

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONS

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Abstract

The state system of strategic forecasting and planning of the Republic of Kazakhstan is an important tool for the implementation of large-scale global tasks and the development of long-term priorities for the central and regional authorities. The purpose of the study is to identify strategic priorities for the regional development of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the example of the Kostanay region and to verify the connection between regional development within the country and world geopolitics. The study covers the main tasks and achievements of the regional economy development. The authors of the study disclose the main areas for improving monetary and fiscal policy, ensuring macroeconomic stabilisation. The study demonstrates the main issues and opportunities of economic development in various regions of Kazakhstan and proposes measures for the labour market modernisation as the main priority of effective economy development. Thus, the new course of national policy within global challenges requires improving the training of qualified personnel capable of providing labour resources. The main task of regional policy and state strategy is to preserve the country as a single unitary state. This specificity requires effective management of all internal structure elements of the Kazakh society, which is at the stage of systemic modification. The practical significance of the study is due to the visual demonstration of the effectiveness of various regional development theories, their place and role in science and politics.

Keywords: Regional policy, national economy, competitiveness, strategic priorities, concept, diversification

JEL classification: R10, R58, C53

1. Introduction

In the modern world, the importance of regional issues has increased considerably due to the need to strengthen the territorial approach to regulating and managing the development of market conditions to ensure economic relations between regions. The stage of the country's economic development is characterised by a rapidly growing interest in a complex of regional issues. For the effective development of the regions, it is impossible to consider one aspect of the issue. There is a need for an integrated approach to solving all the issues of regional development. The main priorities are the creation of new production complexes, equalising the development levels of individual regions, as well as solving regional issues at the expense of their own internal resources and reserves. The issue has become quite relevant, multi-sided,

and has taken an important position in society and politics. The regional development of various spheres requires applying new analysis methods and the integrated use of existing technologies.

The regional policy of Kazakhstan is an integral part of the general national policy aimed at the effective use of territorial factors of economic management and vital activity to achieve strategic objectives and purposes of sustainable socio-economic development of the country. In this regard, the implementation of an effective and correct regional policy is the key to the successful development of the state (De Laurentis, 2020). Throughout social and economic transformations, the regulatory role of the country in the development of territories has substantially weakened. This was manifested in the reduction of public investment in regional development, which negatively affected the economy of certain Kazakh regions. There was an imbalance in the development of transport and industrial infrastructures, the standard of living, and the availability of social services between regions. A developed region with a high population density and highly qualified personnel has experienced a decline in production and a demographic crisis.

The State is aiming at the decentralisation of resources and competencies. The regions are still heavily dependent on incentive measures and centrally determined priorities. There are limited financial, organisational, and human resources that are necessary to promote development considering local conditions. The current policy is aimed at raising certain sectors in specific areas without considering regional peculiarities. The general areas of the regional progress are to increase competitiveness and maintain economic stability. Although the list of strategic priorities covers a fairly wide range of spheres and areas, the main sectors are human capital development and the introduction of innovations and modern technologies. The Government of Kazakhstan determines the development procedure of strategic concepts and programmes for an integrated system of national policy in regions. National strategy and planning documents are being developed in two areas – economic and social. The purpose of the documents is to develop political, social, and economic spheres, increase social welfare and strengthen citizens' positions in regional society (Chang et al., 2018; Fricke, 2020).

An important priority for ensuring sustainable development is the transformation of common systems in the economy and the transition to innovative development. The regional development programme refers to the competence of local authorities. At the regional level, Territorial Development Programmes are being developed that cover all areas of a certain territory. The programmes include the main tasks of the region's development, areas, purposes, expected results, and the necessary resources. The main objective of this programme is to establish and stimulate capital in the economic growth centres through increasing competitiveness, as well as creating favourable living conditions in the region. The assessment of the state strategic plans entails determining the efficiency and implementation levels of programme documents. The assessment system determines the guidelines and principles of the state bodies' effectiveness according to appropriate methods (Latuconsina et al., 2018). One of the mechanisms for improving the state bodies' activities is the personnel management quality, as reveals the real potential and capabilities of the apparatus in each particular body, which is necessary since the activation of human resources becomes one of the priority strategic tasks of the state to increase labour productivity.

