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Resilience in Pontifical Doctrines: From Pope Benedict XVI to Pope Francis

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Abstract: This study explores the concept of resilience within the teachings of Popes Benedict XVI and Francis, comparing these with established psychological resilience theories by Ungar and Holling. Through a comprehensive analysis of documents sourced from the Vatican's official website, resilience is examined across individual, community, and global dimensions. Individual resilience emphasizes spiritual resources such as faith and hope, which Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis underscore as essential for overcoming personal and societal crises. Community resilience is highlighted in the context of solidarity, cooperation, and cultural identity, as demonstrated in responses to natural disasters and sociopolitical challenges. At a global level, Pope Francis advocates ecological sustainability and systemic justice, tying resilience to shared responsibilities and global solidarity. Methods include textual frequency analysis and semantic mapping of resilience-related terms within papal documents, complemented by a comparative analysis with psychological resilience frameworks. Findings reveal unique contributions of papal teachings, such as the integration of spiritual, moral, and ecological dimensions, which expand traditional resilience concepts. This theological lens adds normative and prescriptive elements, offering transformative perspectives for resilience studies, emphasizing faith, values, and sustainability as pivotal components for enduring and thriving amidst adversity. Limitations of data mining methods suggest potential for further interdisciplinary research.

Keywords: resilience; popes; global and regional stability; crisis; psychology



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1. Introduction

This article examines the concept of resilience through an interdisciplinary approach, with a particular focus on psychological, theological, and sociological perspectives. By building bridges between these disciplines, the article aims to enrich the interdisciplinary understanding of resilience, offering practical and theoretical perspectives relevant in various academic and practical contexts. The integration of spiritual and moral dimensions provides a new approach, while emphasizing community solidarity and cultural identity contributes to strengthening social cohesion. The concept of resilience has garnered increasing attention across diverse academic disciplines, ranging from the natural sciences to the humanities and social sciences (Székely 2015). Its modern origins can be traced back to Crawford Holling (1973), who introduced resilience as a defining feature of living, complex systems. According to Holling, these systems can absorb disturbances arising from external stressors and subsequently return to an equilibrium state. In this homeostatic model, when an external factor disturbs the balance, the system is able to reestablish its equilibrium in a relatively short span of time, without leaving any significant trace of the disruption (Holling 1973). This foundational definition provided scholars and policymakers with a

theoretical lens through which to view adaptation, recovery, and continuity in the face of various shocks, including natural disasters, political upheavals, or economic crises.

However, the rapid rise in the usage of the term “resilience” was not solely a matter of academic curiosity. Governmental, political, and particularly security policy interests played a pivotal role in propelling the concept to the forefront of public discourse. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York marked a critical inflection point, compelling policymakers, scholars, and citizens in Western nations to reassess national security strategies and crisis management approaches. In this political context, resilience came to symbolize freedom, self-reliance, and the capacity to endure adversity (Evans and Reid 2013). The widespread adoption of the concept underlined its applicability to disaster preparedness and response, where learning from catastrophes formed the basis for more robust policy measures aimed at mitigating the impact of future crises. By recasting adversities as opportunities for learning and improving, resilience began to embody a proactive mindset that seeks both to prevent disasters from happening and to recover swiftly when they do (Cutter et al. 2010).

From this viewpoint, resilience—as robustness or resistance—emerges as a dynamic practice. It can be proactive, in that communities, governments, and organizations take measures to reduce vulnerabilities before hazards strike. It can also be reactive, manifesting in the rapid mobilization of resources and reorganization after a crisis (Dainty and Boshier 2008). In both senses, the key is adaptability; a system demonstrates resilience by evolving in response to ever-changing threats and challenges. Whether an external stressor originates in natural processes (such as earthquakes or pandemics) or human-induced phenomena (like warfare or sociopolitical unrest), the principle remains the same: resilience denotes an intrinsic capacity to withstand pressures, reformulate structures, and reemerge in a stable, functional state (Folke et al. 2010).

