

An Examination of Resilience Policing in the District of Columbia

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Abstract

Disasters and emergencies have a remarkable impact on urban environments. Community resilience is necessary for cities to withstand and recover from crises, disasters, emergencies,

and incidents. This research evaluated how the District of Columbia addresses “resilience policing” through qualitative document analysis of 38 publicly accessible documents. The study used content and thematic analysis based on the City Resilience Framework 2024 and Mutongwizo et al.’s (2019) resilience policing elements. By using this method, this research found that the District of Columbia does not directly use the terminology “resilience policing” as defined by Blaustein et al. (2023). However, this research concluded through thematic analysis that the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing elements. This article concludes with recommendations and policy implications based on our findings.

Keywords: DC, District of Columbia, emergency management, emergency management policing, resilience, resilience policing

1. Introduction

Since 1953, the frequency of disaster declarations has increased. The average number of major disaster declarations issued from 1960 to 1969 was about 18.6 per year, whereas from 2000 to 2009, the average number was 57.1 per year (Lindsay, 2017). The Rockefeller Foundation launched the 100 Resilient Cities program in 2013 to transform city governments as they “needed help planning for disasters and combating persistent social maladies” (Bliss, 2019, para. 8). The 100 Resilient Cities program ended in 2019 and transitioned into the Resilient Cities Network “with a mission to reduce vulnerability and improve the well-being of over 220 million urban dwellers around the world” (Resilient Cities Network, 2024, para. 7).

According to a report by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2019), federal spending on weather disasters is expected to increase due to climate change. According to another GAO report, federal assistance for Hurricane Ian in September 2022 was over five billion dollars, Illinois Flooding in July 2022 was over 29 million dollars, and Puerto Rico Earthquakes in December 2019 was over one billion dollars (Government Accountability Office, 2023). The National Centers for Environmental Information (2024) calculated that the United States “has sustained 400 weather and climate disasters since 1980 where overall damages/costs reached or exceeded” (para. 1) one billion dollars, with the data adjusted for the consumer price index (CPI) for 2024.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2024) asserts, “While there may be rising interest and need for greater law enforcement intervention arising from climate-related events and trends, at present there is generally insufficient capacity to meet the challenges of either crime fighting or disaster and emergency management” (p. 8). Additionally, the United Nations Office on Drugs Crime (2024) states, “There are a multitude of stakeholders and agencies with which law enforcement must engage and collaborate with, with numerous tensions and opportunities evident at the grassroots level with regard to state-community relations” (p. 8). Perry et al. (2024) assert that “Managing emergencies and disasters, both manmade (wars, terrorism) and natural (floods, earthquakes), has become an important part of the police mission” (p. 170). Additionally, Luong et al. (2024) concluded that the Vietnamese police have important emergency management roles before, during, and after disasters.

The impact of disasters and emergencies due to climate change continues to challenge current traditional emergency management and police agencies. The City Resilience Framework (CRF) 2024 highlights how social media has amplified social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter) and asserts that “the streets of cities still serve as an essential stage for political expression” (ARUP, 2024, p. 6). Additionally, “conflicts are rapidly changing city populations” requiring communities to deal with economic, legal, and socio-cultural issues (ARUP, 2024, p. 7). Perry et al. (2024) also state that “A large body of research suggests that emergencies may both strengthen and weaken public sentiments of the police” (p. 171).

This article will review the literature on urban community resilience, legitimacy theory, systems approaches and CRF, and resilience policing and provide an overview of the District of Columbia’s government structure as it relates to our study. We will then discuss our hypothesis, research question, and theoretical/conceptual framework. This study identifies relevant documents we will assess and evaluate to examine how the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing. The discussion of findings will focus on our thematic analysis of the documents examined for this study. We will also discuss the study’s limitations. Lastly, we will discuss recommendations and policy implications based on our findings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resilience

Kong et al. (2022) assert that Holling (1973) formed “the beginning of the modern resilience theory” (p. 49652). Holling (1973) discussed ecological system resilience as the “measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables” (p. 14). Timmerman (1981) defined resilience as “the measure of a system’s, or part of a system’s capacity to absorb and recover from the occurrence of a hazardous event” (p. 21).

Zheng et al. (2018) state that “urban resilience is a more strategic, comprehensive, and perspective concept compared with risk management, disaster prevention, and reduction” (p. 235). Kong et al. (2022) state, “Urban resilience appears to be an appropriate response to the increased risk in urban areas” (p. 49653). Additionally, “The main concern of urban resilience research is to improve the capacity of cities to cope with various natural disasters and socio-economic risks under the background of climate change, globalization, and urbanization” (Kong et al., 2022, p. 49653).

