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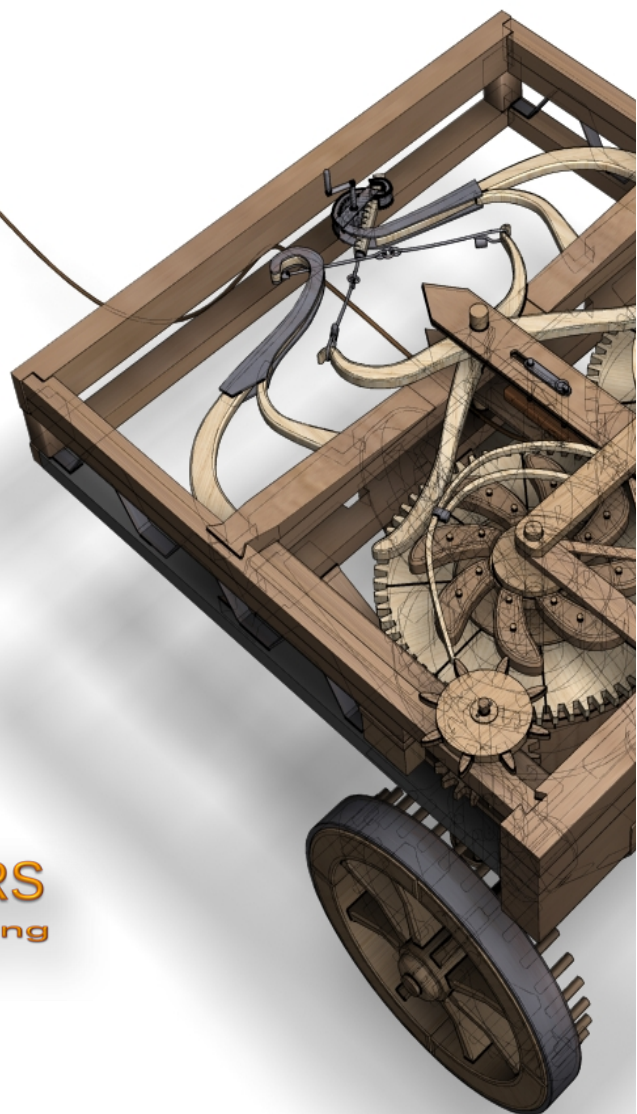
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Tourism Development of Russian Territories: Competitiveness, Effectiveness and Sustainability

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to development a theoretical concept of specialization of Russian territories on the tourist activities and to offer practical recommendations for development of tourism in Russia's industrial territories in the interests of their sustainable development, support for competitiveness, and high effectiveness. The authors use the methods of systemic, structural and functional, comparative, and problem analysis, analysis of causal connections, synthesis, induction, deduction, visualization, etc. The authors view perspectives and determine the possibilities for re-orientation of modern Russia's territories for tourism and determine the corresponding preconditions. Also, the advantages of tourist development of territories, as compared to the industrial specialization, are determined, as well as the problems on the way of industrially-oriented territories' transition to tourist specialization. As a result, it is concluded that modern Russia has a large potential in the sphere of the tourism sector development, which is interesting from the point of view of increase of competitiveness and effectiveness of territorial economy and achievement of its sustainable development. Due to low market barriers and close connections to other sphere of economy, the tourist sector opens wide perspectives for restoration of business activity in crisis-influenced industrial regions of Russia.

Keywords: tourism; destination; sustainable development of territories; competitiveness; effectiveness

JEL Classification: L83, Z33

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, Russia formed the open market economy and strives to lead the new tendencies in development of the global economic system. However, despite the influence of globalization, integration, and other factors, Russian economy preserves the industrial production specialization. As this contradicts the national course for modernization and formation of the post-industrial economy, industrial entrepreneurship in Russia's regions finds itself in unfavorable conditions and developed very slowly.

Re-orientation of the regional economy in the aspect of transition to specialization in the service sphere requires time. In traditionally industrial regions of Russia, higher educational establishments train engineers who dominate in the labor market, having no chance to work according to their specialty. The industrial companies that lost competitiveness – despite the location on cities' centers – are not currently working. Mass unemployment and low business activity are the reasons for deep recession of Russia's industrial regions.

