
Transformation of post-mining towns in Kazakhstan: Top-down and bottom-up attempts of shaping the economic future of Tekeli

Dinara Nurusheva*¹ and Madina Junussova*²

¹Bilig Brains – Kazakhstan

²Institute of Public Policy and Administration at University of Central Asia – Kazakhstan

Abstract

Soviet industrialization policy brought to the map the number of towns built on natural resources extraction sites. Towns with one or few major enterprises attracted the workforce from various fields, eventually, expanding its territory and services. Currently, nearly one-third of the urban settlements in Kazakhstan has a status of single-industry town called *monotown*.

The national government of Kazakhstan introduced special *monotown development programs*. Town administrations have started to develop *the monotown programs* aiming to improve urban infrastructure. Despite many positive achievements, the remaining challenge is the inefficiency of this centrally constrained local program that does not contribute to the long-term sustainability of single-industry towns.

The purpose of the paper is to examine potential ways to develop institutional conditions that will allow towns to boost further improvements. The case of single-industry town – Tekeli – located in South-Eastern Kazakhstan helps to highlight some of the drawbacks and opportunities of the *monotown policy*. The opening of new industries has followed the closure of the lead mining industry. However, there are some remaining local economic development challenges such as unstable job market, youth migration, and the shortage of skilled labor force. The paper will scrutinize the role of the local municipality, business entities and communities in overcoming these obstacles.

Keywords: single, industry town, local governance, Kazakhstan

*Speaker