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Resilience among vulnerable households in Europe

Questions, concept, findings and implications

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EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Please kindly note that this paper is presenting some first selected results of the RESCuE project, a nine-country research cooperation of more than 30 researchers, funded by the European Commission from 2014 to 2017. It might be of interest to you that meanwhile both the project's final results as well as the complete conceptual work have been elaborated and published in a peer-reviewed collected book: Boost, Marie/Dagg, Jennifer/Gray, Jane & Promberger, Markus (eds., 2020): Poverty, Crisis and Resilience. 336 pgs., Cheltenham/UK, Edward Elgar Publishers (part of the Series 'New Horizons in Social Policy').

Resilience among vulnerable households in Europe

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Content

Abstract

The paper shows the results of the RESCuE project, an in-depth qualitative investigation of 250 vulnerable households, their living conditions and socioeconomic practices across nine European countries on the background of the European crisis since 2008. After refining the concept and developing an analytical framework, three major findings are in the focus: First, the concept of resilience proves to be useful and transferable into poverty and social policy research under certain prerequisites. Second, a wide scope of interrelated, substitutable and polyvalent practices allows the very few resilient households to gain their livelihood from mixed sources. Among some of them, direct transfer incomes play only a minor role. Third, there is a surprising high relevance of common goods for low income households. Moreover, certain cultural patterns of knowledge and values, and personal networks also play a crucial role for some doing better than other vulnerable households. Policy implications include first the continuing need for the welfare state, as resilience is vulnerable itself. Second, social policy needs to care for common goods of a considerable scope, available for all citizens, but mostly needed by those living on low income.

Zusammenfassung

Das Papier berichtet die Ergebnisse des Projektes RESCuE, einer vertieft angelegten qualitativen Studie in 250 vulnerablen Haushalten in neun europäischen Ländern vor dem Hintergrund der europaweiten Krise seit 2008. Nach der Verfeinerung des Resilienzkonzeptes und der Entwicklung eines analytischen Rahmens stehen vier wichtige Befunde im Fokus: Erstens, Nutzen und Übertragbarkeit des Konzeptes in Armuts- und Sozialpolitikforschung. Zweitens konnte in den wenigen anzutreffenden resilienten Haushalten ein weites Spektrum von gegenseitig substituierbaren, miteinander verwobenen und polyvalenten Praktiken identifiziert werden, mittels denen ein Lebensunterhalt aus gemischten Quellen erwirtschaftet wird. Direkte Transfereinkommen spielen, zumindest für manche Typen resilienter Haushalte, dabei eine vergleichsweise geringe Rolle. Dies wird drittens unter anderem ausgeglichen durch die hohe Bedeutung und Nutzung von Kollektiv- und Gemeingütern. Hinzu kommen Kulturmuster und Netzwerkbeziehungen, die es den Betroffenen erlauben, mit ihrer Lage besser zurechtzukommen als andere. Für die Sozialpolitik bedeutsam ist erstens die Notwendigkeit der Aufrechterhaltung oder Schaffung eines leistungsfähigen Wohlfahrtstaates, denn Resilienz von Niedrigeinkommenshaushalten ist oft genug instabil und vulnerabel. Zweitens zeigt sich deutlich die Notwendigkeit eines umfangreichen Spektrums von Gemeingütern, die im Prinzip allen Bürgern zur Verfügung stehen, jedoch vor allem Niedrigeinkommensbeziehern das Leben erleichtern können.

JEL-Klassifikation: I30, Z13

Keywords: Resilience, Poverty, Social Policy, Households, Economy of private Households

1 Why resilience, and why so in social policy research? [1]

The background of the following analysis is an unsatisfactory situation in social policy. Despite all activation policies there is considerable poverty in Europe, even more so during and after the crisis of 2008 and the subsequent years. Moreover, there is also an unsatisfactory situation in poverty research: There are a lot of statistical indicators and we know quite a lot what leads into poverty and what hardship and deprivation living in poverty usually means. There are data about ending benefit recipiency and subsequent job uptakes which might or might not mark the end of poverty episodes. But we don't know much about how vulnerable households actually manage to get by in poverty or struggle their way out. And even less is known about how some people at risk are avoiding poverty. An investigation of those gaps and blind spots require a lot of methodical and conceptual innovation in research. Qualitative evidence and historical research reveal a considerable heterogeneity of situations, life courses and problems in poverty (Newman/Massengill 2006, Promberger 2015a, 2016a), which puts intra-group comparison on the agenda (Solga 2013), in order to identify reasons, conditions and backgrounds for those differences in the poverty population. Such kind of comparison, relatively new to poverty research, is nevertheless well established in other fields, like social psychology and social medicine, where concepts like resilience are being used since long to analyse intra-group differences, like how and why some of the observed individuals do better than others under the same adverse conditions. Thus, resilience could be a promising concept for analysis in poverty and social policy research deserving further investigation.

Nevertheless, the concept of resilience, originating from technology, ecosystems research and psychology, having spilled over into human geography and disaster research and surprisingly into community studies and political sciences (see Promberger et al. 2015), has so far rarely found its way into sociology, poverty and social policy research, although there are considerable interfaces. Given this, there was

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[1] This article is based on a presentation by the author, held Jan 18th 2017 at the conference ‚Crisis and Household Resilience in Europe', at the Berlin Science Centre (WZB). The underlying research has received funding from the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme from 2014 to 2017. The author is grateful to Janina Müller and Marie Boost for their contributions on discussing and developing the typology, and to the whole RESCuE consortium for three full years of fascinating joint comparative research: María Arnal, Athena Athanasiou, Attila Aytekin, Marie Boost, Alexandre Calado, Daniel Calderon, Luís Capucha, Carlos de Castro, Hulya Dagdeviren, Jenny Dagg, Matt Donoghue, Pedro Estevao, Monica Gniesczak, Jane Gray, Ursula Huws, Nelli Kampouri, Witek Mandrysz, Soula Marinoudi, Paz Martín, Lars Meier, Araceli Serrano Pascual, Georgia Petraki, Juan Carlos Revilla, Tarik Sengul, Barbara Slania, Monica Tennberg, Joonas Vola, Terhi Vuojala-Magga, Kazimiera Wodz and Aggeliki Yfanti. The author wishes to express gratitude for critical support goes to the project's scientific advisory board - Peter Ester, Jane Millar, Selcuk Candansayar and the late Elzbieta Tarkowska († 2016), to the visual methodology advisers Aida Bosch and Roswitha Breckner, and to the EU project officer Yuri Borgmann-Prebil. Nevertheless the responsibility for this presentation and its conclusions rests with the author alone. It should also be noted that this discussion paper version is preliminary, especially in referencing literature and empirical details. Thus, it is meant to start a discussion, not to end it.

good reason to use the concept of resilience as a theoretical background for an intensive qualitative case study analysis on how vulnerable households are actually getting by during and after the European socioeconomic crises after 2008. Following a public call issued by the European Commission in 2013 under the name of 'Citizens Resilience in Times of Crisis' within the 7th European Research Framework Programme, a project was launched, called 'RESCuE – Patterns of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among Households in Europe'. Its results are presented in the following paper.

2 How do we understand resilience?

Literature first tells us that resilience basically means that some people do better than others under the same adverse conditions, like Emmy Werner (1977) and Ann Masten (2001) say. Second, and more specifically, resilience is some above average kind of recovery after a severe shock crisis, trauma or other extreme events; the respective research tradition starts with Victor Frankl (1959/1985) and his studies on Nazi concentration camp survivors. Resilience may also mean falling less deep than others or recover more quickly than others (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013). Resilience means in a very broad definition to adapt, to cope and to transform after an initial shock. Not to forget, there is also the old and classic mechanical definition of jumping back into the initial state, which points to solid state mechanics as a source of the concept, but has to be rejected for human settings: Heraklit's statement that we simply cannot jump into the same river twice may serve as a reference here, although the mechanic definition still has some importance in approaches from functionalist anthropology or ecosystems theory. But those current definitions of resilience are not sufficient enough for a transfer into social sciences. This has been elaborated extensively in Promberger et al. 2015 and Dagdeviren et al. 2016b.

One main issue is that psychological resilience[2] research strongly emphasizes the inner forces or abilities of people concerned, in other words personal traits, while sociological research by definition has to look for social factors as explanatories. This means that the concept of resilience had to be adapted to the sociological perspective in order to make it fruitful for poverty research. Conclusively, during the preparative phase of the study, five additional elements of resilience could be identified, which arose from our conceptual development and can be summed up as follows:

- Resilience is not a state but a process, so resilience is developing, can be lost or can be achieved. Resilience is not necessarily a stable state. For good reason,

[2] This might be the reason why some psychologists have left behind the initial concept of resilience behind and turned to salutogenetic factors (Antonovsky 1979, Lösel et al. 1990). Otherwise, one could argue that good psychological research is well aware of social framings, but to focus on their core subject, psychologists have to set the social factors aside, keep them constant or define them as external. Anyway, the differences between sociology and psychology on the concept of resilience are better to be seen as a division of labour instead of blind spots.

Emmy Werner studied resilience among the Kauai children in an extended longitudinal design across several decades (Werner 2004).

