

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND EUROPEAN REGIONALISM: THE SCOTTISH CASE

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ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ ПАМЯТЬ И ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЙ РЕГИОНАЛИЗМ: ШОТЛАНДСКИЙ СЛУЧАЙ

Abstract. The region's past together with the historical memory of the people inhabiting it, undoubtedly carries lessons for the present and the future, both for the British state in particular, and for the rest of Europe as a whole. Studying the issues of historical memory helps to rethink the mechanisms of the formation of historical consciousness. It is also important when studying the role of various social strata in this process, which can include both professional historians and politicians, 'decision makers' – people on whom decision-making process depends to one degree or another. Among the set of functions that historical knowledge performs, the most significant one can be singled out – an attempt to "reconcile" the present and the past of the people as a nation. In the light of the current European agenda, a change in ideas about the status of historical memory and a searching of approaches to understanding the issues raised by the regionalization processes require a new look at the process of interaction between these spheres of public life. This article examines the issues of Scottish historical memory in the context of regionalization processes in Europe: what in this case is the history of Scotland – rather a common European tradition or a particular British case? Is it possible to look at the problem differently when both paths are not mutually exclusive?

Keywords: historical memory, Scotland, Great Britain, nationalism, federalism, European regionalism

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Аннотация. Прошлое региона вместе с исторической памятью населяющих его людей, несомненно, несет уроки для настоящего и будущего, как для британского государства в частности, так и для остальной Европы в целом. Изучение вопросов исторической памяти помогает переосмыслить механизмы формирования исторического сознания. Это также важно при изучении роли различных социальных слоев в этом процессе, которые могут включать как профессиональных историков, так и политиков, «лиц, принимающих решения» – людей, от которых в той или иной степени зависит процесс принятия решений. Среди множества функций, которые выполняет историческое знание, можно выделить наиболее значительную – попытку «примирить» настоящее и прошлое народа как нации. В свете актуальной европейской повестки дня изменение представлений о статусе исторической памяти и поиск подходов к пониманию проблем, возникающих в связи с процессами регионализации, требуют нового взгляда на процесс взаимодействия этих сфер общественной жизни. В данной статье исследуются вопросы исторической памяти Шотландии в контексте процессов регионализации в Европе: что в данном случае является историей Шотландии – общеевропейской традицией или конкретным британским случаем? Можно ли по-другому взглянуть на проблему, если оба пути не исключают друг друга?

Ключевые слова: историческая память, Шотландия, Великобритания, национализм, федерализм, европейский регионализм.

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Introduction

The prospect and nature of the relationship between Scotland and the European Union have been re-placed on the political agenda in connection with the referendum on UK membership in the European Union (EU). The political fiasco of Brexit in Scotland, when 1 million 660 people voted

for staying, and 1 million 018 people voted to leave [5], contributed to the development of a discussion on the historical experience of Scotland and the European Union, Scottish historical memory and its role in the context of the development of such a phenomenon as European regionalism.

Materials and methods of research

Object of research is the processes of development and transformation of the Scottish society in their socio-cultural and political context; the subject of research is Scottish historical memory and the process of European regionalism in particular.

Aim of the research – learning the features of the regionalism processes in Scotland, according to its national tradition.

Chronological frames of the article cover modern times, although with some flashbacks to the past of the region.

To achieve this aim, general scientific research methods were used, such as: description, analysis, comparative-comparative method; and also used special methods of historical research: the historical-comparative method and the cultural-semiotic approach.

Results and the discussion

In particular, M. Russell, a member of the Scottish Parliament and a former supporter of the Scottish National Party, noted that the Scots considered themselves Europeans, and accordingly, their region – part of the common European space, long before the UK ratified its membership in the EU. The politician cites a number of historical facts about the point interaction between the region and the mainland in various fields – from economics to education. Accordingly, Russell concludes that the people of Scotland have determined their choice by voting according to an established historical tradition [14].

The pro-European views of M. Russell were supported by the Sunday Herald newspaper published in Glasgow: the editors focused on the historical identity of the Scots, which, in their opinion, largely depends not only on the national character and historical memory, but also on the degree of their influence on their European neighbors through a common history of commercial interactions, intellectual and cultural exchange – that is, the external relations of regions of Europe [15].

