



Facebook

as a Campaign Platform in Armenia

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IN POST-ELECTION FACEBOOK

Results of the Post-Election Stage of “Facebook as a Campaign Platform in Armenia: Presidential Elections” study (February 19 – April 9, 2013)

On February 19 it was already quite clear that the topic of Presidential elections, held the day before, would continue to be the main topic on the political and public agenda.

From that day on we undertook the study of the coverage, organization and management of post-election processes, studied the key players in the electoral developments and the activity of political forces, the claims they made and the various perceptions of those claims by the public.

This was the last stage of our study, called *Facebook as a Campaign Platform in Armenia: Presidential Elections* (February 19 – April 9).

Certainly, fixing April 9 as the last day of the post-election stage on Facebook should be considered but conventional if we are to take it into consideration the rapid dynamics, following this date.

These developments were not due to mere inertia because the campaign of Yerevan’s Elders’ Council was launched on April 7th.

The political forces that had withdrawn from the Presidential race decided to participate in these elections, these being the PAP, the ANC (ANCP) that became a party in April, and the ARF.

When we consider the discourse of all the political forces involved in this campaign, we cannot help the impression that all the above listed parties, as well as the vanguard of the post-election struggle Heritage Party pursue revenge.

And as on April 7th the post-presidential-election processes smoothly transitioned into the pre-electoral race for Yerevan Elders’ Council, we considered it right to fix April 9th as the deadline for our study.

- What was going on in post-election Facebook, following the Election Day?
- What was the Presidential candidates' behavior, what kind of participation did they have in and what evaluations did they give to the post-election developments and election outcomes?
- What attitude did the Facebook political and civil circles have to and how did they participate in the formation of post-election processes?
- From BaREVOLUTION to the Elders' Council elections.

These were the questions we were trying to find answers to in the course of the 50-day period after the Election Day.

Pursuing this goal, we

- We continued to monitor the Facebook pages of Presidential candidates who had one and the pages of the groups they started during the elections:

Hrant Bagratyan - <http://www.facebook.com/hrant.bagratyan?fref=ts>,

Raffi Hovannisian - <http://www.facebook.com/Raffi.K.Hovannisian>,

Paruyr Hayrikyan - <http://www.facebook.com/hayrikyanparuyr>,

Andrias Ghukasyan – <http://www.facebook.com/andrias.2013?ref=ts&fref=ts>,

Arman Melikyan – <http://www.facebook.com/arman.melikyan.33?ref=ts&fref=ts>,

Aram Harutyunyan - <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100005022541378>,

Vardan Sedrakyan - <http://www.facebook.com/SedrakyanVardan?fref=ts>

The Facebook group Vardan Sedrakyan

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/308742132551382/?ref=ts&fref=ts>,

Arman Melikyan group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/395336770548625/?fref=ts>,

- We resumed the monitoring of several political figures' and active Facebook users' pages.

At this stage the criterion for selecting the political figures for monitoring was based on the degree of their involvement, in some form, in the post-election processes.

- We monitored the pages that were opened in the post-election period and were conditioned by the post-election developments.

POST-ELECTION SITUATION AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

“And what is going to be next?” This was the question voiced in the Facebook space ever since the day after the election.

It still stood acute in the approximately two months following the elections. This was chiefly conditioned by R. Hovannisian’s actions who had already officially become S. Sargsyan’s main adversary.

Even though the attitude expressed, the degree of participation brought in and the evaluations given largely varied, there was a shared perception that whatever was underway, it did not at all resemble any of the post-elections processes that had ever occurred in Armenia before. The developments were not predictable, just like R. Hovannisian himself.

R. Hovannisian’s protest rallies in Yerevan (since February 19), in all the regions in Armenia (from February 23 – March 9), his two-hour meeting with S. Sargsyan in his residence (February 21), the official appeal of election outcomes in the Constitutional Court (March 4) and his hunger strike (March 10 – 31), as well as the political disobedience actions by the forces and organizations supporting him in Liberty Square in that time period and the developments on April 9 when, parallel to the inauguration of the RA President, R. Hovannisian made an oath in Liberty Square, with a subsequent march of the people who had arrived from different places and with fragmental clashes between the Police and demonstrators in the evening.

The paragraph above provides a very brief description of the key events which, though labeled non-political processes by famous political figures and analysts, kept the situation quite tense in the course of the study and also triggered various Facebook discussions and debates, humor and sarcasm, propaganda and anti-propaganda.

“I cannot fight for your rights by myself, join in.” This electronic flyer that bears R. Hovannisian’s photo, actively shared on Facebook during the very first wave, was mainly addressed to ordinary people, rather than the other political forces.

Although he did make a few quite transparent messages to various political forces with calls to join the struggle and substantiation for such action (“this is not the struggle and victory of the Heritage only,” “It is necessary to stand by the people” and so on) the movement essentially remained Raffi’s movement. No other nominal political force would join the Heritage.

There are a number of substantiations on why the ANC, for example, experienced in “street struggle” did not join the Heritage. And here is one of them: “... Finally, once again reminding ourselves of the factor of Raffi Hovannisian’s unpredictability it should be stated that the appearance of not only Ter-Petrosyan but any other figure on Liberty Square contains certain risks, for if say tomorrow Raffi takes up the route of compromising with the authorities, something that will not be perceivable to the public (and I mean not any compromise, but a compromise that will be unacceptable from public’s perspective), those standing next to him on the pedestal may find themselves in quite an incomprehensible status... Besides, a major question arises: how many people will remain in Liberty Square after Raffi’s such quite probable step? By the way, if you have been paying close attention, the option of National Assembly by-elections was turned down by Serzh Sargsyan, but it was not given up by Raffi’s team: will this be an acceptable option for the Square?” (Hrant Ter-Abrahamyan, February 25th).

At different stages the announcements made by the representatives of this or that party or movement were mainly signs of sympathy with the people involved in the protest actions, rather than as a sign of willingness to join R. Hovhannisian as the oppositional political leader. This was especially expressed by the participation of a number of ANC active supporters in the street marches on April 9th, regardless of the ANC leader L. Ter-Petrosyan’s statement that R. Hovhannisian won the election and the issue of whether ANC would join him or not would depend on the presence of action and a clear platform on the pedestal (February 23).

The PAP leader Gagik Tsarukyan announced that they were supporting the people, but he did not move onto any practical steps.

A few ARF representatives participated in the protest demonstrations organized in Liberty Square. But they did not participate in the April 9th events.

CANDIDATES AFTER ELECTIONS

Except the Presidential candidate Andrias Ghukasyan, who was on a hunger strike throughout the campaign period, other candidates did not join R. Hovannisian.

Each of them was dealing with their own, “post-election” affairs on their Facebook pages: P. Hayrikyan regularly provided descriptions of his health state. He expressed an opinion on the detainment of the former presidential candidate V. Sedrakyan, based on the accusation of Sedrakyan’s relatedness to his assassination attempt. He said that V.Sedrakyan was a mediator not the one who ordered the assassination. He felt upset when critical attitude was expressed on Facebook that the state had allocated money to improve his health abroad.

A. Melikyan informed the Facebook public of his successful and unsuccessful attempts to personally meet with the ambassadors of different countries to Armenia, continued to explain the whole mechanism of rigging the elections which in his opinion was mainly based on the registers of over a million RA citizens residing abroad.

Unlike the other candidates who did not appeal to the Constitutional Court, Arman Melikyan explained on Facebook why he refrained from appealing to the Constitutional Court. Firstly, because “Today there is no independent, unbiased and uncorrupted court in our country, whereas by filing in my application I would thus acknowledge the right of that court to judge and should beforehand reconcile to any verdict it passed. This is what R. Hovannisian and A. Ghukasyan chose to do: they got a verdict that was as predictable as the rigging of the elections.”

He considered the hunger strike a manifestation of despair rather than a sign of political struggle, that is why he did not go to Liberty Square, unlike a number of state figures, Presidential candidates, and members of other political parties who went there to give R. Hovannisian purely humanistic support.

Before his detention, Vardan Sedrakyan mostly acted against R. Hovannisian and H. Bagratyan. His last status was a call to Facebook users to write a letter to Hrant Bagratyan and ask when he would convene a press conference and give the political evaluation of the election outcomes (March 4th). By the way, he shared this status onto H. Bagratyan’s wall, too, who later deleted it from his timeline.

After detention (since March 5th) only messages telling of the course of the preliminary investigation, excerpts from the *David of Sassoun* epic novel and the stories by V. Sedrakyan written in the past were shared.

In the post-election period H. Bagratyan became less active on Facebook. On the first days he called to the authorities to immediately undertake reforms, come to the square and stand next to the people, satisfy R. Hovannisian's demands and negotiate to find the format of satisfying them (A Call to the Authorities, February 24th).

But H. Bagratyan considered R. Hovannisian's further activities (the hunger strike, the continuation of demonstrations even after that) as populism, which if continued, would make R. Hovannisian very quickly lose what he had gained, that is the trust of 540 thousand voters ("The life of populists is but short: Raffi Hovannisian can quickly lose all this, April 2nd.")

In the first post-election stage the majority of materials posted onto H. Bagratyan's page were shared by other users. Calls to join R. Hovannisian prevailed. For example: "Mr. Bagratyan, don't you want to make the 101th step and stand by Raffi?" (February 23).

It should be mentioned that in the first post-election period (February 19-March 10) only 4 out of the 33 materials on H. Bagratyan's wall were shared by himself, the others were particularly calls of the content quoted above and were made by other users. In the future H. Bagratyan continued writing on Facebook as intensively as he did before the Presidential elections.

The pages of *Vardan Sedrakyan* and *Arman Melikyan*, groups, that were opened for the elections were in no way different in terms of their content from the pages they had as Presidential candidates. Even though V. Sedrakyan's groups had about 1700 and A. Melikyan's group had over 450 members, the content on the group wall was shared mainly by the administrators who also managed the pages of these political figures, still in the capacity of a Presidential candidate, unlike other groups functioning on Facebook the materials on which were either generated or brought into circulation from other sources by group members.

Compared to the pages of all the candidates, R. Hovannisian's page stood out with its varied activities, namely the number of likes, the number of posted materials, their content, and various actions organized on Facebook.

