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# Framing the change and changing frames: Tensions in participative strategy development

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## Abstract

Participative strategy development serves to integrate the interests and perspectives of multiple stakeholders involved in today's complex environmental challenges, aiming at a better-informed strategy for tackling these challenges, increased stakeholder ownership, and more democratic decision making. Prior research has observed inherent tensions between the need for participative strategy to be open to stakeholders' input and the need for closure and guidance. We extend this reasoning using a framing perspective. Our evidence from the development of the England Peat Action Plan suggests that tensions can emerge between the necessary ambiguous initial framing of intended change and the persistence of stakeholders' different framings of this change as well as perceptions of lacking knowledge, guidance, and control. We argue that strategy openness can thereby impede stakeholders' willingness and ability to change and counteract the strategy's aim for major transformation. Interactive spaces help mitigate the tensions and facilitate stakeholders' willingness and ability for change.

## KEYWORDS

co-creation, collaborative governance, co-production, decision making, deliberative monetary valuation, ecosystem services, England Peat Action Plan, environmental sustainability, framing, open strategy, participation, participative strategy development, public policy, stakeholder engagement, stakeholders

## Related Articles

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Today's complex challenges to environmental sustainability concern multiple stakeholders who often hold different views of what the problems are and how they should be addressed (Anderson et al., 2022; UK NEA, 2014). To guide concerted action and achieve major change, it is therefore necessary to clearly define what change is desired and why. For example, to guide the large-scale implementation of radically new forms of environmental land management that support national net zero targets, it is necessary to clearly define what outcomes of land management are desired and how current land management practices need to be altered to achieve those goals (Bateman & Balmford, 2018). Strategies for change are generally more effective if they include diverse stakeholder perspectives, which can be achieved through stakeholder participation in strategy development (Reed et al., 2017). Theories of collaborative governance (Emerson et al., 2012), policy co-creation (Ansell & Torfing, 2021), and open strategy in organizations (Birkinshaw, 2017) have long suggested that stakeholder participation helps develop better-informed strategy by tapping local knowledge, that it facilitates strategy implementation by creating stakeholder ownership, and that it accords with the ideal of deliberative democracy (see Reed et al., 2017).

Participative strategy development requires that the change strategy is to some extent open, i.e., not predefined (Orchard-Webb et al., 2016). At the start of the participative process, those who initiate the change (i.e., change agents) need to frame the planned change sufficiently broadly to allow stakeholders to contribute to this framing. For example, change agents need to define broad rather than specific objectives for new environmental land management, to allow stakeholders to specify what exactly needs to be done in their particular geographic, social, and economic contexts. Such openness can, however, counteract the need for a clear definition of the planned change. A tension can hence emerge between the need for participation and the need for guidance. On one hand, the initial framing of the change needs to be sufficiently ambiguous to allow for stakeholder participation; on the other hand, it needs to be sufficiently well-defined to guide action (Hautz et al., 2017; Heracleous et al., 2018; Luedicke et al., 2017; Van Gestel & Grotenbreg, 2021).

Ideally, an open strategy would become well-defined over time through the participative process. We argue, however, that the lack of precise definition of a strategy can also inhibit the development of shared framing of the planned change and hinder major change. Major change is here defined as a change of "frames," namely stakeholders' interpretive schemata for making sense of the environmental problems and solutions at stake, and a significant change of environmental practices, such as land management approaches (Davies & Hodge, 2012).

Drawing on case study findings, we suggest how the necessary ambiguous initial framing of planned and needed change can facilitate the persistence of stakeholders' different framing. For some stakeholders, this ambiguity can also lead to perceptions of lacking guidance, coordination, and a lacking knowledge base, hampering stakeholders' ability and willingness for significant change in practice. Multivocality—the persistence of multiple views within an umbrella framework (Ferraro et al., 2015) thus persists where it is not beneficial, counteracting the overarching aim of the strategy to achieve a significant shift of frames and practices. Such transfor-

mation then takes a long time and is hard to achieve. Building on empirical insights, we suggest a chain of mechanisms by which the openness of a change strategy relates to the transformation of stakeholder frames and practices. First, we argue that certain tensions emerge between the (intended) ambiguity of the initial framing of the planned change and resulting (unintended) interpretations and evaluations by stakeholders. Second, we suggest how these perceptions affect stakeholders' ability and willingness to change. Third, we suggest how interactive spaces, in our case multi-stakeholder workshops, have a key function in mitigating the tensions inherent in participative strategy development.

Our empirical insights are derived from the case of participative development of elements of the England Peat Action Plan, a strategy that aims at major transformation in the management of peatlands in England. Improved peatland management is regarded as an important pillar for reducing carbon emissions in response to the climate crisis, given that peatlands are a significant source of carbon sequestration that globally stores 30% of soil carbon stock (Bain et al., 2011). The Plan is part of the UK government strategy for reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. During interactive workshops, multiple stakeholders (e.g., farmers and landowners, water utility companies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), national park representatives) participated in the development of this peat strategy by providing their knowledge on local requirements of land management and evaluating proposals for new environmental land management schemes.

Our insights contribute to the understanding of participative strategy making particularly in the context of complex environmental challenges, adding to the reasons why intended major transformation is here often not achieved (Furumo et al., 2020; Moog et al., 2015; Ruyschaert & Salles, 2014). While prior research has highlighted certain tensions inherent in participative strategy development (Hautz et al., 2017; Heracleous et al., 2018; Luedicke et al., 2017; Van Gestel & Grotenbreg, 2021), it has to our knowledge not explored the tensions created by the ambiguous framing of the change and consequences for stakeholders' ability and willingness to change their frames and practices. Moreover, by highlighting the role of interactive spaces, we extend prior insights into methods for mitigating tensions in participative strategy development (Hautz et al., 2017; Luedicke et al., 2017). We now elaborate on the background of our study and our research methods. We then present our findings and discuss our contributions to research and practice, limitations, and directions for future research.

## BACKGROUND

### Participative strategy development

Participative strategy development has been at the center of research on collaborative governance, co-production, and co-creation in the public sector, as well as open strategy in organizations (Hautz et al., 2017; Whittington et al., 2011). We define participative strategy development broadly as strategy making that integrates contributions by actor groups (such as stakeholders) who are not the initiators of the strategy (change agents). "Strategy" is understood broadly as the statement of direction for a group of actors, expressed for example through a vision, objectives, and plans of action (Johnson et al., 2020). Notably, participation can vary in terms of agency—namely, the degree to which it is initiated from top down or bottom up, and the mode of engagement, ranging from mere communication over consultation and deliberation to the co-production of decisions (Arnstein, 2007; Reed et al., 2017).

Our focus will be on the public policy context. Participative strategy making has here been described as part of collaborative governance, namely "the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across ... the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government and/or the public, private, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished" (Emerson et al., 2012, p. 3).

Collaborative governance shares the principles of participative decision making with “open strategy” in organizations (Whittington et al., 2011) but it involves actors across, rather than within, organizational boundaries and is concerned with public, rather than organizational, purposes. Collaborative governance can take the form of co-creation, namely “the process through which a plethora of public and private actors are involved ... in a collaborative endeavour to define common problems and design and implement new ... public solutions” (Ansell & Torfing, 2021, p. 216). Following Ansell and Torfing (2021) we regard co-creation as a particular form of co-production which aims at challenging established wisdom and producing innovative solutions. The participative development of strategy in our study is an instance of such co-creation. Multiple stakeholders here collaborated in workshops to define common problems and design new public solutions to peatland management.

