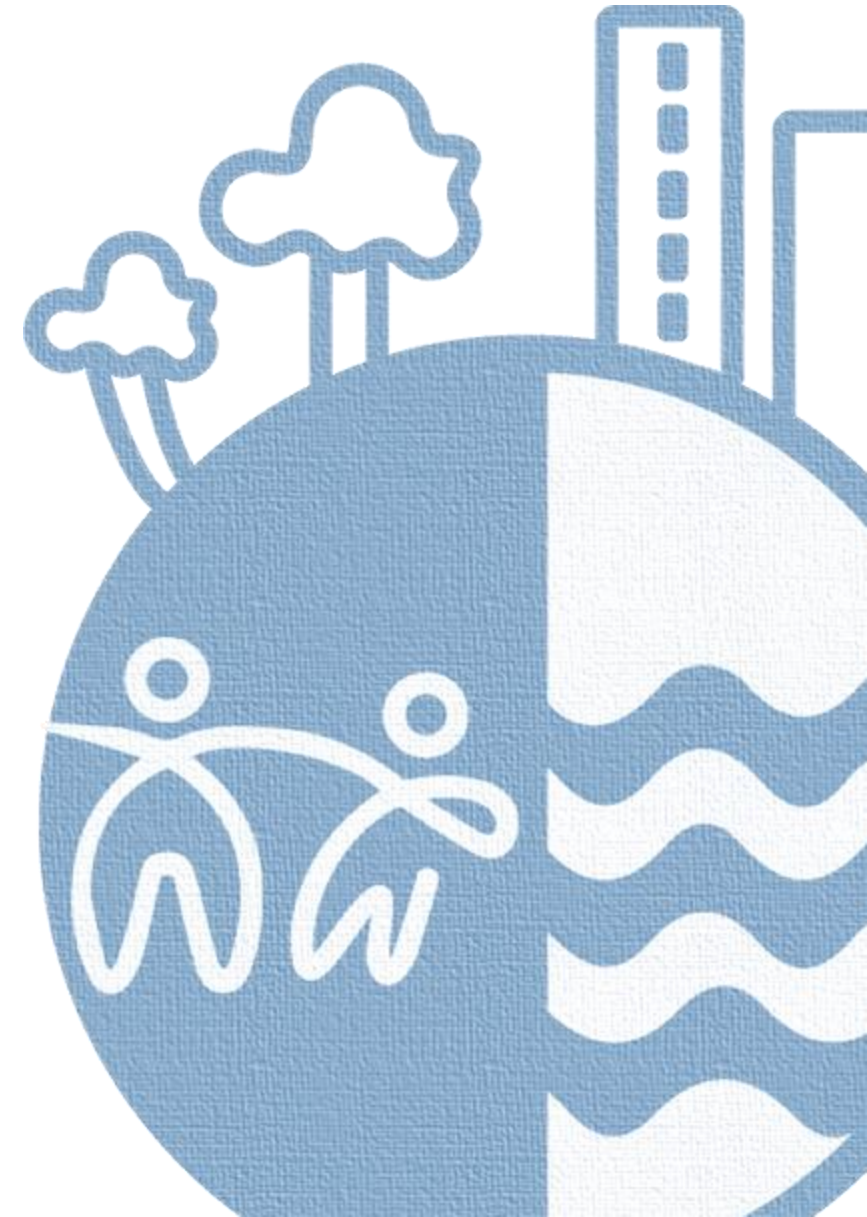




# What can policy makers do to ensure that social vulnerable groups are considered well in flood risk management?

- 1) Engaging them in participation processes
- 2) By integrating knowledge on social vulnerability in decision-making