Zaman and Raihan (2023) assert that “the influences of power relations and political dynamics in shaping community resilience to natural hazards has received less attention in both theory and practice” (p. 589). Zheng et al. (2018) claim that “improving urban resilience to climate change requires a systematic, long-term, and local based approach” (p. 241). Ribeiro and Gonçalves (2019) identified “four basic pillars of urban resilience...resisting, recovering, adapting, and transforming” (p. 101625). Ribeiro and Gonçalves (2019):

concluded that urban resilience is the capacity of a city and its urban systems (social, economic, natural, human, technical, physical) to absorb the first damage, to reduce the impacts (changes, tensions, destruction or uncertainty) from a disturbance (shock, natural

disaster, changing weather, disasters, crises or disruptive events), to adapt to change and to systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity. (p. 101625)

Broadly, this research addresses community resilience, defined by Sherrieb et al. (2010) as the “community’s ability to ‘bounce back’ from severe stress” (p. 228). The City Resilience Framework (CRF) 2024 defines city resilience as “the capacity of cities (individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems) to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience” (ARUP, 2024, p. 5).

Finkenbusch (2023) asserts that “resilience discourse has become increasingly popular in the policy world” (p. 140) and suggests that people’s everyday experiences can enhance citizen-led initiatives and participation. This results in community empowerment and direct access to decision-making. Finkenbusch (2023) further asserts that “Resilience is not a coherent policy paradigm” (p. 159) and that resilience is “a loose cluster of thoughts that can be articulated differently, including subversively” (p. 159). Positive, resilient elements include “the inclusion of local, everyday actors and their critical capabilities” (Finkenbusch, 2023, p. 159).

2.2 Legitimacy Theory

Law enforcement professionals are “local, everyday actors” with “critical capabilities.” Given this, political theory suggests that people seek legitimacy in the actions of those who govern them (Bodansky, 1999). Cosens (2013) asserts, “local agencies may have a higher perception of legitimacy than federal” (p. 3) agencies. Additionally, Cosens (2013) states that on the local level, “fewer formal protections are needed to assure accountability to the regulated public” (p. 3). In the emergency management field, it is said that “All disasters begin and end at the local level.” United States law enforcement officers derive their authority from a constitution and are “sworn” because they swear an oath to the United States Constitution or a state constitution. Given the daily interaction between a local law enforcement agency and its community, existing policing capabilities can positively enhance community resilience.

Local communities prepare for and respond to disasters before a federal disaster is declared. CRF 2024 recognizes cities’ roles in community resilience (ARUP, 2024). Law enforcement professionals are engaged with the community throughout the day. Additionally, these professionals can use community policing approaches, strategic communication, and their day-to-day collaboration with other city services to help increase community resilience and protect vulnerable populations. Perry et al. (2024) assert that police can show “fairness and effectiveness in handling the crisis...halt the long-lasting deterioration in public sentiments and improve public support in the context of the challenging emergency” (p. 185).

2.3 Systems Approaches and City Resilience Framework

Cities are “systems of systems,” and as a result, system-based approaches align with resilience (The Rockefeller Foundation & ARUP, 2014). The CRF was developed by The Rockefeller Foundation and ARUP in 2014, and the CRF was updated in 2024 (ARUP, 2024). The framework identifies drivers that contribute to a city’s resilience. A community can assess its resilience and identify improvement opportunities by examining specific drivers.

The CRF identifies seven resilient system qualities: flexible, inclusive, integrated, redundant, reflective, resourceful, and robust (ARUP, 2024). CRF 2024 has four broad dimensions with 22 goals (ARUP, 2024). The dimensions include economy and society, health and well-being, infrastructure and environment, and local governance and planning (ARUP, 2024). The economy and society dimensions are concerned with the organization “of social and financial systems that enable urban populations to live peacefully, and act collectively” (ARUP, 2024, p. 12). Public safety and security goals are within the economic and social dimensions (ARUP, 2024).

2.4 Resilience Policing

Bagby (2022) found that three features of a resilient organization are important to policing. Those three features include “That the organization can comprehend changing circumstances and adapt to them quick,” “strong communication lines both within the organization and with its clients or partners,” and “have a proactive posture in understanding and mitigating potential risks” (Bagby, 2022, p. 114).

Crises, disasters, emergencies, and incidents in the wake of climate change are challenging law enforcement. To date, “empirical studies have focused on policing during acute crisis events” (Mutongwizo et al., 2022, p. 2). Mutongwizo et al. (2022) assert that:

Hurricane Harvey illustrates how police organisations [sic] in the United States have subsequently adapted their emergency management strategies and capabilities, but that they also continue to rely on traditional policing mentalities and activities when it comes to delivering community safety during these crises. (p. 3)

“Emergency management may emerge as a prominent feature of everyday policing portfolios as ecological instabilities caused by climate change establish ‘new normals’” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 4).

The challenges law enforcement faces have introduced the term “resilience policing.” Resilience policing “is described as an emergent model of security governance that builds upon established state-based community policing traditions to support the management of these complex risks and hazards” (Blaustein et al., 2023, p. 1). Blaustein et al. (2023) suggest that community policing capabilities can be harnessed to enhance community resilience for crises, disasters, emergencies, and incidents. However, “empirical research on resilience policing is lacking” (Blaustein et al., 2023, p. 1), and “resilience policing scholarship remains in its infancy” (Blaustein et al., 2023, p. 2).

