Evidence-based governance or governance learning?

How policy-makers design participation processes for EU Floods Directive implementation

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Governance learning as a form of instrumental policy learning

Bennett & Howlett (1992)	***Governance learning*** **as learning...**
The subject of learning: Who learns?	*...by* policymakers and other government actors
The object of learning: Learns what?	*...about* designing and running participatory planning processes,
The result of learning: To what effect?	*...in order to* improve their effectiveness

Learning and governance decisions

- How do public policy makers learn and use evidence on ‘what works’ in participatory governance?
- How does their learning impact on their choice and design of participation strategies?

Types of governance learning (instrumental policy learning)

Newig et al. (2015, in rev.)

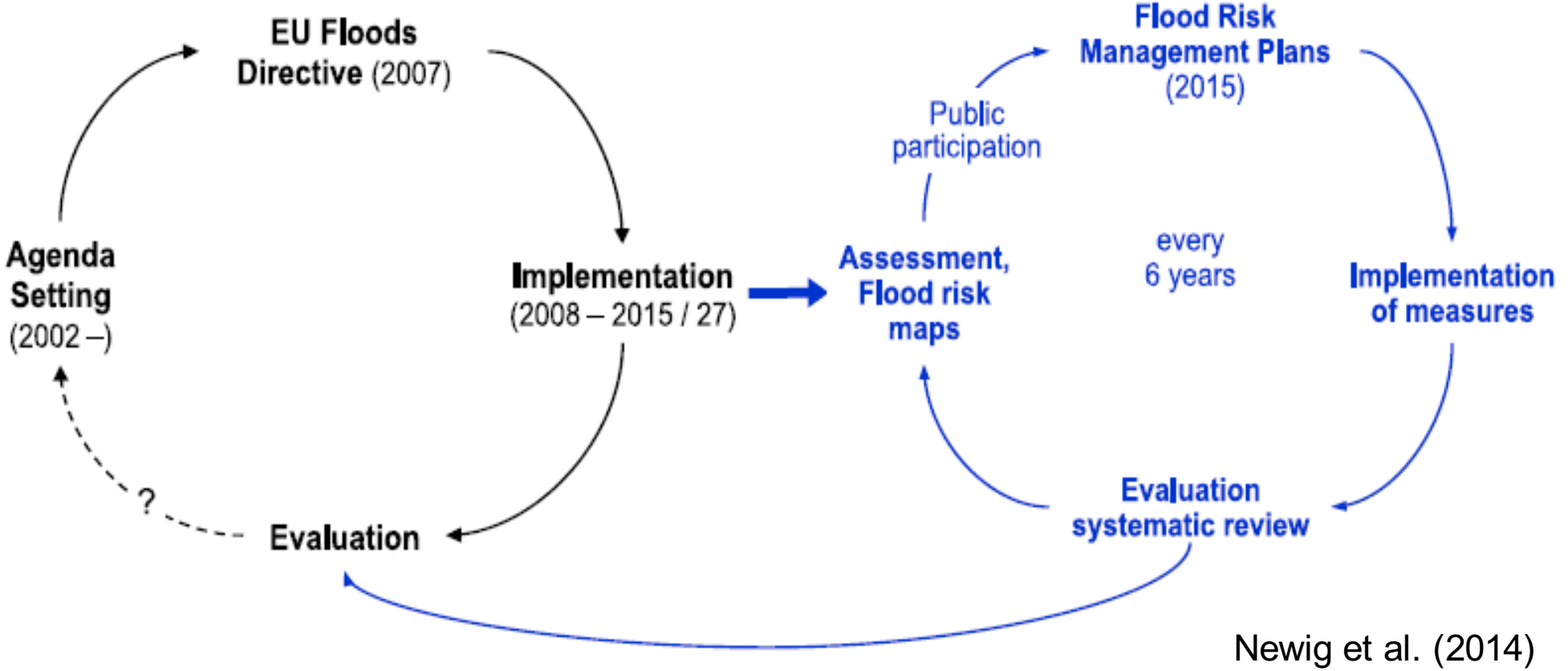
Sources of learning / Modes of learning	Endogenous	Exogenous	
	Same jurisdiction and same policy field	**Other jurisdictions**	**Other policy fields**
Serial learning (sequential)	Learning from sequential instances of policymaking and implementation (e.g. successive policy/planning cycles, serial pilots, 'trial-and-error').	Learning from other jurisdictions' past experiences in the same policy field (e.g. lesson drawing, policy diffusion, policy transfer)	Learning from previous experiences in other policy fields with similar procedural requirements
Parallel learning (simultaneous)	Learning from concurrent policymaking and implementation processes (e.g. parallel pilots, policy experiments, randomised controlled trials)	Learning with other jurisdictions, via co-production of knowledge/evidence (e.g. coordinated planning and implementation)	Learning in parallel across different policy fields with similar procedural requirements

