

## THE MAIN ASPECTS OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND SOCIETY THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE DECENTRALIZATION REFORM

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the research is to define the concept, which includes the fundamental aspects, tools, methods, stages, and directions of the interaction of authorities, business, and society under conditions of implementation of the decentralization reform. In the course of the research, the general scientific methods of cognition were used, gathered on the survey results from information and the normative-legal support of administrative management were analyzed. The article suggests innovative directions of such interaction realization based on the improvement of information support; building of corresponding institutes; technical support with the use of cloud services, which would provide transparent access to the information to all participants of an interaction.

**Keywords:** Tripartite Interaction, Decentralization, Territorial Community.

### 1 Introduction

The world and European experience, in particular, convincingly shows that an effective decentralized system of territorial organization is an integral part of a modern democratic and rule-of-law state. Many countries passed the way of decentralization several decades ago, so most issues on effective territorial-administrative community building are solved for them. As for Ukraine, the low level of organization of the decentralization process and, consequently, of interaction between government, business, and society at the level of local self-government is a legacy of the Soviet command-administrative system of public administration. As a result, political decisions that do not consider the public's point of view are still being implemented in most regions of Ukraine. Also problematic is the issue of conformity of local authorities with the interests, needs, and expectations of members of territorial communities (Levchuk, 2008).

Today, the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985) is an essential reference point on decentralization and local self-governance reform. Implemented changes provide the principles of subsidiarity, the omnipresence of local self-government, financial independence, wide application of democratic mechanisms. In addition, an important role in the decentralization reform is the establishment of effective interaction between government, business, and communities, which allows the progressive development of territorial communities and the state following the social and cultural characteristics of a particular district. As a result, this interaction makes it possible to solve the pressing problems of the communities and strategically develop the region.

The main problem of the organization of this interaction is the lack of organizational and technical possibilities of communication between the three parties of interaction. The implementation of such a possibility will allow to receive appeals from the population quickly, process them, determine the most pressing needs, and make management decisions that best meet the needs of business and society.

The purpose of the research is to determine the main aspects, tools, models, and directions of interaction between the government, business, and society in the conditions of implementation of decentralization reform on the example of Ukraine, taking into account European experience.

### 2 Literature review

The interaction of government, business, and communities forms a tripartite partnership, or as it is called, "inter-sectoral tripartite partnership". The issue has become particularly relevant today and is reflected in the works of the world and Ukrainian researchers. The majority of researchers consider the interaction of government, business, and society at the macroeconomic level. As for the regional level or the level of territorial communities formed due to decentralization reforms, such tripartite partnership has not received proper scientific analysis.

In the economic literature, the concept of interaction between government, business, and the public has a multidimensional meaning and is interpreted as "social partnership", "tripartism", "bipartism", "micro" and "mesocorporatism" (Slyusarenko, 2014). Accordingly, there are different approaches to understanding the essence of interaction as a method and mechanism of social and labor relations regulation, solving social and labor relations between employees and employers, solving problems between government and business.

Peregudov, S. (2007) characterizes social partnership as a complex socio-economic phenomenon that occurs between employees and employers with the authorities' involvement. In the "Economic Encyclopedia" the essence of this category is interpreted as "the principles and practice of tripartite consultations in order to develop agreement of trade unions, entrepreneurs and the state" (Gavrylyshyn, 2020). In foreign literature, the inter-sectoral social partnership is most often interpreted as cooperation between governmental organizations, business corporations, and non-profit organizations, the purpose of which is to achieve sustainable development of the territory. For example, Warner & Sullivan (2004) and Clarke & Fuller (2010) offer the following definition of cross-sector social partnership: "an alliance between parties representing government, business, civil society, in which the resources and abilities of each party are strategically combined. This union is based on the principles of sharing risks, costs and obtaining common benefits". At the same time, in the works of foreign authors, this tripartite interaction is often perceived as a new structure of society, which begins to organize and respond to social problems.

