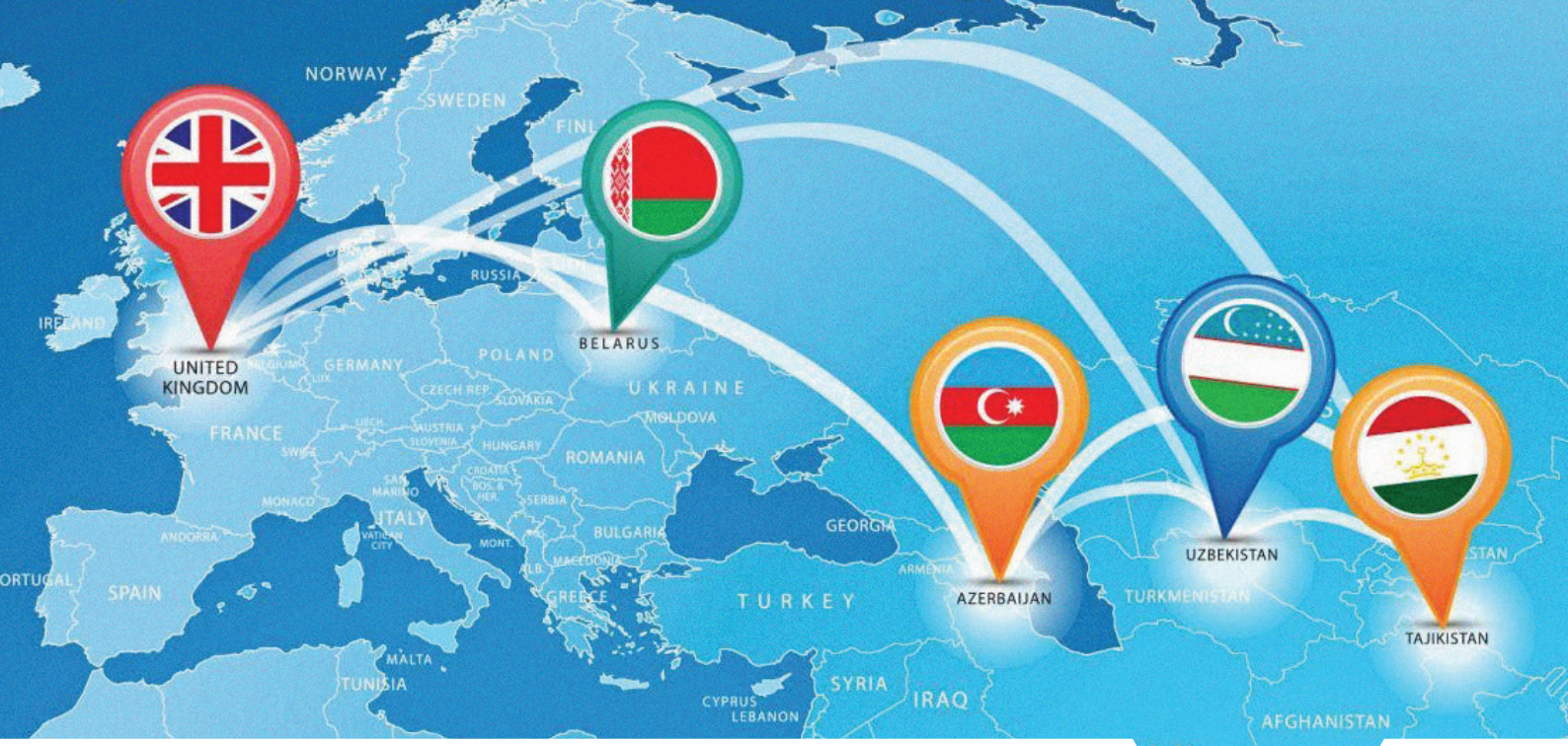


WARWICK

INSTITUTE FOR
GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GCRF COMPASS+: Comprehensive Capacity-Building in Central Eurasia

Tackling sustainability challenges through the lens of resilience

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy paper offers a recap of the GCRF COMPASS+ Research Impact Forum, which brought together policy-makers, practitioners and scholars from the UK, the EU and ODA countries of Central Eurasia, spanning Belarus and Ukraine in the west, South Caucasus and Afghanistan in the south, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the east.

The paper builds on the recently awarded GCRF GNCA funds (2022-23) to focus on the following three objectives:

- to take stock of research findings from GCRF COMPASS (ES/P010849/1, 2017-22) and GCRF Cluster AGRE (EP/T024801/1, 2021-22) in application to the **current developments** in Central Eurasia region, including Russia's war in Ukraine, and other conflicts across the region;
- to seek policy solutions from a **resilience perspective**, to the existing and emerging challenges to more sustainable development across the wider region, especially with a focus on SDG 11 'Sustainable Communities'; SDG 16 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions' and SDG 17 'Partnerships for the Goals';
- to develop a wider research & policy impact agenda in the context of changing socio-political situations across Central Eurasia, and a rising appreciation of the role of **community of relations** at the heart of socio-political, cultural and economic conditions for growth.

