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Formation of a Capable Territorial Community within the Architecture of the State's Public-Service Activity

Liudmyla Antonova ^{1*} ● Yaroslav Zhovnirchuk ² ● Andriy Antonov ³

¹ Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Ukraine). Professor at the Department of Accounting and Auditing, Doctor of Sciences in Public Administration, Professor.

² Koretsky Institute of State and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Ukraine). Acting Head of the Department of Public Administration and Administrative Law, Doctor of Sciences in Public Administration, Professor.

³ State University "Zhytomyr Polytechnic" (Ukraine). Professor at the Department of National Security, Public Administration and Management, Doctor of Sciences in Public Administration, Professor.

* **Corresponding Author**, e-mail: antonovalv77@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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The article investigates how a capable territorial community is formed within the evolving architecture of the state's public-service activity. Building on Ukraine's post-2014 decentralization and the shift toward a service-oriented state, the study conceptualizes community capacity as an integrated combination of managerial, financial, social, legal, and innovation-digital potentials that collectively enable sustainable local development and citizen-centered governance. The argument proceeds from three premises: first, decentralization is meaningful only when local authorities possess the resources and competences to deliver quality public services; second, the service state reframes the state–citizen relationship from administrative subordination to co-production and partnership; third, European integration and the digital transformation of the public sector require alignment with standards of transparency, accountability, participation, and data-driven decision-making. Methodologically, the article synthesizes public administration, economics, and sociology to propose a multidimensional framework for assessing and strengthening community capacity. Within this framework, five mutually reinforcing mechanisms are identified: (1) Financial-economic mechanisms; (2) Organizational-managerial mechanisms; (3) Human-resource mechanisms; (4) Innovation-digital mechanisms; (5) Social-capital mechanisms. The findings demonstrate that these mechanisms operate most effectively as a system, not as isolated reforms. When combined, they generate a virtuous cycle in which transparent finance supports credible planning; skilled personnel implement digital solutions; and higher civic trust widens participation, which in turn strengthens accountability and service quality. Framed by European standards of local self-government and public value, the capable community emerges as a co-equal partner of the state: it co-designs policies, co-produces services, and co-manages development risks while sustaining democratic legitimacy at the local level. The article concludes that advancing the service-state model in Ukraine depends on embedding the above mechanisms in a coherent governance architecture that privileges openness, responsibility, and measurable results. This systems approach aligns local development with EU-oriented requirements of sustainability, inclusion, and digital maturity, and provides a practical roadmap for transforming administratively created communities into genuinely capable ones that are resilient, innovation-ready, and citizen-centric.

KEYWORDS

public administration, decentralization, European integration, regional policy, territorial communities, capacity, financial capacity, sustainable development, service state, public services, public service activities, European Union, reform, strategy, development, regional development, martial law, region, state authorities.



Формування спроможної територіальної громади в архітектурі публічно-сервісної діяльності держави

Людмила В. Антонова ^{1*} ● Ярослав Ф. Жовнірчик ² ● Андрій В. Антонов ³

¹ Чорноморський національний університет імені Петра Могили (Україна). Професор кафедри обліку і аудиту, д-р держ. упр., професор.

² Інститут держави і права імені В. М. Корецького Національної академії наук України (Україна). В. о. завідувача відділу проблем державного управління та адміністративного права, д-р держ. упр., професор.

³ Державний університет «Житомирська політехніка» (Україна). Професор кафедри національної безпеки, публічного управління та адміністрування, д-р держ. упр., професор.

* Автор-кореспондент, e-mail: antonovalv77@gmail.com

СТАТТЯ

АНОТАЦІЯ

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У статті досліджується, як формується спроможна територіальна громада в рамках еволюційної архітектури державної діяльності у сфері надання публічних послуг. На основі децентралізації в Україні після 2014 року та переходу до сервісно-орієнтованої держави, у дослідженні концептуалізується спроможність громади як інтегрована комбінація управлінського, фінансового, соціального, правового та інноваційно-цифрового потенціалу, які разом забезпечують сталий місцевий розвиток та управління, орієнтоване на громадян. Аргументація базується на трьох передумовах: по-перше, децентралізація має сенс лише тоді, коли місцеві органи влади володіють ресурсами та компетенціями для надання якісних публічних послуг; по-друге, держава, орієнтована на надання послуг, переосмислює відносини між державою та громадянами з адміністративної підпорядкованості на співпрацю та партнерство; по-третє, європейська інтеграція та цифрова трансформація публічного сектору вимагають приведення у відповідність до стандартів прозорості, підзвітності, участі та прийняття рішень на основі даних. Методологічно стаття синтезує державне управління, економіку та соціологію, щоб запропонувати багатовимірну структуру для оцінки та зміцнення потенціалу громади. У рамках цієї структури визначено п'ять взаємодоповнюючих механізмів: (1) фінансово-економічні; (2) організаційно-управлінські; (3) механізми людських ресурсів; (4) інноваційно-цифрові механізми; (5) механізми соціального капіталу. Результати показують, що ці механізми найефективніше працюють як система, а не як ізольовані реформи. У поєднанні вони створюють позитивний цикл, в якому прозорі фінанси підтримують надійне планування; кваліфікований персонал впроваджує цифрові рішення; а вища громадянська довіра розширює участь, що, в свою чергу, зміцнює підзвітність та якість послуг. У рамках європейських стандартів місцевого самоврядування та суспільної цінності, спроможна громада стає рівноправним партнером держави: вона спільно розробляє політику, спільно надає послуги та спільно управляє ризиками розвитку, підтримуючи демократичну легітимність на місцевому рівні. У статті робиться висновок, що просування моделі держави-послуги в Україні залежить від вбудовування вищезазначених механізмів у цілісну архітектуру управління, яка надає перевагу відкритості, відповідальності та вимірюваним результатам. Такий системний підхід узгоджує місцевий розвиток з орієнтованими на ЄС вимогами сталого розвитку, інклюзивності та цифрової зрілості, а також надає практичний план дій для перетворення адміністративно створених громад на справді спроможні, стійкі, готові до інновацій та орієнтовані на громадян.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

