



## *On Resilience*

### Genealogy, Logics, and World Politics

What does it mean to be resilient in a societal or international context? Where does resilience come from? From which discipline was it “imported” into International Relations (IR)? If a particular government instrumentalises the meaning of resilience to its own benefit, should scholars reject the analytical purchase of the concept of resilience as a whole? Does a government have the monopoly of understanding how resilience is defined and applied? This book addresses these questions. Even though resilience in global politics is not new, a major shift is currently happening in how we understand and apply resilience in world politics. Resilience is indeed increasingly theorised, rather than simply employed as a noun; it has left the realm of vocabulary and entered the terrain of concept. This book demonstrates the multiple origins of resilience, traces the diverse expressions of resilience in IR to various historical markers and proposes a theory of resilience in world politics.

PHILIPPE BOURBEAU is a lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, and an associate professor in the Department of Political Science, and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Immigration and Security, at the University Laval, Canada.



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PHILIPPE BOURBEAU

*University of Cambridge*

*University Laval*



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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> vi
Introduction	1
1 Towards a More Inclusive Genealogy of Resilience	26
2 Resilience and Security	58
3 Resilience and Migration	85
4 Opening up a Resilience Research Agenda	102
Conclusion	117
<i>References</i>	126
<i>Index</i>	150

# Introduction

What does it mean to be resilient in a societal or international context? Where does resilience come from? From which discipline was it “imported” into International Relations (IR)? If a particular government instrumentalises the meaning of resilience to its own benefit should scholars reject the analytical purchase of the concept of resilience as a whole? Does a government have the monopoly of understanding how resilience is defined and applied?

This book addresses these questions. I develop a novel understanding of what resilience is and its added-value in world politics. To do so, I have chosen an approach that is both eclectic and multidisciplinary, borrowing insights from disciplines as varied as psychology, engineering, social work and ecology. A pluridisciplinary perspective on resilience moves away from a disciplinary silo and rather limiting understanding by legitimising and reinforcing a cross-disciplinary dialogue. It allows and encourages scholars to seek “external” correctives to their own literature gaps and go beyond in-field incomplete and reductive positions, as we shall see later.

Resilience in IR is not new. For example, in the 1990s Robert Powell underscored that for neoliberal institutionalism “international institutional history matter,” i.e. that “the cost of changing or constructing new regimes thus gives existing regimes some resilience to shifts in the balance of power.”<sup>1</sup> Peter Hasenclever and his colleagues contend that international institutions may be more effective or less, and “more or less robust (or resilient).” For them, “regime *robustness* (resilience) refers to the ‘staying power’ of international institutions in the face of

<sup>1</sup> Powell, Robert, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate,” *International Organization* 48.2 (1994): 342.

exogenous challenges. . . . In other words, institutions that change with every shift of power among their members . . . *lack* resilience.”<sup>2</sup>

However, a major shift is currently happening in how we understand and apply resilience in world politics. Resilience is indeed increasingly theorised, rather than simply employed as a noun; it has left the realm of vocabulary and entered the terrain of concept. Resilience has emerged as an important and much-discussed theme in the public policy realm and in various sub-fields of world politics, including security studies, international interventions, urban studies, state-society relationship in the neoliberal era, environmental regimes, terrorism and counter-terrorism studies, and international human rights to name just a few.<sup>3</sup>

This book moves IR’s scattered scholarship on resilience a step further towards the theorisation of its application into world politics. The overarching objective of the present book is to tell a broad socio-political story of the connections between resilience and world politics. The book revisits resilience, demonstrates the multiple origins of

<sup>2</sup> Hasenclever, Andreas, Peter Mayer, and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2, their emphasis.

<sup>3</sup> Ancelovici, Marcos, “The Origins and Dynamics of Organizational Resilience: A Comparative Study of Two French Labor Organizations,” in *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, ed. Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Bourbeau, Philippe, “Resiliencism: Premises and Promises in Securitization Research,” *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* 1.1 (2013); Corry, Olaf, “From Defense to Resilience: Environmental Security beyond Neo-Liberalism,” *International Political Sociology* 8.3 (2014); Chandler, David, “Resilience and Human Security: The Post-Interventionist Paradigm,” *Security Dialogue* 43.3 (2012); Bourbeau, Philippe, “Migration, Resilience, and Security: Responses to New Inflows of Asylum Seekers and Migrants,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41.12 (2015); Jenson, Jane and Ron Levi, “Narratives and Regimes of Social and Human Rights: The Jack Pines of the Neoliberal Era,” in *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, ed. Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Ryan, Caitlin, “Everyday Resilience as Resistance: Palestinian Women Practicing Sumud,” *International Political Sociology* 9.4 (2015); Wagner, Wolfgang and Rosanne Anholt, “Resilience as the EU Global Strategy’s New Leitmotif: Pragmatic, Problematic or Promising?,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 37.3 (2016); Young, Oran R., “Institutional Dynamics: Resilience, Vulnerability and Adaptation in Environmental and Resource Regimes,” *Global Environmental Change* 20 (2010); Bourbeau, Philippe and Caitlin Ryan, “Resilience, Resistance, Infrapolitics, and Enmeshment,” *European Journal of International Relations* OnlineFirst (2017).

resilience, traces the diverse expressions of resilience in IR to various historical markers and proposes a theory of resilience in world politics.

This volume, then, makes three contributions. First, it proposes, by defining resilience as the *process of patterned adjustments adopted in the face of endogenous or exogenous shocks, to maintain, to marginally modify, or to transform a referent object*, a theorisation of resilience as applied to world politics. The main contention is that of the three logics underpinning the scholarship on resilience in IR – i.e. the logics of persistence, agential self-reliance and processual duality – only the third offers convincing grounds on which to theorise its application in IR. Second, it proposes a multidisciplinary genealogy of resilience. I believe that understanding the multiple and multidisciplinary paths through which resilience has percolated into world politics is an essential first step to conducting an analysis of the application of resilience in international politics. Third, by providing a unique and elaborate conceptualisation of the relationship among resilience, security and migration while outlining a much-needed terrain of debate between resilience and current IR fields of research, I argue that resilience is an *intra-social sciences* bridging concept. That is, resilience might well be one of those concepts that cuts across several social sciences disciplines to help scholars make sense of issues and problematics that do not neatly fit within the disciplinary way academia has structured the production of knowledge over time. Overall, this book reflects on the normativity, the practices, the challenges and enticing opportunities of applying resilience to IR questions, and offers several suggestions for unpacking theoretically the concept of resilience.

