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LEGITIMACY AND VIOLENCE
(On the Imaginary of Political Power)[1]

Ever since Max Weber formulated the notion of *legitimate order*, it has been generally acknowledged, that legitimation means society's acceptance of the ways it is governed through the laws enforced by the ruling regime or political power, while the basis for maintaining and strengthening of this acceptance is provided by the enterprise of ruling political domination founded on rationally organized violence. The ideal types of rulers so eloquently described by Weber became the staples of all subsequent discussions about the nature of political legitimation. These types include: the old type of the patrimonial prince consecrated by the importance of his ancient ancestry; the authority possessing an uncommon personal gift or the so-called charismatic leader; and, finally, the state official whose dominance relies on a legally binding foundation (Satzung) and rationally created rules [Weber, 1990: p. 646-647]. However, a reasonable question arises here — what part of society and what kind of collectivity are supposed to make the process of legitimation successful and effective? Would it be enough if, for example, only a small group within the political establishment, or a narrow circle of the political regime's counteractants recognize its legitimacy in order to uphold the continued existence of a particular configuration of political power? Would it be possible to

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limit the strategy of recognition to economic reasons, fear of punishment, the search for existential comfort (by striving to achieve a higher social status within the top ranks in the system of political domination, as stipulated by Weber) or to the libidinous chimeras arising as a result of the public's search for the ideal type of the father, the mother, or the sex partner in political representatives of power, with all the corresponding implications of such process of substitution?

To answer these questions, I believe, one should start with clarifying the ontological foundations of the actions by the leading social actors who enter into symbolic interaction when the process of legitimation unfolds. Indeed, it is evident that their roles here are different. A fundamental characteristic of these foundations was described by Emanuel Levinas who believed that the essential prerequisite for any government is its capacity to influence the independent reality of human will while facing the absolute resistance by the reality of an entirely different order. Hence, there arises the need to influence the independent reality corresponding to the will that emerges as the object of such governing [Levinas, 1994].

However, the subdual of this independent reality to the subject of governing is impossible without its proper adjustment — the action which has, in my opinion, a mythological origin. Legitimation proceeds through a rational assessment of a myth as well as through the ability to maintain the myth as a basis for generating belief in the validity of the governed subject and his/her actions. In this case, we are dealing with the projective function of imagination. During the process of legitimation, the consciousness of the subdued individual makes a permanent axiological choice that becomes fixed in such legitimizing stratagems as the divine origin of monarchical sovereignty, the inalienability of human rights, the principle of separation of powers, the chosenness of a nation, etc. In its turn, the axiological choice first causes the appearance of imaginary political institutions that later become the real and formal ones which then proceed to enforce beliefs by creating the effect of evidentiality. However, if, according to Levinas, the ontological ground of the process of governing is the independent reality, then the ontological ground of the actions by the governed subject is the desire to expand the realm of security for individuals or social groups. At the same time, both sides in this game of legitimation act accordingly to rationally-based, even if mythological, thinking.

Here — if one follows the Weberian types of rationality — it is necessary to distinguish between the formal and material legitimacies. The first is founded on the strength or effectiveness of the government and its institutions, while the second is based on the publicly sanctioned values which are implemented by a power that has the reputation of being legitimate. As a rule, philosophical discussions very rarely take into account even a possibility of such distinction. Instead, a dangerous confusion is often made — namely, the identification of legitimacy with legality. From this confusion, a number of myths are born, including the one of the rule-of-law state. Historically, there were a number of examples when adopting this myth led societies, countries and the world in general to disastrous consequences — such as the collapse of Germany's Weimar Republic and the Nazis'

