

IMPROVING STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING UNEVEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AREAS

U. A. Otajanov

Tashkent State University of Economics, Associate Professor,
Department of Management and Marketing, Doctor of Economics,

Sattarov Sanjar Abdumurodovich

Independent student of Termiz State University

ANNOTATION

The article discusses the need to improve strategies to prevent uneven socio-economic development of the regions. It calls for decentralization reform to address inequalities between regions, balanced development, and the coordination of sectoral reforms and the implementation of these policies by the regions and the local community in order to eliminate uneven development between regions.

Keywords and phrases: uneven development of regions, strategy, decentralization, interaction, modeling.

The policy of uneven socio-economic development of the regions is part of the policy of managing the territory of the states. With its help, states "zone" society and activity and manage their development.

According to Mikhnenko and Wolf, social researchers who developed the state/space theory argue that uneven geographical development has increased in Europe under modern capitalism[1]. Research shows that uneven geographic development is an obstacle to economic development for Keynesian welfare states, and to overcome it, states have used various policies of territorial development and redistribution, in particular, the so-called "spatial Keynesian" policy.

According to Brenner, one of the most famous representatives of the state/space theory, the role and capabilities of states are changing with the decline of Keynesianism and the beginning of neoliberal reforms [2]. Underdevelopment began to be seen not as an obstacle, but as a necessary condition for further economic growth in the face of competition for capital. The mechanism of the new policy was the "re-increase" of state power, which meant that the main level would be territorial or local rather than national as before.

In this regard, Jessop pointed out that it is not just an expression of "locality", but a relativization or division of spatial dimensions in economic and social policy upwards (before Europeanization), downwards (decentralization) and sideways (public through private partnerships) [3]. This confirms that, as we mentioned above, it is now necessary to use large numbers to make a reliable analysis of the development of regions.

In order to prevent the uneven development of regions, it is desirable to end centralization from above. The decentralization reform envisages the transfer of powers and control over the budget from the state to local authorities. This, we believe, has a positive impact as it allows communities to operate independently and determine how best to serve their residents. At the same time, it also involves certain risks related to the ability of different communities to provide the same quality public services regardless of where they live.

Studies show that this reform was accompanied by privatization, which led to the commercialization of public services. If we pay attention to the early period of independence in our country, at first there was an attempt to privatize it, but now it is planned to transfer control over the budget from the state to local authorities. In doing so, local governments believed they could better control funds and provide better services.

However, local authorities cannot fully control the financial situation, resulting in increased debt and poor service delivery. This situation has also exacerbated inequalities in access to health care based on income, work and place of residence.

During the former Soviet Union, urban planning and regional development were considered as a means of achieving territorial equality and social justice in the society, and the construction of socialism required industrialization, which, in turn, required urbanization. In order to avoid the concentration of population in large cities, the policy of developing small towns, as well as turning villages into large urban-type settlements, was carried out. On the other hand, not only economic, but also political and military reasons influenced the location of the infrastructure. This led to a partial convergence of regions, but also to inefficient economic structures with significant consequences in the transition to capitalism.

The Soviet model of regional development management was based on a system of economic planning, all land belonged to the state, so planning led to a reduction in the desire to create a technical task. In the Soviet system, there were almost no legal regulations for the urban planning process, because there was simply no need to identify and reconcile rights, property, and different interest groups.

Community needs were prioritized, with social infrastructure, housing, and green spaces laid out according to standardized norms. Other needs were met through economic planning and redistribution among territorial units through a network of administrative institutions. Union republics supplied necessary goods and services to "lower" levels through centers of various administrative levels. This led to the emergence of specific "centers" and "outskirts". However, depending on the level of the settlement, not only a wider range of goods and services, but also higher quality goods and services were available. However, mitigating uneven geographic development remained a stated goal and trend.

