

Ecological and economic zoning as an instrument of sustainable development of territories

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Abstract

For any federal state regional ecological policy is one of the main areas of activity. Over the past years since the beginning of market reforms, considerable success has been achieved in building a new system of economic relations between the Federal Center and the regions. At the same time, the solution of key problems related primarily to issues of “territorial justice”, ecological state of the regions and the economic efficiency of the national economy is still carried out by providing particular economically weak regions selective support from the federal budget and extra-budgetary sources. The study analyzed the causes of these problems. The following principles were proposed as the basis of administrative and territorial zoning of a constituent entity of the Federation: the principle of compliance with the system of settlement, the principle of accounting for environmental and natural demographic characteristics and others.

Keywords zoning, territorial development, sustainable development.

Introduction

The lack of a clear and balanced regional economic policy based on uniform conceptual ideas about the nature, content and forms of state support for territories predetermines specific actions of the federal authorities, choosing between equalizing interregional imbalances and achieving general economic goals. Meantime, today in the conditions of fierce competition in the globalized world and the Russian economic space, a need has arisen for the formation of optimal models for the economic development of regions. A transition from the concept of a regional policy aimed at reducing territorial imbalances to the concept of territorial competition is becoming increasingly apparent. The traditional points of view and the political strategy regarding problematic regions have changed, confirming a transition from passive support measures to strategies for active self-sufficiency in a region. The understanding has grown that regions are an integral part of the spatial economic system dominated by the forces of competition [9, 20, 29, 32]. Obviously, the provision of permanent financial support to problem regions and the achievement of an acceptable level of “territorial justice” is no longer a sufficient condition for the economic recovery of a state [1, 8, 18, 34, 41]. So, the issues of academic assessment of the feasibility of forming a new territorial organization of government based on an analysis of the processes of evolutionary development come to the fore.

Methodology

The theoretical basis of this research is the works by Russian and foreign economists on economic zoning of territories, sustainable development of regions, relationship of zoning and sustainable development,

academic reports and recommendations, and the legal framework. The methodological basis was a systematic approach that ensured the complexity, consistency and focus of the presented study. In the process of making this paper, analytical, abstract-logical, economic-statistical, monographic and other research methods were applied.

Results

The theoretical research of the last three decades in the social sciences is associated with the development of a new theory of economic growth. Rigid systems of industrial time are being replaced by modern production forms based on knowledge factors and innovation. Growth generators are considered to be individual peripherals and spaces with a certain agglomeration potential, for example, large cities, high-tech zones, global value chains, interaction fields, industry regions, clusters, communities, complexes, technology parks, networks, etc. The common features of these platforms are the combination of many elements in a minimum of space, intensive communication of each with each, and the effect of increasing returns when the whole becomes more than just the sum of its parts [3, 11, 21, 26, 36]. Taking into account the variety of forms of communication, as well as in order to ensure the stability of the entire system, such freedom of action should take place in a strictly organized environment, and from this position, the directional design of the created space becomes an important task.

Obviously, each type of life activity of any system has its own space, however, the following can be distinguished as its common characteristic features: length in various directions (density), presence and relative position of elements (saturation), level of inter-business relations (connectedness), combination of material and institutional components (interaction) [2, 6, 7, 23, 24, 28, 35, 39]. From an economic point of view, the category of “balance” of spatial development, which can only be achieved within certain boundaries, is gaining importance. Thus, it becomes very timely to clarify a number of empirical issues that are crucial – what can be a source of growth, to what extent can it extend and how to regulate it.

Environmental factors that determine the basis of economic activity, as a rule, include natural-geographical, historical, sociocultural, infrastructural, and institutional. In recent years, they also include information and communication technologies aimed at creating a single information space – the Internet, factors of the “creative class” – i.e. concentration of people in creative professions, institutional conditions, innovative development of regional systems, including the research and university sector) [5, 14, 30, 31].

Unlike other types of economic analysis, in which the objects of observation are well known and identified, the most suitable one for use in the spatial aspect has not yet been clearly established. The global level, due to its high complexity and diversity, provides incentives for growth through potential markets, the emergence of new goods and services. The task of the national level is to promote interregional cooperation and the formation of infrastructure projects with public-private partnerships. Regions, sharing some features inherent in the state as a whole, have the opportunity to develop according to their own scenarios, based on the resource potential [33, 37] and prevailing socio-economic and infrastructural conditions [10, 13, 16, 19, 42, 43, 52].

It is the complexity of the analyzed space that determines the decrease in its coverage and transition to the local level, since it is obvious that even the borders of a region are a very weak equivalent, as economic growth is concentrated not in the region as a whole, but only in its separate functional part. As a result of this, a number of scientists are focusing on cities, proving that they are the points of attraction for the merger of a whole complex of factors.

