

## SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AT WAR TIME (BASED ON THE RESULTS OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS)

**Olga Kuzmuk**

Ph.D., Associate Professor,

Volyn National University named after Lesya Ukrainka, Ukraine

e-mail: kuzmuk-olga@ukr.net, orcid.org/0000-0002-9729-1785

### Summary

The article is devoted to studying community resilience in the context of war in Ukraine. It analyzes both subjective and objective dimensions of resilience that affect the ability of local communities to adapt to crisis conditions. The empirical foundation of the research consists of interviews and focus groups with representatives of executive and local authorities, the public sector, business, volunteer organizations, and informal initiatives, conducted within the framework of the Polish-Ukrainian research grant «Multilevel governance of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression on Ukraine, using examples from the Lublin Voivodeship (PL) and the Volyn Oblast (UA)» (funded by NAWA).

Subjective aspects of resilience encompass public perceptions, trust among community members, and emotional resilience, which is manifested in people's willingness to support one another. Objective dimensions include infrastructural, economic, and social resources that contribute to recovery after crises.

The results indicate that distinguishing between subjective and objective aspects of resilience is an effective tool for developing policies capable of supporting communities in wartime. This article aims to contribute to the understanding of the complexity of community resilience in times of crisis and social instability.

**Key words:** Community resilience, Social cohesion, Public participation, Public activity, War, Social ties.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/6522>

### 1. Introduction

In today's world, where conflicts and humanitarian crises have become an integral part of social life, the issue of community resilience during wartime is particularly relevant. This article is based on theoretical concepts of resilience that serve as a foundation for analyzing the characteristics of the humanitarian crisis caused by Russian aggression on the territory of Ukraine. The situation resulting from the full-scale invasion demands a deep understanding of community reactions and the responses of all management entities; particular attention should be paid to studying the factors that contribute to community resilience.

This research addresses the urgent need for effective responses to the humanitarian crisis caused by Russian aggression in Ukraine. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of community resilience as a multidimensional phenomenon that has not yet been extensively explored in the contemporary context of Ukraine. In particular, the identification of objective and subjective dimensions, which is the focus of this article, represents an original idea in the interpretation of resilience, including community resilience, and deserves further

scholarly interest from the academic community. This article draws on theoretical concepts of resilience, providing a robust foundation for examining the unique characteristics and factors that influence community resilience.

The aim of this article is to provide a detailed analysis of the factors that enhance community resilience during war compared to conditions of peaceful life. Community resilience is understood as its ability to adapt to changes, maintain social cohesion, and recover after crises. In this context, it is important to identify both objective and subjective indicators of community resilience. Objective indicators may include the availability of infrastructural and economic resources, while subjective aspects encompass trust, public perception, and emotional resilience.

Thus, this article aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of community resilience in wartime as a complex phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of multilevel governance and the integration of subjective and objective dimensions of resilience to develop effective policies capable of supporting communities in times of crisis.

The empirical basis of our study are interviews with representatives of executive and local self-government bodies, public sector, business, volunteer corps and representatives of informal initiatives received within the framework of Polish-Ukrainian research grant project «Multilevel governance of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression on Ukraine on the examples of activities in the Lublin Voivodeship (PL) and the Volyn Oblast (UA)» (funded by NAWA).

## 2. Theoretical Aspects of Resilience Research: Literature Review

Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008) in their work «Community Resilience as a Metaphor, Theory, Set of Capacities, and Strategy for Disaster Readiness» investigate the concept of community resilience, defining it as a metaphor, theory, and a set of capacities necessary for enhancing disaster readiness. The authors emphasize the importance of social support and collective efforts in achieving resilience. Masten, A. S. (2001) in her article «Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development» discusses how resilience can be viewed as «ordinary magic» in developmental processes. Masten highlights that resilience arises from everyday mechanisms that help individuals and communities adapt to stress and adversity. Aldrich, D. P., & Meyer, M. A. (2015) in their study «Social Capital and Community Resilience: The Role of Social Networks in Disaster Recovery» focus on the role of social capital in community resilience, particularly in the context of recovery after disasters. The authors analyze how social networks can facilitate faster and more effective recovery. Berkes, F. (2017) in the work «Evolution of Co-Management: Role of Social Capital in Building Resilience» examines the evolution of co-management and its impact on community resilience. Berkes emphasizes the importance of social capital for effective resource management and enhancing resilience. Magis, K. (2010) in the article «Community Resilience: An Indicator of Social Sustainability» explores the connection between community resilience and social sustainability, highlighting that resilience is an important indicator for assessing social development and community well-being.

