

THE DECENTRALISM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION-TERMS (CONDITIONS) FOR THEIR INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPIAN UNION.

ARIF S. MURRJA, AGIM NDREGJONI

Department of Sciences of Management, "Aleksander Moisiu" University, Durres

Email: murrja.arif@yahoo.com

SUMMARY

The lack of the decentralism of the local government has brought regional and local developments, differentiated also as uncontrolled migration of the population in the countries of the region and especially in Albania. These differentiated developments amongst regions and local government units are explained to the fact of the distribution of grants and funds for the investments according to the political preferences of the central governments, and also the misdistribution of the responsibilities from these funds. This lack of delegation of the responsibilities of the central governmental units has come as a result of the lack of desire from the central government. The lack of desire is explained with the fact of the central mentality of the political class and that of the society in general, being inherited from the previous political systems. From the disagreements between the two levels of government have been noted incidents with legal, economical and political consequences. In these circumstances, we need to analyze the decentralism of the local government in the countries of the region through a historical, political, theoretical and scientific specter, and according to three cases, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. Currently the decentralism of the local government is one of the most important problems for the entire Albanian society headed in her way to the European Union integration. The normal functioning of a democratic society requires not only an independent executive power from the legislative and judicial but also from the local one.

Key words; centralism, decentralism, local government, reforms and integration.

1 The historical-political analysis and theoretical-scientific analysis of the decentralism of the local government in Albania.

Facing the public opinion and that of the scholars of the economical sciences for more than 18 years this question is asked: Why it hasn't ended yet the decentralism of the local government? Because of the geographical extension of the Albanians in the Balkans, the above question must be analyzed according to the three cases, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. Our research is concentrated mainly in Albania because: a) there exists a state forming tradition with different levels of government at different historical periods; b) Kosovo and the Albanian territories in Macedonia and Montenegro, were taken for the "mother" state since 1913; c) Kosovo, being the newest state in the world, has no political responsibilities in the decentralism of the local government and d) The decentralism of the local government in Macedonia and Montenegro, are dependent from the politics of the respective states and are influenced from the inter-ethnic relations. So we can see that our study is concentrated mainly in Albania, maybe this because of the above circumstances.

The lack of realization of the decentralism of the local government in Albania must be analyzed from three specters; historical, political, theoretical and scientific. In reality there is no heritage or positive past experiences toward the decentralizaion of the local government. This lack of positive experience is accompanied also with a lack of desire of the after 90's political class.

.1Historical analysis

Excluding the Illyrian period, where the society was organized by the basis of tribes, during the roman and ottoman occupation, the method of government has been obligatory to the Albanians. This way during the

roman occupation the society was organized and functioned in provinces and cities, in the ottoman occupation in kazate (prefecture) and nahije (units of local government). From the independence in 1912, until 1945 our society was organized in units of villages, commune and municipalities. From 1945 until 1992 we have had units of villages, folk councils, and unit villages. After the political changes of the 90s our society is organized and functions in unites of villages, neighborhoods, commune, and municipalities⁸.

.2Political analysis

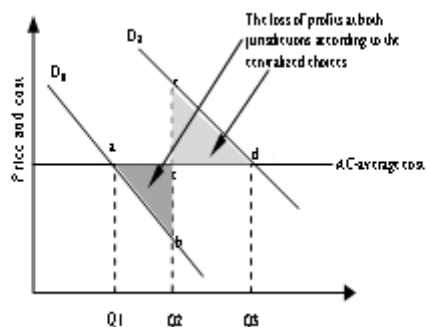
Generally in Albania, Kosovo and other Albanian territories, has predominated autocratic and central systems. After the 90s Albania was included in the processes of the political transformation. To analyze the functionality of the local governmental units in the political specter we will focus *first* at the feudal-capitalist system (1924-1939), *secondly* the centralized socialist system (1945-1993), *thirdly* at the period of the political transformation towards the free market economical system from 2005 and presently⁹. Even as the feudal-capitalist system had western tendencies for the organization of societies, we can't discuss for independence at local government levels. The installation of the classic left system later (1945-1990) had in its philosophy a centralized organization of the society, as a consequence it was "eclipsed" at the maximum the role of the local government. After the political alteration of the 90s, little is done towards the decentralism of the local government. The reasons of not realizing this important reform for the Albanian society are political and closely related with the autocratic and centralized mentalities for the guidance of the society from the central government.

.3Theoretical and scientific analysis

50 years did not pass and it was realized that the central system of the socialist economy failed. This failure was explained with the fact of the lack of the free market economy. We must note that an important part of this failure was also the lack of the offering of goods and services for every community¹⁰. The economical sciences explicate the essentiality of having decentralism through the theorem which bears the

same name. The theorem of Decentralism¹¹ argues the loss of well-being from the central choices in offering goods and services to the local communities¹².

Graph I - Decentralism Theorem



D_1 is the answer curve in the first jurisdiction, and D_2 is for the second one. We can see that the second jurisdiction has a wider preference for goods (Good Q), compared to the first one. This means that if the price be equal between two goods, a greater quantity will be consumed and if the quantity be equal there would be a higher price to pay. By choosing decentralism Q_1 is produced for the first one and Q_2 is produced for the second one. A centralized choice we are supposing quantity Q_3 .

