

Narratives around *Boli*

by

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Abstract

Narratives around Boli brings together the stories of three women (my great-grandmother, grandmother and mother) about their lives back in Nakhijevan and as refugees in Armenia. All three of them had similar life experiences however their interpretations are different. This research is conducted through oral history, scholarly articles, as well as stories based on personal life experiences. It is represented through narratives based on the interviews conducted with the participants. Accompanying the narratives are photographs of places and people taken back in Aznaberd, Nakhijevan. The story of the author, myself, is introduced through an epilogue in the study.

Introduction

This research concentrates on collecting stories of three refugee women of different generations from Nakhijevan and finding out how the intergenerational transmission of trauma has affected them. Those women are my grandmother's aunt (considered my great-grandmother), my grandmother and mother. The aim is to have the story of the same events told by three women in a family relationship who are so different from each other but are linked with a transparent thread. They all were forced to leave their homeland on the same day and each has different perceptions of that particular day.

Armenia and Aznaberd were a part of the USSR. Aznaberd is situated in the Kangarli District of Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan territory and has a border with Vayk, in Vayots Dzor region in Armenia. Nakhijevan is an autonomous region that was annexed to Azerbaijan in Soviet times, similar to the case of Artsakh, even though it had a predominantly Armenian population and had historically been Armenian territory with no state borders with Azerbaijan. Over the years, due to repressive policies of the Azerbaijani republic, the region was depopulated by Armenians. The 1988 attack on the village of Aznaberd is significant historically. It is towards the end of the year that the Karabagh movement had started in Soviet Armenia. Aznaberd was an Armenian village where the population was solely Armenian. Azerbaijani armed forces invaded the village of Aznaberd (Çalxanqala) in Nakhijevan, on November 22, in 1988. Based on the decision of the USSR government, the Armenians were evicted from Aznaberd and the village was given to Azerbaijan. The Armenians in Aznaberd did not want to face injustice and started an armed defense against the Azerbaijan army. After fighting for a couple of days, the Armenians had to give up, as the Azerbaijan army was large and was well armed.

Armenia undoubtedly is one of those countries that have been through a lot of wars and conflicts throughout history. We are a nation that is in constant regional conflict, we are refugees, we are a diaspora. There are so many stories embedded in every Armenian that needs to be told out loud or be heard. Having had the chance to communicate with many refugees I can confidently say that their stories are very inspiring. I belong to a generation of a refugee family from Nakhijevan and it is a pride for me to see my family grow after those hardships and become the people they are today.

Literature review

The primary purpose of this project is to examine how the memories of the traumatic past have influenced the three women of different generations and explore how it has affected their generations. Theoretical research and analysis are vital components of this project in order to understand the intergenerational transmission of trauma and its influence on generations who come after.

A key component of this research is to understand the concept of *postmemory*. According to Marianne Hirsch, "*Postmemory* describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up." (Hirsch, 1997, p. 5). The generation coming after the one having lived the traumatic experience in some ways carries the memory of the trauma as well. The same traumatic experience can be perceived differently for the generations after, yet it is transmittable through images, shared stories and behaviors. This article helped me understand how we, as generations of those having lived through trauma have been influenced by those memories. The family carries the memories of trauma through the stories coming from generation to generation.

Another important aspect is to understand the hardships the refugees face while integrating into the new society. According to a research done by a social work education expert Thomas P. Felke, the foundation of integration for refugees are their rights and citizenship. The key facilitators of integration are language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability. Another important domain is the social connection, which in its turn, includes social bridges, social bonds, and social links. Markers and means are the last key factors of integration that are mentioned in the study. These include employment, housing, education, and health (Felke, T. P. 2010).

In order to have a clear idea about the historical, geographical, as well as political aspects of the invasion of the Azerbaijan armed forces in Aznaberd in 1988 I used Artak Vardanyan's book called *Ազնաբերդ. Նախիջուանահայրություն Վերջին Ասրոցը (Aznabeerd: The last fortress of Nakhijevan Armenians.)*. Artak Vardanyan is an Armenian writer, publicist, poet, translator born and raised in Aznaberd, Nakhijevan. His book helped me get acquainted with the history of Aznaberd, its cultural monuments, people, language, food. Some parts of his book will be included in this project, particularly the images.

When I started working on this project, the aim was different. I wanted to collect the stories of six refugees and represent them as narratives, in that way trying to understand how the refugee hosting changed in Armenia over time. Then I started reading *Blossoming Roots: Youth Collecting Life Stories* edited by Hourig Attarian (2012). The book guided me along a new journey. I realized that including the stories of my great-grandmother, grandmother and mother will make this project impactful. There are several personal stories in *Blossoming Roots* that inspired me to collect the stories of the women in my family and turn this project into a family

archive. Reading about the project participants' reflections in that book, on how anxious they were before starting the interviews, or how doubtful of the fact that their collected stories would be worth sharing (Attarian, 2012) led me to reflections on my own process. It helped me understand that the path I have taken was not going to be easy and most importantly I learned how to turn personal stories into narratives, which can teach a lesson. "The stories of the elders are invaluable," (Attarian, 2012, p. 15) – this sentence particularly made me realize how precious the stories of the elderly of my family are. The stories that they told me since early childhood, which seemed to be just stories of their life, had an impact on the person I have become today. Thus, the sources of this research study are mostly based on people's memories and experiences.

Research questions

This capstone project aims to explore the lives of women of three different generations in a family relationship (my great-grandmother, grandmother and mother) and examine to what extent being evicted from their homeland, Aznaberd, impacted their and their generations' lives. In the scope of this research I explore the influence of their memories on their lives as refugees in Armenia, and attempt to understand how historical trauma affected their 'generations after' (Hirsch, 1997).

Methodology

As soon as I decided on the topic of my capstone project I started talking to different refugees in Armenia and making notes of their experiences. I had worked on a similar project for my journalism class two years ago, and that project helped me decide on a topic for my capstone. At the time, I had interviewed my grandmother's aunt, Nushig, and written a feature story about

her life as a refugee. Inspired by that experience, I conducted oral history interviews with my grandmother and mother as well for this capstone projects.

The interview guidelines were formed to create a structured interview with the interviewee. However, as the conversations progressed the interviews became less structured and turned to informal conversations. The guidelines were designed in a way to explore the life events chronologically, keeping the participants comfortable in answering questions.

In order to explore and understand the influence of historical trauma on people and having a clear understanding of the concept of postmemory I went through scholarly articles. For instance, in the article of *Historical Trauma and Refugee Reception* (Campos, 2016) the research showed that understanding the importance of history is crucial in developing sustainable resettlement environments. Campos mentions, “progress of efforts for improvement in physical and mental health, education, language law, employment, housing, financial aid, and cultural integration must be monitored as the war continues for an unknown period of time” (Campos, 2016, p. 60). The author also puts an emphasis on the language and integration of the refugees in Armenia.

