Farmers' perceptions of the spatial targeting of water management objectives for catchment-level flood and drought resilience

A study on the 'Action Perspective for the Water Transition' strategy by regional water authority Waterschap de Dommel in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Due to climate change, the Netherlands will become drier in summer, wetter in winter, and warmer throughout the year, hence increasing water-related risks of flooding and droughts. Regional water authorities call for a 'water transition': a shift to sustainable, future-proof water management in order to adapt to the new climate and become more resilient. Regional water authority Waterschap de Dommel has therefore developed a strategy for the water transition where the landscape of the water authority was divided into three categories: the high grounds, the flanks, and the stream valleys. Water management objectives are spatially targeted towards one of the three areas. Farmers are key stakeholders, as they are both landowners and water users. For the implementation of the water transition strategy, it is beneficial to know what the farmers' perceptions are, but research on this topic is limited. Farmers' perceptions of the spatially targeted water transition strategy are analyzed through qualitative, semi-structured, one-hour-long interviews. The perceptions are structured through the 6 policy-specific beliefs of effectiveness, fairness, problem awareness, freedom, specific trust, and perceived outcomes. Data analysis is done through deductive coding, based on those same policy specific beliefs. This method allowed for the thematic analysis of both common and unique themes, perceptions, and experiences. The most prevalent themes were the distrust in the water authority, feelings of unfairness towards other sectors, and the need for more ownership over the farmers' own land.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The water transition

Due to climate change, the Netherlands has become drier in the summer, wetter in the winter, and warmer throughout the year (van Gaalen et al., 2024). Measurements from the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) have shown the recent years of 2023 and 2024 to be record warm and to have many days of extreme precipitation. On these extreme days, over 50 millimeters would fall in one day (KNMI, 2025). In summer, the interior of the Netherlands is experiencing droughts more often than half a century ago (KNMI, 2020). Both summer and winter will know more days of extreme precipitation due to increased temperatures and therefore increased moisture-holding capacity of the air (*Hoe Verandert Het Klimaat in Nederland?*, n.d.). It is expected that all of these trends will continue in the future, increasing the water-related risks of floods and droughts (van Gaalen et al., 2024).

The increasingly extreme weather patterns caused by climate change challenge the current water management practices. Historically, the Netherlands has focused mostly on flood prevention by quickly draining excesses of water (Blankesteijn & Pot, 2024). On top of that, large quantities of groundwater were extracted for different purposes, such as farmland irrigation and drinking water provisioning (Louw et al., 2022). However, those water management practices are no longer effective nor sufficient to ensure future water availability, quality, and safety (Blankesteijn & Pot, 2024). To exemplify, the droughts of 2018 and 2019 led to a 2.5 times increase in groundwater extraction for irrigation, which in turn magnified the drought problem (Louw et al., 2022; Stokkers et al., 2022).

Because a new approach to water management is needed, the Dutch water authorities and drinking water companies call for a 'water transition': a structural shift to sustainable, future-proof water management. This water transition can be framed within the larger trend towards more sustainable use of resources, as can also be seen in the energy sector with the more well-known 'energy transition' (Drinkwaterplatform, 2024). Within the water transition, climate adaptation policies and strategies are urgent because the water system in the Netherlands is already being tested (van Gaalen et al., 2024). Decisions on how the Netherlands wants to address growing climate risks are already needed in the short term (van Gaalen et al., 2024).

The national government has recognized this urgency and is calling for a new management approach where soil and water characteristics are the leading principles upon which decisions for spatial planning are made. This approach is called 'water and soil-led planning' (Water en Bodem Sturend) (Rijksoverheid, 2023).

1.2. Waterschap de Dommel's water transition strategy

In line with the water- and soil-led planning, regional water authority Waterschap de Dommel in the south of the Netherlands developed a multi-year strategy that aims to increase the water retention and infiltration capacity of the Dommel river catchment by 2050. The strategy is called the Action Perspective for the Water Transition (Handelingsperspectief voor de Watertransitie) and categorizes the sandy soil area within the Dommel river catchment into three different landscape types: the high grounds, the flanks, and the stream valleys (Waterschap de Dommel, 2023), which can all be seen in figure 1. Water management objectives for flood and drought resilience, such as infiltration and water retention, are spatially targeted within these landscape types. However, the area does not only consist of water and soil.

The region of Waterschap de Dommel is characterized by the diversity in landscape. The two large Dutch cities of Den Bosch and Eindhoven, multiple Natura 2000 areas, and many agricultural businesses all have a great share of land in the region. This means there are many conflicting interests in the area, posing a challenge for the implementation of a spatially targeted strategy like that of Waterschap de Dommel.

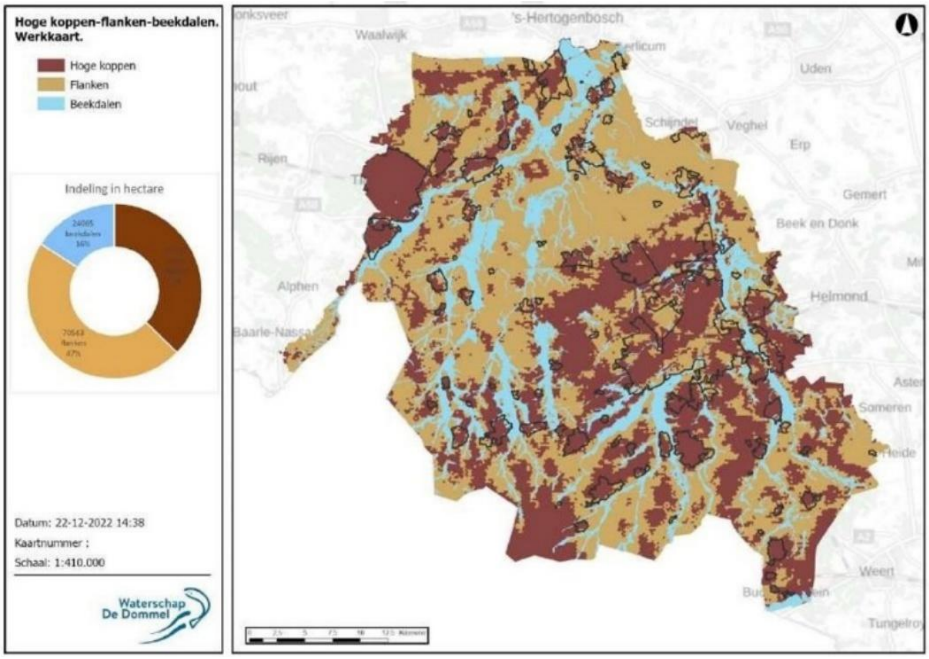

Figure 1 Map of the high grounds (dark brown), flanks (light brown) and stream valleys (blue) (Waterschap de Dommel, 2023)

1.3. Farmers and the spatial targeting of water management objectives

There are some variations to the definition of spatial targeting. For example, in relation to poverty, it is defined as "the deliberate focusing of policy interventions in a specific area" (Cohen et al., 2019). For a definition related to environmental governance, Uthes et al. (2010) describe spatial targeting as the "principle idea that by applying conservation measures on the most vulnerable or suitable land parcels, environmental effects are provided at lower costs than if conducted elsewhere." Overall, spatial targeting thus refers to the strategic allocation of resources or interventions in specific locations to maximize environmental or societal benefits.