The artificial, directive post-industrialization of the regional economy is a serious problem in modern Russia, as it does not allow the existing potential of territorial development and leads to development of the spheres of economy in which the Russian economy has neither absolute nor relative advantages.

As a consequence, the territories of Russia are characterized by insufficient effectiveness and low competitiveness and develop in a very unsustainable way. This leads to high actuality of the search for directions of natural post-industrialization of the regional economy of modern Russia through the development of the service sphere, in which it possesses advantages and can achieve high results, occupying decent places in the world markets.

Development of the tourism sector is a perspective direction of renewal of business activity in recessive industrial regions of Russia, which is a working hypothesis of this research. The purpose of this work is to develop a theoretical concept of Russia's territories' specialization on the tourism activity and to offer practical recommendations for development of tourism in industrially developed territories of Russia in the interests of their sustainable development and supporting high competitiveness and effectiveness.

2. Materials and method

The theoretical issues of post-industrialization of socio-economic systems were studied in the works of such scholars as (Fan *et al.* 2017), (Ștefan-Sebastian 2014), and (Gorbanyov 2011). The practical experience of development of post-industrial economy in industrial countries and territories' specialization on development of tourism sector is reflected in publications of such authors as (Carrillo and Jorge 2017), (Zach and Hill 2017), (Lin *et al.* 2017).

Peculiarities of modern Russia's territories' specialization and the issues of provision of their competitiveness, effectiveness, and sustainability are viewed in the works of such experts as (Przhedetskaya and Sheveleva 2016), (Bogoviz *et al.* 2016), (Sadovnikova *et al.* 2013), and (Popkova *et al.* 2017). The authors use the method of systemic, structural and functional, comparative, and problem analysis, analysis of causal connections, synthesis, induction, deduction, visualization, etc.

3. Results and discussion

Let us view perspectives and determine the possibilities of re-orientation of modern Russia's territories at tourism. The preconditions for this are the following:

- *Unique geography.* There are unique natural landscapes in many corners of Russia, which cannot be seen in any other country of the world. Large territory provides a huge diversity of nature. That's why, while traveling in Russia, tourists can enjoy marvelous landscapes;
- *Interesting history.* There are many sights from various historical ages in Russia. Tourists can choose the destinations depending on any time period – these include Old Rus archeological sites, the Tzar sites and architecture, etc;

- *Specific culture.* The medium location between Europe and Asia formed the culture that is close for representatives of all other cultures. Modern Russia is a multi-confessional country, with a lot of different cuisines and languages. Multi-cultural tolerance of the population predetermines high loyalty of the Russian population to tourists;

- *Convenient location.* Russia is located in the heart of the continent, so it is convenient to reach it from Europe and Asia, as well as Africa. This forms a large number of potential tourists. At the same time, due to moderate influence of natural factors and developed healthcare sphere, visiting modern Russia is safe for tourists in the aspect of health – *i.e.*, it does not require special vaccination. In addition to this, the criminal situation in Russia is low, as compared to many other countries, which makes tourism safe;

- *Favorable currency rate.* Depreciation of ruble created even more favorable conditions for visiting Russia. Due to that, foreign tourist, especially from Europe, can visit and do business in Russia easily.

The viewed preconditions create a possibility for development of historical, recreational, business, and other types of tourism in Russia. Tourism direction of territories' development has a lot of advantages, as compared to the industrial specialization. One of such advantages is flexibility. Creation and development of companies of the tourism sector do not require a large volume of investments, construction of buildings, and purchase of expensive equipment.

An important condition for success of the companies of the tourism sector is marketing, which allows determining the existing demand, and innovations due to which interesting methods for satisfying the demand are used, which attract consumers. Low barriers for entering the tourism market allow involving a lot of companies and employees into this sphere, thus stimulating the increase of the population's employment level.

Also, it is necessary to note such advantage of the tourism direction of territories' development as stimulating the development of adjacent spheres of economy. While industry in Russia's regions is represented in the B2B sphere and industrial companies cooperate only between themselves, the tourism sphere allows developing all spheres of economy in full scale.