Oral history and creative writing had vital roles in putting this project together. With the use of oral history I understood how the invasion of the Azerbaijani armed forces started on November 22, in 1988 and what were the geographical and political reasons behind it. The stories of this project will be in the format of non-fiction narratives. In order to make the stories speak directly to the reader and make them emotionally powerful I used creative writing.

Artist statement

My favorite thing to do with my mother and grandmother is to sit with them and listen to them tell stories from their lives in Aznaberd. Those stories always seemed so interesting and appealing to me. However, I never had a chance to write those stories down or to sit with each one of them to get answers to particular questions. This project gave me an opportunity to talk to them separately and enjoy the process of writing down their stories. Never had I paid attention before how beautiful it is to see their facial expressions when they talk about the games they played as a child. Most importantly, every time they would make pickled *boli*¹, they smelled it so passionately and sighed. Yes, a single green, *boli* brings these stories together and makes them a whole. I want the reader to see how such a simple thing, a wild growing vegetable can carry so many emotions and how it can bring out the child in these grown women.

Every person is different and has a different story of life. However, it seems like there is a transparent thread connecting the stories of these refugee women, as if even so different they still carry the same meaning, lesson and thought. These are stories that are transmitted from one generation to the next, and most importantly they permit me to create a much desired family archive. I do not want this part of the past of my family to be forgotten, even if they ever are completely healed from those wounds.

The stories

The Iron Lady

I wrote this story initially for my Journalism class, as a feature story. At that time, I had a chance to interview Nushig and see the expression of her eyes, while she was passionately telling

¹ Boli (in Latin *Zosima Absinthifolia*) is a vegetable belonging to the fennel family that grows wild in the mountains. It has a bitter taste and looks like a green fir branch, with umbrella type flowers.

about her life in Aznaberd. I consider this story as one of those, which were eye-opening and very emotional for me. Eye-opening in terms of seeing ordinary in life and making the ordinary something special. I had a chance to read some parts of this story to her, and I am glad that before she passed away, she knew what an important role she had in my life and how much she had taught me. This story became the foundation and the reason why I decided to write the stories of my grandmother, mother and myself, drawing a fine picture among four generations. Four generations of women of different ages, who were influenced by the historical trauma caused by the invasion² of Azeris in Nakhijevan.



Figure 1 Nushig Mom. Source: Tnits Tun show,

She is the reflection of beauty, kindness, generosity, selflessness, diligence and courage. The Iron Lady - this is how everyone calls her. Nushig mom is a brave woman who deserves to be known, especially for those who have been through struggles or pain and have given up and lost their purpose. The world is full of famous and interesting people who are in the center of attention, but there is always someone who can be an inspiration with their experience and life story, who live in a small corner of the world far from everyone's eyes. Nushig mom is one of

² The armed forces of Azerbaijan invaded the Armenian village of Aznaberd on November 22, 1988. Their goal was to evict the Armenian population and occupy the village.

them. She had a beautiful family, a husband and four children. They lived in Aznaberd, a village in Nakhijevan, and Nushig worked as a librarian there. When she talks about her life in Aznaberd, there is always a mixture of emotions reflected in her eyes; a reflection of happiness, grief, hopelessness all at the same time. Her eyes always fill with tears when she talks about her past.

She had four children; two daughters and two sons. They were happy, they were an ordinary Armenian family, living in a small village. Satik, Nushig's daughter, decided to leave for Yerevan to get higher education. At that time, because of the lack of cellphones communication was hard. Nushig hardly heard from Satik. "If only I knew I was hugging her for the last time when she left. I would've hugged her so hard not letting her go." On the road to Yerevan Satik was hit by a car and was taken to a hospital. She had no relatives around to take care of her. The doctors had made the wrong diagnosis. She hadn't broken her leg as they had thought, her organs were all damaged. After staying at the hospital for two days and after two days of unbearable sufferings she had passed away. The doctors had been able to find her relatives and told them about the tragedy. Nushig says her biggest grief is that she left her daughter's grave with the Azeris, and does not forgive her for that.

"I remember I was doing the laundry when my neighbor came and announced the horrific news with tears in her eyes. That was it, the day had come and we had to leave everything behind and run away as the Turks (she calls Azeris Turks) had taken over Aznaberd," Nushig remembers. "It was November 22, after hearing the news I wasn't able to control my emotions. At that time I just took my three children and ran to the center of the village where the bus was waiting to take the villagers out." She tells how she, her children and everyone else were crying on the bus, she was terrified as she didn't know anything about her husband, she didn't

know where he was. Eventually, it turned out that her husband had gone to the front line to protect his family. Unfortunately, at that time, the number of Azeris had exceeded the number of Armenians. Everyone had to escape and just stay alive. The Vardanyan family settled in Alayaz, Vayots Dzor region. Days, months, even years passed and life gradually turned back to normal. Her children went to school, Nushig and Gevorg (her husband) did agricultural work. In Armen's, her youngest son's words, the children sometimes would find their mom, Nushig, crying silently in her room, with Satik's picture in her hands, and then she would come out of the room, hug her children as if everything was fine. "She never talked about her grief in front of us, she was really an iron lady," Armen claims.

"I thought I would go after my Satik. I could not finish my journey in this world without my angel baby," Nushig mom says. "But I lived, I lived for my children, I lived for my husband." Nushig's children got higher education. They all married and had children. Nushig says she hadn't spent a day without thinking about her Satik. Unfortunately, Satik wasn't her last loss. Years passed, it seemed that everything was back to normal. How could the Vardanyan family know that another tragedy for their family was waiting in the corner? A couple of months after her husband, Gevorg passed away, her Son, Gharib suffered a heart attack. The doctors couldn't save him. As Nushig's son, Armen says, "We thought that was it. We all had given up on life. Nothing would comfort us and our mom. Little did we know our mom was a true hero."

Nushig mom remains as strong and kind as she has always been. She has taught her generations to live through the pain. She has never given up even after all the hardships she went through. Nushig still lives in Alayaz with her son Armen and his beautiful family. Her three grandsons, Armen's sons, adore their grandma. They won't eat or drink unless they know their grandma has done so. Not only her grandchildren but also all the children of the village love her.

Even though she doesn't work as a librarian anymore, she still has created her own small library, where people come and listen to her interesting stories as well as read books. Nushig is a fabulous communicator. She is a teacher with experience. She welcomes everyone in her house and doesn't let them go until they have drunk her *urtsov chai*, tea made from mountain thyme. Yes, the wrinkles on her face are innumerable. Each of those wrinkles seems to be an imprint of all her grief. "You know, sometimes I wish I hadn't lived after my Satik. Sometimes I think that my existence is pointless. But then I look at those smiling faces that I am lucky to call grandchildren, and they give me hope and purpose."