Spatial targeting of measures and policies is often recommended to improve cost efficiency (Uthes et al., 2010). However, when spatially targeting environmental interventions, there are trade-off concerns between efficiency and fairness because geo-biophysical and socio-economic characteristics are not distributed evenly in space (Gourevitch et al., 2020; Uthes et al., 2010). This uneven distribution can lead to negative stakeholder responses towards the measure, especially when the perceived costs and responsibilities are not shared equally across different sectors or regions (Gourevitch et al., 2020).

Though there has been previous research on spatial targeting, there is a limited understanding of how stakeholders perceive and respond to the approach because studies mostly focused on researching methods for spatially targeting interventions (Guo et al.,

2020), but they rarely explore how
those affected evaluate the strategy (Zimmerman et al., 2019). This is problematic because stakeholder opposition could be a large barrier to the implementation of spatially targeted measures.

Farmers are key players to investigate in this context. As landowners and water users, farmers are not only directly impacted by water management policies and measures but can also assert influence over policies because they own a lot of land within the catchment area. Understanding farmers' perspectives is therefore essential for the implementation of the Action Perspective for the Water Transition strategy by Waterschap de Dommel.

1.4. Research objective and questions

The objective of this study is to analyze and provide insight into the perceptions of farmers regarding the spatial targeting of water management objectives for catchment-level flood and drought resilience, as described in the Action Perspective for the Watertransition by Waterschap de Dommel. Thus, the main research question of this study is as follows:

What are farmers' perceptions of the spatial targeting of water management objectives for catchment-level flood and drought resilience in the water transition strategy by Waterschap de Dommel?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Spatial targeting in academic research

Spatial targeting is researched in different contexts in academic research. Spatial targeting is a topic in non-environmental contexts such as the spatial targeting of urban policies, also called 'area based initiatives' (Rae, 2011) or in environmental contexts such as the spatial targeting of Nature-based Solutions to mitigate flood risk, for instance, based on the SCIMAP-Flood tool (Reaney, 2022). Existing studies on spatial targeting focus primarily on selected individual measures with the purpose of finding the optimal sites for implementation or evaluating the effectiveness of the current allocation of those measures (Uthes et al., 2010; Rae, 2011; Reaney, 2022). Waterschap de Dommel's approach implements the spatial targeting for broad water management objectives, such as flood and drought resilience at the catchment level, instead of site-specific measures, and is therefore an interesting topic of research. It might prove to be an efficient method. That is, if stakeholders show support for the strategy. One study by Zimmerman et al. (2019) assessed opinions of stakeholders, specifically farmers, in relation to spatial targeting. In the research, certain farmers whose land plots were targeted as priorities for conservation efforts against nutrient and sediment discharge were interviewed about their opinions of the spatial targeting approach. However, as this study focuses on site-specific spatially targeted measures for individual farmers rather than spatial targeting at the catchment level, its results are not generalizable to the context of this research (Zimmerman et al., 2019).

2.2 The Action Perspective for the Water transition

The Action Perspective for the Water transition presents a strategy for increasing space and flexibility for the water system in Waterschap de Dommel's area. In the case that there are multiple years with extremely dry summers, increased water extractions will worsen the quality of the water system: groundwater levels will decline, seepage flows will disappear, and streams will dry out. Less

water will be available in all sectors,
increasing the dependence on irrigation and the further drying of natural areas (Waterschap de Dommel, 2023). In addition to droughts, extreme precipitation is expected to be an increasingly large problem, causing more frequent flooding events. (Waterschap de Dommel). To combat these scenarios and other water issues such as water quality, the entire area of the catchment has been divided into three landscape categories based on the water system: the high grounds, the flanks, and the stream valleys. Each of these landscapes has its own spatially targeted objectives for the water transition and increasing drought and flood resilience. In figure 2, the layout of the landscape in addition to the action perspectives is depicted.

The high grounds

The high grounds, where groundwater is located more than >1.5 meters below the surface, serve as the slow buffers of the water system. The goal in this landscape category is infiltration. The Waterschap aims to transition towards the structural supply of groundwater in this area. Groundwater extractions will no longer be permitted freely and existing extraction permits will be put up for discussion. Waterschap de Dommel makes suggestions for nature-inclusive agriculture, agroforestry and the farming of bio-based materials.

The Flanks

The flanks are the linking areas between the stream valleys and the high grounds. Agriculture is the dominant type of land-use in this landscape. The goal within the flanks is to increase the balance between the supply and discharge of groundwater. This will mean the increase of groundwater levels and the decrease of irrigation needs. For agriculture, this area is indicated as the most optimal location. Relative to the stream valleys and high grounds, the flanks have been targeted with less disruptive policies for agriculture.

The stream valleys

In the stream valleys, there are naturally high water levels due to its low geographical position in the river catchment. However, to counter droughts the groundwater level needs to be brought up even more. In this area, the function of water retention is most important. Through soil-elevation, re-meandering and natural damming, this retention capacity will be achieved. The possibility of flooding will be accepted as a natural process in the area. For agriculture, wet cultivation and extensive grazing is promoted, on top of agriculture that adds to the retention capacity of the stream valleys.

In total, the flanks make up most of the landscape with 47%. 37% of the landscape is identified as high ground, and the stream valleys occupy 16% of the land (Waterschap de Dommel, 2023). Based on the descriptions in the Action Perspective, it seems that farmers will mostly feel the consequences of this new strategy in the high grounds and in the stream valleys.

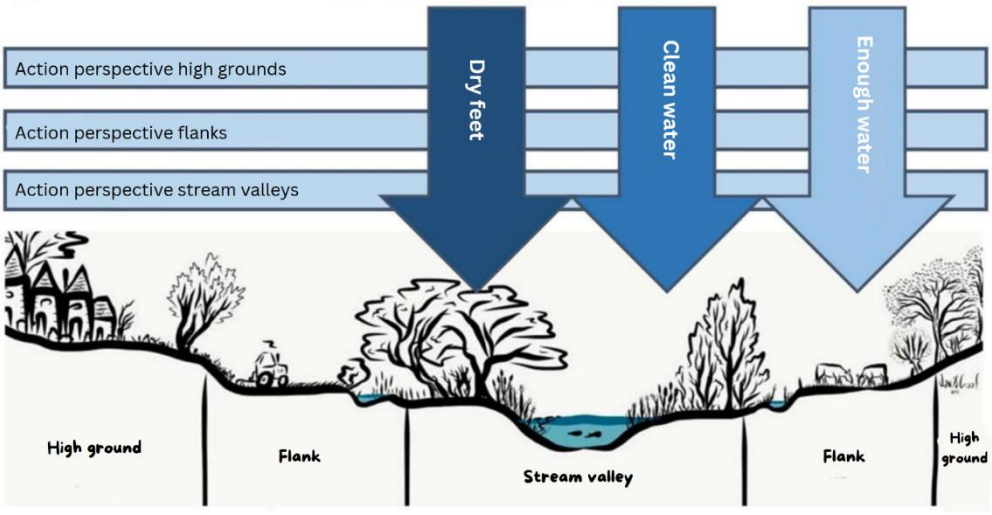

Figure 2 The Action Perspective for the Water Transition, translated into English (Waterschap de Dommel, 2023)

