

## Memorial heritage and social memory of youth of Eurasian integration countries

### Patrimonio conmemorativo y memoria social de la juventud de los países de integración euroasiática

**Galina Ivanovna Osadchaya** 

Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2597-9724>

**Egor Yurievich Kireev** 

Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5441-0430>

**Marina Lvovna Vartanova** 

Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9853-5817>

**Igor Aleksandrovich Seleznev** 

Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2862-9444>

**Anna Andreevna Chernikova** 

Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia.  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8125-7566>

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#### \*Correspondence

Email: [osadchaya111@gmail.com](mailto:osadchaya111@gmail.com)

## Summary

Based on the results of a sociological study, the article attempts a narrative explication of the attitudes of young people in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Russia toward their shared memorial heritage in the context of the permanent reinterpretation of the Soviet past in the former Soviet republics which appears important in the context of the ongoing search for new forms of economic and political integration in the Eurasian space. The study allows providing a characteristic of the place of the Soviet memorial heritage, especially that dedicated to the participation of the USSR in World War II, in the social memory of young people as a unifying factor of millennial and post-millennial generations of the former Soviet republics – participants in Eurasian integration which can contribute to the successful implementation of integration projects in the post-Soviet space. The post-memory generation is generally in favor of preserving the Soviet toponymic names of city streets and squares but young people in countries with a greater degree of linguistic and ethnocultural differences support renaming practices more often. At the same time, the authors note the ambivalence of young people's attitudes towards the future of memorialization policies in their countries which preserves the possibility of potential revision and reconsideration of the Soviet past in the future.

**Key Words:** memorial heritage, social memory, Eurasian integration, youth, USSR.

## Resumen

Basado en los resultados de un estudio sociológico, el artículo intenta una explicación narrativa de las actitudes de los jóvenes en Armenia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán, Kirguistán, Moldavia, Tayikistán y Rusia hacia su patrimonio conmemorativo compartido en el contexto de la reinterpretación permanente del Pasado soviético en las ex repúblicas soviéticas que parece importante en el contexto de la búsqueda en curso de nuevas formas de integración económica y política en el espacio euroasiático. El estudio permite aportar una característica del lugar del patrimonio memorial soviético, especialmente el dedicado a la participación de la URSS en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, en la memoria social de los jóvenes como factor unificador de las generaciones millennial y postmillennial de la primera. Repúblicas soviéticas: participantes en la integración euroasiática que pueden contribuir a la implementación exitosa de proyectos de integración en el espacio postsoviético. La generación posterior a la memoria está generalmente a favor de preservar los nombres toponímicos soviéticos de las calles y plazas de las ciudades, pero los jóvenes de países con un mayor grado de diferencias lingüísticas y etnoculturales apoyan con mayor frecuencia las prácticas de cambio de nombre. Al mismo tiempo, los autores señalan la ambivalencia de las actitudes de los jóvenes hacia el futuro de las políticas de conmemoración en sus países, lo que preserva la posibilidad de una posible revisión y reconsideración del pasado soviético en el futuro.

**Palabras clave:** patrimonio conmemorativo, memoria social, integración euroasiática, juventud, URSS.

## Introducción

The past is subject to constant reconsideration and reinterpretation. The fixation of its specific states typically takes place in memorial complexes and monuments reflecting given historical periods and/or marking certain social relations. Monuments of the past allow tracing back the history of the state while modern monuments demonstrate its current state and ideology. In this sense, monuments always become an object of controversy, scientific debate, and wide discussion, and monuments, along with other symbols, are among the first to be subjected to revision when the socio-political course is changed. At the same time, the discussion around monuments can take place in both the cultural-historical and political dimensions. It is worth noting that memorial sites and memorial complexes often serve as a way of constructing the nation.

The historical legacy of previous eras reflected in monuments, memorials, museums, toponymic names of city streets and squares, as well as celebrations in several countries become an object of wide and often polemical discussion even nowadays. For example, in the United States which set the tone for these debates, there are calls to rethink the past, to revise and reassess the activities of key historical figures which often transfer to monuments that are subject to street vandalism or are demolished and moved by the decision of the authorities (Diaz et al., 2020).

Having a complex and contradictory history, Russia has a rich memorial heritage that can serve as a source of integration and unification or, on the contrary, contribute to disunity. This, in particular, is evidenced by the results of public opinion surveys of different years (Pamiatnik Dzerzhinskomu i Kniaziu Vladimiru, 2015; Pamiatniki Leninu obreli vsenarodnuiu podderzhku, 2017).