rise to power. It is known that the latter took place within the legal framework provided by the Weimar Constitution which gave the President an exclusive right to express confidence in and to appoint the chancellor with no prior approval by the parliamentary majority. This right made it possible for a series of machinations aimed at influencing the opinion of the top military officials, industrialists, land-owners and bankers who in turn persuaded President Hindenburg to opt for Hitler. In fact, Hitler simply parasitized on the manic devotion of the Weimar Republic's social-democratic governments to legalistic procedures while relying on «the Germans' dream of synthesis» (Dahrendorf), their adoration of the *Rechstsaat*, and the centuries-old legitimacy of the state as a sacralized value. The Nazi leader believed that the Weimar Constitution is only a space for power struggle rather than a goal, and — even less so — a sacrosanct national value. The legal takeover of the state institutions was regarded by Hitler as a means to turn the National Socialist Party into a decisive power factor. Through the acquisition of the constitutional right, the future dictator planned a radical reshaping of the German political system [Benteli, 1996: p. 250, 252, 254, 255]. For the first time in European history, the 1933 success of Hitler revealed a fundamental vulnerability of representative democracy which underscores the risks and dangers arising from the cult of legalistic procedures.

The acceptance/recognition of a symbolic order — put forth either by a leader or by an institution — is a key point in the process of any legitimation. In addition, every acceptance / recognition is always associated with the risks involved in human choice and with some element of fiction. At issue here is the emergence of the symbolic order which founds the functioning of social institutions, transforms the individual into the determined social subject, and provides for the intangibility of the reality and the social order. However, the symbolic order does not necessarily envisage coherent acceptance of its principles. What can be the nature of interpretation of such symbolic order? One of the most authoritative answers to this question is Charles Taylor's concept of the so-called "policy of recognition".

What is actually a policy of recognition? In the context of Charles Taylor's works, a policy of recognition is essentially a consequence of the transition from a hierarchical society to a society governed by the principle of common/general citizenship as a regulative ideal. At the same time, if one follows Taylor's logic, the policy of recognition is aimed at identifying and establishing our identity through dialogue. However, in the light of Taylor's theory, dialogue represents only one kind of communicative action and exchange. Therefore, in this context, recognition is a responsible and voluntary acceptance of an identification proposition by one of the partners in dialogue.

This leaves unspecified the causes and motives of such recognition as well as its stability and durability. Most of all, this applies to the political dimension in the recognition of identities and the status of political actors. The problem is that dialogue does not represent an entirely voluntary exchange of values aimed exclusively at mutual understanding. Dialogue's meaning is not exhausted by either the

initiation of collective and separated significance or by the clash of interpretations. Dialogue actually represents a rational form of a wide range of relationships, such as those of communication as well as those of domination and those arising in the course of strategic action. This is why analyzing dialogue exclusively from the viewpoint of its inner communicative rationality is insufficient. Establishing dialogue is usually made possible through the antagonism of participating strategies which is indicated by the pathos of objections characteristic of any dialogue. Therefore, the question arises as to the nature of the main incentive for recognition and eventual legitimation of identification initiatives. In my view, this incentive is represented by the primal asymmetry of dialogue as such. The nature of this asymmetry lies in the ability to exercise power only in regard to free subjects whose freedom provokes appellation and necessitates the need for establishment of a social contract which makes it possible for asymmetry to be maintained or modified.

The asymmetry in the relations of domination is embodied or, one can say, crystallized in institutions. It is precisely institutions (the legal, family, and cultural ones) that constitute the paradigmatic space within which the relations of domination can be established. Undoubtedly, state institutions play a decisive role here, as they reflect the continuity of identification assemblages and the legal heritage of particular cultures. For example, one can see how, despite the demonstrative institutionalization of the US ethno-cultural minorities' activities, the state institutions still dominate in the country relying on the Anglo-Saxon tradition of precedent law, the prior history of conquests and victories, and the English language. It is hard for one to imagine that the ethnic and cultural diversity in the US can undermine the foundations which support the state institutions of this country.

Given the fact that the modern state increasingly consolidates its control over relations of domination, or would be more correct to refer to what is called the politics of recognition as a strategy of governance. Politics of recognition is unable to eliminate the ground for the deployment of antagonistic strategies because it is namely this ground that constitutes the very core of political legitimacy.

At the same time, formation of legal safeguards against the aggravation of antagonisms constitutes the leading narrative of modern Western democracies. This narrative clearly indicates the latent recognition of the other as a free subject whose field of possibilities is structured and determined through justice by power actors who strive to shape the subject's desires, hopes and opinions.

