

## Traditions and information

Transition from the resource model of economic growth to the model based on producing a broad range of hi-tech products and services, that Russia is striving for, may only be possible with a flexible and reasonable combination of scientific, technological, economic and social terms and conditions.

The argument that achieving such ambitious political and economic targets requires significant financial resources, social consolidation, development of modern engineering, communications and other types of infrastructure needs no additional arguments. This has been made obvious by numerous scientific publications, spelled out in Federal and regional programmatic documents and discussed in socio-political mass media. On this question, the country has reached the full consensus.

However, when it is time to implement this thesis into practice, it turns out that each side – various branches of power, people and business (it is necessary to separate large ‘state-sponsored’, relatively independent medium and independent small businesses) – all of them see and implement it differently.

The state is expanding the list of forms and tools for indirect economic participation including those of ‘restitution’ of asset ownership. The process involves numerous amendments and addenda to previously adopted legislative and normative acts turning many of their original concepts unrecognizable.

The business – primarily, the large one and the medium one that is close to the first – is focused on defending its own preferences and exceptions in previously decreed normative acts and ‘acquisitions’ from the period of radical transformations and reforms.

The population or the public in the broadest meaning of the word feels its utter alienation from the process of shaping ‘the image of the present’ let alone ‘the image of the future’.

At the same time, all around the world as well as right next to us there are new processes that are running rampant. Among them is the torrential if not explosive development

of information technologies and the so-called knowledge economy closely connected to accelerated development of human capital. This process is almost destructive for the 'canonical' order and established rules of interaction between the above-mentioned parties.

That is why those who are partial to public governance are facing a hard problem on how to adjust the established practice of cooperation between the state, business and society to the fast changing reality without breaking but improving it.

Obviously, traditions and exchange of information are the key players in this process. As Friedrich von Hayek once said, 'the ability of the people to keep up their numbers directly depends on the amount of capital in the country, traditions accumulated by people and practices of acquiring and transmitting information'<sup>1</sup>.

This is what the current issue of the journal is about – the new technologies themselves are certainly important but they are not enough. No less important is to understand the persistence of traditions, stability of practices (such as management) and to comprehend how they can and must change throughout the process of transforming information flows in the society and the economy (both from the point of view of increased awareness and involvement of business and population in shaping them).

What is lately happening in Russia plainly illustrates the timeliness of this thesis. Alas, the nature of current changes is neither systematic, nor coherent.

Our authors (see the paper by E. A. Kapoguzov and S. A. Revyakin) while saying that public participation and co-production within the state governance in Russia employ electronic platforms, are forced to conclude that the new forms '...are in fact a more convenient technology of people's interaction with government bodies that does not alter the existing processes and procedures ... of decision making'. We are talking about misalignment of digitalization, public administration and closer involvement of citizens in resolving issues important for the society. Once again we are dealing with substitution

---

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Hayek. "The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism" / Ed. By W. W. Bartly, M.: Novosti Publishers, 1992. 303 p. [P. 212].

of administrative efficiency improvement by targets for managed bureaucratic processes.

Targeting controllability or administrative efficiency, which is the attribute of a hard vertical structure for preparing, making and implementing decisions leads to the place where ‘... leading positions of regions in various ratings of innovation development do not always coincide with high results from innovation activity (the paper by I.V. Korchagina, O.V. Sycheva-Peredero, R.L. Korchagin).

Underestimating the role of traditions and close correlation of their changes with information generation processes brings about numerous paradoxes of social and economic development of our country. It is not coincidental that V.M. Polterovich had to acknowledge: “... another enigma of Russian reforms comes up when we compare the output with the share of privatized industrial companies (and their share in the output). Fast privatization should have brought about a dramatic rise of productivity. On the contrary, the efficiency plunged because privatization of enterprises did not lead to their restructuring”<sup>2</sup>.

One of the reasons such enigmas appear while one is trying to resolve problems of developing information-communication technologies in our country is “... *erosion* of the original meaning of ‘information society’; by now one has to admit that the complex essence and regular *maturation* of this phenomenon in the socio-political discourse invariably boiled down to simplified notions (the paper by A.N. Shvetsov).

Why it happened is not a secret for anybody – this being the lack of systematic approach to informatization (narrow technocratic and closely related subjugation slant), disconnect with other sectors of economy or areas of social life, impetuous running forward to ‘gaping heights’ coupled with disregard to the real state of play.

The way out of the situation described on the pages of the current topical paper selection is only possible through the all-round comprehension of arising problems, a system-wide approach

---

<sup>2</sup> V.M. Polterovich. *Elements of the theory of reforms. M.: Economics*, 2007. 447 p. [P. 41].

to their resolution and taking into account existing 'traditional' restrictions.

Open and earnest dialogue on such issues is a fundamental condition of harmonizing tradition changing process with shaping information environment that corresponds to realistic goals of developing both the economy and the society of Russia.

Editor-in-chief of ECO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kryukov', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

KRYUKOV V.A.