

## **Russian governance in the context of the influence of political mythology**

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the process of the formation and influence of political myths on public administration in the Russian Federation.*

**Keywords:** *political myths, politics, society, culture, media, Russia, political leaders*

At the present stage of development of Russian society, the political process is impossible without the participation of the media. This is due, on the one hand, to the growth of political transparency, and on the other, to the diversity of the media themselves (quantitative and qualitative composition). The political side of public life becomes dependent on the need for constant presence on the information agenda. At the same time, the role of the media is growing as a non-political factor expressing political ideas, views and values. The media are one of the main mechanisms of political socialization and function at all levels of relationships between a person and the political system. In today's information society, even the younger generation receives the first information about politics through the media and discusses these messages in the family.

One of the main substantive features of publications in the media of the last decade has been a systematic appeal to facts and the most prominent personalities of the Soviet period, the desire to re-understand and re-evaluate what was happening in Russia in those years. Not all Russians are satisfied with the results of reforms and the situation in the country. This usually leads to the fact that in society there is a need to interpret the present against the background of the past and to look in the past for situational and behavioral models that can provide such an interpretation.

The political myth, that is, "political consciousness that misinterprets the real political system," is one of the most effective ways to form new ideas about the past and its assessments. As noted in the research literature, political myths "are usually perceived by society not as fiction, but as a natural state of affairs." Unlike the classical myth, which is a phenomenon of

artistic thought and one of the components of the cultural space, the political myth is always social, that is, associated with the pressing problems of society. At the same time, turning to old political myths and constructing new ones helps the state and authorities to form collective thinking, corresponding to the implementation of the paths of development of the country and society outlined by the state.<sup>1</sup>

With the help of school, university and other educational programs, thematic exhibitions, monuments, speeches by politicians and works of art, political myths are being introduced into the mass consciousness. The media and the Internet play a critical role in the transmission and dissemination of political myths.

The construction of new political myths, as well as the refutation of those that existed before, is carried out through the use of elements of two semiotic series: non-verbal and verbal.

Non-verbal means primarily include new facts and new plots, new details reported about the object of the mythologized, as well as details:

a) object details - details of appearance, clothing, etc.;

b) behavior. G.G. Pocheptsov (2004: 188), including detailing in the toolkit of imageology, emphasizes "we always believe in details more than in abstraction." A detail of an object, a thing in separate "conceptualized areas" can "semantically combine" with a word and be associated with certain abstract concepts that create an idea of the preferences, character of the mythologized person, as well as the ideology of the era.

The verbal embodiment of the myth is those lexical and phraseological units that make up the general meaning of the content, their associative-semantic and evaluative connections, as well as the compositional and syntactic features of the organization of narrative and stylistic techniques that are most characteristic for the construction of a myth. In most cases, the scientific study of this - actually linguistic - side of political myths simply complements the general analysis of the compositional and substantive features of the myth and the possibilities of its impact on the mass consciousness. Only a few works have been devoted to the linguistic properties of political myths. Meanwhile, linguistic and stylistic means sometimes play a primary role in the emergence of a new political myth, in the reconstruction or refutation of an old myth.<sup>2</sup>

It is quite obvious that the study of the linguistic and stylistic features of modern political mythology is very relevant and requires special attention. The new political reality of Russia:

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<sup>1</sup> Vershinin M.S. Political communication in the information society: promising areas of research // Actual problems of communication theory. Collection of scientific papers. SPb, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Gololobova V.N. Political mythology: theoretical foundations and practical significance in the political life of society. Novosibirsk, 2004.

pluralism of opinions and the right to freedom of expression, which, thanks to the diversity and multidirectionality of the media and the Internet, which almost every Russian now owns, generates not only new myths, but also new forms of their embodiment.

As the researchers note, the activation of political mythology is characteristic of periods of instability and crises, when the lost past is idealized, and the forgotten leaders of the past are seen as figures, in comparison with which the actions of the leaders of the present do not look so effective and correct.

An evaluative interpretation of a political myth is usually a one-way street: the person being mythologized is placed either in a positive zone (re-glorification) or in a negative zone (demonization) on an axiological scale. At the same time, in discourse, two interpretations of the same historical, political event or the same person, opposite in terms of evaluative assessment, can coexist.<sup>3</sup>

One of the central myths characterizing the political culture of Russia is the myth of the Russian people. For the most part, other myths come from him, be it the myth of the exclusivity of the Russian people or the myth of autocracy.

