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# Strategic directions of the national policy in the context of the asymmetry of the regional development

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to substantiate strategic directions to overcome the asymmetry of regional development. The methodological basis involved a systemic approach that allowed, in turn, a holistic approach to clarify the linkages and patterns of regional development asymmetry and justify strategic measures to overcome it. In the results, it was found that the region's development strategy is a set of interrelated measures aimed at ensuring the principles of sustainable development, improving the quality of life, creating conditions for economic growth, ensuring the efficient use of resources, improving regional self-sufficiency, economic security and competitiveness of the region. It is argued that the region's development strategies should be based on: a) associative approach to the formation of goals and tools to achieve them; b) efficiency in the use of resources; c) participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the substantiation of strategic development directions; d) overall coordination of planning and control processes for the achievement of the set objectives. It is concluded that it is proven that the strategic directions of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development must be led by strategic thinking.

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**Keywords:** regional policy; asymmetry of development; strategic directions of development; strategic policy; regional development.

## Direcciones estratégicas de la política nacional en el contexto de la asimetría del desarrollo regional

### Resumen

El propósito del estudio fue fundamentar las direcciones estratégicas para superar la asimetría del desarrollo regional. La base metodológica implicó un enfoque sistémico que permitió, a su vez, un enfoque holístico para esclarecer los vínculos y patrones de asimetría del desarrollo regional y justificar medidas estratégicas para superarlo. En los resultados, se encontró que la estrategia de desarrollo de la región es un conjunto de medidas interrelacionadas, encaminadas a asegurar los principios del desarrollo sostenible, mejorar la calidad de vida, crear condiciones para el crecimiento económico, asegurar el uso eficiente de los recursos, mejorar la autosuficiencia regional, la seguridad económica y competitividad de la región. Se fundamenta que las estrategias de desarrollo de la región deben basarse en: a) enfoque asociativo para la formación de metas y herramientas para alcanzarlas; b) eficiencia en el uso de los recursos; c) participación de una amplia gama de partes interesadas en la sustanciación de las direcciones del desarrollo estratégico; d) coordinación general de los procesos de planificación y control para el logro de los objetivos fijados. Se concluye que está comprobado que las direcciones estratégicas de superación de la asimetría del desarrollo regional deben estar dirigidas por el pensamiento estratégico.

**Palabras clave:** política regional; asimetría del desarrollo; direcciones estratégicas del desarrollo; política estratégica; desarrollo regional.

### Introduction

It is generally accepted that the system acquires a certain «ideal» state in the absence of discrepancies in the indicators of the state of its components. That is, considering the national economy as a system consisting of a set of regional economic systems, the smaller the discrepancy between the economic condition of its regions, the better the system itself and goes to a certain «ideal» state of its development. However, it should be noted

that the divergence and increasing asymmetry between regional economic systems has been progressing recently.

It is impossible to achieve full equality, because there are always differences between regions in resource opportunities, potentials, territorial features, and so on. Issues of asymmetry of regional development are faced by government officials, as their growth can lead to socio-political upheavals, general dissatisfaction and their manifestations among the population of backward areas, threaten economic security and disrupt the consolidation of socio-economic space of the national economy.

The issues of asymmetry of regional development of the business structure are not left out. Because, in some regions there are greater opportunities to attract the population in the form of labor for production, but in regions where more unemployed there is less demand for products. Also, the issue of asymmetry of regional development is acute for the population, which affects the differentiation of income and ensuring living conditions and quality.

The problem of asymmetry in territorial development is also facing the member states of the European Community, as the new EU members have much lower GNI per capita than the old EU members. Resolving differences in regional development, convergence of regions are among the leading goals of regional policy and strategies for regional development.

This and other causes the actualization of the issues of strategic direction of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development, leveling imbalances in the social, economic and environmental spheres.

The purpose of this study is to substantiate the strategic directions of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development. To achieve this goal, the authors set and achieved the following goals: substantiated the feasibility of scientific research in this area in order to justify strategic directions to overcome the asymmetry of regional development; the bases of the strategy of regional development taking into account the processes of decentralization are substantiated; the asymmetry of the development of the regions of Ukraine in terms of GRP values per capita and the share of GRP in general; the consequences and reasons for the growing asymmetry of regional development are identified, as well as possible threats to the spread of regional development differentiation; the strategic directions of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development and the vectors of their direction are substantiated.

The methodological basis for substantiating the directions of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development is a systematic approach, which is an instrument of scientific knowledge, which allows to combine into a single system different methods of research to prove the validity and effectiveness of strategic directions to overcome the asymmetry of regional development.

