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AXIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RURAL AREAS POTENTIAL

AKSJOLOGICZNE PODEJŚCIE DO KWESTII ORGANIZACJI POTENCJAŁU OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH

Key words: axiology, potential, rural areas, organization, competitiveness, development, 5S process

Słowa kluczowe: aksjologia, potencjał, obszary wiejskie, organizacja, konkurencyjność, rozwój, proces 5S

Abstract. In the paper the author considers a possible organization of potential of rural areas in the contemporary era of deepening competitiveness regarding the development of local – rural components of a region. In that view the axiological approach may show a differentiated perception of making good use of rural potential confronting the entrepreneurship (human capital) and rarity (uniqueness) of certain resources. The evaluation of possibilities of using local strengths towards development of rural areas with regard to the Japanese 5S process has also been pointed out. Finally, the author makes an attempt at adjusting and implementing this 5S process to the potential of defined rural input and output.

Introduction

Contemporary *techno* civilization glorifies consumerism and economic advancement but often forgets about the true nature of human being. Thus, the process of axiological evaluation seems to be broadly understood by different people leading to various perception. In fact the notion of axiology takes its roots from two ancient Greek words: *ἀξιος* meaning *worthy* and *λόγος* denoting *science*. Hence, the axiological approach will refer to talking about the value or in other words to studying the quality according to different aspects of theory of value. Considering the example of rural areas potential there are only very few elements which are intrinsically positive for local development (e.g. satisfaction of inhabitants, economic growth) but most of determinants require proper adjustment mechanisms to encountered local conditions. The importance of rural areas may be shown by the figures, especially regarding the effect of scale denoting intrinsic statistical weight of quantitative approach. Analyzing the situation in the EU-27, predominantly rural areas (according to the revised urban-rural EU typology of 2010) constitute respectively 57% and 24% of total area and population. Hence, rural areas are particularly important in terms of territory, providing simultaneously 56% of total employment and thus generating 48% of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the EU [Rural Development... 2010]. However, the significance of delimited rurality does not eliminate the problem of distinct inequalities and heterogeneous character of these areas within one European structure. One may prove that global process of polarization of world population in socio-economic, technical-consciousness, as well as cultural-mental dimensions occur even at the regional European scale. So as to avoid a pessimistic look leading us to the problem issue of structural disparities the non official motto of the EU: *in varietate concordia* (Latin: unity in diversity) may be related to rural areas potential and its complementary character considering all EU member states, and thus put negative disparities into positive diversification.

Value perception

There are many ways of perceiving the value mostly subjective though some are also of objective character adjusted to local conditionings. Thus, the subjectivity of evaluation often influences the specificity of value perception according to the approach (...) *so scheint es* (...) (German: it looks so) – indicating the considerable freedom on sensory interpretation within the concept of value [Hartmann 1916]. From axiological point of view one may distinguish different types of value, e.g. regarding profits for certain purpose, i.e. instrumental value, being advantageous in doing something - technical value, as well as contributory value remaining beneficial as part of a whole and final value being favourable as a whole. Obviously, the value of an aggregate of elements depends on how they are combined within one whole.

Moreover axiological aspects concern the issue of ontological connection between value and fact referring to link between nature of complex evaluation and structure of economic reality. In other words objectivity is symbolized by fact whereas subjectivity risk appears in case of value. The fundamental importance of this relationship should be considered while comparing the components of hard knowledge with value judgments (e.g. positive and negative economics). In such a case two aspects of economic knowledge may be distinguished: explicit knowledge – hard and formal knowledge with a cognitive status (rather of theoretical character), and tacit knowledge – soft, based on experience and intuitive knowledge (rather of praxeological character). While considering the axiological issue with regard to rural areas potential both qualitative as well as quantitative aspects have to be mentioned. Qualitative attitude seems to be more complex and therefore more subjective whereas the statistical concept of growth implies a quantitative approach to socio-economic development and mostly refers to quantitative changes designed to attain goal and economic values [Chojnicki 2010].

