

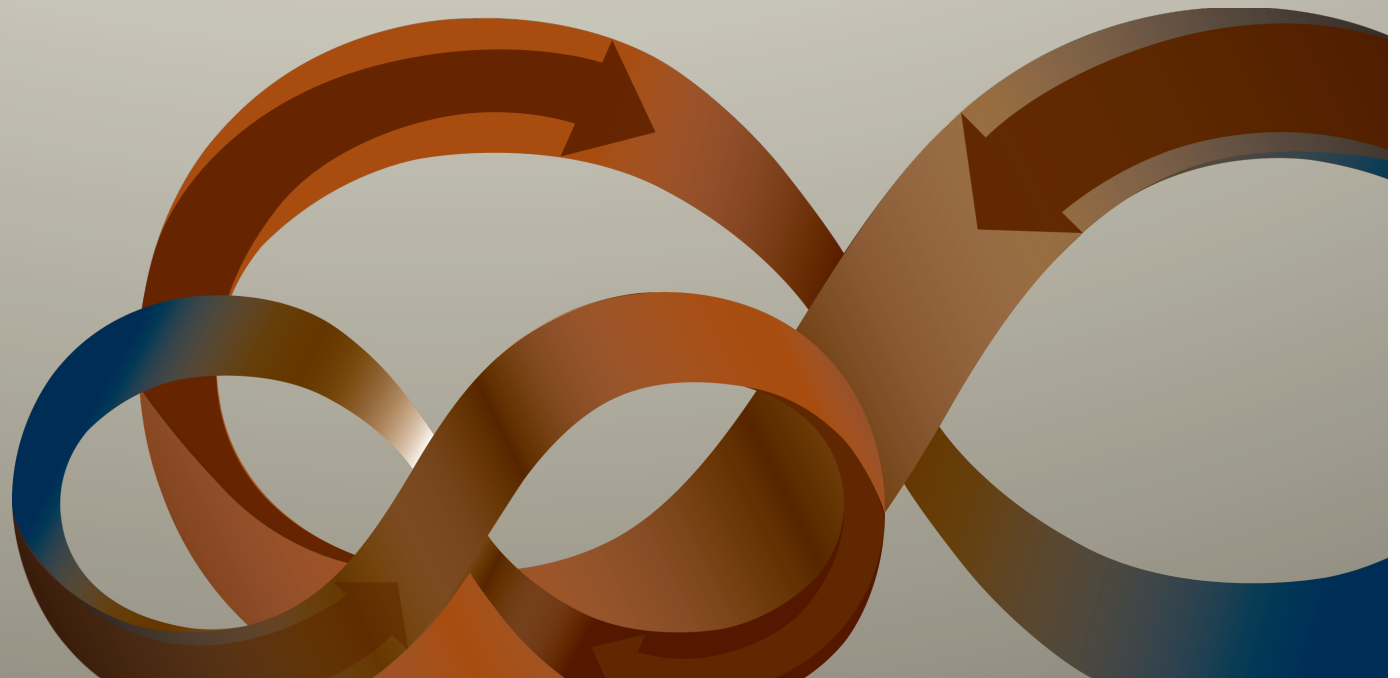


Putting poverty at the heart of urban climate resilience: reflections from Asia

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The Nature of Resilience

- Resilience is a property of complex systems
 - Concepts are derived from ecology, psychology, computer science and similar fields
 - System resilience reflects underlying characteristics
- Resilience is not about normative values
- The power of complex system concepts lies in the way they help to understand how the world works -- *not how we wish the world would work* or the *social position we want to promote*.

