

Decentralization of public administration in the process of building a democratic society

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Abstract. *Full integration of Ukraine into the European political and economic environment requires the further democratization of social processes. A complete transition from an authoritarian or totalitarian regime to a democracy is essential for the creation of a new economic basis of society. This transformation of public consciousness, as an inevitable stage in the construction of a market economy, requires new forms of organization concerning the state regulation of all the various processes present in different sectors and at different levels. The modern concept of Public administration is firmly established as the standard form for the organization of processes and technological support of public administration in Ukraine. The use of a certain unified model of decentralization of Public administration within the framework of Local Self Government will ensure the necessary level of transparency in dealing with many of the common problems of regional development, including those in the context of economic liberalization.*

Keywords: *decentralization, public administration, regional development*

Raktažodžiai: *decentralizacija, viešasis administravimas, regioninis vystymasis*

Introduction

Full integration of Ukraine into the European political and economic environment requires the further democratization of social processes. A complete transition from an authoritarian or totalitarian regime to a liberal democracy is essential for the creation of a new economic basis of society. This transformation of public consciousness, as an inevitable stage in the construction of a market economy requires new forms of organization of state regulation of all the processes present throughout the different sectors and at different levels. The modern concept of Public administration is firmly established as the standard form for the organization of processes and technological support of public administration in Ukraine. However, its implementation within the practice of regional governance, including economic processes in Ukraine takes place at a very low level. Because many of the administrative-territorial units of Ukraine are involved in the processes of cross-border cooperation, including those within the framework of the program of Euroregions, the decentralization of Public administration is of particular relevance. In Ukraine, as in many other countries, decentralization provides the context in which Public administration technologies have the greatest problems of practical application. However, the major drawbacks of decentralization initiatives are:

- low level of administrative capacity of regional and local bodies of power
- a lack of clear feedback mechanisms of these bodies with the population, to whom they provide services
- a lack of clear mechanisms for political and other types of responsibility.

On this basis, to enhance the effectiveness of political decision-making in the decentralization of public administration within the public, political and socio-economic spheres, it is necessary to pay attention to the works of such scientists and experts as J. M. Cohen, S. B. Peterson, J. Litvack, J. Ahmad, R. Bird, M. Kaul, R. Kemp, A. Lockner, Breton A., Bird R. [1; 2; 5-9] and others. Moreover, attention should be paid to the experience of those countries that have stayed with Ukraine in similar starting positions for a long time: a change of the authoritarian regime to democratic, transformation of national consciousness, etc.

Forms of decentralization in the context of the modern paradigm of Public administration

In solving the problem of decentralization, any State makes the most difficult choice in a coordinate system, where on the one hand, a form of decentralization acts as the vector, and on the other hand there is the depth of decentralization.

Under the form of decentralization, we understand the contours of a system of public-political or socio-economic relations, which are subject to change. These may be:

- fiscal decentralization - redistribution of financial flows between the budgets of different levels

- administrative - a change in the administrative structure of the state with the corresponding redistribution of powers
- the organizational or institutional - the establishment of divisional and regional levels of government or representatives of various governmental agencies
- functional - the empowerment of the already existing bodies of state or local authorities at the subregional, regional or local levels
- electoral - changing the structure of electoral districts in the direction of their expansion of representation for the interests of different regions in the representative machinery of government.

There is no final list of forms and directions for the decentralization of the Public administration system, since the process often has a completely opportunistic value in terms of political interests and the aspirations of the elite in power. The goal of any political elite anyhow is to usurp power, although from the point of view of democratic values, the statement must be mitigated by adding elements of publicity and accountability to the electorate.

But in the context of the analysed problems concerning the modern and effective mechanism of Public administration decentralization, we must clearly understand that it is only effective in the context of opportunities and aspirations of the political power that it holds. The exception is the state, experiencing truly profound transformation processes. For example, the transition from a totalitarian or authoritarian management style to a democratic one, which is accompanied by profound changes in social consciousness towards the formation of a real civil society. In states considered as the benchmark of democracy for a long time, these institutions are formed and involved in public and political processes, making them active participants in any reform of Public administration, including and aimed at decentralization.

In the states undergoing this so-called transition, when a society has limited the ever-expanding possibilities for the declaration of its own interests, civil society institutions instead appear as a catalyst for the decentralization processes. Modern Ukraine is a vivid example, where political power was obtained by a coalition of democratic, pro-European forces that initially declared new changes qualitatively in the socio-economic and public-political spheres. Discarding objective factors: such as a fall in the economic development rate, an increase in financial destabilization risks, military action within the territory of the state, and the temporary occupation of some territories – it can be concluded that democratization, and therefore the decentralization of public administration, tends to decay, or at least exhibits a markedly unfinished character.

