

The boundaries of building societal resilience: responsabilization and Swiss Civil defense in the Cold War

Florian Roth / Tim Prior

Abstract:

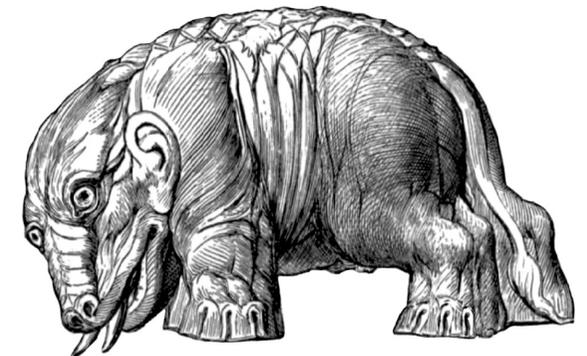
Resilience has become a dominant paradigm in a wide range of risk and security agendas. In this article we describe the modes in which resilience approaches in the domain of civil protection responsabilize social actors and citizens to 'do their part'. We also examine some of the problems such attempts to 'make the people resilient' might raise. Specifically, by using an historical case study of the Swiss civil defense system as example illustrating how a political agenda can be used to proliferate individual responsibility for societal safety and security through instruction, we argue that measures labeled as 'resilience-building' can easily fail to meet their stated goals. Policies aiming at building resilience in a top-down fashion risk becoming counterproductive, especially if public policy aims to persuade or 'nudge' individual perceptions and behavior, as people feel manipulated or scared. It appears imperative to address the political and ethical boundaries of resilience-building efforts in order to understand and improve the effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of current resilience policies.

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1. Introduction – The rise of resilience in civil protection

Civil protection emerged as a policy field during the Cold War as a means to decrease society's vulnerability against weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the event of a nuclear attack. After the cooling of the East-West confrontation in the late 1980s, civil protection organizations in many countries shifted their focus from military threats to natural and industrial hazards, and human-induced risks such as terrorism and cyber attacks. In this context many states have recently attempted to transform their old, mainly reactive civil protection structures into more future-oriented risk management systems (Power 2004; Bach et al. 2010). Generally, these newer systems attempt to combine proactive risk identification and analysis processes that cover various hazard types from natural and man-made hazards with a broad array of prevention, preparedness and response measures. However, these developments have significantly increased the complexity of civil protection, nurturing doubts about whether the traditional 'command and control' practices can still be relevant and effective in modern disaster risk and crisis situations. Older modes of technical risk management, on which the 'command and control' approach was based, are increasingly seen to have become obsolete in the face of an increasingly complex and unpredictable risk environment. Moreover, the capability of governments to guarantee the safety of citizens all the time is being diminished by factors like the increasing costs (social, financial, etc.) associated with protection measures, higher population densities and urban development in higher risk areas, and more complex critical infrastructure systems (Prior/Roth 2013).

In the context of these developments, resilience has become a popular concept, even though the definition and use of this concept in the civil protection community is far from being unequivocal. Resilience can be associated with the ability to withstand stress and bounce back, with the dynamic, cross-scale interactions of coupled human environment systems, and to the individual ability to cope successfully with traumatic experiences and avoid negative trajectories associated with risks, etc. (UNISDR 2005; embrace 2012). The different uses and definitions of resilience can be traced back to the analytical roots of the concept which originate from a variety of distinct intellectual traditions, ranging from engineering to ecology, psychology, geography, sociology, and systems theory (Paton 2006; Walker/Cooper 2011; Zebrowski 2013).

The ambiguity of resilience as a concept raises not just practical issues associated with deciding

whether or not to follow a resilience approach, but also theoretical questions regarding the application of the chosen conception of resilience. In general, adopting a resilience perspective has several important implications for the way in which societies aim to cope with the risks of natural, technical and human-induced disasters. At the same time, not all of these implications are equally controversial from a political standpoint. For example, while it appears rather easy to agree that high levels of flexibility in civil protection systems are desirable or that public preparedness is something positive, one of the most contested points in the contemporary resilience debate relates to the question of who should be responsible for building and guaranteeing resilience in the face of disaster risk. In particular, studies examining resilience from a systems perspective draw heavily on the principle of self-organization, which is seen to play a central role as a fundamental precondition for the adaptation of complex systems under stress. As a consequence, these studies tend to advocate a distributed approach to civil protection as well. Under this approach responsibility for management and protection, once the realm of governments, is increasingly devolved to citizens, or at the very least, is shared between state and citizen (Bulley 2013; Kaufmann 2013; Rogers 2013).

