

Scientific Approaches to Interpreting the Essence of Public Governance of Territorial Communities' Resilience

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Abstract

The article provides a theoretical and methodological substantiation of the concept of public governance of territorial community resilience in the context of contemporary global challenges, including climate change, pandemics, armed conflicts, and socio-economic instability. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of scientific approaches to understanding the category of "resilience," its interdisciplinary significance, and its role in ensuring the sustainable development of territories. Based on a bibliometric analysis of publications in the Scopus database from 2008 to 2025, a growing research interest in the field of "community resilience" has been identified, driven by the increase in global risks and the urgent need to develop effective response mechanisms.

The article presents a clustering of key concepts used in resilience research, including: risk management, social capital, sustainability, adaptation, disaster resilience, climate change, and governance. The main public governance directions contributing to community resilience are highlighted, such as strategic planning, decentralization, human capital development, social cohesion, digital transformation, and public-private partnerships. The achievements of leading Ukrainian and international researchers are analyzed to support the development of a modern model of public governance for territorial community resilience, capable of ensuring their adaptability, security, and sustainable development in the long term.

Keywords: public governance; resilience; territorial communities; sustainable development; strategic planning; decentralization; public-private partnership; social capital; adaptation; risk management.

1. Introduction

In the context of global challenges such as climate change, economic instability, pandemics, military conflicts, and man-made disasters, the ability of territorial communities to adapt quickly, recover, and operate on the principles of sustainability has become particularly relevant. The resilience of their development is emerging as a key task for local self-government and public administration as a whole. Resilience implies not only overcoming crises but also building a sustainable system capable of anticipating risks, preventing their manifestation, and ensuring the well-being of the population in the long term.

Public governance plays a crucial role in ensuring the resilience of territorial communities, as public authorities at the national and local levels possess institutional, financial, and legal instruments for developing appropriate policies, strategies, and programs. The effectiveness of management decisions determines the ability of communities to respond to challenges by

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mobilizing their internal potential and leveraging external support. In Ukraine, public governance of community resilience has gained particular significance in the context of decentralization and military aggression. Territorial communities have found themselves in a situation where their stability, self-organization, and capacity for effective governance determine not only the well-being of residents but also the security of regions and the state as a whole.

The issue of ensuring the resilience of territorial communities has not yet received sufficient attention in Ukrainian academic literature, although it is actively discussed in foreign scholarly publications. Therefore, the analysis of scientific approaches to interpreting the essence of public governance of territorial community resilience is both relevant and timely.

2. Literature Review

The concept of «resilience» in the economic sphere and the field of public governance has been studied by T.Mamatova, V.Borysenko [1], V.Kuibida, M.Bilynska, O.Petroe [2], O.Korolchuk [3], N.Khoma [4], O.Pakhnenko [5], M.Kondratenko [6], H.Masyk [7], and others. The issues of sustainability in territorial communities have been examined by D.Hrytsyshen, I.Abramova [8], Yu.Moroz [9], among others. An analysis of domestic researchers' work indicates that the problem of building resilience in Ukrainian territorial communities is only beginning to gain relevance in the context of modern challenges such as socio-economic instability, armed aggression, and the need for post-war recovery.

However, as demonstrated by the works of foreign scholars, resilience has a more dynamic nature, associated not only with resistance to challenges but also with adaptation, transformation, and development in the aftermath of crises. Notable among international researchers are the studies of F.Norris, S.Stevens, B.Pfefferbaum, K.Wyche, and R.Pfefferbaum [10], as well as G.Deming, M.Fordham, C.Kugglik, L.Pedot, S.Schneiderbauer and K.Shriv [11], S.Kimhi [12], and others. A review of the literature reveals a variety of approaches to interpreting community resilience, which is determined by both the specificity of research paradigms and the broader context of socio-spatial transformations.

