

## PR UNDER INSTITUTIONAL HETEROGENEITY

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*The article aims at revealing the issues of PR institutional development in present-day Russian society as well as the vector of behavioral attitudes in the context of institutional evolution under globalization.*

*The topicality of research is confirmed by newly appearing vectors of institutional space of post-industrial society. Continuing transformations of institutes in the aspect of globalization conditions the interest in the issue of institutional heterogeneity with high indeterminateness and deep deformation of subjects' behavioral functions. The topicality is also conditioned by clearly appearing heterogeneity of Russian economic and social space. The latter is characterized among all by the dependence of the trajectory of past development. Under such conditions the understanding of which specific institutes appear in this process and which is the institutional platform and dominants under globalization gains topicality as well.*

**Keywords:** evolution of institutes, institutional heterogeneity, deformation of subjects' behavioral functions, PR institutional development, PR-communications, regional PR

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Researches of institutional evolution show that the present-day socio-economic space is viewed as balanced and manageable condition of sustainability. Reaching it becomes the result of state technological modernization policy grounded with the scientific methods of microeconomic regulation and analysis of potential balance.

Researches of interaction of principally different institutions in the format of common systematic methodology contribute to understanding the necessity of transplantation and adaptation of knowledge. The development stage characterizing present-time Russia is economy of knowledge. Further movement from this stage may be in two directions. It may be imitation economy, self-repetition and stagnation or from material economy to one of knowledge, institutions, culture and thought [3].

In such circumstances the distance from economy of knowledge to one of institutes can be covered through reaching such a stage of economy of knowledge development, where the knowledge in store will help solve the main part of practical objectives of life-maintenance at least simple renewing life goods.

Currently neither global nor Russian economy reached such a phase. Nordstrom and Jonas Ridderstrale are right to fix the tendency that consists in consequent change of above-mentioned "economies". However the following to "economy of knowledge" is "economy of institutions" [4].

Returning to the proclaimed principle it's worth saying that standardization, variability and variety are necessary for the systems to function and optimal combination of these tendencies may be key in the future.

Consequent shifts of behavioral norms that encompass all levels and functional spheres of economy; out-of-market institutions; forming mental models, norms; industrial thinking in minds of economic agents and their institutional groups – all this characterizes Russian economic transformation institutionally.

In its turn the basic element of well-known phenomenon of pathdependency is nothing else then forming mental models and national economic mentality. Long-lastingness, inner heterogeneity and at times inef-

iciency of certain transformation stages inevitably raise the question of adequacy of fundamental behavioral conceptions.

Speaking about dynamics of institutional development it should be mentioned that being common and universal they are stable, but from time to time this stability breaks and shifts to the period of decadence of some institutions and appearance of others. However a new institution is a really rare event. In this context we should refer to the theory of transplantation of economic institutional. It was developed by V.M. Polterovich and views the fact of assimilability or unassimilability in alien economic space: “institutions appear through transplantation”. Thus the vector of economical researches is determined by changes in institutional structures themselves.

It is absolutely obvious that radical transformations in any society suggest the change of institutional space determined by the range of economic subjects' goals. Their behavior is ruled by institutions compulsory for a developed socio-economic system. Continuing transformation of Russian economic system with formed institutions leads to new institutions introduced and alternative institutions developing.

In its turn obstinate inattention to the essential institutional heterogeneity in the process of reformation may lead to the flop of the latter. Thus due to initial prevailing western pattern elements in institutional and legal space several particular peculiarities were omitted: instability of official game rules; a great role of personal component, bringing a bit of uncertainty into these rules; developing of informal norms of labor interaction. The most important in this context is that the three key system-forming social institutions: economy, politics and law were being transformed to different extents and unparallelly under recent reformation.

In this article we view institutionalization process of PR – a comparably new phenomenon for Russia. Numerosity and big diversity of objectives and functions done by PR in society engendered a great number of approaches to defining the essential characteristics of its activity.

Each of them emphasizes different characteristics but they are joined by the considerable postulate that PR is organizing bilateral mutually profitable relations between a certain organization (state, public or private) and the public.

G. Pocheptsov defines PR as a “science about managing public opinion” [6, p. 15]. Generalizing existing approaches we can define key features of PR-activity.

First and foremost PR is a science and art of organizing and fulfilling by managers in economic, social, political and cultural activity relations with the public, reaching understanding and benevolence between personality, organization and other people (groups of people) or society in general with help of distributing explanatory material, developing information exchange [7, p. 29].

If we view PR as an instrument of non-price competition aimed at forming a positive ambient around the organization and its public then it becomes clear that in this context PR is a logical part of any economic system with a competitive space.

