THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN THE ARMENIAN MEDIA

The Results of a Study on Armenia's Internet Media

October 1 – November 30, 2014

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WHY RUSSIA?

Reason 1.

In 2004-2005 “Region” Research Center conducted a study which aimed to describe, among other things, the stereotypes of the enemy and the partner/friendly states, as rooted in the Armenian society and the Armenian media.

Back then in the opinion of the population of Armenia and by the number of positive descriptions in the Armenian media, Russia was obviously ahead of other foreign countries that were mentioned and described as friendly countries (Armenia and Azerbaijan on the crossroad of “neither peace nor war,” how to overcome stereotypes, Yerevan, 2005, page 32 – 33, 83 - 86).

Ten years later, too, there are mutually exclusive statements.

In 2014 and before that a number of Russian figures and experts have stated a few times that the so-called index of aggression towards Russia is rising in the Armenian media (meaning the ratio between the negative and neutral content/semantic description indicators). Also they announced that this was mainly a result of the intensive activities of the pro-Western media outlets and forces.

Among Armenian experts there is a shared conviction that regardless of the increase inthe critical opinions about Russia in the Armenian media, there are no trends of an established attitude towards Russia in either the media discourse or, moreover, in the political consciousness of masses, among the so-called ordinary people.

So, there was a need to understand the nature of this contradiction.

Reason 2.

The processes of Eurasian integration for Armenia, and those of European integration for other post-Soviet countries in the last two years drew up **new political and domestic social agendas** which have started to occupy essential positions in the public discourse in Armenia.

The materials touching on this issueand published in the Armenian press before our study made it clear that the future integration scenarios for Armenia are not simply related to the most important things for the country (security and the Karabakh conflict, Armenian and Turkish relations, economic development and possibilities for the irreversibility of internal freedoms and so on), but rather derive from the current policy pursued towards Armenia by Russia in the context of the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Reason 3.

And lastly, since the beginning of 2014 the information war between the parties with all its characteristics features has been the main constituent in the context of aggravations between Russia and the so-called collective West, as well as Russia and Ukraine. Russia is anestablished topic in the international newsfeed; Russia is written and spoken about almost everywhere.

Hence, apart from everything else there was also a research interest as to how "contagious" that information war is for the Armenian media, too.

All these reasons today are still very topical after the Gyumri killings on January 12, 2015 and in the conditions of the still shaking Armenian-Russian relations. It is yet impossible to foretell where the shaking discursive interaction will get to and where it will take the parties even in the nearest future.

But one thing is obvious: the results of our research reflect the general picture immediately before these shocks.

WHAT DID WE STUDY?

All these above-mentioned reasons made us undertake the study of the image of Russia in the Armenian media with a number of concrete foci:

- What information activity is there in the Armenian media about Russia?
- What information sources do Armenian media outlets use when producing materials somehow related to Russia?
- What image of Russia do the Armenian media outlets bring to their audiences? What aggression and friendliness indexes are employed in that process?
- What topical stories, messages of what content, what priorities present Armenian current policy of Russia?
- How are Armenia and the Armenian society (self)presented to audiences in the context of the Russian theme, what auto-stereotypes are there in circulation?

In general, the study was conducted after the principle of revealing **"Who speaks of Russia on the Armenian information platforms? What do they say? How do they say it?"**

WHICH MEDIA OUTLETS DID WE MONITOR?

We monitored the Armenian language content of 8 Internet media outlets in Armenia (1in.am, News.am, Lragir.am, Aravot.am, Ilur.am, Yerkir.am, 7or.am, Panorama.am).

This selection shows that we have included:

- Media outlets that affiliate with different political forces (in power and oppositional) as well as independent media outlets,

- Internet resources that have histories of 2 – 16 years, but each of those has its own stable audience and other characteristics.

In a word, we monitored typical examples of media outlets that operate on the Armenian Internet platforms and ensure online coverage.

INFORMATION ACTIVITY ABOUT RUSSIA

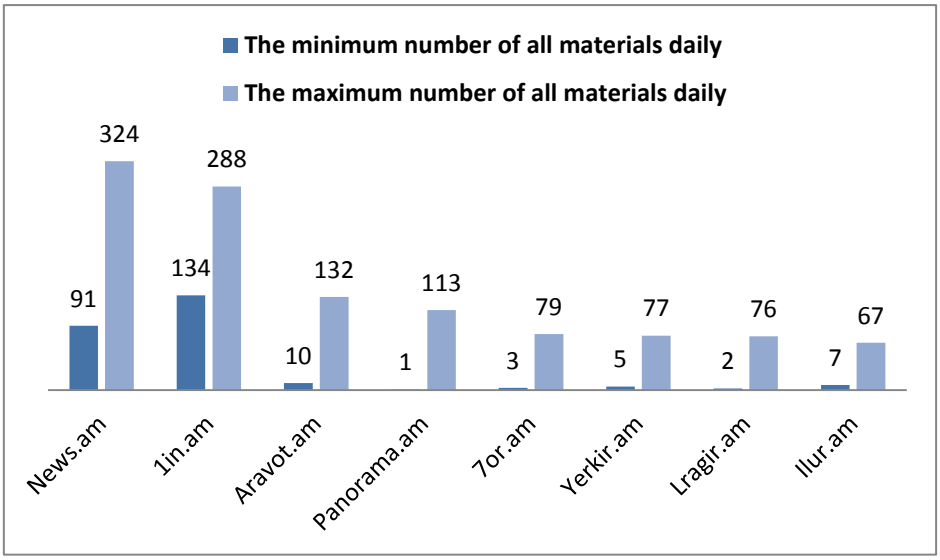
The monitored media outlets have various degrees of intensity, different portions, genre preferences and other specificities in producing materials. Among those there are media outlets that present this or that aspect of the same event as separate materials with their own titles. Also, there are media outlets that prefer to immediatelywrite their own analytical articles and commentaries about that same event.

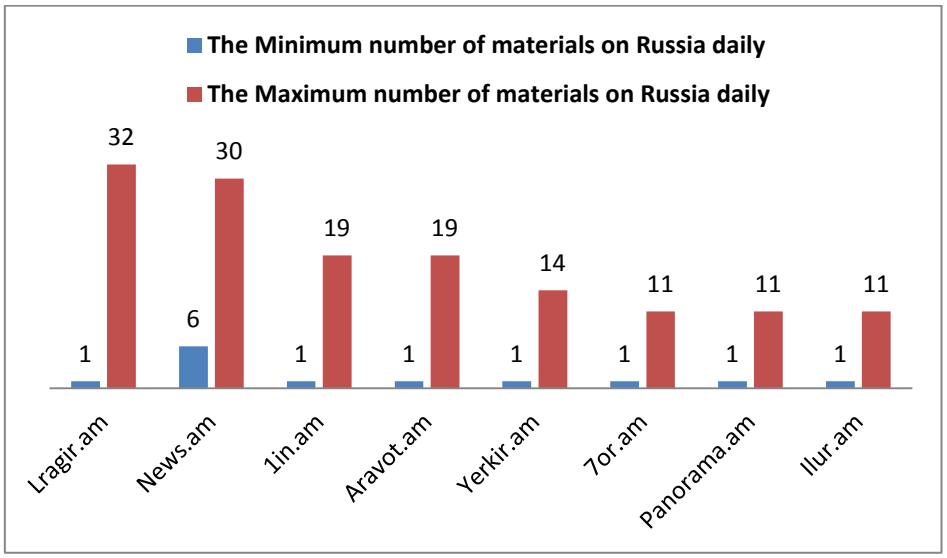
In this group of selected media outlets we have included those that publish at least about 100 and maximum 280 materials daily (1in.am, News.am), as well as those the maximum number of whose materials daily is within the range of 60 to 70 (Ilur.am, Yerkir.am, 7or.am):

The maximum number of materials covering Russia in a day ranged from 11 (7or.am, Ilur.am, Panorama.am) to 30 - 32 (News.am, Lragir.am).

See the graphs below:

Graphs: The maximum and minimum number of materials daily



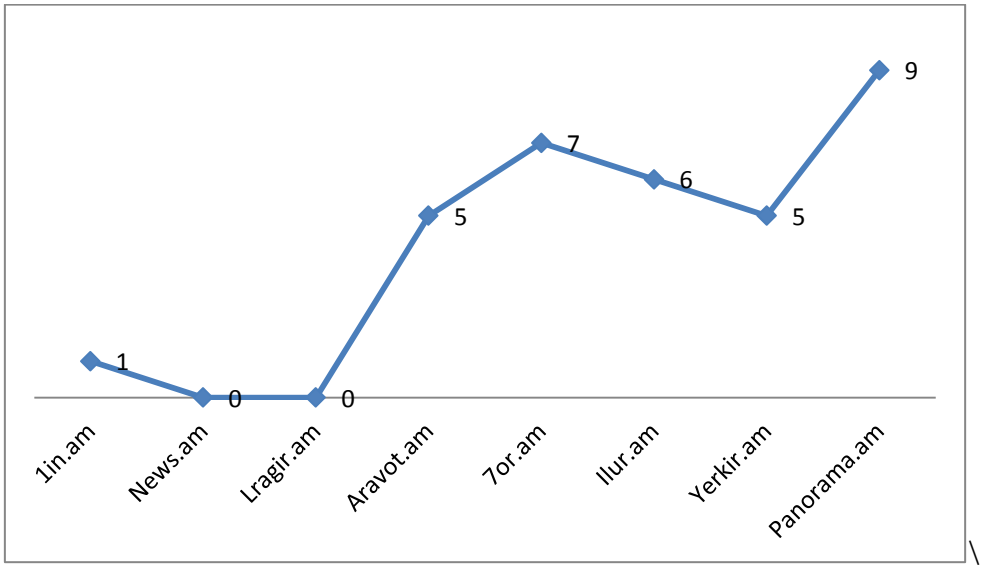


The materials, fully or partially covering Russia and published in the course of the study outnumbered materials referring to any foreign country, including Azerbaijan, when considering aggregate indicators.

Russia with its domestic and foreign policy issues, including the various manifestations of its policy towards Armenia, has been covered in 7% of all the materials (See APPENDIX, Table 1) published in the 8 media outlets.

The graph below shows the days out of the 61 days in October – November on which that there has been no coverage whatsoever of the Russian theme.

