

The Resilience of Local Governments in Facing Multidimensional Crises: A Political and Public Policy Perspective

Firayani

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Jambi, Indonesia.

Email firayani@gmail.com

Inputted : December 27, 2025
Accepted : February 16, 2026

Revised : January 13, 2026
Published : February 23, 2026

Abstract

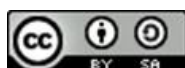
Local governments currently operate within a context of polycrisis characterized by interconnected pandemics, economic instability, climate change, conflict, and migration. This condition requires redefining resilience beyond mere survival toward adaptive and transformative capacities in governance and public policy. This article aims to analyze the main dimensions of local government resilience from political and public policy perspectives using a Systematic Literature Review of studies published between 2021 and 2025. The findings indicate that local resilience rests on four primary pillars: robust institutional capacity, enabling multi-level governance (MLG) and decentralization arrangements, digital transformation and managerial innovation, and social capital with collaborative leadership. Resilience is also shaped by political legitimacy, policy learning, and the availability of internal resources. The study concludes that resilience is not merely an administrative response but an evolutionary process involving learning, cross-sector coordination, and governance transformation. Policy implications highlight the importance of fiscal decentralization, bureaucratic reform, digital public service modernization, and community collaboration in managing multidimensional crises at the local level.

Keywords: *Local Resilience; Multi-Level Governance; Decentralization; Public Policy; Robust Governance; Digital Transformation*

1. Introduction

Local governments today operate in an era defined by overlapping and mutually reinforcing crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, global economic instability, climate change, biodiversity loss, geopolitical conflicts, forced migration, and widening social inequality are no longer isolated disruptions but interconnected pressures forming what scholars describe as a polycrisis. Within such a systemic context, crises amplify one another, generating cascading risks that challenge institutional stability and policy coherence. At the local level, these pressures converge most visibly, as municipalities and cities become the primary arenas where global shocks are translated into concrete governance challenges affecting livelihoods, public services, and social cohesion.

Traditionally, resilience in public administration was associated with the capacity to absorb shocks and return to a prior state of stability. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly conceptualizes resilience as a dynamic and evolutionary process involving adaptation, learning, and transformation (Esposito, 2025; Lowe et al., 2024). Rather than “bouncing back,” resilient local governments must “bounce forward” by reconfiguring governance structures, strengthening institutional capacities, and fostering collaborative networks. This shift reflects a broader recognition that crises are chronic and systemic rather than episodic. Consequently, resilience must be embedded in institutional design rather than treated as an emergency response mechanism.



The importance of institutional robustness has been widely emphasized in recent literature. Salvador and Sancho (2023) argue that robust governance requires contingency capacity, analytical competence, managerial coordination, and collaborative engagement across sectors. Such multidimensional institutional capacity enables local governments to anticipate uncertainty and adapt policy instruments in turbulent environments. Similarly, Cvetković et al. (2021) highlight that effective disaster risk management at the municipal level depends on strategic-administrative transformation encompassing preparedness, response, recovery, and prevention phases. These findings suggest that resilience is inseparable from institutional quality and organizational learning.

At the same time, resilience is shaped by resource constraints. Empirical research demonstrates that internal resources time, budget, and staffing levels significantly influence local officials' perceptions of crisis management capability (Park et al., 2022). Declining fiscal autonomy and austerity measures have, in many cases, weakened municipalities' capacity to innovate or sustain long-term policy responses. Therefore, resilience is not solely normative but materially conditioned by administrative and fiscal realities.

The political dimension of local resilience has become increasingly salient. Governance during crisis is inherently political because it involves prioritizing scarce resources, managing competing interests, and maintaining legitimacy under pressure. The structure of multi-level governance (MLG) significantly affects how responsibilities and resources are distributed between national and local authorities. Cucca and Ranci (2021) demonstrate that European cities' policy capacity during crises depends heavily on vertical coordination mechanisms and fiscal decentralization frameworks. Broadhurst and Gray (2022) further argue that resilient places are those embedded in enabling MLG systems that promote coordination while preserving local discretion.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments shifted among roles as policy takers, policy shapers, and policy makers, depending on institutional arrangements and political capacity (Stoney et al., 2023). In some contexts, municipalities acted primarily as implementers of national directives, while in others they actively designed place-based policies tailored to local conditions (Sefton & Ubaid, 2025). The Ukrainian experience during Russian military aggression illustrates how decentralization can strengthen local resilience by empowering municipalities with fiscal and administrative autonomy (Brovko, 2024). These examples underscore that resilience is deeply intertwined with political authority and governance structures.

