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**MUSEUMS IN THE BRANDING OF REGIONAL RUSSIAN
CITIES: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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Abstract

Globalization has created new challenges, threats and increased competition among cities. The article reveals the role of museums in the branding of non-capital, regional cities of Russia. Regional cities which lack large financial, administrative and organizational resources use branding technologies to attract tourists, investors, and qualified personnel. Museums are able to express urban identity, focus on interesting, unique features of the urban culture and make cities more famous and attractive. The article answers the following questions: what role do museums play in the branding of regional Russian cities? Does Russia have a successful experience of participation of museums in creating an attractive brand of non-capital cities? The experience of European countries, in particular France, shows that the potential of museums as key elements of the urban brand is great, and this circumstance allows us to positively assess prospects for the participation of Russian museums in the branding of Russian cities. The article analyzes the branding of Ulyanovsk, Pustozersk, Naryan-Mar, Myshkin: in the branding of these cities, museums play a crucial role. They have become centers of attraction for both the local population and tourists. The study identified two branding models: regional authorities express their readiness to support programs for the development of museums built into the branding campaigns of cities; the non-profit sector is the flagship of urban branding, and development of museums, museums' innovative activities are associated with the development of regions.

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1. Introduction

Currently, branding has become a crucial tool for promoting various territories: cities, regions and countries. Urban branding is especially effective, since the city, as opposed to the country or region, has more opportunities to express its competitive identity. The city's brand building is forced by fierce competition for human, financial, intellectual and other resources capable of ensuring their constant development. To increase the attractiveness of cities, the local authorities are running branding campaigns, gradually incorporating the branding into the urban development strategies. Urban branding is driven by the laws of globalization and economy: cities with attractive brands can compete in the market, while cities without brands can face economic recession. (Stigel & Frimann, 2006). Despite the fact that the practice of running urban branding campaigns originated in the West, many Russian cities have branding experience or are running these campaigns. This issue is especially relevant for regional cities that are making attempts to distinguish themselves and accelerate their development.

2. Problem Statement

The idea of theoretical development of urban branding belongs to the British expert Simon Anholt. He created a scale for assessing the attractiveness of national and urban brands, which was the basis for the Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index. The rating is based on a number of criteria: the international status of cities, economic and educational potential, contribution to science and culture, attitudes of the population towards tourists, location, pace of life and infrastructure (Anholt, 2006). The issue of city branding was also being developed by Keith Dinnie, who devoted his research to the analysis of the world's best urban branding practices and developed a number of practical recommendations for the successful city brand campaign (Dinnie, 2011).

In Russia, the issue of city branding began to be studied in the early 2000s, although there were earlier branding campaigns. Among the Russian researchers of city branding, it is worth mentioning the works by Denis Vizgalov (2011). He defines the city brand as “an urban identity, systematically expressed in bright and attractive ideas, symbols, values, images and found the fullest and most adequate reflection in the city image” (p. 104).

The city brand is a capacious focus of its unique competitive advantages that distinguish it from others. It forms an idea about the purpose of the city and its specifics, tells about the city through a well-coordinated system of bright and positive symbols, signals, ideas, associations that convey the meaning, beauty, competitive advantages and uniqueness of the city, thanks to which the city becomes famous (Soskin, 2012). The city brand is its intangible asset that provides additional benefits. It combines functional, material, and emotional characteristics to create a unique set of associations (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). In general, city branding is aimed at attracting public attention and personifying positive aspects of the city.

When developing a city brand, it is necessary to study mental and cultural characteristics of residents. Museums play an important role in city branding, accumulating the most important information about the city. Everyone knows large international museums that are associated with the cities where they are located and have become their brands: Hermitage – Petersburg, Louvre – Paris, Prado – Madrid, etc.

The museum brand has a symbolic status, works as a support for communication with the outside world, becoming a sub-brand of the city. The museum preserves and popularizes the values of the country and the city.

