Assessing Resilience for Peacebuilding

Executive Summary of Discussion Document

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15 June 2015

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, international awareness has grown around the notion of fragile and conflict-affected states, alongside an emerging consensus about the need to better understand, address and assess the key sources of fragility within them. While much attention has focused on what makes *states* fragile and prone to conflict, there is also growing interest around what makes *societies, communities, people and institutions* resilient, including within wider contexts of fragility. Alternatively put, *what enables actors at various levels to anticipate risk, respond creatively to conflict and crisis, and steer social and political change in ways that may contribute to transforming conflict structures and fostering shared benefits of peace and development?* Amidst a growing loss of confidence in models that have guided international aid in humanitarian crisis, post-conflict development and peacebuilding over the last decade, there is evolving enthusiasm that resilience as a concept and as a distinct policy agenda, may offer a promising alternative pathway to both better understand, and practically navigate, the complex settings associated with conflict and fragility.

Despite this growing enthusiasm for the focus on resilience, there remain significant debates and gaps in understanding about what actually constitutes resilience in conflict settings and what a peacebuilding approach to resilience might look like. A wide and growing range of indices, frameworks and tools do exist that seek to assess conflict, fragility, and increasingly even resilience, but greater clarity is still needed about the methodologies for developing these tools, precisely what they can and should be assessing and measuring – and particularly, who determines this. While there is widespread agreement that the aid agendas supporting post-conflict societies need to be "locally-owned and led," as well as "context-specific," international actors nonetheless too often rely on models on the basis that they may have worked elsewhere, assuming that this will promote efficiency in the delivery of aid, support cross-country comparative analysis, and contribute to the efficacy of macro-level policy making. Yet this is all too frequently at the expense of inadequately understanding truly endogenous actions, meanings and capacities for resilience.

Assessing Resilience for Peacebuilding offers a critical review of resilience and the evolving approaches related to its assessment and measurement, with the goal of laying a foundation for a global conversation on how a resilience approach can inform peacebuilding, and conversely, how a peacebuilding perspective can support and strengthen the evolving resilience agenda. The document is divided into five parts: I) Background and politics

of the issues; II) Evolution of the concept of resilience and its relevance to peacebuilding; III) Conceptualising and operationalising resilience: Key themes and debates; IV) Assessing resilience; and V) Conceptualising the *Resilience-Peacebuilding* relationship and emerging insights for assessing resilience. This Executive Summary touches upon each of these.

Assessing Resilience for Peacebuilding is a product of the first phase of an Interpeace programme entitled "Frameworks for Assessing Resilience" (FAR). FAR aims to draw on - and in turn enrich - prevailing thinking about the character and sources of resilience in conflict-affected societies, in order to better understand the ways in which it might promote peacebuilding. Through participatory research and inclusive dialogue in three countries – Liberia, Timor-Leste, and Guatemala – FAR aims to build context-driven analyses around how local actors themselves understand the concept and sources of resilience, and how to assess its potential contribution to addressing fragility in these very different conflict-affected societies. In addition, FAR will also include national surveys on resilience in at least two of the three country cases. These case studies, will feed into and feed off a "cross-country comparative dialogue" involving national researchers as well as global specialist-practitioners, scholars and policy specialists from around the world, jointly contemplating how to practically understand resilience in relation to conflict and violence, and how best to assess it and translate that into policy guidance. The overall aim over the project's two year life-cycle, is to endeavour to generate new, context-sensitive frameworks and methodologies to assess resilience. We envisage this will also support a strong community of practice that can share insights and lessons around resilience and peacebuilding across contexts, both horizontally and vertically.

2. Evolution of Concept

Over the past fifty years or more there has been a rich, evolving, and multi-disciplinary literature on the notion of resilience. The scholarship, policy approaches and practical use of the concept have produced widely divergent meanings and applications. While there is no one accepted universal definition, the core building blocks of the concept have evolved through the interaction, application and learning within and between various disciplines and practice areas. These include engineering, physical and material sciences, ecology, psychology and anthropology. More recently, the concept of resilience has gained traction as an analytical concept in the realm of humanitarian aid and disaster recovery, and it is also increasingly being utilised amongst scholars and practitioners in the fields of peacebuilding and statebuilding. This has involved the liberal – and sometimes undiscerning – borrowing of the concept and its assumptions from other diverse fields.

