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From Personal Identity to National Identity in the Mass Media

1. Identity through the place where we live

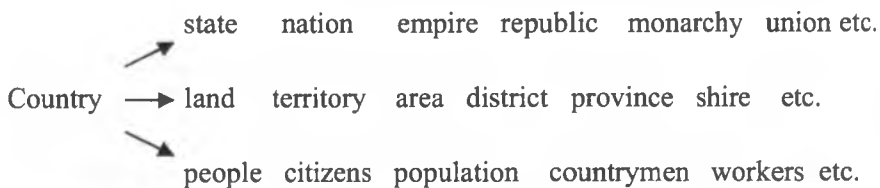
The present paper is devoted to the vast subject of mass media and its role in a person's self-identification, on the one hand, and the identification of a people as one global whole, on the other. Identification begins as it were with the place where people reside, with the name they take (or are given by other people), by the language they speak, and with the cultural habits they share. Thus, this is the logic we are going to observe. This subject is too vast to be properly covered 'in one gulp' if I may put it so. Let us begin with the identity of the place where we live.

Identity as a word of modern dictum is explained by the "Longman English Dictionary of Language and Culture" as follows:

- 1) who or what a particular person or thing is: The identity of the murdered woman has not yet been established.
- 2) sameness; exact likeness (Longman English Dictionary 1992, p. 655).

As we can see in the first meaning, the word corresponds to the Russian word *личность* 'person', while the second is left without any exemplification. However, the second one is of greater importance, because it corresponds to other very important words: *самоопределение* 'self-determination' and *национальное самоопределение* 'national self-determination'. In this philosophically relevant meaning, the word perhaps does not seem to correspond to everyday communication. If one lives in Russia, one still needs a passport with a photograph and a reference to the country to which you belong, and a place of birth and its date. If you are a foreign citizen, you need a driving license as a document of your identification or an identity card with your photograph, name, and signature to prove your identity. For the country to be identified, it needs a territory within the boundaries of

which it has been steadily growing and maturing, at least a supposed date of establishment (or first mention in the annals of world's history), the peoples inhabiting those territories, and the name they ascribe to their own sameness or likeness. To be able to pass this knowledge on to others, these people need their own language (primarily their own but can be partially shared with other peoples). To discuss the concept of identity, let us first turn to the words covering the subzones of the field:



Country is a neutral word used to denote an independent geographical area with its own government. From this point of view, Russia, Great Britain, and the USA are countries. All three have a well established external boundary; however, for a long time, both the Russian and the USA territory was in a *statu nascendi* or rather “*extendi*” horizontally, whereas for Great Britain, it was rather a question of “overseas” territories attached to the mainland as time went on.

State emphasises the political organisation of the area under an independent government – and from this standpoint, all three are also states. Presidential power is more than 200 years old in the USA, 10 years old in the Russian Federation, and the Constitutional monarchy has ruled in the Commonwealth since WW1 (according to the Oxford Encyclopaedia, since 1947 – in fact, from the time of India's independence). Country and State go hand in hand exemplifying a balance of stable and variable elements in one global whole for the people to survive throughout time. Modern history has seen the ‘one nation – one state’ idea or rather a *nation state* type of organisation when a country is considered especially in relation to its people and its social or economic structure. Ideally, Poland and Sweden can be said to represent this type. In fact, however, *one state – many territories* was a new reality of 16th century Russia, 18th century Britain, and 19th century Germany, France, and the USA. From what we know, the Commonwealth is a union of approximately 50 countries that were once part of the British Empire and which are

now connected politically and economically. Since 1917, Russia has been a federation of a number of national republics (национальных республик), national territories, and national districts (национальных автономий и округов). To be a federation or confederation was a question of great debate for many countries, the USA and Switzerland among them. In any case, it is always a question of the highest central or local authority in what concerns money, army, and foreign policies including trade, taxation, and defense.

