

The Concept of Resilience between State Security and Sovereign Security: a Look at Policy Challenges and Interests of the UK

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**The Concept of Resilience between State Security and Sovereign Security:
A Look at Policy Challenges and Interests of the UK**

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Abstract

Resilience is on the rise in security policies, at the international as well as at the national level. Current academic research often links resilience with either the neoliberal retreat of the state and the respective attempt of 'governing from a distance', or with an almost totalitarian grasp of 'resilient subjects', or both. Against the background of the application of resilience in UK security policy, this article argues that resilience does neither of these. Instead, it unfolds as a rather mundane endeavour focused on micro-practices of civil emergency response at the local level. In doing so, resilience enables the repackaging of 'unbound security', which was doomed to fail in delivering its promise. It is, however, neither offering another promise nor symbolising a retreat from state responsibility, but engages in a defensive micro-management of potential catastrophe. Resilience hence does not replace security as a practice of the state deriving from its sovereignty, but links up with it to create a nexus between the doable and the undoable, the resilience-security-nexus.

Zusammenfassung

Resilienz hat sich in den letzten Jahren zu einem Schlüsselbegriff in nationalen und internationalen Sicherheitskonzepten entwickelt. Der derzeitige Stand der Forschung verbindet das Konzept vielfach mit einer neoliberalen Politik des staatlichen Rückzugs aus seiner sicherheitspolitischen Verantwortung, oder mit einem nahezu totalitären Zugriff auf „resiliente Subjekte“. Anhand einer empirischen Untersuchung der britischen Resilienz-Politik zeigt dieser Artikel, dass keiner dieser Ansätze zutrifft. Vielmehr entpuppt sich Resilienz als ein profaner Ansatz des Katastrophenschutzes auf lokaler Ebene. Allerdings ermöglicht Resilienz damit erst wieder die Sicherheitsverantwortlichkeit des Staates, der an seinem Versprechen der „umfassenden Sicherheit“ gescheitert ist. Damit ist Resilienz nicht als Rückzug souveräner Sicherheitspolitik zu verstehen, sondern als staatliches Micro-Management der potenziellen Katastrophen. Resilienz löst daher die Idee einer souveränen Sicherheit auch nicht ab, sondern verbindet das sicherheitspolitisch Mögliche und Unmögliche in einem Resilienz-Sicherheits-Nexus.

Keywords

Resilience-Security-Nexus, UK Resilience Policy, Sovereign Security, Resilient Subjects

Introduction

It is of no doubt that resilience has made its way into the mainstream of security policy and research (Dunn Cavelty, Kaufmann & Kristensen, 2015, pp. 3-4). While in international security the term is strongly associated with the consequences of climate change and resource scarcity (e.g. Newman, Beatley & Boyer, 2009; Gaillard, 2010), in nationally framed security efforts resilience was introduced primarily in disaster control and crisis management (e.g. Manyena, 2006). Such resilience-based disaster response was substantially influenced by the 'Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015' (UNISDR, 2005), and later disseminated to areas such as the protection of critical infrastructure (De Bruijne & Van Eeten, 2007) or terrorism (e.g. Coaffee & Wood, 2006). States such as the USA, UK, Israel, Australia or Singapore, meanwhile, organise their security-related policy framework around the concept of resilience.

Yet, the relationship between security and resilience remains remarkably unclear. Resilience has developed with significant conceptual vagueness, which at times reduces the concept to a virtually empty signifier. This is particularly noticeable in the context of security, since such vagueness offers opportunities for policy actors to then transport various particular interests in this broad vehicle (cf. Zebrowski, 2016, p. 5). Hence, resilience still represents a considerable political, practical, but also analytical, challenge.

This article aims to contribute to the necessary clarification, particularly at the analytical level. It will ask if resilience, as it unfolds conceptually and empirically, indeed represents a paradigm shift in security policy, and if so, how this shift can be understood. Resilience governance in the realm of nation-state based security policy necessarily has to face the paradox of inducing a societal process in a top-down, or 'macro-structural' manner (Wilson, 2014). How this problem is addressed, and also reasoned, by security policy actors is one of the main questions of the transformative effect resilience might – or might not – have on security policies, particularly at the level of sovereign nation states. A second issue is the relationship between resilience and security on the conceptual level. Here, resilience has played an inherent part in the transition from defence to comprehensive security, when the end of the Cold War terminated purely defence-based concepts and opened up the area of 'security unbound' (cf. Huysmans, 2014, pp. 5-8). In this respect, the article argues that while resilience represents, to a certain extent, an answer to the necessary failure of security to deliver its promises as given by the sovereign state, it needs, at the same time, a sovereignty-based

notion of security to come into being. In this sense, 'it operates as a critical and reflexive element rather than as a radical alternative understanding' (Joseph, 2016, p. 380). The intrinsic, but still contradictory relationship between security and resilience then forms what we will call the resilience-security-nexus.

