

The Chants of Our Hearts: Football Narratives of Armenian Women

by

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### **Abstract**

My capstone project is a documentary film exploring the relationships between five Armenian women and football (soccer). Two of these women are footballers, playing for the Armenian national team, while the other three are fans of the game. This project is also a self-study, as I share my own stories in the same format as the other narrators: through oral history interviews. The film includes footage from those interviews along with pictures and videos from the narrators' personal archives and the internet. In the film, we share our favorite football memories and what it's like to be a woman interested in a sport that is dominantly viewed as "masculine." The heartwarming stories of these women show that you don't have to fit in a certain criterion to be interested in football and enjoy the sport in all its beauty.

### **The Chants of Our Hearts: Football Narratives of Armenian Women**

- Hey, Internet, who scored the most goals in international football?
  - Cristiano Ronaldo has scored 118 goals in international football.
- What about Christine Sinclair? How many goals has she scored in international football?
  - Christine Sinclair has scored 190 goals in international football.
- Well, then, who scored the most goals in international football?
  - Cristiano Ronaldo has scored 118 goals in international football.

(Correct the Internet, 2023)

We all live in our bubbles. Sometimes we think that we, as a society, have made steps forward toward equality, but a simple Internet search, like the one above, will show us the subtle biases that exist in this world that we might not always be aware of. Who comes to your mind when you think of female athletes? Swimmers? Figure skaters? Or maybe gymnasts? Those are the sports that people usually associate with women. But what about football, basketball, or rugby? We have these predisposed notions of “feminine” and “masculine” sports, which have been ingrained in us through centuries of biased sports coverage.

This bias and negative reaction from society is not only true for female athletes but for female fans as well. Have you ever heard a woman say she is a fan of a certain “masculine” sport, like football (soccer)? What have people’s reactions been to it? In most cases, other people, usually men, laugh it off and move on because they usually think those women are lying for attention. Sometimes they might even ask women for absurd football trivia to prove that they are not real fans.

One can talk about injustices toward women in sports forever, be it about the lack of research on their health, the scarce resources, or simply the invalidation of women in sports. Despite all this, a lot of women find the courage to fight the system and make a change. In some cases, not most, their bravery and hard work pay off. Women’s football is a great example of this. The UEFA European Women’s Championship in the summer of 2022 broke a number of records

in the women's game in attendances, media coverage, sponsorships, and so on. Many of the players became household names in their countries, inspiring the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

The picture is quite different in Armenia. Women's football is not something people care about. A lot of people in Armenia still believe that women belong in the kitchen and should not take part in sports. Even if they do participate in sports, they should drop it as soon as they hit puberty. How can a female athlete be taken seriously if their bodies are only looked at as baby-making machines? People expect the national team to do wonders when they get little to no support from not only the fans but the federation itself. When you go to the Wikipedia page of the Armenian women's national football team, all you see are the losses that look good as sensational headlines. However, there is no mention of the times the team was completely shut down, the lack of investment from the governing bodies, or the special circumstances surrounding those games. How can one expect a young national team, only reinstated a few years ago, to go out and beat the giants of the women's game, who have been relentlessly building their teams for decades? Some of those countries even offer their women's and men's teams equal pay, which seems too unreal even for a dream in Armenia. The women's game gets little to no coverage, disheartening not only the players but also the fans, who wish to follow women's football in the country. How can the federation and the public expect magical performances from the team when they do not put enough effort into helping the team out?

My goal with this project is to share the joy of football, especially in the women's game. I have heard multiple people say that they did not even know that women's football existed. Even if this project does not convince my audience to follow women's football, it will, at least, make them aware that these teams exist. I could choose to do a project comparing numbers, statistics,

and other sources of quantitative data, but, instead, I chose to focus on personal stories. When people look at quantitative research, all they see is numbers. I wanted my audience to see people. People who have been positively impacted by football and are happy to share their heartwarming stories. Nothing beats watching someone talk about a topic that brings them pure, innocent joy.

That feeling of joy is one of the reasons why I fell in love with football. I have loved playing it since I was a child. I used to play outside with the boys on my street and exchange football cards with my cousins. Somewhere along the years, I stopped going out to play and got too old to collect football cards. Of course, back then, I had no idea that female footballers existed. All I knew were the famous male footballers at that time. I cherish the memories I have of pretending to be Messi and scoring goals with my cousin, but I would have loved to have a female role model to look up to. Luckily, nowadays, children around the world have more opportunities to see women shine in sports.

After years of forgetting about football, one day in 2020, I stumbled upon a video of a female footballer scoring a beautiful goal. All of a sudden, my childhood love for football got a second life. I rewatched that video repeatedly, feeling shameful for never thinking about women being professional footballers. It had simply not crossed my mind. Vivianne Miedema, the top goalscorer for the Netherlands and Arsenal, changed my entire life with a single goal. I will forever be grateful to her for introducing a new world to me and inspiring this project.

In life, whenever I feel happiness, my mind quickly becomes overfilled with negative thoughts. In my head, if something good happens, it means something dreadful is on its way. Luckily, it works the other way around as well. Whenever I am having trouble with something, I start thinking about the good things that are going to happen in the future. This way of thought isolates me from my own emotions, not letting me feel things directly, in their purest forms. I

recently watched a video of John Green, where he also talks about this. I was surprised to hear someone else relate to that way of thought. He then mentioned that one of the reasons he loves sports is because he gets to escape those complicated thoughts and “feel things in a straightforward and uncomplicated manner” (Green, 2023). Those words highly resonated with me because it is only through football that I get to feel pure joy and hopeless misery without a second thought. Nothing compares to the happiness after a big win or to the suffering after a loss. But the best thing about football is that there is a constant feeling of comfort in knowing that there are thousands of others who share the same feelings. It feels nice to know that you are not alone in the world. This is true for all sports, but there is something special about women’s football that not all fandoms have. It is the accepting and family-like community that it offers. In women’s football, no one is afraid to speak up for what they believe and stand up for what is right. I found myself surrounded by players and fans who love everyone for who they truly are. I found myself in a community where I felt safe to be myself. I found myself in a community that became my home.

### **Literature Review**

Women’s football is one of the topics that I love exploring. There is always so much that one can learn about the sport, the players, and the fans. However, before doing deep research, it is important to acknowledge the identity of the researcher, especially in qualitative research. Thus, for this project, I reviewed literature on standpoint theory to better understand myself and my positionality. The other part of my literature review concerns the general topic of women and sports: the injustices female athletes face and the expectations the society puts on them.



