

A Guide for Measuring Resiliency

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INTRODUCTION (Slide 1)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCE

Problem Statement

Apply a more advanced human-centric model in assessing current levels of governmental and societal resilience to subversion and coercion, and internal and/or external aggression.



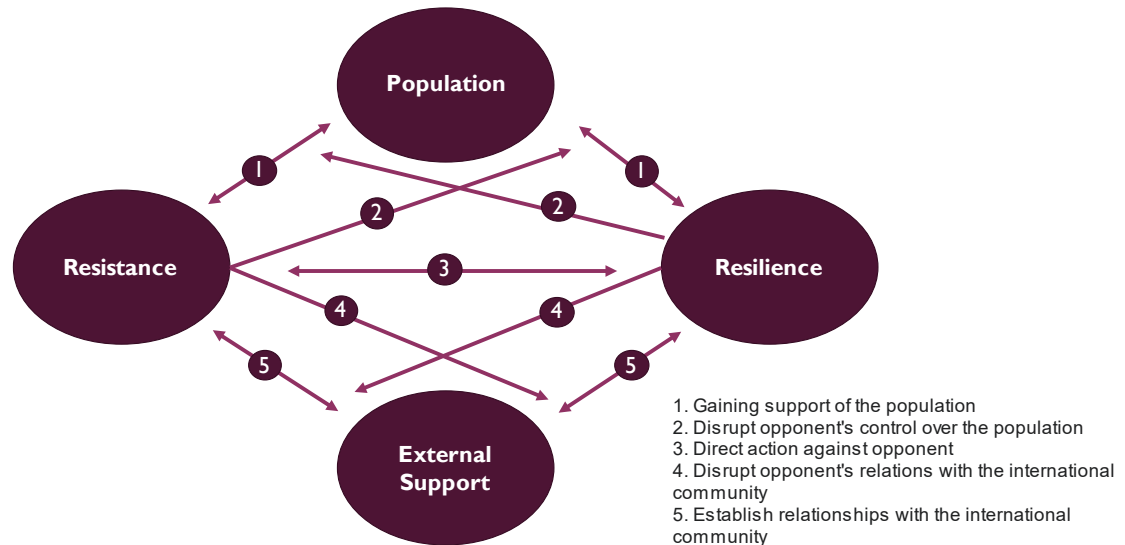
The question of state resiliency remains essential to the three biggest U.S. foreign policy questions of today. Why did Afghanistan fall so rapidly to the Taliban in 2021? Why, in contrast, has Ukraine stood firm against Russian aggression since 2014? And what will the Republic of China (Taiwan) do in the face of the Chinese Communist Party's coercion and, perhaps, military force tomorrow? In military doctrine, framing the operational environment remains an essential requirement, but the military planning process principally describes the

assessment of physical characteristics of air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace – aspects essential to planning a conventional campaign but inadequate for describing the social, economic, and political aspects of the humans living there. Quite frankly, the military’s current design process lacks sufficient anthropocentric considerations essential for measuring governmental resilience or resistance to the same – a critical criterion for operational and strategic campaign development and decision-making. In contrast, we, myself and my coauthor Mr. John Collison at U.S. Special Operations Command Headquarters (which many of you might know), suggest a more advanced human-centric model specifically for assessing resilience and resistance within nation states. In this particular paper, we have compiled a guide for simply measuring resiliency in terms of the will, potential, and sustainability from subversion, coercion and aggression.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (slide 2)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCY *Resiliency and Resistance Model*



A dynamic and polarizing relationship exists between governmental and/or societal resilience and to resistance movements potentially opposed to that very same authority. In fact, every human society contains forms of resistance to current governance or foreign occupation. Resistance can span a spectrum of activities from nonviolent and legal forms of protest to illegal or violent means. In contrast, each regime attempts to brace the resolve of the population against political, economic, or social change – and even revolution. To visualize this relationship of *Resilience and Resistance*, we leverage a reconceptualization of Gordon

McCormick's [model](#) originally built for explaining the Shining Path Insurgency and published in 1987.

