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PRECONDITIONS AND STAGES OF DEVOLUTION IN THE UK

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The article analyses preconditions and stages of devolution in the UK. It is shown, that the decentralization of public administration in the UK means the devolution of central government and increasing the responsibility of local government in the expansion and development of various forms of interaction between state and society. In this context, devolution is primarily a process of transferring power from the central to the lower level. Devolution has become the most important event of recent decades in the political and socio-economic development of Great Britain. In contrast to decentralization, devolution aims at a more substantial transformation of the territorial system of government – the transfer of not only executive powers but also some legislative ones.

Thus, the decentralization of power, which has signs of devolution in Britain, is complex and ambiguous process. The process of devolution in the UK is characterized by asymmetry, as evidenced by the lack of legislative powers of England. In this context, it is stated that the procedure of interaction between public authorities at different levels is not well established. Today, there are a significant number of control functions, levers of administrative and financial pressure on central offices, as well as the lack of clear recommendations by which local authorities could determine what is within their competence and address urgent issues more effectively.

Keywords: *devolution, decentralization, Great Britain, government, regions, regionalization.*

Formulation of the problem. Each country has its own causes, forms and results of decentralization. Therefore, the unique genesis and evolution of relations between central and local government and the basic social values reflected in them, for example, civil society in Britain, statehood in Germany, citizenship in France. However, the analysis of public administration reform at different times and in different circumstances has identified three main models of decentralization that have emerged and been implemented in different countries: «devolution» in the UK, «deconcentration» in France and «delegation» in Germany.

The peculiarities of devolution in Great Britain are due to the influence of internal and external factors, in relation to which the determining role belonged to internal factors. Endogenous factors are associated with the preservation of internal problems of the regions, uneven socio-economic development and growing influence of the ethno-regional elite, which offers its own interpretation of the state of affairs and prospects for regional development. External, exogenous factors are linked to processes such as globalization and European integration, on the one hand, and differentiation and regionalization, on the other.

Topicality of the research. The urgency and need for further more thorough research is due to the controversial position of scientists, who point out not only the benefits of decentralization, but also a lot of disadvantages and risks of decentralization, emphasizing that it does not always achieve the desired results. It is noted that decentralization cannot be considered as good or bad one, but its effectiveness depends on specific factors, such as the

size of the territory or the institutional set-up. The example of Great Britain, which includes distinctive national regions, makes it possible to assess effective methods of public administration in the face of conflicting relationships between them.

The aim of the research. The main aim of the given research is to analyse the historical background and stages of devolution in Britain, which began with the birth of Britain, but intensified and institutionalized since the late twentieth century and continues to the present day.

Analysis of research and publications. To date, scholars have developed a number of theories that explain the causes and consequences of the transfer of power and resources from central to subnational governments. Among the scholars who have studied various problems and prospects of decentralization in the UK and EU countries are: Ayres S. and Pearce G.[1], Baldersheim J.[2], Braibant H.[3], Monson J. and Pierce J.[4], Mintzberg H.[5] and others.

Significant interest in this topic is also observed among Russian researchers, such as Eremina E.[6], Artomanova E., Lukin V., Musienko T.[7] who in their works focus on the model of reorganization and decentralization in the UK, as well as on the issue of identity in the United Kingdom.

Theoretical and methodological principles of the study. In every country and in every society (even those that seem homogeneous ones) there are always centripetal forces tending to centralization and centrifugal forces tending to the periphery are the mainstay of decentralization. Decentralization promotes stability and a predictable structural agreement in which the two forces can interact and maintain mutually beneficial cooperation for the sake of unity and indivisibility, as well as the development of local autonomy. The interaction between centripetal and centrifugal forces can lead either to complete unity – a strong unitary state or to its disintegration. It can also lead to a certain balance of decentralized management with the distribution of power. It should be borne in mind that the difference between decentralization and disintegration is very subtle and is based on a purposeful separation of powers and a level of understanding of the «formula» used in the distribution of resources between the centre and the periphery[8].

