

CDSSES 2020**IV International Scientific Conference "Competitiveness and the development of socio-economic systems" dedicated to the memory of Alexander Tatarkin****ECONOMY AS JOURNALISM: ABOUT THE HERITAGE OF ALEXANDER TATARKIN**

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Abstract

In this paper, one of the later articles by Alexander Tatarkin ("Behavioral readiness of the Russian Federation for neo-industrialism," published in 2015) is analyzed. Three layouts of the text are described through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis: (1) economic research discourse as a part of scientific communication; (2) emotional discourse that represents the socially-oriented position of Tatarkin; (3) Tatarkin's ethical position, expressed as a message to the Russian government. These three levels (the Aristotelian triad "logos – pathos – ethos") intersect and combine into the journalist-like discourse. It is shown here that the boundaries between scientific communication and journalism considered as a significant element of democratic development are blurred; the analyzed text overcomes the narrowness of the research segment, which is related to the development of economic systems, and becomes a journalistic message, addressed to a broad audience. Research responsibility is considered a trend in the history of science in general and in the history of economic thought.

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1. Introduction

This article examines the multiple intersections of scientific research and civil public positions (as a form of social activism). The boundaries and forms of scientific communication are analyzed in an example of a research article by Alexander Tatarkin.

1.1. Science and Journalism

Science and journalism are frequently considered as part of the domain of “scientific communication”. In that sense, we can consider any discipline in the scientific field as a sort of “journalism” due to the wide-spread practice of research results publishing. A number of research magazines are usually excluded from strictly speaking “journalism”, because of a marked difference between the “mass” and the “specific” publics these “journalisms” are addressing to. But it is also obvious that science is increasingly involved in a dialogue with a broad public more active than previously. This dialogue has become particularly important in the “fake-news” era, when misinformation and disinformation have arisen and saturated the communication field. Iyengar and Massey (2019) show that science in a post-truth society has to be active, expanding its influence and findings through mass-media towards the broad public, breaking the boundaries between specific scientific discourse and “common language”. Iyengar and Massey quote a Pew Research Center survey about public confidence in scientists (Funk & Kennedy, 2017). In 2020, this Center reported that the quantity of Americans with a strong confidence that science is beneficial to the public has significantly increased since 2017 (Funk, 2020). Thus, the active role of scientific information leads science towards a dialogue with a broad public. It is believed that scientists must protect the society against fake-news and misinformation. The “science public relation theory” is described by Van Dyke & Lee (2020); the state of the art of the problem of science-public dialogue can be found in their article. Scientific results have now become a significant part of public discussions in social media. For example, the page of the abovementioned research article (Iyengar & Massey, 2019) contains information about the dissemination of this article in social media (Figure 1).

Online Impact

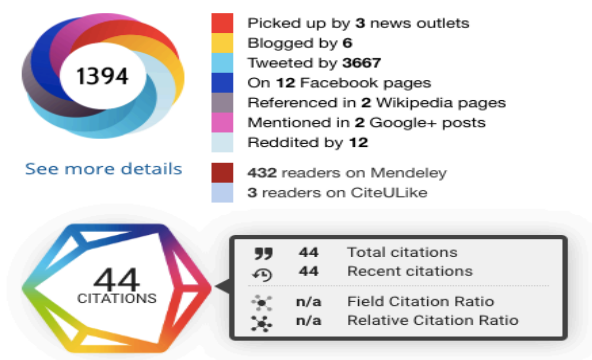


Figure 1. Information of the “online-impact” of the research article Iyengar, Massey, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/16/7656/tab-article-info>

1.2. Economics and Activism

Another aspect of the analyzed problem is relationship between economics as one of the scientific fields and activism embodied in social movements. Since Marxism became a driver of large-scale shifts in societies, economics (as a science) has played an important role in political life explaining social problems, insufficiency of the commonwealth, and relating social movements with economic reasons. The socio-economics theory is aimed to bridge a gap between a strict economic approach to a specific part of human activity and social life (Burns & DeVille, 2017). In Russia, for example, some leaders of social reforms in the 1990s were economists (for example, Yegor Gaidar had a PhD in economics), and the core of all reforms was economy. The analysis of economy is generally related with the analysis of everyday life social conditions. This is why economics as a scientific discipline has a strong social rhetoric, and the boundary between (economic) science and activism seems transparent. The “activism” domain is considered in research literature as a part of the social movements for civil rights, and is often linked with “radicalism”. As Tiago Mata (2018) has noticed, “radical economics” has always been a source of innovations in public discourses influencing “progressive activism” (p. 534). This is why fields of social activism, economic discourses and mass communication have to be interconnected.