Relations of domination in their concrete manifestations — even when legitimated at the level of institutions — are not stable. On the other hand, every communicative act, every appeal to the partner in dialogue either supports these relations or undermines them. And every consensus is fraught with turning into an escalation of coercion, just as every strategic intent or coercion is rich in relations of domination. Power is fundamentally unable to stabilize itself through a consensus or political legitimacy — instead, it produces knowledge, generates discourse and constitutes a symbolic space within which determined and disciplined sub-

jects are produced (Foucault). The above refers to the subjective normalization of individuals. At the same time, the need for subjective normalization of individuals is motivated by the recognition of the other as a free subject which leads to the structuring and limiting of such subjects' the capacity to independently and reflectively define their own goals and aspirations. Thus, the subject is asked to participate in a complex symbolic legitimation game that transforms freedom into a condition of the exercise of power (Foucault).

Appealling to history has been a common technique widely used in the legitimational game and the rationalization of the imposed myth. This is why the images of history outside the academic sphere always appear as the images of power — one can recall here Walter Benjamin's famous adage that history is always the history of the winners. As a rule, great historical narratives do not invite one to dialogue but rather impose it on one drawing the individual into a vortex of identifications whose function is to define a kind of ballistics of imagination. This is well illustrated by battle for history that appears as a way of controlling the continuity of imagined institutions through legitimization of the image of history serving as a way of legitimizing political power. The most common strategy, the aim of which is to legitimize the image of history, is aggrandizing the winners in the collective memory. Every winner is customarily presented as the example of a successful ruler who always has a blank check for controlling the historical process through a system of options. The winner always creates a privileged history. In this way, the basis is created for the establishment of the institutional system and the symbolic order by the re-enactment of strategic symbols of history that can include personalities, events, signs, and images. For example, it is difficult to imagine the content of the post-Soviet Ukraine's symbolic representations without such figures as Bohdan Khmelnitskyi, Ivan Mazepa, Symon Petliura, Stepan Bandera, and Nestor Makhno as well as without such extraordinary events of the national history as the pronouncement of the Fourth Universal, the Day of unification between WUPR and UPR, the 1991 Declaration of independence, the Orange revolution, etc.

The same is suitable to Russia' restorational programs. For example, during the last sixty years, at least two restorations of the Russian empire's public image have occurred. During the World War II, Stalin introduced military decorations named after such czarist generals as Kutuzov and Suvorov.

Of course, the legitimational game never ends. On the one hand, relations of domination tend to the irreplaceability of the symbolic reality and the social hierarchy. On the other hand, a fundamentally free subject always serves as a pillar for any legitimational structures of power. The habituation of the subject's actions can never be so ideal as to rely on the technologies of surveillance and domination as the only instruments against a radical revision of symbolic codes. This condition can be defined as ironic determination of the subject. The game as such contains coercion, because it implies the acceptance of certain rules. Therefore, the game also contains the potential for violence which can be realized either by changing the rules or by violating them in order to preserve the advantage and initiative.

Given this, maxim of will appears as a tyranny to the one who governs, and as an anarchy to the one who is governed. In the process of their interaction, the will to power, or, in Johan Huizinga's terminology, the "agonal instinct" of Homo Ludens is manifested. Deploying his "game-like" concept of culture historically, the Dutch theorist noted the degeneration of political life down to "unprecedented extremes of violence and danger", to the transformation of the principle *pacta sunt servanda* (agreements must be observed) into the principle of *pacta non sunt servanda* (agreements should not be observed), which inevitably leads to social involution, as well as to the transition of society to the level of an archaic culture and to its immersion in the primitive agonal sphere [Huizinga, 1992: p. 113, 120, 235]. The brawls in the Ukrainian Parliament during the key moments of the adoption of legislative acts clearly serve as the examples of such degeneration bearing all the signs of brutal tampering with the legitimation game.

In modern times, ideology became the favorite instrument for the subject of power. Above all, ideology appears as an articulation of symbolic coercion essentially reviving the religious argument in the process of political legitimation of violence.