Against the background of the UK resilience policy, which is undoubtedly the frontrunner in the application of the concept in Europe, we will ask how resilience made its way into the realm of security policy documents, and what new practices, agents and subjects it has engendered during that journey. In the first section, we will discuss the current state of research on resilience in the wider context of security policy. Subsequently, the paper will scrutinize UK resilience policy on two levels: firstly, the entry of resilience into the national strategic level; secondly, the detailed, but still state-led local policies and guidelines are touched upon, focussing on the actual governance that unfolds along the resilience-security-nexus. The conclusions aim to identify patterns that could make sense beyond the UK context and sketch further implications for a comparative analysis of the resilience-security-nexus.

The Debate on Resilience in Security Studies

While resilience can be seen as a slightly modified reincarnation of traditional civil defence measures (cf. Duffield, 2011; Zebrowski, 2013, p. 2), many analytical accounts agree that the concept has formed in a conceptually different manner. This is mainly interpreted as being related to a fundamentally changed perception in the security policy community, which shifts the focus from clearly identifiable threats to undefinable risks in the sense of 'unknown unknowns' (Chandler, 2014b, p. 62). In the course of this process, the conceptualisation of 'complex emergencies' develops from the field of humanitarian relief and development in conflict zones (Keen, 2008) to an application increasingly used in home affairs (Cabinet Office, 2013c, p. 22-23; Brassett & Williams, 2015, p. 37; cf. Alexander, 2013, p. 1-2), which, in turn, results in the 'widespread acknowledgement that Civil Defence was poorly suited to tackle' these crises (Zebrowski, 2013, p. 14).

As a consequence, security, very much tied to the idea of defence during the Cold War, became a considerably enlarged project, 'to a diffusing governmental practice reaching into areas such as migration, environmental protection, natural and human-made disaster relief, humanitarian actions and development policy' (Huysmans 2014, p. 76). This diffusion initially was widely welcomed,

particularly by critical security scholars, known as 'wideners' (Buzan, Waever & de Wilde, 1998, p. 1-7). However, this shift entailed a new threat scenario, constituted through uncertainty and risk (Huysmans, 2014, p. 77-78). Therefore, risk governance became the new mantra in security policies, something Corry (2012) has framed as 'riskification'. Along this argument, the process of riskification is intrinsically linked to the idea of resilience, as security cannot be guaranteed in the context of permanent risk.

While it is a generally undisputed claim that resilience is related to the concept of risk, the relation of resilience and security is interpreted in diverse ways. Within critical security studies and the recent 'critical turn' in resilience research (cf. Biermann et al, 2016), three strands of thinking can be distinguished: one perceives resilience as the replacement of security, a second one views resilience as a reconfiguration, and a third perspective perceives resilience as a kind of enhanced security.

By imposing the ontological assumption that resilience renders a catastrophic imaginary of the world in which everyone is in constant danger, Evans and Reid (2013, p. 83) are perhaps the most outspoken representatives of those claiming that resilience tends to replace security (cf. Evans & Reid, 2014, p. 2). Following this logic, resilience establishes the exceptional as the new normal and, in doing so, effectively disables any potential that could be rendered as political. Since being concerned with the anyway forsaken survival of humanity, resilience thus is a play for time, and not an attempt of transformation (Evans & Reid, 2014, p. 151).

This radical ontological claim by Evans and Reid is contrasted by a more nuanced, but nevertheless lively debate about the resilience-induced reconfiguration of security. Security for these accounts, however, still remains to deal with the exceptional. Therefore, Corry (2014, p. 267-269) assumes that it would not be replaced by resilience; rather, resilience would replace the idea of defence. Notwithstanding the general agreement that a realm of security exists, the principal dispute whether resilience represents an epistemological shift in security thinking, or creates a whole new ontology, drives the debate. One of the main issues in this context is that resilience changes the emphasis from problems to responses, which Aradau (2014, pp. 74-76) perceives as an epistemic shift.

