

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS IN A SOCIAL SYSTEM: POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ELEMENTOS ESTRUTURAIS DE UM SISTEMA SOCIAL: INSTITUIÇÕES POLÍTICAS E EDUCACIONAIS

ELEMENTOS ESTRUCTURALES DE UN SISTEMA SOCIAL: INSTITUCIONES POLÍTICAS Y EDUCATIVAS

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the issues related to the transformation of structural elements in a social system. It demonstrates that any transformation is systemic. The study proves that the above-mentioned transformations are caused by changes in the basic principles of social institutions. Social systems are characterized by self-organization and often supplemented by external management. The idea of permanent transformations in various institutions in the nonlinear world is realized in the fact that specific institutions should correspond to the actual needs of society and its members. At the same time, the priority is to achieve a cumulative effect using social resources in such a way that the intellectual potential of both the entire group and each individual is fully manifested.

KEYWORDS: Nonlinear world. Institutional transformations. Society. Fluctation.

RESUMO: *Este artigo discute as questões relacionadas à transformação de elementos estruturais em um sistema social. Demonstra que qualquer transformação é sistêmica. O estudo comprova que as transformações acima mencionadas são causadas por mudanças nos*

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princípios básicos das instituições sociais. Os sistemas sociais são caracterizados pela auto-organização e muitas vezes complementados pela gestão externa. A ideia de transformações permanentes em várias instituições no mundo não linear se concretiza no fato de que instituições específicas devem corresponder às necessidades reais da sociedade e de seus membros. Ao mesmo tempo, a prioridade é conseguir um efeito cumulativo usando os recursos sociais de tal forma que o potencial intelectual de todo o grupo e de cada indivíduo se manifeste plenamente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Mundo não linear. Transformações institucionais. Sociedade. Flutuação.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo discute las cuestiones relacionadas con la transformación de elementos estructurales en un sistema social. Demuestra que toda transformación es sistémica. El estudio prueba que las transformaciones antes mencionadas son causadas por cambios en los principios básicos de las instituciones sociales. Los sistemas sociales se caracterizan por la autoorganización y, a menudo, se complementan con una gestión externa. La idea de transformaciones permanentes en varias instituciones en el mundo no lineal se realiza en el hecho de que instituciones específicas deberían corresponder a las necesidades reales de la sociedad y sus miembros. Al mismo tiempo, la prioridad es lograr un efecto acumulativo utilizando los recursos sociales de tal manera que se manifieste plenamente el potencial intelectual tanto de todo el grupo como de cada individuo.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Mundo no lineal. Transformaciones institucionales. Sociedad. Fluctuación.*

Introduction

The nonlinear understanding of any transformation is traditionally associated with the synergetic worldview, including several concepts that describe modern principles of constructing complex dissipative systems. According to these principles, society is regarded as an open non-equilibrium system that is far from equilibrium thermodynamics. The basic concepts of the synergetic approach are used to analyze the processes of social development, which allows asserting that transformations of society are systemic. Moreover, transformations of structural elements within the social system are permanent, which can be interpreted as an immanent property of society.

The founders of synergetics G. Nicolis and I. Prigogine drew attention to the high unpredictability of the future as the basis of human actions. Thus, they concluded that the principle of structural stability of society and its internal order could be applied to human evolution and society through a temporary deviation from the state of substantial equilibrium.



Methods

The modern application of synergetic methods to the analysis of social processes and the theory of social institutions are realized as a change in the paradigmatic foundations of studying the research subject in social sciences (PAVLOV *et al.*, 2019, 2020; TSYRENDORZHIEVA, 2010). Previously, modernization processes as the basis for the development of the entire society were interpreted with due regard to the stability of the social system and the evolutionary principles of transformation. According to this logic, any development in the form of revolutionary changes to a system was perceived as pathology or an anomaly since it was impossible to control the positive development of systemic properties (GOLOVASHINA; ZHUKOV, 2012; RAVOCHKIN *et al.*; 2020a; 2020b; 2021). As a result, the concept of social transformations was regarded as a desire to adapt modernization transformations to chaos theory. Moreover, it was assumed that the modernization of society and its institutions moves "from simple to complex", i.e., the structure of public institutions complicates evolutionarily.

The fluctuations of social development imply the desire of the social system to achieve an equilibrium, which makes society as an open system adapt to external conditions. Being a real-life phenomenon, attractors can be understood as a social institution, i.e., a system of rules and modes that determines the functioning of a social structure. Thus, fluctuations as the existence of a social being, including an institution, presupposes a permanent adaptation to the rapidly changing conditions of the world order and forms of coexistence.

From the synergetic perspective, a social institution can be viewed as an attractor since it expresses a set of norms and requirements that describe stable human coexistence. This normative way of describing the interaction between social actors allows to identify and express collectively acceptable forms and methods of interaction between members of society since it organizes various contacts between them based on mutually beneficial cooperation.

