



What motivates and hinders municipal adaptation policy activity? Exploring vertical and horizontal diffusion in Hessen and Finland

UACES RN Research Workshop, Angers

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Growing climate impacts

- While climate change is a global problem, most impacts are felt locally
- Municipalities as a key site of adaptation → key planning competences
- Diffusion as one likely way in which municipal adaptation may spread
 - Limited top-down governance
 - Limited local resources
 - Similar challenges
 - Many states, organizations, municipal and city networks rely on policy diffusion



Image source: Pixabay/Hans Braxmeier

Theory – policy diffusion

(1) Internal and external barriers and motivators of adaptation policy

- Internal: policy-maker motivations, resources, other policies within the jurisdiction etc.
- External: What other jurisdictions do
- Diffusion focuses on external factors (Berry and Berry 2018) and related causal pathways such as interests, ideology, rights/duties, recognition (Blatter et al. 2021) linked with the better known mechanisms of coercion, learning, competition, emulation

(2) Vertical + horizontal diffusion

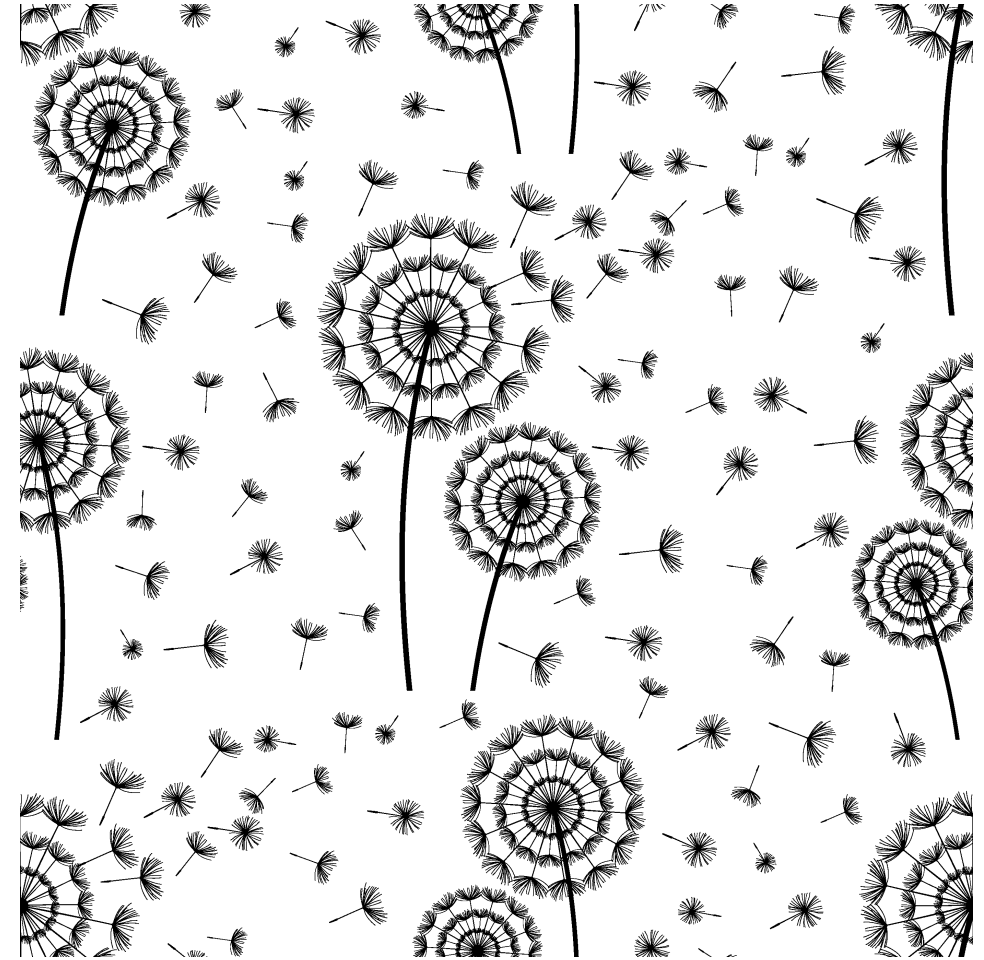


Image source: iStock

International level

EU level

National level

State level

County level

Regulations Resources Strategies Capacity building

External barriers and drivers

Extreme weather events

Adaptation action

Vertical diffusion

Adaptation policy

Municipality 1

Internal barriers and drivers

Short term economic interest

Policy entrepreneur / policy opposition

Civil society

Scientific knowledge

Adaptation policy

Municipality 2

Internal barriers and drivers

Short term economic interest

Policy entrepreneur / policy opposition

Civil society

Scientific knowledge

Adaptation policy

Municipality 3

Internal barriers and drivers

Short term economic interest

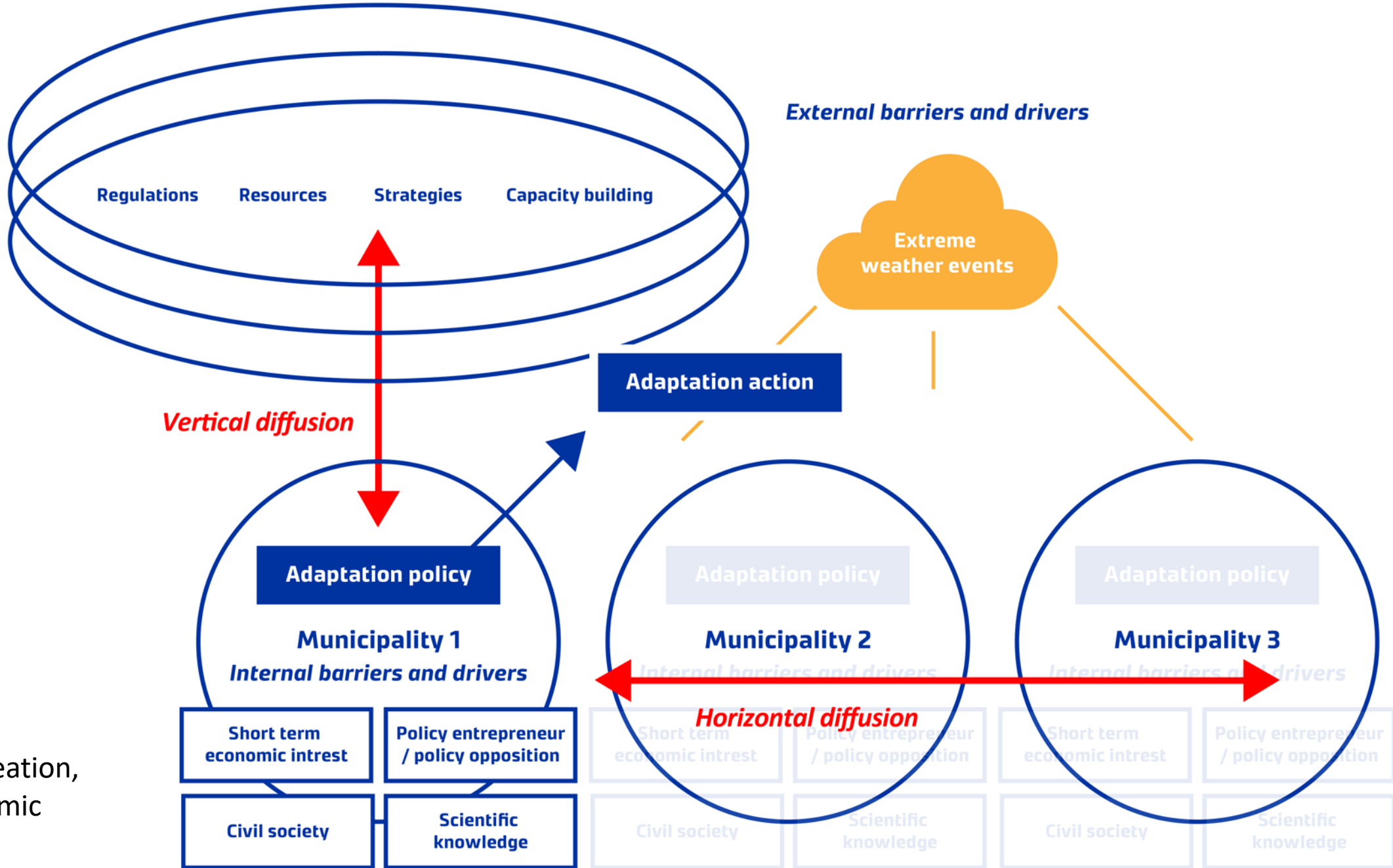
Policy entrepreneur / policy opposition

Civil society

Scientific knowledge

Horizontal diffusion

Source: Own creation, based on academic literature.