In public policy, participative strategy development that involves multiple stakeholders has become increasingly common. It has been propagated particularly as a means of dealing with today's wicked environmental problems (Ferraro et al., 2015). Given that these challenges are ambiguous, complex, intertwined, and concern multiple stakeholders, it is indispensable to tap stakeholders' diverse knowledge bases to more fully understand the wicked problems and their potential solutions (Ainscough et al., 2018; Kenter et al., 2014). Moreover, addressing the multiple stakeholders' interests and priorities and enrolling them in policy decisions is here particularly important, because their support is crucial for implementing large-scale solutions and major change (Barton et al., 2022). Due to the multiplicity of stakeholder interests and priorities, however, it is also hard to reach agreement during such participative public strategy development (Dentoni et al., 2018; Ferraro et al., 2015; Ranger et al., 2016). Moreover, participants in multi-stakeholder strategy development do not always commit to the agreed changes, as shown strikingly in the case of international multi-stakeholder roundtables (Furumo et al., 2020; Moog et al., 2015; Ruyschaert & Salles, 2014; Schouten et al., 2012). Among the reasons for insufficient implementation of changes are stakeholders' financial concerns (Furumo et al., 2020), broader market forces (Moog et al., 2015) and too much room for interpretation in the guidance document, nonintegration of the multi-stakeholder initiative into the socio-political-legal context, and lack of an effective external control system (Ruyschaert & Salles, 2014). A better understanding of reasons for noncommitment is important to ensure a participative strategy is implemented.<sup>1</sup>

## A framing perspective on participative strategy development

“Frames” have been defined as mental schemata or “principles of organization” that guide people's interpretations of the world and their actions (Goffman, 1974, p. 11). Frames are commonly regarded as dynamic structures that are socially constructed and continuously transformed (Benford, 1997; Goffman, 1974) but can also remain relatively stable across situations and over time (Cornelissen & Werner, 2015; Dewulf et al., 2009). The verb “framing” refers to the action of applying a frame to interpret a situation or issue, which is thereby “framed.” For example, if actors apply a “climate change” frame to interpret current practices of land management, they may frame them as environmentally unsustainable. Framing can be used individually to make sense of the world, collectively to arrive at shared interpretations, or strategically to convince others of one's perspective. Due to socialization, individuals share certain frames with members of their social groups, such as friendship groups, organizations, and societies (Goffman, 1974). When individuals change their frames through social interactions, the modified frames can feed back into their group's frames (Gray et al., 2015; Purdy et al., 2019). For example, through discussions with environmental scientists, farmers might modify their “iden-

<sup>1</sup>We thank Reviewer 3 for this consideration.



tity” frame of what it means to be a farmer (e.g., to include peatland conservation) and convince others in their community to adopt the new frame.

The framing lens illuminates key aspects of the participative development of a change strategy. As mentioned, strategy co-creation requires that a strategy is initially open, i.e., not predefined, and the definition of the strategy results from the participative process. In framing terms, we argue that participants in the strategy process need to collectively “frame” the strategy. Taking the case of a participative change strategy, stakeholders have to elaborate on how to “frame the change” that the strategy should aim for. This means they need to arrive at a shared definition of what change is needed and by what actions it can be implemented. Stakeholders may initially disagree on how to frame the change, but they have to arrive at an at least partially common framing of required changes in order to co-create a strategy that enables concerted action (Ansari et al., 2013; Ansell, 2016). Through a process of collective strategy framing, stakeholders hence successively define and “close” the strategy.

The framing lens also helps us characterize major change. We argue that major change tends to involve not just a change of practices (e.g., a change of land management in response to wicked environmental challenges), but also a change of frames, which allows for a new interpretation of the problems and enables innovative solutions (e.g., radically new forms of land management). Arguably, such frame change is necessary for those stakeholders whose current frames conflict with the intended change. For example, a strategy for achieving net zero targets may require some farmers to change from a “productivity” frame to a “net zero carbon emission” frame for evaluating their agricultural practices.

In the context of collaborative governance, the framing perspective has been applied predominantly to discern differences between stakeholders' frames and to suggest how these differences can be bridged to arrive at shared or compatible frames. Given that the multiple stakeholders involved in collaborative governance come from different sectors (public, private, nongovernmental) and interest groups, they typically use different frames to identify the reasons for an environmental problem (diagnostic frames) and its possible solutions (prognostic frames). Stakeholders do not necessarily need complete agreement on problems and solutions to reach joint decisions (Ranger et al., 2016). They may find a solution that allows for multivocality, whereby diverse interpretations of an issue continue to co-exist and do not impede joint action on the issue (Ferraro et al., 2015). For example, Ansari and others (2013) posit that members of international climate negotiations were able to arrive at joint decisions on climate policies by reaching a minimal level of agreement on actions—thus adjusting their prognostic frames concerning problem solutions—without agreeing on the reasons for taking the actions, hence retaining their conflicting diagnostic frames. “Multivocal inscriptions” (i.e., guidelines, norms, and similar statements that are ambiguous enough to allow for diverse interpretations) can be chosen intentionally to facilitate joint decisions despite diverse frames (Ferraro et al., 2015). This demonstrates how ambiguous strategy framing helps in enrolling diverse stakeholders. Arguably however, stakeholders need to align their frames at least to the degree that they can understand each other and be motivated for open discussions (Ansell, 2016). Stakeholders can change their frames through interactions during collaborative governance. For example, they may use interaction strategies such as dialogical learning and rational problem solving (Hassenforder et al., 2016) to align their different frames. Frame alignment can also be reached through “frame deliberation,” whereby stakeholders become aware of their frames and modify them where required (Zimmermann et al., 2021).

While this research on collaborative governance concentrates on frame alignment for defining problems and solutions, the organizational literature sheds more light on the interactive framing of strategy. For example, Rauch and Ansari (2022) describe how the mission and purpose of an organization is reframed by its members over time. In their case, reframing occurred collectively as the frame of the organizational purpose drifted spontaneously in interactions, triggered by factors such as serendipitous inspiration and moral emotions. This study highlights the changea-



bility of strategy framing and its benefits as it helped members to develop a meaningful purpose for their organization.

In the context of pluralistic organizations, Spee and Jarzabkowski (2017) demonstrate how ambiguity in strategy framing facilitates participative strategy development. They explain how diverse organizational members develop “joint accounts” over time to collectively frame a change strategy that accommodates their diverse existing meanings. Akin to multivocal inscription (Ferraro et al., 2015), a joint account is an abstract, ambiguous formulation of the strategy that accommodates actors' diverse meanings, allowing them to interpret the intended change in different ways. This ambiguity in strategy formulation hence facilitates participants' agreement and commitment to the strategy. Raffaelli and others (2019), in turn, suggest that ambiguous framing of a strategy facilitates the adoption of radical innovation. They suggest that an expanded (as opposed to contracted) lens on the firms' identity, competency, and boundaries helps top management team members to reframe these strategic characteristics to align with a radical innovation. Hence, ambiguity in strategy framing here offers the benefit of flexibility. While this research highlights the advantages of ambiguous strategy framing, we will point to the tensions that it can create.

## Tensions in participative strategy development

As outlined, research on participative strategy development tends to emphasize its benefits, such as democratic ambitions, comprehensive knowledge input, and motivating a broad range of actors. Recently however, researchers have also delineated its downsides. For example, there are concerns about the representativeness of participants in strategy making and the danger of using participation as a token for implementing predetermined agendas (Torfing et al., 2021). Of special interest to our study are certain “tensions” created by strategy openness. We define tensions (akin to the Oxford Learning Dictionary) as situations in which the fact that there are different needs causes difficulties. Tensions create “dilemmas” for change agents—namely, situations where they have to make difficult choices between conflicting needs.<sup>2</sup>

A first tension has been observed between the aim of a participative strategy to access a broad knowledge base and the need to arrive at *closure*. In the public policy context, Pop and Seidl (2020) thus highlight that stakeholder collaborations on grand challenges face trade-offs between the need to account for the complexity of a (wicked) problem, which requires involving multiple stakeholder perspectives, and the need for simplifying the problem to achieve shared understanding and action. In their study, stakeholders in a smart city project managed the boundaries of the communicative space through “simplexification,” the simultaneous increase and decrease of complexity depending on the stage of discussions. The tension between the aim to access a broad knowledge base and the need to arrive at closure has also been identified in the organizational context. Hautz and others (2017) explain that open strategy, by granting access to a wider range of knowledge sources, reduces the speed and control over the decision-making process, and wider discussions can take unexpected courses, making it hard to reach a final strategy definition. Luedicke and others (2017), in turn, point out that open strategizing can suffer from information and power imbalances and information overload, which require counterbalancing practices of centralized agenda setting, selective participation, and authoritative decision making, contradicting the democratic aims of participative strategy.

