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REPRESENTATION OF REGIONAL HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE AND POLITICS OF HISTORY IN TERMS OF TOURISM RELATED SOURCES

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh, historical narratives, historical memory, tourism related history, politics of history, Transcaucasia, historical travel guides.

Ключевые слова: Нагорный Карабах; историческое повествование; историческая память; история, связанная с туризмом; историческая политика; Закавказье; исторические путеводители;

Բանալի բառեր. Լեռնային Ղարաբաղ, պատմական պատումներ, պատմական հիշողություն, տուրիզմի պատմություն, պատմության քաղաքականություն, Անդրկովկաս, պատմական ճամփորդական ուղեցույցներ:

The following paper and analysis is upon the complexity of representation of local history, the recreated picture of the past, politics of history, used historical narratives, and its effect on the information channels available to foreigners regarding the history of the region. Moreover we will try to analyze the tendencies from the eyes of a visitor, namely a tourist who is coming to the region with the willingness to know more about the culture, history and people inhabiting the area. Since earliest times of history, self-representation played significant role, since this was the most powerful platform where the state could communicate about itself, to an external other state, or person. This need affected the spheres from formal diplomatic ways until propaganda. From the 19th century, in which time empires have started to transform their image and tools, and smaller regions became so called 'nation states', also a hybrid form of 'national' statehood emerged. These creations have all their specific status to obtain the criteria of a usual state. As well as their national ornaments like flag and coat of arms are were created, their history also had to be built up. In the following, we will go through

the exciting way of historical creations in the soviet and post – soviet regions of Transcaucasia – (Southern Caucasus), not exactly trying to give the right answer to a regional appearance, but rather to map the several ways how different regions, once belonging to a huge empire in the 20th century, namely the Soviet Union, trying to path their route of history.

In geographical measures, our way is covering the region, which in the scholarly language often characterized as a borderland, situated in the post – soviet atmosphere: Nagorno Karabakh. This region today attain a ‘self-proclaimed’ republic between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which both states also legally were created in the 20th century. The ‘self-created’ phenomenon itself brings a serious question, as this paradox leads to the expression: ‘non-recognized’. Upon this terminology we must ask the question, who must recognize a state, and give it all ‘legalities’ to be accepted to the framework of the so-called ‘international community’?¹ Easiest way to reach a clear standing point underlining this statement, is making a quick backup to the history of colonization, when some states who though themselves to be a columnarian members of the internationally ‘recognized states’, used their own armed force, cultural and economic influence, to size various states and groups operating as sovereign systems based on different principles. Based on these historical tendencies, calling these formations, as well as Nagorno Karabakh a ‘non recognized state’ is just a tool of stigmatizing, but not a real case what can be seriously accepted in historical terminology.

In case of the Post – Soviet regions of the world, the historical approach is vivid up until nowadays, state’s and formation’s historical remembrance, historical narratives, or historical canon often formed in bloodshed, and in irregular ways, resulting sharp changes within short periods of time. These quick changes let us to look into the forge of this canonization process, measuring tourism related sources. Because of this in the following analysis we are not searching the answers to draw up the ‘true history’ of Nagorno Karabakh – Artsakh, and select information upon their true or false content measured by our days paradigms, but we undertake the questions how the narrative was formed, and created historical remembrance in the region.

Methodology and research

As the methodological part of the research we would like to rely on a more interdisciplinary approach rather than the traditional tools of historical research. For this firstly we are involving the on the spot data collections, relying on

¹ Legalities and formalization, which are created by the state or states who gives recognition.

personal visits in Nagorno Karabakh in the years of 2016;2017;2018. On the spot data collection in the case of Nagorno Karabakh especially important, as nowadays tendencies in 2018, during the last decade brought a renaissance of tourism in these areas.²³ For that reason we will try to draw a sketch with the help of local providers of historical knowledge such as museums, monuments, and printed materials. While creating a framework, where these new tendencies can be collided with the precious ones, aka. from the Soviet regime. To involve and rely on tourism related sources, can be understood from the international historical trends has just started to deal with this field. This methodology of cognition, its importance, also was emphasized by *John H. Falk*. So that, we will be able to measure, compare and evaluate these collected sources, with sources from libraries. Also this methodology is based upon the concept of mapping more visible and tangible sources, and extract information, how historical canon, imagination and reflection of identity is changed over time in the named regions, within the duality of history and tourism.

