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SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PREREQUISITES OF THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND MENTALITY OF THE INDIGENOUS ARMENIAN POPULATION OF ARTSAKH

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The article discusses several psychological features in the formation of national identity, mentality, and core beliefs, using the example of Armenians from Artsakh. Based on research conducted with individuals born and living in Artsakh over the past three decades, it identifies the historically and culturally rooted factors that, according to the author, have a significant impact on the formation of national identity, national consciousness, and thought processes in times of crisis. As noted by Armenian and foreign researchers, since ancient times, the people of Karabakh have been known for their bravery, courage, resourcefulness, resilience, honesty, incorruptibility, and unwavering loyalty in their behavioral choices. Nature and history in Artsakh have shaped a community belonging to the Armenoid anthropological type, one that, spread throughout the world, can be easily recognized by its dynamism, self-sacrificing bravery, inclination toward courage, resilience that borders on tenacity, convictions that verge on stubbornness, and a patriarchal approach in family life. These admirable traits of the people of Artsakh seem to embody the ancient Armenian virtues. Passed down through generations, these human qualities have hardened and shaped the unique and distinctive character of the Armenian population of the region.

Keywords – *ethnic identity, national mentality, core beliefs, components of mentality, national character, Soviet generation, independence generation, survey method, value orientations.*

Introduction: Throughout its origin and historical development, a nation acquires an interconnected set of psychological traits, forming a more or less cohesive system, which is known as national mentality¹ [7]. Mentality is a national character, national consciousness, and the spiritual-behavioral trait by which an ethnic group distinguishes itself from others, such as Caucasian nations differing from Slavic ones. National character is a stable system of adaptive formations and complexes, among which the primary components include national identity, core attitudes, national spirit, and ethnocentrism. National character is a complex social phenomenon that defines the stable characteristics specific to a given national or ethnic community, encompassing ideas, interests, spiritual, moral, and religious values, motivations, aspirations, and socio-psychological defense mechanisms [8]. At the root of national character and identity lie the psychophysiological traits of the human organism, such as the reactivity of the central nervous system and response speed, which, in turn, are related to the conditions of the living environment. The structure of national character includes several elements.

1. temperament, such as intense or calm;
2. emotions, like national optimism or pessimism;
3. feelings, such as national pride or national apathy;
4. prejudices, including the nation's mission and national roles [7].

The formation of national character is a historical and psychological process spanning centuries. In various environmental conditions, people gradually adapt, developing specific patterns of perception and response with an adaptive nature. These adaptive mechanisms become ingrained in socially established and reinforced norms of individual and collective behavior. In this regard, the focus of our study—the independence generation, with a history of only thirty years—may raise some doubts, as this period is evidently short for recording new trends in the formation of national mentality. However, the aim is not to examine the formation of a new national character or mentality unique to Armenians. Instead, it will explore the factors that, in extraordinary situations and under rapidly shifting conditions, may impart new emphases to the long-term process of forming national mentality.

Prerequisites: The proclamation of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) on September 2, 1991, the legal affirmation of independent statehood through the December 10 referendum that same year, followed by the Artsakh War, the 30-year process of state-building, and ultimately, the depopulation of Artsakh, represent some of the most significant events in modern Armenian history from

¹ The national psyche is sometimes used interchangeably with the concept of national mentality, which refers to the system of attitudes and tendencies of individuals, social groups, and the nation. At the core of mentality lies the national worldview.

socio-political, international-legal, historical, and other perspectives. Chronologically, the declaration of independence in Artsakh coincided with the collapse of the Soviet empire and the decline of communist ideology, while the depopulation aligns with the formation of a new world order²:

Relevance: In the three decades following the declaration of independence, Armenian (and not only Armenian) scholarly thought has explored and evaluated these events from various perspectives. However, to this day, it is difficult to find a comprehensive study that addresses the collective mentality of the individuals involved in this process, particularly representatives of the independence generation, as well as the factors impacting this mentality during the transitional period resulting from changes in the state governance system and social life. Our interest lies in the socio-psychological aspect of the phenomenon under discussion. Therefore, in this article, we will attempt to outline the psychological factors and the effects of their influence, which have been crucial in shaping the mentality, specifically the socio-psychological profile, of the independence generation. What characterizes the generation born and raised in Artsakh?

