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**HISTORICAL MEMORY AS A BASIS OF CIVIL IDENTITY OF  
RUSSIAN YOUTH**

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*Abstract*

In a globalizing world, people can move freely in physical and social space, overcoming geographical and cultural boundaries. Under the conditions of the formation of a common field of the social practice for the entire mankind, the consolidation of social binds, the growth of cultural diversity, the identification space. For the Russian society the problem of formation of civil identity remains relevant throughout the post-Soviet history. The particular political and scientific importance of this theme is shown in modern conditions of transformation of the system of international relations. The development of effective technologies for the formation of civil identity is in the present time of strategic importance for the future of the Russian state. In the absence of a secular ideology uniting society in such multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state like Russia only the common past with its negative and positive events. The article considers historical memory as a backbone element of civil identity. Over the past decades, the problem of memory has been the subject of interdisciplinary research, causing a wide interest of anthropologists, psychologists, literary critics, etc. Special attention is paid to problems of memory in historical science. The article attempts to highlight the most relevant and controversial aspects of the study of historical memory at the present stage: problems of correlation between history and memory, the definition of the term "historical memory", the question of functions of historians in commemoration about the past. Key trends in the development of the research of historical memory are identified.

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**Keywords:** Civil identity, Russian youth, historical memory, historical consciousness, commemoration, "places of memory".



## **1. Introduction**

Civil identity, being a part of social identity, reflects the individual's ideas of belonging to a certain state, civil society, about the entities and structures themselves, their assessment, the right of personal choice – to remain in their composition or leave them, as well as activity orientations to achieve goals. The problem of formation of civil identity remains relevant throughout the entire post-Soviet period of Russian history (Malinova, 2015). Fundamental socio-political changes that took place in the early 1990s led to the erosion of traditional cultural values, global revision and reassessment of the past, marginalization of part of society, loss of pride in the past and responsibility for the future of the country, extreme value relativism. This phenomena, which is often defined as a crisis of civil identity, poses a threat to the future of Russian statehood. The problem of construction of civil identity assumes the particular importance in the current conditions of the ongoing transformation of the system of international relations.

In recent years, the institutions of state power, as well as representatives of the political elite, pay great attention to the theme of construction of civil identity (Koposov, 2011). Within the framework of the legislation, a number of legal documents have been developed, the key task of which is to educate patriotic young people with independent thinking, having a creative world view, professional knowledge, demonstrating a high culture, including a culture of interethnic communication, responsibility and ability to make independent decisions aimed at improving the welfare of the country, the people and their families. The formation of civil identity as the basis for the development of civil society is one of the key tasks of education identified in the FSES of the second generation.

## **2. Problem Statement**

At the same time, at the moment, insufficient attention is paid, in our opinion, to the preservation of historical memory, which is the basic element of the formation of civil identity. The images of the past which are rooted in the consciousness of society predetermine in particular the perception not only of their country, but also of its present and future. In the absence of a secular ideology uniting society in such a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state like Russia, only the common past with its negative and positive events, "places of memory" that are significant for the majority of the country's inhabitants can stand as a reliable basis for solidarity. Despite the fact that memory has been widely understood since the 1980s as a natural interdisciplinary phenomena, the functions of which can hardly be limited by any particular subject area, there are specific concepts of memory for each sphere of knowledge. In the historical and social sciences, in literary studies and psychology, "memory" is presented today in so many different ways and is used in so many different contexts that perhaps the term could be used in the plural.

## **3. Research Questions**

What aspects of the study of historical memory as a category of historical science are most relevant? First, one of the debatable questions is the correlation between history as a science and historical memory: history and memory, history or memory, history as memory? Secondly, since there is no unambiguous answer to the question of how history and memory correlate, there is no consistent approach to the definition of the term "historical memory" in modern science, which is interpreted differently by individual authors.

Thirdly, with the increase in the number of publications devoted to historical memory, more attention is paid to the problem of its formation and the role of professional historians in this process.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the work is to consider the approaches of modern researchers to the understanding of the phenomena of historical memory, which is a key element of civil identity.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The methodological basis of the research is the cultural-anthropological approach and the principles of "new cultural history". The problem of correlation and interrelation of such concepts as historical memory, historical consciousness is considered with the help of the system method. The historical-descriptive method will allow stating the history of the term "historical memory" in the scientific discourse. In addition, general scientific methods, including analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction, were used.

