



**Armenian Online  
Media and Facebook  
Platforms in the 2017  
Parliamentary Elections**

**YEREVAN  
2017**

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## THREE REASONS

**REASON 1** – The elections of April 2, 2017, were held in the conditions created by the new Constitution and the new Electoral Code, and this time they were called to solve the problem of power in the country. The new Parliament will receive wider authorities because of the transition to the Parliamentary model of governance in Armenia in 2018. The task was diversified for the political forces: in one case, it was necessary to have the majority in the National Assembly again, yet this time under the conditions of the new Electoral Code, whereas in the other cases the task was to ensure at least some mandates. That problem led to the creation of unusual alliances, and this promised to bring pre-electoral and perhaps also post-electoral developments filled with intrigues and an unexpected course, rather than surprising and shocking results.

**REASON 2** – In the last few years it had become obvious that the online information platforms in Armenia, i.e. the online media and social networks, more and more attracted the attention of the audience as the major sources of information of public significance. The experience of those years showed that it is in online platforms that public discourse is reflected in its full variety, especially during significant time periods for the country, i.e. in the times of political electoral processes, domestic and societal tensions, and border clashes with Azerbaijan.

**REASON 3** – The elections were organized after a difficult year. The four-day war in 2016, the uprising of the armed group called the Daredevils of Sassoun in Armenia in July and the sympathy for them by some strata of the society had led to a deep domestic crisis, it revealed the nihilistic attitudes in societal moods towards all kinds of political circles, consequently, also with regard to the elections as a primarily political process.

These were the three reasons that preconditioned the decision of our “Region” Research Center to study this year’s electoral processes in online media and Facebook social network in parallel. Since in that way it would be possible to describe all the three parties involved in the electoral process at a time: the political forces with their campaign concepts and their authentic implementations, the online media with today’s specificities of coverage and the manifestations of its relations to the audiences, the Facebook platforms with the attitude of its potential and numerous electorate.

- How did the mass media cover the elections and the offline campaigns of the forces in the elections?
- How did the political forces make use of the social network in order to bring their campaign messages home to the electorate?
- What was the attitude of the society, following the course of elections in online platforms, to elections-related content and/or how did it participate in the campaign processes on the social network?
- What made this year's online campaign process stand out against the background of the previous national campaigns?

These questions served as a basis for our study which was implemented in a number of stages with a total duration of 61 days (February 15 – April 16).

## I. ELECTIONS IN ONLINE MEDIA

### Which Media Outlets and How Many Stages?

The 7 online media outlets with a societal-political focus selected for this research (1in.am, News.am, Tert.am, Aravot.am, 168.am, Lragir.am, Armlur.am) have good ratings and large audiences. The number of monthly views of their web pages on the eve of the electoral phase ranged from 770 000 (Lragir.am) to 10 million (News.am). At the same time, these media outlets are not vocal regarding their political sympathies and preferences. These two criteria determined our choice these very media outlets from among the large number of online media operating in Armenia.

We observed the Armenian language content of these media outlets in two stages:

- For two weeks prior to the official campaign (February 15-March 1) – the preparation stage,
- The official electoral process – the 27 days of the campaign (March 5 - 31), the Silence Day (April 1) and the Election Day (April 2).

## What and How Much? Intensity of Materials on Elections

Starting from the second half of February, online media had already begun to intensively cover the events taking place in the two weeks prior to the official election campaign, as well as the developments related to the composition of the forces, the nominations in the CEC, publicizing the voters' lists and other preparatory work. As a result, the intensity of covering electoral topics in the period prior to the official campaign was almost at the same level as in the official campaign period. For example, the maximum number of materials published by the media outlets every day between February 15 and March 1 ranged from 25 pieces (Lragir.am) to 56 (News.am), and during the official campaign the media outlets produced a maximum number of materials daily, ranging from 35 (Lragir.am) to 62 (Aravot.am) and 63 (News.am). During the official campaign the daily average number of materials on election topics grew significantly in comparison with the situation in the two weeks prior to the official campaign only in Aravot.am and Armlur.am (by 16% in each); in other cases the growth in the intensity of content pieces on elections was 1% (Tert.am), 4% (News.am), 5%(168.am), 8%(1in.am) and 10% (Lragir.am). **See Appendix 1, Table 1.**

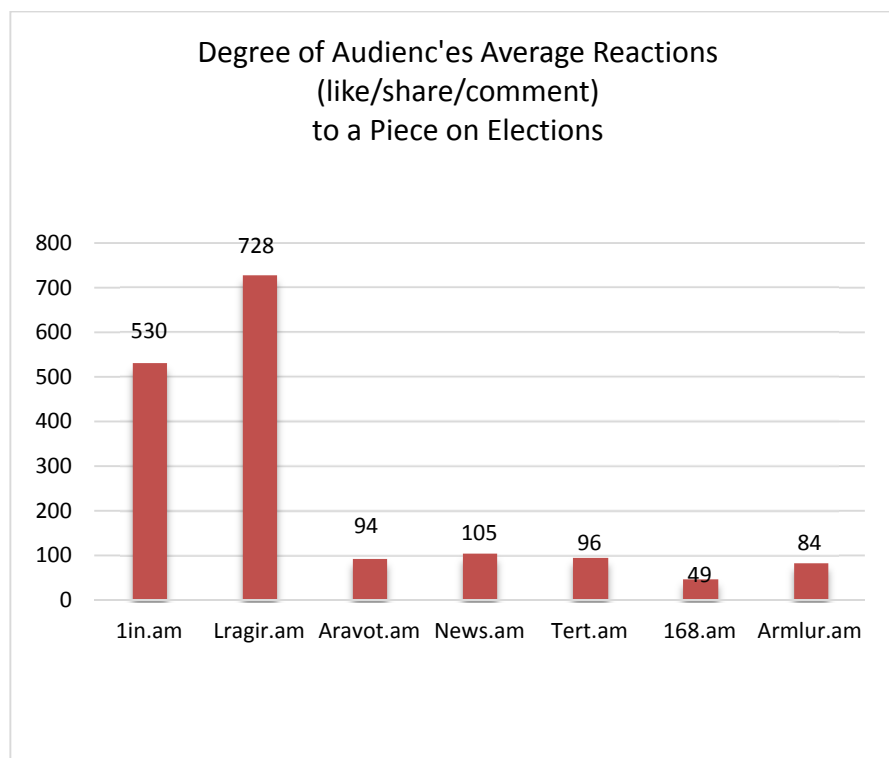
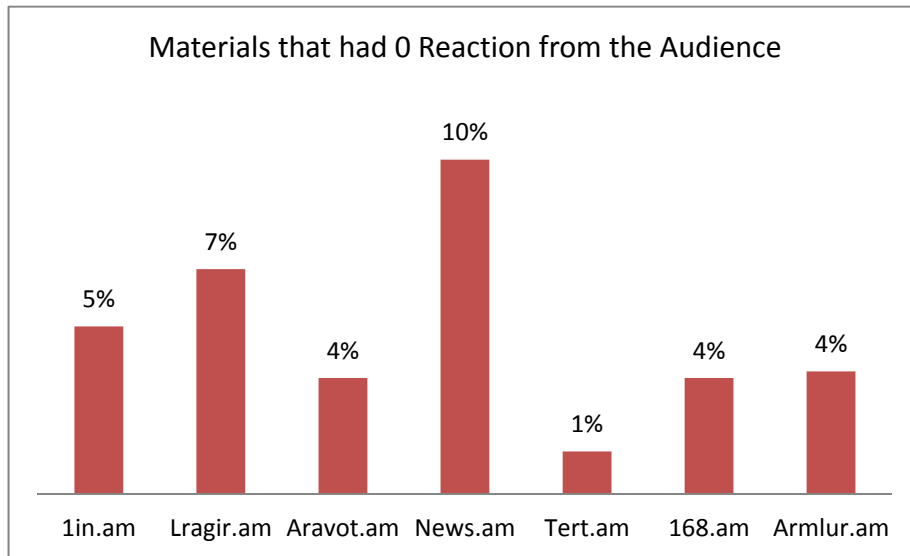
## Degree of Audience's Interest in Elections-Related Content

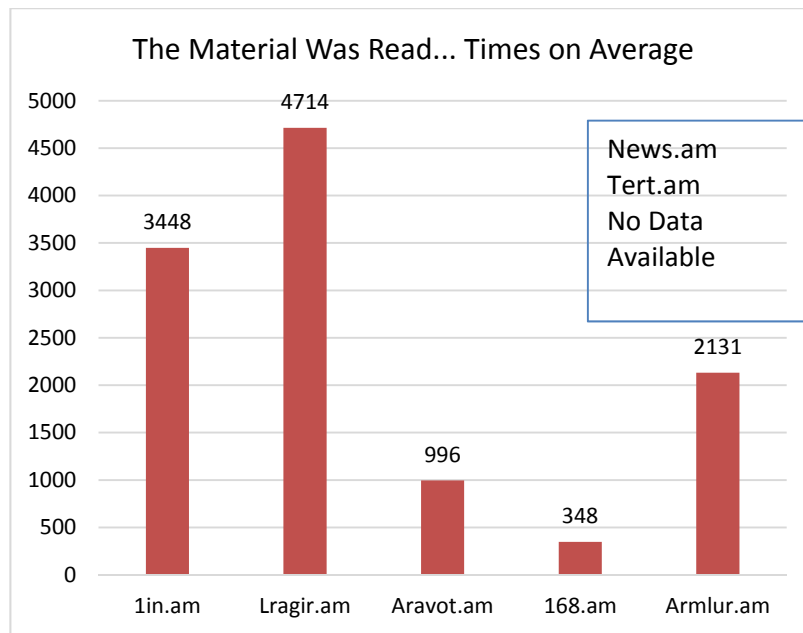
These media outlets demonstrated different levels of interactivity with the audience. Part of the materials on the elections did not generate any reaction among the audiences (0 Likes, Shares, Comments), even though they all (just as is currently the case with the majority of online media in Armenia) stay in touch with their audiences mainly via their Facebook and other social network plug-ins.

Lragir.am and 1in.am stood out by the attitude towards concrete content in the materials. The average number of Likes, Shares and Comments recorded with regard to content pieces on elections published here was respectively 728 and 530 (like/share/comment).

According to the views by audience, content pieces published in Armlur.am also stood out.

**See the figures below.**





## Focus of Materials

Materials covering the characteristic features of the form and course of the electoral process exceeded by number those materials that reflected the platform provisions of the adversary forces and their messages to the electorate in both stages. If during the two weeks prior to the official campaign the issues addressed were the participation or non-participation of this or that force, the format of electoral race as an individual entity or in alliance, the new voting procedures, registrations, various brief clashes and tension, during the campaign the materials of this kind mostly described the course of the campaign and the offline meetings of various forces in different marzes of the country.

Thus, from February 15 to March 1 the number of published materials containing descriptions of the pre-electoral processes (**What kind of pre-electoral process was on?**) ranged from 71% (Aravot.am) to 95% (Armlur.am), whereas in the course of the official campaign it ranged from 59% (News.am) to 78% (Armlur.am).

Materials containing provisions from the platforms of competing forces (**What do we intend to do if we are elected into the Parliament? What will happen after the**



**elections**) ranged from 5% (Armlur.am) to 29% (Aravot.am) in the first stage, and from 22% (Armlur.am) to 41% (News.am) during the official campaign. **See Appendix 1, Tables 2 and 3.**

During the whole electoral process the **issues of electoral violations** circulated at an especially high level of intensity in the online media. In the stage of the campaign materials on electoral bribes/the abuse of the administrative resource ranged from 8 to 11%. The topic was covered with the discussion of all possible manifestations. They wrote about the amount of money to be distributed for receiving/buying votes. They also covered the kinds of electoral bribes offered or promised to individual citizens/whole communities. For example, they wrote that some businessmen candidates made their employees register in their constituencies to receive their guaranteed votes, and this can account for over 7000 RA citizens changing their place of residence registration in the period between January 10<sup>th</sup> and February 10, 2017. The term “**election tasovschik**” (**shuffler**) was widely used in the media and the speeches of political forces (to name those who distributed electoral bribes).

The topic of electoral bribes was largely circulated by the representatives of competing political forces, it was discussed during different meetings and debates organized on different platforms. The expression “**Giving and receiving electoral bribes is criminally punishable**” was voiced less frequently than the circulated public call: “**Take the electoral bribe, but vote at your own discretion, because in the booth it would be impossible to control the act of voting.**”

The topic of using the administrative resource burst out twice in the pre-campaign period. The first case was the story revealed by Exit bloc on the RPA candidate Armen Sahakyan’s wife. The Exit bloc had revealed that she, as a director of a kindergarten, was collecting votes in favor of her husband and the RPA, in general. The second scandal started out with the revelation of the Union of Informed Citizens NGO. Due to the publicized recordings of eavesdropped telephone conversations with the principals of over 100 schools and kindergartens in Armenia the society came to know that the principals were drawing up lists of citizens who would vote in favor of the RPA and submitted them to different headquarters of the party. Both stories were covered also in the media outlets we monitored. The second scandal was much louder and was covered with the participation of all parties, with explanations, justifications and comments made by

different groups. By the way, a third recording was publicized, also containing an obvious proof of the use of the administrative resource and the violation of the right to freely exercising suffrage. But this time the compromising material against the RPA candidate and businessman Artak Sargsyan (the owner of the SAS supermarket chain, usually called Artak of SAS) was circulated after the electoral process was over (post-election period, April 14).

## Ratings of Campaign Topics

**The ratings of materials published during the official campaign and containing platform provisions did not undergo significant changes as compared to the same indicators of the two pre-campaign weeks.**

For the first time in the history of the Armenian electoral processes the topic of Karabakh conflict took the first three positions in the monitored media outlets.

**According to the joint results of all 7 outlets** the platform provisions of political forces that were discussed most were on the following topics: 1. The economy, 2. The Karabakh conflict, 3. Social issues, 4. Domestic relations, 5. Foreign policy, 6. Domestic Freedoms, 7. Army, 8. Corruption and education/science, 9. Legal system, 10. Migration.

In **1in.am** the materials containing provisions from the platforms demonstrate the following rating: economy comes the first, followed by the Karabakh conflict and domestic relations, social issues and domestic freedoms, foreign policy, migration, army, corruption, and education/science in descending order.

In **News.am** we observed the following order: economy, domestic freedoms, the Karabakh conflict, social issues, foreign policy, the legal system and corruption, education/science and migration, domestic freedoms and healthcare topics.

