

Altered Gender Roles in Armenian Families

by

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Literature Review.....	5
Research Questions.....	13
Methodology.....	14
Research Findings and Analysis.....	15
Interview.....	21
Limitations and Avenues for Future Research.....	27
Conclusion.....	28
References.....	30
Appendicitis.....	32

Abstract

Located between crossroads of Eastern and Western culture, Armenian society often prides itself with its traditional values. This patriarchal stereotypical society includes distinct gender roles. Armenian women are expected to predominantly take on the role of creating a family and being the homemaker while men are in charge of being the primary breadwinners. This attitude expected of women becomes the basis of a variety of “traditional,” but degrading approaches toward them, which often end up overlooked. Other more serious issues encountered by society due to these roles include sex-based abortion, domestic violence, and spousal transmitted Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD’s). Patriarchal roles have encountered a shift throughout the years affecting the traditional approach of family.

Introduction

Stereotypical roles of men being the breadwinners of a family and the women being the homemakers are apparent. Men grow up in an environment that favors freedom and are under the pressure of being able to support themselves and their future family. Meanwhile, women are taught to take on the role of being a future wife and mother from an early age. In this type of patriarchal society, it's quite easy to see a vast inequality regarding gender roles.

While legally possessing equal rights as men, a large portion of women are pushed towards taking on the role of a homemaker and are considered to be inferior to men. Women in general, but Armenian women especially, are taught to be obedient to men in regards to gender roles in families. This usually gives men control over the women, subjecting them to a variety of degrading traditions and practices which are considered to be the "norm."

Literature Review

It's no secret that there are specific gender roles assigned to men and women in a majority of Armenian families. Men are typically considered to be the head of the household and the primary breadwinner while women are responsible of being the homemaker. This leads to a vast sea of double standards among the two genders, resulting in deeper than surface level problems, including sex based abortions, domestic violence and spousal transmitted STDs.

Armenian women's primary role in society is to establish a family while men are expected to take care of the family financially. Men are seen as being the descendants of the family responsible for continuing the family name. These distinct gender roles have been passed down from generation to generation. Armenia is a nation which possesses a more patriarchal society, or in other words, a society controlled by men. Societies with a more democratic approach to gender roles favor equality over control. Over the course of a couple of years, Armenians have migrated to countries with democratic societies, consequently being exposed to the presence of gender equality. Exposure to different kinds of societies often leads to the adaptation of various traditions and ideologies. While these migrants are being integrated into societies who put importance on gender equality, they slowly steer away from the patriarchal society which prioritizes men. These gender roles have been passed down from our grandparents and great grandparents, who expect families to have distinct male and female roles. In more Western countries, these roles began to change much earlier than they did in Armenia. However, even the strict gender roles in Armenia have begun to evolve and change over time. This may be partly

due to the large number of immigration to Western countries. With exposure to societies which favor gender equality, Armenians begin to adapt their approach to gender responsibilities to their surrounding society.

One of the biggest but least talked about issues in this region is sex based abortions. While men are seen as continuing the family heir, women are largely looked upon as belonging to the family they marry into. There is a common saying among Armenian men which says, “You raise a girl only to give her away to someone else. The boy is yours,” in terms of children. A majority of Armenians prioritize having a boy over a girl and find it mandatory to have at least one boy in the family. This then leads to large numbers of sex-based abortions. Many times, families terminate the pregnancy after finding out the gender of the baby. The gender of the baby isn’t something which may be planned or predetermined and a large amount of parents terminate the pregnancy after finding out the sex of the baby as shown by a report conducted in the Caucasus region (Michael, 2013). This report states that data regarding sex ratios at birth were elevated in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, but not any other post-Soviet countries. According to the data, sex ratios were high for the first births in Armenia and Azerbaijan and if the child was a girl, the sex ratios were even higher for the second birth. The main contributor to this data was the ever higher proportion of males in third born children. This tendency didn’t occur among other post-Soviet countries, for instance` Moldova.

Women in Armenia whose husbands are migrants also have to face the issue of being contracted with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The connection between STD’s and male migration has long been a conflict of interest (Sevoyan, 2010). The cause of migration is largely due to socioeconomic conditions. According to the report, “It is estimated that since the

dissolution of the USSR about 15 percent of the Armenian population permanently left the country (Heleniak, 2008). However, since the mid-1990s, as the economic situation in the country stabilized and then started to improve, permanent emigration began to subside while temporary labor migration began to rise again.” (Sevoyan, 2010) Due to the gender roles in Armenia and how the man is expected to be the primary breadwinner of the household, they flee to countries with better socioeconomic conditions in order to work and provide for their family. However, evidence suggests that they bring more than money with their return. Research suggests that these migrants are more likely to engage in high risk behaviors such as commercial sex and multiple partnerships. Due to their infidelity, after their return, their wife is exposed to and contracts the STD. It’s also important to note that Armenian women are shamed for having sex before marriage while men are encouraged to do so. In this case, the only possibility the woman will have of contracting an STD is after marriage and caused by infidelity.

Domestic violence is also a huge issue among the present day Armenian society. One of the largest issues regarding this topic is that it’s often seen to be normal for a woman to be subjected to domestic violence. There are various sayings among Armenian society, used predominantly by men, such as, “You must beat a woman to train her,” and “A woman is like wool, the more you beat her, the softer she becomes.” Women are frequently subjected to degradation in forms of emotional and physical abuse. The typical expectation of a woman in a family of bowing her head and staying obedient may lead to more serious issues such as this one. This role gives men the opportunity to control and make decisions for the woman, ignoring her opinions and/or desires. Although a domestic violence law exists in the country, there have been

many instances in which woman have reported the law to not be on their side. While illegal, the domestic violence law isn't commonly enforced and the victims are often overlooked.

The soviet revolution has had a large impact on the role of women both before and after it. According to A. Ishkhanian in the article, "The Impact of the Post-Soviet Transition on Women in Central Asia and the Caucasus," the new laws of 1920 gave women the right to be the breadwinners of the house, be paid individually and the right to own land." (Ishkhanyan, 2003) Ishkhanian refers to women as victims of this transition as they were faced with a new obstacle called the "double burden," in which they were expected to both take care of the household but also step into the workforce. Although they enjoyed the socioeconomic benefits of a "safety net," the neoliberal mentality pushed women towards living by a less patriarchal mindset.