Rather than focusing on specific areas and regions, regional policy considers the subnational level as an analysis object. The use of potential increases productivity and introduces economic life at all levels. Thus, the regional development policy establishes a holistic strategic mechanism for the implementation of various measures aimed at economic growth at the subnational level. The regional policy can help identify the growth potential in certain regions and contribute to the establishment of a healthy business environment that considers local characteristics. This policy supports the diversification of regional economies, which allows maximising the effect of the agglomeration economy and reveal the growth potential in a less affluent region. The most effective measures for diversification focus on the development of the advantages of the current region: natural, physical, financial, and human resources. The rational combination of regional and national policy measures for the use and definition of this capital is of particular importance.

Thus, the political strategy of the regions can contribute to achieving the purpose of the entire state. At the regional level, an integrated policy and economic strategy can promote

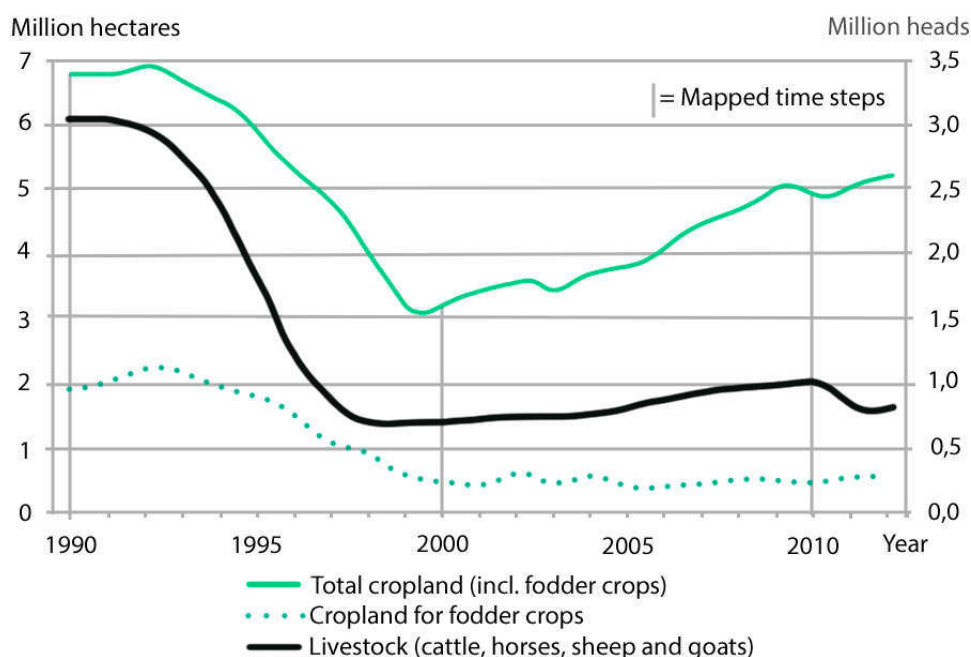
combining various components and lead to increased productivity. Therefore, it is important to determine its traditional tools and scope. Modern regional policy is aimed at competitiveness and growth, which apply to all regions. Sustainable economic growth ensures an increase in human capital competitiveness, which leads to an increased diversification through industrialisation and infrastructure development. In the course of diversification, there is a transition from an extensive path of development to an industrial and innovative one. Diversification is the main aspect of economic and social policy focused on spatial development (Pîrvu et al., 2018).

