




Categoría: Arts and Humanities

ORIGINAL

## Specific features of constructing the memory and identity politics in modern Kyrgyzstan

### Características específicas de la construcción de la memoria y la política de identidad en el Kirguistán moderno

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** the relevance of studying this topic is that memory and identity politics, or historical politics, affect the awareness of the national, cultural, civic identity of the population, which is an important factor in the consolidation of society. The purpose of this study is the analysis of political activity which is aimed at the development of national identity.

**Methods:** when writing the paper, the following methods were used: structural and functional, dialectical, and logical.

**Results:** as a result of the study, it was found that at present the Kyrgyz political elite needs to create a political programme for long-term memory, since there is no specific national policy regarding this. Such a programme should be created in the form of a single political and legal document at the state level. It will be able to ensure systematic, progressive growth based on an understanding of common goals, assuming spiritual unity, which will contribute to the development of a sense of national identity.

**Conclusions:** due attention should be paid to the development of the museum sphere. It is also important to investigate interethnic relations and the development of terminology of ethno-national identity. The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that all theoretical provisions, conclusions, and recommendations can be used to create a programme that will be aimed at developing collective memory and a sense of national identity.

**Keywords:** Memory; Identity; Nation; Politics.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivos:** la relevancia de estudiar este tema radica en que la memoria y la política de identidad, o política histórica, afectan a la conciencia de la identidad nacional, cultural y cívica de la población, lo que constituye un factor importante en la consolidación de la sociedad. El objetivo de este estudio es el análisis de la actividad política dirigida al desarrollo de la identidad nacional.

**Métodos:** en la redacción del trabajo se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: estructural y funcional, dialéctico y lógico.

**Resultados:** como resultado del estudio, se constató que en la actualidad la élite política kirguís necesita crear un programa político para la memoria a largo plazo, ya que no existe una política nacional específica al respecto. Dicho programa debería crearse en forma de documento político y jurídico único a nivel estatal. Podrá garantizar un crecimiento sistemático y progresivo basado en la comprensión de los objetivos comunes,

asumiendo la unidad espiritual, lo que contribuirá al desarrollo de un sentimiento de identidad nacional.

**Conclusiones:** debe prestarse la debida atención al desarrollo de la esfera museística. También es importante investigar las relaciones interétnicas y el desarrollo de la terminología de la identidad etnonacional. La importancia práctica de este estudio radica en que todas las disposiciones teóricas, conclusiones y recomendaciones pueden utilizarse para crear un programa destinado a desarrollar la memoria colectiva y el sentimiento de identidad nacional.

**Palabras clave:** Memoria; Identidad; Nación; Política.

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, the process of transition from Soviet identity to ethnic identity proper is being completed, and the transformation towards a new supra-ethnic identity - “Кыргыз жараны” (Citizen of Kyrgyzstan) - is beginning. The ethnic self-identification of Kyrgyzstanis is conditioned, on the one hand, by the strengthening of ethnic influence, and on the other hand, by the norms of internationalism that developed back in the Soviet period. The politics of memory and identity should be returned to the sphere of national consciousness in order to solve the problem of national identity. The relevance of the study of ethnic and national identity in Kyrgyzstan is due to many reasons: firstly, it is the multinational nature of Kyrgyzstan; secondly, Kyrgyzstan is a relatively young, national state in which the Kyrgyz are the dominant ethnicity, which in itself determines the interest in how this specificity affects the feelings of other ethnic groups, what contradictions arise here and how they affect interethnic relations between the peoples of the country; thirdly, the results of applied research are important for managing the processes of nation-building, the formation of national, international consciousness of the population, strengthening interethnic stability, consolidation, peace, and harmony. According to T. Edensor, national identity persists in a globalising world, and perhaps the nation remains an outstanding entity around which identity is formed.<sup>(1)</sup> Cultural expression and experience of national identity are usually neither impressive nor outstanding, but are generated in ordinary, everyday forms and practices.

In the theoretical study, Z.K. Kurmanov et al. note that the historical and cultural heritage of any nation is an important source in ensuring the sustainable development of the state and society.<sup>(2)</sup> The issue of cultural heritage in the modern conditions of globalisation is being actualised, as each nation cares about preserving its own identity. The politics of memory is a phenomenon that develops comprehensively within the political subsystem of society. Its purpose is to modernise certain topics of the political process of historical events in order to manage the socio-political environment in society and form public opinion.

