

# STATE IDENTITY POLICY IN “NEW” STATES: THE LIMITS OF EFFICIENCY

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## **Abstract**

This article explores a significant scientific problem and an actual issue of real politics, understanding the process and the specifics of the state identity politics. State identity politics is connected with symbolic politics and, in particular, the politics of historical memory. While much has been written on this topic, the lack of a reasonable unambiguous interpretation of such concepts as “state identity”, “national and state identity”, “civic identity” suggests that more can be said. This article provides information on the development of the theory of identity politics, describes the developmental directions of the concept of state identity politics, identifies the problems of constructing the basic matrix of state identity, identifies the problem areas for the formation of the political elite model of state identity, and discusses the hidden conflicting characteristics of state identity politics. The author focuses on developments on these issues of Russian political scientists. A separate point of discussion is the formation of state identity politics in the so-called “new” states, which have to use technologies including “post-truths” to prove the uniqueness and authenticity of the history of their states. The author believes that at present the financial, organizational and technical resources that a state uses to implement the identity politics are becoming the object of competition between various political forces and public opinion leaders from among civil activists. Attempts to create a unified model of state identity, which different layers of citizens would accept, is actually doomed to failure. This study was funded by RFBR and EISR; the research project № 19-011-31616 “State policy in the field of identity formation: conceptual foundations, technologies and prospects”.

**Key words:** *identity, development of the theory of identity politics, state identity policy, given models of political identity, limits of model efficiency, the basic matrix of state identity*

### **Formation of the theory of identity politics**

Renee Anspach introduced the term "identity politics" in 1979 (Anspach, 1979, 765-773), but the theory of identity politics (Eng. "identity politics" or "politics of identity") entered the foreign political science research two decades ago, and Russian political science about ten years ago.

The definition of an identity politics as a process of consciously constructing certain forms of collective identity (Identichnost': Lichnost', obshchestvo, politika, 2017, 647-650), including attempts to create models with given parameters, is accepted by almost all researchers. This applies equally to the proponents of the initial version of this theory, who focused on advocacy of various minorities (ethnic, gender, sexual, etc., people with disabilities) and focused on the constructivism methodology (Bernstein, 2005, 47- 74; Brubaker, 2004), and to those who later, as subjects of identity politics, began to analyze precisely the state and other political institutions using a complex of methodological approaches. Currently, the combination of neoinstitutionalism and constructivism methodologies seems the most relevant for the analysis of state policy in the field of identity formation.

If, in the mid-1990s, the theory of identity politics explained mainly the ideological foundations of the functioning of new social movements Castells, M. (1997) and the right of various minorities who consider themselves disadvantaged, to fight for their "special rights", in the last decade the term "identity politics" has been increasingly used and the attention of researchers is attracted by the task of explaining the political effects of the efforts of modern states to solve the problems of constructing the image of a nation, a state (Achkasov, 2012, 182-202), of rallying citizens, of ensuring unity of the population, guaranteeing the stability of the political system and political regime (Alemán, Woods, 2018; Kenny, 2004; Rumelili, Todd, 2017, 3-17).

Some outstanding social scientists of the present day write about the need to adjust the first version of the theory of identity politics, especially in connection with the development of a "mirror reflection" of discriminatory practices, against which the initial version of this concept was directed. F. Fukuyama directly points out that this theory, serving the noble purposes of restoring justice for socially disadvantaged minorities, becomes a problem in certain conditions (Fukuyama F., 2018). "For some progressives, identity politics turned out to be a cheap substitute for serious thinking about how to reverse the growing trend of socio-economic inequality that has developed in most liberal democracies for 30 years" (Fukuyama F., 2019, p. 149). According to F. Fukuyama, the first problem of this theory is associated with hyper concentration on the material problems of small groups to the detriment of the awareness of the need to overcome the systemic economic inequality in society, which affects the majority of the population. The second problem is rooted in

“usurpation of the political agenda by new, narrowly defined marginalized groups”. This distracts attention from old and large groups with much more serious problems” (Fukuyama F., 2019, p. 150), for example to the working class. The third problem is that an identity politics in the originally formulated sense can “threaten freedom of speech and, in a broader sense, the rational discourse necessary to maintain democracy” (Fukuyama F., 2019, p. 151). Not least, a shift in the focus of research and interpretation of the phenomenon of identity politics occurs because the initial version of the theory of identity politics was primarily focused on solving the problems of small social groups in Anglo-Saxon states with a liberal regime.

