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Overcoming Recurring Crisis through Resilience: An Analysis of USAID's Definition of Resilience

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Overcoming Recurring Crisis through Resilience:
An Analysis of USAID's Definition of Resilience

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A Master's Paper

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ABSTRACT

USAID and Resilience
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This paper analyzes resilience policy employed by the United States' Agency for International Development (USAID). First, by situating USAID's resilience policy within a historical context of the 2011 Horn of Africa Famine, and by drawing on existing literature, I show that USAID's understanding of resilience, and thus its resilience-based policies, are inherently flawed by focusing solely on recurrent crisis. While recurrent crises pose a potential threat to resilience, communities that are exposed to chronic shocks have resilience mechanisms in place against those shocks. Rather, stochastic, or unplanned crises, are larger risks to livelihoods that USAID's resilience policies do not address. While USAID's definition of resilience is broad, encompassing aspects of adaptation and mitigation, it provides a narrow understanding of resilience that renders those that are faced with unplanned and stochastic shocks invisible.

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Introduction

Resilience has long been an interest among scholars in ecology, however, it has recently come to the forefront of development agendas. The interest in resilience can be traced to the reaction of the international community following the failure of development and humanitarian organizations to anticipate and respond to the 2011 Horn of Africa Famine, which opened up conversations on how to avoid such outcomes in the future (Carr, in review). It appears that resilience is linked to sustainability, and even vulnerability, in the everyday discourse surrounding climate change and livelihood challenges. Yet, there remains much ambiguity around the term resilience and what it means to be resilient. A growing number of governments and non-governmental organizations are increasingly using the term in policy and programming documents (USAID, 2012; DFID, 2016). But, there is a common thread among these documents: it signifies the ability of materials, individuals, organizations, even entire socio-ecological systems, to withstand severe conditions and absorb shocks.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also began using the concept of resilience. By 2013, it began to appear in workshops, proposals, and policy documents. Since then, USAID has taken up the task of measuring resilience as well as implementing the concept in their development initiatives. *USAID's 2018 Resilience Evidence Forum Report* states: "We have collectively demonstrated that resilience can be measured, we have gained incredible insights into sources of resilience that enable households and communities to manage and adapt to adversity and change. We have also demonstrated the broader relevance of resilience to sustainably ending hunger and poverty everywhere we work" (6). USAID has put themselves at the forefront of resilience in the field of development, defining the concept for future use.

By implementing policies and supporting programs centered on resilience, USAID has the ability to influence the development agenda of the countries in which it operates. The recent focus on resilience by USAID pushes smaller organizations and countries dependent on USAID support to follow suit. As such, USAID operates not only as a key decision-maker in global development agendas, but also as a developer of resilience definitions. One way that this power is exerted is through the policy and program documents that are published. In his article, "Resilience: A Bridging Concept or a Dead End" (2012), Simin Davoudi outlines a critical issue with translating ecological resilience theory into the social world. In ecological resilience, the desired outcome is sustainability of a system. When translating resilience to the social context, outcomes are tied to normative judgments about what is desirable (Davoudi 2012). By creating policy documents and program guidances, USAID assumes that resilience is desirable, and thus creates normative judgments about what resilience should look like. As I will show throughout this paper, a key characteristic of what resilience should look like according to USAID is tied to recurrence of the shock.

USAID has been investing over $300 million a year in resilience initiatives in eight focus countries in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and southern Asia (USAID, 2016). Though the concept is rather new in development, USAID has released document after document to support the initiative. After resilience was introduced following the Horn of Africa famine in 2011, USAID published their flagship Resilience Program and Policy Guidance in 2012, an extraordinarily rapid process. Because USAID remains a large funding entity in the development sphere, it legitimates its conceptions and understanding of resilience as truth that defines the development agenda. Although the agency has put itself at the lead of the discourse on resilience in development, USAID's definition represents a narrow understanding of resilience as a recurrent crisis which represents a fundamental flaw in policy and practice.