The concept of neoinstitutionalism focused on interest alignment demonstrates different ways of organizing economic and legal principles in conformity with the synergistic approach. As a result, there is a possibility of so-called "turbulent" modernization. Accordingly, traditional standards for the transformation of social institutions and the use of nonlinear modernization resources are rejected, which expresses the fluctuation principle of transforming public relations and various social institutions.

Several sources note that the above-mentioned transformations are caused by changes in the basic principles of social institutions. In traditional forms of social transformation, the



priority is given to the logic of "big causes and big effects" that entails fundamentalism in the theory of social transformations and the desire to transform the essence of a particular institution. In contrast to the traditional principles of modernization, the synergistic basis for transforming social institutions is built over the logic of small changes. The presented logic lies in the instability of a self-organizing system. A fluctuation as a deviation of macrosystem indicators from standard values (a set of inherent random fluctuations) is a property of any actor, i.e., a participant in social processes.

Results

Within the nonlinear development of the world, we consider the transition of some social institutions to others, a change in the status of specific social, political, economic and other institutions, their destruction or even rejection. Many research results emphasize the following interesting fact: the clash of tribal communities with more developed civilizations might result in their refusal to use political (power) structures, for example, the rejection of the Kazakh Khanate and the transition to tribal and spontaneous forms of coexistence. Similar processes are common to other communities: the rejection of political structures entails a return to imperfect forms of social organization with the preservation of other interactions among society members.

A.A. Shtyrbul claimed that external factors, including sudden environmental degradation, military intervention of neighboring communities or natural disasters, entail a refusal to use political institutions (in this case, Khanates) without any features of economic degradation (SHTYRBUL, 2018). Considering this example, we see that the institutions of some societies (in different countries) change locally and independently of each other. Political institutions, even as large as states, can transform or even wither away, regardless of economic institutions. This becomes possible due to the ability of the society to self-organize and preserve the principles of production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services, expressed in the non-state principles of organization.

Based on this logic, we can conclude that the evolutionary principle of explaining the development of society turns out to be ineffective in describing several transformations, emergence or degradation up to the destruction of some social institutions. Therefore, the recognition of permanent institutional transformations as the basic and ontological properties of the social system seems to be decisive and significant for analyzing the further study of social relations.



The idea of permanent institutional transformations in the nonlinear world is realized in the fact that specific institutions should correspond to the actual needs of society. More precisely, social demands, as well as the properties, capabilities and functions of social institutions in all spheres of social life, should develop alongside. Otherwise, contradictions arise between the needs of society and its structural elements, which can have extremely unfavorable consequences for the very existence of both social institutions and society as a whole.

At the political level, there is a difficulty expressed in a correspondence between the type of public relations that determine social demands for specific political institutions and the functions they perform, and actual management institutions created in society and state and endowed with certain powers corresponding to their functions.

D.S. Zhukov and S.K. Lyamin mentioned an algebraic formula to highlight the effective use of certain types of political institutions in a particular society. The scholars used such concepts as "the attractor of a system" (a set of prospects for using specific political institutions) and "the attractor of a basin" (the scope of political institutions). Thus, there are formal and informal political institutions that play the main role in society. The attractor of a system is expressed in the fact that there is mutual dependence and mutual determination between the type of public relations (traditional or modern) and the type of political institutions

It is obvious to state the correspondence of traditional public relations to traditional political institutions, and vice versa. In other words, political institutions aimed at modernization should function in a modernized system of social ties and relations. If there is an imbalance between them, the functioning of a particular social system fails and turns out to be ineffective. The effectiveness of political institutions is understood as the ability to influence a controlled subject, enforce decisions and punish for their non-execution (ZHUKOV; LYAMIN, 2011). Furthermore, political institutions turn out to be ineffective. In some cases, their functioning can be even harmful to the social system. For example, D.S. Zhukov and S.K. Lyamin cited the reforms of the Persian Shah carried out under the guidance of US specialists on the eve of the Islamic revolution. The modernized political institutions of the American society were put into operation without any adaption to the current social environment. As a result, this reform was useless to the Persian political structure.

Based on this analysis, political institutions are adjusted in a natural and non-linear way (ZHUKOV, 2012). This path enables gradual transformations of both political



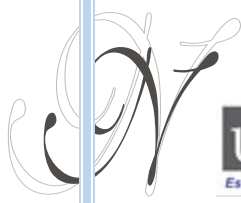
institutions and public relations, which stipulates the need for permanent transformations in society and institutions as its constituent parts.

