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Regional resilience and interconnectedness: a multilevel approach

Ibrahim Shaheen



Theses in Economics and Business

Regional resilience and interconnectedness: a multilevel approach

Ibrahim Shaheen

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Regional resilience and interconnectedness: a multilevel approach

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the
University of Groningen
on the authority of the
Rector Magnificus Prof. J.M.A. Scherpen
and in accordance with
the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on
Thursday 12 December 2024 at 14.30 hours

by

Ibrahim Shaheen

born on 26 May 1988 in Syria

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Prof. F.G. Van Oort

In loving memory of my father Jamil Shaheen, who left us just before
watching me defending this dissertation. Your wisdom and
kindness will always guide me.

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As a kid, I was truly intrigued by the fact that Earth looks like a football. I had serious doubts about it, and I wanted to become an astronaut to see with eyes whether the world was flat or not. When I realized that we do not have astronautics in the Syrian universities, I decided, with soreness, to abandon my childhood dream and rely on a sophisticated methodology to pick the discipline that I will be studying for the next 50 years or so. I did a random draw and picked economics! Back then, I had no idea that in the years to come, I would be studying the economic resilience to crises in my Ph.D. dissertation at a moment in which my home country, Syria, has been suffering a devastating crisis for over a decade. Thinking of the Syrian crisis and the future of that lovely country made the notion of resilience captivating for me. Although I was not able to verify by eyes whether the Earth is flat or not, however, I consider myself very lucky to have accumulated a lot of knowledge in previous years that would allow me to understand that the world is flat, round, and spiky at the same time. It is a matter of what lenses you put when you take a look at it.

My learning journey in the Ph.D. would never have been as rich without my supervisors, Steven, Harry, and Jacopo. I owe you a lot, and I consider myself truly lucky to have you all. Steven, your Dutch directness has enriched me as a person and as a researcher. You are a brilliant supervisor and a true mentor that I am proud to have. Without your sharp feedback and insightful critiques, I would have never made it. I am so grateful to you. Harry, I had never believed that one supervisor could know everything until I met you. Your immense knowledge across multiple fields has profoundly enriched my research journey. During the previous years, you taught me how to see the whole picture and the hidden connections and how to think about them. My sincere gratitude to you. Jacopo, when I came from Italy to the Netherlands to start my Ph.D., I was incredibly

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Ibrahim,

Rome, November 4, 2024

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
List of Tables	xv
List of Figures	xix
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background and objectives	3
1.2 A new approach to regional resilience	6
1.3 Does spatial interconnectedness matter for regional resilience? . . .	9
1.4 From regional resilience to firm resilience	13
1.5 From spatial interconnectedness to digital interconnectedness . . .	16
References	20
2 Operationalizing resilience	35
2.1 Introduction	37
2.2 Theoretical Background	39
2.2.1 Defining resilience	39
2.2.2 Operationalizing regional resilience	41
2.3 Methodology	45
2.4 Empirical Example	48
2.4.1 Data and variables	48
2.4.2 Principal component analysis	48
2.4.3 Cluster analysis	51
2.4.4 Resilience measure	56
2.5 Reflection on the proposed method	59
2.6 Conclusion	61

References	63
2.A Appendix	71
3 Regional interconnectedness and resilience	79
3.1 Introduction	81
3.2 Literature review	83
3.3 Data	90
3.4 Method	94
3.5 The geographical patterns of regional interconnectedness	95
3.6 Findings and discussion	99
3.6.1 Findings of the main analysis	99
3.6.2 Findings on regional trade	103
3.7 Robustness check	111
3.8 Conclusion	116
References	118
3.A Appendix	126
4 Firm interconnectedness and resilience	155
4.1 Introduction	157
4.2 Theoretical background: from regional resilience to firm resilience	159
4.3 Empirical method	165
4.3.1 Data and variables	165
4.3.2 Model	169
4.4 Results and discussion	170
4.5 Robustness check	176
4.6 Conclusion	182
References	184
4.A Appendix	194
4.A.1 Cluster analysis	194
5 Digital interconnectedness and resilience	207
5.1 Introduction	209
5.2 Theoretical background	211

