Development and regional planning within the decentralized administrative frame: case study (the Jordanian Experiment)

ABSTRACT

This aims to review and analyze the Jordanian experiment in the developmental regional planning field within the decentralized managerial methods, which is considered one of the primary basic provisions for applying and success of this kind of planning. The study showed that Jordan has passed important steps in the way for implanting the decentralized administration, but these steps are still not enough to established the effective and active regional planning. The study revealed that there are many problems facing the decentralized regional planning in Jordan, despite of the clear goals that this planning is trying to achieve. These problems have resulted from the existing relationship between the decentralized administration process' dimensions from one side, and between its levels which ranged from weak to medium decentralization from the other side, In spite of the official trends aiming at applying more of the decentralized administrative policies, still high portion of these procedures are theoretical, did not yet find a way to reality. Because any progress or success at the level of applying the decentralized administrative policies doubtless means greater effectiveness and influence on the development regional planning in life of the residents in the kingdom's different regions. So, it is important to go a head in applying more steps and decentralized administrative procedures, gradually and continuously to guarantee the control over any negative effects that might result from applying this kind of systems.

Keywords:
Developmental regional planning
Decentralized Administration
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Introduction

The role of the governments in many developing countries had increased after the Second World War in field of providing the residents with the basic local services like health, education, water, electricity and transport. This increase in the government responsibilities has led to concentrate authority of the development decision-making at the hands of the central governments generally located in the capitals.

This situation has produced gaps and many developmental problems, the most important the increased severity of the economic and social differences, whether at the regional, districts or population concentrations, this made the national bodies and segments often residents dissatisfied with the government's developmental decisions, because most often these decisions are far from the residents' needs, problems and interests. In Jordan, inspire of the succive and tangible successes achieved by the development plans, investment programs and productive projects, still revenues of the growth and development with their productive investment projects are concentrated in the cities and the big centers. This situation has created imbalanced regional development which led to the accumulated requirement and development in these cities and centers at the expense of the ret regions in Jordan (Abu Ayash, 1988: 2). The Jordanian government has noticed this situation and this situation and started to undertake and implement a set of procedures to achieve the balanced regional development, or at least to reduce the economic, social and regional differences, such as the adoption of the decentralized administration in the planning and development field, since this requirement is considered a basic and Necessary provision to guarantee success of the planning processes in this different forms. This is from the logic that the regional development cannot be achieved only from (Top-down) rather it can take place from (bottom- up) through effective participation of the targeted population groups in the development, taking in to account that the development process and the regional development are complex and divergent, it is difficult to plan, execute and follow- up them from the center.

Research Problem

Research problem stems from the presence of the existing relationship between the decentralized administration process from one side, and between its levels, and from the fact that most of the procedures undertaken by the government are still theoretical, and could not find a way to reality. Therefore, there is a need for applying more steps and procedures to achieve the decentralized administration.

Importance of the Research

Importance of the research emerges from addressing a very important issue concerning the Jordanian government and the policy makers, which is the role of the decentralized administration in achieving the regional development and growth through the decentralized policies and procedures to reduce the problems encountering the central government.

This research aims to illustrate and analyze the influence of existing decentralized level in the dimensions and its different administrative sides in preparing and
implementing the regional planning policies and mechanisms, its effectiveness in achieving its different goals. To achieve the research objectives, the researcher has adopted the following research steps:

- Theoretical frame of the research.

- Public administration frame and decentralized administration in Jordan.

- Levels of the decentralized administration in Jordan.

- Organizational structure of the regional planning in Jordan.

- The administrative problems facing the application of the decentralized regional planning.

- Results and recommendations.

Research Methodology

This present research depended on the descriptive method by collecting the data and information from the different library sources, and applying (Karín) method in determining level of the deactualization in Jordan. This is through bringing together the basic administrative sides of the public administration system, then giving each side of these sides specific weight according to a scale prepared by the researcher for this purpose. Though determining the administrative decentralized level analyzing and illustrating extent of relevance of the existing decentralized administrative system for the applied policies and strategies of the regional developmental planning, then determining the nature of the administrative obstacles facing that.