BACKGROUND

Today we are facing a complex combination of crises that, reinforcing each other, acquire an unpredictable dynamic. A recent SIPRI study, for instance, notes that 'our world is being drawn into a black hole of deepening twin crises in security and the environment. Indicators of insecurity are rising, while indicators of environmental integrity are sinking. The mix is toxic, profound and damaging' (Black et al. 2022). Dealing with these crises requires new 'ways of being, knowing, and doing' (Escobar 2018: 19). A complexity-thinking planetary approach to sustainable development through the lens of resilience, presents promising avenues for seeking solutions to future development. The forum brought together different views and practices, to conjointly (re-)discover ways to more sustainable and resilient **communities of relations** on local, regional and global levels.

The GCRF COMPASS+ Research Impact Forum held on 26 January 2023 at the Prince Philip House in London and took stock of the findings from the two projects and examined new challenges faced by the world and the ODA countries of Central Eurasia in particular, to seek policy solutions to this unjust, fragile and geo-politically unstable world of today. Furthermore, the forum explored and connected resilience as self-governance, central to the survival and transformation of local communities/societies, with the resilience as diversity-governance of Global International Society (GIS), to understand how it works especially in times of crises and increasing complexity. The ultimate goal was to see if a more sustainable and ontologically secure world of tomorrow is possible for the region, and GIS, and if yes, what kind of governance is needed to get there (Korosteleva & Flockhart 2020; Korosteleva & Petrova 2021; Flockhart & Paikin 2022).

ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUE(S)

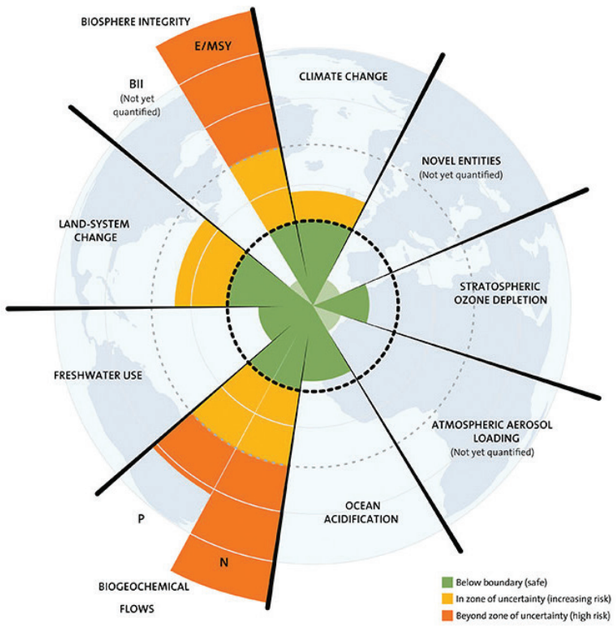
Keynote 1: 'Planetary Limits to Growth and Systemic Risks' (Arthur Keller, IRIS)

Systemic risks are not well understood, which means that our understanding of the related challenges we face in the short to long term are also lacklustre. In the minds of most people, solutions seem clear and already known, and we merely need to enact change through political will in order to solve the problems. However, in reality, this is not the case, because the challenges we face go well beyond the technological and financial solutions that our global institutions are used to.

This problem is made more acute by the lack of understanding of systemic ecological and physical dynamics in policymaking, social sciences and humanities. Yet, these systemic dynamics are a direct result of our collective overshooting of the planet's carrying capacity, which are going to be the main driver of challenges on Earth for our lifetime.

According to the Stockholm Resilience Centre, there are nine planetary boundaries that we should not cross if we want to preserve the conditions of habitability of the planet. Today, we have already crossed six, and may have even crossed a seventh planetary boundary (see below).

Fig.1 Planetary Boundaries for cohabitation



Source: https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html

All of these issues are interdependent. Hence it is not possible to tackle them in isolation. They require systemic thinking, holistic approaches and coordination. However, the dominant approach has been attempting to fix each problem separately. For example, new ways are developed to produce electricity, which is positive for the climate, but they might exacerbate other socio-ecological problems. It leads us to extract more raw materials, further polluting the soils and the hydrosphere.

In addition, we will run into limits as to how we can scale up these solutions. For example, there are not enough metals that can be extracted to implement some aspects of the green transition, particularly copper and lithium, crucial resources for the electrification process, the extraction of which requires enormous quantities of clean water. To make matters worse, they are present in areas that are lacking water. In sum, rather than a problem-based approach, a systemic approach is needed.