Second, the aim of a participative strategy to achieve democratic decision making contrasts with the need for *guidance* and *coordination*. Van Gestel and Grotenbreg (2021) observe that multiple stakeholders' competing ideas about long-term goals make it hard to achieve innovative

<sup>2</sup>The notion of tension hence emphasizes difficulties of any kind that are created by different needs, while the notion of dilemmas emphasizes (more specifically) the difficulty of an agent's choice.

and long-term solutions in public sector collaborations. They reason that strategic leadership (which contrasts with the democratic aims) is therefore required to achieve a shared definition of long-term goals and reduce the emphasis on short-term solutions. Moreover, a “sanctioning and coordinating authority” (Homsy et al., 2019, p. 574) is needed to help frame the issue at stake as a commons problem, to coordinate multiple actors, and to enforce agreed solutions if necessary. In the organizational context, a similar tension has been observed between the need for dialog and the need for direction by decision makers to achieve strategic decisions and action (Heracleous et al., 2018) and between the aim to achieve buy-in of a broad audience and the moderation of contributions by management (Baptista et al., 2017), which can be necessary but decrease thus-gained commitment (Hautz et al., 2017).

While this research highlights tensions inherent in open strategy, created by the aim to gain a broad knowledge base and achieve democratic decision making, our study unveils additional tensions. Led by our emergent findings, we demonstrate tensions created by the necessary ambiguity of framing that is part of participative strategy development. These tensions, we will argue, have important consequences for achieving major change.

### The role of interactive spaces

Given that participative strategy is developed through social interactions, stakeholders in participative strategy need to have a suitable “interactive space,” namely a physical or virtual setting that creates the conditions for interactions that involve dialog and deliberation (see Bryson et al., 2020). Depending on the research focus, such interactive spaces have been called “communicative” (Pop & Seidl, 2020) “discursive” (Hardy & Maguire, 2010), “interstitial” (between-field; Furnari, 2014), “new democratic” (Irvine et al., 2016; Kenter, 2016), and “experimental” (Cartel et al., 2019) spaces. Generally, these interactive spaces have an important function for strategy co-creation, first, because they disrupt organizational boundaries and create new boundaries around members of the space (Cartel et al., 2019). For example, “strategy workshops” (or away-days) in organizations are thought to suspend everyday organizational structures and routines (Hendry & Seidl, 2003), which enables contributions across the normal organizational boundaries and helps participants to question the *status quo* (Johnson et al., 2010). Second, interactive spaces are also seen to enhance emotional commitment to the agreed strategy, by creating a sense of communal commitment (Johnson et al., 2010) and by helping members to emotionally distance themselves from the *status quo* (Cartel et al., 2019). Arguably, transcending existing organizational boundaries and creating new boundaries around workshop participants are particularly beneficial in the public policy context, where stakeholders from multiple organizations collaborate to co-create a strategy. Taking part in a multi-stakeholder workshop, for example, may help stakeholders distance themselves emotionally from the demands and frames of their own stakeholder group and build trust with members of different groups, potentially supporting the bridging of pre-existing conflict (Ranger et al., 2016).

Third, and importantly, interactive spaces (meetings and workshops) are also known to play a key role in sensemaking during strategy development (Kwon et al., 2014; Maitlis, 2005). In the same vein, framing theory claims that frames are developed and changed during social interactions (Goffman, 1974). Interactive spaces are therefore likely to play an important part for developing the framing of change, as well as for changing frames. In the context of public policy co-creation, Pop and Seidl (2020) demonstrate accordingly how “communicative spaces” can function to achieve shared understanding and policy suggestions. Similarly, deliberation in stakeholder workshops has been found to facilitate adjustment of stakeholder frames that contributes to joint decisions (Zimmermann et al., 2021). Our research therefore examines stakeholder interactions during workshops to explore how exactly they relate to participative strategy development and, particularly, to the “framing of the change” and “changing frames and practices.” Drawing on emergent empirical insights, we will point to a previously unobserved function of



interactive spaces, namely for mitigating tensions created by the initial ambiguity in the change strategy.

## Research focus

In sum, research on participative strategy development has praised its potential for achieving a broad knowledge base, stakeholder enrolment, and democratic decision making. In the context of collaborative governance, agreement is however hard to achieve, due to stakeholders' different interests and perspectives of the problem and solutions at stake (see e.g., Dentoni et al., 2018; Ferraro et al., 2015). Moreover, agreed changes are not always implemented at a broad scale (see e.g., Furumo et al., 2020; Ruyschaert & Salles, 2014). Taking a framing perspective, we explore how tensions inherent in participative strategy development affect whether its aims for change are achieved. We apply the framing lens to describe the participative development of a change strategy in terms of framing of the planned and needed change. We also use the framing lens to characterize “major change” as a transformation that involves frame change.

Given that a participative strategy has to be initially open to allow for participants' contributions, the planned and needed change needs to be at first framed ambiguously. Prior research has highlighted the benefits of such ambiguity for integrating diverse perspectives and enrolling of a broad range of actors. At the same time, researchers have observed that strategy openness creates certain tensions, given that the aims for tapping a broad knowledge base and making democratic decisions conflict with the needs for closure, guidance, and coordination. Guided by our empirical insights, we unveil additional tensions created by the ambiguous framing of a change strategy. We explore how these tensions affect the degree to which the change aims are achieved, and we analyze the function of interactive spaces. While interactive spaces are known to facilitate participative strategy development by restructuring boundaries, creating motivation, and aiding collective sensemaking, we shed new light on their role in participative strategy development by suggesting how they help mitigate the tensions inherent in ambiguous strategy framing.

## METHODS

We followed an interpretivist epistemology, aiming to understand the meaning of contextually grounded social experiences from the viewpoint of the participating actors (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). We interpreted these meanings to arrive at a more comprehensive perspective of the events in question. To demonstrate the trustworthiness of our findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1999) we offer a “thick” description of our research context; we are transparent about the links between data, concepts, and the resultant grounded model; and we relate the findings to detailed observations and quotes (Gioia et al., 2013).

## Research context

Peatlands are among the world's most carbon-dense terrestrial carbon sinks, but if their structure is damaged, they can become a major source of greenhouse gases (GHG). Globally ~11% of peatlands have been modified and drained, and despite covering less than .4% of the global land area, these peatlands are responsible for ~5% of global anthropogenic GHG emissions (Leifeld et al., 2019). In the UK, peatlands are the country's largest carbon store, containing more carbon than the forests of France and Germany combined. However, over 80% of the country's peatlands are degraded and therefore a substantial source of GHG emissions from the land use sector (Bain et al., 2011). The restoration and sustainable management of UK peat-

lands is therefore an important part of the UK governments' target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The UK government has invested over £8 million in peatland restoration in 2020/21 and intends to invest over £50 million in it by 2025 (Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs, 2021, p. 3).

We examined stakeholder participation in Natural England's Peat Pilots initiative, which fed into the publication of the "England Peat Action Plan" in May 2021 (Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs, 2021). The Peatland Pilots aimed to explore barriers and opportunities to protect, restore, and sustainably manage peatlands, and engage stakeholders in the development of the England Peat Action Plan. Stakeholders participated via a series of interactive workshops in June 2020, designed to elicit stakeholder input, knowledge exchange, and deliberation. The first author acted as independent researcher while the second author was one of researchers who facilitated the workshop. We hence took advantage of an outsider's as well as an insider's perspective. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the workshops took place online. We concentrate on two workshops, for stakeholders in East Anglia (EA) and Dartmoor. These areas face contrasting conditions, as EA has much smaller areas of restorable peatlands and more intensive agriculture while Dartmoor farming consists to a large extent in extensive sheep grazing.