The generalization of the above definitions of the interaction between government, business and society indicates their truncated nature, inconsistency with the global nature of this complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Tripartite partnership goes beyond the social context and covers a whole range of economic, social, ecological, institutional and informational problems at all levels of management. This allows us to consider tripartite partnership as a self-organized institution, normalized at the legislative level and social rules, which solve key problems of citizens' lives and harmonize society's interests, state, and business. Such an understanding of the socio-economic nature of tripartite partnership indicates the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, the multiplicity and complexity of problems that require consensus in their solution. In addition to the issue of interaction between the authorities, business and society models, the normative-legal documents regulating the issues of decentralized administrative management were studied. The legal regulation of decentralization in Ukraine began with the adoption in 2014 of the Law of Ukraine "On Cooperation of Territorial Communities" (2014). This law defines the basic principles of cooperation and provides the means to stimulate them for further

unification. The Law of Ukraine "On Voluntary Unification of Territorial Communities" (2015) allowed the first stage of decentralization through the formation of territorial communities without amending the Constitution of Ukraine. In 2017, amendments were made to the Law of Ukraine "On Voluntary Union of Territorial Communities", thanks to which the legal regulation of the village status or settlement headman was improved. Some obstacles were also removed in the appointment of first elections in OTGs formed by territorial communities located in neighboring districts.

**3 Materials and research methods**

To determine the main aspects of the interaction between the authorities, business, and society, the current normative-legal documentation regulating the issues of decentralization of European countries and Ukraine, in particular, was processed. Based on regular reporting by territorial communities, the main problems were determined; areas, methods and models of interaction between the authorities, business and society were formed. The main purpose of this concept is to determine the key demands of the society, which were analyzed in 2020 by Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the sociological service of Razumkov Center from August 14 to 19, 2020 in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. According to the study results, 2022 questionnaires were received on a sample representing the adult population. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3% (Ilko Kucheriv Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, 2020). The results of the study confirm the relevance of the research towards finding ways to accelerate the decentralization reform and building such tripartite models of interaction between the government, business, and society, which would allow territorial communities to develop at a faster pace, and the population to feel the positive impact of reforms and improve their quality of life.

**4 Results**

Interaction between the government, business, and society is a constant, uninterrupted process, which allows realizing the development of the territorial community, which is in the conditions of decentralization of administration and use of financial resources. Effective interaction should be organized in all directions: economic, social, informational, and ecological, involving all three links of tripartite interaction. At the same time, under the conditions of decentralization, when the budgets of territorial communities are transferred to direct interbudgetary relations, and the development of the region occurs according to the vision of its population, it is necessary to build new methods of interaction between the links of tripartite interaction. They allow an independent region's economic development and provide the basis for its progressive growth in all spheres. Undoubtedly, the critical link in the process of tripartite interaction is the government because it can ensure the organization of effective interaction. But at the same time, the community is the driving force of such a process, and business is the source of funding for all management decisions. Each of the links has its tools and interaction methods; at the same time, the possibility of this collaboration is built on informational support and the organization of communication processes between all parties.

In solving these problems, a special emphasis should be placed on the innovative development of the economy, increasing the efficiency of public administration, rising incomes of the population, local and state budgets. At the same time, resource provision of the implementation of national goals in the social and environmental-economic spheres in the implementation of the strategy of national projects is extremely important. Businesses, in turn, must take joint responsibility for compliance with the law, improving working conditions, the environmental component of the implemented projects. Civil society, or as it is also called "the third sector," should initiate the solution of the critical problems of life and provide permanent control over their implementation. At the same time, the specificity of control

functions extends throughout the hierarchy of public administration and to all parties of interaction (Slyusarenko, 2014).