Analytical Approach

I draw on an analysis of power and knowledge to understand the relationship between language and power and its socio-political implications on framing resilience in development. More specifically, understanding the ways in which discourse becomes accepted will illustrate the shortcomings of USAID's version of resilience that only focuses on recurrent crisis. According to Foucault, discourse is a way of organizing knowledge that structures relations through the acceptance of fact (Foucault, 1969). Thus, framing development through resilience may enable or empower people differently than a vulnerability or poverty reduction approach. Hence, this essay will first illustrate the emergence of a resilience discourse in fields such as ecology and psychology before its adoption by the development sphere. The second part of this essay will then focus on USAID's resilience model and the ways in which resilience is used to further United States development agendas.

Deleuze (1992) argues that Foucault's notion of "dispositif" is the most useful for understanding development. The dispositif is a "thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble' of discursive and material elements-for example, 'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions" (Foucault, 1980: 194). This is central to the development project because of the number of institutions and resource flows that have been created since the 1940s and modeled after the West (Brigg, 2002). USAID is an example of Foucault's "dispositif" because of not only its institutional power in developing discourse but also its implementation power as a major funding source.

A power/knowledge framing provides a valuable framework for understanding the rationality of development institutions and practices. In this case, Foucault's work on knowledge and power influence the way we see resilience as a particular discursive formation that is a historically and culturally specific form of rationality within broader relations of power. Here, we can understand discourse as: "identifying appropriate and legitimate ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it" (Grillo, 1997, 12). Following Foucault, practices (for example, of development) are rooted in rationales

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that are historically rooted and serve to structure knowledge. In this case, discourse informs practices and is a form of power (Foucault, 1991).

Because resilience is such a new focus in development, it remains a challenge to analyze what outcomes the resilience push has had on development. For this reason, I have chosen to analyze USAID's stated goals and outcomes through their published documents on resilience programming and policies. One way to do so would be to organize USAID's documents chronologically, which would illustrate the growing importance of the concept over time and its shifting priorities (for example, from defining resilience to measuring resilience). Similarly, examining documents on analytical levels, from the macro-level to the micro-level, would illuminate the ways in which resilience is defined, written into policy, and operationalized. Generally, USAID's meta-documents provide the policies for which their sub-offices operate. As such, these documents provide over-arching concepts of resilience, program guidance, and resilience-specific policies. Because these documents must be applicable for so many different contexts, they are broad and generalized so that different parts of the organization can take what they need out of them and have it remain applicable. Meso-documents are typically technical briefs that depict certain context areas, such as fragile or conflict-affected contexts, or regional programming. Analyzing resilience policy at the micro-level illustrates how connected policy levels are. For example, in writing its own Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), USAID Mali consulted with both the West African Bureau and USAID/Washington. Furthermore, USAID Mali relied on other parts of the organization to provide the resilience analytical framework and to pick the targeted geographical location and population. Resilience documents are also connected thematically. By analyzing USAID's resilience discourse via emerging themes, I show what is being privileged in this discourse and what effects that privileging has in shaping the development agenda.

Literature Review

Many authors lament the increased use of resilience as just another buzzword, similar to "sustainability" before it (Davoudi, 2012; Weischelgartner and Kelman 2015). Despite the lack of clarity of the term, many development organizations have been quick to employ it to guide development initiatives globally. Many of the statements made by governments or organizations focus on an ecological understanding of the term, focusing on the ability of a system to bounce back from a disturbance (Davoudi, 2012). However, the lack of specificity in the definition and use of resilience poses the danger that the term becomes an empty signifier rather than a unifying concept (Weischelgartner and Kelman 2015).

