Articulating resilience in practice: chains of responsibilization, failure points and political contestation

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Abstract

Resilience has become a fashionable concept in UK policy making in the last years. Many commentators have interpreted resilience as a neoliberal strategy that seeks to responsibilize individuals in anticipation of the retreat of centralized forms of risk management and protection. However, the haste with which the concept has been adopted also means that little attention has been paid to how resilience works in practice. This article analyses the implementation of a resilience initiative designed to build community resilience to flooding in the UK. It argues that the implementation of the policy is enabled by a long governmental chain of responsibilization comprising several linkages that are also endangered by potential failure points where political contestations play out. It concludes that looking for what resilience 'does' requires investigating the implementation of specific resilience policies and the degree to which they are successful.

Introduction

Resilience is a well-known concept that has gained considerable traction in UK policy-making in recent years (Joseph, 2013a). As a concept and discourse, resilience is flexible and malleable, which makes it optimal for crossing disciplinary and societal boundaries with ease (Brand & Jax, 2007). This sometimes comes at the expense of conceptual and empirical clarity, sparking many debates over its meaning and uses (Alexander, 2013; Folke, 2006). As a result, resilience discourses have been reviewed and considered for application in relation to a large array of issues ranging from security (Bourbeau, 2013) and environmental change (Adger et al. 2011) to development and disaster management (O'Brien & Read, 2005; Barrett & Constas, 2014).

The popularity of the discourse of resilience is attributed by many commentators to its 'fit' (Joseph, 2013b) with the contemporary form of governmentality, neoliberalism (Walker & Cooper, 2011; Evans & Reid, 2013; O'Malley, 2010; Dean, 2014; Lentzos & Rose, 2009). For these authors, resilience is folded into the structure of neoliberalism, being transformed into a strategy that seeks to further embed it. Their main argument is that through resilience, neoliberal elites and forms of authority seek to promote the responsibilization of the individuals, encouraging them to take ownership of risks themselves rather than rely on state-centric forms of risk management. Resilience becomes more palatable in the context of many calls to regard the world as increasingly complex and contingent. This effectively proposes a move away from stable and enduring social relations and towards an understanding of society as composed of

'reflexive agents capable of adaptive behaviour' (Joseph, 2013b, p. 39). At the same time, resilience is reflective of the changing structure of neoliberal societies where autonomous, responsibilised individuals take advantage of networked forms of governance and pursue their own operations with relative independence from the state (Zebrowski, 2009). Mitchell Dean indicates that this changing relation between the individuals and the state has intensified in recent years. He suggests that after the 2008 global financial crisis, the rationality of neoliberalism shifted away from triumphalist economic narratives promising trickle down wealth created by markets. With state-backed public services under even more pressure from austerity measures and further rolling back, neoliberalism simply seeks to make individuals, communities, systems or organizations learn to adapt and live with risks and even potential catastrophes (Dean, 2014).

However, the proposition that resilience fits with neoliberalism or represents one of its strategies can only make a claim about the *ethos* of resilience discourse. Questions emerge in relation to the mechanisms and processes through which individuals are responsibilised and whether or not they work in practice and to what extent. If studies of governmentality propose a connection between neoliberal forms of governmentality and the production of neoliberal subjectivity, they also need to detail the mechanism through which this is achieved and its rate of success (Weidner, 2009). In other words, there is a need to peer into the black box of governmentality and unravel how responsibilization takes place in practice, rather than simply assume it does or that it is successful.

Similarly, diagnoses of resilience as neoliberal strategy have proposed neoliberal rule as a 'strikingly uniform theoretical schema' (Corry, 2014, p. 257), ignoring how resilience can function within logics of governance other than neoliberalism. In this vein, Rogers (2015) suggests that the concept of resilience can be interpreted on a continuum between negative and positive interpretations. A positive reading of resilience is one that stresses participation, collaboration, empowerment and agency in attempts to build resilience. Conversely, the negative reading is aligned with the critique of resilience as neoliberal strategy. However, Roger's treatment of resilience unnecessarily gravitates towards what Tom Lundborg and Nick Vaughan-Williams call a 'fully formed mode of governance' (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2011, p. 375), meaning there's a tendency to be oblivious to the discontinuities, complexity and interdependencies that derive from the implementations of the resilience policies in practice.

