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THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN IDENTITIES IN THE MEMORIAL COMPLEXES OF MURMANSK AND ROSTOV-ON-DON¹

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Abstract

This paper discusses the construction of the urban identities in two Russian cities – Murmansk and Rostov-on-Don – located in Northern and Southern Central Russia respectively. This research investigates identity making, social memory and the redesign of the urban spaces of post-Soviet Russia. The paper examines the process of identity creation through the analysis of the memorial complexes in Murmansk and Rostov-on-Don and defines the predominate gender, historical and geographical narratives encoded in them. The memorial complexes chosen for the study are from Soviet and post-Soviet times, therefore the research examines to what extent the identities imposed during the Soviet era have been reproduced since. The paper deconstructs the monuments, approaching them from the perspective of human geography and revealing to what extent the identity of the Soviet North is connected with militarization and masculinity, how women are represented both in the North and South, and whether the Soviet past has been reconsidered in post-Soviet commemorative monuments. The paper compares this with the perception of the city and the chosen memorials by local citizens through surveys. It contributes to the ongoing debates on the Russian post-Soviet identity market, urban identity, power relations in the post-Soviet cities and the heritage of the Soviet ideology in the city environment.

Key words: Post-Soviet identity; the North; Soviet Arctic; urban identity; memory; militarism; gender; Russian cities

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Introduction

What turns a city into *the* city in contemporary Russia? How do various political and societal actors form and shape the identity of a post-Soviet city? Which role did the recent wars over Soviet history and legacy, geopolitical tensions and the current regional urban development policies play in shaping the city's identity? How did the collapse of the Soviet Union and the change to a market economy, democracy and a new social order influence the places of memory, the process of memory making and the spatial distribution of memory? This research puts together several fields of academic discussion on identity production in the urban environment, memory making, post-Soviet identity and

the theory of place making to approach narrative production in the urban identity of two case-study cities – Murmansk and Rostov-on-Don. This research will help the growing market of identity production in Russian peripheral cities and will add two important cases to the contemporary map of urban identities in post-Soviet cities.

Post-Soviet identity: the background

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the institutions which were responsible for the formation of urban identities changed dramatically. The new market of regional, local and urban identities started to grow quickly and many new institutions, players and actors emerged. These processes have been described by many Russian and Western scholars from various perspectives – sociological, geographical, historical and politi-

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cal. For example, Dokuchaev [2012] explores the construction of regional identities of Perm' region and Ivanovo region from a sociological and political perspective, focusing on the construction of people and place identity.

Golovneva [2013] worked with the questions of regional identities and collective identities, exploring them with a theoretical model of regional identity and the cognitive, axiological, emotional and regulative components of its structure. The components are considered to be ways to describe and create regional identity. Specific attention is paid to the peculiarities of regional identity as a form of collective identity based on the characterization of the structural components of this phenomenon. Timofeev [2008] explores the political aspects of the regional identity and how various historical events have been used for its construction.

This work, however, approaches the issue of identity making and the construction of the urban identity of post-Soviet cities from two interconnected perspectives: geographical and historical, and the third one — gender. The formation of regional, local and urban identities in post-Soviet Russia captures special attention of Russian and post-Soviet scholars in comparison with other ex-Soviet states, as Russia is often seen as the successor of the former Soviet Union and because of the “closely intertwined histories of Russian and the USSR” [Forest, Johnson, 2002]. The evolution and formation of Russian national identity has attracted considerable political and scholarly concern among political scientists in the last ten years.² A number of works in geography and related disciplines have used monuments, memorials, and public landscapes to evaluate the process of nation-building and the formation of political communities. With the notable exceptions of Sidorov on the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow [Sidorov, 2000] the majority of the geographical research was not focused on Russian cases.³ One of the rare examples of the development of this approach are the aforementioned works of Forest and Johnson, who claim that Russia's national identity was mostly influenced by its a geographical location and its positioning as an “ideological empire”. I agree with that approach and examine the memory complexes in the case-study cities from the perspective of human geography and think of the geographical component as predominant in the construction of

national identities. The geographical component in the identity construction of a place in the memorial complexes is one of the analyses, which I examine in the present research.