## Standpoint Theory

*Each of us comes from a different kitchen table.  
Each of us imagines one another's table differently.*

–Lorri Neilsen

Standpoint theory was key for me in understanding my positionality when it came to this research. As Brenda J. Allen (2017) puts it, standpoint theory “strives to explain relationships between power and the construction of knowledge” (Allen, 2017, p. 1). Sandra Harding (2004) mentions that standpoint theorists had originally borrowed the Marxian ontology (Harding, 2004). It referred to German philosopher Hegel’s framework arguing that the working class (the oppressed) had a dual perspective on life because they could see from both their eyes and the eyes of the rich (Allen, 2017). However, Marxian ontology only envisioned one type of the oppressed, which was the heroic, homogeneous agent of history. In other words, they were “idealized proletarian knowers” against the “ignorant bourgeoisie” (Harding, 2004, p. 8). Feminist standpoint theory, on the other hand, challenges the Marxian patriarchal assumptions, which overlooks women. Thus, some feminist scholars highlight the fact that knowledge construction in academia is partial because it largely relies on the experiences of men (Allen, 2017). Dorothy Smith (1974) points out that even though women have always been overlooked or objectified, their experiences are a fertile ground for knowledge (Smith, 1974). As Brenda J. Allen mentions, “Feminist standpoint theory honors the main goals of feminism” in analyzing and disrupting power dynamics to emancipate women and make a social change. This is done by giving a voice to marginalized groups, offering a new view of the world (Allen, 2017, p. 3).

Sandra Harding mentions that the root of the best human knowledge of this empirical world is through human experiences only. And since knowledge is based on experiences, the more different those experiences and perceptions of the world are, the more we will get to know

ourselves and our surroundings. One of the few powers that an oppressed group has is being able to turn an oppressive feature into a valuable insight into their own side of the world. This will not only educate but also show a critical insight into how the dominant society is structured, which goes unnoticed the majority of the time (Harding, 2004).

As Harding puts it, standpoint theory is not only an explanatory theory but also a theory of method (methodology) which can be a guiding point for future feminist research. Even though some people view standpoint theory to be highly controversial, she mentions that it is a way of empowering the oppressed groups, just like the ideology behind feminism (Harding, 2004). Harding also mentions that standpoint themes are produced as a result of race, ethnicity-based, anti-imperial, and queer social justice movements. And as she puts it, “This phenomenon suggests that standpoint theory is a kind of organic epistemology, methodology, philosophy of science, and social theory that can arise whenever oppressed peoples gain public voice” (Harding, 2004, p. 3).

One of the criticisms of standpoint theory is that it creates research that is in no way objective. However, as Stanley and Wise (1993) put it, “Objectivity is just another name for male subjectivity” (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 169). Donna Haraway (2004) introduces the notion of feminist objectivity, which is about “limited location and situated knowledge” and not separating the subject from the object (Haraway, 2004, p. 87). Lorri Neilsen (1998) also agrees with the idea of not “separating the dancer from the dance,” but she wants to emphasize the fact that “the dancer does not only dance (Neilsen, 1998, p. 142).” As Deborah Britzman (1991) mentions, subjectivity helps organize one’s identities, and what it is like to be a person, a student, a woman, and so on. It is also a tool for realizing one’s multiple identities (Britzman, 1991).

## **Women and Sports**

Football is a beautiful game enjoyed in every corner of the world. It gives people a sense of community and belonging be it as fans or players. Over the years, a lot of progress has been made in making the sport as inclusive as possible, giving everyone equal opportunities to freely play the sport on a higher level. Unfortunately, that is not the case for most women around the world, especially in small countries like Armenia, where women are not granted the same opportunities as men not only in sports but in their everyday lives as well. In this part of my literature review I will be looking at literature that explores some of the challenges that women face when they choose to become athletes. The texts I have chosen use a feminist framework to identify the problems in women's sports and offer recommendations on how to fix them. From those texts I have identified four subtopics that represent the main difficulties female athletes face and oftentimes quit their sports. They are as follows: the idea of femininity in our society, internalized misogyny, menstruation, and being a woman in a male-dominated area.

From a young age, girls are brought up to be soft, gentle, quiet, and weak; their parents buy them pink clothes, make-up, colorful ribbons, and so on. When they grow up, these standards do not seem to fade away as they are still expected to look and act a certain way, which usually conflicts with the standards in some sports. In her text, Lex Boyle (2005) looks at the ways female bodybuilders try to keep their femininity while participating in competitions that require them to be muscular. Muscles are usually associated with men and masculinity, so Boyle interviewed six female bodybuilders to see how they manage (or not) to keep their femininity. The answers were simple: have long hair, wear tight or revealing clothes, wear pink or glittery underwear during competitions, enlarge their breasts, modify their faces, wear make-up, and not gain too much muscle (Boyle, 2005). The text by Adams et al. (2005) that explores the obstacles and pressure put on female high school athletes to keep their femininity brings up the same

attributes that athletes use to show off their femininity. Their interviewees, however, were younger girls aged 13-21, which emphasizes that athletes are taught to behave a certain way from a young age. A new way of showing off femininity introduced by Adams et al. (2005) is the gatherings players have before or after competitions. This is an opportunity for them to dress up, do their hair, and look like “every other girl.” They are forced to follow these standards both indirectly by society at large and directly by their male coaches and their overly involved wives (Adams et al., 2005).

Different representations and instances of internalized misogyny are highly present in the participants and their social circles in both Adams et al.’s and Boyle’s texts. In the example of the coaches’ wives, they project their own insecurities on the young girls. The wives themselves were subjected to these toxic ideas of femininity during their younger years, which they have internalized over the years and then practiced on future generations. In the same text, some athletes also showed tendencies of internalized misogyny. They told the researchers that they did not participate in overly feminizing practices and did not understand and support the girls who did (Adams et al., 2005). A similar story is present in the interviewees of Boyle, who looked down on women who were either too muscular or showed too much femininity in their movements during competitions (Boyle, 2005). These examples show female athletes to be overly competitive (in a negative manner) and constantly looking for reasons to hate other athletes. However, the text by Moreno-Black and Vallianatos (2005) shows the exact opposite, emphasizing the togetherness that female athletes have on and off the field. Their paper discusses the ways athletes experience menstruation and their constant need to hide their periods, especially from their spectators. This creates two groups – insiders and outsiders. As insiders, the players know if one of their teammates is menstruating and make sure to frequently “check” her

and make sure everything's all right, helping them to hide it from the outsiders (Moreno-Black et al., 2005).