A much more productive line of inquiry is to move away from upfront theoretical schemas and treat resilience as a 'concept in formation' (Walsh-Dilley & Wolford, 2015). Walsh-Dilley and Wolford contend that the fuzziness and ambiguity of the concept is not a weakness but instead is productive, leading to a host of subjective meanings and interpretations on the ground. Adopting this line of thinking, this article suggests that to move the discussion on resilience forward, more attention needs to be paid to the ground level, where resilience policy initiatives are implemented. As such, the central focus of the article is a 'resilience inspired' policy initiative which sought to pilot resilience building to flooding in the UK.

The Flood Community Resilience Scheme (FCRS, also referred to as the Scheme) was initiated in 2012 for two years with the express goal of piloting approaches that 'enhance flood risk

management [FRM] and preparedness in ways which quantifiably improve the community's overall resilience' (DEFRA, 2012, p. 2). Thirteen pilot projects were awarded funding through the 'Pathfinder Scheme' with the aim that they provide examples of community resilience building practices that can be replicated in other places. This paper is based on a qualitative analysis of interviews with the main actors involved with the Scheme and its core documents: the Scheme Prospectus (DEFRA, 2012), The Rapid Evidence Assessment (Twigger-Ross *et al.*, 2014), and most importantly the Evaluation Report which concludes the Scheme and its achievements (Twigger-Ross *et al.*, 2015).

In order to get a grip on the policy object of resilience I will use the conceptual infrastructure of 'logics of critical explanation'[1]. These logics '*comprise the rules or grammar of the practice[s], as well as the conditions which make the practice[s] both possible and vulnerable*' (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 136, *italics in the original*). I introduce several theoretical distinctions (between different types of logics) in considering the empirical material in order to show how discursively, the policy object of resilience is disclosed through these theoretical distinctions. This article extends the literature on resilience by examining the practices employed in the implementation of resilience policies while also investigating the governmental chain that enables their delivery. It agrees with the literature which regards resilience as a neoliberal strategy: that the ethos of FCRS is to responsibilize individuals and by extension the communities in which they live. This ethos however is articulated in practice through a long chain of responsibilization that stretches from national agencies down to the communities and individuals, and is characterized by a series of linkages. These linkages are connected by articulation points, which in turn constitute potential failure points, jeopardising the integrity and the efficacy of the chain of responsibilization. Moreover, these failures are also sites and moments of political contestation overlooked by the policy framework and by critiques of resilience as neoliberal strategy alike.

This paper will develop the argument in three parts. The first part will present the practices employed in FCRS in terms of some of the main logics that characterize them: responsibilization, preparedness, and 'inverted' solidarity. As such, practices are analysed in their own terms rather than by reference to a theoretical schema. The second part will present an account of how community resilience is articulated by analysing the governmental chain of responsibilization that seeks to enable it. The third part will point out a number of potential failure points in the chain of responsibilization and will consider the political implication of these failures.

Logics of community resilience building

FCRS is a policy aimed at building community resilience practices rolled out between April 2013 and March 2015. The thirteen Pathfinders proposed a considerable range of practices such as 'physical measures through to social and financial measures, including: property level protection [also called PLP measures] (e.g. flood doors, smart air bricks); awareness raising activities (e.g. school education packs, information boards); engaging volunteers in FRM (e.g.

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[1] As presented in the work of Glynos and Howarth (2007).

training flood wardens, developing community flood forums, flood action groups, "gully watch", monitoring of rivers); developing community resilience/response plans; improving flood warning/forecasting capabilities (e.g. local telemetry, installing river gauges)' (Twigger-Ross *et al*, 2014, p. 11). In making sense of these practices, the Evaluation Report for the Scheme follows the model conceptualized by Cutter *et al*. (2008) and distinguishes between five categories of resilience: social resilience, economic resilience, institutional resilience, infrastructure resilience and community capital (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015). While this makes for good framework to assess the success of the Scheme, it does take resilience for granted as a policy object. This paper is concerned with the discursive construction of resilience in practice, which is a function of how practices of resilience are constructed socially and politically. A good way to disclose the discursive policy object of resilience is to think of it in terms of the logics of resilience practices, both as social logics, by which a practice is characterised according to its rules and norms, and political logics, which attend to how the practices emerge and are instituted, but also to how they are contested and transformed (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). In the case of FCRS, I identify three underlying logics: responsibilization, preparedness and 'inverted' solidarity.