The workshops were conducted by Newcastle and Plymouth Universities and Ecologos Research, commissioned by Natural England (NE), who are an "executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)" and act as "the UK Government's adviser for the natural environment in England" (Natural England, 2021). We define NE officers as "change agents," given their task to oversee the development and implementation of the peat strategy. The aim of the workshops, presented to participants at the beginning, was to complement NE's peat pilots. In recent peatland policy strategy development in the UK, there has been a relatively high level of emphasis on stakeholder engagement in terms of the development of strategy, because of the recognized need to balance different policy priorities (climate, biodiversity, food security, and value for public money) while operating in a relative policy vacuum following Brexit, where European policy frameworks are coming to an end (Reed et al., 2020).

The workshops ran over 3 hours, starting with introductions of participants and detailed information about the use of online tools and ground rules (e.g., respecting each other even if disagreeing). Next, an NE member presented an overview of the Peat Pilots, and two academics reported on an interview and a photo study on sociocultural values concerning peatlands. The EA workshop additionally included a discussion of stakeholders' own values concerning peatlands, based on a short pre-workshop value survey. After a short break, stakeholders were given an overview of the current Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) and were asked to discuss payment options and terms of potential future environmental land management and agri-environment schemes with regard to peatlands, in two breakout rooms. The structure accorded with an ecological economic environmental valuation approach (Kenter, 2017; Orchard-Webb et al., 2016) and was designed on the basis of the Deliberative Value Formation model (Kenter et al., 2016), a conceptual model that outlines the key factors of influence and potential outcomes of deliberative valuation processes. The breakout discussions used virtual pin boards and were each facilitated by a researcher. The facilitators later summarized the breakout discussion in the plenary session, entailing further discussions. The workshops concluded with an invited round of final comments.

## Data collection

We obtained our data through observations of the named workshop and post-workshop interviews conducted by the first author. Fifteen stakeholders attended the EA workshop and 14 the Dartmoor workshop (see Table 1) including members of NE, environmental nongovernmental

TABLE 1 Participants

Stakeholder groups	Description	East Anglia workshop participants (16)	Dartmoor workshop participants (13)	Interviews (9 + 3 follow-ups)
Natural England (NE)	The UK government's adviser for the natural environment in England.	5	3	1 (+ 1 follow-up)
ENGOS	Wildlife Trust (2), RSPB (2)	2	2	1 (+ 1 follow-up)
Agri-environment advisors (Advisor)	Social scientist, ecologist advising farmers on taking up environmental schemes	1	-	2
Farmers	-	5	4	4 (+ 1 follow-up)
Landowner	-	-	1	1
Local government (Local Gov)	Cambridgeshire County Council; Dartmoor National Park Authority	3	3	-
Water service providers (Water)	SouthWestWater (2)	-	2	-
		Sum: 16	Sum: 14	Sum: 12

organizations (ENGOS), agri-environment advisors (Advisor), farmers, a landowner, members of local governments (Local Gov), and water service provider companies (Water). The aim of the observations was to gain first-hand experience of stakeholders' views as expressed during the workshop, and of the workshop contents and dynamics. They did not follow a predefined scheme but focused on stakeholders' contributions and stakeholder interactions. The workshops were video-recorded and transcribed to facilitate the analysis.

Overall, 12 interviews were conducted, with the aim to get a better understanding of participants' views and their experiences of the workshop contents and dynamics, and to gain more clarity about themes that we had observed to be potentially important. Nine workshop participants were interviewed about a month after the workshops, allowing for sufficient time for participants to reflect on the workshop and its effects. The participants represented different stakeholder groups, including members of NE and ENGOS, farmers, an agri-environment advisor, and a landowner (see Table 1). Another agri-environment advisor, who had not attended the workshop, was also interviewed at this stage. He was included because of his long-term experience of working on peatland management with both NE and farmers, to clarify nonworkshop-specific questions. The interviews lasted between 19 and 42 minutes, with an average of 33 minutes per interview. All interviews were transcribed apart from four, where the analysis relied on extensive interview notes. At the start of the interviews, the interviewer introduced herself as an academic researcher who was not part of the peatland project, but a social scientist interested in stakeholders' interactions and views regarding peatland management. She also explained the confidentiality conditions. The interviewees' open and critical responses suggest that they were sufficiently at ease with this setting.

The interview questions covered participants' current role, what they remembered most about the discussions at the workshop, whether they recalled any instances where people had disagreed on anything and whether this disagreement had been resolved, what they thought were the main disagreements generally, whether the workshop had influenced their perspective in any way, and whether they would do anything differently now after the workshop (see Appendix 1 for interview guide). In line with our interpretivist approach, the questions and the course of the conversation were adjusted to the participants' own emphases, and the interview guide was developed continuously to further explore emergent themes.

A year later, three follow-up interviews were conducted to gain more certainty on particular themes that had emerged during the data analysis. A farmer and a conservationist who had given

detailed answers in the first interview were asked, for example, to provide clarifications regarding the degree and reasons of strategy openness, different stakeholder views of the planned and needed change, the nature of criticisms of the strategy, and the role of the workshop discussions compared with other fora. Another interview was conducted with a change agent at NE who had not been interviewed in the first stage to cross-check our understanding regarding the intended openness of the strategy, the intended degree of change, and how much the degree of actual change would depend on farmers and landowners' own decisions. These follow-up interviews were thus designed to cross-check our emergent findings.

## Data analysis

We derived our insights through an abductive method of data analysis, defined as the process of forming plausible explanations through iterative comparison between inductive empirical insights and related extant concepts in the literature (see Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). At the highest level, this analysis resulted in the inference of mechanisms that linked the framing of change to actual change in frames and practices. We started the research with a broad aim to examine stakeholders' frames regarding the peat strategy, and their interactions in the workshop. From our observations and interviews, however, we identified the new questions of how participants framed the change and how this framing related to a change in frames and practices. Iterating with the literature on participative strategy making, we identified parallels, particularly with the notion of tensions in open strategy and interactive spaces, and we used these to interpret our inductive insights.

During the workshop observations, the first author noted down several “hunches” (Locke et al., 2008) that were scrutinized during the interviews and the later analysis. We coded all workshop and interview transcripts, starting with codes derived from the initial hunches. For example, in the workshops we noted that participants described the planned and needed changes differently, some referring to small modifications of current agricultural practices, while others described dramatic changes, involving a new way of seeing agriculture and land management, which we classified as “frame change.” Moreover, in the interviews some participants explicitly doubted that major change was possible, needed, or planned. This pointed us to the different framing of the planned and needed change as either “paradigm” or only “moderate” change. As framing and frames refer to interpretive schemata rather than idiosyncratic experiences (Johnston, 1995), we derived the categorizations “paradigm” or “moderate” change by abstracting from more specific descriptions of changes in agricultural practices, as well as from some participants' explicit references to the degrees of change.