2. Problem Statement

In his later works, within the framework of the "Socio-economic construction of the competitive immunity of the territory" project, the Russian economist Alexander Tatarin developed the question about the role of the communication aspect in the economic activity of enterprises and business. This question had been in the focus of his attention since the early 2000s (Popov & Tatarin, 2003). Developing research on the role of communication (in a broad sense of the word) in business, Tatarin took a step towards the social responsibility of economics. When analyzing his late works, one can see he openly criticized the existing official (i.e. state) strategies of economy management. As his research articles were published in scientific magazines they were not in fact addressed to the broad public. The author believes that the problem of science in general and economic research in particular reaching a mass audience can be achieved by breaching the specific research field discursive practices. In this article, it is shown how boundaries are breached in examples from Alexander Tatarin’s article.

3. Research Questions

The problem statement leads to a research question, which can be formulated as following: how can the topic of this research article on economic lead the author to shift his discourse towards a socially active rhetorics?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to find in the example of Academician Alexander Tatarin’s research article the points of intersection between social activism and economic science within the journalism field.

5. Research Methods

The method of Critical Discourse Analysis was used as a theoretical frame and research tool. According to the procedure of this method, the analyzed text should be interpreted on three levels: (1) as a combination of words; (2) as a narrative within the specific discourse (i.e. general rules of the particular analyzed narrative practice); (3) as a social practice related to the ideology (in a broad sense of the word). This procedure varies in a number of researches (see in an example: Marchese, 2019). The current state of the method is characterized by an increasing complexity and a shift towards multimodality (O'Halloran et al., 2017). An improvement of this method as a research tool is observed in (Newman, 2020).

In this article (as a case-study) the method is relevant as a tool used to discover the levels (layouts) of the author's intention and his different "masks" (economist-researcher, critic of the political system, civil activist). Thus, three layouts intersect in the article and shape the latter into a unique form of journalism discourse, disguised by research rhetorics.

6. Findings

The article "Behavioral readiness of the Russian Federation for neo-industrialism" by Alexander Tatarkin was published in 2015 in a scientific Russian magazine "Federalism" (see about this journal in: <https://federalizm.rea.ru/jour>). In this edition, created by the Russian Academy of Science, only research articles can be published. This means that the author has to use specific forms of academic writing and cannot include in his or her text any "informal" enunciations, as it would be allowed in a standard journalist discourse. However, readers of Tatarkin's article meet here a complex discourse which leads this article beyond academic writing boundaries. The Aristotelian triad "logos – pathos – ethos" can be used as an explanatory frame of the critical discourse analysis of this article.

6.1. Composition as a marker of author's position (logos)

The primary analysis of the text helps describe the general construction of the article and characterize its "logos" within the general discourse of economic science. Tatarkin explains what "neo-industrialism" means, how this phenomenon develops in different countries. His task is to show the constraints and limitations of neo-industrial development in Russia. At this layout of the article, all the markers of economic research discourse can be found.

- Special terms are used: industrialization, qualitatively new conditions, integrated technologies, nanotechnology, biotechnology, info-cognitive technologies, public private partnership, life cycle of technological orders, diversification, divergence, convergence etc.
- Charts and diagrams are included (Figure 2 as an example of their complexity).
- The composition of the article is organized as a logical chain: thesis – argumentation – conclusion. Here, there are three marked parts: neo-industrialism as a phenomenon; constraints of its development in Russia as an organizational problem; role of regions as the answer to this challenge.
- The article is addressed to policy makers rather than researchers.

This last sentence helps discover the counterpoint of the article: by addressing this article principally to the government, the author tends to make his text more understandable and convincing. This is why it cannot be analyzed within an academic writing discourse only.

In the first part of the article, Tatarkin demonstrates the “ideal” of neo-industrialism. The second part is devoted to the critic of Russian neo-industrialism. In the third part, the author leads his readers to the only solution of this problem. As one can see, we meet here a strict logical structure, but this logos is not related to the specific economic discourse. The author raises socially significant questions and becomes a public orator, overcoming the boundaries of the economic topic of his article (Tatarkin, 2015).

6.2. Emotional layout of the article (pathos)

In Tatarkin’s article, the socially active position of the author “shines” by its very proper academic style. In the first part of the article, we can see glimpses of emotional layout, for example:

“...determination, after twenty-four years lost for the country with “market” reflections and wavering, for a new industrialization of the Russian economy achieved by updating the production and the technological basis of the economy and improving the quality and efficiency of management of socio-economic and social processes” (Tatarkin, 2015, p. 30).