The next step in women's rights took place under the rule of first president Levon Ter-Petrosyan. This was when the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) was formed. The principal of AIWA is, "increase the visibility of Armenian women and to promote their equal role in the community." (Matossian, 1995) This association pushed towards equality in regards to gender roles. This helped women step foot into the once male dominated workforce and community. Prominent figures in the new government, Lucia Ter-Petrosyan, Hranush Hakobian, AIWA president Barbara Merguerian, and other well-known women gave speeches regarding the role of women in the new government. Although this was a step forward for women's rights and gender neutrality, the traditional mindset stayed with even the leaders of this association who kept prioritizing their responsibility of being the primary caregiver of the house above everything else. Although they preached that women must step out of the typical role of

being a homemaker and go into the workforce, the leaders themselves failed to practice what they preached.

In 2015, a survey was conducted among Armenians by Yerevan State University to better understand the attitudes towards gender roles (ԵՊՀ, 2015) About 60% of people found there to be inequality among men and women in the society. Not surprisingly, women strive towards maintaining traditions while men strive to achieve success and recognition in society. Another similar survey was conducted in 2016 regarding the expected responsibilities from both men and women in Armenia. (UNFPA, 2016) While some tasks had more similar percentage rates such as paying the bills and taking out the trash, other more “feminine” tasks such as cooking or doing laundry had a large contrast in the percentages for responsibility. Not surprisingly, the primary expectation from men is providing for the family while the expectation from women is taking care of it. According to this survey, based on the Armenian constitution, women have all rights to be equal to men but the lifestyle most of them portray doesn’t even come close to these neutral gender roles in a sense of them being interchangeable among each other. This shows that the issue among society isn’t legal but instead psychological. In order to get closer to the equality of gender roles, the mentality of people regarding these typical gender roles must change. This may also be connected to the level of the work men and women take on. A worldwide issue also present in Armenia; women take on lower paying jobs while men are pushed toward higher positions and pay. This, however, is an issue which may be looked upon from different viewpoints. The reason for women taking on higher paying jobs may be due to the fact that they don’t have the time to fully commit to their profession due to household duties while men have the opportunity to be fully invested in their career, without having to take on the household

chores. It's also important to consider the economic factor as well. Men are usually responsible for providing for their parents once they get to a certain age. This financial strain pushes them to work harder while women are responsible for the household chores and caring for their children.

With the high numbers of migration from Armenia, the immigrants must take on different adjustments. According to I. O'Grady, immigrants face various cultural obstacles when moving to a new country, one of which is the struggle to preserve their cultural identity. (O'Grady, 1981) The immigrants from this journal would usually gather in groups with other Armenians in order to have a sort of support group to remind them of their traditional values and traditions. However, no matter how much they tried, they still adapted to the western culture they were surrounded by. Therefore, this community tried to combine both Armenian traditions with Western lifestyles.

A similar experience was recorded by A. Valladian, an Armenian who was raised in the U.S. According to her, it's been difficult to raise her children while surrounded by traditionalists who possessed patriarchal ideals (Valladian, 2018). However, one of the biggest issues she faces while living in Armenia is the treatment of women. More specifically, how it's widely accepted for the Armenian women to have no say in the world that they live in. Statistically, the women who didn't accept this kind of treatment ended up getting a divorce which still didn't cause a change of mentality among the men. This doesn't exactly mean that there's no hope for the women of Armenia getting equality in regard to gender roles. She claims that there are many women in Armenia who are moving towards the change she would like to see in the nation. (Valladian, 2018).

A similar attitude to these societal norms was concluded in an article published by a website titled, “Women in Armenia.” (Gender Roles, 2016) The author, an American woman was surprised to see the gender dynamics which exist in a post-Soviet country such as Armenia. She gives an example of going to someone's house for “khorovats.” The men are in charge of making it, which she claims to be the only thing they cook for their families, while the women rarely ever leave the kitchen. Their primary responsibility seems to be to “serve,” the men in their life. This more forward insight to the gender roles of present day Armenia help give a better understanding of how big of a contrast there is between males and females. She discusses how there's no legal limitations put on Armenian women, however there are other various types of social limitations that women are forced to deal with. They grow up in a society which teaches them that their primary goal should be to become a “good wife,” and that’s the main thing they should focus on other than their reputation. This already establishes clear gender roles even before marriage.

Another similar approach is taken by a journalist and former resident of Armenia where he discusses the positive and negative aspects of Armenia (Abalashov, 2014). It’s interesting to note how he had given up dating in this society due to the restrictions put on women no matter their age. He seems to find it ridiculous how a 24 year old woman can’t go out without permission from her parents or have an 11 o’clock curfew. Another important point to note is the fact that he describes the foundation of society as being built in a way that discourages children and teens to be independent. Armenian men usually never move out of their parents house and women move in with their husband and in-laws after marriage.

According to D. Lye and I. Waldron and the social concerns hypothesis, the associations between social concerns and nontraditional gender role attitudes were stronger for males than females (N. Lye, 1997). There is likely to be a large difference between the role of men and women in democratic societies as compared to them in more patriarchal societies. The Armenian families who have migrated to Western countries are exposed to these gender roles and adapt to them in some way shape or form. The topic of cohabitation is also discussed which is something more familiar to people of Western societies than to those of more traditional ones. However, it has become more well known than it had in the past. This is also grounds for the shift of gender roles as men and women who are cohabitating are sharing the responsibility of the household equally. This includes doing chores, paying rent/bills and cooking. The key to successful cohabitating is an equal distribution of responsibilities. With Armenians being more exposed to this, they too adapt to a more modern approach to gender roles.

Correlated with a shift in gender roles, a shift in marriage has taken place as well. Marriage in the new Millennium is far different from traditional marriages. F. Fincham and S. Beach claim that the state of a marriage can affect individuals both physically and psychologically (Frank Fincham, 2010). In couples, each spouse plays a certain role. These roles however, don't have to be gender specific. Spousal roles are largely made up of the responsibilities expected of each spouse. If each partner has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and fulfills them, there is less of a possibility for conflict to arise in the marriage. However, each spouse has a different understanding for the responsibilities they must fulfill; this could end with a misunderstanding between them. These responsibilities may vary based on family values and the gender roles determined for each family. This may also be a cause for

conflict among spouses who have different ideas of gender roles in a family. When doing my research, I had found various sources on the nature of gender roles in Armenia. There were sources regarding the origin of them, the ideology of the society and the psychology behind them. However, I couldn't find any research which combined this research and discussed the evolution and alteration of these gender roles. This would be beneficial for both interpreting gender roles present in Armenia as well as determining the effect immigration to Western countries has on families. My research will provide both an insight into the society of Armenia as well as an insight into women's rights which have begun to slowly develop in Armenia throughout the years.

