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Unpacking resilience policy discourse**Ksenia Chmutina¹, Gonzalo Lizarralde², Andrew Dainty¹ and Lee Boshier¹**¹School of Civil and Building Engineering, Loughborough University, UK²École d'architecture, Université de Montréal, Canada**Abstract**

There are an increasing number of articles and publications that attempt to define resilience in the face of numerous drivers of risk. Most of this work has tried to identify the values and virtues that are encompassed within a resilient approach in relation to the fragile relationships between the social, natural and built environments (including, for instance, abilities to prevent, react, transform and adapt). However, much less attention has been paid to identifying the practical implications of these values and virtues once a paradigm of resilience has been adopted. In order to address this gap, this study examines what institutions in the UK have actually done when they attempt to enhance resilience. Instead of defining what resilience is, this paper focuses on what local and national governments and other stakeholders do when something is called (or is attempted to be made) 'resilient'. The analysis of 30 key policy documents, a review of 20 formal meetings of a Local Resilient Forum, and 11 interviews with stakeholders confirm that different (and often competing) understandings of resilience coexist; but this work also reveals that two rather different approaches to resilience dominate in the UK. The first responds to security risks, based on a protectionist approach by the State, the other responds to natural risks, and prescribes the transfer of responsibilities from the State to other stakeholders. The analysis illustrates the extent to which resilience has become a highly complex, malleable and dynamic political construct with significant implications for the ways in which policy is enacted and enforced, often with unexpected consequences.

Key words: resilience; national policy; UK**1. Introduction**

The concept of resilience captures the ability of a system to rebound or resume its original form after a stress or perturbation. In the 1970s resilience was associated with two distinct areas: the natural world and ecosystems, and the inner (psychological) world of individuals. A third application of the concept, associated with managing risks and threats appeared later, and is now closely linked to security and emergency planning as it incorporates the idea of 'robustness' (Welsh, 2014).

Due to its capacity to bridge both prevention (proactivity) and response (reactivity) to hazards, and its capacity to evoke the idea of 'bouncing back', the concept of resilience has become widely adopted in both policy instruments and academic research agendas. In

academic debates, most attention has been given to the definition (e.g. Johnson and Blackburn, 2014) and the development of models of resilience (Christoplos, 2014). In practice, governments and other institutions have adopted the term in policy documents and strategic plans aiming at enhancing resilience in the built environment and society. However, lack of commonly accepted definitions and models has inevitably led to tensions in decision-making and intense debates in academic literature (Chmutina et al. 2014; Lizarralde et al., 2015).

Decision-makers and most scholars recognise that individuals, social groups, buildings and cities are – or have the potential to become – resilient. Nonetheless, it is known that the current notion of resilience frames a variety of ethical approaches in areas as diverse as ecology, architecture, urban planning, engineering, and human geography. Institutions and academics have thus devoted much energy and time to define the values and virtues that are to be honoured (and achieved) by adopting a resilient approach. Even though obvious differences exist between some of these approaches, most of them rhetorically assume that a resilient individual, agent or system has the ability to:

- Anticipate an event and its effects;
- Proactively react;
- Manage risks;
- Cooperate;
- Respond after the event to mitigate effects;
- Transform and or/adapt.

But this list raises some questions: What are the consequences of identifying these attributes as existing or desirable? What attitudes and policies follow when stakeholders and institutions aim at developing (enhancing) these ideals? In his paramount publication “On the Genealogy of Morality” Friedrich Nietzsche argues that Western conceptions of moral ideals have been constructed upon the interests of religious or political elites – questioning classical conceptions of ethics that attached moral values to pure reasoning (Nietzsche et al., 1998). He thus questions the value of institutionalised virtues and ideals. Following this tradition of ethical scepticism, this paper examines the attitudes and practices that are motivated by a ‘resilient’ approach, putting particular emphasis on what happens when institutions in general – and the State in particular - adopt the resilience paradigm in urban and national policy in the UK. The aim of this paper is not to introduce another definition, to argue the value of the existing ones, or to describe the characteristics of resilience, but instead to discuss a set of concerns that may act as a common denominator when it comes to trying to reify resilience. Such exploration will allow examining the multiple consequences of adopting different representations of resilience.

2. Do we know what resilience is?

Resilience has generally been defined in two ways: as a desired outcome, or as a process leading to a desired outcome (Kaplan, 1999). Bahadur et al. (2010) conducted a comprehensive literature review in order to demonstrate how resilience is conceptualised and

characterised, and concluded that while the term is widely used, its meaning is increasingly ambiguous. Funfgeld and Mcevoy (2012) argue that “resilience is not used in an exact, defined way, but more as a versatile (and seemingly fashionable) umbrella term, which loosely expresses some of the conceptual underpinning” (p. 326). Joseph (2013) argues that “resilience does not really mean very much and whatever meaning it does have changes depending on the context” (p.47). Another tendency is understanding resilience in a binary way: it is seen as an all or nothing concept (Bourbeau, 2013), thus ignoring the scale of resilience.