In this model, there are four primary nodes: (a) the population, (b) the resilience node, (c) the resistance node, and (d) the external support node. The resistance and resilience nodes perform five basic actions in opposition to each other: (1) attempt to gain support from the population; (2) disrupt the other's efforts to garner support from the population; (3) perform violent and/or nonviolent actions directly against one another; (4) attempt to interrupt their opponent's attempts to garner international support; and (5) attempt to garner international support. Both the population and the external support nodes have agency and can initiate actions to influence the resilience and/or the resistance nodes as well. The power of the *Resilience and Resistance Model* is that it applies in nearly every intrastate conflict, no matter the scale or level of violence.

RESILIENCY MEASUREMENT (slide 3)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCY

Resiliency Measurement

ASSESSMENT:	DATA FIELDS	SOURCES
Resiliency Measurement: Describe the country and population in terms of physical aspects, state fragility, cultural resilience, and governance. Remember that the human terrain is the focus of study but that physical aspects may shape will and perceptions.	Physical	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/ population size, ethnic groups, languages, religions, government type, GDP per capita. All this context is important to consider but not necessarily a measurable statistic.
	State Fragility	https://fragilestatesindex.org/ ranking of the country's fragility in comparison to others.
	Cultural Resilience	https://www.swissre.com/dam/jcr:3f36e9d4fe0f401d8648-9a12770ffc0f/2022-june-sigma-resilience-index-en.pdf this index ranks 31 countries in order of their ability to absorb a range of “shocks”, including natural disasters and financial collapse. It measures nations against nine benchmarks.
	National Morale	https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/419/article/851424/pdf this article offers models to analyze a nation's will to fight. Table one offers methods to assess a military's will to fight, while Table 2 examines national will factors.
	Governance	https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/ ranking of the country's governance in comparison to others, using accountability, stability, effectiveness, regulations, rule of law, and corruption

This paper will demonstrate a method for measuring state resiliency. This methodology is partly inspired by David Hastings’ research over the past decade compiling an international [human security index](#). In short, Hasting used publicly available datasets to quantify the United Nations’s seven factors of human security in nation states. Similarly, a state or population’s resiliency can be measured regarding its propensity to resist subversion, coercion, and aggression from internal or external threats. Some key factors to consider when measuring resiliency include: (a) the physical aspects of the nation or region in question, (b) the fragility

of current governance, (c) cultural resilience to change, (d) the will of the population to fight, and (e) the perceived effectiveness of current governance.

General characteristics to consider include the size and makeup of the population in terms of ethnicity, linguistics, religion, type of governance, and socioeconomic classes. One place to get a general idea of this type of data is from the Central Intelligence Agency's [*World Factbook*](#). This database covers relevant metrics regarding geography, population makeup, natural environment, type of government, economy, energy, communications, transportation, and military capabilities.

Subsequently, when finding real data, another key criterion involves analyzing the fragility of current governmental systems. Obviously, by utilizing information from economic, academic, non-governmental organizations, and other government agencies sources, this portion of the data-driven product approach to measuring resilience remains much more of a whole-of-government product than the ones offered in military planning. The [*Fund for Peace*](#) has established one such a database which considers multiple metrics binned into four categories: (a) cohesion, (b) economic, (c) political, and (d) social. Finally, analyzing resiliency requires a comprehensive study of governance. Some of the factors include the regime's accountability to the people, stability of the regime, how effective the regime's activities and efforts are, the types of regulations in place and how they

are enforced, rule of law, and government corruption. Fortunately, the [World Bank](#) maintains such a database for nations and investors to consider but works equally well for resiliency metrics.