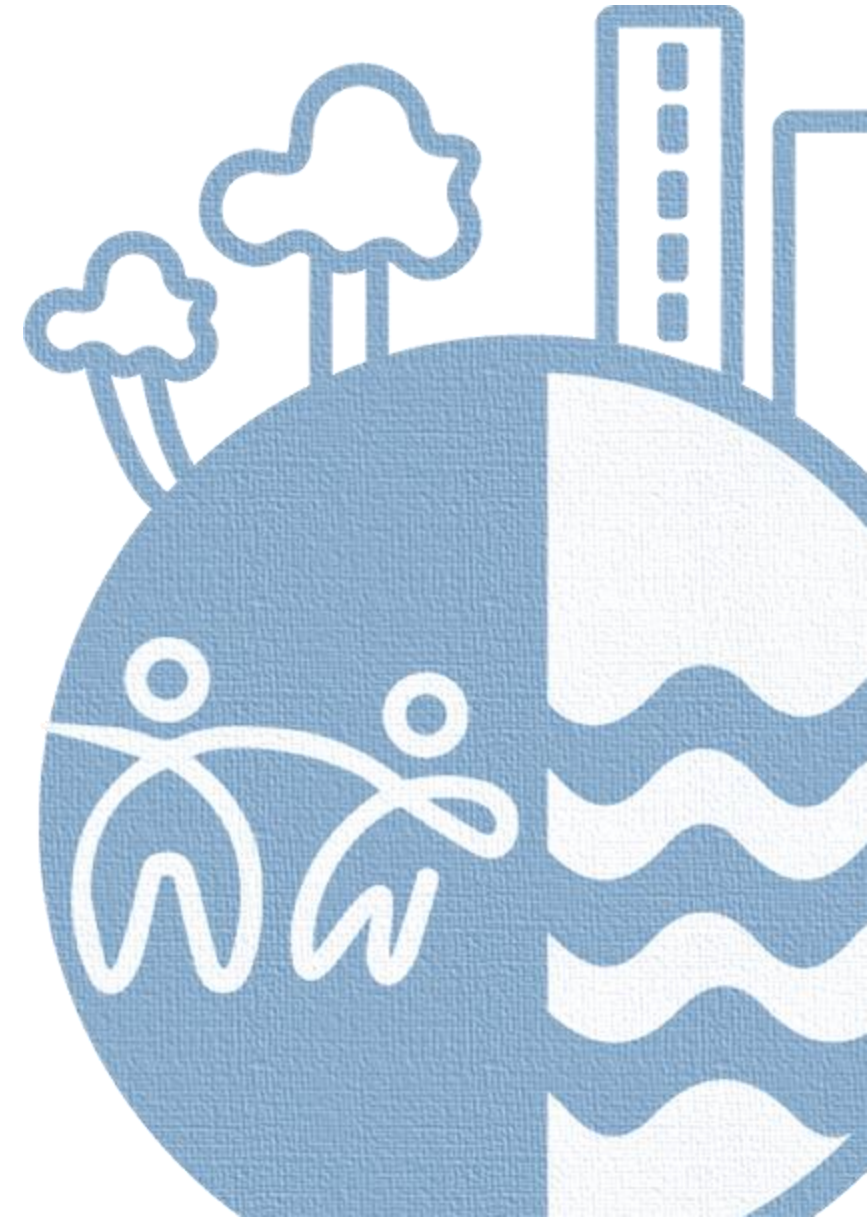




**SOLARIS**  
SOLIDARITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE

What can policy makers do to ensure that social vulnerable groups are considered well in flood risk management?