A systematic approach provides an opportunity to take a holistic approach to clarifying the links, processes and patterns of asymmetry of regional development and justify strategic measures to overcome it.

The system approach makes it possible to agree on the goals, objectives of state and regional governance, to direct the methods and tools of strategic governance to overcome the asymmetry of regional development. The use of such an approach makes it possible to consider the regions as a whole organism, a certain system with inherent specific features and capabilities and at the same time as a subsystem of a higher order, namely a component of the national economy.

## 1. Literature Review

The scientific directions of the following scientists are devoted to the strategic directions of regional development: Borbasova (2021); Burgos (2019); Cao (2006); Derhaliuk (2021); Giedrè (2021); Grigoraş-Ichim (2018); Grosu (2021); Herspergera (2019); Kholiavko (2021); Krasnostanova (2021); Kristensen (2018); Mukhametzhan (2020); Nurse (2017); Paniyaz (2021); Popelo (2021, 2022); Revko (2020); Righettini (2021); Samiilenko (2021); Samoilovych (2021); Shevchuk (2021); Tulchynska (2022) and other.

The authors of the article (Mukhametzhan *et al.*, 2020) developed an econometric model for estimating the impact of asymmetries in the development of the urban economy on regional socio-economic development. Scientists have assessed the asymmetry of regional development using the coefficient of variation of the relevant indicators of socio-economic development of cities and regions, taking into account lag variables.

According to scientists, the proposed model allows to determine the convergence model of regional development, the nature of the impact of asymmetries of urban development on regional economic development in conditions of economic growth and decline, as well as identify key factors of asymmetry of regional development.

Scholars (Cao *et al.*, 2006) consider the way in which regional asymmetry emerged and how it was reproduced at different stages of Argentina's history. The authors consider a number of hypotheses about its main features at the present stage.

The aim of the article (Giedrè, 2021) is to study the impact of economic specialization on regional economic development and analysis of the definition of promising areas of regional economy. The authors argue that neither economic specialization nor economic diversity is a clear solution

to economic growth. Research has shown that specialization measures, in particular the allocation ratio, cannot fully reflect the dynamics of the sectoral structure, which may be important for shaping regional development strategy.

The scientific article (Paniyaz *et al.*, 2021) is based on the definition of strategic priorities of regional development and verification of the connection between regional development within the country and world geopolitics. The authors analyze the main problems and opportunities of economic development in different regions of Kazakhstan and propose measures to modernize the labor market as a key priority of effective economic development.

The authors (Borbasova *et al.*, 2021) proved that the effectiveness of the implementation of strategic plans is the most important condition for the implementation of strategic planning systems, in particular at the level of the territory as the closest to the population. The study concludes that due to the development of strategic management and planning, the relationship of strategic priorities of regional and industrial development, the pace of socio-economic development of territories is increasing.

Scientific research (Krasnostanova *et al.*, 2021) proves that the main priority of regional policy aimed at increasing the competitiveness of regions should be the development of their scientific, technical and innovative potential. The authors have developed recommendations for managing the innovative development of the region.

Researchers have identified priority areas for improving the tools for managing the innovative development of the region, including: the development of public consciousness, innovation and entrepreneurial culture; motivation of the population and entrepreneurship to active innovation; improving the content of specialized training of managerial staff for innovative development; algorithmization of the activity of regional leaders in the management of innovative development of the region. Researchers claim that the implementation of these areas will promote innovative development, increase the efficiency of the regional economy, improve living standards.

The paper (Righettini, 2021) examines the theory of joint governance to determine how it can support the analysis of new participatory practices at the local level and to assess the impact of these processes on the formation of sustainable development policy strategies. Researchers focus on analyzing the reframing process - in particular, it notes that the study uses a top-down system to promote civil society participation in strategic regional development planning.

The article (Herspergera *et al.*, 2019) argues that strategic spatial planning is increasingly being practiced around the world to develop a

coordinated vision to guide the medium- and long-term development of regions. The analytical framework proposed by the authors reflects current planning practices and intends to help consolidate the European understanding of strategic spatial planning, while providing a basis for dialogue with broader discourses on sustainable development in a global context.

The scientific work (Burgos, 2019) analyzes the articulation of mechanisms of economic development in the framework of territorial planning, supported by the transversal nature of this civil service and in the interests of achieving one of its goals: balanced socio-economic development.

The authors (Kristensen *et al.*, 2018) investigated that the existence and preservation of regional disparities between European regions requires special policies to promote structural change. The research focuses on disadvantaged regions and the use of smart specialization - a strategic approach to regional development based on innovation.

