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**UNEVEN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA:  
PROBLEMS AND WAYS TO OVERCOME**

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*The issues of uneven regional economic development in China, its main reasons, are described in the article using the GRP data in 2015, 2019. The main stages of regional development policy formation in the country and the specifics of its implementation at the current period on the example of Anhui Province are characterizes.*

Since the reform and opening up, China's overall economy has achieved great development. However, the problem of unbalanced development still exists, and there are significant differences in the economic development level of different provinces in China. There are a lot of researches on the current situation, problems and countermeasures of the imbalanced development of China's regional economy. In order to analyse problem it's necessary to divide country into the regions. 31 provinces of the mainland China are divided into the Eastern, Central, Western and Northeastern parts. That is, the East (Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong, Hainan), Central China (Shanxi, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan, Hubei, Hunan), West (Guangxi, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia), Northeast (Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang). At present, these four regions of China's regional economy play different roles in the country's economic development: the eastern region promotes economic restructuring, the central region focuses on industrial transfer, the western regions expand border trade, and the northeast region consolidates the pillar role of manufacturing industry.

In order to make conclusion about the gaps in regional development on provincial level we analysed composition of gross regional product (GRP) by region, per capita GRP in 2015, 2019 (Table 1).

*Table 1*

**Data on GRP and per capita GRP in Chinese regions in 2015, 2019**

Region	Composition of GRP by region, %		Per capita GRP, yuan				Deviation of per capita GRP, times	
			2015		2019		2015	2019
	2015	2019	min	max	min	max		
East (10 provinces)	51.6	51.8	40 255	107 960	46 348	164 220	2.68	3.54
Center (6 provinces)	20.3	22.2	34 919	50 664	45 724	77 387	1.45	1.69
West (12 provinces)	20.2	20.9	26 165	71 101	32 995	75 828	2.72	2.30
Northeast (3 provinces)	8.0	5.1	39 462	65 354	36 183	57 191	1.66	1.58
Total	100	100	26 165	107 960	32 995	164 220	4.13	4.98

*Sources.* China Statistical Yearbook.

In general, the data in Table 1 indicates that disparities in regional development are increasing. If in 2015 the difference between the maximum and minimum per capita GRP was 4.13 times, then in 2019 it was above 5 times. The Eastern region, which includes 10 provinces, covers more than half of the total GRP. The Central region of China is developing more dynamically in the analyzed period. The most even development is demonstrated by the Western part of China, where the differences between provinces reduced. Slowing down development is demonstrated by the Northeastern provinces.

Additionally, we divided 31 provinces on 5 groups according to the level of per capita GRP and GRP proportions in 2019 (Table 2).

Table 2

**Distribution of Chinese provincial regions by the level of per capita GRP and GRP share in 2019**

Per capita GRP, yuan	Region	GRP share by region, %					Total number of regions
		0,2–2,34	2,35–4,48	4,49–6,62	6,63–8,76	8,77–10,9	
32995–59240	W	7	1	1	–	–	9
	C	1	3	1	–	–	5
	N	2	1	–	–	–	3
	E	1	1	–	–	–	2
59241–85485	W	1	2	–	–	–	3
	C	–	–	1	–	–	1
	E	–	–	–	1	–	1
85486–111730	E	1	1	1	–	1	4
111731–137975	E	–	–	–	–	1	1
137976–164220	E	–	2	–	–	–	2
Total number of regions		13	11	4	1	2	31

*Sources.* China Statistical Yearbook: E – the Eastern region, C – the Central region, W – the Western region, N – the Northeastern region.

In general, the data in Table 2 shows that 19 regions among 31 have the lowest level of per capita GRP and 13 regions have the lowest level of GRP share. There are two Eastern regions (Guandong and Jiangsu), which share in GRP is between 8,77–10,9%, and two Eastern regions (Beijing and Shanghai) with the highest level of development according to per capita GRP.

All these data demonstrate deepening the differences in regional development in China. The main reasons of imbalanced regional economic development in China lie in the agglomeration of factors caused by urban polarization in different regions, the imbalance of regional development rights caused by long-term administrative decentralization and the difference of regional resource endowment. The long-term imbalanced development is mainly manifested in the gap between urban and rural development, the gap between economic development and the imbalance of industrial structure between regions.

