

Interactive comment on “Social capacities for drought risk management in Switzerland” by S. Kruse and I. Seidl

Anonymous Referee #1

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Dear Colleagues,

Your article deals with the interesting question of social capacities regarding drought risk management in Switzerland. It is well written, concisely structured and has a clear line of argumentation.

By critically reading the article, I have several comments:

1) From my perspective, the most interesting part of the article is related to the identification of points for building social capacities. Although you speak of ‘starting points’ the paper would profit from strengthening this section! Regarding this aspect, I miss a critical reflection on advantages and disadvantages of the applied approach (to identifying starting points for building social capacities for drought risk management based

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on stakeholders perspectives of social capacities). Taking into account that stakeholders might have only very few experiences with drought events, an assessment focusing on stakeholders perspectives only might be limited.

2) You state that you aim at investigating the social capacities existing from the perspective of the stakeholders and that there are, as a consequence, contradictory appraisals. You also rightly pointed out that the stakeholders appraisals have to be interpreted against the background of their context. However, reading the result section, I got a rather homogeneous picture of the current state often presented as ‘facts’. It is not always clear if a statement was given by an interviewee or if it is a situation description of the authors for embedding the previous interview statement (e.g. p 1365 line 19). I recommend rewriting the result section in a way that the broad stakeholders’ perspectives get better visible

3) I agree with the editor that the paper could profit by considering concepts understanding droughts as “socio-environmental phenomena” instead of hydro-meteorological ones. This seems especially important for me when investigating social capacities regarding drought management.

4) From chapter 2 it does not get completely clear how you relate/distinguish the concept of social capacities and the concept of adaptive capacities. You just state that it is similar. This is important as there are quite a lot of studies which applied the concept of adaptive capacity (also in Switzerland: e.g. Hill M. 2013. Climate Change and Water Governance. Adaptive Capacity in Chile and Switzerland. Edited by M Beniston. Vol. 54 of Advances in global change research. Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London: Springer.). Moreover, it does not get clear how you define and delimit terms such as capacities, measures, dimensions. and what ‘social’ means (it seems strange to consider technology and infrastructure as social dimensions).

5) The definition of the 3rd dimension “Organisation and management” is a bit vague and should be improved.

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6) Table 2: the economic and policy measures are not sufficiently clear (e.g. in how far is a concession a drought risk management measure?)

Best wishes, Reviewer

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