Each state tries to convince its people that they are a country and collectively belong to the same political nation. The politics of memory and symbolic politics are closely related to the politics of national identity. According to the conclusions of A.M. Seyizova, the national policy of the Kyrgyz Republic sets as one of its main goals the preservation and expansion of its cultural heritage, national and historical traditions, the creation of an environment conducive to spiritual renewal and growth, the preservation of the heritage of its ancestors and identity.<sup>(3)</sup> The authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic are making every effort to protect the integrity of national culture throughout the world, as well as the historical and cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people.

As noted by Z. Urmanbetova et al., the relevance of the identification dilemma has increased for both the state and the individual.<sup>(4)</sup> The biggest problems of identity are still connected with the solution of ideological and economic problems. The definition of the national identity of the Kirghiz people is the most pressing issue of the country's sovereignty. The problem of national identity is how well a country can adapt to changes in the world, especially those related to ethnicity and multiculturalism. The harmony of ethnic and civil norms is a manifestation of personal identity. Cultural, political, and linguistic identity are the three facets of national identity that can be seen.

According to the above, the purpose of this study is to investigate the state activity of the political elite, which is aimed at the development of national identity.

## METHODS

In order to study in more detail the features of the politics of memory and identity in modern Kyrgyzstan, theoretical research methods were used, namely analysis, synthesis, dialectical, and structural and functional methods. The study used the methodology of the French historian P. Nora “Places of memory”.<sup>(5)</sup>

The structural and functional method of research is fundamental. The key concepts of the topic were investigated, namely: “memory”, “identity”, “collective memory”, “politics of memory and identity”, the main tasks and goals of such a policy was determined, and the main elements of historical policy were analysed. At this stage, the main achievements of the Kyrgyz Republic in the development of national identity and collective memory were analysed. The dialectical method was used to analyse the research and views of scientists on

this problem, which helped to formulate the idea of the specifics of constructing the politics of memory and identity in Kyrgyzstan in modern times.

Logical methods, namely methods of analysis and synthesis, play an important role in research. For an in-depth study of the topic, the work was conditionally divided into several parts. In the first part, modern Kyrgyz legislation on national identity and memory, the issue of national minorities, the preservation of traditional culture were analysed, and what mass events are held to develop a sense of national identity were investigated. It also analysed how the national policy regarding the identity of the people has developed since independence. In the second part, the role of each attribute of the memory and identity politics was analysed separately. The main existing problems in the modern politics of memory and identity of Kyrgyzstan are highlighted. The manifestations of historical politics in America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe were analysed. The role of places and moments of memory, names, natural and anthropological objects, things and events, monuments, words and rituals, taboos, symbols and traditions, literature and art, national language, religion, common cultural identifiers of Turkic speakers, as well as traditional knowledge in the development of a sense of identity of the Kyrgyz people is separately investigated. The function of museums in the politics of memory and identity was analysed. The role of educational institutions in this policy was investigated, and it was also highlighted what needs to be paid attention to when building the educational process in order to influence the development of national identity.

With the help of the second method - synthesis - recommendations were developed for the creation of a programme that should be created at the state level and be a fundamental principle for all institutions engaged in educational and educational activities.

Each nation has its own national-oriented historical memory that influences national identity. Using the methodology of the French historian P. Nora "Places of Memory", the study identified "symbolic objects (individual localities, monuments, events, rituals, symbols and traditions, things and events, constituting the diversity of national identity) in the aggregate, constituting the material from which historical/collective (borrowed) memory is constructed in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>(5)</sup>

Since the task was to test the methodology, a questionnaire survey was conducted, in which 50 respondents took part, including 4 academicians of the National Academy of Sciences, 6 doctors of sciences, 10 candidates of sciences, and representatives of the expert environment. The biographical age of respondents ranged from 20-40 years (3 people), 40-60 years (30), older than 60 (17), i.e., covered the chronological period of the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, including the period of independence, which allowed recording the evolution of the "places of memory" of the nation.

