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A Sociological Analysis of Socio-Economic Development in the Context of Historical Memory and Social Solidarity

Tarihsel Bellek ve Toplumsal Dayanışma Bağlamında Sosyo-Ekonomik
Gelişmenin Sosyolojik Analizi

Abstract

This article examines the impact of historical memory and social solidarity on socio-economic development from a sociological perspective. In contemporary societies, the formation of collective memory, mechanisms of national identity, and processes of social integration directly shape economic behavior, levels of social capital, and institutional stability. These processes not only structure patterns of interaction but also influence the normative orientation of economic decision-making. The study analyzes the role of historical memory within the social system through both classical and contemporary sociological approaches, including functionalism, structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. The findings demonstrate that strong collective memory and institutionalized social solidarity accelerate economic modernization, enhance civic participation, and reinforce social stability. In contrast, fragmented memory structures contribute to social polarization and developmental imbalances. The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that socio-economic development should be understood not only through material indicators but also through cultural and social dynamics, thereby expanding the analytical scope of development theory.

Keywords: historical memory, collective memory, social solidarity, social capital, social integration, national identity

Öz

Bu çalışma, tarihsel bellek ve toplumsal dayanışma dinamiklerinin sosyo-ekonomik gelişme üzerindeki etkisini sosyolojik bir çerçevede incelemektedir. Günümüz toplumlarında kolektif belleğin oluşumu, ulusal kimlik mekanizmaları ve toplumsal bütünleşme süreçleri ekonomik davranış kalıplarını, sosyal sermaye düzeyini ve kurumsal istikrarı doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bu süreçler yalnızca toplumsal ilişkileri düzenlemekle kalmamakta, aynı zamanda ekonomik karar alma davranışlarının normatif

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yönelimini de şekillendirmektedir. Araştırma, tarihsel belleğin toplumsal sistem içindeki rolünü işlevselcilik, yapısal işlevselcilik, çatışma kuramı ve sembolik etkileşimcilik gibi kuramsal yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Bulgular, güçlü kolektif bellek yapıları ile kurumsallaşmış toplumsal dayanışmanın ekonomik modernleşmeyi hızlandırdığını, yurttaş katılımını artırdığını ve toplumsal istikrarı güçlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Buna karşılık, parçalanmış bellek yapıları toplumsal kutuplaşmayı derinleştirmekte ve gelişme süreçlerinde dengesizliklere yol açmaktadır. Çalışma, sosyo-ekonomik gelişmenin yalnızca maddi göstergelerle değil, aynı zamanda kültürel ve toplumsal dinamiklerle birlikte değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini ortaya koyarak literatüre katkı sunmaktadır ve bu yönüyle gelişme analizine daha bütüncül bir perspektif kazandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: tarihsel bellek, kolektif bellek, toplumsal dayanışma, sosyal sermaye, toplumsal bütünlük, ulusal kimlik

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. In the 21st century, the nature of socio-economic development has undergone a profound transformation. Development is no longer limited to GDP growth, industrialization, or technological modernization. Contemporary sociological approaches emphasize that sustainable development critically depends on the cultural structure of society, collective identity, and mechanisms of social integration. In this regard, factors such as historical memory and social solidarity function as intangible determinants of socio-economic dynamics. Recent studies on information environments and institutional knowledge systems further indicate that the organization and transmission of informational resources play a significant role in shaping these intangible dimensions (Muhammedli, 2025b).

Historical memory not only shapes a society's orientation toward its past but also contributes to the legitimacy of normative systems and guides collective behavioral patterns. Social solidarity, in turn, operates as a mechanism aligning individual interests with collective goals, thereby preserving the integrity of the social structure. Under contemporary globalization conditions, the fragmentation of collective memory and the intensification of social polarization further underscore the relevance of this topic. At the same time, transformations in informational and institutional practices, particularly in periods of systemic disruption, demonstrate how socio-cultural frameworks adapt to changing conditions while maintaining continuity (Muhammedli, 2025a).