2. Materials and Methods

In the course of the research, the authors applied theoretical, statistical, mathematical, empirical methods on the example of the Kostanay region. This region is endowed with considerable agricultural land and natural resources. Therein, the regional policy is aimed at implementing measures to use the potential of large enterprises and develop production facilities serving agriculture. Kostanay region is considered to be an area with an average competitiveness level. In order to determine the index components that reflect the development and competitiveness levels of the region, a number of indicators were considered when identifying the competitiveness of the region. An essential condition for index construction is a specific region and certain indicators that should fully reflect the main competitive advantages and the progressiveness of the industry structure. The choice of indicators is determined by the availability of statistical data.

To ensure the effective implementation of economic policy, a whole range of measures was provided in the economy sectors to increase the share of the real sector in the structure of the gross regional product. Thus, production in the industry is increasing due to the utilisation of production capacities. In the agricultural sector, due to the diversification of areas, there is an increase in crop production, new technologies and methods are used. In animal husbandry, there is a production increase of basic products due to the livestock growth in the production sector (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Agricultural development in Kostanay region



Despite the practical and methodological studies that consider the essence of the subject, the main priorities of the regional economy development concerning the structural policy improvement of the region, the integration of statistical assessment of competitiveness level, the search and development of new opportunities by improving the quality of human capital, remain understudied. The main research tools can be considered: the investment programme,

national programmes to support specific regions, coordination and planning of regional development. Recent data demonstrates that regional development is not related to the need for state reform. Such development is called functional, it is based on the economic development of the region, which does not need such political processes as regionalisation and decentralisation.

The mathematical methods are applied in the analysis of regional development due to the need to build mathematical models of economic dynamics. When forecasting the prospects for the regional political system development, it is necessary to identify effective ways to assess the consequences of current activities. It is necessary consider experience and results to develop correct economic solutions that can be obtained by mathematical and conceptual models. Mathematical methods allow drawing conclusions that contribute to the progress of regional national policy.

These research methods are a combination of induction, deduction, decomposition, and statistical analysis. The statistical analysis of the state systems of strategic planning and forecasting made it possible to identify mechanisms for implementing priorities and algorithms for achieving them, to identify progressive elements of strategic planning systems. When conducting an analysis, the authors took into account the provisions of the draft laws that changed the system of state strategic planning in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The material is normative legal acts in the field of regional development and statistical compilations.

In addition, the study was conducted by methods of logical generalisation and system analysis. It appeared that more accurate practical and theoretical information that meets the requirements of the regional economy is in need. The results obtained prove that the regional development policy should provide support and assistance in combination with diverse approaches and consider the typology of regions. Since, at present, almost all countries develop a regional policy, make decisions on changing the administrative-territorial division or consolidation between regions, develop various programmes and means of stimulating them. In general, all tools can be conditionally divided into financial, administrative, and organisational-economic.

The methods and materials considered are not exhaustive. Regional national policy is a rather complex research object in terms of forecasting, development, and analysis. It is necessary to consider many factors that have a direct impact on the region development. The main methodological approaches presented in the study can be applied in assessing various processes that occur in this region and to assess the consequences of political decisions on the investment state development. It is essential to identify the causes for the uneven development of regions and the factors that influence the inequality. Applying various methods of analysis allows stimulating the growth of regional policy in all regions, including the Kostanay region.

3. Results and Discussion

Strategic priorities of the state regional policy have become a relevant and important subject of the 21st century. The key task facing the Republic of Kazakhstan is to create an effective mechanism for implementing regional development policy measures. The state sets purposes to achieve balanced growth and transition from a resource-intensive model to a diversified one. To achieve these goals, reforms are required that would promote national growth while improving the well-being of the local population. During globalisation, the main factor of development is compliance with three requirements: competitiveness, integration into the world economy, and ensuring that these processes positively impact the country and its regions. Achieving this purpose is problematic without the participation of each region since the country's economy as a whole depends on the economy of administrative-territorial units and its components (Skantsev et al., 2019; Benedek et al., 2018).