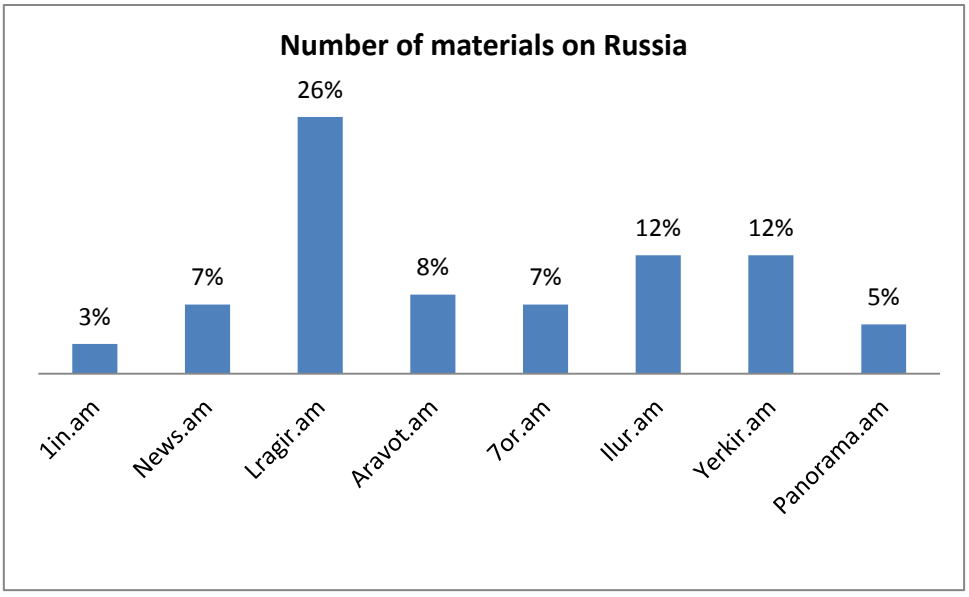
Graph: Number of days when there were no materials referring to the Russian theme



This group includes media outlets that are both specifically interested in the Russian themes and those that covered Russia essentially fewer times.

In this regard the highest results were recorded with Lragir.am, 1/4th of whose materials refer to Russia (26%): and the fewest number of descriptions of or references to the various aspects of Russia was recorded in 1in.am website (3%). In the Ilur.am and Yerkir.am websites the number of materials relating to Russia is the same – 12%. In other media outlets (News.am, Aravot.am, Panorama.am, 7or.am) this indicator ranges between 5 - 8%.

See the graph below.

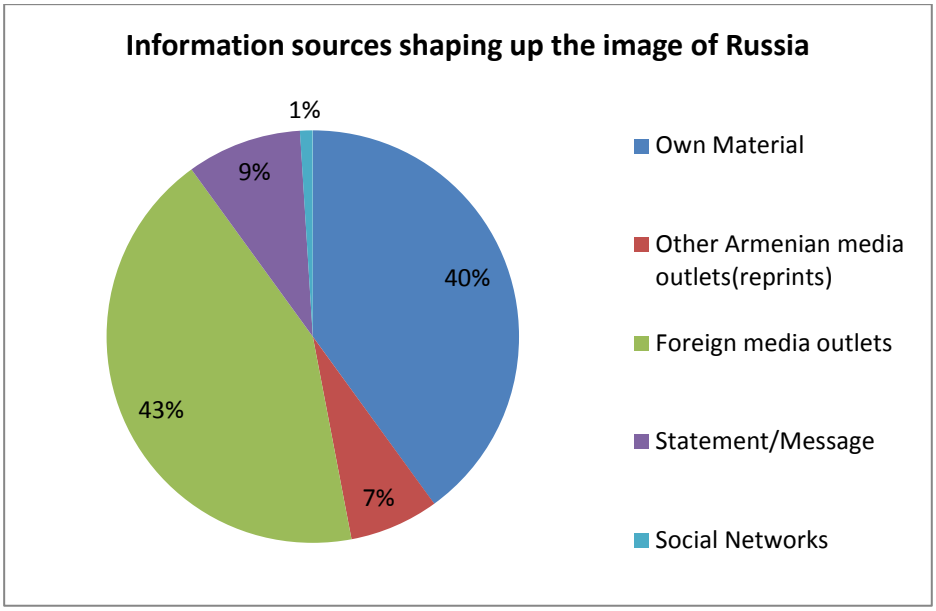


INFORMATION SOURCES SHAPING UP THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA

The materials about Russia in the monitored media outlets are of the following origin: materials of the media outlet's own make, materials by other Armenian media outlets in the form of reprints or short renderings of original materials, press releases and announcements on Russia disseminated for media outlets, materials fromsocialnetworks.

Judging by this ratio of sources, we can definitely say that the overall indicators of materials on Russia produced by the monitored media outlets themselves (40%) and the reprints from foreign, including Russianmedia outlets (43%) are approximately the same. The picture does not change when adding up the number of materials reprinted by these 8 monitored media outlets from other Armenian media sources. The number of releases and materials taken from social networks is obviously much fewer.

In other words, the information sources in Armenia have roughly equal shares with foreign media outlets in their contribution in the task of shaping the image of Russia.

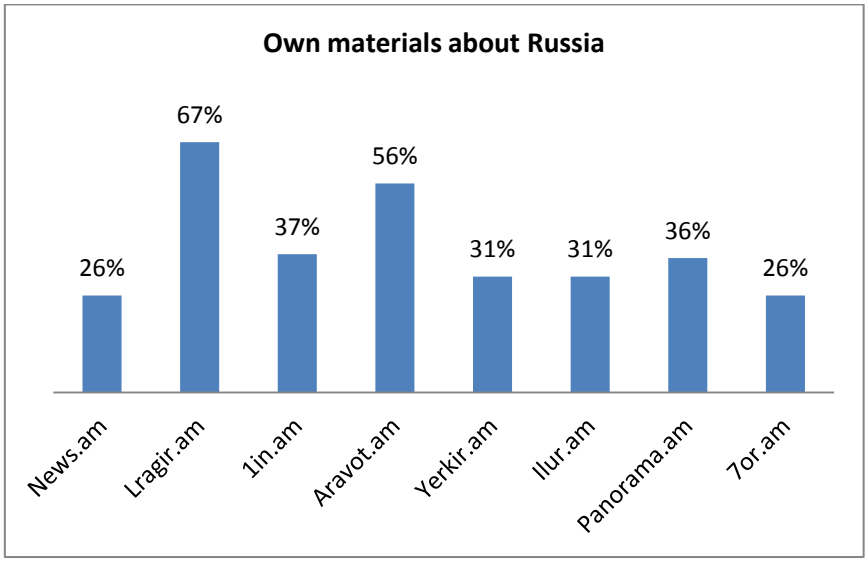


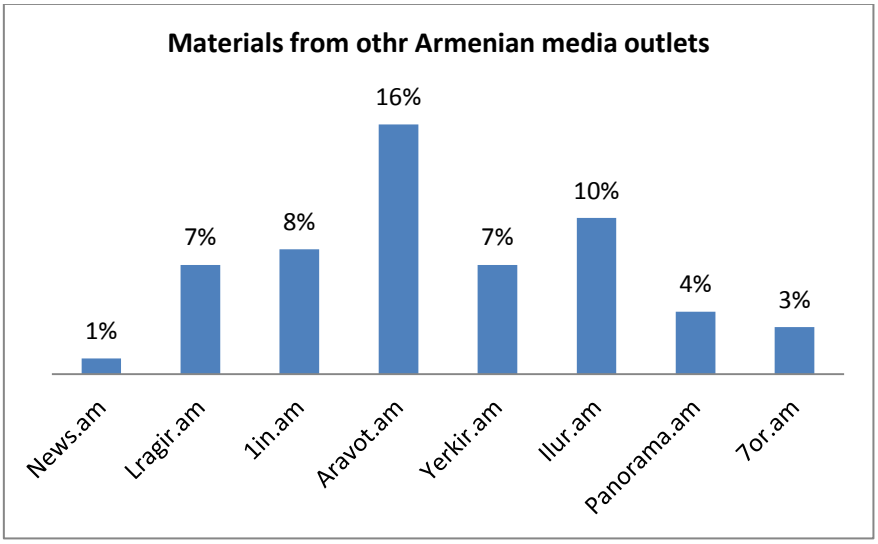
The picture changes considerably when analyzing the indicators of individual media outlets.

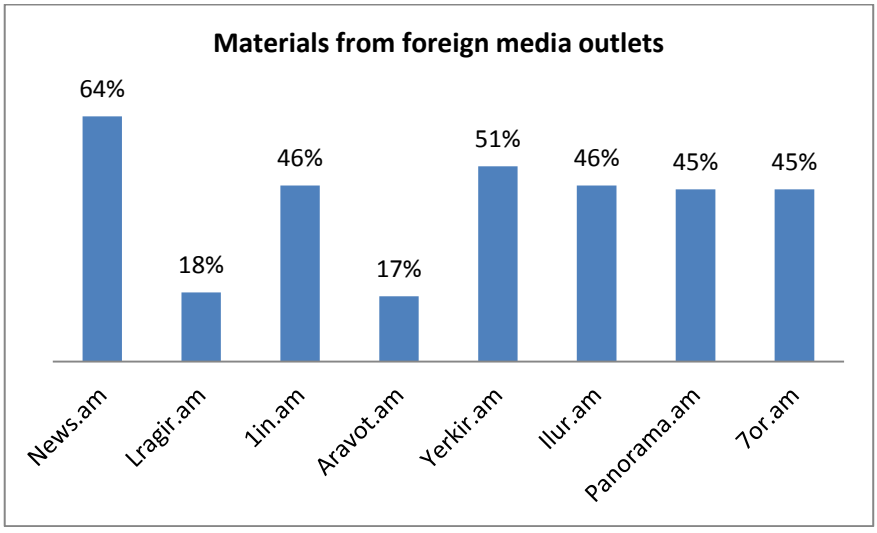
Thus, the leaders, in terms of materials of their own production about Russia, are Lragir.am (18% of materials from foreign sources versus67% of materials of their own production) and aravot.am (18% of materials from foreign sources against 55% of materials of their own production). Among the rest of the media outlets, including the Russian media, the number of reprints was higher than that of the materials produced by the media outlets themselves, namely News.am (26% of materials of their own production and 65% of materials produced by foreign media), 7or.am (26% of materials of their own production and 47% of materials

produced by foreign media), Panorama.am (36% of materials of their own production and 45% of materials produced by foreign media) and so on.

See the graphsbelow, also APPENDIX, Table 2 and 3.







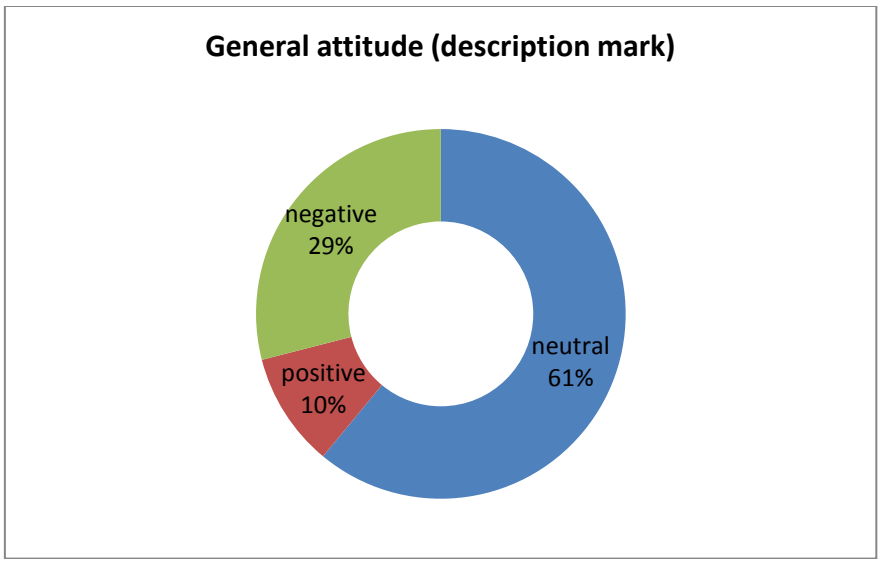
THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS RUSSIA: INDEXES FOR AGGRESSION AND FRIENDLINESS

The marks of attitude in the description of Russia (neutral, positive and negative)were identified by their direct semantic meanings, and not by the contextual messages and implicature.

