

# The practice of using the hero's archetype in creating the images of domestic politicians

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**Abstract**—The article analyzes the cultural and historical images transformation of the political elite representatives in the context of Russian political culture of the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. The transfer of the leader's traits popular among the population to the archaic basis of the hero – a defender against the forces of evil and chaos – is used by political strategists and journalists to construct attractive images of government officials. The authors argue that in the information age the qualified use of the hero's archetype allows accessing to the deep irrational layers of the electorate's subconscious and ensures elevated ratings — from the Russian President Vladimir Putin to heads of regions and municipal associations.

**Keywords**—*hero, archetype, image, political*

## I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CURRENT SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

A characteristic feature of domestic political culture is its development in the context of an emerging civil society burdened with serious “vestiges” of authoritarian traditions and the lack of adequate (that is, acceptable in the conditions of Russian regions) liberal democratic prospects. Media controlled by the authorities are actively transferring mythological constructions into the mass consciousness of Russians, which are not always fixed (rooted) as the ruling elite would like.

Dramatic changes in the political identity of the Russian people, the fierce competition of the “party of power” and opposition parties for the votes of potential voters in the absence of significant achievements in the implementation of economic and social programs, prove that the success of the election campaign and the “longevity” of political leaders are largely predetermined at all levels by the image skillfully transformed by the media into mass consciousness. The Russians traditionally vote not for professionally developed political programs, but “listening to their hearts”, choosing from candidates “their own person” - the one who meets their hopes and priorities. These trends determine the significant interest of Russian scientists in the subject of political mythology of

power, and not in the political culture of civil society institutions.

The relevance of the chosen topic is also due to the strengthening of the mythological role of the media in the modern world, the development of a new generation of political myths based on archetypes attractive to voters, modified taking into account the possibilities of using new information communication channels and modern network systems.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS AND ORGANIZATION

The study was conducted on the basis of general scientific principles of cognition using the methodological developments of cultural studies, social philosophy, and political science. Cultural-historical and phenomenological methods were used to justify the sociocultural content of the political myth; methods of comparative and logical-dialectical analysis were used to determine the role of the archetype in the modern political myth.

**The purpose of this article** is to check the effectiveness of using archetypes in creating an attractive image of federal and regional leaders for voters.

## III. EXPERIMENTAL PART

“In the modern world, the problem of choosing a political leader is solved by the majority of the population not on the basis of political candidates’ programs, their party affiliation, but under the influence of impressions from their images (including the totality of qualities and characteristics) formed on the basis of stereotypes of mass consciousness under the powerful influence of informational, analytical bodies and radio programs, printed articles and political advertising,” believes N. G. Scherbinina [1]. V. M. Shepel defines the image as “an individual aspect or halo created by the media, social group or personal efforts of an individual in order to attract attention” [2]. D.M. Vasilkovskaya considers the image of a politician as artificially created construct acting in the sphere of virtual political reality and influencing the preferences and motivation of the electorate. The

Yakut philosopher A. G. Novikov conceptualizes the image as “a deeply and emotionally colored attitude of electoral groups to politics” [3].

A favorite technique of specialists in constructing an attractive image of a politician is the use of the archetype of the Hero, which allows a modern person to plunge into myth using a system of images passed down from generation to generation. The presence of such archetypes (Hero, Defender, Rescuer, Ruler) in the media products, politics and art, helps to establish relations between different social groups, ensures mutual understanding and consolidation of different generations and ethnic groups.

The archetype of the Hero is a variant of ritualized political communication that allows motivating a potential voter to vote for a particular candidate at the stage of election campaigning. Using this archetype to “heroize” the image of a particular politician helps create a campaign biography and present the candidate as a unique person - a passionate who is ready for great deeds for the benefit of society and has a real program of these feats for the future.

At the first stage, the development and building of the politician’s image is carried out taking into account the parameters of the legitimacy of the candidate, first described by M. Weber:

- respect and support for the best traditions of Russian statehood, society and culture;
- possession of charisma, which means the presence of pronounced traits that evoke respect, love, and strengthen the authority of the leader;
- formed sense of justice, law-abiding behavior, “clean” biography and reputation [4].

The next step in the formation of the politician’s image in the mass consciousness is to “translate” it from an abstract project into an emotionally colored figurative form, corresponding to the requirements of mass media for an information product intended for broadcast on channels with minimal distortion and maximum ratings. A large-scale attractive image that takes into account national, gender, age, religious characteristics, and affiliation with the urban or rural population, the economic situation and other parameters of potential voters will provide the candidate with active support and trust of the electorate [5].

