CONTEMPORARY POST-IDEOLOGIES:

"HYBRID IDEOLOGIES", OR "NEW MYTHOLOGIES" AS A FACTOR OF CONSTITUTING OF POST-MODERN SOCIAL FIELD

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Abstract. *The post-ideologies today are one of the key factors in the constitution of politics and the formation of the identity of human. One would treat them as new mythologies (for establishing a syncretic worldview on the foundation of the fundamental faith, or constitutive myth(s)), hybrid ideologies (relying on the hybrid nature of their origin and interconnection of constituent parts) or post-ideologies (as reflected in the time of their emergence after the traditional ideologies and instead of them). The article deals with the difference between contemporary post-ideologies and the classical understanding of ideology, critically assesses the use of the concept of "post-ideology" in modern social critical theory. In addition, it analyzes the main mechanisms of its formation on specific examples and indicates the main ways of its impact on the screen of mass consciousness.*

Key words: Post-Ideology, New Mythologies, Hybrid Ideologies, the Critique of Ideology, Post-Politics, Propaganda, Poststructuralism, Postmarxism.

Ideology in modern times has always played a prominent role as a special practice for the establishment of "public consciousness": it created a kind of rational model of the worldview, which presupposed a specific "correct" order of views on politics, questions of faith, economics, etc. The power groups could use ideologies as conscious ways to manage the views of the masses of people. Therefore, they were widely employed by both national states and international associations or communities. Largely, the role of ideologies in modern society was consistent with the strategy of metanarratives, the creation of "grand narratives" by J.-F. Lyotard (1993), who competed with each other for the right to determine the legitimacy of certain ideas within their own worldview. Although, with the example of Marxism and its specific embodiment in Stalinism, Lyotard notes the duality of this impulse to work with narratives of ideological systems. On the one hand, sciences within the framework of Stalinism were called upon to "only figure as citations from the metanarrative of the march towards socialism, which is the equivalent of the life of the spirit". On the other hand, one should take into account that for Marxism "socialism is nothing other than the constitution of the autonomous subject and that the only justification for the sciences is if they give the empirical subject (the proletariat) the means to emancipate itself from alienation and repression" (Ibid. 37). In other words, ideology seeks to affirm a certain "Order of Things" in its dogmatic integrity, and to appeal to the complete and final liberation of mankind within the framework of the "concept of Justice", which, according to Axel Honneth, has both a moral and a basic social meaning (Honneth 2001).

In the "golden age" of ideologies, one could even consider them a "transformed form of consciousness", as K. Marx and F. Engels did in their famous "The German ideology". They asserted, however, that "morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life"(Marx and Engels 1976, 47). Or, to emphasize, one could even consider them a "false consciousness", as it was later labeled by F. Engels (Engels 1968). However, even if one believes, after the classics of Marxism, that ideologies are completely dependent from material life, though representing it in their distorted light, one should admit the following circumstance. The "traditional" ideologies tried to establish a rather coherent and internally consistent worldview system (even if falsified in its fundamentals), which relies on solid grounds of common sense, scientifically represented though basically reconstructed and modified in a paranoid way, that sets the basic elements of a person's understanding of his/her own life.

Nowadays we see the disappearance and decline of the traditional ideologies as new forms of manipulation of the consciousness of the masses emerge. They originate from the processes of constituting fragile, or "weakened" identities (pensiero debole, Weak Thought: Vattimo and Rovatti

2012), the phenomenon of post-truth[1], the destruction of habitual ideas about society, reality and, for example, about such basic manifestations of human life as war. The today's human is perhaps managed by a mosaic worldview, which lacks strong islands of truth as an absolute conviction of correspondence between our notions and reality, where the concepts of the real and virtual, fair and dishonest, war and peace have become blurred and often indistinguishable. Thus, the hybrid wars of our time undermine our understanding of the nature and possible strategies of warfare, mix the true reality of the war with its media representation, and make us unsure of our statements and assessments of what is happening on both sides (Barkouski 2016).

What is replacing the familiar ideologies is characterized by mixing various rationalized mono-ideologies into a hybrid whole, which allows combining seemingly hardly interconnected things (for example, the ideas of communist statehood with Orthodoxy and autocratic rule as it is now often practiced in the Russian Federation). Moreover, it combines them in a kind of faith that appeals primarily to the emotional, rather than rational principle in human. Based to this, one would call such new manifestations of mass consciousness as *new mythologies* (for establishing a syncretic world view on the foundation of the fundamental faith, or constitutive myth(s)), *hybrid ideologies* (relying on the hybrid nature of their origin and interconnection of constituent parts) or *post-ideologies* (similar to

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[1] According to the Oxford Dictionary, post-truth is "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". The Oxford Dictionary (n.d.). *Post-truth*. Retrieved from: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth [Accessed 5 October 2018]

postmodernism, post-truth, post-human, etc. as a reflection of the time of their emergence after the traditional ideologies and instead of them). Unlike the classical ideologies, which were practiced primarily and specifically as steady forms of outlook, organizing human activity and thought process in a certain way, the post-ideologies function as an effect of a cumulative environment that completely distorts the intellectual space of activity and forces a person to exist in a contradictory and illogical reality with modified beliefs about the consequences of their own actions.

Using such a concept as "post-ideology" in this context, one cannot ignore the ways of its usage, which are common known today. The concept of "post-ideology" is primarily used by the actual authors in the field in a negative sense as an indication of the missing dimension of the ideological in the modern contour of political and cultural reality. This general way of understanding the status of ideology in the post-modern world is based on the adoption of several theoretical assumptions that are reproduced in one form or another in the philosophical discourse about the political.

First, it is hard not to see the influence of Fukuyama's ideas with his statement of the "end of history", as a consequence of the destruction of the bipolar world, the crisis of historical ideologies, alternative to liberalism, and the final victory of the concept of liberal democracy over its ideological adversary. "That is to say, for a very large part of the world, there is now no ideology with pretensions to universality that is in a position to challenge liberal democracy, and no universal principle of legitimacy other than the sovereignty of the people," states the American political thinker (Fukuyama 1992, 45). Since, in the logic of the author, the pragmatics of the global

ideology presupposes the need for its opposition, conflict with a competing project or projects on a world level, the absence of a commensurate competitor for liberalism means, then, the transition of the world to a state where the ideological field is homogenized and as such ceases to be the object of struggle and rivalry, but only a certain background for the further development of the social. "The end of history will be a very sad", says Fukuyama. "The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history" (Fukuyama 1989, 17).

