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Political myth design as a technology for mass consciousness manipulation

Abstract. *In this article, the authors consider political myth design as a political technology to manipulate and control mass consciousness and unconsciousness with the mass media. The reasons to use the myth design in politics are systematized and the principles under which the political myth design result is formed are emphasized. The features and reasons to use this technology in politics are highlighted, and a number of principles are given, according to which a political myth design constructs the necessary information and ideological result. Theoretical provisions are analyzed and systematized and the practical methods of myth design in politics are described in the article. The main ways to use myths in politics are structured. The paper focuses on the mythological techniques actively used in political myth designing, and on the three main practical tasks of political myth design. The research conducted makes it possible to define a political myth as a result of political myth design, which can be described as a socio-cultural technology for the development of modern myths perceived by the «political result» consumers as the reality of their worldview. This technology uses archetypes, storylines, heroes, and other elements of traditional mythology when creating, disseminating, and transmitting various mass messages, including political communication in the media reality.*
Keywords: *political myth; political myth design; political technologies; mass consciousness; mass media, political manipulation, principles of political myth designing.*

Introduction. In the age of mediacracy, when authorities are strengthened and supported by the mass media, which main task is to introduce the necessary images of power in the human mind, a better understanding of the laws of influence on the political consciousness and the mass unconsciousness with the myths has a special place in the political activities. Therefore, more attention is paid to the ways of its influence on achieving a particular goal of the political elite or the state as a whole, and ways to improve influence. Thus, methods, channels and technologies to manipulate the mass consciousness are constantly improved.

Nowadays, the words «myth» and «mythology» are very frequent in ideological statements. It seems that the level of social life «mythological» in our country has enormously increased recently, and we have stepped out of the realm of science and rationalism into a kind of «mythological» age.

Currently, myths aimed at obtaining, retaining, and legitimizing power are created and disseminated by political parties and associations, teams of political technologists, and individual political leaders. These myths are constantly disseminated through various mass media, which makes it possible to introduce

94   № 2(143)/2023   *Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің ХАБАРШЫСЫ.*
Саяси ғылымдар. Аймақтану. Шығыстану. Түркітану сериясы
ISSN: 2616-6887, eISSN:2617-605X8

mythical political forms quickly and effectively into the mass consciousness.

Purpose: studying political myth designing can help in understanding the features of the development of mass consciousness and determining the principles that guide mythmakers.

Tasks: studying the history, revealing the essence and features of the political myth designing as a technology to manipulate mass consciousness.

History. Throughout the historical development, the myth is based both on a fantastic and an often intentionally distorted reflection of reality. Since ancient times, gods, heroes, and demons have been created in the minds of people. But at each historically determined stage of the development of public consciousness, myths about them are developed in accordance with the peculiarities of thinking of people of a certain epoch. If at the early stages of social development, social myth-making is focused on developing the surrounding reality and preserving the integrity of consciousness of the people, today, myth becomes more and more a tool to manipulate for making influence.

It is this fact that explains the increased interest of experts in the phenomenon of myth in modern society among the knowledge of social philosophy, psychology, and sociology. In this regard, they note that «the opportunities for making and disseminating a mass social myth, as well as for abusing it through the mass communication media in modern society have not decreased, but in many ways have even increased» [1, p.80-88].

When a message is called a myth in everyday speech, it means that it is not recognized as consistent with reality; a phantom (fake) is seen in the myth, born of the naivety of a mass person or the conscious intent of political actors (leaders, parties, associations) and teams of political technologists who legitimize their stay in power by mass media.

Indeed, changes due to the information revolution have made it easy to manipulate mass consciousness by certain people (ideologists) and paradoxically have extremely impoverished the symbolic composition of mythological ideas.

The «social mythology» problem occurred in the twentieth century, when «the myth was significantly changed, and it began to be used as a designation for various kinds of illusory ideas deliberately used by the forces prevailing in society to influence the masses» [2, p. 14-62].

