Monuments and Memory: The Remediation and the Visual Appropriations of the
Mother Armenia Statue on Instagram During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War

Lala Mouradian

A Thesis

in

The Department

of Communication Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (Media Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2021

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Lala Mouradian

Entitled: Monuments and Memory: The Remediation and the Visual Appropriations of the Mother Armenia Statue on Instagram During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Media Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____Chair
Dr. Jeremy Stolow

_____ Examiner
Dr. Stefanie Duguay

_____ Examiner
Dr. Jeremy Stolow

_____ Supervisor
Dr. Monika Gagnon

Approved by_____
               Dr. Monika Gagnon   *Chair of Department*

_____
               Dr. Pascale Sicotte   *Dean of Faculty*

Date: April 9, 2021

Abstract

Monuments and Memory: The Remediation and the Visual Appropriations of the
Mother Armenia Statue on Instagram During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War

Lala Mouradian

This thesis analyzes the remediation and the visual appropriations of the Mother
Armenia statue on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. The Mother
Armenia statue was erected in 1967 in Armenia's capital city of Yerevan as a
female personification of Armenia. Its meaning and symbolism have been
reworked during different collective crises for the Armenian nation. During the
2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, the statue was a significant object of appropriation
in the production and sharing of images on Instagram both by Armenians living in
Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. This thesis examines the Instagram images in
relation to historical and contemporary understandings of the concept of Armenian
motherhood, the history of the construction and symbolism of the Mother Armenia
statue, the intersection of monuments and memory studies, and visual cultural
studies.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Monika Gagnon. Your guidance and support were invaluable in every stage of composing this thesis. Thank you for your kindness and generosity throughout the two years of this Master's program.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jeremy Stolow and Dr. Stefanie Duguay, for their constructive feedback and encouragement both in the early and later stages of writing this thesis. Your knowledge and expertise were fundamental for completing my degree.

To my parents Hagop and Nora, I could not have done this without your love and support. Thank you for everything.

To my brother Levon, thank you for our endless conversations and for spinning records whenever I needed motivation.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

This thesis will analyze the remediation and visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war was an armed conflict between the self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh (or Nagorno-Karabakh) together with Armenia, and Azerbaijan with the support of its closest ally Turkey, in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding territories. The war started on September 27, 2020, and ended with a ceasefire agreement signed on November 9, 2020. The recent war was the latest escalation of an unresolved ethnic and territorial conflict over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh that has its origins in the early 20th century.

During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, the Mother Armenia statue, which is located in Armenia's capital city of Yerevan, was a significant object of remediation in the production and sharing of images on Instagram, as it was being appropriated by Armenian artists, activists, and ordinary citizens as a means of expressing their support for the ethnic Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh and raising awareness about the war among the international community. The Mother Armenia statue was erected in 1967 and its meaning and symbolism have been reworked during different collective crises for the Armenian nation. In particular, the statue has played an important role in representing the concept of Armenian motherhood and women's role in Armenian society in relation to political and cultural struggles. During the recent war, the global reach of Instagram allowed a surge of diasporic Armenians to become involved in creating social media content about the war as an act of solidarity with Armenians living in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. As such, as part of this online activity on Instagram, the Mother Armenia statue was being actively appropriated both by Armenians living in Armenia and in the Armenian diaspora. The production of these images appropriating the statue and their circulation on Instagram during the recent war have contributed to the formation of mobilized "affective publics," which Zizi Papacharissi (2016) defines as "…networked publics that are mobilized and connected, identified, and potentially disconnected through expressions of sentiment" (p. 311). Papacharissi further explains that "within the sphere of everyday political and social activities, online activity may connect disorganized crowds and enable the creation of networked publics around communities, actual and imagined" (Papacharissi, 2016, p. 310). The production and circulation of these images on Instagram, as an online activity, contributed to the construction of mobilized "affective Armenian publics" both in Armenia and the diaspora that were connected through their sentiments and feelings towards the events of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

In order to understand the significance of the Mother Armenia statue and the impact of its recirculation, appropriation, and remediation on Instagram during the recent war, it will be important to look at past and present understandings of the concept of Armenian motherhood and the history of the construction and symbolism of the statue itself. My analysis of the Instagram images will draw on the history of Armenian motherhood in relation to different collective crises for Armenians in the last hundred years. I delve into this history of the formation and development of Armenian motherhood because starting from (at least) the late 19th century, the figure of the Armenian mother played a significant role in communicating the ideals of Armenian national identity and was pervasive during almost every dominant collective trauma or crisis in Armenian history. Although the symbolism and meaning of Armenian motherhood shifts over time depending on the needs and struggles of the Armenian nation in different

periods, the image of the Armenian mother continues to remain fundamental in the development of Armenian national identity.

The different interpretations and transformations of Armenian motherhood were developed by and within a nation that did not have an independent state for the majority of early modern history, with most Armenians living under the rule of different imperial powers. With the absence of an independent state to construct a national narrative, the dynamic portrayal of motherhood throughout different periods in Armenian history played a critical role in developing Armenian national identity. Because the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war was a continuation of a conflict that started in the early 20th century, a period in which other significant events took place such as the Armenian genocide and the Sovietization of Armenia, and later the first Nagorno-Karabakh war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the analysis of the recent activist and artistic interventions of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram in relation to these historical events becomes important. The reason for this is that besides raising awareness about the war, the visual appropriations of the statue on Instagram associate the notion of motherhood with different Armenian national characteristics and narratives. As such, these Instagram images contribute to the process of intensifying the meaning and symbolism of the Mother Armenia figure by combining the historically and culturally accepted notion of motherhood with the national struggle of Armenians during the recent war.

Similar to the tension embedded in the historical transformations of the concept of Armenian motherhood for furthering different national narratives, the remediation of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war was a source for negotiating different meanings of Armenian motherhood. In this thesis, by examining the different understandings of motherhood in Armenian history and in the recent remediation and appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram, I will demonstrate that at times Armenian motherhood is appropriated as an act of empowerment for Armenian women to take on new social roles, while at others it is negotiated to ensure their subordination within patriarchal social orders.

My analysis of these Instagram images will also rely on literatures in the fields of the intersection of monuments and memory studies and visual cultural studies. Within that framework, the concepts of remediation and appropriation are fundamental to my analysis. Remediation, as defined by David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000), is the "representation of one medium in another" (p. 45). I use the concept of remediation in my analysis of the images to examine the representation of the Mother Armenia statue (as one medium) in Instagram images (another medium). Bolter and Grusin further explain that there is a "double logic" to remediation through discussing two concepts: (transparent) immediacy and hypermediacy. "The logic of immediacy dictates that the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented" (pp. 5-6). While "the logic of hypermediacy acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible" (pp. 33-34). In other words, immediacy wants to erase any traces of mediation by making the medium invisible, whereas hypermediacy wants to increase our awareness of the medium represented in other media through remediation. Although every medium wants to improve or reform older media "by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. Thus, immediacy leads to hypermediacy" (p. 17).

While the remediation of the Mother Armenia statue achieves immediacy through changing the functionality of the statue from being a physical structure to being represented in digital Instagram images, the visual nature of these media contributes to the hypermediacy of the

2

statue. As the "remediator" of the statue and as "an icon and avatar for understanding and mapping visual social media cultures" (Leaver et al., 2020, p. 2), Instagram allows and contributes to the hypermediacy of the statue by circulating its visual appropriations. So what are appropriations and what role do they contribute to the hypermediacy of the statue in the Instagram images? Mette Mortensen (2017) explains that "Appropriations of icons belong to current online visual, citational culture. Collective visual frames of reference are not only constituted and confirmed but also contested and challenged through extensive citational practices" (p. 1144). Mortensen describes icons not as universal or necessary images, "but rather as constructions in public discourses involving intense circulation across media platforms along with repeated statements about their iconic status and ability to symbolize topical tensions or conflicts in society" (p. 1143). As such, "… appropriations are central to both the *production* and *reception* of icons… [and] are instrumental in iconization processes. They confirm and consolidate the iconic status by recycling the image in question" (p. 1143, emphasized in the original text). Although Mortenson is discussing the appropriation of images, her theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing appropriations of visual icons can also be applied to the Mother Armenia statue as it takes on the qualities of an image in and through the very acts of its appropriation on Instagram to symbolize the recent events.

Therefore, through confirming and consolidating the iconic status of the Mother Armenia statue both as a physical structure and as a site of reference in the Instagram images, and because of the strong presence of the notion of motherhood in Armenian history and in the culture and politics of present-day Armenia, the visual appropriations of the statue on Instagram during the recent war led to the hypermediacy of the statue. In other words, in this specific case of image production during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, it is the remediation of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram and in the Instagram images that leads to its visual appropriations. Similarly, it is through the visual appropriations of the statue that it is possible to notice the multiple acts of representation of the statue in the digital images and acknowledge the hypermediacy of the statue as a medium.

The Mother Armenia Statue at the Core of This Thesis:

The Mother Armenia statue (Figure 1) was erected in 1967 as a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the USSR's victory in World War II. The statue was placed on an already existing pedestal that hosted a statue of Joseph Stalin from 1950 to 1962 (Figure 2). The Mother Armenia statue is located in Victory Park which overlooks the city of Yerevan. The statue was designed by Armenian sculptor Ara Harutyunyan to represent a female personification of Armenia. The Mother Armenia statue is also a depiction of "a collective image of an Armenian woman, standing guard over her native land. [Through the statue] the idea of motherhood is deeply interwoven with the idea of defending the fatherland" (Ara Harutyunyan Official Website, n.d.). The facial features of Mother Armenia are sharp and serious, she wears Armenian traditional garments and holds a battle sword in her hand that is not fully raised. It is placed horizontally and is raised only up to her torso (Figure 3).

Figure 1: The Mother Armenia Statue

Figure 2: A Statue of Joseph Stalin, Later Replaced by the Mother Armenia Statue

Figure 3: A Close-up of the Mother Armenia Statue

The process of constructing the statue in the image of an Armenian woman and a mother defending her nation was not free of challenges. After making many sketches, the sculptor finally created a sample of the current version of the monument. However, in the beginning, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which was in charge of the decision-making process, did not approve of the sample (Vasilyan, 2013). The main reason for this was the half-raised sword of the statue, which was interpreted by many government officials as a sign of aggression and a nationalist manifestation. As such, it was recommended to Harutyunyan to redesign the statue and completely lower the sword (Vasilyan, 2013). But for Harutyunyan the horizontal movement of the sword was symbolic — the sword is put in its sheath but not completely, and the readiness to draw it is also felt through its horizontal positionality. This positionality of the sword emphasizes the strength of Mother Armenia and represents the image of the Armenian woman ready to defend her family against the enemy (Vasilyan, 2013; Sovetakan Arvest, 1973). Although Mother Armenia is ready to live in peace, if need be, she will raise the sword fully and protect her nation (Nakhshkaryan, 2015). Eventually, the Central Committee approved of the current design of Mother Armenia with the half-raised sword and the statue was placed on the already existing pedestal (Vaselyan, 2013).

Through the construction of statues and monuments, governments have attempted "to naturalize gendered representations of the nation" (Till, 2003, p. 292). War memorials have reified "gendered national imaginaries" and even though women have actively participated in wars "they are often represented as mothers only (and not also warriors) in social memory practices of war…" (Till, 2003, p. 293). The erection of the Mother Armenia statue followed this tradition of conceptualizing the gendered Armenian national imaginary of Armenian women as mothers, which led to the construction of a war memorial that represents the notion of motherhood. However, the initial meaning and symbolism of monuments are not static, and war memorials are no exception. Although memorials seem to fix "history in stone," they are perhaps "cultural history's most vulnerable and adaptable hardware" (Niven, 2007, p. 44). Moreover, "memorials stand in, literally, for the political orders that built them" (Niven, 2007, p. 44). And "It is the way memorials have changed over time that reveals the intimate link between the cultural and the political" (Niven, 2007, p. 44). Therefore, as soon as political orders are changed, memorials represent values that have become rejected or despised (Niven, 2007). As such, similar to other sites of memory, "Destroying or updating [war memorials] is a cultural form of marking political change" (Niven, 2007, p. 44). Although the construction of sites of memory, including war memorials, has been mostly controlled by governments and those in power, they have no control over how individuals and social groups perceive and interpret them (Till, 2003).

The remediation of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram and its visual appropriations during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war directly reflect the dynamic and adaptable nature of monuments in general and of the Mother Armenia statue in particular. The appropriations of the statue are also an indication of how political events, in this case the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, lead to negotiations over the meaning and values that memorials and monuments represent. Both the construction and symbolism of the Mother Armenia statue have complex histories (which will be further discussed in Chapter Two), and the appropriations of the statue on Instagram during the recent war have further contributed to its significance. On the first day of the war, the Mother Armenia statue was illuminated with the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) flag (NEWS.am, 2020), and this appropriation was being posted and circulated on social media

platforms. Immediately after this event, other activist and artistic (visual) interventions of the statue started to proliferate on Instagram.

The instantaneous functionality of Instagram allowed me to engage with the images appropriating the statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war even though I was geographically remote from the armed conflict. As such, as an Armenian and a master's student in the field of media studies, and with my interest in the Mother Armenia statue as a dynamic site of constant change, I felt the urgency to respond to the proliferation of the visual appropriations of the statue on Instagram and write a thesis related to the political, cultural, and social discourses that were dominant among Armenians during and in the aftermath of the war. As such, this thesis will analyze how Armenian artists, activists, and ordinary citizens, both in Armenia and the diaspora, were appropriating the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Chapter Breakdown:

This thesis consists of three core chapters, as well as this introduction and a conclusion. Chapter One provides an overview of the literature that grounds the analysis of the Instagram images in this thesis. This includes scholarship in the fields of Armenian studies/history, the intersection of monuments and memory studies, and visual cultural studies.

Chapter Two brings together different elements necessary to the analysis of the Instagram images. First, it offers a detailed description of the history of the construction and symbolism of the Mother Armenia statue to be used as fundamental material for the in-depth analysis of the Instagram images. Second, it describes recent and contemporary understandings of the concept of Armenian motherhood starting from the 2018 Armenian "Velvet Revolution" up until the start of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Third, it situates the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram within the broader context of media production during the recent war.

Chapter Three undertakes an individual close analysis of five images chosen from the collected Instagram images. The chapter is prefaced by an outline of the research methodology of this research that includes the process of collecting and organizing the images that appropriate the Mother Armenia statue from Instagram and the framework for their analysis.

The conclusion of this thesis presents my final remarks about the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war by conducting a collective analysis of the five Instagram images.

Chapter One

Literature Review

      The literature review of this thesis will be discussed and evoked in relation to the following research questions that guide this study: How are the historical and contemporary understandings of the concept of Armenian motherhood confirmed and/or challenged in the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war? How is Mother Armenia, as a monument and a media object, remediated in its visual appropriations on Instagram? How do the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue affect its functionality as an object that produces and shapes memory? How do the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh reflect or contest its initial construction and symbolism?

      In the literature review of this thesis, I will discuss three main fields of scholarship that I will be referring to in my analysis of the Instagram images appropriating Mother Armenia during the recent Nagorno-Karabakh war. First, I will discuss the formation and development of the concept of Armenian motherhood in relation to Armenian historical events in the last century such as the *Zartonk* movement of Armenians in the late 19th century, the 1915 Armenian genocide and its aftermath, the Sovietization of Armenia in 1920, the first Nagorno-Karabakh war 1988-1994, and the establishment of the independent Republic of Armenia in 1991. Second, I will highlight scholarship in the field of the intersection of monuments and memory studies as discussed by, among others, Marita Sturken, Andreas Huyssen, Pierre Nora, and Nuala C. Johnson. Third, I will discuss different literatures within the framework of visual cultural studies to understand different concepts such as the process of remediation introduced by David Bolter and Richard Grusin, and discussed by Astrid Erll in relationship with memory, and the appropriation of visual icons examined by Mette Mortenson.