This contradiction seems relevant and can be explicated to the countries of the former Soviet Union that share common historical memory with Russia but are characterized by different perceptions of it. Several post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine now consistently follow the path of rejecting the memorial and symbolic significance of the Soviet past (Krinko, Hlynina, 2015; Gaidai, Liubarets, 2016; Plekhanov, 2018). In the established conditions, this heritage can have an impact on the social and economic integration of these countries in the Eurasian space. In this regard, it seems relevant to try to comprehend the attitude to the places of memory of the youth of the post-Soviet countries participating in Eurasian integration. Our study hypothesizes that the common memorial heritage of the Eurasian integration countries presents a consolidating resource that unites the social memory of young people and can contribute to the success of integration in the Eurasian Economic Union.

## Methods

The empirical object of the study is young citizens of post-Soviet states oriented towards economic integration – Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Moldova, and Tajikistan.

We analyze the social memory of the Millennial and post-Millennial generations as post-memory (Hirsch, 2012) since by the time of the collapse of the USSR the oldest of them were no more than 6 years old and they relied on the stories of people close to them such as parents, teachers, the forms of visual representation of what happened, and their own imagination in constructing a picture of events that occurred before their birth or during their early childhood.

By memorial heritage we mean the places of memory, museums, monuments, names of streets and squares, and memorial complexes associated in the social memory of the younger generation with the historical past of their countries.

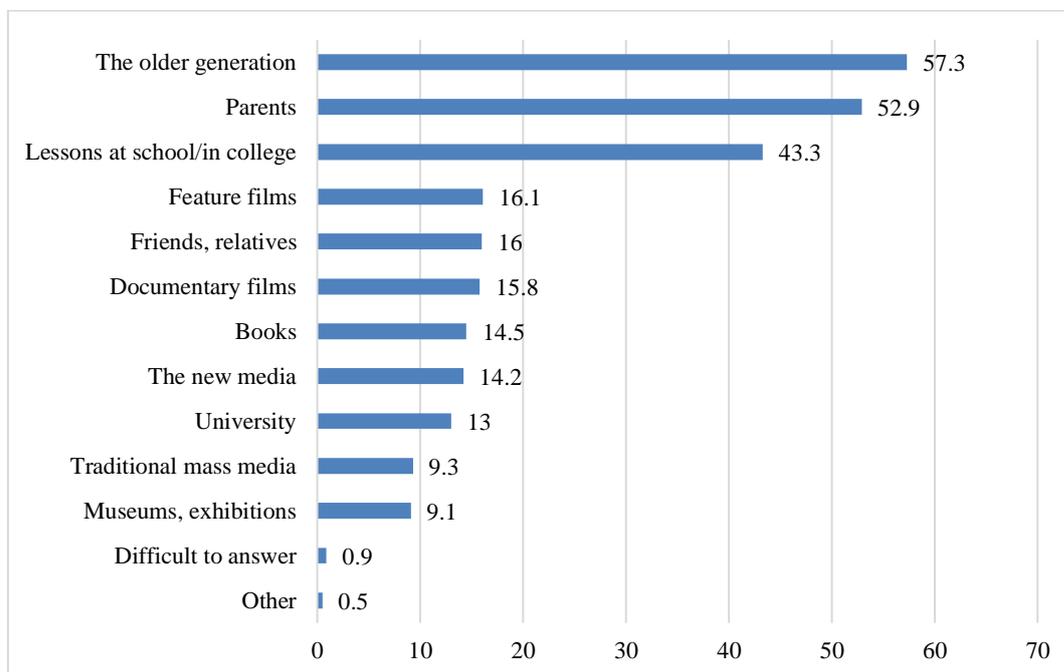
The model of sociological analysis of social memory is based on the following methodical strategy: 1. A questionnaire survey of young citizens of EEU member states and candidates for EEU membership (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Moldova, Tajikistan) who live, study, or work in Moscow aimed at assessing the state of social memory of young people in the EEU member states. 2,949 respondents were questioned (Armenia – 412 people, Belarus – 442 people, Kazakhstan – 405 people, Kyrgyzstan – 401 people, Moldova – 409 people, Russia – 478 people, Tajikistan – 402 people). 2. In-depth interviews. 350 informants were interviewed, 50 informants from each group. The study used non-random sampling. Respondents and informants were selected by snowball method according to the characteristics of age (18-38 years old) and citizenship.