Federation has been known in English since the 18th century, *federal* since the 17th century. The word goes back to Lat. *foedus, foeder* – ‘covenant’. *Confederate* means ‘leagued, allied’; and in Latin, it was an ecclesiastical term: (*con*)*foederatus* – cf. Russ. союзный ‘confederate’. In American history, the “Confederate States of America” (CSA, 11 in number) separated from the “United States” (USA) in 1860-1861 causing the Civil War.

There are many word combinations where a word such as *state* acquires specification: *police state, welfare state, democratic state, one-party state*, etc. *State* correlates with *estate* and Lat. *status* ‘condition’. The word combination *estate of the realm* dates back to the 14th century.

The *population* of a country can grow and change ethnically, numerically, and in many other ways. The word goes back to late Latin *populatio, populosis, (popularis)* and corresponds to those who inhabit a place: Russ. население. In English, the word *people* means ‘nation, race, or persons (collective)’ from the 13th century. When we say *nation*, we refer both to the country as a political unit (a more formal word than *state*) and to all the people in a country. Originally, *nation* meant ‘breed (stock)’ going back to Latin *nasci* – ‘be born, that which has been born, a breed’; then it extended to species and race and narrowed to ‘a race of people’. Thus, in this word, the idea of common ancestors survived. Its derivatives are *national* and *nationality* since the 17th century. And in the words *native, natal*, and *nature*, there is a strongly felt reference to the qualities with which we are born. The Russian words род ‘sib, clan’, рождение ‘birth’, прирожденный (талант) ‘born (talent)’, урожденная Гончарова ‘née Goncharova’ (about ancestors), природа ‘character, nature’, природный (такт) ‘innate’ (tact), Родина ‘homeland’, родители ‘parents’, порода, породистый (орловский рысак) ‘race,

breed (a thoroughbred trotter)', etc. demonstrate well the way the original root has been extending its meanings.

Whatever the social or political forms of self-organisation people prefer to make their own, it is the land that remains the most essential factor of people's life.

Thus, *territory* corresponds to *terra* 'land, ground, dry soil' and after all – 'country'. *Terra* is of Latin origin and has a reference to IE. **tersa* – 'dry', cf. with *thirst* and *torrid*. In Latin, *terra* means 'earth, land' and can be found in words like *inter*, *terrain*, *terrestrial*, *terrier*, *terrine*, and *terrace* and in *terracotta* ('cooked earth').

Land is from prehistoric Germanic **landam* – 'enclosed area', in Welsh *llan* means 'enclosure', cf. Breton *llan* – 'heath'; Fr. *lande* – 'heath, moor' (low, wet land), cf. with E. *lawn*.

Ground is of Germanic origin, found in Dutch 'bottom of the sea', cf. E. *to run aground* said about a ship when it cannot move because the water is not deep enough, **grunduy* possibly meant 'deep place'.

Soil has a number of meanings:

- 1) 'ground' from the Anglo-Norman period, 'land' from Lat. *solium* confused with *solum* ('seat' confused with 'ground');
- 2) make dirty via Fr. *souiller* (cf. Lat. *suculus* – 'piglet'), related to *sus* – 'pig (sow)'. French as well could give E. *sully* (as in: *a scandal that sullied his reputation*, where *sully* is a formal, literary word).

And now back to *country* – 'surroundings', it is borrowed from MLat. *contratus* – 'lying on the opposite side' (from preposition *contra* 'against') in a phrase *terra contrata*; in OFr. *cuntree* – 'area of land', later in English about a 'district occupied by a particular people' whence the meaning of "nation"; it also had a meaning of 'rural area' as opposed to the cities. This meaning developed not earlier than the 16th century; the compound noun *countryside* first appeared in Scotland around the 17th century.

In many poetic contexts, the word *earth* is commonly used. Its first meaning is 'planet on which human beings live, the 3rd planet from the sun'. Then it is 'the land surface of the world'; 'ground'; and

3) 'soil, dirt'. This word can be found in an idiomatic expression: *down to earth* when describing somebody or something – 'sensible, realistic'.

