

## **CITY'S CULTURAL MEMORY AS A SYMBOLIC RESOURCE**

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*Introduction.* The modern city's cultural memory, which is a cultural construct, can be considered as a symbolic resource.

*Research methods.* Applying communicative approach to the process of the city's cultural memory functioning, as well as using the methodology of symbolic interactionism, allowed to reveal the resource potential of cultural memory. This potential becomes the most important cultural factor of effective development of the city in the era of global changes.

*The main ideas of the study, the results obtained and their discussion.* The article contains the results of analysis of the city's cultural memory symbolic resource, as well as identification of the capitalization trajectories of the modern city symbolic practices. The symbolic resource of cultural memory is revealed through the analysis of internal and external symbolic practices of the city, using fragments of the collective memory of the city. The resource is also found by identifying ways to update episodes of the urban past (from the city branding to the formation of a positive urban identity). The actualization of cultural meanings, support and reproduction of authentic fragments of memory in communicative practices of the city are very important channels of the symbolic resource of the city's cultural memory.

*Conclusions.* One of the conclusions of the research is that modern urban elites should consider the city's cultural memory, which has variability and layering, from the position of a symbolic resource that determines social reality, that is, is able to determine the present and future of the city.

*Keywords:* cultural memory; symbolic resources; commemoration; image of the city; city's cultural memory; collective memory; commemoration.

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**Introduction.** Cultural and symbolic practices that have an impact on the collective understanding of the city are increasingly becoming the subject of research in modern cultural and urban studies. In the age of territories competition for limited and mobile resources, cities are striving to create a sustainable and positive image that can become a symbolic basis for attracting investment, tourists or talented young people. In this regard, there is a growing scientific interest to the process of formation of the city's symbolic resources, since they determine the way we interpret or imagine the city. For example, the results of studies of how people represent and perceive cities in the era of globalization are becoming popular today [10].

As it turned out, the process of symbolic representation of the city in the minds of citizens and in the eyes of representatives of the environment is very complex and multifaceted. It combines not only spontaneous, but also targeted actions that affect the repertoire and value of the city's symbolic resources. One of the cultural determinants influencing this process is the city's cultural memory. The scientific category of memory is now being understood within the framework of the collective dimension.

The German and French scholars (M. Halbwachs, A. Warburg, A. Assmann, J. Assmann, P. Nora, etc.) scientifically substantiated the existence of collective memory, which consists of the memories of a particular communities and also the cultural memory. The concept of "cultural memory" was implemented by J. Assmann. On the material of ancient cultures he revealed its role in the development of society and showed the importance of studying cultural memory, thereby producing a powerful impulse of humanitarian research in this direction.

In our opinion, the integration of the existing scientific potential, related to cultural memory, into urban research would open new perspectives in the study of the city, urban image and urban culture. In this research we focus only on the one aspect of the city's cultural memory, which has both fundamental and applied importance.

**Research methods.** This position assumes communicative approach in the study of the city's cultural memory, where communication is the process of movement of meanings in space and time. In this case, the research is aimed not only at the analysis of cultural meanings of the city, but also at the processes of their formation, accumulation, translation, and at the way cultural meanings of the city become significant or, on the contrary, lose value.

### **The main ideas of the study, the results obtained and their discussion**

**Theoretical framework.** The social conditioning of the collective memory was first stated by M. Halbwachs, who proved that there is a collective memory and a social framework of memory, and the ability of our individual thinking to remember depends on this framework and participation in it [7, p. 30]. Collective memory, according to M. Halbwachs, is formed by a specific social group, and it is an artificial product of modernity.

Similar approach, but to the cultural memory of the collectivity, is typical for J. Assmann. In his opinion, cultural memory is a special memory of collectivity, which is associated with the transmission and updating of cultural meanings. Cultural memory is different from other types of memory by its symbolic character, i.e. this memory "can only be realized institutionally and artificially" [4, p. 9].

Monuments, temples, idols, as J. Assmann says, go beyond the subject memory, they allow to identify a group of people, to continuously accumulate and build knowledge about themselves. He believes that cultural memory is an institution that "manifests, objectifies and is accumulated in symbolic forms, which, unlike words or of gestures, are stable and situational transcendent" [3, p. 17]. According to A. Assmann, the abstract concept of cultural memory contains a whole range of diverse texts and practices: preservation of traces, archiving of documents, collection of works of art and antique objects, etc [1, p. 25]. Here, cultural memory is objectified, while it "lives" and is actualized exclusively with the help of people and social groups. According to the French researcher P. Nora, memory is life, which is always carried by living social groups [9, p. 19].