The case: Floods Directive implementation in 10 German federal states

Adaptive policy cycle of the Floods Directive

Binding goal of the Floods Directive (FD):

None! (But Directive aims at protection of human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic development)

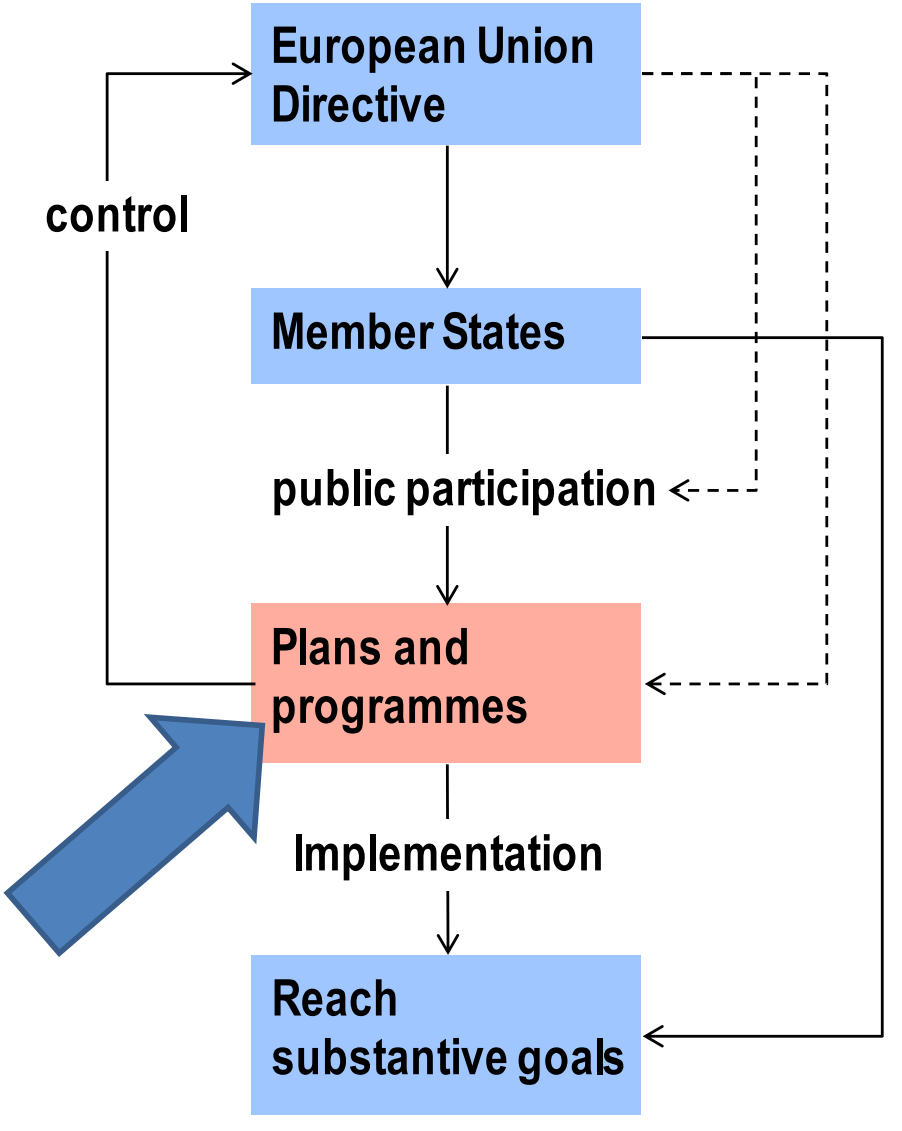


Newig et al. (2014)

