What Factors Perpetuate the Red Apple Myth in Armenia?

by

Lusine Hayruni

Presented to the

Department of English & Communications

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia

Yerevan, Armenia

May 11, 2020

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**Abstract**

This research is about the red apple myth, which is an Armenian marriage tradition, and explores the factors which perpetuate the red apple myth, the purity culture, the notion of virginity as a social construct and a violation of women’s rights. The research aims to understand the core reasons and the factors that make the red apple tradition last, which includes and isn’t limited to one’s upbringing, family influences, external environmental factors, societal beliefs, attitudes, and stereotyped norms. To understand what people believe in, how they behave, and why they act the way they do, it’s essential to understand their thinking and the factors which have influenced them to think the way they do. The way someone thinks, behaves and acts is a direct reflection of how they are raised and educated. Hence, the educational spectrum should be examined and be put in the spotlight to affect change.

 **Keywords:** Red Apple, pre-marital sex, virginity, women’s rights, social construct, purity culture, women’s values/worth, sexual double standards, cultural relativism, sociocultural values/norms/beliefs, social stigma, sexual purity, sexual shame.

**Introduction**

My research is about the red apple myth, the factors which perpetuate this red apple myth, the purity culture, and the notion of virginity as a social construct and a violation of women’s rights. The red apple myth is an Armenian tradition that still exists and persists in Armenia, and which is stronger in rural areas and remote villages. Where does the essence of the red apple myth lie? It’s an Armenian marriage tradition, which has come from older times but has been and still is practiced vigorously in some places. According to the red apple tradition, the woman is expected to have her first sexual experience only at that time, followed by traces of blood spots on the bed-sheet (Poghosyan, 2011). By stating, “only at that time,” the author refers to the wedding night, which means that the potential bride shouldn’t have had previous physical intimacy and connection with someone else. And, if the bride is a virgin, she is praised by all the members of both families, and if the bride is not a virgin, she’s judged, shamed publicly, and may even get divorced (Poghosyan, 2011).

 According to Armenian mentality, the bride should be physically a virgin, to be considered and accepted as a moral and pure person; otherwise she is thought to be a person who has been practicing an immoral and dishonored lifestyle. The red apple symbolizes and signifies the woman’s innocence and purity. People closely link and connect the notion of purity to being a virgin, which follows the idea that if a woman is not a virgin, then she is impure. The purity culture holds the idea that a sexually impure woman has got nothing else to offer. The purity message is not about the actual act of sex itself, but rather it’s about us: who we are, who we are expected to be, and who it is said we will become if we fail to meet those expectations (Klein, 2018). This is the language of shame (Klein, 2018).

 Armenia seems to be integrated and connected to the purity culture. But who gets to decide what it means to be pure or impure, moral or immoral, right or wrong? Who does the power belong to for labeling someone impure, unworthy and unlovable, if not to its very citizens, its own people of all generations? When and how did things go astray, that people stopped questioning and fighting for equality, justice, and fairness for both genders? For women specifically, “virginity has become the easy answer – the morality quick fix” (Valenti, 2009, p. ?), asserting that you can be vapid, stupid, and unethical, but as long as you have never had sex, you are a “good” (“moral”) girl and therefore worthy of praise (Valenti, 2009). The notion of virginity is a made-up social construct, which is meant to make women, in particular, feel bad about their sexual experiences and sexuality. It’s also a violation of women’s rights in the sense that it deprives women of their bodily autonomy.

 Values are the standards of a culture, in our case within the Armenian culture, for perceiving what’s right or wrong, what’s good or bad, what’s fair or unjust in the society. Values are strongly linked to one’s beliefs. Hence, beliefs are those particular specific convictions that one holds to be true.

People in a specific society may have different beliefs about a particular issue, but they may share common collective values. Values have a role in shaping society through clarifying and suggesting what’s right and wrong, just and unjust, moral and immoral, hence, at the same time affecting people’s mentality and thinking. (Mackie, Moneti, Shakya, & Denny, 2015, p. ?)

In the process of understanding what Armenians believe, how they think, and why they believe, think, behave the ways that they do within the context of the red apple Armenian tradition, we should first examine the inner belief systems and values thoroughly that the Armenian culture and society hold.

 Social norms are what people in a specific group believe to be reasonable in the group, something that’s believed to be and considered normal, appropriate, and right (Mackie, Moneti, Shakya, & Denny, 2015). Each nation has its own social norms, which, in a sense, are culturally formed and are accepted, approved and followed by the society. What we as Armenians forget to do though is again challenging and questioning the existing norms, values, beliefs, and the basis on which they have been formed.

 Shame, more specifically, sexual shame exists, although it isn’t talked about a lot, and surrounds women, concerning these notions of purity linked to virginity in Armenia. In general, shame tends to be unspoken, which, on its turn, has adverse effects on women, resulting in them feeling unloved, unworthy of being accepted, respected, and belonging.

**Key Terms and Definitions**

**Red apple**: a marriage tradition that is practiced in Armenia, according to which newly married couples make love on the wedding night for the first time. After this, the husband’s family takes apples to the bride’s house as a sign of a woman’s virginity and moral character.

**Purity culture**: a culture that emphasizes the importance of keeping one’s virginity before marriage and being emotionally pure.

**Sexual purity**: sexual purity can closely be linked to chastity, which implies that sexual relation outside of marriage is wrong.

**Social stigma**: the process of disapproving a person or a group based on the already established societal set of beliefs, expectations, and rules.

**Literature Review**

 Life would be so much different and would take a different course for women, if there was no such concept as “purity culture”, if their rights were not violated and they had complete bodily autonomy, if ignorance was replaced by awareness and education, and if understanding would take over judgments. My focus is about the Red Apple myth (an Armenian tradition), the purity culture (holding that a sexually impure woman has got nothing else to offer), and the notion of virginity as a social construct and a violation of women’s rights. My topic is of paramount importance because whether people realize and acknowledge it or not, there is a lot of shame going on and happening around women specifically, with regard to the notions of purity, virginity, women’s value being solely existent, maintained and kept in their virginity, within Armenia. Shame, specifically sexual shame, tends to remain and be unspoken, which on its turn, can make a person feel worthless, unlovable, unneeded, and make one think that they are incapable of belonging. My topic is an attempt to challenge and question the existing socio-cultural norms, values, beliefs in the context of the Red Apple tradition within the scope of Armenia. The social cultural norms, values and beliefs show that women are valued and appreciated as goods/commodities. This is an attempt to restart treating women as having equal rights, through uncovering the underlying causes of the tradition’s prolonged existence. My interest in the topic arose in the aftermath of face to face encounters, interaction and communication with some of my dear female friends, trusted and shared their stories with me, about how the mentality surrounding virginity loss can and is ruining lives, by making them feel shameful, isolated, unworthy of love and belonging. I started to ponder that women can and are still being judged based on their existent or lost virginity, despite possessing all the other human values: kindness, compassion, honesty and the reality shows that merits tend to disappear in the face of virginity loss. This became the reason for my passion and the starting point of my research process.