The policy of the regions as an integral part of the national policy is aimed at orienting the national space in accordance with the chosen development strategy. This system, which implements the interests of the state in relation to the regions and the internal interests of the regions, also considers modern regional processes. The regionalisation of public administration has objective economic and political foundations. Economic and natural differences between regions determine the effectiveness of regional management and the best solution for the division of responsibilities and rights between central and local authorities.

Successful reforms are possible with an active national policy that will consider the specific features of each region. The establishment of modern democratic approaches will allow using the principles of decentralisation, which consequently provides conditions for the productive management of territorial entities.

Certainly, new approaches to the development of regional policy, the identification of new methods, such as programming and project management, are required. In this regard, it is currently important to analyse the decentralisation of public administration, to solve the issue of inter-budgetary relations for the regional management effectiveness, to designate the regional policy as the main part of the national policy. It is necessary to continue reforms on social, economic, and political modernisation in order to streamline the management system. The modernisation will strengthen the relationship between regional, central, and local government bodies based on the decentralisation of management functions. The implementation of an effective integrated approach to regional management increases the possibilities of market mechanisms and public utility systems. The qualitative economy growth is based on the improvement of the institutional state, increasing the competitiveness of human capital and business, technological modernisation, and minimising the negative impact on the environment.

The Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrates a regional interdependence, characterised by the economic openness of the regions that are parts of the economic system. Economic growth in the country is associated with the advanced development of the raw materials sector. Although there is stabilisation and growth in the raw material regions, the regions developed in the past with a high population density and qualified personnel are characterised by a decline in production, which leads to a difficult transition to market relations. As a result, the socio-economic differentiation of regions increases, which becomes more difficult to overcome (Babayev, 2020; Batur Sir and Çalışkan, 2019). The current circumstances necessitate the introduction and development of modern approaches to the effective study of interregional relations and the use of regional resources to ensure the development of the single economic space.

A number of common regional issues have been identified in the Kostanay region. Most of the issues are due to the raw-material based economy. There is a high level of prices, a low production level of industrial products per person, and low-quality personnel, which contributes to uneven economic development and a considerable inequality in indicators for assessing the potential of regional systems. The issues that have appeared are superimposed on those that have already existed for years. The lack of regional policy and a lack of a clear distinction between the functions of local and central executive bodies lead to a growing set of regional issues and strengthen the regional imbalance in terms of the population's living standard. The regional policy reform and its adaptation to the market system of management are very ambiguous. The mechanism for implementing the region's policy should be flexible to consider the features of tactical and strategic tasks (Martínez et al., 2020).

For regions with high scientific and production potential and strategically important types of mineral resources, national policy methods should aim at providing conditions for restructuring the region's economy and promoting technical re-equipment of enterprises to increase the output of export-oriented goods. For these regions, the regulating the trade sphere is of great importance. The incentive factor for structural adjustment in these regions may be depreciation benefits for priority industries. Attracting foreign investment in industries that can participate in the re-equipment of infrastructure and reach the world level in a short time plays a special role. For the country's food fund regions, economic incentives should promote the development of small and medium businesses to develop new forms of agro-industrial integration of enterprises and increase employment. Environmentally distressed, backward, and depressed regions need social support and assistance to activate the economy and eventually implement certain complex projects to improve socio-economic and environmental development, as well as to assist in attracting humanitarian and foreign aid.

An important strategic priority of regional policy is the forecast scheme, which determines the approaches of the state in key areas of sectoral development. The scheme can ensure the development of current and long-term, macroeconomic and regional aspects, and allow coordinating the actions of territorial authorities and businesses. The complexity and long-term orientation of the scheme will allow using it to identify existing opportunities and

develop promising areas for economic development (Gagarina et al., 2019; Varavin et al., 2018). The forecast scheme solves complex and systemic regional issues, considering the potential of a particular region. To implement the reform of the regional policy, the main approaches have been identified: the removal of infrastructure restrictions in the region, the stimulation of agglomeration, the development of a modern territorial and spatial base. It is agglomerations that play a crucial role in the development of the country as they reveal the labour and economic potential. Therefore, one of the most important tasks of the new regional policy of Kazakhstan is to increase the efficiency of public investments in the social sphere and infrastructure. Thus, the reform of this sector will improve the system of inter-budgetary relations.