G. Sorel notes the high influence of the myth due to its properties and features and shows how ideology based on folk mythology is effective, but at the same time, the introduction a social myth is significantly simplified. Considering the social myth as a «means» to achieve the goal, the author loses sight of the fact that either the simultaneous use of the myth will not cause the expected reaction at all, or the ideologically transformed myth perceived by the public consciousness will take root in it so much that, planned as a means, it can significantly affect the final result [3, p. 43-53].

E. Cassirer, considering the essence and mechanisms of action of social mythology, notes that modern culture does not destroy the elements of myth radically, but puts them under its control: «Previously, myths have always been described as the result of unconscious social activity. But now myths are made up by people acting in an unfailing consciousness and according to plans. They are well aware of what they need and think over their every step. With these people, myth does not seem to develop itself freely and spontaneously. The new political myths do not grow up freely; they are not wild fruits of an exuberant imagination. They are artificial things fabricated by very skillful and cunning artisans» [4, p. 113-118].

Recognizing the ideological tendency of modern myths, the researcher describes them as follows: «We have a new type of myth – a completely rationalized myth. It has been reserved for the twentieth century, our own great technical age, to develop a new technique of myth. Henceforth myths can be manufactured in the same sense and according to the same methods as any other modern weapon — such as machine guns or airplanes. That is a new thing — and a thing of crucial importance. It has changed the whole form of our social life» [5, p.61].

Research methods: When writing the article, the theoretical research was conducted based on the integrated use of synthesis, analysis, deduction, comparative and analytical methods.

Results and discussion. It is possible to consider the «myth» from different sides and interpret them. However, all researchers agree that modern mythology is deliberately created since this is aimed at achieving goals. A number of specific methods have already been developed for them. Modern political mythology is made so as to help the masses to find themselves in a certain mythological reality.

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Серия Политические науки. Регионоведение. Востоковедение. Тюркология.
BULLETIN of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Political science. Regional studies. Oriental studies. Turkology Series

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It should fill the space in people's minds, associated with certain areas of objective realities that exist outside of a person. Also, a myth can control social reality, and change it as desired.

With the myth, politics enters the social reality of the masses. Political mythology is a mental form of political activity, including stereotyping of political phenomena in the past, present, and future.

Accordingly, the myths in politics make it possible to achieve the goals of the elite in power – to control the people's consciousness. Political myth design can be used with various means of political propaganda, social engineering, promotion, information management, astroturfing, nudge, mass suggestion, user-generated content, and other forms of manipulation of public consciousness [6, pp.77-85].

At the same time, political mythology can tell about real events that are taking place and never happened. They are the result of political mythology, which is a technology for designing and transmitting myths, perceived by citizens as an objective reality. Thus, mythology is focused on mass consciousness, and its target is society, the environment where it functions, and the society where it works. In this case, mythology refers to such psyche phenomena as irrationalism and inductance.

In modern political practice, many psychological techniques and technical innovations are used in making and transmitting myths. The political myths in the twenty-first century are disseminated by traditional (press, radio, television) and modern (Internet, social networks, messengers) mass media. It is the media today that largely contributes to the rapid mythologizing of the people's consciousness in politics. They helped to transfer the politics to TV screens, computer monitors, and other devices – to make it accessible and understandable to all users.

This made it possible for political myth design, in turn, to transfer the main marketing strategies previously aimed at promoting goods and services, to transmit and introduce certain ideological mythologies into people's minds. Myth design began to satisfy the needs of people, even those that they do not yet realize. We can say that political myth design updates the formed and unformed needs of the masses, turning them into motives, attitudes, values, and eventually into mental and behavioral reactions predictable and consistent with political goals.

Using technologies, which include political myth design, in politics should be associated with such reasons as:

• the desire to simplify and schematize (algorithmize) the political process, which is caused by the complicated interaction of political actors;

• the use of mainly social technologies to solve tactical tasks due to the lack of state ideology and disagreement of the main political actors about the fundamental social issues and problems;

• transition to postmodernism in culture. This reason can be featured by a focus on the subconscious mind, the multiple opinions and worldviews, and the blurring of a boundary between virtual and objective reality [7, p. 39-116].

Proceeding from this, it is possible to distinguish the principles according to which the result of political myth design is developed:

1. Principle of systematic, but impulsive-emotional impact. Following this point, it is necessary to give meaning to the myth and ensure that it is believed on an irrational-axiomatic level. To do this, it is necessary to exert constant influences to maintain it (reflexive control of the unconscious reactions of the masses).

