

How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

M Pilgun, IM Dzyaloshinsky (2016): “Phantoms of the historical memory: social identity of the Russian youth”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 592 to 615.

<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/071/paper/1111/31en.html>

DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1111en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1111en)

Phantoms of the historical memory: social identity of the Russian youth

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Abstract

Introduction. This paper analyzes the historical memory of the modern Russian youth. **Objectives.** The aim of this project is identification and analysis of the role of images of the past in the process of temporal identity of youth in the conditions of large-scale use Russian elites of the media to disseminate militarist-isolationist ideology. **Methodology.** The main techniques that were used to obtain empirical data were used mass surveys, focus group interviews and others. The survey was conducted in 12 cities that represent all federal districts of Russia (except Crimea). There were interviewed 1548 persons. **Results.** The images of historical events is largely semantic form the basis of national and civil identity of Russians. **Discussion and Conclusion.** Study of features of modern Russian youth perceptions of historical events of the twentieth century determined the specificity of the identity of modern Russian youth, to identify the factors influencing the formation of the SFA overt assessments of historical events in the history of the country, as well as a number of important ideological and educational problems within the complicated political period were violent events in Ukraine.

Keywords

identity; young people in Russia; historical memory; historical events.

Contents

1. Introduction. 2. Object and objectives of study. 3. Methodology. 4. Results. 5. Discussion and conclusion. 6. Notes. 7. References. 8. Attachments.

Translation into the English by the autor **Maria Pilgun** (HSE Moscú/Russia)

1. Introduction

The creation of the social identity in all countries is considered as a necessary condition for preserving the state integrity and maintaining the harmony in the society. It is no coincidence that on the level of higher governmental bodies through messages from the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Meeting, speeches at forums a consolidating notion of the political nation is communicated in the meaning of the co-citizenship, i.e. community of the Russian state citizens. Such interpretation is brought into the discourse through the notions “Russian nation”, “single nation of the Russia”, “we are the multi-ethnic nation of the Russia”.

Besides, the social identity, which may act as a factor for strengthening social bonds and regulating the behavior of an individual, has recently been considered as an important factor for the social development (Tajfel H and Turner JC 1986, Turner JC and Oakes PJ 1986, Turkle S 1995, Salazar JA 2009, Logan et al., 1992, LeBoeuf et al., 2010; Turner and Oakes, 1986, Dell P and Marinova D 2007, McCann RM, Kellermann K, Giles H, et al. 2004, Shavitt S and Nelson MR 2000).

The problem of identity is of particular interest in respect to the analysis of the world view and behavior of the contemporary youth. Various social forces nowadays express concern about the problems of formation of identity in a young person, his/her ideals and values. This concern is stipulated both by global processes of transition from the industrial society to the information and intensifying processes of search of the regional identity.

The self-consciousness of any society begins from the history. Its symbolically significant events create the notional basis of the national and civil identity. At the same time the historical consciousness is exposed to the influence of both the realities of everyday life and images presented in the literature, art and mass media (Ricoeur, 2004, Gudkov, 2004, Strauss W and Howe N (1991)). It is evident that historical events, as a rule, are not the subject of large interest of the modern youth, however, it is rather difficult not to pay attention to the events discussed actively in the Internet. (Derks D, Bos AER and von Grumbkow J 2007, Goffman E 1959, Hebdige D 1981, Huffaker DA and Calvert SL 2005, Kafai YB, Fields DA and Cook MS (2010, Koda T, Ishida T, Rehm M, et al. (2006, Le Boeuf RA, Shafir E and Bayuk JB 2010, Leung LW 2010, Morand DA and Ocker RJ 2003, Pearce C 2009, Prensky M 2001).

The 20th century is very rich in the events being significant for the history of Russia. The list of such events, drawn by historians, comprises several thousands of facts. It is clear that the list of historians and the list of events, stored in the memory of our contemporaries, must differ. However, it is important not only that these differences are stated but also a logic is seen of singling out the event-related complexes by ordinary citizens being so vital for them in order to be stored by them in the operative memory. The exposure, analysis and systematization of the dates and events vital in the context of the Russian-wide identity play an important role for apprehending the problems of formation and development of the Russian youth identity.

2. Object and objectives of the study

The historical memory of the Russian youth is a subject of research in this work. The topic of research are the processes of the temporal self-identification of youth in the conditions of the large-scale usage of mass media by the Russian elites in order to expand the militaristic-isolationist ideology.

With a view to the peculiarities of the subject and topic of the research the research question was framed: what are the patterns of the past in the consciousness of the Russian youth in the situation of massive usage of mass media by the Russian elites in order to expand the militaristic-isolationist ideology?

General tasks of the research:

- Generalization and systematization of modern approaches towards studying the historical memory and actualization of these approaches;
- Exposure and analysis of the role of the patterns from the past in the processes of the temporal self-identification of youth in the conditions of a large-scale usage of mass media by the Russian elites in order to expand the militaristic-isolationist ideology;
- Exposure of youth attitude towards the key events of the Russian history of the 20th century.

3. Methodology

Many researches are dedicated to the analysis of the processes of formation of youth identity. If trying to systematize various publications touching upon this range of issues, it is expedient that they are divided into several groups.

The works, dedicated to the development of Russia as a social and historic organism, will be attributed to the first one. Those are, mainly, the publications by A.S. Akhiezer, V.K. Kantor, V.A. Krasilshchikov, V.O. Kliuchevskiy, P.N. Miliukov, A.V. Obolonskiy, R. Pipes. In the works of these authors the specific nature of admitting our country to the civilization is analyzed, Russia and the West are compared as cultural and historic types, establishment and struggle of the main types of social thinking and social ethics in the Russian society are discussed.

