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Towards the Question of PR's Social Role and Ethics¹

Abstract

The article reviews pragmatic, conservative, radical, idealistic, neutral, critical, and vulgar-managerial worldview approaches to the interpretation of public relations' social role in a society wide-familiar within the theory and practice of Western countries. Sharing the American scholar James Grunig's and his colleagues' point of view on the normative theory of ethical PR, the author shows that only in case of the practical application of symmetrical (ideal) model of communication between organizations and publics, the social institute of public relations may overcome an utilitarian approach to ethics and become more effective and socially responsible.

The author comes to the conclusion that application of such a symmetrical model of public relations in Ukraine will promote the democratic development and creation of a civil society in this country.

Today, a noticeable role — not only in a separate organization's life, but in the development of civil society as a whole — belongs to the social institution of public relations. Therefore it is not accidental that many scholars — particularly in Western countries — devote more of their theories to the general worldview perspectives of the social role of public relations.

¹ Translated from Ukrainian text "Do pytannia pro sotsialnu rol ta etyku pablik rileishnz", *Sotsiologia: teoriia, metody, marketynh*, 2000, N° 1, pp. 62–75.

Certainly most scholars and PR consultants have their personal understandings about the social role of public relations, even though they may not pay special attention to these questions as researchers or articulate them as practitioners. Speaking generally, though, we are witnessing a rather complicated situation, Ukraine — including. Some of the existing presuppositions about PR's social role may enhance the perfection of the recently appeared public relations profession in Ukraine, and others — on the contrary — may discredit this social institution and its importance for civil society building in post communist countries. In most cases it depends on which of the two general types of PR communication models — symmetrical or asymmetrical — is predominantly practiced by different public relations departments while carrying out their duties in real life.

To understand the PR situation in Ukraine the experience of Western countries and their scholars in understanding the social role and ethics of public relations should be applied and reviewed.

Examining the practice of public relations as a management of communication and information flows between an organization and its publics, James E. Grunig — a well known American researcher and theorist — defines the following four historical models of public relations which embrace asymmetrical and symmetrical types of communications:

1. *Press agency or publicity.* This is the model where information moves one-way from the organization to its publics. It is the oldest form of public relations in which the aim was to publicize the organization, its products, and services in any possible way. Public relations people operating under this model are constantly looking for opportunities to get their organization's name favorably mentioned in the media. Communication is viewed as telling — not listening — and little if any research is undertaken. American press agent P.T. Barnum was the leading historical figure during this model's heyday from 1850 to 1900. The typical example of the application of that model today is advertising, sports, theater, and product promotion. These activities involve asymmetrical — only one-way communication — dedicated to help the organization to control the publics that affect it. It is clear that in this case the complete truth is not always told.

2. *Public information.* This model differs from the previous one because the intent is to disseminate information to the public as truthfully and accurately as possible. However, communication here is still essen-

tially one-way. Research — if any — in this case is likely confined to a readability tests or readership studies. Ivy Lee, the father of modern American public relations, was the leading historical figure during this model's early development period from 1900s to the 1920s. Today, this model is practiced in government and educational organizations, non-profit organizations, trade and citizen associations, and even in some corporations. Practitioners operating under this model serve as “journalists in residence”. They try to respond to queries from various publics and become proactive when they believe their publics need to know something important.

3. *Two-way asymmetric model.* This could be best described as scientific persuasion. The two-way asymmetric model employs social-science methods to increase the persuasiveness of its messages. Public relations practitioners use polls, interviews, and other sociological tools to measure public attitudes so the organization can design public relations programs that persuade the publics to agree with the organization's point-of-view and to gain their support. It means that — through the feedback built into the process — the organization is much more interested in having the publics adjust to the organization rather than the reverse. A legendary American scholar and PR practitioner Edward Bernays was the leading historical figure during the model's period beginning in the 1920s. This model of public relations is applied today to most competitive goods-producing businesses where the public relations programs are geared to short-term attitude change.

4. *Two-way symmetric model.* This model represents a public relations orientation in which organizations and their publics are adjusted to each other. It focuses on two-way communication rather than one-way persuasion. Thus, the purpose is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and the publics this organization affects. Instead of thinking of the organization as the source of communication and the publics as the receiver, both are conceived as groups engaged in a transaction. The above mentioned Edward Bernays, many American educators, and Western professional leaders were the main historical figures who followed this model since the 1960s and 1970s. Today the two-way model is used often in regulated businesses like public utilities that strive to build long-term relationships with their clients. Practitioners operating under this model are as likely to suggest internal changes as to recommend repairing something in the environment [1].