Due to certain measures and the influence of positive factors, the economy has recently been booming in most regions of the country. However, the main regional problems have not yet been resolved. To solve them, a strategy has been developed that assumes a transition to a policy of forming and supporting the entire economy of the territory. This approach corresponds to the global trends and practices of territorial development. The main task of the regional policy within this approach was to ensure sustainable economic growth in each region and satisfy the need to develop regional concepts in order to justify the new policy of the regions (Gruia et al., 2019). Modern concepts are associated with a change in state intervention level in economic processes, the development of space with new and modern aspects, and the increasing role of individual territories in the country's economy. With the expansion of globalisation, new factors of placement appeared, telecommunications networks and information technologies began to develop, production and market infrastructure expanded. Regional development has become the dominant component of practical activity.

The main part of the activities is carried out within the framework of the general macroeconomic and social policy. However, when developing and implementing it, it is necessary to consider the agglomeration regional effect and compliance with the interests of the socio-economic development of the regions. The state can establish a regional development fund, which will finance various projects of regional and interregional significance. The territory regulation should be based on the appropriate mechanism of relations between different government levels. It is necessary to prepare regulatory and legal documents on the delegation of powers between the republican authorities and the regional authorities. The procedure for providing state support to the regions should be fixed. The economic mechanism of regional relations should aim at improving the budget and tax system and economic responsibility between political levels. The main task of the state is to motivate regions to achieve the best economic results on a national scale (He et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2019).

A productive mechanism for conducting regional policy helps to increase the regional potential, which leads to an increase in investment, the activity of entrepreneurs, human capital and contributes to the development of various activity types. As mentioned above, this policy does not consider special issues related to competition policy and the regulatory framework, the quality of financial markets, and corruption. The development policy of a particular region considers its specific features to stimulate economic convergence. Policies that consider local characteristics are a necessary part of national structural reforms. It is important to consider several other development and implementation policy aspects that consider local conditions when implemented. These are the development of additional measures to maximize the impact of the region's strong sectors on the economy, as well as the goal coordination of the governing bodies.

The main priority of the effective functioning of the state regional policy is to focus on the potential of its own reproduction, which becomes the main factor of economic security of a particular region. Regional policy plays a key role in the functioning of a socially-oriented economy. The regional economy acts as a tool for implementing the social orientation of the national economy. From the perspective of macroeconomic policy development by region, the most vulnerable objects are considered to be the structures of the regional economy, where the population's main social interests are concentrated. It is necessary to include a social orientation to the regional policy, which will contribute to the creation of a holistic strategic picture (Nakrošis et al., 2020). The absence of social components turns state orientation into an element of spatial policy.

Achieving the goals of regional development involves increasing the efficiency of using budget funds at the regional level and improving the quality of public administration. The introduction of new partnership mechanisms at the regional level and programme-targeted budgeting are becoming one of the priorities of the regional development strategy of Kazakhstan. As part of improving the quality of management at the regional level, measures should be taken to create a system for monitoring socio-economic indicators, eliminate barriers to doing business, and create incentives for the introduction of strategic planning tools.

When a country consists of regions that differ in their resources and characteristics, then they can complement each other with mutual benefit within the framework of the territorial division of labour. Each region can specialise in the production type that requires the lowest cost and halt the production that is more efficient in other regions to exchange the goods among regions. One of the most important tasks of the state in the framework of regional policy is to transform the regional relations from competition to interaction, to organise their cooperation, benefiting from the territorial division of labour. Thus, the country is developing an additional resource for its development. The task of the regional authorities is to optimise two types of regional policy: "work for people" and "people for work". The policy of limiting agglomeration growth should again take a leading place in the regional policy in the modern format (Sagath et al., 2019; Paryzky, 2018).

