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Monitoring of Kazakhstani media coverage of the victory in World War II

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Abstract. The article contains the analysis of media practices for the formation of collective historical memory of the Great Patriotic War in modern Kazakhstani media. Based on the study of special sections and projects dedicated to the anniversary of Victory, authors identified collective memory formation and maintenance mechanisms in four major media platforms. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods within the monitoring the special sections materials. Special emphasis was placed on identifying distinctive and original approaches in the materials typology (news, interviews, documentary mini-films), presentation formats, and dominant techniques used in the commemorative coverage. The analysis revealed key similarities and differences in media strategies, the main motives in the line of materials and limitations in content creation and presentation. Among the most clearly traced correspondences, particular attention was paid to communicative engagement of veterans, which is presented in all the considered media from the earliest periods. At the same time, authors traced differences in editorial policies: from predominantly symbolic and educational directions to the presentation of relevant research. The study demonstrates how modern media reproduce, duplicate and create new content aimed at understanding and covering the historical heritage of Kazakhstan as agents of collective memory formation. The analysis resulted in two main categories of practical recommendations for the technological actualization of content-making processes and involving previously unreachable audiences.

Keywords: Victory anniversary, Great Patriotic War, collective memory, national idea of Kazakhstan, special sections.

Introduction

The fundamental historical events that have a significant impact on group collective memory vary across countries. In some developing societies, the events of state foundation or

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independence are dominating. However, according to Choi (2021), World War II is the most frequently mentioned event in the living historical memory of the greatest number of different societies [1], even though 80 years have passed since the Third Reich surrender.

The post-war technological leaps have ensured the high pace and dynamics of further ideological confrontation, events, conflicts, diplomacy and competition. Globalization, information and communication tools development in the last forty years have united the reaction of the so-called world community to individual phenomena that continue to excite people's minds and, thus, become entrenched in the living historical memory: the COVID-19 pandemic or the September 11 terrorist attacks [1] are examples. That is, periodically arising events have a powerful impact on worldview and on labile historical memory, when the latest event pushes back or obscures earlier ones.

However, World War II, or the Great Patriotic War – if we mean the post-Soviet space – remains one of the most deeply rooted in the significant events of the past memory. Even with its global scale and the tragedy that affected people in most parts of the world, the statute of limitations plays an important role in the collective memory evolution. According to Assmann's (2011) system, social communicative memory is a living, embodied memory with a horizon of 80-100 years [2]. In addition, with the previous generation passing, the new generation feels the desire to rethink the events of the past [3]. These processes are an impetus in the desire to reassess the role of the Soviet period in the history of Kazakhstan.

2025 was a special year for the Republic of Kazakhstan: Great Patriotic War Victory celebration acquired an outstanding scope and openness. For the first time in recent years, Kazakhstan marked itself with a large-scale military parade on May 7, which was attended by a foreign leader as an honorary guest, the presence of President K-Zh. Tokayev at the parade in Moscow on May 9, and the holding of the Batyrlar Tagzym ([“Bow to the Heroes”], the name of the event, an analogue of “Immortal Regiment”) procession in Almaty.

In the public [4] and academic fields [5, 6, 7], there are ongoing discussions about the war and its consequences, about issues of patriotic education and the formation of a modern independent Kazakhstan national idea. However, the country remains one of the direct participants in the war, having made a huge (in relation to the available resources) contribution to the victory. This fact is not questioned by either complimentary or critical interpretations of the history of the Kazakh SSR [8].

*"The Great Victory has become an integral part of the history of our country and a most important lesson for the whole world. This is a truth that we must always remember,"
from the speech of President Tokayev at the Parade in Astana [9]*

The need for continuous knowledge, experience and traditional values transfers from the older to the younger generation is a significant part of the agenda broadcast by President Tokayev at the National Kurultais (an advisory body for developing ideas for the further development of social consolidation) [10]. Strengthening and consolidating historical collective memory are important elements of the domestic public relations political mechanisms in the context of the ideological paradigm construction, which confirms the relevance of the Great Patriotic War topic.

However, if we consider the phenomenon of non-individual, public or group memory, we should emphasize the findings of psychological researchers who distinguish "social memory"

and "collective memory" terms. If collective memory is strengthened and immobile, then social memory is subject to environmental influence [11]. This thesis suggests the need to consider the factor of modern tools for influencing public opinion and, as a consequence, the formation of social memory among young people and its evolution among older generations. One of the most widespread and effective tools of this nature has been and remains the mass media.