The important aspects of the topic are revealed in the historic and pedagogical investigations allowing to have a look at the upbringing process from the point of view of the historical succession. The publications of the following authors will be attributed to this group of works: N.I. Barkova, V.P. Bezdukhov, Ye.P. Belozertsev, V.I. Belyayev, V.I. Blinov, A.P. Bulkin, M.V. Boguslavskiy, P.A. Gagaev, V.I. Dodonov, V.M. Klarin, G.B. Kornetov, N.V. Kudriavaya, S.V. Kulikova, P.A. Lebedev, A.Ye. Likhachev, S.A. Miniukova, A.A. Nikolskaya, V.M. Petrov, Z.I. Ravkin, I.N. Sizemskaya, M.Ye. Steklov, N.I. Yudashina, N.P. Yudina, N.D. Yarmachenko and others. The research works of V.I. Dodonov, V.M. Klarin and V.M. Petrov are written in the same vein. The interpretation of the ideals and values in the system of formation of the young man's personality is illustrated in them.

The conceptualization of approaches, related to the issue of formation of the historical consciousness of the young man, can be found in the works by V.G. Bezrogov, B.M. Bim-Bad, M.V. Boguslavskiy, E.D. Dneprov, G.B. Kornetov, L.V. Moshkova, M.V. Savin, Z.I. Ravkin and other authors.

Besides, in the framework of this work we rely on the methodological apparatus offered by Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin, which is briefly characterized by the following provisions:

- “The research of semantics of linguistic items, objectifying the concepts, allows to obtain access to the contents of concepts as cogitative items.

- The aggregate of meanings of linguistic items forms the language semantic space.
- The concept is an item of the sphere of concepts, the meaning is an item of the language semantic space.
- The meaning is an element of linguistic consciousness, the concept is an element of cognitive (“general”).
- The concept and the meaning to the same extent are the phenomena of the cogitative, cognitive nature.
- The availability of a large number of nominations of this or that concept represents the nominative density of such area of the language system, which reflects the relevance of the verbalized concept for the nation consciousness.” [1]

The main methods for obtaining the empirical material included mass questionnaire survey and focus-grouped interview. When questioned the respondents, not recouring to any additional materials and hints, who had to name 10 the most important events, which, to their point of view, hit Russia in the 20th century.

The questioning was held in 12 cities representing all federal districts of Russia except the Crimea. The federal district of the Crimea was not included into the number of territories to conduct the examination, since the young men in that region had studied on different educational programs, stayed in a different media field until recently, that's why their answers on the questionnaire at that stage cannot be acknowledged as representative for analyzing the attitude of the Russian youth to the events of the 20th century.

All in all 1548 people were interviewed. General characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. General characteristics of the respondents (% to the number of respondents)

Sex	
Male	43.1
Female	56.9
Age	
16 – 20 years old	62.2
21 – 25 years old	27.2
26 – 30 years old	10.6
Education	
Take classes in a secondary school, secondary technical educational institution	44.3
Attend a higher educational institution	24.7
Possessing the secondary-level education, secondary special education	12.1
Higher education	18.9
Area of activities (% to the number of the employed persons)	
Manufacturing industry (including transport, communications, construction)	14.3
Agriculture	10.5
Area of housing-utility and social services	15.2
Education	6.4

Culture/art	8.2
Mass media	26.8
Army, law-enforcement bodies	14.3
Other field	4.3
Frequency of using the Internet	
Every day	97.9
Once in two-three days	2.1
Duration of staying in the Internet per day	
1 – 3 hours	33.8
4 – 6 hours	52.3
7 – 9 hours	6.1
Over 10 hours	11.1

4. Results

Characterizing the obtained results, first of all, it should be mentioned that in the whole for the massive the respondents distinguished 146 events in the national history of the 20th century. From further analysis the following events were excluded: the events taken less than 1% from the total number of events mentioned by all respondents (9.5% of all respondents); and the events mentioned by the respondents which have nothing to do with the 20th century (the Christianization of Rus, the Mongolo-Tatar Yoke, the abolition of serfhood, annexation of the Crimea, economic crisis 2008-2010, etc.). Therefore, for the further analysis 29 events were chosen (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Events taken more than 1% (inclusively) from the total number of the events named by respondents

Event	Percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents
Great Patriotic War	9.1
October Revolution	8.8
USSR breakup	8.7
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.1
WWI	7.0
WWII	4.1
Cold War	4.0
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	3.7
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.2
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	3.1
Civil war	3.0
Stalin's repressions	2.9
USSR formation	2.7
February Revolution	2.6
Default 1998	2.5
Scientific inventions	2.4
Military invasion to Afghanistan	2.4
Olympic Games 1980	2.3

Stalin's death	2.1
Russo-Japanese War	2.1
Assassination of the Monarch's family	2.1
Statement of B.N. Yeltsin about early resignation from the Presidency of the Russian Federation/rising to power of V.V. Putin	2.0
Bourgeois Revolution 1905-1907	1.8
First Chechen War	1.7
Condemnation of the personality cult at the 20th Congress of CPSU	1.5
Lenin's death	1.4
Cultural events	1.4
Caribbean Crisis	1.2
Other	2.3

However, if emphasizing on the events, which were recollected by the largest number of survey respondents, the top ten will be as follows: Great Patriotic War (9.1% from the total number of the events named by respondents); October Revolution (8.8%), USSR breakup (8.7%); space flight by Yu. Gagarin (8.1%); WWI (7.0%); WWII (4.1%); Cold War (4.0%); Perestroika (Rebuilding era) (3.7%); creation of atomic/nuclear weapon (3.2%); explosion at Chernobyl NPS (3.1%).

The second ten events included such events as Civil war (3.0%); Stalin's repressions (2.9%); USSR formation (2.7%); February Revolution (2.6%); default 1998 (2.5%); military invasion to Afghanistan (2.4%); Olympic Games 1980 (2.3%); Stalin's death (2.1%); Russo-Japanese War (2.1%); assassination of the Monarch's family (2.1%).