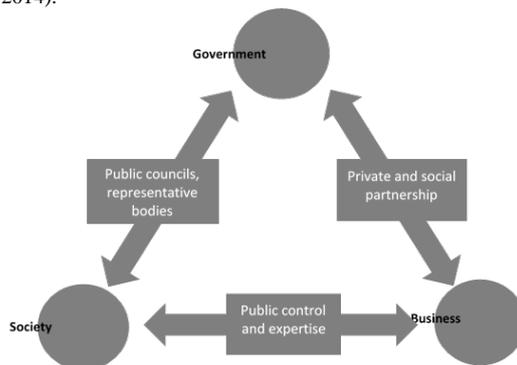


Figure 1 – The components of the institution of tripartite partnership and forms of interaction between its participants

A study by Wordtips (Wordtips, 2021) showed that today there are more than 7,000 vernacular languages in the world. Moreover, the most spoken languages are English, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Spanish and French, which are spoken by more than 3.67 billion people in the world (Fig. 2.)

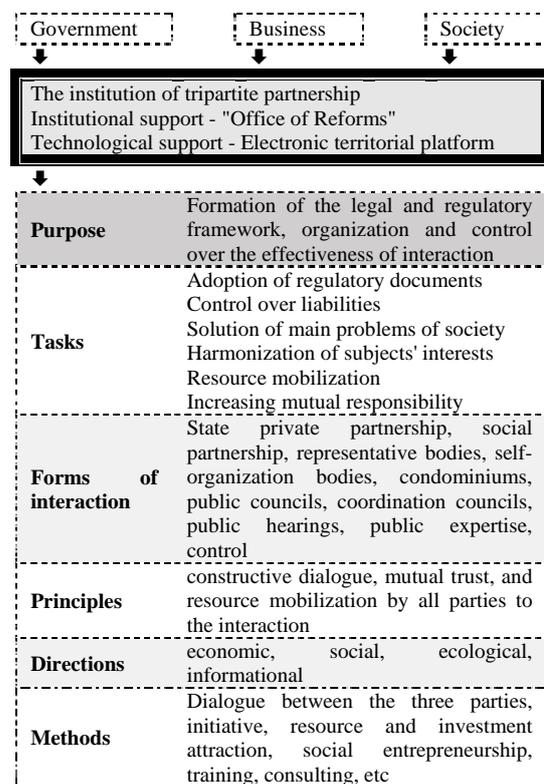


Figure 2 - The concept of interaction between government, business and society

Let us consider the current state of the decentralization reform in Ukraine. According to the survey results (Ilko Kucheriv Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, 2020), we can conclude that the process of decentralization with the current methods of its implementation will be long-term. For example, if in 2016 the positive changes from decentralization were felt by 16% of the population, it took four years for the indicator to increase by 10% only. Today, the development of the decentralization process is slow and insensible. To fully realize the importance of developing their own well-being for the population, it is necessary to organize an effective interaction mechanism between government, business, and society.

As of 2020, the biggest problem for the population is health care (69%) and the fight against corruption in the city government (28%) (Ilko Kucheriv Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, 2020). Corruption is the key factor in solving the issue of territorial community development. For example, the profitability of some Ukrainian OTGs population does not depend on the size of the city or its business activity. In the absence of corruption in governing bodies, some small territorial communities could organize local businesses and provide their population with high wages and infrastructure development (Kazyuk, 2021). The government's initiative in establishing effective tripartite interaction becomes the key to rapid regional growth. Even though the interaction of government, business, and society is a continuous process, this process is carried out in stages in solving specific tasks. The author's team defined six stages of the interaction of authorities, business, and society to solve certain problems, which are reflected in Fig. 3.



Figure 3 – Stages of interaction between government, business and society to solve certain problems

Source: authors' development

According to Fig. 3, any management decision-making process is based on the key elements of management: organization, planning, implementation, and control. In order to ensure the implementation of all these stages, it is necessary to involve institutional structures and technical means, which will ensure the implementation of all phases of tripartite interaction.

**Institutional support.** "Offices of reforms" opened in every country region were to become the main institutions of decentralization and interaction between the government and society. Some of them have their representation in the Internet and disseminate information in social networks (Office of Reforms, 2021). Naturally, the information content of these resources varies from region to region. Still, in general, they highlight regional news about the progress of forming united territorial communities, discussions, meetings, and round tables dedicated to the implementation of decentralization (Volkovynska, 2020).

