THE LEGITIMACY OF POWER AND THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

LORENA-VALERIA STUPARU[*]

Abstract. *After some considerations about the psychological, historical and philosophical foundation of the political imaginary, I will refer mainly on the one hand to ideology and utopia and on the other hand to ideology in conjunction with memory as forms of political imaginary holding a legitimizing function concerning power. Especially in our times of cultural relativism, a conception of legitimacy does not always reflect a perception of legitimacy. As expressions of the social imaginary, ideology, utopia and memory (as I will try to show) are assumed by the political actors for the purpose of legitimizing political power. Nevertheless, even if the legitimacy thus obtained is false, it is possible that political imaginary form – beyond the use of symbols, ideology, utopia and the memory – participates in the human socialized consciousness structure which underlies psychologically the idea of legitimacy. For this purpose, we divided the work into three chapters that treat the above topics: 1. The notion of political imaginary in conjunction with the legitimacy of power; 2. Ideology, utopia; 3. Legitimacy and the boundaries of memory.*

Keywords: *political imaginary, legitimacy of the power, ideology, utopia, memory.*

The notion of political imaginary in conjunction with the legitimacy of power

Writing about the political imaginary in conjunction with the legitimacy of power when dramatic events actually happen, may seem a theoretical luxury. But this is the luxury of normality and reflexivity by which we can understand and explain phenomena difficult to define in a strictly rational language, especially in the polymorphic and unpredictable world of today.

At first glance, power is a concept whose political connotation of legitimacy, established almost as a synonym by modern mentality, is understood by itself.

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[*] Scientific Researcher, PhD, Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations "Ion I.C. Brătianu" of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest; l_stuparu@yahoo.com.

But not any power is legitimate and it is one of the reasons why, as an important concept of political sciences, power is difficult to define[1]. In this context, Hastings questions whether political power is of the same kind as, for example, the power of parents over children or of teachers over their pupils[2]. And this question is not so superfluous as it seems because, as Ioan Petru Culianu shows in a study, there is a "subjective dimension" of this phenomenon, expressed by a word usually accompanied by an adjective such as "civil", "military", "economic", "political" or "religious"[3].

The institutionalized political power as a public force implies the ability of political actors to impose certain directions relevant to social action[4], and this is because in principle the legitimate power expresses a social will assumed by the political system, promoted on behalf of some general purposes, defined as the common good[5], and this sociological observation with an ideological flavor is historically valid for "the common power" built by yielding individual powers and mandating a person or a group[6]. It was noted recently that "democratic states tend to rule through hierarchical structures that combine legitimate power, persuasion and democracy with a sense of distance or mediation between the administration and population"[7]. As Tom R. Tyler shows, legitimacy can be read as "a psychological property" of an authority or an institution, or as a social contract which determines those related to these forms believing that they are appropriate and fair[8].

On the other hand, contexts of legitimacy or illegitimacy of power emphasize the function of symbols associated for supporting or contribute to maintaining power, i.e. the idea of the sacred or "magic" dimension of this political phenomenon. Lucien Sfez argues that "politics belongs to the field of the symbolic" and the presentation of political symbolism also means defining the areas of politics, its borders and its variations since "politics is only about legitimacy, i.e. beliefs and memories validated, i.e. symbols"[9].

As for the "charismatic domination" (Max Weber), we find relevant examples in the work of Girardet about myths and political mythologies such as

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[1] Lorena Stuparu, *Criză și legitimare simbolică a puterii* (*Crisis and symbolic legitimation of power*), in Revista de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, IX, 4 (2012), 92-94.

[2] Michel Hastings, *Abordarea științei politice*, trans. by G. Poede, Iassy, Institutul European, 2000, p. 23.

[3] Ioan Petru Culianu, *Religia și creșterea puterii*, in Gianpaolo Romanato, Mario G. Lombardo, Ioan Petru Culianu, *Religie și putere*, trans. by de Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu and Șerban Anghelescu, Iassy, Polirom, 2005, p. 172.

[4] Constantin Nica, *Teoria politică a legitimității. Max Weber*, in Gabriela Tănăsescu (coord.) *Teorii ale legitimității puterii*, Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2014, p. 34.

[5] Georges Burdeau, *Traité de science politique, tome I : Le pouvoir politique*, Paris, Librairie Générale de droit et de Jurisprudence "R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias", 1949, pp. 57-59.