Menstruation is one of the biggest reasons why girls drop out of sports because of the “complications” it adds. According to Moreno-Black and Vallianatos (2005), there is a correlation between being an athlete and hiding one's periods well. Because of the stigma around this topic, many athletes prefer not to mention it to their coaches, who are usually men. This causes them to go the extra step, like taking medication, wearing layers, or working out on low energy levels. Some athletes even make the switch from pads to tampons to eliminate the danger of spillage even more (Moreno-Black et al., 2005). A lot of women are not ready to live with those kinds of restrictions, so they decide to avoid sports altogether. Thus, there is no surprise that a lot of female athletes do not make it out of youth groups. Martinez-Lagunas et al. (2014) also discuss the topic of menstruation in their paper, where they compare different studies in women's sports and point out the lack of adequate research in those areas. They mention the dangers that menstrual irregularities might bring, which include low bone density – making players more susceptible to injuries (especially knee injuries – ACL [anterior cruciate ligament], MCL [medial collateral ligament]), reduced performance, and impaired fertility (Martinez-Lagunas, 2014).

All of the aforementioned issues can be connected to the fact that sports are a male-dominated area. As mentioned by Adams et al. (2005), sports, just like the military, had always been the space for men to practice their masculinity. After Title IX (a federal civil rights law in the United States, prohibiting discrimination based on sex in educational institutions and programs), men's space was challenged by women, who were also willing to try themselves in sporting competitions (Adams et al., 2005). This caused men to create barriers that women

would have to cross, like having to prove their femininity and working harder in poor conditions. As the student-athletes in Adams et al.'s research mentioned, they did not like conforming to the rules (having to wear make-up, accessories, or revealing clothing) set by their coaches or schools because that made them look less professional. They wanted to be focused only on the game and not have to worry about outside factors (Adams et al., 2005). This is why these rules were created in the first place – to make women's sports look less professional and show female athletes only as "pretty items." As mentioned by Messner et al. (1993), female athletes challenge the assumed naturalness of men and masculinity with sports. In their article, the authors tried to see the differences in TV coverage between men's and women's sports by following two basketball and tennis tournaments. Their findings further proved their point that the people in power (white, middle-aged, heterosexual men) paid more importance to the men's games than the women's. Even if they did cover women's tournaments, they did it in a poor manner, making numerous gendered comments and showing the players from angles that would be appealing to the heterosexual male gaze (Messner et al., 1993). Scott and Derry (2005), in their essay describing their college-level interdisciplinary seminar focusing on the ways the objectification of female bodies and the social construction of femininity interfere with women's participation in sports, mention the unwelcoming atmosphere that female athletes feel when entering gyms or other training grounds as another struggle female athletes face. Even if the atmosphere in those spaces is tolerable, they still have trouble using the equipment that are designed for male bodies. Even if some equipment is made for women, they are usually marked with vibrant colors or glitter and cost much more than the ones for men (Scott et al. 2005).

Another aspect of the male-dominated area that interferes with women's active participation in sports is the heterosexual male gaze that puts certain expectations on female

athletes. Scott and Derry (2005) mention how muscular women are not always viewed as attractive, which is why they go to every step imaginable to show themselves as feminine in other aspects, as mentioned previously. Women are also shown as wives and mothers on mass media to prove their true femininity and situate themselves within the heterosexual context of our society (Scott et al., 2005). The participants in Adams et al.'s (2005) research also related to the idea of female athletes having to prove their heterosexuality by publicly dating men to break the stereotypes that all female athletes are lesbians (Adams et al., 2005). Boyle (2005), on the other hand, brings up a different aspect of the issue, that of overly sexualizing female athletes. Many bodybuilders try to appeal to the heterosexual male masses by wearing revealing clothing and lingerie for photoshoots. Similar instances are also mentioned in Adams et al.'s text, with the example of designing tighter-fitting clothes to call up more spectators to their games (Adams et al., 2005).

The reviewed literature collectively supports the numerous reasons why many women do not pursue sports as a career. Despite the texts being from a decade or two ago, the research is still relevant. Over the years, things might have drastically changed in the West, but the points made back then perfectly describe the situation in Armenia nowadays. While the researchers above focused on different sports, their findings apply to football as well, confirmed by one of my interviewees, who has been an athlete (a footballer) since childhood.

### **Research Question**

My project aims to give five Armenian women the opportunity to share their football stories and memories. As a researcher, I wanted to see how their love for football was reflected in their stories based on their positionalities. During our conversations, we talked about their first

encounters with football, what made them fall in love with it, and how they navigated their love in a world where football is viewed as a “men’s” sport. The research participants also shared their fondest football memories, what objects or experiences they associate with the sport, and the ways football has affected their personal and professional lives.

## **Methodologies**

### **Narrative Research and Oral History**

The main goal of my capstone project is to give a platform to women to share their love for football, creating unique and inspiring narratives. As Lynn Abrams (2016) puts it, narrative is one of the ways people make sense of their experiences and communicate with others. We use narratives not only to tell stories about ourselves but others as well. It is our way of communicating what we know about the world. She also mentions that “Narrative is not merely the content of the story, but the telling of it” (Abrams, 2016, p. 106). And there is no better way to collect narratives than through oral history interviews. I chose this research design to carefully construct unique narratives from stories that otherwise would have been lost in the memories of the narrators.

There is much more to conducting oral history interviews than just asking people questions and expecting straightforward answers. There are a lot of nuances to make the narrators, especially the marginalized ones, feel heard and do justice to their stories. This is the reason I chose to do feminist research and try to stray away from the strongly androcentric practice of oral history that got famous during the 1940s (Minister, 1991). Kristina Minister states, “Feminist oral history is intersubjective oral history” (Minister, 1991, p.36). The feminist researcher needs to put aside all expectations on how the interviews are going to go and be ready to adapt to the needs and wishes of their narrators. This might include slight linguistic changes,



reformulation of questions, or letting the narrators talk about other topics without being interrupted. A strict list of questions can leave the impression of wanting to control the narrator, which is typical of the “male interviewing norm” (Minister, 1991, p.36). The narrators should also feel comfortable asking questions back, turning the interview into a casual conversation. Another important thing for researchers to do is acknowledge the utterances of the narrators, be it verbally or by simply nodding. This will not only make the narrators feel heard but also offer the researcher’s subjective self-reflection on the matter (Minister, 1991).

