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SYMBOLIC PLACE'S CAPITAL AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

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Abstract

The article deals with the problem of socio-cultural conditions for the formation of regional innovation systems. The authors, guided by the culturological approach and using interdisciplinary methodology, identify ways of interaction of symbolic and economic factors in the innovative development of territories. One of the competitive advantages of the Russian regions in the current economic situation is the symbolic capital of the place as the totality of those values that provide the territory with recognition, fame, prestige, and trust in the place from various social groups. The main thesis of the work is the authors' assertion that the symbolic capital of the place can be considered by regional elites as one tool for innovative development of regions. This thesis becomes relevant due scientists' approval that not only the scientific and technical potential of the region, but also the specificity of regional resources is of great importance for the innovations development. Symbolic capital is a sociocultural catalyst for innovation processes, the means of enhancing the material forms of capital. The instrumental potential of symbolic capital lies in its ability to influence the investment attractiveness of the region and the positive image of the territory, to determine the symbolic production of collective identities, and also to be the basis for the developing "economics of impression".

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1. Introduction

The tendencies of the modern era are formed under the influence not only of the processes of globalization or informatization, but also of economism, which is reflected in various aspects of social life – from everyday human practices to territorial development strategies. Economism leads, according to the famous sociologist Shtompka (1996) to the dominance of economic activity, economic goals and economic criteria over the entire social life. In addition, economism is expressed in the prevalence of economic categories (“resources”, “capital”, “efficiency”, “competitive advantage”), which now measure and evaluate the diverse processes and phenomena of reality.

Especially popular nowadays is the category “capital”, which is confirmed by the appearance in scientific research of various types of capital – Intellectual, corporate, cultural and other. Meanwhile, within the framework of a scientific discourse aimed at understanding the problems of innovative development of regions, the theory of symbolic capital, capable of revealing the regularities of increasing or decreasing the significance, the values of regional resources, acquires particular urgency.

Today, speaking about capital in the broadest sense of the word, it is understood as the totality of various kinds of resources that are used to generate income or profit. However, according to modern economists, one of the essential features of modern capital, functioning in the informational, postindustrial society, is the expansion of its content, including such intangible types of capital as social, human, venture, which now play a decisive role in the growth of value and competitiveness (Danilin, Danilina, & Gorelov, 2010).

Indeed, today, in the conditions of informatization and digitalization of society, such types of capital, that have mobility, convertibility, intangible, flexible and dynamic character, are being actualized. Among them is symbolic capital, which due to its convertibility is able to attract tourist, financial, social and other resources to the territory.

2. Problem Statement

Symbolic capital as a theoretical category was first justified and studied by Bourdieu (2001), whose statement was that symbolic capital is the capital of trust, connections, reputation, good name and honor. Symbolic capital is connected with the fact of knowing, with the significance of a person, event, process, practice. Retaining the postmodern logic of the French thinker, we believe that the symbolic capital of the place is a set of values (meanings) that provide a local place recognition, fame, prestige and credibility of different social groups.

During the symbolic production of the values of regions, symbols of places, brands, statuses, and images appear, which become a competitive advantage of the territories. In particular, the symbolic status of the territory (“town, where Santa Claus lives” or “the place of origin of the Russian statehood”, etc.) today becomes the determining factor in identifying the place and establishing its prestige. Territories that used the opportunity to exploit the importance of the place, gained trust, fame or recognition from both the residents of the territories and in the external environment - from the most diverse target groups.

Meanwhile, the scientific potential of the symbolic capital of the place is not fully understood, which impedes further research in this direction. In particular, the features of the functioning of the

symbolic capital of a place as a certain type of capital participating in the social and economic relations of the region remain poorly studied. This situation complicates the possibilities of its applied study (formation, accumulation, strategic design and project making) in the interests of the holders, for example, in the interests of the Russian regions. One of the possible vectors of fundamental research is the analysis of those instrumental properties of the symbolic capital of the place that can be considered as a factor of the region's innovative development in the current economic situation.

3. Research Questions

The problem of ways and means of innovative development of the regions is today one of the most urgent topics both in the world and in domestic research. This circumstance is caused by the need to increase the competitiveness of local territories and a condition for their effective economic growth. One of the debatable issues remains the search for tools that would allow to build a competent innovation policy in the region and to intensify the processes of innovative development of the region, as well as to influence the development of the regional innovation system (RIS).

As modern research shows, a number of factors have a decisive influence on the development of a regional innovation system. Among them, the value of scientific and technical and production potentials of regions, innovative infrastructure, staffing and skill level of employees (Nosonov, 2014). Of course, without the operation of business incubators, start-ups, innovative clusters and other business projects, generating innovations is impossible.

