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The Saviour Myth in the Strategies of Communication in
Electoral Presidential Campaigns in Post communist Romania

-Summary-

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Key words: Romania, the Saviour myth, inaugural speech, president, QDA Miner, national identity, transition, post communism, hermeneutics.

Summary

The scope and the hypothesis of the research: The paper proposes to develop an analysis of the Saviour myth starting from the image of post communism Romania's presidents. Thus, the scope of the research is to prove that those who occupied the highest position of the state represent this myth. In this manner, in order to write this paper we took into consideration two factors which we considered important. The first one refers to the need to offer a different perspective surrounding the presidents of post communist Romania, encompassing in it the passage from communism to democracy. The second factor refers to the desire to achieve an analysis of the Saviour myth, which we consider representative for the Romanian political scene, but also it distinguishes itself through the potential to open new doorways in field of political analysis.

The elements above have reunited in the form of research questions from which this paper starts. These questions are:

RQ1: All four fundamental political myths identified by Raoul Girardet can be found more or less in Romania's political field. Why is the Saviour myth the most representative one?

RQ2: Starting from the premise that all four presidents of post communist Romania are representative for the Saviour myth, is there any president that acknowledged this image?

RQ3: Two of Romania's presidents have won two terms. Which were the differences between them by keeping into consideration that Traian Băsescu had two consecutive terms and between Iliescu's terms there is a four year difference?

RQ4: Myths are elements that adapt to cultural, social or political changes. Which was the evolution of the Saviour myth in the 30 years that passed since the fall of communism from the perspective of the image of the four presidents?

RQ5: Since our analysis will focus on the inaugural speeches of the presidents, we wish to answer the following research question: Which are the recurrent themes in the inaugural speeches of Romania's presidents that can be representative for the Saviour myth?

Research methods: In order to achieve a complete and balanced research we opted for the critical discourse analysis, compared politics but also for a hermeneutical analysis. The first type of analysis focused on the inaugural speeches post 1989. The choice for this type of discourse was based on the desire to obtain pertinent and objective data, and by using this type of speech we managed to achieve this goal. Also, this analysis would not have been possible without the use of the QDA Miner software, destined for this kind of research. Thus, we integrated in it the inaugural speeches, and then we formulated a series of codes to identify the elements in which we were interested in. The obtained data was inserted in the paper through the figures found in chapter VI, where we showed not only the resemblances and differences between the content of the speeches, but also between the images of the presidents. Thanks to the picture we obtained, we managed to objectively argue, with concrete data, the analysis of the presidents we did in chapter V. Also, with the specific elements of comparative politics we obtained a clear but profound interpretation of data. This was continued through the hermeneutical analysis we developed, a method we chose

because of two reasons; first was the desire to use a proper method for the scope of the paper, but also for obtaining a deeper meaning of the data we already had. The second reason consisted in the desire to highlight the text of the inaugural speeches. Thus, during this analysis we have selected representative passages from each speech which we later analyzed following a single idea, which is that hermeneutics presents the liaison between text, the individual's reality and the way the presidents reports to these.

The structure of the paper: In order to answer the above questions, the paper is structured into six chapters, each elaborating the necessary elements for understanding and analyzing the image of the presidents from the perspective of the Saviour.

Thus, chapter I represents a first step of the paper, which focuses its attention on political communication, developing this subject in the context of democracy, but it later presents the importance of rhetorics for political communication. Also, we did a short analysis of the political myth to understand its meaning in developing political communication.

In the second chapter we did a deep analysis of myth, by incorporating not only definitions, but current perspectives related to myth, highlighting the theory of Chiara Bottici. Also, we integrated in this chapter the concept of collective memory, which we considered essential in understanding and developing the political myth, collective memory being a liaison between the experiences and identity of a group.

Chapter III was written with the intention to offer clarity concerning the research methods we used, without ignoring the research questions or the presentation of some factors which are the structure of the analysis of the obtained data, such as compared politics. Also, we did a clear and necessary presentation of QDA Miner, the software we used in order to analyze the inaugural speeches. Similarly, we also focused on the specific elements of the inaugural speeches, in order to obtain a clear understanding structure of the elements we analyzed.

Chapter IV is almost entirely dedicated to exploring key-elements of the political myth, such as ideology, religion, charisma and populism, each occupying an important position in the analysis of myth. Since we wanted to deepen this subject but also to better highlight it in the context of the paper, populism was also analyzed from the perspective of its presence on the Romanian political scene, but also from its impact on Romania's presidents.

In chapter V our attention was almost exclusively focused on analyzing the Saviour myth from the perspective of Romania's presidents. In order to do this, we opened the chapter by presenting the path dependency theory, completed with elements such as national identity or electoral delusion/illusion. Moreover, each post communist president was subjected to a series of observations which regarded not only image elements, but also key moments from their terms. As such, the notions described and presented in the previous chapters were used to further develop behaviors and representative attitudes for the image of a Saviour president. Chapter VI, the final in, is dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the data obtained with the help of QDA Miner, data gathered on the basis of the inaugural speeches. Also, this last chapter contains a hermeneutical analysis of the inaugural speeches, thanks to which we got a deeper image of the connection between text, reality and the president. Because of this analysis we managed to incorporate elements from philosophy, finally obtaining the ample yet profound perspective this paper aimed for. Least but not last, this is the chapter in which we presented the results of the research questions, as they are the most suitable way to end our research.

The conclusion part of the paper is the one where we reprised the main themes of the paper to build a final argument. This validated our research hypothesis, proving that the image of Romania's post communist presidents is representative for the Saviour myth. Also, we must add that during the conclusion segment we highlighted that the paper has the potential to develop other research themes, encompassing a variety of perspectives and openings. The political myth is not the only one that can be developed, elements which constitute it can be researched, and by them we mean collective memory, national identity, ideology, religion or charisma. Separately, each can constitute a subject on its own, either connected to the institution of the president or separately. Also, despite being seen as a formal affair, the inaugural speech is a good opportunity to identify the stakes that a new president has for his term, thus we believe this type of speech can be further analyzed. Finally, the paper reached its scope, which was to offer a new approach to political analysis, resorting to elements that complimented each other in order to offer an image of the past 30 years of political reality seen not only through the perspective of the presidents' image, but most of all through the perspective of the Saviour myth.

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