Probably, the significant reasons for the constantly repeated, in some cases successful, in some cases unsuccessful, attempts of political actors to impose certain models of state identity on ordinary citizens are their firm (and not always unfounded) belief in the objectivity of the political consciousness of citizens (White, Stackhouse, Argo, 2018, 60-73), in the inability of "average laymen" to adequately reflect on what is happening in society, in the absence of the necessary historical knowledge to understand the trends of historical the development of the state, as well as the excessive individualism and concentration almost exclusively on the problems of the majority of the population. We are very far from the unconditional recognition of the mechanism for the formation of state identity (along with many other social and political forms), proposed by constructivists and post-positivists based on an exclusively free and independent choice of model by the individual. It is assumed that the model itself is not imposed from the outside, but is formed by the individual based on their own political preferences. However, the version of the automatic introduction of a ready-made matrix of state identity into people's minds without changing also seems unconvincing.

When speaking about specific mechanisms and means of introducing into the mass consciousness a certain model of state identity, the main candidates are the humanitarian and social science cycles of educational programs in secondary and higher schools, as well as certain areas of extracurricular activities of these structures, the activities of various patriotic organizations, the development of non-profit social volunteer organizations, and priority involvement of young people in their projects, involving citizens in participation (even if passive) in a variety of festive events related to the history and symbolism of the state.

### **Structural components of the basic matrix of state identity**

The basic matrix of state identity fits into the construct of symbolic politics and acts as the main component of state identity policy (Popova, 2016, 157-160).

There are several controversial points in the discussion of Russian scientists about the matrix of state identity. First, it is about the striving of some Russian scientists to identify the categories and contents of the matrices of state and national-state identity. Scientists do not always deliberately discuss this issue; quite often the content of the state identity matrix is designated as part of the national-state identity. In particular, the identity of these categories is “read” in works, for example, by the famous researcher V.S. Komarovskiy. According to I. S. Semenenko, the identification of these two categories is wrong, because the set of components does not match, and, in addition, in the case of the matrix of state identity, the image of “we”, even if it covers the country's population, it is primarily about citizens of the state. In the case of the construct of national-state identity (sometimes it is referred to as national-civic), its base matrix inevitably includes not just the image of citizens of a certain state, but refers to the diversity of national-ethnic groups living in the country, and the perception of the image of the homeland, and not just the state with its formal institutional features. In a certain sense, the separation for researchers of constructs of state and national-state identities is associated with emphasizing the importance of the politics consciously carried out by political actors for the first construct. Moreover, for the second construct, rather spontaneous and long-term political images may be formed on the basis of political stereotypes and not directly derived from political propaganda campaigns. Therefore, the declared components of state and national-state identity almost coincide; so, for example, V. S. Komarovskiy refers to the main components of the national-state identity, the collective we, as the idea of a nation and a country where the state acts as an institutional bond (“my country”, the homeland of ancestors); and as “humanitarian” – “moral community” indicating trust, solidarity, and obligation towards other members of society; “significant others” meaning countries and peoples, the constant interaction which allows us to better understand our differences and identities; interpretation of the past and the construction of traditions as a common fate and history; project of the desired future” (Komarovskiy, 2013, p. 577).

Second, some researchers desire to include the emotional component directly into the matrix of state identity (Titov, 2017, p. 45). The symbolic content of the main components of the matrix of state identity does not actually contain psychological parameters, although the emotional perception of the proposed images, the spatial and temporal change in the functioning of the state, of course, is assumed (Popova, 2018b, 210-217). This is due to the “technological” nature of the construction of the matrix of state identity, just reckoning for the effects of perception of the images of “friends” and “strangers”.

Third, the content of the matrix of state identity changes significantly, especially when it comes to choosing one of the framework-specific versions of the spatial and temporal dimension of one’s “own” state.

In any case, there is a question about the basic identity matrix proposed by political actors, under which politicians purposefully adjust the consciousness of citizens who are objects of identification. The full matrix of the politics of state identity has two dimensions: vertical (dynamic, temporary “past – present – future”) and horizontal (spatial, territorial), but in certain political conditions only one of them can be actualized (Table).