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In the previous version of the strategy[4] to accelerate socio-economic development, to ensure the comprehensive and effective use of the natural, mineral-raw, industrial, agricultural, touristic and labor potential of each region in order to increase the standard of living and income of the people;

to expand the scope of modernization and diversification of regional economy, to reduce differences in the level of socio-economic development of regions due to rapid development of districts and cities with a relatively low level of development, primarily by increasing industrial and export potential;

the tasks of rapid development of small cities and towns have been set at the expense of establishing new industrial enterprises and service centers, organizing small industrial zones, attracting funds of large economic associations, loans from banks and private foreign investments, the basis of which is "stimulation of the use of the regions' own potential" and consisted of "supporting centers of potential economic growth".

In our opinion, it is necessary to move from the policy of elimination through (subsidy-subsidy system) to the policy of supporting "growth poles" as a measure to equalize socio-economic development of the regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. If the previous version of the strategy saw uneven socio-economic development as an obstacle, the current one should focus

on it as a necessary condition for future economic growth by stimulating growth poles. Such poles prevent the current monocentricity of economic growth and allow to ensure the unity of the country through interregional economic cooperation. They should direct resources to their maximum use and strengthen the specialization of society so that they do not duplicate each other's development strategies.

Since the research revealed significant disparities not only between regions, but also within them, the State Strategy in certain types of regions requires special measures for support and development. Therefore, in the strategy until 2026, certain types of functional directions were defined, that is, the state should help different regions and certain parts of them in different ways, and tasks that should be performed were defined. It is worth noting that specialization, networking and understanding them as social systems are important and necessary policies, and the experience of regional policy shows that these measures alone are not enough to maintain cohesion without balancing the level of development.

The decentralization reform to reduce or eliminate the uneven socio-economic development of the regions was initiated due to the low capacity of local authorities to exercise their powers at an appropriate level. . In this regard, first of all, the state's regional policy should be provided with financial resources through tax decentralization reform. This process is only one of the stages of territorial policy, as it involves reforming the administrative-territorial structure and expanding the powers of local state authorities. As the decentralization reform coincides with existing inequalities between regions, it leads to a number of inconsistencies and contradictions (Figure 1).

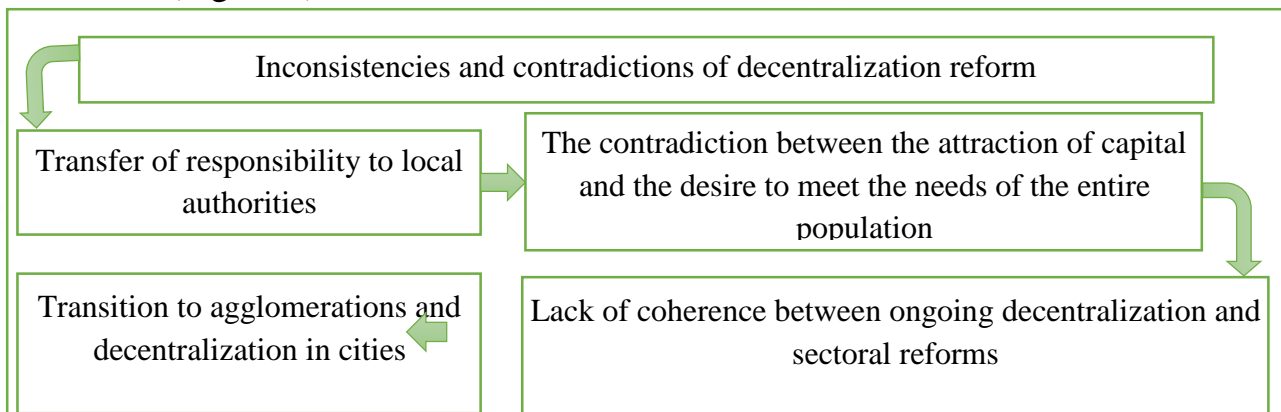


Figure 1. Inconsistencies and contradictions of decentralization reform

Commenting on the data presented in the figure, one of the most frequent criticisms in the context of decentralization reform is the weakness of local institutions, which prevents them from implementing policies. This is quite natural, because different communities tend to transfer responsibility to local authorities without central governments monitoring their activities. In this regard, it can be seen in the fact that the government entrusted local authorities with the obligation to use the remnants of the education subsidy to provide schools with personal protective equipment in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. However,

since these vests were initially distributed unevenly between regions and some communities already used them, not all communities could provide their schools with PPE.