**Technological support.** It is necessary to note that the current information support devoted to decentralization does not solve the problems of interaction between the authorities, business, and society but only has an accountable function. To create an effective territorial platform, it is necessary to develop an electronic service that can be used by each territorial community and determine its basic requests. Such services should be created using cloud technology (Iatsyshyn, 2019), which will allow access to all parties of interaction. Since the results of the interaction between the state, government, and society should be transparent and subject to easy control by the community and stakeholders, commercial organizations can organize such services in terms of long-term support.

**Directions of tripartite interaction.** The interaction of government, business, and society should be carried out in all possible directions, particularly in economic, social, environmental, and informational development.

**Economic development** is the priority, the engine, and the resource of the change process. The economic direction of development must ensure a balance between the interests of business, community, and environmental development in the long term (Trusova et al., 2019). When economic growth is booming and rapid, it is necessary to prioritize social well-being with environmental safeguards in the first place. Conversely, when the economy is stagnant, it is essential to pay attention, first of all, to the solution of economic development problems.

The development of territorial communities without an economy is impossible. Business is engaged in creating additional value. The better the conditions for business development, the better the conditions for community development. These conditions depend on the interaction of national and local authorities, the maturity of civil society, the culture and readiness of local communities to take responsibility for managing the development of the territory, the quality of life today and in the future. In general, the success of sustainable development depends on the business environment. It is not inherent in the nature of the business to create a public product, care about the environment or the sustainable use of non-reproducible resources, worry about socially vulnerable people, or engage in patronage and the like. The main goal of business is profit maximization. However, high quality of life, a developed economy, a favorable business climate, and a welcoming business environment foster a culture of paying taxes and participating in the development of the territorial community with a sense of social responsibility. In addition, a highly profitable business in a stable economy pays taxes and engages in philanthropy, creates a community product, and cares about the quality of life of the community, the environment, and safety.

**The social development of society** compared to economic development will always suffer. The main problem of most major cities is the distortion of tripartite interaction in the business direction, while social issues remain unresolved. The main problem of social development in Ukraine today, as mentioned above, is medical care. In pandemic conditions, the quality of medical provision becomes an increasingly urgent issue. The indicator of general health and the protection of the population is essential, as it guarantees its economic activity. The problem of morbidity rate directly depends on the state's decisions on the organization of restrictive measures and control over their implementation. That is why the spread of infectious and viral diseases is controlled in cities with a positive experience in this direction. However, in addition to problems with medicine, socio-cultural development is also significant. The problem is particularly acute for socially important educational institutions, culture, protection of the elderly, and people with physical disabilities. Especially acute is the problem of a shortage of schools in large cities, where, with active residential development, programs for the construction of educational institutions are not implemented. The authorities must address such problems at the stage of the formation of construction projects.

**Ecological development** is particularly acute when businesses that use natural resources to support their activities intensify. These issues must be coordinated with the community, allowing for thoughtful decisions that allow the industry to operate without restrictions and the community to benefit from the added tax benefits of such a business.

**Information support** is the primary tool for the functioning of civil society and control over the activities of the authorities. Many factors can contribute to confidence in the authorities, among which information activities occupy an important place. Thus, the correspondence between the statements of politicians and their actions works to increase their credibility. At the same time, there are other possibilities for building such trust, and first of all, it is carried out at the legislative level. Particularly in Ukraine, this issue is regulated by the Law "On Prevention of Corruption". (National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, 2021), which separates two types of conflicts of interest and

methods of their resolution. But despite the normative techniques of counteraction, today, the existing "conflict of interests" is obvious for the society when the heads of communal enterprises, being simultaneously deputies of local councils, participate in the distribution of budgetary funds. This fact creates a vast field for corruption and abuse of fiscal funds. It is clear that every presence of such a conflict, even if it is not confirmed, already causes mistrust towards the deputies and activity of local councils in general. Different methods can solve such a problem; the most widespread and proven are open discussions.

