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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DISSEMINATING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SHAPING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL IDENTITY: A STUDY ON LITHUANIAN MINORITIES

Abstract

National identity can be defined by how individuals perceive themselves and what they consider important when presenting themselves to others. In Lithuania, national communities face different attitudes towards their national identity. To preserve a sustainable national identity, it is crucial to pass on the testimony of its daily existence, which is its cultural heritage. Cultural heritage serves as a memory bank that embodies the essence of cultural identity and plays a significant role in nation building. This research aims to explore the elements of cultural heritage that are crucial for Lithuanian minority cultures (Karaites and Tatars) in defining their national identity in a multicultural environment and compare them with the frames created by the media. The research utilizes qualitative content analysis methods with a mixed instrument approach. Online media data was analyzed to identify the characteristics of cultural heritage and the media's position. Framing theory was used to examine the results of the content analysis, which focuses on interpretation schemes used by individuals or media. The analysis shows that the Lithuanian media portrays national minority cultural heritage in a positive light. However, the national identity of national minorities is primarily characterized by three frames: traditional cuisine, language and traditions, collective memory and shared history. Semi structured interviews were conducted with members of national minorities to explore the factors contributing to a sustainable national identity. The interviews revealed that national minority identity is influenced by factors beyond the three frames highlighted in the media. Through the comparative analysis, it became evident that the media does not accurately portrait the national identity of the national minorities (Karaites and Tatars) in Lithuania. Instead, it selectively emphasizes specific cultural elements while downplaying others.

Keywords: cultural heritage, mass media, national community, national minorities, sustainable national identity

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Introduction

Lithuania, like many other European countries, can be described as a multicultural country with a rich history of different nationalities, cultures, religions and customs. National identity can be defined by how a person perceives him/herself and what is important to him/her in perceiving and presenting him/herself to others. Ethnic communities living in Lithuania are confronted with the experience of two cultures, because a person from one ethnic community does not live in social isolation, but is a member of a community living in another culture. It is not only the members of a community who define their national identity as reflected in their daily lives, but also the media, which in turn communicate which cultural objects define the national identity of a particular nation. The media, as mass communicators, can successfully disseminate and reinforce stereotypes and opinions to the general public, thereby simultaneously reflecting and shaping public attitudes towards national communities.

Through assimilation, groups may adopt the values of the dominant culture and new patterns of self-identification, leading to feelings of alienation from their true culture (Grajzl *et al.*, 2018). In addition to assimilation, processes of globalisation and emigration can also have a negative impact on national identity. As a result, cultural heritage can become irrelevant to the very national community to which it belongs, as its members adapt to societal changes and promote the consumerist lifestyles of surrounding cultures (Widdis, 2019). Thus, it is important to clarify what is most important in defining national identity among various processes such as assimilation, globalisation and emigration.

This research aims to explore the elements of cultural heritage that are crucial for Lithuanian minority cultures (Karaites and Tatars) in defining their national identity in a multicultural environment and compare them with the frames created by the media. The subject of the research is the national identity of Lithuanian minorities (Karaites and Tatars), the communicative frameworks of cultural heritage dissemination and their influence on national identity have been little studied. In addition, too little attention is paid to the representation of national communities in Lithuania, and there is no in-depth study of what constitutes the identity of national communities, which can lead to misinterpretations of the nation and incomplete narratives in the media that do not allow the public

to get a full picture of the national communities in Lithuania. Over the last decade, the importance, influence and impact of cultural heritage on society and the economy, as well as the various challenges that cultural heritage faces, have been the main focus of analysis. Silva and Leal (2015) explored the relationship between rural tourism and national identity, Tudorache (2016) analysed the importance of intangible cultural heritage in the economy, Rasoolimanesh *et al.* (2017) studied the influence of communities in heritage conservation and tourism development.

Literature review

Researchers acknowledge that culture is difficult to understand because the concept is often implicit but can be labelled with different categories (Akhter, 2022). Culture is learned through perception, which is shaped by a variety of factors: place of birth and upbringing, language, people around you, environment, psychological stimuli. Another important concept is heritage, which can be understood as things, tangible or intangible, that are so important that we want to pass them on to future generations (Logan, 2007).