Beyond institutional and political arrangements, digital transformation has emerged as a critical pathway for enhancing local resilience. Clement et al. (2023) show that municipalities adopting strategic digital management during COVID-19 were better positioned to coordinate services and maintain citizen engagement. Esposito (2025) conceptualizes this process within a "ladder of urban resilience," where cities evolve from reactive crisis management toward transformative governance integrating technological, ecological, and social systems. Digitalization thus expands analytical capacity, supports evidence-based policymaking, and facilitates transparency key components of adaptive governance.

However, technological innovation alone cannot guarantee resilience. The literature increasingly emphasizes the importance of soft resilience, referring to social, cultural, and relational dimensions of governance (Lu & Yu, 2025). Social capital, community networks, and volunteer engagement strengthen collective response capacity, particularly during public health crises (Wang et al., 2021). Woodruff et al. (2021) demonstrate that cities with participatory planning frameworks tend to exhibit stronger long-term resilience strategies. Moreover, local leadership plays a decisive role. Čermák et al. (2025) highlight how agile mayors and collaborative municipal networks enabled small Czech municipalities to manage two large-scale crises effectively. Such findings reinforce the idea that resilience is relational and embedded in trust-based governance.

Another crucial dimension concerns policy learning and institutional feedback. Sharma et al. (2025) describe a “capacity-learning paradox,” showing how crisis responses both depend upon and reshape policy capacities. In contexts such as Hong Kong and Singapore, crisis governance influenced future administrative reforms and analytical capability. This reciprocal relationship indicates that resilience is not static but evolves through iterative learning processes.

Despite the expanding body of research, important gaps remain. First, many studies focus on singular dimensions either institutional capacity, digital innovation, or social capital—without integrating these components into a comprehensive analytical framework. Second, while decentralization and MLG are recognized as influential, there is limited systematic synthesis connecting political autonomy with institutional transformation and community engagement. Third, the shift from adaptive to transformative resilience has not been sufficiently examined from a public policy perspective that integrates organizational, political, and societal determinants.

This article addresses these gaps by synthesizing recent empirical studies (2021–2025) on local government resilience within multidimensional crises. It advances three central arguments. First, local resilience depends on the interaction of robust institutional capacity, enabling multi-level governance arrangements, digital innovation, and social capital. Second, political legitimacy and leadership are foundational preconditions for effective policy learning and adaptive transformation. Third, resilience should be conceptualized as an evolutionary governance process that integrates administrative reform, participatory mechanisms, and cross-sector collaboration rather than as a temporary crisis response.

By bridging political theory and public policy analysis, this study contributes to contemporary debates on governance under polycrisis conditions. Understanding how local governments adapt, learn, and transform in the face of systemic pressures is essential not only for crisis management but also for sustaining democratic accountability and social stability in an era of chronic uncertainty.

2. Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine the determinants of local government resilience in multidimensional crises from political and public policy perspectives. The SLR method was selected because resilience scholarship has developed rapidly across disciplines public administration, disaster risk management, urban governance, and political science resulting in conceptual fragmentation and varied empirical approaches. A systematic review enables structured synthesis, comparative integration, and theoretical consolidation of recent findings while maintaining transparency in article selection and analytical procedures. By focusing on peer-reviewed literature published between 2021 and 2025, the study captures the most recent developments in crisis governance following the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent global disruptions.

The literature search was conducted through major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using combinations of keywords such as “local government resilience,” “multi-level governance,” “crisis governance,” “urban resilience,” “disaster risk management,” “digital governance,” “decentralization,” and “soft resilience.” Boolean operators were used to refine search results and ensure topical relevance. Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included to guarantee academic rigor and methodological reliability. To meet inclusion criteria, studies were required to explicitly focus on local or municipal governance within crisis contexts, provide empirical findings or conceptual contributions related to institutional capacity and policy adaptation, and demonstrate methodological clarity. Articles that focused exclusively on national-level governance without reference to local institutions were excluded.

The screening process involved several sequential stages to minimize bias and ensure replicability. Initially, approximately 120 articles were identified through keyword searches. After removing duplicates and conducting a title and abstract review, 54 articles were retained for full-text assessment. The eligibility stage involved evaluating methodological robustness, relevance to multidimensional crises, and substantive contributions to resilience theory or practice. Following this process, 23 articles met all criteria and were selected for in-depth thematic analysis. The structured review procedure is illustrated in Figure 1.