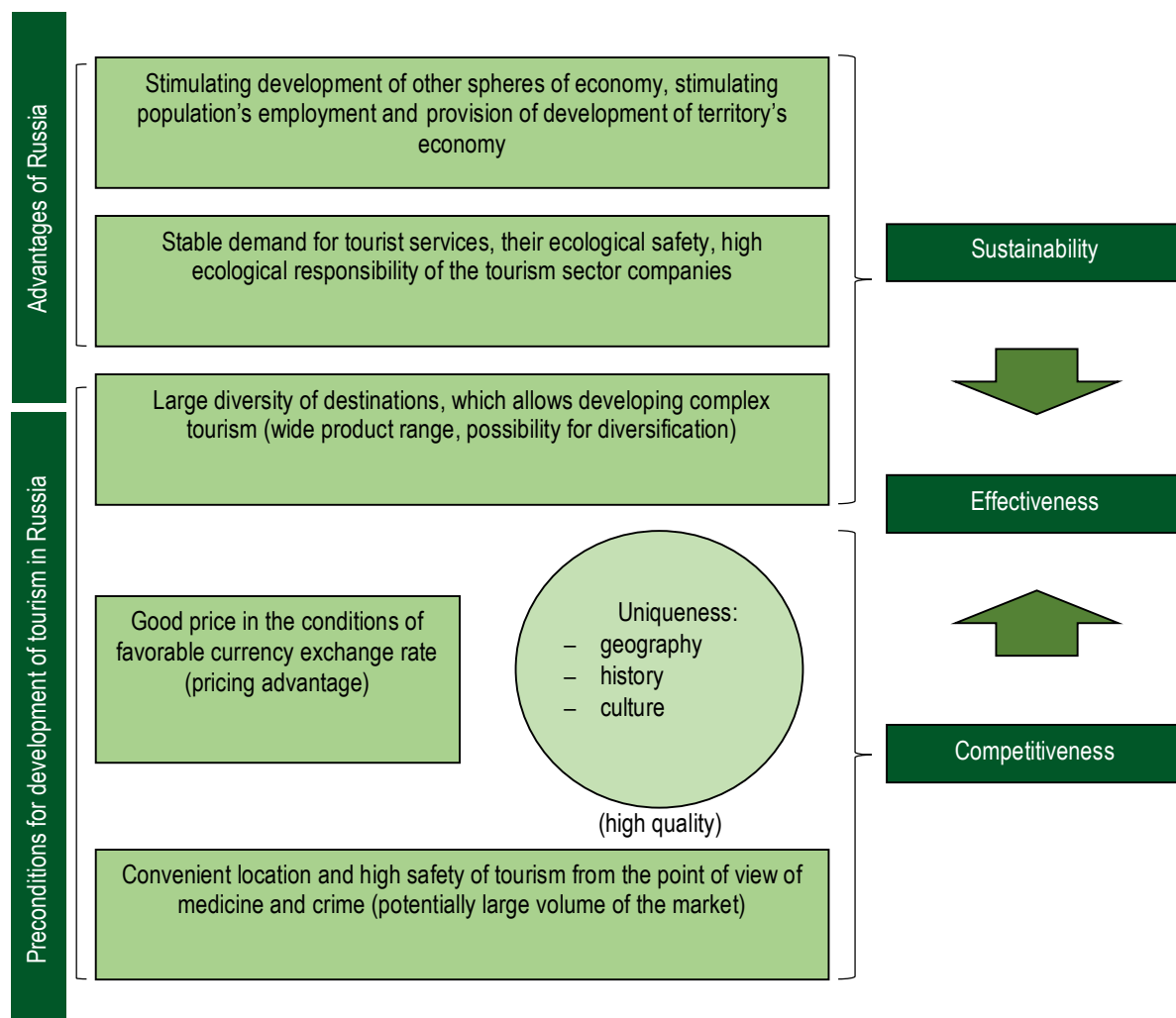
Thus, the tourism sector sets a demand for the work of the companies of food industry, agriculture, construction, trade, transport, *etc.*, creating more jobs and providing additional tax revenues into the territorial state budget.

Its advantages include also environmental friendliness. Functioning of the tourism sector is not accompanied by polluting emissions and supposes preservation of the environment that is favorable for tourists and local population. The natural and recreational tourism supposes the tourism companies' investing into support and restoration of the favorable environment.

The advantages also include the fact that the demand for tourism services could be characterized as stable. That is, development of the tourism sphere can provide the territories of modern Russia with stable income and employment. At that, natural, architectural, and other diversity of Russia's territories allows developing various directions of tourism (not the same in all regions), thus providing equal development of the regional economy.