Cultural heritage forms the basis of how we think, feel, behave and interact with the world. Preserving cultural heritage is a way of preserving oneself, of protecting what is distinctive about a particular group, the authenticity of a people. In order to protect cultural heritage, there is a need for cultural heritage dissemination, which is the sharing of stories about the cultural heritage of a particular people through certain means in order to promote and preserve it, as well as to stimulate interest in and appreciation of the cultural heritage of a particular people, both within the culture itself and between different cultures (Ortiz *et al.*, 2018; Bhandari, 2021). There are many ways in which cultural heritage can be disseminated, including through documents, events, festivals, tourism and community gatherings.

Recent research by Zort *et al.,* (2023) shows that families play a particularly important role in transmitting and preserving cultural heritage to younger generations through different narratives. By passing on cultural values and customs to their children, families keep culture alive and are

therefore integral to keeping cultural heritage alive and passing it on to future generations (Zort *et al.*, 2023).

Museums are an important way of preserving and disseminating history and cultural heritage. The museum is an instrument for the continuous education of the whole community, which not only displays cultural heritage, but also enables the recognition of human works and their relationship with the environment (Yoshida, 2004). Scholars emphasise that it is not only the exhibitions in a museum that allow one to feel the national spirit, but also the museum space itself, which can become an expression of intangible cultural heritage (Xie and Zhu, 2016). The fusion of tangible and intangible heritage allows for the creation of an experience that helps visitors to have a multidimensional view of what they see in the museum environment (Cordón, 2019).

In this era of globalisation, when society is changing rapidly, museums also need to adapt to social trends and offer new ways of communicating cultural heritage, so that the dissemination of cultural heritage is gradually moving away from the traditional face-to-face embodied presence to digital communication that transcends space and time (Jin and Liu, 2022). Digital technology and virtual reality involve the use of tools such as computers and software to preserve cultural heritage and create an environment for visitors to explore and interact with cultural artefacts (Reffat and Nofal, 2013; Kaul, 2012). The use of virtual reality in cultural heritage digitisation has expanded the range of images in visual culture. In addition to photographs, videos and scenes, the use of technology can provide a dynamic and 3D dimension (Jin and Liu, 2022). However, scholars Nikonova and Biryukova (2017) argue that the methods of using digital technologies do not convey the authentic essence of memory, history and tradition as consistently as traditional museums.

From a cultural perspective, the main purpose of literature is to provide the reader with knowledge of cultural history and heritage, while stimulating the imagination and the senses. Literature depicts and inspires social change and is generally perceived as a source of cultural representation (Akhter, 2022).

Culture and education are inseparable because culture paves the way for education and education is responsible for: preserving, transmitting, promoting culture, teaching adaptation to changing cultural patterns,

shaping personality, restoring unity among people and eliminating cultural backwardness. Although cultures change over time, there is a recognisable continuity of core values and patterns of behaviour and heritage that distinguish them from other cultures. This continuity is provided by the education system (Mathews and Savarimuthu, 2020). In addition, cultural heritage sites are important to society because they contribute to the formation and preservation of collective identity and national pride (Nilson and Thorell, 2018). Therefore, the promotion of cultural heritage sites is important to raise awareness of history and promote cultural pride, sense of identity and intercultural understanding.

Migration has been a key factor in the spread of cultural heritage for thousands of years (Pevtsova *et al.,* 2020). In the process, societies have exchanged various cultural elements such as language, values and symbols (Giddens, 2005). Over the last century, the spread of tourism has had a significant impact on the diffusion of cultural heritage. The emergence of tourism activities has accelerated the diffusion of cultural heritage, mainly due to the interaction between 'hosts' and foreign visitors. The dissemination of cultural heritage has also been accelerated by various technologies, media and globalisation (Wang and Du, 2021). Thus, the dissemination of cultural heritage can be an important tool in the processes of preserving and promoting cultural identity, but it is important to note that there are certain challenges that can disrupt the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to future generations.