Mutongwizo et al. (2019) developed a resilience policing framework that “specifies the elements that are creating the need for this type of intervention, as well as how these elements influence the practice of resilience policing” (p. 611). Mutongwizo et al. (2019) include the following elements as part of the resilience policing framework:

there are new, uncertain harms, diverse policing capacities are needed to respond to these uncertain harms, police enroll other actors, for example, government and community resources to deal with these harms, police act as facilitators/enablers in community capacity-building; there is a mutual dependency between the police and community, and,

The Mutongwizo et al. (2019) outcomes include decentralized policing that is “actively distributed where responsibility is shared between the community and police” (p. 611), leading “to more anticipatory crime prevention and adaptation of all actors who are enmeshed in and dependent on each other for policing” (p. 611).

The District of Columbia's creation is in the United States Constitution (U.S. Const. art. I, § 8.). Like the United States Federal Government, the DC Government has an executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The Home Rule Act established the District's current form of government.

The executive branch is headed by a mayor elected to a four-year term. The mayor appoints a City Administrator who “is responsible for the day-to-day management of District government agencies, setting operational goals and implementing the legislative actions and policy decisions of the Mayor and DC Council” (Office of the City Administrator, n.d., para. 2). Four deputy mayors report through the City Administrator, and “oversee agencies within a defined cluster” (Office of the City Administrator, n.d., para. 3). For this research, the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice (DMPSJ) will be evaluated about resilience policing. The DMPSJ provides “direction, guidance support and coordination to the District’s public safety agencies to develop and lead interagency public safety initiatives to improve the quality of life in the District’s neighborhoods” (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, n.d., para. 1). The executive branch also includes many agencies that report directly to the mayor. See Figure 1 for the structure of DC’s executive branch.

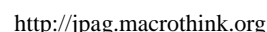


Figure 1. The Government of the District of Columbia's Organization Chart

Source: Government of the District of Columbia (2024)

The legislative branch has 13 elected council members who make laws and provide oversight. Of the 13 council members, one member is elected from each of the District's eight wards, and five members (including the chairperson) are elected at large (Council of the District of Columbia, n.d.-a). "The Council conducts its work through standing committees that perform legislative research, bill drafting, budget review, program and policy analysis, and constituent services" (Council of the District of Columbia, n.d.-a, para. 4). The Council "has 10 committees that consider legislation related to specific policy matters" (Council of the District of Columbia, n.d.-b, para. 1).

"The Office of the District of Columbia Auditor is the legislative auditor of the District of Columbia," supports "the Council in meeting its legislative oversight responsibilities," and helps "improve the performance and accountability of the District government" (Council of the District of Columbia, n.d.-c, para. 1).

The Council of the District of Columbia's committees conduct oversight hearings on government agencies within their jurisdiction. For example, the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety has oversight of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security Commission, Metropolitan Police Department, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Office of Police Complaints, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Police Complaints Board, and Police Officers Standards and Training Board. The Committee on Executive Administration and Labor oversees the Office of the City Administrator. The Committee on Transportation and the Environment has oversight responsibility for the Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency.

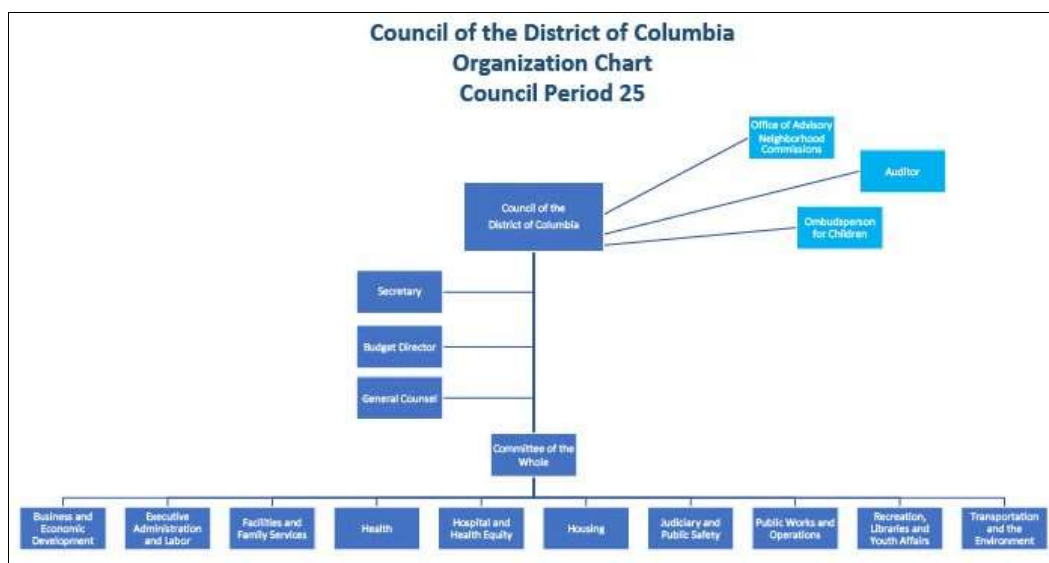


Figure 2. The Council of the District of Columbia's Organization Chart

Source: Council of the District of Columbia (2023)

Reviewing the DC government structure provides insight into what publicly available data can be examined to assess how the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing. Within this structure are key roles with different responsibilities associated with the community's resilience. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that this structure will impact how DC implements resilience policing.

