



CoCo Seminar Series

Fall 2016

The Complexity of Sustainability and Resilience

Dr. Pamela Mischen
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Binghamton University

Wednesday October 5th, 2016
8:30-9:30am Engineering Building H-9
(Knoll-MacDonald Commons / Watson Commons)



The concept of resilience has embedded itself in many disciplines. Researchers speak of psychosocial resilience, disaster resilience, resilience of the internet, educational resilience, ecological resilience, and community resilience. Sustainability is also a term that one hears frequently associated with the environment, but we also speak of the sustainability of the economy, or a program, or "sustainable development." In terms of creating a sustainable society, sustainability is typically defined as a meeting the needs of the present in a way that does not prevent future generations from meeting their own needs. Redman (2014) argues that although resilience and sustainability have been viewed as complementary, and even used interchangeably, we need to focus on further developing their distinctiveness. Redman further contends that resilience is based on adaptation (as can be seen in the repeated references to adaptive capacity in the work of Folke and others) while sustainability is based on transformation. In this presentation I will explore the unique but complementary meanings of resilience and sustainability by using concepts from complexity theory.

Dr. Pamela Mischen is Associate Professor of Public Administration, and Faculty Advisor to the President, at Binghamton University. Her research concerns local government, nonprofit, and community capacity, particularly how networks and knowledge management help to build sustainable communities.

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