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Regional Aspects of the 'Soft Power of Tourism' in the Context of Globalization through the Example of an International Organized youth Environment

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Региональные аспекты «мягкой силы туризма» в условиях глобализации на примере международной организованной молодежной среды

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The presented study analyzes the phenomenon of the 'soft power of tourism' as one of the specific modern phenomena in expanding the boundaries of international exchange.

Aim. The authors attempt to determine the role of young people as the subject of the 'soft power of tourism' in the context of globalization, with a particular focus on the development of this process in specific Russian regions.

Tasks. In the geopolitical environment that has developed over the past decade, it is important to solve the problem of defining soft power and identifying the boundaries of its application. On the basis of this theoretical foundation, this study resolves the issue of developing strategies for soft power application in completing the priority objectives of the society and the state.

Methods. In spite of the increasingly obvious tendency towards the transition of youth relations and tourist contacts into the domain of international politics and public diplomacy, in practice there are strong regional imbalances associated with the different level of opportunities for the youth environment itself. This approach makes it possible to draw attention to the problems of examining the chan-

Статья посвящена анализу феномена «мягкой силы туризма» как одного из современных специфических явлений в расширении границ международного обмена.

Цель. Авторами осуществлена попытка осмысления роли молодежи в качестве субъекта «мягкой силы туризма» в условиях глобализации. Особое внимание уделено развитию данного процесса в отдельных регионах России.

Задачи. В геополитической обстановке, которая складывается в мире в последнее десятилетие, важно решить задачи определения «мягкой силы», обозначить границы ее применения. На основании этого теоретического фундамента решаются задачи разработки стратегий применения «мягкой силы» для решения приоритетных задач общества и государства.

Методология. Несмотря на то что сегодня все отчетливее вырисовывается общая тенденция перехода молодежных связей и туристских контактов в область международной политики и публичной дипломатии, на практике отмечаются сильные региональные диспропорции, связанные с «разноскоростными» возможностями самой молодежной среды. Такой подход позво-

nels for receiving feedback from foreign young people in the context of regional development.

Results. The study addresses certain problems of building the image of territories in the regional aspect as a result of this interaction within the framework of Russia's foreign cultural policy and identifies the major problematic aspects and factors that characterize the prospective role and place of an organized youth environment as a relevant instrument of the 'soft power of tourism' and a mutual regional influence channel in the international exchange system.

Conclusions. Exploration of the phenomenon of the 'soft power of tourism' opens up new opportunities for intercultural and international interaction, economic and cultural cooperation.

Keywords: *soft power of tourism, regionalism, regional imbalances, international youth tourism, international humanitarian cooperation, foreign cultural policy, humanitarian impact, territory image, spatial development, imaginative space.*

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Globalization of international relations has revealed the presence of some objective laws of strengthening the role of individual regions being distinctive with different speed dynamics. The study of this process indicates the increasing importance of macro-social factors that arise from the needs of the society in the innovative types and optimal forms of space development. This occurs as a result of interaction between key subjects of international law in order to ensure the competitive advantage of its individual participants with broader functions, but at the same time with available means. Modern society is increasingly and more frequently looking for ways to exert such influence indirectly — in the form of various instruments of international cooperation in certain areas, where obtaining the desired results due to the factor of innovative use of strategic resources, the so-called "soft power" ("soft power"), plays a much more important role than before [1].

In the light of the identified trends there is an urgent need to ensure security and preserve one's own identity, and consequently — the inevitability of finding new opportunities and developing more effective mechanisms for humanitarian cooperation, especially in the international arena also emerges.

Today, individual state actors, actively using certain tools and strategic resources, are pur-

posefully engaged in promoting their positive image as an expression of public expectations. At the same, time an important tool in creating the image of the country acts in the form of separate, but numerous cultural and historical attractions. The formation of a positive image of the territory, taking into account the advantages of the regional aspect, is a complex, multilateral and long-term process, which is one of the priority foreign policy tasks of many States. At the same time, the implementation of such a task often faces serious systemic and structural problems, both of internal and external aspects. There are different (and often contradictory) "views" on the very nature of the process, which can lead to the clashes of interests of elites, especially those representing the most radical and regional points of view.

