Chapter 10

From Women to Gender and Intersectionality: Rethinking Approaches to Economic Vulnerability and Resilience

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1. Introduction

The concept of resilience has recently attracted a lot of attention in both policy-related and academic literature. It has mostly been applied to observe and study the reactions of individuals as well as systems after an important shock, such as a natural disaster or a deep economic crisis. A lot of resilience work has also been focusing on the capacities of local communities and even of whole countries to adapt to climate change. Interestingly, resilience studies span over various fields of natural and social sciences, such as physics, ecology, but also psychology, psychiatry and disaster management.

Like many other popular concepts, the word "resilience" has fallen victim to its overuse, which has clouded its meaning to the point that it is sometimes used more as an image or a metaphor related to sustainability, than a concrete property or process (Manyena, 2006). In order to clarify this linguistic blur, various studies specialized in different fields (see for instance Martin et al., 2015; McAllister, 2016; Ungar and Liebenberg, 2011) have tried to develop resilience assessment and measure methods. Most of these methodologies, however, are only applicable to one specific field of science. Various researchers (see for instance Berkes and Ross, 2013) have tried to establish a joint and evidence-based understanding of the concept of resilience, which would be applicable across the different fields in which it is used. This joint understanding is often based on a list of criteria or attributes that can fit a multidisciplinary approach to resilience, but it falls short of providing a roadmap to a common methodological standpoint for resilience studies.

Among the social science tools that have been conveyed in order to help resilience studies move forward, and provide methodological clarity, analyses based on the concept of gender have recently gained popularity

(see for instance Hirani, Lasiuk and Hegadoren, 2016; Le Masson, 2016; Smyth and Sweetman, 2015). Yet, many of these approaches to resilience, often studied in relation to vulnerability and adaptation, tend to address gender in very simplistic terms, essentially handling it in a men-versus-women dichotomy. Although they represent progress compared to gender-blind analyses, approaches relying on a men-versus-women dichotomy overlook the fact that there are many differences in status and agency between men and women, and that gender is therefore not the only factor that matters for explaining how individuals can resist and adapt to change. Rapid changes induced by economic shocks, natural disasters or climate change affect societies and individuals in different ways, because of their distinct vulnerabilities and exposure to specific stressors. This is not to say, of course, that women are not on average more likely to be vulnerable to crises because of their lower educational attainment or limited access to land tenure (in the case of Tanzania, see for instance Johnson, 2011; Moyo, 2017). However, this chapter aims to draw attention to the fact that it is mostly in the way it intersects with other factors that gender matters for assessing vulnerabilities and capacities for adaptation.

In this perspective, this chapter proposes to examine the concept of resilience, as well as the associated concepts of vulnerability and adaptation through an intersectional lens. An intersectional approach pays attention to the intersection of various identity categories, such as gender, but also age, ethnicity, social status and so on. Using intersectionality to rethink approaches to vulnerability and resilience helps identify, not only the obstacles and challenges that hamper adjustment to change, but also the areas and opportunities that facilitate adaptation. Building upon various examples, among which the context in Tanzania, the chapter is structured around three main sections. The first section examines the promises, but also limits and shortcomings of the concept of resilience, underscoring the necessity of a power-sensitive approach to resilience. In the second section, we examine how a gendered approach to resilience, adaptation and vulnerability can provide answers to these shortcomings, notably by going beyond the men versus women dichotomy. However, as we demonstrate in the third section, it is only by adopting an intersectional approach that a truly relational and power-sensitive approach to resilience can be developed. This eventually allows the design of policies that take into account the multiple factors that shape individuals' and

collectivities' vulnerabilities as well as their capacities for adaptation and resilience.