## **(1) Engaging social vulnerable groups in participation processes**



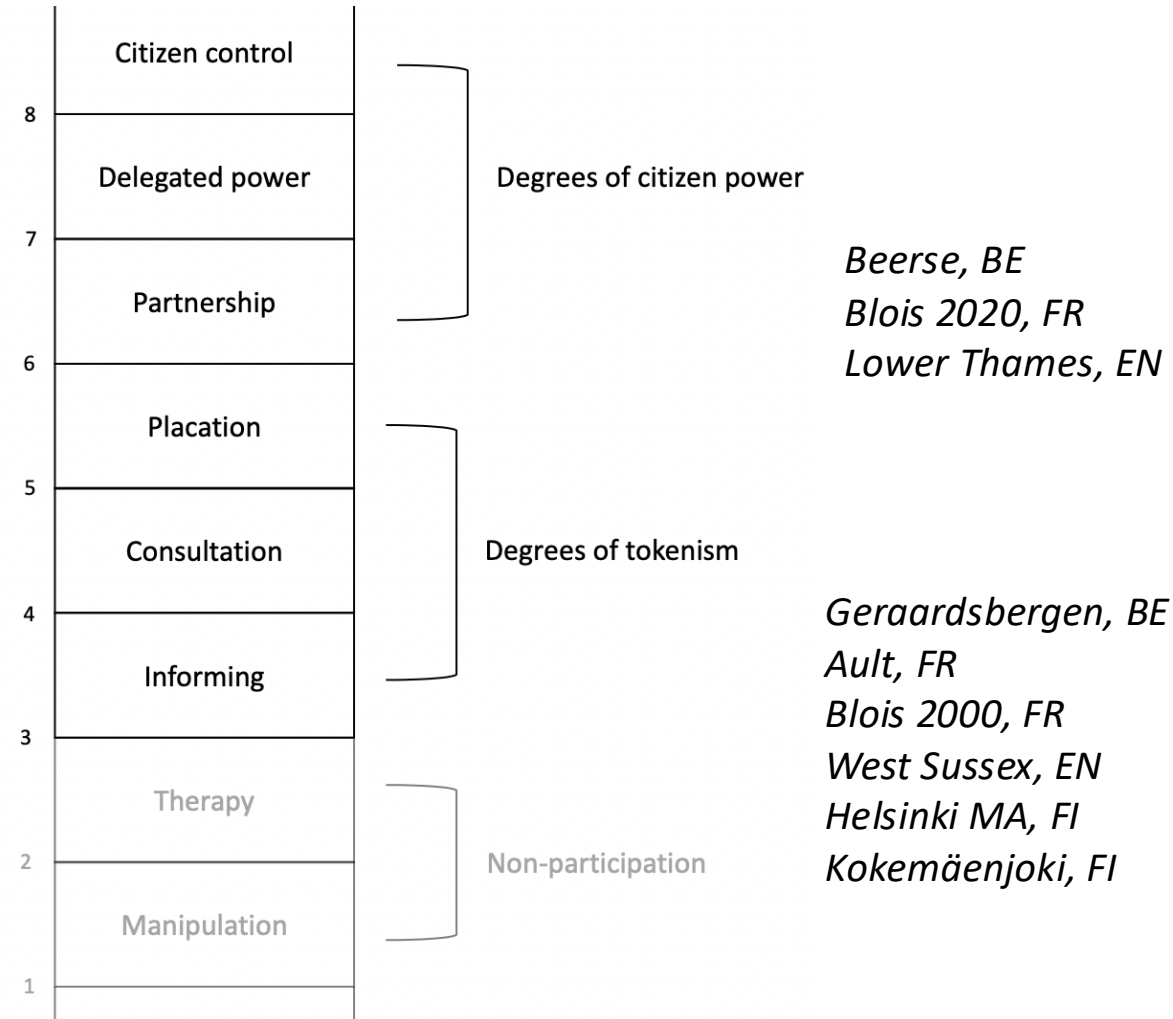
# Public participation: a key dimension of FRM policy design and implementation

In all our case studies:

- Participation processes were designed and implemented by FR managers.
- In several cases, policy makers go beyond legal obligations.

From information/consultation processes to more innovative approaches

Public participation processes seem to be reinforced in blue-green projects and Nature-based Solutions for floods



Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation from Arnstein (1969).

# *What is debated?* Boundary conditions to public participation in FRM

Even in innovative cases (Beerse, Blois 2020 for instance), flood control objectives and technical aspects of flood management are not debated.

Participation processes focus on:

- Secondary aspects
- Secondary objectives of the planned projects (biodiversity protection or leisure activities on the site and so on)

Construction of the flood retention area in Beerse, Belgium



Source: Province of Antwerp

**What are the barriers to the implementation of effective participation processes addressing primary (technical) objectives of flood management projects?**

# Who participates? Socially vulnerable groups still missing in participation processes

In most SOLARIS cases:

- Policy makers have little information on the social vulnerability of the different target groups
- Social disparities among target groups are not identified (FRM policies and social policies remain disconnected in most cases)
- The most vulnerable populations are still missing in public participation processes

*“We organized two participation evenings and provided information flyers in the neighbourhoods surrounding the flood retention area. [...] that is where it stopped for us. We did not ask questions such as: who are we forgetting here? Who are we not reaching at all? We tried to account for the elderly as a target group, but we did not get much of a response to that”* (Interview for the Beerse case, 27-8-2021).

**How to introduce a social dimension in the design of participation processes for FRM policies?**

# “Uninvited” participation: when public processes are exceeded by local oppositions

In some SOLARIS case studies

- We identified “uninvited” participation (Wagenaar, 2014) of local interests, leading to conflictual situations (Blois and Ault, FR)

Opponents point out (among other issues):

- The variety of situations among target groups and limited capacities of the most vulnerable groups

Should participation processes be planned only to prevent resistance?

