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Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci., 12, 1097-1109, 2008
www.hydrol-earth-syst-sci.net/12/1097/2008/

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Identification of stakeholder perspectives on future flood management in the Rhine basin using Q methodology

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Abstract. This article identifies different stakeholder perspectives on future flood management in the downstream parts of the Rhine basin in Germany and The Netherlands. The perspectives were identified using Q methodology, which proved to be a good, but time-intensive, method for eliciting and analyzing stakeholder perspectives in a structured and unbiased way. Three shared perspectives were found: A) "Anticipation and institutions", B) "Space for flooding" and C) "Knowledge and engineering". These three perspectives share a central concern for the provision of safety against flooding, but disagree on the expected autonomous developments and the preferred measures. In perspective A, the expected climate change and economic growth call for fast action. To deal with the increasing flood risk, mostly institutional measures are proposed, such as the development of a stronger basin commission. In perspective B, an increasing spatial pressure on the river area is expected, and the proposed measures are focused on mitigating damage, e.g., through controlled flooding and compartmentalization. In perspective C, the role of expert knowledge and technological improvements is emphasized. Preferred strategies include strengthening the dikes and differentiation of safety standards.

An overview of stakeholder perspectives can be useful in natural resources management for 1) setting the research agenda, 2) identifying differences in values and interests that need to be discussed, 3) creating awareness among a broad range of stakeholders, and 4) developing scenarios.

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Citation: Raadgever, G. T., Mostert, E., and van de Giesen, N. C.:
Identification of stakeholder perspectives on future flood management in
the Rhine basin using Q methodology, Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci., 12, 1097-
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