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## The transformation of the image of the Russian entrepreneur at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: possibilities of applying Pierre Bourdieu's socio-analysis

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### Abstract

The article deals with the transformation of the image of the Russian entrepreneur at the beginning of the 21st century. The interdisciplinary perspective of the specified issue enables the use of approaches and techniques from different branches of knowledge: history, economics, sociology, philosophy, etc. The author addresses the sociological conception developed by the French sociologist, philosopher and anthropologist P. Bourdieu, which fits into the general anthropological orientation of historical research. In order to analyse the possibility of applying this sociological conception to the study of the transformation of the image of the Russian entrepreneur at the beginning of the 21st century, the article examines the central theoretical constructions of the socio-analysis – field, capital, habitus, agents, practices. It also proves the expediency and efficiency of the use of these concepts in the interpretation of the changes in the image of the Russian entrepreneur. The application of the category "image" together with the concepts of the socio-analysis enables to identify the features of the interaction between politics and internal trends in the development of entrepreneurial activity and the entrepreneurial community in the process of forming, processing and transmitting the image of the Russian entrepreneur. The reconstruction of the image is carried out with due regard to both macro- and microsocial factors influencing the development and selection of behavioural strategies and practices by Russian entrepreneurs.

### For citation

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**Keywords**

The image of the entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, image transformation, image reconstruction, power, field, habitus, capital, agents.

**Introduction**

The reconstruction of the image of the Russian entrepreneur at the beginning of the 21st century (with the purpose of revealing its transformation) suggests several possible directions: the official image, which is formed and broadcast by the authorities; factors that caused its translation in this form; perception of the image by entrepreneurs and society as a whole; the image of the entrepreneur, formed within the business community, and its translation through professional institutions; the interconnection of authorities and entrepreneurs within the formed and broadcast image of the entrepreneur, etc. At the same time, the image of the entrepreneur implies the presence of certain qualities, a set of strategies and practices of behavior and even speech cliches. The appeal to the category "image" allows to implement a systematic approach to entrepreneurial activity and to consider it in the unity of individual personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, rules and procedures of business and political institutions and values of entrepreneurial and political culture of the time under consideration.

The interdisciplinary foreshortening of this topic makes it possible to involve to the research approaches and methods from different sciences: history, economics, sociology, philosophy, etc. In this paper the author turns to the sociological concept of the French sociologist, philosopher, culturologist, anthropologist P. Bourdieu, which fits in the general anthropological direction of the historical research. In scientific environment, P. Bourdieu's conception is ambiguous: some historians use his ideas and analysis methods as a research tool in their works based on an interdisciplinary approach, while others do not accept Bourdieu's conception.

In the author's opinion, such concepts of Bourdieu's social analysis as a field (political, economic, power and entrepreneurial community field), symbolic power, capital, practices and agents are productive primarily for our research problem – the transformation of the image of the Russian entrepreneur at the beginning of the 21st century.

**Application of P. Bourdieu's sociological concept to the study  
of the transformation of the image of the Russian entrepreneur  
at the beginning of the 21st century**

The activity of any historical agent, as P. Bourdieu insists, must be considered in the broad context of cultural production. Within the framework of this approach, images, cultural models, codes and symbolic landmarks are considered taking into account historical dynamics. The author seems right to make a certain image in close connection with both the challenges of time (depen-

dence on the socio-cultural context, the social order of authorities) and with individual strategies within the business community.

The concept of Bourdieu as a variant of a comprehensive analysis of mental and social is productive in interpreting changes in the image of the Russian entrepreneur. The appeal to the concept of capital makes it possible to trace the process of formation and design of the image, taking into account rules and norms characteristic for the authorities and the business community of the designated period. Bourdieu's sociological analysis also allows to consider practices of entrepreneurs and government officials, taking into account the specifics of fields, rules of the game, stakes, capitals. P. Bourdieu stresses that it is important to reconstruct values of various fields, and the value is created by the entire field. An adequate explanation of any fact requires the reconstruction of the entire field, including its internal structure, relations to other fields, analysis of the interaction between dispositions (attitudes, inclinations) contained in the habitus and the set of positions provided by the field. The development of a single field is inseparable from the unified history of all fields [Sociological analysis of Pierre Bourdieu ..., 2001]. In this case, the approach assumes the consideration of the values of Russian society at the beginning of the 21st century in general, and of business community and authorities in particular.

According to the field theory, entrepreneurial activity / business community can be represented as a kind of microcosm immersed in the laws of the functioning of a large universe – Russian society in general, but at the same time the field of the entrepreneurial community is endowed with relative autonomy and subject to its own laws. P. Bourdieu's concept, emphasizing the structure of objective relations of the time under consideration and its impact on the behavior of social agents, allows to see how realities of Russian life at the beginning of the 21st century influenced the strategies of politicians and entrepreneurs, and how strategies of behavior of politicians and entrepreneurs in turn influenced the structure of the fields of power and the business community.

