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**ON THE PROBLEM OF ADMINISTRATIVE
REGIONALIZATION*)**

The present paper is a very concise extract of the theses advanced in the final report the author is going to submit to the Sixth General Meeting of the IGU Commission on Methods of Economic Regionalization, Delhi, 1968.

This Commission, set up at the XIXth IGU Congress, 1960, included in its working programme the treatment of questions concerning the relationship between economic and administrative regionalization at its Second General Meeting, Jablonna, Poland, 1963.

The reports on these activities were gradually submitted to the Commission. (See references 1—5.) In this place we formulate certain summary findings, not infrequently only as hypotheses not fully borne out. This is necessary also because questions relating to administrative regionalization are, as a rule, not sufficiently dealt with.

In the works of geographers, economists and politologists, questions of administrative regionalization generally lack a more profound analysis. Among the geographers who in concrete analyses, for the most part, rely on administrative units there exist roughly three approach methods.

1. Approach from the viewpoint of identity between administrative and economic regions, both types being confused. Thus, the economic region is considered to be the sum of several administrative ones or each administrative region is treated simultaneously as an economic one, etc. This conception is handed down especially in Soviet literature.

2. Diametrically opposed is the viewpoint rejecting whatever relationship between economic and administrative regionalization, though not infrequently from altogether different points of view. In American geography the view is rather widespread that the subject of scientific research can only be the theoretical economic region. Administrative regions are the result of unscientific practice.

3. We attempted to advance a third view proceeding from the standpoint that if the study and selection of economic regions as an objective reality is the subject of economic geography, the study and selection of politico-administrative regions as an objective reality is the subject of political geography. In this we rely on the initial thesis of the primary of economics over politics, while questions of politico-administrative (here after admi-

Editorial note: Irrespective of the author's opinion, the majority of members of the editorial staff consider the problem of administrative rayoning as the result of an administrative political practice even if it may rest — besides others — upon geographical analyses.

nistrative) regionalization are understood in a broader sense of the word as a subpart of economic regionalization. (See References — No 5.)

For throwing more light on the relationship, the following procedure was chosen: Predominantly historical connections in a concrete expression were studied by E. Juillard (Strasbourg, France) in "Comparative Analysis of Administrative Regionalization in the World", while the author of the present report chose the way of statistical analysis. The results of both procedures complement one another and E. Juillard certainly deserves thanks for his material contribution.

Only for the lesser part, complete information was obtained from 79.7 percent of the world's land area on which 87.7 percent of the total population lives (1963). We were fully aware of the shortcomings of the statistical analysis overlooking the geographical and historical differences in the individual parts of the world. A larger number of observed cases was to mitigate or eliminate the shortcomings. The following basic facts were studied: the area and the population of the individual administrative regions, their mutual numerical relationship, with available data on the structure of the population according to professions, the share of the population living in the centre of the region and the population density as well as the number of standard units of administrative regionalization answering our European idea of a community. Data of considerably diverging quality were treated with the aid of the punch-card method and the correlations evaluated by means of an "Elliot" computer.

It goes without saying that the results could be only of a strongly general character, since in the concrete projection there exists a whole number of deviations from the conclusions drawn. The incompleteness and inaccuracy of data even more than the too general character of the results compelled us to abandon the construction of optimum models for administrative regionalization of their types. For this reason we remained only on the forum of formulating certain even though only discussion or widely known to self-evident conclusions. We believe that also in this way we contributed at least a minimum to the elaboration of the question which, after all, must be answered, if only for the concrete meaning of the use of administrative units in geographical and other work.

On the whole, it can be estimated that today in approximately 190 state units (or territories corresponding to them from the viewpoint of administration) in the world there are about 3 to 4 million initial administrative units, corresponding to the idea of a community, grouped into approx. 50 000 and perhaps more higher units, roughly answering the idea of the European district, the latter being then subdivided into 4 000 units, roughly analogous to the idea of a county or department, etc. It is natural that in a number of countries there exist multi-stage systems of administrative organization as has been indicated. These multi-stage systems are, however, rather an exception and are ebbing away. The areas of countries are extremely different. We, therefore, understood the biggest state units in the world as confederations of states (which factually almost always answers the purpose) and we considered the individual countries within these systems from the aspect of analysis to be the highest units. Thus the number of 190 "state" units naturally rises in the Soviet Union to 15, in the USA to 50 units, and so on.

