

# The Resource of Cultural Memory in Building Territorial Identity

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**Abstract:** On the basis of data derived from a complex sociological study the authors analyze modern approaches to studying territorial identity, its structure, and the factors that have an impact on its formation. In this day and age of Russian society territorial identity is a key indicator for solidarity and consolidation of the country's people. Territorial identity is a phenomenon constructed in the process of management using communication technology; one of such technologies is the symbolism technology. We regard cultural memory as a social resource within the symbolism technology which is capable of constructing the territorial identity of the studied region using historical, military, and modern territorial symbols. The present work is based on the hypothesis that the spatial and temporal continuum of the Volgograd region relies only on the region's symbolic resource. In the minds of urban and rural residents, the Volgograd region is mostly associated with the symbols of the Stalingrad battle and the Great Patriotic War. This promotes consolidation of urban and rural residents, building a stable regional identity. However, this is also a factor holding back the region's development in the present and future and affecting migration sentiments among the young people, especially urban residents who wish to leave the region under study with its "frozen time". These ideas are confirmed by the findings of the grant study carried out by the authors. The objective of the present paper is to reveal different ways in which territorial identity is manifested, in reproduction and assimilation of cultural memory by the urban and rural territorial community.

**Keywords:** territorial identity, regional identity, cultural memory, memorial sites, territorial communities, region's symbols.

## INTRODUCTION

In modern sociology territorial identity is regarded as one of the types of self-identification for a person or group. An analysis of the main approaches to the development of methodology and armamentarium permits systematizing the available experience of scientific interpretation, working out new avenues of research, carrying out comparative and monitoring analysis; this can be done within the framework of a sociological study proper, and an interdisciplinary effort.

An analysis of approaches to studying territorial identity permits distinguishing a number of issues common to all social sciences, typical of territorial identity studies irrespective of the topical area. Defining territorial identity in the light of links between a person and a territory one should take into account what we know about the territory, construction of the territory's image, self-identification of the carrier of territorial identity. Studying social practices typical of this or that territorial community can yield a model of territorial identity for a person or group. The problems of methods and techniques for applied study of territorial identity are dealt with quite successfully nowadays: researchers resort to accustomed questionnaires, tests, scales, as well as to mapping or chart-making, narrative analysis; these techniques are also used to determine the discourse of territorial identity built around the territory's symbols.

For a complex study of social resources of territorial communities among which we single out cultural memory in the context of the present paper, in June and August 2019 a sociological study was carried out in the framework of RFBR grant No 19-411-340002 "Territorial communities in conditions of social transformation: a sociological and managerial analysis". Mass surveys were carried out in the form of patterned interview with rural residents of 33 municipal districts of the Volgograd region, and with urban residents of 6 towns of the Volgograd region.

The surveys were done with quota samples representing the gender and age, area of residence, random at the stage of respondent selection. Representativeness of the sample was ensured by observing the proportion between rural residents (town districts and villages), adult population makeup according to sex and age in the Volgograd region. The sample size was 848 persons. The obtained data were processed using the SPSS software platform.

## RESULTS

The notion of a region is inseparably associated with the categories of territory, space, social space. In social sciences the notion of a territory is understood as a unity of geographic landscape, a socioterritorial community residing there, and an awareness of the place of residence and of territorial behavior models which influence everyday practices of individuals. Of special interest is studying territorial communities and regional identification of the people constituting these communities.

A territorial community is made up of groups of people whose members are linked by sharing the territory they reside on, social ties, a stable system of interactions, and identifying themselves with the given community (Drozдова, 2011a). The criteria of singling out a territorial community include a body of population localized on a certain territory, a relatively self-sufficient socioeconomic system satisfying the primary needs of the people residing here, highly intensive internal communication compared with external communication, a certain level of the quality of life, human resources, the

models of behavior determined by the socioeconomic and cultural environment, social self-identification of the territory's residents, and presence of this or that form of self-government.

A person's self-identification with a given territory, relating oneself to it reveals different degrees of satisfaction with life, acceptance of norms, rules and values shared by the given community. Territorial identity appears as a basic component of identity. In modern societies local self-identification is complicated due to various impacts like globalization, informatization, domestic and international policy, and mobility of different kinds. Regional self-identification, which is a province of interdisciplinary discourse, is a particular issue within these processes.

