

In the behavioral sciences, including psychology and psychiatry, much has been written about resiliency of persons and individuals. There are a variety of frameworks of resiliency out there that model how people cope and recover from “traumatizing” events and what factors and conditions promote or strengthen this resiliency. More recent studies and literature are exploring and defining the notion of resiliency of a people or of a community in contrast to individuals with the thinking that this is not merely the sum total of the resiliency of the individuals within that community but that there are factors inherent to the community itself that determines how it is able to go through and come out of a disastrous or tragic event. What is common to both frameworks though is that resiliency is innate to both the individual and the community but in varying degrees or levels and as such is expressed and reflected in different ways. Also, there are factors exogenous to the resiliency itself that affects its development and strengthening.

Vale et al in their work *The Resilient City* explores resiliency in a somewhat different frame and unit of analysis. They have put forward the idea of resiliency of cities and in cities they mean both the people and the communities living there and the built environment and structure. They bolster this concept with a census of cities that have been destroyed and ravaged through the years and how for majority of these cities, the predominant pattern has been that of rebuilding and reconstruction rather than their ultimate demise. They only note a few exceptions to this. Hence the notion that there must be something about cities that make them resilient and that it is, like the concept of resilience described above, innate to the cities themselves. In contrast to the resiliency of persons and communities, the idea of resiliency of cities as described by Vale et al is that of the interplay and interaction between the individuals and communities with the structure and environment that is the city. Individuals and communities through their interaction with each other and with political, cultural, social and economic institutions create the whole concept of what their city is all about hence influence how the built environment and structures are designed and implemented. On the other hand, existing physical structures form and shape individual and community interactions and perceptions about themselves and their city hence influencing how policies and institutions are created. This makes, in some respect, this notion of resilient cities different from individual and community resilience but still emphasizes the fact that this is something is inherently in us when they say “This volume is entitled *The Resilient City* rather than *Resilient Cities* because we want to uncover what all humans share when they cope with sudden traumatic changes to their environment.”

In their concluding chapter, Vale et al puts forward 12 axioms or common themes of resilience among the cities that were described in the book. This was in contrast to the analytical framework of disaster recovery activity outlined by study sponsored by the US National Science Foundation in the mid-70s which concluded that disaster recovery is ordered, knowable, and predictable because the process goes through distinguishable stages. Vale et al argues, however, that it is not enough to pose general methods for urban recovery. Thus, in their 12 themes of recovery, the emphasis was more on asking who recovers which aspects of the city, and by what mechanisms.