

## ЭТНОГРАФИЯ, ЭТНОЛОГИЯ И АНТРОПОЛОГИЯ

## Historical Memory of Ethno-Confessional Conflicts in Russia

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The article shows historical memory as one of the key issues in the interdisciplinary field of social research since it determines socio-cultural and political aspects of the life of social groups. It forms the traditions and defines values necessary for the society development, accomplishes integrative function for the nation, ethnic group, accumulates experience of generations and enriches historical consciousness. However, the other side of historical memory as a significant factor of ethnic and religious conflicts is also highlighted. Firstly, historical memory has a conflict potential connected with identity of the social community (ethnic, religious, national) since self-perception of “we” always includes opposition to others, strangers, usually hostile communities. Secondly, historical memory could also mobilize for struggle. The traumatic aspects of collective memory are successfully used in ethno-confessional conflicts for political manipulation and tension escalation. It is a time-consuming task to build new relationships, to

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shift hostility to a neutral phase and then to the stage of cooperation, equality and integration. Contradictory nature of historical memory requires a systematic approach to peace-making policy, to changes in views, to repressing aspects of ethnic and religious conflicts from historical memory. The article presents the results of sociological research aimed at studying different aspects of the historical memory of the Russian society and several post-Soviet countries. The study highlights the dual role of historical memory — ethno integration and division. The authors analyze the personified memory of ethno-confessional conflicts and its reflection in modernity resulting in the information wars, propaganda of enmity and mythologems about the heroes and victims of the lost past.

*Keywords:* historical memory, ethnopolitical conflict, ethno-confessional relations, collective consciousness, ethnic identity.

## Историческая память об этноконфессиональных конфликтах в России

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В статье рассматривается междисциплинарное поле социальных исследований, где проблематика исторической памяти занимает одно из первых мест, поскольку обуславливает различные стороны жизни социальных групп — не только социокультурные, но также и политические. Накапливая опыт поколений и обогащая историческое сознание, она формирует не только традиции, но и служит ценностным ориентиром для развития общества, выполняет важную интегративную функцию для нации, этноса. В работе освещается и другая «сторона медали». Историческая память является значимым фактором этноконфессиональных конфликтов. Во-первых, конфликтогенный потенциал в ней заложен как составная часть идентичности социальной общности (этнической, конфессиональной, национальной), поскольку формирование самосознания «мы» всегда включает противопоставление другим, чужим, а зачастую и враждебным общностям. Во-вторых, историческая память может не только разделять, но и мобилизовывать, служить фактором разжигания и эскалации конфликта. Травмирующие свойства коллективной памяти успешно используются в этноконфессиональных конфликтах как источник для политического манипулирования и создания социально-психологической напряженности. Национальные обиды исторического развития как культурные травмы не залечить простым соглашением сторон. Требуется значительное время новых отношений, перерастания вражды не просто в нейтральную фазу, но в стадию сотрудничества, равноправия и интеграции. Это делает этнические и религиозные конфликты наиболее сложными, требующими системных усилий по проведению политики примирения и реформатирования, вытеснения этноконфликтных сторон исторической памяти. На базе социологических исследований, в которых предметом выступали различные аспекты исторической памяти российского общества и некоторых постсоветских стран, авторы делают вывод о двойственной роли произошедших изменений. В статье анализируется роль персонифицированной памяти об этнических и конфессиональных конфликтах прошлого, которая находит отражение в современной действительности, наиболее остро проявляясь в информационных войнах памяти, пропаганде вражды и мифологемах о жертвах потерянного прошлого.

*Ключевые слова:* историческая память, этнополитический конфликт, этноконфессиональные отношения, национальное самосознание, этническая идентичность.

Recently, studies in the field of historical memory and historical consciousness have become especially acute in the Russian scholarship. Collective memory has become the field of study in various disciplines (history, sociology, political science, psychology, ethnology, etc.). Being the factor of ethno-political conflict, historical memory has a great practical impact. The events of major ethno-confessional conflicts in the post-Soviet space convincingly proved the significance of historical memory as a conflictogenic factor. It is difficult to overestimate the role of historical memory at all the stages of the conflict — from its origin in a latent pre-conflict period, at the first stages of the formation of conflict parties, ethnic mobilization and escalation, to the exploration of possible ways to overcome the conflict. The essential role of historical memory could be confirmed by the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Chechen conflict, the situation in South-Eastern Ukraine and the Crimea, by any ethnic and political confrontation in the post-Soviet space over the past three decades.

Specific methods of ethnic mobilization through collective memory actualization are well known and described in the literature. They involve constructing and active promoting of the narratives of the history of confrontation and “thousand-year” enmity of peoples; the national pantheon of the heroes who struggled for their motherland; the “sacrificial narrative” of the people’s suffering; oppression and infringements of enemies. The policy of defending historical memory is carried out by political elites, counter-elites and so-called ethnic entrepreneurs. These are social groups who usually activate conflict orientation in the collective consciousness, interpret modernity based on the historical roots. Seeking the historical background of the present can lead to a conflict.

Historical memory should be observed as a type of semantic memory of events forming the socio-cultural environment of a person. It is not related directly to the daily practices and needs of a person. Therefore, an appropriate background of the event is required for its actualization, a special “trigger”<sup>1</sup> emotionally intensifying the confrontation. Patterns of collective memory as stable representations of the group about its past are important aspects of the ethnic group, the nation. In general, it could be called a value-normative aspect. Emotional component greatly influences conflict development when actions are emotionally treated as damaging for the social group<sup>2</sup>. Historical memory is actualized through an emotional response to the actual events; a historical reflection of modernity often turns into “memorial wars”<sup>3</sup>.