Under such circumstances, it is exactly the public, a civil society with a high level of political and national consciousness in a state of constant dialogue with the legitimate authority, where the continuation of decentralization aspirations is a particular objective.

In this context, it should be noted that the modern paradigm of Public administration determines a high level of publicity, openness and transparency of public authorities at all levels, as well as local governments. The aim of such publicity in the activity of the authorities is to achieve the maximum level of public confidence in the administrative decisions taken and for representatives of the authorities. In speaking of trust, we primarily have in mind the creation of transparent conditions for cooperation between public authorities with business structures and civil society institutions. Solving socio-economic problems, including a high level of welfare of the population and ensuring the stable development of the economy has been a determining factor in assessing the quality of Public administration for a long time. Society, acting as taxpayers on the one hand, and as a carrier of sovereignty on the other hand, a priori has the right to monitor the activities of government [6]. However, providing such control will be most effective in allowing state bodies and local authorities to implement their own initiatives on the condition that a certain amount of credibility exists.

In this context, an important place is occupied by the problem of building trust between the public and policy makers, within the context of the possibility of the latter to implement the reforms that they offered to voters as their program of action. The implementation of the Concept of Public administration and Local government is impossible in situations where there is political confrontation and political pressure, because under such conditions, there is no necessary freedom of choice between the instruments of realization for driving the democratic initiatives. In other words, the formation of a representative government, society in general, or specific territorial community becomes a compromise with the existing political forces regarding the vision of the future model of the socio-economic system, whether it is the state or socio-economic system of a particular region [4; 8].

Solving the problems concerned with the decentralization of public administration

Further work on the implementation of the reforms is carried out by the authorities formed, depending on the compromise reached among the different members that represent the various political parties, unions, blocks, etc. That is, having reached a compromise with the public, the civil servants form a common vision of the further development of a control object inside the representative authority. It is necessary to make an important note of the fact that these are primarily and mainly the representative bodies of government. It should be recognized that all the other civil servants are mostly focused on performing the decisions made by such bodies. Therefore, the representatives of different political parties should come to some agreement on the ideological component of future reforms throughout the process of developing a uniform policy. This requires a high level of coordination and depends heavily on trust to ensure the minimization of political risks.

In returning to the dedicated contact forms of decentralization, we still focus our attention on the problem of their choice. Of course, in such a choice, the government should be formed based on the need to solve the problems faced in overcoming the challenges it must deal with, or it cannot be achieved, leaving the decision in the hands of a traditional set of administrative and managerial tools. However, it should be kept in mind that whatever the motives of decentralization are, their implementation should be carried out by observing a number of requirements, which are key in terms of preserving the statehood and sovereignty:

- first, by it must be political stability, eliminating the possibility of a manifestation of the so-called power crisis. It should be understood that decentralization is always a response to the needs of society, so it should not be unpopular, and must clearly fit into the criteria of public expectations.
- second, the need to achieve the highest possible level of the utility of these changes. It is not merely enough to achieve formal objectives: to increase the number of administrative units, to legislate the extension of the powers of local authorities, etc. It is about creating conditions that would facilitate the further practical longevity of the decentralization changes that are carried out. In other words, it is necessary to create mechanisms, but not to declare the intention or compromise in any sphere without its further implementation [3].
- third, decentralization should be viable. We talk about the intentions of the political elite opportunism abiding power through decentralization to further strengthen its own position or secure a long stay in power. Still, most often, decentralization serves just such a purpose, however, in terms of the criterion of the efficiency of territorial development and the state in general, any such changes must have a long life cycle, providing stable steady progress. In other words, the key criterion of decentralization should be its achievement and the implementation of the principles of sustainable development in the practice of Public administration. In fact, sustainable development was the result of the transformation of the governance paradigm towards strengthening the position of Public administration.

Thus, we can make a definite conclusion that there are a number of common criteria despite the objective individuality of each state in choosing forms of decentralization. In turn, this makes it possible to talk about the existence of a general algorithm of decentralization carried out in a concrete form. It is impossible to standardize tools and methodology in all forms possible, but the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness or even the rationality of the changes may be of a general nature.