публічне управління, децентралізація, євроінтеграція, регіональна політика, територіальні громади, спроможність, фінансова спроможність, сталий розвиток, сервісна держава, публічні послуги, публічно-сервісна діяльність, Європейський Союз, реформа, стратегія, розвиток, регіональний розвиток, воєнний стан, регіон, органи державної влади.

1. Introduction

Since 2014, the decentralization reform in Ukraine has become, without exaggeration, one of the most successful in the modern history of the state. It has not only changed the administrative-territorial structure, but also gradually reformed the very philosophy of interaction between the authorities and citizens. The idea is not just to transfer powers “to the localities”, but to create an environment where communities get the opportunity to independently solve their own problems and be responsible for the results.

In this context, the study of the phenomenon of the capacity of the territorial community in the architecture of public service activities of the state is of particular relevance.

A capable community is not only about financial stability or the availability of resources. It is, first of all, the ability of local self-government bodies to think strategically, effectively organize public services, support citizens’ initiatives and be open to partnership.

Therefore, the study of theoretical, methodological and practical features of the formation of a capable territorial community in the architecture of public service activities of the state, taking into account the modern challenges of European integration development, the impact of decentralization processes, digital transformation of the public sector and Ukraine’s transition to a model of a service state focused on the needs of citizens and the principles of good governance, is of particular relevance.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical and methodological basis of the dissertation research was scientific research on topical problems of public administration, in particular, local self-government in terms of studying the institution of the capacity of the territorial community), which was carried out by such scientists as: N. Baldych et al. [3], M. Baranovskyi [4; 5], O. Diakonenko [8], I. Hrynchyshyn [10], I. Hryshchenko and M. Kulaiets [11], Ya. Kaziuk [12], L. Melnyk [13], O. Omelchuk [15], P. Ostapenko [16], Kh. Patytska [17], I. Prikhno and L. Prodanova [18], D. Titov [21] and others. Their works form a scientific and methodological basis for the analysis of criteria and mechanisms for the formation of capable communities, determining the institutional, financial, personnel, legal, communicative and infrastructural components.

3. Problem Statement

To reveal the features of the formation of a capable community in the architecture of public service activities of the state, taking into account the challenges of European integration, development and digital transformation of the public sector.

4. Methods and Materials

The research is theoretical and analytical in nature, combining a systemic and interdisciplinary approach to analyze the formation of a capable territorial community (TC) within Ukraine’s evolving public governance architecture. The methodological foundation synthesizes principles from public administration, economics, and sociology to create a multidimensional framework for assessing community capacity. The study is grounded in the theoretical premises of Ukraine’s post-2014 decentralization reform and the transition toward a service-oriented state model, framed by European standards of local self-government. Materials for the analysis encompass both normative and empirical data. Normative sources include official criteria and strategic documents related to local self-government. Empirical data include administrative statistics on the structure and quantity of TCs across Ukrainian oblasts and sociological reports on social capital and trust. Data on regional financial capacity and budget dynamics were also referenced. The Methodological Toolkit utilized a suite of general scientific methods. Analysis was used to define the multi-dimensional nature of community capacity (financial, managerial, social, innovation-digital) and identify influencing factors. Synthesis and Generalization were applied to integrate findings and propose a five-mechanism framework (financial-economic, organizational-managerial, human-resource, innovation-digital, social-capital). The Comparative Method assessed different conceptual approaches to capacity development. Crucially, the

Structural-Functional Approach provided the basis for classifying community capacity into economic, institutional, and legal dimensions, and for modeling the service-state architecture where the five mechanisms interact systematically. This approach validates the capable community as a co-equal partner of the state.

5. Results and Discussion

The decentralization reform, which began in Ukraine in 2014, has become one of the most successful and profound structural transformations of public administration. Its main goal is to transfer a significant part of powers, resources and responsibilities from the central government to the local level, creating capable territorial communities capable of independently solving local development issues. structure of 1469 territorial communities, which today are the basis of local self-government in Ukraine (data from the portal “Decentralization”) [21].

Fig. 1, we can see that the southern and central regions, with a large area and numerous settlements, have the largest number of communities. In particular, the Odesa region is the absolute leader, with 91 communities, which is due to its territorial branching and the combination of urban and rural communities. Dnipropetrovsk region ranks second with 86 communities, which corresponds to its industrial potential and administrative structure. The Lviv region, where 73 communities have been established, is distinguished by high activity of local self-government and stable traditions of public participation.

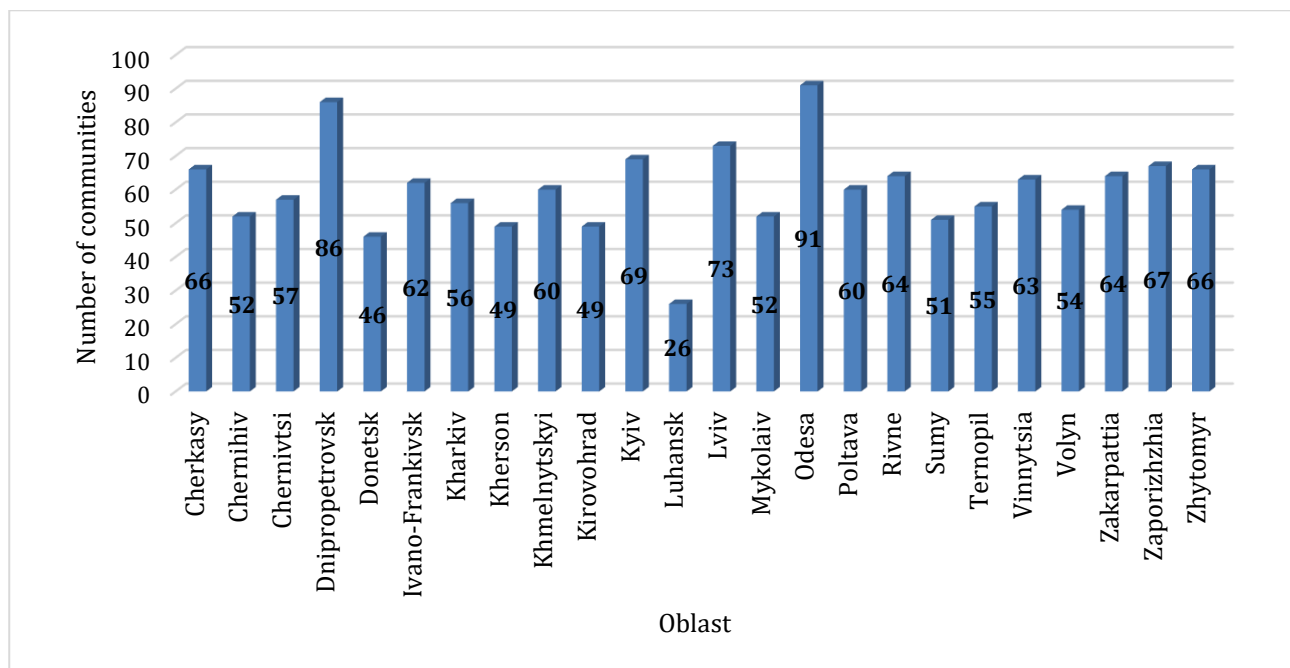


Figure 1. Number of territorial communities by regions of Ukraine

Most other regions have an average level of the number of communities – from 60 to 70. This group includes Zhytomyr (66), Zakarpattia (64), Zaporizhzhia (67), Kyiv (69), Rivne (64), Khmelnytskyi (60) and Cherkasy (66) regions. Such a distribution indicates the relative balance of the administrative-territorial system in the central part of Ukraine.

On the other hand, the eastern regions have significantly fewer formed communities. In the Luhansk region, where hostilities continue, only 26 communities have been created, and in the Donetsk region, 46. These are the lowest figures in the state, which is explained by the temporary occupation of part of the territories and restrictions on the organization of local self-government. Kirovohrad (49) and Kherson (49) oblasts also have a smaller number of communities due to lower population density and the predominantly agrarian nature of the territories.

Thus, the analysis demonstrates clear regional differences in the structure of local self-government. The western regions are characterized by a higher density of communities, which is associated with the historical tradition of active local governance. The central regions maintain a stable, medium level of decentralization, while the eastern and southern regions are affected by security factors that hinder the development of administrative structures.

As a result, it can be noted that the decentralization reform of 2020 successfully ensured the formation of a full network of territorial communities. At the same time, further efforts of the state should be aimed at strengthening the capacity of existing communities, especially in regions that have been destroyed or lost part of their territory. This approach will ensure the uniform development of regions, effective resource management and strengthening of local self-government throughout the country.

The concept of community capacity in domestic science is formed at the intersection of public administration, sociology and economics, which is due to the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon. Turning to the work of researchers [1–22] allows us to better understand how the capacity of the community becomes not only an administrative category, but also a key factor in sustainable local development, combining economic efficiency, social justice and democratic participation of citizens. That is why the study of this concept at the intersection of several scientific areas contributes to the formation of a holistic approach to assessing and increasing the capacity of territorial communities in the context of modern reforms and European integration processes.

As Ukrainian researchers rightly emphasize [1; 2; 4; 10–13; 15; 16; 18; 22], the concept of the capacity of a territorial community goes far beyond the purely administrative category. It is not only about formal indicators, such as the size of the population, the amount of budget resources or the availability of institutional infrastructure, but primarily about the integral qualitative characteristic of the viability of the community, its ability to function as an independent socio-economic and managerial organism.

In accordance with the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities” (2015) [19], a capable territorial community is a community that, as a result of amalgamation, is able, independently or through the relevant local self-government bodies, to ensure an appropriate level of public services necessary to meet the needs of the population living on its territory (in particular, in the field of education, culture, healthcare, social protection, housing and communal services, taking into account human resources, financial support and development of the infrastructure of the relevant administrative-territorial unit)

The criteria for the capacity of communities are defined in the Methodology for the Formation of Capable Territorial Communities, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 214 of April 8, 2015 (as amended) [14]. It emphasizes that the following main indicators are taken into account when assessing the capacity of territorial communities:

- the population of the community sufficient to ensure the effective implementation of delegated powers;
- territorial integrity and transport accessibility, which guarantees the ability of residents to receive basic services within reasonable time limits;
- availability of social infrastructure facilities (education, healthcare, culture, administrative centers) that provide a basic level of life for the population;
- financial capacity, i.e. the sufficiency of local budget revenues to cover current and capital expenditures of the community;
- economic potential of the territory, including opportunities for the development of entrepreneurship, investment attractiveness and employment.

Subsequently, these provisions were specified in the State Strategy for Regional Development for the period until 2027, where the capacity of the community is considered as a basic indicator of the effectiveness of the state regional policy. The Strategy defines that the sustainable capacity of territorial communities is a key condition for achieving balanced development of regions and strengthening the social cohesion of the state.

Thus, the legislative understanding of capacity combines quantitative indicators (demographic, financial, spatial) and qualitative criteria that reflect the level of managerial efficiency, accessibility of public services, citizen participation and the ability of the community to ensure sustainable development. It is at the intersection of these dimensions – legal, economic and institutional – that the practical content of the category of “capable territorial community” is formed.

Classification of types of community capacity, proposed by O. Omelchuk [15] is based on an integrated approach that combines economic, institutional and legal components. It allows you to holistically assess the level of viability of the community, its ability to develop independently, effectively manage resources and ensure the quality of public services.

Table 1. Typology and assessment of the capacity of the territorial community

Economic	Financial	Budget	Level of the Tax Capacity Index
			Income/expenditures of the general fund per 1 inhabitant
			The state of budget subsidies
			Share of capital expenditures in total expenditures
		Investment	
		Income status of community residents	
	Resource	The state of the volume of communal property and infrastructure facilities	
		The state of the volume of property of community residents, enterprises, and institutions	
Institutional	Functional (sectoral)	In the sector of its own powers	
		In the sector of delegated authority	
	Personnel		
	The state of implementation of strategic development planning		
	State of civic engagement		
	The state of civic education		
	State of implementation of smart technologies and innovative approaches		
Legal	Demographic		
	The state of legality of decisions of local self-government bodies		
	The state of legality of local policy procedures		
	Accountability of local self-government bodies		
	The state of the legal regime for the provision of administrative services		
	Status of legal aid provision		

First of all, economic capacity covers financial, budgetary and resource aspects that determine the basis of the material stability of the community. It reflects the state of the tax base, the level of subsidies, the structure of the budget, as well as the availability and efficiency of the use of communal property. The combination of these indicators indicates the economic sustainability of the community, its investment potential and ability to ensure development on its own financial basis.

We fully agree with the position of O. Omelchuk [15], that institutional capacity is critically important, which reflects the effectiveness of the organizational structure of management, human resources and the quality of execution of both own and delegated powers. It also includes the level of strategic planning, civic engagement and the implementation of innovative solutions. Thanks to these characteristics, the community is able not only to maintain stability, but also to adapt to changes and generate new management practices.

From the point of view of democratic governance, the legal capacity of the community is the key to the legitimacy and openness of the activities of local self-government bodies, which guarantees compliance with the rule of law, accountability of the authorities and transparency of administrative procedures. It is this component that builds citizens' trust in local authorities and guarantees the stability of democratic processes at the local level.

Thus, the presented classification reflects a holistic approach to assessing the development of territorial communities, combining quantitative and qualitative criteria. It creates the basis for systematic monitoring of capacity, determining the directions of state and regional support, as well as contributes to the consistent strengthening of the service model of public administration and sustainable development of territories.

Based on the position of O. Omelchuk [15], we believe that a capable community is first of all an independent, viable socio-economic community, capable of forming and implementing its own development policy, effectively managing resources and ensuring a quality of life for its residents. Its essence lies in the combination of independence, responsibility and partnership – the three basic elements of modern local self-government. Such a community has developed managerial capacity, which is manifested in the ability to strategic planning, make balanced management decisions and establish effective interaction between government, business and civil society. It is also characterized by economic self-sufficiency, based on a stable tax base, investment attractiveness, rational use of natural and communal resources.

At the same time, a capable community is characterized by social cohesion and a high level of trust between the authorities and residents. It is able to mobilize human potential, support the activity of citizens and form joint responsibility for the results of the development of the territory. No less

important is the innovation-digital dimension, which is manifested in the use of modern technologies, e-governance and open data to increase the transparency of management.

In this sense, a capable community is a local center of sustainable development that provides a balance between economic interests, social needs and environmental requirements. It not only performs functions delegated by the state, but also becomes an active subject of public policy, capable of influencing regional and national processes.

The formation of capable communities is based on the principles of subsidiarity, participation, openness and accountability enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Compliance with these standards is not only a guarantee of democratic governance, but also an important condition for the implementation of the state's European integration strategy. Thus, a capable community appears as a key element of a new model of a service state focused on a person, his needs and participation in the development of society.

It is important to emphasize that the capacity of the community covers not only the managerial or financial aspect, but also the value dimension – the level of trust between the authorities and citizens, the readiness of the population to participate in public life, the desire for joint responsibility for the future of the territory. In this sense, it acts as an indicator of the maturity of local self-government and the depth of democratic transformations.

Thus, the capacity of the community is not so much a static state as a dynamic process within which local authorities, public institutions and residents constantly interact, forming a new quality of public administration at the local level. Its content in the modern sense reflects not only the functional capacity of local self-government bodies, but also the ability of the community to be a subject of its own development, a bearer of initiative, innovation and social responsibility.

We fully agree with scientists [1; 2; 4; 10–13; 15; 16; 18; 22], that the capacity of a territorial community does not arise at once – it is the result of the accumulation of experience, trust, citizen participation and consistent state policy.

It is the combination of these components that determines the level of the community's ability to respond to challenges, adapt to external changes and at the same time maintain strategic sustainability of development.

For a community to become truly capable, it is not enough just to transfer powers from the state or increase budget revenues. A holistic system of coordinated actions is needed at different levels – from economic and managerial to socio-cultural. Such a system should ensure a close relationship between resources, institutions, people and values on which local self-government is based.

At the same time, the process of forming a capable community is directly related to the public service activities of the state, which acts as an institutional basis for the realization of its potential. It is through the mechanisms of public service administration that the state creates favorable conditions for the development of local communities – provides regulatory and legal support, develops public service infrastructure, introduces e-governance tools, stimulates partnership between authorities, business and civil society.

Thus, the public service activities of the state and the capacity of the community complement each other. It is the capable community that becomes the center of the implementation of the public service function of the state, and the effective state becomes the guarantor of stability, openness and support at the local level.

On the one hand, the service state forms framework conditions for the self-development of communities, improves the quality of services and transparency of management. On the other hand, it is active, capable communities that fill the service model with real meaning, demonstrating the ability to effectively use resources and involve citizens in the joint creation of development policy.

As a result, a new architecture of public administration is being formed, in the center of which is the community as a full partner of the state in ensuring well-being and sustainable development.

It is the interaction between the state and communities within the framework of the public-service paradigm that forms a new quality of public administration through cooperation, service and trust, where the community is not an object of administrative influence, but an equal subject of development. It is this approach that meets European standards of governance and determines the strategic direction of modernization of public power in Ukraine.

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institutions, people and values that form the architecture of public service activities of the state, where the community becomes an equal partner in the implementation of public policy.

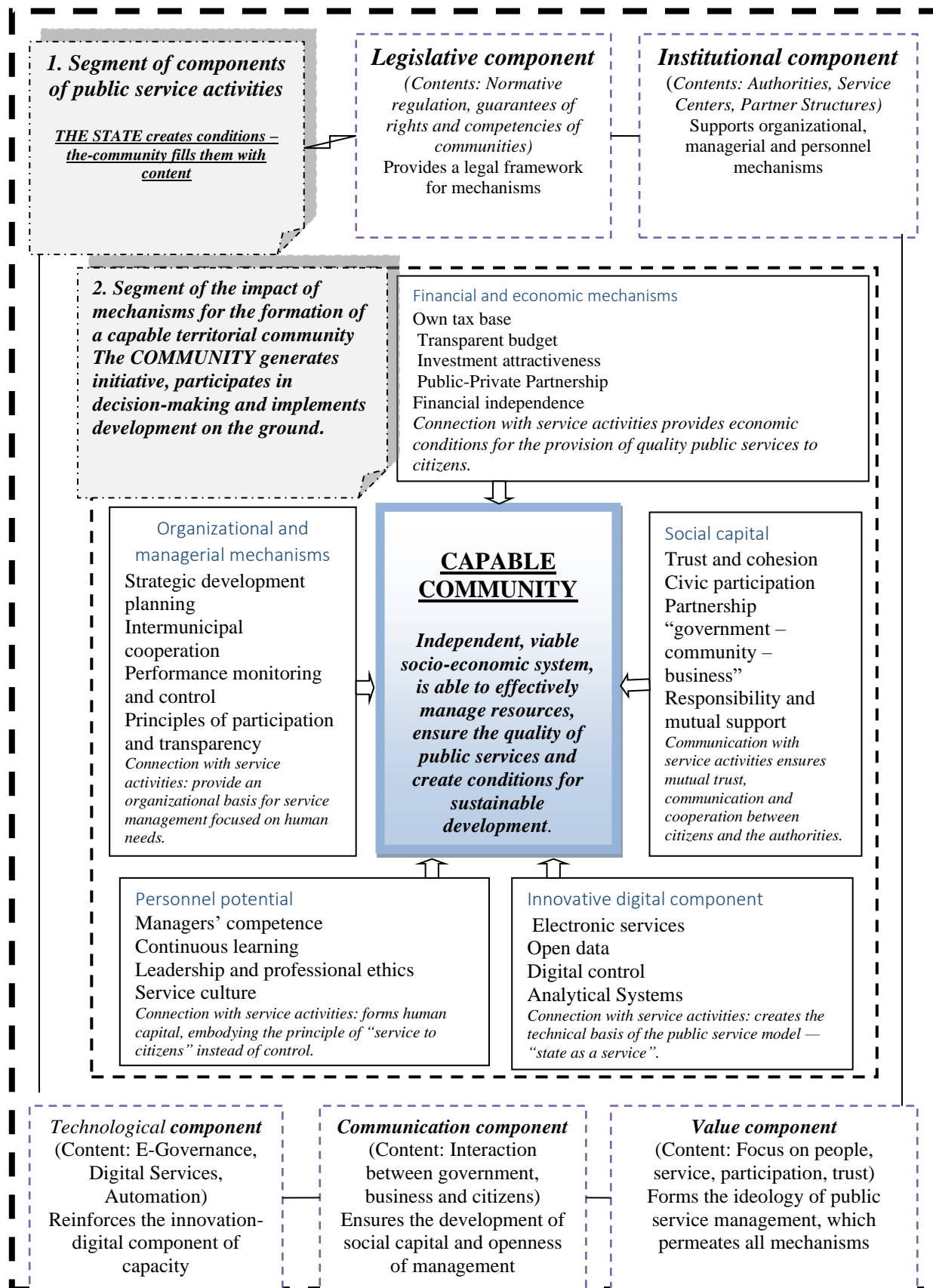


Figure 1. Mechanisms for the formation of a capable territorial community in the context of public service activities of the state

Mechanisms for the formation of a capable territorial community, which are shown in Fig. 1. financial, economic, organizational, managerial, personnel, innovation-digital and social – in their totality form the foundation of a new model of public governance that meets the principles of the service state. They provide not only economic sustainability or institutional efficiency, but also create conditions for a real partnership between the state and the community, based on trust, transparency and mutual responsibility

Let us consider in more detail each of the mechanisms for the formation of a capable territorial community

1. Financial and Economic Mechanisms. Financial stability is the basis of the capacity of any community, because it is the financial and economic mechanisms that determine its ability to independently implement tasks, ensure the provision of public services and proper maintenance of infrastructure. For example, according to the study, as of 2024, the average income of the general fund per capita of territorial communities of Ukraine was approximately UAH 8,182.8, while the minimum value was only UAH 280.1 [7]. A community that owns its own tax base, rationally manages property and efficiently uses natural resources creates a favorable environment for the development of entrepreneurship and improving the well-being of the population. For example, in the period following the creation of the first amalgamated territorial communities, the own revenues of such communities in Ukraine increased almost sevenfold – from UAH 1.1 billion to UAH 7.1 billion in one of the first years of the reforms [4; 5].

Transparent formation and use of the budget, expansion of the base of local revenues, as well as the introduction of public-private partnership instruments form the basis for its economic independence. Thus, studies indicate that the share of local taxes and fees in the revenue side of the budget of communities has an average value of 35.09%, although the scope varies from 0.1% to 83.3% [7].

From the standpoint of public service activities of the state, the financial capacity of the community is a condition for the quality provision of public services at the local level. It is through the mechanisms of financial decentralization that the state provides communities with the opportunity to be not requests for resources, but full-fledged providers of services – educational, social, administrative – in accordance with the real needs of their residents. At the same time, it should be noted that the war and economic shocks have significantly worsened the situation for many communities: In 2025, it is expected that up to 70% of communities will receive a basic subsidy due to significant dependence on central transfers [6].

Thus, without systematically strengthening financial and economic mechanisms, any community risks losing the opportunity to independently provide quality services, and the state's decisions on resource provision become key to transforming a formally created community into a truly capable one.

2. Organizational and Managerial Mechanisms. An effective management system is a critical component of the capacity of a territorial community and includes strategic planning, monitoring of results and citizen involvement in decision-making processes. Studies show that communities that apply medium-term strategic planning have a higher level of implementation of their own development programs than those that are limited to rapid response. It is emphasized that only in the presence of an integral system of organizational and economic levers is a transformation towards self-sufficiency possible [21].

Organizational and management mechanisms include the development of strategic and medium-term development plans, the introduction of systems for monitoring the implementation of these plans, the development of intermunicipal cooperation and the creation of local development institutions – agencies, clusters, partnership councils. The study of decentralization reform emphasizes that the lack of intermunicipal cooperation remains a big obstacle: according to 2019 data, Ukrainian communities “lag in working with investors and promoting entrepreneurship”, which limits their managerial capabilities [3].

In the context of public service management, such mechanisms reflect the principles of partnership between the state and the community. The state sets the framework policy, provides methodological support and tools for quality control of services, while communities adapt the policy to the specific needs of citizens. In such a model, a new form of co-management is created, where service and responsibility act in a complex.

3. Human Resources. A high-quality personnel base is an integral condition for the implementation of reforms and ensuring the effective functioning of the community. The human factor – the competence

of managers, their willingness to innovate, and communicate with the community – significantly affects the results of public policy.

The development of human resources means not only the improvement of the qualifications of employees, but also the creation of a system of continuous learning, the exchange of experience with successful communities of Ukraine and the EU, as well as the formation of a managerial culture focused on service – the provision of quality services to citizens, and not only the performance of formal functions.

Within the framework of the public service model of the state, human resources are its “human face” [9]. It is local self-government employees who play the role of intermediaries between the state and citizens, embodying the values of openness, integrity and respect for a person as a client of public services. Thus, staffing becomes a key element of the transition from the state-power apparatus to the service state.

4. Innovation-Digital Component. In today’s environment, digital technologies act as an important catalyst for transparency, efficiency and trust between the authorities and citizens. The introduction of electronic services, analytical platforms, electronic document management systems, open budgets and citizen participation portals allows for minimizing bureaucratic barriers and increasing the efficiency of management processes. In the context of public service activities, digitalization is becoming a key tool for implementing the principle of “government as a service”. Electronic services are not only a technological innovation, but a mechanism for ensuring equal access to services, increasing transparency, accountability and trust in the authorities. For example, the analysis of mechanisms for the provision of administrative services shows that the introduction of digital pathways reduces service time and increases citizen satisfaction [1].

A capable community capable of using digital tools can become part of the national infrastructure of open data and digital governance, which opens up new prospects for local development.

5. Social Capital. At the heart of a capable community is a person – his initiatives, activity, and willingness to participate in a common cause. At the same time, social capital is a level of mutual trust, cohesion and civic engagement – and it determines how successfully reforms and local policies are implemented. According to a study by the Rating Group agency, “Invisible Glue: A Study of Social Capital in Ukraine”, published in 2023, only about 30% of Ukrainians said they “trust a lot” in their neighbors or the community as a whole [20].

The results of the study showed the following [20]:

- In Ukrainian society as a whole, a positive balance of trust prevails, but there are significant differences between generations. Older people are more open to communication, while young people show a greater disability, which weakens social capital and requires support for youth interaction.
- Trust is closely related to the level of well-being: wealthy citizens are more open than poor citizens, because economic stability forms a sense of confidence and social security. At the same time, most Ukrainians focus on the circle of loved ones – family, friends, acquaintances. This model supports cohesion, but at the same time limits trust in strangers or people with different views.
- During the war, trust in the state and the army increased, which became a manifestation of national unity. However, this trend is rather a reaction to the crisis: after the war, trust in the central government is expected to decline and support for local self-government, which is closer to citizens and has real results of decentralization.
- The media play a key role in the formation of social capital. Ukrainians trust independent online resources and social networks more, but the spread of fakes makes media literacy and critical thinking necessary.
- The war has become a factor in strengthening national identity and solidarity. Support for EU accession, trust in volunteers and NGOs indicate the formation of a new model of interaction based on trust, responsibility and active citizenship.

The study of Kh. Patytska [17] emphasizes that the low level of civic activity and neglect of the opportunities for residents to participate in the life of the community significantly hinder the development of social capital. In her work, she emphasizes that the involvement of community residents in the process of change on their own territory is the basis for the success of territorial development projects, because the development of communities in this case is based not on exogenous factors, but on endogenous factors and inclusion. Therefore, the feeling of belonging to the territorial community, a high level of social cohesion and developed social capital give an internal impetus to the development

of the territory, because community members turn from recipients into active participants and innovators, contributing to the competitiveness of the territory.

A capable community is not only an effective management structure, but above all a community of people who are able to cooperate for the common well-being. For example, in certain communities, the activity of volunteer clubs, public organizations and public consultations is recorded, which allows reducing the cost of improvement and attracting additional resources through local initiatives – such an experience illustrates how social capital is transformed into concrete results.

Support for local initiatives, development of volunteer movements, activities of public organizations and public consultations significantly strengthen social cohesion. Thus, in the study by O. Diakonenko [8] “Social capital of territorial communities of Ukraine during the war” it is noted that communities with a high level of internal mobilization and trust demonstrated better recovery rates after the temporary occupation than those where trust and participation were low.

From the point of view of the public-service state, social capital becomes a measure of its effectiveness – trust in institutions, the willingness of citizens to participate in decision-making, mutual respect between the authorities and civil society creates an atmosphere of true partnership. In this model, the state ceases to be a “power apparatus”, but becomes a service platform that supports the initiative, and the community becomes an active equal participant in development.

Table 2 summarizes the key indicators of social capital of territorial communities of Ukraine for 2022–2024. The data are based on sociological and scientific studies that highlight the level of trust, civic activity, interaction between the authorities and the population, and the participation of public organizations in the development of territories.

Table 2. Indicators of social capital of territorial communities of Ukraine

Social Capital Indicator	Basic data / examples	Source
Index of trust in neighbors or community	About 30% of Ukrainians noted that they “trust a lot” in their community or neighbors. The highest rates are observed in the western regions, the lowest in large cities.	Sociological group “Rating” (2023) [20]
Level of civic activity of AH residents	Only 25% of citizens regularly participate in public hearings or consultations. The most active communities are Lviv, Poltava, and Vinnytsia regions.	H. Patitska [17] (IRD NAS of Ukraine, 2022)
Social capital in communities after the war	Communities with a high level of trust and mobilization of volunteers restore infrastructure faster. For example, the Irpin community restored 70% of educational facilities already in 2023.	O. Diakonenko [8], (DSE, 2023)
Activity of public organizations and volunteer movements	On average, each community has 3–10 NGOs, more than 60% of which cooperate with local authorities. For example, there are more than 400 registered NGOs in the Vinnytsia region.	(Economy and Society, 2021) [8]
Interaction between government and citizens (partnership)	Trust in local authorities in communities that actively involve citizens is 55–60%, in passive communities – only 30–35%.	Uacademic.info (2023) [8]

Thus, social capital is a strategic resource for local development. It determines the level of trust, interaction between the authorities and the population, as well as the ability of the community to self-organize and resilience in crisis conditions. Communities with high indicators of social capital demonstrate greater resilience, entrepreneurship and citizen involvement in decision-making processes.

Summarizing the nature, impact and potential effectiveness of mechanisms for the formation of a capable territorial community, we note that each mechanism of community capacity is directly integrated into the system of public service activities of the state. Together, they form a new architecture of interaction, in which the state provides conditions, and the community provides the content of development. It is this model of cooperation that meets European standards of democratic governance and ensures real stability of statehood through strong, self-sufficient communities.

Thus, the mechanisms for the formation of a capable territorial community – financial, economic, organizational and managerial, personnel, innovation-digital and social – together form the foundation of a new model of public governance that meets the principles of the service state. They ensure not only

economic sustainability or institutional efficiency, but also create conditions for a real partnership between the state and the community, based on trust, transparency and mutual responsibility.

6. Conclusions

The decentralization reform in Ukraine initiated a systematic transition from administrative-command logic to service-oriented governance, where the territorial community acts as a co-creator of policy and a co-producer of public services. A capable community has a multidimensional nature: it combines financial and economic sustainability, institutional and legal maturity, human resources, innovative and digital readiness and social capital of trust and participation. The approach proposed in the article demonstrates the complementarity of five key mechanisms: financial and economic ones guarantee the resource base and economic self-sufficiency; organizational and managerial ones transform national priorities into local programs with measurable results; personnel form service culture and competencies; innovative-digital ensure openness, accountability and speed of services; social mobilize citizens to cooperate. European integration requirements and digital transformation reinforce the need for standards for transparency, performance monitoring, data interoperability, and inter-municipal cooperation.

Prospects for further exploration include the development of an integrated capability index, causal assessment of the impact of individual mechanisms, comparative cases of communities of different types, as well as the testing of digital participatory tools that accelerate the “request-service-feedback” cycle. Today, the formation of capable territorial communities is not just a direction of state policy, but a fundamental condition for the modernization of Ukraine. As a result, the service state and capable communities form a mutually reinforcing ecosystem capable of ensuring sustainability, inclusiveness, and competitiveness of development.

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