Forest and Johnson continue to trace the construction of national identity in Soviet times, claiming that the imperial underpinning of identity constructions were “adopted and adapted” after the October Revolution [Forest, Johnson, 2002, p. 11]. As a result, they see Russian and Soviet identities as closely intertwined [Ibid., p.13], based on their case-study selection. This is the second analysis which I examine in my research — to what extent Soviet history and the Soviet period of the case-study cities are present in the identity of a place from the perspective of the memorial complexes. In other words, which type of regional or local events are commemorated in the city? The discussion of whether we can approach the Soviet Union and the processes which were happening there against the backdrop of broader discussions of Empirical identity and place it among the literature on identity creation in, for example, Great Britain or France is ongoing. However, it is certain that the process of identity making of a place differed dramatically from the free market of actors that we see now. As my previous research showed, one of the key actors in identity making were *kraevedcheskyi* (local history) museums, which created certain patterns of representations and implemented certain narratives into a place, which, however, has so far failed to enter the market economy of identity making in post-Soviet Russia. The processes of national, regional and local identity making were very closely connected to and often aligned with some key-event or “myth” in Barthesian terms [Barthes, 1957]. The questions are what event or myth do pro-governmental actors choose as the basis for the national (regional or local) identity, why and how. To understand this, let us see in how memory making and identities are connected in the first place.

The political geography which operates at the intersection of political studies and the theory of place and nation making tells us that the official places of memory were created to “establish a topography of ‘a people’” and to maintain social stability, existing power relations, and institutional continuity during the period of nation building in Europe [Agnew et al., 2003]. Moreover, selective elite interpretations of the past (by predominantly white males) tended to be abstract and normative, and understandings of the nation as timeless and sacred were represented through the relative locations, designs, and functions of places such as

2 See for example [Kommisrud, Svartdal, 1992; Rousset, 1994; Chafetz, 1997].

3 See for example [Harvey, 1979; Gillis, 1994; Atkinson, Cosgrove, 1998].

monuments, memorials, and museums [Agnew et al., 2003]. Historical narratives and representations of empire, nation, and state were also naturalized through gender relations, in particular through the adulation of male, heroic bodies in public spaces [Ibid, p. 292]. These memorial landscapes defined sacred centers and political power; they drew from or competed with previously existing topographies of social recollection. [Ibid, p. 292]. Inspired by Halbwachs [1925; 1992] and Nora [1989; 1997], scholars from many disciplines now pay attention to the material landscapes and cultural performances of social memory. The majority of scholars acknowledge the role of the ruling elites and governmental authorities in creating the statuary, memorials, museums, grand boulevards, public squares, and ornate buildings which function as “theaters of memory”, where selective histories about the state could be ritually enacted [Boyer, 1994]. Yet while the memory literature is replete with spatial metaphors, most scholars neither acknowledge the politically contestable and contradictory nature of space, place, and scale [Alderman, 1996], nor examine how social memory is spatially constituted. Recent work by geographers demonstrates that places of memory are more than monumental stages or sites of important national events. They also constitute historical meanings, social relations, and power relations. Places are the spatial and social contexts of events, activities, and peoples [Agnew, Duncan, 1989] they are the centers of meaning, memory, and experience for individuals and groups [Tuan, 1974]. Far from being rooted or stable, places are porous networks of social relations which continuously change because of how they are connected to (and shape) other places and peoples [Massey, 1997]. Localized struggles over the meanings, forms, and locations of places of memory are often tied to larger political disputes about who has the authority to represent the past in a society. Renaming streets and urban districts, for example, is one way that officials have attempted to canonize a version of the past in the urban landscape to support a particular political order [Alderman, 1996]. Many places of memory are built as overtly political projects intended to justify existing power relations or to disrupt old ones. This would, in part, explain why so much time, money, and symbolic capital is invested in the construction of monumental buildings and their topographies. Nonetheless, while officials have historically attempted to legitimate their contemporary political acts through such places, simply because they are built does not mean that they inevitably serve to sacralize state politics

[Agnew, Duncan, 1989]. Nor does their establishment indicate a coherent ideological basis among the officials of a state or regime.

All the above forms a solid foundation for narratives to be examined in the identity construction of places. I primarily want to examine the presence of the geographical component in the identity construction, in parallel with the historical and commemorative component. The third narrative that I identify and decode is gender and the construction of masculinity and femininity.