So that they main trends approaching the examination of tourism related sources can be understood from the following volumes. *John H. Falk – Identity and the museum visitor experience* is dealing directly with the cognition of the visitors visiting an area, or a region.⁴ *Claire Lindsay – Magazines, tourism and nation – building in Mexico* is directly examining the process how tourism and the historical field of the science is involved in nation building, what also in the case of Nagorno Karabakh is extremely important aim.⁵ Thirdly we should mention the emergence of other fields to be analysed within this framework, namely the dark tourism, presented in a large volume: *Philip R Stone; Rudi Hartmann; A V Seaton; Richard Sharpley; Leanne White* editors presented *The Palgrave handbook of dark*

² As we know briefly, the tourism in these areas dropped after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in a drastic way, due to warfare and unstable situation. However with time, the regions became more peaceful in their best way, so that tourist could arrive again in bigger numbers. It's reflected also in the supply, what these states offer for the visitors. In the case of Nagorno Karabakh, we can just quickly mention the Tigranakert fortress, and the Local Shushi museum of History, which are promoted and well established. In later chapters we will examine both in details.

³ [http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00983A/WEB/OTHER/780A475B.HTM?OpenDocument Is. 2019.02.14.](http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00983A/WEB/OTHER/780A475B.HTM?OpenDocument%20Is.2019.02.14)

⁴ John H. Falk. *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*. Routledge. London – New York. 2009.

⁵ Claire Lindsay. *Magazines, tourism, and nation – building in Mexico*. Palgrave – Macmillan. London. 2019.

tourism studies.⁶ Rooted upon these historical publications, we can make a try and put Nagorno Karabakh under this investigation.

We would like to follow the path of *John H. Falk*, who raised topics and questions about how history – visitors – cognition are connected, and afterwards about the emergence of new historical approaches formed in the visitors. As we see now, it is a complex and complicated field, where history plays the main role, and as museums has changed the image and working schemes in the past decades, we have the chance now to analyze and compare. These changes occurred largely in order to fulfill the need for knowledge, as well as opening and restoring sites of historical significance making the environment attractive for seekers of knowledge.⁷ The visitors receiving an extract about historical fields what they are not expert of. The changes of the visitors identity and motivations also significant during a visit not just to a museum, but to geographical regions of their interest.⁸ Newer historical approaches can be implemented and on this channel, propagated to the outer world. Falk brings some essentials here also: explorers – “*are individuals who say they are visiting the museum because of curiosity or a general interest in discovering more about the topic of subject of the institution.*”⁹ As visitors of the yet unknown region, during their journey their leisure time is dedicated to fulfil their need to know more about a subject. In addition, if we employ this idea on the tourism activities in Nagorno Karabakh, during the last two decades, when the area is categorized into the not recommended, dangerous place to visit, recognition of the importance is inevitable. Upon this seriousness, the informal channels toward tourist, even more valuable. After all, this groups of ‘explorers’ as Falk categorizes them, are not experts and necessarily “well educated” members of the society, but persons whose interests are wide spread and has the need of new experiences and knowledge.¹⁰

Connecting Nagorno Karabakh to the idea of dark tourism also a close idea. The extremity of the after war scene, was significant during the 1990’, but it appeared just party in the tourism related sources. Even until nowadays the

⁶ Philip R Stone; Rudi Hartmann; A V Seaton; Richard Sharpley; Leanne White ed. The Palgrave handbook of dark tourism studies. Palgrave Macmillan. London. 2018. other publications emphasizing this theme: *Dark Tourism and Place Identity*. ed.: Leanne White & Elspeth Frew. Routledge. 2013.; *The Dark Side of Travel: Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*. ed.: Richard Sharpley & Philip R. Stone. Channel View Publications. Bristol – Buffalo – Toronto. 2009.

⁷ John H. Falk. p. 182.

⁸ John H. Falk. pp.186 – 187.

⁹ John H. Falk. p. 190.

¹⁰ John H Falk. p.190.

presented narrative became a more peaceful vision, starting from the book of *Boris Bratov*¹¹ still shows tanks and war related memories in 1998, the newest volumes like *Yuriy P. Suprunenko's*¹² even not enlarging the war situation, and the history of the wars. The shift moves toward the representation of cultural values, tradition and architectural heritage.

