The ties that bind: reimagining memory in Armenian identity formation.

Understanding Armenian identity, what shapes it and why, is necessary for understanding the Republic of Armenia. For it is this identity and its preservation that motivates the Republic of Armenia to create certain policies that agitate for measures that ultimately either...
improve or threaten stability within the Southern Caucasus as well as Armenian relations with the international community. This thesis utilizes the lens of memory to trace the evolution of Armenian identity through the Russian Imperialist, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods of Armenian history, seeking new ways to analyze and understand the factors that influence the formation of national narratives and to what end. It will explore the expansion of Russia into Armenian life, society, and culture and how this affected the ways in which Armenians were perceived and treated by the Empire. Imperialist perceptions, policies, and actions impacted Armenians’ understanding of themselves in the pre-Soviet era and ultimately created an environment that gave rise to an Armenian nationalism and its quest for nationhood. Furthermore, Armenian life in the Soviet Union and the influence of lingering memories of communism and the Soviet experience on the formation of Soviet and post-Soviet Armenian identity, as well as the post-Soviet resurgence and re-appropriation of historic memories and the reconstruction of a national identity grounded in ideals of historic exceptionalism, reunification, and self-determination, will be discussed.

Department
Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

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