ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS A FACTOR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONDITIONS OF DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract. The digitalization of advocacy activities of public organizations is one of the key manifestations of the transformation of mechanisms of interaction between civil society, the state and other social actors in the context of global technological changes. The purpose of the study is to determine the features of the transformation of advocacy activities of public organizations under the influence of digitalization and to substantiate the levels of its digital transformation. Achieving the set goal determines the logic of the study, which involves clarifying the content of digital advocacy, systematizing modern digital tools of advocacy, determining the main stages of the advocacy cycle and developing a model of levels of technological maturity of advocacy. The research methodology is based on the use of general scientific methods, as well as structural-functional and systemic approaches. Their application made it possible to consider advocacy activities as a complex process, determine the functional capabilities of digital technologies at its various stages and systematize the forms of digital transformation of advocacy. The results of the study showed that digitalization changes not only the tools of advocacy, but also the methods of forming a problem agenda, mobilizing citizens, communicating with stakeholders, forming coalitions, interacting with public authorities, and assessing the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns. Based on the analysis of transformational processes, a model of levels of digital maturity of advocacy was proposed, which includes the analog level, the digitally augmented level, the digital advocacy level, and the AI-driven advocacy level. This approach allows us to consider digitalization not as a mechanical

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transfer of traditional practices to the digital environment, but as a gradual transformation of the logic, tools, and methods of organizing advocacy. The practical significance lies in the possibility of using the proposed model to assess the level of digital maturity of public organizations, identify areas for improving their advocacy activities, and select appropriate digital tools at different stages of the advocacy cycle. The value of the study lies in the systematization of approaches to the digital transformation of advocacy and its conceptualization as a multi-level process, which involves a gradual transition from the use of traditional mechanisms to integrated digital and algorithmically supported advocacy activities. The proposed matrix creates a basis for further research into the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence on the capabilities of public organizations to represent public interests, mobilize citizens, and influence public governance processes.

INTRODUCTION

The current stage of development of democratic societies is characterized by the active digitalization of political processes, which significantly changes the mechanisms of interaction between the state, citizens and civil society institutions. Under these conditions, advocacy activities of public organizations go beyond traditional forms of representing interests, gradually integrating digital platforms, social networks, open data, analytical services and artificial intelligence technologies. Today, digital tools have ceased to be simply means of communication, they have become a full-fledged resource for shaping the public agenda, mobilizing citizens and assessing the effectiveness of advocacy. In Ukraine, this trend is particularly clear: in conditions of a full-scale war, the public sector has taken on critical tasks – from protecting human rights and humanitarian response to controlling the authorities and internationally promoting state interests. The need for a prompt response to social challenges, working with large volumes of information and interaction with a wide range of national and international partners determine the active use of digital technologies in the daily activities of public organizations. At the same time, digitalization transforms not only the tools of advocacy, but also its content, implementation mechanisms, forms of political interaction and ways to achieve social influence. Despite the growing number of studies devoted

to digital transformation and the development of artificial intelligence, the issues of the evolution of advocacy activities of civil society institutions in the context of digitalization remain insufficiently developed in modern political science. This actualizes the need to systematize existing scientific approaches to the analysis of digital advocacy and determines the need to develop our own conceptual framework to describe the logic of its development.

Purpose and tasks. The purpose of the study is to theoretically understand the transformation of the advocacy activities of civil society institutions in the conditions of digitalization and to develop a conceptual model of the transformation of the advocacy activities of civil society institutions in the conditions of digitalization. To achieve the specified goal, the following tasks were defined: to systematize scientific approaches to the definition of the concept of digital advocacy and its place in the structure of advocacy activities of public organizations, to identify the key directions of transformation of the traditional advocacy cycle under the influence of digital technologies, to develop a typology of levels of digital maturity of advocacy activities, to outline the prospects for further research into the advocacy activities of Ukrainian public organizations in conditions of digitalization.

Methodology. The methodological basis of the study is a complex of general scientific and special methods of scientific knowledge. The system method was used to study the advocacy activities of civil society institutions as a holistic process undergoing transformation under the influence of digitalization. The structural-functional method was used to determine the main stages of the advocacy cycle and the features of their functioning in the conditions of using digital technologies. The comparative method was also used to compare traditional and modern digital forms of advocacy activities, as well as to determine the levels of its digital transformation. The generalization method was used to systematize modern practices of using digital technologies in the activities of public organizations, and based on the modeling method, the author's conceptual model of the evolution of advocacy activities of civil society institutions was developed depending on the level of integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence technologies.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Advocacy Activities of Public Organizations

Advocacy is one of the key areas of functioning of civil society institutions, aimed at representing and protecting public interests, influencing the process of forming and implementing state policy, as well as ensuring the participation of citizens in making socially significant decisions. Unlike lobbying private interests, advocacy is focused on achieving socially beneficial changes by using legal mechanisms to influence public authorities, forming public opinion, and developing public dialogue. Dictionaries provide similar definitions of the concept of «advocacy». For example, in the Cambridge Dictionary, «advocacy» is defined as «public support for an idea, plan, or way of doing something» [4].

Since the term was borrowed, it is not found in Ukrainian dictionaries. In Ukrainian political thought, there are attempts to expand and specify the definition of this phenomenon. For example, according to S. Batsyukova, «Advocacy is measures that organizations or groups of individuals introduce in order to influence the decision-making process at various levels, which in turn will help create the necessary changes» [2, p. 81]. According to B. Mohonchuk, «advocacy is closely related to the implementation of a number of rights and freedoms, primarily political, such as: the right to participate in the management of state affairs, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, the right to appeal to state authorities and local self-government bodies» [20].

O. Bondarenko emphasizes that «advocacy […] significantly contributes to the promotion of transparency, accountability and good governance in the country» [3, p. 91].

The following definition of advocacy is posted on the Diya platform, which includes «the process of influencing the decisions of government bodies and other political, economic and social institutions in order to satisfy certain public interests. In the field of open data, advocacy most often concerns the opening of datasets, and also covers issues of developing open data policy, improving the quality of datasets, implementing services or making decisions based on open data, etc» [9]. That is, it is clear that advocacy covers not only direct influence on the decisions of government bodies, but also the formation of relevant policies, improving socially important practices and creating conditions for the use of open data in

decision-making. This indicates the complex nature of advocacy activities and its potential as a tool for social change.