Conducting oral history interviews with women can be challenging because they are not always comfortable sharing their stories with others. Kristina Minister mentions that feminist research points out to the cause why many women are not used to speaking in public. She says that it is because in post agrarian cultures women were assigned to the private sphere (Minister 1991). This may cause some women to feel discomfort sharing their stories with the researcher or find their personal stories to have little historical importance (Abrams, 2016). Thus, the researcher should assist in the recollection and the nurturing of women’s narratives. Even though the narrators are supposed to be the ones speaking during the majority of the interview, the researcher should not expect them to take the lead in the flow of the interview. Some women might be highly dependent on the collaboration of the researcher (Minister, 1991). Yet, the researcher should give the floor to their narrators to create their own narratives in the ways they find appropriate. This shift from having a strict questionnaire style interview to narrative style oral history is the reason why it is more widespread to use the term “narrator” instead of “interviewee” or “respondent” (Abrams, 2016).

Narrative is the way people translate their experiences into words. Some people are good storytellers and some struggle to shape their memories into narratives. Even from the way people

talk about certain topics, oral historians can understand their feelings and attitudes toward those memories (Abrams, 2016). According to John Saul, “Memory is not the past. It is the water you swim through, the words you speak, your gestures, your expectations” (2002, p. 213). Edward Casey mentions that memories are tightly tied to imagining and remembering events, which are the two most fundamental and frequent acts of the mind. Even though memories may not always accurately represent the past, they are an important source of data. Memories are closely related to repeatability, since “a fully constituted perceptual object is an object which can be re-encountered, if not again in perception (for it may cease to exist in the meanwhile), then in a subsequent recollection (Casey, 1977, p, 208). Since oral history interviews are closely tied with memory work, unlike many other qualitative frameworks, it is natural for narratives not to have strict endings and beginnings (Squire et al., 2008). However, it does not mean that those narratives do not have storylines (Abrams, 2006).

Conducting oral history interviews and using people’s narratives for a project have nuances that need to be taken care of in order to respect the narrators and their stories. As Katherine Borland (1991) mentions, personal narratives are the way people comprehend their own lives and present themselves to an audience (Borland, 1991). By sharing those memories with the oral historian, they make their private memories into public ones (Abrams, 2006). Thus, the researcher needs to approach the narratives in a sensitive manner, not to offend the narrators’ carefully constructed senses of selves (Borland, 1991). Since ethnographic research largely relies on human relationships and attachment, it puts the narrators under the risk of being betrayed and manipulated by the ethnographer (Stacey, 1991).

When doing oral history research, not only the narratives are important, but also the way those narrative are produced, by what means, and by whom (Squire et al., 2008). Those

connections are important because oral history projects can become the connecting force between people who “scarcely know each other but share a common ground (Butler, 2008, p. 4). Those newly fostered relationships help create collective identities and emotional connections which can bring to collective social actions (Loose et al., 2018). Narratives have the power to act as modes of resistance to the existing structures of power (Squire et al., 2008). They are able to confront oppression and injustice through revealing overlapping forms of oppression that coexist in individuals’ lives. Thus, becoming valuable resources for social movements which are moving from “single issue campaign models to values-based approaches rooted in a recognition of intersectionality” (Loose et al., 2018, p. 238). The contents of oral history interviews have the power to evoke compassion, empathy, and outrage in a listener, which, in turn, compels action. When people get to physically hear the voices of narrators sharing their stories, a stronger bond is created between them, amplifying the emotional impact of the narrative (Loose et al., 2018). This is one of the reasons I decided to use both the visual and audio materials from the interviews to make a documentary film.

### **Visual Anthropology and Documentary Filmmaking**

Documentaries have always been my favorite genre of films to watch. You get to see something ordinary made into an extraordinary creation. As Julian Stallabrass (2013) quotes Scottish filmmaker and theorist John Grierson, a documentary is a way of treating actuality with creativity (Stallabrass, 2013). I wanted to approach my narrators’ stories creatively, giving them a new life. As David MacDougall (1998) puts it, visuals can provide a way of consolidating anthropological knowledge in a demonstrable way (MacDougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998).

When thinking about my film, one thing has always been clear in my mind: make my narrators the priority of the film. I love what Aparna Sharma (2015) says about recognizing

subjectivity in films. That is to evoke, articulate, and preserve my narrators' experiences that have previously been ignored or overlooked by the public at large. Since they are actively co-creating experiences and subjectivity in their everyday lives, and documentary films are made by "being in the world" (Sharma, 2015, p. 1), my film gives me the opportunity to recognize and accept that subjectivity. By doing that, I want to ascribe validity to the multiple personalities shown in my film, eliminating the notion of the "other" (Sharma, 2015).

The film will give my narrators (including myself) a chance to view themselves in a new light: through my eyes as a filmmaker. In a way, I will be creating a reflection of them that has not existed before this film (Lury, 1997). As MacDougall says, "The subject is part of the filmmaker, the filmmaker part of the subject" (MacDougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998, p. 29). Being both the filmmaker and one of the "subjects," I get to experience both sides. This will, undoubtedly, have an influence on the process and the final result since distancing those two identities from one another is a challenging and sometimes impossible job. MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor (1998) also talk about the blurred boundary between subject and object when the documentary has autobiographical elements. They mention that even though reflecting on one's life is a crucial part of living, it is also important to realize that one's identity is not exclusive to being a film "subject." They have multiple other identities within the framework of the film: as a person living their life outside the film, as someone constructed by the filmmaker, and as a character interpreted by the audience (MacDougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998).

The filmmaker should be careful not to make their narrators into "charity subjects," especially when working with marginalized groups. Trinh Minh-Ha (1990) talks about the way documentaries can be manipulative and exploit the "subjects" in a dehumanizing, overlooking way. She talks about how some filmmakers, upon getting criticism of their work, claim that those

films are made about “common people” for “common people” and are not made for “sophisticated” viewers. This way, they put themselves on a pedestal and look down on their subjects. “The silent common people” are frequently having a camera shoved in their faces to show the “real world” because it is “more fabulous, more maddening, more strangely manipulative than fiction” (Minh-Ha, 1990, p. 73). In my film, I want to follow feminist and queer film theories, that is, putting the accurate representation of my narrators front and center (Gray, 2010). I don’t want to show them as objects that are asking to be viewed. I want to prioritize my narrators’ experiences instead of creating characters with a strong visual and erotic impact. This is something that Laura Mulvey (1975) extensively talks about, explaining the overly present male gaze created in cinema, building upon fetishism and voyeurism to satisfy the straight male audience (Mulvey, 1975).