INTERACTIVITY OF POST-ELECTION PROCESSES

We continued to study the issue of the interrelation between the number of the Facebook fans (people who liked their pages) candidates had and the real number of their supporters. We tried to figure out the content on which candidate's page would particularly gain the users' support and tended to become topics of relatively extensive discussions.

Briefly speaking, what kind of interactive reactions did the messages shared by some political figures get, and was Facebook interactivity on their pages indicative of the real attitude held by the public?

In the first post-election period we recorded an incessant and sharp increase in the number of Raffi Hovannisian's page fans. On the eve of the elections (February 16) the fan-audience of about 15.000 grew by 9.000 within a few days (on February 19 we recorded a rate of over 24.000 likes for this page).

In the course of the remaining post-election days R. Hovannisian's audience kept growing, however at a more proportionate rate.

Neither on the days of R. Hovannisian's hunger strike (which was logical and expected by us), nor in the period around the April 9 developments did we record a sharp rise of this indicator.

Raffi Hovannisian's Facebook Page

(<http://www.facebook.com/Raffi.K.Hovannisian>)

Indicators before His Announcement of Hunger Strike (February 19– March 10, 2013) and After It (March 11–April 9, 2013)

Candidate	Date	Number of Likes for the Page	
		Raffi Hovannisian	February 19-March 10, 2013
	March 11-April 9, 2013	28347	32103

Candidate	Date	Number of Materials	Including Number of Materials Discussed by Users	%	Average Daily Number of Materials
Raffi Hovannisian	February 19- March 10, 2013	217	193	89%	11
	March 11- April 9, 2013	440	421	96%	15

With the same logic we were monitoring interactivity on Vardan Sedrakyan's page, the candidate detained on March 5th, assuming that about 5000 fans of his page were supposed to somehow react to what had happened to him. However, the indicators did not reveal any significant fluctuations in terms of the increase or decrease of the audience.

Vardan Sedrakyan's Facebook Pages

(<http://www.facebook.com/SedrakyanVardan?fref=ts>): Indicators Before (February 19- March 5, 2013) and After (March 6 - April 9, 2013) Detention

Interactivity

Candidate	Date	Number of Likes for the Page	
Vardan Sedrakyan	February 19- March 5, 2013	5273	5184
	March 6 - April 9, 2013	5184	5106

Candidate	Date	Number of Materials	Including number of materials discussed by users	%	Average daily number of materials
Vardan Sedrakyan	February 19- March 5, 2013	16	14	88%	1.1
	March 6 - April 9, 2013	22	11	50%	0.6

The degree of interactivity on the pages of the other candidates did not undergo any changes either.

Instead, the number of reaction of any kind (Like, Share, Comment) to the content on Raffi Hovannisian's page was quite high (talking about). On March 5th and during the following couple of days this indicator even exceeded the total number of the fans of his page as a Presidential candidate (27.102 likes, 27.325 talking about).

Some materials on the page would get an average of 500 likes.

But for example R. Hovannisian's photo with the founding member of Sardarapat Union J. Sefilyan got 1062 Likes and was shared 185 times, which is quite a rare indicator for any political content in the Armenian Facebook domain.

In the post-election period the number of users liking, sharing and talking about materials on the pages of all the other candidates decreased (See Appendix, Tables 1-5, Figures 1,2,3).

POST-ELECTION TOPICS

It was in this period that in the post-election Facebook discourse we could detect stable discussion of topics that were either considered from a novel angle, or were discussed with such intensity for the first time ever, these being civil disobedience, change of regime through a revolution, the role of the church in political processes, hunger strike as a means of political struggle, dialogue and political bargaining, the pledge of the struggle of the opposition, a more disguised propaganda by the media and so on.

In the post-election period the users whose pages we monitored, and namely the Presidential candidates, political figures and Facebook activists raised a few issues in line with the developments underway:

Resignation – of the ruling party and regional administration; this topic was more easily reacted to on the pages of Facebook community representatives, than those of the candidates.

The candidates came up with the general descriptions of the post-election period more frequently than the activists.

Even though R. Hovannisian's hunger strike, unlike all the previous suchlike actions, was in the center of everyone's attention, the content on this action was more extensively reacted to on his

own page. Every day fresh photo reports and other materials collected at the hunger strike site were posted onto the page.

Reactions to issues, such as the role of the church, the dialogue in the post-election period and political compromise, the creation of the so-called alternative political structures and demonstrating civil disobedience through them, were approximately equal in number on the Facebook pages of the candidates and those of the regular users.

“What will happen with the parallel swearing-in events and after them?” This issue also had an approximately equal number of reactions on the pages of the candidates and those Facebook activists (Also see appendix, Tables 6 – 15, Figures 4,5).

BAREVOLUTION ON FACEBOOK

On February 19 at the promulgation of the preliminary report of the OSCE observer mission a group of activists interrupted the presentation of the international observers and read out their own statement on the developments of the Election Day and the falsified outcomes. The video of this event was immediately put into circulation on Facebook by the activists, and it became the original source for information on this unprecedented event. In itself this phenomenon was quite an exclusive development in the history of electoral processes in Armenia.

In any case, in all the previous elections the cases of expressing dissatisfaction with and lack of confidence in the evaluation and conclusions of observing missions were held at a distance, so to say, not confronting the observers. After the action the activists began to share links to stories telling of electoral violations in the course of the Presidential elections onto the OSCE ODIHR Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/osce.odihr>) which were later deleted by the administrators of the page from the organization.

This is the story of the first ever rejection action of election outcomes on Facebook. On the following days all such actions were tagged as “barevakan,” meaning from the Barev – Hello movement, they presented or even organized the protest rallies that were being held or would be held in Liberty Square or anywhere else (they also provided livestream broadcasts of these rallies).

An example of such mobilization could be the initiative of disseminating congratulatory messages on Raffi Hovhannisian’s victory in the elections throughout Facebook on the same day and at the same time (March 4th, at 23:55).

The author of this idea suggested that “you should write as you can or what you wish, only by all means start with the word BAREV... This will even stronger emphasize our solidarity. The important thing here is that all that is done comes in a unified manner. We will flood Facebook with statuses on victory. Our congratulation messages that come one after the other at the same time will be quite impressive on the Armenian sector of Facebook”

(<https://www.facebook.com/satine.andreasyan/posts/497330253664407>). This action did take place, at the specified time different users sent out different congratulatory texts to one another on the occasion of R. Hovhannisian’s victory in the elections. And all the statuses began with the word “Barev.”

Special pages were started on Facebook or links were provided to other Internet resources which presented various actions: boycott of classes by students (Boycotting Classes – Barev New Armenia

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/%D4%B4%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%A1%D5%A4%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%AC-%D4%B2%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%A5%D6%82-%D5%86%D5%B8%D6%80-%D5%80%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B6/213439865464581?fref=ts>), the petition of the supporters, <http://www.change.org/petitions/the-armenian-people-recognize-raffi-hovannisian-as-the-truly-elected-president-of-the-republic-of-armenia>, the sessions of the open civic councils in Liberty Square and so on.

The stories telling of all these initiatives and the events organized in Liberty Square in the period between March 10th and 31st (hunger strike) – the meetings with the people, the video and photo reports on the singers and actors who came to support Hovannisian, the announcements and flyers calling to participate in different demonstrations and the calls were exclusive content pieces.

POST-ELECTION MEMES, POLITICAL SARCASM/ HUMOR, BLACK PR

BaRevolution was otherwise called the Revolution of Barev (hello).

This term began to circulate on Facebook immediately after the elections in reference to the movement headed by R. Hovannisian and was perceived from a number of perspectives at the same time:

- As a form of struggle – a kind and bloodless revolution,
- As a goal – to reinforce the kind and the struggle against the evil,
- As a logical continuation of R. Hovannisian’s campaign technology of individually greeting people and hugging them during his meetings.

At the time of the campaign it was either interpreted as populism or a technique that was not very promising for R. Hovannisian, and it triggered political humor and sarcasm on Facebook.

Barev became the major meme of the post-election period. A number of word derivations of “barev” emerged, all of them having their own meanings on Facebook.

Barev writing – meant any statement or announcement composed by R. Hovhannisian’s supporters and shared on Facebook,

Barevist – meant an activist, supporting R. Hovhannisian.

In response to all these and other memes well spread out on Facebook, the RPA Deputy Chairman A. Ashotyan wrote on his page: “The State Inspection on Language informs that the words “prosperous, hello, congress, safe, republican, epic novel and Raffi” (which were circulated on Facebook and were perceived as the Prosperous Armenia Party or a member of PAP, the announcement/countersign of joining Raffi Hovhannisian, a fragment from S. Sargsyan’s campaign slogan – Safe Armenia, a member of the Republican Party, the nickname of the Presidential candidate V. Sedrakyan – *L.B.*) have not yet lost their real, apolitical, original meanings” (February 26th).

In the course of our study the only public statement that S. Sargsyan made was his March 18 press conference. A few of his expressions developed into new Facebook memes, such as “lukewarm atmosphere” (S. Sargsyan announced that the main cause of the emigration from the country were not the socio-economic dire straits, but rather the lukewarm atmosphere in the country), “as my grandma would say.”

This last statement even caused the opening of a new Facebook anti-propaganda page, called “Grandma” (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/%D5%8F%D5%A1%D5%BF/226445050813794>) (February 19) and the dissemination of new demotivators.

The page however had a very short lifespan and was active only on the first few days.

As of April 9th the page had only 406 likes, and the number of users who liked or shared the content originally on that page was rather modest (the average number of likes of the materials was within the range of 10).

For comparison we should mention that the BaRevolutionist **Anitsystem** page, opened after the elections, retained the level of activity (<http://www.facebook.com/BAREVolutionary?fref=ts>). The number of its fans and the number of the people who liked and shared its content as of the beginning of April were almost the same (1138 likes and 1290 reactions to the materials).