Shaw (2012) proposes that no matter what the definition is, resilience involves three elements: the ability to absorb the stress and retain functionality; the ability to “self-organise”; and the capacity “to learn, to change and to adapt”. This suggests that the tensions are inherent in the construct of the ‘resilience’ concept. Yet, when discussing how to achieve resilience, it is important to consider the following (Vale 2014):

- Resilience of what?
- Resilience to what?
- Resilience for whom?

Whilst the definitions of resilience are multiple and often conflicting, what is clear is that the term resilience is increasingly used to signify a particular state of being, or set of processes to bring about a state of being. In other words, rather than recognising the malleable nature of the term, and the ways in which it is continually shaped by discourse (Alexander 2013), it is increasingly mobilised to represent and/or to justify a cause of action.

2.1 Resilience and political approaches

Striving for resilience is often seen as an agenda that fits perfectly into the neoliberal state (Chandler, 2014) that ‘venerates decentralisation, contextualisation, autonomy and independence’ (Handrup and Rosen, 2013, p.143). Evans and Reid (2014) see resilience as a neoliberal project and a doctrine that institutions in power use to manipulate - and eventually dominate – vulnerable sectors of society. Whilst liberalism is about hands-on implementation, the approach of neoliberalism is more towards hands-off facilitation: in a neoliberal state relocation of authority – and simultaneously of responsibility - from the centre to the periphery takes place.

Joseph (2013) points out that resilience under a neoliberal state stresses self-awareness, reflexivity and responsibility, and encourages the idea of ‘active citizenship’ (p. 42) where people do not rely on the State but instead take responsibility for their own well-being, which leads to preparedness and awareness. Chandler (2014) argues that resilience operates on the level of ‘unknown unknowns’, suggesting that the outcomes only reveal causality after the event and thus are impossible to know beforehand.

Foucault (2007) emphasises that security is composed of a multiplicity of bits and pieces (techniques, machinery, practices, objects, people); and as these elements change, so does the

concept of security. Neoliberalism works through the social production of freedom (Foucault, 2008), but although the State steps back and encourages individuals to act freely, it still intervenes into civil society by opening up new areas in which society can act (Joseph, 2013). As Sage et al. (2015) reveal, resilience policy and practice comprises a composite of circulatory mechanisms that scale political agency in relation to events. Overall, these perspectives point to the inevitable tensions between liberty and security that the resilience discourse reveals, thus highlighting the lack of policy neutrality (as the policy is forced to lean one way or the other).

2.2 How is 'resilience' promoted in the UK? Overview of the resilience agenda

Since 2001, there has been a dramatic change in the purpose and organisation of 'civil protection' in the UK: in place of the Cold War model of civil defence came a model with increased connections with society and full of interdependencies as a result of globalisation and impacts of new emerging threats (Mann, 2007). It was acknowledged that the Civil Defence approach was poorly suited to deal with the 'complex emergencies' and 'new security challenges' of the 21st century (Smith, 2003, p.414; Zebrowski, 2013), whereas the 'resilience agenda' was seen as a proactive response to a 'fast changing and complex world' (Cabinet Office, 2010, p.10). A series of disruptive events in the early 2000s such as protests on the transport networks, the foot and mouth disease outbreak and severe flooding events also highlighted the need to restructure the existing security approach, which, when it came to the local level, mainly focused on emergency response rather than more proactive activities associated with reducing the underlying risks (Bosher, 2014).

The resilience agenda goes hand in hand with the security agenda in the UK. Since 2000 a number of resilience policy documents have been mobilised due to security concerns, as well as security policy adopting the language of resilience. A good example of this is the UK government's response to international terrorism and domestic radicalisation. It has generated a renewed interest in localism, with the aim of helping to build community resilience – and therefore address the radicalisation challenge (Coaffee and Fussey, 2015). However, whilst the security agenda has traditionally been highly centralised, the resilience agenda retreats from 'grand planning' and offers 'a legitimate path for disengagement' (Haldrup and Rosen, 2013) by becoming a 'facilitator' instead of a 'builder' of strengths.

Fjader (2014) points out that resilience contributes towards the security goal of the State, but at the same time resilience and security differ as security is 'preventive and proactive in nature, aiming at protecting the State and the citizens against threat', whereas resilience is 'a combination of proactive and reactive measures aiming at reducing the impact but not preventing threats as such' (p.9-10). This is further emphasised by Corry (2014) stating that the main difference between traditional security (e.g. Clarke, 1998) and resilience is that former focuses on a specific threat, whereas latter attempts to address uncertainties: '[it] makes little sense to "defend" against catastrophic climate change, pandemics, economic meltdowns, or even certain kinds of terrorism, insofar as security concerns such as these are based primarily on uncertainty, are located in the future, and often lack clear adversaries'

(p.1). It is understood that the traditional security approach still has a role to play; but at the same time, there is a need to ‘take a broad view of the systems that we depend on’ rather than following the ideological imprint of a bygone age’ (Evans and Steven, 2009). Resilience plays a clear role in addressing the risks emphasised in the National Risk Registers (with the most recent version published in 2015).¹ Zebrowski (2013) argues that the resilience strategies of the UK government are now oriented ‘towards facilitating and optimising the natural, self-organisational capacities ... of populations-in-emergency’ (p.160). It is also promoted as a response to highly capacious ‘disruptive challenges’ in the context of business continuity and organisations management (Aradau, 2014).

