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THE INCORPORATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN RUSSIA

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Abstract. One of the factors of public administration system development in the “liquid reality” (Z. Bauman) is the institutionalization and incorporating of social networks into the public decision-making process that contributes to the expansion or contraction of the national public policy space. The conceptual basis of the presented research implies the network theory of policy, the theory of deliberate democracy and the concept “governance”. The empirical study was based on the methodology of double reflexivity and conducted using such tools as case study, focus-group interview and monitoring of the online resources of different political subjects. We treat a mechanism of incorporation as a complex interaction of formal and informal network actors with agents of the government with a view to integrate them into the system of public administration or provide forms of influence on it. Latent mechanisms are usually caused by the political and cultural patterns of the Russian society. Open mechanisms are associated with participation forms of political institutionalization of network communities. The authors distinguish the following open mechanisms of social networks incorporating: an integration of problem networks in the public administration system and their mobilization, interaction of new social movements and public authorities, network expert communities integration into a deliberative process. The analyses of more than 30 cases revealed biphasic activity actors of a problematic network: from routine actions – to mobilization. The incorporation of online communities in the public administration system often leads to the emergence of hybrid political institutions which we call heterarchies. A heterarchy as an organizational dissonance is a clash of different value patterns, generating new combinations of resources, creating innovative solutions that are not available in vertically organized structures of power. In Russia it is typical to incorporate heterarchies in the vertical of power, its further development as a unified structure having a hierarchical superstructure and the lower baseline of network configuration. Mechanisms for incorporation can be divided into two types: upstream and downstream. Their specific features are considered by the authors in case studies of the crowdsourcing project "New ways of Zelenograd" and the online community "Bloggers against garbage." The incorporation of social networks helps to solve at least two problems of public administration: to institutionalize and formalize innovative social practices; to expand the adaptive capacity of the powers. The incorporation facilitates the exchange of information and production of new knowledge, resolution of socially significant problems and improves the efficiency of public administration.

Key words: public administration, social networks, hybrid institutions, heterarchies

Introduction. One of the factors of public administration system development in the “liquid reality” (Z. Bauman) is the institutionalization and incorporation of social
networks into the public decision-making process that contributes to the expansion or contraction of the national public policy space [1]. Within the framework of the paradigm proposed by Manuel Castells [2], new information technologies initiate network logics of social system changes. Social institutes and practices obtain brand-new network qualities that have universal character. The public decision-making processes both in global and in all-Russian contexts are closely connected with miscellaneous mechanisms of social networks incorporation in public administration system that has a complicated organizational and communicative configuration. Public administration in the public policy space is considered as goal-directed, controllable, complex and organized joint activity of individuals and their groups that is aimed on legitimate handling social issues with leading integrative participation of state authority institutions, based on the use of society collective resources, and includes the combination of public goals and objectives, conditions and rules, solutions and actions, and also their social results and consequences.

Organic functioning of the public administration complex system is provided through communicative connections, which have certain specificity that appears in:

- state agents motives and actions modification, caused by social environment circumstances of public administration internally diversified structure that contains various platforms of administrative activity, which are linked to the level of public resources and agents and counteragents' involvement in their distribution;
- availability of multiple communication channels (open and latent) between agents and counteragents in the public administration system;
- impossibility to provide concurrence of individual and public motives in agents and counteragents' activity in public administration institutional context.

Therefore, the public administration system real condition is identified by network characteristics, determined by dynamic combinations of authorities hierarchy and agents and counteragents' horizontal structures on the basis of internal communication. The public administration network characteristics content is connected with public or latent institutionalization of mechanisms for social networks incorporation into the public decision-making process that contributes to the expansion or contraction of the national public policy space.

**Methodology.** The conceptual basis of the presented research implies the network theory of policy, the theory of deliberate democracy and the concept “governance”. The authors used comparative and neo-institutional approaches, network analysis, policy documents analyses, monitoring of Internet resources. The empirical study was based on the methodology of double reflexivity and conducted using such tools as case study, focus-group interview and monitoring of the online resources of different political subjects. Integrated basis of several independent empirical researches includes materials of 40 social networks cases (based on depth interviews, printed and electronic media documents, materials that characterize institutionalized forms of network activity, the results of information interactive collection in social online-networks, etc.); transcripts of 6 focus-group interviews with regional and local elite representatives, and also with the leaders of the Krasnodar region intersectoral partnership; online-platforms of various foreign and Russian public activity agents: state authorities, civil society organizational structures (traditional NPOs and network ones) and social networks.