In 1990 a group of American public relations scholars under the leadership of James E. Grunig completed a prolonged study of excellent public relations practices, supported by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Not surprisingly, the two-way symmetric model emerged as the distinguishing feature of excellent PR programs. Thus, J.Grunig and his colleagues consider the two-way model both a normative one expressing how public relations work should be conducted and a positive one explaining things as they are implemented today [2].

Therefore, depending upon the application of the particular model of communications, the social institute of public relations may perform either a destructive or a constructive social role in the functioning and development of society.

Now, we will try to review some of the worldviews on the social role that — in our opinion — are less constructive from the point of view of enhancing the social responsibility of public relations and its excellence perspective.

The Pragmatic Approach to the Social Role

This worldview approach to the PR social role is manifested in statements about the contribution of public relations to the bottom line of social system development and primarily in those cases where public relations are viewed as a material results-oriented practice. Here it is stated that public relations is a useful practice which creates “added value” and that could be used by professionals to meet the objectives of a client organization in a way that benefits the client. This approach underlies the commercial practice of public relations and typically allies it with marketing objectives. In so doing, such an approach also underlies the arguments against the development of codes of conduct or ethical standards in the public relations practice because according to a PR practitioner’s point of view, these may set unacceptable limits on what can be done to achieve the client’s material objectives.

Such an approach to the social role — when followed to its extreme — may lead to manipulative practices such as the so called “Black PR” condemned by publics and create a bad reputation for the institution of public relations. Public relations firms practice pragmatic public relations (strictly speaking, it allows the client to dictate the public relations

practice) in those cases when they provide any service to a client in order to make money for the firm.

Advocates of the pragmatic worldview see society as composed of competing groups, target audiences, and markets from whom commercial advantage is to be won. They consider society as a marketplace for ideas, services, and products. Publics are viewed as potential customers and from this it follows that opposition (or those who hinder the organization to turn the public into its profitable clients) is to be neutralized in the pursuit of commercial objectives.

Of course under conditions of fierce competition the pragmatic approach to public relations is a common phenomenon. However, because of its concern for doing only what the client wants, public relations cannot be excellent from the ethical point of view and hence they seldom make the organization more effective and socially responsible in a long-term perspective. Generally, the pragmatic approach to public relations represents the asymmetrical model of communication between the organization and its publics, because the organization takes care of its own interests and perceives the public as object of manipulation.

The Conservative Approach

Proceeding from the general assumption of the social role of any social institution, advocates of the conservative approach consider public relations to be a tool — or, as R. Tedlow described it, — “a defensive political device” [3], which defends and maintains the status quo in a society. J. Pimlott went even further suggesting that public relations “justifies and defends the privileges of the economically powerful” and that “public relations practitioners, like politicians and teachers, are essentially articulate apologists for a social system based on what are, in some cases, insupportable inequalities” [4]. L. Sussman described public relations as based on a “defensive ideology” [5]. Modern reflections of this view may be found in the writings of Philip Lesly — a well known American scholar — in the book “Overcoming Opposition”, which explains how public relations can overcome threats to the status quo [6].

In practice, a conservative approach to understanding of the PR social role leads practitioners to adopt a defensive or protective outlook on their client's interests—that is, an asymmetrical model of public relations.

Practitioners with this social view also see society in conservative terms. They believe in defending the status quo and an idealized capital-

ist system from attack. Writers on public relations working from this presupposition talk of public relations “arsenals”, “armories”, or PR weapons, that can be used to overcome opposition, target audiences, or defeat “intellectual terrorists” [7]. As we see, the lexicon is rather rigid and militant.

The next worldview, which comes from the opposite side of the political spectrum, is equally asymmetrical.

The Radical Approach

This approach is externally opposite to the conservative worldview approach to the assessment of the social role of public relations. Its advocates presuppose that public relations contribute to changes within organizations and in the society at large. Such a possibility is practically achieved due to providing an outside perspective to management about the organization and its internal functioning. If we take the wider society, then public relations contributes to social change by providing information for use in public debate by establishing links between groups in society and by bringing resources together that can be brought to bear on the solution of social problems.