A comprehensive approach is required for in-depth understanding of the mechanism of actualization of historical memory in the collective consciousness. Firstly, it is necessary to reveal the contents of the historical memory at present, to examine how widespread historical knowledge is in society, what the level of the popularization of scholarly and mythological representation of the historical past is. Secondly, it is crucial to analyze the patterns of collective memory, to identify their conflictogenic and stabilization components. Sociological analysis of historical consciousness could show which periods of the past are perceived as key points in the nation formation, which myths are implemented in

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<sup>1</sup> *Petersen R.* Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe. Cambridge, 2002. P. 15–29.

<sup>2</sup> *Polianskii V.S.* Istoricheskaia pamiat' v etnicheskom samosoznanii narodov // Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia (SOCIS). 1999. No. 3. P. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Demytyev I.A.* “Divided history”: the politics of memory on the territory of the former East Prussia in the light of current discussions // Baltic Region. 2015. No. 4 (26). P. 81.

the collective memory<sup>4</sup>. Besides, historical memory is largely personalized and is associated with the names of heroes, generals, rulers, great public figures.

Using public opinion polls we can identify specific components of the historical consciousness of social groups, and understand what problems of history are outlined and why. Socio-psychological perspective could greatly contribute to the examination of behavioral attitudes and stereotypes.

## Historical memory in the interdisciplinary field

The issue of historical consciousness and collective memory is highlighted in various works. Among famous scholars concerned with this matter are R. Aron<sup>5</sup>, P. Nora<sup>6</sup>, P. Riker<sup>7</sup>, J. Rusen<sup>8</sup>, F. Schenk<sup>9</sup>, M. Halbwachs<sup>10</sup>, E. Hobsbaum<sup>11</sup>, J. Assmann<sup>12</sup>, U. Lotman<sup>13</sup> and others.

Traditions of studying collective memory emerged in the 1990s and involve numerous areas: historiographical, sociological, socio-psychological, cultural and conflictological (interdisciplinary). Such division could be explained by separate and autonomous academic centers in Russia with a permanent resource base for research and publication of results in affiliated journals and publishing houses.

The existing ambiguity of meanings of “collective memory” as an analytical category determines the use of different approaches. Thus, “historical memory” in historical science is used not only to analyze the development of historical knowledge in society due to science and education but also to examine the dynamics of this memory in historical retrospective. How did the images of historical figures change in the memory of descendants? Which circumstances effected this? Why was the interest in a specific chapter of Russian history actualized? The article by E. A. Rostovtsev and D. A. Sosnitsky presents a detailed review of the historiographical tradition of historical memory researches in Russia. The authors consider the periods of national history in terms of historians’ interest in the problem of constructing cultural memory and the factors influencing its changes. They also highlight the links between academic research and social context, such as educational policy, in contemporary historiography. The authors analyze historical policy (memory policy) in Russia, taking into account statistical data and sociological research materials including their own analysis of mass sources (textbooks, literature, cinema, etc.),

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<sup>4</sup> *Garagozov R. R.* Collective Memory and the Russian “Schematic Narrative Template” // *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*. 2002. Vol. 40, No. 5. P. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Aron R.* *Izmereniia istoricheskogo soznaniia*. Moscow, 2014. P. 22.

<sup>6</sup> *Nora P.* *Vsemirnoe torzhestvo pamiati* // *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*. 2005. No. 2. P. 40–41.

<sup>7</sup> *Riker P.* *Pamiat', istoriia, zabvenie*. Moscow, 2004. P. 36.

<sup>8</sup> *Rusen J.* *Tradition: A principle of historical sense-generation and its logic and effect in historical culture* // *History and Theory*. 2012. Vol. 51, No. 4. P. 45–59.

<sup>9</sup> *Shenk F.* *Aleksandr Nevskii v russkoi kul'turnoi pamiati: sviatoi, pravitel', natsional'nyi geroi*. Moscow. 2007. P. 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Khal'bvaks M.* *Sotsial'nye ramki pamiati*. Moscow, 2007. P. 34.

<sup>11</sup> *Khobsbaum E.* *Massovoe proizvodstvo traditsii: Evropa, 1870–1914* // *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*. 2015. No. 6 (104). P. 107–127.

<sup>12</sup> *Assman Ya.* *Kul'turnaya pamyat': Pis'mo, pamyat' o proshlom i politicheskaya identichnost' v vysokikh kul'turah drevnosti*. Moscow, 2004. P. 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Lotman Yu. M.* *Izbrannye stat'i v 3-h t. Vol. 1, Stat'i po semiotike i topologii kul'tury*. Tallinn, 1992. P. 81.

which greatly influenced the formation of the historical memory of Russian citizens. According to the authors, this research allows identifying both consensus and conflict points in the national memory<sup>14</sup>.

The sociological approach to the analysis of historical memory as a factor of social life is widely spread in the Russian scholarship by such scholars as V. E. Boykov<sup>15</sup>, M. K. Gorshkov and F. E. Sheregi<sup>16</sup>, Zh. T. Toshchenko and N. V. Romanovsky<sup>17</sup>, S. A. Ushakin<sup>18</sup> and others.

“Sociological research” has become the most significant journal for discussing issues of historical memory, while its section “Historical sociology” has been presenting publications since 1998. Zh. T. Toshchenko, former editor-in-chief, and his deputy, N. V. Romanovsky were among pioneering explorers of historical memory in sociological discourse in the Russian society. Considering historical memory as a part of collective consciousness and moral life of society, Zh. T. Toshchenko suggests paying attention to the role of historical memory in the process of social changes and achieving the goals of constructing civil nation<sup>19</sup>.

V. E. Boykov argues about the specifics of a sociological approach in the studies of historical consciousness and historical memory represented in socio-cultural regulation of consciousness and behavior of individuals, social groups, ethnic groups and society as a whole. At the same time, special attention is paid to the evaluation of historical memory and its normative and value aspects, depending on the historical period, accumulating the most relevant information about the past in connection to present and possible future. Historical views of people play the role of value orientations and thus have a regulatory impact on their socially significant behavior, contribute to the formation of civic consciousness and cultural and ethnic self-identification, but also warn against repeating the mistakes which lead to great moral, human and material losses<sup>20</sup>.