In the wake of the resilience hype, calls for stronger involvement of the public in civil protection have placed this imperative squarely at the heart of current disaster risk management policies at national and international levels. The UNISDR's 2005 Hyogo Framework is a good supra-national example. One of the Framework's expected outcomes concerns the "substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries". The UNISDR states that "the realization of this outcome will require the full commitment and involvement of all actors concerned, including governments, regional and international organizations, civil society including volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community" (UNISDR 2005, 3). The United States, Australia and the United Kingdom (among many) have outlined national disaster reduction strategies based on the concept of resilience, where involvement is sought, and relied on, from all segments of society. For example, an influential report by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences opens its preface with the statement that disaster resilience is "everyone's business and is a shared responsibility among citizens, the private sector, and government" and building resilience "starts with individuals taking responsibility for their actions and moves to entire communities working in conjunction with local, state, and federal officials, all of whom need to assume specific responsibilities for building the national quilt of resilience" (2012, vii).

The resilience paradigm has become the go-to model for a more distributed approach to civil protection, where emergence and self-organization of actors is seen (by authorities and states) as the foundation of more sustainable, diffuse, and resource efficient responses to disaster and risk. At the same time, however, these practices of public involvement and responsibility sharing can have far-reaching consequences for the relationship between the state and its citizens that have not been considered (much less addressed) concerning the resilience turn in civil protection (but see Stark/Taylor 2014). While in recent years, the literature examining the processes of ‘responsibilization’ has grown considerably, much of this work has focused on critically examining the political relationship between state and citizen, where resilience (and the responsibilization of the citizen) is viewed as a new and possibly dangerous form of governmentality (Joseph 2013; Zebrowski 2013). Often this literature has criticized resilience policies as elements of a neo-liberal political agenda (Hudson 2010; Evans/Reid 2013; Rogers 2013).

This paper acknowledges this critical debate about the drivers and agents of resilience thinking, but seeks to position a discussion concerning the political and ethical boundaries of resilience, citizen responsibility and responsibilization in the context of civil protection. Here we use an historical case study from Switzerland, drawing parallels between this case of ‘total defense’ and the modern application of resilience in order to explore how far the state can (or should) go when seeking to engage, or direct, the responsibility of the citizen in risk mitigation activities.

2. The organization of societal resilience: Public participation, engagement and responsibilization

The value of ‘participation’ (as the practical application of responsibility in civil protection) is of course dependent on the stated and actual goals of the process, and in turn, the form of participation being sought, encouraged, or initiated. In the context of civil protection there are many ways that people can take responsibility or become responsibilized through participation, and these typically mirror well-known and widely discussed typologies of participation (for example, see Arnstein 1969). Shelly Arnstein illustrated participation as a continuum (see **Figure 1**) represented by eight levels of participation that reflect the way power is distributed to, or withheld from, participants. At one end, participation is non-functional and meaningless (manipulative and therapeutic); at the

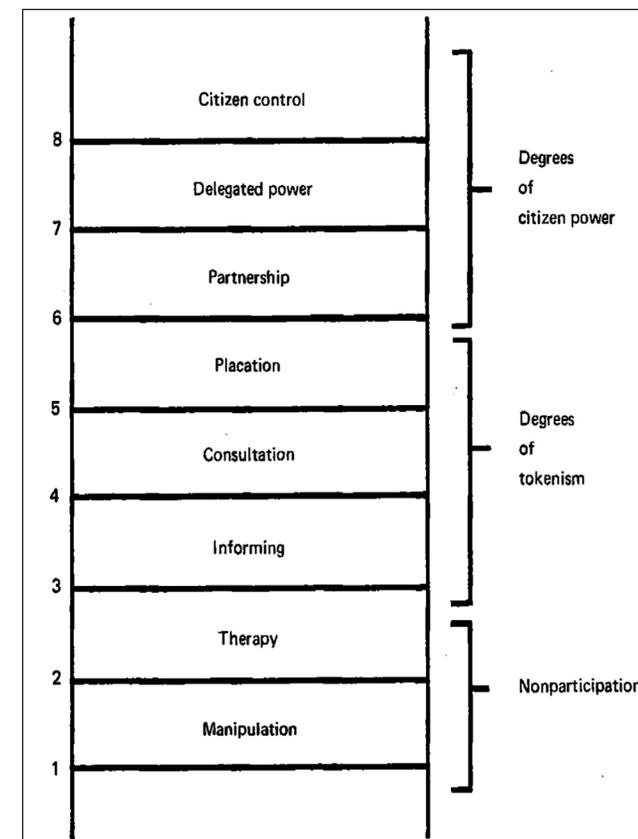


Figure 1. A ladder of citizen participation. Reproduced from Arnstein (1969, 217).

other it is transformative and substantial (citizen power). Importantly, Arnstein (1969, 216) points out “that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless.”