Cabinet Office (2012) defines resilience as “*the ability of the community, services, and of infrastructure to detect, prevent, and, if necessary, to withstand, handle and recover from disruptive challenges*”. This concept frames many subsequent resilience-related initiatives, including the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) framework, the National Risk Register and National Security Strategy, cyber-security programmes, and plans for the protection of critical infrastructure and the prevention of violent extremism.

The UK has an established system for emergency planning and engagement between required stakeholders (Figure 1) described in the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) (Civil Contingencies Secretariat, 2004). The CCA describes the duties of appropriate stakeholders to cooperate in LRFs (formal meetings and allocations of work to responsible stakeholders). The LRFs are based on police areas (HM Government, 2004) and provide a forum for the formal integration of a broad range of relevant stakeholders. It requires Category 1 ‘responders’ (local authorities, government agencies, emergency services and health services) and Category 2 ‘responders’ (utilities, transport, etc.) within a given locality to coordinate and prepare for the causes and consequences of various events. The coordination, however, is event-specific and the participation of Category 2 responders and other stakeholders depends on the nature of the event.

LRFs typically meet three times a year to discuss emergency planning within their counties/municipalities. In the event of a major emergency, the LRF forms the Strategic Coordinating Group, a forum for the co-ordination of a multi-agency response. A number of sub-groups with specific areas of responsibility meet six times a year and report to the LRF. However LRFs are neither a legal entity nor do they have powers to direct their members.

¹ The 2015 National Risk register lists the following threats as being the most prominent: natural hazards (including human diseases; flooding; poor air quality events; volcanic hazards; severe space weather; severe weather; severe wildfires; animal diseases); major accidents (including major industrial accidents; widespread electricity failure; major transport accidents; disruptive industrial action; widespread public disorder); and terrorist and other malicious attacks (including terrorist attacks on crowded places; terrorist attacks on infrastructure; terrorist attacks on transport systems; unconventional terrorist attacks; cyber security) (Cabinet Office, 2015)

Figure 1 Emergency response arrangements in the UK² (authors' illustration)

Overall, UK Civil Contingencies place less emphasis on catastrophe and more on a range of events that threatens to disrupt, damage, or destroy life due to the nature of the threats that the State faces and the result of the events described earlier.

3. Methodology

Whereas a number of disciplinary frames exists in which resilience can be applied (i.e. psychology, sociology, biology, ecology etc.), this paper focuses on policy and built environment literature, and notably on studies about how the built environment is designed, planned, built and managed. Here, we adopt a baseline definition of resilience provided by Boshier (2014): “[It] is a quality of a built environment’s capability (in physical, institutional, environmental, economic and social terms) to keep adapting to existing and emergent threats” (p. 241). Analysing the meaning of policy - and how this meaning is implemented - can be approached in a variety of ways: from narrative analysis (van Eetan, 2007) to cultural theories (Hoppe, 2007), to the use of grounded theory (Wagenaar, 2011). This paper reports the results of a study that has relied on an interpretive framework, which allows the researcher to “focus on meanings that shape actions and institutions, and the ways in which they do it” (p. 130) (Bevir and Rhodes, 2004), which was undertaken using the following steps.

² More information about the emergency response arrangements in the UK can be found in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; its summary is also provided in Fisher et al. 2014.

In the first step of the study - the literature review - was conducted. The second step contextualised the language and representations made in policy documents in the UK within expanded bodies of knowledge. UK national policy documents ranging from 2000 to 2014, published on the official government web site (www.gov.uk) and written by national agencies such as the Cabinet Office and the Home Office were examined. The web-portal was also searched under its 'Policy' and 'Publications sections'. Over 400 results were identified, and then 30 policy documents, which are relevant to the built environment and in which the term resilience is explicitly stated, were contextually analysed (a detailed list is provided in Appendix A). In addition, 20 Local Resilient Forum (LRF) documents (including 2005-2008³ minutes of LRF meetings and their Constitution) were systematically analysed.

The third step adopted an inductive approach to identify emergent viewpoints. The policies and LRF documents were examined for frequencies of word use and conceptual mapping based on the creation of word clouds using Nvivo software. This allowed for the identification of the most commonly used terms and underlying themes in each category of documents, and for comparison of frequencies of terms used and the general vocabulary adopted. It was noted that in the policy portal the term 'resilience' is mostly used under the following themes: emergency, infrastructure, climate change adaptation, disability, social care.

However, a more nuanced reading of the way that resilience is adapted and adopted, particularly at a local level, was required. Therefore, in the fourth step, transcripts were analysed from 11 interviews that were conducted with local authorities and government agency stakeholders involved in the LRF; these stakeholders included:

- Head of regeneration, city council
- Flood management officer, city council
- Three emergency planning officers, city council
- Two liaison architectural officers, police
- Fire and rescue service officer
- Counter-terrorism security advisor
- Civil contingencies research office, police
- Representative of the Environment Agency.

