

Metabolism of Water: Mobility, Power and Scale

Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung (ZEF), University of Bonn
Global Water Systems Project (GWSP), University of Bonn
Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (IRS)
University of Osnabrück

18 JUNE 2014
10.30 – 12.15

BERLIN BOTANICAL GARDEN MEUSEUM

The papers will explore the construction and reconstruction of the flow of urban water by diverse actors (and also contextual factors) in influencing the human well-being. In addition, it will build together a consortium on urban water systems for cross-learning and sharing of experiences.

Infrastructures are built networks that facilitate flows of goods, people or ideas and allow for exchange over space. It is an amalgamation of technical, administrative and financial techniques that places systems at the center for the analysis and focuses on systems building. Arising out of the industrial ecology, urban metabolism has contributed to analyzing the material flow of water to allocate the resources efficiently and offered new ways of thinking about the sustainability of cities and opportunities for innovative urban infrastructures. Urban metabolism through its interdisciplinary perspective had offered a fruitful avenue to investigate urban transformation through diverse tools for development of social and environmental policy and, investigate the role of actors and power relations that shapes infrastructure. Despite its insights, they inform little about the 'everyday practices', the diffuse forms of power and more so less on policy planning and designing of urban infrastructure that has significant influence on human well-being. A situated understanding of the flow, power and technology in everyday practices forms the core towards alternative possibilities for progressive change in rapidly urbanizing world.

The session aims to bring together scholars with different theoretical perspectives and conceptual terms from within ecosystems approach, urban political ecology, technopolitics, complex systems, institutional analysis, and spatial analysis to examine the social materiality of urban water flow in both developed and developing world. The discussion-based session will address the following questions:

1. Introduction to the session and participants
2. Introduction to the concept of 'Urban Metabolism'
3. Presentation of case studies (each 5 minutes with 2 pages of summary circulated during the session)
 - a. "Water infrastructure and infectious hepatitis outbreak in Ahmedabad" – Dr. Veena Iyer, Indian Institute of Public Health-Gandhinagar (IIPH-G) and Dr. G. D. Makwana, Medical Officer, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)
 - b. "Enhancement of natural water systems and treatment methods for safe and sustainable water supply in India – Introduction to the Saph Pani Project" – Prof. Michael Schneider, Freie Universität Berlin

c. "Water, energy and food in Leh Town, Ladakh India: An urban metabolism perspective" – Dr. Daphne Gondhalekar, Scientific Director, Centre for Urban Ecology and Climate Adaptation (ZSK), Technical University Munich, and Research Fellow, Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany

d. "Metabolized-water breeding diseases in urban India: Socio-spatiality of water problems and health burden in Ahmedabad" – Dr. V.S.Saravanan, Senior Researcher, University of Bonn.

4. How relevant is urban metabolism as a concept to encapsulate your research?

5. What is way forward for this group?

The issues raised during the workshop potentially will shape towards creating a forum, developing a research consortium in Germany that will develop research projects, and develop module for dissemination in educational institutions in Europe and abroad.

Agenda

To develop a Research Consortium on 'Urban Water Systems and Human Well-being'

Moderator

V.S.Saravanan, Senior Researcher, Center for Development Research (ZEF) University of Bonn