ляет актуализировать проблемы изучения каналов обратной связи с зарубежной молодежью в контексте регионального развития.

Результаты. В статье рассматриваются некоторые проблемы формирования имиджа территории в региональном аспекте, как результат данного взаимодействия в рамках внешней культурной политики России. Выявлены основные проблемные аспекты и факторы, характеризующие перспективную роль и место организованной молодежной среды в качестве востребованного инструмента «мягкой силы туризма» и канала регионального взаимовлияния в системе международного обмена.

Выводы. Изучение феномена «мягкой силы туризма» открывает новые возможности межкультурного и межнационального взаимодействия, экономического и культурного сотрудничества.

Ключевые слова: «мягкая сила туризма», регионализм, региональные диспропорции, международный молодежный туризм, международное гуманитарное сотрудничество, внешняя культурная политика, гуманитарное влияние, имидж территории, процесс освоения пространства, имажинальное пространство.

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The search for the most effective tools for shaping the image of the territory in the international arena is carried out using (not always in a rational way) all available resources and reserves, including those belonging to the future generations, which leads to the violation of the existing balance. The balance of political power that emerged after the end of World War II was achieved largely as a result of the use of "hard" military force and demonstrated the existence of clearly defined boundaries of its use with the advent of weapons of mass de-

struction. Therefore, the desire to achieve the desired result without obtaining unacceptable damage, to influence the perception of the world community along with traditional, historically established methods and means and determines the emergence of new more effective tools of “soft power” [1].

In the process of expanding the channels of influence of state actors on the outside world due to the isolation or growth of individual regions the need for scientific understanding of building a strategy for their development and the use of resource potential, especially in the youth environment, is getting increasingly evident. It is an effective strategy and timely actions, including the regional dimension in this area, that enable them to have a “targeted”, hidden (manipulative) influence on various processes of international life.

Of course, the definition of “soft power” has recently given rise to a discussion field in which special attention is paid to the study of various aspects of social, cultural, economic and political phenomena of international life [2]. The growing role of “soft power” is reflected in the official documents, where the use of such tools, especially taking into account the capabilities of a civil society, information and communication, humanitarian and other methods, is recommended to solve foreign policy problems in addition to the traditional diplomatic methods [3].

In this regard an important interest in theoretical and practical terms, in our opinion, is the philosophical and scientific reconsideration of the role of modern tourism as the process of development of the territory, the expansion of the integration boundaries, the development of international cooperation and, accordingly, the socio-cultural factor of maintaining the country’s international prestige — the formation of a positive image of individual regions, i. e. the “soft power of tourism”.

Cosmopolitanism of tourism as a phenomenon and its use as a tool of “soft power” to achieve the goal of forming a positive image of the territory in the international arena is becoming perhaps one of the new paradigms in the study of the laws of development of international cooperation of the modern period. As part of the formation of the global tourism space, humanitarian and political needs of different actors in international relations are significantly increasing. This process inevitably leads to the need for deep scientific understanding of international tourism as a specific and priority channel of influence on the outside world — a tool of soft power. For example, D. McClory (Jonathan McClory) considers “the prospects of strengthening British soft power through the focus of economic and tourist activities” [4].

The practice of the effective use of tourism potential has a multiple positive impact on the expansion of the boundaries of international humanitarian cooperation. For example, in Japanese culture, education and creative content a number of institutions in the field of formation of the image of the country in the international arena has appeared [5]. These attractive features of countries often encourage foreigners to visit these ones and thus develop a positive image of them.

One of the directions of progressive development of modern tourism being an important factor in the processes of globalization and the spread of universal values of democracy and civil society is its increasing role in the political sphere of society. Thus, today the use of its potential for the preservation or development of politically loyal socio-cultural environment can not remain unnoticed and is becoming an independent object of study [6].

