Political Marketing Tools Used in Pre-election Campaigns in Armenia: Comparative Analysis of 2013 Presidential and 2017 Parliamentary Election Campaigns

Submitted to

American University of Armenia
Manoogian Simone College of Business and Economics

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of BA in Business

By: Azniv Tadevosyan

Supervisor: Dr. Knar Khachatryan

Yerevan 2018

ABSTRACT

The election campaigns in the Republic of Armenia have received little academic interest from the political marketing perspective, hence the aim of this capstone thesis *to identify the political marketing tools and techniques that were used during the election campaigns, understand their effectiveness in transferring the political promise and to explore whether the change of the political system affected the usage of tools*. For this purpose, the electoral campaigns of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Serzh Sargsyan and Heritage Party candidate Raffi Hovhannisyan in 2013 presidential elections, as well as, after the constitutional change of the political context, of RPA and Tsarukyan bloc 2017 parliamentary elections are studies. The social media, video ads, booklets/flyers, election programs, campaign finances of each campaign were scrutinized as candidates' channels of communication. Visual and written content analysis was carried out to interpret the above-mentioned data. For analyzing the media coverage and the social media environment of the campaigns, reports drafted by the Yerevan Press Club and Region Research Center were used. The two sets of case studies have revealed that he most popular political marketing tool throughout the studied campaigns was the leader image. Next in the row were the policy focus and the ideology. Increase in the usage of social media, reduction of broadcast media ad budget, diversification of political marketing channels and more trends have been identified. Not enough evidence was found to claim that the political system change influenced the campaigning behavior of the electioneers. It also showed that 66.7% of actual and communicated political products

were corresponding, showing that the used political marketing tools were successful in transferring the 'political promise'.

Keywords: Political marketing, pre-election campaign, political brand, political marketing mix

ACKNOLEDGEMENT

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Introduction

Political marketing is a relatively new approach that envisages to investigate the political electoral processes. Kotler and Levy (1969) believed that it was one of the fields that marketers should explore: "Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap". Later, Reid (1988) emphasized the importance of political marketing, mentioning that even though the electorate trusts their own intuition while voting, a large portion of them need to be guided through the process of elections. Gamble (1974) believed that the political market consisted of two groups: those that compete for the office and those that vote. Just like the producers and consumers in economic markets one of these parties is active, creative and the other one is passive and receptive.

The foundations of political marketing models were designed by Niffenegger (1989), who used the 4P's as a basis of his political marketing model[1]. This framework allows the parties to better prepare for the elections, as well as to analyze something so politicized in a whole different dimension, where techniques, communication channels and strategies are easier to explore (as the political dimension is minimized).

The Republic of Armenia has been through around 14 elections after its second independence (Election Guide, n.d.). However, the political marketing discourse has been absent from the discussions and the analyses of the political campaigns, until very recently when Narek Ghukasyan wrote his book called "Political Marketing" in 2012 and touched upon some examples from Armenian political campaigns. After a thorough search in Armenian libraries, there was one more research found on the topic of political marketing (by Taron Parsamyan in 2016). There were no research projects found after 2017 parliamentary elections, thus this is a

---

[1] See Figure 1

research gap that needs to be filled. Accordingly, the first research question would be, *how were the political marketing tools used in pre-election campaigns?* The importance of this research is attached to the findings it offers both to the electioneers and analysts in Armenia, who can view the campaigning from a different angle and possibly advance their future political marketing strategies.

Through a referendum held in 2015, Armenia switched from a semi-presidential system to a parliamentary republic. The emergence of the new system raises questions regarding the pre-election campaign approaches. Selling various products or services may require different methods and strategies depending on the product and service itself, the context, the target and the customer base. Driven by the same logic, methods and strategies during the presidential and parliamentary elections may also vary. Therefore, the research will try to answer the question *whether the election campaign strategies in 2013 presidential elections differed from those of 2017 parliamentary elections.* The findings of these two research questions will bring to an answer of another vital question in political marketing: *What are the recent political marketing trends?*

As it is out of this study's scope to investigate also the political context of the elections, it is hard to find comprehensive causal connections between the political marketing tools and the election outcomes for measuring effectiveness. However, the degree of compliance of the actual 'political promise' (i.e. the political product) and the promoted political product, will help to measure the effectiveness of political marketing tools in regard to transferring the right message. The aim of this paper is to *identify the political marketing tools and techniques that were used during the election campaigns, understand their effectiveness in transferring the political promise.* Analyzing 2013 presidential election and 2017 parliamentary election campaigns will

help to answer the above-mentioned questions and will also give room to explore *whether the change of the political system affected the usage of tools*. Finally, as a result of the comparative analysis this research will try to identify some of the *political marketing trends in Armenia*.

For these purposes, data was collected on 2013 presidential and 2017 parliamentary pre-election campaigns. Two parties with the highest number of votes from each election were chosen. Accordingly, these parties are from 2013 elections the Republican Party of Armenia (Serzh Sargsyan as a candidate), Heritage party (Raffi Hovhannisyan as a candidate), and from 2017 elections the Republican Party of Armenia, Tsarukyan Alliance. After a thorough case study of the above-mentioned campaigns, it was found that the political marketing tools used during the election campaigns in Armenia were mainly leader image and ideology or policy focus. A comparative analysis of these case study findings allowed to claim that there was no significant evidence that the change of the political system affected political marketing tool usage. It also showed that 66.7% of actual and communicated political products were corresponding, showing that the used political marketing tools were successful in transferring the 'political promise'. Finally, the comparative analysis allowed to identify a group of political marketing trends, such as increase in the usage of social media, reduction of broadcast media ad budget, diversification of political marketing channels and more, which will be discussed in depth later.

2. Literature Review

In the diverse and rich political marketing literature, Dominic Wring (1997) is one of the authors who has been successful in combining most of the classical theory developments in the sphere of political marketing. His work integrates the academic contributions Kotler and Levy (1969) and continues to the so called "founders" of political marketing. His research is

particularly valuable in breaking down Niffenegger's (1989) the Political Marketing Mix model basing it on the 4Ps of Marketing. The 4P's of political marketing is the basis of this research project.

There were 3 important pieces of literature that drastically changed the theoretical framework development of the research.

The first was Savigny's (2003) research which presented objections to the political marketing mix, particularly, to the product definition. He challenges the leader image, ideology, party image as political products and claims that those are rather promotional tools. A lesson learned from this piece was that taking objections towards the classical theory may provide a framework which is much stronger.

The second cornerstone reading for this study were Henneberg and O'shaughnessy (2007) who explored theory and concept development in political marketing. The highlight of their study was in exploring the epistemological problems and concept developments of the political marketing theory. Together with that, the authors included a future research agenda, where they gave hints on which promotional tools were trending and needed to be considered.

The final highlight was the paper written in 2010 by Robert P. Ormrod & Stephan C. M. Henneberg (2010), who worked on developing an integrated political marketing theory on strategic political postures and political market orientation. The key here was the integration of different theories, which can prove to be an effective tool that considers multidimensional aspects of the question.

Taking these 3 points into account this research project integrated some models and concepts creating one multidimensional theoretical frame. Further in-depth exploration of

political marketing theory and concepts are placed in the theoretical framework of this research and discussed in depth in that section.

3. Theoretical Framework

Political marketing is defined as the use of opinion research and environmental analysis by the political parties or candidates to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for votes (Wring, 1997). This is how the traditional literature defines political marketing. The term political marketing appeared in literature in 1956 thanks to Stanley Kelley who wrote the following about election consultancies:

"The team relies heavily but not entirely upon their own intuitive feel for providing political marketing conditions. They pride themselves on having "good average minds" that help them to see things as the average man sees them." (Kelley, 1956, p. 53)

Levy and Kotler (1969) also noticed the need of viewing elections in the context of marketing arguing that "political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap." However, while applying marketing concepts to politics the researchers need to keep in mind that the choice is not made by an individual consumer, but rather by a group of individuals (Winchester, Hall, & Binney, 2016).

Is the idea to embark on this academic field was materialized, the researchers started to develop models, which would allow to analyze political campaigns in the context of marketing. One of the first models was developed by Phillip Niffenegger, based on the "4Ps" marketing model. Besides including the marketing mix, the model also takes into account the environment,

the market, the strategic considerations and the party which all together make up the political

marketing process.
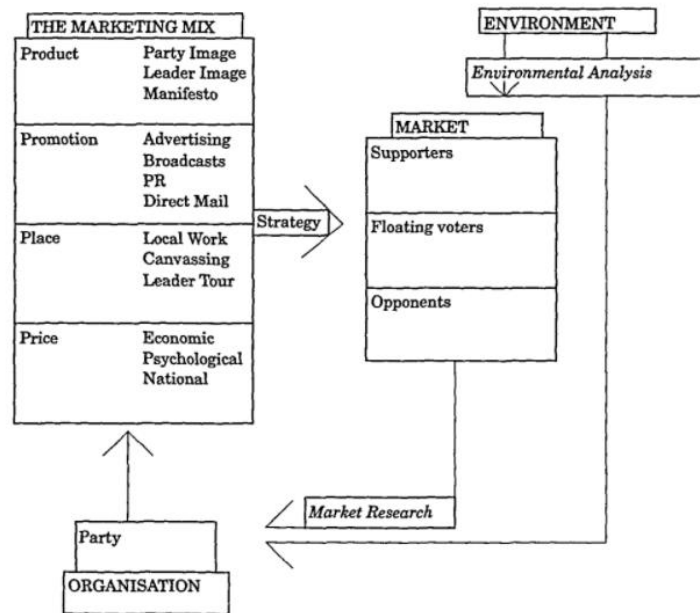
Figure 1:The Political Marketing Process (Wring 1997)

The Market

According to Gamble, there are three components of the political market: the existence of

a mass electorate, competition between the parties for the votes of the electorate and the rules

governing this competition (1974). The main relationship in political market is based on the

exchange of values. On the one hand electorate votes for the political entity and on the other

hand this entity governs in a manner which is favorable for the public (Wring, 1997).