Mandated Participatory Planning: A novel model of European Union (environmental) policy

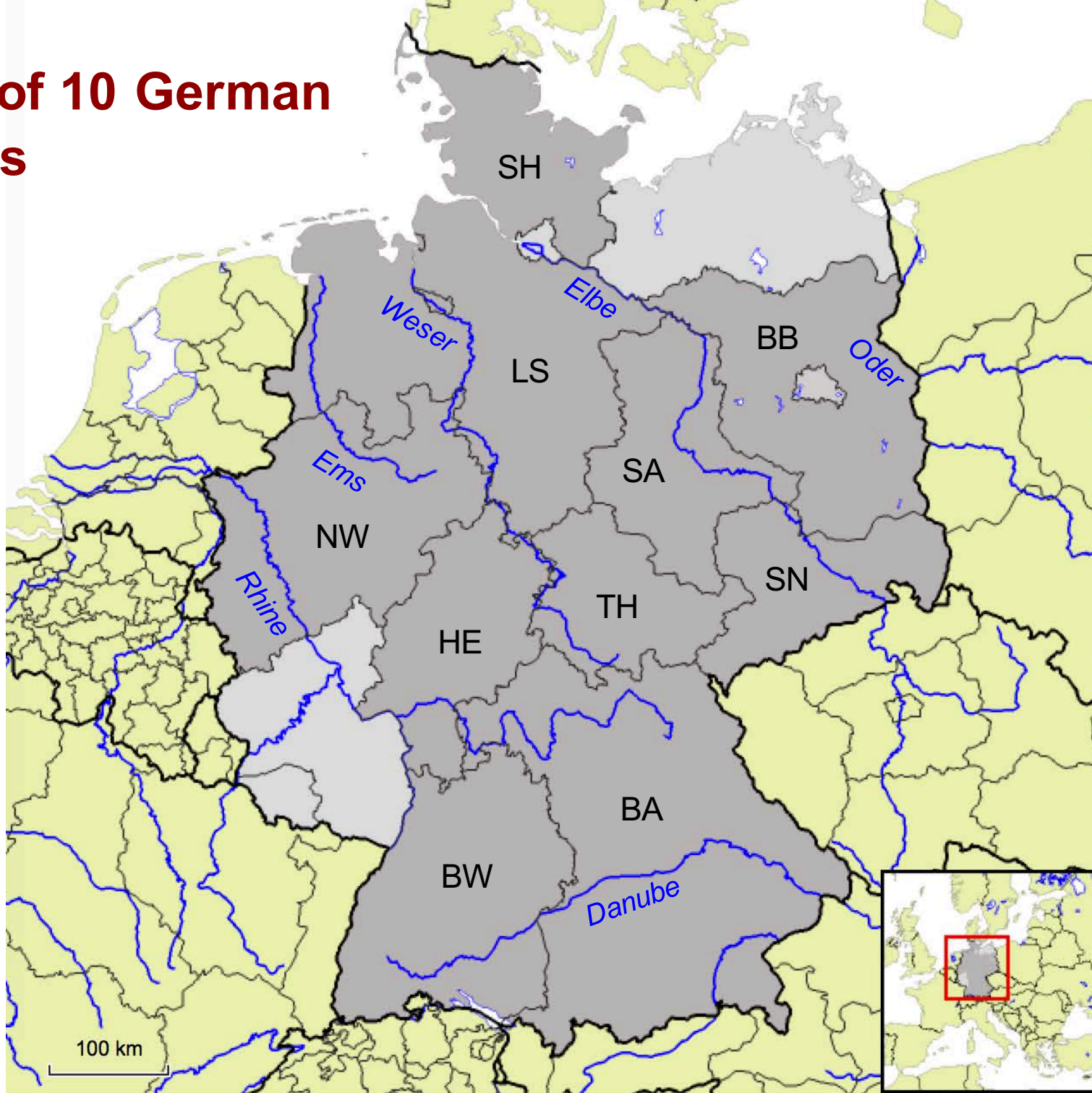
Mandated Participatory Planning (MPP) approach to EU policy implementation

