

FLOWERS TO MOTHERS: DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MARCH 8 WISHES BY POLITICIANS IN ARMENIA

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OUTLINE



Introduction



The emerging discourse of rights



Literature Review



Post war discourse: women and war



Research Question



Conclsion



Pre-War Discourse: Women as mothers and caregivers



References

INTRODUCTION

March 8 is a day marked worldwide as a significant occasion to celebrate women's accomplishments and raise issues of **gender inequality**.

In Armenia there are two special holidays dedicated to women one is **March 8**- International Women's Day, and the other one is **April 7**- Motherhood and Beauty day. The time between these two holidays is considered "**mother's month**", and nail and hair salons are fully reserved during the month, many kitchen appliances are on sale and roses are ridiculously overpriced.

Politicians and public figures address women with various speeches and statements. The study focuses on those wishes on March 8 by the leaders of the **five major Armenian political parties** and alliances, who are all men.



LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Language** is a very subtle yet discrete tool to shape the social world, create narratives around different issues, and form public opinions and attitudes towards minority groups.
- Discourses are "practices that systematically **form the objects of which they speak**"(Foucault, 2002, p. 54). Constant **repetition** of the ideas and statements solidifies the discourse and can shape social reality and people's actions.
- The individual's **sense of who they are** comes from historically created **meanings** communicated through institutionalized patterns of behaving and speaking (Tenorio, 2011).
- **Ideology** is the general and abstract beliefs shared among a group that **organize or control the attitude** of the social group. In political discourse, ideologies are widespread among dominant groups and elites, who are also the reproducers of those ideologies through mass media.

Research Question?

HOW THE WISHES AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF ARMENIAN POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS POSTED ON MARCH 8 CREATE A SINGLE IMAGE AND IDENTITY OF THE ARMENIAN WOMAN. THE SUB-QUESTION OF THIS RESEARCH LOOKS AT WHETHER THE 44-DAY KARABAKH WAR HAS AFFECTED THAT IDENTITY AND HOW. THE RESEARCH ALSO FOCUSES ON THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AS WELL AS OTHER THEMES, IN PARTICULAR IDEOLOGY, POWER AND REPRESENTATION.



METHODOLOGY

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

I have identified five major political parties in Armenia based on their popularity

- **Civil Contract**
- **Armenian Revolutionary Federation**
- **Prosperous Armenia**
- **Bright Armenia**
- **The Armenian Alliance**



PRE-WAR DISCOURSE: WOMEN AS MOTHERS AND CAREGIVER 1/2

- The majority of March 8 wishes start with this expression: "*Dear women: mothers, sisters and daughters*" (Pashinyan, 2019, Tsarukyan, 2019). By narrowing down the **definition of a woman** to only those three options and repeatedly using them in discourse, especially on occasions like Women's International Day, **enforce a restricted identity** of women as mothers or daughters.
- Women's role as mothers is highlighted in the **context of a family**.
- Women have become objects of admiration and respect, which idealizes our **cultural and ethnic authenticity**. Their **historical role** is emphasized and praised.



PRE-WAR DISCOURSE: WOMEN AS MOTHERS AND CAREGIVER 2/2

- There is a **separation** of the international women's rights discourse from the Armenian one, by presenting **ours as a unique case**. Throughout history, the Armenian woman was conceptualized as the **creator of the Armenian nation**, who also transferred the traditions to her children, preserving the culture and hence playing an important role in **nation-building**.

THE EMERGING DISCOURSE OF RIGHTS

- **2020** was the year that March 8 wishes included narratives of **women's rights** and wrote about the historical context and the significance of the day.

Nikol Pashinyan visited the 13-year-old girl who had been a **victim of domestic violence** and was in the Intensive Care Unit. He wrote, *"Many of us feel sorry for this girl and her mother who became a victim of homicide, but let us finally admit that this girl and her mother are also victims of the mentality that violence, particularly violence against women, can have any justification"* (Pashinyan, 2020).

in 2020 **Edmon Marukyan** suddenly started talking about the history of March 8 and **Clara Zetkin's** name was mentioned for the first time in the whole five-year period (Marukyan, 2020).



POST-WAR DISCOURSE: WOMEN AND WAR

On **September 27, 2020**, Azerbaijan launched a **war** against the de-facto republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The war lasted 44 days.

- A few of the listed political parties, including the ruling one, **didn't dedicate a post** to the occasion.
- The rest had **amplified messages** highlighting the role of the **mothers of fallen soldiers**.

