

The Tidal Elbe – people's perception of the Port of Hamburg

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Introduction

Perception of the Port of Hamburg

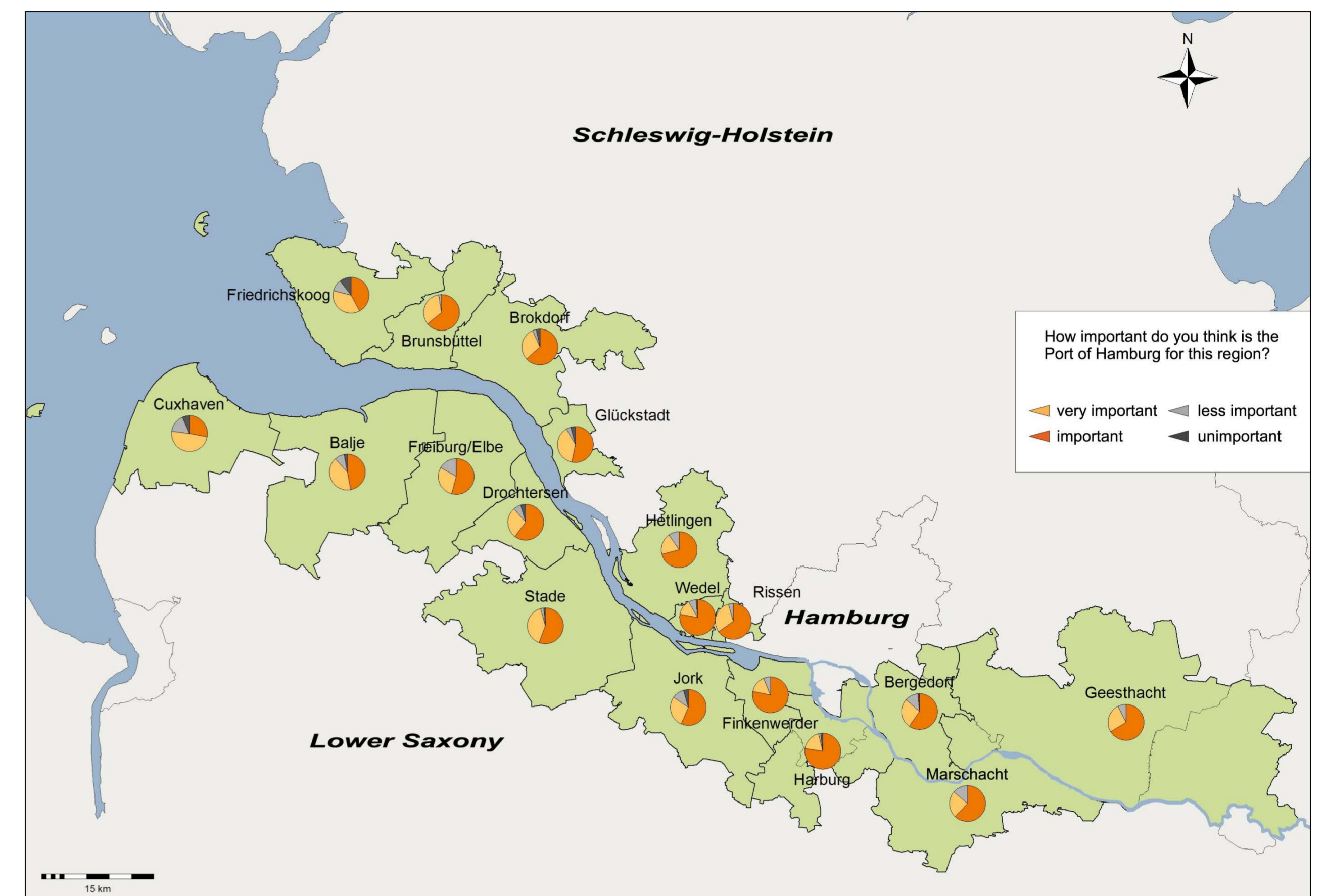
The Port of Hamburg is the largest German port. As an economic hub it fosters the development of the region; at the same time, its development causes severe interventions into the ecosystem. Different interests thus lead to conflicts.

Integrated management including all interest groups seems an appropriate way forward. Management is understood as shaping matters and acting in a targeted way, including the public, stakeholders and all interest groups in a dialectical dialogue. Perception studies in the form of population surveys can help to analyse the preconditions for those management processes [1].