The application of field theory makes it possible to regard the object of the research as a field of struggle for preservation (from some agents) or for changing (from the other agents) the structure of the power relations producing this field. In each field there are dominant and subordinate, determined according to the internal values of the field. A "good" entrepreneur is a person who is considered to be so by "good" entrepreneurs.

It is fundamentally important to take into account the fact of competition within the field between its agents. And this competition within the field occurs according to the rules of the game of the given field. In the field of the entrepreneurial community there is a struggle between entrepreneurs for power and capital (symbolic and not only), for the right to dictate the conditions of the game in the field. These "rules of the game" are described by P. Bourdieu's habitus. Introducing this concept, P. Bourdieu tries to remove the traditional for sociology opposition between the social structure and personal practices of the individual. The fundamental point is that the habit is integral and can not be decomposed into separate components of its dispositions, since it expresses one general principle, a style that is seen in all practices of the individual and transferred from one sphere to another, giving

them mutual consistency. Another feature of the habitus is that it is an unconscious structure – it is a system of deeply rooted dispositions, "forgotten" and completely unreflected [Bourdieu, 2007].

Fields can be represented by individuals. The study of the role of the individual, on the one hand, involves an analysis of social and historical mechanisms (habitus, symbolic capital) that have influenced / determined the possibility of such a role. On the other hand, without the person and his characteristics, the same mechanisms could form a completely different story.

The author proceeds from the fact that in the interaction of an entrepreneur and a politician, each of them is not just an entrepreneur or a politician, but an entrepreneur occupying a certain position in the field of the business community, and a politician who also takes a certain position in the field of power. This interaction will reflect / express the structure of relations between the field of power and the field of the business community. It turns out that the nature and results of interaction of some individuals in each particular case will depend not only on their internal properties, but also on the relations of the fields of which they are representatives.

In addition, agents can simultaneously enter several fields. This statement means that two entrepreneurs may have different total luggage fields. Often entrepreneurs are engaged in politics and politics in the past or in the present are connected with some kind of entrepreneurial activity. And with the contact of the entrepreneur and the politician, the position of the entrepreneur will be influenced not only by his place in the field of the entrepreneurial community, but also by the positions he occupies in other fields (power, religion, science, etc.). To understand the agent, you need to know the history of the field of its functioning. To understand the reflection of an individual entrepreneur on the role and place of entrepreneurs, it is necessary to know the place he occupies in the space of the business community (P. Bourdieu calls it the "objectification of an objective observer"). It (the place occupied) will be the objective reality of the existence of the given entrepreneur and at the same time one of the principles of his subjective representation. In the study, the author attempts to combine both these moments into a single whole [Bourdieu, 2001].

The concept of P. Bourdieu's field allows to look at the problem of responsibility not from the point of view of directly personal responsibility, when the search for the guilty takes place and the historian acts as a judge, but to proceed to the structure of the entire field and mechanisms operating in it. P. Bourdieu said: "In fact, the further the analysis of a particular social environment progresses, the more we understand limitations of the responsibility of specific individuals (it does not mean that we can justify everything that is happening there). The more we understand how a particular social environment functions, the clearer it becomes that the people making up it are manipulated to the same degree as they manipulate. The more they manipulate, the more they are manipulated and the less they are aware of it" [Bourdieu, On Television, 2002, 29]. But, despite the coercion from the field forces, agents are able to influence these fields, having some margin of freedom.

Entrepreneurs change Russian everyday life, expanding the autonomous space of the entrepreneurial community. Through personal contacts with senior government officials, they can influence decisions of politicians. The relationship between government and the business community

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is also determined by the presence of conflicting groups. When competition within the business community for the favor of state bodies, the policy pursued by the authorities is used to discredit opponents and strengthen their own positions.

P. Bourdieu writes that man lives not only in physical space, but also in symbolic space, which includes the whole space of human ideas about the world around him. In the symbolic space there are symbolic capital, symbolic power, symbolic violence, symbolic structures and symbolic order. Symbolic capital as a capital of honor and prestige, as recognition, name and "excellence", according to P. Bourdieu, is real. It is convertible, subject to inflation, usurpation, for which there is a struggle. In such conflicts, the warring factions try to impose their views on the world, their classification schemes, their ideas about "whom (and for what reasons) to consider as whom". An important aspect of symbolic power is its productive ability to "create things with the help of words," that is, to control the social world by controlling the ideas about it. Symbolic structures have tremendous power over people, setting the benchmarks for social practices [Bourdieu, *Policy Field ...*, 2002].

History has many examples when symbolic violence was used. Radio, cinema, photography, fiction, the media, and now the Internet are the main forms of such coercion, through which principles of the vision of the world are imposed. If a person constantly hears some information, then he begins to act according to its content, without thinking about its true meaning.