For this reason, some scholars apply the synergistic approach to understanding contemporary forms of political institutions. As a rule, a "frontier" is understood as "a moving border of contact, mutual influence and interpenetration of social and cultural practices common to network society and previous civilizational social and cultural practices" (MIROSHNICHENKO; MOROZOVA, 2016). The social environment determines the properties of its structural elements. Consequently, modern political institutions, striving to be effective and keep up with the times, become networked, i.e., start to use information and communication resources and society management means. E-government, administration, democracy, elections, etc. represent an incomplete list of what is most consistent with the current time and allows the most effective implementation of political technologies in the context of modern society.

The criterion for the effectiveness of modern e-government is "feedback from citizens, the speed and quality of providing services to citizens through the widespread use of centralized Internet systems" (MIROSHNICHENKO; MOROZOVA, 2016). This state of affairs expresses the government's desire to implement the concept of state guidelines in the strategy of its transformation. Minor changes in the structure of technical and technological development of the social system (the logic that determines the nonlinear development of society as a complex self-organizing system) lead to transformations in the implementation of political power. As a result, technologies based on the principles of coercion form an electronic format of the political process and political interaction between parties to power relations and society as a whole. Subordinate subjects have the opportunity to use the technological aspect of modern culture for getting feedback from those in power.

In addition, scientific literature develops a concept promoting the synergetic management of society. It is argued that a manager is responsible for the correct use of the resources available for social groups and individuals. At the same time, "the level and quality of management activities depend on conditions for the functioning of labor collectives, the intensive and clearly manifested self-organization of group members" (GAISINA, 2016). The essence and principle of management technologies also change: the manager shall use the synergetic potential of their employees as efficiently as possible to let their team achieve the highest production result.

The priority is to achieve a cumulative effect using social resources in such a way that the intellectual potential of both the entire group and each individual is fully manifested.



Informal relationships are formed in a group and contribute to the accumulation of management efficiency. As a result, a natural external and internal environment is created for entire groups and individual actors. Hence, small changes in the methods and principles of management allow forming any managerial (including political) impact on subordinates or controlled communities.

Discussion

Any institution has many principles of its formation but its very existence allows it to function in forms that are slightly different from standard and normatively described (GOTNOGA, 2010). Social institutions are the result of fluctuations as an indicator of chaos at the micro level. Consequently, there is a change in the understanding of transformations related to society members and institutions: the basis for transformations is a variety of small changes which presuppose the cumulative effect with a potential resolution at the bifurcation point, i.e., the critical point where possible ways of systemic evolution of "bifurcate".

Being a set of small changes, a fluctuation lays the basis for the further trajectory of self-organizing systems. At the bifurcation point, fluctuations are the further trajectories of self-organizing systems aimed at the attractor under the synergetic approach. In modern literature, the "attractor" is defined as "the manifestation of a regularity in randomness, a certain set of conditions under which the choice of paths or evolution of different systems occurs along converging trajectories" (KULPIN, 1999). This term can also be interpreted as a natural accident in any self-organizing system. In our opinion, attractors in the social system are social institutions.

Social systems are characterized by self-organization and often supplemented by external management. This is conditioned by the fact that society members are individual persons who have consciousness and the ability to set goals, which determines the possibility of forming specific objectives and methods to achieve them. Such social actors lay the regulatory foundations of effective co-existence; therefore, they create certain conditions of social and institutional functioning. Some scientific works note that "the rules of law and morality, orders and regulations of state and its governing bodies are created and adopted in order to correct and balance the shortcomings of spontaneously self-organizing processes" (NIKOLAEVA, 2001). The self-organization of any social system can be represented not through a simple summative but a synergistic unity of controlled and uncontrolled processes. According to the synergistic approach, the rules of morality, laws and state regulations are



interpreted as a means for arranging systems, the basis ensuring the stability of the social system and commitment to attractors, i.e., such social institutions that can regulate public relations and stabilize society for a long time.

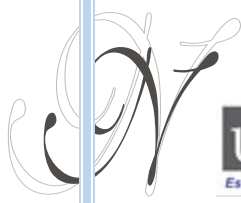
Thus, institutional transformations in the nonlinear world are implemented in the form of a social system passing through the bifurcation point, when various fluctuations have a significant impact on the process. On the one hand, the entire social system as a set of social institutions and society members, as well as a multitude of connections and relationships that determine the organization of society, is capable of self-organizing (PETROVA, 2011) but this process is significantly influenced by people (participants in social self-organization). The latter creates certain trends to achieve such attractors in the form of social institutions that can ensure the maximum stability of the social system. On the other hand, the self-organization of society is never realized in accordance with predetermined laws and regulations (social rules of various ranks and levels). As a result, there are many actions and forms of organization that are of institutional significance and form a specific state of the social system.

The global social system turns out to be self-organizing but the actions of a person as a participant in the social process can be understood as one of the fluctuations entailing the formation of changes and organization of society in accordance with the interests of specific society members.