## What Is Resilience?

A great deal has been written in the scholarly literature about the role of resilience in our social world. Numerous disciplines and fields of research, including psychology, child development, biology/ecology, criminology, mental health theory, socio-ecology and social work have by turns studied, delimited, criticised and exalted the resilience approach.

Yet, one often reads in IR journals that ecologists (and one ecologist in particular: C. S. Holling) “invented” the concept of resilience in the mid-1970s. Readers are *informed* that “it is no accident that the

concept of resilience derives directly from ecology,”<sup>4</sup> that resilience was first “developed within systems ecology in the 1970s”<sup>5</sup> and that only in *the past few years* has resilience “infiltrated” other disciplines such as “the psychology of trauma” while remaining utterly “under-theorized.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Claudia Aradau writes that up until very recently, resilience “was quasi-absent from academic debates . . . C. S. Holling’s [article] and Jerome Kagan’s [article] appeared to be the only significant contributions, which lacked any substantial follow-up for quite some time. Hardly any other articles mentioned resilience at the time.”<sup>7</sup> She states that it is only over *the past decade* that resilience has been presented as offering an answer to several issues, including “children’s education.”

These statements are not argumentative; these authors are not *arguing* that ecologists and C. S. Holling initially developed the concept forty-five years ago and that other disciplines recently jumped on the resilience bandwagon. Rather, the “ecological” origin of resilience is presented as a fact, as an undebatable truth.

The problem is that for anyone interested even tangentially in resilience, this claim is surprising. It is a supposedly “accepted truth” that does not sit well with a vast body of literature in psychology and social work, for example. A quick search in the two main databases for psychology and psychiatry (PsycINFO and MedLine) between 1955 and 2000 reveal the term “resilience” (or “resiliency”) in the title of 1315 peer-reviewed articles and academic press books, in the abstract of 3211 articles and books, and as a keyword in 1310 publications. Nearly 500 PhD dissertations focusing on resilience were completed between the end of World War II and the close of the twentieth century.

This hardly qualifies as absence of debate. If IR critical theorists are right in suggesting that a focus on silenced discourses reveals as much as a focus on dominant discourses – and I think they are – then one is

<sup>4</sup> Reid, Julian, “The Disastrous and Politically Debased Subject of Resilience,” *Development Dialogue* 58 (2012): 71.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, Jeremy and Melinda Cooper, “Genealogies of Resilience: From Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation,” *Security Dialogue* 42.2 (2011): 143.

<sup>6</sup> Walker, Jeremy and Melinda Cooper, “Genealogies of Resilience: From Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation,” 143.

<sup>7</sup> Aradau, Claudia, “The Promise of Security: Resilience, Surprise and Epistemic Politics,” *Resilience* 2.2 (2014): 1.

led to wonder why, and for what purpose, vast swaths of literature on resilience are so bluntly ignored. Certainly, the consequence of this choice is obvious: claiming that an eco-system specialist invented resilience permits IR scholars to treat expressions of resilience in world politics as a logical extension of the literature on ecological systems' adjustment capacity (that is, a literature that emphasises equilibrium and management). On the other hand, if one acknowledges that resilience has been around for more than half of a century in numerous theoretical capacities, this direct association is harder to justify. In the remainder of this chapter, I set this issue aside (returning to it in Chapter 1) in order to discuss some of the definitions of resilience that scholars have provided over the years. I will then offer a novel and integrative definition of my own.

While IR scholars seem puzzled by the problem of how to define resilience as we shall see shortly, distinct conceptualisations exist side by side in psychology, criminology and ecology.

Psychologists were among the first scholars to theorize resilience. A large strand of the psychological literature on resilience aims at uncovering the qualities that help people to positively adapt to profound adversity in a way that is substantially better than would have been expected given the circumstances. Mildred C. Scoville refers, in her 1943 discussion of wartime psychiatric work in Great Britain, to the "astonishing resilience of children"; a few years later, M. Brewster Smith remarks in his study of frame of reference for mental health that "the person who achieves (social desirability) at the expense of personal integrity lacks the resources of strength and resilience to maintain his adjustment against environmental stresses which a more highly integrated person could stand."<sup>8</sup> Several studies quickly followed, most notably a series of articles by the Blocks (Jack and Jeanne, both University of California-Berkeley scholars) and their associates. Jack Block and Hobart Thomas conclude in their 1955 study of the self and the individual's tendency to seek control over its surroundings that, "a certain resiliency or potential for oscillation is required in order for a personality system to cope with the stresses and strains of life."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Smith, M. Brewster, "Optima of Mental Health: A General Frame of Reference," *Psychiatry* 13 (1950): 504.

<sup>9</sup> Block, Jack and Hobart Thomas, "Is Satisfaction with Self a Measure of Adjustment?," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 51.2 (1955): 258.

Similarly, Jack Block and Emily Turula, in their examination of the relationship between self-identification, ego-control and adjustments, argue that resilience should be understood as “the individual’s adaptation capability when under the strains set by new environmental demands. Some individuals can react to the press of new and yet unmastered circumstances in resourceful, tenacious, but elastic ways. In the present time, such people possess ego resiliency.”<sup>10</sup>

The scholarship on resilience was fine-tuned in the 1970s and 1980s with works focusing on the notions of “invulnerability,”<sup>11</sup> “invincibility”<sup>12</sup> and “protective factors.”<sup>13</sup> In child development literature, children reared by seriously mentally ill parents were argued to be have become resilient “by taking on responsibilities for coping with the stress situation, and doing so successfully.”<sup>14</sup> The focus of the literature in this period was on “successful adaptation despite the odds against good development.”<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, psychologists have used resilience to convey the idea that “some individuals have a relatively good psychological outcome despite suffering risk experiences that would be expected to bring about serious sequelae.”<sup>16</sup>

Social workers and criminologists have also participated in the debate on how best to define resilience. While Hamilton and Marilyn McCubbin’s work on family relations sought to study the “characteristics,

<sup>10</sup> Block, Jack and Emily Turula, “Identification, Ego Control, and Adjustment,” *Child Development* 34.4 (1963): 946.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony, James E., “The Syndrome of the Psychologically Invulnerable Child,” in *The Child in His Family: Children at Psychiatric Risk*, ed. E.J. Anthony and C. Koupernik, New York: Wiley, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Werner, Emily E. and Ruth S. Smith, *Vulnerable but Invincible*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Garmezy, Norman, “The Study of Competence in Children at Risk for Severe Psychopathology,” in *The Child in His Family: Children at Psychiatric Risk: Iii*, ed. E. J. Anthony and C. Koupernik, New York: Wiley, 1974; Rutter, Michael, “Protective Factors in Children’s Responses to Stress and Disadvantage,” in *Primary Prevention of Psychopathology: Vol. 3.*, ed. M. W. Kent and J. E. Rolf, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1979.