The semi-structured interviews were aimed at identifying the perceptions and representations of the resilience agenda among key local stakeholders. The interviewees were asked to define resilience and to comment on whether and how resilience is implemented in their day-to-day practice. All interviews lasted for approximately one hour; they were transcribed and annotated. An inductive approach was taken to their analysis, with initial higher level coding based on the key interview themes such as their roles, responsibilities, and actions. Further lower level coding was developed and refined as data analysis progressed; it included the analysis of specific responsibilities with regards to implementing resilience and examples of

³ More recent minutes were not publically available.

the actions taken. Subsequently, thematic analysis allowed identification of a variety of approaches to resilience. Thematic analysis was chosen due to the complexity of the dataset and the need for a flexible analytical process to provide structure to the findings (Howitt and Cramer, 2011). In this way, key concepts were identified which had wider application, beyond the specific LRF under investigation, to the broader context of LRF stakeholder involvement in urban resilience.

The final step of the study consisted of comparing word uses, frequencies of resilience-related terminology and discourses of resilience among the national policy document, local level documents, and the transcripts of the interviews. This content analysis enabled patterns and analytical generalizations to be drawn among each group.

4. Unpacking resilience

4.1.1 Resilience representation in the UK policy

As has already been discussed in Section 2.2, whilst the resilience agenda and the security agenda are often discussed together (e.g. Chandler, 2012; Coaffee and Murakami Wood, 2006), the term ‘resilience’ only covers some particular areas. Table 1 provides the overview of the main areas of discussion and the main actors affected by resilience, which will be discussed in detail in this and the following sections.

Table 1 Overview of selected resilience-related publications

Policy document	Term ‘resilience’ used	Areas covered					Intended audience				
		Traditional security	Emergency planning ⁴	Natural and man-made hazards	Climate change	Infrastructure	National government	Local government	Private sector	Community	Individual
CONTEST strategy (2011)	X		X	X		X	X*	X*		X	X
Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience (2011)	X		X	X	X					X*	*X
The role of Local Resilience Forum (2011)	X		X	X				X*		X	X
Securing the future (2013)	X		X		X			X*		X	X
Resilience in society: infrastructure, communities and businesses (2013)	(X) ⁵		X	X		X		*	X	X	
National Risk Register (2015)	X		X	X	X	X		*			
Sector resilience plans (2014)	X			X	X	X	X*				
Strategic Defence and Security review (2010)	X	X	X	X			*				

⁴ As defined in Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

⁵ In this policy document, resilience is only used in the title but not in the text.

Resilient communications (2013)	X			X		X		*	X		
National Security Strategy (2010)	X	X		X			*			X	
Improving the UK's ability to absorb, respond to and recover from emergencies (2013)			X						X*	X*	X*
Flood and water management Act (2010)	X			X		X		X*			
Keeping the country running (2011)	X			X	X		*				
The National adaptation programme (2013)	X				X			*	X		
Climate Resilient Infrastructure (2011)	X				X				X*		
Climate Change Act (2008)					X		X*	X*			
Civil Contingencies Act (2004)			X	X			*	*			
National Planning Policy Framework (2012)	X				X			*			

* means that this stakeholder is responsible for addressing/acting on a threat/hazard

As shown in Table 1, even though resilience is a significant part of the security agenda, there is a clear distinction between the issues addressed under the traditional security approach and the resilience approach. The traditional security discourse **rarely uses the term 'resilience' (see second column in Table 1)**. The UK government continues to use a 'nanny-state approach' under which it believes it is the State's duty to assume full responsibility for security challenges; and as a result, the population expects the government to address and solve security related matters. Resilience on the other hand is seen as a more 'progressive' approach, and is thus frequently used when it comes to new emerging security issues such as terrorism and cybercrime as well as shocks to infrastructure and emergencies associated with natural hazards, as well as other non-military threats (as demonstrated in columns 3 to 6 in Table 1). The example of the ways the term is used can be clearly seen in the latest Strategic Defence and Security Review (Cabinet Office, 2010). The main objects of the resilience agenda are businesses and communities, whereas the role of local and national governments is mainly to support resilience building. The UK resilience agenda demonstrates that the 'wicked issues'⁶ are the 'unknown unknowns' and thus require complex governance (simply 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' approaches are no longer enough) and involve more government intervention and coordination at both national and local level (this is clearly demonstrated by a range of actors involved (see 'Intended audience' columns of Table 1)). However, when the impact of a threat increases, it becomes more important to 'securitise' it and thus it may be dealt with using more traditional security approaches (see Figure 2).

