
SOCIOLOGY OF INNOVATIONS

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INNOVATION CHANGES HABITUS*

SUMMARY. Application of concepts "habitus", "the practice", offered and developed by P. Bourdieu, for research of subjective aspects of formation of the innovative environment is provided.

KEY WORDS. Innovative environment, research of actions of subjects of innovative activity, habitus, practice, effect of habitus hysteresis.

Modernization was carried out during different periods in the history of Russian society and with different degrees of success (reforms of 1861, the New Economic Policy, privatization etc.). Thereupon it is necessary to notice that in our country there are traditions of deep transformations and changes of both social foundations and technical modernization. Each period of the modernization of Russian society provided a quantum leap in its development as changing economic and political systems, infringing on radical interests of the population, demanded changes in the system of values and political transformations. Contemporary modernization of Russian society is not something new or unknown to Russia, but entails the next basic changes in society objectively caused by the economic and political situation in the world.

Russia chooses an innovative way of modernization and therefore the major problem for society is the formation of the innovative environment without which effective modernization of the innovative type is not possible. We understand the spontaneous self-developing system, comprising various types of subjects of innovative activity, as the innovative environment, including subjects of an infrastructure, and also institutions, insofar as these institutions and interrelations between them influence innovative activity as a whole.

The formation of the innovative environment assumes the presence of objective and subjective conditions and modernization factors. Without focusing on the objective side of modernization, its occurrence and the realization of innovations, since it is not included into our goals, we will review the rather detailed subjective

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side of innovative activity understood in Weber's spirit — as internally intelligent activity focused on the actions of others [1]. Without going into a detailed analysis of the concept, we will underline only that innovative activity in essence is a form of activity which is characterized by a high degree of consciousness, rational, purposeful, sufficiently algorithmized and technologized. Consequently, the conclusion which can be drawn as a result of studying the maintenance of concepts, programs of innovative development, is natural: developers start with the assumption that people will operate according to set purposes, consciously realizing effective forms of action for their achievement. The possibility of non-purposeful, non-realized forms is practically not taken into account. Real behavior and actions of people including innovations, happen to be conscious and non-conscious, rational and irrational, purposeful and aimless, operated and uncontrollable, logical and illogical, since they are influenced not only by objective prescriptors (legal and social norms, role expectations, etc.), but also subjective preferences, individual mindsets and so forth.

This circumstance limits the possibilities of becoming an almost traditional institutional approach to an explanation of the regulation of activity of subjects of innovative activity. As underlined by G.S. Kirdina: «Important for revealing steady social relations, the institutions representing objectivized structures of public activity, should lead to a variety of ways of display of institutions and institutional forms in real life out of sight of researchers. How are they realized in societies with different cultural bases? How is the specificity of their display during the different periods of time, for different social groups, defined? ... Answers to these questions demand an approach beyond the frameworks of institutional representations about society» [2; 23-33].

To understand existing problems of innovative activity, an enquiry into subjective aspects of the formation of the innovative environment of modernization is possible with a sufficient share of scientific reliability. Such an enquiry draws on the study of subjects of innovative activity of a particular disposition, installations in relation to innovative changes, that is, what people understand by the concept of «change», «innovation», and, as separate figures, how they individually interpret this concept, manage their behavior according to this understanding, and also the real forms which are accepted by their action.

In our opinion this problem can be solved by means of use of concepts «habitus» and «practice» offered and developed by P. Bourdieu.

Analyzing the approach of Bourdieu, N.A. Shmatko notices that the author «offers not the theoretical concept as a basis for an explanation of the practice of agents, constructed to present this practice as «reasonable» or, what is worse, «rational», but describes the logic of practice through its phenomena such as practical feeling, habitus, and behavior strategy» [3].

P. Bourdieu provided the introduction of the given concept into scientific use in the following way: «the concept of habitus was born from aspiration to remind that among categorical and explicit norms or rational calculations there are other generating principles of practice. Especially in societies where very little codified things are available so for an explanation of actions of people it is necessary to assume that they submit to some kind of «feeling of game» as said in sports. To understand their practice it is necessary to reconstruct the capital of information

schemes which gives them the chance to generate the intelligent and ordered ideas without intended aspiration and without conscious submission to rules explicitly formulated as such» [4; 117-118].

G.V. Osipov and V.P. Kultygin notice that P. Bourdieu uses the concept with two major meanings: first, «for a designation of incorporated history and sociality... Habitus designates predefiniteness, compulsoriness. It is necessity which has «flesh and blood in things»» [5; 949]; second, «habitus acts as a system of organizing principles of the action generating different practices» [5; 950]. Scientists make an actual conclusion for our research that «the concept of habitus allows to represent the perception of people of the social world as a product of double social structurization» [5; 950]. «Objectived and incorporated history is the same history» [5; 949]. Any social phenomenon, process, change, as well as the concepts reflecting them, have their history. Real social validity is objectively structured, and all its structural elements are objective in relation to the social subject. In the course of learning a person receives objective knowledge of the world, in the course of socialization interiorizes various qualities, values, norms in his or her own semantic structures, forming thereby his or her own «I».