- Resilience moreover is not a 'yes or no' phenomenon but a gradual one. The same practice may lead to different outcomes in different household and family situations and constellations: There are some people who are doing the same but with less outcome. This means they might be not resilient although they execute the same practices.
- Resilience consists of resources and action patterns at levels of individuals and groups under certain and specifiable conditions. Although there are resources within the persons investigated, social sciences by definition have to put emphasis on those resources given in natural, cultural and social environments, structures and situations, some of which became acquired by the individual in family history and biography, while some of them form the conditions and resources in a present day situation.
- Resilience can be identified only in comparison to non-resilience, because if everybody were resilient, the concept would be useless for comparative analysis.
- Resilience may include deviant behaviour or create individual or collective risks or costs to a certain extent; this means to take a non-heroic perspective on resilience.
- Resilience, in case of poverty research, should be investigated on household level. Private households, no matter if single person or family[3] households, are the basic unit of consumption, sharing and mutual support along direct personal and intimate relations. Individuals are usually not taking socioeconomic decisions for themselves alone, but for, or together with cohabitants, family members or other persons in mutual dependence. Even when abilities, resources and risks may also be attributed individually, their handling in everyday life is at household level.
- Two major reasons speak against investigating communities when it comes to resilience and poverty research. One crucial point is the closeness to systems and ecosystems approaches, which – despite all merits in their fields – are not so much interested in the survival, life chances or life quality of single individuals, groups or even single species, if the ecosystem of analysis keeps on existing and functioning. An adaptation and rebalancing process within an ecosystem may almost extinguish one species and dramatically increase another one taking its place, but the system as a whole might well survive (Adger 2000). This cannot be elaborated

[3] The concept of family, as implied in the RESCuE project, could be defined as close interpersonal ties, often involving cohabitation and sharing on the basis of non-market intimate and/or genealogical relations. Couples married or unmarried, hetero-, homo- or non-sexual, with or without children, three- or more generation families, patchwork families, single parent families, wider kin and affective peer cohabitation. Family may include members which are temporarily or permanently absent. As an additional element, we can surely talk about family when the people interviewed talk about themselves as a family. The concept of family excludes all kinds of institutional cohabitation, like in a prison, a hospital, a nursing home, a shelter or a boarding school. A private household is an economic unit with a local centre of at least partial cohabitation, involved in external relations to markets and institutions, and the absence of market relations inside. In difference to establishments, the primary outcome of a family is the life of the family itself.

more extensively here, but might be an argument against many of the community resilience literature which entered the political debate in the UK recently (Joseph 2013). The second reason is far more simple: Communities in the 21st century usually are seldom a practical unit of consumption, production or the respective decisions, although this is the object of study in poverty research. They may become so under certain circumstances, but this is an exemption to be studied instead of a conceptual precondition when choosing the unit of analysis.

- Resilience, as it should be understood in social sciences, means to successfully use degrees of freedom while acting in a set of given constraints (see Dagdeviren et al. 2016b).

Given this, resilience might indeed be a new perspective to learn about avoiding poverty although being at risk, to live in poverty and doing better than expected, or even to struggle oneself out of poverty. Studying resilience in a social policy context therefore means to look at those few who beat the odds, in order to support those better who don't. On this background, the overall research question of RESCuE is:

- How can a minority of persons or families do well under the same adverse conditions such of a general economic crisis which brings other people to suffer from hardship?

How do we approach this question? We are investigating resilience at household level, as households usually are the basic unit of socioeconomic analysis. For single person households this is obvious, for pluripersonal households this is justified by the fact that sharing a place of living usually means to share income and domestic work, leisure, emotions and care on the basis of non-commodified relations, if they are symmetric or not. Our sampling decisions did not exclude single person households but many of our respondents are families in a wider sense, including many forms of cohabitation. The project is aiming at identifying resilient practices of persons and households instead of personal traits of resilient persons, as practice means to interact and communicate both within and outside the household, in order to capture the social about resilience.

The RESCuE study implies a broad understanding of crisis. This can mean an economic crisis, a social crisis, with certain focusing on the European crisis years 2008 and after, but also taking national or local, personal, biographical, or a family crisis into account. The conditions, forms, processes and outcomes of that resilience at various levels were to be investigated.

3 The RESCuE project: Question, design and structure

The RESCuE project includes nine partner institutions with about 30 participating researchers from various academic disciplines like sociology, political science, anthropology, history, economy and geography. The cooperating institutes were the Silesian university in Katowice, Poland, Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain, University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom, Panteion University of Social Sciences in Athens, Greece, the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, the University of

Lapland in Finland, National University of Ireland in Maynooth and the Lisbon University Institute in Portugal, with the IAB as coordinator (see more in Promberger et al. 2014). There were ten research work packages, and four more added for management and dissemination. The effective start of the project work was a state-of-the-art-report summarizing mostly the quantitative and macro effects of the European crisis, the general economic and social developments in Europe, and the research having been done on resilience so far. The next work package was on methodology and fieldwork, where sampling and field access strategy were developed and the fieldwork conducted itself.

Fieldwork started with background analysis, based on documents, public statistics and literature, and was followed by about 100 expert interviews with policy makers and representatives from welfare state authorities, charities, non-government organisations and other stakeholders, mainly at local and partly national level. Besides collecting experiences and information on the project's topic in general, the expert interviews deliberately served to achieve field access and suitable case selections. Therefore, the experts had to be selected through emergent contrasting criteria as well, and deliberate variations of the sampling strategies were induced here to avoid unintended selectivity and ensure sufficient contrastivity, in order to enable for saturation[4].

Then, two regional case studies per country were undertaken; one in a more urban or metropolitan setting, and one in a more rural context. Rural doesn't necessarily mean that people living there actually are dependent on agricultural income, but the pragmatic difference was that they live in a certain remoteness from big cities and metropolitan urban infrastructure. Each local case study consisted of twelve contrasting households, mostly families, living around the poverty line in terms of monetary income. They were interviewed once in a first wave; this narrative biographical interviewing mostly took place in the family homes and was combined with open non-structured participant observation in the place of living, namely home and surroundings. Eight of those twelve families per country and local case study were given cameras and encouraged to take photographs from their life situation, following an inspirational guide line but open for their own issues and topics as well. Subsequently the mentioned photo elicitation interviews of eight households per case study took place, which made 16 per country. In the end, 25 families were interviewed per country, many of them not just once but a second time, thus, the interview body summed up to about 225 families in total with approximately 500 interviews in total, including the mentioned expert interviews. In addition, the participants took several thousand photographies in total. We have thus collected sufficient empirical footage to feed a combination of three hermeneutic methods: Text analysis, visual analysis and data from

[4] The methodological literature on ‚theoretical sampling' (at first instance Glaser/Strauss 1967) often mentions intentional contrasting strategies to be applied in order to achieve a maximum scope of case variation, but there seem to be little considerations on how to avoid unintended selectivity. This could be done by variations of field access and sampling ways and key informants.

case observations, plus background from expert interviewing and documentary analysis.

A fourth work package was on socio-economic practices in those households, the fifth of cultural patterns in the respective households, as it is a key issue of the project to understand socioeconomic behaviour as being embedded in certain cultural patterns and backgrounds (Polanyi 1944). The project also had to take a closer look at biographical developments of resilient households in the respective historical contexts, as both a holistic perspective on the life nexus (Dilthey 1970) and the procedural understanding of resilience require longitudinal analysis – and the fieldwork deliberately had put strong emphasis on biographical interviewing, which then led to designing a sixth workpackage. The seventh workpackage then was designed to consider the spatial dimension of resilience, and the eighth on community, participation and politics, with a ninth in special respect to resilient households' interaction with local welfare state authorities. Given the various and lasting discussions on the third sector in social policy studies, another point of interest is the relation of social economy and household resilience. Intersectionalities of resilience, socioeconomic conditions and outcomes with gender, ethnicity and migration issues were investigated in another cross-dimensional work package.

4 Impressions from the field

The visual data allow not only for elaborated visual analysis and triangulation with textual and observational data collected, but also to get a first, rich and powerful impression into the life and practices of the households observed. Methodologically, such a first impression is not random or anecdotal, neither fully cognitive in terms of being analytical. Roland Barthes (1981) coined the term *punctum* for the direct unfiltered interaction of a picture and a certain spectator. Nevertheless, full visual analysis along the respective contemporary methodologies (for an overview see van Leeuwen 2001) comprises more than this *punctum*: The *studium*, being just an act of reflection and reasoning at Roland Barthes' times, has been developed into different methodological steps in the recent literature, although often ignoring the *punctum* (see Bosch 2017). An advanced methodology (ibid.) has been applied on selected photographies by the research team. Although this cannot be enfolded fully here, the following section includes results of this analysis as well.

Picture 1
Using natural resources - Fishing

Picture taken by anonymous respondent, East Germany, document collected by Boost, M. /Meier, L. & Promberger, M., German RESCuE team

The first picture shows three rainbow trouts *(oncorhynchus mykiss)*, one of them an albino called golden trout, freshly caught by one of our families[5]. They are a family of five, children in elementary school age or younger, living in a rural setting of Eastern Germany, doing a wide range of activities to gain their livelihood. The male adult is an artist (painter and sculptor) by training, who is not unknown in the wider area, neither unsuccessful, but with insufficient and unstable income. His artists' perspective on life can be seen by the composition of fish he took for the picture, their spatial order recalling biblical associations and respective visual traditions about fish, nourishment and plenitude. As the picture implies, he does angling, frequently and successful, and, together with his wife, produces and sells homemade small artwork on seasonal markets – from homemade liquor and fruit jelly to small pictures, dolls or other handicraft. His wife also works as a self-employed skilled tailor for bridal costumes. They live in

[5] It might be of interest here that - unlike in some Scandinavian countries - fishing in general is not free to everyone in Germany, but a common good, the access depending on both a skill certificate to be acquired by a test, and a fishing permit usually to be acquired from a fishermens' cooperative or club - a non-profit organization, which holds a general permit by the municipality. It has to be noted that the depicted fish are not endemic in Germany, but have been and still are bred and released into the fishing grounds by fishermen's associations, but the species is also self breeding and spreading. For a theory of common goods it might be interesting that those local cooperatives governing the common good of fish control and regulate both the access to wild fish and the fish cultivation in their fishing grounds, cooperating with the municipalities in case of municipal waters.

a separate home on her parents' small farm, own one small car, get by relatively well, but have problems not only due to their income instability, but also with insufficient dental care, as at least one of the adults has no sufficient health insurance at the time of the interview. The adults are in frequent arguments about where to invest their resources (labour force, time, means of transportation) best to stabilize their income: The husband's artist's career, or the handicraft business, to which both adults contribute, but being mainly planned and organised by the wife. Besides the cultural patterns of being a family of artists, nature lovers and country dwellers, they interact with and are part of at least three economically powerful networks – first, a network of fellow artists, art purchasers and art intermediaries, second, the kin and peer networks of the respective brides the wife serves with her tailor work, through which she is being recommended to new customers. Third, a network of handicraft market salespersons and organisers, supplying Christmas and other seasonal markets, but also festivals of middle ages costume players.

Picture 2
Gathering mushrooms

Picture taken by anonymous respondent, East Germany. Document collected by Boost, M ./ Meier, L. & Promberger, M., German RESCuE team

Another family, also in a rural context in Eastern Germany, displays a handful of huge mushrooms here, *macrolepiota procera*, judged very delicate by the respective literature, which easily make the main course of a rich family Sunday lunch. Being a family of six, the adults skilled woodworkers, they combine street busking, tourist guide jobs, extensive gardening and do-it yourself with informal construction and refurbishing work in a network of self-employed craftsmen-entrepreneurs. And – since very short time – the woman holds a publicly subsidized part time job in a job creation scheme, supporting young apprentices in doing their homework for the vocational training

school. The family moreover uses and contributes to a set of productive and supportive networks, from the neighbourhood, local associations, street musicians and craftsmen networks, up to keeping up good relations with former employers, local welfare and social economy decision makers.