The Environment

In order to make better decisions the parties should explore and analyze the environment.

Even though it may appear that there is a limited amount of resources that the politicians have in

order to analyze the environment, there are also a plethora of strategies and models which allow to investigate the economic, media and other factors shaping the electorate's concerns and preferences. These are the uncontrollable factors. Nevertheless, the environment also contains controllable factors which are referred to as the 4Ps (Hunt, 1976).

Strategy

Market research: Just as in commercial marketing, market research plays a key role in political marketing process. Private polling and opinion research were the main popular tools used by the party organizations, however in the 21st century political elites are faced with commissioning when it comes to acquiring polling findings to shape a better strategy. Initially, the political market research was quantity oriented, but nowadays with the help of focus groups and other qualitative research tools, it's possible to explore the market both in terms of the quantity and quality (Wring, 1997). The market research process enables to segment and target the political market and best position their offering in the market (Wring, 1997).

The Four Ps of Political Marketing

3.1.Place

The distribution strategy is chosen by the party. The most obvious distribution channel is the party office and its branches in different locations. Another important channel depends on regional network suppliers, who basically are the members of the party in the grassroots level. In addition to these, tours and regional events are organized by the party leadership. Finally, local electioneering is an important tool, which usually takes the form of canvassing, leafletting and "get the vote out" strategy (Wring, 1997).

3.2. Price

Some electoral commentators have discounted this element believing that it does not have a significant effect in campaign planning and implementation (Wortmann & Farrell, 1987). However, Nifenegger justifies the relevance of the pricing mix by outlining its constituent parts which include the voter feelings of national, economic and psychological hope or insecurity (1989). Likely, Reid describes the voting process as a "psychological purchase" (1988). Taking this into account, the parties and the candidates try to capitalize on the reported anxieties or aspiration of a given electoral group. Negative campaigning is another strategy that parties use and it refers to the process of deliberately spreading negative information about the opponent thus attempting to threaten the voters with robust claims (Wring, 1997).

3.3. Product

Even though the product is a central element in the political marketing process, there are major controversies connected to it. Two views on political product can be identified:

1. The image of the political product is the product. Parties pursue policies to win elections, rather than win elections to pursue policies. This means that the policy substance is underestimated, and the policy discussion is related to potential effects on party image. With that mind, he argues that for the voter the costs of acquiring information are larger than the benefits resulting from voting. That is why voters make decisions based upon 'brand images' (Downs, 1957). Electioneers emphasize style over substance, image over policy to appeal to the voters who are assumed to cast their vote effectively. Arguably then, in assuming that voters seek an image to guide their vote, image or the perception of

that image is the product that the political actor seeks to sell. Ideology, leadership and party organizations become tools in establishing that image (Savigny, 2003).

2. Political product contains three aspects: leader image, party image and policy commitments. Different segments give different weights to these aspects and the electioneer's responsibility is to understand which one of the three is more important for the party's target. In the light of the previous view, these aspects can be considered as promotion methods rather than products.

Integrating these two views it is possible to argue that the product that political entities sell to the voters is the "political promise", which refers to the value that they are providing in exchange of the votes. In political marketing value is defined as the officially declared political offering. For example, environmentalism or the gun control policies can be considered as values (O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, & J., 2007). In this research, therefore, manifesto or the policy substance will be considered as a political product. The leader, party image, party's ideology on the other hand, will be viewed as tools in establishing favorable perceptions among the public.

3.4. Promotion

The promotional mix contains two major parts: paid and free media. Paid promotion channels cover all forms of advertising (poster, print, broadcast) as well as telephone and direct mail, e-mail marketing.

Free media is the publicity which parties receive but do not purchase. Organizations have less control over their product's exposure in the mass media, therefore, both the party organizations and the voters pay more attention to this coverage. News management is an important skill that electoral organizations need to have. This is one of the most significant

differences between commercial and political marketing, as marketing agencies or CEOs of big

corporations are unlikely to be overwhelmed with sensitive questions by the press daily. Besides

being able to manage the news, free media strategists need to concentrate on public relations, as

it is a tool designed to attract favorable media attention (Wring, 1997).

As an addition, by analyzing Karlsen (2009) and Esser and Strömbäck (2012) political

campaign communication channels can be divided into three parts: party-controlled (social

media channels, website, video ads, etc.), party-uncontrolled (news coverage) and those that can

be both (leader debates, talk shows with the candidates etc.). These communication channels are

not only important for the electioneers, but also for the analysts who want to get a detailed

picture of a political marketing campaign communication strategy.

3.5. Points for Consideration

Phenomenon of Mediation: While comparing political marketing to commercial

marketing it is important to highlight the differences between the extent to which these processes

experience mediation. Commercial marketing can be assumed to experience mediation through

consumer watchdog programmes or media critiques, for example (O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, &

J., 2007). In political marketing, however, media generally acts as the intermediary that links

political actors and the public. Moreover, most of the interaction and of course influence

structures between these two works through different mediums. Thus, the political marketing

process cannot be detached from the mass-media.   Most of the traditional views on political

marketing ignore or underestimate the important role that media played in framing, transmitting,

championing, and challenging the messages of political actors. As long as these theories fail to

address this effectively they are fundamentally flawed (Temple, 2013). The role of media is not

only mediation, but also preference-shaping, because media outlets have their own agendas and have a freedom to define the parameters of available preferences (Savigny, 2003).

The role of media in this process is often so important that media itself is often the principal target, in other words, the consumer of political marketing activities. As a matter of fact, the political marketing exchange process is a three-dimensional one, as opposed to the two-dimensional commercial marketing exchange process. In this situation, media has the power to alter the original exchange intention and its functions are not always limited to retelling the facts. In a free society, media entitles political powers with influence but not with control.

Periodic vs. Permanent Political Campaign: Traditionally political marketing campaigns have been viewed as a periodic activity, which means that campaigns are carried out only before the elections and before some important events. On the other hand, political actors started to realize that in order to remain in office their campaign has to be permanent. They constantly need to prove the voters that they deserve to be in their current position. Moreover, the voters may change their political position if the power they've elected does not produce the expected outcome and therefore parties and candidates constantly promote and raise awareness about their image, actions, political decisions etc.

In contemporary political marketing, visibility has become a daily activity of electioneering and governing. What was episodic has now become normative and transforms mere campaigns into something that influences policy making and policy implementation (O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, & J., 2007). As a result of these changes, political marketing theories must go beyond the election campaign and use more dynamic conceptualizations that take the permanence of campaign interactions into account.

Leader Image: In the political exchange people consider the party, its history, image, proposed policies etc., but leader image seems to be the ultimate exchange offering that unites all the above-mentioned particulars. People want a strong and caring leader, who is credible and can lead the country. The failure to "find" such a leader is a problem for the party as leader image affects other offering aspects and has a strong effect on political marketing management performance. The image of a single person cannot affect businesses in this scale, which proves that this concept is a specificity for political marketing and needs closer attention. There is a particular interest in exploring this concept and its impact on the electorate in presidential and party-dominated systems (O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, & J., 2007).

"Visual Rhetoric": Symbolism and public imagery are now an inseparable part of political marketing. Parties realized that using visual communication methods and creating meaningful content can stimulate press attention, as well as better convey its identity to the stakeholders. Therefore, this content should be explored together with other communication methods (O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, & J., 2007).

Political Brand: Brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them, which is intended to identify the offerings of the seller and to differentiate them from those of the competitors (AMA, 1960). A political brand accordingly is defined as the ''political representations that are located in a pattern, which can be identified and differentiated from other political representations'' (Nielsen, 2017). Nowadays, when electioneering is becoming a permanent activity, political entities pay more attention to political brands. Political branding, which focuses on a strategy aiming of retain voter loyalty is "the new form of political marketing" (Scammell, 2009). Parties use visual as well as intangible brand components in order to connect with their followers more effectively and communicate the party/candidate ideology

to the public. According to O'Shaughnessy and Henneberg (2007), political brands have three elements: a trinity with the party as the brand; the politician as its tangible characteristics; and policy as core service offerings.

The benefit of using branding as an analytical framework is the simultaneous focus on political actors' "functional perceptions" as well as the "emotional attractions" towards them (Scammell, 2009).

Branding can increase political communication's comprehensibility and credibility and make it "more cognizant of and responsive to public opinion" but it also can lack ideological grounding and stifle intra-party life (Adolphsen, 2009).

3.6. Framework application

As the theoretical background also contains some tactics that are only for the internal use because of confidentiality, we will exclude the Strategy as it is not publicly shared information (especially data related to segmentation). Our focus will be discussing Product, Place and Promotion (Price will be skipped, as it is not an actual amount in this case). The gathered data will be analyzed in the context of this theoretical frame which allows to effectively explore different aspect of the political marketing campaign's structure.

4. Research Design

4.1. The Scope

The research will analyze 2013 presidential election and 2017 parliamentary election campaigns. Two political parties from each election will be chosen for the analysis: the winner and the runner up, accordingly those parties will be the Republican Party (Serzh Sargsyan as a candidate) and the Heritage Party (Raffi Hovhannisyan as a candidate) from 2013 presidential; and Republican Party and Tsarukyan Block from 2017 parliamentary elections.

4.2. The Research Method

The research will be based on a multiple embedded case study as suggested by Yin (2009) for this type of research. Multiple case study will be the most appropriate for our purposes, as the study proposes to understand and map the political market, and by doing so we will form a multifaceted picture. Embedded case study is suitable in this case because the data set is too large to try to do a holistic case study and observe all the aspects of each study.

