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**MEMORY PRACTICES IN FORMATION OF  
SCHOOLCHILDREN'S CIVIC IDENTITY**

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**Abstract**

In recent years the interest in the formation of a civic identity of a person has raised. The problem of identity became aggravated when the society faced the need to make independent decisions having deflected from the power of nature and traditions. The author of this article is interested in how commemoration affects the formation of civic identity, as well as what the strategies for the formation of civic identity of schoolchildren using commemorative practices are. The main issues of this article are as follows: how civic identity is formed, what role commemoration practices play in this process, whether they can become a real alternative to other practices of educational activities in civic education. The scientific value of the information presented lies in the fact that the author of the article carried out a theoretical analysis of approaches to the study of commemorative practices, revealed their structure and typology, developed the following commemorative practices of civic education: reading authentic texts; the practice of commemorative speeches; family saga; legendizing the hero's image; school is your home; commemorative practice "Time Machine"; practices of intergenerational "memory dialogues" and others.

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## **1. Introduction**

Research on memorial issues is currently spread in Russian sociology, history and pedagogy. Therefore, the metamorphoses of understanding the past by modern Russian society are traced; a scientific vision of communities that are organized by means of collective remembering appears. However, Russian works focusing on the integrating role of remembering in social groups practically overlook the problem of weakening this role, that is, the probability of collective remembering being forgotten.

Everyone has individual memories of a personal past filled with unique facts. From the standpoint of the present, the totality of such facts creates a holistic view of the experience. However, completely different people, each of whom has individual experiences, are able to understand and retain the same memories not connected with their lives. This ability to possess shared images of the past becomes the basis for creating a social group since shared memories allow people to experience shared experiences. To make such memories continue to unite individuals into a single community, it is necessary to transfer the experience of the group in time and space. Collective acts of remembering are the means of conveying ideas about a common past which make a person feel involvement in the events experienced by the members of a social group. Therefore, attention to the methods of collective remembering should be paid when studying the identity of society, scientific discourse.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The increase in information flows causing the development of digital media leads to the fact that now many people are able to construct historical images personally through open communication and without any government participation. These tendencies determine the process of memory desacralization as a result of which memories of the past are deprived of the integrating function of society. The situation described is the reason why commemorative practices are not able to operate sustainably in modern society, and therefore, expert groups creating historical knowledge and serving as organizers of acts of collective remembering need to look for new means to preserve historical memory.

## **3. Research Questions**

If the means of transmitting the past become ineffective, then the strength of the narrative of the version of history weakens causing the situation when the identity of the society is threatened from the outside or disintegrated. Consequently, it is necessary to understand not only how the generation of young Russians retains images of the historical past, but also how acts of collective remembering affect imposing socially significant memories. Since after the perestroika Russian/Soviet history was repeatedly rewritten (consequently, the interpretations of the past changed), Russian sociology began to deal with the problem of the state of memory in Russian society. Therefore, such researchers as A.V. Ochkina, N.V. Prokazin, N.P. Starykh, L.D. Gudkov, B.V. Dubin made a kind reference to the memory of Russian society by demonstrating which events and personalities were actualized by Russians on the history card. There are works concerning the development of concepts in the sociology of memory. Among such authors, one should mention V.A. Kolevatova, A. Vasiliev, V. Yarskaya, E. Trubina, E.A. Rostovtseva, D.A. Sosnitsky.

The expansion of the theoretical base for the study of this topic has led to the formation of directions for the study of memory within the framework of Russian sociology. In particular, works by A. Miller, G. Kasyanov, O.V. Petrovskaya, I. Kalinin, O. Lysikova, which deal with the issue of the state's influence on the "proper" understanding of the past by the citizens of the country. In addition to the problems of historical politics, a number of researchers, specifically S. Ushakina, E. Rozhdestvenskaya, V.A. Shnirelman, covered the issue of constructing acts of collective remembering in order to transfer the experience of a social group.

Commemoration is "an action referring to the reality of the past, which no longer exists now" (Churkina, 2016, p. 41). In any community, commemorative practice is a sign that holds individuals together into a single whole allowing them to feel part of a social group. Consequently, a concept (the signified) is embedded in the act of remembering, which will be shared by all members of the community. However, in order to be spread among a group of people, the concept requires a signifier being content (maximum filling of the reality of the past) and form (method of transmission and expression of content). In other words, social experience unites people due to a concept embodied in a material, bodily, verbal or visual presentation, which enables "to predict the transformation of value representations of mass consciousness and the corresponding changes in social behavior" (Yanitskiy et al., 2019, p. 49).

A special place in commemoration is held by "places of memory" being "certain points, around which collective memory is concentrated and preserved" (Antipin, 2012, p. 82). Places of memory can be "objects, events, legends, people, geographical points, whose main task is to connect the past and the present, symbolize the significant past" (Boimirzaev, 2017, p. 1). In other words, memory is past events that try to find a place in the present. Therefore, society is engaged in the introduction of memory into place, i.e., giving memories a more stable form through material objects. Consequently, social memory always manifests itself in something else beyond a single person. Thus, social memory can be "reduced to manipulation of space, where each individual is able to place and withdraw memories from the world outside him changing interpretation" (Serto, 2013, p. 7).