The emergence of museum branding is associated with general trends in the transformation of museums, changes in their role, and processes that resulted in the involvement of museums in the market relations (Soboleva & Epshtein, 2015). Corral-Regur refers the development of the intangible economy to one of the most important reasons for the convergence between non-profit organizations (museums) and marketing tools (brands) (Regourd, 2018). The growing role of intangible assets (brands, patents, concepts) contributes to the transformation of museums into leaders of the future economy. Similarities in the organization of museum management, the dominance of French models in the European geo-branding make the French experience useful for Russia. In the 2006 report "The Economy of the Intangible" presented by the French Minister of Economy, French cultural brands (the Louvre, Orsay, Center Georges Pompidou) are described as elements of the national influence and tourist attractions. The high degree of recognition of museum brands is supported by the expansion and diversification of museum products and services, which contributes to the growth of cultural resources in the context of budgetary funding constraints (Lévy & Jouyet, 2006).

The idea of economic dependence of the museum brand as a source of additional income and a way of "positioning" in the competitive environment of cultural institutions has been developed by Angers, an employee of the communications, brand and sponsorship department of the Chambord castle. He argues about the ability of brands to increase the popularity of museums and make museum products (cups, T-shirts, pencils, printed matter, etc.) and services (educational programs, organization of exhibitions, competitions, events, advertising, rent, etc.) unique and recognizable (Anger, 2013).

Researchers often distinguish between the brands of the largest museums associated with the international influence, and the brands of other museums, for which the relevance of branding is associated with the promotion of a territory in the context of the growing independence and competitiveness. The high potential of museums in strengthening the city brand through exhibition museum projects, presented in museum souvenir shops, and participation of museums in cultural events was recognized. Given the desire of local authorities to invest in local museums, identified with the main actors in territorial marketing, cultural, economic and social development, the link between museum brands and direct financial benefits of museum products and services is weakening in favor of the visibility of museums, their architecture, collections, and politics.

The founder and President of the largest global museum consulting company *Lord cultural resources* Lord describes the emergence of museum branding as a stage in the transformation of modern museums, and the museum brand should be incorporated into the city brand. With the growing demand for museum expertise, the museum employs effective branding strategies such as temporary exhibitions and impressive, informative museum building architecture. (Lord & Blankenberg, 2015).

Museums help attract tourists, adapt to the new requirements of the cultural sector. The changing role of the museum links the city brand and the museum brand, the museum brand influences the perception of cities, giving them a new status, expanding its fame and "creativity" and changing the mentality towards residents. Museums are involved in the process of modernizing cities, giving them the

importance of cultural centers in the perception of tourists and residents, regenerating the urban space, strengthening the identity of the city and cohesion of its inhabitants. They have a beneficial socio-economic impact.

3. Research Questions

The main questions to be answered are as follows:

- What are reasons for the interest of regional Russian cities in branding campaigns?
- What is the role of branding in the urban development?
- What role do museums play in the territorial branding?
- What branding strategies are in demand?
- What are the most interesting examples of participation of museums in the branding of regional Russian cities?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the role of museums in the branding of regional Russian cities.

5. Research Methods

The research methodology is based on the value approach to the museum as an essential element of the cultural, social and economic life of the city, a special form of expression of urban identity. The authors applied the systematic approach to the problem of urban branding, caused by globalization; used the methods of analysis, synthesis, abstraction and generalization to comprehend the concepts of brand and city branding. The comparative method made it possible to compare the experience of various museums in the branding of Russian cities.

6. Findings

The targeted use of budget funds and the development of regional target programs in culture within the decentralization of management play an important role in the implementation of branding strategies.