⁶ As stated by Andrew Lee's CEO foreword in 'Governing for the Future' – "*Increasingly, we face new types of problems – 'wicked issues' – which will require new types of response – flexible, adaptive, using systems thinking, seeing the whole picture not just a part of it. One of the watchwords will be creating 'resilience'*" (SDC, 2011,p.2)

Figure 2 An example of interchangeable approaches to governance within the ‘resilience’ agenda

UK policy often uses resilience as an aspirational term (White and O’Hare, 2014): resilience is something local governments, businesses, communities, and individuals should be building and enhancing. In the circumstances where businesses and communities can do little to prevent risks, resilience becomes a comfort term that offers confidence that the situation will return back to ‘normality’⁷ and softens the vocabulary of security and emergency and to focus on more positive aspects of preparedness (Coaffee, 2013). At the same time, the use of the term appears to be leaning towards the economic and engineering interpretations of the concept; notably because it refers to physical protection, innovative design, networks, prosperity etc.

The UK resilience agenda – and policies it is based upon – emphasises the idea of facilitating the implementation of resilience, rather than imposing it, acting as a neoliberal state (this is highlighted in Table 1, which demonstrates that local authorities are largely in charge of implementing resilience). By using resilience as a politically neutral policy objective (Raco and Street, 2012), the government actually masks political differences (that appear at various levels) over how it can be achieved and what the objectives of resilience are. This is demonstrated in practice, for instance, in the way that resilience agenda is implemented. Our empirical study finds that the government supports local activity, nevertheless it still dictates the forms in which these activities and particular tasks (e.g. risk assessments, business continuity measures, LRF, exercises, etc.) should be carried out by local bodies and

⁷ This idea is challenged by Bach et al. 2010 when arguing that the Government relies on communities and local authorities to have a common understanding of what is ‘normal’, which is not necessarily the case. They provide an example of a complex, fragmented urban area divided along race, religion and socioeconomic status in Birmingham – what would be considered ‘normal’ in such case?

authorities, businesses and other relevant parties. Nonetheless, the Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience (Cabinet Office, 2011a) states that *'the Government role is to support, empower and facilitate; ownership should always be retained by communities who have chosen to get involved in this work'* (p.14). In reality however, communities do not really have a choice about whether to get involved or not because they are required to act through local legislation. Whilst it is true that communities are charged with preparing for, and responding to, incidents, it is the State that decides the priorities of the resilience agenda and channels resources to them. This shows that the rhetoric of community level response masks, in reality, a centralised control, with only few governmental policies pointing out the role of the community in acting on a specific hazards/threat (Table 1). In a situation like this, the government is seen as pushing a particular agenda and instead of giving the power back to society; it puts 'local people 'in the driving seat' when in reality the direction of the journey has already been decided' (Joseph, 2013, p. 48). Such an approach encourages the avoidance of responsibility and the 'denial of choice' when difficult decisions at the local level have to be made (Grint, 2009).

As described earlier, the main responsibility for implementation falls on the local government and the LRFs; however, the analysis of policy documents indicates that the main subjects of these documents are the 'community and the individual'. The fact that the UK Government does not provide a clear definition of the 'community' in the resilience-related context creates further difficulties in understanding who should be responsible for carrying out the task of increasing resilience. In many cases, communities are 'encouraged to think'; the focus thus is not really on a community response but on individual responses. Furthermore, policy allows each individual to consider *'who your community is and which community you belong to'* (Cabinet Office, 2011b, p.9).

Table 1 also shows that resilience is prominently linked to emergency planning. Guidance to the CCA (the core guidance for local authorities and the backbone of the resilience agenda in the UK) states that, for the purposes of identifying an emergency, resilience is concerned with the consequences of an event, rather than the causes (Cabinet Office, 2005). This leads to a surprising finding: the CCA encourages local authorities to focus on the contingencies – i.e. be prepared – whereas the policy aimed at communities and individuals encourage them be proactive and preventive.

4.2 How resilience is implemented locally

As mentioned in Section 2.2, the main mechanisms for implementing resilience are the LRFs. The interviews with the LRF members reveal that their understanding of resilience – unsurprisingly - goes in line with the CCA and clearly focuses on emergency response activities. However, the implementation of resilience at a local level is hindered by a number of challenges. The interviewees pointed out that LRFs have no budget for their activities, and thus, the associated costs are met by the relevant agency or sector involved (e.g. police); consequently the recent budget cuts means that financing LRF projects becomes much more problematic. Although resilience-related activities are not perceived to be extremely

resource-expensive, all respondents expressed concerns about the current economic situation, and in particular, the impact of the UK Government's recent spending cutbacks to public services such as emergency planning. Another issue is high level strategic 'buy-in': it is extremely difficult to get senior management to engage with the LRF process, as those in senior positions prioritise issues as they see fit, rather than according to those defined by the LRF. Fisher et al. (2014) point out that the main reason for these challenges is the fact that LRFs are not a legal entity.

Our analysis of the minutes from 2005 to 2010 of one of the UK's LRFs and its Constitution provides a useful insight into the focus of LRF discussions and actions. There is a large emphasis on planning and emergency, as one might expect. The City Council (as a member of the LRF) is mentioned more frequently than any other LRF member (343 times compared to police, which was mentioned 112 times and the fire and rescue service, which was mentioned 150 times). 'Information' is mentioned a large number of times (252), in the context of both receiving and providing it. The community however is not discussed often: it only gets 93 mentions, mainly in the context of community resilience groups.