## Results

Opinion polls in Russia show that monuments are frequently visited by the population, especially the monuments dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. For example, according to VTsIOM data, a

third of the population does so several times a year or at least once a year (Den pamyati i skorbi, 2020). Nevertheless, the question of the importance of monuments and memorial complexes as a source of information about the events of the past is controversial.

As our survey shows, only 9.1% of the respondents perceive memorials in this way.



**Figure 1.** From what source(s) do you primarily receive or did receive information about your country's Soviet past? (it is possible to choose no more than 3 answer options) (in % of the respondents)

Our informants reported visiting the objects of memorial heritage such as historical museums and memorial complexes rather infrequently despite their continued interest in national history as well as Russian history. Informants were generally more interested in art museums and exhibitions. At the same time, the main historical memorial complexes of their countries tended to be visited by post-Soviet youth as part of the school program and most of these complexes also refer to the participation and role of the USSR in World War II.

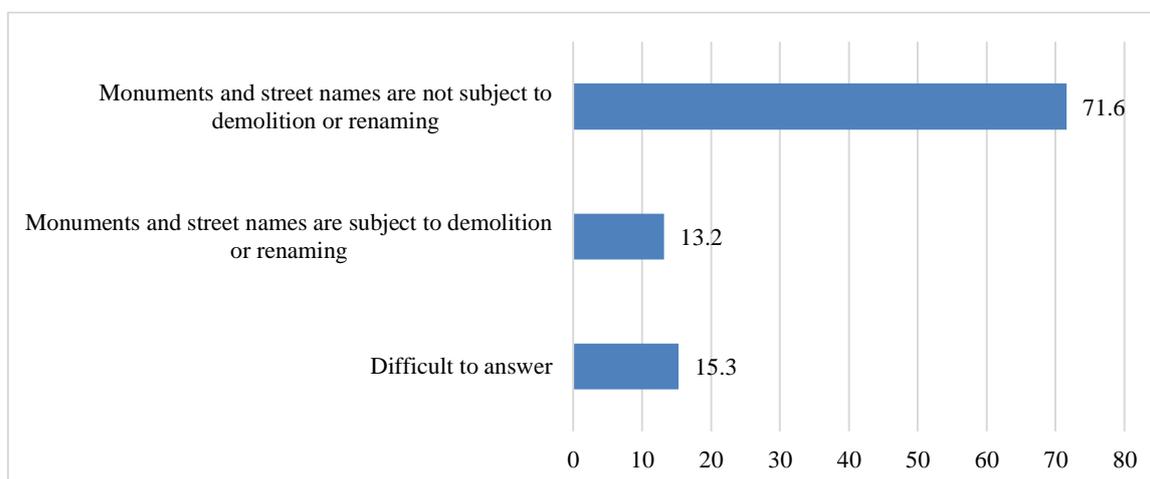
*"I visited museums and memorial complexes in Moldova more than once. Here I have been to the Eternity Memorial Complex and "To the Sons of the Motherland – Eternal Memory". Both of these monuments mean a lot to the entire Moldovan nation. Probably every resident of Moldova has been there. Well, equally significant events for Moldova and Russia are the Second World War and the Collapse of the USSR".* (Alina, Moldovan citizen, 34 years old, working).

*"When I lived in Belarus, yes, I visited. First of all, the Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War, also the Museum of the National Book, the Mound of Glory, the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, and the state complex Khatyn.* (Iulia, Belarusian citizen, 20 years old, student).

*"When I studied at school, we always regularly visited different museums in Kazakhstan. In Russia, I have never been to a museum. Equally important events for Russia and Kazakhstan are, of course, the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War"* (Valeria, citizen of Kazakhstan, 19 years old, student).

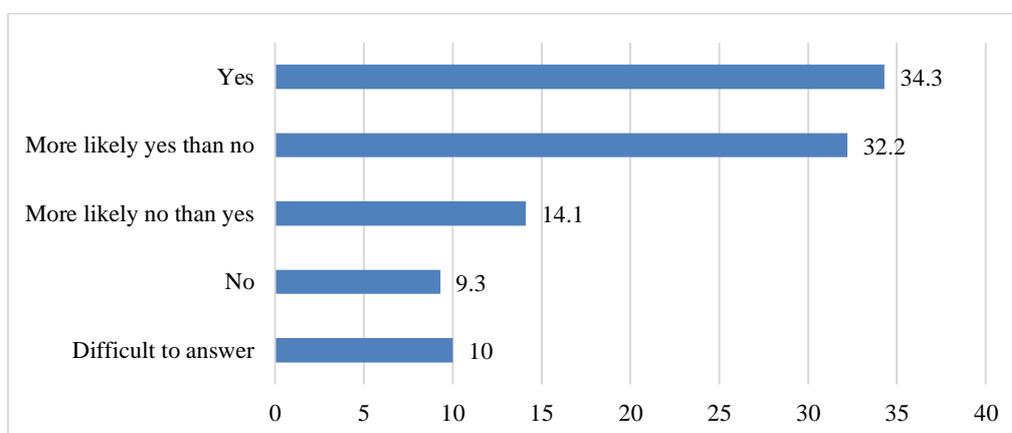
At the same time, monuments and memorial complexes have a profound symbolic meaning. A number of researchers rightly point out that in monuments, the former values gain

