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„Coverage of Women politicians in Armenian print and  
online Media during Pre-electoral campaign in May 2012“

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## **1. Introduction**

Armenian Parliamentary elections in 2012 were the fifth elections of the legislature after the country gained independence in 1991. The elections were marked with increased number of women, who gained seats in the parliament (Table 4). The prior year the quota of women's representation in the Parliament was increased to 15%, although even the previous quota of 10% was never achieved.

After the elections were over, the number of women in the parliament was all-time high (Table 4). There may be various reasons, why women still get less seats in Parliament than they can, however that issue is so large and complex that needs a separate research and is not the main focus of this thesis.

This thesis has the aim to study the case of representation of women in Armenian media during the Parliamentary elections in 2012, in order to reveal the aspects of women's representation in media in a country, where no formal boundaries exist for women to get into politics, but where the patriarchal order of the society is still dominant.

The subject of the research is the representation of female politicians in six Armenian media outlets (3 online outlets and 3 printed outlets). The outlets were chosen on the basis of their diverse ideological affiliation or the absence thereof.

The research is conducted based on monitoring of publications of selected Armenian media outlets. The research was narrowed to the articles that mentioned female politicians, candidates for becoming members of the parliament.

The thesis is an attempt to demonstrate and outline the volume and structure of media coverage of women in media during the pre-election period of parliamentary elections in 2012 that took place in Armenia. The cases selected for the research are analyzed to identify elements of functionalist theory of women's role in the society. As van Zoonen (1994) states, media reflect society's dominant social values and symbolically denigrate women, either by not showing them at all, or by depicting them in stereotypical roles. The models that media offer are restrictive and endanger the development of girls and women into complete human beings and socially valuable workers. Hence, the goal of the research is to investigate to what extent the Armenian Media reflected women in traditional models and stereotypes.

## **2. Armenian Women in public and political life**

### **2.1. Historical background**

The elections in 2012 were the 5th parliamentary elections in Armenia since the country got its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Women's involvement in public and political life in Armenia in 20th century has been mostly determined by the official policy of the USSR towards women. According to that policy there has been no gender distinction between men and women and women were equal to men in all walks of life. Needless to say there were no formal boundaries for women's participation in arts, politics, economy and culture.

“The most important step is the elimination of private property. Only this way we can open the route of true liberation of women. Liberation from “domestic slavery”. (Lenin, 1920 cited by Kurganov, 1968)

Nevertheless, the real situation with inclusion of women into social and political life in Soviet society remained mostly declarative and the representation of women in the political apparatus of the Communist Party was poor.

**Table 1 Women's representation in the Communist Party of the USSR (Kurganov 1968), own representation.**

|  | % in population | % in the Communist Party | % in the Central Comitee of the party | % in the governing body of the Party (Politbyuro) |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|  |                 |                          |                                       |                                                   |

|       |       |       |       |      |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Men   | 45.8% | 79.1% | 97.2% | 100% |
| Women | 54.2% | 20.9% | 2.8%  | 0    |

**Table 2 Women's inclusion in the governing bodies of the Communist Party of the USSR (Kurganov 1968), own representation.**

|                                                     | Total number of members | Men | Women |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------|
| Governing body of the Party (Politbyuro)            | 11                      | 11  | 0     |
| Candidates for inclusion in the governing body      | 8                       | 8   | 0     |
| Secretariat                                         | 11                      | 11  | 0     |
| Members of the Central Committee                    | 195                     | 191 | 4     |
| Candidates for inclusion into the Central Committee | 165                     | 159 | 6     |

The data represented in tables 1 and 2 show the number of women in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union compare to the number of women in key (decision making) bodies of the Communist Party.

As the data in Table 2 shows, women were disproportionally represented in the key decision-making bodies of the communist party, despite their declarative inclusion in the public, political life of the USSR.

Declarative inclusion of women in the political life of the Soviet Union had practical reasons. The first and most important was that women represented the majority of the overall population (Table 1) and declaring their political liberty would mean more votes and support for the communist party.

There is no data about women's voting patterns in the early years of the Soviet Union, however considering the fact that women first got the right to vote under Soviet rule one can assume that women supported the Communist ideology more than the previous monarchic-feudal ideology, where women didn't have particular political weight.

It is worth mentioning that the overall representation of women in various levels of Communist party and other political bodies in the Soviet Union was very diverse; however they rarely achieved high ranks in the party or the government. For example, the number of women in the Soviet parliament (the Supreme Soviet) was steadily increasing: in the period from 1962-1974 the number of women increased from 27% (in 1962) to 31 % (in 1974). In contrast to that, during 70 years of Soviet rule, the Soviet government had just 2 ministers□ P. Zhemchuzhina, (minister of Fishing Industry, Jan-Nov. 1939) and Y. Furtseva (Minister of Culture 1960-1974).

The only female head of local executive branch in Soviet Republics was K. Prunskene in Lithuanian SSR. (Kochkina, 1999)

During the first Armenian Republic, which existed for only two years (1918-1920) prior to joining to the USSR, women also took part in political life of the country. In the first and last parliamentary elections in 1919 women occupied 3 seats (out of 80). (Zeytlyan, 1992)

Although there were no female ministers in the government of the first Republic of Armenia, Diana Abgar(ian), was the first female ambassador in the history appointed in 1920. She served as the ambassador of Armenia to Japan until Armenia joined the Soviet Union. ( Zeytlyan, 1992)

In modern Armenia, the constitution and other legislative acts support women's participation in Elections and a quota has been assigned for women's representation both in the National Assembly as well as in electoral lists of participating parties. The 15% quota has never been achieved so far, although women have actively participated in elections. Moreover, it is a requirement of the electoral legislation, that women should constitute at least 20% of the electoral list of parties . (Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia)

The table below shows the number of women on pre-electoral lists of leading parties.

**Table 3. Women’s Political Participation in the 2012 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Armenia, compiled by author.**

| Party                             | Percentage of women candidates | Number of women elected | Number of seats in NA | % of women |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Armenian Revolutionary Federation | 31.7%                          | 0                       | 5                     | 0%         |
| Prosperous Armenia                | 21.8%                          | 2                       | 37                    | <10%       |
| Republican Party                  | 21.3%                          | 9                       | 69                    | 12%        |
| Heritage                          | 24.6%                          | 1                       | 5                     | 20%        |
| Rule of law                       | 20.2%                          | 1                       | 6                     | 21%        |



|                                     |       |   |   |     |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---|---|-----|
| Armenian<br>National<br>Congress    | 20.3% | 1 | 7 | 22% |
| Total % of<br>women of in the<br>NA |       |   |   | 14% |

Women's representation in Armenian parliament has been growing since 1999.

**Table 4. Number of women elected to the Armenian Parliament in period of 1995 - 2012 years (OSCE 2007), compiled by author.**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>% of women in parliament</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1995        | 6.3%                            |
| 1999        | 3.1%                            |
| 2003        | 5.3%                            |
| 2007        | 9.2%                            |
| 2012        | 10.7%                           |
| Avg.        | ~7%                             |

During the parliamentary elections in 1995 the ruling party-Armenian National Movement formed a coalition with a number of other political parties, one of which was the faction called “Shamiram” (National Assembly of Armenia, 1996), a political party that had mostly women as members. The coalition won the majority of seats in 1995 elections, thus Shamiram had its representation in parliament: 8 MPs, all women. After the resignation of the President of the Republic in 1998, Shamiram has never taken part in elections.

Elections in 1999 were conducted in a completely different political environment and because Shamiram was dismissed women's representation in elections was diminished.

1999 saw the lowest female representation in the National Assembly (Table 4). Despite the fact that in 2003 elections women's representation in the National Assembly increased slightly, it was only in 2007 that the female representation in the National Assembly reached and surpassed that of 1995 (Table 4).

In fact, the parliamentary elections in 2007 saw the biggest increase in women's representation in the legislative power of the Republic of Armenia (3.9%), (Table 4).

As of October 2012 Armenia occupies the 112th place among 145 countries in terms of women's representation in the legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union).

The elections in the National Assembly are held by Majoritarian lists and by Minoritarian lists. The latter is essentially the list of parties. 41 seats out of 131 seats are reserved for majoritarian candidates. During the last elections, only two women got elected from majoritarian lists. Both are representatives of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (Central Electoral Commission of Armenia, 2012).

For every majoritarian seat there were in average 3 candidates throughout the country. Only ten women were competing for the seats in the National Assembly (Central Electoral Commission of Armenia, 2012). In fact, in two electoral districts, two women were competing with each other, thus eliminating the potential maximal number of women getting seats in the National Assembly from majoritarian lists.

## **2.2. Problem statement**

Women constitute 51, 4% of the population, they are also the most educated. (Armenian National Statistical Service, 2012)

However, in the Gender Inequality Index Armenia occupies the 66<sup>th</sup> place among 138 countries.

The GII is calculated based on several indicators of women's representation in different aspects of social life as well as their life expectancy, fertility rate etc.

On the other hand, women seem to have no legal barriers for entering into different domains of social, cultural and political life of Armenia. (International Finance Corporation/World Bank, 2011) Nevertheless, the gender analysis shows that there are major issues regarding the deprivation of women, especially related to their access to human opportunities and their agency i.e., participation of women in all aspects of life and to the development. The existing gap between the legally guaranteed rights and insufficient opportunities to enjoy them in practice hampers the elimination of gender discrimination in Armenian society. (The Millennium Development Goals National Progress Report , UN/RoA Government, Yerevan 2010)

In real life however, despite the absence of legal barriers, economic performance of women in Armenia remains mediocre according to the Gender Gap Index circa 2011.