Methodology and data

To be able to decode and analyze the narratives that I have outlined in previous section I have used the methods of cultural geography and cultural analysis. Although, as described, there is limited research on identity building from a geographical perspective, I have followed some of the basic and longstanding principles of geographical analysis, and the methodologies introduced by Forest and Johnson.

The urban environment and its elements — “monuments, memorial, museums and place names — were always playing a central role in defining Russian national identity” [Forest, Johnson, 2002]. However, in the 20th century the change of narratives after 1917 and 1991 involved revising monuments, renaming places and in some cases physically rebuilding some of the places in the urban environment. This research on the memorials and monuments in former authoritarian societies describes the multifaceted process of commemoration through which political change and continuity and the formations of civil society can be analyzed. Forest and Johnson [2001], for example, describe public monuments in Moscow to examine domestic political struggles at various scales in post-Soviet Russia. Their study of the Victory Park monument at Poklonnaya Gora (commemorating the Soviet victory over Nazism), Lenin’s Mausoleum, the Exhibition of Economic Achievements of the Soviet Union, and the Park of Totalitarian Art suggest that while Russian elites may be uncomfortable with the Soviet legacy, they would rather reinterpret than erase this past. Visitor surveys conducted at these places also indicated the limited popular appeal of civic nationalism in Russia and the associated difficulties of creating new (i.e. post-Soviet) symbolic capital [Ibid.]. Johnson and Forest in their analysis of post-Soviet Moscow symbolic spaces point out that the Soviet-era monuments and memorials represented competition for the usable symbolic capital (honor, prestige, glory, sacrifice, and so on) embodied in these

sites [Forest, Johnson, 2002]. However, their analysis is mostly drawn from the analysis of memory sites and monuments in Moscow. I argue that the example of Moscow should not be generalized to the whole Russia as peripheral cities might have developed a different mechanism to represent the struggle for identity making in a particular city and come up with different memory strategies. I found it useful to use a mixed methodological approach and include surveys alongside the analysis of the monuments themselves, as suggest Forest and Johnson.

This paper is primarily based on the analysis of the symbolic places and memorial sites in the case-study cities and approaches the landscapes as texts [Cosgrove, Daniels, 1988; Duncan, Duncan, 1988]. This perspective is often used in human and cultural geographical analysis to approach the construction of symbolic places and depict how the symbolic meaning of both physical and represented landscapes are deliberately manipulated to advance political interests and how these monuments and the landscapes may be interpreted as a reflection of those interests. However, I pay a lot of attention to the semiotics of each of the particular monuments as well. This approach makes it possible to decode the symbolic meaning of physical spaces and monumental sites as manipulated and encoded by different political interests. To analyze the struggle over the monumental space in a city and to reveal the role of political forces but not reducing the public to mere recipients, Johnson and Forest apply Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital" to the cityscapes. Public monuments are often perceived by researchers as public goods from a political and economic perspective and as being non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Forest and Johnson claim that public spaces and memorials can be perceived as such, and in this paper, I agree with them and approach monuments and spaces that have a lot of symbolic capital, as everyone can observe them free of charge.

Alongside the analysis of the monuments and public spaces, I conducted interviews with local citizens. The purpose of the interviews was not to create a representative selection from a sociological perspective, but to be able to get a sense of (1) the importance of specific monuments in the city and an understanding of which memorial complexes are seen as the dominating ones (2) the general perception of the city's identity and how it correlates with the narratives that I outline. In total, I conducted more than 100 interviews in each city, half men and half women, and in the age range of 18 to 80.

The research is based on empirical data from two case studies — Murmansk (Murmanskaya region, North of the Central Russia) and Rostov-on-Don (Rostovskaya region, South of the Central Russia) collected by the author in 2019. These cities were chosen as being a contrasting pair of Northern and Southern, Central Russian cities. For Russians, what constitutes 'the North' and 'the South' is more symbolic, than geographical. Historical events, imagined geographies and cultural representations influence how people form images of 'the North' and 'the South'. There is much debate how various social, cultural, economic and historical factors influence the construction of the geographical imagines of Russians. Murmansk is a port city in the arctic circle in northwestern Russia, founded in 1916 and it is one of the most strategically important cities of Central Russia as the port remains ice-free all year round. It is called 'the gate to the Arctic', which is how it has been identified since Soviet times from the official perspective — a outpost of the Russian Arctic. Rostov-on-Don is a river port city, situated in the south of Central Russia. It was twice occupied by Germans during World War II and was a city of strategic importance as a railway junction and a river port accessing the Caucasus.