#### **6. Findings**

In modern research discourse, the concept of "civil identity" is becoming increasingly controversial. This is due to the fact that representatives of various social sciences (philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, historians, lawyer) define its content, structure and volume in different ways. Historian and ethnologist, academician Tishkov (2013) formulated already in the first half of the 1990s an innovative provisions on the possibility of interpreting the multinational Russian people as a historical and cultural, political and civil community, the historical continuity of the Russian state, from the point of view of historical memory. His ideas about the Homeland and the general culture with all ethnic and religious diversity of the Russian population became the basis of the concept of the Russian people as a multi-ethnic civil nation (Tishkov, 2013). In this approach, the basis for the formation of civil identity is historical memory.

The concept of connection between history and memory began to be actively developed in the 1980s in France as part of the regular discussion on the foundations and ways of development of historical science. In the words of the famous French historian, expert in the field of historiography Hartog (2008), the 1980s "were gripped by a wave of memory" (par. 4). In 1984, the French historian Nora (1999) proposed the concept of "places of memory". By the term "places of memory" he meant "museums, archives, cemeteries, collections, holidays, anniversaries, treatises, protocols, monuments, temples, associations – all these values in themselves – witnesses of another era, the illusion of eternity..." (Nora, 1999, par. 7).

In Russian historical science, the theme of historical memory appeared belatedly – in the 1990s, when Russian society was faced with a difficult choice: what is necessary to remember and what to call to memory about its past and what is to be forgotten. Among the domestic researchers dealing with the problems of historical memory are L.P. Repina, O.B. Leontieva, I.M. Saveleva, A.V. Poletaev, E.S. and A.S. Seniavskii, O.S. Porshneva, J.T. Toshchenko et al.

One of the debatable questions is the correlation between history as a science and historical memory: history and memory, history or memory, history as memory?

Halbwachs (1975), who introduced the term "social memory" into scientific use, identified it with historical memory. According to Halbwachs (1975), two types of memory are available for the individual: "On the one hand, his memories fit into the framework of his personality or personal life... On the other hand, at certain moments he is able to behave simply as a member of the group, evoking and maintaining impersonal memories to the extent that they affect his group" (p. 57). These two types of memory often penetrate each other: individual memory can rely on collective memory to confirm or clarify one or another remembrance or to fill gaps, and collective memory is centered around individual memories, but does not mix with them: "The collective memory develops according to its own laws, and even if some individual memories sometimes penetrate it, they change as soon as they are placed in a whole that is no longer the consciousness of the individual" (Halbwachs, 1975, p. 66). Thus, according to Halbwachs, there is reason to distinguish between the two memories: internal (personal, autobiographical) and external (social, or historical). History is a form of collective memory (Halbwachs, 1975). Outstanding British historian and philosopher Collingwood (1980) considered the problem of memory from the point of view of the theory of historical knowledge. Considering the concepts that ground the history on memory as untenable, he emphasized their independence from each other: "memory is not history, because history is a certain kind of organized or inferential knowledge, and memory is not organized, not inferential, at all" (Collingwood, 1980, p. 113). French historian Genet (2002) believed that it is possible to identify memory with history, "but not the one that was in reality, but the one that historians created" (p. 80). In contrast to the Genet, Nora (1999) contrasts memory and history, stating that these concepts cannot be synonymous.

In Russian science, the critical attitude to the concept of "historical memory" can be traced in the works of specialists in the theory and sociology of historical knowledge Saveleva and Poletaev (2006). Like many modern researchers, they contrast historical knowledge (science) and "historical memory".

Thus, the question of the correlation of historical memory and history as a science is not solved by modern researchers unambiguously. Even the most convinced critics of the phenomenon of historical memory do not refute the inextricable link between memory and history. In our opinion, the approach of German researchers Assman (2013) looks most convincingly:

*History is not memory. History and memory are two forms of dealing with the past, complementing each other and influencing each other. We need memory to breathe life into a mass of historical knowledge, and we need history to critically test memory constructs that are always subject to political conditions and dictated by the needs of the present. (p. 20)*

Hutton's (1993) position is close to this point of view. According to Hutton (1993), "it is not enough to describe the past through its representations, since such an approach assumes alienation from the living experiences that memory brings to the present" (p. 118).