At the same time, in addition to the scientific and technical potential and institutional structure, regional features and a sociocultural environment that stimulates or, on the contrary, prevents the accumulation and commercialization of innovations, are of particular importance for the development of RIS. Each region is unique due to its special geography, economics, history, ecology, demography. Therefore, there are no universal principles that determine the mechanism of innovative development of regions.

It should be assumed that certain patterns of strategies for innovative development of the regions will be characteristic for Russian regions that have knowledge-intensive and high-tech industries, as well as those with other innovative perspectives. But they can be unproductive for many territories of Russia, which have their own natural, economic, cultural specifics (for example, for provincial territories, or for northern regions, or for territories with rich historical and cultural heritage, etc.). In such Russian regions there are other prerequisites for the activation of the regional innovation system. Without pretending to solve this problem, we believe that it is necessary to conduct research in different directions that would allow taking into account regional specifics in the formation of RIS.

In particular, one of the topical research questions may be connected with the analysis of the symbolic capital of the region, reflecting the specifics of regional resources and the peculiarities of the socio-cultural environment of the territory, which we consider as an indirect factor in the region's innovative development.

In recent years, scientists specializing in various fields of activity are increasingly talking about the ability of symbolic capital to have a significant impact on the development of the territories. Symbolic capital, as shown in some research, has an impact on economic and social processes, and it can

successfully impact the attainment of the objectives of territorial development (del Cid, 2011). However, in European studies related to tourism, sometimes you can find the term “the capital of the territory” or “territorial capital”, which in its sense is similar to the concept of “symbolic capital of the place”. So, the Italian researchers emphasize that territorial capital, based on the uniqueness of the place, makes the territory more attractive for investment (Tortora, Randelli, & Romei, 2014).

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this work is the analysis of the symbolic capital of the place as an instrument of innovative development of the region. The study is aimed at identifying the instrumental potential of the symbolic capital of the place in the process of forming regional innovation systems.

5. Research Methods

Since the research topic has an interdisciplinary context, covering various fields of knowledge (economics, sociology, philosophy, management, etc.), this work is based on an interdisciplinary approach that allows to integrate data from different branches of science. In addition, the research methodology includes a culturological approach, focusing on symbolic, cultural resources in the development of regions. This approach is aimed at analyzing the interaction of symbolic and economic aspects in the development of territories. At the same time, in order to achieve the goal of the research, an instrumental method is used in its work aimed at revealing those properties of the symbolic capital of the place that allow it to be viewed as an instrument for the innovative development of regions.

6. Findings

Symbolic capital, like any other capital, has certain properties that make it popular with regional communities. To understand - what is the essence of this capital, what is its potential in the context of innovative development of the region, it is important to address some of the provisions of the symbolic capital theory developed by Bourdieu (2001).

First, symbolic capital, like any other capital, can bring profit to its holder, even if this profit has a symbolic character. Yet Marx (1961) first substantiated the assertion that capital is a “self-increasing value” that means the value that brings surplus value. To put it another way, capital has the most important property, which characterizes its essence – capital brings profit.

Meanwhile, if in Marxism the emphasis is on production relations, which are an economic imperative, then from the position of P. Bourdieu, activities related to the production of something can not be considered only in the context of the economic imperative. Often, we endow the activity with some value, a condition, for example, within the framework of a sense of duty to some or other people. For example, sometimes a number of economically unprofitable, at first glance, actions can be conditioned by a symbolic appointment (when we are guided by the principles of trust, honor or prestige). In this case, according to Bourdieu (2001), the economic (material) and symbolic capitals are inextricably linked, because often the economic guarantee is given by “good glory” or “allies”.

Therefore, the most important feature of symbolic capital as capital in general is the specifics of its profit, which is expressed in terms of significance, fame, prestige, recognition, trust. The value of symbolic capital is measured by the effect (symbolic profit) that it brings to its owner, while converting to economic benefits. An example of this idea can serve as an example when the positive reputation of the firm is a guarantee of its economic activity, or when the trust to the trademark has a significant impact on the growth of sales of this product.

Secondly, the symbolic profit that the region can use in innovative development depends on which regional resources the symbolic capital of the place is concentrated in.