Nowadays, the perception of value is a little bit differentiated in terms of evaluation of current level of civilization advancement. The civilization forces people to change their lifestyle for being more stressful by offering in unnatural mode more and more extreme situations [Huntigton 2005]. And thus, the outlook on contemporary technical civilization may either create comfort and convenience for some people or form a sort of existential drama for others – constructing by that a kind of axiological contrast of the 21st century (*le contraste axiologique de la modernité*) as well as certain axiological inequality. Often the humankind is not able to keep pace with the process of technology what may cause the increase of the technical-consciousness gap [Niedersen 2006]. The axiological inequalities are a result of individualization phenomenon coming down to motivation whereas the axiological contrasts go far beyond that being situated among axiological anomalies [Czerny 2011].

Rural areas potential and its rarity

Each region within the administrative structure of the state has its own rural products connected closely to the local lifestyle, to the culture and to various geographical (physiography, topography), historical (heritage timeline), linguistic (dialect) and ethnographical aspects. Hence, a definite area has its own, specific potential for creating rarity products (goods, services) being more or less competitive at the local or regional market. The issue is strengthening the aspect of locality which requires a corporate identity and human capital, socially cohesive territory characterized by common traditions, local identity, sense of belonging, common needs and expectations, as well as clear economic and business goals within the entrepreneurial spirit. Especially human capital combined together with desirable level of entrepreneurship seem to be a complex issue. Human capital is based on certain personality traits implying defined skills of the individuals such as: diligence, resourcefulness, efficiency in acting, patience and perseverance, consequence in pursuing a defined goal, solidity, fairness, responsibility, optimistic attitude, self-confidence and psychical resistance influencing the development of entrepreneurship. There are a lot of features directly combined with the entrepreneurship: consciousness, promptness in relations with contractors and clients, ability to take a risk, ingenuity, deliberation in acting, credibility, skill of good organization of work. Considering the issue of value one may distinguish the internal qualities such as individual, personal, psychical, rural community attitudes and convictions in terms of culture and organization, as well as the external qualities of economic, legal, politic, local (commune, land-district) and regional (province) character. Besides there are features giving a chance for improvement and final success involving public relations: openness to people, communicativeness and politeness [Kotala 2004].

The phenomenon of rarity in terms of complex rural potential may imply the creation of new local products and thus give a chance for economic development success based on local entrepreneurship whose roots may be found in tradition of local inhabitants, as well as in material elements of rural society culture. Thus, the so called regional or local product (good or service) may become an export output [Urban 2004]. Obviously, each commune may develop different forms of entrepreneurship depending on the resources owned and feasibility in their utilization with regard to final product market output demand.

Analyzing the sense of place, i.e. rural area one may focus on three main constructs: place attachment, place dependence and place identity. Place attachment refers to the bond between an individual (or group, e.g. rural society) and a particular spatial setting such as a neighbourhood or a geographic region. Place dependence refers to a suitability of location for seeking satisfaction in the pursuit of some personalized interest or goal (possibilities of adjustment, feasibility). Place identity is described as the dimensions of self that individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and non-conscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment [Komáromi-Gergely 2011].

It is possible to give some examples of different types of product on rural areas which may signify different levels of competitiveness at local scale. There are some agritouristic core products which are different depending on intentional group they concern [Kutkowska 2003]:

- example 1 (cultural offer for parents with children, elder generation, foreigners); core product – rest in silence in the bosom of nature, natural recreation, access to nature, to both flora and fauna (contact with animals), access to fresh and healthy food, acquaintance with the ecological production process of organic food, acquaintance with history and culture of the region (micro-, mezo-);
- example 2 (offer emphasizing the taste of rural life for inhabitants of nearby cities, members of outdoor classes, excursions of secondary school children); core product - experience of different culture and lifestyle, rest in rural atmosphere, chance to improve one's knowledge of: regional meals, local delicacies recipes, food-processing, rural handicraft; experience of different tastes; chance for a return to days of youth gone by;
- example 3 (recreational offer for people preferring active leisure prepared especially for sport and recreation enthusiasts); core product: recuperation of the body, improvement of physical condition, recreation, outdoor games, contact with nature and animals, clean air;
- example 4 (eco-touristic offer for nature lovers); core product - rest in the bosom of nature, silence, fresh air, separation from everyday life, access to different natural ecosystems.

