



CONTEMPORARY BIOPOLITICAL SECURITY - An ESRC Seminar Series -

Second Workshop

The Biopolitics of Resilience

Claus Moser Research Centre
Keele University

18-19 June 2009

Organised by:

Dr Luis Lobo-Guerrero
(l.loboguerrero@intr.keele.ac.uk)

Dr Peter Adey

Biopolitics of Security Research Unit
Keele University

The Biopolitics of Security Research Unit at Keele University seeks to foster research on the biopolitics of security amongst academics, research students and the wider society.

Biopolitics of security is concerned with analysing the relations of power through which 'life' and forms of life are promoted and protected.

The Biopolitics of Security Research Unit is home to the Biopolitics of Security Network

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/lpj/bos/>

Programme

Thursday 18 June

13.00 – Registration and coffee

13.30 – Introduction:

-Luis Lobo-Guerrero and Peter Adey (University of Keele)
'The Biopolitics of Resilience'

14.00 –16:00 Panel 1: Ecologies

-Melinda Cooper (University of Sydney) and Jeremy Walker (University of Technology Sydney)
'Genealogies of Resilience: from Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation'

-Mike Hodson and Simon Marvin (University of Salford)
'Urban Ecological Security' A new urban paradigm?

-Doerthe Rosenau (King's College London)
'Leave it Alone!' - Genetic Engineering and the (Counter-)Discourse of Resilience'

16.00 – tea and coffee

16.30- 18.00

Keynote address:

Prof. Pat O'Malley (University of Sydney)

'Giving fear a respectable name': Military resilience, liberalism and scientific governance

19.00 – Drinks reception: Claus Moser Research Centre, lobby

19.30 – Workshop Dinner: Keele Hall

Friday 19 June

9.00-11:00 Panel 2: Scales

-Will Medd (Lancaster University)

'Flood, drought and the neoliberal resilience'

-Jon Coaffe and Marian Hawkesworth (Manchester University), and David Murakami Wood (Newcastle University)

'We are all risk managers now! The everyday impact of urban resilience against terrorism'

-Nadine Voelkner (Sussex University / Keele University)

'It's about prevention': human trafficking risk and resilience in Vietnam'

11.00-11.15 coffee

11.30-13.30 Panel 3: Science and Systems

-Judith Verweijen (University of Utrecht / Netherlands Defence Academy)

'Resilient communities: a new target of stabilization operations'

-Christopher Zebrowski (Keele University)

'The Resilience Apparatus: An interdisciplinary examination of resilience strategies'

Please register with:

Rosie Shepherd
Research Institute for Law,
Politics and Justice, Keele
University

r.shepherd@lpi.keele.ac.uk

-Peter Adey (Keele University), Steve Graham (Durham University), Ben Anderson (Durham University)

'Preparing for the end of the world as we know it'

13.30-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 Roundtable and conclusion

Introduction

Resilience is becoming a security policy buzzword in areas as diverse as environmental, terrorist, and economic risks. Bird flu, chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks, flooding and natural disasters, all loom over systems of production, exchange and the continuation of liberal life. Cities, in particular, have been positioned as most vulnerable to these threats and critical infrastructure protection has been elevated to higher levels of priority.

But how do governments, cities, societies, and economies withstand and bounce-back from such disastrous 'events'? How is life expected not only to *endure* but also to *return* to normal, either preserved or re-cast? How is life expected to 'reset' itself, snapping back into orderly patterns and routines? How are governments, agencies, organisations, and subjects to adapt and transform when disturbances unfold? This poses a challenge for contemporary liberal security policymaking.

However, there is no single language of resilience as evident in simultaneous resilience discourses, from US Homeland Security, to the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection, and to the UK Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Emergency preparedness has meant *preparing-for* the possible outcomes of all-hazards catastrophe, but there is no single understanding or logic of preparedness and catastrophe. In an act of 'letting go' (Foucault), different modes of resilience may assume that the event is inevitable, with the response up for grabs.