3. Conceptual framework

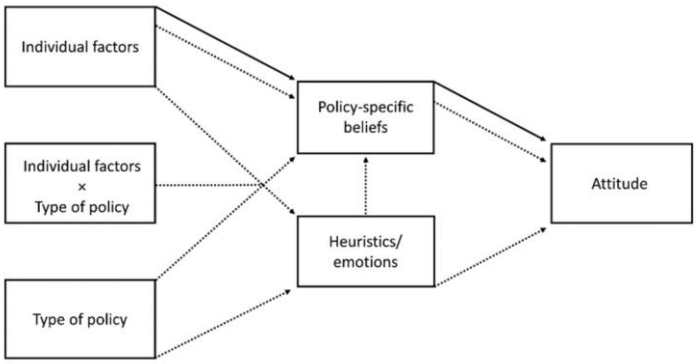

Figure 3 The acceptibility framework by Ejelov & Nilsson (2020)

In order to be able to find an answer to the research question as to what farmers' perceptions are of the water transition strategy by Waterschap de Dommel, there was a need for a conceptual framework that could structure the assessment of stakeholders' views on a strategy or policy. Ejelöv & Nilsson (2020) published a paper that reviewed the individual factors influencing the acceptability of environmental policies. The implementation of environmental policies is difficult for administrators and politicians, as these policies are often not popular with the public. Therefore, it is necessary to know what factors are influencing the public's perceptions of these environmental policies (Ejelöv & Nilsson, 2020). In total, more than 70 articles were reviewed to establish connections between policy acceptability and demographic factors, personal factors, and policy-specific beliefs. Of these, policy-specific beliefs are the most directly relatable to people's perceptions of specific policy contexts.

Policy-specific beliefs are situation-specific variables that are context-dependent and directly related to how stakeholders perceive the structure, implications, and implementation of a specific policy (Ejelöv & Nilsson, 2020). Therefore, it was thought to be an interesting structuring topic for this research on farmers' perceptions of the water transition strategy. Whilst this framework specifically focused on environmental policies and not strategies, it is still regarded as suitable for

this research, as the water transition strategy is the basis for all future policies in the area, and more specific measures are also mentioned within the strategy.

This thesis therefore uses the six policy-specific beliefs found by Ejelöv and Nilsson (2020) to structure the research on farmers' perceptions of the water transition strategy. The beliefs are shown in figure 4 and are:

Problem awareness: The extent to which people recognize the environmental and/or collective problems. Higher awareness generally predicts higher support.
Specific trust: Trust in the competence, responsiveness, and intentions of the specific authority responsible for implementing the policy. Findings are mixed on this belief.
Fairness: Includes both procedural fairness—how the policy was developed and whether stakeholders were consulted—and distributional fairness—how burdens and benefits are allocated. These dimensions strongly influence legitimacy.
Perceived outcomes: Expectations about how the strategy will affect the individual (e.g. business operations), the collective (e.g., rural communities), or the environment (e.g., water quality, biodiversity). Positive outcome expectations increase acceptability, though environmental and collective outcomes often weigh more heavily than individual ones.
Effectiveness: Beliefs about whether the strategy will successfully solve the problem it aims to address. Effectiveness often mediates the relationship between awareness and support.
Freedom: The degree to which people feel that the strategy restricts their autonomy or imposes behavior. Measures perceived as too coercive or inflexible can provoke resistance.

By using these six concepts as a thematic guide, this study explores how farmers perceive the water transition strategy by Waterschap de Dommel that spatially targets water management objectives for flood and drought resilience.

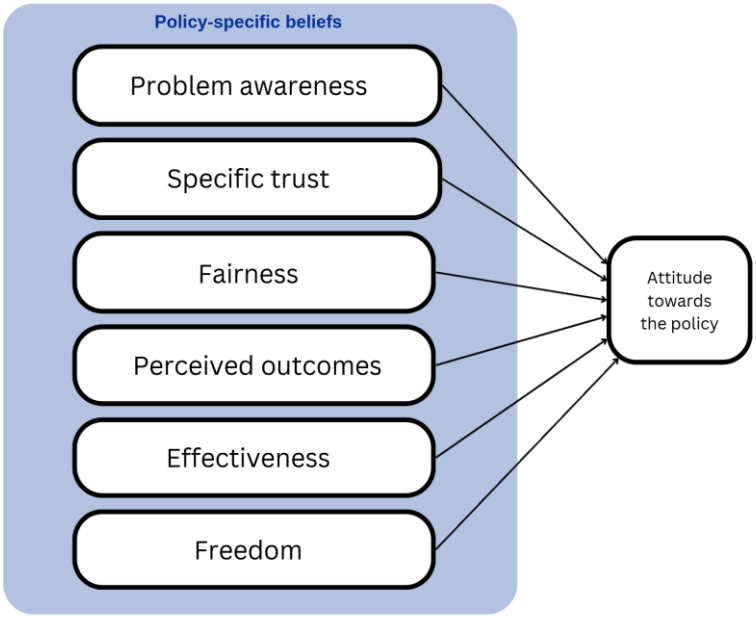

Figure 4 Conceptual framework of policy specific beliefs

4. Methodology

4.1.Research method

Because the objective of this study was to gain in-depth knowledge on the perceptions of farmers regarding the water transition strategy by Waterschap de Dommel, it was chosen to use the qualitative research method of semi-structured interviewing to generate data for analysis. Through qualitative research, it is possible to collect narrative data from individuals or groups and gain in-depth knowledge of the topic of interest (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Qualitative research is often used in environmental resource contexts to describe newly emerged issues, guide policy operationalization, and explore the targets for future research (Zimmerman et al., 2019). Because the water transition strategy was relatively new and still needed to be operationalized, this was deemed a very suitable research method. In figure 5, the methodology for this research is displayed.

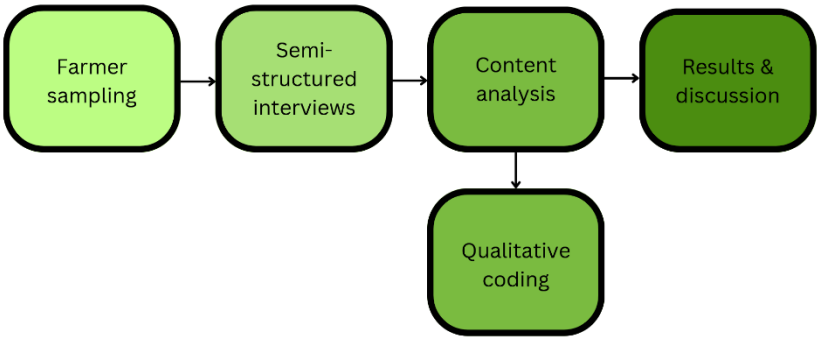

Figure 5 Research methodology

As is shown in the figure, semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection method. This was due to possibility of steering the conversation towards expressions on policy-specific beliefs and the spatial targeting aspect of the Action Perspective for the Water transition, whilst still allowing for unexpected topics to come up (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). After data collection, the interviews were analyzed based on the principles of a content analysis, which is the systematic description of qualitative material (Schreier, 2012). The qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a suitable method when dealing with qualitative data that needs some degree of interpretation, as is the case when analyzing farmers' perceptions of Waterschap de Dommel's water transition strategy (Schreier, 2012). A QCA does not provide a holistic overview of the data but is rather meant to be used when focusing on selected aspects of the data material (Schreier, 2012). The selected aspects in this research were the policy-specific beliefs derived from the paper by Ejelöv & Nilsson (2020). The GCA was done through qualitative coding, which made the structuring of the results and discussion possible.

4.2. Data Collection

Farmer sampling

When sampling interview participants to conduct semi-structured interviews with, the method of maximum variation sampling was chosen in order to get a wide range of perspectives, identify common themes, and still give room to unique individual cases. For the selection of participants, the aim was to achieve variation across several criteria: (1) the distribution of the participants' farmland across the three landscape types—stream valleys, flanks and high grounds; (2) the type of agriculture; and therefore also (3) the water use intensity.