One of the elements of the human myth is human nature. In it, the Russian person is characterized by contradictory hypertrophic qualities, which in some way Russians have. He can be both infinitely patient and as impatient as possible. He can be given the characteristics of both a statesman and an anarchist nation. Another element is the attitude of people to such a phenomenon as power. Again, in the context of this myth, people can be loyal servants of the state and vice versa - try to resist it. The modern attitude of people to power, and indeed a large part of Russian political culture, was formed largely under the influence of mythology, which gave an idea of I.V. Stalin, whose "culture of personality", in turn, was shaped by myths from a strong defender of the tsar. Stalin's personality culture is a classic example of political mythology, which can serve as the embodiment of the myth itself. The goal of this mythology, like many others, is the legalization of power. The peculiarity of this mythology is that we can tell when the ups and downs began, and, moreover, we can say that this mythology partially exists today.

Echoes of the mythology of that time played a role in the formation of modern political culture and leadership style in Russia - V.V. Putin is similar to the Stalinist style, and the use of the mythology of the state and its strong sovereign is only a continuation of the same mythology used by the creators of the image of Stalin. It can even be said that in some respects the image of

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<sup>3</sup> Demidov, A. Ideology as a tool of political communication and power // Power. - 1998.- № 8-9. - P. 44.

Putin in Russian political culture takes on the same paternal aura of the “father of the nation” that was once associated with Stalin.

The myth has now become a convenient tool of manipulation used by politicians and structures that want to direct society in the direction that will bring maximum benefit. In particular, using the example of our country, we can say that political mythology is one of the most important methods of manipulation used throughout the modern history of the country and during the Soviet Union. Taking into account the events taking place both in the country and around it, we can say that they most successfully fit into the "plot" of modern myths, which were created mainly in the interests of both the population of the Russian Federation and its allies and opponents in the fact that Russia is a great power, the population of which has rallied around a strong leader and is ready to repulse all the forces of the enemy.

The political myth has always been associated with the culture that gave birth to it, "it is a projection of social values on the world as a whole." These types of myths have the most archaic component in comparison with other myths. G. Pocheptsov writes: "Myths are a database from which all serious ideas and goals are taken. Even if we do not recognize the existence of certain archetypes, we must agree that a certain set of plots has a high degree of repetition, and a new plot is created on the basis of their existence".

The mythological view of politics is characterized by the idea that a single law prevailing in the world determines the principles of the existence and management of society. The myth suggests that parts of the cosmos and society are not only interconnected, but also interdependent, can reproduce the quality of the whole in each particle and are sensitive to external influences. Reliance on such ideas in public life leads to strict regulation of the behavior of participants in political and social relations.<sup>4</sup>

Society and the current political system work according to the once established mythological scenario with the division of the roles of all members. Each action is legalized, directed towards a closed macrocosm and guarantees its safety. The role of the political system as the guiding principle and the ruler as the center becomes especially important. Focusing on past examples leads to a culturally closed society, a constant reproduction of the existing social model, a slow pace of continuous change and a small amount of foreign cultural borrowings.

Every dominant political force, regardless of what form and type of government it adheres to, what ideas and principles, first of all seeks to retain power as long as possible. It is for this reason that today the creation and dissemination of political myths for the state is as important as maintaining a sufficient level of protection of society. A number of studies have

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<sup>4</sup> Grachev M.N. Political communication: theoretical concepts, models, vectors of development. M., 2004.

already been carried out in Russian science highlighting the direct influence of the media on election results.

Media and PR technologies, which collect, process, interpret and disseminate information, are able to determine public attitudes and ideas, impose ideals and set norms of behavior. In addition, what was not included in the channels of mass communications practically does not affect the development of modern society. Since the media are the main tool for shaping public opinion, they are assigned a leading role in the development and implementation of political myths in the mass consciousness by deliberately distorting facts and events. Political myths disseminated in the media are the main means of justifying and, as a rule, praising the existing political regime and social conditions of life, as well as justifying the legitimacy of the current government. In this regard, one cannot but agree with the opinion of the researcher N.I. Shestov, who asserts that "the information content of the political tradition is a certain set of stereotyped judgments and ideas, motives of activity, which are repeated many times in political practice. The myth begins to correlate with a certain constructive sequence of rituals of political action". Thus, the myth becomes the main state ideology that supports the political elite, which may not meet the real needs of society. As L. Mutovkin notes, "manipulating the human mind is a means of enslaving it, one of the ways in which the ruling elite tries to subordinate the masses to their goals".