The results of the survey give answers to the following questions:

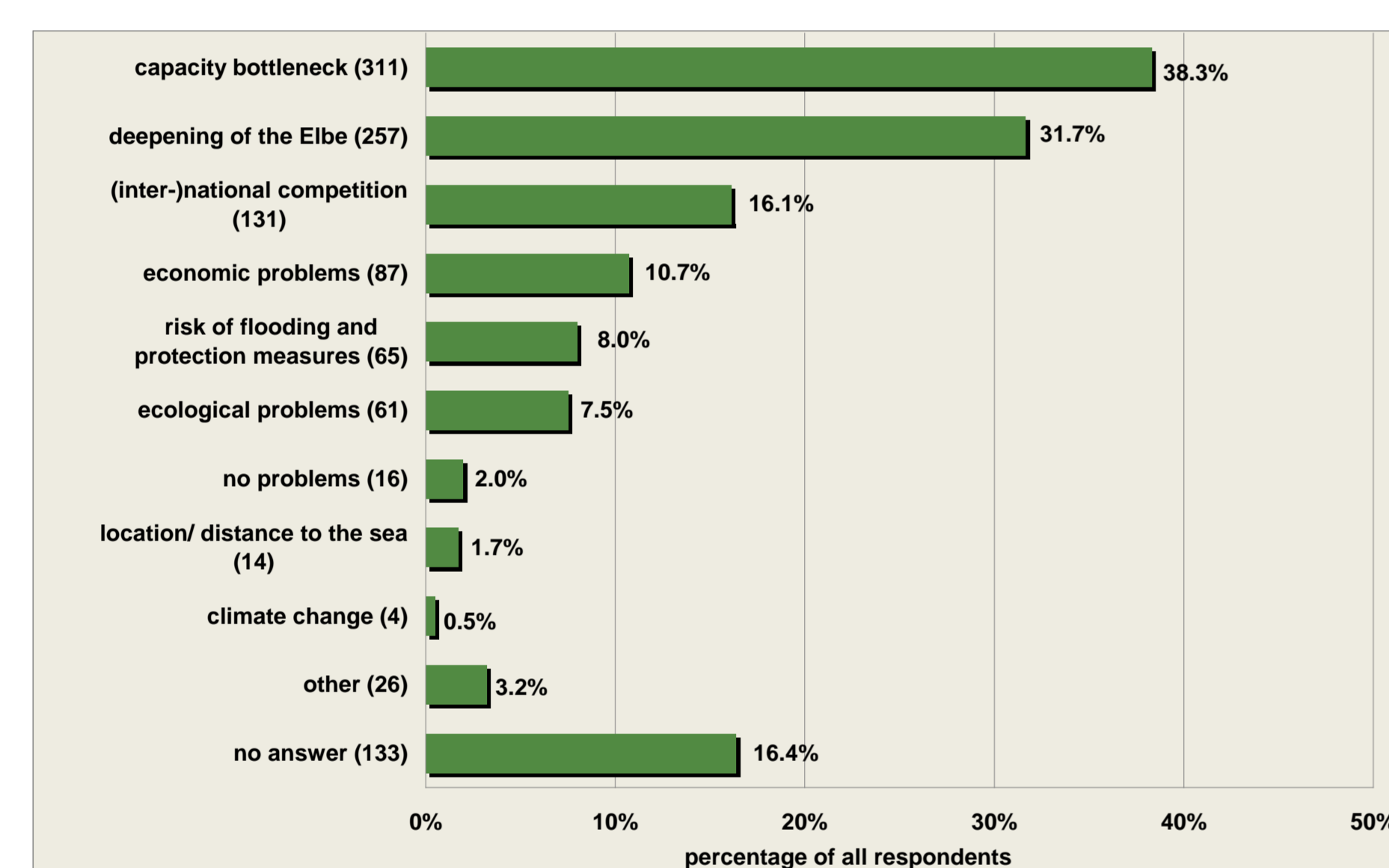
- Do people consider the Port of Hamburg to be important for the region?
- What do people know about the Port of Hamburg and its future problems?
- What future do people prefer for the Elbe river?

How important do you think the Port of Hamburg is for this region?



