Localization of urban ecosystem governance in Bangalore, India – a transition to sustainable water supply?

Flor Luna, *Johan Enqvist, Maria Tengö
Stockholm Resilience Centre, Sweden

Urban lakes connected though channels across the city of Bangalore, India, generate multiple ecosystem services to rich and poor inhabitants including water use for local livelihoods, groundwater recharge and flood control, as well as recreation. Many of these lakes are severely degraded due to rapid urbanization and failure by managing institutions to accommodate different types of uses as well as the connectivity and ecological function of lakes. However, a growing number of citizen-driven initiatives challenge the centralized governance structure and are pushing for a shift to engage and empower local stewardship of lakes as decentralized units in a rejuvenated water providing system for the city.

This presentation combines insights of two studies about the emergence of pioneering lake initiatives and the subsequent spread and citywide mobilization into a network of citizen groups. Results analyzed through transformation trajectory narratives describe the role of emotional attachment and cultural values for motivating early actions. Social–ecological network analysis show broader patterns in the spread of initiatives in relation to institutional settings, interpersonal relationships as well as ecosystem structure. These findings shed light on the potential for better ecosystem "fit" of localized management, and for sustained transformation of urban lake governance in Bangalore.

Keywords: stewardship, urban, transformations, localization

*Presenting author