A problem-based approach further increases the risk of confusing a symptom with the root cause of the problem. Industrial societies can be understood as systems that transform nature into energy, waste, products and services that we consume in our economic activities. Moreover, we are extracting these resources faster than they can be regenerated, and that is mentioning only renewable resources. We generate waste and offload it onto downstream natural processes faster than the Earth can absorb it. In short, industrial societies are transforming and destroying too fast for nature to withstand it, its regeneration capacities are weakening. This state of affairs cannot and will not last.

The waste and pollution come in three forms: solid, liquid and gaseous. The latter includes greenhouse gases, which destroy the climate system and impact other physical systems through climate change. In this case, an approach that focuses on treating the symptoms would be guaranteed to fail, because the problems require that we understand it as a system and that we treat it as a system. As a result, we live in a time of systemic risk. This requires going beyond crisis management procedures –and towards a profound change in our model of society. In specific terms, the flow of energy and raw materials within the system needs to be reduced, followed up with efforts on helping the regeneration of ecosystems.

Dealing with systemic risk requires **systemic resilience**, revolving around a collective capacity to deal with breaks in continuity. This is theoretically possible, though much remains to be done to start heading in the right direction. Changing course will require moving beyond denialism and ideas that respond to the hope of getting out of this conundrum without deep societal transformations. For thermodynamic reasons, we will have to transform it, or it will transform itself in ways that we will not be able to control.

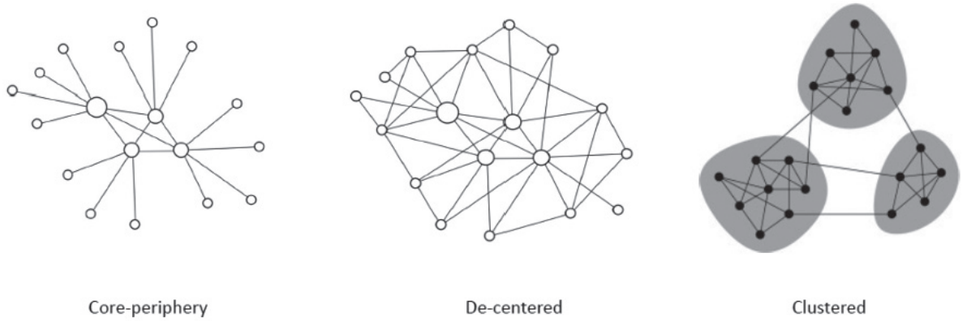
Keynote 2: From Resilience as Self-Governance to Resilience as Diversity-Governance, in a Multi-Order World (Trine Flockhart, SDU)

International system has entered the age of polycrisis, and with this, big questions emerge: Why do we have all these crises and challenges? Why does it feel like the world is spinning out of control? Can we –and if so, how– sustain resilience at local, regional and global levels of governance? How do we tackle sustainability challenges in times of war and crisis?

We live in a time of accelerating change, compounded by demographic crises and changes in the technological landscape. At the same time, we are experiencing a profound alteration of the international system. The shifts in the international system can be understood as organised around 'core-periphery,' 'de-centred' or 'clusters,' the number of which varies according to historical periods.

From the perspective of International Relations theory, the global system is moving towards a 'multi-order world' (Flockhart, 2016). An international system with more than one international order becomes different from 'multipolarity,' it becomes a system of clustered relations –that is, a 'multi-order world.' In a system of clustered relations, as alternative orders co-exist, problems are likely to become more complicated and complex, especially in the age of polycrisis. As each order reflects different combinations of power, principles and practise, multilateralism can become an obstacle, rather than a tool for solving complex crises. Yet, co-operation is also needed.
This requires corresponding new institutions to navigate and mitigate polycrisis the world is going through.

Fig.2 Transformation in the "structure of relations"