[6] Pierre Manent, *Originile politicii moderne. Machiavelli/Hobbes/Rousseau*, trans. from French by Alexandra Ionescu, Bucharest, Editura Nemira, 2000, p. 68.

[7] Jean Grugel, *Democratizarea. O introducere critică*, trans. by Ramona-Elena Lupu, Iassy, Polirom, 2008, p. 77.

[8] Tom R. Tyler, *Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation*, Annual Review Psychology, New-York University, 53 (2006) 375.

[9] Lucien Sfez, *Simbolistica politică*, trans. by Diana Sălceanu, Iassy, Institutul European, 2000, p. 13.

"the calling of the Savior" in France, in the XIXth and XXth centuries[10]. Although the metaphor of "the world as a stage" has undergone a shift starting with the twentieth century[11], and legitimacy actually represents both the political benefits of citizens and the responsibility and competition among elites, popular representation, consensus and governance for the people, the public utility[12], the perception of the political man as charismatic actor, is still alive in the collective mentality.

Due to the human being's fascination for the unknown, the mirage of power was extended until today – converted into ideology or utopia, in modern mythologies or symbologies more or less "transparent", in the flattering feeling of participating, through information, to a "mystery" even in everyday life. And this feeling is shared at different intellectual and spiritual levels, depending on the location in the "life's world".

After these considerations about power and its legitimacy, I will refer to the psychological, historical and philosophical foundation of the political imaginary. Also, I'll refer especially on the one hand to ideology and utopia and on the other hand to ideology in conjunction with memory as forms of political imaginary holding a legitimizing function concerning power.

The imaginary, a concept whose meaning was appointed in the twentieth century in disciplines such as psychology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics, history of religion, sociology of religion, literary criticism, cultural anthropology[13] – reveals its exploratory and creative function, inclusively in the political field. Here, the imaginary of power consists rather in its type of alternative for political rationality (which embraces the area of reasonable actions and philosophical arguments), than in the fact that the faculty of imagining is a structural element of the human *psýche* (either of leaders or of their subjects). However, this alternative for political rationality is not always a fortunate one, as indicated by Ernst Cassirer – who considers that the imaginary would represent only the political non rational, both in the perspective of its origins, functions, promises and risks: "When we lack reason, what remains is always the *ultima ratio*, the power of the miraculous and mysterious", notes Ernst Cassirer in *Le mythe de l'État*. The political realm is exposed, more than any other, with unexpected occurrences which are difficult to predict. Even if modern man "no longer believes in a natural magic", he "believes in a social one, but not completely and unconditionally, so he seeks by virtue of a «rationality needs», «some reasons to believe»". In the first half of last century, in an era of demythisation, politicians, interested in exploiting this human need for reasons of faith, improved "a new technique of myth". Consequently, the

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[10] Raoul Girardet, *Mituri și mitologii politice*, trans. by Daniel Dimitriu, Iassy, Institutul European, 1997, p. 67.
[11] Luc Boltanski, *Fapt și cauză*, trans. by Sofia Oprescu, in *Scena publică. Secolul 21*, Edited by Uniunea Scriitorilor din România și Fundația Culturală Secolul 21, p. 25.
[12] Jos de Beus, Benno Netelenbos, *How to Signal and Label Democratic Crisis – Rethinking Political Legitimacy*, Working Paper Politicologen Etmaal, 2008.
[13] Jean Jacques Wunenburger, *Imaginarul*, trans. by Dorin Ciontescu-Samfireag, Cluj, Dacia, 2009.

"modern myths acquire the mark of this 'strange combination' made by their promoters. They are forged methodical, conscious, even cynically, any weapon which may be used by politicians"[14]. According to this interpretation, the imaginary's level is manipulated by strategies of legitimation.

Eminent thinkers – G. Bachelard, G. Durand, Mircea Eliade, P. Ricoeur, H. Corbin, C. G. Jung, R. Barthes, G. Genette, A. Greimas – argue the rationality of symbolic systems, of methodological possibilities involved in areas ranging from symbolic hermeneutics and psychoanalysis to structural semiotics. For example, to highlight the exploratory function (even in a historiographical direction), and the hermeneutical value of the imaginary at the level of "sacred language grammar" in charge of "the mystery of politics", Wunenburger discovers how juridical and legislative functions precede the executive function. He believes that the first meaning of power is a judiciary one, because the position of judge is the first "human institutional representation, being developed in a manner analogous to the political construction of royalty". According to juridical imaginary, the legal power's ambivalence sometimes is "entitled" to commit evil, even for the good of the group. Following the purpose of perpetuating order and right, the judicial power "handleth the paradox, because it legalizes and legitimizes the violence to make govern the supreme concordia and peace in the social body"[15].

