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2018 SNAP ELECTIONS AND POST-ELECTION POLITICAL AGENDAS ON ONLINE PLATFORMS IN ARMENIA



YEREVAN
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What Did We Study and in What Stages?

A study on the electoral process - We conducted our research in a few stages for three months (November 1, 2018 - January 24, 2019). We applied different approaches to the classification of online media and Facebook content to a given stage, since unlike online media outlets, dissemination of content related to elections on Facebook was not conditioned by the timeline set for the campaign.

Thus, we had the following stages for online media outlets:

- Pre-campaign stage (November 1-25, 2018), official campaign (November 26-December 7, 2018), Election Day (December 9, 2018), two post-election weeks (December 10-24, 2018).

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We set out the following stages for Facebook:

- Preparatory – the stage of positioning themselves on the social network (November 1-13, 2018), the campaign (November 14-December 7, 2018), the Election Day (December 9, 2018), post-election weeks (December 10-24, 2018).

Research on the authorities and new agendas in Armenia – during this post-electoral research we had an undifferentiated period for both online media outlets and Facebook, namely January 1 – 24, 2019.

Throughout the research, we studied the electoral and post-electoral content in 6 top Armenian media outlets, namely 1in.am, News.am, Aravot.am, Armlur.am, Tert.am, Lragir.am.

We also studied the Facebook pages of political forces and those of a number of individual users from Armenia (a total of 32 Facebook platforms).

Thus,

- Before the identification of parties to run for the elections (November 1 – 13, 2018), we monitored the Facebook activity of various political forces, at the same time choosing those pages which would be closely and profoundly monitored in the later stages. In the electoral context we monitored the Facebook platforms of 11 competing political forces (9 parties and 2 alliances).
- To study the new agendas set after the elections, along with the above-mentioned platforms, we also monitored the Facebook pages of political forces not running for the elections, as well as those of a number of other users (analysts, bloggers, and other specialists).

How Did We Select the Facebook Pages?

We selected the Facebook pages after the following principles:

- According to the level of the user's activity (i.e. how many materials on the topic and how frequently he/she would post on Facebook),
- According to the sizes of audiences, following the pages and the level of interaction/feedback (i.e. the total number of those who liked and followed the pages, the number of likes and shares of the content, and the number of comments).

Selection of political forces' pages—Various political forces had various levels of Facebook presence and acted differently. There were official pages of political parties, which normally disseminated more voluminous and comprehensive content, meant for their social network audiences, than the pages of the party leaders or other members, and on the contrary, there were forces which used the social network pages of their members to disseminate the messages of their leaders, administrations and other party members. Besides, there were also political figures who had a number of pages at a time and who from time to time activated their pages alternately. There were a number of political figures/forces, too, who on the eve of the electoral campaign started a new page in order to hold their campaign there, or registered on Facebook for the first time ever, in order to make this their major platform for holding the campaign.

This is the major reason why in case of different forces, considered within our research, we did not select an equal number of pages for one force. In one case, we immediately viewed the page of the official page of the alliance, and the pages of the party leaders, whereas in others we monitored the pages of party leaders only, and in the third case, we viewed only the official pages of the parties.

Principles of selecting pages that belonged to non-politicians – We studied the pages of this group of users within the first month after the elections, in order to complete our research on the authorities and public agenda set on Facebook. When selecting only a few from among active analysts, various field experts and bloggers active on Facebook, we were guided by the diversity of previously expressed thoughts and opinions about politically and socially significant events (so that our list would contain users acting from various standpoints), as well as the sizes of social network audiences, the presence of topical discussions and debates on their pages that later formed social media discourse on the matter

See Appendix, The list of monitored Facebook pages per stage.

What Topics Did We Study?

In general, we studied the topic of snap Parliamentary elections, scheduled for December 9, 2018, as reflected in online platforms, as well as the peculiarities of the discourse on the authorities and the agendas set in post-revolutionary Armenia in the initial period after the elections.

Within the context of electoral processes, we studied:

- What general and specific characteristics could be revealed in the coverage of electoral processes by online media outlets?
- How the political race rolled out in online media outlets and on Facebook platforms?
- What specific messages were sent to the electorate by the political forces running and not running for the elections, by reporters, various social and professional groups and their representatives?
- What interest the audience had in the electoral processes and delivered emphatic messages?

When studying the early agenda set as well as the ongoing discourse about the power, we considered the following:

- What general and specific characteristics could be revealed in the coverage of electoral processes by online media outlets?
- How the political race rolled out in online media outlets and on Facebook platforms?
- What specific messages were sent to the electorate by the political forces running and not running for the elections, by reporters, various social and professional groups and their representatives?
- What interest the audience had in the electoral processes and delivered emphatic messages?

In this course, unlike the previous stages of research, we stopped only on materials that contained comments and evaluations of the power's activities and the agendas being set and did not focus on the daily news coverage on the same topics.

What principles did we follow to calculate the data?

- We identified the topics addressed in the context of the elections and successively in the new post-electoral agendas, coming from the discourse analysis of the content made available in online media outlets and on Facebook platforms.
- The frequency rates of this or that topic was measured after the principle of **one material – one or more issues**. Content related to the major theme of the research on Facebook pages was seen as one unit, namely this could be a Facebook status, a story shared from the media, a photo or a video-piece. Statuses accompanying materials shared from the media outlet onto one's page were considered individual pieces, if they were not quotes from the media article.
- We defined the representatives of political, social, professional and other groups who acted as authors when addressing various issues related to the topic. Their activity was measured by the principle of **one author – one or a few topics**.
- We counted the number of topics reflected in one material based on the change of the author, and by the change in the modality markers of the messages (+, -, 0), namely by the principles of **The number of authors equals the number of topics and the number of connotational markers**, and **the number of connotational markers equals the number of topics**.
- The markers of topics (+, -, 0) were determined coming from the direct, semantically charged formulations, and not the implied meanings of messages.

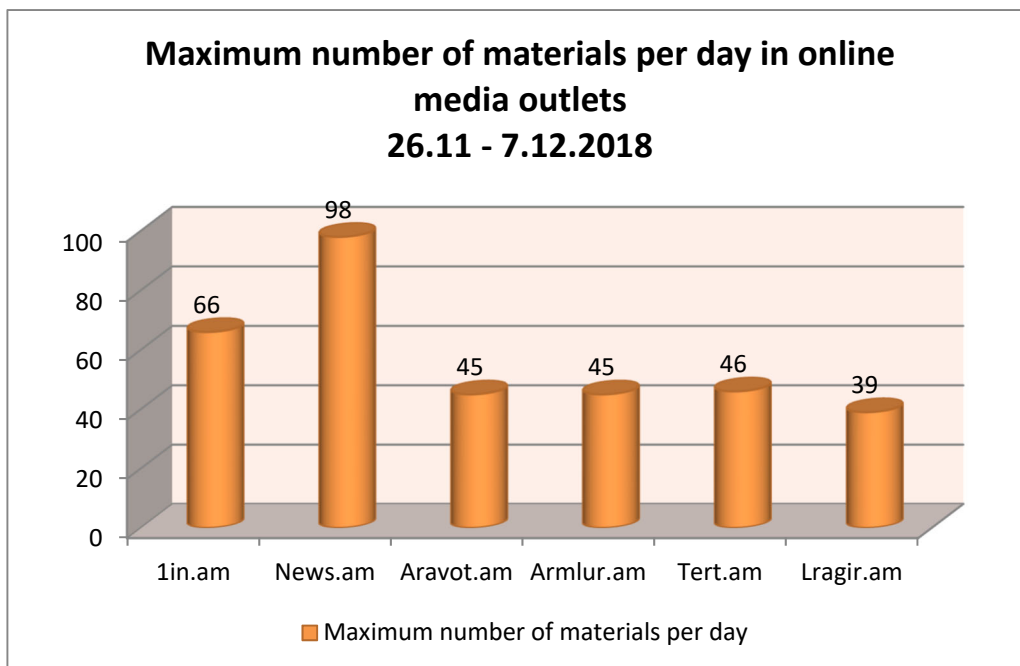
2018 SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ARMENIAN ONLINE MEDIA OUTLETS AND ON THE FACEBOOK PLATFORMS OF COMPETING POLITICAL FORCES

(November 1, 2018 - December 24, 2018)

HOW? Intensity of Discussions on Electoral Topics in Online Media Outlets and on the Facebook Pages of Competing Political forces

Materials on electoral topics started to be circulated in online media outlets since the day of disseminating the first official announcement on holding snap elections on December 9, 2018 (November 1, 2018). These were mainly daily news stories. The topic developed at full scale, later revealing the full diversity of issues we recorded, and then it acutely accelerated after the submission of political forces' applications to the Central Electoral Commission to run the race for the Parliament (November 14, 2018). Until the very first post-election days the topics was covered hyper-intensively, with a vast number of stories. In the course of the official campaign the number of materials on elections per day rose up to 39 in such media outlets that normally produced small numbers of materials, whereas in media outlets that normally produced a larger number of materials daily it went up to 98. By the way, this level of intensity sustained throughout all the 12 days of the campaign.

See the figure below.



In fact, the Facebook campaign of participating political forces was launched before the official campaign, ever since their registration at the CEC, that is November 14. However,

analogously with media outlets, in social media, too, the highest level of activity by the political forces was noticed in the course of the official campaign (November 26 – December 7). During this very period, they disseminated the majority of their elections-related materials in one day.

See Appendix, Table 1.

HOW? Level of Visualization of Elections in Online Media Outlets and on Facebook

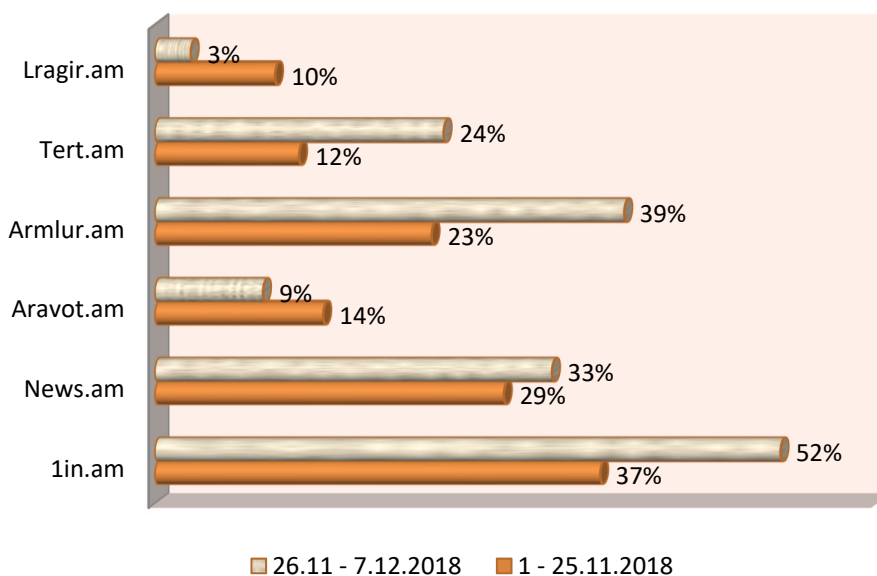
Hello, I am your candidate

In both pre-campaign periods (in online media outlets – in November 1 - 25 and November 26 - December 7, and on Facebook – in November 1- 14 and November 14- December 7) a large number of content pieces were delivered to the audience in the form of video materials. Especially in the course of the official campaign, they were videos of long duration ranging from Facebook lives of offline meetings by various forces with their electorates to video pieces of their own production or produced by media outlets, including the circulation of TV programmes on the websites.