The twentieth century's history featured the deployment of two types of ideologies — the ideologies which were an integral part of democratic discourse and based on democratic values and the aggressive ideologies which were based on sacralization of racial and class narratives. The adherents of the aggressive ideologies tend to parasitize on democratic procedures (the political practice of National Socialism) or imitate them (the political practice of Bolshevism). In the former case, democratic proceduralism served as a mandatory tool for obtaining power, while in the latter case, it served as a propagandistic tool for a system of totalitarian governing. However, in each of these cases, legitimation is established both at the level of masses' acceptance of the functioning of the established political institutions and the system of governance and at the level of recognition of the appropriateness of their existence by a privileged group of rulers headed by a supreme leader. In terms of political legitimation, the system of governing in Nazi Germany tended to use the nomocratic principle which involved implementation of ideological programs in strict accordance with the law, with the traditions of Rechtstaat. However, in the Soviet Union, for the sake of ideological expediency or in the interests of the party bureaucracy, governing could be exercised by imitating the rule of law, violating the declared rights of citizens, taking hostages, using torture to obtain defendants' confessions as well as by persecuting political opponents (dissidents) through the use of the criminal justice system and by public imitation of democracy in general.

Nevertheless, the possibility of dictatorship is originally implicit in the procedures of democratic legitimation themselves. This refers to the way of adopting political decisions through the mechanism of the majority which has always been identified with the procedure of consensus (Rosanvallon). The danger of the majority as an institution for adopting decisions has been in the focus of theoretical

debates since the early nineteenth century. Alexis de Tocqueville compared the tyranny of the majority to the French absolutism. Tocqueville even believed that republican despotism — as a likely consequence of government centralization and the tyranny of the majority — could outperform any European absolute monarchy in its intolerance. Noting the risks of democratic regimes slippage into the tyranny of the majority, Tocqueville gladly quoted the musings of Thomas Jefferson, who was, in his opinion, one of the most powerful apostles of democracy. Let us, too, make use of a fragment of the citations: "If a society would exist where the most powerful party was able to gather easily their forces to crush the weakest party, one could assume that, in such a society, anarchy reigns freely — just as it does in the state of nature where the weakest individual has no defence against the largest violence..." [Tocqueville, 1986: p. 389]. Anarchy and calls for the use of violence (physical force) are products of majoritarian despotism — such is Tocqueville's conclusion from the theoretical and political experience of the founding fathers and from his own sociopolitical observations of the development of American democracy.

Decision-making by the majority explicitly indicates the coercive nature of this generally recognized democratic mechanism. In all situations, where it operates, there remains the threat of abuse of procedure as well as the threat of turning the mechanism into a machine for voting. The social acceptance as to the recognition of the right of the majority as an institutional solution to conflicts has remained suspended throughout the history of this right's existence. This «by default» consent thus legalizes procedurally limited coercion. Despite the lack of a clear alternative, the majority's right in the process of adopting political decisions remains one of the major risks in democratic governance. In particular, the identification of the majority's decisions with the requirements of general interest leads to the identification of a particular regime's nature with the terms of its foundation [Rosanvallon, 2009: p. 12].

For example, starting from 2010 the already obvious tendency of Yanukovych regime's towards authoritarianism is considered legitimate on the grounds that its establishment is associated with the democratic procedural ritual. However, in post-Soviet Ukraine, legitimation loses all its meaning as an institutional regulator of coercion. In fact, the very system of democratic procedures is a kind of virtual reality that arose on the ruins of a grandiose simulacrum. It is worth recalling the Soviet practice of imitation involving "free" elections of one candidate, unanimous adoptions of decisions dictated by the party-bureaucratic elite, etc. The post-Soviet period of solidification of political institutions in Ukraine evidenced a renaissance of both the simulation standard and the coercive methods that were characteristic of the totalitarian state. In this respect, the institution of the President is the most conspicuous one, as the President essentially recreates the ways of governing practiced earlier by the Politburo headed by the Secretary-General. We are dealing here with a kind of constitutional monarchy — but the one without the right to hereditary transfer of the presidency. The President acts in the public sphere through the mechanisms of advertised intimidation of his

