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Territorial capital – a specific feature of territory

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the article is the theoretical analysis of territorial capital in the context of its essence, the elements that determine it, and the role it plays in development policy.

Methodology: The research was based on the qualitative and quantitative approach. The methods applied are primarily the descriptive method and critical analysis of literature on local development, intangible resources and the theory of territoriality. Case studies of selected autonomous territories in Poland (e.g. municipalities with developed bottom-up strategies) are also conducted.

Results: An increase in the importance of intangible resources (social trust, relational capital) as a key factor of development was identified. The important role of informal local coalitions in creating development policy, regardless of formal structures, was noted.

Implications and recommendations: Local development policy should take into account the unique social and relational structure of a given territory. Mechanisms are needed to support local autonomy in the creation of development strategies – especially bottom-up ones. Recommended reorientation of financing tools (e.g. EU funds) from hard investments to soft and networking activities.

Originality/value: The author addresses a current and insufficiently researched area: the role of intangible resources in local politics. He combines the socio-relational approach with the spatial-economic approach, indicating their complementarity. It provides specific tools for diagnosing and strengthening the development potential of local and regional areas

Keywords: territorial capital, territory, location

1. Introduction

In the contemporary socio-economic reality, the role and importance of socio-economic spaces and local development factors have undergone a certain transformation. Apart from research into the effect of classical determinants on local and regional development, there is a continuous increase in the importance of mainly intangible resources on internal social relations and interactions. Autonomous territories of a certain type emerge, capable of exerting a stronger or weaker impact on their own development policy, based not only on history, but above all on interpersonal and interinstitutional connections. The knowledge and organizational skills used in these processes for so-called 'coalitionality' are a kind of attachment to a given territory through social resources capable of absorbing innovations and participating in interregional competitiveness (competition between territories). The change in the relationship between space and economic activity requires special attention to be paid to adapting development policy to the specific features of a given territory.

2. The essence of territorial capital

Territory is a very complex category, meaning that it is exceptionally difficult to adopt a universal algorithm for assessing its value. Nevertheless, all the elements that are at the disposal of a territory and make up this value constitute, as Camagni (2008, p. 34) writes, its "territorial capital" which should be wisely and fully exploited. Thus a particular feature that underlies the specifics of a territory is its territorial capital. Although it is not unequivocally defined in the subject literature, and various understandings of it are proposed depending on the approach, it should be underlined that these are unique resources primarily of an intangible nature (e.g. established relations, culture, organisational abilities, the identity of a place, the ability to innovate, entrepreneurship, climate), that is those which are embedded in a given socio-economic space and are hard to transfer. Undoubtedly, both material and intangible resources are important. However, the importance of the latter is crucial as they constitute all the elements which are created in the space as the result of interaction, and which form a system of relations, norms and territory. According to Markowski, territorial capital is a new factor for contemporary economies in creating a competitive advantage through the synergy of traditional resources related to knowledge and innovativeness. In other words, it is understood as access to material and intangible factors in a given area that may create specific resources or limitations (Markowski, 2021, p. 61). The same author proposes the following definition: "territorial capital comprises specific external benefits created and available as a result of the multifunctional interaction of users of a relatively defined territory" (Markowski, 2011, p. 44). In his opinion, territorial capital is dynamic in nature in both time and space as "complex club goods" available to the users of the club operating within its functional area¹. The above position is confirmed by Przygodzki (2015), who understands territorial capital as a set of elements which constitute the competitive potential of a territory. These include: natural resources, public, private and mixed ownership goods, human, social and relational capital, and organizational, relational and cognitive resources.

This unique opportunity to obtain a competitive advantage thanks to territorial capital is rather contained in the feeling of belonging to a given territory and mutual trust than simply access to capital, in creativity rather than access to a workforce, in the existence of mutual connections and interdependencies, and in the existence of a local identity rather than quality of life and effectiveness (Camagni, 2008, p. 31). All these elements, complemented by existing functional approaches, can be understood in the category of 'territorial capital' (Kwaśny, 2018, p. 125). It also takes into account traditional material resources as well as the latest intangible resources (Fig. 1). Among the former we

Functional areas considered in the context of territorial capital are variable in time and space. This means that in a more flexible, dynamic and globalized economy, continual changes, e.g. administrative divisions of the country appropriate to new functional-spatial relations, are not justified.