Although resilience may be new to the development repertoire, the roots of the term can be found in many different disciplines. In the 1940s, the term resilience first appeared in psychology (Waller, 2001). Ecological roots of resilience emerged in the 1970s from C.S. Holling, who described resilience as "the persistence of relationships within a system and the ability of these systems to absorb change of a state variable, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist" (Holling, 1973, 18). Two main definitions of resilience inform development and resilience programming, engineering resilience and ecological resilience (Davoudi, 2012). The main difference between the two is that engineering resilience emphasizes the time it takes to return to a steady state while ecological resilience focuses on the magnitude of a disturbance that a system can take and still maintain its function (Holling, 1996). Since then, the term has been applied to a variety of different fields and has taken on various different meanings (Aldunce et al. 2014). Table 1 presents a list of different definitions. While the list is not exhaustive, it illustrates the diversity of use of the concept and its evolution.

Table 1: Definitions of Resilience

Author	Date	Definition
Holling	1973	The persistence of relationships within a system and as a measure of the ability of systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist
Pimm	1984	The time taken to return to the pre-disturbance state.
Holling et al.	1995	It is the buffer capacity or the ability of a system to absorb perturbation, or the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before a system changes its structure by changing the variables
Adger et al.	2005	The capacity of linked social-ecological systems to absorb recurrent disturbances such as hurricanes and floods so as to retain essential structures, functions, and feedbacks. Resilience reflects the degree to which a complex system is capable of self-organization and the degree to which the system can build capacity for learning and adaptation.
Gunderson and Folke	2005	The return or recovery time of a social-ecological system determined by that system's capacity for renewal in a dynamic environment and people's ability to learn and change.
Davoudi	2012	*Engineering Resilience:* the ability of a system to return to an equilibrium or steady-state after a disturbance *Ecological Resilience:* the magnitude of the disturbance that can be absorbed before the system changes its structure(how much disturbance it can take and remain within critical thresholds). *Evolutionary Resilience(socio-ecological):* Not conceived of as a return to normality, but rather as the ability of complex socio-ecological systems to change, adapt, and, crucially, transform in response to stresses and strains
Barrett, Constas	2014	*Development Resilience:* Development resilience is the capacity over time of a person, household or other aggregate units to avoid poverty in the face of various stressors and in the wake of myriad shocks. *Humanitarian Resilience:* The capacity over time of a person, household, or other aggregate units to survive in the face of other stressors and in the wake of a myriad of shocks.

Conceptions of resilience have evolved from the ecological understanding of the concept to include human agency within the environment's changing conditions. As the term resilience expanded from natural systems to include social-ecological systems, understandings of resilience also expanded to include the impact of humans on their systems (Carr, in review). Following Carpenter et al. (2001), Carl Folke (2006) proposes that socio-ecological resilience is defined as: "The amount of disturbance a system can absorb and still remain within the same state or domain of attraction, the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization (versus lack of organization, or organization forced by external factors), and the degree to which the system can build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation" (Folke, 2006, 260). In this sense, resilience is not a return to normality, but the ability of systems to change, adapt to and respond to stressors (Davoudi 2012; Carpenter et al. 2005; Berkes and Folke 1998).

In international development applications, under which USAID works, advancing a "development resilience" is imperative. Barret and Constas (2014) offer a theory of resilience as it applies to the challenges of international development, "development resilience focuses on the stochastic dynamics of individual and collective human well-being, in particular, the capacity to avoid and escape from unacceptable standards of living (such as poverty) over time and in the face of myriad stressors and shocks" (Barret and Constas, 2014, 1425). Development resilience thus serves as a framework to understand the interrelated nature of risk, human standards of living, livelihood opportunities, and concepts of adaptation and mitigation. What separates development resilience from former notions of the term is the concern with the basic rights of humans, as well as the aspiration for improved living conditions. In this sense, resilience is asymmetrical in that the system prevents downward movement toward poverty, but enables upward movement toward improved living conditions. This differentiates the system from systems-oriented uses of resilience, which seeks to prevent any shift or change to the system. In this case, resilience is not conflated with the stability of a system.

