

CHAPTER 1

MODERN TRENDS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Governing Trust in Times of Disruption: Institutional Governance for Civic Resilience

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Abstract. Civic resilience has become a crucial condition for democratic stability, institutional continuity and social cohesion in times of disruption. Contemporary societies face overlapping challenges, including declining public trust, democratic backsliding, disinformation, social polarisation, climate-related disasters, cyber threats and geopolitical instability. In this context, institutional governance is not limited to administrative crisis management. It also includes the protection of civic space, rights, participation, accountability, information integrity and institutional learning. The objective of this article is to develop a conceptual and analytical framework for institutional governance for civic resilience and to identify the institutional conditions that enable societies to withstand crises while preserving democratic participation, public trust and rights protection. The study applies qualitative conceptual analysis, comparative policy analysis and secondary data interpretation. The research is based on verified international reports, governance indicators and policy documents produced by the OECD, European Commission, World Bank, UNDRR, Freedom House, V-Dem Institute, International IDEA and Edelman Trust Barometer. The article proposes the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix, which includes seven governance pillars: public trust and legitimacy, civic space, rule of law and accountability, crisis coordination, information integrity, inclusive participation and institutional learning. The results show that civic resilience depends on the interaction between state capacity and civic freedom. Statistical evidence confirms that low institutional trust, restrictions on civil liberties, weak accountability and disinformation significantly reduce the ability of societies to respond collectively to crises. Institutional governance for civic resilience should be understood as a dynamic system that combines competent public administration, democratic safeguards, social inclusion, rights protection and continuous institutional adaptation. Further research should focus on empirical testing of the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix, comparative assessment of civic resilience across countries, and the impact of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and platform governance on trust, participation and civic agency.

Keywords: civic resilience; institutional governance; public trust; civic space; democratic resilience; rule of law; accountability; crisis coordination; information integrity; inclusive participation; institutional learning; social cohesion.

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Introduction. Civic resilience has become one of the most important concepts for understanding the ability of democratic societies to withstand crises, institutional shocks, disinformation, political polarisation, social fragmentation, disasters and external interference. Unlike traditional concepts of state stability, civic resilience does not refer only to the capacity of public authorities to maintain order. It also concerns the ability of citizens, communities, civil society organisations, public institutions and local networks to preserve democratic norms, cooperate during crises, protect rights, sustain public trust and participate in collective problem-solving.

Institutional governance for civic resilience is especially relevant in the context of overlapping crises. Contemporary societies face public health emergencies, migration pressures, climate-related disasters, military conflicts, cyber threats, declining trust in institutions, democratic backsliding and disinformation. These challenges do not affect only technical systems or public administration. They influence the relationship between citizens and the state. When institutions are transparent, accountable, inclusive and responsive, citizens are more likely to trust public decisions and cooperate in difficult circumstances. When institutions are perceived as unfair, corrupt, closed or ineffective, social cohesion weakens and civic resilience declines.

The problem is confirmed by international evidence. The OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions reported that in 2023 only 39% of respondents in 30 OECD countries had high or moderately high trust in their national government, while 44% had low or no trust (OECD, 2024a). This trust deficit is not only a political problem. It is a governance risk because trust affects compliance with public decisions, willingness to cooperate, acceptance of reforms and social solidarity. At the same time, Freedom House reported continuing global pressure on political rights and civil liberties, while V-Dem documented a long period of global autocratisation and increasing restrictions on civil society and media freedom (Freedom House, 2025; V-Dem Institute, 2025).

In this context, institutional governance for civic resilience should be understood as a system of rules, institutions, practices and relationships that enable society to anticipate risks, absorb shocks, protect civic freedoms, maintain public trust and recover through democratic participation. The article argues that civic resilience is not spontaneous. It is produced through institutional design, public integrity, legal safeguards, civic space, inclusive participation, crisis preparedness, reliable information ecosystems and continuous cooperation between the state and society.