Historical consciousness of youth evokes the interest of sociological studies<sup>21</sup> as young people represent a social group usually open to new versions of the historical past, who could easily become the victim of manipulation. Dynamics of changes in youth consciousness can provide the explanatory model of tendencies of change in the historical consciousness of the whole society. However, we should keep in mind “fathers and children” conflict, natural for a dynamically developing society. A generation gap is cyclical and usually is not followed by destructive consequences.

Z. V. Sikevich considers the interdisciplinary approach to the study of historical memory to be the most effective one. She defines historical memory as the core of nation-

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<sup>14</sup> Rostovtsev E. A., Sosnitskii D. A. Srednevekovye geroi i sobytiia otechestvennoi istorii v setevykh resursakh // *Istoricheskaiia ekspertiza*. 2018. No. 1. P. 41–58.

<sup>15</sup> Boykov V. E. Istoricheskaiia pamiat' v sovremennom rossiiskom obshchestve: sostoianie i problemy formirovaniia // *Sotsiologiia vlasti*. 2011. No. 5. P. 44–52.

<sup>16</sup> Gorshkov M. K., Sheregi E. F. Istoricheskoe soznanie molodezhi // *Vestnik rossiiskoi akademii nauk*. 2010. Vol. 80, No. 3. P. 195–203.

<sup>17</sup> Toshchenko Zh. T. Istoricheskaiia pamiat' i sotsiologiia // *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*. 1998. No. 5. P. 3–6.

<sup>18</sup> Ushakin S. A. Vspominaia na publike. Ob afektivnom menezhmente istorii // *Gefter*. URL: <http://gefter.ru/archive/13513> (accessed: 01.03.2019).

<sup>19</sup> Toshchenko Zh. T. Istoricheskaiia pamiat' i sotsiologiia. P. 4–6.

<sup>20</sup> Boykov V. E. Istoricheskaiia pamiat' v sovremennom rossiiskom obshchestve... P. 46–47.

<sup>21</sup> Gorshkov M. K., Sheregi E. F. Istoricheskoe soznanie molodezhi. P. 195–203.

al consciousness and identity<sup>22</sup>. Highlighting the importance of the integrative role of historical memory, Z. V. Sikevich notes the socio-psychological feature of the collective consciousness in Russia when leaders are perceived as role models. Analyzing ethno-political conflict in Ukraine, she reveals a special role of historical memory in the process of intentional changes of the value system in Ukraine, when several national heroes were redefined as those who opposed Russia (R. Shukhevich, I. Mazepa, etc.). However, in other cases, as S. M. Eliseev and N. P. Kirsanova point out, historical memory continues to play an integrative role in the post-Soviet space, as it happens in the common historical memory policy in Eurasian cooperation in the EEU projects<sup>23</sup>.

It is important to note the polysemy of “collective memory” as an analytical category. We regard historical memory as collective ideas about the historical past which embrace not only the evidence of certain events of the past but also the accumulated knowledge and ideas about the key events of the national history. Undoubtedly, historical memory is reflected on the individual, personal level, however, it is based on the collective ideas about history, agreement or disagreement with them, personal perception of collective ideas with respect to own life experience and memories as well.

Events, past circumstances embedded in the historical memory of each further generation are actualized by historical analogies, interpretation of past events based on the present experience. In the collective consciousness this experience turns into a single whole due to cultural and information impact (propaganda, mass art, scientific and educational strategies, etc.). The continuity of historical memory is the procedure by means of which the past is interpreted for the sake of understanding the present and foreseeing the future. This mental procedure is an anthropological universality in the cultural orientation of practical human life which leads to the concept of the passage of time as a necessary socio-cultural factor<sup>24</sup>. With the help of collective memory based on the historical experience of a community/social group, historical consciousness is actually formed, and historical vision is built setting specific tasks and directions of social development<sup>25</sup>. There is also a connection between globalization processes and historical memory. If previously historical events were considered to be mostly local, globalization enables to highlight all the events and conflicts on the international level<sup>26</sup>.

Several authors examined how social identity influenced historical memory and evaluation of historical events on a “bad” or “good” dual scale<sup>27</sup>. The historical memory of society, ethnic and other social communities is selective. Certain events of the historical past can be actualized depending on the political situation, ideology, political conflicts and contradictions of social development: the victory in the war, the struggle for national

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<sup>22</sup> Sikevich Z. V. Deiateli rossiiskoi istorii v predstavleniakh peterburzhtsev (po materialam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia) // *Vlast'*. 2016. No. 1. P. 103.

<sup>23</sup> Eliseev S. M., Kirsanova N. P. Evrazijskaya integraciya i problemy formirovaniya istoricheskoy pamyati molodezhi // *Evrazijskaya teoreticheskij potencial i prakticheskie predlozheniya*. 2016. No. 8. P. 82–85.

<sup>24</sup> Rusen J. Tradition: A principle of historical sense-generation...

<sup>25</sup> Kuznetsov V. I. Formirovanie istoricheskogo soznaniia kak zadacha modernizatsii v sovremennom rossiiskom obshchestve. Gumanitarnye nauchnye issledovaniia. 2014. No. 11. URL: <http://human.snauka.ru/2014/11/8382> (accessed: 15.02.2019).

<sup>26</sup> Lanko D. Historical memory in the age of globalization: the case of Russian-Estonian relations // *Baltic Region*. 2011. No. 4. P. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Sahdra B., Ross M. Group identification and historical memory // *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 2007. Vol. 33, No. 3. P. 384–395.

independence, the surge of certain social movements, etc. By contrast, a kind of taboo may be enforced on other historical events, excluding them from historical memory<sup>28</sup>: the defeat in the war, repression, persecution, betrayal of national interests. However, it is not a permanent practice. The same events can be both actualized and forbidden depending on different ethnic and social groups. Following the Russian sociologist J. T. Toshchenko such situations could be called “centaur-problems”<sup>29</sup>.