Both cities have various monuments, commemoration sites and public spaces, the number of which are increasing. Apart from the "standard" Russian list of monuments, the cities have a number of new and unusual monuments, reflecting local and regional particularities. As mentioned, the debate in the field made me hypothesize that I would primarily be looking for the gender, historical and geographical narratives in the chosen cities.

To sum up, I use a mixture of discourse analysis, interviews, and methods of the sociology of space applied to the built environment of Murmansk and Rostov-on-Don, to examine identity construction through the several chosen monuments.

"The Soviet Arctic" and "The North" in Murmansk

Murmansk has a very vivid and interesting landscape of memorial complexes, including those which have appeared in the post-Soviet era.

The main memorial, dominating the entire cityscape of Murmansk, is the monument to the "Defenders of the Soviet Arctic during the Second World War", or *Alyosha* (Fig. 1), as locals call it. It is a 40-meter statue of a warrior, on a hill which makes it visible from almost any part of the city and makes it the major symbol of the

city, which more than 80% of my respondents acknowledge. The war memorial, dedicated to the Second World War, is one of the most popular city memorial complexes, but what makes *Alyosha* special is that it is dedicated specifically to the “Soviet Arctic defenders”, rather than to the soldiers who fought in the Second World War generally. In other words, the main symbolic place of the city is the one which makes a direct link to the Soviet Arctic.



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Fig. 1. 'Alyosha', Murmansk, 2015

But what does the Soviet Arctic stand for? There is a significant difference between the notions of ‘the North’, ‘the Soviet North’ and ‘the Soviet Arctic’, as last two include the history of Soviet exploration of the North. The South was never so important in terms of Soviet exploration. There is a separate section of scholarship, dedicated to unpacking the discourses on “the Soviet Arctic” and “the Soviet North”. In short, the Arctic was always perceived in Soviet times as a place of military posts, a base for natural resources and a paradigm for the policies of “enlightening backward peoples”. Many researchers describe the center-peripheral relationships between central Russian and the North as colonial. Therefore the discourse on “the Soviet Arctic” is not about Murmansk being a northern city, but about Murmansk being a part of the Soviet Arctic. That statement is widely supported by other monuments and memorial complexes in the city, including: *To the heroes of the Northern city, which fall in the battles of the Second World War; To the Dockers, who fell in the battles of the Second World War; To the honor of the warriors of Polar divisions — the memorial complex of the conquerors of the Arctic; To the participants of the Arctic campaign in the Second World War; To the border guards of the Arctic.*



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Fig. 2. The memorial to the Rail men of polar regions, Murmansk

Although the majority of these monuments were established in the late Soviet period, some of them were unveiled after the Soviet Union had collapsed (for example, the memorial to the participants of the Arctic campaign in the Second World War in 1991, and the memorial to the border guards of the Arctic in 2013). The identity of “the Soviet Arctic”, which holds all these military notions, was prolonged into the post-Soviet era.

The conceptual gap between “northern” and “arctic” identities is perceived by the citizens. Whilst 96% of respondents see themselves as “inhabitants of the North”, only 60% see themselves as Arctic inhabitants. 70% call Murmansk a “Northern” city, but struggle to identify which traits make the city “northern”. Usually it is not about the cold, but remoteness and the polar nights/polar days.

The Militarized North and geopolitical tensions

The military component of the Murmansk identity is reinforced by other monuments, not related necessarily to the Arctic. Several recently installed monuments (‘To the Bravery and Firmness of the citizens of Murmansk’, 2008; ‘To the firemen of military Murmansk’, 2008; ‘To the soldiers of public order of Murmansk’, 2005; ‘To the pilots of sea aviation’, 2001; ‘To the citizens of Murmansk, who died while serving on military duty’, 2001; ‘To the Rail men of the Polar regions (Fig.2) etc.) glorify and commemorate not only the Soviet Arctic. The post-Soviet politics of memory shown in these sites clearly and concisely claim that Murmansk is still seen as mostly a military, and therefore, masculine city.

