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Актуализация потенциала мнемического авторитаризма в современном политическом дискурсе

ВЛАДИМИР ВЛАДИМИРОВИЧ ВЯЛЫХ, **кандидат политических наук, доцент, заведующий кафедрой философии**
Государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования «Оренбургский государственный медицинский университет» (460000, Российская Федерация, г. Оренбург, ул. Советская, 6). E-mail: vylix@mail.ru

Аннотация: В настоящей статье рассматривается феномен мнемического авторитаризма как одна из форм современных модификаций недемократических практик властвования. В ней представлены несколько типов мнемического авторитаризма и их характеристики. Одна из ключевых мыслей в статье связана с тем, что мнемический авторитаризм как форма властвования основывается не только на политике, но и на культуре, ее нормах и ценностях. Актуальность исследования состоит в том, что в условиях современного глобального мира властвующему субъекту необходимы новые формы влияния, а не только экономическое и политическое принуждение. По мнению автора, мнемический авторитаризм может быть такой формой влияния, поскольку способствует решению двух проблем: во-первых, содействует позитивной легитимации властвующего субъекта, а во-вторых, формирует новые возможности для контроля над обществом и государством. Эти возможности проявляются во влиянии на восприятие и интерпретацию различных событий исторического прошлого обществом и индивидом. Разновидность форм этого влияния – авторитарных или демократических – зависит не только от политической и экономической ситуации, но и от норм культуры, преобладающих в обществе и государстве. Мнемический авторитаризм и проблема его конституирования связана с актуализацией культурного наследия, процесс которого связан не только с сохранением наследия прошлого, но и его трансформацией в соответствии с реалиями настоящего, что может стать причиной децентрализации памяти, как отдельно взятого индивида и социальной группы, так и всего общества в целом.

Ключевые слова: авторитаризм, мнемический авторитаризм, культура, память, политика памяти, прошлое

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ACTUALIZATION OF MNEMONIC AUTHORITARIANISM POTENTIAL IN MODERN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

VLADIMIR V. VYALYKH, **Cand. Sci. (Political), Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Philosophy**
Orenburg State Medical University (6, Sovetskaya Str., Orenburg, Russian Federation, 460000). E-mail: vylix@mail.ru

Abstract: The article defines the phenomenon of mnemonic authoritarianism as one of the forms of modern non-democratic government practices. The article shows several types of mnemonic authoritarianism and their characteristics. One of the main ideas in the article is related to the fact that mnemonic authoritarianism as a form of government is based not only on politics, but also on culture, its norms and values. The relevance of the study lies in modern conditions, the fact that the ruling subject needs new forms of influence i.e., not just economic or political coercion. According to the author, mnemonic authoritarianism can be such a form of control, since it contributes to the solution of two major problems: firstly, it provides to the positive legitimization of the ruling subject, and secondly, it creates new possibilities for authority over society and the state. These possibilities are shown in the influence on the interpretation of various events of the historical past both by society and by the individual. The variety of forms of this influence, authoritarian or democratic, depends not only on the political or economic condition but also on the cultural norms that prevail in society and the state. The problem of mnemonic authoritarianism formation is connected with the importance of cultural heritage. It is associated not only with retention of the heritage of the past but also with its compliance to the realities of the present, which, in turn, can cause decentralization of memory for a single individual or a group, as well as society as a whole.

Keywords: authoritarianism, mnemonic authoritarianism, culture, memory, politics of memory, past

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Introduction

The conceptual basis of mnemonic authoritarianism is not only the set of memories about the past but also the history itself, its knowledge and understanding, its interpretation, and everything it has to do with the positive legitimization of political and other practices of the ruling subject. The best approach to understanding mnemonic authoritarianism is to consider this phenomenon in the context of the ruling subject's desire to control the perception of the historical past, how this past is perceived by the society and the individual. This is due to the variety of information and communication technologies that contribute to its distribution. In this regard, the point of view of V. Shnirelman is noteworthy: "... with the fall of well-known totalitarian regimes and the growth of democratization ... alternative versions of history appeared and entered into an active and complex dialogue both with each other and with generally accepted ideas" [Shnirelman, 2016. P. 102]. Simplification of access to historical heritage, the increasing role of information and communication technologies (with the help of which it became possible to transfer this heritage globally) creates a new challenge for the ruling subject whom is related to preservation of cultural heritage, a complete prohibition on revising some of its aspects and distorting deep ontic grounds. The spread of the governing practices' influence on the historical sphere is associated with a specific legitimizing effect, which allows the ruling subject to find justification and motivation for their political actions.