3. Identification of previously unresolved questions and formulation of study hypotheses

Based on the conducted analysis, the following hypotheses are proposed for further research:

1. The effectiveness of public governance significantly influences the capacity of territorial communities to develop resilience in response to systemic crises.
2. There is a positive correlation between the institutional maturity of local governance structures and their ability to implement adaptive resilience strategies.
3. The bibliometric landscape reflects a growing, yet fragmented, body of knowledge that necessitates a more integrated and interdisciplinary research approach.

4. Purpose, objectives and methods of the study

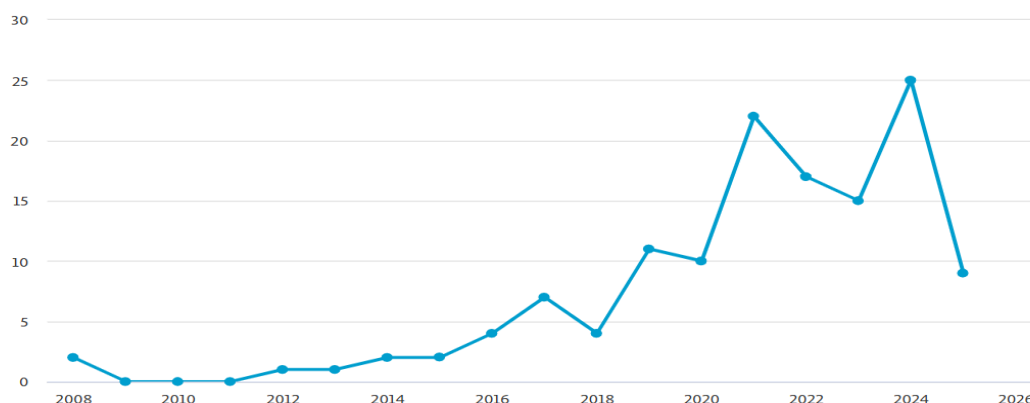
The aim of this article is to provide a theoretical and methodological justification, along with a bibliometric analysis, of scholarly approaches to interpreting the essence of public governance of territorial community resilience. Despite the growing relevance of this topic under the influence of global risks and local vulnerabilities, the scientific literature still lacks a unified conceptual framework for understanding how public administration contributes to strengthening community resilience, particularly in the context of decentralization, crisis response, and post-conflict recovery.

This study seeks to identify key research gaps in the current academic discourse, including the insufficient integration of resilience theory into public administration science, limited empirical studies focused on territorial communities, and the lack of consensus on the institutional and functional dimensions of resilience governance. By analyzing contemporary theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, the article aims to clarify the nature of resilience as a multifaceted governance challenge that requires coordinated action across institutional, financial, legal, and social domains.

5. Results and discussions

In order to identify current and emerging scientific approaches to public governance of territorial community resilience, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Scopus database with the search query «Community resilience» for publications published between 2008 and 2025. Over the past seventeen years, there has been a steady increase in scholarly attention to the issue of community resilience (see Fig. 1). A particularly notable surge in the number of publications occurred after 2015, which can be attributed to the intensification of crises in the socio-economic and environmental spheres and, consequently, the growing relevance of global research on sustainable development.

The highest number of scientific publications was recorded between 2020 and 2023, driven by mounting challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, climate change, and other global threats.



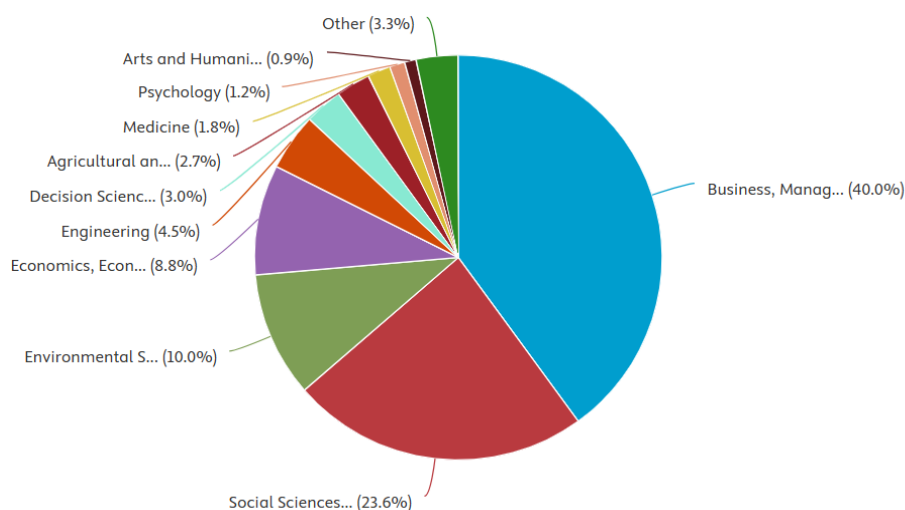
Source: compiled based on data from the Scopus database

