

From flood safety to risk management

The (changed) relationship between experts and political actors in Dutch and American flood governance



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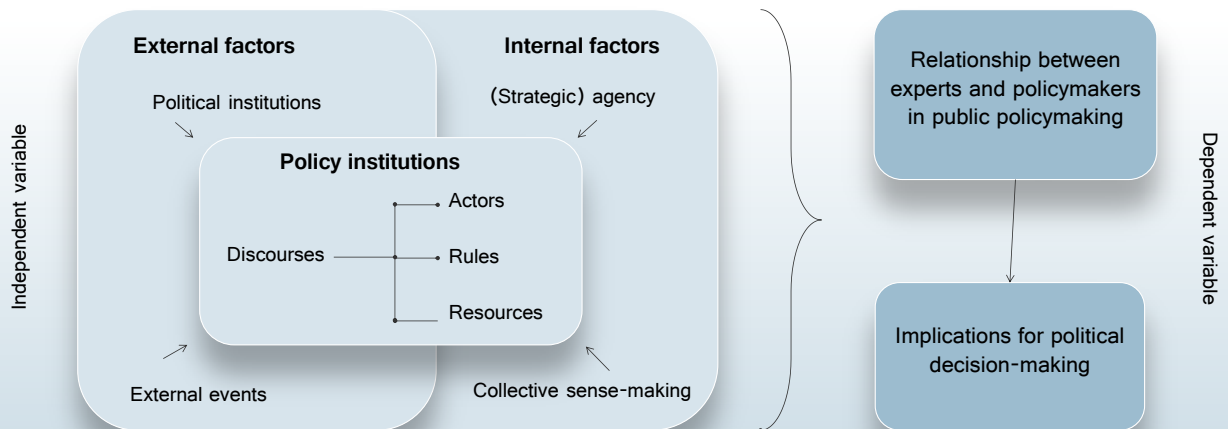


KWR Watercycle Research Institute, Research Group Knowledge Networks and Futures Studies

Theoretical framework

Institutional dynamics

Research focus



Method: Case Studies

The spatial turn in Dutch and American flood governance



Extreme cases: 2 different ends of the institutional spectrum

- Strong tradition in flood safety
- Turned to spatial measures in the 1990s



- Weak tradition in flood safety
- Turned to spatial measures in 1960s

Data

Reconstructions of the policymaking processes

- Literature review to grasp the shift to spatial measures.
 - Policy document analysis to understand the (changing) relationship between experts and policymakers in this process.
 - Parliamentary records analysis to scrutinize the effects of the interaction between experts and policymakers in the policymaking process.
- Results checked through interviews and group meetings with stakeholders.

The spatial turn in the Netherlands

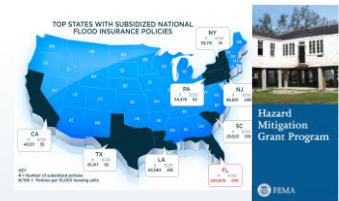
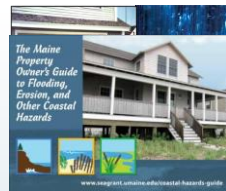
Room for the River, Flood insurance, Second Delta program

- Policies developed in cooperation with “institutionalized” experts: engineers, macro-economists.
- Same expertise: national cost-benefit analyses / economic efficiency
- Local-level (distributive) implications not sufficiently recognized in the policymaking process.



The spatial turn in the US

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)



- New experts: geographers.
- New responsibility-structure: local risk reduction.
- Information on local-level effects.
- National-level trade-off
- 1980's: Management and oversight responsibilities delegated to FEMA: operational expertise.

Conclusions

1. Experts can help to explicate the distributive consequences of policy proposals and therefore facilitate the understanding of “political/distributive” shifts in public governance.
2. A spatial planning approach requires another form of expertise than standardly incorporated in a safety approach to floods.
3. Spatial approach puts up a challenge for upholding the interaction between geographical experts and policymakers because of the trust placed in the self-regulatory capacity of policy instruments.

Thank you!