Are they the inheritors of their ancestors' traits, or, conversely, do they stand out with entirely new qualities not typical of previous generations? Have they adopted the value system and responsibilities passed down from the older generation, or have they developed entirely new value orientations? It is worth noting that many specialists, often remaining at the “surface” of the phenomenon, unequivocally assert that the declaration of independent statehood and the victorious Artsakh war have provided a solid foundation for the formation of a “victorious generation” with a “victor's psychology.”

“There is, of course, a degree of truth here. For people raised in a Soviet communist, highly ideological system-deprived of autonomy and, consequently, trapped in a state of helplessness and despair-the opportunity to “break free from the chains” could genuinely contribute to increased self-confidence and self-worth in the Soviet generation, and to a sense of superiority in the new generation. However, we believe this phenomenon has two sides. For example, it is worth exploring the psychological states, emotions, and feelings of the independence generation following the depopulation of Artsakh, especially as they engage with their foreign peers who enjoy a significantly higher standard of living and, in modern cultural terms, are seen as more developed. Might they be experiencing depressive states or developing

² Here, we are discussing the legal-political decline of communist ideology, as it is evident that once-dominant ideas do not simply “die out” quickly; rather, they lose their preeminent position while remaining viable. In September 2023, the entire Armenian population of Artsakh was forcibly displaced from their homeland, finding refuge in the Republic of Armenia.

feelings of inferiority? What kinds of group sentiments have emerged within this new generation, particularly as social stratification within the country has deepened, the dreams and expectations related to the recognition of independent statehood have remained unfulfilled, and countless issues concerning security and socio-economic development remain unresolved? Additionally, the looming threat of military aggression-like a “Damoclean sword” over the country-persisted in April 2016, September 2020, and September 2023. To address these complex issues, we must first clarify the terms “psychological collective image” and “mentality,” or at least explain how we interpret and use them within the context of the arguments presented in this article.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROBLEM: In psychology, a person's mentality is the unique and relatively stable unity of their psychological traits, encompassing both universal and socially characteristic traits for individuals within a given environment, as well as the individual's own characteristics—such as temperament, character, abilities, distinctive motivations and emotions, the peculiarities of psychological processes, and the structure of self-awareness [4, p. 134].

As follows from this classical definition, the primary components that shape an individual's mental makeup are the universal and social traits typical of people in the given environment, while the other component is related to the collection of personal characteristics of the individual. Interestingly, nearly all accepted definitions of the "person" in psychological literature also directly relate to the individual's relationships with their social environment and other people, as the "person" represents a social quality within an individual, embodying a representative of specific social communities (such as nationality, social class, group, etc.) who engages in a particular type of activity, is aware of their relationships with others, and possesses specific individual characteristics [5]. It is at least clear to us that the concepts applied to define an individual's “mentality” refer specifically to those individuals who embody the characteristics typical of a given society, but they do not pertain to the description of those characteristics themselves, which is more of a sociological issue than a psychological one. This concerns phenomena that characterize the given social order or community, such as the standard of living of the population, the degree of freedoms and the level of their guarantees, people's involvement in addressing important issues for the country, the prevailing ideas and their direction, as well as numerous other historical, cultural, socio-political, and socio-domestic matters.

For a specialist, it is challenging to unambiguously study and identify which specific transformations in social life are crucial for the formation or alteration of people's mentality.

The issue under discussion becomes even more complicated due to the presence of concepts in psychology such as core beliefs, ethnic identity, mentality,

social-psychological profile, and similar terms. These terms describe a person's general characteristics, encompassing their internal psychological structure, system of social attitudes, the "organization" of psychological traits, as well as possible behaviors in socially significant contexts [1].

