



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# Influences of Covid-19 Crisis on Resilience Theories: An analysis of Community, Societal and Governance Resilience

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### Abstract

**Background:** The present article addresses the theories on resilience among the various areas of analysis and research: community, societal and governance.

**Objectives:** As we challenge the third year of the pandemics, the study exposes the theoretical and conceptual approaches to resilience demanding a multisystemic response and participation from all areas of the society: community, society, institutions etc.

**Methods:** Further, the study uses the role of theories during the COVID-19 pandemic by presenting a comprehensive review of how resilience is built through the community and societal mechanisms and processes. We have also employed a quantitative analysis using the search engine provided by the *Google Ngram Viewer (Google Ngram)* on the digitalised literature prior the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Results and findings:** Additionally, the study provides an in-depth analysis of the theories on resilience as the results emphasize the selected word frequencies of the “resilience” concept and related topics before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Conclusions:** The research addressed the quantitative and qualitative approaches of content analysis revealing the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on the theoretical framework of “resilience” and related terms.

**Keywords:** *resilience; community; society; governance; COVID-19 pandemic.*

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### Introduction

The research on the theories of resilience has been investigated in various sectors during the last years, merely relating the resilience concepts to (a) correlates of leadership, crisis management and “operational behaviour” (Pettersson, Jonson, Berggren, Hermelin, Trnka, Woltjer, Prytz, 2021: 1-10; Teo, Lee, Lim, 2017: 135-147); (b) relationship between “collective resilience” and individual conditions (Molenaar, Blessin, Erfurth, Imhoff, 2022: 167-191); (c) knowledge of capability and social resilience (Assmann, Tolgensbakk, Vedeler, Bøhler, 2021: 659-673); (d) accounts of social capital, social agenda work and social system (Furey, Harris-Evans, 2021: 404-414; Olimid, Georgescu, 2017: 42-56); (e) the inner-issues of EU governance and resilience (Georgescu, Olimid, Olimid, Georgescu, Gherge, 2017).

### Methodology

The article uses the method of literature review of the theories on resilience. This method has the role: (a) to identify the major studies on the topic of resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) to identify the new patterns and contributions on specific topics of community, resilience, resilient community, societal resilience and resilient governance; (c) to provide a new framework of research for the resilience-related topics. Furthermore, the study advances five research steps aimed to investigate the review: (1) the launch of the research questions; (2) the investigation of the relevant literature in the area of resilience; (3) exposing common topics related to community resilience theory, urban resilience theory and resilient governance; (4) an assessment of the relevant findings during COVID-19 pandemic; (5) the analysis and evaluation of the research results and findings (Figure 1). Responding to these objectives, the current study frames the following questions: *Q1*: How did the theories of resilience evolve and apply during the last years? *Q2*: What are the main factors contributing to community resilience and societal resilience before and during the COVID-19 pandemic? *Q3*: What are the mechanisms and tools of resilient governance during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Diagram 1. Research steps of the theories on resilience



Source: Authors' own compilation

We have opted to employ a quantitative analysis using a tool the *Google Ngram Viewer* in order to identify the conceptual and relational use of “resilience” before the pandemic crisis (throughout the period 2000-2019). *Google Ngram Viewer* was selected for its worth of providing the accessible instrumentation for: (1) extracting data from a huge online dedicated corpus and, as such, (2) identifying the semantic fields for searchable concepts, while at the same time (3) calculating the scores for concepts associations and (4) allowing to elaborate on the relations formed among concepts in the digitalized literature and (5) to ascertain the theoretical trends and cultural and scientific literature focus for a specific period in time (Chumtong, Kaldewey, 2017).

### **Theories of resilience: a literature review of the concept**

The literature of the 2020s conceptualised the term of “resilience” in both theory and practice. Moreover, the theories of resilience adapted related functions of resilience and governance and correlated the conceptual development across a range of patterns: community resilience, urban resilience, social resilience, societal resilience, organizational resilience, economic resilience etc.

