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Zazerskaya V.V.

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS ON THE BASIS OF INTEGRATION

Zazerskaya V.V.

Abstract

Integration processes, state, problems and prospects of development of socio-economic systems are analyzed. The development of directions for the implementation of interregional interaction is based on a critical analysis of theories of regional integration. The principles of effective integration of regions are determined, and individual provisions for the development of economic integration of each of the theories are used to determine approaches to the integration mechanism and instruments of state regulation of these processes. It is revealed that in economic science two conceptual approaches to regional economic integration have been formed, which are used in practice as a theoretical justification of integration policy: market and evolutionary concepts. Regional integration is the use of the spatial factor as an element of economic cooperation between countries. Models of cross-border communications are considered. Cross-border cooperation as a form of interstate integration with the help of intensification of ties between border regions contributes to the free movement of goods, services, resources.

Key words: socio-economic system, region, integration, transnational cooperation, theory of regional integration

Introduction

The modern conditions of the society and economy development require understanding ongoing socio-economic processes, which poses new challenges to science for the further development of theoretical research and the elaboration of practical recommendations based on them. Transformation of relations within society, transition to the knowledge economy and digitalization, the innovative nature of the processes caused by the convergence of knowledge and technology bring to the fore the solution of the issues of the territorial organization of socio-economic systems. The dynamics and pace of changes occurring in them as a result of the impact of these factors complicate the socio-economic reality.

The constant influence of internal and external factors on socio-economic systems causes the dynamic nature of the processes occurring in them. Management is aimed at preserving the stability of the socio-economic system from

the constant and purposeful influence of factors, expressed in ability to preserve its functional features and structural components [1].

In turn, territorial peculiarities caused by differentiation in providing regions with the necessary economic and social resources determine the direction of managing socio-economic systems, opportunities and threats to the functioning of regional subsystems, trends in regions development. Thus, managerial influence is aimed at ensuring a balance of interests between economic growth and social stability.

Balanced social development is a controlled process of matching interdependent and interrelated branches of economic activity, coordinating the volume of output, the size of services provided to market needs, job security, as well as the formation of an acceptable standard of living for the population [2].

The level of development of the state is based on the economic power of its constituent structural units, i.e. regions. It is expressed as the sum of the volumes of expanded reproduction at the regional level, satisfaction of the social needs of the population. The result of implementing socio-economic development programs is the gross regional product, which is the criterion for defining the level of economic development of the state as a whole.

Therefore, feasibility study of theoretical and methodological aspects of regional development management, as well as the defining prospects for socio-economic development based on integration forms transnational cooperation, are relevant and timely.

The purpose of the study is to validate the need for theoretical research and to formulate practical recommendations to enhance the socio-economic development of regions based on enhanced cross-border cooperation.

The object of the study is the process of socio-economic development of regions.

The need to study the socio-economic development of the region is justified by solving the issues of effective deployment of productive forces and their formation in modern conditions of increasing globalization and cross-border cooperation.

Method

The strategy and target indicators of socio-economic development of regions, the mechanisms for achieving them are elaborated in the studies of scientists, economists and are reflected in program documents and regulatory instruments. T.Yu. Feofilova describes the development of the region as a change in the set of indicators of its socio-economic state and the structure of the economy and life support, which leads primarily to an increase in the level and quality of life of the population. This concept includes economic growth (GRP), GRP growth per capita, income growth, social development, infrastructure development, growth in the level and quality of human capital [3].

The forecast and program documents at the republican and regional levels include [4]:

legal instruments (decrees of the President of the Republic of Belarus on parameters of predicting socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus) and by-laws (resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on the tasks of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus, resolution of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus on estimated balance indicators of the forecast of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus);

the program of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus;

state programs developed for a five-year period and formed by industries (construction, education, etc.) or functionality (employment, small and medium-sized entrepreneurship);

five-year plans of socio-economic development formulated at the level of oblasts, Minsk, districts and cities of oblast subordination.

The analysis of the said documents revealed that, as conditions for the territories development, it is necessary to expand the sources of income of local budgets, improve the quality of their economic space. The formation of new growth points in the regions and the conditions for their further socio-economic development is shown in Fig. 1.