In the UK, the reform of decentralization of power was called «devolution» (from English devolve – to pass), a term that has become entrenched in the process of regionalization in the United Kingdom. The devolution aimed at transferring power from the central to the lower level has become a major event in recent decades in the political and socio-economic development of Britain. Devolution is the maximum possible measure of decentralization, which affects the sphere of legislative power, its independence in certain

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issues. In contrast to decentralization, devolution aims at a more substantial transformation of the territorial system of government – the transfer of not only executive powers but also some legislative ones.

In the theoretical and methodological context, there are two positions of researchers who argue for and against decentralization. First of all, we can say that the productivity benefits of decentralization are not unambiguous.

Depending on the specific historical and ideological context, productivity-based arguments can be found. Organizational theory includes arguments in favour of the fact that centralization can: 1) provide more accurate management; 2) promote the standardization of processes and products; and thus 3) increase the predictability of organizational practice[9].

The main disadvantages of decentralization according to the theory of organization are: 1) the risk of non-optimality, because decentralized organizations focus on their own activities, rather than on the tasks of the entire organization; 2) lack of coordinated control pulses; 3) inadequate diversity of practices and standards, especially in personnel management; and 4) reduced compatibility and predictability at the system level[10].

With regard to health services, expanding the decision-making capacity of several decentralized units can create coordination problems between these units. Investment planning and development of treatment facilities may thus become less optimal. It may also be more difficult to enforce common standards and ensure transparency if governance ambitions are opposed to strong decentralized local government.

Political interpretations of such arguments often focus on the risk that decentralization may create inequality between administrative areas. Accepting local differences is an integral part of decentralization, although not always a clear consequence. Successful implementation of decentralization requires adaptation to local needs, conducting experimental policies.

When justice problems arise, they often put social or political pressure on standardization and balancing of units. To achieve this, some (re)centralization of political and administrative power becomes necessary. Recentralization can provide better opportunities for setting standards and ensuring accountability of supplier organizations to common principles. Recentralization can also strengthen the ability to plan and coordinate service levels in the system. A good example is the introduction of new technologies and investment in new equipment. There is a clear risk of overinvestment, poor or inappropriate use if decision making is decentralized without any coordination mechanism[11].

Problems of coordination in decentralized systems and the risk of duplication of services are thus the main arguments in favour of some degree of centralization of power. Other arguments in favour of centralization relate to possible minor disadvantages, including limited ability to solve complex problems, the risk of capture by strong interest groups such as local industry, and problems of spill overs and shared resources when the action of one political actor negatively impacts another. All these arguments can lead to a policy of (re)centralization[12].

Presenting main material. It should be noted that chronologically the first historical part annexed to England was Wales (Cymru) – a historically unique region of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Wales was the first, after the Act of

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Union of 1536, to formally join the Kingdom of England, so it is more deeply integrated with it than Scotland and Northern Ireland[13].

Chronologically next, after Wales, after the conclusion of the Anglo-Scottish Parliamentary Union in 1707, Scotland was annexed to England[14].

In 1801, Ireland and Great Britain formed the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. There was a single parliament in London. The Irish Government Act of 1920 divided the island of Ireland. The Irish Free State was created, which is the forerunner of the Republic of Ireland. At the same time, Northern Ireland was created. Under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, Northern Ireland enjoys the right to remain part of Great Britain. From 1921 to 1998, Northern Ireland was the subject of a territorial dispute, fuelled by conflicting claims by politicians. The Good Friday agreement ended the controversy and the long bloody conflict. Instead, the reunification of Ireland is now being achieved through peace. Pending the possible reunification of Ireland, Northern Ireland now has a special constitutional status in Britain. The current full name of the United Kingdom – the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – was recently adopted in 1927 under the British Parliament Act[15].

Although the British Constitution is not written, it sets out the principles on which the constitution of any democracy is based. These are sovereignty, the rule of law, the priority of fundamental human rights and freedoms and the separation of powers. The latter principle in its classical form means that all power in the state should not be concentrated in the hands of one person or body, as this could lead to its abuse, and all branches of government should interact with each other and restrain each other.