Open discussions are an essential factor in the success of reforms, but in the case of Ukraine, there is also the time factor. Numerous experts and officials believe that when territorial communities need active change, there is no time to waste on discussions because decisions must be made as quickly as possible.

At the same time, European government representatives state that when the executive authorities were established in Ukraine, no tasks were set for the development of the regions (Decentralization, 2015). Until this happens, it is impossible to understand how the whole system works on the ground. To solve the problem, the government must offer the model it has created and talk to community leaders to convince the population to start working on the model the government has proposed (Decentralization, 2015).

However, the difficulty lies in the possibility of engaging citizens in large-scale discussions of reforms. The majority of the population believes that such issues should be realized by specialists and specially selected people who represent their will. In addition, the aforementioned study by the Ilk Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation notes that the percentage of people who are willing to endure material hardship for the sake of reforms has decreased over the past year. More than half of those surveyed are not willing to do anything to bring reforms to life. Professor of Political Science Department of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy A.Haran does not consider these data negative because not all people will take an active position and spend time on some active actions. Most ordinary people are quite passive. In Western societies, most people are also inactive, so we can say that in Ukraine, there are pretty high rates of people who are willing to do something (Borsch, 2015). Today there are five problems in supporting the interaction of government, business, and society:

- corruption in government;
- distrust in official sources;
- insufficient amount of information;
- discrepancy of the form in which the information is presented to the expected reports;
- inability to collect information promptly in response to public inquiries.

The regional offices of reforms struggled with some of these shortcomings, but their activities in different areas were carried out differently. In addition, they have not now prepared public reports on their work, which would show the amount of information that has been accomplished on the ground. Such information would allow evaluating the progress of the authorities' work with the public. In addition, the active work of the officers on the part of reporting, control, and organization would allow the transition to the second stage of implementation of the decentralization reform, which makes the inflow of investment in the regions. Being fully informed, the population could design investment programs and development strategies for the regions (Volkovynska, 2020).

As already defined, each of the components of tripartite interaction has an essential place in the development of territorial communities. Therefore, the responsibility for the development of the state cannot be transferred solely to the government. To ensure effective tripartite interaction, it is necessary to define its

clear methods from each side. We propose to consider them in Fig. 4.

According to the presented Fig. 4, it can be concluded that society and businesses should have practical tools to communicate their problems and intentions. For this purpose, it is necessary to create information systems that allow identifying the most problematic aspects in the region, enabling the authorities to contribute to their solution by attracting state and commercial, and international resources.

For today, social security programs are very progressive methods of interaction of authority, business, and society. They are embodied by business with the application of floating prices for goods or services following the demands of society. Hybrid trade strategies (Pogodayev 2013) become, in this situation, an effective tool for solving society's problems, stimulating business and practical government work. By processing public requests promptly, the government can provide businesses with recommendations for certain groups of goods or services that are currently in demand.

In addition, there are several international programs for the development of territorial communities in different directions, which allocate funds for its development. In order to receive such funding, there is a need for power and public activity in this direction, which could organize requests and organize the development of funds.

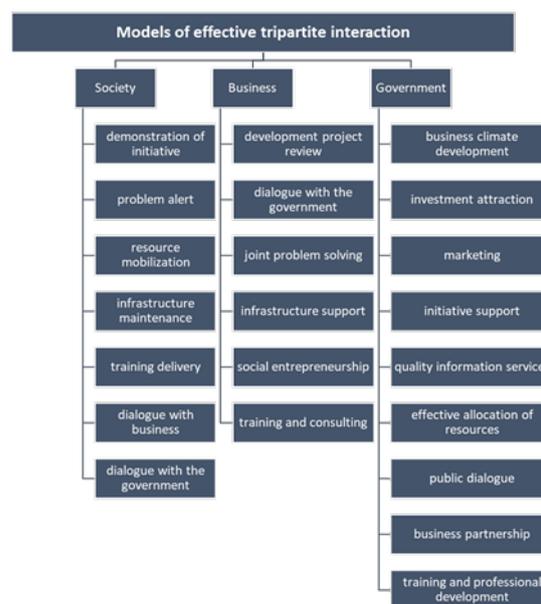


Figure 4 – Methods of effective interaction between government, business and society  
Source: authors' development