According to A.B. Mishchenko and Pugach A. V. «advocacy activities of the public sector aimed at resolving a certain issue or problem, which depends on the decision of key individuals of a foreign state, international organization or supranational institution, are a type of formal and informal pressure on a selected object (target) to obtain the desired result» [19, p. 11].

Also, Vakhovich I. M., Smolych D. V. draw attention to the fact that "through advocacy, non-governmental organizations seek to draw attention to common problems that could be ignored, encouraging authorities, including those at the regional level, to make systemic changes" [25, p. 41].

According to N. Hall, «digital advocacy organizations seek to use "network power" and can quickly launch campaigns on new issues, abandoning old campaigns that receive less support» [12].

In modern international practice, advocacy is considered as a sequential process consisting of interconnected stages aimed at achieving socially significant changes by influencing the process of political and managerial decision-making. Despite the lack of a single universal model of the advocacy process, most known classifications use approaches that are similar in content, differing only in the degree of detail of individual stages. One of the widely used international methodological documents in this area is the UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit: A Guide to Influencing Decisions That Improve Children's Lives (2010), in which advocacy is defined as «a cyclical process that begins with problem identification and situation analysis, includes stakeholder research, goal setting, advocacy strategy development, its implementation, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the achieved results» [24].

Thus, in the proposed model, advocacy is interpreted as a continuous process of managing social changes, combining analytical, communication, and management components.

A similar approach is presented in the manual «Advocacy in Action: A Toolkit to Support NGOs and CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS», prepared with the support of various donors, including USAID. The authors consider advocacy activities as «a sequence of interrelated steps: defining the problem, collecting and analyzing information, formulating goals, identifying target groups of influence, finding allies, assessing

available resources, developing an action plan, implementing it, and further monitoring and evaluating results» [17].

A feature of this approach is the emphasis on the need to form coalitions and partner networks as one of the key factors for the success of advocacy campaigns.

Similar approaches are used by CARE International, where advocacy is considered as «a systemic process based on in-depth analysis of the problem, research of stakeholders, identification of target audiences, building partnerships, use of appropriate advocacy tools and subsequent evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities carried out» [5]. At the same time, considerable attention is paid to the use of the evidence base and the involvement of various groups of stakeholders in the decision-making process.

A similar logic is followed by the international organization CIVICUS, which offers a model of advocacy activity that «covers problem definition, situation analysis, development of partnerships, organization of communication, implementation of an advocacy campaign and evaluation of its effectiveness. At the same time, special emphasis is placed on constant interaction with the public, development of cooperation networks and provision of feedback throughout the advocacy process» [6].

The analysis of international methodological approaches indicates the presence of a common conceptual core of the advocacy process. Despite the differences in the structure of individual models, they are all based on a consistent transition from identifying a social problem to its analysis, forming partnerships, implementing impact measures and further evaluating the results. Thus, the analysis of the above approaches indicates the absence of a single established definition of the concept of «advocacy», which is explained by the interdisciplinary nature of this phenomenon, but at the same time, all the approaches considered allow us to identify its main key features. In modern conditions of digital transformation, the traditional understanding of advocacy is significantly expanded through the use of digital platforms, social networks, data analysis tools and artificial intelligence technologies, which necessitates the rethinking of its forms, tools and mechanisms of implementation. That is why, within the framework of this study, advocacy is considered as a complex political process of representing public interests and influencing public

decision-making, which, under the influence of digitalization, acquires new organizational, communication and technological characteristics.

2. Advocacy as a Mechanism for Ensuring Sustainable Development

In modern science, there are quite a few definitions of sustainable development. In general, it is a model of socio-economic and ecological balance, in which humanity satisfies current needs, expanding the resource and technological potential of the planet for future generations instead of depleting it. The concept itself can contain several focuses at once, namely, systemic-ecological, anthropological-ethical and economic-technological. If we pay attention to the systemic-ecological focus, then this is a strategy for the coexistence of civilization and the biosphere, in which any human activity leaves an ecological footprint, which is fully compensated by natural or artificial regeneration.

Analysis of modern practices shows that one of the key vectors of introducing artificial intelligence into the activities of civil society institutions is information and analytical work. This direction covers the automated collection, systematization and processing of large data sets, in particular, regulatory legal acts, statistical information, sociological surveys, as well as media and social network content. The use of appropriate digital tools accelerates the preparation of analytical materials, the identification of social trends and the formulation of recommendations for optimizing state policy. At the same time, the interpretation of results, the preparation of final conclusions and their compliance with the research objectives remain the exclusive prerogative of a specialist.

A social contract between generations, which guarantees contemporaries a quality of life without restricting the right of future people to a full-fledged living environment, is the basis of the anthropological-ethical focus. The transformation of the global economy from a linear model of extraction-consumption-waste to a closed loop system, where every resource is returned to the production cycle without accumulating a toxic debt to the planet, is an economic and technological focus. Despite the differences in focus, all three approaches describe the same fundamental principle, namely the transition from depletion to self-renewal.

The activities of public organizations are quite extensive, but they act as a kind of link between society and the state. Public organizations are

able to identify social problems, draw the attention of the authorities to them, and can achieve appropriate changes in public policy and practice. It is advocacy that makes it possible to translate public demands into the realm of public policy and achieve changes that have a long-term social effect. In this context, advocacy activities should be considered as one of the mechanisms for achieving sustainable development goals. Through a diverse range of activities, CSOs can influence decisions in the areas of social equality, poverty alleviation, access to education and social services, environmental protection, community development, and ensuring human rights. It is important that such activities are focused not only on solving a specific problem, but also on changing approaches to its regulation.