From the analysis of the juridical, executive and legislative dimensions of power in terms of political imagination and of a polymorphism manifested in representations which use these myths, symbols, analogies, fictions – we deduce that people allow themselves to be governed by others because political mystery emanates, even in secular societies, from the people's imagination. People imagine that secular power comes to the elected officials from elsewhere, that it is transferred from a higher court which remains hidden and inaccessible for the common people. All the more, in modern mass societies, power condenses such a "charge of force", that "it requires an transcendent imaginary". In this case, we are dealing with the current perception of power: "The politics never ceased to confront with the theology" because "it is not certain that the policy could, despite the efforts of contractualist texts, invent autonomous categories". Much more, "the ideas of sovereignty, of general will, of omnipotence, of state policy applied to the immanent order of the political society derive, without a doubt, from intelligible forms of divinity, without losing symbolic substrate". To argue these allegations Dumezil, Castoriadis, Eliade are invoked in Wuneneburger's work: "If the modern state's leaders have abandoned some magic-religious attributes (like the healing power of the kings of France), they have continued to keep other amazing prerogatives (like the right of pardon, the state reason), through which they can be characterized as holders of a right to life and death which cannot be easily justified in terms of rationality"[16].

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[14] Carmen Diaconescu, *Mitul și mitul politic în interpretarea lui Ernst Cassirer*, in *Individ, libertate, mituri politice*, Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Teorie Socială, 1997, p. 186.

[15] Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, *Imaginariile politicului*, trans. from French by Ionel Bușe and Laurențiu Ciontescu-Samfireag, Bucharest, Paideia, 2005, pp. 21-23.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 22.

While Wunenburger's approach places the idea of imagining among the principles and categories without which, like any human phenomenon, politics cannot be fully understood, Ballandier shows how a philosophy of imaginary's power and legitimacy can start with intuitively show proper of politics[17].

Despite some possible counterexamples, the political imaginary carries the idea of the power's inaccessibility, of a power proper only to certain individuals. Also, the state organization and its appropriate institutions, together with political parties whose reason consists in recruiting and propelling the ruling elite or the counterelite – speak about the invisible politics. In other words, what we see daily on TV or read in newspapers, what we perceive as disputes or agreements between certain public persons, as accusations or attempts to exonerate and acquittals – all these are just images of a reality that, although it belongs to our world, still transcends us both from ontological and gnoseological perspectives: it is above and beyond us, as social beings, and it boggles the unaccustomed citizen with the notions and principles of the system's mechanisms.

We can say that the institutions arranged in the political system are the visible and perceptible phenomena in their historical panorama, starting from which we can contemplate the "essence" of politics, consisting of holding the power. From theocracies to the most advanced democracies, political systems are psychologically based on the belief that the source of power is something of a transcendent order (whose office is not necessarily a sacred one, especially in the modern era), that power is transferred to individuals from another court than those to which common people relate. Whether they make their entrance on stage from the left or from the right of power, backstage the representatives of the ruling class have the same mentality of immortals: owners of functions, masters of an imaginary empire extended to the public choices and decisions that become signs of their power. The ideologies of power have the same settling into the imaginary, regardless of their orientation.

Ideology, Utopia

According to Paul Ricoeur, ideology, as well as utopia, is an expression of the social imaginary. The first is related to the need for a social group to give an image of themselves, to represent in the theatrical sense of the word, to play and to enact "collective situations" as the founding acts "resumed and updated in national ceremonies". In this respect, the ideological phenomenon begins very early[18], and Ricoeur reproduces in the spirit of Condillac's inheritance the concept that "ideology was an analysis of the ideas formed by the human mind" (which Napoleon considered as "a threat to the social order"). He also records the example through which Marx gets to define ideology as "general process by which the real life praxis is faked by imaginary representations of the people". More particularly, Ricoeur considers "especially remarkable" that the young

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[17] Georges Balandier, *Antropologie politică,* trans. by Doina Lică, Timisoara, Amarcord & CEU, 1998, *op. cit.,* p. 16.
[18] Paul Ricoeur, *Eseuri de hermeneutică*, trans. by Vasile Tonoiu, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1995, pp. 207-208.