The topic of the audience can be quite problematic at times in another way. MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor mention that films are objects, and like any other object, they have their own identities (Macdougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998). It then becomes important to deliver the “object” in a way that would satisfy its audience. However, it is not always easy to have a specific audience in mind. Marcus Banks (2001) suggests that trying to use a “scatter-gun” technique is usually a bad idea. Trying to satisfy everyone, the filmmaker will fail to satisfy anyone. However, narrowing down the audience too much will not work either since the film will become irrelevant fairly soon. He later quotes a French anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch, who said that he made films first and foremost for himself, then the people who participated in them, and lastly, for the general audience (Banks, 2001). As I have mentioned before, I want my narrators to be the priority in my film, and, as a filmmaker, I might be tempted to put my own needs and wishes first.

As a filmmaker, it would be a big mistake to overlook the general audience altogether. They are a vital part of creating that film experience. As Vivian Sobchak (1992) mentions, the film gives people the opportunity to see, hear, and experience what wants to be seen, heard, and experienced (Sobchack, 1992). The filmmaker gets to share their created world with an audience, who get to judge it based on their own backgrounds and expectations. As Pearce and Mclaughlin (2007) mention, a documentary film is a conversation between the filmmaker and the audience, the seer and the seen, and “the subjectivity of the maker facing the objecthood of the world” (Pearce & Mclaughlin, 2007, p. 14). MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor talk about how the film goes through a hundred deaths and then hundred-and-one rebirths while the filmmaker becomes familiar with the footage and rearranges their ideas over and over again. After some time, those shots stop being *life* and increasingly become *film material*, then *a film*. When the filmmaker watches the final product, all they see are separate details, the raw footage, and remember the events that took place while filming. This, in a way, reduces their experiences to a small canvas. For the spectator, on the other hand, the film is not small but a large, open landscape. They get to be in a completely new world where they are not limited by the frame of the image. For the filmmaker, though, those images are merely a reaffirmation that their subjects exist. “Instead of imagining, they remember. Instead of discovering, they recognize. Instead of feeling curiosity, they feel foreknowledge and loss” (MacDougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998, p. 28).

Films are a great way to give memories a second life. As Diane Ackerman (1990) mentions, we have created cameras to mimic the way we see with our eyes. Even though eyes are the tools we use to see, we process that information in our brains. We create and hang onto memories and moments that might or might not be true, but it never stops us from imagining (Ackerman, 1990). The best way to show those memories is visually, similar to the way we

imagine things. MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor also mention the astounding resemblance between films and memories. They even argue that sometimes films are even more astonishing because they are the intimation of a perfected memory. Of course, it is not possible to record every single memory of a person, but there are ways of recreating them to be as close to their imagination as possible. Some of the ways are by talking about those memories in front of a camera or trying to recreate those scenes. People also connect their memories to certain objects, and having those objects in a shot can make the viewer imagine the rest. In cases when those objects are forever gone, replacements or photographs can still make an important difference (MacDougall & Castaing-Taylor, 1998).

Visuals are important in films, but the audio in films should not be overlooked by filmmakers. As Sharma mentions, after birth, our vision and hearing become the most crucial senses to getting to know the world. Sound is a huge part of cinema, but it is frequently overlooked. However, sound alone could not demonstrate what visuals can, thus accentuating the importance of having both (Sharma, 2015). Music is an integral part of many films, and Ackerman even mentions how it is a whole different language that was developed alongside our speech (Ackerman, 1990). However, music is not the only thing to keep in mind when talking about film audio. Michel Chion (1994) talks about the importance of having a continuous audio layer throughout the film. He mentions that silences in films are never neutral. If there is silence, there needs to be a reason for it. He suggests having continuous passive offscreen sounds, like the background audio of the place, people's chatter, nature sounds, and so on. This will not only eliminate the awkward silences but also give the filmmaker a chance to experiment with those audios, which will affect the visuals as well. Another solution to this problem is to start the sound of a scene a few seconds before it appears on the screen. This way, the audience will hear

something and become eager to know more, to see what's going on, making the film more engaging (Chion, 1994).

After reading all that theory on documentaries and filmmaking in general, I still struggled a lot in making my film. Banks talks about how anthropology never lacks visuals. The problem with it is not knowing what to do with it (Banks, 2001). When I first started, I did not know how to approach the narratives I had, how to connect them, and how to shape them into a product that will make sense. I found comfort in reading that Webster and Gravotta (2014) had a similar experience with their students when trying to make a documentary out of oral history interviews. I took a few tips from them that made my experience much more enjoyable. They suggested writing down all the memorable moments from the interviews and physically surrounding oneself with the interview materials. Another approach they used was to make the film feel the same way the interviews did (Webster & Gravotta, 2014). After all, my goal is to make art that makes a change, however little its impact may be. Raising awareness about the topic and shining a light on the wonderful stories of my narrators is all I am trying to do with my film because, as Diane Ackerman mentions, "Science and art have a habit of waking us up, turning on all the lights, grabbing us by the collar and saying, 'Would you please pay attention!'" (Ackerman, 1990, p. 155).

### **Self-Study**

Growing up, I had never heard of the term self-study. Exploring my own emotions, feelings, and positionality was never really an option, especially in public. I never gave importance to my own experiences and valued the ones I read in schoolbooks or watched in movies. Even in friend groups, I never shared my own stories, I always preferred blending in with the other. As I got older, read more diverse literature, and took courses that challenged my



ways of thinking, I realized how unfairly I had been treating myself. By default, being born a female and later identifying as queer, my voice as an individual has historically been silenced by the mainstream media and society. Reading “The Sand Diaries: Visions, vulnerability and self-study” by Anastasia Kamanos-Gamelin (2005) was the turning point in my mindset of how I viewed self-study and myself in general. She mentions that self-studies are an important part of filling a gap in research. They help us embrace and understand transformational processes by letting us experience them from the inside. Self-study, along with narrative research, are the ways through which we can transform and revolutionize societies, institutions, and worlds (Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005). From those few ideas alone, I was convinced that self-study is *everything*. It is what humanity needs to *be* better and to *do* better. The lost and untold stories are the keys to bringing change to this world, where only stories of dominant groups seem to be existing. And as Kamanos-Gamelin eloquently puts it, “[Self-study] is the manifestation of feminist principles in academia” (Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005, p. 191).

I have always struggled with knowing who I am and what I know. As it turns out, self-study was the way to find answers, discover myself, and make use of my past by becoming my work (Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005). Self-study and autobiographies are means of self-growth, going through a personal change, and changing oneself into getting a new “you” (hooks, 1989; Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005). And as Hourig Attarian (2011) mentions, only after exploring my own research situatedness will I be able to “better comprehend my embeddedness in my research interests” (Attarian, 2011, p. 4).