Apart from the general notion of frames, none of the codes were predefined, but they were all drawn from the initial inductive analysis and consecutive iteration with the literature. When detecting new themes during the analysis, such as diverse framing of the change, the need for guidance, and perceived knowledge gaps, we created new codes or modified and relabeled extant codes. We continuously elaborated on the themes and created sub-codes. For example, the perceived issue of knowledge gaps was divided into lack of expertise, need for education, need for blending scientific and local knowledge, and piecemeal knowledge (see Appendix 2 for abbreviated list of final codes). Starting during the coding process, we noted down potential relationships between themes and illustrated them figuratively. We checked these relationships through node look-ups in NVivo software that helped us read through key themes and detect how they related to each other, allowing us to “put patterns together” (Locke et al., 2020, p. 1). This enabled us to pinpoint mechanisms that linked the initial framing of the change to the ability or willingness for change. For example, look-ups of our node “need for education” suggested perceptions of lacking guidance and a relation to farmers' ability to change. Node look-ups on what we called “piecemeal knowledge” surfaced participant statements which indicated a link between perceptions of knowledge gaps and the willingness to change. We also used several

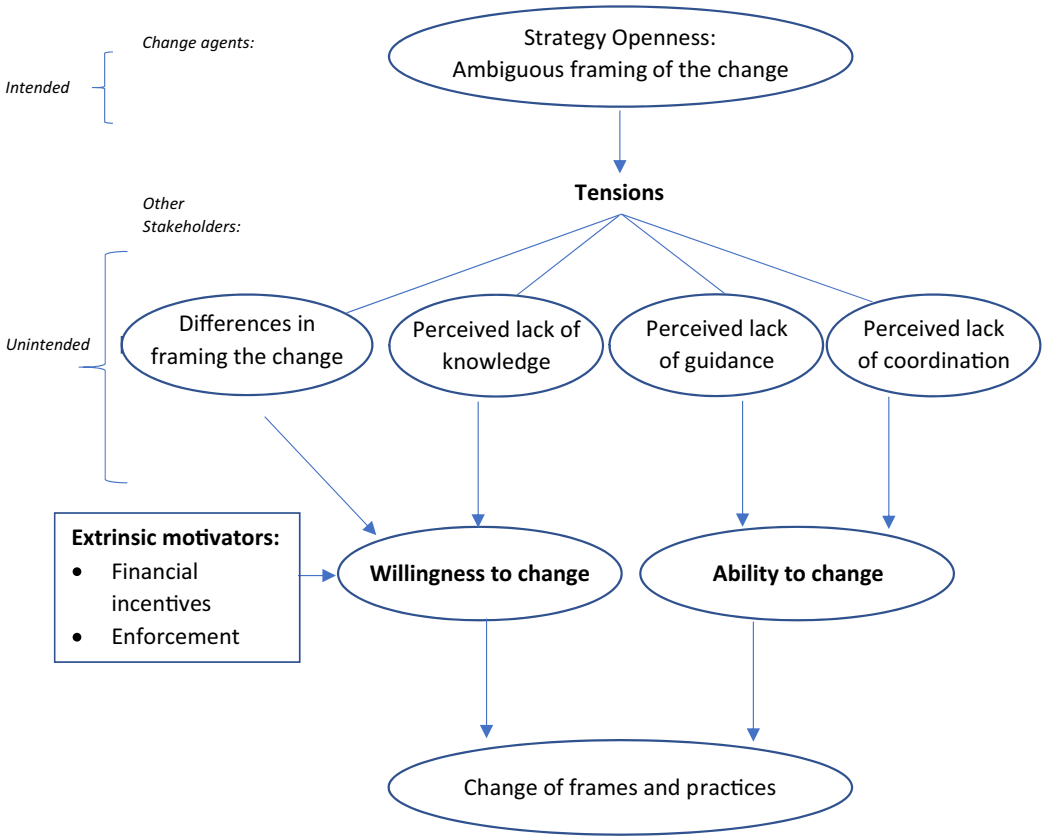


FIGURE 1 Mechanisms linking "ambiguous framing of the change" with "change of frames and practices."

nodes to categorize types of workshop (inter-)actions, such as participants stating agreement with each other, building on each other's statements, contradicting each other, merging different perspectives, and seeking input from others. Look-ups of these nodes helped us identify functions of the workshop, namely knowledge exchange, reflection on priorities, and social comparison.

We created (and continuously modified) tables to summarize participants' different interpretations of the planned change and the needed change, and other consequences of strategy openness. These tables helped us recognize unintended consequences of strategy openness, which we later interpreted in terms of "tensions" that affected participants' ability and willingness for change and, through this, the actual change of frames and practices. To develop an overview of relationships, we redrew our figurative illustration several times. This analysis finally resulted in our grounded model of "Mechanisms linking 'ambiguous framing of the change' with 'change of frames and practices'" (Figure 1) and "The role of the interactive space" (Figure 2).

## FINDINGS

We analyze our findings on participants' perceptions, to successively unfold our conceptualization of the mechanisms by which the ambiguous initial framing of intended change is linked with resultant actual change (Figure 1) and of the role of interactive spaces (Figure 2). We start with participants' perceptions of strategy openness and their framing of the planned and needed change. We here identify a first tension between the need for an initially ambiguous framing of the change and the unintended persistence of different framings of the change. We then point to additional tensions between the need for ambiguous framing and perceptions of lacking knowl-



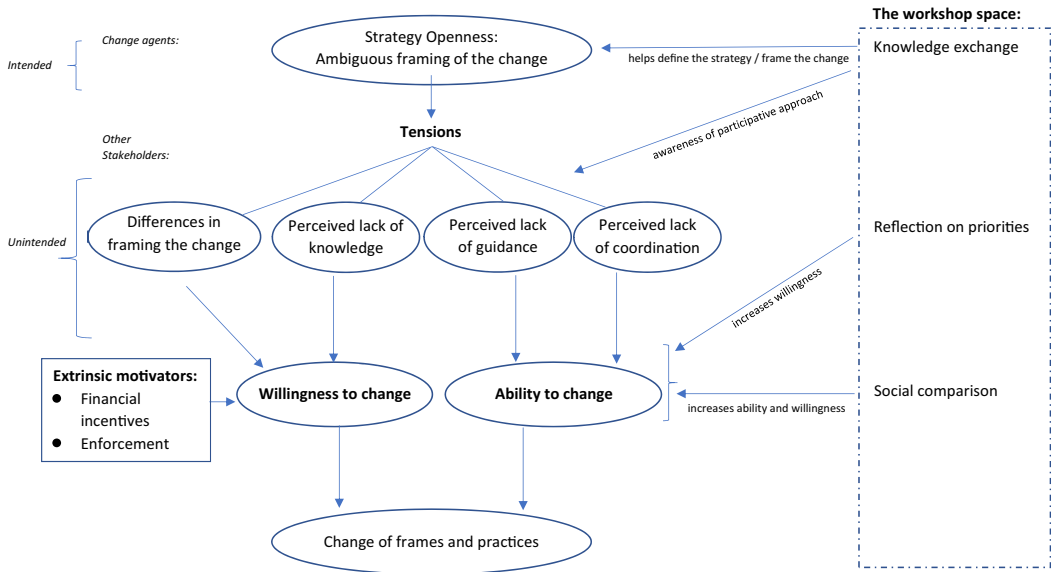


FIGURE 2 The role of the interactive space.

edge, guidance, and control. We infer that these unintended tensions created by strategy openness affected land managers' ability and willingness for change, and thereby the resultant degree of actual transformation. We hence present a chain of mechanisms that links the ambiguous initial framing with the resulting degree and nature of change. Finally, we suggest how the workshop space fed into stakeholders' framing of the change, helped to mitigate the named tensions, and thereby supported stakeholders' ability and willingness for change.

### Strategy openness

Participants across stakeholder groups recognized that the current peat strategy was open to stakeholder input. They attributed this openness first to the aim for participation and compromise and second to gaps in scientific knowledge.

### The aim for participation and compromise

NE members (who were change agents) explained that strategy development was intentionally participative. They stated up front that the peat strategy aimed for major change in peatland management but emphasized the need for consulting diverse stakeholders and finding feasible compromises between their different interests. This was deemed necessary for achieving actual change of peatland management practices by farmers and landowners, whose priorities were seen to partly contradict the suggested major changes. Accordingly, NE had commissioned an inquiry into social, economic, and cultural barriers to the implementation of the peat strategy based on interviews with farmers and landowners. The England Peat Action Plan later emphasized, accordingly, that stakeholders needed to be empowered, peat management directives needed to be adapted to local requirements, and that it was important to help “landowners and managers find solutions that work for their land, without being overly prescriptive” (Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs, 2021, p. 35). A NE representative presented the study findings in the workshop and provided an optimistic outlook on possible compromises: “I think we have a tendency to think that we can have peatland restoration or we can have farming, that it's an

either/or question. And I don't think that's true ... It's the importance of having the right animal in the right place" (NE 2, Dartmoor workshop).

