

# GOVERNORS AND GOVERNED

*An in-depth study about the meaning and practice of governance in Dutch river management in the Ooijpolder and Overdiepse polder*



FOLKERT VOLBEDA

MSC THESIS

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# Governors & Governed

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*An in-depth case study about the meaning and practice of governance in the Ooijpolder and Overdiepse polder*

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## Summary

Water management in the Netherlands underwent a shift (Buijs, 2009; Wiering & Arts, 2006). Instead of fighting the water in a hierarchical and technocratic way, a new form of management emerged in which water and social interactions are accommodated in the face of increasing water levels. The Room for the River programme is an example in which this new approach is underlined. The concept of governance is here often limited as a deliberative tool to develop local fitting policies and achieve local support and acceptance. However, the meaning of governance is ambiguous and contested. Governance should not per se be related to a deliberative and inclusive approach without careful consideration about its meaning. Considering the different meanings is especially important within the RFTR programme as decision-making has to deal with many different societal groups with diverse demands. The objective of this thesis is therefore to investigate the different meanings of governance that exist within current Dutch water management and how these meanings affect decision-making through different social and political dynamics.

For analysing the meaning of governance, the thesis adopts a constructivist perspective that guides the theoretical framework and builds upon governance and discourse theory. First, the thesis uses a governance typology in which distinction is made between a process- and structure-related meaning. Where the first relates to a deliberative and inclusive approach in which a wide array of actors engages in bottom-up in decision making, the latter relates to a hierarchical and technocratic approach in which a small group of experts and government officials. Second, the thesis adopts a post-Marxism discourse perspective from Laclau and Mouffe and the concept of articulation of social demands to analyse decision-making in the discursive field. By complementing both analyses, the thesis gives a comprehensive picture of the meaning of governance and the related practice of decision-making in the face of articulated social demands and emerging social and political logic. Subsequently, the thesis adopts a case study design in which two projects from the RFTR programme were selected as cases: the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder. Data was collected and analysed through document analysis and interviewing of key actors from different layers of government and representatives of interest associations.

The findings of the case study show the ambiguous, dynamic and temporal nature of governance. First, both cases show the presence of a structure-related meaning with a hierarchic, technocratic and mechanistic approach, a process-related meaning with a collaborative and deliberative approach and an intermediary type of governance which situates between the first two meanings. Second, the cases portray that social logic implies a conflict free environment in which the discursive field is absent of conflicting social demands. Furthermore, social demands characterize themselves here as authority respecting requests. Political logic in contrast, imply a conflict rich discursive field in which articulated social demands run counter with social demands within the hegemonic discourse. Social demands that oppose the institutional order and emerging claims are here distinctive. Third, the cases show that meaning of governance and presence of social or political logic is strongly related to a certain level of empowerment or negation of non-state actors in the decision-making process. A structure-related meaning of governance related to the presence of a small and closed group of government officials and experts who engaged decision-making in a technocratic, predetermined, hierarchical and mechanistic manner. Public engagement in decision-making was subsequently limited leading in both cases to emerging political logic. A process-related meaning of governance in

contrast, related to a practice of decision-making in which a wider array of actors was involved besides government officials and experts. Objectives and goals were here determined through a deliberative and collaborative approach in which local residents were empowered to join the discussion. Especially when this meaning of governance was dominant in the project, public engagement and social logic emerged. Lastly, the thesis explains change between process- and structure related meanings of governance through sudden erratic shifts and slow gradual transitions. Both cases show that a structure-related meaning is distinctive for both the start of projects in which conceptual frameworks, budget and planning still have to be decided, as well as for situations in which contrasting demands lead to a conflict-rich environment with a political logic. However, both cases denote that when articulated social demands outside the hegemonic discourse are in line with social demands in the hegemonic discourse, decision-making can change towards a process-related meaning of governance. In turn, in an act to manage conflict decision-making can quickly 'jump' back towards a structure-related meaning of governance when social demands outside and inside the hegemonic discourse collide and are hold onto to.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
Summary .....	ii
Overview of tables and figures.....	vi
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 From fighting to accommodating.....	2
1.2 A clear shift towards an unclear concept.....	3
1.3 Problem statement, research objective, and research questions .....	4
1.4 Outline of the thesis .....	6
2 Theoretical framework.....	8
2.1 The concept of governance .....	9
2.1.1 Governing water.....	9
2.1.2 A silver bullet? .....	10
2.1.3 Process and structure .....	10
2.2 Discourse theory.....	11
2.2.1 Discourse analysis.....	11
2.2.2 Laclau & Mouffe .....	12
2.2.3 Social demands.....	13
2.2.4 Concept and practice of articulation .....	15
2.3 Visualizing demands .....	16
3 Methodology .....	19
3.1 A qualitative and interpretative research approach .....	20
3.2 A case study design .....	20
3.3 Data collection and analysis .....	21
4 The Ooijpolder .....	23
4.1 Background of the polder.....	24
4.1.1 General features.....	24
4.1.2 Designated.....	24
4.1.3 Local and regional resistance .....	26
4.1.4 The association ‘Hoogwaterplatform’ .....	30
4.1.5 Calm water?.....	33
4.1.6 NIMBY’s or experts? .....	36
4.2 Governance in the polder.....	38

4.2.1	A good start is halve the battle.....	38
4.2.2	Securitization .....	39
4.2.3	Countering or accepting? .....	40
4.2.4	When the dust settled... ..	41
4.3	The stressing of demands.....	45
4.3.1	Social demand for calamity polders .....	45
4.3.2	Luteijn .....	47
4.3.3	Local and regional resistance .....	49
4.3.4	Residential demands .....	55
4.3.5	Crumbling pedestal .....	58
4.3.6	Back in the picture.....	61
4.4	Governance and articulation of demands.....	65
5	The Overdiepse Polder .....	68
5.1	History and background .....	69
5.1.1	General features.....	69
5.1.2	Designation as search area.....	69
5.1.3	The association of Overdiep farmers .....	71
5.1.4	A citizen initiative in Dutch water policy .....	74
5.1.5	Devolving responsibility .....	75
5.1.6	Strict or loose objectives .....	76
5.1.7	The objective of spatial quality .....	77
5.2	Governance in the polder.....	80
5.2.1	From governing people to people governing.....	81
5.2.2	Discussion of the non-negotiable.....	82
5.2.3	Governing spatial quality and regional development .....	84
5.3	The stressing of demands.....	85
5.3.1	River expansion for water safety.....	85
5.3.2	From request to equivalential chain of demands .....	86
5.3.3	Development of the terp plan.....	89
5.3.4	Adoption in the discourse .....	91
5.3.5	Spatial demands .....	93
5.4	Governance and articulation of demands.....	97
6	Conclusion & discussion .....	100
6.1	Change, differences and shifts .....	101



6.2	Research questions.....	102
6.2.1	Different meanings.....	102
6.2.2	Social order and political chaos.....	102
6.2.3	From meaning to practice .....	103
6.2.4	Shifts and transitions.....	105
6.3	Discussion .....	106
6.3.1	From government to governance?.....	106
6.3.2	Discourse and the ‘Habermas-Mouffe’ debate .....	107
6.3.3	The dynamics of ‘in- and outside governance’ .....	108
6.3.4	Reflection on research approach .....	109
6.4	Recommendations.....	110
6.4.1	Practical recommendations.....	110
6.4.2	Theoretical recommendations .....	111
	References.....	113
	Annex 1) Background chapter river expansion and flooding of polders.....	119
	A.1 Flood protection & prevention, a history of discussion.....	120
	A.2 Making room for the river.....	122
	A.3 Logic behind flood risk management.....	123
	A.4 Purposefully flooding of polders .....	125
	A.5 Terminology .....	127
	Annex 2) List of interviews .....	130
	Annex 3) Interview script .....	131

## Overview of tables and figures

Table 1. Process- and Structure-related meaning of governance.....	11
Table 2. Request and claim .....	15
Table 3. Recurrence of table 1 .....	38
Table 4. Recurrence of table 2 .....	45
Table 5. Recurrence of table 1 .....	80
Table 6. Recurrence of table 2 .....	85
Figure 1. Articulation of a request.....	17
Figure 2. Articulation and development of a claim .....	18

Figure 3. The area of the Ooijpolder .....	24
Figure 4. Map of proposed calamity polder .....	26
Figure 5. ‘Dike relocation’ in Groenlanden .....	30
Figure 6. Cut out of list of measure .....	33
Figure 7. Cut out of figure from provincial report.....	34
Figure 8. Current measures in the Ooijpolder.....	36
Figure 9. The hegemonic discourse.....	46
Figure 10. The hegemonic discourse after the Luteijn report.....	48
Figure 11. Articulation of social demands by municipalities and province.....	51
Figure 12. Emergence of the claim from the Hoogwaterplatform.....	56
Figure 13. Politicized communication and rhetoric .....	58
Figure 14. Articulated social demands by Lower House .....	59
Figure 15. Cancellation of ‘Calamity plans’ .....	61
Figure 16. Explorative report.....	62
Figure 17. Re-emergence of the claim of Hoogwaterplatform .....	63
Figure 18. Adoption of social demands in the hegemonic discourse.....	64
Figure 19. Convergence of governance and discourse analysis .....	65
Figure 20. Area of Overdiepse polder .....	69
Figure 21. Polder being flooded .....	73
Figure 22. The hegemonic discourse.....	85
Figure 23. The articulated request .....	86
Figure 24. Articulation of requests.....	87
Figure 25. The ‘Terpplan’.....	89
Figure 26. Adoption of the ‘Terpplan’ .....	91
Figure 27. Emergence of conflict.....	92
Figure 28. Adoption of social demands.....	93
Figure 29 a) & b). Spatial quality demands .....	94
Figure 30. The hegemonic discourse after adoption of social demands .....	95
Figure 31. Photo of one of the terps .....	96
Figure 32. Convergence of governance and discourse analysis.....	97
Figure 33. Measures of the RFTR programme .....	123
Figure 34. Map of the riverine areas and exceedance probability .....	123
Figure 35. The work line .....	124
Figure 36. Designated areas .....	125
Figure 37. Purposefully flooding of polders .....	126

# 1 Introduction

The Dutch are increasingly faced with emerging changes related to their water systems. Higher water levels, increasing human population and economic development along major Dutch rivers have led to increasing pressure on the riverine landscape and a call for new approaches about how to deal and manage these issues. This chapter gives a general overview of the context in which a new approach of managing the Dutch water system emerged (section 1.1). This new approach not only aims at managing water in different ways, but also underlines the importance of the people and their opinion that inhabit these riverine areas. The concept of governance is strongly related to this new approach, in which new actors engage on different levels of planning and decision making, which in turn is believed to lead to better locally-fitting and accepted policies (section 1.2). Although often related to a deliberative approach, issues of ambiguity and vagueness around the meaning and understanding of this concept of governance can lead to antagonistic practices of decision making. Instead of deliberative and inclusive decision-making, a hierarchical and technocratic practice of decision-making can emerge. Following this line of thought, this study problematizes water governance on a theoretical, practical and societal level. The chapter introduces the main research objective and four research questions for this thesis (section 1.3). The chapter concludes by presenting the outline of the thesis (section 1.4).

## 1.1 *From fighting to accommodating*

Water has always played an important role in the lives of the Dutch. Since 26% of the country is located below sea level while another 29% is flood-sensitive, the Netherlands has had its fair share of close encounters with water (Directorate, 2012; Roth & Winnubst, 2014). These encounters ranged from dike breaches due to the build-up of so-called ice dams (*Dutch: IJsdammen*) back in the 1800's, to the infamous great flood of 1953 where storm surge combined with spring tide in the North Sea delivered a catastrophic blow to the dikes in the Southwest of the Netherlands (Attema et al., 2014, p. 16; Heezik, 2007). In the face of these storms and floods, the Dutch had to fight against the water to conquer and preserve their land. This explains why the traditional discourse in Dutch water management was, not until long ago, one of 'fighting against the water' (Wiering & Arts, 2006).<sup>1</sup> In this discourse, water managers adopted an infrastructure-intensive engineering perspective (Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005; van Staveren, Warner, van Tatenhove, & Wester, 2014; Warner, Warner, Van Buuren, & Edelenbos, 2012; Wiering & Arts, 2006; Wolsink, 2010). A small and authoritative group of experts managed and regulated water through the construction of technical measures to protect the Dutch. This has led to management of water with the use of measures like streamlining rivers, minimising river basins, the closing of creeks and small streams, replacing them with canals and constructing bigger dikes (Deltacommissaris, 2014; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006). This perspective however is currently regarded as unsustainable or even at a dead end (Directorate, 2011b; Wolsink, 2006, p. 477).

Increasing effects of climate change have led to more melted snow, ice, and rainwater, which need to be processed by the rivers (Directorate, 2011b; IPCC, 2014; Mysiak, 2010; Tol & Langen, 2000). The prediction is that it will rain more and harder with an average 20 mm annual rise in rainfall, particularly in the winter (Attema et al., 2014; Deltacommissaris, 2014; Directorate, 2011b; Management, Ministry of Housing, & Ministry of Agriculture, 2002). Merely technical measures will not suffice to sustain water safety on the long run. Increasing water levels in the rivers in combination with an increase of the population and economy in the low-lying polders can lead to disastrous scenarios (Baan & Klijn, 2004; Directorate, 2011b; Roth & Winnubst, 2014; Wolsink, 2010). Continuing the well-known strategy of the Dutch in fighting the water by constructing higher dikes, would eventually lead to a 'bathtub' effect. Water safety then decreases since the high dikes lead to an inability to quickly evacuate inhabitants in the face of quick rising water levels (Baan & Klijn, 2004; Roth, Warner, & Winnubst, 2006). Floods in these low-lying areas could result in approximately more than a thousand fatalities and damage at a total of € 100 billion (Directorate, 2011b; Management, Ministry of Housing, & Ministry of Agriculture, 2006b; W Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2005).

A shift was necessary towards a new approach of dealing with the Dutch water systems. From the 90's onwards, this shift took place when a new public opinion emerged which questioned the old technical, infrastructure-intensive perspective (Buijs, 2009; Neuvel, 2005). This new perspective underlined that water should not be fought through building higher dikes, but instead should be accommodated (Buijs, 2009; Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006). Near floods in the year 1995 were a catalyst for this emerging perspective (Warner et al., 2012). Water levels rose to extreme levels in the river Rhine and its branches the Waal, the Lower Rhine and the IJssel, and

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<sup>1</sup> Also described as 'water turning' by Neuvel (2005), or 'taming the water' by Lach, Rayner, and Ingram (2005).

the river Meuse in January of that year. Normally the Rhine discharges approximately  $2,000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  of water, but it had to discharge  $12,000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  of water in 1995 (Directorate, 2011b). The decision was made to evacuate almost 250,000 local residents and over 1 million heads of livestock due to the quick rising water levels (Directorate, 2011b; Natuurontwikkeling, 2015; Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012; Wiering & Arts, 2006). In the end, the dikes did hold, but the economic and emotional damage was great. The near flood disaster was a real shock event in Dutch society (Wiering & Arts, 2006, p. 330). A wide array of actors realised that it was of vital essence that a new approach towards managing water should be adopted. Instead of fighting water and constructing ever higher dikes, water should thus be accommodated by giving it room to flow and discharge excessive amounts of water. More space would need to be created for rivers to be able to discharge the increasing water levels (Baan & Klijn, 2004; Directorate, 2012; Neuvel & Van Der Knaap, 2010; Rijke et al., 2012; Roth & Winnubst, 2014; Warner et al., 2012).

The notion of 'accommodating water' became formalized in the 'Room for the River' (RFTR) programme, which was presented in 2000 as a new policy line (Buijs, 2009). The focus was on shaping the Dutch Delta while keeping future conditions in mind. Management of water through retention of water in the river basin and giving more space to the rivers to discharge their water was underlined by national government with the slogan: "river widening rather than higher dykes is the name of the game" (Directorate, 2011c, p. 1; Management et al., 2002). In light of this programme 34 projects were, or are currently still undertaken along the major Dutch rivers to improve water safety and spatial quality at a budget of 2.3 billion Euros. Measures are implemented in inner and outer dike areas and include relocation of dikes, excavation of floodplains, deepening of the river beds, lowering of groynes, and digging of flood channels and new water storages (Directorate, 2011c, 2012; Management, Ministry of Housing, & Ministry of Agriculture, 2006a; P. R. v. d. Rivier, 2005; Warner et al., 2012). In addition to these measures, the idea emerged to purposefully inundate designated polders in emergency situations, which was explored as a response to the ever increasing water levels and relative high costs of the other measures (Warner, 2008). Scheduled to be finished in 2015, the RFTR programme's objective is to increase the maximum discharge capacity of the Rhine and the Meuse. For the Rhine the maximum discharge capacity is raised from  $12,000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  to  $16,000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  in 2015. For the Meuse the maximum discharge capacity is raised from  $2,600 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  to  $3,800 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  in 2015. Furthermore, projects are undertaken in such a way that options to increase the maximum discharge capacity to  $18,000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for the Rhine and  $4,600 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for the Meuse by 2100 are kept open (Management et al., 2006a, 2006b; Management, Ministry of Housing, & Ministry of Agriculture, 2007).

## *1.2 A clear shift towards an unclear concept*

The importance of openness, inclusion and participation of more actors in decision making through governance is often stressed in policy planning. The mentioned shift from government to governance, where more actors are included in more levels of decision making, is believed to be necessary for achieving local acceptance, support for policies and the subsequent smooth implementation of projects (Bakker, Koppen, & Vader, 2007; Fung & Wright, 2003). The measures that are undertaken under the RFTR programme cause substantial spatial changes in the landscape that people use. Especially spatial planning in inner bank areas has not gone without struggles in the past and has often collided with the views of local residents (Davidse, 2008; Roth et al., 2006). Issues

with public acceptance and support could emerge when confronted with the effects of these measures (Buijs, 2009; Wolsink, 2006). Opposition from local actors can seriously hamper planning procedures which can lead to failure to achieve deadlines, increased costs or even cancellation of the project. As Lach et al. (2005, p. 15) states; “instead of managing the uncertainty of physical structures and organised routines, water resource agencies are beginning to manage ambiguous relationships with partners who have conflicting demands and needs”. This perspective shows that water management requires a social interaction-intensive strategy due to the many different societal groups with diverse demands (Gooch & Stålnacke, 2010). Thus, a deliberative and inclusive approach through the utilisation of the concept of ‘governance’ is stressed in the RFTR programme (Directorate, 2011a).

Within the RFTR programme, governance is presented as a clear and commonly defined concept. It is stressed that by “jointly devising and detailing”, local acceptance and support is achieved and planning and budget is not exceeded (Directorate, 2011a). Governance within the RFTR programme entails closer collaboration between national, regional and local governments and more responsibilities for these governments, but also entails close consultation with the general public and the business community (Directorate, 2011d). However, instead of having a shared and clear meaning, a wide array of research on the topic shows that the meaning of governance is surrounded by vagueness and ambiguity (Colebatch, 2014; Lautze, 2014; Pahl-Wostl, Gupta, & Petry, 2008). Despite its widespread use, the term has been accompanied by vagueness about its meaning, leading to inconsistencies in usage and interpretation (Lautze, 2014, p. 25). Meanings of governance can differ between an instrumental toolbox for reaching policy objectives and a deliberative process in which a wide scale of actors is involved, while it can also be viewed as either a normative or an analytical concept (Castro, 2007; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2008). Even subtle differences in meaning can shift the application of governance from a deliberative and dynamic process towards an approach that understands governance as particular institutions and mechanisms, opening the door for a more mechanistic and prescriptive understanding of governance (Lautze, 2014, p. 29). In addition, one can wonder if governance is merely adopted as a pretence strategy used for framing a project as being open, or whether it implies a true adaptation of the concept on an organisational and perhaps even institutional level (van Twist et al., 2011; Wiering & Arts, 2006, p. 327). The discussion about the meaning of governance and subsequent practice of decision-making shows that ‘what governance exactly entails and how it can be adopted’ requires careful consideration (Castro, 2007, p. 98).

### *1.3 Problem statement, research objective, and research questions*

This thesis problematizes the issue of the ambiguous and vague meaning around the concept of governance on both a theoretical and societal level. First, a theoretical problem exists. The literature about governance is often related to deliberation, participation and legitimization. Even so, overall vagueness and ambiguity around the concept, as well as different and contrasting meanings persists. Governance should not per se be related to a deliberative and participative approach without careful consideration of the meaning it receives in specific contexts, as its meaning can differ between a deliberative understanding and a hierarchical understanding. Out of this theoretical problem, a societal problem emerges. The RFTR programme is involved in local projects and concerns many different societal groups with diverse demands. Since an inclusive and deliberative approach is necessary to gain public acceptance and support, it is important that the adoption of a certain

meaning of governance and the emerging social or political logics are properly understood. A meaning of governance that stresses a deliberative and inclusive approach can give room for different demands which can lead to the emergence of collaboration and social logic. In contrast, a meaning of governance that focusses on hierarchical regulation can limit or exclude demands articulated by actors which can lead to the emergence of conflict and political logic.

The objective of this thesis is to *investigate the different meanings of governance that exist within current Dutch water management and how these meanings affect decision-making through different social and political dynamics*. By doing so, this thesis does not only stress the ambiguity and vagueness around the concept of governance, but also shows how adhering to a certain meaning of governance induces a particular style of making decisions and how this is related to social and political logics. For this purpose, four central research questions have been formulated:

1. *What different meanings of governance are present within Dutch water management with governments and non-state actors?* This question addresses the different meanings of governance that emerge due to the ambiguity and vagueness that surrounds the concept. Spatial planning, which for example excludes local actors from decision making, can indicate a technocratic and hierarchical meaning of governance. In contrast, decision-making that involves local actors can point towards a meaning of governance that underlines a deliberative and inclusive meaning. Although both adopt the concept of governance, differences in meaning portray very different features. By exploring these features, like inclusion of local actors, this question identifies and analyses the different apparent meanings of governance within Dutch water management.
2. *How do social and political logics emerge within Dutch water management?* This question aims to uncover social and political logics that emerge within spatial planning of local projects. Where social logic depicts a stable and conflict-free environment, political logic implies a conflict-rich environment with political struggles. This question shows that these logics can emerge from the articulation of different social demands by actors. Social demands that are articulated by national government may well be focussed on reaching pre-determined objectives, like a water safety standard, while social demands articulated by local actors may be primarily concerned with maintaining their 'hearth and home'. Whether these articulated social demands are included or excluded in spatial planning can depend on the presence of social or political logic. In addition, a certain logic can also explain how social demands like 'water safety' or 'the right to live in the riverine area' are articulated.
3. *How do different meanings of governance facilitate different practices of decision making?* This question is expected to uncover the effects that certain meanings of governance have on the practice of decision-making. Participatory decision-making based on a deliberative meaning of governance is often stressed in literature as being vital for achieving local acceptance and support in spatial planning. In practice however, political logic and contrasting social demands can interfere with this ideological notion of governance and decision-making. This can lead to a meaning of governance which portrays a more hierarchical and technocratic approach of decision-making.
4. *What are the social and political conditions for a change in meaning of governance?* This question aims to capture the dynamic character of the concept of governance. Typologies from governance offer a synchronic representation of what governance entails at a specific moment in time. 'Snapshots' of how decision-making takes place, make identification and

analysis of certain meaning possible. However, merely using such an approach leads to a static understanding about the meaning of governance without taking historic antecedents into account. By addressing and diachronically analysing multiple synchronic snapshots over time, change in meanings become visible. Moreover, this question addresses certain ideals about how democracy works and how apparent social and political conditions can induce a change in meaning of governance. Emergence of conflicting demands and political logic can for instance induce a shift towards, or maintenance of, an understanding of governance which underlines hierarchical regulation and management of conflicts. In contrast, the emergence of social logic and a politically stable environment can lead towards a meaning of governance which underlines deliberative collaboration with local residents and stakeholders.

#### *1.4 Outline of the thesis*

The previous sections of this thesis have provided the introduction of this thesis, where the problem outline, research objective and research questions were presented and discussed (chapter 1).

Chapter 2 continues by discussing the theoretical background and framework that is used in this thesis. It elaborates on existing governance theory, from which a typology between two dominant yet contrasting meanings is derived (section 2.1), and discusses discourse theory, which is used in this thesis to make different meaning and understanding of governance visible as mediated by social and political logics (section 2.2). It concludes by presenting a theoretical model that combines both governance and discourse theory to make differences and changes in meaning about governance visible and analysable (section 2.3).

Chapter 3 subsequently presents the methodology that is adopted in this thesis. It discusses the qualitative and interpretative character of the thesis (section 3.1), and elaborates on the case study design that is adopted. Furthermore, the chapter briefly introduces the two adopted cases of the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder (section 3.2). The chapter ends by elucidating the data collection and analysis (section 3.3).

Chapter 4 describes the performed case study on the Ooijpolder. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section (4.1) presents a brief history and overview of the area. The second section (4.2) presents the findings of the performed governance analysis. The third section (4.3) discusses the findings of the performed discourse analysis. Finally, the chapter ends with an analysis that converges the findings of these two analyses into one model (section 4.4).

Chapter 5 present the findings of the Overdiepse polder case study. Like chapter 5, this chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly the brief history and overview of the area is described (section 5.1). In addition, the findings of the governance analysis (section 5.2) and discourse analysis are discussed (section 5.3). To conclude the chapter presents a combination of both analyses (section 5.4).

Chapter 6 concludes by first offering a short recap on the reasons why the thesis was conducted and the research questions (section 6.1). It continues by discussing the findings from the case studies and answering the research questions in a systematic and separate manner (section 6.2). In addition, the chapter reflects on the performed research and situates the used theory and findings in broader



academic debates (section 6.3). The chapter concludes by presenting some recommendations for practice and future research (section 6.4).

The annex chapters start by offering a background chapter (Annex 1) in which the discursive changes within water management that led to the shift from dike enhancement to river expansion measures are discussed. It continues with an analysis about the main properties of the RFTR programme, and how the idea of purposefully inundation of polders emerged. It concludes by elaborating on the discussion about the terminology of the measure of purposefully inundation of polders. The annex chapters continue by offering a list of list of the interviewees (Annex 2), and lastly the interview script (Annex 3).

## 2 Theoretical framework

This chapter explains the theoretical framework applied in this thesis. The first section (2.1) elaborates on the concept of governance where it describes the ongoing discussion about the meaning of governance. Different understandings of governance are here elucidated. Furthermore, the section explains the discussion between two dominant poles that either relate the meaning of governance to *processes* or to *structures*. In addition, the section questions the assumption that governance is a panacea for public acceptance and support. Lastly, the discussion about the meaning of governance is used to flesh out the concept of governance and establish a typology that explains the meaning of governance as either process- or structure-related. The next section (2.2) draws upon interpretive and post-structuralists accounts of research to explain the choice for discourse theory in this thesis. In particular discourse theory from a post-Marxism perspective from Laclau and Mouffe is discussed here. Using a Laclau and Mouffe approach to discourse theory, the section continues by adopting the concept of the articulation of social demands to show the constitutive and temporal character of hegemonic discourses and articulated demands in the discursive field. To make analysis of discourse feasible, the chapter concludes by discussing a theoretical model which draws upon discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe and their concept of articulation of social demands and hegemony (section 2.3).

## 2.1 The concept of governance

### 2.1.1 Governing water

The word governance is introduced in the RFTR programme as a trendy concept. Despite its new-found popularity, the word 'governance' can be traced back all the way to ancient Greece, where the verb κυβερνάω [*kubernáo*] constituted the idea of a steering government (Lautze, 2014). Nowadays the term still exists and, as is shown by the RFTR programme, has increased tremendously in popularity and is widely adopted and used in policies (Colebatch, 2014; Directorate, 2011a). However, this increase in popularity is accompanied by an increase in vagueness and ambiguity about the concept's definition. Despite its historical roots from the Greek verb, Offe (2009, p. 550) even argues that nowadays a verb of governance is non-existing; "there is no verb (such as "to steer" or "to govern") with which one could potentially express: "he is performing the activity governance". Furthermore, Offe (2009) states that the term is untranslatable in other languages, and it lacks a clear opposite, although some might argue that the often mentioned 'shift from government to governance' might indicate that government is some sort of counterpart (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2008). Despite these 'issues' and wide variety in definition there are some main 'ingredients' present. According to Lautze (2014) governance is consistently viewed as the *processes* involved in decision making, the *institutions* through which these processes take place, and the involvement of *multiple actors*. The first two, process and institution are described by Lautze (2014) as core ingredients to one concept. But where Lautze (2014) comprehend these concepts as complementing ingredients, Offe (2009) views them as two conflicting poles (structure vs. process), between which the definition of governance varies in literature. However, where Offe (2009) argues that both meanings excluded each other, Lautze (2014) argues that contrasting practices of decision making can emerge from an emphasis on either structure or process.

To show the possibility of different emerging practices, Lautze (2014) compares two different definitions of governance associated with water management. A definition of governance that puts emphasis on *structure* and institutions is for instance one from the Global Water Partnership (GWP).<sup>2</sup> Governance is here defined as "the government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services. Water governance refers to the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place in a particular country to manage water and deliver services" (GWP, 2012; P. Rogers & Hall, 2003, p. 7). This definition of governance is mainly concerned with the structures that are in place that allow a government to govern and disregards any dynamic decision-making processes (Lautze, 2014, p. 29). Due to its focus on structure, this notion of governance could lead to a more mechanistic and prescriptive approach in which institutions make decisions and articulate policy goals (Lautze, 2014). Governance in this regard is in line with the meaning of Bell and Hindmoor (2009, p. 1) who understand governance as "the strategies used by governments to help govern". Governance is here perceived as an instrumental tool to control and regulate and depicts a more hierarchical approach towards decision-making.

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<sup>2</sup> The GWP is an international network that was founded in 1996 by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to foster integrated water resource management (GWP, 2010).

A definition that puts more emphasis on governance as a *process* is that from the United Nations Developments Programme (UNDP).<sup>3</sup> Governance related to water is here defined as “ the political, economic and social processes and institutions by which governments, civil society, and the private sector make decision about how best to use, develop and manage water resources” (UNDP, 2004, p. 10). In contrast to the earlier definition of governance from the GWP, this definition is more in line with a more social interaction-intensive notion of governance. It not only defines governance as *institutions*, but also as the *processes* related to developing and managing water resources. The lack of coherence between process-related or structure-related meanings of governance thus not only exists on a theoretical level in the academic debate, but also is present on a more practical level within organizations. The danger of this is not only misinterpretation, but also exploitation. Governance can then “ become a *tabula obscura*, on which users can inscribe any meaning that suits their purpose” (Offe, 2009, p. 304). Where for instance governance is pretended to be adopted for a deliberative process and inclusion of local actors, a meaning that emphasizes structure can open up the doors for a hierarchical and mechanistic way of managing the water (Lautze, 2014).

### 2.1.2 *A silver bullet?*

Governance is often related to a deliberative and participative approach where local stakeholders are included at different levels of decision-making. From a practical point of view however, one can question why such a process-related meaning of governance should be adopted in the first place. Why not the familiar and perhaps easier way of top-down decision-making, à la government? Fischer (2000) answers this question by stating that a deliberative approach with participating local residents, broadly speaking, contributes to three important goals. First, adopting a participative process in decision-making can enhance the so-called democratic value, or as Fischer (2000, p. 2) puts it, “give meaning to democracy”. Second, a deliberative approach can increase local acceptance and support of policies (Bakker et al., 2007; Fung & Wright, 2003). A third benefit that Fischer (2000) mentions is the contribution that local residents can offer with regard to local knowledge. Local actors might find better fitting policies than experts due to local knowledge of the area (Bogaert, 2004; Dam, Salverda, & During, 2010; Fung & Wright, 2003). Furthermore, Fung and Wright (2003) state that inclusion of local actors can lead to a shorter and more efficient feedback loop since the time between decisions, actions, effects, observations and reconsideration is shortened. Although the benefits of participative processes are often mentioned (Directorate, 2011a), they should not be taken for granted or remain unquestioned. Adoption of governance might ostensibly indicate a deliberative and collaborative process with equal power relations between actors and inclusion of local actors, but this is by no means a given. As Behagel and Turnhout (2011, p. 298) state “numerous studies document how participatory processes have failed to meet their objectives, have generated unanticipated outcomes, and are characterized by unequal power relations [...] organizing participatory processes alone does not guarantee democratic legitimacy”.

### 2.1.3 *Process and structure*

The meaning, effects and purposes of governance are not undisputed. The previous sections showed that subtle differences in the definition and meaning of governance can lead to very different

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<sup>3</sup> The UNDP is the United Nations' global development network which aims is to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion (UNDP, 2014).

practices. A process-related meaning of governance can lead a deliberative practice of decision-making, whereas a more structure-related meaning of governance can lead to a more mechanistic, top-down practice of decision-making. In addition, it was underlined that the advantages of adopting a deliberative approach with participatory processes are not undisputed and should be taken into careful consideration. The debate around the concept of governance subsequently allows for the establishment of a typology of features of two ‘types’ of governance, as is depicted in table 1. It is acknowledged that such a typology constitutes and induces a very dichotomizing ‘black and white’ rationality, whereas in reality governance might become ‘visible’ in between both poles. However, on the premise that the researcher is aware of this fact, it is argued that this typology will primarily serve as a theoretical tool and lens, thereby also allowing for the identification of certain aspects of governance that are ‘in between’.

Characteristics	Process-related	Structure-related
<b>Actor(s)</b>	Coalition of several actors	Limited amount of actors
<b>Role of expert</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Role of government</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Decision making</b>	Bottom-up	Top-down
<b>Knowledge status</b>	Knowledge is negotiated	Knowledge is objective
<b>Plan objective</b>	Deliberative framework for collaboration (goal searching)	Mechanistic & predetermined (goal oriented)

**Table 1.** Schematic presentation of the features of a process-related and a structure-related meaning of governance (based on: (Lautze, 2014; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2008; Van der Valk, 1998).

## 2.2 Discourse theory

### 2.2.1 Discourse analysis

As the previous sections have shown, a shared meaning or definition of governance is absent. Simply adopting a natural science perspective where conclusions are drawn from a hypothetico-deductive model will therefore not suffice since it tends to lead to a narrow understanding of testing and explanation (Glynnos & Howarth, 2007; Popper, 2005). Political and social systems are ‘open systems’ in which apparent phenomena cannot be easily controlled, reproduced, tested and explained as the natural science methodology employs. Therefore, a different way of ‘doing science’ is needed when one’s aim is to explain social and political phenomena. Discourse theory has tried to fill the gap of “growing dissatisfaction with mainstream positivist approaches to social sciences” (Howarth, 2000, p. 1). However, what discourse precisely entails is heavily debated.

As is the case with governance, discourse is used in a wide variety of meanings and approaches and no ‘commonly agreed upon’ definition is present (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Derived from Howarth (2000), one can state that interpretation and application for research is very much depending on different theoretical backgrounds. This ranges from positivist and empiricists that argue that discourses are frames or cognitive stagnate, to post-structuralisms and post-Marxism that put more comprehensive concepts of discourses forward (Howarth, 2000).<sup>4</sup> Where for some a discourse constitutes a very narrow concept which is limited to a conversation or text, for others it can signify the total social and political world (Howarth, 2000). In spite of this wide

<sup>4</sup> For an extensive analysis of the different theoretical stances on discourse theory; see (Howarth, 2000).

theoretical range, one can state that discourse analysis “generally has a ideational, constructivist or interpretive perspective” (Arts & Buizer, 2009, p. 340). Especially this constitutive perspective is in contrast with the more common and prevailing methods in social and political sciences, such as positivism, critical realism, and certain conceptions of materialism. Whereas positivists generally adhere to the idea that there is some *a-priori* version of ‘pure’ experience and intrinsic identity, discourse theory implies that this is incorrect. Instead, discourse theorists argue that “objects, people, societies and policies are structured contingently and produced through the hegemonic articulation and re-articulation of particular discourses” (J. Rogers, 2009, p. 836). Discourse theorists acknowledge and even embrace the vague, ambiguous and complex interactions that constitute the environmental policy process. Within these interactions, power struggles create the conditions that shape the social and physical world (Sharp & Richardson, 2001, p. 196). Discourses can thus be seen as constructive since discourse not only describe the social world, “but are the mode through which the world of ‘reality’ emerges” (Macleod, 2002, p. 18). This general feature shows its usefulness and applicability in this thesis. Discourse theory underlines the constructionist aspects of concepts, like for instance governance, and accepts that these concepts can have a wide range of meanings to different actors.

By adopting a discourse-theoretical approach, this thesis acknowledges and underlines that not only meaning, but also actions and practices come forward out of a constitutive and contextualized relationship with people’s identities, interest and beliefs (Bevir & Rhodes, 2005; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). This particular focus suggests an approach to discourse theory that can be related to so-called hermeneutics. Bevir and Rhodes (2005, p. 5) state that in the hermeneutical conception “people in the same situation can hold different beliefs because their experiences of that situation can be laden with different prior theories”. This again implies that individuals always contextually construct their identities, interest and beliefs, or in other words, “the reasons people have for doing what they do” (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 51). Hermeneutic theory endeavours to understand actions and practices of people by underlining this constitutive and contextualized element and focussing on reasons and beliefs that emanate from actions and practices (Bevir & Rhodes, 2005; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). Discourse theory in light of this strong interpretive account leads to a strong ethnographic focus (Glynos & Howarth, 2007), where the researcher is inclined to bottom-up forms of social inquiry (Bevir & Rhodes, 2005). This interpretive and bottom-up notion tends to lead to a critical issue. Glynos and Howarth (2007, p. 82;102) note that due to this bottom-up approach, any political dimensions can be ‘elided’ since hermeneutic theory reduces explanations of social and political phenomena to mere “contextualized self-interpretations” of people. Due to the political nature of this research, it is necessary to move beyond this hermeneutical approach.

### 2.2.2 *Laclau & Mouffe*

To make analysis of social and political phenomena possible, it is necessary to adopt an understanding of discourse theory which confirms insights about the constructive and interpretive nature of discourse, but also allows for a more critical and politically thorough analysis than hermeneutics. Discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe, who adopt a post-Marxist conception of discourse, offer such an understanding. Discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe moves beyond the mere interpretive account of hermeneutics, but still underlines the constitutive and contextualized relation that practice, identity and beliefs have. According to Laclau and Mouffe, all objects and actions are meaningful and meaning is “conferred by particular systems of significant differences”

(Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Howarth, 2000, p. 101). An object's identity is given by "the particular discourses or systems of meaning within which it is constituted" (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 109). Subsequently, it allows for a more critical explanation of social and political phenomena. Consider for example the construction of wind turbines in a polder. For local residents the construction might lead to obstruction of their idea about how a polder should look like. This idea probably relates to an image of uninterrupted, fast grassland, consequently leading to opinions about the wind turbines which are probably seen as 'horizon-pollution' in this idea. For the municipality however, the construction might induce an increase in 'clean' energy. In their view the wind turbines are probably related to an aim for sustainable development and green technology. Although both actors might talk about the same thing, wind turbines, the related meaning is very different.

What the example above tries to show, is that meaning of an object depends on the present discourses in which its identity is constituted. It must be emphasized here that not only the object is therefore meaningful but also the practice. In the example of the wind turbines this means that not only the wind turbines are meaningful, but also the construction of the wind turbines. In addition to the constitutive meaning of objects in discourses, it is important to stress the distinction that Laclau and Mouffe make between 'discourses' and 'the discursive field'. Where discourses relate to the articulated partial fixations of social meaning, the discursive field is characterized as a "surplus of meaning that can never be fully exhausted by any specific discourse" (Howarth, 2000, p. 103). In other words, a discourse is situated in a discursive field of meaning, but can never fully cover the whole discursive field since this is infinite. An important consideration is that this notion implies that certain aspects within the discursive field are excluded from an apparent discourse. Laclau and Mouffe stress the partiality of discourses within the discursive field. They argue that due to the presence of a discourse within a discursive field that infinitely overflows with meaning, fixation of meaning in the discourse is always partial, thereby stressing the "openness of the social" (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 179; Howarth, 2000, p. 102). By approaching discourse theory in accordance to the school of Laclau and Mouffe, special attention is paid to the political struggle and deliberation that define and constitute political communities (J. Rogers, 2009, p. 835). Due to their notion of articulation and fixation of meaning in the discursive field, and the partiality of this fixation, Laclau and Mouffe stress the importance of power and struggle in the creation of hegemonic political formations. "It gives prominence to the comprehensive nature of discourse, which should be considered as more than 'just words', by incorporating all forms of meaning, whether conceptual or material" (J. Rogers, 2009, p. 835). Adopting this particular view of discourse theory thus allows this thesis to critically analyse social and political elements.