Research Questions

This research was directed towards addressing and researching a variety of issues present in Armenia linked with gender roles in society. Following and linked with a variety of sub-topics, the main research remained around the questions of: What is the Armenian woman's role in society and how has this changed throughout the years? And, how have gender roles changed in Armenian society throughout the years?

After conducting research I came to find that the main role Armenian women have in society is to have a family and be an “ideal” homemaker. Before going in depth into my research

I was focusing on gender roles in Armenian families in general but after doing my research I realized that the role of an Armenian woman plays a huge role in society. The women seem to be the foundation of society and are expected to live up to a certain standard. In regards to gender

roles in families, these have changed throughout the years and my aim was to confirm this statement while also exploring the reasons behind why it's happening.

Methodology

In order to get a better understanding of these roles, it was important to get an insight into the attitudes society had towards this topic. My research included two previously conducted surveys such as The Gender Barometer Survey (Γηζ, 2015) and The Report on Sociological findings (UNFPA, 2016), which consisted of various questions about gender responsibilities and expectations. These surveys were beneficial to my research due to the detailed manner of the questions revolving around societal gender roles. Questions in these surveys included what the surveyants assumed to be the responsibility of the woman of the household and which of the man such as cooking, taking care of children, doing laundry, etc. Questions extend further than the responsibilities of both spouses and go into the rights each should have. These will serve as the basis of my research by giving an insight into the mindset of the general public.

A large cause of the progression of these roles is due to the generational differences between societies. Newer generations usually possess a more liberal approach to the topic, thus leading to equality in terms of gender roles. In order to put this to the test I thought who better to interview than my own mother and grandmother. My grandmother has had a traditional role in her family while my mother's was slightly different due to her migration to the U.S. The interview was conducted based on a set of open ended questions asking them about their opinion on how gender roles should be established and asking them about their own personal experience on the matter. I, my mother and my grandmother sat in the same room while I asked them

questions regarding their own attitudes and life experiences with gender roles. By having them both in the same room, it was interesting to record the similarities and differences in their answers. As was expected, all three of us had different ideas on gender roles while holding onto a few key principles in the Armenian family and the interview in served as a way to showcase the generation gap among us through their answers and experiences.

Research Findings and Analysis

The research of this project was based on several data collection methods. Primarily, it included the research and analysis of secondary data, which were mainly two previously conducted surveys that had already gathered statistics on the topic of gender equality and roles in Armenian society. It's also based on primary data (in this case, personal interviews) conducted by me in order to get some firsthand information on the subject. It's also worth mentioning that the data collected was predominantly qualitative. Before starting this research I had set a few research objectives. I wanted to find out:

1. Whether double standards exist in Armenia.
2. Whether the concept of “double burden” is applicable to Armenian females
3. Whether it's acceptable for responsibilities among men and women to be interchangeable

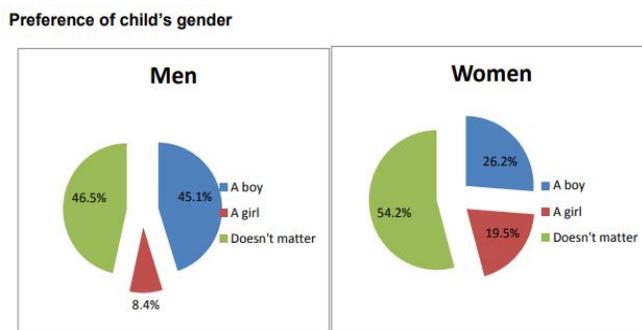
In order to tackle each and every one of this objectives, I will need to take a look at some data from the surveys conducted:

1. GENDER BAROMETER SURVEY IN ARMENIA (ԵՊՀ, 2015)

2. The Report on Sociological findings (UNFPA, 2016)

First research objective

One of the key components proving the existence of double standards in Armenia is selective abortion. Respondents' answers regarding gender preference of their future children is as following:



Only 46.5% of men and 54.2% of women do not give preference to the gender. This means that half of the population does have a pre preferred gender. It is worth mentioning that 45.1% of men prefer having a boy as opposed to 26.5% of women. This clearly states that the Armenian population does in fact have biases against female children and preferences of having a male offspring. This may be explained by the fact that in Armenia, in order to continue the bloodline of the family one must give birth to a male representative. Women in this case are considered unnecessary for the survival of the family. That is why it is crucial to have at least 1 male child. Due to this, the ratio of son to daughter preference in Armenia is 5, according to

Public inquiry into enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health rights in Armenia United Nations population fund, 2016. (Programme of Action, 2014) Each year, over 1400 girls are not being born in Armenia due to sex-selective abortions. According to Garik Hayrapetyan, the number of men aged till 20-21 in Armenia from 1993 is 50,000 more than women in Armenia. (UNFPA, Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women in Armenia, 2008-2010) Sex-selective abortion is not only a form of discrimination and violence against women, but also an unethical and harmful practice.

Another aspect of double standards in Armenia is domestic violence. Statistics regarding domestic violence in Armenia are reported in Global Economy (Armenia: Female labor force participation, 2019) Statistics shows that:

- 61.0% of women were exposed to controlling behavior
- 25.0% of women were subjected to psychological violence/abuse
- 8.9% of women were subjected to physical violence
- 3.3% of women were subjected to sexual violence
- 9.5% of women were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence

We must also note that the instances which have been documented have been reported due to the severe extent of the violence experienced by the victim. This issue has many indirect consequences. According to the Office of Women's Health, children raised in families with domestic violence are at risk of long-term physical and mental health problems. They have the potential of becoming abusers themselves in the future.

The third component contributing to double standards in Armenia is migration that causes the spread of STDs. According to the survey, 26.5% of the population had at least 1 member of the family migrating to another country for work.

Has any member of your family migrated for work in the past one year?

	Male	Female	Total
1 Yes	23.8%	27.7%	26.5%
2 No	76.2%	72.3%	73.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This migration causes many issues in regards to transmission of STD to women. It is acceptable for men to have sexual intercourse with other women, while being in another country. However, women are expected to be loyal to their husbands, even if he is being unfaithful. When men come back, they transmit these diseases to their wives. Another important aspect is the importance of women being a virgin before she gets married. In Armenia, 85.9% of respondents agree that a woman should be a virgin until marriage.