In its early iterations within the chemical and metallurgical sciences, resilience was narrowly associated with the qualities, characteristics or attributes of a given substance, tested and ascertained by how these responded or adapted to various external pressures. The classic example drawn upon was illustrated by the characteristics of a spring: specifically the capacity to stretch and "bounce back" in response to external force. These notions developed further both through the engineering sciences and in the early work in the psycho-social and anthropological fields, resulting in the evolution of less static notions of resilience. It was acknowledged that these attributes or capacities were less inert or innate, but in fact were highly dependent on contextual factors and relationships. In the social sciences, this was particularly important in the evolution of studies of resilience from the purely individual level (without negating the importance of individual attributes), to the more social, cultural, community-based, institutional, and societal levels.

As the concept has developed from its understanding in the pure sciences to its applications to social sciences, it has thus evolved from a more narrowly defined notion of a set of attributes, qualities or capacities that enable a society or community to endure, respond or "bounce back from external shocks," to a more process-oriented and relational concept, that speaks particularly to the agency of individuals, groups, communities, institutions and societies in shaping their environment, including dealing with stressors and conflict within the context of complex adaptive social systems.

Ecology, and the study of ecosystems in particular, was at the forefront of a further development in the concept and utilisation of resilience. This involved a shift towards understanding resilience as a *system's* ability to absorb or adapt to shocks and stresses. Nonetheless, premised on the agency of individuals and groups, this shift expanded the use of resilience beyond a particular individual or level, to an acknowledgement of the multi-dimensional interactions and relationships between various levels and actors. This thinking also entrenched the critical notion of resilience as more than simple "bouncing back" to an original state or a status quo ante, but rather situated it as a dynamic reaction and interaction of various components and capacities, within complex adaptive social systems. Over the last decade, resilience has also been applied as an analytical concept to inform thinking and orient programming in the realm of humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction and recovery. More recently still, it has begun to gain traction amongst scholars and practitioners in the peacebuilding field.

In recent years, intergovernmental institutions, such as the World Bank, OECD-DAC and UNDP, along with many donor governments and aid agencies, have begun engaging with the concept of resilience and integrating it into their policy and programming agendas. As is common with aid institutions, each has conceptualised resilience with a slightly different focus and set of priorities in mind. The World Bank has taken a primarily risk-centred approach to resilience, focusing on risk mitigation and the ability to respond to and absorb shocks, with a particular emphasis on climate change and disaster mitigation. The OECD-DAC has similarly focused on the links between risk management and resilience. Recently the OECD-DAC has developed a toolkit to support practitioners in developing "Resilience Roadmaps." These are based on resilience systems analyses that assesses risk and ways to build resilience. UNDP engages resilience from a human-centred approach, focussing on how an individual's agency and ability to foster resilience can contribute to broader societal resilience. UNDP has done significant work with resilience in disaster risk reduction and crisis governance.

The field of peacebuilding has only come to discussions of resilience in recent years. Emerging peacebuilding perspectives on resilience are appropriating much of the same language that is reflected in the growing consensus. While little is yet written, peacebuilding theorists and practitioners are expressing interest in the concept for its focus on the positive potentialities inherent in a given context that can help to build, consolidate and sustain peace. The resilience lens offers peacebuilding a perspective on the endogenous strengths in systems, structures and people within conflict-effected societies, rather than the more conventional focus on the obstacles to peace or fault-lines for further conflict.

As the notion of resilience gains popularity in relation to peacebuilding and conflict, there are nonetheless also emerging concerns that the notion itself is contested: a new language which is gaining particular traction within the international community, but which may disguise some pre-existing debates in the peacebuilding field. These debates are between notions of resilience that are retrospective and ameliorative in addressing the symptoms of violent conflict and injustice on one hand, as opposed to interpretations of resilience that view it as transformative in engaging the underlying causes on the other.

3. Key themes and Debates

This section describes the cross-cutting themes and debates on resilience that have particular relevance for understanding resilience and its relationship to peacebuilding in situations of conflict and fragility.

Conceptualising Resilience as Capacities: Absorption, Adaptation and Transformation

Across practice areas, the concept of resilience has been used to describe a wide variety of responses, objectives or outcomes, including to "bounce back," "cope," "absorb shocks or stressors," "adapt" or "transform" – and to understand the relationships between them. With this diversification, so too, there are debates about how to

conceptualise and utilise resilience – as a concept, a value, a metaphor, a set of actions or responses, an analytical framework, an attribute, an outcome or as a lens – all with implications for how it is might be assessed. Amidst the varied views there is a growing convergence that resilience should be understood as an ability, or set of capacities. Resilience capacities will manifest differently in different contexts and may apply to various actors or levels within a society. Commonly these include: individuals, households, communities, institutions and wider societies or systems. The three most commonly recognised capacity types or components of resilience are:

- **Absorptive capacity** is the ability to minimise or buffer the exposure to – and consequence of – shocks and stresses (ex ante) where possible, and to recover quickly when exposed (ex post).
- **Adaptive capacity** involves making choices and taking actions to mitigate the effects of conflict and violence, as well as associated livelihood strategies, based on changing conditions. It includes moderating potential destruction and identifying and taking advantage of opportunities to do things differently and to cope with the consequences.
- **Transformative capacity** suggests the ability to transform (uproot) conflict drivers and structures, and to (re)create/build a new or changed system[3] that more readily addresses the initial causes of conflict.