For example, such activities of public organizations can be traced in the work of public organizations of the Odessa region for 2025-2026. Indicative in this context is the experience of the Association for the Promotion of Self-Organization of the Population, whose activities are related to the development of local democracy, public participation and strengthening the capacity of territorial communities. In 2025, one of the key areas of the Association's work was advocacy for legislative changes in the field of self-organization of the population. Representatives of the organization participated in the work of the parliamentary working group on the development of draft law No. 6319 «On bodies of self-organization of the population», analyzed legislative proposals and amendments, prepared expert materials and interacted with people's deputies and representatives of the relevant parliamentary committee. Such activities demonstrate that advocacy by CSOs can be directly aimed at changing the regulatory and legal conditions for the functioning of local democracy, and therefore at the formation of more capable and inclusive institutions [27, p. 5]. It is important that in the activities of the Association, issues of local democracy are considered in connection with the resilience of territorial communities and their ability to independently respond to social challenges.

Another public organization, Ecodia, in 2025–2026 implemented a number of initiatives related to supporting territorial communities in issues of adaptation to climate change. In 2026, Ecodia announced the selection of communities in the Odessa region to participate in the program, which provides expert and technical support in identifying climate risks and preparing adaptation action plans. Thus, the public organization participates

not only in the dissemination of environmental knowledge, but also in the formation of practical approaches to planning the development of territories taking into account long-term climate risks [11]. A separate area of activity of Ecodia in 2026 was work on issues of renewable energy development in the Odessa region. Therefore, advocacy activities in this case combine environmental and social interests and are aimed at finding energy development models that take into account both the need for a transition to cleaner energy and the interests of territorial communities.

At the same time, the advocacy activities of CSOs in the Odessa region have a distinct social dimension. The experience of the NGO «April 10th» («Desyate Kvitnya»), which works with internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and other groups in a vulnerable situation, is indicative. The organization considers advocacy as a separate area of its activity and uses it to influence the legal and institutional conditions for ensuring the rights of the relevant groups. One of the tools of such influence is strategic litigation, through which individual cases can become the basis for broader changes in law enforcement and state policy [14].

Such activities of the organization correspond to the social and institutional dimensions of sustainable development, namely, the formation of a special approach to recovery, in which the population is not considered exclusively as a recipient of assistance, but acts as a participant in the process of determining development priorities.

The gender aspect of sustainable development is represented by the activities of the public movement «Faith, Hope, Love», which operates in the Odessa region and participates in the implementation of the agenda "Women, Peace, Security". Within the framework of the activities of the Coalition 1325 Odessa, representatives of the public sector interact with regional authorities on issues of preventing and combating gender-based violence, protecting victims and taking into account gender aspects in security policy. A separate example is the project «Advocacy of the activities of the Coalition 1325 in the city of Odesa for the further implementation of its activities», aimed at strengthening the capacity of local governments, law enforcement agencies and public organizations to work with the problems of sexual and gender-based violence [26].

Another area of advocacy related to the social component of sustainable development is combating discrimination and ensuring equal access to rights and public resources. In the Odessa region, the relevant activities are carried out by the Roma Human Rights Center, which works with the protection of the rights of the Roma community, legal education and representation of its interests. In this case, advocacy is aimed at overcoming not only individual violations of rights, but also more persistent forms of social exclusion. This corresponds to the understanding of sustainable development as a process that should provide opportunities for the participation of various social groups in public life and access to rights and institutions without discrimination [22].

An analysis of the practices of public organizations in the Odessa region in 2025-2026 indicates an expansion of the subject field of advocacy activity and its gradual shift from the representation of individual social groups to influencing the institutional mechanisms of forming and implementing public policy. Advocacy initiatives cover various areas of activity, which indicates that modern advocacy of public organizations is increasingly not situational, but systemic in nature and is focused on changing the conditions within which social problems arise and reproduce. It is significant that in these practices, advocacy is combined with analytical, expert, human rights and communication activities. Such a combination allows public organizations not only to articulate public demands, but also to justify the need for relevant changes, to involve representatives of government bodies and other stakeholders in their discussion and to influence the decision-making process. In this sense, advocacy is one of the channels for institutionalizing public interests, through which the problems of individual communities, social groups or territories acquire the status of a subject of public policy.

According to the Ukrainian Center for Independent Policy Research (2024), «the introduction of artificial intelligence tools significantly optimizes the administration of the non-profit sector. The use of algorithms covers both the fundraising cycle – grant market analysis, project proposal preparation, development of logical-structural matrices, budgeting and reporting – and internal operational management. Digital solutions simplify team coordination, task planning, stage execution control and document flow» [23]. As a result, this reduces time spent on bureaucratic procedures,

improves the quality of project documentation and contributes to the rational allocation of human resources.

Finaly the experience of public organizations of the Odessa region gives grounds to consider advocacy as one of the important mechanisms for civil society participation in ensuring sustainable development. Its significance lies not only in the ability to achieve a solution to a specific social problem, but primarily in the ability to influence the regulatory, institutional and managerial conditions of further development. In this context, public organizations. perform the function of an intermediary between public needs and public institutions, ensuring the representation of citizens' interests, their involvement in the decision-making process and public control over their implementation. It is this role that allows us to consider advocacy not as an auxiliary direction of activity of public organizations, but as an independent mechanism of political influence and one of the factors in the formation of a more inclusive, responsible and sustainable model of social development.

3. Digitalization of Advocacy Activities of Public Organizations

The integration of artificial intelligence technologies into the activities of civil society institutions leads to a transformation of approaches to the organization of their activities and a gradual expansion of the functional purpose of digital technologies. If at the initial stages of digitalization AI was mainly considered as a tool for automating individual routine operations, in modern conditions it acquires the significance of a comprehensive resource for organizational development, increasing institutional capacity and adapting civil society organizations to dynamic changes in the digital environment.

The functional potential of artificial intelligence technologies covers a number of interrelated areas of activity of civil society institutions. First of all, this is the information and analytical area, within which the use of AI algorithms ensures automation and acceleration of the processes of collection, processing, structuring and primary verification of significant amounts of information. This creates additional opportunities for monitoring socio-political processes, preparing analytical materials, identifying trends and forming an evidence base for making organizational and strategic decisions.

