

The problem of historically developed regional imbalances in the economic development of China has remained the most tangible and painful over the past decades, without the solution of which successful progress along the path of reform becomes impossible. China, like other countries with large, geographically extended territories, faces the problem of significant differences in the level of economic development in its regions. But in China, the regional problem is becoming particularly complex and acute due to an unprecedented population. Moreover, nations and nationalities here are at different stages of socio-economic and political development, one of the peoples is many times superior to other nations in numbers, for centuries it has dominated the society.

The problem of the uneven economic development of the regions of China was considered in their work by many researchers. Mainly focusing on Chinese state regional policy, regional development programs, citing government measures aimed at raising the backward regions of the PRC. However, there is a shortage in economic and geographical studies when, using a quantitative assessment of the depth and dynamics of regional imbalances, the mechanisms of the formation of such imbalances would be analyzed, and internal and external factors of transformation of the regional structure of the PRC economy would be revealed.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

To study the socio-economic results of the accelerated modernization of XUAR and the role of the region in the transboundary Kazakhstan-China cooperation, the author used the civilizational [1] and socio-constructivist approaches [2], which allow to expand the field of analysis and see in the studied object not only cognitive, but also social component. The application of economic and statistical analysis and regional diagnostics methods has made it possible to process a variety of statistical material, various input data characterizing the level, structure, and characteristics of XUAR's socio-economic development. The assessment is given to the development of the region as a whole and covers all the main aspects of its development. [3, 4] In addition, the diagnostic method made it possible to identify and assess the key problems that are most significant from the point of view of solving specific tasks of regulating territorial development, in what direction and with what changes the general regional situation and certain regional problems are transformed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The underlying causes of these differences are due to the geographical logic of the development of regions and the history of the formation of their economy.

Russian geography scientists under the "regional policy" understand the general policy of the state, geographically adapted to local conditions and features of the region. Any regional policy is based on a certain concept, the idea of developing a region over a foreseeable time interval, within which the prerequisites and conditions, as well as the parameters and systems of restrictions that outline the area of possible development, remain relatively unchanged [5, p.11].

For the development of the region there are objective and subjective restrictions that impede the natural path. The main objective limitations are those of a natural-geographical nature. It is impossible to change the nature of the landscape, the regime of solar radiation, some climatic features of the region, since these are its static indicators. At the same time, there are dynamic objective indicators that lend themselves to anthropogenic influence and change. This is the amount of water resources, relief restrictions, the proximity of the territory to the seas and some climatic characteristics. There are at least a dozen states in the world, there are two components: a more developed center located in the coastal strip and accumulating economic life, and a lagging inland territory. But looking at a world map, the first thing that catches your eye is China, with its powerful coastal strip producing goods for the whole world, and the western provinces, suffering from its location remote from the seas [6, p.146].

Of course, XUAR, from the point of view of geographical location, has maximum continentality and has a special regional specificity.

If we use the indicator of transport-geographical continentality developed by scientists of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which is understood as the measure of the remoteness of the main part of the economic and demographic potential from the seas and oceans that have a certain transport significance, then the XUAR by this indicator refers to ultracontinental regions. Most of its territory is located in a distance of more than 2000 km from the coastline, which means that it is in the least favorable geographical position in relation to the sea routes [7].

Coastal regions are significantly different from domestic in all economic indicators, which reflects the dichotomy of land-sea development, since the coastal situation in China creates the best conditions for economic growth. The rapid development of coastal regions is also determined by the favorable natural conditions of this part of the country, both for the population and for economic activities. To a large extent, the separation of the coastal region from the interior is determined by the geographical logic of economic development. In accordance with the results of studies conducted by D. Sachs together with Chinese economists, only one factor of the coastal situation explains the variations in the rate of economic development of Chinese provinces by 60% [8].

As noted above, in addition to the objective factors of the development of the region, there are subjective prerequisites, which include the attitude to the region from both the government and various agents of the economy. The allocation of resources for the development of the region depends on both those and others.

Since the beginning of the policy of reform and openness, especially after the 12th CPC Congress, the economic development of China has clearly shown a trend of priority development of the eastern regions.