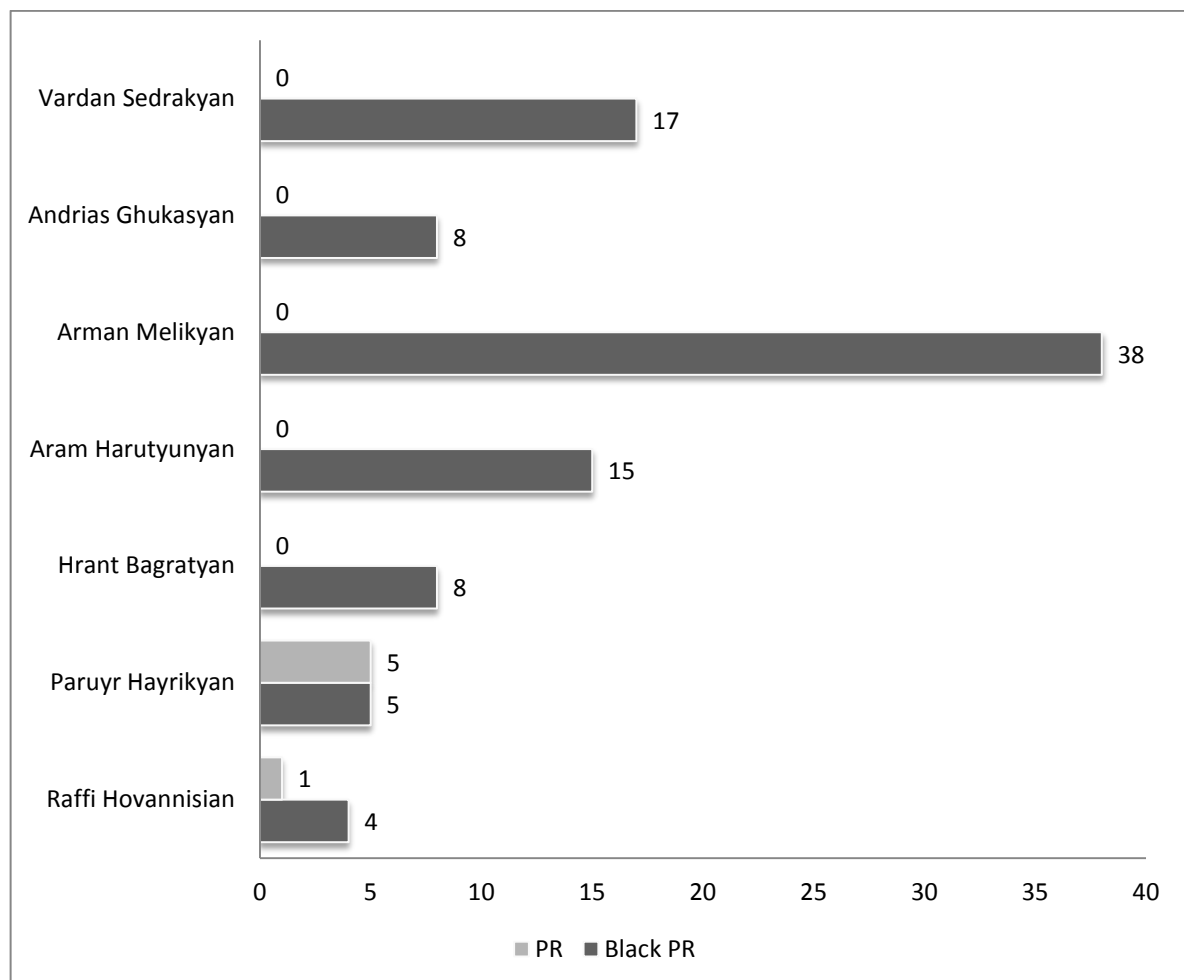
In its turn R. Hovhannisian’s “No turning back” caused the appearance of a Facebook meme.

In the post-election Facebook writings of epistolary genre (in some cases serious and sometimes humorous) were regularly spread out. And this correspondence of mutually political context followed the letter addressed to S. Sargsyan by the famous singer S. Tankian, and the former’s reply.

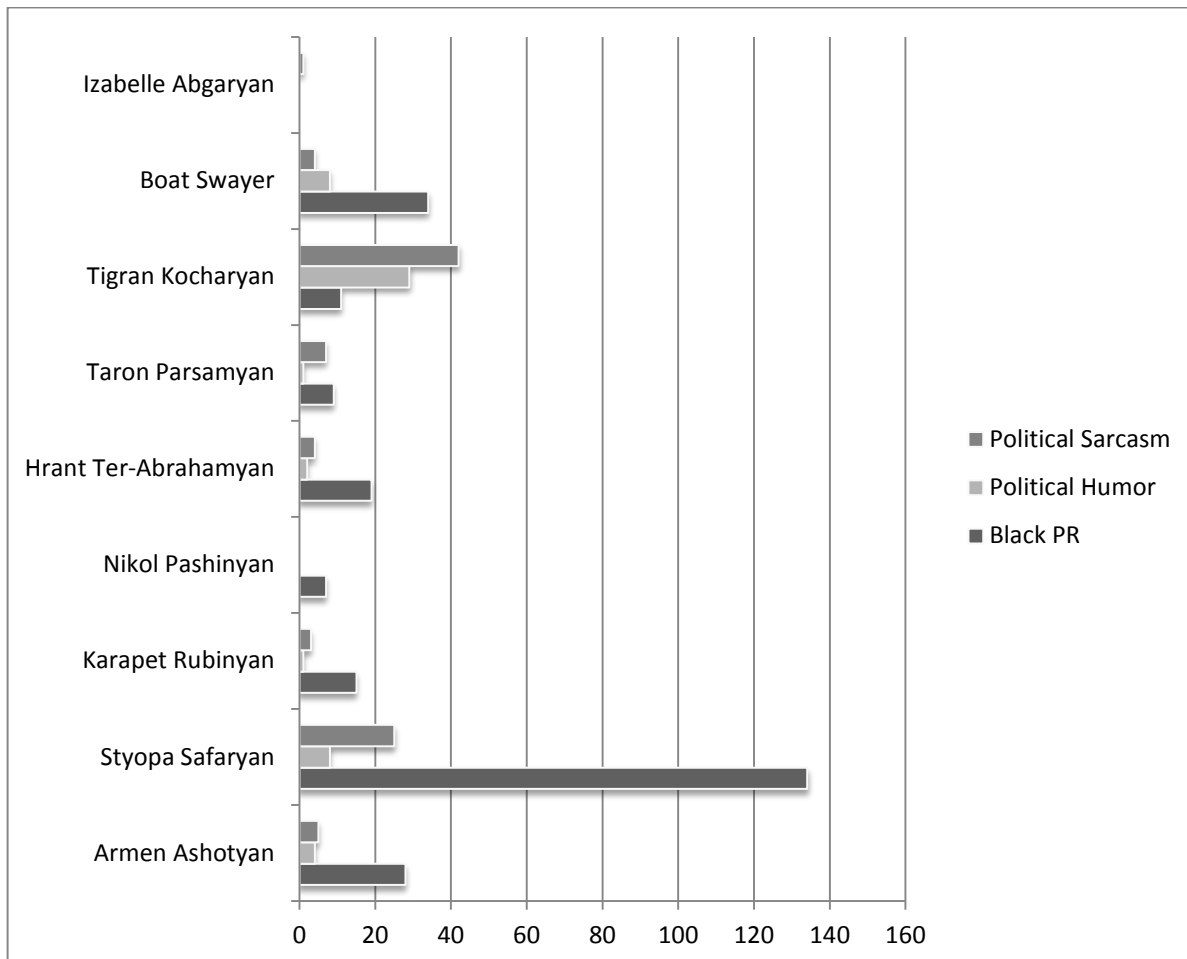
The manifestations of political humor and sarcasm addressed at R. Hovannisian rapidly decreased in the period of his hunger strike. Before the hunger strike and especially after it the attitude to his actions was reflected in humorous expressions of the following kind: “I am happy that our Motherland is not as large as Russia. Or else Raffi would tour the marzes up until 2018, and many of my colleagues would pass away in an untimely manner. I am grateful to our ancestors for leaving us with only a handful of land,” the journalist A. Samuelyan wrote on his Facebook page (Facebook activists, February 26).

Black PR against Raffi Hovannisian was activated on Facebook on April 9th. The fact of his prayer at Tsitsernakaberd, accompanied by the head of the Police V. Gasparyan and leaving part of the demonstrators on Baghramyan Street raised a wave of criticism against him. “Raffi became a political cadaver” was quickly put into circulation by the pro-governmental media. Some analysts, supporters of the oppositional forces and members of oppositional parties hurriedly began to say the same thing in varied language.

Number of Black PR and Self-Advertising Content Pieces on Candidate’s Pages



Number of Content Pieces of Black PR, Political Humor and Political Sarcasm on Political Figures' Pages



For quantitative data on political humor, sarcasm and black PR in the post-election period also see Appendix, Table 16

PRE-ELECTION DEJA VU OR A PRELIMINARY OUTLINE OF STRUGGLE FOR YEREVAN ELDERS' COUNCIL

The elections of the Elders' Council, as a process, can for the first time ever become a topic of broad discussions in the Armenian segment of Facebook and a reason for struggle among the key players involved in the process. This will be led according to all the features typical of social networks: from the race for the number of fans up to the organization of propaganda and anti-propaganda campaigns.

In the course of our study for the first time ever did the topic of the elections for the Elders' Council begin to be discussed along with the topics of other electoral processes (See Appendix, Table 8).

An RPA group, called "A Better Yerevan," (<http://www.facebook.com/AveliLavYerevan?fref=ts>) that opened on Facebook on April 1st, keeps the number of its members open to the public – about 23.000.

There is a group oppositional to this one, called "A Better Yerevan without Taron Margaryan" (the incumbent Mayor, RPA member) with a membership of about 1100 people.

The page, bearing the improper name of "I am disgusted with Armen Ashotyan" (RPA Deputy Chairman, RA Minister of Education) and containing materials beyond civilized political struggle is of anti-propaganda nature, too (<http://www.facebook.com/EsZzvumEmArmenAsotyanic>).

Starting from the second half of March the PAP member and former RA Minister of Foreign Affairs Vardan Oskanyan came out of his prolonged silence period. He resumed his interpretations of the processes underway in the country and is making judgments on Yerevan elections to be held on May 5th.

The ARF candidate for the Mayor of Yerevan Armen Rustamyan has started to write regularly on this topic on his Facebook page.

