

Faculty of
Social Sciences

Water Governance as connective capacity

Prof.dr. Jurian Edelenbos

Research group Governance of Complex Systems

Department of Public Administration

Co-editor of International Journal of Water Governance

Erasmus University Rotterdam



Introduction

- Challenge of fragmentation
- More need for coordination and capacity to govern interrelations
- Beyond technical orientation towards process and relation orientation
- Governance capacity: well-networked relationships among stakeholders from different sectors, domains and jurisdictions



Erasmus

The need for connective capacity

- A systemic approach stresses the capacity to connect
- Finding drivers for connective capacity
- Relational capacity: **trust**
- Trust as good intentions, living up to prior agreements, reliability
- Research in water governance shows that trust is an important predictor of good outcomes



Erasmus

Next to trust: boundary spanning leadership

- Individual capacity: network managers, connective agents
- Work at boundaries of organizations in informal spheres
- Skilled in **linking** processes and people, **selecting** information and **translating** to other domains
- Research shows that:
 - It is a predictor of integrated performance of water governance
 - Boundary spanning also leads to increase of trust



Erasmus

To conclude

- Water governance goes beyond technical rationality
- Water **governance capacity** is about developing and maintaining well-networked relationships among stakeholders
- Individual and relational capacity: **trust** and **boundary spanning** as important predictors of effective and integrated outcomes from water governance processes
- Trust and boundary spanning as important **mechanisms** to develop water governance capacity

The Erasmus logo, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.