The ways to overcome such differences are connected with regional development policy and strategy improvement. China's regional development strategy has passed through three phases: a balanced development strategy in 1949–78; an unbalanced strategy from 1978 – mid 1990's and a coordinated regional development strategy since the late 1990's (Ploberger, 2016). In the planned economy period, the development of energy, raw materials and heavy processing industries was prioritised, and the geography of development was

driven by resource availability. In the mid-1960's, tense relationships with the United States and its allies saw the government launch the Third Front programme relocating strategic industries in mountainous areas in central and western China. Once international tensions eased, priority was switched to the coast. After 1978, reform and opening up saw growth concentrated in eastern coastal areas. The establishment of special economic zones, open cities and open economic zones, the introduction of a wide range of other preferential policies and the mission, set out in an 'economic development strategy for coastal areas' put forward at the end of 1987, to develop an export-oriented economy and play a leading role in international competition led to a sharp increase in regional disparities.

Regional coordinated development refers to the healthy and orderly development of environmental, economic and social factors in an open system (Xu & Wu, 2010). Meanwhile, it is also an inevitable choice to adapt to the sustainable development of the new era and an important embodiment of high-level economic and social development (Song & Wu, 2010). However, differences in resource, location advantages, and transportation between cities have led to greater spatial and temporal heterogeneity in regional development levels (Lan & Zhong, 2018) [3]. Moreover, the consolidation of regional industrial division of labor and development paths has intensified the imbalance of spatial development (Li & Wang, 2016). The purpose of coordinated regional development is to bring into play the comparative advantages and enthusiasm of different regions, and gradually reduce the gap in regional development through the improvement of market mechanisms, cooperation mechanisms, mutual assistance mechanisms, and support mechanisms to form a new pattern of complementary advantages and coordinated development among different regions (Xie et al., 2016). From the beginning of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, China has implemented a series of major strategies to promote coordinated regional development, including the rise of the central region and the development of the western region (Yizhen Zhang, Weidong Cao, Kun Zhang, 2020) [2].

There are currently two main streams of regional coordinated development research. The first concerns the influencing factors of coordinated development research. Lan et al. studied the main factors affecting the coordinated development of metropolitan economy and logistics (Lan & Zhong, 2018) [3]. Wei et al. studied the regional development differences of Jiangsu Province from 1950 to 1995 and believed that human capital, physical capital, and institutional structure were the main factors that caused regional development differences (Wei & Kim, 2002). Moreover, economic, ecological environment, and local government actions as well as innovation capacity, are also considered to affect regional coordinated development (Yang et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2011). The second stream focuses on the research perspective of coordinated regional development [1].

China's 14th Five-Year Plan, covering the years 2021–2025, was adopted in March 2021. The ninth part of the Five-Year Plan is titled "Optimize regional economic layouts and promote coordinated regional development" [4]. According to the content of this part Chinese parliament and the National People's Congress will implement major regional strategies, regional coordinated development strategies, and major functional zone strategies in an in-depth manner, strengthen regional coordinated development systems and mechanisms, and build a regional economic layout for high-quality development and a land and space support system. But it's necessary to involve local community and local authorities into the regional development strategy determination and its implementation. According to this point of view each province should work out local strategy taking into account comparative advantages of the territory. For example, as for Anhui province, it should (1) actively participate in the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, (2) establish a unified and coordinated development mechanism at the provincial level, and (3) take advantage of the comparative advantages of industrial resources in various cities.

## References

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### **QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE POPULATION AND PROBLEMS OF ITS PROVISION IN THE CONGO (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC)**

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*The article examines the essence of the concept "Quality of life of the population". The urgency of improving the quality of life of the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is substantiated. The tendencies of changes in quantitative indicators of the quality of life of the population, as well as the country's position in the world ranking of human development are shown.*

In the modern world, the quality of life of the population is the most important criterion for the well-being of society. The quality of life of the population is the most important social category that characterizes the structure of human needs and the possibility of meeting them.

In the scientific literature, until now, there is no unity of views of scientists on the essence and quantitative indicators of the quality of life of the population.

The world health organization in 1994 defined the quality of life as «the perception that an individual has of his place in existence, in the context of the culture and the system of values in which he lives, in relation to his objectives, his expectations, its standards and concerns. It is a broad conceptual field, encompassing in a complex way the physical health of the person, his psychological state, his level of independence, his social relations, his personal beliefs and his relation with the specificities of his environment».

The quality of life of the population is also considered as a complex characteristic of the level and conditions of people's life, reflecting the possibilities and degree of their satisfaction of material, spiritual and social needs and the subjective perception of life and its individual aspects.

The concept of quality of life involves the formation of not only objective factors that determine the quality of life (food, housing, employment, education, etc.), but factors that determine a person's subjective perception of the level of their well-being, including such concepts as happiness, job satisfaction, family life situation, housing conditions, etc.

The problem of ensuring a high standard of living is especially important for a number of African states, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, with an area equivalent to that of Western Europe. The country has exceptional natural