On the whole, the known findings can be derived from the analyses performed and confirmed, respectively, as follows:

1. The territorial administrative organization in the world is, as a matter of fact, very diversified, but certain general rules of its arrangement can be traced. Thus the initial approach of work has been principally confirmed, where the determination of the relationship between economic and administrative regionalization is for us a comparison of the rules and principles of both types of regionalization.

2. The territorial administrative organization is considerably conservative. It naturally is also subject to changes, but the latter, as a rule, are realized additionally so that they culminate in a certain economic or political development stage. We also see conservatism in the fact that it is a provable principle to transfer the already well-proven models of administrative regionalization into areas where the problem of new division is being tackled.

3. The basic element, determining to a considerable extent the model of organization used, is constituted by the lowest administrative units called communities. The regionalization of communities is the key problem of entire administrative regionalization. The organization of communities is closely connected with the type of settlement, but also with the character of the political system (level of democratization, quality of local leading officials, etc.).

4. In my opinion, the determination of the hierarchical system of introduced regionalization constitutes an important factor. As has already been said, there exist, in essence, three systems that are taken over and partly modified. It seems that for the choice of system power-political needs (questions of federalization, centralization, etc.) are determinant. Thus, we do not want to belittle the relationship between the choice of system and the geographical conditions of the respective country, where, for example, the area certainly influences the scope of the divided units and the like. Analyses have also indicated a certain regularity in the number of units so that the number of lower units within the framework of higher units is generally limited. The finding that the individual hierarchical systems display a rather geographical distribution seems to be at variance with what has been said before. Thus, two-, three-, and multi-stage systems are represented within the framework of advanced capitalist countries just as among the socialist countries. Therefore, we must not understand by power-political needs a fundamental difference between social systems, but concrete political needs of the individual countries, tradition of their division and the like.

5. Again we repeat the finding on the relationship between the size of country and the choice of its territorial regionalization. This dependence naturally encounters other limiting factors as in insular countries or in mountain regions.

6. We think that the analysis has sufficiently demonstrated the relationship between the size of administrative regions and the population density and the associated settlement density. The more densely populated a country is, the more complicated is the system of administrative regions, the regions being smaller as well. The population density reflects the greatly different level in the concentration of economy. The individual countries often feature a greatly varying population density. The hierarchical system of regions is,

as a rule, uniform. Both viewpoints are conflicting. The call for one system seems to prevail in the end.

7. No immediate relationship between the character of administrative regionalization and natural conditions has been demonstrated. The latter strongly influence the density of population and thus act as mediator. For lack of data we did not succeed in demonstrating on a larger scale any relationship between the economic structure (according to the employment rate of the population) and administrative regionalization. A comparison made in a part of the areas (mainly in Europe) rather shows that administrative regionalization is relatively independent of the economic structure of the respective country. Naturally there exists a relationship between the structure and the density of population which holds good.

For the time being, we cannot fully defend our point of view. It seems, however, that administrative regionalization is relatively autonomous from economic regionalization even though a number of relations of mutual structures, conditions of development and practical use for delimiting both types of regionalization are associated with it.

8. Our observations are necessarily only of hypothetical value. For the time being, they have not been fully demonstrated. The fact that under various conditions the intensity of the individual factors and their reciprocal influence are different constitutes a handicap as well. Ultimately we suppose that administrative regionalization is the result of the conflict of two factors: power-political and organisational needs of the administrative machinery and conditions of settlement finding their expression in the density of population. This density of population appears to us as a limiting factor and, at the same, time, a starting point for the choice of regionalization. The politico-organisational needs are a factor impressing its seal on regionalization within the scope of possibilities. Also the politico-organisational needs have their indispensable principles and demands which have to be observed (productivity of administration, its uniformity and simplicity, etc.). It would be a useful thing if political theory and the theory of management formulated these principles more precisely.