Since there is no unambiguous answer to the question of how history and memory correlate, there is no consistent approach to the definition of the term "historical memory" in modern science, which is interpreted differently by individual authors. The most common definitions of the term "historical memory»:

- way to preserve and broadcast the past (hence the desire to create "places of memory") (Nora, 1999);
- one of the dimensions of individual and collective memory, symbolic representation of the past (Repina, 2006);
- a series of events, memories of which stores national history (Halbwachs, 1975);
- the phenomenon of public consciousness – "in a certain way focused consciousness, which reflects the special importance and relevance of information about the past in close connection with the present and future" (Toshchenko, 2000, par. 6);
- strong points of mass knowledge about the past, a minimum set of key images of events and personalities of the past in oral, visual or textual form, which are present in active memory (no effort is required to remember) (Saveleva & Poletaev, 2006);
- a set of ideas about the social past that exist in society both on a mass and individual level, including their cognitive, imaginative and emotional aspects (Repina, 2010). With this approach, historical memory acts as a synonym of historical knowledge and there is a natural question about the need for additional terms.

This diversity of approaches to the definition of "historical memory" indicates that a more or less precise definition has not yet been developed and the term is now used in a variety of senses (sometimes even within one and the same study). However, most often in modern literature historical memory is understood as the memory of the historical past, the representation of the historical past (Lykova, 2007).

With the increase in the number of publications devoted to historical memory, more attention is paid to the problem of its formation and the role of professional historians in this process. Ural researcher Mazur (2013) differentiates the sources and mechanisms of formation of historical memory. According to Mazur (2013), the mechanisms of translation of historical memory are: education system, mass media, oral communications, memory places.

As long as the topic of memory is relevant, the problem of historians' responsibility is also relevant. What is the role of professional historians: are we talking about the desire to reconstruct an objective and impartial picture of the past and to counteract the history that is influenced by the environment and always depends on the present? If we accept the thesis that historical memory is not just one of the main sources of information about the past, but also the most important means of forming an individual's civil identity, it becomes obvious that historians play a dual role in the process of formation, translation and transformation of historical memory. Thus, historians, not always consciously, determine how our past and present will look in the eyes of descendants.

## **7. Conclusion**

Analysis of publications devoted to various aspects of historical memory allows us to identify a number of trends that have emerged in recent years in the study of this phenomenon.

First, Russian researchers in the 2000s created fundamental works devoted to various aspects of preservation and translation of historical memory. The number of publications devoted to the role of historical memory in the formation of civil identity of the Russian youth is growing steadily (S.S. Bazhenov,

M.M. Butilmerzaeva, V.Yu. Gadaev and H.A.S. Khaladov, N.L. Vakhonin, etc.). Special attention is paid naturally to the problems of historical memory as the basis of civil identity in historical science.

Second, researchers are increasingly interested in the national dimension of historical memory, historical memory as the basis of an individual's civil identity (Griban, 2014; Finney, 2011, 2013; Lowenthal, 2004; Bordiugov, 2011). The understanding that memory is variable and has national, social and age-specific features has led to the actualization of studies devoted to the identification of the features of memory about the events of the past of representatives of different countries, the comparison of national models of memory about certain events, the factors of formation of national historiographical traditions.

Thirdly, in our opinion, there is a "virtualization of history and historical memory»: technological progress has led to the emergence of new means of commemorating the past. If in the 19 – early 20 century the authority of science and education as means of formation of historical memory was undeniable, at the end of the 20 – 21 century, the role of media technologies is increasing. Memory retransmission tools have reached a new level, which has resulted in the creation of a huge number of websites in recent years, the purpose of which is to update and retransmit knowledge about the past.

The presence of controversial issues in research on this topic, on the one hand, and the realization of the fact that memory is an integrating factor in the development of society, the basis for the formation of civil identity – on the other side, require further study of this phenomenon within the framework of historical science, analysis of the essence, structure, laws of functioning and mechanisms of transformation of historical memory.

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