Chandler (2014b, pp. 47-48) instead claims that this particular shift to problems constitutes an ontological turn, as it deals no longer with the knowable, because the emergences of complex systems by definition cannot be known. The framing of resilience in complexity thinking becomes

increasingly popular in critical security studies, which on the one hand is caused by theory (cf. Comfort et al, 2002; Walker & Cooper, 2011), but also by what is claimed to be changing ontological conditions of security policy: 'Security is now the mediation of failure' and '[...] the resilience discourse advocates the acceptance of insecurity as a fundamental condition' (Heath-Kelly, 2015, p. 72; cf. Kaufmann, 2013: p. 67).

Complexity thinking, particularly in its application in UK resilience policy, would, according to Chandler (2014b, p. 58), change the perception of the government, as unknowability becomes constitutional for governance practices. Aradau (2014, p. 87) also considers this as one of the central problems of resilience, because resilience '[...] remains hostage to the limits knowledge'. Therefore, resilience policies would remove 'the modernist understanding of government as instrumentally acting in a world potentially amendable to cause-and-effect understandings of policy-making' (Chandler, 2014b, p. 58). In so doing, it alters also the subject positions of the governed, in a way Chandler (ibid.) describes as a narrowing of the gap between government and the governed, and 'fundamentally challenges the traditional liberal assumptions on which the division of the public and the private spheres was constructed' (Chandler, 2013, p. 214). Such a process has severe consequences on sovereignty, which needs a liberal framework in place, particularly in the form of a distant responsibility of the state for the governed.

Resilience policies instead blur the clear, liberal boundaries and tend to work through practices of denial (Joseph, 2016, p. 381). Resilience emphasizes the need for adaptability to future insecurities, inscribing the responsibility of the struggle to '(re-)establish' security to subjects (cf. Dunn Cavelti, Kaufmann & Kristensen, 2015, p. 12). In this perspective, the governance of complexity relies on processes of deliberation rather than on an invocation of neoliberal subjectivity due to a retreat of the state (for the latter view, see Joseph, 2013, p. 40).

Finally, a third strand of research argues that resilience offers a convenient way for states to bring security back in. According to Coaffee and Wood (2006, p. 514), particularly in the UK, in clear contrast to Cold War emergency planning, 'a new protective and regulatory state has emerged and is articulated through the rhetoric of resilience'; this has lead 'to the dispersion of security responsibilities to all levels of government'. Instead of a retreat of the state, as the 'resilience as neoliberalism' critics would argue, this would lead to a much stronger role of the state's attempt of providing security. Particularly by invoking the logic of surveillance, Coaffee and Fussey (2015, pp. 91-

92) assert that the logic of the UK governmental practice after the 2005 terror attacks in London was to simply recast the language of security with that of resilience without changing its focus or purpose (cf. Raab, Jones & Szekely, 2015). This is even interpreted as an attempt to strengthen the responsibility to enact sovereign security: Fjäder (2014, p. 125) sees resilience within current attempts by states “‘fighting back” to maintain control over national security’.

While we read the first strand – resilience as a totalitarian vision of apolitical governmentality – as an empirically detached over-interpretation, we see strong linkages between the second and the third strand of the scholarly accounts presented here. While of course impossible to impose, resilience is still ‘done’ by state agencies; hence it will necessarily influence its role and agency position. In discussing the long-term responses to 9/11 from a political perspective, Neal (2012, p. 108) observes the results from the classic, exception-based sovereign security trope – security emergencies that sideline rights and liberties, and critical deliberation – fading, and ‘more diverse forms of politics return’. At a general level, the same process can be seen to be at work with resilience, as it takes the room left open by sovereign security. Through the connection with resilience, a transformation of sovereign security is initiated, although it remains doubtful if this happens in the form of a simple exchange with post-liberal, and therefore post-sovereign forms of a ‘societal security’ (Chandler, 2013, p. 210). Despite their complementary character, security and resilience certainly fit together uneasily as explored below.

Transformations of Sovereign Security: the Development of Resilience in UK National Security

As it has already become clear from the variety of research on the subject, resilience is a far-reaching concept with a remarkable capacity to provide a bridge between various areas of internal and external policies. This insight is underlined when looking at the foundations of UK National Security policy. However, from the outset, certain questions remain: does resilience signify a roll-back of the state as the main security provider? Or perhaps, is there a transition of responsibilities, in terms of other actors or agencies taking on roles which were formerly those of sovereign state security? The second question in particular concerns the relationship between the concepts of security and resilience.

The following section will discuss these issues founded on a critical reading of the main strategy papers of contemporary UK national security policy. This focus on the 'bigger picture' of strategic developments enables us to develop a more concise view on state-based resilience policies, as many of the, often contradictory, concepts developed at the local level are results of spatially limited initiatives with highly divergent interests, or outcomes of particular regional political settlements. The UK government, in contrast, very clearly defines community resilience as a state-led affair (Corry, 2014, p. 63).