Forms of mnemonic authoritarianism

Different forms of mnemonic authoritarianism can be caused not only by economic, political, and cultural premises but by religious aspects as well. For example, in a theocracy, the past, or its aspects, can be sacralized, its perception and interpretation are determined by religious norms and contain some element of dogmatism. Attempts to revise this perception or proposal within the framework of the alternative discourse can be related with the opposition of religious values and established dogmas. At the same time, an alternative version of history is also subjected to strict censorship. As the result, repressive measures against the individual or social group that formulated it are applied. This kind of mnemonic authoritarianism can be defined as clerical. The main factor determining this type of mnemonic practice of the ruling subject is religion with its norms and values. According to L. Burke and S. Faulkner, the "instrumentalization" of remembrance raises another problem: the use of past events and memorials for political purposes (in addition to mythologization and ideologization), which raises the further question of legitimate and illegitimate forms of using the historical past, threatens them trivialization and banalization" [Burke, Faulkner, 2010. P. 3]. We can agree with the authors that the analysis and perception of history, determined by religion, can lead to some simplification of its nature, deformation of the ontic foundations of any events of the historical past. But at the same time, we can disagree with the authors in the sense that unnecessary simplification of the past is not the goal of clerical mnemonic authoritarianism. It is rather a question of creating certain mnemonic objects, through which the perception of history takes place. A system of criteria is being created, following which becomes part of the mechanism for identifying society and the state. A slight deviation from them does not lead to any serious consequences for the social life of the individual because the ruling subject allows it.

The authoritarianism of mnemonic discourse does not exclude its signs in other ruling practices, including democratic ones. In Western democracy, the model of perceiving the history and nature of mnemonic practices is more dynamic and progressive but also has the desire to determine the perception of the historical past by the individual and the society. The perception of past events, which became the basis for creating a democratic authority, is combined with ignoring or excluding particular memories of some events that indicate the authoritarian nature of specific elements of Western democracy. The authoritarianism of mnemonic practices in Western culture is shown by the fact that within the framework of the created narrative, it is positioned as an ontic ideal: the exceptional nature of the democratic achievements and the significance of the contribution to the development of modern civilization, which, in turn, is confirmed by proper sources from the historical past. There is also a simplification of the perception of the past, its proper interpretation to achieve external or internal political goals. It is in the transformation of the perception of the historical past that lays the potential to justify the messianic role or civilizational mission of a democratic ruling subject. Negative aspects are removed from the history of democracy. Emphasis is placed on its positive aspects, which leads to the idealization of democratic culture and its historical heritage. It should be noted that Western mnemonic authoritarianism has oriental character; idealizing its past, it seeks the negative aspects of another state's history to prove its predisposition to the formation of democracy in its culture to the detriment of its own ontic foundations.

Traditions and history as basis for mnemonic authoritarianism

Considering the cultural and political environments of Asian states, mnemonic authoritarianism is mostly based on the traditions and history of the states. V.E. Molodyakov believes that for the Japanese, some of the factors determining the attitude to

historical memory, the following features might be distinguished: honest, but often a superficial interest in their past [Molodyakov, 2008. P. 285] traumatism associated with external factors [Molodyakov, 2008. P. 289]. However, these factors do not indicate the specifics of Asian mnemonic authoritarianism, as the author himself says that the listed features cannot be considered exclusively for Japanese people [Molodyakov, 2008. P. 289] since those features can reflect the attitude to the historical memory of the state with any form of political structure. One of the main features of Asian mnemonic authoritarianism is the orientation toward the public perception of history, the priority of the collective memory of historical events over their individual perception. This is a significant feature of Asian political culture, which does not imply the development of individual perception, submission to the collective consciousness; this also refers to issues related to the interpretation of the past.

A common feature to these practices of mnemonic authoritarianism is that they are based on the assertion of the legitimizing role of historical knowledge in the context of creating a ruling practice. According to D. Gorin, "...the legitimizing function of historical knowledge is based on temporalization as a fundamental part of systems of thought that ensure the ideological legitimization of power. Holistic pictures of the social and political system are supported by fixing the differences between the present and the past, the present and the future" [Gorin, 2013. P. 100]. We can agree that the task of mnemonic authoritarianism is the correlation between the historical past and the formation of the mechanism for social identification of the country's population and the ruling subject, as well as the positive legitimization of its political practices in the present. However, in the case of impact on the perception of historical knowledge, we are talking not only about ideological legitimation but also about the complete correction of public consciousness for its further control to the detriment of the individual perception of the history. In this case, the past has a certain transformation by the prevailing ideological dominants and the value-normative forms of the ruling subject. In this regard, the theory of E. Meyer about the "elaboration of the past" (Aufarbeitungder Vergangenheit) or "overcoming the past" is interesting [Meyer, 2008. P. 177]. In this paper, the author speaks of a set of measures undertaken by states to overcome the totalitarian or authoritarian legacy of the historical past [Meyer, 2008. P. 178]. He uses this idea while studying the historical past of Germany after the end of the Cold War and the unification of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, which was accompanied by the experience of comprehension and interpretation of an authoritarian and totalitarian past. But the author does not pay enough attention to the fact that mnemonic practices of reformatting the consciousness of society and the individual, over time, can change the direction of development from democratizing the attitude to the past to its authorization, the formation of mechanisms for controlling the perception of the past and correlating it to the present. In this case, it will be better to talk about the "re-encoding" [Shnirelman, 2016. P. 106] of the past, according to which the state determines not only what should be remembered, but also how it should be remembered [Shnirelman, 2016. P. 105].