4.3. The Case Study Analysis Tools

In drafting up the research design, several decisions were made. Firstly, the material for investigation was defined. The political campaign communication was carried through various channels including speeches, posters, websites etc., however due to the scarcity of information and the contextual limitations of this research only the following channels were selected for further exploration:

1. Social Media

2. Video Ads

3. Booklets/flyers

4. Election programs

5. Campaign Finances

Additionally, the branding efforts and media presence of the chosen parties will be presented. The main points of exploration for this purpose will be the name, slogan and the ideology or the image that the party is actively using/promoting while communicating with the public.

The second decision that had to be made was concerning the tools that would be used while working with the secondary data. In this regard, visual and written content analysis will be carried out to interpret the above-mentioned data. The content analyses of the electoral programmes of the candidates was undertaken the following way: the text of each programme was broken into topics according to the sphere they relate to and where they put the emphasis, which was followed by the grouping of similar topics into bigger ones - a process known as coding. Finally, the following categories were identified: Regional Development and Agriculture, Economic Well-Being (and Standards of living: Includes unemployment and poverty related issues as well), National Security and National Interest (As the candidates include social security and healthcare in National Security, the same principal was used here), Culture and Education (includes arts, science, innovation), Human Rights/Democracy, Corruption (Monololies and Oligopolies included as well, business ethics).

Analysis of the allocation of financial resources will be conducted to define the financial priorities of the parties/candidates.

Comparative Analysis will be carried out in order to identify the trends and find common patterns between the two data sets generated as a result of the case study.

To compare the actual political product with the promoted product a table was created with top 3 political promises and 3 promoted promises. If the same topic appeared in both sections, then the promotional channels were successful in transferring the right message.

This methodological triangulation of desk research and content analysis will increase the reliability of the research.

4.4. Data Sources

As the nature of the data is different, the sources are various as well. Following, the relevant data sources are presented.

• The information on financial resources and expenses of the campaign were acquired from the website of the Central Election Committee of Armenia. The transparency and the publication of campaign financing and costs are imposed by law and, therefore audit reports on each party's campaign funds are available online. The declarations of contributions made to the pre-election fund and their use includes the list of all spendings in the scopes of the campaign. This information was taken and grouped according to the purpose of the spending such as broadcasting expenses, print material expenses, video production etc., in order to see which promotional activities were financially prioritized by the parties.

• For analyzing the media presence and the overall media environment during the election campaigns media monitoring reports from Yerevan Press Club were used. The main problem with the exploration of media is that many media outlets are private and are financed by individuals who are political actors or have certain political interests. The bias that exists in the current Armenian media cannot be ignored, however, there are no certain methods on how to effectively take it into consideration. Therefore, while considering the media analyses this limitation should be kept in mind.

• For social media environment and overview of the campaign facilitation in social media platforms special report results will be used produced by Region Research Center. In addition to this, the social media pages used by each party will be explored to understand where and how the touchpoints with the public were created. The platform that will be explored is Facebook as it is one of the most widely used social media platforms in Armenia.

•   Video materials were found on Youtube channels or the web-sites of the parties and/or of the candidates.

•   The copies of booklets were acquired through photographs/videos posted on the Internet. Many on these photos were used in different articles and contexts, however in the scopes of the research the photographs are viewed separately from the articles within which they were found.

5. Political Context

This research aims to explore the political campaigns in the context of marketing in order to understand the communication methods and channels that political entities use to connect to the electorate. There are many factors that influence the voter's choice including marketing strategies, political situation, political system, social conditions etc., but this research concentrates only on the political marketing components and strategies. The rest of the factors are tackled only as far as they influence the topic of interest.

6. Limitations

The political processes that are currently taking place in Armenia (the velvet revolution), might affect the political environment and change the current trends and affect the future communication methods and political marketing tool usage. Most probably, in the elections to come, the candidates would rethink their political marketing strategies in order to maximize the probability of their success. If a study on the possibly-to be-changed tools of political marketing during the election campaign is conducted in the future, along with this study it can serve as a valuable source for a comparative study.

7. Case Study of 2013 Presidential and 2017 Parliamentary Election Campaigns in Armenia

7.1. 2013 presidential elections

Overview: Presidential elections of 2013 were held on 18th of February. There were seven registered candidates. The campaign started on January 21 and lasted until February 16. February 17 was a silence day. The voter turnout was 60.18% or 1.5 million voters. The winner was Serzh Sargsyan, the Republican Party of Armenia's candidate, who won with 58.64% of the votes. The runner up was Raffi Hovhannisyan from Heritage party who received 36.75% of the votes.

7.1.1. Heritage party

The candidate: Raffi Hovhannisyan

7.1.1.1. The Political Brand

Logo: The logo of the heritage party, as well as the name, come from the history of Armenia. The name 'heritage' connects with the Armenian lands, the patrimony reached from the past generations and the logo includes the eternity sign (symbolizing the eternal Armenia nation), a part of which is broken. The broken part symbolizes the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The blue color that is used in the logo creates a perception of sincerity, respectfulness and trustworthiness (Kolowich, 2017).

Political views: Democracy, Western approach balanced with patriotism. The approach is a result of the leader's background. He was born and raised in the USA, where he was exposed to democratic values. His family members are 1915 genocide survivors therefore, the patriotism and the nostalgia towards the homeland is tense. The Western approach, informality and prioritization of human rights are values that Raffi as a leader was integrating into the Heritage party and his followers.

Campaign Name: Hi (Barev). The campaign was called Barev, because the leader Raffi Hovhannisyan had a habit of saying 'hi' to everyone he met on his way to work. Later his habit received positive feedback and his team used this opportunity as a powerful tool during the pre-election campaign.

Slogan: Together it's Possible

7.1.1.2.The Product

Heritage party's pre-election program named "New Armenia" starts with the description of the 'old Armenia', which the party thinks was very problematic. After describing the tough situation Armenia is facing, it starts to reject all the cliché arguments that the government officials bring to justify the poor situation of the country (e.g. the situation is bad because the country is small, because our neighbors are stronger, because of the Kharabagh conflict etc.). The program emphasizes the government's fault in failing a number of processes and not working in favor of the people, but rather working for their own benefit.

There is no mention of Raffi Hovhannisyan in the program, rather 'we' was used to emphasize collectivity (referring to both the party and the nation).

The structure of the text is very organized. Each section starts with defining a need for change and then suggesting a strategy to implement it. The strategies are broken into tactics and include detailed steps and specific laws, approaches etc. that will need to be tackled. The program looks very realistic due to the structure and the depth. However, there is no timeframe or a deadline for implementing the program.

One of the specificities of the program is that it tackles the problems of different socially vulnerable groups. The emphasis on them is weak however, it's important that the different parts of the population are targeted. These is a special attitude towards human rights, which can be seen from the structure of the document. It was divided into two major categories: Human Rights and State Government. The first section includes sections like healthcare system, proper education, economic development etc., which are presented as phenomena that every citizen has the right to experience. In the State Government section, the program encloses the national interest, national security and the usage of national resources. Below are the findings of the content analysis.
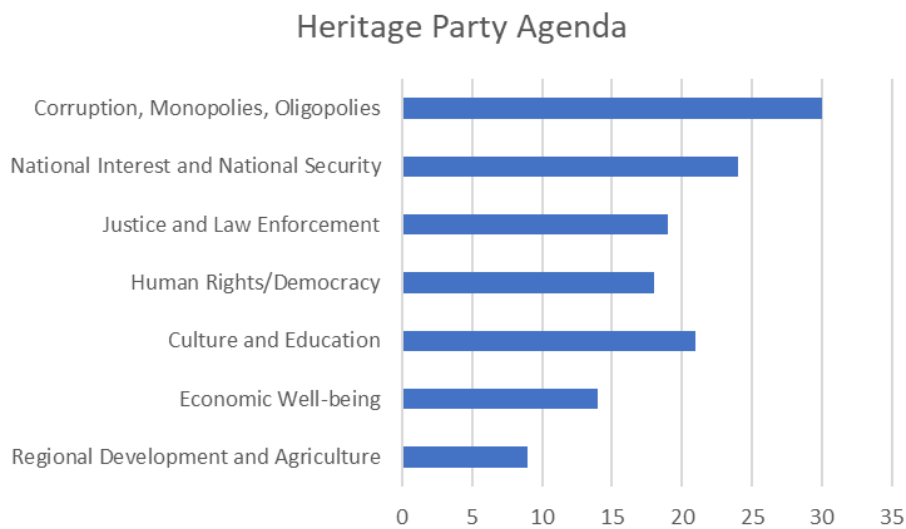

Figure 2:Heritage Party Agenda

7.1.1.3.Place

The Heritage party has 46 regional subdivisions in Armenia. In the scopes of the 21-day political campaign the candidate and his team travelled through the all regions of Armenia. All major cities and villages were covered. The end of the campaign was marked by 2 concerts in Gyumri and Vanadzor.