Fig. 1. Dynamics of publication activity in the Scopus database by the search query «Community resilience», 2008–2025

Content analysis of publications in the Scopus database reveals key directions in the study of community resilience. These include issues of risk management, development of social capital, the role of partnerships and horizontal interaction between communities, spatial organization of territories, and access to critical infrastructure and services. There is also growing interest in innovative models of public governance aimed at enhancing communities' adaptive capacity and developing recovery strategies in post-crisis conditions. The results indicate the necessity of shifting from traditional approaches to public administration toward more flexible and dynamic models based on resilience principles.

A literature analysis in the Scopus database using the search query «Community resilience» across scientific fields demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of this concept. The largest number of publications is concentrated in the fields of business, management, and social sciences, reflecting a focus on the socio-economic and governance structures of communities, mechanisms of socio-economic interaction, and the need to build trust between community members and authorities in times of crisis. A significant portion of publications also belongs to engineering, medicine, economics, agriculture, and information technology, which underscores the multifaceted nature of approaches to understanding «resilience».

Researchers pay particular attention to spatial planning, critical infrastructure management, the development of sustainable development strategies, and mechanisms for adapting to emerging challenges. At the same time, there is growing interest in the topic of digital transformation of communities as one of the key factors in enhancing their resilience. This distribution of scientific research highlights the complexity of the issue of community resilience and the need to integrate knowledge from various fields to develop effective public governance models. Such models should be aimed at strengthening the capacity of territorial communities to respond to challenges, recover quickly, and ensure sustainable development in the long term (see Fig. 2).



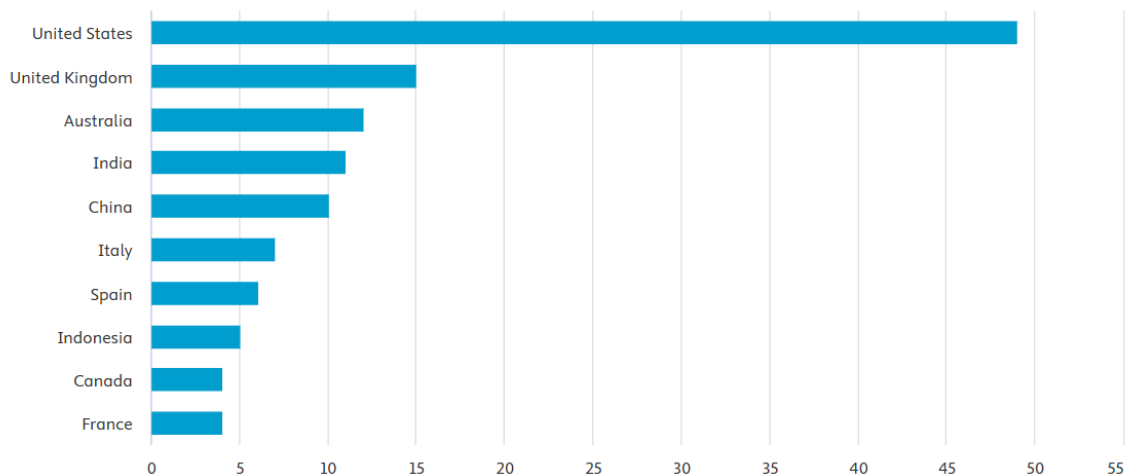
Source: compiled based on data from the Scopus database