Another “spatial unit” is the “locality”, which is understood as a separate intracity district. Such a variety of units of analysis seems to be a serious problem in the development of a single conceptual framework for identifying the territorial boundaries of economic growth. Its solution requires carefully organized

conceptual categories that are able to identify the levels, scales and measurement systems under which economic activity takes place.

The authors believe that the formulation of the theory of economic growth should characterize its historical basis, be based on the principles of self-organization of the economy at a certain level of development of productive forces, and also reflect the level of existing economic relations [25]. It is proposed to consider these three conditions as the basis for self-development, but for efficiency and performance, additional elements must be taken into account – the generation of innovation and the relationship between people [4, 38, 40, 46, 48]. Under these conditions, a fundamentally new basis appears for the interconnection of the fragmented structural elements of the economy into a single whole. In the authors' opinion, it makes sense to pay attention to the joint development of such interrelated territorial categories as region, district and cluster, forming a new geographical level, as they form a single system.

In the Russian Federation, a region is generally understood as a part of a territory that has a commonality of natural, socio-economic, national-cultural and other conditions. Moreover, a region does not necessarily coincide with the borders of a constituent entity, so in some cases, it can territorially unite several adjacent constituent entities of the Russian Federation. For example, Vidyapin defines a region as a group of regions, territories, republics that make up a territorial and national economic whole (North-West, Western Siberia, etc.), and then represents a region as any territory independent in economic, administrative and administrative terms occupied by people [45].

A number of scholars, depending on the development paths and combinations of political, cultural and economic forces, distinguish two varieties of regions [12, 15, 17, 27, 31].

1. Cultural regions – a set of people having a common culture, language and territory of residence. A cultural region either did not become an independent state, or lost such a status. In this sense, a region must not have clear boundaries; it is homogeneous from the point of view of individual criteria and differs from neighboring regions by a certain set of parameters and internal solidity.

2. Administrative regions – appear as a result of reforms in the field of regional democracy and have some powers in the development of internal regional policies and a certain political legal capacity.

Obviously, the administrative-territorial division is a rather comprehensive and multilateral phenomenon, since it is crucial for the functioning of the entire political system of society and the solution of the tasks of economic and socio-cultural development.

Given that the life base of any administrative region is determined by the economy, the academic basis of the administrative-territorial structure is, accordingly, economic zoning. The unity of the administrative-territorial structure and economic zoning of the state is the most general principle of the joint organization of the processes of economic zoning, territorial sectoral distribution and territorial management.

Zoning is the allocation and scientific justification of areas (zones) of various types. Moreover, the allocation of the types of territories should be “potential”, i.e. facing the future, proceeding not from the current situation, but from the possibilities of predictive development.

According to foreign scientists, a system of division into areas is necessary only to facilitate the study of individual factors of the problem under consideration. In other words: there can be as many areas as there are problems studied by the methods of regional science. An area is a means of selecting and studying spatial combinations of comprehensive sets of phenomena found on the globe. Any site or part of the Earth's surface can be considered an area if it is homogeneous in terms of the conditions of this spatial combination. The entire surface of the globe, with its comprehensive combinations of phenomena, can be theoretically divided into an infinite number of regional schemes built on the basis of various distinguishing features. The homogeneity of an area is determined on the basis of indicators necessary to characterize this phenomenon within a distinguished geographical unit. Thus, an area is an intellectual concept created by thinking, using certain features characteristic of a given territory [22].

In the authors' opinion, a district is a special territorial form of existence, which should be characterized by the homogeneity of natural factors, economic, social and organizational structures [47].