The statehood and political system of the United Kingdom have been historically developed in the context of the «Anglo-Saxon and Celtic» or «centre-ethnic (Celtic) periphery» dichotomy. Ethno-national (Celtic) regions evolved from an independent state to a single political space, uniting with England, after which their socio-political development was integrated into a single British political system. However, it cannot be called unified, as ethno-national regions have preserved their own political culture based on existing cultural and territorial differentiations. Therefore, Celtic nationalism and the realization of the right to homrul (self-government) of ethno-national regions became the most important for the development of the United Kingdom. At the same time, if in Ireland it was about autonomy and independence, in Wales – about broad autonomy, in Scotland there was a gradual radicalization of attitudes and demands – from autonomy to secession[16].

The question of the confrontation of the cultures and interests of the centre with the Celtic regions is clearly evident in our time. The centre faced a dilemma: to continue centralization or to recognize existing regionalisms. This dilemma formed the main contradiction of the British political system: the opposition of the principle of parliamentary supremacy and regional self-government, which began to be decided by ethno-regional parties.

Today the strengthening of the ethno-national identity of the population of the Celtic periphery is stated. Today, «Scottish», «Welsh», «Irish» identities exist and develop as conscious identities shared by the majority of the population of the Celtic regions. At the same time, it is important that those who identify themselves, primarily as Scots, Welsh, Irish, also emphasize their «Europeanness» as opposed to «Britishness». For example, it is quite symptomatic that respondents across the United Kingdom associate their identity with their country of residence (region) and not with Britain as a whole (60% vs. 25%) or declare

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[14]Scotland. (n.d.). *Enciclopedia Britanica*. Retrieved from: https://www.britannica.com/place/Scotland
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the equivalence of these concepts, but do not associate themselves exclusively with United Kingdom[17].

In Scotland, according to the latest data survey, only 8% of respondents declared their British identity (for comparison: in Wales there were 17%, in England – 19%, and in Northern Ireland – 40%); 18% of Scots reported double self-identification (for comparison: 7% in Wales, 9% in England and 8% in Northern Ireland). It is important that these indicators do not change over time. Speaking of Celtic regions, 83% of Scots feel primarily Scots. At the same time, 94% of those born in Scotland choose the Scottish identity as the only or most important among other identities. In this survey, respondents describe «Scottishness» in very positive terms, pointing to the openness and loyalty of society. In addition, quite often British researchers, comparing Scottish and English identities, traditionally note the strength of Scottish and the weakness of English. Scots also associate themselves with Europe, not Britain, because there is nothing in the correlation between «Scots» and «European» that raises controversy or questions, while they arise when the Scots-British link is mentioned[18].

Speaking of Wales, after the transfer of power, the Welsh Government sought to maintain a common Welsh national identity through the Common Strategy for Wales. These included, for example, strengthening Wales' place in the world and continuing to support the Welsh language. The inclusion of national identity in the 2011 census gives Welsh governments the opportunity to study how people living in Wales describe themselves. The census shows that 58% (1.8 million) of people living in Wales identify themselves only as Welsh, and another 7% (218 thousand) identify themselves as Welsh and British[19].

In Northern Ireland, the idea of «Britishness» is extremely important to the Protestant population, and Northern Irish Protestants can be called more British patriots than the British. But most people in Northern Ireland also call themselves Europeans. And in this sense, Protestants and Catholics have common positions. Paradoxically, the «Britishness» of the Northern Irishman differs from the «Britishness» of the Englishman. In 2011, one-fifth of the region's population identified themselves as Northern Irish. In this regard, the situation has improved in terms of ties between Protestants and Catholics, as in 1998 only 10% of Catholics declared their «Britishness». To date, of the population normally living in Northern Ireland, 40 per cent have described their national identity as British only, 25 per cent as Irish only, 21 per cent as a Northern Irish identity only and 14 per cent as another identity, including combinations of the above[20].

The important thing is that today «Britishness» is no longer shared even by the British themselves. 3/5 of them say they are English, not British. Less than a tenth of the population of England choose a dual identity. 72% call themselves exclusively British, and 58% – rather English than British. And it is precisely «Englishness» in contrast to «Scottishness», «Welshness» and «Irishness» that is already associated with Euroscepticism[21].