Glorification of the candidate is carried out in the following ways:

- Socially significant actions are allocated or attributed to him (a third-generation teacher ..., a soldier who participated in armed conflicts ...);
- Emphasizing the candidate’s professional or social activity as unique, evaluated by state bodies (state awards) and the professional community (developed a unique system for updating tundra ecosystems ..., laid the foundations of the engineering school of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), founder of a regional scientific school);

- Active care, patronage to groups of people in need of increased social support (in the propaganda texts this item is disclosed on the following social groups or strata, such as: children, pensioners, people with disabilities, representatives of indigenous peoples of the North);

- The creative activity of the candidate develops against the background of chaos, lawlessness, devastation, financial difficulties, etc.

- The presence of antagonistic enemies whose professional and human qualities are in binary opposition with the qualities of a hero;

- Appeal to national (ethno cultural) values: birth in a worthy family, moral purity (married, has four sons, the eldest son in the family of a collective farm worker), decent life - campaign texts show features of a hagiographic narrative [6].

Vladimir Putin, a retired state security officer, has a reputation as the leader who managed to restore order in the country after the collapse of Yeltsin period and the collapse of the Soviet Union. He certifies himself as a “statesman” and sees his mission in restoring order and an efficient economy in Russia.

The archetype of the Hero, full of strength and energy, the embodiment of masculinity and skill, is fully realized by Putin. The Russian president himself pilots a fighter; he has proven himself in the "purely male" activities: a great rider, marksman, experienced driver, skilled skier. Mythological heroes raised to heights, descended into the depths, defeated predators and saved children. Vladimir Putin picks up amphorae from the bottom of the sea, swims in a wormwood (a naked torso photograph delighted the female part of the electorate), dives with a scuba gear. He pilots a fighter himself, flies on a hang glider, accompanying storks, visits families of ordinary Russians, gives beautiful dresses to little girls from poor families and is hiring their unemployed fathers. V.V. Putin eats borsch with combine harvesters, participates in biker runs, goes on tatami with judokas, and communicates with talented youth, thereby demonstrating his proximity to the electorate and understanding of their needs. He is laconic and responsible, leads a healthy lifestyle (unlike his predecessor), punishes presumptuous officials, and attends charity concerts and Orthodox churches.

The archetype of the Hero-Defender of his territory is realized in the revival of Russia's position in the world, in "salvation" from Syrian extremists, "pacification" of the Caucasus, and the annexation of the Crimea. The President of the Russian Federation visits the territories affected by natural disasters, the cities that have become objects of technical disasters for organizing assistance.

Experts and reputable foreign media have repeatedly recognized V.V. Putin’s “Person of the Year” for his significant contribution to international cooperation. The image of the stability keeper and the “savior of Russia” ensured him victory in four Russian elections [7]. The high level of support for V. Putin by

the Russian population, even with a real drop in income, is explained by the balanced patriotic position of the head of the state, real measures to protect national security, and the correspondence of the president's personal qualities to the social expectations of the general population.

Political leadership in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) exists in conditions of remoteness, extremeness, "Alaasn mentality" (alaas - a small meadow with a lake, surrounded by a taiga forest — the northern version of a "country paradise"), statism and paternalism [3]. The need for accelerated socio-economic development of the territory and building productive relations with the federal center requires local leaders to be competent, efficient, and flexible and think outside the box.

Experts consider the ethno cultural identity of the region's population an important resource in the struggle for social and political rights [5]. In ethnic republics, the status of regional leader is almost one level with the leader of the country. Thus, in Yakutia, where the culture of the titular ethnic group is considered to be a key element in preserving the specifics of the region (as a number of politicians, scientists and public figures of the republic believe), political issues inevitably affect the national aspect, which in a certain way affects the representation of political images in the regional media [6]. In the "ideal" case with fully controlled information channels and consolidated elite, the regional leader acquires the classic "mythological" features of the founder of a new world and a fighter against evil [7].

Thus, the era of the reign of M.E. Nikolaev (the first president of Yakutia), which ended 18 years ago, is still only positively characterized by the regional media as a decade of "radical renewal and construction of a new democratic Yakutia"; "The heyday of science, culture and spirituality of the republic"; Yakutia's steady movement towards "stability and prosperity" in the context of a "circumpolar civilization". The reason for such political longevity is a thoughtful appeal to the social memory of the Sakha people - a creative likening of the identity of the First President of Yakutia to the powerful ruler of antiquity - Tygyn Darkhan, the owner of huge pastures in the Tuymaada valley, thousands of herds, soldiers and slaves [8]. After high-profile victories over independent clans, the Khangalass prince annexed their lands to his territory and became the toyon (king) of the tribal union of the Yakuts, laying (according to regional historians Ksenofontov G.V., Basharin G.P., Ermolaev T.S., Toporkova V.V.) the basis of the Yakut statehood in the first quarter of the XVII century.