The essence of such a re-encoding is determined by the model of perception of the historical past that prevails in the culture. According to D. Moses, the attitude to the historical past can go in two major ways: from accepting the traumatic character of the past, the inextricable connection of the present with it ... to the desire to radically break the connection between the past and the present ... to restore and renew national identity" [Moses, 2007. P. 241]. The author's position looks convincing as such a division can be almost in any mnemonic discourse. But there is a drawback in D. Moses's theory: he does not mention the possibility of existence for median principles in the mnemonic discourse. In the framework of democracy, it may be shown in the desire of the ruling subject to find balance between totalitarian censorship and the pluralism of the historical past interpretations. The median origins of history perception, which signify mnemonic authoritarianism, contribute to the formation of mnemonic consensus, within which the individual and the society preserve a kind of freedom in understanding and assessments of the historical past, but within the framework of normative and value ideas which set by the ruling subject.

The individual and the society in mnemonic authoritarianism

The median of authoritarian mnemonic discourse does not admit dogmatization, distortion or excessive pluralization of the past while creating certain mechanisms for determining the mnemonic activity of an individual. In the realities of the global information society, the creation of median principles under authoritarian conditions is also significant because the state is unable to control the perception of the past [Moses, 2007. P. 107]. But here we need to make a clause since we are not talking about total control over the perception of the past, but about creating certain standards for its perception and interpretation. Information and communication technologies can help the ruling subject, giving quite extensive opportunities for the formation of their cultural code, a significant part of which is the historical past, represented both in the form of any events and in the actions of individual historical personages. In this regard, the conceptualization of mnemonic authoritarianism

using information and communication technologies splits into two directions: eventual and personal. The first is related to the impact on the perception of a specific historical event by the individual and the society. Here, authoritarianism is shown in the fact that perception should be connected with the value-normative pattern of the ruling subject and also, this identification should be mandatory. The existence of an alternative point of view is allowed, but in a limited form, severe differences with official discourse are either not allowed or limited. Denial or critical refusal of the generally accepted interpretation of historical events can cause intellectual isolation of the individual, or bring specific political consequences. The second, personal, means that there will influence the individual's consciousness within the framework of perception and formation of an attitude towards a particular historical personage, its ruling practices, and value dominants. Through personal mnemonic authoritarianism, the ruling subject can legitimize own actions in the present, or emphasize the positive aspects of the chosen practice and neutralize its shortcomings in comparison with the historical figure of the past, as well as to form a perception of himself as a successor to significant achievements of the predecessor, a follower of political course. Authoritarianism, in this case, is manifested in the fact that when perceiving a historical person, the individual needs to correlate with the actions of the ruling subject that he is conducting in the present, to agree with their correctness. At the same time, the negative aspects of the political course of the ruling subject from the past are ignored; the positive ones stand out from the historical context and apply to the realities of the present. Personal aspect of mnemonic authoritarianism can contribute to the formation of a personality cult, although not in its classical totalitarian form but in a more modern version.

Positive and negative aspects of mnemonic authoritarianism

Both personal and eventual forms of mnemonic authoritarianism correspond to the task of creating a "larger narrative", which serves the interests of the ruling elite or the dominant majority [Shnirelman, 2006. P. 570]. This narrative is not always a negative phenomenon since mnemonic authoritarianism and the narrative created within its framework (being internally contradictory phenomena) have both positive and negative aspects. Among the positive aspects of mnemonic authoritarianism, we can single out that this system is a source of values to unite and identify society with the ruling subject. Using mnemonic practices, the ruling subject tries to prevent the distortion from some historical events, to protect ontic grounds from negative external influences. Despite the positive basis of mnemonic practices, their authoritarian nature is that even acting in the name of protecting the cultural heritage, the ruling subject most often proceeds solely from His understanding of its value. The practices, by which the mnemonic activity of the society is determined, can lead to the sacralization of some past events, providing them unjustifiably high significance in the historical context.