In order to identify and characterize the mechanisms for social networks incorporation into the public administration system the authors used several researchers'
theoretical developments, which allow to see variety of network configurations at the stages of state policy development and implementation («governmental subsystems» [3], «support coalition» [4], «political coalition» [5], «implementational structures» [6] etc.). Regardless of the name used, the researchers point out that the network is an efficient organizational form for handling complicated, semi-structured socio-political issues on the basis of partnership, trust-based relations between agents that provide information, knowledge and other resources exchange.

**Results.** We treat a mechanism of incorporation as a complex interaction of formal and informal network actors with agents of the government with a view to integrate them into the system of public administration or provide forms of influence on it. Latent mechanisms are usually caused by the political and cultural patterns of the Russian society. Social networks incorporation latent mechanisms are usually determined by the Russian society political and cultural patterns, which reproduce socio-cultural evolution genetic codes and political development constants. In authority and political subsystem it has the form of development of political clienteles in the public administration system, political elite recruiting on the basis of closed network communities, subjective institution-building, political investments, made by business into authority, and in administrative and management subsystem – it has the form of specific game rules, established by the representatives of network communities and corruption mechanism of market interaction between business and authority.

Open mechanisms are associated with participation forms of political institutionalization of network communities. The authors distinguish the following open mechanisms of social networks incorporating: an integration of problem networks in the public administration system and their mobilization, interaction of new social movements and public authorities, network expert communities integration into a deliberative process. In authority and political subsystem the following mechanisms of social networks incorporation develop: mobilization and integration of problem networks in the public administration system, substantive interaction between new social movements and public authorities, network experts communities integration into a deliberative process. In administrative and management subsystem it is the mechanism of problem networks procedural integration into the public administration system and the complex of intersectoral social partnership mechanisms.

The incorporation of online communities in the public administration system often leads to the emergence of hybrid political institutions, which we call heterarchies [7]. A heterarchy as an organizational dissonance is a clash of different value patterns, generating new combinations of resources, creating innovative solutions that are not available in vertically organized structures of power. In Russia it is typical to incorporate heterarchies in the vertical of power, its further development as a unified structure having a hierarchical superstructure and the lower baseline of network configuration. Mechanisms for incorporation can be divided into two types: upstream and downstream. Their specific features are considered in case studies of the crowdsourcing project "New ways of Zelenograd development" and the online community "Blogger against garbage".

Under a downstream model of heterarchies formation, a state undertakes to create conditions for development and design of network structures from network civil society environment in order to generate ideas on handling public issues and to implement them in administrative and social practice. The downstream mechanism may be implemented
in this model development through open data system arrangement and crowdsourcing technology. Zelenograd prefecture experience may exemplify such a mechanism.

In the end of 2012 — beginning of 2013, with the help of crowdsourcing, Zelenograd administrative district prefecture together with Witology company launched crowdsourcing pilot project "New ways of Zelenograd development". In the course of this project four lines for development of future Zelenograd image as the city of social innovations, leading science and technological center, the city that is convenient for life and industrial tourism center. Crowdsourcing projects efficient implementation requires strong organizational support from administrative structures and availability of technological mechanisms and tools, aimed to decrease the risks of promoting populist decision with long-term negative effects. In general, in case of crowdsourcing activity correct planning positive effects from making such decisions in public sphere prevail over negative ones.

Heterarchy development model, based on upstream mechanism, is characterized by the fact, that hybrid organizational structure development vector is determined by the network civil society initiatives, addressed to public authorities that finally results in their incorporation into the public administration system. These processes actualization is connected with the factors, which determine public authorities acting in conditions of uncertainty (socio-economic and political crises, emergency situations occurrence, etc.). Heterarchies are established upon the initiative of the state that creates a condition for the structures, self-organized by the network civil society, to institutionalize into a heterarchy. In this case, the state acts as "reputational player" in new organizational space. "Blogger against garbage" heterarchy functioning may be considered as an example of process that uses upstream mechanisms.