The question raised by both the politician and the editors is relevant: the question of whether the history of Scotland and Scottish national memory are more of a common European tradition, a particular British case, or both paths are not mutually exclusive – still remains of current interest among the academic community. Moreover, what lessons can the Scottish past carry, together with it the historical memory, for the Scottish future, as well as for the future of a united Europe in the context of the development of regionalization processes?

Recently, the internal situation in the EU has been characterized by the growth of political regionalism: an increase in regional activity has been noted in Italy, Spain, Belgium and the UK [13]. It is noteworthy that work on this issue is being carried out on several levels at once: at the

national level, the governments of all countries prefer to respond to these challenges in a fairly uniform manner, namely, to pursue a policy aimed at stabilization, expansion, but, in general, a balanced composition of internal political representation. Most of them chose to delegate authority from the center to the regional authorities [11].

At the supranational level, the EU increasingly includes a regional dimension in the process of shaping and developing its policy guidelines: the establishment in 1994 of the Committee of the Regions and the expansion of the powers of the EU funds for regional policy and European structural funds have created new links between the EU and the regions within its member states.

The historical similarity between Scotland and Europe becomes especially evident when we draw a parallel with the region's southern neighbors, the British. For example, this applies to the spiritual sphere: the complete subordination of the church to the authority of the state in England, and “Calvinism of the Geneva type” – in Scotland. Also noticeable are the frequent references and desire of the Scots to adopt the Scandinavian experience (both in everyday life and in the economic one – for example, on oil issues), and the American one – from the British. At the same time, English and Welsh legal systems are based on common law, Scottish law uses a civil code based on Roman law.

Prior historical tradition viewed Scotland's history primarily within the framework of general British history, which was largely aimed at illuminating the successful integration of the two states after 1707. Touching upon the European context, the Scottish regional heritage is seen as an integral part of building a common European space in the process of universal integration, and therefore the idea of a common historical memory with the continent is gaining relevance again. It seems that the choice between these two views of Scottish history is not entirely correct. It would be more accurate to say that this or that historical tradition prevailed depending on the balance of power in the political arena. Claims that Scotland is more “European” in character and history than England are equally related to the shaping of modern Scottish identity as the basis for an independent nation-state [12].

Traditional modernization theories are based on the idea that the development of such processes as industrialization, urbanization, the development of education and the expansion of communication contribute to the homogenization of Western European society [7]. This region was not chosen by chance: it was the countries of the Western European region, as representatives of the long-established statehood, that were assigned the role of the flagship engines of modern processes.

This region is also unique in that there is a simultaneous presence of two opposite trends – integration (the formation of a single European community) and disintegration (regionalism).

At the beginning of this century, contrary to the forecasts of such modernization theories about the irreversibility of the processes of homogenization of society, regionalism (in its various forms) turned out to be one of the dominant trends. British society, as mature, stable and dynamically developing, should have been an example of such homogeneity. But historically it turned out that it was here that ethnic and interethnic contradictions again spread, which, along with universal British nationalism and regionalism, testify to the weakening of the national state.

Scientists note that regionalism in Western Europe at this time was the least expected process. For example, K. Deutsch, one of the leading scholars in the field of European integration, a sociologist and political scientist at Harvard University, considered the development of the ideas of nationalism in the middle of the 20th century as not a promising vector of movement in the North Atlantic region for the political activity of national groups [4; 9].

European regionalism develops under the influence of the historical memory of the territories, in this case – Scotland. “Healthy” nationalism promotes state building, while sympathies for supranational institutions weaken it, which can be noted in the example of Scotland, in which the surge of nationalism in the 60–70s of the XXth century and at the beginning of the XXth century is a sign of a crisis in the British state. The phenomenon of the so-called double identity is associated with these processes: a large part of the population of Scotland defined themselves as both Scots and British. Considering Scotland as a separate region (or nation), they considered England as a separate region (or nation).

Scottish historical memory traditionally carries with it the idea that the British state did not live up to its expectations. First of all, this is expressed in the fact that at the conclusion of the Union in 1707, the Scots considered themselves as an equal partner, and not a region dependent on London. Convinced that they were allied with England as an equal partner, the Scots intuitively denied that they were being ruled by a richer and possibly stronger southern neighbor [3].

It is also indicative that, according to studies, over the past quarter century no European country has become more centralized. At the same time, half of them, on the contrary, are characterized by the decentralization of powers towards the regional level of government [6]. Moreover, it is worth noting that within the framework of the European Union itself, several types of regionalism can be distinguished:

1) regionalism as devolution.