Literature review. The concept of resilience originally developed in ecology, psychology, disaster risk reduction and systems theory. In public governance, resilience refers to the capacity of institutions and societies to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions and transform in response to long-term risks. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 identifies disaster risk governance, investment in resilience,

preparedness and the principle of “Build Back Better” as central priorities for reducing risk and strengthening societies (UNDRR, 2015). Although the Sendai Framework focuses primarily on disaster risk, its governance logic is applicable to civic resilience because both require prevention, coordination, institutional capacity and participation.

The European Commission has also developed a resilience-oriented approach through its resilience dashboards. These dashboards assess resilience in the European Union and its Member States as the ability to make progress toward policy objectives amid challenges and transformations (European Commission, 2024). This interpretation is important because it connects resilience not only with survival during crises, but also with the capacity to continue democratic, social and economic development.

The literature on public trust is central to civic resilience. Trust in government is influenced by competence, integrity, openness, fairness and responsiveness (OECD, 2024a). In crisis situations, trust reduces transaction costs, supports compliance with public health or security measures, and increases citizens’ willingness to cooperate. However, trust must not be interpreted as passive obedience. Democratic trust depends on accountable institutions, the rule of law, freedom of expression and meaningful participation.

Civic space is another key element of resilience. The OECD defines civic space as the legal, policy, institutional and practical conditions that allow non-governmental actors to access information, express themselves, associate, organise and participate in public life (OECD, 2025a). When civic space is protected, governments and civil society can collaborate throughout the policy-making cycle. When civic space is restricted, early warning signals from society are weakened, vulnerable groups become less visible, and public decisions become less legitimate.

The literature on democratic resilience emphasises the importance of institutional checks and balances, electoral integrity, independent media, civil society, judicial independence and anti-corruption mechanisms. The World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators measure governance through six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (World Bank, 2024). These dimensions are directly related to civic resilience because they define whether institutions are capable, legitimate and constrained by law.

Recent democratic indicators show that resilience cannot be taken for granted. Freedom House reported that global freedom declined in 2024 for the nineteenth consecutive year, with deterioration in political rights and civil liberties in many countries (Freedom House, 2025). V-Dem’s Democracy Report 2025 states that autocratisation has continued over a long period and that restrictions on media and civil society are among the most common strategies of democratic erosion (V-Dem Institute, 2025). These

findings indicate that civic resilience must include protection against institutional capture and gradual erosion of democratic safeguards.

At the same time, resilience research warns against purely defensive approaches. Civic resilience is not only protection from threats. It also includes positive institutional capacities: civic education, participatory governance, social inclusion, transparency, public service continuity, community networks and the ability to learn from crises. Therefore, institutional governance for civic resilience should be analysed as a dynamic ecosystem rather than a single policy field.

Aims. The aim of this article is to develop a conceptual and analytical framework for institutional governance for civic resilience and to identify the institutional conditions that enable societies to withstand crises while preserving democratic participation, public trust and rights protection.

The objectives of the article are:

- to clarify the concept of civic resilience in the context of institutional governance;
- to analyse the relationship between public trust, civic space, institutional quality and social resilience;
- to identify the main governance dimensions that support civic resilience;
- to systematise international indicators relevant to civic resilience;
- to develop an Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix as an analytical model;
- to formulate practical recommendations for strengthening civic resilience through institutional governance.

Methodology. The article uses qualitative conceptual analysis, comparative policy analysis and secondary data interpretation. The research is based on official reports, international indicators and policy documents produced by the OECD, European Commission, World Bank, UNDRR, Freedom House, V-Dem Institute, International IDEA and Edelman Trust Barometer.

The methodological approach is based on three levels of analysis. The first level examines conceptual and normative sources related to resilience, civic space, public trust and democratic governance. The second level analyses international indicators that can be used to evaluate institutional conditions for civic resilience. The third level develops an original analytical model, the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix, which systematises the main institutional capacities required for civic resilience.

