Developing Resilience Understanding as a Tool for Regional and Tourism Development in Bavaria

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1   Introduction

The spatial perception of risks and crises fluctuates between global challenges and the attitude towards local and regional strategies for action (Troeger-Weiß 2018). Reference systems are different and sometimes contradictory: While pandemics such as the coronavirus and its worldwide spread in 2020 lead to resolute response measures by politicians and decision-makers, climate change measures, for example, are criticised from many sides for the hesitant behaviour of responsible actors (Elkerbout et al. 2020). Local and regional governance structures have limited decision-making powers within the political systems of their communities (Kuhlmann and Bouckaert 2016). At the same time, bottom-up approaches are required when it comes to finding joint solutions to social issues (Sabel and Victor 2017). In times of dynamic processes of transformation and change, the resilience approach finds its way into questions of spatial science and political theory (Christopherson et al. 2010; Boschma 2015). These mostly analytical approaches sketch ex-post an understanding of the course of crises and try to develop strategies for the future to learn from the lessons of the past. It becomes clear that psychological and sociological concepts of motivation, self efficacy, and willingness to change can deliver an explanatory framework and make a difference in the question of whether challenges are actively managed or passively neglected (Cinderby et al. 2016; Paton 2008; Wink 2014).

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Conferences and events that explicitly address the resilience approach have developed in different local and regional contexts in recent years, also and especially where it is not a question of coping with crisis events in the short term, but rather of maintaining long-term resilience for the future (Hartz-Karp and Meister 2011). The aim of this article is to examine methods and formats that are used in the course of dealing with the resilience approach. The focus is put on particular studies and related experiences in the study area of Bavaria. Specifically addressed questions are:

- At which interfaces can an effective start be made in actively building resilience in a region?
- What prerequisites and factors does a region need in order to actively promote the transformation of the transport economy towards more resilience?
- What is the role of destination managers in Bavarian tourism destinations regarding resilience development?
- How should destination resilience be organised on a regional level?

The presented findings (Chapter 5) are part of ongoing studies. They are interim results and, at this point, serve as an explorative discussion of introducing the resilience approach on a regional level (Chapter 6).

2 Resilience in Regional Development and Tourism

2.1 Changes in Resilience Understanding

The resilience approach has found its way into various research disciplines. For a long time, engineering, psychological, and socio-ecological approaches were the home of the concept (Dawley et al. 2010; Pendall et al. 2010). Since the beginning of the 2000s, organisational and spatial science disciplines have considerably expanded the scientific discourse. The latter are responsible for placing social systems at the centre of a stakeholder-oriented consideration of the resilience approach (Adger 2000; Frommer 2013; Walker and Salt 2012). In addition to the description of resilient systems, this development has increased the importance of a participatory discussion of resilient societies (Al-Khudhairy et al. 2012; Ryan 2012), whereby these address not so much a status quo but a process that has to be implemented in the long run (Hassink 2010; Hughes et al. 2005; Newman and Dale 2005). This process depends on the systemic framework conditions

and the participation of relevant actors. It can usually only be described in context and be understood as a collaborative development of competencies between science, politics, business, and civil society (Walker et al. 2002). Furthermore, joint knowledge acquisition and awareness raising from a cooperative spectrum of actors is necessary, because abstract challenges are also addressed in addition to concrete threat scenarios (Tschakert and Dietrich 2010). With regard to specific crisis events, a transfer of knowledge between places and regions can take place by means of disaster control plans, best practice cases, and crisis management tools (Cutter 2016; Cimellaro et al. 2010). Rather incremental threats and change processes require a comprehensive set of methods that have hardly been researched (Robinson and Carson 2016) and which have rarely allowed quantitative measurements to date (Hoffman and Hancock 2017).

2.2 Resilience in Regional Development

Regional resilience has become a "buzzword" in regional and economic studies in recent years (Martin and Sunley 2015). Cities and regions are facing social, ecological and technological transformation processes that require adaptation. The resilience approach thus provides regions and regional development with a new perspective on change processes and challenges (Gruber 2011). In recent years, the resilience approach has developed into a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach within the framework of a multi-level system, which increasingly deals with regional units in a manifold interaction process at an individual, organisational, and overall spatial level (Wink 2016). Resilient regions are characterised above all by their ability to adapt to trends and circumstances that cannot be influenced (Lukesch et al. 2010). With regard to adaptive systems, the terms "adaption" and "adaptability" are frequently discussed issues in regional resilience studies (Pike et al. 2010). While adaption concerns changes within existing structures, adaptability is more about the long-term ability to overcome a negative lock-in. Nevertheless there is a dynamic tension between the two (Boschma 2015). A closer look at regional resilience in the literature shows that adaptation processes often occur in the course of crises related to climate change (Plöger and Lang 2016). Further analyses are particularly concerned with the issue of why certain regions recover more quickly from crises and various stressors than others, which are unable to achieve their original growth rates even after a longer period of time (Jakubowski et al. 2013; Bürkner 2010). According to this approach, resilience describes "the ability of societies/ecosystems to respond to disturbances

or shocks and to maintain essential system functions" (Gerstengarbe and Welzer 2013, p. 49, translated).