Lindberg and Swearingen (2020: 467-478) note that the societal patterns and interests involve resilience practices and measures assessing two factors of intervention: “community leadership” and “social capital”. However, other studies show that the resilience area of research is relatively innovative emphasizing the resilience framework to time (Ahmad, Chowdhury, Siedler, Odek, 2022) and space frame (Mavhura, Manyena, 2018), as well as the targeted level of intervention, local and regional. Building on the framework of community resilience, Ahmad *et al.* note that the COVID-19 pandemic involves “social safety”, “emergency response” and “sustainable community empowerment systems” (Ahmad, Chowdhury, Siedler, Odek, 2022: 1-12).

While the regional resilience framework refers to the strategies and functionality of infrastructure (Sharma, Tabandeh, Gardoni, 2020: 1315-1330), resilience addresses basic services in a determined location (Compagnucci, Morettini, 2020: 767-792). This classification of local-specific forms of resilience (local/regional) is an example of the resilience approaches in which multilevel governance is needed to influence interactions across various formats: individual, community, societal.

While local and regional governance share objectives in infrastructure and services, collective resilience underpins social behaviour and norms (Elcheroth, Drury, 2020: 703-713). This generates a supportive social and political context as well as a collective-level resilience plan of analysis (Imperiale, Vanclay, 2021: 891-905). For example, other scholars recommended focusing on the multisystemic research of resilience as well as on the implementation of public policies focusing on governments as “optimizing agents” (Karacaoglu, Krawczyk, 2021: 826-848).

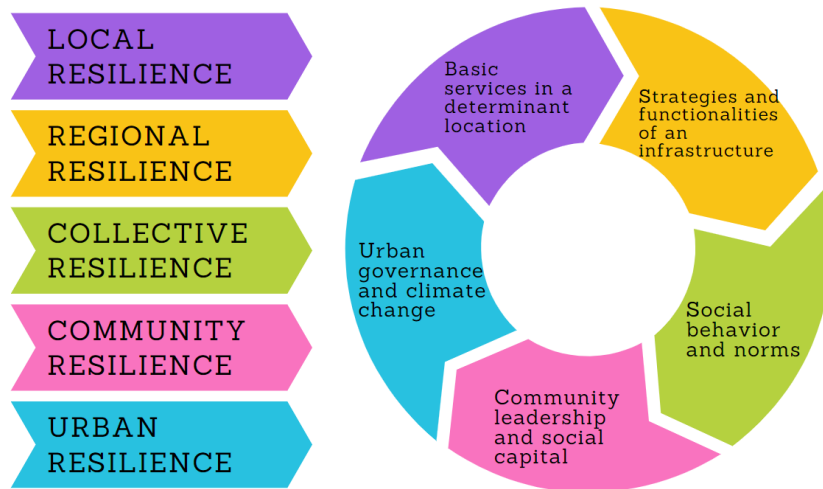
One common approach of the latest studies is that resilience is related to social theory and behavioural processes. Moreover, urban policy mechanisms are needed, as the theory of urban resilience advances sequential phases of urbanization, urban governance and climate change (Friend, 2017), including normative and policy evaluations (Hommels, 2017), access to urban facilities and services as a multi-system approach to social, economic and cultural interdependencies. The growing research on urban resilience reveals a pivotal change in the broader values of interactions between the social system, “human lifestyle” and health care services (Urquiza, Amigo, Billi, Calvo, Gallardo, Neira, Rojas, 2021).

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In addition, conceptual parallels can be designed with community resilience. Both types have an impact on the social system emphasizing different indicators of the functionality of the social capital, human settlements and interactions.

We thus included the three factors to build the analytical framework of the five types of resilience: “community resilience”, “regional resilience”, “collective resilience”, “community resilience” and “urban resilience” (Figure 2).

**Diagram 2.** Analytical framework of “local resilience”, “regional resilience”, “collective resilience”, “community resilience”, “urban resilience”



Source: Authors' own compilation

The resilience research also focuses on two key topics (“integration” and “solidarity”) using a wide range of sub-topics (social resilience, societal resilience, moral resilience, emotional resilience etc.). These sub-topics reflect different adaptive approaches in specific domains of resilience including family, community, society etc. In particular, the latest studies reveal increased engagement with European Union governance and resilience (Biscop, 2020: 1009-1023; Ladi, Tsarouhas, 2020: 1041-1056; Wolff, Ripoll Servent, Piquet, 2020: 1025-1040).

