



# SECURITY, GEOPOLITICAL CAPABILITY, SOCIETAL RESILIENCE AND THE PUBLIC POLICIES TO ENFORCE IT

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Resilience became a concept of first importance for today's hybrid threats and conventional turbulences, even full-fledged wars in Europe. But since there is a number of theories and definitions of this concept, some type of rationale should be made, as for the instruments needed to measure the level of resilience of states, nations and societies. Moreover, there are a lot of projects, attempts and possibilities to do that, coming from different disciplines and fields of research which also need to be rationalized. More importantly, we need to find a proper set of indicators to show us an actor's level of resilience in order to therefore propose a solution and public policies to enforce it. That is our aim in a multi-institutional approach to be launched in the near future. The most problematic part is that of finding suitable measurable items in order to describe some of the criteria for resilience that need to be approached in order to create a map of indicators and to deal, therefore, with a resilience level improvement.

**Keywords:** resilience; competitiveness; geopolitical capability; societal security.

## Resilience and conceptual reference terms

Resilience is the capacity of an actor – be it state, nation, society, company, city or human community of any kind – to survive and to recover from the turbulences coming from the day-by-day life. This general approach has several developing ways since studies have proven that nations are more resilient or less capable of surviving in the history even though they are facing the normal day-by-day life and not any type of cataclysm, natural disaster or manmade crises (Daron and James 2013, 529) (Kissinger 2015, 350) (Bremmer 2012, 229). So, the first idea was how to compare nations and why some survived, some developed and some other were absorbed or dissolved. That is a first line of research dealing with how to compare nations.

On the same trend, the next level of concern was about the crisis. There is an external factor that impacts states, nations or societies and can completely destroy those actors. So, resilience would be the capacity to survive and recover from the impact of such crisis. We would prefer this definition and line of thinking approach (Chifu 2018a, 23-30) (Chifu 2022a), with a

cognitive-institutional (Stern 2001, 299) in order to judge crisis decision making and sustainability of those actors (Chifu 2019, 335) (Chifu and Ramberg 2007, 387) (Chifu and Ramberg 2008, 352). But the preparedness and anticipation of crises prove to be the most important part of the resilience, specifically exercises, prevention and reaction in time of crisis. And this has to do with the early warning systems and with the prospective studies (Chifu 2015, 38-45) (Chifu 2022d) (Chifu 2022b).

Here too, a new value is added since we do not know to anticipate each and every crisis, so we need beyond the horizon scanning and capacity to foresee possible future crisis and types of crises, or what we usually call "new crisis", in order to prepare and prevent the impact, specifically to raise awareness and resilience.

Another line of thinking is linking security with resilience (Chifu 2022c). And it seems as natural as possible: when an actor is facing threats, risks and vulnerabilities, his level of resilience can be measured according to the capacity to deal and manage those security turbulences. But here, too, we need to pay attention to the nature of the actor involved in the estimation of the resilience, since there is a lot of literature discussing type of antagonism between security and democracy (including in the democratic states), but also

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between security of the state and institutions and security of the nation, societal security and the state security or security of different communities and that of the whole society (Chifu, Oazu and Oleksandr 2008). The whole dichotomy is debatable, but we need to consider, when it is up to national resilience, what we are talking about and how we have to estimate the balances once inside a democratic society.

Studies have proven that an important part of the instruments used in order to raise resilience are linked with the narrow niche of competitiveness (Chifu 2018b). As much as nations and societies are prepared in this field, they can face better resilience as long as their competitiveness is at a highest level. Since 2018, RAND Co has identified the basic indicators for a human community a different actor competitiveness. This emerged into a study developed solely on the fundamental criteria of a society that becomes a competitive actor, which proves to be a resilient one, at the same time (Mazarr 2022).