In this sense tourism “as a form of soft power” [7] to a certain extent has an impact on humanitarian processes as well, as it forms the image of the territory at the level of “foreign travelers” feelings. As a result, there is a fixation of positive, neutral or negative perception of the tourism phenomenon in the world public consciousness.

In our opinion, tourism as a tool of soft power is a special kind of foreign economic activity of the state aimed at the formation of the desired image of the territory through the regulation of tourist flows, based on the principle of complementarity (complimentary action) [8].

Tourism as the most dynamic type of foreign economic activity becomes an extremely important tool of global but at the same time soft impact in the process of international cultural exchange. The nature of the tourist development of the territory determines the need to focus more on its important organizational and structural features in the selection of “soft power” tools. It should be emphasized that the deep understanding and study of this phenomenon occurs not only in the Western countries, where tourism has played an important role in shaping the image of individual countries, but increasingly it is used by the countries of the Asian region to promote their popular tourist centers [9].

These and other multi-faceted characteristics of modern tourism characterize its gradual transition into the area of implementation of the “soft power” policy. There is a significant alternative to the existing realities — complex and contradictory international relations, which are often associated with the use of instruments of hard power based on the coercion policy. And one can suppose that in the nearest future the

development of this process will be stimulated to a large extent by the rapidly developing youth communication and especially by the potential of the internationally organized youth environment institution [6], which is more and more involving in its orbit millions of young people from around the world. At the same time it is always necessary to remember the ancient Eastern wisdom — “if you want to defeat the enemy — bring up his children”, which transfers the phenomenon of youth tourism into the category of strong but inconspicuous soft power tools.

Youth tourism as a type of socio-economic activity has a growing dynamic that demonstrates increasing penetration into the various spheres of society making it a natural and integral channel of international cooperation. The revealed features allow to characterize it as an important tool of influence on the formation of the territory image. The latter occurs not least due to the “cross-pollination effect” [8].

It should be noted that despite all their importance the concept and structure of international youth tourism as a promising and demanded target component of foreign cultural policy that can have an impact on other countries and territories are not enough developed in the domestic scientific literature. The need to recognize its prospects as an effective and specific tool for the spread of cultural influence is dictated by the fact that the growing needs for multi-faceted activities of participants in the organized youth environment as a resource of transformations find support not only at the level of world politics centres, but also within the framework of well-known international organizations.

The development of this process is significantly affected by the peculiarities of individual interests and attitudes, value orientations of the international law subjects, so the organizers of youth tourism often use it as an instrument of influence. An important role in this is played by the main property of tourism as a form of space exploration “it is better to see once than hear a hundred times.” Thus, along with traditional instruments of influence (propaganda, PR, politicking), tourism has a significant difference — the formation of personal experience in the process of developing the territory [1].

A deep understanding of the nature of international youth relations and the features of soft power policy as a tool of influence takes place within the framework of the organized youth environment institution which still suffers from a serious lack of constant attention and proper state support, which inevitably implies the need to consider best practices both of the historical past and modern period [10].

With the collapse of the USSR the profound structural changes in existing ties up to the

fatal destruction of entire institutions occurred. It is not surprising that the former influence of tourism as an important instrument of international youth solidarity has been virtually eliminated. The resulting vacuum has led to the rapid flowering of “Western values”, sometimes everywhere and blindly in the youth “rebellious” environment.

At the same time, against the background of the growing trend of liberalization, i. e. a sharp transition from the total administrative and ideological approach of tourism regulation to the economic stimulation of the free market, it became obvious that the accumulated potential of the Institution of organized youth environment does not fully meet the increased needs of the new Russian elite (especially regional) and new political standards. Accordingly, its former ideological and humanitarian potential for objective reasons could not become an important prerequisite for independent development in the new socio-historical conditions. In fact, the analysis of the existing trends in recent decades shows that the sphere of domestic youth tourism remains underdeveloped. In this context, the previously developed forms and projects of international relations as a tool of “soft power” of the Soviet heritage can not meet the existing demands. But despite this, the best Soviet experience and practices are still in demand and have not lost their former international role, importance and relevance for the development of this area.