 The actual process of finding the necessary literature with regard to my topic was quite a thought-provoking, challenging, and worthwhile experience. Different books, scholarly articles discuss topics about shame, sexual shame, virginity as a social construct, effects/consequences of sociocultural norms, women’s worth/values, sexual double standards, and of course, purity culture. The challenge was to leave out the unnecessary information and keep the ones I needed. What’s interesting, though, is that if I did not do consistent research on my theme, I would still think the same way I used to. Then I thought to myself that people are not the ones to blame for thinking alike and not daring to challenge the mainstream, but rather the reality that there aren’t any educational organizations, programs, or a scheme for equipping and empowering women with knowledge about their sexuality and their rights.

 The themes existent and identifiable in my research questions are the following: the Red Apple myth (an Armenian tradition), the purity culture (implying that sexually impure woman has no worth), sociocultural constructs, norms and values (their possibility of change), shame (sexual shame), and education (proactive and preventive strategies implemented).

 The first theme in my research questions is about the Red Apple myth (an Armenian tradition that still prevails.) To tackle the issue, I found a very descriptive ethnographic article relating to the description, interpretation, and observance of the Red Apple Armenian tradition. The author’s method is based on field research and a number of conducted interviews with both men and women of different generations in Yerevan, in towns and villages of Armenia. Some of the interpretations of virginity show that Armenians tend to connect virginity loss and pre-marital sex to immorality and dishonor, and the reason for this type of mentality, according to the author, lies in the traditional demands (Poghosyan, 2011). The author’s main finding is that the Armenian Red Apple tradition, although it is no longer constructive, still persists. And, although many people do not consider the tradition to be correct, they still tend and choose to demonstrate outward devotion to it (Poghosyan, 2011, p.384). Keeping these ideas in mind, the Red Apple tradition then becomes a violation of women’s rights in the sense that it deprives women of their bodily autonomy.

 The next theme in my sub research questions is about the purity myth (the Evangelical Purity movement, which is a worldwide phenomenon.) To tackle these themes, I found two primary sources (book chapters) that take a close look at the purity myth and how the evangelical purity movement creates a shameful generation of women. The first author’s method is based on cultural and social analysis. Her main argument concerns the purity myth and its core, which is the idea of virginity used to punish women and violate their rights. According to the author, the notion of chastity is a sham perpetrated against all women (Valenti, 2009). Culture, religion, and social attitudes/ beliefs all have a significant influence in deciding what roles virginity and sexuality play in women’s lives (Valenti, 2009). In her book “The Purity Myth,” Jessica Valenti (2009) attempts to end the idea of virginity and argue that it should not be an integral measure of a woman’s identity and worth. She remarks, “Staying pure and innocent is touted as the greatest thing we can do, but equating this inaction with morality is problematic because it continues to tie women’s ethics to our bodies” (Valenti, 2009, p.24-25).

Discussing purity culture and viewing virginity as commodity and morality, Linda Klein’s book paves the way for me to compare and contrast these notions within the context of the Red Apple tradition as well, where virginity’s connection is closely linked to virtue, honor, norms, and traditions. Klein’s method is based on several things: cultural commentary, memoir, and journalism. The book titled *Pure: Inside the evangelical movement that shamed a generation of young women and how I broke free* concentrates on the Evangelical Christian Culture and its devastating effects on women, which is a worldwide phenomenon and a movement (Klein, 2018). Klein’s main argument is that Evangelical Christianity’s sexual purity movement is dangerous, threatening, and traumatizing to women since it results in women to live in fear, shame, anxiety, and worthlessness (Klein, 2018). Linda Kay Klein argues that the purity myth teaches that every sexual activity makes a person less pure and that it is not that much a matter of the actual act of sex itself. Still, instead, it is all about women, who they are, what they are expected to be, and who they become in the face of violating the norms and when failing to meet the expectations (Klein, 2018, p. 12).

 There are certain accepted and followed social and cultural norms/values which may change in the name of human rights, and the socio-cultural norms that are accepted in the modern world and in Armenia may have commonalities. To tackle these issues and find possible answers, first, we need to understand the social and cultural norms, how they form, and whether those are susceptible to change and adaptation. To answer these questions, I found two primary sources which offer an in-depth overview of what social norms are and how they are measured. The authors’ method is based on qualitative analysis and research. Social norms may involve an entire community’s beliefs and actions (Mackie, Moneti, Shakya, & Denny, 2015). The authors remark, "Beliefs about what others do and what they think we should do, maintained by social approval and disapproval, often guide a person’s actions in her social setting" (Mackie et al., 2015, p. 4) And, to understand the reasons as to why the Red Apple Armenian tradition prevails, we need to first understand the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of Armenians. My second primary source to tackle this question is a report relating to the sexual and reproductive health of young people in Armenia. The author’s method is based on survey research and case studies analysis. The report (Khachikyan, 2009) consists of population-based surveys and case studies concerning sexual knowledge, behaviors, practices, and attitudes of young people in Armenia. The survey data on attitudes to pre-marital sexual relationships suggest that the majority of female (91%) and male (97%) respondents of the study considered pre-marital sexual relationships acceptable for men but nor for women (Khachikyan, 2009, p. 98). The results of the survey of this particular theme suggest that the national tradition of pre-marital virginity keeping in Armenia persists for women, while pre-marital sexual relationship for men is acceptable (Khachikyan, 2009, p. 107). Double sexual standards and gender-based differences are existent in Armenia.

 My last major theme in my sub research questions is about shame, more specifically, sexual shame. The question I have asked is what shame can do to women and the outcomes range from feelings of loneliness, disapproval, social isolation, unworthiness, to the incapability of receiving and giving love and belonging. Although shame isn’t talked about a lot, because of fear of judgments, social isolation, and loneliness, it exists. To tackle the question as to what shame does to women, first, we need to take a close look at what makes a person feel shame? Within the context of my research I take a firm position on the idea, that it is not the actual act of sex itself or the process of virginity loss that makes a woman feel shame, but rather the societal pressure, societal standards of what’s right or wrong, what’s moral or immoral, what’s acceptable or unacceptable, and the outside judgments that are thrown at women that make women shameful. The first article I found concerning shame is on negotiating discourses of shame, secrecy, and silence. The authors’ method is based on a qualitative study. The main argument implies that there is shame associated with silence and secrecy. The notion of shame is the dominant religious and cultural construction of women’s sexuality embodiment (Ussher et al., 2017). The results suggest that no single woman in the study was passive with regard to the discourse of sexual shame, and all of them were eager to show active resistance to get at least some sexual agency, at the same time, be able to maintain and keep their both cultural and religious identities (Ussher et al., 2017).