Table. The structure of the matrix of state identity\*

Parameter 1. Image of “our” state (8 dimensions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “correct” borders of the country: 1) the limits of the state / borders; 2) the perception of certain territories of the state;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the “correct” time to create statehood</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “correct state symbols” (national emblem, anthem, flag, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “correct” historical hero (the founder of the state, the hero who saved the state, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modern national leader - a hero</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• image of the ideal/heroic/catastrophic past of “our” state</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• image of “our” state in the present</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attractive uncertain future of “our” state</li> </ul>
Parameter 2. Image “we are citizens” (3 aspects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• type of civilization</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a way of designating of people/population/citizens</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-determination of a social/political group relative to significant and iconic groups</li> </ul>
Parameter 3. “They” (3 dimensions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dominant model of identification of “others”</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External “they” (enemies, allies)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal “they” (enemies, allies)</li> </ul>

\* Models, mechanisms and features of the content of the matrix of state identity are described in detail in the scientific articles. (Popova, 2016, 162-164; Popova, 2017, 176-182; Popova, 2018a, 125-128; Popova, 2018b, 211-217).

The matrix of state identity policy is formed based on the national myth proposed by the elite, which, by entering a person into a collective scenario of behavior and forming a collective system of expectations, plays an extremely

important role in ensuring the stability of the political regime and the political system of the state.

It includes the following three components: a) the image of "our" state, which reflects the "correct" borders of the country (limits of the state/borders and the way of perceiving certain territories of the state), the time of creation of statehood, state symbols, host of historical heroes, the main mythologized historical character – hero, supported by a large majority of citizens, a modern national hero – leader whose image should be associated in the consciousness of the population with the image of the entire political the elite;

b) the image of “we” with an unambiguously interpreted method of designating the state’s population, a declaration of the country's affiliation with a particular type of civilization and self-determination of the elite regarding groups that are significant for it;

c) the image of “they” with an external and internal dimension, as well as with the separation of “friends”, “others”, “strangers” and “enemies”, to indicate which the confrontational model “others – strangers – enemies” with external and internal measurements is used often; these images can be either abstract and generalized, or personified (Popova O., 2017, p. 291–292).

An important subject of political debate for political actors in the struggle for the dominance of their version of the basic matrix of state identity is related to the time point for the creation of the state and the determination of which of the significant historical figures is considered the ancestor of the state. In this ideological, and by no means scientific, dispute, the correspondence of the points of view of political players with historical reality does not matter at all. Variations on the theme of the time of the creation of the state, its borders and history seem to be just a bargaining chip for positioning players in the political space. The transformation of discursive designations of political institutions, phenomena and processes fundamentally changes their symbolic and instrumental meaning. For example, for modern Russia, the questions of the correlation of the historical borders of “Kievan Rus”, “Novgorod Rus”, “Moscow Rus”, “Russian Empire of Peter the Great”, etc., along with the rights of modern Russia to be considered the heir of these state entities, remain hot. A similar situation can be observed in the discourse of some Polish politicians seeking to relate their history along with the borders to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The theme of Great Moravia is still relevant for some Hungarian and Czech politicians, etc.; the list goes on. Representatives of various political forces are “adopting” different dates for the creation of “their” state in order to obtain certain political preferences in the form of an increase in the number of supporters with certain political views.

Concentration on the past in the lack of a positive, carefully designed, “competitive” image of the future of the country testifies to the defectiveness of the proposed models of state identity. The variant of “attractive uncertainty”,

so often used in political manipulations by politicians at the top of power, is not alien to representatives of the political opposition. The image “a beautiful country of the future” is too vague for people who have already passed the phase of domination of the negative model of identity in their political consciousness. Thus A. Navalny, a representative of the non-systemic opposition in Russia, uses such an attractive vague characterization of the country in the future, which has already become a meme. Herewith the only clear characteristic declared is based on the principle of negation. Russia should not be a corruption country. Everyone, including modern corrupt officials, will agree with this. However, this approach cannot ensure a real increase in the number of supporters, since it does not satisfy the request of the majority of the population for the most clear, positive image of the future of the country.

A similar situation exists with the element of the identity matrix “we”. Political actors, especially representatives of the political or business elite, are by no means inclined to look for something in common between their group and citizens of the country and identify themselves with them, since there is an insurmountable gap between them in the amount of access to various kinds of resources and benefits, but at the discourse level unity is declared.

In modern states, the functions of the basic identity matrix are gradually transforming. It no longer forms merely a definite ideological worldview on the interstate structure of the modern world and the place of the “own” state in it. At the intensification of the political struggle not only at the domestic, but also at the interstate levels, it is increasingly playing the role of a significant model that sets the boundaries and images of citizenship. The basic matrix of state identity in real politics is increasingly playing the role of stakes in the competition of political actors with different political settings for the loyalty and loyalty of the population. There is no single basic matrix of state identity that would be shared, if not by all, then by most political actors. Opinion leaders, political activists, public politicians strive to offer society their own, different from others, models of state and civil identity and make them both a means of attracting supporters and testing their followers for loyalty and devotion.