In development resilience, the variable of interest is a person's household, or village, wellbeing. The notion of wellbeing can be loosely tied to Amartya Sen's notion of "capabilities", or rather, a person's ability to achieve the kind of life that they value (Sen, 1992). Barrett and Constas argue that wellbeing is increasingly stochastic, vulnerable to a host of disturbances that effect indicators such as income, health, security, and assets. Chronic poverty is sustained deprivation of capabilities". Development resilience relies on a permanent disruption of the system that traps people in chronic poverty (Barrett and Constas, 2014). While resilience has once privileged stability, Folke agrees that "disturbance has the potential to create opportunity for doing new things, for innovation and for development" (2006, 253). In this sense, resilience takes on the meaning of overcoming the traps of

poverty by gaining capabilities in the face of disruption to a system and thus provides opportunities for transforming development (Barrett and Constas, 2014).

Resilience in ecological systems is not a product of forethought, but rather an emergent property of a natural system. However, as resilience is used increasingly to refer to socio-ecological systems, the impact of human agency must be recognized and thus puts into question the characteristic of resilience. In socio-ecological systems, resilience becomes managing the capacity to cope with, adapt to, and even shape change (Folke, Carpenter, et al. 2006). In this sense, resilience is an approach that organizes thought into action. Resilience is not a fixed asset, but rather a continually changing process, less about being and more about becoming (Davoudi, 2012). Resilience approaches to development provide an object with which to generate interdisciplinary collaboration on issues of fundamental importance to governments. Biological conceptions of resilience frame it as a property of the system itself whereas sociological understandings of resilience employ the term as a project. Resilience as a project is seen in development agendas such as USAID, when initiatives have a specific "resilience" component.

Davoudi notes that "in the ecological literature, resilience is almost always power-blind and a-political" (2012, 306). As pointed out by Osbahr (2007) and Leach (2008), in Bené et al. (2012), resilience among different groups in the same system can be asymmetrical: a certain project may increase the resilience of a community as a whole, but there are likely some winners and some losers within that same community. As such, resilience is a matter of social framing by different actors with different objectives and various resources. Resilience, as currently employed by development agencies, fails to capture and reflect social dynamics such as agency and power. The focus on the ability of the system to respond to disturbance takes precedence over the choices of those who operate within the system, who may or may not exert control over how resilience is shaped (Bené et al. 2012).

Bené et al. highlight another challenge posed by resilience theory. While I have discussed that there is some debate among the literature as to whether resilience is an outcome to be sought after or a characteristic of a system, Bene et al. argue that both of these conceptions correlate resilience to positive wellbeing, when that may not always be the case. Drawing from Amartya Sen's notion of adaptive preference (1992), some households may have managed to strengthen their resilience at the detriment of their wellbeing (Bené et al. 2012). For example, some might forego traditional modes of agriculture in favor of precarious low-wage urban employment. In sum, one may be very unwell, but very resilient.

Much of the literature on socio-ecological resilience centers on the debate about whether resilience is a property of a system or the desired outcome of that system. However, as Bené et al. highlight, what is omitted from the debate is the potential negative side of resilience. That is, that whether resilience is a characteristic or an outcome, resilience does not always lead to increased well-being. Similarly, resilience is not even throughout a system. Increasing the resilience of one may lead to the increased vulnerability of another.

The emergence of resilience in the socio-ecological sphere is contested. While many argue that resilience is too broad a concept and risks becoming an empty-signifier or an all-encompassing phrase (Davoudi, 2012; Weischelgartner and Kelman 2015), others see resilience as an opportunity to prioritize innovation and development in the face of disturbances and shocks (Barrett and Constas, 2014). Drawing on Amartya Sen's notions of poverty alleviation, development resilience sees disruption as an opportunity to overcome systems of chronic poverty.

To understand how the theory of resilience is applied to practice, it is necessary to place USAID's conception of resilience within the broader discourse around resilience. While there is a multitude of definitions and understanding of resilience, stemming from various epistemological backgrounds, USAID's definition fits within them, forming a discursive practice. The rest of this paper will first, attempt

to place USAID's definition of resilience within the existing discourse of resilience and then will answer

the question: in what ways do USAID's resilience policy documents create normative judgements about

resilience and offer a flawed understanding of the concept?