The analysis will highlight three main aspects of the role and function of resilience frameworks in the changing landscape of state security, arguing that: first, resilience is not the opposite of security (cf. also Bourbeau & Vuori, 2015), but develops almost hand-in-hand after the end of the Cold War as an integral part of a resilience-security-nexus addressing the issue of the politics and policies of emergency; second, this nexus is built on the inherent failure of sovereign security to provide an answer to these challenges; and third, resilience is not only based on a new understanding of what these emergencies are and how they are constituted, but also plays a substantial role in the internal restructuring of emergency policies at an organisational level.

The first references to resilience in UK security policy at the national level came with the first-ever National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2008, called 'Security in an interdependent world' (Cabinet Office, 2008). The emergence and the title of this strategy already point to the shift that it represents. Before 2008, the UK had mainly papers and strategies in place that dealt with defence. This is also true for the last national guidance document before the 2008 strategy, a two-part document from 2003 called 'Delivering Security in a Changing World'. Whereas the title suggests that it would deal with changing aspects of security in its broader sense, it was still published as a 'defence white paper', with particularly the second part ('Future Capabilities' from 2004) focusing almost exclusively on military aspects. The emergence of resilience in UK security policy is hence intrinsically tied to the evolvement of a 'security policy' as such, and its emergence out of the narrow realm of defence. This is underlined by the interesting fact that the 2004 Contingency Act, which later became one of the central frames of reference for resilience-based policies, does not use the term 'resilience' at all.

The current UK Civil Contingencies doctrine is based on its former iterations, but still introduced some considerable and at times unexpected changes. Earlier legislation, based on the Cold War mind-sets of 1945 and 1986, put strong emphasis on the responsibility of local authorities in civil emergencies, although already then a guiding principle for the state was that 'the centre has

traditionally viewed its role as being that of adviser and coordinator, with local services left to fill in the details of operational plans and manage them on the ground' (Smith, 2003, p. 411). With the new civil contingency policy, the state took over more responsibility in such cases. One of the most severe changes was that 'the emphasis on empowering local authorities in emergency planning would be replaced by a statutory requirement for this to be undertaken by partnership bodies ... liaising closely with central departments and Civil Contingencies Secretariat' (ibid, p. 415). The advent of resilience in security policy goes hand in hand with a stronger involvement of the state, and therefore with a reinforcement rather than a diminishing of sovereign security.

Resilience has already been an integral part of the tectonic shift in security policy after the end of the Cold War. Despite, or even because of, the shocking character of the end of the comfortable geostrategic constellation in the years prior to 1990, however, it took years before the consequences of the new geostrategic outfit took hold on the policy level. The debate on broadening and deepening security in the aftermath of these global events intensified almost ten years later, around the year 2000 (cf. Buzan & Hansen, 2010, pp. 187-191). The attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent, almost all-encompassing focus on the 'war on terror', delayed the inevitable process of a diversification of what had been defence and now was moulded into security. 'Twenty years after the Berlin Wall came down, the equipment we have available is still too rooted in a Cold War mind-set, as we have found to our cost in Iraq and Afghanistan', the foreword of the 2010 NSS consequently states (HM Government, 2010, p. 5).

Interestingly, seen in hindsight, this shift was something almost unanimously agreed upon across the whole political spectrum. Especially in the UK system, which tends to have a comparatively strong polarisation due to the majority vote system, such non-partisanship is remarkable. While the 2008 NSS was issued by a Labour government, the subsequent Conservative-Liberal coalition immediately took over the torch and issued a 2010 edition; this process is currently continued by the Conservative government elected in 2015.

The second part of the heading of the 2008 NSS – 'interdependent world' – points to the second determining aspect that resilience entails. What is called interdependency here is in fact a world perceived as being incalculable; interdependency hence is the neat and positive expression of the 'age of uncertainty' (NSS, 2010, p. 5) that contrasts with the 'brutal certainties of the Cold War' (ibid, p. 3). Security and resilience immediately link with unpredictability – the certainty of threats gives

way to 'risks'. It is, in particular, this intrinsic linkage of security and resilience with unpredictability which supports Chandler's (2014a) claim that 'complexity' is not just an epistemological shift, but instead creates a whole new ontology. As it is stated by the national security policy community in the UK: 'The opposition between two power blocs has been replaced by a more complex and unpredictable set of relationships' (Cabinet Office, 2008, p. 3).