3. Methodology

3.1a Hypothesis

H1: We hypothesize that the District of Columbia's executive and legislative branches of government will not effectively address resilience policing.

3.1b Research Question

RQ1: This research seeks to answer the question, "How does the District of Columbia's executive and legislative branches address resilience policing?"

3.2 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Sherrieb et al. (2010) asserted that future research was needed to support the relationships among community social and economic structure and resilience following disasters. Even with the need for future research identified, the authors stated, "Community resilience takes us beyond making plans for a disaster to building strengths in a community that will facilitate the process of resilience when needed" (Sherrieb et al., 2010, p. 245). They found that community resilience was significantly and negatively correlated with economic development, social capital, and social vulnerability (Sherrieb et al., 2010). Additionally, social capital had significant negative correlations with social vulnerability (Sherrieb et al., 2010). Lastly, economic development and social capital were moderately correlated (Sherrieb et al., 2010). Sherrieb et al. (2010) concluded that there are correlations between individual indicators and community resilience, economic development, and social capital.

Aziz et al. (2023) identified the ranking and validation of ten critical dimensions of crisis readiness: early warning, information management and communication, legal and institutional frameworks, property protection, recovery initiation, resources, response planning, risk and hazard assessment, and training and coordination. While these findings were for a specific incident response, they could be applied more broadly to resilience policing.

"There have been no empirically grounded studies, which describe or theorise [sic] how police might enhance the resilience of local communities in the face of disasters or improve the efficacy and responsiveness of crisis governance systems" (Blaustein, 2023, p. 2). Through this lens, this study seeks to explore this area further and contribute to resilience policing scholarship.

This research will assess how the District of Columbia's government addresses resilience policing by assessing how government documents incorporate principles from the CRF

2024's public safety and security goals (ARUP, 2024) and Mutongwizo et al.'s (2019) resilience policing elements. Examining how an urban municipality addresses these ideas can provide insight into how urban governments may enhance resilience policing.

3.3 Research Study Design

This research's foundation is based on the CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and Mutongwizo et al.'s (2019) resilience policing elements. This foundation allows for a specific assessment and examination of how resilience policing is addressed in the District of Columbia. Additionally, the CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and Mutongwizo et al.'s (2019) resilience policing elements can help identify better resilience policing strategies revealed by analyzing publicly available data.

This research uses document analysis, "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27), to study how the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing. The documents reviewed are publicly available and were selected based on their likelihood to include references to "resilience policing" based on the District of Columbia's government structure related to law enforcement and resilience efforts. Documents came from different government entities, including the DC Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency (CCCR), Office of the City Administrator (OCA), DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice (DMPSJ), DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (DC HSEMA), and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

Documents will be reviewed and measured against the CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and Mutongwizo et al.'s (2019) resilience policing framework. This will enable the assessment and evaluation of how the executive and legislative branches and associated entities (agencies, boards, commissions, and committees) impact resilience policing in the District of Columbia. This research will analyze how the District of Columbia addresses the CRF 2024's economy and society dimension and associated public safety and security goals (ARUP, 2024). Our research will perform content (White & Marsh, 2006) and thematic (Ozuem et al., 2022) analysis. Content analysis can provide quantification, for example, how often a word appears (given its context). Whereas thematic analysis "goes beyond the activity of quantifying words or phrases" (Ozuem et al., 2022, p. 148) and enables "detailing the analysis of the data rather than the data itself" (Ozuem et al., 2022, p. 150).

Figure 3 provides a summary of the documents reviewed to conduct this research. Figure 4 shows the entities with documents reviewed. Figure 5 classifies the documents reviewed by category. Lastly, Figure 6 provides abbreviations used in Figures 3, 4, and 5.

DC Governance Related to Resilience Policing	
Entity Abbreviations	
Abbreviations	Entity
CCCR	Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency
CJCC	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
CotW	Committee of the Whole
DC HSEMA	DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
DOEE	Department of Energy & Environment
DMPSJ	Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
EAL Committee	Committee on Executive Administration and Labor
EOM	Executive Office of the Mayor
HSC	Homeland Security Commission
JPS Committee	Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
MPD	Metropolitan Police Department
OCA	Office of the City Administrator
ODCA	Office of the District of Columbia Auditor
ONSE	Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
OPC	Office of Police Complaints
PRC	Police Review Commission
TE Committee	Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Figure 6. DC Governance Related to Resilience Policing, Entity Abbreviations Table

Note. Figure 6 was created by the authors after reviewing source documents.