This worldview approach sees society as a system in which knowledge and information provide power and influence that can be used to bring about change and development. Its representatives — such as G. Goldhaber, H. Dennis, G. Richetto, and O. Wiio — argued that power and influence within organizations now have passed to public relations practitioners who can provide information about the environment to key decision makers [8]. In this connection, G. Hofstede argues that PR practitioners now should act as agents of change within organizations, to help top management to adjust to the dynamic of public values and changing expectations [9].

However despite their polarity, both the conservative and radical approaches to the interpretation of PR’s social role assume that organizational communication can have a powerful effects on society (in the first case — to maintain its’ status quo, and in the second — to bring about changes). What is most important though — and this unites both approaches — is they see public relations as a tool to be used in a war among opposing social groups. Thus, in both cases the same asymmetrical models of public relations are propagated.

Now, we will try to review some other worldview approaches that are closer to the symmetrical and thus, more progressive public relations models.

The Idealistic Approach

Such an approach to public relations sooner could be called “ideal”. Idealistic presuppositions about public relations are reflected in codes of conduct, definitions of the practice, conference speeches, and academic writings about the public relations practice. They can also be found in James E. Grunig’s and his colleagues’ books. The named approach is widely represented in popular textbooks on public relations — many times reedited in USA and other Western countries. The idealistic world view presupposes that public relations serves the public interest, develops mutual understanding between organizations and their publics, contributes to informed debate about issues in society, and facilitates a dialogue between organizations and their publics.

Representatives of this worldview see society as emerging from compromise—from the peaceful resolution of conflict between groups in society. They assume a pluralist and progressive society in which a diversity of views and their reconciliation lead to social progress.

James E. Grunig and Joy White — the most prominent advocates of idealistic (excellent) public relations — emphasized, “the idealistic social view assumes that a norm of reciprocity governs society and that norm makes it possible for public relations to play the role envisioned in the symmetrical worldview, which is closely aligned with this worldview. Excellent public relations practice, therefore, generally will be symmetrical and idealistic” [10].

The Neutral Approach

Adherents to this academic approach adopt the view of logical positivism. A sphere of public relations for them is a neutral object of study. They focus on such questions as the motivations of organization when they initiate public relations activities, the goals and objectives toward which public relations activities are directed, and the effects of public relations. This approach is typical for positivistic sociologists who view society as a “positive” object of study and raise — without any metaphysical explanations and biases — the question about the methodology and methods of public relations as a social institution efficiency verification.

However the pretension to be unbiased and “neutral” in analyses of social phenomena and processes is very vulnerable. Of course, observations and interpretations are the essence of all scholarship, but philosophers of science now generally reject the idea that observation and interpretation can be neutral. Worldview and values affect the observation as well as interpretation, and both lead to criticisms of the behaviors observed and recommendations for more effective behaviors.

The Critical Approach

This worldview approach is represented by the wide range of critical scholars (from radical Marxists to empiricists) who draw implications from their data for change in public relations practice. Critical scholars view organizations and society as constructed systems that can be deconstructed and reconstructed. These scholars have done research to document the poor ethics, negative social consequences, or ineffectiveness of forms of public relations that differ from the normative theories of civilized public relations.

Some representatives of the critical approach evaluate public relations from a political perspective. For example, M.Olasky, a conservative theorist, maintains that corporations have used public relations to consort with government — thus restricting competition [11]. O.Gandy, a Marxist, in his turn argues that public relations help to preserve the dominant power structure in society [12]. Other critical scholars such as L.Rakow have suggested that the two-way symmetrical model of public relations cannot work without radical transformation of existing societal culture and political structure [13].

The social institute of public relations is criticized by rhetorical theorists on other grounds. For example, M.Smilowitz and R.Pearson [14], as well as G.Cheney and G.Dionisopoulos [15] have examined public relations against the yardstick, provided by rhetorical theories such as J.Habermas’s “ideal communication situation” [16] or Burke’s theory of “identification” in persuasion — the cocreation by the persuader and persuadee of a state of affairs [17]. To criticize public relations, a large and growing community of scholars have begun to use the feminist theory. Finally, quantitative researchers have used the theories they have developed from observing how organizations practice public relations to criticize that practice and to advocate a more effective one.

