

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/envsci

Multi-level stakeholder engagement in flood risk management—A question of roles and power: Lessons from England

Thomas Thaler^{a,b,*}, Meike Levin-Keitel^c

^aFlood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University, London, United Kingdom

^bInstitute of Mountain Risk Engineering, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria

^cInstitute of Environmental Planning, Leibniz University Hanover, Hannover, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Stakeholder engagement
Flood risk management
Power
Partnership funding
Societal implications

ABSTRACT

In the past years, stakeholder engagement has become more important in flood risk management. On the one hand stakeholder engagement is often declared as a better way of management, a more successful way to reach consensus in policy discussions. On the other hand is the implementation of increasing stakeholder engagement far away from being as positive, where stakeholder engagement often ends in diverse difficulties and conflicts between political leaders and stakeholder groups. This paper aims to highlight participatory governance in flood risk management to provide an overview of the potential contributions and challenges of a participatory and collaborative governance approach. In this paper, we discuss the role of national authorities and local stakeholders in English flood risk management in three different examples (Bridgwater, Cockermouth and Morpeth). The results show that the Cockermouth and Morpeth flood risk management scheme is characterised by a high level of local self-responsibility in the planning and decision-making process. The study sites with high local capacity (Cockermouth and Morpeth) show a strong leadership at local level and bottom-up concepts and ideas. The local involvement in the discussion and decision-process depends on the local capacity (capacity to act), such as resources (knowledge, financial, time), interest, social and cultural capital. It strongly depends on these aspects, if localities are able to ensure their interests and needs at national level.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is a core aspect of integrated flood risk management (Renn, 2008). Therefore, in recent years we have observed an increasing number of policy or academic

papers in which stakeholder engagement has become more important in flood risk management (see this special issue). On the one hand, stakeholder engagement is often declared as a better way of management, a more successful way to reach consensus in policy discussions. On the other hand, the implementation of stakeholder engagement is far away from

* Corresponding author at: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Peter-Jordan-Straße 82, 1190 Wien, Vienna, Austria. Tel.: +43 1 47654 4364.

E-mail address: thomas.thaler@boku.ac.at (T. Thaler).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2015.04.007>

1462-9011/© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

being as positive, where stakeholder engagement often ends in diverse difficulties and conflicts between political leaders and stakeholder groups with a much restricted outcome than expected (Menzel and Buchecker, 2013; O'Toole et al., 2013; Blackstock et al., 2014; Feliciano et al., 2014). Thus, the quite normative demand of a participatory and collaborative governance approach in the flood risk management debate has to be translated and transformed for everyday planning practice (Tseng and Penning-Rowsell, 2012; Blackstock et al., 2014; Newig et al., 2014).

Scholars have defined stakeholder engagement as a social process working together to find a collective solution for a certain problem (Green and Penning-Rowsell, 2010). In the policy discussion, stakeholder engagement is often initiated by political parties/leaders (e.g. mayors) or by public administration. Key arguments are to increase trust, legitimacy of local stakeholders in public administration (Krause and Dan Nielsen, 2014; Mees et al., 2014). In the literature, scholars often mentioned the inflexibility of public administration to reacting to the outcome of public participation processes (Haque et al., 2002; Speller, 2005; Reed, 2008; Tseng and Penning-Rowsell, 2012). Other problems are related to the lack of institutional support, about how to organise/deal with stakeholder engagement processes, to the lack of communication, information sharing, especially to the lack of resources, particularly with respect to large participation processes (Thaler and Priest, 2014). Key problems lie in the different interests, views of each stakeholder group on flood risk management policy (Lupo Stanghellini and Collentine, 2008; Lupo Stanghellini, 2009; Reed et al., 2009; Levin-Keitel, 2014). Stakeholder engagement in general depends very much on the power relationship between the national, local level. Resulting out of the national authorities' roles, tasks, aspects of power can reach far behind these hierarchical/heterarchical logics. This second aspect of stakeholder engagement focuses on the facets of who has power, who seems to be powerless, how different stakeholders deal with power (Lukes, 2005; Juntti et al., 2009; Thaler and Priest, 2014). Therefore, even if the national authority is in a very hierarchical and, so to speak, powerful position, local stakeholders are not necessarily in a powerless-victim position. First of all, the success of stakeholder engagement in flood risk management depends on the awareness of local stakeholders (administrative, citizens) that they can be involved. Thus, power includes the question of who the involved stakeholders are, including the not formal ones as well (Driessen et al., 2012; Levin-Keitel, 2014; Thaler and Priest, 2014). However, the local engagement strongly depends on their social capacity, such as knowledge, motivation/self-interest, networks, organisation, procedural capacity (Kuhlicke et al., 2011). Therefore, social capacity strongly refers to the aspect of ability of stakeholders to ensure their interests (Kruse and Seidl, 2013).

The presence and effectiveness of local grassroots organisations is a key aspect of sustainable collaborative governance in flood risk management. The societal acceptance and capacity to engage in the policy and flood risk management planning process seems to be higher in the wealthy rural study sites than in Bridgwater. Most of the time the exclusion of private stakeholders as stakeholders in the partnership is

based on a lack of political willingness to involve and to enforce private stakeholders to contribute. However, the influence of stakeholders in the flood risk management planning and decision-making practices depends on the local capacity as well as trust and openness in the public administration. Most of the different stakeholders have strong interdependent interests, such as economic growth vs. restriction in land use management or implementation of flood storages vs. structural engineering solutions, which cause conflicts between them. Further conflicts mainly arise due to funding; especially, the amounts of the individual contributions.

This paper aims to discuss the role and the relationship between national and local stakeholders in the English flood risk management system. We highlight participatory governance in flood risk management to provide an overview of different implementation processes and the potential contributions and challenges of a participatory and collaborative governance approach in flood risk management. However, the paper does not stay in the simple description of the planning processes; rather the aim is to look further behind these examples, interpreting underlying key aspects of stakeholder engagement in flood risk management. Therefore, this paper deals with following two research questions:

- (1) In how far characterises the relationship between national and local stakeholders the design and implementation of flood risk management strategies? And
- (2) how the relationship between national and local stakeholders characterises the design and implementation of flood risk management strategies?

2. Conceptual framework

To understand and to analyse the relationship between national and local stakeholders we developed a heuristic—analytical framework (Table 1); which is composed of a stepwise model including three main stages of interaction. The already mentioned key aspects – (1) the role of the national and local stakeholders on flood risk management policy, and (2) the power relationship between the national and local level in policy decision-making practices – are now explained in detail to outline the conceptual framework.

2.1. Stage 1 (hierarchical structure)

Here, national authorities play the most crucial role in the partnership approach. A key aim for flood risk management, for example, is to develop and initiate project proposals for flood defence schemes (develop a project appraisal, ensure funding from national sources, organise all approval needs for the realisation of the project). During this stage the national authorities are the project leaders, who also define the conditions with the stakeholders, e.g. cost sharing among the stakeholders. The focus is to find potential stakeholders (state and non-state stakeholders) and integrate them into the partnership approach. Building trust is important, especially between stakeholders who have never collaborated in the

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10504535>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10504535>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)