On the empirical basis of Kazakhstani media as instruments of historical social memory representation and maintenance, we monitored and analyzed special sections and projects in online format dedicated to the Great Patriotic War or the Victory anniversary. The study aim was to show how media can construct social memory through different formats and topics. The objectives were: 1) To identify which online media presented special sections for the Victory anniversary and in what form; 2) To conduct content analysis by topic, genre, visual characteristics; 3) To interpret the representation of Kazakhstan's participation in the war according to the analyzed materials; 4) To analyze the sections' functions; 5) To develop recommendations for media presentation influencing the development of historical memory of the Victory and the Great Patriotic War.

Literature Review

The historical experience of groups and societies (in our case, the peoples of the USSR) can become both a resource and a limitation for them [12]. There is a correlation between collective memory and the collective thinking of the future [13], that is, what development trajectory the society that bears collective memory sees for itself in the future.

The collective or historical memory can be considered as a matter necessary for consolidation in achieving common goals [14]. In the context of the historically multinational Kazakh society, efforts to form a stable and uniform paradigm is a part of the social consolidation [15] and identity determination [16] model. Achieving and maintaining a consensual (common) or at least emancipated (with different but compatible ideas in different groups) type of collective memory [13] seem to be urgent in diverse society.

Belarusian researchers note an effective communication process between the media and the public in covering historical and cultural heritage [17]. In other words, the media are not only a factor influencing public opinion, but also its reflection [18]. Since media strategies, professional journalism and some genres of blogging primarily operate in the field of relevance [19], the unceasing stability of the common Great Patriotic War and the Victory memory in Kazakhstan (as well as in the Republic of Belarus) become a legitimate subject for elaboration.

At the same time, news formats traditionally remain in the media's field of action. The anniversary year generated numerous news hooks and media outputs, placing this analysis outside the realm of outdated or previously released content.

Methodology

The relationship and influence of media on collective memory were studied with theoretical discussions [20] and visual language analysis methods [21]. This paper provides the quantitative and qualitative content analysis within Kazakhstani media monitoring.

4 platforms were identified among the media presented in online formats. These media presented special sections and projects dedicated to the Great Patriotic War or the Victory anniversary. These are the Zakon.kz online media, the Khabar TV channel, the "Internet resource Tengrinews" online edition, and the Kazinform news agency.

The number of materials, subheadings (topics and genres) and presentation formats of the material was counted in the special sections of each media. Qualitative content analysis consisted in highlighting representative frames and accents of each special section.

Results and discussion

2 of the 4 media outlets that presented a separate special section dedicated to the 80th Victory anniversary are state-owned. This fact indicates that the authorities understand the relevance of the Great Patriotic War theme.

Table 1. Special Sections and Headings

Media	Special Section	Heading	Number of Media Materials
Zakon ¹	Герои Великой Победы [The Great Victory Heroes]	Герои [The Heroes]	45
Khabar ²	День Победы [Victory Day]	Подвиги [The Feats]	15
		Новости [News]	63+
		Новости [News]	-
		Подвиги ветеранов [The Feats of Veterans]	16
Tengrinews ³	Проект Победители [The Victors Project]	Хабар помнит [Khabar Remembers]	81
		Моя история войны [My War Story]	25
		День Победы [The Victory Day]	-
		Последние события [Latest Events]	-
		Участники и ветераны ВОВ [Participants and Veterans of the Great Patriotic War]	4452

¹Source: https://special.zakon.kz/den_pobedy

²Source: <https://khabar.kz/ru/den-pobedy>

³Source: https://tengrinews.kz/pobediteli/?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=spec_banner

		Обращения к потомкам [Appeals to Descendants]	29
		Истории о ВОВ [The Great Patriotic War Stories]	9
Kazinform ⁴	80 лет Великой Победе [80 years since the Great Victory]	Письма с фронта [Letters from the Front]	6
		Забытые герои [Forgotten Heroes]	18
		Ветераны войны [War Veterans]	32
		Женщины и дети [Women and Children]	8
		Поисковики [The Searchers]	15
		Труженики тыла [Home Front Workers]	8
		Уникальные снимки [Unique Photos]	13
		Историки-эксперты [The Expert-Historians]	38