Respondents' profile: humanities (43), natural sciences (7). By field of activity (double positioning was allowed): public service (4), education (9), academic science (10), culture (14), business environment (2), non-governmental sector (16). The survey was conducted between January-June 2022. The closed questions of the questionnaire specifically included options to encourage respondents to move away from stereotypes and attitudes.

## RESULTS

The Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the responses from a recent survey exploring various aspects of national identity, collective memory, and cultural practices among respondents. The survey covered topics such as the direction of the country, determinants of respondents' behavior, trust in strangers, verbal associations with the country, influential historical figures, precedent events, identification markers in both the material and natural environments, as well as symbols of fauna and flora associated with Kyrgyzstan. The responses offer insights into the collective mindset and cultural values prevalent among the participants. The "horizontal unity" of the nation is not visible, because more than half of the respondents answered negatively to the question "Is there more agreement and cohesion (trust) in the country than disagreement and disunity?".

Not only positive memories are stored in memory, but there are also those that they try not to talk about or are not approved by society (unprocessed traumas), or are not encouraged by the authorities. One of such events, which brought national humiliation and suffering, is the Urkun/Exodus, which took place from 1916 to 1937, although the absolute majority of the country's inhabitants tie it only to 1916. In short-term retrospect, the events of 2005, 2010, and 2020 simultaneously go through feelings of "pride", "humiliation", "joy", "suffering", which indicates that there is no value-normative consensus yet.

Table 2 presents the responses to the questions concerning the conditions of embedded memories through ritualization and institutional practices, the associative range of natural elements and positive qualities of the Kyrgyz people that facilitate horizontal interaction. The survey explored the extent to which respondents recognize acceptable rituals, associate them with natural elements and perceive positive qualities within their ethnic identity. Responses highlighted key cultural practices and values that are important for strengthening cognitive attitudes and developing civic and national identity.

**Table 1.** Summary of answers to the survey questions on national identity, collective memory and cultural practices in Kyrgyzstan

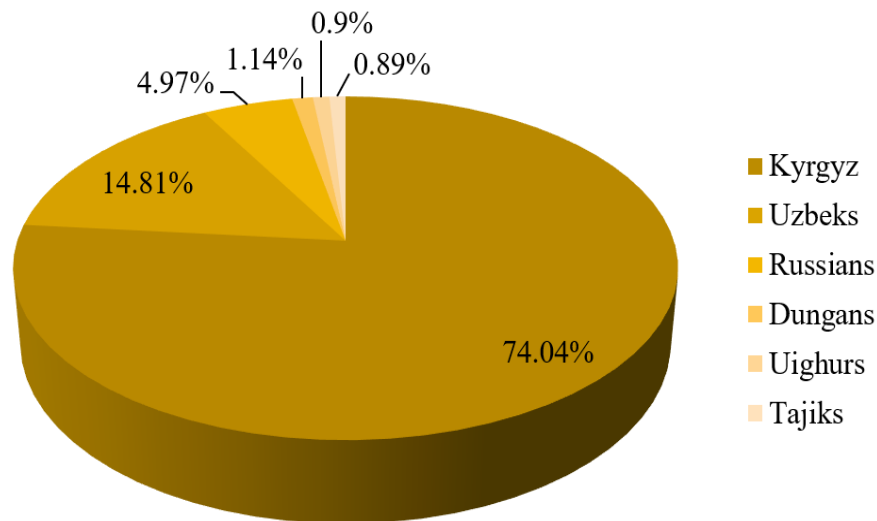
Category	Response	Frequency
Direction of the country	Correct	6
Behaviour determinants	Plans, dreams, commitments	27
	Everyday worries	26
	Spiritual practices	15
Trust in a stranger	Rather no than yes and No	26
	Rather yes than no and Yes	24
Verbal associations with country	“Сен таза болсон, мен таза болсом - коом да таза болот!”/“If you and I are not tainted, then society will be clean!”	27
	“Эркиндик”/“Freedom”	11
	“Ак ийилет, бирок сынбайт”/“White bends, but does not break”	10
Influential historical figures	V. I. Lenin	20
	J. Abdrakhmanov	18
	Epic hero Manas	15
	Ch. Aitmatov	15
Precedent events	Great October Socialist Revolution	29
	Independence in 1991	25
	Accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Empire in 1861	17
	Talas (Artlakh) Battle of 751	6
Identification markers (material)	Yurt	35
	National clothes	22
	National ornaments	21
	Flag of the country	18
	Traditional music	17
Universal celebrations	New Year	35
	Nooruz	20
Natural environment symbols	Issyk-Kul	43
	Mountains	40
	Altai, Yenisei	4
Fauna symbols	Golden eagle	31
	Snow leopard	26
	Kyrgyz horse breed	13
Flora symbols	Juniper	20
	Aigul flower/moon flower	19
	Tien Shan spruce	16
	Cotton	0
	Wheat	0