In sociology and social psychology issues of social identity are regarded in the framework of Weber's interpretive sociology, explaining interactions within and between groups. Territorial identity implies referencing oneself with the term "I am a member of the territorial community" in relation to both spatial and social categories (Fedotova, 2019). Authors representing this approach (Makarychev, 1999; Krylov, 2005; Sagitova, 2018; Hall, 2000) show particular interest in the notion of regional identity. Through the lens of activism approach authors define it as "a condition of relating oneself to the territory they reside on, the regional community and territorial communities, which causes a desire and need to participate in regional interactions, to associate one's present and future life with the development of this region and the urban/rural territory" (Drozdova, 2011b).

Regional identity was in the focus of attention of researchers from different countries like Cobb, Dalrymple (Malaschchenko, Glushkova, 2017, Paasi, 2019). This phenomenon is analyzed through the lens of domestic components like culture, values, landscape, stereotypes, folklore, economy, etc.; besides, identity is construed with consideration to external factors like globalization, migration and the like.

In our opinion, regional identity is the process of understanding and interpreting regional uniqueness by urban and rural residents. The process is supported by daily practices and rituals, a system of symbols, meanings and institutions, their spatial communication within regional borders. Here the emphasis is on sharing the same territory where local interests of urban and rural dwellers are played out. In our view, an important resource influencing this process, is the cultural memory of territorial communities.

Introduction of the notion of cultural memory is associated with the name of Jan Assmann (2004). In his view, cultural memory plays an important role in the formation and translation of collective identity within human communities of various historical types. According to Assmann, cultural memory is an institution which is revealed, objectified and accumulated in symbolic forms (Assman, 2016). The notion of cultural memory includes a huge set of symbols, texts and practices: "conservation of traces, archivation of documents, collecting works of art and an-tiques...", and other (Assman, 2004).

A town, for instance, can be the carrier of cultural memory. As a total of its residents, the town has its own historical fate; it has its own history related from generation to generation. Translation of cultural memory of territorial communities occurs through institutions of memory storage and translation, and using such symbolic forms as tradition, meaningful events, etc. These elements form a symbolic space in which the cultural memory of a given territorial community is focused. The cultural memory of a territory (town) is a result of cultural designing. A part of history of a

certain space either fades into oblivion or becomes a part of culture of the studied territorial community.

Researching cultural memory of territorial communities is associated with the notion of 'sites of memory' proposed by Pierre Nora. The historian believed that the phenomenon of cultural memory is created and maintained by people, social groups and communities: "memory is life whose carriers are always live social groups" (Nora, 2005). Nora brings up to date the need for cultural memory in a society. According to him, the less collectively memory is experienced, the more it needs special people who turn themselves into 'memory people' (Nora, 2005).

For urban and rural residents cultural memory is the indispensable basis for regional identity formation. From the point of view of sociological study logic, at the stage or armamentarium development a regional identity should be represented verbally in the form of social identification: "I am a member of the territorial community". It is this indicator that is both the most common one in individual social practices, and the most frequently used in qualitative and quantitative studies. In this respect, we find of interest the knowledge of the extent to which the region's residents identify themselves with other residents and the region on the whole.

Our findings show that a greater part of urban respondents identify them-selves as Russian people (Table 1). For more than one third the identity if an urban resident is also important. For 57.9% of rural respondents and 38.1% urban re-spondents regional identification is important. Indeed, rural residents are more prone to perceive the region as a single spatial and temporal sector where they practice agriculture.

Table 1. Territorial self-identification of respondents, %

Which territorial community do you mostly identify with? (not more than three variants)	Urban residents	Rural residents
Russian people	67.40	55.50
Residents of Southern Russia	9.90	8.50
Residents of the Volgograd region	38.10	57.90
Resident of my town	33.80	39.40
Resident of my town district	6.00	7.00
Resident of my street/block of flats	8.00	3.90
I am on my own	5.00	5.20
Don't know	4.10	55.50

In polyethnic multireligious regions the territorial identity has a much broader range; it serves the function of fortifying the civic identity (Belikova et al., 2019). Sociological studies show that the people in the Volgograd region show a quite strong regional identity, both in terms of incidence and priority; although urban residents rated civic identity as the first. There is very little identification with residents of Southern Russia partly because the region has been included in the Lower Volga area for a long time, and its residents are more inclined to identify themselves with the neighbors, residents of the Astrakhan and Saratov regions. This uncertainty reflected in territorial identity stems from territorial changes and transfer of internal boundaries due to administrative governance.

As a resource cultural memory also unfolds through the definition of the notion of motherland by respondents (Table 2). In our view, this notion is a moral and spiritual constituent of territorial identity; it reveals the spiritual bases of patriotism, the content

of historical patriotic experience, one's attitude to the country and home. This question served to reveal spatial indicators of respondents' all-Russian and local patriotism.