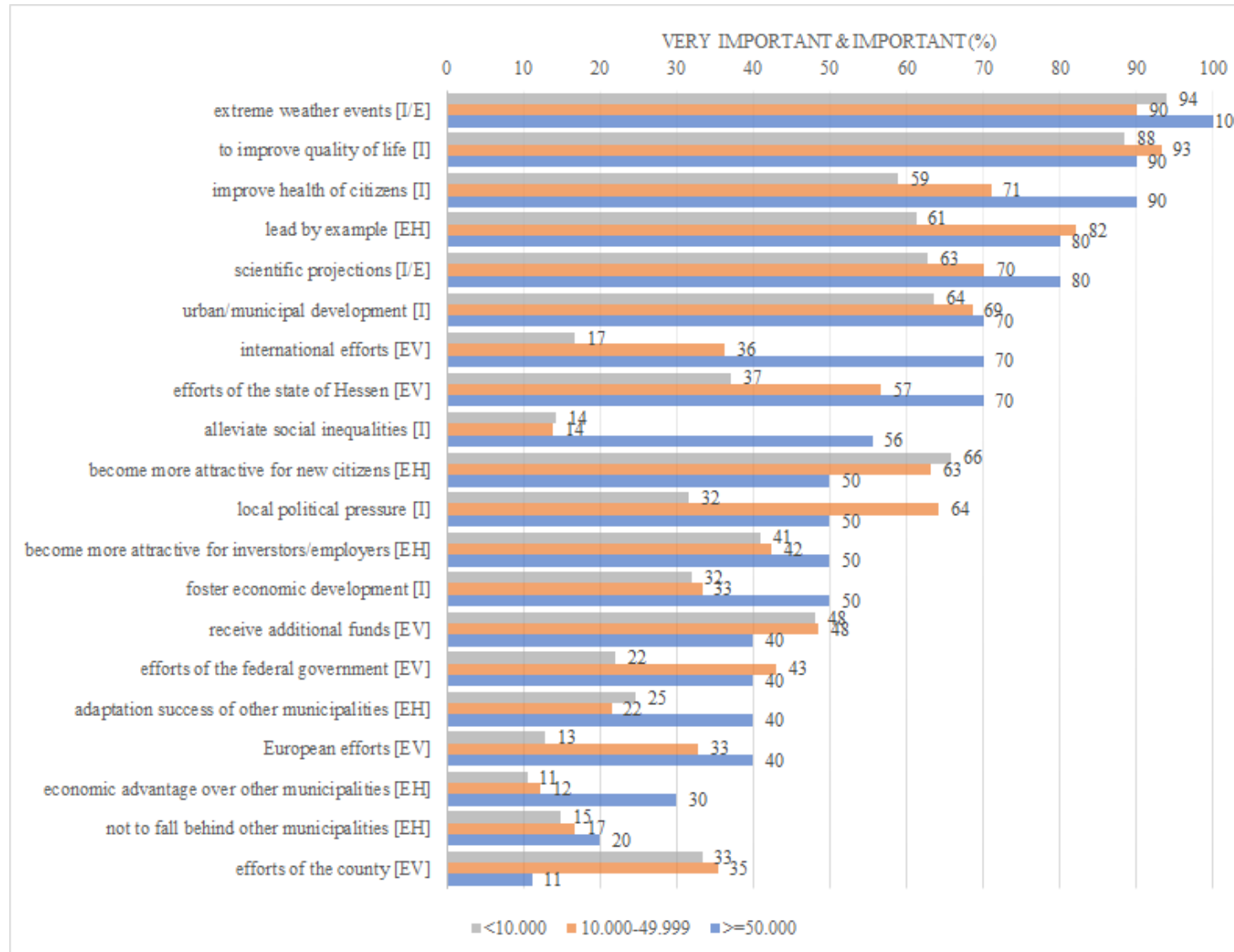


Empirical approach

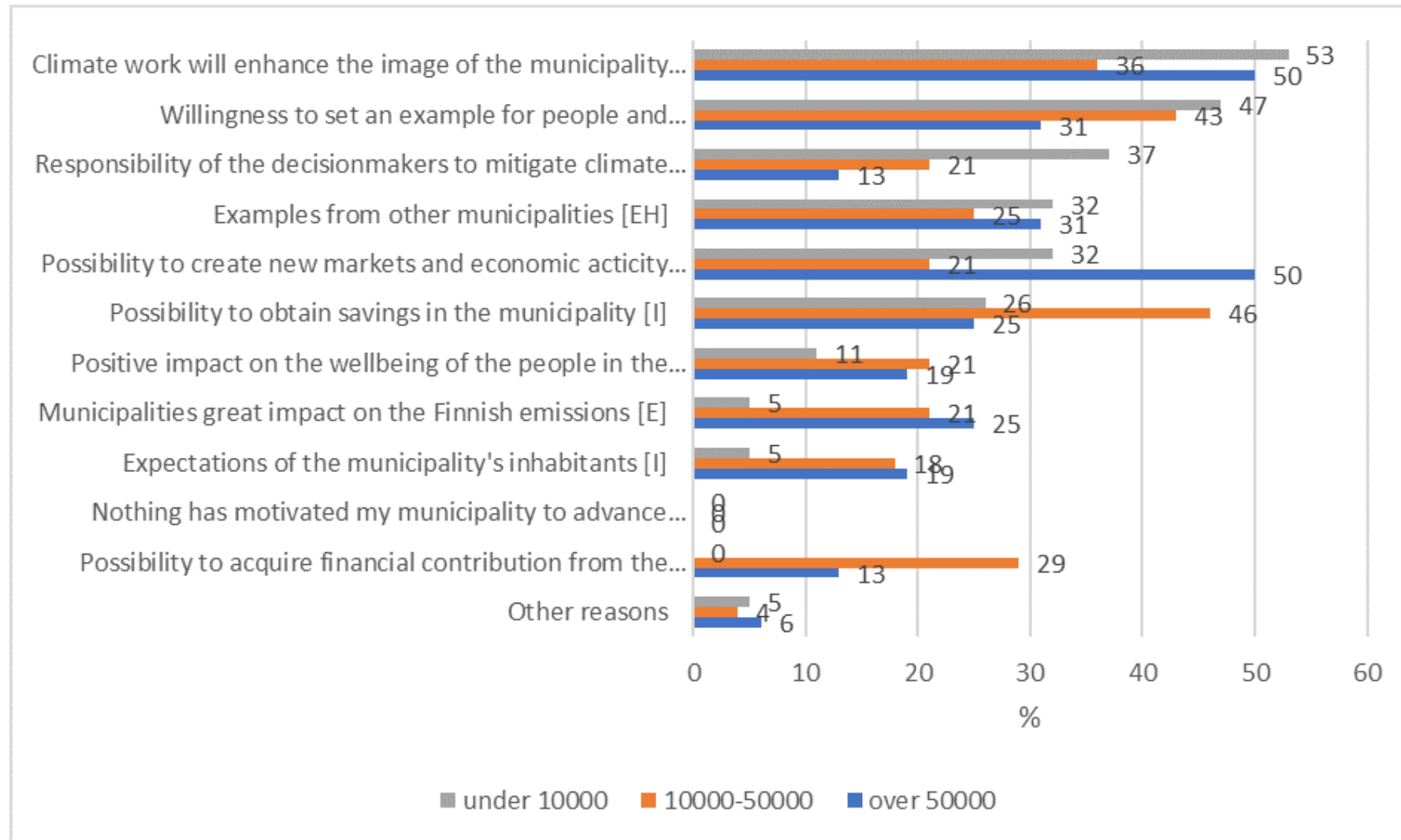
- Focus on the state of Hessen/Germany and Finland
- Similar adaptation rules, similar population size
- Finland = unitary state; Hessen a federal state