S. A. Ushakin states that historical memory in the mass consciousness is affective. Thus, modern celebration of the Victory Day by the Russians shows not memories, but indirect experiences, inclusion into the context of the past for emotional connection<sup>30</sup>. This experience of the great historical past is symbolic; it influences group identification at present. Action for the sake of the past and its actualization is more important for society rather than objective historical knowledge. Human memory is focused not only on dates and events but also on emotionality. Therefore, collecting detailed “flashbulb memories” after important events is supposed to be a quite good sociological method<sup>31</sup>.

### Shift from memory to conflict

Ethnopolitology traditionally distinguishes between the types of conflicts associated with the realization of the interests of ethnic groups and the protection of their identity and values. There are conflicts related to status, hegemony and protection, accordingly. This theoretical division could contribute to a deeper analysis of the conflict, identifying its factors, causes and functions. However, such ideal types in real life are usually mixed and can mutually influence one other. The hegemonic construction of the ethno-nation may result in a status conflict in some areas, whilst the real clashes and violent actions can lead to a protective type of conflict. Nevertheless, political technologists to a greater extent use the methods of mythologizing the events of the historical past in the hegemonic and status types of conflict, when examples of national greatness, heroic deeds, victories, successful confrontation with enemies are stressed, as well as examples of the so-called “strong will” according to L. Gumilev. In contrast, the protective type of conflict is focused on the memory of historical grievances, losses and injustice lasted for a long time. Heroes who resisted enemies, the leaders of social movements, moral leaders are praised here. The religious factor is usually important in such conflicts — the memory about martyrs fighting for the faith and the people. Protective type of conflict is characterized by the factors of fear and anxiety associated with the potential deprivation of the status of an ethnic group. Perceptions of possible deprivation of status and limited access to resources, expectations that this could pose a threat to further existence of the entire group cause fear and willingness to mobilize a conflict<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Repina L. P. Opyt sotsial'nykh krizisov v istoricheskoi pamiati // Krizisy perelomnykh epokh v istoricheskoi pamiati. Moscow, 2012. P. 27–31.

<sup>29</sup> Toshchenko Zh. T. Mankurtizm kak deformatsiia istoricheskogo soznaniia (opyt sotsiologicheskogo analiza) // Sotsiologija vlasti. 2010. No. 1. P. 6–18.

<sup>30</sup> Ushakin S. A. Vspominaia na publike. Ob affektivnom menedzhmente istorii.

<sup>31</sup> Lambert A. How Does Collective Memory Create a Sense of Collective? // Memory in Mind & Culture / eds P. Boyer, J. Wertsch. Cambridge, 2009. P. 194–217.

<sup>32</sup> Khalliste O. V. Rol' istoricheskoi pamiati v “zashchitnom” etnicheskom konflikte: aktualizatsiia travmy sotsial'noi identichnosti // Trudy Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo instituta kul'tury. 2015. Vol. 208. Part 2. P. 27.

Therefore, we consider that both ethnic inequality and views about the unfair distribution of resources create an atmosphere of socio-psychological tension, the ground for mutual blaming. Ethnic inequality brings about the construction of ideology (mythology) in historical memory associated with the national championship, the superiority of the nation-forming people over the rest. The other conflict party, in contrast, perceives itself as a victim, and ethnic inequality is reflected in the discrimination. Thus, memory trauma determines the conflict tension of both parties. Among the methods of forming a “victim complex” and dehumanizing the enemy could be speculation about the number of victims in the ongoing or past conflict; speculation about the attacker; active usage of stories and rumors demonstrating the cruelty of one of the conflict parties<sup>33</sup>.

Traditionally, ideologeme of “fraternal peoples” plays an important role in the historical memory of the Russian society. On the one hand, this construct of common roots and historical past performs an important integrative function, strengthens the ethnopolitical unity both within one country and in terms of international unions. On the other hand, it often turns into a serious conflictogenic factor since the splits among “neighbors and relatives” are the most hurtful. It was the scholar L. Kozer who described in his work “Functions of social conflict” the pattern of intensification of the conflict arising from previously close social relations. Breaking away from a single united community, former members often turn into so-called renegades, joining other competitive and even hostile unions. A “renegade” trusts a new strong community and demonstrates loyalty to it. It could be stated that a renegade gains confidence in own correct behavior due to the acceptance and approval from the new community. Moreover, a renegade would not only demonstrate loyalty to the new unit, protecting its values and interests, but would also aim to take revenge against own moral past<sup>34</sup>. It is quite natural that such a situation inflicts a deep “cultural trauma” on the representatives of the former community, forms a hostile attitude, emotional intensity, perception of this situation as a betrayal.

Such a situation happened in the Russian history when the “inviolable” centuries-old unity of the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples was destroyed as a result of “The Belavezha Accords” in 1991. However, the cultural trauma of the disintegration of fraternal peoples into three independent states could not be called a conflict factor. During the 1990s and partly in the early 2000s, in the collective consciousness of Russians, the construct of three fraternal Slavic peoples stably remained as friendly, despite all the difficulties of political changes. The “unity of the virtual Slavic world”<sup>35</sup> still existed, and results of the Russian survey even showed expectations of the inevitably new integration with Belarus and Ukraine. The cultural trauma turned into a conflict factor resulted from historical offences and unfulfilled expectations. It happened in Ukraine, where political forces aiming at integration with the West, contrary to Russia, gained the upper hand. If the hope for maintaining the neutral status of Ukraine and multiple social ties with Russia still remained after the events of the Maidan in 2004, the events of the Maidan in 2014 finally showed a tendency to explosion and conflict confrontation. The issue of an open ethnopolitical conflict was only a matter of time, and the outbreaks of violence naturally

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<sup>33</sup> Achkasov V. A. Kontsept “dilemma bezopasnosti” v issledovanii dinamiki etnopoliticheskikh konfliktov // Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Politology. International relations. 2016. Vol. 6, iss. 2. P. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Kozer L. Funktsii sotsial'nogo konflikta. Moscow, 2000. P. 94.