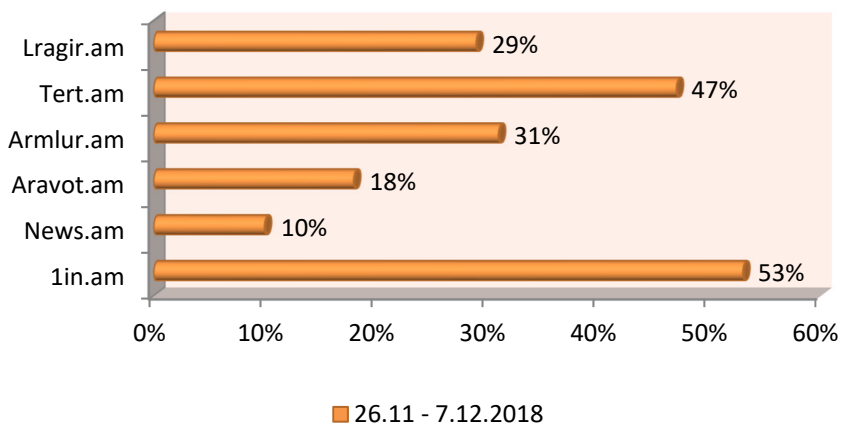
Thus, for example, on the days of the official campaign in four out of six online media outlets videos constituted an essential share within the total volume of materials on elections (in 1in.am they constituted 52% of all materials, in Armlur.am - 39%, in News.am – 33% and in Tert.am – 24%). Aravot.am and Lragir.am continued the tradition of a considerably larger number of text materials as compared with that of video pieces.

See the figures below, including Appendix, Tables 2 and 3.

The share of videos in online media outlets



Live streaming campaigns / online media outlets



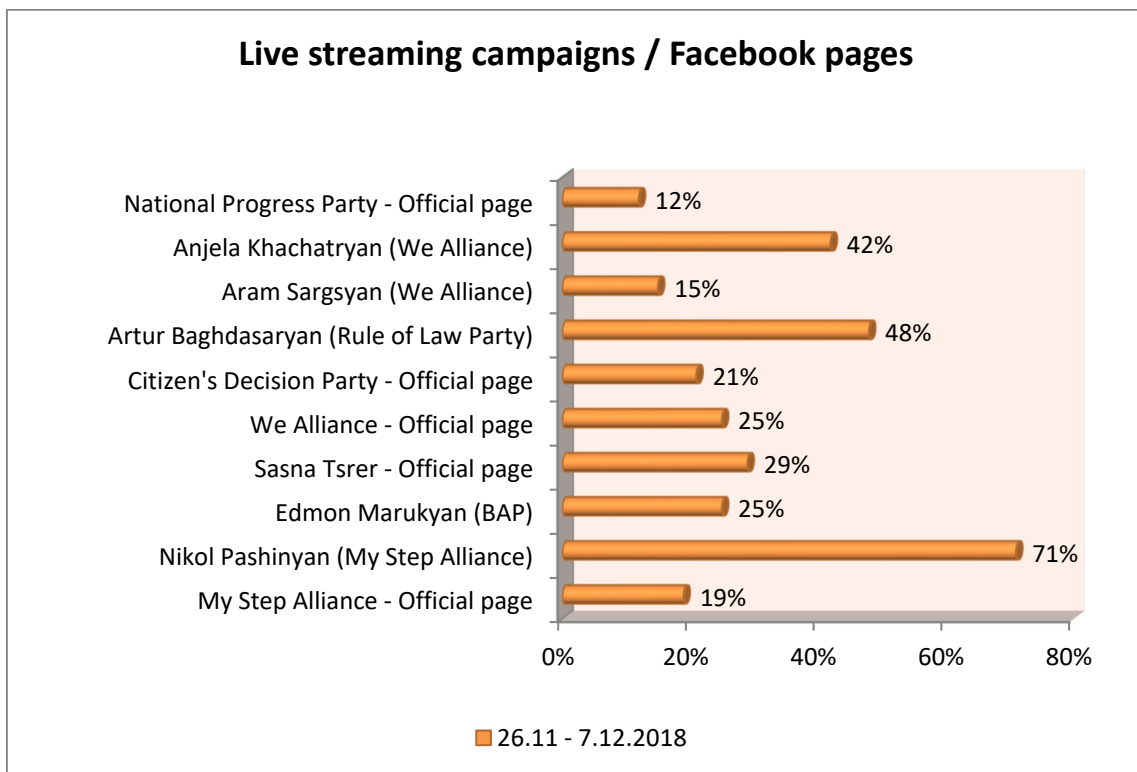
The degree of visualization of Facebook campaigns by competing forces was even higher, on a number of pages the volume of video materials rose up to 90% during the official campaign.

Among those video materials, live streaming constituted a considerable share during the official campaign, namely one's own Facebook lives from the offline campaign meetings and live propaganda and black PR speeches by individual politicians and figures.

See Appendix, Table 4.

The innovative aspect within this campaign was the use of Facebook lives by a larger number of candidates, representing various political forces (for example, Armen Ashotyan, ArpineHovhannisyan, Eduard Sharmazanov from RPA). The live publications by acting Prime-Minister NikolPashinyan, and the leader of Bright Armenia Party EdmonMarukyan were stable in terms of quantity. In NikolPashinyan’s page they amounted to 71%. Apart from the Facebook lives of his offline campaign meetings from his Facebook page, EdmonMarukyan also held lives to wrap up the outcomes of the day.

See the figure below.



HOW? Circulation of Pre-Electoral Materials and Debates

In the course of this campaign, too, there was circulation of materials on various electoral topics in social networks, online media outlets and on TV. In the media outlets we monitored, materials taken from the Facebook pages of competing forces constituted a considerable share. For example, these were the debates held remotely among adversaries on Facebook, their messages on the geography and schedule of meetings on the next campaign day, etc.

During this period, the recordings of various TV debate programmes were published in online media outlets. For example, Aravot.am, News.am published the recording of the

Great Debate among the leaders of the slates of all competing political forces, held on December 5 on Public TV, fully, with a duration of 3.5 hours. News.am posted a few pieces from the very acute debate series, called **Tête à Tête** on Ararat TV, mainly with the participation of representatives from the RPA and My Step Alliance.

Unlike other online media outlets, 1in.am organized debates among the candidates of competing political forces within the framework of regular Internet debate programmes.

The debates among the candidates and forces were held not only in the face to face format, through media outlet mediation, but also remotely, on Facebook, when a status posted by a candidate on his/her page was reacted to by another candidate on his/her own page. Just like the previous electoral processes (2012, 2013, 2017), this time, too, we did not come across with a case when a candidate trespassed into the Facebook domain of the adversary and make comments on his/her page.

HOW? Propaganda, Harsh Black PR, Hate Speech in Online Media Outlets and on the Facebook Platforms of Competing Forces

The online campaign of competing forces, including My Step Alliance, was launched before the official start of the campaign. The political forces conducted their political race in both online media outlets and on Facebook, via the presentation of their own programmes, propaganda in favor their team-members, placing advertisements on Facebook and online media outlets, as well as harsh black PR against adversaries, sometimes even by using hate speech.

There were quite spread and actively circulating claims about the nature of the campaign in that period, referring to the unprecedented atmosphere of intolerance and hate. However, our data indicate that this impression was formed due to a few scandalous, remote and face to face verbal conflicts which lasted because of the continuous reiteration of topics. For example, the statement containing a comparison between the Karabakh conflict and the VelvetRevolution made by the representative of My Step Alliance S. Mikaelyan on the very first day of the official campaign was immediately countered by the RPA and other forces, it became an occasion for acute and public clashes between the various representatives of My Step and RPA during every single one of their face to face debates, up to the end of the campaign.

Harsh clashes between the My Step Alliance and the RPA representatives took place with the participation of different individuals, including the leaders: N. Pashinyan – V. Sargsyan, other candidates occupying various positions on the slates, namely A. Ashotyan – A. Harutyunyan, A. Hovhannisyan – L. Nazaryan, A. Ashotyan – R. Rubinyan, S. Mikaelyan – D. Shahnazaryan.

It so happened that during the campaign there were more talks about the general atmosphere and hate speech than concrete examples of that hate speech.

On the other hand, the principle *all against all* was functioning. There was reciprocal criticism, if not black PR, used by the forces fighting for the second and third places in the National Assembly, as well as the newly emerging parties.

Thus,

- **Acting Prime Minister** spoke negatively about the RPA and its leader when addressing 16 out of 24 topics during the official campaign.
- The negative (-) mentions by **My Step** mainly referred to the RPA, followed by PAP, ARF, Citizen's Decision SDP, We (Menq).
- The **RPA** mentioned the Prime Minister with negative modality (-) in all 18 topics, spoke negatively (-) about the Government and My Step Alliance addressing 12 topics out of 18, gave negative evaluations also to SasnaTsrer, We, CD SDP, Rebirth, and National Progress.
- The **PAP** spoke with a (-) mark about the Prime Minister, the RPA, the BAP, ARF, My Step, Tsrer, and Rule of Law party.
- **The ARF** spoke about the Government in negative (-) modality only. There were similar evaluations also of the Prime Minister, My Step, RPA and BAP.
- The **BAP** made negative (-) evaluations of RPA, PAP, SasnaTser, ARF, and National Progress.
- **Sasna Tsrer** spoke negatively (-) about the RPA, PAP, ARF, Rule of Law, and BAP.
- **CD SDP** made negative(-) evaluations of the RPA, the Prime Minister, the Government and My Step, as well as the ARF and the Rule of Law.
- **We** stated negative (-) evaluations about the RPA, followed by My Step and the Prime Minister, and few times about PAP, ARF, Sasna Tsrer, Rule of Law, CS SDP.
- **Rebirth** spoke negatively(-) about My Step and the Government, RPA, PAP, ARF and Rule of Law. It did not give any negative (-) evaluation to the Prime Minister at all.
- **National Progress** did not speak negatively (-) about the Prime Minister either, instead it spoke negatively about the RPA, PAP, My Step, BAP, Rule of Law and ARF.

However, by general indicators 11 out of 8 forces (My Step Alliance, BAP, SasnaTsrer Party, Rule of Law Party, Citizen's Decision, We Alliance, National Progress, Rebirth) as well as the Prime Minister had an almost proportionally distributed positive, negative and neutral semantic charge in their evaluations and comments about their adversaries.

The campaign led by the **RPA** candidates was mainly built on black PR. The negatively marked statements and comments made by this force significantly, i.e. almost twice exceeded the total of positive and negative evaluations.

The **ARF** mostly delivered negatively and positively marked speeches in this campaign. In online media outlets the neutrally marked discourse of this force was rarer than that marked positively or negatively.

In case of PAP the picture was a bit different. This force normally spoke either positively or neutrally about its adversaries. Negatively marked statements and evaluations were considerably fewer.

See Appendix, Table 5.

The picture was quite different on Facebook. The representatives of adversary forces not only chose to act with extensive black PR, but tolerated and did not delete from their pages comments made by the so-called ordinary users that contained hate speech. During the electoral race, the trend of acting through supporters and fake account holders against various groups spiked up in the social media domain. In general, different figures are mentioned regarding the number of these very accounts in the Armenian segment of Facebook that bore an individual's first and last names or were fake accounts marked with a slogan used for these domestic political purposes. They not only disseminated misinformation, but also actively commented on various pieces of content related to political forces on the social network. We also registered cases when individual candidates shared statuses addressing their adversaries that contained obscene language from other users' pages onto their own pages.

Competing forces also prepared black PR videos and shared them onto their pages. For example, explicitly black PR video materials, entitled **No to RPA, No to PAP, No to ARF, No to Bright Armenia**, were uploaded onto the official page of National Progress. The RPA disseminated 11 video materials, entitled **Nikol's Lies**, through its Facebook page bearing the slogan of RPA campaign – **If you feel concerned**.

Who and to What Extent?

Analysing the content of materials on the electoral process in online media outlets, we identified 24 topics, which were addressed by the representatives of different groups, namely political and social forces, the Diaspora, representatives of other countries, Armenian experts and specialists of different fields, reporters, and so on.