The first president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Mikhail Nikolaev was also born on the Khangalassky land and in Soviet times made his political career in the northern regions of Yakutia, going from a young veterinarian to the head of the republic. In the era of sovereignty, he was able to fully realize the dreams and hopes of his ambitious fellow countrymen about creating a "diamond emirate" in the

north of Russia, having allocations to the budget of the republic of the diamond mining concern ALROSA [9]. No other Russian region in the "dashing 90s" could boast such attention to education (the network of presidential schools), the extent of students studying abroad, 25% surcharges to rural teachers, doctors, and cultural workers. Part of the "diamond money" was invested in the development of higher education, medicine, international events and conferences organized to popularize the culture of the titular nation: congresses on shamanism, harp music, etc. [10].

The activities of M.E. Nikolaev were evaluated by Russian and foreign experts at the end of the twentieth century as an example of the consistent development of a new type of civilization - circumpolar. "The thoughtful use of sovereignty in relations with the federal center", economic well-being, the creation of the "diamond emirate", the revival of the traditional Sakha culture, the cult of higher education, a healthy lifestyle and sports - all these characteristics of post-Soviet reality were presented by the local media as historical feats of the "founding father", another victory in a tough competitive confrontation with the federal center in the name of a new Yakutia, was considered educated, economically and spiritually rich:" judging by the significance of his actions, first focus on the future, he has proved his right to be called the First President of the Republic." The resignation of M.E. Nikolaev from the post of President of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in 2001 became the basis for the emergence of local political myths about the "golden age" of the republic.

The Sakha people — the titular nation of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) — are characterized by a patriarchal type of political culture, the components of which are statism, paternalism, hierarchy, concentration of power in the "strong hands" of one leader [6]. The electorate of the third President of the republic, E. A. Borisov (2010-2014), the population of traditionally non-industrial regions of the republic, hoped with the help of a "village leader" to solve the social problems of the Yakut village (every fifth rural family in the republic officially lives below the poverty line).

Controlled regional media outlets disseminate materials about regional leaders, emphasizing features such as:

1. Protective functions. The head of the region is the defender of the interests of his land, his voters. First of all, he is an educated specialist who requires real results from his team and himself. It emphasizes the strength (character, personality), rigidity (aggressiveness) in upholding decisions that are significant for the region.

2. The ubiquity of the regional leader, his active participation in the daily life of the republic. A native of a simple village family, he is closely connected with his voters thanks to numerous field meetings, live broadcasts, the work of public receptions, the generous funding of social programs, including subsidized construction of prestigious educational and medical

institutions, and additional student places to study at central universities due to republic and state-paid student places at the Northeast Federal University, Churapchinsk State Institute of physical culture and sports, the Yakut Agricultural Academy.

3. Significant for all heads of the republic is the care of their fellow countrymen. The first President of the republic, in his native village Oktemtsy, built a hospital equipped at the same level as the National Medical Center and a polytechnic college, whose students study at the scientific schools of universities in Novosibirsk and Moscow during the winter holidays. The second President of the Republic, Vyacheslav Shtyrov, initiated the construction of a modern stadium in his native village, the construction of a college, and increased the number of seats from the republican budget for school graduates from the Arctic regions and engineering students. The third President of the republic for the native village Churapcha lobbied for the opening of the federal status institute of physical education and sports (the largest in the Far Eastern Federal District), including the construction of a new building, a dormitory and comfortable housing for teachers. The 19th Spartakiad in national sports "Manchaara Games 2012" was also held in Churapcha in 2012, while the main argument for choosing a place was not the availability of the necessary infrastructure, but the lack of major sports competitions for 27 years and the previous Olympic victories of Churapcha wrestlers at the Olympic Games 1972 (Munich) and 1976 (Montreal). The district center was hastily gasified; a large stadium was built where the Games, the cultural and ethnic center, were held.

4. The cult of "sportiness." The archaic hero was the winner. The President of the Russian Federation takes part in demonstrations in judo and has a qualification belt. The cult of "sportiness", introduced by V.V. Putin in the highest echelons of power, is implemented by the heads of the region as support for freestyle wrestling - a traditionally prestigious sport in the republic, the construction of sports complexes and stadiums for holding championships in freestyle wrestling, national hapsagai wrestling, and national sports.