7.1.1.4.Promotion

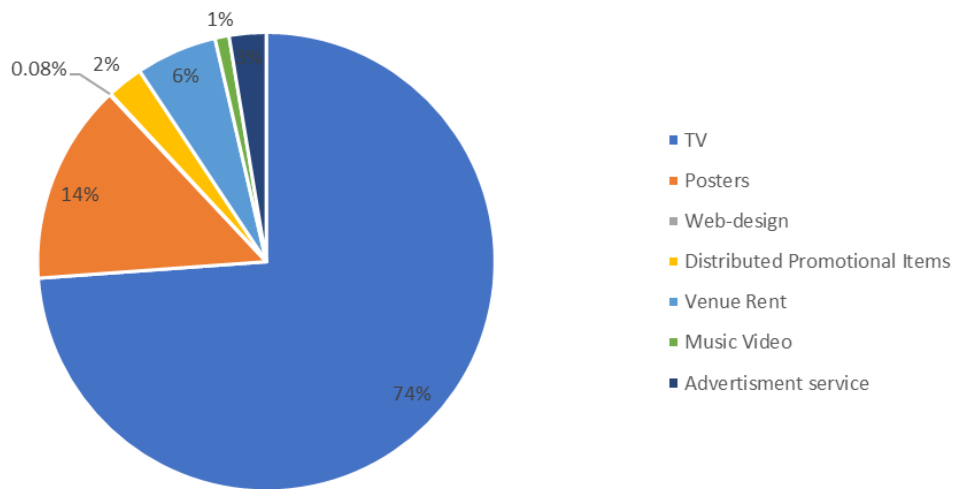*Financial resources:* Total spending amounts to 91.000.000 AMD.

Figure 3:Financial Allocation: Raffi Hovhannisyan's Pre-election Campaign, 2013

Even though most of the funds were allocated to TV ads, the party had quite limited resources compared to the other parties and circulated only 2-3 videos in order not to fall far behind from the competition. An important fact here is that the party payed attention to the online presence and allocated funds to web design.

Distributed Promotional Items: flyers, the pre-election program, flags, scarves, banners.

Scarves: One interesting campaign component was that people started to wear scarves, which were inspired by Raffi. He was almost always spotted with a scarf which had a symbolic meaning. When Raffi's grand grandfather was displaced from Western Armenia in 1915 he had a scarf that was one of the only things he could keep. He later gave it to Raffi as a "heritage" and a symbol of the motherland. That is why he had it on most of the time and he also smartly incorporated this symbol into the campaign. Special scarves were printed by the party and distributed to the people.

Social Media: Facebook was just starting its boom in Armenia in 2013 and the Heritage Party decided to carry out the campaign there as well. In fact, Raffi Hovhannisyan's FB page had 90% interactivity rate, which was the highest among all other candidate FB pages, and his page posts exceeded 217. (Region Research Center, 2013). As the real life Barev campaign was going viral, many FB users started to post about seeing Raffi using the hashtag #barev.

Raffi's page stood out by the number of posts reporting about election violations. Among all FB pages the candidates, his page was the one containing the largest number of polling stations where election violations had been recorded. Majority of his posts were about the

electoral process and the above-mentioned violation. Below are the areas of focus of Raffi Hovhannisyan's FB page posts.
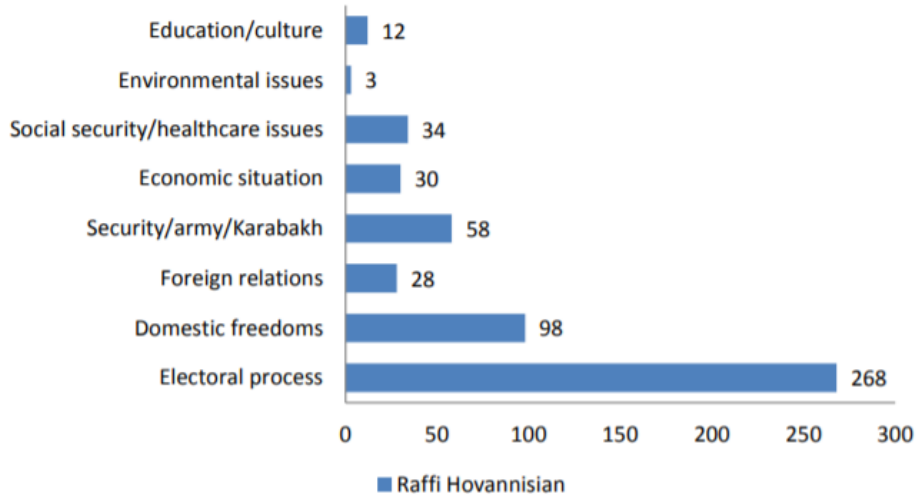

Figure 4:Raffi Hovhannisyan's FB page Agenda (Region Research Center, 2013)

Even after the election, when dissatisfied with the election results people started rallying, the #barevolution found its use in FB. The campaign established a user base, which was using FB to mobilize, and these users were sending online flyers to each other informing about the time and the location for the rally. From the start of the campaign the number of these users reached from 15,000 to 28,000 (Region Research Center, 2013).

Door to door: A door to door marketing was also conducted. The team covered all regions of Armenia, all major cities and villages. In big cities they did 2 visits per house (beginning of the campaign, towards the end of the campaign). They had two types of flyers. One was promotional and the other one served as a reminder.

Video: "Let's Go to Our Land" was the main promotional video of the party. Its duration is 67 seconds. Raffi is speaking or appearing in the video through the whole video. He says that

on February 18th we will all appear at a crossroad. There are two roads. One goes to the country of corruption, monopolies, emigration, unemployment, oligarchy and poverty. Visually, you can see the Republic square in the dark in the background and road signs within the above-mentioned atmospheres. The other goes to the New Armenia, with rich villages, workplaces, small businesses, high salaries, clean environment and returning migrants. This is illustrated again with the road sign containing the positive changes and the bright and sunny Republic square in the back. He says that he is going on the new road and is calling everyone to join him on the path to the 'real Armenia, our Armenia. Let's go to our land'. Than the visuals switch to the people who are rotating a giant mechanism, which spreads light all around and works like a whole in the entire Armenia end Artsakh as it shows the map. The video ends with Raffi's photo and the slogan 'Together it's Possible'.

Song: "Sareri Qami" (The wind of the mountains) was one of the main symbols of the campaign. Harout Pambukchyan and Ruben Hakhverdyan perform it and they are also in the music video. The duration is 4 minutes 55 seconds. Raffi appears in it for approximately 1 minute. The rest of the visuals include the mountains and especially the Mount Ararat, Western Armenia, footage of the Artsakh movement, himself and Harout placing flowers at a genocide memorial in the US, footage of him with Monte Melkonyan and Karin dance collective performing a national dance. During this dance Raffi also joins them. All these symbols refer to the Armenian history and identity. Together with the song that's played with some national instruments and vibes it promotes patriotic sentiments.

The very last part of the footage again emphasizes Raffi's personality. Ruben Hakhverdyan says, "He is not Raffi Hovhannisyan, he is our Raffi".

Flyer: The flyer uses the grey background, which relates to optimism and innocence and orange, which usually speaks of competitiveness (Kolowich, 2017).

The flyer includes three pictures of him. One is placed in the bottom and features him giving a speech. The second is placed next to his biography. In this section there are random red lines which seem to underline important phrases. The emphasis is put on his qualifications in Law, his voluntary return to Armenia, his political activity as an opposition.

Here, again a call to action can be identified, where he calls on joining him on the road to the real Armenia.

The next side of the flyer includes a comparison of him to Serzh Sargsyan. The photo of Sargsyan is an angry one and has an empty box next to it and Raffi's photo is a smiling photo of him, which has a ticked box next to it as if someone preferred to vote for him instead of Sargsyan. Under each photo there are 5 points emphasizing the political views. Raffi's policy agenda presented in the flyers is slightly different from the one presented in the program. Most of the points are concerning corruption, monopolies and oligarchies as in the pre-election program (first three points), and the last point about stopping the migration also fits well with the program. However, the 4th point on stopping diplomatic relations with Turkey was not the focus of the program and was only mentioned once. This point serves as one more tool to emphasize his patriotism.

Celebrity Endorsers: The celebrities who were involved in the campaign were Ruben Hakhverdyan and Harout Pamboukchyan who are very well-known among the older generation and loved by the majority of Armenians, as they are considered classics. Their songs also arise patriotic sentiments, which makes them suitable endorsers for this campaign.

The Reincarnation, which is a popular Armenian reggie band, was the other celebrity endorser, who helped to grasp the attention of the youth. The end of the campaign was celebrated with 2 of their concerts in Gyumri and Vanadzor.

Media: During the campaign, Raffi Hovhannisyan received 284 news and comment references, 32 discussion and 14 other references. Hovhannisyan had 28 positive and 1 negative statements voiced at his address.

It is worthy to mention that Hovhannisyan and Sargsyan have received "especially intensive coverage", when compared to the other candidates (Yerevan Press Club, 2013).

7.1.1.5.Competitive Advantage

Leader Image/Personality: Raffi's campaign was nothing more than walking down the street and saying 'Hi' to the people. He did not waste time on lengthy speeches, or heavy events. The travelling team would contact regional staff and find out the busy locations and hours in the certain city. Accordingly, the team would plan the rout and go off the road. A few team members would go to the planned location and set up audio equipment and play "Sareri Qami". By that time Raffi would walk to that spot greeting and chatting with the people. Meanwhile, the staff would distribute promotional flyers. This is how the team managed to be in all ten regions while also promoting Raffi's informality and kind personality. He would attend all events with his wife and children and the support from his family could be seen from the side which also added up to the transparency and casualty that made him a favorite candidate.

The candidate was so direct that he would ask locals to spend the night at their houses. Once, he even went into a barber's shop and got a haircut during his walk for the campaign. First, people did not take this campaign seriously and even most of the team members were skeptical about the success of the campaign, but then it just went viral and the masses started to talk about Raffi and his party's campaign.

The emphasis on his informality is clear also in the visual materials, where next to his name its written Raffi in simple handwriting without his last name.

7.1.1.6.Main Promotional Tools

Deriving from all the explored channels and touchpoints that the party and the candidate had with the public we can mention at least 3 main tools that were used during the campaign:

1. Leader image: Again, referring back to his informality and his story of being the patriotic Armenian which left the USA and returned to Armenia to make his homeland better

2. Usage of symbols: Almost all communication methods that were analyzed above contained patriotic symbolism, which is very appealing for Armenians.

