

Abstract

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Laissez-faire Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction: A Case Study of Floods in Belgrade, Serbia

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Abstract

Objective: The city was hit by a flood on July 5, 2022. Afterwards, the mayor of Belgrade declared that no one should be blamed because we cannot influence God's will. Objective is examination of the relationship between such a laissez-faire approach to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) from the city government, and some groups from hill areas (historically not flooded), who were flooded and have started to develop DRR approaches to adequately respond to the next possible flood.

Methods: Participant observation site work is in progress and includes 32 households in the residential hill area of Belgrade that experienced its first rain floods from 2019 to 2023. DRR is represented through self-installed special devices on the city sewage network. The data collection and analysis included narrative analysis and sociological analysis of photographs. All data was first anonymized as some practices were viewed as legitimate but not always legal.

Results: During the relevant three years, the number of non-flooded homes increased proportionally with increasing self-installation of special devices on their city sewage system

Conclusions: Groups left without official DRR policies can develop resilience through individual actions in communal infrastructure and find ways to resist natural hazards and government laissez-faire DRR.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.190>.