The relationship between participation, responsibility, and responsabilization in the context of civil protection revolves around the (re-)distribution of power. A transformative participatory process begins from a realization by the citizen(s) that they should, and can, do something for themselves – they become involved (participate) as a result of their own initiative, and so self-organize their activities and take responsibility for them and the outcome. This practice of responsibility taking can be contrasted to processes of responsabilization by considering who decides whether civil society’s participation in civil protection is indeed necessary or desired. If participation in civil protection is facilitated or demanded of citizens, then self-organized actions are unlikely, citizens are responsabilized, even manipulated into a belief their involvement is more than just a “substitute for genuine participation” (Arnstein 1969, 217). Importantly, responsabilization need not be framed as a negative practice if participatory processes adequately redistribute power in decision making, yielding mutual benefits to all participants.

In the context of civil protection, encouraging the public to mitigate risk, and seeking their direct involvement in such practices, has been popular long before the recent emergence of resilience approaches. Risk communication processes have long sought to influence peoples’ behaviors in the context of many different risks (health, technical, environmental, etc.), typically with the objective of encouraging behaviors that mitigate risk, and reduce the consequences of risk activity on people, communities and the broader society. But traditional risk communication practices are fundamentally passive in their delivery – they seek behavior change simply through the provision of information; assuming that people properly understand and interpret the information, and act on it appropriately (Leiss 1996; Renn 2008).

Yet, in recent years, the academic and policy discourses concerning participation in civil protection have turned more toward discussion about the importance of transformative and deliberative approaches that go far beyond the traditional goal of encouragement. The modern political call for shared responsibility in civil protection processes goes well beyond giving information and expecting action. These policies place the citizen squarely in the midst of civil protection processes, relying on them as fundamental elements in civil protection systems. For example, the Australasian

Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC 2010) points out in its *Position Paper on Bushfires and Community Safety* that because emergency management resources are often limited in times of wildfire threat, properties that are not actively defended by the owner, or prepared for defense when authorities arrive, may not be allocated firefighting resources and thereby considered as unavoidable losses:

“People should be allowed and encouraged to take responsibility for their own preparedness and safety in bushfires. Fire agencies should support and assist them to manage and prepare for bushfire, and encourage people to understand fire and to take actions necessary for their own safety.” (AFAC 2010, 6)

Also in many other countries, sharing responsibility in civil protection has become a fundamental political objective. For instance, in a speech on the issue of critical infrastructure protection, U.S. President Barack Obama made clear that societal resilience is not merely the responsibility of the state:

“Emerging and evolving threats require the engagement of our entire Nation – from all levels of government to the private sector and the American people. This month, as we recognize that safeguarding our critical infrastructure is an economic and security imperative let each of us do our part to build a more resilient Nation.” (The White House 2013)

Here, participation represents a practical action that states are using to increase public involvement in risk management, with multiple stated advantages including higher risk perception and awareness, involvement in decision making that affects people, heightened levels of hazard preparedness, and more resource efficient delivery of civil protection services. In consequence, participation processes are seen to permit members of civil society to take responsibility in the context of broader civil protection activities. That is, the application of responsibility is exercised practically through participation – by actively participating, the citizen either takes responsibility (and power, perhaps through a self-organised process), or becomes ‘responsibilized’ in a manipulative, or empty participation ritual.

While proponents of resilience as a problem-solving measure associated with civil protection can identify a range of practical and political benefits associated with devolving responsibility for safety

and security to the broader society, there are clearly cases where the devolution of responsibility can or will not work. There may be a range of reasons why this might be the case. Boundaries that limit citizens' willingness or ability to assume responsibility might include poor community organization, lack of leadership, fear of taking responsibility or of the consequences of seeking more power, or simply an inability to recognize a problem to address. Boundaries to responsibility redistribution may also be practical: do citizens have the capacity or capability to assume responsibility in civil protection? Are the hazards they are likely to face of a nature (too intense, frequent, unpredictable, etc.) that precludes non-specialist responses and actions? At the same time, however, devolution of responsibility in civil protection is often also inhibited by authorities themselves when they initiate contrived process-oriented, rather than outcome-oriented participation or local involvement processes. Since the latter processes imply a high level of responsibility being placed on the civil society participants, they involve significant consequences on the balance of responsibility between the state and the citizen. Stark and Taylor suggest that crisis management processes based on building community resilience are often less successful than anticipated exactly because the participation processes involved (which result in a process of responsabilization), are not transformative: authorities might seek to devolve power, but they "do not relinquish it" (2014, 1). It is therefore important to acknowledge that a balance between the state's relinquishment of responsibility, and the citizen's acceptance of responsibility should be explored and established. If participation processes are "empty and frustrating" (Arnstein 1969, 216) then while powerholders might claim that all sides were considered, in reality only some of those sides benefit from the process. On the other hand, how much responsibility should a citizen be expected to, or want to take? Problematically, distinguishing between the boundaries of resilience and the limits of responsabilization is very difficult, yet a better elucidation of these will help to increase the utility and appropriateness of resilience in modern civil protection discourses. In order to explore these issues, we next present the case of Switzerland's *'Zivilverteidigung'* (civil defense) doctrine, an historical analogue to the modern resilience approach in civil protection that illustrates how public policies claiming to foster societal resilience can end up in a quagmire of responsabilization, manipulation and ideology.