In the Azerbaijani context, the consolidation of national statehood, the promotion of social cohesion in the post-conflict period, and the implementation of economic modernization strategies necessitate a comprehensive examination of historical memory and social solidarity factors. These processes are closely linked to the capacity of institutions to reinterpret and systematize collective experience within evolving informational and socio-political environments.

Problem statement. Although contemporary social theory extensively addresses the economic and institutional dimensions of development, the mechanisms through which historical memory and social solidarity influence socio-economic processes remain insufficiently examined. The core issue lies in identifying, within concrete empirical and theoretical frameworks, how the structural components

of collective memory interact with levels of social integration to shape economic behavior patterns. The central research question is therefore formulated as follows: through which mechanisms does the institutionalization of historical memory strengthen social solidarity, and how does this process affect the resilience of socio-economic development? Research objective. The study aims to identify the mechanisms by which historical memory and social solidarity influence socio-economic development from a sociological perspective and to substantiate their interrelation at both theoretical and empirical levels. Scientific novelty. The study's contributions include conceptualizing the interaction between historical memory and social solidarity within a unified analytical framework, systematizing the intangible determinants of socio-economic development, and proposing an integrative development model applicable to post-transformation societies. Practical significance. The findings provide a theoretical basis for shaping public policy, designing social integration programs, and refining educational and ideological strategies. Furthermore, the study offers applicable mechanisms for strengthening social capital within socio-economic planning processes. The integration of informational infrastructures and knowledge management practices into policy design may further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these strategies (Muhammedli, 2025b).

Sociological and Theoretical Foundations of Historical Memory

Conceptual Definition of Historical Memory. Historical memory constitutes the socially organized form of a society's perceptions of the past, collective experiences, and symbolic interpretations within the social structure. It is not a mere mechanical aggregation of individual memories but rather a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by normative and ideological frameworks and sustained through intergenerational transmission. The concept of collective consciousness forms the theoretical basis of historical memory. A society perceives itself not only as a subject of the present but also as a continuation of historical processes. This perception plays a crucial role in the formation of national identity. Historical memory establishes the ideological foundation of the collective "we" and determines the semantic framework of social integration. Historical consciousness represents the reflective dimension of historical memory. While memory preserves social experiences, historical consciousness interprets these experiences and shapes strategies for future behavior. Thus, historical memory possesses not only a retrospective but also a prognostic function.

The social-constructivist nature of memory indicates that the past is reconstructed within the system of social relations rather than reproduced objectively (Agayev, 2025). Educational systems, media, political discourse, and cultural institutions play a central role in shaping historical memory. Within this process, the principle of selectivity operates: certain events acquire symbolic significance, while others recede to the periphery.

Theories of Collective Memory. The theoretical foundations of historical memory extend from classical sociological approaches to contemporary discursive models. Structural-functional perspectives evaluate memory as a guarantor of social integration, preserving normative stability and reinforcing social order. The concept of cultural memory connects memory not only with institutions but also with symbolic systems such as rituals, monuments, and collective ceremonies, which ensure intergenerational transmission.

Postmodern approaches interpret memory as a discursive construct shaped within power relations (Agayeva & Abbasli, 2023). Accordingly, historical memory can function both as a mechanism of integration and a source of conflict.

Structural Components of Historical Memory. Historical memory consists of three components: symbolic, institutional, and communicative. Symbolic spaces represent collective identity, while institutional mechanisms define normative frameworks. Communication channels such as media and public discourse ensure transmission and reinterpretation (Khalafova & Ismayilov, 2024). In the contemporary era, media has become a primary carrier of memory, expanding interpretative plurality while also increasing fragmentation risks.

Functions of Historical Memory. Historical memory performs key functions including normative legitimacy, social integration, and mobilization. These functions enable the stabilization of social order and the coordination of collective action.