### 2.2.3 *Social demands*

An important question that must be raised is how abstract notions of discourses, the discursive field and partially fixed meaning can be understood as reality and how they can be analysed. Laclau (2005) argues that one should start with the smallest unit of analysis, namely social demands. The concept of social demands allows for an analysis of how the articulation and fixation of meaning can shape, or constitute, groups or coalitions (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011). But what does a 'social demand' entail? According to Laclau (2005), there is such an amount of vagueness around the word 'demand' it leads to the ambiguous notion that a social demand can either mean a request or a claim. However, the ambiguity around the meaning of social demands actually allows for the establishment of an

analytical tool. Laclau argues that social demands articulated as a *request* have a fundamentally different meaning than social demands articulated as a *claim*.

A request can be explained as the articulation of a singular demand that is 'passive' in character (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011). This entails that an articulated request will not attempt to take action, but shows confidence that the government will satisfy the demand. Related to this point, a request respects the institutional order. As Behagel and Turnhout (2011, p. 301) state, a request "does not call into question the decision-making power of the authority to which it directs itself". Furthermore, Behagel and Turnhout (2011, p. 301) argue that requests are dialectical of nature, which means that a request is "styled as an intellectual exchange of ideas which are believed to be well-defined and not influenced by power relations". These features show that requests are characteristic for a politically stable, 'rule-following' environment where each single articulated demand within a particular regime is dealt with in a structural and isolated way (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). Request can therefore be classified as being part of a 'social logic'. When these singular demands stay unsatisfied, they might accumulate, leading to the increasing inability of the institutional order to settle each demand separately (Laclau, 2005, p. 74). In these cases multiple unsatisfied demands might merge into one *claim* during which a unifying identity is created. Demands articulated as a claim are fundamentally different than demands that are articulated as requests. First of all, where requests are characterized as singular demands, a claim is a plurality of different demands which are merged together (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011; Laclau, 2005). This formation of merged demands actively and forcefully engage the institutional order by calling it into question, and possibly by advocating taking action elsewhere (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011). Claims thus emerge in environments dominated by 'political logic'. Political logic entails "the dynamic process by which political frontiers are constructed, stabilized, strengthened, or weakened" (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 144). Political logics thus emerge when power relations are instable due to the inability of the institutional order to address the multiple social demands, and might intensify in time of crisis and hegemonic struggle (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011; Doty, 1996). It is important to mention here that, when the political mobilization has reached such a level that the different unsatisfied demands are merged into a stable system of signification, not all demands might be represented in the identity of the claim. Instead, as Behagel and Turnhout (2011, p. 302) underline, the articulation of one identity entails the unification and structuring of the different demands within the claim, where "one demand will act to signify the complete chain of demands that become articulated within the claim, thus becoming the hegemonic' signifier". When successful, a claim might thus give rise to a new discourse through the process of political logic. The articulated partially fixed meaning of the old hegemonic discourse can here become 'unfixed' and challenged, subsequently leading to a potential new hegemonic discourse. Unlike the old discourse, this new discourse will attend to the previously unsatisfied demands; and most specifically to the particular demand that unified and structured the claim (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011).

To explain the struggle for hegemony and emerging chasm in the discursive field, Laclau and Mouffe present the logic of equivalence and logic of difference. First, the logic of equivalence purports the idea that the identities of particular demands stress nearness. Furthermore, Laclau and Mouffe even argue that individual identities can dissolve as the result of a perceived negative identity that is seen to threaten the individual identities (Howarth, 2000, p. 107; Townshend, 2004, p. 271). An antagonistic frontier is drawn between the merging individual identities and the 'negative' identity (Laclau, 2005). Howarth (2000, p. 107) exemplifies this by stating that if the demands a, b, and c are



made equivalent ( $a \equiv b \equiv c$ ) with respect to demand d, then d must completely negate a, b, and c ( $d = \neg(a, b, c)$ ). Glynos and Howarth (2007) argue that the logic of equivalence captures the substitutive dimensions of a relation by creating a dichotomizing view of ‘us’ and ‘them’. It must be stressed however that this does not necessarily mean that they share the same identity but more crucially that they share the same enemy, which can be nicely expressed by the ancient proverb; ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’. A perhaps extreme but clarifying example of this logic is the case of foreign policies of the Allied forces in the Second World War. Although the Western Allies and the, back then, Soviet Union had inherent differences with regard to identity and beliefs, they still recognized the need to work together to counter the Nazi’s (Wikipedia, 2014). In this case, the Nazi regime (d) totally negated the discourse of the Allied forces (a, b, c), leading to the equivalential relation ( $a \equiv b \equiv c$ ) with regard to the Nazi regime (d): ( $d = \neg(a, b, c)$ ). Second, Laclau and Mouffe present the logic of difference to capture the combinatory or contiguous aspect of a relation (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). The logic of difference here endeavours to break the equivalential chain by not simple accounting for differences in identity but also for keeping elements distinct, separate and autonomous (Doty, 1996; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). This logic can be again nicely expressed by an old proverb, namely ‘divide and rule’, in which a hegemonic discourse might seek to separate certain demands to prevent the articulation of requests into a generalized claim that could overthrow and replace it (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 145).

Analysing social and political phenomena with the theoretical concept of articulation of social demands “directs special attention to modes of engagement between civil society and authorities”, and allow for the identification and analysis of evident demands (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011, p. 301). Therefore, this thesis follows the definition of discourse from Behagel and Turnhout (2011, p. 301), who define discourse as “a relational totality of meaning resulting from the articulation of social demands”.

Request	Claim
Single demand	Multiple demands
Passive	Active
Respects institutional order	Calls institutional order into question
Dialectical	Rhetorical
Part of a social logic	Part of a political logic

**Table 2.** Schematic presentation of the features of a request and a claim (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011).

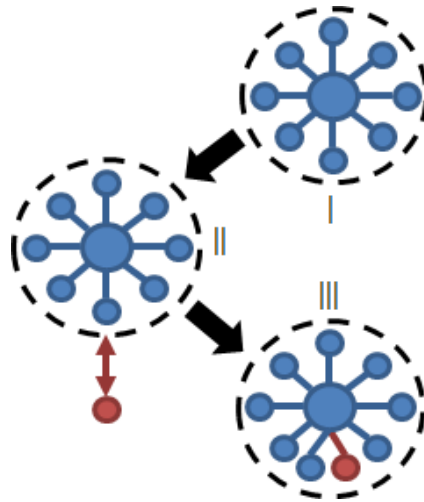
#### 2.2.4 *Concept and practice of articulation*

Derived from the definition of discourse used in this study, it becomes clear that articulation forms an important aspect in this research. It is therefore also vital to look at the theoretical background of the concept and practice of articulation. It can be expected from ‘hegemonic agents’ and ‘political subjectivities’ to engage in articulation of social demands, leading to relations among discursive elements and fixation of meaning (J. Rogers, 2009, p. 837). However, as J. Rogers (2009, p. 839) notes, it is “succinctly difficult” to identify these relations, patterns and discursive formations, where a plurality of simultaneous different meanings in the discursive field can obstruct the attempt to establish a general sense of discourses. A way to overcome this issue and show the organization of discourses, what and who they exclude or include, and how they are articulated together, is to look for so called ‘nodal points’ (J. Rogers, 2009). These nodal points might be compared to the earlier

mentioned demands, and in particular relate to articulated claims and a sequence of unsatisfied request that are beginning to cluster through the emergence of one hegemonic identity. Furthermore, hegemonic agents articulate nodal point to construct, stabilize and partially fix systems of meaning around them (Doty, 1996; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Howarth, 2000). It is thus also possible to relate this notion of 'nodal points' to the concept of signifiers. Behagel and Turnhout (2011) use the concept of a hegemonic signifier to explain how the articulation of an entire claim is structured (as earlier explained in section 2.5). They argue that for a single demand that seeks to signify the whole chain of demands, and attain this function of hegemonic signifier, rhetoric is used (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011, p. 302). According to J. Rogers (2009, p. 839) "it is not difficult to identify these signifiers or nodal points [...] because they are contained in all statements and responses". Also Doty (1996, p. 10) sees the feasibility in identifying these 'fixing elements' by stating that "it is possible to locate representational practices in texts that work to establish these nodal points".

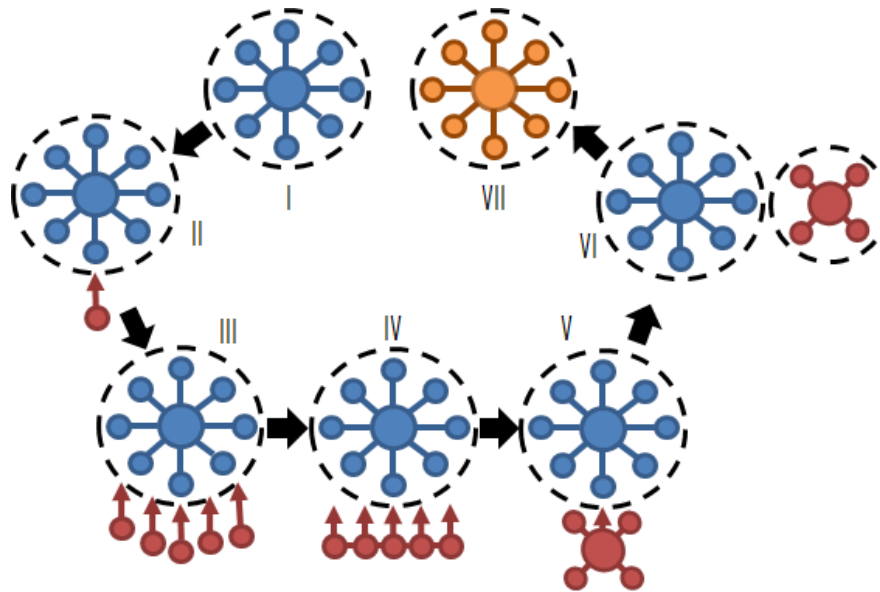
### *2.3 Visualizing demands*

By approaching discourses in a Post-Marxist way and by using the concept of social demands (as depicted in table 2), this theoretical approach allows the thesis to identify the different social demands that are present and constructed within the RFTR programme. By looking at the articulatory practices that surround demands, this study is able to identify apparent 'nodal points' or 'hegemonic signifiers', which are used by agents to structure and fix meaning in a hegemonic struggle following political logic. Different notions of governance and related decision making practices can subsequently be identified and analysed. To make these abstract notions of demands, nodal points, fixation of meaning and the different logics more tangible, tables 1 and 2 provide an ideal-type visualisation of the used theory. Similar tables are used to depict the findings with regard to the different social demands of actors. By means of this model, demands are identified and visualized in synchronic snapshots. This synchronic approach implies that the model represents discursive organization of social demands at one specific moment in time without taking historical antecedents into consideration. However, by visualizing synchronic snapshots from several moments in time, a so-called diachronic analysis can be made. Thus, where a synchronic approach allows for the identification and representation of snapshots from the discursive field, a subsequent diachronic approach takes the development of the articulation of social demands and discursive organization over time into account. By combining these two approaches, this model allows this thesis to give a full account and analysis of articulatory practices in the discursive field.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical representation of the articulation of a request towards a hegemonic discourse.

- I. In the above figure, situation I describes a situation where a dominant discourse has fixated meaning around a hegemonic nodal point. As explained, this fixation is only partial due to the “overflowing infinity of meaning” of the discursive field in which the demands are articulated and fixated in the discourse. In the figure the partiality of the discourse is depicted as the dashed circle around the articulated demands. These demands, which can be compared to the earlier mentioned nodal points, are shown as the circles and their fixation is depicted by the connecting blue lines. In this figure the big blue circle relates to the hegemonic signifier around which meaning and the different demands are fixated.
- II. The figure describes in the second scenario (II) the situation in which a demand has been articulated in the form of a request, which is depicted by the red circle. The request is formulated towards the hegemonic discourse, and subsequently is recognised and responded too, as is shown by the double shaped arrow.
- III. The acceptance of the request has, in this third situation (III), led to ‘satisfaction’ of the demand.. This is depicted in the above figure as the incorporation into the hegemonic discourse, where the initial demand is now linked to the hegemonic signifier of the hegemonic discourse.



**Figure 2.** Theoretical representation of the articulation and development of a claim towards a hegemonic discourse.

- I. The first situation (I) in the above figure depicts the scenario in which a hegemonic discourse has been articulated and partially has fixated meaning in the discursive field.
- II. Similar as in figure 1, the second situation (II) subsequently describes a scenario in which a demand has been articulated in the form of a request. However in contrast to figure 1, the request which has been formulated towards the hegemonic discourse is not recognised by the hegemonic discourse, which is shown by the "single-way" arrow.
- III. The marginalisation and exclusion of requests can lead to accumulation of these requests, and an increasing inability of the hegemonic discourse to 'deal' with them in a differentiated manner. This is depicted by situation (III) in figure 2. However, since the request still respects the institutional order, we can still speak of social logic and political stability.
- IV. Hypothetically, the marginalisation of a sequence of requests can lead to a scenario in which the different emerged requests co-align following a logic of equivalence. This co-alignment is depicted in the fourth scenario (IV) in figure 2 in which the initially separate request are now linked to each other.
- V. Within the linked constellation of actors, one demand might become dominant, subsequently becoming the hegemonic signifier, which is depicted in the fifth scenario (V) by the relatively bigger red circle. From here on, one can speak of a claim that actively engages the hegemonic discourse.
- VI. If successful a claim might give rise to a discourse, which in turn might be characterised as the 'counter discourse' of the old hegemonic discourse, which is depicted in the sixth (VI) scenario by the dotted circled red dots.
- VII. Finally, the last scenario (VII) depicts the situation if a counter discourse is successful. In that case, the new discourse can either replace the old discourse or be incorporated consequently leading to a new discourse.

### 3 Methodology

This chapter describes the general research approach that has been chosen in this thesis. It starts by discussing the qualitative and interpretive character of this thesis and how it links to the approach in the theoretical framework of governance and discourse analysis (section 3.1). Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the choice for a case study design, how the choice for the particular cases was made, and briefly introduces the cases of the Ooijpolder and Overdiepse polder (section 3.2). To conclude, the chapter explains the methods that are used to collect and analyse the data (section 3.3).

### *3.1 A qualitative and interpretative research approach*

The basis of this thesis is founded on an interpretive research approach, as already has been touched upon in the second chapter (see section 2.3). This interpretive character already implicitly underlines the qualitative stance that this thesis takes. The thesis argues that it is necessary to go beyond the numbers and parameters of a quantitative approach to be able to analyse complex social and political phenomena. Instead, as Rowlands (2005, p. 81) states, it is necessary to “come to terms with the meaning [...] in the social world”. Research founded on a qualitative approach allows for in-depth analysis and explanation of social and political phenomena subsequently permitting research to give “compelling descriptions of the qualitative human world” (Kvale, 2008, p. 47). Engaging in research with this approach allows the researcher to perceive reality not as a given but instead acknowledge that it is a social construct formed by human actors (Walsham, 2006). The practice of research here entails interpreting and describing the social world that is constituted through language, consciousness, and meanings that actors hold (Koch, 1999). Acknowledging that there are no predefined variables allows for explanations and understandings of phenomena in social context and their relationship (Walsham, 1995).

A theoretical fundament that underlines the conception that reality is constituted and constructed is therefore both necessary and indispensable when one has to deal with contested definitions like governance (see section 2.1) (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003). The character of this thesis thus clearly links to the theoretical framework which underlines and acknowledges the fact that different meanings of governance exist. To be able to study this, an analysis is thus needed that underlines the constitutive and contextualized relation that practice, identity and beliefs hold. In this thesis, the choice is therefore made to adopt discourse analysis from Laclau and Mouffe (see section 2.4). Approaching governance using this particular discourse theory does not only allows for the identification of different meanings of what different actors constitute as ‘good governance’, but also for the analysis of political struggles and deliberation through the articulation of different social demands.

### *3.2 A case study design*

To be able to answer the research questions, this study adopted a case study design and selected two projects from the RFTR programme as cases. These cases were analysed using the governance- and discourse-analysis from the theoretical framework. The choice for a case study design has been made since it allows the researcher to gain holistic insight and full understanding of the researched phenomena (Kumar, 2011). By doing so this thesis follows the argument made by Behagel (2012, p. 52) who states that by adopting this particular methodological design, one can study “meaning in action” in a search for “critical knowledge”.

To study the way how governance is understood and practiced through decision-making, this study chose two projects that had to deal with river expansions measures. The RFTR programme here served as a starting point for the identification of suitable cases. However, within the RFTR programme a wide array of measures were, or still are, undertaken at several locations. These measures can range from relocation of dikes, excavation of floodplains, deepening of the river beds, lowering of groynes, and digging of flood channels and new water storages. Although all measures are interesting to analyse with regard to the research questions, this study made the choice to focus on one particular type of measure to make the thesis more feasible and researchable. Therefore the

choice has been made to focus on measures that entail the purposefully flooding of polder; ‘calamity polder’ or emergency overflow areas, and retention areas. A lot of attention has been paid to these controversial measures, which made it possible to collect enough data from both scientific sources (e.g. Baan & Klijn, 2004; Neuvel & Van Der Knaap, 2010; Roth & Winnubst, 2009, 2014; Warner, 2008), as well as non-scientific sources, like newspapers, webpages and suchlike (e.g. Heuvel, 2002; Lagerweij, 2002; Schreuder, 2002; Volkskrant, 2002). Thus, especially projects where the measure of purposefully flooding of polders has been planned or even is implemented formed compelling and interesting cases with regard to the thesis’ topic.

The choice has been made in this thesis to study one case where the planning and implementation of flooding a polder has failed and to study one case where the planning and implementation succeeded. The choice respectively fell on the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder. The Ooijpolder denotes a case in Gelderland where the planning around purposefully flooding of the polder led to regional and local resistance and to the eventual cancellation of the plans. The Overdiepse polder in contrast, portrays a case where government and local residents closely worked together which currently has led to the implementation of a retention measure. The cases can be described as so-called extreme or deviant cases, since “they serve to highlight a particular phenomenon in a dramatic fashion”(Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 202). It must therefore be stressed that these cases are not necessarily exemplary for the Room for the River programme (Tielen, 2015). Instead, they offer insight in the way how governance can be understood in a discursive context of articulated demands and claims in the face of controversial inner-dike measures that can quickly politicize.

### *3.3 Data collection and analysis*

With regard to the data collection, it must first of all be underlined that when one performs discourse analysis, data collection cannot be considered a specific and separated phase, which needs to be finished before analysis starts. As Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 27) state “data collection is never completely excluded, and new questions always arise which can only be dealt with if new data is collected or earlier data is re-examined”. In other words, boundaries between the different research phases, which in other research are normally clearly separated, might become blurry as phases overlap, are reconstructed, supplemented or even completely revised. However, to present the reader with a comprehensible methodological structure, the data collection phase has figuratively been ‘extracted’ from the whole research process.

For the data collection both primary as secondary data was collected. The secondary data was mainly collected through document search and consisted of written media, policy documents, webpages, public report, advisory report, and scientific literature related to the RFTR programme and more specifically to the cases. The primary data was collected through the conduction of 10 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the main actors in both cases, which was then transcribed. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their prominence in the case and through snowball-sampling which entails that previous interviewees deliver information for possible subsequent interviewees. Project managers were in both cases contacted first, since they could help identify other main actors and deliver contact information. Overall, the interviewees ranged from project managers, representatives from interest groups, and civil servants from different layers of government (see Annex 2).

For the data analysis of the thesis, content analysis was used to analyse the secondary data. Furthermore, the audio taped interviews were transcribed and coded twice in accordance to the information it contained. The first coding constituted a 'bottom-up approach' where the transcriptions were analysed for overarching categories that were present in the interviews. This led to a categorization of recurrent themes: role division; governance; spatial quality; water safety; argumentation; conflict; change; discourse; and so on. The second labelling entailed a more 'top down approach' where the transcriptions were scanned and coded with the utilisation of the categories based on the theoretical framework of this thesis. These entailed: process-related meaning of governance; structure-related meaning of governance; living with water discourse; fighting the water discourse; articulation of a request; articulation of a demands; logic of equivalence; logic of difference; and so on. By adopting both of these approached, the information in the interviews was not only organized in a systematic manner but also allowed for a full and in-depth analysis of the transcribed interviews.



## 4 The Ooijpolder

This chapter elaborates the case of the Ooijpolder. It begins by presenting the history and background of the polder. It here covers the designation of the area for water safety measures, the organization of local, regional and national actors and the struggle in and outside the polder about its designation as calamity polder, emergency overflow area, and later also retention area (section 4.1). The chapter continues by explaining how governance took shape by analysing the case using the typology as presented in the theoretical framework (section 4.2). Subsequently, the chapter endeavours to shed light on the different articulated demands using theory from Laclau and Mouffe. The discursive elements are here visualised as presented in the theoretical framework (section 4.3). The chapter concludes with an analysis that converges both the governance and the demands analysis into one model (section 4.4).

## 4.1 Background of the polder

### 4.1.1 General features

The Ooijpolder is an area in the municipality of Groesbeek, situated east of the city of Nijmegen and south of the Waal and Rhine, in the province of Gelderland (see figure 3).<sup>5</sup> The Ooijpolder is often mentioned together with the adjacent Dutch part of the Duffelt, which is an adjacent polder that extends across the border. Local residents however, still distinguish both polders from each other (Davidse, 2008; I5; Roth et al., 2006). In this thesis, whenever the Ooijpolder is mentioned, both the Ooijpolder and the Duffelt are meant. The Ooijpolder encompasses approximately 3.300 hectare of land containing farms with agricultural activities (which counts for 75% of the acreage), nature area managed by the State Forestry Service, and the villages Beek, Kekerdome, Leuth, Millingen aan de Rijn, Ooij, Persingen and Ubbergen. The polder counts circa 13.200 residents living in these villages and an additional 1.440 in the countryside. In 2002 the polder counted circa 1.500 full-time jobs, mainly concerned with trade, hospitality industry, and financial and corporate services (Luteijn, 2002, p. 57).



**Figure 3.** Graphic representation of the area of the Ooijpolder. Based on maps (2015).

The area has a long history of fighting against water. Already in the 13th century dikes were constructed to protect the inhabitants of the polder. Despite these measures, the polder was still faced with numerous occasions of high water and floods. For example, the village of Persingen was almost entirely swept away during floods in the years 1809 and 1820 (Schulte & Steegh, 1983), and the polder was evacuated during the high water of 1995 (Natuurontwikkeling, 2015). In spite of the long history of floods and dike breaches, the idea to purposefully use the polder for controlled floods to flatten discharge peaks in the Rhine met with fierce regional and local resistance.

### 4.1.2 Designated

During the presentation of the 'Room for the River' plans in Loevestein on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2000, the Ooijpolder was one of the 35 'spatial reservations' (Heezik, 2007; Roth et al., 2006). Spatial reservations entail that designated areas are exempt from developments which could hinder the implementation of water safety measures (Management et al., 2006b, p. 16). The polder was mentioned here as possible area for the development as a retention area through inner dike

<sup>5</sup> The name of the municipality of 'Groesbeek' has changed to municipality of 'Berg en Dal' on 1 January 2016.

measures (management & Rijkswaterstaat, 2000, p. 23). Although the polder was initially mentioned as a retention area, the paper and presentation already made notion of anticipating on higher discharge peaks and potential designation of the polder as calamity polder;

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*"Measures should fit in a total package which is necessary for a normative discharge level of [...] 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>/s. Such a package would include outer and inner dike measure [...] To make inner dike measures (retention basins and green rivers) possible in the future, spatial reservations have to be made. Depending on the rate of outer dike river expansion, retention basins could be used as a calamity function." (management & Rijkswaterstaat, 2000, p. 31) <sup>6</sup>*

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In addition to mentioning the possibility of polders used for calamity purposes, this statement show an underlying shift within water management which acknowledges that complete water safety is impossible to reach by means of technical-infrastructure measures. Instead, water safety must be reached by means of management of residual risk and discharge peaks through designation of polders for purposefully inundation of certain designated polders. As the Province of Gelderland state in a report on water safety:

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*"Absolute safety can, especially with regard to the failure mechanisms that could emerge in inner- and outer dike areas, not be guaranteed." (Gelderland, 2003, p. 33)*

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The plans for using the polder for purposefully flooding, together with its assumptions about the number 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> and the necessity of calamity polders, led to a shockwave of reactions and protest from the engineering world, different governmental bodies and local residents from the designated areas. Soon after the presentation in 2000, the province of Gelderland who disagreed with the plans of the national government organized counter-expertise together with the Chamber of Commerce, employers' and employees' organization of Gelderland and farmers' unions (Warner, 2008).

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*"The province and the Chamber of Commerce opposed with plans: it would decrease the value of houses and real estate, it was argued to be a danger for the economy and people [...] so they initiated a research from WL Delft Hydraulics, which was also the organisation that came up with the idea of emergency overflow areas. They concluded that the concept was correct, but the location was not." (I2)*

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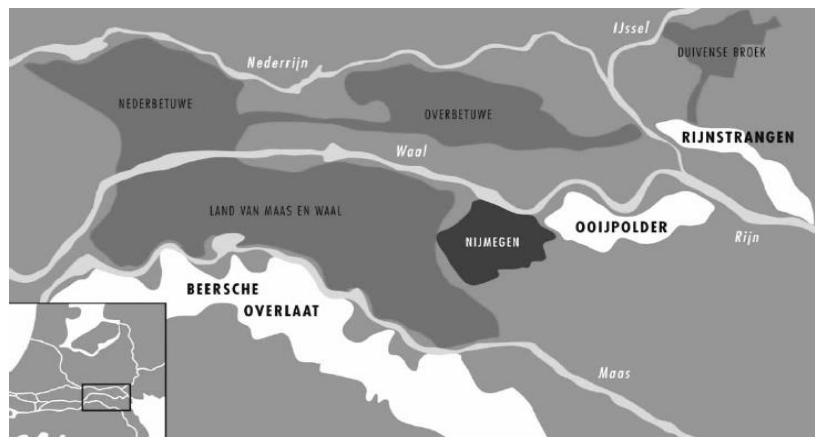
The conclusion that purposefully flooding of polders would be an effective measure but not the proposed locations and modalities, might not be a surprise since WL Delft Hydraulics was also the founder of the idea of emergency overflow areas (Warner, 2008). <sup>7</sup> Despite this, by publicizing the report the province of Gelderland became the first to formerly question the assumptions that backed up the idea of purposefully inundation of designated polders, with a focus on the argument of a discharge level of 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> rather than 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Extracts from policy documents and transcribed interviews originally in Dutch are translated by the author.

<sup>7</sup> WL Delft Hydraulics (*Waterloopkundig Laboratorium*) was a Dutch independent scientific research institute. From 2008 on the institute continued under the name of Deltares.

In light of the emerging critiques, an advisory committee was initiated in 2001 (Roth et al., 2006; van Buuren & Warner, 2014; van Staveren et al., 2014; Warner, 2008). Named after its' chairman, liberal senator David Luteijn, the Luteijn Committee was instated to research the usefulness and necessity of the policy measure of emergency overflow areas, indicate suitable areas, investigate the operation of such polders, look into compensation for flood-induced damage, and increase public support (Davidse, 2008; Warner, 2008). During the work of the committee, the necessity of upstream calamity polders became more prominent, "as the impact of flooding in those polders was held to be much less than upstream areas" (Warner, 2008, p. 576). In 2002 the committee presented its findings, where it indicated a necessity for calamity polders and designated three areas: the Ooijpolder, the Rijnstrangen and Beersche Overlaat (Luteijn, 2002). With respect to the difference in terminology of 'retention areas' and 'emergency overflow areas', the Luteijn committee shared the distinction that also van Ellen (2004) noted. An area designated for retention of water was seen by the Luteijn committee as a structural measure to drain discharges of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . An area designated as emergency overflow areas on the other hand, would be present for the so called 'residual risk', meaning that it would be used with a chance smaller than the safety standard of 1/1.250 years (Luteijn, 2002; Roth et al., 2006).



**Figure 4.** Map of the proposed calamity polders, indicated by the white areas. From Warner (2008) & Roth et al. (2006).

The Luteijn committee has been heavily criticized for "propagating [...instead of investigating] the proposed idea of calamity polders" (Roth & Winnubst, 2014, p. 237). Although increasing public support was one of the 'quests' on which the committee embarked, consultation with local actors about the designation of their polder for floodwater storage was absent (Warner, 2008). As becomes clear from an interview from Warner (2008, p. 577), the committee "simply judged security 'too important' to extend discussion to citizen stakeholders". Apparently "largely unaware of the sensitivity of the issue and the changing debates on flood protection", the new Vice Minister (*Dutch: staatssecretaris*) for Transport and Water Management (*Dutch: verkeer en waterstaat*) Melanie Schultz van Haegen adhered to the committees advice and reserved funding for the proposal of designation of calamity polder (Roth & Warner, 2007, p. 523).

#### 4.1.3 Local and regional resistance

During the time that the Luteijn committee researched and presented their findings, the municipalities of the designated areas began to organize counter expertise in response to the report from Luteijn. Under the initiative of the municipality of Ubbergen, the municipalities of Angerlo,

Beuningen, Druten, Duiven, Kleve, Kranenburg, Millingen, West Maas, and Waal Wijchen, commissioned the technical university of Delft to analyse and review the Luteijn report (Boer, 2002a, 2002b; Hoogwaterplatform, 2004).<sup>8,9</sup> In the report 'emergency overflow area; airbag or air pocket', carried out by Drs de Boer the conclusion was made that:

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*"Emergency overflow areas should flatten waves with a maximum of  $18.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  to  $16.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ . The occurrence of such a wave is speculative. The German government denies the possibility of an amount higher than  $16.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ . The problem is thus unrealistic. Emergency overflow areas in this way will be neither necessary, nor useful, nor urgent...they might not even work...additionally...the measure will decrease the chance of flood to 1:4000...this is a breach in the Law of Weir...with a water level of  $16.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  there is a lot to be said for dike enhancement."* (Boer, 2002a, p. 8)

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In a similar report carried out by Drs de Boer, he again concluded that the concept of emergency overflow areas or calamity polders is "debatable [...] since the chances of floods are smaller than ever and [...] the traditional way of dike heightening is not explored, while it [it being emergency overflow areas] might prove to be far more expensive and might lead to greater local disturbances" (Boer, 2002b, p. 42). Additionally, the report stated that the proposed measures, especially retention areas and calamity polder, could be regarded as "utterly retarded; reverting to primitive practices that emerged solely from a lack of technology and organization of water management" (Boer, 2002b, p. 1).

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*"For the maintenance of the chances on floods a wide array of unorthodox, or for the 20th century primitive and forsworn measures are being implemented and explored."* (Boer, 2002b, p. 11)

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The previous statements are in line with an interview with an associate professor from the Wageningen University, who proclaimed that the researchers from Delft often regard river expanding measures with respect to water safety as nonsense (I2). In their perspective water safety is still best offered through the traditional way of technical-infrastructure intensive measures like dike enhancement; "the higher the risk, the higher the dike" (I2).

In addition to the organization of this counter-expertise, the local municipalities made use of the formal moments for participation (*Dutch: inspraak momenten*). The municipality of Ubbergen for instance, made clear after the publication of the Luteijn report that there was a danger of 'river fatigue' under the municipalities and organisations of the riverine area:

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*"Due to way how communication takes place, we see a declining support in our municipality. Due to the publication of the report of the Committee of Emergency overflow areas [the Luteijn report], a reactive and defensive attitude has emerged under residents and businesses. The approach of a top-down measure meets a lot of resistant and leads to problem with support for other measures [...] we are as municipality not or barely able to*

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<sup>8</sup> German municipality

<sup>9</sup> German municipality

*explain to the inhabitants what is going on. If there is no light shed in the process on the coordination with other policies and communication with the stakeholders in the areas, problems with support will emerge.” (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 4)<sup>10</sup>*

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Combined with a list of demands, ranging from the social demand to research alternative measures to social demands related to closer collaboration with the stakeholders, the municipalities took a clear stance next to the Province of Gelderland against the measure of calamity polders and emergency overflow areas.

*“The municipality of Ubbergen is shocked that the Ooijpolder is mentioned in document of the State as retention area [management and Rijkswaterstaat (2000)], and that the committee Luteijn advised for the designation and implementation of the Ooijpolder (until Millingen aan de Rijn) as emergency overflow area [...] the designation is not acceptable [...] has many negative consequences [...] there is common interest served by doing so [...] and the necessity and usefulness has been proofed insufficient.” (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 4)*

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In the meantime, the Province of Gelderland did not remain silent. In addition to the earlier report conducted by WL Delft Hydraulics, the Province had another report prepared and carried out with the neighbouring German state North Rhine Westphalia. This report further supported their doubt, which allowed the province to occupy a stronger position (Roth et al., 2006). This report was published and sent to the Vice Minister of Transport and Water Management in the period of 2003 until 2004. The report firstly contained a brief analysis of the Luteijn report wherein it stated that;

*“The true water level decrease that is to be reached down stream will not be reached with the mentioned capacity of the emergency overflow area [...] in the proximity of Lobith. At greater distances from the emergency overflow areas, the controlled floods will have almost no effect since the water level decrease would be limited. We therefore consider neither the usefulness nor the necessity of emergency overflow areas present, and plead for the [...] implementation of structural measures within the river discharge system.” (Gelderland, 2003, p. 2)*

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The report mentioned that a water level of  $15.500 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  would be more realistic. Only a highly theoretical superwave would bring  $16.500 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  (Hoogwater, 2004; Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008). Only when no floods occur in Germany whatsoever due to for instance unrealistic high dykes a water level of  $18.700 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  would be possible (Warner, 2008). In light of this research the Province of Gelderland remained opposed to emergency storage and the assumed  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , and chose to argue for a high water scenario that “is  $1.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  lower than the scenario from RWS and the Vice Minister” (Roth et al., 2006, p. 35). As an official from the Province stated in an interview:

*“The Province always stated that if you truly adopt an adaptive approach and you give the river enough space than it is not necessary to have a measure like emergency overflow areas. We once compared the riverine system with a circulatory system; a blood-letting in*

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<sup>10</sup> The municipalities Groesbeek, Millingen aan de Rijn and Ubbergen were merged in 2015 into the municipality of Groesbeek.

*this sense is an emergency solution. But if you take care that everything is in order, you will not need it.” (14)*

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Furthermore, the province emphasised the importance of cooperation with Germany. Although it was stated in the discussion paper that “the necessity of inner dike measures depends upon foreign developments (management & Rijkswaterstaat, 2000, p. 31), it also indicated that the “solution should not lie abroad” (Gelderland, 2003, p. 3). The Province of Gelderland however, was of the opinion that collaboration with Germany was inevitable. Since not only the Netherlands is concerned with water safety along the Rhine, but is the one that lies downstream and is thus partly dependent on measures undertaken by upper stream nations, it would be insurmountable to have some level of collaboration:

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*“North Rhine Westphalia carries out a programme of dike enhancement and river expansion. Certain expanding measures, especially retention areas, could have effects in Lobith.” (Boer, 2002a, p. 13)*

*“Consultation and collaboration with Germany is inevitable. The possibility of water flowing in through Germany into inner dike areas in the Netherlands in the period until 2020 should be taken into account. After this period, this should still be accounted for, because North Rhine Westphalia has a lower safety account than the Province. We will thus continue our collaboration with North Rhine Westphalia. This means that we will further develop insight into the dike system and flood patterns of North Rhine Westphalia. We will continue to work on possibilities of compartmentalization behind the dikes of North Rhine Westphalia and will collaborate on a proper connection at the national border.” (Gelderland, 2003, p. 3)*

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Perhaps due to this fierce resistance from the lower governmental bodies, the RFTR programme management board asked for a formal regional advice (*Dutch: regioadvies*). This advice would be organized and publicized by the provinces of the riverine area; the Province Gelderland, Noord-Brabant, Zuid-Holland, Overijssel, and Utrecht (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005). The municipalities however, were not directly and formally involved in this regional advice (Ubbergen, 2004a). Although the report stressed the probability of a normative discharge level lower than  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , which was shown by the abovementioned report from the province and North Rhine Westphalia, this report stated that the actual incoming water level dependence would be dependent on any outcomes from measures performed in Germany. Therefore, the regional advice decided to sustain the assumption of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  on a policy level, despite the earlier denial of the province (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005). However, the report from the provinces also state that;

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*“Of course it is not the case that all measure are necessary right away to safely discharge  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . On the one side,  $16.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  applies as a minimum, on the other side a discharge level of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $17.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  are proper measures to anticipate sufficiently presently. The regional advice assumes for any long term measures a discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ .” (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005, p. 16)*

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Although the report stated that upper stream retention would be vital for the whole riverine area, the regional advice acknowledged that the actual implementation is a sensible subject with regard to

proper water level predictions (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005, p. 21). Therefore any retention measures were perceived as a last resort. However, the report stated that:

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*"A certain amount of measures have been cancelled due to various reasons. These concern: the retention beyond the branching area around Arnhem / Nijmegen."* (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005, p. 22)

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The regional advice stresses the preference for measures that have significant water decreasing effect, have regional support, are cost-effective, and contribute to spatial quality (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005).

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*"Projects should aim for structural solutions for the high water issue...which can be summed up as: broadening rivers, deepening flood plains, and finally dike enhancement."* (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005, p. 22)

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Although the necessity for retention in upper stream riverine areas was underlined, the regional advice did not mention the Ooijpolder as retention area. Instead the area around the Ooijpolder and Nijmegen was proposed as areas for "high water gullies [...] together with the implementation of a number of ongoing projects" (Stuurgroep Bovenrivieren, 2005, p. 23). This also includes a dike relocation in the polder near the area of 'Groenlanden' (see figure 5) (Ubbergen, 2004b). The northern part of the new dike would become part of the flood plain. In reaction to this regional advice the municipality of Ubbergen declared that "if this measure would be adopted by the government, then the detailed planning should happen in consultation with the municipality and the local residents" (Roth et al., 2006; Ubbergen, 2004a). Although the provinces now adhered to the assumption of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  in this regional advice, the municipalities were less convinced. As a civil servant states in a letter to the committee in charge of the development of the regional advice for the upper stream region:

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*"There is no clarity about the amount of future incoming water [...] although the regional advice assumes a level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  [...] we do not follow this assumption [...] and wish to wait [...] for the results of the research that is performed together with Germany."* (Ubbergen, 2004b)

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**Figure 5.** Graphic representation of the possible 'dike relocation' in Groenlanden (based on maps (2015)).

#### 4.1.4 The association 'Hoogwaterplatform'

During the back and forth throwing of reports and research, the local residents of the Ooijpolder did not remain silent. Although the plans of Vice Minister de Vries initially led to some disturbance with the local residents, actual resistance from the local inhabitants of the polder did not emerge until the publication of the Luteijn report and a presentation of the result by its chairman in the polder in 2002 (Davidse, 2008). After this meeting, organized by the local Rabobank, the interest association and "resistance movement" Hoogwaterplatform was established under the chairmanship of local



resident H. Sanders (I5).<sup>11</sup> As the chairman H. Sanders states in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 71):

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*"The typical top-down approach came as a big shock. Before that, nobody realised that there would be a chance that we would be designated; there was no turmoil or resistance. That only occurred after the publication of the report. [...] But due the meeting it became clear for the local residents."*

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The interest group aim, as is stated in Hoogwaterplatform (2004, p. 9), is to represent and expound the interests of the local residents, inform them about the measure 'emergency overflow area' and alternatives, influence the decision-making in the Hague through contacts with national and regional governments (with a focus on the House of Representatives or Lower House), involve other local interest groups and advocates (like for instance politicians and public officials of the former municipalities Millingen aan de Rijn and Ubbergen), and involve locale, regional and national press, radio and television.<sup>12</sup> The association characterizes itself as a well-organized group of around 300 members mainly consisting of highly educated people (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004; Roth et al., 2006, p. 73), with a vast network of contacts throughout governmental bodies and agencies.

