KLIMA 2050

RISK REDUCTION THROUGH CLIMATE ADAPTATION OF BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Innovation in the realm of institutional complexity – the case of climate adaptation

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Introduction

• Climate changes and changes in precipitation have fundamental consequences for the built community
  – In Norway, the precipitation is expected to increase on the average with 30% by 2100

• We need both adaptation to and innovation in order to deal with the climate changes
Empirical observation and aim

• The built community is highly fragmented, with many actors that are highly interdependent

• Climate changes provide both challenges and opportunities to the built community

• Our aim is to build theory on the emergence of a new social order in a mature institutional field as a response to exogenous shocks, such as climate changes
Theoretical background

• The tension between various institutional logics in a field
  – i.e. a dominant logic on “how to interpret organizational reality, what constitutes appropriate behavior, and how to succeed” in a field (Thornton 2004: 70)
  – institutional complexity (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta and Lounsbury 2011)

• Previous research: focus on incremental adjustments of social order over time

• Identified gaps:
  – The process of translation and adaptation of societal logics into an institutional field (Thornton et al. 2012)
  – Change of inter-institutional practices and how actors develop new practices when facing joint exogenous pressure (Greenwood et al. 2011)
Initial research model

The existing societal logic of the built environment

Institutional logic

Institutional logic

Institutional logic

Institutional logic

Exogenous shock challenging the existing social order

Institutional complexity
Research design and methods

- Unit of analysis: phenomena of incidents of flooding and/or landslides and how different institutional actors deal with these incidents
- A multiple case study (comparative)
- Cases including both successful climate adaptation and ‘failures’
- Qualitative methods based on
  - interviews with people in key organizations – both individually and in groups, who have a stake in the chosen incidents
  - observations at the scene
  - participation in meetings dealing with the incident
  - various reports on the incident and related issues
Vignette

- Kvam in the south-east part of Norway, being hit by two ‘100-years’ floods in 2011 and 2013 – causing the evacuation of hundreds of people and the shut down of roads and rail services.
- Many measures taken after flooding in 2011, including strengthen dam, but of no use – a new and unexpected flooding hit the area in 2013.
- 2015: debate over who is to pay and waiting for a new dam solution – takes time.
Preliminary findings

• The built community is conscious about the challenges (and that this is major challenge)
• However, no full overview of the consequences of the climate changes and what measures that are required
  – No “good” tried out solutions
• No one is taking overall responsibility
• Hence, no unified understanding and strategies of what to do and who is to do what
Points for discussion

• Theoretical positioning and contribution
  – Gaps in institutional theory and institutional logics perspective? Specific issues and references that are particularly relevant?
  – Gaps in innovation theories? Particularly related to process- and organizational innovations
  – Gaps in the inter-organizational theories?

• Research design
  – Developing an appropriate research design – recommendations with regard to case sampling and data collection?