2. Resilience between Individual and Collective Factors

Over the past few decades, the concept of resilience has become extremely popular, across various fields of research and practice. This striking popularity can perhaps be explained by the concept's extreme versatility, as it has been applied both to systems or collective entities, and individuals. During the past 50 years, resilience research has notably blossomed in psychology and psychiatry, focusing for example on factors explaining how children or adults having undergone serious hardship and/or belonging to discriminated communities develop resilience to adversity and trauma (see for instance Fleming and Ledogar, 2006). After stressing the importance of individual factors explaining resilience, this strand of research has been increasingly recognizing the role played by family, community, as well as other cultural factors in fostering individuals' adaptation and recovery. In turn, such broadened understanding of resilience has led to a growing interest in what triggers the resilience of entire groups or communities (see for instance Magis, 2010). This strand of resilience research has highlighted the importance of collective factors for ensuring resilience, such as community self-organization and development (Chaskin, 2008).

Another strand of research has focused on the resilience of whole collective systems, for instance ecological systems facing the threat of climate change, or other disasters such as fires or wars and conflicts (Eakin and Luers, 2006). In this perspective, resilience is often understood as the capacity of a system to absorb, accommodate and/or recover from changes and disturbances, while maintaining function and structures (Nelson and Stathers, 2009, p. 88). Strongly relying upon biophysical sciences, this strand of resilience research has mostly overlooked social sciences' insights about individual, cultural and/or social factors favouring or impeding resilience. In answer to this shortcoming, integrated approaches trying to reconcile (mostly individual) psychological and (mostly collective) socio-ecological approaches to resilience have subsequently been developed. These integrated approaches put the stress on adaptive capacity, community self-organization and agency as key factors for resilience (see for instance Berkes and Ross, 2013).

Many discussions on resilience tend to centre on situations during or following extreme events like natural disasters, with the coining of concepts such as that of "disaster resilience". More specifically, literature on resilience and wars, as well as on resilience and climate change has been blossoming over the past decades (on resilience and wars see for instance MacDermid Wadsworth, 2010; Werner, 2012; on resilience and climate change see, among many others, McEvoy, Fünfgeld, and Bosomworth, 2013; Morecroft et al., 2012). For some time, these thematic associations have supported the idea that the resilience of individuals and of collective entities could or even should be studied in exceptional circumstances, for example in times of crises. However, an increasing number of studies have been pointing at the fact that the resilience of both individuals and systems can also be traced outside of exceptional events, for instance in the mundane ways through which individuals and societies deal with stress and change. This has led to an increased attention to resilience as an everyday, as opposed to an exceptional, matter (see for instance Back, 2015; Kent, 2016).

Many critics were addressed to the concept of resilience and its uses, notably pointing at the fact that the term of resilience is alternatively used to describe a process, quality, trait or outcome (Glanz and Sloboda, 2002). In addition, the precise criteria according to which resilience as a process or as an outcome should be assessed seem to vary from study to study, or from case study to case study. As a consequence, resilience is notoriously difficult to pin down and measure. Paying attention to criteria used to define resilience seems particularly important: How do we define and measure resilience? Who decides what resilience is, and according to which criteria should it be evaluated? For instance, are we not applying "Western" criteria when measuring adaptation and resilience throughout the rest of the world? Can resilience be measured in the same way in very different economic, cultural, political and social settings, or should we acknowledge the fact that since resilience also depends on cultural factors, it can take on different shapes and meanings in different cultural settings?

But the most important criticism addressed to the concept of resilience admittedly comes from social sciences, where the concept's focus on the individuals and their capacity to "rebound" was denounced as a way to absolve governments from their responsibilities regarding the protection of their populations. In most social sciences-related fields, be it in disaster or climate change studies, and even when focus is placed on

collective entities such as whole societies or groups, resilience is indeed seen as primarily originating from the individuals' capacities to mitigate and adapt to change. As such, the concept of resilience mostly puts the stress on individual responsibilities and capabilities. For many authors, this means that policies encouraging and supporting resilience can be considered as a neoliberal form of governmentality that shifts the burden of adaptation from the collective to the individual (see for instance Joseph, 2013). The resilience "narrative", encouraging individuals to recognize the existence and inevitability of danger, and to be proactive in ensuring their own security and survival, has thus been described as an instrument used by neoliberal governance to enable the subjection of populations (Reid, 2012).

