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## Article

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## Viability of local communities: Theoretical analysis and review of scientific research

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**Abstract.** The study of the viability of local communities is critical both for Ukraine and for any country that strives for sustainable economic development, stability, and improving the quality of life of its citizens. It helps to prepare communities for challenges, promotes effective resource management, investment attraction, and social cohesion, which is the foundation for sustainable and harmonious community functioning and progress. The purpose of the study was to clarify the concept of the viability of a local community and identify key economic aspects to substantiate the areas of further research on the mechanism for ensuring it. In the course of the study, theoretical methods of analysis were used, in particular literature review and conceptual generalisation, to identify the resources of the viability of local communities. The definition of a viable local community as a complex socio-economic system capable of remaining functional in the long term, providing for the psychological and social needs of its members and promoting their development in conditions of limited resources, adapting to changes in the economic environment is formulated. A conceptual model is constructed that provides a general idea of the key components that affect the ability of a local community to survive and develop. The proposed model highlights the importance of integrated viability analysis, considering the relationship between different resources and conditions that contribute to the sustainable development of local communities. The results show that the combination of economic, information, financial, material, organisational, and human resources is critical to ensuring the viability of communities. The practical value of the study is to substantiate the need for an integrated approach to the management of local communities, which is aimed at the effective use of all available resources to achieve maximum effect. This will ensure coordination of efforts at all levels and will contribute to the creation of a holistic economic development strategy that involves long-term planning and consideration of the specific needs and challenges of each community, thereby achieving harmonious and balanced progress

**Keywords:** conceptual model; viability of complex systems; resources for ensuring viability; socio-economic system; sustainable development

### INTRODUCTION

A local community is a socio-economic system consisting of many interdependent components that cover social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental aspects. It requires an integrated approach to managing its development, because consideration of all factors and relationships allows creating conditions for sustainable development, improving the quality of life of the population and ensuring the stability and prosperity of society. The key integral characteristic of a complex system is its viability, which reflects the possibility of its functioning for an unlimited time.

The study of the conditions for the viability of communities and the management of their development is extremely relevant today. Communities that are able to adapt to modern challenges (climate change, economic inequality, migration, pandemics, geopolitical instability) and develop further ensure the stability and prosperity of their residents. Decentralisation reforms, which are actively carried out in Ukraine and many other countries and involve the transfer of a significant part of power from central authorities to local communities, primarily in the management of economic development and the management of

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financial resources, require a new approach to the management of local units. This helps to improve the investment climate, support the development of local businesses and create new jobs, which is especially important for economic growth and poverty reduction. The community viability study will enable the development of programmes and policies that promote optimal resource allocation, ensuring their effective use where necessary, which maximises the positive impact on the overall state of communities and contributes to their further development. For Ukrainian local communities (called territorial communities) affected by wars and crises, the study of viability is a key to developing recovery strategies that will contribute to long-term stability and prosperity of communities.

Many researchers covered various disciplines and areas of knowledge, which allows getting a more complete picture of the viability of communities. This includes economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects that are important for a comprehensive understanding of community development. The ability of local communities to change for development was investigated by T.A. Kapsalis & V.C. Kapsalis (2020). They considered the inability of local communities to cope with the demanding and extremely changing environment a threat to the sustainable development of humanity and emphasised the importance of implementing important bottom-up social changes, starting with studying the needs and interactions of people in local communities. The paper highlighted the main factors that influence the community's desire for change and their willingness to adapt to development challenges: the degree of dissatisfaction, the presence of a common vision of the future, trust in the methodology of change, and the degree of resistance to them. The model for assessing community readiness for change proposed by the authors allows researchers to better understand how different aspects affect community viability, and this is important for developing strategies to improve it. The model also highlights the importance of an integrated approach, where each factor plays a role, and the weakness of one can lead to the overall failure of the initiative. The authors' approach can be used as a diagnostic tool to assess the community's ability to change and identify aspects that require increased attention to ensure its viability.

L. Casini *et al.* (2021) examined the viability of communities through the well-being of residents, as well-being is a comprehensive indicator of quality of life, combining social, economic, and environmental aspects. The assessment of well-being, according to the authors, helps to better understand the effectiveness of the community in meeting basic needs, ensuring security, promoting economic development, which is the foundation for its long-term viability, and opens up opportunities for targeted improvements. The study is essential for achieving community viability through the development of a well-being assessment methodology that includes detailed monitoring of key aspects of quality of life, such as economic status, safety, environmental quality, and educational opportunities. Their approach

to identifying and measuring components of well-being through questionnaires, using factor analysis and verifying the reliability of results helps to accurately identify critical factors affecting the viability of rural areas, and implement effective solutions to improve living conditions.