Although Fukuyama recognizes that although, for example, Islam constitutes "a systematic and coherent ideology, just like liberalism and communism, with its own code of morality and doctrine of political and social justice", directed not only to the members of a particular ethnic group, but to humanity as a whole, he still concludes that "despite the power demonstrated by Islam in its current revival, however, it remains the case that this religion has virtually no appeal outside those areas that were culturally Islamic to begin with" (Fukuyama 1992, p. 46), and therefore it is not able to form a competing global ideology against liberalism. This approach associates the "post-ideological" state of the world with the loss of the possibility of competition between ideologies as a mean of social struggle and of the unification of value and political principles in the global

perspective. Of course, today a number of Fukuyama's forecasts look rather utopian, but we can definitely agree with him that now there is no global confrontation of political ideologies on a global scale in the former sense of the Cold War times.

Second, there is no doubt that the use of the concept of "post-ideology" is now under the influence of the critique of the ideological dimension of the social, which is produced within the framework of the ideas of poststructuralist philosophy and in many respects should be understood in opposing the concept of L. Althusser's ideology. Thus, Althusser explicitly emphasizes the dual function of ideology in modern society: ideological recognition (reverse side of which is the function of non-recognition) and the formation of the subject's knowledge of the world and him/herself, where ideology "works" as an integral part of the state apparatus. The second case is the most obvious as a visible manifestation of ideology, as part of its direct impact on the individual, where it announces itself as far as possible explicitly. In the first case, "ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was *really him* who was hailed' (and not

someone else)", writes Althusser (Althusser 1994, 130-131). Moreover, in his understanding the category of the subject is constituting any ideology, but Althusser immediately specifies that "the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects.* In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning."(ibid. 129).

Since the subject by Althusser himself is produced through ideology, it permeates the entire body of the social, depriving itself of its own external: insisting on the practical denial of its own ideological nature, ideology translates all that is happened in social reality into the format of its own worldview: "ideology has no outside (for itself), but at the same time that it is nothing but outside (for science and reality)" (ibid. 131). The individual is unable to be in the social reality, without recognizing him or herself as a subject and not performing rituals of ideological recognition, i.e. not acting purely ideologically. Hence for Althusser there are two significant circumstances in understanding what ideology means: "1. ideology is nothing insofar as it is a pure dream (manufactured by who knows what power: if not by the alienation of the division of labour, but that, too, is a negative determination); 2. ideology has no history, which emphatically does not mean that there is no history in it (on the contrary, for it is merely the pale, empty and inverted reflection of real history) but that it has no history of its own "(ibid. 121-2). In this connection, poststructuralism rejects the

entire dimension of an ideology along with the general structuralist pathos of criticism of the subject's idea and such a form of its constitution. In this case, "post-ideology" expresses the transition to the "post-subject" philosophizing, where an individual turns out to be an ensemble of practices, not necessarily tied to the central apparatus of the ideological impact on society: the subject is no more constituted ideologically, but basically decentered.

What is clearly opposed to ideology for Althusser is a science that can become that point from the outside, from which a detached view of the very nature of ideology, or opposition to the ideology, is possible (ibid. 131). In this case, one can agree with T. Blake's assertion that in the case of Althusser we must understand ideology in the tripartite sense as "(1) the Other of science (dualism knowledge-illusion), (2) an eternal and universal structure of misrecognition (dualism lived relation to the world-truth) and (3) a system of ideas (dualism superstructure-base)" (Blake 2015). However, even at this point, poststructuralism criticizes Althusser's position, not recognizing the extra-ideological status of science itself. As F. Lyotard emphasizes, "a science that has not legitimated itself is not a true science; if the discourse that was meant to legitimate it seems to belong to a prescientific form of knowledge, like a "vulgar" narrative, it is demoted to the lowest rank, that of an ideology or instrument of power. And this always happens if the rules of the science game that discourse denounces as empirical are applied to science itself"(Lyotard 1993, 38). Denying the claim of science to be the only expression of the "Will to Truth", poststructuralism suggests in this case to perceive it only in the context of all other practices of signification and

thereby to establish an order in which ideology no longer has its constitutional meaning. In this case, "post-ideology" starts to be understood as a global rejection of the ideological dimension of reality, its transfer to a different mode of functioning: as a world in which no one ideology, be it political, whether scientific, no longer has the place as the main principle of establishment the reality. Up to almost complete ignorance of the use of this concept in the texts of poststructuralist thinkers and their practical abandonment of ideological struggle against the so-called "ultraliberal ideology" (Stiegler and Petit 2013).

Naturally, such an understanding of the "post-ideological" world as the completely outside of the zone of ideological influence and, in fact, of the political one, causes serious objections both on the part of those who are sufficiently close to poststructuralism and mostly post-Marxist authors. The already mentioned Australian researcher Terence Blake emphasizes that poststructuralism does not abandon thinking about ideology as such, it simply tends to express its criticism of frameworks, discourses and social practices in other terms, aiming at criticizing primarily such an influential ideology of modernity as scientism: "My historical hypothesis concerning the quasi-disappearance of the word 'ideology' in the texts of Deleuze, Foucault, and Lyotard is that these philosophers, despite the relative effacement of the word "ideology", do not abandon the concept of ideology nor the battle against it. (…) In trying to free themselves from the Althusserian notion of ideology, they produce and elaborate a different set of concepts in order to deconstruct the famous Althusserian binary opposition between science and ideology"(Blake 2015). In particular, he sees certain parallels between the

Deleuzean concept of rhizome with its notion of assemblages, dogmatic image of thought, plane of organisation, transcendence, desire machines and the dimension of ideology as such, in this case understood as "inextricably structuring desiring assemblages". Indeed, it is difficult to disagree that the whole project of Schizoanalysis in the famous work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1977) is permeated with the anti-ideological pathos of emancipating the subject and criticizing the totalitarian impact of the repressive practices of the state and society aimed at the production of neurotic paranoiac individuals. In this regard, it can be argued that we are dealing not so much with the rejection of a dialogue about the ideological as such, but rather with the transfer of the discussion to another level and in another language.