This word is of Anglo-Saxon origin: OE. *eorthe*, and comes ultimately from the Indo-European base **er-*. It corresponds to the prehistoric Germanic noun *ertho*, Swedish and Danish *jord*; it goes back to Gr. *eraze* 'on the ground' and Welsh *erw* 'field'. Perhaps it is possible to mention here the archaic Russian words: орать (пахать) 'to plough' and оратель (пахарь) 'ploughman'.

This word can be seen as the base for many derivatives: *earthen* ('made of earth or baked clay'); *earthenware* ('pottery made of coarse, porous baked clay'); *earthling* ('one who inhabits the earth'); *earthly* ('terrestrial, conceivable, possible'); *earthquake* ('a series of vibrations in the crust of the earth'); *earth science* (e.g., geology); *earth shaking* ('of fundamental importance'); *earthwork* ('about fortification'); *earthy* ('resembling earth or soil', 'crude, unrefined'). In Russian, we have a group of thematically related words: Земля как планета 'the Earth as a planet'; земная поверхность – земля как суша 'surface of the earth – dry land'; земные радости 'earthly joys', земляные работы и земляные укрепления 'tillage and tilled land', земельный надел и земледелец 'farm and farmer', землистый цвет лица 'earth-coloured (= pale) complexion', земля-матушка и мать-сыра земля, 'Old Mother Earth', щепотка родной земли 'a pinch of native soil (which you take along if you go away for ever)', бросить горсть земли 'to sprinkle some earth (into or on the grave)', земляника '(lit.: "earth berries") wild strawberries', etc.

In conclusion: The coexistence of so many synonyms in Modern English is historically bound; all words add something new to the idea of land obtained, owned, occupied or inhabited, enclosed, and arable. As a matter of fact, the opposition of land and sea (which is so vital for the British people) is well demonstrated in and through these words.

The British Isles, island, islet, peninsula, and cape are words that help us to appreciate the boundaries of the state, while *channel, bay, sea, ocean, current, stream, strait, harbour, backwater, creek, river, rivulet, and lake* help us to appreciate the importance of the water ways of the country.

Let us turn to William Wordsworth (1770-1850) who wrote:

I travell'd among unknown men,
 In Lands beyond the Sea;
 Nor, England! Did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.
 'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more
 Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire;
 And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
 Beside an English fire. (fr. Lucy)

If we now cast a glance at the titles of TV programmes in July (Moscow 2002), we realise all of the importance of the image created: Публичные люди 'People in Public', Народ против 'People Against ...', Криминальная Россия 'Criminal Russia', Российские тайны 'Russian Secrets', Вся Россия 'The Whole of Russia', Служу России 'I Serve Russia', Русское лото 'Russian Lottery', Русская рулетка 'Russian Roulette', Русский экстрим 'Russian Extreme', «Союз бывших». Украина «Alliance of the Bygones». Ukraine'. There is a clear cut opposition between new Russia and Russia of ex-USSR. Only one former slogan-title is propagandised: 'Military service of a man to his motherland'. All other ideas seem to be less positive – 'criminal Russia' or 'gambling Russia' – with people either for or against something (what in particular is left unidentified).

Other lands and other nations are often shown from a very peculiar standpoint: шопингом по Италии 'shopping through Italy' is not an invitation to a museum or fine arts gallery – it promises the cheapest way to trivial pleasures. The instrumental case of the recent borrowing шопинг 'shopping' sounds both aggressive and ironical (if you refer to a well known literary context: ударим автопробегом по бездорожью и разгильдяйству 'with the car-race we take action against disorder and dissoluteness').