What capacities of public participation processes to integrate conflicts pro-actively and build from them?

Flyer published by local opponents to the delocation project in Ault

etc...

## MORT ANNONCÉE DU BOURG D'AULT

Le Syndicat Mixte Baie de Somme et la Municipalité lancent un appel d'offre visant la déconstruction des ouvrages de protection du front de mer, ouvrages qui viennent à peine d'être remboursés par les contribuables aultois !

**Et ce n'est qu'un début !**

Les documents internes de la Mairie et du Syndicat Mixte révèlent un projet de destruction bien plus vaste (voir carte au dos).

**Nous réclamons un moratoire :**  
la suspension du processus de destruction du trait de côte,  
la suspension des appels d'offre pour le Moulinet et  
le lotissement du phare dit «le Sémaphore»  
tant que les aultois ne se seront pas exprimés par les urnes.

Parce que personne n'a le droit de disposer de nos vies.

6 commerces sont dans la zone de destruction, dont le Cise, deuxième employeur de la ville.

Inscrivez vous sur les listes électorales avant le 31 décembre.  
Que vous soyez ou non d'accord avec nous, vous n'aurez pas  
2 chances de vous exprimer sur le programme de destruction  
de la Mairie et du Syndicat Mixte Baie de Somme.  
L'année prochaine, il sera trop tard !

