

War Heritage: Different Perceptions of the Dominant Discourse among Visitors to the “Adem Jashari” Memorial Complex in Prekaz

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Abstract : In Kosovo, public rhetoric and popular sentiment position the War of 1998-99 (the war) as central to the formation of contemporary Kosovo's national identity. This period was marked by the forced massive displacement of Kosovo Albanians, the destruction of entire settlements, the loss of family members, and the profound emotional trauma experienced by civilians, particularly those who actively participated in the war as members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Amidst these profound experiences, the Prekaz Massacre (The Massacre) is widely regarded as the defining event that preceded the final struggles of 1999 and the long-awaited attainment of independence. This study aims to explore how different visitors perceive the dominant discourse at The Memorial, a site dedicated to commemorating the Prekaz Massacre, and to identify the factors that influence their perceptions. The research employs a comprehensive mixed-method approach, combining online surveys, critical discourse analysis of visitor impressions, and content analysis of media representations. The findings of the study highlight the significant role played by original material remains in shaping visitor perceptions of The Memorial in comparison to the curated symbols and figurative representations interspersed throughout the landscape. While the design elements and physical layout of the memorial undeniably hold significance in conveying the memoryscape, there are notable shortcomings in enhancing the overall visitor experience. Visitors are still primarily influenced by the tangible remnants of the war, suggesting that there is room for improvement in how design elements can more effectively contribute to the memorial's narrative and the collective memory of the Prekaz Massacre.

Keywords : critical discourse analysis, memorialisation, national discourse, public rhetoric, war tourism

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