The Concept of Armenian Motherhood and Armenian History

      The concept of Armenian motherhood "is filtered through a distinct history of national struggle and genocide and upheld by Armenian women through that perception" (Beukian, 2014, p. 249). This history includes the struggle of Armenians to preserve their identity against forces of assimilation, the fear of loss of their lands, the 1915 Armenian genocide, the Sovietization of Armenia, and Armenia's war with Azerbaijan or the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Beukian, 2014). As such, the history of the formation of Armenian femininity based on motherhood "reflects the deep historical development of Armenian feminine national identity, rendering motherhood as a symbolic feature of national (self-)identity within the nationalist project" (Beukian, 2014, p. 249). However, the particulars of the notion of Armenian woman as mother were formulated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Rowe, 2009).

      Within the context of the *Zartonk* movement of Armenians, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Armenian women writers actively discussed and wrote about the role of Armenian women in Armenian society and the construction of Armenian national identity (Rowe, 2009).[1]

---

[1] The late 18th and 19th centuries are referred to as the *Zartonk* period of Armenian history, which literarily translates to 'awakening.' This period signified the engagement of Armenian intellectuals in "defining Armenian national identity, tracing the origins and vitality of Armenian culture, establishing a modern system of education, considering the institution of the family, and evaluating the role of Armenian women in all of these theories and institutions" (Rowe, 2009, p. 13).

At least nine women writers were well-known literary and intellectual figures in the Armenian literary circles at the time and made a significant contribution to Armenian literature at the turn of the 20th century (Rowe, 2009). These women writers advocated for women's education and civic participation in philanthropic work, ensuring the inclusion of women's opinions and perspectives in the Armenian press and redefining women's role in the national sphere through the notion of the "Armenian woman as mother of the nation" (Rowe, 2009, p. 24). The notion of Armenian woman as mother of the nation suggested that the status of Armenian women in the society could be considered a "political act" since women were to raise and educate children who were to become patriotic members of the Armenian nation (Rowe, 2009, p. 24). However, beyond this nationalistic vision, Armenian women expanded this perception of Armenian women as "mother-educator" to take part in political activities relevant to the Armenian people (Rowe, 2009, p. 24). Therefore, the concept of the "mother-educator" justified female education and granted women access to philanthropic organizations and the teaching profession. As such, "women's work [and women's education] was legitimized on the basis of caring for the nation and its children" (Rowe, 2009, p. 24).

While Armenian feminist women writers were redefining the role of Armenian women as "mother-educator" and advocating women's involvement in civic and political participation, the 1915 Armenian genocide, the creation of the Armenian diaspora, the collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, the establishment of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), and the Sovietization of Armenia in 1922 led to a change in how Armenian women were discussed in Armenian literature, as well as national discourses (Rowe, 2009). After the Genocide, new themes were starting to emerge in Armenian women's writings such as "fears of assimilation, intermarriage, alienation and psychological trauma as a consequence of the Armenian Genocide" (Rowe, 2009, p. 268). And yet, the role of the mother remained an important concern for Armenian women writers in post-genocide Turkey, the Armenian diaspora, and Soviet Armenia (Rowe, 2009).

However, although many survivors of the genocide were forced to leave Western Armenia, others remained in Turkey. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, the Allied powers occupied the territories within the Ottoman Empire and many Armenian survivors were able to return to their homes (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016). Those who remained in Turkey or returned to their homes were hopeful to establish an independent Armenia within the borders of Western Armenia. But with Turkey's consistent resistance, the Allies withdrew by 1923, and the Turkish Republic was established. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Armenians in Turkey had to reconstruct and preserve their national identity and their communities in the very country that tried to annihilate them (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016). Following World War I, everyone involved in writing and talking about Armenians was in agreement that the restoration of Armenianness had to have a "gendered dimension" (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016, p. 159). The Armenian leadership in post-genocide Tukey "felt the need to prove "the Turk" wrong simply by surviving as a nation" (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016, p. 159). And for the Armenian nation to survive, it had to ensure the re-establishment of the Armenian family, which included "both the big Armenian national family and its smaller units composed of individual Armenian families" (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016, p. 159).

In the process of ensuring the survival of the Armenian nation, "The women of the family, specifically the mother, had the most important role in the restitution of the family, thus of the nation… As a biological figure, the female body reproduced the new generation, those who would make the Armenian future possible" (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016, pp. 159-160). Therefore, in the

immediate aftermath of the Armenian genocide, the traditional patriarchal Armenian family continued to be crucial for the maintenance of Armenianness in post-genocide Turkey, and "Mothers remained the trunks that connected the Armenian roots with the new branches" (p. 160). Perceiving Armenian women as biological figures, however, was in tension with the efforts of the feminist women writers to promote women's education and professional advancement through the very concept of motherhood.

While the notion of Armenian motherhood was central to the survival of the Armenian nation, pregnant women and young mothers were a specific target for the Ottoman-Turkish perpetrators (Derderian, 2005). On April 24, 1915, Armenian male intellectuals were arrested and later executed, resulting in "eliminating the community's intellectual and political leadership" (Derderian, 2005, p. 2). Following their arrest, men of military age were massacred, and the remaining Armenians were deported from their homes. Since Armenian male intellectuals and men of military age were executed, women and children were deported, and Armenian women fell victim to sexual and gendered violence, which included rape, forced (re)marriage, and sex slavery (Derderian, 2005). Although many Armenian women and children were being forcibly assimilated into Ottoman Turkish families (and many others were being rescued), pregnant women, infants, and children often experienced violence as "the embodiment of biological continuity" (Derderian, 2005, p. 9). As such, although in opposite contexts, the perception of Armenian women as mothers was mutually inclusive with the notion of the survival and the continuation of the Armenian nation for both Armenians and Turkish authorities.

After the Genocide, while most of Western Armenia continued to remain a part of the Republic of Turkey, on May 28, 1918, the First Republic of Armenia was established. By late 1920, however, the Soviet Red Army conquered the First Republic, and Armenia became a part of the Soviet Union in 1922, with the creation of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, also known as Soviet Armenia.

What role did Armenian women play in the First Republic and Soviet Armenia? What kinds of transformations did the notion of Armenian motherhood undergo in these periods of Armenian history? While there is a gap of scholarship that specifically discuss the role of Armenian women in relation to motherhood in the First Republic of Armenia, it is evident that women had the right to vote and be elected to governmental positions (Ohanian, 2020). In this newly born republic, women parliamentarians played a crucial role in forming the social, political, and cultural aspects of the first republic and emphasized the active participation of women in the country's political life (Ohanian, 2020). Therefore, while suffrage for women was gradually spreading in the world at the beginning of the 20th century, women in the First Republic of Armenia already had the right to vote and get elected to governmental positions (Ohanian, 2020).

After the Sovietization of Armenia and the establishment of Soviet Armenia in 1922, the Soviet government attempted to dismantle traditionalism and involve women in serving the Soviet government and advancing the economy, which was "completely contrary to the collective values of the family life of Armenians" (Beukian, 2014, p. 250). With the family being "The most traditional institution or structure in Armenian society," it became a crucial target for the Soviets (Beukian, 2014, p. 250). However, for the societies joining the Soviet Union, these attempts of reconstructing the family were viewed as means of destroying their traditional family structure and resulted in "reinforcing traditional family and kinship norms" (Beukian, 2014, p. 250). However, there was a clear contradiction between the Soviet government's policies and

their perceptions of women (Beukian, 2014). Although the Soviet government's agenda was to ensure that women contributed to the economy, they "continued to encourage the image of women as mothers and household carers" (Beukian, 2014, p. 250). This was also true for women within the Armenian society and in the household. Although Armenian women in Soviet Armenia were involved in all governmental structures and the workforce, there were not any measures in place to change their traditional roles in the household, and this was known as the "double burden" (Cavoukian and Shahnazaryan, 2020, p. 730). As such, Armenian women living in Soviet Armenia were still being brought up in a patriarchal Armenian family, with their social identity being limited to being "a woman-mother and a woman-protector of the family" (Aslanyan, 2005, p. 194).

After the dissolution of the Russian Empire (historical name) in the aftermath of World War I, the region of Karabakh (also known as Artsakh in Armenian), along with the regions of Zangezur and Nakhchivan, were disputed between the First Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan. After the Sovietization of both Armenia and Azerbaijan and under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union gifted the land of Karabakh (when the region's majority of the population were Armenians) to Soviet Azerbaijan in 1924, as he was dividing up territories to form the Soviet Union. This decision was made by Stalin to placate Turkey, and the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (hereafter Nagorno-Karabakh) was established within Soviet Azerbaijan. After Stalin's decision, the Soviet army was in control of the region and the conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijan remained dormant for decades. However, when the Soviet Union began to collapse in the late 1980s, the conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh re-emerged. Armed conflicts over Nagorno-Karabakh escalated in 1988 and lasted until 1994. The Nagorno-Karabakh war 1988-1994, referred to as the Artsakh Liberation war by Armenians, was triggered by the Askeran clash (February 22-23, 1988), which was followed by the Sumgait pogrom (February 26 – March 1, 1988).[2] The Nagorno-Karabakh war caused thousands of lives on both sides and ended with a ceasefire in May 1994 and resulted in the de facto independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in the favor of Armenians (currently the Republic of Artsakh). Although Nagorno-Karabakh historically belongs to Armenians and Armenians are the indigenous people of its lands, the territory remains internationally recognized as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The nationalist movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in the late 1980s, the Nagorno-Karabakh War, and the period after Armenia gained its independence (1991-2010), resulted in a shift in the role of Armenian women "from protestors, soldiers, and martyrs, to home-carers, housewives, and mothers" (Beukian, 2014, p. 248). Although, as a means to resist Soviet policies, the discourse to return to traditional family values and gender roles had already begun in Soviet Armenia, it became even more prominent in the years when Armenia was struggling for independence, especially during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the late 80's and early 90's, which led to the revival of the memory of the Armenian genocide (Beukian, 2014). During the Armenian nationalist movement of the late 1980s, women, alongside men, were fighting for their desire to become independent from the Soviet Union and liberate Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan. When the Nagorno-Karabakh war started in 1988, Armenian women participated in the fighting along with men and assisted soldiers in "preparation, cooking, caring, and healing" (Beukian, 2014, p. 252). However, in the post-

---

[2] In February 1988, Armenians began petitioning for Nagorno-Karabakh to be transferred to Armenia, this resulted in a clash in the Askeran region of Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which was followed by the Sumgait pogrom that targeted the Armenian population in Soviet Azerbaijan's town of Sumgait in late February 1988.

independent and post-war period, "women returned to their traditional role in the family and home, and in many cases, this was done with their consent" (Beukian, 2014, p. 254). After gaining its independence, "Armenia underwent a resurgence of neo-traditionalism and patriarchal patterns of behavior" (Cavoukian & Shahnazaryan, 2019, p. 730). In this context, once again, the Armenian society, the government, and Armenian women themselves "[solidified] the image of the "sacred mother"" (Ohanyan, 2009, p. 231) that has been part of Armenian national and cultural tradition for centuries.

      The more recent and contemporary understandings of the concept of Armenian motherhood, particularly during and after the 2018 Armenian "Velvet" Revolution up until the start of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

Monuments and Memory Studies

      The Mother Armenia statue has a complicated and dynamic relationship with past and present political and cultural events, it is also a media object that produces and shapes memory. As such, analyzing its visual appropriations on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war through the lens of memory studies will be useful to better understand and analyze the contemporary struggles over its meaning and symbolism.

      Situating memory studies in relation to cultural studies, media studies, communication, and visual cultural studies, Marita Sturken (2008) discusses the concept of memory practices, which regards memory as a "dynamic process" rather than a concept that exists in objects, that is shaped by the practices of individuals and groups of people (p. 74). These memory practices include "memorialization, ritual, the creation of shrines, the debates and battles over the meanings of memory that emerge in the construction of memory institutions" (p. 74). Therefore, debates about a museum or a memorial and their role in society are just as important to the process of constructing memory as the physical structures themselves (Sturken, 2008). Therefore, studying these practices of memory and not only objects of memory, "highlights the very active aspect (and hence the constructed nature) of memories" (p. 74). Sturken (2008) also discusses the concept of technologies of memory "in which memories are experienced and produced" (p. 75). These technologies include but are not limited to memorials, souvenirs, bodies, digital images, and photographs.

      In his discussion of the intersection of monuments and memory, Andreas Huyssen (1993) argues that in modern societies, besides being negotiated in rituals and beliefs, memory is also shaped by "public sites of memory as the museum, the memorial, the monument" (p. 249). Huyssen explains that monuments have been "experiencing a revival of sorts, clearly benefitting from the intensity of our memorial culture" (Huyssen, 1993, p. 253). Huyssen argues that one of the reasons for the "newfound strength" of museums and monuments in the public sphere lies in the fact that they "offer something that the television screen denies: the material quality of the object" (Huyssen, 1993, p. 255). And this could also be applied to the Instagram images that remediate the Mother Armenia statue. As such, this material quality of the museum and the monument "in a reclaimed public space in pedestrian zones, in restored urban centers, or in preexisting memorial spaces [attract] a public dissatisfied with stimulation and channel-flicking" (Huyssen, 1993, p. 255).

      Along the lines of Huyssen's discussion about the relationship between monuments and memory in the postmodern stage, Nuala C. Johnson (1995) argues that "Statues, as part of the cityscape or rural landscape, act not only as concentrated nodes but also as circuits of memory"

(p. 63). Johnson highlights that the examination of both the location and the iconography of statues are important to understand their functionality in relation to memory and national political discourses. Their location "reveals the ways in which monuments serve as the focal point for the expression of social action and a collectivist politics," while their iconography "exposes how class, 'race', and gender differences are negotiated in public space" (Johnson, 1995, p. 62). Therefore, such structures or sites provide "a focus for the performance of rituals of communal remembrance and sometimes forgetfulness" (p. 294). Pierre Nora (1989) refers to these sites as *'lieux de mémoire'* or sites of memory. For Nora, these sites have three characteristics: material, symbolic, and functional. They are "simple and ambiguous, natural and artificial, at once immediately available in concrete sensual experience and susceptible to the most abstract elaboration" (pp. 18-19). As such, Johnson (2002) explains that the public ritualization of symbolic dates and events is expressed through these sites of memory and "the ongoing project of establishing individual and group identities, [becomes] symbolically coded in public monuments and their attendant ceremonials" (p. 294).

However, sites of memory are often removed, replaced, or altered due to political and/or cultural changes and struggles. Katharyne Mitchell (2003) argues that "Monuments constructed in the past can become static through time, then get re-energized as they are used ceremonially" (p. 446). Therefore, monuments frequently change from being a "passive space into a dynamic one, then back again" (p. 446). Mitchell further emphasizes that what is interesting is not just the initial construction of these sites of memory, "but the contemporary struggles over the transformation of these old markers and their associated meanings" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 448). Forest & Johnson (2002) analyze the struggles over public monuments of the Soviet era in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and argue that "Such critical junctures bring the politics of memory—and of monuments in particular—to the fore," therefore, analyzing sites of memory allow the exploration of "underlying continuities and discontinuities in national identity politics" (pp. 524-525). Along the lines of the discussion of the transformation of the symbolism and meanings of monuments, Huyssen argues that although the material quality of monuments is one of the most profound strengths of these sites, it does not guarantee their success. In sum, as Karen E. Till (2003) puts it so eloquently, "When everyday routines, political regimes, economic structures, and symbolic system are in flux, the constructed "normality" of places – and their associated identities, power relations, and social practices – may be questioned" (p. 294).

War memorials are an example of a site of memory that "partially reflect a nation's political history" (Mayo, 1988, p. 75), "offer insights into the ways in which national cultures conceive of their pasts and mourn the large-scale destruction of life" (Johnson, 1995, p. 54) and "anchor memories about past events and present societal (though contested) remembrances about these events and the nation" (Beckstead et al., 2011, p. 194). Beckstead et al. (2011) argue that war memorials, through memorializing significant events of a country or a society, contribute to understanding the past and how memories affect individuals and society. As such, war memorials, as symbolic objects, become sites of memory "where national and social myths are mapped and group and individual identities are created" (Beckstead et al., 2011, p. 196). Moreover, Beckstead et al. argue that remembering through war memorials helps in creating a collective memory of past events that is not only accessible to individuals but also to members of a group (Beckstead et al., 2011). The success or decay of collective memory relies on the continuation of shared memory, and the creation of shared memory offers powerful messages that unite groups of people that share a common past and helps them understand past events

(Beckstead et al., 2011). As such, war memorials functions as a "vital social link between the past, present, and future" (p. 196).

