

# Regional Planning for Reducing Disparities in Decentralized Development Systems: Perencanaan Regional untuk Mengurangi Kesenjangan dalam Sistem Pembangunan yang Terdesentralisasi

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**General Background:** Regional planning plays a crucial role in achieving balanced development by optimizing the use of natural and human resources across geographic areas. **Specific Background:** In federal systems like Iraq, the effectiveness of decentralized development plans is often undermined by ambiguity in administrative authority and the uneven distribution of wealth and resources among regions. **Knowledge Gap:** Limited research has examined how decentralization impacts the successful implementation of regional development plans in governorates not affiliated with any specific region. **Aims:** This study aims to analyze the role of decentralized regional planning in reducing disparities and improving the efficiency of development strategies in Iraq. **Results:** Using a SWOT analysis framework, the study reveals that administrative ambiguity and regional inequality are significant barriers to effective development. It highlights that empowering local authorities and redirecting investments toward marginalized areas can reduce unemployment, improve living standards, and stabilize populations. **Novelty:** The study uniquely links regional planning with decentralization and proposes a model integrating community participation and legislative restructuring as tools for sustainable regional development. **Implications:** The findings emphasize the urgent need for strategic regional planning that supports decentralized governance to achieve social and economic balance across Iraq's diverse regions.

## Highlights:

Decentralization improves efficiency and local development planning.

Regional inequality weakens national development strategies.

Public participation strengthens planning and implementation success.

**Keywords:** Regional Planning, Decentralization, Development Policy, SWOT Analysis, Iraq

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## Introduction

Before delving into the topic of planning or development plans, it is necessary to determine the reason for the need for this process first. It is worth noting that man has a natural desire to organize his living activities, which makes planning one of the basic psychological characteristics of

man and one of the social motives that do not arise from human biology, but are acquired from the society in which he lives. Therefore, this research will shed light on the Iraqi development experience, the Governorates Law No. 21 of 2008 and its amendments, and what it included in transferring some competencies and powers to local governments in the governorates to support administrative, economic, social and environmental decentralization. However, its implementation requires greater seriousness to move away from the central approach and ensure the proper implementation of the development transformation process and overcome the negatives associated with the short time period to accomplish the development transformation. Required. And work through research to link the cognitive framework and the analytical framework for the purpose of understanding the relationship between the implementation of development plans and constitutional legislation for the experiences of the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **2. Regional planning:**

Regional planning can be defined as the study of natural and human resources, whether exploited or unexploited, in a specific area of land (region) to know the potential of this region and its available resources and exploit them during a specific period of time to achieve specific goals that seek to achieve the advancement and development of the region. With this expression, it is linked to local administrations that are responsible for protecting and preserving local resources for the benefit of the region and the state as a whole. However, regional planning remains part of the overall planning of the country, which is primarily linked to centralization, one of the goals of which is to exploit all natural and human resources in the state in all its regions and to work on coordinating and organizing the exploitation of these resources to achieve specific goals that the state aspires to during a specific period of time [1]. The concept of regional planning has gone through three stages during its development period, which are [2]

1. The early stage, which is the stage extending from the year 1920 to 1933: (This stage will be the beginning of the emergence of the concept of regional planning, as this concept appeared in the United States in 1920 AD as a new and distinct branch that differs from city planning.
2. The stage of programmed projects: (1949 - 1962): This stage followed World War II and is called the new stage, as the projects that were implemented were subject to the supervision of the federal government.
3. The stage of area development: Areas Development, which began in the seventies of the last century and is considered the most comprehensive stage.

#### **1.2. Objectives of regional planning:**

Regional planning has a set of objectives represented by the following paragraphs [3]

1. Working to achieve a balance between population distribution and natural resources to reduce regional disparities to achieve balance in development at the state level.
2. Optimal and balanced exploitation of resources and capabilities available in each region in order to achieve future goals of development plans.
3. Working to improve the standard of living of the region's population by providing job opportunities in agricultural, industrial and service activities and working to relieve pressure on major cities.
4. Stabilizing rural populations by reducing rural migration to cities by working to create job opportunities and reduce unemployment rates.