Another picture, not displayed here, shows a young woman. An unemployed ex-student, she is standing in front of a 19th century building's shop window, which is a local street children support place where she involves herself as a volunteer. She also uses the shop as a place where she can not only involve into supporting children living on the street, but she also finds communication and support for herself: When she is there, she shares info and conversations with street workers and other volunteers, and it is quite common for her to participate in the meals they cook for and with the children, and if there are some spaghetti left over she may easily take them home, as she tells us. When being asked for the relevant resources beyond some basic income support, she mentions an aesthetical and physical relation to nature, which she loves to explore by long walks, photography and own drawings, her couple relations, and the material and psychosocial support through social infrastructure and networks she participates in as a volunteer.

Picture 3
A harvest of blueberries

Picture taken by respondent from northern Finland, single mother, born 1981, living in a rural area. It is important for her to involve her children into practical work. See also her verbal quote on p. 26. Documents collected by Tennberg, Vuojala-Magga and Vola, Finnish RESCuE team.

Above we can see a picture from Finland, where a single mother family presents their blueberry harvest of that day, estimated 3 kg or more. Harvesting blueberries is a late

summer outdoor occupation which is very common for many families in Finland. For low income families, this is not just an occasional hobby but plays a non-neglectable role as a seasonal natural added income in a mixed livelihood. Such livelihood is often composed of gathering and proceeding wild fruit or products of small agriculture and gardening, for self-consumption, sharing or gift exchange, while small or occasional jobs and transfer incomes provide monetary side of the livelihood. Herding, where applicable, stands between market and money on one side, and subsistence production for self-consumption and non-market distribution on the other side, as it usually has monetary and non-monetary outcomes[6] in the area under investigation.

Notably, and similar to pre-modern economic practices, small subsistence economy on natural resources holds not only the manifest function of getting a livelihood, but also latent functions of using and producing knowledge, transferring knowledge to children, and reproducing family cohesion and social ties[7]. The blueberries, mushrooms and fish, but also the street children support shop indicate – beyond all differences – the relevance of common goods as resources, which we will come back to later.

Those first visual impressions can very well be brought in line with the self-descriptions and narratives of the resilient families. Strikingly, resilient families have not only developed numerous, partly unusual patterns of mobilizing additional resources, but some of them belong to older historical layers of economy seemingly obsolete in modern labour societies of our days. Residual, as Raymond Williams (1983) would call them in his studies on culture. Studying them that way is well justified, as they are not simply economic practices, but cultural patterns, aligned with certain understandings, knowledge, skills, narratives, norms and values. These are not part of mainstream discourses on modern economic behaviour, nor on the affirmative neither on their critical side, but nevertheless are deeply inscribed into human behaviour through the evolution of mankind and still at least tacitly or latently present in everyday life – such as sharing, gift exchange, mutual help, solidarity, craftsmanship, wider concepts of family, and plurifunctional networks and communities.

5 A typology of resilient households

Instead of looking deeper into classifying those practices and related cultural backgrounds, which is going to be published by other RESCuE colleagues very soon, this paper takes a next step in order to reconstruct a typology of resilient households. The term ‘typology’ here is understood to be reached through an inductive process of case by case comparison on similarities and differences, alongside starting and emerging

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6 See Boost and Meier (2017) for consumption practices of resilient households.

7 Although ‘manifest’ and ‘latent’ functions are a convincing concept, elaborated by Robert Merton (1965), it is of doubt whether latent indeed means unconscious, tacit or objective, as the different schools of functionalism still are conflicting about, or if not ‘secondary’ would be better. At least our interviewees were usually very aware of their practices’ ‘secondary’ or ‘latent’ functions.

criteria and dimensions of looking for resources and resource mobilization which have been melt together through time into relatively consistent and stable patterns of resilient practices and their backgrounds. Resilience is judged by economic, physio- and psychosocial outcomes allowing for doing better than others under similar adversities. The comparison and interpretation process starts with a heuristic differentiation of resources into hidden and overt, economic, social and cultural ones, inspired by Bourdieu's kinds of capital (Bourdieu 2011). During comparison and interpretation, categorisations of differences and similarities are being refined, fine-tuned, rejected, carefully generalized or abstractified above single case towards at least a between-case level of meaning (see Kelle/Kluge 1999, Hempel-Oppenheim 1936, Soeffner 1989, Glaser/Strauss 1967).

While this process of induction is going on, not only the 'cases themselves' are speaking. It has been widely disregarded in some 'purist' approaches of ethnographic research, that concepts, descriptions and model processes from earlier analysis - what Alfred Schütz (1981) called second order concepts - come into play anyway, mostly through language. Not as an ex-ante hypothesis with underlying causal assumptions or as nomothetic attempts, but as conceptual heuristics and offers in a potentially wider set of language than only those of the people observed – which itself, at least in our days, is influenced by second order language and concepts, as we had to learn in advanced ethnographic analysis (Sowa 2011). Or, to put it short, Max Weber would not have been able to formulate the theory of the ideal type and the theory of power, if he had not taken into account second order (or order crossing) concepts from theology and history, namely 'eidolon' and 'charisma'. Thus, against many simplifying assumptions – there cannot be 'pure' or 'reconstructive' qualitative research based on the language and narratives of the observed group alone. The researcher therefore must not naïvely reject second order concepts in analysis (artificial nativism), but has to use them reflecting and displaying the historical and present interconnections between the field concepts and what might be called second order concepts, their borders and translations.

One consequence is, not surprising, consistent with an old dogma of qualitative research, to keep away from conceptual intrusion into the field during data collection as much as possible, in order not to shed self-descriptions, narratives and diversity of the units of observation under an avalanche of scientific terminology. The other consequence is, to do what the structuralist approaches of qualitative research (Oevermann 1981, Levi-Strauss 1982) do since ever: To bring in categories from the scientific discourse where it helps to sharpen, to abstractify or generalise the analysis instead of remaining within the field language and therefore neglecting the difference between science and non-science, which admittedly is just a gradual one. If we would follow a 'reconstructive' approach alone, we would never have the option to investigate 'social class' or 'inequality' when a population is observed that does not have class in its active vocabulary or feels completely equal. Moreover, involving theory in the interpretive process after data collection allows concluding and hypothesizing

more generally than by inter-case-level concepts only. And, on the other hand, theorizing can be done more sharply if connected to comparative case study analysis than pure theory would allow for (see Flyvbjerg 2006). To reconnect to the RESCuE project, it has to be noted that 'resilience' is still mainly a second order concept for what is practically thought of getting by well or better than others in adversity. Except in the UK, where resilience is being tried to transform into a neoliberal or neoconservative concept of justifying another meltdown of stately organised social security.

But there is more about resilience. During the analysis, rectifications of the starting heuristic categories with some hoped-for but unexpected surprises from the field emerged to be crucial dimensions for the typology: The composition of the 'mixed livelihood' in an economic sense and the nature of its sources, the socioeconomic framework in which this takes place, like communities, networks, family wideness and concepts, markets, degree of commodification, the cultural backgrounds, mainly knowledge and skills, norms and values and aesthetics. We will turn later to the conceptual developments, namely the order and meaning of categories, but now we will approach the typology.

The first type of vulnerable households showing resilience is what we suggest to call the self-reliant oíkos. Self-reliance is an unsatisfying translation for what Friedrich Nietzsche called „Eigensinn", having been used by Kluge and Negt (1981) in their analysis of working class history in 19th and 20th century Germany. This has some proximity to Edward Palmer Thompson's conceptual ambivalence, deliberately built into the term of 'making' of the English working class, which means 'being made' as well as 'making oneself' in finding degrees of freedom for adaption, coping, organising and resistance (Thompson 2016). Empirically, the resilient households in the RESCuE study have a multitude of resources and practices at hand, which can substitute each other mutually, all being based on knowledge and skills, a few assets, many common goods, networks and communities, and a culture at distance to highly commodified life. The multitude of practices allows for substitution and keeping up the model where one practice fails. 'Don't put all your eggs in one basket' was a characteristic say of those families. But there is not just a multitude and diversity of practices. Most practices are pluri-functional in themselves: In the case example behind picture 2, going out in the forest for having a nice weekend activity doesn't only bring home some delicate mushrooms, replacing purchases, saving money and increasing food quality, but also is a family event, strengthening family cohesion and enabling a transfer of knowledge from parents to children. As the interviewees emphasize, it is recreative, relaxing, but also a part of the family's self-definition of an alternative value system and aesthetic self-expression, in which - and we observed many such families – nature, solidarity, or other social ideas replace market success. One could even say, such cases show an entwinement of social, cultural and economic aspects or functions in a way which has been significant for premodern social life, not only in the ancient Greek concept of oíkos (Finley 1965), but also in lower social classes until the dawn of the industrial age (Malcolmson 1988) and even in industrial workers' biographies until the mid 20th century (Deppe 1982). Observably, such residual patterns

of culture, having been made obsolete or redundant by processes of increasing social differentiation and progressing divisions of labour[8] have never disappeared completely, and are now reemerging in resilient households and families at the fringes of lower income groups. Resilient households of the 'self-reliant oíkos' type appear in most countries of the RESCuE investigation, strongly visible in Northern and Central Europe, here and there in rural and even urban sites of southern Europe, but with no case examples in the RESCuE studies in Ireland and the United Kingdom[9]. The 'self-reliant oíkos' is for certain but not completely associated with rural or small-town settings and formal or informal property orders, allowing for use of natural resources on public land, no man's land or unfenced private or self-owned land; it includes cheap housing facilities, often inherited or self-bought at very low prices, low possibilities for formal labour market integration, but sufficient possibilities for network and community based economic activities. Significant risk potentials of the 'self-reliant oíkos' household type are overwork and related health problems, family ruptures, or a lack of entitlements to welfare state premises if their multiple but still small livelihood fails. The self-reliant oíkos uses multiple resources, among them many active and economically functioning local and translocal networks. Analysis has identified examples like one family being involved in professionals' networks, musicians' networks, neighbourhood and alternative culture networks, local sports club and a carnival society – and this case does not stand alone. Often, the self-reliant oíkos is a kind of a spider or knot within a set of overlapping networks. The education often is at mid-level or above, which means the adult household members are often skilled craftsmen or –women, able and willing to do a lot of work on their houses, flats, gardens, repair their car themselves and sell their labour force through one or another of their several networks. Characteristically for that kind of resilient families is an extremely wide definition of family: Their friends, colleagues and customers may all be addressed as family. One woman from a 'self-reliant oíkos', working part time for little money in a public job creation scheme, supporting unemployed youth to write applications and improve their education, referred to her clients as family.