Some more events scored from 2 to 1 percent: Statement of B.N. Yeltsin about early resignation from the Presidency of the Russian Federation/rising to power of Putin (2.0%); Bourgeois Revolution 1905-1907 (1.8%); First Chechen War (1.7%); condemnation of the personality cult at the 20th Congress of CPSU (1.50%); Lenin's death (1.4%); Caribbean Crisis (1.2%).

Thinking over the reasons, which stimulated fixation of these or those events in the memory of the survey respondents, it can be stated that in the apparent chaotic nature of the distinguished events a rather clear regularity is traced: in the historical memory of the young contemporaries those facts got fixed which related either to a substantial quantity of involved people or to the scope of consequences for destabilization of the social system. The destabilization means not only destructive processes (though the majority of the distinguished events are just of such nature) but also the events which stimulate social development but in the form of a sharp overturn. The space flight by Yuriy Gagarin, the condemnation of the personality cult at the 20th Congress of CPSU and some other historical facts are just of that nature. Sometimes both factors are combined into one unit.

Having a look at the top ten events, distinguished by the survey respondents, taking into account the breakdown of the points of view of representatives of the various gender, age groups, respondents possessing different level of education, employed in different areas of activities, residing in different cities and using the Internet with the different intensity, the following conclusions can be made.

First of all, conspicuous is the fact that women oftener than men mentioned the first human space flight, WWII, creation of atomic/nuclear weapon. And men oftener than women recollected the following events: WWI, Cold War and Chernobyl disaster (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratio of males and females who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	Males	Females
Great Patriotic War	9.2	9.0
October Revolution	8.7	8.9
USSR breakup	8.9	8.5
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	7.7	8.5
WWI	7.7	6.3
WWII	3.9	4.3
Cold War	4.4	3.6
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	3.9	3.5
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.2	4.0
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	3.4	2.5

Concerning the age groups, the October Revolution was recollected, mainly, by the youngest survey respondents at the age of 16-20. The WWI was included into the list of significant events by more respondents from the elder age group – 26-30 year-old people. The Perestroika (rebuilding era) as an event which hit Russia was mentioned almost twice as less by 16-20 year-old respondents (Table 4).

Table 4. Number of respondents of different age who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	16 – 20 years old	21 – 25 years old	26 – 30 years old
Great Patriotic War	9.2	9.6	8.2
October Revolution	9.5	8.6	8.2
USSR breakup	8.9	8.7	8.7
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.3	8.1	8.2
WWI	6.6	6.3	8.7
WWII	4.3	3.2	5.4
Cold War	3.7	3.9	4.2
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	2.4	4.3	4.5
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.0	2.4	4.2
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	2.7	3.5	3.1

If having a look at the top ten events being important for Russia from the point of view of the respondents with a different level of education, it is evident that the October Revolution was mostly included into the list of significant events by pupils and people possessing the higher education. For example, the rebuilding era and creation of atomic weapon were mentioned by some bigger number of students from higher institutions (Table 5).

Table 5. Number of respondents with different level of education who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	Take classes in a secondary school, secondary technical educational institution	Attend a higher educational institution	Possessing the secondary-level education, secondary special education	Higher education
Great Patriotic War	9.0	10.0	8.3	9.1
October Revolution	10.3	7.8	7.6	9.4
USSR breakup	9.3	8.2	8.3	9.1
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.3	8.4	8.3	7.5
WWI	6.9	5.6	9.0	6.6
WWII	4.2	4.4	4.9	3.0
Cold War	3.7	4.2	4.9	3.1
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	1.4	5.0	4.6	3.8
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	2.4	4.1	3.9	2.2
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	2.8	2.6	3.7	3.3

Very interesting data can be taken from the difference of events included into the list of important by the respondents employed in different areas of activities (Table 6). The Great Patriotic War was the most often mentioned by the survey respondents, who neither study nor work (hence, it can be supposed, they spend more time in contact with various media resources, which in the year of the 70th anniversary of the Victory rather much attention gave to such historic event). The second place is taken by the education system employees, which can be explained, too. The October Revolution is less acknowledged as an important event by the service sector employees and unemployed participants of the survey. However, the first human space flight was mentioned by the service sector employees rather oftener than the others. It is interesting that the respondents employed in the education system rarely if ever included WWII into the list of important events (if comparing this figure with the corresponding index by the “Great Patriotic War” event, with a high share of assurance it can be explained by the fact that the teachers combine these two events).

The respondents, using the Internet on a daily basis and surfing there for 4-6 hours per day, included the “Great Patriotic War” event into the list oftener than all others. The October Revolution was mentioned the most often by the survey participants using the Internet once in two-three days but surfing in it from 7 to 10 hours per day. The USSR breakup as an important event was mentioned particularly often by the respondents using the Internet every day. WWI and the explosion at Chernobyl NPS were recollected practically twice more by those respondents who surf in the Internet once in two-three days. The explosion at Chernobyl NPS was practically omitted by the respondents staying in the Internet 7-9 hours per day.

Table 6. Number of respondents employed in different areas of activities who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events)

Event	Manufacturing industry	Agriculture	Area of housing-utility and social services	Education	Culture/art	Mass media	Army, law-enforcement bodies	Other field
Great Patriotic War	8.4	8.1	8.7	11.6	7.3	9.7	7.8	16.3
October Revolution	8.4	5.4	3.4	5.8	9.8	9.0	7.2	4.7
USSR breakup	8.4	9.9	8.4	7.2	9.8	6.9	7.8	7.0
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	7.1	9.0	11.4	4.3	8.5	7.9	9.2	9.3
WWI	7.7	9.0	5.7	8.7	8.5	5.2	9.8	2.3
WWII	3.9	6.3	7.8	1.4	4.9	3.8	5.9	7.0
Cold War	5.2	4.5	4.6	2.9	6.1	4.5	5.2	4.7
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	5.2	6.3	3.6	7.2	3.7	4.8	3.3	2.3
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.2	4.5	2.8	1.4	3.7	4.8	3.9	0
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	3.2	2.7	3.6	2.9	2.4	1.7	5.2	9.3

The interesting data were obtained when comparing answers of the respondents using the Internet with various frequency (Table 7) and surfing in the Internet different amount of time (Table 8).

