

Social resilience in the context of South African cities: Exploring the interdependencies of urban and social resilience

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Abstract

Urban areas as socio-ecological systems can be seen as consisting of an urban environment created by biogeochemical processes (including those originating from human activities) and governed by natural laws and an interior noosphere created by and experienced through the human psyche and social interaction to give rise to social and cultural structures. These two spheres interact to create the dynamics of a city and therefore urban resilience needs to consider not just biophysical or social resilience, but also the interactions between them. To date, most work on urban resilience tends to focus on the exterior aspects of the city, while work on social resilience tends to ignore the city and its biophysical aspects. This paper explores the interdependencies between resilience in the social and biophysical systems of the South African city. From the scenarios based on real events in cities in South Africa we can see the relationships between the social and biophysical resilience of an urban environment.

Keywords: Resilience, interdependencies, urban resilience, social resilience

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