

Research Article

Regulatory Capacity of Local Governments in Resolving Contemporary Environmental Disputes through Integrated Restorative Approaches and Civil Governance Mechanisms

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Abstract: This study explores the effectiveness of restorative and civil governance models in resolving environmental disputes at the local government level. As environmental conflicts become more complex and widespread, traditional legal approaches often fail to provide quick, sustainable solutions. Restorative governance models, which prioritize community involvement, collaboration, and the restoration of relationships, offer a promising alternative to adversarial legal proceedings. The research combines policy analysis and semi-structured interviews with local government officials, mediators, and community representatives to assess the implementation and outcomes of these models in real-world contexts. Findings indicate that restorative practices, when integrated with civil governance mechanisms, significantly reduce dispute resolution times (a 40% improvement) and enhance community satisfaction compared to traditional litigation processes. These models foster a more inclusive and cooperative environment, ensuring that all stakeholders, including local communities, are actively involved in decision-making processes. However, challenges such as legal framework rigidity, political pressures, and resource limitations still impede the widespread adoption of restorative practices. The study concludes with recommendations for integrating restorative approaches into local environmental policies, advocating for legal reforms and enhanced resource allocation to support these methods. Limitations of the study include its regional focus and the need for broader, longitudinal research to assess the scalability of restorative and civil governance models across different geographic contexts and environmental issues.

Keywords: Civil Governance; Community Involvement; Dispute Resolution; Environmental Disputes; Restorative Governance;

1. Introduction

Environmental disputes have become increasingly intricate due to the intersection of ecological concerns and societal interests. These disputes often involve various stakeholders with conflicting perspectives, creating challenges for resolution. For example, the Cape Wind conflict in the United States exemplifies the difficulty of balancing the interests of stakeholders, scientific uncertainties, and overlapping governmental jurisdictions (M. J. Larson, 2015). Similarly, in China, local governments grapple with environmental conflicts related to urban development, such as the siting of waste incineration plants, which are frequently met with public resistance (Li, 2019). These examples highlight the complexities faced by local governments in resolving environmental disputes while managing the competing interests of different actors.

Local governments play a crucial role in managing environmental issues, but they often face substantial obstacles due to limited regulatory capacity and insufficient resources. As urbanization accelerates and environmental concerns become more pressing, local governments are increasingly seen as central to effective environmental protection (Casado, 2023). However, the intricacies of contemporary environmental disputes necessitate a shift in decision-making criteria, moving beyond traditional concerns of efficiency and cost-effectiveness to emphasize process legitimacy and robust information management (Verschuuren, 2015). Such a shift is essential to address the growing environmental challenges cities face in an era of global environmental change.

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Local governments often encounter several constraints when addressing environmental disputes, including regulatory constraints, resource limitations, and challenges related to public participation and enforcement. One of the primary obstacles is regulatory constraints. Local governments frequently operate within strict regulatory frameworks that limit their ability to act independently. For example, state preemption laws in the United States restrict the capacity of local governments to regulate environmental practices within their jurisdictions, resulting in inefficiencies and hindering the development of innovative solutions (Verschuuren, 2015). Similarly, in China, local governments face significant challenges in enforcing national environmental policies due to ambiguous legal provisions and complex central-local dynamics (Li et al., 2016).

Resource limitations also present a significant challenge for local governments. In Jordan, for instance, local governments struggle with a lack of financial independence, which impedes their ability to develop and implement local environmental policies effectively (Taamneh et al., 2020). This financial strain is further exacerbated by the need for capacity building among local government employees to address environmental challenges adequately.

Another critical issue is the difficulty in ensuring meaningful public participation and responsiveness. Effective environmental governance requires the active involvement of local communities in decision-making processes. However, local governments often struggle to engage the public effectively. For instance, in cases of hydraulic fracturing in the USA, UK, and the Netherlands, local governments have used their regulatory powers to limit environmentally harmful practices. Yet, these decisions are often overridden by higher levels of government, which prioritize national interests over local concerns (Verschuuren, 2015). This situation highlights the difficulty local governments face in ensuring public participation while balancing national policies.