Table 7. Number of respondents with different frequency of using the Internet who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	Using the Internet on a daily basis	Using the Internet once in two-three days
Great Patriotic War	9.1	6.3
October Revolution	8.4	9.4
USSR breakup	8.8	3.1
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.0	9.4
WWI	6.7	12.5
WWII	4.2	6.3
Cold War	4.0	6.3
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	4.4	6.3
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.3	3.1
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	2.9	6.3

Table 8. Number of respondents staying in the Internet different amount of time who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	1-3 hours per day	4-6 hours per day	7-9 hours per day	More than 10 hours per day
Great Patriotic War	8.0	9.7	8.5	7.9
October Revolution	7.3	8.6	9.3	9.3
USSR breakup	8.6	8.7	9.3	8.6
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.0	8.1	6.8	9.3
WWI	8.3	6.3	8.5	4.6
WWII	4.9	3.6	6.8	4.6
Cold War	4.6	3.2	6.8	4.0
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	4.9	4.1	4.2	4.6
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	3.6	2.6	5.1	4.0
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	3.6	2.9	0.8	2.0

If looking at the list of events of the 20th century significant for the Russian history from the point of view of the cities, where the survey participants reside (Table 9), the following data are worth noticing.

The Great Patriotic War more often entered the lists of respondents who reside in St. Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don and Yekaterinburg (by the way, the citizens of Rostov and Yekaterinburg mentioned WWII the least among other cities). The October Revolution 1917 was mentioned most often by the citizens of Yekaterinburg, Khabarovsk, Piatigorsk and Moscow. The USSR breakup as an important event was recollected the rarest in Novosibirsk. WWI entered the list of important events the rarest in Khabarovsk, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg. The Cold War was not recollected at all by the survey participants from Nizhniy Novgorod, the space flight by Yuriy Gagarin – in Volgograd, and the rebuilding era – in Piatigorsk. The most memorable event turned to be the rebuilding era for the respondents from St. Petersburg.

Table 9. Number of respondents from different cities who included this event into the top ten events, which hit Russia in the 20th century (percentage from the total number of the events named by respondents)

Event	Moscow	Rostov-on-Don	St. Petersburg	Khabarovsk	Novosibirsk	Yekaterinburg	Nizhniy Novgorod
Great Patriotic War	9.0	12.4	12.6	10.5	7.1	11.8	8.4
October Revolution	10.1	3.4	6.3	10.5	8.2	10.8	7.2
USSR breakup	9.3	7.9	6.3	8.1	4.7	8.6	9.6
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.2	5.6	8.4	8.1	9.4	8.6	7.2

WWI	6.8	9.0	3.2	3.5	4.7	3.2	8.4
WWII	3.8	2.2	6.3	3.5	5.9	2.2	3.6
Cold War	3.5	4.5	4.2	4.7	4.7	5.4	0
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	2.0	5.6	8.4	4.7	2.4	7.5	4.8
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	2.3	2.2	4.2	3.5	5.9	2.2	7.2
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	3.0	3.4	2.1	3.5	1.2	1.1	2.4

Continue of Table 9

Event	Piatigorsk	Kazan	Cheliabinsk	Volgograd	Krasnoiarisk	Ulianovsk
Great Patriotic War	6.7	8.5	10.8	7.8	8.4	8.1
October Revolution	10.7	8.5	7.0	7.2	8.4	5.4
USSR breakup	6.7	11.1	7.0	7.8	8.4	9.9
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	8.0	9.4	8.3	0	7.1	9.0
WWI	6.7	7.7	5.7	9.8	7.7	9.0
WWII	6.7	5.1	3.8	5.9	3.9	6.3
Cold War	1.3	6.0	5.1	5.2	5.2	4.5
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	0	4.3	3.8	3.3	5.2	6.3
Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	6.7	1.7	5.1	3.9	3.2	4.5
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	4.0	3.4	1.3	5.2	3.2	2.7

The next task, the survey participants had to do, was the necessity to grade those ten events, which were considered the most significant for Russia in the 20th century. And the most significant event, from the point of view of the respondents, had to be attributed the 1st rating, and the least significant in the list – the 10th rating. The summarized results of rating are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Average ratings of importance of the events on all respondents

Event	Rating
Great Patriotic War	2.1
October Revolution	2.9
WWII	3.0
February Revolution	3.7
USSR formation	4.3
USSR breakup	4.5
WWI	4.6
Assassination of the Monarch's family	4.9
Civil war	5.2
Bourgeois Revolution 1905-1907	5.4
Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	5.6
Stalin's repressions	5.7
Stalin's death	5.8

Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	6.5
Statement of B.N. Yeltsin about early resignation from the Presidency of the Russian Federation/rising to power of V.V. Putin	6.5
Scientific inventions	6.6
Russo-Japanese War	6.7
Lenin's death	6.7
Beginning of the Cold War	6.7
Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	6.7
Default 1998	7.0
Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	7.1
Condemnation of the personality cult at the 20th Congress of CPSU	7.2
Military invasion to Afghanistan	7.2
Caribbean Crisis	7.3
Cultural events	7.4
First Chechen War	7.6
Olympic Games 1980	7.7
Other	6.8

If having a look at the top ten of the most significant events, from the point of view of the survey participants, of the 20th century from the point of view of some objectively personal characteristics of theirs (Table 11 – 14), the following data are worth noticing (just to remind: the lower the rating, the higher the event significance).

The men appraised higher than the women the significance of such events as the Great Patriotic War, WWI and the assassination of the Monarch's family.

The respondents of 26-30 years old tend to give less importance than the respondents of other age groups to such events as the USSR formation, Revolution 1905-1907; and the participants from the average age group gave lower ratings to such events as WWI and February Revolution. The 16-20 years-old respondents evaluated the “assassination of the Monarch's family” event lower than the respondents from other age groups.