Complementing this framework, resilience has also become a hallmark of interdisciplinary discourse. Scholars from fields as varied as ecology, engineering, organizational studies, psychology, and theology have explored how resilience can illuminate the ways in which different systems—be they ecosystems, enterprises, or social institutions—can maintain functionality under stress. The interdisciplinary approach emphasizes that theoretical insights should be translated into effective, on-the-ground solutions. As a result, contemporary scholarship increasingly underscores the significance of cross-sector collaboration, inclusive governance, and resource allocation strategies that reinforce resilience at multiple levels (Evans and Reid 2013; Hollenbach 2002).

In recent decades, resilience has also begun to appear prominently in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Though one might initially consider resilience an empirical or technical concept rooted in ecology and systems theory, church leaders have increasingly recognized its ethical and spiritual dimensions. Indeed, since Holling’s (1973) seminal work, the meaning of resilience has expanded to include moral, cultural, and faith-based interpretations (Dulles 1992). Pope Francis and his predecessors, such as Benedict XVI and John Paul II, have all touched upon themes closely linked to resilience—particularly social justice, environmental stewardship, and communal solidarity. In fact, Pope Francis’s (2015) *Laudato si’* discusses the imperative of safeguarding creation against environmental degradation, reframing ecological crises not only as scientific or political problems but also as moral and spiritual ones.

One of the reasons that papal statements on resilience carry particular weight lies in the global reach and influence of the Catholic Church. With over a billion adherents worldwide, papal encyclicals and apostolic exhortations resonate far beyond ecclesiastical boundaries. They offer moral guidance and a framework for action that can shape discourse in international forums and local communities alike (Benedict XVI 2009a). By championing

the notion of resilience, popes emphasize that preparation for crises must not be purely technological or administrative. Instead, it should address deeper aspects of human life: dignity, solidarity, compassion, and the ethical use of resources (Hollenbach 2002). In doing so, Catholic leaders contribute to a discourse that aligns the physical, organizational, and spiritual dimensions of resilience, thereby illustrating the interplay between faith and public policy.

A crucial component of this spiritual perspective on resilience is the idea that communities can develop “internal fortitude” through moral values, shared identity, and collective responsibility. Himes (Himes et al. 2005) points out that when believers are encouraged to strengthen social bonds and embody virtue, they effectively create a robust moral infrastructure that supports resilience in times of crisis. This moral infrastructure—rooted in compassion, empathy, and justice—enables communities to respond more effectively to emergencies and, equally importantly, to nurture long-term well-being. This approach aligns with the broader holistic view that resilience cannot be confined to engineering solutions or short-term preparedness plans. Rather, it spans cultural, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, all of which play decisive roles in determining how societies weather hardships (Himes et al. 2005).

In many respects, the Catholic Church’s emphasis on resilience dovetails with the broader interdisciplinary consensus that modern societies must adopt integrated, context-sensitive strategies. For instance, an economically resilient system must also account for social equity, ensuring that vulnerable populations are not disproportionately affected by calamities such as pandemics or extreme weather events. Likewise, a politically resilient society ensures that governance structures remain transparent, inclusive, and accountable, thus maintaining legitimacy even when faced with critical challenges. Meanwhile, an ecologically resilient environment requires attention to biodiversity, sustainable resource management, and climate adaptation measures. The Church’s teachings thus bolster this integrated standpoint by advocating for the defense of human dignity and the environment, reminding us that resilience is ultimately a question of moral responsibility as much as technical expertise (Pope Francis 2015).

Moreover, the concept of resilience, when viewed through the lens of Catholic social teaching, underscores the significance of hope and faith as motivating forces. Jacques (2016) notes that hope provides a reservoir of emotional and psychological energy that can sustain individuals and communities during prolonged adversity. It is one thing to have a contingency plan for natural disasters but quite another to maintain collective resolve and moral clarity in the face of catastrophes that may stretch on for years. Within this context, the Church’s messages, promulgated through papal encyclicals and pastoral letters, serve as reminders that resilience encompasses not only preparedness and recovery but also the deeper spiritual capacity to find meaning, purpose, and a sense of communal belonging in the midst of crisis (Jacques 2016).