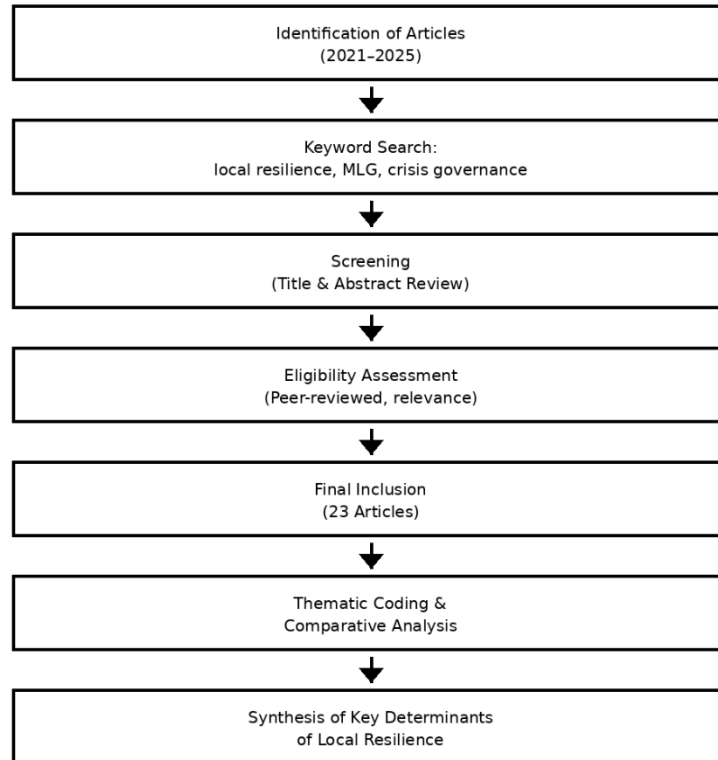


Figure 1. Research Procedure Flow Diagram

The selected studies were analyzed using qualitative thematic coding. Each article was examined to identify core concepts, analytical variables, and empirical findings related to local resilience. Initial coding generated categories such as institutional capacity, fiscal autonomy, digital transformation, community networks, leadership adaptability, and policy learning. These codes were then grouped into broader analytical clusters reflecting four principal dimensions of local government resilience: institutional robustness, multi-level governance and decentralization, digital innovation pathways, and social capital with collaborative leadership. Through comparative synthesis, similarities and variations across different geographical and political contexts were identified, enabling the formulation of integrated determinants of resilience.

The analytical approach adopts a political–institutional lens, recognizing that resilience is not solely administrative or technical but deeply embedded in power relations, legitimacy structures, and governance arrangements. By synthesizing empirical case studies from Europe, Ukraine, Asia, and other regions, the study identifies recurring structural determinants while acknowledging contextual diversity. This comparative orientation strengthens analytical generalizability without overlooking institutional specificity.

To enhance reliability, the review applied consistent inclusion criteria and systematic coding procedures. Cross-referencing findings across studies allowed triangulation of recurring themes, particularly concerning institutional capacity, digital transformation, and collaborative governance. Validity was reinforced by integrating both empirical and conceptual studies,

reducing the risk of overgeneralization. Nevertheless, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The review focuses primarily on English-language publications and does not employ quantitative meta-analysis techniques, which may limit statistical generalization. However, for the purpose of conceptual integration and policy-oriented synthesis, the SLR approach provides an appropriate and rigorous methodological foundation.

In sum, the methodology ensures a structured, transparent, and comparative analysis of contemporary scholarship on local government resilience. By systematically synthesizing 23 peer-reviewed studies, the research establishes a coherent analytical basis for understanding how institutional capacity, governance arrangements, digital innovation, and social capital interact in shaping resilience under multidimensional crises

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The synthesis of 23 peer-reviewed studies reveals that local government resilience in multidimensional crises is shaped by four interdependent dimensions: institutional robustness, multi-level governance arrangements, digital transformation pathways, and social capital with adaptive leadership. Rather than operating independently, these dimensions interact dynamically, forming a systemic architecture of resilience that determines whether local governments merely respond reactively or evolve toward transformative governance.

Institutional Capacity and Robust Governance

Across the reviewed literature, institutional capacity emerges as the foundational pillar of local resilience. Salvador and Sancho (2023) conceptualize *robust governance* as the ability of institutions to maintain functionality under turbulence through contingency planning, analytical foresight, managerial coordination, and collaborative engagement. In crisis contexts, institutional robustness depends not only on formal authority but also on adaptive administrative practices.