The survey participants possessing the higher education gave less importance to the “USSR formation” event. The “assassination of the Monarch's family” event turned to be more significant for the respondents with the secondary-level education.

Concerning the interrelation of significance of the events, acknowledged by the respondents, depending on the duration of their surfing in the Internet, no particularly clear dependencies were found. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the survey participants, surfing in the Internet for more than 10 hours per day, tend to evaluate higher the significance of such events as the USSR formation and the Revolution 1905-1907 and lower the “WWI” event. On the contrary, the respondents, surfing in the Internet for 4-6 hours, consider the “USSR formation” event less important and the “WWI” event as more important.

Table 11. Average ratings of importance of the top ten events by the gender property of respondents

Event	Males	Females
Great Patriotic War	1.8	2.3
October Revolution	3.1	3.0
WWII	3.3	2.9
February Revolution	3.0	2.7
USSR formation	4.1	3.9
USSR breakup	4.3	3.9
WWI	3.6	4.9
Assassination of the Monarch's family	3.3	5.9
Civil war	5.4	5.3
Revolution 1905-1907	5.9	6.1

Table 12. Average ratings of importance of the top ten events by the age groups of respondents

Event	16 – 20 years old	21 – 25 years old	26 – 30 years old
Great Patriotic War	2.1	2.0	1.6
October Revolution	3.0	2.8	3.3
WWII	3.2	2.7	2.7
February Revolution	3.6	4.3	3.1
USSR formation	4.3	3.7	5.4
USSR breakup	4.5	4.8	4.7
WWI	4.4	5.1	3.9
Assassination of the Monarch's family	5.2	4.4	3.0
Civil war	5.5	4.5	5.8
Revolution 1905-1907	4.9	5.7	6.3

Table 13. Average ratings of importance of the top ten events depending on the education of respondents

Event	Take classes in a secondary school, secondary technical educational institution	Attend a higher educational institution	Possessing the secondary-level education, secondary special education	Higher education
Great Patriotic War	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.9
October Revolution	2.9	3.3	3.0	2.8
WWII	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.5
February Revolution	3.9	2.8	2.9	4.7
USSR formation	4.4	3.4	4.3	6.3
USSR breakup	4.6	4.0	4.5	5.1
WWI	4.7	4.3	3.8	5.1
Assassination of the Monarch's family	5.1	5.9	3.0	4.4

Civil war	5.3	5.6	6.2	4.5
Revolution 1905-1907	4.7	5.8	5.7	5.9

Table 14. Average ratings of importance of the top ten events depending on the amount of time of respondents staying in the Internet per day

Event	1 – 3 hours	4 – 6 hours	7 – 9 hours	Over 10 hours
Great Patriotic War	2.0	2.2	1.7	2.3
October Revolution	3.1	3.1	2.3	3.5
WWII	2.9	3.9	2.1	2.6
February Revolution	3.4	4.0	3.0	3.3
USSR formation	4.3	5.2	4.2	2.8
USSR breakup	4.3	4.4	3.6	5.2
WWI	4.1	3.1	5.2	6.1
Assassination of the Monarch's family	4.0	5.1	6.0	5.1
Civil war	5.2	4.2	6.5	5.3
Revolution 1905-1907	6.5	6.7	5.2	4.2

Table 15 provides the comparison of the top ten events from the list, which were placed as important for Russia in the 20th century, and the top ten events, which were named by the respondents as the most significant for the same period of time in the Russian history.

Table 15. Comparative analysis of the top ten events included by respondents into the list of important events for Russia, and estimated by them as significant

Place of the event in the list of important events for Russia	Event	Degree of event importance	Event
1.	Great Patriotic War	1.	Great Patriotic War
2.	October Revolution	2.	October Revolution
3.	USSR breakup	3.	WWII
4.	Space flight by Yu. Gagarin	4.	February Revolution
5.	WWI	5.	USSR formation
6.	WWII	6.	USSR breakup
7.	Cold War	7.	WWI
8.	Perestroika (Rebuilding era)	8.	Assassination of the Monarch's family
9.	Creation of atomic/nuclear weapon	9.	Civil war
10.	Explosion at Chernobyl NPS	10.	Revolution 1905-1907

As it can be noticed in Table 15, the list of top ten events, which are taken from the “historical memory” of the respondents, does not quite coincide with the list of events, which are attributed the high level of importance by the respondents, and the order of taking the events from the “individual historical memory” does not correspond to the reasonable result of thoughts concerning the actual significance of this or that event for the country. The exclusion comprised only two events: the Great Patriotic War and the October Revolution. Hence, it can be preliminarily concluded that the “directed” picture of importance of the events, created by the efforts of professionals in the educational and media spheres, is far away from the personal evaluation of importance of the events, which took place in Russia in the 20th century, made by young men.

The averaged data provided above give general idea about the fact what kind of events and to what extent were acknowledged as significant by all respondents. However, the data about the quantity of respondents, who attributed a certain rating to this or that event, are still of scientific importance. Table 16 provides statistical data, representing cluster distributions, “concentrations” of opinions of the respondents about the significance of events which are in the top ten of the most significant events for Russia in the 20th century. These data allow defining the events by the degree of importance of which the level of consent of the respondents is high, and the events which significance is acknowledged by fewer respondents.

Thus, for example, the “concentration” on the first rank place of the “Great Patriotic War” event is evident. The “October Revolution” event was placed by the majority of the respondents to the second rank place; however, still many respondents did not consider this event as particularly significant having attributed to it the 7th, 8th and even 10th rank places. The “WWII” event scored the least number of votes, but still took firmly the 3rd rank place. Though it is interesting that the same number of respondents placed this event to the 5th and 8th places as well as to the 6th, 7th and 10th places. A very interesting picture is given by the clusters of the “USSR breakup” event: the degree of its importance concentrated on the 3rd and 4th rank places, which allowed it to be in the top ten significant events, but having taken only the 6th place. Almost the same situation goes to the “WWI” event. The situation with the “USSR formation” event, which did not enter the top ten important events, but turned to be on the 5th place by its significance, is even more interesting, for this event was chosen not by many respondents, but those who did it, gave to it a high rank place. By the way, this event was included into the list of important by the same number of the survey participants as recollected about the “Civil War” event, however, the degree of importance of the latter turned to be rather lower.