To the complementary question about negative qualities, respondents pointed to wastefulness, laziness, envy, non-commitment, dependability, conformity, credulity. The authors suggest that this subject area requires professional analysis and interpretation. Thus, the survey revealed the need for the development (construction) of a new collective memory, its recoding and updating of the “collective faith”.

National identity should be based on Kyrgyz ethnic identity, considering the presence and coexistence of national minority identities. According to the data at the beginning of 2021, the Kyrgyz ethnic group makes up the majority of the population. Other ethnic groups living in the country: Uzbeks, Russians, Dungans, Uighurs, and Tajiks.<sup>(8,9)</sup> Due to the potential misunderstanding among the Kyrgyz people, it is necessary to systematically carry out educational work to explain why the Kyrgyz language and cultural values should have priority in the establishment of national identity (Figure 1). This is conditioned by the fact that the language and culture of diasporas have been widely developed in their historical homeland. The Kyrgyz language and cultural values should contribute to the establishment of civic identity.

**Table 2.** Survey responses on ritualization, associations with natural elements and positive qualities of Kyrgyz people

Category	Response	Frequency
Ritualisation and Institutional Practices	Ritual of blessing	41
Associative Series of Natural Elements	Earth	24
	Water	21
	Fire	4
	Air	4
Positive Qualities of Kirghiz (Horizontal Interaction)	Hospitality	24
	Adaptability	19
	Tolerance	18
	Friendly mutual assistance	15
	Creative work	4



Source <sup>(8)</sup>

Figure 1. Ethnic composition in Kyrgyzstan as of 2023

Thus, despite the presence of clear cultural markers and shared values such as hospitality and adaptability, the responses indicate a lack of cohesion and harmony among the population. The recognition of both positive and negative qualities, as well as mixed attitudes towards historical events, highlights the complexity of Kyrgyz national identity. The findings emphasise the need for targeted efforts to build a unified national identity that respects ethnic diversity and promotes Kyrgyz cultural values. Such an approach is necessary to build a strong civic identity and to take into account the historical and cultural nuances that influence the collective memory and identity of the Kyrgyz population.

In recent decades, the processes of national identity associated with the acquisition of state sovereignty have been observed in Kyrgyzstan. Some people still associate themselves with the USSR and do not fully identify with the new republic. Currently, Kyrgyzstan needs to create a long-term memory policy that will be clear, clear and fixed for existence in the form of a single policy and legal document. Several post-Soviet countries have adopted and are currently implementing similar policy documents. In addition to creating a political and legal document, the political authorities should also:

1. Organise cultural events more often in order to popularise and bring national values to each region.
2. Systematically carry out mass events, the main purpose of which is the revival and development of the Kyrgyz language, it is also necessary to consider national, regional, and local languages, their dialects, dialects and sub-dialects.

3. Systematically carry out educational work to explain why traditional values should take priority in the development of national identity.
4. Pay due attention to the development of the museum sphere with new identification codes.
5. Consider that the development of the national identity of Kyrgyzstan should be based on three main and fundamental pillars: civic identity, recognition of the Kirghiz as a state-forming nation - the core of consolidation, and the politically neutral identity of ethnic minorities

## DISCUSSION

In the conditions of the modern political situation, the question of unity, national identity in the context of the development of the political life of society is acute. The political science of the Kyrgyz Republic needs the concept of the development of national identity. From a political standpoint, it should be recognized that identity is important from the position of its ethno-national component, since national identity has such a socio-political function, based on which the principle uniting ethnic groups is associated with the achievement of a common goal for the whole state. The political and intellectual elites of the new nations faced the problem of nationalizing the past, identifying turning points in history, and reformatting collective historical memory to support nation-building and the emergence of political regimes after the fall of the Soviet Union. The collective memory of inherited historical origins serves as a platform for the search for new concepts and ideals. At the time of political independence, public opinion was dominated by difficult debates that split Kyrgyz society into opposing dichotomies.