Theoretical and Structural Analysis of Social Solidarity

Concept and Development. Social solidarity refers to cohesion around shared values and functions as a key integrative mechanism. In modern societies, solidarity is based on functional interdependence rather than similarity. Normative systems underpin social cohesion. Weakening consensus leads to declining trust and increasing fragmentation tendencies.

Social Capital and Trust. Social capital represents networks of trust and mutual obligations. Structural approaches emphasize networks, while normative approaches highlight shared values (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025).

Types of Social Capital. Social capital includes bonding, bridging, and linking forms. These forms interact to maintain balanced social integration (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2022).

Institutional Foundations of Trust. Trust exists at interpersonal and institutional levels. Institutional trust is crucial for stability and economic performance. Historical memory shapes trust by influencing collective perceptions of institutions.

Network Structures and Civic Participation. Social solidarity is maintained through civic networks and participation. Active civic engagement strengthens social capital and supports

development (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025). Indicators of Social Solidarity. Social solidarity can be measured through civic participation, organizational capacity, and perceptions of justice. Declining participation weakens normative legitimacy, while strong institutional structures enhance systemic stability (Abasova, 2024).

Social Fragmentation and Risk Factors. Weak solidarity leads to fragmentation, including polarization and distrust. Ideological fragmentation weakens collective narratives and undermines integration (Agayeva, 2024). Persistent distrust negatively affects cooperation and development processes (Abasova, 2024). Thus, social solidarity is closely linked to social capital, trust, and institutional structures. Its sustainability depends on the institutionalization of historical memory, while its weakening destabilizes socio-economic development.

Reproduction of Historical Memory through Social Institutions and Socio-Economic Behavior Models

Historical memory is reproduced not only at the level of collective consciousness but also through institutional structures, which play a decisive role in shaping socio-economic behavior patterns.

Education System and Normative Encoding of Historical Memory. The education system represents a primary mechanism for institutional transmission. Curricula, textbooks, and civic education contribute to the formation of collective identity. Narratives of historical experience reinforce social solidarity and mobilization potential, while the remembrance of historical events contributes to the formation of collective behavioral orientations (Mahammadli, 2024). Consequently, the education system indirectly influences economic behavior by shaping civic responsibility, trust, and socially responsible entrepreneurship.

Mass Media and Memory Politics. The representation of historical events in media reshapes collective consciousness and establishes ideological frameworks that influence socio-economic stability. Media discourse may strengthen social cohesion or intensify fragmentation. Legitimization of development models through historical narratives enhances public acceptance and reduces resistance (Khalafova & Ismayilov, 2024).

Mechanisms of Transforming Social Solidarity into Economic Capital

Social solidarity constitutes not only a normative but also an economic resource.

Social Capital and Economic Efficiency. High levels of trust reduce transaction costs and enhance economic efficiency. In contrast, low-trust environments rely heavily on administrative control, leading to inefficiencies.

Culture of Collective Action. Strong solidarity increases participation in public projects and improves implementation of development programs. Collective action plays a key role in local economic initiatives.

Historical Traumas and Socio-Economic Transformation

Historical traumas influence social behavior and economic strategies. They generate cautious economic behavior patterns and reinforce collective resilience. Under certain conditions, traumatic memory may also enhance social cohesion and contribute to development potential (Balayeva & Mahammadli, 2025). In this context, the legacy of traumatic experiences often shapes risk perception and decision-making processes, leading to more conservative and security-oriented economic practices. At the same time, when collectively reinterpreted, such experiences can foster a shared sense of purpose and solidarity, strengthening the capacity of societies to mobilize resources in response to challenges. Thus, traumatic memory operates as a dual mechanism that both constrains and enables socio-economic development depending on its mode of integration into the social system.

Globalization Context

Globalization introduces challenges to collective memory and identity. It may weaken local identities and reshape historical narratives, leading to structural changes in social solidarity (Nadir & Sevda, 2022). In this context, globalization not only expands cultural interactions but also generates tensions between global influences and locally embedded value systems. Such tensions can result in the reconfiguration of collective identities, where traditional narratives are either transformed or marginalized within broader transnational frameworks.