Another important area is increasing operational and organizational efficiency. The use of artificial intelligence tools makes it possible to automate certain administrative procedures, optimize document flow, information flow management, communication with target audiences, and certain elements of fundraising activities. As a result, the volume of routine operations performed by employees decreases, and human and financial resources can be more effectively directed at implementing the organization's main programmatic and socially significant tasks.

«The use of AI in the field of strategic planning and forecasting is of particular importance. The use of predictive analytics and processing of large data sets expands the capabilities of civil society organizations to identify potential risks, predict changes in the social environment, model possible development scenarios, and determine strategic priorities. At the same time, such technologies do not replace a management decision, but form an additional analytical basis for its adoption» [23].

Artificial intelligence has significant potential in the field of strategic communications and advocacy. The use of algorithmic tools contributes to the segmentation of target audiences, the personalization of communication messages, the analysis of public reactions and the optimization of information campaigns. This can increase the targeting of advocacy initiatives, expand the possibilities of involving citizens in socio-political processes and strengthen the ability of civil society organizations to represent and communicate public interests.

Therefore, the integration of artificial intelligence into the activities of civil society institutions is complex and goes beyond the automation of individual functions. AI is gradually becoming a tool for increasing the institutional capacity, adaptability, analytical soundness and communication efficiency of civil society organizations. At the same time, its use requires taking into account the issues of data reliability, algorithmic bias, transparency of decision-making, protection of personal data and ethical boundaries of the use of automated systems. It is the combination of the technological capabilities of AI with the principles of responsible governance and democratic accountability that determines the prospects for its use as a factor in the further transformation of civil society in the context of digitalization.

The generalization of the above theoretical approaches and practical activities of public organizations gives grounds to assert that most modern studies consider individual tools of digital advocacy or analyze the impact of digital technologies on individual stages of advocacy. The analyzed sources did not reveal a comprehensive model that would simultaneously combine the stages of the advocacy cycle and the levels of technological maturity of advocacy. Therefore, this necessitates the need for conceptual modeling of the corresponding process. It is the generalization of the above approaches that became the basis for developing the author's model of the transformation of advocacy activities of public organizations in the context of digitalization, which allows us to trace the evolution of each stage of the advocacy process from traditional practices to the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools.

In view of this, the author's matrix of the transformation of advocacy activities of public organizations in the context of digitalization is proposed (Table 1), which is based on a phased analysis of the full cycle of the advocacy campaign. The matrix is based on the assumption that digital transformation does not change the logic of the advocacy process, but primarily transforms the tools for implementing its individual stages, expanding the possibilities of information collection, communication, data analysis, coordination of participants, and evaluation of results.

The proposed analytical matrix of the digital transformation of advocacy is based on a combination of comparative, structural-functional and procedural approaches. The purpose of such a matrix is to systematize the changes that advocacy activities undergo under the influence of digitalization and artificial intelligence technologies, as well as to determine how technological tools change individual functions, mechanisms and methods of implementing the advocacy process. The approaches used made it possible to consider and trace the dynamics of advocacy changes. For example, the application of structural-functional analysis made it possible to consider advocacy as a complex of interconnected functional components, each of which plays a certain role in achieving the desired political or social change. At the same time, the procedural approach made it possible to trace the dynamics of advocacy activities, namely from the initial identification of a socially significant problem to assessing the effectiveness of the impact

and forming the basis for the subsequent advocacy cycle. The comparative approach, in turn, provides the opportunity to compare the methods of implementing relevant functions at different levels of technological support.

The theoretical basis for determining the structure of the advocacy process was the generalization of international approaches presented in methodological and practical materials of UNICEF, CARE International, CIVICUS [5, 6, 24] and other international organizations, which consider advocacy as a set of interrelated actions aimed at shaping the public agenda, mobilizing stakeholders, influencing decision-makers, and achieving desired changes in policy or practice. On this basis, the proposed matrix does not mechanically reproduce any of the existing schemes, but carries out their analytical generalization and supplements them with a technological dimension. That is, the author's contribution to the proposed matrix is not in the isolation of the functional components of advocacy, which are already presented in international methodological approaches, but in their conceptual combination with the technological dimension of advocacy activity. Unlike existing models, in which digital tools are mainly considered as separate means of communication, mobilization or information collection, the proposed matrix explains digital transformation as a cross-cutting characteristic of the entire advocacy cycle. Also, the fundamental difference of the proposed matrix is the combination of procedural and digital dimensions of advocacy. While traditional models mainly answer the question of what actions the subject of advocacy performs and in what sequence, the proposed matrix additionally allows us to determine how these actions are performed depending on the level of digital maturity. Thus, digitalization is considered not as an external or auxiliary component of advocacy, but as a factor that can transform the methods of information collection, evidence-based formation, stakeholder mobilization, communication, political influence, monitoring the implementation of decisions and evaluating results.

If we consider the structure of the proposed matrix, it consists of two interrelated dimensions, namely vertical and horizontal. The vertical dimension is represented by the main functional stages of the advocacy cycle and reflects the logic of the deployment of advocacy activities (see Table 1). Such structuring allows us to consider advocacy not as a one-

time campaign, but as a cyclical process within which the results of the evaluation can form new information about the problem, identify unresolved aspects or generate new needs for political intervention. Therefore, the final stage does not mean the final cessation of advocacy activities, since the results of the evaluation can return the subjects of advocacy to redefine the problem, clarify the evidence base or revise the strategy of influence. It can be seen that the proposed sequence is analytical, not strictly linear in nature, because individual stages can partially overlap, be carried out in parallel or be repeated. For example, partnership building can begin at the problem definition stage, and communication activities can accompany almost the entire advocacy cycle. That is why the vertical dimension should be understood as a structured model of the main functions of advocacy, and not as a mandatory algorithm of activities.

The horizontal dimension characterizes the levels of digital transformation and digital maturity of advocacy. In this model, digital maturity of advocacy does not refer to the number of digital tools used by an organization, but to the degree of integration of technologies into the functional logic of advocacy, the nature of data use, the level of automation, the ability of digital systems to support decision-making, etc. This approach fundamentally distinguishes digital maturity from simple digitalization. For example, the presence of a website, a social network page, or e-mail in itself does not indicate a high level of technological maturity. What is decisive is what function technology performs in the advocacy process and how much it changes the way it is organized.