### The use of “resilience” concept before the Covid-19 pandemic

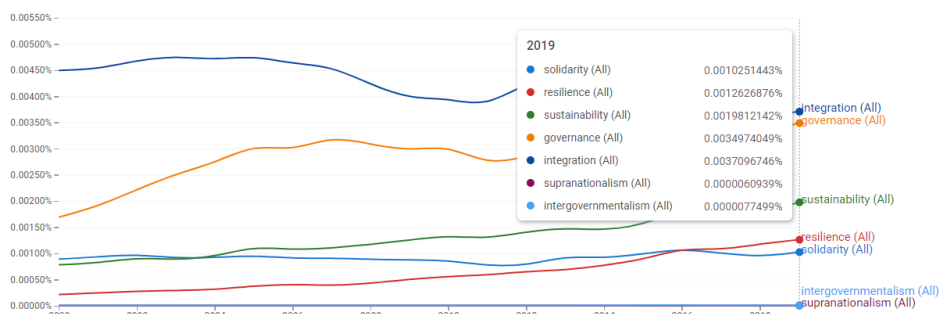
The study on resilience has received a wide interest lately, a series of studies, books or journals being designed specifically to address, publish and promote theoretical or empirical insights of this process and desideratum: *Journal of Safety Science and Resilience (JSSR)* (2020 – present), *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* (2013 – 2019), *Ecology & Society* (1997 – present), *Adversity and Resilience Science* (2020 – 2022), *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* (2014 – 2021), *Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure* (2016 – 2022).

Before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the “resilience research” focused highly on the relations between “disaster resilience and sustainability” (Pal, von Meding, Shrestha, Ahmed, Gajendran, 2020), risk appraisal, discursive practices and

resilience (Kar, Cochran, 2019), local abilities and global concerns (Mavelli,2019: 224-239).

Employing the *Google Ngram Viewer* as an approachable tool for online content analysis (Chumtong, Kaldewey, 2017; Schmale, 2017: 854-873), this section of the paper presents the results obtained through the analysis of resilience conceptual usage before the pandemic crisis (throughout the period 2000-2019). The search employing as keywords “resilience”, “solidarity”, “sustainability”, “governance”, “integration”, “supranationalism”, “intergovernmentalism” has resulted in the results shown in Figure 1 below.

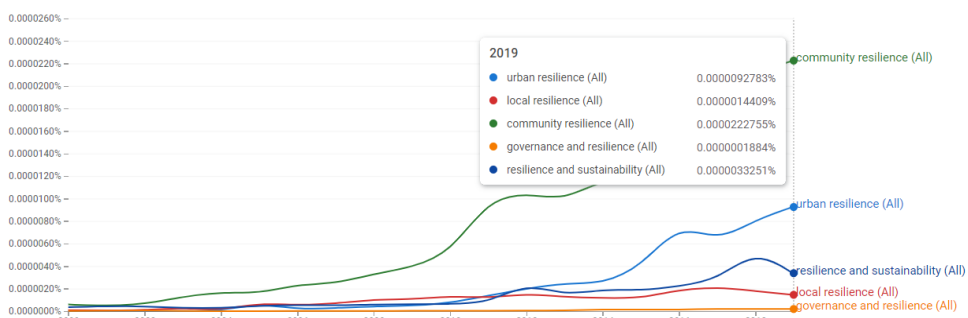
**Figure 1.** Comparative conceptual usage of “resilience”, “solidarity”, “sustainability”, “governance”, “integration”, “supranationalism”, “intergovernmentalism” (2000-2019)



Source: Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

The search for “urban resilience”, “local resilience”, “community resilience”, “governance and resilience” and “resilience and sustainability” through the online papers corpus has retrieved the situation presented in the subsequent Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** Conceptual usage for “urban resilience”, “local resilience”, “community resilience”, “governance and resilience” and “resilience and sustainability” (2000-2019)