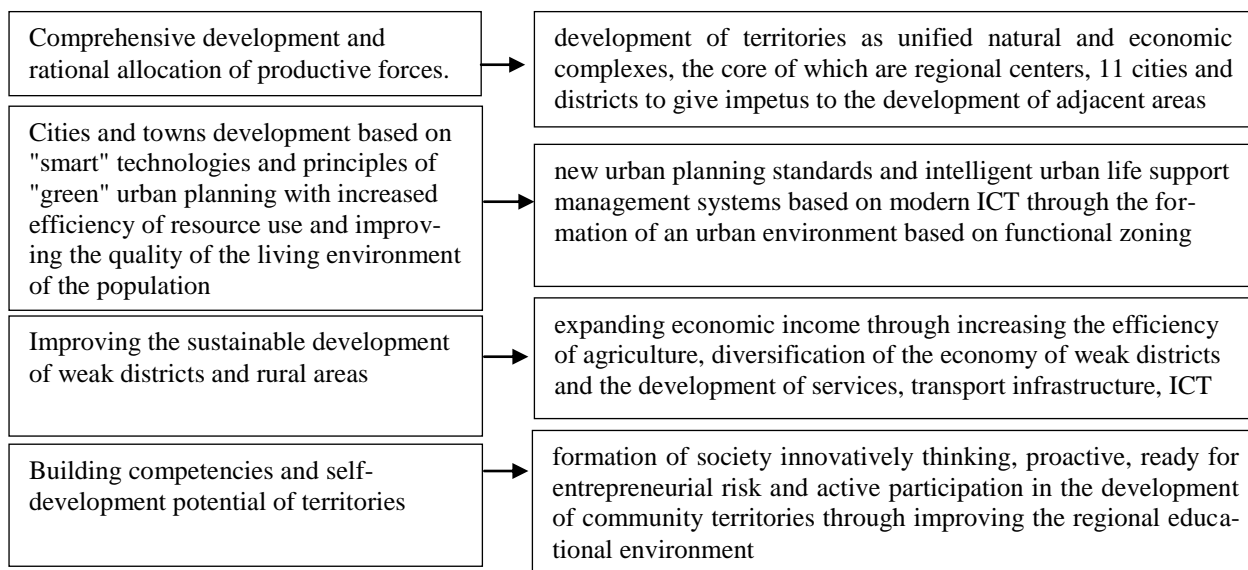


Fig. 1 – Directions of regional development: program aspect [4]

This approach fully applies to the border regions where globalization processes bring to the fore external economic factors. Their influence causes the transformation of the border regional economy associated with structural shifts, the search for new forms of organization of the economic space and increasing the region competitiveness. The focus on creating new points of economic growth will facilitate more efficient use of the resource base of the regions and ensure sustainable development of the territory.

Thus, the study framework reveals a particularly significant scope of methodological issues related to the adaptation of general theoretical conclusions to specific tasks of the regional development, including the border region, which determined the relevance and significance of formulating methodological and practical provisions for the development of border regions using cross-border cooperation tools.

Territorial imbalances in the socio-economic development of regions exist in almost all states, regardless of their size, economic capacity, and political system. In this regard, the search for ways to minimize the negative consequences of territorial imbalances, the development of an effective regional policy occupy a central place in the national economy.

In the context of globalization, cross-border cooperation is considered as the most important direction of the integration strategy of the state and its regions, providing for the introduction of special tools for regulating socio-economic processes and ensuring their sustainability, a favorable investment climate, the formation and development of the business environment of the region.

Let's consider aspects of regional integration theories from the standpoint of their influence on developing the cross-border cooperation framework. The starting point is to establish the substantive side of the integration process.

Integration originates from the Latin "integratio" - restoration of individual parts into a single whole. Integration is the unification of economic entities, deepening of their interaction, development of ties between them [5].

Integration process are actions aimed at uniting disparate parts into a single whole. The scope of integration processes in the economy should be understood the unification of countries, industries, organizations and sectors of economy in order to increase their efficiency.

The ultimate goal of any association is the acquisition of great benefits and advantages in the form of material, financial, labor, intellectual and other means, which the participants would not have if acting autonomously. Taking advantage of the diverse forms of interaction and complementarity of economic factors implies an increase in the overall socio-economic efficiency of development. Integration may be the case in various spheres – economic, political, social, etc. The connectivity of the economic space is expressed at several levels: international (world economy, integration groups of individual states), macro-level (national economy), meso-level (industries, large integrated structures, regional associations), micro-level (enterprise, production processes). It can have an institutional model (inside a treaty signed by states) and a soft model (without institutionalizing, due to the high level of economic interdependence and complementarity). There are also a superficial integration (affecting only the market sphere) and deep integration (manifested in the sphere of production).