In the area of administrative powers, when European governments have delegated some of their responsibilities to regional levels of government. And here the Scottish case is a classic example: the establishment of its own parliament by the Scottish Act in 1998 and the first elections in 1999. This phenomenon, in addition to obvious historical, political and other social policy and practice [2], the system of state administration that developed after the war in the new realities is not economically profitable and ineffective. Having resorted to devolution, the central government has relinquished some of its everyday tasks, leaving the regions to independently determine the vector of their development on private issues.

2) regionalism as federalism.

This, at first glance, is a completely contradictory property of regionalism – sometimes taking federal features – serves as greater regional autonomy both within one state entity and in the vastness of the common European space. An example is the governments of the federal states of Germany or Austria, participating in the development of a common European policy not only on administrative issues, but also at the foreign policy level.

3) regionalism as nationalism.

The classical understanding of a nation is a community of people based on a single historical tradition and memory, culture, in most cases, language and religion matter. Very often, nations develop within several states. This is the key moment of the interaction of European regionalism and nationalism: since the EU consists of several member states, including many nations, the first [regionalism] helps the second [nationalism] go beyond one state and develop at the interstate level.

Multilevel governance has led to the fact that regional entities began to exert an increasing influence on decision-making in the EU; nation states, in turn, began to lose their monopoly in this area.

In this light, the example of Scotland is particularly interesting. This is a region whose people, following the path of European integration, have managed to maintain a commitment to the national memory and historical tradition of their once independent state, while resisting centripetal tendencies within the United Kingdom. Chronologically, Britain's accession to the European Union coincided with the rise of nationalism in Scotland [8]. These two events took place in parallel and were not dependent on each other. However, it seems obvious that joining the common European space allowed the nationalists to feel a certain level of confidence: having achieved the status of autonomy within the UK, they would nevertheless continue to receive support from Brussels. The rise of nationalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which ended in the 1979 referendum, laid the foundation for the subsequent modernization in the constitutional order of the entire British state in the long term: the establishment of parliament in accordance with the 1998 Scottish Act and subsequent elections to it in 1999. The division of responsibilities took place in such a way that the competence the regional parliament was assigned a number of issues such as health, education, legislation, agriculture, while matters relating to foreign policy remained the prerogative of Westminster. Thus, it is obvious that the interaction of the region with the EU was extremely difficult without the participation of London: the British government tightly controlled the conduct of European politics and the degree of independence of the Scottish executive power in these processes [10].

As the European Union began to interact with its territories through the implementation of regional projects, the influence of territorial authorities increased. Along with other states, Scotland is represented in the European Union through a number of formal and informal institutions. First of all, the EU interacts with the regions through legislation. However, it is worth considering the fact that as long as countries, and not regions, are members of the European Union, then the interaction between them will take place at the supranational level.

Conclusion

Historically, Scotland is a region characterized by the presence of powerful and influential regional authorities (for example, Strathclyde), which also influences the nature of relations with the European Union.

Scotland is also characterized by the presence of traditional devolutionary tendencies aimed at making localized decisions. The question of the complete independence of the territory from the UK is still open and it is assumed that its status is unlikely to be changed over the next decade.

However, the analysis of the historical experience of Scotland, as well as devolutionary tendencies of the XX – early XXI century suggests that it is the regional interaction in the European Union that is of paramount importance for the region, since it is within its framework that small countries are given the opportunity to be “heard”. This applies to both the political and economic spheres – for example, the adoption of a single currency would ensure closer interaction in the future of an independent region with one of the most powerful economies in the world.

Being subject to transformation, national consciousness, along with the historical memory of the people, contributes to changes in national thinking: a nation as a spiritual community, united by the unity of the past and its symbols, culture, and not needing independent political institutions, came to be replaced by a political nation, putting forward demands for political independence [1].

Even if Scotland does not receive the status of an independent state within the next decade, in search of explanations for many of the problems faced by Scottish society in a rapidly changing world, and attempts to find its own place in it, to define its identity along with the presence of a conflict of “native” and “imported” from a political point of view, support from the European Union will continue to be of a strategic nature, since the stronger the ties between the EU regions, the weaker the authority of the central government within the nation state [1].

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