

## **Influence of the cultural concept of place on the policy of flood risk management**

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In the field of flood risk management a large inventory of adaptive responses to climate-induced and socio-economically-driven hazards has been developed. Although this inventory comprises a wide array of structural and non-structural measures, one of the most effective adaptive responses is planned resettlement of people at risk. The paper investigates current challenges of relocation programs for communities in flood risk management, and introduces the theoretical concept of place attachment (Heimat) as a central framework to analyse the barriers and challenges of relocation in flood risk management. Two study sites in Austria (Eferdinger Basin and Machland region) are selected to analyse and to assess the use of relocation as an adaptation strategy in flood risk management. The relocation scheme is voluntary with the authorities offering to buy out property at its estimated market value. Although relocation strategy comprises one of the most effective adaptive responses to the flood hazard challenge, this adaptive response is highly contested (legally, socially and economically). People who are affected by relocations are confronted with profound changes in their livelihoods; in particular to overcome emotional attachment to the home left behind and adapting to a new residency as well as re-building a neighbourly network. To investigate the importance of place attachment in the individual decision, we conducted a semi-structure qualitative approach in both study sites. The findings of the study show that place attachment is a central argument against the relocation within the region. Nevertheless, the concept of place attachment is a widely intangible concept, but demonstrates a central argument within the relocation process. We conclude that although a relocation process may be seen as an ‘optimal’ solution for flood risk management, in practice there are many limitations and barriers in conduct these relocation processes them effective. Rhetoric may not be matched by reality and a ‘relocation’ agenda may bring more problems than it solves.