Empirical evidence from disaster risk management (DRM) reinforces this perspective. Cvetković et al. (2021) demonstrate that municipalities with structured preparedness systems and trained personnel were better able to transition from response to recovery phases during disasters. Marchezini et al. (2025) further highlight that implementation gaps in DRM policies are frequently linked to organizational weaknesses within municipal civil defense units, including insufficient coordination and limited analytical capacity. These findings indicate that resilience requires continuous institutional development rather than temporary crisis mobilization.

Resource constraints significantly mediate institutional capacity. Park et al. (2022) show that local officials consistently identify time, financial resources, and staffing levels as critical determinants of perceived crisis management ability. Declining municipal budgets during prolonged crises limit innovation and reduce flexibility in reallocating resources. Consequently, institutional resilience cannot be separated from fiscal sustainability and human capital development.

The reviewed studies collectively suggest that robust governance involves both structural and cognitive components. Structurally, municipalities require formalized procedures, stable funding mechanisms, and professional administrative corps. Cognitively, resilience depends on learning capacity and analytical reflexivity—institutions must interpret evolving risks and adapt policy tools accordingly. This dual dimension underscores the necessity of integrating administrative reform with capacity-building initiatives.

Multi-Level Governance and Decentralization

The second major determinant of local resilience concerns the configuration of multi-level governance (MLG). Cities and municipalities rarely operate autonomously during crises; instead, their capacity is embedded within vertical and horizontal governance networks. Cucca and Ranci (2021) argue that European cities' policy capacity is significantly influenced by national institutional frameworks and fiscal decentralization arrangements. Where vertical coordination is enabling rather than restrictive, local governments demonstrate greater policy flexibility.

Broadhurst and Gray (2022) further show that resilient places are those integrated into cooperative MLG systems that balance oversight with autonomy. Excessive centralization may constrain local innovation, while fragmented governance structures may generate coordination failures. The effectiveness of local responses thus depends on the quality of intergovernmental relationships.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments operated along a continuum from *policy takers* to *policy shapers* and *policy makers* (Stoney et al., 2023). In centralized systems, municipalities primarily implemented national directives. In more decentralized contexts, they adapted measures to local epidemiological conditions and socio-economic realities (Sefton & Ubaid, 2025). This variability demonstrates that resilience is not solely an institutional property but also a function of political autonomy.

The Ukrainian case provides a compelling illustration of decentralization enhancing resilience under extreme conditions. Brovko (2024) shows that fiscal and administrative decentralization prior to the Russian invasion enabled municipalities to mobilize local resources rapidly, coordinate humanitarian assistance, and maintain service delivery despite military aggression. Decentralization, therefore, can strengthen local adaptability when supported by stable institutional frameworks.

The comparative synthesis of MLG findings is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Multi-Level Governance and Local Resilience Capacity

Dimension of MLG	Contribution to Resilience	Empirical Evidence
Fiscal decentralization	Increased budgetary flexibility and rapid crisis response	Brovko (2024)
Vertical coordination	Alignment between national strategy and local implementation	Cucca & Ranci (2021)
Horizontal collaboration	Inter-municipal knowledge exchange	Broadhurst & Gray (2022)
Place-based policy authority	Context-sensitive adaptation of crisis measures	Stoney et al. (2023); Sefton & Ubaid (2025)

The table indicates that resilience is strengthened when decentralization is accompanied by coordinated governance mechanisms. Autonomy without coordination may produce fragmentation, while coordination without autonomy may suppress adaptive capacity.

Digital Transformation and Innovation Pathways

Digitalization constitutes a third major pathway toward local resilience. Clement et al. (2023) show that municipalities that strategically integrated digital platforms into crisis management were able to sustain service provision, improve communication, and monitor epidemiological data more effectively during COVID-19. Digital tools enhanced transparency and facilitated citizen engagement, reinforcing institutional legitimacy.

Esposito (2025) conceptualizes digital transformation within an evolutionary *ladder of urban resilience*, where cities move from reactive crisis management toward systemic transformation integrating technological, ecological, and social dimensions. This model

emphasizes that digital innovation is not merely a technical upgrade but part of broader governance reform.

Riemer et al. (2025) highlight the importance of systemic management practices in enabling local governments to navigate complexity. Data-driven governance, scenario planning, and cross-sector digital coordination enhance analytical capacity and anticipatory governance. Digitalization thus functions as both an operational and strategic instrument of resilience.

However, the literature also warns of digital inequality and capacity gaps. Municipalities with limited technological infrastructure or insufficient digital literacy face barriers in leveraging innovation effectively. Therefore, digital transformation must be accompanied by investments in training, cybersecurity, and inclusive access to ensure equitable resilience outcomes.