In **Tert.am** the order was as follows: economy, the Karabakh conflict and the social issues, domestic relations, foreign policy, army, education/science, migration.

In **Aravot.am** the order was as follows: the Karabakh conflict, economy, the social issues, army, legal system, foreign policy, and migration.

**168.am** demonstrated the following order of platform provisions: economy, the Karabakh conflict, social issues, domestic freedoms, foreign policy, corruption, and the legal system.

In **Lragir.am** we observed the following order: economy, domestic relations, the Karabakh conflict and foreign policy, domestic freedoms, social issues, and the army. (See **Appendix 1, Figure 1 and Table 4**)

**As it can be seen from this joint and individual ratings, during the campaign the following 4 topics were addressed significantly less: the Diaspora, environment, healthcare, and culture/tourism.**

The provisions from the platforms of competing forces were presented in the online media jointly. Besides individual interviews and round tables with the representatives of the political forces some of which were organized by the online media (for example, the format of 168.am's **Pressing Club**) and reports of the course of different meetings, thematic digests were extracted from the platforms of different forces and presented to the audiences. For example, what the forces proposed regarding the economy, foreign policy, education and other spheres.

#### A Note on Methodology –

- a) When classifying the materials into two groups (materials containing provisions from the platforms and covering the form and course of the process) we were guided by the principle of prioritizing platform provisions. In other words, the material was defined as containing platform provisions even if it also contained descriptions of the characteristic features and details of the electoral process.
- b) The number of references to topics was counted based not on the factual number of their descriptions, but the number of authors voicing them, i.e. the principle of one material – one or several topics . The authors were defined to be members of the following groups: each of the competing forces, journalists, others (experts, NGO members, representatives of other countries and international organizations).

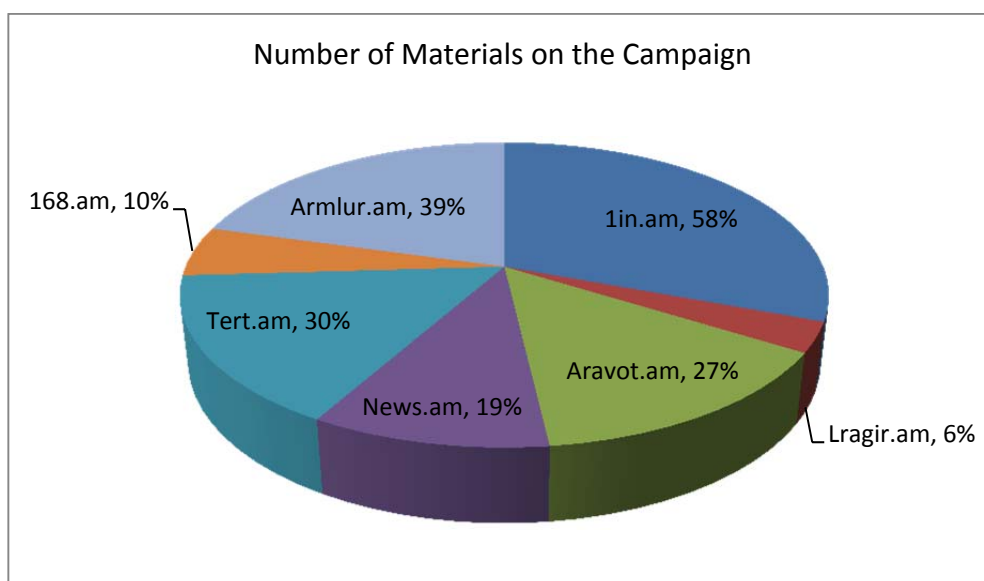
## How and to What Extent? The Visualization of the Campaign in Online Media

Some of the studied online media outlets covered the campaign with a significant number of video materials. The offline meetings of the forces in different settlements were presented here by means of video reports. The interviews or the discussions with their participation were mainly presented in this format, too.

It must be noted that never before had so many faces of ordinary citizens been in online media, and there had been no direct speech to the extent we saw this time. By means of the visualization of the campaign it was possible to make known the moods of the population in different settlements towards the elections in general, and the political process and this or that force participation in particular. In the video materials there were many presentations of the nihilistic moods of the voters. For example, Armlur.am regularly published materials containing vox-pops with the citizens in the streets of their towns and villages on whether they intended to go to the polling station and who they would cast their vote for.

**The video materials of this kind presented the approaches and standpoints of the so-called offline domain and the attitude to the electoral processes.**

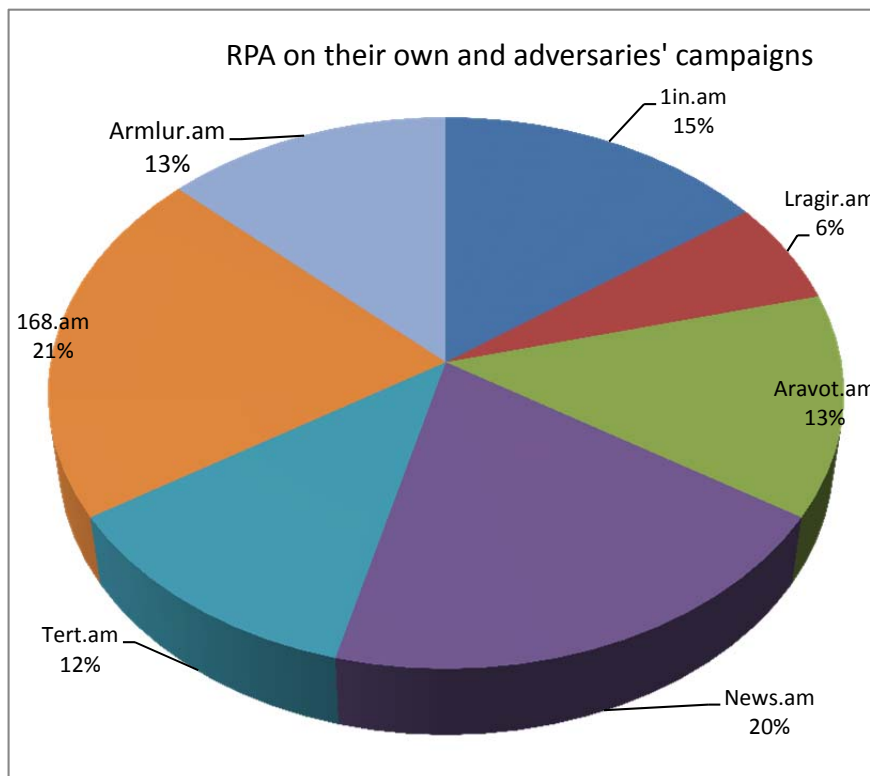
The figure below shows the number of video materials on the official campaign in the media outlets we monitored. The largest number of video materials was found in 1in.am and Armlur.am.

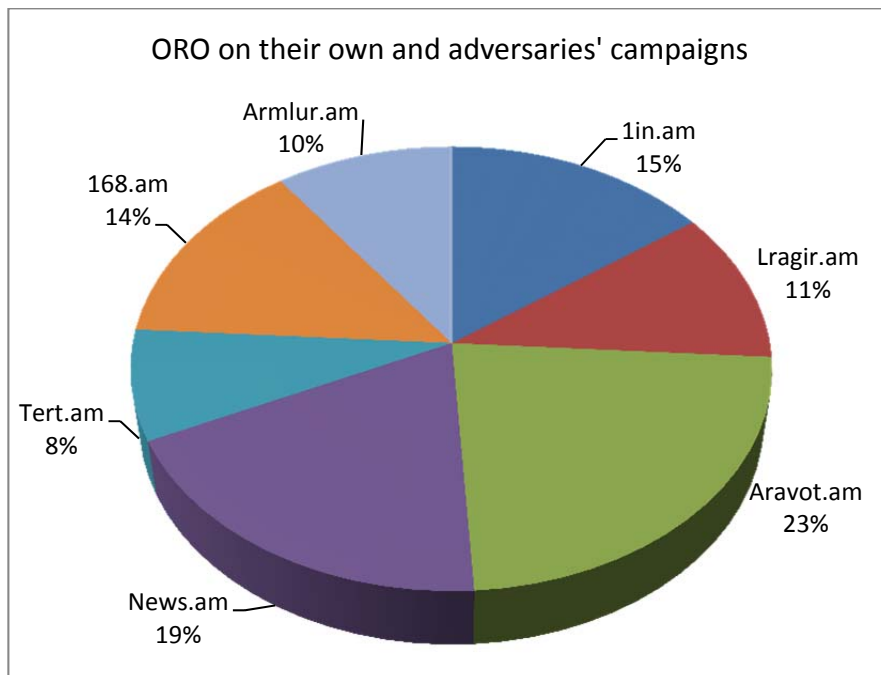
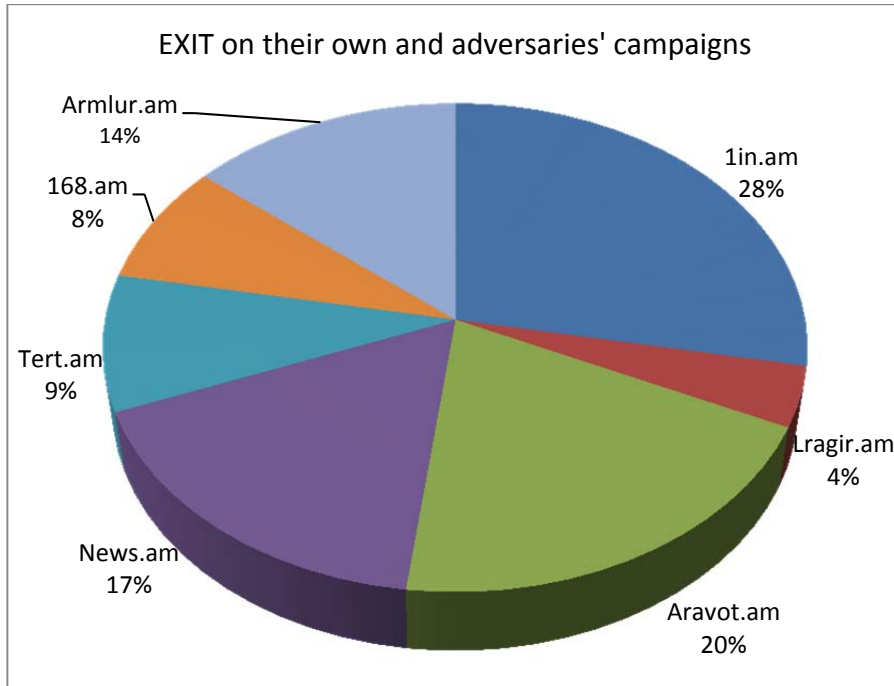


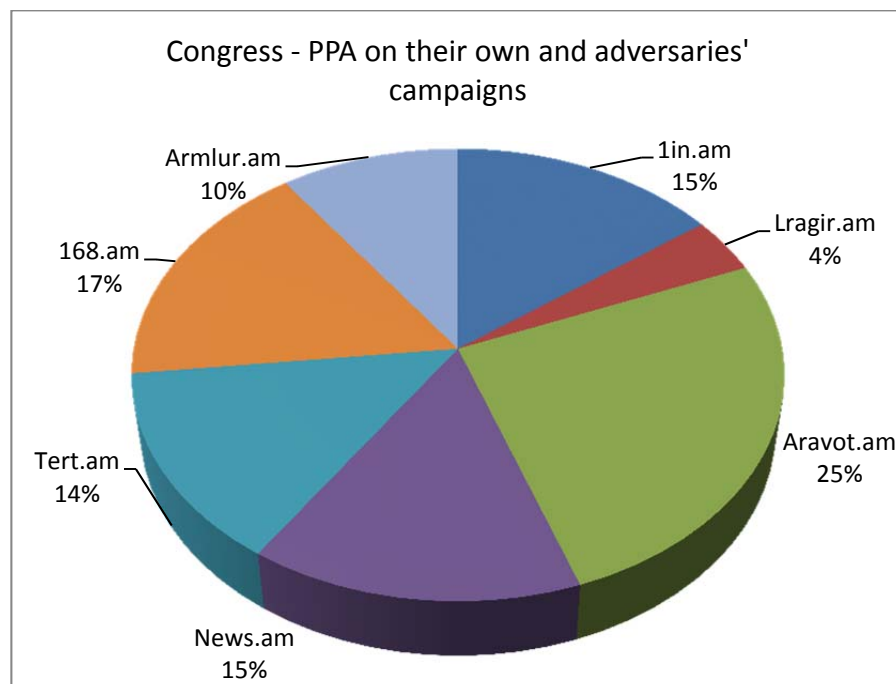
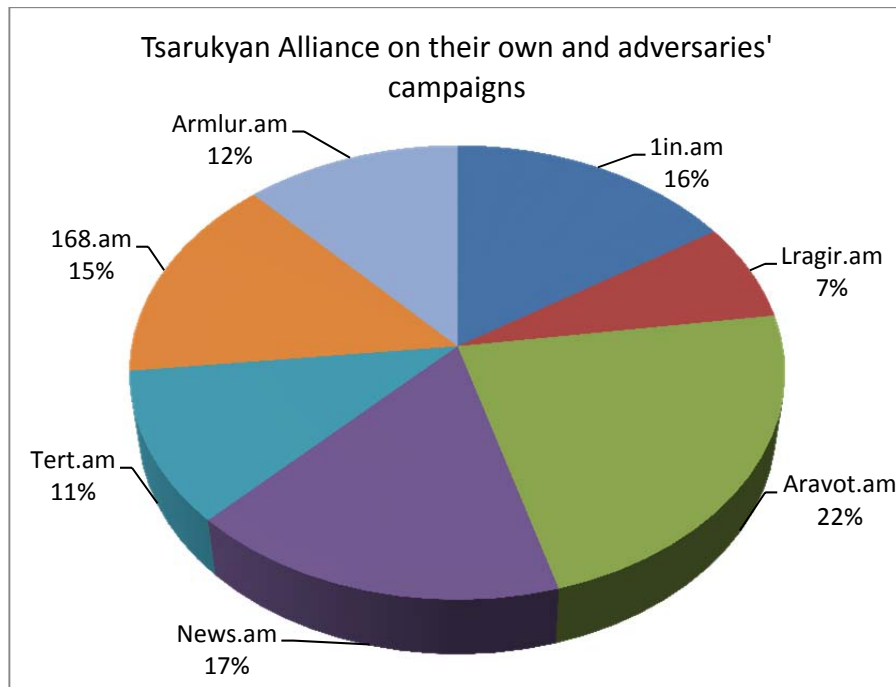
## The Share of Attention Devoted by the Media to Competing Forces