Based on the above, we offer the following concept of specialization of Russia's territories on tourism in the interests of their sustainable development for supporting competitiveness and high effectiveness (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The concept of Russia's territories' specialization on tourism activity in the interests of their sustainable development for supporting competitiveness and high effectiveness



As is seen from Figure 1, the core of development of tourism activities by modern Russia's territories should be provision and support for their uniqueness, which is a guarantee of high competitiveness of tourism activity. This will allow getting advantages from it and achieving high effectiveness of development of the regional economy.

Transition of industry-oriented Russia's territories to the tourism specialization is hindered by three main problems. The first problem is a weak brand of the Russian tourism. Low awareness of foreign tourists and low loyalty of Russian tourists predetermines unattractiveness of Russia's territories as destinations.

The second problem is underdevelopment of the tourism infrastructure. This includes low quality of roads, lack of hotels, underdevelopment of tourist sites, etc. That is, the existing potential of development of tourism in Russia is not realized in full, which requires investments and wish from public authorities, business, and local population.

The third problem is entrepreneurs' attitude to business in the tourism sphere. It is manifested in their unreadiness to invest into its development. This is seen at the Russian resorts, which local residents think that favorable conditions are enough for attracting tourists, while the quality of service (especially, as to the comfort) leaves a lot to be desired, and the price for all goods and services are too high.

In order to solve these problems, we offer the following practical recommendations for development of tourism in industrial territories of Russia in the interests of their sustainable development and support for competitiveness and high effectiveness. Firstly, it is helped by the FIFA 2018 which is to be held in Russia.

In order to receive the maximum profit from this event, it is necessary to ensure high interest from the population and business for creating the best impressions for the tourists. This could be done with the help of the Russian contest for additional investments for the most well-intentioned regions. This will involve the population and entrepreneurs of a region into a competition, which supposes a stimulus.

Secondly, it is important to ensure creation of the infrastructural objects, so that they could be used afterwards. In this context, it is expedient to set thorough control over the quality of execution of works on construction of hotels and roads. Thus, the attracted investments for FIFA 2018 will be used effectively and will create an impulse for development of the regional economy of Russia.

Thirdly, it is necessary to introduce clear standards of the quality of tourist services. If the tourist companies do not care about creation of favorable conditions for tourists, then the state must take care of that. For that, an independent committee should be created, which assigns the levels ("stars") to all tourist sites in Russia, depending of which the possibilities of their owners as to the prices for the services will vary.

That is, it is necessary to implement the state regulation of prices in the tourism services sphere, by establishing the price limits for various categories of tourist object. This will allow for maximization of the ratio of price and quality of tourist services in Russia, which will increase competitiveness of the tourism sector.

For monitoring and control over realization of these measures, we offer to use the following evaluation scale (Table 1).

Table 1. The scale for monitoring and control over realization of the offered measures

Indicators	Criteria of evaluation	Rating scale		
		1	2	3
Level of region's friendliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of knowledge of English; level of business's corporate responsibility; friendliness and hospitality towards tourists. 	low low low	medium medium medium	high high high
Long-term use of infrastructural objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of road construction; duration of region's greening; potential for further use of hotels and restaurants; potential for further use of sports complexes. 	low low low	medium medium medium	high high high
Level of standardization of tourist services' quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ranking of hotels assigning "stars"; ranking of restaurants; standards for tourist agencies. 	absent absent absent	absent absent not applied	applied applied applied

