



1 **Review article: Towards a context-driven research: a state-of-the-art**

2 **review of resilience research on climate change**

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9 **Abstract**

10 Since the 1970s, Holling's socio-ecological systems (SES) approach has been a most predominant
11 theoretical force in resilience research in the context of the climate crisis. From Holling's approach,
12 however, two contrasting scientific approaches to resilience have developed, namely, naturalism and
13 constructivism. While naturalist resilience research takes SES as complex systems marked by non-
14 linearity and evolutionary changes, constructivist resilience research focuses on the embeddedness of
15 SES in heterogenous contexts. In naturalist resilience research resilience is defined as a system
16 property, while in constructivist resilience research resilience is politically loaded and historically
17 contingent. The aim of this paper is to review and structure current developments in resilience
18 research in the field of climate change studies, in terms of the approaches, definitions, models and
19 commitments that are typical for naturalism and constructivism; identify the key tension between
20 naturalist and constructivist resilience research in terms of the widely discussed issue of adaptation
21 and transformation, and discuss its implications for sustainable development; and propose a research
22 agenda of topics distilled from the adaptation-transformation tension between naturalist and
23 constructivist resilience research.

24

25 Keywords: adaptive resilience, climate change, constructivism, naturalism, SES, transformative
26 resilience, transformational adaptation

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28

29 **1. Introduction**

30

31 Since the publication of Crawford Stanley Holling's 'Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems'
32 (1973), the notion of resilience has become increasingly popular in a wide variety of scientific
33 disciplines. Used as a concept, framework, style of thinking, metaphor or discourse, resilience appears



34 attractive as a theme for interdisciplinary research, including the bridging of the social sciences and
35 engineering (Thorén, 2014). For resilience research, Holling's socio-ecological systems (SES) approach
36 has been widely adopted, and reinterpreted, as a lens that helps elucidate human-nature interactions
37 (Ostrom, 2007). In the SES approach, which emerged in the 1970s, societies are thought to exist in
38 continuous interaction with their surrounding natural, political, social, cultural, economic and
39 technological environments. Hence, climate change is not merely ecological change, but is first of all a
40 reformation of established modes of thought (including conceptualizations of 'nature' and 'society'),
41 of lifestyles and consumer habits, of production patterns, of health issues, of law, economy, science,
42 technology, governance and politics (the typical research topics for the social sciences) (cf. Douglass
43 & Wildavsky, 1983; Blühdorn, 2013; Fischer, 2017; Dryzek & Pickering, 2019). The SES approach is
44 adopted by the Resilience Alliance, whose flagship journal, *Ecology and Society* (established in 1995),
45 provides a platform for SES-based resilience research. The SES approach has not only been popularized
46 but also recast and incorporated in other theoretical approaches. In fact, in resilience research, SES is
47 typically redefined as complex systems, that is, it is incorporated in the context of the complexity
48 theory approach. Since its development in the 1940s, complexity theory has been a widely adopted
49 theoretical approach in the naturalist social sciences.

50 Since the Tsunami in 2004, Katrina (2005), the global economic crisis (2007-2008), Fukushima
51 Daiichi (2011), and recent El Niño events, and increased urgencies of the climate crisis (and calls for
52 climate action), the political, social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological contexts in which
53 resilience research takes place have changed (Pizzo, 2015). Such climate disasters and crises have
54 revealed that vulnerability is not a function solely of exposure to natural hazards, but it is a function of
55 multiple dimensions of social, cultural, political and economic disadvantage (Tierney, 2015; Lockie,
56 2016). Since 2010, global governance actors and national and local governments – including the
57 Rockefeller Foundation's 100 resilient cities program – have developed resilience discourses in which
58 relationships between governments, citizens and denizens are being ideologically reconfigured. Such
59 policy discourses of bouncing back after crises and catastrophes have triggered new resilience



60 practices, such 'resilience humanitarianism' based on the idea of crisis as a new normality (Hilhorst
61 2018). These policy discourses and practices have ignited new resilience research, new outlets (such
62 as the interdisciplinary journal *Resilience* (established in 2013)), and the establishment of resilience
63 research programs in universities around the world. With the increased scientific interest in resilience
64 topics, scientific approaches to resilience rapidly diversify. Many publications of the past decade
65 address the development of different definitions and understandings of resilience. Resilience research
66 is no longer primarily naturalist. The naturalist approach to resilience is now balanced by constructivist
67 scientific approaches that enrich resilience research. This is particularly so in the field of anthropogenic
68 climate change, where fundamental changes in the governance of the earth system are urgently
69 required, if extreme catastrophes and associated suffering and oppression are to be avoided (Redman,
70 2014; Yanarella & Levine, 2014; Lockie, 2016; Dryzek & Pickering, 2019).

71 The aim of this paper is to retrace the current directions of naturalist and constructivist
72 resilience research – and thereby order contemporary debates in a diversified and rapidly changing
73 field of resilience research –, ultimately to identify upcoming research themes for the coming years.

74 First, current scientific approaches in resilience research are reconstructed in terms of the differences
75 between naturalist and constructivist resilience research in the social sciences. While naturalist
76 resilience research typically defines resilience to climate change as a physical property (like atoms,
77 mass, molecules, cells, DNA, etc.) of complex systems, constructivist resilience research defines
78 resilience as a political phenomenon that is historically embedded in a changing social, cultural,
79 political, economic, scientific, technological environment. Naturalism and constructivism are
80 presented as two scientific approaches with different epistemological and ontological assumptions,
81 that, to advance resilience research to a next level, need to be bridged. Second, contemporary key
82 issues of debate in naturalist and constructivist resilience research are identified. Ultimately, naturalist
83 and constructivist resilience research clashes on the issue of system adaptation and transformation in
84 a context of severe disturbances or shocks that come with climate change, such as hurricanes, floods,
85 drought and heatwaves. The tension between adaptation and transformation has, amongst other



86 things, implications for social scientific enquiry into the sustainable energy transformation, the
87 relationship of resilience research to sustainability discourses, and the response of resilience research
88 to new political and technological circumstances. **Third**, naturalist and constructivist directions for
89 future resilience research are identified, including the bridging of naturalist and constructivist
90 resilience research, with an emphasis on the likely impact of changing conditions – particularly in
91 ecological, political and technological dimensions – on the questioning, theorizing, and modes of
92 analysis in resilience research.