The discursive behavior of political parties not running for the elections could mainly be witnessed in mid-November, in the period of submitting applications at the CEC. The media publicized their announcements and explanations in terms of refrain from participating in the elections. They kept silent during the official campaign. YerkirTsirani Party was an exception, which made statements about the course of the campaign on behalf of its leader or the party itself, commented on the evaluations and standpoints on the Karabakh topic expressed in the course of acute debates between My Step Alliance

and the representatives of the RPA, published sharp critical remarks about the RPA, Civil Contract/My Step and NikolPashinyan in online media, and conducted aggressive black PR on Facebook.

The other political forces that chose not to participate (Heritage, ANC and so on) kept silent on Facebook.

The electorate's discourse on online platforms –In the course of this campaign, unlike the 2017 Parliamentary elections, online media outlets contained a miserably small number of opinions, expressed by ordinary citizens, regarding the process, the interest in the elections and other matters. The speech and the opinions of the electorate were expressed on Facebook platforms, including the pages of various political forces and politicians, mainly in the form of comments.

The discourse of the adversaries – In online media outlets the comments and opinions of My Step Alliance, the members of the government, the Prime Minister and the RPA were the most prevalent in number. However, in different stages, also in different media outlets due to different priorities. Thus, before the official campaign, from among all political forces RPA representatives spoke on the elections more frequently, and during the official campaign the acting Prime Minister took the first position in this regard.

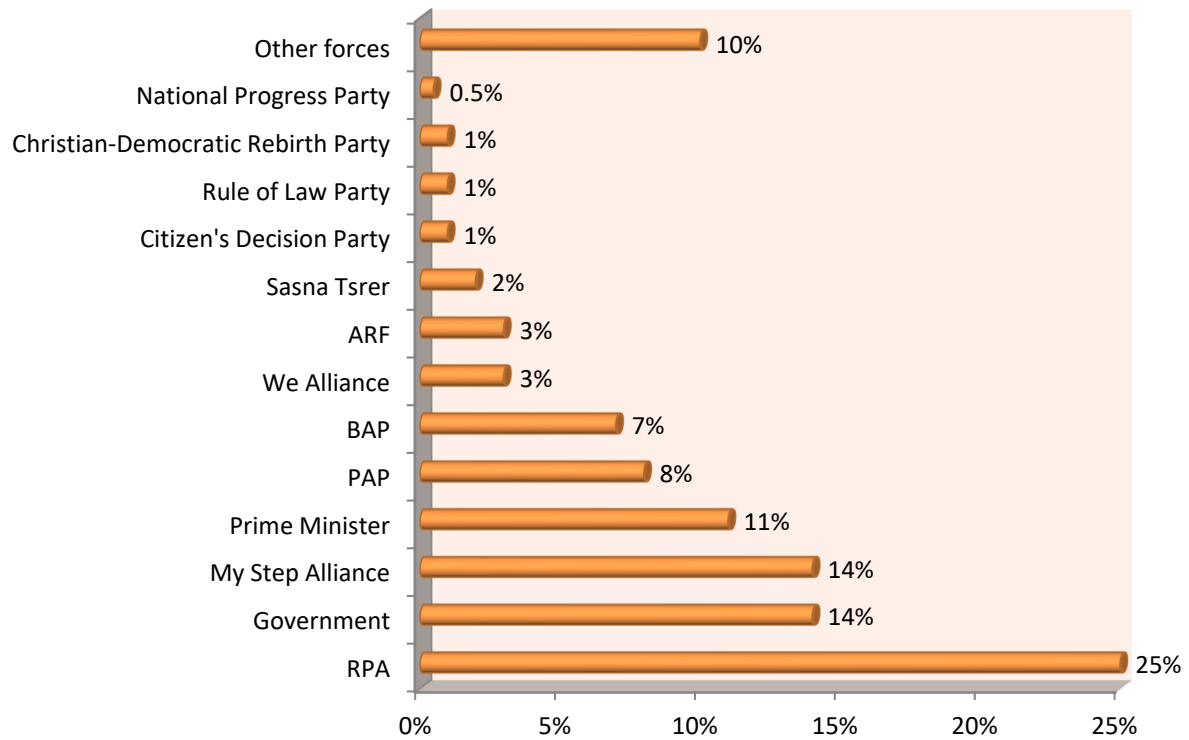
In both pre-campaign stages, the media outlets reflected the messages of PAP almost proportionally. The picture was the same for BAP before the official campaign. Whereas during the 12 days of the official campaign, BAP's messages were reflected considerably more frequently in 1in.am. By the way, with a major gap with other media outlets.

The forces that were not elected into the Parliament manifested noticeable patterns, too. If before the official campaign the ARF's messages was reflected more often, as demonstrated by the aggregated indicators of online media outlets, than the opinions and evaluations expressed by SasnaTser, during the official campaign there was a swap between these two forces: SasnaTrer appeared on a position higher than ARF.

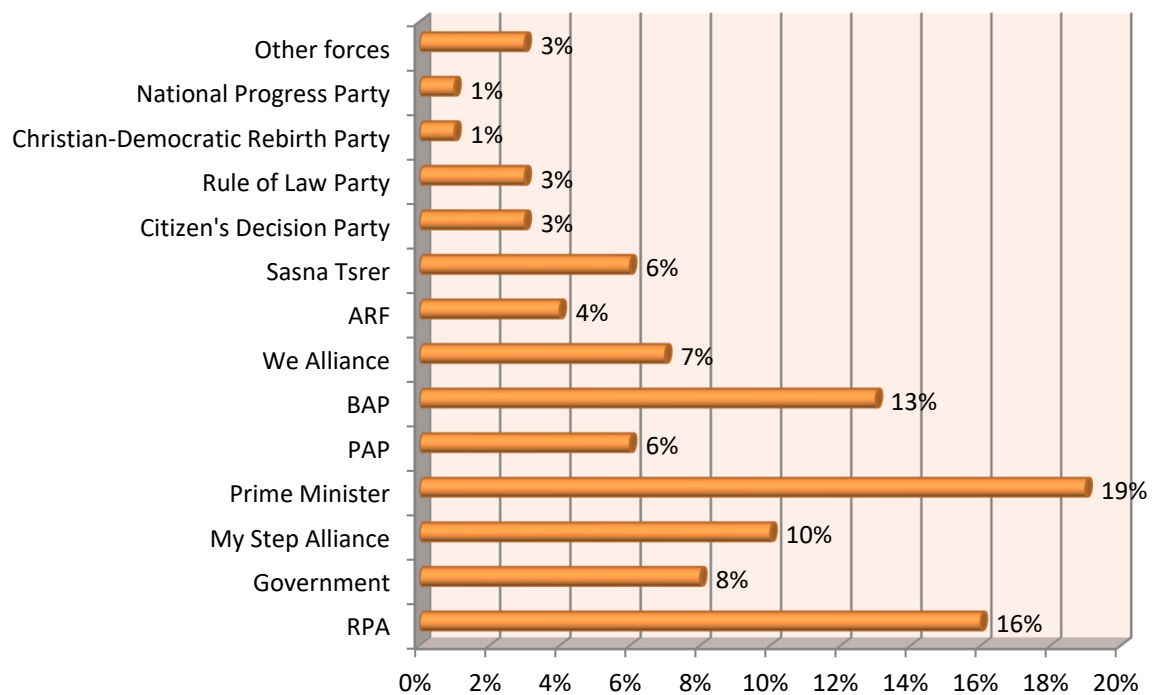
The level of interest by online media in the newly emerged political parties that were unknown to the electorate (Citizen's Decision SDP, Rebirth and National Progress) was noticeably low throughout the electoral process. However, in the stage of official campaign the opinions of the Citizen's Decision SDP on the websites of these media outlets exceeded the number of the opinions, held by the other two new forces.

For more details on this topic see Appendix, Tables 6 and 7. Also see the figures below.

Who and to what extent spoke in online media outlets 1 - 25.11.2018



Who and to what extent spoke in online media outlets 26.11 - 7.12.2018

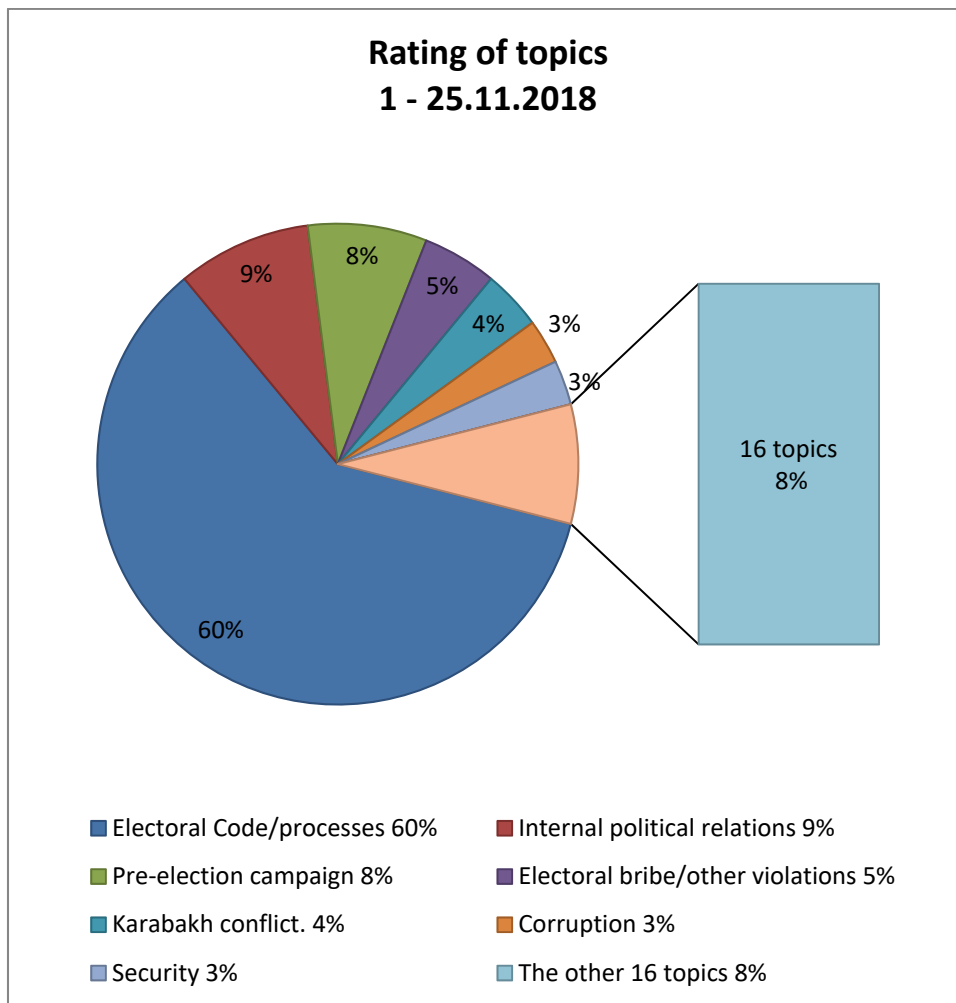


WHAT ABOUT? Priorities of Electoral Topics in Online Media Outlets

Before the launch of the official campaign (November 1-25) the most frequently circulated topic in all the media outlets we monitored related to the enforcement of the old electoral code in the new elections and the list of problems stemming thereof. The divergent views reflected in the comments on all this, along with the daily news coverage of the electoral process (formation of alliances, slates, news about candidates and other news typical of this stage) essentially pushed the topic of electoral code/process ahead of other issues outlined in that stage. Thus, the topic of electoral code/process made up over 2/3 of all topics touched upon in four media outlets (Lragir.am-79%, Tert.am-72%, Armlur.am -63%, News.am – 59%), and in 1in.am and Aravot.am it constituted half of the topics (55% and 49% respectively).

