“Commonplaces of Memory“ in Personal Memories – the Example of Weddings in Gora

Members of the Gorani community with whom I have spoken talked about the Gorani wedding ritual as a marker of the Gorani ethnic community. In other words, they did not present it only as an important event in their own lives, but also as an event which is meaningful for the whole community. I have assumed that if an event is of special significance then the memory of it must occupy a special place in individual memory. This encouraged me to analyze personal memories of Gorani weddings in this paper.

In the paper I will show which elements contribute to the maintaining of certain contents in individual memory and how commonplaces of memory are made within individual memory. At the same time, I will attempt to answer the question of the influence of collective frameworks of remembering in the formation of these commonplaces. In this context I consider the question of the relationship between the individual and collective memory and remembrance.

Furthermore, in the paper I will show that commonplaces of memory within personal memory are formed under the influence of collective memory, and that the selection of events which will be remembered more intensively that others, as well as the measure in which the retained memories will be near to the collective model depends on the individual’s personal (subjective) choice. It is evident that the Gorani wedding represents a social practice which is not comprised only of the influence of the collective on the individual memory and remembrance, but that the reverse is also plainly visible. Individual memory, because it is organized in accordance to a certain collective frame of reference enables that frame to last and reproduce.