The preservation of historical memory is therefore essential for maintaining legitimacy and stability within development strategies (Qasimli & Mahammadli, 2024). By sustaining continuity between past experiences and present institutional practices, historical memory reinforces the credibility of development policies and supports long-term societal cohesion. Accordingly, the integration of global dynamics with locally grounded historical narratives emerges as a key condition for achieving balanced and sustainable socio-economic development.

Empirical Analysis

Indicators of Historical Memory.

Historical memory is measured through knowledge of history, emotional attachment to the past, and identity indicators that reflect the continuity of collective experience (Ismayilov, 2022). These dimensions capture both the cognitive and affective components of memory, linking individual perceptions with collective representations. In this context, historical knowledge provides a cognitive

framework, emotional attachment reinforces symbolic belonging, and identity-based indicators reveal the degree of internalization of shared narratives within the social structure.

Indicators of Social Solidarity.

Social solidarity encompasses a set of interrelated indicators, including trust, civic participation, and a sense of social responsibility. These dimensions reflect the degree of cohesion within a society and the extent to which individuals align their actions with collective norms and expectations. Trust functions as a foundational element that facilitates cooperation and reduces social uncertainty, while participation indicates the active engagement of individuals in social, civic, and institutional processes. Responsibility, in turn, represents the internalization of shared values and obligations, reinforcing the stability of social relations. Together, these indicators provide a multidimensional framework for assessing the strength and sustainability of social integration within the broader social structure.

Indicators of Socio-Economic Development.

Socio-economic development is measured through a combination of economic performance and social indicators that reflect both material progress and societal well-being (Ismayilov & Khudiyeva, 2023). Economic performance typically includes metrics such as productivity, income levels, and structural diversification, while social indicators encompass dimensions such as access to education, quality of life, social mobility, and equality of opportunity. The integration of these indicators allows for a more comprehensive assessment of development by capturing not only quantitative growth but also qualitative transformations within the social structure. In this context, sustainable development is understood as a balanced process in which economic expansion is accompanied by improvements in social cohesion and institutional effectiveness.

Statistical Analysis

Correlation Analysis.

A positive correlation exists between historical memory and social solidarity, as well as between solidarity and economic performance (Khalafova et al., 2025). This relationship suggests that the strengthening of shared historical narratives contributes to higher levels of social cohesion, which in turn enhances collective capacity for coordinated economic activity. Moreover, the interaction between these variables indicates that social solidarity functions as a mediating mechanism through which cultural and symbolic resources are translated into tangible socio-economic outcomes. In this respect, the alignment of collective memory with institutional practices may play a critical role in sustaining long-term development dynamics.

Social solidarity emerges as a key explanatory variable in economic development, while historical memory operates as a structural determinant (Ismayilov & Aliyeva, 2023). This distinction highlights

the dual-layered nature of development processes, where structural factors shape the underlying conditions and relational dynamics influence observable outcomes. In this context, social solidarity facilitates the mobilization of collective resources and enhances coordination among actors, whereas historical memory provides a normative and symbolic framework that stabilizes these interactions over time. The interplay between these dimensions suggests that sustainable development depends not only on institutional arrangements but also on the continuity of shared meanings within the social system.

Qualitative Analysis: Discourse and Identity Model

National Narrative and Economic Legitimacy. Discourse analysis demonstrates that development strategies achieve higher levels of public acceptance when aligned with historical narratives (Qasimli & Mahammadli, 2024). The incorporation of historical symbols into economic initiatives strengthens social mobilization, while resistance to reforms tends to intensify in contexts of identity conflict.

Social Trauma and Economic Behavior. Qualitative findings indicate that traumatic memory reinforces threat perception and encourages protective economic strategies. Under such conditions, state-centered development models tend to gain stronger legitimacy (Mahammadi, 2024).