Ulyanovsk Region became one of the first Russian regions with its own regional brand, developed in accordance with the brand management rules. It was developed by the leading Russian expert in territorial branding Andrey Stas, in 2010; The *Ulyanovsk is Ready for Takeoff* brand was based on the idea of Ulyanovsk as the aviation capital of Russia (Chilikova, 2011). The city's aspiration to become an attractive tourist "destination" caused the emergence of the *Ulyanovsk is the cultural capital* brand (Akhmetshina, 2015). An indicator of the urban development in the cultural and creative sector was the status of the "Cultural Capital of the CIS" within the interstate program aimed at expanding cultural exchange, preserving historical and cultural heritage and increasing the tourist flow. An attempt to brand

Ulyanovsk region as the "Homeland of Kolobok" resulted in the creation of the "Kolobok Manor" museum near Ulyanovsk. It is an attractive interactive place for family tourism.

Images of Ulyanovsk are associated with "legendary personalities": Karamzin, Goncharov, and Plastov. The regional government supports programs for the development of regional museums that promote their names, with a particular emphasis on exhibition projects. In 2012, on the basis of the Historical and Literary Museum n.a. Goncharov, the Historical and Memorial Center was created (the Museum n.a. Goncharov). The main brand of Ulyanovsk "Ulyanovsk – Lenin's homeland" is associated with Lenin. Its high potential is reflected in the "Museum of the USSR" project.

The International Cultural Forum held annually in Ulyanovsk discusses the experience of museums in geo-branding and such strategies for the development of museum brands. The strategy "genius of the place" was successfully applied in the creation of the museum n.a. Vasily Zuev (the miniaturist of the Carl Faberge firm) in Cherdakly, Ulyanovsk region (ICF Ulyanovsk, 2020). The museum participates in the regional competition of children's creativity dedicated to the master, the project of an art object – a monument to the artist in the form of a large Easter egg. The museum's activities were supported by the regional administration and attracted investors.

The private balalaika museum, opened in Ulyanovsk in 2013, is currently selling souvenirs under the Balalaika Museum brand. Together with the Balalaiker Manufactory, created in 2015, the museum has developed a souvenir balalaika with a traditional signature, which is now supplied to the European market and identifies the Ulyanovsk region.

An interesting example is the experience of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug (NAO). The branding strategies of the NAO were preceded by the creation of the Nenets Museum of Local Lore within the target program "Preservation and Development of Culture in the NAO for 2007–2010". In the new, specialized, beautiful three-storey building with a large area of exhibition halls, a sector for the exhibition and sale of creative works by masters of decorative and applied arts, fine arts, photography, souvenirs was opened to popularize culture of the NAO.

Since 2011, the development of the museum and tourist complex "Pustozerye" has become an important area of the target cultural programs of the NAO. To promote Pustozersk, the eponymous museum-reserve implements special exhibition projects (e.g., the ship exhibition "Pustozersk is the first Russian city beyond the Arctic Circle."). The museum staff and volunteers participate in projects to create the tourist and museum infrastructure facilities near the archaeological heritage site (the Avvakumovy Pennyshki project, the Big Pustozero trail). They also participate in the thematic zoning and implementing the brand in the urban environment of Naryan-Mar (the "Museum and Ethnographic Courtyard" project).

The main components of the "Nenets Autonomous Okrug is the Northern European Pantry of Russia" brand, developed in 2011, symbolize the indigenous population, the Nenets, care for the inhabitants of the district (chum), traditional industries (deer horns and fish), oil production and water reserves (Treskin & Bormotov, 2012). In cooperation with the mayor's office of Naryan-Mar with the International Assembly of Capitals and Large Cities of the CIS, the brand "Naryan-Mar is the Capital of the Russian Arctic" is being promoted. The Nenets Museum of Local Lore is one of the key tourist destinations in the capital of the NAO. It plays an important role in promoting the historical and cultural

heritage of the region, while strengthening the traditional functions of the museum in heritage preservation, educational, scientific and communication areas. The constant search for new museum products, the desire to form a positive image of the institution, an increase in the number of excursions and lectures, new methods are combined with expanded research activities. Since 2013, the Department of Culture of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug has taken measures to expand the exhibition exchange of the Nenets Museum of Local Lore: exhibitions using the museum's funds in other Russian regions and abroad, attracting exhibitions from other museums.

