALM/ԱԼԱ	Orecor/Օրեցօր	10
	Zarkerak/ Զարկերակ	10
	Ajcegart/ Այցեքարտ	3
Shant/ Շանթ	Horizon/ Հորիզոն	10

	Herankar/ Հեռանկար	8
Yerkir Media/ Երկիր մեդիա	Yerkirn Aysor/ Երկիրն այսօր	10
	Small Talk /Դեսից դենից	3
Total		133

The variables

The following variables were used throughout the monitoring:

- *Topic* (e.g. domestic policy, economy, education, historical events etc.)
- *Type of attitude* (any type of intolerant attitude)
- *Object of attitude* (object towards which any type of attitude has been demonstrated)
- *The source* (the source of intolerant attitude)

For a detailed description of the tool, see Appendix 1.

THE ANALYSIS

All programs subjected to analysis (see p.5) were broken down into the following four categories:

- News
- TV interviews
- Entertainment programs
- Information programs

During analysis, various TV programs and TV channels were compared within these groups.

The tables below show which topics were most frequently discussed in TV programs, the types of attitude expressed towards these objects, and other interesting indicators revealed during the research.

Table 2 shows objects with the highest incidence in broadcasts. The data shows that foreign policy and events abroad are most frequently covered topics on air (16.3%): The coverage of domestic policy with 7.1% is only on the fifth place. Though topics referring to mass media are not at the bottom of the list, they still have a rather low indicator (1.1%).

Table 2. Quantitative and percent ratio of topics most frequently occurring on air

<i>Topics of programs</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Foreign policy, events abroad	261	16.3%
Economy, agriculture, finances	226	14.0%
Domestic crime, disasters	138	8.5%
International relations, foreign integration	135	8.3%
RA domestic policy	114	7.1%
Everyday life, social problems	115	7.0%
...
Mass Media	18	1.1%
....

Table 3 shows topics that are most frequently covered by news programs. *Haylur* news program most frequently covers *foreign policy and events abroad* (14.9%), the same topic is covered more frequently than other topics by *Lraber* (17.1%), *Horizon* (13.5%), *Yerkirn Ajsor* (16.8%), as well as *Epikentron* (14.3%) which covers it with the same frequency as Armenian economy, agriculture and financial issues, the topic most covered by *Oretsor* (20,0%). *Zham* most often covers everyday life and social problems (18.8%).

Table 3. 5 topics most frequently occurring in news programs

<i>TV channel</i>	<i>Topic</i>									
	RA domestic policy	Legislative, policy reforms	International relations, Foreign integration	Karabakh, Negotiation process	Foreign policy, events abroad	Economy, agriculture, finances	Events/ Activities	Everyday life, social problems	Domestic crime, disasters	Culture
Haylur			15 9.3%	12 7.5%	24 14.9%	32 19.9%			14 8.7%	
Lraber			16 6.8%		40 17.1%	31 13.2%	18 7.7%		21 9.0%	
Orecor		11 5.6%	16 8.2%		11 5.6%	39 20.0%			14 7.2%	
Horizon	14 9.0%		18 11.6%		21 13.5%	18 11.6%			15 9.7%	
Zhamy			12 8.7%		10 7.2%	22 15.9%		26 18.8%	12 8.7%	
Yerkirn Ajsor		12 7.7%	20 12.9%		26 16.8%				15 9.7%	12 7.7%
Epikentron	16 11.4%		15 10.7%	13 9.3%	20 14.3%	20 14.3%				

Table 4 shows types of Attitude. Here we can see that 85.1% of all topics monitored did not contain any type of intolerant attitude and were thus rated 'tolerant'.

Table 4. Types of attitude

<i>Type of Attitude</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>%</i>
The entire article is tolerant	1429	85.1%
Positive attitude	40	2.4%
Biased support at the expense of others	12	0.7%
Discrimination	2	0.1%
Negative attitude¹	77	4.6%
Labeling, derision, irony, insult	67	4.0%
Accusation directed against a group, or the members of a group, of having negative impact on the society or the state, attempting to seize power etc.	47	2.8%
Justifying discrimination or crime	3	0.2%
Difficult to code	3	0.2%
Total	1680	100%

Table 5 represents types of attitude excluding tolerant topics. Overall, the number of topics containing intolerant attitude is 251, among which the most frequently occurring were negative attitude (30.7%), labeling, derision, irony and insult (26.7%), accusations directed towards a group (18.7%). Positive attitude forms 15.9% of all cases where attitude was expressed.