9. If we accept the preceding view, we can see that both main factors are more or less closely linked to the needs of economic regionalization. The influence of administrative control on economic management increasing in the world leads, or will lead, to the adaptation of the politico-administrative demands to the needs of economic management according to the really existing distribution of economy in the regions. The density of population is always more or less a reflection of certain economic realities in space. For all that, the mutual relations between both types of regionalization are more intricate than has frequently been stated.

An obstacle to their better elucidation consists, first and foremost, in the insufficient treatment of questions relating to the theory of control and administration, but also in the weakness of political geography as a component of the system of geographical sciences.

In the present report all the conclusions are only generally formulated. In the final report we will try to demonstrate the conclusions on the basis of at least some concrete examples. When we began the comparative analysis, we hoped our conclusions would be more profound and firmer. We do not

believe that the method of our analysis was wrong, but the very complex of problems is so complicated that we have been unable to demonstrate more.

The fact that our maximum expectations have not been fulfilled must not dissuade us. More specialists ought to occupy, themselves with the questions of administrative regionalization and its relationship to economic regionalization with concentrated efforts. If we have done no more than supplied the necessary impulse, we would consider our task fulfilled.

References

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R é s u m é

K PROBLÉMU ADMINISTRATIVNÍHO RAJÓNOVÁNÍ*)

Předkládaná stat je výtahem ze závěrečné zprávy, kterou hodlá předložit autor na zasedání Komise pro metody ekonomické a administrativní rajonizace, kterou Komise přijala do svého pracovního programu v roce 1963. Autor vychází ze stanoviska, že předmětem studia hospodářské geografie je zkoumání ekonomických oblastí jako objektivní reality a zkoumání politicko-administrativních oblastí jako objektivních realit je předmětem politické geografie a vztah obou disciplín zároveň udává i ráz vztahu zkoumaných objektů. K vyjasnění vztahu se užilo celosvětové analýzy současného administrativního rozdělení států a závěry jsou zhruba tyto: 1. Bez ohledu na značnou rozmanitost administrativního rajónování na světě lze vystopovat jistá pravidla jejího uspořádání. 2. Administrativní rajónování je silně konzervativní a jeho vývoj se zpožďuje za vývojem ekonomických oblastí. 3. Základním článkem jsou nejnižší jednotky, v naší předstávě obce. Jejich rajonizace je klíčová pro ostatní úroveň administrativního rajónování. 4. Podle autora je důležitým faktorem určení hierarchického systému oblastí (dvou, třístupňového či mnohostupňového). Rozhodující pro volbu systému jsou mocensko-politické potřeby státu. Přitom však systémy nejsou vázány na určité sociálně politické poměry. 5. Velikost administrativních oblastí je v závislosti na rozloze států. Čím je stát větší, tím zpravidla jsou větší i jeho jednotky. 6. Lze prokázat vztah mezi velikostí oblastí a hustotou zalidnění a hustotou sídlišť. Hustěji zalidněné státy mají soustavu oblastí složitější a oblasti všech hierarchických stupňů menší. 7. Vztah oblastí k přírodním podmínkám je zprostředkovaný. Nebyl prokázán vztah k hospodářské struktuře zemí. Administrativní rajónování, jak se zdá, je relativně nezávislé na rajónování ekonomickém. 8. Naše zjištění lze stavět jen jako hypotézy. Konec konců se jeví administrativní rajónování jako střet dvou faktorů: mocensko politických a organizačních potřeb státu a podmínek sídelních (hustoty zalidnění).

Získané závěry jsou formulovány obecně. Nesplnila se očekávání autora, že se dosáhne výsledků hmatatelnějších. Zfetelně by bylo třeba otázky velmi složitých vztahů obou forem rajónování dále zkoumat.

*) *Poznámka redakce:* Většina členů redakce je toho názoru (na rozdíl od autora), že problematika administrativního rajónování je výsledkem administrativně politické praxe, i když ta může být podložena — mimo jiné — i analýzami zeměpisnými.