By the indicators of all the 8 monitored media outlets, the materials referring to Russia were mostly presented in neutral colors (61% of descriptions); negative coloring comes second (29%), followed by positive coloring (10%).

See the graph below.

Graph. The general picture of attitudes



It should be specifically underlined that this order of attitude marks is a consistent characteristic feature of the Armenian media, which was manifested in the Armenian media also in the course of our previous studies on the images of enemy and friendly states to Armenia.

For example, ten years ago the so-called anti-Russian aggression index (the ratio of the number of negative marks with that of neutral marks) was 0.32 whereas the so-called friendliness index (the ratio of the number of positive marks with that of neutral marks) was 0.24 (See Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Crossroad of "neither peace nor war", Yerevan, 2005, page 84). In other words, it is almost proportional.

Ten years ago it was possible to find 5 neutral descriptions per positive description, whereas one could detect 3 neutral descriptions per negative description.

According to the results of this study, as it can be easily calculated, the total aggression index is 0.48, and the friendliness index is 0.15.

This means we have about 6 neutral descriptions per positive description, and 2 neutral ones per negative description.

There is no noticeable increase in the so-called aggression index; special calculations were required in order to detect this slight decrease in the friendliness index.

When collating the indicators of individual media outlets we can see that this ranking of neutral, negative and positive descriptions is maintained in 7 out of the 8 monitored cases.

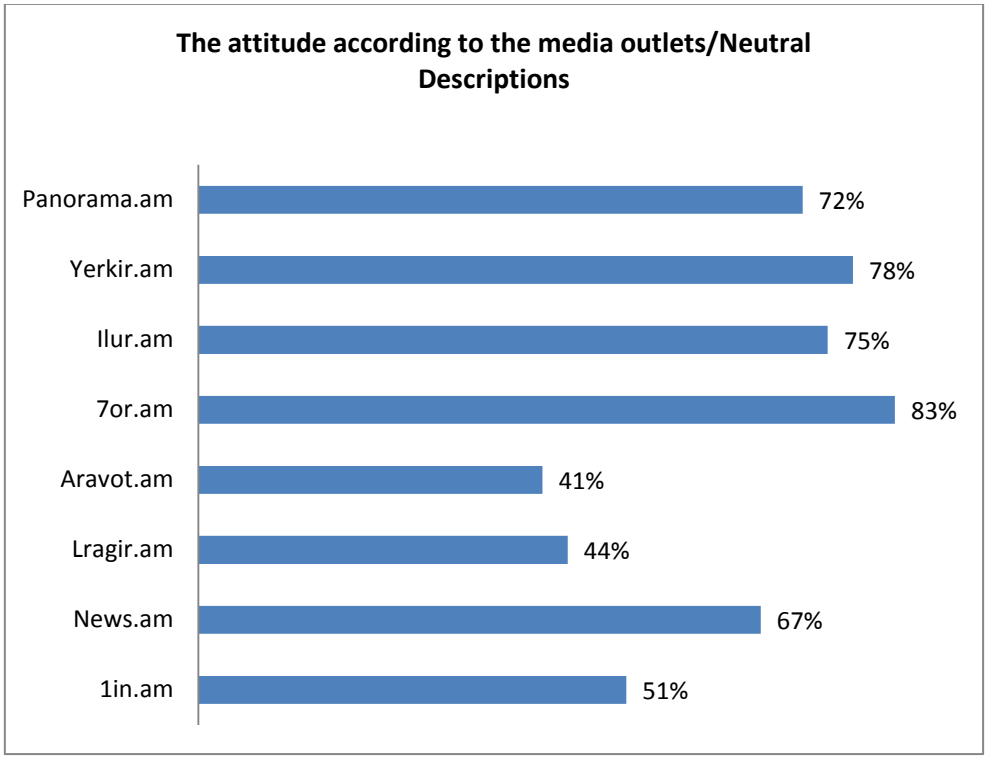
At that, apart from Lragir.am and Aravot.am, the difference between neutral and the so-called emotional (positive or negative) descriptions indicators is considerably large.

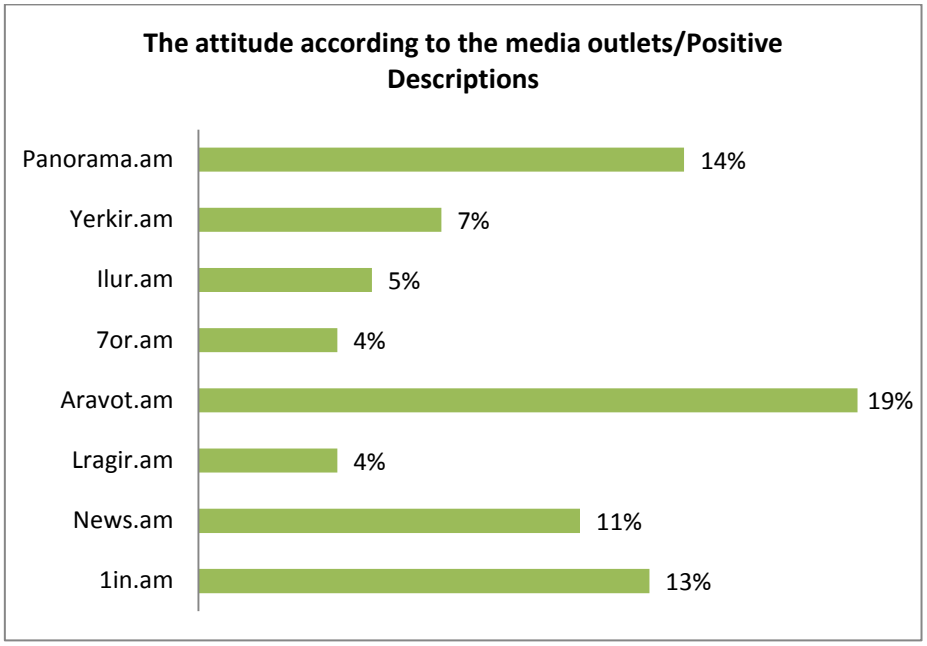
In Aravot.am neutral descriptions prevail over the negative indicator by only 1% (41% neutral, and 40% negative descriptions).

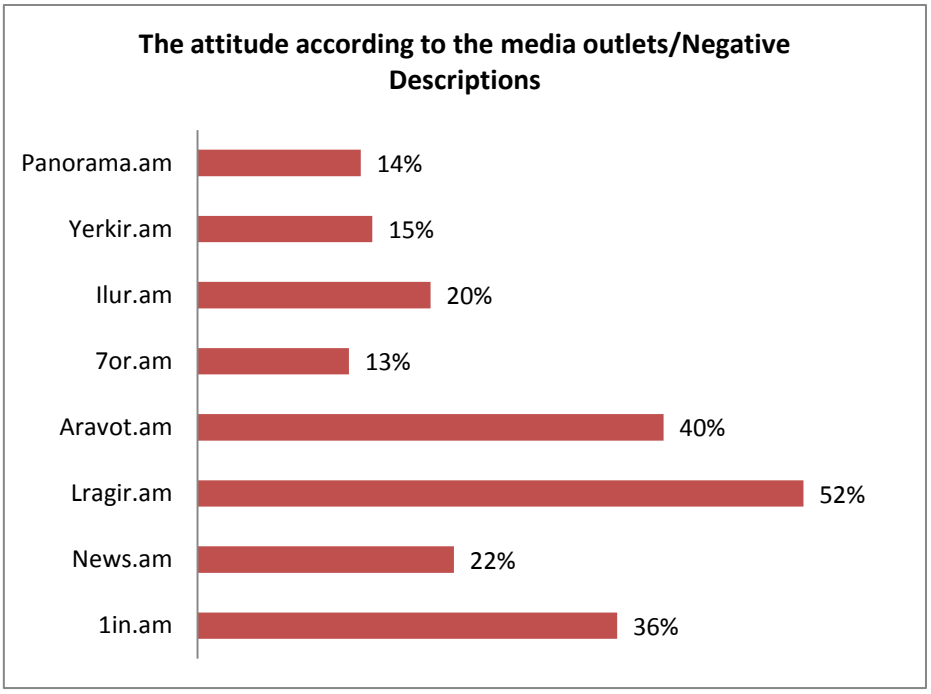
Lragir.am stands out from all the other media outlets with a completely contrary picture: the number of negative descriptions here prevails over neutral ones by 8% (52% negative, 44% neutral descriptions).

Nonetheless, even in the case of Lragir.am which is an exception we have 1.2 negative description per neutral description, and at large this is rounded to 1/1 ratio of the negative and neutral.

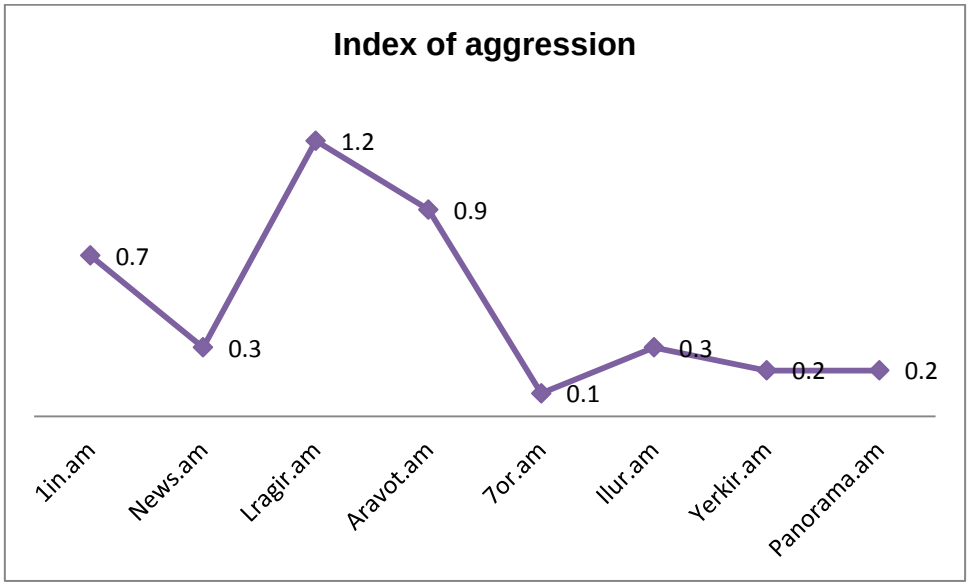
See the graphs below. Also APPENDIX, tables 4 and 5