The famous Slovenian philosopher, Slavoj Žižek is one that more than others insists on this reinterpretation of ideology in the context of the non-acceptance of its disappearance in the "post-ideological" world. Actually, ideology for him is something that permeates the structure of reality itself as "a set of explicit and implicit, even unspoken, moral-political and other positions, decision, choices, etc., which predetermine our perception of facts, what we tend to emphasize or to ignore, how we organize facts into a consistent whole of a narrative or a theory" (Žižek 2013). The ideology here is not a complex of ideas or explicit ideological statements, nor it is "a simple mystification obfuscating the hidden reality of domination and exploitation" but rather a common framework or set of positions and practices that lie at the basis of the emergence of similar ideas in an individual. They are where

the Real breaks into the entire body of ideology through its inconsistencies, gaps, etc.

In this case, the ideology for Žižek ceases to be an illusory representation of reality, but it "*is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence* - that is, the social effectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individuals 'do not know what they are doing'" (Žižek 2008, 15-6). This constitutes the ideological as a "double illusion". On the one hand, as a symptom: a certain naiveté of a subject, who does not realize his/her immersion in the ideological reality, does not see the distance between social reality and its distorted representation. On the other hand, ideology manifests itself as a fantasy, the level at which reality itself is structured with the help of ideology, and human activity is guided by fetishist inversion: "The mask is not simply hiding the real state of things; the ideological distortion is written into its very essence" (ibid. 25). People, realizing this, are still doing so as if they did not know.

Ideology as a fantasy structures our social relations and disguises the unbearable and incomprehensible realm of the Real. "The function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (ibid. 45). Only an appeal to the proper Real, claiming itself in this ideological dream, is capable of challenging its power. However, such a step is difficult to accomplish, given the fragility of the individual's relationship to his/her own Real and the practical set of the ideology "*on effacing the traces of its own impossibility*", as Žižek argues, based on the Lacanian perspective (ibid.

50). In this form, ideological fantasy continues to permeate the sphere of consciousness of modern human and does not allow her or him to escape the influence of the ideological, even with a rather skeptical attitude to ideologies as such. In this case, the ideological field is here at hand in an analogical way as the constituting of the desire field in Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the individual never stay in a mode of confidence that his/her desire belongs to properly him/her but is not something imposed from the outside.

Žižek suggests that the transition to a "post-ideological world" at the level of discourse became possible in the light of the advent of the epoch of the Cynical Reason, proclaimed by Peter Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk 1988). If earlier ideologies, and above all totalitarian ones, claimed to be the truth, that is, they created a system of lies that would be experienced as truth and taken seriously by people, now the situation has changed. Even the creators of ideological narratives no longer assume this attitude, counting on the manipulative and instrumental nature of the ideology that individuals accept not for its apparent truth, but under ordinary violence and promises of profit. At the same time, such a cynical attitude toward ideology does not at all overcome its fantasy dimension of existence: "If our concept of ideology remains the classic one in which the illusion is located in knowledge, then today's society must appear post-ideological: the prevailing ideology is that of cynicism; people no longer believe in ideological truth; they do not take ideological propositions seriously. The fundamental level of ideology, however, is not that of an illusion masking the real state of things but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself. And at this

level, we are of course far from being a post-ideological society" (Žižek 2008, 30).

The ironic detachment of the cynical reason, therefore, remains within the ideological framework of consciousness, so neither it nor the recourse to practices of everydayness, as a medicine against ideology, becomes an effective means of overcoming an ideology that turns any reasons against itself into arguments in its favor. This was the case for example in the Nazi Germany, where everyday practices of communicating with a Jewish or communist neighbor did not in any way abolish the effectiveness of the Nazi ideological machine, convincing that all inconsistencies between ideology and reality are only additional evidence of the meanness and deceit of the enemies of the Reich. Therefore, for Žižek it is obvious that the ideological practices cannot be canceled by the apparent elimination of ideology as the dominant discourse from the social field. Analyzing this phenomenon with the means of politicized Lacanian psychoanalysis, he uses a language that describes the area in an alternative set of categories, "allowing us to grasp contemporary ideological phenomena (cynicism, 'totalitarianism', the fragile status of democracy) without falling prey to any kind of 'postmodernist' traps (such as the illusion that we live in a 'post-ideological' condition) " (ibid. XXXI).

It is obvious, however, that Žižek here is criticizing not so much the rejection of the traditional interpretation of ideology and the absence of its former positions in society as the attitude to recognition of the complete disappearance of the ideological from the sphere of social reality: the post-ideological as a world without ideology, or where ideology does not make

sense more. At the same time, it can be argued that Žižek insists on a revision of the phenomenon itself without changing its name, although it speaks not so much of ideology in the former sense as of fantasies and perversions of a social imaginary, not always rational in its essence.

Žižek's position that any attempt to go beyond ideology is a form of our enslavement to it, echoes Saul Newman, who criticizes the "poststructuralists" for trying to break away from the dimension of ideology, undermining the essential identity of the subject and dissolving it in a variety of discourses and practices, but in fact coming to the point that ideology is everywhere. "'Poststructuralism', then, in holding that we must abandon the whole problematic of ideology because it presupposes a non-ideological essence that does not exist, is performing two contradictory operations simultaneously. It is attempting to step outside ideology while, at the same time, denying us a place outside. What this amounts to is a reaffirmation of ideology despite or, more precisely through, one's attempts to elude it" (Newman 2001, 319). The paradoxical nature of such an attitude, according to Newman, lies in the logic of structuralism, which post-structuralist thinkers continue to follow: since this logic claims that the individual as a matter of fact has no shelter from the influence of ideology, that it exists everywhere, so it turns the ideology itself into a losing all concrete meaning: ideology is everything and nothing at the same time. In this perspective, ideology is not something that disappears in a poststructuralist perspective, but is rather depreciated and rendered meaningless as a construct, and then such a crisis of interpretation of ideology leads to a statement of the "post-ideological" state of the world. A way out from this paradox could be,

according to Newman, the discovery of "a non-essentialist extra-ideological point of departure" from ideology as the basis of modern criticism of ideology, the roots of which relationship one could see in the spectral reconfiguration of the ideological subject by M. Stirner with his accent on the topic of insurrection of the individualized ego. Nevertheless even this decline from the ideology, according Newman, is not final, but only temporary way out for the subject (ibid. 328-330).