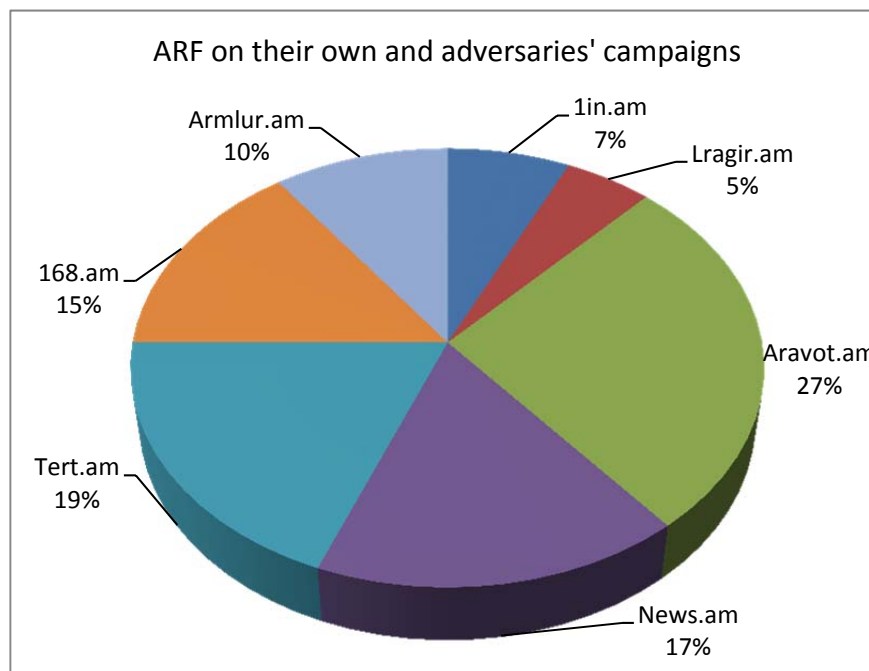
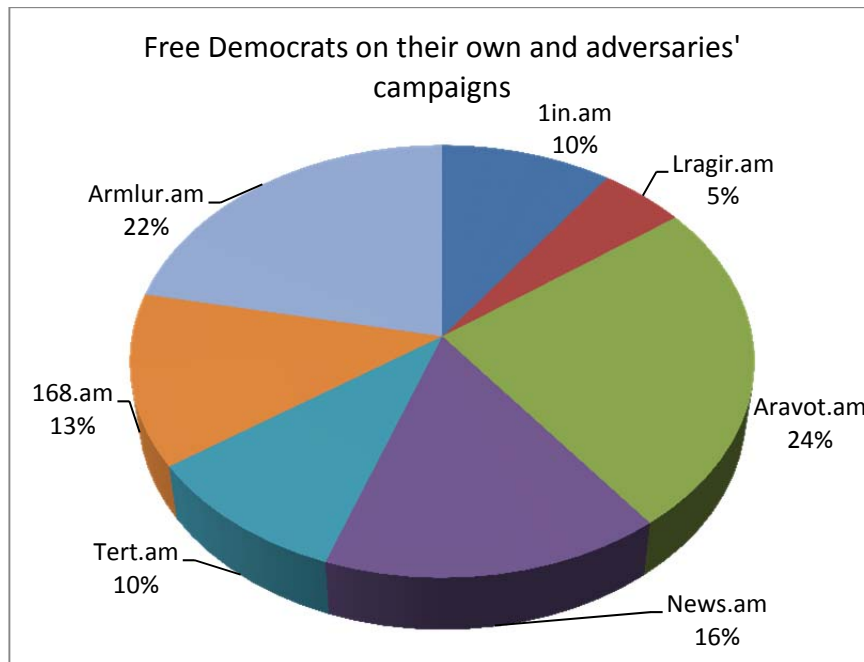
According to the degree of attention paid to the competing forces in the monitored media outlets (number of references), the following order was arrived at. Online media covered the RPA most, and then by descending order they covered the Tsarukyan Alliance, ORO, Exit, Congress – PPA Alliances, the ARF, the Armenian Revival, the Free Democrats, and the Communist Parties.

**This order differs from one media outlet to another. See the figures below.**

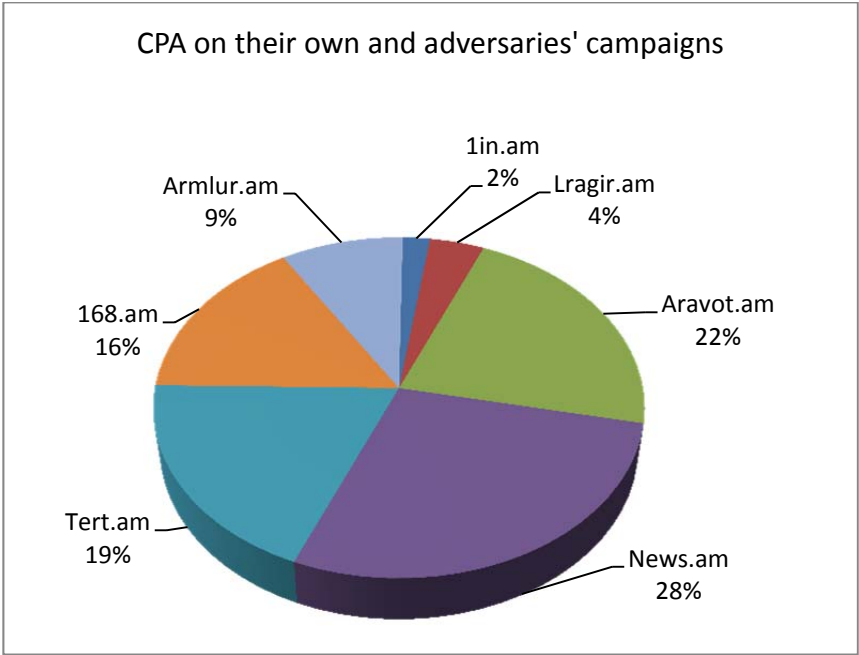
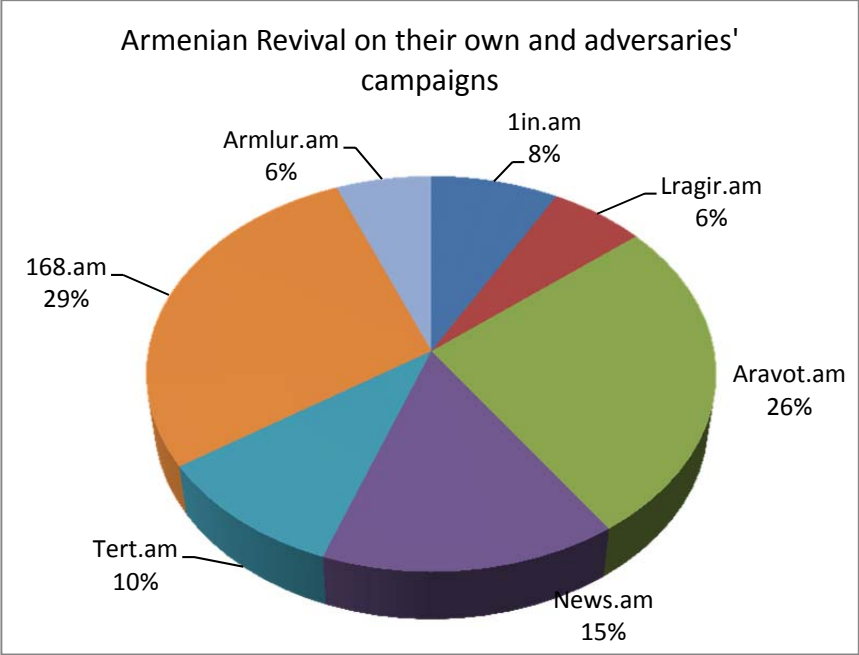












A Note on Methodology – We have calculated the intensity of references made by the forces focusing on the principle of ‘who spoke about whom.’ References to the same force in one material were counted by the number of speakers making those references. The number of authors of references in one material is seen as equal to the number of references made by the same force or different forces.

## PR and Black PR

**What was the tonality used by the adversaries and others (journalists, experts, NGO representatives, political figures not participating in the elections) when speaking about competing political parties/alliances in their media presentations on electoral topics?**

According to the joint indicators of the monitored media outlets, the Free Democrats (4% of references) and Exit Alliance (8% of references) were the ones least mentioned with the negative evaluative markers.

The highest number of references with negative evaluative markers was on the RPA (42.5%) and the Congress-PPA (25%). The degree of Black PR against the other forces was from 7% (CPA) to 15% (Tsarukyan Alliance) and 16% (Armenian Revival).

The proportionality of references containing PR elements as compared to those with black PR was almost the same in the case of all forces, or approximately equal to negative markers, or significantly higher. The RPA’s indicators are an exception, PR references to the RPA are approximately 3,5 times less as compared with the number of references with negative evaluations.

**The specificity of the electoral campaign consists in the fact that the negative evaluations were mostly given by the competing political forces.** Even when presenting thematic platform provisions to the public they were guided by the critical and black PR formulations addressed at the competing forces. For example, in the speeches on the topic of security the thesis applied by almost everyone was that the RPA cannot

ensure the security of the people in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, or else there would be no April war, neither would there be any human and territorial losses. The ARF said about the others that if the electorate looked back at the route the ARF party had covered to the present, they would not see any other classical political force except the ARF. The RPA wondered when speaking about Seyran Ohanyan from ORO: How come the former RA Defense Minister started to speak about the illegalities and irregularities in the system after he left the ruling branch of power, this is not moral. The Congress – PPA spoke about others: the positions regarding Nagorno Karabkh were specifically presented in their platform, whereas the others were presenting fairy-tales that were as primitive as in kindergarten and so on.

During the campaign the PR and black PR means were used to the full.

**Journalists/online media mainly acted in the role of someone who transfers the words of someone else, and were not the first-hand authors of either PR or black PR.** For the first time in the history of electoral processes online media received orders of paid advertisement during the campaign. The RPA and AFR posted paid advertisements in almost all monitored media outlets. And this was the only vivid expression of nominal PR by the online media.

**The others** (experts, members of forces not running for Parliament, and other representatives of this group) expressed themselves with a more frequent use of negative evaluation than positive expression when speaking about the RPA, ARF, Tsarukyan and ANC – PPA Alliances and the CPA.

**The RPA** expressed their negative attitude mostly towards the Exit, Tsarukyan, ORO and Congress – PPA Alliances. It made neither negative nor positive references to the Armenian Revival Party and the Communist Party of Armenia.

**The ANC – PPA Alliance** became the main target for ARF's criticism and black PR, followed by the RPA as the concrete addressee of criticism.

The RPA was the main addressee of negative descriptions voiced by the **Armenian Revival Party**.

**The Free Democrats** spoke negatively mainly about the RPA and the Tsarukyan Alliance.

**The Exit** bloc structured its speeches mainly around the principle of complete criticism against all. But the highest number of negative references made by the representatives of the Alliance was addressed against the RPA, Tsarukyan and Congress – PPA Alliances. The criticism by the **Tsarukyan and Congress – PPA Alliance** was also mainly directed against the RPA.

**The CPA** preserved relative correctness and had very few instances of negative evaluations (4 – 6 times). **For more details see Appendix 1, Table 6.**

A Note on Methodology: The markers of descriptions (positive and negative, as in all our monitoring projects) have been specified according to their direct semantic meaning, not by implicature.

## II. ELECTIONS ON FACEBOOK PLATFORMS

### Preparations on Facebook: pre-campaign stage

The 2017 Parliamentary elections were the third national electoral process (after the 2012 Parliamentary and 2013 Presidential elections), during which the forces participating in the elections made use of the possibilities of Facebook social network. On the one hand, this had to do with the circumstance that on the eve of the elections 1/3 of the population of Armenia was registered on Facebook, namely, 1 million citizens, 99% of which were 18 and over. On the other hand, this had to do with the natural necessity not to lag behind adversaries on Facebook (just in case).

February was mainly the period for the preparation and positioning on the social network. The Facebook pages of the newly-formed alliances (ORO, Tsarukyan Alliance) were

opened for specifically campaign (PR) purposes. The page of the Exit Alliance, formed in December 2016, was opened in January 2017. The already existing Facebook pages of the other forces were adjusted to the new campaign. Thus, the Congress – PPA Alliance used the Armenian National Congress Facebook page, which had been operational since March 2016 and had been used in the October 2, 2016 elections of local self-governing bodies. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, i.e. on the day of the launch of the official campaign, the newly-created votearf2017.am to be used by the ARF for its campaign purposes was announced to be launched. The materials on the website were further posted onto the Facebook page of the party. For the first time ever in the history of the electoral processes in Armenia “Love Armenia” Facebook page was launched by the RPA, which did not identify the party affiliation in the name of the page, unlike the official Facebook pages of all the other forces. It should be noted that during the previous two elections this ruling force promoted its campaign on the social network completely on its own, mainly through the use of the pages of its young members and supporters.

As a result, the official campaign was launched on March 5<sup>th</sup> with the participation of not only pages well –known to the Facebook community, but also newly-opened official ones.

This serious attitude to campaigning on the social network even by those political forces that own TV stations (the Armenian Revival Party, PPA that was a branch of the Tsarukyan Alliance, the ARF, and also the RPA though not nominally) proved the intention of the competing forces that this time central position was to be given to Facebook social network. This is what they shared with us during our surveys. And a few circumstances were offered as the major reasons for such an intention: Facebook is a wide platform for circulating information which enables to implement campaign activities here, too. Our decision to monitor the whole of the electoral process on Facebook throughout all the three stages (the two weeks prior to the official campaign period, the official campaign itself and the Election Day, and the two post-election weeks) could be accounted for by another reason. It was the experience of the 2013 Presidential elections when the intensive post-election processes started and unfolded on the Facebook platforms mainly with the involvement of the leadership of the competing forces or their supporters. We recall various meetings held by the representatives of different political forces with Facebook activists in this period.

Thus, we monitored the official pages of all 9 forces, as well as the pages of their leaders and other candidates active on Facebook ( 28 Facebook pages in total, the list is presented in Appendix 2) for 61 days (February 15-April 16). Aiming at covering the pages of all the forces involved in the process, including the political forces that were part of different alliances.