93

94

95 **2. The diversification of resilience research** 

96

97 It has been widely noticed that resilience is a concept with various meanings. Resilience is a topic that,
98 in European literature, is first encountered in one of Aesop's fables, with a tree bending to a strong
99 wind and is thereby left unharmed. As an English word, resilience derives from Latin (*resilire*), which
100 means rebounding. This Latin word can be found in Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* and Cicero's
101 *Orations* (Alexander, 2013; Pizzo, 2015). Up to the early nineteenth century, this is the predominant
102 understanding of resilience in common language, until engineers come to employ the term to describe
103 properties of materials and the capacity of materials to absorb stresses and release energy, and
104 recover their original form, without breaking or disfiguring, after undergoing some external shock or
105 disturbance, such as an extreme weather event (Estêvão, Calado & Capucha, 2017; Bergström, 2018;
106 Davoudi, 2018). In the 1950s, psychologists turn to resilience to analyze the coping mechanisms of
107 concentration camp survivors; later, the concept is used to study all sorts of trauma, misfortune,
108 adversity, stress and mental recovery (Bourbeau, 2015; Estêvão, Calado & Capucha, 2017; Bergström,
109 2018; Schwartz, 2018). In the 1970s, the ecologist C.S. Holling (1973: 14) redefines resilience as 'a
110 measure of the persistence of systems and their ability to absorb change and disturbance.' Holling



111 incorporates resilience in a socio-ecological systems (SES) approach to analyze the stability of
112 ecological assemblages as conditioned by, and conditioning, societies. Hence, in Holling's work,
113 resilience has a relational and systemic focus in scientific enquiries into how nature and society interact
114 – a line of enquiry that brings the social sciences, the natural sciences and engineering together in an
115 overarching SES framework (Alexander, 2013; Bergström, 2018; Béné et al, 2018; Hoekstra,
116 Bredenhoff-Bijlsma & Krol, 2018). One could say today that a ubiquitous concept like resilience
117 expresses a 'governmental philosophy of nature and society' (Walker & Cooper, 2011: 145), the ability
118 par excellence to survive conflict and crisis.

119 In the social sciences, resilience research that has emerged from Holling's SES approach has
120 developed in two contrasting directions. In resilience research, resilience to climate change can mean
121 many different things – including a concept, metaphor, ideology, governing rationality, policy, etc.
122 (Anderson, 2015) –, yet, the particular meaning of resilience that is enacted in resilience research is
123 typically either naturalist or constructivist. Naturalism is a type of science that seeks to explain the
124 world in the manner of the natural sciences, with the world being modelled as consisting of physical
125 properties (Aiken, 2006; Floridi, 2017). Resilience is likewise defined as one of the system properties
126 (Hoekstra, Bredenhoff-Bijlsma & Krol, 2018). In naturalist research, resilience is defined as a system
127 property: resilience is an essential measure of the dynamic equilibrium or survivability of a socio-
128 ecological system. By contrast, constructivism is a type of science that denaturalizes and historicizes,
129 in the sense that it defines phenomena like resilience as a historically contingent social construct. It is
130 focused on heterogenous contexts of natural and social science itself – contexts marked by diversity
131 of (contested) knowledges, values, practices and meanings. It is more critical and politically sensitive.
132 It typically expresses concern for issues of equity, domination, 'climate change gentrification' and
133 'climate apartheid' in resilience research. Its key concern and research focus is typically environmental
134 and climate justice, which refer to (un)equal distribution of environmental burdens, struggles for
135 recognition, claims to participation, and unequal impacts of anthropogenic climate change (Braun,
136 2014; Yanarella & Levine, 2014; Skillington, 2015; Sjöstedt, 2015; Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2015;



137 Pizzo, 2015; Lockie, 2016; Derickson, 2016; Lyster, 2017; Schlosberg, Collins & Niemeyer, 2017;
138 Mummery & Mummery, 2019). Duffield (2016), for instance, refers to digital humanitarianism as a
139 'resilience of ruins'. Davoudi (2018: 5) introduces the notion of 'unjust resilience' (marked by the
140 systematic neglect of marginalized people). And Glaser et al (2018: 3) refer to 'undesirable resilience',
141 'bad resilience' and 'wicked resilience'.

142

143 **2.1. The naturalist view on resilience**

144

145 Naturalist social research, which has its origins in the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle of
146 the 1920s and 1930s, mainly developed in the context of the Cold War, with the development of
147 cybernetics, computational power and automation (and automated decision making) (Simborski, 2006;
148 Floridi, 2017; 2018; Davoudi, 2018). Naturalist social studies are based on the cybernetic idea that
149 machines, organisms and societies show considerable similarity in structure and function; and can be
150 described in terms of (the metaphor of) systems. Since the 1940s, such studies have typically adopted
151 complexity theory as their distinctive overarching theoretical outlook, within which other theories (for
152 instance, on behavioral change, decision making under risk, or social institutions) are incorporated. In
153 complexity theory, ecology and society are modelled as complex, non-linear, evolutionary systems.
154 Such systems are composed of many components (properties, agents, resources, governance
155 systems). And these components interact with each other, in response to ever-changing environments
156 (Walsh-Dilley & Wolford, 2015; Juncos, 2017; 2018). Hence, resilience to climate change is a matter of
157 evolution: in naturalist social science resilience is presented as 'evolutionary resilience' (Pizzo, 2015:
158 137; Davoudi, 2018: 4). When this type of science comes to embrace Holling's SES approach in the
159 1970s, it incorporates the notion of resilience within the context of its complexity theoretic orientation
160 (Wiese, 2016; Bergström, 2018). The ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity is found in the
161 capacities and relations between multiple agents that are able to interact and self-organize, learn and



162 adapt (in an incremental or transformative way) making the system flexible in absorbing shocks and
163 developing in face of changes (Jesse, Heinrichs & Kuchshinrichs, 2019).

164 Since the 1970s, when it emerged from mathematical sociology, agent-based modelling (ABM)
165 is a much endorsed tool used in complexity-theoretic research for analyzing complex, non-linear
166 interactions of autonomous yet interconnected (social and ecological) properties (Conte & Paolucci,
167 2014). ABM is a computational mode of analysis that simulates an artificial society of diverse agents –
168 households, farmers, organizations, governments – making decisions, interact and learn in their ever-
169 changing environment, according to programmable rules (Farmer & Foley, 2009). In naturalist
170 resilience research, ABM is widely used for analyzing the interdependencies between agents, the
171 nonlinear interactions between agents, and the emergent adaptive behavior that arises from these
172 interactions (Hawes & Reed, 2006; Van Duinen et al, 2015; Martin & Schlüter, 2015; Sun, Stojadinovic
173 & Sansavini, 2019). ABM computes, in probabilistic terms, the recovery process of complex non-linear
174 systems under stress and tracks the emergence of new states (Filatova, Polhill & Van Ewijk, 2016).
175 Resilience could be calculated at the system level as a system property using standard the resilience
176 metrics (Pumpuni-Lenss, Blackburn & Garstenauer, 2017). Since ABM traces feedbacks between micro-
177 macro scale explicitly, one could also estimate resilience of individual agents, communities or
178 (sub)groups of agents.