This critique of the concept of resilience applies to all changes and events that endanger individuals as well as collectivities, but it is particularly relevant when applied to natural or man-made disasters, which, as we have seen, have long been put at the heart of discussions on resilience. Feminist and post-colonial analyses of the concept of resilience have notably condemned it for individualizing the consequences of events such as draughts, famines, tsunamis or industrial disasters, which could and/or should have been better prevented or mitigated by authorities, but which are almost always presented as unavoidable "accidents" (see for instance Bracke, 2016; Parashar and Orjuela, 2021). In addition, various scholars have pointed out the discrepancy between public discourses on resilience, which stress the need for local authorities and individuals to adapt their practices in order to be more resilient, and policies which are often designed and decided at the national or even international levels. This has notably been the case of policies related to climate change mitigation (Djoudi et al., 2016, p. S252). In other words, there is an important conceptual and practical gap between the fact that resilience is expected to be mostly performed at the very local and micro level – individuals and their close environment –, and the conceptual frame upon which policies designed to enhance resilience are built.

Following up on this, some scholars have highlighted the fact that approaches to resilience need to take into account how power relations shape not only the issues that individuals and societies face, but also how they are able, or not, to adapt to change. It means, for example, to recognize that climate change is at least partly human-made, but also that power relations and social inequalities have an impact not only on who is affected by climate change, but also on whether and how those affected

by climate change can adapt (see for instance Tacoli et al., 2014, p. 2). In short, recent discussions around the concept of resilience have highlighted the need to underscore the accountability and responsibility of governments and international institutions, in order to counterbalance the idea that resilience and adaptation happen mostly at the individual and local levels.

These recent debates suggest that enhancing resilience can only be done by adopting a multilevel and multifactorial approach, taking into account not only the individuals and their immediate environments, but also collective capacities and dimensions as embedded for instance in political, economic, and cultural factors at local, national and international levels. This systemic and encompassing understanding of resilience opens avenues for bypassing many of the above mentioned critiques, because it highlights how resilience can be the product of individual as well as collective norms and positionings.

3. A Gendered Reading of Resilience: Vulnerable Women and Resilient Men?

One of the main ways in which discussions on resilience have been brought forward is through an analysis of vulnerabilities. The concepts of vulnerability and of resilience are closely linked, although the relation between the two is not always clear in academic and policy-related debates: for instance, should resilience and vulnerability be opposed, with vulnerability considered as a negative trait, and resilience as a positive quality? Or are the two concepts co-constructed? (Manyena, 2006, p. 439). While a focus on individuals' vulnerabilities can reinforce the tendency to individualize the effects of disasters and rapid changes, and to put the responsibility for adaptation on individuals, everything depends on how these vulnerabilities are understood. If they are seen not just as individual traits, but as consequences of the positioning of individuals in the social and economic system, and of their access to power and resources, then an analysis based on vulnerabilities can provide answers to the critiques addressed to the concept of resilience. Building on feminist theory, authors like Tschakert and Tuana (2013) propose, for instance, a relational understanding of resilience and vulnerability, whereby "reciprocal" vulnerability is understood as the ability to affect and be affected by others, while "situated" resilience is always dependent on the specific

context, and on power relations. According to this understanding, "the goal [of resilience] is not fostering invulnerability but finding better ways of encouraging relations between peoples, current and future, and between peoples and places" (Ravera et al., 2016, p. S239).

Gender has increasingly been taken into account in these discussions on the relations between resilience and vulnerability. More specifically, women's vulnerabilities and capacities for resilience have been the focus of numerous studies, while only a few have looked specifically at men. Examining the relations between vulnerabilities, resilience capacities and gender proves to be particularly fruitful as gender, like resilience, is located at the nexus of individual and collective factors. Gender indeed illustrates how an individual factor (for instance, identifying as a man or as a woman) can be both treated as a personal issue and associated with powerful cultural norms. As one of the most important aspects of personal identity, gender can be a strong determinant of one's social and economic positioning, and of one's access to power and resources. Gender is often directly correlated to a differentiated access to decision-making processes, as well as other resources such as money and neo-patrimonial networks, which are essential for determining individual resilience.

