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SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AS THE OBJECT OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH: INTER BOURDIEU AND ZIZEK

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The article investigates the phenomenon of symbolic violence by synthesizing ideas of structuralist constructivism by Bourdieu and post-Marxism psychoanalytic S. Zizek. The author deduces the phenomenological characteristics of symbolic violence, which distinguish them from the field of related phenomena: the latency, the desire to be included in everyday life, the heterogeneity of the object, dialectical connection with the physical violence, the transposition of the capital logic in its production, etc. The author considers the process on the level of practice and interprets it as imposing symbols and meanings in everyday life to establish and maintain relations of power. The author's definition of symbolic violence, classification of symbolic violence, in particular, it includes such species as the subjective (direct, specific, personalized) and objective (systematic, generated by the social structure) are defined. Such variables in the formula of symbolic violence, as: subject, object, methods, and the nature of the imposition of the meaning and symbols, it's legitimization, relations of power and domination – are developed and reproduced. Functioning of symbolic violence practices is investigated on the example of modern Ukraine's life case - renaming of toponymic objects in Kharkov.

Keywords: symbolic violence, subjective symbolic violence, objective symbolic violence, imposition.

В статье анализируется феномен символического насилия в перспективе синтеза идей структуралистского конструктивизма П. Бурдьё и психоаналитического постмарксизма С. Жижека. Приводятся феноменологические характеристики символического насилия, выделяющие его из поля смежных явлений: латентность, стремление к включению в повседневность, гетерогенность объекта, диалектичная связь с физическим насилием, транспонирование капитальной логики в его продуцировании и др. Автор рассматривает данный процесс на уровне практик, интерпретируя его как навязывание символов и значений в повседневности для установления и поддержания отношений власти. Дается авторское определение символического насилия, проводится классификация символического насилия, в частности, выделяются такие его разновидности, как субъективное (прямое, конкретное, персонафицированное) и объективное (системное, порожденное самой социальной структурой). Рассматриваются такие переменные в формуле символического насилия, как субъект, объект, способы и характер навязывания значений и символов, их легитимация, отношения власти и господства, которые производятся и воспроизводятся. Функционирование практик символического насилия рассматривается на примере такого кейса из жизни современной Украины, как переименования объектов топонимики г. Харькова.

Ключевые слова: символическое насилие, субъективное символическое насилие, объективное символическое насилие, навязывание.

У статті аналізується феномен символічного насильства у перспективі синтезу ідей структуралістського конструктивізму П. Бурдьє і психоаналітичного постмарксизму С. Жижека. Наводяться феноменологічні характеристики символічного насильства, що виділяють його з поля суміжних явищ: латентність, прагнення до включення у повсякденність, гетерогенність об'єкта, діалектичний зв'язок з фізичним насильством, транспонування капітальної логіки в його продукуванні та ін. Автор розглядає даний процес на рівні практик, інтерпретуючи його як нав'язування символів і значень у повсякденності для встановлення і підтримання відносин влади. Дається авторське визначення символічного насильства, наводиться класифікація символічного насильства, зокрема виокремлюються такі його різновиди, як суб'єктивне (пряме, конкретне, персонафіковане) і об'єктивне (системне, породжене самою соціальною структурою). Розглядаються такі змінні у формулі символічного насильства, як суб'єкт, об'єкт, способи і характер нав'язування значень і символів, їх легітимація, відносини влади і панування, які виробляються та відтворюються. Функціонування практик символічного насильства розглядається на прикладі такого кейсу з життя сучасної України, як перейменування об'єктів топоніміки м. Харкова.

Ключові слова: символічне насильство, суб'єктивне символічне насильство, об'єктивне символічне насильство, нав'язування.

The theme of social violence in sociology, social philosophy, social anthropology and other related disciplines, on the one hand, is obviously relevant, but on the other hand remains neglected. Complicacy of theorizing on the subject is not only in the ambiguity of the studied problem, the lack of consensus in defining the phenomenological characteristics of violence, its classification criteria, or investigation its nature, not even the multidimensionality and multi-layer ontology of this phenomenon, but in its discursivity and sensory. Epistemological difficulty of this subject lies not at the level of ideas, not on the level of concepts and not on the level of theories, but on the level of world view. Max Weber's postulate of the freedom of assessment is practically impossible, and the use Mills's «sociological imagination» requires extraordinary effort.

Another important issue in the study of this phenomenon is so-called victimity, affection to acts of direct, immediate, explicit violence, followed by victims and losses (acts of terrorism, murder, war, vandalism, etc.). Typically, such studies (even faster detections) end up questioning actors, their motives, means and consequences of violence, while the root, systematic causes and effects are mostly ignored.