Each core product should be supplemented by real product which may include accommodation (affordable, *de luxe*, comfortable), full board based on farm products, access to kitchen, opportunity for purchasing farm products on the spot, excursions, walks, active leisure – volleyball court, football pitch, table tennis room, gym, etc. The element which may give a marketing importance to the real product is broadened product involving, e.g. tourist routes, hiking trails, cycling tracks, vicinity of nature reserve, vicinity of state border, horse riding facilities, possibility of angling, bathing beach in the vicinity, etc., increasing the potential competitive advantage of tenderer.

Organizational determinants and good practice

Regarding the international definition – the issue of competitiveness refers to the ability of a country or its part (e.g. region) to accumulate the local wealth in a more successful way than other comparable administrative units [The World Competitiveness... 1994]. The 5S process indicates the organizational way of behaviour which may strengthen the competitive force and advantage of the definite unit in the future. This way may be easily implemented on rural areas (e.g. administrative unit of rural commune) regarding their complex and more and more rare potential.

The Japanese five steps of perfect organization are designed to improve efficiency, strengthen maintenance, and provide continuous improvement in various facets of socio-economic life. The components of the Japanese 5S process are the most fundamental and often overlooked aspects in continuous improvement initiatives which may be implemented also into rural areas development strategy. Each of five elements is named after a different Japanese term beginning with the letter “S”: Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shitsuke [Hirano 1996].

1. Seiri (整理) denotes *sorting of potential*, a kind of selection of rural elements (strengths, assets) is the first step on the way to easy access to rural potential (mostly input). In fact it comes down to positive/negative classification of useful particular rural constituents.
2. Seiton (整頓) means *setting in order*, a type of systematics of rural elements (strengths, assets) is the second step on the way to easy access to rural potential (input and output). It relies on configuration of different assets, simplifying the access to them and finally straightening the competitive power of a rural area with regard to the strategic schedule.
3. Seiso (清掃) denotes *shine*, indicates the need of orderliness meaning a sort of clean harmony and equilibrium of rural development components and determinants in terms of their parametrization. This is the third and the last step towards easy access to rural potential (mostly output). It concerns accomplishment of the basic trinity of practical management.
4. Seiketsu (清潔) *standardize*, stands for a static aspect of implementation of the 3S organizational ordering. The maintenance of the first three pillars enables stabilization and socio-economic conformity a kind of compliance between population and rural area. It leads to the creation of balanced standards.
5. Shitsuke (躰): *sustain*, represents a dynamic aspect of implementation of the 4s organizational ordering. The maintenance of self discipline, custom and good practice towards sustainable continuous improvement is a key point for final success. The habit of continuity, understood as enforcing the sequence of the first 4S, ought to be mastered day after day within the process of complex rural areas development. In practice it comes down to finding the proper perseverant rhythm (Japanese: 律 *ritsu*) adjusted to the local conditionings.

As we may notice the Japanese 5S method is eligible to implement on rural areas being an example of model management of local resources ordering. First three steps concern the access to rural areas potential whereas the fourth and fifth pace regard respectively the static and dynamic nature of implementation of the defined model on rural areas. This pattern should be adjusted to local potential considering its stability aspect in terms of possible use. All these components make up the so called good practice proving the high level standards of a defined rural structure.