subordinates. Such sessions of intimidating pedagogy by way of a "parent bashing" repeatedly turn into the legitimation of a strong and strict leader. However, the verbal warning symbolizing a strict but fair supervisor is addressed primarily to the public, since there is usually no need to resort to the mass media to implement personnel changes. This practice is completely in line with the strategy of governing in the post-Soviet Ukraine representing the main feature of what the Yale scholar Keith Darden identified as the "Blackmail state." This refers to the promotion of corruption and crime through the use of imperfect and confused legislation that provides those in power with the levers of guaranteed surveillance over the citizens. In fact, blackmail has assumed the role played in totalitarian practices by the comprehensive and constantly orchestrated suspicion of the Soviet citizens in violating ideological taboos whose interpretation was the exclusive right belonging only to the party functionaries. The Blackmail state also exploits the human capacity for self-coercion and operates outside the realm of real justice by expanding the realm of unjustice (unrecht) which — if one follows Hegel here — refers to the phenomenon's movement towards its likeness [Hegel, 1990: p. 138]. In this case, likeness represents a simulacrum of justice that presupposes the social subject's orientation towards a certain type of perception, acceptance, and political sanctioning of the likeness or, in other words, its legitimation.

As was already mentioned, imagined institutions, including the democratic ones, constitute an important part of the process of political legitimation. Democratic institutions are neither born spontaneously as a logical consequence of contemplation and reflection nor do they appear as an epiphenomenon of the political system. Instead, they are established historically, by being created on the basis of freedoms won in struggle. Only when gained and retained freedoms and rights are organizationally consolidated on the foundation of collective autonomy, reverse coercion, i.e., resistance to ruling elites becomes possible. Political legitimation is implemented through the balance of power and the threat of coercion coming both from the police — representing those in power — and from the rebels representing the society's organized communities.

In this respect, today's "war of statistics", or the war of the figures provided by media reports on the protests, can be very indicative. As a rule, in every report generated from within the law enforcement, the figures given appear too low, while the reports coming from the protests' organizers habitually contain inflated figures. This is why the multi-thousand rallies in the days of the Orange Revolution was none else but an explosion of Ukrainian society's legitimational potential and the realization of the well-known right to uprising considered by Jean-Jasque Russeau the cornerstone of the social contract. It was the latent threat of large-scale riots and mass protests rather than quasi-religious ritualism of the shamans of procedural democracy or the moralistic invectives aired by today's opposition politicians during political talk show that directed the course of the meetings of the Ukrainian Supreme Court and decisive legitimated the progress of the second round of the presidential elections in early 2005.

It was the legitmational conflicts and vicissitudes of the 2004 uprising type that had played the role of a democratic *paideia*, or democratic education of the individual, which, according to Cornelius Castoriadis, is not anything similar to the growing of plants but which is something that should constitute the central object of political concern [Castoriadis, 1996: p. 234]. At the same time, the restoration turn in Ukraine has convincingly confirmed Castoriadis's insight that any attempts to separate the "positive" right from fundamental values, or the beliefs that history would readily produce the individuals capable of forcing the democratic mechanism to function, are completely illusory. Justification of the elections winner's tyranny and, eventually, the recognition of the majority's tyranny are only simplified by the "positive" law and democratic procedure rhetorically magnified outside the context of permanent social conflict and struggle and outside critical evaluation of fundamental values professed by political actors.

However, the following question naturally arises — how can democratic *paideia* be possible in the conditions of the rising tide of insignificancy (Castoriadis), when the clear connection with the electoral procedure, the text of legislative acts and the practices of governance disappears? In my view, the mere presence of formal political institutions holds significant educational potential. One can also mention legitimational inertia of the institutions which functions through the presence in individuals' minds of the authentic, normative and ideal sense of such notions as parliament, electoral law, popular sovereignty, political pluralism, separation of powers, etc. Notwithstanding the distinct simulative component in the practical functioning of political institutions in the post-Soviet society, the very fact of their existence necessitated the principles of communicative action and a possibility of understanding between the conflicting parties. On the one hand, the democratic ritual and procedures serving only for conscious concealment of political intentions constitute is an instrument of discursive violence, a kind of battle simulacrum. On the other hand, however, they are an integral part of all modern republican regimes.