The first recruitment attempt was done through sending emails to two large farmer associations that were active in the area of Waterschap de Dommel. However, this only resulted in the recruitment of one participant. It was then decided that a more hands-on approach was needed. Therefore, a list of agricultural businesses in the area was made through the use of Google Maps and publicly available contact information. Farmers were then called on the phone to ask whether they might be open to participating in the research. Most farmers asked for an official invite with more information through email. However, the reply rate to email contact was very low. In the end, four more farmers from three different businesses agreed to be interviewed, bringing the total number up to five participants from four different businesses.

Regarding the total sample size, the aim was to keep interviewing until a diverse range of perspectives were heard and data saturation was reached. In practice, however, there were issues with time constraints and a difficulty in finding willing participants, which forced the researcher to halt the conducting of interviews after the fourth session. However, across the four interviews, the participants generally expressed very similar opinions and beliefs, suggesting that data saturation might have already been reached at that time.

Interview procedure

Interviews were conducted in Dutch and were planned to last approximately one hour. This length allowed for in-depth conversation and time to cover all policy-specific beliefs whilst not taking up too much time of the farmers so that they would be willing to participate in the research.

An interview guide was developed to structure the interviews and ensure that no topic was left unaddressed. The guide consisted of open-ended, non-dichotomous, and clearly formulated questions. These were developed based on the policy-specific beliefs conceptual framework. Additional questions were related to water use, the location of the farm within the landscape, and general information about the farmer's business designed to establish rapport. For each main question, specific follow-up questions were prepared to allow for deeper exploration depending on the direction of the interview. The complete interview guide is included in the appendices.

Participants could choose between conducting the interview online or in-person. The in person interviews were conducted at the participants' farm or house. Three of the four interviews were conducted in person, and one was conducted online through Microsoft Teams. All interviews were audio-recorded using recording devices provided by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In the case of the online interview, video and audio were recorded through Microsoft Teams.

The content of the interview guide did not need to be changed throughout the interview process. The structure was not followed strictly, which allowed the conversation to flow more naturally. During the first interview it became apparent that the formal phrasing of the questions did not match the conversation style of the participants. In response, the researcher adapted the wording and changed to a more informal and approachable interview style to better fit the style of the interviewees and thereby enhance rapport and data quality.

4.3 Data analysis

After the data was collected, all interviews were transcribed using the transcription tool of Microsoft Teams. The transcripts were then edited and reviewed to correct any mistakes. This was not only useful for ensuring that the data was as accurate as possible, but it also allowed for familiarization with the interview contents, which helped to identify recurring themes and expressions later on.

The edited transcripts were then imported into Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. The transcripts were analyzed through a deductive coding approach. The initial codes were based on the conceptual framework of policy-specific beliefs, including the themes of effectiveness, fairness, freedom, specific trust, perceived outcomes, and problem awareness. In addition to these predetermined codes, some additional codes were added to indicate relevant contextual information, such as interviewees' perspectives on water use, their motivations for farming, and the location of their farms within the three defined landscape types: stream valleys, flanks, and high grounds.

To illustrate the coding process, Table 1 presents a selection of coded quotations that have been translated from Dutch into English. Coding example 1 shows a quote to which multiple codes applied. Effectiveness was applied because it was implied that Waterschap de Dommel addressed the wrong source of the problem of water quality, namely the farmers, and therefore was not fixing the issue. Fairness was applied because the interviewee elicited a sense of unfairness towards being targeted as the cause of a problem as a farmer, while there were other problems that were not being addressed. The farmer mentioned that 'water quality was not improving' and therefore recognized the existence of one of the problems mentioned in the water transition strategy. That is why the problem awareness code was also applied. Lastly, the water authority is perceived to not adequately address the cause of the water quality issues, which could have implications for the specific trust. Some quotes were more straightforwardly related to one specific code, as is seen in the other two examples.

Through this coding process, it became possible to systematically analyze farmers' beliefs, experiences, and concerns in relation to the water transition strategy.

Table 1 Illustrative examples of the coding process, translated into English.

Coding example	Quote	Codes
1	"Or is the problem, like I just said, actually somewhere else — that water quality isn't improving — and they still aren't looking at that, while those sewage overflows and other discharges, I think, are actually a huge part of the problem, and not us as farmers." (2)	Effectiveness, Fairness, Problem awareness, Specific trust
2	"All kinds of farmers will quit." (3)	Perceived outcome
3	"Because 5 meters from the stream — I'm talking about the [name of the stream] — I'm not allowed to apply artificial fertilizer or manure." (5)	Freedom

4.4 Research Ethics

As this research deals with personal data of interviewees regarding their farming businesses and personal experiences, an ethics self-check was done to affirm that the interviews were conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Science at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Participants were provided with a detailed informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, the topic that was going to be discussed, and how their data would be handled. They were also informed and asked permission to audio-record the interviews (and video-record the online interview). The informed consent form was sent to the participants prior to the interviews so that they had time to go over it and consider their participation without being pressured. Participants were also informed about how long their data would be stored (ten years), where it would be stored

(on secure, password-protected ResearchDrive servers), and who would have access to it (the researcher and supervisors only).

The informed consent form also emphasized that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study at any time without losing their right to the offered incentive of a gift card. In addition, all participants were made aware that they had the right to skip any questions they did not wish to answer, both before and during the interview.

To protect the privacy and anonymity of the interviewees, all direct personal identifiers were removed during transcription and analysis. Indirect personal identifiers such as place names that had no added value to the research were also removed. Personal information, including names and contact details, was stored separately from the interview data and encrypted using Cryptomator software. No data were shared or accessible outside the researcher and supervisors.

5. Results

In total, five farmers from four distinct agricultural businesses were interviewed between May and June of 2025. The represented sectors are vegetable production, dairy farming, and tree nursery cultivation. The business sizes ranged from small and family-run to a larger business with around 30 employees. When asked which landscape types their land was located in, the interview participants mostly already knew and were able to indicate this themselves. These indications were then verified together with the participants, using an ARCGIS map made publicly available by the water authority (Waterschap de Dommel, 2022). Although all of the businesses were spread across multiple landscape types—stream valleys, flanks, and high grounds—each had one predominant category. Two businesses were mainly located in the stream valleys, one in the high grounds, and one in the flanks.

In terms of water use, all farmers perceived their business to require no more water than the average in their area, saying their water use is “just normal” (3) or “just about the same” (4). Whilst all interviewed farmers had an irrigation system, there was a difference in the number of groundwater wells, with the lowest being one and the highest ten. One farmer also had a closed water system that only sporadically needed refilling from a groundwater well. Another described having a pond that captures the runoff water from the farmland.

When participants were asked what they liked most about being a farmer, they mentioned that farming was their hobby and a lifestyle and that they liked to be entrepreneurs.

> *People sometimes say, ‘Wow, you work a lot.’ But work is my hobby, so yeah… It’s just a way of life, isn’t it? (5)*

5.1 Problem awareness

Droughts and floods were an issue that all participants had experience with on their own land. Some participants expressed to suffer from these events, but others perceived the impact on their business operation to be quite low.