2. The country and the countrymen

“Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”, is the Latin proverb showing us an example of ancient patriotism or nationalism. Patriotism – according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1997, p. 850) – is love of one's country and willingness to defend it: “an upsurge of patriotism” where *upsurge* is a word characterising a strong feeling either positive (enthusiasm) or negative (anger) (op. cit. p. 1314). Nationalism denotes a strong feeling of love and pride in one's own country, but in a combination with the word *upsurge* (“an upsurge of cultural patriotism”), it is specially marked as derogatory (op. cit. p. 772). In Russian патриотизм, патриот ‘patriotism, patriot’ correspond to Gr. *patris, patriotis* in the meaning of ‘любовь к Родине, преданность своему отечеству, своему народу; а также земляк, соотечественник’ (‘love to one's country, loyalty to one's fatherland, to one's nation, compatriot, compatriotship’). It also developed a word combination with the negative meaning – квасной патриотизм ‘flag-waving patriotism’ – to characterise narrow-minded people. We see that Russians are very sensitive to their land and kinship with the introduction of two equally important ideas of родина going back to the place of birth and Отечество related to the ancestry of a man, his roots as it were. The opposition of родина ‘homeland’ – чужбина ‘foreign land’ is always present in folk poetry and songs. Poltava was a very serious trial for the Russian army:

Распахана шведская пашня,
 Распахана солдатской белой грудью;
 Орана шведская пашня
 Солдатскими ногами;
 Боронена шведская пашня
 Солдатскими руками;
 Посеяна новая пашня
 Солдатскими головами;
 Поливана новая пашня
 Горячей солдатской кровью.

[Turned-over Swedish soil,
 turned over with the white breasts of the soldiers;
 Ploughed Swedish soil,
 ploughed with the legs of the soldiers;
 Tilled Swedish soil,
 tilled with the hands of the soldiers;

Sown new Swedish soil,
sown with the heads of the soldiers;
Watered new Swedish soil,
watered with the hot blood of the soldiers.]

(cf. Русское народное поэтическое творчество [Russian Poetic Folklore] 1978; p. 242)

This is how the true and patriotic love of the country is emotionally and metaphorically related to the fundamental and most essential process of tilling/ploughing and sowing. The land is watered by the soldier's hot blood, and as with seeds, this land is filled with the human heads, limbs, and bodies. The Crimea War "inspired" N. Nekrasov to write about the similar emotions of *poor weeping mothers* and the same metaphor of *fields of blood* is rhymed melodiously with *weeping willows*:

Одни я в мире подсмотрел
Святые, искренние слезы –
То слезы бедных матерей!
Им не забыть своих детей,
Погибших на кровавой ниве,
Как не поднять плакучей иве
Своих поникнувших ветвей... (1855 г.)

[In the whole world, only they did I watch carefully,
those sacred, sincere tears –
These are the tears of poor weeping mothers!
They will never forget their children
who fell on fields of blood,
like a weeping willow will never raise
its hanging twigs...] (1855)

Thus, нива, пашня, and земля ('wheat field', 'arable land', and 'earth') – are key words both in English and Russian. The "phraseology of earth" is very rich. V. Dal'¹ left us many samples of Russian wisdom, for example: Земля тарелка, что положишь, то и возьмешь ("Land is like a plate: as much you put there, as much you take from it"); без хозяина – земля круглая сирота ("without its master the land is like an orphan").

¹ Vladimir Dal' – a great Russian lexicographer and compiler of the Russian etymological dictionary of the 19th century.

The military experience is also well shown in some proverbial sayings: Кто с мечом к нам придет, тот от меча и погибнет ('The one who comes to Russia with a sword will perish from it', the famous saying of the Russian hero Alexander Nevski). The tendency towards union was strongly felt by the Russians: Новгород – отец, Киев – мать, Москва – сердце, Петербург – голова. ('Novgorod – the father, Kiev – the mother, Moscow – the heart, St.Petersburg – the head'.) Nowadays references to two capitals are just as common and popular among the journalists and TV announcers.

National pride and patriotic feelings are cultural universals. Let us turn to what Winston Churchill once said in his speech to the House of Commons on May 13, 1940, during the Second World War:

You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny [...]. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs – Victory in spite of all terrors – Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized. No survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for [...]. I feel entitled at this juncture, at this time, to claim the aid of all and to say, "Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength." (Churchill 1945a)

These lines were repeatedly cited not only in manuals on rhetoric but even in books for students of language and literature as an example of self identification rhetoric (McRae/Boardman 1995, p. 33).