Table 2. Attitudes toward sexuality

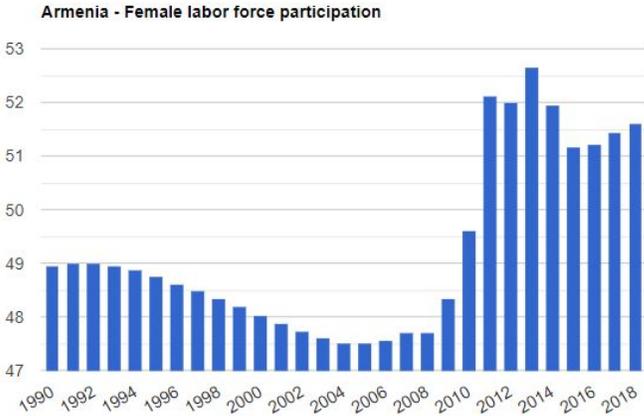
Percentage of male and female respondents who agree with the following statements

Statements	Men (N=767)	Women (N=850)
Men need sex more than women do	48.5%	49.7%
Men are always ready to have sex	66.0%	51.4%
A man needs other women even if things with his wife are fine	44.5%	26.0%
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	44.7%	46.2%
A woman should remain a virgin until marriage	87.5%	84.3%
Women who carry condoms on them are "easy"	60.9%	42.2%
<i>Percentage of respondents who agree with at least one of those statements</i>	97.3%	97.4%

In regards to the third statement of this survey, the same percentage of male and female respondents believe that it is solely a woman’s responsibility to avoid getting pregnant. To sum up, almost half of the female respondents have internalized the sexist stereotype that puts the responsibility of getting pregnant on women.

Second research objective

Second research objective considers the “double burden” issue. Double Burden is a term that describes people (in our case, women) that work to earn money alongside a significant amount of household duties they are forced to perform. Here is the data from armstat showing the increase of the percentage of women involved in labor participation. (The Global Economy , 1990 to 2018)



From this graph we can conclude that female labor participation rate has increased during the last 28 years. However, when asked about gender roles in the household, it’s still perceived that women should be involved in all of the household duties. When asked the extent to which respondents agree with the statement that “A career should not be a woman’s first priority,

family should always come first” 89.3% of men and 81.2% of women claimed that they strongly agreed with that statement.

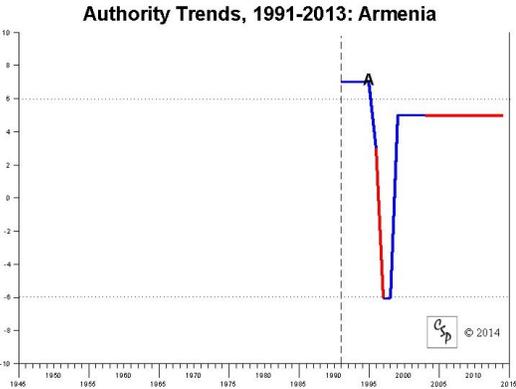
A career should not be a woman's first priority. Family should always come first.	89.3%	(male)
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A career should not be a woman's first priority. Family should always come first.	81.2%	(female)
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While the number of working women in Armenia is increasing, their household duties do not decrease. They are still expected to do all the work around the house leading to the presence of the double burden.

Third research objective

According to Polity4 statistics, Armenia is considered to be a democratic country. Polity4 assigns a score to countries, ranging from -10 to 10. Countries with a score of/close to -10 are countries with autocratic regimes and very limited/no freedom, and 10 is assigned to most democratic countries. Armenia has a score of 4 as of 2014, which means that legally Armenia is



a democratic country.

Despite legally being a democratic country, Armenian traditional views are located at the very core of the society. Traditional views are incrementally changing throughout times, however this rate of change is lower among men, rather than women. This is the cause of why Armenian women are more keen to taking over male roles and activities rather than vice versa. A more in-depth interpretation in this is seen in the latter discussed interview.

Interview

My mother and grandmother were asked different open ended questions in an attempt to get their insight into the role of Armenian women in society. My grandmother has more traditional views on gender roles due to her upbringing. She is currently living with her husband, son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. When my mother first got married, she had a similar living situation to my grandma and lived with her husband, his parents, his sister and brother in law. These living arrangements changed when she migrated to the U.S to seek better socioeconomic conditions. I, on the other hand, am often criticized for having a mindset that's "too Western," and misunderstandings between us usually happen due to the generation gap. While they believe that a man and a woman should strive to create a family, I believe that it's important for the spouses to have the freedom to communicate with each other, live with each other and date for a while until they truly feel ready for marriage and children. As a result of this cohabitation, gender roles and responsibilities will be established early on. This also gives the opportunity to determine the compatibility between the two spouses based on the types of roles they are willing to take on. They often tell me that there's no such thing as being ready for marriage and/or children and is one of those things you must master on the way. While I put an

importance on career and self-development, they prioritized family (including both their children and parents.

When asked about how they picture the ideal Armenian family, my grandmother replied with “A family where each member has his/her place and function. Where the grandparents are the head of the household, the father is the breadwinner of the house, the mother takes care of the children and the children contribute to the family in their own way.” My mother suggested a similar answer to the question and as much as I would like to say that I pictured a less traditional family, the image my grandmother described was the first thing to come to mind. My grandmother continued her answer by suggesting the preservation of certain values in a family, even if the children may see them as being unimportant. My mother on the other hand, while agreeing with the fact that traditions must be preserved, also thought that they shouldn't be imposed, allowing for the freedom to take these on. When asked about what they considered to be these traditions they both began listing things such as standing up when their elders entered the room, having a separate place at the dinner table for the man of the house and having a family where the grandparents and the men are considered to be the head of the family. The concept of “traditional,” seemed to lie under the children and women of the house showing respect for their elders and the men of the house.

My grandmother married into a large family which she claimed brought with it more problems. She previously lived with her husband, his brother, parents and grandmother. She was expected to rise when her mother-in-law entered the room and prepare coffee for her father-in-law. It was small actions like these that were expected of her as an act of respect. When she first got married, she was in charge of all the responsibilities of inside the house and wasn't

permitted to go to the store. Her mother-in-law was in charge of the “outdoors” responsibilities such as grocery shopping. Meanwhile, her husband was the only one in the household working. My mother on the other hand, divided the responsibilities with her mother-in-law; she was in charge of cleaning while her mother-in-law was in charge of the kitchen. I personally picture married life as a divide of household responsibilities with your spouse rather than your mother-in-law. I hadn’t even imagined what it would be like living with my in-laws after marriage. My idea of marriage was between two people who work things through to create and establish a strong family. Interestingly, both my mother and my grandmother constantly referred to their in laws when asked questions about gender roles in families. This could be due to the fact that responsibilities between spouses had been predetermined while the ones between their mother-in-law had to be arranged.