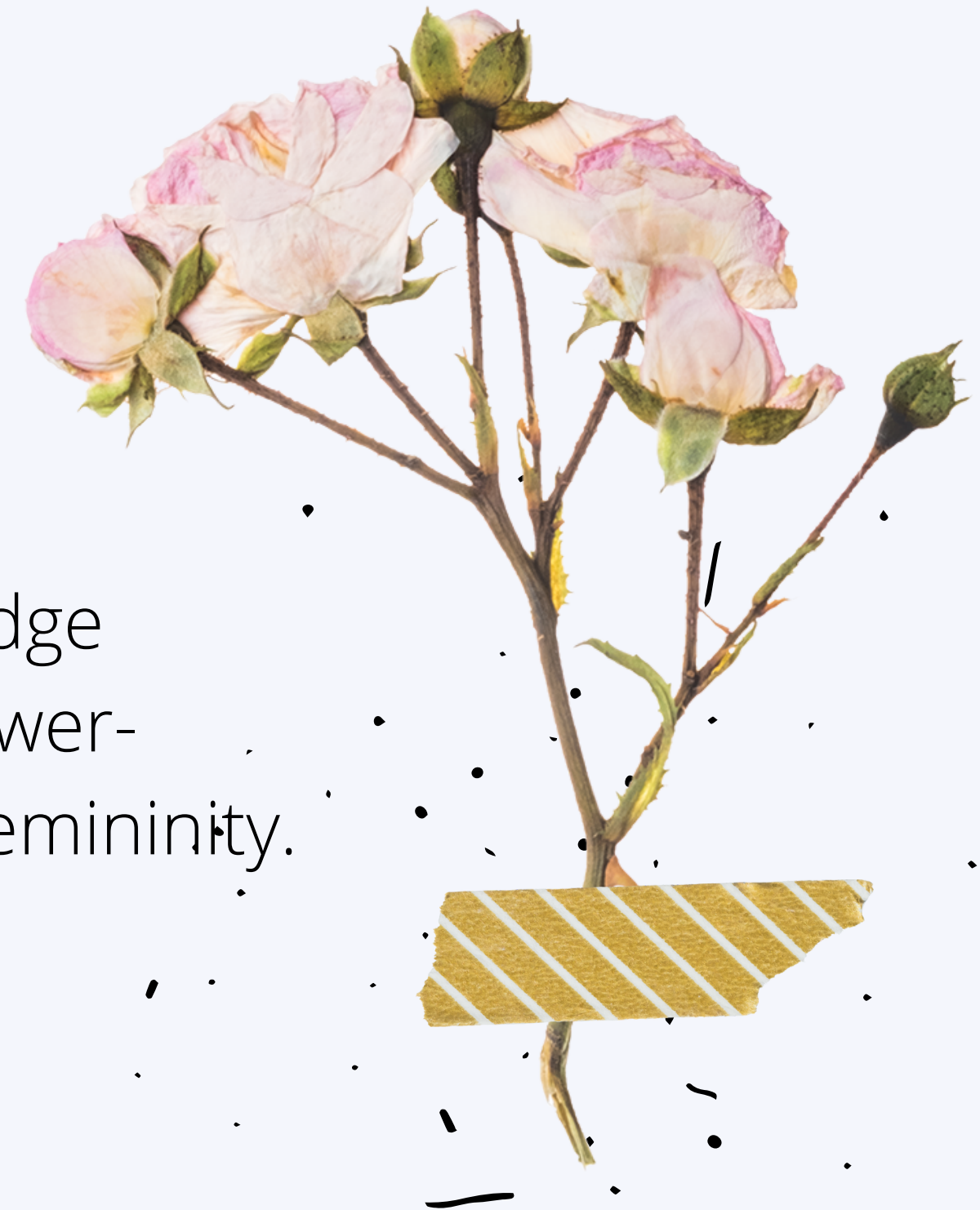
"It is no secret that the Armenian woman has been the upholder and shine of the hearth for centuries. Nowadays, our best national traditions are preserved thanks to you, and it is because of your unbreakable will that we have such a patriotic generation.

I express my special gratitude to our mothers who gave birth to heroes, who sacrificed their most precious child to the Homeland" (Tsarukyan, 2022).



CONCLUSION

In Armenia March 8 celebrations turned from being International Women's Day, an occasion to acknowledge prominent women and raise gender issues, into a flower-gifting event reproducing a discourse of patriarchal femininity.



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