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## The historical policy plan as it relates to the progression of the Russian-Ukrainian war

### El plan político histórico en relación con la progresión de la guerra ruso-ucraniana

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#### Abstract

Russian aggression against Ukraine since 2014 and its new explosion in 2022 actualized historical issues. The purpose of the article is to analyze the strategy of historical politics in the context of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The methods of system analysis, forecasting, historical-comparative approach were used to write the research. The results highlighted the emergence and peculiarities of the use of the term “historical policy”, investigated the problems of creating and functioning of a unified policy, and the peculiarities of the organization of the historical policy strategy. The article examines that in countries without undeveloped academic freedom, historiography depends on the direction of the political situation. It is the ruling elites who act as the main customers for the formation of historical theories, the writing of relevant narratives, and the creation of concepts that change history in its affirmative template. Among the problems on the way to the formation of historical policy, the existence of significant

#### Resumen

La agresión rusa contra Ucrania desde 2014 y su nueva explosión en 2022 actualizaron cuestiones históricas. El propósito del artículo es analizar la estrategia de la política histórica en el contexto del desarrollo de la guerra ruso-ucraniana. Los métodos de análisis de sistemas, la previsión, el enfoque histórico-comparativo se utilizaron para escribir la investigación. Los resultados pusieron de relieve la aparición y las peculiaridades del uso del término “política histórica”, investigaron los problemas de la creación y el funcionamiento de una política unificada y las peculiaridades de la organización de la estrategia de política histórica. El artículo examina que en los países sin una libertad académica poco desarrollada, la historiografía depende de la dirección de la situación política. Son las élites gobernantes las que actúan como principales clientes para la formación de teorías históricas, la redacción de relatos relevantes y la creación de conceptos que cambien la historia en su plantilla afirmativa. Entre los problemas en el camino hacia la formación de la política histórica, se ha corroborado la existencia

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contradictions in the interpretation of events, the use of history for political manipulation, and insufficient attention to national minorities have been substantiated. The conclusions emphasize the importance of the formation of historical policy based on scientific knowledge, rather than a political vision.

**Keywords:** historical policy, strategy, Russian-Ukrainian war, humanitarian policy, Ukraine.

## Introduction

Russian aggression in Ukraine, which began in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea and support for pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, has taken on a new global dimension since February 2022. The challenge to the world security organization system has also become a defining issue for domestic Ukrainian realities. With the invasion and military destruction, academic confrontation has intensified significantly. Russian disinformation, which had been actively used since 2014, received new substantial infusions, but this time faced active Ukrainian resistance. The reason for this is the confrontation in the field of humanities, part of which is caused by historical policy, thanks to which it was possible to stop the spread of Russian historical myths and fictions. Addressing this issue is relevant because in the future the debunking of stereotypes and outright fakes of Russian propaganda is gradually transformed into a kind of “information war zone”, the existence of which has become a distinctive feature of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The use of historical “arguments” as occasions for aggressive foreign policy in the XXI century. has turned the official Kremlin into a pariah in the diplomatic sense of the word (Kurapov et al., 2022). At the same time, the gigantic domestic market for the consumption of propaganda information allows Moscow's information troops to freely use “historical” rebukes. Unfortunately, for a long time, part of Ukrainian society had free access to such information. Its closure has created a certain vacuum, which Ukrainian sources of historical information must fill. A balanced policy in the sphere of history has the task to simplify and accelerate such a transition.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the strategy of historical policy in the context of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Achieving this goal requires the implementation of certain tasks:

de contradicciones significativas en la interpretación de los acontecimientos, el uso de la historia para la manipulación política y la insuficiente atención a las minorías nacionales. Las conclusiones subrayan la importancia de la formación de una política histórica basada en el conocimiento científico, más que en una visión política.

**Palabras clave:** política histórica, estrategia, guerra ruso-ucraniana, política humanitaria, Ucrania.

1. To characterize general ideas about modern historical politics.
2. Identify problems and prospects for the formation of historical policy in Ukraine.
3. Analyze the peculiarities of forming a historical policy strategy in modern Ukraine.