Notably, women's wages are lower than that of men by approx 39% , despite the fact that there are more women with university diploma and higher education than men. (World Economic Forum, 2011. Gender Gap Index 2011)

The same report indicates that women's political engagement is very low. Two criteria of political engagement of women are taken into account: women in ministerial position (ranked 83th) and women in Parliament (ranked 107 c.2011).

In order to provide dynamics of women's engagement in different aspects of social life, the World Economic Forum provides data for several years of monitoring.

According to that data, the level of educational attainment in Armenia has been consistently good, whereas economic equality has actually slightly worsened during the last 6 years of monitoring. In contrast, political empowerment has slightly increased since 2007.

In 2012 one of the few women taken part in Parliamentary elections, as an independent candidate Narineh Movsisyan stated: "By putting myself forward, I dispelled the long-held myth that one needs support from some quarters to become a candidate. Under a total electoral blockade, with no campaign headquarters, no full-time campaigning, and no media visibility, I still managed to win 1,340 votes," Movsisyan told IWPR. "I don't consider myself defeated". (Mkrtchyan, 2012)

Naira Zohrabian (elected PM) noted that Armenia's parliamentary delegates to the Council of Europe and to Euronest, an assembly that groups the European Union and six of its eastern neighbors.

"This is no coincidence", she said. "It is specifically women who've been entrusted with representing Armenia's interests in important international arenas".

Zohrabyan, who is now serving her second term in parliament, believes other women only have themselves to blame if they cannot break into politics.

“We need to overcome this complex within ourselves before we demand that men respect gender equality”, she said. (Mkrtchyan 2012)

The common denominator in both statements is that, there are obviously problems with women's representation in politics they can be defined as:

- Psychological barriers
- Lack of media visibility
- Harsh and unfair competition (electoral blockade)
- Lack of resources for campaigning - this last statement is not gender specific, but women probably face the issue more frequently than men, because of distrust by public.

This thesis will be focusing on defining the level of women's visibility in Armenian media during the Parliamentary Elections in 2012 and investigating the context of their representation.

The OSCE/ODIHR has conducted monitoring during the whole period of the electoral campaign and its report is publicly available. The monitoring also includes a section on Media (with no focus on gender-specific coverage, though). The report goes on indicating, that overall the campaign was covered equally and fairly. According to the report, all major political parties got equal broadcast time, guaranteed by the law. (OSCE/ODIHR 2012)

### **3. Theoretical Background**

Since its first manifestations, feminist theory has evolved enormously and today one of the aspects feminist scholarships is the problem of women's representation in the media and popular culture. As the feminist discourse has evolved, it has become a subject of a substantial change.

Yet the history of feminist thought has provided its own labels (liberal, radical, Marxist-socialist, etc.), which, however, signal to the broader public that feminism is not a monolithic ideology, that all feminists do not think alike, and that, like all time-honored modes of thinking, feminist thought has a past as well as a present and a future. (Sarikakis, 2011) With that said, feminism is not a rigid area of study and it is susceptible to various influences of time, ideology, dominating political powers etc.

Since the Soviet communist ideology derives from teachings of Marx, it is worth noting that the influences in feminism are also susceptible to the Marxist ideology.

Marxist-socialist feminists (e.g. Gimenez, 2005; Holmstrom, 1982; Jaggar, 1983; Malos, 1980; Young, 1980) focus on class division as the major factor in women's oppression, paying attention to the intersections between women's work and women's self-perception. (Sarikakis, 2011)

Lenin (1968), the founding father of the USSR himself stated: "The most important step is the elimination of private property. Only this way we can open the route of true liberation of women. Liberation from "domestic slavery". Thus putting feminism in the framework of political or ideological struggle and hence including feminism in the agenda of Communist ideology in the Soviet Union.

As it was mentioned earlier, women's issues and feminism in as such are largely influenced by the communist ideology that dominated in Armenia (and other ex-soviet countries) for 70 years.

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Marxist-Leninist approach to feminism vanished from the agenda as a dominant ideological framework.

With that ideological gap unfulfilled, the feminist discourse was left largely to the individuals, various organizations and of course, the media.

Media production, for instance, is neither a straight-forward derivative of the malicious intents of capitalist male owners, nor is it merely the product of the sexist inclinations of media professionals. It cannot be seen as a simple black box transmitting the patriarchal, sexist or capitalist values of its producers. [...] It is better characterized by tensions and contradictions between individuals with different professional values and personal opinions, and between conflicting organizational demands such as creativity and innovation on the one hand and the commercial need to be popular among a variety of social groups on the other hand. Two other elements of the model have been fundamentally reconceptualised, namely 'distortion' and 'socialization'. In this chapter I shall discuss the critiques on these concepts which together provide the building blocks of the cultural studies perspective which will inform the remainder of this book. (van Zoonen, 1994)

Hence it would be fair to notice that in the context of absence of any dominating feminist ideology in the country Armenia, the representation of women in general and especially in politics was left to individual choices of media owners, reporters and editors.

This hypothesis assumes an investigation on the subject of the influence of women's media coverage during the electoral campaign on the voters' choices. Ross (2004) claims that recent

research studies exploring more precisely the contours of that relation and the media's antenna and actual role in influencing voting behavior have identified a complex set of effects with several variables, such as gender, party, education, and ethnicity, all playing a part (LeDuc 1940; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; West 1991, cited in Ross, 2004). What is a link less clear-cut, though, is the specific identification of cause-and-effect relations between exposure to political campaigning and actual voting decision, although most studies suggest that the media are more likely to reinforce existing attitudes than change them, and therefore have a negligible real effect on influencing final outcomes. (Ross, 2004)

However, the influence of the media coverage on the elections is yet unclear. And as Shapiro and Page (1992) claim: "People probably do not need large amounts of information to make rational voting choices. Cues from like-minded citizens and groups (including cues related to demographic characteristics and party labels) may be sufficient, in an environment where accurate information is available to permit voters to act as if they had all the available information". (McKelvey and Ordeshook 1986, cited in Wittman 1989, cited in Page and Shapiro, 1992)

If soaps are regarded as the archetypal "women's" genre, then news and current affairs are seen as of almost exclusive interest to men. It is often taken almost as read that women are not interested in news and that, as a genre, it is very much the domain of men. (Ross, 2004)

If women leaders are described in a common way in the news, despite these differences, this suggests the media are viewing women through a stereotyped lens. (Norris 1997, cited in Ross, 2004)

Because of the nature of the research, it is worth looking at the patterns of usage of the technologies between men and women in order to further clarify the big picture of women's representation in the media. Half of the news outlets monitored in the study are purely online



publications, whereas all the monitored media outlets have online versions. Hence it is worthwhile to investigate the patterns of women's representation in online media.

Internet is considered to be a generally masculine media and the people who are running online media are mostly men. The same phenomenon is observed in Armenia. All three editors in chief of online news outlets monitored are men. The tiny proportion of women working in senior positions in the media, including in film, satellite, and even new media, makes clear that the problem is not "just" with news media, but also with the media industry more generally. Although changes in media and communications technology and the increasingly global nature of mass media are forcing a reconsideration of the relationship of media to gender, it is nonetheless clear from those studies that focus on women's involvement in new media that despite their egalitarian image, new media industries — like old media and other creative industries — are neared by the persistence of gender in-equalities. (Pitt 2003 cited in Ross, 2004)

Newsroom culture that masquerades as a neutral "professional journal-ism ethos" is, for all practical (and ideological) purposes, actually organized around a man-as-norm and woman-as-interloper structure. And what feminist scholarship shows, when applied to a range of national contexts, is that these structures are remarkably similar and remarkably stable over temporal and geographical dimensions, as ample empirical and anecdotal evidence shows. (Ross, 2004)

#### 4. Methods

Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000)

The research approach of this thesis is the one suggested by Wimmer & Dominick. (2010)

- **Problem Selection** - Media coverage of female candidates during pre-electoral campaign in Armenia. Media coverage of female politicians is one of the cornerstone issues in modern feminism. It is especially important given the fact that women are actually under-represented in the Parliament. Although, formally there are no barriers of entry into politics or governing bodies, it doesn't ensure automatic equal representation of men and women both in politics and in media. The quota for women's representation in the parliament has never been fulfilled in modern Armenia. One of the probable causes for that might be the inequality of representation of women in the media or their distorted representation. This thesis aims to investigate the media coverage of female politicians during the election campaign in 2012 in Armenia as well as to compare the coverage of women in the American media.
- **Review of existing research and theory** - There are currently no researches publicly or otherwise available in that field in Armenia, although there are several researches on women's involvement in public life in Armenia, one of which is cited in this thesis (Research conducted by CSRN on women's involvement in the Economy of Armenia). A lot of research has been conducted about the issue of representation of women in politics during the last decades. Since the representation of women in politics is a complex phenomenon, it is also connected to the issue of women's representation in media. This

thesis is based mainly on the research about the representation of women in politics and in media. Since this thesis has a local context (it focuses on the topic of women's representation in Armenia) it would be very useful if any research on women's representation in the media in Armenia was accessible, however, there is no known research on the issue in Armenia or about Armenia.

- **Statement of hypothesis or research question** - The lack of research on the topic of representation of women in Armenian media has posed some questions that this thesis is looking forward to answer. One of the questions is:
  - Are women equally or fairly represented in the local media during the election?  
With that said, is the female candidates' coverage in the media during the elections in 2012 in Armenia relevant to their participation in the electoral process. Do the media represent women candidates to the same degree as they are represented in politics?
  - How were women candidates represented in Armenian media during the 2012 elections? Was the representation biased? If yes, then how? What are the main reasons of distortion of female candidates' images?
- **Research Methodology** - The research for this thesis was conducted by monitoring six Armenian media outlets' coverage of the election campaign in 2012 as well as interviews with women candidates running for a seat in the Parliament. Three of the six media outlets are online newspapers and three are printed newspapers. The aim of the monitoring is to reveal several aspects of women's representation in the media. The researched texts are organized around cases, where women were represented. The

rationale behind this approach is to understand the difference of coverage of the same case by different media outlets. This will help to understand whether every media outlet has its own distinct way of portraying women, or not. Another reason for breaking down the research into cases is the nature of the research topic, it is impossible to capture all women who participate in elections. Hence the need for systematic breakdown of the media monitoring results into cases rather than media outlets.