Results and discussion

In this study, we will consider economic integration at the meso-level, which is understood as the highest stage of internationalization, when the growing economic interdependence of two or more border regions turns into the fusion of national markets for goods, services, capital and labor, and the formation of an integral market with the coordination of domestic and foreign economic policy by local authorities based on national integration strategies.

A critical analysis of regional integration theories will determine the principles of effective integration of regions, and separate provisions on developing economic integration of each of the theories will help to select approaches to the integration mechanism and tools for state regulation of these processes.

Liberal concept of integration

The first scientific school to study international economic integration was the market (neoliberal) school which became widespread in the 1950s. Those years, after the establishment of the Benelux Customs Union (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg) [6, p. 38], Europe intensified integration processes. Representatives of this school (R. Aron, W. Röpke et al.) assumed that integration is the unified market of several countries that provides with complete freedom of action of market forces and competition. State regulation disorganizes economic processes, that is why market is the best economy regulator. In their opinion, regional integration in the foreign economic sphere requires creating a single market space for several countries, which ensures complete freedom of competition and spontaneous market forces aimed at optimal regulation of the economic life of these states.

Thus, the recognition of only the market mechanism of regional integration leads to deregulation of foreign economic relations of the participating countries in forming interregional economic cooperation. We believe that when establishing interterritorial relations between countries, preference should be given to forms of cross-border cooperation that contribute more to the manifestation of the market mechanism of integration. However, as world experience shows, international economic integration, as represented by the market school, is impossible in modern conditions. Because of increased competition and the possible displacement of national producers, the state has to make purposeful efforts to neutralize these negative impacts.

Institutional theory of integration

In the 1960s, the market-institutional school was developed in the theory of regional economic integration [7, p. 62]. Its most prominent representatives (B. Balassa, J. Viner, H. Krömer et al.) believed that solving such problems as the development of weak districts and industries, employment management, stimulating economy in order to avoid downturns, is impossible without active participation of the state in the face of its bodies in integration processes. The role of the state was expressed in the coordination of economic policy, especially in implementing measures to eliminate discrimination in the movement of goods and factors of production, which are defined as "negative integration" and mean the elimination of restrictive measures by the state against private business, ensuring the most effective operation of the market mechanism.

The market-institutional school representatives presented integration as a set of logically replacing each other more developed forms of economic cooperation. B. Balassa, for instance, identified the following stages in regional integration development: free trade zone, customs union, common market, economic union and full economic integration. According to H. Krömer, the initial stage of integration is characterized by non-institutional forms of interaction: various inter-firm agreements, creating joint ventures, amalgamation of companies of integrating countries, establishing international NGOs on their territory. The subsequent stages of integration he refers to institutional forms: integration through unilateral state measures, cooperative integration, institutional integration.

Thus, representatives of this school reduce integration processes only to the elimination of national restrictions in international exchange" [8, p. 19]. However, the identification of regions as the main participants and intermediaries of integration (K. Meyer) and attributing various forms of interaction of micro-level entities of the integrated countries to the initial stages of integration makes it possible to talk about cross-border cooperation as a form of expression and at the same time an instrument for the development of economic integration of individual regions [9].

Neo-Keynesian concept of integration

The strengthening of the role of the state in integration processes are apparent in the views of representatives of the dirigiste (neo-Keynesian) theory and the structural school of integration. The 1970s, increased significantly the positions of the dirigiste (neo-Keynesian) theory, representatives of which (R. Cooper, G. Myrdal, J. Pinder, J. Tinbergen et al.) assumed that successful development of integration requires not the freedom of action of market forces that favors the strong side, but the intervention of the state [9, pp. 57-67] that contributes to the proper development of countries and regions, to the implementation of appropriate economic, financial and social policies. For example, G. Myrdal paid considerable attention to the impact of uneven economic development [10] during integration on the full development of all process participants. J. Tinbergen, defining the essence of economic integration, said that in its optimal version it eliminates artificial barriers that slow down the economical progress, and purposefully creates levers of effective regulation and unification that help to build rational structures of the international economy. The scientist asserted that the free competition inherent in market forces is not able to ensure the proper socio-economic development of the region. Introducing the concepts of "positive" and "negative" integration into economic theory [11, p. 122], he showed the important role of the state in regulating integration relations when establishing cooperation between regions of countries if regions with different levels of socio-economic development interact. In this regard, the ultimate goal of regional economic integration is to form the optimal economic structure of the entire integrated region with appropriate economic policy.