Theoretical Integration of the Model. The comparison of empirical findings with the theoretical framework leads to the formulation of a conceptual model: Historical Memory → Social Solidarity → Social Capital → Socio-Economic Development. This model demonstrates that historical memory influences development indirectly through structural and normative mechanisms.

Integration into Development Strategies

Normative Frameworks. Development is shaped not only by economic indicators but also by cultural and normative structures. Historical memory and social solidarity ensure legitimacy and sustainability of development strategies (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2022). In this regard, normative frameworks function as stabilizing mechanisms that align institutional practices with collectively shared values, thereby reducing systemic uncertainty. The integration of symbolic and cultural elements into development processes enhances the adaptability and long-term coherence of socio-economic transformations.

Cultural Justification. Development models aligned with historical consciousness enhance social mobilization and strengthen institutional trust, thereby ensuring long-term stability. Conversely, misalignment weakens legitimacy. This indicates that development is not merely a technical process but also a culturally embedded phenomenon, where the acceptance of reforms depends on their resonance with collective meanings. As a result, culturally grounded policies tend to generate higher levels of public engagement and compliance.

Collective Identity in Strategic Planning. Incorporating historical experience and collective memory into planning processes strengthens the social foundations of development (Heydar, 2023; Ismayilov et al., 2019). Such integration contributes to the formation of a shared strategic vision, enabling more effective coordination between institutional actors and society. In this context, collective identity operates as a unifying framework that facilitates consensus-building and supports the implementation of long-term development objectives.

Institutional Strengthening of Social Capital

Trust Formation. Institutional mechanisms such as transparency, accountability, and public oversight are essential for strengthening trust (Ismayilov et al., 2022). These mechanisms contribute to the predictability of institutional behavior and reduce uncertainties in social and economic interactions. In this context, trust emerges not only as a normative expectation but also as a functional resource that facilitates coordination among actors and enhances the efficiency of institutional processes. Where institutional reliability is consistently maintained, trust becomes embedded within the social structure, supporting stable patterns of cooperation over time.

High trust environments reduce transaction costs, increase investment, and stimulate entrepreneurship. These outcomes reflect the capacity of trust to lower informational asymmetries and minimize the need for excessive regulatory control. As a result, economic actors are more inclined to engage in long-term planning and collaborative initiatives, which contributes to sustained economic development. Beyond these direct effects, trust also facilitates the formation of stable networks of cooperation, enabling more efficient coordination among economic agents. In such environments, the predictability of interactions reduces perceived risks, thereby encouraging innovation and the diffusion of new economic practices across institutional contexts.

Civic Participation. Inclusive governance models enhance social solidarity and strengthen the relationship between social responsibility and economic activity (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2023). Participation not only increases the legitimacy of decision-making processes but also reinforces the sense of collective ownership over development outcomes. In this regard, active civic engagement functions as a bridge between institutional structures and societal expectations, enabling more responsive and adaptive governance. Consequently, higher levels of participation tend to support both social cohesion and the effective implementation of economic policies.

Transformation of Historical Traumas

Constructive Transformation. Educational programs, academic discourse, and cultural initiatives enable the transformation of traumatic memory into a positive developmental resource (Rzayeva & Mahammadli, 2025; Alizadeh & Mahammadli, 2025). This transformation process allows

societies to reinterpret past experiences in ways that reduce the persistence of collective grievances and redirect them toward constructive social objectives. In this sense, the recontextualization of traumatic memory contributes to the formation of shared meanings that promote reconciliation and collective orientation toward the future. Consequently, such processes strengthen social cohesion and create favorable conditions for sustainable development.

Social Resilience. Resilient societies adapt more effectively to crises and maintain stability. The balanced management of historical memory plays a key role in this process (Aliyeva et al., 2025). Effective resilience depends not only on institutional capacity but also on the ability of societies to integrate past experiences into adaptive strategies. In this context, historical memory functions as a cognitive and normative resource that informs collective responses to uncertainty. As a result, societies capable of managing their historical narratives in a balanced manner tend to exhibit greater continuity, flexibility, and long-term stability.