Unlike a country-by-country descriptive comparison, this article applies a functional governance approach. It asks not only which countries perform better, but which institutional functions must be present for civic resilience to exist. This allows the research to connect democratic governance, public administration, civil society and crisis management into one integrated framework.

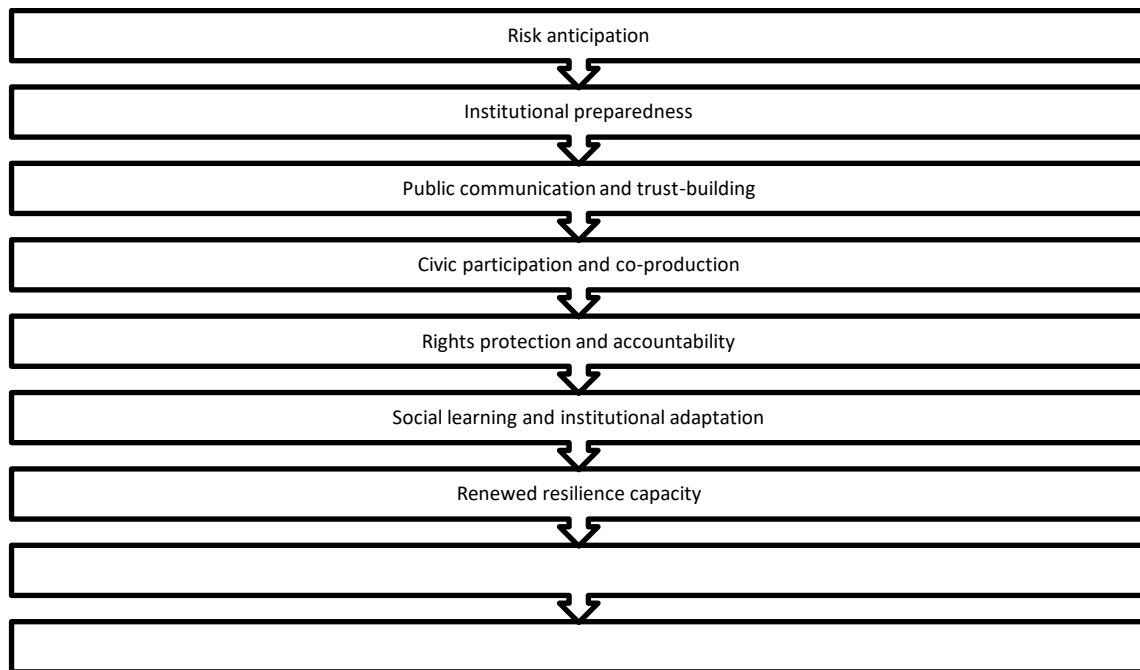


Figure 1. Institutional governance cycle for civic resilience

Source: developed by the author based on UNDRR (2015), OECD (2024a, 2025a), European Commission (2024), and World Bank (2024).

The model shows that civic resilience is cyclical. It begins with risk anticipation and institutional preparedness, but it becomes sustainable only when public communication, participation, accountability and learning are integrated into governance.

Results. The analysis allows institutional governance for civic resilience to be defined as a system of formal and informal mechanisms through which public institutions, civil society, communities and citizens collectively maintain democratic functionality, social trust, rights protection and public service continuity under conditions of disruption.

This definition includes four essential elements.

First, civic resilience requires institutional capacity. Public institutions must be able to plan, coordinate, deliver services, manage risks and respond to crises. Without administrative capacity, even democratic intentions may remain ineffective.

Second, civic resilience requires legitimacy. Citizens must perceive institutions as fair, lawful, transparent and oriented toward the public interest. Legitimacy does not eliminate disagreement, but it creates conditions for peaceful disagreement and compliance with lawful decisions.