Quantity Q_3 forces the citizens of the first jurisdiction to consume with the given price, a greater quantity. The vice-versa happens with the second jurisdiction, meaning a lesser quantity consumed form the expected. The graphic defines the loss of well-being for each jurisdiction from choosing centralism which equals the triangle abc for the first jurisdiction and cde for the second jurisdiction.

1 CONCLUSIONS

1 From the historical and political analysis we conclude these obstacles in realizing decentralism:

- The lack of tradition in different historical periods.
- The centralized mentality of the society and its political class (the predominition of autocratic and centralized systems)
- The lack of desire and the involvement of central governments. Left central governments or the right ones, have hesitated in delegating powers to the local governmental units. It must be noted the fact that decentralism is closely related to the unision of

⁸ Study of Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization year 2003 pg. 1-4

⁹ Murrja A., "Local Finances and Governance", doctorature thesis 2008, pg. 53-54.

¹⁰ Murrja A., "Local Finances and Governance", doctorature thesis 2008, pg.57-58.

¹¹ Wallace Oetas American economist of the 70' in the past century

¹² Ballestra V., Russo R., "The communal and Proincial contributions", first edition, March 2004, pg.15-17.

communes and municipalities, which has not been happening because of the political costs.

d) The political differentiation in guiding the society in central and local levels, has obstructed the decentralism. In 1997 the left side took central power, and the local power was governed from the democrats. In 2005 the democrats took the central power and the left guided that local. In the elections of 18 February 2007, in which time the democrats continued the central governance, the left side won the major municipalities in the country such as Tirana, Durres, Fier, Vlore, Elbasan, Lezhe, Korce and Lushnje.

1 From the theoretical and scientific analysis we conclude that:

a) 50 years did not pass and it was realized that the central system of the socialist economy failed. This failure was explained with the fact of the lack of the free market economy.

b) We must note that an important part of this failure was also the lack of the offering of goods and services for every community.

c) The economical sciences explicate the essentiality of having decentralism through the theorem which bears the same name. The theorem of Decentralism argues the loss of well-being from the central choices in offering goods and services to the local communities. According to Graph 1, the area of the well-being loss for the first jurisdiction is the triangle *abc* and for the second jurisdiction is *cde*.

1 From the lack of realization of decentralism we conclude that:

a) Distribution of grants and funds for the investments according to the political preferences of the central governments

b) Obstacles in regional developments

c) Disagreements between two levels of government
From the disagreements between the two levels of government have been noted incidents with financial and political costs. So for example we can mention here a- the destruction of the upper pass of Zogu i Zi in 2005 from the central government (invested from the municipality of Tirana); b- the tragedy of Gerdec in 2008, where we cannot exclude for responsibility the municipality of Vora and c- the interference in the national highway signals from the current head of Himara municipality Mr. Jorgo Bollano.

Currently the decentralism of the local government is one of the most important problems for the entire Albanian society headed in her way to the European Union integration. The normal functioning of a democratic society requires an independent executive power from the legislative, judicial, the media and also from the local government.

The independence of the local government or the local governance in our country, compared to Italy and USA is very much perplexed. In these countries the functionalities of the local government are over 30 including here the lawmaking, the lodging politics, the prosecution, the tribunals, prisons, airports, public defense and so on.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend on the decentralism of governance as a condition for the integration of the regional countries into the European Union:

1) The union of the units of local government (communes and municipalities) into larger administrative units

2) To continue the reformation of the legal basis of the local government units in collaboration with the Association of the Municipalities Council, Communes and Prefectures.

3) The responsibilities of the local government must be alienated from those of the central government.

4) The managing capacities of the local governmental units need to be raised

5) The central government must immediately take measures for the transfer of the competencies

6) Consultations need to be had with the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the European Council

7) The adherence of the European Card for Local Self-government

LITERATURE

1. Ballestra V., Russo R., *"I tributi Comunali e Provinciali"*, first edition, March 2004.

2. Brosio G., Governo M., & Piperno S., *"Governo e Finanza Lokale"* third edition 2003.

3. Kelmendi S., *"Intergovernmental-decentral Politics in Building Administrations"* Tiranë 2003.

4. Murrja A., *"Local Finances and Governance"*, doctorate thesis 2008.

5. Murrja A., & Shehu H., *"The unison of communes and municipalities- a good step of the reform in local government"*, magazine *"EKONOMIA dhe TRANZICIONI"*, publishings of Albanian Center for Economical Research, Year XIII, Nr.1(48) January-March 2007.

6. Murrja A., & Shehu H., *"The need studying the local finances as a discerned discipline of the financial sciences in the universities of our country according to western experiences"*, Magazine *"EKONOMIA dhe TRANZICIONI"*, publishings of Albanian Center for Economical Research, Year XVI, Nr.3(50) July-September 2008.

7. Study of the Ministry of Local Authority and Decentralism, year 2003