After World War II, war monuments were being constructed throughout the Soviet Union "as one conduit for the imposition of politically desirable memories" (Niven, 2007, p. 41). Monuments dedicated to the Soviet Motherland, to Stalin, or to the Great Patriotic War were constructed so that Soviet citizens remember the Soviet government as liberators from Nazism and support communism (Niven, 2007). In Soviet Armenia's capital city of Yerevan, the Mother Armenia statue was erected to mark the 25th anniversary of the USSR's victory in World War II. However, since the Mother Armenia statue represents the collective image of Armenian women as mothers, it becomes necessary to discuss the relationship between monuments (and war memorials) and gender, as well as motherhood. In a general sense, national monuments of men represent the nation, while female figures symbolize the motherland (Till, 2003). Therefore, through monuments and war memorials, "Gendered symbols of social identities and power relations in the landscape implicitly or explicitly construct a national "norm"" that becomes part of the everyday lives of individuals and social groups" (Till, 2003, p. 292).

Appropriation, Remediation, Memory

Since the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the recent Nagorno-Karabakh war are *visual* appropriations of the statue, it becomes necessary to situate them within the framework of visual cultural studies. However, the literatures that I discuss within this field of study are specific and appropriate to the fact that these images on Instagram appropriate a statue. As such, my discussion of the different concepts and theories in the field of visual cultural studies will be tailored to the content and specificity of the Instagram images and the significance of the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue during the war.

Huyssen (1993) argues that the success of a monument "will have to be measured by the extent to which it hooks up with the multiple discourses of memory provided to us by the very electronic media to which the monument as a solid matter provides an alternative" (p. 255). To apply this argument to the Mother Armenia statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, it becomes necessary to explain how the processes of its alteration and appropriation initially started "offline" with the illumination of the statue and then migrated to social media platforms, with a focus on Instagram.

The war started on the morning of September 27, 2020, and on the same evening, a group of young people illuminated the Mother Armenia statue with the flag of the Republic of Artsakh and the national coat of arms of the Republic of Armenia, accompanied with different hashtags such as #WEWILLWIN, #NKPeace, and #StopAzerbaijaniAgression (NEWS.am, 2020). The hashtags that were projected on the statue were already being used on social media, and images and videos of the illuminated statue were being circulated on the Internet. As such, along the lines of Huyssen's argument, the Mother Armenia statue was being appropriated both offline and online simultaneously. The interactions between the statue of Mother Armenia and its visual appropriations on Instagram were being achieved through what David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) define as remediation, which is the "representation of one medium in another" (p. 45). Bolter and Grusin assert that it is not only new media that remediate older media, "older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 15).

Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (2009) discuss the concept of remediation in relation to cultural memory and argue that "Just as there is no cultural memory prior to mediation there is

no mediation without remediation: all representations of the past draw on available media technologies, on existent media products, on patterns of representation and medial aesthetics" (p. 4). The concept of cultural memory relies on the idea that in order for memory to become collective, it has to be part of a process where memories are shared through "symbolic artifacts that mediate between individuals and… create communality" (p. 1). These "symbolic artifacts," as media, are "complex and dynamic systems" and "emerge in relation to each other and in interaction with each other" (p. 3). Therefore, this dynamic understanding of both media and cultural memory is very much in relation to remediation (Erll & Rigney, 2009). As such, "memorial media borrow from, incorporate, absorb, critique and refashion earlier memorial media" (p. 5). Furthermore, Erll (2008) uses the term remediation to explain that events are often represented over and over again, over periods of time, in different media. As such, the representation of remembered events is not connected to a single medium, rather these events can be represented in a variety of available media (Erll, 2008). Referring to the burning twin towers on 9/11, Erll explains that they quickly transformed into the single iconic image of the tragedy and have been remediated in different media ever since. However, the processes of remediation are not specific to icons and narratives, and media products and media technologies could also become objects of remediation (Erll, 2008). In the case of the representation and appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue in the digital images on Instagram, the remediation processes were based on regarding Mother Armenia both as an icon and a media object. This will be further examined in the proceeding chapters.

Bolter and Grusin (2000) explain that remediation "ensures that the older medium cannot be entirely effaced; the new medium remains dependent on the older one in acknowledged or unacknowledged ways" (p. 47). This idea of the new medium remaining dependent on the new medium can also be discussed through the lens of appropriating visual media. Mette Mortenson (2017) discusses the relationship between appropriation and visual icons and argues that "appropriations are central to both the *production* and *reception* of icons" (p. 1143, emphasized in the original text). Mortenson further explains that during conflicts and crises, "… icons invariably raise questions of power" regrading which visual representations of those events become dominant and which representations do not (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1145). As such, the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue can be analyzed through Mortenson's theoretical framework for how "appropriations construct, confirm, and contest icons" (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1142). Appropriations are not only "spin-offs of iconic images," but are also a genre on their own (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1144). However, like icons, appropriations navigate across media and digital media, particularly when they are controversial or tackle controversial topics (Mortenson, 2017). Through citing and copying, appropriations confirm the iconic status of an image "as a prevalent frame of reference and part of collective visual memory" (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1145). Moreover, citizens use appropriations to formulate personal and public positions towards political events (Mortenson, 2017). As such, appropriations have the ability "to mobilize collective memory and political imaginations to new ends" (Mortensen, 2017, p. 1145). Therefore, appropriations are not only central in the process of constructing icons but also "in offering and negotiating between competing interpretive frameworks" in regards to conflicts and crises (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1145).

Mortenson (2017) states that traditionally icons emerged from the interactions between the mainstream media and political figures. However, nowadays the iconization of images is influenced by citizens, activities, and other non-mainstream actors. As a result, there has been a change in "which images gain iconic status and how they gain iconic status" (Mortenson, 2017,

p. 1145). The appropriations of the statue of Mother Armenia during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war reflect this change from mainstream to non-mainstream influence in the process of the iconization of images, as they were produced by activists, artists, and ordinary citizens trying to raise awareness about the war and countering mis/disinformation campaigns by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Jean Burgess (2016) coins the term 'vernacular creativity' to describe "creative practices that emerge from highly particular and non-elite social contexts and communicative conventions" (p. 206). Burgess explains that 'vernacular creativity' is a "productive articulation of consumer practices and knowledges… with older popular traditions and communicative practices" (p. 207). In other words, 'vernacular creativity' indicates closing the gap "between the conditions of cultural production and the everyday experiences from which they are derived and to which they return" (p. 207). Burgess further explains that 'vernacular creativity' ensures the distinction between the everyday, as mundaneness, and "the specific dignity of everyday lives, expressed using vernacular communicative means" (p. 206).

Through the concept of 'vernacular creativity,' Burgess highlights the importance of studying the creative practices that emerge from ordinary citizens and within non-mainstream contexts. While the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war are an example of 'vernacular creativity,' how does Armenian historical memory, and specifically the different notions of Armenian motherhood, influence the creative practices in the production of the visual appropriations? Marianne Hirsch (2019) explains that descendants of survivors of powerful collective experiences such as genocide or war feel that their identities were formed by these events and they experience these collective traumas "not as memories, but as postmemories" (p. 172). Hirsch defines postmemory as "the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma or transformation of those who came before" (p. 172). The "generation after" remembers these events only through stories, images, and behaviors of individuals and groups of people among which they were born and grew up (Hirsch, 2019). Hirsch emphasizes the role of commemorative artistic practices "as the connective tissue between divergent but related histories of violence and their transmission across generations" (p. 174). She argues that "The arts offer a fruitful platform to practice the openness and responsiveness that allow such connections to emerge for the postgenerations" (p. 174).

Along the lines of the relationship between artistic practices and postmemory, Marie-Aude Baronian (2016) argues that with the continuous and persistent denial of the Armenian genocide by its perpetrators, Armenian diasporic communities, as decedents of genocide survivors, "continuously feel the need to accommodate visual evidence in order to validate their inherited historical past" (p. 303). And yet, as both evidence and a means to remember the past, there is an absence of the availability of images of the Armenian genocide, and this "insufficiency in visual evidence of the Genocide must be linked to the politics of extermination, which applied to any form of recording and which explicitly demonstrates the will to negate the killings" (Baronian, 2016, p. 304). Along with the genocidal policy of the Ottoman Empire, the recording of visual evidence of the massacres was almost completely absent, and the few available evidence was mostly destroyed or hidden (Baronian, 2016). Therefore, the lack of visual evidence of the Armenian genocide "explains the rather complex relation that the Armenian communities at large have towards images in general," one marked by a constant desire to reconstruct and vindicate the past by any visible means available" (Baronian, 2016, p. 304).

While Baronian discusses the need to produce images and visual evidence of the Armenian genocide in Armenian diasporic communities, Harutyun Marutyan (2007) examines Armenian iconography in a very specific period in Armenian history during the Karabakh Movement (1988-1990) that eventually led to the first Nagorno-Karabakh war in the early 1990s. The initial aim of the Karabakh Movement was to support the Armenian majority population in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan for self-determination. Marutyan argues that during this time the most important part of Armenian historical memory was the memory of the Armenian genocide. However, during the movement, the memory of the genocide was being transformed, and "the self-image of the grieving and pleading victim was replaced by the image of the warrior" (p. 83). During the Karabakh Movement, posters and banners were produced in large quantities and the subject of the Armenian genocide appeared in them immediately after the Sumgait pogrom (February 27-29, 1988), which Armenians compared to the 1915 genocide (Marutyan, 2007). Therefore, based on his examination of the iconography (banners and posters) of the Karabakh Movement, Marutyan states that the topic of the Armenian genocide "remained to be the principal expression of historical memory of the Armenian people during the years of the Movement" (p. 106). And yet, this memory was witnessing a change; overcoming the crises during the Karabakh movement was being associated with overcoming the struggles of the beginning of the 20th century, during and in the aftermath of the genocide Marutyan, 2007).

Chapter Two

After discussing the literatures that I will be drawing on in my analysis of the Instagram images that appropriate the Mother Armenia statue during the recent war, it becomes necessary to outline the history of the construction of the Mother Armenia statue and its symbolism that I will refer to in my analysis of the Instagram images in Chapter Three. This chapter will also discuss how the notion of Armenian motherhood was being reworked during recent political and cultural events in Armenia, starting from the 2018 Armenian "Velvet" Revolution up until the start of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. The discussion of these events and their negotiations of motherhood will be useful to better understand the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the war, as these images were produced within the framework of the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution and during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Therefore, this chapter will provide an overview of these events and their relationship with the concept of motherhood and will also situate the Instagram images within the broader framework of (visual) media production during the 2020 war.

The Mother Armenia Statue: The History of Its Construction and Symbolism

On April 24, 1965, on the 50th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, despite USSR's ban on public demonstrations, an illegal protest took place in Soviet Armenia's capital city of Yerevan to demand the official recognition of the genocide and the return of Armenian ancestral lands in Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan (Lehmann, 2015). Following the 1965 demonstrations, although the issue of returning the Armenian lands remained unsolved, "Armenians were to witness a sustained affirmation of both their national concerns and their identity as Soviet citizens in the cityscape of Yerevan" (Lehmann, 2015, p. 29). Consequently, after 1965, Yerevan became subject to a "monument-building boom that revealed not only the new presence of the genocide in Soviet Armenia's public space but also its continued, hybrid conjunction with the Soviet project" (Lehmann, 2015, p. 29). Concurrently, the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the USSR's victory in World War II over Germany emerged throughout the Soviet Union. In Yerevan, this victory was praised through the construction of the 22-meter-high bronze statue of Mother Armenia in 1967, which was also a part of the "monument-building boom" in Yerevan (Lehmann, 2015). Although the statue of Mother Armenia celebrated the Soviet Union's victory in the war, "it also nationalized it" (Lehmann, 2015, p. 29). The statue wears traditional garments that refer to archeological discoveries in the Ararat valley [one of the largest plains of the Armenian highlands] and is equipped with a sword and a shield (Lehman, 2015).

Initially, The Victory (Park) Memorial Complex (currently the Mother Armenia Memorial Complex), which consisted of a 17-meter-high bronze statue of Joseph Stalin and the 30-meter high pedestal, was built to mark USSR's victory in World War II and was opened on the 30th Anniversary of Soviet's rule in Armenia, on November 29, 1950. The pedestal was designed by Armenian architect Rafayel Israelyan and Stalin's statue was made by sculptor Sergey Merkurov, both of Armenian ethnicity. Merkurov's statue of Stalin was one of the largest Stalin monuments in the Soviet Union and "was decked with a long military coat with one hand resting underneath its lapel in a Napoleanic posture" (Lehmann, 2011, p. 481). While Israelyan's pedestal was constructed with a local tuff, a volcanic tuff that is extensively used in Armenian architecture, such as buildings and churches, especially in the capital city. The pedestal is in the

layout of Saint Hripsime church, one of the oldest surviving churches in Armenia. The church was built to honor a female Armenian saint who was believed to not have given up her Christian faith despite external pressure and threats. Years after designing the pedestal, Israelyan had confessed to his act of defiance by saying the following: Knowing that the glory of dictators is temporary, I have built a simple, 3-nave Armenian basilica (A1+, 2010). As such, Israelyan's design of the pedestal in the model of Saint Hripsime church suggests that Israelyan was not only alluding to Armenia's past before its Sovietization but also signifying Armenia's defiance against foreign aggressors.

However, after the end of Stalin's repressive reign and the criticism of his cult of personality, a decision was made in 1956 to remove all statues of Stalin in the USSR. In Yerevan, however, Stalin's statue was removed only in 1962. There were two main reasons for the late removal of the statue. First, Armenians were not necessarily in favor of removing the statue and the Armenian authorities were not under pressure to remove it quickly; second, the government did not have the necessary equipment to remove Stalin's statue until 1962 (Lehmann, 2011). After the removal of the statue in 1962, the pedestal remained empty for five years (Chilingaryan & Gurjyan, 2013). In 1967, the Mother Armenia statue was placed on the same pedestal as a female personification of Armenia and as a symbol of the notion of "peace through strength." Keeping the original pedestal that carries both political and cultural significance for Armenians has two main implications. First, the pedestal represents the Armenian Christian tradition, and second, it signifies the persistence and survival of Armenians against extinction and foreign threats.

In 1970, three years after the construction of the Mother Armenian statue, the "Armenia in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945" museum was opened inside the pedestal. In 1995, the museum came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia and was renamed "Mother Armenia" Military Museum. Today, the exhibitions inside the museum mainly reflect two themes from Armenian history: The participation of Armenians in World War II and the Artsakh Liberation War 1988-1994. While the outdoor exhibition, located around the memorial complex, mainly includes Soviet military hardware, such as tanks, aircraft, and missiles, dating from World War II to the 1980s.

In an interview with Ara Harutyunyan in 1973 in the magazine Sovetakan Arvest (Soviet Art), the sculptor explains that the meaning, the symbolism, the place, and the orientation of the statue were already decided, and there was an already existing pedestal. The statue replacing Stalin's statue was going to be the guardian of the city and the country and the symbol of the people (Sovetakan Arvest, 1973). Because it was already determined that the statue was to personify the people and the notion of the motherland (Armenia), Harutyunyan chose the image of a girl, a woman, a mother with a sword to demonstrate that personification. However, for Harutyunyan, since the statue was dedicated to the commemoration of a war, it also had to be strict and monumental, it had to express masculinity, strength, heroism, and victory (Sovetakan Arvest, 1973).