According to Till, gendered national imaginaries are reified usually through war memorials [Till, 2003, p. 293]. Till cites Dowler in his analysis of war memorials in Ireland, generalizing that, despite the role of women in the warfare “they are often represented as mothers only (and not also warriors) in social memory practices of war and are thereby excluded from public political landscapes” [Dowler, 1998]. War memorials are masculine spaces and include monuments for generals, tombs to Unknown Soldiers, mass or military cemeteries, commemorative fields, historic battlefields, prisons, and their associated ceremonies [Mosse, 1990; Raivo, 1998]. At war memorials, soldiers are represented by the sacred relics of dead male bodies who are commemorated as national martyrs having died protecting their homeland and its vulnerable citizens. Although these places of memory reinforce the gendered understanding of the nation as a fraternal brotherhood, the meanings and social identities of “the war dead”, and of victims, perpetrators, and heroes change through time. Further, public commemorations of war are far from straightforward and vary in different national, local, and political contexts.

That is the case of Murmansk, however there is one particular monument which reinforces the masculinity of the city and creates another dimension of female discourse in the Murmansk identity. Surprisingly, the second most popular monument, which was named by 25% of my respondents is the monument “For those who know how to wait” (Fig. 3).

This is a life-sized monument of a woman, situated on the outskirts of the city, who is waving hello (or goodbye) in the direction of Murmansk bay. This is a rare example of monuments dedicated to women in Russian cities. “For those who know how to wait” and *Alyosha* create a striking contrast. “For those who know how to wait” is situated on the outskirts, and is invisible in the city’s landscape, while *Alyosha* can be clearly seen from any point in the city. Regardless of the fact that the figure of a woman is actually present (which is very rare in Russian memory landscapes), it works on the masculine discourse of a Soviet Arctic city and the Soviet Arctic narrative. The role of women is narrowed down to one specific thing — waiting for husbands and sons, who either are in the military or are explorers and who leave behind all the women of Murmansk. The other interesting thing is that “For those who know how to wait” reshapes the sea part of the city’s identity, foresting the military part.

60% of respondents identify themselves as living by the sea. The issue here lies in the fact that

Murmansk has no pedestrian access to the coast — almost the whole shore is blocked by the portside, which is inaccessible for those who do not work there. The majority of the population is actually cut from the sea itself. This brings us to the question what this seaside means for them. The sea holds no leisure or idea of beach, but refers to the industrial port, the fishing industry and the military fleet. We can see again how the identity of Murmansk is confirmed in the city landscapes, in the monuments and memory sites, which mainly refer to exploration, the military presence and the fishing industry.



Photo © Author

Fig. 3. ‘For those who know how to wait’, Murmansk

Summing up, Murmansk has a strong memorial landscape, which was developing throughout the 20th and 21st century. Through the Murmansk memorial complexes, the city is represented as a military Arctic city, with a glorious military past and present. The gendered narrative, which can be easily decoded from the positions, sizes and titles of the military related monuments is reinforced by contrast of the second most popular monument “For those who know how to wait”. Despite the changes of the social, economic and political agenda in the country and the decreasing economic strength of the port and fishing industry, these identities are the main ones visible and reinforced in the cityscape. The reason for such a positioning

of the city becomes clear against the background of the overarching increasing Russian interest in Arctic. The Russian Arctic has drawn a great deal of public attention due to the plans of Putin's government to remilitarize these territories, to construct a Northern Sea Route, and to claim the Arctic continental plate for fossil fuel extraction. These plans have started to be put into place across various cities and settlements of the Russian Arctic, including Murmansk — the largest and the most important port. The absence of discussion about re-militarizing these territories, restructuring the local and regional economics and moving forward from the Soviet era provide no grounds for rethinking the city's identity. Quite the opposite, the current governmental plans for the region reinforce the Soviet narratives and identities.

Constructing the South: Urban identity of Rostov-on-Don

The city of Rostov-on-Don has fewer memory complexes than Murmansk. There have been only a few memorial complexes created in post-Soviet times, and they are commemorations of the victims of political repression. How, then, is the Soviet past represented and commemorated in the city? Can we claim that the Soviet past and Soviet history is reinforced there as well? Are the Southerners of that city equally as important as the Northerners of Murmansk for the official city identity? In other words, is the geographical identity of Rostov-on-Don equally interconnected with the historical identity and what are the other connotations? The absolute majority of the people I interviewed see themselves as residents of the South, referencing to the city as 'warm', 'hot' and 'welcoming'. Other possible identities (such as 'port city', 'sea city' or 'Caucasian') were mentioned less than 10% of the time. However, these Southerners are not present and not supported in the city memorials, the memoryscapes or public spaces. The most popular monument in the city is, quite predictably, the monument dedicated to the Second World War — *Zmievsкая Balka* (Fig. 4).