Taken together, these insights highlight how resilience has evolved into a complex, multifaceted concept that cuts across disciplinary boundaries and societal spheres. Its intellectual roots lie in ecology and systems theory, yet its practical implications extend to security policy, urban planning, education, healthcare, and religious discourse. This breadth reflects the growing recognition that robust, enduring solutions to modern challenges require an interlocking approach—one that accounts for physical infrastructure, social networks, governance structures, and ethical or spiritual values. By advocating this comprehensive view, scholars, policymakers, and faith leaders alike contribute to a richer, more nuanced understanding of resilience.

Analyzing papal statements from the perspective of resilience is crucial, as these messages offer strategic guidance for the effective management of crises. Through this

analysis, teachings that foster social cohesion and sustain societal well-being during times of challenge can be uncovered.

Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis were chosen as the focus of this research because their teachings explicitly and thoroughly address the concept of resilience, particularly on spiritual, community, and global levels. During their papacies, global challenges such as natural disasters, economic crises, and social inequalities made the discussion of resilience especially relevant. While earlier popes, such as John Paul II or Leo XIII, also addressed similar issues, the concept of resilience explicitly appears only in the teachings of modern popes, making these discourses the central focus of the study.

2. Results

2.1. *Benedict XVI*

The concept of resilience plays a significant role in the teachings of Pope Benedict XVI, addressing the capacity to withstand challenges and maintain stability both individually and collectively. This analysis draws on seven documents in which the term resilience appears, examining it in various contexts and themes. These documents include diplomatic letters and speeches directed toward ambassadors, heads of state, and communities, addressing issues such as natural disasters, economic crises, cultural identity, and religious and social values.

In his address to the Ambassador of Iceland, the Pope emphasizes the importance of preserving national identity and cultural heritage amid economic challenges, highlighting the resilience of the Icelandic people in managing financial crises ([Benedict XVI 2008a](#)). Similarly, in his speech to the Latvian ambassador, resilience is linked to the unity derived from historical and cultural roots, providing a foundation for overcoming current economic difficulties ([Benedict XVI 2009b](#)).

In his remarks to the Ambassador of Lesotho, the Pope underscores community solidarity and the fight against corruption as key elements of resilience, especially in combating poverty and hunger ([Benedict XVI 2006](#)). Addressing the Ambassador of the Philippines, the Pope commends the faith and courage of the Filipino people, which contribute to resilience in the face of social and economic challenges and promote justice and peace ([Benedict XVI 2009c](#)).

In a letter commemorating the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Pope praises the resilience and unity of the American people, emphasizing the need to maintain hope and respect for human dignity amidst tragedies ([Benedict XVI 2011](#)). Regarding Cyprus, the Pope highlights the Christian heritage and social cohesion as foundations of resilience, with a special focus on peace and reconciliation ([Benedict XVI 2010](#)). In his address on the role of grandparents, the Pope emphasizes the importance of family and community connections, which serve as essential pillars of social resilience ([Benedict XVI 2008b](#)).

These seven documents collectively provide a comprehensive picture of how Pope Benedict XVI interpreted and applied the concept of resilience in various situations, highlighting its importance in promoting social stability, justice, and the preservation of religious values.

2.1.1. Individual-Level Concepts

- Faith and Religious Conviction—Personal faith as an inner resource for coping with difficulties ([Benedict XVI 2009c, 2010](#)).
- Hope and Trust—Maintaining belief in the future and optimism even in challenging times (September 11, [Benedict XVI 2008a](#)).
- Perseverance—Determination to overcome personal challenges ([Benedict XVI 2006, 2009c](#)).

- Selflessness—Willingness to act for the benefit of others, even at the expense of personal comfort or safety (Role of Grandparents, [Benedict XVI 2006](#)).
- Honor and Integrity—Upholding moral principles despite adversity ([Benedict XVI 2009b](#), [2009c](#)).
- Family Values and Bonds—The role of individuals in maintaining family cohesion and intergenerational relationships (Role of Grandparents).