At the analog level, advocacy activities are mainly based on direct interpersonal interaction, manual collection and analysis of information, traditional forms of communication, physical presence and expert decision-making. Digital support at this level does not determine the logic of the process, and the main resources are human experience, professional expertise, personal contacts and institutional connections. The digitally augmented (hybrid) level is characterized by a combination of traditional and digital tools. Digital technologies at this level mainly perform the function of strengthening existing practices. At the same time, the main organizational logic of advocacy remains mainly traditional. That is why the use of a digital tool does not mean an automatic transition to the digital level.

The digital level is characterized by the transition from the use of individual digital tools to the systemic organization of advocacy activities in the digital environment. Digital platforms, open data, digital registries, analytical systems, online participation mechanisms and data-driven approaches are becoming not auxiliary, but structurally important components of the advocacy process. At this level, digital data is used systematically to identify problems, form an evidence base, mobilize stakeholders, implement campaigns, interact with authorities and evaluate results. The highest level in the proposed model is intelligent advocacy (AI-driven Advocacy). In fact, this is a transition from digital processing and use of data to their intelligent analysis using artificial intelligence technologies. Its key feature is not the fact of using AI tools, but their use to identify patterns, predict, personalize, scenario modeling, automate analytical operations and support strategic decision-making. At the same time, AI-driven Advocacy does not involve replacing a person as a subject of advocacy. Artificial intelligence in the proposed model is considered as a tool to support analytical and strategic decisions, while the definition of values, advocacy goals, political priorities and responsibility for the decisions made remain with people and relevant organizations. This allows us to avoid technological determinism and consider AI not as an autonomous subject of advocacy, but as a tool to expand the analytical and strategic capabilities of its subjects.

Importantly, the four horizontal levels are not sequential stages of organizational development. They constitute an analytical typology that allows us to determine the technological maturity of individual advocacy functions. One organization can simultaneously demonstrate different levels of digital maturity at different stages of the advocacy cycle. For example, it can use constant digital monitoring of open data and AI tools for information analysis, but form partnerships mainly through traditional personal contacts. Similarly, a digital communication campaign can be combined with traditional methods of direct influence on decision-makers. Thus, AI-driven Advocacy involves a qualitative change in the role of technology. If at the digital level technology mainly provides data collection, transmission and analysis, then at the intellectual level it can be used to interpret large amounts of information, detect weak signals, predict the development of problems and predict risks.

Table 1

Matrix of functional stages and levels of technological maturity of advocacy activities

№	Stage of the advocacy cycle	Level of digital transformation of advocacy			
1	2	3			
1.	Identifying and formulating the problem	Personal appeals from citizens, direct observation, interviews, offline surveys and consultations with stakeholders	Combining traditional appeals with online surveys and social media analysis	Continuous digital monitoring of open data, media and social platforms	AI analysis of large amounts of information, detection of hidden patterns and weak signals, prediction of the development of the problem and its potential consequences.
2.	Researching the problem and preparing the evidence base	Analysis of legislation, official documents and manual systematization of evidence.	Combining traditional document analysis and expert assessments using electronic databases, digital statistical tools, and online sources.	Data-driven analytics, interactive dashboards, open data integration	AI analysis of large data sets, pattern detection, predictive analytics, and automated generation of analytical conclusions to substantiate advocacy positions
3.	Coalition building and stakeholder engagement	Meetings, negotiations, telephone communication and direct stakeholder engagement	Combining offline interactions with digital channels (messengers, email, etc.)	Digital platforms for coordinating activities and mobilizing a network of stakeholders	AI recommendations of potential partners, analysis of interaction networks and stakeholder mapping

End to Table 1

1	2	3			
4.	Communication campaign	Press conferences, printed materials, television	Combining traditional media and communication tools with digital channels for information dissemination (website, social networks)	Combining traditional media and communication tools with digital channels for information dissemination (website, social networks)	AI-audience segmentation, message personalization, generative content creation, audience reaction prediction, and adaptive campaign optimization for the target audience
5.	Advocacy influence on decision-makers	Personal meetings with officials, official appeals, public hearings, public consultations and direct negotiations	Combining traditional contacts with electronic appeals and petitions	Electronic consultations, digital petitions, online public participation platforms and digital channels for direct interaction with authorities	AI scenario modeling, political risk assessment, stakeholder reaction prediction
6.	Decision-making monitoring	Paper documents and offline control	Combining traditional control of decision implementation with the use of official web resources, electronic requests and online reporting	Open data, digital registries, online reporting to track decision implementation	AI-automation of monitoring decision implementation, identifying deviations and anomalies, predicting risks of non-fulfillment and generating analytical reports
7.	Evaluating the effectiveness of advocacy impact	Periodic analysis of achieved results, expert assessments, surveys and report preparation	Combining offline assessment with digital reporting	Data-driven evaluation: analysis of outreach and engagement, achievement of targets, changes in policy and stakeholder behavior	AI-based assessment of advocacy effectiveness and impact, identification of success and failure factors, prediction of long-term consequences and formulation of recommendations for further strategy

Therefore, the matrix does not establish a single route for the technological development of the organization, but allows for a differentiated assessment of the digital maturity of individual advocacy components. It is the intersection of the vertical and horizontal dimensions that makes it possible to determine how technologies change a specific function of the advocacy process. In this context, each cell of the matrix represents a certain way of implementing a specific advocacy function at a certain level of technological maturity. For example, at the stage of problem identification, traditional advocacy may rely on personal appeals and direct observation, digitally augmented advocacy may combine them with online surveys, digital advocacy may use constant monitoring of open data and digital platforms, and AI-driven advocacy may use artificial intelligence to identify hidden patterns, weak signals, and predict the development of the problem. Thus, the horizontal dimension demonstrates not just a change in tools, but a transformation in the way the corresponding function is performed. A similar logic can be traced at other stages. Therefore, the proposed matrix allows us to consider the digital transformation of advocacy as a multidimensional process, in which not only the means of communication or channels of interaction change, but also the ways of producing evidence, mobilizing collective action, exercising political influence, monitoring and evaluating results. At the same time, technological maturity has a functionally differentiated nature: an organization can be high-tech in one component of advocacy and remain predominantly traditional in another. The generalized transformation presented in the model can be described as a movement from reactive and predominantly manual advocacy through digitally enhanced and data-driven advocacy to adaptive, predictive and intellectually supported advocacy. Accordingly, the key feature of digital maturity is not the maximum number of technologies used, but the ability to integrate data and digital tools into the strategic logic of advocacy, to increase the validity of decisions, timeliness of response and the ability to anticipate changes in the advocacy environment.