- **Data Collection** - Has been carried out in order to understand the qualitative and quantitative aspects of women's representation in Armenian media. It is equally important to understand the quality and the volume of women's representation in the media. The data for the research was found from media monitoring that has been carried out. In order to organize the media monitoring, a series of web searches with names of female candidates have been performed. Since the search would bring all the articles about mentioned female candidates, the search has been restricted to the results (articles) published during period of election campaign. Further searches were performed restricting not only the date range of the publications, but also the publishers. This restriction included only the six outlets monitored. The total amount of publications in monitored outlets during the given timeframe was 2668. 260 of which mentioned women. For the sake of narrowing down the sample, among the 260 articles were chosen the ones that representing cases involving women politicians.

- “Hayots Ashkharh” (Armenian World) Newspaper had 247 articles about election campaign of which 12 (4.85%) were about female politicians.
- “Aravot” (Morning) Daily had 192 articles about election campaign of which 19 (10%) were about female politicians.

- “Yerkir” (Earth) Daily newspaper had 378 publications about elections, 43 (11.3%) of which are about female candidates.
- News.am published 745 articles about elections during the observed period, of which 80 (10.73%) were about women or women’s issues.
- Lagir.am published 301 articles about elections, of which 26 (8.3 %) were about women candidates.
- Lurer had 805 articles about elections, of which 86 (10.68%) about women.

The study shows that 30,5% of articles are commentaries, 67% of all articles are news reports and only 2.5% are interview with women candidates.

- **Analysis and interpretation of data** - Will be made based on the data collected in the previous step. The data gathered during the research is analyzed in the section 5 of this document. Because of the nature of the research, the represented analysis is more qualitative than quantitative. Several variables that affected the representation of women in media were identified. Each variable is discussed and analyzed. Candidates are also analyzed according to these variables. After studying and analyzing the variables, more general patterns are being discussed in the corresponding section. The pattern analysis is essentially a semantic analysis of texts written in the media. The textual analysis aims to identify the language used to describe female politicians.
- **Presentation of results** - This thesis itself is the representation of results. Section five as well as the conclusion part of the thesis delves into the results of the research, revealing different aspects of women’s representation in Armenian media. Also, using available scholarly literature, a comparison is being made between the representation of women in Armenian and American media.

- **Replication** - As Wimmer and Dominick (2010) concluded in their book on Mass Media Research, the results of any single study are, by themselves, only indications of what might exist. A study provides information that says, in effect, “This is what may be the case”. For others to be relatively certain of the results of any study, the research must be replicated, or repeated. Since the replication of the results is not an aim for this thesis, it is left for future researches.

## **5. Description of results**

Data collection was conducted online by examining six news outlets in Armenia. Three of them are printed daily newspapers; the other three are news websites.

Aravot Daily is a daily newspaper established in 1995. Most of the authors are women. It is not affiliated with any political party. Aravot Daily is considered as liberal news outlet.

Hayots Ashkhar is a daily newspaper established in 2005 it is affiliated with the Republican Party of Armenia, which is the ruling party in Armenia.

Yerkir is a daily newspaper. It is the official media outlet of the (ARF) Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Yerkir has a weekly extension.

Lragir.am was established in 2007, it is one of the oldest news websites in Armenia. The website features more of editorial content, rather than reporting. It is sponsored by the Open Society Foundation and is one of the liberal-oppositional websites in Armenia.

Lurer.com is another liberal website among the monitored websites, it was established in 2011. It runs a tri-lingual websites, although not all the content is translated into foreign languages.

News.am is one of the most popular news websites in Armenia. It was established in 2009. It is affiliated with the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

After conducting the monitoring of the abovementioned resources, it became clear that during the pre-electoral campaign the coverage of women candidates and women's issues was scarce and was evolving around several major topics or events presented below.

**Table 5. Number of articles in the researched media outlets and the amount of articles about female politicians based on own monitoring.**

|                                 | Articles about campaign in general | Articles concerning either to women politicians or to gender issues |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aravot (Morning)                | 192                                | 19                                                                  |
| Hayots Ashkhar (Armenian World) | 247                                | 12                                                                  |
| Yerkir (Earth)                  | 378                                | 43                                                                  |
| Lragir.am*                      | 301                                | 26                                                                  |
| Lurer.com                       | 805                                | 86                                                                  |
| News.am                         | 745                                | 80                                                                  |

Hence, we could determine the following major topics and events and several other news pieces that were unable to categorize under the main topics. The major women-related events were divided into 6 cases:

1. The conspiracy around the inclusion of Narineh Mirzoyan into the candidate list of the Republican Party and her further withdrawal
2. The events around the 40th electoral district, where two female candidates were nominates as majoritarian candidates
3. The saga of female candidate and her powerful opponent in the 1st electoral district
4. Women against Nikol Pashinyan
5. Women newsmakers
6. Heghineh Bisharyan's struggle with Yerkir Daily

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\* the difference in the numbered articles found on Lragir.am is a result of website downtime, because of that articles are researched till 26.04.2012



## **5.1 The Narineh Mirzoyan conspiracy (Case 1)**

### **Background**

Narineh Mirzoyan is the wife of a famous local documentary film director. Ms. Mirzoyan has never been active neither in public nor in political life of Armenia. She is a professor of medicine in Yerevan State Medical University. She became famous after the scandal, when her name was in the electoral candidates list of the Republican Party of Armenia without her consent. The issue gained a lot of publicity partly because her husband is a prominent opposition figure, involved in various civil movements. Ms. Mirzoyan claimed that she was never asked and never agreed to be a MP candidate from the Republican Party and that her inclusion was illegal. She later withdrew her candidacy from the list and never took part in the election. She also mentioned in her statement (Anon.A, 2012) (which was published on her behalf on her husband's Facebook account and later on Lragir.am) that she is regretting for the matter and she apparently signed documents without exactly knowing what she is signing and these documents happened to be application forms for registering a candidate.

### **How the media reacted to the issue**

Of the six media outlets monitored, only four covered the topic: Lragir.am, News.am, Lurer.com and Aravot Daily. Lurer.com had 3 articles about the topic, whereas other three outlets had 2 articles each on the subject matter.

What is worth mentioning is that in none of the articles, Narineh Mirzoyan's picture was posted. Instead, it was Tigran Khzmalyan's (her husband) picture that was posted along the articles except for two articles in News.am, where the articles were accompanied by impersonalized images. Furthermore, in none of the articles, the title featured Narineh Mirzoyan's name. Here again, all the titles were about “Khzmalyan's Wife”.

**Lurer.com** - published three articles on the issue. The main figure of the articles was Tigran Khzmalyan, his comments. No interview or interrogation or reference was ever made of Narineh Mirzoyan. The first article (Anon.B, 2012) expressed implicit suspicion about the fact that the oppositioner's wife was nominated as a ruling party's candidate without her consent. Furthermore, because Ms. Mirzoyan was technically still a candidate by the time of the first article in Lurer.com, the author of the article never even assumed that Ms. Mirzoyan has the right to participate in any political movement, even if her husband is in opposition. The second article (Anon.C, 2012) (republished from the “Haykakan Zhamanak” daily) stated that according to the information from the spokesman of the Central Electoral Commission Ms. Mirzoyan presented documents proving that she resided in the Republic for the last 5 years consecutively (this statement is a law regulation for registering candidates). That meant, that Ms. Mirzoyan has personally submitted these documents (another regulatory requirement to personally submit a statement of 5 years residence in the Republic). All this, according to the website, meant that Mr. Khzmalyan was lying, when he was claiming previously that the registration was without his wife's consent.

In the third article (Anon.D, 2012) Narineh Mirzoyan's husband was quoted as saying: “Just in this moment my wife is submitting her self-withdrawal application” (to the Central Electoral Commission).

In all the abovementioned articles the author is not specified.

**Lragir.am** - Published two articles about the issue. The first was essentially the copy of the statements of Tigran Khzmalyan and Narineh Mirzoyan. In fact, Narineh Mirzoyan's statement was posted on her husband's Facebook page on her behalf.

In her statement, Ms. Mirzoyan regretted for the accident and asked for understanding from people who know her, labeling the accident as a “*mistake*”. Ms. Mirzoyan explained her inclusion in the lists with “misunderstanding of the contents of the documents she was signing and that she herself bares all the responsibility of the mistake”. (Mirzoyan, 2012) She also stated that she was never interested in politics and never intended in running for the parliament. She went on adding in the same article: “Just as for every working Armenian woman, I have two poles in my life: my job and my family”. (Mirzoyan, 2012)

Days later “Sardarapat” movement, of which Ms. Mirzoyan's husband is a member, issued a statement (Anon.E, 2012) regarding the latest developments about Ms. Mirzoyan, accusing the Republican Party in illegal actions, when registering Ms. Mirzoyan as a candidate without her consent. That statement was published in Lragir.am as well.

**News.am** - Published two articles about the issue. None of the articles was about the scandal as such. These were official statements of the Central Electoral Commission about accepting the withdrawal application of several candidates (including Mirzoyan's) and approving the withdrawals. In both articles the title included Khzmalyan's name again.