## Theoretical Framework or Literature Review

The works of contemporary historians and political scientists who have studied the transformation of Russian-Ukrainian relations through the centuries and investigated the origins of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its hybrid mechanisms are important for this study.

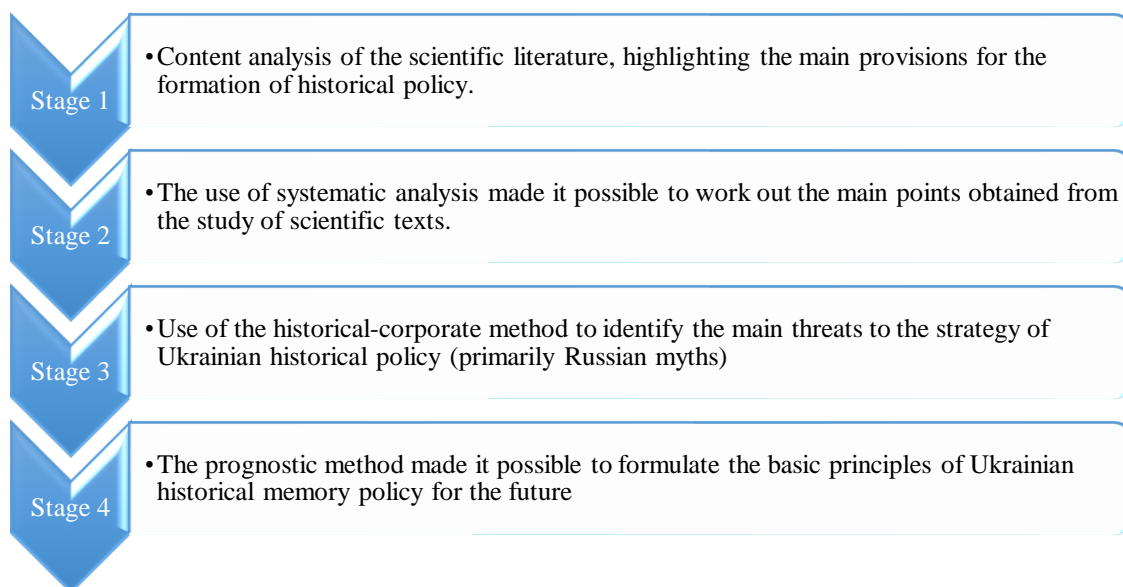
Canadian political scientist Kordan (2022) in his work “Russia's war against Ukraine: historical narratives, geopolitics, and peace” explored the development of Russian-Ukrainian relations through the prism of historical, political, and economic aspects. The researcher notes that relations between these states have always been formed based on contrasting historical narratives, which can be defined as “the story of empire and colonial rule against sovereignty and self-determination”. The author further notes that by emphasizing identity, the Russian imperial historical narrative turns to the past and the state's control over it. At the same time, Ukraine's history, based on autochthonous and European origins, shapes a future based on the principles of freedom, unity, and autonomy. Canadian historian of Ukrainian origin Himka (2015), exploring the historical origins of the mentality of the Ukrainian people, noted that different historical experiences in the regional plane of Ukraine led to the emergence of different cultures and identities. Bulgarian researcher Michailova (2022) explored the historical origins of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict of 2014, which resulted in Russia's seizure of Crimea, is historically closely related to the collapse of the