3. Criticism of the Opponent: From the pre-election program to the promotional flyers were based on addressing criticism to the government and to Serzh Sargsyan and taking the role of the "savior" as the ones who take the responsibility to change the situation.

7.1.2. Republican Party of Armenia (RPA)

The candidate: Serzh Sargsyan

7.1.2.1.The Political Brand

Logo: The RPA emblem is the traditional Armenian symbol of eternity in red with eight petals, with a right turn and a sword and eagle with extended wings in the center. The red color emphasizes importance and power (Kolowich, 2017).

Political views: The republican party defines itself as a conservative, right wing party, which also tries to promote democratic values. They use the ideology of Garegin Nzhdeh, who

was one of the key political and military leaders of the First Republic of Armenia and is widely admired as a charismatic national hero.

Campaign Slogan: Towards a Secure Armenia!

The slogan is also visualized in the colors of the Armenian flag and is used in all visual touchpoint with the public.

7.1.2.2.The Product

The program of the pre-election campaign starts and ends with the reminder about the party's vision, which is a Secure Fatherland and Secure Families. In several places certain words were capitalized to emphasize their importance (e.g. SECURE, SECURE ARMENIA etc.). The word 'secure' was used 42 times in a 20-page document, in addition to other indirect references to security. This clearly shows that the priority for Sargsyan and his team was the security of Armenia and Artsakh. He even took the concept a step further by expanding the security framework to families, citizens, nation and state. What we are dealing with here is the securitization of every aspect of the people's life.

Even though the party clearly defines the deadline for the program implementation (which is 5 years), it presents rather a vision and not a plan of actions. The statements are broad, and it is hard to understand the outlined steps that RPA is going to undertake to reach the claimed goals. The appeal to emotions is clearly noticeable, as there are several references to the painful history of the Armenian nation, its struggle against all kinds of hardships, which however show that the Armenian nation is strong and powerful. The word "we" is used both to refer to the RPA and to the people. The document starts and ends with Serzh Sargsyan's letter, which are the only places where the candidate is "noticed". He refers to the people as "My Fellow Armenians"

and closes his letter by the following words: "I assure you that we shall live in a much better Armenia by 2018." For the rest of the document the collectivity is remained. Another interesting pattern was that the RPA kept mentioning their previous work and that they will continue with the same path and reach the goals set during their last term (Serzh Sargsyan was the president of RA since 2008).

The public and the competing political organizations were actively criticizing Sargsyan and RPA because of widespread corruption, poverty and many other problems in the country. In his opening letter Sargsyan did not leave this criticism unanswered and called it a healthy criticism which shows how much the Armenian nation loves and cares about its country. It was an interesting way of 'dealing with the objections'.
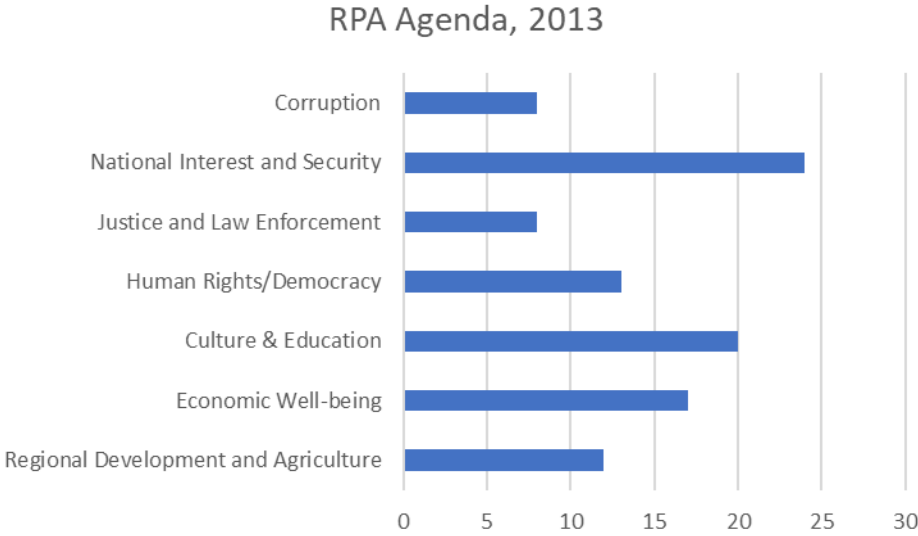

Figure 5: RPA Agenda, 2013

7.1.2.3.Place

Sargsyan's campaign had an extensive network of offices and the RPA offices and the party base were also used for his campaign. According to RPA information provided to the

OSCE/ODIHR EOM, there were 1,186 campaign offices countrywide (excluding Yerevan offices). The other candidates either had no campaign offices or had a limited number of them in the larger cities (OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 2013). The campaign was carried by a regional tour, which included the candidate's speech and a concert by Armenian celebrities.

7.1.2.4.Promotion

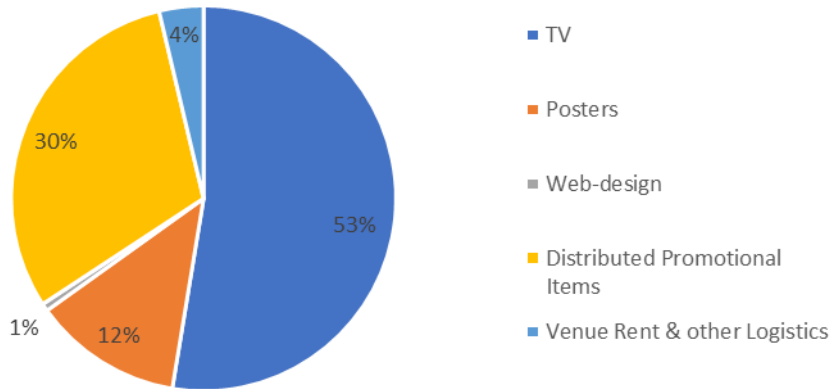*Financial resources:* Total spending amounts of 101.628.021 AMD.

Figure 6:Financial Allocation, Serzh Sargsyan's Pre-election Campaign, 2013

RPA spent approximately 1,000,000 drams on web-design of the <u>new website</u> specifically for the candidate's promotion. This was an important step since Sargsyan was not represented in social media platforms.

Distributed Promotional Items: Flyers, pins, banners, different sized flags, lighters, necklaces, notebooks, discs.

Social Media: Serzh Sargsyan was the only candidate that was not officially represented on Facebook, however his team tried to fill that gap. Namely, Armen Ashotyan (the then-

minister of education), Taron Parsamyan and Tigran Kocharyan, were involved in FB posting, commenting, sharing via their personal pages.

Despite this fact, the candidate had become the main hero of quite rapidly shared demotivators and political sarcasm pieces on the network throughout the campaign. Those were occasionally responded to either directly or in the form of Black PR counteractions, taken by S. Sargsyan's supporters.

The majority of posts made by his counterparts include the electoral process (as in the case of the other parties), domestic freedoms, economic situation and security (Region Research Center, 2013).

Video, Song and Celebrity Endorsers: The main circulating <u>promotional ad</u> by the RPA was the video of the song called "Toward a Secure Armenia". "Step by step toward the Armenia of our dreams" the song says and puts the emphasis on creating such Armenia together, where our 'brothers and sisters' from Diaspora would return.

Celebrity endorsement was heavily used in this video and it was clearly targeted towards three different segments. The following celebrities were involved:

-Levon Aronyan, who is a popular chess player and was very respected among the people,

-Shushan Petrosyan and Nune Yesayan, who are the older generation in the Armenian show business and are favored by the people in their age group,

-Hayko, Razmik Amyan, Lilit Hovhannisyan and Mihran Tsarukyan, who are the new generation and are more attractive for younger people.

The visuals in the video perfectly communicated all the major and minor points in the pre-election program. Firstly, the video featured people of different backgrounds. The video starts with Hayko introducing the author of the song who is blind and is assisted to the stage by one of the celebrities. The video features young active people, happy children, elderly people who are helped to cross the streets, soldier going to the army after taking a cross necklace with him, soldiers playing football with children, families, working people, a student who receives a prize from Serzh Sargsyan, a Diaspora Armenian who returned home and saw Ararat, sportsmen and dancers. Additionally, it shows manufacturing facilities, agricultural equipment, the cultural monuments of Armenia and its nature. Of course, the Armenian flag (or flag colors) and the slogan of the campaign were appearing in the video almost every 10-15 seconds.

The ad's duration is 3 minutes 19 seconds, but the candidate appears in it only for 2 seconds in 2 different scenes: shaking hands with Levon Aronyan and handing a prize to a student.