International youth tourism contacts contributing to the strengthening of regional ties are increasingly finding understanding and support within organizations such as UN, UNESCO, UNWTO, WYSETC etc. and individual state actors. Youth travel is one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism, accounting for almost a quarter of a billion tourists annually. This indicates an increasing influence on the development of regional cooperation [1]. With the growing emphasis on the targeted development of this activity various international youth tourism organizations and other stakeholders are increasingly interested in using tourism links as an approved channel for international youth cooperation and exchange. It is also necessary to note another feature of the modern period, namely the presence of various criteria for the targeted use of the potential of tourist contacts in terms of expanding cooperation with young people in other countries, where much attention is paid to the problems of the loyalty degree of young people in relation to these countries.

One should mention the existing complex relations between individual geopolitical centers, their views and positions (for example — the spread of “Western” universal values of democ-

racy and civil society). Moreover, the individual regional elites can perceive these relations as a hidden threat to their own cultural foundations and traditions (identity), and above all — in the most vulnerable “rebellious” youth environment.

Thus, the idea of the “American dream” or “a well-fed and rich Europe” is also formed mainly in childhood and adolescence through the influence of cinema as a kind of cultural expansion — another kind of “soft power” along with linguistic expansion [11].

Excessive and aggressive expansion of the boundaries of “progressive” youth tourism (both spontaneous and targeted) in the certain territories as a multifaceted process can be accompanied by a manifestation of displeasure and even antagonism in terms of the dominance of representatives of other cultures and peoples. Complex political events, migration, economic crisis, regional challenges in different parts of the world make not only significant changes in the structure of tourist flows, but can also change the content side of youth tourism in terms of its effective function of influence on the formation of the territory image. All this has a negative impact on the ongoing humanitarian strategies of individual states, in which international youth relations are given special attention as a priority means of promoting “soft power”.

The growing influence of Russia and even its position among the most influential countries by the criterion of “soft power” [12] do not fully provide the conditions for the formation of the necessary qualities of numerous specialized civil society organizations and youth structures in the sustainable development in this area. This situation does not allow the latter ones to act properly in the international organized youth environment as an actor and an instrument of influence in the development of tourist space.

Nevertheless, the ability to be a challenging center of attraction, especially for those countries that traditionally exist thanks to the strong influx of young people, is a strategic area of its humanitarian interests and should be based on the developed tourist contacts.

In this regard the most logical and close orbit of the development of international youth tourism in the context of the use of “soft power” for Russia, of course, is represented by the territories of the countries included in the integration regional structures of the CIS, EAEU, SCO, BRICS, etc. The need to ensure such an increasing role, including in the context of the development of a single humanitarian space, is largely due to the existing shortage of effective use of the potential of Russian participants in the international organized youth environment as an instrument of “soft power tourism”. The

role of Russian participants both of this environment and existing specialized organizations is modest in comparison with similar structures from developed countries.

The qualitative involvement in this process of the concerned actors and broad layers of youth, many of whom, in fact, do not properly represent the existing system of international youth cooperation and tourism both at the regional and Federal levels, requires the development of not only targeted development programs, but also the creation of a new model of the domestic youth tourism industry.

Despite the major youth events (XIX World Festival of youth and students, 2017), implemented international event projects on the territory of individual subjects and Federal districts of Russia (“Territory of meanings” “Ladoga”, “Mashuk”, “Tavrida”, “Baikal”, “Altai. Points of Growth”, “Baltic Artek”, “Amur” Eurasia”, “TIM”, Biryusa”, “MORNING”, “Volga”, “Native Harbor” and others), international relations are often limited mainly by the protocol meetings or projects and events, the composition of participants of which is mainly represented quite insignificantly, etc.