ne pas jeter sur la voie publique IPNS

www.ault-environnement.com

etc

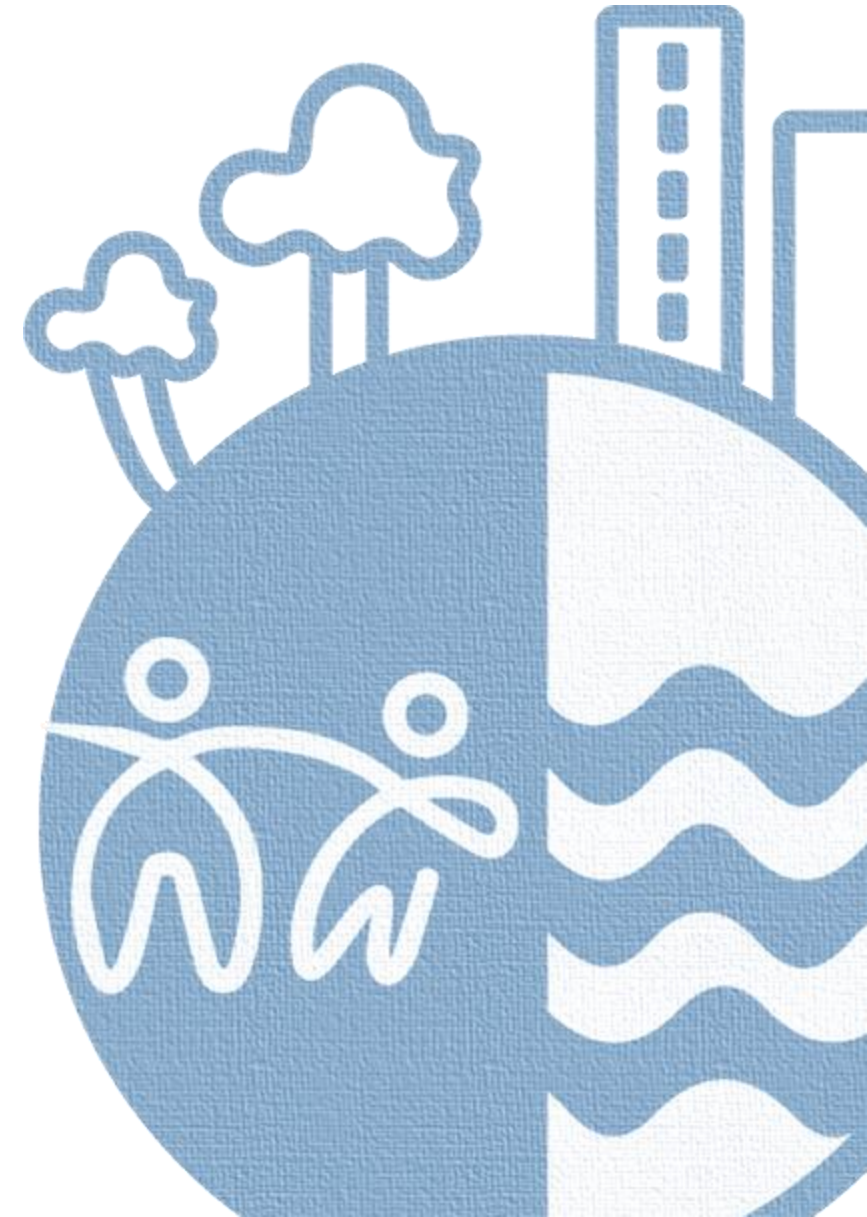
Source: Ault Environnement NGO



**SOLARIS**  
SOLIDARITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE

What can policy makers do to ensure that social vulnerable groups are considered well in flood risk management?

**Integrating knowledge on social vulnerability in decision-making**



# Building and accessing knowledge on inequality

All countries have data on social inequalities

- Socio-spatial data on inequalities, socio-economic data, housing, age, socio-spatial data on inequalities...

However, this data is not used in FRM

- Risk managers do not know about it or use it
- Practitioners for social inequalities do not work in FRM
- There seems to be a gap between these two fields : social issues and risk management

Two cases: existing social data not used

- England: Flood Index Vulnerability
- Blois (France)

**La Bouillie district before the delocation process**



Source: Blois Agglomeration, 2002.



# Building and accessing knowledge on inequality

England: the public policy aims at supporting individual and property level actions

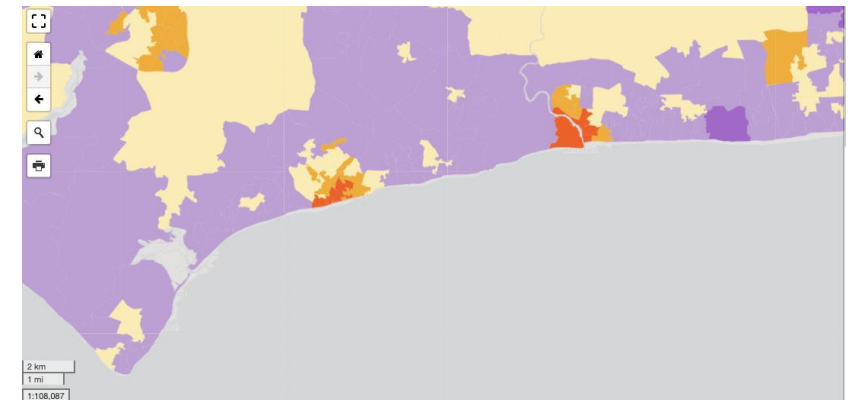
## Data not used

- to examine if FRM solutions are adapted for the inhabitant's situation

## Data not exploited to know

- If inhabitants have access to information on how to implement FRM solutions or
- If they have the material and social resources to implement them

## « Flood vulnerability index »



Source: <https://www.climatejust.org.uk>

# Building and accessing knowledge on inequality

La Bouillie, Blois, France

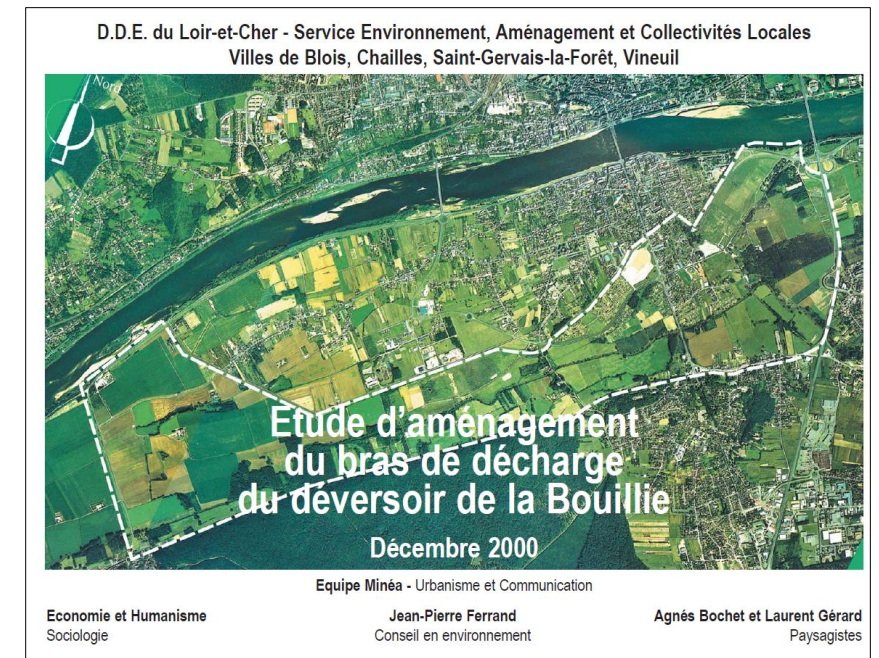
- De-urbanisation project in 2003
- 400 people and 23 business