This is Nushig, the Iron Lady in the mountains. A true representation of selflessness, kindness and courage. How many times has life tried to break this woman into pieces, but she is stronger than ever, even at the age of 82. Nushig takes a handful of *boli* and asks, "Do you know what this is? This is my mother, this is my family, this is my life, this is my two lost children." *Boli* is a vegetable that grows in the mountains. It has a bitter taste and looks like a green fir branch. Yes, the smell of *boli* is now the only thing that takes her back to Aznaberd, a place, where in her words she left her true happiness, the place where she was destined to live.



Figure 2 boli,

Grandma Manya

My grandmother was very shy to give an interview. She kept making jokes as we were starting our conversation. At first, I had my interview guidelines, consent forms, the equipment ready with me. As we started, I realized that I needed to have a simple conversation with my grandmother rather than set her in a position when she will overthink the answers she would give me. She kept questioning every answer she gave. So I put everything away, the questions, the various forms and asked her to be herself and just tell her grandchildren about herself like she does whenever we are around.

Manya Khachaturyan, my grandmother, was born in 1957, in the village of Aznaberd³, Nakhijevan region. Her father, Khacho, was a simple workman and builder. Her mother, Dukhik, worked on a collective farm (*kolkhoz* as it was known then). Her family included her mother, father, herself, and four siblings. She was the youngest in the family. To the questions, whether she was teased a lot by her siblings, she cheerfully says that she was loved the most and no one ever gave her a hard time.

As a child, my grandmother and her friends liked to play many games, including *Droshak tanil* (stealing the flag) and *Padmosalotsi* when there are two teams taking turns to throw the ball at each other, whoever gets hit by the ball loses the game. Her favorite game was *Droshak tanil*, when they would be divided into two teams and would go through certain challenges. The winning team got to steal and take the flag. When talking about her childhood, I saw the little girl Manya sitting in front of me and not my grandmother. She seemed so peaceful and happy, I think she imagined she was in their village and she was a child again. My grandma told me how they would gather together, to go and pick greens and flowers from the mountains. They picked *boli*,

³ Aznaberd is situated in the Kangarli District of Nakhchivan, Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan. The village was renamed to Çalxanqala.

a type of green with a bitter taste from the mountains, brought home, and pickled it. According to her, it was the favorite vegetable of everyone living in Aznaberd. The smell of *boli* brings a smile to my grandmother's face. As we talked, she was cleaning *boli* to pickle it for winter. I saw how gently she was cutting each leaf of the vegetable, smiling throughout the conversation. She gave one to me and asked to taste it. None of her grandchildren like the taste of *boli*. They also picked other leafy greens, like *aveluk* (dock). They braided the greens and stocked those for winter. Among her friends were Gohar, Elmira, Voski, Achik. She remembers all of them. One of their favorite things to do was going to the springs with them, sitting and talking for hours. "Those were the most fascinating and memorable moments," she recalls.



Figure 3 My grandmother (first one from the left) with her friends.

Source: Family album, 1965

She went to school in Aznaberd from grade one. Every year, as they were over with school, they liked to gather together and go to the mountains to organize parties and have fun

saying goodbye to the ending year. They had a cultural center in their village, when they would go singing, dancing and watching movies.

When she graduated from high school she started to learn and master sewing and knitting. My grandma started to earn a living by sewing and knitting since the age of 22. She worked at home and made clothing for people, including school uniforms. As she grew up, every one of her siblings had gotten married and her chores in the house had multiplied. I know how hardworking and selfless she is now as a grandmother, but I did not know she had so many responsibilities as a kid too. She would take care of her maternal grandfather, who was blind, and she would take the animals to the pasture right before her classes would start. She tells me how she would wake up early in the morning to go and feed her grandfather, change his clothes, and then she would come home to do other chores, and only after that much work would she go to school. And when the classes were about to be over, she would ask permission to leave thirty minutes earlier so that she could go and take care of her grandfather again. She sighs, and says that she was made to work her whole life. She says work is her cure and that she will get sick as soon as she starts working less.

Her father liked to play the *zurna*, a traditional musical wind instrument. He went to weddings and played the *zurna* and he always took my grandmother with him as she was very passionate about dancing. She went with her father and danced at the weddings all day long. “I remember one day I approached my father and told him how much I wanted to have a party when everyone would dance and have fun.” On her birthday, on September 1st, he organized a surprise party for her birthday and played the *zurna* all day long. My grandma and her siblings did not refer to their father as father or papa, they called him by his name – Khacho. Khacho liked hunting a lot. His hunter friends came to their house, then went hunting the next morning.

She thinks her own son, Ruslan is very much like Khacho, as he also has so many hobbies and is very good at everything he initiates. As a child, my grandmother liked to spend time with her maternal grandmother, who was a very kind woman, with a big heart. Her grandmother had her over all the time, as she created any circumstance to have my grandmother in her house. She made dinner and asked her to go and have dinner with them.

This is how her days passed. She had no idea that soon, as she grew up, she would meet the love of her life, my beloved grandfather. They had never met in person before, but one day his family decided to go to my grandmother's parents to ask for her hand. It was a common thing at that time. In her words, at the very moment she saw him in their house, she fell in love with him. She talks about him with adoration, love, and longing in her eyes. Her parents did not agree to let her go at first, but she convinced them, as she was sure she had found a real love. Finally, they all agreed and on March 5th, 1977, his family came to put a ring on her finger. Their engagement lasted eight months. As my grandma says, those were the happiest eight months, with so many irreplaceable memories. As the days went by, both of them fell in love even harder.



Figure 4 My grandmother and grandfather,

Source: Family album, 1977

October 14th was their wedding day. They got married and created a beautiful family. In 1979 my mother Anahit, their firstborn child, was born. The child brought bright colors to their happy life. As my grandmother tells, her father-in-law, Margar, would celebrate every monthly anniversary, saying “my child became one month older.” Then after a year and a half, Ruslan,

my uncle was born. They could not be happier. Eventually they had four children: my mother, my two uncles and my aunt. They were one family living in the most beautiful village, Aznaberd and it seemed like they still had so many happy days ahead.



Figure 5 My grandparents with their daughter Anahit (my mother). 1980

Source: Family album

Unfortunately, they were not destined to have many cheerful years in Aznaberd. The fateful day came on November 22, 1988⁴. As my grandma remembers, they prepared dough for baking bread that day. And suddenly, the village became crowded, it was so chaotic. The news of Azeris invading Aznaberd reached them quickly. Everyone was panicking. As soon as my

⁴ The armed forces of Azerbaijan invaded the Armenian village of Aznaberd on November 22, 1988. Their goal was to evict the Armenian population and occupy the village. Soon, with the decision of the Soviet government the village was given to Azerbaijan.

grandfather heard the news, he took his carabine and ran to the street. All of them were scared and confused, did not know what to do, or where to go. “My father-in-law kept telling, ‘մի վախեցեք, աշխարհը հո փալասով չի ծածկած, որ թուրքերը գան մեզ մեր տնից հանեն’ (don’t worry the world is not covered in a rug, the Turks will not make us leave our houses), little did he know աշխարհը լավ էլ փալասով էր ծածկած, աղջիկս (the world was, in fact, covered in a rug, my dear).” The kids did not stop crying. Suddenly, my grandma’s mother-in-law ran to her and asked her to take the four children and run away, to go to her parents’ house. My grandmother’s parents’ house was at the very end of the village, far from the Azeri incursions. Most of the people in the village were running to their houses, to escape the damage caused by the attack.