Modern researchers rely on a broader understanding of cultural memory, for example, on a result of interaction of past and present in the cultural context [5, p. 2]. Meanwhile, any community can be a collective accumulating cultural memory. The formation of memories in symbolic forms occurs in relation to the city as a whole, including citizens and urban environment. The city has a historical destiny, social structure, it has its own past, institutions of memory storage, urban traditions, myths,

significant events, urban places of memory, etc. These elements constitute the symbolic space in which the cultural memory of the city is structured. In addition, the symbolic resource of the city's cultural memory has not yet been fully comprehended by science.

The present research works are usually concentrated on the cultural memory of the nation and therefore do not aim to link the symbolic potential of cultural memory with the competition of territories for recognition, distinctiveness, fame. At the same time, modern integrative capabilities of the Humanities allow to consider the cultural memory as a dynamic social and cultural construct, which can and should be designed.

**Point of view.** Staying on the position of German scholars, we believe that cultural memory of the city is a complex space of storage, translation and updating of cultural meanings of the city. Such meanings are important elements of the city culture (symbols, images, myths, facts, events, significant places), which are units of cultural memory and symbolic marking of the city.

We state that cultural memory serves as a kind of storage of significant meanings of the city, which are symbolic resources of the place. Symbolic resources include everything that carries a conditional significance and can be used to obtain a symbolic profit (for example, increasing fame, recognition, convertibility into a tourist, social, financial, creative and other types of resources). This includes both historical dates, legends, famous personalities and symbols of the city, the city image and much more.

The symbolic resource of the city's cultural memory can be revealed on the basis of two related vectors – internal and external. First, cultural memory is closely connected with the internal social and cultural environment of the city. In particular, the city's cultural memory: a) unites the urban community into a single symbolic continuum, forms a community of people, makes it a single whole on the basis of common memorable events; b) ensures the continuity of generations of citizens and, transferring the cultural experience of the city, binds the past and the present through urban culture; c) is a symbolic basis of urban identity, since the content of identity is formed through the common past, through which values, self-consciousness and active activity of the community are strengthened [1, p. 32].

The nature and specificity of these processes directly depends not only on how authentic the cultural meanings of the city are, but also on how they are integrated into the daily practices of the city and what they mean to the citizens. In particular, the historical Russian cities (Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Veliky Novgorod, Suzdal, Pskov, etc.) potentially have rich symbolic resources, and the more ancient city is, the more multilayered its cultural memory is.

But the very fact of the city's historicity does not guarantee the relevance of certain urban meanings. For example, a symbolic resource of the historical personality of the city will become a part of the city identity only if it is cultivated in urban practices (in museum, flora, festival, book, etc.), transmitting a symbolic code of a unique fragment of the cultural memory of the city. Cultural memory of the city keeps only those memories that are accepted and supported by contemporaries in their urban practices (for example, in holidays, in art or in the names of streets, squares, metro stations, etc). So, the city's cultural memory is a reservoir of meanings that can be used to form an attractive image of the city, to create urban brands. The most important quality of cultural memory is its variability, dynamism and dependence on interpretations.

A. Assman notes that the framework of memory is changeable, as well as value settings [1, p. 99]. The city's cultural memory is a social construct, because any episode can be forgotten or made a part of the urban culture. The city can "draw" from

the layers of cultural memory a part of its authentic past, reproduce it in symbolic forms and present its image, in the external environment as well. That is how many city brands appeared. In particular, our research of brands of Russian cities showed that their symbolic foundation is usually consists of the actualized layers of the city's cultural memory. Often urban branding is influenced by the meanings of creative personalities, characters, which in the past were associated with the city (brand of Klin city, which is based on the fame of Chaikovsky), or the historical significance of the authentic production of the city (Vologda lace, Kolomna candy as brands).

The social construction of the city's cultural memory exists because the memory has two levels: a) the actual level, i.e. the layer of cultural memory, which we support in urban practices; b) the potential level, i.e. the layer of cultural memory of the city, which is less objective in urban environment, stored in archives as fragments of the past, and is insignificant for contemporaries. A. Assman also speaks about this feature of cultural memory, when he emphasizes that memory is a contradictory structure, "which combines, mutually penetrating into each other, remembering and forgetting" [2, p. 33], as functional memory and accumulative memory. Commemoration, i.e., the process of actualization of cultural meanings, despite of its different realization on two levels of memory, plays an important role for the resource potential of the city's cultural memory.

The symbolic resource of cultural memory will bring profit for the city only under the condition of competent actualization of cultural meanings of the city in form of supporting available city meanings (actual level) and reproduction of potential city meanings (potential level). The need for commemoration is caused by the symbolic nature of the city's cultural memory. The specificity of cultural memory is manifested in the artificial structuring of community values. According to Yuri Lotman, each culture defines its own paradigm of what should be remembered (i.e. stored) and what should be forgotten [8, p. 201].

