Exploring potentials and limitations of linking reconstruction process to urban governance

First author, affiliation: Fatemeh (Farnaz) Arefian, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL
Email: fatemah.arefian.10 @ucl.ac.uk; f.arefian@silkcities.org

Abstract

It is acknowledged that urban reconstruction is more challenging and complex than rural reconstruction. One explanation of such complexities is that regulatory frameworks for urban governance in cities are more complicated and varied in their bureaucracy or efficiency. For example, cities are dynamic systems with multiple interconnected factors and population density. Such factors must be taken into account for the purpose of reconstruction that itself inherits complexities. For example, housing development in a given city follows a certain process. Following a destructive disaster in the city a reconstruction process must be designed and implemented for the city reconstruction, which must incorporate the contemporary expectations from reconstruction. Examples of those expectations are disaster risk reduction (DRR) and participating disaster-affected locals and/or other expectations rooted in the envisioned developmental multidisciplinary recovery.

Intrinsic challenges also potentially make urban reconstruction less interesting than rural reconstruction for humanitarian organisations and international agencies as it was the case in Pakistan after the Kashmir earthquake in 2005.

The paper will explore the potential linkages between urban governance and programming reconstruction, focusing on housing process. It will discuss how the reconstruction process, and the urban governance process, can potentially inform each other towards better programming in reconstruction and the mainstreaming the DRR measures. The paper focuses on housing reconstruction as the counter-activity of housing development in normal situations.

The methodology is qualitative and inductive analysis of theoretical and empirical literature. The paper presents part of the findings of a PhD research on organising and managing post disaster reconstruction programmes.

The paper argues that designing the reconstruction process as an improved version of normal development process contains opportunities with potentials for mainstreaming DRR, however such an approach inherits limitations. The paper will elaborate on those potentials and limitations.
This research contributes to theoretical development on reconstruction management and organising reconstruction programmes in urban contexts, pointing to better reconstructions in practice.

Keywords: Reconstruction process, Urban governance, Housing development, Housing Reconstruction

Abstract Reference Number: 76