## What and to What Extent? The Substance and Quantity of Campaign Content (March 5- April 1)

**On Facebook platforms adversary forces were free in deciding on their thematic campaign agendas, the formats of promoting their content and the choice of the means. However, as it was also the case with the online media, on the official pages of all forces materials on offline meetings in different settlements in the country held during the campaign constituted a majority.** The Free Democrats were the one party from among all the other forces that resorted more to content pieces containing platform provisions (68%), and on the contrary, 62% of the materials posted on the official page of the Tsarukyan Alliance were the materials on the warm reception organized by the people of different villages and towns for the leader of the Alliance, as well as stories that dealt with various local requests by the citizens.

Various forces gave preference to the various topics that were axes of their speeches. For example, the economy, social issues, the army and the Karabakh conflict/Security topics were the provisions from the RPA's platform that were most discussed on the official Facebook page of the party. Domestic freedoms, domestic relations, the Diaspora and election bribes were not addressed at all.

The list of topics from the party platform was longer on the pages of the Exit and ORO alliances, the Free Democrats, ARF and CPA. The Armenian Revival Party focused on social issues, and issues related to the economy, the legal system and the army on its page. On the page of the Congress – PPA Alliance the topic of the Karabakh conflict/Security was substantially ahead of all the rest. The page of Tsarukyan Alliance focused on topics of economic and social problems. The cases of reference to other problems were of a very small number or did not exist at all **(the figures showing ratings of election campaign topics are presented in Appendix 2).**

# Audiences, Interactivity Rates and Interaction on Facebook Platforms



Significant fluctuations in the number of 'Likes' and 'Followers' of the page



RPA



Raffi Hovhannisyán  
(ORO Alliance)



Karen Karapetyán  
(RPA)



Armenian Revival



Exit Alliance



Tigran Urikhanyán  
(Tsarukyan Alliance)



Nikol Pashinyán  
(Exit Alliance)



ARF



The pages of competing forces, having audiences of different sizes, launched their official campaign. For example, the page of the ORO Alliance that was opened in January, had 3509 likes on the first day of the campaign, and the Armenian Revival Party had 14552. However, during the campaign the sizes of the audience of the pages did not change. There were pages that started the campaign with huge audiences and had very small reductions of or additions to the number of the likes and followers (this was the case with

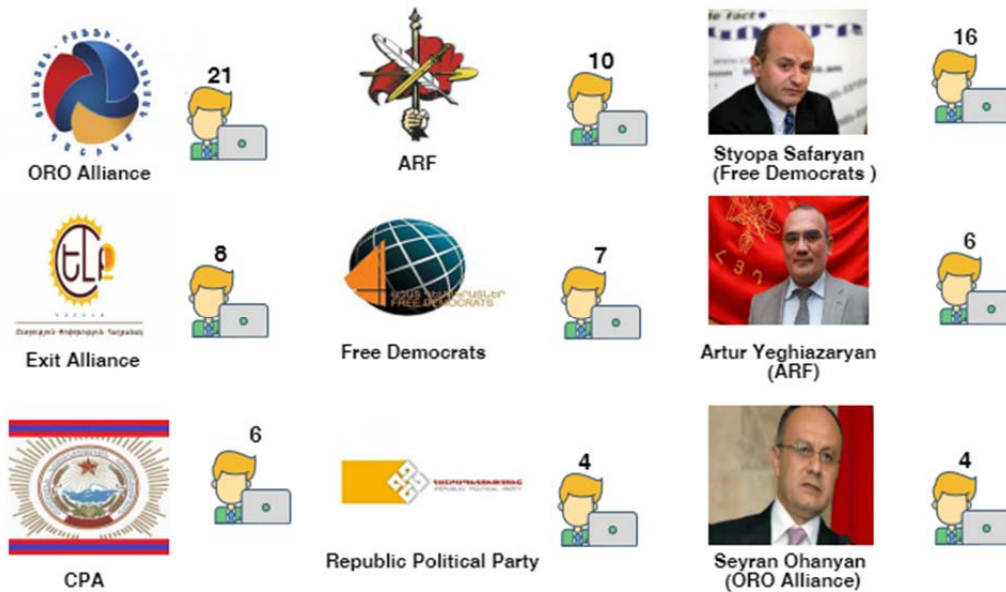
the official pages of Armen Ashotyan from the RPA, Raffi Hovhannisyan from the ORO Alliance, Tigran Urikhanyan from the Tsarukyan Alliance, as well as the official pages of the Armenian Revival Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation). And on the contrary, there are newly opened pages which managed to record a significant growth in their page audiences during the campaign (this was the case with the official pages of the RPA and the Exit Alliance). During the campaign the audiences of Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan's (an RPA candidate) and Nikol Pashinyan's (the Exit Alliance) pages were growing dynamically during the campaign. On the eve of the Election Day the former had had an increase of audience of up to 11000 people, and the latter of up to 13000. **(Besides the infographic above, see also Appendix 2, Table 1).**

The fluctuations in the number of audiences during the campaign were not related to scandalous incidents (they were sustainable) or black PR processes. There is a list of examples: Samvel Babayan's arrest <sup>1</sup> who stood close to the alliance of the three former ministers (ORO) did not become a reason for an abrupt rise, or on the contrary, fall in the number of the followers of this force. Or, the information on the tense clashes, stabbing, and scandalous arguments among the candidates from different forces (among different RPA candidates, among the RPA candidates and the candidates of the Tsarukyan Alliance, among the RPA candidates and voters supporting the ARF and so on) again had no impact on the size of the Facebook audiences of the competing forces. The story on the revelation of the lists of voters in favor of the RPA drawn up by the principals of 144 schools and kindergartens raised a wave of discussions on Facebook, but did not cause a reduction of the number of the RPA Facebook audiences.

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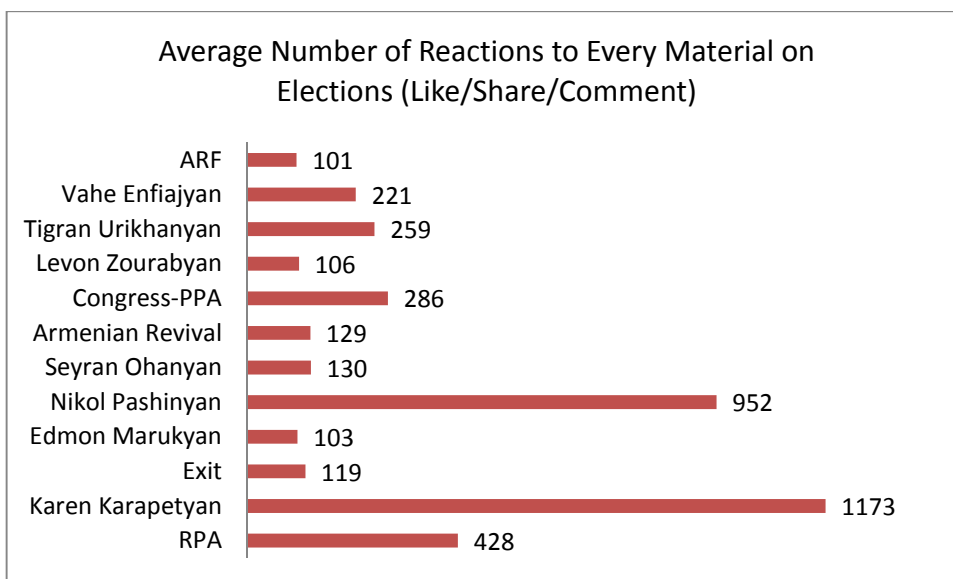
<sup>1</sup>Samvel Babayan, who was the former Defense Minister of the NKR and was supporting the ORO Alliance, was arrested in the middle of the campaign, namely on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, within the framework of a case on transporting IGLA anti-craft missile from Georgia to Armenia. Although he denied the charges against him, he was still detained for two months. The ORO Alliance disseminated a statement on Facebook where this circumstance was evaluated as a case of political pressure against the Alliance.





The competing forces proposed various amounts of content on the elections to the Facebook community and the followers of their pages. Up to the Election Day the official pages of the ORO (583 materials in 27 days), the Exit Alliance, the Free Democrats, the ARF, and the CPA, as well as the pages of candidates Styopa Safaryan (the Free Democrats candidate had 456 materials in 27 days), Artur Yeghiazaryan (ARF), and Seyran Ohanyan (ORO) had the maximum number of materials on them. **(Besides the infographic presented above, also see Appendix 2, Table 2).**

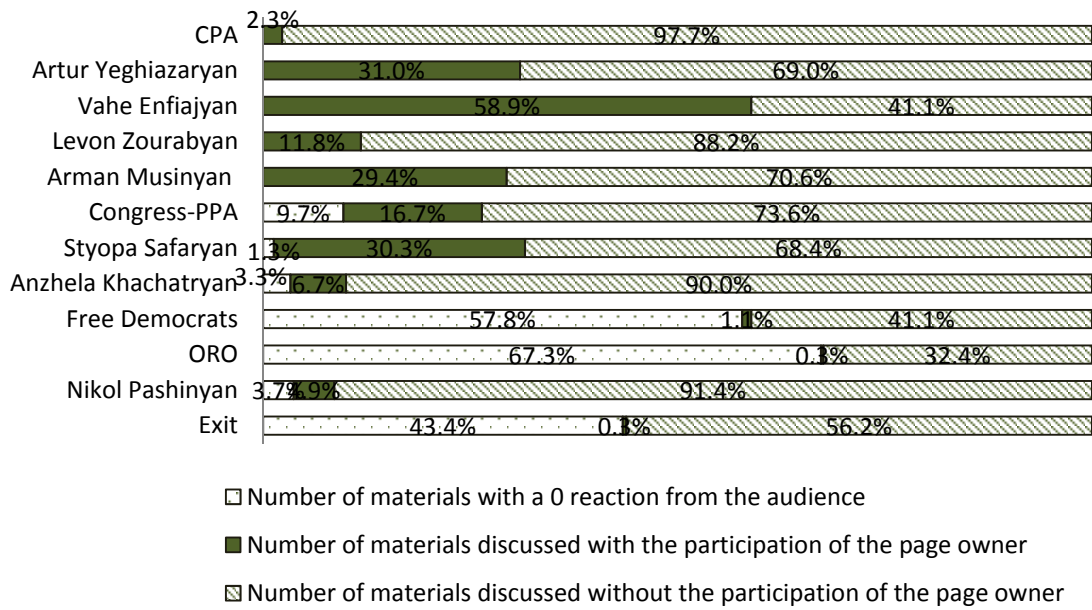
**The level of interactive responses by the audience** to the content on the elections regarding the competing forces varied. The figure below shows the monitored pages that enjoyed a maximal level of interactivity by the audiences. Except the two candidates who had the highest indicators, namely Karen Karapetyan and Nikol Pashinyan, the **interactivity rate** of the other 9 pages fluctuated within the 100 – 130 range. The interactivity rate of Nikol Pashinyan's page was 952, and Karen Karapetyan's was 1173.



The average number of likes, shares and comments on every material on elections posted on Facebook platforms was called an interactivity rate. This rate shows the average degree of interest held by the electorate masses on Facebook with regard to the content on elections posted on the respective page.

The following figures show that on 12 out of the 28 monitored pages the content pieces on elections were discussed also with the participation of the forces or candidates administering the pages. In all the remaining cases the reactions (comments) of the Facebook audiences to the materials published were not reacted to by the owners/administrators of the pages. In other words, the competing forces and their candidates used those pages as platforms for sharing information rather than as a venue or environment for expanding their contacts with the electorate on Facebook or holding discussions.

### Interactive Reactions and Contacts with the Electorate



## How?

### The Visualization of the Campaign on Facebook

On Facebook platforms the **degree of the visualization** of the campaign was significantly higher (**that is to say, the correlation of the number of video materials and photos on the elections with the text content pieces**) than in the online media (**See Appendix 2, Table 3**). It is necessary to especially highlight that this very kind of materials received the highest number of reactions (like/share/comment) by the users.

- a) The number of views of video materials posted on the pages of some candidates and forces were quite impressive. For example, the number of the views of almost every video material covering campaign visits on Karen Karapetyan's page reaches a few tens of thousands, on the RPA's page the live stream of the campaign concluding event had 85000 views (on March 30<sup>th</sup>). The interview with the leader of the Congress – PPA Alliance, the first President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan on Kentron TV Channel had 288000 views. During the interview he presented the position of the Congress – PPA on the settlement of the Karabkh conflict, and he

made a comparison with the provisions on this issue in the platforms of the competing forces.

- b) **For the first time ever the mode of circulating song clips and disseminating electoral slogans by this means were used in the campaign.** During the election campaign three political forces produced song clips using their electoral slogans. These music videos too, had a large number of views. The number of views of the RPA's music video **Let's Change the World** had over 140000 views in the first few days, but later the number of dislikes exceeded the number of likes. The music video was deleted, and reposted onto the Facebook page. Moreover, it was discussed on the non Republican platforms of Facebook, it caused a wave of black PR among ordinary users, and the same music video was later circulated with completely different lyrics criticizing the RPA. The Free Democrats produced the music video for the rap song **We Can Do It, We are Free** and the number of its views reached 143.000. **The Peace Anthem** produced specially for the campaign of the Congress – PPA Alliance and posted on Facebook had 101.000 views. There was also Peace TV of the Congress – PPA the video materials of which were video talks with the supporters or members of this political force where they tried to justify the need for the implementation of their slogan, which ran **Peace Now**.

## PR and Black PR on Social Networks

The process of the electoral struggle on Facebook was conducted according to the unique rules of the game on social networks and with the use of different toolkits and practices, though the materials prepared by the traditional media constituted the larger share of Facebook content on the competing forces. It is natural that these materials were of either PR or epistemological nature. By the way, there are pages which consisted exclusively of this kind of materials, i.e. materials on election topics by the traditional media.

Nikol Pashinyan's page from the Exit Alliance stands out in terms of the use of a wider variety of social network tools where we can find live streams from his own apartment and

from his meetings with the voters in the yards, as well as answers to questions in live streams and examples of translation into sign language.

In response to the shot in the RPA campaign music video, called “Let’s Change the World” where the RPA candidate, incumbent Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan played percussion instruments for the song performed by the Reincarnation Band, a new video appeared on Facebook where ex-Prime Minister Hrant Bagratyan was playing the guitar. He posted this video of himself playing with a status that read: **“Our Response to Chamberlain”**.