When thinking about this project, especially the self-study aspect of it, I feel two things: freedom and fear. With the advice of Anastasia Kamanos (2020), I am using the understanding of my marginality as a strength, which is giving me an immense feeling of emancipation (Kamanos,

2020). Mary Phillips Manke (2005), while talking about her queerness, refers to her herself as “self-as-Other.” It gives her the opportunity to look at things from a different perspective, ask rarely heard questions, use unexpected resources, and so on. When talking about doing research, she says, “I can take risks. I can feel free” (Manke, 2005, p. 194-195). Working on this project has been a journey of taking risks and feeling the freedom that comes with it.

Along with feeling the freedom of sharing my own stories and creating my own narrative, there came the fear of exposing myself. I was scared of sharing a part of me that I have always kept to myself. As bell hooks (1989) puts it, I was trapped in the fear that a bond could be “lost or broken in the telling” (hooks, 1989, p. 156). She says those words when referring to the bond that exists inside families, even if that connection only brings negativity in one’s life. I see football as my family. It brings me joy, comfort, and safety. However, that is not always the case. There are times when it takes a toll on my mental health. Whatever these feelings might be, I keep my connection to football close to my heart, which is why hooks’s words stood out to me. With this project, I am confronting my fears and, as Kamanos puts it, “lifting the veil” which separates my inner and outer worlds, making myself known (Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005, p. 186).

### **Narrators**

The process of interviewing my narrators was the most challenging yet rewarding part of working on this project. I had to come out of my comfort zone on multiple occasions, which, I think, paid off in the end. Prior to this project, I had already done a few oral history interviews but in all those cases, they had been with family members or friends. True, similar interviews also have their challenges, but at least I had the comfort of being around people whom I had known for years. When I made the decision to interview strangers, I was terrified about

everything. However, with the support of my supervisor and my friends, I was able to overcome a lot of those fears and enjoy the process of getting to know new people.

When choosing my potential interviewees, I wanted them to have different standpoints: be from different generations, countries, and have their own special connections to football, be it as a player or a fan. After conducting the interviews, I was pleasantly surprised to see numerous similarities between my narrators despite their different paths in life. Below, I talk about my narrators, how I came across them, why I chose to interview them, the interview process, and what stood out to me from our conversations.

### **Teveen Aghababian**

The first person I interviewed was Teveen, an Armenian footballer, born and raised in the US. When doing research on which players from the Armenian national team I could reach out to, I stumbled upon Teveen's Instagram account. Her latest post was about getting an injury and having to stop playing football for a while. A few weeks prior to that, a couple of my favorite footballers had gotten the same injury, which led me to research the topic of injuries in female athletes for my research methods class. The topic of injuries was close to my heart, and I wanted to know more about them from someone who had to go through that. Being from the US, Teveen could choose to play for the US women's national team, but she chose to play for Armenia. She even came to Yerevan to play a season with Pyunik WFC before suffering an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury and having to undergo her third knee surgery. During the time of our interview, Teveen was in the US, so we did the interview on Zoom. After over two hours of friendly conversation, I got to learn a lot of insider information on football, injuries, and football structures both in Armenia and the US.

## **Henrieta Ghumashyan**

Henrieta, from Margahovit, Armenia, is one of my friends', Tatev's mother. During our oral history course in 2021, Tatev had interviewed her mother about her life story. At her presentation, she mentioned her mother's love for football and showed us her football diary that she had made in her teens in Soviet times. To say that I was impressed with the journal would be a huge understatement. I was so touched and inspired by her love for football that I started making my own football diary.

When I told one of my friends and support team members, Arpi, that I wanted to interview some women about football, her first comment was, "You should interview Tatev's mom." I did not need to think twice and immediately texted Tatev to tell her about the idea. She was more than happy to ask her mother, who agreed to have a conversation with me. A few weeks later, Arpi and I were on our way to Margahovit. It was snowing heavily, and we got to feel ourselves in a wintery fairy tale in the mountains. Since Tatev was my other support team member, I knew I had people around me who would step in as soon as I needed any help. Despite my intense nervousness, that trip to Margahovit and my conversation with Henrieta is something I will never forget.

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Not all my plans regarding interviews went as smoothly as the first two. I had planned to interview someone who has been a massive help in moving women's football in Armenia forward. We scheduled several interviews but were unable to conduct them for various reasons. Since I was extremely eager to have her story in my project, I kept trying to contact her to decide on a new date. That took months, but I was not able to interview her in the end. Since I was already in the later stages of my project, I was tempted to simply be satisfied with what I already

had. Even though my previous narrators had given me more than enough to work with, I still wanted to keep the “diversity” aspect of my project. Instead of settling for what I had, I went for more. After a few more failed attempts with other potential narrators, I was able to have a conversation with two more women, who filled in the missing parts of my project.

### **Anaïd Mouratian**

Dr. Mouratian was one of my professors at AUA. I had taken a couple of classes with her, where she had mentioned football a few times. When thinking about potential narrators from different parts of the world, she immediately came to my mind. Dr. Mouratian was born and raised in France and I was curious to learn more about the French football culture. At first, I was nervous to ask her for an interview about such a personal topic because I was still taking a class with her and did not want to cross any lines. But as soon as I talked to her, all my fears went away. Her enthusiasm and interest in my project reassured me that I had made the right decision in choosing my topic and asking her to be a part of it.

Our conversation went better than I could have ever imagined. We soon found out that we had a lot of similarities when it came to being football fans. I had never met another fan, who also liked watching games at home instead of going to a stadium. Having said that, we both really enjoy the dynamic atmosphere that football fans create during games through chants and songs. The interview took place in one of the classrooms on our campus, but I traveled through time and space, hearing her fascinating stories. What made this experience even more enjoyable was her genuine interest in my experiences as well. It was refreshing, not being the only one asking questions, making this conversation one that I will never forget.

### **Anyuta Galstyan**

At first sight, it felt like I had enough stories to start working on my documentary, but I was still feeling uneasy about something. Yes, my research would be complete, but my inner voice was telling me that I needed to interview one more person. In my head, my research was “uneven” because I would have three football fans and one football player. I wanted to interview another footballer, someone who had grown up in Armenia, to see what it had been like in comparison to the US. I came across Anyuta on Instagram and remembered watching her play during the most recent international games against Cyprus. From her page, I also saw that she was currently playing in Kazakhstan for Okzhetpes WFC. Coincidentally, I had watched Okzhetpes play against my favorite club, Arsenal, a few years ago, so it was another little detail that made me want to reach out to Anyuta. Much to my delight, she agreed to have a conversation, and we immediately scheduled our interview. Since she was in Kazakhstan at that time, we had a call on Zoom, where she shared her stories of growing up in Armenia and playing for local teams, participating in a lot of football events, which led her to earn a spot in the Armenian national team as well as in Okzhetpes.

