

The effectiveness of public administration of sports in rural communities under decentralization (experience for Ukraine)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of public administration of sport in rural communities of Ukraine through the prism of a comparative analysis of the experience of European countries in this sphere. General scientific methods (analysis and synthesis) and public management methods (expert assessment, comparative analysis) were involved. The results showed that before the beginning of decentralization, the Ukrainian system of financing and management of sports developed according to the French model—with a certain centralization of the management of state structures and vertical reporting. At the same time, it has been established that under the new realities such a system will not be able to function, which is already noticeable based on reports on the financing of the industry. Starting from 2015, local budgets (including those of rural communities) gradually invested much more in the development of sports than the state budget. Accordingly, a logical step would be their initiative in the development of the sports sphere, particularly in mass sports. Based on the practices of European countries, the Ukrainian authorities need to introduce practices of more active involvement of sponsors.

KEYWORDS

Public Administration; Sports Management; Financing System; Rural Communities; Decentralization

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern development of sports in rural communities in Ukraine is behind new paradigms. The relatively recent decentralization reforms have created a small “vacuum” in the decision-making and administration of the industry, when the old mechanisms no longer work, and the new ones are still not properly established. For this reason, using European role models and harmonizing them

with Ukrainian realities is a promising area for further research. We believe that the organization of the discussion around such a question will allow to highlight some vulnerable points in the functioning of the vertical of sports management, to demonstrate some ways out of the current crisis. The relevance of the problem is also emphasized by the possibility of forming individual recommendations for the regulation and functioning of sports policy in rural communities.

Some problems of the development of sport in rural communities in the context of decentralization have become the objects of scientific research. In particular, Antoniuk & Perkhach (2020) characterized the problem of modeling the management of rural communities in Ukraine. At the same time, Dorofieieva & Prikhodko (2020) analyzed the role of decentralized governance for the further development of sports. Marcen et al. (2022) studied the peculiarities of the organization of physical education in rural areas of Europe. The main attention was paid to the analysis of rural municipalities in Spain. At the same time, Kellstedt et al. (2022) generally characterized the functioning of youth sports in European rural communities. In spite of this, the effectiveness of public administration of sport in rural communities in the context of decentralization remains poorly investigated.

In this study, consideration of the main issue is divided into several questions: determination of the effectiveness of sports institutions in Europe through the prism of the Ukrainian experience, and financing of sport in rural communities in Europe. Such a structure will allow for a detailed examination of the fundamental questions of sport functioning at the local level in different European countries. In particular, the study allowed for the suggestion of possibilities for fundraising or sponsorship for financial support, as seen in many European countries. Attention is also drawn to certain statistical indicators, whose study demonstrates important structural changes in the formation of sports policy, where the main initiative can belong to representatives of local structures, including managers from rural communities. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of public administration of sport in rural communities of Ukraine through the prism of a comparative analysis of the experience of European countries in this sphere.

2. METHODS

In this study, we used general scientific (logical) methods to research public administration. Among the general scientific methods, we distinguished analysis and synthesis. The method of analysis consisted in a strict division of the main subject of research into smaller structural elements (study of the institutionalization of sports in Europe, analysis of sports in rural European

communities through the prism of financial and budgetary issues, etc.) in order to study in depth, the features of public administration in rural areas of Europe. Based on synthesis it was possible to combine the previously mentioned parts and form specific conclusions regarding the further implementation of the European experience in the field of public administration of sport in rural communities of Ukraine.

We also used the method of concretization, based on which the features of functioning of the sphere of sport management in rural communities of one or another European state are reflected. The main part of the work is formed on the use of the comparativistic method of research, in particular, the article compares the features of public administration of sport in rural communities of Great Britain, Germany, France, etc. This allowed to compare the mechanisms of governance and form its conclusions. At the same time based on the prognostic method of research, it was possible to form their own judgments about the prospects of development of public administration of sport in rural communities of Ukraine in the conditions of decentralization. The article also used a systematic method of research, based on which the phenomenon of public administration is considered as a complex system consisting of many manifestations.

Among the methods of public administration, we distinguished expert assessment, method of observation, and comparative analysis. Based on the expert evaluation of the experience of European countries, it was possible to predict the further management activity in the sphere of sport in rural communities. With the help of their own observation, it was possible to highlight the main problems of sports management in Ukraine and form possible mechanisms to improve the sphere of public administration in this area. In addition, the application of the structural and functional method of research was important. Additional methods were an abstraction, retrospective, inductive and deductive methods of research.