strength and new ones emerge changing the stability of the axiological landscape, and the meaning of monuments and memorial complexes is subject to re-interpretation in terms of symbolic meaning (Suvorov, 2017). It is the symbolic aspects that lead to the question of the advisability of preserving memorial heritage sites or radically abandoning them. Our study allows us to state that within the Eurasian Economic Union, a consensus view of the Soviet memorial heritage has developed among the Millennial and post-Millennial generation which is demonstrated by most respondents (71.6%) agreeing with the statement that monuments and street names should not be demolished or renamed but remain unchanged in memory of the Soviet past.



**Figure 2.** In your opinion, should Soviet monuments (as well as street names) remain on the streets of your country's cities in memory of the Soviet past, or should they be demolished or renamed? (in % of the respondents)

It is also important to note that although the participants in Eurasian integration are now sovereign states, the memory of common Soviet past is reflected in the continuing declarative support of young people for the installation of monuments to a prominent Russian or Soviet figure in their countries which, on the one hand, emphasizes a generally positive attitude towards common history, as well as the preservation of a common orientation toward Russia as the political and cultural center of Eurasian integration in the post-Soviet space. 66.7% of the respondents would support the installation of a monument to a prominent Russian (Soviet) figure (poet, writer, politician) in their country (answers "Yes" and "More likely yes"). On the other hand, about ¼ of the younger generation of the Eurasian integration countries (23.6%; answers "More likely no" and "No") are not ready to accept such a possibility and are not ready to support their installation which prevents us from concluding on an unambiguously positive attitude to these potential initiatives.



**Figure 3.** Would you support the installation of a monument (name of a street or a square in honor of) a prominent Russian (Soviet) figure (poet, writer, politician) in your country today? (in % of the respondents)

Cross-country specificity is most evident in the answers of informants regarding the importance of certain monuments/names of streets and squares for their countries today. For example, some answers of informants from Moldova show traces of common history with Russia starting from the times of the Russian Empire (Alexander Vasilievich Suvorov) through the Soviet period (monument to the Komsomol Heroes) to the sovereign post-Soviet history referring to the national struggle for independence (Stephen III the Great):

*“Of those I know, the monument to the great Russian commander Alexander Vasilievich Suvorov erected on the main square of Tiraspol in 1979; the monument to the victims of the Jewish ghetto; the memorial complex to the soldiers who fell in the Afghan war; the monument to the Komsomol Heroes; Stefan cel Mare Boulevard”* (Tatiana, 18 years old, Moldova).

Young Armenian citizens, in addition to the Soviet era, point to monuments referring to prominent national figures of art, as well as to urban toponymic names in honor of countries with a large Armenian diaspora and a friendly policy toward Armenia:

*“There is the street of Tumanian, this is a famous Armenian poet and writer. His monument is next to the opera house. There is France Square, since France is a friendly country, it recognized the Armenian genocide early enough. There are streets named after great Armenian artists. They are the composer Khachaturian, the writer Tumanian. There are streets named in honor of Baghramian. Well, that is, quite a lot. I think Soviet monuments should remain because it is history, it is culture <...> and tearing down monuments is the last thing a person who loves their country should do.”* (Ashot, Armenian citizen, 22 years old, working).

In the content of the social memory of the Millennial and post-Millennial generation of Kazakhstan, the Soviet memorial heritage is intertwined with the current perception of the sometimes contradictory attempts to build the ideology of the newly independent state through recycling the memorial corpus that partially formed already in the post-Soviet period which can often cause misunderstanding and irritation among the younger generation. It should be noted that Kazakhstan has an updated “State List of Monuments of History and Culture of Republican Significance” that reevaluates the Soviet memorial heritage and suggests that monuments to Lenin and Soviet party figures in the cities of Kazakhstan should be stripped of their republican status (Order № 88 of the Minister of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, April 14, 2020).