Shocks may appear as sudden and discrete incidents, or they may develop more slowly and be unforeseeable (Boschma 2015). In times of permanent change and with the presence of different stressors, one characteristic is of particular importance to regions: the ability to cope with changes. This means for regions to be able to transform in a way that important structures and functions are further developed in new context conditions (Weig 2016). Here, the core question is how regions can position themselves in a crisis-resistent and future-oriented manner. Foster defines "regional resilience as the ability of a region to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disturbance " (2007, p. 14). Thus, regional resilience means to deal with future issues in an early and timely stage, to become aware of different options for action and development paths and to keep a clear view on important future-related questions. Among other things, this also implements reflexive behaviour and precautionary measures (Jakubowski et al. 2013). Early detection and being prepared for change therefore have a significant impact (Lukesch 2016). To be a resilient region does not only mean to be economically successful or to just examine values such as economic growth, standard of living, or employment rates. It is also about the question which factors are helpful to adjust and adapt over time (Christopherson et al. 2010). Economic, social and ecological subsystems need to be taken into account in an appropriate manner (Foster 2007). It is also noticeable that applied research on regional resilience tends to relate to rural areas and especially to structurally weak regions. Moreover, the focus lies on regions that were historically dominated by industry. The emphasis has been placed particularly on the question of how cities and regions have dealt with far-reaching economic changes, and how these have been able to overcome the transformation of economic structures. Particular challenges were high unemployment, the loss of previous traditional industries and, consequently, a long-lasting reorientation process towards alternative economic sectors in the service industry (Wink et al. 2016). However, less research is devoted to regions that are economically very strong, but nevertheless have to worry about their future (Kujath 2010).

2.3   Resilience in Tourism

Tourism-related resilience literature has gained importance in the shadow of the regional resilience discussion. Pioneering contributions by Farrell and Twinning-Ward (2004), Cochrane (2010), or Becken (2013) describe tourism as a good

example of complex adaptive systems. The tourism-related resilience discussion has its predecessors: a systemic understanding of destinations with different development phases has been prominently discussed in the 'Destination Area Lifecycle' by Richard Butler (1980). The necessity of transforming supply and demand structures in the face of ecological and social challenges of intensive tourism development at the regional level provides additional fuel for the introduction of the resilience approach to tourism research (Cheer et al. 2019). In the course of an emerging evolutionary understanding of resilience, however, it is less the resilience of a tourism system than of a regional system with special consideration of tourism which has been scientifically investigated (Bellini et al. 2017).

Especially in structurally weak rural areas, tourism seems to be a relatively easy-to-establish economic pillar that can contribute to the mitigation of regional disparities (Lv 2019; Stoffelen et al. 2017). The development of tourist destinations is thereby also a matter of regional and location development for the economy (Pechlaner et al. 2009). In this context, destination management is to be understood as strategic regional management (Lew 2014). Due to the recent overtourism debate, destination resilience is pursued by organising management structures in a more decentralised way or by supporting primarily businesses with a high regional identity (Tervo-Kankare 2019). The local population as guarantors of tourism value creation (Cheer et al. 2019) has an active participatory role in strategic tourism development issues. Potential crises can be identified at an earlier stage by using the decentralised knowledge of the community (Mair et al. 2016). The competence-oriented participation in the definition of local and regional resilience strategies is part of a more or less formalised organisational process, which will be discussed in the next section.

3   Levels and Initiatives to Develop Resilience Understanding

Regional resilience is beginning to become an explicit topic of regional policy (Raith et al. 2017). Using comparative case studies, Wink et al. (2016) were able to show that policymakers at various levels of governance have implemented a wide range of measures to increase regional economic resilience even without the use of the term resilience. In this contribution, we examine the explicit use of the resilience approach in the form of practical initiatives. Resilience initiatives can be started and promoted by central governmental agencies, whereas local ownership and bottom-up processes are crucial for long-term success (Juncos 2016; Sharifi

2016). National resilience strategies are one possibility to provide an administrative framework for the specific development of resilience initiatives. To date, national resilience strategies have been developed particularly in countries whose national identity is significantly shaped by the threat of natural disasters (e.g. New Zealand) (Brown et al. 2017; McGowan 2012). These strategies provide a framework that is clearly linked to disaster risk reduction. External effects and state policy guidelines have an impact on the resilience of a city or region, but above all they set a framework that must be completed by concrete local initiatives (Shaw and Maythorne 2013). Local initiatives can be organised in networks that go beyond federal and national administrative units, for example the 100 Resilient Cities network of the Rockefeller Foundation (Spaans and Waterhout 2017).

