Reviews

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Piotr Lewandowski, "Potęga narracji. Narodowe mity (geo)polityczne Rosji w kontekście bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego" ['The Power of Narrative: Russia's National (Geo)political Myths and Information Security'], Universitas, Kraków 2022, 560 pp.

The monograph by Piotr Lewandowski titled *Potęga narracji. Narodowe mity (geo)polityczne Rosji w kontekście bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego* is the result of author's research work on the issue of the role of political myth in geopolitical processes that considers aspects of information security. Lewandowski's academic output has focused on the problems of disinformation, geopolitics, international security, and information security. It comprises mainly articles and chapters published in multi-author monographs. In this respect, the monograph under review is an independent scientific study.

Potęga narracji... was published by Universitas publishing in Kraków in 2022. The work has a total of 560 pages and seven chapters, plus bibliography and an index of personal names. It presents an innovative approach to studying Russia's national political myths and their representation in the Polish opinion press. Lewandowski begins with an introduction in which he specifies the study's objectives and its founding paradigm. The research problem and hypotheses are outlined clearly and methodologically correct. The rest of the work presents the issues and specific theses, the selection of research material, the timeframe and the methods, techniques and tools of press analysis.

Lewandowski dedicated the first chapter to theories of myth and forms of social consciousness, introducing the reader to various concepts of myth, such as those by Mircea Eliade, Ernst Cassirer, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Paul Ricoeur and Geert Hofstede. Lewandowski then proceeds to analyse political myth as understood by Georges Sorel, Vilfredo Pareto, Maurice Halbwachs, and as defined in contemporary approaches.

Chapter two is an in-depth narrative analysis of Russia's national political myths, presenting various aspects such as the myth of the Communist or Soviet past, the myth of the empire, the myth of tsarist autocracy, the myth of the Russian nation, the myth of the Wild East, the myth of the foreground of civilisation, the myth of Polish agency and the myth of the eternal enemy. It is a narrative analysis that can provide a reference field for future research on political myths, archetypes, stereotypes or geopolitical codes.

In chapter three, Lewandowski focuses on analysing mythic narratives between 2004 and 2010 in individual magazines, examining the representations of particular narratives, mythic narrative structures and overall national mythic narratives of Russia in the Polish press. Here, Lewandowski also addresses the variations of these narratives over time.

Chapter four takes the reader into framing the Russian issue from the perspective of national political myths, using social constructivism and framing as analysis tools. Lewandowski analyses the linguistic image of the world in media communication, framed by the mythic narrative and the role of myth in creating media reality. Chapter five continues with an analysis of framing as a mechanism of mythological communication, considering the framing of titles, leads, lifts, captions and photographs and capturing the overall framing as a new phenomenon proposed by Lewandowski in the context of information security research.

Chapter six deals with Russia's national political myths in the transfiguration process of collective memory by analysing linguistic determinism, collective memory, the press text as a vehicle of the past, the workings of political elites, the rankings of memory, memory versus history, and memory in the process of communication. Chapter seven, the final one, analyses the phenomenon of transfiguration, covering the object, organisation, functions and communication of this mechanism.

The work ends with a conclusion in which Lewandowski summarises the study's main findings and includes an extensive bibliography, including books, articles in collective works, journal articles, opinion polls, works in Russian, online articles, and newspaper articles cited in the work.

In assessing the publication, it is essential to focus on two aspects. The first one is the value of the work. It is an ambitious and comprehensive research project that contributes analysing Russia's national political myths in the Polish opinion press. The work should be assessed from the perspective of its novelty, value, and relevance to the study of information security, cultural security and the constructivist paradigm in international security. The innovation of the work stems from its Russia's national political myths' extensive analysis that uses a variety of theories of myth and social consciousness. The inclusion of the concept of myth in the context of information security is particularly valuable. The apparent research value lies in the complex analysis of national mythic narratives, and in applying the media analysis tools in the context of political myths.

Therefore, Lewandowski's work is essential in information security, as it analyses how national political myths can be used for information manipulation, affecting the security of societies. Here, too, is the context of Russian information warfare or the fitness of this research for recognising reflexive management. In addition, the research touches upon

things related to cultural security, examining how national myths influence the perception of Russian culture in Poland with a broad context of social imaging.

The rationale for the valuable aspects of the work is as follows:

– the work provides a unique approach to the analysis of Russia's national political myths in the Polish opinion press, integrating theories of myth, hermeneutics and concepts of social constructivism against a background of information and international security;

– through a detailed analysis of mythic narratives, the work reflects an innovative approach to examining the impact of national myths on the perception of Russia, with consideration of geopolitical codes and aspects of international security;

– by using the term *framything* as a novel tool of analysis, the work expands the field of research on the media framing of political myths, thus making an essential contribution to the study of the construction of media reality;

– the work stands out by integrating the concept of the transfiguration of collective memory, demonstrating how the past and national political myths co-create cultural identity and also influence the cultural security of society;

– the application of press content analysis methods in investigating political myths provides practical tools for verifying myth framing, an important resource for researchers, media practitioners and information security analysts.

As a result, Lewandowski's work not only sheds new light on the mechanisms of political narrative formation but also makes a significant contribution to the development of security science through a unique combination of myth theory, social constructivism and a new analytical tool, which shapes a modern approach to the study of the impact of political myths on public perception and related issues of information and cultural security.

The second aspect related to evaluating Lewandowski's work refers to the deficits that exist despite the volume and comprehensiveness of the issues covered in the monograph. There is a direct lack of a chapter dedicated to information security (even if only as an introduction to the problem). In the context of research on Russia's national political myths and their representation in the Polish opinion press,

the features related to information security may include the following elements of analysis:

– information security as a research context: the work lacks direct reference to how Russia's national political myths represented in the Polish press may affect information security, especially in disinformation, information manipulation or influence on public opinion. The overall research apparatus used in the work is adequate for the study of disinformation and enhanced considerably, but such assumptions do not appear in the work's content;

– analysis of propaganda and disinformation: the work would benefit from a detailed analysis of the tools, techniques, and strategies used to represent Russia's national political myths in the Polish press;

– the role of the media in information security: apart from a few references, mainly in the introduction, there is a lack of consideration of the role of the media in the context of information security, considering the potential risks that may emerge from the popularisation of specific political myths;

– cybersecurity: although the work does not refer to cybersecurity, this subject manifests itself in some aspects throughout the work, especially if national political myths are used for cyberattacks or online disinformation campaigns.

These features would allow for better information security coverage in analysing Russia's national political myths in the Polish opinion press.

In conclusion, the author's monograph by Piotr Lewandowski, PhD titled *Potęga narracji. Narodowe mity (geo)polityczne Rosji w kontekście bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego* appears to be a significant contribution to the study of national political myths. Its value lies in its comprehensive approach to the topic, attention to information and cultural security, and fit with the constructivist paradigm of international security. As a textbook, it should inspire students and researchers, introducing them to modern approaches to analysing political myths.