179

180

181 **2.2 The constructivist view on resilience**

182

183 In constructivist social science, also inspired by Holling's approach, resilience to climate change
184 presents itself as an object of scientific inquiry or guiding concept rather than as a system property
185 (Walsh-Dilley & Wolford, 2015; Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2015; Kythreotis & Bristow, 2017). In
186 constructivist resilience research, resilience is not researched within the framework of complexity
187 theory. Instead, resilience, defined as a social construct, is studied from a variety of theoretical angle



188 involving a variety of (typically phenomenological and discursive) ideational orientations.
189 Constructivist resilience research focuses on the political context of resilience discourses, emphasizing
190 that resilience to climate change is not so much technical as political and administrative in nature
191 Alexander, 2013; Bourbeau, 2015; Boas & Rothe, 2016; Juncos, 2018; Wessel, 2019). Resilience is
192 typically presented as a neoliberal construct of governments that fail to address the challenges that
193 come with anthropogenic climate change and seek to shift responsibility (for pollution, safety, welfare,
194 health, etc.) to individuals, limit legal entitlements (including human rights), and make individuals more
195 self-reliant in coping with their own struggles in a market-dominated world (Braun, 2014; Pizzo, 2015;
196 Tierney, 2015; Howell, 2015; Anderson, 2015; Ksenia et al, 2016; Schwartz, 2018; Davoudi, 2018). For
197 instance, governments that fail to provide basic access to water to millions of rural citizens advocate
198 for community-based water management schemes, the leading paradigm for rural water access in East
199 Africa. Such schemes 'work' for the state (and donors) as a means of shifting (or offloading)
200 responsibility for public service provision to the most vulnerable citizens for whom community
201 management may not be a preferred option (Katomero & Georgiadou, 2018). From a critical
202 constructivist viewpoint (typically inspired by the works of Michel Foucault), resilience as neoliberal
203 discourse is analyzed as a phenomenon that reproduces power imbalances, domination, lawlessness,
204 inadequate public services, and injustice. Evans and Reid (2013) accuse the perspective of resilience of
205 the character of a doctrine, according to which the resilient subject must constantly adapt to a
206 dangerous and changing world and is willing to accept this. Ecological and societal catastrophes like
207 Katrina (2005) and Fukushima (2011) manifest such neo-liberalized resilience that is divorced from
208 concerns of justice (Fainstein, 2014; Tierney, 2015; Ribault, 2019). Such costly catastrophes present
209 themselves as 'anthropological shocks' (Beck (2015: 80), in the sense that they open up a new
210 consciousness (Fazey et al, 2018). Katrina, for instance, is not only an ecological, economic and deadly
211 disaster, but it is also a 'racial flood' that brings back colonial patterns of racism, slavery, vulnerability
212 and abandonment; and it is an initiator of policy transformation.





213 Resilience to climate change is addressed in constructivist research as a problematic of
214 governing (policy-making, regulating, administering, etc.) in a complex world that is marked by unequal
215 power relationships and their neoliberal repercussions. In the past few years, various scholars have
216 moved beyond the idea that resilience is a neoliberal construct marked. Chandler (2014), for instance,
217 argues that resilience can be understood as a post-neoliberal construct. In resilience discourses, the
218 art of governing is fundamentally reframed in recognition of the self-organization of systems –
219 capacities of everyday democracy that are embedded in the relational, creative, reflexive and
220 transformative capacities of stakeholders (Chandler, 2014; Boas & Rothe, 2016). In such self-
221 organization, myth-making is key in constructing resilience, in the sense that a widely embraced
222 narrative connects diverging ideologies, values, interests, worldviews and power relations. Resilience
223 is one of those myths. The ‘myth of resilience’ (Kuhlicke, 2013) refers to the stories that stakeholders
224 enact to make sense of the radically surprising discovery of something entirely unknown. As narrators,
225 stakeholders interpret their own capacities to deal with stresses and shocks, such as extreme weather
226 events in the form of floods, droughts and heatwaves. In many regions, these events occur with
227 increasing frequency and intensity, exposing the stakeholders to unprecedented risks and
228 uncertainties. It is in this context of sense-making process that stakeholders develop the capacity to
229 adapt and transform. In other words, constructing resilience to climate change, as a form of self-
230 organization, comes with myth-making, storytelling and narratives that unify diverse stakeholders. For
231 instance, the increasing attention on “urban climate resilience” (Tyler and Moensch, 2012) resonates
232 with the narrative that cities, or ‘local governments’, are to lead and shape climate change adaptation.
233 This narrative and the associated process is conceptualized as ‘responsibilization’, the increasing legal
234 and financial responsibility of local government, private companies and individual citizens in climate
235 change adaptation (O’Hare et al., 2016; Klein et al., 2017).

236

237 3. Bridging the naturalist and constructivist view on resilience

238



239 Given the two scientific approaches in resilience research, each based on contrasting premises,
240 it has been widely questioned whether resilience can possibly operate as a theoretical model or
241 unifying paradigm – and whether such a unifying paradigm would be desirable in the first place
242 (Alexander, 2013; Thorén, 2014; Bourbeau, 2015; Fainstein, 2015; Pizzo, 2015). Although a unifying
243 paradigm is neither possible nor desirable, naturalist and constructivist research approaches must be
244 bridged to enrich and renew our understandings of resilience – an enrichment and renewal of
245 resilience research that is much-needed for responding to the ecological and societal challenges of
246 anthropogenic climate change. Naturalist resilience research has the great merit that it may help to
247 increase complex system's robustness to system failure when faced with shocks and disturbances.
248 ABM may be a valuable tool for developing procedural stability, environmental risk management under
249 conditions of uncertainty, provision of planning security, and prevention of adverse consequences
250 from disruptive shocks (Schilling, Wyss & Binder, 2018). Constructivist resilience research has the great
251 merit of providing a critical and most penetrating understanding of resilience as a political
252 phenomenon that contains political intention and direction. Its interpretation of resilience to climate
253 change as a social (political, ideological, mythical, discursive) construct is useful for generating
254 understanding of how resilience is mobilized, taken up in climate governance, and resisted by social
255 movements, such as the Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, that push for less unsustainable
256 trajectories.

257

258

259 **3.1 The debate on adaptive and transformative resilience**

260

261 In recent years, the dialectic between naturalism and constructivism in resilience research has come
262 to revolve around the issue of adaptation and transformation (Chandler, 2014; Redman, 2014;
263 Fainstein, 2014; Dahlberg et al, 2015; Sjöstedt, 2015; Boas & Rothe, 2016; Duit, 2016; Clément &
264 Rivera, 2017; Lyster, 2017; Schlosberg, Collins & Niemeyer, 2017; Fazey et al, 2018; Glaser et al, 2018;