The analysis of thematic materials on this subject allows us to note that there are no clear data, both on the number of participants in these events and on the qualitative aspects of the organization and conduct as well as the results of the implemented forums. The trend of increasing quantitative aspect, which is increasingly developing at the expense of administrative resources and initiatives, often overshadows the issues of using them as a mechanism of “soft power” channel development properly. The lack of necessary data on the youth tourism as well as detailed information on international cooperation of young people, especially within the regional aspect, on the website of the Russian Tourism Agency indicates the slow development of the national institution of international youth cooperation and tourism — hence the “multi-speed” opportunities are emerging.

At the same time, the current situation around the problems of the institution of international youth cooperation and tourism is increasingly actualizing the need to form a fundamentally different configuration of youth relations in the external environment. It is the constructive institutional development of this area that can help numerous participants of the organized youth environment to make maximum use of new opportunities and channels for broad participation in the international humanitarian cooperation.

As the analysis of international practice shows, the broad involvement of the younger generation representatives in the mass forms

of interaction, including the one through permanent tourist contacts, is carried out largely taking into account their socio-psychological characteristics. Young people are most susceptible to the new ideas, trends, concepts that have a significant impact on their worldview and stereotypes about the surrounding world, in particular, in the formation of the image space (tourist image of countries, territories etc.).

Of course, today the humanitarian component of the socio-cultural and political influence of youth tourism on the new territories is very noticeable, which in turn creates some prerequisites for the formation of a new identity among young people exploring purposefully the tourist space. While traveling young people communicate with their peers and local residents and broadcast new values and knowledge that afterwards, of course, contribute to the formation of their image of one's country and people etc. Visiting another socio-cultural environment, apart from the formation of a common view (as a result of the development of new values, sensory experiences, positive emotions, involvement into the other socio-cultural communities etc.), creates an image of countries, territories, and tourists become carriers and conductors of the acquired values of foreign culture in their own society, thus carrying out "cross-pollination". It is the image of certain prosperous countries that to a large extent forms the tourist orientation of young people — the need for travel or, on the contrary, it can form certain stable negative stereotypes of theirs. For example, the famous phrase — "to see Paris and die" — in the past years meant the secret dream of millions of young Soviet people, to which many of them literally sought through all their life. And this fact proves that the positive image of cities, regions etc. was largely the determining factor in the development of the international youth tourism in some countries.

It is known that the USSR also used actively the resources of individual regions, which occupied a special place in the formation of the tourist image of the country. Popular tourist routes, international youth centers, World youth festivals, the cities of Moscow and Leningrad, the Golden ring and other attractions have always been associated with the image of the country among young people.

Of course, tourist ideas about different countries and regions are undergoing a significant transformation, and in the new conditions in the youth environment there are new attitudes, interests and stereotypes in relation to foreign travels and their perception, basing on their existing image.

It should be noted that cultural, historical, political values, modern achievements and at-

tractions as priority areas of Russia's foreign policy in many respects are becoming the important tourist preferences of foreign youth. It is necessary to strengthen the work in the regions not only on the organization of permanent multifunctional international youth centers (Artek, Sirius) designed for a relatively long stay, common residence, establishing friendly contacts, cooperation on various programs, but also on the formation of such centers in the border regions. In our opinion, this would allow the foreign peers, who have never been there before, to get acquainted with the country and acquire a more reliable idea of the multifaceted culture of Russia and its peoples' traditions. It is also obvious that one of the most important factors determining the image of the country abroad is the one which reports for UNESCO world heritage sites [13]. Their invaluable value as a factor contributing to the development of international youth humanitarian cooperation and tourism is widely recognized [14].

Of course, the role and place of unique objects of tourist and excursion display, attractions, institutional mechanisms and other resources of Russia's regions as a means of forming an international positive image of the country in the international youth environment not only requires reflection and separate profound study.

This suggests that for the purpose of qualitative development of the institution of youth tourism and the definition of its target functions in the use of potential in the external environment as a promising tool of soft power the state must have a certain level of sustainable socio-economic development, cultural and scientific achievements. At the same time it is necessary to create the most attractive conditions and mechanisms for the involvement of the concerned regional participants in the formation of a full-fledged national institution of youth tourism, which provides various opportunities for self-realization. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly necessary to develop specialized routes and projects aimed at foreign youth audiences and, of course, it is necessary to offer new concepts in order to make good use of the potential of young people in the international arena. Tourism ties as a means of forming a unified system of interaction between young people and its actors, should undoubtedly become an incentive for the development of a new youth tourism space, which has a positive impact on the process of humanitarian integration and projects of rapprochement in other areas.