In April, 2011 online-network community "Blogger against garbage" was created in the Russian segment of online-space, initiated by Sergey Dolya, a famous photographer, businessman, traveler and blogger, who published in Livejournal his observations on the plenty of garbage around us. A public message began with the words: "Unfortunately, not everyone in our country is accustomed not to spoil the place, where they live. Many people drop garbage just under their feet that results in...", then he rather emotionally described beaches, strewn with litter, and expressed his thoughts on "why not to clean it up!" [8]. During the first days alone this public message gained more than 500 comments from online-space users, who expressed their readiness to go cleaning with bags and gloves. According to the Runet blogs rating, in November, 2013 Sergey Dolya took the top place in this rating with subscribers quantity equal to 25424 users and credibility index equal to 497367 users.

"Blogger against garbage" main idea was to organize top-bloggers around the country to dispose garbage from the territory and thus to draw online-society groups attention to this issue. Top-bloggers went to different cities to cover the garbage disposal campaigns: besides direct translations in online-space, top-bloggers accumulated regional bloggers efforts, thereby launching the process of new participants (journalists, mass-media) involvement in the project active part — in off-line action (disposal of garbage from different areas). After multiple reports, particularly Instagram-reports, connected with the plenty of photo-materials, "Blogger against garbage" online network community got partners and sponsors — that means "reputational players" joined it, Eldorado, Coca-Cola, Beeline, Svyaznoy companies became "reputational players".
In 2013 80 territorial entities of the RF with the participants total number of more than 50 thousand took part in the project. The hashtag #bloggerprotiv in Twitter got in the Runet trends. People, who participated and who will participate in "Blogger against garbage" future campaigns, found each other in online-space. As an off-line result of the campaigns arranged, more than 1500 tons of garbage was collected. Together with off-line campaigns, "Blogger against garbage" all-Russian campaign was broadcasted online that allows not only to monitor the campaign results on a real-time basis, but also to unite the participants from various geographical places. The civil initiative network activity together with high public response attracts attention of regional and local authorities representatives in different territorial entities of the RF. All the project coordinators stated in their reports ad interviews that the regions governors and municipalities heads cooperated willingly with the project activists, proposing to join the efforts to tackle the important public issue. Municipalities heads began to post in their social networks accounts "on-the-spot" photo- and video-reports on garbage disposal. From the one side, official authorities joining to the civil initiative provided additional organizational and material resources to the citizens’ network activity; from the other side, it allows public officers to increase their symbolic capital at through image sensitivity to the relevant civil initiatives. Analyzing the results of online network community functioning within the period from 2012 till 2015, we may say that the authorities gradually incorporate "Blogger against garbage" network community, playing "a reputable player" role in a newly establishing structure, supporting and developing constructive socio-political practices.

Both these mechanisms (downstream and upstream) produce a public platform, where heterarchy structures either emerge, or develop and function under patronage of any authority. The platforms, which promote developing the model of coordinated interaction in the frameworks of single organizational environment on the basis of downstream and upstream mechanisms results integration, seem to be the most efficient. Thus, heterarchies, emerging in a new political reality of network public policy, not only become the result of political institutions hybridization, but also allow the state and civil society institutional environment to adapt to each other’s needs in the network format of interaction. This fact, in its turn, allows them to find innovative ways to meet these needs and ways to implement them into modern public practice, acting within the frameworks of partnership model of interaction on the basis of cooperation strategy.

Conclusion. The incorporation of social networks helps to solve at least two problems of public administration: to institutionalize and formalize innovative social practices; to expand the adaptive capacity of the powers. The incorporation facilitates the exchange of information and production of new knowledge, resolution of socially significant problems and improves the efficiency of public administration.

In post-industrial society the mechanisms of different state agents and counteragents activity coordination are increasingly provided by information-communicative infrastructure, on the basis of which interactive mechanisms of public policy and network administration development are designed and implemented; these mechanisms are impossible without formation of knowledge network and the state active attitude in defining universal public values.

Public mechanisms of social networks incorporation into the public administration system play a key role in the present-day Russia modernization. The social networks
resource potential is determined, first of all, by their dynamic characteristics, which lead to activating and actualizing latent relations in the public policy sphere, to filling existing connections between various actors with new content or to goal-oriented search of new connections. As R.M. Emerson points out, the networks emerge not as a self-goal, they form a political structure of opportunities that let the agents to pursue their goals, intentions, etc. [9]. The social networks integration into the public administration system contributes to development of political networks, which are open to hierarchic and non-hierarchic forms of interaction between various state structures, as well as between them and private groups of interests.

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References