Table 16. Number of respondents positioned the event on the corresponding rank place (for the whole of the massive)

Event	Rank place									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Great Patriotic War	623	247	165	47	47	15	15	15	11	0
October Revolution	329	365	141	94	92	49	53	35	11	15
WWII	163	126	84	63	16	21	21	16	4	21
February Revolution	56	51	99	38	27	24	3	14	24	3
USSR formation	46	64	39	78	32	14	43	4	11	25
USSR breakup	57	147	237	192	147	68	90	79	57	34

WWI	87	156	87	138	112	87	52	52	52	43
Assassination of the monarch's family	38	9	62	26	56	26	18	15	26	18
Civil war	4	50	71	43	43	32	32	46	18	25
Revolution 1905-1907	18	18	12	12	32	18	34	26	8	12

And it is worth mentioning the difference, which was noted in relation to the assessment of significance of these or those events, given by the men and women; representatives from different age groups; school pupils and higher institution students as well as survey participants surfing in the Internet different amount of time. (The discrepancies in the rest of groups of respondents were statistically negligent).

Thus, for example, the “Great Patriotic War” event was placed to the first place by 42% of men and 38% of women. Concerning the “WWII” event another ratio was recorded: 12% of women and 8% of men. The “October Revolution” event was placed to the first place by 18% of women and 12% of men. It is interesting to mention that the “WWI” event was attributed the highest degree of significance by 8% of men (the same number was given to WWII) and only by 2% of women. Concerning other events, included into the top ten by the degree of their significance, no substantial differences are observed in the evaluation by men and women.

Concerning the age groups, 37% of survey participants at the age from 16 to 20 considered the Great Patriotic War as the most significant event for Russia in the 20th century. The elder respondents – 21-25 years old turned to be 45%, and the respondents at the age of 26-30, who placed this event to the first place, were even more – 54%. The October Revolution was placed to the first place by 21% representatives from the first and second age groups; and 17% turned to be in the eldest group. WWII was admitted as the most significant event of the 20th century by 11% of the respondents at the age of 16-20; 9% at the age of 21-25 and 12% of the survey participants were from the age group of 26-30.

Practically the equal number of higher institution students and school pupils gave the first place to three leaders among the events which hit Russia in the 20th century: the October Revolution (10% и 12%, accordingly), WWII (18% and 16%) and the Great Patriotic War (47% and 51%).

The majority of the survey participants, as shown above, practically every day spend some time in the Internet. That's why it is interesting to understand whether there is any dependency between the amount of time, during which the respondents surf in the Internet (including obtaining the information there and discussing various events). It is evident that historical events, as a rule, are not the subject of large interest of the modern youth, however, it is rather difficult not to pay attention to the events discussed actively in the Internet.

Thus, the first place was given to the “Great Patriotic War” event by 47% of the survey participants, surfing in the Internet from 1 to 3 hours per day; 50% of those who stay in the network 4-6 hours; 33% of the respondents who use the Internet 10 and more hours per day; 27% of the respondents surfing in the Internet from 7 to 9 hours. The “WWII” event was given the first place by its significance by 14% of those who use the Internet 1-3 hours and more than 10 hours; 20% of those who stay in the network 4-6 hours; 27% – 7-9 hours. The “October Revolution” event is considered to be the most significant by 20% of the respondents, surfing in the Internet from 7 to 9 hours; the

representatives from other groups by such feature practically do not differ from each other when determining the paramount importance of this event: those are from 7% to 9%.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The conducted research provides the basis for stating some issues requiring to be deeply analyzed.

The first one is: understanding the role of the historical memory and its bearers for the formation of the national, ethical, civil identity. The ideas about the past, circulating in the society,[2] take the strategic point in the structure of identity. The patterns of the past take part in structuring and understanding, constant interpreting the current events contributing to the person's orientation in our world.

Since endorsement of the identity requires the sense of continuity of the history, therefore the functional meaning of any memory lays in the fact that it, uniting the past and the present, helps a person to preserve his/her identity in time, helps to acquire a new identity in the changing time. The community, adapting new notions and ideas, must from time to time reinterpret the past, so that the novelty effect would be lost and the new would become the continuation of the historical tradition. That's why the past in the collective memory undergoes constant reorganization. In this picture of the past there should be no great changes and breaks, so that the group would be able to recognize itself in it at any historical stage. The memory of the past, expressed in the culture, is often organized on a high level and is strategically important. So-called loci of memory, among them such cultural facilities as museums, exhibitions, theaters, archaeological areas, ethnographic peculiarities, folklore, applied art centers, are destined to preserve such memory.

The current activity of the historical memory is conditioned, apart from everything, by the necessity of the Russians to comprehend the present place of the country in the history and in the world. The necessity in comprehending the present time induces a commitment to produce a certain attitude towards the previous eras, attempts in their evaluation and reevaluation. In other words, in the society there is a constant active mental work going on, the historic myth of the recent past is created [3]. At that, the important role is allocated to the succession of the present Russia towards the achievements and ideals of the Soviet Russia, which is impossible without the evaluation, rethinking of the events of the 20th century.

In other words, the memory is understood not like a sum of memoirs of separate people, but like a collective cultural product, developing under the influence of the family, religion and social group through language structures, everyday life practices and social institutes.

In the work named “History, memory, national identity” [4] Professor of the National Research University - Higher School of Economics Yu.P. Zaretskiy points out, that “the pattern itself of the past in the historiography cannot be “objective” in principle”. It is either its “reconstruction” (at its best), or just a “construction” has almost nothing to do with the “real” past. And it is acknowledged, that in both cases this pattern, first of all, directly depends on the power relations in the society and, secondly, is a subject for manipulations of powers aiming to achieve these or those political results in the present” [5].

