POLITICAL MYTH AS A FORM OF CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL REALITY: DISCUSSION REGARDING THEORY AND ITS PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract: The paper analyses the issues of the essence, origin and form of existence of such a phenomenon as a political myth. Starting from the form of a classical myth, the authors gradually ascend historically to the political myth and the peculiarities of mythologemes of this order. The study of political mythology in the context of globalization is more relevant than ever in modern post-industrial society. Countries that are in a state of transitional democratic regimes with emerging democratic institutions are extremely dependent on ideology and political mythology, which can both contribute to the strengthening of emerging institutions, and completely destroy them.

Keywords: political myth, mythology, social reality, social, political, society, globalization

1 Introduction

The etymology of the word "myth" goes back to the ancient Greek term meaning a story, a legend, a certain form of preserving and transmitting information about the world order, life and activities of a person. In the later periods of the archaic epoch, the etymology of the word expanded absorbing new semantic connotations; however, the conceptual linguistic core of the "myth" still reflects the main content and functional features of the phenomenon. As we know, the myth is historically the first form of cognition and perception of the surrounding world by a person; originating in ancient times, the myth formed the consciousness of an archaic person and conditioned a specific form of perception of reality by him (Bizeul, 2006). It was the myth that served as the starting point for all epistemological constructions of human consciousness; explanatory models in the form of primary emotional images were sacralised in collective thinking, creating a matrix of a person's worldview.

The political myth, being more mobile in space and time in comparison with archaic myths, is at the same time the most complex; being relied on the original plots of traditional myths, the political myth supplements them with new images-symbols, signs and interpretations, constructed or perceived, resulting in a systemic myth consisting of several small myths and, accordingly, numerous mythologemes. In our opinion, it is most expedient to study the structure of a political myth from the perspective of mythologemes as basic units.

Any political myth appears to us in the form of a large patchwork canvas decorated with a variety of drawings made in many shades in compliance with the basic colour scheme and unity of composition. Each of the myths is a sign / symbol / archetype, and so on; with taking its own place, it forms a systemic image of perception and a matrix of consciousness and thinking, through which the perception of political reality occurs. At the same time, the political reality itself is also present in the myth, but in a dialectically withdrawn form, since a myth does not describe reality as it is, but interprets and perceives it in accordance with its symbolic logic (Edelman, 1967). The mythologemes themselves differ in their images, in the level of rootedness in the cultural and historical layer of social life, in the degree of influence on public consciousness; they are myths and images of a lesser order. A political myth can contain a different number of myths, many of which will be "secondary", will have the character of an addition, or the spread of a central-forming systemic myth, and so on. In our opinion, the analysis of the

most famous political myths rooted in the public consciousness allows us to draw a conclusion about the necessary presence of three basic mythologemes in each political myth (Halpern, 1961).

1) The myth of the creation of the world. This element migrated into political mythology from the structure of religious myths and embodies the very ontological basis of a political myth. The myth of creation is a traditional archaic myth rooted in the cultural and historical space of every nation; it is deeply rooted in the public consciousness. In the context of political consciousness, the myth of the beginning of the world presupposes a solution to the issue of the emergence and organization of political life. As examples of such a myth, we can single out the myth of a self-organizing political community, popular in the context of liberal ideology; the myth of the divine origin of political power, and so on. In addition to cosmogony (the act of creation), the myth of the creation of the world includes cosmology: the principle of the distribution of power and political resources as an aspect of the organization of political life. In this regard, economic myths, as a rule, exist within the political myth, solving the issue of resource allocation, which is secondary to the problem of creating political life. Thus, the myth of the "invisible hand of the market" is part of a more fundamental myth about the contractual self-organization of political life by the human community, and the myth of "economic scarcity" may be a continuation of the myth from chaos to order, from the overthrow of the old political regime to the embodiment of a new, perfect political system, etc.

2) The image of a messiah. This element of political myth is a reference to the hero archetype and expresses the subjective side of the myth. The image of the messiah in political myth often appears to be ideologically coloured. The figure of the messiah is embodied not in the image of the hero of legends and ancient legends, as the archetype of the hero is traditionally embodied, but, as a rule, in the image of a specific person associated with political reality or the political life of past years. As a "rescuer", the political myth uses the personages of real statesmen, people inscribed in the political reality of the present or the past, while a certain empirical material has been accumulated about each "rescuer", which can be used and embodied in various forms, both by the mass collective consciousness, and by individual efforts of representatives of the academic community, and experts in political management and consulting. More often, political myths resort to symbolizing political figures of the present and recent past; such personalities quickly form an emotional response and a vivid image in the public consciousness, for example, the figures of V.V. Putin, M.S.Gorbachev, or I.V. Stalin in the context of Russian history. However, the sacralisation of figures from the distant past, who played a significant role in the historical and cultural context of the development of society, is no less effective; the formation of a "messiah" in the image of Peter I and Ivan IV is no less successful in the mass consciousness. In addition, not only an individual, but also a separate social community, as well as an institution, including the party and the state, can act as a "messiah". The image of a messiah, as a rule, is formed in the corresponding ideological field; therefore this element of the political myth is the most associated with ideology (Gushchin, 2006, 2005).

3) The concept of unity. One of the most important functions of a political myth is the identification of an individual with his/her political group; the implementation of this function is impossible without the mythologeme of unity, which becomes the most important condition for the consolidation of society and the opposition of "friends" and "enemies". The political myth affects the collective

consciousness, levelling an individual self-identification with other individuals. The appeal to the archetypes of the past and the cultural-historical layer of the development of the people predetermines the identification of the population with the nation and the state, unfolding in the opposition "ours and strangers". The concept of unity formed by the political myth, most vividly reflects political existence expressed in the potential antagonism of political groups.