This workshop, the second of the Biopolitics of Security ESRC seminar series, seeks to examine the conception, en-action and experience of *resilience* as a practice of liberal security. It seeks to pose questions to historical and contemporary resilience strategies ranging from the genealogy of the concept to their conditions of possibility and operability, to their differentiation with other forms of security.

In particular, but not exclusively, the following questions will be pursued:

- Is resilience a defining feature of liberalism? Are other forms of resilience present in its different stages?
- What is particularly different about resilience discourses in relation to other practices of liberal security?
- What are the different rationalities and practices required for an idea of resilience to operate?

- What do analyses of resilience discourses and practices have to offer to the ways in which we understand contemporary liberal governance?
- Is resilience an exclusive feature of liberal forms of life?

The workshop is organised around three broad themes: ecologies, scales, and science and systems

Abstracts

Keynote Address:

‘Giving fear a respectable name’: Military resilience, liberalism and scientific governance

Pat O’Malley

University of Sydney

In World War I, hundreds of allied soldiers were executed for cowardice and desertion. By 1916, however, a new syndrome ‘shell shock’ was invented, and a new dilemma for military discipline created. Was the mental breakdown of troops a question of moral character and military discipline or a neurosis that only medical experts could treat? Military medicine had a particularly hard time, especially psychiatrists who were regarded with the deepest suspicion, even by many medical officers. As late as the end of World War II influential treatises still insisted that the ‘problem’ was to do with ‘will power’ and ‘character’.

Military governance seemingly preserved many 19th century liberal ideals into the mid-20th century and beyond, and diagnosis remained a strange (to our eyes) and conflict-ridden assemblage of the moral, medical and military. Psychiatry became fairly well ensconced as a technology for governing ‘mental casualties’ after World War II, particularly in the US, although always in tension with the military ethos. Eventually some stability was introduced into diagnosis by the invention of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the wake of the Vietnam War, and its inclusion in DSM-III in 1980. At last a lack of resilience was made scientific and the struggle seemed to be won by the ‘psy’ sciences. However, recently PTSD has been destabilised and trauma counselling questioned in much the same terms as in 1916. Renewed emphasis is being placed on individual ‘resiliency’ – the ability of people to withstand trauma. Willpower and self control have been reinvented as ‘coping strategies’ – but is this because of the ‘failure’ of PTSD? Or is it the latest episode in a much more enduring dilemma of liberal governance between enlightenment ideals of individual self reliance and the modernist tendency toward scientific government?

Panel I: Ecologies

Genealogies of Resilience: from Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation

Melinda Cooper

Department of Sociology and Social Policy
University of Sydney

Jeremy Walker

University of Technology Sydney

‘Resilience’ as an analytical category, an ontological quality of ‘systems’ and as managerial strategy has flourished, becoming near orthodoxy not only in its home turf in ecological monitoring and natural resource management, but infiltrating and extending into areas of the social sciences, in the lexicon of corporate management and finance, clinical psychology, community and development policy, public health and national security. Almost an explicit policy field in the US, it has converted terrorism, critical infrastructure protection, state-failure, natural disasters, and human-caused environmental risks (ie related to climate change) into a stream of events for a competitive industry of disaster response planning, logistical crisis response and public-private partnerships. Resilience has become a regular, if barely theorised, term of art in discussions of international finance and economic policy.

In this paper we construct a genealogy of resilience from the work of CS Holling, tracing its career in ecology where it organises a shift to a post-equilibrium concept of the ecosystem, to the more general application of the term in the recent work. In attempting to account for its wide reception in a neoliberal policy context, we turn to the later philosophy of FA Hayek, whose characterisation of the market as a complex, self-organising ‘spontaneous order’ we argue laid the ground for a biological ‘neoliberal avant garde’, that while politically aligned with the neoclassical economics of the Chicago school, were unsatisfied with its mechanical equilibrium models. Given that it is climate change *adaptation* (not prevention) that has provided the occasion for an ecological metaphor entering political economy, it is of particular interest that Holling’s general concept of ‘socio-ecological resilience’ absorbs uncritically the mainstream school of thought in economics that is opposed to any notion of ecological limits. Similarly, the anarcho-libertarian hostility to any intervention in the ‘spontaneous order’ of market capitalism follows Hayek in appropriating an ecological/systems metaphor despite being completely innocent of ecology and thermodynamics. Considering the consequences of this on the uptake of the term at the level of national security and international economic policy, we focus on the question of critical infrastructure, and the prospects of ‘resilience’ adapting to the crisis of neoliberalism by informing a ‘Green New Deal’.