At the same time, as modern requirements and globalization transformations affect the needs of a constant search for solutions to management issues, there are special approaches to their theoretical justification. Consequently, this study is formed on the globalization approach. The latter is related to those world transformations when the role of the relationship between civilizational, inter-national, and inter-state processes increases. In addition, the key recommendations and conclusions are built based on the integration approach, with the help of which it is possible to solve the mutually beneficial relations of various structures of the state in various spheres of life. Significant importance was also given to the information and innovation approach, based on which

the public administration as a system, which should be based on new technologies and information services, was analyzed.

Through the prism of the above approaches, the phenomenon of public administration in this article is based on the systemic, centralized organization of government policy. In addition, this concept is used in legal, managerial theory and acts as a kind of procedure in the execution of actions of executive, legislative, and judicial authorities in order to implement state regulation and the provision of certain services to the population. Given the general interpretation of the concept of “public administration”, we believe that it means the whole system of managerial institutions with a power hierarchical structure, as a result of which the responsibility for the implementation of certain state decisions comes down from the top. Consequently, this term refers to coordinated actions on specific public affairs (Table 1).

Table 1. Peculiarities in the interpretation of the term "public administration"

Public management	
Broad meaning	The whole system of management institutions with a kind of hierarchy of power, as a result of which the responsibility for the implementation of certain decisions comes down from the top.
Narrow meaning	In a narrow interpretation, the phenomenon of public administration is associated with the executive branch of government. In this case, it is explained as the professional duties of civil servants, which include all activities aimed at the implementation of government decisions, research, implementation, and development of certain areas of government policy.

Note: Compiled based on the author's analysis

The main empirical materials of this study are program documents of the development of the sports industry, official information from budgets and their filling, strategies for the development of sports, adopted at the levels of ministries of the relevant European countries. In addition, the main sources for the implementation of this study were publications on the portals of the authorities of the European states. It should be noted that the important materials of this work were the data on funding in the field of physical culture and sports in Ukraine. So, the conclusions of this article refer to the empirical materials obtained from the official data.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Institutes of Sport in Europe: Lessons for Ukraine

Currently, the situation with the development of the sport is undergoing a stage of de-Sovietization and return to its origins. This process is difficult, but inevitable and clearly visible in the recovery of sports life in Ukrainian rural communities. At the same time, the necessary amount of meeting the financial needs for the maintenance of rural sports public organizations is not fully covered by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (Antoniuk & Perkhach, 2020).

In general, the strategy and vision of the main administrator of the budget in the field of sport in Ukraine revealed a crisis in the understanding of the main priorities and structural directions. Among the latter is the almost complete neglect of sports development in rural areas. It is no secret that small rural settlements do not have a strong financial potential for their sustainable self-development. At least, it is less than in those settlements with a much greater concentration of population and economic potential (Davydenko et al., 2022). Researchers have repeatedly drawn attention to the existence of a direct proportional relationship between the financial capacity of regions and the total population (Dorofieieva, 2022). The latter factor has become one of the most motivating in the administrative-territorial reform in Ukraine and at least a partial solution to the problem of financing various aspects of society.

For a long time, members of rural areas had rather unclear opportunities to preserve human potential in general, let alone to develop and form a more or less stable economic ground. The beginning of decentralization brought the opportunities of rural communities to a new level in terms of the development of economic, demographic, and cultural life (Dorofieieva, 2022). At the same time, separate imbalances in the development of different communities, limited financial resources for implementing quality transformations, constant subsidies, inefficient use of received resources, poorly competent leadership, and lack of information about attracting extra-budgetary funding remained relevant problems.

Decentralization in Ukraine has only opened certain opportunities for sports development in rural settlements, but the efficiency of such promotion depends on the efforts of local activists, authorities, and the community. Encouraging and directing the efforts and resources of local communities to develop sports activities at the local level can significantly affect the situation of sports and promote physical culture among the population.

In general, the experience of European countries in the field of sports development shows the high efficiency of the state power vertical in the sphere of sports with a socially oriented public-private partnership with the main function of state support (Kellstedt et al., 2021). The specified approach influences the long-term state planning of sports policy, as well as provides proper control over the implementation of relevant tasks.

The European experience of the physical education system shows that the territorial principle of the distribution of leadership functions also entails the delimitation of competences and responsibilities of state and territorial management bodies. It means that at the state level the key general management functions are implemented, while at the regional or local level the sports management bodies are primarily oriented towards the support of mass sports and the development of the concept “sport for all” (Marcen et al., 2022). The influence of these actions leads to the formation of physical education and recreation infrastructure, taking into account before all the main needs of the population in rural communities.