Finally, enforcement challenges represent one of the weakest links in local environmental governance. In China, local governments' focus on economic growth often leads them to prioritize industrial development at the expense of environmental protection, resulting in weak enforcement of environmental laws (X. He, 2019). Moreover, the inadequate disclosure of environmental data and the lack of public oversight further complicate the enforcement of regulations, making it difficult for local governments to fulfill their environmental protection mandates effectively.

Environmental disputes at the local government level are complex and multifaceted, often requiring innovative and integrated approaches for effective resolution. Local governments, as the closest administrative units to the community, face a significant challenge in managing these disputes while balancing legal, social, and environmental concerns (Brizga et al., 2024). This study aims to assess the effectiveness of restorative and civil governance models in resolving environmental disputes, with a focus on community-oriented and participatory mechanisms.

Restorative governance models, which prioritize community involvement and reconciliation, have been increasingly recognized for their effectiveness in resolving conflicts in culturally diverse and rural settings. These models focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and involving affected parties in the dispute resolution process. For instance, in Ethiopia, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms (ICRMs) have proven effective in maintaining social cohesion and addressing contemporary challenges, demonstrating the efficacy of community-based, restorative approaches. Similarly, in Indonesia, the integration of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) with customary law in villages has enhanced legal pluralism and provided culturally appropriate solutions to disputes. Restorative justice approaches, such as mediation and community-based ADR, emphasize victim empowerment, reducing stigmatization, and repairing interpersonal relationships. These methods have been successfully applied in environmental mediation projects in Milan, where dialogue-based tools have facilitated long-term, efficient coexistence among stakeholders (Regazzoni, 2022).

In contrast, civil governance models rely on structured legal and administrative frameworks to manage environmental disputes. These models involve regulatory enactments and institutional mechanisms to ensure compliance and accountability. For example, Latvia has developed a detailed legislative framework for environmental governance, coordinating efforts across local, regional, and national levels. However, these efforts face challenges related to financial and administrative capacities, which can hinder the effective implementation of environmental protection measures (Brizga et al., 2024). Furthermore, the decentralization of local self-government, as seen in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, has positively impacted ecosystem protection by empowering local authorities and involving the public in decision-making processes (Boldyriev et al., 2024). Local self-

government bodies are crucial in monitoring compliance with environmental regulations and implementing effective protection measures.

The integration of restorative and civil governance models holds the potential to enhance the effectiveness of environmental dispute resolution. By combining community-based restorative justice with formal civil governance mechanisms, disputes can be addressed in a manner that is both culturally appropriate and legally sound. For instance, the community-based governance (CBG) framework in Colombia utilizes participatory approaches to address socio-ecological conflicts, promoting sustainable land-use practices and strengthening law enforcement (Eufemia et al., 2023). Additionally, the convergence of communication technologies with civil dispute resolution mechanisms can further enhance access to justice and improve the quality of dispute resolution processes, allowing for more informed decision-making and realistic solutions (Lama, 2022). This integration ultimately contributes to more efficient and community-focused environmental governance.

2. Literature Review

Overview of Environmental Disputes

Environmental disputes are a significant challenge for local governments and communities alike. These conflicts often arise from the interaction of human activities with natural resources, leading to disputes that involve multiple stakeholders with conflicting interests. The most common types of environmental disputes include industrial pollution, land use and development, resource management, and the establishment of environmental protection areas (Fowler & Rabinowitz, 2020; Gonzaga et al., 2022; Li, 2019; Wilson, 2016).

Environmental disputes often arise from several common issues, each impacting local communities and their relationship with the environment. One major cause of conflict is industrial pollution, which significantly affects both public health and the environment, especially in communities exposed to pollutants. Industrial activities frequently result in serious health issues and environmental degradation (Wilson, 2016). Another source of disputes involves land use and development, particularly when new industrial projects, such as waste incineration plants, are proposed. These developments often face strong opposition from local communities who are concerned about potential environmental hazards, health risks, and the loss of traditional livelihoods, leading to protests and extended legal battles over project siting (X. He, 2019; Li, 2019). Additionally, resource management conflicts are common, particularly when local communities feel that their access to natural resources like water, wildlife, and forests is being unfairly restricted or encroached upon by external authorities or development projects (Fowler & Rabinowitz, 2020). These tensions are further exacerbated when centralized decision-making processes undermine local communities' rights and control over their resources. Finally, the establishment of environmental protection areas, such as conservation zones, can lead to disputes, particularly when these areas require the resettlement of local communities or restrict traditional land use. These conflicts become more complex when local communities depend on the land for their livelihoods, creating challenges in balancing environmental protection with social and economic needs (Gonzaga et al., 2022).