Other sources tackle the problem of sexual double standards. The authors’ method is based on survey research and an interview. The main argument implies that although liberal ideas, thoughts, and discourse not only approve, accept, but also praise women’s casual sex, the traditional discourse and the sexual double standard do not (Farvid, Braun, & Rowney, 2017). The interview analysis and results suggest that the sexual double standard exists and is found; however, whether it is relevant or appropriate is challenged (Farvid et al., 2017). And my final primary article connected to women’s sexuality is based on a qualitative phenomenological approach. The main argument is that although there is some existent awareness of a woman’s right to experience sexual pleasure, it is thought that those sexual activities which are beyond the existing and present social norms will lead to social isolation, social shame, and guilt (Fazli Khalaf, Liow, Low, Ghorbani, & Merghati-Khoei, 2018). And, women’s sexuality is experienced strictly under the control of society and religion, at the same time forcing various risks and responsibilities to women (Fazli Khalaf et al., 2018).

 To conclude, the literature chosen for my research is not limited to only one type of study but rather involves various kinds of investigations, such as descriptive research, including case studies, survey research, qualitative research, and ethnographic research, as well as field research, cultural, social analysis. The significance of the chosen literature lies in its in-depth, and thorough examination and exploration of the Red Apple Armenian tradition’s observance, and the connections purity culture has with it. Through the process of challenging the mainstream, new knowledge is generated and the existing culture is validated. One of the significant strengths of the literature is that it provides an in-depth detailed look/view on my topic. The major weakness of the literature and the one thing that’s missing, I believe is concerning the actual implementation of the plan to raise awareness and educate women about their rights and sexuality. Next steps for my research would then be, through in-depth analysis and study of the existing knowledge, attempt to suggest and generate possible ways of educating women, which will enable them to know, understand and challenge the blindly accepted mainstream ideas, and have the courage to stand up and fight for their sexual rights. Education then will help correct the line which says that a woman’s worth is kept, maintained and lies in their genitals and not in their hearts, minds, and souls.

**Research Questions**

 The central research question of capstone project is the following: What factors perpetuate a myth? What are the factors that perpetuate the Red Apple myth in Armenia? What causes the Red Apple tradition to prevail? Since my capstone project seeks to answer multiple research questions, I have also identified my two secondary research questions, closely related to the primary research question. My first secondary research question is the following: How is the Red Apple Armenian tradition/myth a violation of women’s rights within the context of purity culture? And my next secondary research question is the following: Why is the notion of virginity used to control women’s sexuality and determine their value?

**Methodology**

 I have carried out qualitative research. Qualitative research aims at making and creating meaning. There are various types of qualitative research, like in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnographic research, and others. I have identified my primary research method to be conducting and employing face to face, one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews, which I found to be most beneficial compared to quantitative methods, like surveys and questionnaires. The general purpose of conducting interviews is aimed at helping the interviewer to get a better and a deeper understanding of a particular area of interest from a certain number of people. In my case it was acquiring knowledge, experiences, and thoughts about the perpetuation of the red apple myth in Armenia, including preferences, attitudes, feelings, and opinions.

 My research is about what factors perpetuate the red apple myth in Armenia and it seeks to answer the question as to why the notion of virginity is used to control women’s sexuality and determine their value. To understand whether social and cultural norms have a say in peoples’ lives and thinking as of what’s considered to be right and wrong, moral and immoral, I have chosen to conduct interviews to reach to peoples’ minds. Conducting interviews enabled me to understand the way they think, the underlying core reasons for why they think the way they do, and their actions according to their thinking. Conducting in-depth interviews with my participants enabled me to conclude why how and what they think, believe, and behave.

 There are several significant reasons why I chose to conduct one-on-one in-depth interviews with the respondents rather than using online and phone interviews, surveys, focus groups. People talk when they are listened to and when they are heard. In case of surveys, they don’t let the respondent have a thorough open-ended discussion. The participants would answer the close-ended questions, which would be nearly impossible to analyze or acquire quality knowledge with regard to my theme because some respondents might feel too shy to talk and answer genuinely.

 The second most important characteristic for a person to engage in a conversation is the environment and the physical connection. The theme I have chosen is such that people wouldn’t directly and at once concentrate on the central theme, but rather, the questions I have created succeeded in creating a safe space and an atmosphere where the participants were willing to talk and share what they thought about and believed in. I started the interviews with the questions that my respondents felt comfortable answering first, after which we transitioned slowly to the next phases.

I carried out semi-structured interviewing. The questions I prepared for the interviewers varied slightly for men and women accordingly, while at the same time, were closely related to my primary and secondary research questions. The questions I came up with were based on previous research done on my topic. The questions I asked, intended to figure out what Armenians believed in, how they thought, and why they behaved the way they did within the context of the Red Apple Armenian tradition’s prevalence. The questionnaire for male and female participants can be found in Appendix 2.

 The target group for the discussions and the interviews included both genders: men and women. The reason for this is that although the red apple tradition mostly interferes and is related to women, I found it to be of equal importance to take a look at both sides and compare what men say to what women say. Eventually, I came to a conclusion by comparing, contrasting, analyzing, and evaluating all their ideas, opinions, and thoughts. The selected individuals are from Yerevan. The reason I don’t have people outside of Yerevan or from remote rural areas is because of the pandemic that restrained movement. I selected eight people equally divided among men and women. The age range was from 21 to 30, including both men and women.

Each interview had an approximate half an hour duration. The first step of the research was to carry out the interviews after getting the participants’ consent for participation and record them. The interviews were conducted in Armenian. The next step of the process was transcribing all the interviews in Armenian, then into English. After this, I read, analyzed, and took out five major themes that were discussed by all the participants. Analyzing the themes, I found connections and correlations in between, that led me to draw the conclusion.

**Research Findings and Analysis**

The purpose of my qualitative research is aimed at discovering the causes of continuation of the red apple tradition in Armenia, which is quite persistent not only in the city of Yerevan but also more in rural areas/districts of Armenia. To be able to understand the causes as to why the red apple tradition prevails, I carried out eight in-depth face to face interviews with both genders, where the age range of my participants was from 21 to 30. Within the male group, the age range included the following ages: 21, 24, 26, 28. Within the female group, the age range consisted of the following ages: 22, 22, 25, 30. The interviews were conducted with people I have known for some time and lasted for approximately 30 minutes each.

 Out of all the eight in-depth face to face interviews, five significant themes have come out, which will be looked at, analyzed, and concluded in a thematic order one by one. The thematic content starts with looking at the ways Armenians think, the way their mindset is shaped, the values through which they judge a person, and whether the Armenian society puts differences between boys and girls. Then, following this thread, we will see how Armenians feel about the red apple tradition, whether their overall reactions are positive/negative and why. We will also be able to see if there is any connection between the notion of virginity and a woman’s worth. I have used pseudonyms for some of the interviewee’s names, based on their wishes to remain confidential.

1. **Theme #1 Armenians’ mindset and thinking: How is a person’s mindset shaped? What influences a person’s thinking? What factors contribute someone to think the way they do?**

 To the question as of how your current mindset/thinking is shaped, maybe through different factors/influencers like one’s family, friends, and other people’s opinions, in other words, why you think the way you do, almost all the respondents’ first thought was around the importance of families. Three of the male respondents mentioned that the most crucial factor and influencer of one’s thinking were families. Norayr remarked, “Well, all those already mentioned parts do exist in a developed individual, all including one’s family, friends, and as you mentioned other people’s opinions as well, although other people’s opinions don’t matter that much, as it’s accepted in the society”(Norayr, interview, March 15, 2020). And all four of the female participants mentioned that the most influencing factor in shaping one’s mindset was families again.