Here, the critical expressions (“lost years”, “swaying”) converge with the “neutral” style of the rest part of this sentence.

But starting from the “counterpoint” (when Tatarkin describes the current state of neo-industrialism in Russia), the emotional tools of a discourse that aims to convince are used more frequently:

1. Rhetorical questions emphasize the author’s attitude to the situation:

“The fate of traditional industrial sectors, which continue to form the economic basis ~~of the functioning~~ of most industrial regions, is hardly analyzed, if at all. How should one deal with them? Liquidate them? Or wait for their natural death under the influence of the loss of their competitive advantages? Or, by means of modernization, technical and technological renewal, and their “reconstruction” into the upcoming neo-industrial system?” (Tatarkin, 2015, p. 33).

2. Important words are given in italics (in the example below they are highlighted in bold font):

*“The successful resolution of these contradictions is seen in the **implementation** of interactive social, political, organizational and management **changes**” (Tatarkin, 2015, p. 34).* Italics in the article are used as “exclamation marks”, or – comparing with social media practices of communication – as a “capitalization” of the words. Tatarkin never uses italics just for logical reasons, they are essentially emotional markers.

At the end of the article, where he changes his discourse completely, the author uses openly emotional speech: (from a “neutral” academic writing to a “passionate” civil activist speech):

“The fundamental and socially significant decision which will enable to implement this priority should be the termination of a meaningless, unprepared and socially uncoordinated (and therefore without positive results for social development) government that can only propose «Games of Reforms» of the educational system (secondary and higher) with a nearly complete elimination of labor-professional level education. As a result of the reforms, the healthcare system was finally divided into two far from equal parts: one accessible to all, but with a minimal and low quality of services provided to the population, and an elite one with a full list of paid medical services, and therefore not accessible to the majority of the Russian population. In the process of market reforms, most of the sectoral and design institutes have been re-profiled, and research work in the RAS system is constantly limited on the most ridiculous reasons that do not stand up to serious criticism. There are two real reasons: the desire to reduce the burden on the federal budget by limiting the financing of budgetary spheres; attempts to use the saved funds to compensate for the growing «failures» of the decreasing level of government management” (Tatarkin, 2015, p. 42); “The creation of Skolkovo, Rusnano, Kurchatov Center, which are more specialized in «cutting and dividing» budget funds than in real fundamental and applied developments, cannot solve the above problems” (Ibid, 43) etc.

6.3. To be heard by authorities (ethos)

For Alexander Tatarkin, the real addressees of his article are the Russian government and the President of Russia (the latter is mentioned several times in the article as a person obliged to act in the current situation). Here, we can see an appeal to moral values (such as the commonwealth, the prosperity of the country). This position is explained by human-centered arguments: *“The supreme goal and the main criterion of a quality economic growth is increasingly becoming the human being, as the main productive force of any society and the main consumer of the results of production activities. And in this we see the fundamental difference between the new industrialization and all previous stages of technological development”* (Tatarkin, 2015, p. 38). From this position, the “behavior” of government is compared in this article to “childish egoistic games”. At the end of his article, Tatarkin’s writing becomes increasingly more socially active, emotional and discursively open. This is the reason why the title of his article becomes clearer after reading the text: “behavioral readiness of the Russian Federation” indicates the author’s attitude to the government, which cannot provide relevant solutions to the general challenges of the current situation due to their “infantilism” and “weaknesses”.

The ethical “umbrella” of this article can be considered in terms of “responsible research” (Ahrweiler et al., 2019). Rhodes and co-authors used the expression “academic activism”, considering it as a form of “politicizing” of scholars by “disrupting political consensus”, what they defined as democratization of academic discourse “in the name of equality” (Rhodes et al., 2018).

7. Conclusion

The “classical” definition of journalism includes “objectivity”, “fairness”, “trustworthiness”, “autonomy”, “technological advancing”, “social responsibility” and “ethical sensibility” (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 167). All the aforementioned traits of journalism are aimed to support their principle

function: to raise, disseminate, develop ideals of democracy. In discussions within Media Communication Studies, the question about the place of scientific communication in the journalism field was usually answered negatively. Generally speaking, only scientific popularization in mass media was considered as a journalism. Scientific discourse originates from a narrow segment of researchers, and broad publics are excluded from this dialogue as they cannot understand the specific lexicon, formulas etc. (see: Jamieson et al., 2017). However, the scientific discourse is multileveled, and can be organized as a classical journalist message. In the specific case of Alexander Tatarin's scientific heritage, within his research articles, we discover layouts of pure science, civil activism, and journalism art.

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