4. Summary of Key Findings

This research assessed, analyzed, and evaluated 38 documents to examine the content and how frequently resilience policing, as defined by Blaustein et al. (2023), appeared in the documents. None of the documents examined contained the direct words “resilience policing.” This research also examined content and themes related to CRF 2024’s public safety and security goals (ARUP, 2024) and Mutongwizo et al.’s (2019) resilience policing elements. While reviewed documents did not utilize the term “resilience policing,” themes related to resilience policing framework elements identified by Mutongwizo et al. (2019) were identified. Additionally, CRF 2024 goals and resilient system qualities (ARUP, 2024) were found within the documents.

Some documents identify efforts to build upon recognized community policing practices to enhance complex risk and hazard management. For example, the Sustainable DC 2.0 Plan identifies MPD as a partner agency to “Improve emergency and community preparedness to respond to climate change events including extreme heat, storms, and flooding, with a focus on the most at-risk populations” (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019a, p. 160). The MPD Responses to Performance Oversight Hearing Questions assert that MPD’s Community Focused Patrol Unit (CFPU), which was dissolved in December 2023, “worked alongside various partners, including CSOSA, HSEMA, DCFEMS, MTPD, all district outreach units across the city, and many more” (Metropolitan Police Department, 2024b, p. 43). This document demonstrated that the municipal police partnered with the District’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency.

The New National Assessment Gives MPD High Marks report from the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor discusses results from the New York University School of Law, Policing Project's SAJET™ Policing Assessment. This assessment gave MPD an overall score of 81.66% and considered the Department well-performing. Notably, MPD scored 92.16% for the portion of the assessment related to "Effective Policing," which includes community engagement and policing, where MPD scored 100%. The assessment highlighted MPD's community walks and Special Liaison Branch, noting that the branch was "a model for community policing in its work with historically underserved communities" (Office of the District of Columbia Auditor & New York University School of Law Policing Project, 2024, p. 6).

The Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results (NEAR) Act Police Reforms Advance Procedural Justice but Data Initiatives Stall report found that "MPD should appoint a Community Policing Working Group of 10 to 15 members to examine national best practices in community policing on an ongoing basis" (Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, 2023, p. 1). Additionally, the report concluded, "The Metropolitan Police Department has not fully complied with requirements to operate a Community Policing Working Group and compliance has declined over time" (Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, 2023, p. 12).

The District's Climate Ready DC document aims to "Make neighborhoods and communities safer and more prepared by strengthening community, social, and economic resilience" (Department of Energy and Environment, 2016, p. 17). However, MPD was not identified as a lead or partner for this goal. This document also identifies police stations at risk for future flooding in Southwest DC and the need for backup power.

This research reviewed 12 District of Columbia's Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency meeting documents from October 20, 2022, through December 12, 2024. This research attempted to evaluate all meeting documents published from March 12, 2020, through December 12, 2024. However, the website with the meeting documents, climatecommission.dc.gov, resulted in an "Access denied" message for the earlier meeting documents. Of the 12 meetings held between October 20, 2022, and December 12, 2024, the Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency did not reference "resilience policing" or MPD as a partner/stakeholder. The January 20, 2023, meeting minutes asserted that "Climate priorities need to be embedded across all of the District's planning and investment decisions" (Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency, 2023a, p. 3). Additionally, September 14, 2023, meeting minutes reflect:

The Commission has engaged with almost all agencies required by its establishment legislation, but there are more stakeholders that should be engaged to promote and advance the Commission's recommendations. These include other boards and commissions, business leaders, and the general public. (Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency, 2023b, p. 4)

The "MPD Needs Improved Data Analysis, Targeted Deployment, and More Detectives" report from the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor noted that:

MPD's use of officers from patrol and non-patrol assignments to fulfill special details, such as large-scale events and the movement of dignitaries, impedes these personnel's ability to do their primary jobs and merits a data-based analysis of long-term Homeland Security Bureau staffing needs. (PFM Group Consulting, LLC, et al., 2024)

This identified how certain events impact the ability of MPD officers to do their job. MPD's mission is impacted by the District's unique status as a city, county, state, and the seat of the United States federal government requiring specific policing services that other large city police departments do not have to provide as part of day-to-day operations.

MPD's strategic plan identifies "impactful community engagement" as a guiding principle to mean "building and sustaining positive relationships in our communities and working together to create a safer city" (Metropolitan Police Department, 2023, p. 5). Additionally, the plan includes a value statement that the Department wants to "Instill a sense of transparency in operations with regular reports and outreach on critical events and community concerns" (Metropolitan Police Department, 2023, p. 6). Another value statement reads that MPD wants to "Sustain a culture of building and sustaining safe neighborhoods by making the relationship between police and neighborhoods paramount — tailoring policing to neighborhoods" (Metropolitan Police Department, 2023, p. 6). Furthermore, MPD clearly articulates its desire to "Build homeland security into the culture of the MPD and the community without creating fear" (Metropolitan Police Department, 2023, p. 6). The strategic plan also discusses MPD's Community Engagement Academy (CEA), which helps community members learn about police operations. However, the identified topics do not include resilience policing.