The name of Mikhail Nikolaev is associated with the history of the emergence and growth of popularity of the International Sports Games "Children of Sakha-Asia." Egor Borisov proposed his own option - International children's sports games in winter sports, the international championship of Asia in intellectual games.

The leaders of the republic always occupy the post of president of the Yakutia freestyle wrestling federation; patronize promising young athletes - freestyle wrestlers and boxers.

5. Interaction with the media. Modern media, especially television and the Internet, play a crucial role in creating an attractive image of the region and its leaders. Hence the desire of the authorities is often to use any significant informational reason in order to increase their own rating: the opening of events,

forums, exhibitions, conferences, competitions, etc. Regional leader's affairs are broadcast in prime time by regional television; fill the front pages of the Russian-language and Sakha-language press.

6. Cultural achievements. Archaic cultural heroes, contributing to the harmonization of the world, ensured the intellectual / cultural development of their compatriots. The republican media characterized the First President of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) as "the enlightener of the twentieth century." Mikhail Nikolaev dreamed of creating a kind of "diamond emirate" so that every resident of the republic had a higher education, skilled work, decent earnings.

The official ideology of Mikhail Nikolaev was the ideology of "cultivation" - the accelerated rise of education, science and traditional culture of the Sakha people to turn the titular nation into one of the most civilized peoples of the world. Therefore, unique structures appeared in the republic: the Ministry of Culture and Spirituality of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Academy of Spirituality, whose mission is to further enhance the spirituality and culture of the population of the republic. For 10 years of M.E. Nikolaev's presidency, every fifth school of the republic received a new building, the Yakutsk State University and the Yakutsk Agricultural Academy - modern buildings for classes, new equipment, high-speed Internet. Young talents from remote villages got the opportunity to study at the Higher School of Music, at the Yakut Ballet School College named after A. and N. Poselsky, Arctic State Institute of Culture and Art.

In the study conducted in the spring of 2019 on a sample of junior students and teachers of the North-East Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov and Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University obtained data on the formation in the mass consciousness of these groups of the heroic myth of V.V. Putin. People see a national leader in VV Putin who should be trusted by 80% of university students aged 18-20. Teachers of universities in Yakutsk and Magnitogorsk, where the authors work, associate the image of the president with Peter I (66%), Stirlitz (72%), with the mythical times of the great transformations.

The archetype of the founding hero, a cultural hero, associated with the image of the First President of Yakutia M.E.Nikolaev, ensures that he maintains a high political rating in the collective memory of the faculty of NEFU. 18 years after leaving the post of head of the republic, the politician retains his popularity among the middle (75%) and older generation of teachers (90%) of the titular nationality. This political longevity is due to a spectacular policy, the implementation of large-scale social and cultural programs, carried out at the expense of the remaining revenues of large budget-forming enterprises in the region, the strengthening of the positions of Yakutia at the international and Russian levels, and the growth of ethno cultural consciousness of the republic's residents.

#### IV. RESULTS

To date, vivid images of the political and administrative elite representatives are completely constructed by professionals and are transmitted to the mass consciousness of the population through mass communication. An ordinary resident of the territory has no opportunity to form his own opinion about the real personality of the administrative or political elite representatives, but their political legends and images are realized only in the form of certain information.

The authors confirm the effectiveness of building the image of a politician based on the archetype of a hero in Russia. This design takes into account the electorate's desire to realize their hopes through identification with an archetypal brand: a rescue hero will overcome obstacles, a cultural hero will ensure the rise of society, and a defending hero (ruler) will take control of the situation.

The effectiveness of such a construct is that a politician who uses the archetype of a hero to construct his own image is always a "sold product". As a successful use of the hero's archetype when creating the image of a politician, we'll give the image of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin, a hero-deliverer, strong, decisive, with a tough attitude towards opponents of Russia. The archetype of the founding hero and cultural hero formed the basis of the image of the First President of Yakutia M.E.Nikolaev and provided him with political longevity and appreciation for the middle and older generation of Yakutians of the titular nationality.

Studying the specifics of processes in the field of political interactions seems to be a very promising direction, since, on the one hand, this opens up a number of possibilities in the field of practical politics: the formation of strategic planning in the field of political relations, the creation of a stable image of power positions at all levels, from municipal to state. Secondly, this problem is of interest for further theoretical research by specialists of different profiles.

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