‘Urban Ecological Security’ A new urban paradigm?

Mike Hodson

Centre for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures
University of Salford

Simon Marvin

Centre for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures
University of Salford

The term ‘ecological security’ is usually used in relation to attempts to safeguard flows of ecological resources, infrastructure and services at the national scale. But increasing concerns over ‘urban ecological security’ (UES) are now giving rise to strategies to reconfigure cities and their infrastructures in ways that help to secure their ecological and material reproduction. Yet cities have differing capacities and capabilities to develop strategic responses to the opportunities and constraints of key urban ecological security concerns such as resource constraint and climate change, and consequently these newly emerging strategies may selectively privilege particular urban areas and particular social interests over others. Consequently in this article we focus on world cities and outline the challenges posed by the growing concern for urban ecological security and review the emerging responses that may increasingly form a new dominant ‘logic’ of infrastructure provision, which we characterise as Secure Urbanism and Resilient Infrastructure (SURI). We conclude by addressing the extent to which this new dominant ‘logic’ underpins a new strategy of accumulation or a more ‘progressive’ politics, by outlining alternatives to SURI, possibilities to shape SURI more ‘progressively’ and developing an agenda for future research.

‘Leave it Alone!’ - Genetic Engineering and the (Counter-)Discourse of Resilience

Doerthe Rosenau

King’s College London

This paper will engage with the scientific context of discourses of resilience, in which the rise of complexity theory has led to a paradigmatic shift in the conceptualisation of life in the last decades. Instead of perceiving the evolution of life as taking place in a state of equilibrium, its productivity is ascribed to its evolution in ‘far-from-equilibrium conditions or at the edge of chaos’, through continual crises. This has fundamental consequences for the biopolitical imperative of ‘making life live’: instead of regarding catastrophes as something destructive, it is argued that they need to be conceived as a positive, strengthening factor for the development of life. In governmental practice, this implies a shift from the target of ‘securing’ a population from a threat to making it ‘resilient’ against it.

However, the paper will argue that in this context, the concept of resilience does not only serve discourses of governance, but also discourses of resistance, due to the fundamental paradox that emerges when complexity theory-influenced science is translated into governmental practice: While in science, the destruction of particular forms of life is considered unproblematic for the evolution of life as such, leading to the imperative of non-intervention, the target of governance is the strengthening of a particular form of life through intervention.

A good example for the concept of resilience becoming one of resistance is the discourse around genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Resilience, defined as 'the capacity of an ecosystem to tolerate disturbance without collapsing into a qualitatively different state', is invoked by GMO-opponents to argue against genetic engineering (conceived as human intervention) by pointing to eco-systemic boundaries. The paper will show that governmental organisations, such as the EC, are not equipped to incorporate this understanding of systemic resilience into their governmental practice. It will therefore pose the question whether the (counter-) discourses of resilience does not fundamentally challenge governmentality as such.

Panel II: Scales

Flood, drought and the neoliberal resilience

Will Medd

Geography Department
Lancaster University

Somewhat ironically it was not the drought of 2006 that saw people in England queuing for bottles of water because supply had been cut off, but the floods of 2007. This paper contrasts the strategies of managing drought and flood in England as a case study through which to unpack what neo-liberal approaches to 'resilience' look like in practice. Both flood and drought have provoked significant debate in England, particularly in the context of climate change, about how to manage the future threat of droughts and of floods. Drawing on research conducted on the 2006 Droughts in the south east of England, and the 2007 Floods in the north east of England, the paper introduces the story of 'flood' and 'drought' by examining the ways in which forms of resilience are manifest across scale - from the lived experience of flood and drought to regional strategy. Through these accounts of the paper reflects on the value of the concept of resilience as a multiplicity and on the limits that particular neoliberal framings of resilience pursue.