Unequal starting conditions gave significant advantages to the coastal regions, which by the beginning of the reform were far ahead of the inner regions in terms of socio-economic development. On the other hand, these benefits were enhanced by the creation of a favourable market environment for business in the coastal provinces. As China's economic ties with other countries have become more intense and the Chinese economy has become more open, external factors of regional development have become increasingly important. The best conditions for inclusion in the world economic processes are the coastal provinces with advantages in terms of transport and geography, specializing in light industry, electronics and electrical engineering, and characterized by a higher degree of denationalization of the economy and a favorable business climate. [9, p.51]

As a result of this regional disparity, since the beginning of economic reforms, the gap in the socio-economic development of the eastern and western regions has become so wide that it is very difficult to overcome in the short term.

There is a significant regional differentiation in the Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita, the level of development of the productive forces and the structure of the economy. Thus, the post-industrial structure of the economy includes the central subordinate cities of Beijing (the tertiary sector - 76.5% in 2012) and Shanghai (60.4 %); the strongest industrial structure with the highest share of secondary sector is in Qinghai (57.7 %), Henan (56.3 %), Shanxi (55.6 %); the highest share of primary sector is in Hainan (24.9 %), XUAR (17.6 %), Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (16.7 %). [9, p.50]

Realizing that uneven regional development can become not only an economic, but also an acute ethno-social problem, the Chinese leadership came to the conclusion that it is necessary to radically change the country's regional politics. Therefore, the bias in the strategy of regional development began to gradually shift from the eastern to the western regions.

The official strategy of large-scale development of the western regions was proclaimed at the IV plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPC of the 15th convocation on September 22, 1999. A special place in the state program for the development of the western regions of China is given to the development of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

This is an area with rich natural resources. Deposits of 138 types of minerals out of 171 available in China have been discovered here, including 7 types of energy resources, 42 types of metals, 70 types of non-metallic ores, 3 types of groundwater. In 2013, the XUAR ranked first in China in assessing potential mineral reserves. Of greatest interest to the country are energy resources. According to the second energy assessment, oil reserves in Xinjiang amount to 20.9 billion tons (30% of the total oil reserves of China), natural gas - 2.1 billion cubic meters (over 40% of the total reserves of natural gas), coal - 2.19 trillion tons (40% of coal mining in China). [10, p.65]

In the strategic plan, it is planned to turn the XUAR into the country's largest oil and gas industry base in the near future. To achieve this goal, the Central Government annually increases funding for the exploration and development of hydrocarbon deposits in the XUAR. Loans from international financial organizations and foreign governments are also actively used.

So, on July 4, 2002, the project was officially launched to transport natural gas from the Tarim basin (XUAR) to densely populated eastern China (Shanghai), where industrial production is concentrated. Investments in the first and second phases of the Project amounted to over 290 billion yuan. The main pipeline and 8 branches of the gas pipeline were commissioned on December 30, 2012. At the conclusion of the second phase, almost 40,000 km of a gas pipeline network was built in China, covering 28 provinces and autonomous regions of mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. [11, p.65]

The pragmatic interest of the Chinese leadership in the XUAR is obvious, connected with the prospect of using Xinjiang's natural resources, and using them mainly outside the national autonomous region. In this regard, some Kazakhstani and foreign experts, evaluating the role of Xinjiang in the intra-Chinese interregional division of labor in the foreseeable future, suggest that the main articles of its export to the domestic market will remain natural resources. This trend is now reinforced by an increase in the supply of oil and gas to its internal regions. Chinese researchers have a similar point of view, noting that the supply of natural resources will better integrate XUAR into the Chinese economy. Moreover, both of them talk about the possibility of developing the richest mineral resources of the national region only through powerful subsidies from the center.

Here I would like to object to these statements. It seems to us that if, in accordance with its legally established status, the autonomous region was given the opportunity to independently manage at least part of its natural resources and allocate considerable revenues from them to boost the XUAR economy, then the need for subsidies from the center would disappear by itself. Analogies of this kind of settlement of relations between the center and national regions have long existed in world practice. For example, Russian legislation provides for the possibility of differentiating powers between the center and the constituent entities of the Russian Federation for the management of natural resources, which allowed for the optimal combination of national and regional interests. In this regard, it would be appropriate to recall that the unfair regulation of property relations on natural resources was one of the main causes of centrifugal trends in the national republics of the former Soviet Union and its subsequent collapse.