Two additional sources are worthy of consideration. One reference with insights into cultural resilience includes [Swiss Re Institute's](#) resilience index. This index ranks thirty-one nations in their ability to absorb a range of challenges, including natural disasters. It measures nations against nine benchmarks. While this index provides a good example of investigation, it contains only a fraction of states worthy of analysis. Another source from [Journal of Advanced Military Studies](#) provides a methodology to estimate national morale during violent conflict. This scholarship provides methods for evaluating both the state's and the military's confidence and ability to maintain combat operations. Another study from [RAND](#) defines national will to fight as “the determination of a national government to conduct sustained military and other operations for some objective even when the expectation of success decreases or the need for significant political, economic, and military sacrifices increases.” So, both military morale and national will to fight prove useful metrics for analysis. Table 1 on this slide illustrates all these previously described methodologies for measuring resilience.

CASE STUDY (slide 5)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCY

Case Study of Venezuela



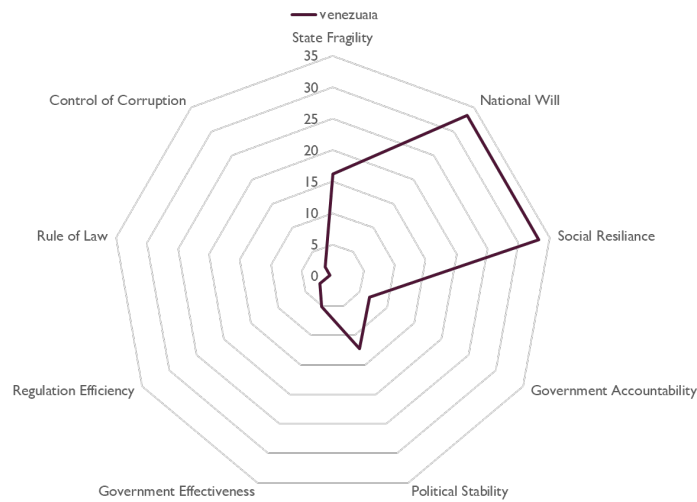
In developing a practical application, we analyzed Chad, Mongolia, Taiwan, Moldova, and Venezuela to test the methodology. Presented here is Venezuela as the case study for measuring resiliency in as simple as a one paragraph overview. In this concise assessment, we also present percentages based on internationally recognized and publicly available statistics. At its heart, Venezuela's significance as a case study lies in measuring the resiliency of the Nicolas Maduro regime, particularly following the external support it has received over the past decade from adversarial states like Cuba, Russia, China, and Iran.

General Context

Venezuela was one of three countries which emerged after the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830, the other including Colombia and Ecuador. After the discovery of oil in 1914, the state has been ruled by caudillos (strong men). Initially, these

presidents had strong ties with the United States. However, after Hugo Chavez took power in 2002, the dictator attempted to enforce a form of popular socialism and state managed economy similar to that employed by Fidel Castro. Venezuela shares borders with Colombia, Brazil, and Guyana. However, its porous border also contains nonstate groups, such as the FARC and ELN. In terms of size, the country is considered large, with an area twice that of the state of California. There are 28 million citizens, about half that of Columbia, but an estimated 7 million people have left Venezuela since 2015, created a large diaspora in neighboring states, as well as the United States. The Venezuelan population resembles that of many Latin American countries with a Spanish, mestizo, and indigenous fabric, but also immigrants from Italy, Portugal, Germany, and the Middle East. In terms of language and religion, its fairly unified with Spanish universal and Catholicism at 96%.

CASE STUDY RESILIENCE MEASUREMENT (slide 6)



State Fragility	National Will	Social Resilience	Government Accountability	Political Stability	Government Effectiveness	Regulation Efficiency	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption
16.2%	33.3%	33.3%	6.8%	12.3%	5.2%	2.4%	.5%	1.9%

Data-Driven Analysis

In terms of [state fragility](#), Venezuela ranks 29th out of 179 countries (or 16.2% in comparison with others).¹ The [national will to fight](#) is evaluated as low (or 33.3%), due to corruption, government incompetence, and lack of public trust. We also evaluate [social resilience](#) also as low (33.3%), with diffused political ideologies, substantial social class competition, and ethnic disparities. According to the [World Bank](#), and in comparison with other nations, Venezuela ranks in 6.8% in government accountability, 12.3% in political stability, 5.2% in government effectiveness, 2.4% in regulation efficiency, .5% in rule of law, and 1.9% in control of corruption. Tallying all these factors equally, the overall resiliency to

coercion, subversion, or revolution for Venezuela remains one of the lowest in comparison with other nations at 12.4%.