Previous related studies

To the knowledge of the researcher, there are no specific studies conducted about Jordan connecting between the public administration field from one side, and the regional planning from the other side. For this reason, the researcher has resorted in preparing this research to a number of previous applied studies from similar environments to Jordan, the most important studies are: Poppe (1997) study which has addressed and analyzed the decentralized development planning in Indonesia, since it shed light on the extent of correlation and harmony between kind and effectiveness of concerned institutional structures in the regional planning from one side, and the applied regional development strategies from the other side. The study considered the regional planning process as administrative process in the first place by proofing the influence degree of the administrative sides of the planning process on the extent of success in preparing and implanting the regional development plan. Kroes and Menash (1996) study showed how preparing and implementing the regional development plans in shadow of the decentralized administration in Ghana republic by analyzing the matrixes of the development goals at the (National, regional and local levels), then evaluating the concerned managerial structures in preparing these goals, to show the effect of the administrative sides on the effectiveness of the spatial planning process, and the extent of its success in achieving its goals.

Mueller (1996) study has addressed the theoretical side of the importance of the decentralized administration in the regional and local planning process, and suggested a number of methodologies and mechanisms can be employed in the decentralized administrative process to guarantee success in preparing and implementing the regional development plans, also, the study showed
the problems and obstacles facing this planning in light of the existing legislations and institutional structures.

**Theoretical Frame**

In managing their political and developmental affairs the countries apply centralized or decentralized methods or both of them, decentralization is defined as the case in which the right for participation is given in making the decisions for the lower managerial levels, with without cancelling right of the central side in making the decision. So, decentralization is a work method based on the principle of distributing authority of decision making between the central authority and other independent authorities existing in the different districts and population congregations (Al-Zo'bi, 1989:14). Decentralized administration represents in activating role of the regional and local authorities by dedicating administrative, planning and developmental tasks, increasing their effectiveness, and enhancing their role in bearing their responsibilities and authorities in a way that works to engage the local residents in the local development processes which at the end leads to their success. The administrative side in the process planning and executing the development plans generally, and the regional development particularly is an issue should be treated as basic and necessary for success of these plans in achieving their goals by concentrating on applying administrative strategy able to connect the planning concepts with the administrative competence and capability of the regional planning institutions and authorities, by determining functions and authorities of the regional planning bodies in shadow of the applied decentralized administration (Poppe, 1997:6-7).

Regional planning process in light of the decentralized administration should care about activating people’s participation and role of the targeted segments in preparing and implementing the regional development plans, this is known as “planning from below”, or as stated “planning form above”. The differences between these two methods of planning method are reflection of the type of the applied administration system.

Planning from below works to achieve one basic principle of the successful development principles represents in enhancing “self-esteem” and freedom in its comprehensive humanitarian concept which allows and maximizes the human’s ability in the selection process. So, planning from below helps in determining the regional development goals placed by the central planning authorities. Applying the decentralized administration effectively in the regional planning and development fieldwork to easy implement the development programs for the needs of the local residents and their requirements. Firstly, this depends on distributing authority in making the decision between the central planning authorities, and regional planning authorities, which made many countries applying the regional decentralized planning for a set of reasons (Rondinelli and Chaema, 1985:3-8):

- Regional planning works for establishing a relative fair distribution of the authority in making the decisions, the investments and the resources inside the country.
- Regional planning decentralization means the central planning authorities
giving up part of their authorities to local planning authorities living with the local residents' problems, perceiving their reasons and dimensions.

- Decentralized regional planning contributes to establishing the direct and continuous contact between the regional planning authorities and the residents.

- It allows the delivery of the resources and the investment to all regions and the state's district.

- Decentralized regional planning enhances the authority's effectiveness by assigning many tasks to regional and local authorities in order to create an effective and influential decentralized regional planning there should be available many provisions (Karin, 1995:6).

- The presence of the political wish in the central government to give up part of its authorities to regional planning authorities.

- Applying the comprehensive decentralized regional planning.

- The necessity for the presence of clear and specific role in the regional administration.