The Chairman of the Liberty Party, the former RA Presidential candidate Hrant Bagratyan apologized to the residents of Yerevan for not participating in the elections for Yerevan authorities, even though he had gained 4% vote in the Presidential elections, as he wrote on Facebook.

The propaganda clashes are obvious between two oppositional parties – the Heritage and the ANCP. We witness a similar kind of confrontation when we read the "skirmishes" between the RPA and PAP member Facebook users.

There is an impression that the struggle here is not for votes, but for political rehabilitation. The RPA and the Heritage want to prove that their victory in the Presidential elections was legitimate. The PAP, ANCP and ARF aim to earn enough ground to return to the active political arena.

Already at this point in time we should state that the Facebook political struggle is more diverse in its nature.

But this is a topic that will take us beyond the scope and the timeframe of our study.

THUS,

- We recorded a decrease in the Facebook activity of almost all candidates in the post-election stage, except the leader of the Heritage Party R. Hovannisian who had become S. Sargsyan's major adversary. In the post-election period his team began to use the propaganda and organizational possibilities of Facebook even more intensively and would share a larger amount of content on his page than before.
- The dissemination of political electronic flyers on the social network, the invitations and the calls to participate in various actions, as well as holding actions on Facebook created an impression and a feeling of incessantly unfolding developments.
- In the post-election period the Facebook platform was used also by livestream broadcasters, who in this case had an opportunity to enlarge their traffic due to the Facebook audience. It was possible to monitor the street marches and the coverage of clashes on April 9th also via Facebook.
- It should be noted that at the time of such critical and very tense situations Facebook had become a major source of information for public due to the possibility of simultaneously receiving and comparing materials from different media outlets and blogs here.
- The number of the so-called Facebook fan audiences the Presidential candidates had did not give us a possibility as before to shape up an opinion on the size of the public that would approve of some of their concrete actions. For example, in the most active post-election period for R. Hovannisian the number of the people who liked his page was in the range of 27.000 – 30.000, which is less than 5% of the 540.000 people who cast their votes for him in the elections.
- We recorded preparatory Facebook activities and the launch of campaign processes for the local self-governing body (Yerevan Elders' Council) elections similar to the preparation for the Presidential elections. And this is the first ever attempt to organize local self-governing body elections on Facebook, too. However, this preliminary conclusion of ours does not yet mean that the Facebook platforms will be used also in the course of future local self-governing body elections. The point here is the peculiarity of the upcoming elections of the Elders' Council (with this struggle for Yerevan and the forces that have come into the struggle).

See general conclusions on the electoral processes on Facebook in the upcoming issue of our bulletin.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Facebook Audiences of Presidential Candidates and
Possibility for Interactivity on Their Pages
(February 19-April 9, 2013)

Candidates	Likes				Friends				Date on the page
	19.02.13	10.03.13	11.03.13	09.04.13	19.02.13	10.03.13	11.03.13	09.04.13	
Raffi Hovannisian	24123	27689	28347	32103					
Paruyr Hayrikyan					4140	4070	4069	4000	
Hrant Bagratyan	3436	3647	3678	3725					
Aram Harutyunyan					1418	1562	1570	1767	
Arman Melikyan					702	797	794	878	
Andrias Ghukasyan	2109	2086	2078	2076					
Vardan Sedrakyan	5273	5178	5155	5106					

The page is closed for other users' materials

The page is open for other users' materials

Table 2. Audiences of Political Figures and Activist Users and Possibility for Interactivity on Their Pages (February 19-April 9, 2013)

Political Figures and Activist Users	Friends				Subscribers				Date on the Page
	19.02.13	10.03.13	11.03.13	09.04.13	19.02.13	10.03.13	11.03.13	09.04.13	
Armen Ashotyan	4953	4951	4951	4957	8392	8923	8997	10280	
Styopa Safaryan	4600	4919	4929	5365					
Karapet Rubinyan	2531	2629	2642	3006					
Nikol Pashinyan	3905	4730	4730	4999					
Hrant Ter-Abrahamyan	3123	3230	3237	3455	190	223	219	275	
Taron Parsamyan					382	490	490	481	
Tigran Kocharyan					794	844	868	892	
Boat Swayer									
Izabelle Abgaryan	2434	2637	2648	-					

From 23.03 Audience Indices on Izabelle Abgaryan's page are closed

The page is closed for other users' materials
The page is open for other users' materials

Table 3. Indices of Page Interactivity (Presidential Candidates)

Candidates	Number of Materials			Number of Materials That Generated a Discussion Without Candidate's Participation			Number of Materials That Generated Discussion With Candidate's Participation			Total Number of Discussed Materials			%		
	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	<i>Total</i>
Raffi Hovannisian	217	440	657	193	421	614	0	0	0	193	421	614	89%	96%	93%
Paruyr Hayrikyan	7	18	25	4	11	15	3	0	3	7	11	18	100%	61%	72%
Hrant Bagratyan	33	13	46	8	6	14	1	1	2	9	7	16	27%	54%	35%
Aram Harutyunyan	7	7	14	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	71%	0%	36%
Arman Melikyan	68	32	100	12	5	17	16	2	18	28	7	35	41%	22%	35%
Andrias Ghukasyan	25	9	34	12	4	16	0	0	0	12	4	16	48%	44%	47%
Vadan Sedrakyan	23	15	38	14	7	21	4	0	4	18	7	25	78%	47%	66%

Graphic 1. Indices of Page Interactivity of Candidates' Pages According to the Number of Materials Reacted by Audience(%)

(February 19-April 9, 2013)

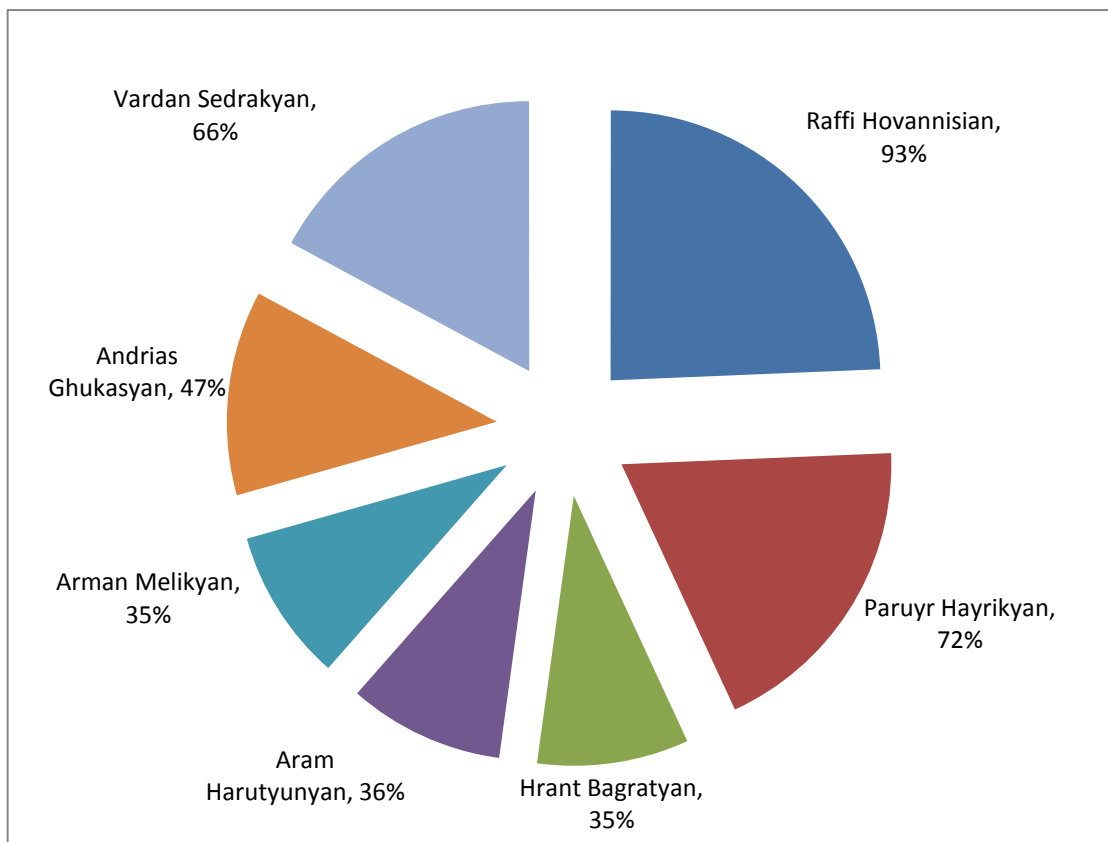


Table 4. Indices of Page Interactivity (Political Figures and Activist Users)

(February 19-April 9, 2013)

Political Figures and Activist Users	Number of Materials			Number of Materials That Generated a Discussion Without Candidate's Participation			Number of Materials That Generated Discussion With Candidate's Participation			Total Number of Discussed Materials			%		
	19.02- 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02- 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02- 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02- 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	<i>Total</i>	19.02- 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	<i>Total</i>
Armen Ashotyan	67	38	105	27	20	47	31	6	37	58	26	84	87%	68%	80%
Styopa Safaryan	199	145	344	77	50	127	59	41	100	136	91	227	68%	63%	66%
Karapet Rubinyan	43	29	72	21	14	35	2	5	7	23	19	42	53%	66%	58%
Nikol Pashinyan	12	7	19	8	4	12	2	1	3	10	5	15	83%	71%	79%
Hrant Ter-Abrahamyan	74	77	151	10	7	17	55	55	110	65	62	127	88%	81%	84%
Taron Parsamyan	28	10	38	5	1	6	14	8	22	19	9	28	68%	90%	74%
Tigran Kocharyan	75	40	115	21	13	34	53	21	74	74	34	108	99%	85%	94%
Boat Swayer	90	76	166	5	2	7	83	67	150	88	69	157	98%	91%	95%
Izabelle Abgaryan	102	71	173	18	10	28	77	51	128	95	61	156	93%	86%	90%

Graphic 2. Indices of Page Interactivity of Political Figures' and Activist Users' Pages According to the Number of Materials Reacted by Audience (%)

(February 19-April 9, 2013)