<sup>14</sup> “Resilience in the Face of Adversity. Protective Factors and Resistance to Psychiatric Disorder,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 147.6 (1985): 607.

<sup>15</sup> Masten, Ann S., Karin M. Best, and Norman Garmezy, “Resilience and Development: Contributions from the Study of Children Who Overcome Adversity,” *Development and Psychopathology* 2.04 (1990): 426.

<sup>16</sup> Rutter, Michael, “Implications of Resilience Concepts for Scientific Understanding,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1094.1 (2006): 1.

dimensions, and properties of families which help families to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adaptive in the face of crisis situation,”<sup>17</sup> Froma Walsh was studying the “ingredients of family resilience: how it is possible for some families to emerge hardier from adversity – not in spite of, but actually strengthened through their experience.”<sup>18</sup> And Robbie Gilligan argues for the value of resilience as a key concept in social work with young people, characterising a resilient child as someone “who bounces back having endured adversity.”<sup>19</sup>

For these scholars, resilience is a set of dispositional qualities that permit some individuals to “bounce back” or to do better than expected under certain circumstances. In short, the often-cited maxim of Friedrich Nietzsche that “whatever does not kill me makes me stronger” captures well the bulk of this literature.<sup>20</sup>

More recently, some scholars have moved away from the understanding of resilience as a set of qualities that someone possesses or can develop. These scholars recast resilience as a *process*. Consider the following definitions of resilience from the early years of the twenty-first century: “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity”;<sup>21</sup> a “process that persons demonstrate over time and indicates that persons who have experienced adversities actively use the resources available to them to help them cope with, adapt to and overcome risks that threaten their development and pro-social adaptations to their life circumstances”;<sup>22</sup> a “dynamic process whereby individuals show adaptive functioning in

<sup>17</sup> McCubbin, Hamilton I., and Marilyn A. McCubbin, “Typologies of Resilient Families: Emerging Roles of Social Class and Ethnicity,” *Family Relations* (1988): 247.

<sup>18</sup> Walsh, Froma, “Healthy Family Functioning: Conceptual and Research Developments,” *Family Business Review* 7.2 (1994): 183.

<sup>19</sup> Gilligan, Robbie, “Adversity, Resilience and Young People: The Protective Value of Positive School and Spare Time Experiences,” *Children & Society* 14.1 (2000): 37.

<sup>20</sup> (1888 [1998])

<sup>21</sup> Luthar, Suniya S., Dante Cicchetti, and Bronwyn Becker, “The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work,” *Child Development* 71.3 (2000): 543.

<sup>22</sup> Gilgun, Jane F., “Evidence-Based Practice, Descriptive Research and the Resilience–Schema–Gender–Brain Functioning (Rsgb) Assessment,” *British Journal of Social Work* 35.6 (2005): 848.

the face of significant adversity.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the work of social worker Michael Ungar best characterises this trend away from understanding resilience as a set of qualities. For Ungar, resilience is “the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse.”<sup>24</sup>

While this conceptual evolution in the understanding of resilience was taking place in the psychology and social work literature, the field of ecology was also deepening its understanding of this concept. Three main strands of literature on resilience have emerged in ecology: equilibrium resilience (or the Pimm resilience), ecological resilience (or the Holling resilience) and socio-ecological resilience (or the Adger-Folke resilience).

Equilibrium resilience is concerned with the conditions that determine how far a system can be displaced from a fixed point of equilibrium and still return to that equilibrium once the disturbance has passed. The work of Stuart Pimm best exemplifies the equilibrium understanding of resilience; for Pimm, the population resilience of a species is “the rate at which population density returns to equilibrium after a disturbance away from equilibrium.”<sup>25</sup> This model has proven to be both influential and dynamic in the ecology literature.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, ecological resilience is defined as a “measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations

<sup>23</sup> Schoon, Ingrid, *Risk and Resilience: Adaptations in Changing Times*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Ungar, Michael, “A Constructionist Discourse on Resilience,” *Youth & Society* 35.3 (2004): 342; “The Social Ecology of Resilience: Addressing Contextual and Cultural Ambiguity of a Nascent Construct,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81.1 (2011).

<sup>25</sup> Pimm, Stuart L., *The Balance of Nature?: Ecological Issues in the Conservation of Species and Communities*, University of Chicago Press, 1991, 18; “The Complexity and Stability of Ecosystems,” *Nature* 307.5949 (1984).

<sup>26</sup> Tilman, Daniel, “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning,” in *Nature’s Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*, ed. G. C. Daily, Washington, DC: Island Press, 1997; Lehman, Clarence L. and David Tilman, “Biodiversity, Stability, and Productivity in Competitive Communities,” *The American Naturalist* 156.5 (2000); McManus, John W. and Johanna F. Polsenberg, “Coral–Algal Phase Shifts on Coral Reefs: Ecological and Environmental Aspects,” *Progress in Oceanography* 60.2 (2004); Loreau, Michel et al., “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning: Current Knowledge and Future Challenges,” *Science* 294.5543 (2001).

or state variables.”<sup>27</sup> At the heart of ecological resilience lies the capacity of a system to maintain its function in the face of adversity.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the socio-ecological conceptualisation of resilience pushes Holling’s system of thought a few steps further, directly highlighting the synergistic and co-evolutionary relationship between social and ecological systems.<sup>29</sup> On this understanding, resilience is “the capacity of linked social-ecological systems to absorb recurrent disturbances . . . so as to retain essential structures, processes, and feedbacks.”<sup>30</sup> For Carl Folke and his colleagues, the emphasis is on the combined capacity of humans and natural systems to achieve “management that secures the capacity of ecosystems to sustain societal development and progress with essential ecosystem services.”<sup>31</sup> How resilience can speak to both natural and social sciences is a theme that will be further discussed in the conclusion.

