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Towards explanations of 'deep' shifts in environmental governance practices

A framework and examples from the domain of flood risk governance in The Netherlands

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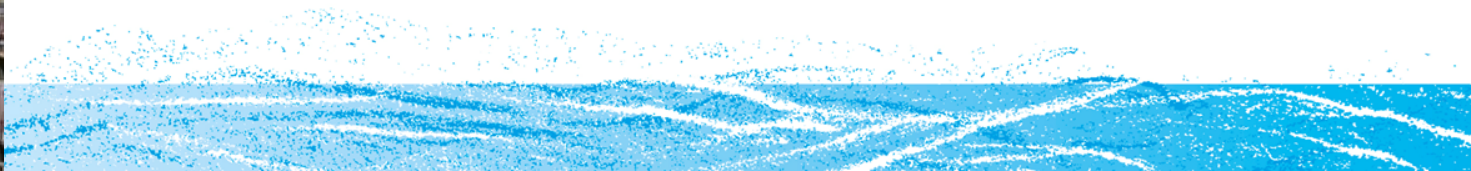
Outline of the presentation

- 1) Why a meta-framework for explaining stability and dynamics in governance practices?
- 2) What to explain? - The explanandum
- 3) Five types of explanatory factors: an overview
- 4) Example 1: the (Delta)diike
- 5) Example 2: shock events; what do they do?
- 6) Conclusions & research agenda



Why a meta-framework: enhancing reflection on the chosen approach & comparability of the findings

- **Need to understand** (analyse and explain) environmental governance before we can determine if it makes us better adapted to climate change;
- Problems with **comparability of existing studies**
 - Conceptualisation of the explanandum
 - Fragmentation in terms of the frameworks used (E.g. MSF (Kingdon 1984); PET (Jones & Baumgartner 2005); ACF (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1988); policy entrepreneurship (Huiteima et al. 2011); IAD (Ostrom); Multi-level perspective;



The explanandum: “governance” should be disentangled into measurable indicators

- Adaptation studies have often compared apples with oranges (Dupuis and Biesbroek 2013);
- “Deep shifts in (modes of) environmental governance” = a multi-faceted concept;
 - What is “governance” (e.g. “actors”, “rules”, “relationships”, “resources”, “policy programmes”);
 - What is “a shift” (what should change on which dimensions?)
- Example: one may find accumulation of modes of governance instead of shifts “from government to governance” (Driessen et al. 2012)



Five types of interrelated explanatory factors

- Physical circumstances - rainfall patterns, altitude, gradient)
- Infrastructure - sunk costs, path dependency)
- Structural factors – (formal/informal) rules and resources
- Characteristics of agency
- Shock events



Example 1: Delta dikes – contributing to stability AND dynamics in governance (from Tennekes et al. 2013)



‘Normal’ dike: established actors & divisions of responsibilities, clear separation from spatial planning, relative autonomy of water management actors => **centralised/decentralised governance**



‘Super’ dike: new functions, new actors, need to take into account spatial planning, loss of autonomy for water management actors => **public-private governance**

<http://www.matterofspace.nl/projectpages/superdijk.html>



Shock events – those issues that are seen as a shock event by the actors involved



- -Dike breach in Wilnis in 2003 – discovery of a new type of threat
- -River floods of 1993-1995 in The Netherlands.
 - NB: change had been underway for some time
 - Shock events may contribute both to stability and dynamics (e.g. accelerated dike reinforcement AND increased stakeholder involvement, e.g. near floods in The Netherlands (1993/1995))
- Recent floods in the UK: **not** a shock event?



Conclusions & research agenda

- Meta-framework has brought together different types of factors from various frameworks, illustrated with examples
- Next steps:
 - Comparative analyses and explanations of stability and dynamics in modes of environmental governance (e.g. STAR-FLOOD project)
 - Inclusion of/dialogue with other disciplines than social scientific ones (e.g. law, economics)
- Potential for identifying design principles for ex-ante evaluation of policies



Thanks for your attention!



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