Unlike other media outlets, only two media outlets contained other and comparatively frequently covered topics. For 1in.am it was the topic of the pre-campaign period (the potential course of the campaign, issues of holding/refraining from the campaign prior to the official launch and other issues – 18%). The topic was discussed and presented in the course of 1in.am's regular Internet talk shows (broadcasted daily or at another frequency rate), and in its analytical articles (18%). In Aravot.am, the next relatively frequently covered topic, after the electoral code/process, was that of domestic relations (the interrelations among forces, groups, authorities and opposition in the domestic political arena, the ideological frame of parties and other issues – 17%).

See the figure below, also Appendix, Table 8.



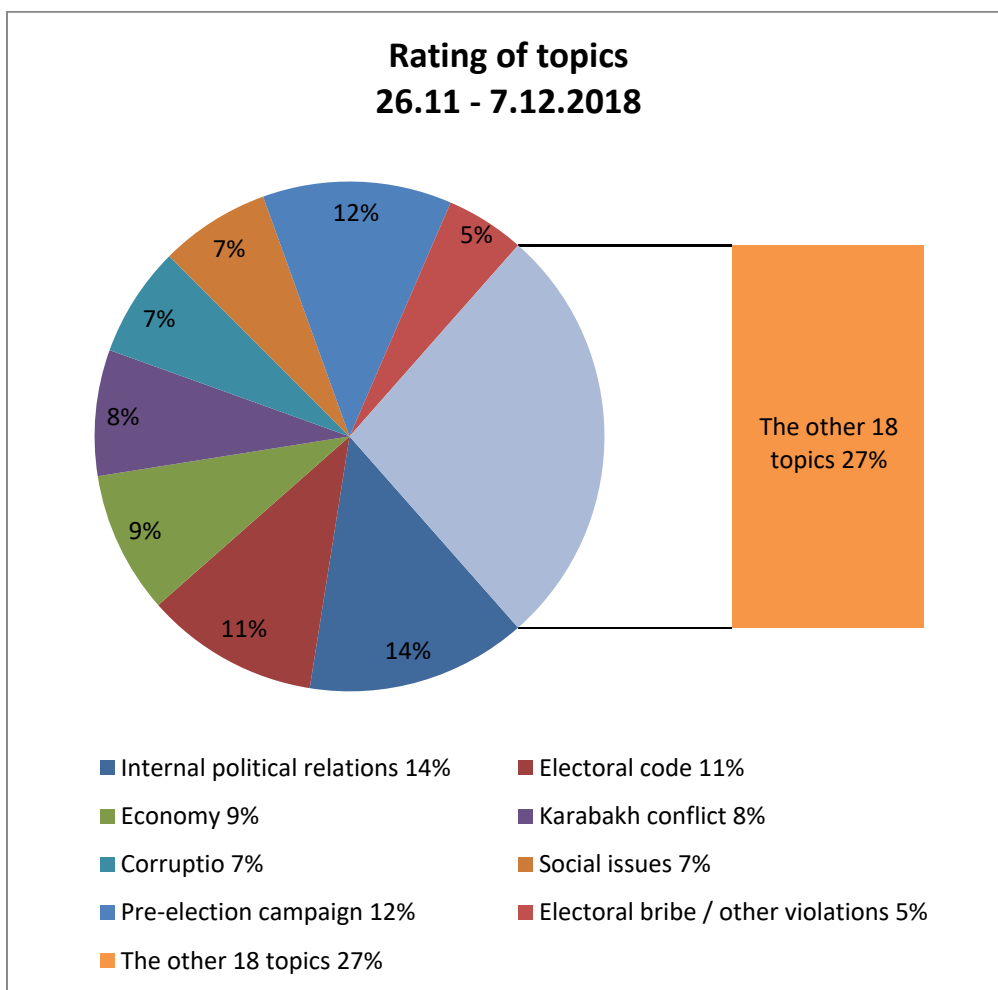
During the official campaign (November 26 – December 7) other topics became more frequent. Thus, apart from Tert.am, in all other media outlets evaluative comments on the nature and course of the campaign and daily news (the aggregate of news on the campaign, hate speech and electoral bribes/other violations) exceeded the so-called essential and substantive topics (electoral code reform, adoption of the law on political parties, issues related to the economic and other aspects of life in the country, visions of the forces on the Karabakh conflict, army, security, foreign policy, corruption). Some of these topics were central since April revolution. Thus, in 1in.am the topics of the modes and nature of the campaign totalled up to 31%, in News.am they amounted to 19%, Aravot.am – 24%, Armlur.am – 24%, Lragir.am – 16.6%, and Tert.am – 2.5%. However, it needs to be underlined that most of the authors of evaluative remarks on the campaign to be classified into these three groups and published in online media were not the competing forces, but reporters and other individual specialists, experts, NGO sector representatives and others.

Before the launch of the official campaign, the traditional topic of electoral bribes/other electoral violations was raised in online media outlets more frequently than in the successive stages, including on election day. There were no media publications typical of this stage on the financial capacity of nominated candidates and the types of distributed or

promised electoral bribes in different settlements. We can also assure that there was a radical change of discourse on electoral violations.

If during the previous electoral processes the representatives of non-ruling forces often turned to the electorate, appealing to them to vote by preference even if it was impossible to reject the electoral bribe, this time it was regularly underlined that not only offering but also accepting bribes would entail criminal liability. Statements were made on excluding the electoral bribe as a phenomenon in this process, the notifications on the sanctions established by the law disseminated by the RA Police were published.

See the figure below, also Appendix, Table 9.



Audiences and Their Feedback

The entirety of materials on elections drew a tangible level of interest among the online media audience. The video materials published during the official campaign had more views than texts. The number of views for a considerable share of online media videos

ranged from a few thousand to tens of thousand. Materials that had 50000 and essentially over views were scarce, and most of those were not, say, about the meetings of competing forces with their electorates during the campaign and the speeches made, but rather the remote or face to face debates among the forces, the evaluations and characteristics they gave one another.

See Appendix, Table 10.

The picture was the same on the Facebook pages of the adversary forces. Here too the social network content with video materials generated more engagement than exclusively texts.

However, the key areas generating views differed from force to force. The pages of the Prime Minister and My Step Alliance obviously stood against the others. The number of views for 81% of Facebook lives shared here during the campaign reached over 50000, later amounting to several hundred thousand. 33 – 40% of video materials on the RPA candidates' pages (VigenSargsyan, Armen Ashotyan) had considerable view rates (50000 and over). And these were either media materials with their participation during the campaign or they were Facebook lives, in case of Armen Ashotyan, for example.

The pages of VaheEnfiayyan from PAP (11%) and GareginChugasizyan from SasnaTsrer (10%) also contained videos of 50000+ views.

The views for the remaining forces were either too small in number or did not exist at all, or those views were incomparably small in relation with the above-mentioned forces.

See Appendix, Table 11.

Various monitored pages had audiences that essentially differed in size (**See Appendix, Table 12**). The level of feedback from the social network audiences to the content uploaded here was noticeably different.

The Prime Minister's page continued to differ essentially from others, not only in terms of the sizes of the audience, but also the feedback rates – likes, shares and comments. 70% of the materials had over 5000 reactions of the kind. The comments and other actions by users on the rest of the pages monitored did not exceed 5000. In case of some forces a considerable part of materials (98% - RPA, Rule of Law) had user engagement rates ranging from 100 up to 1000 in total for likes, comments and shares. And there were pages the content of which drew an even lower level of interest from the audience. The majority of reactions here amounted up to 100 likes, comments and shares (ARF, Rebirth, and National Progress).

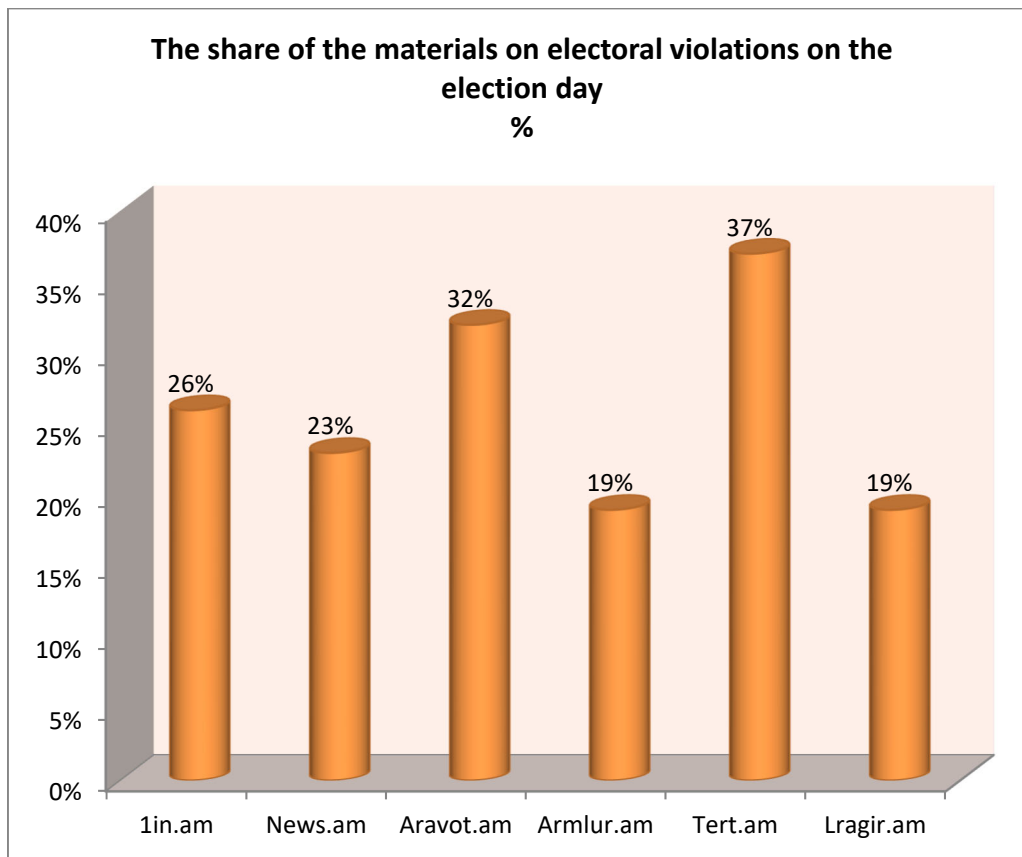
See Appendix, Table 12.

