

RESILIENT SOCIETIES

IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

FROM CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS TO SOCIETAL IMPLEMENTATION

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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RE-CARE

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13:00–14:00

Recovery or Transformation? Rethinking Resilience in Super-Aged Societies

Satoshi Kodama (Kyoto)

Resilience has become a central concept in disaster management, public health, and social policy. It is commonly understood as the capacity to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and adapt to disruptive events. In disaster studies, resilience is often illustrated by the “resilience triangle”, where the goal is to minimise the loss of social functions and accelerate recovery after a crisis. While this framework is useful, its ethical implications remain insufficiently examined.

This talk argues that the meaning of resilience changes significantly in super-aged and shrinking societies such as Japan. In Japan, resilience challenges emerge in at least two distinct contexts. Metropolitan disasters, such as a major earthquake in the Greater Tokyo Area, raise familiar questions of infrastructure protection, business continuity, mass evacuation, and rapid recovery. In such cases, resilience is largely understood in terms of restoring critical functions and rebuilding better. Here, the idea of Build Back Better remains plausible, since recovery can still be oriented towards restoring and improving pre-disaster functions.

However, disasters in ageing and shrinking rural communities present a fundamentally different challenge. The 2024 Noto Peninsula earthquake illustrates this problem. In many affected areas, population decline, ageing, labour shortages, and weakening community ties had already eroded local capacities before disaster struck. In such contexts, the question is no longer simply how to recover quickly, but rather: recover to what state? Conventional resilience models often assume that the pre-disaster state provides a desirable baseline for recovery. In super-aged and shrinking communities, however, this assumption becomes increasingly questionable.

This suggests that resilience in such contexts should be understood not only as recovery, but also as adaptation and transformation. This includes difficult decisions concerning selective reconstruction, infrastructure maintenance, regional healthcare provision, compact city development, and planned non-reconstruction of certain areas.

Yet planning for such transformations generates a profound ethical tension. On the one hand, meaningful preparedness requires planning before disaster occurs. On the other hand, openly discussing scenarios involving selective reconstruction or planned non-reconstruction of certain areas can appear politically troubling and morally unsettling. Yet postponing such discussions until after disaster strikes may lead to confusion, conflict, and unjust outcomes.

I call this the resilience planning paradox: the more seriously a society prepares in normal times for future crises, the more it risks undermining trust, legitimacy, and solidarity. The ethical challenge is therefore not whether to plan, but how to plan justly, transparently, and democratically.

09:30–10:30

Democratic Societies in Times of Uncertainty and Crisis: How to Build Resilience Against Internal and External Information Threats

Thorsten Quandt (Münster)

Democratic societies around the globe are currently grappling with what has been termed a “polycrisis”—a convergence of natural disasters, public health emergencies, armed conflicts, economic volatility, and deep-seated social friction. In this turbulent environment, autocratic leadership principles are increasingly marketed as an appealing alternative to complex democratic discourse, which critics often paint as too slow or ill-equipped to provide the rapid responses modern challenges demand. In the process, the historical lessons that taught us otherwise seem to be fading from collective memory.

Compounding these socio-political strains, open democracies are also facing deliberate attacks from manipulative actors with a vested interest in undermining systemic stability. While foreign disinformation campaigns seek to destabilize from the outside, internal factions seed distrust and weaponize biased narratives against democratic institutions for domestic political gain. These information threats strike at the very foundation of democratic systems and societal stability—both of which rely fundamentally on trust, fairness, open discourse, and a careful balancing of diverse interests.

Yet, despite the severity of these challenges, the situation is far from hopeless. Building resilience against these informational threats is both urgent and achievable. There are multiple, viable paths toward cultivating societal immunity against information warfare and systemic destabilization.

In this keynote speech, communication scholar Thorsten Quandt (University of Münster) will outline the current landscape of information threats, drawing on his own research into online disinformation and toxicity. Moving beyond diagnosis, he will offer conceptual frameworks and actionable ideas on how to immunize modern societies against these pressing challenges.

14:30–16:30

Health System Resilience: Data Governance and Social Preparedness

- **How Should Genome Data Be Used in Our Society?**

Shigeto Yonemura (Tokyo)

Genome science is advancing dramatically in the whole world today, and it has got quite easier to analyze personal genome data and use it for many purposes. For example, it can be used in various social decisions like hiring of workers, entrance examination of universities or schools, and so on. However, the legal rules on genomic data use are not sufficient both in Europe and in Japan, because data protection law provides appropriate resolutions only for limited cases of genomic data use. In this presentation, I would like to explain detailed situation of genomic data use and propose some more legal rules for greater social acceptance of genomic data.