Logics of responsibilization

These logics refer to the practices through which the government seeks to enable the agency of individuals to take ownership of flood risk management themselves. Responsibilization is the main ethos proposed in the Scheme, which is echoed by most of the Pathfinder managers interviewed. As the definition employed in the Scheme documents suggests, the scope of community resilience is about enabling local communities to 'help themselves and others' with the aid of local resources and local expertise (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015, p. 30).

Many of these practices deployed in FCRS revolve around individuals aiming to improve their personal and inter-personal potential to be resilient against flooding in conjunction with the enrolment of various technologies and material practices. In the evaluation report, these interventions (or practices) are framed as building community capacities for flood risk resilience (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015). These capacities are understood to either improve on particular strengths communities already have (e.g., existing culture of volunteers to recruit flood wardens) or put in place new resources communities can draw on in the event of an emergency (e.g., flood plans, PLP measures, etc.). Building the community's capacity for flood resilience is accompanied by the identification of vulnerabilities at the level of the community, understood as 'inherent characteristics or qualities of social systems that create the potential for harm' (Cutter *et al*. 2008, p. 599). For the most part, identifying vulnerabilities relates to locating vulnerable individuals - those who by virtue of age, gender, mental health, lack of resources, connectivity, education or English language ability cannot participate in community building activities themselves (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015). One of the achievements reported by the Pathfinders is locating vulnerable individuals and integrating them in flood plans, so they can be helped in emergency.

Capacity building and acting on vulnerability are the product of a wider revolution in FRM, reflective of a movement away from expensive structural defences toward the incorporation of

cheaper and more flexible social approaches (Verritty, 2006). To better understand this transition, it is useful to think of it in relation to the logics of equivalence and difference. They are linked to the political logics that look at how practices emerge and are transformed. The intersecting logics of equivalence and difference, respectively, construct and deconstruct antagonistic relations where similarities between frontiers are enforced and differences within frontiers are diminished (Glynos & Howard, 2007). For example, the logic of difference is at work here as it breaks down the unity of both the state in charge of the structural defences and the public passively safeguarded by them. At the same time, the logic of equivalence is at work in the re-orchestration of the distinction between the state as protector, on one side, and the passive public, on the other, into one between state as enabler and individuals as active participants[2].

The disaggregation of the unitary character of the state was gradually accomplished as successive governments reacted to the 'windows of opportunity' (Johnson, C., Tunstall, S. & Penning-Rowsell, E., 2005) provided by critical flood events. The Bye Report, which responds to the 1998 floods, advocates for individuals to be introduced to the issue of flooding and made aware of it (Bye Report, 1998). Making Space for Water (2004) sets up a holistic strategy for responding to flood in its 'own terms' rather than resisted outright (DEFRA, 2004). The Pitt Review (2008) is the first document to call specifically for community resilience initiatives (Pitt, 2008). Politically, these documents, as responses to flood events, gradually enact a transition away from the idea that 'powers that be' and authorities can keep hazards at bay by themselves (Deeming *et al.*, 2012). Instead, they seek to entrench a narrative that presents flood risk management as a complex issue with solutions requiring the involvement of multiple stakeholders. At the same time, a shift to localism is pursued as evidenced by the creation of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) by the Flood and Water Management Act of 2010 (Cabinet Office, 2010). This move gives local authorities responsibility for surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses alongside the task of developing flood risk management strategies in their area (Cabinet Office, 2010).

On the other side of the spectrum, the public that was once passively safeguarded with structural defences is increasingly asked to step up and take responsibility for flood risk. This again started with the Bye Report's (1998) call for individuals and communities to be made aware of floods and was officially sanctioned by the Pitt Review's proposition that 'responsibility [for flooding] does not lie with Government or other authorities and organizations alone – they cannot protect people from all the consequences of natural disasters' (Pitt, 2008, p. 349). Again, the logic of difference is at play in this policy framing, as it breaks down the apparent unitary character of individuals as a public to be secured by the 'powers to be'. The public is disaggregated into knowledgeable communities and individuals, more attuned to the realities of the local scene in which they conduct their lives. As an official with National Flood Forum puts it, in regard to the solutions to flood risk advanced by national agencies like the Environment Agency: 'it may

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[2] The logic of difference breaks down and keeps separate the elements of a practice, while the logic of equivalence inserts distinctions and creates frontiers and antagonisms (e.g. political right vs. left, capitalism vs socialism). The policy object of resilience is constituted in the relationship between these two logics (see Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 144).

be the perfect solution but equally, the communities may have their own ideas about what may be a solution, they know what happened in reality in their street and their solutions may be more cost effective' (National Forum official).