The need for participation and compromise was also expressed by some of the participating farmers, for example: "I'm a strong believer that this whole peat conservation project needs input from every angle" (Farmer 2, EA, interview). Compromises were also seen as fundamental for implementing new peat management practices. For example, accounting for farmers' financial security was deemed necessary for securing their peatland management services: "It's the old saying, you can't be green if you're in the red ... we won't have the ability to manage wildfire or do any of your swiping work or anything on the Commons" (Farmer 6, Dartmoor workshop).

## Gaps in scientific knowledge

Apart from the aim for participation and compromise, participants across stakeholder groups mentioned the lack of conclusive scientific knowledge as another reason for strategy openness. A comprehensive map of peat conditions across England was yet missing; and several pilot projects and experiments were still ongoing to explore and test new peatland management options, such as re-wetting techniques and new crops. Open questions remained, for example, about how much peatland in each region was restorable, what percentage of this was in farming areas, and which crops would need to be changed. Accordingly, change agents' presentations in the workshops focused on the ongoing pilots and broad objectives rather than providing detailed guidelines. Some farmers similarly attributed the openness of the strategy to gaps in scientific knowledge, for example when explaining that science still needed to find out more (Farmer 6, Dartmoor, interview), that NE had not yet "looked into the local knowledge and fine detail" and the workshop had been a "think-tank" (Farmer 2, EA, interview).

## Differences in framing the change

At the time of data collection, participants provided divergent interpretations concerning the degree of change that was planned and needed, describing it either as a paradigm change or as only a moderate change. Stakeholders had thus not arrived at a shared framing of the change.

### Paradigm change

Those primarily involved in the delivery of the peat plan (NE, ENGOs, government representatives, water companies) explained that the peat strategy aimed at major change, namely a far-reaching carbon emission reduction through changes in peat management across England. Carbon reductions were framed as an important public good that justified high financial subsidies or "public money for public good." According to presentations by NE representatives, the new peat management would include a significant change in land use practices, with the expectation of an eventual 25% reduction of crop cultivation on some peatlands. This required new farming practices that still allowed "farmers to be farmers," but meant a paradigm change, which can be classified as a change of frames, and a major change of practices, requiring the use of "alternative agricultural techniques and agriculture crops which work with the peatland so that it can restore or maintain itself" (NE 2, Dartmoor workshop). One workshop participant thus described the change as "a transformation that is as large as anything since the second world war and farmers are now being asked to produce a completely new suite of goods" (ENGO2, EA workshop).

In EA, where crop cultivation was predominant, such paradigm change was seen to include new wetland farming (e.g., growing reed) and even "carbon farming," i.e., the agricultural production of carbon sequestering sphagnum moss. A "real change of heart" (NE 2, interview) already practiced by some farmers was seen in new water management methods which served



to raise water levels and reduce carbon emissions during certain times of the year on agricultural land, replacing traditional drainage practices. In Dartmoor, where sheep farming was the main agricultural practice, farmers would be incentivized to reduce sheep grazing on protected areas and contribute to peat restoration work. Concerning the technical peatland restoration and maintenance work, a participant expressed that “the scale of the job is huge.” For example, “There could be contractors up over Dartmoor all year round forever effectively, for many years to come, picking away at it” (Local Gov 6, Dartmoor workshop).

Some of the farmers also perceived that a major change was planned, but they tended to emphasize the risks of such change. In EA, there were some fears that the peat strategy aimed at a reduction of farmland through rewetting, which they thought would ultimately threaten food security in the UK and make it necessary to rely on cheap food imports. In Dartmoor, some farmers and landowners voiced the possibility that the peat strategy would endanger farmers' existence, as it would force farmers to give up large areas of pasture, no longer permitting them to make a living from their sheep and making them reliant on environmental payments as primary source of income.

### Moderate change only

Across stakeholder groups, there were other voices who explained that the implementation would or could mean only moderate change. This perspective was closely tied to the views that farmers would only take up moderate changes in practice (Advisor 2) and that major changes would not be feasible due to consequences such as food insecurity (EA) and driving farmers off their farms, thereby disabling them to deliver restoration work (Dartmoor). Hence, the interpretation of what change was planned went hand-in-hand with participants' evaluation of what change was feasible. One participant (Advisor 2, interview) expressed that the peat strategy followed a “zeitgeist” and deployed new terminology (such as “natural capital,” “ecosystem services”) that implied a game change, but would not entail much change in practice, as “the activities the land managers will actually participate in won't really have changed very much.” He felt that the owners of the peat plan got carried away with the new concept “as if it represents new stuff on the ground, which, largely it doesn't, in my opinion.”

Similarly, some farmers in both EA and Dartmoor envisaged that the peat strategy either was not meant to or could not entail drastic change in practice. They were hence relatively relaxed about the demands placed on farmers. In the workshop for EA, farmers focused their input on methods of long-term soil conservation which would help maintain agricultural peat soil, rather than considering the introduction of radically new crops or rewetting of agricultural areas. Moreover, flooding was not seen to be feasible in many farming areas, because it would destroy adjacent farmland. Instead, a useful and therefore more likely change would be to store flood waters only in reserved areas such as the Great Fen, hence: “Some of these areas, I think, will be, and probably are being, looked at with that in mind ... You're not going to flood peatland between farms. You're only going to flood these areas, like the Great Fen and other reserves” (Farmer 3, EA, interview).

In Dartmoor, a farmer suggested the new scheme would have to accommodate the complexity of the commons rights and the danger of overgrazing new areas, and policy makers therefore would not “have the courage” to change government schemes drastically but would only “tweak them” (Farmer 6, Dartmoor, interview).

Overall, participants across stakeholder groups hence framed the planned change in contrasting ways—either as a paradigm change or as moderate change. We argue that these differences in framing were tied to the ambiguity of the initial framing of the change that was part of participatory strategy development. Rather than imposing the need for paradigm change across the board, the strategy openness allowed for diverse framings to persist, including “watered-down” versions of the desired paradigm change that envisaged only a moderate change of agri-environmental



practices. The persistence of contrasting views contradicts the need to arrive at a shared framing of the planned change to achieve strategy closure. Hence, we discern a tension between the need for an initially ambiguous framing of the planned and needed change, and the need for strategy closure (see Figure 1, tension relating to differences in framing the change).

Moreover, we argue that the view that only moderate change was planned, tied to the reasoning that only moderate change was feasible or needed, limited farmers' willingness to change their frames and or modify their practices significantly (see Figure 1, arrow from differences in framing the change to willingness to change). Farmers who believed that only moderate change was planned and needed would not feel motivated to engage in major change. Such willingness can be characterized as "intrinsic motivation" for major change, i.e., a motivation created by the rewarding nature of the activity itself (for example achieving desired peatland protection) as opposed to rewards external to this activity, such as monetary awards (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). A local government representative was thus concerned that the governments' message for change was not strong enough for achieving the required "cultural" change.

They have been given a very clear message, public money for public good, and that this will be a lot more focussed around outcomes ... I'm not sure how that message is landing, and whether that's strong enough. So, I'd have concerns I suppose about a cultural shift in how things will be done in the future.

(Local Gov 6, Dartmoor workshop)

## Perceived lack of guidance, coordination, and knowledge

Most of the farmers expressed that they appreciated the participative approach to strategy development and the option of compromises. Most also seemed to accept the inconclusiveness of knowledge and were ready to wait for more scientific and local knowledge to emerge. There were however several voices that regarded the openness of the strategy as a shortcoming, pointing to the lack of guidance, coordination, and knowledge. We hence observed tensions between the intended openness of the strategy, and these unintended evaluations. We argue that these affected farmers' ability and willingness to change (see Figure 1).