The facial features of Mother Armenia were modeled after Jenya Muradyan, whom Harutyunyan spotted at a grocery store in Yerevan (Nakhshkaryan, 2015). However, it has been noted that the statue's facial expressions are sharper and harsher than Muradyan's more delicate features (Nakhshkaryan, 2015). Mother Armenia's serious and sharp features symbolize her readiness to defend her nation and country. The Mother Armenia statue in Yerevan is not the only mother statue that represents the "personifications of mothers as countries or of countries as mothers" in former Soviet countries (Lleshaj, 2015). These monuments were built after World

War II and allow the exploration of the features of the idealized socialist women and the intersection of nationalism with socialism (Lleshaj, 2015). The ideal socialist woman was both a part of the workforce and devoted to her family. Because she was equal to men as a citizen, in governmental bodies, and in the workforce, representing her in artistic projects and objects as too feminine, both for her behavior and appearance, "would signify a deviation from the ideal of the devoted socialist woman" (Lleshaj, 2015). As such, women in socialist realist artistic works, such as paintings and sculptures, "were portrayed with androgynous or masculine features and strong voices and gestures that signified their devotion to serving the motherland" (Lleshaj, 2015). Therefore, these statues of mothers "are militarized rather than nurturing," and yet they have survived the fall of the Soviet Union due to their "linkage to the idea of the nation and the motherland" (Lleshaj, 2015). This idea of survival can be seen in Mother Armenia, which also hosts a military museum inside the pedestal that is not only dedicated to the USSR's victory in World War II, but also to the victory of Armenians in the first Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Motherhood, Militarization, and Peace-Building

In the Spring of 2018, 27 years after Armenia gained its independence from the Soviet Union, the Armenian "Velvet" Revolution took place that resulted in the toppling of the long-standing authoritarian regime and the election of the revolution's leader, Nikol Pashinyan, as Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. The main aim of the Velvet Revolution was the toppling of the oligarchic and corrupt government, and although the demand for gender equality was not an explicit goal during the protests, women with different self-perceptions about their gender role in the Armenian society participated in the protests, including feminist activists and women with more traditional views about their roles in society (Ziemer, 2019, p. 72).

In order to understand the presence of the notion of motherhood in the protests, it is necessary to discuss the effects of the discourses of militarization in Armenia on motherhood. As a highly militarized state (due to the ongoing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh), "the military as an institution assumes a central role [in Armenia]... [and] "motherhood often represents for women what soldiering represents for men—an opportunity to serve the nation" (Ziemer, 2019, p. 74). The formation of the notion of Armenian motherhood has been influenced by many historical events, such as the Armenian genocide, the nationalist movement in the late 1980s, and the Nagorno-Karabakh war. And all these historical moments and collective traumas have been connected to "conflict, war and militarism" (Ziemer, 2019, p. 74). As such, Armenian cultural traditions are also militarized and women are seen as "the nurturers of the nation" and have the responsibilities of giving birth and ensuring the growth of their nation (Ziemer, 2019, p. 74). And yet, in 2018, a large number of women became active participants in social and political activism as both organizers and participants of the revolution (Ziemer, 2019).

A very noticeable moment during the Velvet Revolution was when women used "motherhood as a resource to protest" and "mothers took to the streets with their prams" (Ziemer, 2019, pp. 84-85). As a society that perceives motherhood as an opportunity to serve the nation, its transformation during the protests from a private to a public concept was an empowering act as it was being practiced outside the domestic space and on the streets (Ziemer, 2019). As such, Armenian mothers engaged with the symbolic importance of motherhood and reworked it in a way that served and benefited the revolution (Ziemer, 2019). However, as soon as the revolution ended, "power as gendered, patriarchal and paternal returned largely to its 'normal', pre-revolutionary, state" (Shirinian, 2020, p. 198). And yet, the military clashes

between Armenia and Azerbaijan in July 2020 and the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war once again complicated the notion of Armenian motherhood and the role of women in Armenian society.

It is noteworthy to mention that on February 22, 2020, *Akanjogh*, the first feminist podcast in Armenian that was launched in Armenia a year after the Velvet Revolution, released an episode on the topic of Armenian motherhood. In this episode, through interviews and their personal experiences with living in Armenia, the hosts highlight that motherhood in Armenia is not a choice, rather it is a "non-choice" and a public debt (Anahit & Gohar, 2020). Even within the context of post-revolution Armenia, Armenian women are pressured to have children by society and their bodies are seen as public property (Anahit & Gohar, 2020). This phenomenon that *Akanjogh* discusses can be analyzed through the idea that Armenia as a nation should be understood as a "nation-family," where people have intimate encounters with strangers based on the idea that they have the same national and genealogical belonging (Shirinian, 2018). These intimate encounters within the Armenian nation-family include, among many others, strangers advising women about different aspects of motherhood based on traditional, national, and familial values (Shirinian, 2018). Moreover, the podcast episode emphasizes that for diasporan Armenians, the 1915 Armenian genocide continues to influence the notion of motherhood as being a weapon against the enemy (Turkey) who once tried to annihilate them (although this notion is becoming less and less present within diasporic communities). As for Armenians living in the Republic of Armenia, the country's continuous state of war with Azerbaijan, and with Turkey as a neighboring country, motherhood and giving birth are seen as absolutely necessary as women/mothers are to raise children that would one day join the army and fight against the enemy.

While the notion of Armenian motherhood seems to have returned to its traditional form within the Armenian society after the revolution, the new post-revolution regime in Armenia was trying to promote discourses of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan through the concept of motherhood. In July 2018, a few months after the revolution, Anna Hakobyan, the wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, launched the "Women for Peace" campaign, "aiming at a dialogue among women leaders and activists of the societies involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (Atanesyan, 2020, p. 544). The declaration of the campaign states the following: "Not all women are mothers; however, all people have mothers. Thus, women have the right to demand care and love for all generations – their motherly demand for peace" (Women For Peace Campaign, n.d.). It is evident that the campaign uses the notion of motherhood to try and achieve peace for the people involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and living in the region. However, two years after the launch of the campaign, from July 12 to 16 2020, military clashes took place between Armenia and Azerbaijan (not within the borders of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh but the Republic of Armenia).

As a response to the military clashes in July 2020, Anna Hakobyan made the following statement within the context of the "Women for Peace" campaign: "As an Armenian woman and a mother, I have to say bluntly: Armenian mothers do not fear of sending their sons to the war, moreover they do not fear of personally fighting and dying for their homeland. Nevertheless, Armenian mothers prefer peace. I am confident, Azerbaijani mothers, sisters and daughters, too" (Women for Peace Campaign, 2020). Based on the two statements made two years apart by the wife of the Prime Minister, it is apparent that the concept of (Armenian) motherhood was, once again, being reworked to fit the circumstances of the time, whether that was campaigning for peace with Azerbaijan or defending the country during a war against Azerbaijan.

Immediately after the short-lived armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in July

2020, from August 25 to 31, within the framework of the "Women For Peace" campaign that was initially promoting peace for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, 15 women of different age groups and professions from Nagorno-Karabakh participated in a one-week combat training. "The training aimed at getting acquainted with the military service life and acquiring military skills" (Zartonk Media, 2020). Moreover, on September 19, 2020, Anna Hakobyan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense, announced a country-wide voluntary basic military training program for women and young girls aged 18-27 to acquire basic military skills (HyeTert, 2020). A few days after this announcement, on September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan launched a deliberate unprovoked attack on Nagorno-Karabakh that led to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war that ended on November 9, 2020, with a ceasefire agreement signed by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, and the President of Russia.

From the above-mentioned examples, it is evident that the concept of Armenian motherhood was being negotiated in post-revolution Armenia in relation to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of government-supported projects. However, it is also important to understand the notion of motherhood on the cultural and societal levels both in Armenia and in Nagorno-Karabakh. Before discussing the concept of Armenian motherhood during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, it is necessary to discuss a few examples of the relationship between militarization and motherhood for women both in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As mentioned, in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as a response to the ongoing conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, "the discourse of 'othering' Azerbaijan (and the Turks) … necessitates an equally strong discourse of 'us' that underscores Armenianness as exclusive" (Shahnazarian & Ziemer, 2019, p. 185). As such, similar to how motherhood is perceived in Armenia, women and mothers in Nagorno-Karabakh are also "required to care for and protect their patriotic sons" (p.185). And this is how women contribute to militarism in the country: as mothers they would give birth to and raise their sons who would become soldiers and defend their nation.

In 2019, before the start of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, Kvinna till Kvinna, a foundation that promotes women's rights in conflict-affected countries in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the South Caucasus published a report about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to explore women's perspectives on the conflict and the peace-making processes. The report highlights that in the aftermath of the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia and within the context of the meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaderships, both countries have stated that it was time to "prepare the populations for peace" (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). However, this statement has proven to be baseless, and the report explores women's involvement (or exclusion) and perspectives regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the failed negotiations for peace in the region. The report explains that "Although there are a few women in combat roles and many in roles that support the military, one of the most important ways of including women in militarisation is through norms of "motherhood" (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). Militarization is rooted in the political and social aspects of both Armenia and Azerbaijan and therefore it affects how womanhood is appropriated in both societies. The concept of motherhood is "important for the production and survival of militarism," as women can relate to the military through their sons and other male relatives who are serving in the army (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). Moreover, the report further emphasizes that "Any woman can be incorporated into the process of militarization through their relationship to men, but only if their roles are as mothers (and thus producers of future combatants), providers of cooking and cleaning services for the military, or teachers who instill

patriotic values and the "truth"" (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). Therefore, women as mothers are active participants in the process of militarization in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and also Azerbaijan, through giving birth to male children and instilling nationalist and patriotic values in them as future soldiers (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). As such, "Women's reproductive labour is therefore central to militarization" (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019).

During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, on October 9, 2020, Kvinna till Kvinna published a gender brief "with the aim of keeping women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders' priorities and roles in focus" (Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). The brief was also in response to how the public discourse around the war was mostly concentrated on male-centric politics and how the media was portraying the opinions of male experts and politics on national, regional, and international levels. As such, women's expertise and needs were almost invisible in the media and the public sphere. According to this brief, during the war, the propaganda on both sides of the conflict was quite active, and there was a propagation of gendered norms of heroism portraying women as the "mothers of the nation" and "the "honour of the nation" (Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). As such, within this propagation of gendered norms, women's "care and support role to the military machinery [was] celebrated and expected" (Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). And yet, the gender brief makes the case that often times after the end of a war, the same women portrayed as mothers and the honor of their nation "find themselves forgotten and trapped in the traditional expectations of women to be selfless, demand no compensation for their losses, put up with returned "warriors" war trauma and sometimes abuse and violence, because the latter are the "heroes" of the nation" (Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). The brief is discussing the portrayal of women in the media during the war as part of the propaganda machine of both sides of the conflict, and yet the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the war were not necessarily part of that propaganda but rather they were produced by Armenian artists, activists, and ordinary citizens expressing their views and opinions about the war.

"Media War" and (Visual) Media Production During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War

Writing this thesis only a few months after the end of the war, there is a gap in scholarly resources that discuss the production of media during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war and the "media war" between Armenia/ Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. As such, I will mostly rely on non-scholarly articles and news-sources to contextualize the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue within the broader context of media production during the war.

On October 21, 2020, the Institute for the Study of Human rights at Colombia University published an article stating that after Azerbaijan and its closest ally Turkey attacked the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 27, "They also launched a media war to blame Armenians for the escalation of deadly conflict" (Gulesserian & Phillips, 2020). While launching attacks on the civil population, Azerbaijan and Turkey were also "simultaneously engaged in a war of words to whitewash their responsibility" (Gulesserian & Phillips, 2020). As such, as their military operations were gradually increasing, they were "[intensifying] their official whitewashing of events through disinformation" (Gulesserian & Phillips, 2020).

From the first day of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, and within the framework of the "media war" between Armenia and Azerbaijan, "in addition to spreading misinformation and panic-inducing news in mass media through fake and stolen accounts, generating artificial trends

on Twitter and creating staged propaganda materials, the Azerbaijani side also resorted to the method of mirror replication" (Barseghyan, 2020a). Through this "mirror replication" approach, whatever the international community and the Armenian side were accusing Azerbaijan of, Azerbaijan was "discovering" and reporting it about the Armenian side. When it comes to the production of visual media, Azerbaijan also used the same propaganda method for replicating images and "systematically mirrored the Armenian side's visuals. Sometimes, this came in the form of a response; at other times, it was outright plagiarism" (Barseghyan, 2020b). As such, Azerbaijan was duplicating war-related images and videos initially produced by the Armenian side as part of its propaganda machine.

When it comes to the Armenian side's involvement in the "media war," I would like to suggest that there were two different approaches and agendas for the production of media: The Armenian government on the one side, Armenian artists, activists, and ordinary citizens on the other side. According to the Editor-in-Chief of CivilNet, an online multimedia platform based in Armenia, during the war, the Armenian public was reluctant to perceive the truth about what was happening on the battleground. And yet, this was not entirely accidental, as "throughout the war, the [Armenian] media was instructed by the state to report information only from official sources" and they "worked under martial law restrictions and under self-censorship, with the principle of "do not cause harm"" (Harutyunyan, 2020). However, according to CivilNet, since the very beginning of the war, official state information and the information that the news platforms received from the journalists reporting from Nagorno-Karabakh "were in direct contradiction to each other" (Harutyunyan, 2020). As such, based on the claims of CivilNet's Editor-in-Chief, the Armenian people suffered tremendously as they were victims of "the immoral propaganda of their own officials," which in turn disabled journalists to do their work without any governmental restrictions and properly inform the public of the reality of the battleground and Armenia's military position (Harutyunyan, 2020).

Although the relationship between the Armenian government and media outlets was complicated during the war, Armenian artists, activists, and ordinary citizen's engagement with media, and specifically social media, was a fundamental part of the media production practices during the war. Social media platforms were being extensively used by both sides of the conflict to disseminate dis/misinformation and propaganda, but also to raise awareness about possible injustices, some of which were truly threatening to civilian life, while the remaining were fabricated and baseless. As such, "Social media played a significant role in the way that Armenians and Azerbaijanis experienced [the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war]" (Pearce, 2020). On both sides of the conflict, "Posting patriotic content, lambasting dissenters and online spats with "the enemy" allowed people to do *something* about the war" (Pearce, 2020, emphasized in the original text). Therefore, "For Armenians and Azerbaijanis, whether still in the region or part of the wider diaspora, social media provided a way to participate, and feel engaged" (Pearce, 2020). As such, although both the Azerbaijani and Armenian governments had their own agendas for producing media as part of their propaganda machines, "affective publics" both in Armenia and in the Armenian diaspora were creating and producing their "own" media, and the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the war are a part of those (visual) media production practices.

Chapter Three

Methodology:

      The research methodology for this thesis consists of two main parts: data gathering and data analysis. As such, I will first discuss the gathering process of the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue from Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, the categorization of the collected images, and the selection of five images for close analysis further in the chapter. Second, I will describe the approaches and methods of analyzing the five Instagram images.

Data gathering:

      On September 27, 2020, three days after the defense of my master's thesis proposal, Azerbaijan launched a deliberate, unprovoked attack on the region of Nagorno-Karabakh (also known as the Republic of Artsakh), that led to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. My initial thesis proposal was interested in analyzing the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue in the aftermath of the 2018 Armenian "Velvet" Revolution. However, on September 27, as I was following the news on my social media accounts, my newsfeed started being bombarded with images and videos of the Mother Armenia statue being illuminated with the Artsakh flag, as well as different hashtags related to the war. Knowing that this new appropriation of the statue could become a part of my thesis, I started documenting the social media posts of the illuminated statue My documentations of the illuminated statue will not become a part of the data/images that I will analyze in Chapter Three. Rather, this experience of encountering and documenting the illumination of the statue remains an aspect of my methodology.