Table 2. Respondents' opinion of what motherland is, %

Point out the meaning of 'motherland' for you (not more than three variants)	Urban residents	Rural Residents
Place where I was born, where my home is	59.30	63.60
My country	42.80	37.60
My village	1.80	17.60
Region where I live	8.40	13.00
Place where I feel well and comfortable	13.20	11.20
Place where my home and relatives are	43.80	37.30
Point on the country's geographic map	2.90	0.90
Don't know	3.30	0.60

As we can see, most respondents associate their patriotism with the place of birth: they chose the answer "place where I was born, where my home is". This is the opinion of 59.3% surveyed urban residents and 63.6% rural respondents. A similar answer "place where my home and relatives are" was chosen by 43.8% of urban respondents and 37.3% of rural respondents.

The answer "my country" represents national patriotism; it was chosen by 42.8% of urban residents and 37.6% rural residents surveyed. Only 8.4% of urban respondents and 13% of rural respondents associate their patriotic sentiment with the region. A revealing choice, in our view, is the answer "place where I feel well and comfortable" given by 13.2% of urban respondents and 11.2% of rural respondents.

Although the respondents could choose up to three variants, this answer remained unpopular. We see the reason in the fact that any level of respondents' patriotism, be it local or national, is not associated with material wellbeing, comfort or material values in general, which makes the research of social resources an urgent issue for the development of urban and rural territories.

Table 3. Indicators of territorial solidarity of urban respondents, %

Do you feel or not solidarity with these people?	No solidarity, infrequent interactions	Occasional conflicts, I feel no solidarity	No solidarity, but no conflict either	There is solidarity, frequent interactions	Don't know
1. people living next door	16.5	2.9	42.7	32.8	5.0
2. fellow townspeople	21	3.7	46.6	17.1	11.7
3. people in my region	22.5	3.1	48.2	10.9	15.3
4. people arriving to my town (migrants)	28.5	6.6	41.6	4.1	19.2

An indirect indication of regional identity is the answer to the question about the respondent's solidarity with various groups (Table 3, 4). Territorial self-identification,

solidarity with a social community depend directly on the perception of Strangers by the native population; these strangers may become 'friendlies' if the solidarity is high, or they can become 'aliens' if the interaction is based on conflict or there is complete distancing. As shown by the study, mutual support and cooperation are more powerful on locations where people find it more comfortable to reside and interact.

The greatest solidarity by urban respondents is shown with people living next door (32.8%); the case is the same with rural respondents (51.5%). Lesser solidarity is shown towards people arriving to the town (migrants): 4.1% for urban residents and 6.9% for rural residents. This is quite understandable since a smaller territorial community like people living in one block of flats know one another personally, experience similar problems; they often develop a narrow sociopsychological circle of interaction, especially at a certain time in one's life, for instance, at the advanced age.

The rather low indicators of solidarity with migrants are also quite accountable. Достаточно низкие показатели солидарности с приезжими, мигрантами тоже вполне объяснимы. The migrant and the out-of-towner are perceived as strangers; the native population does not often interact with this category of residents, which certainly makes the formation of a territorial community problematic, but with competent management the absence of conflicts permits mapping out positive trajectories of tolerant/solidary interaction.

We revealed low levels of respondents' solidarity with the region's residents: it was pointed out by only 10.9% of surveyed urban residents and by 11.4% of rural respondents. At that, rural residents show more solidarity with the residents of their own village (35.2%); only 17.1% of urban respondents said they were solidary with their fellow townspeople which confirms the hypothesis that rural residents are more integrated in their local community, show more solidarity, and constitute a rather tightly-knit group.

Temporal and spatial characteristics of vital activities of urban and rural residents determine the significant differences between these territorial communities. We suppose that these differences give rise to two multidirectional trends: the trend for convergence (leveling the difference), and the trend for counterposition (increasing the difference) of urban and rural residents in this day and age.

Table 4. Indicators of territorial solidarity of rural respondents, %

Do you feel or not solidarity with these people?	No solidarity, infrequent interactions	Occasional conflicts, I feel no solidarity	No solidarity, but no conflict either	There is solidarity, frequent interactions	Don't know
1. people living next door	9.0	4.8	24.4	51.5	10.2
2. fellow townspeople	7.8	2.7	38.9	35.2	15.4
3. people in my region	13.6	4.5	38.9	11.4	31.6
4. people arriving to my town (migrants)	22.0	4.2	32.8	6.9	34.0

Solidarity with the region's residents does not by itself imply a positive evaluation of the region; it does not affect a person's desire to cast in one's lot with this location. In the space of a region, particular importance is attached to the person's own identity. Identity, including regional identity, is often determined by the conditions in which a person lives, by traditions that he grows accustomed to, traditions he observes without questioning and without fail, what he believes in, to what and whom he is bound by his own history. In this regard, the markers of cultural memory also serve as indicators of territorial identity.