Meanwhile, communities as networks of everyday forms of interaction have become a main research subject to describe local and regional resources for resilience development (Norris et al. 2008; Paton 2008). In Germany, there are scattered initiatives that explicitly include the term "resilience" in their title. Regionale Resilienz Aachen e.V. was founded by scientists, citizens, and students. The association is an interdisciplinary discussion and participation platform for the resilient design of urban space and the region, with the aim of developing a transformation concept for the regional economy and society. Current projects focus in particular on perspectives for sustainable and resilient urban planning and development as well as on the role of city partnership networks for municipal sustainability (Resilienz Aachen 2020).

In various German cities, the initiative "Zukunftsstadt" (City of the Future) deals with impulses for sustainable urban and regional development. This project, which is funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), is designed to be highly participatory and aims to provide good examples of resilient cities and regions. A number of local sub-projects from this initiative bear the term "resilience" in their names.[1] These temporary projects are of an exemplary research nature and mostly relate to specific topics in the context of climate change adaptation (Zukunftsstadt 2020). All in all, the intention is to promote the proactive dimension of the resilience approach by means of funded projects and explicit mention of the resilience concept. This is intended to release it from the civil protection authorities and bring it into the minds of citizens. Apart from this, in Germany, disaster control issues are supported by a remarkable volunteer culture (Voss and Dittmer 2016). For example, without using the term "resilience",

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[1] e.g. BREsilient (Bremen): https://bresilient.de/; HeatResilientCity (Dresden): https://heatresilientcity.de/; RESI-extrem (Stuttgart): https://www.project.uni-stuttgart.de/resi-extrem/.

about 1.3 million people were involved in a volunteer fire brigade in 2016 (Feuerwehrverband 2020). In the light of the coronavirus crisis in 2020, the discussion of destination resilience, which had previously only been regarded scientifically in a European context, was translated into spontaneous practical initiatives and exchange formats.[2]

4 Bavaria and the Region of Ingolstadt

4.1 Geographical Context

Bavaria is the largest federal state in Germany with regard to its geographical extension and, in economic terms, it occupies a leading position within German and European regions (Glückler et al. 2008). For a long term, Bavaria was mainly known as an agricultural region. The effects of industrialisation and the trend towards tertiarisation were observed in Bavaria comparatively late (Deutinger 2001). Nevertheless, in recent decades, Bavaria has quickly developed into a successful industrial region known for its internationally networked and competitive companies (Glückler et al. 2008). The mechanical engineering and automotive industries are particular focal points of the Bavarian economy (Pfäfflin and Ruppert 2011).

At the same time, Bavaria has developed into a globally known tourist brand (Pillmayer and Scherle 2013). From 2010 to 2019, the annual tourism volume increased steadily; therefore, this industry was far away from a crisis. The strength of the Bavarian economy and its success in tourism go hand in hand, and business trips play an important role in the demand for tourism, which is particularly reflected in city tourism (Arlt 2016). At the same time, Bavarian tourism has built onto its natural resources and developed structures over decades in the small-scale private rental business. This product, which is exposed to global competition in many respects, still represents a significant pillar of Bavarian tourism, which is the reason why destination management has a special role to play in coordinating the fragmented components of offers on a regional scale (Pechlaner and Döpfer 2009).

The research on regional resilience in this study specifically refers to the Ingolstadt region. The Ingolstadt region is located in the heart of Bavaria and represents the interface between two metropolitan regions, Munich and Nuremberg. The region, which includes the districts of Eichstaett, Neuburg-Schrobenhausen, and

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[2] e.g. resilient destinations: https://www.resilientdestinations.com/;

Pfaffenhofen a.d. Ilm as well as the city of Ingolstadt, can regularly secure the top places in economic rankings, even if there has been a tendency for a light slow-down recently (Focus Money 2020). The Ingolstadt region is also predominantly a rural area. As a central municipality with an urban and rural environment in the agglomeration area, the city of Ingolstadt has a supra-regionally important supply function (Bachinger 2012). Results of expert interviews in the study show that the strengths of the region lie particularly in its outstanding location. The city and the respective districts are characterised by very good accessibility. Good transport connections are ensured by the central location near the autobahn, the short distance to Munich Airport, and the respective federal highways within the region (Regionaler Planungsverband 2020). Another special feature of this area is its location in Altmuehl Valley Nature Park. Therefore, tourism represents an important economic factor for the region. Not only the hospitality industry, but also the retail sector and service providers in the region benefit from it (Engels 2008).