The matrix can be used not only as a conceptual scheme, but also as an analytical tool for studying the digital transformation of civil society and advocacy, which allows you to move from recording the fact of using digital technologies to assessing the depth of their integration into the process of creating and promoting socially significant changes. The practical value

of the proposed model is that it allows you to assess the level of digital maturity of advocacy activities of a particular public organization, determine the directions of its further digital transformation, and also compare the effectiveness of the use of digital technologies at different stages of the implementation of advocacy campaigns. In addition, the matrix can be used as an analytical tool during strategic planning of civil society organizations, assessing their institutional capacity and developing recommendations for the implementation of artificial intelligence tools in advocacy practice.

4. Digital Advocacy as a Mechanism for Ensuring Sustainable Development

In the context of globalization, sustainable development involves not only achieving economic, social and environmental results, but also the formation of effective mechanisms for the participation of citizens and civil society institutions in determining public policy priorities. Advocacy activities in today's conditions are of particular importance, since it is through them that public organizations can represent public interests, influence public decision-making processes, draw attention to socially significant problems and contribute to the formation of responsible state policy. We have already noted that the digitalization of public relations significantly changes the traditional mechanisms for implementing advocacy, and various digital tools allow advocacy campaigns to be more large-scale and focused on specific target audiences. At the same time, the digital environment creates opportunities for involving those population groups that previously had limited opportunities for participation in socio-political processes. Digital advocacy is closely related to achieving sustainable development goals, since the implementation of the relevant goals requires not only the activities of state institutions, but also the constant participation of civil society, public control and representation of the interests of various social groups. Digital tools expand the possibilities of civil society to influence public policy and ensure citizen participation in achieving sustainable development goals. Thus, digital advocacy should be considered not only as a transformation of traditional ways of influencing public organizations, but as a potential mechanism for ensuring sustainable development, combining public participation, digital technologies, public control and influence on policy development and implementation. At the

same time, the effectiveness of digital advocacy is determined not only by technological capabilities, but also by the readiness of society and public organizations to use them responsibly.

According to Uko Hadson, "people are the center of sustainable development. The ever-more complete satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of all classes of people, the construction of a prosperous and flourishing country, a democratic and civilized society is a consistent principle at every stage of development. Sustainable development focuses on equality. Society should always create favorable conditions for the development of human potential and strive to allow everyone to develop their potential and provide acceptable living conditions. Socially sustainable development includes several key aspects, such as population stability, development of rural areas to reduce migration pressure on urban areas, minimizing the negative impact of urbanization on the environment, improving education, eradicating illiteracy, protecting cultural diversity, gender equality, meeting gender needs and interests, and expanding public participation in decision-making processes" [13, p. 354]. Therefore, sustainable development involves not only economic growth and environmental protection, but also creating conditions for the development of human potential and the active participation of citizens in public life and decision-making. That is why civic participation is an important component of ensuring sustainable development.

Researcher Milinda Mayadunna emphasizes the role of social media in the context of sustainable development. In her opinion, "social media is a powerful and multifaceted force in promoting sustainable development. It raises awareness, shapes norms, mobilizes communities and facilitates the co-creation of value. However, its potential is limited by real challenges such as superficial interaction, disinformation, unequal access and security risks. The effectiveness of social media in promoting sustainable development ultimately depends on how strategically, ethically and inclusively it is used. When these conditions are met, it can significantly contribute to building a greener and more sustainable future." [18].

It can be concluded that social networks can also be an important tool for supporting sustainable development, expanding opportunities for civic participation and social mobilization, but their effectiveness depends on responsible, inclusive and strategic use.

Other researchers Ahmed Saif Abu-Alhaija and Mahmoud Mohamed Elsawy study advocacy in marketing and conclude that "consumer environmental awareness plays a significant role in the relationship between digital sustainability orientation and green brand advocacy, indicating that the more environmentally conscious consumers are, the better they respond to digital strategies focused on sustainable development" [1].

This conclusion can be extended to the field of digital advocacy of public organizations. In this case, it is no longer about consumer behavior, but about public participation and support for socially significant changes. Digital tools create much broader opportunities for disseminating information about sustainable development issues, shaping the public agenda, engaging citizens in discussion, and mobilizing support for advocacy initiatives. At the same time, the effectiveness of these tools depends on the extent to which target audiences are aware of the significance of the relevant issues and are ready to move from information consumption to interaction and participation.

Thus, in the context of digital advocacy for sustainable development, it is appropriate to consider public awareness and interest both as prerequisites for effective communication and as an important resource for the advocacy process. A civil society organization, using digital platforms, can not only inform about the problem, but also shape its public understanding, involve stakeholders, create support networks and translate individual awareness into collective action. Accordingly, digital advocacy for sustainable development involves a two-way interaction where digital technologies expand the capabilities of civil society organizations to influence the public agenda, and also, in turn, expand the level of awareness, digital engagement and willingness of citizens to participate, which determines the potential for such influence.

In this sense, the digitalization of advocacy is changing the tools of civil society organizations and the nature of interaction between them and society. From the traditional model, in which the organization mainly formulates the problem and broadcasts the advocacy message, there is a transition to a more interactive model, where citizens can act as a source of data, participants in communication, disseminators of advocacy messages, members of digital networks and direct participants in collective action. This change is an important characteristic of the digital transformation of

advocacy and should be taken into account along with the technological maturity of civil society organizations themselves.

