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Contents

Abstract

Under the general rubric of "resilience," this article examines the demands of human systems and the challenges of coping with this challenge. Fundamental to the ability to operate in the face of change are the ways in which to meet the challenge, it would make sense to look to areas of human experience where change and the interaction of human and natural systems have been addressed before. We examine the intellectual areas of ecology and risk, and find that the attribute of resilience is a strong theme. A three-class typology of resilience (resistance to change; change at the margins; openness and adaptation), is developed to structure the discussion and clarify the issues. We argue that, whereas the nature of the problems facing humanity demands entertaining responses across this spectrum, current institutions and policy processes appear to be locked into "type 2"—change at the margins.

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