Rapidly changing societies and environmental conditions are among the major challenges. In a global world, the sustainability dimension has emerged and the integration of sustainability ideas complicates the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. Various natural disasters, climate change and social unrest can cause damage to cultural heritage, especially to tangible objects that may be destroyed, for example as a result of natural disasters. Similarly, heritage sites are vulnerable to weather fluctuations, which can have a variety of indirect and direct consequences, such as the loss of tangible cultural features, reduced visitor numbers and disruption of socio-economic activities (Markham *et.al.,* 2016). Therefore, it is essential to integrate sustainability considerations into the conservation of cultural heritage. As Dastgerdi *et al.* (2019) argue, climate change will affect cultural diversity and socio-cultural interactions, forcing communities to change their working habits and lifestyles, compete for

resources, or migrate elsewhere due to climate-related disasters such as desertification, flooding, or sea-level rise. Thus, in the face of changing social and environmental conditions, the transmission of cultural heritage may become more difficult, as many tangible heritage sites may be damaged beyond recognition, while intangible heritage may become irrelevant as societies change and adapt to the new conditions that emerge.

Another major challenge is the commercialisation of cultural heritage. When cultural heritage becomes a commodity, it can become overly dependent on the pursuit of economic profit and lose its authenticity. Commercialisation can also lead people to forget the historical and cultural value of heritage and see it as a mere commercial commodity (Zhang *et al.,* 2021). However, the proliferation of heritage commercialisation can also have positive consequences, such as increasing people's awareness and interest in cultural heritage, as well as promoting tourism and economic growth (Besculides *et al.,* 2002). It is important to strike a balance between economic and cultural interests in order to preserve cultural heritage and achieve sustainable economic goals, while preserving core cultural values and principles (Cassel and Pashkevich, 2014, Kinnvall, 2004).

Cultural stigma is a very important challenge that can be particularly problematic as it refers to the general negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and discriminatory structures in society (Low and Purwaningrum, 2020). In intercultural communication, it is crucial that the communication process focuses on cooperation, the ability to better understand other cultures, their representatives and their cultural heritage, and the ability to arrive at solutions that are acceptable to all participants. In this way, intercultural cooperation can become enjoyable, meaningful and productive, helping to broaden horizons and learn from each other (Samovar *et al.,* 2014).

National identity is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. For this reason, each researcher defines and explains the concept by emphasising different perspectives. A nation is a community of people formed historically over time. This group of people is characterised by a distinct territory, an authentic language, a history and a particular economic and cultural life. A nation understands itself as a collective entity that develops and implements core values. Each nation is distinguished by its individuality in terms of language, culture and historical development. Uniqueness and

distinctiveness are seen as intrinsically valuable, as these individual qualities together contribute to the irreplaceable cultural diversity of humanity. Nowadays, due to globalisation and other processes, it is observed that civilisation is moving towards the homogenisation of cultures, and from this perspective, the uniqueness of each nation is not only valuable for itself, but also an asset for all other nations and for humanity as a whole (Boulding, 2019).

When analysing the concept of national identity, it is noticeable that some scholars focus more on culture and traditions, while others focus more on geography, but Pitkänen (2017) systematised the ideas expressed by different scholars and divided national identity into two components: ethnic and civic identity (see Table 1).

Table 1. Elements of national identity

TAUTINIO TAPATUMO DEDAMOSIOS MPONENTS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY	
Ethnic/cultural	Civic/political/national
Origin myths	Birth and place of residence
Folk language	Nationality
Customs and traditions	Sovereignty
Religion	Legal system
Native history	Political system
	Social culture

Source: Pitkänen, 2017

Civic identity focuses on a particular territory – the state – within which a community has formed as a political and geographical unit that is subject to the laws of the state, i.e. individuals identify themselves through their nationality and the political and legal structures of the state. Their identity is defined by their allegiance to the institutions and rules of the state rather than by tradition, language or religion. The opposite is true of ethnic identity, which emphasises tradition, culture, language and history.