### **Mariana Safaryan**

“Interviewing” myself was probably the hardest thing I had to do during the whole process. At first, I had decided to have someone else ask me questions to keep the format similar to the other interviews. Everything was pretty much planned: I had sent my friend and support team member, Arpi, the questions I wanted her to ask, given her directions on how to film, and even chosen a time and location. But I kept putting off the interview because I was never “in the mood.” I don’t usually talk about football around people and the thought of doing it in front of a camera was really off-putting.

After weeks of contemplating, I decided to give up on the idea of an interview and script whatever I wanted to say. In hindsight, it was the right decision because I structured my film in a way that my stories were the transition points between topics. After I was done with the full script, I filmed my parts in an empty stadium in my neighborhood in Yerevan. I had spent numerous hours kicking a ball in that stadium during the last few months, thinking about this project, so, it felt right to shoot my “interview” there. I went there at six o’clock in the morning, hoping to film while it was still quiet outside. Little did I know the birds and dogs would be having their morning conversations on full volume. My microphone did catch those sounds, but, I think, they gave my recordings a bit more life. Instead of using software to get rid of the birds chirping, I highlighted them in the opening credits of the film.

It was a rainy day and the morning got progressively foggy. At first, I found it annoying because my clips would differ from one another, but then I realized how ironic the situation was. The first football game that I ever went to (Armenia W - Norway W) got postponed because of a fog. Now, every time it gets foggy, I always think about that game, which was my first introduction to the Armenian women’s national team, inspiring this project. Even though those little inconveniences did cause a lot of frustration during the editing process because of the inconsistencies, I don’t think I could have chosen a better time and place to film my parts of the film.

### **Artist Statement**

My final product is a documentary film based on oral history interviews conducted with five Armenian women (including myself). It is a representation of our love for football, the memories we have, and the connection we share through the sport.

This project has an element of autobiographical inquiry. I am both the filmmaker and one of the narrators. By having this dual role, I got to take a distance from myself and look at my own stories from a different lens. This helped me immensely in structuring the film as I got to use my own narratives as transition points between topics.

The film starts with a montage of historic, memorable moments in football history, with the intention to grab the viewer's attention. However, those moments are not the main focus of the film. The idea behind the project is to shine a light on the stories that remain unheard or forgotten in the midst of those headline-worthy moments.

*The Chants of Our Hearts* is a film resembling a diary made up of stories that hope to shine a light on these women's experiences, give a new definition to football, and create bonds between the narrators and the viewer.

### **The Chants of Our Hearts**

<https://vimeo.com/843544183?share=copy>

### **Reflection on Process**

*Writing this book feels like coming home.  
In a sense, I have been working on it since I was old enough to write.*  
—Anastasia Kamanos, 2020

This project feels like coming home. In a sense, I have been working on it since I first found comfort and safety in football.

When I first had the idea to do something football-related for my capstone, I was worried that it would turn my hobby into a chore. Much to my surprise, it did the opposite. I don't remember ever having more fun while working on something. I enjoyed not only the little wins



that I had throughout the months but the setbacks as well. The more difficulties I had with the project, the more I grew as a person and as a researcher.

The structure of the film was one of my initial struggles. I was unsure whether I wanted to narrate everything myself or put one clip after another without narration. In the end, I managed to find the golden middle and have a bit of both. It took a lot of planning and internal struggles, but I managed to pick the core topics and stories I wanted to include in the film. This meant that I had to omit a lot of other stories that could just as easily be included, but in some cases, sacrifices like those are necessary to get to a desired outcome.

Another struggle I had to battle was my expectations of what the film was going to look like. Initially, my plan was to have a lot of complicated, artistic shots and try to make a cinematic masterpiece. However, I soon realized that for a film like this, it was quite impossible, especially since I conducted half of my interviews on Zoom. For the ones I did in person, I had asked my friends to shoot our interviews from many different angles to make them more interesting. I did not end up using any of those shots and it hurt me to “waste” all that footage. But I decided to focus more on what was being said instead of “showing off” camera angles. It makes the film feel more authentic to have one simple shot of the narrators talking, creating a bond between them and the viewers. It also perfectly recreates the experience I had during those interviews.

Overall, I feel like I succeeded in what I wanted my film to be: a heartwarming diary of stories that will give a new definition to football, fill the viewer with love, and put a smile on their faces.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A Consent Form 1

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](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)) դեկլարությամբ Մարիանա Սաֆարյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ իմ կապը ֆուտբոլի հետ՝ որպես հայ կին երկրպագու: Մարիանա Սաֆարյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը սպորտի հանդեպ ունեցած սիրո և պատմությունների 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 թե ինչպես եմ ծանոթացել ֆուտբոլի հետ, ինչն է ինձ գրավել, և ինչպես եմ արտահայտել իմ սերը այս սպորտի հանդեպ: 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

Հասկանում եմ, որ այս հարցազրույցը իր մեջ ներառում է իմ անձնական արժեքների և կարծիքի կիսում, որին կվերաբերվեն առավելագույն խնամքով և հոգատարությամբ: Տեղյակ եմ, որ ազատ եմ կանգնելու, դադար տալու և չճարունակելու ցանկացած պահի: Հարցազրույցին մասնակցելը չի ներառում որևէ ռիսկեր:

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 ինֆորմացիոն բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով

— համաձայն եմ բացահայտելու իմ ինֆորմացիան: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինֆորմացիան կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում կամ էլույթներում:

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

## ԿԱՄ

\_\_\_ Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը գաղտնի է: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինֆորմացիան չի բացահայտվի, այլ ցանկացած հրապարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն:

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

Այն դեպքում, երբ ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել

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

ՌԻՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵՂ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐԱԴԻՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱԶԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱԶԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵՂ ԱՅՍ ՌԻՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն \_\_\_\_\_

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

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն Մարիանա Սաֆարյան

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

Եթե որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, որպես դիպլոմային ծրագրի մասնակից, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հունանիստար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ.՝ 060 612769, էլ. հասցե՝ [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)):



## Appendix B Consent Form 2

### CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate in a capstone project conducted at the American University of Armenia (AUA). This is to state that I agree to participate in the capstone project conducted by Mariana Safaryan. The capstone director is Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)).