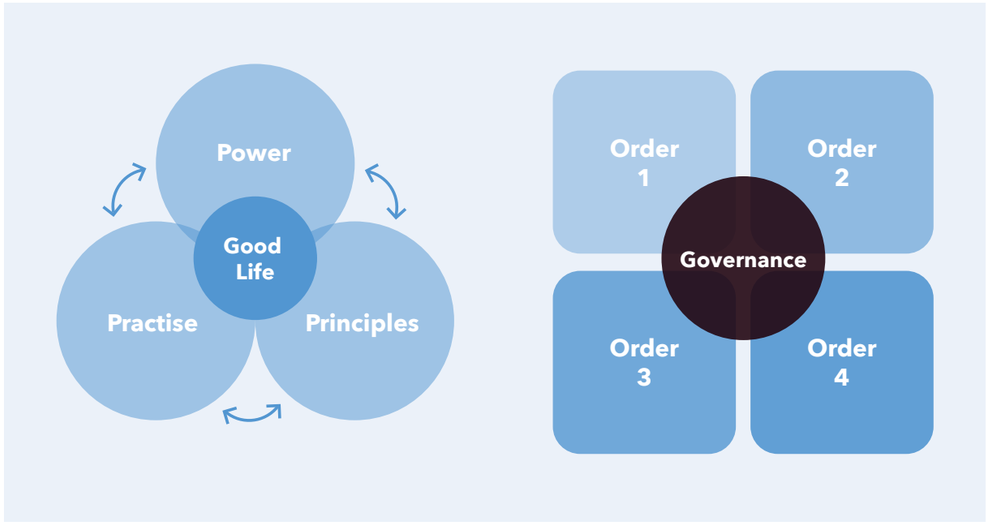
Source: T.Flockhart

In a multi-order world, there is more than one international order. This means there exists more than one perception of what conditions and constitutes 'order' and 'good life.' The difficulty in a multi-order world is that there is always more than one level of ordering, which in turn requires a responsive (multi-order/polycentric) system of governance.

In more precise terms, the levels of ordering are as follows:

- National level of ordering –can be considered to be the local level
- International level of ordering –liberal international order
- Global level of ordering –global international society

Fig.3 Resilience 'within' and 'between' orders



Source: T.Flockhart

Resilience, as a way of governing complexity (Chandler 2014; Korosteleva & Flockhart 2020), constitutes a key concept in a multi-order world. It can be articulated as 'resilience within' and 'resilience between' different orders. Resilience can be further understood as a way of being - that is, being able to reflect and adapt to change, and if necessary even transform with change. As stated above, within each order, social domains exist —each encompassing power, principles and practices —which are held together by different understandings of what constitutes the 'good life.' For an ordering domain to be resilient, it must have alignment between all three spheres —power, principles and practices. This is the resilience 'within.' On the other hand, resilience 'between' relates to interaction among alternative orders, which can be called resilience as 'diversity governance.' The latter is complex because it involves multiple ordering domains, each reacting to external stimuli according to their individual 'within' processes. This type of resilience —as 'diversity governance' —requires further theorisation, to ensure a more sustainable and cooperative system of governance (Flockhart & Paikin 2022).

Colloque 1: Local perspectives on resilience: why communities matter, and how to support them?

Over the past two decades, the concepts of 'community resilience' and 'local ownership' have proliferated in policy-making. However, the ways these concepts have been applied in practice and in policy programmes is widely criticised by the scholarly community for rigid thinking and premeditated solutions (Joseph 2013; Petrova and Delcour 2020; Korosteleva and Flockhart 2020). In this context, it was important to explore the potential of the concept 'community resilience' as new 'ways of being, knowing, and doing' (Escobar 2018:19; Chandler 2014; Korosteleva & Flockhart 2020; Flockhart & Paikin 2022), which is situational, context-specific, local, relational, and emergent. By referencing research findings from Central Eurasia, this colloque aimed to identify what made communities resilient, i.e. unpack local identities, philosophies, perceptions of the good life, local resources and support infrastructures, and social capital more broadly. The questions that shaped the discussion included i) what motivates people to stay resilient in times of crisis, war, adversity; and ii) how the international community can support them.

Colloque 1 participants took an approach guided by a complex systems theory. Society and communities, no matter how small, should be viewed as a complex system, containing many parts which may interact with each other in various ways to result in outcomes that would not otherwise have occurred. These interactions, whether characterised as equal, dependent, competitive etc., lead to unique system properties, such as feedback loops, adaption, and emergence. This paradigm has several significant implications for our understanding of resilience. Resilience is not merely about external forces impacting on a community, but also about what happens within a community when it faces challenges, whether they are external or internal. Furthermore, resilience does not mean a community will return to its previous order or mode of being after recovering from a negative event; rather, because communities as complex systems are fluid and changeable, a new order is likely to emerge.

This complexity also means that the future is unpredictable.

Accordingly, resilience is not about robustness, as some previous conceptions had asserted – it is impossible to prepare for every threat in a complex, interconnected society. Rather, communities should be flexible and adaptable. Non-flexible, non-adaptable systems often become ossified, making them brittle to shocks. In contrast, flexible and adaptable communities are able to absorb shocks, making the consequences of those shocks less detrimental, especially in the long-term.

Nurturing resilience of local communities is integral to reaching the goal of societal resilience on the regional, national, trans-national, and global levels. Overall resilience can be thought of as a multi-storied building, with local resilience as a foundation. Without resilience at the local level, the entire structure would crumble. Nurturing resilience of a 'multi-storied building' is a complex and challenging task. It is critical and fundamental to the nature of resilience, to start with a local level first in order to give the possibility of building resilient societies at the highest levels. Change can also happen more quickly at the local level, with changes that enhance resilience providing positive reverberations throughout the entire system.

