THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN CONDITIONS

Problem statement. Over the recent years, in connection with the declared course towards decentralization of power and harmonization of the Ukrainian public administration system with the European standards, a discussion is underway in the scientific community as to an “ideal” regional development model. However, a search for such a model leads to a necessity for reviewing foreign experience and scientific works by theorists of regional development in advanced countries, specifically Western Europe and North America, which serve as a model and guide both in terms of practical public administration reforms and their theoretical substantiation.

Recent research and publication analysis. It should be mentioned that regional development issues are in the focus of many Ukrainian scientists’ attention. In particular, these subjects have been explored by O. Bezuhlyi, S. Diachenko, V. Fedotov, S. Hazarian, A. Hornyk, V. Khoroshyk, O. Konotoptsev, V. Kuibida, Yu. Kuts, V. Mamonova, Ya. Obodets, T. Pautova, R. Smetanin, I. Svyrydov, V. Zbukar, Ya. Zhovnirchik and others. Yet, a rapid evolution of public administration theories requires updating the current scientific ideas of the regional development nature and essential characteristics.

The paper objective is generalizing current theoretical approaches to regional development and defining its essential characteristics under the present conditions.

The paper main body. For a long time, the western scientific literature considered the concept of territorial, in particular regional, development exclusively with relation to economic factors. However, at the end of the 20th – the start of the 21st century, scientists
were preoccupied with the idea that economic growth should be separated from social development even by their meaning: ‘growing’ means getting bigger, while ‘development’ – getting better.

The idea was aided by socially- and community-oriented approaches that allowed linking local and regional development with the activity of such new institutions as branch-related development agencies and NGOs, aiming to employ various types of capital at the local level.

In the early 2000s, based on growing concern for the nature, quality, and durability of economic development, the theories helping to solve social, environmental, political, and cultural problems gained a special popularity. For that reason, there appeared alternative concepts that were taking into account not only economic, but some other aspects of regional development as well. Alleviation of social inequality, encouraging civil governance, and recognition of cultural diversity were regarded as important factors of regional development. Thus, life quality, social unity, and citizens’ well-being got to play no less the role than that of the economic competitiveness and growth indicators.

Conclusions of the research and prospects of further scientific surveys. Generalization of the features of today’s most popular scientific approaches to understanding regional development, allows making the following conclusions.

Firstly, there is no single common definition of regional development in the science and practice of public administration. Secondly, the definition of ‘development’ is always geographically differentiated, changing with time both within a month, and from month to month. Thirdly, the 21st century was marked by deviation from the economic determinism in defining regional development, and today the development concept is considered in the context of the need for taking into account social, environmental, political, cultural, and other factors. In the fourth place, in the management of territorial development, different stakeholders should take part, and their relations should be built on partnership and dialogue.