- **Resilient Infrastructures for Pandemic Preparedness in Germany: Lessons Learned from an Epidemiological Perspective**

André Karch (Münster)

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown very clearly that resilient infrastructures are a prerequisite for successful pandemic response. In the field of public health and epidemiology, these infrastructures were not available in a sustainable and resilient way in Germany during the COVID-19 pandemic. We counteracted this shortcoming by establishing three independent but linked infrastructures (a nationwide infectious diseases modelling network, a platform for rapid adaptive epidemiological studies, a consistent interface between public health institutions and academia) in a way that resilience and sustainability were addressed by design. I will discuss the challenges in the process of establishing these infrastructures, share lessons learned during the process, and give an outlook on what is necessary to keep the infrastructures prepared in times where no pandemic threat is challenging the infrastructures.

- **Cross-Border Patient Flows as a Mechanism for Healthcare Resilience: Insights from the CareFlow Project**

Bernd Hellingrath and Adam Widera (Münster)

The CareFlow project explores how cross-border patient flows can enhance the resilience of healthcare systems in European border regions by enabling flexible capacity sharing and coordinated response mechanisms. We present our socio-technical approach to modeling and managing these flows, combining data-driven decision support with institutional collaboration. To ensure practical applicability and robustness, we apply the Trial Guidance Methodology (TGM), which rigorously tests both the technical functionality and real-world feasibility of the developed solutions. This approach allows us to assess operational value and identify how cross-border coordination can sustainably strengthen healthcare resilience under conditions of uncertainty.

- **Workstyle Reform and Healthcare Productivity Changes in Japan**

Yoshinori Nakata (Tokyo)

Extended working hours among physicians have invited international crises, prompting large-scale protests and strikes by doctors in countries such as the United Kingdom and South Korea, thereby disrupting healthcare delivery. The reform of physicians' workstyles, which was implemented on April 1, 2024, represents a key component of Japan's labor policy, primarily by imposing legal limits on overtime work. It is hypothesized that the reform will enhance productivity by improving physician health and reducing medical errors although no study has confirmed this hypothesis. We attempted to determine the effects of this workstyle reform on the healthcare productivity changes using the Malmquist index model.

11:00–13:00

Governing Crises and Resilience: Institutions, Autonomy, and Social Imaginaries

- **Criminal Punishment as Crisis Governance: Learning from Penal Enforcement During COVID-19**

Sou Hee Yang (Takasaki)

Does criminal punishment serve as a legitimate tool of crisis governance? This research examines this question through COVID-19 enforcement measures in South Korea and the United States. It asks when violations of administrative orders, such as quarantine, isolation, or business-closure requirements, can legitimately be treated as criminal wrongdoing rather than mere administrative non-compliance. While penal sanctions may be deployed to enhance compliance during crises, such an expansion of state power must be strictly constrained and justified only where there is clear legal notice, subjective culpability, proportionality, and a demonstrably serious risk to public safety.

- **Street-Level Bureaucracy and Discretion in Social Policies During Crises: Examples from Long-Term Care Policies**

Davide Viero (Duisburg-Essen)

Decentralisation of decision-making and assessment responsibilities has been a significant reform in modern social policies around the world, often leaving sub-national governance authorities and street-level institutions with greater autonomy. The evaluation of this degree of autonomy, referred to as “discretion”, refers both to the identification of the legitimate space these frontline actors, who know more about the system working and are constrained by available resources, have to exercise their own judgement about how public services are delivered and to the degree of freedom from external control they have in doing so.

This contribution investigates discretion in social workers' decision-making regarding benefit eligibility across four long-term care (LTC) systems—Germany, Portugal, Spain, and Taiwan—using a factorial survey experiment. From this perspective, in the field of LTC policies, social workers' discretionary work is evident in the decision-making processes designed to address often-unclear guidelines and eligibility criteria, as well as budgetary and service-availability limitations brought about by the ongoing demographic change crisis.

- **The Autonomy Paradox and the Reconfiguration of the Public Interest: Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) in the Age of Hyper-Liberalism**

Yukio Sakurai (Yokohama)

This study examines whether the expansion of voluntary assisted dying (VAD) can be reconciled with the protection of the public interest and vulnerable populations. It conceptualizes this development as part of a broader shift toward “hyper-liberalism,” defined as an intensified form of liberal individualism marked by an autonomy-centered and expansive conception of individual self-determination. Drawing on Schumpeter’s account of rationalization, the study argues that this shift erodes the ethical and institutional conditions necessary for meaningful freedom, a dynamic illustrated through a comparative analysis of Canada and the Netherlands, where VAD regimes exhibit normative drift and increasing reliance on subjective assessments of suffering. It advances the concept of the “autonomy paradox,” contending that the expansion of individual choice is structurally accompanied by intensified bureaucratic governance, and calls for a reorientation toward relational autonomy and the common good.