Instead of continuous communication with the national government, the aim of influencing decision-making was based upon contacts in the Lower House and had been a prime objective of the association. As a spokesman of the Hoogwaterplatform states in an interview:

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*"I quickly realised that the former Vice Minister really sank her teeth in the concept of calamity polders with her RWS. Therefore I thought "I will not waste energy in convincing her since she was already so convinced that this ought to be the solution for the Netherlands". So how could we prevent her from implementing this? Then I proposed to the rest of the board that our strategy should be based on convincing the Lower House to block it." (I5)*

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*"What they did really smart was the fact that there were actually five layers of formation of alliances established; local, regional, transnational, in the expert community and the press. Furthermore, the Hoogwaterplatform established a very good webpage, which was also visited by the ministry of internal affairs and RWS. They had access to members of parliament [...] They had friends in the province but also knew people in RIZA." (I2)<sup>13</sup>*

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It becomes clear that the members quickly made a well-established organization within the association with one board and three distinct workgroups; an 'action and communication' group which engaged in the development of actions; a technical workgroup which served as think tank of the association, engaged in the technical aspects of the high water issue, was responsible for the

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<sup>11</sup> The Rabobank is a Dutch multinational banking and financial services company.

<sup>12</sup> The House of representatives is the lower house of Dutch Parliament. It controls the government by approving or disproving policies and legislative proposal, and next to this engages in the development of legislation together with the Senate and the cabinet.

<sup>13</sup> *Rijksinstituut voor Integraal Zoetwaterbeheer en Afvalbehandeling* was the Dutch department for research and consultancy in the area of water management. In 2007 it was merged into the water service department (*Waterdienst*) of RWS.

substantiation of arguments, and delivered alternatives for the emergency overflow measure; and lastly a workgroup which engaged in the judicial aspects (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004). Especially the technical workgroup was vital in the association by delivering counter-expertise, leading to the fact that they were not only perceived as action group but also as a group of experts with well-established arguments and also the capability to understand the professional jargon of the water management world. An important expert among their midst was the late prof.ir. van Ellen, who delivered the main argumentation of the association;

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*"The main argument of van Ellen against the plan was that the assumption that at a certain moment in time  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  water could flow into the Rhine at Lobith, which was used to rationalise the measure, was utter nonsense and impossible. Before such an amount of water arrives, Germany will be faced with floods...Only the Dutch are too stubborn to believe this, the Germans also think it is nonsense." (I5)*

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In addition, the association argued that the actual proper moment of 'deployment' would be very difficult to determine; the risk of flooding the polder too early or too late would be substantial. In both cases, the effect of the measure would be limited (I5). Furthermore, the argument was made that the capacity of the polder as emergency overflow area would be negligible (I5). By not only being able to *understand* the professional jargon of the water management world but also *speak* it, the association was able to put the assumption of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , that rationalised the use of emergency overflow areas, into question. As an associate professor state in an interview:

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*"For proper contra hegemony there is more necessary than a proper agenda, you also need to be able to speak the language of your opponent. A 'blue engineer' listens quicker to a 'green engineer' than a farmer since the 'blue engineer' might argue that a farmer knows nothing of water management. But when an old professor from Delft [the late prof.ir. van Ellen] is participating, then they listen. Implicit and local knowledge might sound nice, being able to speak the language of your opponent and do this more smart is very important." (I2)*

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As also Roth et al. (2006, p. 76) state; "those who want to wage war against the powerful complex of research and policy-making has to have their own specific expertise". Not only the ability to make rationalised arguments founded on expertise in water management was important, but also the ability to actually be able to understand the often highly technical character of the discussion and read the research reports.

One vital research report in their "resistance" against the plans for the polder as emergency overflow area the association was a report from WL Delft and HKV (I2; I5; Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008).<sup>14</sup> This confidential report placed critical notes and doubts with the financial aspects of the measure of controlled emergency storage of water, and the proposed capacity of the Ooijpolder for such a measure (I2; Roth et al., 2006). Its existence was kept secret for as long as possible by the Vice Minister (as is stated by the late prof.ir van Ellen in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 80). However, the Hoogwaterplatform became aware of its existence due to a leak and was able to retrieve it by appealing on the law of transparent administration (*Wet Openbaarheid Bestuur*) and

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<sup>14</sup> HKV is an independent consultancy bureau for research in water and safety

threaten with juridical steps.<sup>15</sup> According to van Ellen in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 80): “the position of RWS and the Vice Minister began to deteriorate” after this.

With the weakening of the position of the Vice Minister and her ministry, the Hoogwaterplatform was able to use their contacts in the Lower House. Especially the members of parliament Van Lith (CDA) and Boelhouwer (PvdA) were closely connected with the Hoogwaterplatform and often visited the area (I5).<sup>16,17</sup> Together Van Lith and Boelhouwer presented a motion to transfer the money reserved for the emergency overflow areas to the budget of the Room for the River programme in the end of 2004 (Roth et al., 2006). After the motion was accepted in the Lower House, the Ministry recognized the implausibility’s of the measure (Management, 2005, p. 7), and was forced to abandon the plans for emergency overflow areas. The spatial reservations were lifted and the budget for calamity polder (400 million euro’s for the period 2011-2014) was transferred to the Room for the River budget (Roth et al., 2006). As Roth et al. (2006, p. 84) states:

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*“With the adoption of this motion, the plans for emergency overflow areas went into the fridge, and the Luteijn report disappeared in the drawer.”*

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#### 4.1.5 Calm water?

With the motion from Van Lith and Boelhouwer accepted and the plans for calamity polders and emergency overflow areas abandoned, the Ooijpolder at first sight appeared to have ‘sailed in calm waters’. In the final part of the PKB, only the Millingerwaard in the Ooijpolder was mentioned as a suitable site for ‘extra floodplain excavation’ (see figure 6). The regional and local resistance from both governments and local residents appeared to have paid off.

Bijlage, blad 1: Maatregelen Basispakket

Naam maatregel	Codering/Locatie	Minimale Hydraulische taakstelling		Grondgebruik
		m	op rivier km	
Boven-Rijn/Waal				
Obstakelverwijdering Suikerdam en polderkade naar de Zandberg	1503	-0,08	870.8-871.8	natuur
Extra uiterwaardvergraving Millingerwaard	1504	-0,09	870 - 872	natuur

**Figure 6.** Cut out of the list of measures from Ministry of Transport and Water Management et al. (2006b, p. 22).

Regardless of their success, the Hoogwaterplatform was not dissolved. A spokesman explains why:

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*“After 2005, we thought that we could dissolve the association. But in a general meeting we decided not to do this. You never know what the politicians in The Hague would contrive. So we maintained the association and kept an eye on the issue.” (I5)*

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<sup>15</sup> The law of transparent administration (*Wet Openbaarheid Bestuur*) is a legal principle which endorse the disclosure of information and indicate the right of citizens to see information which is in the hands of the government.

<sup>16</sup> PvdA is a Dutch social democratic political party.

<sup>17</sup> CDA is a Dutch Christian democratic political party.

This constant vigilance eventually paid off, as the Ooijpolder was mentioned again in the context of the Delta programme as polder for purposefully flooding, this time as retention area in 2013 (Gelderland, 2013). However, in this case the idea neither emerged from the political circles in The Hague nor from the water-expert world in RWS. Instead, a group of civil servants tasked with the establishment and development of a regionally accepted ‘preference strategy’ to sustain water safety after the RFTR programme came with the idea (Gelderland, 2013; I1). This strategy would need to reach the objective of making the Rhine ready for a discharge of  $17.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for the year 2050, while keeping the perspective open for a discharge of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for the year 2100.

In the development of the plan, the civil servants chose to make an overview of potential measures, and derive ‘promising measures’ from this list:

*“We first made an overview of every thinkable measure if you wanted to achieve the objectives with regard to water safety. If you would solely do this with river expansion measures, you would have to use the Ooijpolder for a sufficient water level decrease” [...] It was more of a thinking exercise for what the promising strategies could be if you would do it solely with dike enhancements or solely with river expansion measures. Eventually you would need to make a combination of the two. But those were the ‘extremes’ that we derived [...] Than people resisted, because according to them we should not even have written those things down”. It felt for them as if we had not included them [...] But we had a lot of communication during the regional process with the boards of the municipality, and to a lesser extent with the citizens, because it was a strategy, a precursor of spatial plans; it was a preparation for the national water plan.” (I1)*

If the choice would be made to again follow a strategy that would only focus on making room for the river, the report concluded that extensive inner dike measures would be inevitable and that retention appeared to be a fundamental part of an expansion strategy (Gelderland, 2013, p. 30). Although the Ooijpolder was merely mentioned as one of many ‘promising measures’ in this explorative study (see figure 7), the association Hoogwaterplatform immediately organized resistance against this new idea (I5). As a spokesman of the interest group Hoogwaterplatform stated:

*“We resisted in the past, and we resist fiercely in the present.” (I5)*

Tabel 3.1: kansrijke maatregelen, strategie Ruimte voor de Rivier

Traject	Maatregel binnendijs	Maatregel buitendijs
Pannerdensch Kanaal		Regelwerk Looeverdams
		Landhoofd A12 Velp-Westervoort
Bovenrijn		Koppenwaard
	Retentie Rijnstrangen	Millingerwaard/Erlecomse Waard
	Bypass	Inlaatwerk Suikerdam aanpassen
	Ooij/Groenlanden/Bisonbaai	
	Retentie Ooijpolder	Aanpassen inlaatwerk Millingsedam, geul Millingerwaard, benedenstrooms Erlecom aantakken
		Kadeverlaging Tuindorp
		Kadeverlaging Byland
		Stadswaard Ubbergen

Figure 7. Cut-out of a figure from Gelderland (2013, p. 29).

Since the association was maintained after the plans for reservation as emergency overflow area, it could quickly and easily organize an information presentation in which the civil servants were asked to present their ideas (I1; I5).

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*"We were standing in a room in front of about 100 people, and were to explain how we had the guts to mention the word retention. The mayor of Ubbergen chaired the meeting very well, he also stated that we were not the directors but were civil servants who had the assignment to elaborate this strategy. So he told everybody not to lynch us but to let us explain what we came up with. After the presentation the people applauded, I presume probably not for the content, but for the fact that we had the meeting. Than you get the feeling that you did something right. But it was still too late since the people were already in a 'resistance' mood." (I1)*

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*"So these civil servant made a proposal for the deputies of the province of Gelderland [gedeputeerden staten van Gelderland]. But it was very clumsy; these civil servants did not indulge themselves into the prior history. They had no idea of what happened during 2003 until 2005, why the state decided to renounce their plans." (I5)*

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However, the plan for the Ooijpolder as retention basin was only mentioned in the explorative study as one of many 'promising measures' if the choice would be made to adopt a strategy solely based on river expansion. As an official of the province of Gelderland states:

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*"From these 'promising strategies and measures', we built a 'preference strategy', and here the Ooijpolder as retention is not included, because this strategy is based on a powerful interplay of river expansion and dike enhancement [...] a dike relocation however, is kept in mind, but the big retention measure is out of the picture and was never designated for spatial reservation." (I1)*

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Later, during the further development of the 'promising strategies' (dike enhancement or room for the river), possibilities from these two strategies and establishment of a 'preference strategy' were explored in two official workshops (*Dutch: ambtelijke werksessies*). In these workshops, not only civil servants from for instance municipalities, water boards, and the province were present, but also a so-called reflection group (*Dutch: spiegelgroep*) containing citizens and businesses (Gelderland, 2013; I5). In addition to their presence in these official workshops, this reflection group, acted as a feedback group for the development of plans in the riverine area of the Rhine and the Waal. To further support the decision-making by making effects of decision visible and allow non-experts, who are not in possession of a water engineering or hydrology degree, also comprehend the effects of different measures, the computer programme 'building bucket' (*Dutch: blokkendoos*) was developed (I1; I7). This programme calculated the effects which certain measures had on the water level and modelled and visualized this on a map.

Currently, the only measure that specifically takes place in the Ooijpolder is the digging of gullies in Millingerwaard (see figure 8). This measure ought to lead to a better distribution of incoming water of the Rhine between the 'Pannerdensch kanaal' and the Waal and to allow the Waal to better discharge high water level peaks. After implementation, the measure should lead to a water level decrease of nine centimetres in the Waal (R. v. d. Rivier, 2015). Furthermore, the new gullies are supposed to be part of new nature areal in the area, where intensive management will be kept at a

low level. The area is given room to develop naturally into a 'river dune landscape' with hard- and softwood riparian forests (R. v. d. Rivier, 2015).



**Figure 8.** Graphic representation of the current measures in the Ooijpolder. The lower left illustrates the current situation and the lower right illustrates the new situation where the gullies have been dug. Based on infographic from R. v. d. Rivier (2015) and maps (2015).

#### 4.1.6 NIMBY's or experts?

One aspect that is important to mention in the case of the Ooijpolder is the distribution of costs and benefits and the emergence of terms like NIMBY's. The case of the proposed measures in the Ooijpolder arguably denotes the opposite of a 'tragedy of the commons' scenario. Instead of sharing the costs while keeping the benefits, the Ooijpolder case denote a scenario where benefits are shared, but the cost are more or less focussed on one specific location. Whereas the water safety is increased for the whole region, the measure that provides this water safety is located at a specific location in which local actors have to deal with the spatial and temporal consequences of this measure. Local opposition to these types of plans could undermine these shared benefits of increasing water safety.

During the discussion around the plans for the Ooijpolder as emergency overflow area, retention area or merely as area for the digging of new gullies, different perspectives subsequently have emerged about the designation of the local government and residents as NIMBY's (Not In My Back Yard), also known as the Nimby syndrome (Dear, 1992). This term often pops up in cases where projects require large amount of lands, and is often the denominator of local opposition (Wolsink, 1994). Designating actors as NIMBY's is often done by actors in favour of the land use constructions and has a clear implication for the perception of any local opposition; "this opposition is based purely on self-interest; and because standing up for one's own interests is seen as selfish, it may be safely disregarded " (Wolsink, 1994, p. 853).

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*"The hard thing about water safety is that you never do it only for yourself; you also always do it for the adjacent municipality or the downstream area of the river." (I1)*

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After the question whether the complications in planning in the Ooijpolder, with regard to local resistance was due to a NIMBY attitude a civil servant from the Province of Gelderland stated:

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*"Well yes, the boards of the municipalities also feel this way, understandably. This does not disappear when you are on an administrative level. People feel connected and concerned with their area, that is logical, also for the board of a municipality. They were instated to represent the concerns of their municipality." (I1)*

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The municipalities have found themselves in a situation where they had to find a balance between representing the concerns of the local community and being able to talk and negotiate with the national government. As the mayor of former municipality Ubbergen states in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 81):

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*"If you say that you don't want it, and that they have to do it elsewhere, you quickly designate yourself as a NIMBY. 'You are a mayor and of course you are against it'. This appearance sticks to you; that you only talk for your own municipality. That is where the Hoogwaterplatform helped a lot [...] They were able to 'attack' the government in ways I could not."*

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Designation as a NIMBY group can thus have great effect on the inclusion and exclusion of local actors and subsequently the way how governance takes shape. As is stressed by Wolsink (1994), those who are 'branded' as a NIMBY might simply be surpassed since the opposition is based on self-interest. Although the local municipalities had some issues with this, the Hoogwaterplatform association was able to circumnavigate designation as NIMBY's by actively trying to get rid of any NIMBY accusations (Roth et al., 2006, p. 75). As explained before, the association had a lot of expertise and knowledge about water management in their own ranks. Due to this the Hoogwaterplatform have characterized themselves more as a group of experts than an action group (Davidse, 2008). Additionally, the members always stated that if the Netherlands could only be saved by making a calamity polder of the Ooijpolder, they would accept it (I5). However, since their own experts stated that the latter was not the case they would keep resisting "with tooth and nail", and keep a vigilant eye on every plan with regard to water safety that concerns the polder (I5).

## 4.2 Governance in the polder

The governance processes in the Ooijpolder case initially depict a technocratic ‘battle’ between on one side the Vice Minister, the Ministry of Transport and Water Management and RWS who hierarchically tried to press their plans for calamity polders and on the other side the regional and local governments, and Hoogwaterplatform who, with their own experts, research and reports opposed these plans. It might be perhaps due to the fierceness of these happenings that the Hoogwaterplatform kept an ever watching eye over the ‘high water issue’, leading to an early ‘interference’ in the explorative planning of some civil servants of the province of Gelderland in 2013. However, in the end this process shifted towards a more deliberative and collaborative approach with local residents, as the presence of a reflection group suggests. This paragraph ‘breaks’ these happenings down to make them analysable, using the governance typology presented in the theoretical framework. For convenience this typology is again provided below (see table 3).

Characteristics	Process-related	Structure-related
<b>Actor(s)</b>	Coalition of several actors	Limited amount of actors
<b>Role of expert</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Role of government</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Decision making</b>	Bottom-up	Top-down
<b>Knowledge status</b>	Knowledge is negotiated	Knowledge is objective
<b>Plan objective</b>	Deliberative framework for collaboration (goal searching)	Mechanistic & predetermined (goal oriented)

**Table 3.** Schematic presentation of the features of a process- and structure-related meaning of governance (based on: (Lautze, 2014; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2008; Van der Valk, 1998).

### 4.2.1 A good start is halve the battle...

The beginning of the ‘calamity polder and emergency overflow discussion’ began right after the presentation of the Vice Minister de Vries in Loevestein castle in 2000. Already during this presentation specific features of governance became visible. As the previous paragraph explained, the Vice Minister surprised not only the engineering world, but also several regional and local governments with her already detailed plans for making room for the rivers. The start thus delineates a type of governance wherein even lower governmental bodies initially have been excluded from the planning-process (Roth et al., 2006). On the question whether the province was included in the plans and designation of the picked areas, a provincial official replied:

*“No, actually not [...] the Vice Minister suddenly came up with this. That, of course, brought a lot of commotion.” (I4)*

This start of the project clearly relates to several features that characterize a structure-related meaning of governance. The amount of actors was limited to the Ministry Transport and Water Management, and former WL Delft Hydraulics as independent expert. From their research it was decided in a top-down and predetermined manner that the Rhine should be able to discharge a water level of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  at Lobith for 2015 and  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for 2100 by river expanding measures and designation of polders for controlled flooding. On the other hand, as Annex A.4 explained, the choice for making use of a Key Planning Decision appears to be an early sign of a more process-related meaning of governance. Subsequent happenings again denote a more hierarchical approach, where technocratic reports and research are ‘thrown’ to each other, and the Vice Minister and RWS



have sunk their teeth in the concept of emergency overflow areas, retention areas and the associated assumed water levels. As a member of the Lower House stated in a meeting in 2004:

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*"If the people of the Ministry of Transport and Water management have something in mind, they will rumble through like a train." (Kamer, 2004, p. 5)*

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This 'war of reports' lasted for around five years until the Vice Minister was forced to abandon the idea in 2005 with the acceptance of the motion of Van Lith and Boelhouwer. However, some of the research and reports are notable to mention as it characterizes the way how planning- and decision-making took place within this time period.

#### 4.2.2 *Securitization*

The Luteijn report, which was initiated in 2001 after the political and social unrest is a characteristic example of the war of reports described earlier. With respect to the first feature of governance, 'actor(s)', the Luteijn committee have started their research with a process-related meaning of governance in mind. The chairman Luteijn stated in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 55) that the committee strived for a mixed composition of members with a combination of experience, different political bodies and a scientific approach. This aim can be related to features from process-related governance; a coalition of several actors. However, the subsequent consequences of the choice to have a limited amount of water experts in the group led to a committee which was understaffed with actual water experts (Luteijn, 2002). The committee became dependent on the guidance and advice of the Ministry according to Roth et al. (2006, p. 55). As chairman Luteijn stated in an interview with Roth et al. (2006, p. 55):

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*"I did not have specific knowledge with regard to the high water issue."*

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Due to the lack of knowledge and expertise of actual water management of most of the committee members, the water experts that were to guide and advice the committee are stated to have taken up a managing role (Roth et al., 2006, p. 55). Although the tendency of having a mixed composition of committee members can be related to the feature of process-related governance, the actual practice thus relates more to a structure-related meaning of governance where experts and the government had a central role. Furthermore, the committee is stated to have deemed water security too important to include local inhabitants views (Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008), and solely focus on communication and collaboration with managers, representing bodies and societal organisation like majors, directors of the province, agricultural organisations and nature protection organisations. This securitizing approach led to a top-down setting, portraying a structure-related meaning of governance. Also the scientific approach of the committee which was based on "quantitative principles with regard to normative discharge level and the probability of exceedance" (Roth et al., 2006, p. 57) indicates a technocratic and mechanistic approach. The committee was set out to substantiate predeterministic objectives set out by the Vice Minister, in practice thus portraying a structure-related meaning of governance.

Following the conclusion of the committee that emergency overflow areas would be useful in the Ooijpolder, the Vice Minister made spatial reservations in the proposed areas. Although in the initial plans in Loevestein, the Ooijpolder was mentioned as a retention area, the committee deemed upper

streams emergency overflow areas important and vital for the assurance of water safety. A shift occurred in which the measure for Ooijpolder changed from designation as a retention area to an emergency overflow area. This meant that the new measure would be more related to disaster policy and calamity control than to river expanding policy. As a civil servant from the municipality of Groesbeek stated in an interview:

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*"Then the idea behind these emergency overflow areas was that it was a disaster scenario and therefore formal procedures should not need to be followed. You can just designate areas, and when the disaster is about to happen, you just pierce a dike, that's it [...] That was the idea of a these emergency overflow area, that it would have to be included in the PKB or in the MER procedure [...] since it is part of disaster policy it would have been practiced in a different manner."* (I10)

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The hierarchical approach of the high water issue is a clear case of securitising in which water security was deemed too important to include local inhabitant's views. This depicts a clear case of 'crisis-mode' decision making (Warner, 2008, p. 577). With this type of decision-making, decisions are made in a hierarchical, top-down manner substantiated by 'objective' data and models, leaving little room for non-experts to participate. In addition, the committee offered a clear 'nine step' plan of action together with a designation of governmental bodies responsible for the concerned step. The advice from the committee for a stepwise approach for dealing with high water depicts a mechanistic approach. This again clearly related to features of a structure related meaning of governance.

#### 4.2.3 *Countering or accepting?*

The Luteijn report shows an approach based on a structure-related meaning of governance. Also the organization of the province of Gelderland with the 'WL Delft Hydraulics report' and the North Rhine Westphalia report, and the municipalities with the 'de Boer report' show similar features of a structure related-meaning of governance. Within these reports a limited amount of actors engaged in producing counter-knowledge and often governments and especially experts played a central role. The knowledge status, or in other words the way how knowledge is perceived, in these different reports is important to note, since it connotes almost a paradoxical nature.

By disagreeing with the arguments made by the Vice Minister during the presentation in Loevestein and later also with the Luteijn report, these counter-reports implicated that certain knowledge might be 'wrong'. This initially points to the acknowledgement that knowledge is not so much objective but instead could be negotiated and outcomes are dependent on subjective choices for certain models and assumptions. The discussion about the 'proper' normative water discharge level is a notable example of this. Interestingly enough, the organized counter-expertise that claims to have the 'right knowledge' subsequently makes use of similar assumptions to rationalise and substantiate their conclusions. In the end, all parties thus claim to have the 'right objective' knowledge. However, by disagreeing with each other the subjectiveness around the high water issue is also underlined and it shows that the knowledge might be treated by the different parties as objective but instead is "negotiated" in a manner of back and forth throwing of technocratic arguments, reports and research. The knowledge status thus relates on the one hand to structure-related governance, in the sense that the knowledge produced by a certain party is seen by that party as objective, but on the other hand also relates to process-related governance, in the sense that the different produced

knowledge is contested and countered and thus needs to be negotiated between the different parties.

In addition to the above mentioned happenings that occurred between the different governmental bodies and layers, the strategy of the Hoogwaterplatform also ought to be explained here since it denotes a somewhat ambiguous nature. On the one hand, their strategy to engage the plans of the Vice Minister through the Lower House with highly expert arguments which they communicated to the Lower House illustrates a clear case of a structure-related meaning of governance. The need to 'play' it through a higher governmental body that can influence the national government and RWS underline a certain structure and hierarchy within the government. On the other hand, the fact that an association of citizenry actually was able to influence the decision-making this way, points to a way of governance in which citizenry can influence the outcomes in a 'bottom-up manner'. This again, relates to a process-related meaning of governance. By the acceptance of the motion Van Lith Boelhouwer in 2005, the Hoogwaterplatform has shown that even in a highly hierarchical and technocratic environment, possibilities exist to exert bottom-up influence by simply addressing another political or governmental body. Therefore, the Hoogwaterplatform ambiguously underlined the hierarchical top-down structure within the governmental system but also show bottom-up possibilities of citizen power; subsequently thus denoting features of both structure- as well as process-related meanings of governance.

#### 4.2.4 *When the dust settled...*

After 2005 and the commotion around the concept of calamity polders and emergency overflow areas, the PKB policy documents are rich in statements about decentralizing power, inclusion of local views and participation of local residents. Due to the emphasis on the intensive water-society interactions, it was underlined that the RFTR programme required a style of governance that was based on "reaching negotiated solutions with local inhabitants, government administrations at various levels, ministries and agencies; in short, a negotiated approach" (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, pp. 38-39). The happenings in the Ooijpolder appear to have served as a lesson. "If not addressed and negotiated right from the start, conflicts about property issues may lead to resistance against plans for change" (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 40). Participation is therefore emphasised as important and necessary according to several policy documents. This becomes visible when looking at the following statements from a variety of policy documents:

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*"National government defines the borderline objectives for safety, timing and funding. The regional authorities have maximum scope to conceive and implement plans within the borderlines. Residents and the business community are involved right from the start."* (Directorate, 2011c)

*"Jointly devising and detailing rather than top-down."* (Directorate, 2011a)

*"The local government bodies involve residents, businesses and other stakeholders including conservationists in planning and implementation of the projects."* (Directorate, 2011a)

*"The national government indicates the preconditions, while the region fills this in. Regional and local governments (provinces, water boards and municipalities) devise plans*

*together with inhabitants and local enterprises, and implement them, if possible, themselves.” (Directorate, 2011d).*

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As paragraph 5.1.5 explained, this quiet and calm period lasted until 2013. In the plan-making for the new Delta-Programme for the period after the RFTR programme the polder was again mentioned as potential site for water retention by a group of civil servant of the province of Gelderland (Gelderland, 2013). Although the measure in the area was merely mentioned as a ‘promising measure’, it was enough to again light a spark in the ranks of the Hoogwaterplatform and municipalities.

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*“I was furious, how did they came up with that?” (I10)*

*“We immediately came into action, and informed the public...Retention is a step worse than emergency overflow area [...] it was very clumsy of them.” (I5)*

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During the subsequent happening a discussion can be noted about the proper time for inclusion of local actors. As 5.1.5 elaborated, the mentioning of the retention measure merely encompassed a promising measure within an explorative study in which the strategy would be focussed on making room for the river. The question thus arises whether local actors should already be included in this stage of a project where different scenarios are explored and the framework of a project is still to be made.

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*“But if I state that I am going to implement a certain measure than plan-making will last for at least another 10 years; lines on maps will shift, and levels will change from 10 to 10.1 or 9.8. In that case you work at a level which could have effects in the area and its inhabitants. But if I were to ask to them whether I should or should not do a certain measure: well then of course they would say “preferably not.” (I1)*

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However, this phase was exactly the time in which the local actors engaged the plan-making.

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*“People wanted to know precisely when we were to start, how often, how high the dike would become, how high the water would get, whether it would go left or right from their garden fence...all of this was unknown at that time. We only had a conceptual framework. But that is really hard to communicate, especially when the project draws nearer.” (I1)*

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The establishment of an explorative report which on the one hand allows for a clear framework but on the other hand also allows for enough room for deliberative processes and local collaboration, and where all parties are satisfied with their moment of inclusion, is a difficult if not almost impossible equilibrium to find. This can also be seen in the character of the explorative report. The initial phase in the development of this report is characterised by features from a structure-related meaning of governance; a limited amount of actors, mainly comprising of government officials and experts, engage in the technical question what should happen where to have a certain quantitative effect. Objectives were developed in a predeterministic manner. This part in a project thus denotes a quite hierarchical and technocratic momentum, connoting a structure-related meaning of governance. Only after the establishment of a framework, inclusion of local actors was considered as useful as the above mentioned statement from the provincial official highlights. Although the

importance of a framework is underlined in an interview with a municipal civil servant (I10), inclusion of actors that go beyond the technical aspects of a project and measures are seen as an important improvement for future projects:

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*"If you denominate a retention area as a 'promising measure', than you find a mare's nest, since there is no support for retention. You have to come up with well-thought proposals, which think about potential effects and what it could mean for the area. Now it is often very technical and it goes like: 'we have to store so much water in so much time, how much soil do we need to accomplish that. Let's have a look at the map...this is a good spot'. That ratio is far too technical...Therefore you need a work group which not only includes technical experts, who focus on quantities, but also include people that are sensitive to how residents could think about the project, and people who focus on nature and landscape. This way, I think, you will establish a proposal which does not finds the mare's nest.'" (I10)*

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This quote above describes that features of process-related governance should be present in the establishment of a project framework. Especially the inclusion of several actors, who not only focus on technical aspects are notable characteristics. According to the municipal civil servant, this way of planning- and decision-making ought to lead to locally better supported solution (I10). This discussion shows that often in practice, as Roth et al. (2006, pp. 8-9) state; "the concerns of citizenry and their wish to give shape to their own habitat often collide with the centralistic and technocratic tradition of RWS and the centralising approach of governments within the discussion about spatial measures related to water safety". However, after the meeting where the provincial officials explained the plans around the measures for the Ooijpolder, the decision was made in the final 'preference strategy' not to implement a retention measure in the polder but instead find a combination of dike enhancing and river expanding measures, and continue the process with closer collaboration with a reflection group and inter alia the help of the programme 'the building bucket' (I1).

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*"Beforehand, planning went over the heads of citizens, therefore we decided...that the vision would be made with the four B's; citizens, businesses, directors, and officials [burgers, bedrijven, bestuurders en beampten]. It would not be done from the governmental building from the province, but would be organised together with all parties to develop a vision to govern high water protection." (I4)*

*"We tried to do it in a different way in this strategy with a reflection group, to allow people from the Ooijpolder and elsewhere to think about it. At one moment we had that programme; the 'building bucket'. I found it fantastic. And when the Ooijpolder was not in sight anymore, a lot more conversation was made possible." (I1)*

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*"We developed all kinds of means which...allow the director but also citizens to emerge from their position as 'consumer of policy' to one of co-designer. One of those is the 'building bucket' [...] which was an instrument to show what would happen if a measure would not be done, and what should be done to replace that. People employed a whole different role, they became jointly responsible. It was brilliant, really successful." (I7)*

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By means of this reflection group and the programme 'building bucket', the government officials were able to inquire about local perspective, gain better views on possible locally supported

measures, but also was forced to look at alternatives and give clear explanations about certain decisions through the formal participation moments. As a civil servant of the Province of Gelderland states in an interview:

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*"Are you going to invest in a concrete dike of 10 meters, or are you going to invest in a dike relocation or something else? In that whole story directors are eventually the ones who make the decision and citizens the ones that participate [inspreken]. And because of this participation you are forced as director to think over your decisions at a couple of points or give better explanations." (I1)*

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This statement shows that participation is formally limited to consultation and plan-making and not so much directly engages in actual decision-making; government officials are still the decision-makers. However, as becomes clear from interviews with a provincial official and a member of this reflection group, possibilities were created by the establishment of this reflection group to thus engage in plan-making but also influence decision-making by forcing directors to revise decisions, look at alternatives or give better arguments and explanation for made decisions (I1; I5).

The establishment of the reflection group and the development of the programme the 'building bucket', allowed for more extensive participative processes by empowering non-experts, like residents, to collaborate in the plan-making. By modelling and visualizing effects of certain measures it made it possible for citizens and non-experts to join in the planning-making and influence the decision-making. As the representative of RWS stated, it allowed citizens to "emerge from their position as 'consumer of policy' to one of co-designer" (I7). This shows that the programme was adopted as an instrument which empowered non-experts in the reflection group to be included in the process of planning- and decision-making by redistributing expertise between science, the engineering world and the public (Whatmore, Lane, Odoni, Ward, & Bradley, 2011). These characteristics can be clearly related to a more process-related meaning of governance.

### 4.3 The stressing of demands

During the conflict about extensive spatial measure in the Ooijpolder for the purpose of water safety between national government on one side and regional and local governments and local residents on the other side, articulated demands often clashed. As Roth et al. (2006, pp. 8-9) state; “the concerns of citizens and their wish to give shape to their own habitat often collides with the technocratic tradition from RWS and the centralised propensity of the government when concerned with safety issues”. This paragraph elaborates these demands and concerns by using the typology of Behagel and Turnhout (2011) and puts them into a discursive perspective using discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe. For convenience the typology between the two different demands, request and claim is again illustrated below (see table 4).

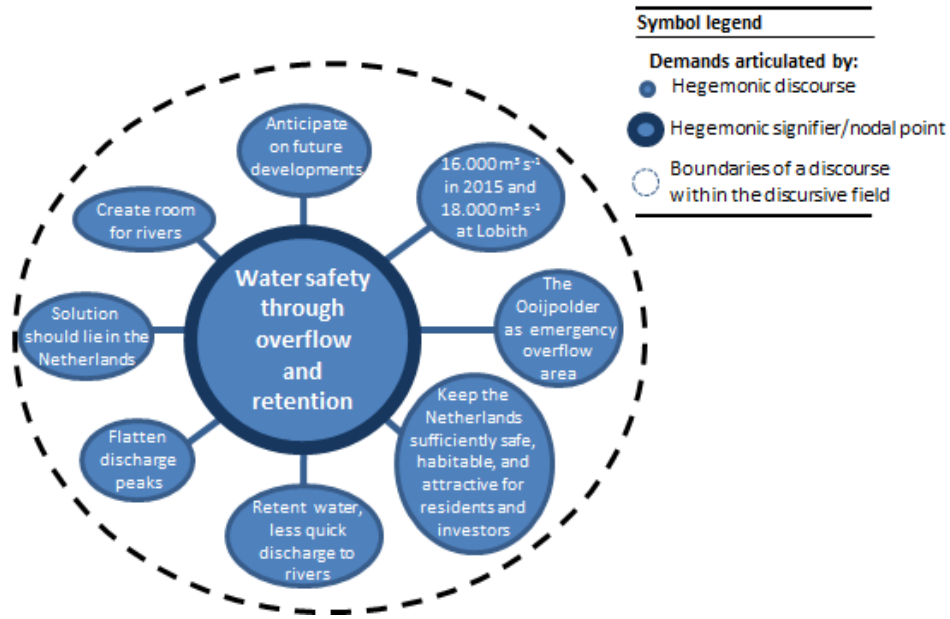
Request	Claim
Single demand	Multiple demands
Passive	Active
Respects institutional order	Calls institutional order into question
Dialectical	Rhetorical
Part of a social logic	Part of a political logic

**Table 4.** Schematic presentation of the features of a request and a claim (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011).

#### 4.3.1 Social demand for calamity polders

During the 2000 presentation in castle Loevestein the Vice Minister presented her plans for a new direction within water policy and management to sustain water safety, which were then on further elaborated in the starting note of the Environmental Impact Assessment in 2002 (*Dutch: start notitie milieu effect rapportage (MER)*). As explained, for the Ooijpolder these plans entailed that the area could be used for controlled flooding, and was initially designated as a possible retention area (see figure 4 in section 4.1.2).

Within these plans for the Ooijpolder the Vice Minister articulated the social demand that water safety for the riverine area ought to be ensured in the future through designation of overflow and retention areas. Within this discourse, this demand of reaching water safety through overflow and retention served as a hegemonic signifier. This demand connected several other demands related to water safety, thereby fixating meaning around the idea of reaching water safety through designation of areas for controlled flooding (see figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Graphic representation of the hegemonic discourse from the Vice Minister and RWS.

Starting from the top and moving clockwise, the following demands from the Vice Minister and RWS can be identified (depicted by the blue text balloons in figure 9).

- The demand to anticipate on future developments. On the one hand the riverine area is often intensively used by humans; recreation, habitation, nature development and conservation, industry and transport, while on the other hand it is assumed that the rivers will have to deal with increasing water discharge levels due to effects of climate change (Attema et al., 2014; Directorate, 2011b; IPCC, 2014; Management et al., 2002; Mysiak, 2010; Tol & Langen, 2000). Subsequently the scarce space and water safety in the riverine area is put under increasing pressure. All of these future developments have to be taken into account an need to be anticipated upon (Management et al., 2002).
- Partly related to the latter social demand, the discourse also underlined the necessity to contain residual and future risks by taking a normative discharge level of 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> for the year 2015, and 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> for the year 2100 into account within planning and implementation of measures.
- To be able to manage such water levels, it was argued by the Vice Minister and RWS that it would be necessary to allocate areas for retention or emergency overflow of water. The Ooijpolder was one of those areas.
- An often articulated social demand is the necessity to keep the Netherlands sufficiently safe, habitable and attractive for residents and investors. This demand underlines the multiple land use. Upon closer inspection, this sentence of "keeping the Netherlands *sufficiently* safe..." is interesting to note. Whereas in the past RWS is stated to have aimed for full safety, this demand underlines the uncertainty within water management, and the inability to ensure full safety in an uncertain world.



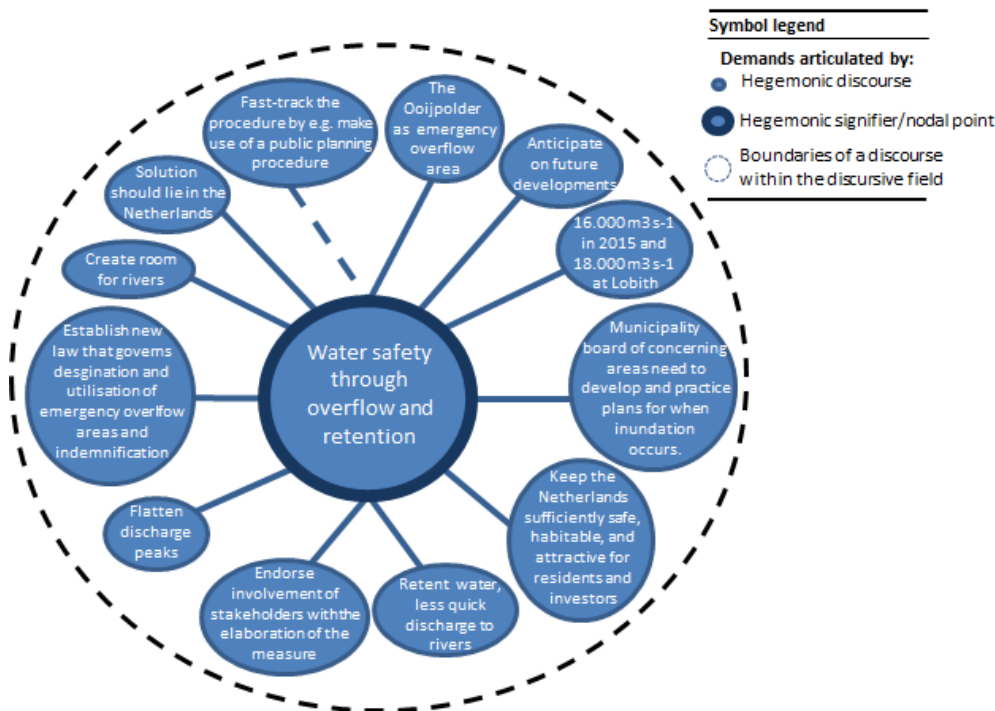
In addition to the allocation of some areas for retention or emergency overflow of water, it was generally stressed that to be able to deal with potential water levels of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  and  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  and ensure water safety;

- Precipitation should discharge less quick to rivers by retention and storage.
- High discharge peaks should be flattened to prevent dike breaches and floods,
- Although it was acknowledged that the inflow of water at Lobith would be dependent on measures in Germany, it was underlined that solutions to the high water issue ought to be in the Netherlands (Gelderland, 2003).
- Rivers need to be given more room to discharge their water.

