

Investigating Mythmaking In Politics: A Comparative Study Of American And Egyptian Regimes

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Abstract

This paper mainly focuses on the use of myths by political leaders as a tool of argumentation and a mechanism of influence on the mass. Myth in politics is not an entertaining story or imaginary tale about gods and creatures, it is rather seen as a narrative with significance that the speaker uses in order to describe real events in dramatic way. It is also a system of beliefs and a mean of providing answers to complicated political issues as well as other functions. American political leaders, whether on political campaigns or national events, tend to use narratives in their speeches together with other mechanisms to influence the public opinion. Taking Murray Edelman mythic themes as a starting point, and adding the Egyptian context for comparison, the current work aims at investigating what kind of political myths Donald Trump and Abdelfattah El-Sisi employ when addressing their citizens. Drawing on the works of Chiara Bottici, and through examining two political speeches for each president, and with the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as an approach to this study and MAXQDA as a software for analysis. In doing so, major similarities are found in the use of Political Myths, and some minor differences. The similarities is that both presidents hint that their countries are always under the threat of a Conspiratorial Enemy, and the constant need of their societies to a Valiant Leader. The differences lie in the use of the third mythical theme that deals with the unity is the key towards prosperity, each president has his own way of using this theme. Also, one of the major differences is the use of Golden Ages/ Perfect Future myth. The major contribution of this work to the field of analysing political speeches lies in demonstrating and proving that political myths are being adapted as an argumentation and persuasive strategy by politicians. Also, this work focuses only on two political regimes, the investigation of other political regimes might lead to different conclusions. Thus, the researcher concludes that the work on myth and its use in the political arena requires further research.

Keywords: Politics, CDA, Van Dijk, Ideological Square, Mythmaking