      However, the (visual) appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue did not stop with its illumination on September 27 and continued throughout the duration of the war on social media platforms. I first encountered such appropriations on Instagram, and although these images were also being circulated on other social media platforms, I will focus my research solely on Instagram. Different online platforms are used by researchers for answering different research questions (Laestadius, 2016), and Instagram best fits my research as it is interested in understanding the *visual* appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the war. The reason for this is that Instagram, as an online platform, "lends itself to understanding self-representation and expression, online communities, and everyday lives as mediated through images" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 576). Therefore, I collected the data for this thesis completely from Instagram, as it is a platform that relies on and is designated to visual media.

      After encountering images on Instagram appropriating the Mother Armenia statue on the first day of the war, I started actively and deliberately searching for more similar images. My active search started on September 28 (the second day of the war) and continued until November 9 (the last day of the war). There are three primary options available for researchers to gather data from Instagram: extracting data directly from the Instagram Application Programming Interface (API), obtaining data from a third-party tool that connects to the Instagram API, or manually extracting data from Instagram's user-interface (Laestadius, 2016). For the data gathering process of this thesis, I used the third approach and manually obtained data from the Instagram user-interface. This approach is the most time-consuming and is not appropriate for gathering big data (Lestadius, 2016). However, as the thesis is interested in gathering and analyzing a small set of data/images, this approach was the best fit for my research questions and

goals. Also, through this approach, researchers can "engage with images/videos, captions, hashtags, and comments in the manner that users envisioned when they created the content" and only collect the data relevant to their research and disregard irrelevant data (Laestadius, 2016, p. 582).

As a site of research, Instagram "affords *searchability*" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 578, emphasized in the original text) that allows researchers to search and locate data specific to their research questions and topic of study. This affordance is possible through Instagram's built-in search functions for searching usernames, hashtags, locations, and so on (Laestadius, 2016). Shifting the focus to conducting research through hashtags, "one can search for, navigate, or engage with hashtags, while others can monitor, trace, and retrieve small or large datasets linked to them" (Omena et al., 2020, p. 2). Hashtags have "the capacity to represent communities, publics, discourses, or sociopolitical formations, [and] can be perceived as sociotechnical networks, both as "the medium and the message"" (Omena et al, 2020, p. 2). To search and collect images appropriating the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram, I conducted my search using five hashtags related to the war that were among the most used hashtags during the war: #armeniastrong, #artsakhstrong, #wewillwin (also the Armenian version # հաղթելուենք), #artsakhisarmenia, #recognizeartsakh. When typing in a hashtag on Instagram to search for images, one can choose to see either the "Top" or "Recent" posts under that hashtag. As I was interested in the most recent posts in relation to the ongoing war, I was observing the images under the "Recent" tab to find relevant posts under each hashtag by chronological order. As such, I retrieved the most recent images uploaded on Instagram for each of the five hashtags every day that appropriated the Mother Armenia statue in one way or another. I also used the hashtag #motherarmenia to search for images, and although this hashtag was not being actively used, I was still able to find a few relevant images.

I took screenshots of all the images that were appropriating the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram as I was encountering them and ended up collecting 51 images. I categorized these images into five sections/themes:

1. The Mother Armenia statue along with the monument We Are Our Mountains.[3]
2. Militarizing the Mother Armenia statue.
3. A neutral photo/artwork of the Mother Armenia statue, with no additional symbolic/visual indications of the war. These images almost always include a written text or are accompanied by a caption including hashtags and/or a written text, contextualizing them within the framework of the war.
4. Associating the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide through the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue.
5. The Mother Armenia statue with other Armenian national/cultural figures and/or symbols.

I will only analyze one image from each of the abovementioned categories (a total of five images) for purposes of conciseness and in-depth analysis.
Data analysis:

---

[3] The monument We Are Our Mountains was constructed in 1967 (the same year Mother Armenia was erected) is located in Stepanakert, the capital city of the Republic of Artsakh. The monument is also known as "Tatik-Papik" (Grandmother-Grandfather) as it depicts an elderly couple hewn from rock, representing the people of Artsakh. However, only their heads are visible and their bodies are in the ground, symbolizing the people of Artsakh's strong connection to their land.

According to Laestadius (2016), there are four main approaches to Instagram research: Big Data quantitative approaches, digital humanities approaches, small data combined with qualitative approaches, and direct engagement with Instagram users through ethnographic research. This study is interested in the third approach which is analyzing small samples of Instagram data (the five images selected from the collected set of images) paired with qualitative research methods, in this case, visual research methods. Each of the abovementioned approaches of Instagram data is appropriate for a specific set of research questions and goals. Analyzing small samples of Instagram data approach best fits the research questions for this study. The reason for this is twofold: First, analyzing small samples of Instagram data "can provide extremely valuable insights that could not be obtained from Big Data approaches" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 580), and second, the small data approach is useful for research "that seek to understand specific phenomena as they exist among narrow subpopulations of Instagram users rather than to facilitate generalizations to all Instagram users" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 581). Since this thesis is interested in analyzing how the Mother Armenia statue was being appropriated during the war, the small data approach combined with visual research methods is appropriate for understanding this specific phenomenon among a particular group of Instagram users.

Moreover, small sample sizes of Instagram data "offer the best opportunity to make sense of Instagram post components as a unit" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 581) rather than analyzing each component, such as image, hashtags, and text, as independent units. Moreover, analyzing these components as a unit "has been recognized as critical to fully making sense of Instagram data" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 581). There are mainly two options available for Instagram users to upload images to the platform: uploading images through Instagram's built-in photo capturing feature or uploading images not taken by their mobile phones (which is the case with the visual appropriations of the statue) such as memes, images of text, and other types of digital images. As such, each post on Instagram includes an image or a video and "involves a conscious decision about aesthetics (or the lack thereof)" (p. 575). Consequently, "Instagram has a highly visual culture that frequently conveys meaning through photographs, with text and hashtags used as needed for context" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 575). Therefore, through the small data approach, it is possible to analyze Instagram data as units that include Instagram images along with the texts and hashtags that accompany them and complete their meaning.

Images on Instagram are "highly interpretable data that are well-suited for qualitative research" (Laestadius, 2016, p. 578). This interpretation of images, as suggested by Gillian Rose (2016), can take place at four sites where the meaning of images are made: the site of production, which is where an image is made; the site of the image itself, which is its visual content; the site(s) of its circulation, which is where it travels; and the site where the image encounters its spectators or users," referred to as "audiencing" (Rose, 2016, p. 24). All four of these sites have three modalities: technological (how an image is made and how it travels and is displayed), compositional (the material qualities of an image, such as content), and social (the economic, social, and political relations surrounding an image) (Rose, 2016).

Based on the research goals and research questions of this thesis, Chapter Three will mostly focus on analyzing the sites of the images themselves, and, to a lesser extent, the sites of their production. The analysis will also take into consideration the three modalities of these two sites: technological, compositional, and social. Moreover, it is important to mention that visual content on social media, including Instagram, "are not just social media artifacts, isolated and individual, but are surrounded by debates and discussions that take on political, legal, economic, technological, and sociocultural dimensions" (Highfield & Leaver, 2016, p. 49). As such, the

analysis of the five images will be grounded in the concepts and ideas discussed in the literature review of this thesis, as well as the historical and contemporary understandings of the notion of Armenian motherhood. To be more specific, the analysis of the images will be in relation to the concept of Armenian motherhood, the intersection of monuments and memory studies, and the analytical frameworks surrounding the remediation and appropriation of visual media. As such, through analyzing the sites of the images themselves and the sites of their production, the thesis will focus on the social, cultural, and political discussions surrounding the production of these five images to understand how the Mother Armenia statue was being appropriated during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Justification of Corpus:

Through closely following social media activities in relation to the war and observing broadcast media covering the events of the war, I was able to notice that the five hashtags #armeniastrong, #artsakhstrong, #wewillwin (also the Armenian version #հաղթելուենք) #artsakhisarmenia, #recognizeartsakh were among the most used hashtags both by media outlets and social media users, particularly Instagram users. Also, the hashtags #wewillwin and #հաղթելուենք were projected on the Mother Armenia statue when it was illuminated on the first day of the war. Concurrently, these two hashtags were being actively used on social media platforms and by different broadcast media. As such, I searched and collected images from Instagram appropriating the Mother Armenia statue through utilizing these five hashtags.

After collecting 51 images appropriating the statue from Instagram between September 28 and November 9, I organized them into five main categories based on their content and thematic similarities, with each category containing 9 to 12 images. I will be analyzing one image from each of the five categories. My decision-making process of selecting the five images was informed by choosing images that explicitly reflect the category to which they belong. In other words, I have chosen one image from each of the five categories that clearly represent the theme of that specific category.

I will first analyze the five images that appropriate the Mother Armenia statue individually based on the approaches highlighted in the research methodology section of this thesis. After analyzing each image on its own, I will conclude this thesis with a collective analysis of the five images.

The Analysis of the Instagram Images

Image One: Mother Armenia as a Representation of Armenia

The first appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue that this thesis analyzes (Figure 4) is an image created by Agnes Avagyan, a Switzerland-based Armenian caricaturist. The image was posted on Instagram on October 5, 2020, and it reflects the theme of the first category of the collected images: The Mother Armenia statue along with the monument We Are Our Mountains. The image was made during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war to raise awareness about Azerbaijan and Turkey's involvement in hiring mercenaries to fight against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The image also addresses the international community's ignorance and lack of interference in the war. While there are other images among the ones that I collected that bring the Mother Armenia statue together with the monument We Are Our Mountains (mostly depicting the two figures on their own), I chose this particular image as it also includes other elements and symbols besides the two monuments. These additional components in the image

are not necessarily Armenian but are related to the war. As such, this combination of elements and figures that accompany Mother Armenia and We Are Our Mountains further complicates the unity of these two monuments in a single image.

Figure 4: Mother Armenia as a representation of Armenia

This image brings together the Mother Armenia statue, located in Armenia's capital city of Yerevan, and the monument We Are Our Mountains, located in Nagorno-Karabakh's capital city of Stepanakert. In addition to these two monuments, the image also includes other Armenian symbols: Mount Ararat (one of the most significant Armenian national symbols), an Armenian church, and the Armenian flag. While all these Armenian symbols and figures are located on the left side of the image, the right side of the image consists of non-Armenian elements, or rather symbols and figures referring to the enemy, Azerbaijan and Turkey. More specifically, it shows a fez (a headdress that used to be worn by Ottoman Turkish leaders), with a mustache and the Turkish flag sketched on it. The mustache is a reference to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's President. The fez, or Turkey under the leadership of Erdoğan, is opening the door for mercenaries and financing them to join the Azerbaijani armed forces in their fight against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The image also depicts the Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev, wearing a tie with the Azerbaijani flag. As such, the image highlights the role of Turkey in financing the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war for the Azerbaijani side, as well as the close

relationship that these two countries share, sometimes referred to as "one nation with two states." Finally, the image also includes the flag of the European Union, referring to its failure to intervene in the war and defy the war crimes committed by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

When it comes to the caption of the image, it is written in German and communicates how Turkey and Azerbaijan were refusing a ceasefire and peaceful negotiations and were trying to exile the Armenian population from Nagorno-Karabakh. It also notes how the international community was looking the other way and failing to hold Azerbaijan accountable for committing war crimes (thus the inclusion of the flag of the European Union). While the hashtags accompanying the caption and the image include, among others, #armenia, #artsakh, #artsakhstrong.

The apparent interpretation of the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue alongside the monument We Are Our Mountains is the unity of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh both in terms of ethnic belonging and fighting together against the enemy during the war (as the Armed Forces of Armenia fought side-by-side with the Artsakh Defense Army). However, besides the depiction of that unity, another interesting element in this image is how each country is represented through different symbols and figures. Azerbaijan is represented through its president Aliyev, Turkey through its president Erdoğan and the fez (thus the association with the Ottoman Empire), Nagorno-Karabakh through the monument We Are Our Mountains, and Armenia through the Mother Armenia statue. However, given the history of the construction of the statue as the guardian of the nation, the symbol of the people, and the (female) personification of Armenia, its representation (or personification) of Armenia in this image is perhaps not that surprising. It is interesting to note that the representation of both Azerbaijan and Turkey are quite masculine, as they are represented by their male leaders. But that is not the case for Armenia, nor Nagorno-Karabakh. While analyzing the reasons for the absence of the (male) leaders of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in this image is beyond the scope of this research, the strong presence of Mother Armenia requires some further interpretation.

Besides its representation of Armenia as a participant in the recent war, the strong presence of the Mother Armenia statue in this image is achieved through the remediation of the statue on Instagram, as well as its appropriation by the creator of the image. Through remediation, the new medium, the Instagram image, remains dependent on the older medium, the Mother Armenia statue. The image remediates the statue but also depends on it to construct and convey its visual narrative. In other words, it is through the remediation of the statue on Instagram that the image is able to portray Mother Armenia as a representation of Armenia and its involvement in the war. The remediation of the statue on Instagram also leads to the appropriation of the statue in the image and to its contribution in constructing the meaning of the image. The visual appropriation of the statue in the image contributes to the iconization of the statue, as appropriations are fundamental to the production and reception of visual icons. This iconization of the statue both as a physical structure and within the context of the image allows the hypermediacy of the statue as the viewer becomes aware of the representation of the older media in the new digital media/image. The hypermediacy of the statue in this image and its visual appropriation on Instagram during the recent war allow the examination of which representations or symbolisms of the statue are confirmed or contested in this particular image. Also, with the hypermediacy of a statue that represents the figure of Mother Armenia, it becomes possible to examine how the image negotiates the concept of Armenian motherhood through appropriating the statue and confirming its iconic status as a prevailing site of reference and part of collective (visual) memory (Mortensen, 2017).

Initially, at the time of designing and constructing Mother Armenia, the sculptor of the statue, Ara Harutyunyan, chose the image of a woman and a mother with a sword to demonstrate the personification of Armenia. However, he was determined that the statue had to also represent masculinity, strength, and victory, as it was dedicated to the commemoration of a war victory. And these characteristics are evident in her facial features, her sword, and her posture. Do these masculine features and characteristics of Mother Armenia contribute to the statue's appropriation in this image as a representation of Armenia alongside the male leaders of its enemies? Or is it the statue's association of motherhood with the idea of defending the nation that influences this specific appropriation? It is evident that through the Mother Armenia statue, the image depicts Armenia as an active participant in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war and as an ally to Nagorno-Karabakh. As such, it contributes to the placement of the notion of motherhood and the figure of Mother Armenia at the core of the armed conflict. Shifting the focus to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, during the First Nagorno-Karabakh war of the late 1980s and early 1990s, besides their traditional roles as mothers and caregivers, Armenian women were also protestors and soldiers. Therefore, it is impossible not to notice the parallels of the perception of the role of Armenian women/mothers during the first Nagorno-Karabakh war and in this image that depicts the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Appropriations, however, "are instrumental not only in constructing icons but also in offering and negotiating between competing interpretive frameworks in relation to topical conflicts, which are uncertain, unsettled, and require the public to take a stand" (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1145). Although this image was created in regards to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the recent war, its appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue becomes connected with what the statue represents. As such, this particular appropriation is negotiating between different interpretations of the concept of Armenian motherhood and the image of the Armenian mother.

How does this appropriation negotiate the notion of motherhood? Generally, national monuments of men often represent the nation while monuments of female figures represent the motherland (Till, 2003). And yet, this image further complicates this claim. While the physical statue located in Yerevan most certainly represents the motherland or Mother Armenia (Մայր Հայրենիք), the appropriation of the statue in this image obscures that certainty. In this specific appropriation of the statue, does Mother Armenia represent the Armenian nation or the motherland/motherhood? Or does it represent both of these notions? Are these two concepts necessarily mutually exclusive in this image or are they deeply intertwined? As a statue that represents the collective image of Armenian women as mothers, its appropriation to represent Armenia, as a nation, a country, and the motherland, depicts the active role of Armenian women during collective crises or traumas throughout Armenian history. In relation to this observation, and as Forest & Johnson (2002) argue, critical events "...bring the politics of memory—and of monuments in particular—to the fore," therefore, studying sites of memory allows the understanding of "underlying continuities and discontinuities in national identity politics" (pp. 524-525). In this case, the national identity politics is Armenian motherhood, which in times of war and other crises becomes a symbol of guarding the nation and fighting against the enemy.