Table 5. Types of attitude, excluding tolerant articles

<i>Types of attitude, excluding tolerant articles</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>%</i>
Negative Attitude	77	30.7%
Labeling, mockery, irony, insult	67	26.7%
Accusation directed against a group, or the members of a group, of having negative impact on the society or the state, attempting to seize power etc.	47	18.7%
Positive attitude	40	15.9%
Biased support at the expense of others	12	4.8%
Justifying discrimination or crime	3	1.2%
Difficult to code	3	1.2%
Discrimination	2	0.8%
Total	251	100%

¹ Creating a negative image of a group, without expressing specified accusations, referred to by other points

Table 6 indicates the objects towards which each separate type of attitude was expressed most frequently. For example, common citizens have the largest share of labeling, derision, insult and mockery (19.4%). The object “Other” (representatives of culture, education etc.) has the largest share of accusation directed against a group, or the members of a group, of having negative impact on the society or the state, attempting to seize power etc., expressed by 10.6%. Positive attitude is mainly directed at Armenia and the Armenians (30.0%).

Table 6. Objects with the highest percent in every separate type of attitude

Type of attitude	Object	
Positive attitude	Armenia, Armenians	30.0%
Biased support at the expense of others	Other (representatives of culture, education etc.)	33.3%
Discrimination	Armenia, Armenians	50.0%
	Russia, Russians	
Negative attitude²	Other nationalities, states	15.6%
Labeling, mockery, irony, insult	Ordinary citizens	19.4%
Accusation directed against a group, or the members of a group, of having negative impact on the society or the state, attempting to seize power etc.	Ordinary citizens	10.6%
	Other (representatives of culture, education etc.)	
Justifying discrimination or crime	Turkey, Turks	50.0%
	Other nations, states	

Table 7 reflects the ratio of tolerant topics in all monitored TV programs. Among local news programs (excluding the *Zarkerak* international news program) the *Horizon* news program contains the most tolerant topics (93.5%), and *Epikentron*, the fewest (83.8%). As far as TV interviews are concerned, the largest number of tolerant topics occurred in *Perspective /Herankar/*. *Sketch /Urvagic/* had just 3.1% fewer tolerant topics³, with *Visit Card /Ajceqart/* coming last (54.2%). Among information programs, the *02* program is the one that broadcasts information without any intolerant expressions. The tolerance indicators of entertainment programs are the lowest among all the other types of programs. The five programs with the lowest tolerance indicators were entertainment programs (in highlighted cells): *Small Talk* (31.2%), *My Big Fat Armenian Wedding* (45.0%), *Bustle* (50.0%), followed by TV interviews *Visit Card /Ajceqart/* (54.2%) and *Sketch /Urvagic/* (58.9%). However, as far as TV interviews are concerned, one must bear in mind that attitudes expressed by guest speakers in live broadcasts were assessed together with those expressed by the journalist.

² Creating a negative image of a group, without expressing specified accusations, referred to by other points

³ As far as the interviews with live broadcast are concerned, it should be taken into account that the overall assessment includes the attitudes of both the journalist-interviewer and the guest speaker.

Table 7. The most tolerant program with regard to its topics

<i>The most tolerant program with regard to its topics</i>	<i>%</i>
News programs	
Zarkerak (international news)	99.5%
Horizon	93.5%
Lraber	91.9%
Yerkirn Aysor	91.8%
Haylur	87.9%
Zhamy	89.4%
Orecor	86.0%
Epikentron	83.8%
TV interviews	
Perspective /Herankar/	62.0%
Sketch /Urvagic/	58.9%
25 minutes /25 rope/	85.0%
Visit Card /Ajceqart/	54.2%
Informative programs	
02	100%
Press Review	73.6%
Special Commentary	80.0%
Entertainment programs	
My Big Fat Armenian Wedding	45.0%
Small Talk	31.2%
Bustle	50.0%

Table 8 represents attitudes expressed by each source. The highest indicators are highlighted. The table shows that during the monitored ten days, the most frequently expressed intolerant attitudes were labeling, derision, irony or insult (24 cases/ 44.4%). Extreme manifestations of intolerance by participants of TV shows have a rather big share; 54.5% of topics they touched upon contained labeling, derision, irony or insult. The highest indicator of intolerance expressed by guests or interviewees was registered in 31.5 % of topics (negative attitude).

Table 8. Attitudes expressed by each source expressed in percents and numbers.

<i>Attitude</i>									
<i>Source</i>	Positive attitude	Biased support at the expense of others	Discrimination	Negative attitude	Accusations against a group	Justifying discrimination	Labeling, mockery, irony	Difficult to code	Sources that expressed attitudes
Host, journalist	11.3%	5.7%	–	34.0%	15.18%	–	43.4%	1 1.9%	54
Quoted from another local media	14.3%	4.8%	–	38.1%	28.6%	–	23.8%	4.8%	21
International news quoted from other international sources	6.7%	6.7%	–	33.3%	26.7%	–	40.0%	–	15
Guest, interviewee	21.3%	5.6%	–	31.5%	23.1%	1%	22.2%	0.9%	108
Quoting the words of the interviewee	35.0%	5.0%	–	45.0%	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%	–	20
Participant of a show	-	-	18.2%	27.3%	-	–	54.5%	–	11

Table 9 summarizes five most frequently occurring objects with any type of attitude and the attitudes with the largest shares expressed towards them.