can distinguish geographical location, size, production capacity, climate, traditions, natural resources, quality of life, the benefits of an agglomeration generated by a city, as well as entrepreneurship incubators and industrial districts or other business networks that contribute to reducing transactional costs. The latter are so-called non-market interdependencies, such as understanding, customs and informal principles that enable economic entities to cooperate in conditions of uncertainty, as well as such values as solidarity, mutual assistance and exchange of ideas, often developing in clusters of small and medium-sized enterprises working within the same sector.

territorial capital intangible resources material resources benefits of place: agglomeration non-market geographical location, benefits: interdependencies innovation clusters, size, traditions and customs production capacity, entrepreneurship understanding, climate, incubators, solidarity and mutual natural resources, industrial districts, assistance, quality of life business networks social capital

Fig. 1. Components of territorial capital

Source: developed on the basis of (Kwaśny, 2018, p. 126).

Territorial capital distinguishes a place and its uniqueness in cultural, spatial, social and economic dimensions. It would seem that in the contemporary socio-economic reality, we can also define it as a set of all the best possible traditional resources combined above all with knowledge and innovativeness, that is creative capital which is the key factor in competitiveness.

3. Human, social and creative capital as elements of territorial capital

Territorial capital should be substantive, and its task is to stimulate regional and local economic productivity. We should understand this all as a quality which is conditioned by solutions adopted among others in education, but also in family education (related to inheriting human capital). This is a typical example of combining the education system with the economic development. In economic practice, these dependencies very often induce a cumulation of effects related to the creation of spatial imbalance and the growth of disproportions. One example of this is the fact that in the distinguished local economies functioning in space there are considerable disproportions in the level of development of human capital, e.g. from the perspective of investing, which first takes place at school, and later by acquiring professional experience. In this understanding, human capital becomes a factor influencing the long-term growth rate, and investments in human capital result in internal effects in the form of an increase in work efficiency, as well as external effects in the form of increased productivity of physical capital. The conclusion from this is that the principal determinant of human capital is knowledge. As noted by Domański (2006, p. 82), "the process of creating human capital is the result of connections and dependencies between the education system and economic development, which results in various interdependencies and the cumulation phenomenon, which in turn leads directly to spatial imbalance and the growth of disproportions".

This approach means that investments cause an increase in the wealth of nation (region, microregion) by increasing workload, on condition that there is practical application of the acquired knowledge. Korenik (2008, p. 76) takes the position that "the term human capital itself is used both in relation to

people, as well as entire social groups living in a specific area, their skills and predispositions. This is important because it is through this capital that the diffusion of knowledge occurs in the regional and local community, which is the foundation for rapid socio-economic development, that is territorial growth".

Similarly to financial and material capital, human capital demonstrates a tendency to focus on a given territory as a result of the positive couplings between them and the phenomenon of synergy. In a certain sense it is subject to unification itself, which is an expression of increasing globalization. Contemporary disproportions and the level of development of regions and micro-regions contribute to its mobility. Here we can use a certain regularity, that is the higher the level of human capital people represent, the greater their tendency to be mobile. It is obvious that the greatest cumulation of this capital occurs in territories with a high level of development. In these conditions, social capital, often called relational capital, takes on a particular importance (Herbst, 2007, p. 297).

In the literature on social capital, there lacks an unequivocal position as to the definition of the category. It is often used in relation to such issues as social trust, culture and institutional efficiency. As noted by Herbst (2007, p. 128), "it is most useful to look at social capital as a network of interpersonal connections, and above all the way in which this network can impact economic development".