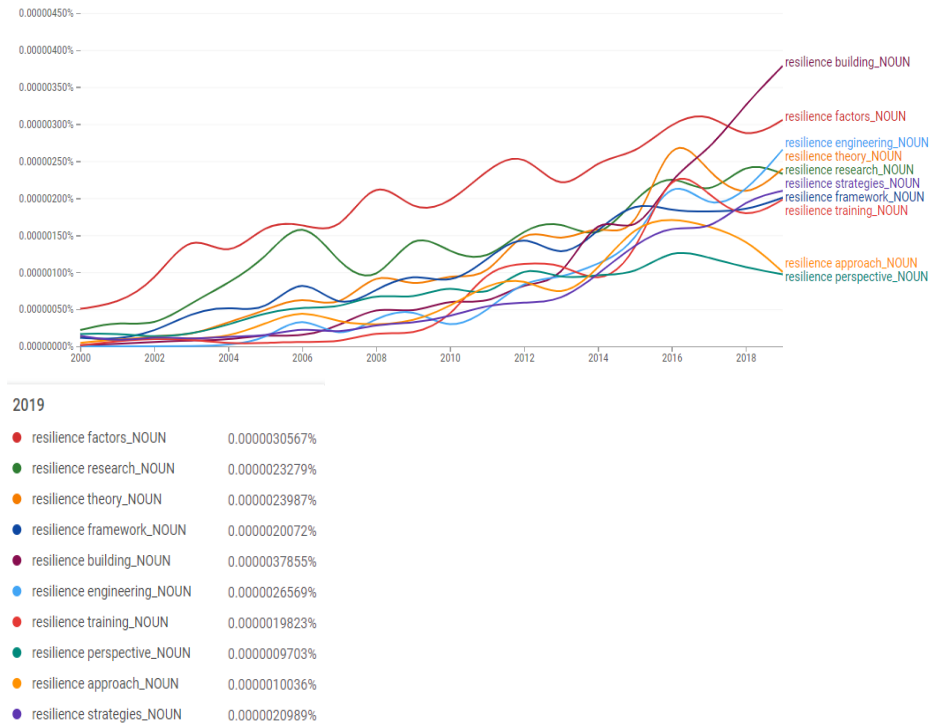


Source: Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

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The search using Ngram Google Viewer has identified the top 10 conceptual relations of resilience in the online Google Books corpus: “resilience building”, “resilience factors”, “resilience engineering”, “resilience theory”, “resilience research”, “resilience strategies”, “resilience framework”, “resilience training”, “resilience approach” and “resilience perspective”.

**Figure 3.** Relational analysis representation of the use of “resilience” concept (2000-2019)



*Source:* Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

The best scores for the *Ngram Viewer* conceptual associations were as follows: “resilience building” (scoring 0.0000040936% in 2019), “resilience factors” (scoring 0.0000030361% in 2016), “resilience engineering” (0.0000026902% in 2019), “resilience theory” (0.0000030646% in 2016), “resilience research” (0.0000025241 in 2018), “resilience strategies” (0.0000020989% in 2019), “resilience framework” (0.0000020072% in 2019), “resilience training” (0.0000026976% in 2016), “resilience approach” (0.0000017390% in 2017) and “resilience perspective” (0.0000013292% in 2016). We thus notice a wider use of the term during this period.