As I listen to my grandmother talk I carefully examine her expressions, gestures, and movements. She was staring at a point on the ground, with hands clenched together, and her tears flowing. I was sure she was trying to avoid eye contact with me. It came as surprise to me when she said, “I miss that day, Ani jan, but at the same time, I want that day to vanish from my head.” I did not quite understand why she said so, but I did not want to interrupt her either. It seemed like she was in her little world at that very moment and relieved everything she was talking about. She had Baris, the youngest child, in a blanket, in her hands, and her other three children were hugging her legs. Fearing of getting attacked on the road, they started walking to my grandma’s parents’ house. She remembers that night the moon was so bright, it seemed like it was early evening. As they were passing by the houses they saw that everyone had left, the doors were open, and yet nobody was home. Finally, they got to their destination. As they arrived, they saw that most of the population of the village was hiding in her parents’ house.

They sat there for a while and waited for some time, until another horrible news came to them. They were told that the Azeris had bombed Onik's motorcycle. Onik was my grandfather's closest friend. Everyone was in shock. My grandma recounts, "I remember your mother shouting very loudly. She was screaming 'my father is gone'." They thought my grandfather and Onik were on the motorcycle and they were killed. Fortunately they were able to fight back and escape. After hearing this news, everyone at the house was a bit relieved. Soon the news came again that the situation was getting worse and the Azeris were all over the village. As most of them were in my grandma's parents' house her mother-in-law came in running and breathing heavily, announcing that there was a bus waiting for women and children to get them out of the village. There was no other better solution at that moment, they had to leave as quickly as possible. The first thing my grandmother was worried about was saving her four children who were horrified by what was happening. They got on the bus and started driving. "God knows how awful it was, my daughter, it was so hard to breathe, I had to pretend to be strong to comfort my four little children. They were innocent, they did not really realize what was happening and why were people fighting. I had to hold back my tears, hug each one of my kids and make sure they were okay," my grandma remembers. As they were passing by the hospital in the village, they saw my grandfather, Alik. He had the carbine hanging on his shoulder and was walking back and forth nervously. "That moment was a spark of happiness, it seemed like seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. I thought to myself, my Alik was alive." He got on the bus and got angry at my grandmother for leaving.

The stories I have heard about my grandfather made me understand how patriotic he was. Even in such a horrifying situation, he was thinking about his homeland first. "He got on the bus, his face was so red and sweaty. I had not seen him as angry as he was then. Alik wanted us to get

off the bus and go back to the village, as in his words they were fighting to protect us from the Azeris and it was a betrayal to leave the place.” Of course they could not stay, it was very dangerous. Finally, the elder women convinced my grandfather how dangerous it was for those four little children to stay in the village when there was shooting everywhere. He gave the last money he had in his pocket to my grandma, kissed the children, and let them go. The road seemed so long and everyone was expecting the Azeris could bomb the bus any second. The stress and fear made Anahit, my mother, who was nine years old, throw up and have a stomach ache all the way to Vayq⁵. She became so pale and soon she seemed to be unconscious. My grandmother’s worries were multiplied. Now her daughter was suffering and she did not have a clue what to do. It seemed like the nightmare was not going to end. Finally, they got to a village called Gyunut, in Vayq region. Soon, a man named Khachik got on the bus and offered his help to those who needed it. After seeing Anahit in pain, he offered to host them in his house until she would get better.

⁵ Vayk is a town and the center of the Vayk Municipality of the Vayots Dzor Province in southern Armenia.

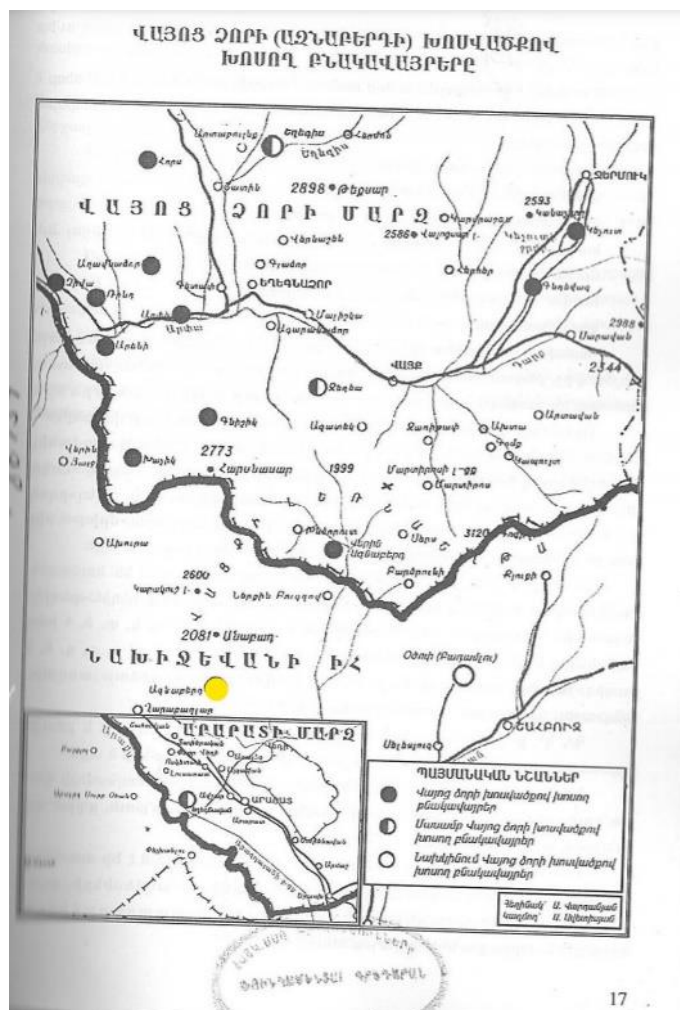


Figure 6 Vayots Dzor border with Nakhijevan. (Aznaverd is marked yellow)

Source: Artak Vardanyan

Khachik lived with his mother and father, as he had to take his wife and children out of the village to be safe from a possible invasion. They took my mother to the hospital and fortunately a couple of hours later she started to feel better. They stayed in Khachik's house for two days. Then my grandma decided to go to Yerevan, where some of her relatives were waiting. "I am so grateful we met Khachik, as without his help I do not know what I would have done. They made some food for us for the road, such as *ghaurma* (meat made with butter), honey,

bread, cheese,” my grandma says. On the way to Yerevan, she heard people talking to each other and worrying about leaving their houses, land, animals, stocked food. Only then did my grandmother realize that this was it, there was no going back. She realized those conversations were about hopeless people, who are desperate for having left their homeland behind. My grandmother hugged her four children and started crying.