Identity is a difficult term to understand, and it is worth considering it as an analytical category and a discursive construction. This will allow focusing on how identities are implemented in specific organizational conditions, which can have serious consequences for the individuals and organizations involved. Identity politics, in turn, is initially associated with the consequences of identification, but the authors consider this in a broader sense as a concept that allows focusing on how national identity constructs are related to interests and ideologies, and their consequences.<sup>(6)</sup>

After the collapse of the USSR, Kyrgyzstan had a chance to create an independent state. It was a difficult process, because, being a member of the USSR and having all the external signs of a state, Kyrgyzstan did not have genuine sovereignty and could not pursue its own foreign and domestic policy. As in other republics of the former USSR, Kyrgyzstan experienced a surge of nationalism after the collapse of the USSR. There were certain requests for self-affirmation of the Kirghiz as a state-forming ethnic group, but such ideas were poorly formulated. Around the second half of the 1990s, nationalist rhetoric significantly weakened, and concerns were increasingly expressed about the need to unite all ethnic groups and create a multicultural society in which all ethnic groups would have equal rights. It is crucial to remember that in 2010 Kyrgyzstan faced a serious test, including from the standpoint of state-building. Up to this point, neither the institutional structure responsible for this area, nor anyone in the state paid any significant attention to the relations between the Kyrgyz and other ethnic groups. The Kyrgyz nationalist discourse, known today, consists of various opinions and concepts based on the belief in the need to protect and promote the interests of the Kyrgyz people as a whole. The Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 221 "On the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040" notes the vision of civic integration and national unity: "Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyz zharany, integrated into the process of nation-building, live in a single open political and legal space, a pluralistic society, united by civic identity and pride in their country".<sup>(7)</sup>

The political discourse also contains ideas of the revival and development of the Kyrgyz language, increasing its role in public and political life, the authorities are criticised for the fact that very little has been done for the revival of the language for more than two decades. Much of this discourse is quite reasonable, given that the Kyrgyz language lost its position greatly during the Soviet era, it practically degenerated and became a symbol of backwardness. The Kyrgyz language is one of the ancient Turkic languages in which outstanding cultural values originated. The establishment in the Constitution of the status of the Kyrgyz language as the state language and the definition in this Constitutional law of the procedure for its wide and full-fledged use as the state language in all spheres of state and public life creates the basis for preserving the identity and development of the national culture of the Kyrgyz people, improving language policy.<sup>(10,11)</sup>

Turkic-speaking peoples (Kirghiz, Altaians, Khakas, Tuvans) had common cultural identifiers (names, symbols and signs, folklore), and traditional knowledge (clothing, crafts, technologies). Therefore, the revival and preservation of ethnic traditions plays an important role in the preservation of ethnic identity, along with the preservation of the language. Traditional culture in Kyrgyzstan is a very significant phenomenon that can be easily encountered in everyday life. And to this day, despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan is a modern state, folk traditions are loved, revered, and carefully passed on from generation to generation. Folk traditions and continuity are extremely important for every culture, without which there will be no cultural diversity.

In the field of intangible cultural heritage of the country, there are the following laws and regulations: Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 557 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Classification

of Elements of the Integral Cultural Heritage of the Kyrgyz Republic and the National List of Elements of the Integral Cultural Heritage of the Kyrgyz Republic”; Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 14 “On craft activities in the Kyrgyz Republic”.<sup>(12,13)</sup> In order to create conditions for carriers of intangible cultural values of the Kyrgyz people with the support of Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 179 “On the creation of the state institution “Kyrgyz State Theater “Manas””.<sup>(14)</sup> The epic “Manas” is becoming increasingly important as an ideological factor of identity and independence, uniting the Kyrgyz people, designed to educate all generations of the population, especially young people, by examples of the best qualities inherent in the people, such as love for the homeland, harmony, justice, generosity. In order to popularise and bring cultural values to each region, cultural events are held annually. For example, the World Festival of World Epics and the World Nomad Games are organised every two years.<sup>(3)</sup>

In accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, central and local authorities support initiatives in the field of crafts by selling items of intangible cultural heritage, organising exhibitions, and taking other measures to promote their development. The exhibits include a handmade Kyrgyz yurt, traditional musical instruments, carpet, leather and wooden products, exhibitions of applied art, performances (master classes), artisan works that give visitors the opportunity to observe the process of sewing, twisting threads.<sup>(3)</sup>

The new toponymy, which includes the names of cities, villages, streets, squares and educational institutions, is a vivid example of state policy aimed at the establishment of national identity. Common processes include the widespread “naturalisation” of toponymy, Turkification and de-russification of educational and communication frameworks in Kyrgyzstan and its neighbours. Museums can be seen as “memory machines” where curators can tell stories by choosing certain exhibits, labels and signatures. This is especially true in countries that are developing a new national identity. In trying to create a new future, societies in transition must simultaneously cope with a difficult past. Museums are places that are closely connected with the collective memory of a nation.<sup>(15)</sup> Since the establishment of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1991, adjustments have been made in the country’s museums. New political and ideological points of view can be promoted through national museums.

In modern society, more and more emphasis is placed on ethnic identification, on the need to consolidate the ethnos by emphasising its cultural and historical features in order to establish an integrating national ideal in the changing conditions of the country’s development. Historical politics or the politics of memory form the historical consciousness of society. In the broadest sense, this refers to the politicisation of collective memory, institutions, and political persons. Then most of the public memory can be considered political. According to the theoretical study by G. Zubrzycki and A. Wozny, a phrase that is a common version of “the politics of history”, made its literary debut in the German word “Geschichtspolitik”, which combines politics and history into one phrase.<sup>(16)</sup> Memory politics in a broader sense concerns discussions about the past and how it should be recorded, remembered, and disseminated, or silenced and forgotten.

The phrase “identity politics” has mainly been used in American politics to refer to the political actions of various minority groups fighting discrimination and seeking to get involved in the political process. Outside the United States, the term has been used to characterise violent ethnic and nationalist struggles in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, as well as separatist movements in Canada and Spain. The new identity politics, which is mainly observed in Europe, is exceptional in contrast to the identity politics practised by minority groups. It is based on promises to protect the “silent majority” from the negative consequences of immigration, growing European integration, and globalisation. Identity politics, as practiced now, emphasises the notion of identity based on ascriptive traits such as race, ethnicity, and religion. As a result, this represents a fundamental departure from class politics, according to which political strife stems from economic problems such as redistribution and the size of government.<sup>(17)</sup>

Historical politics, which is a controversial topic, is often seen as a tool used to influence public opinion and present history in a way that serves the interests of the ruling political elite. According to I.B. Kuźma and E. Pietrzak, on the other hand, the phrase “memory politics” has less political connotation.<sup>(18)</sup> Here the emphasis is on community memory, not on its politicisation. However, both phrases are often used in the same sentence. They also refer to the idea of collective memory, which is related to the sense of identity of people and communities. Thus, history is adapted to identity and is a product of factors such as origin, social status, or power dynamics. However, the link between memory politics and power is just as important as the link between public memory and identity. This is due to the fact that collective memory is associated with the justification of the existence of a certain group, its institutions and structures of political power. The method of applying power depends both on the way it is generated and on how society perceives time. Political power influences what should be remembered and how.

It is impossible not to agree with the conclusions of U. Belavusau and A. Gliszczynska-Grabias, that memory politics can entail historical politics, for example, one that distinguishes between real and accurate stories, incorrect or falsified stories, and also determines how a story should be told, or even uses the laws of memory to formally manage specific historical interpretations.<sup>(19)</sup> Revisionist historical practices, which range from changing geographical names and destroying monuments to actually rewriting history, are especially noticeable

after regime change. Given the importance of collective memory for national identity, it is often codified in constitutional laws, promoted in the media and distributed in educational institutions.