- **‘The World Ends Tomorrow!’ – Yet Again...: Patterns in the Discursive Construction of Apocalyptic Narratives**

Dennis Krämer (Münster)

Few narratives are as enduring and at the same time as precarious as the announcement of the end of the world. From religious eschatological expectations and nuclear threats to current scenarios of climate catastrophe and the unforeseeable consequences of ever more powerful AI, the prophecy of imminent doom runs through Western history.

My starting point is the discursive patterns behind these apocalyptic narratives. Rather than treating them as exceptional events, I understand them as a regular social form of self-reassurance through which social groups deal with crises and reduce contingency. Apocalyptic narratives do not simply depict threats: by anticipating an imminent end, they create meaning in the present, assess threats, shape collective identities, mobilize resources, and legitimize domination. To illustrate this, my talk presents first findings from a theory-generating sociology of knowledge approach.

14:30–16:30

Truth, Trust, and Health: Fostering Societal Resilience in the Digital Age

- **From National Security to Civil Society: Reframing Information Resilience and Disaster Mis- and Disinformation in Japan**

Kyoko Kuwahara (Tokyo)

Japan possesses a long history of natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. The acute social uncertainty caused by such events has historically been accompanied by the rapid spread of rumors, mis/disinformation, and panic. Despite this historical exposure, societal preparedness regarding mis/disinformation and broader information resilience in contemporary Japan remains comparatively underdeveloped. This study argues that part of the challenge lies in the dominant framing of mis/disinformation in general. In recent years, concerns surrounding this issue have increasingly been discussed through a national security lens in Japan, particularly in relation to foreign interference and geopolitical competition. While security dimensions are important, a state-centric framing risks narrowing the discussion and limiting broader societal preparedness. As a result, current discussions on information resilience may skew our perception of the issue, and insufficiently incorporate the roles of critical stakeholders, including civil society, local communities, educators, media actors, and public communication sectors. Drawing on Japan's historical experiences with disasters and crisis-related mis/disinformation, this study calls for a broader whole-of-society approach to information resilience during public crises that complements, rather than replaces, existing national security frameworks.

- **Head in the Sand: Digital Discourse and the Ostrich Avian Flu Controversy in Canada**

Jean-Christophe Boucher and Guillaume L'Hermie (Calgary)

The 2025 culling of approximately 300 ostriches in British Columbia following a confirmed H5N1 outbreak rapidly escalated from a routine veterinary measure into an international controversy involving legal challenges, political interventions, and public mobilization. This study investigates this escalation by examining the misnegotiation of evaluative frames across social media and news platforms. Utilizing a two-layer analytical approach, we first use topic modeling to identify the primary narrative clusters structuring the controversy. Second, we employ claim-based analysis to trace how specific claims migrated between evaluative registers—such as an epidemiological claim about flock immunity being appropriated into a political narrative about government overreach, or economic trade arguments reframed as moral stances on animal suffering. Ultimately, this research tracks emotional valence and institutional positioning to expose how health crises are rapidly politicized online.

- **Contesting Credibility: Influencers, Trust Attacks, and the Long-Term Erosion of Public Health Authority**

Chris Tenove (Vancouver)

Because most people cannot evaluate scientific claims themselves, they must judge whether those making them are trustworthy. This epistemic dependence makes the trustworthiness of public health communicators and institutions a critical but threatened resource. We examine how that resource is contested in Canada's digital information system. First, a computational analysis of prominent Canadian accounts discussing vaccines finds that unaccountable influencers, not government bodies or credentialed media, dominate narratives about vaccine efficacy and institutional trustworthiness. Second, an analysis of Twitter/X replies to Canadian health communicators finds significant levels of hostility as well as trust attacks that allege dishonesty, corruption, or hypocrisy. Together, these studies suggest that problems exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic are durable features of a platform-based information system that amplifies influencers while raising the personal costs of speaking for public health. We conclude by considering implications for the long-term resilience of public health communication.

- **Researching Information Resilience: Trends in Interdisciplinary Academic Work on Disinformation**

Saïd Unger, Johanna Klapproth, Thorsten Quandt and Dennis Krämer (Münster)

Mis- and disinformation are as old as communication itself. Yet, it took two forces to propel interdisciplinary and international research on false information out of its niche: the internet and a crisis. This international comparative study examines the expansion of research on resilience to disinformation during recent regional and global crises, such as natural disasters, pandemics, and wars. Applying bibliometric analysis, topic modeling, and network analysis to an international dataset featuring research from Germany, Japan, and beyond, we map core themes, collaborations, and cross-disciplinary blind spots. Ultimately, we argue that understanding and countering the spread of mis- and disinformation requires a deeper integration of perspectives—bridging communication science, psychology, and politics with epidemiology, cybersecurity, and information systems.