USSR in 1991. At the same time, British and Canadian political scientist of Ukrainian origin Kuzio (2022) analyzed key events, the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and investigated its preconditions and causes of escalation. Ukrainian researcher Vushko (2017) described the importance of historians in the Russian-Ukrainian struggle. She notes that the military events entailed an intensification of historical debates, influencing history to become more relevant than ever before. Canadian historian Marples (2022) explored the specifics of the development of Ukrainian-Russian relations, outlined key aspects of the war's origins, and discussed its continuation and possible outcomes. Hurska (2021) characterized Russia's hybrid strategy in the context of Black Sea politics. Bertelsen (2017) experienced the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014) in Ukraine and outlined the relationship of these events to Russian aggression. Martz (2022) described the course and development of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation, focusing on the analysis of Russian army crimes against Ukraine. Sidorova et al. (2022) identified key features of humanitarian policy formation in the context of military conditions. At the same time, works of Ukrainian historians such as Gromenko (2022), Parshyn (2020), Spys (2022), Ryvchin (2022) provide insight into the vectors of Ukrainian policy through the centuries and the development of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation. The work of researchers who have studied the development of Ukrainian military law is also important for this study. Zakharchuk (2022) investigated the peculiarities of legal regulation of military law through the prism of foresight.

Therefore, the researchers focused on several important aspects of the formation of historical memory policy in Ukraine: the importance of the "Russian factor" and its influence on historical perceptions in Ukraine, the need to get rid of this influence through the prism of the events of the occupation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent deployment of full-scale aggression; the relevance of attempts to formulate the basic principles of the concept of historical memory. At the same time, the challenges associated with responding to Russian propaganda, which uses historical narratives as a justification for aggression, will require further analysis.

### Methodology

This work uses general scientific and special historical methods of knowledge. The study is based on the system analysis, through which the importance of the strategy of historical policy in the context of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war is defined. Through the prism of system analysis, the decomposition of the system of the strategy of historical policy into separate elements is conducted and the holistic characteristic of how they interact for the purpose of the main goal - the effective organization of humanitarian policy of Ukraine is made. Possible strategic directions of historical policy are defined and described with the help of the prognostic method. Special historical methods of reality study are of particular importance in the study. In particular, through the prism of using a historical-corporative method, it was possible to characterize some established myths of the past events in Russian historiography (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Sequence of research methods used.

Source: author's development.

This methodological model made it possible to fully reveal the purpose and objectives of the study. Its use in practice has not met with serious objections.