**Aravot Daily** - Published two articles about the incident that involved Narineh Mirzoyan. Both articles were interviews. One (Zakharyan, 2012) of Mirzoyan's husband, where he described the situation with the inclusion, their further actions. The other article (Zakharyan, 2012) was an

interview with the representative of the Republican Party, where Mirzoyan was included as a candidate. Mr. Sharmazanov, the spokesman of the Republican Party told the reporter that Ms. Mirzoyan's inclusion was nothing extraordinary and that she wasn't included because of her husband's political activity as a member of an oppositional movement.

Both articles in Aravot Daily were written by a woman.

## **5.2. Gayaneh Arustamyan versus Men (Case 2)**

### **Background**

Gayaneh Arustamyan was a candidate from the liberal opposition coalition Armenian National Congress, who was running for a seat in the parliament as a majoritarian candidate in Yerevan. She was one of the few women candidates, who were nominated as majoritarian candidate. Ms. Arustamyan chose the first electoral district, where two other candidates were nominated: a candidate from the ruling Republican Party and a representative of a parliamentary minority. Both candidates were men, but that was their only similarity.

The candidate from the Republican Party (Rouben Hayraptyan) is a prominent oligarchic figure, a multi-millionaire and the head of the Armenian Football Federation. He has been involved in numerous scandals previously.

The other rival candidate was Stepan Safaryan, a representative of a parliamentary opposition minority. He and his party were very active during a number of civil movements that occurred in Armenia during the last several years.

It is important to mention that the campaign in this electoral district gained a lot of publicity due to several events. Hence this part of the media monitoring will be divided into two parts: events

where Ms. Arustamyan involved and events where she wasn't involved directly, but has made either comments or interviews. The two major events that happened during the campaign in this electoral district were Ms. Arustamyan's invitation to the debate that was rejected by the ruling party candidate and the beating up of Ms. Arustamyan and another candidate from the same coalition by unidentified people.

Ms. Arustamyan has invited her rivals, Mr. Hyarapetyan (Republican Party) and Stepan Safaryan (Heritage Party) to take part in a televised debate. Mr. Safaryan has accepted the invitation, while Mr. Hayrapetyan refused to take part in a debate with a woman, stating that he doesn't want to engage in political debates with a woman and that he is worried that she (Arustamyan) will scratch him.

### **How the media dealt with the issues**

Before diving into the media analysis, it is worth mentioning that the media outlets monitored in this research are partisan. That being said, there are outlets that represent a certain political movement or party, hence there is a layer of own political perspective, in the interpretation of facts, that not necessarily have something to do with gender issues.

So, in order to analyze the media response to Ms. Arustamyan's campaign, we will break the analysis into several parts: the incident with Mr. Hayrapetyan's statements, the beating up of Ms. Arustamyan and her colleague candidate.

**News.am** - Broke the news about R. Hayrapetyan's statement (Anon.F, 2012) that he refuses to publicly debate with Ms. Arustamyan, because she is a woman and he is afraid, that “she will beat him up”. The statement was quoted during the press conference held in April.

**Aravot.am** - Quoted Ms. Arustamyan saying: “This is an outstanding example of cynicism and gender inequality. I demand that Mr. Hayrapetyan apologized for his statements”. (Anon.G, 2012)

However, when the same daily published the news of Mr. Hayrapetyan ditching Ms. Arustamyan's request for a debate, the article was entitled “(Hayrapetyan) is inviting Levon Ter-Petrosyan to a debate”. The latter is a quote from the full statement of Hayrapetyan, where he stated that he refuses to debate with Arustamyan and is inviting the leader of the opposition (L. Ter-Petrosyan) to a debate. So the article's author took that very statement and made it a title, pushing Hayrapetyan's statement about a female candidate into the shadow. What's even more striking that the article featured Levon Ter-Petrosyan's huge picture instead of Hayrapetyan (the author of the quote). And the author of the article (Simonyan, 2012) is a woman, actually.

In a different article by the same author (a woman) covered the fact that R. Hayrapetyan ditched Ms. Arustamyan's invitation and quoted Mr. Hayrapetyan's full statement. (Simonyan, 2012)

**Lurer.com** - An opposition outlet that has widely supported and covered opposition candidates throughout the electoral campaign has also covered the incident about Hayrapetyan's famous comment. In particular, the website never made a separate article neither about Hayrapetyan's pressconference (where he made the statement), nor about the statement itself. Instead, the website interviewed Ms. Arustamyan about the subject matter and quoted her saying: “Apparently, Mr. Hayrapetyan assesses women based on other women in his surrounding. And I don't consider that statement seriously”. She also said, commenting on Hayrapetyan's statement that he's not going to debate with Arustamyan, because she is a woman: “If Mr. Hayrapetyan wanted to appear as a gentleman and not engage in a debate with me, I would urge him to withdraw his candidacy from the election as a gentleman”. This has been the only coverage of

the incident, where Ms. Arustamyan expressed her opinion about the accident that concerned her directly.

In an interview to a TV program, quoted (Anon.H, 2012) by Lurer.com, Mr. Hayrapetyan apologized for his statements, stating that he didn't mean to insult the candidate.

**Lragir.am** - Has not covered the story at all. Instead, in an article (Anon.I, 2012) published on April 12 Arustamyan's case was mentioned slightly in the context of different news. Nikol Pashinyan (a candidate from the same party as Ms. Arustamyan) said he would debate with R. Hayrapetyan, who previously mentioned that he doesn't want to debate with a woman, but is ready to debate with any man from the ANC candidate-list.

**Armworld.com** - the printed daily has no articles about the incident. What's even more interesting, there's no reference to Gayaneh Arustamyan in the newspaper at all.

**Yerkir.am** - No coverage

### **5.3 The 40th electoral district (Case 3)**

#### **Background**

The 40th electoral district is an electoral district in a remote town in the northeast of the country. The district caught much attention, when two women were nominated as candidates in the same district. It was one of the 3 other districts, where there were more that two women were nominated. The curiosity arose, when the background story broke about the nominations in that district. For many years, Mikael Vartanian, a multi-millionaire was the member of the parliament from that district, however during the last elections he refused to run for the parliament seat. Instead, two other women were nominated in the same district, who both work in the former

MP's company. It all started, when Vartanian appeared on the local TV announcing, that he is not running for the seat in the parliament, but he is supporting Marineh Marabian, a non-partisan candidate. Ms. Marabian, is the director of one of the factories, Mr. Vartanian owns. As time passed, another majoritarian candidate appeared that also happened to work in the same factory as a worker. After a while the third candidate appeared in the same district. The third candidate wasn't affiliated with Mr. Vartanian in any way. After the third candidate was nominated, Sousana Abrahamyan (the worker-candidate) submitted a withdrawal. Why? Because, according to the legislation, elections are not valid in an electoral district, if less then 2 candidates are taking part. So when the third candidate appeared, Ms. Abrahamyan was not necessary.

### **How the media covered the developments**

**Aravot.am** - kicks off the coverage by presenting the three candidates in the 40th district. (Sargsyan 2012) The author is representing all the candidates running for the parliament seat in the 40th district. The author mentions that the two candidates are from the same company. The article tells about the background of each candidate briefly. Ms. Marabian's background is represented in more details, including her education and the fact that speaks Arabic.

The next article is focusing on candidates' submitted statements of personal wealth. It appears that Ms. Marabian is wealthier then her opponent. In the same article, the author also concludes that Mr. Babajanyan's (the other candidate) strength is that he is a native of the region, where the electoral district is situated, thus he is better known than Ms. Marabian. According to the article's author, Ms. Marabian's strength is that she is backed by the ruling Republican party as well as the fact that Mikael Vartanian, is supporting the candidate's campaign financially. (Sargsyan, 2012)



In another article, (Sargsyan, 2012) entitled “The worker has quitted the campaign” the author (same as in all other articles about the subject) reports that the alternative (spare candidate) has withdrawn her candidacy. The only article in Aravot Daily that somehow describes Ms. Marabian's actual political plan is the coverage of a rally organized in Noyemberyan (the biggest town in the 40th electoral district). This is pretty much the only significant coverage (Sargsyan, 2012) of the campaign in the 40th district in Aravot Daily. The article starts off with a representation of the speech of governor of the Tavush region (where the 40th district is situated) during the rally organized by Ms. Marabian. The governor's speech was strange because he confused the electoral district number in his speech and also misspelled Ms. Marabian's surname. The governor then went on saying that the rally and the concert following the rally are organized by Ms. Marabian and Mr. Vartanian (former MP from the same electoral district). Then Ms. Marabian took the stage and gave a speech. Aravot daily reports that her main points were the support of local producers and that she will vote against laws that turn Armenia into a consumer of imported goods and not supporting local production.

**Lragir.am** - has devoted two articles to the elections in the 40th electoral district. The first article was published announcing the nomination of Sousana Abrahamyan. It was widely believed that Mikayel Vartanian would run for the seat, but at the very last moment the decision was made in the Ruling party that Mikayel Vartanian will not run for the seat the website reported. It was also surprising that the candidate has a "strange occupation" for a candidate. The author of the article (Ter-Matevosyan, 2012) expressed her surprise with the fact that an ordinary woman was running as an MP candidate. The author also wrote that apparently Ms. Abrahamyan is nominated in order to secure Ms. Marabian's victory, since earlier; Mikayel Vartanian appeared in a TV program in the local regional channel announcing that he's not going to run for

the office and that he is supporting Ms. Marabian. This article (Ter-Matevosyan, 2012) was published in Lragir.am earlier that month and was entitled “Under Vartanian's shadow”, featuring Mikayel Vartanian's picture.

**Lurer.com** - Didn't cover the conspiracy as a whole, but instead limited itself with reporting the further withdrawal of Sousana Abrahamyan from the campaign. The news (Anon.J, 2012) was a general article about 4 other withdrawals, which were announced and approved by the Central Electoral Commission. In a different article (Anon.K, 2012), Lurer.com mentioned Marabian's name as a general remark. The article was about Marabian's rival candidate, who was using the slogan of the former Interior Minister, who was later accused in criminal activities including murder. In that article, it was mentioned that Marabian is the rival candidate backed by Mikayel Vartanian and the ruling party.