As a policy, community resilience looks to bring in close quarters the disaggregated state and the knowledgeable individuals, both united by the threat of flooding as a complex issue that requires the participation of multiple stakeholders and by recognition of the shared roles and responsibilities they have. The distinction between the state as protector and the passive public is re-orchestrated into a distinction between state as enabler and individuals as active participants. This is confirmed by the Evaluation Report, which states that the Pathfinders have achieved increased community awareness and participation and 'improved knowledge of roles, responsibilities and flood risk' (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015, p. 187). In the process of bringing individuals into flood risk management alongside state structures and other actors, the differences between all the actors involved are downplayed and the mutual dependencies and the common interests highlighted according to the logic of equivalence. It can be argued that what resilience policies aim for through responsibilization is the promotion of a particular *disposition*, understood both as a specific arrangement of actors (or subject positions) and an individual quality of mind (or mentality) that encourages regarding flood risk as a unifying and ubiquitous threat which makes taking responsibility for flood risk necessary.

Logics of preparedness

If logics of responsibilization promote a disposition of responsibilization, logics of preparedness represent the practical work through which such disposition is sought to be instantiated on the ground. Logics of preparedness characterise a series of practices that aim to ingrain habits of action and practice that prepare individuals and communities for the emergency to come. The preparation for future disruptive events takes place through simulations akin to scenario planning and exercises. In an exercise, subjects are asked to inhabit the event; they are exposed to experiential knowledge and asked to develop 'habits of action and thinking' (Adey & Anderson, 2012, p. 107) while the scenarios 'attune imagination to the unexpected, the rare, the uncertain' (Aradau & van Munster, 2007, p. 9). Unlike other modes of intervention, preparedness does not look to stop the future event from happening all together but rather aims to 'stop the *effects* of an event disrupting the circulations and interdependencies that make up a valued life' (Anderson, 2010, p. 791, *emphasis in original*). This is central in the definition of community resilience employed in the Scheme. Community resilience is defined as a process where communities 'help themselves and others to *prepare* and *respond* to, and to *recover* from emergencies' (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015, p. 30, *emphasis added*).

While only one Pathfinder developed an actual exercise, the general attitude cultivated through practices - like dry runs (sirens go off and information about flood response is given out by volunteers in an area), learning events, flood awareness programmes, community flood plans or in the setup and maintenance of flood groups and flood warden schemes - is one of establishing a link with the future emergencies, inhabiting the time interval until and after the emergency and developing habits of action and thinking in relation to the nature of expected emergencies. Such practices seek to introduce flood to both the individual and collective

imaginary as something that can and will eventually happen, mobilizing both cognition and affect in relation to the flood emergency. As the evaluation report concludes, the Pathfinders have contributed to 'increased community awareness, cohesion, empowerment, participation' and they have 'improved knowledge of the roles, responsibilities and flood risk' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 11). Awareness, planning, learning or knowing one's role and responsibility in relation to flood emergencies encourage individuals to talk about flood, to accept they need to talk about it, to break down its effects and operationalize responses to them, effectively providing a cognitive and affective link to the flood emergency to come. Furthermore, they are not asked to hypothetically inhabit only a projection (a simulation) of the emergency in the future, but also the interval up to and after the emergency. If the time until the emergency is not known (or the emergency can happen at any time), the habits of thinking and action are to be permanently repeated as there is no expiration date for when the emergency ends.

One other set of practices that helps ingrain preparedness habits of thinking and action relates to the installation of flood warning systems like rain and river gauges that monitor the level of rivers or rainfall and alert communities when such levels become critical. As presented by a member of a community that participates in the Scheme, the flood alert presents itself as both opportunity and necessity for cultivating these habits:

> In the event of another flood, I have actually got a personal flood plan […] for instance we had a flood alert on Friday and we very nearly got flooded again so I got a list of things that I do to make my house and myself more secure. For instance I make sure my animals are in the house, they are not in any kind of danger for themselves, and then I just got this checklist of things that I do, mainly to know, should anything happen, I have everything there. I always have a bag to help myself up with a torch, telephone numbers you know, very different things, if I needed to leave the house grab that bag, grab my animals and just leave (Community Flood group member)

Furthermore, after an actual emergency, the performance of the preparedness habits is to be resumed and potentially updated based on the flooding experience but always in relation to the next one, whose occurrence is unknown.