It is clear that democratic *paideia* does not automatically guarantee — not even in the distant future — consolidation of democracy. Like every other game (let us recall that, among many other meanings, the word *paideia* meant a game, or pastime, in ancient Greece), it contains the elements of tension, uncertainty and risk. Moreover, given the fact that the increasing simulation and decline of signification begins to cover not only the realm of political action proper but more and more areas of human activity in general, the threat of loss of connection between the signifier and signified can turn into a total devaluation of society's network of institutions. First, the devaluation is likely to affect the system of secondary and higher education and eventually to completely neutralize the ground which feeds democratic education and formulates the rules of the democratic legitimation. We are witnessing an unprecedented banalization and even sacralization of falsifications (such as "dead souls" voting in the Verkhovna Rada, etc.). Fraud becomes synonymous with special courage, the one of defiance and im-

morality, and is established as a fundamental value of imitative democracy while political representation, according to Jean Baudrillard, turns into a dialectical fiction concealing a mortal battle [Baudrillard, 2000: p. 116].

Today's electoral quasi-sociology plays a significant role as a power factor in the process of political legitimation. Parasitizing on the authoritativeness of the sociology as a science, the propaganda machines of ruling parties have become a weapon of "gentle" terror. One can even talk here about legitimation programming of individuals' minds through digital manipulation. Essentially, methodologies constructed by the advances of theoretical sociology and social psychology have become used as the qualification certificates for fraudulent legitimization of political interests through the endless "blah-blah-blah" of court political analysts, which has become an integral part of political marketing.

In his pioneering article "Public Opinion Does Not Exist", Pierre Bourdieu drew attention to the effects created by the imposition of poll problematics in the interests of political parties, which primarily affects the meaning of the answers and the importance given to the publication of poll results. However, the main effect manifests itself by concealing the real balance of political powers by means of discursive coercion. Bourdieu convincingly argues that "the opinion polls, at present time, is an instrument of political action; its most important function is perhaps to impose the illusion that a public opinion exists, and that it is simply the sum of a number of individual opinions. It imposes the idea for instance that in any given assembly of people there can be found a public opinion, which would be something like the average of all the opinions or the average opinion...the politician who yesterday said 'God is on our side' today says 'Public opinion is on our side' " [Bourdieu, 1993: p. 163]. Sociological data, which is extremely distorted as a result of surveys' processing, becomes sacralized and its dissemination by various centers of different political orientation (most notably, during TV talk shows) sometimes even turn into the chivalry tournaments of fighting for "His Majesty the Prevailing Rate". Thus, pseudo knowledge, which is constituted by combining different discourses in the realm of *doxa*, that is, in the realm of common beliefs, is used for legitimizing the existing hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of power. Quasi-sociology attempts to move the realm of *doxa* into the frame work of an episteme that appears as the assemblage of power and knowledge.

Let us not forget, however, that, in the process of interaction between populace and those in power (mentioned at the beginning of this article), there always exist the independent reality which is opposed to both ideological (in the conditions of totalitarianism) and contemporary (in the conditions of established authoritarianism) quasi-sociological programming of consciousness. Just as scientific communism parasitized on the authority of scientific knowledge as such.

This is why coercion inherent in any particular legitimation model based on some rationality remains insufficient. Instrumental and focused terror remains a necessary addition to legitimational procedures, including the falsified ones, in

the regimes of "imitational" of democracy or electoral authoritarianism. This terror functions through a system of controlled judiciary, police, and agencies of political surveillance.

Terror provides an absolute guarantee for the efficiency of legitimation game played according to the rules imposed by the coryphaeus (in the sense of the leading figure of Plato's dialogue). In his works, Luhmann pointed to the cases in which unsuccessful socialization and deviation from the "preset" mode of action results in the need for the use of special control methods (namely, brutal force). This primarily refers to the conditions under which institutions are detached from the social reality that created these institutions [Berger, Luckmann, 1995|: p. 104]. However, there are sufficient reasons to assume that, just as institutialization, the legitimational process itself is a way of curbing the fundamentally independent reality of different and alien violence transformed by its (own?) form. One of the most telling features of the transformed form of violence can be sent in the obligatory address "Your Honor" to the head of any court through which the requirement of voluntary reverence for the authority of the institution manifests itself in personalized subdual serving as part of legitimational coercion.