Additionally, the concepts of personality profile or personality portrait are also used in the practice of psychological diagnosis. In our view, the personality profile differs from the psychological portrait primarily in that it is largely a quantitative rather than a qualitative characterization [2, p. 79]. Unlike a personality profile, a portrait is not a scale or table that describes the correlation of scores derived from various factors; rather, it is a description of that correlation, involving textual and content analysis and interpretation. Nevertheless, the identification and interpretation of a profile can have a significant positive impact on clarifying a person's portrait and mentality. The fact is that a complete personality profile reveals information about almost all aspects of an individual's life and includes the following components:

1. the individual's unique style of thinking, acting, and perceiving the essence and content of phenomena, along with the ability to predict possible behaviors in significant situations;
2. the main personal characteristics and important value orientations;
3. the emotional profile, which includes which events may provoke emotions, which may not, the psychological experiences they can immerse themselves in, and the characteristic emotional experiences;
4. worldview, beliefs, and biases that influence the individual's interests and everyday behavior;
5. current goals and the means to achieve them;
6. characteristics of personality; how the individual perceives themselves and how they present themselves to others;
7. interpersonal conflicts, complexes, and forms of expression;
8. motivations, decision-making abilities, and strategies for building relationships;
9. loyalty and risk factors;
10. characteristics of professional activity and prospects for advancement [3, 8].

To understand the substantive changes that have occurred in the generalized psyche of the generation born after the declaration of independence, we first need to recall what has changed during this period and identify the characteristic social-psychological components that were previously associated with the moral-psychological profile of the "builder of communism." This assumption is made with the understanding that these components were sufficiently characteristic and consolidated in the collective psyche of the people of Artsakh during the socialist regime. Theoretically, the moral value system of the "builder of communism" included the following principles:

Dedication to the cause of communism: A deep love for the socialist homeland and solidarity with countries in the socialist camp.

Diligent work for societal interests: The principle that "he who does not work, neither shall he eat."

Concern for the preservation and growth of societal achievements: A sense of responsibility and care towards collective progress.

Strong awareness of social duty: Intolerance towards any violation of public interests.

Collectivism and mutual assistance: The ethos of "one for all, and all for one."

Humanitarian attitude towards others: Emphasizing that "man is a friend, brother, and relative to man."

Honesty and integrity: Upholding moral purity, simplicity, and modesty in both personal and public life.

Mutual respect within the family: Emphasizing the importance of caring for the upbringing of children.

Intolerance towards injustice, laziness, dishonesty, and careerism: A rejection of negative behaviors that undermine societal values.

Friendship among peoples: Promoting solidarity and rejecting national and racial discrimination.

Intolerance towards enemies of communism: Standing against those who threaten peace and the freedom of nations.

Fraternal solidarity among the working class of all countries: Fostering international cooperation and support among workers globally.

If we deliberately exclude concepts and traits that are not directly related to moral and psychological characterization from this value system, we will have the following picture: the Soviet person was characterized by (or at least theoretically should have been characterized by) devotion, diligence, conscientiousness, compassion, care, friendliness, humanitarianism, respect, honesty, modesty, fairness, moral purity, simplicity, solidarity, and principledness (in the text, intolerance toward negative phenomena).

Due to these characteristics, the "builder of communism" acquired a generalized image in which personal interests and success were subordinate to the public good and welfare. Setting aside the contentious issue of how people in real life perceived, appropriated, and accepted communist ideas, it is worth noting that in the analysis of the unique factors of the Armenian population of Artsakh, there are opinions circulating that it is precisely because of these characteristics that the Artsakh Armenians were able to author numerous episodes of courage and heroism in life-and-death wars, where the adversary often exceeded them in military technology, weaponry, and human resources. Our personal viewpoint on this matter is that this hypothesis deserves to be considered and may be correct to some extent if we accept

that the Artsakh Armenians have historically embodied, more than their neighboring territories, characteristics such as traditionalism, lawfulness, and especially the exceptional ability to unite around a national idea in critical moments. The Armenians of Artsakh not only belong to the Armenoid anthropological type of the Indo-European language family but also represent the most striking representatives of that type [5].

Thus, we can conclude that the Armenian population of Artsakh has embarked on the path of building its statehood with generalized moral-psychological qualities and socio-psychological characteristics, the primary sources of which are two:

Traditionalism, being imbued with national-traditional notions of morality, homeland, and honor,

Law-abidance, upbringing shaped by the prevailing ideas of the given time period.