10:00–11:30

Theoretical and Normative Foundations of Resilience

■ Resilience Between Cybernetic Fantasies of Control and Deliberative Crisis Governance

Gabriel Bartl (Berlin)

The aim is to demonstrate that, on the one hand, the concept of resilience opens up possibilities for experimental adaptability in dealing with uncertainties and crises, but on the other hand, it is co-opted within solutionist paradigms and those dominated by engineering and technical sciences (cf. “engineering resilience,” “resilience engineering”). For the elaboration of a viable concept of resilience, however, the most promising approach appears to be one that, far removed from any cybernetic control fantasies, conceives of resilience as a non-teleological process (Endreß and Rampp, 2022) which – and this is crucial – makes the social dimension its linchpin, for instance with regard to certain deliberative conceptions of “community resilience” (Wright, 2022). Against this backdrop, the question arises as to how resilience can benefit from a spirit of social experimentation and creativity while simultaneously placing processes of negotiation around social values at the center. Conceptualizing the transformative capacities embedded in a dynamic understanding of resilience through the dimension of participatory processes (Lorenz, 2013) offers a way to make the conflictual dimension of resilience visible as well. Furthermore, a reflexive understanding of resilience (Bonß, 2015) appears necessary in order to continuously review the direction of transformation.

■ Humanity, Solidarity, Impartiality: Ethical Principles for Designing Predictive Crisis Technologies

Joschka Haltaufderheide (Greifswald)

Public health crises increasingly motivate the deployment of AI-supported predictive and decision-support systems. From epidemic forecasting to the prediction of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies, such technologies promise to support decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, urgency, and moral overload. Yet despite their promise of making catastrophic futures visible and actionable, these systems raise profound ethical questions regarding their responsible design and implementation. Existing frameworks in AI and digital health ethics often remain insufficient for such contexts. Focused on values such as autonomy, transparency, and fairness, they are largely tailored to stable settings and individual decision-making.

Against this background, this paper argues that predictive crisis technologies require a distinct ethical orientation grounded in the normative conditions of crises themselves. Drawing on technophilosophy and disaster ethics, it conceptualizes predictive technologies as mediators that shape how future threats are perceived and acted upon. It is argued that such systems should enable neutral, collective, and coordinated responses in situations of shared vulnerability. Their design and development should therefore be guided by the principles of humanity, solidarity, and impartiality. Together, these principles provide normative orientation for predictive technologies aimed not only at increasing efficiency of responses, but at enabling ethically responsible action.

■ **Equity-Sensitive Resilience Research: A Phenomenological and Mechanism-Based Framework Grounded in Lived Experiences and Social Practices**

Azher Hameed Qamar (Münster)

This contribution proposes a conceptual and methodological framework for developing resilience strategies that systematically account for inequalities related to age, gender, socioeconomic position, and migration background. I introduce the Phenomenology of Lived Social Resilience (PLSR) as an original framework that reconceptualizes resilience as a lived, relational, and contextually situated social process. I argue that resilience is not something migrants have; it is a process they go through, unfolding through dynamic person–environment interactions shaped by structural conditions, institutional encounters, civil society, and everyday social practices.

Drawing on my research with migrants in Sweden (2021–2024) and Germany (2025–ongoing), I demonstrate how inequalities become visible through four interrelated dimensions of social resilience (i.e. status, networks, support, and visibility) which together shape access to resources, recognition, participation, and belonging. I conceptualize integration and social resilience as interconnected and co-produced through interactions between migrants, institutions, civil-society actors, and local governance contexts, highlighting the need for multi-actor, multi-level, and context-sensitive approaches in times of growing societal uncertainty. The proposed framework offers a roadmap for designing phenomenological and mechanism-based resilience research that can inform both conceptual development and societal implementation. It provides researchers and practitioners with tools to integrate lived experience, social practice, relational mechanisms, and institutional contexts into robust, equity-sensitive resilience strategies.