Researchers (Nurse *et al.*, 2017) are exploring the extent to which funds such as the European Regional Development Fund can be used effectively to focus on issues that are considered important at the local level. The authors analyze how successfully the European Regional Development Fund-funded schemes are developed, using the experience of key stakeholders working at each level of the funding process.

However, despite numerous studies on this topic, the issues of strategic directions to overcome the asymmetry of regional development need to become increasingly relevant and require further research.

## **2. Results**

It should be noted that in Ukraine there is an increase in the asymmetry of economic development between regions. Such inequality quickly increased and led to the concentration of financial, human, material and intellectual resources in the leading regions, which further aggravated the economic and social situation in the outsider regions.

The implementation of reforms in the direction of decentralization of power has not only expanded the capacity of regional and local authorities to overcome existing problems, but also increased resources for strategic measures to improve the effectiveness of regional development policy. Decentralization provides an opportunity to use an individual approach to specific areas in order to overcome the existing pressing problems of socio-economic development.

Such reform provides a specific territorial orientation in the application of regional policy tools that are more effective than the implementation of strategic measures in general for all territories. Outlined and other, it is possible to note that strategic measures for the economic development of specific areas are more effective in applying an individual approach to solving existing problems.

The region’s development strategy is a set of interrelated measures aimed at ensuring the principles of sustainable development, improving the quality of life, creating conditions for sustainable economic growth, ensuring efficient use of resources, increasing regional self-sufficiency, economic security and competitiveness.

Regional development strategies should be based on:

- partnership approach to the formation of goals and tools to achieve them, which involves mutual understanding between government, public and business representatives;
- efficiency in the use of resources to achieve goals;
- involvement in substantiating the directions of strategic development of a wide range of stakeholders and relevant analytical tools on the possibilities of achieving the set goals;
- general coordination of planning and control processes to achieve the set goals.

In the Table 1 presents the value of GRP per capita and the share of GRP in total to the country by region in 2015 and 2020, as well as the value of the rank of the region by these indicators.

**Table 1. GRP indicators in 2015 and 2020**

Region	2015				2020			
	GRP per capita (in actual prices, UAH)	Rank of the region	The share of GRP in total, %	Rank of the region	GRP per capita (in actual prices, UAH)	Rank of the region	The share of GRP in total, %	Rank of the region
<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>46413</b>	-	<b>100</b>	-	<b>94661</b>	-	<b>100</b>	-
Vynnytsia	37270	12	3,0	10	83175	9	3,3	10



Volyn	30387	18	1,6	20	73215	14	1,9	17
Dnipropetrovsk	65897	3	10,8	2	122379	4	9,8	2
Donetsk	26864	21	5,8	4	49422	22	5,2	6
Zhytomyr	30698	17	1,9	16	70247	1	2,1	14
Transcarpathian	22989	23	1,5	22	48861	23	1,5	22
Zaporizhzhia	50609	5	4,5	9	91498	6	3,9	9
Ivano-Frankivsk	33170	15	2,3	13	63254	18	2,2	13
Kyiv	60109	4	5,2	5	123367	3	5,5	4
Kirovohrad	39356	10	1,9	17	77816	13	1,8	19
Luhansk	10778	25	1,2	24	18798	25	1,0	24
Lviv	37338	11	4,8	7	85198	8	5,4	5
Mykolaiv	41501	8	2,4	12	82149	11	2,3	12
Odesa	41682	7	5,0	6	82903	10	5,0	7
Poltava	66390	2	4,8	8	134449	2	4,7	8
Rivne	30350	19	1,8	19	58332	20	1,7	20
Sumy	37170	13	2,1	14	70576	15	1,9	18
Ternopil	24963	22	1,3	23	54833	21	1,4	23
Kharkiv	45816	6	6,3	3	92864	5	6,2	3
Kherson	30246	20	1,6	21	59987	19	1,6	21
Khmelnytsky	31660	16	2,1	15	65916	617	2,1	15
Cherkasy	40759	9	2,6	11	86319	7	2,6	11
Chernivtsi	20338	24	0,9	25	46136	24	1,0	25
Chernihiv	35196	14	1,9	18	78118	12	2,0	16
Kiev city	155904	1	22,7	1	320885	1	23,9	1

Source: compiled according to statistics.

According to Table 1, it can be noted that the difference in the rank of regions on such indicators as GRP per capita and the share of GRP in general often do not differ much and often fluctuate within 1-2 steps. The biggest discrepancy is observed in the Donetsk region, which in 2020 ranks 22nd in terms of GRP per capita, but ranks 6th in terms of GRP share in the overall distribution of the country. This situation is primarily due to hostilities that began in Ukraine in 2014 and led to significant displacement of the population from the occupied part of the territory.