Cutter, S. L., Brennan, R., & B. M. (2010) in their article titled «Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative» examine the concept of resilience as a necessary component of national security, emphasizing the importance of preparing communities for disasters through planning, training, and investing in infrastructure. Paton, D., & Johnston, D. (2001) in their work titled «Disaster Resilience: An Integrated Approach» propose an integrated approach to resilience that includes preparedness, response, and recovery, highlighting the importance of social

cohesion and local resources in the recovery process after disasters. Twigg, J. (2009) in the work titled «Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness in Development and Emergency Programming» discusses risk reduction strategies that can enhance community resilience, including the role of organizations in training and preparing populations for potential threats. Klein, R. J. T., & Nicholls, R. J. (2012) in their article «Ecosystem-Based Approaches to Climate Adaptation: A Review of the Evidence» explore how ecosystem-based approaches can enhance community resilience to climate change, providing examples of successful initiatives in various regions. Fritz, C. E. (1961) in his classic work titled «Disasters» discusses the long-term social and psychological impacts of disasters, as well as the resilience mechanisms that help communities recover. Berkes, F., & Ross, H. (2013) in their article titled «Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach» propose an integrated approach to community resilience that includes social, economic, and environmental aspects, emphasizing the importance of local knowledge and resources. Putnam, R. D. (2000) in his book titled «Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community» examines the decline of social capital in the United States, arguing that the decrease in participation in community organizations and events negatively impacts social resilience and community cohesion. Granovetter, M. S. (1973) in his article titled «The Strength of Weak Ties» presents the theory of «weak ties», asserting that such connections can be crucial for providing information and resources within communities, thereby contributing to their resilience. Bourdieu, P. (1986) in his work «The Forms of Capital» introduces the concept of social capital, highlighting its role in creating social networks that are critically important for community resilience in the face of social and economic crises. Tilly, C. (2004) in his work «Social Movements, 1768–2004» analyzes how social movements and collective actions can promote social resilience, emphasizing the importance of organization and collective action in achieving change within communities.

Coleman, J. S. (1988) in his work «Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital» discusses how social capital contributes to the development of human resources in communities, which in turn enhances their resilience and adaptability. Sztompka, P. (2000) in his work titled «Trust: A Sociological Theory» explores the role of trust in social relations and community resilience, emphasizing that trust is a critically important factor for social cohesion. Holling, C. S. (1973) in his work titled «Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems» introduces the concept of resilience in ecological systems, which can be adapted to social systems. He emphasizes the importance of diversity and adaptability in maintaining resilience. Fukuyama, F. (1999) in his work «The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order» analyzes how social changes and economic factors influence social ties and community resilience, arguing that the restoration of social norms is critically important for resilience. Putnam, R. D., & Goss, K. (2002) in their article «Introduction: The Role of Social Capital in Community Building» examine how social capital contributes to the development and strengthening of communities, highlighting its role in enhancing social cohesion and resilience. Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2009) in their book «The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone» explore the relationship between equality in society and social resilience, asserting that more equal societies have higher levels of social cohesion and fewer social problems. Meyer, M. A. (2013) in the article «Community Resilience: A Framework for Understanding and Supporting Local Resilience» discusses a framework for understanding community resilience, emphasizing the need to support local initiatives and resources to enhance resilience. Berkes, F., & Folke, C. (2002) in their work titled «Back to the Future: Ecosystem Dynamics and Local Knowledge» emphasize the importance of local knowledge and practices in supporting the resilience of ecosystems and communities, highlighting their role in adapting to changes.

### 3. Resilience as the Foundation for Community Development

Resilience is a key factor in community development and the foundation for forming a developed and capable territorial community. This concept encompasses all human processes – social, educational, cultural, economic, and others – that aim at equitable development and the well-being of people. In today's globalized world, it is important for communities not only to meet the basic needs of their residents but also to actively contribute to environmental preservation (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015).