During the electoral campaign Facebook was the first platform where the appeals and calls by different forces to their competitors were published or statements on this or that development were voiced. For example, Seyran Ohanyan’s call not to make use of the parents who lost their sons in the army for PR purposes or the statement by a number of forces after the death of Bread Bringer that they suspended their campaign activity for one day on this occasion and so on.

During this campaign the political forces reacted to the speech made by their adversaries mainly on their own Facebook platforms at a certain distance. There was no discussion or debate on the same plain, with the exception of a few cases. And in general, Facebook platforms worked by the team-based principle, in the format of political forces and their supporters. Discussions and critical, frequently sarcastic comments on certain practices or phenomena observed during the campaign were mainly posted in other Facebook domains. For example, the major thesis put forth by the Congress – PPA Alliance (for the sake of peace and the development of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh it is necessary to immediately establish good-neighborly relations with Azerbaijan) triggered internal discussions on Facebook on the topic of peace and war in general. This was the only force that presented itself with clear provisions, yet unacceptable for the majority. However, the large number of those who opposed to this thesis put forth by the Congress – PPA Alliance was not seen on its official page.

One of the provisions on the Free Democrats’ platform that largely singled it out from all the others (Armenia must change its foreign policy vector towards Europe and NATO) was not accepted by the Facebook community either, but at the same time it did not become a

topic for intensive discussions, unlike the reactions to the Karabkh issue provision by the Congress – PPA.

This campaign was also unique in the sense that this time black PR on the social network was not a very extensive phenomenon, as it was, for example, in the 2013 Presidential elections.

There were almost no caricatures, demotivational posts and memes of political figures and the competing forces. Neither were there any oppositional social network flash mobs, etc. A number of video materials containing elements of black PR were shared by the *I am against the Republican Party* Facebook page with a considerably large number of views and likes and quite a high interactivity rate. Perhaps this was the only page shared on Facebook that contained definite Black PR content.

The political forces and their candidates made a wide use of paid advertising on Facebook.

## Election Day (April 2, 2017) on Facebook and Online Media, Post-Electoral Quiet

The Election Day went by without any information shocks in online media and on Facebook. The major topic of all 7 monitored media outlets, and naturally Facebook platforms, was the coverage of the course of the elections. Online media covered a considerable part of the events of the day by means of video materials (**See Appendix 3, Figure 1**).

From 46% (News.am) to 61% (Armlur.am) of the materials on elections covered or alerted on electoral violations which were mainly presented not as facts but rather suspicions of various violations, mainly as signs of the abuse of the administrative resource (**See Appendix 3, Figure 2**).

Journalists were the ones who most of all spoke about the manifestations of electoral violations in online media, however, not mentioning a concrete force. The representatives

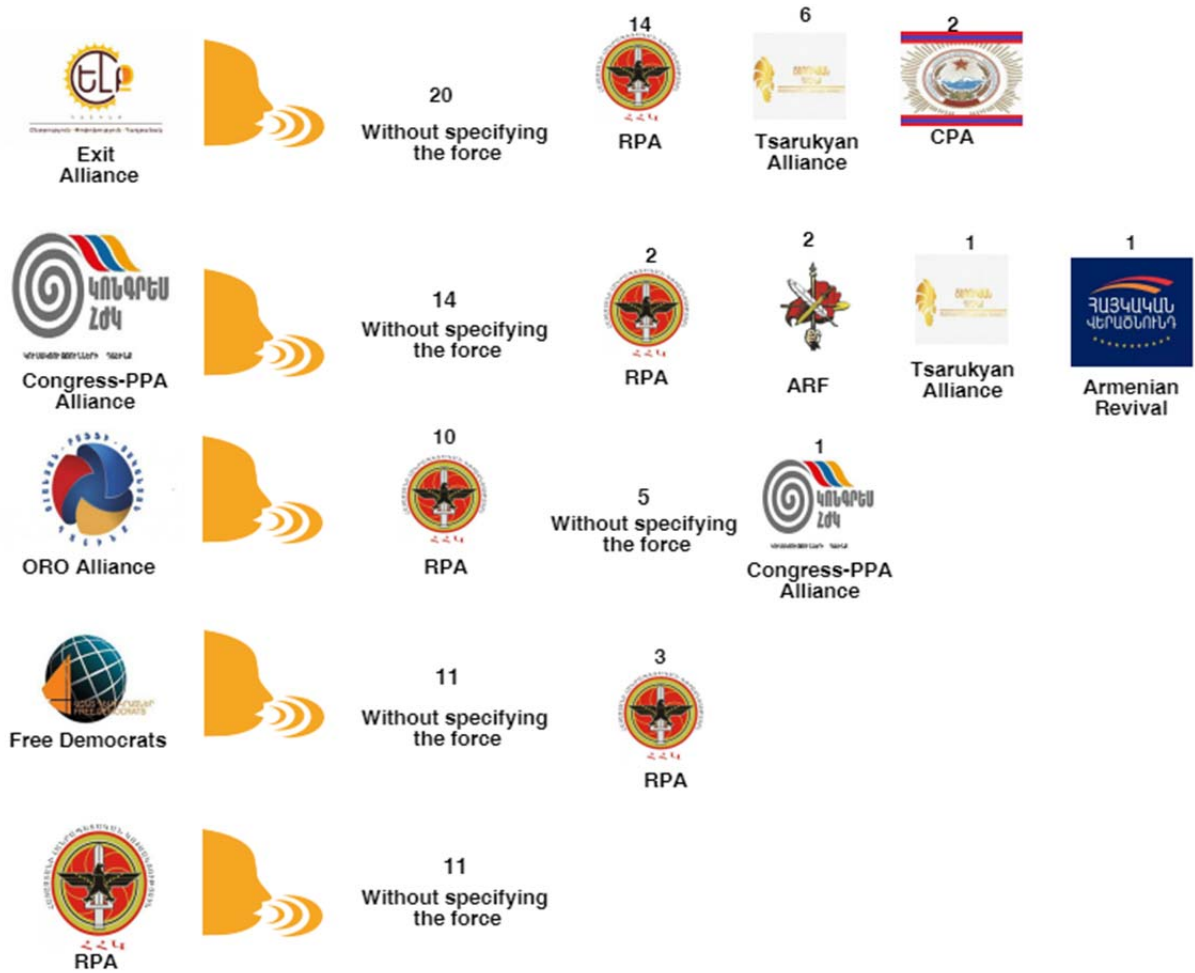
of the Exit, Congress – PPA, ORO Alliances and their proxies made statements on the topic of electoral violations for the media.

Since the Silence Day (April 1) with only a few exceptions the degree of activity of the competing forces and their candidates on Facebook acutely declined. Three forces, namely the Armenian Revival Party, the Congress – PPA and the CPA did not post any content at all on their official pages on the Election Day (April 2).

The maximum number of materials was posted on the official pages of the ORO and Eixt Alliances.

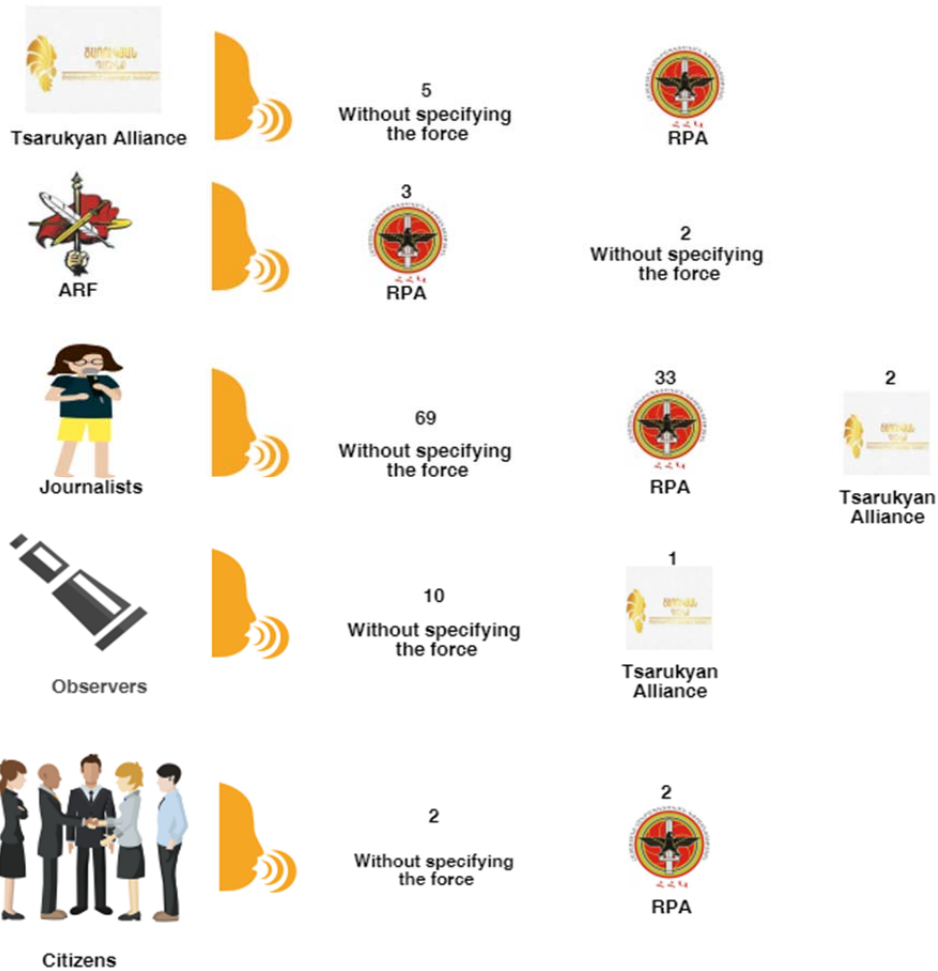


Who spoke about electoral violations on the day of elections and who were they attributed to?





Who spoke about electoral violations on the day of elections and who were they attributed to?



Starting from the Silence Day, with only some exceptions, the degree of Facebook activity by the competing forces and their candidates abruptly declined.

During the two post-election weeks the forces appeared in different social network plains. The first two of the political forces that were elected into the Parliament (RPA, Exit, Tsarukyan Alliance and ARF) smoothly moved to the pre-electoral processes for Yerevan self-government. The others took a time-out on Facebook.

## CONCLUSIONS

- It can be said that this was a parallel study of the offline and online campaigns of the political forces since there was a significant amount of coverage of the offline campaign both in the online media and on the Facebook platforms of the political forces. This was done mainly by means of video materials and presenting the opinions of citizens from different settlements. Probably no other campaign in the past and in general no other electoral process had been as visualized as this one; this was also unique due to the unprecedented number of presentations of the ordinary voters' perspectives. The visualization of the electoral processes on Facebook became more extensive because besides the video materials in the media outlets, the Facebook platforms of the political forces were enriched by video materials of their own make.
- Online media started to quite intensively cover the electoral topics before the launch of the official campaign, and this was related to preparatory processes.
- During the official campaign the daily average number of materials on elections as compared with the two weeks prior to the official campaign showed a significant growth in only 2 out of the 7 media outlets, in the others it was intensive from the very beginning. The picture was quite different on Facebook. Although PR on social networks is not regulated by the RA Electoral legislation, and even though many of the competing forces already had an experience in organizing and holding Facebook-based campaigns and were represented in varying degrees, they approached their campaign in the social networks in line with the classical requirements. All the forces launched their Facebook campaigns on the official start date of the campaign, the majority of the competing forces complied with the rules of the Silence day. Unlike the previous two national elections, this time all competing forces, without exceptions, were represented on Facebook by means of their official pages.
- Although unlike online media, the political forces set their own campaign agendas on Facebook, the thematic ratings of the political forces' campaign in the media and on social networks did not differ much. For the first time in the history of electoral processes in Armenia did the topic of the Karabakh conflict start to be discussed

with special intensity and was promoted by the political forces for three reasons: firstly, the Congress – PPA Alliance had turned it into its major campaign thesis, presenting all other aspects as issues deriving from this one. There were references to the Karabakh issue in the platforms of the other political forces, too, but the majority of their speeches during the campaign targeted the thesis put forth by the Congress – PPA Alliance (i.e. the development of Armenia requires the immediate establishment of good-neighborly relations and the signing of a peace agreement with Azerbaijan). By the way, online media was not the only one to initiate different interviews and discussions on this matter with the involvement of various forces. The second reason was the unprecedented military activity on the Armenian – Azerbaijani front in April exactly one year ago. And the third one was the participation of the former RA Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan in an oppositional stance within the Alliance of the three former Ministers. By the way, the other quite sensitive issue for the Armenian society, i.e. the army, was discussed much less intensively and not by all the forces. It should be highlighted that during all the previously held national electoral processes the issue of the Karabakh conflict did not use to be separately stressed, coming from the principle of not making it a topic of political manipulations.

- The topic of the elections was circulated in online media and on Facebook platforms throughout the whole course of the elections starting with the pre-election stage and finishing with the post-election period. For example, during the campaign this topic was covered by 8 – 11% of all materials in online media.
- The electoral race unfolded on Facebook according to the unique social network rules of PR and the use of various tools and practices. There were pages that stood out due to the large number of the content pieces on the elections: the official pages of the ORO, Exit, Free Democrats, ARF, CPA, the pages of candidates Styopa Safaryan (Free Democrats), Artur Yeghiazaryan (ARF), Seyran Ohanyan (ORO). The daily average of materials posted here outnumbered posts on other pages. But if in one case, we are dealing with shares of their own or supporters' speeches from the official pages or various online media, in the other case the facts of authentic statuses written were recorded (as is the case with Styopa Safaryan's page).