SUBJECTIVE APPROACH: The author of the article holds a viewpoint of an "immediate participant" regarding the phenomena described, thus deriving insights from personal experience and observations. For a comprehensive disclosure of the issue, it is important not to underestimate the role of these two foundational pillars, but rather to attempt to construct the system of value orientations of the generation building an independent state based on them. This is because it was that very Soviet generation at the roots of independence, and the new generation simply did not have sufficient time to shape a new identity. The traditionalism and law-abidance that previously characterized the Armenian population of Artsakh still do not raise doubts today.

In Artsakh, this island of Armenian preservation, concepts such as honor, conscience, shame, and tradition have been maintained until the last day, more than in any other region. The resident of Artsakh has firmly clung to his parcel of land. The Armenian youth of Artsakh had not yet been as "civilized" as their compatriots from other areas. We believe that the reinforcement of this phenomenon has also been aided by the region's highly monoethnic nature (where the number of Armenians approached almost 100 percent), its relative isolation from various influences (due to closed borders and harsh blockades), limited interactions with representatives of other nations, and the minimal scale of various "humanitarian, developmental, human rights, and freedom-supporting" programs, which typically pursue non-national, private, and opportunistic interests and goals.

Empirical Research: In order to study the generalized value orientations of the generation born and raised in Artsakh, we previously conducted social-psychological research on young men aged 18-20 in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Artsakh [3]. This selection was based on the fact that the army is concentrated with a large number of youth of the same gender, age, and purpose. The study was conducted in 2004-2005 and in 2008 using a social-psychological survey method. Questionnaires

were presented that indirectly aimed to reveal the value orientations of the youth, particularly their attitudes toward independence and statehood. For example, for the question "What should be primarily defended with arms?" various response options were provided. In another survey, to enhance reliability, the question was phrased as follows: "Rank the following concepts by importance: Homeland, Independence, State, Faith, Honor, Parents and Family, Friends."

From the results obtained, we observed that the undeniable priority, as well as a growing trend over the years, belongs to "parents and family." More than half of the respondents chose this option. "Homeland" and "State" shared the second and third places, each receiving about 22% of the votes. If "Faith" was selected by one in ten respondents, with this figure remaining unchanged over the years, then the concepts of "Honor" and "Independence" experienced a significant decline, dropping from 15% and 10% to 5% over the course of four years, respectively. We believe that these calculations, which may seem trivial at first glance, can greatly aid in correctly understanding the values guiding the generation of independence. For instance, it can be concluded that independence was much "sweeter" during its initial acquisition phases in the 1990s and early 2000s, as the enthusiasm and expectations for a better future were high at that time. However, year by year, facing various everyday difficulties and unresolved social issues, this enthusiasm noticeably diminished, giving way to feelings of disappointment and unfulfilled hopes and expectations.

Table 1 Results of the Survey of Boys Aged 18-20 (2004-2005)

Question	Response Options	2004/1	2004/2	2005/1	2005/2
	Number of Respondents	1294	3492	3318	250
Rank by Importance	Faith	11.1	9,9	14.4	10.3
	Honor	14.8	12,1	6.0	4.8
	Homeland	18.3	11,1	19.2	22.0
	Independence	9.7	9,2	1.6	4.4
	Parents, family	34.5	14,3	33.2	51.6
	Friends, Surroundings	5	11,8	-	-
State/Republic		5.3	11,5	20.4	22.5

From the survey results, another interesting conclusion can be drawn: questioning the independence generation's lack of patriotism appears to be unfounded, as the youth increasingly understands concepts such as statehood and homeland. Among the factors hindering patriotism, they specifically cite the country's socio-economic situation (see Table 2).