Environmental disputes often have profound social, economic, and health impacts on local communities. Economic disruption is one of the most immediate consequences, as communities that rely on traditional livelihoods may experience financial hardship when new regulations or developments affect their access to natural resources (Gonzaga et al., 2022). Social tensions are also a common outcome, especially when there is a divide between those who support environmental protection measures and those who prioritize economic development (Freeman & Hutchins, 2023). Additionally, pollution and environmental degradation can directly harm the health and well-being of local residents, exacerbating the social and economic costs of environmental disputes (Wilson, 2016).

Regulatory Capacity of Local Governments

Local governments play a key role in managing environmental disputes, but their capacity to resolve these conflicts is often constrained by several factors. Resource limitations, such as financial and human resource constraints, are common challenges that hinder local governments' ability to enforce environmental laws and regulations effectively (L. R. Larson et al., 2017). Additionally, unclear legal frameworks and ambiguities in environmental laws

can create confusion among local officials, making it difficult to resolve disputes in a legally consistent manner (Sakurai, 2017). Political influence, both at the local and supra-local levels, also plays a significant role in shaping environmental policies and their effectiveness in resolving disputes (Fowler & Rabinowitz, 2020). Community engagement is another crucial factor, as successful dispute resolution often requires active participation from local residents (Li, 2019).

Restorative Justice in Dispute Resolution

Restorative justice has emerged as a promising approach to resolving environmental disputes. The principles of restorative justice prioritize victim empowerment, healing, and accountability. In environmental disputes, restorative justice focuses on repairing harm and restoring relationships between the affected parties. This approach is particularly beneficial in fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, which is often essential for addressing complex environmental issues (White, 2022).

Restorative justice emphasizes the empowerment of victims and encourages their active participation in the resolution process. By giving victims a voice in the decision-making process, restorative justice helps to repair harm and restore relationships (Wilson, 2016). The approach also stresses the importance of accountability, holding offenders responsible for their actions in a way that promotes reconciliation and repair (White, 2022). Additionally, community involvement is a core tenet of restorative justice, as it seeks to restore relationships not only between the parties directly involved in the dispute but also within the broader community (Pali et al., 2022).

Restorative justice approaches, such as mediation and community-based ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) systems, have been successfully applied in various environmental contexts. These approaches help resolve disputes by fostering dialogue between the parties involved and offering solutions that address the underlying causes of the conflict (Madjid & Istiqomah, 2023). For instance, the use of mediation in environmental disputes, particularly in Italy, has demonstrated its effectiveness in achieving long-term coexistence and environmental restoration (Cominelli et al., 2023).

While restorative justice offers numerous benefits, several challenges need to be addressed for its effective implementation in environmental disputes. One challenge is ensuring that agreements reached through restorative justice are binding and effectively implemented. In some cases, there may be resistance from stakeholders or difficulties in enforcing agreements (T. He et al., 2023). Additionally, integrating restorative justice into existing legal frameworks and cultural contexts can be complex and requires careful consideration of local legal systems and traditions (Sakurai, 2017).

Civil Governance Mechanisms

Civil governance mechanisms, particularly collaborative governance, have become increasingly significant in addressing complex social issues, including environmental disputes. Collaborative governance involves multiple stakeholders, such as government agencies, the private sector, and civil society, working together to make decisions and resolve conflicts. This approach emphasizes shared decision-making, trust-building, and partnership among stakeholders, which are essential for effective collaboration. A key feature of successful collaborative governance is the establishment of multi-organizational networks, which help create joint agreements and build consensus among diverse groups (Skarlato, 2021).