As they got to the bus station in Yerevan, her aunt, Shushik, came to them running and crying, “Manya jan, you are alive. Your mother has gone crazy thinking you were killed. Thank God.” All the relatives had thought they were killed on the road. The extended family kept approaching them one by one and offering to host them in their houses. They stayed in their relative’s house with a tiny hope that maybe everything was not over and it was possible to go back. They slept every night with a hope that soon my grandfather would come, hug all of them and take them back to Aznaberd. One evening, my grandfather showed up with his blind father and a set of bedding. The last spark of hope was gone. “Alik, why are you both here? Why did you bring father all the way to Yerevan? We are going back, right?” she asked. “Yes we are, but for now, you have to be patient,” he answered. The next day my grandfather left again. Days passed by and only bad news kept coming. Someone’s car or house was bombed, someone else was shot, the shooting never stopped. The feeling of being forced to wait constantly in so much uncertainty killed them slowly.

One day my grandfather came again, with another set of bedding with him. “This is it Manya, I am sorry, we are not going back.” The fairytale named Aznaberd ended with this one sentence, “I am sorry, we are not going back.” Just imagine, how many things can change in a second, one day you have the happiest life in your house full of people you love, and the other day you are stuck in the middle of nowhere without a clue of what you are going to do.

The Hovsepyan family, and many families from Aznaberd started to spread all over Armenia trying to start everything from zero. My grandmother's family settled in the village of Ararat, in a house with the poorest of conditions. "The house was destroyed, there were not any basic living conditions. I remember I made a place with a tent for my father-in-law to sit outside in the shadow. It was a good thing he was blind and could not see what he left behind and where he was sitting at the moment," my grandma remembers. Soon my grandfather and grandmother started working to meet the needs of the family. My grandfather was a tractor driver, and my grandma worked at the *kolkhoz* (collective farm). "Your grandfather did not want me to work in such a place, where working conditions were bad. But I had to Ani jan, I had to do my best to get back on our feet as soon as possible."

Yet, living through a war and its consequences was not over for the Hovsepyan family. The Artsakh war started in 1991, and my grandfather went to the frontline. Days passed by without any news about him. He kept fighting for about two months, and one happy day he came home bringing with him the news of victory and joy to the family.

Soon, my grandfather decided to move to Tigranashen⁶, which was liberated from Azerbaijan. Nature there is so beautiful, with rocky mountains and breathtaking wildflowers. He made a decision to move there as some people were afraid of living on the border with Azerbaijan. He was ready to protect the village at any cost, which gave confidence to the people in that small village. He started working in a small market and was able to provide his family with a living. As my mother now remembers, that one year in Tigranashen was one of the happiest years of their lives. They had friends over every evening, cheerful Armenian music was

⁶ Tigranashen is a village in the Sadarak District of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan, de facto under the control of Armenia, administered as part of its Ararat Province.

playing every day, and everyone was dancing and having fun. The children went to a school in Sevakavan. They were hoping the hard days and sufferings were in the past.

April 3rd was the day grief descended on the Hovsepyan family. After an argument with someone from the village my grandfather was asked to go with the mayor to explain the reason for the argument. He was standing in the basement talking to the father of the man with whom he had been arguing earlier that day. "I remember, Alik was walking and talking to that man in the basement, when his son ran from behind his father's back and hit Alik in the heart with a knife. I saw it, that horrifying image is right in front of me. Ruslan (her son) and I witnessed it happen. Alik fell to the ground, he was unconscious. I ran to him, put my hand on the wound, it was so big I could not cover it," tells my grandmother not able to hold back her tears. I wanted to stop her, I could not watch her relive that terrible moment once again. She kept going, "People were telling me not to worry, he will survive, if the blood was coming out, it means he will survive. Stupid of me to believe them. I remember my Ruslan hitting his head on the ground yelling, "my father is gone, my father is gone." They lifted Alik and his hands were moving back and forth without coordination," she kept wiping her tears, still staring at a point on the ground. "Soon I saw Anahit, holding Baris, running to me, out of breath. She kept asking what happened to her father. I could not answer." My grandma then added what is still imprinted in my mind, "he defeated the turks so many times and he was killed by an Armenian on his land." She has not gotten over this terrible pain, she still suffers. She does not often talk about it, maybe because she does not want to break the image of the strong woman she is for us.

After the death of my grandfather my grandmother had to be as strong as ever. She started working in various places to meet the needs of her children. She worked day and night, without break. Eventually her children grew up, "I am one lucky mother, Ani jan, my children

grew up and now they have their families. I am thankful to them for you, my grandchildren. You are my pride, my strength, and the answers to my prayers.”

This is the story of my dearest grandmother. I want her story to live and serve as an example for our generations to come. I witnessed her eyes change from shining to filling with tears throughout our conversation together. I could not help but notice her expressions gradually shift from happiness to grief. As I work on writing this text now, I think of it as an addition to our family archive and a home for memories of the past. I know everyone in our family is waiting impatiently to read this narrative, but I am not sure when I will be ready to show it to them.

When we go over to visit my grandmother, she bakes the most delicious Armenian *gata* with *khORIZ* (a traditional Armenian pastry with a filling that consists of flour, butter and sugar). *Gata* is not my favorite, but when she makes it I cannot resist it. We sit around the table and watch her bake the *gata*. First, she rolls out the dough, then she adds the *khORIZ*, rolls it, and starts cutting it into pieces. During the process she likes to tell us stories about their life in Aznaberd, and most importantly, our favorite – stories about our deceased grandfather, may he rest in peace. When we are around her, we seem to be in a totally different world. I feel protected with her, and the warmth of her words is simply amazing.

Mother Anahit

Anahit Margaryan, my mother, was born in 1979, in Aznaberd⁷ village in Nakhijevan region. In her own words there has always been a special bond between her and her village. She

⁷ Aznaberd is situated in the Kangarli District of Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan territory. The village was renamed to Çalxanqala.

describes Aznaberd as a place with mesmerizing beauty. It had breathtaking mountainous landscapes, where incredibly beautiful flowers would blossom. There were many cultural sites and monuments among which were *Surb Grigor*, *Surb Hovhannes (Srvanes)*, *Surb Hakob (Srgagop) Monasteries*.



Figure 7 My mother and my grandmother. 1980

Source: Family album

Her father, Alik, born in 1953, worked on a collective farm (*kolkhoz*) at that time, whereas her mother, Manya was a housewife and also worked as a home-based tailor. Neither of them had higher education. My mother lived with her parents, grandparents, and three siblings - two brothers and a sister. Being the eldest sibling created a number of responsibilities for her, but as she mentions, it was a pleasure for her to be the eldest sibling. “I remember how proud I was

to take my little sister to the kindergarten all by myself even though I was in elementary school. I was mature enough to take care of my siblings.”