Kazinform was the only media outlet in the sample that did not present the News section in the special project. At the same time, the monitoring revealed that news related to current anniversary events were presented in the regular News section, while in Khabar, Zakon and Tengrinews (Latest Events section) the corresponding materials were mostly duplicated in the special section and in regular news blocks. This explains the inaccuracy or lack of values in the corresponding fields. At the same time, in the Victory Day section, Khabar presented materials with a link to the online portal 24.kz, which is part of the agency. It is also important to highlight that in the Women and Children section of Kazinform special project, 2 out of 10 materials did not relate to the topics of the Great Patriotic War, the Victory anniversary or others, although they contained content related to the topic of the section itself - Women and Children. The table and the overall count (see Table 2) show 8 relevant materials (excluding 2 irrelevant).

Each special section contained its own unique features with obvious intersections, considering the general topic. However, the Tengrinews section Participants and Veterans of the Great Patriotic War clearly stand out from the number of materials, with 4,452 recorded. This is a kind of database containing short biographical information on Kazakhstani war participants and home service personnel, quite rightly attributed to the Winners special section. The other media number of materials indicators turned out to be quite comparable.

⁴ Source: <https://www.inform.kz/specproject/victory-day-80/>

Table 2. Characteristics of the Special Sections Presentation by Media

Indicator / Media	Zakon.kz (special section The Great Victory Heroes)	Khabar (special section Victory Day)	Tengrinews (The Victors Project)	Kazinform (80 years since the Great Victory)
Total number of materials	More than 130	More than 150	Approx 4500	More than 138
Content formats	Texts/photos	Short videos, documentary mini-films	Complex: Texts, photos, videos, reference notes	Complex: Texts, photos, videos, reference notes
Topics and motives	Heroes, feats, patriotism	Veterans, memoirs, documentary	Biographic notes, documents	Heroes, perpetuation of memory
First publications	2024	2015	2011	2009
Target audience	Age: 18-24 - 9%; 25-44 - 48%; 45+ - 43%	TV and YouTube viewers	Broad, horizontal development, different media-section fragmentation	economically active citizens, political and business establishment
Special features	Emphasis on veterans' memories, honoring, stories of continuity, and role models	Emphasis on memories, parting words, and television (video) documentaries	Emphasis on short biographies of veterans	Emphasis on current events (installation of monuments, events), recent searches and studies

Table 2 illustrates the main quantitative and qualitative content analysis results. The titles turned out to be quite accurate in reflecting the mentioned specifics. Note that each media presented (since the first publication) the results of specific journalistic engagement with veterans. Interviews, parting words, wishes, and memories of veterans are presented in every media, while the general emphasis on such content was recorded in Khabar (2–3-minute videos in the Khabar Remembers and 4–15-minute videos in the My War Story sections). Zakon presented similar content in text format; Tengrinews also offered a number of video materials (1-2 minutes) in the Appeals to Descendants section. Kazinform, in addition to the section on materials from historians, presented the War Veterans section with the largest number of materials. Long-standing and systematic (Kazinform since 2009) documentation of war veterans' stories, considering the passage of time for those who were direct participants in the events, speaks of the high level of journalistic responsibility of every media in our sample, as well as a powerful impulse to preserve and record the experience of living witnesses.

Given the consubstantiality of the subject matter, identifying completely unique features during the content analysis of 4 media proved to be a difficult task. However, in addition to the obvious difference in the main format of presentation or broadcasting, such as the emphasis on television and video material on Khabar TV channel versus most text and photo materials

on the other media, we were able to identify some different features. The Tengrinews database with biographical information and photographs of veterans remained unique; in addition to a large amount of video content in general, Khabar stood out for its presentation of documentary mini-films; Zakon focused on patriotic education and continuity. Given the absence of the News section, Kazinform's section materials contained multiple justified intersections with the current modern events content. However, the unique and strongest content of this media was the materials of the Search Engines and Expert-Historians sections, where they highlighted the activities of contemporary researchers.

The time frame was fixed at the earliest date of relevant material publication. Probably, special sections included some or all materials on the topic of war, conversations with veterans, celebration of Victory Days and anniversaries produced in previous periods. Thus, the special sections of 2025 became a collection of materials on the topic, including fresh 2025 content. Such a composition indicates systematic long-term relevant topics coverage.