Marx "used the metaphor of overthrow in a darkroom, starting point of the photo" to assign the function of "inverted image of reality"[19] to ideology.

This overthrown image is useful for legitimizing the power of a group and it concerns the "counterfeiter" and "parasitical" levels of ideology. From this point of view, the symbolism and rhetoric own to the public discourse which is necessary in any society, become an ideology when they are applied to justify a political regime because "the claim to legitimacy of a power system, always exceeds our tendency to believe in its natural legitimacy"[20].

Thus "where there is power, there is a claim of legitimacy" and "the use of rhetoric in public discourse with a purpose of persuasion"[21] represents for Ricoeur the second level of the ideological phenomenon (as an expression of the social imaginary) linked to the concept of legitimization.

Searching to understand the profound basis upon which the authority phenomenon is based, Ricoeur reveals the third level of ideology, namely integration, more importantly in his opinion than legitimacy and dissimulation. As an example, in this case the French philosopher selects the commemorative ceremonies, when a community "revives the events considered as the foundation of its identity" and involving "the symbolic structure of social memory". The role of ideology in commemoration of the founding event whereby the community keeps a report with its roots, is "to disseminate the belief that the founding events are constitutive of social memory and, through these, to the very identity of the community". The three functions of ideology recognized by Ricoeur have the common feature to be "an interpretation of the real life". The distinction between imagination as function, and imaginary as field of imagination allows the identification of an image's quality as "consciousness of something"[22]. Ideology "reinforces, doubles, protects and preserves the social group"; instead, utopia projects the imagination "outside reality, in an elsewhere which is a nowhere". While the ideology (even by the means of fantasy, it is important to add) "protects and preserves reality", "utopia puts it in question in a crucial way". The latter expresses all potentialities "repressed in the established order" within a group, "an exercise of imagination to conceive 'a different kind than what it is' of the social life", "the dream of another family life, a different way of approaching the things and consuming the goods, to organize political life, to live the religious life"[23].

In a political sense, utopia is contested on the one hand by its "anarchic reveries" and on the other by a new social order within an alternative society, and thereby it is "the most radical reply for ideology's integrative function". While "the pivotal function of ideology consists in legitimizing authority", "utopias are as many imaginative variations on power", "a distance between

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[19] *Ibidem*, p. 276.

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 278.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 280.

[22] Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'imagination*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, troisième édition, 1989, p. 5.

[23] Paul Ricoeur, *Eseuri de hermeneutică*, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

imaginary and real which constitutes a permanent threat to the stability and to the permanency of that real"[24], as it was defined by Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia*. The ideology's pathology is manifested by "affinity for illusion, dissimulation, lying"; instead, the specificity of utopia is manifested by "the loss of the real itself in favor of a perfectionist and unachievable scheme", through a kind of "crazy logic of everything or nothing" that replaces the action's logic consciousness of the elementary distinction between desirable and feasible, which leads some "to unfold in writing", others "to close in the nostalgia of paradise lost" and others "to kill without discrimination"[25].

But beyond this "negative" dimension, Ricoeur notes that utopia has a liberating function, for "imagining the un-place, means to maintain open the field of the possible". Briefly, we need utopia "in its fundamental function of challenging and designing a radical elsewhere, to carry out a radical critique of ideologies"; and to cure the utopia of insanity, "the healthy function of ideology" is required, with "its ability to give to a historical community the equivalent of a possible narrative identity"[26].

Legitimacy and the boundaries of memory

The recent political memory involves the following question: do we still have ideologies today?

As Ricoeur has shown in the book *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oublie*, as a "province of the imagination" that contributes to the definition of narrative identity, memory can in its turn hold an ideological function. Beyond the psychological, historical and philosophical foundations of the social and political imaginary, the paper *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oublie* talks about the possibility of converting memory into modern ideologies and mythologies when the authors renounce their epistemological rigor – exploiting rather its imaginative side. In this respect, one of the guiding ideas of the book is that "beyond the ordinary language, a long philosophical tradition, linking in a surprising way the influence of English empiricism and Cartesian rationalism, turns memory in a province of imagination"[27]. Using the Platonic theory of *eikön* which focuses on the presence of an absent phenomenon (with a virtual reference to the elapsed time) Ricoeur observes the relationship between memory and imagination, whether oriented towards fantasy, fiction, the surreal possibly, or the utopian and its previous reality.