My grandmother disagreed with interchangeable roles in families. “If a woman is organized enough that she can complete her responsibilities there won't be the need for men to get involved in these.” She explained how a woman has the ability to keep up with the cooking, cleaning and taking care of children and if she organizes her day in such a way that dedicates a specific amount of time to each of these, the involvement of a man won’t be needed. According to her, the man is responsible of providing for the family without the need for interference from his wife and she should do the same in the household tasks. In contrast, my mother claimed that while each spouse should have his/her role in the family, if the woman can step up and help contribute to the family financially, then the man can have the common courtesy to clean up after himself. Connecting to my grandmothers previous statement regarding the lack of need for the man to get involved in household tasks, my mother stated that women nowadays are helping out

both financially and around the house. Presently, there are many women who earn equal if not more pay than the man and if women are helping men accomplish their traditional duties of being the primary breadwinner, men should be able to help with the household tasks. She still thinks there are certain tasks that should be specific to the woman such as ironing or doing most of the cooking, but the man should be able to help if needed. This then lead to the discussion of work for women.

My mother never faced obstacles permission to work, which she largely believed was due to the financial need of a second provider for the household. As for my grandma, she claimed that it was the biggest obstacle she has yet to overcome in her life. Her husband looked at women at the workplace as a place to drink coffee and gossip. She finds it a pity for a woman with a degree to spend the rest of her life at home. “A woman needs to have her own little world set apart from her home life.” This statement may easily be interpreted as gaining an insight into the psychological issues of the women who take on the role of a homemaker. They often spend the entire day caring for their family and sometimes end up losing their own sense of self. My grandmother described working as being not only a way for an individual to feel useful, but also essential for the women who take on the role of the homemaker as it provides a change of scenery and a breath of fresh air from their day-to-day responsibilities. One commonality they both had was the agreement of the presence of change in these roles and responsibilities among spouses in the past couple years. They both first realized this change when they saw more fathers bring their children to school than mothers. This then caused a larger involvement of men in their children's lives compared to the past. Since women are faced with the double burden of both working and taking care of the household chores, it's only natural that a change in the roles

would occur. They also agreed on the fact that the responsibilities of women are far larger both in number and difficulty compared with men.

Migration had its own place in shaping both my mother as a person and as having a role in our family. According to her, before moving to another country, a family needs to have a strong foundation; any previous cracks in this foundation will grow deeper. By living abroad, she was forced to become independent even though she thought she wasn't prepared for it at the time. It's at this time that she found it necessary for both her and her husband to take on a variety of responsibilities in order to create a strong and successful family. I found this to be fundamental of my understanding of gender roles when growing up. The idea of the man being the "head," of the household still existed in my family but a sense of ambiguity was also present; each parent looked past the traditional gender roles they witnessed while growing up and looked at practicality. This may be what formed my current views on gender roles as I prioritize equality between spouses. I grew up in an environment without distinct gender roles and instead were prioritized based on necessity of each of them to take them on. My father would often help out around the house when my mother was working long shifts and vice versa. I grew up looking at these "roles," as simply being responsibilities which weren't set in stone and had the ability to change based on circumstances. This ideology was also embedded in me due to the type of society I grew up in. This ideology was considered to be the norm. I hadn't realized that gender roles could be more distinct and anchored until I was integrated into a more patriarchal society. The attitudes of "a woman is responsible for the house and the man is in charge of making money," was foreign to me as I grew up seeing them do both interchangeably. My grandmother

claimed that she had nothing but respect for young families who were able to establish their families in a country where they aren't surrounded by any relatives to help.

Interestingly, my grandmother pointed out that she witnessed the abolishment of these traditional gender stereotypes when they went on vacation. She described her husband as being a completely different person while in another country. She stated that this was the time in her life where she felt like she was given a sense of freedom. This was largely due to the fact that the opinion of society no longer existed. Both my mother and grandmother blamed the obsession of acceptance and opinion of society to be the cause of the problems encountered by gender roles. As far as the future of the structure of Armenian families, both my mother and grandmother stated that they would like to witness respect for one another as being the largest priority among families. My mother also stated that she would like more families to break free from the opinion of society and become more independent while simultaneously upholding Armenian identity. She claimed that her husband was much more open to helping around the house in the U.S than in Armenia. She has witnessed many of the people she is surrounded by act a certain way or refrain to do certain things due to the opinion of society. Men in Armenia often are afraid of being viewed as "unmanly," due to the fact that he steps outside of his patriarchal role in society in order to help his family. She claimed that Armenia is the type of nation where people are quick to come to an opinion if they see someone acting different than everyone else and if more men in Armenia could break free from being the victim of others opinion and helping their wife, then these roles could be much less fixed in the future.

Limitations and avenues for future research

Although I attempted to get a clear insight into the topic of women and gender roles through the analysis of surveys and conducting my own interview, I would like to conduct an interview among male participants as well in order to get insight into the issue from the opposite side. I mostly centered the research around “women speaking about women,” in order to gain some insight into how they feel about the matters that affect them. Due to the fact that I wanted to focus on the generational differences regarding opinions about the topic, I didn’t get an understanding of how men feel about the subject. While women speak from their own experience as being part of the functioning of these roles, men are usually the ones who establish them in the first place.

For future research, I would like there to be more information about newly established families and the roles they have established in their household to better determine the present and future situation. I would like to get their insight into the topic and determine if they are under a more traditional or modern approach in shaping their future family. I’m also aware that there are many people in Armenia who possess an unconventional approach to the topic in ways such as cohabitation before marriage. This may open up an entirely different realm of these gender roles.

Another avenue for future research is the differentiation of attitudes regarding the issue in both rural and urban parts of the country. Residents of the city center tend to have a more modern approach towards the topic as compared with people of villages. It would also be

interesting to interview residents from both parts of the country and analyze their responses to capture the similarities and differences among them.

Conclusion

Armenian society is often viewed as being patriarchal. Women are taught to be obedient and modest from a young age until they get married. Men, on the other hand, are taught to have control over women which later leads to a variety of issues. Evidence shows that more than half of the population has a preference to the sex of the baby they want which later leads to the presence of sex based abortions. Women are also subjected to domestic violence which is another less talked about issue in this country. The migration of males in order to work and provide for the family ends in their wife contacting STDs due to her husband's infidelity during his time away from her. Serious issues like these arise from the imposition of control men possess and the docile role of women.