Image Two: Militarizing Mother Armenia

The second image (Figure 5) that this research examines was posted on the Armenia-based Instagram art page "lemur.000," on October 1, 2020. Simply put, the image portrays the statue of Mother Armenia as it is, without changing her features or adding other elements,

figures, or symbols, except for replacing her sword with a rifle. The image is accompanied by a caption written in Armenian, #հաղթելուենք, which translates to #wewillwin, and it also includes other hashtags such as #artsakhstrong and #armenia. Given the history of the construction of the statue, its initial symbolism, and the relationship between militarization and Armenian motherhood, this specific appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue needs to be analyzed in relation to the historical and contemporary notions of militarizing Armenian motherhood. Moreover, its examination should be in close relationship with the initial meaning behind her sword and its positionality and how its replacement with a rifle further complicates the idea of militarizing Armenian motherhood and its role in defending and guarding the nation in times of wars and other collective crises.
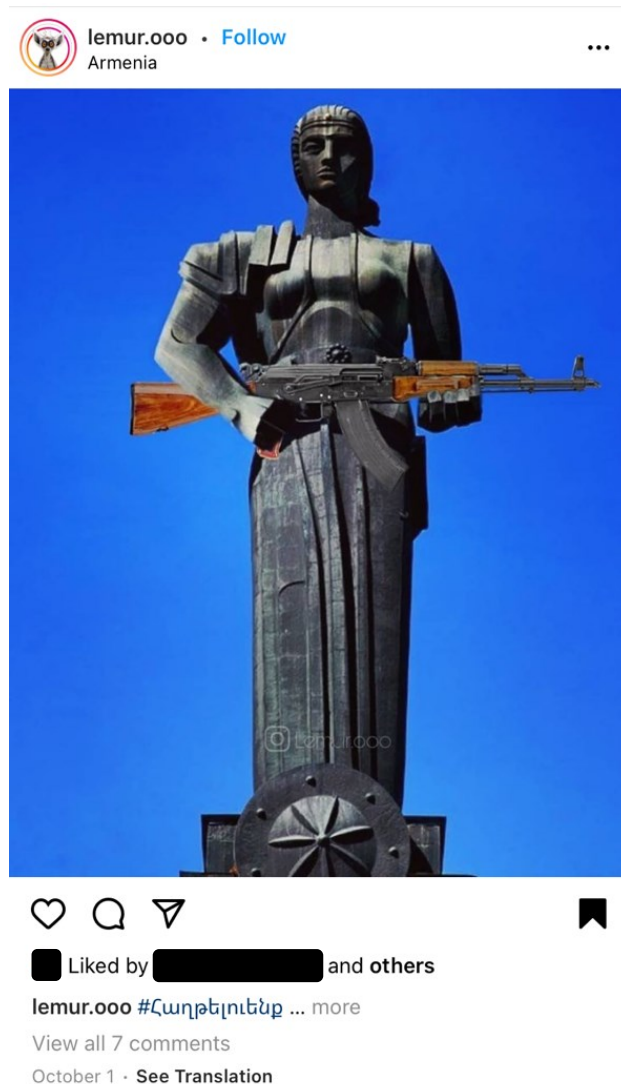
Figure 5: Militarizing Mother Armenia

Looking at this Instagram post as a unit (image, caption, hashtags), it becomes evident that, similar to Image One, the Mother Armenia statue is representing Armenia's involvement in the war as an ally to Nagorno-Karabakh, even though Azerbaijan's attacks were directed towards the region on Nagorno-Karabakh and not within the borders of the Republic of Armenia.

31

However, unlike Image One, the appropriation of the statue in this image does not necessarily indicate that the statue is representing Armenia as a country, as a nation, or as the motherland, but rather it communicates the idea that the Armenian side will win the war. As such, in this specific appropriation, Mother Armenia is representing the notion of the potential victory of Armenians in the war rather than Armenia itself. Also, as opposed to Image One, this image does not include other symbols or figures alongside the statue (except for the replacement of the sword with a rifle). As such, the processes of the remediation and the appropriation of the statue in this image are perhaps a bit less complicated than in Image One. In other words, the hypermediacy of the statue in the digital image becomes apparent from the very start as the statue is portrayed on its own. The representation of Mother Armenia in this new medium is very much dependent on the older medium, the statue. While the appropriation of the statue holding a rifle contributes to the iconization of the statue as a significant site of reference for creating an image in relation to the recent war. As such, this particular appropriation, both leads to the iconization and the hypermediacy of the statue, and thus allows for the interpretation of the meaning and symbolism of Mother Armenia holding a rifle instead of her half-raised sword.

The most complex aspect of this appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue is the replacement of her sword with a rifle. The placement and positionality of the sword at the time of the construction of the statue was criticized and widely debated until Ara Harutyunyan received approval from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The half-raised sword of Mother Armenia and its horizontal positionality had a significant meaning for Harutyunyan: Mother Armenia does not draw her sword, but she does not completely put it in its sheath either, indicating her readiness to fight and defend her nation if needed. This symbolic positionality of the sword is also a representation of the collective image of Armenian women and their readiness to defend their family and nation against the enemy.

The replacement of Mother Armenia's sword with a rifle in this image directly communicates the idea of Mother Armenia defending her nation against Azerbaijan and Turkey during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. However, the relationship between militarization and motherhood in Armenian society is not always associated with women's direct involvement in the war and physically fighting against the enemy. The militarization of motherhood is often associated with Armenian women's role and responsibility to bear children and raise them as Armenia's future soldiers who would defend their nation against the enemy. However, although this understanding of Armenian motherhood has been accentuated in Armenian society, especially since Armenia's independence in 1991, in the aftermath of the 2018 "Velvet" Revolution, many government-supported initiatives started encouraging military training for Armenian women and young girls. These initiatives only existed for approximately two years before the start 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, as such their continuity and influence on Armenian women's involvement in the military (as well as on the notion of Armenian motherhood) remains to be seen. Through the replacement of Mother Armenia's sword with a rifle in this image, it becomes evident that this specific appropriation does not necessarily reflect the long-standing and most present notion of the militarization of Armenian motherhood, that is Armenian women's national role and responsibility to give birth to future soldiers. Rather it indicates an active involvement of women/mothers in the war by actually holding weapons and engaging in warfare.

Contemporary negotiations over the transformation of sites of memory and the meanings associated with them make them remarkable objects of analysis (Mitchell, 2003). Although statues and monuments represent the political regimes that construct them, and they often get

removed, replaced, or altered once these regimes topple, the statue of Mother Armenia has never physically undergone any transformation after the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent Republic of Armenia in 1991. Since this image appropriates the Mother Armenia statue by replacing her sword with a rifle, and thus communicates discourses of war and militarism (of Armenian motherhood), it becomes necessary to conclude the analysis of this image by considering Mother Armenia as a war memorial. Mother Armenia as a war memorial partially reflects Armenia's political history, offers insights into how it mourns the destruction of life in a time of war, and brings forward memories about events in (Armenian) history, as well as contemporary societal and cultural remembrances about these historical events. Additionally, Mother Armenia, as a war memorial and a symbolic object, is a site of memory "where national and social myths are mapped and group and individual identities are created" (Beckstead et al., 2011, p. 196). After the fall of the Soviet Union, Mother Armenia had not been physically transformed and was able to survive in post-Soviet Armenia, possibly because of the national ideologies and symbols that it demonstrates. However, its remediation and appropriation in this digital image on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war stands for its symbolic and "online" transformation to represent Armenian's involvement in the war and the militarization of Armenian motherhood.

Therefore, as a war memorial that hosts a military museum and was constructed to celebrate the victory of a war, its appropriation in this digital image to reflect the notion of militarizing Armenian motherhood is not necessarily in direct contrast to the history of its construction. And yet, this appropriation of the statue is very much different from its initial symbolism. While this appropriation reflects the complex relationship between militarism and Armenian motherhood, it also challenges the long-standing and persistent understandings of the role of Armenian women in Armenian society in regards to militarism through portraying them as active participants in the war.

Third Image: Mother Armenia as a Symbol of Peace

The third image (Figure 6) that this thesis examines is an image that was created to counter and challenge another image. It was posted on Instagram on October 25, 2020, on the Instagram page of Vahan Atanyan, an American-Armenian artist, who designed the image. This image reflects the theme of the third category of the collected images: A neutral photo/artwork of the Mother Armenia statue, with no additional symbolic/visual indications of the war, but accompanied with a written text and/or a caption, to contextualize the image within the framework of the war. The image consists of an artwork depicting the Mother Armenia statue and the hashtag #DEFENDARMENIA. Looking at this image alone, it is clear that its message is related to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. However, it is not possible to fully understand the meaning and reason beyond this specific appropriation of Mother Armenia without examining this Instagram post as a unit (image, caption, hashtags).

The Instagram image is accompanied by a video and a caption, two fundamental components that complete its meaning. In the video, the illustrator and another supporter of this project explain that this image was created as a response to an image depicting an Ak-47 rifle (also known as the Kalashnikov) with the message "Defend Armenia." In their opinion, the Ak-47 should not be associated with Armenia and Armenians during the war, as it represents neither peace nor Armenia and gives the wrong impression of the will of the Armenian people and what they are trying to achieve—peace. As such, they have replaced the Ak-47 with the statue of Mother Armenia as it represents Armenia and the idea of "peace through strength." The caption

reflects the same ideas articulated in the video and further explains that this new design to communicate the message "Defend Armenia" through Mother Armenia is a better representation of Armenia and the Armenian people's will to achieve peace. In simpler words, as mentioned in the caption, "The Mother Armenia Statue is located on a hill overlooking Yerevan, it is seen as a guardian over the Armenian capital and this is what we as a team believe best fits "Defend Armenia.""
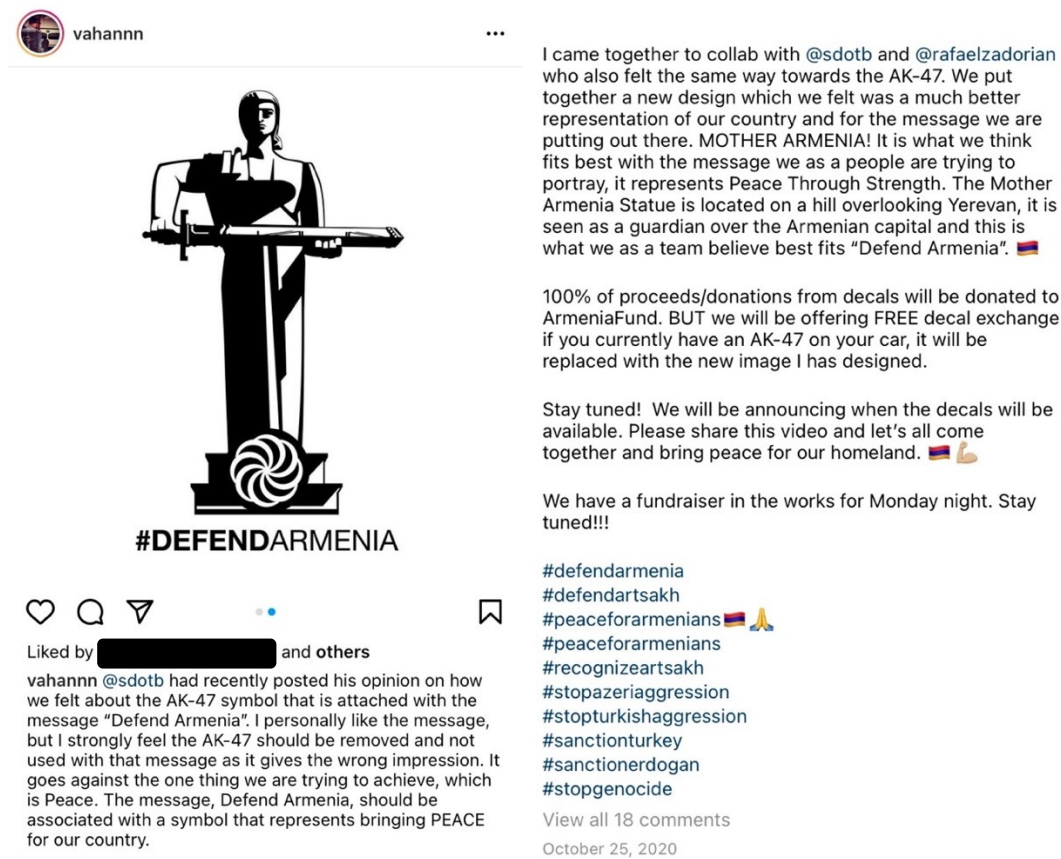

Figure 6: Mother Armenia as a symbol of peace

Communicating the notion of peace through appropriating Mother Armenia is an interesting negotiation over the meaning and symbolism of the statue. It is also a very different depiction of Mother Armenia compared to the two images analyzed in this chapter thus far. In Image One, Mother Armenia is a representation of Armenia and its active involvement in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. In Image Two, Mother Armenia's sword is replaced with a rifle, an indication of the militarization of the statue and the notion of Armenian motherhood. In this image, however, Mother Armenia is appropriated alongside the message "Defend Armenia" to represent peace and depict the will of the Armenian people to achieve peace. Those involved in creating this image have embraced the idea that Mother Armenia represents the notion of "peace through strength" and therefore she should be the one represented in a project communicating the idea of peace during the war. While it is true that Mother Armenia represents the idea of

achieving peace through strength, that message is not a simple one. And when combined with the other symbolisms of the statue, that idea becomes complicated even further.

Traditionally, the Mother Armenia statue represents a collective image of Armenian women and connects the notion of Armenian motherhood with guarding and defending the nation. Her half-raised sword indicates that although Mother Armenia is ready and wants to live in peace, she is ready to fully raise her sword and protect her nation. She is also the guardian of the city and the country and the symbol of the Armenian people. She also expresses masculinity, strength, heroism, and victory. Her sharp and serious features are a symbol of her readiness to defend her nation and country. Although the narrative of peace is symbolized in the iconography and symbolism of Mother Armenia, especially through the positionality of her sword, her features and other symbolisms also suggest that she is very much ready to engage in war.

This specific appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue in this image to represent peace is a selection of a singular aspect of what the statue symbolizes, and yet it is a unique appropriation in a time of war when Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh were under attack by the enemy. In 2018, a similar narrative of achieving peace through the notion of motherhood in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was being communicated by the wife of Armenia's Prime Minister through the "Women For Peace" campaign. As a response to the military clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, her campaign released a statement indicating that although Armenian mothers prefer peace, they do not fear to send their sons to war and they are personally ready to fight and die for their country. However, in the aftermath of these clashes, 15 women from Nagorno-Karabakh participated in a one-week combat training within the framework of the "Women For Peace" campaign. Also, a few months later, the wife of the Prime Minister and Armenia's Ministry of Defense announced a country-wide voluntary basic military training program for women and young girls.

Comparing the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue during the war to symbolize peace to actual events and projects in Armenia in relation to motherhood and peace, it becomes evident that this appropriation does not necessarily reflect the reality of the situation in Armenia. Although motherhood seems to be negotiated to promote peace when an actual war is not taking place, during armed conflicts, this negotiation of the notion of motherhood takes a shift to promote a different agenda. Although works of art do not need to reflect the agendas of government-related initiatives related to this complicated relationship between Armenian motherhood and militarization, this specific appropriation of the statue of Mother Armenia allows for the exploration and questioning of the different ways that the notion of Armenian motherhood gets negotiated time and time again to fit specific agendas both in times of peace and war.