 These replies suggest that the ways families educate their children will decide what kind of individuals they will become when they grow up. Two of the interviewees, one male and one female, talked about other factors which also play prominent roles in one’s thinking which are the kindergarten, the school, the university. They also paid close attention to the other most crucial factor after family influence which is the environment, where someone interacts and is raised and the society. Yeva explained: “I think that each person’s thinking is affected by the society in which he/she lives. But to avoid society’s opinion, we as individuals should try through different methods to escape and get out of our stereotypical mindsets” (Yeva, interview, March 14, 2020). Most of the respondents, both female and male, took into consideration the opinions of their friends and relatives, but not other peoples’ opinions. To the question with regard to making personal decisions and whether in that case, other people’s views would make a difference, most of the participants said that other people’s opinions wouldn’t matter in making personal decisions. However, they would consider their family’s and friends’ advice. Sos said, “I think the way I do. No one’s opinion matters. Family is not considered other people, friends, and relatives have their own opinions in which I am not interested at all, and stranger’s opinion doesn’t matter at all” (Sos, interview, March 16, 2020).

 These replies suggest that although people try to be guided by their own thinking, often trying to get out of the boxes that limit them, however, it’s still not easy to ignore society’s views and opinions simply because we as individuals are parts of this society. We live in it, and whether we realize it or not, we tend to adapt to some extent. Lia commented:

We live in Armenia, we can’t avoid other peoples’ opinions, but at the same time, it’s important not to take those opinions into account, because you are living for yourself, in that case, you don’t need other person’s opinion. But the environment and the country in which you live in doesn’t let you; you are living in a place where you are forced to take a look and take into account what other people say, talk about. Therefore, you can’t be free and live the way you want to live. Family plays an important role in shaping one’s thinking (Lia, interview, March 17, 2020)

1. **Theme #2 Boys and girls in the Armenian society: are there differences? The gender differences marked by society: Does the society discriminate?**

 To the question as to whether the Armenian society marks differences between boys and girls and whether there are gender discriminations, all of the eight respondents replied with a yes, confirming the gender-based differences set by the Armenian society in almost all spheres. Answers ranged from the actual birth of a child when a baby boy is born, the news is more welcoming than when a baby girl is born, to family betrayal and dominance. Lia said:

Yes, differences have always been put on the genders. And, I can say those differences are marked in all things. Starting from one’s birth, it’s preferable to have a baby boy; boys are allowed to do such and such things, girls aren’t when they are already grown-ups, boys can act and live the way they want to, while girls can’t. And, all of those things are coming from the made-up stereotypes of our Armenian society. (Lia, interview, March 17, 2020)

 It’s interesting to note that the participants being young adults realize and accept the fact that there are differences. One of the male participants Norayr Grigoryan, for example, talked about some villages where women can’t even speak and be heard. According to him, this is because of the old made-up traditional model, which is the core cause of all the inequalities leading to a misbalanced and unhealthy environment in the Armenian society. (Norayr, interview, March 15, 2020) Another female participant Lida Aghayan tackled the issue of betrayal within families, saying that if a man betrays his wife, then it’s normal simply because he is a man; he has the right to cheat and has more privileges compared to women. In contrast, if a woman betrays his man, she would be harshly dishonored by society, which in her own words, implies that there is sexual discrimination as well. She also talked about how a man’s word is more dominant than a woman’s say. She added, “We have some equality now, but I think the core cause of all the inequalities is in the fact that women before lacked financial security, meaning that men were the main source of income; therefore, men have had more privileges” (Lida, interview, March 13, 2020).

 It becomes apparent that there is realization, understanding, and acceptance of all these mentioned problematic issues, and the cause of which lies in the Armenian society’s traditional model. And, finally, another female participant Neli shared another existing fact which is still considered relevant in certain places – the idea that women are mostly perceived to be housewives who are supposed to stay at homes and raise children, which reveals the importance of awareness and equal education for women in particular (Neli, interview, March 15, 2020).

1. **Theme #3 Human values: Which human values are most important to you? Based on what and through which human values do you judge a person?**

 To the question on which human values you judge a person and which human values are most important to you, 6 of the participants directly replied that honesty is the most significant human value that exists. One of the male participants Norayr, for example, valued most honesty and sincerity of a person, at the same time noting that honesty is a rare thing because people tend to be dishonest. He continued stating that he also valued true open-heartedness/openness when a person genuinely tries to connect with you through an open heart (Norayr, interview, March 15, 2020). Another male participant Karen appreciated the honesty in the first place, and open-heartedness in the second place in a person (Karen, interview, March 17, 2020). Sos added: “Honesty and trust, those will be enough. All the other human values are based on those two. And, trust comes from honesty” (Sos, interview, March 16, 2020).

 The answers to this question by the female respondents were quite similar to what the male participants said, although some of them valued first loyalty, justice, equality, and humanness. For example, one of the female participants, Neli, noted that the three most important human values for her are loyalty, justice, equality (Neli, interview, March 15, 2020). Lia said that it’s essential for her that a person is attentive and humanly (Lia, interview, March 17, 2020). And other participants as well valued honesty to be of paramount importance. Yeva explained: “First comes honesty; I can never communicate with dishonest people. Secondly, when a person isn’t using you, exploiting you, that’s a critical feature when they realize that you are a part of the society and are equal. Only under these cases, other values like respect and trust are built. All the other values are shaped around these points” (Yeva, interview, March 14, 2020).

 No one wants to be lied to, deceived, or cheated on, that’s true. The fact that Armenians consider honesty to be the most important human value, also indicates and suggests that those who consider honesty to be important, would live their lives by being honest. There is something fragile in some of the female respondents’ answers. Two of the female participants considered loyalty, justice, equality, and humanness to be of paramount importance, which I believe isn’t a coincidence. People usually talk about and want the things that they may lack in their lives. Thus, it may not be happenstance that men didn’t even think about equality, justice, and loyalty. These women’s answers are clear indications that women in Armenia have lacked justice, equality, and commitment. As already discussed by one of the female participants who shared the view that men can betray and women can’t cheat in our previous section, it can be concluded that women are considered and expected to practice loyalty. In contrast, men don’t have to, simply because they are men. Another example that could be linked to justice from the previous section is the man’s dominance in talking, saying something and being heard. In contrast, women did not have much space for freedom of speech, which also indicates as to why women talked about justice and men didn’t. These replies suggest that there is some existing misbalance and an unhealthy environment in the Armenian society between the two genders. It is vital for both men and women to be aware and realize that no woman is less because she is a woman and that inequality and injustice shouldn’t be practiced simply because she is a woman.