- 2 independent surveys (Hessen: Nov 2020-Jan 2021, 51% response rate; Finland Dec 2021-Jan 2022, 31% response rate)



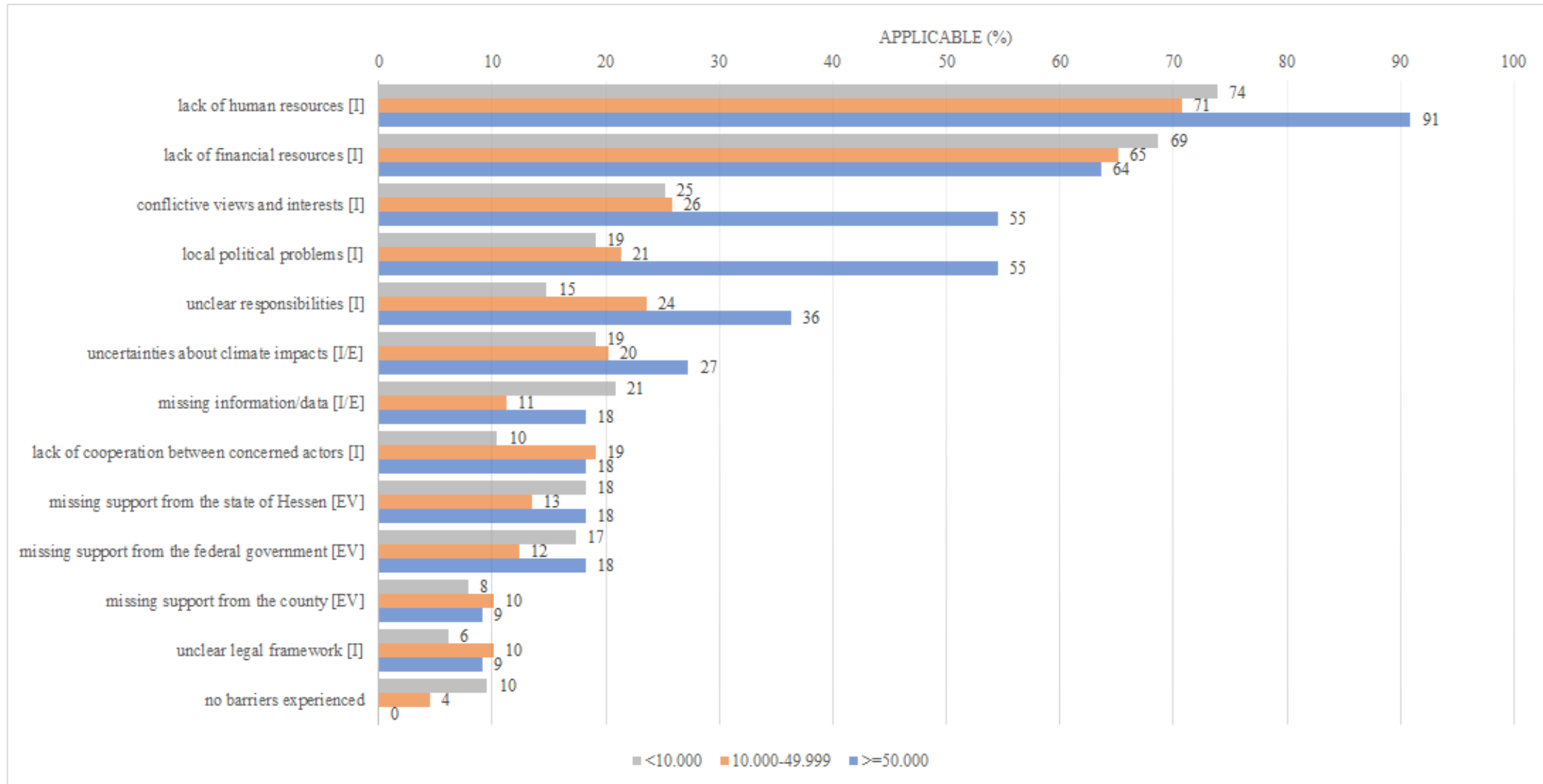
Results: Internal & external motivations, Hessen