Another source, related to the social and collective memory, is a work by Ricoeur P. Memory. History. Forgetting, in which the author describes the memory as an activity, work. According to the point of view of the author the work of the memory is made both inside and outside an individual consciousness not only on the level of a separate person but also on the level of the society. The

society itself experiences a particular “historical condition” – the situation of breaking from the past, which should be restored not through the live memory, but through the historical reconstruction [6].

The hardships, experienced at the present time by the national memory, are provoked not only by the external rush of globalized tendencies of the world development from the part. The problem is still in the fact, that many events seemed to be important historical landmarks, turned to be blemished by facts that should be understood in a new way. In this regard a mass of questions arise: about the role of the Varangians in the Russian history, shared history with Ukraine and Belorussia, about the Strife, the role of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the First, fall of the monarchy, the Stalin's epoch, war, stagnation, breakup of the USSR and the 90ies, including “the shocking therapy” and privatization.

It is well known that the soviet ideological system formed a rigid model of greatness of the soviet state, which was at constant opposition to the hostile world. The traces of such processing of the collective consciousness are still evident. According to the data of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM), the Russians, still nowadays, in the 21st century, gladly discuss the greatness of the Russian nation, its accomplishments, the height of the moral, culture, advantages of the national psychology, traditions and customs. At the same time Russians draw parallels with the citizens from other countries, first of all, western states, but admiring their own national traits. And the main idea, which Russians lay in their reasons, is that the Russian nation has to take back its place in the country and in the world.

Hence, according to the public opinion survey, in 2005 the main differences of the Russian national character from the qualities of the western people, according to the Russian citizens, were sincerity, kindness, warm-heartedness, nobility, reliability, hospitality and mutual assistance as opposed to greed, selfishness, craft, shrewdness and arrogance of the citizens from western countries. At that, 42% of the respondents were not able to name at least one positive feature attributable to the contemporary western people. At the same time among their own negative traits the Russians named alcohol addiction, laziness, lack of initiative, forgiveness, obedience and excessive simplicity. [7]

It can be specified that the main place in the aggregate of ideas about oneself as a member of the ethnic community in the consciousness of Russian citizens is taken by the meaning of the passive dependence, which determines a peculiar pained voice for the rest of meanings of the collective self-identity being additional to them. Imaging oneself as a “sacrifice” the Russians assign themselves valuableness, ameliorate self-perception. And it is remarkable that the feeling of being a “sacrifice” emerges before the “enemy” itself appears, which posture in such cases takes the early allocated place for it.

However, recently the Russians have increasingly assigned their country to the great states, having changed the criteria for entering this list of “the best”. According to the survey in July 2013, the main basis for such qualification now is the national history. This is it which provokes the greatest pride of the Russians: 85% admitted that they are proud of that, and only 11% said that they are not. The second place among the reasons for pride is taken by the Russian sport and sportsmen (77% to 18%, accordingly), the third place – the great cultural heritage and art (75% to 19%, accordingly). And only the army and military might (63% of the respondents are proud of those, 28% are not) come after that (History, sports, science: What are the Russians proud of? July 29, 2013).

At the same time it should be stated that, despite growing pessimism concerning approaching of Russia and western countries, comparison with them, meaning that the orientation towards them is still one of the main components of the Russian national identification. The most precious and significant for the contemporary Russians are the experience and achievements of Germany (12%),

USA and Switzerland (4% each), Great Britain, China, Sweden (3% each), Japan and France (2% each), other European countries (1% each). The respondents named those countries in 2012 among those which, according to their opinion, Russia should resemble (What expects Russia in 2020, June 09, 2012).

The mythology of history as a factor of identity formation should be singled out as the second problem. Referring to the works of many contemporary authors (Geary P.J. *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton, 2002), Yu.P. Zaretskiy proves conclusively that the ethnic and national identity of millions of people is based on illusions and myths. It can be an ethnogenetic myth - the myth about common ancestry (common ancestor), the idea about a peculiar territory admitted as the “historical homeland” and the common *group* past (unimportant whether real or assumed), making the realizable commonness of individuals (alive and fallen into oblivion). In the framework of the integral historical and mythological canvas the myths about the origin, place of habitation and settlement, about common ancestors, cultural heroes, famous leaders and wise rulers of the ancient time, about “fateful” events of the common past depicted in the “dimly remembered world” and systematically reproduced in rituals, symbols and texts appear as a foundation of any ethnocentric (ethnoterritorial, ethnocultural, ethnoconfessional) identification.

And it may go not only about the reproduction or reattribution of old myths but also about the delivery of new ethnocentric myths aimed at clear outlining the borders of the “own” community having detached it from a wider territorial and political formation or having united several such formations, for which reason it is apparently necessary to remember different levels of the self-identification and various dimensions (synchronous and diachronous) of both individual and collective (social, ethnic, national, etc.) identity.

The socially built historical myths, ideas about the past perceived as authentic “recollections” (as “history”) and building up a significant part of such world map, play an important role in the orientation, self-identification and behavior of the individual, in the formation and support of the collective identity and translation of ethical values.

In this regard a necessity arises to analyze the formation of separate historical myths, their certain functions, environment of their existence, marginalization or reactualization in the historical ordinary consciousness, their utilization and ideological reevaluation, including in the interchanging or competing narratives of the national history (since all nations take themselves in terms of the historical experience rooted in the past). The constant selection of events takes place in the network of interactive communications, so that some of them are subjected to oblivion, where the others are preserved, overgrown with senses and transformed into the symbols of group identity. The process of reinterpretation of the past is going on, which produces new myths. The research of the mythological component of the modern historical consciousness as well as the possibilities of conscious construction/deconstruction of the historical memory is of peculiar interest.