These definitions from psychologists, social workers and ecologists all share three characteristics that prove problematic for the theorisation of resilience in world politics. First, they define resilience as being about *positive* adjustments. Indeed, all the works referenced in the previous part of this section start with the premise that disturbance (or shock) is inherently negative and that resilience is about positive adaptation to such a negative event. This premise reflects a broad acceptance that resilience is good and thus must be promoted. In some cases, this acceptance amounts to a disciplinary bias; in the psychological literature, for example, resilience is typically employed in discussions of an individual’s actions following instances of sexual abuse or severe psychological trauma. Being “resilient,” in these contexts, is

<sup>27</sup> Holling, C. S., “Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems,” *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 4 (1973): 14.

<sup>28</sup> Carpenter, Steven R. et al., “From Metaphor to Measurement: Resilience of What to What?,” *Ecosystems* 4 (2001); Gunderson, Lance H., “Ecological Resilience – In Theory and Application,” *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 31 (2000).

<sup>29</sup> Adger, Neil W., “Social and Ecological Resilience: Are They Related?,” *Progress in Human Geography* 24.3 (2000).

<sup>30</sup> Adger, Neil W. et al., “Social-Ecological Resilience to Coastal Disasters,” *Science* 309.5737 (2005): 1036.

<sup>31</sup> Folke, Carl, Johan Colding, and Fikret Berkes, “Synthesis: Building Resilience and Adaptive Capacity in Social–Ecological Systems,” in *Navigating Social–Ecological Systems: Building Resilience for Complexity and Change*, ed. Fikret Berkes, Johan Colding, and Carl Folke, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 354.

unequivocally a positive adaptation. Although this inclination makes sense in certain disciplines, a wholly positive portrayal of resilience ignores the potential dark side of this trait, especially in socio-political terms. As I will discuss this in the conclusion, it is important that the definition of resilience we apply to world politics remain normatively open and avoid any such analytical closure; resilience is not always a desirable feature of social, political or economic life.

The second problematic element shared by these definitions is their tendency to depict resilience as a binary concept. Resilience is characterised in this literature as all-or-nothing – either there is resilience or there is not. One direct consequence of this position is the lack of any serious exploration of a *scalar* understanding of resilience. Treating resilience in a binary way also sidesteps the notion that there may be distinct types of resilience. As a result of this attitude, we witness a disconnect – in theoretical and empirical terms – between the complexity of contemporary world policy and the analytical framework proposed to make sense of the different patterns of response that international events inspire.

A third limit of some of these definitions is their tendency to reify the *prior* conditions to resilience. Psychologists, for instance, reify the state of mind or personality that the individual “bounces back to” through resilience. This reified condition may be a fixed point in time, a snapshot of one’s personality, or a pre-existing, unchanged and stable state of mind. Similarly, from an ecological standpoint, equilibrium resilience reifies the balanced state to which a resilient system will return. While it may be true that an eco-system can return to a clearly defined previous state after a significant shock, it is hard to translate this concept directly to political systems – the state of social “equilibrium” that a human population might exist in and return to is hard to envision and articulate. Ecological resilience, too, partakes to some degree in the reification of the previous condition, as it emphasises that resilience is about maintaining the *same* relationships between populations or state variables.

Whereas, as we have seen, distinct conceptualisations of resilience exist side by side in the psychology, social work and ecology literature, we are faced with the exact opposite situation in IR. The literature suffers not from a diversity of definitions of resilience but from a limited number of definitions. Despite the growing popularity of the concept in international studies, only a handful of IR scholars have proposed a definition of resilience.

For instance, in their introduction to their excellent edited book *Social Resilience in an Era of Neoliberalism*, Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont define resilience as “the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organisation, class, racial group, community or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenge to it.”<sup>32</sup> In a nutshell, resilience is “the capacities of societies to cope with many kinds of knowledge” and social resilience “is an essential characteristic of what we call successful societies.” In his study of disasters and how societies react to them, Daniel Aldrich defines resilience as “the ability of a neighbourhood, ward, or area to engage in positive, networked adaptation after a crisis.”<sup>33</sup> For David Chandler, it is “the capacity to positively or successfully adapt to external problems or threats.”<sup>34</sup>

However, these definitions fall short of offering a convincing position. Hall and Lamont understand resilience as a fixed set of attributes or qualities that a society may possess. The problem is that psychologists and social workers have long abandoned this understanding because it opens the door to the danger of blaming the victim, i.e. of rendering injured parties responsible for their inability to react with resilience to a given shock. As aforementioned, psychologists and social workers now understand this concept in processual terms, and Hall and Lamont remain silent on this issue. Both Aldrich’s and Chandler’s conceptualisations start with the premise that the disturbance is inherently negative; resilience is thus about positive adaptation. However, resilience has a dark side, especially in societal terms. This is not to say that one should find a way to interpret powerful earthquakes (the focus of Aldrich’s book) or terrorist attacks in large cities as positive events, but rather that there might be good reasons for wanting to transform a social structure, a given situation, a political regime, a norm, etc., and that being resilient to these changes could be considered negative. David Shambaugh’s and Jack Goldstone’s arguments regarding “resilient

<sup>32</sup> Hall, Peter A. and Michèle Lamont, “Introduction,” in *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, ed. Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Aldrich, Daniel P., *Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012, 7.

<sup>34</sup> Chandler, “Resilience and Human Security: The Post-Interventionist Paradigm,” 217.

authoritarianism” are a useful illustration.<sup>35</sup> Since Chandler’s definition restricts the sources of shocks to the external realm, his approach is unable to problematise expressions of resilience occurring after an endogenous shock (e.g. home-grown terrorist attacks or intra-community violence). Problematically, several expressions of resilience are thus excluded entirely from this framework. Social shocks and disturbances are not always external; the imposition of an exogenous/endogenous dichotomy on contemporary world affairs is a fragile foundation upon which to theorise our understanding of resilience in world politics.

While a search of the literature reveals a dearth of definitions of resilience offered by IR scholars, paradoxically, you only have to sit on a panel or two at the British International Studies Association annual conference to hear the opposite problem lamented: that there are currently so many definitions of resilience that we do not know what it actually means. This criticism is typically not offered as inspiration for scholars to engage further with resilience, but as proof of the useless nature of resilience as a research concept. To be relevant and worthy of academic attention, it seems, a concept must be undisputed.