## Results and Discussion

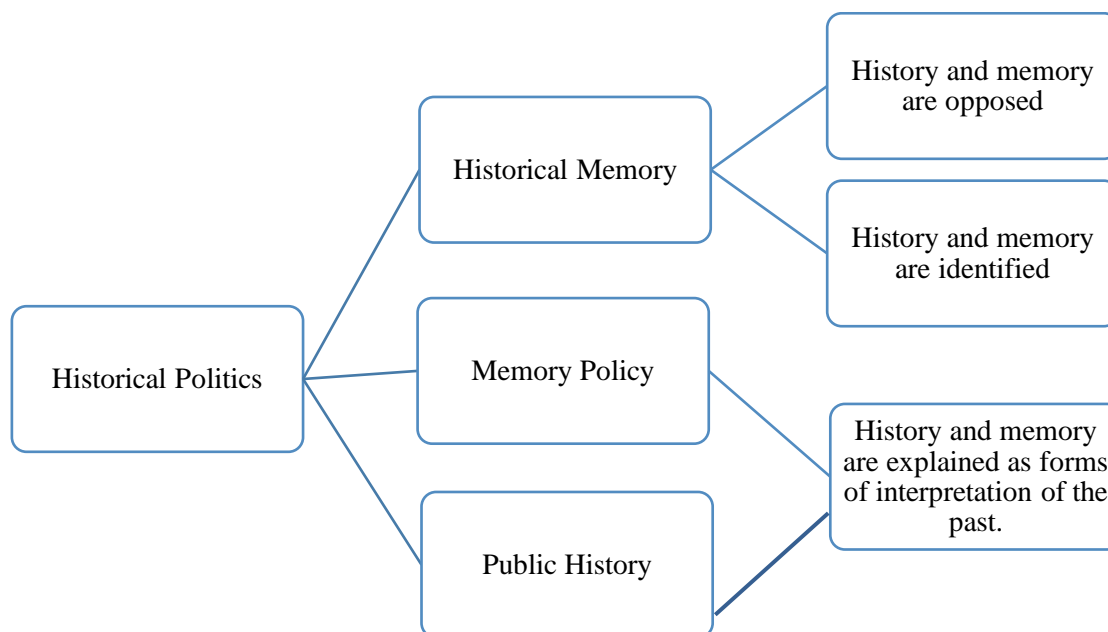
### Historical Politics: An Explanation

The term historical politics refers to the set of practices through which certain political forces or states attempt to assert certain interpretations and explanations of past events as dominant (Gromenko, 2022). For this reason, contemporary researchers believe that historical politics has three functions, in particular: symbolic, interpersonal, and identification (Kellner et al., 1993). At the same time, the problem of the dependence (or independence) of historiography on political discourse dates back to the emergence of history as science itself. For example, in countries where academic freedom is underdeveloped, historiography depends on a certain political conjuncture, as diverse systems of political elites act as customers of historical theories, narratives, or concepts, modifying history into its affirmative template (Vushko, 2017). Consequently, history and politics have always been closely linked throughout the centuries, with authorities trying to apply individual historical manifestations in order to enhance their importance and influence on society. Such a fact is logical and justified, because when the authorities disregard historical experience, then in order to justify their policy, they try to turn history into instruments of politics, distorting historical processes themselves, falsifying historical phenomena and facts, giving them anti-scientific judgments.

Historical politics as an instrumental implementation of past events for political purposes is an old phenomenon. However, it

appeared and “successfully implemented” before the emergence of this concept. The term “historical politics” itself emerged in scholarship when its use reached a critical point: in the context of a variety of manipulations of past events in the interests of modernity (Higashi et al., 1993). It is clear that in the 1930s the concept of “historical politics” (Geschichtspolitik) began to be actively used in the works of German historians, in the 1970s - in the United States (Higashi et al., 1993). Obviously, in the USSR history became an element of ideological propaganda, so historians involved in the development and implementation of the historical policy were called “soldiers of the ideological front”. Nowadays, the historical policy is implemented on behalf of cultural, political, ethnic, or other social groups through the prism of the struggle for power, its content, or division. In a sense, the term is an element of the global phenomenon of the politicization of history and one of the manifestations of the increased attention of political practitioners, historians, and other researchers to the politics of memory (Kellner et al., 1993). We believe that the phenomenon of historical politics includes the transmission of various memories and experiences as well as forgotten historical facts. History policy is implemented by its subjects: the president, the government, the parliament, the National Academy of Sciences, and other government institutions. At the same time, it can also be implemented by the civil society, through various special associations or organizations, and by independent media outlets.

An integral part of historical politics is the phenomenon of historical memory (Sydorova et al., 2022). If we summarize the various interpretations of the nature of the relationship between history and memory, we can reduce them to the following positions (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The relationship between historical politics and memory.

*Developed by the authors of the article*

Thus, in some concepts, history, and memory are opposing elements, even treated as incompatible. At the same time, history and memory are sometimes identified. The most common approach is that history and memory should be explained as specific forms of interpretation, interpretation, and representation of the past reality that are in manifestations of constant interaction and mutual complementarity (Higashi et al., 1993). Consequently, when considering the peculiarities of the formation of historical policy, special attention should be paid to the development of historical memory.

### **Problems of forming a unified historical policy in Ukraine**

In general, the introduction of a unified historical policy in Ukraine may face a whole set of challenges. This set can be increased or decreased, but the main challenges will remain unchanged.

1. The existence of significant contradictions in the interpretation of events in Ukrainian history. One and the same historical fact may have different interpretations depending on the political, social, and cultural attitudes of different population groups (Sydorova et al., 2022). This can lead to clashes regarding the content of the historical policy and cause distrust of it among certain groups of the population. The free exchange of opinions among Ukrainian specialists has led to the normal democratic development of history

as a science (Himka, 2015). However, the installation of clear markers and assessments can be perceived negatively. In this context, an important detail is the lack of sources to describe many events. Even relatively modern documents are partially preserved in Russian archives, access to which has always been difficult for Ukrainian historians (Parshyn, 2020). Many archives have been destroyed or have been moved to Russian collections. For example, all Old Ukrainian chronicles of the Kyiv and Volyn traditions are preserved outside of Ukraine (Parshyn, 2018). For this reason, it is impossible to reproduce individual events in their entirety, they will always leave room for interpretations.