All of these demands were fixated and linked in one hegemonic discourse, which is depicted in figure 9 by the surrounding dotted circle. The social demand of 'water safety through overflow and retention' here served as the hegemonic demand that signified the whole range of different demands within this discourse.

#### 4.3.2 *Luteijn*

In response to the critique that emerged after the presentation of the discourse of 'water safety through overflow and retention', the Luteijn committee was instated to research the usefulness and necessity of the policy measure of emergency overflow areas, indicate suitable areas, investigate the operation of such polders, look into compensation for flood-induced damage, and increase public support (Davidse, 2008; Warner, 2008). It is stated that with the Luteijn report the aim was of the Vice Minister to be better able to substantiate and 'sell' her plans for overflow and retention areas (Warner et al., 2012). Within a discursive context, this can be interpreted as the effort to strengthen the discourse by increasing fixation of meaning around the idea of reaching water safety through overflow and retention measures. Additional research by a proclaimed independent committee could lead to the articulation of additional social demands that underline the earlier articulated demands within the discourse by establishing new linkages within the discourse, thus increasing the fixation of meaning within the discursive field (see figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Graphic representation of the hegemonic discourse after the Luteijn report.

Starting from the top and moving clockwise, the following demands were added into the existing discourse by the Vice Minister after the presentation of the findings of the Luteijn report (Davidse, 2008):

- Perhaps most important, the report of the committee underlined the necessity for upper stream overflow and retention areas and considered them necessary to ensure water safety;

*"Therefore the committee considers the designation of emergency overflow areas that could store 200-250 million cubic meter of water justified. The areas however should to the utmost extent be located upper stream...With the use of emergency overflow areas, 95% of the damage that would occur during an uncontrolled flooding, could be avoided."* (Luteijn, 2002, p. 21;60)

The Ooijpolder was here also designated by the Luteijn committee as a potential site for an emergency overflow area (see figure 10).

- Like the Vice Minister and RWS, the committee also argued that water management should anticipate on water levels of 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup>, in which the designation of a few areas would not only cut costs, but would also leave room for choice for future structural measures (Luteijn, 2002, p. 22);

*"Along the border 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> could flow into the Netherlands, while the rivers can only safely discharge 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup>. There could thus flow 2.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> of "excess" water into the Netherlands."* (Luteijn, 2002, p. 37)

- The report indicated the necessity that municipalities from designated areas ought to develop, practice and coordinate plans concerning preparation, evacuation, inundation, de-

inundation, recovery and re-accommodation and aftercare including claim settlements in preparation of controlled inundation (Luteijn, 2002, p. 59).

- Although the committee has been heavily criticized with respect to the lack of involvement of local residents and their views during their research, it is surprising to note that the committee did stress the necessity to involve stakeholder, 'win their trust' and gain acceptance during the elaboration and planning of measure;

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*"Involvement of stakeholders during the elaboration of measures to reduce the chance of damage and reducing casualties reduces the experienced risk. Minimal spatial restrictions on activities in an emergency overflow area; the perm character of such restrictions will have a negative effect on the risk perception of people...a final guaranteed indemnification is a exigency...that covers all damage of the directly affected interest groups, which should also be clearly communicated to the diverse groups....There is a lot of distrust against the government with respect to the utilisation of emergency overflow areas. Trust in the responsible agencies will increase acceptance. The government ought to ensure that the designation of an emergency overflow area will not lead to postponement of other necessary safety measures and their maintenance. Consequences of physical interventions and spatial measures depend on the extent of how they fit in the, by the residents experienced and formulated, characteristics of an area. Close collaboration and input from residents is therefore for the elaboration of these spatial measures important."* (Luteijn, 2002, p. 61)

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- The report argued that the national government would need to be responsible for designation, utilisation and the way how indemnification would take place for emergency overflow areas because the effects were to be cross-regional. However, the report states that a new law ought to be established to cover these issues (Luteijn, 2002, p. 28; 29).
- An interesting demand that was mentioned in the report was in sharp contrast with the demand for collaboration and inclusion of local views and values. The argument was namely also made in the Luteijn report that instead of following a lengthy PKB procedure, designation and implementation of emergency overflow areas should follow procedures by means of a 'public planning procedure' (*Dutch: Rijksprojectenprocedure*). Whereas a PKB allows room for actors to file complaints and engage in the planning procedure, a 'public planning procedure' characterize itself as a straightforward approach to fast-track the decision-making process (Warner, 2008, p. 571). Under the argument that the designated areas would need to become rapidly available and decrease the length of uncertainty for the residents, the committee stated that the procedure should be shortened. However, it must be stated here that this social demand has been absent from later plans concerning the Ooijpolder. To show this, the demand has not been linked with a solid line, but instead with a dotted line in figure 10.

#### 4.3.3 Local and regional resistance

In response to the development of a hegemonic discourse, demands articulated by regional and local actors emerged. In the period before 2002 the only "counter" research performed was commissioned by the Province of Gelderland, the Chamber of Commerce, the employers' and employees' organization of Gelderland, and the farmers' unions and performed by WL Delft Hydraulics (Warner, 2008). However, apart from questioning location choice, this research actually

underlined the articulated demands in the discourse. It was not after the publication of the Luteijn report and the first formal participation moment after the publication of the starting note of the Environmental Impact Assessment (MER) and the Luteijn report, that the hegemonic discourse of 'water safety through overflow and retention' was actively put into question. In this period (2002-2005) several counter movements can be observed and sharp criticism emerged about the ideas of the Vice Minister for emergency overflow measures and the findings of the Luteijn report. As prof. ir. Brouwer stated in (Delta, 2003):

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*"It is complete insanity. You also don't temporarily catch water in your shower basin, when your toilet is clogged. You will have to increase the discharge capacity by making a bigger drain-pipe for the toilet."*

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The first opposition in this respect was organized under the initiative of the municipality of Ubbergen.<sup>18</sup> During the formal participation moment and in response to the Luteijn report, the municipalities of the designated areas stressed their concerns in letters to the Ministry of Transport and Water management (Ubbergen, 2002), and by commissioning the technical university of Delft to research the Luteijn report (Boer, 2002a) (see 5.1.3 for elaboration). Especially the report from de Boer placed several critical notes to the Luteijn report. As an article in the Dutch newspaper Gelderlander (2003) states:

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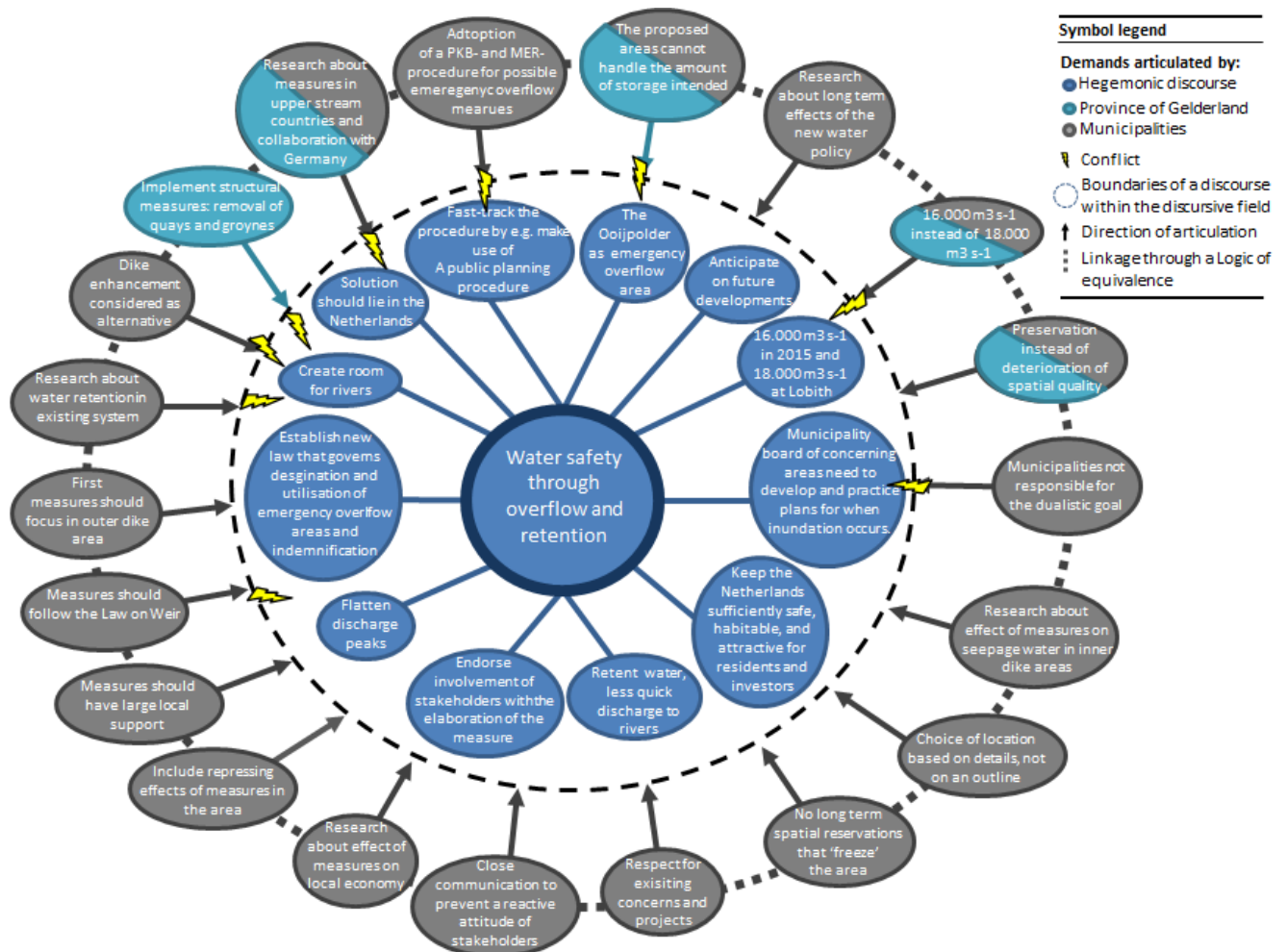
*"The Delft's water engineer E. de Boer smashed the plans for emergency overflow areas, which have been made by the committee Luteijn, to pieces."*

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However, later also the Province of Gelderland helped articulate several social demands in response to the Luteijn report. In this period, the articulation of several, sometimes conflicting, demands can be observed, which are shown in figure 11. Due to the similarity of the demands that were articulated by the municipalities and the Province, they have been visualized together in figure 11.

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<sup>18</sup> Under initiative of Ubbergen, and in collaboration with the municipalities of Angerlo, Beuningen, Druten, Duiven, Kleve, Kranenburg, Millingen, West Maas and Wijchen.



**Figure 11.** Graphic representation of the articulation of demands from the municipalities (grey text balloons), the Province (light blue text balloons) towards the hegemonic discourse (dark blue text balloons). The conflicting demands are represented by the yellow lightning symbols.

Again, by starting from the top, moving clockwise, the following demands from the municipalities can be identified;

- Due to this focus on Dutch areas for retention and overflow, the Luteijn Commission “shot itself in the foot; by concentrating on the Dutch side, Luteijn lost a sizeable chunk of its inundation capacity. The three areas that were finally selected (Ooij, Rijnstrangen and Beerse Overlaat, cannot handle the amount of storage originally intended” (Boer, 2002a; Warner, 2008, p. 11). When the Ooijpolder would be implemented as a emergency overflow area it would deliver a storage capacity of 200 million  $\text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  (Boer, 2002a). This is however only half of what is necessary for an assumed normative discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ , and would besides that still lead to “extensive floods” (Boer, 2002a, p. 55).
- According to the municipalities, not enough attention has been paid to the effects for the long term of the new water policy of the 21th century. These effects should be considered in alternatives plans.
- An important contrasting demand is the normative discharge water level which should be anticipated upon. Whereas the Vice Minister and later also Luteijn stressed the possibility of a water level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ , the report from de Boer questions this assumption and inclines to instead make use of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ ;

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*"A discharge of  $18.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  is speculative. It is impossible to give this number a chance of occurrence. Luteijn mentions the chance of 1:10.000. This is derived from a statistical black box which ignores the limited capacity of the German Lower Rhine...The German government denies the possibility of a number more than  $16.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ " (Boer, 2002a, p. 11;13)*

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In line with this argument of de Boer (2002a), the municipalities argued that a number of  $16.000\text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  would be more sensible and that subsequently dike enhancement would suffice to sustain water safety,

- According to the Municipality of Ubbergen, certain measures will deteriorate the spatial quality instead of increasing it. "Due to the quantitative safety objective in the starting note, the second objective will not be reached with certain extensive measures" (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 3). The spatial quality should instead be preserved.
- Another conflicting demand within this discursive moment, was the demand articulated by the municipalities that responsibility for sustaining water safety and preserving and increasing spatial quality should not lie on the municipal shoulders:

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*"The promise of a double objective should be fulfilled on a national level and should not be imputed on river municipalities like Ubbergen" (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 1).*

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This appears to be in contrast with the conception of the Luteijn committee that municipalities ought to play a central role in the "setting up and coordination of emergency overflow plans" (Luteijn, 2002, p. 31). In addition to the articulation of these conflicting demands, several demands were stressed by the municipalities (Ubbergen, 2002);

- Research should be done to see what the effects of the proposed measures are on the seepage water in the inner dike area.
- Choice of the location for measures like retention and emergency overflow should be based on details, rather than an abstract outline. "Designation of areas for measures with extensive local implications based on effects from an outline is irresponsible" (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 4).
- No long term spatial reservations should be established. These reservations will freeze and lock down the area thereby leading to damage, since no spatial developments may take place (e.g. construction of neighbourhoods, business parks, investments in local businesses developments). The (than) current situation would be frozen, pending for the implementation as an emergency overflow area (I4). As de Boer (2002b, p. 33) states: "a lot of municipalities saw the opportunity for expansion of development disappear with great sadness."
- Existing projects and concerns should be respected.
- A reactive attitude of stakeholders and problems with local support should be prevented. Close communication is therefore necessary.
- In line with the demand of respecting local projects and concerns and to gain local support, more research should be done about effects of measures on the local economy.
- Related to the latter demand, planning- and decision-making should include the repressing effects on the local economy and spatial quality in the area.
- Measures should have large local support.

- Proposed measures should follow the 'Law on Weir'. De Boer (2002a) argues that the proposed plans of the committee Luteijn are in violation of the Law on Weir by choosing for flattening high discharge levels at Lobith. Such a measure would lead to a failure chance of 1:4000, which is lower than the established norm of 1:1250 which is derived for a discharge level of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  (see Annex A.3).
- Measures undertaken in the area should firstly be focussed in the outer dike area (Ubbergen, 2002).
- More research should be done about retaining water in the existing system (Ubbergen, 2002)..
- Dike enhancement should be considered as an alternative measure (Ubbergen, 2002)..
- According to the municipality, it would be necessary to also look abroad for solutions. The main approach of the Vice Minister and RWS however, was focussed on measures in the Netherlands, and communication and collaboration with Germany was subsequently limited (I5). In addition to the need to establish closer collaboration with German water management due to the reason that the Netherlands is a downstream country and physically depended on measures undertaken in Germany, de Boer (2002a, p. 47) states that by adhering to a normative discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  Germany would be inclined to allow water levels of this magnitude:

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*"One would call mischief upon themselves. Germany needs and want to store more water".*

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The sharp contrast in possible discharge level of  $14.600 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  with a chance of failure of 1:500 used in North Rhine Westphalia (as stated in de Boer (2002a, p. 37) underlines the necessity to communicate and collaborate with German water management. Furthermore, the municipalities argued that the high water issue is as European problem and not so much a Dutch problem. Therefore research ought to be done in undertaking measures in upper stream countries (Ubbergen, 2002). As is stated in the participation reaction for the starting note of the Environmental Impact Assessment of the municipality of Ubbergen:

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*"The key of the high water issue lies in Germany, upstream from Cologne. It is presumptuous to already decide about the designation of retention and emergency overflow areas". (Ubbergen, 2002, p. 2)*

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- Although the starting note of the Environmental Impact Assessment made note of the possibility of making use of a PKB procedure with the designation of emergency overflow areas (Management et al., 2002), the Luteijn committee advised to adopt a quicker approach; a public planning procedure (Luteijn, 2002). The municipalities however, underlined the necessity to make use of a PKB procedure. This way, conflict could be perceived among different articulated social demands. Where the Luteijn committee on the one hand stressed for a quick procedure by making use of a fast-tracking approach which consequently could mean less time to file complaints and presence of formal participation moments, the municipalities underlined the importance of these elements by stressing the need for a PKB-procedure which would allow local inclusion. (Ubbergen, 2002).

All in all, this comprehensive list of demands articulated by the municipalities sketch an attitude which is not too fond of the idea of designating their area for controlled flooding or storage of water. As the municipality of Ubbergen (2002, p. 4) states:

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*"The municipality of Ubbergen was shocked of the fact that the Ooijpolder was mentioned as a potential retention area in earlier state documents and that the committee Luteijn advises to use the Ooijpolder (until Millingen aan de Rijn) as emergency overflow area. The municipality of Ubbergen finds this designation as retention area or emergency overflow area unacceptable. A designation has a lot of negative consequences...and it serves no common interest... usefulness and necessity is therefore insufficiently proven."*

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When these articulated demands are compared with the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011) it can be stated that although some elements of a claim have emerged, the articulated demands still can be considered requests. Although the discursive field, as is visualised in figure 11, show that the demands have been articulated by the municipalities through a logic of equivalence –since all municipalities organized together and endorsed the report of de Boer-, they are not truly merged. Instead, the articulated demands were merely linked and made equivalent to each other. Despite that the different municipalities of the designated to have co-aligned under the initiative of the municipality of Ubbergen, a hegemonic demand that signified the whole chain of demands did not develop. These demands, despite the equivalential linkage, all have a singular character which relates to characteristics from a request. However, the report of de Boer and the approach of the municipalities to also make use of the formal participation moment after the starting note of the Environmental Impact Assessment depict a dualistic character when put into a discursive context. On the one hand the municipalities adhered to the institutional order by making use of the formal participation moment to file their complaints and questions. On the other hand, the organization of counter-expertise in the form of the 'de Boer report' which actively questions the ratio and arguments behind the state's plans for retention and emergency overflow measures in the Ooijpolder show elements of what could be related to a claim; in the sense that it actively calls the institutional order into question. However, overall it can be stated that the articulation of the different demands by the municipalities followed a social logic; since utilisation of rhetoric was absent and institutional order was mostly respected and followed.

On top of these social demands articulated by the municipalities, the Province of Gelderland also engaged in the articulation of several demands. Like the municipalities, the Province established counter-expertise by carrying out a research with North Rhine Westphalia which was publicized in 2004, and proposing these findings to the Vice Minister. Even before this study was carried out, the Province already sent a proposal to the Vice minister in 2003. In this report on 'high water protection for the province of Gelderland', the province of Gelderland proposed "a combination of concrete measures [...] which can accommodate and discharge all the incoming water to the sea through outer dike areas. Emergency overflow areas offer no use with this approach and only small retention areas can contribute to the, to be realized, basic variant" (Gelderland, 2003). Where most of the demands have been similar to some of the articulated demands by the municipalities, the demand for the "proper" normative discharge level initially has been different. Unlike the municipalities, the Province adhered to the proposed number of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ :



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*"We as governments need to aim for the best assumption. In 2100 this is a discharge of 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> at Lobith...If sufficient validity is given to this assumption, we have to aim to establish structural measures. The necessity of structural measures within the river system is urgent due to the limited necessity and unreliability of emergency overflow areas...Discharge level that are higher than 12.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> leading to floods in North Rhine Westphalia should be accounted for until 2020. From 2015 on, the aim for the Dutch Rhine basin will be to safely discharge 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> at Lobith...We therefore consider it wise to aim for a maximum discharge of 17.000 in 2020 with a linear increase in time to 18.000 in 2100, when the calculations for the dike-designs in North Rhine Westphalia are taken into account." (Gelderland, 2003, pp. 2-3)*

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Adhering to this assumed discharge level of 18.000 in 2100 has disappeared however after the combined working group of the Province of Gelderland and North Rhine Westphalia was finished with their report in 2004 (Hoogwater, 2004). This report actually underlined the impossibility of such a number (as explained in 5.1.3), and instead chose to "remain with 16.000 as a target for Room for the River and remained opposed to emergency storage" (Warner, 2008, p. 574). Despite this sudden change in attitude about the proposed normative discharge level, the other demands in both reports were in line with the demands that were also articulated by the municipalities (Gelderland, 2003; Hoogwater, 2004):

- Implement structural measures in the outer dike area. The province in this case proposed for the upper part of the Rhine near the Ooijpolder to make use of measures that would remove quays and groynes instead of making use of emergency overflow areas.
- Closer collaboration with Germany is greatly emphasized in both reports.
- Acknowledgement that the proposed designated areas in the vicinity of Lobith for emergency overflow measures are too small (200 million m<sup>3</sup>) to realise the wanted water level decrease.
- Adopt 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> as normative discharge level in water policy.
- Preserve and if possible increase spatial quality.

What comes forward from these demands is that, similar to the municipalities, also the Province "deemed neither the usefulness nor the necessity [for calamity polders] present, and pleaded instead for realising safety through the establishment of structural measures within the river system" (Gelderland, 2003, p. 3). The demands articulated by the Province denoted characteristics of both requests and claims. Although multiple demands emerged, they still denoted a singular character and were not merged into a claim. Coming from one province and underlined in one report, this also happened through a logic of equivalence. Although the reports actively question the plans of the Vice Minister, it must be noted that they were apparently also initiated by the Ministry of Transport and Water management (Hoogwater, 2004, p. 33). The institutional order was thus still respected, and that the organization of this counter-expertise can more be related to a social logic.

#### 4.3.4 Residential demands

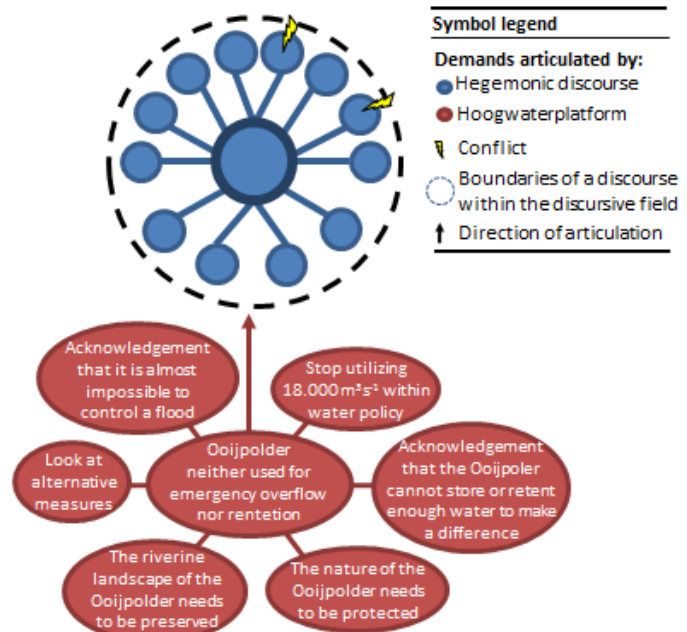
After the presentation of the conclusions and findings of the Luteijn committee for the residents of the Ooijpolder in 2002, local organization quickly emerged by the establishment of the Hoogwaterplatform (as explained in 5.1.4). The association had a clear message;

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*"We do not want to become an emergency overflow area, and we do not want any measure that will harm the area economically or make it inhabitable. We want an international approach and we propose alternatives." (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004, p. 9)*

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The Hoogwaterplatform substantiated their statements by arguments of their own technical workgroup, but also by making use of reports and research that was undertaken by the municipalities and the Province. All of the performed research, reports and documents were from then on compiled in an organized 'documentation map' (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004). From this 'documentation map', several demands come forward, in which the demand that the Ooijpolder should neither be used for emergency overflow measures nor retention measures has been a central and recurrent articulated demand, and has functioned as a nodal point within the discursive field. The subsequent question then emerges whether this also led to the development of a hegemonic demand which linked and signified the other articulated demands and the emergence of a claim. To answer this, it is first necessary to identify the different articulated demands, which are visualized in figure 12.



**Figure 12.** Graphic representation of the emerged claim from the Hoogwaterplatform, articulated towards the hegemonic discourse.

- Some important demands that were articulated by the association were based on the technical aspects of the overflow measure and critique on these aspects. As the chairman of the association stated in an interview:

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*"The resistance is based on the technical argument that people were using the wrong assumed amount of water, that it was hard to determine when to use the area exactly for overflow...and the amount of water that could be stored would be insufficient to make a difference downstream [...] additionally, dikes can breach due to five different reasons in which emergency overflow areas will not solve anything." (I5)*

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This quote shows that the Hoogwaterplatform not only argued that a wrong normative discharge level was used –see demand below–, but also underlined the fact that the Ooijpolder could not store nor retain enough water.

- A normative discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  was "nonsense", and would never reach the Netherlands.
- The association also argued that it should be acknowledged that actually 'controlling the flood' would be almost impossible. Firstly timing of utilisation would be very hard to predict, opening up water inlets too early or too late would result in failure of the measure. But also

determining who would be responsible and decide when the proper time would be was an issue according to the Hoogwaterplatform.

- Subsequently, due to the technical 'flaws' in the plans for retention and emergency overflow areas, the association argued that the Vice Minister should look at alternative measures. On top of these technical demands, the Hoogwaterplatform also stressed the demand that the nature in the area and riverine landscape ought to be protected and would sustain heavy damage when the measure would be used (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004).

To see whether these articulated demands can be characterized as either singular requests or one claim, in which the demands are linked by a hegemonic signifier it is necessary to again look at the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011). First of all, multiple demands were articulated by the Hoogwaterplatform, which is necessary for the development of a claim. Also the fact that the association organized themselves bottom-up, engaged in the development of research and contacted governmental officials with influence on the decision-making process or with a water management budgetary, point towards an active approach, which can be related to the feature of a claim. However, as paragraph 4.2.3 already touched upon, the active approach of the association to influence the planning and decision-making through other governmental bodies, and the most important being the Lower House, denotes an ambiguous character. On the one hand this approach questions the institutional order by surpassing the Vice Minister and "her RWS". A notable example of this is for instance the report about the 'trustworthiness of RWS' that the late Hoogwaterplatform member Prof. Ir van Ellen wrote. In this report he questioned the plans of RWS, and stated that their argument for other measures that dike enhancement "seemed very implausible", and that there is "deceptive politics in play" (Hoogwaterplatform, 2004, p. 28;30). This report and statements clearly questions the responsible authorities, thereby putting the institutional order into question. On the other hand, the argument could be made that this approach also respects the institutional order, since the strategy was based on going to a higher governmental body which could influence the Vice Minister. The articulated social demands thus characterize themselves as being between a request and a claim. However, on top of this more formally focussed strategy, the association also actively engaged in the contacting of local and national press (paper, television, and radio) and made intensively use of social media to stress their points. Additionally, the association invited governmental officials to the area, where the visitors were presented with the compiled 'documentation map' (which was mentioned before) and explained from the perspective of the residents what the effects would be on the area, and why the association was against it. This approach denotes a more informal way of communication in which the association also made use of rhetoric to gain support. Artist impressions of how the area would look like when the measure would be implemented but also cartoons that depicted RWS as a child 'playing with water' were for example shown to the visiting government officials (see figure 13).



**Figure 13.** Examples of 'politicized' communication and utilisation of rhetoric.

The fact that the chairman refers to the association as 'the resistance' denotes a tense and politicized character within the discursive field. This choice of words creates on the one hand a dichotomizing chasm between the Vice Minister's plans and the conception of the association, while on the other hand it creates an equivalential chain between the demands of the stakeholders of the polders. The presence of both logic of equivalence and logic of difference denotes a situation which is part of a political logic.

When these features are thus compared with the typology of Behagel and Turnhout (2011) it becomes clear that the different ingredients to 'prepare' a claim are present; multiple demands were articulated; they actively engaged the issue at hand; to some extent it questions the institutional order in the sense that the directly responsible governmental bodies were surpassed; rhetoric's were used; and lastly the happenings around the polder can be related as being part of a political logic where a sharp chasm was created through the logic of equivalence and difference between on the one hand 'the resistance' and on the other hand 'the Vice Minister and her RWS'. The articulated demand that stressed that the Ooijpolder should neither be used for emergency overflow nor retention measures have served as a signifying demand which gave meaning and linked the rest of the singular demands. This demand can thus be considered as a hegemonic signifier (as is depicted in figure 12), and it is possible to speak of the articulation of a full-fledged claim.

#### 4.3.5 *Crumbling pedestal*

It was not until the discovery of the critical report from WL Delft and HKV (see 5.1.4) by the Hoogwaterplatform that the pedestal of the Vice Minister and her plans for retention and emergency overflow areas began to crumble. The strategy to influence the members of the House of Representative had paid off. On April 15<sup>th</sup> of 2004, the Vice Minister Schultz van Haegen had to defend her plans for retention and emergency overflow areas before the Lower House. During this meeting critical questions and demands were articulated by the members of the Lower House (Kamer, 2004, pp. 1-5):

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*"It is not necessary to designate emergency overflow areas [...] the extensive funding can better be used for making the system ready for discharging  $16.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and in time  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ ." (PvdA)*

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*"Communication is really important. Does the national government engage enough in communicating and informing with the local residents? [...] I am in doubt about the suitability of this measure, especially about the ablation of residual risk. A false sense of safety should not be created." [...] The national government should commit more to the realisation of structural measures like river expansion and dike enhancement." (VVD)*

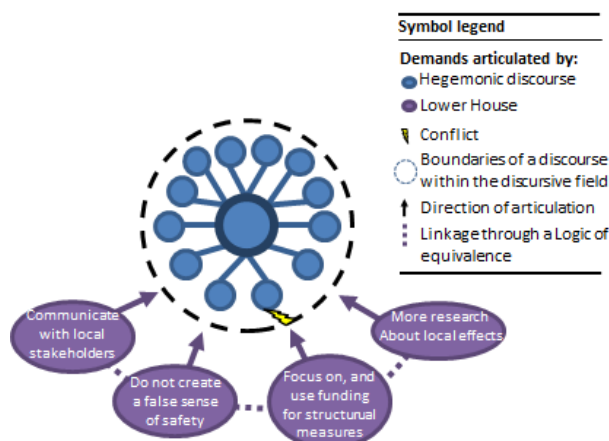
*"There should be research about the effectiveness, the consequences of the spatial reservation and the relation with designation of emergency overflow area and control of calamities. Emergency overflow areas are not necessary, not useful and not the most optimal solution. They are no alternative for structural measures like dike enhancement and making room for the river [...] Emergency overflow areas are no guarantee that uncontrolled floods will no longer occur. The costs of designation and implementation of circa 1.25 million euro do not outweigh the benefits [...] The PKB could have far-reaching consequences for the development of the areas. [...] Spatial reservations of these areas will limit the stakeholders of the area [...] Does it not make more sense to limit the risk by giving priority to structural measures in collaboration with abroad to prevent floods?" (CDA)*

*"Emergency overflow areas are unnecessary, not functional, expensive and ugly [...] It would be wiser to spend the limited resources on giving the river more space, so that more water can be caught." (Groenlinks)*

*"It is difficult to determine how much water can be discharged in 20 years. Now the number of 16.000 and 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> are used. Like always, scientist disagree. According to a fax of the Hoogwaterplatform, the Ministry of Transport and Water management is in possession of a research about the limitations of flood risk in the upper stream area which the members of the Lower House should not be allowed to see. There is even a procedure started in accordance to the law of transparent administration. Is the Vice Minister trying to counter this procedure? Why is the Lower House not allowed to see this information, which questions the principles of the Committee Luteijn? [...] The current plans for emergency overflow areas are not a good solution [...] Implementation of emergency overflow areas cost a lot of money which can be used better on other solutions." (D66)*

*"Priority should be given to water management with existing methods like dike enhancement, the deepening of the floodplains et cetera. [...] Certain building projects in these areas should be allowed to continue [...] Collaboration with Germany and Belgium are*

*essential with the implementation of safety measures on this level." (CU)*



**Figure 14.** Graphic representation of the demands articulated by the Lower House towards the hegemonic discourse.

These statements show that apparently not only the lower governmental bodies, like provinces and municipalities, were not keen on the idea of "controlled flooding". Also a national governmental body like the Lower House stressed their concerns and articulated demands that were in contrast to that of the Vice Minister and the Ministry of Transport and Water Management. The demand for more

research about local effects of designation, communication with local stakeholders, not creating a false sense of safety and security, and most notably the fact that the focus should lie on structural measures was articulated by the Lower House (as is depicted in figure 14). Although questioning and putting pressure on the plans of the Vice Minister, the character of these demands mostly relates to features of a request. The articulated demands had a singular character and were stressed by different political parties. Although the Lower House actively asked for explanation of the plans and questioned the idea of emergency overflow areas, the Lower House in its function as governmental body that checks the national government adhered to institutional order and system. Despite the political character of the meeting where the Vice Minister had to “defend” her plans, a hegemonic nodal point was absent. Therefore it can safely be stated that in spite of a critical undertone, the demands articulated by the Lower House can be characterized as requests.

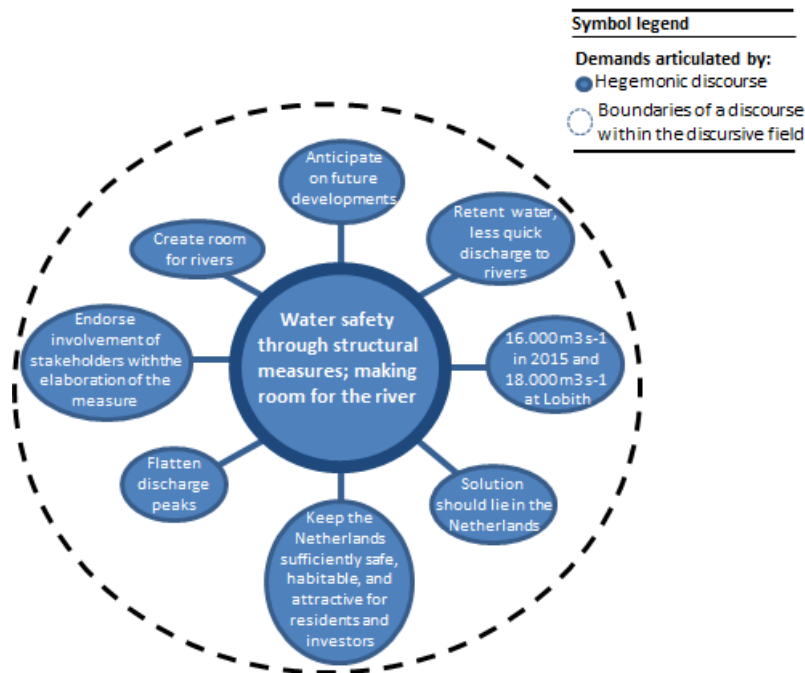
In response, the minister defended her plans by stating that the national government had its responsibility within calamity control, and that measures should be based upon the ‘precautionary principle’:

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*“The starting point of the Ministry with calamity control, environmental issues, et cetera is based on the precautionary principle. This also applies to emergency overflow areas. In the case that in a couple of year something happens in the basin of the river, than the State is responsible. If there are far-reaching consequences, than civilians and businesses will not go to the provincial board of Gelderland but to the national government. Therefore it is the responsibility of the national government to establish measures in time.” (Kamer, 2004, p. 10)*

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Despite this, the funding for the plans for emergency overflow areas was relocated to the RFTR budgetary and the spatial reservation on the Ooijpolder for retention or emergency overflow areas was lifted in 2005 by the motion of Van Lith Boelhouwer. Although the claim which was articulated by the Hoogwaterplatform has been successful in influencing the planning- and decision making, it goes too far to speak of an evolution towards a newly formed discourse. Instead, the hegemonic discourse of ‘water safety through overflow and retention’ underwent a change, in which the articulated demands that related to emergency overflow disappeared from the discourse. Instead, water safety through structural measures that would expand the room for the river, and closer collaboration with local stakeholders were underlined (see figure 15). However, what is interesting to note here is that although emergency overflow areas were banished, the underlying assumption of a normative discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  was preserved (Management et al., 2006b).



**Figure 15.** Graphic representation of the hegemonic discourse after the cancellation of ‘calamity plans’.

#### 4.3.6 Back in the picture

With the spatial reservation as emergency overflow area gone, the Ooijpolder appeared to be out of the picture for controlled flooding. However, with the mentioning of retention of water in the polder as a ‘promising measure’ in the explorative planning study, the issue re-emerged in 2013. Within the report of the official workgroup, several demands were again articulated around the issue of water safety (see figure 16).

*“The main objective is; to come to a regional governmental accepted preferential strategy for future water safety on the long term (2050/2100).” (Gelderland, 2013, p. 7)*

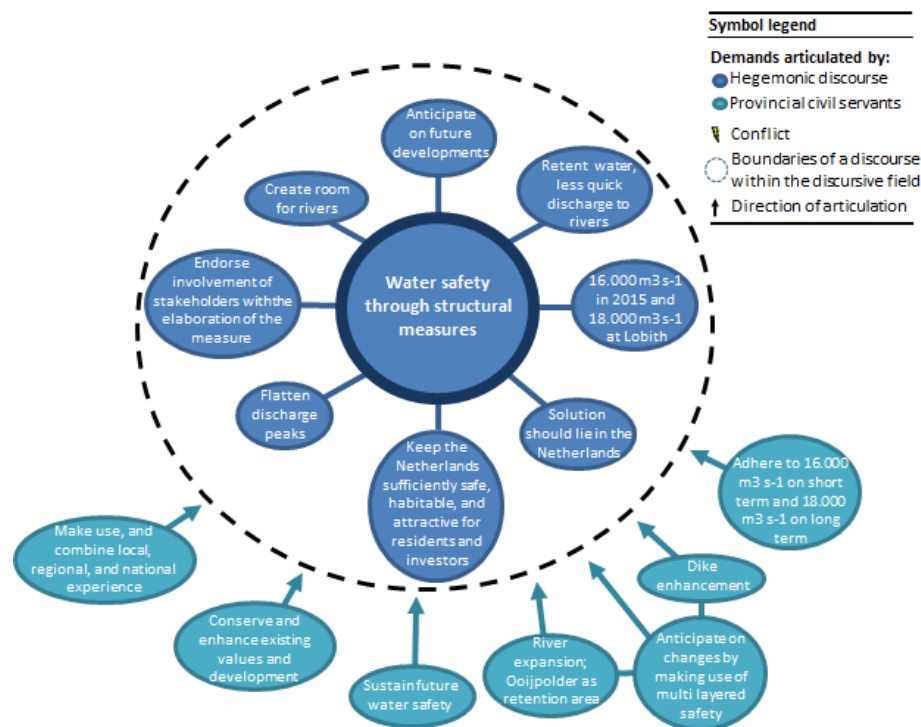
On top of this key issue, the report articulated several other demands (depicted in figure 16);

- Anticipating high peaks in water level, dry periods with low water levels, and other changes like soil subsidence, sea level rise, by making use of the *“possibilities of multi-layered safety (prevention, sustainable spatial planning, calamity control) and adhering to the wished safety level”* (Gelderland, 2013, p. 7). Within this perspective, the report stated the necessity to look into options for river expansion with measures that were expected to sufficiently decrease water levels, and dike enhancement with measures that could accommodate water levels resulting from climate change (Gelderland, 2013).
- The necessity to adhere to a normative discharge level of  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  at Lobith on the short term and  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  at Lobith on the long term (Gelderland, 2013). In addition, the report stressed the economic and ecological importance of the riverine area and subsequently the necessity to allow these areas to continue or start to develop.
- It was underlined that the existing spatial quality determines the identity of the area, which should be preserved, and plays an important economic role (Gelderland, 2013, p. 17). Water



management “would not be a brake, but rather an engine” with respect for local conditions, conservation and enhancement of existing values where possible, and adding of new values where necessary (Gelderland, 2013, p. 17).