2.1.2. Community-Level Concepts

- Community Cohesion—Cooperation among social groups and communities to achieve shared goals ([Benedict XVI 2006](#), [2010](#)).
- National Identity and Cultural Heritage—Attachment to history and traditions, which provide strength during challenges ([Benedict XVI 2008a](#), [2009b](#)).
- Peace and Reconciliation—Promoting social harmony, especially in conflict situations ([Benedict XVI 2010](#), September 11).
- Justice and Equality—Ensuring social and economic justice for everyone ([Pope Francis 2016](#); [Benedict XVI 2006](#)).
- Environmental Sustainability—Careful stewardship of natural resources and responsibility for future generations ([Benedict XVI 2008a](#), [2009b](#)).
- Religious Dialog—Collaboration among religious communities to foster peace and mutual understanding ([Benedict XVI 2010](#); [Pope Francis 2016](#)).
- Solidarity—Mutual support among community members during difficult times ([Benedict XVI 2006](#), [2008a](#)).

Table 1 summarizes the key resilience concepts highlighted in the pontifical doctrines of Benedict XVI.

Table 1. The key resilience concepts highlighted in the pontifical doctrines of Benedict XVI.

Individual-Level Concepts	Community-Level Concepts
Faith and Religious Conviction	Community Cohesion
Hope and Trust	National Identity and Cultural Heritage
Perseverance	Peace and Reconciliation
Selflessness	Justice and Equality
Honor and Integrity	Environmental Sustainability
Family Values and Bonds	Religious Dialog
	Solidarity

2.2. Pope Francis

Pope Francis frequently addresses resilience (42 mentions on the Vatican website) as a personal virtue, emphasizing the importance of inner strength in the face of suffering. In his message to the Church in Estonia, he praised the enduring faith of communities that endured decades of oppression, urging them to draw inspiration from their spiritual roots and the testimony of martyrs like Archbishop Eduard Profittlich ([Pope Francis 2024a](#)). Similarly, during his visit to L'Aquila, he commended survivors of the devastating earthquake for beginning to rebuild their lives through faith, solidarity, and remembrance of their lost loved ones ([Pope Francis 2022](#)).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis acknowledged the immense burdens faced by healthcare workers, praising their compassion and encouraging them to preserve their well-being while continuing their service ([Pope Francis 2021a](#)). In his message for World Pulses Day, he recognized the resilience of rural workers, especially women, who continue to feed their families and communities despite systemic challenges ([Pope Francis 2021b](#)).

2.2.1. Community Resilience

At a community level, Pope Francis describes resilience as the ability of societies to unite and rebuild. At the 51st International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu, he highlighted the resilience of Filipino communities after Typhoon Yolanda, emphasizing the role of faith and mutual support in fostering healing and hope (Pope Francis 2016). He frequently underscores the importance of solidarity, as in his message to Lebanon, where he urged political and religious leaders to draw strength from the nation's heritage to overcome present challenges (Pope Francis 2020).

In his message to the World Rural Forum, he acknowledged the collective resilience of family farmers, who work collaboratively and sustainably to nourish their communities. He highlighted the need to support rural women and youth, who play key roles in building resilient agricultural systems (Pope Francis 2024b).

2.2.2. Global Resilience

On a global scale, Pope Francis ties resilience to ecological responsibility and systemic justice. In his message for World Food Day, he called for the transformation of global food systems to make them more sustainable, equitable, and resilient in the face of crises such as climate change, conflicts, and economic inequalities (Pope Francis 2021c). In his address on food and humanitarian crises, he emphasized the interconnectedness of global challenges and highlighted the need for international solidarity to build resilient communities worldwide (Pope Francis 2023).

In his message to young participants of the "Economy of Francesco" initiative, he encouraged them to be agents of change, using their creativity and resilience to create a more inclusive and sustainable economy. He urged them to participate in building systems based on fraternity, solidarity, and ecological responsibility (Pope Francis 2021d).

