

System of Regions Management in the Circumstances of the Geopolitical Competition: Priorities of the Modernization Development

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Abstract

The article examines the role of the regions management system in the implementation of modernization development in the context of the geopolitical competition. Russian regions welcome modernization, especially on the socio-economic level, as they need investments to address the current socio-economic and social problems, to borrow advanced technology, and to become spaces of social stability. The authors believe that the modernization project in modern Russia is possible in the context of transition to the regional level, which is associated both with the modernization capacity of regions management and with the use of regional scenarios of modernization development. In authors' opinion, this allows reducing the financial and organizational burden on the Federal Center, increasing the responsibility of the management system, and providing its performance with the necessary degree of competence and flexibility.

Keywords: regions management, socio-cultural modernization, regional and interregional cooperation, Federal Center, independence of the regions

1. Introduction

Regions management is an important part of the existing system of social management in the Russian society in the circumstances of the geopolitical competition. Given that regions vary greatly by geo-climatic, economic, social, and ethno-cultural factors, we can say that various mechanisms of mitigation, correction, and coordination of various management levels exist in the regions management system.

We have previously noted that the methods and models of the regions management are defined by the idea of territorial public self-organization (Popov, 2001). Noting the importance of the personal factor in politics (Putnam, 1976), we can say that the formation of the social environment as a structure of constructive-creative type working for the future is what matters (Posukhova, 2014, pp. 424-428). The idea is that the regions management can significantly affect social modernization of the Russian society and qualitative perfection of various aspects of the social, political, and economic life, which aims achieving the performance of a modern society – a society of knowledge economy, social initiatives, and constructive social creativity (Volkov, 2013).

2. Methodology

When writing this article, the authors used a wide range of research methods, which included the systematic method, the method of the comparative analysis, and the method of document analysis. The authors draw on the experience in development and modeling of processes of regional development and modernization and single out the criteria for evaluating their efficiency. All this helped solving tasks and making conclusions on the alleged conceptual problem.

3. Results

The considerations we offer lie in the fact that the modernization in the development of the Russian society for a long time had recurrent nature, was culminant, concerned military and administrative aspects, but it was not associated with the creation of an effective system of regions management. In the circumstances of geopolitical

competition, Russian regions face the increasing long-term social burden, the increasing attractiveness of transferring the solution of re-industrialization problems as well as the problems of post-industrialization, formation of civil society, promotion of values of the human personality, and improving the education to the regional level (Gorshkov, 2012).

And this is not a declaration of intent: the vast experience of effective countering to threats and challenges and of independent solution of local problems has accumulated at the regional level. But modernization of the Russian society requires transferring the marked achievements not to the position of adaptation to circumstances, but of development; not of reduction or regional race, but of creating conditions, rules, and regulations of regional and interregional cooperation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the management system in the society as a whole (March, 1989).

The effect of the introduction of organizational and managerial innovation may have applications. The experience in target programming in the beginning of the 2000s shows that modernization cannot be a momentary and uniform process for all regions, but triggers of modernization must be created at the level of the Center. An indicative fact is that in the social development of regions, in our opinion, there are plenty of inconsistent criteria that are not able to provide for a comparable and comparative analysis of the level of their social and socio-economic development in the context of geopolitical competition (Volkov, 2013, pp. 180-184).

4. Discussion

In the context of modernization, we should note that, if we count on the best results of modernization and see it as strategic development prospects (So, 1990), the regional factor becomes indispensable together with the factors of qualified management, with the modernization policy of the Center. Russian regions welcome modernization, especially on the socio-economic level, as they need investments to address the current socio-economic and social problems, borrow advanced technology, and become spaces of social stability.

During the study of the problems of regions management, it is important to emphasize that the main obstacle is the persistent "non-differentiation" of the aspects related to modernization of Russian society and the modernization at the regional level, which, in our opinion, is related to the tradition to describe problems of regional development only through the prism of national priorities. Of course, it is difficult to expect the launch of regional models of modernization without involvement of the policy of the Center in the economic, financial, and political spheres.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the modernization at the regional level in the circumstances of geopolitical competition means re-coding priorities of national development in accordance with the variability of regional conditions, with the difference between the modernization capacities of regional societies, with difference in emphasis of the modernization. Common sense tells us that the management models cannot be applied equally in the Far East and in the Volga region in the sense that they follow unifying criteria. This, however, does not mean abolition of legal and political controls of the modernization process at least in order not to limit the spontaneity or regional separatism.