As previously mentioned, statues, as sites of memory, may be transformed during critical events and their associated meanings get questioned and altered. This appropriation of Mother Armenia achieves exactly that— it negotiates the initial meanings and symbolisms of the statue of Mother Armenia to fit the discourse of promoting peace during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. And yet, as argued by Kvinna till Kvinna's gender brief, during the war, there was a propagation of gendered norms of heroism portraying women as the "mothers of the nation" and the "honour of the nation" (Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). In this specific image, this claim made by Kvinna till Kvinna is a bit more complicated. Mother Armenia already represents the "mothers of the nation," however, her appropriation to symbolize peace puts her and the notion of motherhood in the position of being responsible for achieving peace, when in reality women's actual involvement in the war and potential peace negotiations was quite limited

(Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al., 2020). Therefore, although the image counters the Ak-47 and attempts to associate the message "Defend Armenia" with peace through the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue, it reflects the stereotypical portrayal of women in the media during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war as the mothers and protectors of the nation, when in fact that portrayal could not have been further away from the reality.

Fourth Image: Mother Armenia, the Armenian Genocide, the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War

      The fourth image (Figure 7) that this thesis analyzes reflects the theme of the fourth category of the collected images: associating the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide. The image was created by Steve Altan, a New York-based artist of Armenian descent, and was posted on his Instagram page "rockbeatspaper" on November 5, 2020. The image includes the following elements, figures, and symbols: an illustration of the Mother Armenia statue, a portrait of a woman, pomegranates (an Armenian national symbol), and old newspapers clippings of articles reporting the 1915 Armenian genocide (one of these articles is about Aurora Mardiganian, an American-Armenian author, actress, and a survivor of the genocide, whose face is partially visible in the upper left corner of the image). The caption of the image simply reads "Mother Armenia." Therefore, looking at this image either independently or with the caption, its relevance to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war is not explicit. However, the hashtags that accompany the image and the caption, such as #defendartsakh, #artsakhstrong, #artsakhisarmenia, reveal the purpose of creating the image. Also, the fact that it was posted on Instagram during the war is another indication of its association with the war.

      And yet, based on these observations, the association of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide is not very clear. Looking at the image on its own, it seems as if the image simply reflects the events of the genocide and is simply a commemorative work of art. However, the date that the image was uploaded to Instagram and the other hashtags that accompany the image makes the association of the genocide with the war apparent. The hashtags that indicate this association include #armeniangenocide, #stopgenocide, #lestweperish, and so on. Since the thesis is interested in the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue during the war, it becomes necessary to shift the focus of the analysis of this image to the statue itself. What does the Mother Armenia statue represent in this image that associates the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide? How is it portrayed and how does it negotiate the notion of Armenian motherhood?

      Since the topic of the Armenian genocide is very present both in this image and the hashtags that accompany it, it also becomes crucial to analyze the Instagram post in relation to the notion of Armenian motherhood during and in the aftermath of the genocide. Before the genocide, the role of Armenian women in the national sphere was being redefined through the concepts of "Armenian woman as mother of the nation" and as "mother-educator" (Rowe, 2009). However, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the notion of Armenian motherhood witnessed a shift to represent the biological continuation of the Armenian nation and Armenian women became the biological figures who would produce the future generations of Armenians and ensure the future of the nation (Ekmekçioğlu, 2016). During the recent Nagorno-Karabakh war, Armenians were fearing that another massacre could take place against the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh. Similar to how the memory of the 1915 genocide was revived during the first Nagorno-Karabakh war of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Marutyan, 2007), the

recent Nagorno-Karabakh war was also being associated with the memory of the genocide. In this image, the association with this memory is achieved through the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue that represents the collective image of Armenian women and Armenian motherhood, ready to defend and guard her nation in times of crisis. As if it is her role and responsibility to come forward and stand up against the existential threat from the enemy.
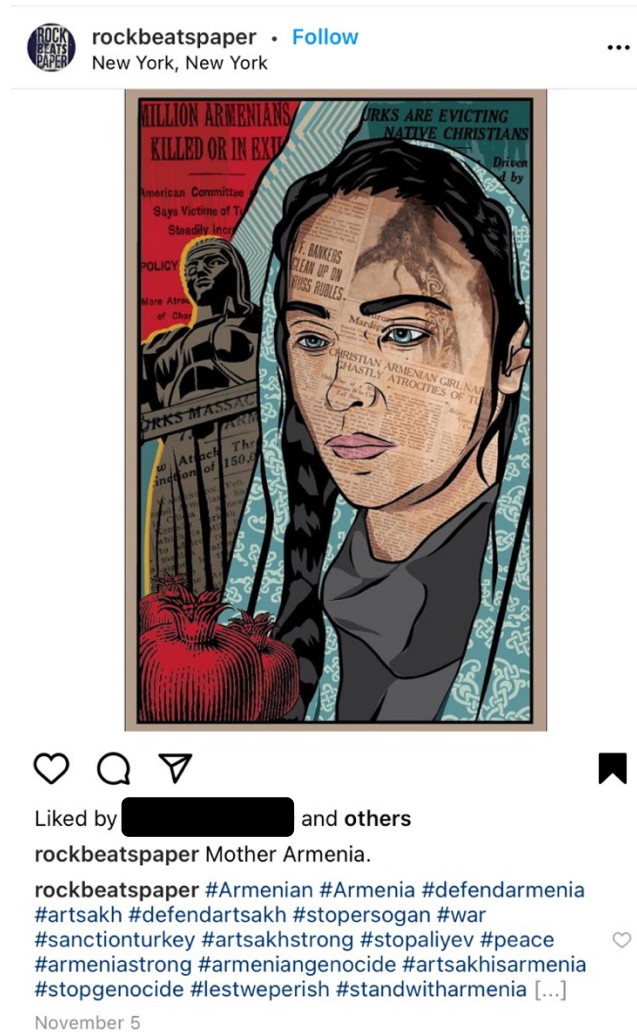

Figure 7: Mother Armenia, the Armenian Genocide,
the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war

When it comes to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenian women are involved in the military machinery mostly through their roles as mothers for future soldiers. The inclusion of the Mother Armenia statue in an image that associates the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide and communicates the fear of another possible genocide directly reflects the notions of militarizing Armenian motherhood, perceiving mothers as guardians of the nation, and identifying women as the biological figures who would ensure the future of the Armenian nation. As Marutyan (2007) argues, during the first Nagorno-Karabakh war and the Karabakh Movement, the most important part of Armenian historical memory was the memory of the Armenian genocide. And this memory of the genocide was being reflected in the

iconography (posters and banners) of these two events. And yet, the memory of the genocide was being transformed from grieving and self-victimization to fighting and being a warrior against the very same enemy. However, is that transformation of the memory of the genocide also reflected in this image? Are the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue and its associated understandings of historical and contemporary notions of Armenian motherhood challenge that transformation? To some extent, yes. The inclusion of the Mother Armenia statue, along with the newspaper clippings that narrate the events of the genocide, do bring forward discourses of victimization and fear. But at the same time, through communicating the notion of Armenian motherhood, the image stands as a reminder of the fundamental role of Armenian mothers in ensuring the continuation of the nation despite threats of genocide during the war.

Finally, does this image reflect the Armenian diaspora's continuous need to produce visual evidence of the genocide to validate their historical past against Turkey's persistent denial of the genocide (as argued by Baronian (2016))? The image certainly reflects that need and desire. Moreover, the image was created during another existential crisis for the Armenian people, the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, and reflects the association of the war with the genocide through a visual work of art. Therefore, this close relationship between the production of visual materials and the denial of genocide seems to be present in the Armenian diaspora even beyond the genocide that took place more than a hundred years ago. Also, the production of images related to the genocide is being adapted to new and emerging crises for the Armenian nation and is being modified to meet the present needs and struggles of the Armenian nation.

Image Five: Mother Armenia and Armenian Historical Male Figures

The fifth image (Figure 8) that this thesis examines reflects the theme of the second category of the collected images: The Mother Armenia statue with other national/cultural figures and/or symbols. In this image, the Mother Armenia statue is portrayed with other Armenian historical national/cultural figures, including writers, musicians, and heroes — all of whom are men. The historical figures portrayed in this image include Mesrop Mashtots, a linguist and the inventor of the Armenian alphabet; William Saroyan, an American-Armenian novelist; Sasuntsi Davit or Davit of Sassoun, the main hero of Armenia's national epic Daredevils of Sassoun; Komitas, an ethnomusicologist, a priest, and a survivor of the Armenian genocide; Davit Anhaght or David the Invincible, a 6th century philosopher; Khachatur Abovyan, a 19th century writer; and Yeghishe Charents, an Armenian poet. All these Armenian historical figures are holding weapons in their hands, and most of them have never been soldiers or fighters. Komitas' musical instrument, for example, is turned into a gun. The caption of the image is written in Armenian and reads "we will definitely win," a reference to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. While the hashtags include the names of some of the figures portrayed in the image, as well as #մայրհայաստան (#motherarmenia) and #peaceforarmenians. I was able to find this image through searching with the hashtag #հաղթելուենք (#wewillwin) on Instagram and it was posted on a public Instagram page. However, I am not completely certain if the page that posted this image is also the creator of the image. Since interacting with Instagram users was not a part of the research methodology for this thesis, I decided not to contact the page and ask for confirmation.

During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, the Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian armed forces were outnumbered by the Azerbaijani army (plus mercenaries), which was financially and militarily supported by Turkey. In other words, the Armenian side was not as equipped with

weaponry as was the Azeri side. The portrayal of Armenian historical figures, artists, and heroes holding weapons could be an indication that Armenia could also fight with and through its culture and history. This portrayal could also suggest the continuation of the Armenian cultural heritage and its presence during the crises of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. And yet, all these important figures from Armenian history included in this image are men. Mother Armenia is quite literally hosting and carrying them towards their fight against the enemy. Unlike all the male figures, however, Mother Armenia is not holding a gun and her half-raised sword is still in its original position and is not fully raised. Is she also joining all the historical figures in their fight or is she simply guiding them to the war?

Figure 8: Mother Armenia and Armenian historical male figures

Similar to the previous images, this digital image relies on the remediation of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram to complete its meaning. However, while Mother Armenia, as a statue and a medium, is remediated in the image, are the other historical figures also remediated alongside the statue? Or is their presence in the image achieved through the appropriation of the statue? Given that these historical figures are not media, at least not in the same way that the physical statue of Mother Armenia is a medium, their presence in this digital image and their

contribution to the visual narrative of the image is achieved through the appropriation of the statue. In other words, through the appropriation of the statue, the iconic status and presence of Mother Armenia in the image are confirmed. Since this appropriation/iconization is achieved through and is complemented by the presence of these historical figures, it becomes necessary to analyze their contribution to the narrative of this image, how they confirm or challenge the symbolism of Mother Armenia, and how they negotiate the notion of motherhood in this particular image.

      I have deliberately left the analysis of this image to the last, because I want to examine its appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue in relation to the previous four images, as her representation in this image is quite different from the other four images. In other words, in this image, Mother Armenia seems to have a secondary role, rather than being at the core of the meaning of the image (as was the case with the other four images). The reason for this is that although she is carrying all these figures, her actual involvement and participation in the war is not very evident. In Image One, although there are several other elements in the image, Mother Armenia represents Armenia as a country and a nation very much involved in the war. In Image Two, her sword is replaced with a rifle, an indication of her readiness to go to war. In Image Three, she is portrayed as a symbol of the Armenian people's will to achieve peace. In Image Four, the statue is appropriated to associate the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war with the 1915 Armenian genocide, and although there are other components in the image, her presence is quite dominant. In this image, however, although her portrayal expresses strength through carrying all these historical male figures, it seems like she is only a messenger and a carrier. She is taking them to war, but she is not in a position to fight herself. Her sword is not fully raised, and she is not holding a gun as the other figures.

      How does the hypermediacy of the statue, achieved through its remediation and appropriation on Instagram, challenge this secondary role that Mother Armenia plays in this image? Does the hypermediacy of the statue in the digital image necessarily mean its dominance over the other aspects and components that make up the image? Or is it through the very process of hypermediacy that Mother Armenia is able to construct any meaning at all? Even though she does not seem to be sufficiently equipped to engage in war herself, she is the one carrying all these male figures to war. As such, it becomes evident that hypermediacy is not necessarily related to what the older medium represents or what role it plays in the new medium as long as the new medium remains dependent on it "… in acknowledged or unacknowledged ways" (Bolter & Grusin, 2020, p. 47). Therefore, in terms of negotiating the concept of motherhood, this particular appropriation of the statue seems to be assigning motherhood a secondary role in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to the recent war, thus reflecting the most present perception of motherhood in Armenian society (and also in Azerbaijan) in regards to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that is the militarization of motherhood (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). Moreover, the report published by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation about women's involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict suggests that, both in Armenia and Azerbaijan, women are included in the military machine through their relationship with men as mothers, as providers of cooking and preparing for the military, and as teachers raising patriotic sons (The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2019). As such, this principle perception of motherhood contributes to my analysis of the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue in this image. Mother Armenia is portrayed as the hostess and the carrier of the historical men figures holding guns and ready to go to war, but she herself is not equipped to engage in warfare.

Conclusion

A Collective Analysis of the Instagram Images

To conclude this thesis, I will analyze the five Instagram images collectively based on their common characteristics and in relation to the main concepts and ideas outlined in the literature review of this thesis.

First, as mentioned previously, Mother Armenia replaced a statue of Joseph Stalin, the very person who gifted the land of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan when dividing up territories to form the Soviet Union. This very act by Stalin had vastly contributed to the conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenians and Azerbaijan. As such, the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue in images created as a response and during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war are an interesting intervention of the statue and its history of construction as a replacement of a statue of Stalin. While this specific historical detail might not have been a deciding factor for creating these images, as a historical memory it is nonetheless an important aspect of the collective analysis of these images that appropriate Mother Armenia.

Marita Sturken (2008) argues that memory is a "dynamic process" and its practices include "…the debates and battles over the meanings of memory that emerge in the construction of memory institutions" (p. 74). These debates and battles over a meaning of a monument, a memorial, or a statue are as important factors in constructing memory as the physical structures themselves (Sturken, 2008). As such, analyzing these practices of memory allows the exploration of the "active aspect" and "constructed nature" of memories (Sturken, 2008, p. 74). This thesis regards the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue in the digital images on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war as memory practices and as debates over the meanings of memory that have emerged in the construction of Mother Armenia and its replacement of Stalin's statue. As a "technology of memory," "in which memories are experienced and produced" (Sturken, 2008, p. 75), the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue has allowed the analysis of the digital images during the war in relation to historical memories of Armenians and the different negotiations over the meaning of Armenian motherhood. While Sturken's concept of "technologies of memory" has informed the basic analysis of the appropriations of the statue during the war, Andreas Huyssen's (1993) discussions about the relationship between monuments and memory have also influenced their examination. According to Huyssen, the strengths of monuments and their revival in modern societies has to do with the fact that they offer materiality, something that the television (computer and mobile phone) screen denies. Although the availability of the visual appropriations on Instagram is possible through the computer or the mobile screen, the remediation of the statue on Instagram reflects Huyssen's argument about the significance of the material quality of monuments. However, despite this, their success is not guaranteed (I will discuss this idea further in the proceeding paragraphs). Pierre Nora (1989) refers to these "technologies of memory" as 'lieux de mémoire' or sites of memory, which have material, symbolic, and functional characteristics. All of these characteristics were being negotiated in the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue as a site of memory, thus reflecting both Sturken and Huyssen's discussions about the intersection of monuments and memory studies.

Returning to Huyssen's discussion about the success of monuments, he further argues that the success of a monument has to be measured by how much it "hooks up" with discourses of

memory communicated by electronic media, to which monuments provide a material alternative (Huyssen, 1993, p. 255). In the case of the Mother Armenia statue, its success during the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war can be measured by the very acts of its appropriation which were a means of "hooking up" with the discourses of the war taking place on "electronic media," in this case, Instagram. However, in the process of "hooking up" with the discourses on Instagram, the Mother Armenia statue was quite literally traveling to social media through what David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) define as remediation. Moreover, as these two authors argue, it is not only new media that remediate older media, but older media also adjust themselves to respond to the challenges these new media represent. In the case of the appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue during the war, it is evident that the Mother Armenia statue (as an older media) was being remediated on Instagram to keep up with the emerging discourses of war on digital media, thus potentially securing its success as a site of memory.