Smith (1988) argues that national identity is shaped by myths and cultural elements that create a connection to the nation. Modernists argue that

myths can change and be created by elites based on their values, but Smith (1988) argues that myths can be created by elites based on their values. Smith (1988) disagrees with this view, arguing that myths are a construct of the past, with fixed symbols and frames that are established in people's collective memory. According to Gellner (1996), national identity is a contemporary construct, meaning that economic and social progress develops national communities accompanied by a shared political concept of the state. Anderson (1991) takes a different approach, arguing that the nation is an imagined community that conceives of national identity through the shared experiences of communities, a construction bound together by symbols and rituals and linked to territorial and administrative categories. Although the majority in the community do not know each other, they are united by a shared image in their minds of their idea of community.

The preservation of cultural memory is one of the key aspects of how the dissemination of cultural heritage affects national identity. Cultural memory is a form of collective memory whereby a group of people transmit memories of significant national events in everyday communication (Smith, 1999). Cultural memory is stored in cultural elements and objects that help people remember historical events. Researchers argue that the dissemination of cultural heritage helps to preserve these memories and ensure that they are passed on from one generation to the next, thus reinforcing a sense of continuity and maintaining national identity (Assmann, 2021). In addition, cultural heritage helps to strengthen a nation's distinctiveness. Researchers point out that every country has a distinct national identity and a rich heritage that has evolved over the years. Sharing cultural heritage is one way to showcase this uniqueness on a global scale (Frawley *et al.,* 2020). Sharing cultural heritage, for example through museums and other cultural institutions, provides visitors with a tangible link to their national identity. Museums and other cultural institutions act as an educational tool, providing insights into a nation's history, values and unique characteristics, and helping a nation understand why it is different from other nations in some way (Xie and Zhu, 2016; Chukwu and Ogunboyowa, 2022).

Both economic prosperity and cultural tourism can promote cultural heritage. According to researchers, tourism and creative industries can help stimulate economic growth by promoting cultural heritage. Tourists flock to a place to learn about the history, art and traditions of a country with

a rich cultural heritage. This not only boosts the local economy, but also fosters a sense of national pride among the population, who are aware of the importance of their cultural heritage on a global scale, and this sense of pride contributes to the formation of national identity.

Cultural heritage creates a sense of togetherness. A nation celebrates its various cultural festivals, customs, values, and traditions, bringing people from different backgrounds together under a common cultural umbrella (Nilson and Thorell, 2018). Sharing cultural heritage fosters attachment and a sense of belonging to one's nation, as cultural heritage connects individuals to their shared traditions, symbols, language and historical narratives, thus helping individuals to feel a sense of belonging to the national community (Rouhi, 2017).

In summary, the diffusion of cultural heritage has a significant impact on national identity. By sharing elements of cultural heritage, a nation preserves its cultural memory, thus ensuring its continuity and relevance in the modern world.

Research methodology

In order to answer the research objective, a qualitative content analysis of Lithuanian online media, in-depth interviews with members of the national minority community and a comparative analysis of qualitative research were conducted. In order to find out the media's attitude towards the peculiarities of the cultural heritage and national identity of national minorities, the articles of 5 different Lithuanian online media news portals (15min.lt; Delfi.lt; LRT.lt; Žmonės.lt; Bernardinai.lt) from 2017 to 2023 were analysed using the method of filtering search results, where the articles were selected according to the "keywords" entered in the search request.

20 articles were analysed. In order to process and analyse the data collected for the qualitative study, the data were divided into categories, subcategories and statements so that recurring themes, ideas and concepts could be identified and properly interpreted (Zaveri, 2023). In order to process and analyze the data collected for the qualitative study, the data were divided into categories, subcategories, statements so that recurring themes, ideas, and concepts could be noticed and properly interpreted

(Zaveri, 2023). In other words, separate but similar statements were given a generalizing label called a category. To conduct the first study, 20 articles from 2017 to 2023 were selected using a filtering method of search results. The articles were searched for statements that reflected an external view of the Karaites. The research was conducted in an ethical manner. Only publicly available information was analyzed. The study did not analyze specific individuals or sensitive content, and therefore adheres to standards of etiquette and privacy.