Social capital should be expressed among others by the fact that in the initiatives it undertakes, a given entity uses not only its own resources, but also relies on the behaviours and reactions of other members of a given group. This creates a feedback loop which mobilizes the members of a given community to increase their participation in social life. The source of social capital can therefore be seen in the traditions of civic participation, the positive experiences of the community and collective cooperation, local organizations and philanthropic organizations, as well as the attitudes of local leaders. Similarly to the education system. For example, in local governments there is presently a lack of trust in the local government, which unfortunately is not conducive to entrepreneurship. The ties and relationships are often too stiff and there is a high level of mistrust in the authorities. Such a situation is not conducive to innovativeness. The lack of skills for cooperation between governments, authorities, local governments and people weakens this group of resources, and subsequently the administration of a given area. There is also often a tendency to create individualistic attitudes, which has an isolating effect and leads to stagnation and even economic and social regression. In such a territory, no thought is given to competitive advantage, and efforts are not made to improve the quality of life, education and work. This means that social capital creates a hermetic society. In such regions, communities are cohesive not only naturally but also thanks to social capital. Deeply embedded social ties hinder the influx of new ideas and new inhabitants, and are not conducive to development. Such territorial capital should be replaced with creative capital that brings new features to territorial capital. In practice, it is important to gather people with high qualifications and skills, but also characterized by an unconventional and innovative attitude, as well as with untypical skills and who take part in creative activities both individually and in teams. It follows from the above that social capital is impacted above all by the quality of interpersonal relations (relations, relationships, synergy effect), which means that it constitutes human capital enriched with relations and cooperation. While human capital is static, social capital should be treated as dynamic as it brings benefits.

Creative capital is formed in the creative sectors in which there are creative professions. Representatives of these professions and sectors are generally considered to be the creative class. In the case of enterprise territorialisation processes, from a geographical point of view this means, for example, that the links between the success of individual firms in a given territory vary significantly. In centres with weaker territorial capital, both income and social disproportions will intensify. Layering phenomena are noticeable in such territories.

This poses a significant challenge for local authorities and politicians. Their activity cannot be limited, for example, to the single locating of a new enterprise, as this should be continuous and conducive to both embedding enterprises in regional structures and the valorisation and renewal of local resources, in particular technological resources. In other words, authorities and politicians face the need to ensure interaction between logic and global (industrial) strategies, and the logic of territorial development (Jewtuchowicz, 2006, p. 167).

In the current socio-economic reality, we see a networking of territory, and the most effective network is that of creative capital, which, as has been emphasised on numerous occasions, is becoming the most valuable territorial capital, thus also of a given socio-economic space and its development, as well as a determining element providing the opportunity for shaping economic policy. Networks also enable the concurrent execution of many tasks in real time. Production by citizens can in such a case be treated as an element of new territorial production. It appears in the network and becomes the manifestation of a new dimension of the social sector, due to the radical reduction in the costs of information distribution and knowledge. This argument can in turn lead to the conclusion that territorial development based on traditional and new factors is guaranteed while constantly achieving a competitive advantage. Successes are achieved by those territories that are able to develop in themselves the ability to continually generate innovation. It must be admitted that mainly for historical reasons, the possibility of achieving a multiplier effect through them is highly varied in Poland. This situation causes the appearance of barriers to regional and local development and the search for policies that will strengthen the system of mutual interaction and thus the strength of territorial capital. Poorly developed territories would seem to have an opportunity in creative capital, whose main task must be to increase the strength of economic embeddedness and its influence on the remaining areas, thereby expanding the economic area of the territory.

4. Location as a key determinant of territorial capital

In order for economic processes in a given territory to be effective, decisions should be made primarily regarding the location of operations and treated as strategic decisions for enterprises. The term "location" itself comes from the Latin term locus/locaro, meaning situating a certain activity in a specific place. As noted by Korenik et al. (2020, p. 11), "today, we have a dual understanding of the word: on the one hand it refers to the Latin original and relates to location, that is a state, on the other hand it refers to the activity related to selecting a specific place for activity (stay)". In economic practice, this activity can be referred directly to the particular procedure (process) of selecting a place for one's activity on the basis of adopted criteria. It should be admitted that this process is exceptionally difficult, as a specific place is characterized by certain location values, while a specific activity features specific location requirements. The same authors underline the importance of optimal location, stating that "this occurs when both the values and the declared requirements correspond to one another. As both the requirements and values change over time, this can lead to a reduction in location effects and an increase in uncertainty for a given activity" (Korenik et al., 2020, p. 12). In addition, they point to the location benefits for enterprises related to spatial proximity and the ensuing interactions for a given type of activity e.g. the creation of Porter clusters. Due to the nature of production and the degree of dependency on the supply of raw materials, they distinguish three locations: forced, bound and free. At this point, it is undoubtedly necessary to agree with the statement that every location has its own values. What is more, every location is unique (Kopczewska, 2008, p. 45).