Our hypothesis relies on the following idea: tourism belongs to one of the most effective ways where information can be provided about history, local histories and self-representation. As from the beginning of the 21st century, large masses of people started to visit directly historical places, we cannot neglect it as a factor of historical cognition.¹³ Community based tourism on the other hand means, touristic activities toward not highly developed, and well established regions of the world. In the areas of non-recognized states, the efforts to show their local histories, key points of their identity, their ceremonies, remembrance, historical canon, are coming with a more powerful way of representation. Form this after all we can trace back a full analysis on historical narrative and historical representation of Nagorno Karabakh.

Leaflets and guidebooks promoting tourism about Nagorno Karabakh

Leaflets in short, between 20-50 pages were especially popular in Karabakh to publish in several languages. During the soviet period it was mainly presented in Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani language, after the after the war of 1991-94 it changed to mainly Russian and English, while nowadays more and more publications are consisting Russian, Armenian and English as well. They are giving more detailed information about history and cultural elements, with more detailed orientation of the selection of historical events and historical monuments wanted to be showed for tourists, visitors.

The most influential person during the soviet and after war years is Mkrtchyan Shagen Makichevich¹⁴ who played great role conducting the historical remembrance in publications, and developing the displayed content toward visitors. His biography was also changed during the shifting of the narratives. This can be traces back in several printed materials, like the *Encyclopedia of Artsakh-Karabakh*¹⁵ and *Architectural monuments of Nagorno Karabakh* from 1988.¹⁶ His

¹¹ . . . : . . . 1998.

¹² . . . (. . .) . . . : . . . 2017.

¹³ <http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00983A/WEB/OTHER/780A475B.HTM?OpenDocument&ls.2019.02.14>.

¹⁴ In Russian transliteration:

¹⁵ . . . - . . . : . . . 2005.

works from the soviet period, including books where he is delicately speaking about the eternal brotherhood between the nations inhabiting Karabakh, especially the friendship of Azerbaijani and Armenian inhabitants as it can be read in the following quote from the leaflet from 1970: “*The brotherhood and friendship of Azerbaijani and Armenian people can be found as an evidence of the inhabitants of Hadrut.*”¹⁷ In 2005, these books were left out from the biography in the above mentioned encyclopaedia of Artsakh, and writings in favour of the Armenian approach are picked into the canon.

In his first guidebook form 1969, he represents some of the most controversial figures of the territory. One of the most exciting figure is Bogdan Khnunyants, who was commemorated as the most notable 'professional revolutionist' in the region, also appeared on an exhibition in 2018 in Obdorsk, still remembered clearly, emphasizing his 'professional revolutionist' attitude.¹⁸ In Karabakh, during the Soviet era upon this narrative of 'professional revolutionist' there were many of them remembered, and displayed on exhibition. However after the dissolution, these revolutionaries were excluded from the narrative, just the ones connected to the Second World War remained in their position, such as Nelson Stepanyan.¹⁹ The poet Molla Panah Vagif is commemorated. His figure became controversial and especially exploited over the fight of historical representation. Yet in the guidebook of V. M. Sysoev form 1930, he was not mentioned, however there is a detailed information package about Shushi.²⁰ Also in a large guidebook written in 1934 for tourist visiting the Transcaucasian region this figure was not mentioned, only Nagorno Karabakh received a chapter with a detailed route.²¹ Molla Panah Vagif's figure then appears again, in an Azerbaijani guidebook from 1990, where he is stated to be an Azerbaijani poet and

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statesmen.²² During 1998, when his historical memory is totally distorted from the previous one, Boris Baratov commemorated him as a nomad Turkish, with his actions against Nagorno Karabakh, who was involved in murder, and about his destroyed mausoleum simply writes: *“after 200 years of the death of Vagif, this monument is was erected, but now it is not a mausoleum anymore but a monument of a previous era.”*²³

Regarding the period after the war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a more Armenian narrative started to be promoted. Several printed materials were presented in order to emphasize this new canon, now mentioning the imagines or wanted ancient roots to the visitors like Urartu²⁴, the Hellenistic world and the most powerful, the Christianity in the region from the early middle ages.²⁵ This new narrative is up until nowadays are forming, here we can mention the archeological excavation of Tigranakert, as well as the opening of the Tigranakert museum in the newly built castle shaped building on the site. These leaflets and guides however still made a distinction between the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh. While, ending our short analysis, the tendencies today are going toward to create a common cultural space with Armenian and with its culture. We can find its evidence in a guidebook from 2017 written by Suprunenko Y. Pavlovich.²⁶ This guidebook also interesting from the point, that it is a special historical guide to Armenia, where Nagorno Karabakh is even not too much emphasized as a separate region, but put into a cultural and historical frame where all is connected with the Armenian historical past and culture. In terms, the author did not make structural borders in the book, Nagorno Karabakh did not receive separate chapter. Its historical narrative is told as organic part of the all Armenian historical past, figures and events are emphasized under this notion in this guidebook.