- The necessity for building awareness and political culture in the district's population by the central government about concept and importance and goals of the decentralized administration.

- Providing the regional planning authorities with their needs of the infrastructure and the competences to be able to accomplish their tasks effectively.

**Public Administration Structure and the Decentralized Administration in Jordan**

The Jordanian constitution is considered the basic legislative for all laws, instructions and regulations concerning the existing administrative systems.

Since we can find in the constitution its different articles general and special rules in organizing the centralized and decentralized administration in the state, this means that the decentralized administrative systems in Jordan is based on the legislative foundations mentioned in the Jordanian constitution represented in a group of lows, the most important are:

1. Laws of the municipalities issued year 1955, and still applied till our present time.

2. Law of villages administration number (5), year 1954.

3. Law of organizing the cities, villages and the buildings number (79) year 1966 and its amendments.

4. The planning law number (68) year 1971.

5. Laws of the administrative divisions the latest issued year 1995, since the kingdom according to this law is divided in to (12) governorates with a number of districts and provinces.

Generally, these laws include the administrative and developmental specialties of the central government's authorities and institutions, the regional and local. These laws are executed through the public administration
structure in Jordan divided in to two basic division:

**The central administration**

It represses in the central government, and is considered the higher executive authority responsible for managing the state’s internal and external affairs.

The central government consist of the prime minister and a number of ministers, with branches of the ministries in the governorates to follow-up what it issue of decisions, such as the customs department, income tax, lands and survey, all refer to minister of finance (Abu-Shaikha and Assaf, 1985:109-133).

**The local administration**

Local administration in Jordan consists of two types of the units:

- Local councils: including the municipality and villages councils, and common services councils, their responsibilities administrating and developing the housing in which they locate, all members of these councils or elected.

- In year (2001) issued law of merging the geographically approximate municipalities, half of the members of these municipalities' councils assigned by the government, and the other half through the election by the residents.

- Units of the public administration: they are the administrative regions management, including the governorates, districts and regions.

Decentralized administration in Jordan is based on distributing decisions making authority between the central administration's departments and the local administration, in their two divisions: the local councils and the public administration units.

Based on the structure of the public administration, and the nature of the governmental authorities and institutions specialties, centralization, regional and local determined by the mentioned laws it is possible to distinguish between two types of the decentralized administration in Jordan.

**Regional Administrative Decentralization**

This decentralization is based on the principle distributing the administrative and developmental specialties between the centralized administration and the local and regional administration units. (ministry of planning, 1989; 15 – 20).

**Municipality and Village Councils**

Municipality councils in Jordan are established in the kingdom's cities according to the municipalities law which emerges basically from article (21) from the constitution.

This law sates that the municipality is a domestic institution enjoying the financial independence, forming, cancelling and determining the boarders of the municipality and this law determines its functions and authorities.

This law has been implemented to all of the kingdom's municipalities according to the new law of merging the municipality's year (2001).

Functions and specialties of the municipality council have been mentioned in details in article (41) from the municipality law, their number is
about (37) functions, the most important developmental functions of the municipalities are:

- Planning and building the roads, monitoring and construction the buildings, and granting the building licenses.
- Providing the citizens with water, electricity, ad Gaz, and organizing the professions and industries.
- Establishing and organizing the markets and the vehicles parking within the municipality's boarders.
- Monitoring the hotels work, the restaurants, coffees and the clubs.
- Establishing the parks and the squares, the health centers, hospitals and different types of schools.
- Preserving the public health, collecting the garbage, transferring and wearing it out.

In addition to many administrative, developmental and monitoring functions determined in article (411) from the municipality law.

While the village council practices administrative, developmental financial, monitoring function greatly close to the municipality council function.

**Common services councils**

These councils are established by a decision from minister of municipality and village affairs based on accreditation from the governor or the administrative officer, it consists of number of geographically approximate municipality and village councils. The minister decided the number of the members and the head of the council. These councils' practice authorities of the municipality and village councils stated in the laws and regulations especially regarding the services and the developmental common projects.