The effectiveness of political legitimation is also achieved because of individuals' willingness to back pass to another their own feeling of anxiety constituted by various phobias, ressentiments and lust for power. The individual projects onto the world promised by the candidates his/her dreams about a kingdom of justice where ressentiment and unbridled envy are vent in the full impunity for violations of taboos or in the punishment of "the subject/object of their envy". Whereas in the developed democracies, one of the cornerstones of legitimational process is the cult of the succeful political manager, in post-totalitarian regimes, the cult of the strict and attentive master plays an important role. It is precisely with the image of a strict and attentive master-adept that the idea of order (i.e., the imagined equivalent of tranquility). This happens because order represented by the candidate serves the role of a presupposed system of social behavior, for the disadvantaged individual who is under pressure of the necessity of thinking and making daily decisions. Instead, chaos and confusion are inevitably associated by the post-totalitarian individual with permanent conflict of interest, and thus with the democratic practices of resolving these conflicts at the institutional level. This results is his/her negative attitude to the principle of separation of powers which in turn defines the general political culture of the post-totalitarian society leading to totalization of the governmental sphere, attraction to the various models of the vertical power, and reincarnation of force component of legitimational process in the form of political terror.

To a large extent, a distrust of the procedures and practices of democratic legitimation is also a product of the historical memory of the post-communist individual. In fact, in the Soviet Union, there were two systems of law — the formal and the informal one. Legal ritual was followed only to the extent considered necessary by the party leaders. Thus, paradoxically, we are dealing in this case not

with the actual functionality of the law itself but with the relative independence of the legal "formalism, or symbolism" (Castoriadis) in the service of the political expediency of governing. The fact that, in the process of deployment of political practices, the law is not considered as an authentic value and the reproduction of imitative ritual as the only legitimational basis is continued leads to the glorification of force in the process of social communication and to a political dialogue dominated by the discourse of war with its customary insults, ridicule, and articulated disdain or even hatred towards the opponents.

The political experience of existing in the conditions of imitational democracy gives birth to a false understanding of the nature of the international institutions and their legitimational role as well as to a false identification of that experience with the experience of countries living in the classic democratic regimes. All this makes international dialogue extremely difficult, which is well illustrated by Ukraine's suspended European integration. This identification provides ground to the conclusions whereby legitimation becomes limited exclusively to PR technologies and manipulation of consciousness — for example, to informing the public about the results of government policies, to the application of laws and holding of elections, to selective observance of constitutional norms, and so on. In all splendors, there appears the danger of anomie as the generally accepted standard of social behavior which is totally unacceptable in modern Western democracies. The more so because the very project of a united Europe is based on the fundamental values developed within the often dramatic and centuries-long history of the establishment of modern institutions. Above all, this refers to the fundamental human rights.

The correlation between legitimation and violence, which appeared in the process of deployment of post-Soviet political practices in modern Ukraine, clearly confirms the notion of the trans-historical nature of social and political structures formulated by Karl Marx in his "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon". The socio-political structure is consolidated by relying on the legitimational standard and the symbolized and sanctioned ways of reconciliation with the existing political regime which even revolutionary vicissitudes fail to neutralize. However, the change of language drapery considered by Marx only as a way of changing the representation of social structures may in fact become one of the turning points during their historical transformations. It turns out that linguistic innovation, even as a revival of vocabulary from age-old epochs, plants "genetic" and irreversible changes in the social imaginary — and the more radical is such innovation, the greater opportunities for transformations are instilled in the functioning of a social institution.

Certainly, the abovementioned "decline of signification", or a kind of semantic implosion of words that blossomed so much in the period of manipulative political technologies, essentially blocks the linguistic innovation strengthening the suspicion towards verbal propositions of political actors. However, the "credit history" of the established meanings of this or that idea affects significantly the upheavals in imagined institutions. Today, it is almost impossible to weaken — at least