In-depth interviews were conducted to find out what shapes the national identity of national minorities and the importance of cultural heritage. 9 Lithuanian Karaims were interviewed. Interviews were conducted until sufficient information was obtained to answer the main questions. As the information became repetitive, data saturation was reached and the study was discontinued. In order to process and analyze the data collected for the qualitative study, the data were divided into categories, subcategories and statements.

The qualitative research instrument was a semi-structured interview, consisting of six main questions and follow-up questions. The pre-planned questions provided a framework for the interview process (Kardelis, 2017), but there were no strict time and response constraints for the informants. Questions 1-2 aimed to find out what objects were important in defining one's national identity, without trying to impose any preconceptions. Question 3 asked about the stories shared (to find out what stories are associated with national identity). Question 4 asked about relationships with members of the ethnic minority community. Question 5 sought to identify the factors that have helped the communities to survive to the present day. According to Riaupšienė (2007), the semi-structured interview gives the researcher flexibility, although the questions are pre-planned and numbered, but this type of interview allows the researcher to ask additional questions and draw attention to the interviewee's answers. In order to find out what shapes national identity and how community members relate to cultural heritage, community members were interviewed regardless of age, social status and education. Finally, a comparative analysis of the qualitative studies was carried out, as Zaveri (2023) argues that this helps to understand the relationship between the two qualitative studies.

Research results

Based on scientific sources, it has been established that heritage is divided into tangible and intangible heritage, and the study aimed to assess which elements of heritage of national minorities are identified in the media, and how national minorities themselves perceive and identify themselves through heritage elements. The content analysis of the Lithuanian media revealed that heritage is perceived through geographical and psychological aspects, while the content analysis of the interviews revealed that in addition to heritage, psychological and geographical aspects, national minorities associate their national identity with community activities. It is also important to underline that although both groups (media and minorities) identify national identity through heritage, geographical and psychological aspects, the content itself and the importance of the elements highlighted in it do not coincide in all respects.

The content analysis of the media most often emphasises the cultural heritage and geographical commonalities of the national minorities (see Figure 1), while the national identity of the Karaites is defined in the media by Karaite traditional pastries, the story of Vytautas the Great and Thrakai, and the national identity of the Tatars is associated with their culinary heritage – Hundred leave pie – and with their combativeness and loyalty to Prince Vytautas of Lithuania.
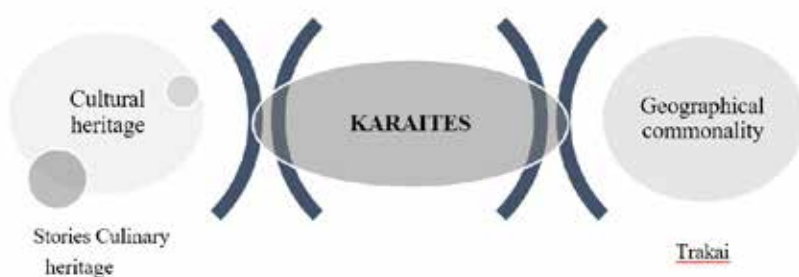

Figure 1. Key elements describing the national identity of Karaites and Tatars in the media (compiled by the authors, based on the survey data)

It cannot be avoided to point out that without these elements little would be known about national minorities in Lithuania. This attitude of the

journalists frames the national identity in 3 main frames and narrows the general public's perception of the national minority culture itself. Further analysis of the content of the articles presented reveals other aspects that describe who the Karaites are, but it is important to note that they are not given special attention.