The results of many studies focus on the economic components of community resilience. In particular, D. Tarasenko *et al.* (2021) based on statistical data analysed in detail the socio-economic conditions that affected the development of united territorial communities in Ukraine, identified a significant gap between "rich" and "poor" regions, and substantiated the need for targeted support for less developed communities to reduce the imbalance. The researchers emphasised the importance of entrepreneurship development as the main driver of economic growth and social stability of communities and suggested developing various development strategies according to the type of territories (adaptive, innovative, and anti-crisis). This will better respond to the specific needs of communities and increase their viability.

The monograph by T.A. Sakhno (2023) provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of the development of territorial communities, in particular, focuses on the economic and organisational components that contribute to their viability. It offers new theoretical and methodological approaches to assessing financial support and the effectiveness of forming financial flows in communities, which are a key to ensuring their economic viability and development. The conceptual models and methodological approaches proposed by the researcher help to understand the importance of integrating business, the population, and authorities into community development strategies, and consider modern challenges, such as war and economic crises.

The research by P.R. Payne *et al.* (2021) is useful for investigating the viability of communities, as it highlights the importance of a multidimensional approach to assessing its internal characteristics. For an adequate understanding of viability, it is important to consider various aspects of the state of the community and their perception by the local community, which is not fully reflected in statistics. This provides a more accurate understanding of the true viability of the community, focusing on the local context and the opinions of its members, which helps to develop more effective and realistic development strategies.

Approach of N. Shafieisabet & F. Karimi marezi (2022) to quantify community viability based on a large-scale survey deserves attention. The researchers identified and provided an index assessment of social factors that affect the sustainable viability of rural settlements: social awareness, trust, social cohesion, social networks and connections, and participation in the activities of various organisations and groups. They concluded that these social factors are vital for coordinating actions and building the capacity of rural communities needed to achieve rural development and viability. The researchers emphasised that no development can take place without awareness, participation and mutual

social trust, and focusing on social factors can help eliminate social inequality and reduce migration by improving living conditions in rural settlements.

Analysis of publications shows that despite the existence of significant scientific and practical interest, there is a lack of clarity in defining the concept of the viability of a local community, and research focuses on certain aspects, mainly social or environmental. The impact of economic factors on the viability of communities remains insufficiently investigated, and there are practically no approaches to its comprehensive assessment. Such fragmentation does not allow creating a complete picture of the state of local communities, which reduces the possibilities of effective management influence and making informed decisions to ensure their sustainable development.

The purpose of this study was to clarify the concept and define the key economic aspects of the viability of a local community, analyse the interaction and mutual influence of its elements based on scientific literature, and develop a conceptual model that will provide a systematic view of the viability of a local community.

The study was organised in several stages. At the first stage, 95 English-language and Ukrainian-language publications in journals indexed in scientometric databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were selected and critically analysed, mentioning the terms “viability”, “resilience”, “community”, and “sustainable development” without limitation of the period and type of publication. This allowed reviewing modern theoretical approaches to the concept of viability of local communities and developing a list of resources that provide it. In addition, the author conducted interviews with the heads of the united territorial communities of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast in 2020–2021. The author confirmed that participation in the interview was voluntary, and data confidentiality was preserved.

At the second stage, based on the theoretical analysis of existing concepts, considering cybernetic approaches to determining the viability of complex systems, the author proposed their own vision of the content of the concept of “viability of a local community” and identified the conditions for its achievement. At the third stage, the resources of the viability of local communities were systematised in relation to the conditions of viability that they provide, and a conceptual model was built that provides a comprehensive understanding of the viability of a local community. At the fourth stage, the results obtained were summarised and recommendations were formulated for further research and practical application.

#### PHENOMENON OF COMMUNITY VIABILITY IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Understanding the viability of a community, in particular, the reasons why some communities are resilient, adaptable to change, and innovative, while others are not, is an urgent research issue. The phenomenon of the viability of local communities first attracted the attention of sociologists and economists in the context of sustainable community

development. In the paper “Northern people, northern resources, and the dynamics of carrying capacity” by R. Weeden, one of the first researchers on this topic, defined a viable community as one that “sees itself as an entity that wants to stay with its uniqueness, which looks forward to the future with hope and believes that it can make decisions and take action to correct perceived bad things” and considers the development of the community to be any change that strengthens viability (Weeden, 1985).