Social Capital, Leadership, and Soft Resilience

The fourth dimension of resilience centers on social capital, leadership, and relational governance. Lu and Yu (2025) introduce the concept of *soft resilience*, emphasizing social networks, participatory culture, and institutional trust as critical components of adaptive capacity. Unlike infrastructure-based resilience, soft resilience foregrounds the relational and cultural foundations of governance.

Empirical studies support this perspective. Wang et al. (2021) demonstrate that community volunteer networks in China significantly enhanced public health crisis management during COVID-19. Similarly, Woodruff et al. (2021) find that U.S. cities incorporating participatory planning into resilience strategies exhibit stronger long-term adaptive capacity.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in mobilizing social capital. Čermák et al. (2025) show that agile mayors and horizontally networked municipalities in Czechia were instrumental in coordinating responses during two large-scale crises. Effective leadership fosters trust, accelerates decision-making, and encourages cross-sector collaboration.

Sharma et al. (2025) describe a “capacity-learning paradox,” in which crisis responses simultaneously depend upon and reshape policy capacities. Through iterative learning, municipalities enhance analytical and operational competencies. Political legitimacy and citizen trust are prerequisites for such learning processes, as they determine compliance and cooperation.

These findings indicate that resilience is relational and socially embedded. Institutional strength alone cannot ensure effective crisis management without community engagement and leadership legitimacy.

Integrated Model of Local Government Resilience

Synthesizing the four dimensions reveals that local resilience operates as a layered and interactive system. Institutional capacity provides structural stability, multi-level governance shapes political autonomy, digital innovation enhances analytical and operational capability, and social capital ensures legitimacy and cooperation.

This integrated architecture is illustrated in Figure 2.

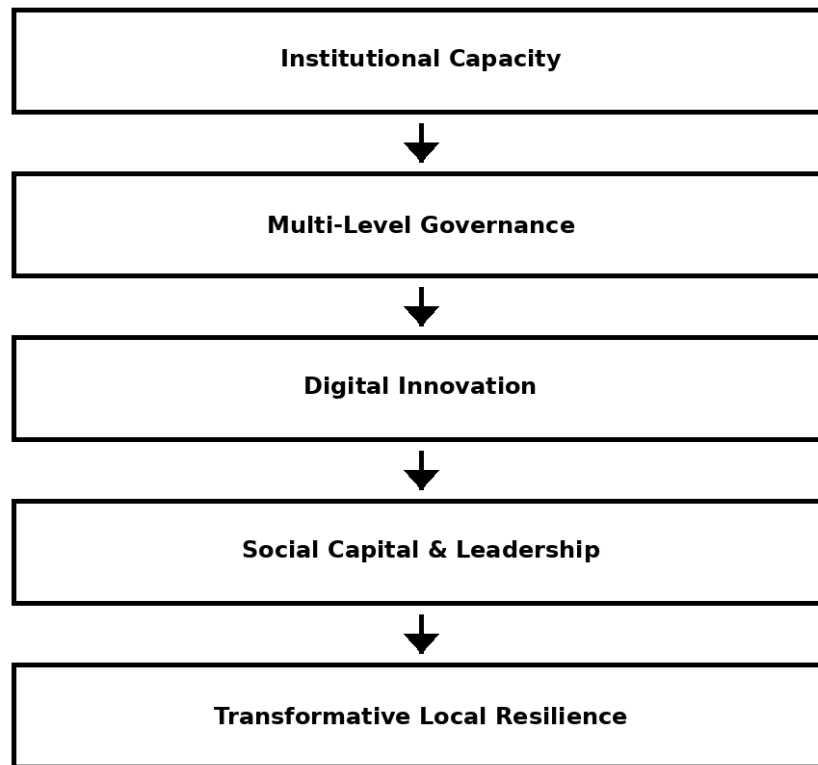


Figure 2. Dimensions of Local Government Resilience

The model suggests that resilience evolves from foundational institutional capacity toward transformative governance through the interaction of political, technological, and social determinants. Weakness in any dimension may undermine the overall system.

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the results demonstrate that local government resilience is multidimensional, context-sensitive, and politically embedded. Municipalities that combine robust institutions, enabling governance arrangements, digital innovation, and strong social networks are better positioned to navigate multidimensional crises. Resilience is neither static nor purely technical; it is an evolving governance capability shaped by institutional learning, political legitimacy, and collaborative engagement.