2. The use of history for the purposes of political manipulation. Historical politics can be used to support a particular political or national ideology. This can entail ulterior motives in historical politics and disrupt the objectivity of the reflection of history. A prime example of this risk is the contemporary historical politics supported by the Kremlin regime (Kordan, 2022). Its direction demonstrates significant distortions of the real course of events, which is done intentionally to justify certain political needs (Ivanov, Ivanov & Okipnyuk, 2021). In particular, it refers to the ethnic situation in the South and East of Ukraine, where the overwhelming majority, it would seem, has always been Russians (Hurska, 2021). The exaltation of such theses does not

do credit to Russian historians. At the same time, it does not exclude the possibility of a repetition of the “Russian” scenario, in which political interests will dominate over the scientific requirements of objectivity.

3. Insufficient attention to national minorities and other groups whose pasts are linked to the territories in which they live (Krasnozhan, 2021). Historical policies may not take into account the history of minorities and other groups, which can lead to a distortion of history and complicate the formation of national identity. Such a development is quite possible when the previous point is realized - neighboring peoples and ethnic minorities begin to be forgotten when political interests begin to prevail. The use of historical politics as a weapon against national minorities may contribute to the emergence of inferiority complexes, xenophobia manifestations, etc. (Michailova, 2022).
4. When creating a historical policy, the Ukrainian side should take into account the fact that the Russian government systematically turns to manipulations on historical topics, which allegedly explain and prove the prerogative of Russia on its territory and resources. It is known that the

rhetoric of the Russians applies the concept of the Russian world, which justifies the seizure of Ukrainian territories (Kuzio, 2022). In particular, for this concept, the seizure of the peninsula of Crimea has a notable meaning, since it was here that Prince Vladimir the Great was baptized. That is, this territory is supposedly symbolic for Russia (Ryvchin, 2022). However, first of all, one should take into account the fact that Vladimir Sviatoslavovich was the prince of Kyiv. At the same time, in the international legal plane, the justification of modern political actions and reactions by what happened to significant historical figures is not a legal basis.

### **Peculiarities of the formation of the strategy of historical policy of modern Ukraine**

According to contemporary Ukrainian historian Gromenko (2022), when Ukraine lacks a clear Ukrainocentric Strategy of historical policy, the Ukrainian population will be doomed to constantly compete with Russian myths in the historical arena, without the ability to counterattack. Therefore, the main directions of the Strategy can be defined in advance (See Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*The main directions of historical policy*

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#### **The main directions of the strategy of historical policy**

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1. Debunking historical myths constructed by Russia
  2. Decommunization and decolonization
  3. The popularization of a Ukrainian-centric humanitarian policy
  4. Formation of the historical memory of contemporary dead heroes
  5. Lustration of collaborators in all spheres of activity (special emphasis on education and science).
  6. The domination of scientific interests over political ones in the research, popularization, and understanding of history
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#### *Authors' development*

The main direction of modern historical policy should be the debunking of all Russian myths and their manifestation in Ukraine. Consequently, decommunization is important, which is now embodied through the prism of street renaming. After that, the main emphasis should be placed on revising and changing the basic Soviet legal and institutional norms, concepts, and principles. This will have the effect of eradicating Soviet methods of organization at the official level. At the same time, the key focus should be on incorporating European standards of doing business and taking into account Ukrainian realities and national traditions. Another important stage is the formalization of the

decolonization process. For this reason, it will be important to form the key foundations of deprivation of the public plane of monuments, names of institutions associated with the process of incorporation into the empires (Hurska, 2021). At the same time, the implementation of the historical policy of Ukraine should include the creation of new names of streets, monuments honoring the fallen in the Russian-Ukrainian war, and other modern heroes (Gyidel, 2021). This will unite the national idea and will be a kind of permanent memorial to the deeds and honor of contemporary Ukrainian heroes. A significant part of this direction is the creation of the National Military Cemetery, the formation of the

so-called National Pantheon of Ukraine (Martz, 2022).