Prior to the unification of neighborhoods, social and administrative services were provided by district state authorities and relevant bodies located in regional centers. After the re-organization of the districts, each neighborhood had to establish its own territorial authority for the provision of social services or purchase these services from neighboring communities. However, only half succeeded because the communities failed to establish such centers. In addition, the newly established districts still have social protection departments, which, although the number of employees has decreased, but the volume of work has increased[5].

The contradiction between attracting capital and the desire to meet the needs of the entire population is manifested in the financial autonomy of newly formed communities, one of the main goals of decentralization. While all communities have different levels of economic development, discussions and research on decentralization prioritize local economic development and capital attraction. "There is no clear answer among the scientific community about the positive effect of decentralization on economic development: it all depends on the general economic development of the country" [6], says Fedorov. In particular, high-income countries benefit from decentralization, while in low-income countries it may exacerbate regional inequality. At present, public policy does not offer solutions for the provision of public services for all citizens, attracting investors and capital. State politicians should give priority to the construction of social infrastructure that will provide for the population of the society.

As a result of the transition to agglomerations and decentralization in cities, territorial politics is not limited to the creation of communities, but also includes attempts to establish mutual relations between them and to agree on their plans and strategies. One of the mechanisms for encouraging inter-municipal cooperation is agglomeration, which can be seen in the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is currently trying to increase the form of cooperation by uniting a large city with common economic and investment interests and neighboring settlements on the basis of agglomeration.

Another process - today the territorial organization of local self-government within the city is determined by the city council - despite the fact that there are representative bodies in the districts, it is the city council that decides what powers they have. Many large cities currently do not have district councils, leaving people without representation at the level closest to them. This is why the city council and its deputies are overworked in the capital, especially on a voluntary basis.

On the other hand, the fact that the closest representative body operates at the level of an administrative-territorial unit of 3 million inhabitants creates a situation that limits their right to express their interests. In addition, it is important to divide the city into districts, which is not always optimal, and to find the optimal size and powers of regional authorities within large

cities. Of course, in order to overcome these theoretical problems, in our country, the activities of district (city) mayors' assistants on the issues of developing entrepreneurship in the neighborhood, ensuring employment and reducing poverty[7] and establishing new districts in the large regions of the Republic (New Life district in Tashkent[8], These include the adoption of decisions on the new Namangan District[9], Kokdala District[10] in Kashkadarya region within the city of Namangan.

Centralized management of the development of districts and their resources can create a situation of inequality, because some districts receive more because they are "central", or because "elite" housing is being built, or because they are needed for activities of national or urban importance. Today, we see that regional politics in Uzbekistan is changing the scale and hierarchy of levels of government. He stressed that this should lead to quality of life and access to benefits for all, regardless of where they live. The success of such a policy can only be seen in time, but regardless of the place of residence, one should not forget that equal efforts are needed to ensure a high level of quality of life.

In order to reduce the uneven socio-economic development of the regions, in our opinion, it is necessary to change the regional policy from the leveling to the stimulation of growth poles. Decentralization can be the basis for such a policy, as it creates communities that become new players and compete for investor capital. However, it is important to act so that it does not become a race to the bottom that offers increasingly unfavorable conditions for competition for investment teams. Serious inequalities in the quality of life and the ability to guarantee it exist not only between regions, but also within regions. Regional policy should not be limited to measures to promote growth poles, but should balance inequality between regions through equalization policies to maintain cohesion.

In short, decentralization cannot replace an integrated state regional policy, which must include an understanding of the role of the state in the overall development scheme and how societies interact to achieve a harmonious and balanced development of the state and ensure a high quality of life, regardless of the place of residence. In order to prevent uneven socio-economic development, policymakers should work to coordinate sectoral reforms and implement these policies by regions and local communities.

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