The internal structure of symbolic capital can be presented on the basis of the territorial spectrum of meanings bearing the emotional, evaluative, spatial or other information about the territory. The analysis of symbolic capital in several Russian cities shows that that this capital is concentrated in the following territorial meanings:

- famous persons (historical and contemporary);
- natural and geographical features (dry climate, Northern lights, etc.);
- territorial statuses and brands (“City of brides”, “Textile edge”, etc.);
- unique production (lace, crystal, birch, etc.);
- visual components of the territory (especially architectural environment);
- symbols of territory and memorials (monument, coat of arms, etc.) unique event of history and culture (festivals, historical dates, myths, legends).

For example, the symbolic capital of Yaroslavl is concentrated in its 1000-year history, the territory of Pribaikalye – in the uniqueness of the lake Baikal, Veliky Novgorod – in the oldest stone temple of St. Sophia Cathedral, Krasnodar region – in a unique climate that combines several climate areas, Volgograd – in its military glory.

It should also be noted that the symbolic capital of the place is not a monument, a myth or a unique landscape, but their popularity or importance for a particular community. The importance of the symbolic capital for the territory is in its ability to be converted, i.e. to be part of symbolic and economic exchange. For example, the positive image of the city in the external environment is able to attract people or material goods.

Hence, the symbolic value of the place is becoming an instrument of attraction of a variety of resources. And this is one of the possible aspects of the profit of the symbolic capital of the place. It is especially important for those Russian regions that have an authentic cultural environment, local traditions and a rich local history.

Specifying the above, we note that the instrumental potential of symbolic capital of the place in the context of innovative development of the region can be as follows:

a) Symbolic capital of the place due to exploitation of the values of the region has the property of attracting investments. In the course of regional competition for investment, often a crucial role is played by the special symbolic status of the territory, regional brands, unique cultural heritage or geography that make the region exceptional due to these features. In this regard, symbolic resources can become a tool

that can improve the investment climate in the region, increase its investment attractiveness by positioning and cultivating the value of the unique social, cultural, natural and other characteristics of the region.

b) One of the directions of innovative development of the Russian regions is the formation of tourist and recreational zones, as well as scientific, educational and cultural clusters. Symbolic capital of the place here has an obvious effect: it generates emotions and imagination, makes us appreciate imageries and practices, creates certain impressions about certain people, places, events. The historical fact of the veche republic, which once the region was, or the recreated production of an ancient recipe for pastilles, or the presence of evidence of the residence of a fairy-tale character – all this attracts tourists and potential residents. It is no coincidence that the Danish economist Rolf Jensen believes that modern society lives in the era of the imagination and the era of storytellers. One can agree that “for the greater part of the planet, the orientation toward the acquisition of more and more material wealth ends ... instead, there is a growing interest in the emotional side of life” (Jensen, 2002, p. 12). Hence, the importance of emotions, imagination, symbolic values in the sale of goods and services increases, and those that tell a story (for example, offering it in a regional brand) are in demand.

c) The most important factor of innovative development of the region is creative resources, namely young, educated, talented people, without which it is impossible to produce innovations. However, provincial regions are experiencing an outflow of young people to large cities. Capitalization of symbolic resources in the region leads to an increase in the attractiveness of the territory, the creation of a positive image of the place, and increases its prestige, also in the eyes of regional residents.

d) One of the sociocultural conditions for the innovative development of the region is a territorial identity, the symbolic resource of which is capable of ensuring the acceptance of innovations by the regional community. Collective identities today become a symbolic commodity, not only in the external environment, ensuring the stability and positivity of associations with the territory, as well as attachment to the place. Therefore, the formation of regional innovation systems should take into account the territorial identity, which is the key to maintaining a special socio-cultural microclimate in the region, support of the “spirit of place”. If we consider this problem through the prism of the city, we should agree with the modern urbanists who believe that the city transformations need the presence of urban self-awareness, pride of the city, a sense of belonging to it (Lendri, 2000).

7. Conclusion

In the development of the regional innovation system, regional features are of great importance. Therefore, the strategies for innovative development of regions should be based on regional specifics, conditioned by natural, social, cultural, economic conditions and capital. One of the tools that accumulate value information about regional resources is the symbolic capital of the site, reflecting the specifics of the region.

Due to its value nature, the symbolic capital of the place is now regarded as one of the factors of the competitive advantage of the regions and thus often has a significant impact on the economic growth of the regions. Its potential lies in the ability to influence the investment attractiveness of the region,

nourish the symbolic resource of territorial identity, influence the positive image of the region, and be the basis for the developing “economics of impressions”.

Thus, the key function of the symbolic capital of the place as an instrument of innovative development of the region is to activate the material forms of capital, their transformation from a latent state to an active one. Symbolic capital of the place is a kind of sociocultural catalyst that can indirectly influence the intensification of the process of formation of a regional innovation system.

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