While the concepts of *absorption, adaptation, and transformation* are widely used in describing resilience capacities – there is no agreement on their inter-relationship: are they three components manifesting varyingly in different contexts, do they constitute a linear or sequential trajectory with transformation as the desired endpoint, or does resilience emerge as an outcome of all three in which the processes of change that might lead to transformation may be incremental? Initial efforts to conceptualise the links between peacebuilding and resilience lead to the observation that the particularity of a resilience lens, is that it broadens our perspective on peacebuilding – from the aspiration to prevent conflict by controlling change, to the capacities of systems to cope with, adapt to, and shape change.[4] This logic gravitates towards an understanding of peacebuilding that facilitates particular kinds of sustainable change: which supports and is responsive to the organized actions of people, communities and institutions to prevent, manage and learn from crises, and ultimately that transform conditions of violent conflict and fragility. While peacebuilding can bring its thinking and practice around issues of transformative change to resilience discussions, peacebuilders may also benefit from the revitalised attention to different capacities and responses, how and under which conditions these might shift and evolve, and the strategic entry and leverage points that might be engaged by those aiming to foster resilience in transformative ways that serve peace.

Resilience, Complex Adaptive Systems and Change

The notion of complex adaptive systems (CAS) offers a vehicle for thinking and practice that starts with an acknowledgment of the diverse causal relationships and dynamics of interaction between various actors, elements, and levels in any particular context. CAS, and related complexity theory were popular first in ecology, but social scientists sought their wider applications. CAS has important ramifications for how resilience in conflict, and peacebuilding is understood and practiced – notably for considering how systems (e.g. communities or societies) self-organise and respond to conflict, crisis, and change.

At the heart of discussions about CAS is the notion of change – and specifically adaptation – in response to stressors or shocks, including conflict and disaster. It is recognised that changes in CAS are non-linear, unpredictable and sometimes gradual or incremental rather than momentous: an adaptive system is able to respond in the face of shocks, external or internal, in ways that enhance its ability to survive in the new conditions. [5] Greater complexity makes attributing causality and intentionality extremely difficult, if not impossible. This

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3   USAID, "Community Resilience: Conceptual Framework and Measurement," 2013, p. 10

4   This is discussed in the context of ecological systems by Ramsbothan, O., T. Woodhouse, H. Miall (eds.) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution, Second Edition*. Polity Press: Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2008, p. 303.

5   De Weijer, F. "Resilience: a Trojan horse for a new way of thinking?," p. 3

has important methodological implications for assessing resilience.[6] It is also important for a more integrated understanding and approach to peacebuilding efforts on a broader scale and across multiple levels and systems.

Negative and Positive Resilience

Much of the current dialogue around resilience is focused on and assumes the positive possibilities from engaging with and operationalising the concept. However, there is much evidence that "negative" forms of resilience exist as well, that is – resilience that hinders positive absorption, adaption, and transformation and which instead might reinforce downward cycles of conflict and crisis. Examples may include:

- Systems of corruption or conflict-based sub-economies, which prove resilient and enduring and even systemic in nature, despite formal political and even constitutional change;
- Criminal gangs and networks which are highly socially cohesive, well organised and frequently regulated by violence and coercion, but which nonetheless provide an alternative place of belonging to otherwise marginalised and excluded members of society;
- Potentially negative (e.g. radicalised in the direction of violence) manifestations of religious or ethnic identity.

In some cases, negative resilient practices may nonetheless be playing important roles in the short term, for example in the case of armed actors who may provide "alternative" security to communities in insecure areas. These may also however, have the effect of undermining or ensuring the dysfunction of local institutions from (re)building in transformative ways, for example, by proliferating exclusionary and arbitrary practices that fuel rather than extinguish conflict dynamics and have longer term adverse impacts on peacebuilding.