**News.am** - Has not covered the topics itself, instead we could find re-published materials from printed outlets about the subject matter. In total, there are three articles, mentioning the issue on the website. Two of them are re-printed materials and one is the general announcement, that 5 candidates have presented self-withdrawals, among which was Sousana Abrahamyan. In fact, the general article was mentioned earlier in this analysis, because in that very same article, entitled “Khzmalyan's wife and four others have withdrawn their nominations” was covered earlier, when representing the Khzmalyan Conspiracy. In other two articles the newsmakers were Vartanian brothers, who have refused to take part in elections. The first article (Anon.L, 2012) , which looks more like a gossip, claims that the Vartanian family is getting ready to immigrate from Armenia, and that the refusal to take part in the elections and the nomination of an “unknown” woman is a proof of that. The second article (Anon.M, 2012) is quoting the spokesman of “Grand Holding” (company owned by the Vartanian family), who said that Mr.

Vartanian is not running for the seat because he is extremely busy with his other duties as the head of the company.

**Yerkir.am** - has just one article, where the name of Ms. Marabyan is mentioned. It is the reprint of the list of all the winners in all majoritarian districts.

**Armworld.am**- Apart from the usual list of winning candidates of majoritarian lists, armworld.am has one article (Yeghyazaryan, 2012) covering the issues in the 40th electoral district indirectly. The article is a response to another article, quoted earlier in this analysis, according to which, the Vartanian family has decided to emigrate from Armenia and the fact of Ms.Marabyan's nomination is a proof of that. Armworld claims that the article appeared in “Hayatsq” daily and then re-printed in News.am is a lie and that the Vartanian family is not going anywhere.

#### **5.4. Women against Pashinyan (Case 4)**

##### **Background**

In this story there are two central figures: Nikol Pashinyan, an opposition candidate from ANC and a group of women, later dubbed as Samvel Aleksanyan's (Armenian oligarch) Women. The story is analyzed, because it happened during the electoral campaign and it involves women. Unlike other women in our media analysis, these women were not nominated as MP candidates; they were just a group of women, allegedly backed by Samvel Aleksanyan, Nikol Pashinyan's rival in the 4th electoral district, where the two men were competing to get a seat in the parliament. The story received a wide coverage in the oppositional media. According to Pashinyan a group of women attacked (physically) a group of activists, who supported Pashinyan

and were distributing leaflets in Malatia-Sebastia district of Yerevan, where the 4th electoral district is located. As in other cases, the coverage of the story is biased, depending on the political engagement of media outlets. So, Lurer.com's coverage dramatically varies from Hayots Ashkhar's (armworld.am) coverage. However, what is important is how the media covers women's collective image. Lurer.com, which was supporting Pashinyan during the whole campaign was representing women as aggressive and called them corrupt, whereas Hayots Ashkhar represented them as women with their own opinions, who were against Pashinyan

### **How the media is representing the issue**

**Lragir.am** - as Lragir.am reports (Anon.N, 2012), on April 15 a group of women and men attacked a group of activists disseminating promotional materials of opposition candidate Nikol Pashinyan. It is reported that one of the activists is in hospital. Police has initiated an investigation. Later, the ANC (where Pashinyan is a member) published (Anon.O, 2012) an official announcement condemning the incident and demanding a quick and thorough investigation and accusing Samvel Aleksanyan (Mr. Pashinyan's rival) in organizing the violence. A statement (Anon.P, 2012) from Mr. Aleksanyan's office followed the ANC statement, neglecting any relation of Mr. Aleksanyan with the group of attackers. In that statement, it was mentioned that the attacking women were acting on their own behalf and that they expressed their discontent with Pashinyan's leaflets' content, where Samvel Aleksanyan was referred with his nickname-“Lfik”. Nikol Pashinyan in an interview with Lragir.am said that women were employees of one of Aleksanyan's enterprises and that they were brought to the venue in a bus. In the same interview, Mr. Pashinyan said: “let us not hide behind women, and compete fairly and openly”. In the meantime, Heritage party published a statement (Anon.R, 2012), condemning the incident.

**News.am** - has article (Anon.S, 2012) about the incident, where the police investigation has found out that the person who actually attacked physically one of the activists was found and it was not a woman.

In another article (Anon.T, 2012) about the accident, in which it was the report, submitted to the police, saying that a group of women and several men attacked the activists in Malatia-Sebastia district. In an interview (Anon.U, 2012) with one of the activists of Mr. Pashinyan, the activist said that women, who attacked them were following them everywhere they would go and that when the activists tried to speak to them one of them said that Samvel Aleksanyan is like Jesus Christ in Malatia in this district and they will vote for him.

**Yerkir.am** - Published an article (Anon.V, 2012), where one of ANC members reported that among the women, who attacked them, was Samvel Aleksanyan's driver, which proves that the incident was planned and supported by Mr. Aleksanyan.

**Lurer.com** - Published Gohar Veziryan's (MP candidate) statement about the incident in Malatia-Sebastia, where Ms. Veziryan was condemning the incident and claiming that the attackers, were backed by S. Aleksanyan. (Veziryan, 2012).

**Aravot.am** - Published an article (Anon.W, 2012) reporting about the incident. No further comments were made in Aravot Daily.

**Armworld.am** - Published one article (Anon.X, 2012) on the subject, where Vartan V. (person accused) has confessed to the police that he was the one who attacked the opposition activists in Malatia-Sebastia.

## 5.5 Women Newsmakers (Case 5)

Although it is believed that women are marginalized in Armenian political scene, there are still women who possess leading roles within their respective political parties and in the parliament. Often times they are making the headlines in the news and represent their parties in media, international scene, etc. These are a handful of women newsmakers and throughout the research their appearance was evident, although not as much tied with a specific issue or cause as in cases described earlier. In this section the focus not on the events, but on people who made the news or appeared as points of reference in the media. This section's structure will be somewhat different from the previous section and will focus on names of female leaders who appeared the most in the media during the electoral campaign.

**Naira Zohrabyan** - one of the most quoted politicians in Armenia. She is a member of Prosperous Armenia party and also is the head of Armenian parliamentary commission on European Integration. She is also a member of several other parliamentary commissions. Currently she is serving her second term in the parliament. A simple search in Google will bring approximately 1.700.000 search results for Naira Zohrabyan, in contrast with just 750.000 results for Gagik Tsarukyan, who is the leader of the same party. In our research, her name was quoted 26 times. Naira Zohrabyan has given a number of interviews and press conferences during the electoral campaign. She has not been involved in any specific story during the electoral campaign.

**Satik Seyranyan** a long-time editor in chief of one of the oppositional newspapers in Armenia. She has never been a member of parliament and it was her first time running for the seat in the parliament. Before the elections she was mostly known as the editor in chief of “168 Hours” daily. When the campaign started, she was nominated as an independent candidate, later the

oldest Armenian political party; Dashnaktsutyun announced that they support Ms. Seyranyan. Satik Seyranyan's campaign was perhaps the most outspoken among all female majoritarian candidates, partly because of massive advertising and partly because of a scandal that involved her husband, who was a member of the ruling party. Unfortunately she was not elected as an MP due to massive frauds during the Election Day. Satik Seyranyan's name appeared 36 times in our research.

## **Heghine Bisharyan**

### **Background**

Rule of Law party is the only political party in Armenia that has more female members than male members. Heghineh Bisharyan is the vice chairman of the Rule of Law party, which is a part of the ruling coalition along with the Republican Party of Armenia, although the Rule of Law has significantly less seats in the parliament.

### **Media Coverage**

**News.am** reported (Anon.Y, 2012) that Satik Seyranyan had sold her summerhouse to finance her campaign. In a different article, (Barseghyan, 2012) entitled as “Aram Manukyan doesn't consider Satik Seyranyan and Zaruhi Postanjyan (two female candidates in the 4th electoral district) as rivals”, although in the same article Mr. Manukyan was quoted as saying: “I have no rivals at the 4th electoral district”. He didn't specify any female candidates. Besides, the two female candidates in that district and Mr. Manukyan himself there were three other male candidates.

**Lragir.am** - published a short interview (Anon.Z, 2012) with Hovhannes Shahinyan a long-time member of the ruling party, who has decided to quit the party. Hovhannes Shahinyan is Satik

Seyranyan's husband. Answering the question about the reasons for quitting the Republican Party, Mr. Shahinyan said that he is now busy with helping his wife in her campaign and he doesn't want to be in politics anymore. His engagement in politics will be in helping her wife's campaign. The second article where Ms. Seyranyan's name appeared in Lragir.am is a report about a press conference of Dashnaktsutyun party, where one of the leaders of the party said they will support Ms. Seyranyan despite the fact she is not a member of her party. The spokesman said that a woman and journalist like Satik Seyranyan should be in the parliament and that is the reason they support her.

**Lurer.com** had three articles connected to Ms. Seyranyan. One (Anon.Ä, 2012) about the news that her husband has quit the party. Ms. Seyranyan commented on that saying that her husband will give a statement on the matter after the elections. The second (Anon.Ö, 2012) was about Ms. Seyranyan selling her summer house to finance the campaign. Ms. Seyranyan said in the interview that she sold the house because she is not a millionaire and has expenses to cover that are related to the campaign. Lurer.com has conducted a poll on their website asking the readers to vote for their favorite candidate in the 4th electoral district where Ms. Seyranyan is running. According to the poll results she won the poll, getting 37% of all votes.