A significant resource is the international youth cooperation of non-state actors, which is largely carried out outside of the single professional community. Against the background of the growing relevance of using its multifaceted

potential, for example, as a tool to influence the formation of a positive image of the country, initiatives and projects aimed at creating new accessible platforms for interaction both at the Federal and regional levels are put forward.

Existing youth institutions of the development of regionalism on the territory of the European space (Youth regional network (YRN) established under the guidance of the Assembly of European regions Assembly of European Regions), which involves individual youth organizations from some regions of Russia (Tatarstan, Kaliningrad) create favorable conditions for interregional cooperation. The youth regional network as a platform that brings together youth parliaments, councils and organizations to discuss and exchange ideas on critical youth issues and policies at the regional level focuses on the issues of current importance affecting young people's concerns. Of course, the existing model of regional interaction of young people within the framework of the well-known pan-European organization deserves attention in terms of supporting regional initiatives aimed at the interaction of young people, including in the field of education, tourism, youth cooperation etc.

In this regard, the program of the developing organization — “Association of international youth cooperation and tourism” (St. Petersburg) deserves close attention. Building relations within the framework of the formation of a single all-Russian platform with relevant organizations and structures from the regions of Russia the Association contributes to the expansion of the boundaries of international relations of youth through the “soft power of tourism”.

Today it is also important that the state should undoubtedly create the most favorable conditions for the motivation of all the participants in the sphere of international youth tourism and support projects aimed at the qualitative use of the demanded potential of the organized youth environment in the international humanitarian cooperation. At the same time the presence of stable informational channels devoted to the activities of these actors in the broad masses allows to expand the boundaries of the use of soft power including the ideological aspect as well. The organization of domestic youth tourism is of particular importance in this context as it is impossible to retransmit one's multinational culture without a direct contact with it, especially in the regions. Actions aimed at the formation of a new organized youth tourism environment and its effective development should qualitatively fit into the general logic of expanding the boundaries of Russia's foreign cultural policy, which is able to open new spaces for a wide range of ideas and forms of international

youth cooperation, including the ones through regional tourist contacts. It is obvious that this becomes possible only with the directed state regulation of tourist flows, the use of tourism as a tool of soft power.

Thus, it can be stated that the trends observed in recent decades, namely of the process of “protracted” exit from the crisis of the Institute of post-Soviet international youth tourism and consequently the problems of subjectivity and the use of its potential in the foreign cultural policy of Russia, are of great interest. At the same time, researchers do not properly focus their attention on the problems of its use as a necessary factor of imaginability (expansion of the boundaries of spatial perception) in the context of promoting the image of individual regions of Russia in the international space, which are increasingly demonstrating their capabilities as stable and attractive centers of socio-cultural influence and attraction.

The development of international relations and intense competition as well as its growing needs in the field of humanitarian presence provision creates an objective need not only to understand the role of this factor in the foreign cultural policy, but also requires the development of the post-Soviet concept of the Institution of international youth tourism establishment as a promising tool of soft power. At the same time the effectiveness of this concept implementation largely depends on the correct interaction of all participants, whose activities are primarily focused on the needs of foreign audiences.

The organization of the regional structure of domestic youth tourism is also of great importance in the formation of the image space. This is an important and promising direction of the tourism process, which combines various social and cultural mechanisms as equal ones to the influence of the factors on the perception of young people about the world.

At the regional level there is an objective need to develop new approaches and recommendations to strengthen the role of the organized youth environment in the effective use of the “soft power of tourism”. The possibility of using the regional aspect of youth tourism as a tool of soft power providing additional channels of influence on the international space should not only be desirable, but also become a necessary condition for the activities of all participants of this Institute in order to create a positive image of the territory.

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