The modernization process in the Russian society develops increasingly and is associated with the socio-structural, institutional, and cultural changes. Speaking of this, we mean that the Russian society is generally ready for the process of modernization by the criterion of human capacity: the critical mass of expectations for positive changes and overcoming of the costs of social reformation of the first decades of new Russia has been formed.

At the same time, we must not forget that the modernization potential not only includes economic criteria (the level of technology and vocational qualification potential), but is also related to the quality of the regions management system, with the way in which at the level of regions management the understanding of the modernization objectives, ways of interaction with the federal center and local communities exists. This is only the first condition.

No less important is the fact that the modernization influence in a management system should be viewed through the prism of realistic assessment of conditions in the regional environment (Zayats, 2013). Excessive self-esteem as well as passive standby position inhibit the modernization process (Mergel, 2011). There is a feeling of eternal expectation, which results in situations when partial measures or partial changes are called modernization, or modernization ranges far and wide under the influence of the uniqueness of the Russian society and its inability to have any modernization samples similar to previous ones.

We should use the term "uniqueness" in the sense that the Russian society as the concentration of regions is open to the use of different models of regional development in the context of geopolitical competition. Without

crossing the line of managerial relativism, we need to remember that the focus on the variability of regional development means the need for inclusion in the regions management priorities of the option to redefine the positions, the continuous monitoring of the regional situation, the understanding of and support for regional projects, the understanding of the conventional, traditional, and modernization-related concepts in the Russian society.

Positive perception of the modernization in the regional aspect can be considered as a fact if the modernization leads to socially visible results, to notable progress in elimination of social disparities and provision for meeting the basic needs of the society. We can see this at a significance level of regions' interests in the lives of the Russians. With all the diversity of life plans (creating a happy family, getting a prestigious job, good education, wealth, starting one's own business), the ideal model of life includes also regional self-satisfaction. Not by chance, the Russians are so sensitive to what region they live in. So far, it has manifested itself in the concreteness of the capital and provincial life.

At the same time, qualitative vertical and horizontal renewal of the society means that the modernization capacity of management may be taken as the main criterion of efficiency of regional administration. The specified issues are of particular importance in an environment where these goals are set for the regions in far from good conditions: while regional inequalities exacerbate, while there is an increase in global and in-country challenges. Of course, in the perception of these problems, there are significant regional nuances. For the population of the Far East, it is extremely important to establish communication with the center, to overcome the feeling of loneliness, abandonment. In central Russia, we are talking about the termination of the processes of depopulation and re-industrialization of regional economic life.

When we consider the modernization capacity of the management system, at first glance, it seems that modernization has already completed: indeed, the Russian society has experienced the socialist type of accelerated modernization in the 1930s. Urbanization of the society as well as the existence of modern social classes is a fact. But we agree that such processes are not so smooth; therefore, it is wrong to say that the process of social modernization in the Russian society has completed, and the regions management system needs efforts to overcome regional disparities and backwardness of certain regions.

Conflict pluralization of interests in the society as well as the diversity of regional elites suggest that there is not only the problem of social revenge of specific population groups, but also realization of the commonality of regional interests is required. Especially it should be noted that the measured degree of modernization in the final product and of employment in sectors such as finance, insurance, marketing, consulting, information and technology can convince that the Russian modernization has completed only in big cities, while the rest of the population lives in the area of pre-modernization and under-modernization.

In our view, this is an erroneous position as regional communities have not passed their own path of social and cultural modernization, the resources of self-development have not been identified, and the over-reliance on the state governance as an instrument of implementation of the interests of the macrocommunity still persists. "Axiomatic" for the system of the regions management is the fact that recognition of the special role of the government in the process of modernization requires treating the modernization capacity as a measurement in the management system, the identification in the management system of the shares and the degree of influence of innovative developing and promoting management methods.