Another consequence of this state of affairs is the fact that society members (people) perceive fluctuations as ontological properties of social institutions, i.e., such properties that determine the constancy of institutional transformations. Consequently, participants of the social process exist in a permanent state of uncertainty and strive for greater certainty through the regulation of social reality and the formation of social institutions of a different order.

It is worth mentioning that the informatization of modern society described by post-industrial theorists and practitioners includes a set of processes for the formation of immense knowledge and data that determine social processes. Accordingly, the synergistic approach to social transformations initially endows social institutions with the property of permanence. Modern society focuses not on the stability of its own being and the existence of its parts, as described in the concepts of the 19th and early 20th centuries, but on social changes expressed, among other things, as fluctuation transformations of social institutions. Z. Bauman's ideas about knowledge society and a "modular" person describe the current worldview. It is necessary to adapt to the emerging transformations. Otherwise, we lose the ontological ability to correspond to the conditions of collective existence since we become unable to adapt to rapidly changing rules and principles of building society and world order.





Within the framework of the modern information society, a policy of rapidly changing institutional positions of actors (participants of the social process) is implemented, which makes people, small and large social groups as mobile as possible, having the property of adaptability and the ability to permanent transformations expressed in an explicit form.

This principle of managing social institutions allows realizing the nonlinear development of society through increasing the efficiency of the controlled system due to the full use of performers' resources. In this regard, the basis and essence of the approach to understanding power structures and their political institutions change. Power subjects are viewed as top managers but not sources of coercion. These are the same managers as ordinary subordinates, only ensuring the efficient use of resources belonging to a larger number of social actors.

Moreover, an effective manager of any level should constantly use the resources of their subordinates, namely, change the conditions and principles of organizing the work process in such a way that the system functions as efficiently as possible. This principle of management in general and political activity in particular is a consequence of permanent institutional transformations that occur within the nonlinear development of the world.

Similar to political institutions, the Russian education system exists in conformity with the nonlinear principles of development. Scientific articles note that the nonlinear development of Russian education might consist in the implementation of close links between educational activities and the practical application of the acquired knowledge and skills. This allows to change the principles of communication between the state and education system. G.E. Zborovskii and E.A. Shuklina claimed that "the democratic principles of higher education management grant universities the freedom to choose their own development paths" (ZBOROVSKII; SHUKLINA, 2016). Thus, soft power allows institutions of higher education in the Russian Federation to move away from a unified training of specialists and independently teach future specialists in various spheres.

Higher education is a consequence of the economic, political, and cultural development of the state that has a fundamental impact on the educational process and ensures the maximum adaptation of students to the current social environment. Thus, the system of higher education applies the basic principles of synergistic influence on the educational process: small fluctuations in various areas of social reality cause changes in the processes of obtaining relevant knowledge.

Concerning the development of higher education as a social institution, G.E. Zborovskii and E.A. Shuklina emphasized the need to combine the all-Russian and regional





levels, as well as their interests for the distribution of scientific personnel throughout the country, but not only their engagement and employment in the central regions and capital.

The scope of nonlinear higher education can be expressed in the following way:

- The interaction between people and social communities, rather than higher education institutions as organizations;
- Cooperation in the field of education management rather than an authoritarian form of interaction between the university administration and the teaching staff;
- The formation of individual educational trajectories, allowing students to adapt to the needs of society;
- A higher level of using human and intellectual capital.

The use of such elements allows transforming education in accordance with the current situation in society and state. Such a construct of the educational process can be achieved through a permanent change in the very principles of higher education, which is a social institution that has a significant impact on the entire self-organizing society.

One of the most significant forms of transforming higher education institutions is the system of distance education that becomes a modern institution in the market of educational services. Distance education has many options for further development since it assumes the uncertainty of the future (BELUKHINA, 2007; KUDASHOV *et al.*, 2017; MUSAT *et al.*, 2019). For this reason, distance learning in higher education is open not only to the present but also to the future. It is admissible to use those resources of online education that are effective here and now. However, it is possible to adapt educational activities to any situation. The selection of pedagogical technologies proves the nonlinear development of education and demonstrates the permanence of changes in higher education.

Conclusion

We have revealed that institutional transformations are permanent in the modern nonlinear world, i.e., they are an ontological property of social systems and their structural elements. The permanent nature of such transformations is conditioned by multifactor challenges and opportunities interconnected in several aspects produced by the actors of international relations, which proves their transnational and global nature. Today institutions are often used to construct valid explanations of the existing problems, therefore the content of such transformations concerning the structures directly depends on the imperatives of a



non-linear society that cannot be guessed or predicted. Thus, any institution can minimize the upcoming risks only through intellectual practices that offer the outlines of future institutional practices. This helps win at least some time for the subsequent challenges and opportunities.

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