- The fluctuations of Facebook audiences were connected not with the number of materials but rather the use of creative PR formats in one case, and the image of the political figure in the other. In this regard Nikol Pashinyan's (Exit Alliance) page stands out due to the relatively wider use of social network tools where we find live streams from his apartment and the meetings in the yards with the electorate, his answers to the questions posed and examples of sign language translations of the video materials. The scandals involving this or that force did not impact on the fluctuations in the sizes of social network audiences. For example, the audience of the ORO Alliance page did not abruptly change on the occasion of the arrest of its supporter, the former NKR Defense Minister Samvel Babayan, the audience of the RPA page did not shrink after the scandalous recordings of the school and kindergarten principals was publicized.
  - Both on Facebook and in online media the video materials mainly received the maximal responses of the users collecting a maximum number of likes, shares and comments.
- a) The number of video views on the pages of some candidates and forces was quite impressive. For example, the views of almost every campaign video piece on the page of Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan amounted to tens of thousands, the interview of the Congress – PPA Alliance leader, the first President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan where he spoke about his team's concept of the regulation of the Karabakh conflict had 288000 views.
- b) **For the first time in the campaign process music videos were circulated and used to popularize the campaign slogans.** This is what three political forces – the RPA, Congress – PPA, and the Free Democrats – did.
- During this campaign the political forces made use of paid advertising on Facebook, and for the first time in its history did the online media receive paid electoral advertising. The online media we observed advertised the RPA and ARF for pay.
  - Among the authors of Black PR messages on the online media there were fewer journalists than representatives of the competing forces and other groups, namely experts, representatives of NGOs, and others. Just as on Facebook platforms the RPA was the major black PR target. The Facebook platforms acted by the team principle, in the format of ***political forces and supporters***. The discussions and

critical, often sarcastic commentary on some phenomena during the campaign mainly unfolded on other Facebook plains. Except for some individual cases, the candidates of opposing camps did not have debates on the same plain. It was different in the case of online media that organized various face-to-face thematic debates among the representatives of competing forces.

- Both the sizes of the page audiences, as well as the attitude of users to their content, expressed in the form of Likes, agreements or disagreements with elections-related content pieces varied. In the case of some pages the average rate of reactions to every material on it outnumbered those on other pages. The pages of Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and Nikol Pashinyan (Exit) stood out from this perspective, with 10 others, namely those of RPA, ARF, Congress – PPA, Seyran Ohanyan, Armenian Revival, etc., as pages that were stably reacted to by the electorate.

After the elections it became clear that 4 out of the 9 competing forces overcame the 5% threshold in the case of the parties and 7% of the Alliances, namely the RPA, the ARF, the Tsarukyan Alliance and Exit Alliance. But both these and other forces abruptly stopped or in some cases reduced the intensity of Facebook activity after April 2. Two of the competing forces moved on to the campaign processes of Yerevan municipal authorities immediately after the Parliamentary elections on Facebook. The post-election developments were related to the facts of litigation over election results initiated by two political forces, namely the ORO and Congress – PPA. But those processes did not receive any resonance either in online media or on Facebook, just as was the case with the post-election developments of the 2013 Presidential elections.

# APPENDIX 1

## Elections in Online Media

Table 1. Frequency of Materials on the Campaign (February 15, 2017 - April 1)

Media outlet	Maximum Number of Materials on Elections per Day		Number of Materials on the Silence Day (April 1)	Share of Materials on Elections in Daily Production	
	February 15-March 1	March 5-31		February 15-March 1	March 5-31
1in.am	50	57	14	18%	26%
Lragir.am	25	35	11	20%	30%
Aravot.am	43	62	14	22%	38%
News.am	56	63	6	12%	16%
Tert.am	34	40	9	11%	12%
168.am	36	48	10	15%	20%
Armlur.am	43	57	5	25%	41%

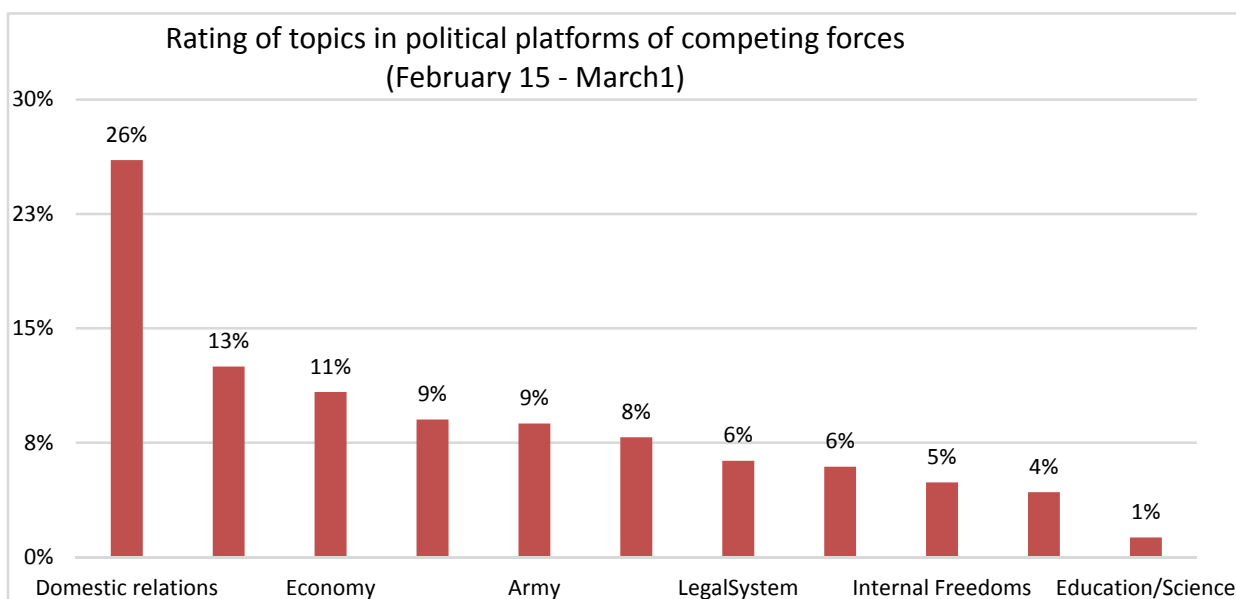
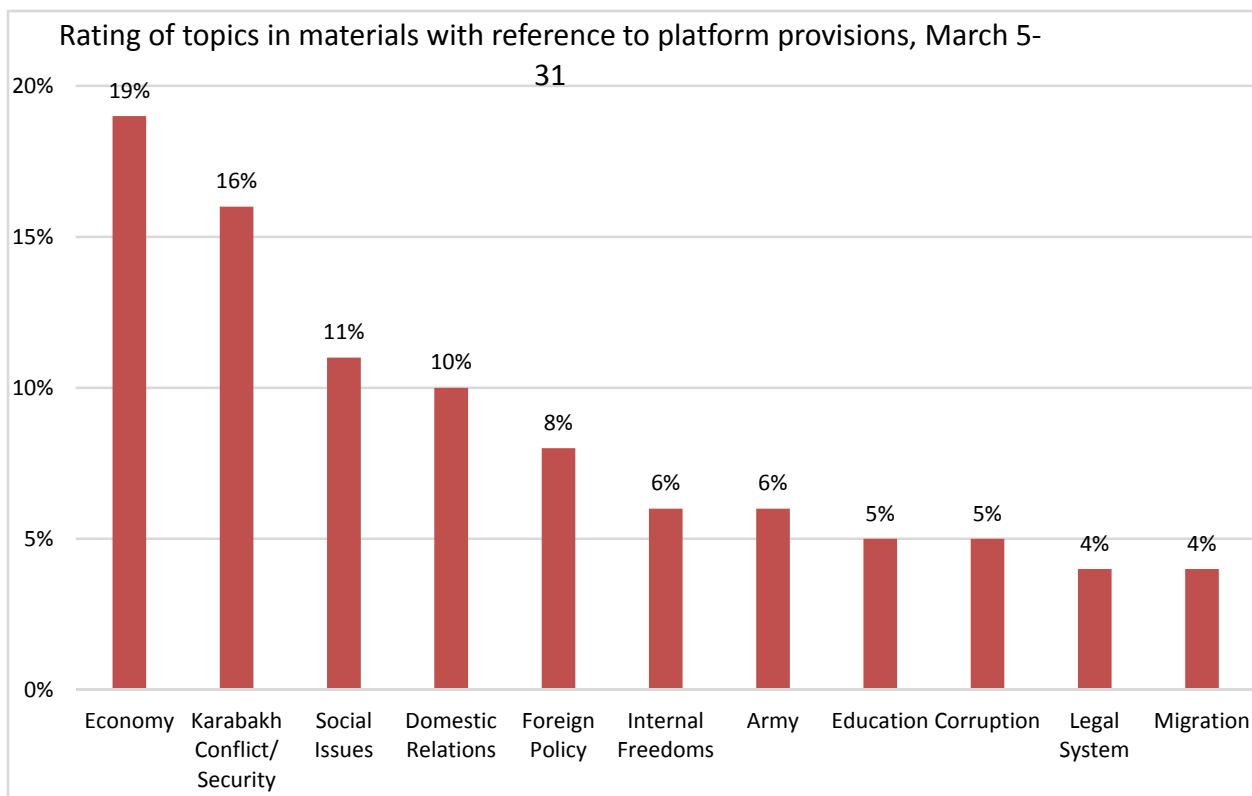
**Table 2 .Content focus of materials on elections from February 15 – March 1**

<b>Media outlet</b>	<b>Total number of materials on elections</b>	<b>Volume of materials on the topic of pre-election processes %</b>	<b>Volume of materials with provisions from platforms of competing forces</b>
<b>1in.am</b>	384	73%	27%
<b>Lragir.am</b>	199	72%	28%
<b>Aravot.am</b>	325	71%	29%
<b>News.am</b>	424	75%	25%
<b>Tert.am</b>	293	79%	21%
<b>168.am</b>	304	84%	16%
<b>Armlur.am</b>	337	95%	5%

**Table 3.Content focus of materials on elections during the official campaign (March 5-31)**

<b>Media outlet</b>	<b>Total number of materials on elections</b>	<b>Materials on the campaign containing no reference to election bribes %</b>	<b>Materials on campaign with reference to election bribes %</b>	<b>Materials with reference to platform provisions</b>
<b>1in.am</b>	1128	55%	9%	36%
<b>Lragir.am</b>	501	58%	10%	32%
<b>Aravot.am</b>	1082	52%	11%	37%
<b>News.am</b>	1076	50%	9%	41%
<b>Tert.am</b>	628	56%	8%	36%
<b>168.am</b>	776	65%	9%	25%
<b>Armlur.am</b>	863	70%	8%	22%

**Figure. Rating of topics in materials with reference to platform provision**





**Table 4. Rating of topics in the materials containing platform provisions during the official campaign (March 5-31, 2017)**

Topic	Media outlet							Total
	1in.am	Lragir.am	Aravot.am	News.am	Tert.am	168.am	Armlur.am	
<b>1 Economy</b>	113 18%	54 18%	126 17%	164 19%	88 22%	117 27%	74 17%	736 19%
<b>2 Karabakh conflict/Security</b>	97 15%	36 12%	156 21%	98 12%	68 17%	56 13%	91 20%	602 16%
<b>3 Social Issues</b>	62 10%	20 7%	99 14%	66 8%	71 17%	49 11%	56 13%	423 11%
<b>4 Domestic relations</b>	95 15%	46 16%	16 2%	126 15%	62 15%	13 3%	28 6%	386 10%
<b>5 Foreign policy</b>	53 8%	36 12%	45 6%	62 7%	31 8%	35 8%	25 6%	287 8%
<b>6 Internal Freedoms</b>	361 10%	27 9%	28 4%	29 3%	10 2%	37 8%	32 7%	224 6%
<b>7 Army</b>	625 4%	18 6%	57 8%	63 7%	19 5%	14 3%	20 4%	216 6%
<b>8 Education/ Science</b>	624 4%	12 4%	37 5%	34 4%	15 4%	24 5%	33 7%	79 5%
<b>9 Corruption</b>	625 4%	14 5%	43 6%	49 6%	7 2%	29 7%	15 3%	182 5%
<b>10 Legal System</b>	11 2%	11 4%	48 7%	51 6%	5 1%	21 5%	19 4%	166 4%
<b>11 Migration</b>	529 5%	8 3%	35 5%	35 4%	14 3%	14 3%	14 3%	149 4%
<b>12 Tourism/ Culture</b>	11 2%	3 1%	11 2%	19 2%	5 1%	8 2%	21 5%	78 2%
<b>13 Healthcare</b>	9 1%	2 1%	5 1%	28 3%	8 2%	12 3%	12 3%	76 2%
<b>14 Diaspora</b>	12 2%	9 3%	15 2%	15 2%	4 1%	9 2%	4 1%	68 2%
<b>15 Nature Protection</b>	3 0%	0 0%	5 1%	10 1%	2 0%	0 0%	1 0%	21 1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>3793</b>

**Table 5. Description marks contained in reference of competing forces during the campaign (March 5-31)**

About Whom	How/ description mark			Total
	0	+	-	
<b>RPA</b>	1622 44%	498 13.5%	1568 42.5%	3688 100%
<b>Tsarukyan Alliance</b>	805 67%	223 18%	181 15%	1209 100%
<b>ORO Alliance</b>	620 65%	237 25%	95 10%	952 100%
<b>Exit Alliance</b>	479 61%	243 31%	64 8%	786 100%
<b>Congress-PPA Alliance</b>	304 53%	133 23%	142 25%	579 100%
<b>ARF</b>	299 64%	116 24%	59 12%	474 100%
<b>Armenian Revival</b>	259 68%	64 17%	60 15%	383 100%
<b>Free Democrats</b>	204 60%	126 37%	12 3%	342 100%
<b>CPA</b>	154 71%	48 22%	16 7%	218 100%
<b>About them: Political Forces in General Terms</b>	158 55%	9 3%	121 55%	288 100%
<b>About them: Opposition in General Terms</b>	85 65%	6 5%	40 30%	131 100%
<b>Total</b>	5766 58%	1728 17%	2509 25%	10003 100%

**Table 6. Who? About Whom? How?**

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Journalist	RPA	715	13	394	1122
	ARF	140	3	26	169
	Armenian Revival	100	1	26	127
	Free Democrats	63	4	6	73
	Exit Alliance	215	6	19	240
	Tsarukyan Alliance	415	4	60	479
	ORO Alliance	279	4	32	315
	Congress-PPA Alliance	117	9	28	154
	CPA	61	2	7	70
	Political forces	40	0	18	58
	Authorities	20	0	21	41
	Opposition	20	0	7	27

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Others	RPA	248	74	199	521
	ARF	79	4	11	94
	Armenian Revival	84	2	16	102
	Free Democrats	71	13	4	88
	Exit Alliance	132	28	9	169
	Tsarukyan Alliance	157	33	41	231
	ORO Alliance	161	25	26	212
	Congress-PPA Alliance	86	12	39	137
	CPA	55	3	7	65
	Political forces	43	0	33	76
	Authorities	22	1	55	78
	Opposition	22	0	6	28

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
RPA	RPA	419	388	0	807
	ARF	18	2	1	21
	Armenian Revival	5	0	0	5
	Free Democrats	7	1	0	8
	Exit Alliance	20	1	14	35
	Tsarukyan Alliance	62	4	19	85
	ORO Alliance	29	0	19	48
	Congress-PPA Alliance	11	0	8	19
	CPA	3	0	0	3
	Political forces	18	2	16	36
	Authorities	3	5	0	8
	Opposition	10	2	15	27

