

Edited Volume on Regional Resilience in the Global South

Closed call for Chapters

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We are pleased to invite chapter abstracts for an edited volume expected to be published in 2027. In this volume, we seek to tackle the issue of regional resilience, which is once again a topical analytical lexicon in regional and local economic studies amid escalating global and local crises (Martin & Sunley, 2015). The volume builds on our work in rural African regions, where we have documented how these regions are increasingly confronted by intersecting crises, including the Ukraine-Russia War, global pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical dynamics, that affect their capacity to endure. We adopt an evolutionary understanding of resilience, in which regional economic resilience (RER) is defined as the ability of regional economies to resist, adapt to, or transform in the face of shocks, and subsequently recover to maintain or improve their pre-shock economic performance (Martin & Sunley, 2015; Sutton et al., 2023). This perspective foregrounds resilience as inherently future-oriented, linking short-term coping with longer-term adaptability and path creation (Neise et al., 2018; Pike et al., 2010). But we are acutely aware that, despite its increasing popularity, regional resilience is a deeply contested concept with no universally accepted definition, methodology, or theory of regional economic resilience. For scholars and policymakers in the African context, which continues to bear the brunt of major crises, it is perhaps urgent to develop a more context-relevant definition and understanding of what constitutes regional resilience. Many of the studies that have come out so far analyse regional settings in the Global North, which do not fit neatly and are not comparable with regional trajectories in sub-Saharan Africa.

Across Africa, regional resilience has become a central concern for policy and practice, reflected in a growing number of continental and international initiatives. Platforms led by the African Union, such as the Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Africa Climate Summit, alongside financing and policy forums like the African Development Bank's Africa Resilience Forum, increasingly frame resilience as a cornerstone of development planning. Recently, Trust Africa, a key pan-African institute, launched a book and hosted conferences in which they discussed how Africa is responding to multiple global crises and the role the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, governments, civil society, business, and philanthropy play in mitigating impacts and advancing Agenda 2063. While these initiatives signal an important shift towards recognising the multi-scalar and systemic nature of resilience, we argue that a truly southern or African perspective of resilience has yet to emerge. This perspective must, among other issues, reflect the uneven power relations, value chain dynamics, and historical structures that shape which resilience is prioritised.

A key entry point for understanding regional resilience in Africa lies in examining how regions are structurally positioned within global value chains (Martin & Sunley, 2015). This requires attention to commodity dependence, extractivism, and uneven value capture, as well as to the resilience of specific value chains and the ways shocks travel across them. Such dynamics are shaped by multi-scalar governance arrangements in which local, national, and international actors influence adaptive capacity. At the same time, resilience is deeply conditioned by agency, power, and inequality, raising critical questions about who can adapt or transform and who remains vulnerable, particularly within informal economies and along gendered and generational lines (Cretney, 2014). These processes are further embedded in historical and postcolonial structures, including colonial legacies, path dependence, and externally imposed institutional arrangements, while emerging decolonial perspectives foreground Indigenous knowledge systems and alternative economic logics (Mlilo, Bollig, & Diez, 2024). Looking ahead, a focus on future-making and transformation pathways shifts the emphasis beyond recovery towards diversification, path creation, and just transitions, including green transformations, digitalisation, and inter-path

dynamics across sectors. Taken together, this positions regional resilience not as a neutral outcome, but as a contested, power-laden, and future-oriented process.

This edited volume, therefore, calls for contributions that critically engage with the above agendas and themes by answering one or more of the questions below:

1. How can regional resilience be reconceptualised from Global South perspectives, beyond Eurocentric frameworks
2. How can we understand and develop typologies for the various crises affecting rural regions in Africa?
3. In what ways do power asymmetries within value chains influence which actors can adapt, upgrade, or transform under crisis conditions?
4. How do different value chains and development pathways within a region interact, compete, or complement one another?
5. Who benefits from resilience-building strategies, and who is excluded or rendered more vulnerable?
6. How do extractive economies and resource dependence shape patterns of regional resilience and vulnerability across Africa?
7. How do social networks, remittances, and community-based systems function as resilience infrastructure in contexts of weak formal institutions?
8. How do regional integration processes (e.g. the African Continental Free Trade Area) reshape value chains and strengthen regional resilience across the continent?
9. What role do African states play in shaping regional resilience, particularly in contexts of limited fiscal capacity and external dependence?

We are open to abstracts that pose questions not covered above, but that relate to regional resilience on the African continent.

Submission instructions

Abstracts of approximately 350 words should be sent to Professor Javier Revilla Diez at j.revilladiez@uni-koeln.de by 1 October 2026. Each abstract should identify the topic, research questions and methodology. We will provide feedback on accepted abstracts by 20 October 2026. The submission deadline for the first full draft chapters is 30 March 2027. All chapters will undergo rigorous internal review. We plan to host an initial hybrid workshop in March 2026 on Regional Resilience in Southern Africa in Kasane, Botswana, where the first draft chapters will be presented, and authors will receive feedback. We plan to submit the full draft book manuscript for review to James Curry Publishing House by autumn 2027 with a possible publication in 2028.

References

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