The idea of memory as an imaginary province is helpful in recognizing memory's usage by ideology as an expression of the social imaginary, designed to legitimize power insofar as ideology is related to the imaginary used in a "rational way". Taking into account the meaning of "obligatory general lie" borrowed from Solzhenitsyn by Alain Besançon in the book *Les Origines*

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[24] *Ibidem*, p. 283.
[25] *Ibidem*, p. 285.
[26] *Ibidem*, p. 286.
[27] Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oublie*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2000, p. 5.

intellectuelles du léninisme, ideology appears as an agent of political fiction, and in its quality of false consciousness (Marx) it can act more efficiently than the truth[28].

Based on these two premises – of the memory that can be considered, beyond its temporal function, as a province of the imagination – and of ideology seen as an expression of the social imaginary, one can see several aspects which justify the hypothesis of an ideological function including memory in the legitimization of power, even within political contemporary democratic regimes.

According to Ricoeur, history is itself a province of the individual or collective memory, and social or political constructions – as we know – have an imaginary representation at least at the level of the past, when history is invoked not so much in the spirit of demonstrating a truth recorded in documents, but in the spirit of interpretation which seeks to impose a power that has no real legitimacy. This ideology seeks to impose and to consolidate a power without real legitimacy (i.e. Consensual); or, illegitimate power is stolen and not gained by democratic vote – in contemporary society: or usurped – in those pre-modern societies in which legitimacy is transferred by inheritance.

Ricoeur's analysis of memory as a province of the imagination warrants the conclusion that the ideological form of the social imaginary constructs a false legitimacy, the power using ideologies to justify utopias and in this regard, "memory's ambition to tell the truth and its gaps are analyzed in relation to abuses of memory"[29]. Scientific history and ideologically manipulated history are so opposed through an imagination which abdicated from its creative functions, practicing a destructive one. As memory works as a matrix with regard to history[30] – political and diplomatic history, economic and social history, history of cultures and mentalities – the ideological subjugation of history is possible through a forced and imposed memory: "Even the tyrant needs a rhetorician, a sophist, in order to give effect to his undertaking of seduction and intimidation. The imposed narration thus becomes the main instrument of this double operation. The new value that adds ideology (...) to satisfy the demand for legitimacy required by leaders has itself a narrative texture: founding myths, tales of glory and humiliation nourish the discourse of flattering and fear".

This makes it possible to connect the explicit abuses of memory with their distorting effects at the phenomenal level of ideology. At this level, the imposed memory is armed with a history which is itself "authorized", the learned and publicly celebrated history. In fact, a rehearsed memory is, at the institutional level, a memory taught (…) Taught history, learned history, but also celebrated history. At the obligatory memorisation is added to the agreed commemoration"[31].

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[28] Alain Besançon, *Originile intelectuale ale leninismului*, trans. from French by Lucreția Văcar, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2007, p. 5.

[29] Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oublie, op. cit.,* p. 26.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 504.

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 104.

Thus Ricoeur discusses the problem of the memory's abuse analyzed by Tzvetan Todorov according to which the confiscation of memory "is not only specialization of the totalitarian regimes" (*Les Abus de la mémoire*). The phenomenon of memory and history counterfeiting is practiced by dictatorial leaders of all time and any illegitimate leader exploits the mystifying function of memory as an attribute of ideology in order to sustain his projects and to maintain himself in government. Much more, the distinctions between use and abuse made by Paul Ricoeur lead to a possible interpretation of a current political phenomenon marked by malevolent imaginary: not only the excess of an obligatory and imposed memory as a duty is an abuse, but also noxious is the abused memory's fragmentation or its deletion in order to justify the legitimacy of a regime. Memory's profanation of people who have played a role (more or less political) on the stage of history, the refusal to recognize their merits and achievements, the attempt to cancel the value and the meaning of their lives by inventing nonexistent or partial and contextual culpabilities – are practices located at the intersection between memory and ideology, used both by politicians situated to the right of the political spectrum as well as by those situated to the left. Conversely, the invention of a glorious past, memories of extraordinary events and facts that have not occurred – reflects the pathological function of the imaginative memory which has become ideology.