2. Principle of sensitivity to social cost and consequences. A myth should be evidence-based, authentic, highly artistic, and plausible. It should not contradict the original ideas and greatly change the prevailing pictures in the minds of the masses, otherwise, it may lead to social upheavals and will not have the desired effect.

3. Principle of modeling. There is no point in making a complete model of a political myth. Its individual facets are effective only. Consequently, those facets that will serve to achieve the goal will be directly designed, i.e. they will be able to influence the emotional component of human consciousness.

4. Principle of refusing to focus on the continuous happiness of those living in the myth. According to this principle, the myth does not have to be entirely devoted to happiness and success; there must be a certain proportion of suffering (this distinguishes the myth from utopia and makes it look like the truth). This will allow the emotionally coloring of the political myth, creating drama and showing differences and relationships more deeply, resulting in the greatest response in the consciousness and unconsciousness of an individual.

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5. Principle of rhetoric. It is necessary to use logical and psychological techniques that will help spread awareness. Also, when screening a political myth, it should be taken into account that psychosemantic and paralinguistic (non-verbal) methods of influence prevail over linguistic (verbal) ones.

6. Principle of emotionally and sensually saturated areas. It can be said that this principle includes all the above-mentioned points and is fundamental, since in order for a socio-political myth to become more effective, the entire palette of emotions of its consumer should be affected [8,7-17].

Political myth design can be seen from different angles:
• as a technology of mythological techniques, archetypal images, and artistic means;
• as a design activity to make and disseminate myths;
• as a means for storing and translating universal meanings, ideas, and stereotypes.

Mythologemes and components of myth, which are used in politics, make it possible to increase the effectiveness of information and ideological results created, in particular, a process of perception of information and its assimilation by the masses becomes much easier.

The following basic mythological techniques are most actively used in myth design:
• archetypes and mythological images. Archetypes are understood as universal images common to all people, which are reflected in the perception of the world, and pertain to the collective unconscious (Z. Freud, K.-G. Jung);
• opposition within the storylines that ensures the duality of phenomena, which is peculiar to mythological consciousness. Here such constructions as «before–after», «negative–positive», «now – before», etc. are used. This allows opposite things to exist in the myth, linking them at the same time into a single space;
• the use of mythologemes based on the need-based schemes of the human psyche, i.e. a formation of people's needs, by activating collective needs through a chain of individual needs [9, pp.6-8].

In conclusion, it should be noted that in politics, myth design performs three main practical tasks:

1. Updates and modernizes the past represented in the historical memory of the masses by creating unconscious associations of vicissitudes of the traditional myth heroes with political processes in which the audience representatives participate. The characters of mythical narratives should be perceived by their masses as contemporaries who went through similar historical events.

2. It sacralizes, synergizes, and ritualizes real political events in the minds of the masses. People should perceive themselves not as hostages of the momentary political conjuncture, mercantile interests of elites, and profane everyday life, but as participative co-creators of the political history of their country, nation, and state. This role should be played by mythologized involvement in political actions – mass rituals that produce an irrational connection with the deep expediency, non-futility of existence, and peculiarity of the current political moment - the sacral belonging of political life. Creates a feeling of being [10, pp.138-139]

3. Symbolization and mythologization of the future is a making of a complex irrationally attractive myth about the collective future (what will happen after a political victory). Vividly and intelligibly presented an image of society that will be embodied in the case of support for this political entity or course.

Conclusion. The modern world emphasizes the need for new research on political processes associated with the secularization and massification of social manifestations and effects on the mass media consciousness. In turn, political myths result in political mythology, which can be called a socio-cultural technology for the development of modern myths perceived by the «political result» consumers as the reality of their worldview. This technology, called myth designing, uses archetypes, storylines, heroes, and other elements of traditional mythology when creating, disseminating, and transmitting various mass messages, including political communication in the media reality [11, p.45-109].