USAID and Resilience

Background

USAID's focus on resilience to recurrent crisis is partly an artifact of when it entered

development discourse. Resilience entered the development discourse following the 2011 Horn of Africa

drought and ensuing famine (USAID 2018, 6). The international community failed to predict the

magnitude of the drought that hit Somalia and other parts of East Africa, even though there had been

warning signs as early as December 2010. Non-Governmental Organizations, such as Oxfam

International, described the donor response to the crisis and slow and inadequate (The Guardian, 2012).

USAID was among the donor agencies that failed to respond in an adequate and timely manner. The

subsequent famine killed hundreds of thousands of people. In the year following the famine, USAID

published its first piece on resilience policy: *Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis: Policy and Program*

Guidance (2012). The guidance provided the first USAID definition of resilience and outlined projects

and strategies that encompassed Disaster Risk Reduction strategies, highlights from the 2012 *Climate*

Change and Development Strategy, and projects such as increasing resilience for rainfed crops. Because

the push to focus on resilience came after the 2010-2011 drought, USAID set the agenda for resilience to

focus on recurrent crisis such as drought (versus stochastic shocks, for example).

The focus on recurrent crises explains USAID's choice of initial countries in the Horn of Africa

and the Sahel, where countries have been plagues by recurring drought and famine. Additionally, Nepal

provides a different context to apply a resilience approach where disaster-related economic losses are

still high. The 2018 Resilience Evidence Forum Report reiterates the choice to focus on people and

places subject to recurrent crises and acknowledges that shocks and stresses are chronic characteristics of the places in which USAID operates (7).

The introduction of the guidance document addresses the 2011 Horn of Africa crises to illustrate the adoption of resilience by USAID. While it was noted earlier in this paper, the call for resilience was initiated by the failure of the international community in response to the famine earlier in 2011. In bold lettering in the introduction, USAID reads: "We must strategically coordinate humanitarian and development assistance in a way that catalyzes sustainable, transformable change" (7). USAID's introduction puts the agency at the forefront of the resilience agenda without admitting to any fault toward the failed response to the crisis. The inability to take part in failure, in this case the failure to predict the severity of the 2011 drought and to act pre-emptively to address the famine, presents an idealistic reason for focusing on recurring crises. By narrowing USAID's definition of resilience to recurring crises, there is a level of predictability that allows USAID policies and programs to be rendered effective, even transferable, regardless of time and place. As such, resilience at USAID's roots' in the 2011 Drought have left a legacy of defining resilience through predictability.

USAID's Definition: A Focus on Recurrence

Resilience is dependent on many important factors, thus the challenge is determining which institution, policy, or political constraints cause the most impediments to building resilience, including those of USAID. Often, communities that face recurrent crises receive little political attention, either due to geography or socio-political differences in state actors. While USAID claims to foster resilience through promoting good governance structures, the agency fails to recognize itself as a governing institution that sets rules and agendas for resilience.

Documents written by the USAID Center for Resilience offer a clear and constant definition of resilience: "the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to,

and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth." While this is a rather broad conception of resilience, encompassing mitigation, adaptation, and recovery strategies, it remains constant throughout the policy papers.

According to USAID's Policy and Program Guidance, recurrent crises are compounded at the intersection of chronic poverty and exposure to shocks and stresses. Under this framework, communities are able to take anticipatory action to avoid major losses and are able to respond quickly and effectively, primarily encompassing mitigation strategies as central components to USAID's definition of resilience.

The program guidance frames resilience as a characteristic of a community noted in their definition as an "ability." USAID adds a community's ability to take anticipatory action to mitigate crises to their resilience repertoire. As such, communities increase their resilience by preparing for a potential crisis before the threat is realized. USAID's conceptual framework outlines communities' need for both adaptive capacity and the ability to address and reduce risk. As such, interventions focus on good governance and women's empowerment. These interventions generate either increased adaptive capacity or improved risk reduction technologies, allowing communities and households to either adapt to crises as they take place or to mitigate their risk before crises. While vulnerability (reduction), adaptation, and resilience are linked, there remain key differences in potential interventions, illustrated later in this paper, that USAID's definition of resilience overlooks.