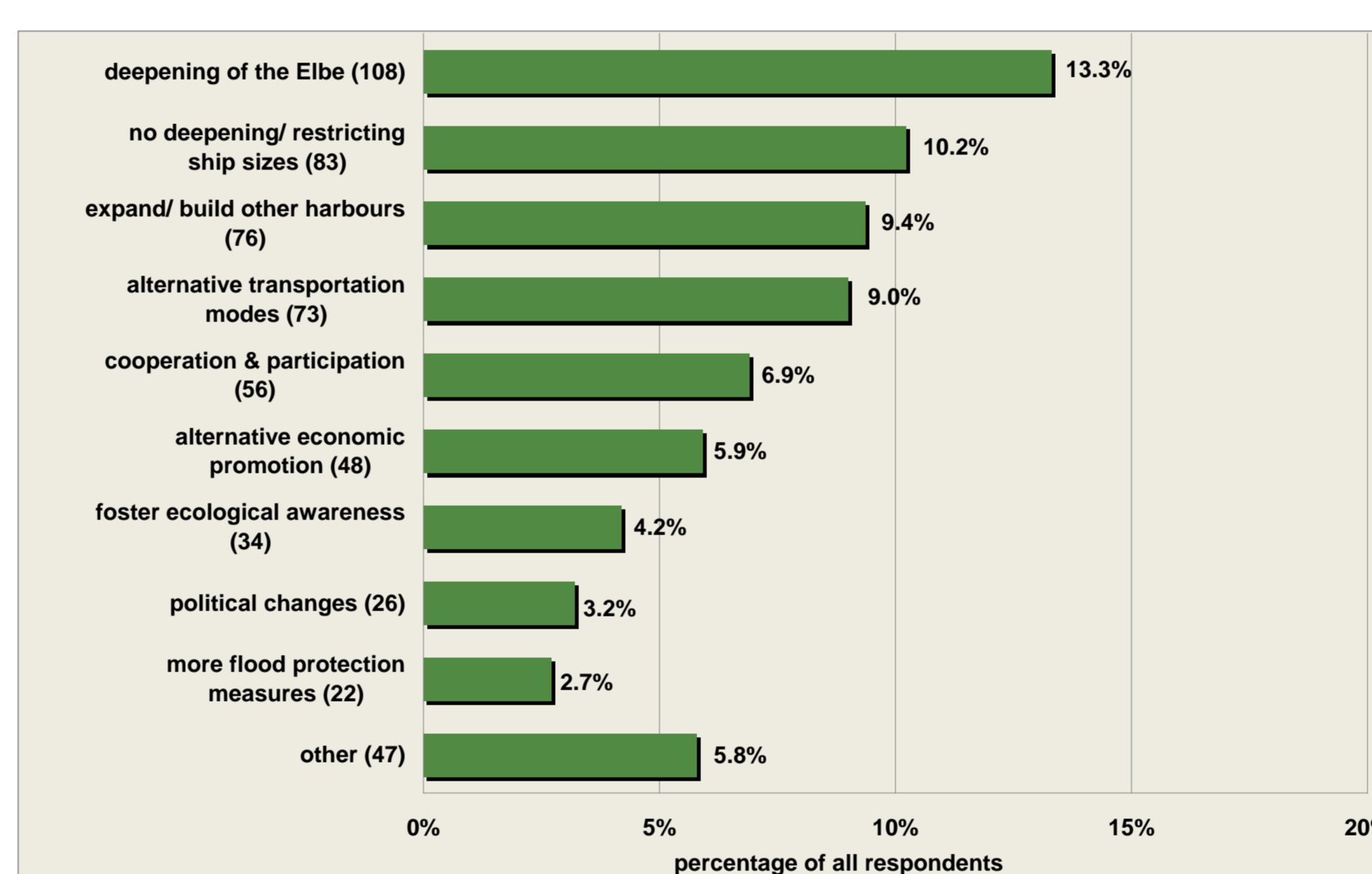
(cartography: B. Weig, B. Gardeike; software: RegioGraph)

Which future problems do you think the Port of Hamburg will face?