In recent years, one can observe a certain transformation of the components of the basic matrix of state identity. The following trends deserve attention.

First, while maintaining the rigidly defined structure of the state identity matrix, the images of components become more and more mobile, subject to situational variability, legitimized by the political “expediency of the moment”.

Second, there is a loss of logical harmony and the consistency of the construct of this matrix among various political actors.

Third, visual images of the matrix of state identity are associated not only with state symbols of the present, attributes of the past are being increasingly used; the time transfer of the formation of the state deep into the centuries is being actualized.

Fourth, a bright, positive image of the common future of the people and country is emphasized; the contrast between the difficult past and the bright future is emphasized, but the future remains extremely uncertain, often there is no project of the future state or the possibility of its achievement looks mythical.

Fifth, regardless of the number of supporters of political actors offering one or another model of the basic matrix of state identity, the image of “we” is always presented as the dominant (largest, most significant, exceptional) social group. The ethnonational component is necessarily included in the matrix, sometimes completely replacing the entire content of “we”.

Sixth, there is an active mythologization of the images of both "We" and "Others". "We" have no flaws, in relation to the "Others" their confrontational model as strangers or enemies dominates. A positive image of the “Others” also does not correspond to political reality; through the efforts of political actors, it transforms into the image of powerful eternal allies or patrons.

#### **Hidden conflicts of system characteristics of state identity policy**

In the analysis of the state identity policy, clearly insufficient attention is paid to the problem of the prospects and limitations of the state's ability to form certain models of political identity and politicized forms of social identity. Researchers are quite skeptical of the government's claims to develop and implement programs to create them. However, the lack of real research in this area makes scientists speak quite carefully.

On the one hand, all political scientists acknowledge that the state has been and remains, in the context of globalization and the emergence of the information society, one of the most influential institutions of political socialization, with tremendous material, organizational and technical resources for the formation of national, political, civil identity. On the other hand, researchers believe that even in a totalitarian state, its most powerful resources and capabilities do not allow unifying the political views of people, including attitudes towards the authorities and the political elite, history, present and future of their country. Even scientists who rely on the constructivist methodology are convinced of the impossibility of a situation where a certain model of political identity would be promoted exclusively by the ruling elite (Ortmann S., 2009, pp. 23–46). The formation of both state and civil identity requires the participation and initiative of individuals and non-state actors. Even with the dominance of the state-centric approach to the relationship

between the state and civil society institutions, there is little reason to deny the subjectivity of non-state actors in the process of identity formation.

The state identity policy can be described as a specific set of political projects, practices and tools for the formation and development of a given system of political views, ideological and political value orientations of the majority of the population, aimed at creating strictly regulated ideas of “we are citizens” and “my state”. The state identity policy, implemented in any country regardless of the nature of the political regime, performs important functions of forming a national and civic identity of the population, forming a symbolic association of citizens, and offering a more or less unified perception of the most significant images of "their" state. At the same time, the state identity policy can be aimed at supporting and/or challenging any politicized forms of social identity of citizens of "their" country.

Regardless of the nature of the political regime, the particularities and traditions of political life, the elaboration and correctness of the implementation of the state identity policy, a number of potential conflict situations are inevitably hidden in it. The most significant of these are the following:

First, in the modern information society with its diverse channels for obtaining heterogeneous information, there is a request for a “politics of differences”, which, of course, contradicts the state’s position to create a single model of state and civil identity.

Second, the political elite is trying to construct and impose on society a universal basic matrix of state identity, the positions of which would meet all or at least a large part of the country's adult population. However, this is impossible, since completely different symbols, historical heroes, ideas about the “right” borders of the state, its past, present and future, political symbols, etc. are significant for various social groups.

Third, the political elite itself is never so homogeneous and united, adhering to the same ideological attitudes and political views, in order to avoid the presence of competing “we are the state” images in the minds of its representatives. The internal disagreements, even if not always publicly disclosed, are inevitable, disagreeing on the different ideologies of groups within the political elite over the grounds for the state identity policy pursued in the country.

Fourth, the state authorities, trying to maintain control over all participants in the interaction of implementing the state identity policy, are constantly faced with the need to integrate into the system not only diverse state and non-state cultural and educational institutions which, with varying degrees of effectiveness, are able to implement the tasks set for the formation of civil and state identity, but also include various institutions of civil society which attract leaders of public opinion, whose interests in this area may not at all coincide with the demands of the power elite.