For example, the Ministry of Culture, Media and Sport of Great Britain is the key government body responsible for sports development policy. The ministry transfers the finances from the state budget and the authority to distribute them to five institutions: the agency UK Sport and the English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Ireland National Councils. UK Sport predominantly conducts strategic planning for sport, both globally and nationally (McFarland, 2017). At the same time, the UK experience is polycentric. A number of non-governmental organizations and institutions of sport and physical education are clearly subordinated to the work of the said Ministry.

In Germany, the main sports organization is the German Olympic Sports Confederation. Its founders were German sports federations and unions. This structure is responsible for the development of sport in the country and the promotion of the idea of people's sports, which are engaged in a wide segment of the population of different ages. The main goal of the government sports policy in modern Germany is to attract the maximum number of people in the country into sports and physical education. This concept is tried to be realized through the development of mass sports and sports recreation, including active leisure and recreation (Hartmann-Tews, 2022). Note that in rural areas of Germany, many private institutions and organizations are involved in the development of sports, providing financial resources to support the sports industry.

The governments of the German states practice close cooperation with the government and national sports organizations, and there is also cooperation with communities and communes. In

accordance with their autonomy, the Länder implement the organizational aspects in different ways, but priority is given to such areas as sports in schools, youth sports, sports for all, sports for the elderly and disabled, construction and improvement of sports facilities, etc. These areas are prioritized at all levels, but also at the level of rural communities (Marcen et al., 2022). A study of the financial provision of sports development in the German states confirms the view that the funds for this work come primarily from taxpayers from the state and federal budgets. Lottery societies and organizations also play a significant role in this (Kellstedt et al., 2021).

Sports clubs are the backbone of sports life in Germany. Back in the 1990s, the German Sports Association organized a campaign under the slogan “The Sports Club” is a win-win for everyone. From that time until today, a network of sports clubs has been actively developing in Germany. Modern researchers count them up to 100 thousand. Currently, sports clubs offer a wide range of sports, which can be engaged in their walls. Even though the lion's share of such clubs operates in cities, their branches and smaller organizations are also widely represented in rural areas. These organizations have received the status of socially useful because the purpose and result of their activities is to attract a large number of people to practice sports. This, in turn, affects the taxation system: The German federal government provides significant tax benefits to such organizations.

Organizationally similar to the Ukrainian realities is the system of interaction between state institutions and local sports in France. The sports policy in this country is determined by the Ministry of Sports. In regions, departments, and communes there are state branches. The state reserves the right to control, license, and certify sporting events, clubs, and facilities. In addition, the relevant authorities support federations of persons with disabilities, local sports schools, and settle disputes at the local level.

An important role in the development of sport directly in rural areas in France or Great Britain belongs to independent private organizations (Kellstedt et al., 2021). They support rural sports, build various sports grounds and buildings, organize and conduct competitions, and help select athletes and prepare them for top teams. Funding for such organizations in Great Britain is provided through the system of national Councils. A separate role is also played by certain sports societies, which are given the right to freely exercise control over the expenditure of funds. We believe that one of the mechanisms of effective public administration of sports in rural areas in the context of decentralization is the formation of individual school sports group leagues in the network of schools of a particular municipality. This practice is widespread in Spain and France.

3.2. Sport in Rural Communities in Europe: the financial aspect through the lens of decentralization

The important mission of decentralization in Ukraine and in the world is the formation of effective local self-governance and organization of effective management of the integral living environment of citizens, guaranteeing the system of providing the necessary and quality services, introducing democratic mechanisms of local democracy, and resolving conflicts between citizens and state authorities. At the same time, the implementation of such a reform also had an impact on the implementation of sports policy, ensuring its financing.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine remains the main administrator of budget funds, proposed to allocate for sports development in rural areas. Such a system of disposal of finances is usually not typical for European countries, where the situation with financing is different and does not depend on the center. Note that, given the experience of the European Union countries, the central government allocates only a certain part of the budget for support. In Germany and Austria, this figure ranges from 2%, in England - 5%, in Portugal - 46% of the total amount. Obviously, the rest of the needs are financed by funds from local budgets (from 40 to 98%). As far as we know, these resources are used primarily to support mass and children's sports in local communities (Hartmann-Tews, 2022).

Many EU countries have a policy of mixed funding, where private organizations and governments share the costs and sponsor the development of sports at all levels, even locally (Dorofieieva, 2022). This commercial model promotes the development of professional sports competitions. This approach also supports children and youth by increasing the budgets of rural communities, sports centers, and schools so that young people have the opportunity to participate in various sports activities. Note that these measures are effective at both the regional and municipal levels, which contributes to the development of sports in general (Kellstedt et al., 2021).