Notwithstanding, one wonders if resilience is alone in (supposedly) having such a multiplicity of definitions.<sup>36</sup> Is there a consensus in IR, for example, about the definition of power, governance or identity? Should discussion of “security” be dropped because Stephen Walt, Barry Buzan, Peter Katzenstein, Randall Schweller, Christopher Browning and Matt McDonald, and Charli Carpenter disagree on its meaning or even worse, because we disagree with how a particular US president instrumentalises the term?<sup>37</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the

<sup>35</sup> Shambaugh, David L., *China’s Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008; Goldstone, Jack A., “Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies,” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011).

<sup>36</sup> I have recently raised a similar point concerning debates about practices, see Bourbeau, Philippe, “The Practice Approach in Global Politics,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2.2 (2017).

<sup>37</sup> Walt, Stephen M., “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 35.2 (1991). Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era. Second Edition*, Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991. Katzenstein, Peter J., ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Schweller, Randall L., *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,

eclectic understanding of security in IR is what makes the body of research on this topic rich, stimulating and challenging.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, although it might seem confusing at first glance, the eclectic polysemy of resilience creates an opportunity for a cross-perspective dialogue that ultimately benefits and enriches the literature.

In a similar vein, it is important to note a certain lack of clarity concerning what it is that critics of resilience actually criticise. The object of criticism is often not precisely articulated. In fact, one could argue that the critics have designed their target in such a vague and fuzzy way that pretty much anything thrown remotely close to the target would have a good chance of hitting it. Take the work of one of the leading critics of resilience, Jonathan Joseph. I consider Joseph's work to be of excellent quality, but nowhere in his two most recent articles (at the time of writing) does he inform the reader of how he defines resilience.<sup>39</sup> We do not know what exactly Joseph is criticising. Is it the application within IR of psychology's focus on "bouncing back" or ecologists' notion of "equilibrium," or the premises of social-ecological resilience, or the UK government's particular use of resilience, or resilience as a whole? Is it all of these things? This distinction is important because one of Joseph's central messages and hopes is "that communities around the world . . . will continue to show a lack of interest in the idea of being resilient"; I think it would be helpful to know what exactly communities are advised to abandon.

Accepting that the very subject of one's analysis is open to conceptual dispute does not mean that one should hide behind the easy position of definitional vagueness. In this work, I am slightly altering my previous definition of resilience to incorporate the three action verbs typically associated with resilience. I define resilience as *the process of patterned adjustments adopted in the face of endogenous*

2006. Browning, Christopher S. and Matt McDonald, "The Future of Critical Security Studies: Ethics and the Politics of Security," *European Journal of International Relations* 19.2 (2013). Carpenter, R. Charli, "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations," *Security Dialogue* 37.1 (2006).

<sup>38</sup> Bourbeau, Philippe, ed. *Security: Dialogue across Disciplines*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph, Jonathan, "Resilience in UK and French Security Strategy: An Anglo-Saxon Bias?," *Politics* 33.4 (2013); "Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism: A Governmentality Approach," *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* 1.1 (2013).

or exogenous shocks, to maintain, to marginally modify, or to transform a referent object.<sup>40</sup> Several components of this definition are worth highlighting.

By locating resilience explicitly within world politics, this definition postulates that resilience is processual rather than a set of qualities that an individual can possess or develop. The problem with understanding resilience as a personality trait is that it opens the door to the danger of blaming the victim, of rendering injured parties responsible for not being able to react with resilience to a given shock. Focusing on the interactions between the referent object and its environment, as well as on the underlying processes from which expressions of resilience emanate, moves us away from this trap (a point I will return to in Chapter 1). Similarly, my definition emphasises that resilience is concerned, not with ephemeral and punctual reactions, but rather with those adjustments that are patterned and durative. Such adjustments involve repeated interactions between individuals and their surroundings; as such, they must be situated within particular socio-historical contexts and carried out in a medium/long term perspective. In other words (to borrow a forceful image from Paul Pierson), the definition posited here adopts a *moving pictures* approach rather than a snapshot one.<sup>41</sup>

My understanding of resilience deliberately moves us away from a solely individualistic conceptualisation to permit the application of resilience to communities and societies as well. Even though actions ultimately belong to the individual, an institution, a community or a society can also display resilient patterns of adjustment when resilience is the dominant (individual) form of reaction. Although this book is primarily concerned with humans and with social communities and societies in the arena of world politics, this definition could also be applied to ecosystems, non-human (species-level) communities, or even economies.

In addition, the ways in which disturbances and adjustments are understood and experienced may differ from context to context, from culture to culture, and from individual to individual. The proposed definition takes into consideration the intersubjective circumstances

<sup>40</sup> Bourbeau, Philippe, "Resiliencism: Premises and Promises in Securitization Research," *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Pierson, Paul, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

under which patterned adjustments take place. A society might be able to respond with resilience to one particular type of shock, but not to another – or one society might react with resilience in the face of a particular shock while another society fails to do so. In this sense, my definition permits a culturally embedded understanding of resilience. This is an important consideration. A fully functional definition should be sensitive to expressions of resilience in non-Western cultures and marginalised groups, without reducing such expressions to a subheading of a particular Western political philosophy, a point I return to in Chapter 1. Moreover, I contend that resilience is sensitive to time. Resilience can refer to how a society is navigating through the aftermath of some past adversity, such as 9/11 (retrospective), through some current adversity (concurrent), or how the society might navigate through a disturbance in the future (prospective). Additionally, there is the consideration that a society might be able to respond with resilience at one time in its history, but not another.

The definition of resilience I propose rejects the idea that resilience is always about positive adjustments. Shocks need not be inherently negative, and thus the adjustments to them may not be necessarily positive. In some cases, being resilient might, in fact, mean being an obstacle to positive change. I am not arguing that one should find a way to interpret terrorist attacks in large cities as positive policy, but I do argue that there might be good reasons for wanting to transform a social structure, a given situation, a regime, a norm, etc., and that being resilient to these changes could be considered negative. In short, I contend that encoding an *a priori* normative bias into the definition of resilience is unnecessarily limiting, as adjustments may be both positive and negative.