Despite the importance of local-level resilience and the greater feasibility of making timely changes, practitioners and scholars remain mostly in the dark about what actually makes communities resilient. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that communities are diverse, so there is no 'one-size fits all' solution. At the same time, however, we need a good understanding of community resilience; colloque participants argue that such a conception is possible. While solutions may not always work in every community, there are general guiding principles which may be applicable elsewhere. To this end, a set of policy recommendations are offered in the relevant section of this policy brief.

Colloque 2: Regional challenges to sustainable governance and how to tackle them through resilience-nurturing

'Community' is precisely where change is constituted and ordering takes place in the pursuit of set goals, whereby power is manifested in a specific social identity, in principles which specify the norms and rules that define appropriate behaviour and social sanctions, and in practices which could be habitual and/or reflexive to 'bring about transformation and renewal.'

In a complex life, if change were to affect one element of the ordering domain, it would necessitate adaptation in the other two, to remain resilient and responsive to a constantly changing environment. Central to a responsive ordering domain —a community of relations— is resilience as a governing modality and a foundational principle of the local, enabling a complex system to self-organise in the most adaptive ways in response to change. These communities, drawing on common traditions, philosophy, intergenerational knowledge, and aspirations for the good life, may exceed state borders and develop intra- and inter-regional dynamics (for example, Central Eurasia) around common challenges, or fight against injustice (for example, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia conjointly but not as a state).

Colloque 2 participants focussed on the issues on how best to respond to emerging regional challenges, including 'geopolitical instability', which is a cause for 'irreversible climate breakdown' and planetary calamity, among other consequences. The participants underlined that the local level is too particular, and the global is too universal. Thus, the regional level provides a conceptual and practical bridge between the two. Grounded on the idea of reciprocity, generosity, hospitality, regional resilience aims to build an inclusive region for common sustainable development of the regional community.

Especially in times of polycrisis, regionalisation can lead to changing problem narratives by reorienting perspectives. The tangible benefits of proximity in conjunction with shared values can help policy makers in neighbouring countries to utilise regional resilience. The stability and peace in a country will positively affect neighbouring countries.

At the same time, regional conflicts put an increased stress on the borders. For instance, pressures on water appear to be one of the most felt in Central Asia in terms of a shared and yet most scarce resource. On this topic, regional governance could map administrative borders on river basins, something which does not exist at the moment, but the focus could be on how to create one, and focus on how to manage it.

Regional resilience can also be viewed through the concept of 'strategic autonomy', though the principle is, as for resilience more generally, heterogeneous. Typically, regions are considered to coalesce around shared cultural, geo-physical, and geo-political problems, which regional knowledge-sharing and collaboration can be more effective at tackling.

However, shared regional institutions are frequently at risk of becoming focussed on self-maintenance, rather than addressing the problems for which they were created. This calls for the need to build new global institutions.

A region is defined as at least three states that interact with each other and are geographically close. There is no regional without the local. It is possible to foster regional connectivity and collaborations rather than competition by integrating learnings from the local level and adapting to the needs of the region. Promotion of religious diversity and tolerance was considered a critical element of regional resilience. Mutual support during a crisis also benefits resilience and constitutes a way to promote it. It is important, however, to underline that 'resilience is a process, it never stops.' This necessitates the creation of institutions at correct scales and levels, that can facilitate exchange between society and state, such as through religious tolerance and acceptance.

In certain regions, such as Central Asia, the most important institutional aspect of resilience is avoiding state collapse. Be that as it may, regional resilience will not translate into global resilience until state-dominated societies move beyond protecting their prerogatives to involve other actors and transcend state-led paradigms. In this sense, building a regional identity requires pragmatic cooperation, based on an equilibrium between two seemingly contradictory but mutually reinforcing dynamics of connectivity (through joint investment, trade routes and maritime borders) and caution –the need for a fence and an open door at the same time. In conclusion, resilience at the regional level occupies a unique middle-ground linking local and the global.

Colloque 3: Rethinking international support and global governance in a pluriversal world: how to make it more resilient?

There is an urgent need to rethink, redesign and reevaluate current governance structures using a bottom-up approach. New structures need to be inclusive, fair, and just. Yet, how can we rethink global governance today, to make it more resilient? What should be done for it to be responsive to change and cooperative, respecting and accommodating emerging ordering domains, and working beyond states and Western-centric core-periphery structures and bias?

This is the main discussion topic in colloque 3. Much of the diversity in responses to the questions posed by this colloque centre on competing priors regarding what resilience actually means – both in the broadest sense and within the context of global governance.