Alternative sensemaking and alternative values in the term of „Eigensinn" or non-commodified orientations are extremely important for them, and such are social relations like gift exchange or sharing, implying cultural patterns at huge distance from the highly commodified ways of life. One stunning characteristic is the multifunctionality of practices which develops into an entwinement of production and reproduction. They produce goods within the family, in the household, in the premises where they

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8 Durkheim (2013), Parsons (1949) and Luhmann (1984) gave classical descriptions of such processes.

9 The temptation would be high to associate this with the 'liberal' property order and the lack of common goods in these countries, with either historically early and deep going enclosures (UK) or deprivations (Ireland), early (UK) or dependent industrialisation (Ireland), and also early and deep going de-industrialisations, but it might be too early to judge this from very limited case numbers in just two areas of investigation in each of those countries.

live, involving good craftsmanship and a lot of practical aesthetics (See Bosch/Promberger 2017). Usually the resilient families of that type don't claim for basic income support, although they are close to the poverty line. Examples comprise artisans, artists, rural families returning from renting their land out to direct subsistence economy on own ground, aged people with little pensions and huge gardens.

The second type of resilient households is a small entrepreneur or bricoleur-entrepreneur who makes business on very small profit rates or from other households' leftovers, taking high risks on very low margins, where other entrepreneurs would quite soon turn their back on the business or never enter at all. He can be called an unusual variety of the Schumpeterian (Schumpeter 1942) entrepreneur, as he does not do any creative destruction himself. The destruction often has already been done by others – be it the adverse social and personal environment in disadvantaged kids, or the waste other people put on the street or leave in their flats when moving out or dying. The bricoleur-entrepreneur stands for creativity with things and persons having been subject to loss, degradation or deprivation. Alternative values, but also just a lack of options and motivation to accumulation and growth plays a certain role here. Again, skills – from skilled craftsmanship to university education (often unfinished or obsolete), practical experiences in former regular jobs – are of importance, but also personal networks for setting up projects or finding customers. As a bricoleur in the sense of Levi-Strauss (1962), the entrepreneur-bricoleur is fascinated by creatively connecting things, people, using what is at hand to form something unusual but useful, or making sense in an unexpected way. Nevertheless, the surprisingly high level of planning and aesthetics applied by this type are suggesting to reject the negative connotations carried by the initial 'bricoleur' concept of Levi-Strauss (ibid.). Unlike in the 'self-reliant oikos', subsistence economy, gift exchange and sharing play just a minor role in the livelihood composition. The small entrepreneur-bricoleur produces mainly for markets, which are co-structured by personal, local or professional networks. He or she, often as a couple or family, does not work for just a favour in turn, but seeks to gain a monetary income from his or her activities, and does not refrain from setting up formal cooperation with fellows of his trade, customers or funders when necessary. Nevertheless, his business often has some strong ethical background – like making waste stuff useful again, working for fair prices, or working not only for profit but also for the benefit of underprivileged persons, or for society in terms of education or social projects. The most striking examples comprise a one-man facility services (snow cleaning, repair, flat clearances) enterprise in combination with a second hand shop, or an educational entrepreneur who offers group activities for disadvantaged kids, moreover some artists, but also a retail trader in small electronics on a flea market. There is some overlap with third sector and social economy activities and networks, but not in a typologically constitutive sense.

The third type, to be called 'secondary resilience', is probably quite familiar to many social workers, policy practitioners and researchers studying vulnerability in developed welfare states. We suggest calling it 'secondary' because the resilience is derived from welfare state transfers in the narrow sense. And those resilient families are

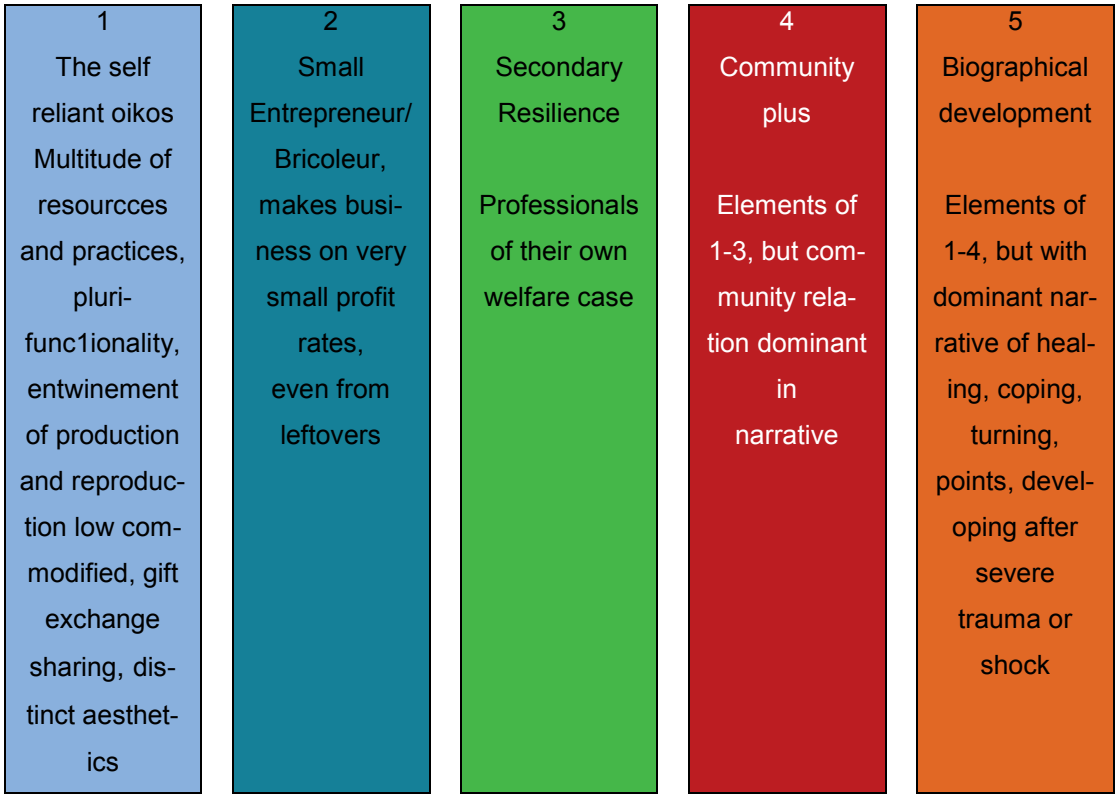
not just simple recipients of these services – which is the case for a certain part of the families in most of the types presented, and therefore not distinctive: The families of 'secondary resilience' can moreover be called professionals of their own welfare case, as they are experts in enforcing their citizens' rights and entitlements, often against the welfare administration to maximise the outcome of the welfare system for their own. Their other resources are comparably narrow and poor: their nucleus family, and their aspirations and investments that their children might have a better future through education. Networks, neigbourhood or wider kin relations play hardly any role, while institutional and civil society support does so a bit. Examples comprise a family where the husband became a victim of violence, enforcing his legal acknowledgement as a disabled person, and some single parent households in deprived urban areas. A significant picture shows Mr. H., unemployed and disabled after a brain injury, sitting at the kitchen table, writing a protest letter to the welfare authority and supervising his daughter's homework (picture not displayed here).

A fourth type of resilience can be called the community or solidarity type. This type may show characteristics of other types in a loose connection, but with the special distinction that a strong community affiliation makes the family or the person resilient in their own perspective, having pulled them out of a deep crisis. Different communities may play a role here: It can be a church community, a neighbourhood mutual support group, an unemployed persons' initiative – or any other civil society organisation, no matter if well corporated or of grassroots origin. Integration and resilience courses show remarkable homogeneity, with an initial phase of crisis, helpnessness and hardship, then contact and receiving benefits, then moving slightly from getting support into participating, and enhancing the scope of activities, mutuality and 'giving back'. Our case examples comprise – among others – a Syrian family, participating in an autonomous solidarity network in Athens where members – often poor themselves - collect and distribute leftover or donated food. Remarkably, this is not a food bank run by a well established charity, with strong demarcations between activists and beneficiaries, but a kind of self-help solidarity food support network. Other examples include neighbourhood solidarity groups and grassroots church initiatives, where families develop resilience by growing into civil society (see Promberger et al. 2016).

A fifth type of resilient households, often they are single person or mother-daughter households, could be called 'biographical development and healing'. Despite showing elements from other types unsystematically, the type is constituted by dominant narrative pattern of the interviewed persons - a narrative of healing, coping, turning points and developing oneself out of the state of a severe trauma or shock. Many cases have encountered strong psychic or physical health crises, sexual or domestic violence, traumatisation in the strict and severe sense, loss of home and dramatic family ruptures. They are seeing themselves in a healing procedure after a turning point, which might have been initiated by strong authentic interventions together with a reflexive change of own habits. This is often accompanied by a change of place, an episode in a sheltered home. After this, they are slowly improving, increasingly gaining back self-control and self-respect, often through contact with animals and plants and manual

work on decorative things and identity-related objects, but also through peer self-help groups under the supervision of local church or social work organisations, at least for the female cases prevailing in numbers. The turning point and upward development of the few men observed in this pattern often goes together with reducing substance abuse, finding a chance for taking up working for trustable persons, earning some income and – strongly - finding a new partner. The typological analysis is not yet fully completed, but the tentative typology developed here has proved robust both in analytical workshops of the German RESCuE team, and other teams, at least punctually corresponding with findings from other studies (Hirseland/Ramos Lobato 2010, Bosch 2010, Paugam 2008).

Picture 4
Typology of resilient households



Source: M. Promberger, IAB

This paper is now going to present on the general findings and policy implications of the rescue project resilience among vulnerable households in Europe. Section 6 – to follow now - will focus general results in brief terms, while section 7 will be an attempt to both capture these mixed livelihoods and ways of living systematically and discuss exemplary results. The concluding section 9 will turn to suggest some tentative policy implications in order to how to foster resilience in anti-poverty politics.