In the study carried out within the RFBR grant No 19-411-340002 "Territorial communities in conditions of social transformation: a sociological and managerial analysis" we put forward a hypothesis that the spatial and temporal continuum of the Volgograd region was mostly based on the region's symbolic resource. In the minds of both urban and rural residents the Volgograd region is associated with the symbols of the Stalingrad battle. On the one hand, this promotes consolidation of urban and rural residents, formation of a stable regional identity. On the other hand, it is a factor which holds back the region's development in the present and future, and affects the migration sentiment in the minds of young people (under 35), especially among urban residents who seek to leave the region which is 'frozen in time'. Of interest are the findings showing what exactly is stored in the cultural memory of people residing in the Volgograd region. In this respect it is interesting to see the answers of respondents to the question "Do you know the history of your town?". Answers are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Respondents' assessment of their knowledge of the history of their town/village, %

<b>Do you know the history of your town/village?</b>	urban	Rural
Yes, I know it well	42.9	29.8
I have some idea of it	46.2	53.1
No, I don't know it	3.5	8.7
No answer	7.4	8.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Urban residents give a higher assessment of how they know the history of their territorial community (42.9% of respondents), than rural residents do (29.8% of respondents). On the whole, the respondents believe they are familiar with the history of the town/village they live in. Indeed, the city of Volgograd and the Volgograd region are a region steeped in history which is familiar not only to the region's residents but also to those living far away. For the purpose of revealing the symbolic resource and cultural memory of the population all respondents (urban and rural residents) were asked about associating the Volgograd region with regional symbols. The respondents could choose not more than three variants. Their answers distributed in the following way (Table 6).

Table 6. Respondents' associations with the symbols of the Volgograd region, %

<b>Point out the symbols with which the Volgograd region is associated for you</b> <i>(not more than three variants)</i>	<b>Urban Residents</b>	<b>Rural residents</b>
The great Russian rivers: the Volga, Don and Koper	70.6	68.3
Symbols of the great Patriotic war (Motherland statue, Stalingrad battle, Mamayev Hill, Soldatskoye Pole, Sgt Pavlov's House)	87.1	87.3

Churches and monasteries (Ust-Medveditsky, Spaso-Preobrazhensky, Belogorsky Kammenobrodsky, Holy Trinity monasteries, Kremenskoj monastery of Ascension, Holy Trinity Church in the Filonovskaya Cossack village, and other)	11.3	19.0
Volzhskaya Hydroelectric Power Station	30.6	21.5
Tractor producing plant, Krasny Oktyabr plant, Barrikady plant	17.5	17.5
Volga-Don shipping canal	11.5	6.9
Natural landmarks (Volga-Akhtubinsk bottomland, bottomland forests on the Khoper, Don, Medveditsa rivers, Schcherbakovskaya valley, lake Elton and other)	14.0	14.8
Geoactive anomalous zones (Medveditskaya mountain chain, Sinyaya Mount, Devil's Lair)	0.8	3.9
Olympic champions	6.6	5.4
Don't know	1.0	0.6

All answers given by the respondents were conditionally divided into several groups:

1) Symbols of the region's natural geographic landscape (rivers: the Don and Volga; natural landmarks: Volga-Akhtubinsk bottomland, bottomland forests on the Khoper, Don, Medveditsa rivers, Schcherbakovskaya valley, lake Elton; geoactive anomalous zones: Medveditskaya mountain chain, Sinyaya Mount, Devil's Lair).

2) The region's religious symbols (churches and monasteries: Ust-Medveditsky, Spaso-Preobrazhensky, Belogorsky Kammenobrodsky, Holy Trinity monasteries, Kremenskoj monastery of Ascension, Holy Trinity Church in the Filonovskaya Cossack village and other).

3) Patriotic symbols associated with the Great patriotic War: Motherland statue, Stalingrad battle, Mamayev Hill, Soldatskoye Pole, Sgt Pavlov's House.

4) Industrial and agricultural achievements of the region (Volzhskaya Hydroelectric Power Station; Tractor producing plant, Krasny Oktyabr plant, Barrikady plant; Volga-Don shipping canal).

5) The region's celebrities like Olympic champions.

In terms of popularity and recognition the first place is held by symbols associated with cultural memory and cultural trauma of the region's population (87.5%). For the region's residents the Stalingrad battle presents a cultural trauma, a narrative incorporating the past tragic event into people's cultural memory and forming the regional identity.