Social data at the scale of the project

- The study gave guidance based on those living in the spillway's strong relationship with the territory

But data not used

## MINEA report on La Bouillie



Source: MINEA, 2000.

**Does this have to do with the lack of public policy commitment? Or to the time needed to deal with this data?**

# Focus on collective vulnerabilities

In all countries “vulnerability” is part of FRM

- Notion framed by crisis
- It refers to collective vulnerabilities
- Vulnerability based on facilities (e.g. home for elderly) and locations according to hazard
- Based on big categories (elderly, children, mobility)

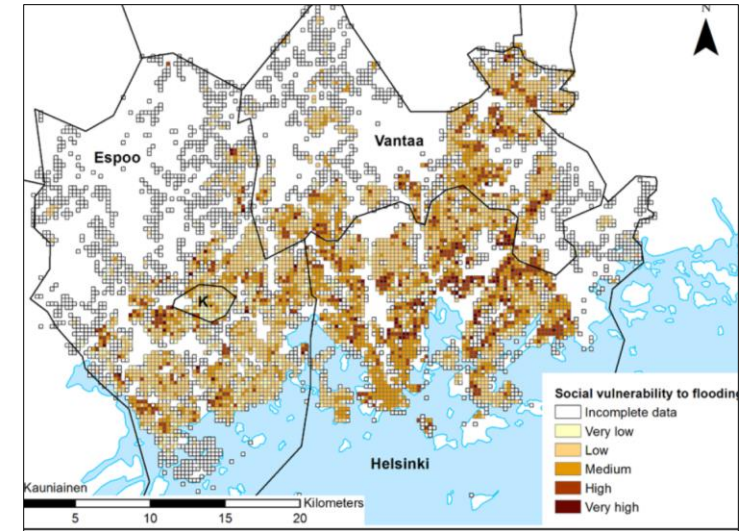
Two examples of recent efforts

- Finland: Kazmierczak (2015)
- France: Vulnerability index, MDEM (2018)

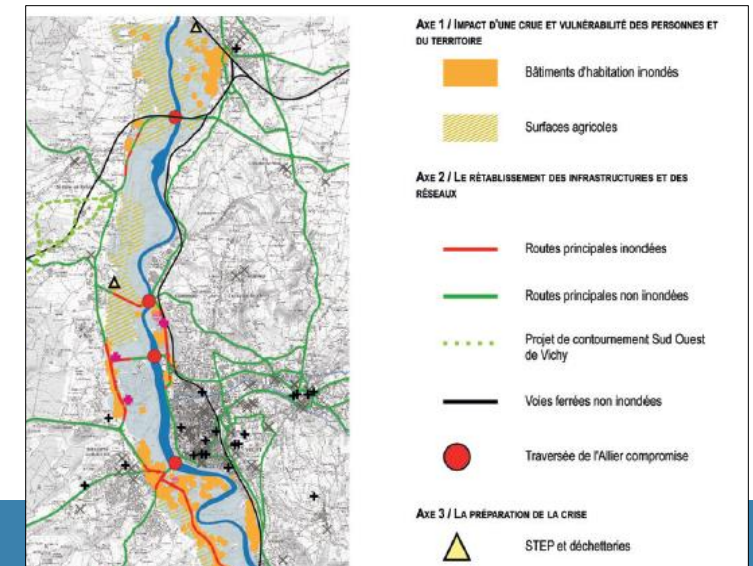
Lacking

- Individual perspectives (rather in crisis management)
- Social pathways (long term perspectives)

## Social vulnerability to flooding in the Helsinki Area



## National Vulnerability referential



Source: Kazmierczak (2015)

Source: MDEM, 2015.