2.2.3. Resilience Through Faith and Hope

Pope Francis frequently links resilience to the Christian virtues of faith and hope. In his Christmas message to the people of Lebanon, he used the cedar tree as a symbol of perseverance and renewal, encouraging the nation to remain faithful to its spiritual identity while working toward a brighter future (Pope Francis 2020). Similarly, in his address on World Pulses Day, he connected the simplicity and strength of legumes to the resilience needed to overcome hunger and inequality, urging communities to participate in building a fairer and more sustainable world (Pope Francis 2021e).

2.2.4. Conclusions

Pope Francis's reflections on resilience illuminate its multidimensional nature, encompassing personal perseverance, communal solidarity, and global responsibility. Through his teachings, he inspires individuals and communities to draw strength from their faith, support one another, and commit to caring for the Earth. For Pope Francis, resilience is not merely the ability to endure but a transformative force that enables growth, renewal, and the pursuit of justice.

2.2.5. Keywords Highlighted in Pope Francis's Teachings on Resilience

At the Individual Level:

- **Faith**—A source of inner strength for overcoming difficulties.
- **Hope**—Trust in the future, enabling one to move forward even amid tragedies and crises.
- **Perseverance**—Steadfastness and determination in the face of obstacles.
- **Compassion**—Understanding and sensitivity toward the suffering of others.

- **Commitment**—A firm resolve toward one’s goals.
- **Inner Strength**—The ability to process personal pain and loss.
- **Patience**—Reconciliation with the passage of time during difficulties.
- **Fidelity**—Adherence to values and faith even in challenging times.
- **Renewal**—The potential for personal growth and development after crises.
- **Creativity**—Seeking new solutions to challenges.

At the Community Level:

- **Solidarity**—Responsibility for and support of one another within communities.
- **Collaboration**—Collective effort to overcome obstacles.
- **Unity**—Maintaining a communal spirit despite difficulties.
- **Social Justice**—Promoting equality and fairness for all people.
- **Common Good**—Prioritizing the interests of the community over individual concerns.
- **Mutual Support**—Strengthening one another in community life.
- **Empathy**—Understanding and addressing the problems of others.
- **Sustainability**—Responsible use of community and Earth’s resources.
- **Reconstruction**—Physical, spiritual, and social rebuilding of communities after crises.
- **Harmony**—Creating and maintaining balance within communal life.

These keywords, as emphasized in Pope Francis’s teachings, convey the message that resilience is not merely an individual capability but also a communal responsibility. The inner strength of individuals and the solidarity of communities together form the foundation for enduring crises and fostering renewal.

Table 2 summarizes the key resilience concepts highlighted in the pontifical doctrines of Pope Francis.

Table 2. The key resilience concepts highlighted in the pontifical doctrines of Pope Francis.

Individual-Level Concepts	Community-Level Concepts
Faith	Solidarity
Hope	Collaboration
Perseverance	Unity
Compassion	Social Justice
Commitment	Common Good
Inner strength	Mutual Support
Patience	Empathy
Fidelity	Sustainability
Renewal	Reconstruction
Creativity	Harmony

3. Discussion

The following outlines how the teachings of the popes provide unique contributions to the concept of resilience. The emphasis on the spiritual dimension highlights the role of faith and hope as fundamental virtues of resilience. Pope Francis, in his message to the Church in Estonia, emphasizes the importance of inner strength derived from spiritual roots, which aids individuals and communities in overcoming oppression and crises (Pope Francis 2024a). Similarly, Pope Benedict XVI underscores the role of religious conviction in Latvia and Iceland as a foundation for national identity and community resilience (Benedict XVI 2008a, 2009b). This spiritual dimension complements Ungar’s (2008) ecological resilience theory by incorporating faith and hope as internal resources, particularly in religious communities. By framing resilience through a lens of faith, the popes’ teachings offer a unique approach to resilience that speaks to spiritual and moral fortitude, an area often underexplored in psychological resilience theories.