Overall, the social memory of young people in Kazakhstan regarding the memorial heritage shows attempts at combining the desire to preserve the memory of Kazakh statesmen of the Russian Empire (*Chokan Valikhanov*) and the Soviet period (*Amangeldy Imanov, S.D. Luganskii*) with the ongoing search for a new post-Soviet identity (*Abay Kunanbaev*) which is generally a common ground for the youth of Kazakhstan and Moldova in terms of attempts to understand the national memorial heritage through the prism of shared history with Russia.

*“I believe that street names and monuments in Kazakhstan do not let us forget about our heroes. It seems to me that a person's national identity is important. Recently most of our cities renamed streets and avenues in honor of our first president who left office this year. It caused a lot of absurdity for the country because they renamed the streets of our heroes.”* (Valeria, 19, citizen of Kazakhstan, student)

*“I was born in Astana and have lived there all my life. Except for the last few years. We have symbols of the city. Astana did such a stupid thing, they just renamed the city, I do not even want to say the name, I just have such a rejection. I protest against all this.”* (Victor, citizen of Kazakhstan, 25 years old, student)

*“First of all, monuments to me are history and a reason to think about the meaning that a single person can have. There are many different monuments in Kazakhstan, even a list was approved. There is a bust of twice hero of the USSR Sergei Danilovich Luganskii, then the monuments to Abai Kunanbaev, Chokan Valikhanov, and Amangeldy Imanov”.* (Vlad, a citizen of Kazakhstan, 21 years old, student)

Kyrgyzstan also went through a phase of renaming city and street names in the post-Soviet period, however, knowledge of the Russian language and participation in the EAEU allows the positive attitude of Kyrgyz youth to the Soviet memorial heritage to be maintained. The responses of informants show a combination of memories of the Soviet past and memorials dedicated to important events in the country’s post-Soviet history also characteristic of youth from Kazakhstan.

*“Almost all cities and streets were renamed after the Soviet Union collapsed, while now it’s Bishkek, it used to be Frunze, in Soviet times. Everything has been renamed and now I can’t even remember some streets. If we talk about monuments, almost every city has a monument to the Great Patriotic War. The older population of Kyrgyzstan has great respect but the younger people are already forgetting”.* (Altynai, Kyrgyz citizen, 25 years old, working)

*“In my opinion, an important monument in Kyrgyzstan is the Monument to those who died for freedom. The monument to the victims of the April 2010 events. Also the monument to Lenin, the monument to Yuri Gagarin”.* (Zarina, Kyrgyz citizen, 26 years old, working)

*“In our country, of course, now both Soviet monuments are important, and new monuments have appeared that identify specifically Kyrgyzstan, and they are also very important. If you remember, for example, the main street remains the Soviet street for many. Of course, it was given a Kyrgyz name but people still use the name Sovetskaia. The square where we have the eternal flame is also a very popular place, it’s beautiful, the square is iconic. But of the new squares, it’s the Independence Square, the monument to Manas, the monument dedicated to the repression of Ata-Beyit, our intellectuals who were killed in the 30s.”* (Nazgul, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan, 36 years old, working)

In contrast, answers questioning the need to preserve Soviet monuments and the names of squares and city streets are more common among the younger generation of Tajikistan. It is worth noting that in accordance with the Law on the State Language, the renaming of streets, parks, and urban and rural settlements is being actively pursued in modern Tajikistan and the need to install monuments to Turkic and Persian poets and statesmen is being discussed (V Dushanbe pereimenovali riad ulits, 2018) The responses of young citizens of Tajikistan often include detailed descriptions of the most memorial monuments important to the national culture and national consciousness:

*“The most important for my country and Russia today are the monuments of architecture. Soviet monuments, in my opinion, should be renamed. I might support the installation of a new monument but I believe that they should be installed in honor of the country’s national heroes and cultural figures in the first place.”* (Sarkhat, citizen of Tajikistan, 32 years old, working)

*“In Tajikistan, of the Soviet monuments, there are only those of Lenin. There are Titov Street, Shevchenko Street. Now we have started to change the names of streets to those of our figures. That’s why I can’t remember. I haven’t been there for a long time. We have a monument to Ismail Samani in the center of the city. He’s considered to be the first king who united all Persian states.”* (Dzhamshut, a citizen of Tajikistan, 19 years old, student).