They lived in a two-story house with a beautiful garden where the branches of the mulberry tree would take over the balcony. The house had a wooden fence surrounded by beautiful chrysanthemum flowers. Her grandfather, Margar, was fond of growing plants and flowers and he passionately took care of the flowers in the garden. Margar was an old man, who had been blind for over a year and did not let anyone know about it. “I remember one day he slipped over a hole in the ground and pretended he did it intentionally, and then one day, when he was singing a lullaby for my baby sister, he said “Will I ever be able to see your beautiful face,” only then, my mother realized he had gone blind,” she remembers. In my mother’s words, he was a very kind man who would never argue with anyone, he was intelligent and smart who never in his life used a curse word. Her grandmother, on the other hand, was a very active woman, who liked to argue with everyone. “My memories with my grandparents are so beautiful. They are the people who made my childhood so memorable and with bright colors. I remember their constant fights, when my grandfather would sit silently and my grandmother would talk nonstop. It was funny how the silence of my grandfather would drive my grandma even crazier.” My mother did not stop smiling when talking about her grandparents. She remembers how her grandmother worked in a hospital and every day, when she came back from work, my uncle and she ran towards her asking about what she had brought for them. She always had something for them, candy, cookies, etc. One day, when they approached her again asking what she had for them she answered, *khozan* which in Aznaberd dialect means nothing. Not being aware of what it means they started shouting loudly, “We want *khozan!*”



Figure 8 My mother with her grandmother Vardush. 1987

Source: Family album

As a child, my mother made lots of beautiful memories with her friends in Aznaberd. She would go outside early in the morning and come back home late at night. Their house was surrounded by gigantic rocky mountains. She would go to the mountains, sometimes all by

herself and would play there day and night without any fear. Now, as an adult, she is very surprised about how fearless she was as a child. Anything could have happened to her as there were many wild animals in the mountains, which could easily attack her. She liked to pick wildflowers and *urts*, an herb from the thyme family growing wild in the mountains, with a delicate smell and beautiful yellow flowers. People like to dry it and make tea with it. I like the taste of tea with *urts* as well, it helps me relax.

My mother remembers, she would climb up the walnut tree, which grew near their house, sit on the branch and start reading. She says it made the reading even more interesting for her and also she could enjoy the beauty of their village from above.

She had a best friend, whose name was Anahit as well. They enjoyed each other's company and spent a lot of time together. However, there is one story that my mother has always told us about her adventures with Anahit. One day, as usual, they decided to go to the mountains and collect flowers. They took the responsibility of taking the herd of goats to the pasture, thinking there is nothing hard about doing so. They headed to the mountains, started playing together, running around and picking flowers. And suddenly, they noticed that there was not a single goat around. They had been so occupied by playing that they did not notice the goats running away. "I remember how afraid we were, it was getting late already but we did not have the courage to go home. Our parents would get angry at us for losing the goats," she says. As it was getting darker, they decided to get going. Suddenly they realized they were lost in the mountains. They found a cave and hid in it. It started raining and they thought that if a storm started they might never be able to get out of the cave. The rain poured hard and the lightning struck. My mother and Anahit waited for a while until the rain stopped and soon got out. Fortunately they were on the right path of going home. Fear had taken over them and each little

sound became scary. Most importantly, they were afraid of the reactions of their families. Little did they know there was a big surprise waiting for them back at home. The goats had found their way back home all by themselves. Their parents were afraid something had happened to them. They could have got lost in the mountains. She laughs every time she tells us about this incident.



Figure 9 My mother with her friend Anahit. 1986

Source: Family album

My mother had set up some house chores for herself. She would help her mother take care of her siblings and do the housework. She did everything to please her mother and ease her burden. My mother's family was a typical Armenian family carrying many traditional values.

The most important meal for them was dinner, they might not have time to have breakfast or lunch together, but they all got around one table for dinner. They liked to celebrate the national holidays with relatives who would visit them mostly for the summer holidays. There were so many pranks my mother and her cousins would pull on each other. For instance, one day, his cousin Karen, who was a very playful boy, locked their grandmother in the basement where she stayed for a couple of hours. My mother and her brother felt bad for their grandmother but could not open the door as they did not have the key. Karen left the house with the key and returned thirty minutes before everyone would return from work. He opened the door and their grandmother came out after being locked there for three hours. The grandma started chasing him and everyone laughed. “There are so many memories and stories that are worth sharing,” my mother says. I can tell how excited she gets when she starts telling stories about their life in Aznaberd.

My mother went to school in the village. She was a smart student who always got high marks. All of the subjects were her favorites, she could not pick one. My mother remembers that one particular day, when both her parents held her hands and took her to school. “I could not get enough of that moment. I had my bag, and a bouquet of flowers in my hands, I raised my head, looked at my mother and then my father. That was one of the most beautiful moments of my life. I was the proudest child walking to school. I saw how proud they were to take their firstborn to school and seeing them like that made me happy.” She liked to do her homework by herself, but sometimes her mother would help her to write the letters correctly in the first grade. My mother was and still is fond of reading. She had a whole library in their house and mostly liked reading historical novels. She is a true patriot like her father, my grandfather. It is amazing to see how passionately she loves her country, her land, with every cell of her body.

“I remember how one day, I said I did not like the Armenian language subject at school. My uncle got upset and told me how important it is to love your country. I was ashamed of what I said and since that day, Armenian language and culture became my favorites. I carried his words with me throughout my whole life, and as I grew up I understood the wisdom of his words. If a person does not like her own language and country, then most probably that person does not belong there,” my mother recalls.

She remembers the day of invasion⁸ very well, even though she was just nine years old. It was November 22, 1988. She had read about wars, the mass killings in Sumgait⁹, the Armenian genocide in books but she never thought she would have to face it in real life. She remembered some scenes from the genocide depicted in books, where the Turks would cut a pregnant woman’s belly open, get the baby out and put soil inside the body. All these horrible imagery kept popping in her mind that day. She thought her worst nightmare was about to come true. The situation was chaotic in the village, she was playing around when she realized something was wrong. “My father was talking to my uncle and he said something that is stuck in my mind. He said “Jonik (his real name was John), there will be blood,” I was a child and did not quite understand what he meant by that,” she recalls. She did not understand what her father meant by that, but she started to panic unconsciously.

The Azeris invaded the village. The electricity of the whole village went off. It was dark and the screams of people had taken over. My mother was mostly worried about his baby brother, she was begging her mother to run away like everyone else was doing so that her baby brother would be safe. Her grandfather kept repeating, “աշխարհը հո փալսսով չի ծածկած,

⁸ The armed forces of Azerbaijan invaded the Armenian village of Aznaberd on November 22, 1988. Their goal was to evict the Armenian population and occupy the village. Soon, with the decision of the Soviet government the village was given to Azerbaijan.