Community resilience includes a system of values that supports the fair distribution of resources and opportunities among all members of the community. This means that the community must be able to adapt to changes, challenges, and threats that may arise in social, economic, or environmental contexts. Resilience entails not only the survival of the community in times of stress but also its ability to recover and develop.

The factors influencing community resilience are diverse. They may include social cohesion, access to education and healthcare, economic stability, and effective management of natural resources. Successful communities create conditions for the participation of all community members in decision-making processes that affect their lives, fostering trust and cooperation.

Thus, resilience is not only a technical or administrative aspect but also a moral obligation of the community towards its members, encompassing a commitment to justice, equality, and well-being. Understanding resilience as a complex concept helps communities navigate a complicated world and formulate strategic plans that ensure their sustainable future.

### 4. Subjective and Objective Community Resilience

Community resilience is an important characteristic that determines its ability to develop and adapt in the face of constant change. In assessing community resilience, it is advisable to use a variety of indicators, which can be divided into two main groups: objective and subjective.

#### *Objective Community Resilience*

The first group of indicators reflects the objective state of community development. These indicators can be characterized as «objective community resilience». They include the financial stability of the community, the level of development of industrial and social infrastructure, as well as cultural development.

Objective indicators allow us to identify the actual living conditions within the community, including aspects such as:

*Financial Stability:* This indicator encompasses the community's budget revenues and other financial aspects that affect the community's ability to invest in development.

*Infrastructure Development:* This indicator assesses the availability and quality of roads, lighting, medical facilities, educational institutions, and other infrastructure elements that contribute to improving the quality of life.

*Cultural Development:* This includes access to cultural events, opportunities for self-expression, the development of local traditions, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

#### *Subjective Community Resilience*

The second group of indicators pertains to the subjective assessment of community resilience conducted by its members. This concept can be characterized as «subjective community resilience». It is based on the principle of self-assessment by residents regarding the level of resilience or capacity of their communities.

Subjective indicators may include:

*Life Satisfaction:* This measures how satisfied residents are with their living conditions, the quality of services, and the opportunities offered by the community.

*Sense of Security:* An important component is the feeling of personal and social security, which impacts the overall resilience of the community.

*Participation in Community Affairs:* The activity of residents in decision-making, involvement in volunteer initiatives, and local organizations is also an indicator of subjective resilience.

Thus, the assessment of community resilience should consider both objective and subjective indicators. This allows for a more comprehensive picture that reflects the real state of the community and its capacity for development in changing conditions. Understanding these aspects is critically important for formulating effective development strategies that address the needs and aspirations of residents.

## **5. Community Resilience: The Importance of Subjective Indicators**

Community resilience or capacity is not limited to just a set of objective indicators. While financial stability and infrastructure development are important aspects, there are numerous subjective indicators that also significantly impact the assessment of community resilience. These indicators include the level of community cohesion, residents' participation in community life, and other social factors that shape the overall picture.

### **1. Level of Community Cohesion**

Community cohesion is an indicator that reflects how much residents feel a part of the community. A high level of cohesion fosters stronger social ties, enhances trust between residents and authorities, and creates conditions for collective action. Cohesion can be expressed through participation in cultural, social, or volunteer initiatives.

### **2. Residents' Participation in Community Life**

The process of residents' participation in community life is an important indicator of their engagement. This includes not only the willingness to be active but also real involvement in decision-making, participation in elections, public hearings, and other forms of interaction with local government authorities. A high level of participation indicates an active population and a willingness to work for the benefit of the community.

### **3. Mobilization of Community Members' Efforts**

The level and nature of the mobilization of community members' efforts for its development is another important indicator. This includes initiatives arising at the local level, as well as the willingness of residents to unite to achieve common goals. Mobilization can manifest in the form of volunteer projects, local campaigns, or joint events that contribute to community development.

### **4. Level of Public Activity**

Residents' activity in the public life of the community, particularly their participation in demonstrations, petitions, and other forms of expressing their opinions, is an important aspect of community resilience. It indicates that residents not only keep track of events but are also ready to respond to the challenges facing their community.

