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### Planning for flood resilient cities

Restemeyer, Britta

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# Acknowledgements

*Da is' das Ding!* And no, this time I am not talking about the World Cup, although luckily enough, that's also (still) there where it should be. Of course I am talking about this book, and the – at times – seemingly endless process of writing it. As a supporter of Schalke 04, I thought I have proven skills in patience and perseverance, but doing a PhD took this to a whole different level. Luckily, writing the PhD 'only' took 5 years, 3 months and 2 weeks, whereas with Schalke I am still waiting for the huge success after roughly 60 years of unfulfilled hope... But enough of football, let's shortly reflect on this PhD trajectory.

I started the PhD for many reasons, but I guess two stood out. The first reason was an enormous interest in the topic of flood resilient cities, which has sprouted early on during my Bachelors at the HafenCity University Hamburg. As a true Northern German, I feel most at home in cities with water and a good and solid sea breeze. I was, and still am, fascinated about the idea of 'living with water' – learning to deal with the dangers of water, and, at the same time, using water as an asset in the city to its full potential. The second reason for starting a PhD was that I could move to the Netherlands – a country I knew from several sailing trips on the 'Waddenzee', where I fell in love with 'kibbeling', 'patat speciaal' and Dutch 'gelaten- en gezelligheid'. Groningen's closeness to my German hometown Oldenburg enabled me to go on this adventure with the possibility to escape whenever I wanted and hold on to my existing social network. In that sense, doing the PhD in Groningen was a perfect combination of several favourable circumstances. Nevertheless, I completely underestimated what it means to do a PhD. Therefore, I want to thank all the people that have helped me directly or indirectly in this intellectual endeavour.

Johan – thank you very much for all the support in the last couple of years! We met during my time as a WCM student, and I remember that I thought 'Yes, a planner that's interested in water too!' Thanks to you I started writing the NWO proposal, and I still don't know how, but we managed to get it. I was always impressed by your eloquence, which certainly helped us to get the scholarship. During the PhD trajectory, you provided me with valuable feedback and always commented immediately on my pieces. Even when you moved to Oxford, you were still very much committed to my PhD. Your positive spirits and belief in my work certainly helped me to walk the last mile! At the same time, I also enjoyed our talks about life in general, cultural differences between Germany, England and the Netherlands and, of course, football. I hope that we will continue to work together, in some form or the other, after the PhD!

Margo – toen ik hoorde dat jij mijn dagelijkse begeleider werd, was ik

ontzettend blij! Ik had het jaar daarvoor nog college van je gekregen en ik vond je een ongelooflijk goede docent. Ik dacht met Johan en Margo aan mijn kant kan het eigenlijk al bijna niet meer mis gaan. Dat ging het gelukkig ook niet, hoewel het tussendoor wel wat moeilijker werd dan ik in het begin had verwacht. Jij hebt me de hele tijd ondersteund, ook toen je met verlof was – daarvoor heel erg bedankt! Je gaf me advies over het reilen en zeilen in de wetenschap, hoe ik me staande kon houden als docent en onderzoeker, maar ook over leven en carrière in het algemeen. In de laatste twee jaar heb ik zeker duizend keer van je gehoord: 'Eerst moet het boek af, Britta, daarna ligt de wereld aan je voeten'. Dat het boek nu af is, komt zeker ook door jou. Ik wist dat ik altijd bij jou kon aankloppen. Je hebt me bij elk artikel geholpen om op te starten en de focus te vinden. Als ik ergens vastliep, wist je zeker een manier om het op te lossen. Ik vond onze conversaties altijd heel prettig. Ik hoop dus ook dat we in de toekomst nieuwe mogelijkheden voor samenwerking vinden!

I also would like to thank all my respondents in Hamburg, London and Rotterdam for their time and incredibly useful input during the interviews. Special thanks to the Environment Agency in London for letting me participate in the workshop on the implementation of the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, and the programme team Rijnmond-Drechtsteden for letting me participate in their everyday work and providing us with valuable information and temporary work space at their offices. This thesis could have not been done without these insights that I gained on site.

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Luckily, I also knew some people in Groningen outside the FRW context that could distract me, particularly in times when the academic world drove me nuts. Here I want to thank the 'Focus Group' remainders, Alex, Mufty and Wietske. You have made my life here much lighter, as I could dive into a new life with some 'old friends' in town. En natuurlijk ook dank aan mijn roei-team – Nynke, Welmoed, Elsbeth en Wietske – jullie hebben er altijd mooi de 'Vaart' ingehouden :-). Nynke – heel erg bedankt voor de mooie opmaak van dit boek! Dat heeft me echt ontzettend veel tijd en energie bespaard. Zo mooi had ik het zelf niet kunnen doen!

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The idea of a flood resilient city has gained prominence in academic as well as policy discourses. A city which can withstand or adapt to a flood event without being harmed in its functionality, and is even capable to transform to a new, less flood prone state when necessary. Although this sounds promising, it questions traditional approaches and institutions, asking for a stronger integration of flood risk management and spatial planning, and new governance arrangements between state, market and civil society. This poses the question: how, and to what extent, has this promise been brought to practice?

This book presents a study on how resilience is made sense of in long-term flood risk management strategies in the regions of London and Rotterdam. Moreover, it examines how flood resilience has been implemented in urban redevelopment projects in the cities of Hamburg and London. Thereby, this study provides a 'reality check' on an increasingly used, yet multi-interpretable concept. All three cities reveal tendencies of integrating flood resilience approaches into their existing approaches. However, resilience thinking seems to have been incorporated in a rather technical-rational way, with a strong focus on indicators and technical flood defence measures. Next to discussing the implications of this understanding of resilience, the book provides insights into which conditions are conducive for implementing a flood resilience approach in urban areas.

**Britta Restemeyer (1986) works as a researcher at the University of Oldenburg (D). She holds a BSc in Urban Planning from the HafenCity University Hamburg (D), an MSc in Water and Coastal Management from the University of Oldenburg, and an MSc in Environmental and Infrastructure Planning from the University of Groningen (NL). She conducted her PhD research at the Department of Spatial Planning and Environment, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen.**