1. **Theme #4 The Red Apple tradition and pre-marital sex: How do Armenians feel about the ongoing red apple tradition? Do they react positively, negatively towards this tradition and what are their views on pre-marital sex?**

 To the question regarding the red apple ongoing and prevailing tradition in rural areas and the city, what they think about this tradition, and the causes which make the Red Apple tradition to prevail, very different answers appeared. To put it more coherently, only one of the male participants was strictly against the existence and the continuation of the red apple tradition, and other male participants’ opinions were largely positive stating that it’s preferable and it’s good that this tradition continues. As for the question whether pre-marital sex is normal, only two of the male participants welcomed pre-marital sex and were fine with it, while the other two participants were firmly against it. All of the four female participants were against the red apple tradition, but concerning pre-marital sex, two of the female participants’ reactions were positive on the issue.

 Now let’s see what our respondents are saying about these issues. One of the male respondents, Norayr, was strictly against this tradition and felt quite negative towards it, claiming that it’s a tradition that might work in older times, but old ways aren’t modern and appropriate now. He mentioned that, like many other things, the red apple tradition is something that’s been wrapped around the Armenian society. He also mentioned that this tradition has Arab and Turkish roots. He added: “First of all, as of today, people have personal space, intimate life, and personal life. This very Red Apple tradition results in making you show and demonstrate your sexual life to the public. That’s what I don’t understand, what are you trying to show through that?” As to the causes of the continuation of the red apple tradition, Norayr pointed out two primary reasons – the first being the illiteracy of people who don’t adapt to the new mentality, values, progress that have changed over time. And, secondly, he thinks that people take it just too seriously. Norayr also tackled another problem about the red apple tradition’s fictitiousness. “The problem is that there are also cases when people do the Red Apple in a fictitious manner. I mean, if you are going to be and act fictitious and not keep the essence of the tradition, why do it? If the tradition should have a fake demonstrative nature, what’s the point, it’s meaningless. What regards to pre-marital sex, I feel positive. It’s any person’s and any couple’s own choice, and no one has the right to interfere with that issue” (Norayr, interview, March 15, 2020).

 Another male participant, Karen, described the red apple in the following way: “Well, the tradition itself is good, but the way it’s presented, the presentation procedure is bad. It should happen privately, and in secret and not like the ways we do it, I mean taking red apples to the bride’s house, etc. and making it public.” Karen believes that it’s vital for the tradition to continue with one condition that it all stays between the couple. It’s interesting that his argument for the tradition not to disappear completely can be linked to morality, dignity, and honor. He added, “I don’t want it to end completely, because it also has a good feature, meaning that boys and girls should not live too freely, they should think more about their family, morality, honor, and dignity.” Karen is against pre-marital sex. He explained, “I feel negative towards it as an Armenian man. And, maybe the core reasons are the tradition, the stereotypes, the environment, the relatives” (Karen, interview, March 17, 2020).

 Sos remarked, “It’s good that this tradition continues. Let’s put the Red Apple tradition aside, and talk about the girl’s virginity. This is the right question. So, there are many reasons why a girl may not be a virgin. If a girl is not a virgin, she does not stop being a human. She stays human. She stays a worthwhile human. The question that is raised is why she is not a virgin. Let’s say she has been raped. What should you do? Should you take and burn her? Let’s say she got married and got divorced. Should you take and burn her? No, but there can be someone who sells her body for money. You should take her and burn. Someone can become a victim of pleasure; it’s not accepted. It depends on the reason why a girl isn’t a virgin. And, the Red Apple tradition is proof that the girl is innocent and hasn’t been with anyone” (Sos, interview, March 16, 2020). Unlike other respondents, Sos clarifies as to why he is against pre-marital sex, which is quite interesting. He explained, “I am against it, and there should be no sex before marriage. To avoid disappointment, they should not give space to that instinct; otherwise, marriage will not happen. You might wonder why, because after you have sex before marriage, you start to have feelings of regret, in Armenia, because there is this tradition” (Sos, interview, March 15, 2020).

These responses posed some other questions and ideas, which directly link and connect back to the significant influences of one’s thinking. Karen’s final statement was the following: “I have this inner feeling, that if a girl has already had sex before marriage, I can’t have personal relations with the girl” (Karen, interview, March 17, 2020).

 Let’s take a closer look. Karen thinks more traditionally than Norayr. Could it be a matter of illiteracy? It could be, of course, that Karen may take it more seriously than Norayr, though it is not that much an issue of ignorance, but rather how one has been educated, lived, and raised. We have already discussed that different factors might be integrated into one’s overall education. Therefore, it is all a matter of upbringing and education, in what conditions and under what circumstances, moral principles, values, one has been raised. And it all starts at a very early age within one’s family structure. Karen is being guided more by the standards and principles and values that have long been inculcated in him by his family, relatives and his overall environment. In contrast, Norayr might be guided by his own morals, standards, and principles, which he has acquired from his family. We again come to the conclusion that the way a person thinks, acts, and behaves is a direct reflection of how he has been raised. Sos also pointed out the core problem, which according to him, wasn’t that much the red apple tradition but rather the girl’s virginity and, more importantly, the reason why someone may not be a virgin.

 These ideas suggest that not all connect the loss of virginity to a person’s moral character, but only depending on the reasons for the virginity loss, which doesn’t sound convincing. It is saying that it is okay if you aren’t a virgin, but if you have a compelling argument for the absence of your virginity, then you may be given a chance to love and be loved, to find a partner, and create a family, which isn’t right. Sos connected sex before marriage to disappointment and regret among men, which was also fascinating to examine. Following this line of thought, a question is raised. How do you get married to someone and integrate your sexual life with that person if you find out the day at the wedding that you aren’t right for each other in bed? We all know sexual experience is a crucial phase in someone’s life, be that person a man or a woman. Sos’s opinion shows that men take a different stand with regard to a sexual life with their future wives. What it means is that, it’s fine for a man to get married to a virgin girl and not have a pleasant sexual life together, simply because they may not look at sex as something healthy for the woman’s organism and overall health, but rather a means to continue his generation. Only in such cases, would Sos’s argument work if men look at sex as just a means to have children and continue their generation. Otherwise, men who take a different stand and believe that their sexual lives with their partners are essential, I think they would reconsider.

 Now let's take a look at our female participants' answers and see how they feel about the red apple tradition and pre-marital sex. One of the female participants talked about the symbol that the red apple tradition might have. Yeva said,

People think that a girl's virginity is a question of dignity and honor. I think that each person should be guided by their own thinking and not by other's opinions. And, there are many cases in the Armenian society when a girl makes a mistake, and then isn't able to find/create a family or a partner, only for the reason that the society misrepresents her for her mistake. I think we should be free from that stereotypical mentality. (Yeva, interview, March 14, 2020)

Here is what the symbol of the red apple tradition is, according to Yeva: "The Red Apple's symbol I think is the following – the white color is associated with purity and innocence, while the red color is associated with losing one’s virginity and blood. And why Red Apple, maybe because the apple is the only fruit that's similar to the solidity that a woman has in herself, meaning not too fragile to be broken." With regard to pre-marital sex, Yeva thinks that sex is right after marriage, but if there is mutual trust between the two people, then no one has the right to forbid them.