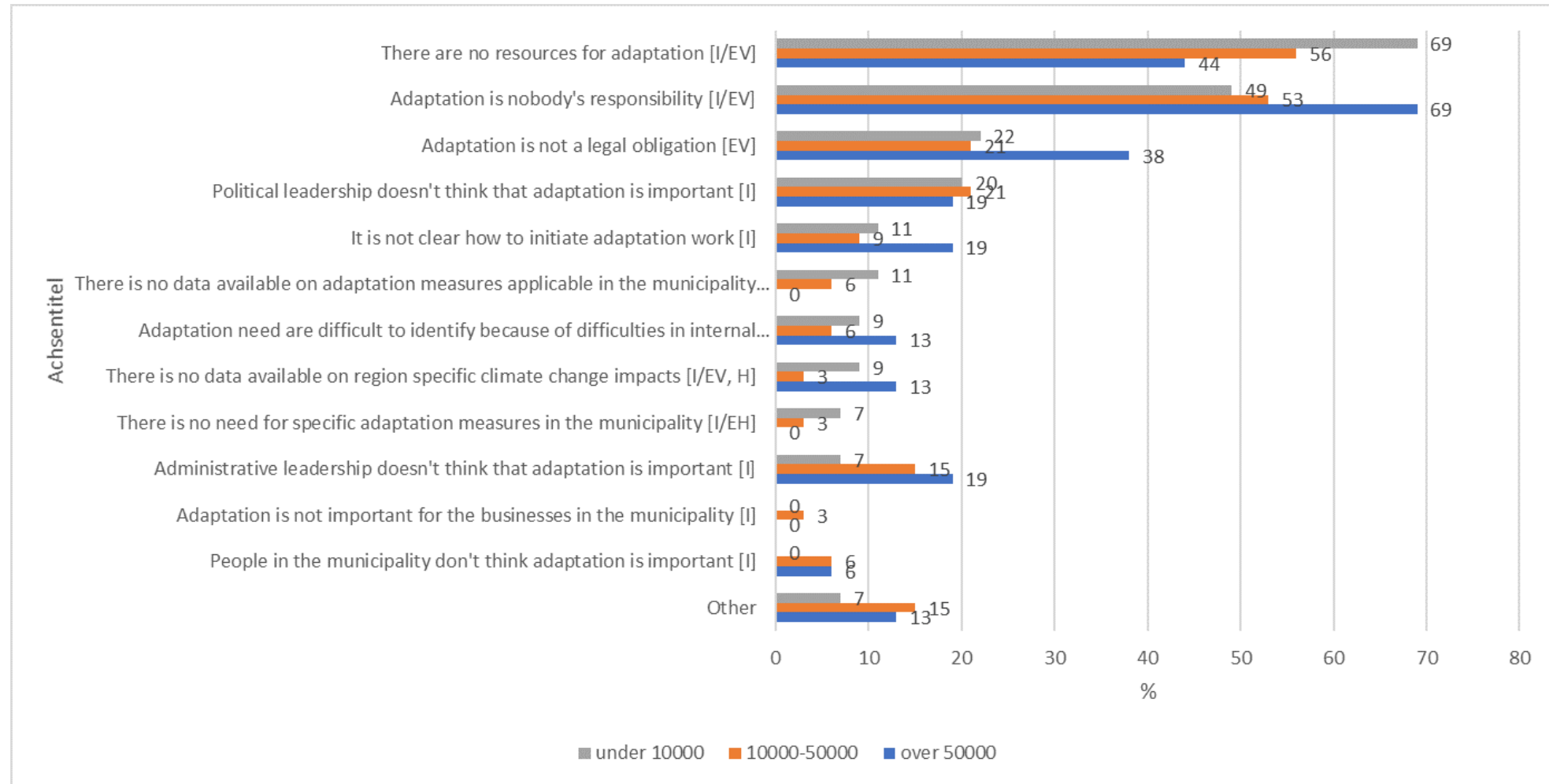
Results: Internal and external motivations Finland