Preparedness requires its underlying practices to be repeated or iterated. In the implementation of the Pathfinders, it was found that sustaining the performance of habits required constantly maintained practice, since 'flood knowledge passes quickly' (DEFRA representative). For preparedness to persist, local authorities and the communities need to come in close contact according to the logic of equivalence, united by the common threat of flooding. As one of the Pathfinder Managers expresses, communities require 'an element of continuous involvement' while another appreciates that the maintenance of the resilience policies is 'infinite […] there isn't an end date to policies or the need for community resilience' (Pathfinder Managers). In the evaluation report, it is recognized that the interventions focused on the needs of the community rather than flood management institutions are more effective for flood resilience in the long term (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015). However, most of the key factors that provide legacy and continuity for the Pathfinders are centred around the local authority which needs to 'increase ownership of flood planning' or 'build on the approaches and tools developed by the Pathfinders for promoting practical flood resilience measures' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 185).

Logics of 'inverted' solidarity

These logics refer to practices that seek to enrol the interests of members of the community to work together, united against the threat of future flood events (adapted from Kolers, 2012). Whereas the previous two logics focus predominantly on the individuals, the logic of 'inverted' solidarity is centred at the community level and the relationships between individuals and the community as a whole.

To bring the communities together, the Scheme operates with the notion of community capital, which is an extension of the sociological notion of social capital (Putnam, 2000) and which conceptualizes the potential for mutualism, bonding and association in the community. Some of the practices that seek to cultivate community capital refer to community events or surgeries (including in schools), development of social and educational media for the community, organization of community engagement/learning events, establishment and development of flood groups, flood networks or flood warden schemes. Research shows that having community capital helps in the sense that members of the community are willing to help one another. However, 'this help is often spontaneous, unplanned, lacking in organisation and spatially limited' (Coates, 2010, p. 34). In addition, "merely having social capital in a community does not mean that it is readily instantiated into any form of hazard resilience" (Deeming *et al.*, 2008, p. 295, as cited in Twigger-Ross *et al.*, 2015). On the ground, among the Pathfinders, there is recognition that resilience needs to go beyond instances of mutualism and association in the event of an emergency.

To go beyond mutualism and association in practice, the Pathfinders seek to encourage a more general attitude of solidaristic community building in response to future emergencies. As such, they stress the importance of 'coming together as one' to assemble groups to respond to floods 'cohesively' or how 'working together' enables 'cumulative benefits' (Pathfinder Managers). While existing community capital plays a big role, the Pathfinders premise the efficiency of the flood response on the collective engagement of individuals in the community. The Evaluation Report stresses that 'community engagement is at the heart of the pathfinder scheme' and its long term focus lies in 'involving members of the community and local organisations in preparing for and responding to flooding' (Twigger-Ross *et al.*, 2015, p. 57), rather than only in post-disaster relief response. Furthermore, as a Pathfinder Manager suggests, community engagement becomes a duty between the members of the community, as non-participation weakens the collective response:

> In terms of community resilience I think it is important to come together as one, because it has an impact on the individual wellbeing, you might be resilient but if the next door neighbour doesn't have the same resilience it does have an impact on yourself. So working together you get a greater effect than individually (Pathfinder Manager)

The Scheme frames community resilience as solidaristic by (re)orchestrating the relations between individuals and changing the content and the direction of political engagement. Solidarity can be read here as a 'moral relation' that occurs when individuals or groups 'unite around some mutually recognized political need or goal in order to bring about social change' (Scholz, 2009, p. 208) and differs from mutualism or association because of its emphasis on

'solidarity-given duties' (Kolers, 2012, p. 366). The management of flood emergencies is casted by the Scheme as the political need that requires mutual recognition. Flood emergencies are relocated from the realm of government control and expertise into the everyday life of the community where individuals are asked to exercise their agency in solidarity, not in preventing their occurrence but in containing their effects. The meaning of the political here refers only to participation in policy, with no indication of how substantial this participation is in relation to decision making. The solidaristic engagement within communities needs to be read in conjunction with the logics of responsibilization and preparedness as their implementation is more efficient in the context of a collectively orchestrated response to emergencies. As such, individuals are encouraged to incur solidarity-given duties (obligations incurred specifically in relation to the participation in community resilience initiatives) and to recognize the long lasting benefits of 'working together' in order to enable 'cumulative benefits' and have a 'greater effect than [working] individually' (Pathfinder Managers).