Flyers: There were 100.000 copies printed of this particular flyer and distributed in different regions of Armenia. The flyer includes a hopeful photograph of Sargsyan, his name number as it would appear in the ballot paper and the slogan. The other side of it includes the subtitles of the election program. There are no extra visuals or written content, which would draw the attention from the main tools which are: the leader image, the policy focus (security) and an attempt to stick in the visual memory (ballot paper form). The red color gives the sense of urgency and importance, and the grey color creates a perception of innocence and optimistic approach (Kolowich, 2017).
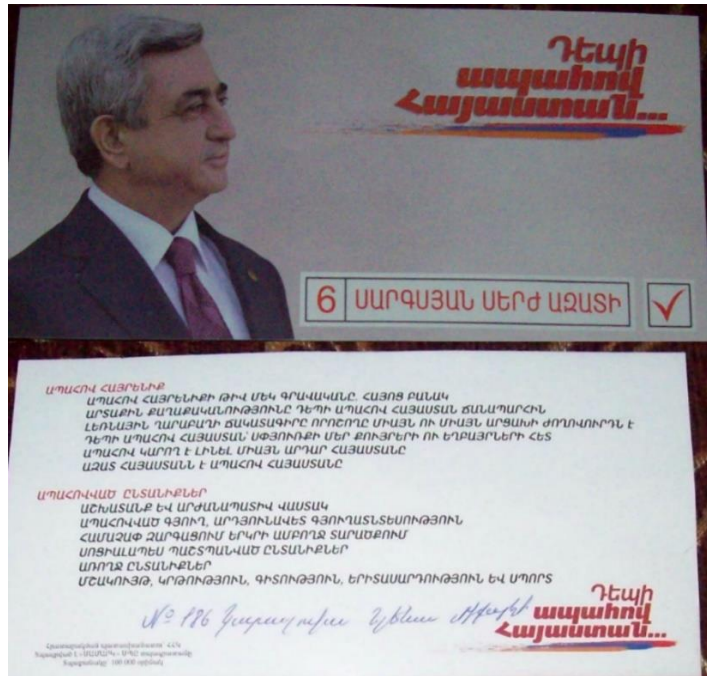
Media: During 2013 elections, the representatives of the executive were presented 6,337 times as opposed to 4,874 appearances of all other candidates combined, which clearly demonstrates the information advantage the-then President enjoyed. Sargsyan received 565 news/news and comment references, 42 discussion references and 23 others. To Sargsyan's address there were made 61 positive and 9 negative statements (Yerevan Press Club, 2013).

7.1.2.5. Competitive Advantage

Human resources and party structures played an important role in Serzh Sargsyan's campaign. The number of campaign offices located throughout the whole country speaks for itself. As RPA was the ruling party of the country of course they had more membership base than the rest of the parties and had more networks in different channels, which could have be used to promote the party and the candidate.

7.1.2.6. Main Promotional Tools

Appeal to emotion: Even in the pre-election program RPA uses appeal to emotion while constantly bringing up the hardships that the Armenian nation had faced, which is then linked to strength and pride of each and every Armenian who is able to overcome anything.

In the video there are many representations of socially vulnerable groups, such as disabled people, the elderly, the soldiers etc. The main point, however, was the happiness of these people, which invokes hope and optimism.

Policy Focus-Usage of a security discourse: As military service is mandatory for all young men, there are many families who are constantly involved and informed of the army matters and the Artsakh conflict. While emphasizing the importance of security RPA tackled one of the most important concerns of the public.

7.2. 2017 parliamentary elections

Overview: 2017 parliamentary elections in Armenia under a new parliamentary political system were held on April 2. The campaign was held from March 5 through March 31st and April 1 was a silence day. Nine parties and alliances participated in the elections. The voter turnout was 60.86%. The Republican Party of Armenia won the 49.17% of the votes. The runner up was Tsarukyan Alliance consisting of Prosperous Armenia, Alliance party, Mission party with 27.35% of the votes.

7.2.1. Republican Party of Armenia (RPA)

The candidate: Serzh Sargsyan

7.2.1.1.The Political Brand

The political views and party symbols were presented in the last section.

Campaign Slogan: Security and Progress

The slogan is visualized in the colors of the Armenian flag and is used in all visual touchpoint with the public.

7.2.1.2.The Product

As in RPA's 2013 pre-election campaign, in the 2017 program as well the slogan and the content were all about security. This time again, security was not used solely in the context of the Artsakh conflict, but was expanded into social security, healthcare and almost every other field of the discussion.

The 2017 pre-election program starts with a section called "Security and Progress Symbolize the 25 years of Independence". Here, the emphasis is on the historical difficulties and especially hardships that were faced during the 25 years of independence (economic problems,

the Earthquake, Artsakh war etc.). Even though the Armenian nation has been very strong, we have not yet achieved all our goals as a nation and we still have a long way to go to build the country of our dream: the FREE, INDEPENDENT, FAIR, and INTELLECTUAL ARMENIA (the capitalized letters were used in the text to emphasize the importance of it). At the end, the Armenian nation is praised for its abilities and strength. Later, it speaks about the importance of relying solely on ourselves while trying to progress and improve our security. The team of RPA is ready to constantly work on these matters, with the help of the people.

The text ends with a small message, which spares words of appreciation to the people of different backgrounds and then asks the people to be optimistic and try to create the Armenia of their dreams. "We believe in our people and its ability to work, to learn, to appreciate the new and to apply our abilities and good will."

Structure-wise the texts are very similar and had almost all the same sections, as they did in 2013. The weight allocated to the tackled issues and topics were relatively similar however the emphasis on economic well-being decreased, the focus on security, culture and education increased.
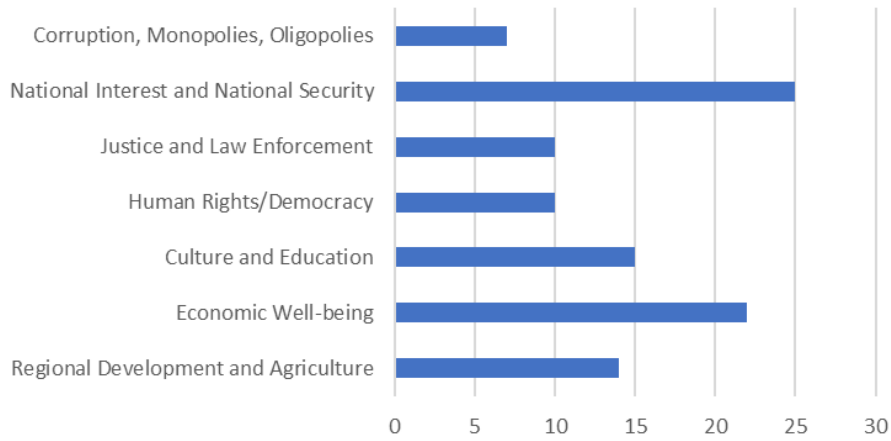
Figure 7: RPA Agenda 2017

7.2.1.3.Place

There were 782 campaign offices of RPA in RA regions and Yerevan. There was a regional tour of the team during the pre-election campaign period.

7.2.1.4.Promotion

Financial resources: Total spending amounts to 386.822.249 AMD.

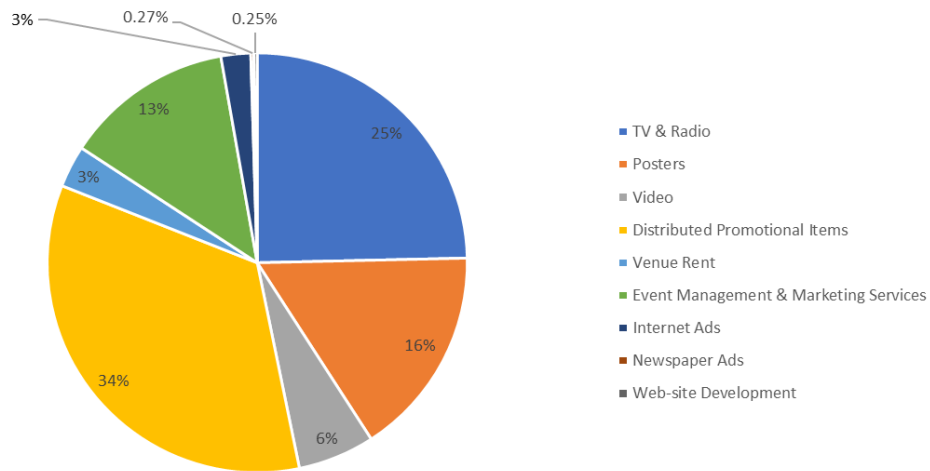

Figure 8:Budget Promotion, RPA 2017

A very important fact here is that some marketing activities are outsourced, which is a new trend in Armenia.

Distributed promotional items: 8gb flash drives, candy, iPhone 5 cases, flowers, flyers, the pre-election program etc.

Social Media: HHK vice-president Armen Ashotyan says that in these elections they took a lesson from Europe and were actively represented not only in traditional media, but also through a number of online channels. "Our party is the strongest on the internet today. Also leading is our brand website, LoveArmenia.am, which has been operational since March 5 and has already managed to get 100 thousand visits. The number of views on our videos is passing the 1 million mark," says Ashotyan. For the first time ever in the history of the Armenian electoral processes Love Armenia Facebook page was launched by the RPA, which did not identify the party affiliation in the page name.

During the campaign, the audience of Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan's page grew dynamically, and his page had the highest interactivity level among all other pages of different parties. On April 1st it had an increase of audience of up to 11,000 (from 46,437 likes on May 5 to 57,470) people and the RPA official page had a growth of 6,000 likes. The number of the views of almost every video material covering campaign visits on Karen Karapetyan's page

reached a few tens of thousands of users, on the RPA's page the live stream of the campaign concluding event had 85,000 views (on March 30th). Overall, Karapetyan's page was 83% visualized. One more interesting fact is that during the pre-election campaign days many individuals started receiving Viber messages from Karen Karapetyan's name.

The main content (35%) was about the electoral processes as during the last years. The Kharababagh conflict/Security topics were the next most popular topic (19%). The other two were economy (15%) end social issues (13%). This is exactly matching the top policy agendas of the RPA. Domestic freedoms, internal politics, the Diaspora and election bribes were not addressed at all (Region Research Center, 2017).

Video, Song and Celebrity Endorsers: The number of views of the RPA's music video Let's Change the World had over 140,000 views in the first few days, but later the number of dislikes exceeded the number of likes and therefore the video was deleted and reposted onto the FB page. It was the main video circulating the broadcast media as well.