Another author, Cosmas Zavazava, concludes that digital innovations can contribute to sustainable development precisely when they are focused on empowering specific social groups and territorial communities. For example, the digitalization of education in remote communities, the development of digital skills and e-commerce, the use of digital tools in healthcare, and the economic empowerment of women demonstrate that technology can not only optimize existing processes, but also create new opportunities for social and economic participation [17].

For civil society organizations, this is of fundamental importance. Digital advocacy for sustainable development must take into account the capabilities of digital platforms and inequalities in access to them. If part of the target audience does not have proper access to the Internet, digital devices or the necessary skills, transferring advocacy activities exclusively to the online environment may lead to the exclusion of precisely those groups whose interests require representation. Therefore, the digital transformation of advocacy should combine technological innovations with the principles of accessibility, inclusiveness and non-discrimination. In this context, civil society organizations can perform a dual function. On the one hand, they use digital technologies to increase the effectiveness of their own advocacy activities, and on the other hand, digital inequalities themselves can become the subject of advocacy when civil society organizations direct their activities to ensuring access of different social groups to digital infrastructure, services, information and digital skills. Therefore, digital technologies act both as an advocacy tool and a potential subject of advocacy influence. This allows us to broaden the understanding of digital advocacy for sustainable development. The main tasks of digital advocacy are to use modern technologies to promote socially significant changes, as well as to ensure that the digital transformation itself remains inclusive and contributes to the expansion of opportunities for participation. Accordingly, the digital maturity of a public organization should not be assessed solely by the number or complexity of technologies it uses. A good indicator is also its ability to ensure the accessibility of digital communication, take into account the needs of different groups and combine digital and traditional forms of interaction. And, returning to the matrix (see the previous section),

digital technologies do not eradicate the previous ones at each new stage, but only complement them.

The importance of digital communication in building public support for sustainable development is also confirmed by J. Zhang's study on the role of social networks in promoting environmental sustainability. The author emphasizes the potential of social media as a tool for disseminating environmental information, creating environmental awareness, and stimulating responsible behavior [28].

In the context of advocacy activities of public organizations, this provision acquires a broader meaning. Social networks can perform both the function of disseminating an already formed advocacy position and contributing to the formation of public understanding of sustainable development issues, necessary for further mobilization of citizens. In this context, digital communication can be considered as one of the mechanisms for the transition from informing to the formation of public support and collective action.

A practical demonstration of this interdependence is provided by Santi Prativi and Natalie Jurges' study of digital advocacy in the context of conflict of interest over the use of the Kamojan Nature Reserve in Indonesia. The authors show that a grassroots community used social media, digital platforms, and an online petition to disseminate scientifically based information about the potential consequences of land use policy changes, mobilize public support, and attract the attention of decision-makers. Digital advocacy was not limited to an information function: it facilitated interaction between public representatives, researchers, and policymakers, and ultimately became one of the factors in revising the controversial policy decision [21].

This example is indicative for understanding digital advocacy as a mechanism for combining public mobilization, evidence-based communication, and political influence. It is important that digital technologies in this case did not replace traditional forms of advocacy, but supplemented them: an online petition and a campaign on social networks were combined with public demonstrations and other forms of direct public activity.

Therefore, we can conclude that digitalization expands the possibilities of advocacy primarily by increasing the speed of information dissemination,

scaling communication, forming interaction networks, and attracting new participants, while maintaining the basic logic of the advocacy process, namely, from the formation of public demand to influencing political decisions. This case also practically complements the second stage in the matrix (see Table 1), showing that the ability of public organizations to transform scientific and analytical information into accessible arguments for society and decision-makers acquires particular importance. In the digital environment, this process can be scaled through social networks, open data, digital platforms, and other channels for the dissemination of evidence-based information.

5. Risks and Limitations of Digitalization of Advocacy

The digitalization of advocacy has many advantages in the era of global transformation and the impact of artificial intelligence on all spheres of human activity. However, despite this, there are criticisms and limitations despite the significant expansion of opportunities for civil society. The transition to digital forms of advocacy transforms the very environment in which public demands are formed, interaction between citizens, civil society organizations and authorities occurs, etc. It is logical that digital technologies can simultaneously expand access to participation and create new forms of inequality, dependence and vulnerability.

Digital inequality is one of the key challenges of the 21st century, which is gaining particular importance in the context of the rapid digitalization of social processes. In fact, the expansion of digital opportunities is accompanied by the preservation and emergence of new forms of digital inequality. Access to digital technologies remains uneven both between individual countries and regions and between different social groups. In the context of advocacy, this creates the risk of uneven participation in the digital space, when opportunities largely depend on access to digital resources. Thus, the digitalization of advocacy can simultaneously reproduce or deepen existing social inequalities.

This is also confirmed by modern research. For example, researchers Gudzenko O. and Shchepova D. emphasize three levels of digital inequality, talking about uneven access to digital technologies, uneven development of skills and inequality of “powers”. They formulated this, based on the opinion of researchers and expressed it in the form “in the case when a

computer and the Internet are available (the first level of digital inequality), extremely easy to use (the second level), not everyone would be able to fully use the opportunities" [15, p. 101].

According to another Ukrainian researcher, I. Dovzhuk, there are four social factors that influence the level of digital inequality. These are "geographical restrictions – between people living in cities and rural or mountainous areas; differences between socio-economic and demographic communities; between economically developed and underdeveloped countries; between educated and uneducated population groups." [10, p. 238-239].

This approach allows us to consider digital inequality as a multidimensional inequality of opportunities to use digital resources to realize one's own social, economic, and political interests. This is of particular importance for advocacy, since formal access to digital platforms does not mean that different groups have the same ability to use them to represent their interests, mobilize citizens, and influence public policy.

Ukrainian researchers I. Davydova and V. Tokareva consider the problem of digital inequality through the prism of human rights. The researchers emphasize that "recognition of Internet access as a basic human right, as practiced in some countries, can be an important step towards ensuring equality of opportunities and social justice. Expanding Internet access will contribute not only to overcoming digital inequality, but also to strengthening democracy, increasing economic competitiveness and expanding the rights and freedoms of citizens" [8, p. 73].

