

правилом наближення інтересів – використовуючи географічне наближення, хронологічне наближення, наближення за специфічними інтересами та емоційне наближення.

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-393-4-39>

PHOTOJOURNALISM IN CONDITIONS OF WAR: VISUALIZATION OF MEMORY

ФОТОЖУРНАЛІСТИКА В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ: ВІЗУАЛІЗАЦІЯ ПАМ'ЯТІ

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The notion of public memory reveals the complexity of the processes of accumulating, preserving, and reproducing information about the past, which is crucial for self-identifying visions. Public memory is formed through a combination of cultural and communicative memory, their time modes, and their impact on the community as a whole.

First of all, it is worth considering the role of cultural (according to M. Halbwachs) and communicative memory (according to J. Assman). Cultural memory reflects the accumulated collective experience symbolized in cultural customs, rituals, myths and history. It is the basis for the formation of a common identity and provides a link between the past, present and future. Communicative memory, on the other hand, is a history that is depicted within

autobiographical memory in the recent past. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention the concept of «collective memory.» This form of memory exists between members of a community or group and arises through collective experience, traditions, history, and other cultural aspects at the same time. Collective memory indicates the memories of individuals and is a collective awareness of certain events that are important for a particular social group. Such form of memory can be embodied in various cultural forms (symbols, memorable events, myths) that hold a social group together and have an impact on the formation of identity and consciousness. Thus, it acts as a way of storing and transmitting experience, knowledge, and values and plays an important role in shaping collective cultural identity.

Furthermore, it is important to take into account the time modes of collective memory. These modes differ both in the intensity of the emotional experience during recollection and in the manner in which past events are further culturally symbolized. They can take the form of various commemorative rituals, holidays, or symbols that are reflected in the culture of the community.

The communicative nature of collective memory affects the formation and recording of memories not only of individuals but also of the entire community. Memory acts as a function that involves an individual in social groups, and it actively lives and is preserved in the process of communication. Thus, the interaction between individual and collective memory forms the basis for a common identity and ensures the continuation and development of the cultural and historical heritage of the community. «The events of the past appear for descendants, besides a pragmatic set of factual data, in the categories of «sublime,» «heroic,» or «ugly» and «tragic.» [4, p 72]

We are currently living in the era of visual culture, which, to a certain extent shapes the memory of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, volunteers, and civilians (living in the «hot spots») are direct witnesses of the war. Also, the majority of the Ukrainian population is witnessing and being affected by Russian shelling of civilian targets throughout the country.

However, not all of Ukraine's civilian population saw scenes of the Ukrainian Armed Forces fighting against the Russian army, and not everyone witnessed the battles for Kyiv, Mariupol, Bakhmut, etc. The civilian population of the country perceives and remembers the war directly through the media, including photojournalism. Citizens follow the news from the frontline on social media (Instagram, Telegram); there are daily reports from many military brigades, and various war-related projects, articles in Ukrainian and foreign publications are published, accompanied by military photographs that demonstrate certain situations and realities of the war. The photographs

help to imprint in the memory of the civilian population the terrorist acts committed by the Russian military against Ukrainian citizens.

According to the German historian J. Assmann, it is this experience of «living memory» that is the context of «communicative memory.» Next to it, there is «cultural memory,» which is the most persuasive experience of the past that is passed down from generation to generation and expressed in unusual forms. «It is a stock of information stored for appropriate use, a symbolic form of transmission and actualization of cultural meanings that go beyond the experience of an individual or group.» [2, p. 45] Obviously, it should be noted that photojournalism shapes the memory of the war for foreign communities, not just the Ukrainian one. Broadcasting the events taking place in Ukraine is important to combat Russian propaganda.

By covering the lives of Ukrainians and their powerful resistance to the occupier, Ukrainian photojournalists are destroying the Russian narrative of a «special military operation» launched to liberate the Russian-speaking population from the neo-Nazi government. Photojournalism contributes to the formation of a holistic picture of the scale of Russian aggression and Ukrainian response.

«In recent years, the power of the image has been taking precedence over the power of the word. For most media, the need for visualization of human activity is the main factor of communication. The use of visual factors in the media has formed the phenomenon of photojournalism. The peculiarity of photojournalism is the ability to use verbalization for visual perception by the audience. Photojournalism is represented in various journalistic fields: in periodicals, in the print press... There are two main functions of photojournalism: representative and expressive. The first helps to fulfill a visual function that helps to reflect reality. The second serves to create an image as a communicative tool.» [1, p. 542]

Reportage photography in wartime acts first and foremost as news, and then it can serve as a document of a specific period and then as a historical fact.

At the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, photographers Konstantin and Vladislava Liberov re-qualified from wedding photographers to war reporters. They go to the frontline to the «hot spots» to capture people and images, thus conveying the history and atmosphere of what is happening there. They record the everyday life of soldiers, their military work, the destruction of cities and the lives of civilians, and photograph humanitarian missions (the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station by Russians). Most of their photographs are about people; most often, they take close-ups of soldiers on the frontline and take their portraits.

Photojournalist Yevhen Malolietka won one of the most prestigious photo contests, World Press Photo. He won with the photo «Airstrike at a maternity hospital in Mariupol.» This was reported on the World Press Photo website

on April 20, 2023. «This story depicts the reality of the Russian attacks on Mariupol in a direct way, without indulging in tragedy and other visual possibilities. The story is full of rare and historic images from different angles at a ground level, packaged and edited flawlessly to communicate the civilian toll of war. Each image left a mark on the jury. They were struck by how the Ukrainian photographer risked his life to access visuals of Russian combatants and make these images available to the world. This story will rise as a collection of haunting iconic images of the ongoing war» [5].

Therefore, photojournalism plays an important role in shaping the collective memory of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Photographs reflect the reality of the war, showing the lives of soldiers on the frontline, the destruction of cities, and the humanitarian disasters caused by Russian aggression. These images serve not only as news but also become historical documents that record important stages of the war committed against civilians and the Ukrainian military. The information transmitted through photojournalism becomes part of the «communicative memory» that lives on and is preserved in communication and forms the basis for further understanding and interpretation of the events taking place in Ukraine.

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