Another line of thinking has pointed out to studies quantifying the geopolitical capability of a state, nation or community, with a very balanced combination of indicators that represent and aggregate a summum of qualities that mirror the capability of a country (Roger 2019) – exceeding the usual evaluations of power, military power, economic resources and political leadership that are coming from the same family of thinking about the perspectives of resilience. For sure, a resilient country is not necessarily a powerful one, yet the geopolitical capability can provide us with numerous useful indicators for measuring resilience.

### **Resilience and its instruments in NATO and EU frameworks**

NATO and the EU are institutions that have introduced resilience recently in the core of their documents especially after an important development of the hybrid threats that require a cooperation of the state and its institutions, the society and the citizens (Chifu 2018). It has been the same in tackling terrorism and radicalization, but with a lower level of impact once citizens do not cooperate with the institutions. Hybrid threats are one issue where this cooperation needs to happen, but it is subject to numerous conditions,

the main one being the trust in the institutions, the authorities and their aim of protecting societies and each of the citizens. This is not easy to achieve.

NATO has proven to be more practical due to its focus on the objectives that the organization has. This refers to the security approach, to the resilience at the level of the state and society alike, considering each and every member state a democracy, too. It also refers to both national and societal resilience and to the protection of critical infrastructure. Societal security is seen as limiting the vulnerabilities of a society in order to face attacks and coercion (NATO 2022) and to safeguard societies, populations and common values (NATO 2021).

There are seven basic requirements or condition quantified by the Alliance:

- 1) ensuring the governance continuity and the critical governmental services;
- 2) constant and sustainable energy supply at affordable prices;
- 3) ability to confront and cope efficiently with the uncontrolled migration of individuals;
- 4) constant water and food resources for the population;
- 5) ability to manage high level casualty crises;
- 6) functional and resilient communication systems at all times;
- 7) ensuring resilient transportation systems (Shea 2016).

The European Union also has a strategic document, the Strategic Compass, defining resilience (European Union 2022). It is a combination between the security approach and crisis approach to resilience, in this case too. The themes involved focus on climate change, disasters and civil emergencies. The EU, however, is also looking into the economic resilience, discussing supply chains, transport routes, freedom of navigation, supplies security. Societal resilience is focused on informational warfare and democracy insisting on securing access to credible information and independent media, tackling manipulation and foreign interference at an informational space level, but also the resilience of democratic processes and that of the society facing disruptive technologies used by the strategic competitors of the EU or by third states.



### Projects and indicators useful in resilience evaluation

There are different levels of projects and indicators useful in the evaluation of the resilience and societal resilience. In some cases, we have clear quantifiable and measurable indicators. In some other, the sense of the approach to resilience indicators is less mature and has just a formulation of the idea to be measured or the phenomenon that need a Cartesian approach. In the third category, we just have a detailed evolution, trend or track of an event and we need to figure out how we can obtain a useful indicator that really reflects and quantifies the trend of a developing event.

For instance, if we look at the project of competitiveness, the relevant characteristics of the actors aim at democracy and freedoms versus authoritarianism and closed, dictatorial regimes, nationalism (Mazarr, Blake, et al. 2018). They are related to the strength and depth of national identity, the degree of revisionism, measured at the level of international actors and the continuous evolutions aimed at increasing access to the distribution of goods; increasing the relative relevance of the state; increasing the global relevance and influence of one's system of values and ideology; changing the rules governing the system; increasing its relevance in establishing the new set of rules.

Then, the theoretical grounds for a competition between international actors introduces the differentiation between these moderate and the most militaristic revisionist approaches: a repeated violation of international rules for the concerned actor's unilateral benefit; territorial ambitions and the desire to create a sphere of influence through military aggression, to be militarily dominated; a vision of the international order as deeply illegitimate, created against them, hence the need not for reform, but complete and profound change, even for the complete destruction of this order.