By regarding the management of floods as a political issue in which they (now) have a stake, individuals are encouraged to gradually enact social change by altering material and institutional arrangements and subjective attitudes. However, this is not to reclaim some political terrain they have seemingly lost or are in need of, but to accommodate the political at the community level in terms of responsibilization and preparedness for flood events. This is a crucial point to highlight. As this logic is incentivised by Pathfinder-initiated practices, it cannot be simply characterized as solidarity. It needs to be qualified as 'inverted' solidarity, as its direction of travel is not from the people and towards the political structures, but the other way around. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Scheme and Pathfinders are oblivious to the fact that, to be solidaristic, any movement or engagement requires individuals to come together despite incompletely shared interests (Kolers, 2012). For the most part, the Scheme operates with understanding of community resilience applied to a 'romantic, united and unitary' conception of the community, devoid of the consideration of its contradictions and conflicts (Bulley, 2013, p. 271). As such, recognition of the tensions within the community is missing, while the consonance of interests between individuals is taken for granted. Overall, the subject encouraged by these three logics presented above appears similar to the neoliberal depoliticised one in the sense that is 'agential, but within the coordinates of the system' (Aradau, 2014, p.74), represented here by the prescriptions of the policy.

Articulation of community resilience

The previous section analysed some of the main logics that characterize the multitude of heterogeneous practices employed by the FCRS Pathfinders. However, in order to make the phenomenon of community resilience intelligible, the plurality of logics needs to be linked together and fused with other concepts and empirical phenomena to provide a complex yet 'singular explanation' (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 181). The question that is answered in this section is: 'How is community resilience articulated?' It will be argued that the articulation of community resilience depends on the emergence of a long governmental chain of responsibilization that aims to ingrain particular habits of thinking and action through processes of iteration.

The logics of responsibilization have presented the process by which the UK has shifted in the last two decades from structural defences to flood risk management, which incorporates social solutions with engineering solutions (Werritty, 2006). Structural defences involved major works of infrastructure commissioned from high level national agencies and delivered by experts at the regional level without the participation of the public, until a string of flood events starting in 1998 sparked lively debates that challenged this paradigm (Werritty, 2006). Community resilience policies seek to involve individuals and communities in the management of risk rather than simply dictating what needs to be done without their consultation. To deliver this, rather than imposing a top down direct and exclusive transfer and implementation of expert knowledge, a longer governmental chain of responsibilization between top agencies and individuals in the communities needs to be established.

In the case of the FCRS, the governmental chain of responsibilization is composed of a series of linkages that connect formal and informal structures with individuals in the communities. The first of these linkages involves the connections between the formal structures, involved in the top-down transfer of expert knowledge and resources for capacity building. The Scheme places the emphasis on having 'clear linkages and accountability' between these structures for these transfers to take place (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2014, p. 4). More particularly, the Scheme is initiated and promoted by DEFRA and implemented with the help of EA with further support provided by third sector agencies like National Flood Forum and input (of various intensities) by a plethora of other local and regional agencies, formal association and market agents.

The second set of linkages engages the formal structures with formalized organizations at the local level, mainly flood groups. The work carried out by Pathfinders suggest that a baseline (or common denominator) is established at the very local level (defined as one or two streets) where a flood group comes together. For a number of reasons, including shared agendas and 'possibly existing community capital', the very local level is where flood groups 'work best' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 140). This appears to be the level at which a flood group comes together more organically, since the Evaluation Report recognizes that this dynamic would be otherwise lost or not replicable at a wider geographical level. To counteract this, the suggestion is that 'networks are of central importance' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2014, p. 7-8) and flood groups should connect with wider community resilience groups, which in turn would 'facilitate links with wider structures and may streamline engagement with local councils' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 141). The wider networks, which can span up to regional levels, are achieved through the presence and intervention of cross-reaching actors like NFF, which can act as catalysts for the multiple resilience groups located in and on different geographical scales and regions.

The third set of linkages occurs between the more formal organizations, like flood groups and members of the community. Flood groups are important for fulfilling the role of a translation agent between the expert knowledge that comes from national agencies and local knowledge, according to the logic of equivalency. Involvement of individuals from the community means that the role of local knowledge is recognized as 'particularly useful in identifying the most appropriate approach to engagement and framing the initiative in a way that resonates with members of the community and encourages more participation' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p.