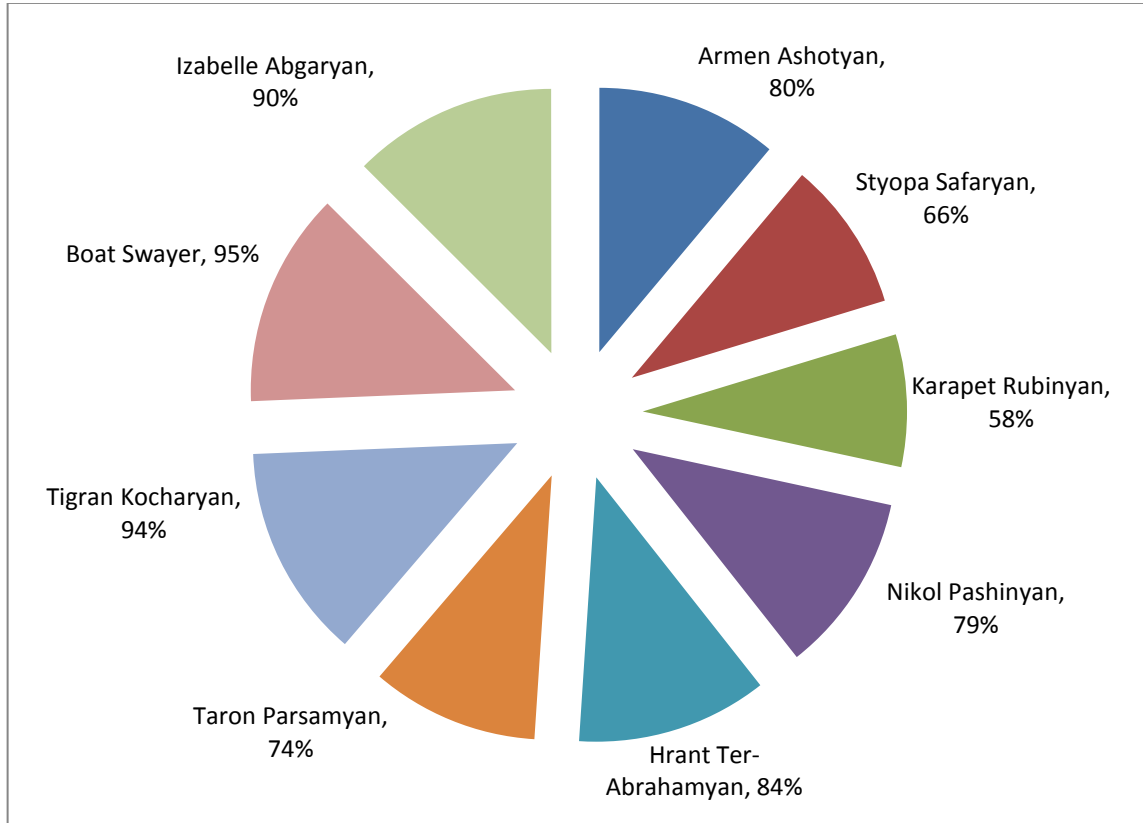


Table 5. Daily Average of Activity of Political Figures and Activist Users According to the Number of Statuses

Political Figures and Activist Users	Number of Materials on Elections			Also Personal Statuses			Daily Average of Statuses (20 days)	Daily Average of Statuses (30 days)	Daily Average of Statuses (50 days)	%		
	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	Total	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	Total	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	Total	19.02-10.03.13	11.03-09.04.13	Total
Armen Ashotyan	67	38	105	29	7	36	1.5	0.2	0.7	43%	18%	34%
Styopa Safaryan	199	145	344	64	38	102	3.2	1.3	2	32%	26%	30%
Karapet Rubinyan	43	29	72	7	6	13	0.4	0.2	0.3	18%	21%	18%
