



Unpacking the Role of Law in Value Chain Resilience

Helsinki, 24–25 October 2023

Call for papers, deadline 15 August 2023

The workshop is organized as part of the Law for Secure Supply: Internalizing the Crisis Exceptions (LEXSECURE) project, funded by the Academy of Finland and co-hosted by the universities of Turku, Lapland and Eastern Finland.

Background: The Sustainability/Resilience Nexus // Production has fragmented into global networks of actors connected through contracts and equity ownership, or ‘global value chains’ (GVCs). Lead firms governing value chains can align thousands of suppliers in dozens of countries for logistical functionality, cost-management, and research and development. Recent private and public regulatory initiatives steer governance also towards a sustainability footprint, or ‘externalities’ ranging from modern slavery to CO2 emissions. But the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily recast these basic tenets of global production as organizations and governments madly scrambled for suddenly scarce supplies. As private and public actors alike became acutely aware of the fragility of the global production system, a resilience-oriented *paradigm of secure supply* rose to the forefront of the crisis response in industry and policy. Actors mapped supply chains to understand previously veiled sources of crucial supplies. Mapping was followed by actions ranging from ad hoc emergency transactions to integrating resilience in existing value chains, and from importing know-how to kick-start local production to forging new public/private alliances and joint ventures.

We see the novelty of the situation not in the methods or techniques used to deal with the crisis, but the *encompassing nature of the problem*, emblemizing sudden resource scarcity and distributional conflict after decades of growth. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights a need for coordination in *global-systemic crises*. This affects the very foundations of value chain capitalism, turning the gaze of private and public actors towards anchoring resilience at the heart of the legal infrastructure of GVCs. The EU’s *Critical Entities Resilience Directive* and proposed *Single Market Emergency Instrument*, related instruments in the US and beyond, and the energy transition and its reliance on critical raw materials, provide some examples of how GVCs move to the center of geopolitics and geoeconomics.

The emerging shift towards resilience *materialized in the use (or abuse) of legal means* to ensure stable supply of critical supplies during the COVID-19 crisis. However, the consequences of COVID-19 may only be a bleak foretaste of crises and responses to come: Anthropogenic climate change, ongoing biodiversity loss, and possible ecosystem collapses, for just some examples, seem posed to usher in an era of constant crises, where *concerns over resilience become endemic*. The question must thus be framed with a view towards the future proliferation of global-systemic crises. As such, GVCs and current modes of production and extraction can also serve as a contributing factor to economic fragility. This invites a broader reconsideration of modes of economic organization beyond ad-hoc ‘fixes’.

Aim / Angles / Themes // We invite researchers in law and related fields to explore these themes, with possible topics including the legal or socio-economic foundations of resilience in global production; legal or extra-legal approaches to the private governance of resilience; explorations of the national, European and international regulatory reactions and frameworks around resilient supply, including their effects along value chains, local communities and workers; the role of private actors, states, or supranational actors in coordinating or regulating resilience; or private or public international law approaches to easing global-systemic crises through, for example, the coordination of public policy or other states of exception. More generally, we invite participants to discuss how law can contribute to resilience in face of increasing global-systemic crises in the Anthropocene, and what shapes, steers, and constitutes the fundamental legal conditions for effective coordination of and oversight over global production.

Process // We invite researchers and professionals to submit an abstract of max 500 words by 15 August 2023 to isabell.storsjo@utu.fi. Acceptance is notified by 25 August 2023. Participants are expected to provide extended abstracts/short working papers by 17 October. In case of non-presenting participants, a short motivation letter is expected. Participation is free of charge. A limited amount of financial support may be available for those in need. A special issue or edited volume building on the topics of this call for papers is planned.