3. When the state makes the people resilient – the case of ‘civil defense’ in Cold War Switzerland

While the term ‘resilience’ has entered the civil protection debate only rather recently, many of the key elements of resilience – preparedness, robustness, redundancy, and decentralization – have been present in the theory and practice of civil protection for many decades. An interesting historical example for a (largely failed) attempt to build societal resilience in a top-down fashion was the concept of civil defense, which Swiss authorities tried to establish in the early years of the Cold War. The case illustrates how the historical roots of resilience thinking in civil protection reach back much farther than the current popularity of the concept of resilience may suggest. Interestingly for the modern discussion about the appropriateness of resilience in civil protection, the Swiss case not only exemplifies how resilience thinking (even though not termed as such) can flourish in contexts of high vulnerability and uncertainty, it also casts a light on some of the problems associated with modern attempts to build societal resilience in a top-down manner.

3.1. Responsibilizing the citizen under the doctrine of ‘*Totale Landesverteidigung*’

As a small, land-locked and resource-scarce country in the direct neighborhood of several regional Great Powers, Switzerland has traditionally been well aware of the limits of its capabilities to defend against foreign aggression. Dating back several centuries, Swiss security policies were characterized by the principle of neutrality to maintain the confederation’s sovereignty and security (Freymond 1990). However, in the first half of the 20th century, in the wake of rising aggressive nationalism and fascism in Europe and two World Wars in direct proximity, neutrality alone was decreasingly trusted as a mechanism that could prevent foreign occupation (Brunner 1966, 29ff). After the Second World War it was particularly the emerging nuclear arms race and several international crises (amongst others the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the Berlin Crisis in 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962) that led to a perception of nuclear vulnerability in Switzerland.

In light of these developments, Swiss policy makers introduced the doctrine of ‘*Totale Landesverteidigung*’ (total national defense), while building on the necessity to reinforce anti-Communist

consensus (Eidg. Bundesrat 1966). The doctrine's political popularity rested on the belief that even though Swiss defense capabilities could not match those of an aggressor, a well-organized, comprehensive defense system could nonetheless inflict significant costs on aggressors attempting to gain control over the country, thereby dissuading an attack (Eidg. Bundesrat 1973, 15).

The total defense system built upon several pillars that together encompassed essentially all realms of public and private life. The first pillar was a strong military defense based on conscription and a militia system that ensured not only high force levels, but also a close interweaving of military and civil functions (Anasohn 1967). Further, under the concepts of '*Landesversorgung*' (national supply of essential goods and raw materials) and the '*koordinierte Dienste*' (coordinated public services) the total defense system aimed to integrate additional social functions, such as industrial production, food supply and communication, medical services, and transport into overall defense planning. Finally, it emphasized '*Zivilschutz*' (civil protection) as a key element in maintaining resistance against foreign attacks, especially in war scenarios involving the use of weapons of mass destruction on Swiss territory (Eidg. Bundesrat 1966). Under this last pillar, Switzerland established one of the most far-reaching (and most expensive) civil protection systems in the world at the beginning in the 1950's. A popular vote in 1959 resulted in a decision by the Swiss people to enshrine civil protection within Switzerland's constitution (Widmer 2013). The most visible element of this system was the 300,000 bunkers that were constructed during the Cold War period to provide shelter to all citizens in the event of armed conflict or a nuclear accident (Eidg. Bundesrat 1971). Like the overall total defense system, the Swiss civil protection system was strongly decentralized, with the Cantons and the communities exercising primary responsibility. In this way, the civil protection system reflected the aversion of political conservatives to a strong central state (Imhof 1996, 207).

In general, the total defense doctrine built on broad political support encompassing conservatives, liberals and social-democrats, as well as most elements of the mass media (Imhof 1996). Controversial however, were those attempts by conservative circles to shift responsibilities to the level of the individual, drawing on the concept of '*geistige Landesverteidigung*' (spiritual defense). The idea of spiritual defense had emerged in Switzerland after the First World War as an effort to prepare society for the realities of 'total warfare'. Under the influence of the Russian revolution, and spurred by growing fascism in Italy and Germany during the 1920's and 1930's, spiritual defense turned increasingly into an anti-totalitarian ideology, prompted by conservative as well as liberal

politicians, intellectuals and journalists. In a sense, spiritual defense represented the basic political consensus in Switzerland in the inter-war period (Unabhängige Expertenkommission Schweiz – Zweiter Weltkrieg 2002, 75ff.). At the same time, the concept remained ambiguous, encompassing national-romantic notions of Switzerland as a peasant mountain society, and progressive ideals of Switzerland as a liberal and open multi-ethnic society.