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
ARF	RPA	715	13	394	1122
	ARF	140	3	26	169
	Armenian Revival	100	1	26	127
	Exit Alliance	215	6	19	240
	Tsarukyan Alliance	415	4	60	479
	ORO Alliance	279	4	32	315
	Congress-PPA Alliance	117	9	28	154
	Political forces	40	0	18	58
	Authorities	20	0	21	41
	Opposition	20	0	7	27

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Armenian Revival	RPA	4	1	12	17
	Armenian Revival	59	61	0	120
	Exit Alliance	1	0	0	1
	ORO Alliance	4	0	2	6
	Congress-PPA Alliance	2	0	2	4
	Political forces	4	0	3	7
	Authorities	4	0	3	7
	Opposition	1	0	1	2

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Free Democrats	RPA	11	0	71	82
	ARF	2	0	8	10
	Armenian Revival	0	0	4	4
	Free Democrats	58	106	0	164
	Exit Alliance	4	0	4	8
	Tsarukyan Alliance	4	0	11	15
	ORO Alliance	4	1	4	9
	Congress-PPA Alliance	3	1	6	10
	CPA	1	0	1	2
	Political forces	0	1	6	7
	Authorities	5	0	18	23
	Opposition	3	0	0	3

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Exit Alliance	RPA	41	0	257	298
	ARF	7	0	7	14
	Armenian Revival	10	0	10	20
	Free Democrats	3	0	1	4
	Exit Alliance	100	207	0	307
	Tsarukyan Alliance	31	0	37	68
	ORO Alliance	7	8	7	22
	Congress-PPA Alliance	8	0	21	29
	CPA	2	0	1	3
	Political forces	5	0	10	15
	Authorities	3	0	42	45
	Opposition	8	1	3	12

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Tsarukyan Alliance	RPA	33	8	64	105
	ARF	1	0	0	1
	Exit Alliance	2	0	10	12
	Tsarukyan Alliance	114	175	2	291
	ORO Alliance	5	1	2	8
	Congress-PPA Alliance	4	0	6	10
	Political forces	18	1	8	27
	Authorities	11	0	11	22
	Opposition	3	0	2	5

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
ORO Alliance	RPA	25	0	183	208
	Armenian Revival	0	0	1	1
	Free Democrats	0	1	0	1
	Exit Alliance	1	1	2	4
	Tsarukyan Alliance	11	5	3	19
	ORO Alliance	120	198	0	318
	Congress-PPA Alliance	6	0	5	11
	Political forces	10	2	0	12
	Authorities	12	1	89	102
	Opposition	11	3	2	16

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
Congress-PPA Alliance	RPA	10	1	92	103
	ARF	2	1	6	9
	Armenian Revival	1	0	2	3
	Free Democrats	2	1	0	3
	Exit Alliance	2	0	2	4
	Tsarukyan Alliance	5	2	3	10
	ORO Alliance	7	0	1	8
	Congress-PPA Alliance	61	109	0	170
	CPA	0	1	0	1
	Political forces	5	0	5	10
	Authorities	10	2	38	50
	Opposition	3	0	2	5

Author of description	About Whom	How? Description mark			Total
		0	+	-	
CPA	RPA	4	3	4	11
	Free Democrats	0	0	1	1
	Tsarukyan Alliance	2	0	1	3
	Congress-PPA Alliance	0	2	4	6
	CPA	32	42	0	74
	Political forces	3	2	6	11
	Authorities	0	0	1	1
	Opposition	1	0	1	2



## APPENDIX 2

### Elections on Facebook Platforms

#### List of studied Facebook pages and Their URLs

##### Exit Alliance

1. Facebook Page of Exit Alliance - <https://www.facebook.com/yelqdashing/>
2. Edmon Marukyan - <https://www.facebook.com/edmon.marukyan>
3. Nikol Pashinyan - <https://www.facebook.com/nikol.pashinyan/?fref=nf&pnref=story>
4. Facebook Page of Hanrapetutyun Party - <https://www.facebook.com/hanrapetutyunparty/?fref=nf&pnref=story>

##### ORO Alliance (Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanian Alliance)

5. Facebook Page of ORO - <https://www.facebook.com/%D5%95%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%90%D5%A1%D6%86%D6%86%D5%AB-%D5%95%D5%BD%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D4%B4%D5%A1%D5%B7%D5%AB%D5%B6%D6%84ORO-bloc-1763431443973554/>
6. Vartan Oskanian - <https://www.facebook.com/VartanOskanian/>
7. Seyran Ohanyan - <https://www.facebook.com/seyrans.official/>
8. Raffi Hovhannisyan - <https://www.facebook.com/Raffi.K.Hovhannisian/>

##### RPA (Republican Party of Armenia)

9. Facebook Page of RPA - <https://www.facebook.com/lovearmenia.am/>
10. Armen Ashotyan - <https://www.facebook.com/%D4%B1%D6%80%D5%B4%D5%A5%D5%B6-%D4%B1%D5%B7%D5%B8%D5%BF%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6-Armen-Ashotyan-219704501451853/>

11. Karen Karapetyan - <https://www.facebook.com/Karen.Karapetyan/?fref=ts&pnref=story>

#### **Armenian Revival Party**

12. Facebook page of Armenian Revival - <https://www.facebook.com/haykakanveracnundofficial/>

13. Heghine Bisharyan - <https://www.facebook.com/heghine.bisharyan>

14. Artur Baghdasaryan - <https://www.facebook.com/Baghdasaryan.Arthur/>

#### **Free Democrats Party**

15. Facebook Page of Free Democrats - <https://www.facebook.com/freedemocrats>

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

17. Hrant Bagratyan - <https://www.facebook.com/hrant.bagratyan>

18. Anjela Khachatryan - <https://www.facebook.com/anjela.khachatryan.10>

#### **Congress –PPA Alliance (Congress –People's Party of Armenia Alliance)**

19. Facebook Page of Congress - PPA - <https://www.facebook.com/congresshzhk/>

20. Arman Musinyan - <https://www.facebook.com/arman.musinyan>

21. Levon Zourabyan - <https://www.facebook.com/LevonZourabyan/> -

#### **Tsarukyan Alliance**

22. Facebook page of Tsarukyan Alliance - <https://www.facebook.com/tsarukyandashing1/>

23. Tigran Urikhanyan - <https://www.facebook.com/UrikhanyanTigran/>

24. Vahe Enfiayyan - <https://www.facebook.com/enfiayyan?fref=ts>

#### **ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)**

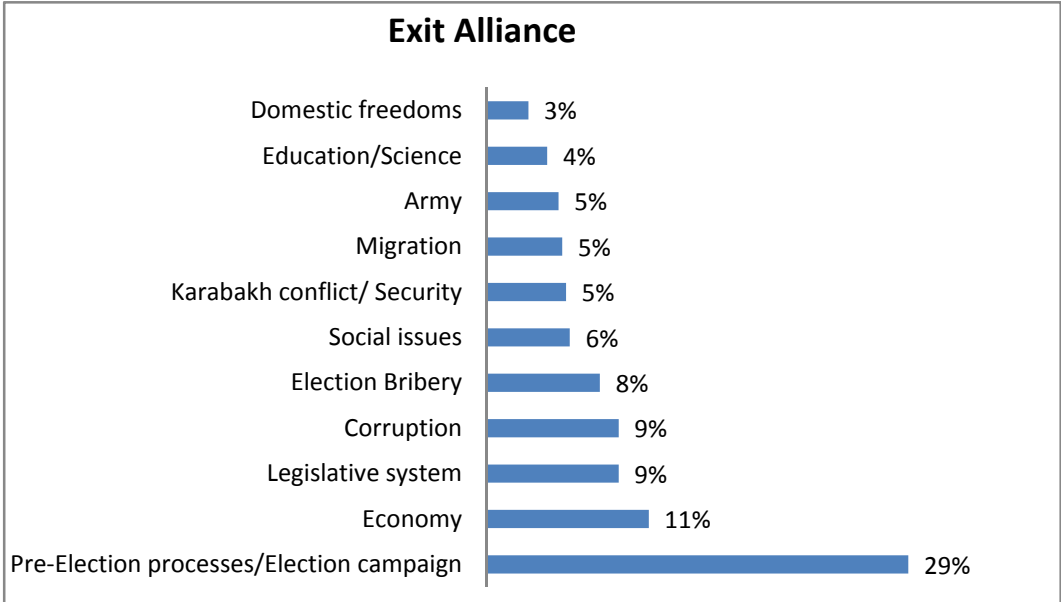
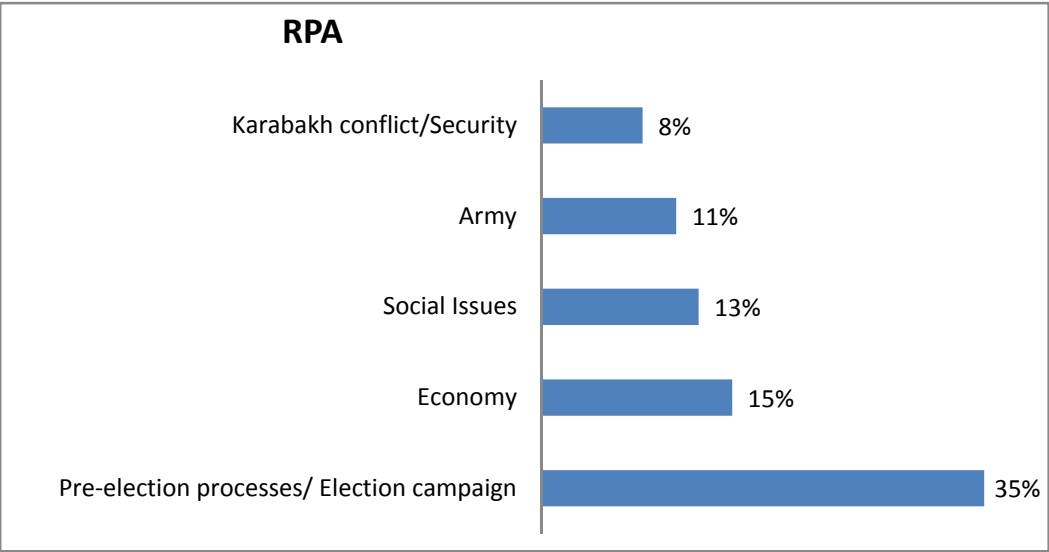
25. Facebook Page of ARF - [https://www.facebook.com/pg/arfdofficial/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/arfdofficial/posts/?ref=page_internal)

26. Armen Rustamyan - <www.facebook.com/pg/armenrustamyan>

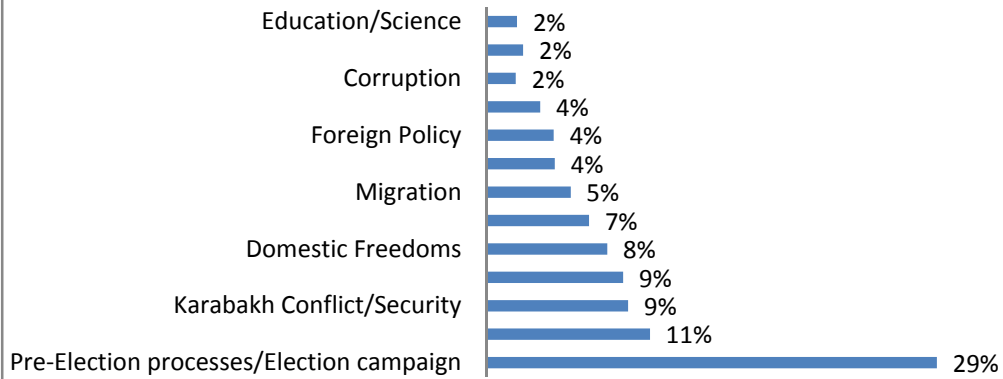
27. Artur Yeghiazaryan - <https://www.facebook.com/arthur.yeghiazaryan>

#### **CPA (Communist Party of Armenia )**

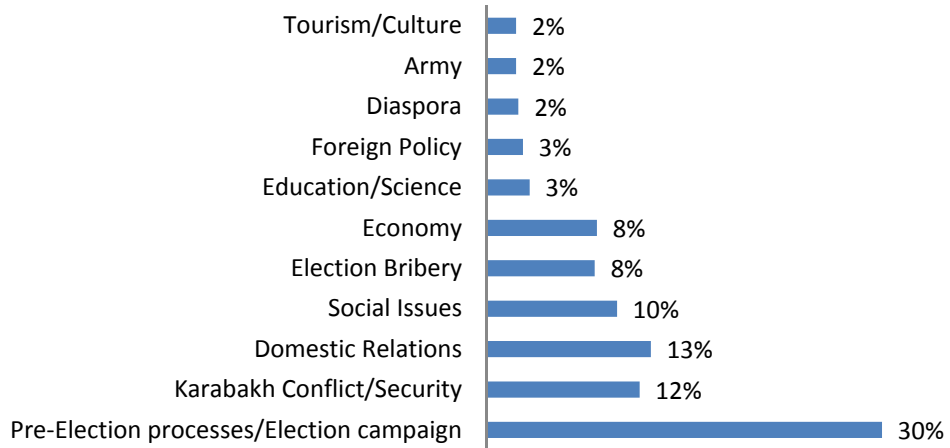
28. Facebook Page of CPA - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009652571124>