Discussing how gender can have an impact on the perceptions of risks and on individual levels of vulnerability, belongs to a now well-established tradition in disaster studies (see for instance Alston, 2021). Some authors have underscored the fact that the perceptions of risks can be gendered, and that women's risk perceptions tend to be given less attention than those of their male counterparts. As Nelson and Stathers (2009) show in the case of Tanzania, this sometimes leads to an increase in women's vulnerability. Due to their different positions in the social, economic, cultural and political systems, men and women can hold different perceptions of risks, and of what should be protected and/or preserved should a crisis or disaster arise. In addition, they also need differentiated forms of support to build their resilience, and they can experience adaptation and mitigation interventions in different ways (Fisher and Mohun, 2015). In parallel to disasters studies, and echoing research on the importance of the everyday for understanding and measuring resilience, recent studies focusing on Global South countries have also shown how women's specific vulnerabilities and adaptation patterns are often visible outside of disasters and extraordinary events, and embedded in everyday matters and in daily routines (Lenette et al., 2013).

It is probably through a climate change lens that the nexus between resilience and gender has been explored the most frequently. This strand of research builds on the idea that the impacts of climate change are gendered – in the sense that they tend to affect men and women in different ways (Detraz and Sapra, 2021). Some studies also show that climate change is likely to specifically affect women in low-income groups, rather than to affect all women in the same manner (Nirmala and Venkateswarlu, 2012). Unfortunately, many of the studies looking at the links between gender and climate change limit their gender analysis to a men versus women dichotomy, and pay little or no attention at all to issues of masculinities and of femininities, and to how these structure power, as well as social and political relations (Djoudi et al., 2016). As explained by Thompson-Hall, Carr and Pascual (2016), this tendency to rely on analyses of the sex-disaggregated gender categories of "men" and "women" is particularly salient in vulnerability and resilience studies. What is surprising is that this simplistic understanding and use of gender disregards the existing evidence demonstrating the importance of other factors such as socio-economic status, age, marital status, etc. to explain how people are affected by "external" events. Mirroring a trend that is still very much present in other fields which pretend to mainstream gender, the meaning of gender is here narrowed down to its simplest statistical men/women division. One of the consequences of this simplified analysis is that it tends to paint the image of a "feminization of vulnerability", and to foreground a discourse, within climate change studies, about the victimization of women. This discourse ignores and silences the fact that men and women are far from united and consistent groups, and that depending on their social status, some men are far more vulnerable to climate change – or to other disasters – than some women.

This is not to say, of course, that the men/women division does not matter for understanding vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, or that women are not more likely, on average, to be affected by it. But it is important to be aware of the important consequences that this feminization of vulnerability has at the policy level. In particular, it reinforces "a tendency to frame the discussion on women being especially vulnerable to broader environmental and structural forces, rather than focus on women and other marginalized groups being active agents for transforming and adapting to change, collectively, and from the margins" (Ravera et al., 2016, p. S238). Instead of empowering women, the idea that women are systematically more disadvantaged and vulnerable than men

to the consequences of climate change reinforces patriarchal narratives whereby women are described as weak and in need of (masculine) protection. This narrative associates women to vulnerability, while men are more likely to be associated with the ideas of resilience and agency. As we will see in the following section, this men-versus-women analysis overlooks the multiplicity of other factors, like socio-economic status, caste, religion, education and so forth, which, together with gender, determine levels of vulnerability and capacities for resilience. This type of analysis also feeds essentialist understandings whereby specific qualities or attitudes are attached to men and women, for instance the idea that women would be more environmentally conscious than men (Ravera et al., 2016, p. S240).