Contemporary researchers note that the budgets allocated to European administrative units differ, depending on the top management and the traditions of governance. In particular, France spends about 6-7% of its budget to support sports (Hartmann-Tews, 2022). Each year, 20 billion euros are spent on the development of physical education in different regions. The rest is financed by private organizations or individuals. Consequently, it is clear that an important role in the funding of rural sports in Europe belongs to private organizations and institutions with corresponding responsibilities (Drózdź, 2021; Melnyk et al., 2019). In particular, in Great Britain and France,

support for the development of sport in rural communities is provided by special private organizations. In addition, in European countries such mechanisms of sport provision as sponsorship and fundraising (it refers to the collection of funds or the process of raising various resources (financial, material, human, information, and others), which a community or a particular organization cannot provide on their own, however, they are important for the implementation of a particular sports project or the activity of the sports industry in a particular rural community in general (Marcen et al., 2022) are actively used. Fundraising can take a variety of forms depending on the specific conditions. or public business, organization of charity events to raise money, a system of grants distributed among different foundations, income from membership fees, etc.

Given Poland's experience, it is a frequent phenomenon to involve banks in supporting sports as providers of capital in order to promote a particular brand, improve the image or attract potential visitors. Banks in Poland actively contribute to the financial support of sports through such ways as patronage, sponsorship, or volunteer activities (Buszko, 2020).

However, in Ukraine, the sports industry, as noted, is fully financed by the state. Private organizations are mostly not involved in supporting the development of physical culture in villages. In addition, the government mostly neglects the countryside as a region for the development of sports. As a result, young people do not have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports. At the same time, EU states are actively engaging the capacity of local authorities to modernize the field of sports (Pfeiffer & Wierenga, 2019).

In the EU there are also special private institutions that address the needs of society and deal with the financing of various areas, while in the rural communities of Ukraine such institutions are almost absent. Thus, in Ukraine, the prospects and opportunities for cooperation between local authorities and private structures are not fully realized. In our opinion, this is an important negative aspect of decentralization.

It is worth noting positive developments in the development of funding for rural sports. Note that funds from the budgets of the state and local levels are distributed unequally in Ukraine. At the same time, official statistics shows that there are more financial resources on the local level than on the official Kyiv level. We placed the processed results in Table 2 (Panchenko, 2021).

Table 2. Financing of sports in Ukraine from 2014-2020

Year	State funding, billion UAH	Funding from local budgets, billion UAH
2014	2,45	1,83
2015	3,65	2,47
2016	1,41	3,12
2017	2,38	4,57
2018	2,87	5,64
2019	2,87	6,83
2020	2,15	7,24

Consequently, the trend towards increasing financial costs of Ukrainian regions to hold competitions, the maintenance of sports facilities, the formation of teams, etc. are the first manifestation of changes, by which rural sports will be more seriously supported in the future.

4. DISCUSSION

We believe that some mechanisms of public administration of sport in rural areas should be borrowed from the European experience. First of all, for the development of sport in Ukraine in the conditions of decentralization such perspective solutions are possible as:

1. creation of a funding network covering budgetary and non-budgetary sources
2. improving the system of non-budget financing.

Some models of public administration of sports in rural areas of Europe seem to be effective. In particular, we believe that sports clubs (like the German ones) should now also become a key basis for the development of mass Ukrainian sports. Such clubs should operate not only in big cities, but their branches should also be represented in rural areas. Note that the functioning of such clubs is a private initiative, supported at all levels of government. For this reason, the German experience in regulating management and tax issues is very important.

We believe that sponsorship can be an effective mechanism to improve the financing of the sports industry in rural communities. This kind of help is not absolutely disinterested like volunteering or charity, but in Ukrainian conditions, it can be extremely effective. Traditionally sponsors have supported a variety of industries: car companies and fuel manufacturers have sponsored car races, women's goods firms have sponsored rhythmic gymnastics, and so on. At the all-Ukrainian level, such support (also from advertisers) is already actively applied at least to the most recognizable sportsmen and sportswomen.

At the level of rural communities, it is possible to attract sponsorship funds of agricultural producers. Ukraine belongs to the list of promising agricultural producers, the implementation of which can accelerate the transformation of the financial economy (Kellstedt et al., 2021). Leaving most of the taxes to local budgets will improve the financial situation in the regions. At the same time, establishing cooperation with local agribusinesses could lead to the use of sponsorships to finance expenditures on the sports industry. The implementation of such a simple program, in general, will facilitate the dialogue between the authorities and business representatives in the regions and can grow into broader cooperation on a mutually beneficial basis.