The duration of the video is 3 minutes 59 seconds. 19% of that duration Karen Karapetyan was featured interacting with youth, standing in the crowd, taking selfies with them and playing drums, 12% of the duration was given to the team which was shown having discussions, going on meetings etc, and finally 9% of the total duration was occupied by Serzh Sargsyan, who was featured with Karen Karapetyan. The rest of the video featured soldiers, artists, employees, youth etc. who were spreading colors around the city.

The celebrity endorsers were Levon Aronyan (like in 2013) and Arthur Abraham a world-famous Armenian boxer. The song was performed by Reincarnation, who performed 5

years ago for Raffi Hovhannisyan's campaign, who was opposing Serzh Sargsyan and RPA. This might have been one of the reasons why the dislikes of the video overnumbered the likes.

Brochures: The text which was used in the very end of the pre-election program was also in the brochures.

The brochures of RPA 2017 campaign contained the following photographs. The core of the team that was on the party list for the election was featured only once while Karen Karapetyan (then prime minister) and Serzh Sargsyan (then president) had more role in the visual content. The photographs of Sargsyan are both fitting into the security topic, as they are taken with soldiers in a rather serious setting. The photos of Karapetyan, however, were very informal with a wide smile and casual looks. In the first one, he is not even wearing a costume which is usually odd for the politician and in the second one, he has his jacket off and on his shoulder, which again is very informal.

Media: Even though during the official campaign period the media coverage of all parties was roughly equal there were huge discrepancies in the February 15-March 4 period almost on all TV channels, favoring either the RPA, or the parties to which their ownership is allegedly connected to. The RPA received 26 positive and 47 negative statements, the negative ones being addressed from Kentron and Yerkir Media TV stations. In this campaign too, the officials of the ruling party were widely covered during their non-campaigning official duties, a case in point for which is Karen Karapetyan's appearance on his working visits when in the background the campaign materials of the party are visible (Yerevan Press Club, 2017).

7.2.1.5.Competitive Advantage

Resources: The financial spending of the RPA were 3.8 times higher than in 2013, meaning they had very many opportunities and sales channels that they could use to promote RPA for this amount of money.

Besides the financial resources their human resources were also valuable in this sense. One of the only political marketing specialists Taron Parsamyan was a member of the team, thus, RPA was ahead of the competitors also in this regard.

7.2.1.6.Main Promotional Tools

Leader image: Karen Karapetyan, who was not even on RPA's party list, was one of the main figures in visual representations of the campaign. His youthfulness, friendliness, coolness and casual looks and behavior were overemphasized.

Usage of security discourse: The security discourse was emphasized more than during 2013 campaign of the presidential elections, however the specificity of this campaign was that security was linked to Serzh Sargsyan.

The team image: A few team members who are more recognized by the public were shown in the visual content under the light of professionalism and hard work.

7.2.2. Tsarukyan Alliance

Alliance members: Prosperous Armenia, Alliance party, Mission party

7.2.2.1.The Political Brand

The Name of the Bloc: Even though the alliance consisted of three parties, the name of the bloc was chosen to be after Gagik Tsarukyan from Prosperous Armenia. This is already a form of leader image promotion.

Slogan: Time to Change and Build, With Tsarukyan Alliance to Prosperous Armenia

Logo: The golden color of the logo can be associated with prosperity.

Political views: Economic liberalism and social conservatism are the main ideological bases of the leading party Prosperous Armenia (Europeran Friends of Armenia, 2012).

7.2.2.2.The Product

The Tsarukyan Alliance's pre-election program starts with a letter from Gagik Tsarukyan, which focuses on the power of the people, who can help to create a prosperous Armenia. He mentions that the April 2nd elections are important, and the participation of the people is the best way to have free and fair elections. He mentions that all political actors need to understand their responsibility. "I already said, that I came to carry my cross, and I assure you, I'm gonna carry it until the end."

Tsarukyan Alliance thinks that they deserve people's votes because 1. They have the political will do drag Armenia out of the economic and social crisis, 2. They need a wide public support. If they receive the 50+1 votes they will address their political program with the 15 cornerstone clauses. The table below shows the focus of the program and the 15 action points. Corruption, Justice, Human Rights were referenced but the emphasis on them was too small and that is why they do not appear it the graph.
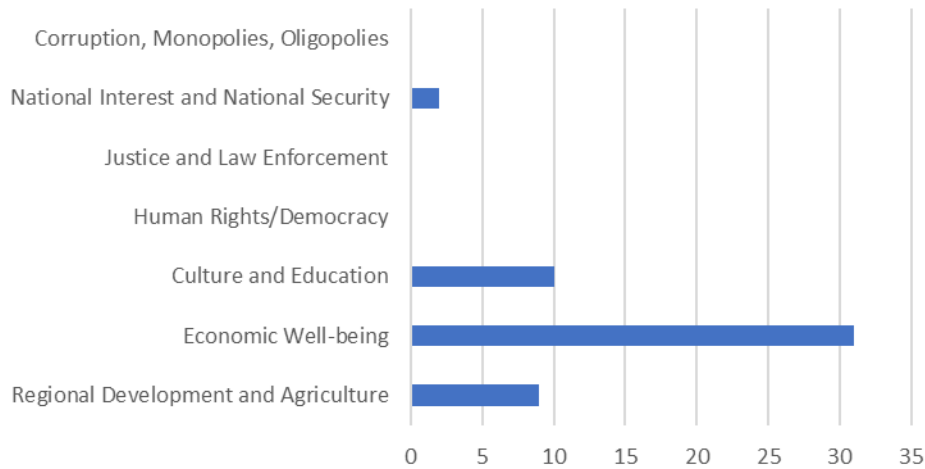
Figure 9:Tsarukyan Alliance Agenda

The above mentioned 15 points all concern the economic well-being. These are rather the steps that they would undertake, as soon as they take the offcie. There are no long-term implications. The steps proposed are specific, but they do not show a vision or the approaches of the party.

The pre-election program ends with the aim of the party, which is having a strong country, developing economy, prosperous family and honorable citizens; and the main slogan.

7.2.2.3.Place

The campaign starts from Tavush. Ten different campaign groups and Gagik Tsarukyan simultaneously travel to the region's communities, after which in the bigger city of that region people met Tsarukyan.

7.2.2.4.Promotion

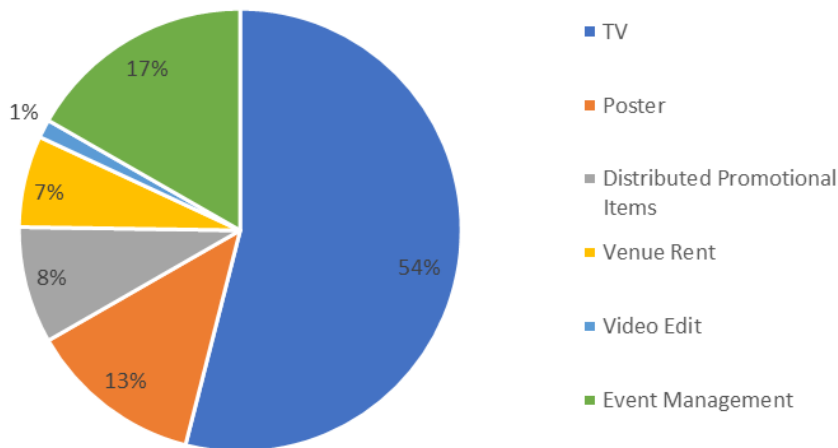*Financial resources:* Total spending amounts to 156.361.270 AMD.

Figure 10: Budget Allocation, Tsarukyan Alliance, 2017

Even though Tsarukyan Alliance had sufficient funds, they did not spend any of it on online promotional channels.

Distributed Promotional Items*:* Brochures, the pre-election program, flags, fliers, visit-cards, flowers.

Social Media: The Facebook page of the newly-formed Tsarukyan Alliance was created specifically for the campaign (PR) purposes during the campaign preparation stage. 62% of the materials posted on the official page of the Tsarukyan Alliance were the materials of peoples' warm reception organized in different villages and towns for the leader of the Alliance, 11% of the content touched upon social issues and 15% - the economy. Tsarukyan Alliance increased its FB likes by 1,633.

Even though Enfiajyan and other Tsarukyan Alliance members were active on social media, the level and the quality of social media management was much lower than that of the competitors. Their pages had low interactivity and visualization rates, which means their engagement with FB was poor (Region Research Center, 2017)**.**

Video: The <u>promotional video</u> that has 2 minutes and 25 seconds, duration starts and ends with the Tsarukyan Alliance logo. First, the video features a deconstructed and non-functional buildings, in dark colors. Then Gagik Tsatukyan starts to speak. His speech is combined with gradually improving situation and his interaction with the people. He mentions that the team is not in the race for power, or their own benefits, "I really love my nation" he mentions.

Tsarukyan appears or speaks in the video for 69 seconds, which is 47 % of the whole video. He speaks about the necessity to build this country together little by little.

The video mentions the tens of thousands of jobs and favorable conditions that "they" have created (as it is an alliance, but it seems like the reference is about Tsarukyan and not about Prosperous Armenia Party or any of the other parties in the alliance). In the video it is also mentioned that the Alliance aims to create an image of an Armenia where people forget the path of migration. They finalize with mentioning their love towards the Armenian nation and that they love their motherland and know how to build a strong and prosperous Armenia.

The video which started with the ruins slowly transforms into images of many hardworking people, especially on construction. The growth becomes more rapid towards the end escalating into a collage of Tsarukyan interacting with ordinary people, during openings of various organizations, some of the created job places (e.g. Noy cognac factory). The last scene includes a flat city miniature that within seconds grows into skyscrapers.