2 Methods

A neo-institutional approach was chosen as a methodological basis for the study; it allows performing a comprehensive study of the political myth from a functional, as well as ontological, and epistemological positions.

Based on the definition and ontological characteristics of a political myth, it can be concluded that political mythology shapes a person's ideas about political space and forms political identity. Creating a political identity, the political myth forms the political worldview, political values and attitudes of society, at the same time reflects and transforms the model of political behaviour of citizens (Lincoln, 1989).

The structure of a political myth is a ramified system of elements, the imposition of which on each other creates the necessary socio-political image. E. Cassirer comes to the conclusion about the dual nature of a political myth, which is a defining essential component; in his opinion, a political myth "on the one hand, is a product of mass consciousness, and on the other, is the result of purposeful activity in ideological production" (Cassirer, 2011). The dual nature of the political myth, noted by E. Cassirer, reflects the idea of the multi-composition and multi-functionality of political myths; it combines elements of reflection, perception and production of political reality. Based on the subject of the formation of the myth, and depending on whether the political myth is the product of the collective spatio-temporal myth-making of the people, or the authorship of the myth belongs to the technologists of a particular political party or state institution, we can talk about conditionally "natural" and "artificial" political myths, taking into account the fact that the same myth can be both natural and artificial at the same time, based on collective archetypal premises and supplemented by the attributes of modern political realities that distort the semantic load of the archaic myth.

The functional complexity and multi-level structure of a political myth is also emphasized by modern domestic political scientists and theorists of political science. N.I. Shestov defines a political myth as "a stable and emotionally coloured stereotype of perception of the political realities belonging to the past and present, generated by the need of an individual and social structures in the political process" (Shestov, 2006). In his definition, Shestov focuses on the stereotypical structure of myth and the need for the existence of political mythology as an integral attribute of political life. Thus, based on this definition, the political myth is presented to N.I. Shestov as a form of socio-political life, the content of which is the construction of stereotyped images and conceptual models of the political in the past and present. In our opinion, the political myth is not an exclusive embodiment of stereotypical ideas about politics, despite its recurrent nature; the presence of archetypal models in the arsenal of political mythology and the function of reproducing images and ideas, and the comparison of a political myth with a mental construction that embodies stereotypes seems superficial (Royce, 2017).

3 Results and Discussion

The system of relationships between a political myth, an ideology and utopia is complex. All three types of social consciousness closely interact with each other, creating new hybrid forms of perception of social and political life. A political myth is quite often the central component of ideology, and can

also underlie a social utopia; in addition and on the contrary, utopian plots can be present in a political myth, in connection with which the conceptual separation of these forms of consciousness does not seem appropriate, although the presence of various essential components allows terminological separation of concepts.

The division of political myths into "natural" and "artificial" seems as being not significant. Regardless of the subject of myth-making (whether it is a people, a social group or a specific professional political strategist), a political myth is based on archetypal ideals and refers to a single existential basis, in connection with which the division into constructed myths and myths generated by the collective political consciousness in the process of historical development does not make sense, since in addition to a single basic cultural and historical layer to which these myths refer, they pursue a single goal and perform the same functions. This situation does not mean that a political myth cannot be constructed and used by a certain social group to influence the mass consciousness in order to obtain a "political effect" of a certain kind; it means that there is a "natural" myth at the heart of every "constructed" political myth (Levi-Strauss, 2007), it also points out the fact that a political myth created to fulfil specific political tasks, for example, mobilizing the population for a political action, participation in elections, an uprising, and so on, being rooted in political consciousness, is transformed: it is refracted through the prism of personal and collective ideas, moral values, historical archetypes of society, psychological characteristics, and then leads to actions of a completely different, and often directly opposite, nature (Cassirer, 2002). Moreover, a myth created for a specific political purpose may turn out to be weak and unstable if it does not have deep archetypal foundations, which will lead to its rapid destruction or debunking in the mass consciousness.

In the author's opinion, the most important functions of a political myth are:

1) The formation of political consciousness expressed in the creation of a matrix reflecting perception of political events and phenomena;
2) The formation of a political culture, within the framework of which the political myth becomes a cultural and historical heritage;
3) An ideological function associated with the use of a political myth in the formation of ideology;
4) An integration function that involves a person into a stronger and more numerous social group;
5) The function of identification, which consists in the formation of political identity with a binary opposition "we-they";
6) A rehabilitating function, which must be attributed to the layer of emotional and psychological perception of a political thing and a social thing by a person.

4 Conclusions

The symbolization of political unity most effectively occurs with the help of an appeal to the idea of common origin ("Kiev is the mother of Russian cities", "CIS as the heir of the USSR" and so on), the major events of Russian and world history ("Moscow is the third Rome", "USSR is the winner of fascism "), as well as to lofty ideals, most often of a religious nature, for example, the myth of America as a" found paradise", "Holy Russia", and so on. Even in the case of the formation of an internal party myth, there is an appeal to the concept of national or state unity; however, in this case, the concept of unity will be supplemented with ideological elements.

Thus, using linguistic, figurative, and symbolic constructs, the political myth forms a binary opposition to one degree or another, which is presented as a mechanism for the perception and assessment of political reality.

The political myth forms a specific model of consciousness and behaviour. On the basis of rational and irrational ideas, it creates a dichotomous system of human orientations in the political

space, forms value judgments about the political system, and predetermines human behaviour in political reality. In turn, this contributes to the rooting, transformation or destruction of existing myths, as well as the formation of a new political mythology. Thus, the political myth forms the collective political identity of a person in a segment of social space.

Acknowledgements

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AA, AG