This proves that the digitalization of advocacy processes is directly related to the provision and implementation of fundamental rights and freedoms. Access to the Internet and digital technologies expands the opportunities of citizens, in turn, limited or unequal access to digital space can create new forms of inequality in the implementation of human rights and civic participation. That is why digital advocacy can act as a mechanism for protecting and expanding human rights in the conditions of digital transformation of society. The international alliance CIVICUS defines the digitalization of civic space as a process that combines significant opportunities for expanding civic participation with new risks and constraints. In their reports, the alliance's researchers provide an interesting example, emphasizing that "in democratic contexts such as Taiwan, South

Korea, and Japan in East Asia, advanced civic technologies have enabled citizens to co-create policies and increase transparency in governance. Conversely, authoritarian regimes such as those in China and Myanmar use digital platforms to consolidate control through censorship, surveillance, and Internet shutdowns" [7, p. 7].

That is, the effectiveness of digital advocacy depends not only on the availability of digital platforms, but also on the level of accessibility of the digital environment, digital literacy, protection of citizens' rights, and openness of the digital space. In other words: digitalization in itself does not guarantee the democratization of advocacy, since its outcome depends on how inclusive, safe, accessible, and open the digital environment is for civic participation.

As a result, the risks of digitalization of advocacy should be considered as factors that can affect the real ability of different social groups to be heard and influence public decisions. Unequal access to technology, differences in digital competencies, legal restrictions and the ability to control the digital space determine who receives additional opportunities for participation and who remains on the periphery of digital interaction. Therefore, the effectiveness of digital advocacy should be assessed not by the number of platforms involved or audience reach, but by the extent to which it ensures real representation of different groups, accessibility of participation and the ability to transform public positions into influence on the process of making public decisions. This highlights the need to combine digital tools with mechanisms to overcome digital inequality, protect human rights and preserve open civic space.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research provides grounds to assert that digitalization is changing approaches to advocacy activities of public organizations. Its impact is not limited to the transition from offline communication to digital channels. The way in which a social problem becomes the subject of political attention is changing, an evidentiary position is formed, connections are built between participants in the advocacy process, interaction with authorities is carried out, and the effectiveness of public influence is determined. As a result, digital advocacy should be considered as a new organizational configuration of traditional advocacy, within

which technological capabilities are gradually integrated into all functional components of the process. Theoretical generalization of approaches to advocacy allowed us to establish its fundamental feature, namely, the effectiveness of public influence is formed by the interaction of analytical work, political representation, and control over the implementation of agreements reached. This approach allows us to move away from the narrow interpretation of advocacy as pressure on authorities. In a broader political sense, it is a way of transforming public needs into a subject of public decision and a mechanism for maintaining communication between civil society and the public administration system.

In this context, a significant result of the study is the justification of the relationship between advocacy and sustainable development. Advocacy impact acquires long-term significance when it is aimed at changing the rules, institutional practices and decision-making mechanisms that determine the conditions for social development. Then, civil society organizations can act as participants in the formation of the institutional environment necessary for their systemic solution, and not only as subjects. The experience of organizations in the Odessa region shows that such activities cover local democracy, human rights, social integration, environmental policy, gender security and other areas in which current decisions have consequences for the long-term sustainability of communities.

The author's matrix of functional stages and levels of technological maturity provides an opportunity to consider the digital transformation of advocacy in a new way. Its fundamental difference lies in the distinction between two characteristics: what happens within the advocacy cycle and how deeply technologies are integrated into the performance of the corresponding function. Thanks to this, digital maturity can be determined not by the number of platforms or software products used, but by changing the way advocacy work is carried out. This formulation of the question allows us to avoid identifying digitalization with the technical equipment of the organization. The proposed typology of four levels (analog, digitally augmented, digital, and AI-driven) reflects the gradual complication of the role of technologies in the advocacy process.

At the same time, these levels do not form a universal sequence of organizational development. Rather, they are coordinates for assessing individual advocacy functions. An organization may have developed

mechanisms for working with data, but use traditional methods of forming partnerships; actively use digital campaigns, but remain at a low level of digitalization of monitoring political decisions. Thus, the technological maturity of advocacy is fragmented and functional. Of particular importance is the emergence of artificial intelligence in this system, the qualitative difference of which is manifested in the ability of technologies to work with large amounts of information, identify trends, assist in scenario analysis and support strategic planning. At the same time, the final definition of social goals, assessment of political expediency and responsibility for advocacy decisions cannot be transferred to the technological system. Thus, a promising model of digital advocacy should not involve replacing the subject of advocacy with artificial intelligence, but expanding its analytical capabilities.

The study also allows us to clarify the nature of the interaction of digital advocacy with sustainable development. The digital environment creates conditions for faster dissemination of socially significant information, attracting a wider range of participants, forming support networks and responding promptly to political changes. However, the mere presence of digital channels does not transform civic activity into political influence. Between the information visibility of the problem and the change in public decision-making, there are a number of intermediate processes, the passage of which determines whether digital activity becomes real advocacy. This leads to another important conclusion, namely, digital advocacy has a dual nature in relation to the problem of sustainable development. Technologies expand the possibilities of public participation, but at the same time create new barriers for those who do not have sufficient access to digital infrastructure, skills or a safe information environment. Therefore, the full digitalization of advocacy cannot be considered an absolutely progressive scenario. In certain situations, preserving offline channels of participation is a necessary condition for representing the interests of groups with limited digital capabilities. Hybridity in this case is not an intermediate stage of technological development, but a conscious principle of inclusive advocacy practice.

Thus, the proposed conceptual model allows us to study how technologies change the way advocacy functions are performed, which allows us to reveal the real depth of digital transformation. Thus, digital advocacy

appears as a dynamic form of political participation, in which technological development directly interacts with the institutional capacity of civil society. Its further evolution will be determined not so much by the emergence of new digital tools, but by the ability of public organizations to responsibly integrate data, digital platforms and artificial intelligence into the process of making socially significant decisions. A promising direction for further research is the empirical verification of the proposed matrix using materials from Ukrainian public organizations, the development of indicators for assessing the digital maturity of individual advocacy functions and the determination of the conditions under which technological enhancement of public participation truly leads to long-term political and social changes.

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