In the situation of this predominant criticism of the use of the concept of "post-ideology" in the modern context, there are also attempts at an alternative interpretation of "post-ideology" as a distinctive state of the ideological dimension of politics in the modern world. The foundations of this approach one could found in the works of P. Bourdieu, C. Mouffe and E. Laclau. Thus, Bourdieu speaks of the loss by politics today of its actual content in the former sense under the influence of the doctrine of neoliberalism, which produces effects very far from those that previously produced former ideologies. "First is the destruction of all the collective institutions capable of counteracting the effects of the infernal machine, primarily those of the state, repository of all of the universal values associated with the idea of the public realm. Second is the imposition everywhere, in the upper spheres of the economy and the state as at the heart of corporations, of that sort of moral Darwinism that, with the cult of the winner, schooled in higher mathematics and bungee jumping, institutes the struggle of all against all and cynicism as the norm of all action and behaviour" (Bourdieu 1998). The move towards a neoliberal utopia of a pure and perfect market in this case, according to Bourdieu, undermines any

collective structures, ranging from nations and ending with the family, questioning the possibility of any regulatory policy at any level of sociality. Moreover, this leads us to a post-ideological and post-political state that does not allow us to make strategic decisions or to resist the economic logic of our collective existence.

Expressing her solidarity with the negative perception of such a "utopia" of our collective future, C. Mouffe explicitly states, "thanks to globalization and the universalization of liberal democracy, we can expect a cosmopolitan future bringing peace, prosperity and the implementation of human rights worldwide. I want to challenge this "post-political" vision" (Mouffe 2005, 1). Thus, she believes that the entire series of similar categories, such as "dialogical" and "cosmopolitan" democracy, "global civil society", "absolute democracy" and "cosmopolitan sovereignty", establish that in fact anti-political view of the world, which denies the antagonistic dimension of the "political" and dissolves any opportunities for competitive political action in a homogenized social field. One of the main signs of the weakening of modern politics, Mouffe believes, is its "moralization": "instead of being constructed in political terms, the "we/they" opposition constitutive of politics is now constructed according to moral categories of "good" versus "evil" (ibid. 75).

Such a "moral register", included in politics, leads to the fact that normal agonistic competition in this sphere is replaced by a confrontation between "good" and "bad" rhetoric: politics turns into demagogy and situational decision-making against the background of a desire to gain a tangible moral victory over the rival. Against the backdrop of the global

domination of the doctrine of liberal democracy, as Mouffe suggests, we are increasingly losing the opportunity for ideological opposition in politics, decision-making in the context of rival political positions and views, and we are increasingly sliding into the logic of exclusion: if someone does not accept the idea of a liberal economy and democracy as an institution of formal equality, he or she by definition falls into the stigmatized camp of "bad guys" and becomes someone alien or hostile to the actual political field, displaced being outside its margins.

Another effect of erasure of the political due to the dominance of neoliberalism is the transformation of politics into a simple technical decision-making tool. It is assumed that with the demise of communism and the socio-economic transformations of the information society, as well as against the background of globalization, all antagonisms from politics disappear, and it starts now to be possible as a "win-win politics" where solutions could be found that favored everybody. "This implies that politics is no longer structured around social division, and that political problems have become merely technical" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, xiv-xv). However, for Laclau and Mouffe, such a non-alternative nature of the concept of globalization and the "neoliberal orthodoxy" supported by global markets must be overcome by means of establishing a new radical hegemony as a return of the political in spite of the rhetoric of the global world: "This argument takes for granted the ideological terrain which has been created as a result of years of neo-liberal hegemony, and transforms what is a conjunctural state of affairs into a historical necessity. Presented as driven exclusively by the information revolution, the forces of globalization are

detached from their political dimensions and appear as a fate to which we all have to submit. So we are told that there are no more left-wing or right-wing economic policies, only good and bad ones! To think in terms of hegemonic relations is to break with such fallacies" (ibid. xvi).

One could argue that in the case of criticism against neoliberalism by P. Bourdieu, and in the case of the joint argumentation against it by C. Mouffe and E. Laclau, we are dealing with a statement of a new dimension of the existence of a political, or rather "post-political" world where under the influence of neoliberal and globalization strategies the traditional dimension of politics proves to be superseded, and the liberal economy and the diffuse ideological concept of the world come to replace politics as such. Summarizing this vision of contemporary post-ideological policy through the optics of these authors, E. Brighi and L. Giugni singled out in it three constitutive elements: "the strategic framing of ideologies as 'old' ways of understanding politics vs. the 'new' ways of pragmatic problem-solving; a penchant for technical rather than principled solutions and for extreme personalization bordering on populism; the acceptance of the late logic of capitalism and neo-liberal interdependence as non-negotiable facts" (Brighi and Giugni 2016, 27).

On the example of the actual policy of the Italian "post-communists" in the case of Matteo Renzi, these authors demonstrate how much the landscape of modern European politics is drifting towards the "realm of post-ideology", which unites political programs, partisan ideologies and public orientations into a single vector, where "ideology lies at an intermediate, porous level which however does not in itself guarantee an effective or

straightforward mediation of the other levels – ideational levels are not always aligned and ideological goals can be ambiguous, divisive or not particularly explicit" (ibid. 18-19). This, according to the authors, makes statements about the "end of ideology" groundless, although they require clarification of their own understanding of what is ideology today in its actual "post-ideological" format of existence as applied to the discourse and policy of European countries. Similar elements of the development of the actual policy are noted, however, also in the East Slavonic context by M. Minakov, saying that "instead of increasingly complex political communication conditioned by ideological competition and by an evolving political logic, we have seen ideological simplification, diverse forms of political reasoning and worldviews reduced to a single semantic field" (Minakov 2011, 47).