Moreover, Bolter and Grusin discuss the "double logic" of remediation through the concepts of (transparent) immediacy and hypermediacy. The logic of immediacy indicates the idea that in the process of remediation, the medium itself should disappear and the focus should be on the thing represented. While the logic of hypermediacy recognizes the presence of the medium in the thing represented and makes it visible. To put it in simpler terms: immediacy makes the medium invisible, whereas hypermediacy increases our awareness of the medium being remediated. While every medium wants to improve the media that it remediates through offering a more "immediate" and "authentic" experience, this "immediacy leads to hypermediacy" (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 17). Analyzing the remediation of the Mother Armenia statue in the visual appropriations on Instagram during the war through the "double logic" of remediation, it becomes evident that while the Instagram appropriations were remediating Mother Armenia in an "immediate" and "authentic" manner to create digital images related to the war, this immediacy has led to the hypermediacy of the presence of the statue in the appropriations. This hypermediacy was being achieved through the ability of these visual appropriations to further the iconization of the Mother Armenia statue and thus bringing the statue to the core of the meaning and purpose of the creation and production of the images. Also, Instagram's role as the "remediator" of the statue has contributed to the hypermediacy of Mother Armenia because of Instagram's ability to highlight the visuality of the remediation of the statue and its visual remediations in the digital images.

Connecting the concept of remediation to memory studies, Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (2009) argue that, as media, symbolic artifacts, including statues, monuments, and memorials, are "complex and dynamic systems" and "emerge in relation to each other and in interaction with each other" (p. 3). As such, these symbolic artifacts "… borrow from, incorporate, absorb, critique and refashion earlier memorial media" (p. 5). If we regard the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue as "symbolic artifacts" that are symbolic representations of the events of the war, then it becomes evident that they have emerged in relation to and in interaction with the Mother Armenia statue (another symbolic artifact) and they have borrowed from, incorporated, absorbed, critiqued and refashioned the Mother Armenia statue (an earlier memorial medium than the visual appropriations). Moreover, Astrid Erll (2008) uses the concept of remediation to explain that events are often represented over and over again in different media, over periods of time. According to this, Erll argues that the representation of remembered events is not bound to one medium but rather to a variety of media. In the case of the appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue in the five images analyzed in the preceding paragraphs, it is clear that different narratives and remembered events regarding the notion of

Armenian motherhood were being remediated in the digital images created during and in relation to the war. Moreover, the statue of Mother Armenia, as a media technology, was itself being remediated over and over again on Instagram. In sum, Erll's discussion of how the representation of remembered events gets remediated in different available media and how these media themselves get remediated time and time again are reflected in the visual appropriation of the Mother Armenia statue, both as media technologies and as media that represent remembered events from different periods of Armenian history.

Throughout my analysis of the five images, I constantly used the concept of "appropriation" to discuss how Mother Armenia was being represented and negotiated in the digital images on Instagram during the war. For this, I primarily relied on Mette Mortenson's (2017) discussion of the relationship between appropriation and visual icons. Although Mortenson's main focus is the appropriations of iconic photographs of suffering and photojournalistic images, the theoretical framework that she provides about the appropriation of icons can also be applied to the Mother Armenia statue (as an icon) and its visual appropriations. As a statue, Mother Armenia is not precisely a photograph or an image that has been produced or has become iconic or dominant during a conflict, nor it is the only iconic visual representation of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Nonetheless, its many representations on social media during the war suggest that the Mother Armenia statue has taken on the qualities of an image (and an icon) in and through the very acts of its appropriation. As such, I have analyzed its representations on Instagram during the war through Mortenson's theoretical framework for how "appropriations construct, confirm, and contest icons" (Mortenson, 2017, p. 1142).

Finally, my analysis of the Instagram images in relation to historical and contemporary appropriations of the notion of Armenian motherhood are influenced by the term 'postmemory' introduced by Marianne Hirsch. More specifically, Hirsch (2019) explains the relationship between 'postmemory' and commemorative artistic practices and argues that these practices are the "connective tissue between divergent but related histories of violence and their transmission across generations" (p. 174). Based on this, the analysis of the visual appropriations of the Mother Armenia statue on Instagram during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war has regarded these digital images as connective agents between Armenian historical memories of trauma and violence and their presence and emergence for the postgenerations.

References:

A1+. (2010, May 7). *«Mayr Hayastan»-y Khnamqi Karot [Mother Armenia longs for care].* https://a1plus.am/hy/article/38112

Anahit & Gohar (Host). (2020, February 22). Yndrutyun, te partadranq․ mayrutyun [Choice or obligation? Motherhood] (No. 9) [Audio podcast episode]. In *Akanjogh Podcast.* https://anchor.fm/akanjogh-podcast/episodes/N9-ep7kq7

Ara Harutyunyan Official Website. (n.d.) *Monument "Mother Armenia". 1967.* http://araharutyunyan.com/eng/index.php/top-list-news/21-praesent-et-orci-tellus

Ara Nakhshkaryan. (2015, July 6). Haytni anhayty «Mayr Hayastan» Hushardzan [The famous unknown "Mother Armenia" monument] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDB8VnJGc14

Aslanyan, S. (2005). Women's social identity from an Armenian perspective: Armenian woman, Soviet woman, post-Soviet woman. *Gendering Transformations*, 192.

Atanesyan, A. (2020). Media framing on armed conflicts: Limits of peace journalism on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 14*(4), 534-550. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2020.1780018

Baronian, M. A. (2016). Missing images: Textures of memory in diaspora. In Alexis Demirdjian (Ed.), *The Armenian genocide legacy* (pp. 303-313). Palgrave Macmillan.

Barseghyan, A. (December 10, 2020b). Duplicating Images: Azerbaijan's Mirror Propaganda Operation Part II. *EVN Report*. Retrieved from https://www.evnreport.com/spotlight-karabakh/duplicating-images-azerbaijan-s-mirror-propaganda-operation-part-ii

Barseghyan, A. (November 19, 2020a). Azerbaijan's Mirror Propaganda Operation. *EVN Report.* Retrieved from https://www.evnreport.com/spotlight-karabakh/azerbaijan-s-mirror-propaganda-operation

Beckstead, Z., Twose, G., Levesque-Gottlieb, E., & Rizzo, J. (2011). Collective remembering through the materiality and organization of war memorials. *Journal of Material Culture, 16*(2), 193-213.

Beukian, S. (2014). Motherhood as Armenianness: Expressions of femininity in the making of Armenian national identity. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism, 14*(2), 247-269. https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12092

Bolter, J. D. & Grusin, R. A. (2000). *Remediation: Understanding new media*. MIT Press.

Burgess, J. (2006). Hearing ordinary voices: Cultural studies, vernacular creativity and digital storytelling. *Continuum, 20*(2), 201-214.

Cavoukian, K., & Shahnazaryan, N. (2019). Armenia: Persistent gender stereotypes. In Franceschet, S., Krook, M. L., & Tan, N. (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Women's Political Rights* (pp. 729-743). Palgrave Macmillan.

Chilingaryan, N., & Gurjyan, G. (2013). Socialist realism and Armenian building tradition: Steps to form a unique architectural language. *ICOMOS, 58*, 73-79.

Derderian, K. (2005). Common fate, different experience: Gender-specific aspects of the Armenian genocide, 1915-1917. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 19*(1), 1-25.

Ekmekçioğlu, L. (2016). *Recovering Armenia: The limits of belonging in post-genocide Turkey.* Stanford University Press.

Erll, A. (2008). Literature, film, and the mediality of cultural memory. In A. Erll, & A. Nunning (Eds.), *Cultural memory studies: An international and interdisciplinary handbook* (pp. 389–398). Walter de Gruyter.

Erll, A. (2011). *Memory in culture*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Erll, A. & Rigney, A. (2009). *Mediation, remediation, and the dynamics of cultural memory*. Walter de Gruyter.

Forest, B., & Johnson, J. (2002). Unraveling the threads of history: Soviet–era monuments and post–Soviet national identity in Moscow. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 92*(3), 524-547.

Gulesseraian, L., & Phillips, L. D. (October 21, 2020). The media war by Azerbaijan and turkey against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. *The Institute for the Study of Human Rights.* Retrieved from https://www.humanrightscolumbia.org/news/media-war-azerbaijan-and-turkey-against-armenia-and-nagorno-karabakh

Harutyunyan, K. (December 12, 2020). The Karabakh War, Media, Propaganda, and Immorality. *Media.am.* Retrieved from https://media.am/en/uncategorized/2020/12/15/25476/

Highfield, T., & Leaver, T. (2016). Instagrammatics and digital methods: Studying visual social media, from selfies and GIFs to memes and emoji. *Communication Research and Practice, 2*(1), 47-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2016.1155332

Hirsch, M. (2019). Connective arts of postmemory. *Analecta Política, 9*(16), 171–176. https://doi.org/10.18566/apolit.v9n16.a09

Hovhannisyan, Z. (2020, September 21). *Opinion | Armenia's womanly face of war*. OC Media. https://oc-media.org/opinions/armenias-womanly-face-of-war/

Huyssen, A. (1993). Monument and memory in a postmodern age. *Yale Journal of Criticism, 6*(2), 249–261.

HyeTert. (2020, September 19). *PM's spouse Anna Hakobyan organizes voluntary basic military training for young women.* https://hyetert.org/2020/09/19/pms-spouse-anna-hakobyan-organizes-voluntary-basic-military-training-for-young-women/

Johnson, N. (1995). Cast in stone: Monuments, geography, and nationalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 13*(1), 51-65.

Johnson, N. C. (2002). Mapping monuments: The shaping of public space and cultural identities. *Visual Communication*, *1*(3), 293-298. https://doi.org/10.1177/147035720200100302

Laestadius, L. (2016). Instagram. In *The SAGE Handbook of social media research methods* (pp. 573-592). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781473983847

Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). *Instagram: Visual Social Media Cultures.* John Wiley & Sons.

Lehmann, M. (2011). The Local Reinvention of the Soviet Project Nation and Socialism in the Republic of Armenia after 1945. *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, 59*(4), 481-508.

Lehmann, M. (2015). Apricot socialism: The national past, the Soviet project, and the imagining of community in late Soviet Armenia. *Slavic Review, 74*(1), 9-31. https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.74.1.9

Lleshaj, S. (2015, June 14). *The "National Mothers" of Socialism: From Mother Albania to the Mother of Georgia*. Balkanist. https://balkanist.net/national-mothers-of-socialism/

Marutyan, H. (2007). Iconography of historical memory and Armenian national identity at the end of the 1980s. In Darieva, Ts. & Kaschuba, W. (Eds.), *Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States* (pp. 82-107*).* Chicago University Press.

Mayo, J. M. (1988). War memorials as political memory. *Geographical Review,* 62-75.

Mitchell, K. (2003). Monuments, memorials, and the politics of memory. *Urban Geography, 24*(5), 442-459.

Mortensen, M. (2017). Constructing, confirming, and contesting icons: The Alan Kurdi imagery appropriated by# humanitywashedashore, Ai Weiwei, and Charlie Hebdo. *Media, Culture & Society, 39*(8), 1142-1161. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717725572

Nemsitsveridze-Daniels et. al. (2020, October 9). *The Missing Peace.* The Kvinna till Kvinna
    Foundation. https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-Missing-
    Peace.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0BYUq7DIXwOgrSc_obmTyS-ZNywR2pCBaYtFRt80C_LfW-
    K4IILJz3hyI

NEWS.am. (2020, September 28). *Mother Armenia monument in Yerevan is illuminated with Artsakh
    flag.* https://news.am/eng/news/604559.html

Niven, B. (2007). War memorials at the intersection of politics, culture and memory. *Journal of War
    & Culture Studies, 1*(1), 39-45. https://doi.org/10.1386/jwcs.1.1.39_0

Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *representations, 26*, 7-24.

Ohanian, S. D. (2020). The role of women in the social and political life of the Republic of Armenia
    (1918-1920). In Der Matossian, B. (Ed.), *The first Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) on its
    centenary: Politics, gender, and diplomacy* (pp. 113-132). The Press at California State
    University Fresno.

Ohanyan, A. (2009). State-society nexus and gender: Armenian Women in postcommunist context. In
    Gelb, J., & Palley, M. L. (Eds.), *Women and Politics Around the World: A Comparative
    History and Survey (*pp. 231-45). ABC-Clio, LLC.

Omena, J. J., Rabello, E. T., & Mintz, A. G. (2020). Digital methods for hashtag engagement
    research. *Social Media+ Society, 6*(3) 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120940697

Papacharissi, Z. (2016). Affective publics and structures of storytelling: Sentiment, events and
    mediality. *Information, Communication & Society, 19*(3), 307-324.

Pearce, k. (December, 4, 2020). While Armenia and Azerbaijan fought over Nagorno-Karabakh, their
    citizens battled on social media. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from
    https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/12/04/while-armenia-azerbaijan-fought-over-
    nagorno-karabakh-their-citizens-battled-social-media/

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials.* Sage.

Rowe, V. (2009). *A History of Armenian women's writing, 1880-1922*. Gomidas Institute.

Shahnazarian, N., & Ziemer, U. (2020). The Politics of Widowhood in Nagorny Karabakh. In Ziemer
    U. (Ed.) *Women's Everyday Lives in War and Peace in the South Caucasus* (pp. 179-201).
    Palgrave Macmillan.

Shirinian, T. (2018). The nation-family: Intimate encounters and genealogical perversion in Armenia.
    American Ethnologist, 45(1), 48-59. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12598

Shirinian, T. (2020). Political patriarchy: Gendered hierarchies, paternalism, and public space in
    Armenia's 'Velvet Revolution'. In Ohanyan, A. & Broers, L (Eds.), *Armenia's velvet*

revolution: Authoritarian decline and civil resistance in a multipolar world* (pp. 181-199). Bloomsbury Publishing.

Shirinyan, A. (2018). Karabakh discourses in Armenia following the Velvet Revolution. *Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation, 3*(2), 140-154.

Sovetakan Arvest [Soviet Art]. (1973). *Qaghaqn u Qandakagordzu [The City and the Sculptor],* (9), 6-14. Retrieved October 24, 2020, from http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Sovetakanarvest/1973/9.pdf

Sturken, M. (2008). Memory, consumerism and media: Reflections on the emergence of the field. *Memory Studies, 1*(1), 73-78.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. (2019). *Listen to her: Gendered effects of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and women's priorities for peace.* https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Listen-to-Her-%E2%80%93-Gendered-Effects-of-the-Conflict-over-Nagorno-Karabakh-and-Womens-Priorities-for-Peace.pdf

Till, K. (2003). Places of memory. In Agnew, J. A., Mitchell, K., & Toal, G. (Eds.), *A companion to political geography* (pp. 289-301). John Wiley & Sons.

Vasilyan, V. (2013). Mayr Hayastani hnaguyn Nakhatipery [The most ancient prototypes of Mother Armenia]. *History and Culture Journal of Armenian Studies,* (A), 209-223.

Women For Peace Campaign. (2020, July 25). *Anna Hakobyan's message.* https://wfp.annahakobyan.am/en/2020/07/25/%d5%a1%d5%b6%d5%b6%d5%a1-%d5%b0%d5%a1%d5%af%d5%b8%d5%a2%d5%b5%d5%a1%d5%b6%d5%ab-%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%b2%d5%a5%d6%80%d5%b1%d5%a8/

Women For Peace Campaign. (n.d.). *Women For Peace Campaign Declaration.* https://wfp.annahakobyan.am/en/who-we-are/

Zartonk Media. (2020, September 2). *Artsakh women participate in 1-week combat preparedness training at initiative of Armenian PM's wife.* https://zartonkmedia.com/2020/09/02/artsakh-women-participate-in-1-week-combat-preparedness-training-at-initiative-of-armenian-pms-wife/

Ziemer, U. (2019). Women against authoritarianism: Agency and political protest in Armenia. In Ziemer, U. (Ed.), *Women's everyday lives in war and peace in the South Caucasus* (pp. 71-100). Palgrave Macmillan.