



POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AS AN EVOLUTIONARY SYSTEM  
(TO THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE-IDEOLOGICAL MATRICES)

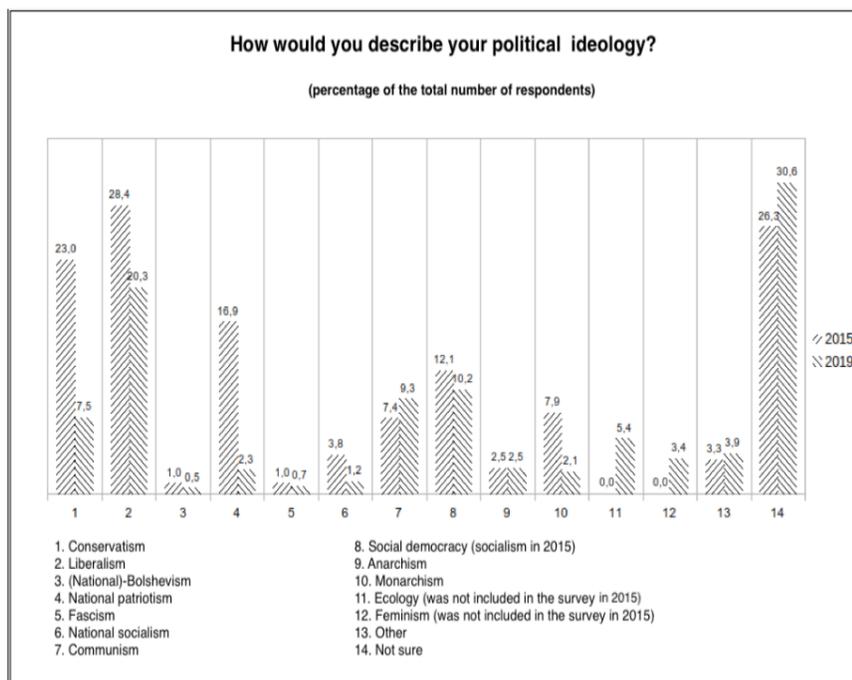
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Introduction

One of the main problems in the study of political ideologies is the polysemy of key ideological concepts, as well as the excessive variability of their reflection in public consciousness. This problem has repeatedly become the object of study (W.B. Gally, F. Jameson, J. Lacan, E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, S. Žižek, M. Freeden and others). To solve this problem, the author's concept of cognitive-ideological matrices was developed, which presupposes co-evolution of logically ordered ideological systems and heterogeneous group consciousness, as well as their mutual influence on each other. Implementing this approach, the presented concept of cognitive-ideological matrices involves the allocation of two levels in the matrix - the level of ideologemes and the level of concepts. This distinction demonstrates how conceptual ideological systems set cognitive structures for crystallization in the individual consciousness of ideological concepts, and at the same time explain the empirically observed conceptual contradictions in this consciousness. The described concept was tested in a series of sociological studies of youth consciousness conducted in 2015–2016 and 2018–2020.

Results

The results obtained in the course of the research recorded a significant shift in youth consciousness. This shift found its expression in a change in the ideological self-representations of student youth, in which in 2019 the tendencies toward a shift towards the left-liberal center of the ideological spectrum are most pronounced (Fig.). The main thing that has changed, compared to 2015, is the gradual evaporation of the nationwide “post-Crimean” enthusiasm with a parallel increase in the feeling of crisis in all areas of public life. As shown by the data obtained in 2019, this feeling is also strengthening in the student's consciousness - 34.2 % of respondents assess the economic state of Russia as “pre-crisis”, and 35.4% - as “crisis”. In accordance with the methodology for studying cognitive-ideological matrices, the first shifts should have occurred at the pre-reflective level of “vague” ideologemes, after which, if the trend persists, reflection should have occurred at the level of political concepts. It was this hypothesis that was confirmed during the research.



Slogans	Strongly agree		Tend to agree		Strongly disagree		I don't care		Not sure	
	2015	2019	2015	2019	2015	2019	2015	2019	2015	2019
<i>Personal freedom and human rights are inviolable!</i>	74,0	75,5	15,5	16,3	1,5	0,7	1,9	1,6	7,1	5,9
<i>"Our hearts demand changes!.."</i> **	-	50,7	-	25,2	-	4,0	-	6,7	-	13,4
<i>All the troubles in Russia are caused by <del>Judge-Masonic</del> conspiracy</i>	8,1	15,4	10,6	15,6	40,9	28,3	9,9	13,1	30,5	27,6
<i>Stop feeding other nations!</i>	10,9	38,5	23,3	23,0	30,2	13,8	15,0	7,7	20,6	16,9
<i>Free the Internet! *</i>	-	58,1	-	21,2	-	3,3	-	6,1	-	11,3
<i>Let's save nature for our children! *</i>	-	76,2	-	11,8	-	1,0	-	3,4	-	7,6
<i>Russia is only for Russians!</i>	8,2	11,4	25,6	11,6	45,1	50,1	10,2	12,5	10,9	14,3
<i>Down with the oligarchs! ("Eat pineapples and chew fois gras, your last day is coming, accused bourgeois!" in 2019 survey)</i>	20,5	25,6	37,6	17,8	9,1	17,6	18,0	12,0	14,9	27,0
<i>For the Slavic brotherhood! ("Slavs of the world, unite!" in 2019 survey)</i>	35,4	22,2	24,2	19,9	6,7	20,0	12,1	15,2	21,6	22,8

\*these slogans were not included in 2015 survey.

Conclusion

The concept of the cognitive-ideological matrix describes a pre-reflective environment in which protoelements of political ideologies are formed from the elements of the sedimented social experience of an individual. This is the same “zero level” in which the ideological “protoplasm” arises through the formation of an individual's predisposition to one or another, and more often to several ideologies at once.

**Research:** In solving the problem of the connection between heterogeneous consciousness and systematic ideologies, one cannot agree with the opinion of Michael Frieden about the final erosion of ideological structures. The empirical data obtained in the course of the research indicate the presence in the student's mind of several matrix structures that set the ranges of interpretations of the information received about the facts of social reality. As a result, there are several types of cognitive-ideological matrices that determine the respondents' perception of the facts of social reality.

Acknowledgements

The study was performed with the financial support of Russian Foundation for Basic Research under the scientific project No. 18-011-00906 a.