The second most important issue for the state in the context of decentralization is to determine its depth. By depth, we mean the lowest possible level of administrative authorities, which shifts the centre of decision-making and thus, the centre of responsibility. Decentralization in the Public administration system is in its essence, an extension of the powers of government or local authorities that function within the

hierarchy below the central level [5]. Thus, it is logical to assume that decentralization will take place on the basis of the administrative and territorial structure of the state. For each State, such a transfer of the decision-making centre will be a unique experience, because each administrative-territorial unit in each country has a number of features and characteristics that are unique to it. This is due to several aspects:

- first, the process involved in the formation of subregional public authorities at that level of government. We are talking about the majority, proportional or mixed electoral system, which leads to unity, or vice versa – a difference in the policy of local and national authorities. This in turn determines the probability of reaching a political compromise during the developmental process of the territories and the degree of pressure from the centre felt at the subregional level.
- second, with the degree of control by the state of local authorities' activities or the process of appointing the heads of regional authorities. For example, in France, the degree of participation of the state is personified by the figure of the prefect, who oversees and monitors the activities of some aspect of the government at the regional level, departmental, or the commune. In turn, the appointment of governors is happening in Ukraine (the level of the same region in France and Italy, voivodship in Poland) and the heads of regional administrations (the level of the same department in France, the province in Italy, County in Poland) who are the heads of regional authorities, will at the same level as the public bodies of local self-government. Thus, there may be a conflict between regional elites and the central government, which adversely affects the effectiveness of authorities.
- third, with the degree of participation of local authorities or local governments in economic processes. Total control of the economy by the bodies of the central government: ministries, departments and committees, but market relations predetermine the opportunity to participate in the economic processes for state business entities and communal forms of ownership.

Hence the decentralization of Public administration in order to be successful and meet the criteria that have been formed in the European practice of regional management requires:

- optimization of the resource security bodies of regional and local authorities, improving their financial independence
- formation of highly qualified managerial personnel
- introduction of new technologies for the regional management of socio-economic and public-political processes
- development of various forms of business partnerships, including the private and public sector
- increase in the activities of non-governmental institutions and the public bodies of self-organization involved in regional decision-making.

At the regional level, real centres of decision-making and responsibility should be created. In such a centres, Public administration powers should be delegated to increase the efficiency and flexibility of economic management, social and other public processes in the region. That is why, further transformation of the concept of Public administration at the regional level carried out in the framework of the theory of Local Self Government is considered appropriate for in the conditions in Ukraine.

Conclusions

1. Decentralization will be not only be implemented through rather complex integration, but involve a specific mechanism in the practice of public management for regional development, which can be schematically represented as follows.
2. The public administration decentralization mechanism not only provides an extension of the powers of regional and local government, but relevant functional support in the delegation of authority. Each group of questions, whether their solution is assigned to a lower level rather than the national level, is accompanied by a transfer of resources needed to solve them, as well as legislative regulatory and organizational support. As a result, necessary conditions are formed for the implementation of the delegated powers, which significantly increase the efficiency of Public administration and provide an opportunity to talk about implementation of the effective principles of Local Self Government.
3. For Ukraine, this practice had been replaced for a long time by a solid declaration and formal approach by the government to meeting the challenges of local government, which ultimately led to a drop in the efficiency of public bodies at the subnational level. It is even permissible to talk about the recent crisis in the local government system in Ukraine as an institution of civil society, and its transformation into a rudimentary one. That is why a more modern Ukraine has chosen the solution of a redistribution of powers between its centres and regions the first place, in order to avoid deformation of the economic, financial and social subsystems of society.
4. The most current trends that exist in the context of the decentralization of the capacity of regional governments and local authorities are the following:
 - a) adoption of an effective strategic document that defines the overall objectives, trends, tools and decentralization mechanisms in all systems of public-political and socio-economic relations. An important element of this document should be a system of indicators of achievements / failure of reaching goals within specific time intervals. Thus, the strategy will not just become a declaration of intent, but will instead, be