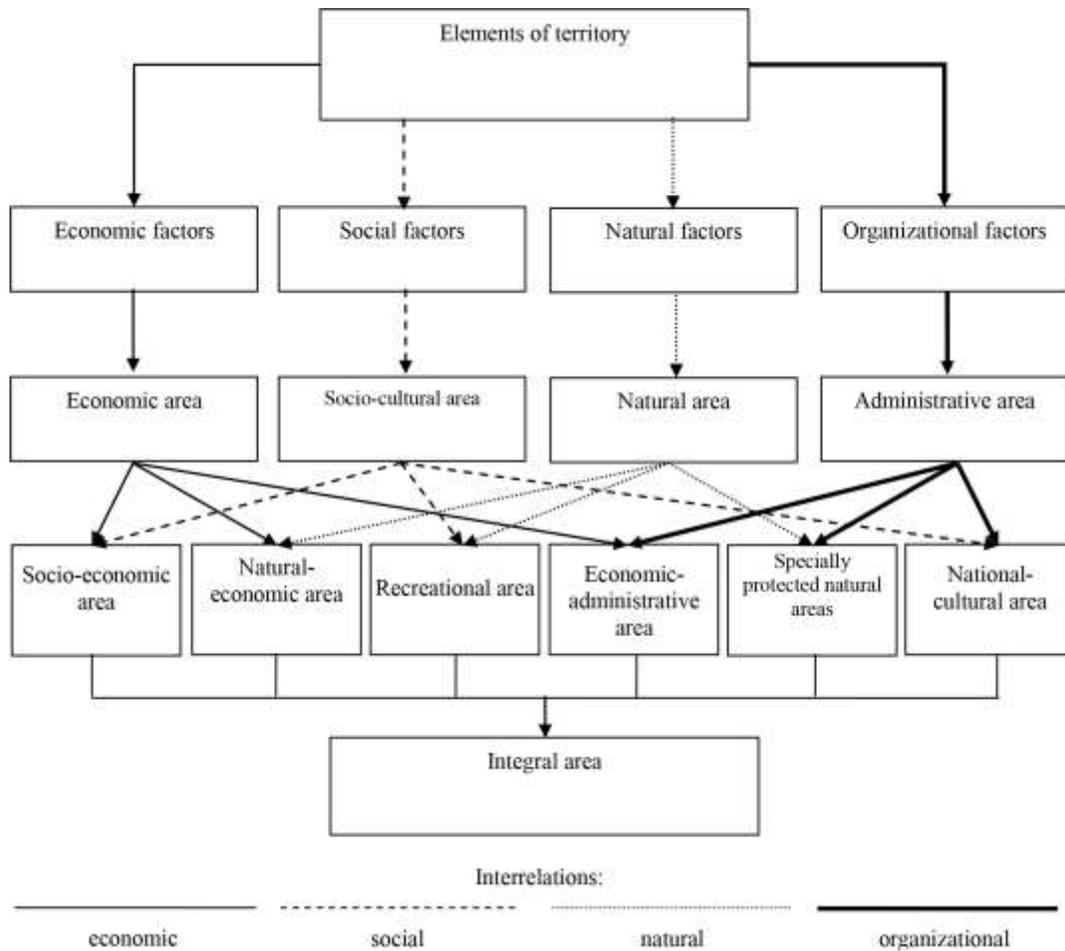


Figure 1: Relationship of the elements of territory based on influence factors

The spatial environment of a region is characterized by a variety of elements that interact in different ways with the territorial systems of the economy and settlement. The process of territorial allocation is distinguished by the complexity and contingency of many reasons. The problem of economic regionalization has not yet been sufficiently developed, and lies in the fact that an area is a special form of territorial organization that is neither clearly defined nor fully prepared for work at the moment.

Discussion

An analysis of the academic literature, primarily related to the regional economy, the theory of state and law, allows one to speak on the use of various terms: “state structure”, “territorial structure”, “territorial and political structure”, “administrative-territorial division”. The authors refer only to some of the most common interpretations of these terms.

State structure is a national-territorial organization of the state, determined by a number of social, historical, national, geographical and other conditions, also including the relationship of central and regional authorities.

Under the territorial structure is understood the aggregate organization of management systems and structures of various territories, acting simultaneously as objects and subjects of management.

Territorial and political structure is a certain procedure for dividing the territory into parts, their legal status and the relationship of the central authorities with the authorities of the constituent parts – state and administrative units.

Administrative and territorial structure is the division of the country into certain parts, in accordance with which the structure is built and the activities of state or municipal authorities are carried out to fulfill their established tasks and functions.

Administrative and territorial division is the system of the territorial organization of the state, on the basis of which the bodies of state power and administration are formed and operate [44; 49-51].

Administrative and territorial units are such objects of territorial administration, within which the life of the population is organized by administrative bodies.

There is no clarity in the literature which term is best used. Some authors use them as single-order, while others try to differentiate. Unfortunately, in all cases, the existing definitions do not fully reflect the inherent qualities of these concepts, and as a result, their meaning boils down to “dividing the territory into constituent parts”.

Obviously, administrative and territorial division is a rather comprehensive and multilateral phenomenon, since it is crucial for the functioning of the entire political system of society and the solution of the tasks of economic and socio-cultural development.

Conclusion

Thus, the following principles are the basis of administrative and territorial zoning of a constituent entity of the Federation:

- The principle of compliance with the system of settlement.
- The principle of multilevel territorial organization.
- The principle of compliance with the conditions of economic development of the territory.
- The principle of accounting for environmental and natural demographic characteristics.
- The principle of accounting for the national composition, socio-cultural and domestic characteristics of the population.

Given that the life basis of any administrative region is determined by the economy, the scientific basis of the administrative-territorial structure is, accordingly, economic zoning. Thus, the unity of administrative and territorial structure and economic zoning of the country is the most general principle of economic zoning, integral territorial sectoral formation and territorial management. The effective division of the territory into administrative regions on the basis of economic zoning is an important factor in their sustainable development.

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