**PURPOSE:** I have been informed that the purpose of the project is to give a platform to Armenian women to share their passion for football (soccer). Within the bigger context of the project, the interview conducted by Mariana Safaryan is meant to focus on the personal stories and experiences of women in a male-dominated sport, where their voices are constantly being silenced.

**PROCEDURES:** I understand that the interview will be conducted in participants' homes or other appropriate places and might be recorded on video. Alternatively, the interview may be conducted on Zoom or another online platform. As a participant, I will be asked to explore my love for football (soccer) as an Armenian woman and share stories that best represent my connection to the sport. The interview will last from one to two hours. However, as a participant, I am free to stop at any time, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the project at any given point. I understand that if I wish to extend the interview for more than two hours, I will be provided with that opportunity.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** I understand that the interview involves the sharing of my personal stories, views, and opinions, which will be treated with the utmost care and consideration. I have been informed that I am free to stop, take a break, or discontinue at any time. There are no risks involved in partaking in this interview.

**CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION:** As a participant, I will have access to all the recorded material for verification purposes. Throughout the project, if and when the material produced is in Armenian, I will have the opportunity to review and verify the English translations.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

I understand that the data from this project may be published in print or digital format for academic purposes.

In terms of **identification and reproduction** of my participation:

I agree to **disclose my identity**. I understand that my identity may be revealed in any publications or presentations that may result from this interview.

I agree to the reproduction of sound and images from this interview by any method and in any media for academic purposes (which may include webpages, documentary clips, etc.)

**OR**

\_\_\_ I understand that my participation in this study is **confidential**. My identity will be concealed. I will be given a pseudonym in any publications or presentations that may result from this interview.

\_\_\_ I agree that while data from my interview may be published, no sound or images from it may be reproduced.

**When photographs, artifacts, or documents are scanned or photographed**

\_\_\_ I agree to let the student researcher copy family photographs and documents for use in the student project.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

INTERVIEWEE: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER:  
NAME (please print) Mariana Safaryan

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a capstone project participant, please contact Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)).

## Appendix C Consent Form 3

### CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate in a capstone project conducted at the American University of Armenia (AUA). This is to state that I agree to participate in the capstone project conducted by Mariana Safaryan. The capstone director is Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)).

**PURPOSE:** I have been informed that the purpose of the project is to give Armenian women a platform to share their passion for football. Within the bigger context of the project, the interview conducted by Mariana Safaryan is meant to focus on bringing together the stories of women from different backgrounds and connections to football.

**PROCEDURES:** I understand that the interview will be conducted in participants' homes or another appropriate place, and might be recorded on video. Alternatively, the interview may be conducted on Zoom or another online platform. As a participant, I will be asked to explore my love for football, how I got introduced to the sport, what it means to me, and the standout stories in my life connected to it. The interview will last from one to two hours, however, as a participant I am free to stop at any time, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the project at any given point. I understand that if I wish to extend the interview for more than two hours, I will be provided that opportunity.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** I understand that the interview involves the sharing of my personal views and opinions, which will be treated with the utmost care and consideration. I have been informed that I am free to stop, take a break or discontinue at any time. There are no risks involved in partaking in this interview.

**CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION:** As a participant, I will have access to all the recorded material for verification purposes. Throughout the project, if and when the material produced is in Armenian, I will have the opportunity to review and verify the English translations.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

I understand that the data from this project may be published in print or digital format for academic purposes.

In terms of **identification and reproduction** of my participation:

I agree to **disclose my identity**. I understand that my identity may be revealed in any publications or presentations that may result from this interview.

I agree to the reproduction of sound and images from this interview by any method and in any media for academic purposes (which may include webpages, documentary clips, etc.)

**OR**

\_\_\_ I understand that my participation in this study is **confidential**. My identity will be concealed. I will be given a pseudonym in any publications or presentations that may result from this interview.

\_\_\_ I agree that while data from my interview may be published, no sound or images from it may be reproduced.

**When photographs, artifacts or documents are scanned or photographed**

\_\_\_ I agree to let the student researcher copy family photographs and documents for use in the student project.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

INTERVIEWEE:  
NAME

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER:  
NAME Mariana Safaryan

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a capstone project participant, please contact Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)).

## Appendix D Consent Form 4

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](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)) դեկավարությամբ Մարիանա Սաֆարյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ հայ կանանց և ֆուտբոլի մեջ եղած կապը: Մարիանա Սաֆարյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը ֆուտբոլի ոլորտում իմ անձնական փորձը և պատմությունները լուսաբանելն է ընդհանուր նախագծի համատեքստում:

Ընթացակարգը

Հասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է ինձ հարմար որևէ վայրում (կամ օնլայն), և տեսագրվելու և/կամ ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես խոսելու եմ իմ մանկությունից, կարիերայումս հաղթահարած դժվարություններից, հասածս հաջողություններից և իմ ու ֆուտբոլի մեջ եղած կապից: Տեղյակ եմ, որ հարցազրույցը տևելու է մոտ մեկից երկու ժամ, բայց այդուհանդերձ իրավունք ունեմ ցանկացած պահի դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, հրաժարվել պատասխանել որևէ հարցի, կամ որևէ պահի դուրս գալ նախագծից: Հասկանում եմ, որ եթե ցանկանամ հարցազրույցը երկու ժամից ավելի երկարածգել, ինձ այդ հնարավորությունը կընձեռվի:

Ռիսկեր և օգուտներ

Հասկանում եմ, որ այս հարցազրույցը իր մեջ ներառում է իմ անձնական պատմությունները, արժեքները և կարծիքները, որին կվերաբերվեն առավելագույն խնամքով և հոգատարությամբ: Տեղյակ եմ, որ ազատ եմ կանգնելու, դադար տալու և չժամանակելու ցանկացած պահի: Հարցազրույցին մասնակցելը չի ներառում որևէ ռիսկեր:

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 ցանկացած 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 ինֆորմացիայի բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով

— համաձայն եմ բացահայտելու իմ ինֆորմացիան: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինֆորմացիան կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում կամ էլ ուրիշներում:

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

## ԿԱՄ

\_\_\_ Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը գաղտնի է: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինֆորմացիան չի բացահայտվի, այլ ցանկացած հրատարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն:

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

Այն դեպքում, երբ ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ կամ վաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել

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

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

Մասնակից՝  
Անուն ազգանուն

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

Հարցազրույց վարող՝  
Անուն ազգանուն (Խնդրում եմ գրել տպատառ) Մարիանա Սաֆարյան

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

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