Among the above reviewed worldview approaches to the assessment of PR social role, modern scholars give the advantage to the idealistic (“ideal”) worldview. Specifically, adherents to the popular (in US and other Western countries today) scientific school of “Excellent public relations”, headed by James Grunig, view this approach as the most insightful and ever growing. Contribution to this process is made not only by adherents and propagandists of excellence in public relations, but also by those scholars and practitioners who from humanistic positions criticize wide-spread unethical public relations practices. However, many public relations pragmatic practitioners try to pay no attention to this worldview, as well as to the criticism of their practice on the part of “Excellent PR” adherents. However the fact is practices built upon negation of public interests, and violations of norms of professional PR ethics and social moral standards contradict the fundamental values of democracy and civil society building.

The Vulgar-Managerial Approach to Public Relations

It should be noted that in many professional publications on public relations we can find vulgarization of the approach to PR, namely the PR is a technique but not a profession. For example, this opinion was stated in one of the most widely read newsletters on public relations and communication by Ragan in his report on March 20, 1989, “Public relations is a craft, a technique, a discipline; but it’s not a profession. ...Apart from academe, who ever worries about PR’s not having a substantial body of knowledge?” [17].

However what is more surprising, is such a point of view can be found in popular books on public relations written by well known professionals such as R. Wood in “Confessions of a PR Man” [18]. Being a former executive of Carl Byoir and Associates, he describes the day-to-day work of public relations only in terms of technique. The same approach also can be found even in the more sophisticated book by Hill and Knowlton’s former CEO — Robert Dilenschneider called “Power and Influence” [19], which Edward L. Bernays described in a book review as more about tactics than strategy [20].

The vulgar-managerial approach to public relations as a technique to influence public opinion is associated closely with the press agency and public information models of public relations wide-spread in early period of PR from the end of 19th century to the 1920s. It stands close to the “narrow” spread notion of today that public relations is a marketing

function. P.Kotler and A.Andreasen, for example, argued that marketing is strategic but public relations is not [21].

In this particular case we deal with a deep delusion that PR is a purely applied discipline and only a set of techniques unattractive for a theory of strategic management.

A Normative Theory of Ethical Public Relations

Conceptual worldviews always suffer with subjectivism. More than that, most people are even not aware of the power that worldviews have over their behavior. Yet people have a possibility to become aware of their worldviews — and in case of necessity to choose an alternative one. In the post-communist society it turned to be a mass phenomenon.

However as far as it's impossible to build a new democratic society without overcoming the former totalitarian communist worldview, it's inconceivable that the transformation to new relations between the government and the people, between pro-market organizations, political parties, and publics can be achieved without setting a system of symmetrical communication.

Public relations cannot be constructive and effective if organizations have a culture that is authoritarian, manipulative, and controlling of others — asymmetrical in its worldview of relationships with the social environment. Public relations also cannot be effective (more than that — excellent) if in the organization, the top managers adhere to asymmetrical model of public relations (in their neutral or advocacy function), and conceive communication as solely technical in nature. On the contrary, effective and excellent public relations may be achieved if by chance it is based on the worldview that public relations is symmetrical and viewed as an integral part of strategic management. In other words, we need the transition to new worldview where the organization and publics are viewed as partners.

Such worldview should meet a number of universally recognized criteria:

- first, it should have strict internal logic and coherence;
- second, it should be effective in allowing people and organizations to solve problems originating in their environments;
- third, it should have intrinsic imperatives of ethical ability to promote social harmony in society.

Now, taking into account the objective of our article, we will look at the last of the above criterion and see how issues of social harmony, that includes high standards of ethics, are resolved by some of the earlier reviewed competing worldview approaches to the social role of public relations.

First we discuss in detail the “idealistic approach” to the ethical public relations developed by Grunig.

It should be noted that some PR practitioners and scholars perceive the “idealistic approach” (as well as the terms “ideal”, “model” or “exemplary”) as impractical, abstract, utopian, and unrealistic. Yet the notions “ideal” or “exemplary” capture the most essential and unique parts of what is put into the value of the idealistic approach or worldview. Such an approach to understanding of the social role of public relations presupposes a normative standard for true ethical public relations, in other words the standard of how it should be practiced. The orientation to high principles of ethics of symmetrical public relations makes this approach unique and more ethical than other competing worldviews.

What makes the idealistic approach practical? Maybe those who oppose this approach are right calling it “impractical”, “abstract”, and “unrealistic”?