> *Yes, our experience with flooding is that the pasture is completely submerged all the way up to the barn. But that has mostly happened in winter, so it hasn't caused us too much trouble yet. (1)*

Moreover, participants characterized droughts and floods as periodic events occurring every few years, reflecting a sense of normalcy towards these conditions. Three of the five participants perceived floods and extreme precipitation to be of much larger concern than periods of drought. Participants mentioned this difference stemmed from the fact that they had an irrigation system

drawing from groundwater wells, which allowed them to maintain production with only increased water usage fees as an additional cost. One farmer even intentionally farms on higher and dryer ground in order to avoid wet feet.

> *Droughts have been around for 30 to 40 years—every 10 to 15 years you get some dryer years, and then you just give more water, it's that simple. We just irrigate more. (3)*

When asked about regional issues due to weather extremes, many stories came up about other farmers that experienced great damage due to flooding of their land. Additionally, some farmers mentioned the negative effect of flooding on forests and trees in the region. However, these regional issues were often connected to wrongdoings of the water authority instead of being framed through the lens of climate change.

> *But you can also see it in nature… The road from [place] to [place], the forests there are just dying. They've been standing in water for too long. They can't handle that. But I really don't understand how Waterschap De Dommel doesn't see that. I think they're only looking at [A major Dutch city], making sure it stays dry. So the problem lies not just with us—it's more widespread. (5)*

Despite the use of negative words such as 'klimaat wappies' (irrational climate activists) and 'groene mensen' (green people) to describe environmentalists, all farmers expected that climate issues related to extreme precipitation and droughts would increase in the future, displaying an awareness of climate change. Some conveyed this reluctantly:

> *Three years ago, everything dried out, and now we've just had the two wettest years. I think climate extremes are getting a bit more intense. I denied it for a long time, but I do think they're becoming more intense. (3)*

In addition to seeing connections between climate change and increasing weather extremes, participants recognized irrigation, water use by industries, and increased water use from individuals to be contributing to the problem of water scarcity. Moreover, water quality was framed multiple times as an area of concern.

5.2 Specific trust

Farmers' perceptions of Waterschap De Dommel, the responsible authority for the implementation and development of the water transition strategy, was characterized by both frustration and skepticism. In particular, the water authority's competence, responsiveness, prioritization and approach were discussed in a negative light.

First, according to the participants, Waterschap de Dommel has made technical mistakes that have caused much damage to farmlands in multiple locations throughout the region. This happened, for example, during the remeandering of streams or during maintenance. In addition to the mistakes, participants felt Waterschap de Dommel lacks certain practical 'in the field' knowledge. Participants made multiple comments about actions of the authority that they thought were illogical.

> *We weren't against the remeandering of that stream at all, but when you see what actually happened there, you start to question whether it's being done properly. (2)*

Secondly, when farmers experienced water-related issues, participants described a lack of urgency from the water authority to solve them. In these cases, contact with the authority was often initiated by the farmers, and it would in many instances take multiple phone calls before Waterschap de Dommel took action.

> *In years like last year, they didn't maintain that ditch properly. And then here, the grasslands and arable crops just drowned and rotted. And then the people from the water authority just sit back and don't take action — they come and look, and with crocodile tears say, 'Oh, how terrible this is,' but then nothing is actually done. That kind of thing really riles people up, and I think that's a shame. It doesn't have to be that way, at least not in my view. (4)*

> *I wouldn't say that it [water related problem] really gets resolved right away or that it's dealt with in a reactive manner. It usually just simmers on in the background a bit. (1)*

Thirdly, several farmers expressed frustration that Waterschap De Dommel seemed to prioritize other parties' interests above theirs. The farmers explained that the agricultural sector suffers from the policies of the water authority in favor of cities, industry, nature, and ecological goals. One farmer elaborates on this perception by explaining how farmers' interests have historically declined in importance at the water authority's board:

> *As farmers, we used to represent one strong shared interest. But now, most of the board is democratically elected, so there are far fewer farmers than citizens. Our interest is always subordinate, so we lose every discussion within the board. (3)*

Lastly, all participants had issues with the perceived top-down approach of Waterschap de Dommel, noting that policies and regulations were often imposed without consultation or dialogue.
Multiple participants mentioned Waterschap de Dommel did not listen to the input of the agricultural sector. Participants found this even more frustrating because they perceived themselves and the entire agricultural sector to have valuable on-the-ground knowledge and experience. One participant regularly attended meetings with the water authority and spoke about the mood during the meetings:

> *Sometimes there's some cursing here and there. Then things don't always go the way they should. That might be because people aren't being heard — people from the field. (4)*

Participants also made positive statements regarding Waterschap de Dommel. In general, the field workers of the water authority were perceived to be of good will and doing their best. Participants also expressed willingness to cooperate with Waterschap de Dommel, and one farmer appreciated that Waterschap de Dommel mentioned in the Action Perspective that they wanted to cooperate with the farmers as well. Another participant saw potential for the trustworthiness of Waterschap de Dommel if they would act less like the government.

5.3 Fairness

Many statements from participants revealed concerns regarding both procedural fairness and distributive fairness. In terms of procedural fairness, the interviewees were skeptical about the involvement of farmers in the creation and design of the water transition strategy. When directly asked about the perceived degree of involvement of farmers in the formation of the strategy, one

interviewee thought it depended on the region, and all others thought involvement was very limited:

> *But yes, the input we have is so... so minimal, right? While we are actually the people they should be negotiating with — not the people who live in the cities. (5)*

The participant who spoke those words also referred back to the perceived top-down approach of Waterschap de Dommel, which was already mentioned in the previous section about specific trust, stating that the strategy is imposed from above. This was a recurring theme across all interviews, as farmers pleaded for a more equal and collaborative relationship with Waterschap de Dommel, where they are actively consulted and included in the decision-making process. Farmers thought this was only fair, as the water authority is making decisions about the land that is in possession of the farmers.

> *When you're talking about someone's property, it shouldn't be done in a sly way—just sit down at the table and be open about it. Don't go off and publish things on your own and then say, 'Oh, that was not the intention.' 'Yes, but that was already discussed back then.' No. you should come here to sit down at the table. (5)*

Distributional fairness was discussed in several ways. Most farmers did not express strong concerns about the spatial targeting aspect of the water transition strategy. Stream valleys were generally viewed as the least desirable areas for agricultural activity due to the anticipated interventions that could lead to excess water on farmland. The flanks were perceived more positively, though no particular reason was given to explain this. Still, the location of their farm compared to other locations did not elicit a strong reaction of unfairness from the participants. On the other hand, the participants stated strongly that the agricultural sector is disproportionately burdened with solving the water-related issues compared to other parties such as industries, urban areas, the water authority, and nature. This was mentioned both in the context of the water transition strategy and within the national policy context.

> *Then you read about who's expected to solve it again, and it's mainly the farmers… agriculture, nature, and I think there was another group mentioned too… urban areas? But I think, especially when it comes to water use and pollution, it's not just the agricultural sector. There's industry, which once again gets off the hook. I read a sentence saying that the water authority should also be a bit more critical of itself—particularly regarding sewer overflows. There are still so many unchecked issues coming from other sectors. And as farmers, we've already done a lot in recent years. I think, well, maybe take a look at that for once, because right now, we're just mopping the floor while the tap is still running. (2)*

The participants said that they themselves and other farmers have already made a lot of concessions and investments for improving water-related issues and for the public interest in general. That's why it seems unfair to them that the water transition strategy again lists farmers as one of the main sectors where changes are going to happen.

5.4 Perceived outcomes

During the interviews, the participants found it difficult to voice what they perceived to be the outcome of the water transition strategy. This was because of the fact that the strategy is still being shaped and measures are not set in stone yet.

