

What do sustainability and resilience mean in the context of urban infrastructure?

Planning, designing, and operating sustainable and resilient infrastructure has become a priority for most nations on earth. Yet, by nature, the terms “sustainability” and “resilience” are conceptual, and they do not help much in the design process. In this talk, we will discuss their meaning within the context of urban infrastructure, differentiating between sustainable, tolerable, and unsustainable infrastructure, and discussing the concept of satisficing in resilience. We will also look at specific examples in several infrastructure domains to illustrate how they can be applied. In particular, we will compare the model of water distribution in high-income countries with the one adopted in Vietnam that tends to be both more sustainable and resilient. In the end, while we are a long way from operating truly sustainable and resilient urban infrastructure, we have made much progress that we can learn from and get inspired for the future of urban infrastructure.

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