

**Vale and Campanella, Introduction:** Cities are remarkably resilient, and throughout time have been consistently rebuild after devastation wrought by war and natural disasters. The reasons behind this are the subject of this book. Even those cities that have been lost often remain destinations for tourists and scholars. Urban disasters can be categorized by type of disaster, human toll and scale of destruction. Cities are often the targets of attacks and are also home to urban violence. The ways that cities are rebuild are a reflection of who holds the balance of power. The authors compare disasters by the death toll and devastation they cause, but point out that using these numbers “only begin to hint at the nature and scale of devastation that their shorthand connotes.” The term “recovery” must also be defined in order to determine whether a city has returned to normalcy. Additionally, the authors ask how the disaster is memorialized in the city.

**Vale and Campanella, Conclusion:** The authors rightly point out that their use of “resilient city” may be misleading because “every city seems to qualify,” and yet cities like Chicago and Jerusalem are hardly comparable in terms of what has been overcome. The themes that the authors draw from the book are that resilience is a political necessity, the competency and resilience of governments are revealed—positively or negatively—through disasters, the views of the less resilient are generally not heard or that this group will contest the idea that the city has accomplished its goal of rebuilding, the entire nation is affected by the destruction and rebuilding of a city, resilience is increasingly determined with the aid of outside actors, human resilience is symbolized through urban resilience, remembrance of loss drive rebuilding efforts, the rebuilding phase it not a time for major changes to the city structure or public policy, the “power of place” is shown by the insistence to rebuild at the same location, the rebuilding phase is a time to upgrade infrastructure, resilience is site-specific, and resilience and recovery include more than just rebuilding the physical.

**Reactions:** The stages of response and reconstruction are generally the same as those used by aid workers, and it’s interesting to see the graphic the authors use to show the phases accompanied by their time frame. There was an article this week in the New York Times lamenting the slow pace of reconstruction from the tsunami (implicit in the article was the idea that, with all of the money that people donated, that things should be rebuilt by now). Although there are problems and delays in the tsunami cleanup, I think most people would be surprised to see this graphic, which doesn’t have the rebuilding phase peak until about 52 weeks—one year—after the disaster, and has major reconstruction beginning around 100 weeks—2 years—after the disaster. Most of the places devastated by the tsunami, it should be pointed out, are rural—it would be interesting to compare urban versus rural rebuilding post-disaster. Going off of the theme that “disasters reveal of the resilience of governments,” it will be interesting to see whether the tsunami will lead to changes in the governments of the affected countries, particularly in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.