The condition of uncertainty undisputedly changes the role that sovereign security, and the traditional predominance of the state, plays – the question, however, remains which direction this change would take and how it should be interpreted. As shown, a popular presumption in current research holds that the ontology of risk in security policy leads to a roll-back of the state in the sense of a Foucauldian 'governing from the distance', fitting well in to current debates on neoliberalism (e.g. Joseph, 2014). Indeed, there are clear statements that could be read in support of this assumption – security and resilience, *both* part of the risk governance that results from the notion of an 'interdependent world', come with a passive self-definition of the state's role: 'Some risk is inevitable, and the Government's role is to minimise and mitigate it' (Cabinet Office, 2008, p. 6). However, as further analysed below, when discussing the practices of UK policies, the role of minimising and mitigating is not to be understood as a roll-back, but rather as the self-reflexive (Chandler, 2014b, p. 63) component of a process that may be interpreted, depending on the respective political perspective, either as surveillance-oriented micro-management or as security policy deliberation.

Hence it is almost inevitable that resilience, as the part of risk governance dealing with the unknown, is particularly called upon when dealing with civil emergencies. All NSS link resilience to the challenges and processes outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, where three particular instances are listed that indeed go beyond the focus of security policy: serious damage to human welfare; serious damage to the environment of a place; and, finally, serious damage to security, as in war or acts of terrorism. The last instance is particularly interesting as it contextualises resilience as the mode of action during instances where security has already failed – explicitly – and has led to consequences nobody is able to envision. As stated in the wording of the NSS 2010: 'But we cannot prevent every risk as they are inherently unpredictable. To ensure we are able to recover quickly when risks turn into actual damage to our interests, we have to promote resilience, both locally and nationally' (HM Government, 2010, p. 25). Sovereign security here remains tied to the exception, but instead of the exception being the new normal, it is rather the failure of exceptional policies which

reintroduces the non-exceptional via the pragmatic practices (cf. Schmidt, 2015) of resilience. Resilience hence aims not for normalising the exception, but for keeping the exception at bay. In doing so, it is serving the national ('our') interest, which is establishing the paradoxical process of sustaining sovereign security while at the same time blurring its boundaries.

The third transformative aspect of resilience sounds rather ordinary, but is nevertheless intrinsically linked to the other two features: resilience is used to bridge different policy areas in a way that security would not be able to provide. The 'whole-of-government' approach, an often-cited policy mantra, is one important aim in this respect. Such an approach shall be 'based on a concept of security that goes beyond military effects. It places greater emphasis on domestic resilience and a stable global environment' (HM Government, 2010, p. 10). Especially in a country like the UK, with a highly complex and diverse administrative structure, a 'whole-of-government' approach means and demands a lot, but at the same time is just not sufficient. Therefore the security strategies focus on actively engaging the private sector, infrastructure providers in particular, in a set of permanent policies of emergency, for which resilience serves as the main background vision.

The much more fluid conception of responsibility linked to the resilience-security-nexus enables the active participation of private sector actors in emergency situations to a new extent. It is of course important to have a clear and mobilising policy concept in place that attracts people, as resilience obviously does. However, there is another important element involved. The idea of sovereign security can only provide one way of non-state actor participation in security affairs: based on formal obligations, legal accountabilities, formal schemes of security clearances and the like. While this is certainly the mode of operation for the old-school defence community, it is hardly a motivating context to foster collaboration with the private sector. The discursive arsenal of resilience links up with the relief from legal responsibilities, an important factor for actors used to thinking in terms of financial liability. It is therefore certainly not by chance that the 'Local Resilience Forums' (cf. Cabinet Office, 2013a), a key instrument in the application of the concept in UK emergency response, are not formally constituted as legal entities; and that this is explicitly forbade in the respective policy guidelines.

These three aspects, the main elements of how resilience is constructed and used in UK national security policy, suggest that resilience has been an integral part of the tectonic shift in security policy after the end of the Cold War. This was not made explicit for several years while the debate focused

upon the broadening security; however the attempt to evolve broader concepts met with little success. This was perhaps inevitable as:

The many insecurities are not equivalent, do not co-exist in one site, and do not systematically reinforce one another... Constructing a theory that synthesises them around a global threat, a grand cultural or civilizational change, or a hegemonic order will give the impression of a homogeneity that does not really exist. (Huysmans, 2014, p. 1)