The question is quite to the point. To find an answer we recall that for over a century, philosophers debated the merits of two types of ethical theories: *utilitarian* and *deontological* theories. As it is known, ethical utilitarian theories (I. Bentham, G. Mill and others) emphasize the practical aspects of behavior and its utility for the biggest number of people. Deontological ethical theories — in their turn — emphasize formal, universally true principles of what is good or evil.

If we speak about the utilitarian approach to ethics, we must emphasize that this approach often runs into trouble because of its relativity in definition of action consequences. The main point is that behaviors often may have both positive and negative consequences and as T. Tuleja put it, “...in calculating the net sum of good and bad in a potential action, I am not likely to be dispassionate and impartial but to weight my own happiness more heavily than that of others” [22]. The problem of relativity in evaluation of action consequences becomes extremely difficult in another situation — when power is not equal. In that case the consequences desired by the powerful get greater weight than consequences of the less powerful [23].

In terms of relativity the category “consequences on others” is important for public relations. J.Grunig and Hunt, for example, say that an organization does not have a public relations problem unless it has undesirable consequences on publics or they have negative consequences on it. However if the organization has great power it probably may ignore the consequences of its behavior on publics, but only if its behavior does not violate the moral imperative of reciprocity. This means that the norm of reciprocity forms the basis of the symmetrical approach to public relations, and it makes such an approach inherently ethical [24].

J.Grunig and his colleagues emphasize that asymmetrical public relations can also be ethical if its practitioners can prove that the consequences of their behavior do not harm people. However, PR practitioners frequently disagree about what actions are ethical when they take an asymmetrical approach to public relations. For example, is it ethical to advertise cigarettes that are harmful to health? In real life, many who practice asymmetrical public relations avoid the question about ethics of such actions, and resort to rhetoric about the neutral social role of those who take a conservative or radical position on the issue — for instance cigarette advertising. In such situations most of PR men — if we use W.Booth’s words — “...show themselves to be, in effect, available to the highest bidder: they fail to provide, from within themselves, any hint about limits to how and when their (unethical) techniques are to be used” [25].

In other words, speaking about ethics within relativism, public relations should be based on a worldview that incorporates ethics into the process of public relations rather than in debates on ethics of its outcomes. In the case of cigarette advertising, such an approach could for example be taken as a starting point for a dialogue among tobacco companies, smokers, and antismoking groups. The outcome then could be ethical if all parties will participate in the public debate and decision making as well as in the mutual definition of those threatening consequences for health that are to be avoided.

This is in contrast to relativistic, deontological ethical theories, as it was mentioned earlier, that pay special attention to the strict observance of mandatory and formally universal rules of interaction. An attempt to define these rules in a form of a “shorthand description of the process of communication” was made by K.Burke in his concept of “identification”. Resting upon this concept, American scholars G.Cheney and P.Tompkins proposed their theory of “An ethic of identification” of some public

relations rules. They argued that the ethic of identification “must account for both explicit and implicit forms of linking one’s interests with those of others” [26]. Then, Cheney and Tompkins singled out four deontological rules of interaction that constitute the ethics of symmetrical communication:

Guardedness. Communicators, or organizations, should not capitulate “willy nilly” to the persuasive demands of others.

Accessibility. Communicators should be open to the possibility of being persuaded for their own benefit.

Nonviolence. We should attempt to persuade rather than to coerce others. In doing so, however, we should not “arouse and solidify hostile feelings nor should we present our view of the world as the single, correct one”.

Empathy. We should listen to others as much for our sake as for theirs. We should be “genuinely concerned with the arguments, opinions, values and philosophies of others” [27].

A similar but more extensive theory of public relations ethics is developed by R. Pearson [28]. His theoretical propositions are based in large part on the theories of the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas. It is known that Habermas’s theory of ethics rests on his concept of “an ideal communication situation” — a situation characterized by dialogue in which participants agree upon a system of rules to facilitate that dialogue [29]. These rules constitute the formal, deontological aspects of ethics.

According to Pearson, the following rules apply to each of four communication acts:

- *Communicatives* are communication acts that open lines of communication. As such, they should be *intelligible* to the person to whom they are directed. The communicator should “clarify, offer synonyms, make whatever repetitions are necessary so that a hearer understands, and . . . select channels of communication that increase the likelihood of understanding” [28, p. 235].
- *Constatives* “assert, report, explain, predict, deny, object, or estimate”. They “make an implicit claim to truth”, and the communicator should support that claim to truth by *providing grounds or reasons* [28, p. 236].
- *Representatives* are “expressive speech acts that reveal how a speaker feels”. In making such statements, a communicator

should *be sincere and show trust-worthiness* by behavior “that matches his or her expressed intention” [28, p. 237].