within the confines of the Christian civilization — such concepts as democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, opposition rights, and free elections to the extent as to permanently erase them from the vocabulary of even those regimes that are authoritarian. The fact is that political interaction can only be made possible through the process of symbolic representation of action, which is well illustrated by the examples of international legitimation of contemporary authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. Despite their terrorist nature, these regimes are forced to legalize their actions in the space of the dominant political discourse of Western countries whose legal institutions are safely protected by their military might and the efficiency of their advanced models of market economy. Therefore, it is precisely the strength of the Western countries that serves as a decisive impetus for legitimational maneuvers in the implementation of foreign policy. This often reveals a fundamental incompatibility between the demonstrational imitation of democratic procedures by authoritarian regimes, with their "institutionalized duplicity" (Castoriadis) and the values of democratic regimes, beyond which it is difficult to imagine the functioning of the West's political institutions. The fact that the Western countries still might resort to methods of *Realpolitik* does not necessarily mean that, being guided only by geopolitical rationality, they are ready to abandon the system of democratic values that form the coherent social and political institutional network of modern developed societies which was historically established through development and endurance. Despite the recessionary trends, this network remains the cornerstone of Western democratic societies relying on a political culture that has its own heroes, myths and sacred symbols. And every sacred symbol is fundamentally a strategic symbol, too.

The inefficiency of the propaganda strategies resorted to by the contemporary authoritarian (Belarus type) or the semi-authoritarian (Russia, Ukraine type) regimes in their foreign policy are the results of their illusions concerning the European understanding of the nature of the political. This is caused by the centuries-long lack of institutional experience in the European practices of governance originating from the principles of functioning of the Greek polis and from the standards of political behavior established by the practices based on the Roman law.

Nevertheless, such illusions do not belong exclusively to the representatives of the power establishment. In post-Soviet Ukraine, the understanding of politics as a simulation ritual as a way of payment for the implementation of one's selfish private interests is widely practiced at all levels of common social consciousness. However, the most dangerous product of devaluation of the political was represented by the pseudo-stoic technology of "against all" during the 2009-2010 presidential race. In the context of discreditation of political participation (such slogans as "all politicians are the same" represented the jargon of this discreditation engrained into the mass consciousness), it became possible to suspend the core values of democracy that barely began to establish themselves after decades of pseudo-politics of totalitarian governance. The manipulative technology of "against all" became possible only on the social ground ravished by the practices

of the totalitarian society in which the individual's atomization reached its apex and in which the emancipation of the individual was erroneously identified with the emancipation from society.

Essentially, by promoting an escape into the private, by praising the idea of "the spiritual independence of intellectuals", this technology managed to turn the classical Greek "idiot" (i.e., an individual who, consciously or not, disengages him/herself from the agora of the polis through the non-recognition of the supremacy of political principle) into a cultural hero who became the embodiment of the highest moral virtues. The further developments in Ukraine clearly showed the harmfulness of ethical approach to political legitimation, since, the conditions of difficult choice, there appeared a complete relativity of Good and Evil and a fundamental impossibility of ethical universals. The guise of media-imposed system of values concealed the social, economic and political interests of the corporately consolidated quasi-elite.

The nature of the *political* and the nature of *political legitimation* manifest themselfs primarily in the use of institutionalized action of power implemented through restriction and self-restriction. Denial of the supremacy of political principle in regard to the private sphere of the individual, devaluation of the values of democracy's institutional experience, and discreditation of the *political* all result in a massive spread of anomie and, eventually, in the restoration of the natural state. Under these conditions, the idols of intimidation, blackmail, deception, provocation and pretentious care come back to life.

The nature of the political legitimation manifests itself primarily through the institutions and thus through self-limiting power. But the negative institutional experience of democracy, domination of virtual and informal institutions caused the massive spread of anomie and eventually the animation of natural state. Under these circumstances, the idols of intimidation, blackmail, deception, provocation and ostentatious care come alive.

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LEGITIMACY AND VIOLENCE (ON THE IMAGINARY OF POLITICAL POWER)

The main goal of the article is to show the formation of cultural-historical and philosophical-legal preconditions of political legitimacy. Also it deals with the correlation of the state governing and political recognition, violence and legitimation technologies, state institutions, and the imaginaries of political power. Special attention is given to the manipulative electoral sociology in the process of the authoritarian government establishment.

Key words: political legitimacy, violence, state institutions, imaginaries of political power, authoritarian governing

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