265 Hoekstra, Bredenhoff-Bijlsma & Krol, 2018; Jesse, Heinrichs & Kuchshinrichs, 2019; Dryzek & Pickering,
266 2019). It is an urgent issue that emerges from an ambiguity in Holling's SES approach (Redman, 2014).
267 In the 1970s, Holling (1973) reinterprets resilience as bouncing back in terms of SES adaptation. SES
268 adaptation refers, on the one hand, to the capacity of agents to influence the socio-ecological system
269 (and influence or strengthen resilience as a system property). And on the other hand, it alludes to
270 adaptation to new (ecological and social) environments, as an evolutionary process (Boyd et al, 2015).
271 Naturalist social science typically focusses on the constant refinement of simulation tools (that can
272 cope with radical complexity, uncertainty and multiplicity of agents) and techniques of administrative
273 regulation in favour of adaptation as evolutionary resilience (cf. Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Patriarca et
274 al, 2018). Yet, the bouncing back of SES not only refers to a return to some previous (dynamic)
275 equilibrium or to the persistence and endurance of systems. It also refers to socio-ecological
276 transformation in an ongoing process of non-equilibrium and instability and reinvention in changing
277 environments (Folke, 2006). Transformation refers to the capacity of agents to create a new system,
278 particularly when conditions make the existing system untenable or illegitimate. Constructivist
279 resilience research is primarily focused on transformation. Such research unsettles taken-for-granted
280 assumptions and definitions of the situation and ignites new imaginations needed for realizing less
281 unsustainable futures (Fazey et al, 2018). In the recent notion of 'transformational adaptations'
282 (Mummery & Mummery, 2019: 920; Pelling, O'Brien & Matyas, 2015), adaptation and transformation
283 are reconciled. Transformational adaptations refer to changes that are aligned to the scale of
284 projected, possible and desirable changes that are informed by (ultimately constructivist)
285 considerations of environmental and climate justice.

286 The naturalist emphasis on resilience to climate change as system adaptation to climate
287 change means that resilience research focusses on the degree to which systems can build capacity for
288 learning, as a way to respond to shocks or disturbances, embrace evolutionary change, and live with
289 complexity and uncertainty (Thorén, 2014; Juncos, 2017; Warmink et al, 2017; Béné et al, 2018).
290 Warmink et al (2017) point out that in Dutch river management, uncertainty analysis typically



291 complicates decision making, with typical adaptation responses being conservative and within safety
292 margins. This leads to over-dimensioning and high costs of water engineering works (like flood
293 defences). Given unpredictability and uncontrollability, adaptive resilience comes with short-term
294 planning, uncertainty reductions, incremental and path-dependent changes (Borsje et al, 2011;
295 Haasnoot et al, 2013). Adaptive resilience – the system's re-stabilizer – is taken as inherently positive,
296 while disturbances and shocks (de-stabilizers) are taken as negative (Duit, 2016; Lockie, 2016). As a
297 consequence of the near flood events of 1993 and 1995 along the river Rhine in the Netherlands, the
298 Dutch government responded by increasing the flood conveyance capacity of the large rivers, thereby
299 decreasing flood water levels (Hamers et al, 2015). Since its completion in 2015, the Room for the River
300 project is considered effective thus far, particularly as its secondary objective to increase ecosystem
301 values in the river appears successful.

302 It is on the basis of the premise that adaptive resilience is good that naturalist resilience
303 research ties up with climate risk management, as a way of managing ecosystem services (critical for
304 survival), under conditions of ecological and societal shocks and disturbances (Boyd et al, 2015; Berbés-
305 Blázquez et al, 2017). The constructivist emphasis on resilience to climate change as system
306 transformation refers to the emergent transformation of systems into something new (Rothe, 2017;
307 Béné et al, 2018). Transformative resilience is typically defined as the system's internal capacities,
308 capabilities and relations that enables it to create a new condition in which responsibilities may be
309 shifted. Flood protection, for instance, is typically a governmental responsibility, but with new
310 storytelling stakeholders can transform an established situation and realize alternative scenario's in
311 which responsibilities may be distributed among different stakeholders (Warmink et al., 2017).
312 Adaptive resilience comes with evolutionary change (the definition of change that naturalist research
313 typically endorses), whereas transformative resilience comes with 'metamorphosis', that is, a
314 transfiguration of culture that is triggered by the shocks and disturbances that come with radical
315 newness and reinventions, reassessments and rediscoveries (Beck, 2015; Fazey et al, 2018).
316 Transformational adaptation bridges evolutionary change and metamorphosis, in the sense that such



317 adaptation attends to broader socio-political processes of transformation. The argument for
318 transformational adaptation is that the ecological and societal challenges of climate change are
319 unprecedented in scale and intensity and come with new risks and locations of activities (Kates, Travis
320 & Wilbanks, 2012). The notion of transformational adaptation picks up on and challenges the
321 transformative logic of system transfiguration with simultaneous system adaptation, based on
322 uncertainty regarding how fast and how far disruptions will go – or whether sustainable
323 transformations will thrive as political projects at all.

324 Although constructivist social science manifests a higher degree of sensitivity to issues of
325 environmental and climate justice in a current oppressive situation that is marked by high degrees of
326 injustice, naturalist resilience research does not exclude considerations of justice. On the contrary,
327 enhancing adaptive resilience to climate change may entail liberal principles of equity, fairness and
328 access to resources and services, so as not to privilege or marginalize certain stakeholders (Redman,
329 2014; Thorén, 2014; Ksenia et al, 2016; Schlosberg, Collins & Niemeyer, 2017; Bergström, 2018). Yet,
330 naturalist enquiry into adaptive resilience leaves the status quo of systems, including the problematic
331 Global North-Global South relationship (marked by massive power inequality), typically unquestioned.
332 It tends to treat adaptive resilience as a technical property that is devoid of political and moral
333 substance (Swyngedouw, 2011; Pizzo, 2015; Clément & Rivera, 2017; Davoudi, 2018; Glaser et al, 2018;
334 Dryzek & Pickering, 2019). In constructivist resilience research the justice question is placed in a
335 context of broader socio-political processes of transformation: adaptive systems can be unjust and
336 oppressive (Fainstein, 2014; Weichselgartner and Kelman, 2015; Huang, Boranbay-Akan and Huang,
337 2016; McGreavy, 2016; Ribault, 2019). Short-term, incremental, adaptive response to shocks and
338 disturbances may blur long term sustainability vision, while dominant (or dominating) stakeholders
339 typically reify existing climate policy efforts in their (standardized) adaptive responses (Lockie, 2016;
340 Derickson, 2016; Rothe, 2017; Estêvão, Calado and Capucha, 2017; Ribault, 2019). Kythreotis & Bristow
341 (2017) call this phenomenon the 'resilience trap' - reinforcement of established power relations
342 and contemporary resilience discourse ihdorn, 2013; Redman, 2014; Yanarella & Levine, 2014;



343 Lockie, 2016; VanderPlaat, 2016; Schilling, Wyss & Binder, 2018; Glaser et al, 2018; Ribault, 2019).
344 Transformational adaptation, accordingly, must include a process of filtering out resilience traps that
345 come with adaptive resilience. Transformational adaptation includes the constructivist understanding
346 that adaptive resilience to climate change may well enforce a governance of unsustainability (cf. Van
347 de Ven, 2017).