Nikol Pashinyan	12	7	19	0	1	1	0	0	0.0	0%	14%	5%
Hrant Ter-Abrahamyan	74	77	151	43	39	82	2.2	1.3	1.6	58%	51%	54%
Taron Parsamyan	28	10	38	16	10	26	0.8	0.3	0.5	57%	100%	68%
Tigran Kocharyan	75	40	115	68	32	100	3.4	1.1	2	91%	80%	87%
Boat Swayer	90	76	166	70	54	124	3.5	1.8	2.5	78%	71%	75%
Izabelle Abgaryan	102	71	173	76	43	119	3.8	1.4	2.4	75%	61%	69%

Graphic 3. Daily Average of Activity of Political Figures and Activist Users According to the Number of Statuses

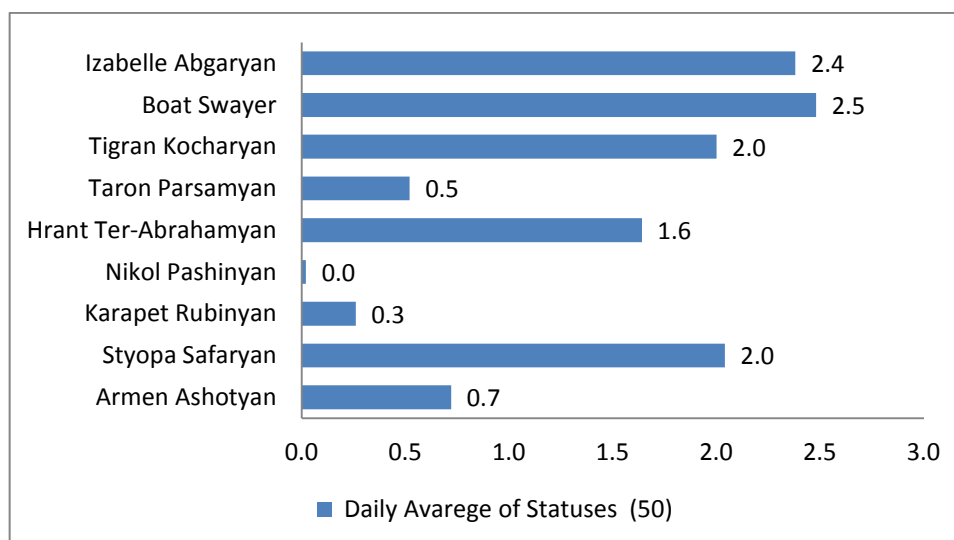
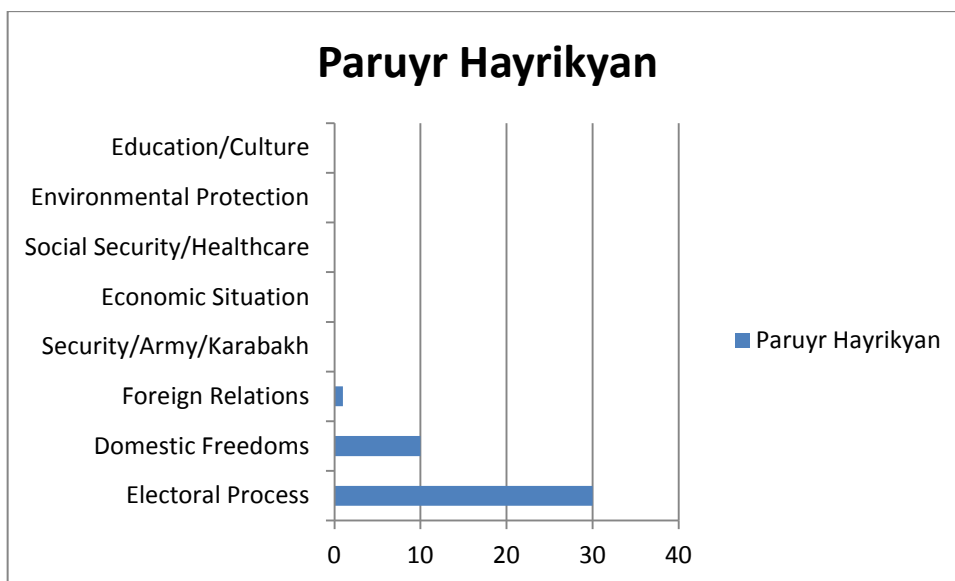
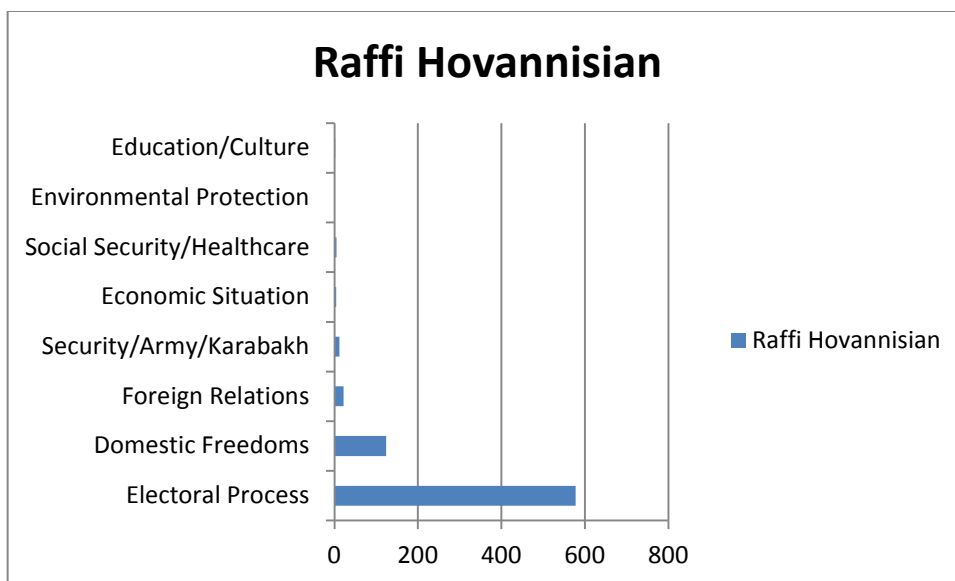
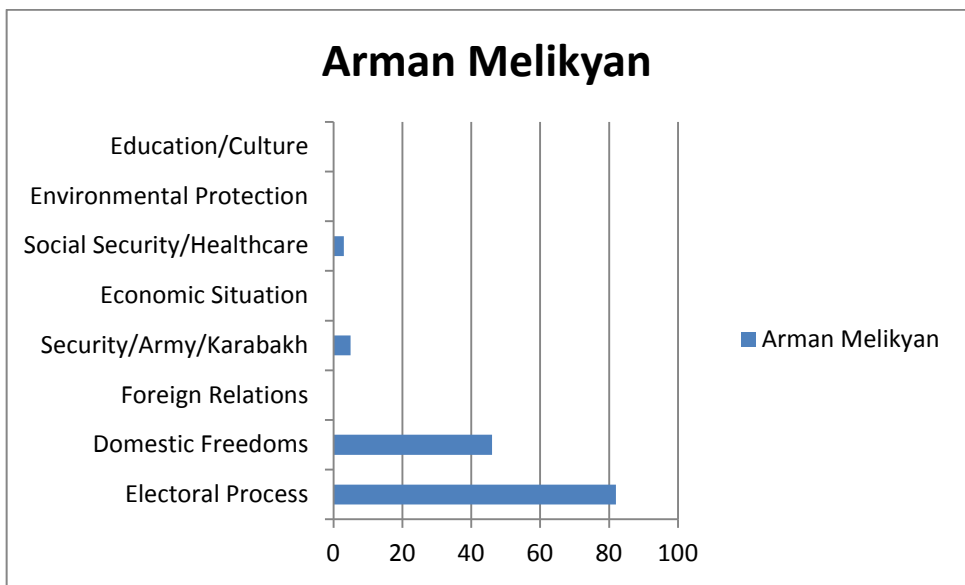
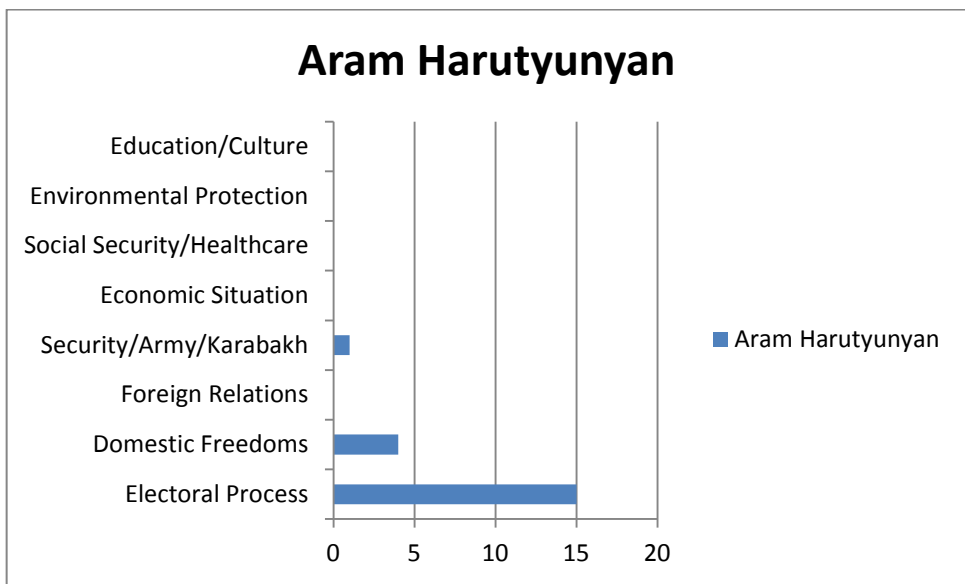
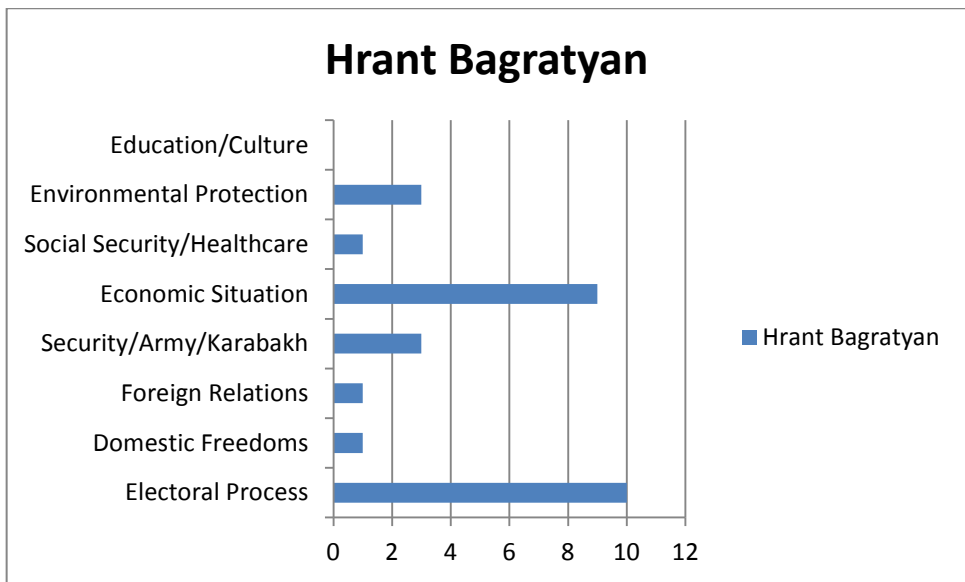


