



Organizational values and the implications for mainstreaming climate adaptation in Dutch municipalities: Using Q methodology

Introduction

The aim of the research paper is to identify and explain the patterns in organizational values concerning climate adaptation that occur in various policy departments within three Dutch municipalities – Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam – and to explore the possible implications of these organizational values for mainstreaming climate adaptation. All three cities have to deal with an calculated increase in precipitation and extreme events as a consequence of climate change (CROW 2010). Although governments are not solely responsible for climate adaptation, municipalities do play a substantial role in addressing climate adaptation (Bulkeley 2009). Organizational values are defined as the policy department's socially shared cognitive representation of problem definition and strategy regarding climate adaptation.



Methods

- Q methodology was used to reveal these patterns among the policy departments. This method provides a structural model for data collection and quantitative analysis, and allows for a qualitative evaluation (Webler et al. 2009).
- Interviews and focus groups have been conducted to map and understand the the allocation of tasks and resources of the three municipalities.
- The findings from the interviews and focus groups have also been used to substantiate our findings on the possible implications of the value patterns for mainstreaming.



Results Q method

Table 1

Value pattern 1: Start today	Value pattern 2: Not our task	Value pattern 3: Shared responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate adaptation is a current issue and not a hype• It requires a new way of thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My department is not primarily responsible for climate adaptation• My department has no budget for climate adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate adaptation is a responsibility of everybody• The municipality should communicate information on climate adaptation to its citizens

NB: Table shows two distinctive statements per value pattern. Overall there is general agreement between the respondents that participated in the Q method that each city should anticipate climate change. They disagree on the timeframe of action and who should be responsible for this.

Results Interviews and Focus groups

Table 2

Opportunities for mainstreaming	Barriers for mainstreaming
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness to act• Framing that facilitates mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of political commitment• Unsupportive organizational structures



Conclusions

For climate adaptation, it is essential that policy departments invest in knowledge development and create a narrative that convinces the aldermen of the importance of the topic at hand. The findings revealed that in order to signify the relevance of climate adaptation, many policy departments use concepts and terms closely related to the current narrative in their own policy sector. By doing so, several policy departments are in a sense already mainstreaming climate adaptation.

References

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