Not surprisingly, this Manichean understanding of the relations between vulnerability, resilience and gender, has far-reaching effects that can be seen both in the issues on which research focuses, and in policies. Djoudi et al. note, for instance, that in climate change research, gender is addressed less frequently in studies on mitigation than in those on adaptation: "The lack of articles addressing gender issues and climate mitigation may be due to the prevailing notion in the mitigation debate that scientific and technological solutions are generally considered to be a male domain, often at the expense of social and behavioural considerations" (2016, p. S252). What this means is that women tend to be naturally treated as having adaptation skills, especially at the local and micro level, whereas men are supposed to be particularly competent at mitigation techniques and policies, at the local, national and international levels (Djoudi et al., 2016, p. S257). As we have seen, this translates into a multiplicity of publications focusing on women's adaptation skills and resilience in both "everyday" and mundane matters (see, among many others, Ear, 2017; Molesworth et al., 2017; Smucker and Wangui, 2016). In parallel, most publications looking at mitigation policies at the national and international levels, namely in the field of climate change studies, are "gender neutral", meaning that they focus on institutions usually led by men. At a policy level, the consequences of such discourses are staggering. As explained by Drolet et al.:

"There is a significant risk that post-disaster responses unconsciously act to reinforce existing gender inequalities – for example, by distributing resources to the male head of households, by provisioning traditional male occupations and ignoring women's small business enterprises, by seeking advice and decision-making support only from male leaders, and

by assuming that cultural constraints are fixed and unchangeable" (2015, p. 438; see also Alston, 2021).

Although this statement should be nuanced as it overlooks the fact that an increasing number of programs specifically target women and girls (in the case of Tanzania see for instance Irish Aid, 2018), it is a clear reflection of men's and women's positionalities and access to power, men being typically more likely to hold policy making positions. Such a trend reinforces existing stereotypes about qualities respectively attached to men and women, and in particular about their respective capacities in times of crises. It feeds the idea that, at such times, men are the best placed to make decisions, while women's specific vulnerabilities limit their adaptive skills to the local level. As they echo deeply held cultural assumptions, these stereotypes are rarely challenged and structure policy responses to brutal changes and disasters. Interestingly however, the ways in which the recent Covid-19 pandemic was managed across the world directly contradict such representations. Recent studies have shown, for instance, that the outcomes of the pandemic were systematically better managed in countries led by women (Garikipati and Kambhampati, 2020). In spite of this, the existing literature on resilience tends to present mitigation and management of disasters and change as a masculine quality, thereby complementing the above-mentioned feminization of vulnerability.

Studies that adopt a broader understanding of gender, and of how vulnerabilities are gendered, paint a more nuanced picture. They emphasize various factors, from women's lack of access to power, resources, and decision-making structures, to the fact that agricultural practices and crop choices are gendered (Thompson-Hall, Carr and Pascual, 2016, p. S374). The Tanzanian "National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Change" (United Republic of Tanzania Vice President's Office, 2013, p. 8) reminds us for example that "gender inequalities intersect with climate risks and vulnerabilities. Thus, women's historic disadvantages, their limited access and control over decision-making, environmental and economic resources, and their restricted rights, make them more vulnerable to climate change". In addition, women's unequal access to land and land tenure matters particularly in climate change and disaster studies, as women in many countries are still being barred from access to land tenure. This is especially problematic for widows, who are likely to be denied access to land after the passing of their husband, and therefore to lose the capacity to feed themselves and their families. This gendered vulnerability is considerably heightened in the context of climate change

and/or of natural disasters. Bizoza (2019) shows for example that the economic resilience of rural women in the context of climate change is strongly dependent on land access. His study on women in the G5-Sahel countries in West Africa demonstrates that women's capacities for adaptation and resilience to climate change and other natural disasters is heavily dependent on other often neglected factors, such as access to production resources, to small scale irrigation, or to agricultural mechanization. Such patterns are visible in the case of Tanzania too, as demonstrated by Moyo (2017).

On the whole, these studies show that women's vulnerabilities and capacities for resilience can often be explained by cultural norms and traditions, rather than by their belonging to the "women" category. By taking the context into account, this encompassing, and more accurate, understanding of gender highlights the fact that gender is not just a quality possessed by individuals, but that institutions and norms themselves can be gendered, especially when they are informal and reliant on traditions (Ravera et al., 2016, p. S242). Such a broadened understanding of why gender matters in resilience studies is critical for appreciating how individuals, but also communities, are vulnerable to rapid changes and disasters, but also whether and how they can adapt. Taking stock of this gendered and situated knowledge is the first step towards building individuals' and communities' resilience.