[17] Ibiden.

[18] National identity and ethnicity in Scotland (n.d). *ESRC: Centre on dynamics of ethnicity*. Retrieved from: http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/medialibrary/briefings/dynamicsofdiversity/code-census-briefing-national-identity-scotland.pdf

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[21] Kumar, K. (2003). *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from: https://journals.openedition.org/lhomme/2076?lang=en

It is obvious that «Britishness» is undergoing a transformation, as it is simultaneously influenced in some way by united European and ethno-national identities. «Britishness» is about the country's history, expansion and world leadership. It is based on Britain's unique geographical location, unwritten constitution, rich history with the status of a maritime superpower, and close ties with the world. These factors construct the British identity, and in times of crisis they always sound as the strongest ones[22]. The British themselves, breaking down «Britishness» into elements, point out that its pillars are Protestantism, empire, passing heavy industry, because new staples do not appear[23].

The movement for devolution in Great Britain developed gradually and also gradually gained supporters. The initiators of the constitutional reforms necessary for the devolution of power and management functions were Labour, who in developing and implementing their devolutionary project based on understanding the benefits of the principle of redistribution of management functions and responsibilities in the modern state, combining centralization by central authorities, and the decentralization of political decision-making to the regional level.

State policy to implement the model and strategy of devolution was based on many years of experience in the autonomous functioning of executive bodies in the Celtic regions of the United Kingdom, which independence was limited by imperfect mechanisms that did not provide sufficient representation of regional interests in public policy and distribution of resources and investment [24].

A new stage in the implementation of devolutionary transformations in the Celtic regions, begun as part of the reforms of the 1990s, as well as the modification of the mechanisms of functioning of the central government, which differed not simply in the redistribution of part of the power from the central executive bodies within the framework of functional decentralization, but in the implementation of a larger strategy for expanding the sphere of self-government of the regions and their participation in political decision-making and the implementation of the developed political course dates back to the second half of the 2000s [25].

Changes in the European direction of British foreign policy occurred with the arrival of Mr Blair in 1997 as Prime Minister as a pro-European politician. However, it cannot be said that the New Labour Party supported deep integration (although the signing of the Maastricht Treaty provided for a qualitatively new level of European unification), moreover, their approach was fully in line with national interests. Within the country, which consists of several historically established regions, the idea of their own autonomy persisted and gradually began to strengthen. In the field of culture in the regions of the United Kingdom there was a desire to revive national identity, strengthen the position of language[26].

[22] Mann, R., Fenton, S., Garbaye, R., Schnapper, P. (eds.). English Nationalism and Britishness: Class and the ‘Sub-state’ National Identities. *The Politics of Ethnic Diversity in the British Isles Palgrave Macmillan UK*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137351548_9

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Consistent and active action on decentralization and devolution of governance in the regions of the United Kingdom was taken only at the end of the twentieth century. To assess the balance of factors that made the 1997 reform possible, it is necessary to turn to the history of the devolution itself. The British model of regionalism, considered in a pan-European context, is interesting in terms of its national characteristics. Great Britain (like many Western European countries) has adopted an asymmetric model: each region has had different powers.

The UK's national policy was to address the risks of radicalizing ethno-nationalism and possible separatism as a precondition for consolidating society and uniting the regions on new institutions and major constitutional reforms.

In essence, it was an intermediate model of federalization, which was called devolution in the establishment of the preservation of a unitary state. Devolution set the task of transferring some power to the local level, on the one hand, to fulfil historical obligations and to weaken ethno-radicalism, and, on the other hand, to keep the leading powers and control over the process of constitutional change[27].

The model of regional reform in England, developed by Labour, provided a very limited form of devolution and concerned, on the first stage in 1990s, transfer of powers in the field of distribution of individual administrative functions within London, while maintaining the existing unified system of elected legislative and executive power as a strategic management structure.