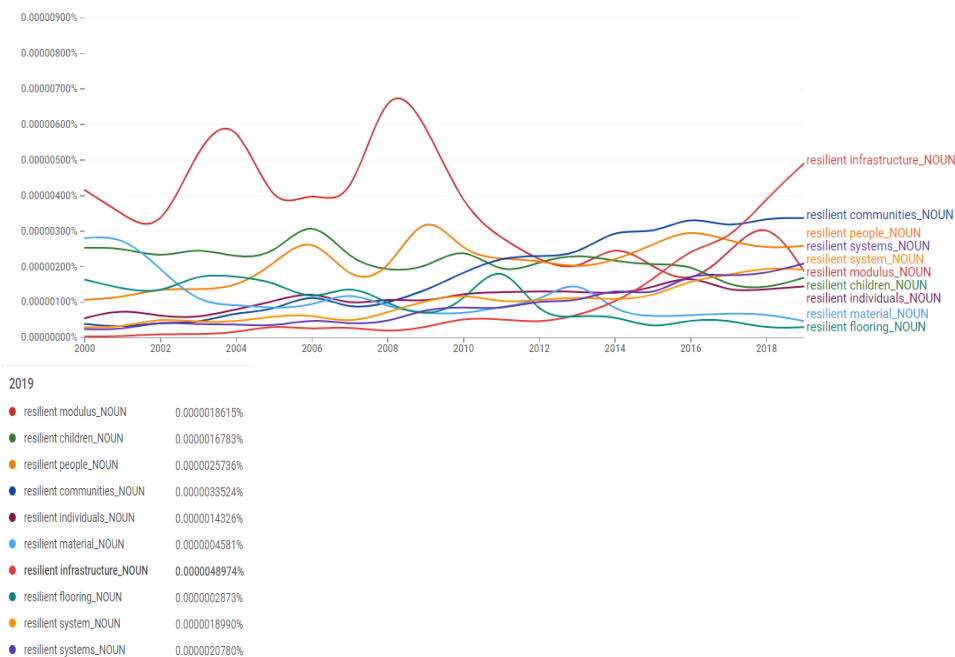
**Figure 4.** Comparing the apex for the use of “resilience” concept

2012	2016	2019
● resilience factors_NOUN 0.0000026661%	● resilience factors_NOUN 0.0000030361%	● resilience factors_NOUN 0.0000030567%
● resilience research_NOUN 0.0000016024%	● resilience research_NOUN 0.0000023804%	● resilience research_NOUN 0.0000023279%
● resilience theory_NOUN 0.0000016577%	● resilience theory_NOUN 0.0000030112%	● resilience theory_NOUN 0.0000023987%
● resilience framework_NOUN 0.0000015638%	● resilience framework_NOUN 0.0000018209%	● resilience framework_NOUN 0.0000020072%
● resilience building_NOUN 0.0000008758%	● resilience building_NOUN 0.0000023198%	● resilience building_NOUN 0.0000037855%
● resilience engineering_NOUN 0.0000009062%	● resilience engineering_NOUN 0.0000023733%	● resilience engineering_NOUN 0.0000026569%
● resilience training_NOUN 0.0000011217%	● resilience training_NOUN 0.0000025051%	● resilience training_NOUN 0.0000019823%
● resilience perspective_NOUN 0.0000011272%	● resilience perspective_NOUN 0.0000013292%	● resilience perspective_NOUN 0.0000009703%
● resilience approach_NOUN 0.0000009394%	● resilience approach_NOUN 0.0000017390%	● resilience approach_NOUN 0.0000010036%
● resilience strategies_NOUN 0.0000005940%	● resilience strategies_NOUN 0.0000016428%	● resilience strategies_NOUN 0.0000020989%

*Source:* Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

The search for semantic relations by employing the wildcard selection, implying the use of ‘\*’ symbol followed by NOUN, thus commanding a search for the top 10 widest used associations between the ‘resilient’ adjective and a noun, were further identified: “resilient infrastructure” (with a score of 0.0000048974% in 2019 of the total ngrams), “resilient modulus”, “resilient children”, “resilient people”, “resilient communities”, “resilient individuals”, “resilient material”, “resilient systems”, “resilient flooring”, “resilient system”, thus showing a pronounced use of the term towards 2019.