Endogenous Capacities, Local Agency and the Role of International Actors in Building Resilience

At the heart of discussions around resilience are questions of whether and how positive forms of resilience can be supported, cultivated, enriched or developed, and what the roles are and should be for external actors – be they external to a particular community or system, and especially, if they are international. This prompts questions of where resilience resides or originates in the first place. With strong support for a focus on *endogenous* resilience, be it conceptualised as capacities, processes, responses, latent or patent, or otherwise, there is also evolving acknowledgement that these are not fixed states, and can be actively supported and cultivated.[7]

Thinking in systems and complexity theory offers interesting insights into this topic. Eco-systems theorists, for example, argue that resilience as a process emerges from interactions between individuals, and their environment on multiple levels of a system. Furthermore, risk and protective factors exist at each level of a system and influence the interactions between individuals, as well as between individuals and their environment, emphasizing the agency of individuals, communities and groups in shaping, adapting and in turn being shaped by their environment. Complexity theory also examines the self-organising capacity of systems and how the strength of this capacity affects the ability to withstand pressures and shocks. Complexity theory logic suggests that external intervention removes the natural feedback, self-organisation and reaction process of the society itself. This potentially fosters dependency and deprives learning opportunities of a system, and can undermine the freedom and agency people have in negotiating their own lives.

International actors are often engaged in societies in conflict because national actors have not been able – or have been perceived as unable – to transform the conflict situation internally. However, institutions such as the World Bank, and various United Nations agencies, for example, are increasingly being encouraged, both

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6 Jütersonke and Kartas, "Resilience: Conceptual Reflections", p.6
7 Santos, R.S., "Why Resilience?" SDSU, p.6, referencing Masten, 2001; Pardon, Waxman & Huang, 1999.

internally and externally, to think deeply about local contexts, and to become more reflective about the limits of their contributions in some conflict contexts.[8] Amongst scholars and policy-oriented practitioners, there is also growing attention to the notion of endogenous capacities and the nature and role of local institutions, as well as the primacy of local actors. As De Weijer argues, fostering nationally-owned processes demands adaptability and the adoption of institutional multiplicity that is dynamic and diverse.[9]

Many international organisations are, however, beginning to shift their discourse towards resilience and the measurement of it, without sufficient consideration of *the endogenous sources of resilience and what actually constitutes and drives it in a particular setting,* and, without asking the tough questions about the implications of their work in this area, with particular reference to conflict-sensitivity. Supporting, and building upon existing resilience capacities, and understanding the roles of different actors, requires consideration of several key factors. The level of analysis – be it individual, community, institutional, society, or state – and the concomitant assumptions about where resilience resides, will affect how enhancing and leveraging existing sources of resilience may be understood and undertaken. Further, identifying enablers of adaptive capacity and how they can be engaged, as well as risk factors that hinder resilience or foster negative resilience, and how these can be neutralised or mitigated, is particularly relevant for understanding how positive resilience for peacebuilding can be supported and enhanced.

Levels of Analysis, Actors and Relationships

How resilience functions within and across levels of analysis, actors and relationships presents perhaps the most serious challenges and important potential – conceptual, methodological, and political – for those focused on how resilience can drive transformative change and support peace.

Different organisations, researchers and practitioners focus their analysis on diverse actors and the manifestations of resilience at different levels of society. While the World Bank and the OECD-DAC tend to focus on states, UNDP focuses on wider societies, while other institutions focus on the particular targets of their work – e.g. UNICEF primarily considers social service sectors, and particular stakeholder groups such as children and women; civil society organisations often target societal and community levels; and still other agencies favour individual and family level engagements. However, there is insufficient debate and attention to the critical question of how these various levels interact or connect, and the cumulative effects, or system-level pathways and tipping points. There are important questions around the levels in society at which resilience is developed and detected, and how these different levels relate to and influence each other in complex interactive social systems.

Many institutional approaches to date are not sufficiently engaging with resilience as a multi-faceted phenomenon that manifests itself at multiple levels in society: at the individual level, at the level of the family, within communities, institutions, within and across identity-based groups in society, and at the society-wide and national political level as well. And resilience is not merely an attribute or quality detectable at these different levels, but rather, resilience is shaped by the relationships, pathways and connectors between the different levels and actors. Resilience then, is embedded not only in the relationships between people and groups in society, but also in the relationship between society, its institutions, and the state. This complicates the endeavour of measuring or assessing resilience, demanding tools and perspectives that can access and penetrate at these different levels in society, and tease out the complex relationships between them.

Peacebuilding scholars and practitioners are therefore increasingly grappling with how to translate the capacities and manifestations of resilience that exist and are more easily observable at the individual, localised or community levels, into aggregated impact at the institutional, policy and wider societal levels. Beyond just the questions of

8   See for example: World Bank. "Conflict, Security and Development," World Development Report, 2011; UNDP. Building Resilience for Sustainable Human Development: 2013 and UNDP, Governance for Peace: Securing the Social Contract, 2012.