Theory of Persistent Crisis

USAID's focus on recurrent crises represents a narrow understanding of resilience. Following socio-ecological theories of resilience, systems that are faced with the same recurring crises would be able to adapt and build resilience toward that stressor, potentially building negative resilience which causes people to become trapped in a resilient yet un-well system. Systems that face chronic, or

recurring, shocks are examples of systems with multiple equilibria. In these cases, shocks flip the system into another equilibrium of behavior in order to guard stability (Gunderson, 2000). Hence, communities that face recurrent shocks have resilience built into them to face these crises, following ecological resilience theory.

Mali's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 2 (DO 2) is centered around resilience and improving the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and households. Following the document's definition of USAID's conception of resilience, it goes on to state that, "the ultimate goal of USAID resilience-building interventions is to reduce the repeated infusions of humanitarian assistance to areas of recurrent crises" (41).

The DO2 proposes a development hypothesis that states:

"Within a focused geographic zone for resilience and within projects across the Mission's portfolio, if risks from recurrent climate shocks and stresses are reduced, if drivers of conflict are mitigated, if livelihoods are diversified and improved and if human capital is strengthened, then the adaptive capacity and ability to reduce/manage risk of vulnerable communities and households will be increased" (41).

Further, while adaptation is a key component of USAID's definition of resilience, USAID assumes that systems that are faced with recurrent crises lack adaptive capacity. In this sense, mitigation leads to adaptive capacity. However, when systems are faced with chronic shocks, adaptive capacity will be built.

Gaps in USAID's Definition

An inherent assumption of USAID's resilience interventions is that resilience is a new concept to their operational areas. However, livelihood activities in high-risk areas that are subject to increased vulnerabilities, especially climactic variation, already have systems of resilience built in. In preparation

for drought, farmers modify their agricultural production practices to provide 'self-insurance' to minimize the impacts of a chronic shock to an acceptable level. In vulnerable regions, farmers use these strategies in different combinations to meet their level of need, and as such have become an integral part of farming systems and may not easily be identified as a coping mechanism for drought.

USAID's focus on recurrent crises may further render existing coping strategies invisible. Because adaptation strategies would be incorporated into a resilient system in socio-ecological theory, USAID's interventions risk undermining existing resilience strategies. For example, diversification of agriculture protects against income variability of crops that are affected by global market forces. Common practices include the careful choice of crop varieties, temporal adjustments of cropping patterns and adjusting planting dates, changing weeding and fertilization practices, and use of soil and water conservation practices. In vulnerable regions, farmers use these strategies in different combinations in order to provide resilience to specific shocks and stressors.

Failing to recognize existing patterns of resilience removes agency from populations facing crises. There is an underlying assumption that these populations are merely acted upon, either by the shock itself or by the project intervention. While structural forces such as gender inequity or access to credit institutions may be compounding factors, populations that are faced with recurrent crises tend to have adaptive capacities built into their system, as mentioned above. As such, failing to recognize existing patterns of resilience risks damaging or even disestablishing them.

Where resilience is already built into a system, it is assumed that resilience is always a beneficial process. USAID's technical brief *Building Resilience in Fragile or Conflict-Affected Environments* alludes to the possibility of negative resilience, especially in fragile or conflict-affected areas. It is possible to have a resilient autocratic state. However, communities that are exposed to shocks and stresses that could have been prevented are often remarkably resilient. However, because that resilience is developed in a fragile environment, strategies may include reliance on illicit networks that impede sustainable

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development in the long run. As such, communities that face recurrent shock can be resilient, but resilience relies upon dangerous lifestyles, or generates cycles of being disadvantaged. The severity of the shock dictates the actions required to sustain livelihoods, and include reduced consumption, and increased borrowing, higher rates of seasonal out-migration, default on loans, withdrawal of children from school, distress sale and liquidation of productive assets such as livestock, land, trees and other assets. Households often initially respond in terms of forced reduction of expenditures on certain 'non-essential' items such as clothing, social functions, food and medical treatment, adjustments in food balance and move progressively to reliance on public relief and safety-net programs and exploitive environmental management practices.