<sup>35</sup> Skochilova V. G. Ideologema “bratskii narod”: faktor legitimnosti v konfliktnom protranstve // Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 2017. No. 415. P. 117.



led to the mobilization of the parties and the growth of the socio-psychological aggressive climate.

The post-Soviet countries focusing on nation-building pursue a memory policy: development of memory institutions, museums, new monuments (often instead of the demolished ones), historical Internet portals, historical programs about the key moments of the nation's development. Specific PR projects for historical characters are created (such as "Name of Russia 2008" or the project of the renaming of Russian airports and railway stations in honor of famous people of the Russian history held in 2018). As it was mentioned, the policy of memory can both serve an integrative function unifying society and be hostile towards other ethnic groups and nations, even within own country. At this latent stage of the conflict, it is still possible to change inter-group relations, to prevent the split, ethnic and social tension and conflict escalation. There is a wide range of negotiations, institutional opportunities and ways of corrections of historical policies to solve this issue.

It is much more difficult when the conflict has already begun, has expanded into a violent phase with numerous victims. In the case of ethnic and religious conflict, regulation is not enough, the conflict should be transformed. Long-lasting post-traumatic period, slow peace-making policy, healing of fresh memory traumas, overcoming splits and coming up to consensus follows the end of such a conflict. Conflict analytics announce the need for memory policy involving all the parties of local relations (population, government, NGOs, religious organizations and third parties), the creation of special peace committees and conciliation commissions. The places where the tragic events took place become memorials. Remembering all the victims of past conflicts, regardless of the conflict parties, should lead to reconciliation and unity. There is a very thin line between preserving peace and preventing provocations that could be used to force resentment and hostility<sup>36</sup>.

### **Ethno-confessional conflicts in the historical memory**

The article examines the traumatic historical memory of the Russian society in 1999–2018<sup>37</sup>. The authors identify the objects of memory — processes, events, activities of specific historical figures perceived as historical injustices and grievances in the collective consciousness of the Russian society. We distinguish those processes and events that could be interpreted as ethnic and religious and could perform as factors of modern ethno-confessional conflicts under certain conditions. The work is based on the secondary data analysis as well as on the authors' study. The research is limited by the comparison between St. Petersburg and the Republic of Crimea and the Donbass, leaving out the regional dimension of the problems of ethnic memory.

The study conducted in 2001 by the Russian Independent Institute for the Study of Social and National Problems (RNI) in collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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<sup>36</sup> Etnopoliticheskii konflikt: puti transformatsii: nastol'naiia kniga Bergkhovskogo tsentra / eds V. Tishkov, M. Ustinova. Moscow, 2007. P. 528.

<sup>37</sup> Internet survey conducted on the platform of the Center for sociological and Internet research of St. Petersburg State University (September–November 2018). Topic: "Self-identification of the population in the area of ethno-political tension of Russian-Ukrainian relations (Republic of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions)". Quota sample. Out of 637 respondents — 50.9 % residents of Crimea, 49.1 % residents of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Young people, who are active users of social networks and make up more than 60 % of respondents (aged 15 to 34 years), mostly represent the sample.

identified 6 historical periods based on the perception of historical challenges and achievements:

- 1) Russia before 1917;
- 2) USSR in the period of J. V. Stalin;
- 3) USSR in the period of N. S. Khrushchev;
- 4) USSR in the period of L. I. Brezhnev;
- 5) USSR in the period of M. S. Gorbachev;
- 6) Russia in the period of B. N. Yeltsin.

Pre-revolutionary Russia was perceived as a quite insignificant period in the historical memory of Russians in contrast to idealized views of 1990, and received rather low positive and negative rates. The only exception was the evaluation of the state of Orthodox Church — 61.4%, and average indicators referring to love for the country — 35.2%. The most positive periods according to the respondents' evaluations were the periods of J. Stalin and L. Brezhnev. At the same time, there was a noticeable difference in the estimations of the periods. Respondents characterized Stalin's period as a timeframe of a high order, discipline, authority in the world, and love for the country, whilst Brezhnev's period was associated with stability, social justice, development in the moral life and labor relations. Periods of M. Gorbachev and B. Yeltsin gained the most negative evaluations with regard to development. At the same time, Gorbachev's period was not deemed as tough as Yeltsin's one, which was recently experienced as the verge of disaster by respondents<sup>38</sup>. However, the study did not reflect a short but crucial period of V. I. Lenin and the Civil war, and that fact could create a rather biased approach in favor of Stalin's period.

Being the subject of our study, the evaluation of ethnic conflicts and crises in each of the abovementioned historical periods is presented in the table (Tab. 1).

*Table 1. Interethnic conflicts and crises according to Russian estimations in 1999 (%)*

Characteristic	Russia before 1917	USSR in the period of J. V. Stalin	USSR in the period of N. S. Khrushchev	USSR in the period of L. I. Brezhnev	USSR in the period of M. S. Gorbachev	Russia in the period of B. N. Yeltsin
Interethnic conflict	12.6	13.3	5.6	8.5	45.0	84.8
Crisis	15.5	5.9	5.1	8.7	37.0	92.7

Analyzing variables of the study, we chose a connection with perceptions of crises because the correlation is more visible there. Khrushchev's Thaw was perceived as the most peaceful, conflict-free period in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the least number of injuries, ethnic conflicts, when many peoples, the victims of Stalin's repressions, were rehabilitated, and there was the rise of integration of "peoples' friendship" in interethnic relations. Nevertheless, the Russians were the most mobile ethnic group at that time, representing the majority of the working class of the national republics and engineering personnel. In the periods of M. S. Gorbachev and B. N. Yeltsin the historical memory of ethnic

<sup>38</sup> Gorshkov M. K., Sheregi E. F. *Istoricheskoe soznanie molodezhi.*

conflicts could be described as “fresh wounds” mostly perceived as the consequences of the disintegration and crisis processes of the dissolution of the USSR and the Russian regional separatism of the 1990s.