Fig. 2. Structure of scientific research in the Scopus scientometric database by field of knowledge based on the search query «Community resilience»

A bibliometric study in the Scopus database based on the search query «Community resilience» by country indicates the dominance of scientific contributions from countries with well-developed risk management systems and a high level of civil society institutions. The highest number of publications on this topic originates from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This is due to their active scientific and applied efforts in the fields of risk management, strengthening social capital, and the functioning of resilient communities. These countries also place significant emphasis on disaster prevention and response to the consequences of natural disasters, technological accidents, social crises, and pandemics.

At the same time, there is growing interest in community resilience research in Asian and Latin American countries. This trend is driven by global processes related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the need for communities to adapt to new challenges—such as military threats, climate change, economic instability, and migration flows.

It is worth noting that for Ukraine, the development of a scientific foundation for community resilience research is particularly relevant in the context of war and post-war recovery, in order to support the development of territorial communities based on principles of adaptability and innovation (Fig. 3).



Source: compiled based on data from the Scopus database

Fig. 3. Structure of scientific research in the Scopus scientometric database by country based on the search query «Community resilience»

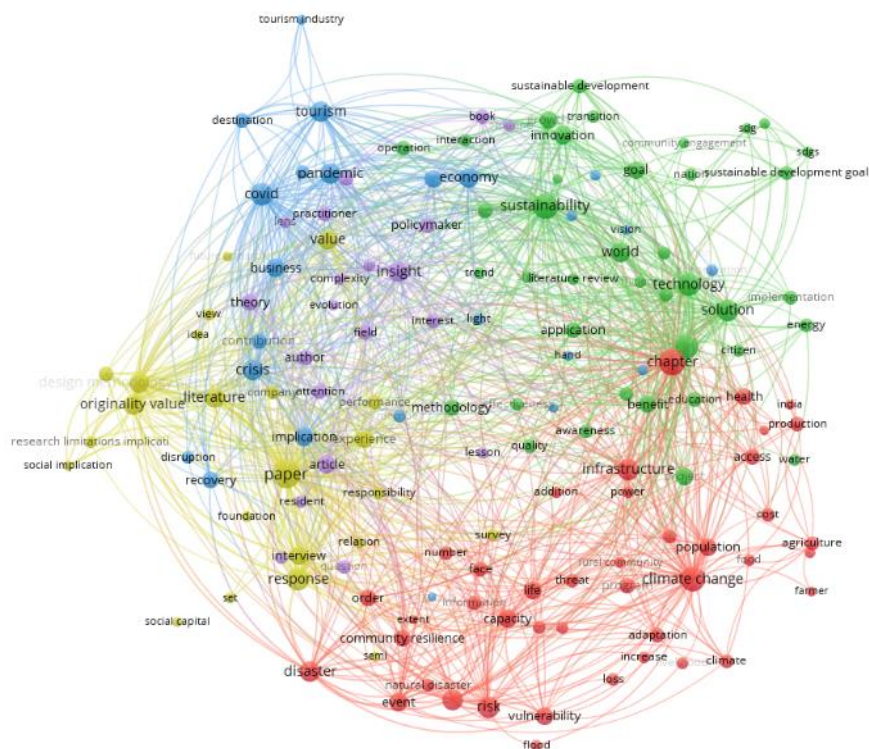
A bibliometric analysis of scientific publications based on the search query «community resilience» in the Scopus database was conducted using the VOSviewer tool, which allowed for the assessment of 837 publications and the identification of seven main clusters of key concepts representing dominant directions in the scientific discourse. The first cluster encompasses research focused on the concept of «risk management», which reflects approaches to minimizing hazards and enhancing communities' capacity to withstand crises. The second cluster is related to «social capital», viewed as a crucial component of a community's collective ability to self-organize and mobilize resources in emergency situations. The third cluster pertains to «sustainability», emphasizing the close relationship between community resilience and the concept of sustainable territorial development. The fourth cluster covers the concept of «adaptation», highlighting the flexibility of systems and their ability to transform in a changing environment. The fifth cluster addresses «disaster resilience», associated with studies on disaster prevention and responses to natural and technological hazards. The sixth cluster focuses on «climate change», reflecting the relevance of environmental threats in shaping community resilience. The seventh cluster is centered around the concept of «governance», including studies on the development of policies, strategies, and public administration mechanisms aimed at enhancing the resilience and robustness of communities. Overall, these clusters illustrate the key directions of contemporary research in the field of territorial community resilience and help to identify the most relevant aspects for scientific and practical understanding in the context of emerging global challenges (see Fig. 4).