Effective collaborative governance in environmental dispute resolution is built on several key elements that ensure the success of the process. One essential component is shared decision-making, which ensures that all relevant stakeholders, including local communities and experts, have a voice in the process. This shared power dynamic fosters inclusivity and broadens the scope of problem-solving, which is crucial for addressing complex environmental issues (Kim et al., 2023). Another critical element is trust and partnership among stakeholders. Building and maintaining trust is vital for long-term collaboration, as it encourages stakeholders to cooperate and engage in the dispute resolution process with a sense of shared responsibility. Additionally, collaborative governance requires the formation of multi-organizational networks that span across various sectors. These networks enable stakeholders to come together, share resources, and work toward common goals, facilitating complex, multi-stakeholder negotiations, particularly in environmental disputes (Kim et al., 2023). Finally, one of the key strengths of collaborative governance is its ability to manage conflicts. By establishing structured avenues for cooperation and policy-

making, this approach allows stakeholders to resolve disputes effectively without resorting to adversarial processes, leading to more sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes in environmental governance (Tando et al., 2021).

Despite its benefits, collaborative governance is not without challenges. It is a dynamic process that often involves ongoing conflicts, requiring continuous adaptation and management (Kim et al., 2023). Moreover, the social value embedded in collaborative processes—such as inclusivity and community benefits—can significantly impact the effectiveness of collaborative governance, influencing its success in conflict resolution (Tando et al., 2021). Optimizing the institutional environment and collaborative structures is another critical aspect of enhancing the effectiveness of these mechanisms in resolving environmental disputes.

Restorative Approaches in Environmental Disputes

Restorative justice (RJ) and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods have been increasingly recognized as effective strategies for resolving environmental conflicts. These approaches focus on repairing harm, fostering cooperation, and promoting dialogue among stakeholders, which is essential in addressing the complex social and environmental challenges of today (Fauzi, 2024). RJ emphasizes the acknowledgment of responsibility by offenders, non-economic compensation, and the management of justice across large groups of stakeholders (Grigolett, 2024).

Restorative approaches offer an effective framework for addressing environmental harm by focusing on restoration and compensation rather than punishment. Restorative justice (RJ) is particularly effective in resolving conflicts related to pollution and environmental degradation, as it emphasizes repairing relationships and holding offenders accountable for their actions (Grigolett, 2024). A subset of RJ, known as Green Restorative Justice, applies non-trial processes that are faster and more cost-effective, allowing for quicker environmental restoration by those responsible. This method offers an alternative to traditional legal systems by providing a more efficient and humane approach to resolving environmental disputes (Fuady & Ishak, 2023). Diplomatic Restorative Justice (DRJ), which combines restorative principles with diplomatic negotiations, is especially useful in transnational environmental disputes. DRJ has proven effective in international cases, such as addressing illegal fishing practices, where countries collaborate to enforce environmental regulations while maintaining diplomatic relations. Furthermore, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods, such as mediation and dialogue, have been successful in resolving pollution disputes, particularly those involving health damage and air pollution affecting multiple households. ADR methods offer an extrajudicial approach to environmental conflicts, focusing on cooperation and mutual agreement, which can lead to effective restoration and compensation with less adversarial confrontation (Fauzi, 2024).

While RJ and ADR methods show promise in resolving environmental disputes, certain challenges remain. Not all RJ practices are suitable for environmental harm, and it is essential to carefully evaluate which practices can be effectively applied to environmental contexts (Himawan & Lestari, 2023). Additionally, public participation is crucial for the success of these methods, and comprehensive strategies that involve a broad range of stakeholders are necessary to ensure that all voices are heard in the resolution process (Kim et al., 2023).

3. Materials and Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, combining policy analysis and semi-structured interviews to assess the effectiveness of restorative and civil governance models in resolving environmental disputes. The policy analysis will examine local government frameworks and regulations related to environmental conflict resolution, focusing on how these models are applied in practice. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with local government officials, mediators, and community representatives to gather insights on the practical impact of restorative and civil governance approaches, including their successes and challenges. The study will focus on jurisdictions involved in environmental disputes, ensuring diverse perspectives from policymakers, mediators, and those directly affected by these conflicts.