These conclusions are confirmed by the results of the study conducted in 2002 by the Sociological center of the Russian Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation (RAPA). Thus, thinking about the negative events in the Russian history, most of the respondents connected them with the problem of ethnic and religious conflicts. The most significant events causing feelings of bitterness and shame were the following:

- 1) Chechen war — 21 %;
- 2) Stalin's repressions — 13.6 %;
- 3) Gorbachev's rebuilding campaign — 12.7 %;
- 4) Afghanistan war — 9.2 %;
- 5) Dissolution of the USSR — 6.6 %<sup>39</sup>.

The numbers show the greatest emotional perception of historical memory is associated with the recent tragic events of the Chechen war, which became an example of the largest ethno-political conflict in the history of post-Soviet Russia. Additionally, the religious factor played a great role in that conflict. The entry of extremist forces of Islamic fundamentalism in the Russian territory, a series of terrorist acts with a large number of victims among the civilians had a strong traumatic impact on public consciousness, formed an atmosphere of social and psychological tension. The collective memory of the failures of the Russian forces and the policy of the Federal center during the first Chechen campaign in 1994–1996 could not be a matter of national pride. Even later, despite the declared completion of the antiterrorist operation in Chechnya in 2001, active clandestine activities of individual groups of fighters continued until 2009. The Afghanistan war in the fourth position of the list, affecting the collective memory in a similar way, is noteworthy. The memory of this ethnic and religious conflict is perceived in the public consciousness as a kind of preliminary stage before the Chechen conflict.

We would like to pay special attention to the second position of historical memory traumas belonging to the crimes of the Stalinist regime characterized by repressions against peoples and their forced resettlement. Despite the contradictory figure of J. V. Stalin himself, a tendency towards mostly positive perception of his period is observed. However, there is a painful attitude to mass repressions among the majority of Russian citizens, especially among families who personally faced them, when the memory of the past is supported by word of mouth.

All in all, Gorbachev's rebuilding campaign can be equated with the dissolution of the USSR. Obviously, the second event followed the first one, and it was strongly connected with the formation of national movements and their transformation into one of the parties of the growing ethno-political conflicts during that period. As we mentioned before, the collapse of the ideology of “peoples' friendship” was one of the deepest and most painful traumas of Russian identity, which became one of the factors of ethnic and political conflicts in the post-Soviet space. According to the data of the same survey of RAPA conduct-

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<sup>39</sup> *Бойков В.Е.* Состояние и проблемы формирования исторической памяти // *Социологические исследования*. 2002. No. 8. P. 86.

ed in 2002, respondents indicated the options of “liberator-nation” (78.9 %) and “defender of peoples” (63.9 %) as the dominant traditional characteristics of the Russian people<sup>40</sup>.

Finally, analyzing the factors of historical trauma of the Russians, we want to present a summary table showing the dynamics of “feelings of shame” indicators based on the Levada Center monitoring — 1999–2018 period. We identified only those historical events mentioned in that monitoring which were directly or indirectly related to ethnic and confessional conflicts (see the tab. 2). The question was: “What are you ashamed of, what makes you feel shame and grief when you look back on Russian history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?”

*Table 2. Events of the shame of the Russians in the national politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (%)<sup>41</sup>*

Historical Events — Memory traumas	Apr. 1999	Jul 2003	Aug 2008	Sept. 2012	Jun. 2015	Jan. 2017	Dec. 2019
Dissolution of the USSR	48	41	38	32	28	33	45
Repression, terror, the eviction of peoples in the 1920–50s	34	39	35	25	25	22	21
Church persecution	21	18	27	16	12	11	16
The desire to force other countries and peoples to follow the only model of ruling	15	9	8	6	5	4	9
National arrogance	7	5	7	5	3	3	7
Military defeat	16	16	11	8	4	5	6

Based on the presented data in the table, it can be stated that traumatic events and views are gradually fading out of the historical memory of Russians due to the vanishing personal memories about the life during that period as well as due to inevitable generational change caused by historical time passage. Besides, the natural desire to get rid of traumatic components existing in memory is also observed. Thus, modern state policy of memory is aimed at moving historical traumas to the back, creating identity through a sense of pride about the great achievements of the country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several events and conflicts have begun to be perceived as the result of modernization or historical accidents. It is especially noticeable in the fact that there’s a decline in the memory about victims of Stalinist repression by almost one third, and about military defeats and losses. The victory in the Second World War (The Great Patriotic War in Russia) widely celebrated at the state level gradually overshadows its tragic foundation. The most painful memories of the unsuccessful war in Afghanistan and the Chechen conflict of 1994–1996 were not actively mentioned and turned into a gap in historical memory. However, the recent destabilization processes, the long-lasting conflict with the West and the Ukrainian crisis allow us to state that contradictions are rising among Russian citizens. On the one hand, people want to perceive Russia as “the Great Power”, On the other hand, not absolutely definite and effective position of the state is observed. As a result, the historical trauma of

<sup>40</sup> Boykov V.E. Sostoianie i problemy formirovaniia istoricheskoi pamiati. P.88.

<sup>41</sup> See: National identity and pride. Indicator of the Levada Center. January 17, 2019. URL: <https://www.levada.ru/2019/01/17/natsionalnaya-identichnost-i-gordost/> (accessed: 03.03.2019).

the dissolution of the USSR again came to the surface in the mass consciousness. Challenges of the present social, political and economic situation, conflicts in the post-Soviet space, the loss of the former status of a great power are perceived as the result of the historical event concerning the dissolution of the USSR.