**Aravot.am** has published a long interview with Satik Seyranyan in their printed edition, there was no specific topic or issue, and instead it was a general interview about the electoral campaign. The article's excerpt is available online (Grigoryan, 2012) .

**Yerkir Daily** - Yerkir Daily is the official newspaper of the Dashnaktsutyun party. The newspaper published an article (Hakobyan, 2012) about the announcement that Dashnaktsutyun will support Ms. Seyranyan in the elections.



Has the biggest number of publications about H. Bisharyan and her party, mostly constituted of women. The nature of the coverage and comments is rather peculiar, given the unusual vocabulary. Though no direct insults were published, Ms. Bisharyan has been referred as “1<sup>st</sup> lady of the Rule of Law Party”, in an article about the possibilities of a new coalition with the Republican Party. In the same article the author (male) calls Bisharyan’s statements about the “High effectiveness of the previous coalition” an “obvious lie”. The author also mentions several times that Ms. Bisharyan’s other statements about the success of the coalition are a “fantasy”. The author also states that “Ms. Bisharyan doesn’t even have a clue whether there will be a coalition in the newly elected parliament or not”, because the elections have yet to be held and it is uncertain what will be the balance of the parties gaining seats in the parliament.

In another article about the party, the author of the article indicates that the “Rule of Law” party is the only one, where there are twice more women than men. However, when it comes to the majoritarian electoral lists, only 38 of 178 members of the list are women. Next assumption the author makes is that “Women are there just for the sake of headcount. When it comes to real policy, women are left in the shadow”.

Ms. Bisharyan’s relations with media became cloudy, after Yerkir Media (parent company of Yerkir Daily) aired the video recording of the speech, where Ms. Bisharyan made a mistake in her speech and called the party leader Arthur Baghdasaryan a woman. During a press-conference days later Ms. Bisharyan called the actions of Yerkir Media sabotage and a lie. On the next day after the press conference, Yerkir Daily (subsidiary of Yerkir Media) published an article about the incident bashing Ms. Bisharian for the lack of respect and called her statements a lie.

**Armworld.am** - published just one article (Anon.Ü, 2012), where Satik Seyranyan's name was mentioned. The newspaper affiliated with the ruling Republican Party announced in a short

article that H. Shahinyan has decided to quit the party. It was said that Mr. Shahinyan submitted a request for resignation. The newspaper also mentioned that Mr. Shahinyan's wife, Satik Seyranyan is running for a seat in the parliament as an independent candidate supported by Dashnaktsutyun.

## **6. Analysis and interpretation of results**

In this section of the thesis, analysis is presented about the research conducted. The research was conducted in six media outlets in Armenia, which covered the parliamentary elections in 2012.

In the previous section we have identified five topics that caused public and media attention as well as two female candidates of completely different profile: an experienced politician and a parliament member and a journalist who attempted to run for the parliamentary seat.

The events that were selected in the previous section were meant to describe different angles of women in politics: both women politicians and women who are not involved in politics but made the news in the context of the pre-electoral campaign.

With this vast and diverse background information we can now dive deep into the analysis of how women are represented in Armenian media.

In the analysis I will leverage the Concepts>Constructs >Variables method proposed by Wimmer and Dominick (2010) and try to define the Construct of an Armenian woman engaged in politics as it is represented in the media.

One of the questions posed during the research is: why some female politicians got more media attention than others. Among the news articles researched, it is obvious that only a handful of female candidates got any media attention. If we assume that in average, 25% of all candidates were women; we can easily determine that out of those 25% only less than ten women got media attention. This is easy to explain, if you analyze and try to classify women who got media attention, thus finding a cause for media attention and then assuming that the absence of certain variables causes media ignorance. We determine several variables that we found important when analyzing the causes of media attention. Unfortunately, it is impossible to measure the impact of

different variables, so we will proceed with a Boolean method. This method assumes that if a certain variable is in place, this variable causes a certain outcome (in our case, media coverage), and if the given variable is not in place, it doesn't cause the same outcome (in our case, not being covered by media).

These variables are:

**Type of nomination: majoritarian versus minoritarian** - this is perhaps a fundamental factor, because depending on the nomination type a candidate becomes more or less significant. For example, a woman in top 10 candidates of a party's minoritarian list is more likely to get a media attention, than a woman that is listed below 10th position in the party's candidate list. Similarly, if a woman is taking part in a majoritarian election, where every electoral district has several candidates instead of 10 parties with more than 100 potential candidates each, she is more likely to get a media attention. It should be noted, that this criteria of variable is not gender specific, and the rule is equally valid for both men and women.

In our research we encountered some perfect examples of this rule. Susana Abrahamyan, who was nominated in the 40th electoral district as a majoritarian candidate, got a significant media attention, although before 2012 she never took part in any election and essentially was unknown before as a political figure. Of course, she later withdrew her nomination; however she grabbed a certain media attention. More than some more experienced female politicians would hope.

Another example of this rule is Naira Zohrabyan, the member of Prosperous Armenia Party. Unlike Ms. Abrahamyan, she was nominated as a minoritarian candidate, but because she was in the top 10 of the minoritarian list of the PA party, she got more media coverage than Karine Ajemyan, from the same party, who was number 14 in the PAP list. Despite the fact that both of

women had served previously as MPs from the same party, their position in the list was a crucial fact in getting media attention.

**Membership in a political party:** Another variable that I find important in getting media attention. The idea of this variable is that a woman affiliated with a political party is more likely to get a media attention than the one who is not affiliated. Part of the reason is that parties are usually relatively big establishments sometimes owning media outlets and other members and activists, who can act as amplifiers. It is extremely important to mention, that this is not a universal rule and applies only to majoritarian candidates. A majoritarian candidate is defined by the party he or she represents, whereas in minoritarian elections, the party is defined by a group of people, most often unknown to the public. Given this assumption, it is worth remembering Satik Seyranyan, who was nominated as an independent candidate and in the process of the campaign got support from the Dashnaktsutyun Party. In the aftermath, Yerkir daily (affiliated to Dashnaktsutyun) started to cover her campaign. This is just one example that falls into the context of this thesis. Beyond the media coverage, she also got the support of numerous volunteers and activists from Dashnaktsutyun party.

**Competition in the electoral district:** This variable may also be described as “tell me your competitor and maybe I'll recognize you”. A typical example of this is Gayaneh Arustamyan's campaign. She was competing in a district, where her major rival was a prominent oligarchic figure and the chairman of the Football federation of Armenia, Ruben Hayrapetyan. Ruben Hayrapetyan himself is a newsmaker with a very controversial reputation. Having someone like Rouben Hayrapetyan as a competitor turned out to be beneficial for Ms. Arustamyan, in terms of media coverage. Rouben Hayrapetyan's shocking statements about his refusal to debate with Ms. Arustamyan because of her gender generated lots of attention around Mr. Arustamyan. In

contrast, many other female and male candidates in other majoritarian districts didn't get the media attention because their rivals were “boring”.

Another example that could fall under this variable is perhaps the incident with Nikol Pashinyan, where there were women in the center of the story, when Pashinyan's campaign was disrupted. Indeed this is an example of women who were not participating in elections as candidates, however, acting as counter-agents of someone already famous and well-covered got the famous group of women in the spotlight of the news. Although, it is worth mentioning that the coverage was mostly negative in this case.

**Affiliation with individuals** - This is my personal favorite variable. The main idea is that someone can get media attention just because he or she is affiliated with a certain individual. The best example for this is the story with Narineh Mirzoyan. Ms. Mirzoyan was included in electoral lists of the ruling Republican Party without her consent. This injustice and fraud is indeed a topic for an investigation and media coverage. However, the story got amplified by the fact, that Ms. Mirzoyan is the wife of a famous film maker and opposition activist Tigran Khzmalyan. Ms. Mirzoyan's story had nearly no political significance; however it got covered more than Satik Seyranyan's whole campaign. Only Lragir.am had four articles about the issue, whereas Satik Seyranyan appeared in Lragir.am just twice. This inequality is even more obvious, when you consider the fact that the whole saga of Ms. Mirzoyan's inclusion lasted just two days, where as Satik Seyranyan and many other female candidates who got no attention at all were campaigning for a whole month.

Another example of this phenomenon is the coverage in 40th electoral district, where the long-time elected candidate Mikayel Vartanian refused to take part in elections and backed one of his

employees, Ms. Marabian. All the coverage about Ms. Marabian was somehow related to Mikayel Vartanian.

There's a reverse example of this phenomena, when Hovhannes Shahinyan quitted the Republican Party, Satik Seyranyan got media attention, instead of her husband, who was actually the newsmaker in this particular case.

### **6.1 Patterns of representation**

The analysis of the results of the research would be incomplete, if no reference is made to the patterns of how women are represented in the media. The purpose of this part of the analysis is to determine the way women are portrayed in the media during the elections. Now that the important variables for getting media coverage are defined, it is time to describe the way the coverage is done. We should look back and try to identify specific patterns used when describing or covering women in politics. Some of the variables described earlier are defining these patterns. Here we will leverage some methods described by van Zoonen (1994) such as stereotypes, pornography and ideology and adding depersonalization as an important pattern of women's representation in the media. For the purpose of clarity, we will examine each piece of media-analysis separately.

On one hand this can be considered as a sign of gender-neutrality, but on the other hand, this can be interpreted as de-personalization of female candidates.

Sometimes, representing a woman politician based on what she has achieved, rather on who her husband or boss is was occurring. That's an alarming trend that speaks about neglecting women and instead referring to men, associated with her. This is a pure example of de-personalization.

Because of the unclear difference between male and female politicians (in terms of their agenda), women are treated the same way as men are.

### **Narineh Mirzoyan's inclusion in the RPA list ( CASE 1)**

The fact that someone can be added to an electoral list by being misled is already an outrageous fact. Given that the person is a woman, rises additional questions, more specifically, would/could the same thing happen to a man? If not, then, is it because women are considered unable to stand for their rights? However, the way media covered the story is a subject of our research.