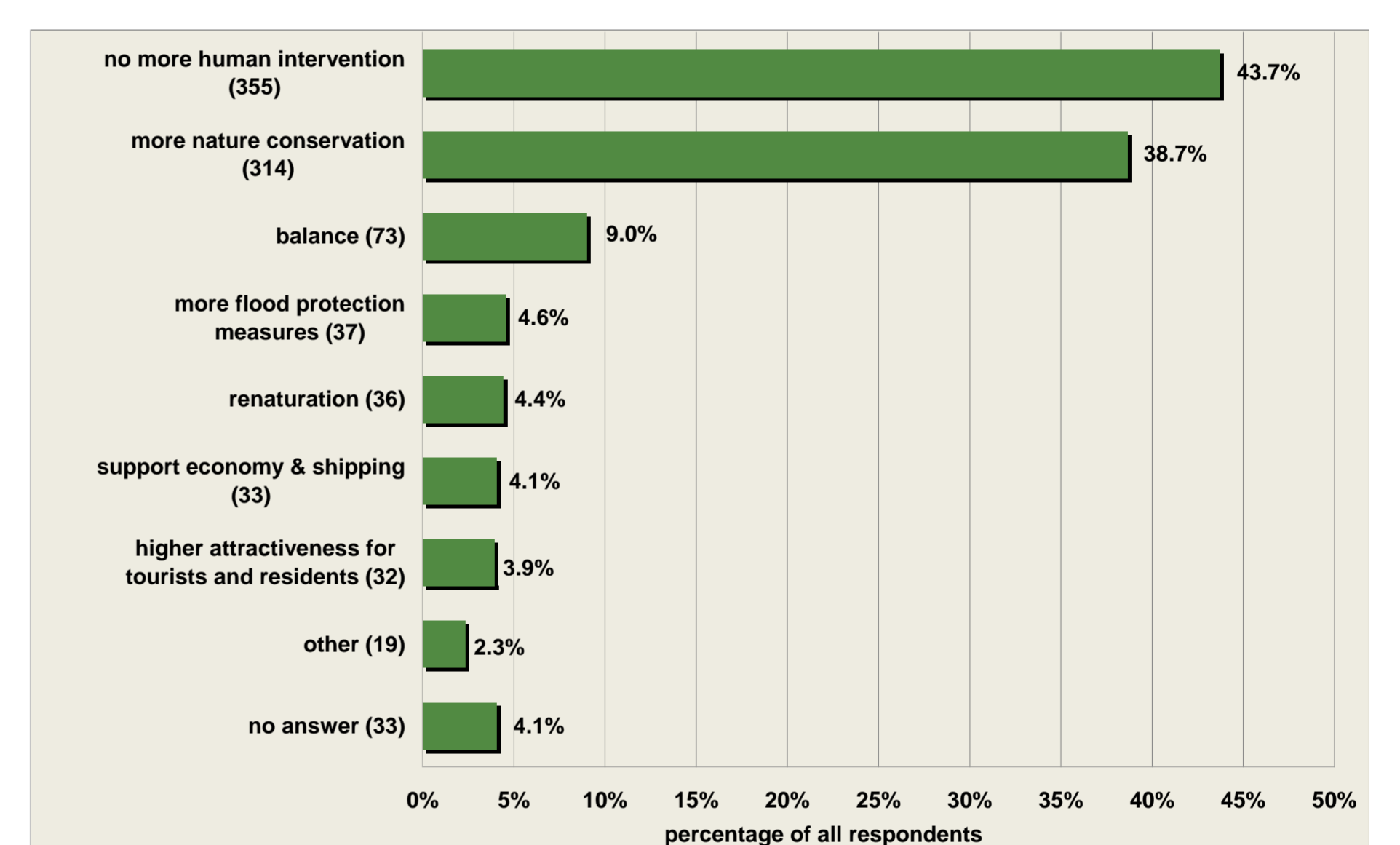
(m.a.p.; number of answers 1.105; n=812)

What do you think could be done to avoid those problems?



(m.a.p.; number of answers 905; n=812)

What future would you like to see for the Elbe?



(m.a.p.; number of answers 932; n=812)

Method

Population survey (spring 2012)

The random street survey took place in 18 selected communities on both sides of the tidal Elbe. It included rural areas and small towns in the federal states of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, as well as four urban districts on the outskirts of Hamburg. Altogether 812 residents were interviewed – all older than 15 years of age and having lived in the region for at least 5 years.

The survey was based on a questionnaire which consisted of 33 open and closed questions. Answers received to the open questions were later aggregated into categories to allow for quantitative analysis.

Reference

[1] Ratter, B.M.W. & Weig, B. (2012): Die Tide-Elbe – ein Kultur-, Natur- und Wirtschaftsraum aus Sicht der Bevölkerung. HZG Report 2012-4. Geesthacht.

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Conclusion

Challenges for management

People consider the Port of Hamburg important for the development of their region. Respondents expect the limited capacity and the deepening of the Elbe river to be the major challenges for the port. Suggested solutions range from deepening the Elbe to restricting ship sizes. For the river Elbe, people mainly request less intervention, more nature conservation or at least a better balance between economic and ecological interests. Residents want their environment to remain a living environment but they also perceive the economic importance of the Port of Hamburg.

The challenge will be to shape the development process together with many different interest groups.

The results of this survey contribute to a better understanding of public perception. This is important for implementing effective means of communication as part of successful integrated management.