Table 6. Topics Raised on Candidates' Pages and Number of References Made to Them (February 19-April 9, 2013)

Candidates	Electoral Process			Domestic Freedoms			Foreign Relations			Security/Army/Karabakh			Economic Situation			Social Security/Healthcare			Environmental Protection			Education/Culture		
	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03 - 09.04.13	Total			
Raffi Hovannisian	283	578	861	12	124	250	1	2	38	12	1	2	3	4	7	6	5	11	2	1	3	1	2	3
Paruyr Hayrikyan	13	30	43	0	10	10	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hrant Bagratyan	35	10	45	10	1	11	0	1	1	1	3	4	8	9	17	2	1	3	0	3	3	2	0	2
Aram Harutyunyan	19	15	34	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arman Melikyan	136	82	218	61	46	107	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Andrias Ghukasyan	52	17	69	10	10	20	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vardan Sedrakyan	36	13	49	10	14	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Graphic 4. Topics Raised on Candidates' Pages and Number of References Made to Them
(February 19-April 9, 2013)





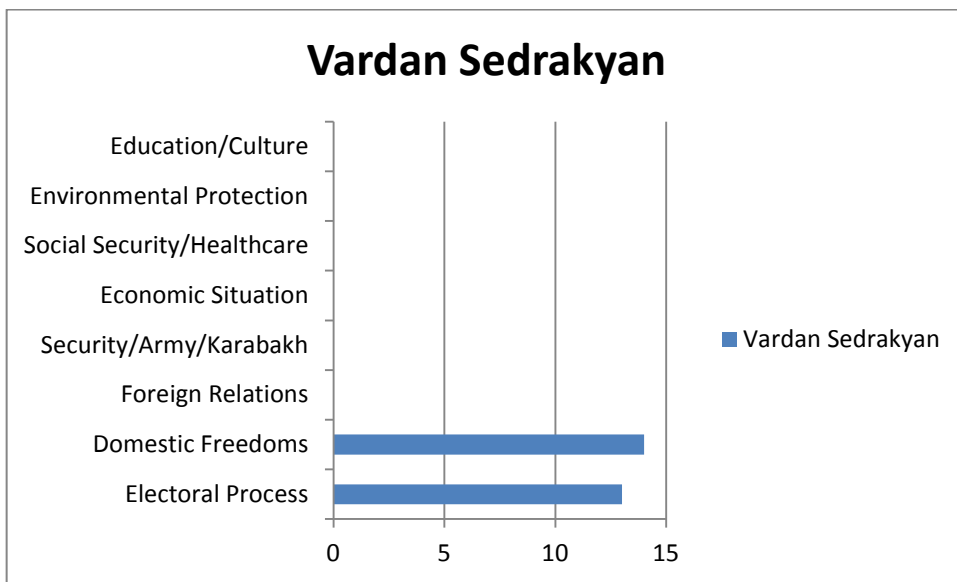
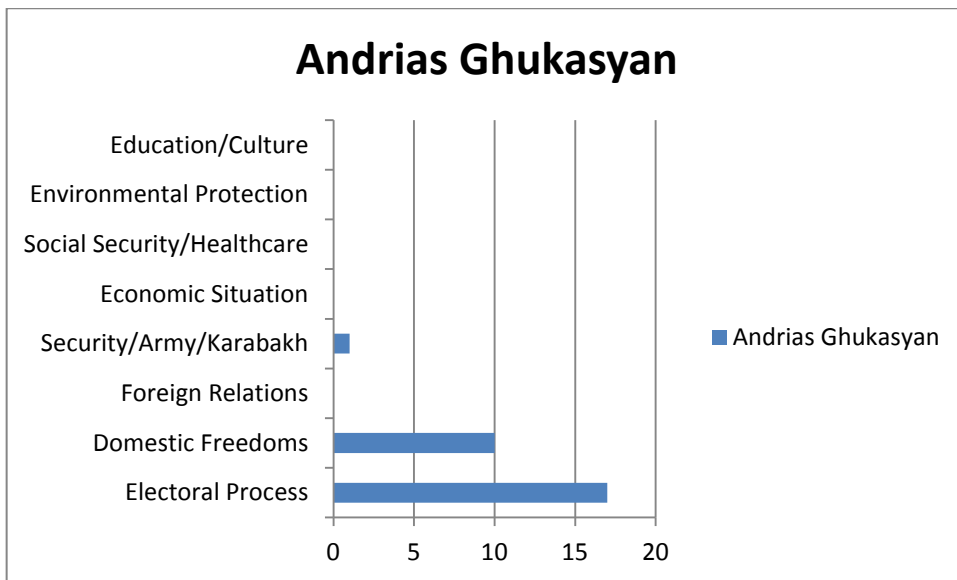
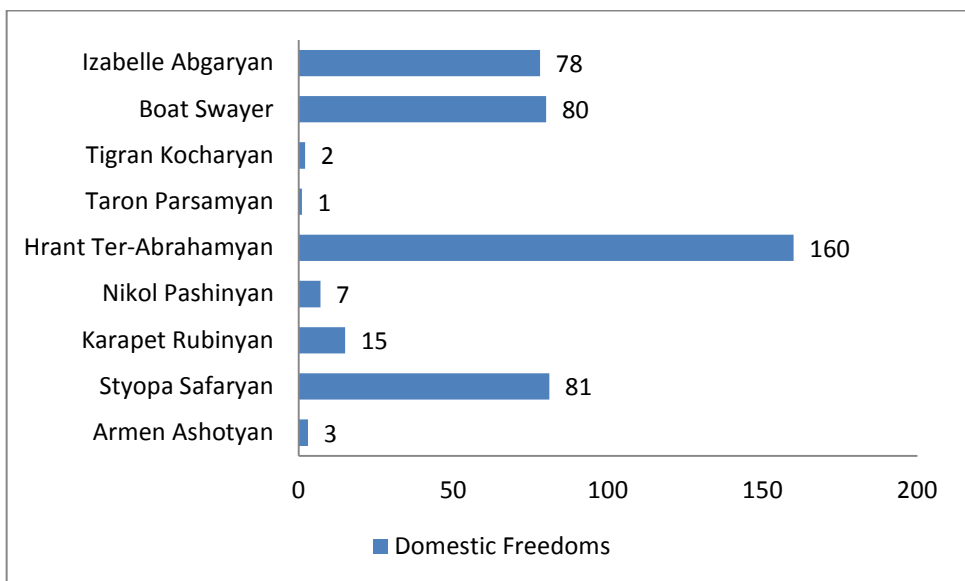
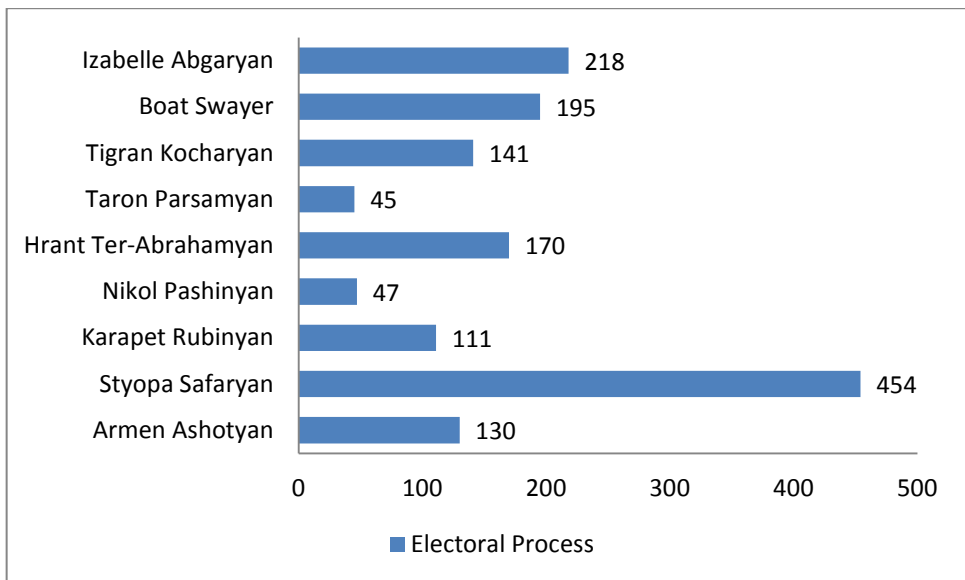
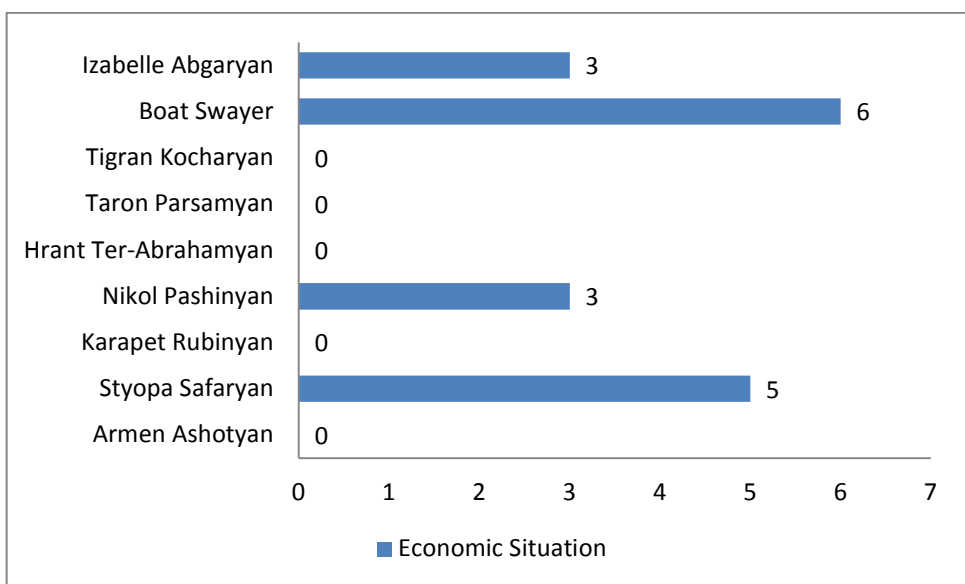
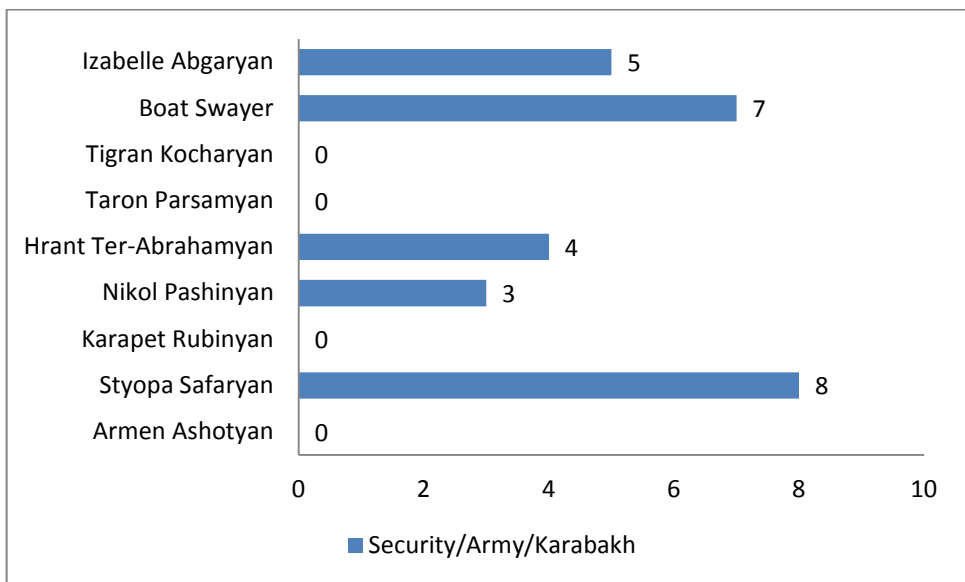
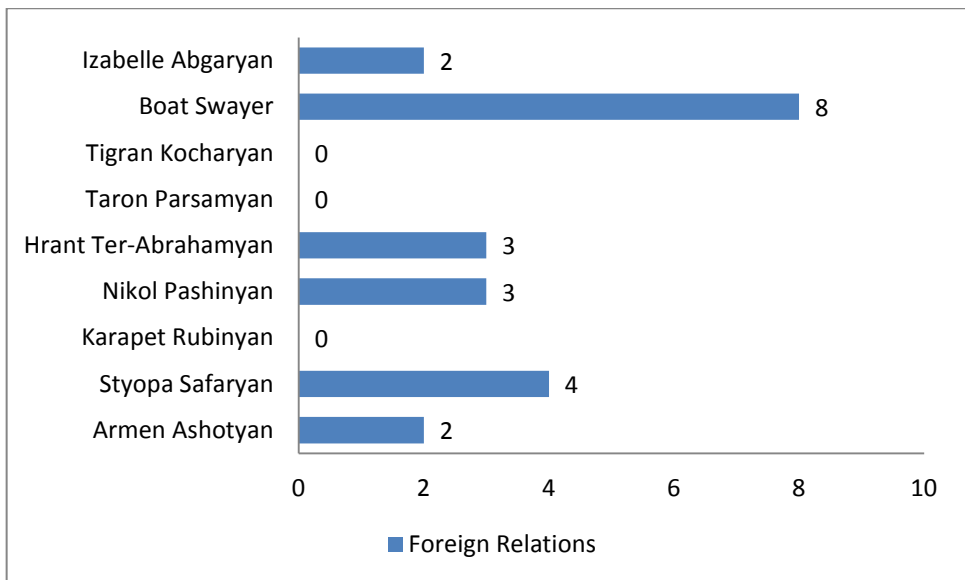


Table 7. Topics Raised on Political Figures' and Activists Users' Facebook Pages and Number of References Made to Them

Political Figures and Activists	Electoral Process			Domestic Freedoms			Foreign Relations			Security/ Army/ Karabakh			Economic Situation			Social Security/Healthcare			Environmental Protection			Education / Culture		
	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total	19.02 - 10.03.13	11.03- 09.04.13	Total
Armen Ashotyan	72	58	130	3	0	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Styopa Safaryan	242	212	454	4 2	3 9	81	3	1	4	4	4	8	1	4	5	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	4	4
Karapet Rubinyan	64	47	111	8	7	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nikol Pashinyan	24	23	47	5	2	7	0	3	3	2	1	3	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hrant Ter-Abrahamyan	63	107	170	8 6	7 4	160	0	3	3	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Taron Parsamyan	31	14	45	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tigran Kocharyan	80	61	141	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boat Swayer	75	120	195	5 6	2 4	80	0	8	8	4	3	7	0	6	6	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
Izabelle Abgaryan	125	93	218	5 2	2 6	78	1	1	2	3	2	5	0	3	3	0	1	1	0	5	5	2	4	6

Graphic 5. Daily Average of Activity of Political Figures and Activist Users According to the Number of Statuses





