



PART 3

Read the text below and answer questions 27–40.

GOVERNANCE, EQUITY, AND THE FUTURE RESILIENT CITY

Resilience has become the favoured idiom of the twenty-first-century city: a reassuring promise that urban systems can absorb shocks—floods, heatwaves, pandemics, supply disruptions—and then return to normal. Yet the language is deceptive. A city can “bounce back” in aggregate while particular districts remain exposed, under-served, or politically unheard. In that sense, resilience is not simply a technical attribute of pipes, walls, or sensors; it is a judgement about which harms are deemed intolerable, which losses are counted, and whose security is treated as non-negotiable. The concept therefore sits uneasily between engineering and ethics, describing both an infrastructure agenda and a moral claim about distributive justice.

If resilience is a promise, governance is the machinery that either fulfils it or turns it into a slogan. Urban governance includes legal authority over land and water, the administrative capacity to coordinate agencies, and the institutional legitimacy required to impose difficult trade-offs. Where these components are weak, resilience becomes fragmented: drainage upgrades proceed without housing reforms; public health planning is detached from transport access; and redevelopment incentives quietly relocate low-income residents into hazard-prone zones. Where governance is aligned, however, resilience can be treated as a cross-sector project that links infrastructure, social services, and public health around shared risk priorities rather than isolated departmental targets.

Equity matters because vulnerability is not randomly distributed; it is manufactured over decades through planning decisions, market pressures, and uneven political influence. In many cities, informal settlements cluster on steep slopes, reclaimed land, river edges, or other marginal sites where land is cheaper and danger is higher. Poorly insulated buildings intensify heat stress; overcrowded housing accelerates disease transmission; and long commutes reduce the capacity to evacuate or access care. These conditions are not simply “exposure” in a cartographic sense. They are socio-spatial fragmentation: the uneven layering of risk onto communities whose bargaining power is already constrained. A purely technical upgrade may reduce hazard intensity while leaving the underlying distribution of vulnerability intact.

This is why “risk blind spots” have become a central critique. Standard hazard maps often treat exposure as a clean overlay—floodplain boundaries here, population density there—while overlooking the everyday factors that transform hazards into disasters. They typically do not incorporate variables such as household savings, job security, or the reliability of



access to clinics, even though these conditions determine whether a shock becomes a prolonged crisis. Blind spots also arise from data gaps: informal housing may be undercounted, undocumented residents may be excluded from datasets, and platform-generated indicators may privilege what is easily measured over what is socially consequential. The result is a technocratic bias in which plans optimise for the visible city and neglect the hidden one.

In response, many municipalities are experimenting with participatory mechanisms intended to correct epistemic injustice—situations where official knowledge systems systematically discount local experience. Community-led mapping can identify which underpasses flood first; neighbourhood committees can reveal informal shelter networks; participatory budgeting can redirect spending toward preventive measures such as cooling centres, tree canopy, safe retrofits, or targeted health outreach rather than only post-disaster clean-up. However, participation alone does not guarantee fairness. Meetings can be dominated by those with time, language skills, or political connections, and some programmes inadvertently shift the burden of resilience onto residents, expecting unpaid monitoring or volunteer labour. More credible models therefore pair participation with safeguards—translation, childcare, accessible meeting times—and clear rules linking community input to budget decisions, so that consultation becomes power-sharing rather than performance.

Technology is often marketed as a shortcut to resilience: sensors for real-time water levels, satellite imagery for subsidence, and “digital twins” that simulate heat, flooding, or mobility patterns. These tools can be valuable, but they also risk producing a false precision. Models are only as robust as their assumptions, and if a digital twin is built mainly from formal land records, it may reproduce exclusions by systematically omitting informal neighbourhoods. For this reason, some cities increasingly treat urban data as stewardship rather than mere extraction: a practice governed by transparency, privacy protection, and community oversight, with explicit attention to whose realities are represented and whose are erased. In this view, technology can support resilience only when it is embedded in accountable institutions rather than treated as an apolitical solution.