It was found that the media highlight the material heritage of Karaite and Tatar culture, especially the culinary heritage. The most frequent focus is on Karaite traditional pastries, due to their popularity in Lithuania, but it is also mentioned that the Karaite culinary heritage does not only consist of Karaite traditional pastries, but no greater attention is paid to the presentation of other dishes. It is also important to emphasise that the media position Karaite cuisine in a positive context, describing it as delicious, thus arousing the interest of readers. The study shows that one of the elements of the intangible heritage is the story of Vytautas the Great, which stands out because it is close to Lithuania and is linked not only to the Karaims, the Tatars, but also to the Lithuanian national identity, because Vytautas the Great is a historical figure close to Lithuanians and his mention helps to draw attention to him and position Karaites in a positive context. Vytautas the Great is a respected historical figure in Lithuania. In addition to the historical narrative of Vytautas the Great, the stories of cucumbers and wooden three- window houses are sometimes mentioned in the media, but these stories are not highlighted in all articles, so we cannot say that they define the national identity of the Karaites. In a religious and linguistic context, the Karaites are described as a people with a very unique religion and language, but it is stressed that religion is in decline among the Karaites and that the language has virtually disappeared. The Tatars, on the other hand, emphasise their religion, Islam, through wedding and funeral traditions. However, there is a noticeable loss of their language. In addition to religion and language, traditions and national dress are a unique feature. Thus, when the Karaite heritage is mentioned, the communication message tends to emphasise the Karaite traditional pastries and Vytautas the Great. Other cultural heritage items, such as religion, language, traditions and national costume, are placed in a positive context, described as unique, but not given enough attention or interest. In addition to cultural heritage, Karaite national identity is also reflected in the media in terms of geography. Karaites are associated with

Thrace because of the historical context of Vytautas the Great, and Thrace is perceived as a centre of attraction for Karaites.

The media do not hesitate to describe the Karaites in various ways. They emphasise their militancy, honesty and loyalty, based on the historical story of Vytautas the Great. More recently, articles have portrayed the Karaites in a positive light, describing them as a hospitable and tolerant people. It is important to note that these characteristics are not framed as the main communicative messages. It is noted that comparisons are sometimes used to show the similarity of Karaites to Jews, but such framing may offend the nation or create stereotypes that are not associated with the Karaite people.

When Karaites were asked what things were important to them in defining themselves as Karaites, culinary heritage, community, geographical commonality and psychological aspects were most emphasised (see Figure 2).
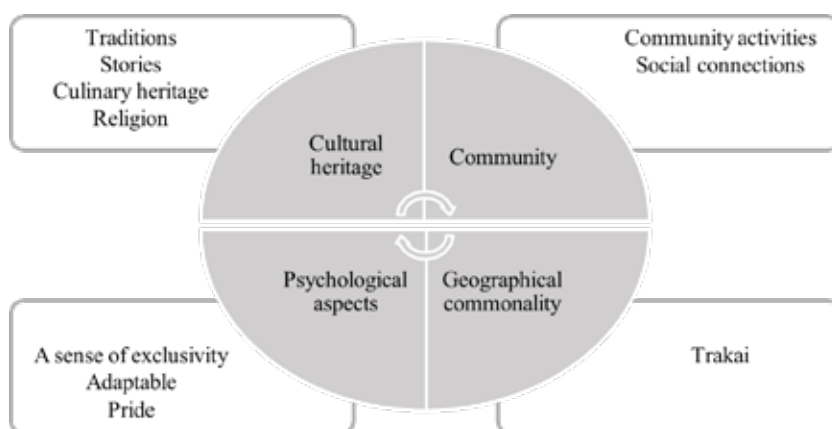
Figure 2: Key elements describing the Karaites' national identity
(compiled by the authors based on the survey data)

The activities and social ties of the Karaite community were highlighted. It was emphasised that without the activities of the community, it would be more difficult to maintain the Karaite people, as it is in the community that cultural knowledge, language learning and observance of traditions are promoted. It also strengthens the sense of belonging to the Karaite people in the community. The Karaites spend a lot of time

together, celebrating festivals, participating in summer gatherings and various events, thus forming and consolidating the Karaite national identity through community activities.