5.2.1	ICT and firm-level resilience in the resistance stage	212
5.2.2	ICT and firm-level resilience in the recovery stage	213
5.3	Empirical strategy	216
5.3.1	ICT and firm-level resilience in the resistance stage	216
5.3.2	ICT and firm-level resilience in the recovery stage	217
5.4	Data	219
5.5	Findings and discussion	224
5.5.1	ICT and firm resilience	224
5.5.2	ICT and firm recovery	227
5.6	Robustness Check	230
5.7	Conclusion	232
	References	234
5.A	Appendix	242
5.A.1	Additional analysis	242
5.A.2	Cluster analysis	245
5.A.3	Alternative analysis	248
6	Conclusion	265
6.1	Summary	266
6.2	Limitations	269
6.3	Policy implications	271
6.4	Future research avenues	272
	Samenvatting	275

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Various regional resilience definitions	42
2.2	Comparing two conventional methods to operationalize resilience. Source: The author	44
2.3	The correlation Matrix for clustering variables. Source: The author	49
2.A.1	Definitions of the variables used in Cluster Analysis	72
2.A.2	Descriptive statistics Cluster 1	74
2.A.3	Descriptive statistics Cluster 2	75
2.A.4	Descriptive statistics Cluster 3	76
2.A.5	Eigenvalues of the Principal Component Analysis	77
3.3.1	Summary statistics	93
3.4.1	Correlation matrix	96
3.6.1	Feasible Generalized Least Squares estimation results of the main model in equation 3.3	101
3.6.2	Descriptive statistics of trade data	103
3.6.3	Feasible Generalized Least Squares estimation results of trade data	104
3.6.4	Additional analysis of trade data.	108
3.7.1	Robustness check 1: re-estimating the base model using fixed effects, random effects, and panel-corrected standard errors esti- mators	112
3.7.2	Robustness check 2: Feasible Generalized Least Squares estima- tion of equation (3.3) using different resilience measures	114
3.A.1	Correlation matrix of the trade data	127
3.A.2	Panel fixed effects estimation for equation 3.3	128
3.A.3	Panel random effects estimation of equation 3.3	130
3.A.4	Panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) estimation of equation 3.3	132

3.A.5	Estimating the border effect using the trade data sample and various panel data estimators	134
3.A.6	Feasible Generalized Least Squares estimation of the impact of imports on regional resilience	136
3.A.7	Panel fixed effects estimation of the impact of imports on regional resilience	139
3.A.8	Panel random effects estimation of the impact of imports on regional resilience	142
3.A.9	Feasible Generalized Least Squares estimation of the impact of exports on regional resilience	145
3.A.10	Panel fixed effects estimation of the impact of exports on regional resilience	148
3.A.11	Panel random effects estimation of the impact of exports on regional resilience	151
4.3.1	The population of firms in our sample	165
4.3.2	Descriptive statistics	168
4.4.1	Panel fixed effects estimations of the relationship between firm resilience and FDI (equation 4.1)	172
4.5.1	Robustness check1: Fixed effects estimations of equation 4.1 for subsamples of micro, small, and medium-sized firms.	178
4.5.2	Robustness check 2: Fixed effects estimations with different measures of firm resilience and different subsamples	180
4.A.1	Selected Firm characteristics for cluster analysis	194
4.A.2	Descriptive statistics of the resulting clusters over the full sample	197
4.A.3	Random effects estimations of the relationship between firm resilience and FDI (equation 4.1)	198
4.A.4	Random effects estimations of equation 4.1 for subsamples of micro, small, and medium-sized firms	200
4.A.5	Random effects estimations with different measures of firm resilience and different subsamples	202

