

Multiple Flood Experiences and Perceived Flood Consequences: Insights from the 2013 Flood in Germany

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Facing severe and repetitive floods, many European countries are changing their flood management approach from hazard to risk-based management, with the aim of preventing and mitigating harm. This approach has increased the role of households and their responsibility in terms of reducing flood risk.

This study is conducted with the aim of analyzing how citizens perceive their responsibility to take action to mitigate the impact of future flood events and how this is changing through the experience of multiple flood events. For this purpose, questionnaire surveys are conducted among 1,378 households in two states of Saxony and Bavaria, Germany. In the first step, the dynamic interaction between personal actions and the number of floods experienced as well as the perceived severity of flood consequences were tested empirically. In the second step, it was intended to understand whether the interaction between personal action, flood experience and perceived consequences influences citizens' feeling of responsibility.

The results show that people who were affected by a flood event and have taken previously private mitigation action tend to reject their personal responsibility in flood risk management unless they perceive the flood severity of the consequences as low and have experienced fewer flood events before the most recent flood event.

These findings can contribute to better understand the role of citizens in flood risk management, namely in terms of how and to what extent households should be motivated to take personal mitigation action.

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