



Participatory approaches to understanding practices of flood management across borders

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The aim of this paper is to outline and present initial results from a study designed to identify principles of and practices for adaptive co-management strategies for resilience to flooding in borderlands using participatory methods. Borderlands are the complex and sometimes undefined spaces existing at the interface of different territories and draws attention towards messy connections and disconnections (Strathern 2004; Sassen 2006). For this project the borderlands concerned are those between professional and lay knowledge, between responsible agencies, and between one nation and another. Research was focused on the River Tweed catchment, located on the Scottish-English border. This catchment is subject to complex environmental designations and rural development regimes that make integrated management of the whole catchment difficult. A multi-method approach was developed using semi-structured interviews, Q methodology and participatory GIS in order to capture wide ranging practices for managing flooding, the judgements behind these practices and to 'scale up' participation in the study. Professionals and local experts were involved in the research. The methodology generated a useful set of options for flood management, with research outputs easily understood by key management organisations and the wider public alike. There was a wide endorsement of alternative flood management solutions from both managers and local experts. The role of location was particularly important for ensuring communication and data sharing between flood managers from different organisations and more wide ranging stakeholders. There were complex issues around scale; both the mismatch between communities and evidence of flooding and the mismatch between governance and scale of intervention for natural flood management. The multi-method approach was essential in capturing practice and the complexities around governance of flooding. The involvement of key flood management organisations was integral to making the research of relevance to professionals.