In addition to community activities, the Karaites pay great attention to their cultural heritage, especially their culinary heritage, traditions, stories and religion, and it is therefore striking that not all elements of cultural heritage are important to the Karaites in defining their national identity. With regard to culinary heritage, the Karaites emphasise that their culture is much deeper than a single dish. The various vegetable, meat and pasta dishes that bring the whole family or community together are important to them. They also value preserving traditions and passing them on to future generations. Karaites often point out that people in Lithuania celebrate Christmas, but Karaites do not have and do not practise this tradition and therefore associate their identity only with Karaites traditions. It is also important to stress that there is more innovation in mixed marriages of Karaites, and that families celebrate Karaim and Lithuanian traditions. Karaites hear different stories in the family and in the community. Stories that the Karaites associate themselves with include Vytautas the Great, the story of cucumber growing, and stories about old ways of preserving the nation, but an important difference that has been noted between the media and the Karaims' narratives is that in the media the Karaites are associated with the story of the wooden houses with three windows, but according to the Karaites themselves, the wooden houses of the Karaites have more than three windows, and so the story does not represent the Karaites.

The religious and linguistic context is defined by the Karaites in the same way as by the media, acknowledging that they are not strongly religious and that they rarely know the language, but stressing that they try to use the language at festivals and to include a word in their communication, and that they are religiously associated with the Karaite religion.

Both the Karaites themselves and the media express the Karaite national identity in a geographical context, linking the Karaite people to Thrace. Both groups point to Trakai as the centre of Karaite attraction. The Karaites describe Trakai as a homeland to which it is always good to return. The Karaites describe Lithuania itself as a country that has invited and welcomed them, and they are happy that there is respect for Karaite culture

in Lithuania. In addition to Lithuania and Trakai, the Karaites also refer to Crimea, from where the Karaites were brought to Lithuania, and to the continuing friendship between the Crimean Karaites and the Lithuanian Karaites, but emphasise the differences in their cultural heritage today.

The analysis of the psychological aspects shows that the media describe the Karaites somewhat differently than the Karaites describe themselves. The Karaites associate themselves with a sense of uniqueness, adaptability to their environment and pride in their nation. Both groups acknowledge that Karaites are tolerant of other cultures, and therefore the media's position on tolerance is correctly perceived in relation to Karaite national identity. It is also important to add that while the media sometimes refers to the similarity of Karaites to Jews, Karaites claim that comparisons of their culture to Jews and Muslims are disappointing, as they see their nation as unique and authentic.

To sum up, the key features that define the national identity of the Karaites in the media are Karaite traditional pastries, Trakai, Vytautas the Great, and it is with these communicative frames that the media define the national identity of the Karaims. The Karaims themselves define their national identity through their community activities, through various historical stories heard in the family and in the community, through Thracians, through their culinary heritage consisting of various dishes, through the traditions cherished in the family and in the community, and through their religion.

The differences that emerged between the two groups are due to the fact that journalists choose a communicative frame, which can be influenced by personal beliefs, experiences and values. Journalists often focus on what will attract attention and interest, so the articles chose to mention Vytautas the Great, Trakai and the Karaite traditional pastries (hereafter "3 main communicative frames") because these frames are familiar to Lithuanians and therefore it is easier for journalists to draw attention to them and introduce the Karaites to Lithuanians. In addition, Lithuanians also associate themselves with Vytautas the Great, and since he brought the Karaites to Lithuania, this historical aspect creates a positive attitude towards the Karaites. In online media, articles always start with one of these three frames. This means that although other aspects of the Karaite cultural heritage are mentioned, they are placed at the end of the articles,

with less emphasis or less frequent mention. In addition to the three main frames, some cultural aspects are more prominent in some articles and others in others, but it was not observed that anything else is more prominent in addition to the three main frames, because other cultural aspects of Karaites are not relevant, known or assimilated by Lithuanians.

Conclusions

The analysis of the scientific literature has shown that the concept of cultural heritage is dynamic and constantly evolving, but that it is most clearly expressed through the tangible and intangible cultural heritage inherited from the past in all its forms and types. The essence of cultural heritage is the stories, knowledge, traditions and other cultural elements that have been passed down from generation to generation and that play a role in shaping national identity. An analysis of the literature has shown that the national identity of national communities is shaped not only by their relationship with cultural heritage, but also by economic and social progress and political structure. It also includes an understanding of how individuals emotionally connect and identify with their nation, and the shared idea of nation they form in their minds.

The online media research showed that the Karaite and Tatar people and their cultural heritage are positively positioned in the media. The Karaites are described as a national community characterised by hospitality and tolerance towards Lithuanian culture, and the Karaims' cultural heritage is described as interesting and unique.