Noting that though the practice to act based on the achieved is pragmatic and generally has sufficient adaptive capacity, the development of Russian regions is understood to proceed under a slightly different model. It is difficult to deny that the current public consciousness consolidates around Russian values (Gorshkov, 2010). This circumstance makes it possible at the level of regions management to realize the necessity of inter-regional development and vertical and horizontal compatibility of development patterns.

Overcoming the social archaic, the way of life of traditional societies is associated with the expansion of the time horizon of life planning, with the exception of legal and political nihilism at the level of mass consciousness, and in the management of regions – the formation of a new rational type of managerial thinking and effective management commensurate with the assessment of both the cumulative result and the specific individual result of managers.

Complaints that the regional community is too conservative and imbued with the paternalistic spirit, or is migration-spirited and disintegrated, are not a condition for refusal from modernization, but a motivating factor. We can say that for most Russians, the regions management system is a prerequisite for organization and self-organization of regional life. References to the negative evaluation of the management system do not mean denial of the management system as the most important resource of modernization development. To understand

this problem better, it is important to say that all aspects of management depend on the extent, to which they are relevant to the increasing differentiation of regional life, changing social integrators, enhancing functionality of regional institutions.

At first glance, the regions management system seems to have sufficient professional development, increased job discipline, and improving extent of the management bodies' coherence. However, as we have seen, the regions management system has not decided how to combine the interests of the state, of the regional community, and individual interests. This is probably due to the fact that at the regional level, such a model is the most difficult one, as the management system is far behind the processes of interest differentiation in the regional community, and to the fact that there is a qualitatively new situation related to the practice of various forms of social life, when the traditional legal and administrative mechanisms are not efficient (Isakova, 2014).

Division of the Russian society for modernists and traditionalists may characterize only the vertical slice of the social life. Towards the regions, it is quite arbitrary, though, judging by the share of urban and rural population, there are regions that tend to post-industrialization, and regions that find the stage of re-industrialization necessary.

The path of accelerated modernization seems acceptable, as the most preferred one for the elimination of regional inequalities. Since the Russian government cannot inflate regions with financial resources or create favorable conditions for certain regions, so that it would not be accompanied by regions' development disparities, the modernization capacity of the management system includes how and to what extent the management system is based on its own resources and uses efficient financial transfers to solve problems; and how the effective social practices, legal and financial regulators are engaged.

Thus, the common myth about the alleged inertia of the management system, its self-isolation, and commitment to narrow corporate ethics, and about quiet resistance to modernization projects is not confirmed. The choice of managerial priorities is not unambiguous: the goal is the creation of a modern country with an appropriate production and way of life. This goal does not cause large differences in the regions, it is only in the degree of perception of modernization, which may be higher in regions with open market dynamics, and lower in the regions that are highly subsidized.

As for the management system, exception cannot serve in principle as the abandonment of the policy of modernization. Another thing is that for specific regions, there are well-defined parameters of the modernization processes.

In the area of the regions management, models of regional development are intensively being developed. At the same time, the starting characteristic is of fundamental importance. Is modernization possible or not? In either total or partial sense? This phenomenon shows a rather important feature: Russian regions indeed have significant differences in the economic and social capacity. This situation is compounded by the fact that regions are differentiated by the degree of remoteness from the Federal Center and this factor is a frequent "scary" circumstance for potential investors, as well as a certain degree of archaic regional life, and the existing informal management practices.

Currently, we observe the functioning of the three main types of managerial activity: the modernization, transitive, and traditional management. A lot, of course, depends on the region's leader and his team. It is important to emphasize that regional society is heterogeneous in the degree of urbanization, social and economic activity of the population, and the socio-demographic capacity. One can argue that the social distance between the regions is not reduced and there is a different threshold for the possibility of modernization.