Table 2 Survey Results for 18-20-Year-Old Boys (2004-2005)

What hinders patriotism?	Family	1251	9,5	1074	10.3	177	6,6
	Friends, Surroundings	343	2,6	286	2.7	57	2,1
	Social situation of the country	10135	77,1	8055	77.1	2080	78
	the state of the army	1197	9,1	962	9.2	235	8,7

It can now be asserted that market relations, social polarization, and the reordering of value orientations (personal interests and priorities, materialism, individualism, the decline of "spiritual values," etc.) lead to a diversity of issues related to the intellectual, physical, and overall preparedness of the youth, which in turn affects the formation of the psyche of the generation of independence. The problem is further complicated by the fact that many representatives of the Soviet generation, unable to adapt to the new circumstances, ceased to make efforts, retreated from their positions, and gave way. Some adopted an indifferent and passive stance, leaving the younger generation with the monopoly of navigating complex situations, saying, "If you reject our ideas, then please do not disturb us and do whatever you want." By abandoning an active life stance and adopting a passive position, some representatives of the Soviet generation inadvertently reinforced the inertia of the communist ideas that had become the meaning of life for them. This self-isolation of the "generation of fathers" and the change in the environment of the independence generation's activities led to an increase in the instability of the value-oriented system for the youth. To provide a professional assessment of this situation, it will be necessary to identify events that are significant for the country's present and future, in which the participation of young people is substantial.

Let us recall that national character is a system of certain reactions and tendencies to act, arising from shared experiences and lifestyle. The true traits of a nation and its individual representatives, often latent or repressed, tend to manifest themselves spontaneously and exhibit behavioral expressions in problematic situations. This becomes particularly evident in conflictual and crisis situations. In this regard, it is hard to find a more typical example than war. In a critical moment, the youth of Artsakh found themselves in the vortex of fighting against uncertainty. It is natural to assume that, in the absence of time to make considered decisions, the youth would be guided in their behavioral expressions by the internal drives and stable positions mentioned in the introduction of this article. To its credit, it should be noted that even the most optimistic forecasts were far exceeded. The generation of independence, at least the male representatives, fearlessly plunged into battle. The girls did not lag behind the boys at all; they massively engaged in the volunteer movement aimed at supporting and securing the frontlines. Groups of 30 to 40 girls were engaged in volunteer work for weeks on end in food and supply depots,

distributing food, clothing, and items collected for the front. This kind of behavior demonstrates that the generation of independence has remained, in terms of its mindset, a worthy bearer and continuer of the national character, national thinking, and traditions historically shaped by previous generations.

Conclusion: Thus, the formation of national psyche is a historical and psychological process significantly influenced by extraordinary and crisis situations in the socio-political life of the given period. The generation of independence among the Armenian population of Artsakh reaffirms its exceptional ability to unite around a common idea of tradition, lawfulness, and patriotism, even in times of emigration. Despite the specific characteristics of its formation due to socio-economic and socio-political complexities, the generation of independence carries within its collective psyche the essential traits of national character and thinking that have historically distinguished Armenians as ethno-psychological characteristics.

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ՀՈԳԵԿԵՐՏՎԱԾՔԻ ԶԵՎԱԿՈՐՄԱՆ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ
ՆԱԽԱԴՐՅԱԼՆԵՐԸ**

Վիրյա Յարամիշյան (Երևանի պետական համալսարան, Երևան, Հայաստան)

*Արմենուհի Սանթրոսյան (Եվրասիա համագործակցություն հիմնադրամ,
Երևան, Հայաստան)*

Հոգվածում քննարկվում է ազգային ինքնության, հոգեկերտվածքի և հիմնարար համոզմունքների ձևավորման մի քանի հոգեբանական առանձնահատկություններ Արցախի հայերի օրինակով: Այնտեղ ծնված և վերջին երեք տասնամյակներում ապրած անձանց հետազոտության արդյունքների հիման վրա առանձնացվել են հոգեկերտվածքի պատմամշակութային ծագում ունեցող այն գործոնները, որոնք, ըստ հեղինակների, արտակարգ իրավիճակում իրենց շոշափելի ազդեցությունն են թողնում ազգային ինքնության, ազգային գիտակցության և մտածողության ձևավորման գործընթացի վրա: Ինչպես վկայում են հայ և այլազգի հետազոտողները, հնագույն ժամանակներից ի վեր դարաբաղցին եղել է քաջ, համարձակ, հնարագետ, դիմացկուն, ազնիվ, անկաշառ ու անդավաճան՝ իր վարքային ընտրության մեջ: Բնությունն ու պատմությունը Արցախում ստեղծել են արմենոիդ մարդաբանական տիպին պատկանող այնպիսի հանրույթ, որը, ներկայումս սփռված լինելով ամբողջ աշխարհում, հեշտությամբ կարող է ճանաչվել գործունեության լայն թափով, անձնագրի քաջությամբ, խիզախության նկատմամբ հակվածությամբ, կողահաստության հասնող համառությամբ, իրասաժիության հասնող համոզվածությամբ, ընտանեական կյանքում՝ նահապետականությամբ: Արցախցու այս համակրելի գծերը կարծես խտացնում են հին հայկական առաքինությունները: Մարդկային այս որակները՝ արցախցի բազմաթիվ սերունդների երակներով փոխանցվելով, կարծրացել ու ձևավորել են երկրամասի հայության յուրատիպ անկրկնելի նկարագիրը:

Հանգուցային բառեր – էթնիկ ինքնություն, ազգային հոգեկերտվածք, հիմնարար համոզմունքներ, հոգեկերտվածքի բաղադրիչներ, ազգային բնավորություն, խորհրդային սերունդ, անկախության սերունդ, հետազոտության մեթոդ, արժեքային կողմնորոշումներ:

СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ПРЕДПОСЫЛКИ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ЭТНИЧЕСКОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ И МЕНТАЛИТЕТА КОРЕННОГО АРМЯНСКОГО НАСЕЛЕНИЯ АРЦАХА

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Арменуи Сантросян()

В статье рассматриваются некоторые психологические особенности формирования национальной идентичности, психики, менталитета и базовых убеждений на примере арцахских армян. По результатам исследования людей,

родившихся и проживавших в Арцахе в последние три десятилетия, были выявлены факторы историко-культурного происхождения формирования психики, которые, согласно рассуждениям автора, оказывают ощутимое влияние на процесс формирования психики, национальной идентичности, национального самосознания и мышления в условиях чрезвычайных ситуаций. Как свидетельствуют армянские и зарубежные исследователи, карабахцы с древних времен были смелыми, отважными, находчивыми, выносливыми, честными, неподкупными и верными в своем поведенческом выборе людьми. Природа и история в Арцахе создали такую общность, принадлежащую к арменоидному антропологическому типу, которую, будучи разбросанной по всему миру, легко узнать по широкому размаху деятельности, самоотверженному мужеству, склонности к храбрости, достигающему до степени упрямства, убежденности, достигающей до уровня базовых основ, консерватизма в семейной жизни. Эти положительные черты Арцахского армянина, кажется, воплощают в себе старинные армянские достоинства. Эти человеческие качества, передаваемые по венам многих поколений арцахцев, в итоге закаляли и формировали уникальную и неповторимую психологическую характеристику армян региона.

Ключевые слова – этническая идентичность, национальный менталитет, глубинные убеждения, компоненты менталитета, национальный характер, советское поколение, поколение независимости, метод опроса, ценностные ориентации.

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ՔՈՎԱՆԴԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ * СОДЕРЖАНИЕ * CONTENTS

Anahit Gevorgyan THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CRISIS BY EMPLOYEES (ON THE EXAMPLE OF RA LABOR MARKET).....	3
Anastasiia Shumarova ADAPTIVE MECHANISMS UNDER CONDITIONS OF CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO EXTREME STRESS IN THE CIVILIAN POPULATION... 12	
Arman Babayan, Yenok Hakobyan, Hrant Avanesyan, Hrachya Hovhannisyan FEATURES OF APPLICATION OF MACHINE LEARNING TOOLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS	22
Armen Grigoryan, Sahak Hovhannisyan INVESTIGATION OF ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE	38
David Hayrapetyan, Narine Mirzoyan DEVELOPING THE THEORETICAL RESOURCE MODEL FOR REFUGEE STUDENT INTEGRATION	44
Karine Hakobyan, Lusine Stepanyan EXPERT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF THE RESCUERS	61
Marine Mikaelian PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY WAR (BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE 2020 ARTSAKH WAR)	71
Vitya Yaramishyan, Armenuhi Santrosyan SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PREREQUISITES OF THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND MENTALITY OF THE INDIGENOUS ARMENIAN POPULATION OF ARTSAKH	84
Հոդվածներին ներկայացվող պահանջները.....	101