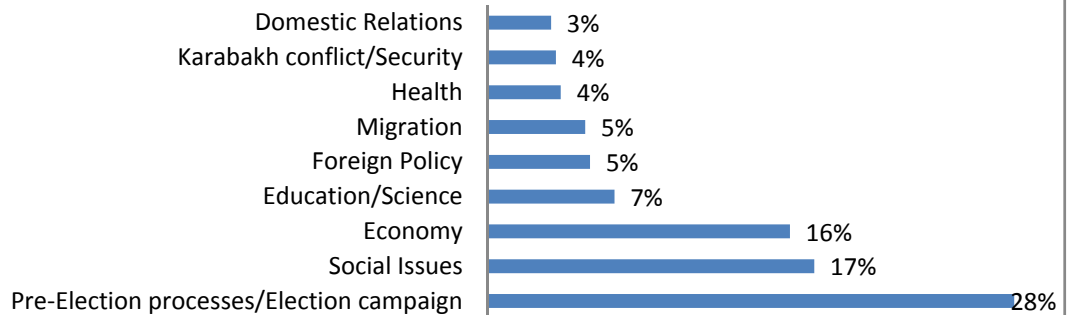
### ORO Alliance



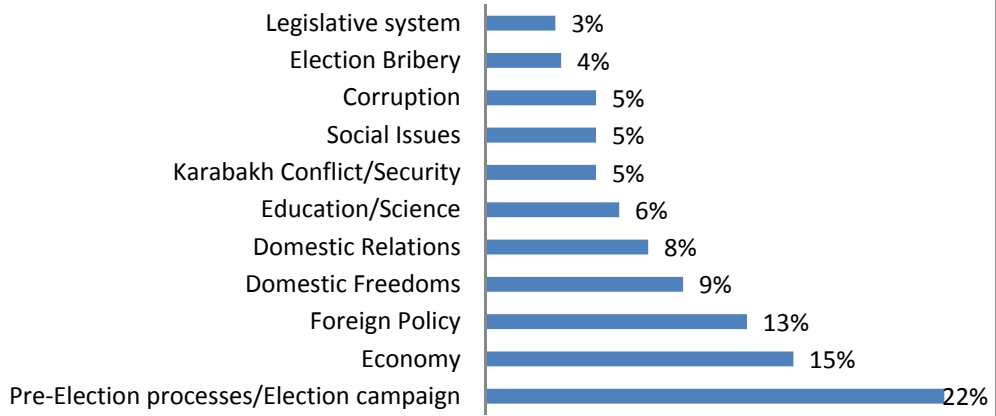
### ARF



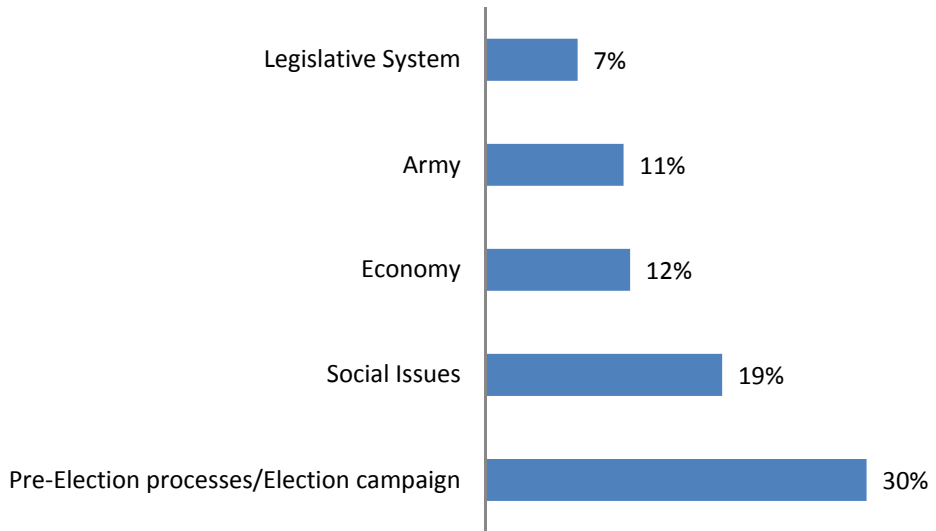
### CPA



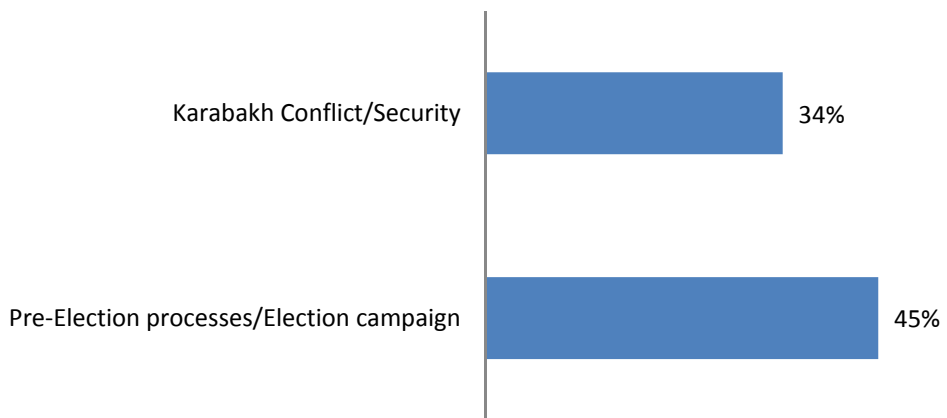
### Free Democrats



### Armenian Revival



### Congress - PPA Alliance



### Tsarukyan Alliance

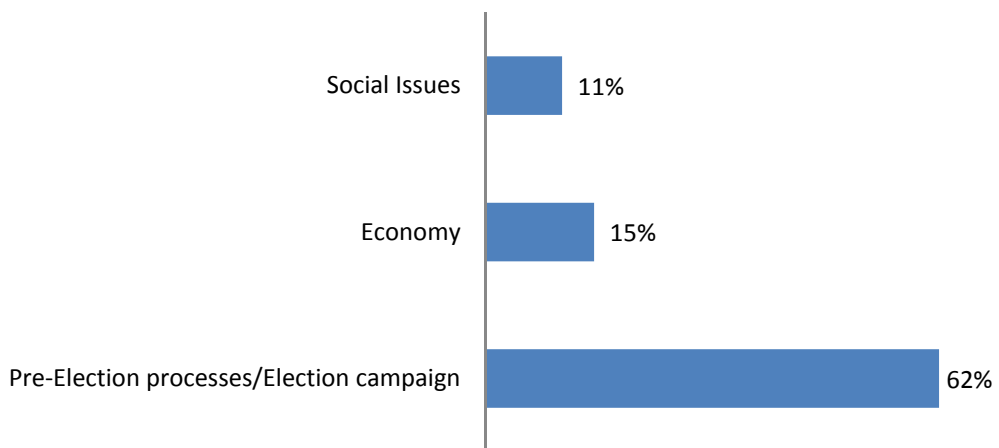


Table 1. Competing Forces' Facebook Followers during Campaign (March 5-31)

Pages of Political Forces/ Candidates	Page Followers		Page Audience Fluctuations
	March 05. 2017	April 01. 2017	
RPA	4864	10820	+6000
Armen Ashotyan	12199	12145	-50
Karen Karapetyan	46437	57470	+11 000
Exit Alliance	3509	12565	+9000
Edmon Marukyan	8000	9601	+1600
Nikol Pashinyan	78481	91443	+13000
Hanrapetutyun Party	570	1570	+1000
ORO Alliance	1145	3775	+2600
Vartan Oskanian	7309	7377	+70
Raffi Hovhannisyan	33436	33426	-10
Seyran Ohanyan	5537	5839	+302
Armenian Revival	14552	14389	-160
Heghine Bisharyan	Access to the data is blocked		
Artur Baghdasaryan	7231	7456	+225
Free Democrats	1408	3288	+1880

Anjela Khachatryan	1234	1419	+185
Styopa Safaryan	8237	8864	+627
Hrant Bagratyan	8626	8806	+180
Congress - PPA Alliance	4707	6417	+1710
Arman Musinyan	974	999	+25
Levon Zourabyan	8357	8782	+425
Tsarukyan Alliance	1810	3449	+1633
Tigran Urikhanyan	13276	13371	+95
Vahe Enfijyan	3483	3774	+291
ARF	17148	17482	+334
Armen Rustamyan	2322	2347	+25
Artur Yeghazaryan	2505	2592	+87
CPA	Access to the data is blocked		



Table 2. Number of Materials, Covering Elections (March 5 – April 1)

Pages of Political Forces/Candidates	Maximum Number of Materials per Day	Average Number of Materials per Day	Number of Materials on Elections on the Silence Day (01.04.17)	Total Number of Materials (5.03-1.04)
RPA	11	3	0	86
Armen Ashotyan	5	2	0	57
Karen Karapetyan	7	2	1	60
Exit Alliance	18	8	3	226
Edmon Marukyan	7	2	1	60
Nikol Pashinyan	6	3	2	81
Hanrapetutyun Party	9	4	1	118
ORO Alliance	49	21	6	583
Vartan Oskanian	2	0	0	9
Raffi Hovhannisyan	12	3	2	77
Seyran Ohanyan	9	4	1	108
Armenian Revival	7	2	0	61
Heghine Bisharyan	3	1	0	22
Artur Baghdasaryan	4	2	0	43
Free Democrats	23	7	0	187

Anjela Khachatryan	12	4	0	121
Styopa Safaryan	45	16	1	456
Hrant Bagratyan	6	2	2	51
Congress - PPA Alliance	7	3	0	71
Arman Musinyan	2	1	0	17
Levon Zourabyan	3	1	1	17
Tsarukyan Alliance	8	3	0	90
Tigran Urikhanyan	1	0	0	9
Vahe Enfijyan	8	3	0	73
ARF	31	10	2	267
Armen Rustamyan	2	1	1	19
Artur Yeghazaryan	19	6	6	156
CPA	19	6	1	176

Table 3. Degree of Campaign Visualization on Facebook

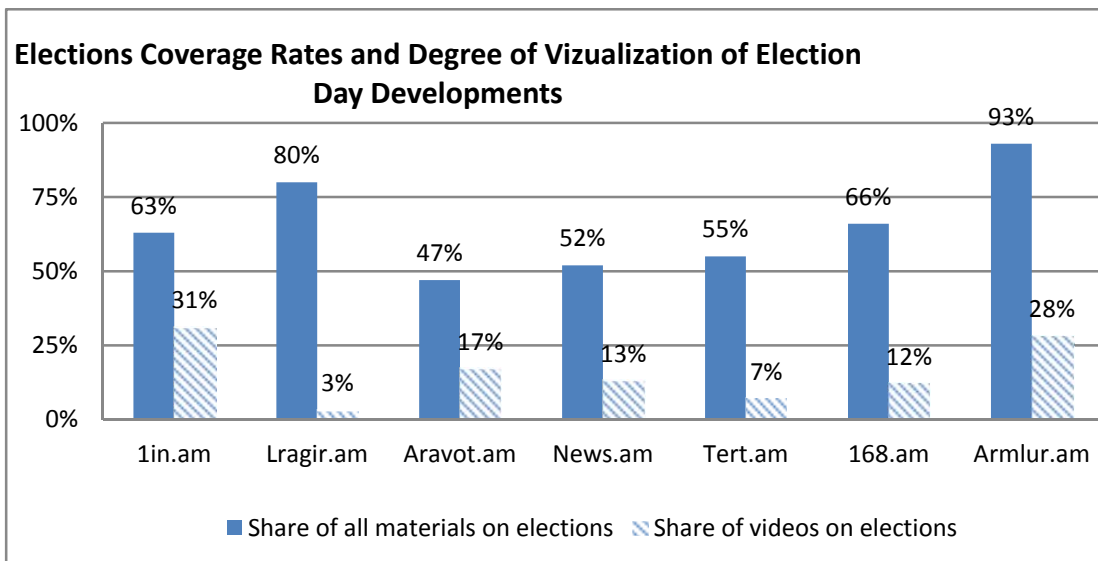
Political Forces/Candidates	Total Number of Materials (5.03-1.04)	Videos and Photos (by Ratio) %
RPA	86	63%
Armen Ashotyan	57	60%
Karen Karapetyan	60	83%
Exit Alliance	226	84%
Edmon Marukyan	60	67%
Nikol Pashinyan	81	72%
Hanrapetutyun Party	118	36%
ORO Alliance	583	49%
Vartan Oskanian	9	67%
Raffi Hovhannisyan	77	18%
Seyran Ohanyan	108	25%
Armenian Revival	61	69%
Heghine Bisharyan	22	55%
Artur Baghdasaryan	43	65%
Free Democrats	187	68%
Anjela Khachatryan	121	55%
Styopa Safaryan	456	25%
Hrant Bagratyan	51	65%

<b>Congress - PPA Alliance</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>49%</b>
Arman Musinyan	17	41%
Levon Zourabyan	17	59%
<b>Tsarukyan Alliance</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>49%</b>
Tigran Urikhanyan	9	67%
Vahe Enfijyan	73	32%
<b>ARF</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>37%</b>
Armen Rustamyan	19	74%
Artur Yeghazaryan	155	16%
<b>CPA</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>43%</b>

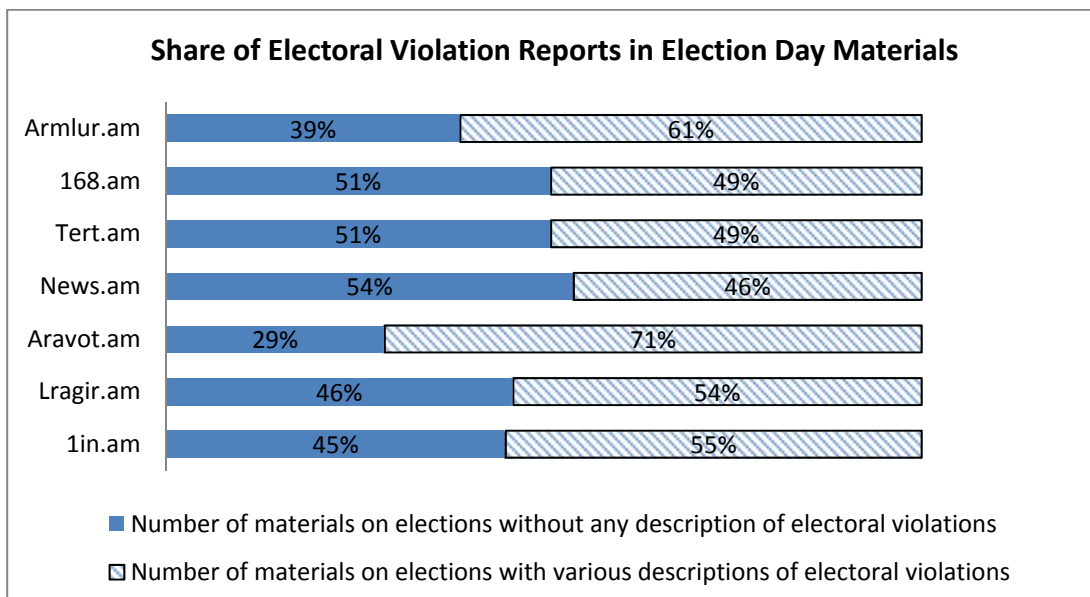
# APPENDIX 3

## Election Day in Online Media and on Facebook

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**