It is worth noting that the development of a relevant methodological foundation for public governance of community resilience requires not only bibliometric analysis of scholarly sources but also the identification of key scientific approaches to its implementation. In this context, the research of K. Pastukh is particularly important, as it emphasizes the need for a systemic and comprehensive approach to territorial development management in the face of contemporary challenges. She highlights that public governance serves as a key instrument in shaping the resilience of territorial communities by ensuring a balance between the social-economic, environmental, and institutional components of development. Moreover, she underscores the importance of introducing innovative governance mechanisms, enhancing the capacity of local self-government bodies to effectively respond to crises, fostering partnerships, and involving the public in decision-making processes [13].

The researcher stresses that public governance of territorial resilience should be based on the following approaches:

- Strategic planning;
- Decentralization of powers;
- Human capital development;
- Social cohesion.

The integration of these approaches ensures the sustainability of territorial development and enhances the ability of communities to adapt to environmental changes, resist risks, and recover after crises. Furthermore, it lays the foundation for the formation of a modern public governance model aimed at strengthening the resilience of territorial communities in the long term [13].



Source: Compiled based on data from the Scopus database using the VOSviewer software tool

Fig. 4. Clustering of Publications by the Search Query «Community Resilience» in the Scopus Bibliometric Database

Continuing the analysis of methodological approaches to public governance of community resilience, it is important to consider the contributions of O.Krainyk, who emphasizes the significance of developing effective state policy in the area of sustainable community development. It is underlined that the sustainable development of territorial communities requires not only a sound legal and regulatory framework, but also the active involvement of local self-government bodies in strategic planning processes, investment attraction, infrastructure development, and the improvement of population well-being. Particular attention in these studies is given to the necessity of combining state regulation with decentralized governance approaches, which allows for the consideration of each community's specific features and ensures flexible responses to challenges and threats. The key factors of sustainable territorial community development are identified as: institutional capacity of government bodies, economic self-sufficiency, environmental safety, social cohesion, and effective local resource management [14].

Conceptual foundations and practical approaches to ensuring sustainable territorial development within the public governance system are also explored by N.Vasylieva, O.Vasylieva, and S.Prylipko. The researchers place particular emphasis on shaping effective governance policies in the context of post-industrial society challenges, including globalization, digitalization, and environmental instability. They stress that «...sustainable territorial development is the result of a combination of effective strategic planning, innovative management, resource security, and a high level of citizen engagement in decision-making processes. An important element of public governance is the development of partnerships between state institutions, businesses, the academic community, and civil society» [15]. The authors also highlight the necessity of integrating modern information and communication technologies into local governance practices, which enhances the openness, transparency, and effectiveness of public authorities.

Key areas of public governance for sustainable territorial development are considered to include:

- the institutionalization of public governance for sustainable development;
- the formation of an integrated system of strategic planning;
- the development of territorial partnerships;
- the provision of innovative and technological support for governance;
- the enhancement of communities' social resilience;
- the harmonization of environmental and economic interests [15].

The use of public-private partnership (PPP) mechanisms to stimulate territorial development and enhance resilience to socio-economic challenges is the focus of research by V.Kruglov and V.Stadnyk. The authors emphasize that PPP serves as an effective management tool for mobilizing additional resources, attracting investment, modernizing infrastructure, developing the social sector, and ensuring sustainable economic growth of regions and territorial communities. Particularly important in the context of resilience is the fact that PPP enhances the ability of communities to adapt to environmental changes through:

- economic diversification;
- infrastructure modernization;
- improved quality of services;
- introduction of innovative technologies.