- To “write history in a more positive sense” the provincial civil servants also articulated the demand to make use of and combine local, regional, and national knowledge, skills and tools. It would be necessary to look for a method between local, regional, and national governments, social organizations, and the business community that would lead to a commonly shared final image (Gelderland, 2013, p. 18).



**Figure 16.** Graphic representation of the articulated demands in the explorative report.

The merge of these demands into one claim did not occur. Instead, all of these demands characterized themselves as singular demands. Additionally, being articulated by a civil servant workgroup of the province as advice for the new Delta programme, the stressed demands adhered to and respected the institutional order. Although the report later ignited a new spark of resistance with the Hoogwaterplatform and again led to a conflict between government and citizenry, at the moment of articulation it can be stated that the articulated demands constitute themselves as part of social logic. Following this line of thought, this leads to the classification of these demands as ‘requests’.

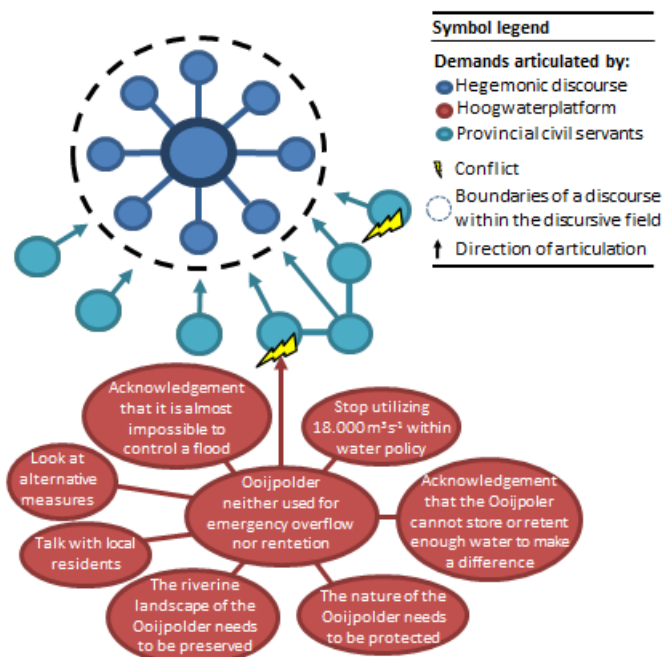
With the articulation of the demand that the Ooijpolder might be needed as retention area when solely following a river expansion strategy, the earlier articulated claim of the Hoogwaterplatform re-emerged. Together with the municipalities the Hoogwaterplatform again strongly opposed the proposed ideas in the report of the civil servant workgroup. As figure 17 shows, the claim of the Hoogwaterplatform again collided strongly with the demand for the Ooijpolder as retention area, and the notion of a possible water level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . This also became obvious during the information event which was organised by the municipality in consultation with the Hoogwaterplatform (I5). The civil servant workgroup was asked to present and explain their plans during this meeting. No need to say that tension was high (I1; I5). Interesting to note however, is the



logic of difference which was used by the major of Ubbergen to 'defend' the provincial civil servants by stating that the visiting provincial civil servants were not the ones in charge but merely got the assignment;

*"The major of Ubbergen led the meeting [...] and he said "these people are not the managers; these people are the civil servants which were ordered to work out this strategy. Do not lynch them, they will explain what they came up with". In the end we received a round of applause for our presentation, probably not for the content, but I think for the fact that we had the meeting." (I1)*

Despite the applause after the meeting, the Hoogwaterplatform together with the local municipalities and Germany still resisted the plans and sent a formal letter of opposition to the head of the Delta Programme. In the end, the idea of using the Ooijpolder as retention area was not used. The reason for this was on the one hand the strong local opposition of residents (I5), municipalities and Germany but on the other hand also the fact that the mentioning of the Ooijpolder as retention area was merely part of one of two extreme strategies in a explorative study (I1). Since the final decision would entail a dynamic interplay between both strategies (dike enhancement and river



**Figure 17.** Graphic representation of the re-emergence of the Hoogwaterplatform claim.

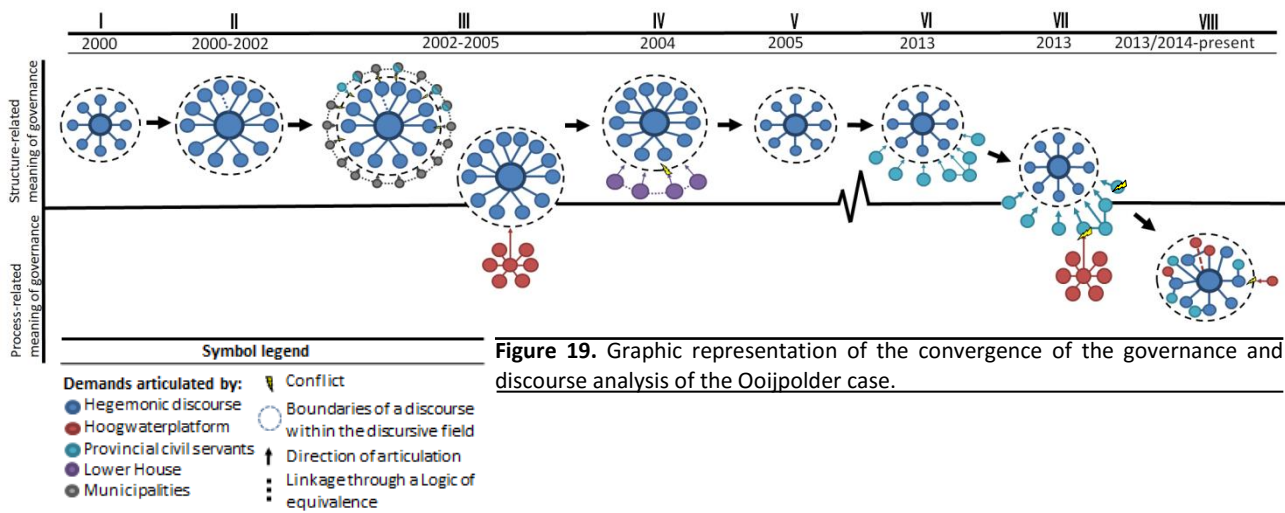
expansion), the decision was made to cancel the plans of the Ooijpolder as retention area. Instead, as was explained in section 4.1.4, high water gullies are currently dug in the Millingerwaard. Although the idea of making a retention area of the Ooijpolder was not adopted, several other demands were. The call for closer collaboration with local residents and making use of local, regional and national expertise and experience is now strongly underlined. The existence of the reflection group is a notable example of this. Furthermore, the call for 'looking at alternative and structural measures', and 'implementing measures based on an interplay of dike enhancement and river expansion' has been adopted by the hegemonic discourse. The demand that was articulated by the Hoogwaterplatform, which entailed that the Ooijpolder should neither be used for emergency overflow nor retention, has also been accepted by the hegemonic discourse. This is portrayed in figure 18 by the dotted line. Interesting to note is the perseverance of the hegemonic discourse in relation to the demand of making use of a normative discharge level of 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> on the short term and 18.000 m<sup>3</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> on the long term. The long lasting conflict about the 'proper' water level to be used in water policy thus still exists (depicted by the lightning symbol in figure 18). In spite of this, one cannot speak of a whole new discourse. Instead, the former hegemonic discourse developed and evolved by adopting the above mentioned demands (as is depicted in figure 18).



**Figure 18.** Graphic representation of the adoption of several articulated demands in the hegemonic discourse.

#### 4.4 Governance and articulation of demands

To be able to derive possible relations between the findings from the governance analysis and the discourse analysis, both analyses are combined into figure 19. The y-axis here relates to the type of governance. The positive side denotes a structure-related meaning of governance and the negative side denotes a process-related meaning of governance. The x-axis simply denotes the time, in which the different time periods are illustrated in top of the figure (I, II, III, ...). To make the figure comprehensible the articulated demands in the discursive field, which are explained in more detail in section 5.3, are shown in a simplified manner. All the demands that are articulated by the different stakeholder are simply represented by varying dots, but mark the same colours as the more comprehensive figures from section 5.3.



**Figure 19.** Graphic representation of the convergence of the governance and discourse analysis of the Ooijpolder case.

Overall, what becomes clear from figure 19 is that initially governance has occurred on a more structure-related level, and only later developed towards a more process-related type of governance with the Ooijpolder-case. Within the Ooijpolder case, eight notable situations can be distinguished when looked at it using insights from the governance and discourse analysis.

##### Situation I

This situation depicts the articulation of the demands that formed the hegemonic discourse during the presentation of the Vice Minister of Transport and Water Management at Loevestein in 2000. The articulation of the demand that emergency overflow areas, or so called ‘calamity polders’, were necessary to guarantee and sustain water safety, has acted as a nodal point within the formation of this discourse. Demands like a normative water level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  on the long term and anticipating on future development became linked and fixated in this hegemonic discourse. The formation of this discourse has gone hand in hand with a practice of planning- and decision-making dominated by a structure-related meaning of governance. Hierarchical, top-down and technocratic decisions and reports, and poorly informed stakeholder are notable examples of this.

##### Situation II

Although some critique emerged in response, actual articulation of demands was absent after the presentation at Loevestein. Still, the Vice Minister decided to instate a committee to substantiate the claim of the hegemonic discourse that these measures were necessary (Warner, 2008). This Luteijn committee inter alia engaged in researching the usefulness and necessity of the policy measure of

emergency overflow areas, and was finished and presented in 2002. The report underlined the proposed plans and locations for calamity polders and emergency overflow areas. Demands, like the choice of using the Ooijpolder for calamity control, that were articulated in the report were adopted by the Vice Minister, thereby increasing the linkages and fixation of meaning within the discourse. The way how the committee engaged in this research have been criticized for being technocratic and mechanistic in which views of local stakeholders were not included, and the committee already had the predeterministic objective to substantiate the Vice Minister's plans, (Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008). This type of governance clearly relates to a structure oriented practice of planning and decision making.

### **Situation III**

The propositions made by the Luteijn committee, and the subsequent adoption of these articulated demands in the hegemonic discourse, led to strong local and regional opposition and the articulation of a wide array of different demands. Both municipalities of the concerning areas and the Province of Gelderland engaged in the organization of counter-expertise where through a logic of equivalence pressure was set on the plans of the Vice Minister. Many of these articulated demands were in sharp contrast with that of the hegemonic discourse. However, these demands followed and respected the institutional order and have remained requests. Although the multiple demands of the municipalities and the Province have been linked through a logic of equivalence, a nodal point in the form of a hegemonic signifier that signified the whole link of different demands was absent. The demands articulated by the interest association Hoogwaterplatform however did have this nodal point. The demand of 'not making a calamity polder of the Ooijpolder' here served as a nodal point that linked and signified the other demands thereby increasing fixation and meaning. Overall, the discursive field characterized itself as a conflict rich environment where most of the actors took strong positions against each other. However, when looked at the type of governance, a more structure-related meaning of governance was present, despite the articulation of the claim of the Hoogwaterplatform, which denotes a more process-related meaning of governance.

### **Situation IV**

After the regional and local resistance, also national resistance emerged through the Lower House, which placed critical notes at the proposed plans of the Vice Minister. The Vice Minister Schultz van Haegen had to defend her plans for retention and emergency overflow areas before the Lower House on April 15<sup>th</sup> of 2004. During this meeting critical questions and demands were articulated by the members of the Lower House that stressed for the necessity for more structural measures, more research about local effects, closer communication with local stakeholders and not creating a false sense of safety (Kamer, 2004, pp. 1-5). Coming from members from the Lower House, a certain extent of linkages between these demands was present through a logic of equivalence. A nodal point that signified the whole chain however was absent. The articulated demands thus remained a request. Since the articulation of these demands happened following and respecting institutional order, this study argued that it denotes a structural type of governance, despite the articulated demand for more local collaboration.

### **Situation V**

Due to strong resistance on a local, regional, and later even national level, the Vice Minister was in the end forced to abandon her plans due to the motion of Van Lith Boelhouwer in 2005. The hegemonic discourse however not so much transformed but simply removed the demands related to

calamity polders and emergency overflow areas. Instead the focus became more on structural, river expanding measures. This however appeared to have happened without local involvement and followed a structural-meaning of governance in which institutional order was followed.

#### **Situation VI**

After the happenings in 2005, the Ooijpolder was out of the picture until 2013. A workgroup of civil servant from the Province of Gelderland, tasked with exploring a promising strategy for water management under the Delta Programme, mentioned the Ooijpolder as a promising location for a retention area. Since these demands were part of an explorative study, where mentioned measures were merely seen as options that could be followed when adopting either a dike enhancing strategy or a river expansion strategy and in the end 'a dynamic interplay' would be sought of these two strategies, these demands are seen as loose request. Furthermore, coming from an appointed workgroup of civil servant with absence of local inclusion, these requests followed a structure-related meaning of governance.

#### **Situation VII**

Although the formulation of the new plans initially depicted a structure-related meaning of governance, the practice of planning- and decision-making portrays more features of a process-related meaning of governance after the re-emergence of the claim of the Hoogwaterplatform. The Hoogwaterplatform actively engaged the plan making by immediately asking the civil servant to explain their plans in the polder.

#### **Situation VIII**

Despite a tense situation at first, the Hoogwaterplatform managed to once again remove the planning around the Ooijpolder from the map, explorative or not. From here on a more inclusive and collaborative approach of governance was emerging. Hence, the visualized shift towards a more process-related meaning of governance in figure 19. Development of the 'building bucket' programme and establishment of a reflection group are notable examples of this. In the end, only time will tell if the current hegemonic discourse will continue to follow this process-related meaning of governance or will return towards a practice that denotes a more structure-related meaning of governance.

## 5 The Overdiepse Polder

To see how governance takes shape in an environment where, in spite of the articulation of strong demands, government and local residents still are able to closely work together, this chapter discusses the case of the Overdiepse polder. The chapter elaborates here on the depoldering (*In Dutch: ontpoldering*) of the Overdiepse polder and the development and implementation of the residential initiative of the ‘terp plan’ (*Dutch: terpenplan*) to make ‘flowing with the river’ or ‘cocurrent retention’ (*Dutch: meestromende berging*) possible. First, the chapter introduces the history and background of the polder where it briefly touches upon the specifications and features of the polder. It describes the development of the plans for cocurrent water retention in the polder (section 5.1). From there on, the chapter starts with the analysis of the case using the theoretical framework. It firstly touches upon the different features of governance that are present in the Overdiepse polder (section 5.2). Subsequently, the different demands are described using discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe (section 5.3). The chapter concludes with an analysis that combines both the governance and discourse analysis and pinpoint possible relations between the two (section 5.4).

## 5.1 History and background

### 5.1.1 General features

The Overdiepse polder is situated in the province of Noord-Brabant between the rivers the 'Bergsche Maas' in the North and the 'Oude Maasje' in the South (see figure 20). The polder was created in 1904 with the excavation of the Bergsche Maas which aimed to improve the discharge capacity of the river Meuse (*Maas*). Being a low-lying and poorly drained area which inundated each year in winter, the polder was exclusively used for extensive production of hay (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003). However, after two 'land consolidations' (*Dutch: verkaveling*) in 1948 and in the 1970's and the construction of the sluice 'Schipdiep' (I3), the establishment of more intensively agricultural activities and the settlement of 17 farmer families from nearby villages was made possible (Roth & Winnubst, 2009).



**Figure 20.** Location of the Overdiepse polder with respect to Den Bosch, the 'Maas' and the 'Bergsche Maas'. Based on maps (2015)

Before the designation as a suitable area for river extension measures, the 550 acres sized polder with an additional 180 acres of floodplains harboured 94 inhabitants (as counted in 2003). The polder was mainly used for agricultural purposes containing 16 dairy and arable farms, one intensive pig farm, one recreational harbour for 340 boats, a military training ground in the Western part of the polder, and a planted forest of 3 ha owned by the State Forestry Department (*Dutch: Staatsbosbeheer*) in the East (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003; Roth & Winnubst, 2009). A summer embankment (*Dutch: zomerkade*) is located alongside the 'Bergsche Maas' in the North. Parallel to this summer embankment runs the winterdike (*Dutch: winterdijk*) of 7.1 km, which was the prime weir in the polder. In the south of the Polder, alongside the 'Oude Maasje', an embankment ran of 5.6 km which only had a limited weir function after the realisation of the 'Schipdiep' sluice (I3).

### 5.1.2 Designation as search area

The Overdiepse polder was firstly designated in the mid- and late-90's in several government studies as a so called 'search area' due to its unique location downstream of the 'Maas', a small number of residents and a history of water retention (with the yearly inundation in the winter). This designation as 'search area' implied that the polder would be a suitable place to store water and enhance discharge levels of the riverine system (De Gast, 2004; Roth & Winnubst, 2009). The *Integrated*

*Investigation Downstream Rivers* report (Dutch: *rapport Integrale Verkenning Benedenrivieren*) conducted by the Ministries of VROM and LNV, RWS, Provinces, Municipalities, and water boards, is a notable example within the variety of different studies.<sup>19,20</sup> In this report, the area in which the polder is situated; ‘land van Heusden en Altena’ was mentioned as a possible location for measures leading to an increase in discharge capacity of the river and decrease in water level (Ministry of Transport and Water Management, 2001; Roth & Winnubst, 2009). However, measures like these are mostly related with intensive spatial interventions, often leading to relocation of the local residents. This creates complex situations in which, as Warner et al. (2012, p. 52) states, “linkages emerge between flood risk management and spatial planning, bringing in new societal actors [...] who must be taken into account”. Especially with regard to the latter aspect of Warner et al.’s quote, the project in the Overdiepse polder gained both national and international attention as local residents were able to include their ideas in the process of decision making and final implementation (W. B. Delta, 2015; Holmes, 2014; Warner et al., 2012). Although the project in the Overdiepse polder is currently widely known for its close collaboration between governments and residents, it started in a different manner. At the outset of the project, the polder was designated as a ‘search area’ in the explorative study report *Integrated Investigation Downstream Rivers*. However, the local residents of the polder were neither included nor involved in this study. As was the case for the Ooijpolder, the question can again be raised whether an explorative study is a proper moment for citizen participation? Although it is often stressed that participation and inclusion of citizens in decision making should be done as soon as possible, interviews with representatives from different governmental bodies and the representative of the farmer association of the Overdiepse polder indicate otherwise. Interviewees in the case of the Overdiepse polder stated that inclusion of local views and demands should not be done too early, but also not too late (I8; I7; I9).

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*“There has to be framework, an outline of plans. Otherwise you get wild-west stories. If there is no outline or framework you get a henhouse.” (I9)*

*“You can approach a project with regard to communication and involvement with local citizens using the formal rules, what legally is defined. My opinion is that if you do it that way, which means that local citizens can only involve during moments of formal participation...than you only have time to make the contradictions visible, but are unable to bridge them. You have to do it earlier... already at the moment that you know that you are going to do something in a polder... But you got to have an outline, a framework. You must know what the assignment is. That is what citizens expect from you, they pay taxes so that we know what has to be done. If you don’t know that [...] that is silly.” (I7)*

*“If you go into discussion and tell “we are doing something but we cannot tell you what the consequences can be”....people have other worries, and interesting and nice things to do. It is thus always looking for the right balance; not too early but also not too late. So let’s not make each other crazy with fuzzy plans, but also don’t say at the end of a project “look, this*

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<sup>19</sup> The Ministry of LNV was the Dutch ministry concerned with agriculture, nature and food quality from 1935 to 2010. Nowadays its policies fall under the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

<sup>20</sup> The Ministry of VROM was the Dutch ministry for matters concerning housing, spatial planning and the environmental. Since 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Environment and Spatial Planning merged together with the Ministry of Transport into the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (Wikipedia, 2015).



*is the result, please sign here. So include them early enough to have influence, but late enough when it is tangible.”(I8)*

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After the study was conducted, the outcomes were presented in an adjacent village by a former delegate of the province of Noord-Brabant. Although the above mentioned statements indicate that this would be a proper moment to include the local residents, this did not happen very actively. The local residents were neither personally notified nor invited. Instead the only notification was a small news bulletin in the local newspaper. Although the farmers’ representative indicated that an outline had to be present *before* local residents were included to prevent ‘wild west stories’, this apparent lack of including local residents *after* the establishment of an outline was perceived as an error (I9).

*“That is where the government went totally wrong. You know the address of everybody, so why don’t you just write and notify the 17 people that live in the area?” (I9)*

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After one of the residents noticed the exclusion, the farmer community ‘rallied up’ and attended the presentation. The residents were here presented with a map in which the Overdiepse polder was already coloured blue (I6; I9). As a spokesman of the Overdiep farmers stated in an interview:

*“Then they turned the beamer on, and there it was; the polder, the eye of the polder, coloured blue. That led to a little hubbub in the room. We thought “golly, the plans are already finished since the polder is already coloured! We will never get rid of that!” (I9)*

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After the meeting ended, a couple of farmers stayed and were approached by the provincial delegate who stated to the remained farmers that:

*“The soup is not as hot when it is served...but still you should realise that something must happen...when you are smart, you should write a page with a number of terms and conditions and make an appointment with me to discuss them”. (I9)*

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Although the news initially led to a lot of frustration and anger with the farmers, the farmers quickly made a clear and deliberate choice to adopt a constructive and cooperative approach instead of

an obstructive and defensive approach (Directorate, 2011d; I6; I9; Roth & Winnubst, 2009). The fact that the representative of the province indicated that the farmers could formulate their conditions and demands played an important role in the start-up of the organisation of the farmers (I9). As a spokesman of the Overdiep famers stated:

*“We were very surprised. The government was thus really accessible for residents. The man wanted to talk to us. So we invited him, and he just came by for a visit.”(I9)*

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### 5.1.3 *The association of Overdiep farmers*

From the meeting with the provincial delegate and after an assembly with all the residents of the polder, the farmers “acknowledged the public interest in these flood protection measures, but doubted the government capability to decide quickly on the issue [...] they also sensed that litigation could probably delay decision-making, but would also start a long period of uncertainty for their farming enterprises” (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 43). The farmers decided that their reasoning

should be that “in case something has to be done, then preferably quickly” (I9). Furthermore, the farmers realised that the amount of space in the polder would be too small for all the 17 farmers for a profitable business in the near future (I3; I7; I9). In light of this notion, they argued that they should “try to turn this threat in an opportunity” (I9).

Within 10 days after the information evening, the local farmers formed a small team of residents which could communicate with government civil servants and inform the rest of the residents about any progress and developments (I9). Appointments were quickly made with government civil servants to discuss the plans and conditions of the project in the polder (I9). This bottom-up organised workgroup, with the two local farmers Nol Hooijmaijer and Sjaak Broekman as core members, turned out to be very effective in communicating with the government (I6; I9).

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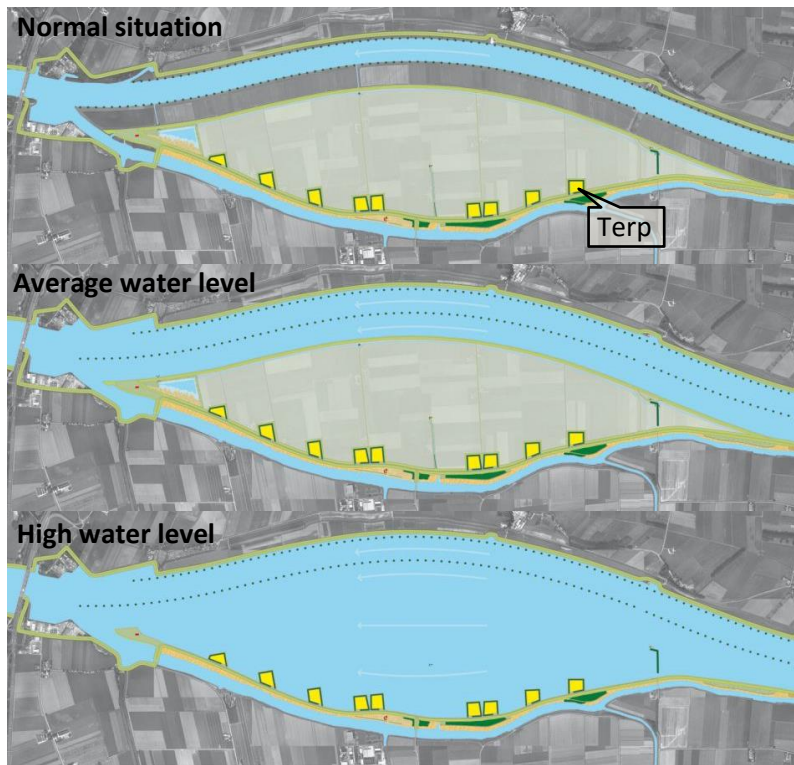
*“You received messages for the government and subsequently you would deliver answers to the residents. You just cannot sit with 17 persons at the negotiation table with the government. Then it will become a henhouse, then nobody would understand each other.” (I9)*

*“I don’t know how we would have done business if they were not there. You cannot sit around the table with everybody when it concerns generic decisions.” I6*

*“Nol and Sjaak, who as local councillors have administrative experience, had a prominent role. They were a really good interlocutor for the governments. Otherwise the government would have rolled over them.” (I3)*

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To give the interests, conditions and demands from the local resident some “support base and body” (I9), the farmers decided to register an interest group with the Chamber of Commerce; the association of Overdiep farmers (*Dutch: Vereniging Belangengroep Overdiepse polder*). With the help of Habiforum, the interest group explored several ideas of how river expanding measures could be combined with the continuation of farming and living in the polder (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003; Roth & Winnubst, 2009). These explorations ranged from a so-called ‘zero-variant’ in which dikes were enhanced and heightened, a ‘middle-variant’ which entailed the placement of a prime weir lengthwise in the polder keeping farms in the South of the polder dry, and a ‘terp-variant’. After an internal poll and further negotiations, the interest group made a choice for the ‘terp-plan’ and developed it further with the help of ZLTO and a financial contribution from the province (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003; Roth & Winnubst, 2009).



**Figure 21.** Graphic representation of the polder being flooded, based on map from (Bosch-Slabbers, 2016)

Their plan comprised a combination of technical and spatial measures which “makes retention [...] possible, while also protecting the property and guaranteeing the future socio-economic continuity of the farmers” (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 40). The plan, as depicted in figure 21, would require; (I) heightening the summer embankment north of the Oude Maasje to the standards of a prime weir; (II) relocation of residential housing and businesses on the terps alongside this new prime weir; (III) excavation of a soil depot in the west of the polder, where it could serve as material for the terps; (IV) adaptation of infrastructure, including the placement of a pumping station; (V) such a design of the area that it would ensure that a flood will not occur more than once every 25 years (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003).

With regard to the discussion of the purposefully inundation of polders, either in the form of calamity polders, emergency overflow areas or retention areas, the project in the Overdiepse polder with the ‘terp plan’ can be characterized as a new variant. Although the measures taken in the project are now and then related as ‘retention area’ (GMB, 2015; Roth & Winnubst, 2009), interviews underlined that there is a difference between a retention area and the measures taken in the Overdiepse polder.

*“Actually it is discharge enlargement, making the river wider. A retention area on the long term is for instance the ‘Rijnstrangen’. There you would really store and retain water, take it out of the system, and later when the water level is decreased, release it... This is mainly about making the discharge capacity of the river wider, leading to a quicker runoff to the sea. It is thus about letting the water flow cocurrent to the river.” (I8)*

The main difference between a retention area and the project in the Overdiepse polder lies in the fact that during high water levels the Overdiepse polder truly becomes part of the flow profile of the

river instead of a 'temporary storage room', as is the case with retention areas. Although the polder in a sense is still purposefully inundated, the incoming water is thus not so much stored stationary in the polder but is instead allowed to flow along with the river through the polder. Therefore it is better to speak of 'cocurrent retention' than of merely 'retention'. As is stated in the Integrated Investigation Downstream Rivers report (Ministry of Transport and Water Management, 2001, p. 54):

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*"Room outside the winter dike can be used to increase river capacity. Areas not directly used for habitation or industry and located in between two converging river branches can be utilized for this...In cases of high river discharge levels, or high water levels due to storm at sea, there is the possibility for the water to flow over the lowered summer quays [...] The hinterland will inundate thereby increasing the retention capacity of the river. By lowering a part of the quay at the other side of the area, the incoming water is allowed to flow into the opposite river branch. The retention in this sense becomes 'cocurrent'."*

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#### 5.1.4 A citizen initiative in Dutch water policy

The initiative of the 'terp plan' and the proactive approach of the farmers have been considered a rare and new occasion back then in Dutch water policy. As Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 40) state; "such local initiatives are quite new in the Dutch water world" and "they form the basis for interesting experiments with more inclusive forms of policy-making and planning". This way of citizen involvement also has been revolutionary for the government (I7, I6, I3).

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*"The normal reflex of residents is of course in projects like these that they oppose it and begin making banners to demonstrate. The nice thing here, which you don't see very often, is that they said: 'we can try to withstand these plans but if the government want these plans, the chances are significantly that they will be implemented. Let's come together to see if we can come up with an initiative which is useful and acceptable for us'. This is of course a very special reaction."*(I6)

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The 'terp plan' initiative from the residents of the polder was initially put next to several other alternative plans for the area as a so-called 'mirror-project', but was in the end selected as the best fitting option for the area. Although Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 43) state that "the plan fitted in with an atmosphere conducive to changes in the policy field", the government was still surprised that a local initiative came out as the best option in every study:

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*"The 'terp plan' was continuously taken along in all kinds of alternatives from the Department of Public Works and Water Management. However, the government almost did not want to believe this, since the plan did not existed formally, it was not in the 'bureaucratic treadmill'. In that time it was rather revolutionary."* (I3)

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Like in the Ooijpolder, the programme 'building bucket' was used to allow non-experts, who are not in possession of a water engineering or hydrology degree, to also comprehend the effects of different measures. The instrument was adopted in the case of the Overdiepse polder firstly to demonstrate the unique location of the polder for water safety measures (I9), but also to calculate and model the different variants, including the 'terp plan' (I9).

Due to the constructive attitude, proactive initiative, and demand of the farmers that “in case something has to be done, then preferably quickly”, the Vice Minister for Transport and Water Management Schultz decided to designate the Overdiepse polder as a so called ‘frontrunner’ project (*koploper project*) in 2004 (I3; I6; I7; Noord-Brabant, 2005). This meant that the planning study and the following procedures could already start before, and thus precede the finalisation of national level policy and the official approval from the Senate and The Lower House. The planning study entailed “the elaborating of the ‘terp plan’, performing environmental studies, the consideration of the different variants of plans and the preparations of the internal decision making by the ministry (decision about the project and variant)” (Noord-Brabant, 2005, p. 1). Additionally, the Province of Noord-Brabant “created regulations for buying out farmers at an early stage” to give farming families the opportunity to look actively and timely for alternative locations in the Netherlands or abroad, and the province the opportunity to use the land for relocation of enterprises, land exchange and reallocation” (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 44).

In the course of the further planning phase, two management mechanisms were developed in the form of two workgroups in which the farmers directly and indirectly formed a part of (I3). The first administrative workgroup (*Dutch: bestuurlijke werkgroep*) consisted of a representative of the province of North-Brabant, two aldermen from the municipalities of Waalwijk and Geertruidenberg, a director from the water board Brabantse Delta and the Dutch Department of Public Works and Water Management, and an external representative of the farmers from Habiforum. The latter was attracted by the province to represent the farmers on an administrative level (I6). Beneath the administrative workgroup a second workgroup was formed; the official advisory group (*Dutch: ambtelijke begeleidings groep*). This group consisted of civil servants from all the different governments (province, Dutch Department of Public Works and Water Management, municipalities) and two local farmers (I3; I7; I9). This group was the main entry for ideas, suggestions and demands from the local residents and other stakeholders. However the administrative group would make final decisions on actual realisation and implementation (I3; I9). These two groups came together twice a year with all the relevant stakeholders where they were informed about the progress of the project (I9).

#### 5.1.5 *Devolving responsibility*

In addition to the designation as ‘frontrunner’ project, another new feature of the Overdiepse polder case was decided in 2004; in an ‘regional administrative agreement’ the devolving of responsibility from the national government to lower governments was underlined (provinces, municipalities, water boards, etc). In the agreement it was decided that the province would be the director of the project in the planning phase and the water board Brabantse Delta the director of the project in the implementation and realisation phase. It was reasoned that these governmental levels were better able to include local demands and to seize regional and local opportunities (I3; I6; I7). Another reason for this tendency for decentralisation lies in the fact that the Dutch Department of Infrastructure and Water Management looked back at a big reorganisation in which a lot of expertise retired or left the organisation. This partly led to their inability to direct a programme the size of the RFTR programme (I7; I8). As representatives of higher governmental bodies stated:

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*“It is more about ‘who goes ahead’, ‘who is the best to do so’, ‘whose competence and qualifications are the best’, and ‘who wants to’? It is good to work with more local*

*governmental bodies...a water board for instance is familiar with the area, the people, the culture....From a management perspective they are thus best able to make assessments and choices.” (I8)*

*“The strength of municipalities and water boards is that they know the area. We are located very nicely 22 storeys high, but we are too far away for such a relation” (I7)*

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With the designation as ‘frontrunner project’ and the province as director in the planning phase, agreements were made about the planning study, planning procedures, and which governmental body would direct the project. In this way, the Province of North-Brabant became the first province in the Netherlands to be in charge of a river project. As a civil servant of the Province of North-Brabant stated:

*“As the provincial government we were and still are of opinion that we pre-eminently are the government body...our core business should be that we can take up projects like this. That is logic given the scale, scope and task area of a province...As a province, you are in the position to make a broad consideration of interests and demands, closer to the people than the national government can.” (I6)*

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The designation as frontrunner project came with the benefit of making early planning procedures and relatively quick acquisition of farms possible. However, due to its ‘revolutionary character’ and the relatively new way of carrying out projects like this, the search of how such a project should be carried out, was described by the local residents as “painfully long”. As a representative of the Association of Overdiep farmers exclaims in an interview with the Volkskrant in 2007:

*“I cannot grasp why it should take that long. Half of Berlin was rebuilt in twelve years after the war. Why does it have to take 14, 15 years for us in our polder of 550 ha? It is time for something to happen. The Ministry of Transport and Water management has allocated 86 million euro’s for the whole project. My biggest fear is that 60 million will be spent on consultancy- and engineering-firms.”(Volkskrant, 2007)*

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This feeling was not only present with local residents. As a representative of the Ministry stated in an interview:

*“The case of dialectics of progress was a little bit present, but it always remained a ‘frontrunner’. When you engage in something new and innovative, you deviate from the beaten tracks. What happens then is that what normally takes one memo or note, now takes ten. Every consideration, every deviation is extra work for the civil servant working on it. We all wanted it to be carried out faster, especially the residents, but we ourselves as well. But you still want to do it in a careful manner, think local consequences through to a higher programme level, do the procurement and contracting of the contractor well and don’t take silly risks only because you are in a hurry. It is very frustrating how much time these things take. Our perspective is not different in that sense, we think that as well.” I8*

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#### 5.1.6 Strict or loose objectives

A notable happening was the discussion during the planning phase about the water level decrease that would be reached when the ‘terp plan’ would be implemented. After the ‘terp plan’ was

elaborated on paper, it was tested for its capacity for water level decrease. It turned out that the objective of 29.8 cm water level decrease would not be reached. After implementation of the 'terp plan' only a potential water level decrease of 27 cm could be reached.

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*"We as farmers then think "well, it is only 2 or 3 cm", but in water management 2 cm is an awful lot. So that was a very tense moment. We really had to insist to let the project continue." (I9)*

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This initially led to a fierce discussion on whether the plan should be implemented at all and how much work the extra 3 cm would cost (I9). Interviewees indicated that due to technical and political reasons the 'terp plan' was not abandoned. The local farmers, their representatives and several civil servant asked and pressured whether "two years of squabbling would be worth the extra two cm" since residents and government civil servants already spent so much energy and work to reach agreement (I3; I9). Furthermore, the representative of the association of the Overdiep polder indicated that:

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*"Nobody dared to pull the plug, not us and not the government. Than it would have been a lost cause. The usefulness of the 'terp plan' was proven." (I9)*

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When the above conception was stressed to the province, who was still director of the project during the planning phase, the province concurred and indicated that they too "could live with 27 cm" (I9). However, the plan also had to be approved by national government, RWS, the Ministry, the Senate and The Lower House. As a civil servant of the Province of North-Brabant states in an interview:

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*"The water level decrease was an important stake for them. It had to be right down to the mm. The 'terp plan' however ran two cm short. Their initial reaction was that extra measures had to be taken to reach the number of 30 cm. But we stated that this was calculated with such an imprecise model...that the actual design of the plan does not matter, but the number is merely dependent on the choice of the model used...That discussion took a very long time." (I6)*

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After a discussion with RWS, RWS decided to see whether a water level decrease of merely 27 cm would comply with the law on weir. From this, it was concluded that the project would meet the necessary safety standards (I7). According to a representative of RWS this was due to the fact that the present dikes were high and strong enough to withstand water levels when the 'terp plan' was realised (I7). When this was explained to the Senate and Lower House the 'terp plan' with a potential water level decrease of 27 cm was approved (I7; I9) and in 2010 entered the realisation phase.

#### 5.1.7 *The objective of spatial quality*

In addition to the objective of water safety, the objective of spatial quality and regional development (*Dutch: gebiedsontwikkeling*) was also underlined (I6). This entailed the combination of "water storage with strengthening the agrarian structure by investing in farms to make them economically more sustainable" (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 43). As stated earlier, an important aspect of the Overdiepse polder case is the fact that both farmers and governments realised that implementation of the 'terp plan' would necessarily mean the relocation of several farmer families out of the polder to ensure profitable and sustainable business in the future due to the limited size of the area (I13; I7;

I9). Since some farmer families were willing to leave the polder and be relocated, the land could be bought up by the government and partly sold or leased for 10 years to the remaining farmers to the remaining farmer families (I3; I6; I9). With the help of ZLTO the farmers proposed a plan which entailed terps of 14.000 m<sup>3</sup> sand and clay and 2.25 ha at the top so that there will be enough space for development opportunities for the coming 40 years (I9).

Until 2006, project procedures were performed under the banner of 'frontrunner' project. As stated earlier, this designation was not yet formally approved by the Senate and Lower House. The actual formal approval of the 'terp plan' was not until 2006, when the Senate and Lower House reached agreement on the Spatial Planning Key Decision (*Dutch: Planologische Kern Beslissing*) of the RFTR (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003). According to Roth and Winnubst (2009), around this time also the objective of "spatial quality began exerting influence on the process in the Overdiepse polder". A so-called 'Q team' was established that provided an outline with conditions, directives and advise with regard to the spatial quality of the design of the 'terp plan' (I6).

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*"With the spatial quality, the Q team and the state advisor for landscapes, you try to give a colour which is consistent. It not so much about whether it is beautiful or ugly, but more about whether it fits in history, in the landscape, in the sequence...you can make a plan which looks very nice on a local level, but when the beads are strung together, it might be too eclectic." (I8)*

*"As region we never like it when state representatives come by and tell what The Hague think should happen.<sup>21</sup> That never feels right. But the way this team did this was very proper, professional, engagingly and with a lot of feeling for the local situation...We followed their advice to develop a design competition which should prescribe the condition in which the farms should be build, in terms of colour and choice of material and how the terps should be designed." (I6)*

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It becomes clear from these statements that every interviewed government body was very enthusiastic about the objective of spatial quality and the way the Q-team did their work to reach this objective. In addition, the statements below indicate that local residents were able to include their demands and conditions during the process.

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*"I think that especially in the area of spatial quality, since it is a matter of taste and personal perception, it is very possible to include the feeling of the people, and make use of their commitment. Where it concerns technicalities...that is primarily an engineering affair. Especially with this area it is possible to let local residents play an important role." (I6)*

*"You may expect from the government that when you do something in a certain landscape that it will be leaved decently [...] But when is a project a success? That is when those who can influence it, come in a situation in which they can win and lose something. This was inter alia made possible by the objective of spatial quality. " (I7)*

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<sup>21</sup> The Dutch national government is often referred to as 'The Hague' since it is the city where the seat of the Dutch cabinet and parliament is located.