*“The main square of the capital on which stands a monument to the founder of the Tajik state, Ismoili Somoni. The monument to the great writer and poet Rudak, who was also the founder of Persian and Tajik literature.”* (Anakhita, a 19-year-old citizen of Tajikistan, a student)

Russian youth generally favor preserving the memory of the Soviet past expressed primarily in the perpetuation of the memory of the Great Patriotic War, although the informants' responses contain statements in favor of a certain revision of monuments that have lost their ideological significance, particularly monuments to V.I. Lenin. Also important to Russian millennials and post-millennials is the urban and regional identity of monuments emphasizing the contribution of their city or region to the country's history including through the activities of prominent personalities from these territories. Informants note that although many monuments and names of streets, squares, and cities have already lost their former ideological meaning, they should be preserved as a reminder of the Soviet historical period in the history of the country.

*"I believe that all the names that now exist in our country, they are all important, they all reflect different periods of our history"* (Valeria, Russian citizen, 38 years old, working)

*"I believe that the most important monuments at the moment are the ones that have been erected to the leaders of the war effort. For example, almost every major city in Russia has a monument to Zhukov, who made an indefatigable contribution to the victory in the war. Naturally, these are Lenin and Engels streets - these streets exist in absolutely every city. The names of the streets should remain in the memory of the Soviet past, although their names are not as important as they were named before. Monuments should not be torn down, they should remain in the memory of the faces of that time. For example, in many cities there is a monument to the Unknown Soldier, even in my home town (Iukhnov), there is such a monument, which is approached and worshipped by probably all the inhabitants of this city and it has a huge role."* (Tatiana, citizen of Russia, 34 years old, working)

*"Immediately Lenin Street comes to mind, it is in almost every settlement in our country. In my opinion, some monuments can be removed as they have lost their relevance. For example, monuments to Lenin. And some, on the contrary, should remain forever, such as the monument to Gagarin because the first flight into space can be only once. The Obelisk "To the Hero-City of Leningrad" is very important for our country as it emphasizes the importance and role of St. Petersburg in the victory over Nazi Germany."* (Iliia, Russian citizen, 31 years old, working)

Memorial representations most similar to those observed in Russian youth are common among the citizens of Belarus who largely rely on the history of the USSR. Discussing the historical monuments the most important for them, most informants mention memorials dedicated to the events of the Great Patriotic War. These include the Brest Fortress and Khatyn memorials, the Victory Monument in Minsk, the Holocaust victims' memorial "Yama", and the Dalva memorial complex. Representatives of Belarussian youth generally support the idea of preserving the names of streets and monuments from the Soviet period.

*"I can't imagine my country Belarus and the city of Minsk without Victory Square. The square is very beautiful and memorable. I'd also like to mention the memorial to military glory "Ludchitskaia Vysota". Soviet monuments should remain on the streets of cities to commemorate the Soviet past and under no circumstances should they be demolished or renamed as we should respect the history of the Soviet Union. I am for monuments, I am for history"*. (Svetlana, citizen of Belarus, 37 years old, working)

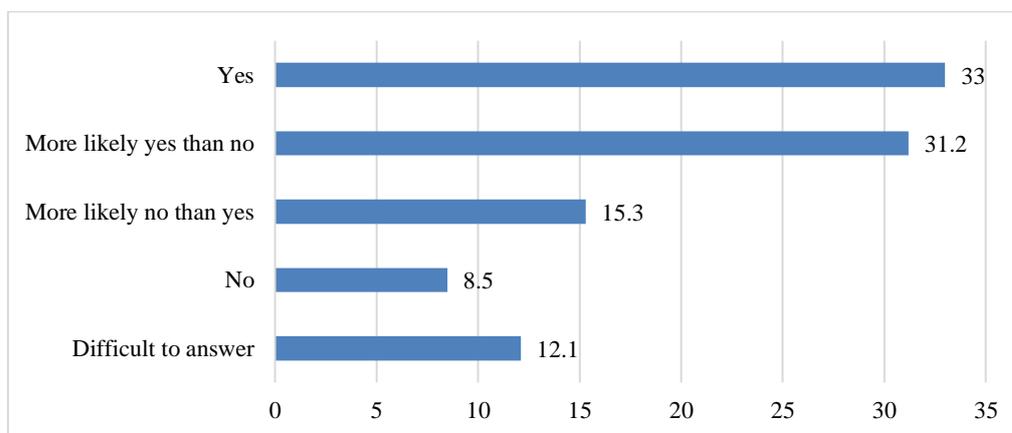
*"There are many monuments in our country dedicated to the soldiers who died in World War II. I believe that monuments and street names should be preserved in the cities of our country as it is a part of history."* (Kristina, citizen of Belarus, 27 years old, student)