In UK security policy, resilience has taken up the role of redefining and cohering a new security paradigm after the failure to successfully articulate the idea of 'unbound security' (ibid). This repackaging was done through focusing on the reconceptualisation of civil emergencies. Thus, resilience paradoxically again opens up the floodgates for all-encompassing ideas of life policies, but in a different way than security could have done. These differences can be broken down to three elements: (1) resilience is dealing with emergencies instead of threats, whereby these emergencies are not tackled by the exception-based apparatus of sovereign security, but rather work pre-emptively and pragmatically to prevent exception; (2) resilience works with the 'unknown unknowns' of risk, and hence its 'governance thereby works "backwards" – from the problem – not forwards to achieve some collective policy-goal' (Chandler, 2014b, p. 62); and, therefore, (3) resilience does not replace, but complements sovereign security by adding a post-liberal, reflexive element. Thereby, a complex is emerging which breaks the limits of sovereign policies with the paradoxical aim of reinforcing them: the resilience-security-nexus.

Soft but Sustainable Transformation: How Resilience Policy Unfolds

After discussing the resilience-security-nexus on the macro level of national security strategies, the following section focuses on the application of concrete guidances and directives, and analyses the mode of governance that is applied through UK resilience policy at the local level. Such a focus on the local, particularly on the community level, is a well-discussed topic in resilience research and often connected to the question of state responsibility (cf. Bourcart, 2015). Compared to most of the scholarly accounts, however, UK national doctrine suggests a different picture. In following up this gap between the scholarly discussion and the impression generated by national policy strategies, this section will ask in which particular sectors resilience policies unfold, what aims are put in place for these policies, and how these policies are used at a concrete, 'on-the-ground' level.

As shown above, resilience is not an overarching goal that subsumes all other forms of policy that addresses civil emergencies, but links up with security to form a resilience-security-nexus. This nexus works with the particular figure of risk, which, despite dealing per definition with unprecise, undefined or even unknown dangers, is subject to scientific efforts of risk quantification and 'registering' (Hagmann & Dunn Caveltly, 2012). In the UK, there is a national risk assessment process in place, which undertakes to identify and estimate the main risks in relation to civil emergencies in a yearly rhythm. The current edition of this risk assessment (Cabinet Office, 2015) identifies major risks that exceed the limits of what has been conceptualised under broad security frameworks and are thus exemplars of resilience, including widespread electricity failure, coastal flooding, and pandemic influenza.

Therefore, organising resilience has to follow the policy areas in which these risks are potentially emerging. Table 1 (see below), taken from the publicly available short version of the confidential UK sector resilience plans, lists these eleven areas along with the respective governmental responsibility. This planning process offers two important insights. Firstly, the resilience part of the resilience-security-nexus evolves around the 'soft' issues, and thus could be defined as encompassing everything outside the realm of 'hard' security (which would require the use of weaponry in whatever form). The UK version of the resilience-security nexus thereby takes the form of straightforward complementary task sharing, with security focused on prevention and combating, and resilience on all other aspects.

Table 1: Target areas for UK resilience policies (Cabinet Office, 2014, p. 5)

| Sector | Sub-Sector(s) | Sector Resilience Lead |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Communications | Broadcast | Department for Culture, Media and Sport |
| | Postal | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills |
| | Telecommunications | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills |
| Emergency Services | Ambulance | Department of Health |
| | Maritime & Coastguard | Department for Transport |
| | Fire & Rescue | Dpt for Communities and Local Government |
| | Police | Home Office |
| Energy | Electricity | Department of Energy and Climate Change |
| | Gas | Department of Energy and Climate Change |
| | Oil | Department of Energy and Climate Change |
| Finance | | HM Treasury |
| Food | | Dpt for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| Government | | Department of Health |
| Hazardous Sites | | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills |
| Health | | Department of Health |
| Nuclear | | Department of Energy and Climate Change |
| Transport | Aviation | Department for Transport |
| | Ports | Department for Transport |
| | Rail | Department for Transport |
| | Road | Department for Transport |
| Water | | Dpt for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |

As can be seen, each sector has a clear responsibility chain with a named lead ministry attached to it, which has two implications: firstly, that resilience in its applied version on the policy level is a strongly state administered affair. This leads to a second consequence regarding the mode of governance: notwithstanding the counterintuitivity of such a practice, resilience is applied as a surprisingly strictly top-down project, inherently linked with local practices, as will be shown further below, and so can be seen to be a highly bureaucratised endeavour of state agencies. UK resilience is less concerned with the enabling or shaping of resilient identities than with the tight control over policy and the public-private mixture of policy actors.