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*"For the recognition of spatial quality it was important that it was a clearly mentioned objective [...] the open attitude might be more underlined by the inclusion of such an objective. However, I do think that without this objective it would be still present, but less recognized." (I8)*

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The Q-team focussed on the fact that it was perhaps one of the last chances to design and realise eight farms along the same road all at once (I7; I9). Following this line of reasoning, the Q-team stated that the design of the terps and farms should be such that each farm would have their own identity but still would express a 'shared unity' (I7). This led to suggestions about size, shape and arrangement of the farms, barns and feeding silo's on the terp (I7; I9). However, according to interviews that Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 48) conducted, the farmers were initially not so "enthusiastic" about the objective of spatial quality. "Consultation at the design stage did not take place; the architect did not even visit the polder; the inhabitants were denied any opportunity to express their views or preferences; and there has been no serious discussion of alternative options nor reaction to their critical questions." Especially the fact that some ideas of the Q-team would run counter to the ideas and preferences of the farmers when implemented, led to a tense discussion in the polder about what spatial quality entails (Roth & Winnubst, 2009). As the farmers' representative stated in an interview conducted for this thesis:

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*"The spatial quality is put on paper at a certain moment. At that moment we as community have had a few months of discussion about whether we could actually pay for everything the government was asking from us?" (I9)*

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To give the local residents a voice, the province decided to include them in a panel of judges of a design competition, which was advised by the Q-team (I6; I7; Noord-Brabant, 2009).

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*"In first instance the farmers disliked this...but we proceeded in the sense that that it would prescribe what the farmers should do, but that there was a certain palette. So we decided to put the residents in the jury, then everything changes of course. That has actually worked out fantastic." (I6)*

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In addition, the local residents were given the opportunity to give their opinion about the nominated ideas prior to the award ceremony, and after the award ceremony the province, the local residents together with both municipalities looked at whether and how the proposed design could be implemented and realised (Noord-Brabant, 2009). With the outcomes, an outline for the design was developed with which all the farmers. Although the happenings around the objective of spatial quality illustrate a tense situation at the start, in the end all parties agreed on the design and implementation of the 'terp plan'.

The further planning phase, in which financial means were designated to the project, the 'terp plan' was further elaborated, public law procedures (*In Dutch: publieksrechtelijke procedures*) were carried out, all the farms were bought by the government, and everything was worked out so that the water board could publicize the public tender, lasted until 2010 (I6). However, since the province was mainly perceived as a policy-making governmental body, the decision was made in the 'regional administrative agreement' to let the local water board Brabantse Delta direct the implementation and realisation of the project, which started in 2010 with the publication of the public tender (I3),

where after the contractors Van Oord, GMB and Oldenkamp together formed the ‘Combinatie De Hollandsche Waard’.

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*“The Department of Public Works and Water Management decided that the implementation of such a big project should be directed by the water board. We are permanently represented in the area, owner and manager of the river dike. We manage the water level in the polder, and have a direct relation with the farmers.” I3*

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When the water board started with directing the project in the realisation phase, they adopted a so called IPM-model (integral project-leadership model). This entailed that the directory of the project was divided in five tasks; (I) a project manager, who is responsible for the proper implementation of the project; (II) a risk manager, who is responsible for identifying and control of possible risks; (III) an environmental manager, who maintains contact with local residents and governments; (IV) a technical manager, who is responsible for the technical and substantive input of the project; and lastly (V) a contract manager, who is responsible for the contracts of all the different stakeholders (I3; RWS, 2015). Currently, after approximately 15 years, the measures in the Overdiepse polder are nearly finished and have led to the construction of eight terps along the south weir, and a potential decrease of the water level in the Meuse of 27 cm.

The former river dike which ran south alongside the Bergsche Maas has been lowered 3 meters over its complete length of 6 km, so that water from the Bergsche Maas could flow through the polder during high water (I3). To pump out any remaining water after high water, a pumping station was placed in the north. After the project is finished the water board Brabantse Delta will be in charge of the water management in the polder and its infrastructure (I3; I9).

## 5.2 Governance in the polder

From the history and background of the Overdiepse polder case sketched above, it becomes clear that the way how decisions were made and the way how procedures were undertaken underwent some notable changes in time. Ranging from ‘search area’ to ‘frontrunner project’ and full-fledged RFTR project, this paragraph analyses the case with regard to the typology of a process- and structure-related meaning governance, as is presented in the theoretical framework. The different characteristics; actors, role of expert, role of government, decision making, knowledge status, and plan objective here serve to order the analysis. For convenience the governance typology is again presented below in table 5.

Characteristics	Process-related	Structure-related
<b>Actor(s)</b>	Coalition of several actors	Limited amount of actors
<b>Role of expert</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Role of government</b>	One of more roles	Central role
<b>Decision making</b>	Bottom-up	Top-down
<b>Knowledge status</b>	Knowledge is negotiated	Knowledge is objective
<b>Plan objective</b>	Deliberative framework for collaboration (goal searching)	Mechanistic & predeterministic (goal oriented)

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**Table 5.** Schematic presentation of the features of a process- and structure-related meaning of governance (based on: (Lautze, 2014; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2008; Van der Valk, 1998)

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### 5.2.1 *From governing people to people governing*

At the outset of the project, when the polder was designated as a 'search area' in the explorative study report *Integrated Investigation Downstream Rivers*, the local residents of the polder were not included. The amount of actors who participated in this study was limited. Only governments and experts played a central role in making top-down decisions about the possible outline of the project. Also the presentation of the outcomes of the study in an adjacent village happened initially in this manner, since local residents were not directly notified nor invited. This indicates a way of governing that was described by some interviewees as "over the heads of the residents" (I9). It can thus be stated that the practice of governance, when compared with the characteristics of actors, role of state and experts, and decision making at the start-up of the project can be related to a structure-related meaning of governance.

The first inclusion of local residents took place only after the attendance of the Overdiep community at the information evening when the representative of the province approached the farmers. The statement that the farmer families should indicate their demands and conditions to the government can be seen as the opening up of the decision-, and plan-making. Aside from the lack of notifying and inviting the Overdiep community personally, the moment of citizen inclusion and empowerment was thus more or less in line with the above mentioned statements about a proper moment to include citizens; local residents were approached by the government after the broad outline was established. After this 'opening-up', the case shows that organization of the local residents emerged relatively quickly. As Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 53) state "the government was primarily implementing its water policy, but now finds itself in interaction with a group of farmers that took over the initiative, decided to react positively to the government plans, and were clear about their priorities, demands and expectations". This statement of Roth and Winnubst (2009) indicates that inclusion was unexpected. However, according to interviews with the farmers' representative, the open attitude of the representative of the province played a vital role in opening up the project for the local residents. This inclusion of citizens can be viewed as a motion towards process-governance where a bigger and more varied coalition of actors is involved. As the above statement of Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 53) shows, the role of government and experts subsequently shifted from a 'central role' to 'one of more roles' where decisions are no longer taken in a hierarchical top-down manner, thus indicating a shift towards a process-related meaning of governance.

To see whether this shift has truly pushed through and led to the adoption of a practice of governance with a process-related meaning, it is necessary to look critically at the two 'management mechanisms' that were established; the administrative workgroup and the official advisory group. It becomes clear from these two groups that the roles that the local residents had in both workgroups led to different levels of participation during the planning phase in the Overdiepse polder. What comes forward from the interviews is that the most direct involvement of the farmers in the official advisory group was mainly concerned with participation in discussions, staying informed about progress, notifying the present governmental bodies with the concerns and condition of the local residents, and keeping these local residents informed about the progress made. The actual making of decisions was restricted to the administrative workgroup where the farmers were not present in person, but represented through Habiforum. Although both workgroups imply a less direct form of involvement in decision making, interviewees from different government levels indicated that the farmers were integrated in the process.

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*"The farmers are an integral part of the parties that made and reviewed plans....It is good to include citizens because they know the specific features and chances of the area, you cannot see those from a map. The fact for instance that the farmer needed to innovate is invisible when you merely draw lines on a map." (I3)*

*"The farmers were really present in discussion about how the planning, implementation and realisation would take place." (I8)*

*"The farmers in the Overdiepse polder participated in all areas. That is very special. Although Nol and Sjaak were no civil servants, they sat in the official advisory group. In addition to this they were represented on an administrative level through Habiforum. To participate both on an official and administrative level is new and unique. The Overdiepse polder is therein a superlative degree. There was not one cook, but a whole brigade working to prepare the dish." (I7)*

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Also the representative of the association of farmers indicated that during biannual meetings with all the actors, and during meetings with the official advisory group it was possible, to a certain extent, to negotiate aspects of the project (I9). Furthermore, the fact that the farmers were represented through Habiforum in the administrative working group was decided according to mutual understanding for reasons of integrity.

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*"It was very difficult for us. If we were part of the administrative work group, we would be there with double reasons. You have your own stakes in the polder and have to defend your own propositions. We were of the opinion that an independent third party would need to do that." (I9)*

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The argument can thus be made that during the planning-phase characteristics of process-oriented governance were present. Although the biannual meeting had a more informative and communicative character, there was a wide array of actors present which were able to discuss project progress. In addition, the official advisory group, which provided the administrative work group with plans, considerations and ideas, consisted of representatives of governments and two local farmers. There was thus again a coalition of several actors in which the government and experts represented one of more roles. However, the process of actual decision-making was limited. The official advisory group was consisting only of governments and a representative of the farmers. So although plan-making was bottom-up, this was not truly the case for actual decision-making. This again relates to a more structure-related practice of governance. On the other hand, the fact that a representative of the local residents was present in this decision-making body indicates a practice of governance which falls somewhere between a process- and structure-related meaning.

### 5.2.2 Discussion of the non-negotiable

With respect to the plan objective and knowledge status, it is clear that RWS and the Ministry already outlined objectives with respect to water safety and spatial quality; a decrease in water level of 29.8 cm in the area with measures that would also ensure the enhancement of the spatial quality. The fact that these objectives were already formulated beforehand by the national government relates to a pre-deterministic approach. Especially the objective of water safety at first instance was fixed. The knowledge to back this objective up is presented as objective and non-negotiable:

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*"The water level decrease is pretty sacrosanct. It has been formulated rationally...and is tested by Deltares. For these important objectives we have decided to use independent parties who are acceptable for everybody, what they state is the truth. You can indefinitely discuss whether the model is correct, or whether it should be 29 cm. Deltares determines this....simple as that." (17)*

*"We deliberately put up a clear objective with regard to water safety. Otherwise you will get a process where everybody haggles with each other. We decided that this was a firm objective. Although it might sound dogmatic, it is good to begin with a clear framework and outline. Then you have a good starting position. When you don't have this, there is no focus and organisations will have no grip on the project." (18)*

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As these statements again show, the wish for an outline and main objectives before citizens are included is considered vital for a project to have a good starting position. Although this notion at first glance relates to a more structure-related meaning of governance, the fact that these objectives are perceived as a mere 'outline' and foundation for a solid starting ground for the project, indicates that there is room for negotiation left. The actual design of the area is not pre-determined but instead is developed through a deliberative approach in which a multitude of stakeholders collaborate to find a way to reach certain set objectives. Again this falls in-between a process- and structure-related meaning of governance. A couple objectives are considered as fixed, but the details remain open for discussion. The actors are oriented on reaching these goals, but do so in a deliberative approach of collaboration.

Although this objective of water safety is stated by national government as a fixed, non-negotiable objective, the happenings and negotiations with regard to the achieved potential water level decrease in the Overdiepse polder indicate that there is some 'wiggle room'. As previously was detailed, in the end a water level decrease of two cm less than the initial objective was approved by all parties. The arguments used by the different actors to justify this deviation in interviews are interesting to mention. The local residents focussed on political and social reasons. They argued that the amount of work that was already put into the project by government civil servants and local residents was of such an extent, that cancelling the 'terp plan' was politically and socially not acceptable. As the farmers representative indicated "...nobody dared to pull the plug". Furthermore, the extra time that it would take to look how two cm would be realised was in sharp contrast with the demand of the local residents that "...in case something has to be done, then preferably quickly", and thus unacceptable for them. The province of Noord Brabant on the other hand, directly questioned the models and knowledge used to justify the number of 29.8 cm water level decrease. As a civil servant of the Province of North-Brabant stated "...the amount of 29.8 cm was calculated with such an imprecise model... the number is merely dependent on the choice of the model used" (16). After a discussion around this number, the Ministry and RWS decided and argued that due to technical reasons a water level decrease of 27 cm would suffice to meet the norm in the law of weir.

Once these happenings are compared with the characteristics 'knowledge status' and 'plan objective', we can thus see a shift away from a structure-related meaning to a process-related meaning of governance. At first, objectives are pre-determined and fixed. Statements from the representative of RWS indicate that their demand of a water level decrease of 29.8 cm was non-negotiable and rationalised by the models of an independent, scientific renowned bureau. The

utilisation of independent party Deltares to calculate the proper water level decrease in respect to the objective of water safety is an technocratic argument for national government to perceive the demanded water level decrease as non-negotiable due to the expertise of Deltares; “ what they say is just the truth” (I7). However, the happenings after the calculations of potential water level decrease when the ‘terp plan’ would be implemented show a different story. During the discussion around the objective of water safety, the objective and the knowledge to justify it, residents and lower government bodies as the Province could question the number of 29.8 cm and demand for approval of the number of 27 cm. The fact that their demand was considered and adopted by national government, points to a more deliberative framework.

As was the case with the Ooijpolder, the computer programme ‘building bucket’, which was developed to support the decision-making of the RFTR programme, again is a notable example of empowerments of non-experts. Initially, the instrument can be related to a more structure-related meaning of governance, since it is used to substantiate the established outline of the plan in the Overdiepse polder. However, by modelling and visualizing effects of certain measures it made it possible for citizens and non-experts to join the decision-making. As the representative of RWS stated, it allowed citizens to “emerge from their position as ‘consumer of policy’ to one of co-designer” (I7). This shows that the programme was also adopted as an instrument which empowered non-experts to be included in the process of variant choice by making choices for certain measures comprehensible. This again relates more to process-related governance since it allowed for a more deliberative approach in which a wider coalition of different actors could negotiate.

### 5.2.3 *Governing spatial quality and regional development*

In addition to the prime objective of water safety, the regional governments stressed for the adoption of an objective which would underline the possibilities for regional development. The statements of government civil servants show that this idea of leaving the area in a better state than it was before the project, is believed to have had empowering effects on local citizens. However, features from both process- and structure-related governance appeared to be present in the happenings around the objective of spatial quality. Although the objective is believed to empower local residents by inclusion of local views and values, the start-up was more related to structure-related governance according to interviews conducted by Roth and Winnubst (2009) with farmers’ representatives. A Q-team merely consisting of civil servants and the state advisor of landscape without regard of views, preferences, alternatives, as is stated in Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 48), clearly relates to the feature of a limited amount of actors. The government and experts played a central role in predetermining objectives, and establishing outlines and conditions with regard to spatial quality.

Subsequent happenings imply more process-related governance. The establishment of a design competition in which the local residents were part of the panel of judges indicate the opening up of the actors involved in the decision-making. In addition, local residents were consulted and included in the planning-, and decision-making prior, during, and after the establishment of the design competition (Noord-Brabant, 2009). As the farmers representative also indicated in an interview, consultation of local residents with ZLTO led to a situation in which local residents were able to negotiate and discuss with governments and the Q team and come to “a win-win situation” (I9). This collaborative approach, in which local residents, together with government and experts collaborate

in a deliberative approach, corresponds clearly to characteristics from a process-related meaning of governance.

### 5.3 The stressing of demands

Over the course of the project, a wide array of social demands was articulated by the different actors. Following the happenings as described in section 6.1, this paragraph elaborates on these social demands by analysing them using the request-claim typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011) and put them into a discursive perspective using discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe. For convenience the typology between the two different demands; request and claim from Behagel and Turnhout (2011), is again illustrated below in table 6.

Request	Claim
Single demand	Multiple demands
Passive	Active
Respects institutional order	Calls institutional order into question
Dialectical	Rhetorical
Part of a social logic	Part of a political logic

**Table 6.** Schematic presentation of the features of a request and a claim (Behagel & Turnhout, 2011).

#### 5.3.1 River expansion for water safety

The previous chapters explained that from the 90's onwards the idea emerged that merely building higher dikes will not suffice for sustaining a safe future. Several governmental studies, for example the Integrated Investigation Downstream Rivers report, began to explore the possibilities for measures that would expand rivers to sustain water safety. It becomes clear from statements like "river expansion will be investigated as the solution to the high water issue...river expansion and safety are a prime concern" (Ministry of Transport and Water Management, 2001, pp. 11-12), that ensuring water safety through river expansion was considered a prime and vital objective and demand in this report. As figure 22 illustrates, the emergence of this demand into a hegemonic signifier within Dutch water policy has served as a nodal point to connect other demands in a discourse that has fixated meaning around the idea of river expansion and 'Living with the water', (Buijs, 2009; Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006). In addition to the hegemonic signifying demand of 'water safety through river expansion', this discourse entailed several connected demands (Ministry of Transport and Water Management, 2001; Rooy & Slootweg, 2003; Roth & Warner, 2007; Roth & Winnubst, 2009, 2014);



**Figure 22.** Graphic representation of the hegemonic

- A safe future where floods are prevented in the riverine area.

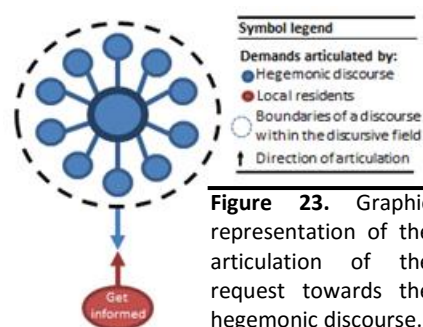
- A future in which local inhabitants of riverine areas would not have to fear water in the riverine area.
- The additional possibility to extract minerals, clay and sand during river expanding measures.
- In the area where the Overdiepse polder is located 'land van Heusden en Altena', outer and inner dike measures are considered promising and potential.
- Space for people living and inhabited the riverine area.
- A few rigorous measures with long term and larger effects are preferred over several small measures with short term and smaller effects.
- Space for people working in the riverine area.
- Space for recreation in the riverine area.
- Foster understanding among stakeholder in the riverine area.
- The report argues that society is ready to deal with the high water issue 'in one go', therefore it is necessary to act quickly.
- As the report states, "the emphasis should lie on local aspects, customary work". Any measures should thus entail regional and local fitting aspects.
- Space for nature development in the riverine area.

When the above mentioned demands that were articulated by the governments, ranging from the state to municipalities, were presented during the formal information evening, a demand from the local residents of the polder emerged. This demand was based on the wish to get informed about the possible plans for measures in the polder, and can be derived from the attendance of the local residents (see figure 23). When this demand is compared with the typology between a request and a claim from Behagel and Turnhout (2011), it

becomes clear that this demand characterized itself as a request: it consisted of one single demand to get informed; it was passive in the sense that it respected and did not per se question the institutional order; it did not use 'rhetoric to attain a function as hegemonic signifier but instead portrayed a dialectical nature; and was part of social logics.

### 5.3.2 From request to equivalential chain of demands

The subsequent happenings with regard to the emergence of demands after the formal presentation evening show an increasing in emergence and addition of social demands inside the hegemonic discourse, and an increase of demands from the local residents which are organized through the logic of equivalence, as is portrayed by figure 24.



**Figure 23.** Graphic representation of the articulation of the request towards the hegemonic discourse.





**Figure 24.** Graphic representation of the articulation of requests towards the hegemonic discourse.

First, the hegemonic discourse of ‘water safety through river expansion’ was complemented with the objective of ‘spatial quality’. Spatially related social demands were already present within the discourse in the form of nature development, living and habitation and recreation (see figure 24). However, the articulation of the social demand of ‘spatial quality’ served as an additional nodal point which increased fixation of meaning around the spatially related demands within the discourse. Also the complementary demand for multi-functional land use, although not mentioned as full-fledged RFTR-objective, served in a similar way. The articulation of the social demand for using land for creating space for water and sustaining agricultural activities, nature and recreation increased fixation of the demands for space for work, living and habitation, recreation and nature development, and the possible extraction of clay, sand or minerals in the riverine area (Noord-Brabant, 2008). Furthermore, research by Deltares led to the articulated demand that measures undertaken in the Overdiepse polder should result in a water level decrease of 28.9 cm.

On the local level, articulation of several demands from the residents had taken place after the message from the provincial delegate at the information evening (Rooy & Slootweg, 2003; Roth & Winnubst, 2009) & I9);

- Farms, businesses and local residents should only need to be relocated one time. This way, the business operations could continue.
- Local residents that ought to be relocated should be properly compensated through financial means. The financial position of the farmers should be maintained on a proper level. Furthermore, loss and damage on property should be compensated.
- The equal treatment for all local residents was a demand considered of great importance. The farmers argued that measures that would lead to distinction would subsequently also lead to discord and would put increasing pressure on the social relations in the polder and its small sized community.
- Nobody’s situation should deteriorate.
- The polder is characterized by its open, wide and free horizon. This open character should be maintained

- If measures need to be taken in the polder, then preferably through quick and decisive plan- and decision-making. The planning study should not be characterized by endless measurements and calculations
- In line of this thought, the choices made for measures in the polder should be final and definite. The farmers indicated that already since the designation of the polder as possible location for river expansion led to a deteriorated investment climate and decreasing finances by cautious banks due to the subsequent uncertainty.
- Local residents should keep playing a role in the further planning- and decision-making.
- Farming business should be able to continue throughout and after the project on a similar level as before.

These social demands were to some extent structured through a logic of equivalence. By initially addressing all the local residents as one community which should state their demands (I9), the government underlined a common ground or identity in the polder: one community which faces river expansion measures. As Glynos and Howarth (2007) explain in their argument about this logic, by stressing this singular identity the government have initially created a dichotomizing view of 'us' (the Overdiep community) and 'them' (Government). Although the emergence of an 'us and them ratio' might indicate an antagonistic frontier, it must be stated that the government civil servants and residents from the Overdiep bridged this chasm. From interviews, the farmer's representative indicated that the government was really open and 'accessible' for the local residents to approach, and government civil servants indicated that communication with the local residents was made possible due to the quick and constructive organisation of the residents into a workgroup and later interest group with a few members who engaged in direct communication about general terms and conditions. This way, demands from the Overdiep community could be communicated in an efficient and effective manner with the government. When these demands are reflected against the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011) it can be stated that although multiple demands have emerged, these demands were still articulated as singular requests. Despite the fact that through the logic of equivalence connections were established between them, they were not truly merged into one claim where one hegemonic demand signified the whole chain. In addition, the demands still respected the institutional order by addressing the demands through a small workgroup of local residents with a constructive and compliant attitude towards the government. This can for instance be seen from the fact that, where normally local residents rally up with banners and oppose the plans, the local residents in the Overdiepse polder accepted the plans and tried to get the most out of it (I6). This attitude is clearly underlined in the reasoning from the farmers and initially indicates a 'passive' stance in the sense that the government plans and institutional order is respected. However, it must be noted here that, although this approach might indicate a compliant attitude, the farmers also indicated that this approach would not be infinite:

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*"The residents explicitly keep the option open to cease all collaboration. The longer the uncertainty takes, the more difficult it will be to continue the collaboration with a constructive attitude." (Rooy & Slootweg, 2003, p. 57)*

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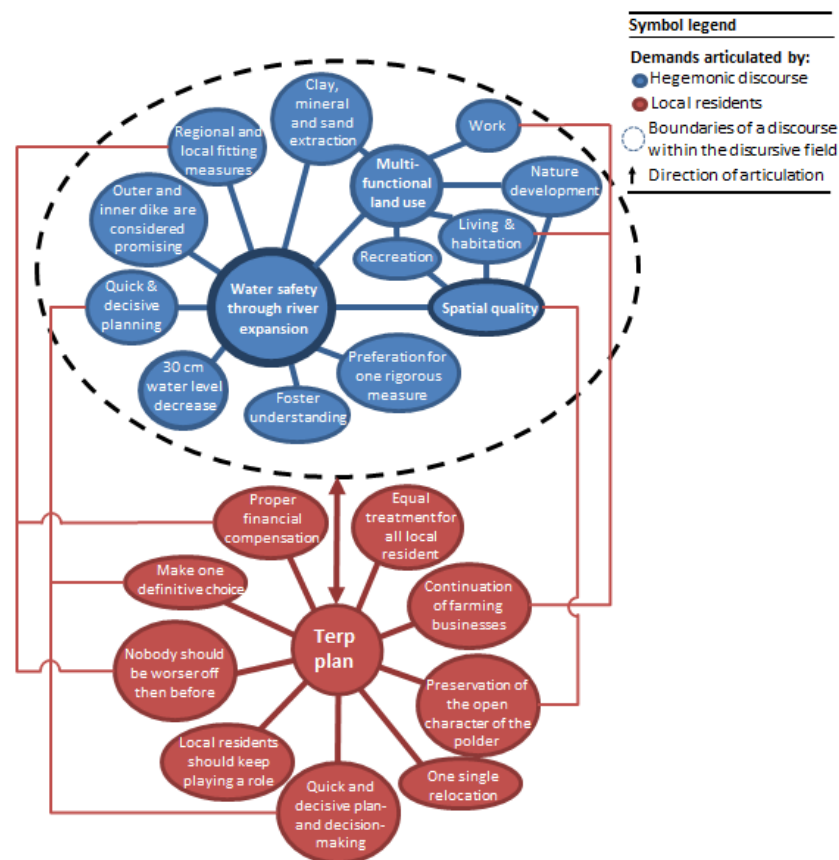
This notion also was embedded in the local demands that plan- and decision-making should be quick, decisive and definitive. Although, this statement indicated that the Overdiep community was willing

to shift towards a more active and non-collaborative approach, at the time the articulation of demands can still be characterized as part of social logic and seen as requests rather than a claim.

### 5.3.3 Development of the *terp* plan

As explained before, during the planning study in the polder a number of different possible variants were explored ranging from the placement of a new weir in the middle of the polder to the placement of terps. When these explorations were finished, the local residents unanimously indicated the preference for the ‘terp variant’. The plan was argued to be “the best solution on short and long term since; maximum space for the river would be created; maximum safety would be provided to businesses and residents; the use of the polder for cocurrent water retention would deliver no extra risk to the adjacent village Waspik and the municipality Waspik; and the ‘terp variant’ would lead to a definitive measure that would suffice for the long term” (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003, p. 39). According to the Rooy and Sloodweg (2003), a measure in accordance to the ‘terp plan’ would thus be cost-effective, fitting in the regional spatial framework and the long term vision, and would have support from the local residents in the area. As is stated in the Rooy and Sloodweg (2003, p. 11):

“this variant has the explicit preference of the residents due to its definitive, robust and cost-effective character, strengthening effects on the landscape, cultural-historical quality and social cohesion in the polder”.



**Figure 25.** Graphic representation of the articulation of the 'Terplan' towards the hegemonic discourse.

The articulation of the demand for adoption of the 'terp plan' thus signified the whole equivalent chain of singular demands and merged them, as is depicted by figure 25. However, not only demands that entail local interests have been articulated. As figure 25 shows, also demands that state something about water safety, spatial quality and the way how decision making should take have been articulated and linked to the terp plan. Furthermore, several of these articulated demands can already be linked to some of the articulated demands within the existing hegemonic discourse. Also the fact that the Province made a financial contribution for the development of the Terp Plan shows an aim of 'co-production' and the endeavour to stimulate a more bottom-up approach (depicted by the double sided arrow in figure 25). What is interesting to note is the statement of a civil servant of the waterboard 'Brabantse Delta', who said that " the government almost did not want to believe this [the existence of the terp plan], since the plan did not existed formally, it was not in the 'bureaucratic treadmill'". Although this statement appears to be in contrast with the fact that a financial contribution was given by the province, there was still some degree of resistance by the government.

Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 49) state that during the establishment and development of the terp plan "the board of the farmer association of the Overdiep polder realised that representing the interests of all farmers was crucial in elaborating the various options for the terp plan and making them fit into 'Room for the River'. Effort was especially geared to getting all farmers 'on board', even those who intended to move and had apparently less to gain from the outcomes of the design process of the terp plan. Although discussions about design options were not very relevant for them, negotiations about procedures and compensation are. The strategy was to focus on these after reaching general agreement on the terp plan". These findings from Roth and Winnubst (2009) again show a logic of equivalence. The approach of getting all the farmers "on board" is a clear and notable example of the aim to create a common identity which underlines the demand of the terp plan.

In contrast to this logic of equivalence, the acquisition of the farms and businesses and compensation for relocation was negotiated with each farmer separate.

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*"Everybody will be approached individually by an independent Confidential Committee to discuss desired solutions." (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003, p. 48)*

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These negotiations included compensation of costs related to the depreciation of land, costs of reconstruction and rebuilding of homes and businesses, compensation of unfavourable parcelling, compensation for expenses during relocation, possible lease arrangements, and compensation for farms that will relocate or move out of the polder (Rooy & Sloodweg, 2003, p. 48). Despite the earlier equivalential merge of demands from the local residents (illustrated in figure 25), the 'terp plan' led to a few cases of differentiation within the farming community. Although the 'terp plan' also stressed a general demand for proper financial compensation and equal treatment for all residents, the plan led to individual negotiations where each farmer's own local condition was treated separately. The 'terp plan' entailed the voluntary leaving of some farmers, and the relocation of the remaining farmers. These closed and individual negotiations with all farmers initially led to differentiation in the community of farmers, thus compromising the social demand of equality for all the farmers. As Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 50) state; "The need on the part of the province for clarity about who moves and who stays, in combination with the various farmer intentions, strategies and initiatives in dealing

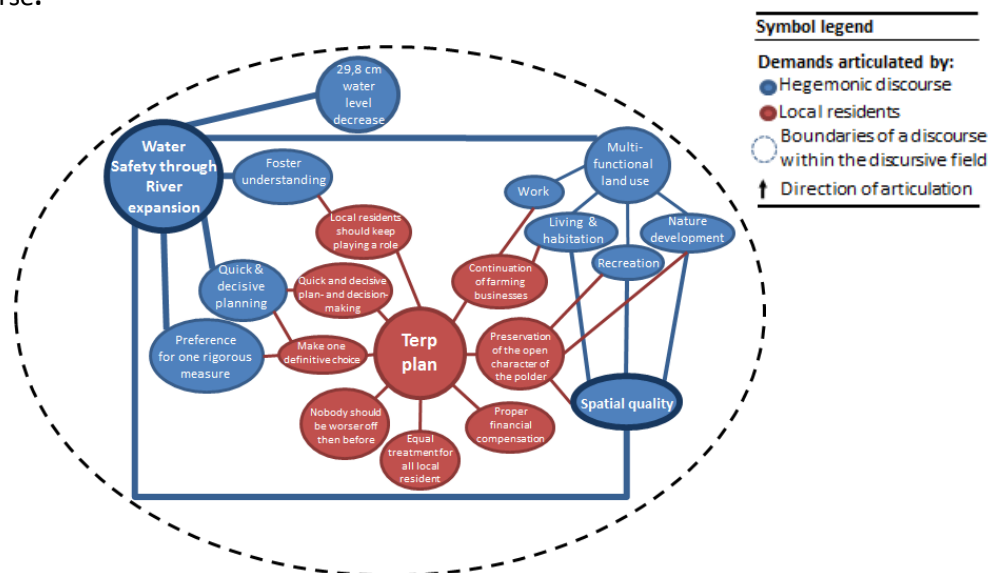
with the terp plan, may be a source of actual differentiation of farmers in terms of opportunities for negotiating their future”. This is a clear effect of logic of difference, in which the linkages in an equivalential chain of demands are broken by accounting for differences in identity and keeping elements distinct, separate and autonomous (Doty, 1996; Glynos & Howarth, 2007). As a farmers representative states in an interview with Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 49):

*“We must be honest, not all farmers are equal. If terps are going to be built along the dike as planned, those who live there now and intend to stay will prefer to keep their own land. It will be extremely difficult then for another farmer to claim a terp there. The province stated that ‘all farmers have equal chances’ [...] In fact, all may have equal rights but not equal chances. This awareness of existing differences becomes increasingly felt as we move towards a final choice.”*

Lack of clarity about the amount of government budget for buying out of farmers, true intentions of individual farmers to leave or stay and claim a terp, and the closed individual negotiations thus led to a division in the common identity through a logic of difference. Despite this emerging division in the farmer’s community the ‘terp plan’ was adopted as ‘frontrunner project’ in 2004 and the province was able to successfully close all negotiations with all the individual farmers. This was either done through voluntarily buying out, or by stressing the possibility of expropriation to farmers unwilling to move, which in the end was not necessary (I6).

### 5.3.4 Adoption in the discourse

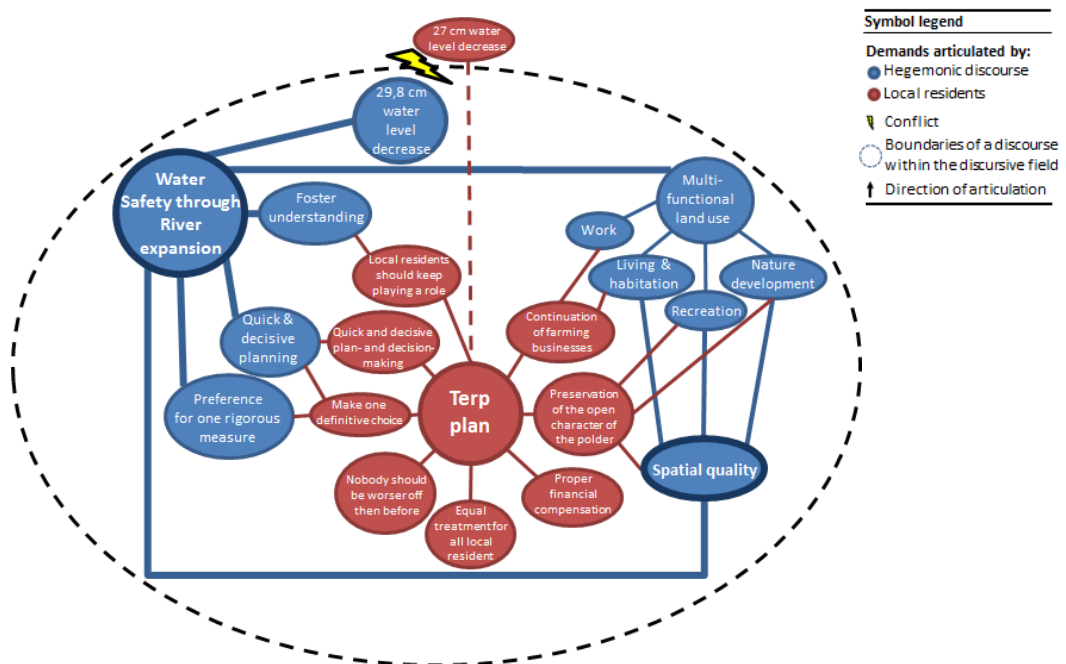
As figure 26 shows, during the endorsement and designation as frontrunner project and later as full-fledged RFTR project, the ‘terp plan’ was accepted and integrated into the ‘water safety through river expansion’ discourse.



**Figure 26.** Graphic representation of the adoption of the ‘Terpplan’ in the hegemonic discourse.

Several demands linked to the ‘terp plan’ could also directly be linked to demands from the governments, which could explain why the ‘terp plan’ also came out as the best option in several governmental studies during the planning study. The demand to be able to continue their farming businesses on at least an equal level in the future as has been done before the river expansion

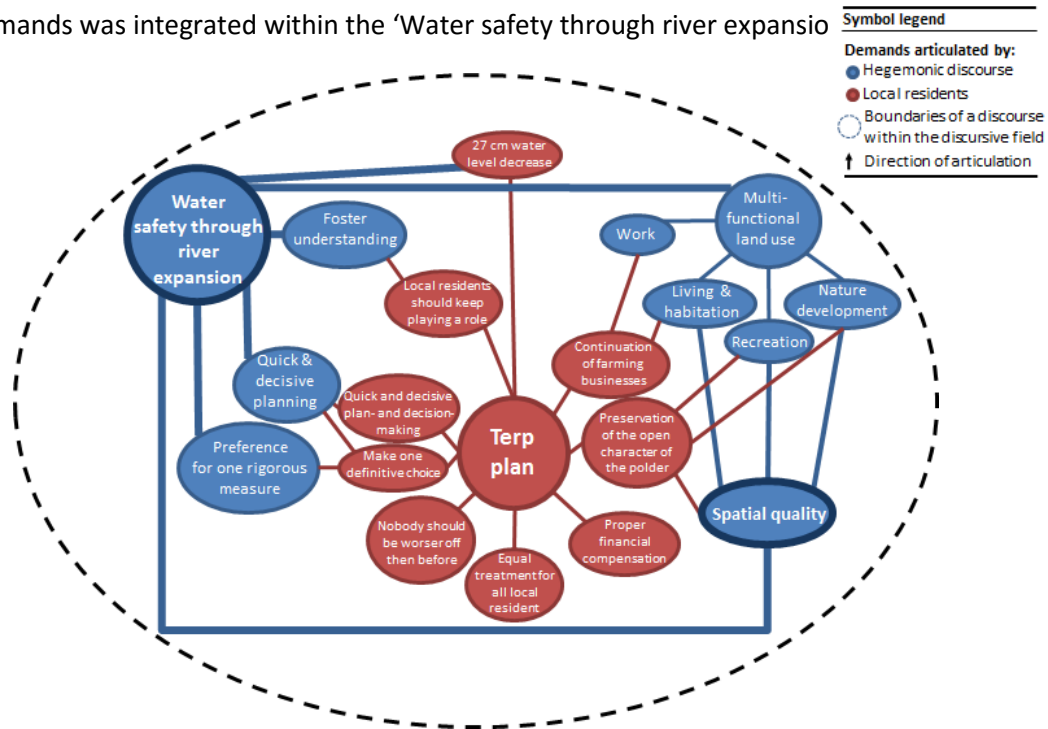
measures, clearly connected with the demand articulated by the governments which stressed the multi-functional use of land with regard to the combination of living, habitation and work. In addition, it can be argued that the demand of the farmers to sustain the aesthetic qualities of the polder with its open, riverine scenically character also connected with the demands for spatial quality and the related demands for space for recreation and nature development, which also endeavoured to sustain the typical riverine landscape in the polder. Also the demands to adopt a quick and decisive plan- and decision-making clearly related to the similar demand of the government. Moreover, the wish of the farmers to aim for one definitive measure can be related to the preference of the government to have one rigorous measure with long term effects over several smaller measures with short term effects. Finally, the wish of the government to foster understanding for a river expansion measure can be related to the demand of the local resident to be involved and keep playing a role. The many visits from government officials who explained the usefulness of river expansion measures to the local residents and the many negotiations, consultations and discussions between the farmers and governments are a notable example for both demands. In addition to these demands which could be directly linked to demands from the governments in the discourse, there were a number of demands connected to the 'terp plan' which were not yet present within the 'water safety through river expansion' discourse: the wish for proper financial compensation, equal treatment, and no deteriorated livelihood. Although figure 26 does not depict direct linkages with the main social demands of the hegemonic discourse, by adoption and integration of the 'terp plan' within the discourse, subsequently these demands also became fixated within the discourse.



**Figure 27.** Graphic representation of the emergence of a conflict around the derived water level decrease that was linked to the Terp plan.

All of the demands related to the 'terp plan' did not conflict with the governmental demands. However, after the potential water level decrease was calculated, it became clear the 'terp plan' would deliver only a water level decrease of 27 cm. This initially led to a discussion, since it conflicted with the initial demand of 29.8 cm water level decrease from the Ministry and RWS (see figure 27). During this discussion the character of the demand of 27 cm began to shift from a request to a claim.