Following USAID's focus on places that face recurring crises, along with ecological theory, systems with adaptive capacity may have resilience built in. If so, communities may be negatively affected by current resilience outputs. The lack of analysis and guidelines for countering negative resilience in USAID's documents present possibilities for further disempowering communities struck by crisis.

Moving Forward

The lack of an updated program guidance document illustrates a shift in USAID's priorities within resilience to developing measurement indicators. This shift toward quantifying resilience provides an opportunity to better understand how USAID views resilience concretely.

The 2015- 2019 Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) for West Africa is a document developed to encompass initiatives and programs that the 21 countries in the region need over the course of 5 years. The RDCS serves as a guiding document to highlight challenges and opportunities as well as organizational priorities over the term. The document goes over three

Development Objectives (DO) that USAID wishes to pursue, one of which is "Broad-Based Economic Growth and Resilience Advanced through West African Partners".

DO 2, USAID's development objective that encompasses economic growth and resilience focuses on three interrelated sectors of economic growth: agriculture, trade, and the environment. In understanding DO 2, the concept of resilience is heavily tied to economic growth. In the strategy's depiction of each of those sectors, resiliency is not mentioned.

The Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) briefing provides another example of regional resilience programming. RISE is a new USAID initiative that commits $130 million over 2 years to building resilience in Burkina Faso and Niger. The initiative purports focused efforts on strengthening institutions and governance, increasing sustainable economic wellbeing, and improving health and nutrition (3). The report also details 5-year goals for targeted zones in Burkina Faso and Niger. These goals range from reducing Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates to below 10% to increasing income from livestock, poultry, and cowpeas by 50%. Once again, resilience is heavily tied to economic growth and the strengthening of state and economic institutions.

Framing resilience in terms of economic growth can be traced to ecological roots of the concept and the attempts to integrate social science into resilience. The link between economic growth and environmental quality is tied to understanding environmental carrying capacity and thus, the resilience of the environment (Arrow et al. 1995). The general proposition is that as income increases, environmental degradation increases up to a certain point, after which environmental quality improves. This is used to justify environmental degradation in developing countries with a high focus on economic growth. Poor people cannot justify ecologically conscious amenities over material well-being. This modeled relationship of economic growth and environmental quality suggests that as economies grow, they use up more of the environment's finite resources. As Arrow et al. point out, "economic activities are sustainable only if the life-support ecosystems on which they depend are resilient" (1995, 521). In

this case, economic growth could be seen as a "shock" to a socio-ecological system that therefore necessitates resilience, which is often overlooked by development agendas.

The inclusion of economic growth follows a distinctly American view of development. Thus, economic growth and resilience are becoming inextricably linked. New measurements for resilience utilize income as the main indicator. While there has been growing body of literature and knowledge around resilience, USAID's linkage to economic well-being pivots resilience in development to follow American understandings and intents and serves as a prime example of power assertion through development discourse. Further, measuring resilience using economic indicators can be once again tied to USAID's focus on recurrent crisis. Communities that are able to experience economic growth would be more able to predict and take anticipatory steps to mitigate a recurrent crisis. Conversely , economic growth would have little effect on a stochastic shock where an unplanned crisis could have devastating, and unknown, effects on a system's economic function and stability.

USAID Mali published a Results Framework Paper to accompany its 2015-2020 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2014). This provides a framework under which to measure success. Resilience objectives in Mali will coordinate transition, development, and humanitarian assistance programs in the region, given Mali's fragile governance structure and ongoing conflict. Interventions that build resilience in Mali include: building strategic information and decision-making systems; emergency food and non-food assistance, cash transfers, basic health services, community management of acute malnutrition, improved natural resource management, disaster, and economic risks reduction, etc. This non-comprehensive list is the first to actually define and illustrate what is considered a resilience intervention.