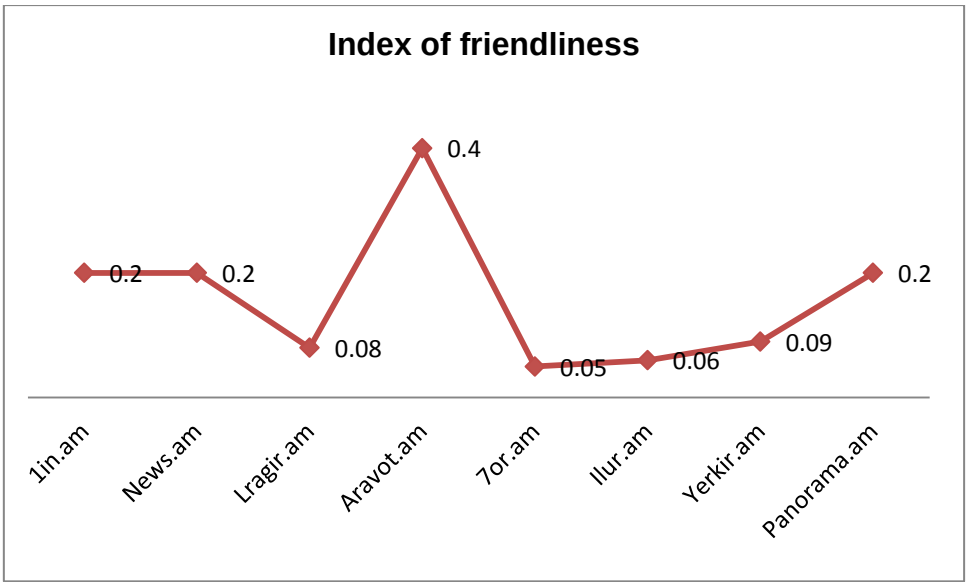



The attitude according to the media outlets/Positive Descriptions
Panorama.am
14%
Yerkir.am
7%
Ilur.am
5%
7or.am
4%
Aravot.am
19%
Lragir.am
4%
News.am
11%
1in.am
13%


The attitude according to the media outlets/Negative Descriptions
Panorama.am
14%
Yerkir.am
15%
Ilur.am
20%
7or.am
13%
Aravot.am
40%
Lragir.am
52%
News.am
22%
1in.am
36%

Graph. Indexes of aggression and friendliness in the media outlets





INFORMATION SOURCES AND AUTHORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS RUSSIA

In the monitored media outlets the neutral, positive and negative descriptions in the materials referring to Russia have their own origins. Those are:

- Commentaries and evaluations offered by the media outlets themselves;
- Commentaries and evaluations by Armenian forces, figures, experts that have made their way into the media publications,
- Commentaries and evaluations by Russian forces, figures and experts,
- Commentaries and evaluations by other foreign forces, figures and experts.

We offer this classification mostly trying to better understand the actual share of the Armenian media in the whole mass of evaluations and commentaries which in fact outline the info-image of Russia for the Armenian audience.

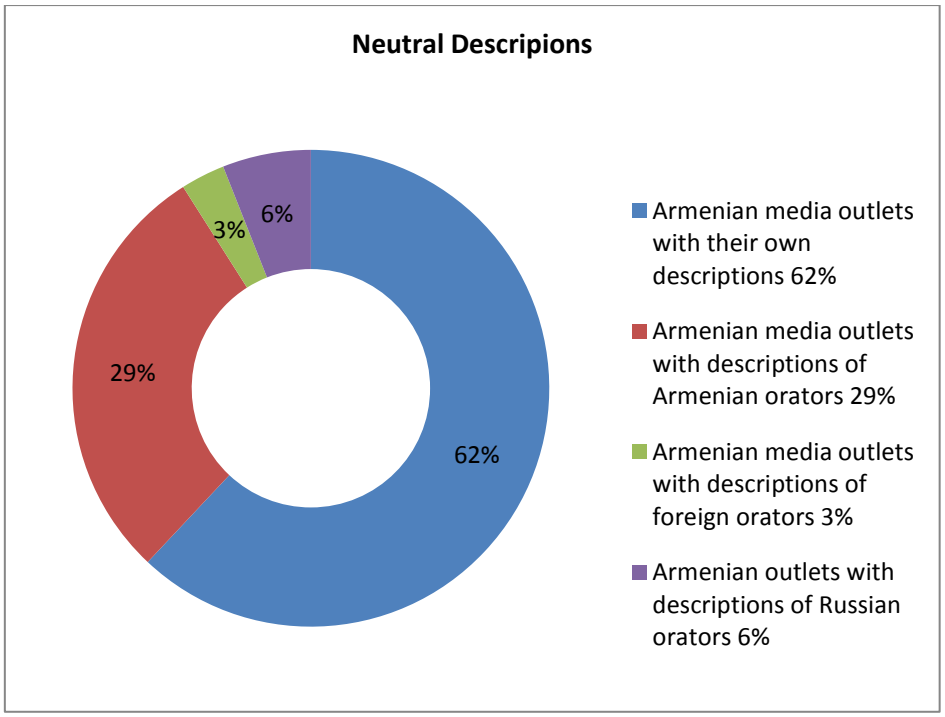
Taking into consideration the fact that there is a certain amount of other Armenian online mediacontent circulating in the above-mentioned outlets (in the form of reprints or brief renderings), we calculated those indicators also in an aggregated manner, calling those "Armenian media outlets."

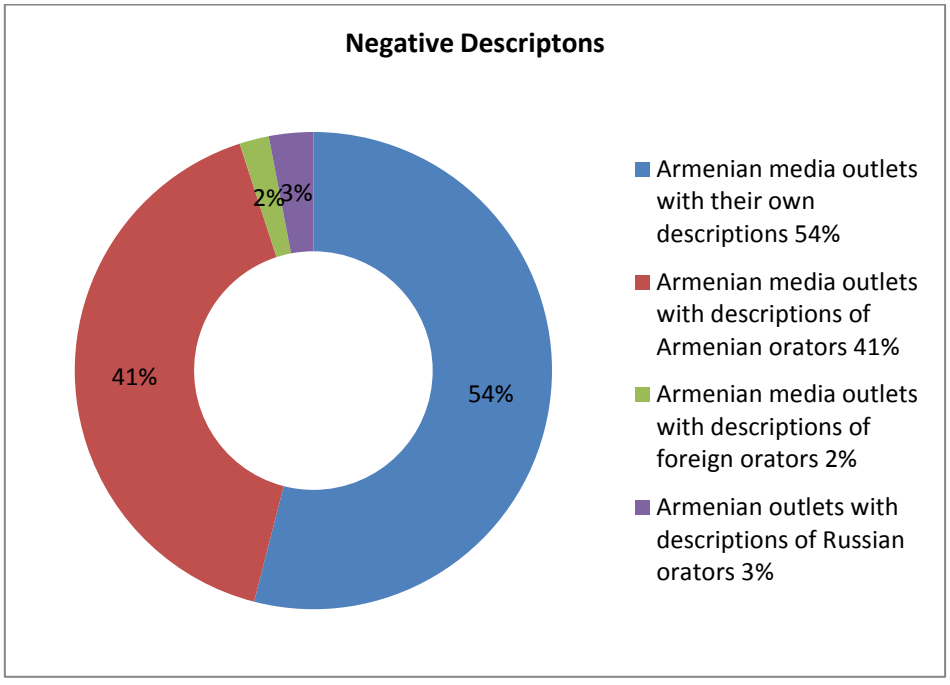
Hence, in this regard we arrived at the following picture:

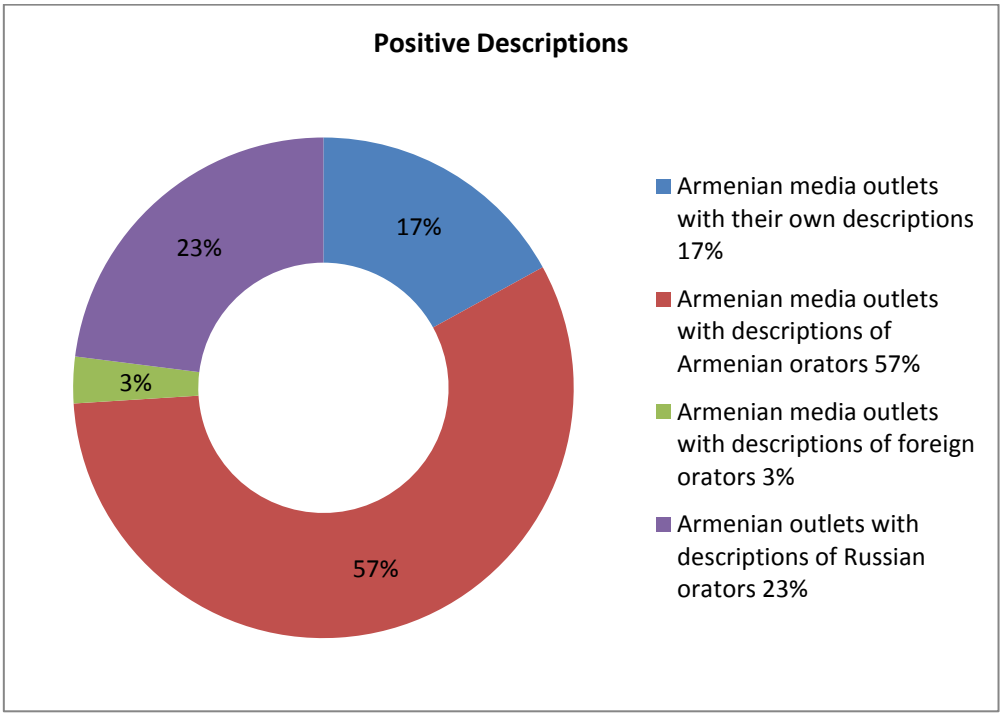
- Mainly the authors of neutral descriptions are the Armenian media outlets themselves, as well as the representatives of Armenian forces, individual figures and experts (total 91%). In the monitored media outlets the number of neutral descriptions by other foreign (3%) and Russian (6%) figures, forces and experts is considerably smaller.
- The indicators of the positive image are mainly shaped by the opinions of Armenian (57%) and Russian (23%) forces, figures and other experts that are only followed by the commentaries made by the Armenian media (17%).
- Mainly the authors of the negative image are again from the Armenian camp: the Armenian media outlets and the Armenian forces, figures and experts (total 95%).

See the graph below, also APPENDIX, Table 6.