Local residents stated that it would be socially unacceptable to abandon the 'terp plan' and the province questioned the models and knowledge that were used to back the up the demand of 29.8 cm. A more active feature emerged where the validity of the demand from the national government and subsequent institutional order was questioned. This relates more to aspects of a claim, where issues become actively politicized through political logic. In the end, after long discussion between governments, the initial demand of 29,8 cm water level decrease was replaced by the water level decrease that the 'terp plan' would deliver, as is depicted in figure 28. By 2006, when the 'terp plan' was formally approved and adopted within the RFTR programme, the 'terp plan' together with its related demands was integrated within the 'Water safety through river expansion



**Figure 28.** Graphic representation of the adoption of the articulated demands in the hegemonic discourse.

### 5.3.5 Spatial demands

From 2006 on, with the adoption of the 'terp plan' in the RFTR programme, the demand of spatial quality within the discourse became more visible in the project. However as stated before, during the elaboration of this demand some conflicting demands emerged between on the one hand the practical oriented farmers and on the other hand the Q team, whose focus lay more on implementing elements portraying their perception of beauty.

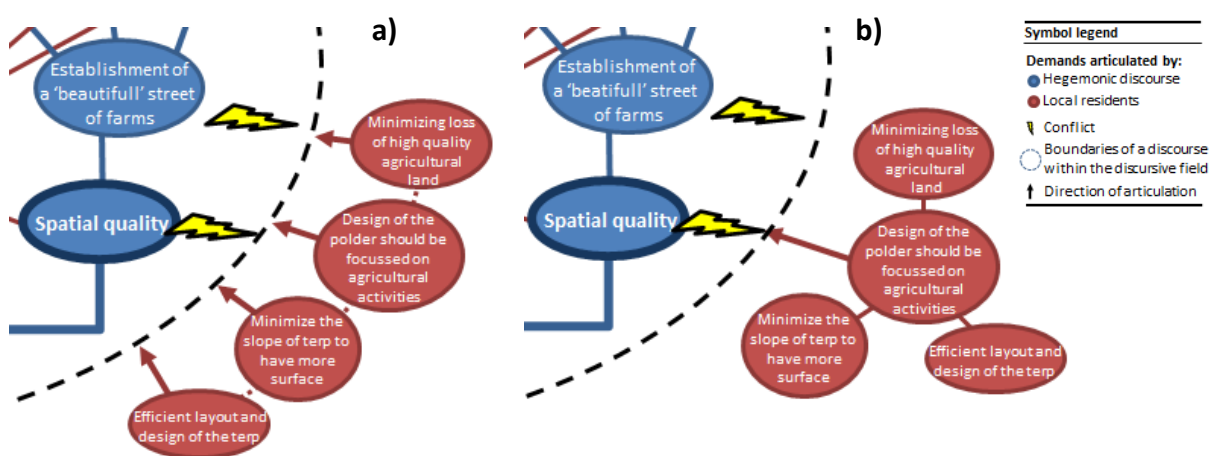
*"They (the farmers) just wanted an area where they could farm, and continue their business in a reasonable and undisturbed way. There was no discussion about this on the main line, but in the implementation it is a whole different story. The size of the terps for instance; the national government want to keep them as small as possible to cut costs, while the farmers want them for evidential reasons as big as possible. On the implementation level you thus have a lot more discussions." (16)*

*"The architect said this would be very beautiful. We tried to make him understand that, for farmers, beautiful is not always functional. How many hectares of land are fragmented by this plan? [...] We have made clear that this will remain an agricultural polder, but they do*



*not listen. They just continue repeating the same story: 'I still think that this would be beautiful.' We have tried to make clear that we objected to the fact that they had made a layout for the polder without any consultation with the farmers. We have offered twice to have a look at what they were making but that never happened."* (A farmers representative in an interview with Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 49))

These statements show that the farmer articulated new demands with regard to this objective of spatial quality in the project. However, since a Q-team from experts was 'put on the job' for bringing spatial quality in the project, these demands initially were articulated outside the discourse. The farmers, whose main demands were related to size and location of the terps and minimizing the loss of good farming land, had a harsh negotiation with the government civil servants and the Q-team about the implementation of this objective of spatial quality. As Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 48) stated; "the farmers wonder whether it is realistic to allocate so much land to the 'spatial quality' functions". When these demands are compared with the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011), it becomes visible that again most of the proper ingredients for the development of claim were present. First of all, a build-up of unsatisfied demands can be seen, where articulated requests from the farmers are being neglected. "Consultation at the design stage did not take place" (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 48). At the same time these requests are increasingly bound together through a logic of equivalence. A dichotomizing line is thus drawn between the demands articulated by the Q-team, which stressed the potential of a 'beautiful' unifying street of farms, and by the farmers, which stressed the agricultural character and agricultural efficiency of the polder (see figure 29a).

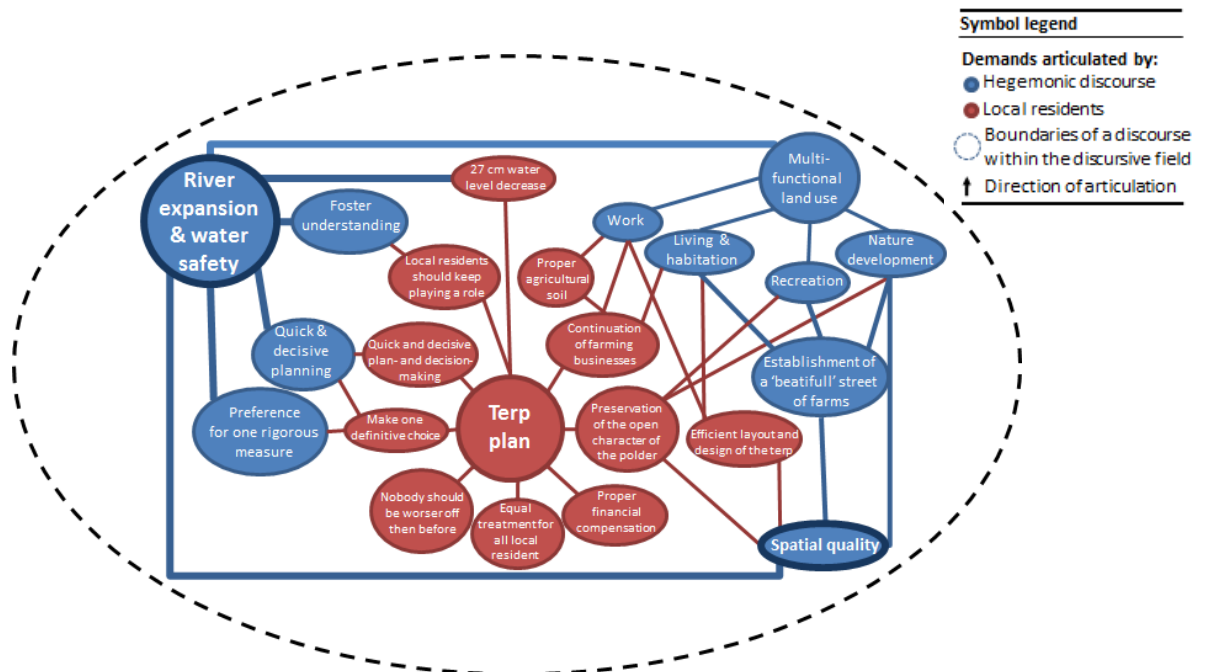


Within this chain of equivalent demands from the farmers, the articulated demand for a design which allowed efficient agricultural activity emerged as a nodal point, thereby unifying and structuring the different demands together (see figure 29b). The farmers actively questioned and countered the assumptions and plans from the Q-team during negotiations, in which the farmers made use of expertise from ZLTO to back up their claims about size and design of the terps (I9). The fact that Roth and Winnubst (2009) speak off "fierce discussions", and the farmers representative characterizes the process as a "struggle" clearly indicates a political logic.

Although the discursive organization show in figure 29 indicates the development of a claim, it is too early to speak of the articulation of a full-fledged claim where agricultural efficiency served as a



hegemonic signifier. Even if political logic was present, debate was still going on and the farmers were offered the possibility to take part in the jury for the design competition. This again, points towards social logic. An example of this is the organization of the design competition, in which local residents were directly involved through the partaking in the jury. Therefore this thesis argues that, despite that the ingredients were present for the articulation of a claim and the articulated demands transcended the label of 'requests', the discursive organization of the articulated demands of the farmers were in a grey area in between both. The compromise that was reached in the end, and the partial integration of the farmers' demand for an efficient design of the terp in the hegemonic discourse, is a notable indication of this (see figure 30). However, with the help of ZLTO the farmers were able to calculate a size of the farms and terps that would ensure enough space for development opportunities for the coming 40 years (see 6.1.6) and the integration of this in the final implementation. In addition, the plan from the Q-team to plant a dense line of trees on the terp was abandoned due to the demand of the farmers that this would cost too much space. Also, some farmers were allowed to place the barns in such a way that they could make effective use of solar panels.



**Figure 30.** Graphic representation of the hegemonic discourse after the adoption of the articulated demands from the farmers' association.

However, several demands from the Q-team were also still implemented. These demands were mainly broad outlines, regarding the general 'looks' of the terps and the farmhouses. For example, the place of the farmhouses had to be on front side of the terps and the slope of the terps was fixed. Some details for the design of the farmhouse were for instance: that the farmhouse was not allowed to have an overhang of the roof anywhere; the gutter needed to be integrated into the cavity wall; the gable had to be bricked all the way to the roof; and the bricks for the farmhouse had to have a dark colour. Despite the initial struggle with regard to the spatial quality and the Q-team's demands for a framework, the farmers and governments currently appear to be very content with the result of the project (see figure 31).



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**Figure 31.** Photo from one of the built terp farms in the Overdiepse polder.

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*"The nice thing is that each farmer had its own architect. It [the condition from the Q-team] was only an outline, a framework. And you can see that this was really a success, thanks to the Q-team. It is not cluttered, every farm has its own identity but the polder is still a unity. Every farm is very different, as well from the inside as from the outside. But the overall plan is the same. This has led to a calm appearance." (17)*

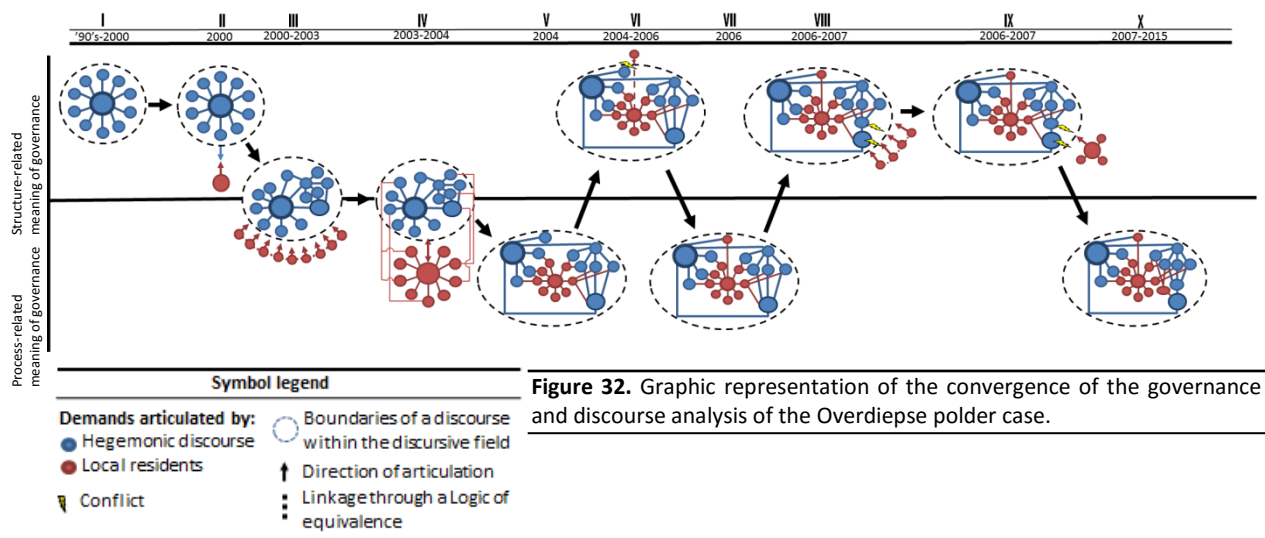
*They [the Q-team] gave some recommendations and guidelines, and that worked very well. On their advice we organised the design competition...The residents disliked this initially, but their attitude changed when we included them as panel of judges. That has worked fantastic." (16)*

*"They [the Q-team] gave several conditions and a framework in which we were allowed to design the farm. And these were very reasonable and feasible. So than you gave the report from the Q-team to your architect...It differs between the architects how nuanced these conditions are met. But that is the power of the polder. It is a unity but still with some diversity. The farms did not had to be identical to each other. That is wat we have aimed for." (19)*

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## 5.4 Governance and articulation of demands

Following the structure of the previous case of the Ooijpolder, the Overdiepse polder case ends with a brief analysis in which the governance and discourse analysis are combined. Using the same outline, this is depicted in figure 32. The y-axis again relates to the type of governance, where the positive side denotes a structure-related meaning of governance and the negative side denotes a process-related meaning of governance. The x-axis simply denotes the time. The different time periods are illustrated in top of the figure (I, II, III, ...). To make the figure comprehensible, the articulated demands in the discursive field, which are explained in more detail in 5.3, are shown in a simplified manner. All the demands that are articulated by the different stakeholder are simply represented by varying dots, but mark the same colours as the more comprehensive figures from 5.3.



**Figure 32.** Graphic representation of the convergence of the governance and discourse analysis of the Overdiepse polder case.

Overall, when analysing the project by looking at the characteristics related to actors, role of experts and government, decision making, and plan objectives, one can perceive a shift from a structure-related meaning of governance towards a process-related meaning of governance with a few 'bumps' back to a structure-related meaning of governance at several moments during the project. The designation as a search area and presentation afterwards, and the discussions around the objectives of water safety and spatial quality are notable examples of this. Although the typology only offers a twofold explanation of the difference in meaning, practices in the Overdiepse polder case indicate that practice often can be related to a 'grey' area, in between both meanings. Within the Overdiepse polder case, ten distinct situations can be distinguished when looked at it using insights from the governance and discourse analysis.

### Situation I

The first situation in figure 32 depicts the articulation of demands that formed the initial hegemonic discourse around the concept of water safety through river expansion measures. Explorative governmental studies articulated social demands in a top-down manner with a small team of experts and governmental officials. The emergence of this hegemonic discourse therefore is strongly related to a structure-related meaning of governance.

### Situation II

When this hegemonic discourse articulated the social demand that river expansion measures might be needed in the polder, the first request of local residents became visible; the wish to be and stay

informed. The offset of the information evening about the potential plans for the polder however can be characterized as an example of structure –related meaning of governance since local residents were not invited. However, a shift towards a more inclusive approach became visible after a couple of residents were approached by a provincial official who offered the possibility for the farmers to articulate their demands.

#### **Situation III**

After the information evening in 2000, articulation of social demands within the hegemonic discourse continues in which demands like spatial quality and multifunctional land use complement the discourse. In addition, also local residents engaged in the articulation demands after the ‘invitation’ of the provincial official. The local residents were addressed through a logic of equivalence by the government; one community which is faced with river expanding measures. A shift can thus be perceived towards a more deliberative approach where the government offer the possibility to local residents to stress their demands. However, true adoption at that time was still absent and local residents were not yet included in the process of planning and decision making. Since this discursive moment is ‘in between’ a process- and structure-related meaning, the articulated demands are also visualised in the middle of the governance axis.

#### **Situation IV**

The discursive moment depicted in situation IV shows the evolution all the separated requests towards the articulation of the request to adopt the terp plan, which served as a nodal point that linked the previous chain of singular demands. Although all the ingredients are present for ‘preparation’ of a claim, the organization of the terp plan depicts a grey area; not only from a governance perspective but also from a discursive point of view. On the one hand, inclusion of local residents and the development into the planning process is enabled by the government, through for instance the financial contribution of the province and communication through workgroups. Furthermore, most of the demands articulated in the terp plan not so much oppose the hegemonic discourse of water safety and spatial quality, but instead supplement it, or refine it to local conditions. Several demands from the terp plan can for instance be directly linked to demands in the hegemonic discourse. Deduced from this one would expect an environment of social logic and a process-related meaning of governance. The terp plan thus did not so much depict a full-fledged claim, since it did not per se resisted or countered the hegemonic discourse. However, the statement of the local residents that collaboration could be terminated anytime if it the project would take too long, shows the underlying possibility of a more political logic and the possible emergence of a more ‘aggressive claim’. Additionally, the mentioned disbelief and amazement by government officials that a local plan could be still depicts notions of a more structure-related meaning of governance. Therefore the articulated demands are again visualised in the middle of the governance axis.

#### **Situation V**

Despite elements of a political logics in the previous situation, the shift towards a more collaborative and deliberative approach has pushed on since the terp plan and the articulated demands were adopted in the hegemonic discourse. Establishment of working groups where farmers directly and indirectly through representatives took part in the planning and decision-making are notable examples of an environment with a more process-related meaning.

#### **Situation VI**

Situation VI depicts when the actual water level decrease was calculated that the Terp plan would deliver -27 cm-, conflict emerged with the articulated demand of a water level decrease of 29.8 cm within the hegemonic discourse. This conflict paired with a bump back into a more structure-related meaning of governance and more political logic in which initially a technocratic, top-down reaction emerged.

#### **Situation VII**

After long discussion between governments and local residents, the choice was made to accept the water level decrease that the Terp plan would deliver and continue with the planning procedures. From 2006 the Terp plan was formally approved and adopted in the RFTR programme. A shift back can be perceived towards a more process-related meaning of governance in which local residents and governments closely collaborated following a social logic during the further concrete development of the Terp plan.

#### **Situation VIII & IX**

Although the previous discursive situation depicted a more process-related meaning of governance, the development and implementation of the demand of spatial quality led to conflict. During the development of this objective, a technocratic team of experts (the Q-team) articulated the demand that a 'beautiful street of farms ought to be developed'. This however was in contrast with the farmers' perception of the spatial quality of the area which focussed on the agricultural character of the polder. During this, the farmers initially articulated several demands which was in conflict with the demands articulated by the Q-team but can be characterized as requests. Coming from the farmers' community they already linked following a logic of equivalence, as is depicted in situation VIII. However, as situation IX visualizes, the requests of the farmers appears to be neglected by the Q-team Roth and Winnubst (2009, p. 48)). Consequently, a build-up of equivalential linkages emerged around the farmers' demands that the design of the polder should be focussed on agriculture activities.

#### **Situation X**

By putting the farmers in a jury for a design competition of the Terp plan the farmer's demands are partially satisfied, and a shift back to a process-related meaning of governance occurred. The articulated demand that the terp design should be 'efficient' was adopted in the final decision and implementation, thereby resolving the conflict, and the farmers had their say in the decision for the design of the terps and farms. Despite the initial struggle with the technocratic approach of the Q-team and the objective of spatial quality, the farmers and governments currently appear to be very content with the result of the project, which will be completed this year with an opening ceremony (I3; I6; I9).

## 6 Conclusion & discussion

This concluding chapter presents and discusses the results and findings of the data analysis. The chapter starts off by elaborating on the reasons why this research was conducted and by briefly discussing the objective and research questions (section 6.1). The chapter subsequently answers each of the research questions separately (section 6.2). In addition, the chapter continues by reflecting on the adopted theoretical framework and methodology in connection with the wider relevant scientific debate about governance and discourse theory (section 6.3) To conclude, the chapter presents some recommendations for both practice and for further research (section 6.4).

## 6.1 *Change, differences and shifts*

This thesis set out to identify and understand the different meanings of governance in Dutch water management and how governance could take shape in the practice of decision-making. The objective of this thesis was therefore to *investigate the different meanings of governance that exist within current Dutch water management and how these meanings affect decision-making through different social and political dynamics*. Although sometimes presented in policy documents as a clear concept with a shared meaning, this thesis shows that instead governance denotes an ambiguous and contested term on both a theoretical and practical level. The semantic discussion that surrounds it has led to a wide variety of different meanings. Understandings and terminology can differ and shift between a structure-related meaning and a process-related meaning, each with subsequent different practices of decision-making (Lautze, 2014). On the one hand a structure-related meaning of governance can lead to a hierarchical, technocratic and mechanistic way of making decisions in which predetermined objectives are articulated by a small group of government officials and experts. A more process-related meaning of governance on the other hand, denotes a deliberative way of decision-making in which a large group of different actors are included in the process and where knowledge and objectives are negotiated.

Understanding and acknowledging this dualistic and ambiguous nature is important not only on a theoretical level but also on a practical level, especially in light of the changes that emerged in Dutch water management. Research about this topic is important for understanding complex governance issues in which meaning about what governance entails can differ and change in the face of possible emerging conflicts. Whereas water management formerly ‘fought’ the water through a hierarchical and technocratic approach with the use of infrastructure-intensive measures lately a more social-intensive approach is used in which the water is ‘accommodated’ (Buijs, 2009; Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005). Instead of a small group of experts and governments that construct bigger dikes to protect the Dutch from the water, a wider array of stakeholders engages in the planning and decision-making process in which water is given more space through river expanding measures (Directorate, 2011b). This development has gone hand in hand with a proliferation of the term governance in policy circles in which a decentralized government and inclusion of local stakeholder are expected to increase public support and acceptance (Buijs, 2009; Directorate, 2011a). The Room for the River programme is a notable example. However, the increasing use of the concept of governance has been absent of a more shared and better understanding about the meaning of the concept. This is especially important due to the contested nature of some of the measures in the RFTR programme. The purposefully inundation or flooding of polders is one of the more ‘socially and politically complicated’ measures. Calamity polders, emergency overflow areas and retention areas led to a shockwave of public and governmental protest but also to cases of close collaboration between different layers of government and the public.

By adopting both governance and discourse theory and analysing the two cases of the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder which were derived from the Room for the River programme, the thesis was able to answer the research questions, which are presented below;

1. *What different meanings of governance are present within Dutch water management with governments and non-state actors?*

2. *How do social and political logics emerge within Dutch water management?*
3. *How do different meanings of governance facilitate different practices of decision making?*
4. *What are the social and political conditions for a change in meaning of governance?*

The following sections systematically answer each of these questions separately by discussing and reflecting on the findings from the case studies and data analysis.

## 6.2 *Research questions*

### 6.2.1 *Different meanings*

With regard to the first research question, this thesis shows that different meanings of governance are present on a theoretical level, but can also be found in practice. Although not always as dualistic as the typology used in this thesis depicts, features from both a structure-related meaning and a process-related meaning were found in both the Ooijpolder case and the Overdiepse polder case. In both cases there were also some situations which denoted a clear presence of a certain meaning of governance. The start of both projects for instance showed a clear structure-related meaning. Features that implied this meaning were the presence of only a small team of government officials and experts who engaged in a hierarchical and technocratic manner in the articulation of objectives and who determined aspects like budget and general planning. On the other end, both projects later showed that several features of process-related governance emerged in which a wider array of actors engaged deliberatively in the decision-making. At first instance it appears that these findings underline the dualistic and idealistic nature of governance that is described in the typology. However, both cases also show that there is a grey area in between this 'black and white' notion of governance. Instances where non-state actors were allowed to participate in the planning- and decision-making, but objectives were still presented as predetermined and the knowledge founding these objectives was regarded as non-negotiable characterize this grey area and underline the blurry boundary between a structure and process-related meaning of governance.

### 6.2.2 *Social order and political chaos*

To see how decision-making occurs and articulated social demands are 'handled', this section addresses how social and political logics emerged within Dutch water management. The cases show that social logic implies a conflict free environment in which the discursive field is absent of conflicting and unaddressed social demands. Articulated social demands outside the hegemonic discourse do not aim to oppose or undermine the authority of the existing structure, but merely seek to be addressed and satisfied. These demands can be characterized as minor tweaks in a project and do not involve key changes to the main objectives of a project. An example of this is for instance the request for a certain colour of brick in the new farms in the Overdiepse polder. The request does not oppose the social demand of new farms, but merely aims to adjust minor details and can subsequently easily and in an orderly fashion be addressed through a deliberative approach in which local residents are included in the decision-making process.



Both cases show that when articulated social demands outside the hegemonic run counter with social demands within the hegemonic discourse, conflict can quickly arise. This is especially the case with so-called nodal points that determine to a great part the character of the hegemonic discourse. For example, articulated demands in this regard do not request a certain colour of brick in a new building, but oppose the necessity of a new building all together. Requests are not minor tweaks in a project but instead involve major objectives like water level reduction or spatial quality. These social demands can remain unsatisfied for a longer amount of time, if not forever, and are excluded from the hegemonic discourse as they are not easily resolved. In these instances, political logic can emerge in which unsatisfied requests link and cluster into a chain of equivalent demands that oppose the hegemonic discourse. Subsequently, the cases show the existence of an intermediary type of demand that complements the distinction between request and claim from Laclau (2005) and the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011). Such demands are not yet merged with other demands into a full-fledged claim under the banner of a hegemonic signifier. However, such demands also do not represent simple request anymore, as they do not respect the institutional order and oppose the hegemonic discourse. A struggle for hegemony here emerges between the existing hegemonic discourse and the unsatisfied equivalential chain of social demands. Such discursive organization denotes a point of no return in which one must give way to the other. Either the hegemonic discourse continues through a hierarchical and exclusive way of decision making or is forced to adapt and change by including the articulated demands. Furthermore, if the equivalential chain of unresolved demands remains a full-fledged claim could emerge which would further oppose and undermine the hegemonic discourse as counter-discourse. The Ooijpolder case is a notable example of this trajectory in which the counter-discourse of the interest association Hoogwaterplatform was able to strongly influence the existing hegemonic discourse. In sum, the cases clearly portray that social logic occurs when social demands outside the hegemonic discourse are articulated as requests. Not only do these requests respect the institutional order, they are also in line with the social demands in the hegemonic discourse and are subsequently easily and readily satisfied and adopted. A deliberative and inclusive approach with constructive collaboration between governments and local residents is thus characteristic in these discursive organizations. Political logic in contrast, emerges when articulated social demands are in sharp conflict with demands in the hegemonic discourse. Articulated requests are subsequently not easily linked with the hegemonic discourse and therefore not readily resolved, leading to exclusion of actors and a proliferation of unsatisfied social demands that can link through a logic of equivalence and even merge into a claim. A hierarchical and technocratic approach that excludes these demands from the hegemonic discourse is subsequently characteristic.

### 6.2.3 *From meaning to practice*

The more practical question of how the different meanings of governance facilitate different practices of decision making follows from the previous sections. The findings from both cases showed that adhering to a certain meaning of governance and presence of either a social or political logic can imply a certain level of empowerment or negation of non-state actors in the decision-making process. Different meanings about the concept of governance were present both on an abstract level of understanding, as well as on a more practical level in the form of differences in the group constitution and dynamics. The cases in this regard portray the presence of small, selective groups of government officials who engage decision-making in a hierarchic and technocratic manner, or large, open groups of different stakeholders who engage decision-making in a deliberative and

inclusive manner. Lautze (2014) already argued that differences in understanding can lead to different practices of decision-making: a structure-focussed meaning can lead to a mechanistic and top-down practice of decision-making whereas a process-focussed meaning can lead to an open and inclusive practice of decision-making. This thesis confirms this argument from Lautze (2014).

The cases showed that adhering to a structure-related meaning of governance related in the cases to the presence of a small and closed group of government officials and experts who engaged decision-making in a technocratic, predeterministic, hierarchical and mechanistic manner. This group articulated social demands in the form of main objectives on such a technical or administrative level that public engagement was subsequently absent or at a minimum. Again the start of both projects is a good example of this. Both cases denoted a dominant structure-related meaning of governance particularly at this moment in which budget, planning and technical objectives were determined. Inclusion and participation of local residents at this moment in a project, was perceived as impractical. Interviewees from both government and civil society noted that a conceptual framework has to be present before local actors are included and participate to prevent 'wild west stories'. Furthermore, local actors often lack the necessary vocabulary and knowledge to participate in this part of the project. In spite of the often heard statements that a deliberative way of decision making cannot be soon enough, the cases show that the technical and administrative approach to determining main objectives is still often seen and accepted as the sole domain of experts and governments. The interest association Hoogwaterplatform from the Ooijpolder case is in this regard the odd one out. Having members that can be considered experts in water management, the Hoogwaterplatform successfully organized counter-expertise during the planning for emergency overflow and later also retention areas. Being able to speak the language, the Hoogwaterplatform was able to engage project planning early on in the process. Whereas 'exclusion' of local residents in the beginning of a project is often accepted as a necessary aspect of project planning, the Ooijpolder case shows that it is very much dependent on the character and circumstances of the area and its inhabitants what the 'proper' moment for participation is.

A process-related meaning of governance related in both cases to planning and decision-making in which a wider array of actors was involved besides government officials and experts. Objectives and goals were here determined through a deliberative and collaborative approach in which local residents were empowered to join the discussion. Especially when this meaning of governance was dominant in the project, public engagement emerged. Inclusion of local actors through reflection groups, the computer programme 'building bucket' and residents taking seat in an 'official advisory group' are just a few notable examples from the cases that portray this process-related meaning of governance and related deliberative practice of decision making.

In addition to the two meanings of governance from the typology, there were also several moments in both cases where the meaning of governance was in a grey area in between both a structure-related and process-related meaning. This 'blurry' type of governance occurred during moments where non-state actors were empowered to join, but were for instance limited to planning and thus still restricted from the actual decision-making. The opportunity that the local residents received to articulate social demands in the beginning of the Overdiepse polder case is a notable example of this intermediary type of governance. Although local residents were allowed to participate, the participation was limited to merely presenting their demands at that time. The main objectives were

still articulated in a predetermined, technocratic and hierarchical setting by a smaller group of actors.

#### 6.2.4 *Shifts and transitions*

Whereas the first three research questions primarily described governance through the articulation of demands by means of synchronic snapshots, this section covers the diachronic aspect of this study by discussing what the social and political conditions for a change in meaning of governance are. As elaborated in section 4.4 and 5.4, the synchronic snapshots of the different discursive organisations are placed on a timetable with alongside the different meaning of governance. This way shifts and transitions with regard to the meaning of governance are made visible and analysable. Adopting diachronic analysis in addition to synchronic analysis not only underlines the ambiguous nature of governance, but also its dynamic and temporal character. This type of governance analysis is important, as the case studies showed that the meaning of governance can change both from a structure-related meaning towards a process-related meaning and vice-versa. Change in this regard occurred in both cases through either slow gradual transitions or sudden erratic shifts in meaning. The Ooijpolder case showed an overall slow and gradual transition from a structure-related meaning of governance towards a process-related meaning of governance. The Overdiepse polder case showed in addition to a gradual transition in the beginning of the project ('90-'04), also more erratic shifts later in the project ('04-'15) in which the meaning of governance moved back and forth from a structure-related and process-related. Furthermore, both cases show that with a slow and gradual transition, the intermediary meaning of governance emerges. Whereas shifts allowed for the emergence of this type of governance, sudden and erratic shifts in contrast 'pushed and forced' the meaning of governance to either a process- or structure-related meaning, thus "skipping" the intermediary meaning of governance.

The cases show that social and political conditions for these shifts and transitions are strongly related to the extent of how much certain articulated demands in the discursive field are in line or in conflict with the existing hegemonic discourse. Conditions for a shift or transition towards a structure-related meaning of governance included the emergence of conflicting social demands and the inability or unwillingness of governments to address these social demands leading to a politicized discursive field. In both cases, conflict of articulated social demands with the hegemonic discourse was a source of antagonistic pressure, leading to dichotomizing views about how the project should proceed. This was especially the case when social demands related to main objectives like water safety and spatial quality. Furthermore, the cases showed that through logic of equivalence the different unsatisfied demands could merge into more stable systems of signification when these articulated social demands outside the hegemonic discourse were not directly addressed by the government. Antagonistic frontiers were here drawn between the hegemonic discourse and the unsatisfied demands. In this emerging hegemonic struggle, both cases showed that governance with a structure-related meaning was adopted in an apparent attempt to manage the conflict with a hierarchic and technocratic approach. The presence of unsatisfied requests and establishment of a claim, which comprises a variety of merged unsatisfied demands, is distinctive for shifts and transitions towards a structure-related meaning. Logic of equivalence arguably serves here as cement for linking these demands together into a stable system of significations that is able to oppose, influence or even replace the existing hegemonic discourse.

Conditions for a shift or transition towards a process-related meaning of governance were the presence of articulated social demands that 'fitted' in the hegemonic discourse leading to a predominant socialized discursive field. The articulated social demands characterized themselves as requests following a social logic and easily linked to social demands in the hegemonic discourse. Subsequently, the articulated social demands did not stay unaddressed as the previous paragraph described, but were readily satisfied and adopted in the hegemonic discourse. The absence of antagonistic social demands that could draw a dichotomizing chasm between demands inside and outside the hegemonic discourse allowed for a deliberative and constructive way of decision-making. Public engagement and collaboration between government and non-state actors emerged as the main approach, since it was possible to have a 'gentleman's discussion'. Then again, it is important to realise that when a project follows a process-related meaning of governance this is by no means a guarantee for future practices. The Overdiepse polder case clearly illustrates that when conflicting social demands that run counter with nodal points in the hegemonic discourse are articulated, a quick and sudden shift can occur to a structure-related meaning of governance to manage the emerging conflict. This again not only shows the dynamic and temporal character of governance and the related practice of decision-making, but also that it is important to realise, understand and act upon the influence that social and political conditions have on changes in meaning of governance.

## 6.3 Discussion

### 6.3.1 From government to governance?

This thesis set out to investigate the differences in how governance was understood and could take shape in river management in the Netherlands in which management adopted a more adaptive and deliberative approach of governing the Dutch rivers. The thesis argued that although governance is often presented as a clear and unequivocal concept in many policies, many different meanings of the concept and subsequently also practices can be present. The thesis adopted a typology of two dominant yet contrasting meanings of governance based on Lautze (2014), Pahl-Wostl et al. (2008), and Van der Valk (1998). The typology allowed for the deconstruction of the complex practice of decision-making and implementation of policy down to analysable components. The deconstruction of the two meanings of governance in turn also allowed also for identifying practices of decision-making which were 'in between' both meanings. By doing so, the 'grey area' could be identified and investigated, despite the dualistic 'black-and-white' character of the typology.

As stated in the theoretical framework, different types of governance can be found in scientific literature. Therefore, some of the erudite readers in governance theory can recognise or miss certain types of governance in one of both meanings presented in the typology. It is stressed here that the typology from this thesis offers by no means a complete picture of all the different meanings of governance. Instead, the typology is used to show and underline the multiplicity in meaning and identify two dominant meanings in the presented two cases. Furthermore, scholars coming from social and political sciences might recognise the typology as a reflection of the notable shift 'from government to governance'. A structure-related meaning of governance can here arguably be understood as a form of 'government'. The term government in this regard does not so much relate to governmental bodies, but more to the practice of governing in a hierarchical and top-down fashion. The process-related meaning of governance can then be further linked to the second

concept of governance in this shift from 'government to governance'. However, the findings of this thesis show that basing policy on this 'shift' still requires careful consideration about what both government and governance entails. By perceiving a more deliberative approach as a shift away from government to governance, it puts a dichotomizing difference between government and governance and gives the conception that 'government' is not a form of governance and that governance automatically entails the opposite of government: a deliberative and collaborative form of decision making. This thesis showed that governance can also be related to a hierarchical, technocratic and mechanistic approach and does not automatically entail a deliberative and collaborative approach. Therefore, those who speak of a 'shift from government to governance' need to consider the umbrella character that the meaning of governance holds. 'Governance' does not necessarily imply a practice of decision making of deliberation and inclusiveness as it can very much denote a practice of decision making similar to 'government'.

### 6.3.2 *Discourse and the 'Habermas-Mouffe' debate*

To be able to research the constitutive and differential character of governance, this thesis took an interpretive theoretical stance, in which discourse theory based on Laclau and Mouffe was used to identify articulated demands and investigate the discursive organization of these demands in hegemonic discourses, claims and requests. However, during the research it soon became apparent that, perhaps due to its non-positivistic and non-deterministic nature, discourse analysis has been unaccompanied by a clear methodology about how to actually perform it (Howarth, 2000). One could even ask whether it is possible to speak of an actual discourse analysis, since it often is limited to abstract theory (Macleod, 2002). Regularly it appears that research which claims to adopt discourse analysis, somehow performs it, and voilà, observations and subsequent conclusions were made (Macleod, 2002; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 5). According to this research, the post-structuralism and post-Marxism Essex school of discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe is no exception herein. Although the concept of articulation of social demands allows for a unit of analysis for discourse theory, a theoretical linkage with governance theory is lacking, leading to gaps between abstract theory, analysis and real-world practice.

Currently, a systematic analysis that goes beyond merely describing present narratives appears to be absent. Therefore, this thesis endeavoured to develop a theory which made analysis of governance through discourse analysis possible, while at the same time move beyond a mere abstract concept of discourse theory. By visualizing discourses as snapshots of articulated demands and hegemonic structures in the discursive field throughout time, the theoretical framework of this thesis offers a new perspective on research in both governance and discourse theory. Identifying the variety of social demands articulated by different actors and visualizing them as portrayed in this thesis, shows to be an effective way to systematically describe the character of present discourses and analyse the political domain of decision-making.

By adopting discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe there are some assumptions which hitched along in the theoretical framework that ought to be noted. Mouffe namely has a profound conception about how democracy works, which is heavily debated between a variety of scholars (Kapoor, 2002). The debate here centres on whether the core of democracy is about conflict or deliberation. In this debate, Mouffe takes a clear stance by stating that conflict is the foundation of the democratic ideal. Mouffe argues that due to the profound and irreconcilable differences

between actors, a deliberative approach cannot resolve issues as people are limited in their capacity to look objectively beyond their own demands (Dryzek, 2005, p. 220; Erman, 2009). An often mentioned contraposition to Mouffe's opinion about the concept of democracy is Habermas' notion of deliberative democracy; by Kapoor (2002) even referred to as the 'Habermas-Mouffe debate'. Habermas' argument is founded on the idea of "reasoned and inclusive public deliberation that is geared to reaching consensual decisions"; a so-called 'gentleman's discussion' (Kapoor, 2002, p. 459;460). Where Mouffe argues that democracy turns around conflict, Habermas argues that democracy is about mutual understanding, listening to each other, having dialogue with actors and finding the middle ground.

This thesis showed that neither Mouffe's nor Habermas' argument is necessarily wrong or right. Both cases showed that deliberations and conflict simply alternate as social and political dynamics emerge. As both cases showed, both meanings and subsequent practices of governance and decision-making are present and are depending on the social or political logics that are dominant in the discursive field. In instances with a dominant social logic, Habermas' conception of democracy with deliberation and a focus on mutual understanding works and subsequently becomes visible. However, Habermasians wrongly presume that a 'gentleman's discussion' will be possible in politicized situations since it is constituted through power, consisting of inevitable antagonism and prone to 'expressions of hegemonic power and thus unstable' (Erman, 2009, p. 1042). To overlook or even abandon assumptions like hegemony and antagonism and neglect the 'the conflictual dimension of the political process' (Erman, 2009, p. 1041), would inevitably lead to losing the ability of a proper political analysis. Therefore, in instances of political logic a conception of democracy that is in line with Mouffe's arguments of conflict emerges. In turn, the thesis also showed that Mouffe's idea that democracy only consists of conflict is too dark and not applicable for instances of a dominant social logic. Where a structure-related meaning of governance is thus in line with Mouffe's idea of how democracy works, a process-related meaning of governance is in line with Habermas' conception.