Complex Socio-ecological System Components

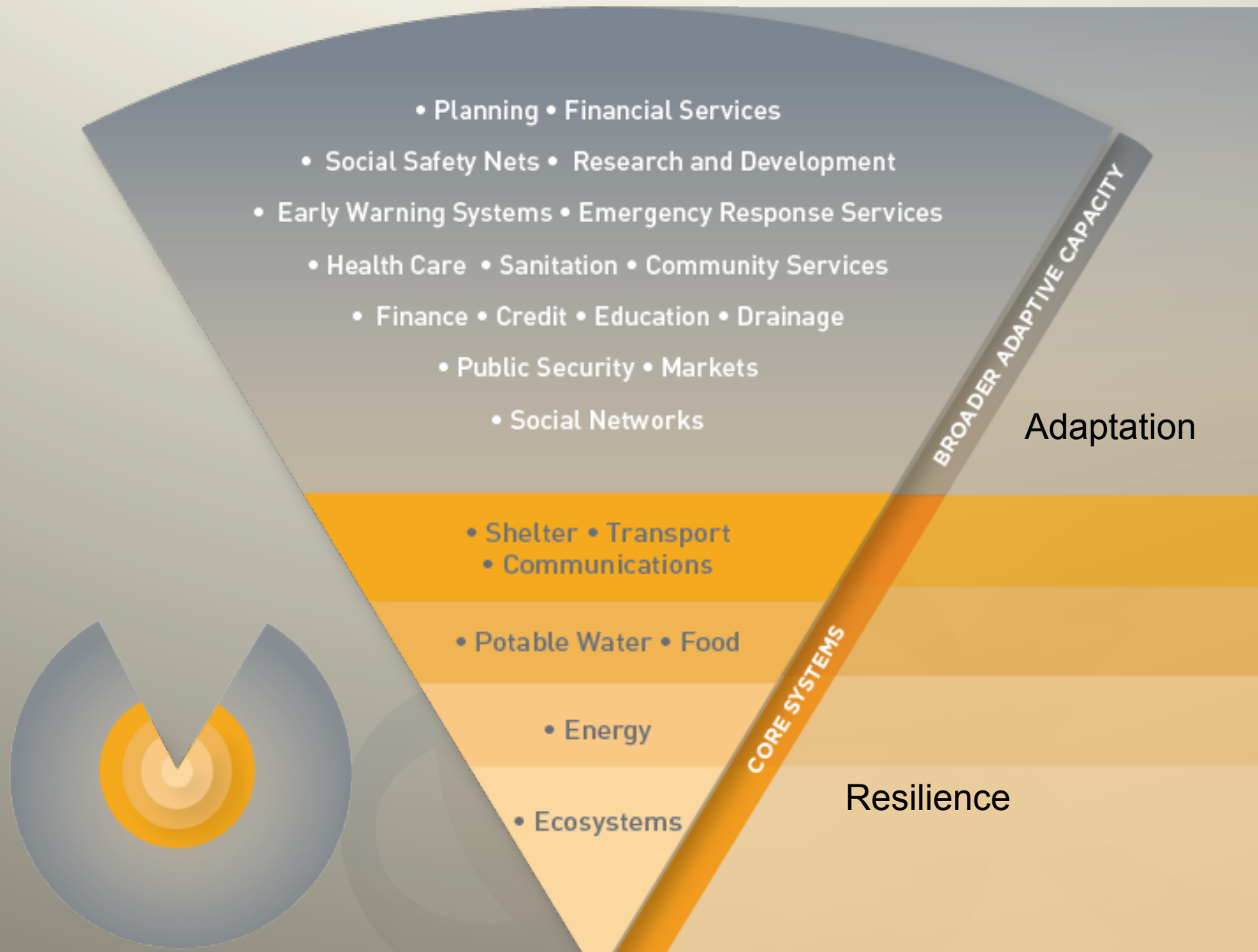
Inanimate

- Physical Systems
 - Ecosystems
 - Infrastructure
 - Communications and information
- Institutions: the “rules-in-use”
 - Formal (laws, regulations...)
 - Informal (culture, norms)

Purposive Agents

- People, Organizations
 - Identity groups (movements, communities, religions)
 - Market Actors (individuals, households, businesses)
 - Government entities
- Those managing systems
- Those depending on system services

How do Resilient Systems Relate to Adaptation?