The first obvious circumstance in the media coverage is that although the subject of the news was Narineh Mirzoyan, it was her husband, who was in the center of the media attention. Not a single interview was taken from Ms. Mirzoyan, nobody directly asked her about what happened. Moreover, the only public statement that Ms. Mirzoyan made was published on her husband's facebook wall. None of the articles featured her name in the title or her photograph. Instead it was all her husband, who gave interviews, spoke on behalf of his wife. Even the spokesman of the Republican Party, to which Ms. Mirzoyan adhered unconsciously, gave an interview. In most of articles, Ms. Mirzoyan was referred as Tigran Khzmalyan's wife.

### **Gayaneh Arustamyan versus Rouben Hayrapetyan (CASE 2)**

As in the previous example, here as well the statement of Rouben Hayrapetyan raises many questions about the ethical side of things, and here again, it is interesting to observe and analyze how media reacted to his statements. First and foremost, it is worth mentioning, that the statement itself got media attention as something extraordinary. Ms. Arustamyan herself in an interview called Mr. Hayrapetyan's statements sexist.



The coverage and the debate about Hayrapetyan's statements revealed some peculiarities of Armenian way of perceiving gender issues. Namely, Ms. Arustamyan herself made a rather strange comment on Hayrapetyan's statement, where she concluded that Mr. Hayrapetyan's refusal to engage in the debate was an act of nobility and further suggested that Mr. Hayrapetyan withdrew his candidacy as an act of nobility. Another peculiarity happened when Aravot daily's female reporter reported Hayrapetyan's famous press conference and simply skipped the part about the refusal and the reasons of the refusal to debate. Instead the reporter went on entitling the article “Hayrapetyan is challenging Ter-Petrosyan to take part in the debate”.

Lragir.am, a website famous for its liberal views didn't even cover the story.

This particular case is a great illustration of how the Armenian media is clumsy about gender-related issues. It is obvious that no commentary or editorial was published about the issue and the whole story was handled as yet another news of the campaign. In a rare circumstance, when the media could have its own opinion it refused to publicize it, thus approving the event.

Thanks to the intense media appearances and amplification of the issue in the social media, a public pressure arose and eventually Rouben Hayrapetyan had to apologize for his statements.

### **The 40th electoral district (CASE 3)**

The surprising appearance of Sousanna Abrahamyan in the political scene of the country and her silent disappearing was accompanied with an obvious case of objectification and de-personalization. Often times, the authors of articles referred to her as “the worker”, “M. Vartanian's employee”, etc. Her nomination itself was a brilliant example of objectification of a woman. When a man behind the scenes can nominate two women and then later, withdraw one of them. What is even more illustrative in this case is the difference of social classes of the two

women and the man behind the story. The owner appoints the manager and the employer and then removes the employer, because she's not needed anymore. This kind of attitude towards women got its reflection in the media. Titles like "Under Vartanian's shadow" or explicit assumptions that S. Abrahamyan's nomination is just a simple act of securing a more favorable candidate, who in turn is a protégé of M. Vartanian are examples of on one hand reflections of reality, and on the other hand a complete insensitivity towards the issue of two women of completely opposite social classes and their objectification.

#### **Women against Pashinyan (CASE 4)**

The incident happened during the campaign in Malatia-Sebastia district of Yerevan, when reportedly a group of people most of whom were women attacked activists and supporters of oppositional candidate. The coverage as a whole was balanced, and nothing extraordinary can be said about the coverage of the incident. The actions by the group of attackers were the only extraordinary thing in that story.

#### **Heghineh Bisharyan (CASE 5)**

Heghineh Bisharyan's coverage in the media has not been scarce, although Yerkir Daily's coverage is the one that deserves a separate mention. It was an outstandingly negative coverage in terms of labels given to a female politician. In contrast with other cases, this was the only coverage, where the female candidate was labeled as a liar. And it's not only the case of calling Ms. Bisharyan a liar, there's much more in the language and context of her coverage, which is impossible to translate. An extremely negative attitude toward a politician in Yerkir Daily's coverage is associated with the case, when Ms. Bisharyan mistakenly called the leader of her

own party (male) a woman. That incident was amplified by Yerki Daily and got a large coverage in the social media. This has been the source and the cause of the conflict between Bisharyan and Yerkir Daily. Nevertheless, Yerkir Daily has explicitly stated negative attitude towards Ms. Bisharyan throughout the whole campaign.

## **6.2 Women shaping the agenda in politics?**

Throughout the research, we encountered just one remark about the political plans/program of a female candidate. In her speech in Noyemberyan, Ms. Marabyan has vaguely outlined some points in her political agenda. These were: empowering of local producers and local economy and struggle for not letting Armenia become a consuming market for foreign producers. No other political idea was ever mentioned in media that would be voiced by a female candidate. This is an interesting topic, because it reveals some peculiarities of Armenian political scene that make it so different from western (namely American) political culture. The main difference is that women in Armenian politics are not considered as a distinct interest group. And are trying to catch-up with men, who set the tone and the agenda in politics.

In these terms it is worth to take a look at the other side of the mirror: the people who elect. If we simplify the election model, we will end up with a simple demand-supply model, where political ideas are demanded by the population and are supplied by the ones seeking to be elected. In this regard, are women politicians an alternative to men? To answer this question, we need to look at the historical paths that two completely different societies have taken: The Armenian society in Armenia and the American society in the US.

In the US, female politicians differ from men first of all with their agenda. Things like better maternity, abortion, equal rights for men and women are the cornerstones of American feminist

politics since 70s. The “female issues” usually refers to public concerns that impinge primarily on private sphere of social life and particularly those values associated with children and nurturance. (Sapiro, 1981) In Armenia, by contrast, these issues seem to be muted. And the reason for that is not the lack or absence of “women's issues”. It is even more surprising to see that these issues are not voiced by female politicians.

In this regard, a substantial part of a population is left ignored despite the fact that some of these issues are voiced in programs of political parties. As a result, there are no “women's issues” formulated in Armenian politics. In contrast, in America, these issues formulated and promoted initially by women, have now become a part of national agenda. In fact, a recent study (4thestate.net, 2012) shows that these topics and issues are being more talked by men than women.

The described situation has its reflections in the way female politicians are depicted in Armenian media. Not having a cause and voice distinct from men, they fail to stand out of the crowd effectively. If we add the layers of perception of women in traditional Armenian society to that, we will get the full image of a female politician in Armenian media: “Yet another politician that needs our votes, but has longer hair”. Again, if we look at the patterns of representation of female politicians in the media, we will easily notice that among the variables presented, there's no such variable as “suggesting a different agenda” or just “being different”. Instead, what we see is a list of reasons that are mostly gender-neutral: place in the party's list, type of nomination, affiliation with a political party, etc.

Even the most “outrageous” case of 40th electoral district essentially could happen to a man. Satik Seyranyan's husband's case is another perfect illustration of the abovementioned. Instead of asking her husband about the reasons he left the party, the journalists asked his (politically

active) wife. This case is the absolute opposite of what happened to Narineh Mirzoyan, when she was included in the RPA electoral lists. Nobody asked Ms. Mirzoyan about the matter. Instead, again, her politically active husband handled the situation. These two cases illustrate once again that even the most discriminating reasons of getting media attention in Armenia are not purely feminine and can happen to a man. This is important, because it shows that there's no agenda set for women and by women.

In contrast in the US, with the rise of feminist movement in 70's a set of issues was adopted by female politicians that remain a central topic in their agenda. Namely the abortion right is one of the most consistent and recurring topics in American political discourse for the last 40 years.

True, feminism in the US has a longer story with its three waves, which have resulted in global changes in the American Society and culture. The legalization of abortion and the right for equal co-education are among the most significant changes that happened in the US in 70 under the pressure of women's organizations and movements.

In addition to that as Atkeson and Krebs state in their research of women's coverage during the Albuquerque Mayoral elections, women candidates are perceived as having more typical feminine traits and fewer masculine traits; being more liberal, democratic, and feminist and better able to handle so-called compassion issues such as health, education, and women's rights issues. In contrast, male candidates are perceived as having more typical masculine traits and fewer feminine traits, being more conservative and better able to handle issues such as foreign policy and crime. (Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Leeper 1991; Kahn I 1994; Koch 2000; McDermott 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2002). Male candidates are also seen as more electable. (Sapiro 1981-1982 cited by Ineper 1991; cited by Atkeson and Krebs 2008)

Women's representation in the US has evolved massively starting from the seventies under the pressure of various activists and groups.

ABC News approvingly quoted Senator Jennings Randolph's description of women's libbers as "braless bubbleheads," and CBS News commentator Eric Sevareid dismissed feminist claims of oppression as unfounded and hysterical. (Schulman, 2001)

Seventies also marked the emergence of NOW (National Organisation of Women) that was one of the main leading feminist organizations in the US.

NOW agitated for the equal rights amendment, legalized abortion, government-subsidized child care, and enforcement of laws against sex discrimination in employment and housing. (Schulman, 2001)

### **6.3 The final chord: who is the Armenian female politician (according to Armenian media)?**

The image is somewhat blurred here, as the above stated facts show. Because of the lack of a certain agenda on women's issues, women have to address their messages to the same population as men politicians. This egalitarian approach is proving to be less successful for Armenian female politicians, because the society's perception of women is traditional and women are expected not to engage in politics. However, the theories of social change tell us that this stagnation will be over, when the society runs into a need to publicly discuss women's issues.

For now, the media depicts female politicians as auxiliary actors to political parties, businesses and their husbands. Very few of women politicians have gained public acknowledgement without being attached to a political party or a business or their husbands. As one of the

interviewed candidates said: “Women candidates are not treated seriously. Female candidates are noticed by media, when they act aggressively” [Margarit Yesayan's Interview].