Brochure: The first page of the brochure features Gagik Tsarukyan, the Alliance logo, and the slogan. On the next page, again there was a photograph of Tsarukyan and his letter which was used in pre-election program. On the final page there was another photo of the leader with

the 15 action points of the program. Regarding the colors the dark shade creates a perception of power and fearlessness (Kotler & Levy, 1969).

Media: Tsarukyan bloc had 36 positive and 6 negative statements made regarding the bloc. The large part of the positive statements was made on Kontron TV channel. Also, the party received a huge portion of airtime before the official start of the campaign, amounting to almost the half of the airtime, at the same TV station (Region Research Center, 2017).

7.2.2.5.Competitive Advantage

Leader's performance: Tsarukyan and the amount of charitable activities that he is involved in is huge in the eyes of the public. He supports sportsmen, students, socially vulnerable groups etc and many people support him for that kindness.

7.2.2.6.Main Promotional Tools

Leader image: His previously activities and the wide smile that is being used in most of the visual contents.

Ideology: Emphasis on economic well-being, which convinces many people especially the ones, who currently do not enjoy proper living conditions.

8. Research Findings

8.1.Comparative Analysis Findings/Identified trends

As an answer to the research question whether the political system change has influenced the political marketing tool usage, it can be concluded that there is no enough evidence to claim that the political system change influenced the campaigning behavior of the electioneers.

As a result of the comparative research of the findings of 2 sets of multiple embedded case studies the following trends were identified:

- The fund expenditure on social media ads and web design is growing and the expenditure on broadcast media is decreasing, showing that the electioneers are migrating from offline media to online media.

- As a result of this change, the political marketing communication methods are becoming diversified.

- Political parties began to outsource marketing services, which means that the political actors started to comprehend the vital role of political marketing in campaigning.

- The visualization rate and the interactivity rate of the pages of political parties/candidates are on a grow.

- The electioneers are exploring and finding out about new tools used in social media platforms. If in 2013 the usage of hashtags was an exciting activity, after 2017 parties need to think of generating creative social media campaigns and come up with engaging social media content.

- Celebrity endorsements remain as popular as they were in 2013. The challenge for the parties is choosing the right endorser, who matches the party image.

- Pre-election programs are losing content and gaining form. This means that it is becoming harder to identify the actual "political offering" of parties.

- Decentralization is another trend, which will be widely used. Regional tours and having offices in different communities ensures interaction with the potential voters.

- The amount of work is gradually increasing the voter interests are rapidly changing. As we saw Some parties started to prepare for the campaign much earlier than they were used to, in order to keep up with the voter needs. This means that the political market in

Armenia is moving towards permanent campaigning to be able to accept the challenges of the environment.

- The importance of human resources is increasing, as the electioneering requires more intellectual work and more physical effort than it used to. Finding the right people for the team will ease the campaign organization process.

- Distribution materials are becoming more diverse and more creative. If booklets and flags were the usual promotional materials used in 2013, in 2017 parties showed more creativity towards this by printing their logo on candies, iphone cases, etc.

8.2. Case Study Analysis Results

As clearly seen from the table, the most popular political marketing tool throughout the studied campaigns was the leader image. Next in the row were the policy focus and the ideology. Finally, the team image, symbolism and appeal to emotion were some of the other rarely used tools used during pre-election campaigns in Armenia.

Party	Competitive Advantage	Main Tools Used
RPA, 2013	Human Resources Party Structures	Appeal to Emotion Policy Focus
Heritage	Leader Image/Personality	Leader Image Symbolism Criticism of the Competitor
RPA, 2017	Financial resources Human Resources	Leader Image Policy Focus The Team Image

Tsarukyan Bloc	Leader's Performance	Ideology
		Leader Image

Figure 11: Tools used in Political Marketing Campaigns:2013&2017

As calculation based on the results of the table below, it can be claimed that 33,3% of the communicated policy agendas did not match or matched only partially with the officially presented policy agendas, which means, that the actual and communicated products are not significantly different.

Party	Actual Product	Communicated Product
Heritage	1.Corruption, Monopolies, Oligopolies 2. National Interest & National Security 3. Culture and Education	1. Economic Well-being and living standards 2. National Interest & National Security 3. Education and Culture
RPA, 2013	1. National Interest and security 2. Culture and Education 3. Economic Well-being	1. Domestic Freedoms 2. Economic Situation 3. Security
RPA, 2017	1. National Interest and security 2. Economic Well-being 3. Culture and Education	1. Conflict 2. Economy 3. Social Issues
Tsarukyan Alliance	1. Economic well-being 2. Culture & Education 3. Regional Development	1. Social Issues 2. Economy 3. In-Country Regional issues

Figure 12: Actual and communicated products: Degree of Compliance

9. Conclusion

In the scopes of this research project the 2013 presidential and 2017 parliamentary election campaigns were analyzed in a multiple embedded case study analysis of the winner and runner up parties of each election. The election campaigns of each year were separately analyzed and later compared with each other. This qualitative research was conducted with the help of tools such as visual content analysis, text-based content analysis, secondary data analysis etc.

The four main questions that this research project aimed to answer were:

1) *How were the political marketing tools used in pre-election campaigns?* To determine the used political marketing tools a secondary research data analysis, content analysis and financial allocation data were explored. The main political marketing tool used during the above-mentioned pre-election campaigns was the leader image. The second one was the policy focus or the ideology. Other tools such as appeal to emotion and the 'team image' were used to compete during the campaign.

2) *Did the change of the political system affect the choice of political marketing tools?* The information available at this point is not sufficient to claim that these two data sets have a strong correlation.

3) *What are the recent political marketing trends?* Some very interesting political marketing trends were developed during and as a result of these two elections. The most obvious trend in the Armenian political market, that the comparative analysis clearly derived, is the migration of the parties from broadcast media to online media. Another Interesting trend is the new habit of the parties to outsource marketing activities, which in its turn shows that the political marketing discourse is not absent from the discussions and is expecting an interesting growth.

4) *Are political marketing tools effective in transferring the 'political promise' to the voters?* As established in the theoretical framework, 'political promise' refers to a set of concerns and policy proposals officially declared by the party/candidate. The source of that information is the per-election program. 66.7% of the political agenda priorities were properly communicated to the public, thus the political marketing channels were successful in adequately transferring the 'political promise' (i.e. the declared political product derived from the election program).

Not only this research helped to describe political marketing activities which were not viewed at from the marketing point of view, but it also opened some room for new research projects.

10.References

Adolphsen, M. (2009). Branding in Election Campaigns: Just a Buzzword or a New Quality of Political Communication? *MEDIA@LSE Electronic MSc Dissertation Series*.

AMA. (1960). Retrieved April 16, 2018, from https://www.ama.org/Pages/default.aspx

Downs, A. (1957). An Economic Theory of Democracy. *Harper and Row*.

Election Guide. (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2018, from http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/12/

Esser, F., & Strömbäck, J. (2012). Comparing Election Campaign Communication. In F. Esser & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), Handbook of Comparative Communication Research. *Handbook of Comparative Communication Research*.

Europeran Friends of Armenia. (2012). *Armenia 2012: An Introduction to the political party landscape.* Yerevan.

Gamble, A. (1974). The Conservative Nation. London.

Hunt, S. (1976). The Nature and Scope of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*.

Karlsen, R. (2009). Campaign communication and the Internet: Party strategy in the 2005 Norwegian election campaign. *Journal of Elections*.

Kelley, S. (1956). Professional Public Relations and Political Power. Baltimore.

Kolowich, L. (2017, November 3). *Color Psychology in Marketing [Infographic]*. Retrieved May 7, 2018, from https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/psychology-of-color

Kotler, P., & Levy, S. (1969). Broadening the Concept of Marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 10-15.

Nielsen, S. W. (2017). On Political Brands: A Systematic Review of the. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Niffenegger, P. (1989). Strategies for success from the political marketers. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 45-51.

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission. (2013). *INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION: Republic of Armenia, Presidential Election, 18 February 2013.* Yerevan.

O'shaughnessy, D. S. (2007). Theory and Concept Development in Political Marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

O'shaughnessy, Henneberg, D. S., & J., P. N. (2007). Theory and Concept Development in Political Marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Region Research Center. (2013). *Facebook as a Campaign Platform in Armenia.* Yerevan.

Region Research Center. (2017). *Armenian Online Media and Facebook Platforms in the 2017 Parliamentary Elections.* Yerevan.

Reid, D. (1988). Marketing the Political Product. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34-47.

Robert P. Ormrod, S. C. (2010). Strategic Political Postures and Political Market Orientation: Toward an Integrated Concept of Political Marketing Strategy. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Savigny, H. (2003). Political Marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Scammell, M. (2009). Political Brands and Consumer Citizens: The Rebranding of Tony Blair. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

Temple, M. (2013). The Media and the Message. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

The Committee for Open Democracy. (2013). *Analysis of the 2013 Armenian Presidential Election and Recommendation.*

Winchester, T., Hall, J., & Binney, W. (2016). Conceptualizing Usage in Voting Behavior for Political Marketing: An Application of Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Wortmann, D., & Farrell, M. (1987). Parties strategies in the electoral market: Political marketing in West Germany, Britain and Ireland. *European Journal of Political Research*.

Wring, D. (1997). Reconciling Marketing with Political Science: Theories of Political Marketing. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 651-663.

Yerevan Press Club. (2013). *Armenian Broadcast Media Coverage of Parliamentary Elections in 2012, Presidential Elections in 2013 and Elections to the Yerevan Council of Elders in 2013.* Yerevan.

Yerevan Press Club. (2017). *Monitoring of Armenian Broadcast Media Coverage of Election to RA National Assembly on April 2, 2017.* Yerevan.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Reseach: Design and Methods.* Washington D.C.

I agree to have this research paper posted on the AGBU Papazian library database for an open access to the AUA community.