At the community level, the popes emphasize solidarity and cooperation in fostering resilience. Pope Benedict XVI, for example, highlights community solidarity and the fight against corruption as key components of societal stability and resilience in Lesotho and the Philippines (Benedict XVI 2006, 2009c). Pope Francis commends the solidarity and mutual support of Filipino communities following Typhoon Yolanda, which helped sustain hope and facilitate recovery (Pope Francis 2021e). This perspective underscores the importance of community-driven initiatives that prioritize collective well-being over individual gains, a point that complements Holling's (1973) systems-level model by integrating psychological and social dynamics into resilience strategies. Community solidarity, as outlined by the popes, also aligns with the need for shared responsibilities and mutual aid, which can act as a buffer against systemic and environmental challenges.

The teachings of the popes also highlight the importance of hope and trust in the future as integral to resilience. In his Christmas message to the Lebanese, Pope Francis uses the metaphor of the cedar tree to symbolize perseverance and renewal, encouraging the nation to rely on its spiritual identity while striving for a brighter future (Pope Francis 2020). Such messages reflect an emotional and symbolic understanding of resilience, offering narratives that inspire collective optimism. Emphasizing hope and optimism as psychological resources not only enhances resilience research but also provides tools for coping with long-term crises and traumas. This complements Ungar's ecological approach, which often focuses on the interaction between external supports and individual capacities, by adding an emotional and spiritual dimension that sustains individuals and communities in challenging times. In the comparative analysis, the unique contribution of papal teachings to the concept of resilience lies in their emphasis on spiritual and moral dimensions, which are less addressed in the models of Ungar (2008) and Holling (1973). Ungar's ecological resilience theory highlights the importance of cultural and social support networks, yet papal teachings add a transcendent perspective that underscores the roles of faith, hope, and ethical responsibility during crises. For instance, in Pope Francis's teachings, faith is not only presented as an inner resource but also as a foundation for community solidarity and global accountability, extending beyond individual and local contexts.

Holling's systems-level approach prioritizes sustainability and adaptive cycles, but papal teachings stress that resilience is not merely a technical or systemic issue but also a moral and spiritual challenge. Pope Benedict XVI, for example, emphasizes the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of justice as essential elements for maintaining social cohesion. These values suggest that resilience serves not only to endure crises but also to uphold human dignity and foster communal harmony.

This type of analysis highlights that papal teachings not only complement but, in some cases, challenge the emphases of psychological and ecological approaches. This opens the possibility of interpreting resilience on a more integrated and profound level, taking into account individual, community, and global dimensions simultaneously.

On a global scale, Pope Francis frequently stresses the importance of ecological responsibility and global solidarity in building resilience. In his address to the FAO, he advocates for the establishment of sustainable food systems that are more resilient to climate change and economic inequalities (Pope Francis 2021c). Incorporating global responsibility into resilience research emphasizes the interconnectedness of local and international efforts, aligning with Holling's (1973) focus on sustainability within systems-level models. The emphasis on ecological sustainability is particularly timely, as global challenges such as climate change necessitate collaborative responses. By linking resilience to stewardship and global solidarity, the teachings provide a moral framework that calls for shared responsibility and equitable resource distribution.

The role of values and identity is another key focus in the teachings of the popes regarding resilience. Pope Benedict XVI considers national identity and cultural heritage as essential resources for overcoming societal crises (Benedict XVI 2008a), while Pope Francis highlights social justice and the preservation of values as fundamental elements of resilience, especially for marginalized groups (Pope Francis 2024b). Highlighting the psychological dimension of values and identity can contribute to the development of culture-specific resilience interventions that account for the unique contexts of individuals and communities. By advocating for inclusivity and the protection of human dignity, the popes' teachings underscore that resilience is deeply rooted in the collective ethical frameworks that guide societies through adversity.