Election Day, Early Post-Electoral Reactions

(December 9, 2018, December 10-24, 2018)

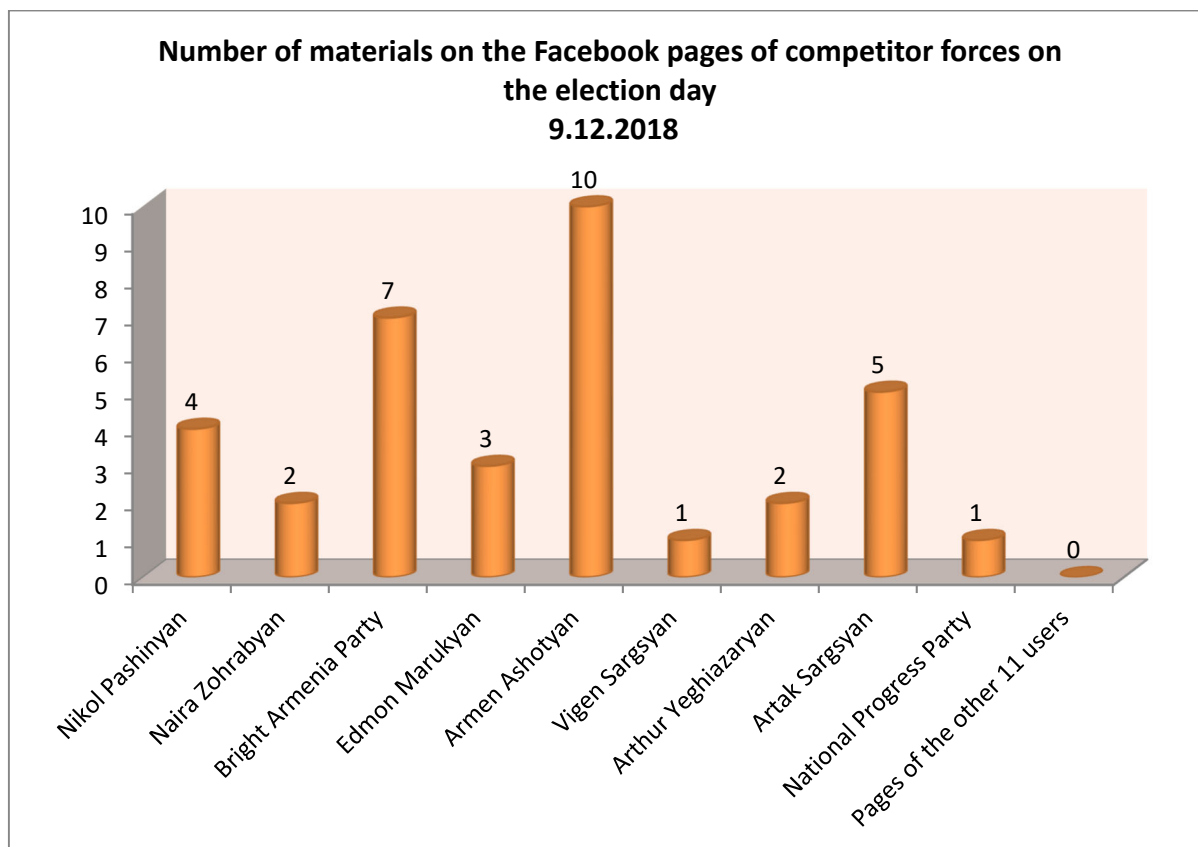
The highest number of materials on elections were recorded on the day of elections, namely December 9th. Part of the news flow on that day was made up by reports on electoral violations which were sent to media outlets by reporters, observers, Committee members functioning in the polling stations. In fact, however, there were often pieces of news from the same polling station.

See the figure below.



Only 9 of the 20 Facebook pages of competing forces we monitored contained 1 and more than one evaluative notes or simply a photo series of the election day. Armen Ashotyan's page from RPA and the official page of the Bright Armenia Party were more active than others' pages. On that day regular Facebook users reported on the situation they witnessed in and around their polling stations: "it's boring, it's calm, no cars or crowds" etc.

See the Figure below.



The majority of post-election materials in media outlets was published during the first four-five days after the elections. In this course of time the frequency and number of materials published was comparable with the level in the pre-campaign period.

In post-electoral materials political evaluation was given to the course and the significance of the elections. The low level of turn-out was specifically discussed, and polarly different conclusions were drawn from this. Materials on the outcomes of the elections were posted (the votes received by political forces, individual candidates, as well as the distribution of votes across marzes, etc.)

Materials on the restructuring of the whole political arena, the interrelations among various political forces, the nature of relations between the power and the opposition, the composition of the new parliament, and the political factions made up a separate group. Where would the opposition be – in the Parliament or among extraparlimentary forces? Debates on this topic were held also between two parliamentary forces –BAP and PAP.

NEW AGENDAS IN POST-ELECTORAL ARMENIA JANUARY 2019

The first month after the elections (January 2019) lapsed with intensive definitions of new agendas in the media, as a matter of fact, with the participation of both the power and parliamentary and extraparliamentary forces.

Thus, we established that in 6 online media outlets we monitored materials containing commentary and evaluation on the ruling power and new agendas in Armenia were of varied intensity and extent. And this did not have to do with the traditional signatures of media outlets. For example, News.am that mostly published daily news stories had more publications with evaluations and comments about the authorities, than the regular daily news pieces containing the analysis of the author or some other person in Aravot.am.

See Appendix, Table 13.

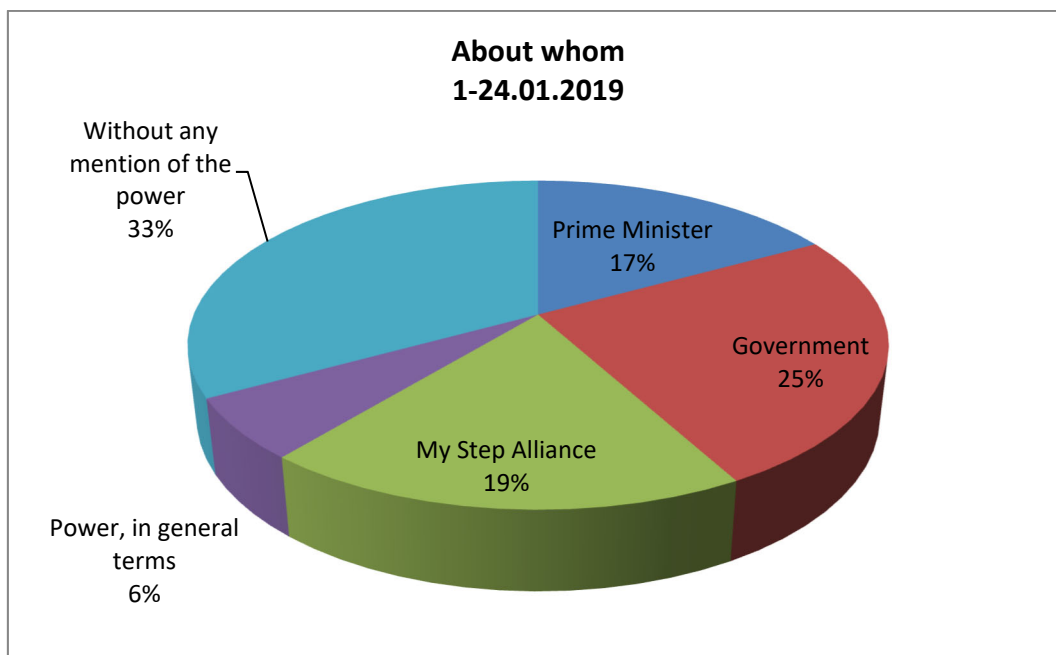
A considerable portion of these materials (67%) contained references to the authorities – the Government, their units, individual members, My Step Alliance and its individual representatives, the Prime Minister himself. The Government was addressed more in the materials of this stage than the Prime Minister and the ruling My Step Alliance.

There are also materials containing the general term “authorities”. These cases were fewer in number.

Approximately 1/3 (33%) of materials about new agendas were presented without any concrete references, using terms such as “the country, our state, we should”.

The largest number of mentions about the Prime Minister was contained in Aravot.am, the largest number of references to the Government, various units and individual members were made in Tert.am and Lragir.am, and My Step Alliance in Armlur.am.

See the figure below, also Appendix, Table 14.



Reporters, experts and other specialists made the most evaluative remarks about the power, followed by Parliamentary forces, the Prime Minister himself and the RPA. From among non-parliamentary forces the RPA's evaluations were the most frequent, followed by SasnaTsrer, ARF, Free Democrats and Republic Party opinions. The majority of opinions by non-parliamentary forces ended up in online media from the Facebook pages of those forces and their representatives.

The Facebook activity of political forces varied in its intensity. See **Appendix, Table 15**.

However, the representatives of political parties elected into the Parliament and those remaining out of it did not suspend their activity on the social network, clearly solving issues related to propaganda and black PR.

Only three weeks after the elections, Facebook demonstrated a spike of critical attitude against the ruling power. Every single one of back-to-back discussions and black PR actions were driven by concrete events for information coverage, namely the first post-election activities of the ruling power, unsuccessful announcements and commentary, conduct, attire, etc. Part of the information-related processes were generated on Facebook, as for example the brief Facebook live commentary by the Prime Minister on his meeting with Aliyev during the Economic Forum in Davos in January. This became an occasion of a debate on the opportunities and capabilities of the new authorities to deal with the Karabakh conflict, taking place both on Facebook and in the onlinemedia outlets at the same time.

The process of Government structure optimization announced by the ruling force became a topic of discussions both in online media and on Facebook.

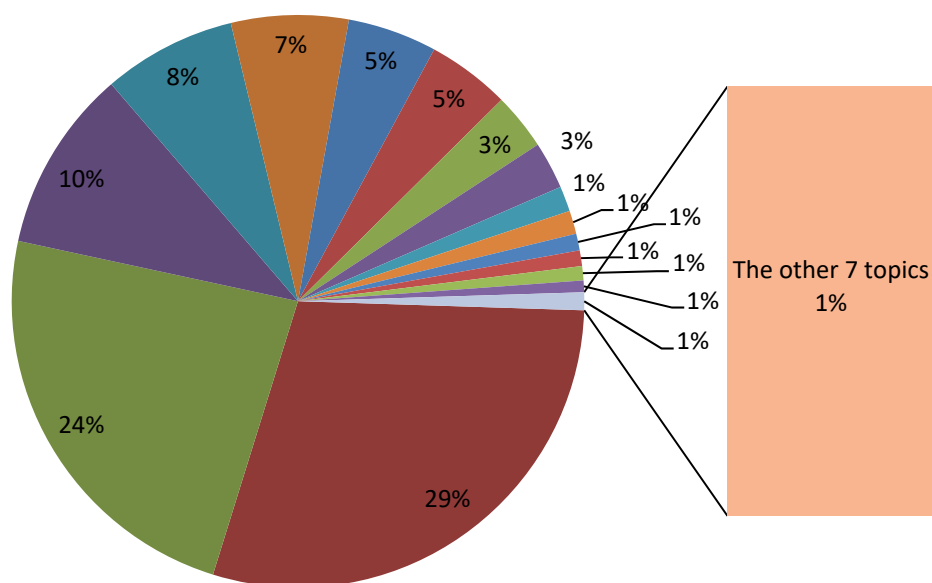
Media publications on the sums of bonuses paid to the staff and heads of various units within the Government and the facts of receiving bonuses after only a few months of activity caused a lot of discussion on Facebook, at the same time triggering debates on a number of issues, namely establishment of new management mechanisms, definition of remuneration sizes in the public sector and for officials in general, and most importantly, the efficient use of budget funds. Publications on this topic in relation to the new authorities immediately cast a shadow over the impression created by the power's various statements on savings in different sectors and cuts in the service volumes in different public entities. Most importantly, it went against the positive image of the new authorities as individuals taking public transport to work, minimizing various representative costs and undertaking other popular steps, an impression formed during the previous months. A series of public reports on the topic by the leaders of a number of state agencies was launched.

Debates on the general information atmosphere, freedom of speech, social media black PR, and the forces supporting it were resumed with a new wave of pathos, specifically coming from the statements made during one of the Prime Minister's live speeches.

One of the topics most actively circulated in online media outlets had to do with the formation and methods of governance at institutional structures and the formatting of the political arena (reshuffling of forces, the interrelations between the new opposition and the new ruling power). This topic was followed by the topics of foreign policy issues, economy, Karabakh conflict, freedoms and rights. The rest of the topics were dwelt upon with less intensity, including the very intensively discussed topic of Electoral Code reform, corruption, social issues and so on.

See the Figure below, also see Appendix, Tables 16 and 17.

**Rating of the topics in online media outlets
1-24.01.2019**



- Governance 29%
- Political field 23%
- Foreign policy 10%
- Economy 7%
- Karabakh conflict 7%
- Freedoms 5%
- Legal system 5%
- Corruption 3%
- Social issues 3%
- Security 1%
- Education / science 1%
- Diaspora 1%
- Healthcare 1%
- Culture 1%
- Army 1%
- The other 7 topics 1%

All these topics and debates emerged within communications between the ruling power and political forces, authorities and the society, and mostly on Facebook platforms. Thus, the Prime Minister started a series of Facebook lives, entitled “A Conversation with the Citizen” during which he addressed the comparisons between the old and new governments on public platforms, highlighted the vast volume of misinformation circulated lately, spoke on the topics of media freedom and the new image of the ruling power in the country.