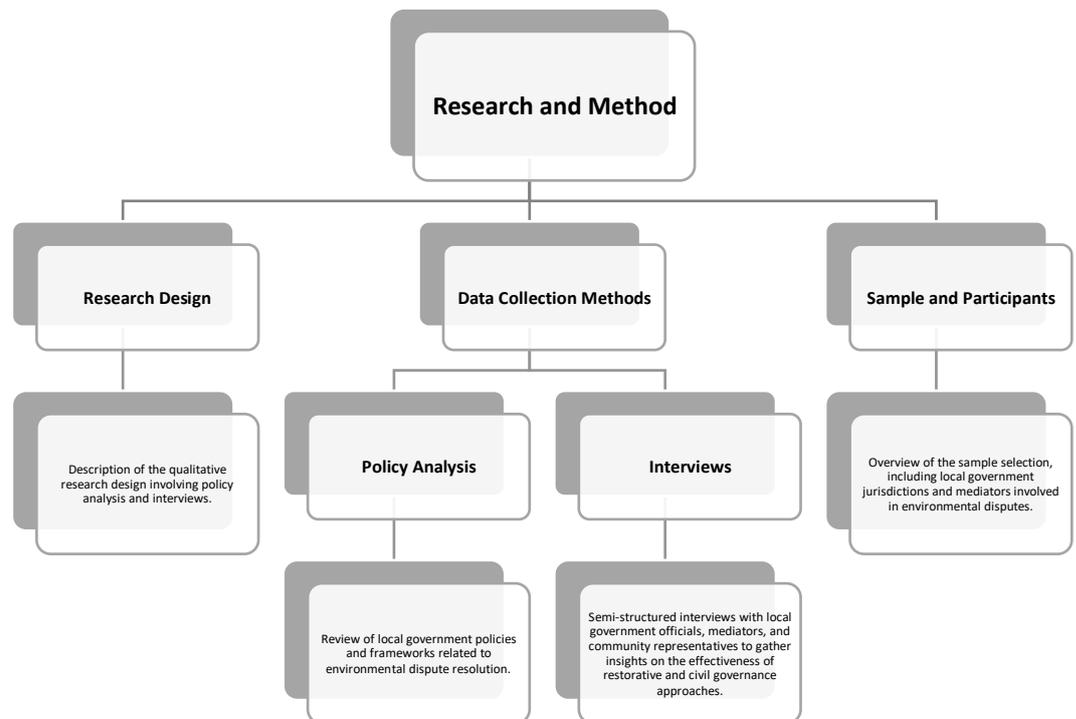


Figure 1. The structure of the Research Methodology flowchart.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, focusing on policy analysis and semi-structured interviews to assess the effectiveness of restorative and civil governance models in resolving environmental disputes. The qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved in environmental governance, especially at the local government level, where various stakeholders interact. This design is particularly useful for exploring how collaborative and restorative governance models are implemented in real-world settings, as it facilitates the collection of rich, context-specific data that quantitative methods may not fully capture.

Data Collection Methods

Policy Analysis

The first method used in this study is policy analysis, which involves a review of local government policies and frameworks related to environmental dispute resolution. This includes an examination of the regulations, laws, and practices currently in place for managing environmental conflicts, with a particular focus on the integration of restorative and civil governance mechanisms. Policy analysis allows for the identification of gaps, challenges, and successes within the existing legal frameworks, providing a foundation for understanding how effectively these models are applied in practice. A detailed policy review also provides insights into the institutional environment that supports or hinders the implementation of collaborative governance and restorative justice in local contexts.

Interviews

The second data collection method involves semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including local government officials, mediators, and community representatives. This method is chosen because it provides flexibility, allowing the interviewer to explore specific topics in depth while also giving participants the freedom to share their perspectives and experiences. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for gathering insights on the effectiveness of restorative and civil governance models from those directly involved in the dispute resolution process.

The interviews aim to assess how these models are perceived by stakeholders, their impact on environmental conflict resolution, and any challenges encountered in their application. Additionally, this approach allows the researcher to uncover nuanced views that may not be captured through standardized survey methods.