*"In my opinion, any memory of the Soviet era whether it's a street name or a monument should be there anyway. It's a part of our history, and I don't understand how a part of history can be forgotten and crossed out."* (Ira, citizen of Belarus, 18 years old, student)

As we can see, commemorative practices are closely intertwined with the perception of the heroic in the minds of the post-Soviet memory generation and are constructed around statesmen, generals, poets, and writers of the pre-Soviet period, the return to the perpetuation of their memory is perceived as an element of the construction of a new civil and national identity of independent nation-states (Mokhov, 2011); monuments and toponymic names of the Soviet period including a separate layer of memorial heritage dedicated to the Second World War; new monuments and names that often present a reference to the past in an attempt to find support for the construction of an independent future in the logic of post-memory.

It should be noted that in their perception of the heroic, our informants rather demonstrate the preserving orientation on the common history of the Russian Empire, USSR, and modern Russia with the share of national elements being insignificant. Oftentimes, not only Soviet (Iuri Gagarin) but also historical (A. Suvorov, M. Lomonosov, A. Pushkin, A. Zhukov) and modern (V. Putin) Russian representatives are considered as heroes. When it comes to national heroes, informants refer to historical and cultural figures of their countries in different years – Stefan III the Great (Moldova), Nusratullo Makhsun, Mirzo Tursunzoda, Bobochon Gafurov, Sadridin Aini, Shirinshokh Shokhtemur (Tajikistan), Ovanes Tumanian (Armenia).

Thus, the discursive field around monuments erected in Eurasian integration countries is currently outlined by the discussion around the dichotomy of the national/soviet (Russian) and heroic. When deciding whether or not to erect a monument, representatives of the Millennial and post-Millennial generations believe that priority should be given to the national heroes of their countries (64.2%; “Yes” and “More likely yes” answers). The proportion of those who do not share this viewpoint and see no difference in the nationality and citizenship of people worthy of monumental immortalization is 23.8% (“No” and “More likely no” answers).



**Figure 4.** Do you agree with the statement that monuments should be erected first of all to the national heroes of your country? (in % of the respondents)

The question of who presents a national hero nowadays and, more broadly, the question of general perceptions of the heroic among millennials and post-millennials in the Eurasian integration countries, does not have an unequivocal answer at the moment and is rather ambivalent in nature. Among those primarily worthy of immortalization are war heroes and veterans (38.1%), as well as artists and cultural figures (21.3%). It is noteworthy that 16.6% of the respondents believe that no one deserves a monument today and another 15.7% of the youth of the Eurasian integration states found it difficult to answer this question which also emphasizes the observation that the image of the hero and the heroic in the views of contemporary youth in the Eurasian space is unformed. Especially noteworthy is the fairly low level of perception of contemporary politicians and political figures which manifests in only 5.3% of the study participants being willing to recognize them as heroes worthy of a monument.

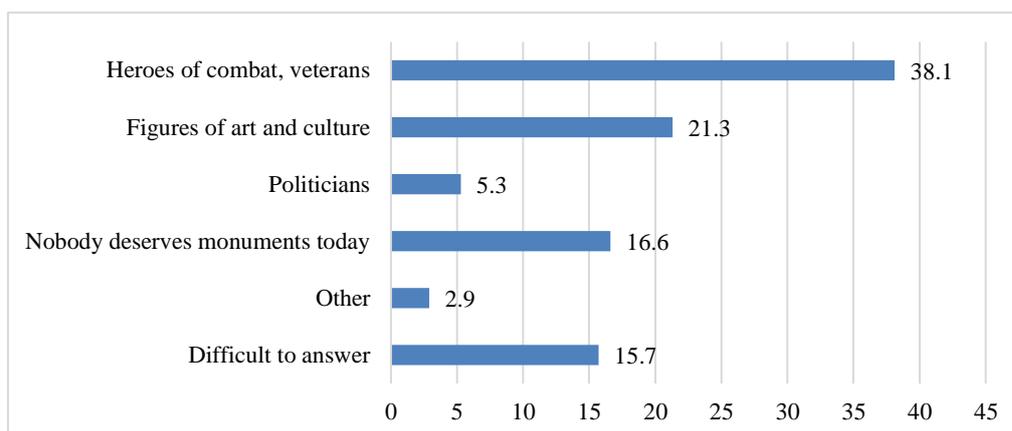


Figure 5. Who, in your opinion, is more deserving of monuments today? (in % of the respondents)