At the same time, the experience of managing sports in rural communes of Poland will be a valuable borrowing. We believe that the sponsorship of banks has a positive effect on the support of sports in rural communities, even under martial law. This can be explained by the fact that budgetary resources in times of war are accumulated on the issues of support and defense of the civilian population.

In addition, an effective option for the public management of sports in rural communities in the context of decentralization is the formation of individual sports school group leagues in the school system of the united territorial community. Another approach to effective management should be to attract experienced coaches, athletes to the school division, which will promote rural sports as a whole (Teare & Taks, 2021). Note that such coaches should understand modern training practices and have all the tools to implement them. At the same time, it is important to use digital management systems to track the progress of both specific athletes and coaches.

Another mechanism that should be borrowed from the European system of public administration of sports in rural communities is the practice of spreading the fundraising work of communities to support sports. This refers to the process of raising funds and various resources (as well as financial ones) for the purpose of implementing a certain sports project. Such work in the Ukrainian reality will be focused on finding sources of funding for directly nonprofit projects and programs, based on which important issues in the development of sport will be solved. Also, an effective tool of public administration, which requires much wider implementation, is the system of grants, which are distributed among various foundations (both international and Ukrainian). Unfortunately, this mechanism is little used in the management system in rural communities not only on sports but also on other socially significant issues.

It should be noted that the existing model of funding and management of sports societies in rural areas does not bring the desired results. Until then, the “mixed” model of financing the sector, when expenses were distributed in the appropriate proportion between the expenditures of the state and local budgets, was in use. Perhaps the Ukrainian authorities should reconsider it in the direction of greater centralization. The formation of a unified system of management allowed to concentrate efforts and resources on pre-planned directions of sports development.

On the one hand, however, it contradicts the latest tendency of allocation of funds, according to which local budgets already spend on sports and physical culture more than official Kyiv suggests. Secondly, we believe that the development of sports in rural areas of Ukraine should be massive. We are not talking about targeted training of professionals, but about the introduction of a mass base and the promotion of sport and healthy lifestyles. This aspect is extremely important in the Ukrainian reality since the generally low level of stability in society inclines many young people to crime, drug addiction, and other social dangers. Engagement in sports, as proven by experts, is able to wean a young person from addictions. Consequently, preserving the initiative in the development of the sports industry at the level of rural communities in the conditions of decentralization will also be aimed at solving other social issues. Decentralization in Ukraine has made this scenario real, and both the state and rural communities are going through a difficult phase of reducing absolute centralism in the state model. Obviously, there will be those among specialists who will find the new horizons of rural sports extremely dark.

However, there are also risks of using European practices in Ukrainian reality. We are talking about the imperfection of the judicial system, Ukrainian legislation, and the criminality caused by military action. These factors can lead to the fact that rural communities either possess the tools of abuse or are bound by contracts with unscrupulous “businessmen”. Consequently, contracting with sponsors (as practiced in Poland) is quite threatening for Ukrainian realities. The topic will require further scientific discussion, which would identify the best ways of development of the sports industry within the rural communities of Ukraine.

5. CONCLUSIONS

So, decentralization has opened up new opportunities for rural communities in Ukraine to develop. Sports and physical culture are also among the industries that need to be addressed. Because Ukraine used to have a centralized system of state administration, there is not much experience in

local administration today. Therefore, the probable use of foreign European experience is quite possible.

Since sport today is associated with tangible financial investments and also becomes a source of advertising, it attracts the attention of local business. We believe that sponsorship, that is, the involvement of local firms and companies (Ukrainian agricultural firms are known for their activities) is still an underestimated resource for resolving local sports problems. This practice is quite common in the UK, France, and Poland, and demonstrates its effectiveness in the system of sports management. In addition, the leading role in the development of sport directly in rural areas in the UK belongs to independent private organizations engaged in supporting rural sports in general by building sports grounds and buildings, organizing and conducting competitions, etc.

The German experience is also useful, which consists in creating branches of sports clubs in rural areas. As the latter are engaged in the development of mass sports concepts, they will get benefits from the state - this model can be applied in the Ukrainian reality. Moreover, the management of sports institutions in Germany is decentralized, and the federal center has a limited impact on decision-making. Note that in Ukraine, local governments (including rural communities) already invest in the development of sports more than the central state budget. We believe that this trend is a harbinger of the revival of sports traditions in rural communities of Ukraine.

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