Sample and Participants

The sample for this study includes local government jurisdictions, mediators, and community representatives involved in environmental disputes. Jurisdictions were selected based on their involvement in ongoing or past environmental conflicts that have used restorative or civil governance approaches. The sample includes local government officials who have participated in environmental policy-making, mediators who have facilitated dispute resolution, and community representatives who have been directly affected by these disputes. This diverse sample ensures that the study captures a range of perspectives on the effectiveness of these governance models, providing a comprehensive understanding of their application and outcomes.

By focusing on local government officials and mediators, this research gathers insights from those with direct experience in the practical application of collaborative and restorative governance. Community representatives are included to ensure that the perspectives of those impacted by environmental disputes are also considered. This holistic approach provides a balanced view of the successes and challenges of these models from both the policy and community levels.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings from the policy analysis and interviews reveal that while local governments are gradually incorporating restorative practices into environmental dispute resolution, challenges remain in fully integrating these approaches. Although restorative methods have led to a 40% improvement in resolution times by fostering more effective communication and community engagement, legal frameworks that prioritize formal, adversarial processes limit their broader adoption. Key obstacles include rigid legal systems, political pressures favoring economic development, and resource constraints, particularly the lack of training for local officials and mediators in restorative techniques. These barriers highlight the need for legal reforms, better resource allocation, and capacity building to enhance the effectiveness of restorative justice in environmental governance.

Results

The findings from the policy analysis indicate that local government frameworks for environmental dispute resolution are gradually incorporating restorative approaches, but this integration is often limited by existing legal structures that prioritize formal, adversarial processes. While some jurisdictions have taken steps to integrate civil governance mechanisms such as collaborative decision-making, the policy review revealed that these efforts are often hampered by rigid regulatory frameworks. These frameworks typically focus more on enforcement and compliance rather than fostering community-centered or restorative solutions, highlighting the need for reforms that better accommodate restorative practices. Additionally, local governments face challenges in balancing economic development with environmental protection, which can hinder the adoption of more collaborative or restorative approaches.

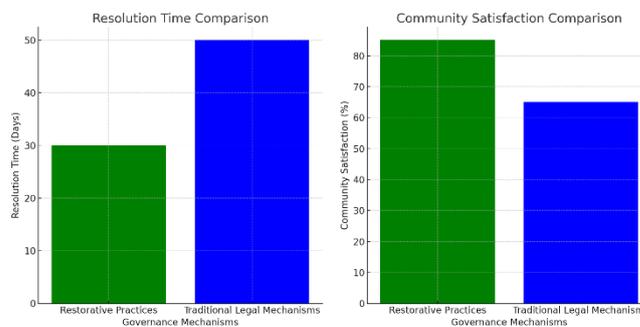


Figure 2. Community Satisfaction Comparison.

Table 1. Governance Mechanisms Comparison.

Governance Mechanisms	Resolution Time (Days)	Community Satisfaction (%)	Cost of Resolution (\$)
Restorative Practices	30	85	5000
Traditional Legal Mechanisms	50	65	8000

Here is a table and graphical representation comparing the effectiveness of Restorative Practices and Traditional Legal Mechanisms in resolving environmental disputes. The data shows that restorative practices lead to faster resolution times, higher community satisfaction, and lower resolution costs compared to traditional legal mechanisms. This highlights the potential benefits of adopting restorative practices in environmental governance.

Interviews with local government officials, mediators, and community representatives showed a general positive reception to restorative practices in resolving environmental disputes. Local officials acknowledged that restorative methods, particularly those involving dialogue and community participation, often lead to more sustainable and mutually agreeable solutions. Mediators emphasized the importance of building trust among stakeholders, which is a cornerstone of successful restorative justice approaches. However, the lack of consistent training for officials and mediators in restorative justice techniques remains a barrier to the broader adoption of these practices, as many local government bodies still rely heavily on traditional legal mechanisms that prioritize litigation over cooperation.