Based on the stated methodological position, we suppose that actualization of cultural memory occurs in the course of communicative practices, in which the cultural meanings of the city are comprehended. Monument, myth, tradition themselves are not yet cultural memory as long as they are not inscribed in a symbolic form of significance and not included in interaction. As J. Assmann notes, cultural memory exists only in "constant interaction not only with people's memories, but also with external symbols", it is "a metonym for physical contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object" [3, p. 17]. For example, a forgotten fairy-tale character can acquire a new significance for the cultural memory of the city because of a number of communicative events (film adaptation, creative competition, virtual tour, etc.) and communication technologies (advertising tour with a visit to the place of residence of

the character). Both city residents and outsiders can be carriers of the city's cultural memory.

Different social groups can influence the formation or oblivion of cultural meanings of the city: tourists, journalists, scientists, government officials, migrants and many others who interpret, create and transmit urban values. P. Nora also speaks about the importance of the process of actualization of memory structures in his theory of memory places – important community places that accumulate the collective memory and act as a kind of tool for constructing collective identity. According to P. Nora, places of memory are born and alive thanks to the feeling that there is no spontaneous memory, which means that it is necessary to create archives, celebrate anniversaries, give funeral speeches, notarize acts, because such ceremonies are not natural [9, p. 25].

Cultural institutions (archives, museums, libraries), place names, works of art (painting, poetry, cinema) are tools that have an impact on the interpretation of the urban past episodes. The media as a powerful generator of cultural meanings plays a certain role in this process and accumulates communicative practices of commemoration. Getting into the media space, the "clot" of cultural memory can acquire additional value, and most importantly, a kind of assessment and interpretation.

The symbolization of the urban past plays a special role in contemporary period, when cities are in a state of constant struggle for limited and mobile resources. The result of this struggle is the symbolic capital of the city as «a set of significant elements (meanings) of the territorial environment that provide the local place recognition, fame, prestige, trust in it from various social groups» [6, p. 144].

**Conclusion.** Thus, the city's cultural memory is a repertoire of cultural meanings that can be enriched with a certain content, thereby affecting the imagination, perception, representation of the city in the society. Cultural memory of the city is an important symbolic resource for the competitive struggle of territories for the increase of their significance, recognition, identification and sustainable growth of confidence from different target audiences.

The vectors of use of the city's cultural memory symbolic resource are diverse: from urban branding and image strategies of the city to the formation of a sustainable urban identity, strengthening symbolic links between the city and the citizen. The cultural memory become a symbolic resource only if its fragments are significant for the urban community and they become a part of everyday urban practices: in memorial plaques, festivals, names of squares, sculpture, festivals, actions, exhibitions, brochures, gastronomy and much more.

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## **КУЛЬТУРНАЯ ПАМЯТЬ ГОРОДА КАК СИМВОЛИЧЕСКИЙ РЕСУРС**

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**Введение.** Современная конкурентная борьба городов за привлечение туристов, инвесторов, потенциальных жителей сегодня происходит в символическом пространстве. Города стремятся завоевать доверие целевых аудиторий, повысить свою значимость, узнаваемость, обеспечить устойчивость идентификации, то есть накопить символические ресурсы.

**Методы.** Коммуникативный подход, а также методология символического интеракционизма, используемые в работе, позволили авторам выявить ресурсный потенциал культурной памяти, который становится важнейшим социокультурным фактором эффективного развития города в эпоху глобальных изменений.

**Основные идеи исследования, результаты и их обсуждение.** В качестве символического ресурса может рассматриваться и культурная память города, которая представляет собой социокультурный конструкт. Статья содержит результаты исследования, проведенного авторами статьи с

целью анализа ключевых аспектов символического ресурса культурной памяти города, а также выявления траекторий капитализации символических практик современного города. Символический ресурс культурной памяти раскрывается через анализ внутренних и внешних символических практик города, использующих фрагменты коллективной памяти города, а также путем выявления способов актуализации эпизодов городского прошлого (от брендинга города до формирования позитивной городской идентичности). Основным условием функционирования символического ресурса культурной памяти города является актуализация культурных смыслов, поддержка и воспроизводство аутентичных слоев коллективной памяти в коммуникативных практиках города.

*Заключение.* Одно из значений исследования состоит в том, что современным городским элитам следует рассматривать культурную память города, обладающую изменчивостью и многослойностью, с позиции символического ресурса, который детерминирует социальную реальность, то есть способен определять настоящее и будущее города.

*Ключевые слова:* культурная память; символические ресурсы; образ города; культурная память города; коллективная память; коммеморация.

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