9   De Weijer, F. "Assessing resilience in fragile states: possible and desirable?", ECDPM, 2014.

geography or "scale," the challenge is in defining how resilience for peacebuilding may manifest or be most effectively "transmitted" and enhanced across different levels in fragile and conflict-affected societies.

In relation to this, an issue requiring deeper investigation is the linkage between formal and informal institutions within society at large, and the role of resilience in shaping these interrelationships. In this regard, "hybridity" provides an additional lens for contemplating the interaction of different levels, institutions and relationships within complex systems in conflict-affected societies. It is particularly relevant for interrogating the links between formal and informal institutions, and the ways that indigenous, endogenous and external influences and systems interact. Hybridity draws attention to the presence of endogenous sources of resilience and demonstrates the varied ways resilience can manifest itself in highly creative, less formalised ways. It also highlights how long entrenched, highly insular institutions and systems can possess resilience, manifesting both positively and negatively.

Resilience through the lens of different stakeholder groups

Understanding resilience by reference to different "levels" in society, is not just a question of scale or geography in moving from the individual to the societal level. Resilience has different meanings shaped by different experiences and interests of and for different social groups. A youth perspective, for example, or a gendered lens, each offer distinctive understandings of what positive and negative resilience might mean in practice, how contested these notions may be, where resilience might inhibit rather than foster real change and equity, etc. In the quest to develop and test frameworks for assessing resilience, it is vital to acknowledge these differences, and disaggregate analysis accordingly. With particular reference to the context and the nature of the historical conflict in any given country, particular attention and varied weight should be given to strategically important social sectors (e.g. youth, women, victims, ex-combatants, displaced persons, or indigenous groups, among many others). This will help to capture and detect implications for understanding of positive and negative resilience in context, as well as to optimally broaden the participation and ownership of this process. Although particular attention should be given to marginalised or excluded groups, this should not limit the potential of a more diversified and thoroughly disaggregated thematic or sectoral analysis of resilience – and what this might mean for assessing resilience.

Relationship with Social Cohesion and Social Capital

The relationship between resilience and notions of social and political cohesion has not been clearly articulated. There is, however, growing recognition that there is a reciprocal relationship between these concepts, as well as areas of convergence and overlap. For some, resilience and social cohesion can both be viewed as representing a quality, a set of assets or attributes, and/or processes and relationships that enable communities or societies to navigate conflicts without a resort to violence or coercion. For others, social and political cohesion is simply the "glue" which enables societies to cohere behind a common set of institutions, norms and a shared sense of political identity or community. It is seen as intrinsic to *the character* of a society, as opposed to resilience, which is viewed as a quality and capacity within society – that defines the particular attributes, character and durability of the "glue". This still leaves much open for interpretation about the nature of each concept, and the precise interactions between the two.

Social capital has also emerged as a key concept in the discussion of the relationship between social cohesion and resilience, and can arguably be considered a subset of social cohesion, which strongly correlates with resilience factors in defining the extent and quality of social cohesion, but which is still distinct. Social capital refers to the

internal social and cultural coherence of society, the norms and values that govern interactions among people and the institutions in which they are embedded.[10] The powerful notions of "bonding, bridging and linking" social capital, adds value for how we think about and assess both levels of social cohesion and positive and negative resilience in communities and wider societies – which also are viewed as relational processes, and must be measured as such. By the same token, notions of resilience as embedded in relationships – rather than just being seen as an aggregate of individual or collective attributes – modifies and complicates the assets of social capital that need to be measured and assessed in complex, conflict-affected societies.

While interesting research is emerging about the impacts of social capital, and social cohesion, separately have on resilience – clarity on the relationship between the three still requires deeper contemplation and definitional precision to test the claim made in one study which suggests simply that communities "with higher levels of bonding, bridging and linking social capital are inherently more resilient than those with only one type or none."[11] Another found that levels of social cohesion, measured by how regularly people work together to achieve common goals, determined resilience to conflict escalation immediately following a violent incident.

The presence of social capital and social cohesion have been assessed by identifying societal attributes that demonstrate their presence. These can include the presence of or perception of inclusion, exclusion, trust, and legitimacy among others. Understanding how social cohesion and social capital are woven into society and the entry points for assessing them is highly relevant to assessing resilience, which similarly resides in the relationships and dynamic interplay of different actors, levels, groups, and institutions. In turn, resilience offers a wider lens, looking beyond the horizontal and vertical dimensions of assessment and engaging on a holistic systemic level. There appear to be some 'common sense' attributes that need to be assessed, precisely because of their relevance to the interactions between horizontal and vertical relationships. Amongst others, this may include: the role and character of leadership across different levels of society; the function of intermediary agencies, pathways, and communication, which connect these different levels; patterns and experiences of exclusion or selective inclusion, etc.