The personification of history is an important component of historical consciousness, one of its early forms, closely related to mythology. The attitude to the whole historical periods of social development and modernization depends on the evaluation of historical figures. "Eras" of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Alexander II, J. V. Stalin, L. I. Brezhnev and others are associated with personality traits of the leaders in the mass consciousness, a certain style of leadership, corresponding with the results of the period of government, reflecting a certain model of national policy.

The association of a strong leader with a strong state, and a strong state — with a national rise is usual for the collective consciousness of the Russian society. It's not fortuitous that Alexander Nevsky, Peter Stolypin, and Joseph Stalin were announced in the television project "Name of Russia" (2007) as three the most popular leaders. The figure of Peter the Great has also been associated with the absolute leader of the historical past in the majority of sociological surveys over the last 30 years. Despite their differences, they symbolize the image of a strong state. Etatism focusing on statehood, military-political power and geopolitical influence are among major value orientations of modern Russian citizens. "Name of Russia" could undoubtedly be called a kind of PR-project of the current socio-cultural elite with a predictable result. Nevertheless, public opinion polls show similar attitudes to the national heroes of the past in the collective consciousness.

The Laboratory of ethnic sociology and psychology of Research Institute for integrated social research of St. Petersburg State University conducted a study of the residents of St. Petersburg in 2013 and revealed the correlation between the periods of Russian history that evoke positive associations, and historical figures that cause a sense of pride. Rating is the following: Peter the Great (67%), P. Stolypin (23%), Catherine the Great (17%), J. Stalin (16%), Alexander II (15%). In the top five, there are only heads of state and government. Generally, several consistent patterns were revealed in the dynamics of perception of historical figures of different periods (surveys were conducted in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2014 among St. Petersburg residents). Firstly, a positive evaluation of historical figures of the Empire period had increased (1996 — 41.3%; 2006 — 50.1%; 2014 — 53.4%). Secondly, a positive perception of the figures of the Soviet period decreased significantly (39.0, 35.8 and 22.5 %, respectively)<sup>42</sup>.

Attitude to politicians among Russian students is another interesting topic. The answers of young people to the question of the all-Russian survey held by the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography RAS "Which historical figures of the past and the present contributed most to the implementation of popular expectations of society?" distributed as such: Peter the Great (47%), V. I. Lenin (28%), J. V. Stalin (26%), Catherine the Great (18%)<sup>43</sup>.

Ranking popular historical figures, Ukrainian people also positively evaluate Peter the Great, putting him in the leading positions of the list. According to the survey conducted in November 2016 by the sociological group, the rating is the following: M. Gru-

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<sup>42</sup> *Sikevich Z. V. Deiateli rossiiskoi istorii v predstavleniakh peterburzhtsev (po materialam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia)*. P. 104–105.

<sup>43</sup> *Rossiiskoe studenchestvo: identichnost', zhiznennye strategii i grazhdanskii potentsial* / eds V. A. Tishkov, R. E. Barash, V. V. Stepanov. Moscow, 2014. P. 111.

shevsky (72 %), I. Mazepa (52 %), Peter the Great (50 %). The rest, including S. Petlura, V. Lenin and J. Stalin, received mostly negative scores. Sociological research investigated the increasing percentage, although not very high, of a positive attitude to the national hero S. Bandera<sup>44</sup>. The contradictory role of Peter the Great in the historical policy and memory of Ukraine should be noted, whose figure is opposed to Hetman Mazepa receiving almost the same result with a small statistical error. Ukraine's regional diversity (the East-West dichotomy) influenced the opposing choices of historical "heroes" and "conflict figures", confirming the conclusions about collective memory as a factor of ethnopolitical conflict.

The comparative data was obtained in the Internet survey conducted by the authors in the Crimea and the Donbass in the autumn of 2018 (survey link was posted in the politically neutral social networks and was sent via mailing). Among important research outcomes, we provide a comparison of ratings of historical figures, marked by residents of these regions and, therefore, integrated into their historical memory. Thus, answering the question "What historical figure of your country would you name as a hero, a person you respect or are proud of?" the following distribution of the answers was obtained (Tab. 3).

*Table 3. Memory about outstanding historical figures*

	Historical figures — Crimea (%)		Historical figures — Donbass (%)	
1	Joseph Stalin	12,5	Joseph Stalin	47,5
2	Peter the Great	11,4	Peter the Great	20,5
3	Catherine the Great	10,6	Catherine the Great	13,3
4	Alexander Suvorov	4,5	Fyodor Sergeyev (Comrade Artyom)	10,6
5	George Zhukov	2,7	Alexander Suvorov	8,0
6	Vladimir Lenin	2,7	Bohdan Khmelnytsky	7,3
7	Mikhail Kutuzov	2,7	Taras Shevchenko	6,3
8	Bohdan Khmelnytsky	2,3	Yuri Gagarin	5,9
9	Pavel Nakhimov	2,3	Kliment Voroshilov	5,9
10	Ahmet Khan-Sultan	1,9	John Hughes	5,9

We want to pay attention to the number of mentioned historical figures, which was much larger than in traditional telephone and all-Russian surveys. However, combining received information in clusters, it is possible to see the general and specific in the historical memory of residents of the Crimea and the Donbass in comparison to the all-Russian data, to reveal the regional peculiarities of historical memory, as well as the Ukrainian component of historical consciousness and memory.

