



Towards a diversification of Flood Risk Management Strategies in Europe: a reflection on meta-governance challenges

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Because of climate change, extreme weather events and urban sprawl, urban areas have to deal with increasing flood risks. It is argued, both in literature and in practice that these risks can no longer be dealt with by focusing solely on flood defenses (building dikes, dams, embankments etc.). Actors at various levels (international, European, national as well as regional) wish for and make efforts at a diversification of Flood Risk Management Strategies (FRMSs). The additional role flood prevention by pro-active spatial planning (building permits), flood mitigation (e.g. urban green infrastructures, adaptive buildings), flood preparation and flood recovery can play in improving a region's resilience to flooding is widely debated.

However, scientific literature so far has only addressed each shift – and the necessary institutional preconditions for establishing it – separately, but has failed to address them in combination. A diversification of FRMSs will result in governance challenges, which necessitates coordination or meta-governance. Meta governance must integrate existing – often fragmented - Flood Risks Governance Arrangements. It is however not clear under which conditions such meta-governance can be successful. Aim of this paper is to explore the conditions that enable a successful diversification of FRMSs. Our exploration consists of three steps. First we will structure the debates in relevant literature by the development of a classification scheme of governance challenges. Second, we will elaborate this scheme for a diversification of FRMSs from flood defense towards flood prevention, mitigation, preparation and recovery. Third, we will reflect on the ways meta governance addresses these challenges in the Netherlands, England and Poland. These cases on one hand show that diversification practices may be complicated, but on the other hand reveals the conditions under which such a diversification may take place. A distinction will be made between discursive requirements (i.e. the content of flood-related policies), and actor- rules and resources related conditions (i.e. the organization of flood-related policies). Future comparative empirical research is needed to further refine these conditions. We therefore conclude our paper with a research agenda .