Gender roles in most Armenian families have remained traditional in a sense of the man being the primary breadwinner and head of the household. However, as evidence from surveys and my own personal interview suggests, these gender roles have evolved and changed over time. The responsibilities of a man and a woman in a family are becoming more interchangeable. This could be due to the migration of large numbers of Armenians to more Western countries and being exposed to a more gender-neutral family structure or it could also be due to the woman being forced to provide for the family financially as well as taking care of the household chores. It's also safe to conclude that these distinct roles exist in Armenia due to public opinion. It's not a widespread phenomenon for the man to help the woman around the household and the public usually frowns upon it. If Armenian society grew into one where the norm would be the man

helping the woman around the house, less men would be hesitant to do it. These deeply rooted gender roles are slowly beginning to change due to the exposure to new societies where gender equality is prioritized. Nevertheless, these roles are still in the process of evolving and changing.

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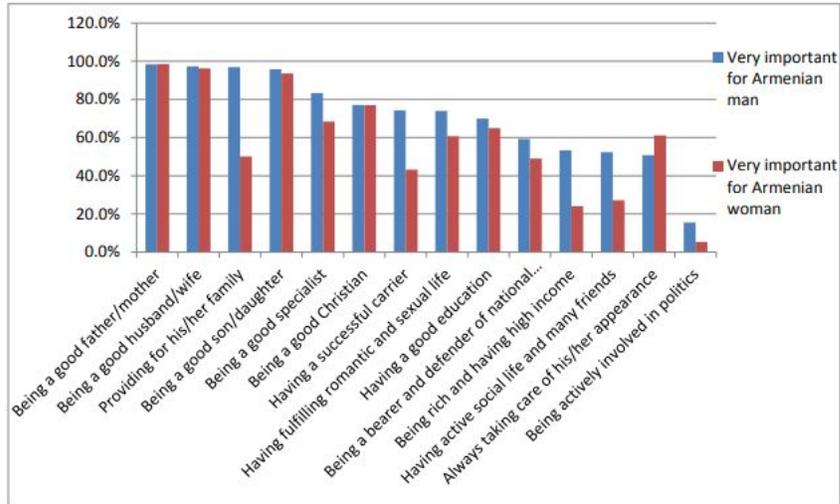
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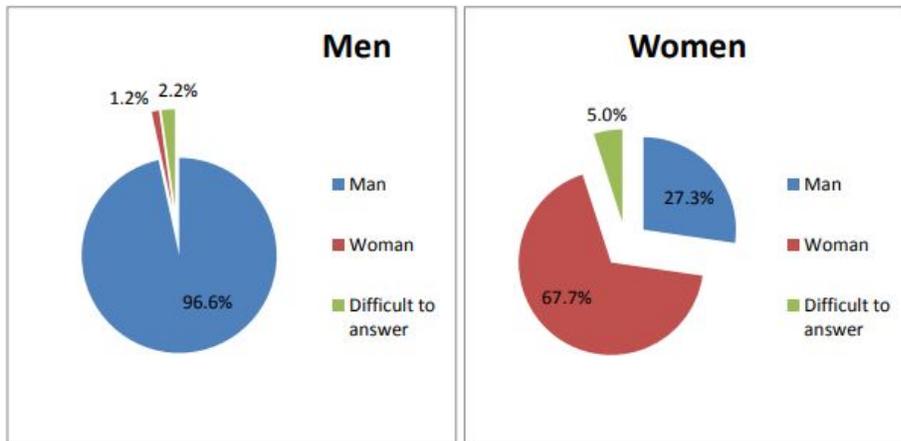
Appendix 1

Survey results from secondary data «GENDER BAROMETER SURVEY» ARMENIA A

SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY (UNFPA, 2016)



If you would have had a choice to born a woman or a man, what would you have chosen?



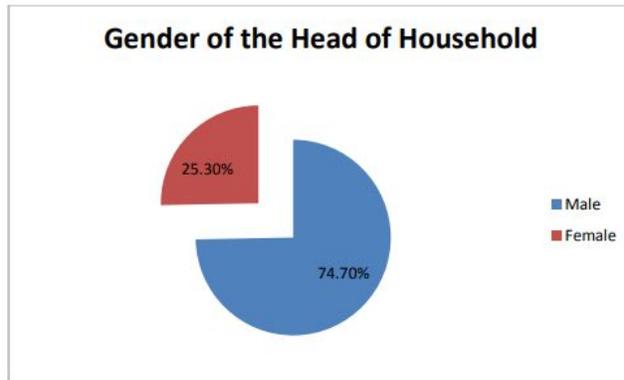
I will read you several statements. Tell me please to what extent you agree with each of them – “completely agree”, “rather agree”, “rather disagree”, or “completely disagree”.

	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer
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20

A man should do any work in order to guarantee his family's material well-being.	91.9%	5.7%	1.2%	1.2%	
A career should not be a woman's first priority. Family should always come first.	89.3%	7.8%	2.2%	0.7%	
A girl should remain a virgin until marriage	86.6%	7.3%	3.8%	2.1%	0.1%
A woman's most important mission is to have a child.	77.8%	14.0%	5.4%	2.6%	0.1%
A man should always earn more than a woman.	75.3%	12.2%	7.9%	4.4%	0.1%
Women and men should have equal rights and should be given equal treatment.	67.3%	16.0%	10.3%	5.9%	0.6%
When jobs are scarce, men should have priority in getting jobs over women.	62.1%	16.2%	12.3%	9.0%	0.4%
The most important work is better done by men.	60.4%	17.8%	14.2%	7.5%	0.1%
Overall, men are better political leaders than women, and men should be elected.	48.9%	18.8%	19.4%	10.4%	2.5%
Overall, men are better at business than women.	41.9%	23.2%	23.3%	9.0%	2.6%
Education is more important for a boy than for a girl	31.0%	10.3%	17.0%	41.7%	31.0%