**Regional Administrative Units:**

It is meant by the regional administrative units the governorates; the kingdom is divided for the administrative and developmental purposes into (12) governorates according to the administrative divisions law year (1995). Heads of the administrative units are known as the administrative governors, the central authority appoints them, they all work under the supervision of minister of interior.

The ministries branch in the governorates are also considered regional units pertaining to central ministries existing the capital, these branches perform specific tasks from re-distributing the authority inside the governmental institution locating in the center and its branches in the governorates.

**The Decentralized Facilities**

This decentralization is materialized in the public institutions, including each public authority has been established by the state and granted the executive authority by the law to enable it to perform its tasks and activities independently from the executive authority.

These institutions are divided into two types: The central departments, or the authorities locating in the center, as the legislation department, general statistics department, department of the urban development.

The second type is the public institutions locating in the districts and the regions,
such as bank of the industrial development, and of agricultural loans.

At the spatial planning and development level, many of the authorities have been established to perform the planning and development tasks in specific regions, as the case in authority of Aqaba region, authority of Petra region, authority of the Badia development and greater Amman municipality (Ministry of Planning 1989: 15-20)

Levels of the Administrative Decentralization in Jordan

The local administration in Jordan plays a basic role in the comprehensive development process, because of the multiple and interrelated burdens on this administration at the administrative and developmental levels.

From one side it is responsible for managing the administrative ISSMES and accomplishing the governmental tasks from implementing from the other side, it concerns with developing the regions in which it practices its administrative authorities, also by forming the different structural departments through specialized committees which led to maximize its role the regional planning and regional development.

In order to determine the decentralization levels in Jordan the researcher depended on (Karin) method through which to divide the decentralization in to three basic levels:

1- Strong decentralization.
2- Medium decentralization.
3- Weak decentralization.

The foundation upon which this division is based represents in determining the public administration basic sides with which connected the application of the administrative decentralization, then studying these sides from two perspectives:

A- The legislative source from which emerged each side from these sides, and generally the legislative source is determined on three sources:

- The constitution.
- The laws.
- The administrative commands.

The continuation is considered the most powerful legislative source, since it is difficult to change its articles and contents, even if this takes place, it is at highest levels of decision making and requires complex and interrelated procedures, because the public administration sides related to the decentralized by power, since stated in the constitution characterized by power, since they are based on strong legislative source.

While in the case the administrative laws can be changed and modified but at a less complex degree than the case in the constitution.

Size and type of the granted administrative authorities

The bigger the size and type of the administrative authorities of the administrative units granted to the local and regional units in each side of the public administration sided related to the process applying the decentralization, the decentralization will be strong. (Karin, 1993, 7 – 10) has determined in his way size and type of these authorities for each side of
the public administration sides and connecting them with decentralization level they represent when talking about the public administration sides related to the application of the decentralized administration represented in:

- The spatial dimension: it is meant by that forming the geographic decentralized units, if this is through the constitution the decentralization will be strong, and if according to a law the decentralization will be medium, and if according to an administrative law the decentralization will be weak.

**The organizational dimension**

It means the extent of independence of the local administrative units in setting their internal order.

If the central government placed the internal order for the local administrative units or determined detailed instructions for this purpose, the decentralization will be weak.

**The institutional dimension**

If the local administrative units have the normal institutional structure for the governments of parliament and independent judiciary the decentralization will be strong, and if all the institutions are available except the judiciary and some of the other institutions, the decentralization will be medium and if the local departments are only administrative authority, then decentralization will be weak.

**Determining the authorities**

If the local administrative units' authorities determined according to the constitution, decentralization will be strong, and if based on administrative decentralization will be weak.

- **Legislative authority**

If the local administrative units enjoy full legislation authority in specific sides, decentralization will be strong.

**Representing the local interests at the national level**

If institutions at the national level such as in parliamentary councils represent the local and regional interests, decentralization will be strong. If the representation of the local interests at the national level is limited to one person or more, decentralization will be medium, if the two provisions are absent, decentralization will be weak.