In other words, a narrative or commemorative core is "a self-sufficient reality that establishes its presence in social reality through regular reproduction in the present" (Malinova, 2017, p. 9). We get one more important property of commemorative practice, specifically, the practice of everyday history, everyday life, the material component of this life, which consists in the spatial and material characteristics of "places of memory". As Hobsbawm (2000) notes, "invented traditions" are formed at the level of everyday practices. Only in this case they will have a certain status in the public consciousness and regulate it in a necessary way. Hobsbawm (2000) identifies the main features of "invented traditions": "artificiality, conceptual retrospectiveness, contrast, repetition, extreme conservatism, fictitiousness" (p. 53). However, it is precisely "fictitiousness that does not allow to refer "invented traditions" to commemoration in the full sense, but makes it logical to call them a part of commemorative practice, since the latter is not limited to exclusively artificial modeling of its content, but does not exclude it" (Shoob, 2016, p. 82).

According to Durkheim's concept, commemorative rituals (practices) have the following properties: collective character, emotionality, sacredness, retro-orientation (Durkheim, 2018). The problem here is that when an individual creates personal memorable narrative connected with personally experienced events, then he independently creates a memory from fragments of the perception of the past. However, when an event is removed from historical memory, such a memory is an integral object to a person since the

individual himself is not competent in constructing facts that go beyond the limits of his limited everyday world. The researchers determined that “the structure of the conceptual sphere of regional identity can be described by five components ... such as mythological-religious, existential, historical, natural and value” (Maksimova et al., 2019, p. 91).

The activity approach puts special emphasis on the subject-subject relations of social agents, which is the basis of social ones. In this regard, the peculiarity of the comprehension of commemoration is that, as a rule, it is considered either in the context of individual ritual practices (memorials, parades, other celebrations), without going beyond the specific event context of its existence (local approach), or only mentioned in passing in the context of more general theoretical reasoning (defocused approach).

Therefore, according to researchers, the most productive method of studying commemoration is observation (participant and non-participant), which enables to see the external side of the act of remembering in the context of social interaction. The application of this method is necessary when studying commemorative practices as ritual actions that separate the sphere of the sacred from everyday life; content analysis and questionnaire surveys are necessary to identify the most commemoratively dense topics in historical narrative. Thanks to them, it is possible to find out which events of the past are actualized in a particular social group, as well as to identify the common symbolic space of historical memory; discourse analysis shows the influence of socio-cultural and institutional contexts on the transmission of historical plots (Stepanova & Symanyuk, 2019). Thus, one can “see how the addressee and the boundaries of the social frame determine the content of the commemorative narrative” (Anikin, 2008, p. 20).

Commemorations are formed at the level of communicative memory. The dynamics of memory consists not only in the alternation of oblivion and recollection, but also in the combination of “flash” and “short” memories in the creation of a biographical narrative. However, it is precisely “flash” memories that are reference points in the construction of a narrative about their past since their commemorative density is much higher than the average memory cells. The most “types of leisure such as collecting, craft, artistic practices, sports are open to historical experience” (Linchenko, 2015, p. 119). Commemoration is always associated with an unusual fact of the past since it should excite a person and make him put forth an effort over consciousness in order to plunge into the past while remembering is the exception, not the rule. In the politics of memory, “in addition to commemorative practices, there is also “forgetting” being an inverse mechanism for regulating memory when some pages of history are tried to be forgotten, not discussed” (Churkina, 2016, p. 38). The question, therefore, is to single out everyday and non-everyday commemorative practices, where the former turns out to be less thematic. The difference between them “lies in the specifics of highlighting the experience of the past as an object of activity” (Linchenko, 2015, p. 125). Forms of “places of memory and, accordingly, commemorative practices are what P. Nora wrote about (topographic, monumental, symbolic, functional)” (Nora, 1999, p. 98).

Education, including patriotic education, is a strategic guideline for Russian education. However, “in the modern socio-cultural situation characterized by diversity, contradiction, multi-vector development of society and polystylistic culture, it is necessary to revise its forms in order to bring them into maximum compliance with the needs and mental characteristics of the new young generation, the so-called generation Z, which is noticeably different from the previous generations of peers” (Murzina & Kazakova, 2019, p. 157). The state offers new formats of collective remembering to modern youth. These forms are as follows:

holding interactive exhibitions, unprecedented memorial processions and flash mobs, using the Internet space to create commemorative events, as well as introducing a cultural and anthropological educational standard in educational institutions. Based on the perspective presented, a person will better assimilate the images of the collective past at the individual level, if the historical narrative is in contact with the events of his personal life. Hence, the role of family's history linking personal memories with the history of a social community increases, since "... morality is a more important predictor of socio-political views than values" (Sychev et al., 2019, p. 62). Images of historical memory are more effective for young people to assimilate if they are associated with a family background. In other words, a young person is better oriented in the vagaries of the historical period if a relative who has felt the influence of the historical process took part in it since modern researchers "have revealed the regularities of the relationship between meaningful states of life with the acceptance-rejection of life-meaning tasks by a person, as well as with success or failure of their solutions in his individual life" (Karpinsky, 2019, p. 82). However, the past of the family is not always updated in the form of a circulation of memorable objects or stories. Therefore, the use of resources of family history sometimes impedes assimilating the images of historical memory: "in modern society, there is a growing demand for the dissemination of pro-social practices" (Kislyakov et al., 2019, p. 128). In such a situation, the way out would be to turn to the structure of commemorative practice: when adjusting its elements, it is necessary to make sure that the act of remembering always surprises and, thereby, creates a new aura of commemoration. If the concept of commemorative practice should always be the same, then it is necessary to change the form of the historical material presentation.

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

The purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical substantiation of commemorative practices as a basic educational activity in the formation of civic identity of schoolchildren.

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

Theoretical analysis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature on the research problem; analytic-synthesizing; comparative.

#### **6. Findings**

Based on the position presented, a person will better assimilate the images of the collective past at the individual level, if the historical narrative is in contact with the events of his personal life. Hence, the role of family's history linking personal memories with the history of a social community increases. Images of historical memory are more effective for young people to assimilate if they are associated with a family background. In other words, a young person is better oriented in the vagaries of the historical period if a relative who has felt the influence of the historical process participated in it. However, the family's past is not always updated in the form of a circulation of memorable objects or stories. Therefore, the use of resources of family history sometimes impedes assimilating the images of historical memory. In such a situation, the way out would be to turn to the structure of commemorative practice: when adjusting its elements, it is necessary to make sure that the act of remembering always surprises and, thereby, creates a

new aura of commemoration. If the concept of commemorative practice should always be the same, then it is necessary to change the form of expression of the historical material.

The sociocultural conditioning of the formation of the schoolchildren's civic identity presupposes the actualization of commemorative practices of civic education: reading authentic texts (commemoration through books, letters, diaries); the practice of commemorative speeches (commemoration through the praise or censure of the deeds of past generations); family saga (commemoration through family identity being a journey through the historical places of family life, rituals and traditions of family holidays, etc.); legendizing the hero's image (commemoration through the study of the biography of ancestors); school is your home (commemoration through local identity by creating educational centers of the school, forming a school style, creating a child-adult community, etc.); commemorative practice "Time Machine" (commemoration through the study of local history by visiting museums, memorable places of the city (village), recalling the history of traditional peasant life, etc.); practices of intergenerational "dialogues of memory" (commemoration through organizing intergenerational dialogue in "power zones" ("places of memory") being monuments, burial places, other objects of historical memory); "Planets of childhood" (commemoration through organizing exhibitions of children's toys, letters and diaries, photographs, master classes of children's games from different historical periods); background commemorative practices (commemoration through environment education, the formation of school style, various types of traditional leisure being collecting, craft, artistic practices, sports); calendar commemorative practices (commemoration through school and family holidays, anniversaries, memorable historical events, cultural events, for example, the appearance of a book, film or play dedicated to a specific historical theme).

## 7. Conclusion

Commemoration is a form of objectification of cultural memory. The historical memory of a society is expressed in commemorations, which can be both individual and collective. Commemoration should be interpreted as a set of public collective practices aimed to form the values and models of behavior through ritually formalized retention and reproduction (repetition) in the actual culture of symbolically expressed ideas about the past meaningful for the group.

Commemorative practice is always the practice of everyday history, everyday life, the material component of this life, which consists in the spatial and material characteristics of "places of memory". Commemorative practices should contribute to maintaining a unified attitude to the past in society, including the "local" past, which is an integral part of the common past of the people and the state. Commemorative practices presuppose a set of ways by which the memory of the past is consolidated, preserved and transmitted in society.

Commemoration is always associated with an unusual fact of the past, since it should excite a person and force him make an effort over consciousness in order to plunge into the past because remembering is the exception, not the rule. In the politics of memory, in addition to commemorative practices, there is also "forgetting", an inverse mechanism for regulating memory, when some pages of history are tried to be forgotten, not discussed. The question, therefore, is to single out everyday and non-everyday commemorative practices, where the former turns out to be less thematic. The difference between them lies in the specifics of highlighting the experience of the past as an object of activity.

Based on the position presented, a person will better assimilate the images of the collective past at the individual level, if the historical narrative is in contact with the events of his personal life. Hence, the role of family's history linking personal memories with the history of a social community increases. Images of historical memory are more effective for young people to assimilate if they are associated with a family background.

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