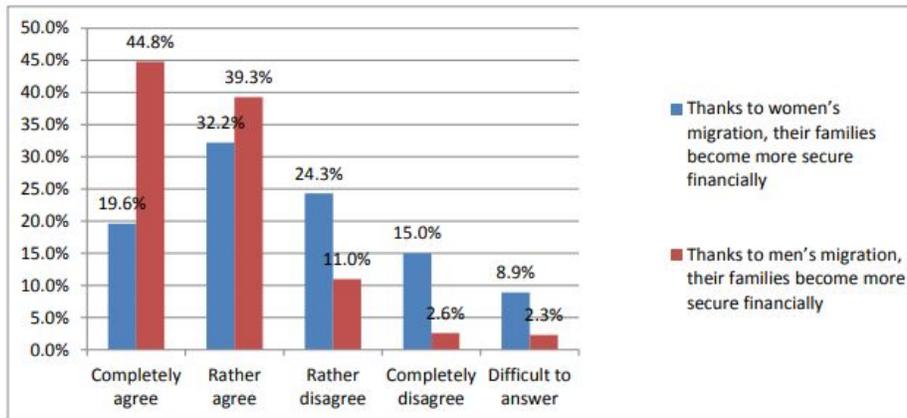
Head of Household's Gender



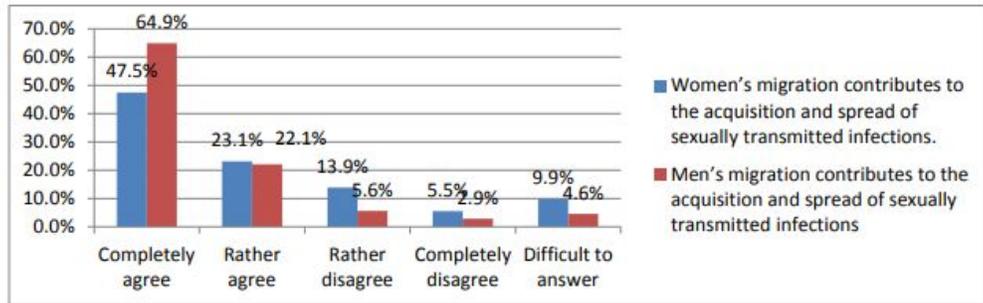
Has any member of your family migrated for work in the past one year?

	Male	Female	Total
1 Yes	23.8%	27.7%	26.5%
2 No	76.2%	72.3%	73.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

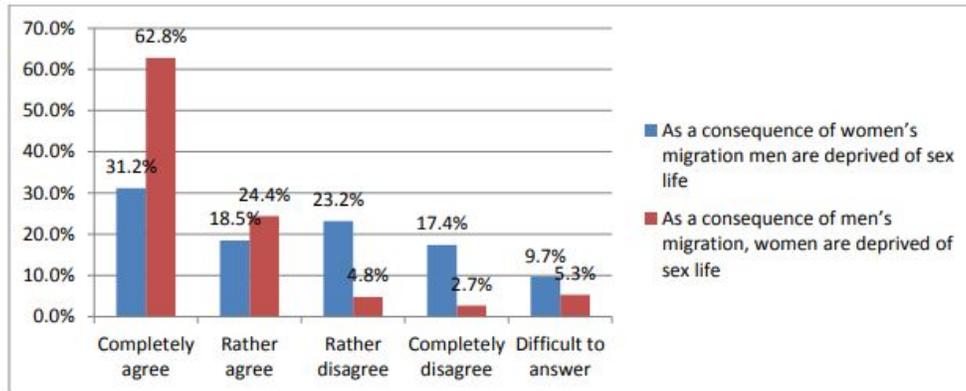
The Impact of Migration on a Household's Financial Security.



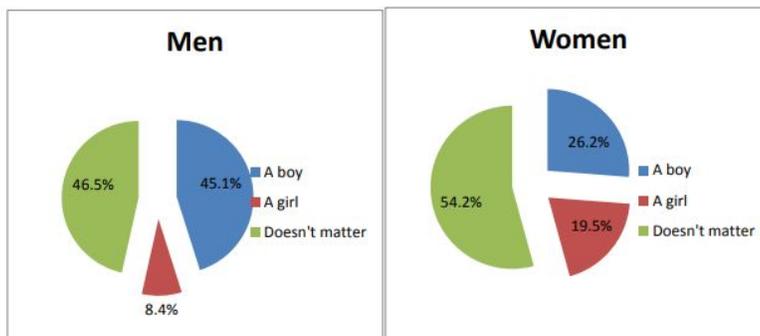
The Impact of Women's Migration on the Acquisition and Spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.



The Impact of Migration on the Deprivation of a Couple's Sexual Life.



Preference of child's gender



Survey results from MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY IN ARMENIA REPORT ON
 SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY FINDINGS (ԵՊՀ, 2015)

	Men (percentage of men reporting sexual violence against female partner or another woman/girl) N=369	One time before & in the last 12 months	More than once	In the last 12 months	Over 12 months ago
1. Forced a woman/girl to have sex	7.6%, including →	4.6%	2.9%	5.1%	2.4%
2. Had sex with a woman or girl when she was too drunk to say whether she wanted it or not	5.4%	3.5%	1.8%	4.3%	1.0%
3. Forced a female intimate partner to have sex	5.1%	4.1%	1.1%	4.6%	0.6%
4. Forced a female intimate ex- partner to have sex	3.5%	2.5%	1.2%	2.8%	0.9%
5. Forced a woman, who was not a female intimate partner at the time, to have sex	2.5%	1.6%	0.8%	1.6%	0.8%
6. With another man forced a woman to have sex with them	1.1%	0.8%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
7. With another man had sex with a woman when she was too drunk to say whether she wanted it or not	2.1%	1.3%	0.8%	0.5%	1.6%
Percentage of sexual violence (perpetrated and reported by men)	14.6%				

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who agree with following statements

Statements	Respondents (N=1,617)
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	35.7%
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	27.7%
If a woman cheats on a man, it is okay for him to hit her	55.4%
It is okay for a man to hit his wife if she won't have sex with him	5.1%
<i>Percentage of respondents who justify intimate partner physical violence</i>	70.3%

Table 2. Percentage of male and female respondents who agree with following statements

	Men (N=767)	Women (N=850)
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	44.6%	27.8%
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	35.2%	21.0%
If a woman cheats on a man, it is okay for him to hit her	60.9%	50.5%
It is okay for a man to hit his wife if she won't have sex with him	5.8%	4.5%
<i>Percentage of male and female respondents who justify intimate partner physical violence</i>	78.6%	62.9%

Table 2. Attitudes toward sexuality

Percentage of male and female respondents who agree with the following statements

Statements	Men (N=767)	Women (N=850)
Men need sex more than women do	48.5%	49.7%
Men are always ready to have sex	66.0%	51.4%
A man needs other women even if things with his wife are fine	44.5%	26.0%
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	44.7%	46.2%
A woman should remain a virgin until marriage	87.5%	84.3%
Women who carry condoms on them are "easy"	60.9%	42.2%
<i>Percentage of respondents who agree with at least one of those statements</i>	97.3%	97.4%

Appendix 2

Interview Questions:

1. How do you envision a traditional Armenian family?
2. What responsibilities do you think the man should have and which ones should the woman have? (paying bills, laundry, cooking, etc.)
3. How do you feel about these responsibilities being interchangeable between spouses?
4. What were these roles like when you first got married?
5. Have they changed at all over the years?
6. What factors into the change of these roles in families over the years?
7. What kind of effect has migration had on your family roles?
8. What is your idea of the typical Armenian woman?
9. What are some obstacles you've encountered because of our culture or stereotypes?