Under the influence of these realities, the regional life is conceived as avoiding the modernization process, and the decisive role is assigned to the Federal Center. But regional subjects, regardless of their size, tend to desire for positive social identity, to use different strategies in order to achieve social comfort and social satisfaction (Toshchenko, 2013). Therefore, the system of regional administration cannot be based on the opposition of the particularity of interest commonality – only comparison is possible as well as targeting the inter-regional development and adjusting the practically suggested trends of modernization development.

To control the regions in terms of geopolitical competition, the objective integral indicators are the gross domestic product, the state of population health, the level of corruption and crime, the development of education, science, and personnel training, as well as special narrowly regional indicators reflecting the specific problems of a particular socio-cultural space: the income of an individual, his family, the contents of the consumer basket, and the level of minimum social standards (Popov, 2001).

In this regard, it should be noted that the management system has an important property not to engage the mechanisms of enforcement of the technological process, but to influence on the minds and attitudes of the regional society for the purpose of social mobilization to achieve better results. This bar applies primarily to the management of regions because depending on how the management system is perceived and whether its value determines the extent, to which there is inertia, complacency, or the possibility of self-fulfillment of the region's capacity, the readiness of the region's society for the realization of modernization projects is determined.

Of course, evaluation of the modernization capacity depends strongly on the image of the region in the Center, on what the brand of the region is, what the assessment by the region's society of the state of regional life is, and how the region's governments understand their managerial mission. In the sense of devotion to the interests of the region, usual reference is made to the origin of regional leaders, and at the same time, the apparent predisposition to inviting people from the outside who have proven experienced managers or technocrats exists.

Such "scissors" of preferences evidence that the model of modernization influence has not formed yet in the public mind and the regional life is often evaluated solely by personalized factors or by the degree of interaction solely with the Center.

Since the bulk of the Russian regions are not satisfied with the situation, the question expectedly arises: "What needs to be changed in the structure of the regions management?" Judgments about this question say that it is necessary to change both the state of the system of regional management and the mobilizing capacity of the regional society. When the extent, to which modernization capacity is measured with a highly qualified managerial work, is discussed, this indicator shows that there is a real problem of changing generations in the regions management system, as well as the change in the nature of management activities.

It is obvious that for real impact on the modernization process, one cannot expect miracles from financial managers, as well as hope for the leaving generation of strong economic managers. An important aspect of modernization is the aggregate intellectual capital in the management system, the coherence and coordination of managerial actions, and awareness of the general managerial mission.

The most positive from the population's point of view is the increase in the professional and educational level of management, the prevalence of specialists in the field of management, economics and law, as well as the rejuvenation of the administrative staff. These aspects are particularly important in order to understand the importance of the self-development resource (Florida, 2002), the priority of the criterion of managerial effectiveness. Even if disorientation depending on regional characteristics is observed regarding this issue, it is not due to differences within the region; the degree of financial resource availability and the sufficient provisioning of regional projects become very important.

At the same time, it was revealed that the regions management system performs the modernizing mission if it acts as the guarantor of rights, interests of the regional community, creates conditions for individual and collective development, and combines these trends with the protection of the interests of the state. This confirms the conclusion that those regions are the most successful and have sufficient resources for unassisted solution of their problems, which focus their efforts on correcting the situation in the regional life, transferring the region from the category of highly subsidized regions to the category of regions that require few subsidies or no subsidies at all.

The assertions that regional differences result in the situation when being successful means getting into the group of donors, which drastically reduces the opportunities of modernization development, have reasonable explanations: the matter is that the Russian regions that are donors usually are not areas of modernization by technological parameters, i.e. they do not create surplus products. Reallocation of funds associated with the resource rents, with the possession by regions of unique natural resources, determines the right of the state to redistribute income as national property. Similarly, the concentration of financial resources in major metropolitan areas requires the government to distribute the finances in the form of returning the income to the regions where it was generated. Therefore, the modernization capacity is measured by finding one's own development resources that warrant particular region to take the position of independence and build reputational capital in influencing on the nation-wide processes.