Let's highlight the main mechanisms often used by the media to ensure "favorable conditions" for broadcasting and consolidating political myths in the mass consciousness - the dissemination of a large amount of information occurs haphazardly, fragmentarily, preventing the creation of logical chains between interconnected messages. Thus, the audience is deprived of a holistic perception of the events and facts covered;

- broadcast messages containing immorality and obscenity, oversaturation of the agenda with "zero" information, overwhelming the public, preventing them from analyzing the news for its meaning;

- continuous and rapid dissemination of messages that do not allow the public to determine the degree of importance and relevance of the information provided. Such information overload does not allow the information to be perceived meaningfully or completely alienates the public from watching the news. As a result, we get an audience that cannot analyze, compare, has lost touch with the past, lives only in the present - here and now, and therefore easily lends itself to all sorts of manipulations. Therefore, the meaning of political myths often boils down to transferring a socio-political problem to the mythical sphere, finding an explanation there and presenting it to society. And if earlier the reason for the origin of myths was the lack of knowledge, then in the modern world this is a reluctance to logically explain many processes. In

addition, an unconditional belief in myths is associated with a person's desire to regain his former "painless perception of the world around him". That is, the myth makes it possible to replace the complex and truthful image of reality in the minds of the masses with a symbolic image that allows one to live in harmony with the world.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the current political myths circulated in the media are technical or short-lived. Such myths temporarily divert public attention from real global problems or crises. Modern political myth, like ancient myths, also consists of symbols and images. But at the same time, today's myth differs from the archaic one in that it contains much more text, or rather, a group of messages containing subtextual information and evoking certain emotions and feelings in the audience. They sympathize with the myth when the content of the text matches or "complements" the existing worldview created by the political myth, and also when the myth has an emotional basis. Thus, the construction of a political myth is an integral part of the activities of political elites: myths rooted in the public consciousness make it possible to legitimize the actions of the ruling structure and maintain balance in society.

In addition, the modern myth is genetically linked to the processes taking place in the mass media - the media is assigned the main role in the creation and dissemination of political myths.

For the mythological legitimization of President Putin, the ideology of a "national leader" was imposed on the mass consciousness - the head of the supranational level of power, standing above the conceptually dependent residents who maintain the continuity of the previously chosen political course. The continuity of the embodiment of the heroic figure of Putin was actually achieved thanks to the election victory of United Russia, which, as a rule, achieved its sacred and charismatic status through a complex system of bureaucratic rituals.

The logic of the political myth lies in the transfer of a certain causal connection, contested due to the social crisis, into the sphere of mythical images, where a new causal connection can be found and then transferred to political reality. Thus, the political myth carries a kind of search logic that works due to the lack of completeness of the initial data.<sup>6</sup>

In the culture of early civilizations, the king, as a necessary part of the social space, is not even localized as a person. Thus, the possible possibility of dividing a single cultural space and the emergence of contradictions is overcome in advance. Opposition to the myth is completely impossible, because it violates the integrity of the world, in which everything is coordinated. The

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<sup>5</sup> Gololobova V.N. Political mythology: theoretical foundations and practical significance in the political life of society. Novosibirsk, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Vershinin M.S. Political communication in the information society: promising areas of research // Actual problems of communication theory. Collection of scientific papers. SPb, 2004.

story popular in myths about dualism - gods, demons, people - does not actually create elements of opposition, they are just different parts of the same system of things. The sacred principle, concentrated in the king as a figure and in the government as a necessary process of correcting society, unites all aspects of mythological reality and even justifies the possible mistakes of those in power.

The lack of individuality of the ruler can be traced in the images, plastics and descriptions in the text. All of them fit into the portrait of an ideal ruler, clearly archaic in nature. This also applies to personal life and the performance of state functions. It is believed that a ruler who obeys the sacred nature of his social status is present at every point of the public space. Everything that is important for the existence of society can be connected with it. At the same time, the head of state is ethically ambivalent; he cannot be judged in terms of good and bad. It is clear that the one who rules is who has a certain territory with clear boundaries, where manifestations of disorder / chaos are unacceptable, and only in this way the exercise of power is possible.

Since the ordering mechanism affects the cosmos, assumes that it is poorly formed, it is necessary to periodically revive the existing order, as well as recognize the presence of an incorrect / disordered element in the main figures of social space. The chthonic component is reflected in the peculiarities of the image of the ruler as the center of the political myth, referring to both traditional political myths and modern ones. The monarch is a figure standing on the border of Being and Nonexistence, Cosmos and Chaos, it is the center and periphery, a concentrated expression of what a person is used to considering sacred since the time of the archaic.

However, one should not speak of the original models as fully describing the contours of all systems of political mythology. Archaic images exist as interwoven into the fabric of culture, realized only within its limits and subordinate to the logic of cultural development.

Despite the fact that the initial basis of the myth is formative, it strongly depends on the cultural and historical context, as well as on the trends in the development of human culture as a whole. Over time, mythologies that have arisen as a result of an initially defined way of perceiving the world undergo significant changes in terms of a number of factors of cultural development.

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