> *In broad terms, we do know what challenges there are. But what it will concretely mean for our farm — that, we still don't know. (1)*

Still, the farmers did make predictions of the expected outcomes of the strategy. One farmer was certain that no matter what, the plans from Waterschap de Dommel will go through in the end, even if the farmers do not agree with them. The farmer framed this within his experience of the many strategies and plans he has experienced over the last 40 years.

> *I just see the entire agricultural sector largely disappearing in the Netherlands because they simply don't stand a chance… In 15 years, if I can no longer make a living here and the government comes along and wants to buy the land behind us, then I'll say: guys, I'm out. And that's it — it's been the strategy for 30 or 40 years already: launch plans, and very slowly it just starts to happen. (3)*

The participants thought agriculture would slowly lose more and more land, as farmers feel pressured to quit due to the many measures by different authorities that restrict their business practices. One farmer predicted that many of his colleagues would quit if the water transition was implemented. The measures that were proposed in the water transition strategy, such as the switching to different crops, were viewed as a potential threat to the revenue model of the farmers. The participants expressed that if the strategy would take away the revenue model of the farmers, they would not be willing to cooperate with Waterschap de Dommel for the implementation of the strategy.

> *Yes, if a farmer has no future, no perspective, then you're not going to cooperate — it's that simple. And I think most people are actually willing to cooperate, but there has to be a revenue model. That could involve... well, land swap, for example. In the stream valley, I'd be willing to grow a different crop or farm less intensively. But then I do need to have land somewhere else where I can still produce. I mean, if you have a number of cows to feed, you need to have feed — otherwise they won't produce milk. And yes, if I can't fertilize those potatoes anymore, then... well, then there won't be any potatoes. So one way or another, measures will have to be taken to make sure income can still be generated, otherwise people simply won't participate. It's really just that simple, I think. (4)*

Farmers would be willing to participate in a land swap if the new plots have similar conditions and are not too far away. However, they questioned the feasibility of land swaps as Waterschap de Dommel does not have a lot of land in its own possession.

> *Land swap would probably be the best option, provided that land is available in the area. And then there's still the question—I'm not even sure how they view irrigation—but here we do have the ability to irrigate, even electrically. Can we also do that on those other plots of land? We use pasture for the cows… our home plot is grassland, and if we lose land there, you can't expect cows to walk for kilometers, so it has to be somewhat local. So yes, it would be nice, but I also think it's a challenging task. (2)*

Farmers did not see much potential in subsidies for better water management practices, as the farmers perceived the subsidies to have a high chance of being discontinued when a new government is elected or budgets are changed. In the end, the policy that most farmers dreaded but thought was likely to happen was expropriation.

> *Yes, I'm always like, then you see the word expropriation somewhere again, appropriation of land, you know—if it can't be done amicably, then it will be done forcibly. I actually think that really goes too far, so yes, that does scare me off, so to speak. (2)*

In terms of environmental outcomes, multiple farmers predicted that nature surrounding the stream valleys would improve with implementation of the strategy because the area will get wetter. The interviewees found it difficult to say whether the plans in the strategy would lead to a decline in water-related problems on their own land.

5.5 Effectiveness

Participants had mixed feelings regarding the overall effectiveness of Waterschap De Dommel's water transition strategy. On the one hand, most participants agreed on the effectivity of the goal of water retention and rewetting for the purpose of combating droughts and increasing the quality of nature in the area. On the other hand, those same measures were perceived to have negative effects on agricultural areas during periods of extreme precipitation.

> *If you're remeandering the Dommel to retain water—great, no farmer is against that. But then also install a ditch alongside it, so that in cases of extreme water, you can discharge it. Right now, they've slowed everything down, which… build a dual system, where in case of emergency, you can open the lock and the water just flows out—just like that. Water retention is a good thing. No farmer is against retaining water, but the point is: when you have to harvest, when you have to dig up crops, you still need to be able to access the land. (3)*

Moreover, some farmers raised concerns that the strategy focused too much on the agricultural sector, without taking other water users into account, such as industry, urban areas, and nature. This skewed focus was seen as undermining the objectives of the water transition strategy.

> *The strategy will probably have a positive effect on nature, but they should also actively work on nature itself. I don't know if you see anything happening there, but I personally haven't seen anything actually being done for nature yet. (2)*

> *In principle, the problem doesn't lie with the farmer. Look, 14% of the Netherlands is covered (by buildings and infrastructure). If it rains in Eindhoven, it ends up in Den Bosch within a few days. They need to make sure it infiltrates into the ground locally. (5)*

Additionally, the perceived lack of coherence across governance levels was seen as a barrier to effective water management. Participants pointed to European, national, regional, and local policy institutions that were working against each other.

> *So the province develops policies, but then the municipality says, 'Well, we're not going to implement that.' And that's something you encounter structurally on all fronts. The same applies to the water authority and forests — there are all kinds of initiatives, but nothing gets resolved; you keep running into a wall. (3)*

Farmers also felt there was sometimes a disconnect between the goal and the proposed measures. Two farmers were surprised by Waterschap de Dommel's proposal to infiltrate more water in the high grounds, saying that water is already infiltrating in those areas and therefore claiming it is a useless measure.

> *Yes, but that always seeps into the ground. It has been that way for hundreds of years, because on high fields—look, there are no ditches here. Where there are no ditches, the water can't drain away. It's very simple. So if you go cycling through these higher fields, you'll see that there are no ditches. Ditches are only found on the lower fields, because that's where the water needs to be drained.(3)*

Two farmers also predicted that because of the measure, many dairy farmers would need to quit or relocate their businesses due to the measures in the water transition strategy. However, they predicted this would have an adverse effect on what the strategy aims to achieve, as arable farmers take over the dairy farmers' grasslands that are beneficial for water infiltration and retention.

> *But we've been saying for years that it's skewed policy, because what happens is—say, twenty dairy farmers stop here, that's 1000 hectares of grassland, and grassland is actually quite good for water retention. But now that's becoming 1000 hectares of arable farming. That land is cultivated more intensively, more chemicals are used, more irrigation happens, so we're actually achieving the opposite of what we want. (3)*

The participants were asked to specifically consider the spatial targeting aspect of the strategy with the three different landscape types and whether they thought it would be an effective approach to increase resilience to the water related problems in the region. Some farmers thought it was possible that the goals of the strategy could be achieved, but only under certain conditions. There should be enough money available; a revenue model needs to remain for the farmers; Waterschap de Dommel should invest in innovation techniques and better contacts with the farmers; and one farmer thought the strategy was not feasible without land acquisition. One farmer firmly answered that he did not believe in the effectiveness of spatially targeted water management objectives at the watershed level.

> *If funding is available and there's a viable business model, then a lot is possible. But without a business model… well, I think that would really be a problem. Time, energy, and simply money will have to be invested. If a farmer sees no future or perspective, then they won't cooperate — it's as simple as that.. (4)*

> *No. I believe that water should be buffered at the farm level. What's the point of rewetting 500 or 1,000 hectares back there if it dries out over here? I say, hold on to the water where it falls, make a basin of 100,000 cubic meters for a farmer so he can use that water all summer…then you're retaining it and putting it to use. I support managing it at the farm level. (3)*

The other participants shared the same opinion of preferring farm-level interventions over the catchment-level approach as described in the water transition strategy.