Every media presented were using a certain range of convergent capabilities. In addition to the reviewed online special sections pages, the materials were duplicated on video platforms and social networks, with feedback through comments.

Most of the materials presented in Russian were also published in Kazakh. Some (especially news) were presented in English and a number of other languages, although not as fully.

Conclusion

Kazakhstani media monitoring revealed the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War as a source of national idea and historical collective memory construction. The special sections released in 4 republican-scale media indicates the framework of influencing collective memory [22]. The media set their own strategies for the material selection and interpretation [19] and thus, it is crucial to consider that different social and information paradigms can be constructed on other media platforms (anti-Soviet, for example). There are no questions with regard to the anniversary celebration and related events news coverage – those issues were covered by most of the Kazakhstani media - the difference is rather in material actualization, in the presence or absence of the media's intention to use the theme of the Great Victory in the formation of historical social memory.

The results showed the interpretations and content similarities in Zakon.kz, Khabar, Tengrinews and Kazinform, with significant differences in presentation/broadcast, formats, and main emphases, given the initial difference in each media's target audiences.

The special sections' content analysis identified certain presentation limitations, repetitive methods and formats of delivery, and the prevalence of conventional technical solutions. Based on the identified limitations, we developed two sets of recommendations to improve the relevance and visual quality of media content.

Kazakhstani media need to strengthen their digital infrastructure [23] and apply new creative multimedia approaches. Since the open communication format promotes public consensus [24], a two-way (government-society) or three-way (government-media-society) dialogue in the format of interactive materials presentation by the media can become a valuable resource.

Among the soft measures to update the existing content, one can note the need for “modernization”, i.e., improving the quality of videos, especially those that present direct speeches of veterans and home front workers, representatives of the outgoing generation; further efforts in digitizing archival materials, photographs. In a broader sense, it is crucial to implement artificial intelligence capabilities (with the initial development of ethical standards for relevant material presentation).

One of the key limitations found was the absence of infographics as a useful tool for visualizing historical content. A way to simultaneously diversify, simplify perception, and attract the younger generation - can be the expansion of the animated content line (in our case, we are talking more about creation than expansion). Modern artificial intelligence models as of May 2025 (RunwayML, Lumen5, Animoto, Designs.ai), facilitate simplifying and creating animation or animated characters, and generate short videos according to texts or data. The content produced and processed by editors can become an effective tool within special sections, and also on platforms and intra-platform, such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Stories. This approach is also applicable in an interactive format with the ability to select the most interesting animated character for the consumer using live speech synthesis (including translation into different languages). The relevant models when voicing a character (historical figure, soldier, hero/heroine, political figure) or creating subtitles are ElevenLabs and Google TTS.

There are broad opportunities to create educational and entertaining animated videos on the Great Patriotic War topics for media outlets with a wide target audience (as Khabar TV channel), and others having separate sections for children (where the younger generation is not considered the main audience). Artificial intelligence text generative models (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) are widely used in modern journalism as assistants for creating scripts or dialogues, while Stable Diffusion, DALL-E and other models are available for visualization. The final products can be presented on the media online platforms, and also on YouTube and Telegram channels.

The described tools are not an innovation either in the field of global journalism or in the production of educational content, despite the relatively short period since the presentation of powerful and accessible generative models. The mainstream nature of such practices and availability (in some cases, there are free models obtainable) shows that there is no need for substantial funding to reformat new content and process existing ones. These factors are relevant for regional media with small budgets or for private projects. At the same time, the case of media content processing dedicated to such a large-scale historical phenomenon as the Great Patriotic War, its prerequisites and consequences, as well as the case of educational content creating, including children's content, may prove innovative and unique.

The second block of recommendations for the further development of media presentations on the topic of war, Victory, honoring veterans and historical memory construction is devoted to the scientific journalism format advancement. As part of this study, notes and articles with varying depth of coverage of historical, archaeological, archival and search work were recorded. Partially and rather briefly, the modern scientists' and enthusiasts and studies are shown in Kazinform's special section headings. The content analysis results demonstrated a

rather selective and superficial implementation of the science journalist function as a mediator between researchers and the general public [25].

The science journalism genre, with a solid volume of articles devoted to argumentation and evidence within investigations, interpretation of reports and other forms of quality journalism articles (as opposed to popular journalism), is inherent and popular in countries with an established media culture [26]. The development of the genre in the Kazakhstani media field seems not only in demand, but also effective, especially for such media as Kazinform (with the political and business establishment as the target audience), for business, magazine editions documentary TV channels.