### Lack of guidance

The mildest form of criticism concerned the need for more guidance for farmers on new agricultural techniques, and clearer answers to open questions. A farmer in EA listed some of the many open questions:

What is a peat area? Is probably the biggest question we still haven't answered. ... Therefore, is it going to be restored or managed? And if it's a small patch in a field, do we ignore it or do we manage a small bit in the middle of a field? ... Which peats on the lowlands are relevant? If we take some production, what sort of timescale are we looking to regenerate? And therefore, where is that production going to go and is it going to be a net benefit from an agricultural point of view?

(Farmer 2, EA, interview)

Some farmers therefore asked for more guidance, for example a clear indication of what areas of peat were to be rewetted and how to deal with peat within farming land. While farmers felt they needed such guidance to implement changes, the strategy could not provide it without the farmers' and other stakeholders' input. We hence observe a tension between the strategy's openness to land managers' knowledge inputs and their calls for more guidance. We argue that the perceived lack of guidance stifled farmers' and landowners' ability to take action, even if they



were willing to do so (see Figure 1, arrow from perceived lack of guidance to ability to change). As a farmer put it:

When government steps out of some of the fundamental research that's required to deliver some of these things ... as a farmer ... you're thinking about all the bits that [farmer's name] mentioned, the bits that I've done, but nobody is helping us from an education point of view to deliver it.

(Farmer 4, EA workshop)

## Lack of coordination

Several participants requested more governmental coordination, given the difficulties of reaching compromise. This was most prominent in Dartmoor. Due to the complex legislation and historical disputes between commoners, it was here particularly problematic to find compromises between peat restoration goals and different farmers' and landowners' interests. A participant pointed to the need and difficulty of negotiation in this context: "Personally, I can see that the farmers have rights, and that's not going to change, therefore we have to find a way to cohabit. But that's extremely difficult to do and it requires a huge amount of negotiation and reaching of consensus, which, quite honestly, takes years to do" (Landowner 1, Dartmoor, interview).

Negotiating local solutions was therefore regarded as difficult or even unfeasible. We hence observe another tension, between the openness of the strategy to participation and compromise, and the calls for more governmental coordination. While the participative strategy development aimed at reducing central control to include diverse interests, this was not always feasible, and more coordination and control was thus demanded. The lack of coordination was seen to impede stakeholders' ability to implement major changes, due to the inability to reach compromises (see Figure 1, arrow from perceived lack of coordination to ability to change).

## Lack of knowledge

The strongest form of criticism concerned lacking scientific and local knowledge, amounting to a lack of trust in the peat strategy and affecting farmers' willingness to change. Several participants pointed to flaws in the local peat restoration plans resulting from insufficient local knowledge. In Dartmoor, farmers explained that moving hefted cattle to new areas would disbalance the whole farming system. It would lead to some areas being overgrazed and others undergrazed, given the different ways cattle and sheep graze. These common concerns were seen to be left unanswered in the current peat management plan, demotivating farmers to engage in new practices at this stage. In the same vein, the lacking knowledge and direction of the strategy makers was criticized during this workshop conversation in Dartmoor:

Farmer 8: I've really no idea what you guys are talking about, what you expect us to do. None whatsoever.

Farmer 7: Yeah. Quite ...

Farmer 8: I don't think it's a communication problem, because I personally don't think you lot know what you want.

Farmer 9: Our countryside stewardship team, I don't think the woman who wrote it knew what she wanted.

On the extreme end, a farmer questioned the correctness of extant scientific insights. He explained for example that the restoration of peat, compared with the burning of fossil fuels, would have an insignificant effect on carbon emissions, and claimed that the estimated figures were wrong as a result of wishful thinking: "They come up with a lot of figures, and I'm not a scientist but I can





count. There are gaping holes in their figures, ... They want something to be true, they want to believe in it" (Farmer 8, Dartmoor, interview).

We hence recognize a tension between strategy openness and perceptions of lacking knowledge, which for some created mistrust in the strategy. While the participative approach required knowledge to be incomplete at the stage of stakeholder participation, these stakeholders demanded a better-informed initial strategy and were not motivated to engage in major change without such input. We hence suggest that such perceptions of lacking knowledge affected stakeholder's willingness for major change (see Figure 1, arrow from perceived lack of knowledge to willingness to change).

## Consequences for change of frames and practices

As mentioned, the agents of the peat strategy aimed at a paradigm change. This would involve a frame change, namely a change in stakeholders' schemata for interpreting environmental needs concerning peatlands, which would lead to new priorities and a significant change in agri-environmental practices. While our data do not allow us to judge the overall level of actual change in frames and practices in the respective regions of the UK, our findings do indicate a lack of such change for several farmers. Limited frame change was apparent first in the aforementioned reasoning—that only moderate change was feasible or needed, tied to the interpretation that only moderate change was planned. Second, some participants observed a lack of radical change in practice. On the far end, a lack of frame change was visible in certain farmers only restoring some wetlands on their land rather than reforming their agricultural practices, and regarding this as a sufficient contribution to environmental conservation: "once you put in a wetland you, the mindset will think, well I'm alright then Jack, because I've done all I need to do, but actually I'm going to go and take my massive tractor and spray all the things I'm going to spray" (Farmer 5, EA workshop). In the same vein, the uptake of incentives for more significant interventions had often been poor in the past: "A lot of these payment rates are based on significant interventions, which obviously we need in places, but we know they have never really achieved the level of take-up and change that we would want" (NE 5, EA workshop).

We extrapolate from our findings to suggest that the ambiguity of the initial framing of the change contributed to such lack of major change. We have argued that the openness of the strategy required an initial ambiguous framing of the change that allowed farmers to interpret it in ways that did not mean a change in frames, or a significant change in practices, lowering stakeholders' willingness for major change. In addition, we have suggested that perceived lack of guidance and lack of coordination limited farmers' ability for change, while the perceived gaps in knowledge affected their willingness for change (see Figure 1). Assuming that reduced ability and willingness for change impede the actual change of frames and practices, we infer that the ambiguous initial framing of the change affected the resulting actual change through a chain of mechanisms, namely: the tensions created by framing ambiguity, and their consequences for stakeholders' willingness and ability for change (see Figure 1, arrows from strategy openness: ambiguous framing of the change, to tensions, to willingness/ability to change, to change of frames and practices).

## Financial incentives and enforcement

Many voices emphasized that achieving a significant change in practices and a broad uptake required higher financial incentives rather than changing mindsets—"In my experience the best way to lead the industry is to give it incentives. Farmers are great at responding to incentives from government, going back decades, and this is no different" (Local Gov 3, EA workshop). Going

a step further, a few participants favored enforcement of new practices above incentives. As one farmer in EA put it: “If you want a big uptake, unfortunately it's going to cost a fortune ... I don't think the public will stand it again. I think the way it'll change will be government legislation, personally, more than financial benefit” (Farmer 2, EA workshop).

In Dartmoor, where consensus between farmers and landowners was particularly hard to reach, one landowner similarly suggested that relying on incentives was not sustainable, but enforcement of new practices would be necessary in the long run:

One of the things that we do very badly in Britain is to follow up things like this with legislation to enforce it ... our government is never strong enough to understand what the fundamental issues are underneath and bring in legislation against a powerful lobby group to enforce it.

(Landowner 1, Dartmoor, interview)

Such financial incentives and enforcement can be described as extrinsic motivators (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022) of change, creating motivation not through the rewarding nature of the change itself, but through external rewards (receiving financial incentives and complying with legislation). We have argued that farmers' intrinsic motivation and their ability for major change were inhibited by the ambiguous framing of the change, through the described chain of mechanisms. Arguably, if this intrinsic motivation and ability were therefore not sufficient for achieving major change, these extrinsic motivators would be required for achieving major change.