4.A.6	Fixed effects estimations of the relationship between firm resilience and FDI (equation 4.1) with sectors fixed effects	204
5.4.1	Descriptive statistics	222
5.4.2	Matrix of correlations	223
5.5.1	Survival analysis: Cox proportional hazard model estimation . .	226
5.5.2	Panel fixed effects estimations of the link between firm productivity and ICT	229
5.6.1	Robustness check: different estimators and samples	231
5.A.1	Panel fixed effects estimation of equation 5.8 using firm "resilience" as a dependent variable instead of productivity	244
5.A.2	The "Size class" variable	245
5.A.3	Cluster size and description of the firms within each cluster . . .	245
5.A.4	Panel logit estimation: an alternative to survival analysis to study the resistance phase of firm resilience	249
5.A.5	Panel logit estimation: an alternative to survival analysis to study the resistance phase of firm resilience	250
5.A.6	Panel fixed effects estimation with ICT measured as the share of workers who use personal computers	251
5.A.7	Panel fixed effects estimation with ICT measured as the share of teleworkers in the firm	252
5.A.8	Panel fixed effects estimation with ICT measured as a dummy variable = 1 if the firm has a website	253
5.A.9	Panel fixed effects estimation with ICT measured as a dummy variable = 1 if the firm has a broadband internet	254
5.A.10	Survival analysis using the "parametric" Weibull Model	255
5.A.11	Repeating the robustness check in table 5.6.1 using ICT intensity as the share of workers who use personal computer	256
5.A.12	Repeating the robustness check in table 5.6.1 using ICT intensity as the share of teleworkers in the firm	257
5.A.13	Repeating the robustness check in table 5.6.1 using ICT measured as dummy = 1 if the firm has a website	258

5.A.14 Repeating the robustness check in table 5.6.1 using ICT measured as dummy = 1 if the firm has a Broadband internet 259

5.A.15 Panel fixed effects estimation with *firm resilience* as the dependent variable and ICT as the share of workers who use a personal computer 260

5.A.16 Panel fixed effects estimation with *firm resilience* as the dependent variable and ICT as the share of teleworkers in the firm . . . 261

5.A.17 Panel fixed effects estimation with *firm resilience* as the dependent variable and ICT as having a website 262

5.A.18 Panel fixed effects estimation with *firm resilience* as the dependent variable and ICT as having a broadband internet 263

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Post-shock Hysteretic Outcomes. Source: Martin (2012)	43
2.2	Regional resilience outcomes of our proposed measure. Source: The author	47
2.3	Screeplot: proportion of variance explained by each principal component. Source: The author	50
2.4	The quality of representation for the clustering variable by the principal components. Source: The author	51
2.5	The dissimilarity matrix. Source: The author	52
2.6	Elbow method and Gap statistic method to select the appropriate number of clusters. Source: The author	54
2.7	Silhouette coefficient. Source: The authors	55
2.8	European NUTS2 regions by cluster. Source: The author	56
2.9	Average resilience over the period 2009-2015. Source: The author	57
2.10	Peers' resilience vs. the conventional method. Source: The authors	58
2.11	Peers' resilience vs. EU resilience as well as vs National resilience. Source: The author	59
2.12	Match and mismatch between Peers', European, and National resilience. Source: The author	60
3.3.1	Resilience measure: average over the period 2009-2015, by cluster	91
3.5.1	Regional resilience in European NUTS2 regions: average over the period 2009-2015	97
3.5.2	Moran's I scatterplot for average resilience 2009-2015	98
4.3.1	Number of firms and FDI share in the Italian NUTS-3 regions. Source: the author.	166
4.A.1	Size distribution of the resulting clusters. Source: the author. . .	195

4.A.2 The optimal number of clusters. Source: the author. 195

4.A.3 The optimal number of clusters. Source: the author. 196

5.A.1 This graph shows how similar/dissimilar each observation to other observations. It provides evidence on the cluster-able structure of the data. If the data was randomly generated, one would not be able to recognize any patterns in the colors. Source: the author 246

5.A.2 To decide on the optimal number of clusters the data reveals, we use this elbow method. It relies on the Within-cluster Sum of Squares WCSS, which is the sum of the square distance between points in a cluster and the cluster centroid. We pick the number of clusters where the value of WCSS is minimized (the elbow point). Source: the author 246

5.A.3 Silhouette width statistic tests the validity of the cluster solution. It measures how similar each observation is to other observations in the same cluster in comparison to observations from different clusters. The value ranges between -1 and +1. The higher the value, the better the match between the observation and the cluster to which it was assigned. Source: the author 247