Fifth, by sharing organizational, financial and technical resources with other participants in the implementation of identity policy, the authorities strive to achieve a unified understanding of the essence of the tasks set both by all institutional participants and personal participants (political leaders, opinion leaders online and offline) involved in this process. However, due to the presence of a wide variety of political interests and attitudes among the participants in this process, this task is almost impossible to achieve.

Sixth, conflicting moments inevitably arise in the process of implementing a state identity policy and due to the competition between the subjects of its realization for resources are primarily financial ones.

Seventh, the hopes of the political elite to develop a universal mechanism for the formation of state and civil identity and achieve a single result in the formation of a given model of collective forms of these types of identity among the population are inevitably broken due to the existence of a huge number of sources of extremely contradictory information about the real situation in the state, its history, personalities of prominent politicians.

The most obvious and inevitable consequences of these sometimes hidden, sometimes manifesting conflicts are a decrease in the effectiveness of the implementation of an identity policy, the high cost (financial, symbolic, political) of projects, and the distant prospect of reaching civil agreement on their content and the formation of certain models of state and civil identity.

### **Trends of the development of state identity policy in the "new" states**

The term "new state" usually refers to countries in which there has been a radical change in state ideology and/or a change in territory and borders. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, radical changes in the principles of the economy, ideology, and political elite took place in the Warsaw Pact countries of Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, among others, in Germany the borders changed radically, a change affecting both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In a complex system of projects of state identity policy in these countries, elements of historical policy and policy of memory are necessarily present.

The mandatory set of components, mechanisms and means of state identity policy (Popova O., 2016, pp. 157–158) includes:

- development of a system capable of consolidating society and/or classifying individuals as "their own" and "alien" of the system of state and cultural-historical symbols;
- interpretation of the content and symbols of public holidays, which, using images of the past, at the same time legitimize the presence in power of a specific elite group and justify the existing political course;
- creation of an integrated infrastructure for maintaining historical memory, including state scientific and educational centers and institutions, as well as

institutions existing under the guise of civil society institutions, which, in doing so, perform primarily ideological functions;

- financial support by the state for certain scientific, political and public projects in the field of politics of memory and history;
- attempt of ideological control over scientific humanitarian and social studies;
- restriction of access to various archives;
- construction of historical and political myths with the aim of absolutizing the history of the state and the unique characteristics of the nation or ethnic groups living on its territory;
- emphasizing the historical mission of their state using moralistic rhetoric;
- development of a system of laws that reinforce a certain interpretation of historical events as the only correct and possible;
- educational policy, an attempt to unify the concept of textbooks of history, literature and the state (national) language;
- toponymic policy;
- use of special expressions constituting the exclusivity of “their” state in speeches and messages of heads of states in official discourse;
- ideological justification for the need to combat internal and external enemies with their clear designation;
- hidden ideological control of the media online and offline;
- symbolic involvement in the implementation of the politics of historical memory of state bodies, civil society institutions, political leaders of other states, heads of international organizations;
- development of measures to ensure recognition by the world community of historical events beneficial to the state.

There seem to be five components of the state identity policy, which are reproduced now in most Eastern European and Central European “new” states.

First, there is explicit ideological request for the search for the most ancient archaeological artifacts and historical events to confirm the continuity of the “new” states with necessarily powerful powers (ideally empires) of the past. A nostalgic theme for a significant part of the political elite of Poland is the Commonwealth with the territory “from sea to sea”, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – Great Moravia.

Second, identification of the state with a significant historical character along with attempt to create a symbolic pantheon of heroes is relevant. From this point of view, of course, the case of the Northern Republic of Macedonia, which defended Alexander the Great as its hero in fierce competition with Greece, is very interesting. Absolutely in line with this politics lies the reconstruction of the historical center in Skopje with the erection of gigantic buildings and a huge number of figures of famous enlighteners, commanders, warriors, referring people to almost two thousand years of history.

Third, in the state identity policy there is also a “we are an object” component associated with self-determination regarding their history after the Second World War. The political elites of the “new state” clearly demonstrate a request to position this historical period as a “dead zone”, a “temporary loop” away from European civilization, not as their own mistake, but as a forced process under the influence of external forces (Semenenko, 2018).