### **5. Openness of Authorities and Status of Consultations**

The level of openness of local government bodies is critically important for building trust between the authorities and the community. Regular consultations with residents, as well as their involvement in shaping local policies, contribute to creating open and transparent governance. Authorities that actively engage the community in discussions enhance trust levels and improve interaction.

Thus, the assessment of community resilience should consider not only objective indicators but also subjective aspects that significantly impact development. The level of cohesion, residents' participation, mobilization of efforts, public activity, and openness of authorities are important elements that shape community resilience. Taking these indicators into account allows for a more complete picture of the state of the community and its capacity for development in changing conditions.

## 6. Community Resilience: Research Findings

The analysis of the results of our research on the factors of community resilience allows us to highlight several key postulates that emphasize the interconnection between various aspects of community development. These postulates help to better understand how different factors influence resilience and progressive community development.

### 1. High Level of Participation as a Factor of Cohesion

The first postulate asserts that a high level of resident participation contributes to strengthening community cohesion and progressive development. When residents are actively involved in decision-making, organizing volunteer initiatives, or participating in cultural events, it not only increases trust levels but also fosters a shared vision for the community's future. Cohesion, in turn, is an important element of resilience, as it enables communities to effectively respond to challenges and adapt to new conditions.

### 2. Lack of Direct Connection Between Financial Well-Being and Activity

The second postulate indicates that communities with higher levels of financial well-being do not always demonstrate high levels of participation. This means that the availability of resources does not guarantee residents' activity in public life. Important factors may include cultural, social, and historical traditions that influence residents' willingness to engage in collective activities.

### 3. Highest Activity in Rural Communities

The third postulate indicates that the highest level of participation is observed in rural communities. This may be due to closer connections among residents, shared traditions, and the necessity of mutual assistance in conditions of limited resources. Rural communities often demonstrate active engagement in addressing local issues, which contributes to their development.

### 4. Cohesion as a Driving Force for Development

The last postulate emphasizes that community cohesion is a driving force for community development. It indicates that residents united by common goals contribute to the community's well-being. A shared goal, based on the needs and interests of the residents, can serve as a foundation for developing development strategies and implementing effective projects.

Thus, the results of our research allow us to formulate several important postulates that highlight the connection between resident participation, financial well-being, and community cohesion. These axioms can serve as a basis for further research and practical recommendations for enhancing community resilience under various conditions. Understanding these interconnections is key to formulating successful development strategies and ensuring the resilience of territorial communities.

## 7. Community Activity and Cohesion in Times of War

In times of war, there is an unprecedented increase in community activity, a high level of social cohesion, and the mobilization of efforts from all community members. These changes

indicate a transformation in societal orientations from individualism to collectivism, which is critically important for overcoming the challenges brought by war.

In wartime, population activity becomes not only an important indicator of community resilience but also a necessity for survival. People come together to support each other, organize aid for the military, medical institutions, and those affected by the conflict. This surge in activity is a powerful indicator of cohesion and unity.

The war has prompted society to reassess its values. Communities are beginning to collaborate actively, realizing that collective efforts are key to overcoming difficulties. A representative of informal volunteer initiatives emphasizes the importance of a collective approach: «This disaster, this war, has come to our land and forced us all to wake up. We must understand that we can no longer live by the principle of ‘my house is on the edge, I know nothing.’ The war has shown that ‘there is no such thing as someone else's grief, we are all united». This change indicates that communities are starting to recognize their shared responsibility for each other's well-being.

During the war, it is crucial for communities to remain cohesive and support one another, regardless of their geographic origins or which part of Ukraine they represent. It is this shared identity that becomes the foundation for further actions.

The war has effectively become a catalyst for transforming societal orientations, fostering increased community activity and social cohesion. This underscores the importance of collective efforts in overcoming difficulties and supporting one another in times of crisis. Unity and collectivism are not only strategies for survival but also the basis for the community's future development, which is critical for the restoration and strengthening of national identity.

## 8. Conclusions

As a result of the analysis conducted, several key conclusions can be drawn:

In times of war, there is a significant increase in community activity and social cohesion. This indicates that communities capable of mobilizing their resources and uniting efforts demonstrate a higher level of resilience.