### 3. Decentralization and regional planning:

When examining the secrets of regional planning, the topic of decentralization must be addressed, as decentralization is considered a very dynamic element among other features of governance arrangements, and it reduces the independence of the state. Decentralization is applied in different regions for various purposes such as imposing or restoring political and economic control, strengthening the democratic system, reducing conflicts or disputes, expanding public facilities, or exacerbating regional differences due to their distance from the local level. The central government may not have satisfactory knowledge of remote localities [4]. Therefore, decentralization is applied in many countries.

Therefore, decentralization is applied in many countries. Accordingly, decentralization empowers citizens to ensure their interests are reflected in government strategy and amenities.

Regionalization of power opens up community political participation in policy making [5]

Figure No. (1) shows the type of balanced relationship between decentralized and local administration.



**Figure 1.** of the researcher's work based on [6]

### 4. Federalism and its impact on regional development plans:

Federalism, within a broad category of federal political systems, presents a specific type of policy

characterized by the fact that federal units and regional units are not subject to each other, i.e. each has its own sovereignty that derives its authority from the constitution and not from any other level of government, i.e. each has its own powers that allow it to deal directly with its citizens in exercising its legislative, executive and tax powers, and each is directly elected by its citizens. Accordingly, federalism enjoys a set of levels as a form of political systems, which are [7]

1. Two levels of government, each of which exercises its authority directly over its citizens.
2. A formal constitutional distribution of legislative and executive powers and their allocation of income resources between these two levels of government while ensuring areas of true self-government for each of them.
3. Provisions for authorized representatives from the regions to express their views when available within federal policy-making institutions, often through the special form of the Second Federal Council.
4. A written constitution that is supreme and cannot be amended unilaterally, since this requires the consent of a large number of the units that make up the federation.

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Federalism is a constitutional mechanism for distributing power among different levels of government, whereby federal units enjoy constitutionally guaranteed real autonomy in certain political areas.   | What does federalism mean?            |
| Identity federalism: A means of achieving peace, stability and common consensus in countries with regionally concentrated differences in identity, ethnicity, religion or language. Efficiency federalism: A tool that improves service delivery, ensures equality in decision-making, prevents excessive concentration of power,                 | Why federalism?                       |
| While federalism has helped some countries resolve their conflicts or improve their governance, it can also exacerbate existing differences, sometimes leading to deepening conflicts or state failure. Federalism is a complex form of government, often largely legal, which is costly and hinders consistent policy making and implementation. | Obstacles to implementing federalism? |
| Federal systems are usually applied in countries with cultural diversity and large territories. The best examples of this are the federal or semi-federal countries; Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Spain, South Africa and the United States of America.                                       | Where can federalism be applied?      |

**Table 1.** shows the questions that revolve around the term federalism

5. Differences between the impact of decentralization and federalism on development plans:

There are a number of differences that distinguish one from the other, including [9]

1. From a legal standpoint: Administrative decentralization governs local administrations by a special law established by the central government, while federalism is governed by its own constitution.
2. In terms of independence: Administrative decentralization enjoys independence from the central government but is subject to the guardianship and control of the central government, while federalism enjoys autonomy. As for the central government with regard to self-administration, it has its own constitution, legislative and executive powers, and its own system of government.
3. As for its role in participating in national decisions, administrative decentralization does not have

this role and it sets the general policy, but it is responsible for implementing the general policy set by the central government, which is the opposite of what is the case in federalism, as it contributes to drawing up the general policy of the state.