This analysis shows that not all the themes of resilience outlined by the government are acknowledged in the LRF documents. For example, climate change adaptation is not really touched upon, but as Shaw and Maythorne (2011) argue, LRFs (and emergency managers) have nothing to do with climate change (i.e. as a potential cause of a disaster); this issue is dealt by special climate change officers based within more local authorities. Again, this reemphasises the point stated in the CCA guidance that resilience deals with the effects and not the causes.

As discussed earlier, local authorities and agencies are not the only ones responsible for increasing resilience at a local level: the government gives the responsibility to implement resilience to local governments, yet in its policies it focuses on the individuals. As stated in the Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience (Cabinet Office, 2011a, p.3), *'There will be times when individuals and communities are affected by an emergency but are not in immediate danger and will have to look after themselves and each other for a period until any necessary external assistance can be provided. Communities will also need to work together, and with service providers, to determine how they recover from an emergency'*.

This role is a part of the renewed invocation of localism and community through the government's 'Big Society' programme, which has been introduced simultaneously with reductions on public expenditure and service provision (MacKinnon and Driscoll Derickson, 2012). This programme encourages communities and governments 'to work together' (Bach et al. 2010) but in reality such togetherness does not exist as there is not sufficient dialogue; instead there is a one-way information flow from the government to the local authorities (Figure 3). Local authorities are charged with the role of an information and guidance provider in the context of resilience, with formal relationships between local authorities and LRF, communities and national government. This isn't an easy task however as the relationship between local governments and communities may not be straightforward, as very

often local authorities suffering from the lack of capacity and capability are unable to arrange the required level of outreach (Bach et al. 2010).

Figure 3 Graphical representation of the resilience-related information exchange between national and local actors

The Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience (2011) states that ‘*Individual resilience is about having an informed understanding of the risks faced and the likely impact of those risks.... [Individuals] need to be able to assess their proximity or vulnerability to these risks and use this as motivation to act and be prepared*’ (p.11). This underlines that resilience can be built when the individuals – and the communities – are well informed. But in reality resilience building has to take place without any prescriptive advice from the national government. One of the government documents states that: ‘*Householders and businesses at flood risk should take the **appropriate steps** to better protect their properties through property level **resistance and resilient measures***’ (HMG, 2011, p.26, authors’ emphasis); it is however unclear what resilient measures should be used and who would finance such improvements. Instead the policy document simply urges individuals to create their own resilient strategies, while at the same time the government is doing little to force property developers to design in resistance/resilience measures when they knowingly build in flood prone areas.

Contrary to the national documents, the LRF defines community as ‘*a group of interacting people living in a common location*’, and also ‘*communities*’ *sharing a common interest or experience such as ethnic or religious groups, or groups of people affected by an emergency*’.⁸ In addition, there is a list of actions for community engagement, however this

⁸ This publication has not been listed in a reference list in order to protect the anonymity of the LRF, as both its authorship and title contain the name of the constituency in which this particular LRF operates.

list is again rather one-sided. It clearly states how the LRF should engage with the community, and which responder is responsible for the engagement (e.g. in the case of the analysed LRF it is police), but there is no acknowledgement of the dialogue that is required.

It is pointed out that local authorities should provide resilience-related advice on their websites, however the study conducted by Herbane (2011) argues that the provided advice is not sufficient. The guidance to the CCA requires responders to publish their assessments and plans on the local authority websites in order to communicate their CCA-related responsibilities and provide advice and assistance beneficial to public in the prevention or response to an emergency (Cabinet Office, 2005). However as identified by Herbane (2011), the content of the websites has a publicity rather than advisory focus: the majority of the local authorities' websites mainly report on dealing with flooding and diseases/epidemics but hardly have any references to other matters, for instance, terrorism and cybercrime. In addition, only 3% of all the local authorities' websites have a reference to the general public as a stakeholder.

The interviewees also pointed out that communicating with the public is one of the biggest problems they face. The LRF discussed in this paper has made concerted efforts towards effective information sharing with the public, using various methods of communication such as Twitter, which allows the emergency services to more easily ascertain where problems might arise, and to respond to public concerns. Further interventions that would increase resilience require legislation, in order to, for example, allow mobile phone broadcasts to be made. However these actions are not necessarily effective. The interviewees mention that this can be attributed to a lack of awareness among the general population and agree that there is a need to increase education at school level in order to increase overall resilience. The interviewees feel that in the UK the general public has a passive attitude and can demonstrate signs of 'dependency' when it comes to experiencing a natural hazard related emergency.