 Another female participant, Lida, said that the red apple is considered to be a symbol of purity and innocence. Still, she believes that virginity shouldn’t be the only moral factor and shouldn’t be regarded as criteria for a woman’s morality. With regard to why the red apple tradition continues, Lida said, “The two main reasons are the views of society which are quite dominant and this feeling of honor and dignity, which people can’t emotionally get over. I think people should be guided not by some physical factors but by human values” (Lida, interview, March 13, 2020).

Neli, confirmed Armenians to be a very traditional and conservative nation and remaining a virgin until marriage is one of the societal rules. She explained,

My family is against these views, I have talked to them a lot, and they would always tell me that if the couple loves each other, they can and will wait. To me, it’s even normal that the couple lives with one another before marriage, to see if you can live with that man, even the sexual relationships. Maybe, you don’t feel comfortable around this man, and maybe you don’t feel pleasure in terms of sexual relationships. In such cases, you get broken, and there are cases when women in a marriage feel this way, but they stay silent and afraid of what the society will say. It’s better to live together before marriage so that you see if you are right for each other. (Neli, interview, March 15, 2020)

This reply is again a clear illustration of how family and societal views have a say in what’s right and wrong, what’s moral and immoral, and even when is the right time to engage in sexual intercourse.

Out of all these responses, it becomes apparent that men tend to judge a girl who is not a virgin, with exceptions, in case she has been raped, in case she is divorced, when she is less judged. She could even be accepted and understood, but no one takes into account the fact that if men can engage in sex for pleasure, women have the right to do it as well. No one seems to accept the right of equality in this issue, and no one seems to realize that as a result of a failed sexual relationship, a woman’s overall both emotional and physical health may be affected. It’s interesting to note how all women differed significantly from men in this particular response. The differences have to do with the fact of how it directly impacts women’s bodies, their choices and decisions about their own bodies.

1. **Theme #5 The absence of virginity and a woman’s worth: What does the notion of virginity have to do with a woman’s worth, or does it? The absence of virginity in choosing a life partner.**

 To the question on what does the notion of virginity have to do with a person’s worth and whether the absence of virginity would be an obstacle in choosing a life partner, opinions varied. One of the male participants, Norayr, stated that judging a woman based on her virginity is an old model already. He remarked, “As of today, it’s already an old model for judging a woman. In our days, it’s not a modern phenomenon to judge a woman based on the existence of the hymen, because many girls are virgins in a fictitious way.” Norayr doesn’t pay attention to the absence of virginity. He added: “I don’t judge a person based on virginity. If you know who is in front of you, if a girl is immoral, it doesn’t matter if she is a virgin or not, she will stay and be immoral. Each man and woman should have the right to be happy, and how they will build their happiness, is only their decision.” He also pointed out the possible problems that might arise because of sex after marriage. The problems include the fact that women might not get their sexual lives right and enjoy that life fully after they find out that they aren’t right for each other in bed, some can’t even get pregnant because of the emotional pressure. He also said that the process of judging would pass with time. According to him,

Giving children sex education, that’s the right thing to do. If a child is educated from a very early age, when they grow up, they will know what comes after what and they won’t get all the false information from porn sites, or the Internet. That would be a professional approach. And, by the time they are adults, they will be literate around these issues. Education plays an essential role, and the well-educated child will become an adult who thinks right and healthy. (Norayr, interview, March 15, 2020)

 Another male participant Karen, reacted slightly differently, stating that he does pay attention to whether a girl is a virgin or not and he would be less likely to build a serious relationship with a girl who isn’t a virgin. At the same time, he said: “The moral and the purity of one person comes from their human values. Human values are more important than virginity, but I give equal importance to both of those things” (Karen, interview, March 17, 2020).

 Sos added, “Virginity doesn’t have anything to do with a person’s worth. Whether a girl is a virgin or not, it’s not related to values in anyways. If a girl isn’t a virgin, and she admits and tells you about it, and why she is not a virgin, I would even respect her for her honesty.” Sos also clarified the reason behind why people judge someone who isn’t a virgin, arguing that people usually judge those who haven’t been married, assuming that if a girl has had sexual affairs before marriage, then she has lived an immoral life. According to Sos, a girl can be clean and pure and moral, and not be a virgin and vice versa. To the question of whether the absence of virginity would change anything in choosing a life partner, he said that it depended and that he would go for finding out the reason why.(Sos, interview, March 15, 2020).

 These answers suggest that Armenian men don’t find a woman’s actual worth closely and directly connected to a woman’s virginity, but instead, they judge the actual act of sex itself. Some men judge and criticize someone who isn’t a virgin, and other men feel fine and positive on this issue. I came to another hypothesis, as well. The same girl who may not be a virgin due to certain reasons could be someone’s sister or mother. I believe those men who would have encountered such cases and situations, would not dare to judge other girls, and they would look at it from a completely different angle.

 Now, let's finalize and take a look at what the female participants' reactions were on this issue. Yeva connected the continuation of the red apple tradition directly to prostitutes. She said, "I feel negative only towards prostitutes and I think that it's them who corrupt our generation and stimulate, promote traditions like the Red Apple to continue" (Yeva, interview, March 14, 2020). It's interesting to think about how prostitution could affect the continuation of the red apple tradition. One reason maybe that many men, going to prostitutes, already think that prostitutes are not virgins and they engage in immoral behavior and act, therefore when an ordinary girl turns out not to be a virgin, they instantly connect it to immorality. Another female participant Neli stated: "A woman's worth I think is in her femininity. And the notion of virginity is just a label that has been put on a woman's forehead" (Neli, interview, March 15, 2020). Lia thought, "A girl may not be a virgin but be a perfect person. Men on their parts judge a girl not knowing what has actually happened. What's important to keep in mind is that men pay close attention to others' opinions" (Lia, interview, March 17, 2020). As a result of all these responses, it becomes clear that only those women who aren't virgins are judged and that these individual judgments happen because society collectively supports and stands for a specific belief.

**Limitations and avenues for future research**

 Undoubtedly, there were limitations concerning my area of study and research. One of the most significant limitations was the number of respondents who participated. A small number of people were interviewed – eight people who were divided equally between men and women, although the overall results of all the eight interviews were quite detailed and thorough. One avenue for further research would be widening the scope of this project by integrating more people in it; for example, an approximate number of 50 participants equally divided between males and females.

 Moreover, the participants chosen for my research belonged to specific categories. All of them were from the city of Yerevan, which was also a limitation. Another avenue for future research would be integrating other people living outside of Yerevan, people from different Armenian districts, and rural areas as well. Since the theme of the study relates to the red apple tradition, which is expected to happen more in rural and remote regions of Armenia, it would be productive to see how those people felt and thought about it. And, that would guide and lead us to more structured analysis and understanding as to why the red apple myth persists.