Highlighted particularly by references to the climate crisis and more broadly to global environmental challenges, some responses viewed the global approach to resilience as principally concerned with prevailing contexts of polycrisis, invoking systemic risks and threats to human and planetary systems against which global resilience is conceptualised as a method of governance for mitigation and adaptation ('the governance approach').

A second vein of responses concentrated on resilience as governance of diversity, coalescing around ideas of reconciliation, cooperation, and the creation of 'global neighbourhoods' within which diverse perspectives on 'the good life' are celebrated ('the neighbourhood approach'); one group characterised this as avoiding 'convergence of ideas' in constructing unified governance systems, and instead preserving polycentric value domains –though crucially responses to this approach were inconsistent across discussions. To address an important distinction within this vein, in some places the neighbourhood approach was related specifically to the context of the polycrisis, where creating space for cooperation in global stewardship was viewed as a means to better ends in dealing with persistent global environmental crises, but in others this approach was viewed as an end of itself –particularly where cultural approaches built on community units, as opposed to 'collections of individuals', were foregrounded in discussions.

In contrast to other colloques, perspectives on resilience as self-governance were not materially present. On the one hand, references to the United Nations and constituent organs such as the Security Council revealed an explicit approach to the global scale as an assemblage of states; less overt references to cooperation and global neighbourhoods were typically couched in the idea of cooperation between sub-communities derived from stratum below the global level — in effect creating a conceptual space in which resilience as self-governance was absent on account of the lack of a genuine global community capable of self-governing.

Related to the previous point regarding the absence of resilience as self-governance from these conversations, conclusions regarding the involvement of various stakeholders in the global stratum of resilience were another area of clear distinction.

The first clear vein of responses was to see global approaches to resilience as related to contemporary global governance structures built upon interactions between sovereign nation states as the principal agents with meaningful power on this geographical scale. More embedded in the governance approach to global resilience than the neighbourhood approach, this vein tended towards seeing resilience as a framework within which political actors could work in existing global institutions to construct cooperative solutions to global challenges — though it is critical to note that no single participant suggested that institutions in current forms would be capable of achieving this, with reform of the United Nations noted in particular. In this discussion, substantial disagreement was voiced in how such an approach could, and should, deal with major 'fault lines' between value and geopolitical centres, for example, the US-Europe/China dichotomy.

This is not to say that discussions necessarily implied that this approach would be desirable for a global approach to resilience. One group, for example, suggested global referenda should be used to embed democratic involvement in a single global community into global institutional/political processes for responding to key global issues such as climate change, asking in particular "how can you give a person in Madagascar the same voice on global governance issues as an American?" While the directness of this suggestion was relatively unique, the idea of 'seeing beyond' the façade of national sovereign states represented by political agents, towards nations as complex overlaps of integrated sub-communities that can then themselves integrate and overlap on a global scale, was common to most discussions – though as a principle more than in any practical forms.

The 'how' of the bottom-up involvement - the idea of resilience as 'diversity-governance' - was substantially less explicit as a newly emergent concept. Here, it seems unhelpful to characterise the global sphere as a category separate from those of the regional and the local: some discussions explicitly grounded in the idea of local communities as the basic unit of society, rather than separate. Some participants within the Western liberal tradition, offered the alternative idea of not viewing the global sphere as of itself, but rather building it directly as a forum for these local and regional spaces to overlap, interact, and work together – which would imply a substantial reorientation of existing global approaches.

A final space of contention on the states vs 'smaller units' issue was identified in the question of behavioural change. While it is noted that different responses had different approaches on whether resilience in global governance should be ultimately concerned with global challenges or with the 'neighbourhood approach' and governance of diversity, participants also reaffirmed that these approaches exist within the defined extant global context of systemic risks and polycrisis – and that as such any approach must be mindful of these. In this lens, the issue of behavioural change was raised as a fundamental tool for responding to these crises; two schools of thought regarding the principal class of agents responsible for implementing this, were expressed, broadly along the same lines as responses to the appropriate sets of stakeholders for involvement in the global stratum of resilience. On the one hand, participants noted the possibility for large numbers of individuals to make small changes amounting to a larger change – aligned with the 'bottom-up' view seeing beyond nation states as the actors in global governance – and, on the other, the unavoidable reality that nation states have substantially more capacity, individually and collectively, to promote change through 'soft' and enforced/coercive approaches, which others considered might be necessary given the scale of challenges to which resilience may be an appropriate response.

These two approaches to the stakeholder involvement in the global stratum of resilience elicit a much more fundamental question highlighted by some discussions - that is, whether a global approach to resilience is compatible with the fundamental tenets that the concept of resilience as self-governance, seeks to instil in processes of governance and challenge response.