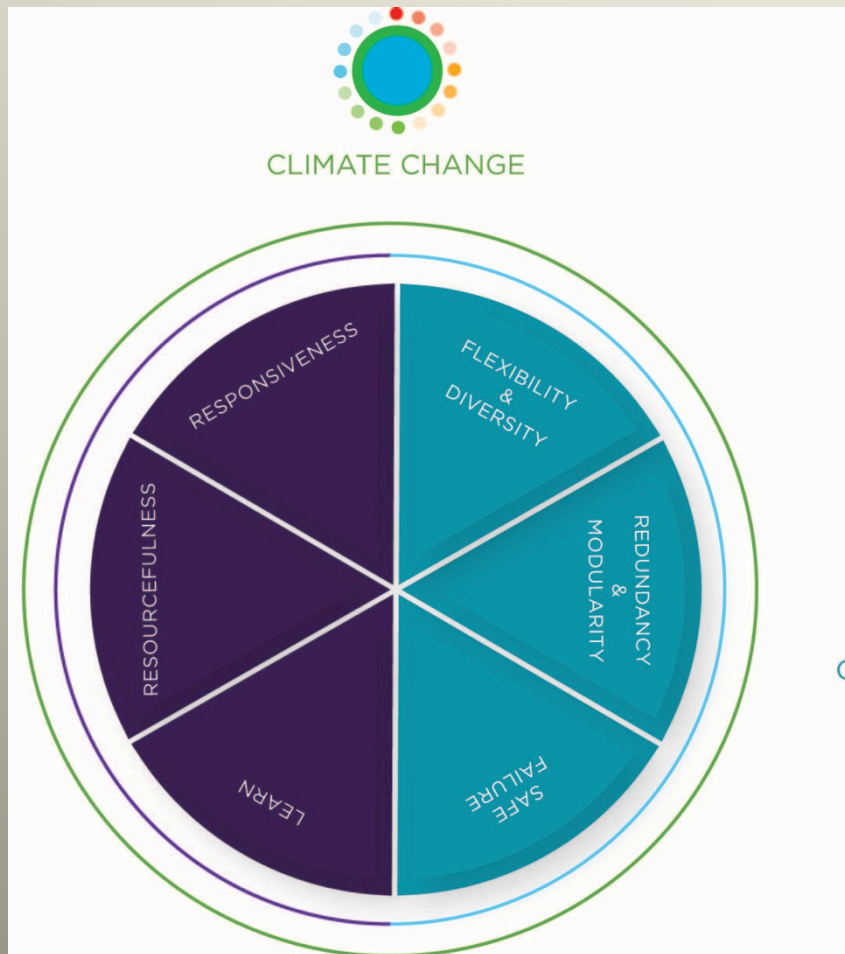


People & Organizations as Agents

- Modes of organization shape the behavioral logic of individuals and groups
- Institutions mediate relationships among groups and between systems and groups
- Politics and contestation are an inevitable outcome of agent – institution interactions in complex systems



The Characteristics of Resilience & Adaptive Capacity



- Agents/Groups
 - Responsiveness
 - Resourcefulness
 - Ability to learn
- Systems
 - Flexibility & Diversity
 - Redundancy & Modularity
 - Safe Failure
- All either enabled or constrained by institutions
- All in relation to exposure