The third problem, which is a direct consequence of the previous two points, is an a priori perception of violence as a deviant category. In this work we emanate the ideological premise that violence is not a deviation from the norm, «system failure», but it is an integral part of the «social organism» at a certain stage of its «evolution.»

One of the ways to break through theoretical and methodological impasse and, simultaneously, the means of specifying the object of research is the study of symbolic violence. Problematization of this phenomenon was difficult and very long, since the philosophy of modern times (both classical and non-classical), followed by studying of modern philosophers (primarily structuralists, neo- and post-Marxists) and crystallized in the works of S. Zizek, M. Foucault, Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, J. Baudrillard, N. Elias and other sociologists and philosophers of the second half of the previous century.

There is a wide field of possible theoretical interpretation of this phenomenon (as «coercion» in Karl Marx, «domination» in Weber's «hegemony» in A. Gramsci, «authority» in Dahrendorf and others), but its «symbolic violence» is a kind of synthesis of diverse approaches. It combines researching of macro-, mezo- and microlevels, constructivist and structuralist ideas, and enables a systematic study of social processes. On the one hand, this term tells us about multiple, multi-layered nature of violence, and, on the other hand, switches the interest of researchers from direct confrontation of physical forces (that S. Zizek called «subjective violence»), to the same force clashes, but mediated by symbolic environment (language, signs, symbols, status, rituals, etc.).

The relevance of this topic is evident. In modern Ukraine the escalation of physical violence in the struggle for political, economic, ideological, and other powers takes place. Symbolic violence is another «space» of confrontation, factor of transferring the forces collision from the phase of direct physical interaction to phase mediated by signs and symbols. The process of formation of a «new order» involves the formation of new power relations, new forms of subordination, coercion and hegemony, new methods of regulation and legitimation (the «new», at least, for the Ukrainian society). And one of the key instruments of this process is namely symbolic violence. This process is the key means of symbolic struggle by using stigmatization, (re)symbolization, symbolic deconstruction and other facilities of symbolic violence.

The aim of this work is theoretical and methodological study of the phenomenon of symbolic violence by synthesizing the ideas of P. Bourdieu and S. Zizek in order to propose author's concept and research scheme of symbolic violence.

Based on the simple etymology of the term «symbolic violence», we can nominate the following hypotheses:

First, it is the action (practice), which involves using of signs and symbols. S. Zizek on this occasion said that «the symbolic» violence embodied in language and form» [1, p. 4-5].

Second, it comes with a generic concept of «violence» as a struggle of forces. We offer to operationalize «force» with the concept of capital (in Bourdieu's tradition) – and primarily symbolic.

Third, the «violence» implies unequal opportunities for various parties to use «force», subordinate and coerce, i.e. to be involved in power relations. We can categorize the power (in its resource sense) as a form of symbolic capital. Therefore, (symbolic) violence - is not just a tool of power (as it appears in conceptions of Max Weber, Hannah Arendt and others), it is its purpose.

In appliance with the cumulative logic of capital, the more common practice of symbolic violence, the higher the chances of its growth. Accordingly, the higher the position of the agent (in Bourdieu's terminology), which carries symbolic violence, the greater is the probability of success of symbolic violence act. A position also characterized by the disposition, i.e. predisposition to certain positions in social space. And often these dispositions are directed to subjugate by the means of symbolic violence.

Another important point on this subject can be done when we interpret S. Zizek's idea to separate the violence into subjective, objective and symbolic. Although Zizek not obviously mentioned, he implied the following implicit meaning: symbolic violence can also be subjective (direct, specific, personalized) and objective (system generated by the social structure). We deconstruct Zizek's triad to dyad by removing «symbolic violence» which will be considered in terms of subjective symbolic violence and objective symbolic violence.

Objective symbolic violence takes over the properties of an objective violence – it is rooted in social structure, impersonal, systematic, total. Subjective symbolic violence, logically, has a subject (agent) which produces it. Zizek writes on this: «Such [symbolic] violence is not only obvious - and widely studied - cases of hate speech, and relations of social domination, reproduced in our conventional linguistic forms [i.e. subjective symbolic violence]: there is even more fundamental form of violence, which belongs to the language per se, it implied by a certain semantic universe [objective symbolic violence]» [1, p. 4-5].

Zizek sees an example of embodiment of objective symbolic violence in establishing the concept of separation of men into races (with further alignment of the hierarchy of races in the perception of Western man): «Perhaps the fact that the word «ratio» and «race» have the same root tell us something: the language, but not primitive self-interest, is first and foremost tool of separation; through the language and our environment, we can «live in different worlds» even when we live on the same street. This means that verbal violence is not a secondary distortion, but it is the primary instrument of all specific human violence» [1, p. 30].