13:00–15:00

Technological Resilience: AI, Cybersecurity, and Digital Infrastructures

■ Artificial Intelligence and Welfare Services in Japanese Municipalities

Susanne Brucksch (Tokyo)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an emerging technology evokes manifold hopes, expectations, and concerns across various disciplines. The practical application of AI technologies increasingly intersects with various social contexts in Japan, among them is the field of welfare services. AI applications are introduced in various municipalities with the promise to provide orientation and advice on topics like child protection, elderly care, disability support or healthcare. Among local communities and other facilities these AI applications are presented as tools for receiving advice, raising efficiency, or improving decision-making for persons in charge. This leads to the question in which ways and to what extent does AI technology improve and secure the access to welfare services on local level. A quantitative newspaper analysis among articles of the Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun between Jul 2023 till Jun 2025 shows that the topic of AI in reference to health, care and disability support topics receive continuous attention. In contrast, the attention for AI technology in reference to childcare and child protection related topics have surged particularly since Jan 2025. This paper chooses analytical approaches from the field of STS and welfare studies to shed light on critical aspects of AI and intersections of welfare service provision in modern society. It intends to deepen the quantitative insights of the newspaper analysis by furthering the study with a qualitative case study on AI welfare service applications in Shinagawa ward in Tokyo and other municipalities.

■ Disconnected Resilience: Absence-Relations and Digital Detox in Times of Technological Uncertainty

Annie Kurz (Stuttgart)

How do individuals and institutions try to cultivate “resilience” in increasingly technologized environments? What forms of human–technology relations emerge when technologies are deliberately turned off, suspended, or avoided? This paper examines practices most popularly known from English language debates as digital detox or technological disconnection as contemporary tactics or strategies for negotiating uncertainty, information overload, and the growing ambivalence surrounding digital media.

Applications designed to keep us away from other applications, such as Freedom (2009), AppDetox (2014), Forest (2014) or Apple’s integrated Screen Time (2018) promise greater control over everyday technological engagement and promise to help introduce “healthy” periods of intentional disconnection. Their international expansion signals a broader shift in public attitudes toward digital technologies. Conditions of being “offline,” “unplugged,” or “disconnected” have become desirable states towards “balance” or some type of “equilibrium”, giving rise to a diverse ecosystem of practices, artifacts, and markets centered around temporary withdrawal from digital connectivity. The phenomenon, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, is no longer restricted to individual self-regulation. Recent developments in Europe, the US, Japan and Australia illustrate how concerns about digital overexposure increasingly enter political and institutional spheres. In 2025 for

instance, the Japanese city of Toyoake proposed guidelines encouraging residents to limit recreational smartphone use to two hours per day. In December 2025, Australia became the first country to implement a nationwide social media ban for users under the age of sixteen, requiring major platforms to prevent minors from maintaining accounts. Such initiatives reveal growing attempts to frame technological disconnection not merely as a personal lifestyle choice but as a collective strategy for managing uncertainty, personal and global crises, dependency, and perceived risks associated with digital infrastructures.

Drawing on Don Ihde's postphenomenology, I approach resilience not as a fixed personal trait but as a relational and technologically mediated process. Postphenomenology understands technologies as active mediators of experience rather than neutral tools, emphasizing their multistable and non-neutral character. From this perspective, disconnection does not constitute the absence of mediation. Rather, it produces alternative or re-negotiated forms of mediation and perhaps more "resilient" new configurations of human-technology-world relations.

Through philosophical analysis as well as through speculative artistic methodologies, I expand on my concept of "absence-relations" to describe these technologically mediated forms of non-use. Thus, digital detox practices reveal paradoxical attempts towards a "pushing back" as individuals increasingly rely on technologies against technologies in order to create distance from technologies.

■ **Responding to Cyberattacks on Healthcare Information Systems and Government Involvement**

Ken Ogata (Tokyo)

Healthcare information systems are critical infrastructure that affects human lives and societal safety. However, as they are network-based systems, they are exposed to the threat of cyberattacks. Yet, because many of these systems are operated by small, private-sector entities, they cannot implement comprehensive countermeasures on their own, making a certain level of government involvement necessary. This presentation will compare and analyze the laws of major countries regarding mandatory cyberattack response requirements, support frameworks, and government involvement.

■ **From Pilot Projects to Resilient Healthcare Infrastructure: Legal and Ethical Conditions for the Social Implementation of Medical AI in Japan**

Takanori Fujita (Tokyo)

The presentation examines how medical AI can be implemented as part of the resilience infrastructure of healthcare systems in super-aged societies, focusing on Japan's healthcare DX, health data governance, and AI policy. It will also discuss the dual character of medical AI as both a resource for clinical decision-making, workforce sustainability, regional healthcare access, and crisis preparedness, and as a source of risks related to bias, opacity, privacy, liability, and unequal access. Finally, it proposes a co-regulatory framework combining legal safeguards, professional standards, local experimentation, and continuous evaluation.