# Vagueness of lay knowledge

Recently, importance giving to citizen knowledge within climate policies

- GIEC reports emphasize the importance of lay knowledge (“indigenous knowledge”, “local knowledge”, “lay knowledge”, “citizen science initiatives”) for the effectiveness of adaptation actions (IPCC, 2022)

But vagueness of the notion of ‘lay knowledge’

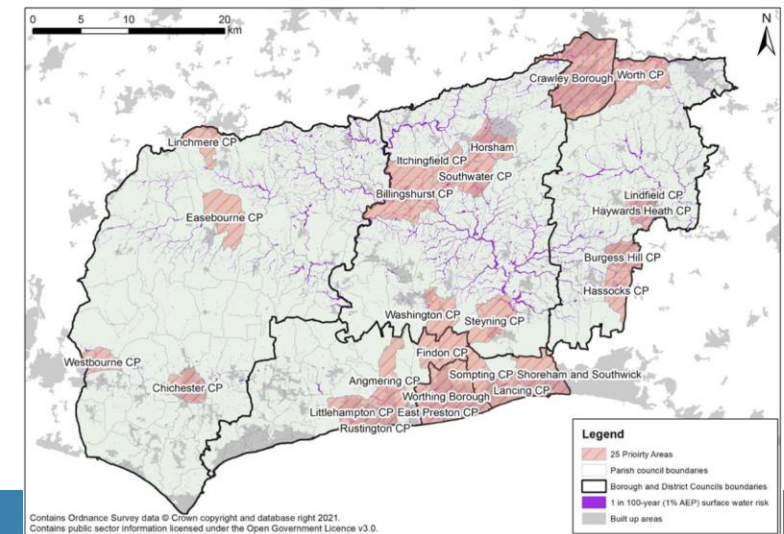
- Local authorities encounter difficulties when working with it
- Example: Flood action groups (England) should be working bottom-up (supporting citizens), but they are often used to disseminate solutions of policy makers to other citizens (so, used as a 'tool' of top-down decisions)

## Flood Action Groups presentation



<https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk>

## FRM priority areas in West Sussex, based on improved data



Source: LFRMS 2 in West-sussex

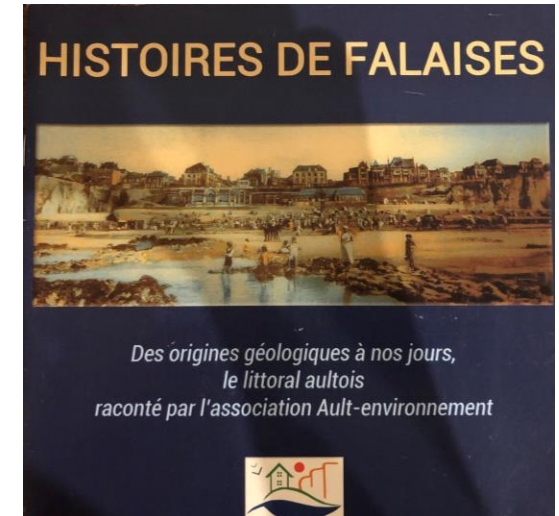
# Vagueness of lay knowledge

But vagueness of the notion of lay knowledge and the difficulties local authorities encounter when working with it

- Sometimes lay knowledge is set aside because it does not agree with public policy
- It is summarised as the expression of some local interests
- Sometimes lay knowledge is side-lined because there is plurality
- This delegitimization does not happen in the same way when there is plurality of expert opinions
- Experts' opinions are framed as 'multidisciplinary insights'

**Recommendation to policy makers: acknowledge the plurality of lay knowledge (tension/conflicts)?**

Booklet of the exhibition on the cliffs "Ault falaises vives"



S. Guevara, April 2022.

**Ault, France**



Source: M. Bonnefond, avril 2022.

# Partners



# Introducing Robbert Biesbroek



- Associate Professor at the Public Administration and Policy group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands
- Investigates how States deal with emerging boundary spanning policy problems that crosscut spatial, temporal and administrative systems, particularly climate change
- Was a coordinating lead author for the chapter on Europe in the IPCC AR6 report Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation. Lately, he was also involved in the first European Union Climate Risk Assessment (2022-2024) in which he co-led a chapter on social cohesion and justice.