4. Looking at Vulnerability and Resilience through an Intersectional Lens

One of the ways in which the above-mentioned limits of a gender analysis can be bypassed is by relying upon an intersectional approach. First developed by the black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1991), the concept of intersectionality initially aimed at critically assessing the intersection between race and gender, as a way to better understand and analyse the specific patterns of oppression experienced by women of color in the United States. Its hermeneutical power has since then expanded to include multiple aspects of social identity, that it explores in a non-essentialist and context-specific fashion (Marfelt, 2016). The concept of intersectionality both expands feminist theorizing and criticizes it. It indeed maintains a certain focus on gender as a key analytical dimension, but looks beyond it, at other identity aspects such

as class, caste, age, education, religion, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on. The major objective of an intersectional approach is to understand how these various identity dimensions produce and/or strengthen inequalities between individuals (MacKinnon, 2013). In doing so, it pushes forward feminist theorizing of power structures and inequalities: it notably shows that weaved with gender, elements such as age, race/ethnicity, marital status, generation, socio-economic factors, etc., play a major role in understanding inequalities between individuals. It also provides insights on whether and how individuals can (or cannot) adapt to change, and develop (or not) agency and resilience (Marfelt, 2016).

The concept of intersectionality seems to be particularly relevant for advancing resilience studies, because even if it builds on individual experiences, it can also be applied both to inter-individual and collective situations. For example, Lutz (2015, p. 40) has shown how an intersectional approach could be used to analyse power relations and inequalities at the interpersonal level, but also at the level of local and national institutions, or at the cultural level, in discourses and symbols. One of the basic principles of an intersectional approach is to take the context into account, and to refuse broad universalizing and generalizing methods, which tend to homogenize and essentialize groups and societies. As a consequence, an intersectional approach does not look at collective entities as defined only by one characteristic, say gender or socio-economic status, but focuses on groups as defined by the intersection of different identity characteristics, for instance working-class widows – the intersection being here at the nexus between socio-economic status, marital status, and gender. By looking at different identity aspects and not just at gender, the concept of intersectionality helps to understand how individuals' and groups' social, cultural, economic, etc., positionalities make them more or less vulnerable to disasters and/or to rapid changes. It also helps to comprehend whether these positionalities can explain and/or foster their resilience. In a nutshell, an intersectional approach helps to understand specific experiences beyond simplifications deriving from an uncritical use of gender analysis.

Applying an intersectional analysis to study agrarian settings, Thompson-Hall, Carr and Pascual (2016, p. S374) show for example that gross generalizations assuming that only men are farmers, or that women are always the poorest and the most vulnerable, hinder our understanding of how vulnerabilities are created and reproduced: "Intersectional framings, however, give deeper attention to multiple facets of farmer identities

and the way these facets come together to influence vulnerability of different people" (2016, p. S372). An intersectional analysis allows us to identify and highlight different contextual elements, such as social, cultural or situational constraints, that can favour or hamper adaptation and resilience. This requires adopting an interdisciplinary approach, which goes far beyond environmental studies, geography or political ecology, to encompass sociological, economic, legal and anthropological methodologies, among many others. In turn, this multidisciplinary approach can help to devise broad support programs, to identify opportunities across multiple fields and reinforce adaptation capacities of groups as well as of individuals.

But it is perhaps in its ability to unveil and dissect the structures and systems of power that are embedded in, both formal and informal institutions, that the concept of intersectionality would be the most useful in resilience studies. As we have seen in the previous sections, there is a lingering tendency, in resilience and vulnerability studies, to consider resilience as an internal trait that individuals and systems either possess or lack. Against this assumption, recent studies have highlighted the fact that resilience and vulnerability are in fact relational and situated (see for example Tschakert and Tuana, 2013). Because an intersectional approach sheds light on how different identity traits interact and sustain inequalities and relations of power, it is ideally designed to unpack the relational dimensions of vulnerability, adaptation, and resilience. As such, intersectionality, as both a concept and a method, demonstrates that addressing vulnerability and fostering resilience cannot be done without addressing power relations too. As explained by Tacoli et al. (2014), when trying to improve women's resilience capacities, it is important to take stock of the underlying issues of the social and economic inequality that these women face, as well as the fact that women are not a homogeneous group.