Toward the end of 2017, a series of measurement guidances were published by the Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning consortium, funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. The new measurement tools are indicative of USAID's push to move toward a quantifiable understanding of

resilience. For measuring household resilience, two main indicators are used: household income, and food consumption before and after the shocks. Shocks measured for range from excessive rains/flooding and drop disease to death of a household member or youth unemployment. Interestingly, while USAID's definition of resilience hasn't shifted to incorporate stochastic or unplanned shocks, shocks measured to show a widening of the concept. The focus on food consumption and income as measurement indicators reinforces USAID's incorporation of economic growth as resilience. USAID also realizes the impact of external institutions on household resilience. For example, the 2017 Enumerator Guidance for measuring resilience poses questions on a household's access to markets, infrastructure, and services such as education, money lending, and saving institutions, or agricultural extension services (7). The depth of survey questions and the number of indicators, from well-being to degree of shock to resilience capacities indicate the complexity of implementing resilience programs and measuring resilience outcomes.

Resilience measurement guidelines are important steps in identifying measures of resilience. Without being able to measure and/or to monitor resilience, policymakers and societies more broadly will not be in a position to identify and support interventions that have more effect on people's ability to respond and to accommodate adverse events (Bené, 2013). Bené outlines that by nature, resilience is context specific, however, frameworks to measure resilience must be generic enough to be scaled out and applied globally.

Conclusion

USAID has had a prominent role in shaping the resilience discourse in development, specifically in exploring the ways in which to plan for and adapt to recurrent crises. Since the term was introduced following the 2011 Horn of Africa famine, it has been central to USAID's operating missions. While USAID's definition of resilience is broad, encompassing aspects of adaptation and mitigation, it provides

a narrow understanding of resilience that renders those that are faced with unplanned and stochastic shocks invisible.

USAID's programming strategies focus on both mitigation and adaptation to achieve resiliency, framed around economic stability and growth. The West Africa Regional Development Strategy's intermediate result 2 (IR 2), conservation and resilient low-emissions growth improved, illustrates that resiliency is tied to economic growth in this RDCS. It couples environmental conservation with economic growth given the absence of environmental safeguards currently in place and the increases in foreign direct investment and enlargement of the extractive industry sector in the region. The IR calls for the concept of resiliency, closely tied to the ecological definition of resilience, in natural resource management and conservation.

Drawing on Foucault to analyze power and knowledge in USAID's resilience discourse, I have shown that USAID has shaped our general understanding of resilience. Foucault's notion of "dispositif" can be used to understand resilience discourse at the intersection of institutional power, regulatory decisions, and discourse. While resilience is a rather new theme in development, I have shown that the shift to resilience has been historically and politically rooted, and thus the discourse is laden with such implications.

Although USAID has considerably shaped resilience discourse, the agency has further narrowed definitions of resilience by only focusing on recurrent crises. Future areas of focus for resilience initiatives include social capital, financial inclusion, psychosocial sources of resilience, women's empowerment, diversification of livelihood risk, sustainability of natural resources, and access to markets, however there has been little effort to expand into preparing for and measuring the effects of stochastic shocks on the resilience of communities. This represents a departure from ecological roots of the term of resilience, in which systems display adaptive capacity and have resilience capacities to expended shocks built in.

Similar to USAID's focus on recurrent crisis, the agency's policy documents do not represent resilience measures already in place. Although, the recent measurement guidances do provide surveys to assess a household's current resilience strategies. While there are many structural factors that limit a person or household's ability to cope with shocks and stresses, many communities have either household-level or community-level strategies to increase resilience to stressors. USAID does acknowledge that women tend to be more vulnerable to shocks than men due to gender inequity and lack of access to institutions such as education and credit, however, the agency's policy documents do not illustrate an operationalized conception of women's empowerment although it is a central tenet of USAID's goal.

USAID's newest focus has been on measuring resilience and provides an interesting opportunity to further research the ways in which discourse is executed through operationalized missions and the power of applying quantitative data to livelihoods and wellbeing.

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