6 General Results in Brief

Just a small part of vulnerable households is resilient at all[10]. But those who are resilient show a broad scope of different socioeconomic practices embedded in certain cultural patterns, and being organized within social or, more precisely, family, communities and networks. There is also a strong tendency to what social historians call a mixed economy. Most resilient households around the poverty line are making their living out of mixed sources. This could also be called a multisource livelihood, with a mixture of economic, social and cultural sources and practices, but also mixed functions and meanings of every certain practice. So, interconnectedness, multi-purposedness, diversity and substitutional elasticity characterise the practices resilient families are actually pursuing to gain their living and to keep their head up.

Then, resilience of vulnerable households, as we had to learn, is vulnerable itself and it can involve risks. These risks may affect society, impose risks for community, or mean risks for the person or household itself. Health problems, in relation to overwork or substandard access to medical provisions and institutional health care threatens resilient persons. Within families often the adults are concerned, trying to minimize the risk for their children and take a higher burden themselves. But this is a problem of poverty in general, not of resilient families alone. Family rupture is another risk that resilient families share with non-resilient families in low income situations. But, as some of our cases show that resilience may include families reacquiring a role as a unit of production, ruptures might be even more menacing. Self-endangerment through risky practices can also take place. While there was no electricity, water or gas tapping observable in the RESCuE cases, insecure heating and cooking devices or fuels[11] could be observed occasionally. Community risks may arise from practices which overstretch the family's share in public goods (i.e. by tapping, overextraction of natural resources, free riding public transport, or by participating in social or gift exchange only on the 'taking' side) or generate public safety risks (living in illegal or insecure buildings or tapping). Illegal or grey practices (small theft, fraud, squatting, informal paid labour or undocumented entrepreneurship) might pose risks to general society, but were rarely observed among the resilient households of the RESCuE project.

Generally spoken, the instability of income generation and the general situation of living in scarcity seems to be the major risk for resilient as for non-resilient poor households, followed by the syndrome of overwork, money scarcity, below average access

[10] Precise quantification of our findings is impossible, as the qualitative methodology applied here uses contrast samples instead of random samples. But it can be noted that screening for resilient cases required a lot of efforts and yielded many non-resilient cases where resilient cases were expected. This does not necessarily have to depend on their low incidence alone, but may also be caused by a double stigma, of being poor, and doing better than other poor, thus avoiding participation in the research project.

[11] Mainly firing wood impregnated or contaminated by paint, oil or other substances, or fueling improper devices.

to healthcare, and bad health, in some cases accompanied by poor housing. This risk profile does not differ too much from other working poor households, although potential risks of resilient households seem to be more virulent or actual in non-resilient cases. The present situation of resilient households is better compared to others, but situations can change quite quickly in a way where the practices pursued before are no longer helpful. Of course the observed families try to balance or compensate it through substituting one practice with another, but during a severe economic crisis, health problem or natural disaster this can reach its limits quite quickly. Moreover, and again similar to other poverty households, risks may distribute asymmetrically in households in terms of gender or generations. In some cases, women have a higher risk of overwork due to extensively combining of family obligations with work and income generation. We have to keep in mind that all income generation activities of these households do not have very high outcomes, so they have to make extensive use of their labour force, which may bring them in conflict with their health and family relations. It has to be noted that resilience does not lift families very far above non-resilient families, but it observably makes a difference, constituted by the levels and scope of resources, level of welfare dependency, activity, motivation, self-esteem and quality of life, compared to non-resilience.

The project was able to identify a handful of stable and established household patterns of resilience leading to a household or family typology, as described above. We also found out that the higher the degree of diversity and mixture of practices within each single unit of observation is, the more potential for elasticity, substitutiveness and efficiency and thus sustainability is in the respective pattern of resilience. Then, resilience, which is very important, requires certain institutionalized social conditions. Among these we can find a highly relevant role of common goods, and of the developed welfare state in a wider sense – of which we will hear more in the next section.

7 Assets, resources, abilities, conditions – what enables household resilience?

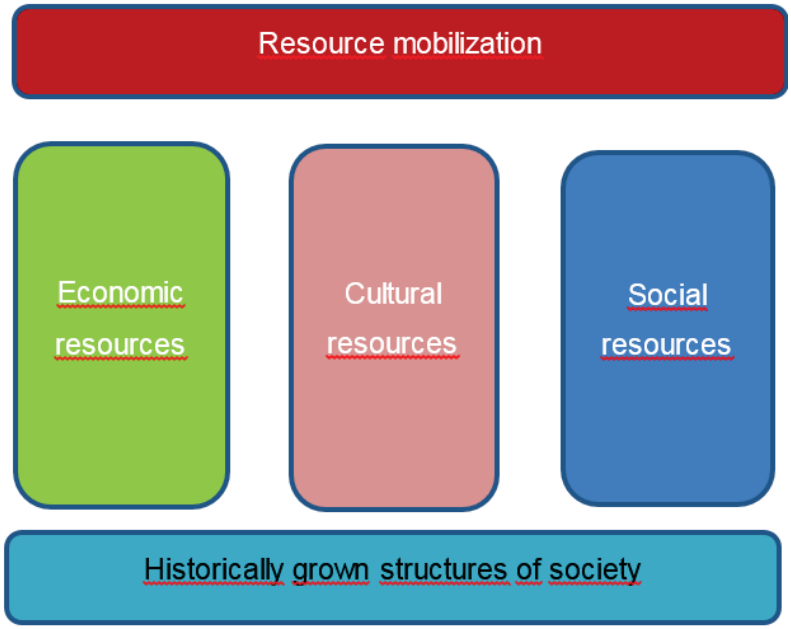
One of the major challenges of analysing the data was to give a structure or observational order to the resources and practices observed across and within the cases under study. Qualitative methodology offers three options for the outcome of such a structure in general: Classification, typologies, and dimensional aggregation, and three combinable ways to reach them – such as comparison, induction, deduction on the basis of similarities and differences.

A first classification attempt has been published already by Dagdeviren et al. (2016a) from the RESCuE team; a tentative and yet incomplete typology has been shown above in this paper, but if we want to know where resilience comes from and of which factors it depends, and if we do not want to get lost in the manifoldness of practices observed, there is need for dimensional aggregation.

In the beginning of the project, as a starting point, a heuristic attempt was developed which more or less was derived from Bourdieu's forms of capital, being turned into

groups of resources instead of capital, due to some theoretical doubts whether concepts of capital apply on resources and practices where commodification is more exceptional than general[12].

Picture 5
From Bourdieu's capitals to resilient households' resources



Source: M. Promberger, IAB

The sources of the means of living available for a household or family can be divided in economic resources, cultural resources and social resources. Those resources result from the historically grown structure of society, and require a certain level of availability, appropriation and mobilization to make them useful for practical life. Being a sufficient heuristic attempt for the initial phase of the project, certain problems arose when this approach was confronted with the empirical data.

First, the distinction between resources and practices turned out to be blurred in reality. This does not matter in the case of capital or money or easy to sell commodities

[12] Not only in Marxian thought, 'capital' requires accumulation and productive consumption for market sale, not for personal direct consumption by the proprietor. It simply loses its function as capital when being directly consumed (see also Max Weber and Georg Simmel for similar arguments). Accumulation, which leads to the existence of capital at all, itself requires the existence of markets and labour relations where a surplus is produced and distributed – which is not really possible where the things and goods and relations produced and appropriated are hardly commodified at all, and the surplus goes into sharing and gift exchange instead of being accumulated. Bourdieu, in some remote corners of his work, admitted that his concept of capital can be applied only under certain historical conditions. And we may add that this means 1950s and 1960s France and the differentiation lines of its elite, possessing and working classes, but does neither describe premodern societies, nor the ways of life at the fringes of functional integration into postmodern production, of the 'excluded', as Bourdieu's contemporary followers say. Foucaultians and Frankfurters might claim that there is no escape from the totality of capitalist structures, there is no real life in false life (Adorno 1997:43), but empirically there is, at increased risks and high costs, in social areas where partial functional decoupling from mainstream economy takes place.

in present-day societies, but it does matter for resources whose resource character depends almost completely of their use value. Such resources can be functioning only when they are mobilized and appropriated to practice. So a forest is not a resource for you when you don't know how to collect berries or mushrooms, or how to enjoy yourself outdoors. A wrench is useless for a person who does not have a nut to apply it on, and a shelter for homeless kids or a food bank isn't a resource for you if you are too remote, or not allowed to access, or if you're not an approved member of the targeted population. Thus, the existence of some resources or being a resource at all before or beyond a certain practice is theoretically vague, at least for some of the resources investigated here. You can of course count economic capital or monetary assets, you can take your university degree and nail it on the wall, or convince an employer when showing it at a job interview - but what about a tacit skill, values of sharing and solidarity or an alternative way of life? They manifest their existence only or mostly in practice.

As a consequence, it may not be necessary to drop the resources concept in favour of pure practice, but it has to be kept in mind for analysis that a non-mobilized resource may not necessarily contribute to resilience. There is something else than just resources.

Second, the deductive character of the Bourdieu adaptation – dividing the resources into economic, social and cultural - has to be downweighted to give way to inductive conclusions from empirical data, not only according to requirements of qualitative methodology, but also due to the manifest overlap or entwinement of social, economic and cultural functions of single practices. Picture 3 from above – the blueberries - illustrates this.

The photographer told us:

> *"I'm in the forest with my children. It is a kind of meaningful exercise and one gets berries for home use. For example, we use a lot of lingonberries and lingonberry jam, really a lot. Children learn to take responsibilities, like berries just don't walk to the table by themselves."*
>
> *(Respondent from northern Finland, single mother, born 1981, living in a rural area. It is important for her to involve her children into practical work. Document collected by Tennberg, Vuojala-Magga and Vola, Finnish RESCuE team)*

Analysing the practice documented in the interview and pictures, it is easy to identify an economic function, berries for home use including storage, and this storage is not one or two glasses of jam, but may extend to meters on the shelf. The practice shown includes several cultural functions, like the technical procedure of gathering and processing berries, the respective knowledge is not only applied but also reproduced, once through reactivating it during applying it, and once through the intergenerational transfer from parents to kids. The social functions of the berry gathering practice are cooperation and strengthening group relations within the family, the knowledge transfer and the learning, definition and actuation of social roles, including the relation be-

tween nature and humans. We can call this again 'entwined multifunctionality' of practices, and this is not only the case in many of the resilient families observed, but can also be regarded a characteristic of many preindustrial economic practices of households in agriculture and herding, just to mention concepts of 'sacred landscape' in hunter-gatherer cultures (Jordan 2003, Nergård 2004), the blessing spells and signs for agricultural tools and cattle in catholic rural communities up to today, as well as the involvement of children in household and economic activities of their parents[13].