At the same time, the popularization of Ukrainian-centered humanitarian policy should become an important direction of the modern Strategy (Spys, 2022). It means that the Ukrainian authorities should motivate specialists to form special courses, open seminars, lectures, webinars, programs on YouTube channels, TV channels, etc., which told the public about the real history of Ukraine and debunked all the myths on popular scientific plane. Related to this is also the popularization of Ukraine's historical past through the development of documentary and historical films (Marples, 2022).

Lustration of collaborators should be introduced in all fields of human activity, followed by a taboo for the realization of the profession. (Gromenko, 2022). This should be implemented in order to ensure that collaborative collaborators with the enemy and do not harm the implementation of Ukrainian-centric policies.

The historical policy should respond to all the above-mentioned problematic challenges. In particular, it should be based on the principles of consensus among scholars, which puts exactly the scientific element at the center. At the same time, it must be recognized that there are things that are blatantly horrible and criminal. For example, the Stalinist famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine. It cannot be rehabilitated, substantiated, or justified in any other way (Zakharchuk, 2022). Similarly, Ukrainian historians are likely to condemn the actions of the Putin regime (Kaplina, 2022). It is important to note the probable involvement of legal decisions - if the relevant sessions of the tribunal are held, it will allow to recognize the criminal actions as criminal from a legal point of view (Kaplina, 2022). Accordingly, attempts to justify them will be punished, and even if there are researchers who do not agree with the conclusion of the court, this will be a sufficient argument to erase the respect of the criminals from the national memory.

Cooperation among historians would be facilitated by organizing and holding regular conferences where certain problematic issues could be discussed and recommendations for future controversies could be made (Bertelsen, 2017). A positive example was the congresses of Ukrainian historians held under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Perhaps similar measures should be reinstated so

that they rekindle interest in historical policymaking.

Consequently, a particularly important step is the formation of the so-called "humanitarian front," the main task of which is to counter Russian and historical fakes (Russian aggression in the media). The subjects of the implementation of the humanitarian front should be scientists (historians, political scientists, cultural scientists, art historians, etc.), economists, educators, and journalists (Gushchyn et al., 2022). Such events will contribute not only to the implementation of effective humanitarian policy but also to the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation through the organization of various popular science projects and events.

### Conclusions

Thus, the new stage of the Russo-Ukrainian war, which began in 2022, demonstrated the presence of not only a military clash but also a clash of ideologies. Russian historical policy has become the cornerstone of preparation for justifying aggressive actions in Ukraine. The Ukrainian side faced a lack of appropriate policy tools. The development of a separate policy in the historical sphere has become an urgent problem.

The article confirms that the components of the historical policy are public history, historical memory, and the politics of memory. Paying attention to these elements will be an extremely important task in the future, as the work of researchers continues, and relevant updates on the interpretation of certain events must be presented appropriately. The main challenges to the development of historical politics will be research and communication problems. First of all, we are talking about the existence of significant contradictions in the interpretation of certain events in Ukrainian history. One and the same historical fact may have different interpretations depending on the political, social, and cultural attitudes of different population groups. It is also possible for history to be used for political manipulation. Another challenge is the lack of attention to national minorities and other population groups, whose past is linked to the territories in which they live. These challenges can be overcome through a thoughtful historical policy strategy. The main directions of historical strategy should be: debunking the historical myths compiled by the Kremlin regime, de-communization, and decolonization, popularization of Ukrainian-centric humanitarian policy, formation of historical memory about contemporary dead heroes,

illustration of collaborators in all spheres of activity ( scientific interests over political ones in research, popularization, and understanding of history.

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