- *Regulatives* “include orders, commands, requests, admonitions, promises, agreements, and refusals”. In making them, the communicator claims that they are *based on valid norms* or on his or her authority and responsibility. The communicator, therefore, must justify these claims by explaining the norms that give the speaker the “conviction” that he or she is right. If the hearer disagrees, the claim should be debated [28, p. 237].

Then Pearson explains that people (organizations and publics) that follow these rules may not always agree on practical decisions when they have different values or different concepts of what is good. That is, they often may not agree on the utilitarian or practical aspect of ethics. To reach an agreement both sides must use or accept “mixed motives” — that is, the conviction that each side is right and the conviction that others should be respected. What is needed here is an approach to ethics that combines “moral conviction and tolerance” so that when people disagree about what is moral they debate and attempt to persuade one another [28, p. 315].

In doing so however, they should follow rules that leave them open to persuasion at the same time that they try to persuade others. What is right or wrong, true or false can be determined only through dialogue and agreement and not through the evidence or “raw organizational data provided by one party or one organization”. Pearson said, for example, that the statement that an organization has “advanced minorities into management ranks” can be “true” only when the organization and a representative of a minority public agree that it is true [28, p. 239].

Pearson cites political theorist Bruce Ackerman, who advanced similar principles of openness and dialogue for resolving disputes over right and wrong and truth. Ackerman said that a power holder (such as an organization or management) can not suppress the claims of someone else to power (such as a public or employees) without giving reasons for doing so. He adds that the reasons must be always consistent. For example, a reason could not a good one if the holder of power asserts that his or her “conception of the good” is better than that of someone else or that he or she is “intrinsicly superior to one or more of his fellow citizens” [30, p. 11]. After these remarks Pearson makes the following conclusion: “The upshot of this final rule is that an illegitimate claimant to power over scarce resources will be reduced to silence, because he or she will

not be able to provide reasons, only unsupportable claims of superior moral insight” [31, p. 72].

Before developing the ability to take others into account by adopting formal rules such as the Golden Rule or, before accepting the norm of reciprocity, people must advance through several stages of moral development. Pearson share Habermas's opinion that moral development has one more stage—that of interactive competence or the ability to engage in dialogue. At that stage, people base morality on responsibility rather than on rights and develop a greater sense of interdependence and relationship.

Pearson comes to a conclusion that the more person is morally developed (and also an organization) the more he uses the concepts of reciprocity and symmetry to decide what is moral [32, p. 244]. It entirely corresponds to the concept of symmetrical public relations developed by “the idealistic approach” to the PR social role and ethics.

Pearson then develops the following basic premise and moral imperatives of an ethical theory for public relations:

Basic premise: Ethics in public relations is not fundamentally a question of whether it is right or wrong to tell the truth, steal clients from one another, accept free lunches or bribes or provide information for insider trading etc. Rather, ethical public relations practice is more fundamentally a question of implementing and maintaining inter-organizational communication systems which question, discuss and validate these and other substantive ethical claims.

Basic moral imperatives:

- 1) It is a moral imperative to establish and maintain communication relationships with all publics affected by organizational action.
- 2) It is a moral imperative to improve the quality of these communication relationships, that is, to make them increasingly dialogical. More precisely and more concretely this means working toward rule identification, rule clarification and rule change such that measures of organization/public understanding of and agreement on communication rules become increasingly positive [32, p. 377].

Thus, all presented arguments supporting the necessity and practical expediency of the symmetrical approach to PR practices prove its ethical superiority over the dominant asymmetrical worldview that still per-

vades public relations. The symmetrical approach should step by step turn to become normative and replace the practice to utilize PR tools as means of public consciousness and behavior manipulation. An analysis of advanced practices convinces us that the symmetrical models of public relations work well in real communication situations as well as in ideal situations. The “idealistic approach” is a working, realistic worldview that inevitably will prove its advantages for transformation of Ukraine into true democratic and civic society. At the same time, it's obvious that development of the symmetrical — the normative from the ethical public relations point of view model — is the precondition for Ukraine to join the world community of free and prosperous nations.

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