



SEMINAR

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Collaborative disaster management in Turkey Helena Hermansson, PhD

Natural disasters are included in the category of so called “wicked problems” as interventions and strategies for dealing with them are far from obvious and there is a lot of uncertainty involved when it comes to how best to prepare for and respond to them once they do occur (Weber and Khademian 2008). Another characterizing feature of wicked problems is that they require collaboration between many different actors in society in order to manage them as effectively as possible. My dissertation focuses on this last aspect of the problem and investigates the challenges of bringing about fruitful collaboration between organizations involved in preparing for and responding to disasters. The project aims to answer how fruitful prerequisites or conditions beneficial for collaboration can be achieved. Can they, for example, be encouraged through top-down structural changes, such as political reform or legal initiatives or are local bottom-up initiatives more fruitful? How can actors best organize for attaining and encouraging collaborative disaster management? What benefits and drawbacks do, for example, hierarchies or more flat modes of network organization bring for collaboration?

Many of the theoretical frameworks concerning these disaster and collaboration have been developed and applied in Western Europe and the United States (Oliver-Smith 1996). Studying collaboration in Turkey therefore presents an opportunity to add new empirics and insights to our understandings regarding how politico-administrative system and culture affect collaboration and its prerequisites. As Turkey recently underwent institutional reform aimed at improving collaboration in the disaster management domain (2009) and a number of disasters have since followed, Turkey is deemed to be a suitable case to study.

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