In 1938, on the eve of the Second World War, spiritual defense morphed into official state policy through a declaration by the Federal Council (Eidg. Bundesrat 1938). The declaration was drafted by the Catholic-conservative Councilor for Interior Affairs, Philipp Etter, who clearly followed the national-conservative interpretation of spiritual defense (Jorio 1998). Accordingly, the declaration largely disregarded any liberal thoughts and instead argued that the sovereignty and survival of the Swiss nation could not be defended with the instruments of politics and military alone. Following this perspective, it was considered imperative to establish a strong mental or spiritual preparedness on the individual level, especially against the threat of ideological subversion by foreign agents. In these efforts, the state and the citizens formed an organic unit, in which one served the other:

“Der Staat wird getragen von der Gemeinschaft des Willens und des Geistes, von einer einigenden, alles Trennende und Differenzierende überschattenden Idee, die in der Staatsform ihren wesensgleichen, organischen Ausdruck und ihre natürliche Erfüllung findet.”(Eidg. Bundesrat 1938, 997)

In order to “firm and kindle the belief in the preserving and creativeness of the Swiss spirit” the authorities would proliferate Swiss values and traditions with the means of ‘*öffentliche Kulturpflege*’ (public cultivation of culture): effectively education and information measures (Eidg. Bundesrat 1938, 991ff.). In this sense, after the Second World War, the concept found its way into several influential policy documents, now mostly with a clear anti-Communist undertone. For instance, the concept was used in the ‘*Soldatenbuch*’ (soldier’s book), a field manual for soldiers that was distributed to Swiss soldiers from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s as well as in a manual for civil defense with the title ‘*Zivilverteidigung*’, published in 1969, which was distributed to the population at large, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following (Eidg. Militärdepartement 1958; Eidg. Justiz- und Polizeidepartement 1969). Moreover, different public organizations such as the section ‘*Heer und Haus*’ (army and home) of the Swiss army, the foundation “Pro Helvetia”, and private actors like the

association *'Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft'* dedicated themselves to educate the Swiss people about spiritual defense with seminars, publications and radio shows (Perring 1993). While these various efforts differed in their means, they shared the ideal of a subsidiary political system, built on the patriotism and sense of duty of the individual founded in Swiss culture. On the other hand, however, the people were also depicted as confused and easily tempted to forget about their duties of spiritual defense, requiring a reminder from time to time. In this sense Karl Brunner highlighted in 1966 the importance of educating the Swiss people about the necessity of spiritual defense:

“Seien wir uns klar, daß in uns selbst eine Gefahr lauert. In dem hektischen Geschehen des Tages und dem Wohlleben einer Hochkonjunktur droht der Sinn für das, was wesentlich und unwesentlich ist in des Menschen Leben, vernebelt zu werden. [...] Mancherorts - nicht zuletzt in gewissen Kreisen von Intellektuellen - ist ein solches Nachlassen der inneren Abwehrbereitschaft festzustellen.” (Brunner 1966, 50)

Until the late 1960s, the concept of spiritual defense remained a rarely contested element of Switzerland's defense doctrine. However, this changed with the publication of the controversial book *'Zivilverteidigung'* (civil defense), by the Federal Ministry of Justice in 1969 (Eidg. Justiz- und Polizeidepartement 1969). The book relied heavily on the concept of spiritual defense as a manipulative tool, which ultimately led to it becoming discredited by many critics of the book. The book highlighted various modes by which state actors attempt to share responsibility for safety and security with the broader society. Equivalent to the Federal Council's declaration from 1938 discussed above, *'Zivilverteidigung'* underlined the assumption that the interests of the state and the citizens were completely congruent. Löffler has described the relationship between the people and the authorities implied in the *'Zivilverteidigung'* as an “organically grown, symbiotic community” (2004, 179, authors' translation). At the same time, it reflected the focus placed on subsidiarity by the book's spiritual fathers, and their strong aversion to anything that could be construed as “state socialism” (Imhof 1996, 207). However, the mixed reception of the manual illustrates how public policies can lose public legitimacy if perceived as ideological and manipulative, problems that are mirrored in the modern discourse surrounding resilience in civil protection.