Scientific research on the phenomenon of community viability began with the analysis of communities that survived in the difficult conditions of the Arctic north, the deserts of Australia or the ocean coast and remain identical. Authors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century draw attention to the fact that the loss of viability by communities is not always associated with extreme living conditions, isolation of settlements, or resource poverty. A. Dale *et al.* (2010) pointed out that the viability of communities has been severely affected in the industrial world by suburbanisation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pointing to the massive destruction of both urban areas and rural settlements in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. J.D.R. de Raadt (2011), examining communities in Europe, including Sweden, Spain, Italy, France, Austria, and Australia, noted that most communities have found themselves in distress as a result of numerous challenges, including growing individualism, a decline in education, ethics, and charity, a lack of meaning in professional activities, and a managerial approach that harms humanity and nature. These factors are not unique to economically developed countries, but, on the contrary, occur in different regions of the world. In addition, these factors are interrelated and create destabilising feedback that undermines and contributes to their disintegration. And given that the number of abandoned settlements continues to grow, systematic studies of the conditions for ensuring the survival and development of communities do not lose their importance.

A. Dale *et al.* (2010) examined the role of communities in sustainable development, emphasising that their viability provides the necessary resilience to address economic, social, and environmental changes. They found that partnerships and teamwork are important for solving community problems and ensuring innovation. The researchers emphasised the need for interdisciplinary study to restore communities. Through a meta-analysis of thirty-five Canadian communities, the paper reveals how community viability interacts with the concept of sustainability, and notes the need for further research to clearly define this concept. The researchers also noted that improving the viability of communities can be a strategic area for governments, which helps to combine local initiatives with national and international programmes.

The book “Community Vitality: from Adaptation to Transformation” by A. Dale *et al.* (2014) was a significant contribution to community viability research. The authors’ idea was that viability is a critical factor that allows moving from a state of simple survival to prosperity. They emphasised that any assessment of viability should consider

elements that first meet the basic needs of the community, and then create conditions for creativity, adaptation and innovation. This approach is closely related to the hierarchy of needs developed by psychologist A. Maslow in 1943. Application of the Maslow approach provides the community with a structured way to prioritise and consistently meet needs. The researchers noted that Maslow's concept, while individual in nature, can be extended to apply to communities. This allows considering the community as an independent organism, where the satisfaction of basic needs creates the foundation for further development. The use of this hierarchy allows allocating resources efficiently, focusing on the most urgent needs and avoiding spending on less important projects until the main problems are solved.

J.D.R. de Raadt & V. de Raadt (2014) in the book "From multi-modal systems thinking to community development: Regaining our humanity through community" approached the study of community viability from the perspective of a multi-modal systems approach, offering a comprehensive approach to community analysis that includes various models and methods of systems thinking. This provides a deeper understanding of the economic and social interactions and interdependencies between different aspects of community life. The researchers propose practical strategies and approaches that help increase the viability of communities by strengthening connections, collaboration, and shared values.

In many studies, the concept of viability is closely related to the desire of residents to be part of a particular settlement, while maintaining identity and self-determination. A viable community can be described as one where "people feel that they can remain residents for a certain period of their lives, where they find sources of income and a meaningful life" (Aarsæther *et al.*, 2004). S. Martin *et al.* (2008) examined community viability through the prism of the impact of migration and fuel costs on community stability, identifying the main reasons for migration as the search for economic and educational opportunities.

Studies that examined residents' willingness to stay in a particular community have identified several motivation factors. In particular, K. Sorlie (2009) pointed to the importance of belonging to a place and identity, and the social environment and access to economic benefits, as motivations for continuing to live in a locality. The researcher's suggestions are based on the idea that when basic needs such as work and housing are met, people are more likely to stay for the sake of a quality of life related to the area, environment, and social connections.

The viability of a community can be determined by its ability to maintain its economic, social, and environmental sustainability. An integrated approach to community development, including ethical management, cohesion, human capital development, and sustainable development of natural resources, is important. The main elements of viability, according to J.D.R. de Raadt (2011), are social cohesion, environmental responsibility, and economic sustainability that together contribute to the long-term prosperity of communities.

The viability of communities is interpreted as the ability to maintain the quality of life in all its aspects (economic, social, environmental). The researchers suggest that the unsatisfactory level of well-being observed in many rural communities is the reason for the phenomenon of rural abandonment and curtailment of farming activities in different countries, regardless of their level of development (Casini *et al.*, 2021). Critical aspects of community well-being considered in the literature include economic indicators (employment, income, economy), community services (education, leisure, transportation, and infrastructure), the state of the environment (quality, sustainability, and appearance), social factors (safety, community cohesion, engagement), politics, health, and attachment to place and community (McCrea *et al.*, 2014).

A. Dale *et al.* (2010) examined factors that contribute to encouraging communities to jointly address sustainability issues, using examples from Canadian communities. These factors include: openness and trust in the community, which promote partnerships of various types and encourage innovation and creativity; connection with people and place; continuity and stability of funding and leadership; the possibility of change that encourages innovation and creativity, but is not excessive and does not lead to instability. According to A. Dale *et al.* (2014), community viability is defined as its ability to not only survive, but also thrive, anticipate changes of various kinds, implement new ideas, and prevent problems, not just respond to them.

Viability is increasingly seen as a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses harnessing the skills, knowledge and abilities of local residents, strengthening relationships and communications, enhancing community initiative, increasing responsibility and adaptability, and creating sustainable, healthy ecosystems and a diverse, healthy economy that brings many benefits to the community.

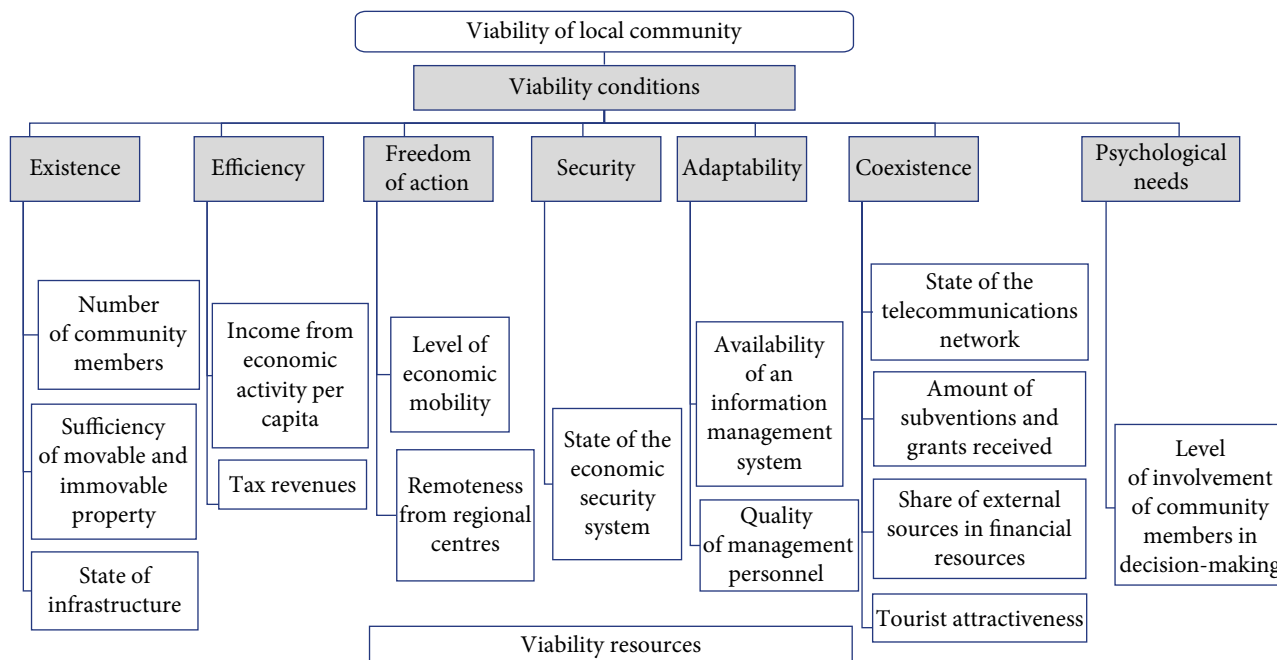
The concepts of "viability" in publications are used to describe various systems and situations in which systems must operate within certain limits to survive or function effectively. In accordance with the generally accepted approaches described by H. Bossel (2001), any complex system is viable if it:

- ♦ able to exist in a normal state of the environment, has available resources necessary to maintain the system (material, energy, and other resources);
- ♦ in the long run, is able to be effective in its efforts to provide the necessary limited resources and can have an impact on the environment when necessary;
- ♦ has the freedom to choose ways to solve problems related to environmental diversity;
- ♦ has the ability to protect itself from the harmful effects of changing and unpredictable conditions outside the normal state of the environment;
- ♦ can learn, adapt, and organise itself to generate more adequate responses to challenges associated with changing environments;
- ♦ it can change its behaviour to respond appropriately to the behaviour of other systems in its environment.



In addition, for social systems that are human communities, an additional condition for viability is the ability to meet the psychological needs of community members. In the context of generally accepted approaches, the viability of a local community can be defined as its ability

to maintain and develop its functionality in the long term, despite changing conditions. The analysis of existing approaches allowed specifying the list of conditions for the viability of communities and building its conceptual model (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of local community viability (economic aspect)

Source: developed by the author

The basic conditions for the viability of a local community are ensured by the availability of appropriate resources, primarily economic ones, which are the foundation for sustainable development and social prosperity. The proposed model shows the relationship between these conditions and the required resources, which allows characterising each basic aspect considering the basics for its implementation.

**Existence.** This is the main condition that provides for the availability of community members, basic physical and material resources to ensure their vital activity. The number of community members is critical to the ability to conduct economic activities, develop infrastructure, and ensure minimum living standards.

**Efficiency.** The community's resources are limited, so it must be able to use them effectively to meet its needs and achieve its goals. This helps to maximise economic growth and productivity, and attract investment to increase economic returns, which has a positive impact on tax revenues directly to the public budget and, as a result, on the opportunities of the community to improve the standard of living. The community must also have the ability to influence the environment to provide additional economic resources when needed.

**Freedom of action.** The condition is that the community has the freedom to choose how to solve problems that arise as a result of environmental diversity. This includes

expanding opportunities for entrepreneurship, developing alternative economic strategies, and providing economic flexibility that allows the community to respond quickly to market changes and crises. Freedom of action also largely depends on the remoteness of the community from the main administrative and economic centres.

**Security.** The community must be able to protect itself from the harmful effects of changing and unpredictable environmental conditions, in particular, natural disasters, economic crises, and other threats. From an economic standpoint, this implies the creation of economic stability, insurance mechanisms, diversification of sources of income and reserve funds to prevent economic shocks.

**Adaptability.** Communities that can adapt to changes in the external and internal environment have a higher chance of long-term success. Community adaptability is determined by the ability to learn and self-organise to generate adequate responses to changes in the environment. Economic adaptability is the ability of a community to innovate, develop new economic skills and knowledge, and quickly reorganise economic resources to respond to market and technological changes.

**Coexistence.** The community must be able to change its behaviour to respond appropriately to the actions of other systems in its environment, such as other communities, organisations, government institutions, etc. The economic

aspect of coexistence includes not only the availability of state subventions and subsidies, but also participation in interregional and international economic cooperation, the development of partnerships and networks for sharing resources and expanding economic opportunities.

*Provision of psychological needs.* This is an important condition for the viability of social systems, which implies creating a favourable social climate, maintaining social cohesion and a sense of community. This is possible by creating conditions for economic well-being, ensuring equal economic opportunities and access to resources, which contributes to social cohesion and reduces economic inequality.

Thus, the viability of a local community as a complex socio-economic system is its ability to remain functional in the long term, meet the economic, psychological and social needs of its members, and promote their development in conditions of limited resources, adapting to various changes in the environment.

### RESOURCES FOR ENSURING THE VIABILITY OF A LOCAL COMMUNITY

The viability resource of a community as a socio-economic system determines its ability to achieve long-term sustainability, support economic growth, ensure social well-being, and adapt to changing environmental conditions, including economic crises, technological changes, and social challenges. To develop a list of economic resources for the viability of a local community (Fig. 1), the findings of other researchers and their own thoughts on the conditions for ensuring the viability of the local community were combined, including the results of the analysis of interviews conducted by the author with the leaders of the united territorial communities of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast in 2020-2021.

Maintaining the population is critical to achieving the viability of local communities. Researchers, in particular N. Aarsæther *et al.* (2004), suggested using a simple indicator of population growth or decline to assess the viability of a community, recognising it as a rough but understandable and significant indicator of a decrease in the number of inhabitants of any settlement leading to the loss of resources necessary for its existence, which is most pronounced in small settlements. It is the violation of the socio-demographic balance in individual rural settlements that the researcher T. Zaiats (2017) considered as one of the main reasons for the gradual degradation of the rural settlement network of Ukraine.

Access to sufficient physical capital is crucial for community development and building a sense of place among residents, said G.P. Green (2016). This capital, which includes buildings, infrastructure, and other physical facilities, not only contributes to economic growth, but also improves the quality of life of residents by meeting their basic needs. Investments in physical capital not only provide individual income, but also contribute to the overall economic and social well-being of the community.

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in ensuring the viability of local communities, which was emphasised by

C. Turner & D. Johnson (2017), and A. Magomedov *et al.* (2024). Transport, energy, communications, and water supply are important elements that determine the economic development and social cohesion of communities. The developed infrastructure contributes to the efficient functioning of enterprises, improves the quality of life of residents and helps attract investment. Thus, infrastructure resources are the basis for maintaining economic activity and social well-being in communities.

The transfer of a significant share of rights and responsibilities to the local level in the process of decentralisation requires ensuring the economic security of communities. Economic security is critical to the viability of local communities, as it ensures stable development, effective resource management and protection of rights, which contributes to their long-term functioning and well-being. As noted in the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2015), to ensure the economic security of territorial communities, the key is the institutionalisation of their legal personality through state registration of communal property, and the development and implementation of standards of economic rights and obligations. It is also important to strengthen the personal responsibility of government bodies, monitor their activities, and assess the causes of economic insolvency of communities. S. Volosiuk & I. Sirenko (2021) described the key components of the local community's security system, in particular, economic, informational, social and environmental, focusing on economic security as a basic component.

To ensure the viability of a community, it is important to what extent the local community controls or owns material resources. Ownership or control of natural resources can be an important source of financial income and stimulate the economic development of communities through various resource-related projects. Such projects often attract the attention of investors and external partners who can provide additional resources or funding (Aarsæther *et al.*, 2004). However, the focus on generating revenue only from the exploitation of resources, according to I. Tymechko (2020), may pose a threat to the stability of local communities due to the economy's dependence on limited resources, reduced investment in other areas of development, and possible resource depletion.

As noted by T. Zaiats (2017), socio-economic development and viability of rural settlements largely depend on their territorial proximity to economic and administrative centres. The distance from the centre restricts access to financial and investment resources necessary for infrastructure development and implementation of innovative projects. The lack of diversity of economic sectors inherent in remote territories often leads to dependence on one industry, which increases the risk of economic fluctuations, as emphasised by I. Leshchukh (2020). The resource-related instability inherent in remote communities undermines their economic viability (Darko & Halseth, 2023). In addition, remoteness can contribute to the loss of human resources due to population migration in search of

better living and working conditions. Communities located closer to administrative centres have more favourable conditions and better socio-economic prospects (Ilina & Shpyliova, 2021; Kuzyshyn *et al.*, 2024); periphery and unfavourable geographical location affect the competitiveness of territories and their ability to provide a favourable environment for economic activity.

Researchers consider the diversity of economic activities as a factor in the viability of communities; in particular, this was discussed by R. Darko & G. Halseth (2023). J. Olsen *et al.* (2022) in the article “Barentsburg and Longyearbyen in the Times of socioeconomic transition: residents’ perceptions of community mobility” described how economic mobility contributes to community viability. In particular, it was emphasised that in the context of socio-economic changes, such as the transition from traditional sectors of the economy to new ones, the ability of residents to adapt and move between different sectors of the economy is critical. This helps to ensure the community’s resilience to economic shocks and supports its long-term viability.

Tourism can have a significant positive impact on the viability of individual communities, contributing to their development and conservation. It contributes to the improvement of infrastructure, the development of human capital, the promotion of unique local products, and the preservation of cultural and historical heritage. According to M. Irfan *et al.* (2024), the development of green tourism can create new jobs and promote economic growth in rural areas. Agrotourism, as emphasised by V. Ohorodnyk & R. Finger (2024), plays an important role in the development of rural communities, ensuring the diversification of farming activities, creating alternative sources of income and stimulating the development of local businesses and tourism infrastructure. Agrotourism promotes food security by strengthening local food systems through the development of sustainable production methods and increasing the economic stability of farms, which reduces their dependence on foreign markets and supports the region’s self-sufficiency (Addinsall *et al.*, 2016). In addition, tourism supports sustainable development goals such as decent work, responsible consumption, and nature conservation (Mnisi & Ramoroka, 2020). Through its integrated impact on the economic and social development of communities, tourism is becoming a key factor in ensuring their sustainability and prosperity. As a result, communities that actively develop tourism activities get the opportunity not only to preserve their uniqueness, but also to ensure sustainable development for future generations.

#### FACTORS OF EFFECTIVENESS AND LONGEVITY OF PUBLIC INITIATIVES AS RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY VIABILITY

Given that local communities function as socio-economic systems, studying the effectiveness of community initiatives is crucial for understanding the key resources of community viability. It is important to consider not only financial and material resources, but also human capital,

organisational structures, and the level of social cohesion. Studying publications on community initiatives provides a deeper understanding of how the interaction of different resources contributes to the long-term economic development and sustainability of communities.

The study of the effectiveness of community initiatives also highlights the importance of social interaction and participation of residents, as these aspects significantly affect the ability of communities to achieve sustainable development. In particular, the involvement of community members in making decisions about its development is a critical factor for maintaining the viability of the community, as active participation contributes to a deeper understanding of local needs and priorities, which allows making informed and effective decisions. Community members who have the ability to influence decisions feel more responsible for their implementation, which contributes to increased social cohesion and shared responsibility. Social capital generated through the active participation of citizens contributes to better coordination of actions and efficient use of available resources (Boonstra *et al.*, 2023), which ultimately increases the viability of the community.

P. Healey (2014) pointed to the fact that community member initiatives require organisational resources for the implementation and long-term survival of projects. This includes tools to attract attention and ensure visibility of the initiative among a wide audience (information materials, communication channels, and strategies to promote the initiative). Physical assets, a legal organisational structure, and financial resources are also required to organise activities. Together, these resources shape the initiative’s ability to fulfil its mission and ensure its sustainable development (Igalla *et al.*, 2020). In turn, by providing vision, developing common ground and motivation, social capital can contribute to the development of organisational resources.

The longevity and effectiveness of public initiatives is determined by the presence of leaders who create a stimulating environment and attract support from other organisations, which is emphasised by S. Berdej *et al.* (2015). According to B. Rivza & M. Kruzmetra (2017), rural economic growth is largely influenced by the quality of local self-government and the willingness of local community residents to take active, innovative, and inclusive actions. Management personnel in a community can include both officials and specialists who manage, coordinate, and ensure the functioning of local self-government. The presence of an effective management system, which is determined by the quality of management personnel, the use of information systems, and the quality of communication, allows quickly responding to challenges and ensure the sustainability of the community (Ingram & Vora, 2024; Niu *et al.*, 2024).

The state of telecommunications infrastructure also plays an important role in maintaining the effectiveness of local self-government and the viability of communities. This issue was investigated by L. Philip & F. Williams (2019), B. Kelley & L. Sisneros (2020), T. Conroy & S. Low (2021). According to their findings, reliable telecommunications



networks help attract business and investment, as businesses need stable Internet and communications to function effectively. A good state of the telecommunications network contributes to better communication between community members, maintaining social connections and organising community events, which can increase the level of social cohesion and activity of residents, according to S. Low *et al.* (2022). Reliable telecommunications networks provide access to a wide range of information resources and online services, including government services, banking, online shopping, and other important services that affect the quality of life in the community and become an important criterion for small communities in the competition to attract residents.

Communities have the opportunity to develop their activities and introduce services that ensure their functioning, invest in communications, and pay for assets through financial resources. The basis of the financial viability of communities is taxes and mandatory payments that go to the budgets of communities. Depending on the country's tax legislation, these may include: personal income tax, value added tax and excise tax, corporate income tax registered in the community, real estate tax, and other payments. The study by A. Sobczyk & D. Budzeń (2022) confirmed the existence of a correlation between the economic activity of residents and the budgets of local authorities. The high share of personal income tax in the community budget revenues indicates its strong dependence on the availability of business structures and official employment of the population. Stable and sufficient financial support helps to develop optimal strategies for using and increasing available resources, while the constant subsidisation of the local budget against the background of insufficient funding and inefficient use of own revenues significantly hinder development processes. This was highlighted by L. Nedilska *et al.* (2023). Financial resources in the community budget can also come from subsidies and external financial funds, but dependence on them makes communities vulnerable, especially if such support is temporary or concerns one-time grants. To increase the independence and longevity of local socio-economic initiatives, according to M. Sharir & M. Lerner (2013), a variety of business models that generate a consistent and secure revenue stream can be used.

Thus, the analysis of a large layer of scientific literature identified the main resources for ensuring the viability of local communities. These resources are linked by complex causal relationships, require additional research, and cannot be fully reflected in the developed conceptual framework. However, this model provides a general idea of the key components that affect the viability of local communities. It can serve as a basis for further research and help determine strategic directions for community development and management.

To ensure the viability of local communities, an integrated approach is necessary, since actions based on only one resource and ignoring others are insufficient. For example, to improve the efficiency of community management,

it is necessary to ensure not only the introduction of modern information management systems, but also a reliable telecommunications network that allows optimising communication and data processing processes. However, even the availability of these technological resources will not be sufficient without qualified management personnel who can effectively use these tools to ensure the sustainability and viability of the community. Effective solutions for individual resources that have proven effective in the past and have been successfully applied both in the community itself and in other communities should be integrated into an integrated system of interrelated measures. This combination of best practices will help to achieve a synergistic effect, reduce individual negative manifestations and will contribute, as proved by J.D.R. de Raadt & V. de Raadt (2014), to achieving community viability. An integrated approach to community management directly affects its ability to achieve important social and economic goals. Effective governance not only integrates various aspects of development, but also ensures the implementation of sustainable development goals that set priorities for improving community life. This includes ensuring access to the necessary services and resources, which improves the quality of life, social and economic stability.

Integrated governance contributes to the broader socio-economic goals reflected in global initiatives and programmes. Viable communities contribute to the creation of inclusive and sustainable communities, which is the foundation of many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (United Nations, 2020). Viable communities with good governance can provide access to economic opportunities and social services that contribute to poverty reduction (SDG 1). Local governance structures can support the development of agriculture and food security (SDG 2). Strong communities can provide access to health services and implement health programmes (SDG 3) and promote access to quality education for all community members (SDG 4). Viable communities support policies and programmes that promote gender equality and women's participation in decision-making processes (SDG 5) and reduce social and economic inequality (SDG 10). Effective community management ensures access to clean water and adequate sanitation (SDG 6). Local economic strategies can create jobs and stimulate economic development (SDG 8). Strong and viable communities have a direct impact on the creation of safe, inclusive and sustainable human settlements (SDG 11).

The viability of communities is critical to achieving the strategic goals of the European Union, which are detailed in such documents as "The European Green Deal" (European Commission, 2019), "EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030" (European Commission, 2020a), "The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas" (European Commission, 2020b), "European declaration on digital rights and principles" (European Commission, 2022). Strong and active communities promote social cohesion, reduce inequality and improve the quality of life, which are key EU priorities (European

Commission, 2019). President of the European Commission U. Von der Leyen stressed the importance of effective local government and active citizen participation to increase trust and transparency, which is consistent with the goals of building a democratic society, and for achieving economic sustainability, as viable communities support local entrepreneurship, create jobs and promote innovation (Von der Leyen, 2019). In the field of ecology, viable communities are implementing sustainable practices that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and preserve biodiversity. Rural communities, in particular, have significant potential to support food security and preserve cultural heritage. Investment in infrastructure development and digitalisation contributes to better connectivity and prosperity in these regions. Thus, viable communities are the foundation for sustainable development and overall prosperity of the European Union.

### CONCLUSIONS

The definition of the viability of a local community formulated based on cybernetics and systems thinking approaches allows creating a more holistic and effective vision of community management, which considers the complexity and interdependence of all components of the system. This will facilitate the integration of different types of resources (human, financial, informational, material) to maximise the efficiency and viability of the community.

Based on the theory of the viability of complex systems, the study identified the conditions that ensure the viability of a local community: the existence of residents and basic physical and material resources to ensure their life, the efficiency of using available resources, the freedom of the community in choosing ways to solve problems, security, adaptability to changes in the external and internal environment, the ability to coexist and meet the needs of community members. In addition, economic resources were identified to ensure the viability of the community. Streamlining conditions and resources allowed building a conceptual model of the viability of a local community

The developed conceptual model provides a holistic view of the key components that affect the viability of local communities, which helps to better understand the complexity of their structure and the interaction between different elements. The model promotes effective planning and management by helping to identify priority areas for community development and viability. In addition, it provides an evidence-based framework for decision-making and strategy development at the local and state levels, considering the complex relationships within the community. This conceptual model is an important tool for researchers and practitioners working in the field of local self-government and community development, as it provides a systematic approach to analysing and managing community viability.

As a result of the analysis of studies on the phenomenon of viability of local communities, several key areas for further research were identified. First of all, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive methodology for assessing viability that considers economic, social and environmental factors, allowing for more informed management decisions. Special attention should be paid to the investigation of mechanisms of interaction between communities and other economic entities, and the analysis of the impact of various economic factors and resource management strategies on ensuring long-term stability and prosperity of communities.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy have been completely observed by the author.

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## Життєздатність територіальних громад: теоретичний аналіз і огляд наукових досліджень

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**Анотація.** Дослідження життєздатності територіальних громад є критично важливим як для України, так і для будь-якої країни, що прагне до сталого економічного розвитку, стабільності та покращення якості життя своїх громадян. Це допомагає підготувати громади до викликів, сприяє ефективному управлінню ресурсами, залученню інвестицій та соціальній згуртованості, що є основою для стійкого і гармонійного функціонування та прогресу громад. Метою дослідження було уточнення поняття життєздатності територіальної громади та визначення ключових економічних аспектів для обґрунтування напрямів подальших досліджень механізму її забезпечення. Під час роботи були використані теоретичні методи аналізу, зокрема огляд літератури та концептуальне узагальнення, для ідентифікації ресурсів життєздатності територіальних громад. Сформульоване визначення життєздатної територіальної громади як складної соціально-економічної системи, здатної залишатися функціональною у довгостроковій перспективі, забезпечувати психологічні та соціальні потреби своїх членів і сприяти їхньому розвитку в умовах обмежених ресурсів, адаптуючись до змін в економічному середовищі. Побудована концептуальна модель, яка дає загальне уявлення про ключові компоненти, що впливають на спроможність територіальної громади виживати та розвиватися. Запропонована модель підкреслює важливість інтегрованого аналізу життєздатності, враховуючи взаємозв'язки між різними ресурсами та умовами, що сприяють сталому розвитку територіальних громад. Отримані результати вказують на те, що поєднання економічних, інформаційних, фінансових, матеріальних, організаційних і людських ресурсів є критично важливим для забезпечення життєздатного стану громад. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в обґрунтуванні необхідності комплексного підходу до управління територіальними громадами, який спрямований на ефективне використання усіх наявних ресурсів для досягнення максимального ефекту. Це дасть змогу забезпечити координацію зусиль на всіх рівнях і сприятиме створенню цілісної стратегії економічного розвитку, яка передбачає довгострокове планування та врахування специфічних потреб і викликів кожної громади, завдяки чому досягається гармонійний та збалансований прогрес

**Ключові слова:** концептуальна модель; життєздатність складних систем; ресурси забезпечення життєздатності; соціально-економічна система; сталий розвиток