

RESILIENCE AND NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY OF UNKNOWNNS

*Simin DAVOUDI**

Abstract

We live in challenging times with a heightened level of uncertainty and constant reminders of the unpredictability of what might be lurking around the corner, be it catastrophic climate events, terrorist attacks, financial crisis or global pandemic. Among the prescribed remedies for dealing with such a state of flux, the one that has gained significant currency is 'resilience'. Yet, it is not quite clear what resilience means beyond the simple assumption that it is good to be resilient. Despite a lack of clarity, its use in policy and practice has increased substantially in the last decade. Resilience is everywhere and is in danger of becoming an empty buzzword because of its overuse and ambiguity. In this talk, I draw on my previous work (listed below) to: shed some light on this slippery concept, unpack its fundamentally distinct meanings; outline some of the political and normative implications of translating it from its ecological origin to social domains; and, critique the ways in which resilience has been co-opted into neoliberal strategies.

References

- Bohland, J. Davoudi, S. & Lawrence J. (eds.) (2018) *The Resilience Machine*, Routledge
- Davoudi, S. (2018) self-reliant resiliency and neoliberal mentality: A critical reflection, in E. Trell et al. (eds.) *Governing for resilience in vulnerable places*, Routledge, 1-7
- Davoudi, S. (2016) Resilience and governmentality of unknown, in M. Bevir (ed.) *Governmentality after neoliberalism*, Routledge, 152-171
- Davoudi, S. et al. (2013) Evolutionary resilience and strategies for climate adaptation, *Planning Practice & Research*, 28(3) 307-322.

* Professor on Environment and Planning Director of Global Urban Research Unit (GURU) School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Co-Director of Newcastle University Centre for Cities (Cities NUCoRE) Newcastle University, UK
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/guru/staff/profile/simindavoudi.html#background>

Davoudi, S. (2012) Resilience: A bridging concept or a dead end? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 13(2) 299-307.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649357.2012.677124>