In relation to these agendas in online media outlets we can see a larger number of Prime Minister’s opinions on governance, and then in declining order, on the economy, freedom of press and the Karabakh conflict.

My Step Alliance was the force that expressed itself most frequently, mainly reacting to/or addressing matters of governance, followed by the topics of the political landscape and foreign policy. There were considerably fewer references to the Karabakh conflict and other issues raised by the other forces.

The two other parliamentary forces – PAP and BAP – spoke on the matters of political arena and governance more frequently. The remaining part of the issues were essentially less addressed in the discourse of the representatives of these forces published in the media.

The members of the Government spoke/or reacted to various issues on governance, followed by issues on the political landscape and economy.

The media continued to pay equal attention to the evaluative remarks circulated by the RPA. From among extraparliamentary forces, the RPA appeared on the media most frequently due to reposts of social network content rather than their direct commentary given to the media. During the post-election period, the RPA continued to criticize My Step and the Prime Minister on three topics, namely foreign policy, followed by governance issues and the Karabakh conflict.

From among other political forces who were not elected into the Parliament, ARF's and SasnaTsrer's evaluations appeared in online media least frequently. These two forces mainly addressed the issues of political landscape and the Karabakh conflict.

Various topics were promoted in other Facebook pages (belonging to non-politicians) in the context of agendas under discussion, and various attitudes were demonstrated towards the ruling power and their first post-election steps. In this group of only 8 we can see attitudes without extreme manifestations. Thus, there are pages which operated exclusively from critical/humorous/sarcastic standpoints, which contained underlined messages of ***you see what we ended up with, we were telling you before***. The next group was composed by users who pursued, in their words, the information strand of ***telling good from bad, and praising the good and criticizing the bad to amend***. Other extreme attitudinal manifestations towards the power (fascination or harsh resistance only), including those with the use of hate speech, continue to be manifested mainly among the so-called ordinary users.

CONCLUSION

- Materials on election topics started to be circulated in online media ever since the day of disseminating the official notification on holding the snap election on December 9, 2018 (November 1, 2018). The activity of political forces on Facebook started since the submission of applications by parties and alliances running for the Parliament at CEC (November 1, 2018). A hyper-intensive level of elections coverage in online media was recorded during the 12 days of the official campaign (November 26 – December 7, 2018), and this was conditioned by the participation of a relatively large number of forces in the elections, namely 9 political parties and 2 alliances, on the other hand, it was conditioned by the shorter than usual duration of the official race. The same was true only in relation to the Facebook activity of the competing forces. The most active campaign stage in social networks was registered during the official campaign. However, in social media they had more freedom to promote their campaign regardless of the established timeline.
- At all the stages of this election the campaign was conducted at a high level of visualization both in online media and in the social media domains of a number of forces. A large number of content pieces were delivered to the audiences in the form of video materials. The number of video materials in a number of Facebook pages amounted up to 90% during the official campaign. Especially during the official campaign these were pieces of extended duration, ranging from livestreamed offline meetings of various forces with the electorate to video materials of their own make or produced by media outlets, including the reposts of TV programmes in the websites of online media.
- The innovative aspect within this campaign was the use of Facebook by RPA candidates. The use of Facebook lives had stable rates on the pages of the acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the head of Bright Armenia Party Edmon Marukyan. On the page of the RA acting Prime Minister they amounted to 71%. Just like the campaign period for 2017 parliamentary elections, online media outlets also used the practice of live broadcasts.
- During this campaign it was noticed that there was cross-circulation of elections-related content among various media platforms, just like the publication of TV content on online media websites and the presentation of purely social media content of competing forces on online media websites. Those forces – RPA, Rebirth, Citizen's Decision SDP – that did not hold any or held fewer offline campaign activities in different settlements across the country, made a wide use of the media platforms during the campaign, and brought onto their Facebook pages a larger number of traditional media materials.

- The debates became the distinguishing markers of this campaign ranging from the great debate, organized by Public TV which the top leaders of slates participated in to debate-style meetings organized by online media outlets. 1in.am demonstrated stable rates in terms of its debate style Internet broadcasts. The debates among candidates and forces were held not only face to face and mediated by the media outlets, but also remotely on Facebook platforms, exclusively in the form of reactions and comments to the statements/statuses of adversaries on their own Facebook pages.
- The campaign of competing forces was accompanied by quite an emotional rhetoric, often with the use of harsh black PR, sometimes also with the use of hate speech. Even though there was an impression that the main debate was held between the representatives of the former ruling RPA and new power, also with the active participation of the acting Prime-Minister, however, in reality, the principle *all against all* was being applied.

The harsh resistance between My Step Alliance and the RPA rolled out among different participants and on a broad front. On the occasion of a number of scandalous statements there were lasting verbal clashes, and it sustained throughout the whole campaign. That was the reason why statements on the general atmosphere and hate speech during the campaign exceeded the number of the concrete examples of hate speech.

- However, by general indicators 8 forces out of 11 (namely, My Step Alliance, BAP, SasnaTsrer party, Rule of Law, Citizen's Decision SDP, We Alliance, National Progress, Rebirth) as well as the acting Prime-Minister had almost proportionally positive, negative and neutral semantic charge in their evaluations and comments about their adversaries. The attitude of the RPA was explicitly negative and was built on black PR. The negatively marked statements and comments made by this force almost twice exceeded the positive and neutral markers in total. The ARF acted more with negatively and neutrally marked speech in the course of the race. The neutral discourse by this force was smaller than that marked positively or negatively. And this is not typical of the campaign behavior of this political force, demonstrated in the previous elections. Normally, the ARF spoke neutrally about its adversaries. Unlike ARF, PAP mainly demonstrated either a positive or a neutral attitude when speaking about its adversaries.
- The picture was different on Facebook. Here the representatives of competing forces conducted not only black PR at a large scale, but tolerated it on their pages, did not delete the comments by ordinary users that contained hate speech. It should be underlined that hate speech was widely disseminated in the social network due to fake pages, and fake individual users' activities who supported a political force or promoted their campaign, however we noticed a few cases when individual candidates shared statuses containing obscene language from ordinary users' pages onto their pages or tolerated comments by ordinary users containing hate

speech addressed at the adversaries in their own pages. The latter was more frequent. The competing forces (RPA, National Progress) also prepared black PR video clips and disseminated them via their pages.

- The messages of political parties not participating in the elections were disseminated by online media outlets in the pre-campaign stage. They mainly stated their excuses for refraining from running the race. The major part of these forces kept silent on their Facebook platforms, too, except for YerkirTsirani party and its leader, which in this course of time led aggressive black PR against both the RPA and the acting Prime-Minister. The opinions of ordinary citizens were mainly expressed on Facebook platforms, and the media outlets in this stage did not reflect their opinions to a large extent. The level of interest by online media outlets in the newly created parties that were not very well known to the electorate (Citizen's Decision SDP, Rebirth and National Progress) was noticeably low throughout the election period. The level of interest in different forces and the intensity of their campaign coverage varied from outlet to outlet. For example, in the course of the official campaign 1in.am covered the campaign of Bright Armenia Party more than those of My Step Alliance and the RPA. All other online media outlets paid maximum attention to these two forces. We should underline that the editor-in-chief of 1in.am was a candidate from Bright Armenia.
- A total of 24 different topics were circulated in election contexts (competing forces, reporters, experts and other individual figures/specialists). They were presented to audiences in the form of daily news and commentary. However, during the campaign there were more materials related to the nature of the process (the total of materials on news coverage of the campaign, hate speech and electoral bribes/other violations) than topics related to the political programmes of the parties. We should underline that some of these (electoral code reform, adoption of the law on political parties, economy, the Karabakh conflict, army, security, foreign policy, corruption, foreign intervention) were the major topics in the media before the elections stage, they were the axis of ongoing debates between the old and new ruling forces ever since the days of the Velvet Revolution. We can also assure of a radical shift in the discourse on electoral changes. The specificity of these elections was that there was a universal announcement that both giving and accepting electoral bribes were criminally liable offenses and announcements were made about excluding the election bribe as a phenomenon in this process. Notifications on the sanctions for electoral violations established by the law and disseminated by the RA Police were published. There were no appeals typical of the previous stages that even if people accepted electoral bribes, people were free to vote according to their preferences.
- The Prime Minister's Facebook page continued to be essentially different from the rest not only in terms of its audience size (as of the last day, his audience was 1090203 out of 1500 000 Facebook accounts), but also the number of their

reactions – likes, shares and comments. 70% of materials had over 5000 reactions of the kind. The comments and other forms of engagement by users in the rest of the pages did not exceed 5000. There were also pages the audience of which ranged between 1 and 100. Video materials from among the elections-related content pieces had the largest number of views in online media outlets, and mainly these were materials containing scandalous announcements.

- The more active and thematically diverse post-electoral stage was launched on the first days of 2019. New agendas started to be defined in the media with the participation of parliamentary and extraparliamentary forces. They were based on events and developments linked with the processes underway in the country. The attitude to them was different, depending on who the driving forces were. Regardless of the very widely disseminated claims on authentic and fake agendas, in fact key issues underlay them – Karabkh conflict, security and foreign policy, rights and legal system, interrelations between the media and the ruling power, the maturing of the political landscape, the interrelations between the authorities and the opposition, management capacity and institutional establishment of the new forces. The general process of critical approach to the actions taken by the authorities started which, the governmental circles qualified as a continuation of the political race because of the active participation of extraparliamentary forces. The stage of comparisons between the old and the new will perhaps take a long time.

APPENDIX

List of monitored Facebook pages

November 14 – December 24, 2018

My Step Alliance

Official page - <https://web.facebook.com/imqayle/>

Nikol Pashinyan - <https://www.facebook.com/nikol.pashinyan/>

Lena Nazaryan - <https://web.facebook.com/Lena-Nazaryan-317467302135829/>,

Bright Armenia Party

Official page - <https://web.facebook.com/BrightArmenia/>

Edmon Marukyan - https://web.facebook.com/marukyan.edmon/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Prosperous Armenia Party

Vahe Enfiyajyan - <https://www.facebook.com/enfiyajyan>

Naira Zohrabyan - <https://web.facebook.com/n.zohrabyan>

RPA

Vigen Sargsyan - https://web.facebook.com/Vigen.A.Sargsyan/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDIk8ajPSCozRA0gen8ogL5R6G6VIPYrCmw-wgYLE5bmc7yBF2oZt6yQfloZUPpaz6E0XpBw1c7M9ic

Armen Ashotyan - https://web.facebook.com/armen.ashotyan?_rdc=1&_rdr

ARF

Arthur Yeghiazaryan - <https://web.facebook.com/arthur.yeghiazaryan>

Artak Sargsyan - <https://www.facebook.com/artak.sargsyan.31>

We Alliance

Official page - <https://web.facebook.com/MenqDashing/>

Angela Khachatryan - https://web.facebook.com/anjela.khachatryan.10?_rdc=1&_rdr

Aram Sargsyan -

https://web.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100016322520223&_rdc=1&_rdr

Rule of Law Party

Artur Baghdasaryan - https://web.facebook.com/Baghdasaryan.Arthur/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party

Official page -

<https://www.facebook.com/%D5%80%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%AB-%D6%84%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%BD%D5%BF%D5%B8%D5%B6%D5%A5%D5%A1-%D5%AA%D5%B8%D5%B2%D5%B8%D5%BE%D6%80%D5%A4%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%8E%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%AE%D5%B6%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6%D5%A4-%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%BD%D5%A1%D5%AF%D6%81%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6-269141110470230/>