3.2. A manual to build societal resilience: The publication of ‘Zivilverteidigung’ and the ideologization of responsibility

The concept and first draft of the book ‘Zivilverteidigung’ were conceived and written by Albert Bachmann, a nationalist Swiss intelligence officer who had already co-authored the ‘Soldatenbuch’. The idea to produce an official manual to foster the preparedness and coping capabilities of the Swiss civil population in the face of war and disaster emerged in conservative political circles in Switzerland in 1961 when the (first) Berlin Wall Crisis marked an unprecedented criticality in the Cold War, and fear of a third nuclear World War spread. In this light, the official goal of the book project was, as the preface by Minister of Justice Ludwig von Moos explained, to maintain and strengthen the ‘Widerstandskraft des Volkes’ (resilience of the Swiss people) and protect the country’s sovereignty. However, arguably at least equally important was the necessity to give the Swiss people a feeling of security and especially self-sufficiency in the nuclear age (see Figure 2).

Around the time of the book’s publication Bachmann was a key figure behind attempts by the Swiss Ministry of Defense to establish a secret underground organization designed to organize military resistance in case Switzerland was occupied by a foreign power. The secret army’s existence was only revealed in the later 1980s through a commission of inquiry, which itself was triggered by a series of political scandals (Parlamentarische Untersuchungskommission 1990). Bachmann convinced the then Minister of Justice, Ludwig von Moos, and his Secretary General, Armin Riesen, of the project’s importance. In the following years both von Moos and Riesen became the most important political proponents of the ‘Zivilverteidigung’ book (Bachmann 1961). After a long-term internal dispute, the Federal Council gave a green light for the publication of the book in 1967 and a year later decided that a copy of the book should be shipped for free to every Swiss household (Eidg. Bundesrat 1968), which occurred in 1969.

The book was composed of three parts. The first part described several techniques and processes that would allow the citizenry to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being and to increase their preparedness towards times of crisis and war. For example, it described stock-piling, emergency kits and first aid techniques, protective measures against radiation as well as biological and chemical agents, evacuation planning, and directions to effect self-organized rescue operations. The second part of the book set out different stages in which the Swiss state and society would react

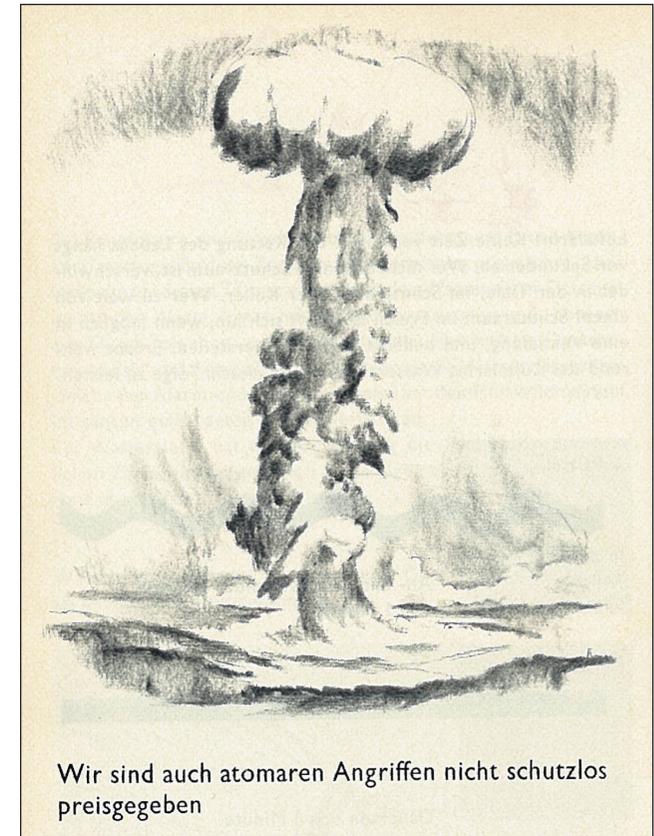


Figure 2. Coping with the risks of the nuclear age, excerpt from ‘Zivilverteidigung’, 72. The text below the image says: “Also in case of nuclear attacks, we are not vulnerable.”

to a foreign military aggression. This section developed a scenario of a political crisis that escalates into a foreign military intervention in Switzerland, combining real diary accounts from World War II with a fictional narrative of a foreign aggression against Switzerland. The central part of the book however was the third and final section, titled "*die zweite Form des Krieges*" (the second way of warfare), which addressed the threats of treacherous political parties, pacifism, espionage and other forms of 'subversive actions' against Switzerland. According to Bachmann, this third part was the most essential section of the book (Müller 1961). It was particularly this third part of the book that caused severe opposition within the government, e.g. by Federal councilor Hans Schaffner, who criticized the confusion of civil protection measures with ideological views (Eidg. Volkswirtschaftsdepartement 1967). In response, Bachmann's draft was revised by a commission in the Ministry of Justice and in the end, in spite of vocal reservations from several of its members, the Federal Council ultimately agreed in 1967 to publish the book with only slight modifications from the original version. In spite of these modifications, this section still clearly illustrates the intentions of the book's spiritual fathers, who held little interest in fostering participation in the sense of devolving responsibility to the citizenry. Quite to the contrary, they attempted to expand the reach of the total defense ideology down to the level of the individual, while silencing critics of the doctrine.