Besides organizational determinants presented in the 5S process there are certain mentality habits referred to in this method concerning the above mentioned good practice which very often, e.g. in Japan is performed mechanically, enabling the additional concentration on the innovativeness process regarding continuous improvement.

Conclusion

The perception of value in the days of widespread globalisation differs, while the worldwide process of social sequence of changing qualities in various aspects of life, is still in progress. There is a widespread ambiguity in understanding such categories as orderliness (static aspect of order) or discipline (dynamic aspect of order treated as a standard rhythm traditional measure). The globalised world specificity relies on the change of natural, cultural or social environment (personal contact with nature, culture and people), as well as the change of everyday rhythm of life. Nowadays many traditional attitudes to the problems of daily life and the quality of self-development are perceived in a different, very often reverse than the conservative, way but the superior aim always remains the same – physical and psychical wellbeing of population in a harmonious environment [Koreleski 2011].

The possible implementation of the owned potential by converting rural input into market competitive rural output is feasible by using the above mentioned 5S process, which corresponds well with the idea of *status et rhythmus ordinis* within *processus ordinis* leading to stable long-run ordering via often fluctuating short-run ordering [Koreleski 2010].

The organizational structure of rural areas potential presents a composite picture of human entrepreneurship, as well as advancement in development in economic, social and cultural dimension. This entrepreneurship is based on such components as, e.g. spirit of innovation, readiness to take risk, excellence at execution and social responsibility. So, if we combine these four elements with the 5S module we may achieve an effect of added value within synergy. It would mean on rural areas the chance for more sustainable and balance development of a definite administrative unit with regard to feasibility for competing on local or regional markets.

Furthermore the significant and complementary question that may augment the human creativity and make the people more capable of identifying opportunities is the Opportunity Identification Capability (OIC) which represents a cognitive capacity that in addition to specific knowledge regarding rural areas potential, enables people to make novel connections and see advantageous prospects and benefits in local or regional business setting [Mosey 2012].

Rural areas are endowed with many different values such as, e.g.: scenic and aesthetic value, recreational value, biodiversity and ecosystem value, existence value, job satisfaction value, cultural value, historical value, spiritual value, security and stability value, agricultural production and consumption value, etc. These values may be achieved by good practice in organic farming considered as agricultural activity that saves eco-systems on rural areas and maintains simultaneously natural biodiversity, cultural heritage as well as rural landscape. Moreover, the presence of historical buildings, natural reserves and cultural monuments creates a chance for qualitative touristic service.

Summing up, the rural areas potential organizational ordering may be based on two complementary planes [Koreleski 2010]:

- static (*status ordinis*) referring to the parametrical advantage of local potential structural ordering and profile, regarding the previously mentioned fourth “S” standardization sustainability aspect;
- dynamic (*rhythmus ordinis*) concerning the sustainability of changes arising in time, requiring proper organizational adjustment regarding both structure and profile, referring to the before mentioned fifth “S” sustainability aspect.

The issue seems to be clear, these recommendations considering both the 5S process and the static/dynamic dimension adjusted in a synchronized way to the rural areas potential may contribute to sustainable model of development course of a defined rural administrative unit.

Obviously, following the widespread standards of the western civilization the issue of the Japanese 5S process need not necessarily be accepted at once especially in Latin and Slavic countries, whereas the best opportunity for its most effective and successful implementation seems to be for Germanic states.

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Streszczenie

W artykule skoncentrowano się na dyskusji na temat aksjologicznej percepcji kwestii organizacji potencjału obszarów wiejskich w dobie pogłębiającej się konkurencji i zróżnicowania rozwoju w skali lokalnej, jak i regionalnej. Poruszono zagadnienia dotyczące japońskiej metody organizacji 5S. Zaprezentowano również możliwości dostosowania procesu wdrażania metody 5S dla potrzeb obszarów wiejskich, uwzględniając zarówno ich potencjał, jak i produkt finalny.

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