60). At the same time, experts from local authorities and NFF come together at the level of the flood groups to provide the expert input for flood groups to be 'set up and set off in a sustainable direction' (Twigger-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 141). Ideally, some of the knowledge that emerges from flood groups and the initiatives piloted at the community level can be shared across Pathfinders at low or no cost (DEFRA, 2012). At the national level, 'the sharing of practice across the Pathfinders and provision of a wide network of support' is done by national flood charities like NFF (Twigger Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 141).

The end goal of the chain of responsibilization is the level of the community, composed of individuals, their environment and the relations between them. At this level, the practices deployed in community resilience building rely mainly on processes of iteration or repetition. Whether it is about dispositions of responsibilization, habits of preparedness or bringing together incompletely shared interests for solidarity building, all of these require the underpinning practices to be reiterated with the intention of ingraining them among the individuals. The elongated nature of the chain of responsibilization through which community resilience seeks to be articulated is a far cry from the structural defences implemented exclusively top-down by experts. However, it also makes the chain and the articulation points between the linkages susceptible to failures.

Failure points in the chain of responsibilization

Potential failures are observable where the articulation points between particular linkages in the chain are endangered by conceptual incongruences or disconnects. The main claim is that these potential failure points do not only represent points where the chain of responsibilization fails to work as the policy making body intends, but that they also represent points where politics play out in practice. This claim will be illustrated with reference to the connection between flood groups and individuals in the community and the connections between individuals in the event of an emergency.

As discussed in the previous section, flood groups play an important role in the articulation of the chain of responsibilization. They act as translation devices between the expert knowledge of the agencies and the local knowledge coming from the community. As the Evaluation Report makes clear, the most successful approach to engaging the community and building long-term resilience is community led, in conjunction with institutions like local authorities or NFF. Furthermore, one of the main catalysts for community participation in flood groups is the involvement of key people, whether they be activists from the ranks of the community, engagement officers from local authorities or other stakeholder organizations. However, the evaluation report also states that communities are more receptive to members from their own ranks rather than institutional actors, like local authorities (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015). The effective medium of translation consists of multi-agency meetings between the flood groups and institutional agencies (i.e., local authorities, NFF representatives, other stakeholders, etc.):

> These meetings carry on a rolling-on basis because if you just have the one meeting many people say I will get back to you about that and they never do, the fact that you are giving communities a voice means that you are building relationships between each other and you are getting rid of

the barriers […] that is so empowering, for communities to know that they can be listened to (Pathfinder Manager)

The notion that 'pathfinder project officers would organise the first multi-agency meetings, then support flood groups to run the meetings themselves before finally withdrawing' is common in the Pathfinders (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015, p. 61). However, the Evaluating Report also concludes that while some Pathfinders have seen this initiative as an end point in itself, 'the resultant outcomes and sustainability are not yet apparent' (Twigger-Ross *et al*. 2015, p. 61). The more important point relates to how empowerment is framed here, as a function of the voices of the community being listened to. The community, however, is reduced to the members of the flood groups who feed in the issues salient to the community. As the quote below from one of the Pathfinders suggests, flood groups rely on a few key people who bring their own agendas to the discussion:

> The flood groups comprise mainly of retired, but busy community volunteers. The development of such groups takes considerable time and support. We have had moments of miscommunication that nearly led to the resignation of all flood group members from one group; we have seen conflicts in groups and a number of flood group members left since they wanted to find solutions to identified flooding problems i.e. pursue lobbying around dredging as opposed to other members who were happy to concentrate on resilience (Calderdale Pathfinder, as cited in Twigger Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 132).

However, the quote may also suggest that the issue is not simply a matter of miscommunication but is, in fact, one of political contestation. What to do about flood risk is far from being a technical problem needing correct answers and more a political exercise in which different ways of thinking about and acting on flood risk are often cast in antagonistic positions. At its core, a flood group embodies an ongoing political negotiation between contending narratives about how to manage floods.

The Evaluation Report omits questions of politics and frames engagement with the community along the lines of a one-sided awareness raising exercise, similar to an outreach program. To engage the communities, the Pathfinders resorted to piggy-backing on existing community groups and community events, to embedding flooding in wider social issues like housing or poverty or seeking to become a familiar presence in the community in order to build trust. The challenges to engagement are located by the Evaluation Report at the level of the individuals, in large part because of their unwillingness to perceive flooding as a relevant matter or because the precarity of their socio-economic status forces them to prioritise other aspects of their existence (Twigger Ross *et al*. 2015). The very one-sided nature of awareness raising suggests that the Pathfinders operate with the assumption that the presence of the flood group will have spill over effects, which will in turn trickle down among community members. The Scheme therefore comes to rely on the articulation of a policy narrative in which the interests and resilience of individuals and the community overall are presented not only as compatible but evolving in the same direction, failing to recognize any tensions between them.