Relatedly, while a shock may certainly be externally imposed on an individual/society (by the invasion of a territory/state, for instance), the source of a shock could equally be internal. Thus, resilience is not only about adjustment to external threats. This distinction also brings to the forefront the objective/subjective debate. I do not disregard the possibility that in some fields/disciplines, objective threats or shocks exist. It is indeed hard to sustain the argument that infections by insect populations are matters of interpretation. Thus, most scholars accept that some shocks and disturbances have less interpretation “space” than others. In the domain of international politics, however, most shocks

or disturbances *are* open to interpretation. Given this reality, it is my contention that, in the realm of world politics, it is most fruitful to focus on resilience as an intersubjective process. Different communities at different times may or may not identify different issues as shocks. Is, for instance, the arrival of 300 refugees on a country's shores a shock? The answer to this will depend on the time, the place and the community. Proponents of an intersubjective approach to resilience point out that, by examining how a given community or a society interprets and potentially adjust to an issue, we gain insight into how resilience is expressed, experienced and conveyed.

This focus on shocks and disturbances should curb the frequent criticism that resilience implies a *permanent* state of struggle to accommodate ourselves into our social world. If shocks and disturbances were permanent, they would not be called shocks and disturbances. There is an important distinction to be made between accepting that disturbances sometimes happen in world politics and positing that our lives consist of nothing more than a succession of traumatic events. Human beings are not crawling their way from one traumatic event to another throughout their daily lives, nor do I think that individuals are permanently and anxiously waiting, almost to a point of paralysis, for the next disaster to happen. To be sure, the United Kingdom's conceptualisation of resilience might invite its citizens to think that they are permanently in danger, but if this is case, then what should be criticised is the UK instrumentalisation of resilience, not resilience itself. Scholars should not forget that the United Kingdom does not have the monopoly of meaning on the concept of resilience.

A critical aspect of my definition is the leeway it allows for the inclusion of variation and distinction among types of resilience. Resilience is not a fixed attribute or an unchangeable characteristic of a society or an individual, nor is social cohesion ever fully achieved. Resilience is always a matter of degree; complete immunity to disturbances and shocks does not exist. Scalar resilience might be thought of in various ways (weak to strong, thin to thick, etc.), but it is important to highlight that resilience does not express itself in a flat, stable or variation-free way. As such, my definition postulates that resilience concerns – but is not limited to – the process of seeking to maintain a given situation/state of affairs in the face of adversity. Indeed, on some occasions, resilience is about a process of renewal

and transformation that seeks to transform basic policy assumptions and potentially remodel social structures.<sup>42</sup>

This definition of resilience gives greater agential power to individuals than certain critics of resilience do. For some scholars, a resilient subject is an apolitical subject that cannot participate in changing the world but must accept the constraints imposed on him/her as a condition of partaking in our social world.<sup>43</sup> This “apoliticality of the resilient subject” thesis is often raised in discussions about the relationship between resilience and resistance – a relationship considered by some to be one of mutual exclusivity. In sharp contrast, my definition of resilience posits that the resilient subject is neither apolitical nor politically passive. Rather, I contend that it is a highly political move to seek to maintain a perceived status quo in the face of disturbances, just as it is a highly political and deeply active move to adjust to a shock by seeking to transform a policy. On a related note, in a co-authored piece with Caitlin Ryan, we question the tendency of some scholars to characterise resilience and resistance as opposing and competing views.<sup>44</sup> Contra this perspective, we contend that resilience and resistance are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, a considerable level of resilience is often a necessity when one is engaged in resistance, as resistance is a highly demanding course of action with numerous impediments and difficulties.

Finally, my proposed definition breaks open the possible range of responses to the question: *in relation to what* is a resilient strategy deployed? While the referent object for resilience (for psychologists and ecologists, respectively) has traditionally been the individual’s well-being or the ecosystem’s functioning capacity, my understanding of resilience posits that the referent object of resilience belongs in the descriptive, rather than the prescriptive, realm. Individuals and societies might deploy resilience strategies in relation to a wide range of different referent objects; as such, our theorisation of resilience should be capable of analysing these possibilities openly.

My objective in trying to better define and characterise resilience in relation to world politics is not to fix the meaning of resilience across

<sup>42</sup> For a typology of resilience see Bourbeau, “Resiliencism: Premises and Promises in Securitization Research.”

<sup>43</sup> Reid, Julian, “Interrogating the Neoliberal Biopolitics of the Sustainable Development-Resilience Nexus,” *International Political Sociology* 7.4 (2013).

<sup>44</sup> Bourbeau and Ryan, “Resilience, Resistance, Infrapolitics, and Enmeshment.”

time and space, but instead to detail, categorise, organise and theorise the ways in which resilience is currently being discussed. This book is not a quest for certainty. Rather, it postulates that debating the meanings, components, interpretations and dynamics of resilience offers the foundation for the sort of friendly disagreement that will enliven further research.

## The Multiple Logics of Resilience

In its current state, the IR literature is organised under three logical rationales: persistence, agential self-reliance and processual duality. The first, the logic of persistence, emphasises that resilience is about maintaining the status quo of a referent object in the face of a disturbance. Resilience here is understood as the process of trying to remain who you are; adaptation in which resources and energy will be expended in maintaining the status quo. Re-affirmation of the value, benefit and importance of the status quo will be made on several occasions. Endogenous and exogenous shocks will be understood with rigidity and the potentially negative transformative consequences brought about by these events will be underscored. Disturbances or shocks are not by definition problematic or negative; they will be socially constructed as being threatening and dangerous by dominant discourses. This is not solely concerned with the individual level, as scholars have demonstrated that resilience is employed by societies and communities who fear that globalisation, free trade or immigration are modifying their social cohesion and collective identity.