The next section discusses the broader implications of these findings for public policy and political governance under conditions of systemic uncertainty.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that local government resilience in multidimensional crises cannot be reduced to administrative responsiveness or short-term emergency management. Rather, resilience emerges as a structurally embedded, politically mediated, fiscally conditioned, and socially constructed governance capacity that evolves through iterative learning and institutional transformation. The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes that resilience is systemic rather than sectoral, and that its effectiveness depends on the interaction of institutional robustness, political authority, governance architecture, financial sustainability, technological capacity, and social trust.

Salvador and Sancho (2023) provide a foundational analytical entry point through the concept of *robust governance*, arguing that local governments facing turbulence require contingency capacity, analytical foresight, managerial coherence, and collaborative networks. Robust governance implies structured adaptability rather than rigidity. Institutions must

maintain operational continuity while simultaneously adjusting to uncertainty. This aligns with Lowe et al. (2024), who propose a research-based urban resilience framework integrating governance systems, socio-ecological adaptation, and policy practice. Both perspectives suggest that resilience must be institutionalized within governance structures rather than activated only during crisis episodes.

Disaster risk management research further reinforces this institutional dimension. Cvetković et al. (2021) show that municipalities with developed preparedness systems and trained personnel exhibit stronger performance in prevention and recovery phases. However, Marchezini et al. (2025) reveal persistent implementation gaps due to limited organizational capacity within municipal civil defense units. This highlights a recurring tension between formal policy adoption and operational execution. Institutional resilience therefore depends not only on regulatory frameworks but on administrative professionalism and coordinated structures.

Internal resource availability also mediates resilience. Park et al. (2022) demonstrate that local officials identify time constraints, limited fiscal space, and staffing shortages as critical barriers to effective crisis governance. Under prolonged polycrisis conditions, resource depletion risks undermining adaptive capacity even when formal governance arrangements remain intact.

At this point, fiscal governance emerges as a decisive structural determinant. Institutional robustness cannot be sustained without sound public financial management. Idrus (2024) emphasizes that effective fiscal policy analysis, transparent government financial management, and the overall financial health of the public sector are foundational to sustainable governance capacity. In crisis contexts, fiscal flexibility determines whether local governments can reallocate resources rapidly, maintain essential service delivery, and invest in adaptive innovation. Weak financial management systems constrain strategic responsiveness and may deepen vulnerability during prolonged crises.

This fiscal dimension complements the resource-based perspective by demonstrating that resilience depends not only on the quantity of resources available but also on the quality of financial governance. Transparent budgeting, strategic expenditure prioritization, and performance-based oversight enhance credibility, accountability, and long-term institutional sustainability. Without fiscal discipline and adaptive financial planning, local governments risk entering cycles of austerity and institutional erosion that weaken long-term resilience. Thus, financial health functions as a cross-cutting variable linking institutional robustness, political legitimacy, and governance sustainability.

The political architecture of governance further shapes resilience trajectories. Cucca and Ranci (2021) argue that urban policy capacity during crisis is embedded within multi-level governance (MLG) arrangements that structure authority distribution and fiscal autonomy. Broadhurst and Gray (2022) emphasize that resilient places balance autonomy with coordination, avoiding both excessive centralization and governance fragmentation. The quality of vertical and horizontal coordination determines whether decentralization enhances adaptability or produces incoherence.

The pandemic period illustrates this variability. Stoney et al. (2023) conceptualize local governments as shifting among policy taker, policy shaper, and policy maker roles depending on institutional authority. Sefton and Ubaid (2025) confirm that municipal decision-making during COVID-19 varied according to political discretion and administrative capacity. In centralized systems, local governments predominantly implemented national directives; in decentralized systems, they engaged in place-based policy innovation. These findings indicate that resilience is inherently political and closely tied to governance empowerment.

The Ukrainian experience analyzed by Brovko (2024) provides a compelling example of decentralization enhancing local resilience under extreme geopolitical stress. Fiscal and administrative autonomy enabled municipalities to mobilize local resources, coordinate

humanitarian assistance, and maintain public service continuity during military aggression. This case demonstrates how political autonomy combined with institutional capacity and fiscal flexibility can significantly strengthen resilience under severe external shocks.

Digital transformation constitutes another major pillar of resilience. Clement et al. (2023) show that municipalities adopting strategic digital management approaches during COVID-19 improved coordination, service continuity, and citizen communication. Esposito (2025), through the “ladder of urban resilience,” conceptualizes digital innovation as part of an evolutionary shift from reactive crisis response toward transformative governance. Digital tools enhance data analytics, transparency, and anticipatory governance. Riemer et al. (2025) further argue that systemic management practices—integrating digital platforms, scenario planning, and cross-sector collaboration—enable local governments to navigate complexity more effectively.