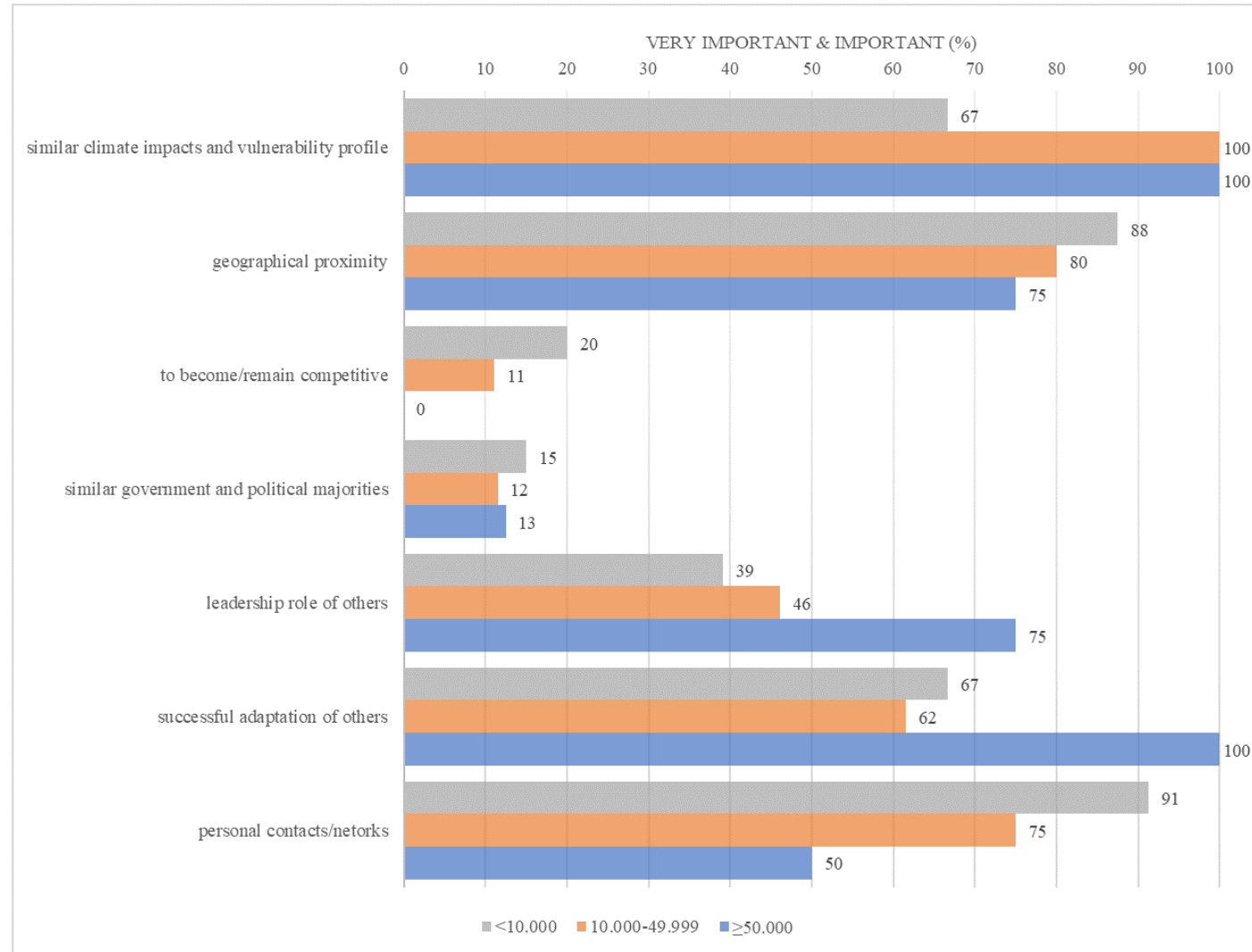
Barriers: Hessen



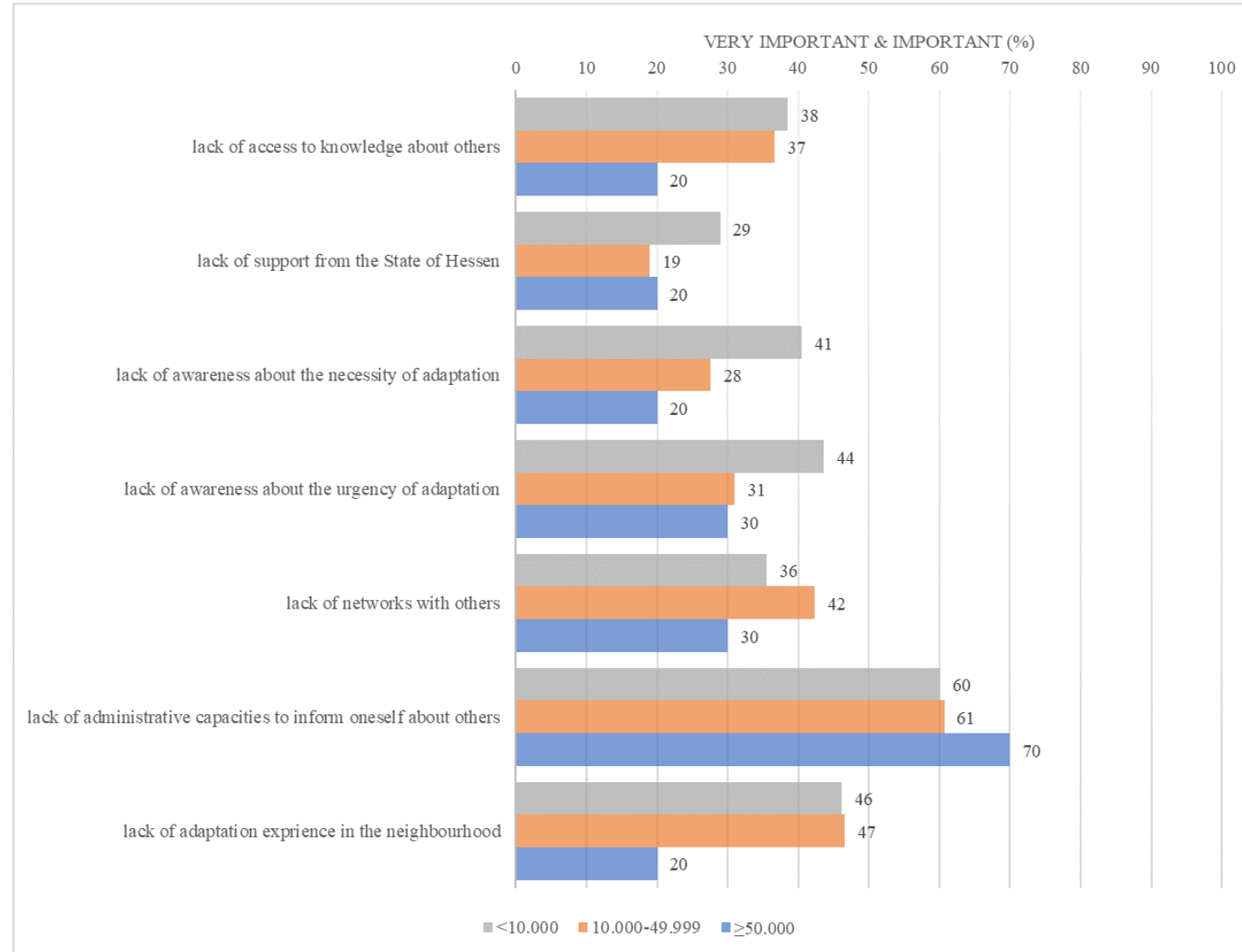
Barriers: Finland



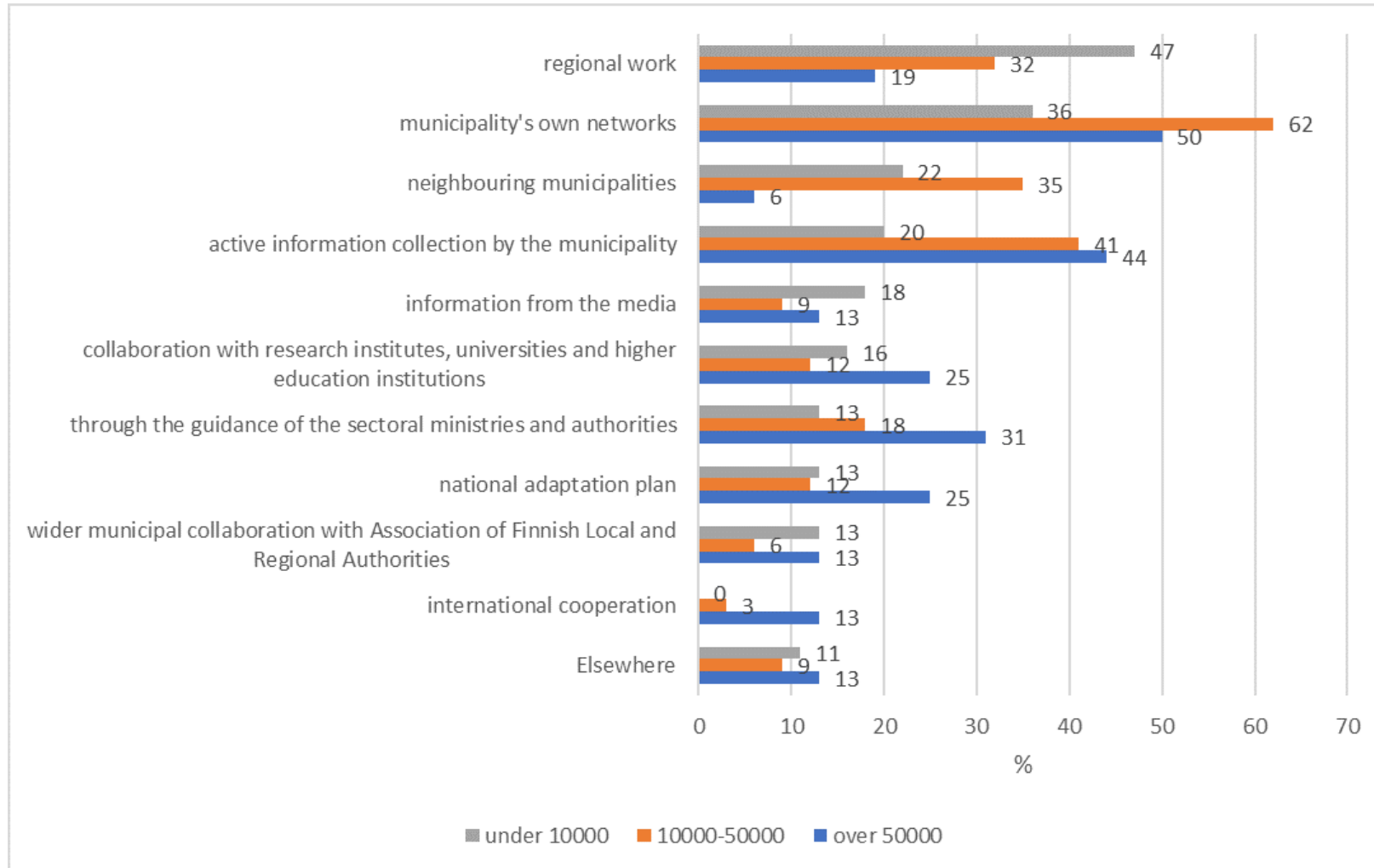
Hessen: Why consider what others do?



Hessen: Barriers against considering others



Finland: Where do ideas for adaptation come from?



Discussion & Conclusions

Motivations for municipal adaptation → reputational factors matter

- Hessen: climate impacts, quality of life, reducing social inequalities
- Finland: well-being; smallest municipalities see less responsibility

Barriers to adaptation

- Lack of personnel and financial resources
- Unclear responsibilities in multilevel governance structures
- Smaller municipalities turn to the closest governance level for support; large municipalities interact with more levels
- Towards place-based adaptation?

Thank you!

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References

Blatter, Joachim, Lea Portmann and Frowin Rausis. 2021. Theorizing policy diffusion: from a patchy set of mechanisms to a paradigmatic typology. *Journal of European Public Policy*: 1–21. doi: 10.1080/13501763.2021.1892801.

Berry, Frances S. and William D. Berry. 2018. Innovation and diffusion models in policy research. In *Theories of the Policy Process*, eds. Christopher M. Weible and Paul A. Sabatier, 4. Ed. Milton: Routledge.

Schoenefeld, Jonas J., Mikael Hildén, Kai Schulze, and Jaana Sorvali (under review) What motivates and hinders municipal adaptation policy activity? Exploring vertical and horizontal diffusion in Hessen and Finland.

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