Within IR, there are many examples of the logic of persistence. Hall and Lamont are “interested in the ways in which groups sustained their well-being” in the face of challenges brought by neoliberalism.<sup>45</sup> In the same lineage, Aldrich contends that resilience is one of the primary factors in successful post-disaster community recovery – that is, efforts to maintain and resume pre-disaster “normal daily routines” (p. 7).<sup>46</sup> Kathleen Tierney underscores that it is the ability of social entities to absorb “system shocks without losing the ability to function.”<sup>47</sup> Much

<sup>45</sup> Hall, Peter A. and Michèle Lamont, *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Aldrich, *Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Tierney, Kathleen, *The Social Roots of Risk: Producing Disasters, Promoting Resilience*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014, 6.

of the literature on the endurance of a regime or an institution follows this logic of persistence.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, scholars have underscored the resilience-persistence of nationalism<sup>49</sup> and of critical infrastructures.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, as an analytical framework, the logic of persistence has some limits. First, it tends to interpret resilience as a static, binary concept. A population either is resilient, or it is not. Second, it ignores the transformational components. The transformational aspect of resilience implies the introduction of novel vectors of response that will (implicitly or explicitly) change existing policies and set new directions for governance in this field. Scholarship in psychology and ecology has highlighted, consistently and for many years, the transformational nature of resilience:<sup>51</sup> the idea that resilience is about bouncing back as well as bouncing forward, and that as a dynamic process resilience comprises some level of transformation and reconfiguration. Accepting the renewal and transformational aspects of resilience does not mean that one has to accept psychology's normative tendency to treat resilience as inherently positive or ecology's assumption of equilibrium; indeed, scholars have theorised the

<sup>48</sup> Powell, "Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate"; Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*; Webber, Mark and Adrian Hyde-Price, *Theorising Nato: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance*, London: Routledge, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, Anthony D., "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism," *Survival* 35.1 (1993); Antonsich, Marco et al., "The Persistence of Nationalism: From Imagined Communities to Urban Encounters," *Political Geography* 40.May (2014).

<sup>50</sup> Boin, Arjen and Allan McConnell, "Preparing for Critical Infrastructure Breakdowns: The Limits of Crisis Management and the Need for Resilience," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 15.1 (2007); Lundborg, Tom and Nick Vaughan-Williams, "Resilience, Critical Infrastructure, and Molecular Security: The Excess of "Life" in Biopolitics," *International Political Sociology* 5.4 (2011).

<sup>51</sup> Folke, Carl, "Resilience: The Emergence of a Perspective for Social-Ecological Systems Analyses," *Global Environmental Change* 16 (2006); Masten, Ann S. and Dante Cicchetti, "Resilience in Development: Progress and Transformation," in *Developmental Pathopsychology. Volume 4. Risk, Resilience and Intervention*, ed. Dante Cicchetti, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2016; Sleijpen, Marieke et al., "Bouncing Forward of Young Refugees: A Perspective on Resilience Research Directions," *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 4 (2013); Walker, Brian et al., "Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability in Social-Ecological Systems," *Ecology and society* 9.2 (2004); Walsh, Froma, "Family Resilience: A Framework for Clinical Practice," *Family process* 42.1 (2003).

transformational aspect of resilience without reverting to either an equilibrium-based or *a priori* normative stance.<sup>52</sup>

The second logic, that of agential self-reliance, proposes that resilience is about individuals managing alone their adjustment to a shock or disturbance. Resilience is here understood as a set of qualities that an individual may possess; measures are developed to build, improve and strengthen the resilience of individuals. As such, it fosters the empowerment of individuals facing chronic violence, underdevelopment and adversity. For Chandler, it is an “emerging conceptual paradigm” that “sees the most marginal or oppressed as the agents of policy solutions.”<sup>53</sup> Chandler views resilience as the first post-modern paradigm of the relationship between the subject and the world because local knowledge is “no longer a limit factor but [is] to be encouraged and facilitated as a policy goal, once it is understood that there can be no universal top-down solution to problems but only ever plural and differentiated, context-dependent, bottom-up solutions.”<sup>54</sup>

This is the logic that several international organisations have been eager to rely on. The United Nations has also invoked it as a new organizing principle, the development of which is perceived as critical to preventing unacceptable levels of human suffering and reducing the costs of international emergency responses. Other recent initiatives include: the United Nations Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, the United Nations Development Programme on human resilience, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Platform for drought disaster resilience, the USAID Resilience Agenda and the Global Alliance for Resilience – to name just a few.<sup>55</sup>

The limits of the logic of agential self-reliance are twofold. On one hand, it does not distance itself from the problem of blaming the victim. It is precisely because they do not want to open the door to the danger of blaming the victim that several psychologists have moved

<sup>52</sup> Berkes, Fikret and Helen Ross, “Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach,” *Society & Natural Resources* 26.1 (2013); Malkki, Leena and Teemu Sinkkonen, “Political Resilience to Terrorism in Europe: Introduction to the Special Issue,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39.4 (2016).

<sup>53</sup> Chandler, David, “Resilience and the ‘Everyday’: Beyond the Paradox of ‘Liberal Peace’,” *Review of International Studies* 41.1 (2015): 47, 51.

<sup>54</sup> Chandler, “Resilience and the ‘Everyday’: Beyond the Paradox of ‘Liberal Peace’,” 52.

<sup>55</sup> Corry, “From Defense to Resilience: Environmental Security beyond Neo-Liberalism.”

away from understanding this concept as agential self-reliance. On the other hand, resilience thus understood becomes a by-product of neo-liberal strategies of governance. As many have argued, rather than empowering individuals it de-humanises them by subjugating them to the power of the best prepared and stripping them of any meaningful agency.<sup>56</sup> The logic of agential self-reliance runs the risk of displacing the burden of responsibility from social institutions to the individual and in so doing facilitates adjustments to a given situation without challenging the underlying conditions that make those adjustments necessary.<sup>57</sup> This is not to argue that the logic is wrong, but to highlight its incompleteness.

The logic of processual duality relies on two core propositions. First, that resilience is a dynamic process rather than a set of dispositional qualities that an individual may possess. This logic sees resilience as a social and multifaceted process working at the individual, family, community and societal levels. Resilience does not take place in a vacuum, but draws on past experiences, collective memory and social history, and depends upon the critical junctures<sup>58</sup> at which agential powers decide to act (or not).

The second proposition is that resilience involves both persistence and transformation. Resilience is about maintaining the status quo.

<sup>56</sup> Walker and Cooper, “Genealogies of Resilience: From Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation”; Joseph, “Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism: A Governmentality Approach.”

<sup>57</sup> Walklate, Sandra and Gabe Mythen, *Contradictions of Terrorism: Security, Risk and Resilience*, London: Routledge, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Commonly defined as “choice points that put countries (or other units) onto paths of development that track certain outcomes – as opposed to others – and that cannot be easily broken or reversed.” Mahoney, James, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 7. See also Mahoney, James and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Capoccia, Giovanni and Daniel Keleman, “The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism,” *World Politics* 59.3 (2007); Collier, Ruth Berins and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991; Katznelson, Ira, “Periodization and Preferences,” in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, ed. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Fioretos, Orfeo, “Historical Institutionalism in International Relations,” *International Organization* 65.2 (2011).