In 2015, the GRP per capita in Kyiv was 155,904 UAH, and in Luhansk region 10,778 UAH, ie the differentiation is 14.47 times. At the same time, the city of Kyiv in 2015 accounted for 22.7% of the total national product, and the Luhansk region 0.9%.

In 2020, the largest value of GRP per capita also falls on the city of Kyiv and is 320885 UAH, and the smallest amount of GRP per capita is 18798 UAH, the differentiation is 17.07 times. In total, the share of GRP in Kyiv in 2020 was 23.9%, which is 1.2% more than in 2015, and the share of GRP in Luhansk region decreased from 1.2% in 2015 to 1.0% in 2020. That is, in five years the asymmetry in terms of GRP per capita has deepened by 3.07 times.

Even greater asymmetry is found in the shares of GRP in the total gross product. Thus, in 2015, Kyiv produced 22.7%, and the share of Chernivtsi region was 0.9% of the total. That is, the differentiation was in 2015 - 25.2 times. In 2020, the share of Kyiv in the total GRP increased to 23.9%, and the smallest share fell on Chernivtsi and Luhansk regions 1% each. Differentiation in 2020 was 23.9 times.

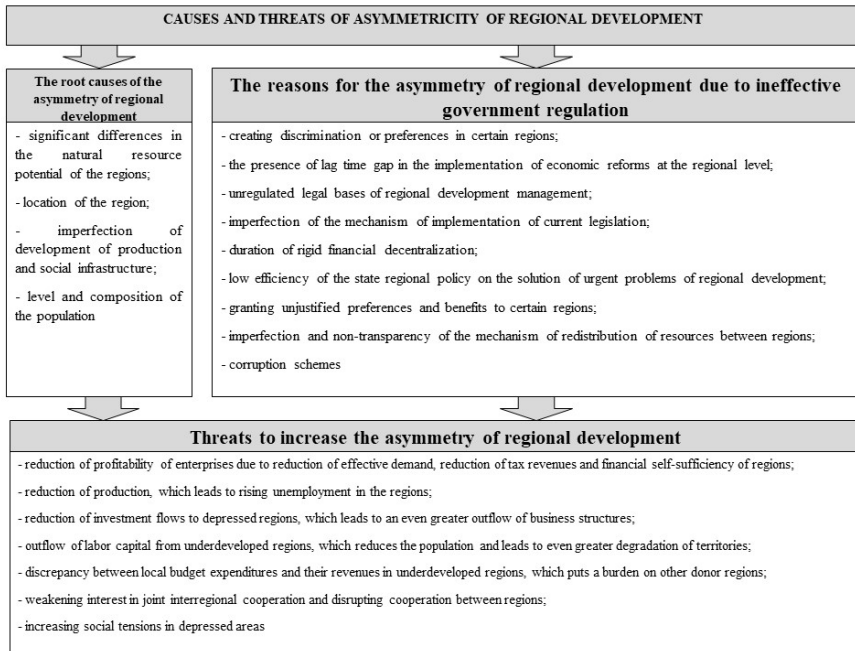
In regions with low GRP per capita values, general unfavorable trends are observed, including:

- predominant raw material orientation of production;
- low share of final products in GNP;
- insufficient development of production infrastructure;
- low rates of introduction of innovative technologies in production and its general modernization;
- low competitiveness of products in both domestic and foreign markets.

These and other common shortcomings inherent in depressed, backward regions prove the ineffectiveness of regional policy and require the development of new strategic directions aimed at maximizing the available and unleashing the latent potential of territories to boost economic development through their own resources.

From the point of view of regional reproduction, the difference between regions lies in the inherent specific features that characterize the set of regional proportions and affect reproduction. At the same time, despite the significant differences, all regions are part of the overall system of national and economic complex of the country, ensuring the achievement of strategic interests of the country as a whole. It can be noted that the root causes of asymmetry of development are (Fig. 1):

- significant differences in the natural resource potential of the regions;
- location of the region;
- imperfection of development of production and social infrastructure;
- level and composition of the population, etc.