As we have seen, the social imaginary's operations of supporting and legitimizing power is achieved not only by imagination, but also by memory through the symbolic mediations of action, and mainly due to resources provided by the narrative configuring of history: "The manner in which the obligation of memory is proclaimed, may appear as an abuse of memory under the sign of the manipulated memory. It is not about manipulation in the strict meaning delimited by the discourse's ideological relationship with power, but of a more subtle way in terms of a consciousness direction which proclaims itself as a messenger for victims requirement of justice. With this testimony's catchment of silent of victims, the use is converted into abuse"[32]. In order to avoid the metamorphosis of the use in abuse, Ricoeur proposes the creative forgiveness and forgetting. Just like memory combined with imagination, forgetting can also be creative, not because it releases the mind from abuse or excess of memory (and thus it makes possible happy memories), but also in an ethical and religious sense. If memory using creative imagination can sometimes serve ideologies, creative forgetting means the release of these.

The ideology does not belong to spontaneous memory (although sometimes imitates it), but to memory prepared by imagination and used to falsify reality, ignoring its symbolic and creative nature. Even if, through propaganda and manipulation, ideology can manifest as a spontaneous and full of pathos experience, it does nothing except undermine the historical truth and legitimize the false. History (as an elaborated form of memory) becomes an ideological instrument when its epistemological function is neglected. The positive aspect of this phenomenon is that, in times of decadence – used with moderation – it stimulates

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[32] *Ibidem*, p. 109.

the search for true legitimate power. As shown by Gabriela Goudenhooft, in modern societies, where normative legitimacy is most appreciated, democracy itself is a guarantee of legitimacy only in an abstract sense: "The rational and procedural legitimacy are not sufficient to them and the symbolic and ritual alternative finds its place, paradoxically, in a hyper-rationalized world. Recourse to myth and the recovery of trust, regaining of public affection don't mean the failure of rational means for acquiring legitimacy, but the use of all funds, the collective imagination being a source which should not be ignored"[33]. Nevertheless, "if the appeal to ritual and symbol is not something irrational, the inconsistency of sacralization and desecrating of the legitimacy puts into question its reason"[34].

Conclusions

In the terms of Paul Ricœur, as expressions of the social imaginary, ideology, utopia and memory (as we have tried to show) are assumed by political man for the purpose of legitimizing political power.

But even if the legitimacy thus obtained is fake, it is still possible that political imaginary form – beyond the use of symbols, ideology, utopia and memory – participates in human socialized consciousness structures which psychologically underlay the idea of legitimacy. People need to admire, to be confident, to found their aspirations upon and invest in people or institutions which they consider able to solve problems that they themselves cannot solve. Here "the psychology of the masses" meets with the psychology of the leaders, who profit from the first and deliver the symbolisms of power. Nowadays, his image confers much more credibility for a political man than his acts. This issue is connected to the "cultural hegemony of the ruling classes phenomenon" i.e. to the "development of false thought patterns imposed by those"[35] – an image of that power able to balance all levels of human social life.

In other words, especially in our times of cultural relativism, *a conception of legitimacy* does not always reflect *a perception of legitimacy*. The ruling class, or a group which intends to take power, appeals to ideology or utopia, to symbolic and ritual strategies based largely on collective memory. On the other hand, people create their own representations of the validity of power. Thus, at least two symbolisms are developing in parallel: one of the governors and another of the people governed. When the governors are perceived as illegitimate, either because they occupy a position for which they aren't qualified, or because they deceived by abuses the expectations and trust of those who elected them to their functions, and this phenomenon touches all components of the political, social, economic and cultural system – the signs of misrecognition of legitimacy begin to appear and manifest themselves through various forms of contestation of power, until it is replaced with another, considered legitimate.

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[33] Gabriela Goudenhooft, *Legitimitatea. Ritualuri ale legalității și autoritate discursivă*, Iassy, Adenium, 2014, p. 169.

[34] *Ibidem.*

[35] Ralph Miliband, *L'Etat dans la société capitaliste. Analyse du système de pouvoir occidental*, trans. by Christos Passadéos, Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2013, p. 307.

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Note

Some excerpts from this article can be found in the following studies written in Romanian:
• "Funcţia legitimatoare a imaginarului politic", in *Revista de Ştiinţe Politice şi Relaţii Internaţio-nale*, no. 4, 2013, pp. 74-84;
• "Criză şi legitimare simbolică a puterii" in *Revista de Ştiinţe Politice şi Relaţii Internaţionale*, no. 4, 2012, pp. 92-106.