5.6 Freedom

As was discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.4, the interviewees perceived the water transition strategy as a top-down approach, where the farmers did not feel consulted. Additionally, they mentioned it was likely that expropriation was going to be used as a measure, which is of negative influence to the perceived individual freedom of the farmers. One farmer also expressed thinking that no matter

what, the plans of Waterschap de Dommel
would be pushed through, even though the farmers might not agree. This comment displayed a feeling of powerlessness. The strategy was perceived in a way where slowly more and more activities of agricultural businesses are limited or forbidden.

> *Yes, it's a bit of a thing — it feels more like using rules to kind of hassle the farmers, so to speak. As if the idea is: if you pester the farmer enough, eventually he'll just give up and leave. (4)*

> *Yes, we're just really afraid — there's talk about large buffer zones along the stream valleys, where less fertilization would be allowed, and something about extensive grazing… To what extent will we have to adjust our way of farming? (2)*

In terms of new opportunities, the interview participants had a relatively positive mindset. One farmer said they did think there were possibilities on an individual business level, but that farmers would lose much freedom as a collective. Other farmers thought that there are always new opportunities emerging when plans like the water transition strategy are implemented.

> *There are always opportunities. People who are now switching to organic farming because of subsidies — those are opportunities. But it's something you have to want. I prefer to work without subsidies; I try to earn my own living. (5)*

Overall, farmers advocated for Waterschap de Dommel to give the farmers more authority to manage water on their own land. They portrayed the agricultural sector as the best steward of the rural landscape, as farmers are knowledgeable about natural processes, know the characteristics of the area, and above all want the best for their own land.

7. Discussion

7.1 General Reflections

When asked what the reason was for being a farmer, the answers were related to a certain way of life and entrepreneurship. It is within this context that many of the struggles listed in the results can be viewed. Generally, farmers had a defensive attitude towards the water transition strategy. They perceived certain threats to their 'way of life,' such as expropriation, and felt restricted in their individual choices by measures telling them how to run their farms. Additionally, the farmers have had unpleasant contact with the authority responsible for the strategy's implementation, which has most likely enhanced all other worries they have about the strategy. Moreover, there are feelings of unfairness towards other sectors such as the industries and cities, as the farmers felt they were picked as the easiest target to solve the water-related issues. Overall, the negative perceptions far exceeded the positive ones. However, the question can be raised to what extent these perceptions applied to the water transition strategy itself.

During the interviews, farmers would often refer to instances and events that were not directly related to the water transition strategy, where they felt the same patterns of unfairness and restricted freedom. For example, the nitrogen crisis came up multiple times in all of the interviews. Reactions like bringing up past or not closely related policies give the impression that the perceptions of the farmers regarding the water transition strategy are considerably influenced by the cumulative burdens from earlier policies. This may have influenced the willingness or ability of the farmers to look at new strategies and policies individually.

Considering this, it is noteworthy that the farmers indeed did not make many comments about the spatially targeted characteristics of the Action Perspective for the Water Transition, especially in comparison to themes like specific trust and fairness. The farmers did prefer farm-level initiatives over the catchment-level initiative, but besides that, there were no feelings of unfairness or resentment targeted towards the method of spatial targeting itself. Between farmers, it mostly did not matter to them that they were located in a stream valley and another farmer was located in the high grounds and maybe had to deal with fewer interventions. Farmers only felt the unfairness when it was between different sectors and within their relation with Waterschap de Dommel and other governmental institutions.

Overall, there were many themes and topics that have potential for being addressed and improved upon in the future.

7.2 The perceptions of policy specific beliefs

Specific Trust:

Due to the strong presence of specific trust as a topic throughout all interviews and the fact that it was the most coded policy-specific belief with 74 quotations, this study strongly suggests that trust in Waterschap de Dommel is a defining factor in the perceptions of the farmers and a determinant of farmers' support for the strategy. This is interesting because in Ejelöv & Nilsson's (2020) research, specific trust came forward as the only policy-specific belief that had mixed findings on whether specific trust in the authority responsible for policy implementation is beneficial to the policy acceptability. Interviewees criticized the water authority for delayed responses, technical errors, and a perceived prioritization of urban and ecological interests over agricultural ones. They called for more direct communication and field-level engagement.

Effectiveness:

Participants saw the potential ecological benefits of water retention but questioned whether the current spatial targeting approach would deliver outcomes efficiently. Several noted that remeandering and rewetting could backfire during high rainfall events, damaging farmland. They advocated for farm-level rather than catchment-level interventions, despite the strategy's alignment with the national strategy of "Water en Bodem Sturend."

Fairness:

Participants focused less on fairness within the agricultural sector and more on inter-sectoral fairness. They felt that industry, municipalities, and even the water board itself were not carrying their fair share of the burden. This aligns with Gourevitch et al. (2020), who had pointed to the trade-off between efficiency and fairness within spatially targeted measures.

Freedom: Farmers emphasized that autonomy and ownership are integral to their identity and business model. The perceived threat of expropriation and the cumulative loss of decision-making capacity created a sense of powerlessness. Additionally, the farmers wanted to be on more equal decision-making terms with Waterschap de Dommel, feeling that they have a right to decide on matters concerning their own land.

Perceived Outcomes: The vagueness of the Action Perspective hindered farmers' ability to foresee clear outcomes for their businesses or the environment. While some saw potential for ecological improvement, others feared unintended consequences, such as increased arable farming replacing pastureland, which may negatively affect infiltration and biodiversity. The limited operationalization

of the strategy also restricted the use of the conceptual framework in the exploration of deeper themes and perceptions.

Problem Awareness: While all participants acknowledged climate change and growing water-related issues, these were often described in an unconcerned way. Their awareness did not necessarily translate into acceptance of the proposed measures.

7.3 Recommendations

In order to increase the feasibility of the water transition strategy, Waterschap de Dommel can invest in more direct, business-level communication with farmers. If the farmers know what the plans are for their own business, and they can sit around the table and discuss the topic with someone from the water authority, then the perceived top-down relationship might change into a more trustful relationship. This would be beneficial for Waterschap de Dommel as well, because currently, the untrustworthy relationship causes farmers to have negative attitudes towards policies that may be unrelated to the policy itself.

Second, the water authority should further explore scenarios of land swap within the strategy, as farmers perceived this as one of the least invasive measures. If the water authority were able to find land that was close to and similar to that of the farmers, they would be open to participating in the land swap measure.

Lastly, the water authority could explore ways to communicate their intentions more clearly to the farmers. Throughout the interviews, there were moments where the farmers interpreted the water transition strategy in a way that gave the impression that there was a misunderstanding. For example, the farmers did not grasp why the goal of water infiltration in the high grounds was mentioned, because they perceived the water to already be infiltrating in those areas. If the water authority explores ways to communicate more clearly with the agricultural sector, these kinds of misunderstandings might be prevented.

7.4 Research limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the limited sample size, which was the result of challenges in recruiting participants. Farmers were often busy or did not respond to follow-up emails after initial contact was established by phone. In total, four interviews were conducted with five participants. The analysis of the fourth interview revealed similar recurring themes and patterns as the earlier interviews, which could have been a possible sign of data saturation. However, the sample size is insufficient to confidently determine that data saturation was fully achieved. Although a maximum variation sampling strategy was used in order to capture diverse perspectives based on business type, landscape location, and water use, it is still possible that participants with similar views and experiences were overrepresented. As a result, this research may not represent some important perspectives and experiences of farmers in the region regarding the spatial targeting of water management objectives for flood and drought resilience in the catchment area of the Dommel River. Another perspective that will not be captured by this research is the changing perceptions of the farmers. As mentioned before, the strategy is still being developed, and therefore perceptions of the strategy might change and evolve throughout its entire development and implementation phases. This study offers only a snapshot of farmers' perceptions at one point in time and does not reflect the shifting perceptions within the policy landscape, as there is no intention to conduct follow-up interviews.