The modern model of the Chinese regional economy, which is based on the development of natural resources by the western regions, and the processing and production of finished products by the eastern regions, retains the role of a raw materials appendage for the western regions for a long period. And it creates a situation in which the gap in the level of socio-economic development between the western and eastern regions will widen. As long as natural resources from the western regions provide the economic needs of other regions of China, the western regions, including the XUAR, will not be able to take advantage of their natural advantage in obtaining cheaper energy for the development of manufacturing industry on their own basis. Most of the products to these areas will come from the eastern regions at higher prices compared to the prices of products that are produced locally. Only intensive construction of Xinjiang's infrastructure cannot guarantee rapid

socio-economic development and income growth for the local population [12, p.65]. Only a fair opportunity to independently manage at least part of their natural resources in order to develop local manufacturing industries will help balance the regional economy of China and reduce the gap in the level of regional development.

Another important direction of the strategic plan of the PRC government was to solve the demographic problem of China by mass relocation from demographically stressed regions of the country to the sparsely populated western regions. XUAR is the largest administrative unit among the autonomous regions of China, occupies 1/6 of the total area of the country, while its population is only 1.5% of the country's population. Therefore, for the Chinese leadership, the possibility of mitigating the demographic problem in the domestic and coastal provinces of the country by relocating their excess population to the XUAR, which is sparsely populated by Chinese standards, is no less important.

The origins of such a policy dates back to the mid-18th century, when in 1759 the lands of East Turkestan were forcibly annexed to China. After the conquest of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, this territory received the Chinese name Xinjiang ("New Frontier").

In accordance with the concept of foreign policy, which has not changed substantially to date, the Chinese emperor encouraged the migration of the Han population to colonized lands in every possible way. We see that today the policy of the central government of the PRC is aimed at dissolving the Uyghur ethnic group and creating a single Chinese nation in the XUAR. Evidence of this is the comprehensive encouragement of the resettlement of citizens from the central regions of the country to the national suburbs. The pace of migration especially increased with the beginning of the policy of openness and reform, proclaimed by Deng Xiaoping, as a result of which the economically active Han population began to move to do business in the autonomous regions of China, including Xinjiang. [13, p.23] The implementation of the program "Greater development of the West of China" since 2000 has served as a new catalyst for mass migration processes. The justification of such a migration policy is explained by some experts as the need for staffing for the implementation of the strategic project and the unwillingness of the western regions to carry out such ambitious tasks on their own.

Indeed, the western region is experiencing a huge shortage of qualified personnel, especially scientific and technical ones. At the beginning of the implementation of the Strategy, 75% of specialists of the highest category of the country concentrated in coastal areas, 21% in the central and only 4% in the western. Of the 10 thousand working people, 885 people in the eastern regions had vocational education, while in the western - only 92. If the eastern regions had 415 higher education institutions, then in the western there were only 142, most of which are located in the areas where they live mostly hans. [14, p.65] For decades, the problem of the shortage of specialists in the western regions has been solved due to their mass transfer from the eastern regions of China.

If we follow the change in the national composition of the population of Xinjiang, then the share of Uyghurs decreased from 80.0% in 1941 to 45.8% in 2010, while the proportion of Han people increased from 5.0% to 40.5%, respectively. [15, p.65] Table 1 presents the national composition of the population of the XUAR according to the latest census of the PRC. Analyzing the statistical data presented in the tables, it can be seen that, as a whole, the share of Uyghurs and Han people in the XUAR is almost equal.

As for the quality composition of labor immigrants, it is noteworthy that from the moment the XUAR was founded until the reforms and openness began, the state, through the allocation and transfer of jobs, encouraged intellectuals and technical specialists to go to work in Xinjiang. It invited young people, urban educated youth, and workers to travel to the interior of the country to support the development of border areas and encouraged demobilized troops to go to Xinjiang for permanent residence, providing them with jobs there, thus forming a generation of workers for settling in the border areas. However, in the 1980-1990s. there is a tendency to re-emigration of the most qualified and able-bodied personnel who arrived in the XUAR in the 1950-1960s. The loss of

such personnel is not compensated, as the new wave of migrants is represented mainly by excessive unskilled rural labor or unskilled workers. That is, the principle of attracting qualified specialists from the eastern and central regions to the western regions has not yet been laid down as one of the main principles in the strategy of "big development of the West". [16, p.142] In any case, with regard to Xinjiang. "In addition," people who have been here for more than a decade, who have mastered the local culture and traditions and are tolerant of local ethnic groups, who are leaving today, for example from the XUAR, are being replaced by a new generation of personnel for whom the principle of tolerance and political expediency is of secondary importance. "These facts convincingly confirm the futility and even negativity of such assistance.