4. Assessment

Many of the current methodologies attempting to measure resilience are focused on specific contexts (such as agro-pastoral communities), specific hazards (such as drought) or applied to specific sectors (such as food and nutrition security). Most of these are focused on negative events (significant and infrequent) associated with intensive risk. There is also a common tendency to exclude relevant stakeholders in assessment processes themselves. [12]

Forms of resilience and related capacities in a community or society also evolve and change over time. All this has crucial implications for how this is assessed in highly complex and evolving systems (including establishing baselines, theories of change, and methods to measure, i.e. indicators, etc.), as well as for programming goals, which may include the aspiration to "build, support or further develop resilience".

Individuals

Approaches to assessing individual resilience can be clustered according to whether they i) focus on the internal

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10   Colletta, J. and M. Cullen. "The Nexus between Violent Conflict, Social Capital and Social Cohesion: Case Studies from Cambodia and Rwanda," *Social Capital Initiative Working Paper No. 23.*

11   USAID, Community Resilience: Conceptual Framework and Measurement", Feed the Future Learning Agenda, 2013, p.iv (Aldrich, 2012; Elliott, Haney, & Sams-Abiodun, 2010; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000)."

12   Mitchell, A. "Inception Report: Analysing and Measuring Resilience," OECD, 2013, pp. 8-11.

attributes of the person, ii) the social environment, iii) or a combination of the two.[13] Internal attributes are capacities a person might possess such as perseverance, optimism, self-efficacy, and problem-solving ability, essentially 'innate human psychological immune capacity'[14] that can be assessed to determine an individual's resilience. The social environment an individual operates within possesses factors and characteristics that affect resilience. The level of social cohesion and social support from school and community activities are key to an individual's resilience. Each of these components can be assessed independently but are most effective in determining an individual's resilience when assessed together. Individual resilience depends on a person's capacities as well as the experiences they have from interacting with their social environment.[15]

UNICEF's Approach to Individual Resilience

UNICEF has developed surveys to evaluate individual resilience basing these assessments around risks and vulnerabilities, individual skills and coping strategies, and access to positive, community-level resources or "assets." The surveys are comprised of questions that have been developed to assess how each of these dimensions contribute to/affect individual resilience. Questions such as: who a person would turn to for help in a crisis, what resources are available within a person's community, and how trusted different actors are within a person's environment, can be developed into a composite evaluation of an individual's resilience.[16]

Communities

A growing focus of resilience assessment is at the community level. Communities are viewed as having great potential impacts: both on individual resilience and catalysing 'trickle up' effects for the broader social system. Frameworks for assessing community resilience are proliferating, in particular from the disaster/humanitarian field. The TANGO framework in particular has served as the basis for a good deal of resilience assessment material.

TANGO model

The TANGO framework assesses resilience to shocks and stresses by identifying access to livelihood assets (e.g. physical, political, social, human, natural, financial), transformative structures and processes (e.g. governance, laws, policies, institutions), and strategies, which combined yield the capacity to deal with a disturbance.[17] The assessment rests on the recognition that households and communities can respond more effectively to shocks and stresses when they have access to sufficient and positive forms of these three elements of adaptive capacity.

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13   CIPD, Developing Resilience: an evidence-based guide for practitioners, 2011.

14   Ibid, citing Kelly, 2005.

15   Ibid.

16   UNICEF. Compilation of Tools for Measuring Peacebuilding Results around Social Cohesion and Resilience, 2014, p. 12.

17   TANGO International. Enhancing Resilience to Food Shocks, 2012, p. 34

Systems

There is growing acknowledgement that systems thinking and analysis offer a vital dimension to understanding resilience and assessing it. However, the methodologies for doing this are only just beginning to emerge.