4.2 Methodological Approaches and Formats to Discuss Resilience

While many resilience studies refer to quantitative comparisons in a retrospective view, the qualitative approach in the studies considered here takes into account the constructivist claim of regional resilience research (Wink et al. 2016, p. 13). Subjective attitudes as well as processes of perception and interaction provide at least one additional explanatory framework for regional and tourism resilience (Christmann et al. 2014; Luthe and Wyss 2014). In the following section, different methodological approaches and formats that have been used are discussed.

Expert Interviews
The main emphasis of the studies discussed in this chapter focuses on qualitative research. As a specific instrument of the qualitative approach, both represented studies in the framework of this contribution make use of guideline-based interviews with experts, which were conducted using principles of empirical social research. Guideline-based interviews are particularly suitable due to their relatively open design, so that the views of the interviewees are displayed more clearly than in standardised interviews (Flick 2017). This is of great importance, especially with regard to the topic of resilience, because the opinions of the various stakeholders are highly differentiated and allow the topic to be considered from

different perspectives. Within the scope of the research, it was important to involve actors from different fields.

Focus Group

While interviews deal with the individuals, their knowledge, and attitudes, a focus group discussion puts the characteristics of a dialogue and participation process into the foreground and particularly uses the group constellation (Schulz et al. 2012). The focus group is suitable for developing a common understanding of a relevant issue. The resilience approach, which has so far hardly been operationalised in questions of urban and regional development, can be regarded as a subject area in which such advantages come into play. In the resilience study on destination development in Bavaria, 12 destination managers were acquired as participants. The moderation provided expert input by presenting conceptual perspectives of the resilience term and used previously conducted interview material for illustration purposes. The following goals were achieved:

- Bavarian destination managers received general information on the theoretical background and practical applications of the resilience approach.
- Mutual reactions were immediately available to the entire participant field of destination managers. Divergent opinions could be discussed.
- The researcher received content-related feedback on the organisational and political application possibilities of the resilience approach in the context of Bavarian destination management.
- The participants were brought to a common level of understanding of the resilience approach which enabled them to be competent discussion partners in a subsequent series of interviews.

Workshops

In the scope of the resilience study for the Ingolstadt region, two workshops were conducted to discuss common positions with regional stakeholders. Due to a transparent participation of various actors, challenges and interrelationships in the context of regional resilience were revealed and explored. Thematically and methodologically, the first workshop focused on the development of indicators to make resilience in the region more comprehensible. The second workshop concentrated on the development of measures to increase resilience in the Ingolstadt region. Transparent participation of the key stakeholders made challenges and interrelationships easier to understand. The half-day workshops were formed by a small group of 15 to 20 people from different fields. During the workshop,

the participants were split into different working groups dealing with similar topics but with different personal backgrounds. It was important to involve not only representatives of the city of Ingolstadt but also actors from the surrounding districts.

Real-Time-Delphi

As a further methodology, Real-Time-Delphi (RTD) was used within the scope of the study for Ingolstadt to clarify the subject matter. The RTD represents a methodical extension of the classical Delphi approach; the classical "round logic" is resolved here. After each question, all participants received a real-time overview of the average answers of the other respondents so that an immediate re-evaluation of their own conclusions was possible (Gerhold 2019). The emergence of this dynamic method can be traced back to Gordon and Pease (2006). Another special feature was the possibility of collecting qualitative data via a comment function for each question. These comments were particularly popular and enabled the respondents to communicate with each other. It served as an argumentation for their choice of answers (Cech and Tellioglu 2019). The Real-Time-Delphi covered a period of five weeks and was carried out using a collaboration platform "SurveyLet" offered by Calibrum[3]

The aim of the survey was to determine future trends and developments in the Ingolstadt region, create a consensus on these developments, and explore ambivalent attitudes more closely. A regional panel of experts from various fields of expertise and competence received selected statements on possible future developments in the Ingolstadt region. These statements related to possible scenarios occurring up to the year 2030. During the formulation, attention was paid to a deliberate exaggeration of the theses in order to stimulate more discussion between the participants. Based on previously defined criteria, 50 experts were selected to be contacted for the study. In the end, the resulting panel consisted of 33 experts, who answered the questionnaire several times within the given time frame and who used the comment function to discuss their points of view.

Population Survey

Resilience also means to identify and discuss problems in a participatory process. In this respect, the population was regarded as the driver and integrating part in the question of resilience development. Thus, a population survey was conducted for the Ingolstadt region as part of the resilience study. The instrument chosen was an online participation opportunity, which covered a survey period of two months.

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[3] see: https://calibrum.com/.

An online survey offers various advantages such as low costs, independence of location, time savings and a high degree of anonymity (Blasius and Brandt 2009). The aim was to develop awareness of this topic among the population and to sensitise them to the issue of resilience. The results are therefore complementary and serve as a basis for further research. Articles in the newspaper as well as in social media drew attention to the survey, so that approximately 250 people participated in the end.