When the image of the Russian businessman is reconstructed, the author turns to visual sources (video, cinema, photo). There are mechanisms for their transformation into a tool for maintaining symbolic power. Possessing the effect of reality (with their help you can show and make you believe that you show), visual sources have the power to form the consciousness of a very large part of the population. The impact of film and photographic images on the consciousness and memory of people is very great. They often act as a tool for creating reality, while they are meant to be a reflection of reality. They can hide while showing, and show while hiding. It is important to see what you want to hide.

Working with visual sources as a methodological tool, the author appeals to the sociological constructions of P. Bourdieu. The ideological component of visual sources must be identified, reconstructed, including the level of artistic means.

One of the ways to reconstruct the image of an entrepreneur involves the analysis of various texts of this period (materials published in the media and on Internet resources, official reports, messages, speeches, sources of personal origin, "ego-documents" – diaries, memoirs, letters, interviews of entrepreneurs, etc.) The concept of the field, according to P. Bourdieu, should remove the need for a choice between reading "text-in-itself" and "text-for-yourself." He argues that between the text and society there is a "social universe, which is always forgotten, it is the universe of producers of these works, the universe of philosophers, artists, writers, and not only writers, but, for example, literary instructions, journals or universities, where writers are formed, etc." [Ibid, 114]. The effect of the field in this case is manifested in the fact that we can not understand the text and its meaning without knowing the history of the field in which the text was produced.

The theory of P. Bourdieu' fields allows to present the text as an entity belonging to a certain socio-cultural tradition – intellectual, national, socio-political, professional. At the same time, the level of autonomy of the field is important. But no matter how weak this autonomy is, according to P. Bourdieu, it is impossible to understand everything that happens in the field, relying only on knowledge of the external context. Some events that occur in one field or another can be understood only by treating it as a microcosm with people involved in it, which influence each other (Bourdieu, 1993).

### **Conclusion**

It is not enough to explain people's actions only through external dependencies, which they can possess because of their social origin, profession, direct or indirect social and economic ties. It is necessary to take into account the position of the person within the field. One of the manifestations of the autonomy of the field is its ability to refraction – the reflection by agents of external pressures through their refraction in accordance with the internal logic of the field to which they belong. The more autonomous the field, the stronger the "refraction" and the less connected is the occurrence in the field with what is happening outside.

Such a methodological message stimulates new questions and expands the problem field: how and how much is the ability of the business community to refraction in practice, how external phenomena are transformed (not only pressure from the authorities, but also society as a whole), what are the nature of external compulsions, their form implementation and ways of influencing. In the opinion of the author, it is necessary to study resistance, mechanisms used by entrepreneurs to resist external coercion. The nature of resistance determines the autonomy of the field, its ability to function according to its internal determination.

Thus, the application of the category "image" in conjunction with the concepts of P. Bourdieu's socio-analysis makes it possible to show the features of policy interaction with the internal tendencies of development of entrepreneurial activity and the business community in the process of forming, creating and broadcasting the image of the Russian entrepreneur. The image is reconstructed taking into account both macrosocial and microsocial factors that influence the development and selection of strategies and practices of Russian entrepreneurs' behavior. It is taken into account that the image is formed, broadcast and perceived in certain political, economic and cultural circumstances, in the field of social communication, in this case in the field of Russian society of the beginning of the XXI century.

Is entrepreneurship good or bad? Is an entrepreneur a hero or a villain-exploiter? Are authorities and entrepreneurs allies or enemies? P. Bourdieu's theory, emphasizing the structure of the objective relations of the time under consideration and its influence on the behavior of social agents, allows to abandon these alternatives. The formulation of the problem gives an opportunity to re-evaluate the nature of the development of entrepreneurship in Russia's realities, determine its place and role in the overall development of the country's economy.

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## **Трансформация образа российского предпринимателя в начале XXI века: возможности применения социоанализа Пьера Бурдьё**

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**Аннотация**

В статье проанализирована возможность применения социологической концепции французского социолога, философа, культуролога, антрополога П. Бурдьё в исследовании вопроса трансформации образа российского предпринимателя в начале XXI века. С этой целью рассмотрены центральные теоретические конструкции социоанализа – поле, капитал, габитус, агенты, практики. Показаны целесообразность и продуктивность использования обозначенных концептов при интерпретации изменений в образе российского предпринимателя. Применение категории «образ» совместно с концептами социоанализа П. Бурдьё дает возможность продемонстрировать особенности взаимодействия политики с внутренними тенденциями развития предпринимательской деятельности и предпринимательского сообщества в процессе формирования, оформления и трансляции образа российского предпринимателя. Реконструирование данного образа осуществляется с учетом как макросоциальных, так и микросоциальных факторов, оказывающих влияние на выработку и выбор стратегий и практик поведения российских предпринимателей.

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**Ключевые слова**

Образ предпринимателя, предпринимательство, трансформация образа, реконструкция образа, власть, поле, габитус, капитал, агенты.

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