In the next stage, in the first half of the 2000s, the redistribution of administrative functions was extended to eight major cities in England. At the same time, the question of the architecture of the governance system in this region, which could function as a subnational governance structure, has not been resolved. The new stage of devolution in England (the second half of the 2000s of the 21st century to the present) is characterized by the preservation of the principle of reforms being limited by the limits of administrative devolution, on the one hand, and the introduction of certain elements of functional devolution in the corresponding local territories of England by expanding their involvement in the decision of problems related primarily to economic development at the local level, on the other[28].

The so-called «English question» as a question of the possibility of forming the region's own institutional structures of government and regional governance remains controversial. At the same time, the initiatives launched in the second half of the 2000s specified the mechanisms of devolution processes in the region. As noted above, Britain's main regional development strategy was to manage the development of its eight major subregional cities. Relevant programs set as a strategic task the formation of the institutional basis for the election of power structures of cities and metropolises, which are considered as independent subregions[29].

After the 2014 Scottish independence referendum in the United Kingdom, according to analysts specializing in the study of devolution issues, a new period of institutional reforms begins.

Conclusions. The United Kingdom has historically developed as a centralized state, providing for the formation of a national identity («Britishness») and the maximum weakening of the country's regional identities. However, today a significant role in the development of devolutionary processes in the UK is played by the existing identities of the United Kingdom – «Scottish», «Welsh», «(Northern) Irish», «English», «British». It was in an effort to preserve «Britishness» based on democratic values and the unity of the four

[27] Ibiden.

[28] Mawson, J., Pearce G. (2009). Governance in the English regions: moving beyond muddling through? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 22.(7), 624.

[29] *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* (2007). Norwich: Crown. Retrieved from:
http://www.cornishassembly.org/ReviewSubNationalEconomicDevelopment&Regeneration17vii07.pdf

nations (English, Scots, Welsh and Irish) that devolutionary models were developed. They were supposed to confirm in practice the strength of the British Union and the readiness of the political system for democratic transformations. However, the main factor in carrying out the devolution was the national forces of the regions.

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Передумови та етапи деволюції у Великобританії

Анотація. *У статті розглядається децентралізація державного управління у Великобританії, яка означає деволюцію центральної влади та підвищення відповідальності місцевого управління при розширенні та розвитку різних форм взаємодії держави та суспільства. В цьому контексті деволюція є перш за все процесом передачі владних повноважень з центрального на нижній рівень. Саме деволюція стала найважливішою подією останніх десятиліть у політичному та соціально-економічному розвитку Великобританії. На відміну від децентралізації, деволюція має на меті більш істотну трансформацію територіальної системи управління – передачу не тільки виконавчих повноважень, а й деяких законодавчих.*

Доведено, що децентралізація влади, яка має ознаки деволюції, у Великобританії протікає складно та неоднозначно. Процес деволюції в державі характеризується асиметрією про що свідчить відсутність законодавчих повноважень Англії. В цьому контексті констатується недостатня налагодженість процедури взаємодії органів державної влади на різних рівнях. На сьогодні зберігається вагома кількість контролюючих функцій, важелів адміністративно-фінансового тиску за центральними відомствами, а також відсутність чітких рекомендацій, за допомогою яких місцеві органи державної влади могли б визначити, що входить до сфери їхньої компетенції і відповідно вирішувати нагальні питання більш ефективно.

Сполучене Королівство розвивається завдяки політичному компромісу, що періодично досягається, здатному пом'якшити головне протиріччя британської політичної системи – дихотомію принципів верховенства парламенту і регіонального самоврядування. Обидва принципи багато в чому пов'язані з самоідентифікаційними процесами, що відображають значення «британськості» та регіональної (етно-національної) ідентичності у свідомості та політичній культурі громадян. Ситуація боротьби чи примирення цих двох ідентичностей була ускладнена появою загальноєвропейської ідентичності після вступу Британії до спільного ринку. Очевидно, що європейська ідентичність посилила регіональні ідентичності, продемонструвавши етнонаціональним спільнотам перевагу «бути ще одним народом Європи», а не просто національною меншістю всередині держави. Проте «британськість» зберігає позиції завдяки глобальному британському проекту, підживлюючись від нього, що було доведено Брекзитом.

Ключові слова: *деволюція, децентралізація, Великобританія, уряд, регіони, регіоналізація.*