Analysis of the Qualitative Research Findings
The analysis of the qualitative interviews is based on GABEK® (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität—Holistic Coping with Complexity) using WinRelan®, a software tool specially developed by GABEK®, to structure and evaluate unstructured interviews. With this approach, the guideline-based interviews can be systematically organised and described as accurately as possible (Abfalter 2010). The method was developed by Josef Zelger and is generally based on the phenomenological Gestalt theory by Carl Stumpf (Zelger 2019). Within the framework of the research presented here, this method of analysis has been used to take into account the open and sometimes very extensive qualitative interviews to an even greater extent and provide a deeper understanding of different aspects in terms of resilience.

5   Selected Findings

5.1   The Region of Ingolstadt

Compared to other regions, the Ingolstadt region is seen as a region of high economic performance not only from structural indicators but also in the perceived feeling of the respondents. This is also comparable to other regions in Germany, which in the recent past have already had to implement fundamental structural development and transformation processes. The results of the interviews reveal that the region offers reputable educational institutions, a good social infrastructure, and a high quality of life for employees and their families. In general, it can be stated that study participants saw the necessity to think about the future, even if the region is economically strong compared to others. The dynamic development of the entire city, which also strongly influences the success of the overall regional environment, is based on a competitive automotive industry. Yet, this is also seen as a main factor of vulnerability. The economic success of the region currently stands and falls with this industry and its expertise. Due to a strong

specialisation in the automotive industry, the region is also characterised by a high vulnerability in the face of exogenous shocks. Especially in times when the economic environment seems to be changing, the question arises how strongly a region can be prepared to react to such a change. The Ingolstadt region is thus facing great challenges and is considering whether it is well positioned for the future with its current economic structure.

Against this background, the aim of the resilience study for the region was not only to identify factors that favour or promote the resilience of a region, but also to determine how long-term stable development can be generated in the region. Association graphs were created with GABEK® to illustrate some insights of the interviews. They show the connections between mentioned keywords according to factors to be more resilient in the future and keywords according to the question how to generate a stable development in the region. The thickness of the connecting line indicates how often the individual terms are linked to each other, i.e. how often they were mentioned in connection with each other.

Figure 1 shows that in order to reduce the vulnerability of regions and to be prepared for external shocks, a clear transformation strategy is crucial. It requires professional communication so that possible negative crisis scenarios are properly understood and translated into constructive projects and measures. This requires
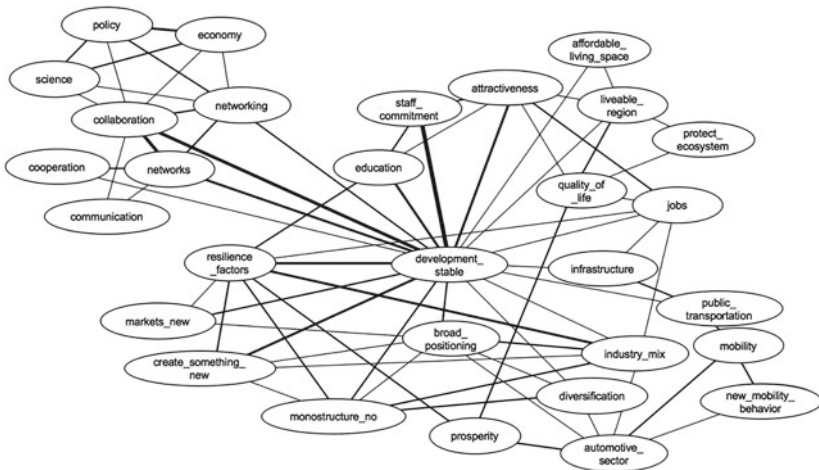
Fig. 1 Factors that Encourage Resilience and Promote Stable Development in the Region of Ingolstadt. *(Source: Extraction from WinRelan®, own elaboration)*

clear communication responsibilities, both internally and externally. The association graph shows the relevance and need for regional networks in the context of global and regional challenges. Not only well-established networks that also deal with issues of resilience have been regarded in this respect. New networks also have to be created and, above all, have to be made usable. The results of the interviews also show that it is particularly effective to link large players with young companies, because young companies in particular foster transformative capacity. This way, competencies of different industries can be bundled with new networks. Networks require cooperation, which must occur at different regional levels: science, economy and policy. Furthermore, the results of the interviews show that if the Ingolstadt region is able to act in a resilient manner, diversification strategies are required. This means a broader positioning, instead of appearing as monoculture, and thus enabling new things to emerge. Interviewees saw a balanced branch mix as crucial to reduce the vulnerability to economic shocks. Several pillars in different sectors and the striving for balance between sector specialisation and diversification are favourable factors for the region of Ingolstadt, as not all sectors are affected by different crises to the same extent. There are even differences within the region and within the various districts. In addition, there are assumptions that small and medium-sized entreprises (SMEs) promote resilience in the region. This is supported by the fact that SMEs are considered as hidden champions in the Ingolstadt region, as the following quote illustrates:

> "Of course, as a region, we are very strongly affected by the automotive industry, but there are also other focal points. I am talking about our medium-sized companies. These are the hidden champions of the region and an important pillar for the entire regional economy." (A84, translated).[4]

Fundamental changes in the Ingolstadt region are seen in the light of digitalisation, automatisation and the appearance of new forms of supply. These are all developments that mutually inspire each other, for which the region already forms an important platform as an automotive location. Thus, the interview partners see the opportunity for the region to think about mobility in a different and new way within the framework of integrated concepts that bring together creative minds and ideas.