It can therefore be argued that such statements of the "post-ideological" dimension of modern politics, or the state of "post-politics" as a loss of the traditional political dimension, are characteristic not only for the current policies of the EU countries or USA. However, the matter is not a simple parallelism, of course. In my article "Post-Politics in Belarusian way: Towards the Establishment of Meaning in Politics," I tried to demonstrate that such phenomena are also well-known in the post-Soviet space, where the post-political state of modern public policy reliably manifests itself under the guise of classical authoritarian regimes. In this case, "post-politics" was understood "through the interconnection of two tendencies - the desacralization of space and des-investment of desires" (Barkouski 2010) as the loss of the political dimension of its distinctive status in the eyes of

society and the inflation of expectations from this sphere of life, not motivating more to invest in itself articulated and unarticulated expectations of individuals. As it was for example at the end of 80th - beginning of 90th XX century. A similar interpretation of post-politics as a transition from a "value policy" to a modern "real politics" is demonstrated by the extreme right-wing Russian thinker A. Dugin, speaking of it as an "ideology of minimal humanism" or an ultramodern (postmodern) way of actualization of politics: "Post-politics is not a denial of politics, but rather an *absolutization of politics as a process of modernization*. This process of modernization consists in the disontologisation of the Political" (Dugin 2003, 470). In this case, the matter is in one way or another the "mediatizing" of the political, the turning it into a show and power of the mediacracy, the eliminating of obvious goals and the playing of "empty" signifiers as a way to implement "politics without politics." It sounds like the post-Marxist critics of contemporary politics of western countries that we discussed previously and similar to the main theses of the Guy Debord's "The Society of the Spectacle". This makes it possible to talk about the current state of "post-ideology" as an ideological level of the embodiment of post-politics on a global scale, where post-ideology no longer means the disappearance of an ideological dimension as such, but its emergence into a different way of self-collecting and influencing a person.

If we are talking about the strategic plan for constructing the newest political discourse, it seems that the main elements of its filling today are numerous post-ideological practices (which can also be defined as "second generation ideologies"). They imply the cognitive format of the "new

mythology" in respect to the organizing of the space of social action. This format differs from the previous one primarily in that the new mythology as a descendant of the old ideology does not seek to establish the selected rational system of values, define its conceptual order and organize the activities on this basis, but constructs such a model for world's interpretation, which is based in part on mythological principles or carries the constitutive features of mythological thinking. The latter implies the use of such structures of signification that build the obvious binary oppositions "ours/others", "light/darkness", "truth/lie", "good/evil", etc., based on partly emotional-irrational myths of historical social, psychological and other kind. This in turn generates a closed logic of the functioning of the discourse, which does not react in any way to external criticism or counterexamples.

At the same time, characterizing the post-ideological as the basically mythological thinking, we are forced to remember those constitutive features of the latter, which are noted in his study by the well-known structural anthropologist C. Lévi-Strauss: "Divergence of sequences and themes is a fundamental characteristic of mythological thought, which manifests itself as an irradiation; by measuring the directions and angles of the rays, we are led to postulate their common origin, as an ideal point on which those deflected by the structure of the myth would have converged had they not started, precisely, from some other point and remained parallel throughout their entire course. As I shall show in my conclusion, this multiplicity is an essential characteristic, since it is connected with the dual nature of mythological thought, which coincides with its object by forming a homologous image of it but never succeeds in blending with it, since

thought and object operate on different levels. The constant recurrence of the same themes expresses this mixture of powerlessness and persistence. Since it has no interest in definite beginnings or endings, mythological thought never develops any theme to completion: there is always something left unfinished. Myths, like rites, are "in-terminable"" (Lévi-Strauss 1969, 5-6). In this sense, contemporary post-ideologies, being new mythologies, are not really too concerned with developing a single consistent image of the world, even falsified one, rather they create the general framework of a "fantastic" reality in which the individual's consciousness fills the missing volume itself, populating it with chimeras from its subconscious.

One could dispute the acceptability of the interpretation of "second generation ideologies" in such archaic ways of thinking, if the works of, specifically, R. Barthes (1991) did not convince us that the mythological consciousness did not at all outdo itself within the limits of modern social practices. Moreover, in their sensational Dialectic of Enlightenment, M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno (2002) did not demonstrate that the unrestricted structures of the myth and their unconscious authority dominate the entire scientific and political ideology and practice of European thinking, which is influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Therefore, we can rather speak about the productivity of such an optics of the view on the nature of post-ideologies, which allows us to reveal some of their noteworthy features.

Unlike the old ideologies the post-ideologies as new mythologies are determined primarily by their hybrid, syncretic character, that is, the possibility of reconciling within their confines the components of mature, i.e. traditional ideologies of very different spectrum (for example, as the actual

Russian experience shows: ultra-left National Bolshevism with neo-conservatism and right-wing traditionalism) and the accession to them of various elements of values, concepts with a general for the post-political situation lack of semantic depth and hermeneutical nihilism. The old ideologies were based in part on a certain pseudo-scientific theory (for example, of racial superiority, the invisible hand of the market or class struggle), which was supposed to justify the convincingness and the only correctness of this ideology, putting irrational elements of social psychopathology (hatred of Jews, contempt for social losers or persecution enemies of the people) in the form of continuation of the theoretically grounded position.

Being hybrid in the way of their constituting, post-ideologies as new mythologies let to create on their own basis conglomerates of basic myths that combine with each other and allow themselves to be coordinated with regard to a variety of political situations. If we take as an example the analysis of the events of the "Ukrainian crisis" (non-declared War between Russia and the Ukraine since 2014), we can in particular see the creation of a conglomerate of such two basic elements of new mythologies, prevalent mainly in the Russian-language politicized sphere, like "Gayrope" and "banderovtsy" (which does not deny the possibility of joining to them other mythological parts in specific cases). The first myth is based on the identification of the internal and external policies of the European Union countries with a separate successful tendency to struggle for the rights of sexual minorities in them as a substitute for the traditional idea of Europe by the simulacrum of Europe of "unconventional values" ("Gay-Europe"),

creating the image of "tolerast Europe" (it combines "tolerant" and "pederast" in one word). This myth allows the functioning of regional authoritarian-state and soil-patriotic models of identity as custodians of traditional, autochthonous values and an original way of life and thinking (including the political one).