The Sustainable DC 2.0 Plan discusses the need for police vehicles to be zero to low-emission vehicles. Additionally, the document identifies MPD as a partner agency to "Improve emergency and community preparedness to respond to climate change events including extreme heat, storms, and flooding, with a focus on the most at-risk populations" (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019a, p. 160). Furthermore, MPD is identified as a partner agency to "Improve public safety through the development and implementation of resident-driven design, programming, and maintenance of streetscapes, parks, and other public spaces" (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019a, p. 166). It is worth noting that this research did not identify key performance indicators or workload measures in other documents that captured the aforementioned actions. Additionally, in reviewing significant themes of the District Comprehensive Plan, resilience policing is not explicitly referenced, and there is no overt reference to how MPD will strategically be integrated into comprehensive planning to enhance public safety through resident-driven design.

The Resilient DC document discussed the need for more microgrids for MPD infrastructure and identified a goal to "build up the police force to 4,000 active officers by 2022" (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019b, p. 134).

DC HSEMA's and MPD's Proposed FY2025 Performance Plans did not include key performance indicators or workload measures related to resilience policing. DC Code § 1-301.201 requires DC HSEMA's Office of Resilience and Recovery to "monitor the

District's resilience readiness" (Council of the District of Columbia, 2024).

DC HSEMA's Responses to Performance Oversight Hearing Questions document specifically demonstrated how DC HSEMA:

Facilitates ongoing preparedness activities through the Interfaith Preparedness Advisory Group (IPAG), which is a joint effort between the Mayor's Office of Religious Affairs, MPD, and HSEMA. IPAG provides a direct connection to the District's faith-based organizations through which HSEMA can efficiently assist with enhancing their readiness for all types of hazards. HSEMA develops content for regular meetings and disseminates relevant information to faith-based communities, especially when there are large-scale events or hazardous weather that may directly impact them. (Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, 2024, p. 23)

This document also highlighted the DC Fusion Center, where DC HSEMA conducts daily coordination with Federal and local law enforcement to assess and respond to threats.

The DC Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency (CCCR) Responses to Performance Oversight Hearing Questions identified the Commission's challenges, including "weak reporting requirements for DC agencies in our enabling legislation" and "insufficient staff support" (Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency, 2024, p. 5). Additionally, the document specified the Commission's top recommendations, including "advance resilience and preparedness for residents and businesses" (Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency, 2024, p. 5).

5. Limitations of the Study

This study focused on DC as a case study to examine how the District of Columbia Government addresses resilience policing. DC is a unique form of government that operates as a city, county, and state. Furthermore, local matters and laws require Congressional Review. Lastly, DC serves as the seat of the federal government for the United States.

An Office of the District of Columbia Auditor Report found that MPD's "unique responsibilities" originate "from its role serving the nation's capitol" (PFM Group Consulting, LLC, et al., 2024, p. 12). For example:

MPD is responsible for mitigating risk and providing security at demonstrations and large-scale or high-profile events throughout the District (for those areas which it has primary law enforcement authority) and works with other agencies – largely federal agencies – when events occur on or in parts of the District for which other agencies have primary responsibility. (PFM Group Consulting, LLC, et al., 2024, p. 12)

PFM Group Consulting, LLC, et al. (2024) also found that:

it is critical that a policing agency's context be analyzed. A department's context – its unique features, department history, current tasks assigned by elected and appointed leaders, community feedback, challenges, and opportunities – form a basis for a review of any policing agency. Policing agencies require a clear and concrete plan for the

deployment of sworn and professional personnel as part of delivering efficient, effective law enforcement services. (p. 56)

Our findings may lack generalizability and not apply to other jurisdictions. However, our methodology can provide a relevant framework for other jurisdictions to use to examine how resilience policing is implemented or can be implemented in their communities. The United States has:

a decentralized police structure for providing police services, hiring police recruits, and properly training them. Therefore, most of the issues surrounding policing become a local government issue in regard to the resources the city or county government can use to fund their respective department. As a result, policing policies, police hiring, police culture, and ultimately services to how the police come in contact with the public will ultimately vary across the country. (Wade, 2017, p. 637)

Mutogwizo et al. (2022) state:

Resilience policing has been developed as a framework for understanding adaptation and is linked to established community policing and third-party policing models. There is a need for future empirical work that explores if and how these transformations are taking place around the world. (p. 13)

This study sought to explore how the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing. Subsequently, we suspected our findings may be limited in applicability to DC. However, given policing's decentralized nature in the United States, local law enforcement agencies and jurisdiction-specific case studies are likely to yield findings that may lack generalizability.

Lowe et al. (2022) developed an urban resilience comprehensive framework and applied it to Melbourne, Australia, to clarify "the concept of resilience, to facilitate communication to multiple stakeholders and application of the concept within the multi-sectoral work of local government" (p. 894). Lowe et al. (2022) asserted that "the findings may be relevant to other jurisdictions" (p. 887). Lowe et al. (2022) sought "to determine a framework that reflects the resilience evidence-base; is applicable to the multi-sectoral work of local government; and could facilitate clear communication of the concept to diverse internal and external local government stakeholders" (p. 887).