Fourth, an important factor in the state identity policy is the self-determination of the “new state” regarding not just the European Union, but Western European civilization (Semenenko, Lapkin, Bardin, Pantin, 2018; Stråth, 2017). This allows to construction of the image of "significant we". Some researchers insist that in the early 1990s, in Eastern and Central Europe, against the background of crowding out the socialist community identity, at first “Europeanism was emphasized against the background of strengthening the national principle. Gradually, the conflict of identities softened, but the identity of a citizen of the European Union won, to occupy a leading place with the inclusion in world political and economic processes. At the same time, regional mutual assistance intensified and both local and national identities grew, especially noticeably as a result of the crisis development of the late 2000s” (Yazhborovskaya I., 2014, p. 303).

The idea is to dominate the strategy of building by post-socialist states within the framework of the renewed boundaries of European identity to the detriment of the state, which is associated with "a reduction in its [state] independence in decision-making, with the fragmentation of public power and the formation of new regulatory orders, with the development and coalescence of network structures" (Yazhborovskaya I., 2014, p. 304). At the same time, competition between the European and state models of identity is gradually being replaced by their parallel development. As an example of the effect of an ill-conceived policy of developing a policy of European openness and, as a consequence, the accentuated development of European identity to the detriment of the state, scientists usually call the situation in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia in the 2000s. Researchers define the policies of the elites of these countries in late 2000s as “national extremism in a crisis”, which nevertheless “predominantly remains a marginal phenomenon” (Yazhborovskaya I., 2014, p. 304). The example of Bulgaria, on the contrary, is considered as an example of a crisis of national (state) identity.

Fifth, in an amazing way three decades later, in these "new" states, with all their unequivocal orientation towards the European Union, the request of political elites for self-determination regarding the Russian Federation/USSR remained. Russia remains a significant “Other”, but with a sharply negative connotation. Russia is considered not just as a significant “Other”, the confrontational model of positioning the political elites of these states in relation to the Russian Federation has become traditional. This applies equally

to the former Warsaw Pact countries but some states that were formerly union republics in the USSR such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine.

A number of countries are pursuing a policy of frank demonization of the image of Russia in the eyes of younger generations. For example, on September 3, 2019, the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry announced that it did not consider Russia as the liberator of its country from Nazism. Some Bulgarian social scientists over the past 20 years have been actively accusing Russia of interfering with the creation of a great united Bulgaria in the last quarter of the 19th century, in fact blaming Russian soldiers for their exploit on Shipkinsky Pass in 1877. Currently professors and social scientists are updating these accusations in reports at international scientific conferences, claiming that the Russian Federation is currently allegedly waging a hybrid war against Bulgaria.

### **Conclusion**

No political actor in the state can claim a monopoly in the formation of political consciousness of citizens, unless it is a totalitarian state with extremely strict control over all areas of the life of a common person. But even in this case, the adoption by all citizens of a unified model of state identity also cannot be achieved. Nevertheless, political institutions, movements and leaders in the state strive to use certain models of political and, in particular, state identity as a noninstitutionalized political resource for the formation and rallying of groups of their supporters (Jensen, 2018; Lee, 2017). Depending on the political weight of the actors, the models they propose are perceived by citizens as more or less convincing, or significant. Since political actors in the formation of their version of identity proceed primarily from their own ideological beliefs and political preferences, considering the political consciousness of citizens as an object of their influence, sometimes not interested in the popular opinion, not trying to adjust models of state identity with the ideas of citizens themselves and using strategies of imposition and manipulation in the dissemination of political information, then the expectations of the total implementation of the given matrices of state identity most often does not occur. At the same time, political players are often guided by stable socio-demographic groups of the proposed options for state identity.

Not only the political and administrative elite personifying the state in the eyes of ordinary citizens offers a simplified model of the matrix of state identity, but other political actors do the same. Quite often, versions of the basic matrix of state identity presented in the information space, in addition to a simplified version of the interpretation of any processes, have the following characteristics: they are rigid, inflexible; do not allow variability in the interpretation of components; built on the principle of dichotomization, they rely primarily on not combining various groups of citizens, but on their demarcation, although formally declared otherwise; moralizing thrives on the

due; at the same time, the expectation of unanimity, “denial” of the right of people to think differently comes through; the principle of minimizing rationality dominates (the emphasis is on offering “ready-made” images and recipes for solving any social and political problems, a unification of the political mobilization scheme for all social groups is proposed). Rarely do any of the political actors neglect populist ideas and a constant appeal to the will of the people. The presence of calls personified in negative external or internal "Others" works as a means of rallying for a relatively short period.

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