And now to "The Great Nation of Futurity" as O'Sullivan paid respect to the feelings of those selected ones on American soil. What follows is a typical example of a publicistic style:

The far-reaching, the boundless future, will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ..., its floor shall be a hemisphere – its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation a Union of many Republics comprising hundreds of happy millions ... governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood – of "peace and good will amongst men". (Inge 1993, p. 8)

Now I would like to conclude this part of our talk on identity created in public for the public by reminding you of the speeches delivered on Victory Day

by three outstanding figures of the past: Stalin, Churchill, and Truman. I believe that the political rhetoric used even on that great occasion by all three makes them recognisable both as men and as political leaders. The speeches were reprinted in the Russian newspaper “ПРАВДА”, May 2002 (English texts taken from the website of the Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org):

1. Мы можем оплатить наш долг перед Богом, перед павшими и перед нашими детьми лишь трудом – беспрестанной преданностью тому делу, которое нам предстоит выполнить. ... (президент США Г. Трумэн). –

‘We can repay the debt which we owe to our God, to our dead, and to our children only by work – by ceaseless devotion to the responsibilities which lie ahead of us.’ (Truman 1945) – The American president speaks about the duty and responsibility of those living before the memory of those who perished and about the necessity of hard work and devotion to the cause of peace and freedom.

2. Мы можем разрешить себе краткий период ликования, но мы не должны ни на один момент забывать об ожидающих нас трудах и усилиях (премьер – министр Великобритании У. Черчилль).

‘We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the toils and efforts that lie ahead.’ (Churchill 1945b) – The prime-minister of Great Britain stresses the fact of a moment of glorious joy as opposed to all the hardships of the postwar period of hard labour and efforts ...

3. Великие жертвы, принесенные нами во имя свободы и независимости нашей Родины, неисчислимые лишения и страдания, пережитые нашим народом в ходе войны, напряженный труд в тылу и на фронте, отданный на алтарь отечества, – не прошли даром и увенчались полной победой над врагом. ... (И. В. Сталин).

‘The great sacrifices we have made in the name of freedom and our defense of our Motherland, the incalculable privations and sufferings experienced by our people in the course of the war, the strained work in the rear and at the front – placed on the altar of the Motherland – have not been in vain and have been crowned by complete victory over the enemy.’ (Stalin 1945) – The Soviet leader mentions the suffering of people and their sacrifices, hard work at the front and in the factories in the depth of Russia. He also emphasises the importance of victory and uses pathetically and emotionally coloured words – *altar, motherland*.

Thus, the materials presented above show the context in which the outstanding politicians and public speakers used references to the key words of

our paper: *country, people, and state*. At the same time, there was one more word repeatedly used by all of them – *labour* and its synonyms *work, effort*.

TV programmes and newspapers of June/July 2002 are more leisure time-oriented, and as a result, the most popular person today is a detective: комиссар Рекс ('Detective Superintendent Rex', a German TV series starring a police dog), инспектор Деррик ('Inspector Derrick', also a very popular German 'export article'), детектив Нэш Бриджес ('Detective Nash Bridges', an American TV hero), комиссар Мулен ('Commissaire Moulin', a French TV series) – these are the names that are cultural symbols of our time against the background of the legendary Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot. As to *land* so much loved by the Russians in the past, it is now the item of parliamentary debate and social concern: When and how much will every one pay for the 'dacha' land or for the land beneath the multistoried building where you own your flat, etc.? Mass media people are not in the mood to make the picture more pleasant than it really is: The topical programmes keep people both interested and involved in the problems of everyday life – money, living conditions, etc. Even the cursory view of popular themes in the mass media of today, if put into a much broader historical and cultural context, can be concluded by one more observation: The patriotic (military) theme is still supported by a number of references in people's memory and emotions, for example полевая почта (ТВЦ) – 'the soldier's mail', служу России – 'Russia! I am at your service.'

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