## **7. Conclusion**

The representation of women in Armenian media strongly correlates to the quantitative and qualitative representation of women in national politics. It is impossible to observe and examine the quality and volume of coverage in the media, without taking into consideration the level and structure of women's involvement in politics. Throughout the paper it was well documented that women comprise a tiny fraction of politicians and have even less representation in decision-making and policy shaping positions in the country.

Although, there are no legal or formal boundaries for women to be represented in politics and media, often times women are faced with traditional images of a woman in Armenian society, which do not assume their involvement in politics.

Besides the obvious obstacles of public perception, historically, Armenian female politicians have chosen a difficult path in achieving parity in politics. Unlike other political systems, Armenian female politicians do not communicate any specific “female issues”, instead they communicate nation-wide issues like economy, foreign politics, etc. which makes it more difficult to stand out of the whole mass of politicians. With that being said, women in Armenian politics do not occupy a specific ideological niche, like in the US. The consequences of this are ambiguous and fall outside of the scope of this research.

However, this lack of niche in politics, strongly affects the way they are represented in media. As a consequence of ideological distinction between male and female politicians, women have hard times getting media attention.



As one of the interviewed female politicians mentioned and as the media monitoring shows, often times the only way for a woman to get media attention is either to do or say something extraordinary or to get involved in a scandal that not necessarily is good for her image.

In rare times, when women were in the epicenter of media attention, however they were sometimes represented as attachments of either their husbands, or their bosses. Although this is not a widespread phenomenon, this trend is indeed alarming.

Again, as M. Yesayan mentioned in her interview, the situation has substantially improved during the last elections, and the media coverage was balanced and less biased than ever before.

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## **9.2. List of Tables**

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## **Abstract**

Equal representation of men and women in politics, media and other spheres of life is a worldwide issue. Countries with long standing democratic traditions are sometimes falling short in representing men and women equally in politics and parliaments.

In this context, Armenia is no different. This thesis is seeking to find patterns of women's representation in politics by studying the local media during the pre-electoral period, when political powers were campaigning to get elected to the parliament.

The study's goal is to find patterns of representation of women in politics by monitoring six media outlets in the campaign period.

Because of the massive research and monitoring scope, we have limited our media monitoring to four case studies and three general observations about female candidates with completely different background.

In our research we have tried to reveal the image of a female politician as depicted in the media and try to understand the causes of success or failure.

In this quest, we used the approach proposed by Kerlinger and Lee, where we used various variables that influenced in our opinion the representation of a female politician in the media.

We also tried to compare, where applicable, the differences in the agenda of female politicians in Armenia and the US to try to demonstrate the substantial differences between them. We find the distinction of agendas important, because as Sapiro asserts, women are an interest group in the society and hence they need a distinct agenda. (Sapiro 1981)

The comparison of two different approaches in campaigning in Armenia and USA has a goal to prepare ground for further researches and possibly find reasons of success and failure in both political systems. The detailed comparison and research of two approaches falls outside of the scope of this research.

The results of this thesis and research are described in detail in corresponding sections. However it is worth mentioning, that this research is the first of its kind and hopefully can serve as a basis for further research on related topics.

The research unveiled some patterns in the way the media depicts female politicians in Armenia, namely, the inequality of volumes of coverage of female politicians, frequent ignorance of their political ideology and assimilation of female politicians with either organizations or individuals that relate to them (like bosses or husbands).

## **Abstract**

Die ungleichmäßige Verteilung zwischen Männern und Frauen in Politik, Wirtschaft, Medien und anderen, vor allem berufsbezogenen Bereichen des Lebens, scheint ein Thema zu sein, das weltweit Beachtung findet. Selbst bei Ländern, die auf eine langjährige demokratische Tradition zurückblicken können, bemerkt man bei der Betrachtung der Parlamentsmitglieder und anderer politischer Positionen das angesprochene Ungleichgewicht. In diesem Zusammenhang ist auch Armenien nicht anders.

Diese Studie hat das Ziel, Repräsentationsmuster von Frauen in der Politik aufzuzeigen, die während der Wahlkampfphase aktiv tätig und öffentlich präsent waren. Dazu wurden sechs verschiedene armenische lokale Medien beobachtet und analysiert.

Aufgrund des umfangreichen Forschungsfeldes haben wir unser Hauptaugenmerk auf die Analyse von vier Fallstudien und drei generellen Beobachtungen über Kandidatinnen mit völlig unterschiedlichem Hintergrund gelegt.

Im Zuge dieser Analyse haben wir versucht, das von den Medien vermittelte Image der jeweiligen Kandidatin und die Gründe ihres Erfolgs bzw. Misserfolgs zu erfassen. Dabei haben wir den Ansatz von Kerlinger und Lee angewendet, wo wir verschiedene Variablen berücksichtigt haben, die unserer Meinung nach die Darstellung einer Politikerin in den Medien bedeutend beeinflussen.

Wo möglich, haben wir auch versucht die Unterschiede der Agenda von Politikerinnen in Armenien und den Vereinten Staaten anzuführen um die substanziellen Unterschiede aufzuzeigen. Wir erachten diese Unterscheidung als sehr wichtig, weil wie Sapiro behauptet,

Frauen eine eigene Interessensgemeinschaft der Gesellschaft darstellen und somit auch eine spezielle Agenda benötigen. Der Vergleich dieser beiden länderbezogenen und dadurch unterschiedlichen Wahlkampfansätze soll für weitere Untersuchungen eine Art Boden vorbereiten, um die möglichen Gründe eines Erfolgs zu identifizieren. Ein detaillierter Vergleich dieser beiden Ansätze würde jedoch über den Rahmen dieser Arbeit hinausgehen.

Unsere Forschungsergebnisse enthüllten auf Seiten der Medien eine essentielle Benachteiligung, die sich vor allem in der Länge der Berichterstattung, der Ignoranz der von den Kandidatinnen vertretenen Ideologien und der fehlenden Anerkennung und Darstellung als eigenständige Personen zeigte. In den Vordergrund gerückt werden vorzugsweise die von ihnen vertretenen Organisationen und nahe Bezugspersonen wie Ehemänner und Vorgesetzte.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit werden in den entsprechenden Abschnitten detailliert beschrieben. Wir hoffen, dass diese Studie als Grundlage für weitere Forschungen zu verwandten Themen dienlich sein wird.

## 10. Resume

Ani Hakobyan

| Education     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2002-2006     | State University of St. Petersburg, School of International Relations(Bachelor),<br>Specialization – European Studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2005-2006     | State University of Heidelberg (Exchange Programm)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2006-2008     | State University of St. Petersburg, Faculty of Journalism (Master’s degree)<br>Specialization – Social Journalism                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2010-....     | State University of Vienna, Faculty of Publizistik und<br>Kommunikationswissenschaft (Master’s degree)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Experience    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10.2011-..... | Cyathus Exquirere PharmaforschungsGmbH – Executive assistant at the<br>Marketing department. (part time)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 06.2012       | University magazine “Blinkwienkel”<br>Main Responsibility: to make Layout of the magazine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 04-05 2012    | Parliamentary Elections in Armenia – Member of the Campaign Headquarters’ of<br>the party “Heritage” and the Head of the Campaign Headquarters’ of the<br>majoritarian Candidat Ruben Hakobyan.<br>Main Responsibilities: To organize Press Conferences, meetings with the<br>population during the pre-electoral campaign and being as an election agent at the<br>election in Yerevan (Armenia). |
| 10.2011       | “Law and Democracy Conference”<br>Main Responsibilities: Organization of participants arriving. Solving problems of<br>the guests, last minute adjustments in room, opening and securing facilities before<br>and after events.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 05.2010       | Vienna Forum “The Future of Europe and the question of Islam”<br>Main Responsibilities: Organization of participants arriving. Solving problems of<br>the guests, last minute adjustments in room, opening and securing facilities before<br>and after events.                                                                                                                                     |
| 06-09 2009    | EICEE, Neuwaldegg Institute in Vienna (Internship)<br>Main Responsibilities: Meeting and greeting visitors and partners, managing<br>different incoming and outgoing phone-calls / e-mails.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 02-09 2008    | “Elitar Travel Agency” Incoming Department – Tour Manager<br>Main Responsibilities: Confirming customer travel and accommodation<br>reservations, providing information to clients on the available tour packages,<br>seeking for German and Austrian partner Tour Agencies, negotiating travel deals<br>with airlines and hotels.                                                                 |

|                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 05-07 2007                                                                                                                                   | <p>“Greenpeace” International Organization, Hamburg branch, Germany<br/>department of energy (internship)<br/>Main Responsibilities: Monitoring, managing differing incoming and outgoing phone calls and e-mails.</p> |
| 02-03 2007                                                                                                                                   | <p>Research practice in “Regional Press Institute”, St. Petersburg<br/>Main Responsibilities: Monitoring, organization of Seminars, managing different incoming and outgoing phone-calls/e-mails.</p>                  |
| 07-08 2005                                                                                                                                   | <p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs RA, department of Europe, CIS (Internship)<br/>Main Responsibilities: Translations (Armenian-Russian-English)</p>                                                                       |
| 04-07 2004                                                                                                                                   | <p>Consulate General of Armenia in St.Petersburg (Internship)<br/>Main Responsibilities: Helping citizens to fill application forms, managing different incoming and outgoing phone-calls / e-mails.</p>               |
| <p>Computer Skills: Experienced PC user. Windows, MAC, In Design, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, Internet search tools, Word, Excel, PDF.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Languages: Armenian (mother language); Russian (mother language); English (fluent); German (fluent); Italian (beginner)</p>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |