



AMALGAMATED TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES AS A BASIS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER IN UKRAINE

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***Abstract:** The peculiarities of the amalgamated territorial communities as a basic condition for the introduction of a course of decentralization of power in Ukraine are considered in the article. It has been found that globalization can often exclude the democratization of the development of territorial communities and society as a whole, as there can be a gradual loss of one of the fundamental elements of democracy, namely: the right of the community to participate in the management of public affairs, especially at the local level, and therefore it was concluded that the sustainable development of the regions and the state as a whole was formed through the transfer of power to the ground, that is,*

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decentralization. The need to define the category of "territorial community" on the basis of the scientific works of world and European economists and domestic specialists in public governance has been proved and five approaches to determining the essence of the concept of "territorial community" have been identified. The author's definition of the concept of "territorial community," which corresponds to the modern political and legal realities of Ukraine, is provided. The characteristics of an amalgamated territorial community are systematized and grouped. A complex of components has been developed that are the basis for the creation and functioning of an amalgamated territorial community of Ukraine in the context of decentralization of power. Strategic and operational problematic issues of formation and development of the amalgamated territorial communities are identified, and ways to overcome them are proposed. Incentives provided to these communities by the state and other regulators have been systematized and studied to motivate them to overcome problematic issues of formation and development of the amalgamated territorial communities of Ukraine. It has been proved that cohesion is an important factor in ensuring socio-economic development, financial self-sufficiency, and investment attractiveness of the amalgamated territorial community. It was concluded that the introduction of the institution of amalgamated territorial communities provides an opportunity for its members to receive rational assistance to solve various problems of the changing present.

Keywords: *decentralization of power; municipal government; strategic development; public administration*

1. Introduction

Transformational processes in the public administration of our country are currently structured around European integration. An important aspect of the development of the domestic system of government is the chosen course of decentralization and separation of the amalgamated territorial community as the basic subject of municipal government, ensuring its formation as a self-sufficient, effective and efficient level of management. Thus, today the development in the sphere of state regulation of territorial development of Ukraine is characterized by increased attention in the areas of administrative and financial decentralization of power and an important emphasis is placed on the delegating responsibility and resources to the municipal level.

The main goal of the implementation of the amalgamated territorial communities is to create such organizational and economic foundations for development that take into account both the interests of the communities themselves in the framework of the introduction of a course of decentralization of power, and continue the general strategic course for the development of the state, territorial and municipal authorities of Ukraine. This will make it possible to increase the responsibility of municipal authorities for the rational and effective use of the existing potential of the amalgamated territorial communities, the effectiveness of the organization of the life of its citizens, and the involvement of unused sources of development of the territory becomes of particular importance. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary full application of the scientific justification for improving the process of unification of territorial

communities, taking into account the needs and interests of all participants in the management process and measures to improve institutional and legal support for the implementation of the course of decentralization of municipal government.

Many world and domestic scientists in public administration and other branches of science were involved in the problems of determination, identification and forming a theoretical, methodological and practical basis on the problems of creating and effective working of amalgamated territorial communities, namely: T. Burmaka, N. Orlova and O. Nepomnyashchyy (2020), A.P. Lelechenko, O.Y. Lebedinska, T.M. Derun and O.V. Berdanova (2020), O. Moroz (2008), M.O. Baimuratov (2016), I. Romanenko (2016), O.A. Diegtiar (2019), G. Davulis (2009), O.V. Batanov (2008), K.O. Patytska (2016), Yu.M. Petrushenko (2017), N.M. Kostiuchenko (2017), S.L. Shults (2017) and others. However, the question of summarizing the features of the theoretical foundations and practical methods of managing amalgamated territorial communities remains not in full studied and requires detailing, synthesis and systematization.

The purpose of the article is to determine the theoretical and methodological foundations of effective practical management of the implementation of the amalgamated territorial communities as the basic condition of the chosen strategic course of decentralization of power in Ukraine. To achieve the purpose, there were solved the following tasks in the article:

- to identify the orientation of the current conditions for the development of international and domestic public administration;
- to summarize the definition of the category "territorial community" based on studies of the scientific works of world, European and domestic economists;
- to develop a complex of components that will become the basis for the creation and functioning of an amalgamated territorial community of Ukraine;
- to develop proposals to overcome strategic and operational problems in the formation and development of amalgamated territorial communities;
- to establish a system of incentives for the introduction and development of the amalgamated territorial communities of Ukraine;
- to identify and prove the importance of amalgamated territorial community cohesion in the changing conditions of the present.

2. Characteristics of the Territorial Community as a Unit of National Regulation

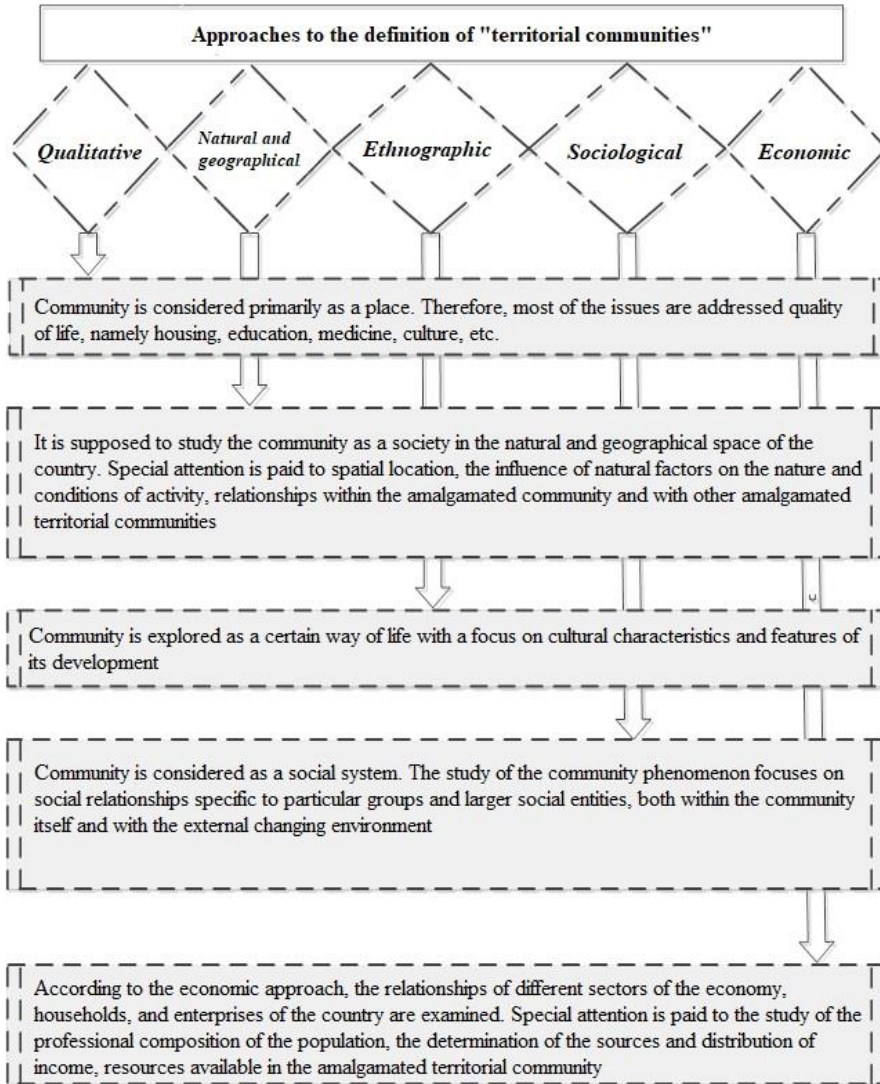
European and global trends in public administration have been characterized by a focus on globalization and democratization in recent decades. But, it should be noted that globalization can often exclude the democratization of the development of territorial communities and society as a whole, since there can be a gradual loss of one of the main elements of democracy, namely, the right of the community to participate in the management of public affairs, primarily at the local level (Burmaka et al., 2020).

Therefore, now there is an actualization of the trend of "reverse effect," that is, upholding the interests of the territorial community on the basis of its involvement in the public administration of the territory, and, therefore, its direct impact on the sustainable development of the regions and the state as a whole. Confirmation of this thesis resides in the fact that high-budget projects focused on the development of territorial communities are one of the key forms of support for the local sustainable development of the regions of Ukraine (Lelechenko et al., 2020).

Many subject studies of both domestic and foreign scientists dealt with issues of the development of territorial communities. It should also be noted that in accordance with article 140 of the Constitution of Ukraine, local self-government is the right of the territorial community to resolve the local-scale issues independently within the framework of the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). Also, the concept of "territorial community" as the community of the inhabitants united by permanent residence in borders of the village, the settlement, the city, with independent administrative and territorial units, or voluntary association of residents of several villages having the uniform administrative center (Law of Ukraine, 1997) is defined by the Constitution and the Law of Ukraine "About Local Self-Government in Ukraine". The European Charter of Local Self-Government recognizes that the territorial community is the right and real capacity of local self-government bodies to regulate and govern a large part of state affairs, carrying out its activities within the framework of the law, under its responsibility, and in the interests of the local population (Moroz, 2008). So, it can be concluded that in European political and legal practice, more attention is paid not to the concept of "territorial community," but to the study of territorial collectives, communes, local associations, that is, communities.

The well-known Ukrainian scientist on the problems of municipal government Baimuratov M.O. considers that the territorial community should determine "a group of people whose members are tied by the bonds of joint relations to the territory in which they live and the bonds of relations arising from the fact of living in a common territory" (Baimuratov, 2016). This definition of territorial communities correlates with its interpretation in the regulatory literature. But, summarizing the definition of the category "territorial community" based on the scientific works of world and European economists, Ukrainian specialists in state and municipal government give proposals for the formation of a new definition of this concept that would correspond to the modern political and legal realities of Ukraine. Scientific works on the problem of finding a definition of the studied category demonstrate a common feature in the given definitions of modern Ukrainian scientists – it is interpreted as a socio-territorial community in a narrow sense, and the emphasis is placed on its various characteristics depending on the scope of application in a wide sense (Romanenko, 2016). Thus, there are five approaches to determine the essence of the "territorial community" concept (Figure 1). The theoretical and methodological study of the essence of the category "territorial community" will be incomplete, unless the main features of such a amalgamated territorial community are identified and revealed, which distinguish it from other state entities.

Figure 1: Approaches to the definition of the category "territorial community" based on the synthesis of domestic and world experience of problems of municipal government



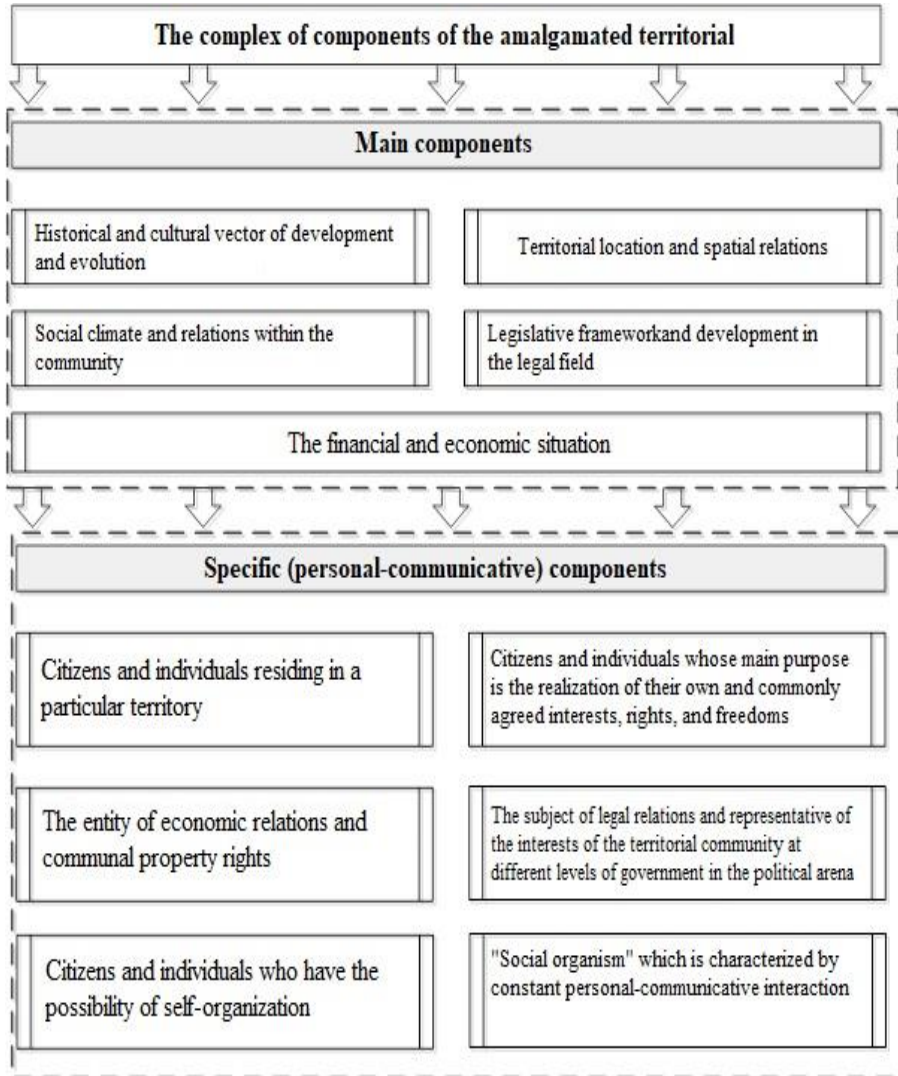
Source: Diegtiar et al., 2019; Davulis, 2009; Territorial community as a basic link of the administrative-territorial structure of Ukraine..., 2016; Storonianska & Prokopiuk, 2016; Patytska, 2017; Skica et al., 2013.

After analyzing scientific sources on this subject, it can be concluded that we can take the author's revision of the following list of features of the amalgamated territorial community, which is provided in the scientific work of O.V. Batanov (2008), namely:

- belonging of the amalgamated territorial community to the territories (one or more) in which it is localized;
- understanding and acceptance by members of the community of their affiliation;
- self-organization of the amalgamated territorial communities;
- the ability of the amalgamated territorial community to self-structure;
- emphasizing the social aspect of functioning to ensure the livelihood of members of the community;
- the activities of the amalgamated territorial community in accordance with the legal and social norms established in Ukraine;
- building the sustainability of interests, links and social practices within an amalgamated territorial community;
- prioritizing local communities over associations formed by nations, peoples, state structures, and the like;
- common and mutually agreed interests within the amalgamated territorial community.

So, summarizing the theoretical and methodological study of the essence of the concept of "territorial community" and their associations, can be provided an author's definition of this category, namely it is a geographically formed community member of which are citizens or individuals, who live, work and/or possess immovable property in the unified territory of a community with a single administrative-territorial center, and which is determined by the permanent links and ability to realize shared and commonly agreed interests in political and socio-economic development, and acts as the sole representative of the interests of the territorial community at different levels of government in the country. Figure 2 presents a complex of components that are the basis for the creation and functioning of an amalgamated territorial community of Ukraine in the context of decentralization of power.

Figure 2: Complex of components of the amalgamated territorial community in the conditions of decentralization of power of Ukraine



Source: Patytska, 2016; Petrushenko & Kostinchenko, 2014; Storonianska & Patytska, 2017.

Thus, the proposed complex of components of an amalgamated territorial community will create the basis for the foundation and work of communities, which may include various territories for the effective use of the existing political, financial, economic, and social resources of citizens and individuals living in these territories.

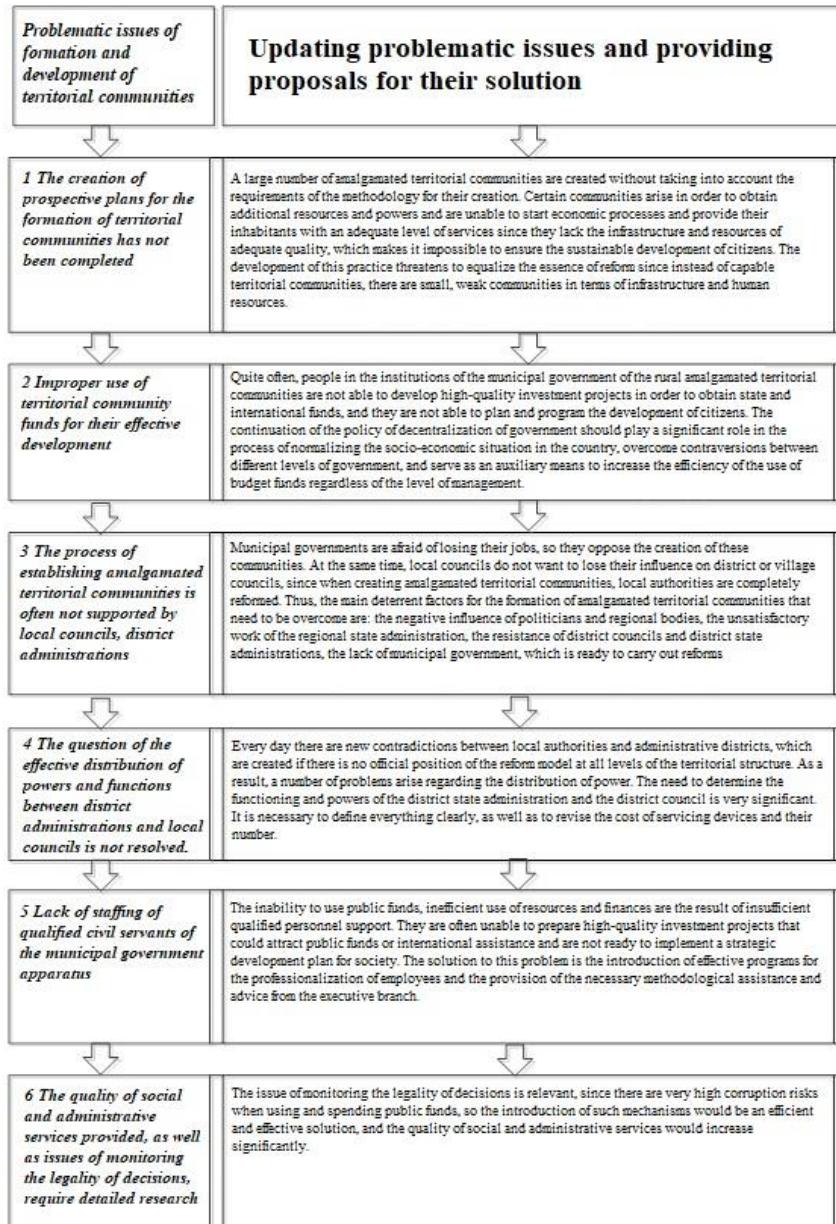
3. Features of Problematic Issues of Formation and Development of United Territorial Communities and Their Overcoming

The decentralization of power in Ukraine is one of the most successful reforms of the government, it has attracted the attention of not only the Ukrainian, but also the world, and especially the European, community. Interest is due to the fact that large funds have been invested in support of this reform. As the establishment and effective functioning of amalgamated territorial communities is the central course of decentralization reform, strategic and operational problematic issues of the formation and development of these communities need to be identified, as well as the means to overcome them (Figure 3).

The following incentives provided to these communities by the state and other state regulators should provide motivation to overcome the problematic issues of formation and development of the amalgamated territorial communities of Ukraine (Figure 3) as the basis for the reform of decentralization of power.

- The unification of rural, village, and urban territorial communities, respectively, allows the newfound community to obtain a new legal status of a territorial community with the power of cities of regional significance and direct inter-budget relations with the state budget. In other words, inter-budgetary transfers from the state budget are provided for such budgets, and their tax capacity is balanced horizontally.
- State financial support is given to the voluntary association of territorial communities of villages, towns, and cities by providing it with funds in the form of subventions for the formation of appropriate infrastructure in accordance with the plan for the socio-economic development of the newfound community if its borders fully correspond to the boundaries determined by the promising plan for the formation of community territories. The amount of financial support is determined by the law on the State budget of Ukraine and is distributed among the budgets of the combined territorial communities, formed in accordance with the perspective plan for the formation of territories of communities, in proportion to their area and the number of the rural population in such a territorial community with the same weight of both these factors.

Figure 3: Problematic issues of formation and development of amalgamated territorial communities



Source: Shults, 2017; Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No 214..., 2015; Law of Ukraine No 13..., 2015.

- Obtaining state support in the areas of information, educational, organizational, methodological support for the effective and efficient achieving the objectives assigned to the amalgamated territorial community both by state authorities and municipal government, and by citizens and individuals who create this community.
- Opportunity to receive funds:
 - the state regional development fund for various investment programs and projects;
 - international projects and programs to support decentralization in Ukraine through a competitive selection;
- The transfer of land to the amalgamated territorial communities could be the impetus for a substantial expansion of the resource base that local authorities can manage in favor of the community itself. In other words, the municipal authorities better understand how to prioritize – to rent a certain parcel to a farmer or use it as pasture, etc.
- Provide extensive capacity at its level to maintain the most effective and least resource-consuming solutions to local issues and provide services to members of the territorial community
- Involving the amalgamated territorial communities in the development of strategic plans for the development of Ukraine through the maximum participation of members of the community, which will contribute to the formation of their involvement in the common cause, the emergence of a sense of "ownership" of the strategic document and motivation for implementation on the ground. It is proposed to adhere to the next three stages in the development of strategic development plans by the amalgamated territorial community:

1 STAGE. Holding consultative and advisory meetings of the community on the sectoral directions of developing and implementing strategies, namely, economics, education, culture, health, ecology, sports, etc.

2 STAGE. Analysis of the results of consultative and advisory meetings of the community, on the basis of which drawing conclusions on solving problems.

3 STAGE. Participation of representatives of the amalgamated territorial community at national meetings on the problems of developing and implementing strategic development plans in various areas and sectors. Defending the interests of community, finding effective means to solve current problems.

Thus, the above-mentioned strategic planning is a prerequisite for the gradual and sustainable development of amalgamated territorial communities through the rational use of their own resources. The development of strategies involves citizens in active solving local problems and at the same time determines priority areas for the socio-economic development of the amalgamated territorial community. The active involvement of the maximum number of citizens allows creating a "living" strategy with an effective mechanism for the development of the community. The continuity and consistency of the strategic planning process is ensured through regular policy revisions

and adjustments. At the end of the study, it should be noted that an important factor in ensuring socio-economic development, financial self-sufficiency of the investment attractiveness of the amalgamated territorial community is its cohesion. Define the main signs of a cohesive community:

- unity of evaluations, attitudes, and positions of community members regarding goals, ideas, and events;
- the interdependence of community members in the process of joint action;
- opportunities for the development, self-realization, and self-assertion of community members;
- mutual assistance, support, and confidence among members of the community;
- a sense of security and belonging to the common cause.

A responsible, cohesive, and effective territorial community is a certain socio-psychological entity that characterizes the place of cohabitation of people, these people themselves, and the relations between them. The inhabitants of such a community are identified with the local community, feel involved in the life and events taking place in the territory of the amalgamated territorial community. It is therefore imperative to identify areas of cohesion in the amalgamated territorial communities, namely:

- organizing the involvement of as many people as possible in collaborative and interrelated activities;
- creation of social (communication) networks;
- training in communication skills (especially business communication).

Thus, in the process of building cohesion, it is necessary that the inhabitants of the amalgamated territorial community receive maximum pleasure from life. It is this economic policy that has more and more supporters in the world. According to scientists from different countries, the desire for economic development by 50% depends on psychological factors. Therefore, the introduction of the institution of the amalgamated territorial communities provides an opportunity for its members to receive rational assistance to solve various problems of the changing present.

4. Conclusions

The features of the effective functioning of the amalgamated territorial communities were studied in the article and proved that this institution is the main basic condition for the implementation of a course of decentralization of power in Ukraine. Theoretic and methodical, as well as practical results of carried out experiments were obtained, namely:

It was revealed that the modern conditions for the development of international and domestic public administration are aimed at upholding the interests of the territorial community on the basis of its involvement in the responsible management of the territory, and, therefore, its direct impact on the sustainable development of the regions

and the state as a whole. The definition of the "territorial community" category based on the scientific works of world and European economists, Ukrainian specialists in issues of state and the municipal government was summarized and the author's definition of this concept was provided, which corresponds to the modern political and legal realities of Ukraine, namely it is a geographically formed community member of which are citizens or individuals, who live, work and/or possess immovable property in the unified territory of a community with a single administrative-territorial center, and which is determined by the permanent links and ability to realize shared and commonly agreed interests in political and socio-economic development and acts as the sole representative of the interests of the territorial community at different levels of government in the country.

There has been developed a complex of components that are the basis for the creation and functioning of an amalgamated territorial community of Ukraine in the context of decentralization of power, which will create the platform for the foundation and work of communities, which may include various territories for the effective use of the existing political, financial, economic and social resources of citizens and individuals living in these territories. Strategic and operational issues of formation and development of the amalgamated territorial communities are identified, proposals for their overcoming and/or smoothing are presented. A system of incentives has been established to motivate the overcoming of problematic issues in the formation and development of the amalgamated territorial communities of Ukraine. Special attention is paid to involving the amalgamated territorial communities in the development of strategic plans for the development of Ukraine through the maximum participation of members of the community, which will contribute to the formation of their involvement in the common cause, the emergence of a sense of "ownership" of the strategic document and motivation for its implementation on the ground.

It has been proved that cohesion is an important factor in ensuring socio-economic development, financial self-sufficiency, and investment attractiveness of the amalgamated territorial community. Key signs of a cohesive community and areas of action to improve cohesion in the amalgamated territorial communities were identified. The overall conclusion was made that the introduction of the institution of amalgamated territorial communities provides an opportunity for its members to receive rational assistance to solve various problems of the changing present. The results of the study can be used as theoretical, methodological, and practical recommendations for the development and effective work of the amalgamated territorial communities in the modern conditions of the introduction of the reform of decentralization of power in Ukraine and become the basis for the creation of a universal mechanism for the constant improvement of this problem.

Authorship

All the authors contributed equally to the study. O.M.N. and O.A.M. were responsible for overall project supervision. Yu.H.P. and A.V.H. contributed to manuscript drafting and formal analysis. O.M.N. and O.A.D. were responsible for visualization and data curation.

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Declaration of conflicting interests

Nothing to declare.

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