The second mythological figure deliberately distorts the level of the presence in the political space of Ukraine of the ultra-nationalist component and demonizes the "fascist" image of the figures of the national liberation movement of the Ukraine in the early and middle of the twentieth century, thereby reducing all manifestations of the national identity of the East Slavic peoples to stigmatized models of the fascist-chauvinistic type in spite of the only possible Great Russian (imperial-cosmopolitan) identity. Of note, the phenomenon of "fascism" has in the post-Soviet (especially Russian) tradition characteristics of a long-practiced peculiar national mythology, where the demonic image of National Socialism is thought almost in the religious sense as an absolute evil and the embodiment of all negative intentions of man, as hostile to everything right and light, purely destructive desire of zombified humanity for general annihilation, which heroicizes its own victory over fascism as the victory of the forces of light over the army of darkness (the theatricalization of the "V Parades", their invariably exalted status, pretentious rhetoric of leaders - the signs of this mythological setting). Therefore, the definition of something in the categories of "fascism" had, both in Soviet and in the post-Soviet context, the meaning of an absolutely discredited and in need of final and ruthless eradication, whether it is a political program or social activism. This is due, inter alia, to the

peculiarities of the policy of memory established in the Soviet Union and inherited by its successors. As the Ukrainian researcher, M. Minakov emphasizes, "The dialectic of collective memory is based on the fact that the memory of trauma does not find direct realization and sublation in actions motivated by ressentiment. The irrational memory that bears the pain is always topical, renewed, and self-fortifying. This also strengthens the irrationality of political life, which manifests itself in the dominance of ideological constructs that require the least critical thought or public display of substantive elements of social life"(Minakov 2011, 45).

In this regard, the use of the mythologeme of the "fascist" image of Ukrainian politics can occur with total disregard for historical specifics, the use of a distorted picture of the submission of facts and even inattention to the meaning of names: in parallel, the bearers of this mythology use the names "banderovtsy", "benderovtsy" and even "binderovtsy" (without attention to the original sounding of the name of Stepan Bandera and with some comic allusions), which indicates the ignoring of the initial facts of the phenomenon itself (this is generally unimportant for mythology). When it comes to "banderovtsy", it is a consolidated name for a whole group of similar lexical units used within the framework of this mythological set (for example, "Ukrainian punitive forces", "Maidowns", "Maidanjugend", "Ukrainian neo-Nazis", etc.[2]) The symbiosis of these mythologemes accordingly generates the cumulative effect of manipulating the consciousness of individual citizens or communities, creating a bipolar

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[2] See the usage of these concepts as elements of the Russian information war in articles (Sazonov and Müür 2017; Furgacz 2016; Khaldarova and Mervi 2016; Bolin et al. 2016).

model of the universe (we/they, Russian Slavs/alien Europeans-Americans, local nationalism as fascism / Great Russian nationalism as common Slavic identity, an empire of good / empire of evil, and Russophile / Russophobe, etc.). Of course, this is only a single example of the formation of a conglomerate of myths, and they are inherent not only in the modern Russian Federation[3], or broader in the Eastern European region. Although it is in this case that the typical philistine mythologies are clearly transformed into a type of mass media technologies aimed at global manipulation of consciousness and reformatting the political field.

It can also be argued that similar effects of post-ideological influence are also present on the Western policy screens, often being spiced with a fair share of populist rhetoric. For example, the well-known and popular one, thanks to the speeches of the former US President George W. Bush, is a mythologeme about the so-called "Axis of Evil" conjugated with the mythology of the demonic Taliban and other incarnations of the terrorist threat. The fact that the "Axis of Evil" is a mythological figure does not at all deny the existence of a threat of terrorism for the same American or world society. But in the form in which this image is used in official political rhetoric and popular notions, it engenders a grotesque picture of the world where whole countries and peoples are stigmatized as the embodiment of the demonic element of Chaos and destruction, a mortal threat to humanity even contrary to the facts. Or, on the contrary, thanks to the "facts", successfully confirming the given picture of the world (as it was with

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[3] See a study of the rhetoric of Ukrainian and European politics around the theme of the "Ukrainian crisis" in the article (Goriacheva 2016).

"bacteriological weapons" of Saddam Hussein). However, this side of American foreign policy and its post-ideological rhetoric has repeatedly been criticized both by internal and external critics. Among the most consistent and principled ones, one can clearly identify S. Žižek and J. Baudrillard.

The first has repeatedly criticized the phantasmal nature of both US domestic policy, which produces torn images of reality, leading the enchanted subject to the social imaginary plane farther from the dimension of the Real, and external policy as well – especially in the plane of "humanitarian interventions". "One does not need to know the brutal reality that sustains such interventions, the cynical pursuit of economic and political interests obfuscated by humanitarian concerns, to discern the falsity of such interventionism—the inconsistencies, gaps and silences of its explicit text are tell-tale enough", stresses the Slovenian thinker (Žižek 2013). Here, in his opinion, we are faced with a visible contradiction, which nevertheless is easily combined in the proposed black and white picture of the world. So in the case of Afghanistan, Žižek argues, we cannot ignore the fact that the Taliban itself is a product of the US intelligence services that are responsible for the fundamentalization of this country, that "we (the global liberal system) created the fundamentalism" and in general the notorious "Axis of Evil" (Žižek 2010), but this does not preserve the public western policy from moral arrogance about the terrorist nature of this country itself and the allegedly primordial threat emanating from it. Such a reluctance to bring together the cause and effect can rather be correlated with the mythological way of thinking, rather than the rationalized ideological discourse. However, even classical ideologies found the resource for such 180-degree turns (for

example, the breakdown of relations and the subsequent war between former allies - the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in 1941, turning the former "brothers in arms" into "sworn enemies"), but then they did it at least in stages, not at the same time.