A characteristic feature of modern regional management is its innovative type, in which the value share of the main resource in the final product is constantly increasing. This type of management is effective at present. It allows achieving the maximum effect with a minimum amount of costs, ensuring an increase in the life quality, and the development of the municipality. The innovative method of municipal education development includes a programme-target approach, which is considered the most common modern method of management activity. To ensure the productivity of such activities, it is necessary to simultaneously clearly interact and separate responsibilities and roles. Therewith, it is important to establish responsibility for the distribution of the information and decision-making.

Freedom of choice of market partners, economy de-monopolisation, and self-government should become integral conditions for the development of the Kostanay and other regions. Regional management provides for a maximum consideration of all types of features of the regions. As a result, the successful project implementation will positively change the investment attractiveness of the region and increase business activity. Increasing the role of regions and their authorities in the political and economic development of the country is not of local importance, but is a global trend. The development of this trend leads to the need for an optimal combination of local and territorial self-government, the redistribution of functions between regions and the state. It is impossible to create statehood in the republic without the presence of extensive infrastructure and economically developed regions. Defining the regional policy clearly is a logical issue. Therefore, the main principle of this policy is to provide the producer and consumer with freedom for economic activity (Halynska, 2008; Popescu, 2018)

The political environment of the 21st century has changed substantially since its development. New values and scales have been acquired. The modern globalisation era is based on global development. It has become impossible to create and develop national policy without an effective and correct internal apparatus. Countries that have weak peripheries and regional conflicts occupy the last places in the lists of leading states. Therefore, a particularly important preference is given to the issues of regional development. Drawing conclusions, the authors can confidently state that the priorities of public policy strategies are acquiring a new global significance and strengthening their positions in the field of science, creating an additional area for research and development.

The industrially-oriented Kostanay region actively implements state programmes and greatly contributes to the development of the socio-economic potential of the country. An important role in the regional economy is played by high rates of civil and industrial construction, as well as the production of building materials. At the enterprises of the region, equipment is being upgraded and highly efficient digital technologies are being introduced. In general, the fields of crop production and animal husbandry are being developed by

diversifying the areas and introducing highly productive varieties. The taken measures are aimed at increasing competitive products and increasing production growth and efficiency. In market conditions, regions are competing for resource sources and sales markets, for foreign and state resources. Regions are independent entities in the national and international markets. The State strives to improve socio-economic well-being through regional policy.

4. Conclusions

The main strategic purpose of regional policy is to overcome the territorial differentiation and economic disintegration of the country. New modern methods and tools are transforming the state economy of specific regions. This goal is achieved through structural transformations of regional policy. The increase in the productivity of regional development management demonstrates that it is necessary to improve basic policy methods, especially in weak, lagging regions. The development of certain regions that have investment attractiveness considerably increases due to the adoption of special state measures and economy modernisation. To prevent economic stagnation, lagging regions require special attention and support. Equalising the socio-economic development levels of the country's regions will stimulate the use of internal resources of the region. At the stage of modernisation and development of new industries, foreign direct investment is the most important tool in regional policy. In the future, the foreign investments will be replaced by domestic ones, which corresponds to the state interests in terms of socio-economic development of the regions and ensuring economic independence and security.

Thus, sustainable development in the conditions of an economic crisis is impossible without effective regulation of legal and economic mechanisms, the industrial and natural resource sector, which assumes a comprehensive account of economic, social, and environmental factors. For the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to implement such approaches, since they still have an imbalance between the existing material base and plans for its development. To date, a number of programmes have been developed for the successful implementation of regional policy in the Kostanay region and the country as a whole. This implementation entails the growth of the state at the international level. Globalisation requires regional development not only within the state but also on the world stage. New concepts and priorities of the state regional policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan are a reflection of changes in the political life of the country.

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