ԿԱՄ

- Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը **գաղտնի** է: Հասկանում եմ, որ կարող եմ քողարկել իմ պատումների մեջ հիշատակվող մյուս անձանց ինքնությունները, եթե այդպես նախընտրեմ:
- Համաձայն եմ, որ չնայած իմ հարցազրույցից որոշ նյութեր կարող են հրատարակվել, սակայն ոչ մի ձայնագրություն չի կարող վերարտադրվել:

Այն դեպքում, երբ ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել (Ընտրեք տարբերակներից մեկը):

— Համաձայն եմ, որ ուսումնասիրություն անող ուսանողը պատճենահանի ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ ու փաստաթղթեր միայն նախագծի շրջանակներում օգտագործելու համար:

ՈՒՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ԾԱՐԱԴՐՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝
Անուն ազգանուն (խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) Ներսիսյան Նոյնա ռաբյան

Ստորագրություն [Ստորագրություն] Ամսաթիվ 20.04.19

Հարցազրույց վարող՝
Անուն ազգանուն (խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) Վարդան Դադարյան

Ստորագրություն [Ստորագրություն] Ամսաթիվ 20/4/19

Եթե որպես բանավոր պատմության նախագծի մասնակից որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հունանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am):

ԿԱՍ

— Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը **գաղտնի** է: Հասկանում եմ, որ կարող եմ քողարկել իմ պատումների մեջ հիշատակվող մյուս անձանց ինքնությունները, եթե այդպես նախընտրեմ:

— Համաձայն եմ, որ չնայած իմ հարցազրույցից որոշ նյութեր կարող են հրատարակվել, սակայն ոչ մի ձայնագրություն չի կարող վերարտադրվել:

Այն դեպքում, երբ ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել (Ընտրեք տարբերակներից մեկը):

— Համաձայն եմ, որ ուսումնասիրություն անող ուսանողը պատճենահանի ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ ու փաստաթղթեր միայն նախագծի շրջանակներում օգտագործելու համար:

ՈՒՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԵՎ ԿԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն (իսնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) Մարիկոյան Խաչատուրյան

Ստորագրություն Մ. Խաչ Ամսաթիվ 20/4/2019

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն (իսնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) Մարիամ Խաչատրյան

Ստորագրություն Մ. Խ Ամսաթիվ 7/20/19

Եթե որպես բանավոր պատմության նախագծի մասնակից որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Աղդարեանի հետ (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am):

Համաձայնության հավաստագիր

Հայաստանի ամերիկյան համալսարանում (ՀԱՀ) «EC299C Դիպլոմային Աշխատանք» առարկային գրանցված ուսանողուհու կողմից անցկացվող հարցազրույցին մասնակցելու համաձայնություն: Սույնով հավաստում եմ, որ համաձայն եմ մասնակցել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Աղդարեանի (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am) ղեկավարությամբ Մարիամ Խաչատրյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ, թե ինչպես են Հայաստանում գեղերային դերերը ընտանիքներում փոփոխվել տարիների ընթացքում: Մարիամ Խաչատրյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը Հայ ընտանիքների գեղերային պարտականությունների լուսաբանելն է ընդհանուր նախագծի համատեքստում:

Ընթացակարգը

Հասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է մասնակցի տանը կամ մեկ այլ պատշաճ վայրում, և տեսագրվելու և/կամ ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես պատմելու եմ իմ անձնական կարծիքը և օրինակները Հայաստանի գեղերային դերերի վերաբերյալ: Տեղյակ եմ, որ հարցազրույցները տևելու են մոտ մեկ ժամ, բայց այդուհանդերձ մասնակիցները կարող են որևէ պահի դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, հրաժարվել պատասխանել որևէ հարցի, կամ որևէ պահի դուրս գալ նախագծից: Հասկանում եմ, որ եթե ցանկանամ հարցազրույցը երկու ժամից ավելի երևարածգել, ինձ այդ հնարավորությունը կընձեռվի:

Ռիսկեր և օգուտներ

Տեղյակ եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, ընդմիջել կամ հրաժարվել շարունակել: Հաշվի առնելով, որ ուսանողների նախագծերը ներլսարանային ցուցադրման մաս են կազմելու (կայքով և/կամ հրատարակումներով), իմ պատմությունը և կարծիքները, իմ թույլտվությամբ, նույնպես ներկայացվելու է:

Մասնակցության պայմանները

Որպես մասնակից ինձ հասանելի կլինեն ձայնագրված և գրի առնված տվյալները՝ դրանք առուգելու նպատակով: Նախագծի ամբողջ տևողության ընթացքում, ես հնարավորություն կունենամ վերանայել ու հաստատել անզերեն թարգմանությունը, եթե նյութը հայերեն է:

— Հասկանում եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ հետ վերցնել համաձայնությունս ու հրաժարվել մասնակցել նախագծին՝ առանց բացասական հետևանքների:

— Հասկանում եմ, որ այս նախագծի տվյալները գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով կարող են հրատարակվել՝ տպագիր կամ թվային տարբերակներով:

Իմ հարցազրույցի ինքնության բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով (Ընտրեք տարբերակներից մեկը).

— Համաձայն եմ, որ **ինքնությունս հայտնի լինի**: Հասկանում եմ, որ ինքնությունս կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում: Հասկանում եմ, որ կարող եմ քննարկել իմ պատմության մեջ հիշատակվող մյուս անձանց ինքնությունները, եթե այդպես նախընտրեմ:

— Համաձայն եմ գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով այս հարցազրույցի նկարների ու ձայնագրությունների վերարտադրմանը որևէ հաղորդամիջոցով (վեբ կայքեր, և այլն):