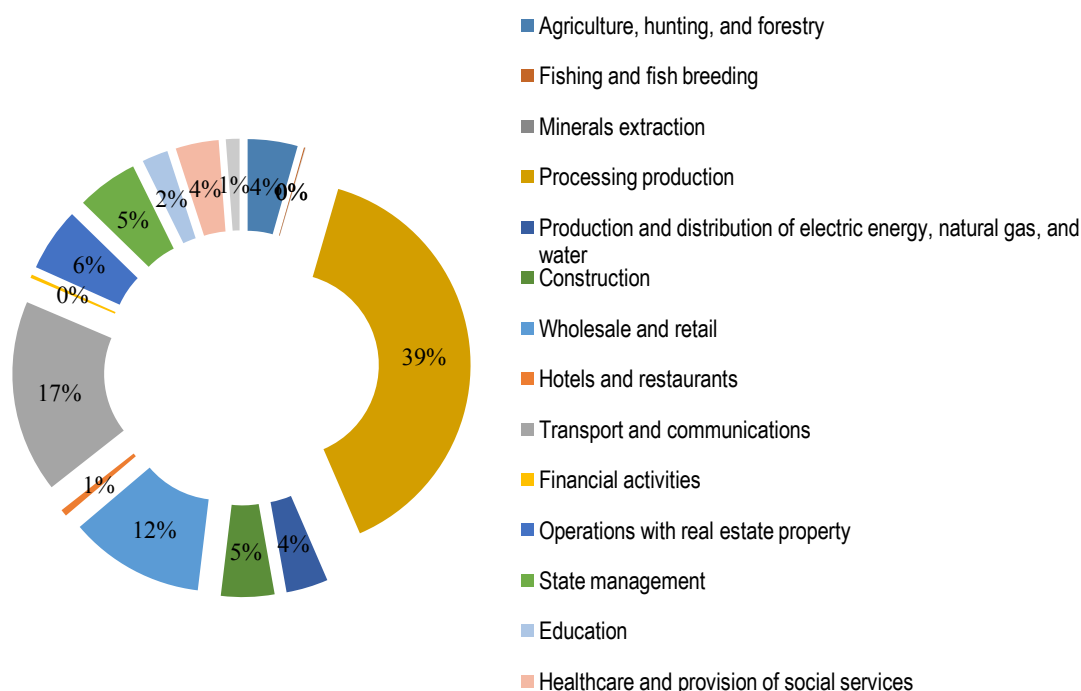
Source: compiled by the authors.

This scale allows performing expert evaluation of the course of realization of the concept of specialization of Russia's territories on tourism activities in the interests of their sustainable development, support for competitiveness, and high effectiveness.

4. Case study

Let us view a practical example of realization of the offered concept of specialization of Russia's territories on tourism activities in the interests of their sustainable development, support for competitiveness, and high effectiveness. A typical industrial region of Russia is Volgograd Oblast. The sectorial structure of gross regional product of Volgograd Oblast in 2016 is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Sectorial structure of gross regional product of Volgograd Oblast in 2016



Source: Compiled by the authors on the basis of materials. (Vologstat 2017)

As is seen from Figure 1, the share of industry in sectorial structure of Volgograd economy constitutes 51.9%, which reflects the industrial orientation of the region. The tourism sphere is not distinguished in the sectorial structure of gross regional product. However, in view of the fact that the share of hotels and restaurants constitutes 0.6%, it is possible to suppose that the share of the tourism sphere is very small – despite the rich history and availability of world-class landmarks, the most popular of which is the architecture and memorial complex Mamayev Kurgan.

Industrial orientation of the region is a reason for strong pollution of the environment. According to the research ecological organization “Green Patrol”, Volgograd Oblast is ranked 19th out of 85 in the ecological ranking of Russia’s regions – mainly due to the high level of industrial pollution of the environment (Green Patrol 2017).

Competitiveness of the regional economy is low – Volgograd Oblast is ranked 39th out of 80 in the Russian ranking of regional economy competitiveness (Golovizin 2017). Sustainability of regional economy is very low – 20th out of 24 (Interfax-ERA 2017).

In the Strategy of socio-economic development of Volgograd Oblast until 2025, the tourism sphere is specified as one of the top-priority spheres of regional economy development (Volgogradskaya pravda, 2017). Due to FIFA 2018 in Volgograd, wide possibilities opened for that, provided primarily by the inflow of large external investments into the region's tourism sphere development.

For ensuring high competitiveness, sustainability, and effectiveness of Volgograd Oblast's economy in the long-term, we recommend to use FIFA 2018 in Volgograd as an impulse for development of the tourism sphere, which will be supported by the region, for this sphere to become a new vector of its growth and development.