⁹ The mass killings of the Armenian population of the city organized by the Azerbaijani authorities at the state level in the city of Sumgait, Soviet Azerbaijan, which took place February 27-29, in 1988 (Gevorgyan, 2019).

որ թուրքերը զան մեզ մեր տնից հանեն”(don’t worry the world is not covered in a rug, the Turks will not make us leave our houses). Her father was not home at that time. Suddenly, he appeared with his face all red and angry. He entered the room on the first floor and they all ran after him. He did not say a word even though my grandmother kept asking questions. My mother silently followed the conversations trying to understand what was up. Her father took his carabine and some homemade grenades and put them in his backpack. Then he kept comforting everyone saying that nothing would happen. “I remember my mother crying, and when my father took his backpack and ran out, I shouted with an inexplicable fear,” my mother recalls. When recounting the details of this day my mother always starts crying, trying to avoid eye contact with us.

“Eventually, my mother took me and my three siblings and we headed to my grandparents’ house. Their house was the safest place at that time as it was far from the Azeris,” she remembers. She walked fast with her mother and siblings, carefully looking around. When they got to the place, they saw that the majority of the village was there. Soon, her grandmother came in running, out of breath, and told everyone there was a bus ready to take the civilians out of the village. My mother got very happy hearing that, as she was worried about her baby brother. “I was happy to leave the place then, little did I know we were never coming back.” All the women and children got on the bus and the men stayed to fight and protect the village. As they were driving along the road they saw her father going back and forth in front of the hospital. His face was still red and angry and he had his carabine with him. He stopped the bus and got in. He wanted to make sure they were all okay before letting them go. It was hard for them to leave my grandfather alone, but they had to leave to be protected.

The road was terrifying as she felt sick the whole time. She remembers how scared she was of the idea that her father was fighting back in Aznaberd, and how it was possible to be attacked by the Azeris any second. My mother kept throwing up the whole time and almost became unconscious. She remembers lying on someone's lap on the bus. Eventually they got to a village in Vayq region. The bus stopped and people started approaching to see how everyone was doing. As my mother was sick and she could not continue the road, a man named Khachik offered them to get off the bus. He took care of them for about three days, took my mother to the hospital. She remembers how some children kept coming over and played with them. They were trying to get them in a better mood. Eventually, my grandmother decided it was time to get going as their relatives had been waiting for them in Yerevan. There were more people coming from Aznaberd with a bus, so my mother, her siblings and my grandma joined them. When they finally got to Yerevan, they saw that the Republic square was full of people. Those were the relatives of the refugees who were waiting to welcome them. Their relatives were there as well, and they took them to their house to wait until my grandfather would come to take them back to Aznaberd.

My mother remembers people talking about the massive damage the Azeris had caused to the village. There were only seven people in the village who stayed and fought for the territory, among them was my grandfather. After fighting intensively for a couple of days, my grandfather came to Yerevan. Everyone was hoping he was there with good news. But it was not to be; the village was fully occupied by the Azeris. They could not go back to their homes.

The consequences that these horrifying events brought with them are irrevocable. "The pain, the thought of not going back and the obligation of starting everything from zero made people miserable. My maternal grandmother's hair went white overnight, she lost her hearing.

Most of the elderly died carrying the pain of leaving everything behind, with a slight hope of going back one day,” my mother recalls. I remember, a couple of days before passing away, my mother’s maternal grandmother had mental health problems. One day, she woke up and did not recognize anyone, she imagined she was in their village captured by the Azeris. She kept yelling and fighting everyone. I do not think that image can ever be wiped from my memory.

My mother had been to Yerevan before for the holidays and she always thought of it as a very beautiful city where she could live one day. “But at that time, the only beautiful place I would dream of living in was my Aznaberd. Yerevan was not the same beautiful city for me anymore,” she says. She was only nine years old then, and did not quite understand what migration meant. She believed it was temporary. My mother liked to learn new things and explore everything. She used to write down everything, or collect everything she found interesting, so that one day she could go back to Aznaberd and show it to her classmates.

Soon my mother's family got a house in the village of Ararat. As soon as they moved in, both of her parents worked. Integrating into the society was not easy for little Anahit. She remembers how shy she was on the first day of school in Ararat. She did not know anyone there and sat in class, gazing down at her shoes. After getting to know her all the teachers and the students liked her. In 1991 my mother, her parents and siblings moved to Tigranashen¹⁰, close to the Azerbaijan border, where they lived for a year. “I remember, one day my brother and I were wandering around in the mountains where we accidentally found our favorite vegetable greens – *boli*. Last time we ate *boli* was in Aznaberd, and we had missed the taste of it so much. We liked to pickle the *boli* or boil and eat it with salt. Everyone liked it back in Aznaberd. It is like a symbol for us, everytime I see and smell it I imagine I am back in Aznaberd. We were so happy

¹⁰ Tigranashen is a village in the Sadarak District of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, de facto under the control of Armenia, administered as part of its Ararat Province.

to find it in our new place of living. My brother and I were very excited, so we picked lots of it and filled our bags with it. When we happily went home to show it to our mother, she told us it had overgrown and was not edible anymore.”

My mother’s family stayed in Tigranashen until the 3rd of April, in 1991, when her father was killed. She remembers that day with tearful eyes. He was killed in front of her mother’s and brother’s eyes. “He had been in an argument with someone. I saw my father leave with this person and my mother was running after him. I could not do anything as I was watching my baby brother,” she recalls. Soon she took her brother and ran to them. When she got there her father was not there anymore and her mother and brother were in shock. Her brother was crying and her mother was hitting her knees, gone crazy. The worst had happened. As my mother says, the pace of her life drastically changed after her father’s death. Life lost its meaning for her. Her father had made so many promises to her, which remained unfulfilled. She is 40 years old now, but still dreams of her father and misses him dearly. “He was so proud of the person I was becoming. He would have his friends over and show them my grades,” she stops talking and starts wiping her tears. I asked her what made her overcome those hardships. “It was not the hope but the feeling of being obliged to bring back the land one day where my father and all of us belonged. Only then, I think, I will believe that my father is resting in peace.”

My mother met my father when she was in college. They got married when she was 18, and now they have three children; my sister, brother and I. “I am proud of my children, and the people they are growing to be. Since your early childhood I told you the most important thing in life is to set goals and do anything to achieve them, I made you understand how important it is to be well-educated and use your knowledge in having your input to make your homeland prosper.”

My mother has never stopped being a force of motivation for us. She made us believe that even though we have never been to Nakhijevean, a little particle of our hearts belongs there. My mother has brought us up with the philosophy that in order to be a worthy individual one must put up with everything life offers, but still have a clear obligation in her mind to contribute to the development and protection of one's homeland at all costs.

“Last question, where do you see yourself in a decade from now?”

