



# A Dutch Perspective on the Role of Solidarity in Adaptation to Climate Change Strategies for Water Management

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Deltas in Times of  
Climate Change 2014

## Introduction

- Why we researched solidarity in water management, in particular in adaptation projects?
- What is solidarity?
- How did we measure it?
- Which role did solidarity play in our case studies?
- Conclusions

## Why solidarity in water management in the Netherlands

- Water management depends on collective and public arrangements in the Netherlands
- Adaptation in water management strategies in the Netherlands is explicitly linked to solidarity

To what extent plays solidarity a role in Dutch water management under adaptation stress?

## Dutch water management and governance under adaptation stress



## Conceptualizing solidarity

<b>Solidarity</b>	Voluntary, reciprocal commitment (moral duty)	to assist	community members in need
<b>Institutionalized solidarity</b>	Legal obligation	to pay tax in order to create funding for state assistance to	other inhabitants entitled to assistance

## Measuring the role solidarity played

To what extent plays solidarity a role in Dutch water management under adaptation stress?

- the proposed or actual measure, the community from which a commitment was asked or a tax imposed, and who was in need of assistance or entitled to assistance.
- the criteria for the distribution of public resources; costs and benefits both from a collective and an individual perspective and on the appropriate time scale.
- who took the decisions and to what extent stakeholders and the general public participated and to what extent the principle of solidarity was openly discussed or only implicitly present.

Selection criterion: variety in water issues

Mixed method approach

- Interviews
- Participatory research
- Collaborative action research

## Role of solidarity compared

- Lake IJssel: fresh water supply solidarity request by the state from one region to another one resulted in protests. Costs and benefits not equally shared between regions. Implementation postponed.
- High sandy soils: fresh water supply solidarity request from a region to the state. Uncertain.
- South west delta: water quality solidarity request from a region to the state. Uncertain.
- Tholen: land owners/right holders and water board cooperate to improve fresh water supply, paid for by special tax on 'users', participation continued through advisory 'user' council.
- Regional flood risk management in Groningen: institutionalized solidarity requested by the water board and the State from inhabitants and companies, who pay the same tax, but get different levels of protection as that depends on economic value. This institutional solidarity is questionable: is it really solidary?
- Heijplaat, unembanked area in Rotterdam: Mix between institutional and ordinary solidarity and potential lack thereof. Solidarity questions expected to arise in case of a flood. Will everyone have to bear their own damage or should the state or the municipality act out of solidarity?
- Rhine river basin: communication and avoidance of harm is mandatory, but a positive duty to assist in improving water safety between countries remains voluntary and informal. Different interpretations of the extent of assistance occur.

## Discussion & Conclusions

- Solidarity is an important characteristic of Dutch governance of adaptation to climate change in the water ambit
- It is in fact institutionalised in the system of regional water management by water boards funded by their own taxes, complemented by the national water agency funded by national tax for national matters
- Solidarity appears under pressure when it is questioned who should be solidary with whom, and why the costs and/or benefits are not divided equally.

## Discussion & Conclusions

- The discussion in our case studies shows that solidarity can not be taken for granted.
- This could lead to other divisions of responsibility at the national / regional level
- Disputes arise over national versus regional costs and benefits: Is disruption on a national scale the right criterion for national solidarity?
- Reliance on regional solidarity might help, but could reduce the willingness to be solidary between regions
- It remains an expert discussion
- The lack of discussion might be related to the lack of awareness and depoliticization of water governance

## Way forward

- Discussion over solidarity contributions is normal where assistance is voluntary (e.g. brothers and sisters).
- Institutional solidarity in water management relies on obligations and rights, but is not immune to discussions, just like other domains of the welfare state.

We recommend:

- Make explicit values, costs and benefits
- Open the discussion over the criteria for allocation of institutional assistance and the appropriateness of measures