Nevertheless, digital resilience remains uneven. Municipalities lacking technological infrastructure or digital literacy face constraints that may widen governance disparities. Thus, digitalization must be integrated with institutional reform, inclusive capacity-building, and sustainable financial planning to prevent resilience asymmetries.

The social dimension of resilience—often referred to as *soft resilience*—adds further depth to this analysis. Lu and Yu (2025) argue that social trust, participatory culture, and cross-sector networks are foundational to adaptive governance. Woodruff et al. (2021) demonstrate that U.S. cities embedding participatory planning within resilience strategies exhibit stronger long-term adaptation capacity. Wang et al. (2021) show that community volunteer networks significantly enhanced public health crisis management. These findings collectively suggest that resilience is relational and socially embedded.

Leadership functions as a critical mediating factor. Čermák et al. (2025) highlight how agile local leadership and horizontal municipal networks enabled effective crisis management in Czech municipalities. Leadership fosters trust, mobilizes resources, and strengthens coordination across institutional boundaries. Political legitimacy therefore becomes a precondition for sustainable resilience.

The capacity-learning dynamic described by Sharma et al. (2025) further enriches this interpretation. Their “capacity-learning paradox” illustrates how crisis responses simultaneously depend on and reshape institutional capacity. Through iterative feedback processes, municipalities strengthen analytical competence and operational readiness. Resilience is therefore cumulative and path-dependent.

Taken together, the literature confirms that local government resilience operates as an interconnected governance ecosystem. Institutional robustness provides structural stability (Salvador & Sancho, 2023); financial sustainability ensures long-term viability (Idrus, 2024); multi-level governance defines political authority (Cucca & Ranci, 2021; Broadhurst & Gray, 2022); digital innovation enhances analytical agility (Clement et al., 2023; Esposito, 2025; Riemer et al., 2025); and social capital ensures legitimacy and cooperation (Lu & Yu, 2025; Wang et al., 2021; Woodruff et al., 2021). Weakness in any dimension may compromise the overall resilience architecture.

Importantly, resilience must transition from adaptive response to transformative governance. Under persistent polycrisis conditions, transformation becomes essential rather than optional. Local governments that strategically integrate institutional reform, fiscal sustainability, digital innovation, political empowerment, and participatory leadership are better positioned to sustain service delivery and democratic legitimacy in an increasingly uncertain world

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that local government resilience in multidimensional crises is not merely an administrative capacity to respond to emergencies, but a systemic governance

capability shaped by institutional strength, political arrangements, technological adaptation, and social trust. In an era characterized by overlapping crises pandemic, economic instability, climate change, and geopolitical tensions local governments function as the frontline of governance. Their resilience determines not only service continuity but also democratic legitimacy and social stability. The findings demonstrate that institutional robustness forms the foundation of resilience. Professional administrative capacity, coordinated organizational structures, and sustainable fiscal resources enable municipalities to maintain operational stability under stress. However, institutional capacity must be supported by enabling multi-level governance arrangements. Decentralization, when accompanied by effective vertical and horizontal coordination, strengthens local autonomy and facilitates context-sensitive policy responses. Conversely, fragmented governance or excessive centralization may weaken adaptive flexibility.

Digital transformation emerges as an important enabler of resilience. Strategic integration of digital tools enhances data management, communication, and service delivery during crises. Yet digital innovation must be embedded within institutional reform and inclusive capacity-building to avoid reinforcing disparities among municipalities. Technology alone cannot guarantee resilience without supportive governance structures. Equally important is the social dimension of resilience. Community engagement, participatory governance, and trust-based leadership strengthen crisis response and long-term adaptation. Soft resilience—grounded in networks and collaboration ensures that policies are socially accepted and effectively implemented. Leadership plays a mediating role by mobilizing resources, coordinating actors, and sustaining legitimacy.

The study further emphasizes that resilience is evolutionary. Crisis experiences reshape institutional learning and influence future governance capacity. Municipalities that embed feedback mechanisms and adaptive planning processes are more likely to transition from reactive crisis management toward transformative governance. From a policy perspective, strengthening local resilience requires integrated action: reinforcing institutional capacity, ensuring enabling decentralization frameworks, investing in digital infrastructure, and fostering collaborative networks. Resilience should therefore be treated as a long-term governance strategy rather than a short-term emergency response. In conclusion, local government resilience in multidimensional crises depends on the balanced integration of institutional robustness, political empowerment, digital innovation, and social embeddedness. Municipalities capable of aligning these dimensions are better equipped to navigate systemic uncertainty and sustain democratic governance in complex environments.