Graph.Authors,expressing attitude towards Russia by description sources





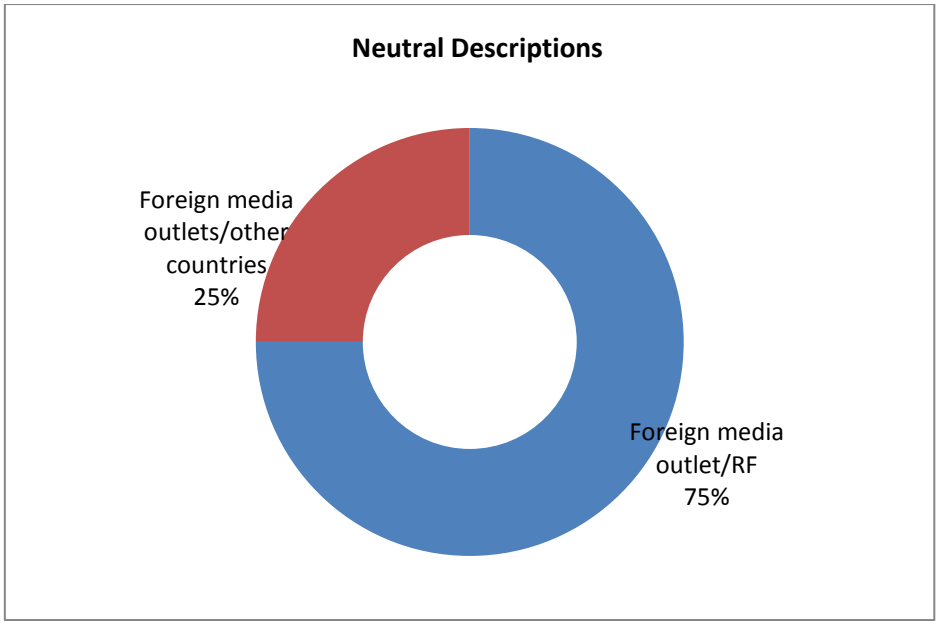


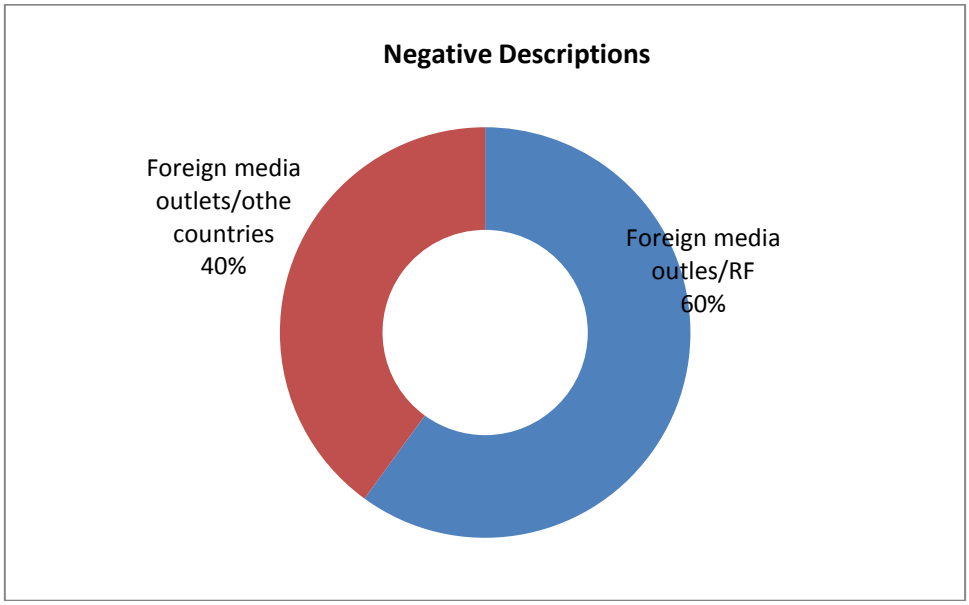
Foreign media have also acted as coauthors in the shaping of the image of Russia through the reprints of their materials or references made to their descriptions.

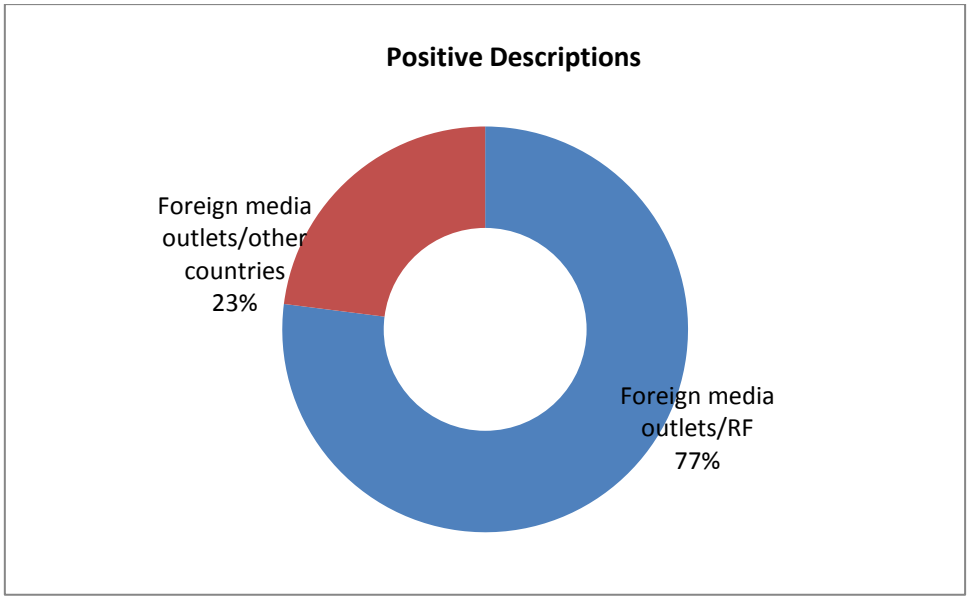
In this regard, we have found out that in the process of shaping the indicators of all the attitude markers (neutral, positive and negative) the Russian media have a larger share than the media outlets of all the other foreign countries.

See the graph below.

Graph.Attitude towards Russia according to the materials and descriptions borrowed from the foreign media







In other words,

- Approximately 1/3 (32%) of the negative descriptions (1098) in the monitored media outlets were from the foreign media.

At that 19% of authors being from RF sources, and about 13% of authors are from media outlets in other countries.

- Approximately 29% of all positive descriptions (365) in the monitored media outlets are foreign sources, too.

At that 22% are Russian sources, whereas 7% are media outlets in other countries.

See APPENDIX, Tables 7, 8, 9

THE THEMATIC COMPONENTS OF RUSSIA'S IMAGE

The stories on Russia in the Armenian media lie in the following three vectors:

- Subject lines that are not directly linked with Armenia, which have been classified by themes: the so-called ***intra-Russian theme***(about the domestic events, processes, actives forces and stories about the relations between them) and ***the theme of Russian foreign policy relations*** (stories about the Russia and its relations with countries other than Armenia and international organizations).

  We will conventionally group these two themes under a common heading - "Russia."

- Stories that are directly linked with Armenia where various aspects of the Russian policy towards Armenia are described.

  The studied content revealed Russian and Armenian relations in 17 fields (economy, integration, military/security, Karabakh conflict resolution, migration, culture, history, sports and so on).

  We grouped all those 17 topics under one heading "RF/RA relations."

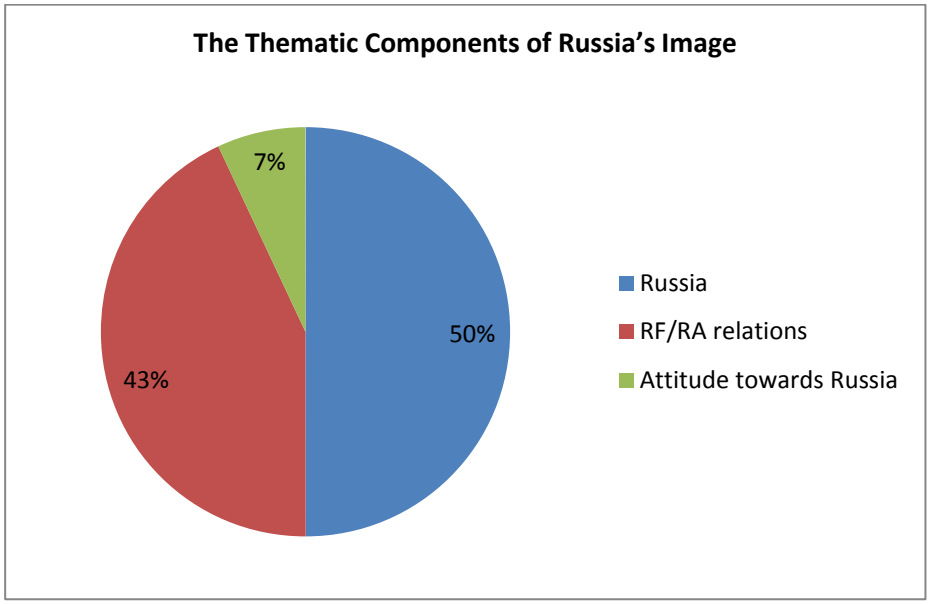
  - Stories on the attitude of Armenia, the Armenian society and separate forces and individuals towards Russia, results of public opinion polls and so on.

  We conventionally grouped these materials under the general heading of the Armenian "Attitude towards Russia."

This classification has revealed quite an interesting picture which shows that in the aggregated indicators of the Armenian media outlets the materials on Russia's so-called non-Armenian policy (heading "Russia" – approximately 50%) prevail over stories covering the various aspects of the Russian – Armenian relations (RF/RA relations, approximately 43%).

See APPENDIX, Table 10

Story lines where the attitudes of some political, social and civic groups or individuals towards Russia were presented in general terms without the descriptions of concrete events were considerably few in number (Attitude towards Russia – 7%).



In simpler terms, in the Armenian media Russia is rather presented as an active information subject (with events, acting forces and figures inside Russia; Russia as an active subject with its various, including Armenian foreign policy platforms, demonstrating a total indicator of 93%) than as an object of Armenia's (mainly generally stereotypical) attitude. The info-image of Russia is shaped on concrete motivation grounds with the initial description of events and processes, followed by evaluations.

THEMATIC RATINGS AND SUBJECT LINES

The thematic classification of the materials has been carried out according to the semantic leitmotif of the material – after the principle of "one story – one theme."

By the aggregated indictors of the media outlets the first lines were dedicated to the following as the most intensively covered topics: domestic events in Russia, RF's relations with other countries and organizations (excluding Armenia), the integration vectors of Armenia, the economic relations between RF and RA, the Armenian attitude towards Russia, as well as the topics of Russian-Armenian relations in the military and security areas, followed by the Russian – Armenian relations in all the other areas.

For more details see APPENDIX, Tables 11 and 12.

The individual media outlet thematic scales demonstrate varied prioritization.

Thus, **in terms of the presentation of domestic events in Russia,** News.am (that contained 48% of all materials about Russia), Ilur.am (25%), Yerkir.am and Panorama.am (each 23%) stand out. Aravot.am (5%) dedicated the least space to the domestic events in Russia.

Most of these materials are mainly reprints from the Russian media or contain references made to the latter with brief descriptions of the events.

The subject-lines are various: they inform the Armenian audience in the Armenian language about the Russian domestic societal, legal, interpersonal, and other (criminal chronicle, car accidents) events, ranging from information of public significance for the Armenian society (the decline of the Ruble exchange rate, financial and banking metamorphoses, legislative amendments about the residency status of the labor migrants, results of public opinion polls on the RF official policy) to specific events that took place in different regions of Russia that did not pose any pan-Russian significance.