It can be also mentioned that PR is a key element of a democratic multipartite system as it is used as an instrument of managing public opinion during elections and in between. So in 1990's, when Russia changed economically and politically, there arose a need in PR technologies as a new method of managing public opinion. Institutional PR development should be viewed historically and systematically. Such an approach allows us to reveal all the possible social sense of this phenomenon and to correctly reveal and analyze the main criteria of institutional PR status. This is the more important if we take into account that many functions and techniques of PR influence had appeared and been used for managing social processes long before the term PR was introduced and treated institutionally.

A situation when through sporadic social interactions, through new resurfacing social attitudes and local public experience there is a new type of social practice budding and identical social relations are produced and maintained (which is defined as institutionalization in sociology) requires a very thorough research.

The system of public relations and influences and the following wholesome PR institution appears only at certain stages of social development. It is a reaction to the current social need, to time challenge.

PR as a social phenomenon appears only when the importance of public opinion is growing and a necessity of new ways of communication (not only propaganda and agitation) for sustaining social stability and understanding arise. Below we will view existing periodizations of global and Russian PR.

M.A. Shishkina was in 2000 one of the first to attempt to systemize parameters of Russian PR. She considers the following essential characteristics of PR as a social institution: a definite circle of subjects who en-

ter into relations that bear a stable character; more or less formalized organization; specific social norms and predictions that regulate people's behavior in this context; socially important functions of an institution that integrate it into the social system and ensure integration of the latter [5, p. 58].

The logics of researching institutional processes require not only analysis of premises and stages of the phenomenon under study but detecting destructive factors, its developmental difficulties and contradictions as well.

Comparative analysis of contemporary works and definite factors that influent PR activity in the market situation reveals the following issues of PR institutional development in Russia.

Firstly comparatively short period of Russian PR development leads to its role, functions and social significance being understood not quite exactly so far not only by potential clients but frequently by specialists themselves. Generally the variety of approaches could be grouped into three main directions: altruistic, compromising and pragmatic.

Altruistic is a European approach to PR where this notion is perceived as organization of collaboration in society's interest. PR's goal is a positive ambient around the object. A classic example of definition in this approach is S.Black's "PR is an art and science of reaching harmony with outer environment through mutual understanding, which is based on the truth and full information [8, p.62]. The definition of Institute of Public Relations given in 1948 is an example of altruistic approach as well "PR is planned long efforts, aimed at creating and maintaining positive relations and mutual understanding between organization and public" [1, p. 20]. On the whole all definitions that refer to altruistic approach mean organizing general collaboration for society's sake.

Pragmatic approach is opposed to altruistic and belongs to American PR school. Its core is in understanding of communication as a thing that can be bought in the market. Thus one can get through collaboration more than was invested. One of definitions in this approach was given by A.N. Chumikov, author of present-day manuals in PR: "PR is a system of info-analytical and procedure-technological actions aimed at harmonizing interrelations inside a certain project and between the participants of the project and its outer environment for the project's success".

This approach is especially popular with Russian researchers, which is connected with the specificity of relations that took place in Russia when market economy began.

Compromising approach is the most popular in present-day practice. It emphasizes definite company or person's interests opposite to abstract harmony. The objective of PR in this context is convincing the public to change its opinion of a certain organization. As a result harmony comes. A classic example of this approach is E.Bernays' (one of PR founders) definition: "PR is efforts aimed at convincing the public to change its approach or actions and to harmonize organization's activity according to public's interests and vice versa [2, p. 55].

Secondly a very serious destructive factor is "black PR" technologies quite actively being used. It suggests unethical methods and ways of influencing public opinion (misinformation, false facts, reputation war etc.). It decreases the level of trust to this profession. This factor's reason is weakness of current system of ethical regulation of professional activity in Russian on the whole and practicing specialists' disrespect for current ethical codices and norms.

The third seriously destructive factor is the absence of universal criteria of assessing PR professionals' activity and their lack of expertise. This factor is conditioned by inefficient system of collaboration in the tandem "university-organization" and "separateness" of university programs from real market demands.

Fourthly it is weak development of regional PR. Russian PR processes are essentially characterized by an obvious incline towards communication integration. In other words gradually vector of PR communication development shifts towards integration of PR with advertising and other forms of marketing communications, whereas marketing PR objectives prevail over social ones. At the same time the results of analysis of markets development demonstrate undoubted priority of PR communication as a social one. Thus PR is in demand due to the necessity of forming and maintaining long basic relations of PR subjects with various public groups.

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