Structuralism

Following the structuralism theory, integration has a pronounced social connotation: it serves the cause of improving modern society – ensuring greater social equality, eliminating the uneven economic development of different countries and regions, i.e. increasing the common well-fare. Its representatives K.G. Myrdal, A. Marshal, F. Perroux et al. believe that the liberalization of the movement of goods and factors of production leads to uneven economic development of regions within the integration complex [10]. According to K.G. Myrdal, the market mechanism leads to an increase rather than a decrease in inequality between regions, and creation of a unified market itself does not provide a more efficient allocation of resources, nor does it affect the growth of labor productivity. Therefore, in his concept, priority is given to the need to ensure equal opportunities for all participants in the integration process, rather than freedom of competition. Also, A. Marshal and P. Wiles endowed genuine integration with the property of equal provision of production factors for all components of the integrated space. It should be noted that practical use of provisions of these concepts made enabled developing mechanisms for integration interactions of the national regions of the countries, expressed in creating "integration zones" in the EU and build "poles of growth" when elaborating regional development policies. The basis for creating an optimally balanced economy in the territorial, economic and social sense is monopolistic capital, and the main task of states is to eliminate the imbalances generated by market freedom.

Thus, two conceptual approaches to regional economic integration have been formed in economics, applied in practice as a theoretical justification of integration policy: "integration for the efficiency of the market economy", on the one hand, and "integration for development", on the other, i.e. market and evolutionary concepts. The market concept is based on the classical thesis of the perfection of market competition, which is acceptable for studying integration in the case of developed countries, but unacceptable in the case of developing countries and countries with transiting economies in transition, where formation of a market economy and its institutions has not yet been completed. Differences also express themselves in the normative aspect of concepts, i.e. in the question of the goals of integration: in the first case, market efficiency, in the second – economic development.

Enhancing the role of the state in development of integration processes can be traced in the development of economic schools. The revealed differences and general trends can serve as a basis for the inclusion of certain provisions of regional integration theories in program documents on the integration of border regions, as well as defining the terms for developing the forms of cross-border cooperation.

Regional integration consists in using the spatial factor as an element of economic cooperation between countries. In this case, mechanisms of state regulation are primary for building territorial basis of interaction and coordination of market relations.

Let's highlight the types of regional economic integration:

- interstate economic integration (free trade zones, customs unions, common market, economic union) [12], which eliminates barriers to trade with the implementation of various levels of measures to protect the domestic market;
- integration at the micro level, which is based on private foreign direct investments.

One of the forms of interstate economic integration is cross-border cooperation. The type of cross-border cooperation depends on the following factors:

1. Stages of development [13]:
 - exchange of information, contacts at the level of regional and local authorities, concluding framework agreements;
 - foreign trade, formation of foreign trade infrastructure;
 - creating joint productions, coordination institutions in various areas of cooperation;
 - microintegration based on establishing integrated local markets of goods, services, labor, technologies, etc.
2. The dominant level in managing interregional and cross-border relations.

As a rule, there are national, regional and interstate levels of management. The national or regional level of governance dominates.
3. The mechanism of establishing cross-border and interregional ties:
 - traditional model: based on differences between countries and their regions (differences in commodity prices, exchange rates, etc.);
 - preferential model: based on a set of preferences within a certain territory, for example, a border area (tariffs, tax and financial and credit benefits), or in order to stimulate ties in certain areas;
 - partner model: based on the principles of administrative and political decentralization, which is embodied in the special powers of local authorities (most often on the border territories), as well as joint mechanisms for solving common problems of the territory.
4. The degree of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation:
 - "euroregion". The most common form of cooperation between cross-border regions covering adjacent border territories of states that differ in a certain economic, socio-cultural, ethnic unity;
 - free economic zones;
 - technopark.

With the development of theories of regional integration, approaches to the development of the mechanism of cross-border cooperation are supplemented [14]. We highlight the formation of "regional growth points" as a tool for "drawing" other regions into economic growth. At the same time, apart from developing the regional system as a whole, the effect of their functioning should be characterized by social and institutional criteria; alignment of the levels of socio-economic development of regions within the framework of national regional policies.

Cross-border cooperation is connected not only with geographical characteristics, but also with functional, sectoral and institutional aspects which also influence the regional and contribute to the free movement of goods, services, capital and people. It is realized on the basis of implementing common programs and agreements that activate the business environment of the region.

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