Mixed sources of livelihood, a diversity of practices, and the multifunctionality of each practice therefore are characteristics of vulnerable households' resilience – this is again one of our general findings. But how can we sort all those practices and resources, in order to better understand them in their relation to their resilient way of living? How can we understand the counterintuitive phenomenon of resilience challenging the researcher, exceptionally being there where hardship is usually expected, and where structural inequalities are most restricting the individuals' social status? How could this done in an inductive way, remaining open for the unexpected findings from the field, but without forgetting about previous insights on inequality?

Jahawarlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India following Mahatma Gandhi, once stated „Life is like a game of cards. The hand that you are dealt represents determinism; the way you play it is free will"[14]The card game is an old and lasting metaphor for life, its options and restrictions. So, why not use a ‚game of cards'- model?

The card game perfectly mirrors the ‚restricted freedom'- approach on resilience: Resilience means to take another (unusual) way amidst of the same restricting environment or ‚social structure'. Social structure therefore is not to be seen as fully determining social action, but as a limiting factor. You can make choices, but in a limited scope. All players have equal numbers of cards selected from just one set. There are, for example, no more than four aces per standard deck, but the variations of cards and the variations of strategies within (or breaking) the rules allow for a good or above average outcome. It is a matter of theoretical framing and empirical question whether all members of a society, of a community, of a Marxian or Weberian class have to play the game, and whether this is an inter- or intra-group game.

Rules even can be broken, modified or transcended. Organising a union or a political party was the major success strategy of the 19th and 20th century working class when playing their limited cards, and modifying the rules in order to turn the game from a

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[13] This is to be carefully distinguished from prohibited child labour in the sense of the EU and national labour laws and ILO codes (see in the sources section at the end of the paper), as it is not for profit or wage, and not to be sold on markets, but for learning and family subsistence. The main characteristic of this practical learning for children is an age-appropriate and paedagogic content, and age-appropriate duration and psychophysical strain, according to the current state of labour medicine, psychology, educational science, legislation and normative consent.

[14] See the sources section at the end of the paper.

fixed sum[15] into a non-fixed sum game, or from rivalry to non-rivalry (or limited rivalry) within groups of workers, and even for society as a whole, when it fell on the fertile ground of the early 20th century nation states in war which had to free their workers in order to fulfil the wartime productivity needs. There are many card games which go beyond zero- or fixed sum games, like the ‚order creation'-games canasta, patience or rummy, like those games where you estimate or bet on your own chances and try to reach this target, and the numerous esoteric games symbolizing aspects of human life, psyche and development, targeting at self-insights instead of competing at all.

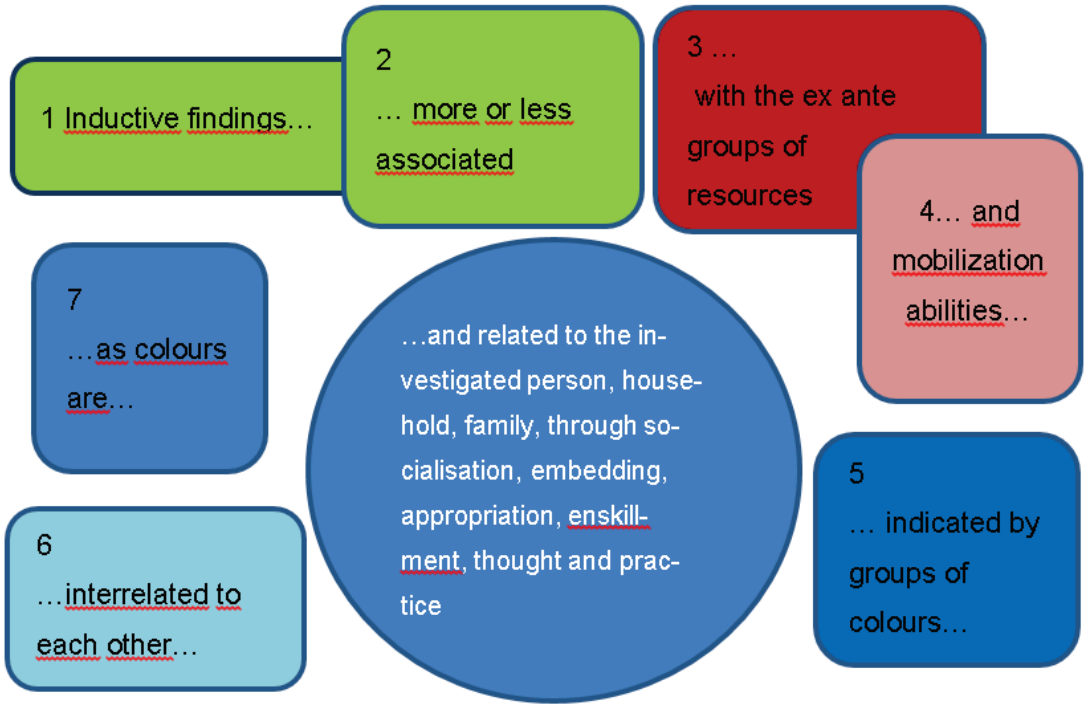
Suits can be paralleled with groups of resources, card values with the usefulness and level of outcome the sources may create. Of course it is optimum, when a player holds only aces and trumps, but the standard play situation means to combine the properties of different cards in mixtures and with flexible strategies of cooperation and competition, like the multi-purpose strategies and the mixed source livelihoods of resilient families. Moreover, playing cards is a process, like resilience of vulnerable households, where gains and losses occur, and frameworks change, and only after a long period it is possible to estimate whether a set of strategies and a resilience development was successful and sustainable or not.

The standard employment contract within the European low-unemployment post-war industrial societies after 1950 was such a sustainable development for most of the metropolitan working classes up to half a century, but is minoritarian since the 1990s. The academic knowledge worker in high tech sectors of the economy might be a stable model of our days, but far less inclusive than the first one and even more at risk. And many other workers have to participate in the card games of modern market societies or austerity driven social policy through flexible contracts and low social security entitlements. As long as there is no good and widely accepted idea how to transcend or modify the rules of the game nowadays, and no organised force to do so, players have to know what they have at hand, and play their game best as possible. This is what our resilient families do, and our analysis shows how they do it – and how resilience can be achieved well. Card games are not just being played for fun,

[15] For the 18th and 19th century, a society's wage sum could be something like the cultural minimum of subsistence plus the result of balancing demand and supply in inter-class exchange, which could be called a more or less fixed sum (after statistically controlling price developments, and a few other issues). For a society with established unionism and collective bargaining, plus one or more political parties representing or including working class policy interests and demands, it might turn into a non-fixed sum, as it does not only represent the slowly developing cultural minimum level of subsistence, and a more or less alternating or cyclical market movement, but also political processes and power relations which are only loosely coupled to business cycles, but also influence inter-class exchange. Historically, the greatest gains in workers' wages and social rights have been initiated or taking place when self-organisation levels and changes in power relations have been allowing for, such as the German 1916 to 1923 and 1955 to 1974 developments. A destitution of working class interest representation and political influence, like 1933-45 in Germany can be identified to have inverse effects on a society's wage sum. There is some literature from social history and labour studies supporting this hypothesis (Bergmann et al. 1974, Lutz 1989), but it seems to be underresearched in economic history.

but considered to be associated with fate and agency, skills, chances and risks of winning and losing, often even dramatically. They have been under-regarded in game theory and social sciences, but they give a good conceptual metaphor for complex social processes.

Picture 6
The card game as a dimensional frame of the RESCuE findings



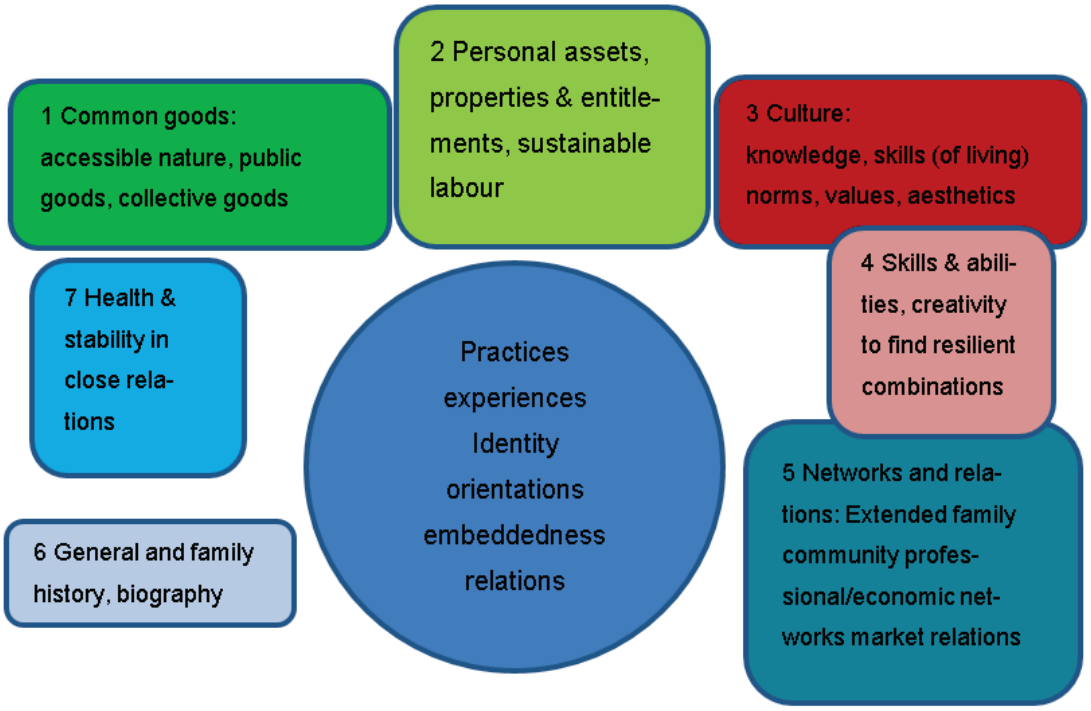
Source: M. Promberger, IAB

Describing resilience as a game of cards, we have inductive findings more or less associated with each other within certain groups of resources or functions that have been identified through the previous theoretical considerations, and mobilization activities to be combined with resource 'cards'. Like the suits in the card game metaphor, their similarity or difference is being indicated by certain groups of colours. Even the colours may show proximity or distance, as colours are interrelated to each other - like green contains blue and yellow. In the middle of this set of cards there is the card holder, the player, standing for the investigated person, household, family. They play their cards using their socialisation and experience, the appropriated or internalised aspects of culture embedding their skills, and practice.