While the newness of the City Resilience Framework 2024 would lead us to suspect that District documents would not capture the updated framework, the concept of the City Resilience Framework was introduced in 2014, before any documents assessed and evaluated during this study were published. This study deliberately focused on resilience policing. A study of this nature requires a rigorous thematic analysis based on examining documents for pre-defined characteristics. While content can easily be examined to determine whether the words are expressly contained or not, thematic analysis requires some subjectivity. The researchers increased the study's objectivity by examining 38 documents to provide a significant sample to assess and examine how the District of Columbia addresses resilience policing. The documents examined provide context-dependent results, which may not be transferable to other environments. Blaustein et al. (2024) assert:

The generalisability [sic] of the context-specific descriptions, analyses, and recommendations it generates is somewhat limited. In our view, this is inevitable because description and theory-building must precede problem-solving, evaluation, and even normative debates when it comes to understanding and governing new and emerging harm landscapes. (pp. 9-10)

6. Recommendations and Policy Implications

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2024) provides recommendations related to “a range of organisational [sic] measures and administrative arrangements” (p. 10). These organizational measures and administrative arrangements are broadly grouped as inventory (expertise and equipment), coordination (preparedness and capacity building), and implementation (organizational measures and administration) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024). We recognize that “Building capacity will require significant resources, human and technical, as well as a major shift in thinking about mission, task, and role for global law enforcement” (p. 50).

Bliss (2016) asserted that “Building community resiliency can be seen as a part of community policing where police work with community partners to prioritize the goals and needs of the community” (p. 75). Additionally, Marietta (2015) asserted:

Providing police and fire protection is the core role of local government. Maximizing our ability to fill this role should occur as the future is being mapped out, not after the emergency is already upon us and all we can do is react and clean up the mess afterwards. (p. 21)

As noted in the summary of key findings, the DC Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency stated that DC agencies had weak reporting requirements and the Commission lacked staff support. The Council of the District of Columbia can strengthen reporting requirements through legislative action. Actions can include the Commission assessing and evaluating key performance indicators to create a publicly accessible and understandable dashboard that measures the District’s resilience, including resilience policing. Legislative action could also require the Office of the District of Columbia’s Auditor to assess and evaluate resilience policing and to officially release a report on resilience policing in the District of Columbia. As part of the performance oversight process, the Council of the District of Columbia could include questions about how MPD and other agencies are addressing resilience policing and progressing towards the goals identified in the Sustainable DC 2.0 plan. Agencies could report on key performance indicators and/or workload measures related to resilience policing.

Executive agencies can enhance services provided by Safe Commercial Corridor Hubs to include resilience for crises, disasters, emergencies, and incidents. Additionally, resilience policing could be incorporated into MPD’s Community Engagement Academy. Furthermore, resilience policing can be incorporated into MPD’s Special Liaison Branch, which “serves as a communication conduit between the police and the community every day” (Metropolitan Police Department, n.d., para. 5) and “works closely with the District’s vibrant communities,

in particular its African, Asian, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, interfaith, LGBTQ+, and Latino communities” (Metropolitan Police Department, n.d., para. 2). Lastly, MPD conducts community walks “to engage residents around safety issues impacting their community and to collectively discuss resolutions” (Metropolitan Police Department, 2024a). MPD could incorporate DC HSEMA into MPD community walks to evaluate any community resilience concerns and/or challenges and to speak with community members. Malik and Berg (2024) concluded that:

Identifying and adopting approaches to include community-based actors, and placing the knowledge of those affected by extreme weather on equal terms with other technical, scientific and professional forms of knowledge, may prove to be a crucial factor in tackling the pervasive and escalating effects of climate change. (p. 11)

Blaustein et al. (2024) discuss how their resilience policing studies (Blaustein et al., 2023 & Blaustein et al., 2024) demonstrated the importance of police “documenting how police manage shocks and disruptions is vital for improving the ability of policing actors and networks to respond to complex risk landscapes in the future” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 4). This research’s thematic analysis examined resilience policing, and the summary of key findings highlights how MPD can enhance resilience policing in the District of Columbia. “Accessing this knowledge is critical for improving the adaptive capacity of police organisations [sic]” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 4).

Blaustein et al. (2024) contend “that modern, state-centric policing entities are fundamentally concerned with the governance of everyday threats, particularly as the perceived immediacy of problems, hazards and risk plays an important role in shaping how limited police time, resources, and personnel are allocated” (p. 5). Our findings support this Blaustein et al. (2024) assertion. Our research confirmed that MPD was identified as an important community preparedness partner (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019a). However, MPD performance documents revealed a predominant concern “with the governance of everyday threats,” notably by the advocacy of increasing the Department’s sworn component to 4,000 officers (Government of the District of Columbia, 2019b). Additionally, MPD’s proposed fiscal year 2025 performance plan contains key performance indicators and workload measures related to traditional policing, such as crime clearance rates, court overtime hours, and vehicle crash fatalities (Metropolitan Police Department, 2024c). Key performance indicators and workload measures can be updated to reflect proactive community-based preparedness activities, such as the number of community engagements with DC HSEMA. This change could impact how police “see and position themselves within wider webs or networks of governance” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 7).