PROVIDING A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (slide 7)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCY

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PHASE	STEPS
One	1. Measuring the state’s resiliency. (the only step discussed here)
	2. Identifying the potential for a statesponsored resistance strategy.
	3. Measuring the potential for external support to resiliency.
	4. Measuring the potential for resistance to current authority.
	5. Measuring the potential for external support to resistance.
Two	6. Identifying the prevalent resistance groups within the state and placing them on the Resistance Continuum.
Three	7. Assessing one or more resistance groups in terms of leadership,
	8. cause,
	9. environment,
	10. organization,
	11. and actions.
Four	12. Making a recommendation concerning potential external support to resiliency or resistance, which normally proposes one of three options: (a) support resiliency, (b) support resistance, or (c) do nothing.

Phase One. If simply providing a percentage-based estimate of state resiliency seems a bit dissatisfying, that might be because measuring state resiliency is only step one in a 12-step process designed to analyze a state in terms of both resiliency and resistance. Phase One, or steps one through five, provides a comprehensive and data-driven analysis to measure state resiliency and resistance, as well as the potential success or failure of external support to either. It leverages publicly

available data produced by U.S. government agencies, global organizations, and academia.

Phase Two. In Phase Two, our methodology leverages globally produced research from non-governmental organizations and international universities to identify prevalent or influential resistance organizations within the state and then categorize these organizations along the resistance continuum to classify their general nature as either nonviolent legal, nonviolent illegal, rebellion, insurgency, or belligerency.

Phase Three. In Phase Three, the methodology assesses one or more of those resistance movements identified by taking a deeper look at its leadership, motivation, operating environment, organization, and activities – methods identified by John Hopkins University – Applied Physics Laboratory and U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Phase Four. Finally, in Phase 4, we subjectively assess the information gathered to make recommendations concerning potential external support in another state's intrastate conflict consisting of three primary options: to (a) support resilience, (b) support resistance, or (c) do nothing. At a minimum, the comprehensive analysis consists of all twelve steps.

CONCLUSION (slide 8)



A GUIDE TO MEASURING STATE RESILIENCY Questions



Robert S. Burrell and John Collision. “A Guide to Measuring Resiliency and Resistance” in *Resiliency and Resistance: Interdisciplinary Lessons in Irregular Warfare, Competition, and Deterrence*. Joint Special Operations University Press, 2024.

Conclusion. Two major publications in 2024 will showcase these research methods. The first is an essay titled “A Guide for Measuring Resiliency and Resistance” in *Small Wars and Insurgencies Journal*, to be released early in 2024. The journal essay outlines Phase One, or the first five steps of the process. The second publication comprises a book titled *Support to Resilience and Resistance: Interdisciplinary Lessons in Irregular Warfare, Competition and Deterrence* published by Joint Special Operations University Press in mid-2024. The book will illustrate all 12 steps of the process. It also showcases the use of these prescribed methodologies applied to a case study focusing on China and Taiwan, which we surmise as extremely insightful. In summation, utilizing the 12-step analysis process presented, a planner, statemen, or practitioner could frame a country or

region in terms of resilience and resistance with data-centric tools – focused on the human-centric terrain and not military platforms. In today’s environment of irregular warfare, competition, and deterrence, analyzing resilience and resistance potential within states remains a crucial step in framing the operational environment as the initial stage of assessment in order to better inform policy decisions and subsequent military strategies.

Notes