Playing a game of cards, trying to do as best as possible, means using the degrees of freedom within strong structural restrictions, resulting maybe of the class or strata system or other structural inequalities. There is a defined set of cards, and rules, but the selection somebody gets is from random in the game, from where the person is born or situated in life. The set of cards is thus double limited, and experience and cooperation (in some games at least, see Zagal et al. 2006) help to make the best out of what you got. The rules are not necessarily as strict as natural laws, they can be broken at certain costs or modified or transcended to cultural and political developments. Colours (or sites) in the card game can be paralleled with groups of resources,

and card values (numbers) and powers (figures) can likewise be associated with the usefulness and level of outcome the respective source of livelihood may create.

Picture 7
Cards for resilience



Source: M. Promberger, IAB

The depicted hand of cards shows what the analysis revealed as substantial factors of vulnerable households' resilience: The first card is the common goods card. Many of our resilient households make an extensive use of commons, which will be shown in more details later. On the second card there are personal assets, properties, entitlements, not to forget sustainable labour if available for those families - which is not the case for many of them. Personal assets in resilient low income families may comprise a cheap used car, a mobile phone, a small inherited or cheaply bought house or flat, a garden or yard, tools, household goods, entitlements. Entitlements may include transfer incomes of course, a driving license, a skill certificate; an entitlement to use a property – like a good renting contract for a house or flat, or a permit to harvest timber at a certain time in a certain place, or a fishing permit.

The third card, culture, has a very broad scope. It includes knowledge and skills, norms and values and practical aesthetics connecting the aforementioned at a level beyond or apart from the idea of market success – like in the connection of beauty, morality and functionality. Close to this one there is a fourth card, an intermediate card which shows those skills, abilities, creativity in order to find and built resilient combinations and patterns of interrelated practices and functions on the basis of experiences and substantial skills. Helping street kids to help themselves, or offering own labour force to a foodbank with a quadruple yield of foodbank goods, communicative relations outside the own small world, giving structure to one's own day, and doing something ethically valuable. Picking mushrooms for a cheap day out with the family,

bringing home the main course of a Sunday dinner, getting recreation and strengthening family ties - all this requires adopted and acquired abilities and creativity of combining and transformation, for which this card stands

There are some social cards, one in particular which indicates networks and relations mostly to extended family community, local communities, professional and economic networks - and of course also market relations on which the formal labour market and standard employment play a rather small role, but informal network-like markets, from mutual help exchange, informal labour along networks and used good markets often are crucially important. We have the card of family history, local and general history and biography, which the members of our households simply have in their luggage, as tools, obstacles, and lenses of perception. And, finally, there is of course a card indicating personal health and the stability of close relationships.

Playing this game of cards results in practices, experiences, which are related to identity, orientations and cultural and social embeddedness. During further analysis, three 'cards' in particular attracted strong attention or brought surprising results, across all countries and cases. First, many economic resources and practices of resilient households are related to common goods of different kinds. Second, knowledge, skills and alternative values are important cultural aspects of being resilient. And third, personal, social resources, mostly of family, extended family and other networks and communities are highly relevant.

Common goods

The common or collective goods have played a small role in organisation studies such as Olson (1958), but have mostly been a neglected topic of economic inquiry until Elinor Ostrom's studies (1990), awarding her the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics. Ostrom managed to show that what was earlier described as the tragedy of the commons (Hardin 1968) – free riding, overuse, overexploitation, instrumentalisation and destruction – was not an inherent problem of common goods in general, but mainly a problem of insufficient management and regulation, in other words, improper governance.

In a set of convincing case studies she shed light on proper and simple methods of governance which have preserved the common benefit of the respective common goods for centuries. The RESCuE study showed another surprise of the commons – their high relevance for households living on low income, and getting by well. Nevertheless, the RESCuE concept of common goods comprises a wider empirical scope of activities and resources than that of Ostrom, who studied commons at a certain level of organised action – which is the case for some of the commons investigated in the RESCuE project, like charity, municipality or government premises and provisions, but is not the case for others, like wild forests, or secondary use of harvested

fields, where just distant authorities account responsible for tolerance or non-tolerance of the practices done on their ground[16]. Often, they are actually private goods like private or state owned land, of which a secondary common use is a kind of informal right, common law and, as functioning as a resource, a common good. The picture below shows a Spanish family, doing a secondary harvest on wild leeks which grow on the fields after the harvest of regular crops, and before the next cultivation period to come.

Picture 8
Leek gatherers in Central Spain

Photography taken by anonymous respondent, Central Spain. Document collected by Arnal, M./de Castro, C./Calderon, D./Martin, P. /Revilla, J.C. & Serrano, A., Spanish RESCuE team

These leeks grow wild, they are not sewn or planted by anyone, and come to be harvested by this family after the field's proprietor harvested the main crop. The regulation on this common good is the culturally based tolerance of the proprietor to a 'secondary harvest' of weeds which have almost no market value. The picture stands for low income families making use of various wild fruit on cultivated and uncultivated land, be it private or public owned or no man's land at all, and they more generally

[16] Disputes on secondary land use have been a major issue of social conflict in preindustrial times, think of Robin Hood. Be it for common rights of grazing on community land versus private enclosures (see Marx 1867, and Thompson 1963/2006), or for minor hunting, forest pasture, informal land use is almost out of view of the public today. Nevertheless, as a result of former conflicts, open access to nature, involving minor use, is regarded as an informal common right in many European countries, sometimes even codified, like in the Bavarian Constitution or the Everyman's Right in most Scandinavian countries, but remarkably restricted in Anglo-Saxon countries.

represent low income families using natural resources to improve food quality, reduce food expenditure, and gain additional natural income by hunting, gathering and fishing, for self-consumption, sharing or gift exchange. Unlike examples from social history, and although foraging for cash is still not uncommon for low income families in mountain or forest areas in Germany, France and Italy, not to talk about Russia or Middle America (Pérez-Moreno et al 2008), there were hardly any households participating in RESCuE, who sold their harvest to traders or on city markets. Thus, using common goods of natural resources observed in the RESCuE project can be judged as nature related practices of direct subsistence, sharing and gift exchange only. Although they are sometimes called hobbies by practitioners and observers, practices like foraging, hunting, plot and community gardening, fishing, herding should not be underestimated in their yield, as detailed analysis in the project showed.

In the absence of own land, households using natural resources all need access to the common good of nature, be it cultivated or uncultivated, regulated formally, or by common law, tolerance and good practice. Among the RESCuE countries, the incidence of accessible nature as a common good with extractable material outcomes – beyond leisure and recreation, which are nevertheless relevant in our cases - seems to be a bit higher in Northern and Eastern Europe, and can be associated with rural contexts, although not exclusively. There are urban equivalents as well.

Plot gardening is a well-established organised working and lower middle class strategy in urban environments, dating back to the 19th century, sometimes organised as 'club goods'[17] by huge employers, by housing or gardening cooperatives, or by workers' or other civil society organisations. Membership is cheap but well sought after, and access thresholds depend more on social networks than on price. Although there is hardly any systematic evidence, many associations are open for and have observable membership of low income families and immigrants. But there is also informal plot gardening outside projects and associations, like squatting of public places or abandoned patches of land for gardening of low income and immigrant families even in cities like Lisbon, documented in the Portuguese RESCuE case study. Squatting, which means making use of abandoned or temporarily unused buildings or land, if tolerated by police and government, are practices turning private property into common goods, not necessarily limited to left student and bohemian movements, especially if severe poverty is around. A differently institutionalised form of land use is community urban gardening: Often implemented for improving social cohesion and community life in problem neighbourhoods, and sometimes limited to interim periods in commodified urban land use, it nevertheless improves not only social cohesion but also food quality and natural incomes of the participants. There is considerable evi-

[17] Club goods are common goods with restricted access for members only.

dence in more than 80 European cities that this is not a marginal phenomenon (Corcoran 2014), although such phenomena were not selected for observation in the RESCuE case studies.

Then there are numerous common goods being produced by charities, municipalities or civil society organisations, social economy actors or local branches of the welfare state. They include clothing chambers, food banks, public water and electricity supply, cheap public transport, cheap or subsidized housing, neighbourhood centres or free access cultural centres, sports clubs, and various other public services.

And it moves over to provisions by the welfare state in a wider sense, providing free or cheap education and information, job creation schemes, basic income support, free or cheap healthcare and public services, emergency shelters – which is an incomplete list.

The resilient families make extremely strong use of those none- or low-commodified commons. Which commons are actually being used depends on the type of the resilient household: The 'secondary resilience' type uses transfer incomes and civil rights support permanently or for longer periods, the 'bricoleur-entrepreneur' sometimes uses networks and project money generated, supported or funded by the welfare state, the social or the educational economy, but usually no direct transfers, and the 'self-reliant oíkos' uses natural resources and networks, social economy and welfare state infrastructures but rather no direct transfers.

Culture: Knowledge and values

Culture is a contested term. The RESCuE project uses it alongside the definition of Raymond Williams (2014). Culture therefore is threefold – the 'ideal', more precisely the norms and values of human self-development and progress, the 'documentary' body of recorded human imaginative and intellectual work, and patterns of human practice and behaviour, as 'descriptions of ways of life' – practice in other words. For RESCuE, culture mainly comprises the 'ideal' in terms of norms and values, 'documentary descriptions' of knowledge, skills and aesthetics of practice, all of it somewhere between being imaginative, intellectual and informal and practical, shaping the 'ways of life'. It starts with things like do-it-yourself, repairing the vacuum cleaner instead of buying a new one, which stands for an immense set of knowledge on issues like good housekeeping, healthy living, gardening, foraging, small agriculture, everyday psychology on family, children, friends and the respective relations. Of course it includes craftsmanship and respective experience with its functional and aesthetic outcome, it is of course about knowledge and how to acquire knowledge, as learning is not a gift which everybody has, but has to be learned itself. And there is creativity, aesthetics, and experience in how living conditions can be transformed or about chances to get by better, if not transfer the odds into something reasonable. This is, according to our observations, also strongly related to alternative values and norms, and to a sense of belonging to a non-commodified culture and social relations, ranging from traditional religious thought via solidarity associated with the values of labour

and other left movements, to the wide scope of alternative values of a post- or anti-industrial background.