In addition, educational institutions play an essential role in the context of regional resilience. Crisis-resistant regions strongly focus their investments on education, innovation, and competences (Gruber 2011). A properly functioning

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[4] The abbreviation following the quotation refers to the individual sense units contained in the analysis of the interviews with GABEK®.

education system helps to build up the adaptive capacity and is less dependent on cyclical fluctuations (Pestel-Institut 2010). In this respect, diversification also plays an important role for the interviewees:

> "It is important that we set up the educational landscape in the region in such a way that it is future-oriented, i.e. on the one hand strengthening the competences we have of course, but also bringing in others on board." (B16, translated).

To a certain extent, this refers to the diversification of higher education, which not only focusses on business and technology, but also on developing new visions in research and teaching. This means not only to educate skilled workers, but also to keep them in the region by providing an attractive freetime and cultural offer, for example. Employment, in turn, means ensuring job flexibility in the future. The more efficiently and flexibly the labour market is organised (e.g. through the shaping of working hours), the more attractive the region is, which in turn also promotes resilience.

All those factors such as workplaces, the attractiveness of the region, affordable housing, and a protected ecosystem contribute to a region worth living in and thus also increase the quality of life in the region of Ingolstadt.

5.2   Tourism in Bavaria

The following explanations are based on the results of a focus group with Bavarian destination managers and qualitative interviews conducted with the same persons some time later. Destination managers play a central role in the development of tourism destinations. They coordinate a network of legally independent tourism service providers with their destination management organisation (DMO) by initiating joint marketing activities and encouraging the service providers to act in a cooperative manner. Destination management is the first point of contact for questions of operational development, especially for small-scale private rental businesses, which are still frequently found in rural areas.

This is regarded as a task against the background of a far-reaching transformation process in the industry. For many of the Bavarian destination managers interviewed, climate change represents a manageable task, and corresponding adjustments to supply will at best only affect seasonal shifts in demand. However, the challenges of digitalisation and the perceived lack of skilled workers, particularly in tourism, are causing greater concern:

"For example digitalisation, artificial intelligence, for example lack of skilled workers and other ways of approaching and searching. The awareness of the tourism industry in this location is still quite rudimentary." (H17, translated)

Destination managers see themselves as the central people responsible for building destination resilience. Due to the predominantly public financing of DMOs, a political mandate to promote resilient tourism structures would, in the view of the interviewees, directly be a task within their position's responsibility.

A destination manager who promotes resilience combines two basic competencies: As a central contact person for the concerns and needs of all tourism service providers in the destination, he or she takes a *leadership role* and usually finds out very quickly when operational challenges or local political circumstances threaten the economic development of tourism. This day-to-day business, however, requires a lot of time, which destination managers do not have for their second essential task in promoting resilience: the development and implementation of a destination-wide tourism strategy.

"So we have to find a way to get involved strategically without overburdening ourselves so much in terms of work that we no longer have any time for operational activities. This is a dilemma that I have to consider in the strategic repositioning." (E9, translated)

In the field of tension between operational and strategic aspects, destination managers make a significant contribution to the development of a resilient destination (see Fig. 2).

