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## A media-place approach to resilience

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## Background

Systems theory and specifically the socio-ecological systems theory approach is a common theoretical departure point to resilience in a multitude of subjects, which dominates resilience thought today (Colding & Barthel, 2019). A socio-ecological systems analysis provides an overview of the linkages between the 'human system', e.g., communities, society, economy, and the 'natural system', e.g., ecosystems as a two-way feedback relationship.

However, resilience thought fails to take account of politics and power relations. It overlooks conflicts over resources, and the importance of power asymmetries (Brown, 2014). In consequence, there has both been calls for theory development in resilience thinking (Brown, 2021), and in the context of tourism (cf. Lew 2013; Lew et al., 2017).

This research shows how media studies, and particularly mediatization (Couldry, 2008) and geography of communication (Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Jansson & Falkheimer, 2006), contributes to a novel approach to understand resilience in tourism places. Additionally, the research also contributes to the development of resilience thought in media and communication studies which so far has been scattered (cf. Houston et al., 2015).

## Method

The research design of this paper applies theory adaptation as an approach to revising established knowledge by introducing supplementary theories as frames in the conceptualization (cf. Jaakkola, 2020). By applying theories of mediatization and geographies of communication - a subfield within media studies - to the developing corpus of resilience in tourism studies, this conceptual article highlights the value of a media studies approach to the conceptualization of resilience of tourism places.

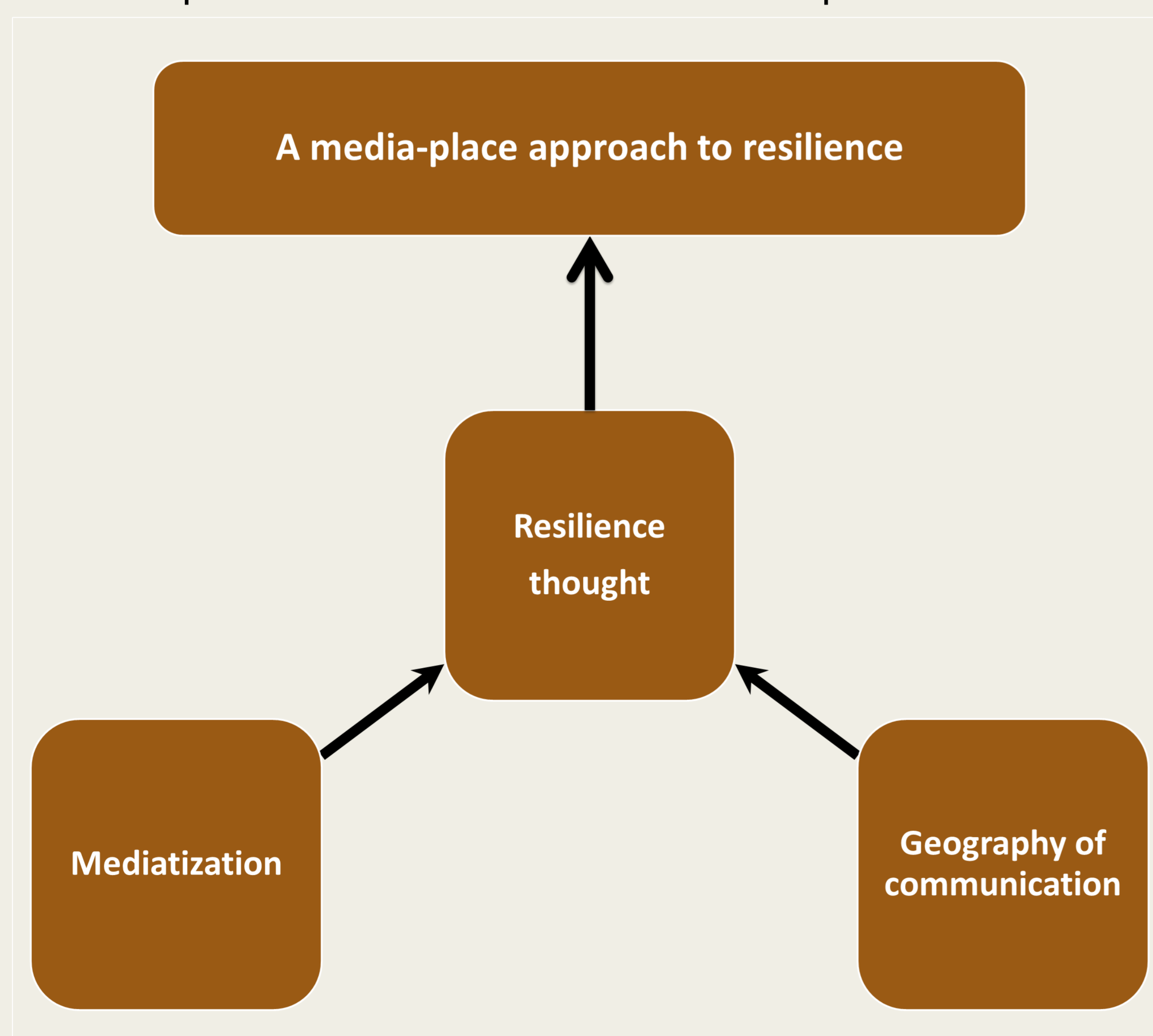


Figure 1. Research design

## Discussion

Mediatization concern broader societal and cultural processes and changes. It studies the influence of a particular media on specific fields and domains. Media is part of shaping different audiences' expectations and anticipations of future events, and these experiences generate forms of actions and interactions that are performed or staged. The interconnectedness of communication, geography and media is expressed in the Geography of communication as "geographies are the spaces and places where communications happen; media are systems and structures that facilitate communication and connect, configure or constitute geographies" (Adams et al., 2017, p. 1)

**A media-place approach to resilience** shows the interconnectedness of media, place and resilience which the dominant social-ecological system approach to resilience in tourism has failed to consider. The dominating socio-ecological systems approach to resilience, assumes an ontology of a system constituted as a subject with clear boundaries. The proposed approach assumes that a tourist place is constituted as a verb that is constantly created and recreated in a process. Resilience in places must therefore be conceptualized ontologically as a fluid concept that evolves over time.

## Conclusions

**A media-place approach to resilience** offers an understanding of sudden and long-term changes in place resilience by giving special attention to:

- **nodes or flows of information that connect the media systems and constitute places.**

These information flows provide insights into the resilience of places as they evolve and not just when they are in unbalance. By highlighting relationships, tensions and contradictions constituted in media and place, a media place approach highlight:

- **the different reasons that are part of triggering the unbalance addressed in the socio-ecological system approach.**

A media-place approach therefore accentuates mediatized interactions and processes affecting resilience in places.

## Further reading

Eksell. J. & Månsson. M. (2023) Exploring the constitution of resilience in places: a media place approach to tourism studies. *Tourism, Culture & Communication*, accepted/in press

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