To apply this methodology on in Jordan a scale has been developed by which to determine numerical weights their values increase in affixed value the higher the decentralization level to be used as standard to measure decentralization degree to confirm and guarantee validity of this scale which consists of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of decentralization</th>
<th>Degree of Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong decentralization</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium decentralization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak decentralization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By using this scale the public administration sides related to the decentralization application determined by Krine which are
(9) sides reached (23) degree, with mean (2.5) degree for all sides.

Table (1) shows that decentralization in Jordan is not weak, but less than medium decentralization also, noted from the same table that the authorities granted to the regional administration units and to the development councils do not enable these units preparing, implementing and monitoring the regional plans effectively.

Since the regional planning process like other forms of the developmental planning require finance and budgets to prepare and implement the regional plans, also require laws considering the conditions of each region and enable the exploiting of its available natural resources and human resources to improve the developmental level in the region.

Table (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The administrative sides</th>
<th>Level of decentralization</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Spatial dimensions (the administrative division)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Administrative divisions were established by the administrative division law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Organizational dimension</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Central authority places general frame for the internal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Institutional dimension</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The absence of the institutions such as the parliament and the judiciary in the units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Assigning those uncharged</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Half of the municipality members are elected by the residents, and the other half is appointed by the government according to new law of merging the municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Determining the authorities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Authorities of the administrative divisions department were determined according to the municipalities and villages management laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Authority of the legislation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The administrative division management do not have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
any legislative authorities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-</td>
<td><strong>Imposing and collecting the taxes</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No authorities in imposing and collecting the taxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-</td>
<td><strong>Expenditure authority</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenditure by agreement from the central administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-</td>
<td><strong>Representing the regional interests at the national level</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All the administrative divisions are represented in the parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organizational structure of the regional decentralized planning in Jordan:**

Regional planning is defined as a group of intended and organized procedures implanted at a specific period of time at the level of district or a group of districts with collective efforts and multiple means to achieve the optimal exploitation of the natural and the human resources available in away for making the required and desired change in the society, directing and following up this change in the life different sides to prevent occurrence of any negative effects. Assuring that the district might be administrative district or natural or cultural district, or occupational district. (Ghnaim, 1998, 37)

Applying the regional planning in Jordan has been linked with a group of clear and specific goals (ministry of planning, 1989, 139-141)

- Achieving the optimal exploitation of the available local resource, and employing the local workforce.
- Achieving the fair distribution of the development profits, improving the developmental and service level in all regions in the kingdom.
  - Reducing the administrative and developmental burden from the central government’s institutions and authorities.
  - Developing the nationality and belongingness spirit, deepening feeling of responsibility in the citizen.
  - Limiting the administrative beurocracy, speeding and facilitating the administrative and developmental decision-making process.
  - Achieving these goals requires a level of administrative decentralization ranges from strong and medium decentralization, this means that there is the need for revising the granted financial, legislative and administrative authorities to the regional administration units to perform their role in on effective and influential way. In light of that, there were (8) developmental districts and (37) developmental region included (124) developmental units (Abu- Ayash, 1988: 9).
Problems encountering the application of the decentralized regional planning:

- Lack of sufficient material and human resources in the departments.

- Weak developmental authorities granted to regional administration councils.

- Limited role of the regional administrative units and insufficient in the field regional planning and development.

- Administrative governors focus on the general administrative issues on the expense of the developmental sides.

- Multiple laws and regulations governing the decentralized management method.

- Weak local residents participation in managing and developing the local and regional administrative units.

- Severe prevailing centralization in the administrative departments.

Results and recommendations

The study showed the absence of the specialized institutional structures concerning with the regional planning process at the spatial, regional and local levels.

- Level of the decentralized administration directly or indirectly related to the regional planning and development sill ranges between weak and medium.

- The need for developing the situation of the regional development councils, granted them the authorities and tasks to be able to prepare and implement the developmental programs and projects.

- The urgent need for expanding and increasing authorities of the development councils in the developmental districts.

- Authorizing the administrative governors in the governorates determining type of the necessary developmental projects for their regions in light of the national developmental policies and strategies.

- Providing the sufficient funds to the local and regional administrative units for the success in making the decisions and the decentralized administration, in addition to authorities to perform their tasks and achieving successful and effective regional development.

References