The teachings of the popes on resilience expand Ungar and Holling's theories by integrating spiritual, community, and global dimensions (Holling 1973; Ungar 2008). These perspectives not only emphasize the existence of resilience but also its transformative potential, with a specific focus on the significance of faith, solidarity, and sustainability. The popes' teachings, combined with Ungar and Holling's theories (Holling 1973; Ungar 2008), underscore that resilience is not merely the ability to withstand challenges but a dynamic process that involves personal growth, community cohesion, and global responsibility, embodying transformative possibilities. This comprehensive approach opens new pathways for understanding and applying resilience, particularly through the integration of faith, values, and sustainability. By addressing the moral and ethical aspects of resilience, these teachings inspire a more holistic approach that bridges psychological, social, and environmental dimensions. As the world grapples with increasing complexity, the intersection of these perspectives offers actionable insights for fostering resilience in diverse cultural and social contexts.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Data Collection

For this research, I utilized the search function available on the official website of vatican.va. I entered the term "resilience" into the search field, and then downloaded and examined all the results presented by the system. (I also conducted searches using the German term "resilienz" and the Italian term "resilienza"; however, the latter yielded only one English-language result, while the former yielded none). These results could pertain to encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, papal letters, and other official documents. I recorded the exact date of the search and the number of results to ensure that the process could be replicated in later stages of the research.

- I. Search Term: "resilience".
- II. Search Location: vatican.va website, built-in search interface.
- III. Time Frame: The search was conducted on 17 November 2024 and 27 December 2024; the study is limited to documents available at the time of the search.
- IV. Selection of Results: I clicked on each search result link and verified whether it truly contained the term "resilience" and whether the context was relevant (e.g., within papal teachings, in the form of official speeches or documents). I excluded texts where the term "resilience" appeared solely as a reference or in a technical remark, thereby not including them in the final corpus.

The documents ultimately included constituted the analytical corpus upon which further content analysis was based.

4.2. Analysis of Search Results

After reviewing the results, I conducted two main types of analysis: (1) basic frequency analysis and (2) context analysis.

I. Frequency Analysis:

- I examined which popes (e.g., Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II) were associated with the texts in which “resilience” appeared, and whether there were any temporal or thematic differences.

II. Context Analysis:

- I scrutinized the immediate textual environment of the term’s occurrence (sentences, paragraphs).
- I analyzed which concepts (e.g., “hope”, “common good”, “solidarity”) appeared alongside or in the immediate vicinity of “resilience”, thereby uncovering the semantic network of papal texts.

4.3. Comparison with the Psychological Concept of Resilience

I compared the data extracted from the papal documents (i.e., the frequency of mentions of “resilience”, the context, and related concepts) with the theoretical background of psychological resilience, primarily drawing from the relevant literature from Ungar (2008), as well as works by Holling (1973) on ecological resilience theory. In identifying parallels and differences, I addressed the following questions:

- To what extent does papal discourse reflect individual coping or rather community-based resilience?
- What ethical, spiritual, or transcendent elements emerge differently compared to the psychological model?
- Is there a normative, moral component in papal texts that, in contrast to the descriptive nature typically found in psychology, carries a prescriptive character?

Based on the conceptual overlaps and differences between the psychological literature and papal documents, I drew conclusions on how the religious–theological context modifies, expands, or reemphasizes the classical concept of resilience.

4.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Since the search engine of the vatican.va website does not always guarantee comprehensive, in-depth text mining (e.g., due to linguistic variations or database structure), it is possible that certain documents where the term “resilience” appears in different linguistic forms or as a synonym were excluded from the corpus. Nevertheless, the method served the exploratory purpose of the research well and provided a reliable initial view of the concept of resilience in papal documents.

The analysis of the documents reveals no direct empirical evidence that papal documents have significantly influenced people’s resilience, but they hold substantial potential on theological and theoretical levels. The emphasis on faith, hope, and solidarity can inspire individuals and communities in their responses to crises, even if these direct effects are not always measurable. While the lack of empirical research represents a limitation, it is also not proven that these teachings are ineffective. Papal messages are widely cited and integrated into social movements and political discourses, suggesting their indirect but significant impact.

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