Third, civic resilience requires civic agency. Citizens and civil society must have real opportunities to participate, criticise, organise, access information and contribute to solutions. Resilience is stronger when citizens are co-producers of public value, not only recipients of state decisions.

Fourth, civic resilience requires adaptability. Institutions must learn from crises, revise procedures, correct failures and build new capacities. Systems that cannot learn become fragile even if they appear stable.

Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix. The central result of the study is the development of the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix. It identifies seven governance pillars that jointly shape civic resilience.

Table 1. Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix

Governance pillar	Core function	Institutional instruments	Expected civic resilience effect
Public trust and legitimacy	Strengthen citizens' confidence in institutions	Transparency, integrity systems, responsive services, evidence-based decisions	Higher cooperation, compliance and social stability
Civic space	Protect participation and collective action	Freedom of association, expression, assembly, civil society protection	Stronger social feedback, pluralism and early warning capacity
Rule of law and accountability	Prevent abuse of power	Independent courts, ombuds institutions, audits, anti-corruption bodies	Protection of rights and institutional restraint
Crisis coordination	Ensure coherent response to shocks	Emergency plans, interagency coordination, local crisis units	Faster response and reduced institutional fragmentation
Information integrity	Protect public communication from manipulation	Open data, media freedom, fact-checking, digital platform accountability	Reduced disinformation and improved public decision-making
Inclusive participation	Involve diverse social groups	Participatory budgeting, consultations, citizen assemblies, local forums	Higher legitimacy and inclusion of vulnerable groups
Institutional learning	Transform crisis experience into reform	Evaluation, foresight, policy feedback, scenario planning	Long-term adaptation and prevention of repeated failures

Source: developed by the author based on OECD (2024a, 2025a), UNDRR (2015), World Bank (2024), European Commission (2024), and International IDEA (2025).

The matrix demonstrates that civic resilience is not produced by one institution alone. It depends on the interaction of trust, participation, accountability, coordination, information and learning.

Statistical and indicator-based evidence. International indicators confirm that civic resilience is under pressure. The OECD Trust Survey 2024 reported that only 39% of respondents in 30 OECD countries had high or moderately high trust in their national government in 2023. Only 37% were confident that their government balances the interests of current and future generations, and 41% believed that government uses the best available evidence when making decisions (OECD, 2024a). These results show that many democracies face a trust gap in long-term governance and evidence-based decision-making.

The World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators offer a broader measurement framework by assessing voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (World Bank, 2024). These indicators are relevant because each of them reflects a governance condition that either strengthens or weakens civic resilience.

Freedom House and V-Dem provide evidence of democratic stress. Freedom House reported continued global decline in political rights and civil liberties in 2024, while V-Dem documented long-term autocratisation trends affecting democracy, media freedom and civil society (Freedom House, 2025; V-Dem Institute, 2025). These developments directly weaken civic resilience because they reduce the capacity of society to organise, criticise, deliberate and hold power accountable.

The Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 also indicates that trust problems are connected with perceptions of grievance, inequality and unfairness. It argues that government, business, media and NGOs need to work together to address root causes of grievance and rebuild trust (Edelman, 2025). Although Edelman is a private research source and should be interpreted with caution, its findings are consistent with public governance literature: social grievance and distrust reduce institutional legitimacy.

Table 2. Selected indicators relevant to civic resilience

Indicator or finding	Institution	Relevance to civic resilience
39% of respondents in 30 OECD countries had high or moderately high trust in national government in 2023	OECD Trust Survey 2024	Shows the scale of institutional trust deficit
37% were confident that government balances current and future generations' interests	OECD Trust Survey 2024	Indicates weak confidence in long-term governance
41% believed government uses best available evidence in decisions	OECD Trust Survey 2024	Reflects public perception of evidence-based governance
Six WGI dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption	World Bank	Provides governance indicators linked to institutional resilience
Global freedom declined in 2024 for the nineteenth consecutive year	Freedom House	Demonstrates pressure on civic and democratic rights
V-Dem tracks more than 600 democratic attributes for 202 countries from 1789 to 2024	V-Dem Institute	Provides multidimensional evidence on democratic resilience
EU resilience dashboards assess the ability to make progress toward policy objectives amid challenges	European Commission	Offers an integrated approach to resilience assessment
Sendai Framework identifies disaster risk governance as one of four priorities	UNDRR	Confirms governance as a central condition of resilience

Source: compiled by the author based on OECD (2024a), World Bank (2024), Freedom House (2025), V-Dem Institute (2025), European Commission (2024), and UNDRR (2015).