### 6.3.3 *The dynamics of 'in- and outside governance'*

In retrospect to the found dynamics that induce shifts and transitions in the meaning of governance, as elaborated in section 6.2.4, it is helpful to reflect on findings from Smith and Stirling (2007) and Stirling (2008). In their argument, Smith and Stirling develop "two ideal-typical conceptualizations of the relations between governance and socio-technical change" (Smith & Stirling, 2007, p. 352). Their first type, 'governance on the outside', is comparable to the structure-related meaning of governance used in this thesis, as it also underlines: a hierarchical approach in which governance interventions are managed; a technocratic approach in which legitimacy is derived from objectivity or authority from aggregating perspectives only from 'relevant' actors'; a mechanistic approach in which interventions are seen in terms of function and dealt with in episodic and isolated decision-making (Smith & Stirling, 2007, p. 359). Second, Smith and Stirling identify 'governance on the inside'. In contrast to the former conceptualization in which governance is largely understood as "instrumental managerial function", this second conceptualization perceives governance as a "fundamentally engaged political process". This ideal-type of governance is comparable to the process-related meaning of governance used in this thesis as it also underlines a deliberative and

inclusive approach in which perspectives from different actors are explored, knowledge and legitimacy is negotiated.<sup>22</sup>

Similar as the argument from Lautze (2014) and the findings of this thesis, Smith and Stirling argue that their ideal-types of governance lead to contrasting strategies (Smith & Stirling, 2007). Furthermore, they argue that both forms can be present and it is not often that governance in practice emerge purely as one of these ideal-types: “Both forms exist to varying degrees in specific instances of socio-technical governance [...] In practice, governance is rarely characterized purely as one of the two ideal types set up here” (Smith & Stirling, 2007, p. 351;353). By looking at the concepts of ‘social appraisal’ and ‘social commitment’ (Stirling, 2008), Smith and Stirling seek to identify, analyse and understand how strategies that emerge from these ideal-types of governance drive policy developments. Smith and Stirling conclude that in practice governance moves between ‘governance on the in- and outside’ due to inherent tensions between processes of objectification and reflexivity (Smith & Stirling, 2007). When actors “agree over the object”, objectification of socio-technical change enables a structure-related meaning of governance in which “coordinated interventions and management” are made possible. According to Smith and Stirling it is in these instances that a reflexive way of governance emerges in which the debate is opened up for perspectives from other actors (Smith & Stirling, 2007).

When looking back on the cases from this thesis, it is interesting to note that in the face of conflict governments often tended to adopt a managerial way of governance and follow a structure-related meaning. Both the Ooijpolder case and the Overdiepse polder portrayed circumstances in which actors did not align behind one object. For instance, different perspective on the normative discharge level and the implementation of the goal of spatial quality led to a discursive field in which a structure-related meaning of governance emerged. Furthermore, although the Ooijpolder depicted a case in which actors stood opposite of each other with regard to social demands, a prolonged structure-related meaning of governance existed. Nonetheless, Smith and Stirling show that governance in practice is not so much fixed, but instead portrays a dynamic, provisional and ambiguous concept. In addition, the cases of this thesis also show that in the end a more opened up way of governance can emerge. In the words of a civil servant from Rijkswaterstaat: “Water safety in is a powerful brand” (17). Water safety constitutes a concept behind which many actors can align and agree about its importance. Still, implementation on a local level entails a lot of changes, not only on a spatial level but also on a socio-economic level as residents might need to move. It is especially in these circumstances that, as Smith and Stirling note, actors no longer agree about a concept or object. Although a structure-related meaning might sustain for a long time, as in the Ooijpolder, in the end the cases showed the importance and necessity for a change towards a more deliberative and reflexive way of decision-making in which perspectives of different actors are included.

#### 6.3.4 *Reflection on research approach*

For an analysis of the meaning of governance, the Room for the River programme offered a nice point of departure, where through river expansion measures a more sustainable protection against floods was explored in close collaboration with regional and local governments and local

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<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive explanation of ‘governance on the in- and outside’ and the concepts of ‘social appraisal and commitment’ see Smith and Stirling (2007) and Stirling (2008).

stakeholders (Directorate, 2011a; management & Rijkswaterstaat, 2000). The measure of purposefully flooding of inner-dike areas served as a useful scope since especially this particular measure has received a lot of attention due to its controversial character. The character and terminology of this type of measure ranged from retention areas to calamity polders or emergency overflow areas. The first term denotes measures that are actually a structural part of a bigger flood prevention and protection system, while the latter two denote measures that are merely used for calamity control (Roth et al., 2006; van Ellen, 2004), and as some interviewees argued were therefore not part of the river expanding measures of the RFTR programme.

The Ooijpolder was adopted as a case in which the proposition of establishing a retention area met with great regional and local resistance and eventually led to the cancellation of the spatial reservation (*Dutch: ruimtelijke reservering*) of the area. The Overdiepse polder, in contrast, portrayed a case in which different layers of governments worked closely together with local residents for the implementation of a river expanding measure. It must be stressed here that this thesis chose to adopt these deviant cases to show the extremities in how governance could take shape. Where the dynamic and ambiguous meaning of governance might be eluded in typical cases, it is argued that due to their deviant character the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder offered a proper starting point for the analysis of the dynamic and ambiguous meaning of governance. Both cases portrayed a considerable amount of both political and social logic which made analysis of different meanings of governance possible. However, the cases are therefore also limited in their exemplarity for general water management. Furthermore, it must be recognized that due to the strong differences in character of both cases, including demographics and size of the areas, it is difficult to make a proper comparison. The choice is therefore made not to do so, but instead to show how governance can take shape through and in the face of the articulation of demands in these two, perhaps extreme, examples of recent water management practices in the Netherlands.

## 6.4 Recommendations

### 6.4.1 Practical recommendations

As mentioned in the previous section, this thesis showed the ambiguous, dynamic and temporal nature of governance by looking at two extreme cases. Notably the initial failure of implementing a measure in the Ooijpolder while the Overdiepse polder ended in a success is interesting for water management to consider. Although the thesis offers no key to success, two practical lessons can be drawn from both cases which are useful recommendations for future practice. These lessons entail:

1. *The necessity for a local fitting approach in which responsible authorities take note and act upon local characteristics of a project.* The cases show that the successful adoption of a certain meaning of governance and related practice of decision-making is very context specific and depends on the characteristics of the area. As a result, it is hard, if not impossible, to establish general rules from the cases. Determining the right moment to adopt a more deliberative and inclusive or hierarchical and technocratic approach is strongly related to local characteristics and apparent social or political logic. Thus, what can be said is that the context dependency of projects implies the necessity for a locally fitting approach in which responsible authorities take note of the local characteristics of a project site. This way, governments can tap into opportunities which would otherwise have been eluded. For



instance, the wish of Overdiep farmers to expand their businesses, which could be arranged within the implementation of the project, is an example of such an opportunity.

2. *The necessity for a clear conceptual framework which has clear boundaries but leaves enough room to have constructive and deliberative negotiation during implementation.* The start of a project appears to be the only moment in project planning in which a general rule of thumb can be established. It was stressed by interviewees that despite the perks of a deliberative approach with inclusion of local actors' views, it is necessary to have some sort of framework present that deals with planning, budget, main objectives and location choice before every stakeholder is included to prevent 'wild west scenes' in which nothing gets decided. This implies that the start of project requires a structure-related meaning of governance in which government and experts work exclusively in a technocratic and relative hierarchical manner. However, this particular start of project planning does not imply that there should be no room left for negotiation and 'wiggle room' within the predeterministic objectives during the continuation of the planning and implementation procedure.

#### 6.4.2 *Theoretical recommendations*

In addition to the previous practical recommendations, there are several theoretical recommendations for future research. These entail:

1. *Research that further detail the governance typology that is adopted in this thesis.* The typology adopted in this thesis comprised of a dualistic perspective of structure- and process-related meanings of governance. Both the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder showed the presence of an intermediary meaning of governance. Future research could seek out to understand and explain this intermediary meaning of governance.
2. *Research to better understand governance in the Dutch River Management.* This thesis was only able to interview a limited amount of actors in a limited amount of cases. To better understand the full-range of meanings of governance in Dutch river management, it would be necessary to perform additional research in other cases. The Room for the River project in Kampen at the river IJssel offers for example a promising and interesting case. Several measures are here implemented for increasing water safety and spatial quality: lowering the summer bed and the construction of the flood channel (*Dutch: hoogwatergeul*) 'het Reevediep'.
3. *Research to further detail the demand typology that is adopted in this thesis.* The distinction that Laclau (2005) makes between social demands, requests and claims, and the typology from Behagel and Turnhout (2011) offers a useful theory to use in the analysis of governance. However, both the Ooijpolder and the Overdiepse polder showed the presence of an intermediary type of social demand. Although this type of social demand lacks a hegemonic demand that links and signifies a chain of different social demands, it does not respect the institutional order anymore. In this regard, the social demand goes beyond a simple request, but does not yet constitute a full-fledged claim. Future research could look

into this intermediary type of social demand and see how it is related to social and political logic.

4. *Research to strengthen the finding of this thesis that a certain meaning of governance is related to a certain discursive organization and test and develop the adopted theoretical framework.* The thesis found that emerging social and political logic, the articulation of social demands and a certain meaning of governance is related. Where political logic implies conflicting demands and structure-related governance, social logic implies a more process-related meaning of governance and articulation of authority respecting requests. Future research could strengthen these findings by researching more cases. In addition, future research could also further test and develop the theoretical framework so that accounts of governance can be better understood through the adoption of discourse theory. Currently, there is a lack of theoretical approaches that combines accounts of governance and discourse theory. The theoretical model that is presented in this thesis, in which governance theory and discourse theory from Laclau and Mouffe is combined should therefore be further explored. By adopting it to more cases the model can be further tested and developed so that accounts of governance can be better understood through discourse theory.

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## **Annex 1) Background chapter river expansion and flooding of polders**

This chapter discusses the main characteristics of the shift that has emerged within Dutch water management. It hereby provides a concise delineation of the discussion within river management that led to the discursive changes and to the development of the Room for the River programme (section A1). The chapter continues by providing the main goals of this programme, and illuminating the background of flood policy in general (section A.2), and the emergence of the measure of purposefully inundation of polders (section A.3-A.4). Finally, the chapter discuss the terminology behind the measure of purposefully flooding of polders which underwent some notable changes (section A.5).

### *A.1 Flood protection & prevention, a history of discussion*

The discussed discursive shift in water management that constituted a change in a 'fighting' to 'living with' water perspective that emerged from the 90's onwards in the Netherlands, seems relatively young (Buijs, 2009). This shift in how people perceive and believe the way in how we should manage our water, went hand in hand with the discussion about whether we should keep building dikes or look for other options to sustain water safety.

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*"The Dutch Department of Public Works and Water Management (RWS) decided after the floods in '93 and '95 that further heightening of the dikes is no longer an option." (I3)*

*"The thinking about the handling of our major rivers underwent a gradual change in recent decades within circles experts and policymakers." (Boer, 2002b, p. 1)*

*"The government told us that we could not keep strengthening and heightening our dikes, because the government could then no longer guarantee the safety of those dikes." (I9)*

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However, this seemingly modern discussion about whether we should solely rely on our dikes and keep strengthening them, already dates back to the 19th century. Heezik (2007, p. 9;113) explains that throughout history numerous hydrologist and water engineers questioned this method of safeguarding people against the water. This becomes for instance evident from the citation that Heezik (2007, p. 9) uses from the Dutch committee that researched the most ideal river derivations in 1825 (*de commissie tot onderzoek der beste rivier-afleidingen*):

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*"There are those under the water engineers..., who deem the raising and strengthening of dikes the expedient, others argue with good reasons that this raising and strengthening should be both physically and financially considered impossible, while others argue the opposite: namely the overall lowering and flattening of the dikes."*

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However, in spite of this already long lasting discussion, the trend and main discourse back then was to furnish the Dutch river landscape from a natural meandering, irregular landscape into a symmetric and straightforward landscape (Heezik, 2007). This was done by placing groynes and breakwaters, cutting of river bends, digging of canals, constructing dams and locks, and of course heightening and strengthening of the dikes (Boer, 2002b; Heezik, 2007; Wiering & Arts, 2006). River management thus seemed to be about optimizing the riverine area in light of human needs and activities.

This 'measure intensive' way of water management is according to Heezik (2007) in line with the assumption of that time that nature could be used in the service of the economic needs of people. This paradigm has thereby led to the 'streamlined' and intensively used river landscape we know today (Warner et al., 2012). However, this anthropocentric assumption of 'humans ability to control nature' is changed (Warner et al., 2012). The discourse that we should fight and could actually tame the water seemed to have been replaced by a discourse that emphasizes the notion that we would need to accommodate water, and live with it (Buijs, 2009; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006).

This actual shift towards a new way of dealing with water and water management in the riverine area seemed to have begun with the emergence of regional and local protests in the '70's and '80's (I7). During this period, numerous cultural historical elements degraded and were damaged due to

the construction and heightening of dikes (17). As Roth and Warner (2007, p. 520) state; “picturesque dike houses and trees gave way to state-of-the-art infrastructure, erected for the greater good of public safety”. This degradation of spatial quality lead to the wish for exploration of other options for sustaining water safety, and closer collaboration and consultation with regional and local actors (17; Warner, 2008). The question ‘who should be included in the decision making procedures’ emerged. This question seems to be in sharp contrast with the former ‘fighting the water’ discourse. Water management was hereby characterised by a hierarchical, technocratic and measure-intensive approach whereby collaboration and consultation with local actors was minimal or even neglected at all (Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006). As Dicke (2001) explains in Warner (2008, p. 570), this lack of consulting local actors about decision about flood management structures and decisions, resulted from the “technological self-confidence, boosted by Dutch expertise in civil engineering”. From the 90’s onwards however, the water management is stated to have increasingly shifted towards a less hierarchically and more social interaction-intensive approach (Lach et al., 2005; Neuvel, 2005; Wiering & Arts, 2006). It became evident and underlined that water management concerns many different societal groups who all have their own demands (Gooch & Stålnacke, 2010). As Warner (2008, p. 571) states “an era of greener engineering started”.

A notable example of this shift, whereby it is underlined that local actors should be consulted and included and that there are other values besides water safety (cultural historical values, nature values, etc.), is the ‘Plan Ooievaar’ which won a national contest called ‘Netherlands – Riverland’ in 1985 (Bruin et al., 1987). As Van der Brugge, Rotmans, and Loorbach (2005, p. 12) state: “the plan contested water management practices in the main rivers”. In this plan, values and land uses other than water safety are underlined, and especially nature development in combination with water retention was strongly emphasized (Heezik, 2007; Weijers, 1986). As a governmental civil servant from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment states:

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*“In the beginning of the ‘90’s the ‘Plan Ooievaar’ was developed whereby nature development in the riverine area received a lot of attention. The development of this, together with the notion that the water rose in the rivers came together very nicely.” (18)*

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Next to this argument for consultation of the ‘end users’ and inclusion of their values in decision regarding water management, the technical discussion whether dikes are a long term solution for flood related issues re-emerged. It became evident that water management is faced with imminent and irreversible effects due to climate change (IPCC, 2014). It is expected hereby that the Dutch river system need to process more melted snow, ice, and rainwater (Attema et al., 2014; Directorate, 2011b; IPCC, 2014; Management et al., 2002; Mysiak, 2010; Tol & Langen, 2000). Continuation of using dikes as prima weir against high water and floods was no longer considered as the safest option when faced with increasing flood levels in the rivers and an increase of the population and economy in the low-lying polders (Baan & Klijn, 2004; Directorate, 2011b; Roth & Winnubst, 2014; Wolsink, 2010). The already mentioned ‘bathtub effect’ would put increasingly risk on the safety of society due to potential quick rising water levels and an inability to quickly evacuate inhabitants in the riverine areas (Roth et al., 2006). It thus became evident that instead of fighting and containing the rivers in a technocratic and hierarchical manner, water management should adopt an approach which would give more room to the rivers and also include the people that inhabit the riverine regions.

## *A.2 Making room for the river*

It is in light of these shifts that the Room for the River programme emerged. Heezik (2007) even notes that when the policy around the programme was set up in April of 1995, it marked the official end of the 'traditional' way of flood protection and prevention. Warner et al. (2012, pp. 17-19) note that within this new way of flood protection and prevention; nature and men are managed in a more equal relation than before; a holistic view of the whole river basin is adopted on the one hand while on the other hand also local conditions and characteristics are incorporated; an integrated approach is adopted whereby the domain has been widened by incorporating a wide array of disciplines; interactive and participative processes are implemented; and water managers anticipate proactively on future developments.

These noted changes are thus in sharp contrast with the former ivory tower from where hydraulic engineers and water engineers engaged in setting up objectives for water safety and engage in flood prevention and protection. Whereas this former practice of water management indicate a more structured-related meaning of governance, the changes noted by Warner et al. (2012), denote a more process-related meaning of governance. Instead of a closed group of actors, primarily consisting of governments and experts that engage in establishing goals in a mechanistic, pre-deterministic and top-down manner, this new way of managing water safety portrays a practice whereby a coalition of several actors negotiate in a deliberative framework for collaboration to set up goals.

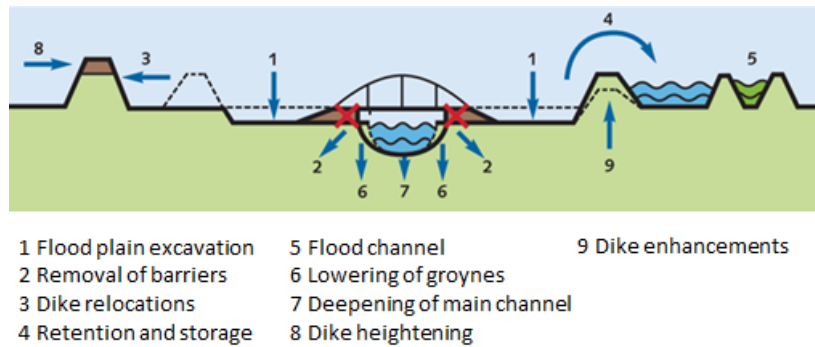
Next to these changes, a shift can be seen in the character of measures adopted to ensure water safety. As the name of the programme suggest, water management now adopted measures that give the river more space (Management et al., 2007), leading to "a shift from vertical (dike-raising) to horizontal (space-creating) measures to increase resilience to floods" (Roth & Warner, 2007, p. 521). This also became evident in an interview with a civil servant from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment.

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*"We moved from a line element to a plane, which automatically appealed to a spatial dimension that previously was much less emphasized...., 'the line' of the dike remains similar when you strengthen it. But when you're talking about 'river expanding measures', than you're talking about surfaces, about m<sup>2</sup>, about acres, even about km<sup>2</sup> in some places. The measure does than not only affect the length but also the width." (18)*

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As stated in chapter one, 34 locations along the major Dutch rivers were designated as project sites in the project area. At these locations, measures like those depicted in figure 33 were or still are undertaken to give the river more space, thereby enhancing discharge capacity and flood protection and prevention.



**Figure 33.** Measures under the RFTR programme, translated from Management et al. (2007, p. 38).

However, next to this main objective of increasing water safety, the programme mentions the objective of enhancing the spatial quality of the riverine area (Management et al., 2006b). The mentioned discussion in the '70's seems to be an important reason for adoption of this objective. As a civil servant of the waterboard 'Brabantse Delta' explains;

*"The regional governments played an important role in the inclusion of the goal of spatial quality. Water safety and spatial quality have a negative history. During the strengthening of dikes in the '70's numerous valuable objects of cultural history have been lost. The reaction was "never again". They said that if we should take the chance of improving the area if we were going to work in the riverine area... The goal of spatial quality is a silver bullet, since it is a vehicle to give something back to the area."* (I3)

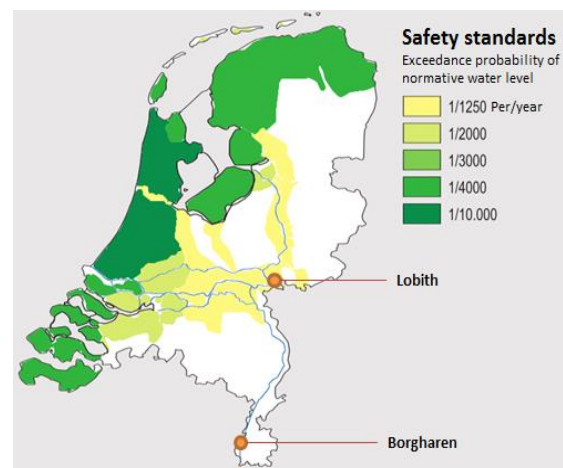
Still, the goal of increasing and enhancing water safety still remains dominant as becomes clear from for instance the following statement from Management et al. (2006b, p. 9):

*"Guaranteeing adequate safety is considered the prime objective; improvement of the spatial quality is a second objective."* (Management et al., 2006b, p. 9)

### A.3 Logic behind flood risk management

Despite this shift towards a more inclusive approach, the ratio behind the objective of water safety is still based on, what is considered as, objective data, risk assessments, probability charts, statistical analyses and extrapolations (Davidse, 2008; W. Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2004). These are based on laws and findings of the natural sciences and are in other words, the realm of experts (Immink, 2005).

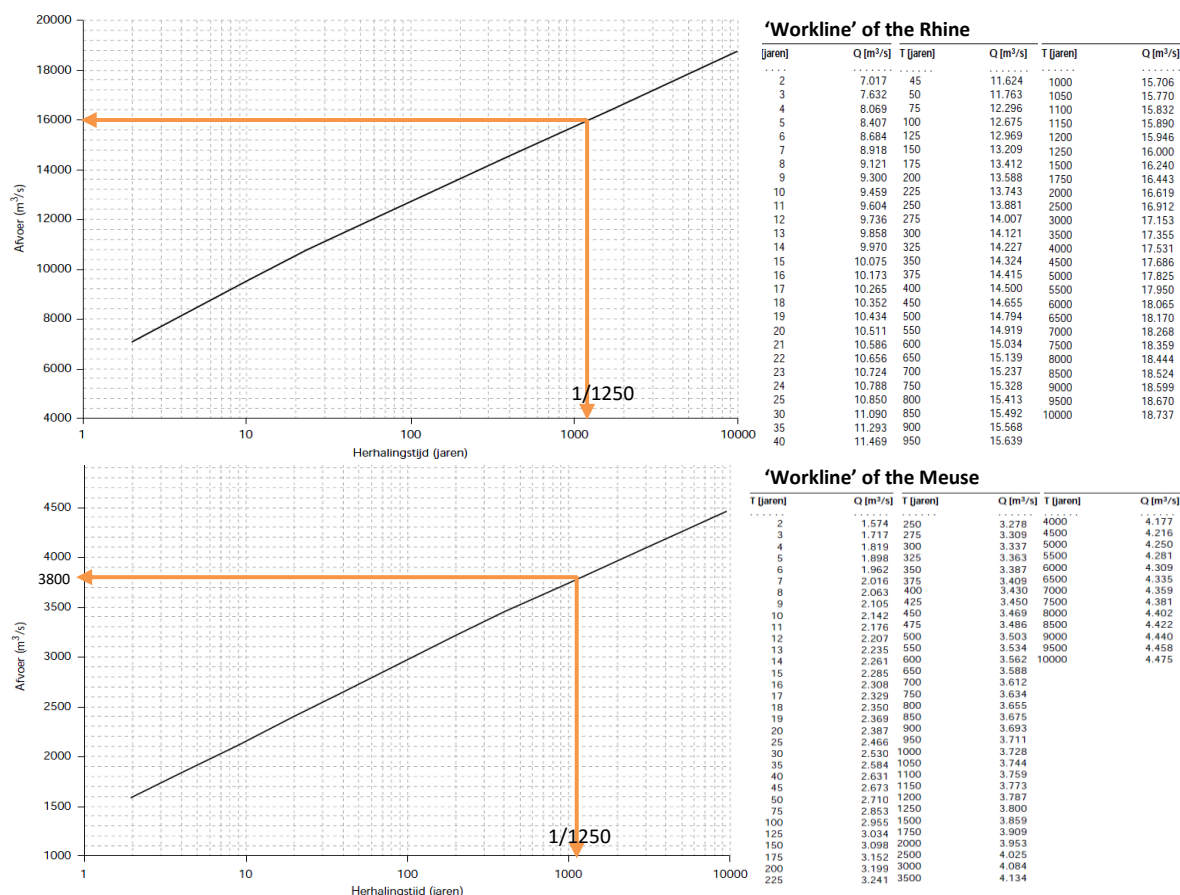
According to the 'law on weir' (*wet op waterkering*), the Rhine and the Meuse must be able to safely drain a normative discharge water level (*maatgevende afvoer*) which occurs once every 1250 years. In other words, the chance that the Rhine and the Meuse are unable to discharge the normative discharge water level has a chance of 1/1.250 to occur today in these areas (yellow in figure 34). The corresponding normative discharge water level, when



**Figure 34.** Map of the riverine areas and the exceedance probability of the normative water level. Based on W. Ten Brinke and Bannink (2004).

it is based on the statistical analyses applied for the Delta Report, is  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  at Lobith for the Rine, and  $3.800 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  at Borgharen for the Meuse (Davidse, 2008; Management, 2001; R. RWS, 2001; W. Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2004; van Twist et al., 2011).

These normative discharge water levels are calculated with advanced computer models that simulate water levels and water flows (Roth et al., 2006). This data is processed in a frequency chart, and put in a graph like figure 35 depicts. The horizontal axis shows the chance that a certain discharge level occurs, and the vertical axis shows the drainage in  $\text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$ . By means of statistical analysis, a so called 'workline' is drawn through the available data. By extrapolation of the 'workline', the normative discharge water levels in relation to a certain safety standard can be derived (Roth et al., 2006).



**Figure 35.** Representation of the workline of the Rhine in Lobith and the Meuse in Borgharen: the relationship between the river flows and the expected recurrence time. Derived from R. RWS (2001, pp. 15-20).

According to these models the normative discharge level for the Rhine was set to  $16.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  by the year 2015, and  $3800 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  for the Meuse by the year 2015.

So although, inclusiveness of local views and condition is stressed, the technicality behind the ratio of flood policy also depicts a highly expertise and technocratic character. This again, denotes the technocratic feature of structure-related governance, which is in contrast with the open and more deliberative character of process-related governance.

#### A.4 Purposefully flooding of polders

As stated before, the Dutch rivers are faced with increasing levels of water. In the light of climate change and the effect of trans-boundary upstream flood protection works, the Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute (KNMI) anticipated higher normative discharge levels (Directorate, 2011b; Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008). According to them, the Rhine would need to be able to carry peak discharges of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  by the year 2100 (W. Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2004; van Staveren et al., 2014). Also for the Meuse this led to a higher assumed number of  $4600 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  by the year 2050 (W. Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2004). Merely creating room for the river would not be enough; extra and perhaps more intensive measures thus seemed necessary to tackle these higher normative discharge water levels. Next to this, Warner (2008, p. 573) and Roth et al. (2006, p. 25) note that the RFTR programme would lead to substantial amounts of quarrying material like sand and clay, which the market might not be able to absorb in a profitable way. Subsequently, the question emerged whether it would be more sensible to concentrate some intensive intervention in a few rather than many locations?

According to Warner (2008, p. 573) these notions led to the idea of “controlled drainage and flooding to store excessive floodwater discharges in certain designated polders”. This was also hypothesized by a civil servant from the province of Gelderland, and also stated in a report from the research committee Luteijn (see 5.1.2);

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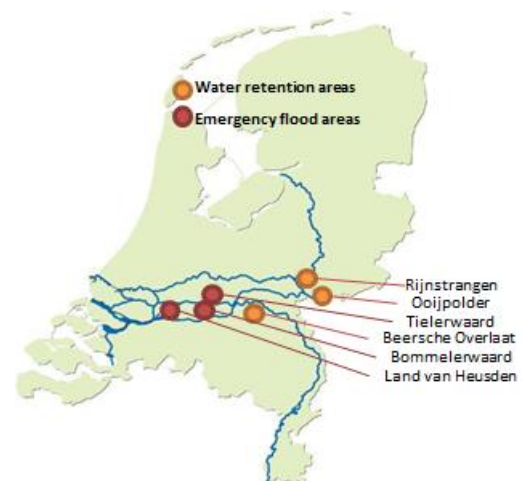
*“It might be the case that there were certain forces within the Ministry that thought “we will not need such a river expanding programme if we designate a few emergency overflow areas, that will save a lot of money.” (14)*

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*“A limited number of areas would cut costs of designation and implementation and would leave room for future choices in structural measures.” (Luteijn, 2002, p. 22)*

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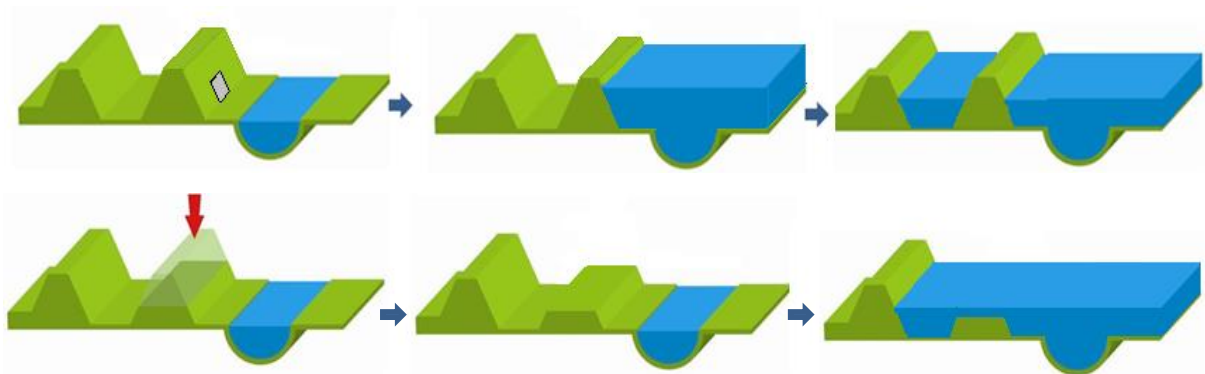
The idea of purposefully flooding certain designated polders firstly became public at Loevestein castle on 29 February 2000 (Davidse, 2008; NRC, 2000; Warner, 2008). On this day, the Vice Minister of Transport and Water Management (*verkeer en waterstaat*) Monique de Vries presented the plans of the PKB RFTR programme. Instead of putting the RFTR plans “under emergency planning or a straightforward ‘public planning procedure’ (*Rijksprojectenprocedure*) to fast-track the decision-making process” national governments decided to make use of a so called PKB. A PKB (*Planologische Kern Beslissing*) which roughly translates into ‘Key Planning Decision’ would “leave plenty of room to file complaints which has much greater scope for participation and redress procedure” (Warner, 2008, p. 571). The choice for allowing regional and local actors (provinces, municipalities, water boards, businesses and local residents) to be able to file complains within the PKB procedure seems to be a sign of a process-related meaning of governance, whereby more actors are able to participate in the process of planning- and decision-making.



**Figure 36.** Designated areas during the presentation at Loevestein castle.

However, next to the presentation of the presentation of this new PKB, the Vice Minister introduced the concept of so-called ‘calamity polders’ (*calamiteitenpolders*) and ‘retention areas’. Under the statement that “a controlled flooding is always cheaper than a uncontrolled one”, the Vice Minister even already showed designated locations for such areas (NRC, 2000). According to the plans, parts of inter alia de Tielerwaard, Bommelerwaard, and the Land van Heusden were designated as emergency overflow areas and the Ooijpolder, the Rijnstrangen area and the Beersche Overlaat were mentioned as possible ‘retention areas’ in case of extreme water levels and to prevent flooding elsewhere, (NRC, 2000; Roth et al., 2006; W Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2005).

The main idea behind these measures is, as is visualized in figure 37, that room is created for water by means of designating certain areas to accommodate peak river discharges. This can for instance be done by lowering an adjacent dike or the placement of locks so that in cases of high water the polder can flood, subsequently leading to a decreasing water level in the main river branch. In the case of flooding of these polders, the organization around the policy will provide “adequate information about high water purveyance, contingency plans and trained crisis teams”(W. Ten Brinke & Bannink, 2004, p. 62).



**Figure 37.** Graphic representation of purposefully flooding of polders. The upper situation refers to the idea of an *emergency overflow area*, the lower situation depicts a *retention area* or *cocurrent retention area* whereby part of the dike is lowered and the polder is ‘*de-poldered*’.

Although figure 37 depicts a polder which is uninhabited and unutilized, this is in the Netherlands a rare phenomenon. Most of the Dutch polders are intensively used due to the fact that in the past “priority was given to developments in all sectors of the economy (industry, transport, housing, agriculture, etc.), and water management had to adapt” to these sectors (Wolsink, 2006, p. 474). It is thus interesting to note that with the designation of calamity polders and retention areas, this approach of adapting water to human needs, seems to have shifted to an opposite approach whereby humans have to adapt and make space for water. As Roth et al. (2006, p. 22) state: “water and spatial planning [...] had to collaborate under the concept of ‘water as a spatial organizing principle’”. As is noted in the discussion paper (*discussienota*) ‘Room for the River’;

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*“On a policy level, the necessity emerges to have water management as an organizing principal within spatial planning.” (management & Rijkswaterstaat, 2000, p. 10)*

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A shift can thus be perceived from firstly infrastructure intensive measures like building dikes, towards interventions in floodplains, but also towards activities inside the dikes, where people live and work. This can be related to the discursive changes that have occurred and the emergence of the new discourse of accommodating and living with water (Lach et al., 2005; Roth & Winnubst, 2009; Wolsink, 2006). Activities in these densely populated and utilized areas are inevitably prone to put “increasing pressure on scarce space, and will have impact on areas along the rivers” (Roth & Winnubst, 2009, p. 39). Therefore, the choice of the Vice Minister de Vries to already publicize detailed plans of designated areas at such an early stage is a political surprising choice.

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*“In the discussion paper ‘Room for the river’ a very controversial map was shown [...] with spatial reservations for the purpose of high water protection.” (Boer, 2002b, p. 25)*

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As Warner (2008, p. 574) states: “maps are so politically explosive because they concretize winners and losers, provoking people to oppose something”. Perhaps not surprisingly, critique emerged from inhabitants of the concerning areas, the engineering world, and from regional and local governments after the presentation at Loevestein Castle in 2000 (Davidse, 2008; Roth et al., 2006; Warner, 2008). As is stated by a civil servant of the Province of Gelderland:

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*“The Vice Minister suddenly came with these plans. Of course this led to a lot of commotion [...] it was only the national government [...] it went over the citizens.” (I4)*

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One of the main criticism on the whole idea of purposefully flooding of polders is the related assumption of the presumed normative discharge level of  $18.000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  at Lobith and  $4.600 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$  at Borgharen. Especially these assumed discharge level led to the believe that calamity polders, emergency overflow areas and retention areas were a necessity to protect the Netherlands against such water levels.

### *A.5 Terminology*

A relevant development to mention here is the change in terminology of the different measures related to the purposefully flooding of polders that took place after the presentation and the criticism that emerged. As Roth et al. (2006, p. 26) explains and what came forward in an interview with an associate professor of the Wageningen University (I2); the areas designated for the purposefully flooding were first known as calamity polders. However, since this term seemed to evoke negative reactions, “...like a red rag...” (I2), the term for the measure changed to so called ‘water inlet areas’ or ‘overflow areas’ (Roth et al., 2006). Later the term for the measure evolved to ‘emergency overflow area’ (*noodoverflowgebied*) and also the concept of retention area emerged (Roth et al., 2006). However, in practice there still seems to be discussion about the technical difference between the terms for the measures (Roth et al., 2006).

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*“I know that there was discussion about the terminology of the term ‘emergency overflow area’. You were not allowed to use it, because that was not what it was. But if you ask me for the reason why, linguistically speaking, I don’t know. It seems to me that you still use the area for an emergency and it will flood over the dike”. (I6)*

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But although retention and emergency overflow area are used interchangeably according to Roth et al. (2006), van Ellen (2004, p. 1) states that there is a clear difference between both measures. Areas used for *retention* of water are a structural part of a bigger flood prevention and protection systems, and are implemented in combination with inter alia dike enhancement, excavation of floodplains, lowering of groynes etc. *Emergency overflow areas* in contrast, only become effective when the actual water level exceeds the normative discharge water.

Although the difference between retention and emergency overflow areas might look blurry from these meanings, van Ellen (2004, p. 1) argues that due to the nature of the measure water levels in retention areas are generally lower than in emergency overflow areas. Damage and related costs are also generally lower than in emergency overflow areas but might occur more often (van Ellen, 2004). According to Roth et al. (2006, p. 26), this difference in meaning is “for some an argument that it is safer to live in an emergency overflow areas (with low frequency of utilization and related damage compensation) than it is to live in a retention area”. This is confirmed in an interview with a spokesman of the interest group Hoogwaterplatform who states;

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*“Retention is a step worse. With the emergency overflow measure, you only flood an area if all other measures seem to fail, as last resort; calamity control. When you designate an area as retention area, than you designate is for the retention of water as a structural measure....than you can expect that it will be used more often than emergency overflow areas.” (I5)*

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This difference is also noted by a civil servant of the Province of Gelderland who explains that;

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*“Retention areas are part of the riverine system [...] an emergency overflow area means that you can pierce a dike if the system cannot safely drain the water, than you can use that area for reduction of the water level in the river, as a sort of last resort.” (I4)*

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However, as will be explained in the next chapter, the policy measure of *emergency overflow areas* was abandoned after the events in the Ooijpolder;

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*“The commotion around the Ooij was a reason for the government to perform a large scale study to the technical and economic aspects of the three overflow areas...the emergency overflow areas along the Rhine, including the Ooij and later also the Beersche Overlaat, were cancelled. The resources that became available were used for RFTR and other water safety measures.” (I8)*

*“The Vice Minister, and The Hague finally concluded to abandon the concept of emergency overflow areas.” (I4)*

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*“Due to the limited effectiveness of the reserved emergency overflow areas in the river basin of the Rhine, the spatial reservation for this technical measure is withdrawn in 2005. Next to this, there are effective physical emergency measures...for the Rhine as an alternative. The situation of the Meuse however is different...Of all the big rivers, the Meuse is the most erratic and most susceptible for extreme situations, especially with regard to the expected effects of climate change [...] Emergency overflow areas therefore still remain an option next to a variety of alternatives.” (Management & Affairs, 2006, p. 8)*

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These statements show that the government renounced the idea of calamity polders and also cancelled the spatial reservation for emergency overflow areas along the Rhine. Only the measure of 'retention areas' is still considered for storage, retention and safe drainage of peak discharge levels, which in 2013 again led to a collision between government and local residents in the Ooijpolder (see 5.1.5).

This chapter already briefly showed that there are a variety of perspectives on the matter of purposefully flooding of polders. For one, the case of the Ooijpolder in the next chapter portrays this nicely by showing that strong regional and local opposition arose and a discursive struggle emerged with various conflicting demands around the designation of the area as emergency overflow area and later also retention area. However, in contrast to this case, the subsequent chapter will go into the case of the Overdiepse polder which was designated as area for river expansion measures along the Meuse. Whereas the reservation and planning around the Ooijpolder was cancelled due to fierce local resistance, the Overdiepse polder case seems to show a different story; one where different levels of governments and local residents closely worked together for the planning and implementation of a citizens initiative.

## **Annex 2) List of interviews**

- I1: A civil servant of the Province of Gelderland: Interview, 12 May 2015
- I2: An associate professor of the Wageningen University: Interview, 22 May 2015
- I3: A civil servant of the waterboard 'Brabantse Delta': Interview, 26 May 2015
- I4: A civil servant of the Province of Gelderland: Interview, 27 May 2015
- I5: A spokesman of the interest group Hoogwaterplatform: Interview, 1 June 2015
- I6: A civil servant of the Province of North-Brabant: Interview, 4 June 2015
- I7: A civil servant of Rijkswaterstaat: Interview, 8 June 2015
- I8: A civil servant of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment: Interview, 12 June 2015
- I9: A spokesman of the interest group of Overdiep farmers: Interview, 30 June 2015
- I10: A civil servant from the municipality of Groesbeek: Interview, 28 July 2015

## **Annex 3) Interview script**

Following a semi-structured interview style, this thesis interviewed the previous interviewees using a list of general themes which allows for bringing up new questions and ideas based on the interviewee's response. The themes adopted in the interviews during the data collection of this thesis consisted of a general introduction, in which recording of the interview and proofreading of the concept thesis was discussed; some personal questions, comprising inter alia the background and function of the interviewee; a discussion about the RFTR programme which included questions about role and objectives of the programme and the interviewee or related government; a discussion about the RFTR programme in the Overdiepse polder or Ooijpolder; a discussion about government and governance, comprising questions about decision-making, distribution of responsibilities, inclusion of local actors and how an average day looked like; to conclude a wind-up which entailed questions about the future of calamity control in Dutch water management, whether something was overlooked in the interview and recommendations for future interviews and interviewees.