We are all risk managers now! The everyday impact of urban resilience against terrorism

Jon Coaffee

School of Environment and Development
Manchester University

Marian Hawkesworth

Centre for Urban Policy Studies
Manchester University

David Murakami Wood,

Global Urban Research Unit
University of Newcastle

Since 2001 resilience has become a key policy discourse underpinning UK emergency planning and national security. Although the emergence of resilience as a central strand of policy was initially stimulated by non-terror events, such as the foot and mouth crisis, the impact of 9/11 has sped up reform of emergency planning policy in an attempt to ensure that the UK is prepared and able to cope with a catastrophic terrorist incident. The array of policy tackling resilience work, in many cases with only a loose attachment to countering terrorism, has grown rapidly, raising a series of critical questions related to how a discourse on resilience impacts upon everyday life. Drawing from the results of a series of RCUK funded research projects, and work with a host of resilience policy makers and practitioners at all tiers of Government, this paper will highlight both the conceptual underpinnings, and implications, of resilience with specific regard to countering the threat of terrorism. First, we unpack what we *mean* by resilience in this context, and analyse how it came to form the bedrock of emergent UK security policy in the wake of 9/11. Second, we ground these ideas in the everyday city in order to highlight how the function of resilience *policy* has been expanded over time to encompass a host of social and economic issues. We conclude, by assessing the potential *impact* of recent government assertions made in the national resilience policy documents, that citizens, professionals or educators have a role to play in countering the threat of terrorism, in particular against crowded public places. As a method, we look through the lens of responsibilities being ‘passed down’ from the State, and then through the social and emotional implications of attempts to embed resilient design features into the built fabric of cities which we argue has the potential to significantly change the everyday experience of urban space.

‘It’s about prevention’: human trafficking risk and resilience in Vietnam

Nadine Voelkner

University of Sussex
Visiting Research Fellow
Biopolitics of Security Research Unit
Keele University

In this paper, I discuss the hybridisation of governmental practices in Vietnam as a consequence of the strategic intervention, rationalised in terms of

resilience, of an assemblage of human security. The strategy of preventing populations-at-risk from becoming (re-)trafficked within the Mekong sub-region and beyond-promoted in Vietnam since 2000 by a variant global assemblage-effectively translates to minimising the risk of trafficking by enhancing the resilience of targeted populations. This involves sponsoring the adoption in Vietnam of a set of specific governmental practices-broadly construed. Herein included is biopolitics by institutions extending from state agencies and Vietnamese mass organisations to commune schools. It includes the technology of self-responsibilisation exercised by at-risk-people and -communities as well as the assembling of a networked political machinery operating across and beyond the state. The necessary conditions of possibility for the development of these governmental practices, however, were found wanting in the specific political context of Vietnam as indeed in the ways the human security assemblage itself operates. In the paper, I elaborate on the conditions of possibility for the development of the strategy of prevention first envisioned and draw attention to the hybrid governmental practices to which it is nonetheless giving rise.

Panel III: Science and Systems

Resilient communities: a new target of stabilization operations

Judith Verweijen

Centre for Conflict Studies
University of Utrecht/
Faculty of Military Sciences
Netherlands Defence Academy

Military strategies in the context of nationbuilding enterprises and counter-insurgency operations increasingly rely on biopolitical tools from the humanitarian and development toolbox. The restoration or improvement of basic community infrastructure in such fields as healthcare, education and agriculture are for example an integral part of the tasks of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan. The rationale for such interventions is no longer exclusively related to narrow purposes of force protection as described in the NATO civic doctrine, but is derived from a multidimensional understanding of the concept of 'stability' that has recently gained currency in strategic thinking on low intensity warfare and counter-insurgency.