**Figure 5.** Relational analysis representation of the use of “resilient” concept (2000-2019)



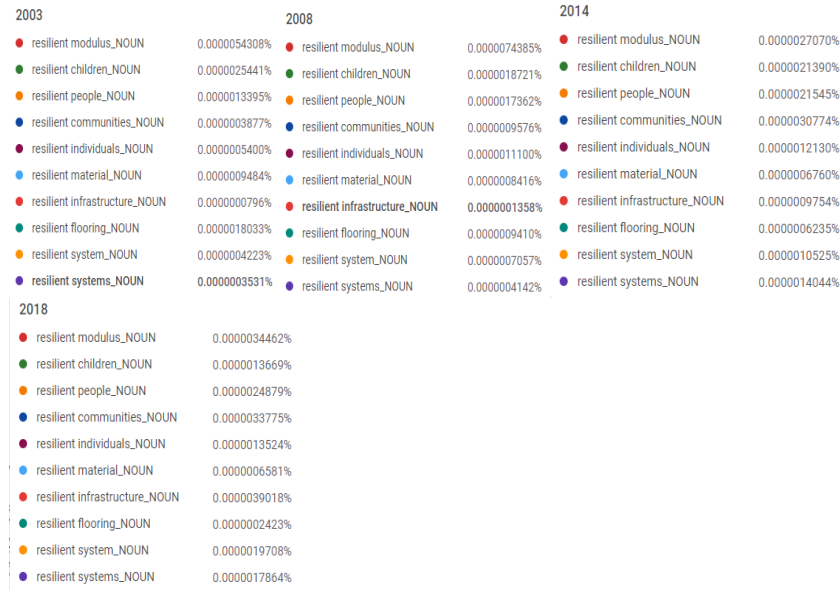
*Source:* Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

The highest scores were obtained by the following combinations “resilient infrastructure” (with a highest score of 0.0000048974% in 2019 of the total ngrams),

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“resilient modulus” (scoring 0.0000074385% in 2014), “resilient children” (0.0000034783% in 2006), “resilient people” (0.0000037254% in 2009), “resilient communities” (0.0000033524% in 2019), “resilient individuals” (0.0000017924% in 2016), “resilient material” (0.0000028063% in 2000), “resilient system” (0.0000019708% in 2018) and “resilient flooring” (0.0000023527% in 2011).

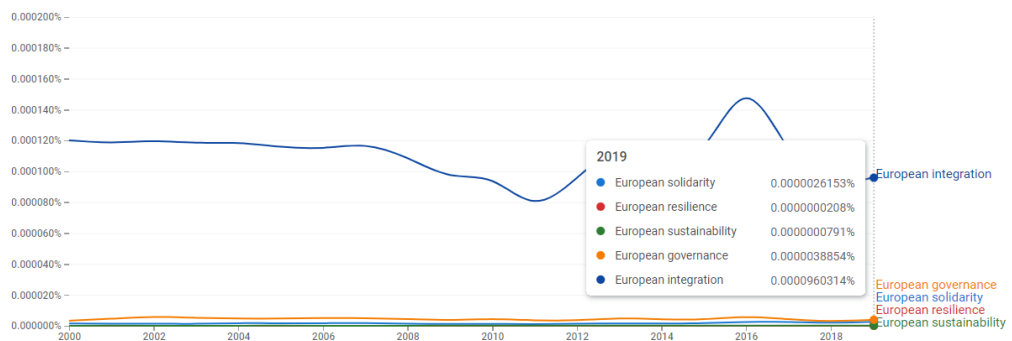
**Figure 6.** Identifying the apex in the use of “resilient” concept



Source: Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

By adding “European” to the inquiry the *Ngram* compositions for 2019 scored highest for “European integration” 0.0000960314%, followed by “European governance” 0.0000038854%, “European solidarity” 0.0000026153%, “European sustainability” 0.0000000791% and “European resilience” with 0.0000000208%.