According to most, resilience seeks to foreground a bottom-up approach that invokes autonomy and self-organisation in the face of shared challenges that are better dealt with by collectives than by individuals. The approach that sees a future for global governance systems comprised of sovereign nation states adopting the paradigm of resilience was thus highlighted as something of a contradiction —if resilience is grounded in a bottom up approach, then how does a top down approach to global challenges directed by the elected or appointed political agents properly reflect the implementation of resilience as a paradigm? This would imply either that any global governance system that goes beyond facilitating connections and discussions between nations and communities cannot adopt resilience as a defining paradigm – i.e., any institutional arrangement with decision-making authority – or that contemporary global institutions must be dismantled and fundamentally reconceptualised, reoriented, and reorganised if the world is to pursue a genuinely resilient approach. Many forum participants took preference of the latter.

POINTS OF CONTESTATION:

- The role of the individual vs the state on behavioural change e.g., talk on the importance of 'little drops making an ocean' vs the individual and collective capacities of states
- Whether or not it would help create new global institutions, or reorganise the United Nations with a more inclusive Security Council. Does this need a mere re-organisation or a complete replacement?

Resilience as a governance strategy is not necessarily compatible with the global system: more work is needed to coalesce how the concept can be operationalised at this sphere without compromising the principles of community (local, national, regional, etc.) involvement and self-actualisation that are fundamental to resilience as a paradigmatic approach, as well as the inherent flexibility in governance responses required for a genuinely resilient outcome.

It is not clear who the key actors for global resilience would be, and therefore it is unclear how adopting a global resilience philosophy based on a grassroots approach would actually change responses to global challenges on the ground. Repeating concerns from the regional level and related to the conflict between a global approach to resilience and focus on communities, it remains ambiguous whether an institutional framework on genuine resilience can be formed – as opposed to one whose purpose instead becomes to reinforce the resilience of the institution itself. At the same time, there was a push to consider the potency of resilience as diversity-governance, based on the framework of Global International Society, as a 'world of many worlds' (Escobar 2018), rather than an established global order of states, largely dominated by liberal thinking (Flockhart and Paikin 2022).

It is important to question whose resilience we are strengthening through policy, to make sure we do not aggravate or deepen existing challenges by creating unintended consequences. Who gets to define resilience? Who does it serve? We need to get rid of the white saviour mentality and colonial mind-set while collectively defining a new paradigm for risk and resilience. How can global institutions better listen to the voices of citizens? These are all pertinent questions that need to be reflected on.

We need institutional frameworks/models based not on similarity but on increasing differences in technology, demographics and power relations. These will help institutions reflect, adapt and change to stay agile and responsive. Future research needs to look at the intersection between academic and political spheres to understand what a 'resilience shift' in global governance would a) be seeking to achieve, in contrast to prevailing paradigms, and b) actually look like on the ground, related to the stakeholder point above but also in considering how it would materially affect global governance/political/discursive approaches.

CONCLUSIONS

In the concluding plenary the questions of peaceful coexistence and resilience were discussed. One speaker suggested we should not judge things according to the 'fit for purpose' criteria and instrumentalist logic. Indeed, such an approach would re-focus resilience on becoming a more pragmatic exercise of re-distributing help, rather than a collective thinking about the common good. For instance, we would not prioritise saving the lives of the highest earners and highest ranking people in the room, leaving behind all those whose pay is minimal or whose tax contribution is non-existent. Essentially, this discussion addressed an issue of whether resilience implies to be 'fit for purpose', and the panellists came to the conclusion that this disagrees with the very nature of resilience, as an emotive, human concept, simply because humans do not by large, act in a means-to-an-end way, as COVID-19 has demonstrated.

The same idea led to the insight that irrationality is not necessarily the opposite of rationality. In fact, irrationality is at the core of human nature. The problematic aspect of thinking about resilience from the perspective of institutions is that all too often, the same institution becomes its own community, from which flow path dependencies. This is all problematic, and requires pressure from below to change, and greater agility and responsiveness to the needs of a wider community. In fact, many agree that resilience is not at all institutionally laden or driven; rather it is a process of relations stemming from the interactive communities, bottom-up. Institutions that emerge to support the realisation of needs of the given communities, are secondary and have to derive their mandate from the communities themselves.

Another panellist emphasised that resilience is fundamentally a creative and iterative concept. Resilience has a strong heuristic potential, to help us tackle multifaceted problems from a transdisciplinary perspective. Resilience, has been argued, is not just a way of thinking, or living - meaning, in a relational, non-linear, processual and iterative way. It is also a way of governing - meaning, to be agile and responsive to the societal needs, and challenges of the environment. This in turn necessitates a different way of thinking about our future, and means to support it, both on a global and a local scales.