**Fig. 1. Causes and threats of asymmetry of regional development. Source: built by the authors**

However, the growing disproportion of regional development is due to ineffective regional policies to address specific problems of development of specific areas. Ineffective state regional policy may consist of:

- creating discrimination or preferences in certain regions;
- the presence of lag time gap in the implementation of economic reforms at the regional level;
- unregulated legal bases of regional development management;

- imperfection of the mechanism of implementation of current legislation;
- duration of rigid financial decentralization;
- low efficiency of the state regional policy on the solution of urgent problems of regional development;
- granting unjustified preferences and benefits to certain regions;
- imperfection and non-transparency of the mechanism of redistribution of resources between regions;
- corruption schemes and the influence of business elites on the redistribution of financial support for regional development projects, etc.
- In turn, increasing the asymmetry of regional development exacerbates the problems of economic development of regions and the country as a whole, consisting in:
  - reduction of profitability of enterprises of backward regions as a result of reduction of effective demand, and as a consequence of reduction of regional tax revenues and financial self-sufficiency of regions;
  - reduction of production, which leads to rising unemployment in the regions;
  - reduction of investment flows to depressed regions, which leads to an even greater outflow of business structures;
  - outflow of labor capital from underdeveloped regions, which reduces the population and leads to even greater degradation of territories;
  - discrepancy between local budget expenditures and their revenues in underdeveloped regions, which puts a burden on other donor regions;
  - weakening interest in joint interregional cooperation and disrupting cooperation between regions;
  - increasing social tensions in depressed areas.

These and niche factors that arise under the influence of disparities can, in turn, be the causes of disintegration trends in the regions, the growing threat of economic alienation of territories and the formation of closed economic spaces. Formation of two polar groups of regions on the one hand, those who are not interested in supporting other donor regions and depressed underdeveloped regions that are recipients of grants. This leads to the lack of interest of the regions in the consolidation of spatial

development. This and others require the formation of strategic directions to overcome the asymmetry of regional development.

Directions for overcoming the asymmetry of regional development should be aimed at:

- overcoming structural imbalances in the development of regions by increasing the adaptability of regions with different regional structures to modern challenges of economic development;
- strengthening the export orientation of the regions, especially in relation to innovative products that are new and competitive in the world market;
- introduction of post-industrial economy on the basis of smart specialization;
- attracting investment in innovative development of regions;
- identification of regional growth points and multipliers of regional development, taking into account the specific potential of the regions;
- focusing and directing the regions to self-development based on their own resources and capabilities, use of latent potential, diversification of economic spheres of activity;
- reducing the importance of subsidized instruments to support the regions and overcoming the paternalistic expectations of the regions regarding state support;
- weakening decentralization to regulate regional development processes, etc.

At the same time, the main aspect of using strategic measures of the state regional administration to overcome the asymmetry of regional development should be aimed at using more flexible methods and tools of influence, which would ensure the interest of regional and local authorities in enhancing the potential of territories. self-sufficiency.

Strategic directions for overcoming the asymmetry of regional development should be aimed at (Fig. 2):

- development and adoption of institutional support for the regulation of regional policy in the context of decentralization p
- development and control over the implementation of regional development programs taking into account the existing potential and latent opportunities;
- ensuring an effective system of territorial organization, which helps

to increase the efficiency of local budgets in the direction of their filling and use;

- creating conditions for the placement of production and intensification of small business development in economically backward regions;
- implementation of incentive measures for full and rational use of existing potential in accordance with the principles of sustainable development;
- elimination of differences in the socio-economic security of the inhabitants of the regions, as well as differentiation between rural and urban populations, which will help stabilize migration processes;
- strengthening the regional awareness of residents about the possibility of realizing their potential at the place of residence;
- increasing the innovative culture of the population and the perception of digitalization of economic processes.



**Fig. 2. Strategic directions of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development. Source: built by the authors**

The main feature of the strategic direction of overcoming the asymmetry of regional development should be a policy aimed at comprehensively stimulating the development of regions in order to overcome the most critical and urgent development problems.

## Conclusion

The study allows us to note that the asymmetry of regional development tends to increase, it requires the use of strategic regulatory tools aimed at overcoming the disparities in regional development. Strategic regulation directs the activities of the authorities in the vector of activating the business environment of the regions to influence the overcoming of the asymmetry of the development of regional economic systems.

The need for state strategic regulation of regional development is due to the impact on the shortcomings of regional development processes, which include the asymmetry and repression of certain areas. Strategic regulation should be based not on policy levers of influence, but on the possibility of choosing various tools for managing and activating local authorities in the direction of development and self-sufficiency of territories. The levers of regional development regulation are an effective tool for complex disproportion systems, which make it possible to achieve ordering of system components and reduce the asymmetry of their measurability.

Further research is needed to develop regional development strategies based on their economic development indicators in order to enhance the use of existing opportunities to ensure sustainable economic growth and increase self-sufficiency, which will help overcome the general asymmetry of economic development between regions.

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