Institutional functions of civic resilience. The results indicate that civic resilience requires at least six institutional functions.

The first function is anticipatory governance. Institutions must identify risks before they become crises. This includes strategic foresight, scenario planning, early warning systems and risk communication. The European Commission's resilience dashboards and strategic foresight approach illustrate the importance of monitoring vulnerability and capacity before disruptions occur (European Commission, 2024).

The second function is participatory governance. Civic resilience increases when citizens can participate in decisions that affect them. Participation provides practical knowledge from communities, increases

legitimacy and creates shared responsibility. OECD civic space work confirms that protected civic space enables collaboration between civil society and governments throughout the policy-making cycle (OECD, 2025a).

The third function is accountability. Institutions must be answerable for decisions, especially during crises when executive power often expands. Accountability mechanisms include judicial review, parliamentary oversight, audit institutions, ombuds offices, anti-corruption agencies and open data.

The fourth function is communication integrity. Civic resilience depends on the reliability of public information. Disinformation, propaganda and manipulation weaken trust and can obstruct emergency response. Therefore, institutional governance must protect media freedom, support transparent communication and promote digital information literacy.

The fifth function is inclusion. A society cannot be resilient if vulnerable groups are systematically excluded from services, rights or participation. Inclusive institutions reduce grievances and increase social cohesion. This includes attention to youth, older people, migrants, persons with disabilities, rural communities and economically vulnerable groups.

The sixth function is institutional learning. After crises, institutions must evaluate what worked, what failed and what should change. Learning transforms crisis experience into future capacity.

Governance typology of civic resilience. Based on the analysis, four types of institutional governance for civic resilience can be distinguished.

Table 3. Typology of institutional governance for civic resilience

Type of governance	Main characteristic	Resilience strength	Resilience risk
Administrative resilience governance	Focus on state capacity, planning and service continuity	Effective coordination and implementation	May become technocratic without civic participation
Democratic resilience governance	Focus on rights, participation, accountability and pluralism	Strong legitimacy and civic agency	May be slower in urgent crisis situations
Security-centred resilience governance	Focus on threat prevention, emergency powers and control	Rapid response to acute threats	Risk of restricting civic freedoms
Transformative resilience governance	Focus on learning, inclusion and institutional reform	Long-term adaptation and renewal	Requires high institutional maturity and trust

Source: developed by the author based on UNDRR (2015), OECD (2024a, 2025a), Freedom House (2025), V-Dem Institute (2025), and World Bank (2024).

The typology shows that resilience can be interpreted in different ways. A purely administrative or security-centred approach may respond quickly, but it can weaken civic freedoms if not balanced by democratic safeguards. A democratic and transformative approach is more sustainable because it combines capacity with legitimacy.

Discussion. The findings show that civic resilience is not identical to institutional strength in the narrow administrative sense. A state may be administratively strong but civically weak if it restricts participation, suppresses civil society or controls information. Conversely, a society may have active citizens and civil organisations but still lack resilience if public institutions are ineffective, corrupt or unable to coordinate crisis response. Therefore, institutional governance for civic resilience requires a balance between state capacity and civic freedom.

The first major implication is that trust should be treated as an institutional outcome, not as a public relations objective. Trust is produced when institutions are competent, honest, fair and responsive. The OECD data show that trust in national government remains limited in many countries, which means that governments cannot assume automatic citizen cooperation (OECD, 2024a). Institutional trust must be earned through performance, transparency and accountability.