Financial resources occupy an important place in building effective interaction between government, business, and society. The problem is not only to obtain them but also to distribute them effectively. Today, many territorial communities can accumulate financial resources from the payment of taxes by businesses. These resources can be used to invest in urban infrastructure or even to create profitable organizations. Gathering public input on the creation of such institutions is important in the effective allocation of such resources. In addition, public members can submit their business ideas, which can be financed from local budgets or even by crowdfunding and international investment funds. By organizing the voting for certain projects, the territorial community will receive information on the public opinion and directions of investment development. In this case, the evaluation of the investment project should be carried out by experts with the help of

developed methodologies (Shvets et al., 2013). Experts can also participate in forming strategic development plans for such organizations (Kostiukevych et al., 2020). State organizations, higher educational institutions, and business representatives can be involved in their development for evaluation.

Such tasks could be assisted by the regional authorities that form regional reform support groups. At the same time, it is necessary to create opportunities for practical public participation in the development of territorial communities. Measures to popularize the reform should be aimed not only to present relevant information but also to form the public's need to search for it independently. By creating relevant and informative information, it is possible to restore trust in the information provided by the authorities and increase the general level of education of citizens.

## 5 Discussion

The interaction of government, business, and society have been studied by many scholars (Holtzman et al., 2011). At the same time, the main studies are conducted on the basis of specific countries to solve certain socially important problems. Holtzman et al. (2011) conducted a comparative analysis of the tripartite interaction between the United States and China. We can confirm that information support is the key to successful cooperation between government, business, and society. At the same time, the more independent the information support is, the more progressive such cooperation will be. Of course, of great importance has the availability of independent information resources and historical and cultural prerequisites for forming such collaboration. Democratic countries, unlike authoritarian ones, build effective links between society, business, and power, which contribute to improving the living standards of territorial communities and the country as a whole. An authoritarian regime prevents the development of such interaction.

Digital technologies and electronic resources are of great importance in building effective interactions between government and society (Maisigova et al., 2021). It has been empirically proven that such interaction methods reduce the administrative costs of communities and ensure reliable protection of information and data storage. Puksas et al. (2019) also investigated different kinds of interconnections between government, business, and society using search engine network queries. The data confirm closer ties in shaping economic interests over social ones. The authors point to a lack of government interaction with academic organizations fostering more intensive community development.

## 6 Conclusion

Effective interaction between government, business, and society is built on the construction of such relationships, which could solve the main problems of society, harmonize the interests of all parties of the interaction, mobilize resources and increase social and mutual responsibility. Interaction between government, business, and society is permanent; it is carried out between all participants with the help of state-private partnerships, social partnerships, self-organization bodies, public hearings, councils, expertise, and control. The main principles of interaction between government, business, and society are constructive dialogue and mutual trust. As of today, the main problems in implementing the effective concept of tripartite interaction are distrust of official sources of information, insufficient volume of information, and discrepancy of the form of information presented to regular reports. Besides that, today, engaged in decentralization government in Ukraine, do not always make reports on the implementation of their works. All this occurs firstly through the lack of desire on the part of authorities, business and society to establish profitable models of interaction, secondly through the lack of operating institutions, which could undertake such tasks, and thirdly through the lack of operating information systems, which would make the relations between the authorities, business and society open. Thus, the creation of such information solutions is proposed, allowing the authorities to collect, sort, process public requests, and make quick

management decisions based on the analysis results. Such platforms should work on transparent conditions with the possibility of control by society.

The study's practical significance lies in the possibility of accelerating the development of the regions of Ukraine using the methods and technologies proposed in the study.

Prospects for further research lies in the creation of effective systems of interaction between government, business, and population in decentralization, depend on the results of further study on the construction and development of forms, methods, mechanisms, and tools of interaction, as well as a clear legislative and financial support of such a system.

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