For destination managers, destination resilience must be viewed in isolation from quantitative growth and *numbers* in tourism volume. Only in regions with low tourism intensity, an increase in the share of tourism value added in the regional economy is considered to promote resilience. Here, tourism can contribute to a diversification of the regional economic structure. This is especially true in regions that are strongly influenced by a particular industry and that are therefore more vulnerable to crises. For some Bavarian destinations, however, tourism does not represent a solution, but a challenge for regional resilience. Due to the fact that the carrying capacity limit of an acceptable tourist number has been reached, quantitative growth is not an option. *Indicators* of destination resilience shift here in particular to qualitative factors and the design of a sustainable social space for guests and locals, which also takes into account the ecological resources of the respective region. Against this background, destination managers face the challenge of having to justify the success of their work in ways other than quantitative growth. Only if they succeed in doing so, destination managers can ensure
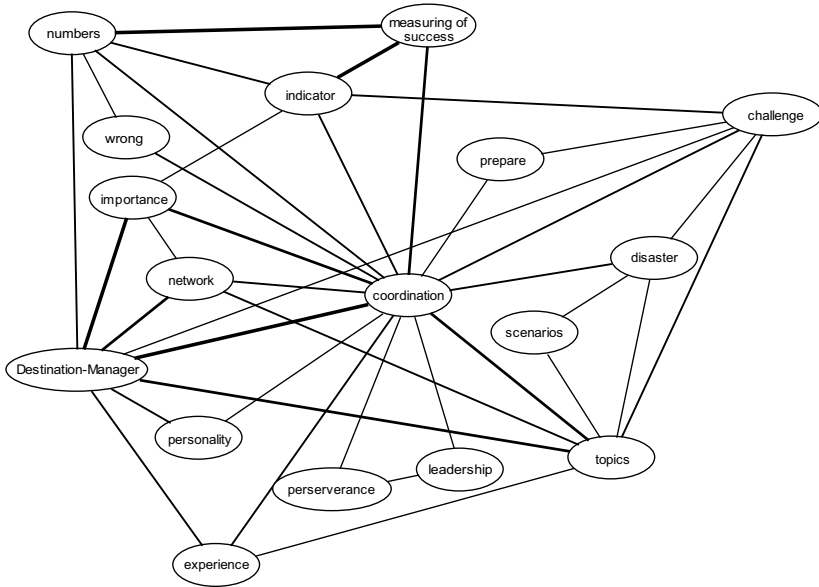
Fig. 2 Coordinating Resilience Development from a Destination Manager's Perspective. *(Source: Extraction from WinRelan®, own elaboration)*

the future financing of their tasks. In this respect, it is above all a matter of convincing local politicians, who often still recognise the increase in the number of overnight stays as the main criterion for successful regional tourism.

However, the destination managers interviewed are generally confident that a rethinking process will begin here as well, whereby *different scenarios* of tourism destination management will operate more at the interfaces of regional and location development. These considerations include questions of organisational integration of different destination and regional development agencies, which on the other hand is seen as a highly political topic.

Based on the qualitative studies with the Bavarian destination managers, it becomes clear that questions of resilience must be considered in the regional context and cannot be solved in a sector-specific way. At the supra-regional level, however, federal, national, and even international *networks* of destination management can certainly make a contribution to destination resilience. This tourism-specific exchange on a professional level is considered to be crucial when

it comes to the early recognition of crises and the appropriate assessment of developments and trends. The implementation of resilience initiatives at the regional level is considered an interesting approach to develop and establish suitable resilience indicators for the region, which can also be used to *redefine and measure the success* of destination management, which is itself looking for suitable criteria to assess its success in a phase of stagnation or shrinkage of the tourism offer.

# 6 Discussion: Perspectives on Future Development of Resilience Initiatives

Regional resilience has so far been investigated mainly quantitatively and retrospectively. This contribution, however, refers to combining individual, organisational and regional perspectives of perception, taking a constructive approach to the formation of an understanding of resilience from the practice of implementation. The research presented in this paper aims to develop a participatory understanding of resilience from a practical perspective at a specific spatial or functional level to provide a contribution to the theoretical development of the resilience approach. In consequence, we can learn from practice how resilience is seen in a particular context, and how the concept can help to overcome difficult situations. In German-speaking countries, people have a rather indefinite understanding of the concept of resilience. It can be stated that resilience is still in a phase of conceptual consolidation despite its current widespread popularity. This is transferable to a regional as well as a tourism-related research context. There are only a few initiatives in Germany that focus on the resilience approach.

With regard to the introduction and implementation of the resilience approach in a German-speaking context, different methods were considered in these discussed research projects. Some of these methods were already in use, while others were implicitly and explicitly requested by the research subjects for further steps of implementation. These experiences can be summarised in an overview, which divides the strategic development of resilience into three phases (see Fig. 3).

First phase: Informing, Sensitising and Contextualising
In a first phase, the focus lies on information, sensitisation and contextualisation of the resilience approach. Participants in the research projects were consciously confronted with the resilience approach. Basic definitions from the various disciplines of resilience research were presented in interviews and focus groups, whereby the study participants were asked to contextualise the information they