Finance and trade-offs then determine what actually gets built—and for whom. After major shocks, emergency funds and donor grants often prioritise visible assets such as bridges, seawalls, and central business districts, while less visible needs—renters’ protections, mental-health services, or small-business recovery—receive weaker support. Long-term resilience requires different instruments: maintenance budgets, social insurance, and funding formulas that recognise chronic risk rather than episodic catastrophe. The hardest



decisions are spatial and temporal: a seawall can protect one district while worsening erosion elsewhere; a new transit line can reduce emissions yet increase land prices near stations. Good governance does not eliminate trade-offs, but it makes them explicit, contestable, and subject to public reasoning rather than quiet displacement.

Ultimately, the resilient city is not a finished product but an ongoing negotiation under uncertainty. When resilience policy is anchored in equity, it treats affordable housing, social protection, and meaningful participation as core infrastructure, not optional extras. Success is judged not only by how quickly a city recovers, but by whether recovery reduces inequality, strengthens trust, and improves everyday wellbeing. In that sense, resilience becomes less about heroic rebuilding after catastrophe and more about patient, institutionalised risk reduction before harm occurs—an achievement measured as much in legitimacy and cohesion as in concrete and steel.

Questions 27–30

Select the correct answer.

27 What is the writer’s main point about urban resilience?

- A** It is best understood as a technical programme whose results can be judged mainly by engineering standards.
- B** A city may recover quickly while still leaving some communities exposed or unheard.
- C** Its success depends chiefly on how rapidly physical damage is repaired after a shock.
- D** It is most effectively delivered through private-sector innovation rather than public institutions.

28 In the passage, “risk blind spots” are most closely associated with

- A** residents refusing to share information with city officials.
- B** hazards that occur too infrequently to be captured by standard maps.
- C** investment being concentrated on coastal districts at the expense of inland areas.
- D** planning tools that overlook everyday vulnerability and are affected by data gaps.

29 The passage suggests participatory budgeting is valuable because it can

- A** remove the need for coordination between departments and agencies.
- B** ensure that all residents have equal influence over final decisions.
- C** redirect spending towards preventive measures based on local knowledge.
- D** replace the need for modelling in decisions about long-term risk.

30 What concern does the writer raise about “digital twins”?



- A** They slow emergency response by adding an extra layer of bureaucracy.
- B** They cannot be updated as conditions change over time.
- C** They inevitably compromise privacy, regardless of safeguards.
- D** They may reproduce exclusions if they rely mainly on incomplete formal records.

Questions 31–35

Choose **TRUE** if the statement agrees with the information given in the text, choose **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the information, or choose **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information on this.

- 31** The passage suggests that weak governance can lead to fragmented resilience efforts across departments.
- 32** According to the passage, informal settlements are often located in places where physical danger is greater.
- 33** The passage states that standard hazard maps routinely include information about households' savings and job security.
- 34** The writer suggests that some participation programmes can unintentionally shift responsibility onto residents.
- 35** The passage suggests emergency funding often prioritises visible assets over less visible needs such as renters' protections.

Questions 36–40

Complete the summary below. Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Building institutional resilience

Urban resilience depends on governance as well as engineering. Strong institutions need public **36** to enforce difficult trade-offs. The passage argues that vulnerability is shaped by long-term inequality, including the concentration of **37** settlements in dangerous locations and higher levels of heat-related stress in poorly protected buildings. Data-driven systems can create blind spots, so some cities treat data as **38** with clearer rules and community oversight. Finally, success should be judged not only by rapid recovery but also by whether it strengthens public **39** and improves everyday **40**

Answer Key

27. B



28. D

29. C

30. D

31. TRUE

32. TRUE

33. FALSE

34. TRUE

35. TRUE

36. legitimacy

37. informal

38. stewardship

39. trust

40. wellbeing