

Geographisches Kolloquium Sommersemester 2023



Ort: Hörsaal H8 (GEO II)

Dienstag, 04. Juli 2023, 16.00 – 18.00 Uhr

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(Re)imagining inclusive and sustainable urban development: The perspectives of urban slum dwellers in Ghana

While the call for inclusive and sustainable urban development, as captured in SDG11 and reiterated in the New Urban Agenda in the Habitat III conference in Quito, has resonated globally, how to achieve this goal remains complex and obscure. Achieving SDG11 is particularly formidable in Sub-Saharan Africa due to rapid urbanisation in the region, where over 61 % of its urban residents live in slums characterised by precarity and lack of basic amenities. Ghana is one of the countries in the sub-region experiencing a swift urban transition, with a significant proportion of its urban population living in slums. Having implemented several policy initiatives over the years, most interventions have not yielded the intended outcomes largely because policymakers have failed to consider the realities in urban slums in the country. In particular, the voices and perspectives of slum dwellers remain largely missing in the inclusive and sustainable urban development discourse. This partly stems from the fact that slums are viewed as social pathologies and inimical to inclusive and sustainable urban development agenda. As a result, urban policy in Ghana, for instance, has often been one of “slum clearing” and “decongestion”, leading to resistance from residents. It is against this background that I extend a warm invitation to you in this colloquium for a “rethinking” and a “(re)imagination” of inclusive and sustainable urban development. In particular, to reflect and debate on the following key questions: what does inclusive and sustainable urban development mean for the ordinary person in an urban slum? To what extent should the views of urban slum dwellers count on the inclusive and sustainable urban development discourse? I draw on my past four years of research on slums in Accra and Kumasi to demonstrate how the perspectives of slum dwellers matter in achieving inclusive and sustainable urban development in Ghana.