The second passionate critic of such a post-ideological hypocrisy of Western politics, French thinker Jean Baudrillard, who already in the early 90's publicly harshly opposed the virtual nature of the Gulf war, whose simulated essence of the new media-war covered the cynical aims of "real politics" (Baudrillard 1995), continued to reveal the whole truth of the "Triumphant globalization battling against itself" in the early 2000's. In his understanding, the "Axis of Evil" itself is the construction "of the America's unconscious and realizes by violence what was merely a fantasy and a dream thought" (Baudrillard 2003, 62), where the model anticipates the event itself, and the war becomes "continuation of the absence of politics by other means" (ibid. 34). Islam here acts as a trigger, initiating a policy of simple solutions and reliance on something that does not even exist in reality. "This is terror against terror – there is no longer any ideology behind it. We are far beyond ideology and politics now. No ideology, no cause - not even the Islamic cause - can account for the energy which fuels terror. The aim is no longer even to transform the world, but (...) to radicalize the world by sacrifice" (ibid. 9-10), emphasizes Baudrillard, thus demonstrating the post-ideological and post-political dimension of the world after 9/11.

However, in the public area there are quite enough direct accusations that the essence of the policy of "humanitarian interventionism" is not at all in fulfilling the moral mission and eliminating the terrorist threat, but in the

completely mundane pragmatic interests of the "energy war" masked by the concern for ensuring the order and democracy worldwide, where the struggle against the "Axis of Evil" was originally conceived as a battle for the "Axis of Oil"[4]. In this case, post-ideology is revealed as the desire to link the pragmatic interest of the state or international coalition with the metaphysics of lofty goals and ideals, where both these levels, divergent in their pathos and ratio, become a point of support for each other. Certainly many commentators reveal various sides of these inconsistencies of the declared goals and selected means, the proposed picture of the world and rough reality.

Summing up this criticism of the contemporary post-ideological policy of liberal democracies, one can refer to the example of the following argument by A. Atkinson-Bonasio: "I would argue that America is forever looking into a Lacanian mirror, constantly seeing themselves and their nation as a reflection that is far better, more noble and pure than reality. Yet they continue to hold on tightly on to the illusion that the reflection is a true representation of reality rather than a manifestation of projected desire. The contrast between the illusion of what America represents to Americans and what it represents to those that look at its actions from an outside perspective is extremely telling of this disparity of perceptions" (Atkinson-Bonasio n.d., 12). This image of the mirror where the desired and the actual is mixed together without any apparent difference, where the "Axis of Evil" becomes the projection of the old idea of the "Empire of Evil" as a complex archetype of the American soul, enchanted by the strong moral and religious

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[4] The example of such an accusatory critics (Duthel, 2011).

discourse of Satan's confrontation, which goes back to the origins of Puritan culture of the Founding Fathers, it becomes the point of collecting the post-ideological that prevails in modern American politics. Within this imagined confrontation with the terrorist threat as war against Satan, Muslims are imperceptibly transformed in American incarnation of German "Jews" of the Second World War (ibid. 5). In general, similar versions of explanations also arise when trying to uncover the reasons for the revenge of the right-wing and ultraconservative policies and its inherent demagogic rhetoric in the European Union and the United States, the same notorious "the Trump phenomenon"[5].

To the above, we can add that post-ideologies as new mythologies appeal to total acceptance of the proposed model of the world and complete defamation of alternative models, which generates the effect of social hysteria (i.e. mass fixation on certain topics with the leading role of emotion) and escalation of ethnic, religious, moral and mental feelings. The latter presumes an increased sensibility to the "sensitive subjects", for example, to "Russophobia" as a distinctive characteristic of the politics of the mostly part of world countries against Russia in the consciousness of many Russian people. This can also be observed in the framework of the post-ideological matrix of the so-called "Russkij mir" ("the Russian world"), from the general outline of which, usually, specific discursive statements of the actual Russian "myth-politics" are produced. As Vladimir Sazonov observes: "While Western media and politicians often regard Putin's national idea (Pax Russica) as a new phenomenon, it is actually not new. Russia's ideology is, to a great

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[5] See, for example (Brady and Rivers, 2016).

extent, an irrational mix of older systems – i.e. Byzantium, the Golden Horde, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Slavophile legacy from the beginning of the 20th century, the Soviet system and its ideological elements, and some ideas from Orthodox Christianity. Nevertheless, Putin's state philosophy is strongly influenced by nationalism, chauvinism, clericalism, orthodoxy, xenophobia, imperialism, and autocracy. In addition, the whole concept is decorated with ideological inventions and myths from the 'glorious' Soviet times"(Sazonov 2017, 27). This syncretism of the ideology of the "Russian world" allows, in the opinion of the author, to combine in it contradictory phenomena and ideas (for example, communist ideology and Orthodoxy being ideological twin brothers) as an effective propaganda tool and information weapon.

Similar effects as an element of the basic destruction of the images of "truth" and "reality" (their total indistinctiveness at the world of post-truth) are also noted by other studies devoted to the Russian-Ukrainian information war. For example, Irina Khaldarova and Mervi Pantti argue with respect to the topic of "fake news" that this is a conscious element of modern Russian propaganda: "Strategic narratives carried by Channel One's journalistically dubious stories can be seen aiming, in the first place, to appeal to emotions and to "blur" the border between what is real and what is not: in other words to form a context in which other messages can be communicated with greater ease" in the context of the fact that "strategic communications are conditioned by the diffused media ecology in which narratives become evaluated and discussed by various political actors and the general public" (Khaldarova and Pantti 2016, 900).