Without such an in-depth analysis, the risk is that women in the Global South are simply instrumentalized by policies designed elsewhere, and considered "as mere resources" (Tacoli et al., 2014, p. 3). So, instead of being empowered, women would be essentialized as a group possessing consistent and unchanging qualities. For instance, describing women as "closer" to nature, or as having "better" adaptation capacities than men in face of climate change, is likely to turn them in the eyes of international donors into *targets* rather than real *actors* and *decision makers* of climate change mitigation policies. Such processes have been quite common during the past decades, and have been observed in other fields and/

or for individuals defined along different identity traits. For instance, LGBTQI+ individuals, due to their alleged tolerance and modern nature, have often been specifically targeted in international development and democratization programs, without being systematically associated with their design (Klapeer, 2018, p. 186). Likewise, in the peacebuilding field, highlighting what are perceived as ideo-typical women's roles in building peace at the local level as well as their alleged "peaceful" disposition, participates in turning women, especially from the Global South, into "objective" allies of liberal peacebuilding (Hudson, 2012). This is especially the case because the stress that has been put on the role of women in everyday and local peacebuilding, and on norms regarding gender equality, echoes international discourses and practices on liberal peacebuilding. These assumptions build on the idea that women's peace work is likely to be similar across very different settings and contexts, ignoring feminist insights into how gender and gender roles are heavily dependent upon the specific context, and how, following the concept of intersectionality, we should be wary of generalizing women's roles and positionalities.

In addition, because it unveils and dissects the power relations and inequalities that lie at the very core of the social fabric, an intersectional approach provides an articulated and consistent answer to one of the main weaknesses of the concept of resilience. As we have seen, one of the major critiques addressed to the concept of resilience is that it tends to exonerate authorities from their responsibilities towards their populations, and to shift the burden of adaptation towards the individuals. An intersectional approach allows us to deepen and refine the analysis of vulnerabilities that explain how individuals can, or cannot, develop resilience. In doing so, it demonstrates that resilience cannot be developed or improved without tackling inequalities between individuals and groups, and without active policies for mitigating power imbalances. It identifies specific intersections (for instance, gender, socio-economic and marital status) that need to be paid attention to and addressed in order to improve resilience capacities. In that sense, an intersectional approach can provide a path not just for *understanding* whether resilience happens or not, but also for *facilitating* resilience by addressing visible and less visible injustice and inequalities. In that sense, intersectionality offers options for addressing the main challenge to effective adaptation, that is a lack of access to resources, social networks, information, and to institutions that allocate resources needed for adaptation, as shown by Smucker and Wangu (2016) in the case of the Mwanga District in Tanzania.

However what an intersectional approach also reveals, is that the factors constitutive of vulnerability and/or resilience are co-constructed, in the sense that they mutually influence one another. This is what Djoudi et al. explain: "Vulnerability and adaptive capacity are dynamic in nature, and changes affecting them at one level can have profound and hidden implications at other levels" (2016, p. S248). What this means in policy terms is that any approach to reduce vulnerability and/or to enhance adaptation capacities has to take this interdependence into account. For instance, if we provide microcredit and access to land to widows in the Great Lakes Region of Africa without tackling discriminatory customs and traditions, will the resilience capacities of the concerned widows be significantly be improved? Existing research indeed shows that external interventions are often resisted and eventually ineffective when they clash with existing customs and traditions (see for instance Bourbeau and Ryan, 2018). The question is therefore not only to foster a more inclusive development process in order to increase adaptation and resilience capacities (Cohen et al., 2016, p. S319), but also to take into account the specific cultural, social and political contexts in which vulnerabilities are created and sustained.