System Vulnerability to Climate

Vulnerability = f

Fragile Systems

+

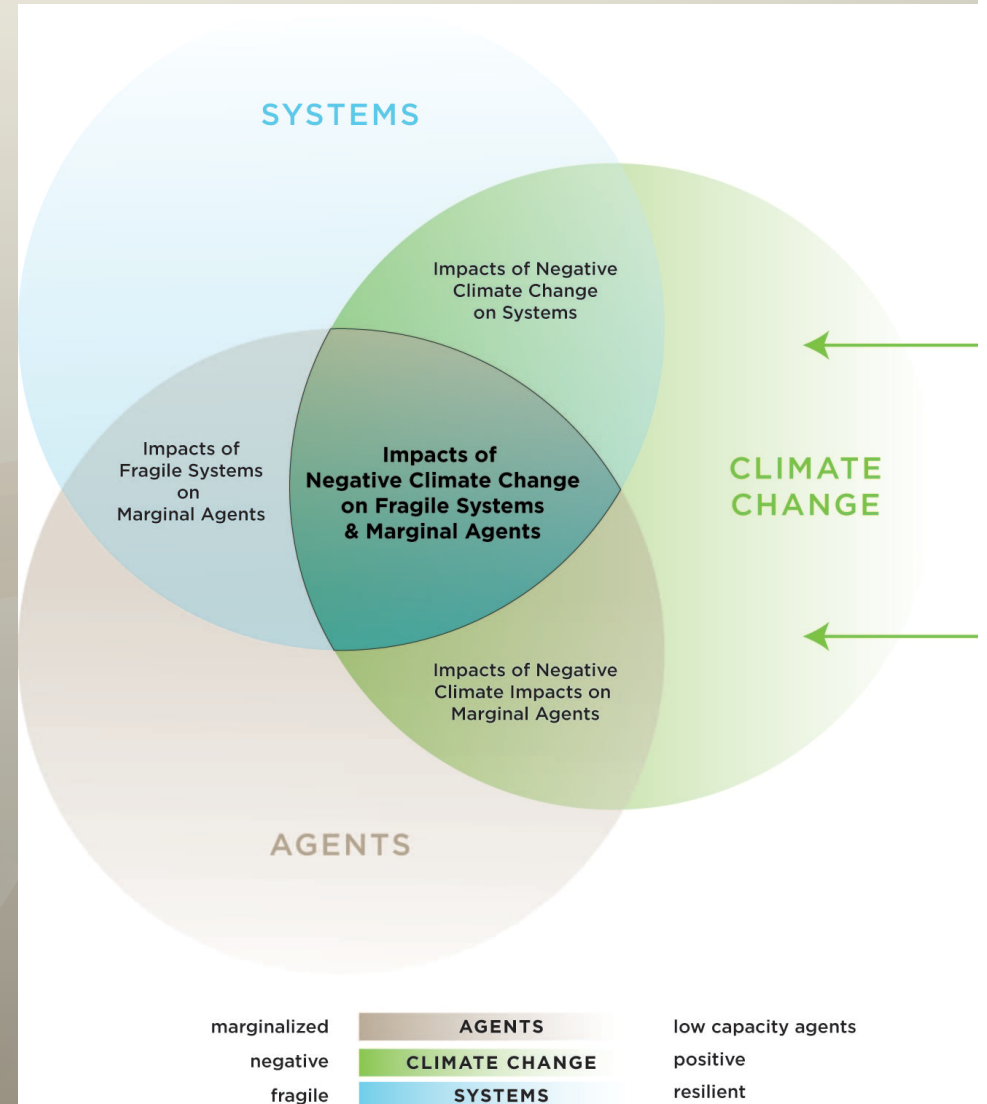
*Low Capacity
Marginalized
Populations*

+

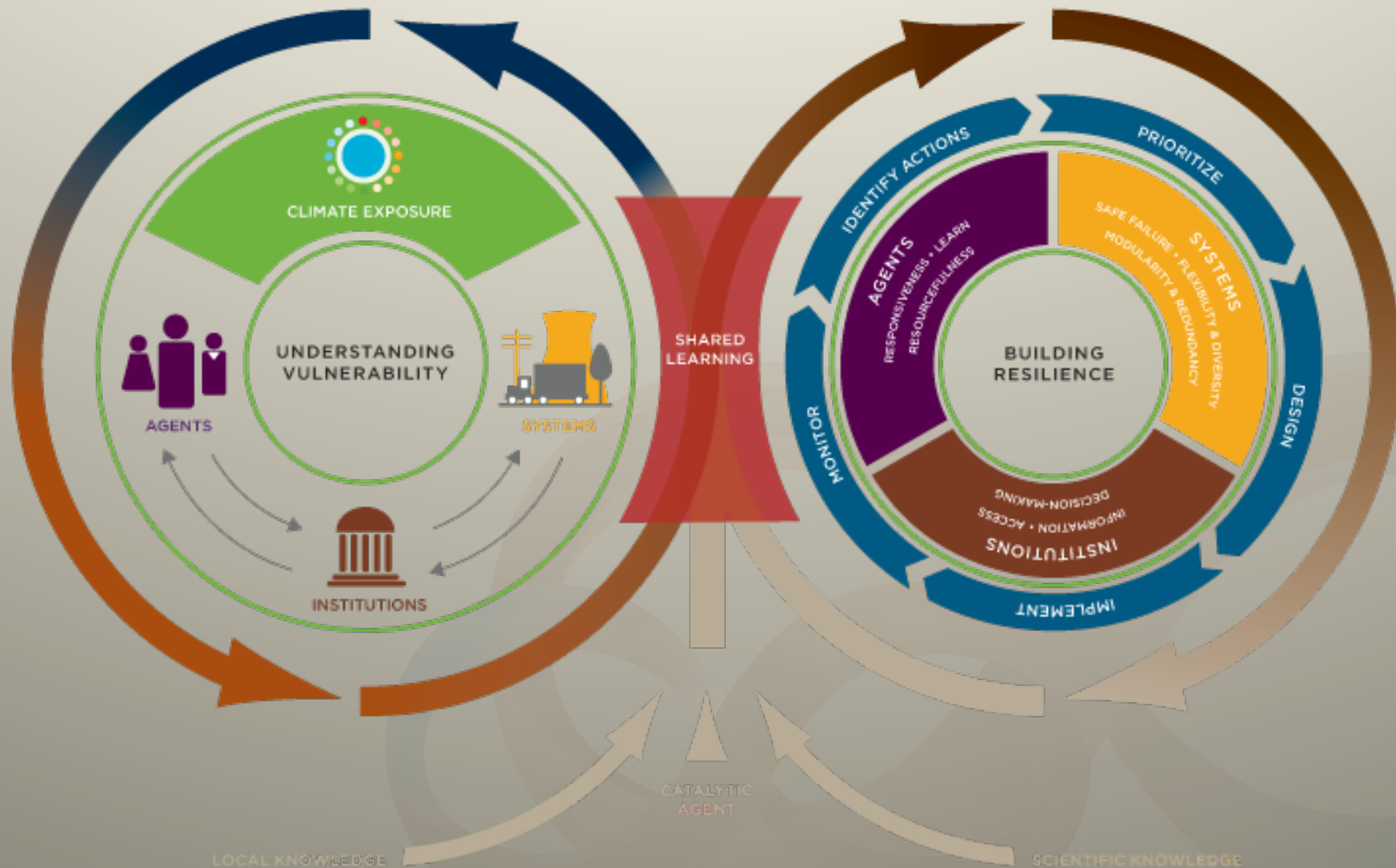
*Constraining
Institutions*

+

Exposure



The Integrated Framework



Shared Learning is the Heart of the Framework

Process is essential to negotiate the space between science
(and other sources of knowledge) and politics