Scholars highlight key principles for the successful implementation of PPPs, including transparency, risk sharing between the state and business, and a focus on community needs. Furthermore, they underscore the need to improve the legal and regulatory framework for implementing PPP projects at the local level, as well as the institutional environment that promotes cooperation between authorities and business actors [16].

The conceptual and theoretical foundations of public governance as an essential tool for ensuring territorial community development under decentralization and the new state regional policy are explored by M.Plotnikova. The author stresses that «...effective public governance involves the integration of efforts of public authorities, local self-government, and civil society to achieve socio-economic stability, enhance territorial competitiveness, and ensure quality of life» [17]. A systemic approach to managing community development—where governance processes are viewed through the lenses of strategic planning, partnership, and innovative resource management—is presented in Plotnikova's research as a key aspect [17].

Modern digital and technological solutions that can be integrated into the practice of local self-government bodies to improve the efficiency, transparency, and adaptability of territorial communities are examined by I.Perfenko [18]. In particular, the author analyzes the use of e-governance, open data platforms, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technologies as tools to optimize decision-making processes, monitor socio-economic indicators in real-time, and engage citizens in governance procedures. A significant scholarly contribution by Perfenko is the development of a model for assessing the technological readiness of public administration bodies for e-governance. This model encompasses technical, organizational, and human dimensions, enabling the evaluation of a community's capacity to implement innovations based on existing infrastructure, personnel qualifications, and a culture of data openness. Such an approach lays the foundation for building adaptive governance systems capable of promptly responding to new challenges and ensuring the long-term resilience and sustainable development of territorial communities [18].

The research by I.Khomiak reveals the key challenges faced by local self-government bodies amid contemporary socio-economic instability, crises, and military threats. The author emphasizes that ensuring effective public governance requires the adoption of new managerial approaches, the implementation of innovative technologies, the development of partnerships, and active citizen engagement in decision-making processes. Particular attention is given to the need for increasing the adaptability and flexibility of managerial decisions to build resilient and robust territorial communities [19].

The academic contributions of V.Bulba and V.Orobey outline the methodological foundations for applying GAP analysis as a modern tool of public governance. They reinterpret the classical approach to the use of GAP analysis and explore its potential in managing rural territories, offering recommendations for improving current innovative practices. The researchers argue that, to preserve rural areas in Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian war and in the post-war period, a key strategic priority of public governance is the development of a safe environment in rural communities [20].

6. Conclusions and prospects for further research in this area

Summarizing the analysis of academic approaches to public governance in the development of territorial communities, it is important to highlight the ongoing transformation of its paradigm—from classical administrative-command models to flexible, partnership-based, and innovation-oriented mechanisms of regional development. The modern concept of territorial community management is shaped by strategic planning, social responsibility, and sustainable development, where priorities include system thinking, stakeholder interaction, and process transparency. Particular attention should be paid to studies emphasizing the role of local self-government as a catalyst for positive change in communities, where public governance acts as the architect of new regional practices—through institutional support, partnership development, modernization of management technologies, and enhancement of community investment attractiveness. In this context, decentralization emerges not only as an administrative reform but also as an ideological platform for activating the internal potential of communities.

It is essential to emphasize that under conditions of uncertainty, crisis, and global transformations, resilient public governance instruments are the cornerstone of stability for socio-economic systems. The focus shifts to decision-making effectiveness, flexibility of governance models, and a people-centered approach where human needs are prioritized as the ultimate beneficiary of development. Thus, at the current stage, the public governance of community resilience should be considered as a holistic system of strategically oriented governance practices that ensure the integration of local resources, adaptability to change, institutional capacity, and the creation of a safe, inclusive, and cohesive socio-economic environment amid increasing uncertainty and global challenges.

Further research should be aimed at developing a comprehensive financial and economic mechanism for public governance of the resilience of territorial communities.

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