- provided with all the features of network planning, which will greatly facilitate the achievement of goals.
- b) the widespread use of a scientific approach to the development of regional development programs, with a focus on return on investment and / or real social and economic benefits. The expenditures of the local and regional budgets after fiscal decentralization should not and cannot be replenished at the expense of subventions from the state budget. The local authorities need to be effective stewards of the budget savings, which will push them towards new forms of incentives for tax revenues and budgets, and thus lead to the development of the regional economy.
 - c) formation of a system of vertical (hierarchy levels of government) and horizontal (institutions of civil society: associations, unions, joint cooperation of regional authorities) to coordinate the efforts of local governments and regional authorities in order to enhance their cooperation in addressing the challenges of territorial development.
 - d) the creation of an effective legal framework, which removes all the sensitive issues found within the context of cooperation between local governments, public authorities, business structures and civil society institutions in the process of the socio-economic development of regions.
 - e) the activation of non-governmental organizations in the development of democratic initiatives at the regional level, and the involvement of partners in cross-border cooperation, including the context of the Euro-regions programs.
 - f) the introduction of the concept of E-government, in order to improve workflow efficiency, the effectiveness of managerial decisions, and to overcome the problems encountered with the excessive bureaucratization of democratic processes.
 - g) training and improvement in the competency levels of managers at all levels of the Public administration system, including civil society institutions. The current level of training of the majority of experts was drawn from the requirements of the old control system, which was formed at the bottom of the party nomenclature. Thus, the training of new formation specialists will not only substantially increase their competence and improve the level of variability in decision-making, but also provide the delegation of responsibility necessary for the Public administration decentralization process.
5. The practical aspects of such reforms for Ukraine lie in the fact that in this way, a certain synchronicity will be achieved in the organization of the decision-making system within the framework of cross-border cooperation. The effective involvement of many Ukrainian regions in such kinds of programs

makes it difficult to lower the level of coordination between the regional management bodies of adjacent territories. This results in less control of the processes and makes it impossible to achieve the common objectives of socio-economic development within a given time period. However, the use of a particularly unified model for the decentralization of Public administration within the framework of Local Self Government will ensure the necessary level of transparency required for dealing with many of the common problems of regional development, including those in the context of economic liberalization.

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Viešojo administravimo decentralizavimas kuriant demokratinę visuomenę

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Anotacija

Kad Ukraina būtų pilnai integruota į Europos politinę ir ekonominę aplinką, būtina toliau demokratizuoti socialinius procesus. Norint sukurti naują ekonominių visuomenės pagrindą, yra būtina visiškai pereiti nuo autoritarinio ar totalitarinio režimo prie demokratijos. Viešosios sąmonės transformacijai – o tai yra neišvengiama rinkos ekonomikos kūrimo stadija – reikalingos naujos valstybinio reguliavimo organizavimo formos, kurios apimtų visus procesus skirtinguose sektoriuose ir įvairiuose lygmenyse. Šiuolaikinė viešojo administravimo samprata yra įsitvirtinusi kaip standartinė viešojo administravimo procesų ir technologinės paramos organizavimo forma Ukrainoje. Tačiau jos praktinis įgyvendinimas regioniniame valdyme, o taip pat ir ekonominių procesų Ukrainoje, vyksta labai lėtai. Ukrainoje, kaip ir daugelyje kitų šalių, decentralizacija sukuria kontekstą, kuriame viešojo administravimo technologijos susiduria su didžiausiomis praktinio pritaikymo problemomis.

Pačios naujausios tendencijos regioninės valdžios ir vietos valdžios galių decentralizacijos kontekste yra šios: efektyvaus strateginio dokumento, kuris apibrėžia bendruosius uždavinius, tendencijas, priemones ir decentralizacijos mechanizmus visose visuomenės-politikos ir socialinių-ekonominių santykių sistemose priėmimas; plačiai paplitęs mokslo pasitelkimas kuriant regioninio vystymosi programas ypač fokusuojantis į investicijų grąžą ir / ar realią socialinę ar ekonominę naudą; vertikalios ir horizontalios sistemos formavimas vietos ir regioninės valdžios pastangų koordinavimui siekiant suaktyvinti jų bendradarbiavimą derojantis su teritorinio valdymo iššūkiais; efektyvaus teisinio pagrindo sukūrimas, kuris pašalina visus jautrius aspektus vietos valdžios, viešosios valdžios, verslo struktūrų ir pilietinės visuomenės institucijų bendradarbiavimo kontekste socialinio-ekonominio regionų vystymosi procese; vadybininkų visuose viešojo administravimo sistemos lygmenyse, įtraukiant ir pilietinės visuomenės institucijas, rengimas ir jų kompetencijų tobulinimas. Tam tikro unifikuoto viešojo administravimo decentralizavimo modelio vietos savivaldos rėmuose naudojimas užtikrins būtiną skaidrumo lygį sprendžiant daugelį bendrų regioninio vystymosi problemų, o taip pat ir tų, su kuriomis susiduriama ekonominės liberalizacijos kontekste.

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