



# Cultural Factors as Co-Determinants of Participation in River Basin Management

## Publication

[Article](#)

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Finding a place for public participation in the policies and practices of European river basin management planning is a challenge for the authorities in the participating countries and territories. Understanding the relationship between national culture, the historical and political differences in the respective countries, and their practical experience with participation is considered important in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. Knowledge and understanding of this relationship will help to provide a context and basis from which new participatory practices can be designed and experiences evaluated, and will also facilitate the identification of conditions necessary for social learning.

Within the context of the HarmoniCOP project, such a study was undertaken in the form of a National Approach and Background study, which examined and evaluated both historical and recent experiences that exist across Europe in relation to public participation and water management as it is today. We draw upon the findings of the HarmoniCOP national reports to identify common features and cultural differences. We depart from the traditional ideational concept of culture as a long-lasting system of perceptions, beliefs, norms, and values to provide a detailed discussion of the practices in four countries. Furthermore, we demonstrate that culture is just one of the factors that explain the differences in national approaches to public participation and argue that culture perceived as a more dynamic, integrated, adaptive socio-cultural system in which groups of actors create new frames, norms, and routines is a more promising road for further research.

The publication is available for download on the [Ecology & Society](#) webpage.

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## Authorship

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Responses to this Article

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