Globalization and Development Balance

Adaptive Development Model. Sustainable development requires balancing global integration with the preservation of national cultural identity. Failure to maintain this balance may lead to structural instability. This balance is not static but requires continuous adjustment in response to shifting economic and cultural dynamics. When global integration processes are not aligned with locally embedded value systems, they may generate tensions that weaken institutional coherence and social cohesion. Conversely, adaptive models that integrate global opportunities with culturally grounded frameworks tend to enhance both resilience and long-term development capacity.

National Branding. Historical memory can function as a strategic resource in national branding, contributing to tourism development, creative industries, and cultural diplomacy. The selective representation of historical narratives enables states to construct coherent symbolic images that resonate both domestically and internationally. In this sense, national branding extends beyond economic promotion and becomes part of a broader strategy of identity formation and soft power projection. The effectiveness of such strategies depends on the consistency between promoted narratives and the lived historical consciousness of society.

Conclusion

Overall Summary of the Study. The comprehensive sociological analysis demonstrates that historical memory and social solidarity constitute fundamental non-material determinants of socio-economic development. These factors function as key mechanisms ensuring both the stability of social structures and the effectiveness of economic institutions. Their significance lies not only in their

integrative capacity but also in their ability to shape the long-term orientation of social systems beyond purely economic parameters.

Key Findings. Societies characterized by strong collective memory exhibit higher levels of social trust. Social solidarity contributes to the accumulation of social capital, while the fragmentation of historical memory is associated with increasing social polarization. Moreover, the level of social integration directly influences the pace and sustainability of economic modernization. These findings indicate that the qualitative dimensions of social cohesion are closely intertwined with the structural conditions of economic development.

Theoretical Implications. Historical memory and social solidarity operate as interdependent social mechanisms. Their interaction ensures the normative and functional stability of the social system. Accordingly, development processes should encompass not only structural economic transformation but also the evolution of collective consciousness. This perspective broadens the analytical scope of development theory by integrating cultural and symbolic variables into its explanatory framework.

Practical Implications. The development of social integration programs should incorporate components of collective memory. Educational and cultural policies need to be oriented toward strengthening social solidarity, while state strategies should prioritize the enhancement of social capital. The effectiveness of such policies depends on their capacity to resonate with socially embedded meanings and historically shaped expectations.

Recommendations. A unified strategy should be developed for the institutionalization of historical memory. Mechanisms of public participation should be expanded to increase social trust, and long-term programs should be implemented to address factors that weaken social solidarity. These measures may also contribute to reducing institutional fragility and reinforcing public confidence in governance processes. **Directions for Future Research.** Further research should examine the role of historical memory in regional development models, the relationship between social solidarity and digital transformation, and the formation of social capital in post-conflict societies. Expanding empirical studies in these areas would allow for a more nuanced understanding of context-specific development dynamics.

Synthesis of Findings. Historical memory serves as a foundational element in the formation of social solidarity. Social solidarity positively influences the accumulation of social capital and economic efficiency. Although traumatic memory may constrain risk-taking behavior, when constructively transformed it can act as a catalyst for development. The alignment of development strategies with historical and cultural contexts constitutes a key condition for social legitimacy. Furthermore, the

institutional protection of national memory under globalization represents a critical factor for sustainable development. Taken together, these elements illustrate the multi-layered nature of development processes, where symbolic and structural dimensions operate in tandem.

In conclusion, socio-economic development is shaped not only by economic resources but also by social capital, collective identity, and historical memory structures. The systematic integration of historical memory and social solidarity into development strategies should therefore be regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for establishing a sustainable and inclusive socio-economic model. This integrated perspective underscores the necessity of approaching development as a socially embedded process rather than a purely technocratic endeavor.

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