

# Governance of Climate Change Adaptation: the role of interests, conflicts and annoying social plurality

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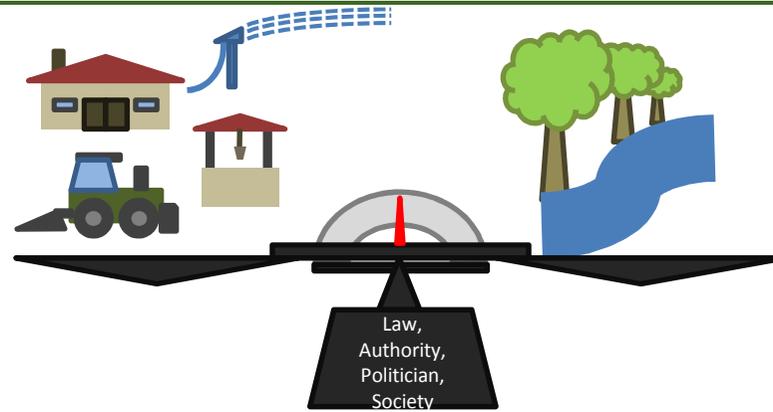
## Strategies to adapt to climate change in the metropolitan region of Hamburg

- 4,3 Mio. People
- 14 Districts
- 3 Federal States  
(Bundesländer)

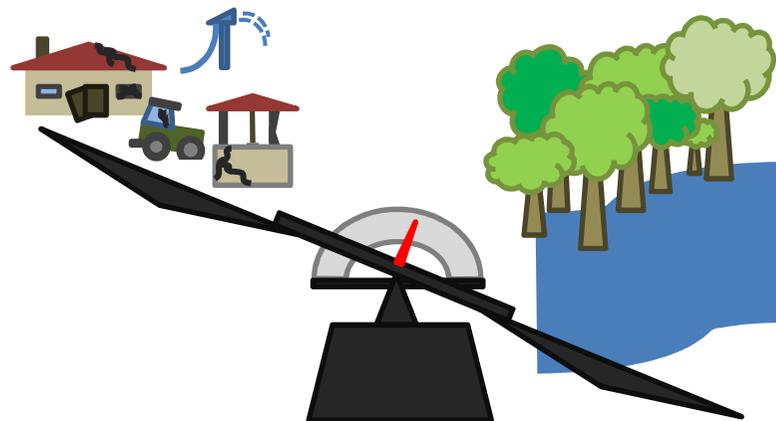


Our work package: Regional Climate Adaptation Governance; stakeholder workshops

- qualitative or interpretative social science, Discourse Analysis
- Conflict-orientated Cooperative Understanding (social learning)
- Semi-guided qualitative interviews (n=41, text corpus: 120,000 words)
- Social Network Analysis
- Five stakeholder groups:
  - district water authority,
  - regional planning,
  - ‘nature’ (authorities and activists),
  - irrigation farmer
  - special administrative authority (regional and district level)
- Objectives was capacity building
  - knowledge brokering and learning (e.g. how to deal with uncertainties)
  - problem perceptions
  - communication



District Water Authority



Regional farmers' association



Environmentalists

- **Rational** conceptualisation of uncertainty:  
'uncertainty' is minimised by combining a 'level of evidence' with a 'degree of agreement' to form a 'level of confidence' (see IPCC).
- **No-regret** conceptualisation of uncertainty:  
'uncertainty' becomes irrelevant because adaptation measures cover the range of most uncertainties.
- **Blissful** conceptualisation of uncertainty:  
'uncertainty' can be a necessary social achievement.
- **Strategic** conceptualisation of uncertainty:  
'uncertainty' is used or constructed to gain or defend power.