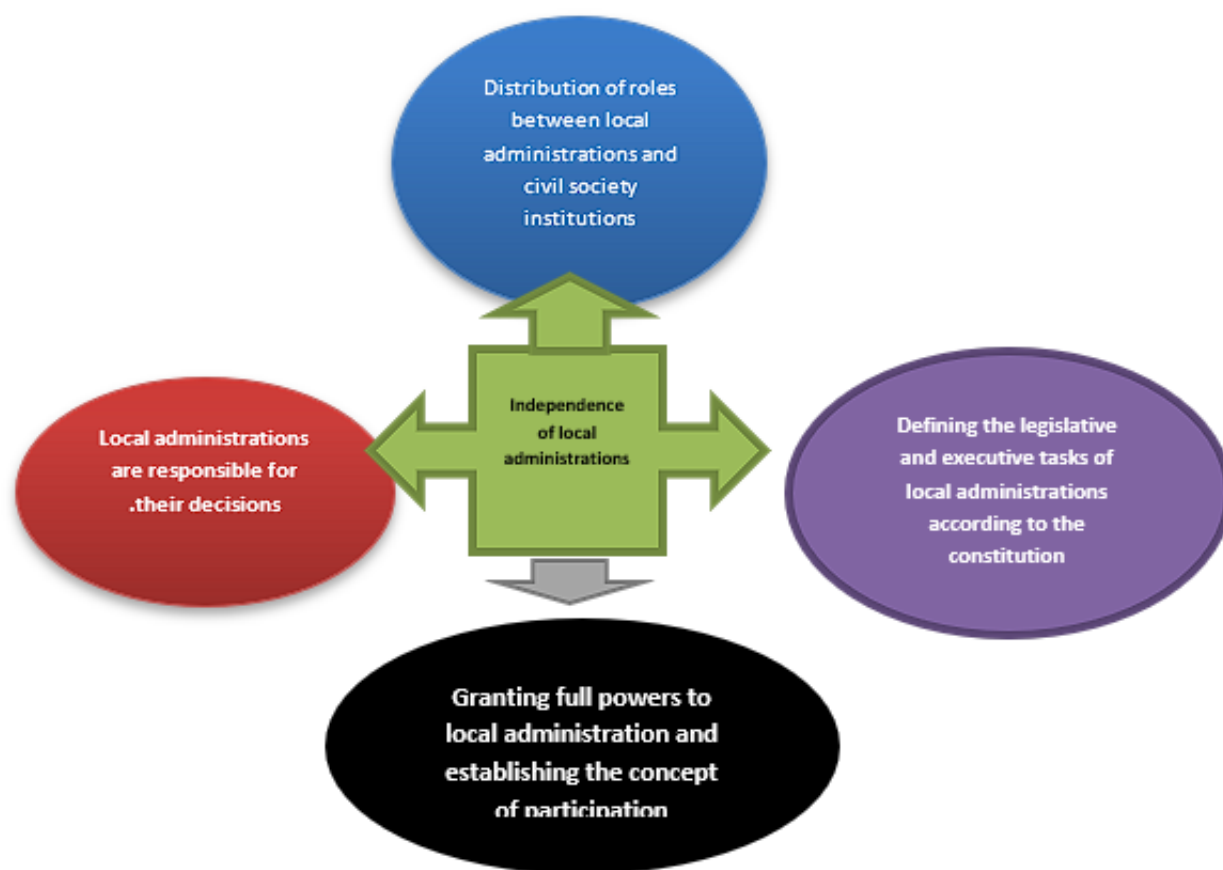
| Unitary State  | Confederal State  | Federal State   |
|--|---|---|
| Centralized and strong   | Weak centrality   | Moderate centralization   |
| Influence is direct on individuals                                     | Influence is direct on the constituent units and not on individuals   | Influence is on both constituent units and individuals                                    |
| Sovereignty is not divided or fragmented                               | Sovereignty lies with the constituent units   | Sovereignty is divided between the central government and constituent units               |
| National law prevails and procedures are clearly subject to it         | Central government can be controlled or its decisions overruled by the constituent units (right of nullification and annulment) | National law prevails in its area and constituent units have their own laws               |
| One tax system and local changes are ratified by the central authority | Central government is financed by contributions and taxes provided by the constituent units                                     | Dual taxation system applies to both levels of government                                 |
| Examples: United Kingdom, France, Spain, Poland, Algeria               | Examples: United States before 1789, Switzerland before 1848, Germany before 1871   | Examples: United States since 1789, Canada, Australia, Sweden, India, Brazil, and Mexico. |

**Table 2.** *shows the comparison between the systems of the unitary state, the confederal state, and the federal state.*

When looking at the Iraqi Constitution of 2005, we clearly notice the existence of two types of development administration based on the legislative and legal articles that regulated the work of local administrations, whether those local administrative units of the governorates organized in regions in the Republic of Iraq, as Article 116 indicated: The federal system in the Republic of Iraq consists of a capital, regions, decentralized governorates, and local administrations, or in the administration of governorates that were not organized in regions, such as Article (122), which indicated: (The governorates that were not organized in a region shall be granted broad administrative and financial powers, enabling them to manage their affairs in accordance with the principle of administrative decentralization, and this shall be regulated by law). Based on this article, the Iraqi governorates, except for the governorates that were organized in a region (Kurdistan Region [11]