Table 1 - Share of the most numerous nationalities of XUAR in 2010

Nationalities	Pulation (thousand persons)	Share (%)
Total population	21 815	100,0
Including national minorities	12 986	59,5
1. Uyghurs	10 000	45,8
2. Han Chinese	8 830	40,5
3. Kazakhs	1 418	6,5
4. Hui	983	4,5
5. Kyrgyzstan	180	0,8
6. Mongols	156	0,7
7. Tajiks	47,2	0,21
8. Manchus	18,7	0,08
9. Uzbeks	10,1	0,05
10. Russians	8,5	0,04

Source: Zhongguo 2010-Nian Jenkou Beam Ziliao [Shantse] / 2010 Census Materials. Book 1. Beijing, 2012. - S. 35-114

It becomes clear that the attraction of additional labor resources from other regions of the country cannot continue indefinitely, since this has already radically changed the ethnic composition of the population of national regions, significantly increased the demographic burden on the territory of the XUAR and created the basis for ethnic conflicts. And in order not to dissolve in the growing mass of Chinese migrants, the Uyghurs strive to contrast their traditional way of life with their conservatism and traditionality.

British researcher Joan N. Smith identifies several groups of cultural characteristics that the local population uses as a means of separating Uyghur and Han ethnic groups. [17, p.155] He attributed the first group to symbolic differences and included the language of communication in it, as well as the policy of birth control. Although the official language is Chinese, Uighurs give preference to their native Uigur language. Most Uighurs speak good Chinese, however, it is used only when communicating with the Han. Between themselves, Uighurs speak only Uyghur.

However, the situation when the Chinese language is used in state and educational institutions, teaching, starting from primary school, is conducted exclusively in Chinese, has put Uyghurs in the position of socio-economic discrimination. To have a chance to get a good job, Uyghurs must have the same level of education as Han migrants. All this led to a high level of unemployment among the Uyghur population, which, in turn, led to a hardening of the Uyghurs against the Han people, occupying the positions of “white-collar workers”. Dissatisfaction grows even more from the realization that the institutionalization of the Chinese language contributes to the quick adaptation of arriving Han migrants to the new social hierarchy in cities created by some Han people for other Han people, in which there is no place for indigenous ethnic groups.

Regarding the policy of birth control, for the majority of the indigenous population of the XUAR, especially residents of southern and rural areas, this problem has become one of the main reasons for the negative attitude towards the central government and the Han. According to Islam, professed by the majority of the local population, children are the "blessing of Allah." Therefore, traditionally Muslim families are large. In addition, a large family is easier to manage.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, at this stage of the implementation of the strategy of transforming the XUAR into a “model land for the whole country”, many difficulties and limitations were revealed. It seems to us that one of the solutions to the problems identified may be the rationalization of the existing system of relations between the center and local authorities, first of all, the delineation of rights and authority, would ensure a combination of national and regional interests. The subsidized method of financing the national region was ineffective. Perhaps attracting foreign investment will provide the necessary impetus for the socio-economic modernization of the western regions. This will require improving the investment climate in the region. In addition, foreign investors must possess all the necessary information about the situation in the western region in order to assess the level of return on investment and the degree of risk. Only after that they will be able to move from a wait-and-see position to active investments.

To solve another problem that has become aggravated in the process of implementing the Program for the Rise of the Western Regions and associated with the mass attraction of labor resources from other regions of the country, it is more rational, as we see it, to develop and improve the level of education and science in the localities, to form their own professional cadres from representatives of the indigenous population, improve the structure of local labor resources. A balanced approach to the solution of personnel policy is needed, which does not violate the ethno-social balance of the autonomous regions.

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