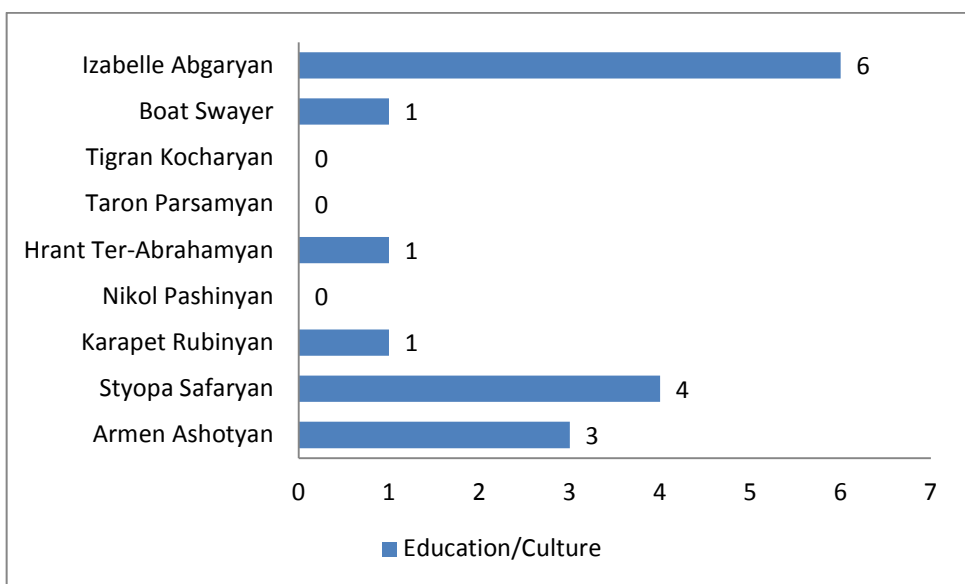
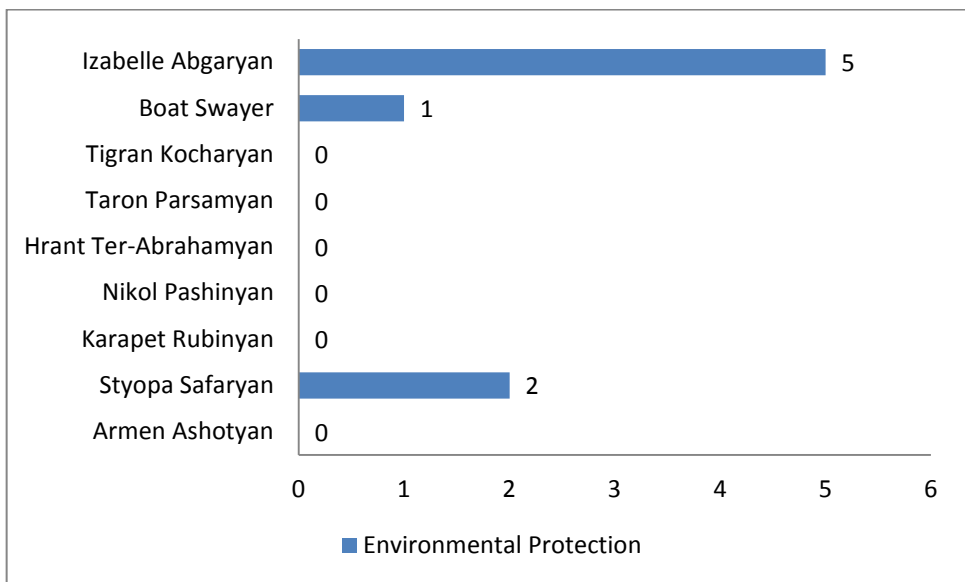
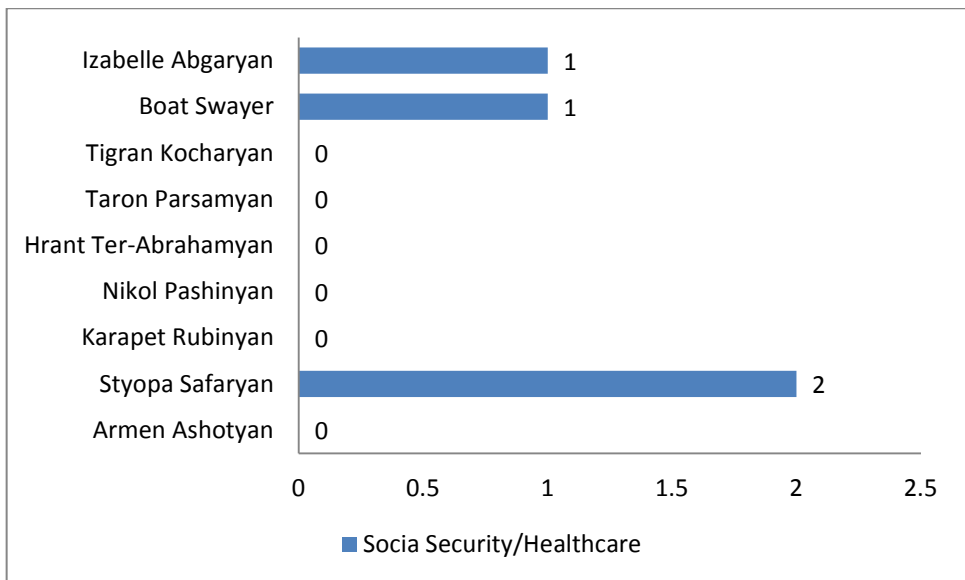


Table 8. Issues Covered in Materials on Electoral Process and Number of References Made to Them
(February 19-April 9, 2013)

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figure and Activist Users	Total
1. Nomination of candidates	13	4	17
2. Course of elections	5	10	15
3. Course of campaign	6	0	6
4. Electoral register	19	1	20
5. Proportional or majoritarian system	1	5	6
6. Assessment by other countries and international organizations (observing missions)	19	12	31
7. Support for this or that candidate by external forces	6	16	22
8. Public opinion polls and other surveys	1	7	8
9. Electoral violations	27	42	69
10. Forged elections	136	142	278
11. CEC	25	19	44
12. Election bribe	13	7	20
13. Abuse of administrative resources	32	15	47
14. Questioning the legitimacy of election results	216	128	344
15. Boycotting elections	7	1	8
16. Political struggle	5	30	35
17. Propaganda campaign	2	51	53
18. Violence and oppression in the electoral process	66	193	259
19. General description of post-election developments	160	68	228
20. Election results	11	15	26
21. Resign	16	40	56
22. Boycott of classes	12	100	112
23. Hunger-strike	252	50	302
24. April 9/Inauguration	90	74	164
25. Elder's Council elections	30	22	52
26. Civil disobedience	7	6	13
27. Alternative structures	17	15	32
28. Church	6	5	11
29. Post-election international responses	8	5	13
30. Dialogue/Compromise	22	22	44

Table 9. Issues Covered in Materials on Domestic Freedoms and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figure and Activist Users	Total
1. State	9	4	<i>13</i>
2. Constitution	23	7	<i>30</i>
3. Legitimacy	46	9	<i>55</i>
4. Democratic Development	12	3	<i>15</i>
5. Rights	41	28	<i>69</i>
6. Civil Society	16	20	<i>36</i>
7. Independence of the Judicial System	27	13	<i>40</i>
8. Corruption	10	4	<i>14</i>
9. Freedom of Speech	8	13	<i>21</i>
10. Mass Media	15	23	<i>38</i>
11. Regime change through elections	6	8	<i>14</i>
12. Regime change through a revolution	32	89	<i>121</i>
13. Justice	30	23	<i>53</i>
14. Impunity	1	8	<i>9</i>
15. Crime	12	8	<i>20</i>
16. Coalescence of power and business	13	3	<i>16</i>
17. Power	57	41	<i>98</i>
18. Opposition	25	41	<i>66</i>
19. Society	40	40	<i>80</i>

Table 10. Issues Covered in Materials on Foreign Relations and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Foreign policy orientations	1	2	<i>3</i>
2. Relations with different countries and various international organizations	9	17	<i>26</i>
3. The Diaspora	30	3	<i>33</i>

Table 11. Issues Covered in Materials on Security/Army/Karabakh and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Different security issues	2	-	<i>2</i>
2. The force, figure ensuring security	-	2	<i>2</i>
3. Migration	7	4	<i>11</i>
4. Army	-	4	<i>4</i>
5. Karabakh conflict	4	4	<i>8</i>

Table 12. Issues Covered in Materials on Economic Situation and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Fake indices of economic development	0	2	2
2. Taxes	4	0	4
3. Tax legislation	0	2	2
4. Budget	6	3	9
5. Branches of economy	12	7	19
6. Monopolies	1	2	3
7. Small and medium sized business	1	0	1

Table 13. Issues Covered in Materials on Social Security/Healthcare and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Minimum wages	1	0	1
2. Bonuses	1	0	1
3. Pensions	3	1	4
4. Healthcare issues	1	0	1
5. Poverty	6	4	10
6. Unemployment	5	0	5

Table 14. Issues Covered in Materials on Environmental Protection and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Mines	4	0	4
2. Use of material resources	1	1	2
3. Protection of fauna	1	1	2
4. Sevan	0	1	1
5. Ponds protection	0	1	1
6. Environmental conditions	1	0	1
7. Environmental activity	1	0	1

Table 15. Issues Covered in Materials on Education/Culture and Number of References Made to Them

Issues	Number of References		
	Candidates	Political Figures and Activist Users	Total
1. Ministry and Minister of Culture	0	1	<i>1</i>
2. Preservation of different cultural values	0	3	<i>3</i>
3. Higher educational institutions	3	3	<i>6</i>
4. Level of education	0	1	<i>1</i>
5. Science	2	1	<i>3</i>
6. Politicization of education	0	7	<i>7</i>

Table 16. Black PR on Candidates' Pages

Candidates' Pages	Black PR by Candidates			Black PR by other Users			Total		
	19.02.13-10.03.13	11.03.13-09.04.13	Total	19.02.13-10.03.13	11.03.13-09.04.13	Total	19.02.13-10.03.13	11.03.13-09.04.13	Total
Raffi Hovannisian	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
Paruyr Hayrikyan	3	2	5	0	0	0	3	2	5
Hrant Bagratyan	1	3	4	3	1	4	4	4	8
Aram Harutyunyan	10	5	15	0	0	0	10	5	15
Arman Melikyan	32	6	38	0	0	0	32	6	38
Andrias Ghukasyan	5	3	8	0	0	0	5	3	8
Vardan Sedrakyan	15	2	17	0	0	0	15	2	17