 And, the final limitation of the study was the age range which was from 21 to 30 in my research. An avenue for future research would be integrating different age ranges as well, for example, an equal number of participants divided among males and females who would be teenagers, adults, and the elderly. This would be most beneficial since it would enable us to get a deeper understanding as to why Armenians think the way they do, by comparing, contrasting and finding correlations in the aftermath of all three generations. Although one-on-one, face to face deep interviewing is a beneficial technique when it comes to an understanding of how someone behaves, acts, and thinks, with regard to the final limitation, a collective focus group analyzing method could also be used. Collecting a certain number of teenagers, adults, and elders, forming groups of three and facilitating discussions around the red apple tradition would enable them to collectively recreate new meanings and ideas, which is another avenue for future research.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the purpose of this research was aimed at discovering, understanding, and figuring out the causes of continuation and perpetuation of the red apple tradition/myth in Armenia. The red apple myth, which is a marriage tradition having old roots, continues to exist, much more durable in remote villages and districts of Armenia. The core reasons for making the tradition last includes and isn’t limited to one’s upbringing, family influences, external environmental factors, societal beliefs, attitudes, conventional norms, which were found as a result of research findings and analysis. The results of the eight in-depth face to face interviews suggest that the red apple tradition continues to exist, that people in certain places, especially in rural areas and districts of Armenia, expect and wait for it to happen. It also suggests that men are judgmental when it comes to sexual rights, the sexual freedom of women, because society’s values, beliefs, and norms have already been deeply rooted in Armenians long ago. On the other hand, the female respondents demonstrated positive attitudes towards the idea that virginity loss shouldn’t be linked to a person’s purity and that having sex is a person’s own choice. The results also suggest that the way someone thinks behaves and acts is a direct reflection of how they are raised and educated. If a person is judgmental and not understanding, if a person accepts certain things and rejects others, if a person can see equality, justice, freedom for both genders, or discriminates, these are all results of one’s upbringing. It all comes down to the importance of education, sex education in particular, which ought to start at a very early age for each individual to grow up into an adult who will think in a progressive and healthy way. And, maybe one day instead of judgemental and criticizing behavior, people will be equipped with the ability to understand, support, and fight for equal opportunities, rights, and freedom for all.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1: The Generic Actual Consent Form**

**Համաձայնության հավաստագիր**

Համաձայնագիր մասնակցելու դիպլոմային ծրագրի իրականացման Հայաստանի ամերիկյան համալսարանում։ Սույնով հավաստում եմ, որ համաձայն եմ մասնակցել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ. հասցե hourig.attarian@aua.am) ղեկավարությամբ Լուսինե Հայրունու կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

**Նախագծի նպատակը**

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ, թե ինչ կամ որ գործոններն են նպաստում/հավերժացնում Կարմիր Խնձոր հայկական ավանդույթը: Լուսինե Հայրունու անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը պարզաբանելն է թե Կարմիր խնձոր ավանդույթը ինչ կապ ունի մարդու ինքնության և ներքին արժեքների հետ:

**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 Կարմիր խնձորի հարատևության մասին և թե ինչպես է դրա բացակայությունը արժեզրկում կնոջը**:** 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 երկարաձգել, 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 ստուգելու նպատակով: Նախագծի ամբողջ տևողության ընթացքում, ես հնարավորություն կունենամ վերանայել ու հաստատել անգլերեն 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**

\_\_Համաձայն եմ, որ **ինքնությունս հայտնի լինի:** Հասկանում եմ, որ ինքնությունս կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում:

 \_\_ Համաձայն եմ գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով այս հարցազրույցի նկարների ու ձայնագրությունների վերարտադրմանը որևէ հաղորդամիջոցով (վեբ կայքեր, և այլն)։

**ԿԱՄ**

\_\_ Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը **գաղտնի** է: Ես հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը չի բացահայտվի այլ ցանկացած հրապարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, որոնք կլինեն այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքը‚ կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն։

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

**Այն դեպքում, երբ լուսանկարներ‚ իրեր կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել**

\_\_\_ Համաձայն եմ, որ ուսումնասիրություն անող ուսանողը պատճենահանի լուսանկարներ ու փաստաթղթեր նախագծի շրջանակներում օգտագործելու համար:

ՈՒՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐԱԴՐՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ։ ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ։

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն (Խնդում ենք գրել տպատառ) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ստորագրություն \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ամսաթիվ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն (Խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ստորագրություն \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ամսաթիվ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ. 060 612769, էլ.հասցե`hourig.attarian@aua.am):

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire**

1. **Questions for male participants:**
2. Բարև ձեզ: Կարող եք ներկայանալ? Քանի տարեկան եք, որտեղ և ում հետ եք ապրում?
3. Եղել եք կամ ապրել եք Հայաստանից դուրս, արտերկրում?
4. Գոհ եք հայ հասարակությունից, այն հասարակությունից որում ապրում եք? Եթե հնարավորություն ունենայիք փոփոխելու որոշ բաներ, ինչ կփոխեյիք և ինչու?
5. Արդյոք մենք որպես հայ անհատներ ունենք վերցնելու ինչ որ բան այլ հասարակություններից կամ ունենք ինչ որ բան տալու? Եթե այո ապա ինչեր? Դրական, բացասական?
6. Ինչով է ձեր ներկայիս մտածելակերպը կազմավորված? Միգուցե: ընտանիք, ընկերներ, պատիվ, այլ մարդկանց կարծիք? Այլ կերպ ասած, ինչու եք մտածում այնպես ինչպես մտածում եք?
7. Եթե կյանքում կանգնած եք անձնական որոշում կայացնելու առաջ, դեր խաղում են այլ մարդկանց կարծիքները, օրինակ ընտանիքի, ընկերների, անծանոթների, հարազատների, ձեր որոշման մեջ և որքան?
8. Ինչ է արժեքը ներկայացնում ձեզ համար? Ըստ ձեզ ինչ է նշանակում ավանդական արժեք? Ինչ եք մտածում հայ ավանդական արժեքների մասին?
9. Հետևում եք հասարակական արդեն իսկ ստեղծված նորմերին, արժեքներին, հավատամքներին? Որքան կարևոր են ձեզ համար այդ նորմերն և արժեքները?
10. Լինելով տղամարդ ունեք առավելություններ կյանքում? Որ հարցերում եթե ավելի մանրամասնենք?
11. Կյանքի ամենատարբեր բնագավառներում, հայ ժողովուրդը հաճախ է դնում տարբերություններ տղայի և աղջկա միջև? Հատկապես որ հարցերում?
12. Որ մարդկային հատկանիշներով եք դատում մարդուն? Որոնք են ձեզ համար առաջնային ամենակարևոր մարդկային հատկանիշները?
13. Ինչ եք մտածում մարդու դերի մասին հասարակության մեջ? Սեռերի տարբերության մասին է խոսքը: Եվ պետք է այդ դերերը: տղամարդու և կնոջ տարբեր լինեն, ըստ ձեզ?
14. Կարմիր խնձորը, լինելով հայկական ավանդույթ շարունակում է հարատևել ոչ միայն գյուղական շրջաններում այլ նաև քաղաքում: Ինչ կարծիք ունեք այս ավանդույթի մասին?
15. Ինչ սիմվոլ ունի ըստ ձեզ կարմիր խնձորը? Ինչում է կայանում այս ավանդույթի կարևորությունն և հարատևությունն?
16. Ինչ եք կարծում որն է կնոջ դերը հայ հասարակության մեջ? Կամ դերերը, որոնք են կնոջ հիմնական դերերը?
17. Համամիտ եք այն մտքի հետ որ կնոջը շատ հաճախ դիտարկում և նայում են որպես մի օբյեկտ, առարկա?
18. Ինչ է կնոջ իրավունքը ըստ ձեզ? Կարծում եք կին և տղամարդ պետք է ունենան հավասար իրավունքներ? Կամ պետք է լինեն տարբերություններ? Եվ եթե այո, ապա հիմնավորեք խնդրեմ?
19. Ինչ եք կարծում նախա-ամուսնական սեռական հարաբերության մասին?
20. Կարմիր խնձորը խոսում է այն մասին, որ այն վերցնում է կնոջից իր մարմնին տեր լինելու պարզ իրավունքը? Դրա մասին ինչ կասեք? Իրավունքի խախտում արդյոք?
21. Կուսություն ասվածը/հասկացողությունը ինչ կապ ունի մարդու ով լինելու հետ?
22. Կուսություն ասվածը շատ հաճախ ասոցացվում է մաքրության հետ: Ինչ եք կարծում դրա մասին? Համաձայն եք այդ մտքի հետ?
23. Կուսությունը ինչ դեր է խաղում ձեր հարաբերություններում?
24. Կսիրեյիք և լուրջ կվերաբերվեյիք այնպիսի աղջկա ով կույս չէ, սակայն ունի բարձր մարդկային հատկանիշներ, ինչպիսիք են օրինակ բարությունն, նվիրվածությունն, հոգատարությունն, ուշադրությունն, աշխատասիրությունն? Ինչու?
25. Եթե սիրեյիք մի կնոջ և իմանայիք որ նա ամուսնացած բաժանված է, ինչպես կվերաբերվեյիք այդ հարցին? Ինչ կանեյիք, կխզեյիք կապերը տվյալ մարդու հետ?
26. Ինչ եք կարծում, արդար է արդյոք վերագրելը կարմիր խնձորը միայն կանանց?
27. Որտեղ է կայանում կամ ընկած կնոջ արժեքը ձեզ համար?
28. Շնորհակալություն:

 **b. Questions for female participants:**

1. Բարև ձեզ: Կարող եք ներկայանալ? Քանի տարեկան եք, որտեղ և ում հետ եք ապրում?
2. Եղել եք կամ ապրել եք Հայաստանից դուրս, արտերկրում?
3. Գոհ եք հայ հասարակությունից, այն հասարակությունից որում ապրում եք? Եթե հնարավորություն ունենայիք փոփոխելու որոշ բաներ, ինչ կփոխեյիք և ինչու?
4. Արդյոք մենք որպես հայ անհատներ ունենք վերցնելու ինչ որ բան այլ հասարակություններից կամ ունենք ինչ որ բան տալու? Եթե այո ապա ինչեր? Դրական, բացասական?
5. Ինչով է ձեր ներկայիս մտածելակերպը կազմավորված? Միգուցե: ընտանիք, ընկերներ, պատիվ, այլ մարդկանց կարծիք? Այլ կերպ ասած, ինչու եք մտածում այնպես ինչպես մտածում եք?
6. Եթե կյանքում կանգնած եք անձնական որոշում կայացնելու առաջ, դեր խաղում են այլ մարդկանց կարծիքները, օրինակ ընտանիքի, ընկերների, անծանոթների, հարազատների, ձեր որոշման մեջ և որքան?
7. Ինչ է արժեքը ներկայացնում ձեզ համար? Ըստ ձեզ ինչ է նշանակում ավանդական արժեք? Ինչ եք մտածում հայ ավանդական արժեքների մասին?
8. Հետևում եք հասարակական արդեն իսկ ստեղծված նորմերին, արժեքներին, հավատամքներին? Որքան կարևոր են ձեզ համար այդ նորմերն և արժեքները?
9. Լինելով կին ունեք առավելություններ կյանքում? Որ հարցերում եթե ավելի մանրամասնենք?
10. Կյանքի ամենատարբեր բնագավառներում, հայ ժողովուրդը հաճախ է դնում տարբերություններ տղայի և աղջկա միջև? Հատկապես որ հարցերում?
11. Որ մարդկային հատկանիշներով եք դատում մարդուն? Որոնք են ձեզ համար առաջնային ամենակարևոր մարդկային հատկանիշները?
12. Ինչ եք մտածում մարդու դերի մասին հասարակության մեջ? Սեռերի տարբերության մասին է խոսքը: Եվ պետք է այդ դերերը: տղամարդու և կնոջ տարբեր լինեն, ըստ ձեզ?
13. Կարմիր խնձորը, լինելով հայկական ավանդույթ շարունակում է հարատևել ոչ միայն գյուղական շրջաններում այլ նաև քաղաքում: Ինչ կարծիք ունեք այս ավանդույթի մասին?
14. Ինչ սիմվոլ ունի ըստ ձեզ կարմիր խնձորը? Ինչում է կայանում այս ավանդույթի կարևորությունն և հարատևությունն?
15. Ինչ եք կարծում որն է կնոջ դերը հայ հասարակության մեջ? Կամ դերերը, որոնք են կնոջ հիմնական դերերը?
16. Համամիտ եք այն մտքի հետ որ կնոջը շատ հաճախ դիտարկում և նայում են որպես մի օբյեկտ, առարկա?
17. Կարմիր խնձորը խոսում է այն մասին, որ այն վերցնում է կնոջից իր մարմնին տեր լինելու պարզ իրավունքը? Դրա մասին ինչ կասեք? Իրավունքի խախտում արդյոք?
18. Ինչ է կնոջ իրավունքը ըստ ձեզ? Կարծում եք կին և տղամարդ պետք է ունենան հավասար իրավունքներ? Կամ պետք է լինեն տարբերություններ? Եվ եթե այո, ապա հիմնաորեք խնդրեմ?
19. Ինչ եք կարծում նախա-ամուսնական սեռական հարաբերության մասին?
20. Որտեղ է կայանում կամ ընկած կնոջ արժեքը ձեզ համար?
21. Կուսությունը ինչ դեր է խաղում ձեր հարաբերություններում?
22. Կուսություն ասվածը/հասկացողությունը ինչ կապ ունի մարդու ով լինելու հետ?
23. Կուսություն ասվածը շատ հաճախ ասոցացվում է մաքրության հետ: Ինչ եք կարծում դրա մասին? Համաձայն եք այդ մտքի հետ?
24. Եթե սիրեյիք մի տղամարդու և իմանայիք որ նա ամուսնացած է եղել, ինչպես կվերաբերվեյիք այդ փաստի հետ? Դրական, բացասական և ինչու?
25. Շնորհակալություն: