

Local Government in Ukraine

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Abstract

The topicality of this issue is conditioned by the ongoing processes of constitutional reform of the territorial organization of public power, while local self-government is becoming a key factor in the development of Ukrainian statehood. In the context of Ukraine, the processes of democratization and modernization of the state consist mainly in finding an adequate balance between centralization and decentralization tendencies. The success of these processes directly depends on the efficiency of the exercise of public power, the optimality of the systemic and structural organization, as well as on adequate methods and forms of the implementation of power at various administrative levels. The key factor is also the optimal distribution of powers between state and local government bodies, which is related to the effective redistribution of substantial and financial resources.

Keywords: self-government, control, law, legislation, competences

Introduction

In every state, local self-government is characterized by a distinct form and designation, and these features are independent of the political-administrative structure, form of government, historical circumstances, or national and cultural specificities (Yarmish, Seryogin 2002). According to Sergeyeva (2017), local self-government in every country of the world is grounded in the principles of national theories of self-governance. The most widespread among them is the communal (community-based) theory, which is recognized by the majority of European states. The communal theory is based on the concept of the natural rights of the territorial community, its specific “sovereignty,” and the principles of decentralized governance (Kondratska 2015). At the same time, it emphasizes the financial and organizational autonomy of local self-government units.

The emergence and development of local self-government are conditioned by society's understanding that state power concentrated in the center cannot effectively address matters of local significance, nor adequately reflect local interests, needs, and the conditions essential for supporting community life (Boryslavskaya 2011). These issues must be resolved at the local level. According to Melnyk (2009), local self-government represents a fundamental pillar of the democratic structure of the state, enabling citizens to participate actively in the management of local affairs. Its organization, functioning, and relationships with other tiers of

government are regulated by administrative and legal norms. This article analyzes the key aspects of local self-government, including its legal framework, structure, competences, and control mechanisms.

The existing model of the systemic and structural arrangement of local self-government was originally conceived as transitional and no longer fulfills its intended function. This model has become an obstacle not only to the further development of local self-government, but also to the broader context of territorial development of the country (Batanov 2008). The continued advancement of local self-government in Ukraine requires an essential revision of its legal regulation at both the constitutional and legislative levels, necessitating the development of an appropriate doctrinal framework to support these changes (Rusnák 2011).

A Systems Approach to Local Self-Government

Local self-government is understood as a system that integrates various objects and phenomena into a new, complex whole whose properties exceed the mere sum of its parts. This system comprises two fundamental dimensions:

1. The system of forms of local self-government – the modes through which local self-government is exercised.
2. The system of subjects of local self-government – the institutions and bodies that perform local self-government (Kondratska 2015).
3. Core Characteristics of Local Self-Government as a System (Kondratska 2020)
4. Integrity – local self-government functions as a unified whole within defined territorial boundaries.
5. Hierarchy – it encompasses subsystems at various levels of administrative–territorial organization, with local self-government representing a subsystem of public authority alongside the state and autonomous entities.
6. Holism – the whole possesses properties that surpass the capabilities of its individual components.
7. Structural implementation – the system is composed of interconnected elements and subsystems that cooperate to achieve common objectives.
8. Readiness/Responsiveness – individual subsystems may have differing objectives, yet local self-government as a whole demonstrates new qualitative characteristics.
9. Homeostasis – the capacity to maintain stable functioning within legal frameworks and in the face of contemporary challenges.
10. Synergy – cooperation among system elements enhances overall efficiency and strengthens outcomes.
11. Integrability – the individual elements of the system are linked into a coherent functional unit.

12. Communicativeness – the system responds to its historical environment and adapts to external changes.
13. Multiplicativity – the effects of local self-government can multiply, whether positively or negatively.
14. Historicity – the system evolves over time in response to internal and external factors.
15. Effectiveness – local self-government contributes to the resolution of tasks in the interest of the community and to the efficient use of community resources (Kondratska 2020).

Hybrid Nature of Contemporary Local Self-Government

Recent theoretical perspectives characterize local self-government as a hybrid system, functioning simultaneously as:

- A subsystem of public authority – performing delegated powers and cooperating with state institutions.
- A subsystem of civil society – representing the interests of the local community and its actors (Kondratska 2017).

This hybrid nature encompasses the diffusion of powers between the state and local self-government through the institution of delegated competences. Key changes include:

1. Eliminating the overlap of state and local self-government competences at district and regional levels, while maintaining state oversight of the legality of local government activities (Naumova 2017).
2. Abolishing local state administrations, with their competences transferred to the executive committees of regional and district councils.
3. Emphasizing subsidiarity, shifting primary decision-making to the basic level—local communities (Kondratska 2015).
4. These measures are aimed at strengthening the autonomy of local self-government and enhancing its operational effectiveness.

1 The legal basis of local self-government

Local self-government in Ukraine is vested with the right of a territorial community to independently resolve matters of local significance within the limits of the Constitution and laws of Ukraine. Local self-government represents a form of public authority exercised by specific subjects—territorial communities and the bodies they establish. These bodies possess a distinct object of competence—matters of local significance—and operate on the basis of a distinct type of public (communal) property (Kondratska 2015). Local self-government is exercised by communities directly and through village, settlement, and city councils and their

executive bodies, as well as through district and regional councils that represent the common interests of territorial communities forming the respective districts and regions (Melnik 2009).

The principal provisions governing the organization and functioning of local self-government in Ukraine are defined by:

- Law No. 254к/96-VR, the Constitution of Ukraine, which in Articles 140–146 establishes the principles of local self-government (hereinafter “the Constitution of Ukraine”).
- Law No. 280/97-VR “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine” (1997) – the core legislative act regulating the activities of local self-government bodies, defining their powers and the procedures for their formation and operation (hereinafter “the Law on Local Self-Government in Ukraine”).
- Law No. 595-VIII “On Elections of Deputies of Local Councils and Heads of Villages, Settlements, Cities, and Regions” (2022) (hereinafter “the Law on Elections of Local Councils and Heads of Local Communities”).
- Law No. 2493-III “On Service in Local Self-Government Bodies” (2021) (hereinafter “the Law on Service in Local Self-Government Bodies”).
- The European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985) (ratified in 1997) – the most significant multilateral instrument establishing the fundamental principles governing the functioning of local authorities and their relationship with public authority. Its main objective is to guarantee and protect the rights of local self-government bodies, which are closest to citizens, and to enable their participation in decisions affecting everyday life.

The Constitution of Ukraine, as the legal foundation of local self-government, consolidates the system of local self-government and its financial and material base (Boryslavska 2011). It establishes the role of the territorial community and provides state-backed financial guarantees for local self-government (Batanov 2008). It also defines local self-government as a guarantor of citizens’ rights and freedoms (Bordenyuk 2011). Pursuant to Article 140 of the Constitution of Ukraine, local self-government encompasses the right of a territorial community—comprising residents of a village, settlement, city, or an association of multiple communities—to independently resolve matters of local significance in accordance with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine.

The Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine” regulates organizational matters related to the activities and powers of local self-government bodies. According to Bordenyuk (2011), the law affirms that local self-government in Ukraine constitutes a guaranteed right and a real capability of the territorial community to address local matters within the state’s constitutional and legislative framework.

The main features of local self-government in Ukraine include:

- Local self-government operates on democratic principles, enabling citizens to participate in the management of local affairs (Sergeyeva 2017).
- Local self-government exists at all levels of the administrative–territorial structure of the state (Rusnák 2011).
- The principle of separation of powers is not applied within the local self-government system; instead, a unified system of representative and executive bodies exists (Kondratska 2015).
- Local self-government has a clearly defined legal status within the Ukrainian legal system (Boryslavska 2011).

Principles of Local Self-Government

Local self-government rests upon a set of principles that shape its legal and organizational framework and ensure its functioning within the broader state and legal system (Melnik 2009).

1.The Principle of Democracy defines the mode of exercising public authority within local communities. It ensures that territorial communities possess the right to exercise their authority directly (for example through local referendums, elections, and citizens' initiatives), as well as through representative bodies such as city and village councils and their heads (Yarmish, Seryogin 2002).

2.The Principle of Legality requires that the activities of local self-government be grounded in the Constitution, applicable laws, and subordinate legislation. This principle guarantees the legal legitimacy of all decisions and measures adopted by local self-government bodies (Batanov 2008).

3.The Principle of Transparency (Publicity) means that the activities of local authorities must be open and accessible to the public. Local self-government bodies are obliged to perform their functions in a manner that is accessible to citizens, with their decisions and actions subject to coverage by local media and open public oversight (Kondratska 2015).

4.The Principle of Collegiality concerns the organizational and decision-making processes within local self-government, which are based on collective deliberation and decision-making in representative bodies, where decisions are adopted jointly (Yarmish, Seryogin 2002).

5.The Principle of Harmonization of Local and State Interests ensure cooperation between local self-government and central state authorities, including the delegation of certain powers and competences between the state and local authorities. This principle reflects the necessity of synchronizing interests across various levels of governance (Boryslavska 2011).

6.The Principle of Election establishes that key representatives of local self-government—such as deputies of local councils and heads of villages, settlements, and cities—are elected directly by citizens, thereby ensuring a democratic mandate and the legitimacy of these bodies (Melnik 2009).

7.The Principle of Legal, Organizational, Material, and Financial Autonomy is fundamental to the effective functioning of local self-government:

- Legal autonomy signifies that local self-government bodies exercise their powers within the legal norms assigned to them, with full discretion in decision-making.
- Organizational autonomy grants local bodies flexibility to determine their internal structure and modes of operation.
- Financial and material autonomy reflects the right of local governments to manage their financial resources and property for the purpose of performing their functions and responsibilities (Sergeyeva 2017).

8.The Principle of Accountability presumes that the activities of local self-government bodies are subject to public scrutiny by citizens. This mechanism ensures that decision-making processes remain transparent and responsive to the needs and expectations of local communities (Bordenyuk 2011).

9.The Principle of State Support and Guarantees ensures that the state provides local self-government bodies with financial and material assistance, as well as guarantees of legal protection through judicial mechanisms, thereby strengthening the stability and effectiveness of local governance (Batanov 2008).

2 System of local self-government

Historical Development of Local Self-Government Models in Ukraine throughout the period of Ukraine's independence, several models of local public authority have been applied:

1. The Soviet Model – a centralized system of direct state administration at the local level.
2. The Decentralized “Anglo-American” Model – a model aimed at full decentralization in which the functions of state administration are transferred to the executive bodies of local self-government (Kondratska 2017).

Table 1: Administrative Division of Ukraine

Capital City: Kyiv	
Regions (Oblasti) and Their Administrative Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cherkasy Oblast (Cherkasy) •Chernihiv Oblast (Chernihiv) •Chernivtsi Oblast (Chernivtsi) •Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (Dnipro) •Donetsk Oblast (Donetsk) •Kharkiv Oblast (Kharkiv) •Kherson Oblast (Kherson) •Khmelnyskyi Oblast (Khmelnyskyi) •Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast (Ivano-Frankivsk) •Kirovohrad Oblast (Kropyvnytskyi) •Kyiv Oblast (Kyiv) •Luhansk Oblast (Luhansk) •Lviv Oblast (Lviv) •Mykolaiv Oblast (Mykolaiv) •Odesa Oblast (Odesa) •Poltava Oblast (Poltava) •Rivne Oblast (Rivne) •Sumy Oblast (Sumy) •Ternopil Oblast (Ternopil) •Vinnytsia Oblast (Vinnytsia) •Volyn Oblast (Luts'k) •Zakarpattia Oblast (Uzhhorod) •Zaporizhzhia Oblast (Zaporizhzhia) • Zhytomyr Oblast (Zhytomyr)
Cities with Special Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kyiv •Sevastopol
Autonomous Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous Republic of Crimea

Source: Author's processing based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine

Table 2: Administrative Division of Ukraine

Administrative Unit	Number
Cities	461
Urban-type settlements	885
Rural areas and villages	approx. 28 000
District administrative units (raions)	490

Source: Author's processing based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine

The system of local self-government includes various levels and organizational structures that enable decentralized governance throughout the territory of the state (Melnik 2009):

- Primary level – basic units of local self-government: villages, rural areas, towns, and cities.
- Secondary level – higher territorial units: districts (raions) and regions (oblasts).
- Elements of the System of Local Self-Government (According to Article 5 of the Law “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine”)

- Territorial communities
- Councils of villages, rural areas, towns, cities, districts, and regions
- Heads of villages, rural areas, towns, cities, districts, and regions
- Executive bodies of village, rural, town, city, district, and regional councils
- District and regional councils.

Bodies of self-organization of the population

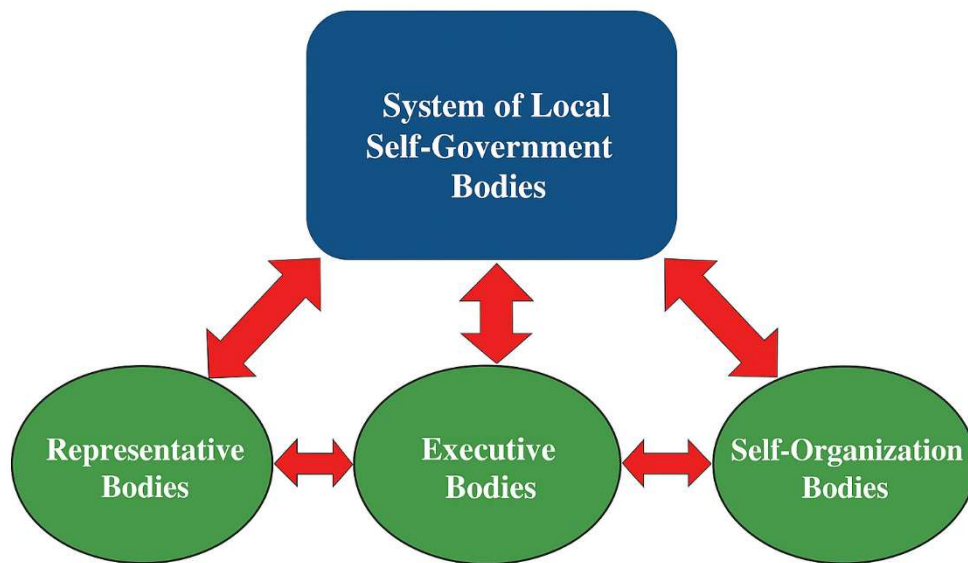


Figure 1: System of Local Self-Government Bodies

Source: Author's compilation based on the Law No. 280/97-VR "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine" (1997)

Available at: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/280/97-bp#Text>

Representative bodies of local self-government ensure the legislative (decision-making) function at the local level. They decide on key matters related to territorial development and the management of local resources (Kondratska 2015).

- Executive bodies of local self-government implement the decisions adopted by representative bodies and carry out everyday administration and management (Boryslavskaya 2011).
- Bodies of self-organization of the population enable citizens to actively participate in decision-making and the administration of local affairs (Batanov 2008).

Primary Level of Local Self-Government

According to Boryslavska (2011), a territorial community, composed of the inhabitants of a municipality, city, or other local units, constitutes the fundamental subject of local self-government, bearing the principal functions and powers within local administration. The amalgamation of individual municipalities can form larger territorial units that exercise self-governance through their own bodies, while also having the option to elect a joint head of the municipality (Kondratska 2015). The territorial community represents the organizational basis of local self-government, where decision-making on local matters is carried out.

At the head of each territorial community stands the head of the municipality, city, or other local unit. This individual is elected by the citizens of the respective territorial community based on the principles of universal, equal, and direct suffrage, by secret ballot, for a term of four years. The head of the territorial community leads both the local council and its executive body, thereby ensuring the effective management and administration of local affairs (Kondratska 2015).

Key powers and responsibilities of the head of the territorial community include:

- The head has the authority to appoint and dismiss department heads and other executive personnel of the council and other organizational units of municipal administration, as well as to manage enterprises and institutions administered by the municipality (Kondratska 2015).
- The head is responsible for the administration of both budgetary and extrabudgetary funds of the territorial community, ensuring the efficient utilization of public finances for local needs (Batanov 2008).
- The head of the municipality represents the territorial community and its bodies in interactions with state authorities and other self-governing bodies. This function also encompasses communication with superior institutions and the assurance of legal and administrative continuity across different levels of governance (Batanov 2008).

According to Sergejeva (2017), the head of the territorial community is a key element of local self-government, coordinating all administrative, legal, and financial processes within the municipality or city, with their decisions and activities directly impacting the quality of life of citizens.

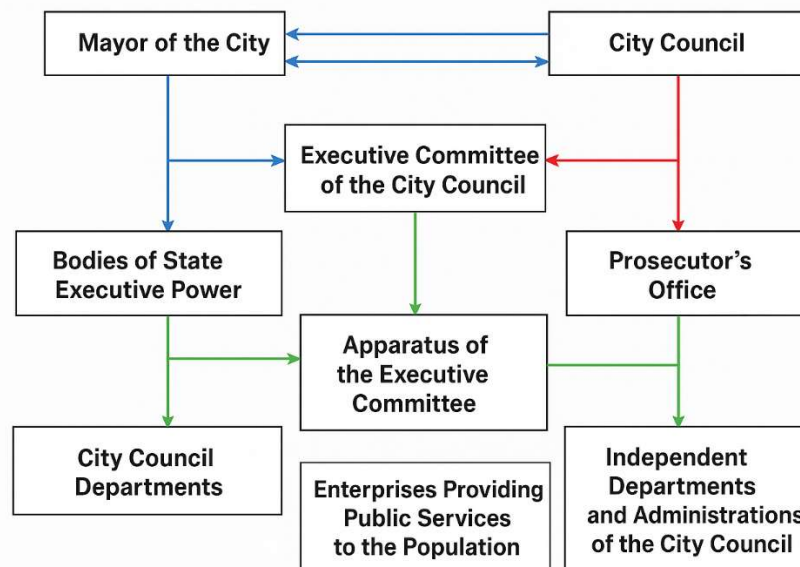


Figure 2: Relationships in Local Self-Government

Source: Own elaboration based on Law No. 280/97-VR "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine" (1997)

Available at: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/280/97-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>

The territorial community exercises its functions and powers either directly or through the bodies of local self-government and their representatives. The primary forms of direct local democracy include:

- Municipal elections – a mechanism for selecting representatives to local self-government bodies, including regional, district, city, and municipal councils, as well as elected officials such as mayors and heads of municipalities (Batanov 2008).
- Local referenda – an instrument of direct democracy through which members of the territorial community make decisions on fundamental issues of local importance. Voting is conducted by secret ballot, and the outcomes are binding (Bordenyuk 2011).
- General assemblies of citizens – these assemblies are organized at the local level within specific territorial units, such as houses, streets, neighborhoods, or microdistricts. They serve to discuss and resolve matters of local significance, thereby enabling active citizen participation in community life (Kondratska 2015).
- Local initiatives and public hearings – these forms of participation allow individuals or groups of community members to actively engage in the decision-making process. Citizens may initiate the consideration of local self-government issues or present proposals for solutions (Babaev 2010).

Rural, municipal, city, and district councils in cities (where established) perform the following functions:

1. They represent the will and interests of both the entire territorial community and specific groups of its members (Rusnák 2011).
2. They encompass the establishment of executive bodies, their approval, appointment or election of officials, oversight over their activities, and the direct administration of local affairs (Kondratska 2015).

Secondary Level of Local Self-Government

Representative bodies of local self-government within territorial units include:

1. Rural, municipal, and city councils – these are self-government bodies that represent the respective territorial units and exercise the functions and powers of local self-government on their behalf. They are composed of deputies elected by the residents of villages, municipalities, and cities. Their decisions are binding for the territory under their jurisdiction (Batanov 2008).
2. District and regional councils – these bodies represent the collective interests of the territorial communities of municipalities and cities. They are headed by chairpersons elected by the councils themselves from among their deputies (Babaev 2010).
3. District councils within cities – established based on the decision of the territorial community of a city or the city council (Babaev 2010).

The powers of district and regional councils have specific characteristics:

- Approval of plans for the socio-economic development of the respective regions (provinces, oblasts) (Batanov 2008).
- Redistribution of resources from the state budget to equalize local budgets (Yarmish, Seryogin 2002).
- Representation of the interests of the territorial self-government of the respective region in relations with central and local self-government authorities (Rusnák 2011).

According to Kondratska (2015), the particularity of the constitutional and legal status of district and regional councils lies in the absence of their own executive bodies, with the performance of their functions ensured by the local state administration bodies.

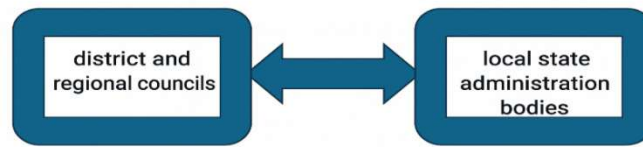


Figure 3: Specifics of the Constitutional and Legal Status of District and Regional Councils

Source: Own elaboration based on Law No. 280/97-VR "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine" of 1997

Available online: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/280/97-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>

Chairperson of the District and Regional Council:

- organizes the activities of the council,
- manages financial resources allocated for council operations,
- signs decisions and minutes of council meetings,
- represents the council in relations with other authorities and organizations.

Councils and their executive committees, within their competence, issue normative acts in the form of decisions. To implement these decisions and fulfill executive and administrative tasks, executive bodies of the councils are established (Sergeyeva, 2017).

Executive committees, departments, and units of rural, city, and municipal councils are executive bodies created by the councils. These bodies possess:

1. Own authority – encompassing areas such as socio-economic and cultural development, planning, accounting, financial management, and regulation of activities of legal entities (Kondratska, 2015).
2. Delegated authority – involving the performance of executive and administrative functions transferred from bodies of executive power (Kondratska, 2015).

Areas of competence of council executive bodies include:

- Planning, budgeting, and financing,
- Management of municipal property,
- Housing and communal services,
- Trade, transport, and communications,
- Education, healthcare, culture, and sports,
- Land relations and environmental protection,
- Social protection of the population (Batanov, 2008).

Bodies of citizen self-organization may be established at the initiative of residents with the consent of local councils and include house, street, or city councils (Boryslavskaja, 2011). Their main functions include:

1. Promoting citizen participation in local decision-making,
2. Addressing the social, cultural, and everyday needs of residents,
3. Supporting the development of the respective territory (Kondratska, 2015).

For more effective exercise of powers and protection of the rights of territorial units, local governments may form associations. The functions of such associations include:

- Cooperation in protecting the rights and interests of territorial units,
- Solving common problems of territorial communities,
- Exchange of experience and preparation of development programs (Kondratska, 2015).

Functions of local self-government in Ukraine, as defined by the Constitution and laws, can be divided into:

- Political functions – supporting local referenda, elections, and direct democracy; cooperation within associations of local governments.
- Economic functions – management of municipal property, establishment and administration of municipal enterprises, approval and control of local budgets, regulation of land relations (Rusnák, 2011).
- Social functions – support and protection of the social welfare of the population.
- Cultural functions – development of education, sports, culture, and spiritual life.
- Environmental functions – protection and improvement of the environment (Batanov, 2008).

Social functions of self-government include approval of socio-economic development programs for regions and districts and oversight of their implementation, approval of territorial planning, management of healthcare institutions owned by territorial communities, provision of social assistance to persons with disabilities, war and labor veterans, large families, and addressing guardianship and custodianship matters in accordance with legal procedures (Kondratska, 2015).

Cultural functions of self-government involve approval and supervision of cultural development programs of regions and districts, management of educational and cultural institutions belonging to territorial communities, and designation of historical, cultural, or scientific objects as cultural or historical monuments (Bordenyuk, 2011).

Environmental functions of self-government are ensured through the organization of territories and objects of the local natural reserve fund, as well as the designation of natural objects with environmental value as natural monuments (Babaev, 2010).

3 Local self-government reform in Ukraine

An important component of constitutional reform in Ukraine is the decentralization of power and the expansion of local authorities' competencies. In 2014, the Concept of Reform of Local Self-Government and Territorial Organization of Power was adopted, emphasizing the decentralization of power (strengthening the competencies) of local self-government and restructuring the management system at the regional and district levels.

Key innovations of decentralization include:

1. Introduction of a three-tier administrative-territorial structure: region, district, community, with expanded local self-government powers (Rusnák, 2011).
2. Transfer of executive power from local administrations to the executive bodies of councils.
3. Division of competencies among self-government bodies based on the principle of subsidiarity, aiming to provide communities with the broadest possible powers (Naumova, 2017).
4. Financial support for the exercise of local self-government powers.
5. Abolition of local state administrations and creation of state representative councils responsible for oversight, supervision, and coordination (Kondratska, 2015).

Interaction with other levels of government: Local self-governments cooperate with local state administrations, which exercise executive power at the local level. This cooperation includes coordinating the activities of local state administrations with self-governments and providing methodological and financial support to local self-governments (Kondratska, 2015).

Control and oversight:

The activities of local self-governments are monitored at multiple levels:

1. Government authorities – ensuring legality and compliance with government policy.
2. Public control – through citizen participation in local affairs, public hearings, and referenda.
3. Internal control – conducted through audits and inspections carried out by the executive bodies of councils (Naumova, 2017).

In Ukraine, local self-government is considered the third tier in the system-structural organization of public power, after the state apparatus and the system of authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC). This system is based on the European continental (French) model, which constitutionally recognizes the independence of local self-government. However, at the district and regional levels, it is connected with local executive authorities – local state administrations – and subjected to state oversight. According to Kondratska (2015), the institution of delegated authority leads to an overlap between state and municipal powers,

and the delegation of executive powers from district and regional councils to relevant state administrations further reinforces this process.

This model, regarded as the most centralized among Western democracies, is effective under specific conditions. It is suitable when civil society is still in the process of formation, its institutions are inactive, or the capacity of self-governing territorial communities to exercise self-government is limited (Kondratska, 2017). It is also applicable in cases of a real separatist threat or when local self-government exceeds legally defined boundaries. In such instances, local state authorities play a decisive role, where their assertive actions compensate for the weakness of local self-government or suppress signs of separatism. The French model is also justified when a controlled transition from strict state centralization to partial decentralization is required (Kondratska, 2020).

According to Naumova (2017), however, the Ukrainian legislator, in adapting this model, did not consider—or intentionally ignored—the fact that the European continental model not only clearly delineates the functions and powers between territorial self-government and state authorities but also provides real guarantees of local self-government independence. In Ukraine, this model was deformed by the introduction of direct state administration at the district and regional levels. This measure did not contribute to the development of local self-government or more effective local governance, nor did it prevent separatist tendencies (Kondratska, 2017).

In the current situation, implementing power decentralization and improving the systemic and structural organization of local self-government is essential. It serves not only as a means to improve the socio-political and socio-economic situation in the country but also as a fundamental condition for preserving Ukrainian statehood, ensuring territorial integrity, and strengthening national security.

At the basic level, the local self-government model in Ukraine is trialistic, with primary competencies divided among three bodies: the mayor of a municipality, village, or city; the relevant local council; and its executive committee (Naumova, 2017). At higher levels (district and regional), however, the system has a monistic character, as all primary competencies are concentrated in the respective local council (Kondratska, 2020). Local state administrations at these levels predominantly exercise delegated powers or perform one-off tasks.

Conclusion

This study focuses on a detailed examination of the legal foundation of local self-government, providing a comprehensive overview of the principal legal regulations governing local self-government in Ukraine, and analyzing key provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine, as well as laws and regulations adopted within the local self-government system.

The Constitution of Ukraine recognizes local self-government as the right of territorial communities – residents of villages, towns, and cities – to independently address matters of local significance within the framework of the Constitution and applicable laws of Ukraine.

Territorial communities exercise this right directly through local referenda or through their self-government bodies. The system of self-government bodies includes villages, towns, cities, municipal councils, and their executive committees, as well as regional and district councils, which represent the collective interests of these territorial communities. The law may also permit the creation of self-organized citizen bodies, such as committees at the level of a house, street, or district, to which certain competencies, financial resources, and property may be delegated.

Unlike the previous Soviet model of local self-government, contemporary local self-government bodies in Ukraine possess an independent status, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Nevertheless, some executive competencies may be delegated to these bodies by law, with their execution subject to oversight by the relevant executive authorities.

The study also addresses current challenges, such as maintaining a unified legal framework for the country, generating material and financial resources for municipalities, regulating limits on self-government interference in local economic activity, and issues related to oversight and accountability of administrative authorities.

Against the backdrop of objective factors, such as war, adverse economic conditions, and financial crises, as well as the actual disengagement of the population from decision-making processes concerning local affairs, subjective factors also emerge, including the legal support for self-government.

In the process of establishing local self-government as a key element of democracy and a fundamental pillar of the constitutional system of Ukraine, both objective and subjective challenges exist. Timely resolution of these issues will contribute to the population's progress toward freedom and prosperity. Among all forms of independence, the independence of local communities is most vulnerable to interference from central and local authorities. Local self-government institutions alone are not capable of resisting state pressure. Ensuring the stability and autonomy of the population in addressing local matters will be sustainable only when it

becomes an integral part of societal practices and is consistently implemented through legislation.

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