Miszczak (2007, p. 29) distinguishes general and specific locations. The first consists of selecting a particular region, and then the locality in which a given facility can be located. The second focuses on determining the area for implementing a considered undertaking, that is preparing a project for the development and layout of individual elements of the facility, and determining its relationship to neighbouring facilities and infrastructure. In this approach, the synthetic approach to economic activity factors plays an important role (see Table 1).

Table 1. A synthetic approach to economic activity location factors

Factor	Factor characteristics
Environmental	These are resources of the geographical environment e.g. water, soil and raw mineral resources, of which the very presence, but above all the cost of obtaining them and the viability of exploiting them are extremely important.
Spatial	These are characterized by dimensions of geographical space. These include: the shape and size of terrain, and its distance, accessibility and location with regards to other areas.
Economic	These are determined by the current socio-economic situation, and include: stable growth, the level of inflation and prices, the size and structure of capital, market size and absorption capacity, the efficiency and cost of work, the development of technical and social infrastructure, and other forms of development.
Socio-cultural	These include: the mentality of the community in a given area, their attitude to socio-economic transformations, their activity and level of entrepreneurship, the level of education and culture, the size and structure of consumption, and the situation on the labour market.
Political	These are dependent both on the state and on local communities. They are the result of the nature of power, the scope of competencies and rights, the way power is exercised by society, and the country's political stability.
Administrative	Examples of legal factors include: regulations related to setting up firms, the tax system, the transfer of services, the transfer of capital, etc. Meanwhile, administrative factors should be understood as the scope of influence of administration on location decisions. The speed and flexibility of administration (central government and local government), depending on its organisational level and structure, constitute one of the most important location factors in this group.
Technical and technological	These are related to scientific and technical advances, and include both the development of science, as well as the use of new technologies for material and intangible purposes. Deciding factors in the location of a given facility or type of economic activity in a given area are: technical and organisational innovations, work on research and development and design, and the production and dissemination of new technical solutions. The impact of scientific and technical advances on location are of a specific nature as they are manifested indirectly by having an impact on changes to the remaining location factors.

Source: developed on the basis of (Miszczak, 2007, p. 30).

In location analysis, absolute location, understood as placement on a geographical grid or layout of streets, must be distinguished from relative location, understood as placement in relation to other locations (Kopczewska, 2008, p. 47). A particular role is played here by spatial proximity, which is the result of both absolute and relative location. Measuring its physical distance is of significant importance at the micro-economic level, as it is "important due to the possibility for personal interactions and *face-to-face* contact, as well as because of transport costs" (Kopczewska, 2008, p. 47). In economic practice, it is a complex, multi-aspect term, and therefore the term most frequently used is 'proximity': geographical, industrial, organisational and institutional.

Geographical proximity is not only limited to physical space and a simple numerical system, but is understood in the meaning used by Perroux, who included the social dimension in the economic mechanisms. This proximity only stimulates the local industrial dynamic if it is combined with organisational and cultural proximity. A typical example here are *Marshall districts*² with an "industrial atmosphere", as well as large networks created by people of specific professions.

Organisational proximity refers directly to interactions between various types of entity: individual, collective and institutional. This proximity contributes to multiplying contacts and the creation of local networks of various types, increasing territorial cohesion at the same time, thanks to which the decision-making process is easier. Such proximity contributes to inducing social, organizational and cultural innovations. It also stimulates education and the shaping of social capital, which reinforces territorial capital³.

The term "industrial district" was first used by Marshall, and became a central concept in local and regional development theories, as well as in concepts of the creation of new production spaces.

One example here are all initiatives focused on security that are of a coalition nature.

Institutional proximity is understood as actors belonging to a space defined by a particular collectivity, and rules of action oriented towards collective behaviours. To put it another way, it is understood as the propensity to live and act in a group (Jewtuchowicz, 2005, p. 69).

The above-mentioned proximity types are the principal determinants of the dynamics and level of development of a territory. Full confirmation of this is found, for example, in the fact that certain types of knowledge and information are exchanged more easily in a more useful way. This is not a purely spatial concept; however, it contributes to the creation of a real social system. As noted by Godlewska (2001, p. 11), location is decided by location factors defined as the specific features of a place that have a direct impact on the investment costs and viability of a given activity. The author adopts the position that today, the classic Weber groups of location factors, that is transport costs, labour costs and agglomeration benefits, have an impact on location when the predicted benefits from selecting a location are higher than the additional transport costs. Other groups should be added to these factors, such as business factors, national, regional and local conditions related to the labour market, as well as personal conditions regarding quality of life (Łuczyszyn, 2020).