Almost equal importance was ascribed to the theme of RF/other countries relations by all the media outlets: ranging between 20% (as is the case with Yerkir.am) to 29% (Panorama.am). Aravot.am (9%) and Lragir.am (16%)were exceptions.

The subject lines were used to bring forth all the urgent issues in the foreign policy of Russia, including the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the aggravation of relations between Russia and the Western countries, the problems in the energy sphere and other events that took place in the period of our study.

The common feature for these materials was that all the identified and covered problems were presented mainly without drawing parallels with the Armenian issues and failed to dwell into the issues of Armenia's integration into the EEU, even if they related to the events and processes of Belarus or Kazakhstan joining the EEU, or, if they covered the relations between Russia and Azerbaijan regarding energy transits, the probable membership of Azerbaijan to the EEU and other issues.

It would be worthwhile to mention that the period of our study coincided with the most important stages of Armenia's membership to the EEU: Armenia signing the EEU treaty in the capital of Belarus (on October 10), the approval of Armenia's EEU membership treaty by the RA Constitutional Court (November 14), and the upcoming ratification by the National Assembly (December 4). All these events brought about active discussions in the Armenian media, also in the media outlets we monitored, as it can be judged by the results of our study.

The results from the RF/RA integration vector theme revealed a group of media outlets that covered these issues more intensively than the others and a group that differed from the one prioritizing the first two themes mentioned above.

Thus, the highest indictors were recorded with Aravot.am (32% of the materials), 1in.am (22%) and Lragir.am (21%). The smallest number of materials on this topic was recorded in Panorama.am (4%) and News.am (2%) websites.

The subject lines depict the evaluations and the attitudes voiced by Russia and its representatives mainly regarding the Eurasian integration vector selected by Armenia, tell about Armenia's official circles, namely the meeting held regarding the EEU membership, present specific discussions on different provisions of the EEU treaty, also there are quite intensive reactions on the occasions of a few scandalous announcements (about Armenia's membership with its internationally recognized borders, the (non-) establishment of customs checkpoints between Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh and so on).

These are materials with political and other conclusions within the general framework of "the activities and announcements made by Russia, other EEU members and their individual representatives on the probable membership of Armenia to the EEU."

In the materials on Armenia's integration vectors theme the issue of Armenia's EEU integration was presented as a separate but already established episode in the EEU membership context.

There are also a few other areas of Russian-Armenian relations (RA's attitude, RF/RA/ economy, RF/RA/security and military, RF/RA/Karabakh conflict resolution) in the materials on which the image of Russia was considered through the prism of Armenia's EEU integration, the future story-lines with Russia were identified with a number of issues and problems related to the EEU integration.

In October – November 2014 the Armenian media meant EEU when they said "Russia," and they mainly meant Russia when they said "EEU."

The theme of RF/RA/security and militaryaspects were more frequently covered by Lragir.am (12%). The largest number of materials on the role of Russia in the Karabakh conflict negotiations process (RF/RA/Karabakh conflict resolution theme) was published by Lragir.am(5%), Yerkir am եւ 7or.am (in each 4% of materials related to Russia).

Subject lines - The subject lines of security/military cooperation with Russia and Karabakh resolution go around the two traditional perceptions of Russia – Russia as the guarantor of Armenia's security and Russia as a subject of the Karabakh conflict resolution process.

We come across mutually exclusive statements in the case of those two perceptions: on the one hand, we have claims that Armenia's accession to the EEU is a threat to Armenia and Karabakh, since in this way Armenia is voluntarily agreeing to isolation and automatically appears under sanctions, losing its western partners, and so on, while on the other hand, we have the assurances that Armenia's EEU integration means ensuring the security of Armenia, since this is the only way to avoid the strikes of Russia that "operates with arms and wages wars."

On the one hand there is an image of Russia as the guarantor of Armenia's security, and on the other hand there is a Russia that directly threatens both Armenia and Karabakh since it sells large batches of arms to Azerbaijan.

Materials on the Russian military base in Armenia appeared only in the form of news stories, which informed of the visits of Russian military figures to the base or other program events.

It is worthwhile to specifically underline that strategic, security and military cooperation issues with Russia are considered from the perspective of the Russian and Azerbaijani military cooperation and Armenia's prospects of cooperation with the Western countries.

Both by the aggregate and individual media outlet results, such themes as migration and the Armenian Diaspora in Russia, both traditional themes for Armenia, were dwelt upon considerably rarely.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS RUSSIA AND AUTO-STEREOTYPES

In essence, all the materials where the attitude of the various forces, individual figures and experts in Armenia towards Russia as a state or the Russian society (the theme of Attitude towards Russia) were presented bring together the manifestations of the Armenian-Russian political relations as well as the relations in various spheres after the principles:

- Armenia and the Armenian society in the relations with Russia.
- Armenia and the Armenian society about the relations with Russia.

Within the aggregate indicators of the media the materials of this group outnumbered (7%) those on such topics as security and military cooperation, the Karabakh conflict resolution, migration, sports, law-enforcing activities, cultural, ecclesiastical, societal, educational, scientific, and media relations, as well as the historical developments between Armenia and Russia.

The theme of the Armenian and Russian political relations and attitude was presented more intensively in the following media outlets: Aravot.am (20%), Lragir.am (11%), 1in.am and 7or.am (each by 10%). News.am referred to the issues of the Armenian attitude least of all (1%).

It should be mentioned that the materials grouped under this heading were consistently devoted to the Armenian attitude to Russia. Among the materials of this very group the negative descriptions (53.5%) have outnumbered both the neutral (29.5%) and positive (17%) descriptions by the total indicators of all the media outlets.

See APPENDIX, Table 13.

But in the materials of all other themes there were episodes where the descriptions of Russia were combined with the so-called Armenian self-descriptions (auto-stereotypes) after the principle "This is Russia, and this is us (our authorities, oligarchs, opposition, society, army, traditions, mentality and so on)."

Here are a few typical examples:

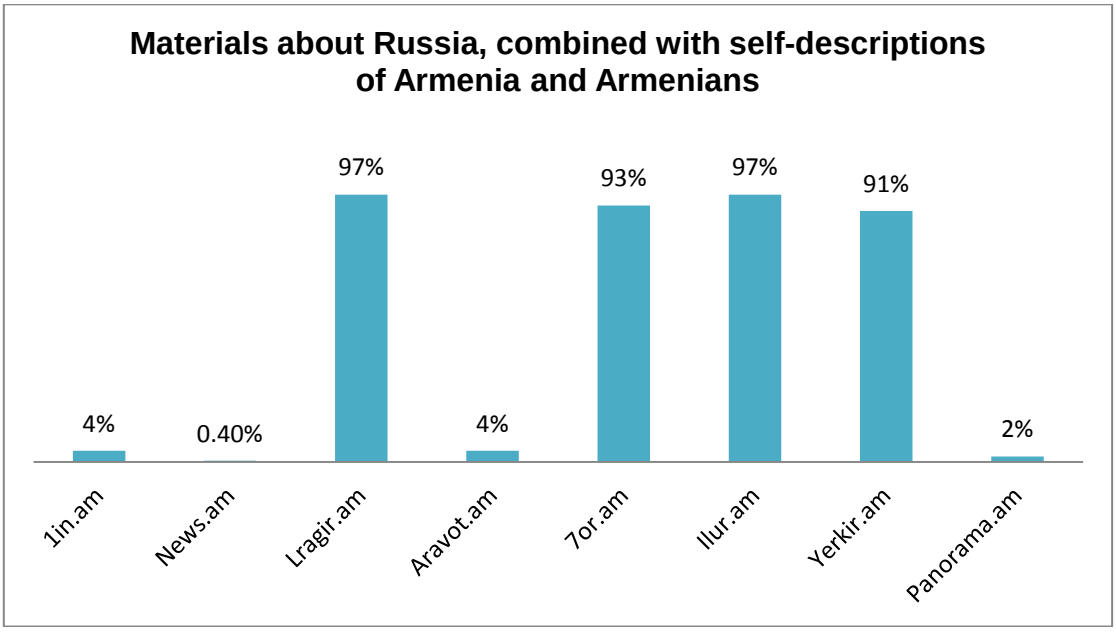
- "Whereas the only place where they still believe in the omnipotence of Russia is Armenia."(http://www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/politics/view/104928),
- "Nothing depended on Armenia, because Armenia made every effort in order to favor its big brother and to join the union"(http://www.aravot.am/2014/10/10/505394/):
- "Some political figures are trying to make pro-Russian statements and to show Armenia's way lying towards Russia as the only way" (http://www.1in.am/1448487.html).
- "Armenia has joined the union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and the first thing to borrow from the big brothers will be the claim for the cult of the personality and the aspiration to rule forever. The one who integrates Armenia into the Eurasian Union will receive the "tag of a khan" (http://www.panorama.am/am/politics/2014/11/13/hayrikyan/)
- "If a letter declaring Artsakh an issue to be solved by Russia as well as Russia's right over Artsakh can be authored by Zori Balayan on the Armenian land, Rizhkov will then definitely reserve the right to announce that Artsakh is not a historically Armenian land." (http://www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/country/wv5k/105996)
- "As a result of all this the citizens of Armenia leave their motherland, acquire Russian citizenship, and Serzh Sargsyan states that emigration shall not be spoken about by exaggerating and artificially aggravating the situation." (http://www.1in.am/1456533.html):
- "He (Andranik Mihranyan – L.B.) called those who felt insulted by Kiselyov's statements inferior and suffering from that complex. He also said that he was surprised to see what a fierce and abnormal anti-Kiselyov campaign was launched in the Armenian media after his statements" (http://www.1in.am/1467515.html).
- "They are the providers of Moscow's policy, and Moscow especially prefers these people to bear the names of locals, for example Armenian surnames, so that colonization is more convincing and is on a voluntary basis… The people in this category have predominantly Armenian surnames whose behavior has caused the tremor of the appropriate circles in Armenia and even Russia (http://www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/politics/view/105966):

It should be mentioned the topic on the Attitude towards Russia is the only one, where the number of negative descriptions is more than the positive and neutral ones, and 60% of the materials about Russia were combined with examples of Armenian self-descriptions (auto-stereotypes) against the background of the image of Russia. This was noted in the aggregated indicators of the monitored 8 media outlets.

The results for individual media outlets show that the materials with the highest number of auto-stereotypes were published in the following media outlets: Lragir.am, 7or.am, Ilur.am, Yerkir.am (92 – 97% of materials about Russia contained Armenian auto-stereotypes), and in the case of others the number of materials containing auto-stereotypes constituted 0.4 – 4% of the total number of materials about Russia.

See the graph below, also APPENDIX, Table 14.

Graph: Materials about Russia with self-descriptions (auto-stereotypes) of Armenia and Armenians



CONCLUSIONS

The presence of Russia on the Armenian information plain is ensured by the contemporary channels of mass communication (the traditional and trendy means of Armenian and Russian information dissemination) and through social networks.