OECD-DAC and Resilience Systems Analysis

The OECD-DAC is leading a donor effort to develop a methodology for a risk-assessment package to enable decision-makers to integrate resilience into their planning and investments, and allow comparisons to be made across different contexts. They have recently released a first version of a guidance tool for practitioners that is designed to help prepare for, and facilitate multi-stakeholder resilience analysis and strategy to infuse within development and humanitarian programming." This includes a 'resilient systems analysis' that determines the broad factors contributing to the resilience of the targeted system to the risk landscape. [18]

Linking the levels and embracing more systemic assessments

With a goal of assessing the contribution of resilience to peacebuilding, all levels require some degree of integration into a multi-track, holistic assessment framework. At present, different communities of practice within the field spearhead varied approaches, which are still primarily oriented around particular levels of society. But the development of a common framework will also undoubtedly present normative, methodological and potentially political or ideological challenges for integration. As well, assessing what drives and cultivates resilience endogenously, is a different endeavour to assessing what interventions might contribute to strengthening, building on or enhancing resilience. The latter demands evaluation of how various interventions might impact the system, for change. This is a more complex undertaking, which may also be influenced in various ways by the role of international actors.

Finally, in developing an integrated framework for assessing resilience for peacebuilding, it will be vital to draw lessons and insights from other areas of assessment practice (both in regards to what has worked and the limitations of these endeavours) that have attempted to cover related areas of work. These include:

- Conflict prevention and early warning, where frameworks and indices often identify risk and "protective" factors as a method for identifying drivers of violent conflict. The methodologies and indicators are usually externally generated, but notably, the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) is stakeholder-driven and seeks to identify indicators engaging all levels of society;
- Violence prevention approaches tend to focus on crime-related and public health data that can potentially offer insights about the resilience of societies to violence. However, some frameworks do seek to identify sources and reasons for violence through perception surveys, such as the Citizen Security Indicators and the Oslo Commitments;
- Assessment of failed states, fragility, and statebuilding has greatly increased over the last decade, with a number of different approaches. They can offer potential insights as to where resilience is may be weak, or where a great deal of negative resilience resides. These frameworks and indices tend to be externally driven and based on objective measures, often missing the complexity of fragile situations;
- Social cohesion frameworks can help increase understanding of the resilience of communities and societies

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18   OECD-DAC. Building a Roadmap to Resilience: Tools for Field People, 2014

by identifying protective factors that can contribute to social cohesion and thus to the development of resilience;

- Peace and conflict impact assessments and the broader field of peacebuilding evaluation have sought to better understand the complexity of contexts, and to identify drivers of conflict and peace – both of which are important components in a deeper understanding of resilience.

5. Conceptualising the *Resilience-Peacebuilding* Relationship and Emerging Insights for Assessing Resilience

A short list of emerging insights follows, providing a foundation for deepening the discussion on the added value that peacebuilding offers for resilience, and vice-versa – in ways that arguably can strengthen both. We also outline the embryonic development of a resilience assessment framework that draws upon the rich contributions of peacebuilding.

Added value of *resilience for peacebuilding* & *peacebuilding for resilience*

Key ways that peacebuilding scholarship and practice add value to resilience:
- Peacebuilding has a strong heritage of examining context, with advanced methodologies to do this. This can support the identification of endogenous sources of positive and negative resilience that are context-specific;
- Peacebuilding theory and practice has for decades engaged and debated the notions of conflict transformation and – to a lesser but still significant degree – transformative change, and the sustainability of peace. These perspectives can usefully inform the development of resilience thinking and practice. In particular, they can facilitate analysis of the limits, benefits, and potential impact, of strengthening "absorptive, adaptive or transformative" resilience capacities in particular contexts;
- Peacebuilding practitioners and scholars have long sought to understand and mediate the interactions and impacts of different levels, efforts, and actors. This can be seen in the practice of peacebuilding evaluation and the literature on impact, as well as in newer thinking aimed at understanding hybridity within and across societies and different levels of a society. This is clearly of great value in coming to terms with resilience manifesting at multiple levels in conflict-affected societies ;
- Peacebuilding has long been concerned with issues of human agency, local ownership and leadership, as well as with the related notion of "local capacities for peace". The assessment and "building" of resilience promises new and innovative attention to identifying and supporting local agency and capacity in different contexts.

Key ways that resilience scholarship and practice adds value to peacebuilding include:
- The focus on the transformative potential of resilience revitalises and returns attention to the important discourse of "positive peacebuilding";
- The focus on identifying and strengthening *endogenous* resilience capacities for peacebuilding, by its very nature catalyses critical new thinking about the nature and contributions of external and international actors. This helps to frame the role of external actors as fundamentally supportive and facilitative in nature;
- More than just a set of attributes or qualities, resilience is a *relational* concept that empowers individuals and collective actors to shape their environment and to be shaped by it, in turn;
- Attention to how both positive and negative resilience may manifest, offers tactical value to peacebuilding approaches that seek to support and enhance positive resilience, whilst counteracting, neutralising or transforming negative forms of resilience. Where such positive or negative resilience is embedded in institutional practices and cultures, this also helps to distinguish when statebuilding serves – from where it might actively compromise – the goals of peacebuilding;
- Resilience offers a lens and different perspective on the relationship between peacebuilding and state-

building, beyond just the focus on enhancing the capacity of state institutions. It offers a more holistic consideration of both horizontal and vertical relationships within state and society, and between the two;

- The renaissance in systems thinking around design, monitoring and evaluation, which is being promoted by resilience scholars and practitioners, can enrich peacebuilding evaluation and conflict-sensitivity thinking and practice.