#### 6. The role of local administration in comprehensive development transformations:

as the concept of development management begins with the actual comprehensive development process, through planning, setting strategies, mobilizing human, material and administrative energies and capabilities, and raising them to the level of performance and community mobilization through effective participation, as well as evaluating performance and the extent to which the actual comprehensive development goals are achieved in all their dimensions. Development can also be achieved by translating policies related to services and economic and social activities and transforming them into projects that care about local priorities [12]



**Figure 2.** shows the elements that must be available for the independence of local administrations

Accordingly, the research concludes that the ambiguity of the division of the organizational structure of units in local administration and the lack of necessary expertise and efficiency sometimes within local units, in addition to the lack of funding and limited local resources, lead to the ineffectiveness of development plans in them. This would generate inefficiency and lost opportunities in managing local resources and confronting threats that hinder the achievement of development.

## 7. Global and Arab models with different development policies:

Studying federal experiences in the world constitutes a necessity for those who wish to develop federal formulas for some countries that are going through the federal transformation phase, especially in benefiting from them to develop appropriate development formulas by taking the positives of those experiences and avoiding their negatives. Among these experiences that the research will shed light on are:

### 1.7. The experience of the United Arab Emirates:

The experience of the United Arab Emirates is considered one of the most prominent modern Arab federal experiences. Modern Arab history has witnessed federal attempts or unification experiences that were not successful or were destined to continue for short periods compared to the age of the federal experience [13] The first paragraph of the UAE Constitution states that the United Arab Emirates consists of the following emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah. The UAE Constitution includes 152 articles that clarify the components of the union and the rights of citizens .

| Emirate                   | Area      | Percentage of total country area % |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Emirate of Abu Dhabi      | 76340 2KM | 86.67                              |
| Emirate of Dubai          | 38852KM   | 5                                  |
| Emirate of Sharjah        | 25902KM   | 3.33                               |
| Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah | 16842KM   | 2.2                                |
| Emirate of Fujairah       | 11652KM   | 1.5                                |
| Emirate of Umm Al Quwain  | 7772KM    | 1                                  |
| Emirate of Ajman          | 2592KM    | 0.33                               |

**Table 3.** Area of the Emirates of the State

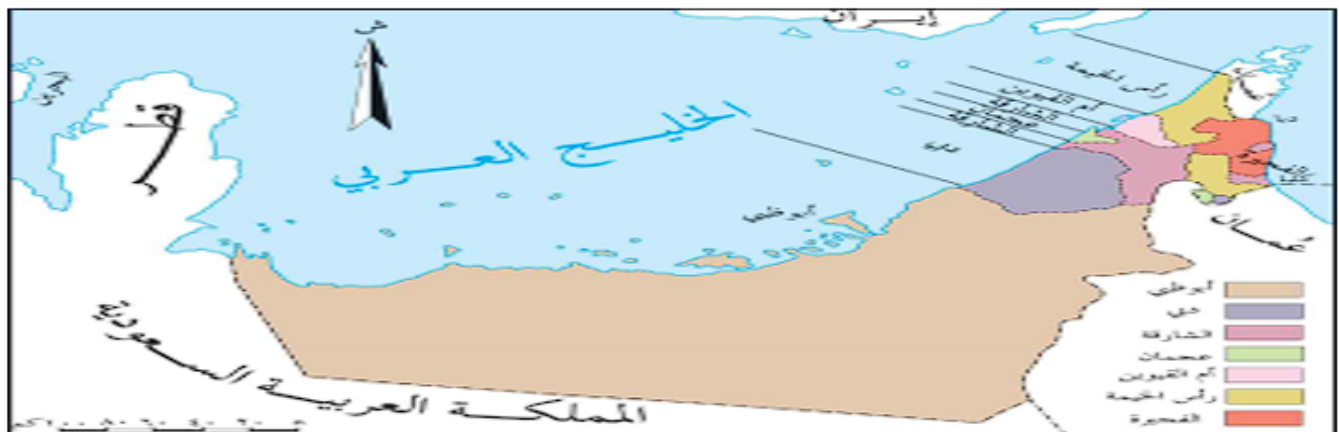
The set of economic, institutional, social and environmental indicators of the development plans in the UAE can be presented and analyzed, with an explanation of the strengths and weaknesses as follows [14]

A- Economic indicators: The structure of the UAE economy is characterized by strength, as evidenced by the high investment ratio index.

B- Institutional indicators: Analysis of institutional indicators indicates significant progress, especially after the launch of the UAE government strategy in 2007.

C- Social indicators: Increase in the level of individual health, which is evident in the increase in life expectancy at birth, the inclusion of all residents in the UAE in primary health care programs.

D- Environmental indicators: Positive development was recorded in data related to land use and agriculture.



**Figure 3.** The United Arab Emirates within its regional connections

In light of the previous presentation, we see that the political system in the United Arab Emirates is a cohesive system that has been able to achieve many accomplishments for its people, and has been able to prove that its federal entity is a solid and stable entity through its diligent progress through an organized methodology that has had an influential reality in its path since the establishment of the union in 1971 AD until today. The first generation of federal leaders was distinguished by political acumen and the ability to open up to others, which prompted them to overcome many obstacles with a genuine desire to cooperate with countries in their regional and international surroundings.

Accordingly, the research concludes that the success and continuity of any development plans is linked to the state of political stability based on the pillars of good governance that derives its strength from the democratic system and the constitution, as it is capable of achieving a national economy based on social justice and the foundation of honest cooperation between the parties to the activity (public and private) and its goal of achieving development, increasing production, raising the standard of living and achieving prosperity.

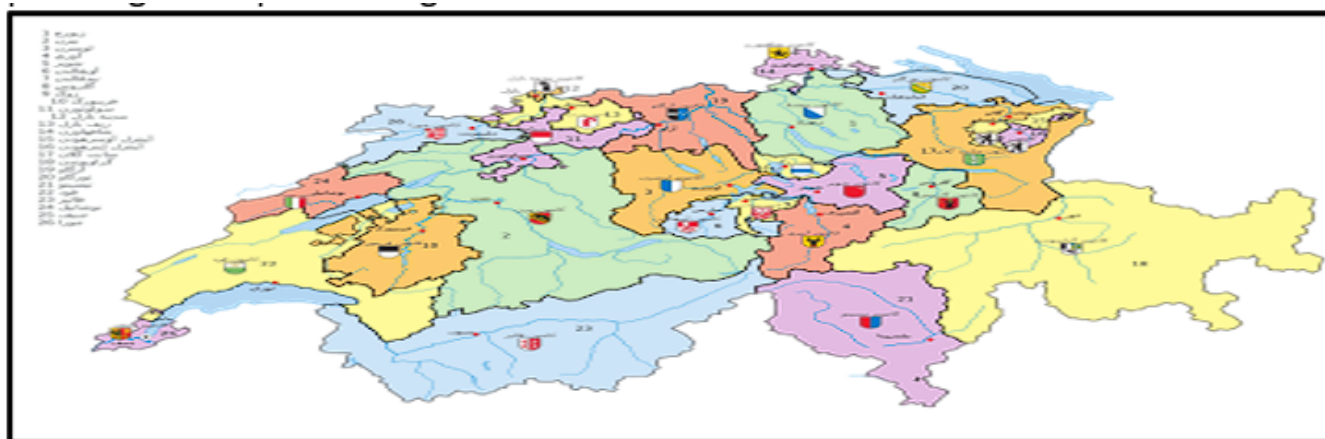
## 2.7. The experience of the State of Switzerland:

Switzerland, like other European countries, developed politically and economically as it turned into an industrial state with the infiltration of liberal ideas, human rights and public freedoms in the world, and associations and unions emerged in it. Article [15] of the amended Swiss Constitution of 2014 states that the Swiss Confederation consists of the Swiss people and the following cantons: Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schweiz, Obwalden and Nidwalden, Glaris, Zug, Freiburg, Solothurn, Basel City and Countryside, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Asteroidean and Appenzell Inner Rhoden, St. Gallen, Graubünden, Aargau, Thurgau, Ticino, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, Geneva, and Jura (Article 1 of the amended Swiss Constitution of 2014) Article also stipulates that the cantons enjoy sovereignty as long as the federal constitution does not limit this sovereignty. The cantons also exercise all rights that were not delegated to the federation.

Through the Swiss experience, we find that it worked to build a society before working to build the state system, i.e. working from the bottom of the state pyramid, which is society, until it reaches the state institutions and rises in its construction. Because many political scientists find that the Swiss experience is a model for studying consensual democracy, but just as this experience has its advantages, it also has its disadvantages that no political system is free of, and which the Swiss worked on in order to avoid them [16]. When we want to study the components of the strength (natural and human) of the State of Switzerland, especially the location and natural materials and studying its population ethnically and religiously, we find that it is a country that if it were destined to be a third world country, it would have experienced a state of poverty and an explosion of racial and religious hatred and a civil war would have raged in it, because it was able to achieve strong cohesion as a model, civilized, advanced federal state that takes into account the causes of technology and great development [17]. Article (75) of the Swiss Constitution of 2014, amended regarding the urban planning of the cantons of the Swiss Federation, stipulates:

- The Federation sets the basic principles of urban planning, while the cantons are responsible for implementing them and for the appropriate and economic use of land and regular utilization of it for the purpose of housing.
- The Federation encourages and coordinates the efforts of the cantons and cooperates with them.
- The Federation and the cantons take into consideration the requirements of urban planning when performing their tasks.





**Figure 4.** represents the Union of Cantons in Switzerland and the problem as a whole is the federal system of the state

[18]

The Swiss Constitution in this case has coordinated the tasks of the Union's work within the cantons in the aspect of urban planning for Swiss cities and in accordance with the powers granted to those unions under the general constitution of the country.

#### 8. Iraq's experience in managing its development plans:

The Iraqi Constitution of 2005 adopted the federal system, as Article 1 thereof states that "The Republic of Iraq is a single, independent federal state with full sovereignty, and its system of government is a parliamentary republic. The Iraqi Constitution adopted three types: parliamentary, democratic, and this Constitution guarantees the unity of Iraq." The Iraqi constitution addressed in Article (124) the administrative system of government applied in the world, the first of which is the system of regions stipulated in Articles (116-121), the second is the system of administrative decentralization for governorates not organized into a region stipulated in Articles (122-123), and the third is the system of local administrations stipulated in Article (125). It remains to be mentioned that the text of Article (124) addressed the issue of the capital, Baghdad, which the constitution did not allow to be organized into a region [19] The distribution of powers between the central government and the regional government was not limited to the above, but rather went beyond that to what was also indicated in Articles (112, 113) of the constitution, which defined the shared powers between the federal government and the regions and governorates not organized into a region, as Article (112) of the constitution stipulates the following: (The federal government shall manage the oil and gas extracted from the current fields with the governments of the regions and producing governorates, on To distribute its revenues fairly in proportion to the population distribution throughout the country, with a specific quota for a specific period for the affected regions that were unfairly deprived of them by the previous regime. And to ensure balanced development for the various regions of the country, and this is regulated by law [20]

The formulation of development policies is based on the philosophy of participation that stems from the emphasis on compatibility and coordination between national and local development, as an exception to decentralized planning based on planning from below to draw up the animal development plan. Hence, participation is not only required in terms of equipment, but also in terms of the necessity of accuracy and efficiency required by local authorities, and that the council's coordination be coordinated with the government and continue and do not intersect with the goals and general policy drawn up by the federal government.

1.8. Economic diversification in Iraq and its impact on development plans: The Iraqi economy is an

example of a rentier state that suffers from economic exposure that cannot be underestimated as a result of its almost complete dependence on crude oil in production and export,[21]. Iraq cannot adopt a development strategy based on reducing consumption and the standard of living is moving slowly, as the Caliph is on the path of capital accumulation, and he has no chance of prosperity except by relying on efficiency and ways to improve it to support economic growth. The starting point in this direction is the deep distinction between financing investment spending, which is the policy adopted so far, and the act of investment, which is building and developing infrastructure and establishing new production capacities. When the government moves towards work and works to achieve investment and efficiency in this area, financing and spending are subject to its conditions, and this is the basic principle to ensure deep transformation and continued catching up with advanced countries [22]

See Table No. (4) showing the revenues estimated in billions.

| Years | Public Revenues | Oil Revenues | Contribution of Oil Revenues to Public Revenues )%( | Non-Oil Revenues | Contribution of Oil Revenues to Public Revenues %)) |
|-------|-----------------|--------------|---|------------------|---|
| 2018  | 90.16           | 80.84        | 89.6  | 9.93             | 10.4  |
| 2019  | 91.01           | 83.95        | 92.2  | 7.06             | 7.8   |
| 2020  | 52.30           | 45.20        | 86.4  | 7.10             | 13.6  |
| 2021  | 75.24           | 65.71        | 87.3  | 9.53             | 12.7  |
| 2022  | 72.51           | 64.95        | 89.5  | 7.56             | 10.5  |

**Table 4.** *explaining oil and non-oil revenues*

Economic diversification has multiple definitions, some of which differ from each other depending on the perspective from which this phenomenon is viewed. While some link diversification to production and sources of income, others link it to the structure of commodity exports. The concept of diversification is defined through policies aimed at reducing dependence on a limited number of exported goods whose price and volume fluctuate or are subject to chronic decline. Many economists define it as the process of diversifying sources of income by adopting a balanced approach to economic development based on studied integration between economic sectors and various activities [23]. Some believe that economic diversification means reducing dependence on a single resource and moving to the stage of empowering the agricultural industrial base, creating a production base, diversifying sources of GDP, and diversifying sources of revenue in the country. means building a sound national economy that moves towards self-sufficiency in more than one sector ([24] Accordingly, the research concludes that the goal of economic diversification in a country like Iraq is to expand and enhance the revenues of the main oil sector and thus increase the share of this sector in both the gross domestic product and export revenues in the long term and work to use the revenues gained from the main sector to create economic development that depends on diversification and moving towards investment in other sectors. That is, it is possible to rely on the main sector such as oil to become a means of achieving economic diversification.

2.8. The form of the state and the nature of development plans: The constitution stipulates that the Republic of Iraq consists of the capital, regions and central governorates in which the provincial council and governor are elected, as well as local administrations and municipal councils in the districts and districts. Therefore, the state's status is based on two different forms: the first: federal or federal, and the second is decentralized. This choice depends on a short period of time through the exercise of political rights in elections and referendums, as we have observed from 2005 until now. The structure of the Iraqi state consists of two forms of government: the first is federal, represented by the Kurdistan Regional Government for three governorates (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk). The second is represented by the decentralization system in the remaining governorates (fifteen other governorates). This structural amendment actually dates back to a historical era in the formation of the Kurdistan Region since the nineties of the last century due to demographic and geostrategic factors, especially in the three governorates that make up the region. The Iraqi



**Figure 5.** represents the administrative divisions of the Republic of Iraq

Accordingly, the research finds that the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 has drawn the directions and competencies of the federal authority with regard to development aspects and management of development projects, which resulted in the transfer of central authority between direct management according to the powers granted to it according to the Constitution and cooperation in its administrations with regions and governorates not organized in a region.

#### 9. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the development plans of the Iraqi economy, opportunities and threats through SWOT analysis:

The concept, importance and objectives of SWO analysis stem from its being a method of analyzing the internal and external environment of the facility that has a direct impact on its performance, represented in the organizational, marketing, production and performance evaluation components, which helps the facility focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the facility. The internal environment and the opportunities and threats of the external environment. Accordingly, SWOT analysis can be defined as the process of identifying and diagnosing opportunities and threats that can be invested in the external environment of the facility and confronting the threats and risks resulting from changes in it, as well as focusing on diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment of the facility and determining their repercussions[28]. This is called strategic diagnosis and is considered a very important process for the organization, as it informs the organization of all environmental conditions and changes. This

requires the use of strategic diagnosis as a set of tools and methods through which the internal environment is monitored to diagnose strengths and weaknesses, and the external environment to discover opportunities and threats, to determine the impact of change and modify it. Objectives and position The organization's strategy, one of the most important tools of strategic diagnosis is SWOT analysis, as it is a useful tool in complex situations that characterize the nature of strategic decisions. It helps business organizations analyze and evaluate all internal and external factors, so SWOT analysis is considered an important [30]



**Figure 6.** shows the importance of adopting SWOT analysis in taking advantage of strengths and enhancing and supporting weaknesses in the development of local administrations. Source: From the researcher's work based on (Prof. Issa Hairesh 2016/ Strategic Management SWOT Analysis published on the link ((Google bazingafiles.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com

#### 1.9. The analytical aspect of the (SWOT) model for the Iraqi development experience:

In order to complete the (SWOT) analysis of the impact of regional planning and its impact on the decentralized development plans for governorates not organized in a region, a set of important scientific indicators were recorded that can be considered strategies that will reduce weaknesses

or vice versa, through which strengths and weaknesses can be analyzed and their results can be known by the research and reflected on the subject of the study to ensure the stability of the validity of the research theory by comparing the subjective factors (strengths and weaknesses) with each other. We see the need for decision-makers to work on drawing a development roadmap with clear features for development plans in Iraq linked to management with a clear and future vision capable of mobilizing material and human capabilities in all economic, environmental and social aspects with the aim of achieving that vision by investing in the available and current opportunities through which the current desires of society are achieved and the needs of future generations are guaranteed, and working on developing scientific and practical plans to stand in the face of threats by relying on scientific and technical foundations in crisis management. See the strengths in Table No. (5) and the opportunities that can be achieved and obtained:

| Points of Strength                                 | Potential Opportunities   |
|--|---|
| 1. Constitution, legislation, regulations and laws | 1. Protecting rights and freedoms and ensuring the rights of society      |
| 2. Efficiency of administrations                   | 2. Success in establishing the desired development goals                  |
| 3. Rentier economy achieved from oil wealth        | 3. Investment in other sectors  |
| 4. Monetary capital                                | 4. Financial management and economic planning                             |
| 5. Physical capital                                | 5. Infrastructure and services  |
| 6. Human capital                                   | 6. Health care, educational services and human competencies               |
| 7. Natural capital                                 | 7. Air quality, environmental beauty, quality of life                     |
| 8. Community participation                         | 8. Achieving development goals for society and achieving decentralization |

**Table 5.** of the researcher's work shows the opportunities and potential gains that can be achieved as a result of strengths according to the SWOT analysis method.

The weaknesses of any development plans mean immediate or future threats to the economic system. See Table No. (6). Since Iraq suffers from internal weaknesses, it has elements of internal strength that it can exploit to overcome weaknesses, threats and potential risks by developing plans that outline the future of development plans in Iraq, whether in the governorates not organized in a region or in the Kurdistan Region, provided that there is no leniency in implementing them or in following up on their planning stages or in assigning them to professional and scientific departments with the availability of a clear vision and the capabilities to mobilize resources towards achieving those development plans to prevent their failure.

| Threats  | Points of Weakness                                  |
|--|---|
| 1. Poverty, the spread of diseases and epidemics, and the spread of crime  | 1. Unemployment                                     |
| 2. Failure of development plans and loss of wealth                         | 2. Weak mechanisms for monitoring development plans |
| 3. Increase in public debt   | 3. Deficit and inflation                            |
| 4. Lack of meeting needs   | 4. Lack of resources                                |
| 5. Undermining confidence in governments is one of the drivers of conflict | 5. Financial corruption                             |
| 6. Fluctuations in oil prices  | 6. Monopoly economy                                 |

**Table 6.** from the researcher's work shows the weaknesses and the expected threats corresponding to them according to the SWOT analysis method

## Conclusion

1. The disparity in levels of wealth and resources is one of the problems that Iraq suffers from in terms of economic, social and urban development, and thus makes the adoption of regional planning an urgent and important necessity in the next development phase.

2. Strengthening the authority of the regions in the constitutional and legislative texts at the expense of the central authority reduced the chances of their success in managing regional development plans.

3. Regional planning should rely on a strategy of redirecting investment towards poor or marginalized areas that are population-repellent areas by providing job opportunities for their residents, raising their living standards, stabilizing them, reducing their migration from their areas, and working to reduce unemployment rates among them. All of this works to create an economic and social balance at the overall level of the country.

4. One of the successful steps of regional development planning is its reliance on community participation in drawing up future development plans, whether that participation is in the stage of preparing the plans or in the stages of implementing or following up on the results of those plans.

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