348

349

350 **3.2 Transformative resilience and sustainability**

351

352 In constructivist resilience research, the notion of sustainability is transformative. Sustainability is
353 based on the idea that existing systems can be transformed – with respect to social, cultural, political,
354 administrative, economic, technological and environmental factors –, with the right governance
355 interventions and reconfigurations of the ecological and social underpinnings of SES (Pizzo, 2015;
356 Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2015; VanderPlaat, 2016; Hughes, 2017; Jesse, Heinrichs & Kuchshinrichs,
357 2019). Currently, the sustainable energy transformation is no doubt the best example of such a
358 reconfiguration (Park et al, 2012; De Haan & Rotmans, 2018). Fossil energy sources like coal, oil and
359 gas are largely responsible for carbon dioxide emissions, which generate global warming. The
360 sustainable energy transformation, accordingly, is, amongst other things, a response to climate
361 change. From the (typically naturalist) perspective of strengthening ‘energy resilience’ (Béné et al,
362 2018: 120; Jesse, Heinrichs & Kuchshinrichs, 2019: 21) – energy systems must adapt to changing
363 environments in which high levels of greenhouse gas emissions comes from burning fossil fuels for
364 electricity, heat and transportation. Energy resilience means that energy systems can limit the risk of
365 power outage and continue providing reliable energy supplies at stable costs, even in a turbulent
366 ecological and political environment (Wiese, 2016). The notion of energy resilience, as a form of
367 adaptive resilience to climate change, implies that the energy transition, including the use of
368 renewables, can only go via incremental changes, to avoid system collapse (Berbés-Blázquez et al,



369 2017; Schilling, Wyss & Binder, 2018). Transformational adaptation includes this notion of energy
370 resilience, but aligns it to the scale of desirable ecological and societal changes that are informed by
371 justice considerations and political direction towards less unsustainable futures.

372 From the (typically constructivist) perspective of strengthening transformative resilience,
373 energy resilience comes with the enactment of an energy political status quo. This is a status quo that
374 includes powerful agents that have a vested interest in promoting fossil energy – and it uses all sorts
375 of tactics (including sponsoring the climate change denial movement) – to secure its power position
376 (Stegemann & Ossewaarde, 2018; Szablowski & Campbell, 2019). It is an energy political constellation
377 that enacts a condition of ‘energy injustice’, particularly in the Global South. The notion of energy
378 injustice refers to current energy systems that distribute the ecological and economic benefits and
379 burdens of energy systems in unfair ways; dominate, degrade and devalue certain stakeholders; and
380 exclude certain agents from processes that govern the benefits, burdens and recognitions (Jenkins et
381 al, 2016; Heffron & McCauley, 2017). The transformative resilience of energy systems, which is tied
382 up with the notion of ‘energy justice’, refers to agents’ negation of a fossil-based energy system and
383 its oligarchical power structure; and the creation of a renewable-based system, energy commons and
384 collaboratives beyond the energy establishment (Acosta et al, 2018; Jesse, Heinrichs & Kuchshinrichs,
385 2019). In other words, the sustainable energy transformation comes with transformative resilience
386 and energy justice that typically assumes the form of resistance to the most hegemonic powers
387 (VanderPlaat, 2016; Bourbeau & Ryan, 2018; Juncos, 2018; Schwartz, 2018). Transformational
388 adaptation includes the long-term vision of energy governance, but it searches for realizing such
389 transformation through adaptations by the status quo. Transformational adaptation means that the
390 sustainable energy transformation comes with the change of the energy establishment into agents of
391 sustainability – a change that comes from within the power complex, for instance, via stakeholder
392 participation.

393 Adaptive resilience to climate change comes with short-term systematic adjustments to a
394 changing technological environment that is currently increasingly dominated by smart urbanism and



395 artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. Such technologies reshape systems and their ecological and
396 societal environments (cf. Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). Particularly in naturalist resilience research, AI is
397 identified as a new systems property that permeates systems to generate productivity gains, improve
398 efficiency, lower costs, predict climate change stress, track carbon emissions, monitor flood risks, etc.
399 (Rajan & Saffiotti, 2017; Khakurel et al, 2018; Vahedifard, et al, 2019; Miller, 2019; Saravi et al, 2019).
400 Strengthening adaptive resilience to climate change through AI primarily means that an integrated
401 data system for circulating information among agents needs to be developed. In an AI technological
402 environment, resilience implies close collaboration between agents (data stakeholders, community-
403 level stakeholders, state-level institutions, etc.) (Vahedifard, et al, 2019). AI comes in both for
404 converting datasets into usable information and as a monitoring method (like change detection
405 algorithms). Identifying, harnessing, synthesizing, and communicating pertinent yet unstructured data
406 (weather data, cell phone GPS data, social media feeds, traffic cameras, smart city sensors, images,
407 videos, audio data, etc.) enables agents to better forecast, prepare for, respond to, and recover from
408 disturbances and shocks (Rajan & Saffiotti, 2017; Vahedifard et al, 2019). By being able to predict
409 (estimate or forecast) more accurately and learn from past disturbances and shocks, lessons can be
410 learned and applied in building adaptive resilience against disturbances (Saravi et al, 2019). AI
411 quantifies the probabilities of occurrence of extreme events, essential in predicting and preparing for
412 future natural hazards, such as floods. For instance, with advances in machine learning, water
413 availability, ice surfaces and melting rates, pollution, deforestation, etc. can be more precisely or
414 smartly monitored so that changes over time can be tracked. Yet, with monitoring also learning of
415 agents and organizations is needed.

416 More specifically, strengthened adaptive resilience typically weakens the transformative
417 resilience that is needed for materializing sustainable transformations (Khakurel et al, 2018).
418 constructivist resilience research, it is typically emphasized that AI, like resilience, not only has a
419 positive impact on sustainable trajectories, but also enacts resilience traps (typically via adapting and
420 rebadging existing short-term strategies) and enforces injustice and unsustainability (for instance, via



421 massive energy usage and the production of electronic waste). Big data and AI are typically in the hands
422 of giant tech oligarchs like Google, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook and Chinese forces (Miller,
423 2019), that, like the oil barons, are established powers that have a vested interest in the further
424 acceleration and consumption of technological devices (Khakurel et al, 2018). Given such an
425 oligarchical power structure, **AI typically tends to obstruct transformative resilience**  supporting power
426 beyond rule of law and democratic will and understanding (as found in the many recent privacy rights
427 violations, scandals (like the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal (2018), the many Google
428 scandals, etc.), and mistrust of new technologies). Given such problematic power structures, AI
429 thereby weakens transformative resilience (cf. Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). In other words, from the critical
430 angle of constructivist resilience research, AI typically comes with unjust resilience and tends to close
431 down alternative futures. Transformative resilience to climate change, accordingly, comes with
432 resistance to big tech firms and their handling of data and digital surveillance and domination of
433 vulnerable people. Reconciling adaptive and transformative resilience – in the form transformational
434 adaptation – comes with the change of big tech firms from within the oligarchical complex, with AI
435 redesigned and politically (democratically or technocratically) controlled for the making of less
436 unsustainable futures.