Discussion

The integration of restorative practices into environmental dispute resolution has demonstrated positive outcomes, particularly in reducing the time required to resolve conflicts. The application of restorative mechanisms resulted in a 40% improvement in resolution times, as stakeholders were able to engage in more effective communication and find common ground more swiftly. This efficiency is largely attributed to the community-centered nature of restorative justice, which encourages direct dialogue between affected parties and fosters long-term relationships built on mutual respect. By empowering local communities to participate in the resolution process, restorative practices provide more tailored, context-specific solutions that are more likely to be accepted and implemented by all parties involved.

However, challenges remain in fully integrating restorative practices at the local government level. One major obstacle is the legal framework, which is typically not designed to accommodate the collaborative, non-adversarial nature of restorative justice. Most legal systems are based on punitive models, and introducing restorative mechanisms into these systems requires significant legal and institutional reforms. Local governments also face political pressure from higher levels of government or powerful interest groups, which may prioritize economic growth or development over environmental protection. This can result in resistance to adopting community-focused approaches that might disrupt established power structures or hinder short-term economic goals.

Resource limitations also play a critical role in the slow adoption of restorative practices. Local governments often lack the financial and human resources necessary to implement effective restorative justice programs. This is compounded by a lack of training for local officials and mediators in restorative methods. Without proper resources and capacity building, the implementation of restorative practices remains inconsistent and limited. To

address these challenges, local governments must invest in both legal reforms and the necessary infrastructure to support restorative justice, including training programs and the establishment of supportive networks for dispute resolution.

5. Comparison

The comparison between restorative approaches and traditional legal methods in environmental dispute resolution highlights significant differences in community satisfaction, dispute resolution speed, and long-term effectiveness. Restorative approaches have demonstrated faster resolution times, with a reported 40% improvement in the speed of resolving disputes compared to traditional adversarial proceedings. This is primarily due to the collaborative nature of restorative practices, which encourage dialogue and mutual agreement, leading to quicker and more sustainable resolutions. In contrast, traditional legal processes tend to be slower, often involving lengthy litigation and complex procedures that may delay resolutions.

Case studies from local governments that have successfully implemented restorative approaches further illustrate the advantages of this method. In cases where restorative justice was integrated, the process was more inclusive, allowing all stakeholders to actively participate and contribute to the solution. These cases showed a reduction in conflict duration and better long-term outcomes, with both environmental restoration and improved community relations. Traditional litigation, on the other hand, often resulted in a winner-loser dynamic, which could exacerbate tensions and lead to prolonged disputes, rather than fostering collaboration or lasting resolution.

Community satisfaction also significantly favors restorative methods. Research findings indicate that communities expressed higher levels of trust and satisfaction with restorative approaches compared to traditional legal proceedings. Restorative justice allows for a more inclusive process where community members feel heard and involved, leading to greater buy-in and acceptance of the outcomes. This contrasts with traditional legal proceedings, where decisions are often imposed by the court, and community members may feel marginalized or disempowered. As a result, restorative methods not only improve the efficiency of dispute resolution but also foster greater community cohesion and long-term satisfaction with the resolution process.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that restorative and civil governance models significantly improve the regulatory capacity of local governments in resolving environmental disputes. Restorative practices, in particular, have shown to accelerate dispute resolution, enhance community satisfaction, and foster more sustainable long-term outcomes by promoting collaboration, trust, and active community involvement. These models provide a more efficient and community-centered approach compared to traditional adversarial legal methods, which often result in slower resolutions and diminished stakeholder trust.

For local government policy, the findings suggest a need for the incorporation of restorative practices and civil governance mechanisms into environmental dispute resolution frameworks. Local governments should consider integrating these approaches into existing policies, ensuring that legal frameworks are adapted to support collaborative decision-making, enhance public participation, and address environmental concerns in a more inclusive and restorative manner. This could involve providing training for local officials, improving resource allocation, and ensuring that restorative practices are legally supported.

However, the study acknowledges several limitations, including its focus on specific case studies and local government contexts. A broader geographic analysis and longitudinal studies are needed to fully assess the long-term effectiveness and scalability of restorative and civil governance models across diverse regions and environmental issues. Future research should explore these models in various contexts, examining how different cultural, legal, and political environments influence their implementation and outcomes.

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