This monument is significant and represents the war of public commemoration practices and the war of narratives about the Second World War. *Zmievsкая Balka* is situated on the outskirts of the city on the site of a mass execution and is a monument to the victims of Nazi occupation. The plaque on the monument says that *Zmievsкая Balka* is the largest place of Nazi mass execution of the Jews in the Second World War in Russia. More than 27,000 Jews and Soviet civilians were massacred here in 1942 to 1943. The phrase on the plaque

has faced several changes, reflecting the changes in the commemoration policies in the country. *Zmievsкая Balka* now is a huge monument park, which consists of a sculpture complex with male and female figures of the victims, a small museum and a large park area. Unlike *Alysoha* in Murmansk, which glorifies the soldiers of the Second World War, *Zmievsкая Balka* is dedicated to the civilians and the victims of the war. This is a rare example in Russian commemoration culture, which usually focuses on the victories and soldiers, rather than losses and civilians. What makes this example even more interesting is that there is another Second World War related memorial in the city — to the "Liberators of the Rostov-on-Don", built in 1983, which was mentioned by 25% of my interviewees. This monument is a much more classical monument of the Second World War — it is very centrally located, with the victory symbol — a figure of the goddess Nike — (which in Soviet times was associated with Motherland) on a 72 meter stela, with Soviet war-related ornaments and bas-reliefs on its foundation. Despite its central location and the fact that this monument is considered to be the main war memorial from the government's point of view, it is far less popular than *Zmievsкая Balka*.

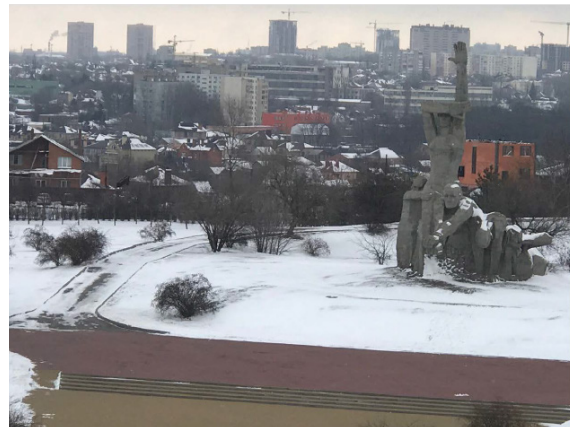


Photo © Author

Fig. 4. 'Zmievsкая Balka', monument on the place of mass execution, Rostov-on-Don, 2019

These two war-related memorial complexes have no associations with the South, or any other geographical connotations. Moreover, in the case of Rostov-on-Don, none of the memorials my respondents mentioned have any geographical connotations. The word south is not present in the urban environment. Unlike in Murmansk, the memorial landscapes in Rostov-on-Don are a battlefield of historical narratives, rather than geopolitical or sources imaginative geographies.



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**Fig. 5. 'Monument to innocent murdered',
Rostov-on-Don**

The “War of narratives” in Rostov-on-Don consists of various forms of commemoration of the Soviet past (like “Pioneer park” and the commemoration of occupation victims), but at the same time it includes monuments that commemorate the victims of the Stalinist regime (Fig. 5) and the victims of the repressions. The formal name of the memory place is “Monument to innocent murdered”. It was established in the early 1990s and is a rare example of the commemoration of the victims of the Stalinist repression, not only in the Rostov region, but in the whole country. This monument plays a crucial role in the city’s memoryscape, as opposing the “official” historical narrative about the Second World War and the figure of Stalin. It has been attacked many times by pro-Stalinists, and was not mentioned by my respondents. In other words, the locals do not see it as important or as one that gives the city an identity. The overarching narrative and identity is still claimed by the history of occupation and the Second World War. This is similar to Murmansk, which also has a memorial dedicated to the victims of political repressions, and which is also invisible for the citizens.

The gender component or the gender narrative in the memorial complexes of the Rostov-on-Don reveals that the victims and the weeping figures on the *Zmievskaia Balka* are women with children. This is a very common pattern in the commemoration of the victims of war, especially the Second World War, and that is the only example in the case study monuments in Rostov-on-Don where women are present.