To better illustrate the political stakes in building community resilience, attention needs to be paid not only to the latent tensions and incongruences between the individuals within the

community, but also to how these tensions and incongruences *emerge in the process of building resilience*. Logics of 'inverted' solidarity are central to community resilience building where individuals are encouraged from above to 'come as one' for a 'cohesive response'. For example, a policy consultant observed that social capital has a big role to play in delivering a better response to flood than individualised ones:

> Recent floods, this winter, because of the activities on that street, people were before the flood knocking on people's doors, people already had each other's car keys so they can move each other's cars if they weren't there […] which is another issue about PLP, if you are not in the house you cannot protect your property, but you got to have that cooperation along that street. That street is a community because they are interactive and helping each other and you would say that's improved their social capital because they are a much more resilient group of people (Policy consultant)

However, when the frame of reference is enlarged beyond the level of the street, the issues of 'knock-on' or 'ripple effects' reveal the complex nature of the flood event, where the interactions between all elements involved give rise to unexpected, hard to predict outcomes.

> If I start making it more complicated then it becomes difficult, is starts to become unstable because you can say they had moved their cars on another street it has an impact on another community, on another street, doesn't make their lives harder? It has an impact on the emergency services because they can't get to that street because the roads are blocked by all those cars, so there is lots of knock on ripple effects then the resilient become less resilient (Policy consultant)

When they move the car to another street, they are adapting to the negative stimuli of the flood event but they might set off an unexpected negative dynamic (in this case, a bottleneck) at a wider community level. This is an example of what is called 'emergence' in chaos and complexity theory, meaning that local adaptations at lower levels of complexity give rise to novel dynamics visible only at higher levels of complexity (for more on emergence see Mitchell, 2009).

Within the long chain of responsibilization, conditions of complexity set in motion a multiplicity of failure points which can propagate in divergent directions, exceeding the material, institutional and subjective arrangements prescribed through the policy. The propagation of failure points engenders differential effects which can turn, as seen in the quote above, into zero-sum outcomes, producing benefits for some at the expense of others. Community resilience does not represent a seamless collective integration of individual agencies which coordinate their response to an emergency. It is rather a messy, agonistic process in which individuals seek to optimise outcomes by prioritizing immediate positive adaptations, unaware of their unintended consequences in the context of the wider community. To act in a *resilient way* generates 'excess adaptive capacity' (Grove, 2014), meaning that individual and collective subject positions encouraged by the policy can be transgressed and new instances of individuals and collective agency can emerge, with both positive and negative effects. Contestations, zero-sum outcomes and agonism reveal the inherently political character of the failure points, while at the same time they carve spaces for disruptions, innovations or change.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed a policy initiative to build resilience in terms of both its implementation and the enabling governmental chain. It has argued that policies, which aim to build community resilience, are articulated through a long chain of responsibilization that seeks to ingrain, via processes of reiteration, specific habits and dispositions (responsibilization, preparedness, collective resilience building) at the community level. At the same time, it has also drawn attention to some of the potential failure points that occur in this chain of responsibilization. This is not to say that the potential failures presented in this paper are the only ones but rather that more research is needed to scrutinize the implementation of resilience policies. Indicating how and if resilience 'works' (whether in the positive way as empowerment for individuals or the negative one as responsibilization) should come primarily from this empirical line of inquiry, rather than derived from theoretical schemas.

One of the main implications of this research has been that the implementation of resilience policies like FCRS poses challenges to understanding resilience on the positive-negative spectrum. Failure points engender zero-sum outcomes and political contestations which alter the nature of the actual effects produced on the ground, exceeding the parameters prescribed by the policy. To place resilience in the empowerment or responsibilization box respectively, means ignoring the range of complexities that derives from their implementation. Here is where one of the main issues lie: in the absence of proper scrutiny of what implemented resilience policies actually achieve, there is the risk that policy practitioners (and even the academic commentariat) may recast the failures of resilience as proof that more resilience is needed. As resilience gradually moves from high-level official rhetoric to actual policy, there is a need for our critical investigations to shift from theoretical pronouncements of what resilience 'is' to what it 'does' or fails to do in practice.

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