In the sum of respondents' answers the second place is held by symbols of the region's natural and geographic resources (85.4%). These imply perspective associated with development of business for summer holidays, active sports, fishing. The symbols of the region's industrial and agricultural achievements rate the third (61%). This indicates that the motto "The Volgograd region is an industrial and agricultural region" is still alive in the minds of the local population.

As for surveying the rural population, the respondents' answers confirm the trends demonstrated by urban respondents (Table 4). The first place is held by symbols relating to cultural memory, the people's cultural trauma (87.3%). The second place is held by symbols of the region's natural geographic landscape (87.1%). The symbols of the region's industrial and agricultural achievements rate the third (45.7%). Since the events of the Stalingrad battle evoke the same associations in both urban and rural respondents, the rise in popularity of natural landmarks is quite accountable in our



view: these symbols have positive associations in the minds of the region's residents; the symbols related to economic and sports achievements are losing their popularity which is quite in line with the region's problem-plagued development nowadays.

All respondents were asked to provide their own answers to the open question "What historical figures do you associate with the image of the Volgograd region?". The answers given can be divided conditionally into several groups. Group one features the names the Great Patriotic War heroes. The most popular answers within this group were G. Zhukov, K. Rokossovsky, A. Maresiev. Other names mentioned were V. Chuikov, Y. Pavlov, A. Yeremenko, M. Panikakha. The second group of answer we designated conditionally as 'historical figures'.

The most popular answer in this category was Yemelian Pugachev. In this category the Vol-gograd region is also associated with the Cossack Akatov, Stepan Razin, yermak Timofeyevich. Creative personalities are represented by M. Sholokhov, A. Pakhmutova, A. Serafimovich. Sportsmen mentioned as outstanding symbols of the re-gion were E. Isinbayeva, L. Slutsky and E. Plushenko. The group of politicians features A. Bocharov, I. Guseva, I. Shabunin, H. Maxiuta. There were also general answers like 'war heroes', 'all our sportsmen', 'our Olympic sportsmen'.

The responses by rural residents show more names from the region's pre-war history, the history of Cossacks, and the founders of rural settlements. The range of names provided by urban residents is wider, but the urban residents' cultural memory mostly revolves around the Stalingrad battle and the Great Patriotic War; it is linked to local events to a lesser degree, which confirmed the hypothesis of the study that the social resource of cultural memory, its symbolic parameters are mostly associated with the Volgograd region's military history.

## CONCLUSION

The filed study yielded several conclusions. Urban and rural residents of the Volgograd region show quite high indicators of territorial/regional identity. Urban residents identify themselves as Russians, a civic community to a greater extent while rural residents show higher indicators of the importance of a territorial community, a regional community rather than a local one, at that.

Although the respondents showed low indicators of identifying themselves with people living in the same town, street, next door, most respondents believe that their 'minor homeland' is their home, 'place where I was born, where my home is'. Most respondents feel solidarity with their next-door neighbors. An interesting concatenation in the answers of urban and rural residents can be traced: "I fell solidarity with the ecumene - I identify myself with the Volgograd region/city - I am a part of Russia". This vector set by the region's geographic location, historical development, polyculturalism, and migration flows.

The analysis of the region's cultural memory that we undertook showed that the symbolic foundation of the Volgograd region image is mostly built upon and sustained by the memory of the Great Patriotic War events which conformed the hypothesis of our study. The Stalingrad battle symbols dominate the minds of the region's residents both in towns and villages. New generations replace old ones, the attitude to past events changes, and symbolic resources lose their significance with time or acquire new meanings: people define the region as 'a war memorial', 'cemetery', 'region rooted in the past'.

To maintain a positive image of the region the cultural memory should incorporate positive modern symbols and brands. Such brands can be natural landmarks which are clearly correlated to a certain territory; territorial communities can unite around them. An entirely non-developed resource is still the one associated with personal achievements of sportsmen, musicians, poets and authors, our contemporaries who have made and continue making an invaluable contribution to the development of the region and country. Using this resource could help create a positive image of the region in the framework of Russian spatial and temporal continuum, develop a more stable regional identity. A region perceived by its population as centered around the past only cannot thrive in the present nor have a strategy of its development.

Thus, modern constituents of regional development present a product of interaction between several temporal trends: past – present – future. Relevant stakeholders in the bodies of national and municipal government in the Volgograd region, the mass media should work persistently on generating positive events, developing and renovating the cultural memory of the region's residents, representatives of territorial communities.

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