To conclude, we can mention, that the narratives formed during the soviet period are not disappeared, but in large volumes transferred into the narratives of nowadays. Historical remembrance was enlarged, and Armenian considered historical events were added, from the times of the first world war, and the Karabakh war, as

²² - á - - -)" : . . (-
- á - - -)" . 1990.

²³ . 1998. p. 27.

²⁴ The topic of Urartu and its contribution to the historical narrative of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh is emphasized in the following book: [Ashkharbek Kalantar & Mirjo Salvini](#). Materials on Armenian and Urartian History. Recherches et publications, Calouste Gulbekian Foundation 2003.

²⁵ These publications are the following:
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- : . 1998.

²⁶ , . (). : .

2017.

well as the second world war's traditions are kept up. This motions however not stopped and not slowed down, for this reason in the following years it will be necessary to review it again with historical tools.

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Summary

The following paper takes an analysis on the changes of the historical narrative in Nagorno Karabakh, comparing several period of it, using only tourism related publications as sources. Three periods are emphasised, and analysed together to get a wider knowledge about the inner connections how the historical narrative and historical memory was formed during the era of the Soviet Union, the Post -Soviet years, and the time slot leading up until nowadays. During the emphasis we tried to find the ones who were involved in the creation of the historical narrative from the scientific side, as well to find the key figures, historical events and built up scenes playing role in the historical narrative. Within these changes, we can receive a new side and viewpoint evaluating the historical narratives of Nagorno Karabakh.

Գերայ Զոլտան

Պետեր Պազմանի կաթոլիկ համալսարան
Հումանիտար և սոցիալական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետ
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Տարածաշրջանային պատմական հիշողության ներկայացումը և պատմության քաղաքականությունը տուրիզմին առնչվող աղբյուրների դիտանկյունից

Ամփոփում

Վաղ ժամանակներից պետությունների կողմից սեփական պատմության ներկայացումը կարևոր դեր է խաղացել, քանի որ այդպիսով պետությունը կարող էր մեկ այլ օտար պետությանը կամ անձին հաղորդել տեղեկություն իր մասին: Այս հարցը հատկապես կարևորվում է միջազգայինորեն չճանաչված պետությունների համար, որոնք հաճախ աշխարհին արդյունավետ ներկայանալու, սեփական պատմությունն ու մշակույթը մատուցելու ոչ բավարար հնարավորությունների են տիրապետում:

Հոդվածում քննարկվում է տեղական պատմության, պատմության քաղաքականության, պատմական հիշողության, ինչպես նաև պատմական

պատմումների փոփոխությունների հարցերը և դրանք օտարերկրացիներին ներկայացնելու ձևերն ու եղանակները: Նշված խնդիրը հեղինակը ներկայացնում է օտարերկրացիների համար նախատեսված տարածարջանի պատմությանն առնչվող տեղեկատվության աղբյուրների վերլուծության հիման վրա: Մասնավորապես հեղինակը Արցախ կատարած այցերի ընթացքում հավաքած նյութի հիման վրա կատարում է սեփական դիտարկումները՝ հիմք ընդունելով Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում հրատարակված տուրիզմին առնչվող գրքույկներն և տեղեկագրքերը: Հոդվածում հատկապես կարևոր տեղ է հատկացվում թեմային առնչվող տեսական գրականության վերլուծությանը, որի հենքի վրա էլ ներկայացնում է Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում պատմական պատումների փոփոխությունները: Քննարկվող նյութը՝ հիմնականում վերաբերում է երեք ժամանակաշրջանների՝ Խորհրդային Միության ժամանակաշրջան, հետխորհրդային և ներկա շրջաններ:

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Խմբագրություն է ուղարկվել 19.04.19
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