Speaking about the role of the position in the production of symbolic violence, we cannot ignore the fact of combining similar positions in the group. As we remember, the class in Bourdieu's theory is «a set of agents occupying a similar position, which, if placed in similar circumstances and subject to such conditionality, have all chances to own the same dispositions and interests, and therefore to develop this practice and the location on the similar positions» [2, p. 59]. Representatives of a class tend to have similar habit and common objectives. So we can talk about the chances of success in the symbolic violence not just of individual agents, but also of classes / groups.

In terms of Bourdieu's structuralist constructivism, «all power of symbolic violence - that is all power, which manages to impose meanings so that they are perceived as legitimate while underlying power relations remain undisclosed - adds its own power, that is purely symbolic, to these power relations» [3, p. 22]. So symbolic violence is necessary function of power (not obligatorily political), which, in turn, relies not only (and not that much) on direct violence, but on the recognition of its legitimacy. «The government has symbolic violence to impose their system of values, a hierarchy of meanings, which, in turn, becomes natural, «self-evident» for individual character. With the help of symbolic violence, transformation of perception and crystallization of relations «domination - subordination» is carried out» [3, p. 19].

Hence, there is logical continuing of the analysis of new characteristics of symbolic violence:

Firstly, the symbolic violence implies «imposing values» and their legitimacy. Thus, symbolic environment is both field of struggle (confrontation of different «meaning»), and the object of struggle (as it is the «meaning» is a means of (re)production of dominance).

Secondly, symbolic violence is often latent, it functions as a hidden and explicit ways of «imposing meanings». Symbolic violence displaces real confrontation by moving it from the real world into the symbolic world. Instead of war - the Olympics or the World Cup; rather than suicide - removing your social network account; rather than battle scar or chop - tattoos (or even temporary). However, all goals remain the same - domination, coercion, hegemony, etc. - and they need to be hided (for example, by the categories of sports, popular culture, etc.).

Thirdly, symbolic violence, being a derivative from physical violence, with many features replacing it (but not completely), hides and covers it, but still retains of an «interest» to the physical, hinting and having it in mind. Symbolic violence is largely tied to corporeality, even more to the body, physiological and physical substrate, and, of course, language. Thus, it is inextricably linked with the psyche, particularly with a sense of inferiority, which can be both a cause and an effect of it.

Fourthly, the state (as the legal monopolist of legitimate violence in Max Weber's conception) in understanding of P. Bourdieu has a kind of metacapital, capital of capitals, and situated on the top positions in the field of symbolic struggle (particularly through educational system¹).

¹ This refers to the P. Bourdieu idea of 'structural similarities between the educational system's monopoly on legitimate symbolic violence and state's monopoly for sending legitimate physical violence «[3, p. 19]. The author also claims that «every pedagogical influence is objectively a symbolic violence, because its arbitrary power imposes cultural tyranny» [3, p. 23].

Fifth, symbolic violence is directly related to the process of symbolic struggle, but is not limited to it. On the one hand, symbolic violence is not the only method of symbolic struggle (competition, demonstration, secession, disclosure, deconstruction, competitions etc.), And, on the other hand, it may not be as de facto symbolic struggle is over (when there is a monopolization of (meta)capital by one of the struggle participants (especially the state) in a particular social field).

Accordingly, we propose to define the **symbolic violence** as *practices of imposition of meanings and symbols making them look legitimate, with the final aim of establishing and maintaining the power relations.*

*The practice*² refers as repetitive, routine, habitual act, which generated by social structure and generate it simultaneously.

The power we see as social relations in the context hierarchy social structures, which provide that the agents, who hold higher positions, on the one hand, have preference in the allocation of resources (including capital) and, on the other hand, have the opportunity and ability to impose their will on others.

The imposition of meanings and symbols is the incorporation to a habitus (often in the early stages of its formation – in a childhood, or when the agent join in the new social field) by repetition, inclusion in everyday life, naturalization (i.e. camouflage as «natural», «obvious» and «indisputable as a certainty») and practical familiarization (when imposition carried not discursively but practically).

The legitimization of meanings and symbols is a way of explaining and justifying of social relationships, their cognitive and normative interpretation.

The symbol is a unity of signifier and signified. Accordingly, there is imposition of new symbol or substitution of signified of old symbol in the act of symbolic violence.

Hence, there is a classification of symbolic violence through the technique of its implementation:

- Imposing of symbol;
- Substitution and imposition of signified;
- The substitution of signifier with preserving of signified.