Conclusions

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the field of contested identities started to develop. The identities themselves started to vary, and the number of actors started to increase as well. One of the important actors, introduced in this article, are the ur-

ban monuments and memorial complexes; those created in Soviet times, and those created after.

Establishing particular forms of commemoration and symbolic places in the urban environment has been always the privilege of those who are in power. In contemporary Russia, the battle for the symbolic spaces in the cities and for the right to acknowledge certain historical events reflects the overarching political struggles [Forest, Johnson, 2001] and the ongoing “war of narratives”. This field is diverse and consists of common patterns of commemoration that reflect the overarching national narrative and can be seen as “set in stone” in the majority of Russian cities and in the site-specific local and regional identities. The research in two cities situated in Central Russia North (Murmansk) and South (Rostov-on-Don) has demonstrated how place identities are constructed and managed and revealed how today’s geopolitical tensions influence this part of identity making.

This research has showed how three axes (gender, history and geography) are presented in the monuments and memorial complexes of the case-study cities; which cultural, historical and social connotations they have and how they are perceived by the local population. Through the analysis of the memorial landscapes and monuments in Murmansk we can clearly define that the city is presented as masculine, militarized, Arctic and marine. The identity of “Soviet military” and the Soviet gateway to the Arctic, which was actively promoted in Soviet times through a range of memorials is being reinforced in today by newly-built post-Soviet monuments, which have similar names and titles as the Soviet ones. This identity is well perceived by the locals, who call the city “cold” and “Northern” and acknowledge *Alyosha* and “For those who know how to wait” as the most important memorials in the city. Rostov-on-Don has a more complex identity pattern which is more aligned only along historical lines. In other words, the geographical and gender parts of the city’s identities are not present in the urban landscapes, neither in the form of memorial complexes, nor in monuments. The reasons for that may lie in the historical relationships between the central authorities and the northern and the southern peripheries. The monuments in Murmansk do not use the city’s name, but rather reference the Arctic and Northerners. Murmansk is objectified and perceived as a symbolic space for Russian Arctic, as an imagined “North”, while Rostov-on-Don just remains itself, not being a part of an imagined “South”.

The (re)establishment of national places of memory in symbolic cities provides evidence about

the continuities between past and present states and regimes. Further research of the memory complexes and their involvement in the identity construction on different scales is important to understand the formation of the identities and their influence on the perception of places by locals.

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С.А. ГАВРИЛОВА

ПРОИЗВОДСТВО ГОРОДСКИХ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЕЙ В МЕМОРИАЛЬНЫХ КОМПЛЕКСАХ МУРМАНСКА И РОСТОВА-НА-ДОНУ

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Статья посвящена исследованию механизма конструирования постсоветских идентичностей городов Мурманска и Ростова-на-Дону, расположенных, соответственно, на Севере и Юге Центральной России. Статья рассматривает создание городских идентичностей через анализ городских мемориальных комплексов и памятников и сравнивает их с восприятием местными жителями городов и отдельных мемориальных мест. Исследование производилось с помощью опросов местных жителей, а также с использованием методов гуманитарной географии. Мемориальные комплексы, выбранные для анализа, относятся и к Советскому, и к пост-Советскому времени, что позволяет проследить, воспроизводились ли советские традиции коммеморации в постсоветское время. В статье анализируются три взаимосвязанных нарратива — гендерный, исторический и географический, и деконструируются такие понятия как: Советский военный Север, его связь с маскулинной идентичностью, нарративами освоения и преодоления. Также в статье исследуется присутствие и отсутствие женских фигур в мемориальной культуре и их место в городском пространстве. Это исследование находится на стыке культурной и гуманитарной географии, исследований памяти и урбанистики и привносит теоретический и эмпирический вклад в академические дискуссии о политизации конструирования идентичности в современной России. Статья также исследует российской пост-советский рынок идентичностей, отношения власти и граждан в пост-Советских городах, наследие советской идеологии в городской среде, а также был ли произведен пересмотр советских исторических нарративов и трактовок исторических процессов. Полученные результаты позволяют понять механизм конструирования региональной идентичности в двух городах, и насколько созданные образы совпадают с их трактовкой местными жителями.

Ключевые слова: постсоветская идентичность; север; советская Арктика; города; память; гендер

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