The incidence of common/ordinary citizens in broadcasts is the highest: 30 cases. Among these cases, 43.3% include labeling, mockery, insults and irony. In attitudes expressed towards the object *Other* (representatives of culture, education etc.) negative attitude had the highest percentage (28.6%). For Armenia and the Armenians, the intolerant attitude is most often positive (46.2%). However, negative attitude and labeling add up to a similar figure, 42.3% (=23.1%+19.2%). The percentage of negative attitude towards other nationalities and states is also rather high.

We found 14 cases of intolerance towards «*other nationalities, states*» i.e. all nationalities and states excluding Russians, Turks, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Americans and Europeans, the attitudes towards which were calculated separately. For the nationalities/states that were coded separately, we found a total of 35 cases of intolerance, including:

- Russia, Russians – 2 cases,
- Turkey, Turks – 10 cases,
- Georgia, Georgians – 5 cases,
- Azerbaijan, Azerbaijanis – 8 cases,
- USA, Americans – 4 cases,
- Europe, Europeans – 6 cases (including 1 case of intolerance towards “the West”).

By adding these 35 cases to 14 cases of intolerance towards other nationalities/states, we get a total of 49 cases, all of them negative, i.e. excluding “positive attitude” or “biased support at the expense of others”.

Meanwhile, among the 30 cases of intolerance with regard to Armenians, there were 12 cases of positive attitude and one of biased support at the expense of others, leaving only 17 cases of negative intolerance towards Armenians. , whereas with other nationalities this indicator is equal to 48 (=49-1), with a difference of 31 cases. This means that the broadcasts were altogether more intolerant towards other nationalities than towards Armenians.

Table 9. The highest percents of attitudes towards most commonly occurring objects

<i>Object</i>	<i>Attitude</i>				The number of total cases
	Positive Attitude	Negative Attitude	Labeling, mockery, irony, insult	Accusation against a group	
Common citizens	10.0%	36.7%	43.3%	16.7%	30
Armenia, Armenians	46.2%	23.1%	19.2%	7.7%	30
Other (representatives of culture, education etc.)	25.0%	28.6%	17.9%	17.9%	28
Ministries, Government	12.5%	62.5%	18.8%	12.5%	16
Other nationalities, states	0%	85.7%	7.1%	14.3%	14

SUMMARY

The pilot monitoring of television enabled us to test and improve the tool, adjusting it to television broadcasts. The monitoring activity also made it possible to observe the types of intolerance manifest in Armenian broadcasts and to identify the main trends. In particular, the monitoring of tolerance in TV broadcasts showed that whereas print and online media mainly focus on domestic issues and domestic policies, the topic most frequently discussed in TV broadcasts was foreign policy and events abroad (16.3%).

14.9% of the 1680 TV topics contained cases of intolerant attitude, meaning that only 85.1% of the coverage was fully tolerant.

The broadcasts were more intolerant towards other nationalities and states than towards Armenians:

- Positive attitude was mainly directed towards Armenia or Armenians (30.0%)
- At the same time 15.6% of the negative attitude is directed towards other nationalities and states⁴
- Negative attitude is the most common type of intolerant attitude (30.7%) on air.
- Among news programs the largest number of topics expressing intolerant attitude is registered with *Epikentron* news program (Kentron TV channel), and the lowest indicator is that of *Horizon* (Shant TV channel).
- In TV interviews the largest number of tolerant topics is registered with *25 ropeh* (H1), and the smallest- *Ajceqart* (ALM).
- Among information programs, *Press Review* of Kentron TV channel contains the smallest incidence of tolerant topics.
- *Small Talk* (Yerkir Media) is the program with the lowest indicator of tolerant topics among entertainment programs.

Overall, the most intolerant TV broadcasts in the sample were entertainment programs.

⁴ The attitudes towards Russia/Russians, Turkey/Turks, Georgia/Georgians, Azerbaidjan/Azerbaidjanees, USA/Americans, Europe/Europeans and the West are calculated separately. For more detail see Table 9.

COMPARISON

Although the first and second phases of the monitoring do not lend themselves to direct comparison, we can still compare the overall figures and general trends. The main differences are as follows:

- 2347 topics were read in print and electronic media and 1680 topics coded during the television monitoring.
- While print and electronic media mainly touch upon domestic policy, the topics most commonly discussed in TV broadcasts in our sample were foreign policy and events abroad.
- Print and electronic media overall contained more intolerant articles (only 59.3% of analyzed articles were tolerant) as compared to television where 85.1% of topics were tolerant, which means that the television sample was on the whole more tolerant than the sample of print and electronic media.