Additionally, the extent to which participants were fully informed about the strategy varied. Only one interviewed farming couple had read through the strategy document in its entirety before the interview. It was also difficult for the reader to provide in-depth information on the strategy during the interviews when farmers answered that they knew what was written within the strategy, even though later it became apparent that they did not know all the details. However, even when certain details may not have been fully known, the themes discussed remain highly relevant, as they reflect broader attitudes toward spatial interventions and governance approaches for flood and drought resilience in rural areas.

Lastly, connecting to the researcher's capabilities, this was the first experience the researcher had with conducting semi-structured interviews. At times, the researcher asked the participants closed-ended questions instead of open-ended. This was probably due to the informal nature of the conversations. In the end, these closed-ended questions may have caused some topics to not be explored to their full potential.

8. Conclusion

This study examined farmers' perceptions of Waterschap de Dommel's spatially targeted water transition strategy using the conceptual framework of policy-specific beliefs. It found that while farmers are aware of regional climate risks and in some cases open to new opportunities, their acceptance of the strategy is conditional and cautious.

Key barriers to acceptance include low specific trust in Waterschap de Dommel, concerns over fairness and freedom, and doubts about the effectiveness of catchment-level spatial targeting. Whilst the strategy aligns well with broader policy trends such as water and soil-led spatial planning programs, its success is dependent on an established relation of trust between parties.

The results show there is a need for transparency and accountability in order to operationalize strategies like the Action Perspective for the Water Transition, and to actively engage and cooperate with farmers. Future studies could focus on different spatial targeting strategies across regions and could also include the opinions of other stakeholders and the water authorities.

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Appendices

1.Interview guide

Interview no. :

Introduction

Introduceer jezelf.

Allereerst wil ik u bedanken voor het meedoen aan dit interview. Het doel van het interview is inzicht geven in het perspectief van agrarische ondernemers op de watertransitie strategie van Waterschap de Dommel. U hoeft zich geen zorgen te maken dat u hier te weinig vanaf weet, want ik zal tijdens het interview meer informatie geven. Ik zal een aantal open vragen stellen en soms doorvragen op iets wat u vertelt. Ik wil benadrukken dat er geen goede of foute antwoorden zijn, omdat ik geïnteresseerd ben in uw eigen perspectief en ervaringen.

Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig, en u kunt zich op elk gewenst moment terug trekken. Het interview zal ongeveer een uur duren. Met uw toestemming zou ik graag het interview willen opnemen, omdat ik geen informatie wil missen of vergeten. Al uw antwoorden zijn vertrouwelijk. Dit betekent dat ik uw volledige interview op papier en de opname zal anonimiseren en alleen zal delen met mijn twee begeleiders. De gegevens worden voor 10 jaar opgeslagen op een beveiligde server van de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, en kunnen op uw verzoek verwijderd worden. Alle uitspraken die in het onderzoek terecht komen zullen niet tot u herleidbaar zijn. U kunt ervoor kiezen om bepaalde vragen niet te beantwoorden, en u kunt op elk gewenst moment stoppen met het interview. Heeft u nog vragen voordat we beginnen?

Zou ik dan nu de opname mogen starten?

Interview questions and follow-ups

Establishing Rapport

Voordat we helemaal in het interview duiken, kunt u misschien een korte introductie geven over uzelf en uw bedrijf? (maak een referentie naar iets dat je al weet of opgemerkt hebt)

Follow-up: Hoe lang werkt u al in dit bedrijf/wat vind u het leukst aan het werk / hoeveel land en hoeveel crops

1. Water use

Kunt u vertellen over het watergebruik van uw bedrijf?

Follow-up: waar komt het water vandaan (putten, grondwater etc.) / waterverbruik vergeleken andere boeren

2. Problem awareness

Wat is uw persoonlijke ervaring met droogten en overstromingen?

Follow-up: hoe denkt u dat dit in de toekomst zal veranderen

In hoeverre vormen droogten en
overstromingen een probleem in de regio volgens u?

Follow-up: specifiek de mensen of boeren in de omgeving (collective) / specifiek de natuur (Environmental) / verandering in de toekomst

(optioneel) Heeft u weleens acties ondernomen of deelgenomen aan programmas of samenwerkingen om problemen tegen droogten en overstromingen tegen te gaan?

Follow-up: zou u dat overwegen?

3. Specific trust

Wat is uw ervaring tot nu toe geweest met Waterschap de Dommel?

Follow-up: wat is uw mening over het Waterschap / ziet u het Waterschap als betrouwbaar / hoe vaak contact met het waterschap / vaker contact willen /

Ik zou het nu graag willen hebben over de specifieke strategie die door Waterschap de Dommel is gepubliceerd, het handelingsperspectief voor de watertransitie. Had u er voor dit interview al een keer van gehoord?

Follow-up: waar of hoe heeft u ervan gehoord?

Voor zover u weet, op wat voor manier worden agrarische ondernemers betrokken door Waterschap de Dommel bij het ontwikkelen van dit soort strategiën?

Follow-up: In hoeverre denkt u dat agrarische ondernemers betrokken zijn bij deze specifieke

strategie?

Summary of Strategy

Ik zal nu een korte samenvatting geven van de strategie om de volgende onderwerpen beter te kunnen bespreken.

[geef samenvatting en benadruk dat dit de geschreven woorden zijn van het Waterschap]

4. Effectiveness & Outcomes

Wat is uw (eerste) indruk van deze strategie?

[laat kaart zien van beekdal hoge kop en flank]

In welke categorie of categorien denkt u dat uw bedrijf gelegen is? (hoge kop, flank, beekdal)

Follow-up: als er meerdere opties zijn, wat is de verdeling?

Wat voor effect verwacht u dat de strategie kan gaan hebben op uw bedrijf?

Hoe kijkt u naar de potentie van de strategie om (toekomstige) problemen met droogten en overstromingen tegen te gaan in de gehele regio?

Follow-up: specifiek de natuurlijke omgeving / verschil in potentie van problemen oplossen

tussen de flanken, hoge koppen en beekdalen?

5. Freedom

Welke kansen of zorgen ziet u voor uw bedrijfsvoering?

Follow up: specifiek beperkt deze strategie uw bedrijfsvoering?

5. Fairness

Wat is volgens u de beste geografische locatie om een agrarische onderneming te hebben?

Follow up: en de minst voordelige?

Hoe kijkt u op de verdeling van de lasten van deze strategie? (distributional fairness)

Follow-up: wie of wat draagt de meeste lasten (natuur, agrarische ondernemers, waterschap etc)

/ beekdal/flank/kop

Hoe kijkt u op de verdeling van de profijten van deze strategie? (distributional fairness)

Follow-up: wie of wat profiteert het meest / beekdal/ flank /kop

Conclusion

We zijn nu aan het einde van het interview gekomen. Heeft u nog vragen of iets dat u wilt toevoegen?

Hartelijk bedankt voor uw tijd en deelname. Als u toch nog vragen heeft kunt u mij bereiken via het e-mail adres j.g.a.melenhorst@student.vu.nl dat ook te vinden is op het toestemmingsformulier.