Here the book uses classic propagandistic techniques to responsabilize the reader: creating a strong, denouncing image of an enemy, based on established cultural stereotypes and symbols, conspiracy theories and the construction of an immediate threat (Bussemer 2005, 24ff.). To this end, the authors drew again on a filigreed scenario in which a foreign government creeps into Swiss society, using political agents to spread misinformation, commit acts of sabotage and ultimately gain political and military control (Eidg. Justiz- und Polizeidepartement 1969, 225ff). Disguised by a peace-loving, liberal agenda, the foreign government used 'subversive elements' that formed a conspiracy to undermine Switzerland's political system to establish a totalitarian regime. Since the conspiracy infiltrates all parts of society, repelling the subversion would require more than state institutions alone. Such subversive elements can be (among others) critical intellectuals, academics, union representatives, pacifists and church officials (228ff). In other words, a subversive element can be virtually anybody who opposes the official total defense doctrine or who points to the financial costs of Switzerland's defense budget (235). Under the scenario, the responsibility to stop the subversive elements also lies with every citizen, each of whom is expected to fulfil his or her role

and defend the nation with a strong patriotic attitude. Accordingly, to defend the nation, the good patriot stays alert and does not trust the subversive elements, but instead identifies and isolates these attempts to undermine the resilience of society (see Figure 3). Since the subversion tries to drive a wedge between the authorities and the citizens, it is imperative that the two stand “shoulder to shoulder” – in effect, that the public approves the government’s measures to overcome the crisis (256ff.). By trusting the authorities, the citizenry practices the above-mentioned concept of spiritual defense and fulfils its role within the state-citizen symbiosis of the total defense doctrine. It becomes clear that the kind of public involvement the authors aimed for was by no means transformative in a sense that it empowered the citizenry through participation. On the contrary, by using the propaganda-based tool-box of subversion and conspiracy, it aimed to fortify the centralized power structures under the guise of public participation.

After its publication, the book soon became the subject of an intense public debate. Many liberal politicians, journalists and intellectuals saw in it a blunt piece of anti-communist propaganda that in no way fitted into the generally relaxed climate of world politics during this phase. Moreover, they argued that the polarizing language of the book was at odds with the liberal traditions of Switzerland’s political culture (Löffler 2004, 183ff.). In particular, the section on spiritual defense was criticized as an attempt to marginalize and discredit critical voices (Imhof 1996, 205). For instance, the president of the Swiss writers’ club (SSV) was heavily criticized by many of his colleagues for his involvement in drafting a French version of *‘Zivilverteidigung’*. Ultimately, the controversy surrounding the book led to the break-up of the SSV and the foundation of the alternative *‘Gruppe Olten’* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch and several other progressive writers (Mühlethaler 1989). Notably, in the wake of this controversy, the concept of spiritual defense was increasingly criticized. While conservative circles defended the idea of spiritual defense as remaining valuable in the fight against the threat of Communism and its subversive agents, most social democrats and liberals abolished the concept, which they regarded as outdated and an unsuitable basis for life in a modern, liberal Swiss society. Some critics even accused the proponents of spiritual defense as holding nationalist, anti-liberal elements (Linsmayer 1983; Mooser 1997). Ultimately, the book also had a long-lasting counterproductive effect on the societal acceptance of the Swiss civil protection system in general, which many people saw as an outgrowth of political ideology, obsessed with security and characterized by fear mongering (Albrecht 1988).



Figure 3. Making the population resilient against subversive elements, excerpt from *‘Zivilverteidigung’*, 145. The text above the picture says: „Long before the onset of violent conflict, the enemy uses the times of peace to spread distrust and discord, to destroy our self-assurance and to undermine our inner resilience. He does it without being noticed, in a seemingly harmless manner, with repetitive perfidious stitches that kill us if we do not stay alert.“

4. Conclusions

Resilience is a popular concept, attractive in the context of civil protection because of the way the process of building resilience, through social-participatory means, has been conceived in that field and in others. Yet questions concerning what is meant by 'being resilient' in a social context and whether a society can actually be *made* resilient, should be considered as preliminary points of discussion in resilience policy development processes. As part of the discourse regarding these broader issues, it is also important to consider in what ways responsibility is given and taken: do members of society have the capacity or desire to take responsibility for their own (and others') safety; do authorities use appropriate mechanisms to devolve responsibility effectively, sensibly, and thoughtfully? By presenting the historical Swiss case of '*Zivilverteidigung*', this article has sought to not only advocate for a more considered and critical approach to the application of resilience in modern safety and security, but has also sought to highlight that there may exist practical, moral and ethical boundaries associated with devolving responsibility for safety and security from the state to the citizen.

