Experiences with relocation in Germany

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Presentation structure

• General approaches to deal with river floods in Germany
• Reasons for relocation in Germany
• Example of relocation: Inden/ Altdorf
• Example of relocation: Röderau-Süd
• Things to learn from relocation caused by brown coal mining
• Closer look: The example of Röderau-Süd
• Problems with relocation
• Lessons to be learned from Röderau-Süd
General approaches to deal with river floods in Germany

• Protect and secure life and assets, e.g. by
  o Technical flood control (e.g. dykes, polder, river dams)
  o Awareness of danger and natural protection (e.g. flood risk maps, relocation of dykes)
  o Designation of areas subject to flooding and risk-adjusted construction

• In some cases it might not be enough to rely on these approaches

→ Designation of risk zones and relocation can be an option
Relocation in Germany

Reasons for relocation

• Economic factors (e.g. brown coal mining)
• Demographic change
• Natural phenomena connected with climate change (e.g. flooding, rock fall, mud slide, snow avalanche)

What to consider when relocating

• In Germany, all decisions to relocate have to be based on weighing between public and private concerns (e.g. flood protection, economic concerns), cp. §1 (7) Federal Building Code
  → Outcome differs from case to case, no general solution
Example of relocation: Inden/ Altdorf

- Reason for relocation: economic interest
- Number of people relocated: 2,984, ~60% jointly relocated
- Duration: 1982-1999 (17 years)
- Participation procedure:
  - survey on potential relocation sites
  - Establishment of advisory bureau in Inden
- Financing: Rheinbraun AG → private financing
Example of relocation: Röderau-Süd

• Reason for relocation: flooding

• Number of people relocated: 340 + some businesses

• Duration: 2002-2005 (3 years)

• Participation procedure:
  • Mediation
  • Provision of a contact person

• Financing: 100% by SAB (Saxony’s central development agency) → public financing
Things to learn from relocation caused by brown coal mining

• Offer early information and participation to affected citizens

• Help with the search for a relocation site

• Govern the relocation process

• Offer residents sufficient reimbursement

• If the reason for relocation is economic, more money can be invested.
Closer look: The example of Röderau-Süd I

- Röderau is located in the Free State of Saxony in the East of Germany.
Map: „Location map Saxony, Germany” by TUBS licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Datei:Saxony_location_map.svg
Röderau is located in the Free State of Saxony in the East of Germany.

Today it is part of the municipality Zeithain.

After the German reunification, Röderau wanted to designate a new commercial area in the Elbe meadows.

First, the permission was denied, because the area had been designated as flood retention area in the GDR.

In 1992, the permission finally was granted.

The competition between city centers and hinterlands lead to the fact that the former policy to keep the Elbe’s catchment area free from development did not have top priority anymore.
Closer look: The example of Röderau-Süd II

- Small demand for commercial uses lead to the conversion into a residential area
- The final settlement included 140 housing units and some commercial units
- ~340 residents
- On 16 August 2002, the settlement was completely flooded by the Elbe river
- After disaster: People started with reconstruction
Closer look: The example of Röderau-Süd III

- Evaluation: Future safety cannot be guaranteed; technical solutions would increase flood risk for neighboring towns.
- 19 December 2002: Agreement on the reconstruction of Röderau-Süd was concluded by the federal state and the Free State of Saxony.
- A state officer negotiated with citizens and finally everyone agreed to leave voluntarily.
Closer look: The example of Röderau-Süd IV

- People willing to move were compensated 100%
- People who wanted to stay were offered 80% of repair costs and no further assistance by the government in case of another flood
- New house must be the equivalent of the house left behind.
- Overall costs of relocation: ~40 million Euro were covered by flood relief fund
Problems with relocation

- People want to move on as fast as possible (quick decision needed)
- Existing land uses in settlements are protected
- Relocation requires the acceptance of residents (and/or efforts at persuasion)
- Relocation is expensive → Relocation cannot be offered to everyone
  - For instance:
  - After the 2002 and 2013 flood, people from Nünchritz-West formed a citizens' initiative that demands a relocation similar to Röderau-Süd
→ Because of weighing process, there is no general solution
Lessons to be learned from Röderau-Süd

• Technical solutions (e.g. dykes) are not always reliable and can fail.
• Former decisions should not be ignored just because they currently are considered “unattractive”.
• Relocation is possible if politically desirable and combined with a sufficient compensation.
• Collective relocation should be aspired when possible.
Thank you for your attention!

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Resources

- Presentation „Neue Erkenntnisse zum Klimawandel - Bedeutung für die Regionale Entwicklung“ by Prof. Dr. Manfred Stock (228 June 2014)