Based upon an extensive analysis of stabilization and counter-insurgency doctrines, strategies and operational practices, this paper explores the conception and en-action of current military discourses on 'stabilization', with a special focus on (re) presentations of 'local communities'. It shows how the penetration of systems-thinking in the military, a trend that has been accelerated by the institutionalisation of network-centric warfare, has influenced the notion of 'stability' in-theatre. An area of operations is

increasingly perceived as a system in which a self-reproducing state of equilibrium must be attained. In order to realize this objective, local communities, the main nodes of this system, must be made resilient to external shocks such as insurgents' attacks. This changing concept of 'stabilization' has led to an increasing emphasis on identifying and addressing the 'root causes' of instability at the local level, as illustrated for example by the US military's use of the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework (TCAF).

This concept of stabilisation shares sustainable development's objective of creating a homeostatic universe of self-reliant communities as described by Duffield (2007). It is also closely related to humanitarian aid's increasing emphasis on Disaster Preparedness, which is based on the same logic of achieving community resilience to systemic shocks. Stabilisation's adoption of the non-material and non-political notion of development as to be found in sustainable development and humanitarianism discourses have allowed it to become a fundamentally depoliticized concept. Achieving 'stability' by enhancing the self-reliance of local communities is a predominantly technocratic process of getting the development inputs right.

Finally, this paper will briefly reflect upon the wider impacts of the changing concept of 'stabilisation' for liberal peacebuilding interventions. Will the new emphasis on local level 'stability' lead to a shift away from rebuilding national-level state institutions? And what are the consequences for the conceptualization of humanitarian and development aid interventions?

The Resilience Apparatus: An interdisciplinary examination of resilience strategies

Christopher Zebrowski

Biopolitics of Security Research Unit
Keele University

The discussion of resilience with regards to Critical Infrastructure Protection all too often narrowly examines only technological solutions to optimizing the resilience of critical infrastructures of advanced liberal societies to interruption or attack.¹ However, a cursory examination of the practices of the UK Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) suggests that engendering resilience is more than simply a technological exercise. Tracing the development of resilience within three separate academic disciplines—namely computer science, psychology and ecology—this paper will discuss how these understandings of resilience differ, and then locate these different understandings of resilience within the resilience discourse of the CCS. The synthesis of these three resilience discourses within the operations of the CCS

¹ Sean P. Gorman, *Networks, Security and Complexity: The Role of Public Policy in Critical Infrastructure Protection* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2005), Lewis J. Perelman, "Shifting Security Paradigms: Towards Resilience," in *Critical Thinking: Moving from Infrastructure Protection to Infrastructure Resilience* (George Mason University, 2007).

represents a specific security assemblage that can be referred to, following Foucault's idea of a *dispositif*,² as a 'resilience apparatus.'

Preparing for the end of the world as we know it

Peter Adey

Biopolitics of Security Research Unit
Keele University

Steve Graham

Centre for the Study of Cities and Regions, Geography Department
Durham University

Ben Anderson

Centre for the Study of Cities and Regions, Geography Department
Durham University

The world has ended many times over. Threats to life as we know it have been played and replayed by emergency planning exercises which construct and perform multi-hazard scenarios. From biological and explosive terrorist attacks, flooding, to the outbreak of disease, exercises rehearse and prepare for the unfolding of catastrophic potentialities which threaten to disturb the everyday. However, the awe with which we treat the apocalyptic is not necessarily met by contemporary securitisation. In an attempt to govern complex and emergent contingent effects, we explore how exercises meet complex systems with their own. By examining the design and planning of an exercise - an artificial system - the paper investigates how the banal processes of complex organisational logistics and sequencing, furnish emergency planners with experiential proficiency. Equipped to tightly manage complex systems, exercises also set in motion a cascade of uncertainties, tests and challenges of response. Arming planners with an expertise in emergence, exercises generate an excess of 'lessons learnt' and 'useful outcomes'. The result is that the apocalypse is made banal.

² Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-1978* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).