- MPP *mandates the explicit formulation of certain plans or programmes* on national, subnational or cross-national level
- Plans and programmes according to MPP function as *the essential element of policy implementation*



(Newig and Koontz 2014)

Our sample of 10 German federal states



Designed with stepmap.de

German federal states: Exposure to flood risk and participatory flood-risk management planning strategies

		BA	BB	BW	HE	LS	NW	SA	SH	SN	TH
Flood risk	Rivers with significant flood risk (km)	7,650	2,005	4,980	NA	2,300	6,067	1,865	936	2,994	3,400
	Flood damages since 2000	Medium to high	High	Low	Low	High, but locally	Low	High	Low; locally high	High	High
Participation	Deliberative, face-to-face, local level participation	(+)		+			+		+		
	Local knowledge gathering	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Participation at the federal state or regional level						+	+			+

→ Great variety of participation strategies

Observed types of governance learning (instrumental policy learning)

Sources of learning / Modes of learning	Endogenous	Exogenous	
	Same jurisdiction and same policy field	Other jurisdictions	Other policy fields
Serial learning (sequential)	Pilots (but with little impact on the design of actual participation strategies); learning from current experience for next planning cycle	*Potentially for the next planning cycle:* Inspiration from other federal states' involvement experiences	Adaptation of WFD involvement models (→ more / less participation)
Parallel learning (simultaneous)	*Considered by few states:* Controlled experimentation	Inspiration from other federal states' involvement models	Advice by researchers (limited) or consultancy (more common)

German federal states: Different forms of governance learning

	BA	BB	BW	HE	LS	NW	SA	SH	SN	TH
Piloting	+	+		+			+	+		
Iterative, cyclical learning pursued (from FD processes)	+		+							
Planned adoption of other states' strategies				+		+				+
Explicitly stated learning from WFD			+	+	+	+	+	+		+
Openness to experimentation	+							+		
Inspiration from other federal states' involvement models		+								
External knowledge used or perceived positively	+	+	+	+				+		+

Summary of key findings

- Typology of instrumental policy / governance learning proved useful for the analysis of German officials' learning about participation strategies.
- We find evidence for all six types – partly through multiple strategies (e.g. endogenous, serial learning through prototyping and learning from one management cycle to the next).
- There was general consensus that systematic learning would improve the quality of participation strategies.
- The deails: Systematic learning on participatory strategies from a neighbouring policy field more often led to *less intensive* participation strategies. However, learning form neighbouring jurisdictions tended to produce *more intensive* participation strategies.
- On the whole, systematic learning is (still) outweighed by more ad hoc decision-making.

Recommendations: Untapped potential for systematic governance learning

- **Awareness:** There should be greater recognition among policymakers of the potential role of evidence and learning in the *governance aspects* (here: of FRM).
- **Networks:** Existing networks (e.g. “LAWA”) could facilitate exchange and learning on governance aspects.
- **Consultants:** Systematic learning and use of evidence demand time that policy-makers tend not to have. A key role could be played by intermediaries such as consultants.
- **Experimentalist culture:** Governance learning from experimentation is still met with much reservation. This seems to be different in countries with a stronger experimentalist culture such as the US, the UK or the Netherlands.

Publications

- Newig, J., Kochskämper, E., Challies, E. & Jager, N. (2015). Evidence-based governance or governance learning? How policy-makers design participation processes for EU Floods Directive implementation in Germany. *Environmental Science and Policy* (under revision).
- Newig, J., E. Challies, N. Jager and E. Kochskämper (2014) 'What Role for Public Participation in Implementing the EU Floods Directive? A comparison with the Water Framework Directive, early evidence from Germany, and a research agenda.' *Environmental Policy and Governance*.
- Newig, J., & Koontz, T. M. (2014). Multi-level governance, policy implementation and participation: the EU's mandated participatory planning approach to implementing environmental policy. *Journal of European Public Policy, 21(2), 248-267.*
- Newig, J., Fritsch, O. (2009) Environmental Governance: Participatory, Multi-Level – And Effective? *Environmental Policy and Governance* 19, 197-214.

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