Each of the above-mentioned proximities can be considered from a general perspective, that is with reference to the region, macro- or microregion, the country or continent, or in more detail to the particular place where activity is conducted. Previously, geographical distance was important, under-stood as the function of transport costs. In the new economy this element disappears, because along with civilizational development, economic, social, technical and natural factors change. There is also a change in their strength and direction. "These dynamic transformations mean that each location is subject to changing perceptions regarding its effectiveness" (Korenik et al., 2020, p. 13). A direct effect of this situation is primarily an increase in uncertainty, intensified by the accumulation of entirely new changes generated by the formation of the new post-industrial economy and globalization processes, to which the phenomenon of digitalization is added. Thus the approach to economic activity has undeniably changed.

In spite of the fact that firms must compete on a global scale, and raw materials, knowledge and capital flow freely around the world, location still plays a key role in building a competitive advantage. This also reveals the relationships between the global and local level. "The effect of the intersection of two levels – global and local – and their mutual influence has been expressed by the new term 'glocalization' which underlines the complementarity and simultaneity of the globalization process and the increasing importance of local development" (Jewtuchowicz, 2006, p. 164).

5. Conclusions

New economic and social phenomena based on technological progress and digitalisation require the search for sources of competitive advantages, which manifest themselves particularly in the resources produced and conditioned by the complexity of territorial socio-economic systems.

The concept of territorial capital and its importance for the economy, as well as the formation of appropriate development policy, carries the burden of a generalized philosophy and a framework of a territorial-functional approach to stimulating development at various spatial levels. This is mainly related to the resources produced and the determinants of the complexity of territorial socio-economic systems. It is undoubtedly one of the fundamental elements of the concept of territorial cohesion, which attempts to translate its concepts into the level of macroeconomic policy, pointing to the territoriality of economic processes. Translating this into practical terms, we are talking here about the introduction of territorial capital into microeconomic public intervention.

Numerous examples of economic practice confirm that there is no universal model for territorial policy. Undeniably, a common feature of this approach is its collective nature. It should be considered as extremely positive that the necessity of a new view on reality and the identification of territorial capital is no longer emphasized only in economics and broadly understood spatial economy research, but also in law, sociology, organising and management, and recently, as is fully justified, in security. This approach determines the interactive and multi-aspect nature of stimulating socio-economic development in its various forms.

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Kapitał terytorialny specyficzną cechą terytorium

Streszczenie

Cel: Celem artykułu jest teoretyczna analiza kapitału terytorialnego w kontekście jego istoty, elementów go determinujących oraz roli, jaką odgrywa w polityce rozwojowej.

Metodyka: Badania oparto na podejściu jakościowo-ilościowym. Zastosowano analizę literatury przedmiotu w zakresie rozwoju lokalnego, zasobów niematerialnych i teorii terytorialności oraz studia przypadków wybranych terytoriów autonomicznych w Polsce (np. gmin z rozwiniętymi strategiami oddolnymi).

Wyniki: Zidentyfikowano wzrost znaczenia zasobów niematerialnych (zaufanie społeczne, kapitał relacyjny) jako kluczowego czynnika rozwoju. Zauważono istotną rolę nieformalnych koalicji lokalnych w kreowaniu polityki rozwojowej, niezależnie od struktur formalnych.

Implikacje i rekomendacje: Polityka rozwoju lokalnego powinna uwzględniać unikalną strukturę społeczną i relacyjną danego terytorium. Potrzebne są mechanizmy wspierania autonomii lokalnej w tworzeniu strategii rozwoju – szczególnie oddolnych. Zalecana jest reorientacja narzędzi finansowania (np. funduszy UE) z inwestycji twardych na działania miękkie i sieciujące.

Oryginalność/wartość: Autor podejmuje aktualny i niedostatecznie zbadany obszar – rolę zasobów niematerialnych w polityce lokalnej. Łączy podejście społeczno-relacyjne z przestrzenno-ekonomicznym, wskazując na ich komplementarność. Dostarcza konkretnych narzędzi do diagnozy i wzmacniania potencjału rozwojowego obszarów lokalnych i regionalnych.

Słowa kluczowe: kapitał terytorialny, terytorium, lokalizacja