Fig. 3 The Strategic
Planning Process for
Resilience Initiatives.
(*Source: own elaboration*)
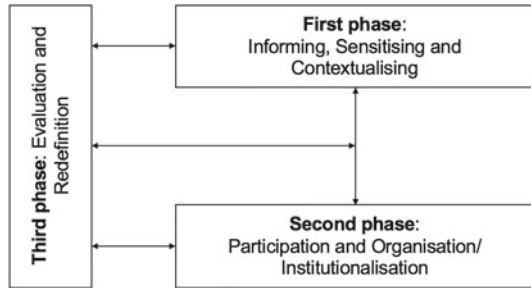
received in a regional or functional context. One major challenge is to raise awareness of issues of resilient development, since in both of the study contexts there was a positive economic development that made a discussion of challenges and crises seem inappropriate, at least to some of the study participants. The results discussed in this paper show that even successful economic regions can deal with the issue of resilience. Indications of a rethinking by broad stakeholder groups are visible; however, this reflection preferentially takes place within certain positions in the administration. Thus, the resilience approach is a catalyst for thinking in different future scenarios, at least for a group of participants with expertise in the field of regional and destination development. It was therefore possible to start a professional discussion. This discussion even developed its own type of dynamic: a wide variety of branches and disciplines in the public and private sectors wanted to take part in the discussion, or to have the views of their stakeholders represented, who were not originally intended to participate in the studies. However, it was evident that top political leadership has not entirely discovered the topic for itself. Local politicians seem to be reluctant to discuss challenges and crises, and there are presumably great concerns about being politically associated with the communication of negative development dynamics. A branch- and target group-specific discussion of the resilience approach could be considered useful using tourism as an example. The overall definition of regional resilience also results from a resilience definition of its sub-systems, whereby in tourism, regional and supra-regional networks should be considered together. The inclusion of heterogeneous stakeholder groups at the beginning of a resilience discussion represents a methodological challenge that was faced with a mix of different qualitative and quantitative methods. Expert interviews are suitable to contextualise the resilience approach on a regional level, whereby a sufficiently diverse group of participants consisting of representatives from business, politics, and civil society

should express their positions. Looking at a specific industry such as tourism destinations, it seems to make sense to ask as many comparable positions as possible about their impressions and experiences.

Second Phase: Participation and Organisation/Institutionalisation

At the beginning of a research project, it is hardly possible to have a comprehensive view of the relevant participants in a participation process. In this context, it is important to involve different actors at different levels in participation processes for resilient development step by step. A broadening of the participation basis is an important next step to create acceptance for the implementation of a resilience approach. In the study of the overarching discussion of regional resilience, the necessity of participation of the population was undisputed, and a request to fill in a questionnaire via the regional media led to widespread participation. In a sector-specific perspective such as tourism, there are certainly controversial views on the necessity of participation of broad sections of the population. Destination managers, who advocated broad participation of the population, require innovative discussion and participation formats that allow direct interaction between tourism stakeholders and the population. The high effort in organising such processes is justified when a general increase in tourism acceptance can be expected through the participatory design of future tourism development. This, in turn, requires a basic transparency and a common understanding of resilience, which can be ensured by carefully handled communication. Participation formats should also have a decision-making character. In particular, measures that combine the expertise of different sectors with new networks and enable unusual constellations of actors are particularly promising. The required effort and permanence that go hand in hand with the implementation of a resilience strategy brings with them the question of how resilience can be organised in specific terms and which actors should be involved. It makes a difference whether the necessary competencies can be provided by existing constellations of actors, or, if there should be resilience managers who lead a lasting participation and design process, no matter if sector-specific or across sectors.

Third Phase: Evaluation and Redefinition

The evaluation of the projects and measures within the framework of resilience development requires a continuous improvement process to verify the effects of the measures. It is necessary to take into account social, cultural, and ecological aspects. A systematic success control should be based on a defined strategy, which already classifies the numerous feedback loops of a resilience system on a regional level. For example, if the defined objectives are not achieved, it is

necessary to verify them to identify the causes and, with this in mind, generate adjustments and correction measures in the previously defined phases. The crucial factor here is a combination of aspects and measures to promote resilience that can be demonstrated in the short term and those that will take effect in the long term. Short-term evaluation objectives are important to demonstrate progress in building resilience to the stakeholders of the resilience initiative and to encourage them to continue to support it financially or with human resources. Long-term evaluation goals form the core of strategic thinking in the context of building resilience and should be implemented consistently. Since these are sometimes difficult to measure and quantify, they are often not yet sufficiently taken into account. Against this background, further conceptual work is necessary to develop reliable criteria of resilience that create awareness and acceptance. The identified phases of the systematic introduction of the resilience approach on a regional level are based on the results and experiences of the studies presented in this paper. They can initially be considered as a linear process, which comes to bear in the successive development of competencies and participation. However, in the further course of the process, these phases presumingly interact with each other in different ways, reacting accordingly to evaluation results. Hence, the process can start all over again by a new sensitisation process in the light of changing conditions. However, it can also begin directly with phase 2, in that the evaluation results indicate organisational structures of resilience that require modification.

The results and references presented are of an exploratory nature. A longer-term monitoring of existing and new resilience initiatives in different regional and functional contexts could contribute to a validation of the results. In the authors' view, the explicit mention of the concept of resilience has great potential to involve different target groups, which have rarely been considered together, in the discussion of sustainable regional development. In its proactive understanding, it can be a useful addition to formalised processes of regional planning.

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