The contribution of the authors.

Akhmetov S. – literature review, organization and structuring of the material, text editing, correspondence with the editorial office

Akhmetova L. – corresponding author, coordinator of the research group, participant administration.

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Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыс жеңісіне арналған қазақстандық БАҚ материалдарына талдау

Аңдатпа. Мақала қазіргі қазақстандық БАҚ-та Ұлы Отан соғысының ұжымдық тарихи жадын қалыптастырудың медиа тәжірибесін талдауға арналған. Жеңіс мерейтойына арналған арнайы бөлімдерді, айдарларды және жобаларды зерттеу негізінде төрт медиа-ресурста ұжымдық жадыны қалыптастыру және қолдау тетіктері анықталды. Зерттеу арнайы бөлімдердің материалдарына мониторинг жүргізу аясында сандық және сапалық мазмұнды талдау әдістемесін қолдану арқылы жүргізілді. Түрлі ақпарат құралдарындағы материалдар типологиясының (жаңалықтар, сұхбаттар, шағын деректі фильмдер), презентация форматтарының және басым екпіндердің ерекше және өзіндік сипаттамаларына ерекше назар аударылды. Талдау медиа-стратегиялардағы негізгі ұқсастықтар мен айырмашылықтарды, материалдар желісіндегі негізгі мотивацияларды, мазмұнды құру мен ұсынудағы шектеулерді анықтады. Ең анық қадағаланған хат-хабарлардың ішінде тақырып бойынша жұмыстың ең ерте кезеңдерінен бастап зерттелген барлық БАҚ-та ұсынылған ардагерлермен ақпараттық жұмысқа ерекше назар аударылады. Сонымен бірге, редакциялық саясаттағы айырмашылықтарды байқауға болады: басым символдық және білім беру бағыттарынан қазіргі ғылыми-зерттеу және тәжірибелік жұмыстарды көрсетуге дейін. Жұмыс қазіргі заманғы БАҚ-тың ұжымдық жады қалыптастыру агенті ретінде Қазақстанның тарихи мұрасын түсінуге және көрсетуге бағытталған жаңа мазмұнды қалай көбейтетінін, қайталайтынын және жаңа мазмұн жасайтынын көрсетеді. Алынған нәтижелер контент жасау процестерін технологиялық жаңарту және принципті түрде жаңа аудиторияларды тарту бойынша екі ұсынымдар жинағын шығаруға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: Жеңіс мерейтойы, Ұлы Отан соғысы, ұжымдық жады, Қазақстанның ұлттық идеясы, арнайы секциялар.

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Мониторинг материалов СМИ Казахстана, посвященных победе во второй мировой войне

Аннотация. Статья посвящена анализу медиапрактик формирования коллективной исторической памяти о Великой Отечественной войне в современных казахстанских медиа. На основе

изучения специальных разделов, рубрик и проектов, приуроченных к юбилею Победы, в четырех крупных медиаресурсах выявлены механизмы формирования и поддержания коллективной памяти. Исследование производилось по методологии количественного и качественного контент-анализа в рамках мониторинга материалов спецразделов. Особое внимание было уделено отличительным и оригинальным характеристикам типологии материалов (новости, интервью, документальные мини-фильмы), форматам подачи, доминирующим акцентам в разных медиа. Анализ выявил ключевые сходства и различия медиастратегий, главные мотивы в линейке материалов и ограничения в создании и подаче контента. Среди наиболее четко отслеженных соответствий выделяется особое внимание к информационной работе с ветеранами, которая представлена во всех рассмотренных медиа с наиболее ранних периодов работы по теме. При этом прослеживаются различия в редакционной политике: от преимущественно символически-просветительских направлений до презентации актуальных поисково-исследовательских работ. Работа демонстрирует, как современные медиа воспроизводят, дублируют и создают новый контент, направленный на осмысление и освещение исторического наследия Казахстана в качестве агентов формирования коллективной памяти. Полученные результаты позволили произвести два блока рекомендаций по технологической актуализации процессов контент-мейкинга и вовлечению принципиально новых аудиторий.

Ключевые слова: юбилей Победы, Великая Отечественная война, коллективная память, национальная идея Казахстана, специальные рубрики.

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