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Adapting through local planning: barriers and opportunities for climate adaptation

Climate Adaptation Flagship

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National Research
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Climate Adaptation



Overview of presentation

- Planning at local community scale offers strong potential for adaptation
 - Can bring together local and scientific knowledge
- Describe 2 different modes of planning
- Constraints on planning recognised by adaptation literature
- Consider wider set of constraints:
 - from Community Based Environmental Planning
- Present lessons from a case study in Sydney, Australia
- Conclusions:
 - Adaptation through local planning needs to recognise a wider set of constraints
 - Researchers need to work with those who can address those constraints

Local planning is an important avenue for adaptation

- **Vulnerability is place specific**
 - Uneven spatial distribution of hazards
 - Pockets of social advantage / disadvantage
- **Local governments (municipalities) are key actors**
 - Immediate link to local vulnerability
 - Connected to their communities, in principle
 - And involve them in the planning process
- **Local planning has two distinct modes**
 - Strategic planning (what are the issues and how to respond)
 - Land use planning (space allocation and development approval)
- **These two modes are linked**
 - i.e. land use planning is informed by strategic planning

Recognised constraints on local planning in adaptation literature

- Climate adaptation literature has identified some key constraints on advancing adaptation through planning
- Lack of resources
 - Money
 - Time
 - Skills
- Institutional limitations
 - Local governments are offspring of state/provincial governments
 - State governments can over-ride local planning decisions
- Lack of information
 - Hazard mapping
 - [less of an issue on human capital, social capital]
- However: the literature on adaptation through local planning is still fairly new and emerging

Constraints on planning from CBEP

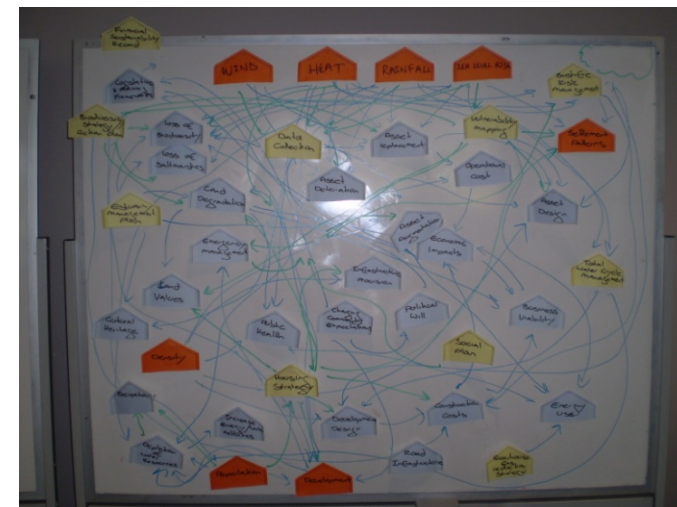
- The literature on Community Based Environmental Planning (CBEP) is much more developed
- Strong focus on place-based planning in local communities
- Relevant to understanding adaptation through local planning
 - Particularly in regards to strategic planning
- Clearly demonstrates heterogeneous nature of local communities
- Shows that there are likely to be winners and losers of adaptation at local scale
 - (in addition to national scale)
 - Re-enforces the question of what constitutes 'legitimate' adaptation
- CBEP shows that combining local knowledge and scientific knowledge is rarely achieved in a single planning process

Case study: Sydney local councils

- Conducted as part of the Systems Approach to Regional Climate Change Adaptation project (with SCCG)
- Conducted in 2008
- Involved interviews with 33 local government representatives from 3 Councils
 - Strategic planners,
 - Land use planners
 - Social planners
 - Engineers
 - Senior managers
 - Elected officials
- Part of a wider program involving vulnerability mapping, systems workshops and stakeholder engagement process
 - <http://www.sydneycostalouncils.com.au/system-approach-to-regional-climate-change-adaptation-strategies-in-metropolises/index.php>

Lessons from case study

- All the surface level constraints are apparent
 - Lack of resources
 - Lack of information
 - Institutional structure means limited local power
- Strong competition on the planning agenda
- Local leadership is crucial
- Direct resources to address other constraints (e.g. information)
- Direct attention to the flaws in the planning system



Conclusion

- Climate adaptation science needs to recognise a wider set of constraints that act upon the planning system
 - Planning is a political process as much as a technical process
- Scientists need to work with people with political agency
 - In so doing, can be used to influence the strategic planning process
- This can lead to change in state planning policy frameworks
 - Draft journal paper available for more information

Acknowledge full team



Adapting through local planning

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Thank you

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