Conclusion

Thus, modern Russia possesses a large potential in the sphere of development of the tourism sector, which poses interest from the point of view of increasing competitiveness and effectiveness of the territorial economy, as well as achieving its sustainable development. Due to low market barriers and close connections to other spheres of

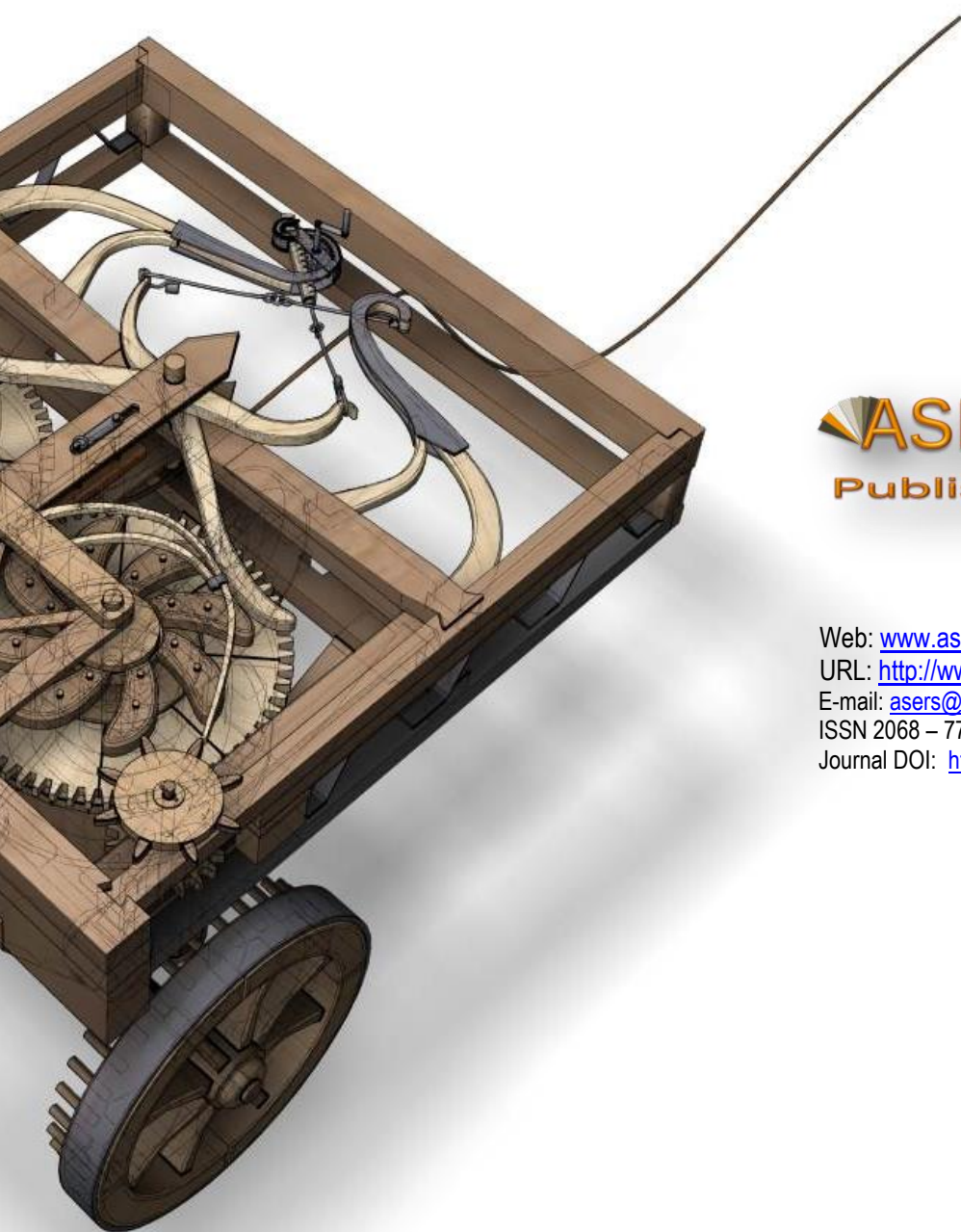
economy, the tourism sector opens wide possibilities for restoration of business activity in recessive industrial regions of Russia.

The largest obstacle on the path of provision of the tourism direction of development of Russia's territories is weak state regulation, which, combined with "market gaps" (investment and innovative passivity of sellers, complexity of strengthening of brand by small companies, etc.) makes it impossible to open the existing potential of development of the tourism sector. The offered authors' recommendations allow solving this problem and activating the process of establishment of highly competitive tourism sector on the territories of modern Russia.

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