P. Bourdieu paid attention to the fact that social practices are caused objectively and subjectively, and the concept of habitus entered by him allows to consider the subjective part of human relations, behavior, actions, and also to present social phenomena, processes and changes completely.

«Habitus is simultaneously a system of schemes of creation of practice and a system of schemes of perception and evaluation of practice» [4; 193], — remarks P. Bourdieu. In this way, by means of habitus «the social world does not appear as completely structured and capable of imposing principles of its own design on any perceiving subject. The social world can be named and constructed in various ways according to various principles of vision and division» [4; 195].

Furthermore, P. Bourdieu explains this idea, proving that in economically developed countries economic and cultural factors have the greatest differentiating value, but it does not mean that it is possible to differentiate a society on the basis of other principles of division, in particular, ethnic or national, religious. It is necessary in some measure to connect innovative changes explained by political, economic and cultural factors with ethnic, national, religious factors, though this connection will not be dominant. In conditions of poly-ethnic societies, as complexly organized in this respect as Russian society, these minor factors at first glance, can become especially significant. Thereupon we will notice that realization of innovations in Russia cannot be effective if features of the Russian outlook and mentality are not considered. P. Bourdieu underlines: «Any effort to mobilize, with a purpose to organize collective action, should reckon with the dialectics of dispositions and the possibilities, occurring in each agent, be it a mobilizer or mobilized» [6].

To understand the essence of this regulator of social action, the following statements by Bourdieu are important: «habitus makes practices, both individual, and collective»; it «is the basis of continuity and orderliness. And also the basis of regular transformations» since acting as a product of the interiorization of external factors «allows to avoid the alternative between the forces connected with the last condition of a system, external in relation to bodies and internal (the motives which have arisen at present, momentary decisions, etc.)», «gives the chance to external

forces to be realized according to the specific logic of organisms in which they are incorporated, i.e. steady, regular and not mechanical» [6].

The value of the analysis of habituses in the study of real forms which the actions of subjects of innovative activity take, is defined by its feature to provide identity and a constancy of practices in time, «in a more certain way, than all formal rules and all evidently formulated norms», thanks to the active presence of last experience which exists in each agent in the form of schemes of perception, thinking and action [6]. Bourdieu underlines that habitus «makes possible free production of any thoughts, perceptions and actions framed, peculiar to special conditions of production of a given habitus and only by this» [6].

It is stated that practices of innovative activity do not always correspond to its objective purposes, requirements, and are generated by specific habituses of innovative changes — dispositions, installations of agents in this sphere of social activity which differ depending on the position of a concrete agent (an individual or organization) in the system of innovative activity, social structure and other significant characteristics.

The concept of the effect of a hysteresis of habitus brought into scientific use by P. Bourdieu with reference to research on the practices of innovative activity, in our opinion, possesses a great heuristic potential. The author specifies that «the system of dispositions possesses inertia: dispositions change more slowly, than their social conditions of production» and «inertia to primary determinacy (in form of habitus) shows cases where dispositions operate in wrong time, and practices objectively are not adapted for actual conditions as they have been objectively coordinated with conditions passed or cancelled» [6]. The essence of the hysteresis of habitus effect (backlogs, delays) consists of the following — any time after the social environment has changed or the agent has taken another social position, the agent still reproduces practices based on their habitus, generated in a former environment with which it will objectively be coordinated. The effect of hysteresis of habitus of innovative changes can offer an explanation of how subjects of innovations understand the new environment (the new social and economic relations caused by requirements of innovative modernization of a society) depending on their habitus, from their ability to decipher a homology between the previous context and the new one, and what prevails: orientation to reproduction of former practices or adaptation of their strategy to this new context.

Thus, the effect of a hysteresis of habitus of innovative changes is at the bottom of inefficiency ascertained in much research of practices in the sphere of innovative activity. For Bourdieu, such situations cause a negative reinforcement of the dispositions lying in their basis which leads to transformation of the habitus which, finally, will lead to the formation of new practice, adapted for the changed conditions. However, Russia does not have sufficient reserves of time for such evolutionary transformation, and it actualizes a problem of formation of the innovative environment: «habitus is formed by work on suggestion and assignment» [6].

In conclusion, we will remark that in our opinion, by the means of P. Bourdieu's theory, it is possible to describe relevantly enough the installation and practice of innovative activity agents which still remain out of sight of researchers, and also to understand innovative changes, their tendencies and their orientation.

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