Related to resilience, governance is the next important concept that needs revisiting. It raises questions about the ways in which we should govern in a context where so many global challenges necessitate a global interpretation of resilience. In this respect, there are deep weaknesses in our current conditions. Specifically, our ability to tackle challenges is impaired by the fact that we do not experience a sense of global community, the fact that only very few great powers have a role in global governance, and that at the global level, this lack of community goes together with a weak participation of smaller countries, with people feeling that they are not involved, and global governance is an exclusionary concept. Connected to that, most planning in the established system is essentially top-down, and rigid, failing to give voice to the local communities or smaller states; and be more flexible and responsive to the grassroot initiatives when dealing with global challenges (climate change, earthquakes, flooding, conflict, war) locally.

We should learn from understanding resilience as self-governance locally, and as diversity-governance globally, and realise that there is no space for universalism or indeed relativism in global international society. This search for uniformity is contradictory with the idea that we should strive for self-organisation on a planetary scale. As a result, we should learn more from local/regional communities to solve global challenges, whereby specific issues can be solved by regional institutions in which the forum participants are all stakeholders. In this regard, having concrete examples that could be used for inspiration would be beneficial. A perspective building on Sufi principles was advocated, where the neighbour and their needs always come first, before the needs of the self. The forum concluded with the idea that the community of scholars and practitioners assembled for this occasion constituted an example of a diverse and definitely resilient community, setting to advocate for local voices on all levels of governance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Local level

- Communities should develop multiple plans for the future, including emergency response plans, to be prepared via their infrastructures to tackle disasters. While it is impossible to predict and be ready for every potential threat, the exercise of creating response plans is valuable in and of itself. This process develops resilience by inculcating awareness that nothing is fixed, and that rapid, momentous changes can occur at any moment.
- To be resilient, communities should have a vision for the future - an aspirated sense of good life - to demonstrate to their constituent parts that they will continue to meet their needs. Each part of a community, including nested or sub-communities, families, and individuals, needs to know that their community serves them. Otherwise, constituents may not feel included as part of their community, making it more likely that they will splinter and break off—especially in the event of crisis—rather than contribute to community resilience. Engendering a sense of community of relations to enable its participants to rally around 'the flag' is an important foundation-building to nurture a sense of resilience in all.
- The idea of 'no community, no resilience' leads to a fundamental policy recommendation: communities must have access to resources. Without the ability to meet its basic needs, a community will cease to exist. It is prerequisite for resilience that communities have adequate physical resources, such as food, water, housing, heating, and other infrastructure.
- People need to feel included in their communities. Resilience derives from a sense of identity and belonging, which in turn are developed through social linkages. The digital revolution and increasing pace of urbanisation are changing many communities, altering the ways people communicate with each other and in some cases, encouraging social isolation.
- Open and interactive channels of communication can also make communities more resilient by allowing for individual voices to be heard. It is critical to let the local voices speak for themselves.
- Communities could be taught about how to influence policymakers and how the policymaking process works in their particular context, empowering them as agents of change. Influential community members could be taught about resilience, bridging the production of knowledge on resilience and nurturing a sense of resilience for the next generation.

Regional level

- Regional cooperation needs to be complemented with integration and exchange among communities to foster regional resilience.
- Regional institutional arrangements should be objective-focussed to avoid 'regionalisation for regionalisation's sake.'
- It is critical to explore how national communities can be integrated into resilience initiatives across different geographical regions to avoid stoking international divisions.
- In the context of scarcity and precarity, resilience can be supported as self and diversity governance, by empowering citizen committees to generate data and contribute to the scientific process.
- Focus on environment-centric approaches emerges as a necessity. For example, the water framework directive in Europe provides a template for water resources management and resilience over water conflicts.

Global level

- Contemporary geopolitical and cultural divisions, including populist political rhetoric, seem incompatible with the fundamental tenets of resilience, and as such its invocation on a global scale is challenging if not impossible without attention to critical fault lines obstructing genuine global inter-community exchange.
- Existing circles of global governance actors need to be substantially opened up –made more transparent, accessible, and diverse– in order for a more resilient global paradigm of governance to be established. The example of citizens' assemblies possibly offers a pathway for such inclusion.
- More responsive and goal-oriented global governance institutions are urgently needed, with flexible budgets to support grassroots activism. Concerns were raised regarding examples of prevailing regional and global institutions initially formed to address a given set or category of challenges best addressed beyond the local and national level –and specifically an apparent tendency to become captured by the need instead to reinforce the necessity or resilience of the institution itself, as opposed to promote long-term solutions to these challenges.

The forum concluded with an urge and interest to continue developing the concept of resilience for the good of the local, regional and global societies. For more ideas and initiatives, please visit GCRF GNCA COMPASS+ learning resource at https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/igsd/compass/

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