5. Discussion

The 'resilience agenda' in the UK introduced a number of neoliberal policies that were seen as a way to move away from state-enforced security to 'the side of laissez-faire' approach (Amin, 2013, p.141). The 'command and control' approach was based on the idea that the public entrusts their safety into the hands of an authority, whereas today's resilience agenda is based on a large amount of information, advice, expert opinion as well as 'heroism' stories where an individual acts in an emergency (Amin, 2013). This evolution of resilience transitioning from governmental concept to public responsibility is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Evolution of resilience building responsibilities in the UK (partially adapted from Coaffee and Fussey, 2015)

Although government policies promote a broader idea of resilience (as demonstrated in the definition), once the implementation of resilience reaches local level, its focus shifts to emergency and immediate response. Such a discrepancy between government policy and local action has been demonstrated in the previous sections. Another example of such discrepancy is related to the threats and hazards that should be addressed under the resilience agenda. As highlighted in the sections above, the UK national resilience agenda covers a wide-range of hazards and threats, but also touches upon trends such as climate change. When discussed under the resilience umbrella, only one part of the climate change agenda – climate change adaption – is addressed, leaving climate change mitigation a responsibility of somebody else. The connection is clear (climate change is linked to natural hazards), and therefore climate change is being securitised at the national level. However at a local level such an approach makes the implementation of resilience even harder, as it is not clear what it is exactly that institutions need to implement: do they need to address the causes or the effects, i.e. is the priority to adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change taking into account the budget cuts.

The implementation of the resilience agenda at a local level is an exercise in coordination that ensures oversight, cooperation and leadership. At the same time, it is not fully devolved to local authorities and is kept close to the national government, thus intending for the State to step in when expected. Many of the policies introduce interventions for both national and local levels simultaneously giving powers to, for example, the Secretary of State, but at the same time emphasising the importance of local authorities - while also cutting sources of funding. Shaw (2012) suggests that a resilient local authority should be innovative, able to manage risks, have strategic leadership and enhance the involvement of civil society, but to

do so they would require funding, which (as pointed out earlier) is an issue. For instance, the emergency management department in the case study county received 12% less funding in the 2013/2014 fiscal year than in the previous year.

The resilience approach emphasises the desirability of personal contingency plans and importance of public involvement and at the same time makes an emergency a ‘shared problem’. However the results of ‘sharing the problem’ could effectively be encouraging people to think it is a problem to be solved by someone else (and as a result people do not do anything), particularly when the information provided is not targeted at the general public but instead is given to the local authorities. Since local authorities cannot – and should not – build resilience on their own, communities and individuals are encouraged to be prepared for emergencies – but again the State plays its role: as resilience can only be increased by *‘communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way **that complements the response of the emergency services**’* (Cabinet Office, 2011c, p.4, authors’ emphasis).

However such an approach may not be very effective as the population knows that the State will respond – and take the situation under control - should the impact of an event increase dramatically and beyond the local level. A good example of this is that many of the UK residents (despite the large amount of easily accessible information and advice) continue to invest in home ownership in flood prone areas while at the same time not necessarily investing into measures to protect their houses against flooding (Bosher 2014). In addition, whilst policies implemented under the ‘resilience agenda’ have characteristics of neoliberalism, a critical stakeholder - i.e. the public – is not significantly involved in the decision-making process (as has been demonstrated in the UK definition of resilience). Although the government expects the community to use and ‘adapt their everyday skills and use them in extraordinary circumstances’ (Cabinet Office, 2011a, p.15), all the emergency efforts are led by the local authorities, who only occasionally involve private organisations and rarely devolve responsibility to communities and citizens.

The policies on resilience also create a sense that the government has chosen the threats and hazards the population can deal with and can be trusted with addressing (Figure 5), but – again – only under the supervision of the State.

Figure 5 Schematic representation of resilience-making in the UK

Theoretically, under the current resilience agenda, the communities are provided with an opportunity to become more resilient and to establish renewed relationships with the State based on trust. However in reality local community efforts (e.g. neighbourhood watch, parish councils) take place because communities perceive local emergency plans to fail due to their over-reliance on central government (whom communities do not trust) (Bach et al., 2010; Sage et al., 2015). But overall, promoted in a time of austerity measures and without any guidance, such initiatives will affect disadvantaged communities that already lack skills and resources and thus may not be able to adapt (to cope with the hazardous circumstances and therefore ‘build resilience’).

6 Conclusions

Although resilience has been widely discussed in the academic literature in the UK and internationally, the majority of the literature focuses on defining resilience and analysing the impacts of the resilience policy. The aim of this paper however differs: it has discussed what national and local governments and other stakeholders have done when attempting to make someone or something ‘resilient’. The results of this paper have a number of practical and theoretical implications:

- An improved appreciation of the limits and uses of resilience theories;
 - Identification of possible political consequences of adopting the resilience approach;
 - Comprehension of the role of the State and institutions within the resilience agenda;
- and

- Identification of hierarchies emerging due to the localisation of resilience.

A variety of emergent local and global threats to UK security has created an opportunity for the emergence of the resilience agenda, where the government articulates the costs and benefits of risk prevention, and the community and local governments act upon it (in a top-down cascade of responsibilities). Whilst masked as not being such, resilience is a politically charged term used as a tool in the government's attempts to keep centralised control and at the same time create a mirage of neoliberalism by shifting responsibilities from the State towards local authorities, communities and businesses. The handling of resilience within a neoliberal context has been seen as a tool to demonstrate 'good governance' of the UK government and to promote local empowerment. However, this only happens in policy rhetoric and is not reflected in practice. The political rhetoric moved from security and emergency as these terms implied government responsibility, to resilience which is hoped to imply individual responsibility.