An Office of the District of Columbia Auditor Report found that MPD had “limited and unreliable Homeland Security Bureau time on task data for special events and details” (PFM Group Consulting, LLC, et al., 2024, p. 59). MPD could consider:

The creation of new roles which centre [sic] on full-time emergency management liaison work may also signal an adaptive shift which signifies institutional recognition of the fact that governance landscapes are changing, and police organisations [sic] must follow-suit

or at least remain abreast of these shifts. (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 7)

Blaustein et al. (2024):

call upon policing and adaptive governance researchers to draw attention to diverse encounters between policing actors and hazards, disruptions, and complexities attributable to climate change in societies across the globe. Establishing a comparative knowledge base is vital for understanding the existing and emerging capabilities and limitations of different policing models and traditions, along with the factors that seemingly support or inhibit adaptation across different policing landscapes. Documenting and analysing [sic] the present and past is necessary for developing more innovative and imaginative adaptive policing trajectories, including those with transformative potential. (p. 9)

Broadly speaking, the advantage of our DC case-study approach “is that it supports in-depth, contextually specific explorations of established policing capabilities, mentalities, and practices” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 9). This approach “encourages researchers to consider how these emerging policing landscapes are shaped by, and shape, wider political and economic forces” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 9). Our findings indicate how both the DC government and MPD address resilience policing. This research is vital as contextualization is necessary for adapting, comparing, and disrupting security governance “in the face of crises, both within and beyond the constraints of established modern and late modern policing models” (Blaustein et al., 2024, p. 9). The New York University School of Law Policing Project’s SAJE™ Policing Assessment could be modified to include resilience policing indicators, which would help measure resilience policing and how it is integrated into policing capabilities, mentalities, and practices.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2024) asserts:

A paradigm shift is occurring due to changing circumstances that is reshaping contemporary responses to the law enforcement mission and mandate. This has ramifications for how law enforcement work is carried out, the resources needed to do so, and the collaborations required across agencies and between community and government. (p. 7)

The CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and resilience policing elements identified by Mutongwizo et al. (2019) can continue to be used to assess and understand how local government addresses resilience policing. Mutongwizo et al. (2022) state, “The wider literature on emergency management policing illustrate the need for police organisations [sic] to develop models and strategies which will enable them to adapt to these conditions in the face of climate related harms” (p. 3). Future studies can examine how traditional policing models may be challenged by climate-related harms and how police collectively address these challenges. More collective research on how police agencies are meeting the demand for resilience policing can help inform police practitioners how they can help their communities adapt to crises, disasters, emergencies, and incidents.

The “framework for ‘resilience policing’ proposed by (Mutongwizo et al., 2021) may help support innovation and adaptation” (p. 3). Future studies can group how rural and urban

police agencies are addressing resilience policing in both the rural and urban environments. Further research in the United States can also compare rural and urban environments in different regions: North East, Mid-Atlantic, South East, Mid-West, South West, North West, and West.

7. Conclusion

This article examined resilience policing in the District of Columbia. Research suggests that local government entities are seen as more legitimate than federal government entities (Cosens, 2013). Cities are systems, and the City Resilience Framework (CRF) 2024 can help communities assess their resilience (ARUP, 2024). The increasing number and impact of crises, disasters, emergencies, and incidents challenge local communities, including law enforcement.

Blaustein et al. (2023) assert that resilience policing can help manage and mitigate hazards and risks. Mutongwizo et al. (2019) developed a resilience policing framework. This research hypothesized that the District of Columbia's executive and legislative branches do not effectively address resilience policing.

This study assessed and evaluated 38 publicly available documents based on content and themes using document analysis. The basis for the thematic analysis came from characteristics identified in the CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and the resilience policing elements identified by Mutongwizo et al. (2019).

None of the documents our study examined contained the direct words "resilience policing." However, documents identify local government efforts to expand community policing practices to support community resilience challenges. The DC government could address resilience policing more directly. Additionally, the District could more effectively track key performance indicators and workload measures related to resilience, including resilience policing. These indicators and measures can be included in a publicly accessible and understandable dashboard, supporting the legitimacy of the government's actions.

The recommendations derived from our analysis focus mainly on District government-specific actions. Our discussion demonstrates the advantages of resilience policing case studies and more broadly connects our recommendations with previous scholarly assertions. Furthermore, local law enforcement departments can use the CRF 2024 (ARUP, 2024) and resilience policing elements identified by Mutongwizo et al. (2019) and similar methodology used by this study to assess and understand how their local government addresses resilience policing. Matczak and Bergh (2023) assert, "Exploring and mapping the links between climate change and police work across the societal, organizational, and individual levels, and making these explicit, is an important first step in ensuring that the police are ready for the future" (p. 6).

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