The recommendations of the study – which point out also to resilience needs in a competitive environment - refer specifically to setting a suitable and feasible actors' level of ambition at the level of managing these developments and competition respectively and, to a lesser extent, to plan to win this competition. Predictability and the evolution management for those processes are the main goals proposed, to avoid their excess and lack

of management in change and competition per se, competition for the sake of competition or achieved victories, which is interpreted as a high-risk game. Also, the option limits spending and wasting resources, which is much more important during this period.

The capacity of the states was subject to a study (Roger 2019) undergone by Henry Jackson Society, as a continuity of studies on geopolitical capacity coming on a trend since 1944 (Fox 1944), with the first "Composite Index of National Capability" (Singer, Bremer and Stuckey 1972) issued in 1960. The current Composite Geopolitical Capability Index (Roger 2019) contains four combined weighted average indices, as follows:

- National base – representing 20% – made up of national welfare (10%), population structure (6%), national distribution (3%) and the self-sufficiency of resources and capabilities (1%).

- The national structure – representing 40% – with three pillars, five indicators, respectively the economic pillar representing a share of 15%, activity and technological achievements (10%) and cultural prestige (15%).

- National instruments – representing 30% – with two pillars, five indicators, diplomacy (15%) and the military instrument (15%).

- National determination (actually measuring the will) – representing 10% –, consisting of four indicators, governance effectiveness (7%), economic determination, strategic determination and altruistic determination (1% each).

As subjective as the system may be, the approach deserves to be considered in terms of future development and adaptation capacity, in terms of the premises and conclusions obtained by the study.

### Balance and its role in developing public policies for enforcing resilience in a society

After a 15-month research, Michael J Mazarr has produced a study about the elements that make a society both competitive and resilient (Mazarr 2022). It is true that each and every classic characteristic of a state like military capabilities, reinforced defence, investments in defence and deterrence, in key technologies, economic capacities all are making the difference on the substance of power, but also on a state and nation level of resilience. Mazarr brings to life

multiple cases where this is not enough, and those characteristics of power are insufficient to explain resilience and success in other cases where the ingredients for a victory are different and coming from different other sources.

The explanation for the success in this type of competition is coming from resilience specifically, in this case from the fundamental qualities of a society to generate economic productivity, societal cohesion and national will, characteristics that have proven to be important and even making the difference in a war, as for winning a competition and forging resilience (Lyal 2022). The long live of a verified and adaptable system and the ability to offer security and prosperity to its own society are fundamental elements of success in bilateral rivalries at a global level.

The study has proposed seven fundamental societal characteristics, all of them part of societal resilience, even though far from being easily able to be quantified or spread in a number of useful indicators. The work in this field is ahead of us:

- national ambition;
- shared opportunities and competitive access for all citizens;
- a common and coherent national identity;
- an active state;
- efficient social institutions;
- a major interest for learning and adaptation;
- a significative degree of diversity and pluralism in the society (Mazarr 2022).

For sure, the study does not rule out the

perspective of the involvement of other factors inside the resilience, like natural disasters, pandemics or geography, which play their role in assessing the societal capacities that could lead to success. And those could not be necessarily linked to the seven characteristics evoked previously. So, all those could be added and discussed inside a dynamic approach of the societies, not only into a static and substantiated format of those characteristics.

However, one of the most interesting Mazarr findings in his study is that all those seven clusters of characteristics, all important for the perspective of resilience and competitiveness, should be addressed in a balanced way. In other words, if one or more characteristics reach the peak, some other lagging behind, we will have a less resilient society than the original one. The excess of each of those benefic characteristics is harming dramatically all the other as well as the entire society, leading to important and even catastrophic side effects.

That is an important lesson learned once we would like to move to public policies in order to enforce the resilience of a society, because all those terms should be approached at the same time, and the monitoring of the evolution of the resilience and competitiveness in that society should be made timely and thoroughly in order to build up a balanced set of resilience characteristics for the society, maintaining both its democratic characteristics and the level of resilience and competitiveness that we are hoping to achieve.

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