Table 10 shows a comparison between the two phases of monitoring, with various types of attitude grouped up into “positive” and “negative” attitudes. Positive biased support at the expense of others and quoted positive attitudes (in print media) are categorized as “positive intolerance” (manifestations of in-group favoritism); various types of negative attitudes are grouped up as “negative intolerance” (manifestations of out-group aggression). As seen from the table, Armenia and Armenians have the highest percent ratio for positive intolerance as compared to other subjects (30.0%). This indicates that Armenian broadcasts praise or are emphatically positive towards Armenia and Armenians. As far as negative intolerance is concerned, members of the general public (“ordinary citizens”) hold the first place again with 30.0%, which means that broadcast media is often intolerant toward the people that it is supposed to serve. In print and electronic media, the main objects of positive attitude are again Armenia and Armenians (20.7%), with almost equal incidence as on TV. As for negative intolerance, the main targets here are state agencies (local governments, parliament, government etc.) (19.8%).

Table 10. The highest percent of attitude towards objects in television, print and electronic media.

Television			
Positive intolerance	Armenia	12	
	Armenians		30.0%
Negative intolerance	Common citizens	12	
			30.0%
Print and electronic media			
Positive intolerance	Armenia	41	
	Armenians		20.7%
Negative intolerance	State agencies	197	
			19.8%

APPENDIX 1

MEDIA TOLERANCE MONITORING METHODOLOGY

Tool description

After watching the program each coder entered information regarding the following variables in their coding sheets:

- *The title of TV channel*
- *Program title*
- *Date*
- *Topic of the program*
- *Type of attitude*
- *Object of attitude*
- *Source*

Program topics include the following values

1. Armenia's domestic policy, national security
2. Legislative and political reforms
3. Armenia's international relations and international integration
4. Elections
5. Corruption, organized crime
6. Karabakh, negotiation process, Karabakh war
7. Regional integration (South Caucasus)
8. Foreign policy, external world, international news
9. Historic events (Genocide, World War II etc.)
10. Economy, agriculture, finances, business
11. Migration, refugees
12. Infrastructure (including construction)
13. Education
14. Environment
15. Culture
16. Religion
17. Science
18. Healthcare
19. Mass media
20. Sports
21. Events/activities
22. Everyday life, social issues
23. domestic crime, criminality, disasters
88. other
99. difficult to code

When the coder came across any type of intolerant attitude, he/she entered both the type and the object of attitude. From each program, coders entered up to five objects towards which any type of attitude had been expressed (up to 2 types of attitude per object). In the event that the same type of attitude was expressed towards the same object several times within one program, only one incident was entered. Thus, not the frequency of occurrence of attitudes but possible cases of attitude were observed.

All entirely tolerant programs were also entered.

The variable "Type of attitudes" has the following values:

1. The entire article is tolerant.
2. Positive attitude (praise, eulogy)
3. Biased support at the expense of others
4. Discrimination
5. Negative attitude (creating the negative image of a group, excluding other types of negative attitude that were coded separately)
6. labeling, irony, mockery, insult
7. Threats, calls for violence, discrimination
8. Accusation directed against a group, or the members of a group, of having negative impact on the society or the state, attempting to seize power etc
9. justifying discrimination and crime
88. Other

99. Difficult to answer

The variable “source” includes the following values

1. Journalist, host (including news announcers) of the media outlet
2. Quoted from other local media outlets
3. International news/ quoted from international sources
4. Guest/interviewee/ speaker
5. Quoted from the words of the interviewee/guest
6. Participant of the show/performer (i.e. participants of entertainment programs, e.g. *My fat, Armenian wedding*)
77. Other
99. Difficult to define

The previously formed list of objects has been further replenished and its final version contained 42 various objects.

Coding principles

To ensure reliability of information each of coders coded different TV channels and TV programs by rotation.
6 coders worked for 2 working weeks simultaneously.

Analysis procedure

All data was entered into and processed by the SPSS statistical data analysis software. The SPSS software allows analyzing quantitative data, calculating the incidence of each variable as well as comparing across variables and interconnecting them.

APPENDIX 2

The comments of media to the press conference held on February 20 regarding the first phase of the monitoring.

Web addresses:

<http://new.aravot.am/am/home/archive/0/view/2009-02-24>

<http://new.aravot.am/am/articles/education/56031/view>

<http://www.zhamanak.com/article/11424/>

<http://telecom.arka.am/rus/smi/2009/02/20/896.html>