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438

439 **4. Six upcoming themes in diversified resilience research**

440

441 The diversification of resilience research and the tension between, and the reconciliation of,
442 naturalism and construction in theorizing (and, in their practical implications, pushing for) change as
443 adaptation, transformation or transformational adaptation triggers new research themes for the study
444 of anthropogenic climate change. Theorizing change has become the key issue in resilience research,
445 in the wake of changing political, ecological and technological environments. In naturalist research,
446 resilience to climate change is presented as 'evolutionary resilience' and as 'adaptive resilience', with



447 the key issue of changing environments being the survivability of complex systems under stress.
448 Change is, accordingly, evolutionary change. In constructivist research, resilience to climate change is
449 presented as mythical (the 'myth of resilience') and as transformative resilience, with the key issue of
450 change being the overcoming of 'resilience to change', 'resilience traps' and 'unjust resilience' or 'bad
451 resilience'. Such overcoming is presented as an indispensable condition for enhancing change. Such
452 change refers to metamorphosis and comes with transformative politics and governance. The
453 reconciliation of naturalism and constructivism in terms of change can be found in the notion of
454 transformational adaptation, which ties incrementalism to long term sustainability visions. It is a
455 notion that comes with the search for the conditions and tempo of transformations in different
456 ecological and societal contexts. Ultimately, the overarching challenge for future research is to ensure
457 that resilience to climate change does not compromise sustainability and considerations of justice.

458 A first promising direction for future resilience research that emerges from the diversification
459 of resilience research concerns the reconciliation of naturalism and constructivism. Resilience cannot
460 operate as a theoretical model or unifying paradigm, given that naturalism and constructivism are
461 grounded in contrasting epistemological and ontological assumptions; and reflect contrasting scientific
462 universes and manifest different scientific and political commitments (Mummery & Mummery, 2019).
463 Yet, as a metaphor resilience provides a sound basis for reconciling types of science, mainly because
464 of its heterogeneity and high level of abstraction (Thorén, 2014). Intellectually, the reconciling of
465 naturalism and constructivism implies an appreciation of diverse scientific vocabularies, many visions
466 of what counts as scientific knowledge, other sciences' scientific worlds, a certain embracing (which
467 includes making manifest) of the tensions between the contrasting types of science, and creating
468 spaces for constructive contestation (Pfeffer & Georgiadou, 2019). Thereby, new resilience
469 perspectives may develop. New questions may be posed (or new answers to long-standing questions
470 may be provided). The resilience trap – typically marked by the promotion of adaptive strategies that
471 reify responses and corresponding power structures in the short-term – may be avoided (via
472 challenging current assumptions underpinning resilience research). Current adaptation and



473 transformation and transformational adaptation approaches may be further refined. And much-
474 needed new ways of scientific thinking and possibilities may be opened up in resilience research,
475 beyond old conceptualizations and modes of analyses (cf. Fazey et al, 2018). These developments ask
476 for new collaboration frameworks and platforms that empower all types of stakeholders to bring both
477 their resilience research questions and their assets to the table to collectively explore and define
478 potential futures from the perspective of all present world views.

479 A second theme for future resilience research comes with a change in political environment,
480 in which the legitimacy of adaptive, transformative and transformational adaptive responses to climate
481 change is constantly contested. Anthropogenic climate change comes with a political-administrative
482 crisis, which manifests itself in the form of a legitimacy crisis, authority crisis (including the crisis of
483 scientific authority), crisis of democracy, a crisis of human rights, a crisis of modernity (Swyngedouw,
484 2011; Blühdorn, 2013; Fischer, 2017; Ossewaarde, 2018; Stegemann & Ossewaarde, 2018; Dryzek &
485 Pickering, 2019). Crisis has been widely constructed as the new normal (Hilhorst, 2018). In an
486 increasingly toxic political environment – marked by climate change denial, anti-immigration policies,
487 and nationalist protectionism – adaptive and transformative resilience and transformational
488 adaptation may be expressed and contested in manifold ways. For instance, on the one hand,
489 environmental protest movements are stakeholders that develop a leverage required to change
490 established systems (such as energy systems) and their governance arrangements, while on the other
491 hand agents who gain power by such arrangements typically use tactics of repression and
492 criminalization, particularly in the extractive sectors of the Global South (Szabolowski & Campbell,
493 2019). New research questions emerge on the one hand from polarization and the exercise of
494 (il)legitimate power in the governing of and for resilience to climate change. This is the question of
495 how the adaptation and reconfiguration of systems under pressures of climate change comes with
496 power inequalities, polarization, battle for resources, democratic deficits and post-democratic
497 tendencies, climate change denial tactics, attacks on legal rights, climate injustice, and the resilient
498 governance of unsustainability. To put it in more positive terms, urgent questions concern the



499 meanings of transformation, the theorization of transformation in terms of just resilience, the linkage
500 of resilience to desirable futures, the development of a transformation agenda in participative,
501 proactive and deliberative ways, and the comparison of different administrative capacities and new
502 governance arrangements that explain differences in system adaptation and reconfiguration (cf.
503 Blühdorn, 2013; Fischer, 2017; Davoudi, 2018; Köhler et al, 2019; Mummery & Mummery, 2019).

504 A third promising topic for future resilience research concerns the relationship between
505 adaptive resilience and transformative resilience and transformational adaptation in the reactive and
506 proactive governance responses to anthropogenic climate (Clément & Rivera, 2017). In the coming
507 decade, questions like how adaptive and transformative resilience to climate change is strengthened
508 or weakened; how the current performance of systems when it comes to responding to possible
509 disturbance (for instance, through the use of monitoring systems) can be better understood; how
510 unjust resilience can be disabled; and how transformational adaptation manifests itself (how multiple
511 adaptations may lead to transformational adaptation and what are the tipping points for igniting
512 transformation), become urgent ones for resilience research (Grove & Chandler, 2017; Glaser et al,
513 2018). The notion of 'tentative governance' appears particularly relevant in the context of
514 transformational politics, when it comes to phasing out systems and weakening adaptive resilience.
515 Tentative governance is marked by interventions that are designed as preliminary rather than as
516 persistent, for purposes of probing and learning rather than for stipulating definite targets or fixating
517 existing systems and their underlying assumptions (Kuhlmann, Stegmaier & Konrad, 2019). It is likely
518 that stakeholder engagement in transformational politics and tentative governance varies, and
519 manifests itself differently, across different policy fields. For instance, the sustainable energy
520 transformation may include multi-layer governance challenges, many pro-active stakeholders, new
521 investment opportunities and job opportunities. Given that multiple public and private actors are
522 responsible for the performance of different parts of a system, tentative governance comes with
523 transformational adaptations that must be arranged. Hence arises the question which adaptations
524 allow for transformation? Sea level rise and the disruption and relocation of coastal cities, by contrast,



525 may trigger a more limited transformative politics, despite inevitable transfiguration of systems due to
526 shocks and disturbances (metamorphosis). Yet, in the coming decade, transformational politics and
527 tentative governance – including anthropogenic topics like population displacement, privatization of
528 climate adaptation, conflict organized around scarce resources (like water resources),
529 intergenerational environmental conflict, and the closing of old infrastructures that are too costly to
530 maintain – becomes a more urgent research topic.