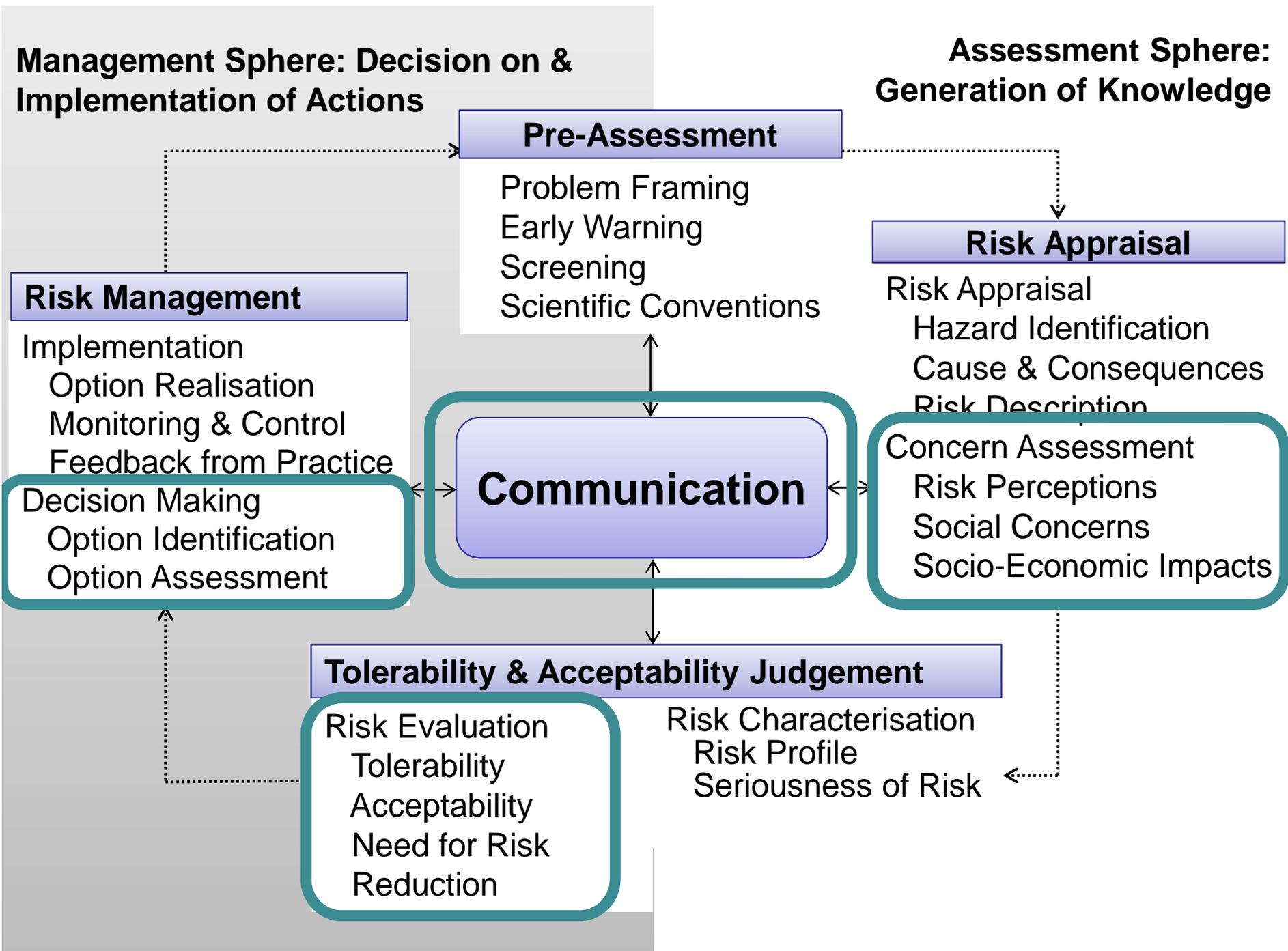
Gottschick, M. (2013, in review): How Stakeholders Handle Uncertainty in Climate Change Governance of Adaptation Networks. Special issue to Governance of Adaptation, in Ecology and Society.

- Climate related uncertainties have minor relevance!
- Knowledge about climate change - the drivers, impacts and related uncertainties – is available.
- Uncertainties are recognised but not seen as problematic.
- No-regret measures reduce relevance of uncertainties.
- Adaptation to climate change is not seen as qualitatively new.

# Further Challenges: Interests, Conflicts, Plurality

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- It is realised that evidence can
  - hardly resolve conflicts of interest.
  - is outplayed by political will.
- Some of the interviewees crave clarity and regulation.
- They express the hope that an abstract superior expertise could solve the conflicts of interests.
- They ask for an unquestionable force which knows the ‘truth’ and will solve the ‘annoying plurality’ of society.



IRGC Risk Governance framework (adapted from Aven/Renn 2010; IRGC 2005)

## Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse

(Reiner Keller, e.g. 2011)

- Links arguments from
  - social constructionist tradition (Berger/Luckmann)
  - symbolic interactionism
  - hermeneutic sociology of knowledge
  - concepts of Michel Foucault
- attempts to understand actor's understanding (sense making)
- integrates several discourse data (texts, speeches, interviews, ...) of several actor's into one possible picture

Needs for decision support and policy advice:

- natural science (mode 1) → e.g. impact models AND
- **social science (mode 1) → e.g. (critical) Social Network Analysis, Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse AND**
- interdisciplinary research (mode 1) → e.g. Integrated Impact Assessment (climate, hydrology, economy, ecology) with participatory elements (mode 2) AND
- **transdisciplinary, transformative research (mode 2) → e.g. Conflict-Orientated Cooperative Understanding; Transition Studies; Reflexive Governance**

Balanced in a reasonable way (research questions, practical objectives, problem situation, funding).