Governance and Community Responses to Floods in Poor Peri-urban Areas - DTU Orbit (13/12/2018)

Governance and Community Responses to Floods in Poor Peri-urban Areas: The case of Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Pikine, Senegal

In recent years, urban flooding has become an increasingly severe and frequent problem for the poor in many West African urban centres. In diverse metropoles of the region, including Lagos, Cotonou, Accra, Abidjan and Dakar, low-income populations who typically live undesirable flood-prone areas see their already considerable vulnerability increased for every flooding event. In the long term, climate change is expected to make matters worse for these already tried populations, due to an increase in storm frequency and intensity, and with them in the risk of floods. However, climate change-induced changing weather patterns and more extreme weather events are only part of the explanation for this situation, as large segments of the urban population in West Africa are not offered the public services, infrastructure and protective regulations needed in order to respond to floods. In Senegal, in spite of significant development aid and interventions, the number of flood victims in urban centres has increased steadily since 1999.

Against this background, this dissertation examines how the governance for floods is configured at the national and municipal scales, in a context of weak state capacity. The dissertation addresses how urban flood management, community responses and resulting public services are produced, as well as the implications thereof. It is investigated how floods have been managed in urban Senegal during the last fifteen years and examines why it has not led to the results expected by the population, state institutions and the donor community. It is found that the significant support allocated to flood management has created a political and personal appropriation of flood management processes at the national level. This has resulted in a fragmented institutional framework with overlapping institutions, duplicate mechanisms and an ongoing ‘negotiation’ of competencies and interpretation of mandates, which have limited the impact of flood management in Senegal. In spite of the lack of achievement in the domain of flood management, it is found that weak state capacity does not mean that the urban poor are simply passive victims of climate change, or that collective services and interventions relative to flood management are inexistent or ungoverned. Instead, the ability to respond to floods is to a large extent formed outside the realm of the state and is maintained through a set of complex negotiation processes among various actors involved in diverse governance modes, found inside and outside the formal state bureaucracy and the official policies and plans in Senegal. The findings also reveal that community responses may not, by themselves, sufficiently compensate for the lack of basic services and infrastructure that is forcing the urban poor to cope with disproportionate levels of risk.

General information
State: Published
Organisations: Department of Management Engineering, UNEP DTU Partnership, Roskilde University
Contributors: Schaer, C., Nygaard, I., Hahonou, E. K.
Number of pages: 126
Publication date: 2015

Publication information
Publisher: UNEP DTU Partnership
Original language: English
Electronic versions:
Governance_and_Community_Responses.pdf

Bibliographical note
PhD Thesis
Source: PublicationPreSubmission
Source-ID: 118945224
Research output: Research › Ph.D. thesis – Annual report year: 2015