**Figure 7.** Analysis of conceptual usage after applying “European” to the search option

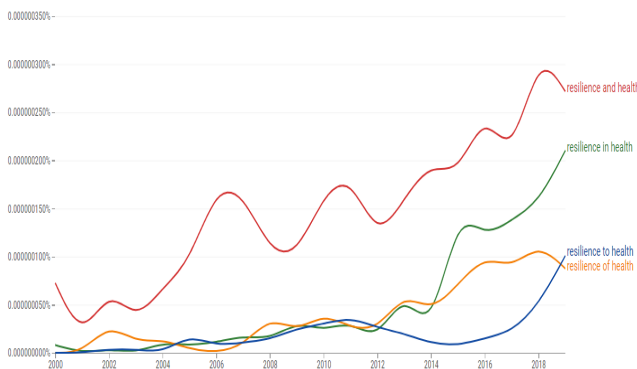


Source: Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data



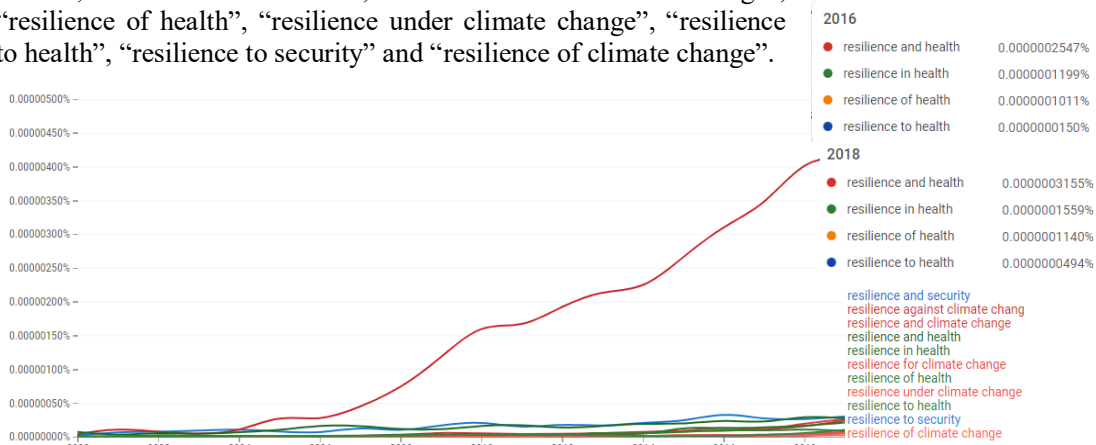
In order to analyse the liaisons between “resilience” and “health” terms prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we employed the *Ngram Viewer* search, consequently obtaining the highest scores for the “resilience and health” association (which scored 0.0000002547% in 2016 and 0.0000003155% in 2018).

**Figure 8.** Resilience and health association before the Covid-19 pandemic



Source: Authors’ own compilation

Aiming to identify the semantic relations coined in the scientific literature for “resilience”, the *Ngram Viewer* search retrieved “resilience to climate change” compilation scoring 0.0000041351% for 2018, followed by “resilience and security”, “resilience against climate change”, “resilience and climate change”, “resilience and health”, “resilience in health”, “resilience and climate change”, “resilience of health”, “resilience under climate change”, “resilience to health”, “resilience to security” and “resilience of climate change”.



Source: Authors’ own compilation based on Google Ngram Viewer data

### Conceptual appraisal of European governance and resilience in pandemic context

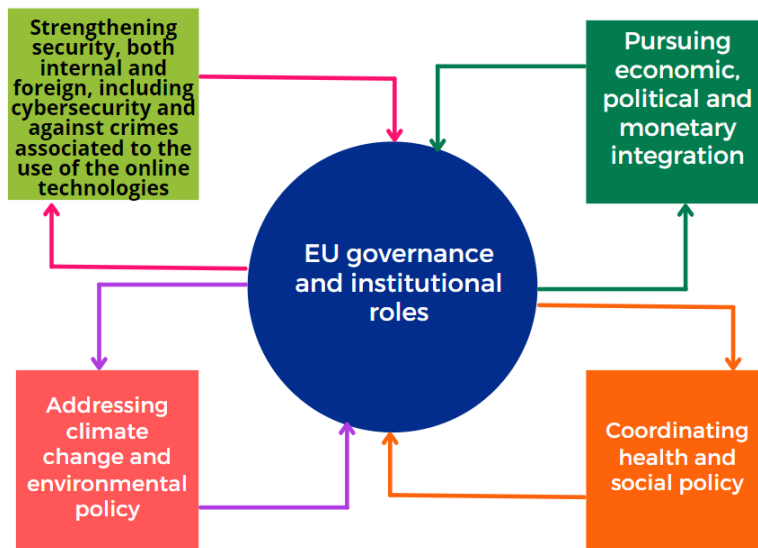
Introducing the resilience establishment in the European Union governance in pandemic context changes the analytic focus towards institutional architecture and responses, discursive practices, policy-making in different areas and economic