References

- Broadhurst, K., & Gray, N. (2022). Understanding resilient places: Multi-level governance in times of crisis. *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit*, 37, 84 - 103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02690942221100101>
- Brovko, O. (2024). Local government resilience in the face of Russian aggression: the case of Ukraine. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 13, 1361 - 1380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2024.2327369>
- Čermák, D., Mikešová, R., & Špaček, D. (2025). How Small Municipalities Contribute to Robust Crisis Governance—Experiences From Two Recent Large-scale Crises in Czechia. *State and Local Government Review*, 57, 241 - 252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160323x251320135>
- Clement, J., Esposito, G., & Crutzen, N. (2023). Municipal pathways in response to COVID-19: A strategic management perspective on local public administration resilience. *Administration & Society*, 55(1), 3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00953997221100382>
- Cucca, R., & Ranci, C. (2021). Urban policy in times of crisis: The policy capacity of European cities and the role of multi-level governance. *Urban Affairs Review*, 58(5), 1493–1522.

- <https://doi.org/10.1177/10780874211041710>
- Cvetković, V., Tanasić, J., Ocal, A., Kešetović, Ž., Nikolić, N., & Dragašević, A. (2021). Capacity development of local self-governments for disaster risk management. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(19), Article 10406. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph181910406>
- Djako, E., Allarané, N., Aigbavboa, C., Youssouf, K., Klassou, K., & Chenal, J. (2025). Evaluation of urban planning practices in Bol City, Lake Province (Chad): Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd11111>
- Esposito, D. (2025). A ladder of urban resilience: An evolutionary framework for transformative governance of communities facing chronic crises. *Sustainability*, 17(13), Article 6010. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17136010>
- Idrus, A. (2024). Exploring Public Finance Policies: A Qualitative Inquiry into Fiscal Policy Analysis, Government Financial Management, and Public Sector Financial Health. *Golden Ratio of Finance Management*. <https://doi.org/10.52970/grfm.v4i2.481>.
- Lowe, M., Bell, S., Briggs, J., McMillan, E., Morley, M., Grenfell, M., Sweeting, D., Whitten, A., & Jordan, N. (2024). A research-based, practice-relevant urban resilience framework for local government. *Local Environment*, 29(7), 886–901. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2024.2318571>
- Lu, Z., & Yu, H. (2025). Soft resilience in urban governance. *GBP Proceedings Series*. <https://doi.org/10.70088/47jwjx49>
- Marchezini, V., Saito, S., Londe, L., & Damacena, F. (2025). Implementation challenges of disaster risk management policies: The organizational capacities of municipal civil defense units. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2025.105291>
- Park, S., Graham, M., & Foster, E. (2022). Improving local government resilience: Highlighting the role of internal resources in crisis management. *Sustainability*, 14(6), Article 3214. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063214>
- Riemer, M., Sa'd, R., Posselt, T., Salehi, P., Corbett, D., Jones, P., Upward, A., DeCruz, E., Baue, B., Asadzadeh, A., Sandholz, S., & Kötter, T. (2025). Systemic management practices—Enabling local governments to adapt in response to complexity. *World*, 6(2), 72. <https://doi.org/10.3390/world6020072>
- Salvador, M., & Sancho, D. (2023). Local governments facing turbulence: Robust governance and institutional capacities. *Social Sciences*, 12(8), Article 462. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12080462>
- Sefton, T., & Ubaid, R. (2025). Crisis governance at the local level: Municipal decision-making during COVID-19. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.70094>
- Sharma, S., Wu, X., & Papyshv, G. (2025). Capacity-learning paradox: How Hong Kong and Singapore's crisis responses shape and are shaped by policy capacities. *Review of Policy Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.70033>
- Stoney, C., Asquith, A., Kipper, K., McNeill, J., Martin, J., & Spano, A. (2023). Policy-making, policy-taking, and policy-shaping: Local government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12585>
- Wang, C., Dong, X., Zhang, Y., & Luo, Y. (2021). Community resilience governance on public health crisis in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(4), Article 2123. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042123>
- Woodruff, S., Bowman, A., Hannibal, B., Sansom, G., & Portney, K. (2021). Urban resilience: Analyzing the policies of U.S. cities. *Cities*, 115, Article 103239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103239>