In turn, this draws our attention to another issue raised in the first section of this chapter, that of how resilience, vulnerability and adaptation are defined in different cultural spaces. It is indeed important to keep in mind that "Western" notions of these concepts, which are particularly dominant in research literature, might differ significantly from how specific communities and groups understand them, including within the "West". More specifically, what constitutes adaptive capacity, resilience and the capacity to innovate, might be defined and attached to different values from place to place, and even from a local group to another (Cohen et al., 2016). This can explain why, even in the same country, individual adaptation can take different shapes and routes, depending on the group the individual is part of. Tacoli et al. (2014) show, for example, that contrary to commonly held stereotypes, women are often not passive victims of climate change. Their adaptation and resilience strategies are shaped by specific cultural and gender norms, and by social relations, which vary from one social and/or ethnic group to another. In other words, the various identity dimensions that matter in intersectional analysis do not have a fixed meaning across time and space, and identity aspects such as gender, generation, marital status, and so forth, will entail different types of cultural expectations from place to place, but also from one social, religious or ethnic group to another.

Interestingly, research in various fields, namely in environmental studies, or in peace and conflict studies, has shown that important economic or political shocks, natural disasters, as well as wars and conflicts frequently entail a disruption of social structures and of traditional norms. They thereby can open up options for changing the constraints under which individuals and groups operate. For example, in contrast to many publications highlighting the plight of women during and after wars, some recent research shows that conflicts, and the widespread adjustments they usher, can have a strong impact on opportunity structures for women. Rapid changes can provide them with access to the political scene, or to employment fields from which they were so far barred (see for example the case of Nepal, Yadav, 2020). Similarly, some studies show that natural disasters such as drought can affect the social structures to such an extent that socially disadvantaged women have much more freedom in choosing to engage in new activities, especially if and when men from their group have migrated. In Mali for instance, women who belong to disadvantaged socio-economic groups can engage in new income-generating activities outside of the house that are forbidden by social norms to higher social status women (Tacoli et al., 2014, p. 4). As such, women from lower social classes sometimes seem to have more adaptive capacities than more privileged women, for whom traditional cultural norms and models continue to apply, regardless of the advent of a crisis (Djoudi et al., 2016, p. 255).

Two major lessons can be drawn from such studies building on an intersectional approach: first, that patterns of adaptation and resilience do not necessarily follow obvious paths – for instance, those who are socio-economically privileged are not necessarily more resilient, because their capacity for resilience depends on other factors, such as gender, geographical location, and so on. In parallel, being a member of a group that is on average disadvantaged, such as being a woman, necessarily entails higher vulnerability and lesser resilience. This is because, depending on the context, some other identity factors might matter more, such as socio-economic and marital statuses. Second, these studies suggest that resilience-building policies which do not take intersectionality into account might actually do more harm than good. Just as vulnerabilities are often the product of multiple superimposing positionalities (for example, being a woman + belonging to a sexual minority + belonging to a discriminated religious group + being poor), resilience is the result of multiple complex, context-specific, and interrelated factors. This lesson

learned might not be good news for those looking for quick-fix solutions, but it undoubtedly paves the way for more efficient interventions and policies.

5. Some Conclusions

In the introduction, we underscored the necessity of coming up with a more nuanced and precise understanding of the concept of resilience. While an intersectional approach might not always be applicable to fields that do not use social sciences tools, we suggest that it can provide a consistent, critical, and evidence-based grounding to the concept of resilience, which some studies lack. By underscoring the complexity of factors lying behind vulnerabilities, as well as adaptation and resilience capacities, an intersectional approach opens up avenues to design more efficient policies for supporting the resilience of both individuals and collectivities. Besides, by foregrounding issues of power and inequalities, it provides answers to the most strident critiques addressed to the concept of resilience.

However, it is important to remember that depending on the matter at hand, resilience is not always desirable. Berkes and Ross (2013) note, for instance, that some social phenomena, such as the loss of livelihoods for a local community, can call for a transformation of the local economy rather than for its resilience. They also point at the fact that these local transformations (rather than resilience) "may enable resilience at higher levels" (Berkes and Ross, 2013, p. 16). This insight is fundamental as it underscores the fact that no individual, group nor local community and state, is completely isolated, and that the potential resilience of each of these entities is always the product of complex and multi-levelled interactions with others.

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