The table contains only 10 top figures of the rating out of more than fifty listed figures of historical memory. I. Stalin and Peter the Great are among the leaders of the rating here, as well as in the all-Russian polls. At the same time, being in the state of the acute conflict,

<sup>44</sup> Ukrayntsy stali luchshe otносит'sia k Bandere — opros // Korrespondent. URL: <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3775689-ukrayntsy-staly-luchshe-otnosytsia-k-bandere-opros> (accessed: 12.03.2019).

residents of Donbas' remember and demand Stalin's figure to a higher extent than people in the Crimea, where there is quite a strong negative memory of this figure among the Crimean Tatars.

The regional component of historical memory in the Donbass is characterized by the choice of the heroes of the revolution and the civil war (F. Sergeev, K. Voroshilov), heroes of labor and artists who glorified the native land (A. Stakhanov, I. Kobzon), and even the British John Hughes, the founder of Donetsk as a large industrial center. Struggling for self-government and regional status, this historical memory is an important component of the identity of the local population. Nonetheless, the connection between historical memory and national identity in the Donbass is more complex as it includes three components: Soviet (J. Stalin, G. Zhukov, K. Voroshilov, Y. Gagarin, S. Korolev and others), Russian (Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, A. Suvorov, Alexander III, Alexander Nevsky and others) and Ukrainian (T. Shevchenko, M. Hrushevsky, B. Khmelnytsky, I. Sirko, I. Mazepa, S. Bandera). Analyzing the split of historical consciousness based on memory about conflicts between Russians and Ukrainians, it is possible to point out the absence of unifying aspects of memory in different historical periods. Remarkable Stalin's figure only intensifies the nature of the political confrontation in the conflict. Unfortunately, such a historical figure as Yaroslav the Wise is poorly highlighted in historical memory and is underestimated in terms of the consolidation policy in Ukraine. A strong positive attitude in the Donbass historical memory to the heroes of the October revolution and the leaders of the Red Army is noteworthy. It could be explained by the widely developed labor movement in the region and even by an attempt to create the Donetsk — Krivoy Rog Republic at the time. However, another tendency is observed in St. Petersburg. After two decades of monitoring historical memory in St. Petersburg, 2014 year became the turning point when the Red commanders of the Civil war in the list of historical figures were replaced by A. Kolchak, A. Kornilov and A. Denikin, albeit with a small number of votes (3.1, 2.9 and 2.1 %, respectively)<sup>45</sup>.

The situation in the Crimea, which became the part of Russia in 2014, is somewhat different. The historical consciousness of the residents of Crimea is less conflict (except for the memory of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars) and is more connected with the periods of the Soviet and Imperial Russia. The choice of figures for historical pride here has a pronounced regional component of people associated with the recent history of the Crimea (A. Suvorov, M. Kutuzov, Catherine the Great, Nakhimov, Alexander III, Nicholas II, I. Aivazovsky, S. Korolev, etc.). At the same time, despite the significant number of ethnic Ukrainians among the residents of Crimea, the component of Ukrainian history in the collective memory is quite weak, which might prevent from possible splits in the local community. There are two historical figures in the ethnic memory significant for the Crimean Tatar population: Akhmet Khan-Sultan, the hero of the Great Patriotic War, and Ismail Gasprinsky, the famous Crimean Tatar educator. It is remarkable that these figures of historical memory are not of a conflicting nature, but would rather play a unifying role in terms of the Crimean regional identity.

Generally, both residents of the Crimea and Donbass do not regard the religious factor as significant in the Ukrainian conflict; there is a tolerant attitude to the religious historical memory. However, about half of the respondents were concerned with empower-

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<sup>45</sup> Sikevich Z. V. *Deiateli Rossiiskoi istorii v predstavleniakh peterburzhtsev (po materialam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia)*. P. 105.

ing the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with autocephaly by the Patriarch of Constantinople, supposing it could lead to a deepening divide of society along the confessional line and would become an additional conflict factor.

The memory of the Great Patriotic War is the major unifying aspect of historical consciousness for the residents of the Crimea, the Donbass, and for all Russians. According to the results of sociological surveys, the vast majority of respondents consider the Victory Day the main holiday, the memory event they are proud of. The attitude of residents of the Crimea and the Donbass also prove the common memory and unity with the Soviet culture and the Soviet Union as a historical phenomenon. The residents of these regions tend to remember more positive than negative events which they are proud of in the history of the USSR, despite the period of Ukrainian “anti-Soviet propaganda”. Although in there were many tragic events in the Soviet history, “black spots”, they did not negatively influence the overall positive perception. Historical consciousness is largely connected with the love of mass art of the Soviet times, mostly, cinema. Peace and security are among the most important values, where historical memory plays a significant role. Respondents note there is a threat of the spread of fascism, nationalist ideology in Ukraine (47.1 %), and the split of the society into Pro-Russian and Pro-Western part (34.1 %). The restriction of using and studying Russian and other peoples’ languages is also highlighted as a significant problem by respondents (20.4%) as the majority of respondents (87.8 %) use Russian in everyday communication, and 77.4% of respondents believe they could be called people with Russian roots and culture, according to the survey results. It is interesting to note that the value of peace prevails among residents of the Crimea (similarly to the whole Russian society) — 36.7% of respondents identified it out of 9 basic values in the telephone survey held by the Center for sociological and Internet research of St. Petersburg State University (N=700, November 2018).

All things considered, historical memory is rather conservative and can not be changed at once in spite of the fast changes inherent to liquid modernity. The dynamics of historical representations of the Russian society over the past two decades show a rather stable trend. The perception of events, periods, and historical figures has changed insignificantly since the Soviet times in spite of some revisions of memory policy. Nevertheless, the confrontational model of historical politics speeds up changes in collective consciousness and results in divides in the society. On the one hand, it is important to understand what can cause such trauma of historical memory within ethno-confessional context, to know the history itself, on the other hand — to be able to predict and understand the dynamics of collective consciousness, to monitor constantly factors of conflict and social tension. Therefore, a fruitful synergy of historical and sociological disciplines could contribute both to theoretical and to practical areas regarding historical memory and ethno-confessional issues.

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