Besides the definition of target areas and respective responsibilities, UK resilience policy has also developed a particular concept of resilience, primarily addressing the concerns of infrastructure. The concept rests on four pillars, namely resistance, reliability, redundancy and response and recovery (Cabinet Office, 2014, p. 6). This concept is outlined in the so-called Sector Resilience Plans, the central document for planning and designing resilience at the local level. Surprisingly for plans addressing concerns of what allegedly should be a bottom-up process, these documents are classified and only publicly available in a summarised version (cf. Cabinet Office, 2011, p. 38).

The four pillars of infrastructure resilience are significant in two aspects. Firstly, they demonstrate the importance that the idea of infrastructure has gained in the context of civil emergency policies. All of these pillars, in particular resistance, reliability and redundancy, are designed as mainly technical measures. They are not targeting subjects or even subjectivity, but are concerned with issues of hardware, its durability, functionality and disposability. As the plans elaborate, resistance is defined as the physical protection of infrastructure components, reliability means maintaining operability, and redundancy means physical back-up capacities (ibid). The human factor, which should play an important part in a concept dealing with the idea of complex social systems (cf. Joseph, 2013, p. 43 on the advanced conceptual development of resilience in the ecology literature), is confined to the fourth pillar, which deals with the traditional measures of emergency relief.

This compartmentalisation highlights the areas where resilience is placed within the resilience-security-nexus. Resilience engages in pre-emption, but has no particular strong role in the realm of prevention, which remains the stronghold of security. The pre-emptive efforts, however, try to think about all possible needs in dealing with the 'unknown unknowns' of a complex risk environment. As shown, however, this is done with the sole focus on what is perceived as 'critical' infrastructure, with the idea of 'keeping the country running' (Cabinet Office, 2011) and maintaining functional capacities.

The key idea in this context is the element of redundancy. While a common concept in informatics and systems of complex communication, redundancy in the context of civil emergency preparedness is something which only resilience can provide. The particularity of redundancy is based on two distinct contrapositions: redundancy contrasts with the traditional security idea of protection, to the extent of contesting its possibility, while at the same time it breaks with the neoliberal idea of cost-

effectiveness – having diverse, partly overlapping systems in place is certainly not the cheapest option in the short run.

The relationship of redundancy and security in general is an uneasy one: while its importance is generally acknowledged (however, mainly in terms of personnel and hardware), it is seen as problematic, particularly from the perspective of linear systems theory (cf. Walker & Cooper, 2011, pp. 156-157). Systemic failure, caused by ‘common-mode errors’, ‘social shirking’ or overcompensation, could backfire (Sagan, 2004). Since it is dealing with the exceptional, security has to design tailored solutions; everything else puts the control at risk. Resilience instead is not working in the logic of controlling exceptional responses, but is concerned with guaranteeing the sovereign duty of care of the government despite the severe limits of its possibility. Redundancy offers an answer to this conceptual and structural challenge; consequently, it is operationalised jointly with the private sector, in an attempted top-down engagement of infrastructure providers in what could be called a redundancy buy-in.

Deriving from the government-led top-down responsibility chain, the main addressees of UK resilience policy are local government agencies, in particular the so-called ‘responders’. These addressees are assembled on the local level in the form of the already mentioned ‘Local Resilience Forums’, formal, but not legal institutions to be set up on county level to institutionalise a multi-agency partnership in emergency response. Along with the definition given by the respective policy doctrines, the providers are divided into three groups, each with particular tasks that go alongside legal implications (HM Government, 2013): ‘Category 1 responders’ are the traditional first responders and security providers that have a legal entity tied to the structures. They represent what still exists as sovereign security: police, fire and rescue authorities, health bodies, protection agencies, environmental agencies and local authorities. As a consequence of their status, all legal responsibilities are with them, in particular the formal lead of the Local Resilience Forums. Hence they represent the central link in the top-down, state-led chain of civil emergency policies.

These state-governed Category 1 responders are surrounded by what the policy documents call the ‘wider resilience community’. This is a euphemism, given that this ‘wider’ community in fact points to the upper levels of the above-mentioned responsibility chain of the involved state agencies. Primarily, addressees are national government agencies such as the National Health Service, the military and ministries; hence state institutions that are not only responsible for the set-up of the

resilience policy in the first place, but would be technically responsible if a repacked, limited concept of sovereign security to civil emergencies was to be applied.