The subject, who is also the initiator of symbolic violence, is an integral part of the process. Given that we consider symbolic violence as practice, we propose to consider subject in term of agent (in the sense of P. Bourdieu, i.e. as actors of social relations, which is both a product and producer of social structure).

Among the types of symbolic violence the following should be highlight:

- State (as the owner of metacapital);
- Social Field;
- Social Groups (including through the delegation of «authority» for separate part to produce symbolic violence);
- Social Institute;
- Social Organization;
- Individual.

The object of symbolic violence has a complex, multi-layered nature. *Terminal* object of this process is the agent's (or group's) habitus, which offer the establishment or consolidation of power relations.

Instrumental objects of symbolic violence are the symbols and meanings, their mediums, repeaters and distributors.

We also should distinguish the concepts, which usually have a same context in sociological discourse – (symbolic) violence and (symbolic) coercion.

Symbolic violence (in the series, such as restrictions, monopolization of the means of production) is the way of establishing and reproducing power relations, while coercion is a «separate form of power,» which «take a place in case of obvious conflicts between subject's and object's interests in power relations» [4, p. 285].

We offer to verify our instruments on example of consideration of the symbolic violence on the basis of case from Ukrainian present – i.e. renaming the city objects after the adoption of the law of discommunization (on the example of Kharkov [5]).

² N. Shmatko, Russian expert on the theory of P. Bourdieu, gives such description of the concept of practice: «The practice is all that makes social agent by himself and what he found in the social world... The practice can not be reduced to subjective purposeful transformation of the social world, nor to the subjective experience of consciousness, but it is a valid implementation (objective and subjective) of social structures. In the most general terms, it is the social world event, but, in turn, an event is derived from the change. So, we can say that practice is changing the social world, produced by agent» [6, p. 548-549].

The subject of symbolic violence is the state in the form of local government, with the support of public and political organizations that support anti-communist dogma and rhetoric. And the situation of the symbolic violence object's layering and heterogeneity in this example traced quite clearly. In fact, we see the replacement of «old» communist toponyms (or their interpretation) by the new «non-communist» ones, that is interpreted as the process of re-symbolization. So, instrumental objects of symbolic violence are the names of streets, parks, subway stations, etc., which materialized in maps, plates and signs, monuments and plaques, documents, archives and more. Terminal object of this symbolic violence act is a citizen's habitus.

Toponyms are very important in people's lives, because they are fundamentally included in their everyday life. Toponyms - the projection of the physical space in a symbolic space and reflection of the symbolic on the physical. It is «a markup» on the «field of play». Toponyms are involved in distinguishing between social groups and communities, structuring of the social space, camouflage or ghettoization and elitization certain areas of the city. Street and towns names are the main elements of identification, especially during interactions between the residents of the same city. It is the benchmark in everyday practices, a key element of logistics during local migration.

In addition to roles in everyday life, toponyms have their historic function; they act as a kind of collective memory. Typically, during the socialization they should already act as an objectified fact (in the terminology of P. Berger and T. Luckmann) for several generations of Kharkov (with some exceptions³). So, the fact of renaming breaks «just-a-intuitive» nature of toponyms per se for current generations for reproduction this logic for the future generations, but with another symbolization.

As a hypothesis, we can assume that the ideological content in the name of urban facilities (which fit in the Soviet Union) eventually emasculated, and names such as «Artem street» and «Petrovsky street» do not associate with leaders of the Bolshevik movement in our everyday life, especially for the younger generation. But under certain conditions «threat» of such reflection was possible, so this renaming is expected in conditions of political processes of modern Ukraine.

This renaming, in a greater extent, corresponds to its legal justification – decommunisation. This is the fight against «Soviet past», collective memory, the Soviet discourse. In many cases, the stigma of Soviet toponyms was replaced by ideologically neutral signs («Lenin Avenue» to «Avenue of Science»). Where possible, the connotation of name was changed (now, the name «Spartacus lane» legally does not belong to the German Marxist organizations, as it was in past, and refers only with the leader of a slave rebellion in the Roman Republic) or returned to previous titles for legitimate as «a historical justice». It seems like this renaming was intended to nullify the mechanisms of objective symbolic violence of maintaining communism ideology by Soviet state, to abandon this technology at all. But some objects are called according to political and ideological discourse of modern Ukraine («Yaroslav Mudriy street»), and one even according to euromaidan mythology - «Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotny square» It is already a kind of precedent that prepares the ground for place naming using the new «heroes» and «victories», symbolizing ideas, values, meanings and ideology of the new regime.

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³ For example, there is easy to meet older generation person, who use name «Industrialnaya» for the railway station, which named «Imeny O.S. Maselskogo» since 2004.