The nature and peculiarities of the Russian (rus) national identity over a period of several centuries are one of the mythology-driven and ideology-driven topics. For several years this issue was mostly discussed almost by such authors as “slavophiles” searching for an explanation of the Russian distinctness in “blood”, “soil” and in the orthodox roots of the Russian culture; and by westerners, on the contrary, insisting on the one-sidedness and incompleteness of modernization processes in Russia. Such discourses originate from the times of the Russian Empire, in the beginning of the 19th century, and the war with Napoleon, which had had great influence on the Russian educated community made it think in the conceptual dimensions different from the previous ones, became a

stimulus for them. The Patriotic War became a part of the national mythology - a special example of the opposition between Russia and Europe. At the same time another myth “emerged” about the fact that Russia had always played a role of the “historical shield”, having protected nowadays developing civilized Europe against the Mongolo-Tatar horde at the cost of tremendous sacrifices. In this regard the Russian elite started considering not the representation of social groups and their interests as the main task of the national policy, but the preservation and strengthening of the might and weight of the whole state, enlargement of its sphere of influence and scales. Therefore, according to the words of the sociologist Lev Gudkov, the discussion of national problems has inevitably taken the “form of constructing limit total values”, in other words, “ambivalent utopia” of the “West” stood against the mythology of organic and vital “Russia”. (Gudkov, 2004, 816).

At that during the pre-revolutionary times the main contradiction of the “West” as a part of the national identification in Russia concluded in the fact that, on the one hand, it represented the tempting material welfare, abundance in the technical and military progress, and, on the other hand, it was a threat for Russia to lose its traditions and to get its isolationism demolished. That was the reason why the “invasion” in the Russian consciousness of “diverse” ideas was treated as an attempt to destroy the values already set in the state.

Therefore, the national origin in the Russian Empire was represented as ethnoconfessional commonness of the lieges of the great state, who identified themselves as respectable figures of czars, commanders, great scientists and writers obligatory opposed to the European ones. In other words, these personalities were notional not by themselves, but only as an illustration of self-sustainability of Russia. Together with that the national culture was acknowledged not like the aggregate of available achievements, but like the foundation for future might of the state, the guarantee of future recognition by other countries.

Nowadays these ideas are gradually broken down, however, their place is taken not by rational thinking concerning the peculiarities of the national history but by new myths. The article of the political expert S. Makedonov, published in the *Izvestia* issue dated January 11, 2006, presents the analysis of mythologems of the nostalgia towards the past in the context of searching for the national identification:

“The first one is the pattern of the Soviet Union with which its founders associate the existence of the “golden age”. For them the modern Russia is not more than just a stump of the USSR.

“The second one is the myth about the Russian Empire, where its founders offer to “reinstate the historical “succession”.

“The third one is the myth of “revival”, finding “roots”, “going back to the origins”. It has been praised and is praised by the figures of ethnonationalistic movements in the republics being a part of Russia and various regional trends (for example, the cossacks).

It is interesting to know that the founders of all three myths rather often condemn each other, but all their slogans at external distinction are profoundly close” (Makedonov , 2006, 2).

The society in Russia, being still greatly perplexed after the break down of the Soviet Union, faces the crisis of identity. To exit from such crisis, it is required to stop looking for the past in every new phenomenon, stop sacralizing this past and to pose oneself in the conditions of the “blank sheet”. And, certainly, one should think about the following:

- Under the influence of what kind of educational and media impacts in the heads of young people do those ten events “emerge”, which they include in their list?
- Why do these young people memorize those evident events, which finally made up thirty the most popular events, and very few others recollected, among which the Silver Age, creations by Bulgakov, Tarkovskiy, etc.?
- How should the media-resource be built, so that the many-sided volumetric history of Russia would not get reduced to thirty events?

6. Notes

1. Z.D. Popov, I.A. Sternin Semantic-cognitive analysis of the language. Voronezh: “Istoki, 2007. – 15 pages.
2. Usually, for the designation of these representations the following notions are used: “historical memory”, “social memory”, “public memory”, “collective memory”, etc. In this work all these notions will be used as synonyms.
3. Ye.S. Petrenko Events of the end of the 20th century in the memory of Russians. In the book: XIV April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development. M.: 2014. 203 pages.
4. Yu.P. Zaretskiy History, memory, national identity. URL: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2008/3/za4.html>
5. Yu.P. Zaretskiy History, memory, national identity. URL: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2008/3/za4.html>
6. Ricoeur P. Memory, History, Forgetting / P. Ricoeur, University of Chicago Press, 2004. – 624 p.
7. Russian and western people: proximity and contrast of two national tempers in assessments by Russians // “Omnibus VTsIOM”. – August 22, 2005. – press publication No. 274. URL: <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=1634>.

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8. Attachements

General characteristics of the respondents (% of respondents))

Gender	
Male	43,1
Female	56,9
Age	
16 – 20 age	62,2
21 – 25 age	27,2
26 – 30 age	10,6
Education	
General secondary	44,3
College Degree	24,7
Higher education	12,1
Incomplete higher education (learning)	18,9
Type of activity	
Industry (including transportation, communication, construction)	14,3
Agriculture	10,5
Trade, catering, housing and communal services, consumer services	15,2

Education	6,4
Culture	8,2
Mass media	26,8
Army, law enforcement bodies	14,3
Temporarily unemployed, housewives, people on care leave, etc.	4,3

Frequency of Internet use	
Everyday	97,9
Every two or three days	2,1
Duration of stay in the internet daily	
1 – 3 hours	33,8
4 – 6 hours	52,3
7 – 9 hours	6,1
More than 10 hours	11,1

How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

M Pilgun, IM Dzyaloshinsky (2016): “Phantoms of the historical memory: social identity of the Russian youth”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 592 to 615.

<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/071/paper/1111/31en.html>

DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1111en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1111en)

Article received on 25 April 2016. Accepted on 10 June.

Published on 30 June 2016.