Such distributions receive confirmation in the detailed statements of the informants:

*“I may not keep track of everything nowadays but I don’t know anyone I could count as a hero today. A hero is a leader. An honest leader. I consider every man who went to war, whatever his thoughts, a hero because he defended his home, his homeland. It seems to me that every such person is considered a hero, even our opponents because they went after some ideal and they too can be considered heroes. Political leaders are not heroes. All political leaders are ambiguous for me, so I cannot judge.”* (Adil, citizen of Kazakhstan, 22 years old, student)

*“Let’s start with the fact that today’s political leaders are in no way heroes, just from my point of view they keep... they just keep the country afloat but I also worry about the fact that they are all corrupt, and there is no question of respect. But to be honest, of course, we had heroes in Kyrgyzstan, in the war, and in all historical events but, unfortunately, I can’t name them now.”* (Aida, Kyrgyz citizen, 23 years old, working)

*“Well, a hero is probably, in my opinion, a person who has done something good for their country. The heroes of our country are Emomali Rakhmon, a Tajik statesman. Also Babojon Gafurov, also a state and party figure. Mirzo Tursunzade is a Tajik poet. And Tajik heroes who went to the war front are Rakhimov, Khabiev, and Khakimov.”* (Maia, a citizen of Tajikistan, 36 years old, working).

## Discussion

The memorial heritage of the USSR occupies an important place in the social memory of the youth of post-Soviet countries. The post-memory generation is generally in favor of its preservation despite the fact that the states participating in Eurasian integration make attempts to revise it in relation to the search for the national identity of independent post-Soviet states. This search is reflected, among other things, in attempts to find and perpetuate the memory of national heroes from the pre-Soviet period that still often show a focus on a shared history with Russia.

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan have taken the longest path of rejection of Soviet memorial heritage while Belarus has taken the shortest. The memorial heritage is primarily represented in the social memory of young people by monuments to national and Soviet heroes – statesmen and cultural figures, outstanding generals, writers, poets, combat heroes, and space conquerors. A large layer of social memory is devoted to memorial complexes dedicated to World War II and the contribution of the republics to the common victory. Representatives of generations X and Y generally do not visit historical museums and exhibitions and receive information about the memorial heritage from the older generation, parents, feature films, and school programs the framework of which often incorporates real contact and familiarity with the historical monumental heritage of their countries.

Young people generally oppose the renaming of cities, streets, and squares, as well as the demolition of Soviet monuments. The predominance of militaristic perceptions is noted in the perceptions of the heroic among the youth of the post-Soviet states who took part in our study.

It is worth noting that several European studies today also focus on identifying the socio-cultural factors of acceptance or non-acceptance of certain monuments as a part of public space (Eröss, 2017). Research in the United States has also focused on contested or controversial commemorative practices in American history (Szlezák, Bender, 2019). Some authors view commemoration as a universal tendency of individuals and groups to use monuments to define their contemporary social identities and construct historical narratives (Gobel, Rossel, 2013). The ambiguity of monuments and commemorations as a consequence of errors in the formation of memory policy in changing societies is also a subject of scholarly reflection (Levinson, 2018). The role of monuments in popularizing militaristic perceptions is an important aspect of contemporary foreign research (Brown, 2019).

Attempts are being made to find new methodological approaches, particularly the use of semiotics, in analyzing the meanings of monuments in the material, symbolic, and political dimensions (Bellentani, Panico, 2016). Individual scholars consider the effects of memorials on social memory and urban identity (Gurler, Ozer, 2013). Questions about the role of monuments and collective memory in the struggle of marginalized social groups for the right to their place and recognition in society seem to be important (Frank, Ristic, 2020).

## Conclusion

The conducted study allows concluding that the common memorial heritage is currently more of a unifying factor contributing to Eurasian integration, a point of assembly, and a key element of solidarity of the post-memorial generation of the participating countries that can contribute to the successful implementation of integration projects in the post-Soviet space. Overall, this conclusion confirms our hypothesis about the consolidating role of shared memorial heritage in the social memory of young people. At the same time, the ambivalence of young people's attitudes towards the future of memorialization policies in their countries preserves the possibility of potential revision and rethinking of the established consensual perception of shared, primarily Soviet, memorial heritage in the future.

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