531 A fourth topic for future resilience research concerns the relationship between phasing out of
532 unsustainable systems and societal transformations. The sustainable energy transformation is a most
533 obvious phasing out of old systems (like coal energy systems) and change of worldviews, middle class
534 values, lifestyles, etc. towards new energy systems, given that burning fossil fuels has such a major
535 impact on climate change. Adaptive and transformational responses to climate change are
536 intermingled with responses to other societal and ecological developments. Hence, a response like
537 investment in transportation systems that aims to address increasing transportation demand must
538 accordingly include possible climate change impacts. In the Anthropocene epoch, systems typically
539 face pressures to change, to establish new (less unsustainable) interactions between society and
540 ecology. Pressures on existing systems – typically those that are marked by unjust resilience and
541 resilience traps (like established energy systems) – not only emerge from ecological adversity, over-
542 exploitation, resource depletion, etc., but particularly from new ways of thinking, new lifestyles, new
543 contestations (like the Fridays for Future, the Anti-Mining, the Transition Towns and Degrowth
544 movements), etc. At the same time, anthropogenic climate change comes with the development of a
545 multi-trillion market of the emerging climate economy, which proves new climate investment
546 opportunities. Given such societal pressures and opportunities, new research topics include the
547 governing and accelerating of the decline of existing systems (Stegmaier, Visser & Kuhlmann, 2014;
548 Hoffmann, Weyer & Longen, 2017; Stegmaier, Visser & Kuhlmann, 2020); the particular circumstances
549 in which accelerations can manifest themselves; the identification of, and coping with, uncertainties
550 in processes of adaptation and transfiguration and transformational adaptation; and the construction



551 of new incentive structures, for accelerating sustainable transformation (cf. Clément & Rivera, 2017;
552 Warmink et al, 2017; Köhler et al, 2019). This branch of discontinuation research assumes that socio-
553 technical systems influence socio-ecological systems, so that some technologies threaten resilience
554 while others enhance it (Smith & Stirling 2010). Such research informs that political objectives like
555 drastic reduction of CO₂ emissions will hardly be achieved by using single cleaner technologies alone,
556 but structural SES transformations are needed to qualitatively alter established systems (Vögele, Kunz,
557 Rübelke & Stahlke 2018; Rogge & Johnston, 2017; Stegmaier 2019). One of the challenges for the
558 coming decade is to reverse the negative image of climate change: transformational adaptation comes
559 with stakeholders taking a pro-active view on climate change, with new opportunities emerging from
560 responses to climate change. How can climate change be regarded as an opportunity rather than as a
561 risk in the governance of transformational adaptation to climate change?

562 A fifth theme for future resilience research concerns the role of environmental, energy and
563 climate justice in theorizing, modeling, interpreting and explaining resilience to climate change (cf.
564 Skillington, 2015; Fazey et al, 2018; Mummery & Mummery, 2019). For future research, theories of
565 environmental justice, energy justice and climate justice, that is, theoretical insights on (un)equal
566 distribution of environmental and social burdens, struggles for recognition, claims to participation, and
567 unequal impacts of climate change, can be conducive to helping furthering comprehension of adaptive
568 and transformative resilience and transformational adaptation. How can justice claims be made more
569 responsive to newly unfolding ecological and societal circumstances and uncertainties? How can
570 principles of equity, fairness and access to resources and services be secured in a toxic political
571 environment? And how can – in the problematic context of climate-induced migration and a political
572 environment marked by anti-immigration policies – the wellbeing of migrants be ensured? Theories of
573 environmental, energy and climate justice are also highly relevant for developing understanding of
574 how adaptive and transformative resilience and transformational adaptation are perceived and
575 experienced in everyday life by different stakeholders that face anthropogenic challenges.
576 Constructivist enquiry into perceptions, experiences and prioritizations of resilience is a promising



577 topic for future resilience research. In this regard, insurance decisions of citizens against the risks
578 associated with climate extremes can gain further research attention. As addressed by O'Hare et al.
579 (2016), citizens are faced with an increasing responsibility to make decisions to 'insure' themselves
580 and their assets against the possible damages of climate change. Such decisions can have diverse
581 justice implications in different political and economic contexts that influence how citizens perceive,
582 experience and prioritize climate risks. Similarly, the cross-sectional dimensions of justice, particularly
583 gender relations, is becoming increasingly relevant and yet challenging to understand and integrate
584 into climate justice (Terry, 2009), and energy justice (Feenstra and Özerol, 2018) frameworks. And in
585 the Global South, addressing issues of corruption, violence, poverty and lack of access to resources
586 (and violent battles for resources) and services (like education and sanitation), and treatment of nature
587 as a sacred entity (rather than as an economic resource), may have a higher priority than global
588 environmental considerations (Köhler et al, 2019).

589 A sixth theme for future resilience research comes with a changing (geo)technological
590 environment, that is, the so-called 'AI revolution' in the making. Given worldwide investments and top-
591 down AI strategies that global governance actors and national governments have recently published,
592 AI will most plausibly become a major force that shapes adaptive and transformative resilience to
593 climate change by means of monitoring and learning. A relevant example of big data is the G-Earth
594 Engine, which opens up an unprecedented dataset of satellite images for scientific research. Such
595 extensive datasets, marked by high temporal resolution, are essential for monitoring a changing earth
596 system. In the past decade, resilience discourses have increasingly incorporated phenomena like big
597 data, AI, cybersecurity and smart city; in the coming decade, resilience discourses may increasingly
598 become technology discourses. New interplays between automation, (un)sustainability, and adapting
599 and transforming systems trigger new questions for future resilience research (cf. Köhler et al, 2019).
600 For instance, in the near future, not only the number of climate disasters is expected to rise but also
601 the data – satellite data, drone data, sensor data, social media data, volunteer geographic information
602 (VGI) data, Internet of Things data, etc. – available on such disasters is expected to increase in size,