The experience of Myshkin shows that even small towns can run effective branding campaigns and museums can play a significant role in this process, becoming centers of interest. In literature on urban branding, this phenomenon is called the "miracle" of Myshkin, since this small unremarkable Russian town has managed to become a tourist, museum center, a settlement with a pronounced individuality.

Myshkin is a regional center in Yaroslavl region, located on the banks of the Volga river. Two factors played an important role in Myshkin's branding – unique museums reflecting the cultural and historical originality of the town, and its inclusion in the plan of cruise routes along the Volga river. Since the 1990s, all cruise ships traveling along the Volga river have called at Myshkin port. In order for tourists to have something to see, the local authorities have created museums. In 1991, the first Museum of Mouse was opened, and prominent representatives of Russian culture Bulat Okudzhav, Dmitry Likhachev and others helped to collect this collection. Today in the town, there are Myshkin Chambers, located in an old wooden mansion decorated with unique carvings. Original cultural events with a “mouse theme” also played a role in popularizing the town: the Year of the Mouse announced in 1996, regular Mouse Festivals, etc.

In the early 2000s, other original museums with an emphatically provincial theme were opened: the Valenok Museum, the Flax Museum, the Museum of Living Crafts, the Museum of Myshkin Merchants *Makhaev Dvor*, the Old Mill Museum with an interactive exposition "Barn Mice", located in the estate of the merchant Chistov, the Museum of Mushkin Peasantry et al. There is an art gallery and Myshkin Folk Museum, which tells about the history of the town. In total, there are 21 museums in Myshkin with a population of 5488 people (Gorodarus, 2020). Alexander Chumikov called Myshkin the provincial museum capital of Russia (Chumikov & Truba, 2019). He also provided figures showing the effectiveness of branding using the museum resources. In 1996, five thousand people visited the town; in 2002, there were 50 thousand tourists, and in 2019 – more than 140 thousand visitors (Chumikov & Truba, 2019). Myshkin can be considered to be a tourist and museum phenomenon. The branding campaign in Myshkin was based on a special identity conveyed through the themes of museums. According to Andrey Stas, Myshkin is one of the first examples of successful urban branding in Russia (Vizgalov, 2008). The creative approach to branding a small Volga town, purposeful creation of museums that convey its identity, cruise routes have become a vivid example of thematic branding.

7. Conclusion

Growing competition and independence of the Russian regions and cities, their growing potential in the development of foreign economic and cultural ties contributes to the widespread adoption of the

administrative model of territorial branding, initiated by the government and subsequent adoption of another model, which is more characteristic of towns, where the flagship branding is favored by the non-profit sector.

In the first case, which can be illustrated by the examples of Ulyanovsk region and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, regional target programs play an important role in supporting the branding strategies of cities and museums. Regional authorities support programs for the development of museums, create new museums, increase the number of exhibition projects and digital innovations, expand foreign contacts of museums. By participating in the development of the urban brand, public museums are involved in the development of their own brands, often described as a search for an image, a new museum product, individuality in educational, recreational, informational, communication roles. The desire to get income from the museum brand is more typical for private museums (Balalaika Museum, Kolobok Manor), whose position remains precarious.

In Myshkin, local activists have been promoting the town brand, and museums founded by local historians have become centers of interest. This civic model shows that the most important branding strategy is the development of museums, an increase in the number of tourist sites, expansion of the range of museum services. Interactive programs, events (e.g., the annual Governor's Festival "Myshkin Samokhod"), and close interaction between museums and tourism sectors have become essential success factors.

In modern conditions, when special municipal programs for the development of tourism are being implemented in Myshkin district and recognition of the Myshkin tourism brand is associated with the consistency of approaches of activists from the local intelligentsia, city administration, tourist companies, a solid foundation is being created for the government support of local museums. The regional and municipal governments fund cultural events (conferences, festivals, etc.) held by museums and projects aimed at promoting the tourism product.

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