War promotes a shift in societal orientations from individualism to collectivism. People are becoming aware of the importance of supporting one another, which leads to the formation of new social connections and strengthens the community.

However, alongside positive changes, there are also risk factors, such as issues related to the settlement of internally displaced persons, adaptation difficulties, and conflicts between migrants and the local population. These factors can threaten social stability and the resilience of the community.

The effective implementation of migration policies is crucial for supporting forced migrants and integrating them into local communities. It is important to develop strategies that take into account the needs of both migrants and the local population.

Community resilience in wartime is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes both subjective and objective aspects. The psycho-emotional state of residents, their readiness for active participation and joint efforts, as well as the material resources and infrastructure of the community – all these factors are interconnected and influence the overall level of resilience.

Studying community resilience in wartime is a relevant topic for further research, as war continues to alter social structures and relationships within society.

Overall, the Ukrainian experience demonstrates that community resilience during war is the result of collective efforts, active citizen participation, and adaptation to new conditions.

This underscores the necessity of supporting social cohesion and developing effective policies aimed at strengthening the resilience of territorial communities in crisis situations.

## References

1. Aldrich, D. P., & Meyer, M. A. (2015). *Social capital and community resilience: The role of social networks in disaster recovery*. *Sociological Science*, 2, 241-262.
2. Berkes, F. (2017). *Evolution of co-management: Role of social capital in building resilience*. In *The Routledge Handbook of Ecological Resilience* (pp. 49-63). Routledge.
3. Berkes, F., & Folke, C. (2002). *Back to the future: Ecosystem dynamics and local knowledge*. In *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: Building Resilience for Complexity and Change* (pp. 121-146). Cambridge University Press.
4. Berkes, F., & Ross, H. (2013). *Community resilience: Toward an integrated approach*. *Society & Natural Resources*, 26(5), 515-520.
5. Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The forms of capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
6. Coleman, J. S. (1988). *Social capital in the creation of human capital*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120.
7. Cutter, S. L., Brennan, R., & B. M. (2010). *Disaster resilience: A national imperative*. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 52(2), 25-29.
8. Fritz, C. E. (1961). *Disasters*. In R. K. Merton & P. L. Kendall (Eds.), *The Focused Interview: A Manual of Problems and Procedures* (pp. 651-672). Free Press.
9. Fukuyama, F. (1999). *The great disruption: Human nature and the reconstitution of social order*. Free Press.
10. Granovetter, M. S. (1973). *The strength of weak ties*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
11. Holling, C. S. (1973). *Resilience and stability of ecological systems*. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4, 1-23.
12. Klein, R. J. T., & Nicholls, R. J. (2012). *Ecosystem-based approaches to climate adaptation: A review of the evidence*. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 3(2), 202-214. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.164>
13. Magis, K. (2010). *Community resilience: An indicator of social sustainability*. *Society & Natural Resources*, 23(5), 401-416.
14. Masten, A. S. (2001). *Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development*. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238.
15. Meyer, M. A. (2013). *Community resilience: A framework for understanding and supporting local resilience*. *Sociology Compass*, 7(2), 113-128.
16. Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008). *Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness*. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(1-2), 127-150.
17. Paton, D., & Johnston, D. (2001). *Disaster resilience: An integrated approach*. In *Disaster Management: A Disaster Management Handbook* (pp. 1-24). New Zealand: University of Otago.
18. Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
19. Putnam, R. D., & Goss, K. (2002). *Introduction: The role of social capital in community building*. In *Democracy and its Discontents* (pp. 3-23). New York: New York University Press.



20. Sztompka, P. (2000). *Trust: A sociological theory*. Cambridge University Press.
21. *The architecture of help. Multilevel governance of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression on Ukraine on the examples of activities in the Lubelskie Voivodeship (PL) and the Volyn Oblast (UA). Comparative research report*
22. Tilly, C. (2004). *Social movements, 1768–2004*. Paradigm Publishers.
23. Twigg, J. (2009). *Disaster risk reduction: Mitigation and preparedness in development and emergency programming*. Good Practice Review 9. Humanitarian Practice Network.
24. Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2009). *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone*. Allen Lane.