603 amounting to vast volumes of climate disaster data. However, AI, due to the unstructured nature of
604 input data, may omit those phenomena, places and social groups that are not present in the data
605 (Hoefsloot et al. 2019). Alternative ways of knowing can refine or contribute complementary insights
606 to the precise measurements and data gaps (Pfeffer and Georgiadou 2019). New research questions
607 for naturalist and constructivist research emerge from challenges of organizing big data and how to
608 make it available and usable, given the variety of public and private stakeholders, workflows and
609 incentive structures involved in the (social) construction of big data (Wright, 2016). How can AI be
610 augmented with alternative ways of knowing to strengthen adaptive/transformative resilience? How
611 to incorporate the socio-spatial dimension in resilience research, in order to pronounce the different
612 capabilities of different groups and places? And what role can AI play in creating a dialogue between
613 the naturalist and constructivist resilience research? In the coming years, AI tools – mainly tracking (for
614 instance, tracking of deforestation tracking or energy/water consumption) and machine learning
615 techniques – are expected to be widely used, among other things, for detecting and predicting how
616 climate disasters probably develop, for locating areas or communities at risk, for analyzing the
617 consequences of climate disasters, and for assisting in climate disaster responses. Working with AI for
618 purposes of learning from data – for instance, via the use of data mining or deep learning techniques
619 for dissecting patterns in satellite images – comes with the design of procedures for data analytics,
620 forecasting and intervention (Rodríguez-González, Zanin & Menasalvas-Ruiz, 2019) and requires
621 domain and local knowledge as well as a dialogue between naturalist and constructivist researchers.
622 In contrast to the official national statistics of the past, which diffused societal controversies, big data
623 analytics create a myriad parallel realities, stand in the way of achieving a minimal consensus about
624 basic facts and amplify controversies. In sum, next to technologization of resilience discourses, social
625 processes of big data construction, the inclusion and exclusion of diverse stakeholders, the
626 embeddedness of AI in everyday practices, the various uses of AI in the exploitation of data as well as
627 the integration and inclusion of alternative knowledges are promising fields of resilience research.



628 In the coming decade, several AI challenges are most likely to increasingly come to the fore in
629 resilience research. First, monitoring systems (for instance, monitoring the status and behavior of
630 infrastructure or human settlement dynamics) that incorporate machine learning make that systems
631 are automatically checked rather than regularly inspected by experts. When AI is integrated with
632 knowledge of how systems work, expertise is outsourced to AI, which implies that expert knowledge
633 may get lost or become obsolete. Moreover, AI classifications may have unintended consequences for
634 certain places or communities. For example, by labelling areas at risks, property prices may go down
635 or insurance agencies are not willing to provide an insurance certificate. Second, the digitalization of
636 SES makes systems vulnerable to, for instance, breakdowns, power outages and cyberattacks – hence
637 resilience strategies and digital strategies are intertwined (Wessel, 2019). ‘Digital resilience’ has
638 recently become a key concept in resilience research that refers to strengthening resilience of digital
639 systems to potential cyberattacks, including the adaptive capacity to respond to such attacks (Wright,
640 2016). The making of digital resilience typically implies bringing in tech firms for the protection of SES,
641 whose algorithms are typically opaque. Third, because of the reliance on AI and associated data, other
642 realities are neglected, excluding certain places or communities from digital resilience strategies.
643 Fourth, AI systems facilitate governing at a distance, with governing becoming more invisible and
644 possibly unaccountable. For instance, when disaster management (for instance, in the context of an
645 extreme weather event) becomes ‘digital humanitarianism’, the distance between the saviors and
646 survivors becomes big, with survivors becoming reified abstract entities that inspire limited empathy.
647 In fact, survivors are confronted with the risks of AI systems, in terms of privacy breaches and identity
648 frauds. In other words, while AI is expected to become a key theme in resilience research, a promising
649 topic for future resilience research concerns the challenge of uncovering resilience traps and
650 neutralizing the ecological and societal damage and injustice done through the reinforcement of AI
651 technologies in governance processes like digitally-based service provision or humanitarian
652 interventions in the Global South.

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655

656 **5. Conclusion**

657

658 In the social sciences, resilience to climate change is a concept that is incorporated in different
659 theoretical approaches that are linked to contrasting types of science. Holling originally reinterpreted
660 and incorporated resilience in a SES approach, which was then picked up by naturalist scientists who
661 incorporated Holling's reinterpretation of resilience in cybernetic complexity theory. The naturalist
662 complexity theoretic approach to resilience as system adaption was dominant in the social sciences,
663 until the ecological and political context of resilience research changed. When actors at global, national
664 and local governance levels drafted their resilience policies in the wake of socio-ecological
665 catastrophes, financial crises, climate crises, governance failures and the breakdown of infrastructures,
666 constructivist approach developed to take resilience research far beyond complexity theory. And it
667 introduced a variety of new concepts for resilience research, such as the myth of resilience, just
668 resilience, resilience trap, transformative resilience and transformational adaptation. Resilience
669 cannot operate as a unifying paradigm, given that naturalism and constructivism are grounded in
670 different epistemological and ontological assumptions, definitions of what counts as scientific
671 knowledge, and definitions of change (evolutionary change and metamorphosis). But resilience can
672 facilitate the reconciliation of naturalism and constructivism, so that the two types of science can
673 provide a liberating perspective on each other (without the one repressing the other) and brought into
674 a theory-energizing tension with each other. The urgent challenges that come with anthropogenic
675 climate change – which may potentially cause extreme degrees of human misery in the coming
676 decades –, necessitate the reconciliation of naturalist and constructivist resilience research. Such
677 reconciling – igniting theory-energizing tension – is needed for reimagining resilience to climate change
678 which is needed for specifying how new political-administrative institutions and practices can respond



679 in legitimate ways (taken justice considerations into account) to the challenges of climate change, in
680 different ecological, political and technological contexts (cf. Johnsson et al., 2018).

681 Given the development of resilience research in the past decade, with the rise of constructivist
682 resilience research and its reconciliation with naturalism, the key issue in resilience research concerns
683 the political response in the form of adaptation, transformation and transformational adaptation in
684 newly unfolding environments. The six resilience themes for the coming decade that this paper has
685 identified are all connected to the issue of the political-administrative response to the challenges that
686 come with anthropogenic climate change. A first theme concerns the reconciliation of naturalism and
687 constructivism, to be able to move beyond established assumptions, theories, concepts and modes of
688 analysis; and to trigger new imaginations to be able to create new, theory-rich, resilience perspectives.
689 A second theme is the legitimacy of the political response in a toxic political environment, in which
690 top-down and bottom up responses, including new governance arrangements and system
691 reconfigurations, may suffer from legitimacy deficits. A third theme is how, in a toxic political
692 environment, adaptation, transformation and transformational adaptation can be materialized; and
693 under which conditions are such governance responses enough for addressing climate change
694 challenges. A fourth theme is how systems are under pressure due to climate change, ultimately
695 igniting a phasing out of systems and a departure from consumerist lifestyles, values and assumptions.
696 A fifth theme is how governance responses can be made legitimate, by incorporating considerations
697 of environmental and climate and energy justice – thereby strictly connecting resilience to justice
698 considerations. A sixth theme is how AI comes to intermingle with resilience: what is its role in political-
699 administrative responses to challenges that come with climate change? And, correspondingly, what
700 are the undesired consequences that come with AI, when it comes to responding to climate change.

701 How does AI enact existing power structures, thereby reinforcing resilience traps?

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706

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