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reverberations: institutional roles; economic, political and monetary integration; health and social policy; climate change and environmental policy; security, both internal and foreign, including cybersecurity and against crimes associated to the higher use of the online technologies. As such, researches were conducted in order to assess the effects of the pandemic on the European integration process. Pandemic crisis effects over the European integration process were analyzed using a wide array of research methods: “historical institutionalism”, “rational choice” and discourse analysis (Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193; Olimid, Olimid, 2021: 109-119) in search for the “critical junctures” for policy-making and European governance (Dupont, Oberthür, von Homeyer, 2020: 1095-1110).

**Diagram 3.** Conceptual appraisal of European governance and resilience in pandemic context

### European governance and resilience during COVID-19 pandemic Identifying continuity and change in research interest



Source: Authors' own compilation

Researches have shown that pandemic-driven policies have triggered oftentimes converse returns on a *scale* of trends ranging from delving European integration (Wolff, Ladi, 2020: 1025-1040; Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193) to a weathering process in some fields (Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193). Closer insights to the European Union governance architecture have highlighted policy changes as well as shifts in the institutional roles and power distribution along the supranational/intergovernmental power structure (Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193). For instance, by analyzing relations between EU and its Member States on European coordination of public health policies and actions a huge corpus of literature has appeared during the pandemic to study resilience of national health infrastructure (Biscop, 2020: 1009-1023). As such, influenced by the health crisis, not a few researches have focused on EU health policies in search for continuity or change (Brooks, Geyer, 2020: 1057-1076). Supplementary weight to the focus of the

research was added with the issues of institutional roles and policy-making trends regarding home security, internal border control, increasing security measures for public health and/or solidarity reasons (Wolff, Ripoll Servent, Piquet, 2020: 1127-1144).

The implications of the Resilience and Recovery Fund (RRF) for the deepening of the EU integration were analyzed in relation to EU's resilience to crises. Researches have brought into discussion concepts such as "adaptability" to crises, identifying the direction of reaction to crisis, studying differences in European discourse constantly focusing on the nexus of supranational/ intergovernmental involvement (Wolff, Ladi, 2020: 1025-1040). Thus by condensing the research on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) as EU's reaction concerning its economic governance brought about within a "window of opportunity" in support for further integration (Ladi, Tsarouhas, 2020: 1041-1056). As such, economic resilience was studied in search for EU directions concerning economic actions and reactions augmented by a sound European competition policy (Meunier, Mickus, 2020: 1077-1094).

Resilience associated to the issue of climate change and the promotion of the European Green Deal during the Covid-19 health crisis received a special attention due to the effects of the health-related measures imposed at supranational level to fight the spread of the pandemic over the environment (Dupont, Oberthür, von Homeyer, 2020: 1095-1110).

Enhancing resilience for cybersecurity of "critical information infrastructure" and protection of information systems while "combating disinformation" is the focus of a corpus of research on the evolution of EU cybersecurity policy (Carrapico, Farrand, 2020: 1111-1126).

### **Conclusions**

The analysis combined the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of content analysis aiming to achieve an arrangement of the effects triggered by the Covid-19 crisis on the theoretical corpus dedicated to resilience. Consequently, the analysis unfolded on two directions: (1) a first line of research focused on a qualitative study of the scientific literature in search for the theories explaining resilience and (2) a second direction disposed in applying the digital resources in order to detect the theoretical trends and cultural focus specific to scientific literature for a certain period in time.

Results have shown that the Covid-19 pandemic produced a shift in the theoretical focus on resilience by outlining the institutional roles and competence-specific responses, continuity and change in discursive practices, incrementalism or systemic change in policy-making in different policy areas with substantial effects on further integration.

### **Authors' Contributions:**

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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