Among the negative aspects of mnemonic authoritarianism, we can single out the desire of the ruling subject through the management of collective or individual memory to take any historical events outside the socio-cultural context, literally reproduce certain norms, rituals and practices from the past to the present, or borrow them from another, ontically opposite culture. Within the framework of the mnemonic narrative, the ruling subject motivates his actions with the exclusively positive character of the borrowed elements of culture, and the need for their adoption is historically justified, it is necessary for the further development of the political system that he manages. In the mnemonic sphere, this is expressed by F. Ankersmit's definition – "privatization of the past" [Ankersmit, 2017. P. 14]. The philosopher considers its appearance to be a consequence of a change in historical consciousness associated with the transference of the concept "memory" into mnemonic discourse, and infrequently replacing it with the concepts of "history" and "past". According to the author, memory is selective, flexible; it allows you to remember only considerably valuable and necessary things at the moment [Ankersmit, 2017. P. 14]. In the context of the analysis of the conceptualization of mnemonic authoritarianism, the author's theory is of great importance, since it demonstrates the manipulative capabilities of mnemonic practices in cultural and political discourse. The weakness of the theory is expressed by the culture-centric approach of the author; he considers the "privatization of the past" only in the context of culture, but without affecting the political sphere. As forms of mnemonic authoritarianism develop, the term "privatization of the past" can take on a broad meaning and be used by the ruling subject not only within domestic but also within foreign policy level.

Mnemonic authoritarianism at the foreign policy level can be addressed against a particular politician, or at the global political level – against the state. Appealing to national cultural dramas, global guilt or a desire for historical revenge can become the basis for mnemonic authoritarianism in political discourse. The concept of "historical justice" in this case acquires a speculative character, which serves the particular purpose of an appropriate historical moment or political situation. The category of historical guilt or responsibility becomes an integral part of mnemonic-political discourse. In this case, mnemonic authoritarianism is manifested in the desire of one ruling subject to impose on others a sense of guilt for

events of the historical past, and not relying on objective but rather their personal criteria of historical guilt.

A sense of guilt, which is created as part of an authoritarian mnemonic narrative, can contribute to both economic and political benefits. In this regard, the point of view of K. Sazonova is of interest, according to which, interpreting the past country from the perspective of utilitarianism or pragmatism, cultivating the role of the "victim" or creating the image of the "savior-winner" can bring specific economic or political benefits [Sazonova, 2019]. We can agree with the authors that the pragmatic or utilitarian aspects, realized in political practice through a mnemonic narrative, can lead to a revision of previously established agreements, a change in economic policy, or even a political course. The revision of the historical heritage has specific political consequences since within the framework of mnemonic authoritarianism this process is formalized through official authorities. An example of such official authorities of mnemonic practices is the International Criminal Court. This example is indicative because it demonstrates several negative aspects of mnemonic authoritarianism at once: firstly, the ICC found out bias and selectivity (most cases are brought against African leaders); secondly, it has a large number of restrictions, the main of which is that any state may either not participate in its activities at all, or revoke its consent at any time [Sazonova, 2019]. These examples demonstrate particular involvement in the use of mnemonic authoritarianism, which makes it not only a cultural practice but also an instrument of political practice. Through such political and cultural practice, can be achieved the effect of forcing various participants of political process to act on the contrary to their national interests or restricting them.

Conclusion

Mnemonic authoritarianism refers to a system of socio-cultural practices aimed at the society and the individual to change their consciousness; they must follow the norms of assessment and interpretation of the historical past by the worldview and value dominants of the ruling subject. The problem of mnemonic authoritarianism formation is connected with the importance of cultural heritage. It is associated not only with retention of the heritage of the past but also with its compliance to the realities of the present, which, in turn, can cause decentralization of memory [Gulova, Sidorova, 2016. P. 3] for a single individual or a group, as well as society as a whole. A distinctive feature of mnemonic authoritarianism is that it introduces the median principle into the discourse. It includes several specific practices, which the ruling subject uses as a tool to unite or disunite the society, create its identity.

Manifestations of mnemonic authoritarianism may be useful if they are associated with the ruling subject's will to protect significant aspects of the cultural heritage from speculations, distortions of its ontic foundations, etc. But the ruling subject uses only its set of values to define significance for particular historical events, which may not match with the perception and interpretation of the same past events by the society or the individual. This shows the negative aspect of mnemonic authoritarianism. The subjective interpretation of past events and the desire of the ruling subject to use such practices and manipulate the consciousness of the individual and the society, to direct it towards solving specific political problems. The ability or inability of the ruling subject to assess right or wrong decisions in political activities makes mnemonic authoritarianism efficient, though not flawless leadership practice.

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