When studying political mythology, modern authors emphasize a trend that lies in the fact that is myth a phenomenon, and myth design as an approach are tools to manipulate political mass consciousness. They focus on the prospects of ideological manipulation through myth making to implicitly influence the worldview, mentality, thinking, emotions, and the choice of the electorate.

Thus, the myth turns into the unconscious consciousness of the political reality of a person. This makes it possible to perceive it as an integral part of any political process and makes it an important indicator of the political culture of a person and society as a whole.

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Саяси мифодизайн бұқаралық сананы манипуляциялау технологиясы ретінде

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада авторлар саяси мифтік дизайнды бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының (БАҚ) көмегімен бұқаралық сана мен бейсаналықты манипуляциялауға және басқаруға бағытталған саяси технология ретінде қарастырады. Саясаттағы мифодизайн технологияларын қолданудың себептері жүйеленіп, саяси мифодизайн өнімі қалыптасатын принциптерге тоқталды. Бұл технологияны саяси салада қолданудың ерекшеліктері мен себептері, сондай-ақ саяси мифодизайн қажетті ақпараттық және идеологиялық өнімді құрастыратын бірқатар қағидаттарға тоқталды. Мақалада теориялық ережелер талданып, жүйеленіп, саясатта мифодизайнды қолданудың практикалық әдістері сипатталған. Мифтерді саясатта қолданудың негізгі жолдары құрылымдалған. Жұмыста саяси мифті жобалау процесінде белсенді қолданылатын мифологиялық әдістерге, сондай-ақ саяси мифтік дизайнның үш негізгі практикалық міндетіне баса назар аударылады. Жүргізілген зерттеулер саяси мифті саяси мифтік дизайнның өнімі ретінде анықтауға мүмкіндік береді, оны «саясат өнімдерін» тұтынушылар өздерінің дүниетанымының шындығы ретінде қабылдайтын заманауи мифтерді қалыптастырудың әлеуметтік-мәдени технологиясы ретінде анықтауға болады. Бұл технология архетиптерді, сюжетті, қаһармандарды және дәстүрлі мифологияның басқа элементтерін әртүрлі бұқаралық хабарларды, соның ішінде медиа шындықтағы саяси коммуникацияларды жасау, тарату және таратуда пайдаланады.

Түйін сөздер: саяси миф; саяси мифодизайн; саяси технологиялар; бұқаралық сана; БАҚ, саяси манипуляция, саяси мифодизайн принциптері.

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Политический мифодизайн как технология манипуляции массовым сознанием

Аннотация. В данной статье авторами рассматривается политический мифодизайн как политическая технология, направленная на манипулирование и управление массовым сознанием и бессознательным с помощью средств массовой информации (СМИ). Систематизированы причины применения технологий мифодизайна в политике и выделены принципы, согласно которым формируется продукт политического мифодизайна. Выделены особенности и причины применения данной технологии в политической сфере, а также приведен ряд принципов, в соответствии с которыми политический мифодизайн конструирует необходимый информационно-идеологический продукт. В статье проанализированы и систематизированы теоретические положения и описаны практические приемы применения мифодизайна в политике. Структурированы основные способы использования мифов в политике. В работе делается акцент на мифологических приемах, которые активно используются в процессе политического мифодизайна, а также трех основных практических заданиях политического мифодизайна. Проведенное исследование дает возможность определить политический миф как продукт политического мифодизайна, который можно определить как социокультурную технологию формирования современных мифов, воспринимаемых потребителями «продуктов политики» как реальность их картины мира. Данная технология использует архетипы, сюжеты, героев и другие элементы традиционной мифологии при создании, распространении и передаче различных массовых сообщений, включая политическую коммуникацию в медиареальности.

Ключевые слова: политический миф; политический мифодизайн; политические технологии; массовое сознание; СМИ, политическое манипулирование, принципы политического мифодизайна.

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Серия Политические науки. Регионоведение. Востоковедение. Тюркология.
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BULLETIN of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Political science. Regional studies. Oriental studies. Turkology Series

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100   № 2(143)/2023   *Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің ХАБАРШЫСЫ.*
Саяси ғылымдар. Аймақтану. Шығыстану. Түркітану сериясы
ISSN: 2616-6887, eISSN:2617-605X8