National Progress Party

Official page - <https://www.facebook.com/NPPArmenia/>

Sasna Tsrer Pan-Armenian Party

Official page - <https://www.facebook.com/sasnatzrer/>

Garegin Chugaszyan - <https://web.facebook.com/gareginc>

Citizen's Decision Social-Democratic Party

Official page - <https://www.facebook.com/sdcdp/>

January 1 – 24, 2019

Political and social figures, analysts, bloggers

Nikol Pashinyan (Prime Minister of Armenia, My Step Alliance) - <https://www.facebook.com/nikol.pashinyan/>

Lena Nazaryan (NA chairman, My Step Alliance) - <https://www.facebook.com/lena.nazaryan.5>

Naira Zohrabyan (PAP) - <https://www.facebook.com/n.zohrabyan>

Arman Abovyan (PAP) - <https://www.facebook.com/arman.abovyan.397>

Edmon Marukyan (BAP) - <https://www.facebook.com/marukyan.edmon/>

Gevorg Gorgisyan (BAP) - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011027627128>

Armen Ashotyan (RPA) - <https://www.facebook.com/armen.ashotyan>

Eduard Sharmazanov (RPA) -

<https://www.facebook.com/%D4%B7%D5%A4%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%A4-%D5%87%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%B4%D5%A1%D5%A6%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B8%D5%BE-Eduard-Sharmazanov-333386077462494/>

Arthur Yeghiazaryan (ARF) - <https://web.facebook.com/arthur.yeghiazaryan>

Artak Sargsyan (ARF) - <https://www.facebook.com/artak.sargsyan.31>

Garegin Chugaszyan (Sasna Tsrer Party) - <https://web.facebook.com/gareginc>

Zaruhi Postanjan (Yerkir Tsirani Party) - <https://www.facebook.com/zaruhi.postanjan>

Suren Sahakyan (Citizen's Decision Party) -
<https://www.facebook.com/usernameisavailablenow>

Anush Sedrakyan - <https://www.facebook.com/ann.norikyan>

Tigran Kocharyan - <https://www.facebook.com/tigran.kocharyan>

Ara Papyan - https://www.facebook.com/ara.papian.mv?_tn=%2CdC-R-R&eid=ARCY5ROshBYjniggQAnxPE6rrRQCOxBi9q2YFAarubKdcYSxx9Srwll42W51FkTbj9LtG5btmdqA5Q8tQ&hc_ref=ARTmUBVIk3SL1y47Lwv0pDgsEcTBD-FWaoLGII9KCvKRxSkdL8_JS4VYTfPSxlqoyDk&fref=nf

Ruben Melikyan - https://www.facebook.com/rubenmelikian?_tn=%2Cd-j-h-R&eid=ARDZjlfRU8zByKUCYaYxhfGuG3B5SOyqczRSnBaMicebg7e--JtybFKr3uSMLe1wC_j-cKfPMYctIVWp

Avetik Ishkhanyan - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100014680840236>

Styopa Safaryan - <https://www.facebook.com/styopa.safaryan.9>

Stepan Danielyan - <https://www.facebook.com/stepan.danielyan>

Table 1. Maximum number of materials on the elections per day on the Facebook pages of competitor forces / 26.11 - 7.12.2018

Facebook pages	Maximum number of materials per day
My Step Alliance - Official page	7
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	20
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	4
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	7
Vahe Enfiayyan / PAP	9
Bright Armenia Party – Official page	25
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	15
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	17
Vigen Sargsyan / RPA	9
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	31
Arthur Yeghiazaryan / ARF	22
Sasna Tsrer Party – Official page	41
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	19
We Alliance – Official Page	30
Aram Sargsyan / We Alliance	18
Angela Khachatryan / We Alliance	8
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party – Official page	20
Citizen’s Decision Party – Official page	10
Artur Baghdasaryan / Rule of Law Party	4
National Progress Party – Official Page	10

Table 2. Visualization of the electoral process/ 1 - 25.11. 2018

Media outlet	Number of materials on elections	Among which number of video materials	Videos on elections %
1in.am	656	242	37%
News.am	675	195	29%
Aravot.am	443	62	14%
Armlur.am	372	85	23%
Tert.am	437	52	12%
Lragir.am	342	34	10%

Table 3. Visualization of the electoral process / 26.11 – 7.12. 2018

Media outlet	Number of materials on elections	Among which number of video materials	Videos on elections %
1in.am	594	308	52%
News.am	735	239	33%
Aravot.am	377	34	9%
Armlur.am	346	135	39%
Tert.am	448	108	24%
Lragir.am	259	7	3%

Table 4. Types of materials on the pages of political competitor forces / 26.11 – 7.12. 2018

Political forces, figures	Status	Material from media/ from another sources	Live	Pre-election photo, video material	Total
My Step Alliance - Official page	63%	4%	19%	19%	100%
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	20%	9%	71%	0%	100%
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	48%	35%	10%	6%	100%
Vahe Enfiayyan / PAP	56%	29%	0%	15%	100%
Bright Armenia Party – Official page	30%	41%	4%	25%	100%
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	9%	54%	25%	12%	100%
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	46%	41%	4%	10%	100%
Vigen Sargsyan / RPA	42%	37%	2%	19%	100%
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	16%	57%	5%	20%	100%
Arthur Yeghiazaryan / ARF	25%	35%	5%	34%	100%
Sasna Tsrer Party – Official page	38%	31%	29%	0%	100%
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	54%	44%	1%	0%	100%
We Alliance – Official page	33%	40%	25%	1%	100%
Aram Sargsyan / We Alliance	35%	50%	15%	0%	100%
Angela Khachatryan / We Alliance	26%	32%	42%	0%	100%
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party – Official page	48%	47%	4%	0%	100%
Citizen’s Decision Party – Official page	31%	50%	21%	0%	100%
Artur Baghdasaryan / Rule of Law Party	5%	48%	48%	0%	100%
National Progress Party – Official Page	45%	41%	12%	0%	100%

Table 5. Who spoke and how during the official campaign / 26.11 – 7.12. 2018

Who?	How?			Total
	0	+	-	
Prime Minister	215	283	213	711
	30%	40%	30%	100%
RPA	138	151	522	811
	17%	19%	64%	100%
PAP	82	95	22	199
	41%	48%	11%	100%
ARF	53	79	85	217
	25%	36%	39%	100%
BAP	158	187	147	492
	32%	38%	30%	100%
Sasna Tsrer	97	97	102	296
	33%	33%	34%	100%
My Step Alliance	120	118	118	356
	34%	33%	33%	100%
Rule of Law Party	33	58	43	134
	25%	43%	32%	100%
Citizen's Decision Party	34	23	36	93
	37%	25%	38%	100%
We Alliance	95	130	96	321
	30%	40%	30%	100%
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party	17	22	22	61
	28%	36%	36%	100%
National Progress Party	24	18	18	60
	40%	30%	30%	100%
Journalist	640	33	246	919
	70%	3%	27%	100%
NGO, expert, other specialist	262	46	135	443
	59%	10%	31%	100%
Total	1968	1340	1805	5113
	39%	26%	35%	100%

Table 6. Who spoke and to what extent / 1 - 25.11.2018

Who	Media outlet						Total
	1in.am	News.am	Aravot.am	Armlur.am	Tert.am	Lragir.am	
RPA	67	130	85	40	61	33	416
	23%	31%	28%	21%	23%	18%	25%
Government	35	66	37	28	38	32	236
	12%	16%	12%	15%	14%	18%	14%
My Step Alliance	40	40	42	31	45	34	232
	14%	10%	14%	16%	17%	19%	14%
Prime Minister	29	51	26	11	31	34	182
	10%	12%	8%	6%	11%	19%	11%
PAP	36	36	26	11	18	12	137
	12%	9%	8%	6%	7%	7%	8%
BAP	26	26	17	18	23	9	119
	9%	6%	6%	10%	9%	5%	7%
We Alliance	6	6	9	16	15	4	56
	2%	1%	3%	9%	6%	2%	3%
ARF	12	7	9	7	10	6	51
	4%	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Sasna Tsrer	11	13	3	3	3	3	36
	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Citizen's Decision Party	4	4	6	2	2	5	23
	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Rule of Law Party	1	8	7	2	3	0	21
	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
President of Armenia	1	2	4	3	4	1	15
	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party	3	2	2	1	3	0	11
	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
National Progress Party	0	1	5	1	1	0	8
	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other political forces	21	28	30	14	13	7	113
	7%	7%	10%	7%	4%	4%	7%
Total	292	420	308	188	270	180	1656
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7. Who spoke and to what extent / 26.11 - 7.12.2018

Who	Media outlet						Total
	1in. am	News.am	Aravot. am	Armlur. am	Tert. am	Lragir. am	
Prime Minister	55	181	38	28	77	60	439
	14%	25%	10%	9%	21%	34%	19%
RPA	25	142	65	44	73	30	379
	6%	20%	17%	15%	19%	17%	16%
BAP	153	63	41	23	35	14	329
	38%	9%	11%	8%	9%	8%	14%
My Step Alliance	66	52	39	34	39	13	243
	17%	7%	10%	11%	10%	7%	10%
Government	32	76	29	19	28	13	197
	8%	10%	8%	6%	7%	7%	8%
We Alliance	7	47	34	45	19	6	158
	2%	6%	9%	15%	5%	3%	7%
PAP	22	39	24	23	23	17	148
	6%	5%	6%	8%	6%	10%	6%
Sasna Tsrer Party	15	46	28	22	29	8	148
	4%	6%	7%	7%	8%	4%	6%
ARF	12	27	28	18	12	3	100
	3%	4%	7%	6%	3%	2%	4%
Citizen's Decision Party	9	13	15	10	11	8	66
	2%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Rule of Law Party	1	16	11	17	17	1	63
	0%	2%	3%	6%	5%	1%	3%
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party	1	8	11	5	8	2	35
	0%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%
National Progress Party	0	7	10	13	2	1	33
	0%	1%	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%
Other political forces	1	8	1	1	2	2	15
	0%	1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	1%	0.6%
Total	399	725	374	302	375	178	2353
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 8. Prioritised topics / 1 - 25.11.2018

Topics	1in.am	News.am	Aravot.am	Armlur.am	Tert.am	Lragir.am	Total
Electoral Code / processes	564	734	482	528	416	362	3086
	55%	59%	49%	63%	72%	79%	60%
Internal political relations	66	117	164	79	16	13	455
	6%	9%	17%	9%	3%	3%	9%
Pre-election campaign	182	62	61	66	29	21	421
	18%	5%	6%	7%	5%	5%	8%
Electoral bribe / other violations	31	92	56	61	25	8	273
	3%	7%	6%	8%	4%	2%	5%
Karabakh conflict	59	37	43	16	44	28	227
	6%	3%	4%	2%	8%	6%	4%
Corruption	12	82	37	16	19	9	175
	1%	7%	4%	2%	3.3%	2%	3%
Security	23	35	37	14	17	11	137
	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Foreign policy	44	18	21	11	4	0	98
	4%	1%	2%	1%	0.7%	0.0%	2%
Economy	25	18	37	13	3	1	97
	2%	1%	4%	2%	0.5%	0.2%	2%
Legal system	4	17	11	10	0	0	42
	0.4%	1%	1%	1%	0.0%	0.0%	1%
Social issues	7	8	7	6	1	1	30
	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%

Rights / freedoms	0	16	5	5	0	0	26
	0.0%	1.3%	0.5%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Army	3	0	5	3	0	1	12
	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Education / Science	1	2	2	3	0	0	8
	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Women / gender issues	5	2	0	0	0	0	7
	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Migration	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Ecology	0	0	3	3	0	1	7
	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Diaspora	2	3	0	2	0	0	7
	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Foreign intervention	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%
Healthcare	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Church	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Culture	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tourism	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	1033	1244	978	840	575	459	5129
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9. Prioritised topics / 26.11 - 7.12.2018