As denotes N. Maurantonio reports that places of memory can serve as thematic oracles for the current state of civic culture, conveying indications regarding public identity and goals not only through proclamation, parable or proverb, but also - and perhaps most importantly - through ways of contact and participation in the place.<sup>(20)</sup> The importance of places such as museums, monuments, and memorials lies in their rhetorical ability to shape narratives that serve as pillars of social identity. Studies of memory politics have been criticised for paying excessive attention to memory sites and ignoring perception problems or how the audience interprets these places.<sup>(21,22,23)</sup> The museum space, which combines dialogical and didactic models of interaction and museum communication, is suitable for solving social problems of working with visitors, and is also one of the most significant tools (platforms) for creating (nationalising) national consciousness. To give the visitor a sense of the social significance of the preceding event, the name, historical fact are supplemented with identification markers of collective memory, a complex emotional complex associated with memories and cognitive attitudes. However, given how the audience interprets various texts, communication studies are well suited to address this latter topic. Nevertheless, reception is still a subject that requires further study.

V.N. Roudometof emphasises the importance of holidays, festivals, and other communal rituals for the development of national identity, regardless of their specific orientation. It is worth agreeing with the author's conclusions, since by organising public holidays, defining worldviews and values, naming heroes or using polyphony in the narrative, the state supports educational activities in this area and finances institutions dealing with memory to achieve goals related to the development of national identity.<sup>(24)</sup> Traditional knowledge, including healing, occupies a special place in the cultivation of national identity.

The main problem with the current literature on memory policy is that it lacks conceptual clarity regarding events that can be classified as collective memory. P.J. Verovšek suggested that the relationship between the formal and informal public sphere should underlie the policy of memory.<sup>(25)</sup> In other words, research should focus both on the basic elements of collective memory declared in state institutions and on the means of interaction by which these memories are transmitted, challenged, silenced, and discussed outside of these formal contexts. Studies of both cultural and political memory will benefit from a more rigid, conceptually clear emphasis, even though this excludes numerous cultural characteristics that are important components of collective memory as a whole.<sup>(26-28)</sup>

Memory can be used as a strategic resource in the struggle for power in memory diplomacy, which is a type of memory policy involving external mnemonic actors and an audience. J. McGlynn and J. Đureinović define the politics of memory as a sector of politics in which many participants fill history with their own goals and subtexts.<sup>(29)</sup> The public sphere is the main goal of memory politics, as it is an arena in which politicised and highly contentious debates about official interpretations of the past can take place.<sup>(30-32)</sup> Many people, organisations, and groups in this public sphere argue about the meaning and interpretation of the past, but certain narratives prevail. The predominant memory is associated with the strength and prevalence of historical representations, their connection with dominant institutions and the role they play in gaining support and forming alliances in formal policy processes.<sup>(33,34)</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a wave of nationalism swept through Kyrgyzstan. Certain demands were made for the recognition of the Kirghiz as a state-forming ethnic group. Until 2010, the authorities did not pay due attention to relations between Kyrgyz and other ethnic groups. National identity can be based on Kyrgyz identity, while recognising the existence and coexistence of national minority groups. Rehabilitation and preservation of traditional culture are crucial for the preservation of ethnic identity. According to the law, municipal authorities must support initiatives by selling intangible cultural heritage objects, holding exhibitions and taking other measures to promote their development. For example, the international festival "Jazz\_Bishkek\_Spring" is held annually, the World Festival of Epics of the World World Nomad Games are held every two years, as well as in the field of crafts through the festival of artisans "Oimo" and ethno-fashion, reconstruction and revitalisation of traditional knowledge, including healing. Presentations (master classes), works of artisans, allowing visitors to observe the process of sewing, twisting threads.

Along with preserving traditional culture, nationalist rhetoric includes proposals for the revival and development of the Kyrgyz language, expanding its importance in public and political life, since little has been done to restore the language for more than two decades. An important attribute of the memory and identity policy is the museum. Since the establishment of the Kyrgyz Republic, changes have been made in the country's museums in order to create a new state with new customs and a common cultural heritage within the borders of the republic. There is no clear national policy in modern Kyrgyzstan. The political elite of Kyrgyzstan should develop a policy of long-term memory, which is clearly aimed at creating a political and legal document. Such a programme should be developed at the state level for systematic implementation.



The scientific originality of this study consists in the fact that for the first time, the specific features of the activities of the political elite were considered while preserving and developing the collective memory and identity of the Kyrgyz people. In further research, it is necessary to pay attention to the development of political programmes and activities aimed at the development of the national identity and memory of citizens of the modern Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

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