A similar idea is also contained in Peter Pomerantsev's article: "But insisting on the lie, the Kremlin intimidates others by showing that it is in control of defining 'reality.' This is why it's so important for Moscow to do away with truth. If nothing is true, then anything is possible. We are left with the sense that we don't know what Putin will do next—that he's unpredictable and thus dangerous. We're rendered stunned, spun, and flummoxed by the Kremlin's weaponization of absurdity and unreality" (Pomerantsev 2014). In the author's opinion, the goal of the new propaganda is no longer to convince someone, but to keep the viewer hooked and distracted, stunning and denying the ability to make critical judgments about the subject of the conversation. In other words, the effects of post-ideology, including the distortion of the picture of reality in the syncretic image of the world, the destruction of the boundary between truth and lies, violence and peace, real and unreal, are easily and universally introduced means of propaganda and information war. Moreover, they have their effect not only at the level of state propaganda, but also at the grassroots level of vernacular communication[6].

Nevertheless, just at the level of propaganda, i.e. its conscious manipulative usage, post-ideology today is certainly widely applicable and

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[6] See on the influence of political rhetoric on the ways of thinking and the actions of Russian inhabitants in the article (Arkhipova 2017). It emphasizes separately the idea that such a situation should be thought much broader than a simple propaganda effect: "we cannot see in this action a simple "reflection" or "imprint" of propaganda. State TV channels and newspapers of 2014-2015 years did not teach citizens to advertise "Obama's entry is forbidden" on the stalls and did not call for sticking "Obama chmo" on the cars" (ibid. 114).

acts as an information weapon in the contemporary consciental wars[7]. If we briefly touch on the topic of using post-ideological practices in modern propaganda, we can start by saying that the goal of the latter, according to the authoritative researcher in the field, French intellectual J. Ellul, is "no longer to change adherence to a doctrine, but to make the individual cling irrationally to a process of action. It is no longer to lead to a choice, but to loosen the reflexes. It is no longer to transform an opinion, but to arouse an active and mythical belief" (Ellul 1973, 25). Propaganda affects not only the individual's consciousness space, but tries to modify all of its surroundings. In essence, the latter should work to produce an integral system of explaining the world and generate incentives for action as a specially organized myth that attempts to take over a personality, explains Ellul. Well-made propaganda always focuses on those collective myths that are shared by society, for example, the myth of the nation, the hero, the happiness, but one can continue to assert that in the long run, propaganda can itself work to create new collective myths: for example, for our region it is a myth about the Slavic unity - a triune people, an original way of development of the "Slavic civilization", etc., - that began to be laid down since the time of the Russian Empire. When propaganda contains elements of collective mythology, basic stereotypes of society, it is perceived as natural and corresponding to the general outlook of a person.

Although propaganda is "acting" primarily at the level of emotions and subconscious attitudes, nevertheless, according to Ellul, it is apt to appeal to

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[7] On the phenomenon of "consciental wars", propaganda and ways of avoiding manipulation by informational forms of influence on the consciousness and psyche of a person, see more in my article (Barkouski 2016).

reason and life experience when it provides information and manipulates facts. This does not mean that it must be rational at its core to satisfy the individual's thirst for facts in a case of actions and decision-making, so its task is to give an irrational answer to what has rational and factual elements in its basis: its credibility is not based on correspondence of facts on their own, but on their "correspondence on reality", more precisely to that vision of reality created by propaganda with the help of their manipulations. Propaganda can avoid direct deception, but it disguises the truth under false or compromised interpretations. However, the individual will act with reliance not on the facts themselves, but on "the emotional pressure, the vision of future, the myth" (Ibid. 86), explaining himself his own actions by their supposedly rational-factual validity. Therefore, modern propaganda, relying on post-ideology as its foundation, is not obliged to take care of its consistency or the fidelity of some specific ideology: it can create conglomerates of various and even contradictory ideological elements, for the individual will make the final rationalization of the worldview for it.

Propaganda no longer tends to remain in line with this or that ideology, besides, today there are practically no clear ideological frameworks in the political field. According to J. Ellul, modern propaganda is not based on a certain ideology, rather the latter is nothing more to it than a material or a means to which the propagandist cynically "does not believe", promoting his message on the screen of mass consciousness: "More and more, the propagandist is a technician using a keyboard of material media and psychological techniques; and in the midst of all that, ideology is only one of the incidental and interchangeable cogs" (ibid. 197). The propagandist

creates from ideologies or a set of incentive words, like "social justice," "democracy," "state," etc., to evoke a certain kind of reactions, or mythologemes to justify the proper kind of action, where action is always primary, but meanings of the words are changeable.

Propaganda almost does not create new myths, but it well exploits the already existing ones, changing and modifying them to suit their needs. This becomes possible due to the so-called "horizontal propaganda", carried out at the level of the social group, and not hierarchically. Propaganda attacks the principal symbols of culture, its attitudes, which shape the world outlook and consciousness of individuals. As a means of conducting a consciental war, it can both work to preserve and protect the necessary myths and stereotypes in culture, and consciously distort and modify these myths and stereotypes, thereby affecting identity, and doing the same as with one's own culture, and with a strange one. Therefore, it is very difficult for an individual, even a reflexive one, to resist propaganda that post-ideologically manipulates ideologies, myths and cultural norms, and does so at a level where rational criticism and argumentation are all too often ineffective.

In conclusion, we can say that post-ideologies as new mythologies inherent in the heroizing of their cosmos with the creation of a polar image of a monster, world Evil, the struggle with which is a sacred duty and obligation for the bearer of these post-ideologies. In some ways, the new mythologies resemble the exalted versions of the radical religious perception of the world with jihad / crusades against the infidels, absenteeism of heretical views of opponents, their demonization. In this sense, post-ideologies can in some ways be considered as a mental return

from modernity to the medieval worldview system, where new ideologies assume the role of aggressive secular religions. This allows us to explain in part their high potential for social mobilization and their spread on the waves of artificially created social hysteria as a mode of faith and unconditional acceptance. Post-ideologies partly resist the strategies of "direct" action and "restoring" the meaning of political categories and values, since they themselves use the resources of the post-political organization of the social field and reject rational social constructivism (see: Barkouski 2010). In this regard, we need the resources of a new social analytics (see: Barkouski 2014) to be able to adequately describe and systematize such post-ideologies (new mythologies) by specifying the main mechanisms and processes of their aggregation (creating conglomerates), as well as functioning on the screen of a mass consciousness. This also becomes possible through the extensive use of methods of discursive analysis and hermeneutic procedures.

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