The interviews revealed that the national identity of Lithuanian Karaims is defined not only by their cultural heritage, but also by three other key elements, such as geographical commonality, community and psychological aspects. The study revealed that the Karaites have a positive attitude towards their nation, describing it as one that is able to adapt to its environment while preserving its national identity, tolerant of other cultures, and proud of its origins and authentic cultural heritage. These psychological aspects strengthen the national identity by giving the Karaites a positive feeling of being part of something big and important. Based on the results of the study, it can be argued that the national identity of the Karaites is composed of more elements than are revealed in the media. Thus, it can

be said that the national identity of Lithuania's minorities (Karaites and Tatars) is deepened and promoted through community activities, cultural heritage, traditions and historical narratives. The media emphasise certain communicative frames, such as Karaite traditional pastries, Hundred leave pie, Trakai or Vytautas the Great, which arouse interest and help to familiarise Lithuanians with the minorities (Karaites and Tatars). Despite this difference in the way journalists and Karaites define themselves, both groups share the common goal of preserving and promoting their cultural heritage and national identity.

The aim of the study was to investigate which elements of cultural heritage are most important for Karaites in defining their national identity in the multicultural environment of Lithuania, and to compare whether Karaite national identity is reflected in the media. Based on the results of the study, the overall conclusion is that Karaite national identity consists of more elements than the media reveals. Therefore, it can be argued that the aim of the study has been successfully achieved and the results obtained are significant as they can be used to improve the media reporting strategy in order to raise public awareness of national minorities living in Lithuania.

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ZNAČAJ ŠIRENJA KULTURNE BAŠTINE U OBLIKOVANJU ODRŽIVOG NACIONALNOG IDENTITETA: STUDIJA O LITAVSKIM MANJINAMA

Sažetak

Nacionalni identitet može se definirati načinom na koji pojedinci doživljavaju sebe i što smatraju važnim pri predstavljanju drugima. U Litvi nacionalne zajednice suočavaju se s različitim stavovima prema svom nacionalnom identitetu. Kako bi se očuvao održivi nacionalni identitet, ključno je prenositi svjedočanstva o njegovom svakodnevnom postojanju, a to je njegova kulturna baština. Kulturna baština služi kao banka sjećanja koja utjelovljuje bit kulturnog identiteta i igra značajnu ulogu u izgradnji nacije.

Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj istražiti elemente kulturne baštine koji su ključni za litvanske manjinske kulture (Karaimi i Tatari) u definiranju njihovog nacionalnog identiteta u multikulturalnom okruženju i usporediti ih s okvirima koje stvara medij. Istraživanje koristi metode kvalitativne analize sadržaja uz pristup mješovitih instrumenata. Analizirani su podaci iz online medija kako bi se identificirale karakteristike kulturne baštine i pozicija medija. Teorija uokvirivanja (framing theory) korištena je za ispitivanje rezultata analize sadržaja, usredotočujući se na sheme interpretacije koje koriste pojedinci ili mediji.

Analiza pokazuje da litvanski mediji prikazuju kulturnu baštinu nacionalnih manjina u pozitivnom svjetlu. Međutim, nacionalni identitet nacionalnih manjina primarno je predstavljen kroz tri okvira: tradicionalnu kuhinju, jezik i tradiciju, kolektivno sjećanje i zajedničku povijest. Polustrukturirani intervjui provedeni su s pripadnicima nacionalnih manjina kako bi se istražili faktori koji pridonose održivom nacionalnom identitetu. Intervjui su otkrili da identitet nacionalnih manjina utječu i faktori izvan tri okvira koja ističu mediji.

Kroz komparativnu analizu postalo je jasno da mediji ne prikazuju točno nacionalni identitet nacionalnih manjina (Karaima i Tatara) u Litvi. Umjesto toga, selektivno naglašavaju specifične kulturne elemente dok umanjuju važnost drugih.

Ključne riječi: kulturna baština, masovni mediji, nacionalna zajednica, nacionalne manjine, održivi nacionalni identitet