“In my village, in Aznaberd.”

Pickled *Boli* Recipe

Boli is the thread that links these stories together. I believe the story would be incomplete without the recipe of the meal, which was present in each story. So here it is.

Ingredients

1kg *boli*

1 litre water

0,5 tea cup salt

vinegar

garlic

Method

Carefully wash the *boli*, add it to the water and boil it for fifteen minutes. Then add the salt, vinegar and some garlic. Enjoy! Simple, isn't it?

Epilogue

We all have certain goals we desire to achieve. We make an effort and work hard day and night to accomplish those dreams. We keep running non-stop throughout our life not noticing that we miss out the most important things in life. We do not appreciate the little things in life that, in fact, matter the most. These three women have played a crucial role in my life, as they

have taught me valuable lessons, most importantly appreciating the tiny details I might encounter. I did not realize how important the little conversations with my family were.

One day, *boli* is just a green for them, which they simply cook and eat, and yet another day it can carry a significant meaning. *Boli* is the magic wand that takes them back to Aznaberd, awakening the brightest memories. It seems to be the only key to the doors of their past, where they left loved ones and their homeland, the place where they belong.

I am a piece of their past, present and future. The conversations with these women made me realize that there is still a spark of hope that one day, they will be able to live in Aznaberd again. One of my primary goals is to make it possible for them to visit their village one day, because I see that they count on me, they believe in me. I do not like *boli*, I cannot stand the smell of it, maybe because it makes my mother and grandmother emotional, but I have a purpose, I will create my own key to their past. Աշխարհը փակասունկ չի ծածկած: (the world is not covered in a rug.)

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Appendices

Appendix A Interview Guidelines

Biographical Information

1. When were you born?
2. Where were you born?
 - a. Please describe the place where you were born.
3. Who were your parents?
 - a. What were the occupations of your parents?
4. Did you have siblings?
 - a. How many children were there in your family?
5. Who did you live with?
6. What were the professions of your parents?

Childhood

- a. What are your memories as a child in Nakhijevan?
1. Generally speaking what was your childhood like?
 - a. What is your most favorite memory connected to your house back in Aznaberd?
 - b. What is your most significant memory connected to the school you went to?
 - c. Whom did you play with in your courtyard?
 - d. Tell me about your friends?
 - e. Will you please name some of the games you played with your friends?
2. What did you like to do the most when you were a child?
 - a. What were your favourite books as a child?
 - b. What hobbies did you have?
 - c. Did you have responsibilities/chores as a child in the village?
 - d. What do you remember often doing with your family?
 - e. What do you miss the most from your childhood?
 - f. What memories do you have of your grandparents?
 - g. What are some of the jokes or pranks your family liked to make?
 - h. What was your most favorite place to visit in Aznaberd?

Schooling

1. What school did you go to in Aznaberd? Where was your school located?
 - a. Tell me both your best and worst memories of your school?
 - b. Tell me about the place and the surroundings of the school.
 - c. What was learning like in your school?
 - d. Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?
 - e. Who helped you to do your homework?
 - f. Are there any teachers or subjects you particularly liked or disliked?

College/University

1. Where did you go to college/university?
2. What degree did you pursue?
3. Were you able to pursue your interests in higher education?
4. What memories do you have of your university life?

Career and Family

1. What was your first job and how did you get it?
2. Where was your job? Was it in Aznaberd?
3. Were you ever unemployed? If so, how did you handle it?
3. When did you create your family?
 - a. Whom did you marry? Describe where you were when you met your spouse.
 - b. Tell me about your wedding ceremony? What year was it? Where was it? How many people attended?
 - c. Tell me what it was like to start a family.
 - d. How did your friends and family react?
 - e. How many children did you have?
5. Who worked in your family?
6. What leisure do you recall you liked to do as a family?
 - a. What memorable vacations can you remember you had as a family?
7. How many children did you have?

The invasion

1. How did the invasion start?
 - a. What is the date and time?
 - b. How did you know you had to move?
 - c. Where were you at that time?

- d. Who did you go with and who did you leave behind?
 - e. What precipitated the movement?
2. How was the movement organized? Was there a certain announcement?
 3. How did you know where you were going?
 4. How did you manage to take your personal belongings with you?
 5. What did you leave behind?

Historical trauma

1. How did the Azeris invade?
 - a. What harm did they do to people in Aznaberd?
 - b. What harm did they do to your family members?
2. I know there were only women, children and disabled people leaving Nakhijevan at that time, as men were trying to fight against the Azerbaijani people; please tell me, what do you remember about the war?
 - a. How many of your relatives and family members stayed to fight?
 - b. Did you lose relatives because of the invasion?
3. How would you describe your experience of displacement from Nakhijevan?
 - a. How did it affect your and your family's mental health?
 - b. How long did it take from you to overcome that?
4. Tell me about the harassment you or your relatives had to experience while being forced to leave Nakhijevan?

Life as a refugee

1. What region did you move to?
2. What were your expressions of the new region when you first arrived?
3. What was your experience in this new community like?
 - a. What were the main challenges you had to face while integrating in the new society?
 - b. Who helped you to settle in the new region?
 - c. What kind of support did the government give?
4. How did you overcome all the difficulties?
 - a. Who/what did you turn to in the most difficult times?
 - b. What has given you the biggest joy at hard times as refugees?
5. How was it like meeting the needs of your family?
 - a. Tell me about your experience getting a job in the new community.

- b. Who worked in your family?
 - c. What schools did your children go to?
6. What have you achieved as a refugee that you are proud of?
- a. How did you achieve all of your goals in terms of becoming a full part of the new society?
7. What do you tell your children or grandchildren about your life in Nakhijevan?
- a. What advice do you give them the most?
8. When looking back, what would you do differently as a refugee?
9. What are your most joyous and the saddest moments a refugee?
- a. What lifelong lessons have you learned from this experience as a refugee?
 - b. What did the hardships and the joyous times taught you?
10. How do you see yourself now and in the next decade?

Appendix B 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 Անի Գալստյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ, թե ինչպես է պատմական սերնդեսերունդ անցնող տրավման ազդել Նախիջևանից եկած փախստական սերունդների վրա: Անի Գալստյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցը նպատակ ունի հավաքել փախստականների պատմություններ և հետազոտություն կատարել այն մասին, թե նրանք ինչ մարտահրավերների են բախվել հայ հասարակության մեջ ինտեգրվելիս:

Ընթացակարգը

Հասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է մասնակցի տանը կամ մեկ այլ պատշաճ վայրում, և տեսագրվելու և/կամ ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես կիսվելու եմ ինձ հասանելի տեղեկություններով փախստականի կարգավիճակի մասին, անձնական փորձով և պատմություններով: 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 ՀԱՄԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ 10.03.2021թ.

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

ԱՆԻ ԳԱԼՍՏՅԱՆ

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ 10.03.2021թ.

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):