Topics	Media outlet						Total
	1in. am	News. am	Aravot. am	Armlur. am	Tert. am	Lragir. am	
Internal political relations	92	145	138	120	175	66	736
	11%	9%	17%	16%	23%	20%	14%
Pre-election campaign	176	144	107	122	15	48	612
	21%	9%	13%	16%	2%	14%	12%
Electoral Code	75	110	109	98	148	41	581
	9%	7%	13%	13%	20%	12%	11%
Economy	75	135	59	75	72	32	448
	9%	8%	7%	10%	10%	10%	9%
Karabakh conflict	66	119	69	40	71	37	402
	8%	7%	8%	5%	10%	11%	8%
Corruption	49	143	57	49	39	30	367
	6%	9%	7%	6.5%	5%	9%	7%
Social issues	56	134	36	60	52	13	351
	7%	8%	4%	8%	7%	4%	7%
Electoral bribe / other violations	63	92	65	49	4	7	280
	8%	6%	8%	6.5%	0.5%	2%	5%
Rights / freedoms	27	106	24	22	32	7	218
	3%	6%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%
Foreign policy	36	89	20	16	27	16	204
	4%	5%	3%	2%	4%	5%	4%
Legal system	12	79	22	18	8	7	146
	1%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Security	7	87	17	17	14	4	146
	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Hate speech	25	71	24	15	0	2	137
	3%	4%	3%	2%	0%	0.6%	3%
Army	5	32	26	15	19	7	104
	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Education / Science	17	33	15	10	20	5	100
	2%	2%	2%	1.3%	3%	1%	2%
Healthcare	8	21	9	12	8	1	59
	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0.3%	1.2%
Migration	6	26	5	8	9	3	57
	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0.9%	1.1%

Ecology	4	16	2	8	7	3	40
	0.5%	1%	0.2%	1%	1%	0.9%	0.8%
Tourism	8	17	0	0	0	1	26
	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0.3%	0.5%
Culture	2	11	5	1	3	1	23
	0.2%	1%	1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Church	0	10	2	1	6	0	19
	0%	1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%	0%	0.4%
Diaspora	3	11	1	1	1	1	18
	0.3%	1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
External response	2	16	0	0	0	0	18
	0.2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.4%
Women / gender issues	3	1	1	0	6	1	12
	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0%	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%
Foreign intervention in elections	5	1	1	0	1	2	10
	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0%	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%
Disability issues	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
	0%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.1%
Sport	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
	0%	0%	0.1%	0.2%	0%	0%	0.1%
Total	822	1652	815	759	737	335	5120
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 10. Range of video views in online media outlets / 26.11 - 7.12.2018

Media outlet	Share of videos viewed 1-1000 times	Share of videos viewed 1000-10000 times	Share of videos viewed 10000-50000 times	Share of videos viewed >50000 times	Total
1in.am	40%	56%	4%	0	308/100%
News.am	17%	52%	26%	5%	239/100%
Aravot.am	50%	41%	6%	3%	34/100%
Armlur.am	33%	46%	13%	8%	135/100%
Tert.am	42%	31%	15%	12%	108/100%
Lragir.am	43%	29%	14%	14%	7/100%

Table 11. Number of views of video materials on the Facebook pages of competitor forces / 14.11 - 7.12

Name of the page	Share of videos viewed 1-1000 times	Share of videos viewed 1000-10000 times	Share of videos viewed 10000-50000 times	Share of videos viewed >50000 times	Total
My Step Alliance – official page	0%	43%	22%	35%	23/100%
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	0%	5%	16%	81%	88/100%
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	20%	60%	20%	0%	5/100%
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	0%	67%	33%	0%	15/100%
Vahe Enfiayyan / PAP	39%	39%	11%	11%	18/100%
Bright Armenia Party – Official page	40%	44%	13%	3%	151/100%
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	19%	69%	11%	1%	134/100%
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	10%	23%	35%	33%	40/100%
Vigen Sargsyan / RPA	3%	23%	35%	40%	40/100%
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	40%	32%	25%	3%	132/100%

Arthur Yeghiazaryan / ARF	53%	32%	12%	3%	34/100%
Sasna Tsrer – Official page	19%	64%	16%	2%	197/100%
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	10%	56%	25%	10%	63/100%
We Alliance – Official page	29%	62%	8%	2%	203/100%
Anjela Khachatryan / We Alliance	41%	43%	8%	8%	37/100%
Aram Sargsyan / We Alliance	13%	70%	15%	2%	53/100%
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party / Official page	53%	40%	7%	0%	72/100%
Citizen’s Decision Party / Official page	16%	59%	20%	6%	51/100%
Artur Baghdasaryan / Rule of Law Party	3%	40%	58%	0%	40/100%
National Progress Party / Official page	43%	43%	9%	6%	35/100%

Table 12. Facebook audiences of competitor forces / 14.11 - 7.12. 2018

Page name	Like +follow 14.11.2018	Like +follow 7.12.2018	The audience has grown
My Step Alliance – official page	52893	60044	7151
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	1082903	1090203	7300
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	12346	13179	833
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	1070	2432	1362
Vahe Enfiayyan / PAP	5903	6038	135
Bright Armenia Party – Official page	20628	24671	4043
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	128477	130113	1636
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	67142	68581	1439
Vigen Sargsyan / RPA	20326	23475	3149
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	419	435	16
Arthur Yeghiazaryan / ARF	3406	3472	66
Sasna Tsrer – Official page	94358	95767	1409
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	2535	2662	127
We Alliance – Official page	1895	5815	3920
Anjela Khachatryan / We Alliance	586	794	794
Aram Sargsyan / We Alliance	6250	6639	389
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party / Official page	1548	2255	707
Citizen’s Decision Party / Official page	5807	9031	3224
Artur Baghdasaryan / Rule of Law Party	58070	58132	62
National Progress Party / Official page	4835	6130	1295

Table 13. Reactions of the audience on the Facebook pages of competitor forces /14.11 - 7.12

Page name	Number of materials with 1-100 reactions	Number of materials with 100-1000 reactions	Number of materials with 1000 - 5000 reactions	Number of materials with >5000 reactions	Total
My Step Alliance – official page	38%	58%	4%	0%	50/100 %
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	0%	0%	30%	70%	107/100 %
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	94%	6%	0%	0%	16/100 %
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	0%	100%	0%	0%	40/100 %
Vahe Enfiayyan / PAP	40%	56%	4%	0%	55/100 %
Bright Armenia Party – Official page	58%	42%	0%	0%	271/100 %
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	11%	85%	3%	0%	158/100 %
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	0%	98%	2%	0%	121/100 %
Vigen Sargsyan / RPA	0%	74%	26%	0%	77/100 %
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	95%	6%	0%	0%	300/100 %
Arthur Yeghiazaryan / ARF	69%	31%	0%	0%	144/100 %
Sasna Tsrer – Official page	34%	63%	3%	0%	338/100 %
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	96%	4%	0%	0%	146/100 %
We Alliance – Official page	46%	52%	1%	0%	323/100 %
Aram Sargsyan / We Alliance	61%	39%	0%	0%	110/100 %
Anjela Khachatryan / We Alliance	92%	8%	0%	0%	50/100 %
Christian-Democratic Rebirth Party / Official page	86%	14%	0%	0%	203/100 %
Citizen’s Decision Party / Official page	28%	68%	4%	0%	79/100 %
Artur Baghdasaryan / Rule of Law Party	2%	98%	0%	0%	42/100 %
National Progress Party / Official page	78%	21%	0%	0%	92/100 %

Table 14. Number of materials on the power and new agendas in online media outlets / 1 - 24.01.2019

Media outlet	Materials in total	Number of materials on the power and new agendas	Share of materials on the power and new agendas %
1in.am	3193	609	19%
News.am	4693	509	11%
Aravot.am	1670	157	9%
Armlur.am	1153	88	8%
Tert.am	2912	281	10%
Lragir.am	1430	205	14%
Total	15051	1849	12%

Table 15. About whom? / 1 - 24.01.2019

Media outlet	Prime Minister	Government	My Step Alliance	Power, in general terms	No mention of the power	Total
1in.am	152/19%	173/21%	137/17%	77/9%	279/34%	818/100%
News.am	86/13%	149/23%	136/21%	51/8%	224/35%	646/100%
Aravot.am	67/25%	58/21%	76/28%	0/0%	69/26%	270/100%
Armlur.am	21/13%	22/14%	60/37%	0/0%	59/36%	162/100%
Tert.am	56/18%	117/ 38%	43/14%	14/4%	79/26%	309/100%
Lragir.am	46/19%	82/34%	19/8%	9/4%	85/35%	241/100%
Total	428/17%	601/25%	471/19%	151/6%	795/33%	2446/100%

Table 16. Number of materials on the power and new agendas on Facebook pages / 1 - 24.01.2019

Page name	Number of materials
Political figures	
Nikol Pashinyan / My Step Alliance	18
Lena Nazaryan / My Step Alliance	11
Naira Zohrabyan / PAP	6
Arman Abovyan / PAP	38
Edmon Marukyan / BAP	61
Gevorg Gorgisyan / BAP	25
Garegin Chugaszyan / Sasna Tsrer	12
Armen Ashotyan / RPA	28
Eduard Sharmazanov / RPA	26
Arthur Yegiazaryan / ARF	15
Artak Sargsyan / ARF	10
Zaruhi Postanjyan / Yerkir Tsirani	8
Non political figures	
Avetik Ishkhanyan	12
Ruben Melikyan	25
Stepan Danielyan	12
Styopa Safaryan	98
Anush Sedrakyan	39
Ara Papyan	74
Suren Sahakyan	2
Tigran Kocharyan	59

Table 17. Prioritised topics in online media outlets / 1 - 24.01.2019

What about? / the topic	Media outlet						Total
	1in.am	News.am	Aravot.am	Armlur.am	Tert.am	Lragir.am	
Governance	217	252	104	70	81	77	801
	25%	30%	34%	41%	25%	30%	29%

Political field	271	148	46	50	74	56	645
	31%	18%	15%	29%	23%	22%	23%
Foreign policy	114	74	34	7	32	21	282
	13%	9%	11%	4%	10%	8%	10%
Economy	80	38	19	8	33	28	206
	9%	5%	6%	5%	10%	11%	7%
Karabakh conflict	40	47	26	7	41	20	181
	5%	6%	9%	4%	13%	8%	7%
Freedoms	27	52	18	7	21	13	138
	3%	6%	6%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Legal system	23	70	7	6	11	11	128
	3%	8%	2%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Corruption	34	29	8	5	9	3	88
	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%
Social issues	22	20	8	8	9	6	73
	3%	2%	3%	5%	3%	2%	3%
Security	0	29	4	0	4	2	39
	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Education / Science	7	18	2	0	3	6	36
	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%
Diaspora	6	8	8	1	1	2	26
	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Healthcare	6	13	0	0	1	4	24
	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%
Culture	2	4	14	1	1	0	22
	0.2%	0.5%	4.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%
Army	7	8	0	0	1	2	18
	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%
Migration	2	8	1	0	1	0	12
	0.2%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%
Ecology	2	2	3	0	1	1	9
	0.2%	0.2%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Hate speech	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Electoral processes	0	2	2	1	0	0	5
	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Tourism	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Electoral bribe / other violations	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Church	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%
Total	861	834	304	171	324	253	2747
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 18. Prioritised topics on the power and new agendas on Facebook pages / 1- 24.01.2019

What about? / the topic	Share of the topic	Share of the topic %
Governance	234	25 %
Political field	104	11 %
Foreign policy	102	11 %
Legal system	99	11 %
Freedoms	91	11 %
Karabakh conflict	81	9 %
Economy	49	5 %
Security	36	4%
Corruption	30	3%
Social issues	27	3%
Migration	21	2%
Diaspora	9	1%
Culture	7	1%
Army	6	1%
Healthcare	5	0.5%
Electoral Code	3	0.3.%
Electoral bribe	2	0.2%
Tourism	1	0.1%
Ecology	1	0.1%
Foreign Intervention	1	0.1%
Total	909	100%