The example of '*Zivilverteidigung*' as part of the '*Totale Landesverteidigung*', which aimed to build the '*Widerstandskraft des Volkes*', is tellingly analogous to the modern popularity and application of resilience in civil protection. Like the Swiss defense policy makers of the time, modern civil protection professionals share the perception that the resilience of the people is important for the safety and security of the people (for example, National Emergency Management Committee 2011, The National Academy of Sciences 2012, Greater London Authority 2014). Even more importantly, many contemporary advocates seem to adhere to the idea that resilience can be built with doctrines and guidelines. On the other side, processes of self-organization are still largely disregarded, ignoring some of the most valuable insights gained in resilience research, and from the field of citizen participation, from which modern resilience advocates could draw many useful lessons and ideas.

Attempts to build societal resilience from the top down become even more problematic when they attempt to influence the behavior of the people by influencing social values and attitudes. Certainly, communication policies as expressed for example in the '*Zivilverteidigung*' appear unthinkable today; not least because modern state authorities are (typically) keen to avoid the impression of manipulation or panic-induction (Freedman 2006). Especially in the domain of civil protection, authorities

generally prefer communication approaches in the language of science: rather sober, trust-oriented and non-ideological. However, despite the desire to rule out blunt manipulation tools to influence public perceptions and behavior in contemporary democratic societies, recent years have witnessed an astonishing interest in communication techniques building on findings of behavioral economics and psychology, commonly referred to as ‘nudging’ (Thaler/Sunstein 2008). Briefly, nudging aims to influence human decision-making processes with the use of heuristics and other subtle communication techniques (perceived to be) in the people’s best interest. In this sense, different Western governments have already begun to establish their own ‘nudge units’ to subliminally influence the choices of everyday people, for example in regards to their health behavior (Wintour 2010). In reality, the line between manipulation and nudging is often hard to draw, since both approaches work primarily on the subliminal level of decision-making and therefore often subvert public scrutiny (Wilkinson 2013). In this sense, the significant post-WWII societal and political opposition against the concepts of civil and spiritual defense in Switzerland may serve as an historical warning not to push societal resilience-building too far.

As a relatively new doctrine in civil protection and disaster risk management (20 years), resilience has gained traction for its perceived ability to solve a problem in these contexts. Not only do governments encourage peoples’ involvement in risk management, people increasingly *want* to be involved in decisions about risks that might affect them. Advocating the key elements of resilience – preparedness, robustness, redundancy, and decentralization – therefore makes sense from the perspective of the practically minded technical risk management expert (a reasonably accurate stereotype within the field of civil protection, one poorly represented by the sociologically inclined). This Swiss case study illustrates that there are differences between encouraging people to take responsibility, and forcing responsabilization. Some modern authors critical of the rise of resilience suggest that resilience, as an authoritarian and neoliberal doctrine (e.g. Evans/Reid 2013), aims solely to disempower, but the zealotry of such claims is as misplaced as the resilience advocator’s claim that resilience will be the future’s disaster management panacea.

Do disaster management organizations (particularly non-government organizations involved in humanitarian- and development-related disaster risk reduction actions) covertly want to subjectify people? Probably not. Realistically, they are tasked with maintaining population safety and security – they are problem solvers that believe responsibility sharing and participation in disaster risk

reduction activities can yield benefits for people living in risky situations (the powerless?), and for organizations whose disaster response, mitigation, and recovery resources and capacities might be limited (the powerful?). Evans and Reid's (2013, 83) statement that "resilience demands our disavowal of any belief in the possibility to secure ourselves and accept that life is a permanent process of continual adaptation to dangers said to be outside our control" is only half right. Yes, many dangers are uncontrollable, but the consequences *can* be controlled (Paton/Johnston 2006), and it is real measures like hazard preparedness, planning, risk dialogue, etc. (which presumably contribute to resilience) that can help citizens to actually secure themselves against those hazards.

Ultimately, a critical examination of contemporary resilience policies is clearly needed given the danger of confusing civil protection measures with ideological views, as was evident in the context of Switzerland's historical national total defense doctrine. However, the 'baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater', so to speak. Rather, the application of resilience in practice should acknowledge and address these criticisms, relying on more in-depth contextual conceptualization of resilience that can then inform resilience-based approaches to maintaining or increasing societal safety and security. While there are inherently valuable aspects of resilience thinking for civil protection, like the ability of a society or social element to respond positively and without significant disruption to some disturbance, questions about forcing resilience, who delivers resilience-building processes, how resilience should manifest (if it doesn't already exist?), and where/in whom it should manifest, are important questions that must be dealt with before the concept and its process can be reliably applied in the context of civil protection, and in the broader societal security agenda.

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