'Category 2 responders', in contrast, are the core of applied UK resilience policy at the local level, as these responders epitomise the factual justifications for its existence. Category 2 responders represent the level of infrastructure providers – namely utilities, telecommunication, transport and related areas – that in the UK context are mostly private enterprises. The privatisation of critical infrastructure has been considered to be a crucial challenge for security policy (De Bruijne & Van Eeten, 2007). Resilience at this level has two very concrete tasks: firstly, the provision of a conceptual grounding enabling diverse actors to be on board without having to rely on legal coercive means; and, secondly, facilitating engagement in a direct face-to-face network of responsibility helping to operationalise the cost-critical aspect of resilience: redundancy.

Resilience, however, enables the government to engage the private providers to invest in these redundancies in their own interest. It is with these Category 2 responders that the primarily mundane, highly bureaucratic, and top-down endeavour of UK resilience policy unfolds its governmental component, as it constructs a deeper reason for private enterprises to invest in almost by definition not cost-effective – hence redundant – parts of infrastructure. They shall do this voluntarily, as the legal duties remain with the other two types of resilience actors assembled in the *not* legally constructed Local Resilience Forums.

Conclusions

The analysis of UK resilience policy has shown that applied resilience is a mundane process, a predominantly technical and also highly regulated affair. While deeply embedded in practices of public service provision on the local level, the state still retains the control of a sovereign, installing the resilience-security-nexus as a top-down-form of governance based on a work-sharing scheme along rationalist criteria of response efficiency. The governance issue is addressed in a dense manner, with the notion of 'community' almost never touching the people living in the community, but instead dealing with the established responders, government agencies, and the commercial providers. It is hardly governing from a distance that takes place here, but an attempt to closely regulate and direct local processes in a way that can be interpreted as a rather extreme case of subsidiarity in the realm of emergency. Nevertheless, resilience is still of utmost importance for organising an all-encompassing approach to emergency policy, after the attempt of stretching the limits of security to all areas of life has failed. Sovereign security, based on the liberal distinction between government and the governed, needs the post-liberal element of resilience to maintain continuity in the era of complexity.

Resilience takes the role of accompanying exceptional security policies, highlighting their failure while at the same time relying on them. The so established resilience-security nexus creates a new quality of density in the governance of civil emergencies – governance, however, not in the sense of governing from the distance, but applied by the top-down-led establishment of numerous micro-practices at the local level. Nevertheless, the current strategies and policy papers reveal that the resilient subject remains surprisingly hidden in the UK policies. UK resilience policy does not rely on strategies of enabling at the levels of communities, households or individuals. The main addressees are the existing government structures at the local level on the one hand, and the privately organised infrastructure providers on the other.

Local resilience mainly tries to engage the business sector at the level of critical infrastructure; hence it is a tool to enhance public care beyond the boundaries of legal responsibilities. They are hooked up in a non-legal, but still strongly formalised framework – the Local Resilience Forums – and integrated in a highly complex process of risk assessment, planning and preparedness. The latter part especially needs the engagement of the private sector, since infrastructure redundancy needs substantial financial investments that, more often than not, do not give a return in the short run. The voluntary

participation of providers on the local level serves not the community level, but rather the government – in sharing costs and responsibilities without the need to set up institutionalised elements of legal coercion.

Despite some scholarly accounts claiming this, resilience, at least in its applied version in the UK, does not represent a roll-back of state policies in the realm of security. While cost-effectiveness is certainly a factor, the main interest behind getting the private sector on board is the widening of a control and safety regime along the laid-out principles of response, reliability and redundancy, as the latter in particular is almost by definition certainly not the most cost-effective way of doing things in the short term.

Nevertheless, the formerly closed practices of security are changing. New agents and partners are brought in and engaged, whilst the state transforms its role from the sole security provider to a *primus inter pares*. While starting to rely on non-legal formations in doing so, however, the sovereign aspect of the resilience-security-nexus still plays an essential part: the main tool of precise policy planning, the Sector Resilience Plans, remain a piece of classified information, not available to the public. As such, they represent an almost ideal showcase of the nexus-aspect between the broad, all-encompassing notion of resilience and the repackaged idea of sovereign security; a showcase, however, that also demonstrates that the embedded contradiction between the two elements cannot be fully resolved.

Resilience is the result of the rejection of full responsibility for security provision by the state, due to its impossibility. At the same time, resilience relies on the condition that sovereign security remains in place, based on this very promise. This contradiction remains at the heart of the resilience-security-nexus. It shows the fractured character of the transformation of sovereign security out of the old ideas of national defence, a process that we are indeed witnessing. In this process of change, however, resilience takes up the role of enabling the repackaging – and hence the re-legitimation – of sovereign security in the condition of its publicly acknowledged failure.

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