There are myriad of ways to conceptualise the relationship between peacebuilding and resilience, with various theories of change that illustrate the important ways in which they can iteratively engage to produce more sustainable peace in conflict-affected societies. Critically, these will emerge uniquely in different conflict-contexts, and this has important implications for the development and design of country-specific assessment tools, approaches and the development of indicators of resilience.

Considerations for understanding, assessing and "building" resilience

The following insights are important guidelines for the development of an integrated assessment framework for resilience, and related programming.

➢ **Resilience to conflict is different than resilience to disaster, necessitating transformative approaches**

Resilience is much more – and more complex – than merely "bouncing back from shocks or stresses". Even this longstanding default position in the disaster recovery/humanitarian worlds is shifting with the recognition that stopping cycles of conflict and disaster requires more than this. While resilience responses in any context will vary significantly, and will no doubt transmute and manifest in new ways over time, from a peacebuilding perspective, moving in a transformative direction is vital if conflict structures are to change in ways that allow peace to be sustainable. Violent conflict often decimates the very foundations of trust and social cohesion that underpin relationships within a social system, as well as often undermining the legitimacy of institutions that uphold the system and which are meant to insulate communities from such stressors or shocks. Thus, while there is undoubtedly always a political context to the nature, scale and consequences of any crisis, including disaster, the clear need for transformative approaches suggests a key reason for a separate field of practice and analysis with accompanying assessment methods and tools around resilience to conflict.

➢ **Understanding and engaging complexity is a basis for transformative approaches**

Accepting that the path to resilience in service of positive peace is neither easily predictable nor linear, innovative approaches – rooted in complex systems thinking – are needed to understand, assess, and promote resilience in ways that serve durable peace. Forms of resilience and related capacities in a community or society are also not static or inert, but evolve and change over time. This is of particular relevance to the dynamics within and between what have been termed "negative" and "positive" forms of resilience, which greatly increase complexity. A key priority should be investigating what might cause catalytic shifts of negatively resilient factors and processes into positive ones that serve rather than undermine peacebuilding.

In addition, understanding how particular forms of resilience in hybrid systems and institutions can serve peacebuilding is undoubtedly a worthwhile endeavour, while it raises political, ethical and other dilemmas. The complexity inherent in CAS has considerable implications for how resilience in and of complex and evolving systems is assessed (including baselines, theories of change, and methods to measure, i.e. indicators, etc.), as well as for programming goals such as "resilience building."

➢ **Endogenous capacities must be a starting point for understanding and engagement**

The focus of resilience in conflict-affected and fragile societies must be on endogenous capacities. The endogenous capacity of a society is composed of natural feedback loops, abilities for self-organisation and reaction to crisis that offers potential for mobilisation and transformation out of conflict. In order to effectively harness, support and build on these endogenous sources of resilience and to ensure that this remains locally -owned and lead, the critical agency of individuals, communities, institutions and systems must be acknowledged, enabled and supported.

➢ **Notions of "building" resilience with involvement of external actors require critical reflection before action**

Resilience thinking, rooted in the logic of complexity theory, suggests that external intervention may remove the natural feedback, self-organisation and may compromise the reaction processes of a society itself, potentially fostering dependency and depriving learning opportunities for the system. This observation needs to be self-critically and reflectively engaged by international actors. This spotlights the need for heighted attention to careful and honest assessment in relation to: where in society resilience resides in the first place; whether and how it can (or should be) "built"; and if so, by whom, through what methods, and in which types of contexts.

➢ **Understanding, assessing, and building resilience requires engaging with and supporting sources of social capital and social cohesion in societies**

There is a complex relationship between *social cohesion*, *social capital* and community or societal *resilience*, with the precise correlations between the three still being interrogated. It is nonetheless evident that the development of social capital has a significant effect on social cohesion and resilience. In particular, understanding the different forms of social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking) as well as the varying economic, social, and political dimensions of social cohesion, can contribute to identifying important endogenous sources of resilience. This can also support the identification of entry points and suggest context- and conflict-sensitive considerations for supporting and building resilience.

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