The knowledge of Russian, on the one hand, and the accessibility of Russian media through various IT formats and drives make the latter an active agent in shaping the current image of Russia in Armenia.

The Armenian society has another effective channel to form an idea about contemporary Russia: these are the personal interactions with compatriots, partners and/or acquaintances in Russia, and sometimes impressions gained through these channels have a larger impact on the coloring of Russia's image than any other media outlet.

The rationale of this research on the media image of contemporary Russia in the Armenian-language Internet media outlets issued in Armenia and the objective to draw the general outlines of that info-image had a few reasons. All the reasons derived from the need to introduce certainty in the regularly held debates on this matter, and on the other hand, it was certainly caused by strong research interest.

The conclusions presented reflect the situation as of the end of 2014 – October and November – and show the production of a typical group selected from the various Armenian media outlets from different angles.

The media outlets we selected – 1in.am, News.am, Lragir.am, Aravot.am, Ilur.am, Yerkir.am, 7or.am, Panorama.am – have quite varied indicators in terms of their affiliation with political forces (governmental, oppositional and independent), history (2 – 16 years), the number of materials produced daily (a maximum of 60 – 280 materials daily), thematic and genre preferences (news or commentary). However, they all have stable audiences.

The major research questions posed were "Who speaks? What do they say? How do they say it?" in publications that fully or partially cover Russia.

Who?
Information Sources

- In shaping the media image of Russia the Armenian media did roughly 50% of the task, the other half being provided by the foreign media. The content offered to the public contained 47% materials of the outlets' own production and 43% stories of foreign make, including the materials reprinted from the Russian media. However, the indicators of individual media outlets testify that there are media outlets in this group that elaborate on a Russia-related theme with the active use of mainly foreign sources of information, and on the contrary, there are also such that deliver their message by means of own

production. In the case of 6 out of the 8 media outlets the number of materials of foreign production is 1.2 – 2.5 times higher than that of own materials, as is the case, say with News.am (26% own materials and 65% materials borrowed from foreign media), 7or.am (26% own materials and 47% materials borrowed from foreign media), Panorama.am (36% own materials and 45% materials borrowed from foreign media). And in the cases of Lragir.am (18% materials from foreign sources versus 67% own materials) and Aravot.am (18% materials from foreign sources versus 55% own material) we see just the opposite: here the number of own materials is approximately three times larger than the number of materials from the foreign media.

- The Armenian media outlets have obviously refrained from extensively transferring opinions and evaluations shared in the social networks (where content on Russia is diverse with varied colors and of various origins) onto their own platforms (1% of materials on Russia).

How?
Information Interest

- The materials, fully or partially covering Russia and published in the course of the study outnumbered materials referring to any foreign country, including Azerbaijan, when considering aggregate indicators.

- Russia was a stable information axis in Armenia during the two months of the research. The maximum number of materials published daily in the monitored media outlets ranged from 11 to 32, whereas the number of days when the Russian theme was not dwelt upon whatsoever was maximum 9 out of the 61 days of the monitoring period.

- Russia with its domestic and foreign issues, including the various manifestation of its Armenian policy was mentioned in 7% of the total number of materials published by the 8 media outlets. As for individual media outlets the share of the Russian theme in the whole mass of published materials ranged between 3%-26%.

Colors of the Attitude

- By the aggregate indicators of the 8 monitored outlets, the materials referring to Russia were most of all presented in neutral colors (61% of all descriptions), followed by negative (29%) and positive (10%) inclinations. This order is characteristic of the Armenian media which is manifested during other in-depth studies with media foci. It should be specifically underlined that the marks of attitude in the descriptions of Russia (neutral, positive and negative) were identified by their direct semantic meaning, and not by the implied messages between the lines.

- There is no considerable dynamics in the so-called indexes of aggression and friendliness, and this is true even in comparison with a study we conducted with the same methodology 10 years ago (see Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Crossroad of "neither peace nor war", Yerevan, 2005, p. 84). In 2004 the aggregate aggression index

was 0.32, in 2014 it was **0.48**, in 2004 the aggregate friendliness index was 0.24, while in 2014 it was **0.15.**

- The aggression index, that is to say, the ratio of negative descriptions with the number of neutral descriptions and the so-called friendliness index, that is – the positive descriptions ratio with the number of neutral descriptions show that we have approximately 6 neutral descriptions per positive description, and approximately 2 neutral descriptions per negative description.

- Except Lragir.am and Aravot.am, in other outlets the indicators of neutral descriptions are considerably higher than those of the so-called emotional (positive or negative) descriptions. In Aravot.am neutral descriptions outnumbered the negative ones by 1% only (41% neutral and 40% negative descriptions). But Lragir.am stands out from among all the other media outlets due to the fact that the number of negative descriptions here prevailed over that of neutral descriptions by 8% (52% negative, 44% neutral descriptions). And even under these circumstances the aggression index of Lragir.am is 1.2, and we at large witness a 1/1 ratio of negative and neutral attitudes.

Authors of Attitude Markers

- **The main authors of neutral descriptions** are the Armenian media outlets themselves, as well as the representatives of Armenian forces, individual figures and experts (total 91%). In the monitored media outlets the number of neutral descriptions voiced by other foreign (3%) and Russian figures, forces and experts (6%) was considerably lower.

- **The indicators of a positive image** were mainly shaped due to the opinions expressed by the Armenian (57%) and Russian forces, figures and other experts (23%), and only then based on the commentaries made by the Armenian media.

- **The main authors of the negative image are again from the Armenian camp** – the Armenian media outlets, Armenian forces, figures, and experts (total 95%).

- The Armenian media does not make use to foreign media content in the shaping of the positive or negative image of Russia specially and deliberately, even though the Russian media have a larger share in the formation of all (neutral, negative and positive descriptions) indicators than the media outlets of other foreign countries. Thus, 19% of all negative descriptions appeared in the Armenian media from famous Russian information sources. About 22% of all positive descriptions of Russia were transferred here from the same sources, too.

What?
Subject Lines and Thematic Priorities

- The Armenian media have no restrictions regarding themes and subject lines. Moreover, there are media outlets that give preference to the diverse themes in the

domestic life of Russia and the issues of Russia's relations with other countries (except Armenia) – News.am (48% of all stories referring to Russia), Ilur.am (25%) and so on. Aravot.am gave the least importance to the domestic events in Russia and Russia's relations with other countries (except Armenia) (5% and 9% respectively).

- And on the contrary, there are media outlets that view everything related to Russia using various self-descriptions (auto-stereotypes) in the general Russian context, namely the Armenian-Russian attitudes and the policy Russia pursues towards Armenia. Individual outlet results show that the materials of the following contained the highest number of auto-stereotypes, namely Lragir.am, 7or.am, Ilur.am, Yerkir.am (there are Armenian auto-stereotypes in 91 – 97% of materials about Russia), while in the others the number of materials containing auto-stereotypes was 0.4 – 4% of the total number of materials about Russia.

- In the Armenian media Russia is rather presented as an active information agent (events, active forces and people inside Russia, Russia as an active agent on its various foreign policy platforms, including Armenia, with a total indicator of 93%) than as an object of the Armenian (mainly general and stereotypical) attitude. The info-image of Russia is shaped on concrete and motivating grounds, when events and processes come first to be followed by evaluations.

- We should mention that the timeline of the study coincided with the very important stages of Armenia's accession to the EEU: Armenia signing the EEU treaty in the capital of Belarus (on October 10), the approval of Armenia's EEU membership treaty by the RA Constitutional Court (November 14), and the upcoming ratification by the National Assembly (December 4). All these events caused active discussions in the Armenian media and as it can be seen from the results of our research, also in the media outlets we monitored. During October – November 2014 the Armenian media meant the EEU by "Russia," and they mainly meant Russia when they said the "EEU." In other words, all the future integration developments of Armenia and its implications for Armenia were really derived from Russia's policy towards Armenia and from the nature of relations between Russia and other countries.

- The probable future for Armenia (the topic: Attitude towards Russia) is described in two colors – negative and positive. The positive and optimistic aspect gained less resonance. And this was done mainly through the voice of the official circles. It is in the materials of this very group that the number of negative descriptions by aggregate indicators (53.5%) outnumbered both neutral (29.5%) and positive (17%) descriptions.

- In the thematic ratings **by the aggregate indicators** the top lines are occupied by the so-called non Armenian stories: the themes are Domestic events in Russia, Relations of the RF and other countries (apart from Armenia) as compared with such traditional themes as migration, the Armenian Diaspora in Russia and so on.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Intensity of Information about Russia

(Frequency of materials on Russia)
(October 1 – November 30, 2014)
The data have been received according to the ratio of materials about Russia and all materials in every media outlet:

Media Outlet	Number of materials on Russia	Number of all materials
1in.am	444	14123
	3%	100%
News.am	1041	14428
	7%	100%
Lragir.am	668	2616
	26%	100%
Aravot.am	445	5370
	8%	100%
7or.am	223	3192
	7%	100%
Ilur.am	299	2486
	12%	100%
Yerkir.am	336	2897
	12%	100%
Panorama.am	259	4740
	5%	100%
Total	**3715**	**49852**
	7%	**100%**

Information Sources shaping up the Image of Russia

Table 2. General profile of information sources

Own materials	Another Armenian media outlet (reprints)	Foreign media outlets	Statement/ Message	Social networks	Total
40%	7%	43%	9%	1%	100%

Table 3. Sources of materials by monitored media outlets

Media outlet	Who/Source of material					Total
	Own materials	Another Armenian media outlet (reprints)	Foreign media outlets	Statement/ Message	Social networks	
News.am	269	15	670	59	28	1041
	26%	1%	64%	6%	3%	100%
Lragir.am	446	50	117	52	3	668
	67%	7%	18%	8%	0%	100%
1in.am	165	37	206	31	5	444
	37%	8%	46%	7%	1%	100%
Aravot.am	250	69	76	48	2	445
	56%	16%	17%	11%	0%	100%
Yerkir.am	105	25	170	35	1	336
	31%	7%	51%	10%	0%	100%
Ilur.am	93	29	137	40	0	299
	31%	10%	46%	13%	0%	100%
Panorama.am	93	11	116	33	6	259
	36%	4%	45%	13%	2%	100%
7or.am	59	6	101	52	5	223
	26%	3%	45%	23%	2%	100%
Total	**1480**	**242**	**1593**	**350**	**50**	**3715**
	40%	**7%**	**43%**	**9%**	**1%**	**100%**

Attitudes of Armenian Media Outlets towards Russia (Neutral, positive, negative descriptions)

Table 4. General picture of attitudes

How? / Description mark	Number of descriptions
0	2264
	61%
+	361
	10%
-	1090
	29%
Total	**3715**
	100%