Looking at national policies and local implementation documents, there is a sense of disconnect between the goals for achieving community resilience and for implementing resilience: local community resilience is about mobilisation, whereas local authorities resilience overall is about preparedness and response. National policy documents adopt a vague but pre-emptive definition of resilience, which – when have to be implemented at a local level - is still articulated through the lens of emergency planning: the focus is still on what to do in case of an event and how to prepare for it. This issue has been highlighted in previous studies and is clearly articulated by a local Emergency Planning Officer *"We plan for the contingency of the actual event and then we are there to respond thereafter if something happens, but we don't at this moment in time (...) get prepared to make ourselves more resilient prior to it. [It's] what would happen if something happened now rather than trying to make it safer immediately, if that makes sense? Our team is very much more a response after the event and planning towards such events"* (quoted in Chmutina et al. 2014:5).

There should be a more prominent difference between addressing the events (short-term) and trends (long-term). A shift in the resilience discourse in the UK's policy is needed as it is currently dominated by the protection of physical assets, thus focusing on more straightforward short-term challenges, which are easier to address as they are more visible. Instead the resilience policy in the UK should focus on longer-term challenges that can be lessened by introducing and effectively implementing more preparedness and prevention strategies.

The resistance to such a shift may be due to the capacities and capabilities of local authorities. Resilience policies are often couched as 'one size fits all' with the importance of local authorities - and their decisions and capabilities - typically under-represented. In addition, emergency managers who are in charge of building and implementing resilience plan to respond (rather than be more preventive) to the vents because that is the way they have been trained to operate, thus making preparedness and recovery a predominant feature.

Rhetorically, resilience certainly offers communities and individuals increased – but within the boundaries - empowerment, however the implementation of resilience has a large gap: a gap in communication of technical and expert knowledge on how resilience can be increased. In order for the individuals and communities to play a real role in increasing resilience, they have to become effective agents in the decision-making process. Currently the national and local government talk to each other and amongst themselves but do not really engage with the community based individuals who are expected to facilitate resilience measures; consequently they do not share sufficient information for community members/groups to make more informed decisions.

The interpretation of resilience has moved from a term to a way of thinking, a paradigm that collects a number of concepts rather than a concept itself. As a result, resilience has become an idea with many different intentions and with a very wide extension. It includes a range of components, from international aid and leadership to resistance and security, to sustainability and community well-being. This makes it impossible to decide whether a specific state is resilient or not, and to find out how a resilient state can be achieved. However, it also has its advantages: due to its vagueness, resilience now plays a role of a term that facilitates communication across various disciplines and it often creates a perception of a shared vocabulary. It could be argued that such vagueness makes this term politically successful and useful in helping – to a certain extent – to reconcile the interests of politicians and practitioners. But at the same time – and as demonstrated here - the vagueness and malleability of the term ‘resilience’ has led to a variety of interpretations and applications, and is indeed understood differently by different stakeholders at different levels.

The UK approach, whilst endorsing a shift towards increasing resilience and encouraging the implementation of resilience as a process rather than a command and control exercise, still remains highly centralised and dominated by prescriptive policies. Present approaches to resilience rely upon implementation by those in charge while excluding those directly affected. Making resilience-related policies more flexible and allowing for the incorporation of prevention measures could provide an opportunity to develop local frameworks that respond to local needs without being constrained within rather outdated institutional frameworks. As a political construct, resilience policy leads to losers and winners. It is important to identify them and make sure that it is not the most vulnerable individuals or social groups who carry the burden of resilience policy.

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Appendix A: List of analysed policy documents

1. Terrorism Act (2000)
2. Civil Contingencies Act (2004)
3. Improving the flood performance on new buildings (2007)
4. Climate Change Act (2008)
5. A stronger Britain in an age of uncertainties: the National security Strategy (2010)
6. Strategic Defense and Security review (2010)

7. Strategy for national infrastructure (2010)
8. Flood and water management Act (2010)
9. Strategic framework and policy statement on improving the resilience of critical infrastructure to disruption from natural hazards (2010)
10. Keeping the country running: natural hazards and infrastructure (2011)
11. CONTEST strategy (2011)
12. Climate Resilient Infrastructure (2011)
13. Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience (2011)
14. The role of Local Resilience Forum (2011)
15. Localism Act (2011)
16. A summary of 2012 sector resilience plans (2012)
17. National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
18. Adapting to climate change (2013)
19. Improving the UK's ability to absorb, respond to and recover from emergencies (2013)
20. National risk register of civil emergencies (2013)
21. Securing the future (2013)
22. Resilience in society: infrastructure, communities and businesses (2013)
23. Resilient communications (2013)
24. The National adaptation programme (2013)
25. Protecting the UK against terrorism (2013)
26. The role of Local Resilience Forums (2013)
27. Maintaining UK energy security (2013)
28. Providing regulation and licensing of energy industries and infrastructure (2013)
29. Sector resilience plans (2014)
30. National Risk Register (2015)