The Power of the Framework

- Enables substantive engagement
- Simplifies and structures complexity
- Helps to understand risk, and fragility
- Helps identify *who, what, why and how*.
- Clarifies the nature of vulnerability

Is not, however, a statement of ethics or objectives

People must bring those themselves

The power of concepts

Resilience is about systems and their behavior

Values are what we use that knowledge for

Process, engagement and shared learning are essential

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Poor? Vulnerable? Resilient?





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What is the purpose of urban climate resilience? Implications for addressing poverty and vulnerability



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ABSTRACT

This paper considers how development policy concerns for poverty reduction and social justice can be accommodated in emerging theories and practice on urban resilience and adaptation in response to climate change. There is growing interest in applying resilience to address the challenges of urban climate change. The application of resilience theory has considerable potential for furthering our understanding of the particulars of urban climate vulnerability with its emphasis on complex systems that are increasingly important to urban life. But there are also significant risks. Resilience theory does not adequately address critical issues of power, voice and equity. Moreover, much of the uptake of resilience is as a buzzword rather than a conceptual framework. As such, the discourse of resilience has connotations that can run counter to interests of poverty reduction. Drawing on experience in Asia, the authors argue for a critical application of resilience, with special attention to concerns of resilience for and by whom.

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Buzzword versus concept

- Drawing a distinction between:
 - Resilience as a **buzzword** – with its everyday meaning and set of connotations
 - Resilience as a **concept** – specific terminology, grounded in complex systems theory
- The buzzword is being taken up more than the concept
- Some unexpected consequences!

Resilience & Social Ecological Systems

- Even the grounding in complex systems can be problematic:
 - How is the systems defined?
 - For whose benefit?
 - Who defines the system?
- Politically charged in contested social spaces – cities – and urbanising processes

But what about poverty? Social justice?

- Many resilient systems are highly ‘inequitable’
- Resilience does not talk about social values
 - Poverty
 - Equity
 - Social justice
- Being resilient is not enough
- Resilience is ***a means to an end*** – it is not the end in itself
- Need to also draw on other theoretical approaches

“Intriguingly we most commonly meet framings in which system resilience come along with the necessary costs to be borne by the poorer groups (we see similar arguments around economic efficiency and austerity and also sustainability). Yet it is less common to see arguments around city system resilience and the need for costs to be borne by the wealthy and powerful in the interests of the greater good. “

(Friend & Moench 2013)

Don't call me resilient



Urbanization

- Urbanization – not just cities
 - Not just about a place – beyond existing administrative boundaries
 - Processes of rapid change - linking urban and rural (*Desakota*)
 - Flows of resources & people, goods and services - CAPITAL
- Increasing significance of complex systems (and services)
 - water, food, energy, waste, transportation, communication

Right to the City



The question of urban poverty

- Poverty in SE Asia is seen as largely rural phenomenon (World Bank 2012 – Vietnam Poverty Assessment)
- But - urban poverty has long been overlooked & underestimated (Mitlin & Satterthwaite 2013)
- We do not have appropriate tools, methods, indicators for assessing urban poverty
- But – still assume that more urbanization (shifts from rural economies) & bigger cities lead to less poverty (World Bank 2012)

Urbanization – and shifting vulnerability

- High dependence on infrastructure and technology – the core assets of cities?
- Increasingly complex institutional mechanisms to manage these systems – the services that they generate, how different people access these services and how the benefits are distribute

Interlinked and interlocked

- From a systems – viz infrastructure and technology perspective
- From a livelihoods perspective – diversified, multi-location household livelihood portfolios
 - Importance of migration and remittances

Changing patterns of vulnerability & poverty

- Significance of quality of access to core systems and services
- Fragility and risks of failure in these systems
- Cascading impacts (beyond location)

Resilience

- The concept has value (more than the buzzword)
- Resilience can contribute to our understanding of urban poverty & vulnerability
- But the concept is not enough to address contested social values
- Resilience:
 - Not as an overall purpose
 - As a means to an end
 - For whom and by whom



MANY THANKS!

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