Considering the readiness of the management system to implementation of modernization projects in the circumstances of the geopolitical competition, we have grounds to say that what we call the initial modernization capacity of the management system depends on the ability to determine the current tactical and strategic priorities, on the degree of support for local initiatives, and on the possibility of constructive interaction with the system of local self-government. Nevertheless, though the modernization readiness acts as an important aspect of it, it is not the only condition for the implementation of modernization strategies in the regions.

The Russian researchers A. A. Prokhozhev and I. A. Karmanova noted that in our country the most complete satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of people was proclaimed as an objective goal of social production during the Soviet period. At the same time, it was emphasized that the ultimate goal of social production directly manifests itself in the growth of the national wealth, which, in turn, determines the possibility and direction of the main productive force of society and people. However, the question "How to measure people's welfare and growth?" remained open. We have had it actually measured as percentage of progress. At the same time, the use of money as a measurement tool allowed drawing only very generalized boundaries between the economic and non-economic well-being. It took many years to make sure that the strong interrelations and indicators characterizing both economic and non-economic well-being should be used for evaluation of the common welfare. This approach is necessary in connection with the possibility of implementation of various development strategies (Prokhozhev, 2004).

This provision is quite important to measure the modernization capacity of the management system. But, in our opinion, the differences between the development strategies do not mean that one can focus either on the economic growth while sacrificing the development of the human capital and considering people as an instrument of production, or, conversely, focus on the social, humanitarian, and spiritual aspects, thereby slowing down the economic growth (Filyushkina, 2014).

The experience in managing regions shows negative effects of going to extremes. This is especially evident in the formulation of purely personal goals of economic growth, when after implementation of likely flawless and cost-effective market mechanisms, it turns out suddenly that the regional development is stalled or slowed down due to the fact that in the region, there is a shortage of managerial and technological personnel, and there is low interest and a low level of substitution of labor resources or the administrative staff is bureaucratized.

None of these reasons can be separately considered as the major one; but taken together, there is a gap between the implementation of the development model and the actual results. In addition, the control system of the regions cannot focus solely on the purposes of non-economic development and welfare, as the Russian regions in terms of the geopolitical competition are mainly in need for re-industrialization and for creating new technological niches. In our view, only one out of eight-ten regions can develop their own welfare due to the non-productive sector if the region has unique climatic, cultural, and historical systems. But in this case, the development of the region requires certain transport infrastructure, energy supply, well-developed housing and communal services.

5. Conclusions

Thus, the modernization potential of the management system is measured by the fact that the objectives of social modernization unconditionally include the transition of the society to the modern economy system, the creation of civil relations, the efficiency of government operations, and the development of human capital, which together drive us to the problem of adequate prioritization of development, to what administrative staff is able to implement advances in targeted areas; to how it is possible to interact with the regional society.

We can agree that the practice of regions management shows that innovative development can manifest itself as a result of managerial activities only when using the already existing resources; and it would be naive to assume that the development of the region in terms of the geopolitical competition is complicated only by resistance of conservative-minded managers.

We can also say that, according to sociological studies, each third inhabitant of the Russian regions needs changes in the current situation (Barbashin, 2012). It is a different matter that approval of changes entails determining what changes may have a modernizing effect on the regional development, what criteria can be used as a basis for assessing the impact of the modernizing effect of the management system. We have noted that the main criteria may be the willingness of management for modernization, determination of the objectives and priorities of modernization in a specific regional context, and the attitude of the regional society to the socially innovative and socially developing role of management.

Consequently, educational, occupational, and age-related indicators act as additional criteria. In the modernization capacity of the management system, it is important to reveal that a region is a homogeneous space, a community of economic structures and historical destiny. In this sense, there are differences in the legal understanding of the territory of a Federation subject. It is important for the modernization in the circumstances of the geopolitical competition to proceed in the direction of reinforcement of feedback with national processes, particularly at the outputs into the external environment.

Each of these factors creates certain positions and dispositions in the modernization process. The system of regions development management up to now has been engaged in urgent tasks of stabilization of the socio-political and economic situation, and targeted countering the process of disintegration. To a certain extent, the modernization process includes the need for changes in the management system, i.e. while keeping the stabilizing effect, to define the scope of development, maintaining and basing on an allowed threshold of changes.

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