It has to be mentioned that, no matter before which background the families place themselves, economic success is not a definite criteria to the resilient families' everyday experience, culture and sense of belonging. Taking a role in society as a labourer or a white collar worker is not of very much importance. On the contrary, it is deemed far more important to have a good family, friends, extended family, to know people and places and to practice solidarity in mutual help.

Social and network relations

This is where we are already touching the networks and social relations card. Strikingly, our findings emphasize the significant role of the extended family, of community, of professional and economic networks and associated 'market' relations. The RESCuE interviewees define 'extended family' in a genealogical way and in a social way. Some cases actually have a lot of close or distant relatives playing a role as a network of mutual support, communication and information, while others define persons outside their genealogical kin as family – like colleagues and friends. There are also networks of street musicians, of educational workers, of skilled craftsmen 'brothers of the trade', plot gardener associations, prayer brotherhoods, subcultural networks, informal workers' or small entrepreneurs' networks. There are self-help groups, there are still some cooperatives, and we have a whole set of civil society organizations, like sports clubs, music clubs – often of a considerable heterogeneity in social status of their membership: In the football club there are also local small employers, craftsmen, thus people who can mobilise labour or hire somebody from time to time, or are themselves part in other networks where hirings take place, which gives access to job or business opportunities. We also met a carnival society, a local grocery shop where people meet, chat and exchange information. Often these networks include one or another form of gift exchange with the respective social and economic functions, like self-made fur shoes made by a Finnish woman for herself and for her wider family. Network involvement is extremely important in the resilient families observed. It is not unusual that a family of two adults and three children is involved in at least five economically highly productive networks, while poor families in general are reported to have far lower network involvement.[18]

[18] On the role of social relations and networks in poverty alleviation and coping, see Gilchrist, A., & Kyprianou, P. (2011); Crisp, R. and Robinson, D. (2010), mainly for the United Kingdom. For Germany, an under average level in supportive social relations of poor households has been demonstrated in statistical sources, and poverty reports reveal special concern for single mothers, children and persons with health problems showing a lack of supportive social relations (Balluseck/Trippner 1998), although there is not much recent evidence.

8 Policy implications – a first look

The publication of the RESCuE results is taking place in a time where the limits, not to say failure of activation policies in reaching the Lisbon goal of a substantial reduction of poverty until 2020 has become obvious. What can be learned from the project? Under any circumstances it is necessary to enhance the current social policy debates, which seem to be too entrapped and polarised between an expansive welfare state in the 1970s social democratic tradition, a still hardly reflected but yet old demand for an unconditioned minimum income, and new and old varieties of austerity driven liberal-conservative approaches of decentralisation, communalisation and individualisation of poverty risks. The findings of RESCuE speak a language apart from these factioned debates.

It is evident that there are a few vulnerable households doing better than expected, playing their cards well, getting by better than others, using above average assets sometimes, but mostly make successful use of common goods, cultural resources, and real-life social networks. Our finding that resilience is a rare case supports the subsequent interpretation that we cannot assume resilience to be something everybody or every household can develop on their own, if they were just willing to. On the contrary: The difficulty to find and reach resilient households for the RESCuE study, the rareness of resilient cases, and the fact that most households in poverty are strongly willing to change their situation (Hirseland et al. 2010) supports the conclusion that living at low income and risk of poverty are in principle non-resilient situations, and just a few might escape by own means. But how can we contribute to a growth of resilience among low income households? What can social policy do? This is complicated, but it starts with the simple formula “improve the cards and teach or learn how to play”.

Keep up and develop the welfare state

The first issue, almost before improving the cards and rules of play, is to keep up the welfare state in the narrow sense of transfer incomes and job uptake support. It has to be stated that the scope and power of those premises are fairly different in the countries taking part in the RESCuE study, ranging from huge coverage and reliability with some problems at the fringes, via selective, austere and restricted, to almost broke, disrupted or inexistent. There is considerable need for narrowing the social policy gap between European nations towards a level which ensures a cultural minimum of existence for any person in need, according to the European Charter of Human Rights (see sources section), not only driven by humanity and the idea of social civil rights, but also by the self-interest of European nations to prevent social disintegration, eruptions and poverty migration.

Take care of the commons

The conclusions of RESCuE moreover suggest to develop the welfare state into a wider perspective. First, for several reasons, there is need to take care of common goods to be a well reflected and safeguarded part of social policy. Although direct transfer incomes and labour integration programmes are the base line, there is a need

to look at the commons to improve the cards and the life of vulnerable households. Not only for welfare clients already known to the authorities, not only the directly welfare state related common goods, but also for low income households out of reach for welfare authorities, and for other common goods which do not show up in present day social policy programmes, neither at EU nor at national levels: It is the accessibility of urban and rural spaces and nature, it is affordable housing costs, fuelling costs, water and electricity, public transport, free information and education, counselling, health services. These are in principle free to everyone, but most relevant to people with insufficient employment and lack of personal assets. And we must not forget that on one poor household in benefit recipiency, there is another one in unregistered poverty or above but close to the poverty line. And those often cannot be reached by welfare and transfer schemes, but by affordable common goods.

Support practical knowledge and culture

Second, we should also think about tolerating if not supporting non- or low commodified cultures, values, knowledge and practice outside the standard expectations of competitive careers in a post-industrial labour society. Beyond asking for labour market relevant qualifications and activities, we should ask for and support facilities, conditions, competencies and activities of leading a good life and participating in citizenship. This may comprise education facilities, support in distributing knowledge on good housekeeping, healthy behaviour, everyday psychology, childcare, do-it-yourself, but also self-help groups with institutional support, professional support and case management where needed, up to certifiable and labour market relevant education and training, including premises, facilities, support and teaching staff. The purpose is to help people to get by well, to help themselves, and at the end of this enhanced concept of activation, understood as empowerment or enabling approach, to become independent from transfer income through sufficiently paid labour or self-run business. Sometimes our resilient families are very active and competent in finding sources of livelihood outside what we would call a standard labour contract, from foraging and gardening to neighbourhood help and voluntary labour, informal work and entrepreneurship. Of course - and this is an old demand of social workers and the people who educate them – it is on the agenda to leave the deficit approach in social policy and search for clients' abilities below certificate level.

Support network and community building

This means also to create low threshold access facilities not only for marginalized groups or people who are already in transfer income schemes, but also for those people at risk who are not yet or not at all claiming benefits. Some of them belong to declined middle classes, some of them have other biographical experiences. Anyway, there's a huge number of people out there who are living at the fringe of poverty but do not claim benefits for different reasons. The resilient families observed in the RESCuE project include many, many of those who make their living within a patchwork and pattern of small economic activities. If they are in need, they need somebody and some institutions to turn to. They might come in need when stronger economic crisis arise or when their personal fate turns bad. We therefore need more low threshold

activities and access to services for people at risk. And we should support network and community building in our activation policies and provide crystallisation points for self-organisation.

Self-organisation is hard to do if you don't know where to meet, don't know whom to approach. But the project gives positive examples - like a priest in a poor neighbourhood bringing people together, or jobcentre or social workers implementing self-help groups for people on low income, people without jobs, or household work classes for younger jobless – or an open-door neighbourhood centre providing meeting rooms? These are all examples for crystallisation points for self-organisation and mutual help, but the approach of supported self-help groups has not been tested too much in European social policy up to now. And it is surprising, how citizens' solidarity and self-organisation is able to pop up from the grassroots especially in some Mediterranean countries – which is definitely something to learn from elsewhere in Europe.

So, there is need for taking care of useful common goods beyond transfer incomes and labour market oriented measurements, for supporting knowledge and non-commodified cultures and values, and to support building and maintenance of helpful networks and community support. Many of this is not new but familiar to local activists and experts, but few of it went into permanent and stable social policy programmes so far, and the recent focus on labour market related activation has pushed it aside even more. It has to be stated that those implications are concerning far more institutions than just welfare offices, job placement offices and a few charities' counselling offices and food banks – despite their undoubtable merits.

This may also involve city and neighbourhood planning, housing policy, access to natural resources, keeping up public services and goods against privatization pressure, inclusive IT policies, education, health policies. Fostering resilience requires a holistic approach on social policy, and turning inter-organisational boundaries into improved cooperation, when we are severely and honestly targeting at a substantial reduction of poverty, and an increasing independency from transfer incomes.

Sources

Pictures:

The image rights lay with the respondents of the RESCuE team who took the photographs; they have consented for them being used by the RESCuE teams specified below, under condition of keeping them anonymous and using them for non-commercial scientific purposes only. The original pictures are stored on protected servers of the RESCuE teams.

Pictures 1, 2: Photographies by anonymous respondents from a rural area in Eastern Germany. Documents collected by Boost, M. /Meier, L. & Promberger, M., German RESCuE team.

Picture 3: Photography by respondent from northern Finland, single mother, born 1981, living in a rural area. It is important for her to involve her children in to practical work. Documents collected by Tennberg, Vuojala-Magga and Vola, Finnish RESCuE team.

Picture 8: Photography by anonymous respondent from Central Spain. Documents collected by Arnal, M./de Castro, C./Calderon, D./Martin, P. /Revilla, J.C. & Serrano, A., Spanish RESCuE team.

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Quotes:

Blueberry gatherer family. Source see Picture 3.

Jawaharlal Nehru on Card Games: https://www.google.de/search?q=Nehru+card+game&safe=active&tbm=isch&imgil=t7CJXQl3MDgGoM%253A%253BVQBnmsEr2PUqRM%253Bhttps%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.pinterest.com%25252Fexplore%25252Fjawaharlal-nehru-quotes%25252F&source=iu&pf=m&fir=t7CJXQl3MDgGoM%253A%252CVQBnmsEr2PUqRM%252C_&usg=__323rXQLqypcj8SihSIYFjIbMAGQ%3D&biw=1920&bih=880&ved=0ahUKEwiqprqo7OfSAhXEJSwKHWsxBuIQyjcIOg&ei=yT3RWOCdKcTLsAHr4piQDg#imgrc=t7CJXQl3MDgGoM:&spf=192 , last checked March 21st 2017.

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