The importance and the problematic nature of disturbances will be underscored so as to justify the emergence of policies to uphold the status quo against changes brought by the shocks. As Chapter 3 will show in greater detail, in the context of international migration, a society following this logic of resilience will identify the movement of people (either through an emphasis on “mass migration” or “illegal migration”) as an important security threat and as a threat to collective identity that should be fought. The arrival of boatloads of refugees on the country’s shores will be interpreted as a security threat to the host society and its social cohesion. Agents’ securitising moves will reinforce the saliency of the threat and the need to further fix collective/national identity. The case of how dominant narratives in France interpreted the so-called worldwide refugee crisis of the early 1990s and the chosen pattern of adaptation to this exogenous shock is a clear example of how the logic of persistence gets operationalised. Indeed, while the number of refugees worldwide was 9 million in 1984, it reached a peak of 18 million in 1992. The surge gave rise to all sorts of projections and scenarios such as the image of waves of refugees and the uncontrollable and unstoppable movement of people. And it gave securitising agents the opportunity, if they were so inclined, to present international migration as a security threat requiring an urgent and strong response otherwise the breakdown of social cohesion beckoned and the very notion of a French nation was in peril. Resilience as persistence explains why strategies to keep French collective identity intact were implemented, and has led in parts to the securitisation of international migration.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, it is also about transforming and remodelling an individual, a group or a social structure. The disturbance has such profound ramifications that substantial re-organisation of the policy is strongly desired. Redefinition often involves important shifts in interpretation and meaning, in agents’ power relations, as well as in institutional and organisational configurations. The transformational aspect implies the introduction of novel vectors of response that will, implicitly or explicitly, change existing policies and set new directions for governance in this field. As a dynamic process, it comprises multiple levels of reconfiguration and renewal. This is not to argue that

<sup>59</sup> Bourbeau, “Migration, Resilience, and Security: Responses to New Inflows of Asylum Seekers and Migrants.”

everything would be created anew after a disturbance, as if events and agency were unfolding in a social vacuum. Yet, resilience as renewal means that disturbances would play a triggering role in a sustained and systematic effort to change profoundly a given policy or how a society understands and interprets a particular set of issues.

The persistence and transformation components are not mutually exclusive, and they can be found in the same society diachronically and synchronically. Furthermore, a society can adopt a persistence mode in one domain and a renewal mode in another domain. By definition, resilience as persistence is no more normatively negative or positive than resilience as renewal; as such, there is no normative continuum that starts with maintenance and ends with renewal. In short, resilience is here understood as a dynamic process involving persistence and renewal.

Working within the logic of processual duality allows scholars to theorise both positive and negative expressions of resilience and to acknowledge that resilience may be a tactic of resistance employed collectively and strategically to adapt to protracted conflicts and chronic adversity. It also underscores the importance of local networks and knowledge in reducing violence against civilians in war zones, and it offers a foundation to theorise the role of the immediate family as well as peer, school and community settings in the resilience of children affected by armed conflicts.<sup>60</sup>

## Précis of the Study

The book is structured as follows. Chapter 1 presents a genealogy of resilience that traces the current expressions of resilience in world politics to roots in psychology, social work, ecology and beyond. The approach proposed is broader than the current genealogical analysis

<sup>60</sup> Carpenter, Ami C., *Community Resilience in Sectarian Violence in Baghdad*, New York: Springer, 2014; Ryan, “Everyday Resilience as Resistance: Palestinian Women Practicing Sumud”; Tol, Wietse A, Suzan Song, and Mark JD Jordans, “Resilience and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents Living in Areas of Armed Conflict,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 54.4 (2013); Williams, Paul D., “Protection, Resilience and Empowerment: United Nations Peacekeeping and Violence against Civilians in Contemporary War Zones,” *Politics* 33.4 (2013).

upon which most IR research on resilience currently relies. This chapter also develops an outline of the conceptual basis of resilience.

Chapter 2 looks at the relationship between resilience and security. In its current configuration, the field of security studies tends to analyse the relationship between security, resilience and non-security politics in cases where a particular issue of concern has already been securitised: when the issue in question has received the status, function and label of a security issue. The literature consistently frames desecuritisation and resilience as processes that take place after an issue has been securitised. The overarching objective of this chapter is to widen our understanding of the connections between desecuritisation, securitisation and resilience. The theorisation of the relations among these concepts that this chapter proposes is multidirectional, incorporating instances where desecuritisation and resilience follow security as well as instances where they precede security. The chapter suggests a triangular model of bidirectional relationships among security, resilience and non-security politics.

In Chapter 3, I explore one leg of the security-resilience-desecuritisation triangle through the lens of migration. Although the ubiquitous appeal to resilience across the broad social sciences spectrum is indisputable, migration scholars have been relatively absent from this vibrant discussion. This chapter examines ways in which resilience induces a socially constructed understanding of international migration as a security issue by exploring how the surge in worldwide refugee numbers and associated mass migration phenomena in the 1990s were not only interpreted as a shock in France, but also instrumentalised by dominant discourses in the country to underscore the necessity of adopting a particular pattern of adjustments in order to uphold the status quo against changes provoked by these migratory events. I argue that the social construction of refugee movements and mass migration as a significant disturbance necessitating resilience has led, ultimately, to the securitisation of migration. In a broader sense, this chapter presents a new lens through which to analyse situations and conditions in which resilience has led to and induced the securitisation of migration.

Chapter 4 identifies fruitful future research agendas for the resilience approach. It shows how understanding resilience as defined in this chapter opens the door to many kinds of added value and sheds a new light on contemporary world politics. In this chapter, I suggest a

few ways of using this notion of resilience to broaden and deepen our research agendas around issues of international interventions, vulnerability, change and continuity, resistance, critical junctures and mnemonic politics. These are but a few of the ways that the notion of resilience in world politics could be explored further. Scholars have already started to make inroads into establishing the added value of a resilience approach to some of these issues, but considerable work remains to be done.

The concluding chapter to this book summons up the set of arguments presented. I then examine three themes that are worth exploring in the context of a book on resilience that focuses on genealogy, logics and contemporary politics: namely, the idea that resilience is a bridging concept, and the normativity and practices of resilience.