Table 5.Attitudes by monitored media outlets

How? / Description mark	Number of descriptions of Russia							
	1in.am	News.am	Lragir.am	Aravot.am	7or.am	Ilur.am	Yerkir.am	Panorama.am
0	228	701	294	185	185	223	261	187
	51%	67%	44%	41%	83%	75%	78%	72%
+	56	113	24	83	10	15	25	35
	13%	11%	4%	19%	4%	5%	7%	14%
-	160	227	350	177	28	61	50	37
	36%	22%	52%	40%	13%	20%	15%	14%
Total	**444**	**1041**	**668**	**445**	**223**	**299**	**337**	**259**
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 6. Authors of Materials Expressing an Attitude towards Russia by the Sources of Descriptions

Who?/Author of Material or Description	How? Description mark			Total
	0	+	-	
An Armenian media outlet with its own descriptions	531	35	369	935
	62%	17%	54%	54%
An Armenian media outlet with descriptions by Armenian forces, figures and other authors	247	121	276	644
	29%	57%	41%	37%
An Armenian media outlet with descriptions by foreign forces, figures and other authors	22	7	14	43
	3%	3%	2%	2%
An Armenian media outlet with descriptions by Russian forces, figures and other authors	52	48	20	120
	6%	23%	3%	7%
Total	**852**	**211**	**679**	**1742**
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 7. Foreign media outlets as sources of information about and description of Russia for the Armenian media

General picture of attitudes towards Russia according to materials and descriptions, borrowed from foreign media outlets

How?/ Description mark								
0			+			-		
Foreign media outlet/Russian Federation	Other foreign outlet	Total	Foreign media outlet/Russian Federation	Other foreign outlet	Total	Foreign media outlet/Russian Federation	Other foreign outlet	Total
849	289	1138	81	24	105	211	140	351
75%	25%	100%	77%	23%	100%	60%	40%	100%

Table 8. Attitudes towards Russia by the sources of materials

(Armenian and foreign media outlets, other opinions in the forms of statements/messages and social network content)

General Indicators of Authors' Attitudes twowards Russia

Who? / Source of material	Description mark	Total
Own material	0	721
		49%
	+	192
		13%
	-	567
		38%
	Total	**1480**
		100%
Other Armenian media outlets	0	123
		51%
	+	15
		6%
	-	104
		43%
	Total	**242**
		100%
Foreign media outlets	0	1138
		71%
	+	105
		7%
	-	350

		22%
	Total	1593
		100%
Statement/Message	0	258
		74%
	+	40
		11%
	-	52
		15%
	Total	350
		100%
Social Networks	0	24
		48%
	+	9
		18%
	-	17
		34%
	Total	50
		100%

Table 9. Authors of attitude towards Russia, by monitored media outlets

Who? / Author of the material	Description mark	MEDIA OUTLET							
		1in.am	News.am	Lragir.am	Aravot.am	7or.am	Ilur.am	Yerkir.am	Panorama.am
Own material	0	54	193	154	71	44	59	81	65
		33%	72%	35%	28%	75%	63%	77%	70%
	+	37	45	18	57	1	8	9	17
		22%	17%	4%	23%	2%	9%	9%	18%
	-	74	31	274	122	14	26	15	11
		45%	12%	61%	49%	24%	28%	14%	12%
	Total	165	269	446	250	59	93	105	93
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Other media outlets	0	16	3	24	28	6	15	22	9
		43%	20%	48%	41%	100%	52%	88%	82%
	+	1	1	2	7	0	3	1	0
		3%	7%	4%	10%	0%	10%	4%	0%
	-	20	11	24	34	0	11	2	2
		54%	73%	48%	49%	0%	38%	8%	18%
	Total	37	15	50	69	6	29	25	11
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Foreign media outlets	0	137	455	83	48	88	112	129	86
		67%	68%	71%	63%	87%	82%	76%	74%
	+	11	54	2	12	3	3	9	11

		5%	8%	2%	16%	3%	2%	5%	10%
	-	58	161	32	16	10	22	32	19
		28%	24%	27%	21%	10%	16%	19%	16%
	Total	**206**	**670**	**117**	**76**	**101**	**137**	**170**	**116**
		100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Statement/ Message	0	19	35	33	37	44	37	28	25
		61%	59%	64%	77%	85%	93%	80%	76%
	+	6	8	2	7	6	1	6	4
		19%	14%	4%	15%	12%	3%	17%	12%
	-	6	16	17	4	2	2	1	4
		19%	27%	33%	8%	4%	5%	3%	12%
	Total	**31**	**59**	**52**	**48**	**52**	**40**	**35**	**33**
		100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Social networks	0	2	15	0	1	3	0	1	2
		40%	54%	0%	50%	60%	0%	100%	33%
	+	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	3
		20%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
	-	2	8	3	1	2	0	0	1
		40%	29%	100%	50%	40%	0%	0%	17%
	Total	**5**	**28**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**0**	**1**	**6**
		100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**0%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 10. Topics, shaping up the image of Russia

- Russia (relations, processes, events inside Russia/relations between Russia and international organizations as well as Russia and other countries)
- Attitude towards Russia (the attitude of Armenia and Armenians towards Russia)
- Relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia (Russia's actions, steps in relations with Armenia in various spheres). These include 17 different spheres: integration vector, state agencies, economy, Security/Military, Karabakh conflict resolution, Public relations, Migration, Diaspora, Media/Freedom of Speech, History, Science, Culture, Interrelations between Churches, Sport, Education, Healthcare, Law-Enforcing Systems.

Topics	Descriptions of Russia%
Russia	50%
Relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia	43%
Attitude towards Russia	7%
Total	**100%**

Table 11. Overall rating of topics and subject matters

What about?	Total
Internal developments in Russia	902
	24%
Relations between the Russian Federation and other countries	792
	21%
RF/RA/Integration vector	536
	14%
RF/RA/Economy	331
	9%
RA's attitude	275
	7%
RF/RA/Security/Military	184
	5%
RF/International organizations	143
	4%
RF/RA/State agencies	130
	3%
RF/RA/Karabakh conflict resolution	90
	2%
RF/RA/Sport	57
	1.5%
RF/RA/Migration	54
	1.5%
RF/RA/Culture	51
	1.4%
RF/RA/Law-Enforcement bodies	48
	1.3%
RF/RA/Diaspora	35
	0.9%
RF/RA/History	25
	0.6%
RF/RA/Public Relations	17
	0.4%
RF/RA/Education	17
	0.4%
RF/RA/Healthcare	13
	0.3%
RF/RA/Media/Freedom of Speech	7
	0.1%
RF/RA/Relations	5

between Churches	**0.1%**
RF/RA/Science	**3**
	0.08%
Total	**3715**
	100%

Table 12. Rating of Topics and Subject Matters by Media Outlets

What about?	Media Outlet							
	1in.am	News.am	Lragir.am	Aravot.am	7or.am	Ilur.am	Yerkir.am	Panorama.am
Internal developments in Russia	61	500	78	24	28	74	78	59
	14%	48%	12%	5%	13%	25%	23%	23%
Relations between the Russian Federation and other countries	115	268	105	42	55	64	67	76
	26%	26%	16%	9%	25%	21%	20%	29%
RF/RA/Integration vector	96	20	138	142	39	36	55	10
	22%	2%	21%	32%	17%	12%	16%	4%
RF/RA/Economy	22	56	75	39	17	56	30	36
	5%	5%	11%	9%	8%	19%	9%	14%
RA's attitude	43	7	76	91	23	13	18	4
	10%	1%	11%	20%	10%	4%	5%	2%
RF/RA/Security/Military	23	25	80	24	3	13	6	10
	5%	2%	12%	5%	1%	4%	2%	4%
RF/International organizations	29	42	11	14	16	6	11	14
	7%	4%	2%	3%	7%	2%	3%	5%
RF/RA/State agencies	14	18	21	20	22	10	13	12
	3%	2%	3%	4%	10%	3%	4%	5%
RF/RA/Karabakh conflict resolution	7	7	32	6	10	8	15	5
	2%	1%	5%	1%	4%	3%	4%	2%
RF/RA/Sport	8	17	2	5	0	3	21	1
	2%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	6%	0%
RF/RA/Migration	8	11	6	17	3	2	1	6
	2%	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%	2%
RF/RA/Culture	3	17	4	5	4	1	7	10
	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	4%
RF/RA/Law-Enforcement bodies	3	20	3	5	1	2	9	5
	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	2%
RF/RA/Diaspora	6	9	11	4	1	2	1	1
	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
RF/RA/History	0	1	14	1	0	8	0	1
	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
RF/RA/Public Relations	2	5	3	0	1	1	3	2
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
RF/RA/Education	0	7	2	3	0	0	1	4

	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
RF/RA/Healthcare	1	8	0	1	0	0	0	3
	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
RF/RA/Media/Freedom of Speech	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
RF/RA/Relations between Churches	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
	0.004 %	0 %	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
RF/RA/Science	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0.002 %	0.001 %	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	**444**	**1041**	**668**	**445**	**223**	**299**	**336**	**259**
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 13. Topics by description marks

What about?	How?			Total
	0	+	-	
Russia	623	54	225	902
	69%	6.00%	25%	100%
Russia/Other countries	543	47	202	792
	69%	6%	25%	100%
RF/RA/Integration vector	245	82	209	536
	46%	15%	39%	100%
RF/RA/Economy	203	28	100	331
	62%	8%	30%	100%
RA's attitude	81	47	147	275
	29.50%	17%	53.50%	100%
RF/RA/Security/Military	94	18	72	184
	51%	10%	39%	100%
RF/International organizations	101	15	27	143
	71%	10%	19%	100%
RF/RA/State agencies	95	19	16	130
	73%	15%	12%	100%
RF/RA/Karabakh conflict resolution	43	9	38	90
	48%	10%	42%	100%
RF/RA/Sport	51	6	0	57
	89.50%	10.50%	0%	100%
RF/RA/Migration	27	12	15	54
	50%	22%	28%	100%
RF/RA/Culture	44	6	1	51
	86%	12%	2%	100%
RF/RA/Law-enforcement bodies	39	0	9	48

	81%	0%	19%	100%
RF/RA/Diaspora	21	4	10	35
	60%	11%	29%	100%
RF/RA/History	8	0	17	25
	32%	0%	68%	100%
RF/RA/Public relations	14	1	2	17
	82%	6%	12%	100%
RF/RA/Education	8	8	1	17
	47%	47%	6%	100%
RF/RA/Healthcare	7	5	1	13
	54%	38%	8%	100%
RF/RA/Media/Freedom of Speech	3	0	4	7
	43%	0%	57%	100%
RF/RA/Relations between Churches	4	1	0	5
	80%	20%	0%	100%
RF/RA/Science	2	1	0	3
	67%	33%	0 %	100%

Table 14. Materials about Russia, combined with self-descriptions of Armenia and Armenians (autostereotypes in the context of Russia's image)

Media outlet	Number of materials containing self-descriptions	Number of materials about Russia
1in.am	17	444
	4%	100%
News.am	4	1041
	0.4%	100%
Lragir.am	645	668
	97%	100%
Aravot.am	16	445
	4%	100%
7or.am	208	223
	93%	100%
Ilur.am	291	299
	97%	100%
Yerkir.am	306	336
	91%	100%
Panorama.am	4	259
	2%	100%
Total	**1491**	**3715**
	60%	**100%**