

Co-Creating theories and research design for an interdisciplinary project dealing with capacity building for people with migration background in Austria

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Understanding spatial and social aspects of vulnerability is of growing importance in the context of climate change and natural hazards. The interplay of structural factors, socio-demographic aspects, current risk communication strategies, spatial planning instruments and related processes and the current spatial and environmental situation, including hazards and hazard zones, geographical locations, building and settlement types, contributing to people's vulnerabilities needs to be analysed and understood to reduce vulnerability and to foster resilience. The project "CCCapMig" (Climate change and capacity building for people with migration background in Austria) aims at linking spatial and technical, as well as organisational and social aspects of climate change and natural hazards. This paper focuses on the co-creation of the theoretical framework and concepts and outlines the research design for this interdisciplinary cross-analysis of several case studies in rural Austria.

The project is designed as an inter- and transdisciplinary survey and brings together engineering sciences, spatial sciences and social sciences. Reflecting the interdisciplinary approach, a theoretical framework was developed that refers to a combination of both theories and frameworks from vulnerability research, theories of risk perception and spatial theories and methods like the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, the Protection-Motivation Theory and Landscape-Planning Theories: The "Sustainable Livelihoods Framework" adapted (by FAO) for disaster risk management offers an analytical framework to understand the emergence of vulnerabilities from the perspective of people's livelihoods on individual and community level. It includes human, social, natural, physical and financial aspects and the role of institutions, policies and legal rights in reducing or increasing exposure to disaster risk and coping capacities. Additionally, theories on risk perception, especially Protection-Motivation Theory, developed by social sciences, will be used as assessment frame to understand people's flood damage mitigation behaviour. Furthermore, spatial theories and landscape planning approaches (like an everyday, evidence-based approach) are combined with theories from social sciences reflecting the interdisciplinary approach of this project that has become standard in studies on disaster and climate change.

This theoretical approach was developed through a collaborative research at the beginning of the research design in order to a) develop further and test existing concepts, b) to fine-tune the proposed method setting, c) to foster common understanding of theories and methods within the interdisciplinary research team.

In general, the research process is characterised by critical theory and brings in reflective elements, allowing feedback circles between methods and theories. End-users and decision-makers will be integral partners, ensuring that feasibility of the recommendations and guidelines will be guaranteed.

Consequently, the methods of data collection in this project reflect the results of the critical discussion of the theoretical frameworks and combine methods of social sciences: interviews with inhabitants living in hazard zones, detailed surveys of families, focus group discussions, and expert interviews with local and regional stakeholders involved in disaster risk management. In addition to that, structural factors, demographic data, current risk communication strategies, legal instruments and related processes and the current spatial and environmental situation (including hazards and hazard zones, geographical locations, building and settlement types) are analysed.