The second implication is that civic space functions as resilience infrastructure. Roads, hospitals and digital networks are visible forms of infrastructure, but civic space is a democratic infrastructure. It enables society to communicate needs, detect abuses, mobilise volunteers, support vulnerable groups and correct institutional blind spots. If civic space is restricted, institutions lose social feedback and crises become harder to manage. The OECD's definition of civic space emphasises the legal and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to participate in public life (OECD, 2025a).

The third implication concerns the relationship between resilience and rights. In crisis situations, governments may justify exceptional measures by referring to security, emergency or public order. Some temporary restrictions may be necessary in extreme situations, but civic resilience requires that emergency powers remain legal, proportionate, time-limited and subject to oversight. Otherwise, resilience policy may become a tool of democratic erosion.

The fourth implication relates to information integrity. Public communication is now a core governance function. During crises, citizens need reliable, timely and understandable information. When information ecosystems are polluted by disinformation or opaque decision-making, public trust declines and collective action becomes more difficult. Institutional governance must therefore combine transparency, media freedom, digital regulation and civic education.

The fifth implication is that local institutions are crucial. Civic resilience is often experienced at the local level: municipalities, schools, universities, community centres, local media, hospitals and civil society organisations. National strategies may fail if they do not empower local actors. Local governance is also important because trust is often built through direct experience with services and officials.

The sixth implication is that resilience requires social justice. Inequality weakens civic resilience because people who feel excluded may not trust institutions or participate in collective action. The Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 highlights the role of grievance and perceived unfairness in the erosion of trust (Edelman, 2025). Public governance literature similarly shows that fairness and responsiveness are key drivers of legitimacy.

The seventh implication concerns institutional learning. Many crises reveal pre-existing weaknesses rather than create entirely new problems. For example, public health crises expose gaps in social protection, digital crises expose weaknesses in information governance, and disasters expose failures in planning or infrastructure. Resilient governance therefore requires systematic post-crisis evaluation and reform.

The article's main analytical contribution is the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix. It shows that civic resilience should be assessed through several mutually dependent pillars: trust, civic space, accountability, crisis coordination, information integrity, inclusion and learning. This model can be used for future empirical research, policy evaluation and institutional self-assessment.

Conclusions. Institutional governance for civic resilience is a necessary condition for democratic stability and social sustainability in times of disruption. Civic resilience cannot be reduced to emergency management, public security or administrative capacity. It is a broader governance quality that enables societies to preserve rights, trust, participation, service continuity and collective problem-solving under pressure.

The article shows that civic resilience depends on the interaction of public trust, civic space, rule of law, crisis coordination, information integrity, inclusive participation and institutional learning. These elements form a resilience ecosystem. If one element is weak, the entire system becomes more vulnerable. For example, strong emergency planning may fail without trust. Active civil society may be ineffective without institutional responsiveness. Digital communication may be harmful without information integrity.

The analysis also confirms that civic resilience is measurable through existing international indicators, including OECD trust data, World Bank governance indicators, European Commission resilience dashboards, Freedom House civil liberties assessments, V-Dem democracy indicators and UNDRR disaster risk governance principles. However, these indicators should be interpreted together because no single index captures the full complexity of civic resilience.

The article concludes that governments should strengthen civic resilience through five practical priorities. First, they should institutionalise trust-building through transparency, integrity and evidence-based decision-making. Second, they should protect civic space as democratic infrastructure. Third, they should ensure that crisis powers are accountable and rights-

respecting. Fourth, they should build information integrity through open communication and media freedom. Fifth, they should promote institutional learning after crises.

Further research should develop empirical indicators for the Institutional Civic Resilience Matrix, compare civic resilience across countries and regions, examine the role of universities and civil society organisations in resilience-building, and analyse how digital technologies, artificial intelligence and platform governance influence trust, participation and civic agency.

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