The calls for enforcement point to the limits to the democratic approach of developing the peat strategy, which aims to enroll, and thus intrinsically motivate, stakeholders. The calls for enforcement imply that designing the strategy participatively will not be enough for achieving major change, but enforcement will also be necessary. While the need for eventual enforcement contradicts the democratic ideal of participative strategy, the two could be combined, if enforcement is implemented only at a later stage, after the closure of the strategy. Our findings further indicate that the need for enforcement may be reduced through an interactive workshop space that mitigates the described tensions.

## The influence of the workshop space

Different to regular committees and online communication,<sup>3</sup> the observed stakeholder workshops provided the rare opportunity for synchronous communication among members of stakeholder groups that did not meet regularly, and facilitation by academic researchers. We argue that this set-up increased the chance of the collaborative discussions that were necessary for achieving open knowledge exchange and reflection on different priorities. These were described by many interviewees. For example: “I just remember quite a lot of different inputs from various backgrounds, and I thought it was very constructive the way it progressed along ... Probably, dare I say, differing views, listening to other people's opinions” (Farmer 2, EA, interview).

Our findings further indicate that the workshops allowed for useful social comparison among stakeholders that supported their ability and willingness for change. The functions of the interactive space are summarized in Figure 2.

<sup>3</sup>Other fora for communication between the stakeholder groups included communications by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA), by the Committee and by the National Farmers' Union (NFU), and meetings of local peatland projects which involved multiple stakeholders.



## Knowledge exchange

Our observations and interviews suggest that the workshops allowed for knowledge exchange, which influenced participants' framing of the planned change. First, the workshops gave change agents the opportunity to present the current strategy and thereby reduce the ambiguity on how to frame the change. The change agents provided information about their views of the planned change, clearly stating the vision of major change and the aim for participation and local adaptation and compromise. Farmers and landowners, in turn, had the chance to provide input of their own, local knowledge, and priorities. In the long run, such input of local knowledge was deemed to help define the specifics of the strategy and thus achieve a less ambiguous framing of the change (see Figure 2, arrow from knowledge exchange to ambiguous framing of the change). Following our previous argument, we infer that knowledge exchange thereby served to increase the knowledge base and the guidance and coordination that the strategy could provide, thus reducing criticisms of lacking guidance, coordination, and knowledge and mitigating the tensions inherent in strategy openness. Notably, the tensions were not created in the workshop, but alleviated through the workshop interactions. This would facilitate farmers' ability and willingness to engage in change. At the stage of publication of the Peat Action Plan (May 2021) closure had not yet been reached, but the stakeholder consultations had fed into the plan, which emphasized the need for adapting peat management directives to local requirements.

Second, some farmers also explained that the knowledge exchange had made them more aware of the early stage of scientific knowledge on many questions and the need for inputs from all sides. Such awareness of the participative approach was reinforced by the change agents' presentation of the strategy as open to local input and compromise, as indicated in this workshop conversation:

Farmer 4, EA: Can I just ask ... there's so many different avenues that these things might be addressed or the strategy, is the idea of this group or all the groups across the country to try and give something to government that it can build on the future support through the ELMS of this type of peatland ... ?

Facilitator: Yes, I think it will inform that ...

NE 2: Yes. So the five pilots and this piece of work by Newcastle University will feed into the England Peat Strategy. And that will set the policy framework for how peat is managed through the funding mechanisms. ... So, actually, your participation today will have a big input on particularly how we'll be doing the design of ELMS ...

Greater awareness of the participative approach, we argue, could serve to increase participants' acceptance of limited knowledge, guidance, and coordination. Those who criticized the lacks thereof may have not been fully aware of the change agents' intention to co-create the strategy based on knowledge input from diverse stakeholders. Becoming more aware of this participative approach would therefore dampen such criticisms and counteract the tensions created by strategy openness (see Figure 2, arrow leading from knowledge exchange to tensions).

## Reflection on priorities

The workshops were also designed to encourage stakeholders to reflect on their priorities. We argue that this reflection made participants more aware of different priorities and motivated them to seek balance between them. For example, some conservationists mentioned that they had become more aware of local issues and the need for adaptation. Triggered by the discussions,

the need for balance was expressed repeatedly by change agents as well as farmers during the workshops, for example:

It's the balance, this word balance is all very, very important. ... It has now got to be redirected ... to be able to make sure that the environment takes its fair balancing for the future. Things ... we've never addressed before, the climate change, the sustainability of our soils and the soil health, are all important in the future realms. And that's what we've got to all buy into as well as delivering the food security that society needs.

(Farmer 4, EA workshop)

Reflecting on different priorities, we argue, increased farmers' willingness to consider new frames and practices (see Figure 2, arrow leading from reflection on priorities to willingness to change). This did not mean that farmers changed their priorities significantly, as they still heavily emphasized food security and economic survival during the discussions. However, the observation that farmers expressed their willingness to balance these priorities with environmental goals indicates that the discussions did influence their views and could to some extent increase their willingness to change frames and practices. The interactions during the workshop support these suggestions. We saw no instances of open conflict, but many instances of building on each others' statements and balancing different views (see Appendix 3 for exemplary dialogs).

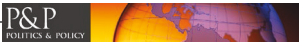
## Social comparison

Hearing others—change agents as well as farmers—reflect on new visions and practices for the future of farming could also encourage farmers to be more optimistic about new practices. The social comparison with farmers who had already experimented with new techniques potentially heartened other farmers to be more confident about trying them out, hence increasing their self-efficacy and willingness to change (see Figure 2, arrow from social comparison to willingness to change).

Overall, while we observed that the tensions inherent in open strategy impeded land managers' ability and willingness to change, we found that the workshop discussions counteracted this effect. By helping to define the strategy, enhance its knowledge base, and strengthen the guidance and coordination it could provide, the workshop space helped to mitigate the tensions created by strategy openness. Extrapolating from our observations, we argue that interactions in spaces such as these workshops have the potential to feed into “how to frame the change” and can support the ability and willingness to change—for those who are open to it—thereby facilitating and speeding up the process of change in frames and practices.

## DISCUSSION

We have presented a model to suggest a chain of mechanisms by which the initial openness of a change strategy, which is required for participative development, affects resultant actual change (Figure 1). The necessarily ambiguous initial framing of the intended change, we argued, creates certain tensions that impede stakeholders' ability and willingness for major change. The ambiguity first allows stakeholders to retain different framings of the planned and needed change, including the view that only moderate change is planned, which contradicts the change agents' aim to achieve a paradigm change. We further reasoned that stakeholders' framing of the change affects their willingness to change and, for those who believe that moderate change is sufficient, this will impede major change. Second, the openness of the strategy can lead some stakehold-



ers to perceive a lack of guidance and coordination, which limits their ability to change and to perceive a lack of knowledge that hinders their willingness to change. Overall, these mechanisms counteract the aim of the change agents for major change—namely, a frame change and significant change in practices of peatland management, which may increase the need for extrinsic motivation through financial incentives and enforcement. We finally suggested how discussions during stakeholder workshops can mitigate the named tensions by influencing the definition of the strategy, stakeholders' awareness of the participative approach, and their ability and willingness for change (Figure 2). In what follows, we outline implications for research and practice, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

## Implications for research and practice

Prior research has praised the aims of participative strategy development, but has also observed that multi-stakeholder agreement is hard to achieve due to stakeholders' different priorities (see e.g., Dentoni et al., 2018; Ferraro et al., 2015) and frames of the problem and solutions at stake (see e.g., Ansari et al., 2013), and that agreed changes are not always implemented broadly (e.g., Furumo et al., 2020; Ruysschaert & Salles, 2014). Moreover, while many have highlighted the advantages of ambiguity in strategy framing, it is also noted that participative strategy development is hampered by inherent tensions between the aim for participation and the need for closure, guidance, and coordination (see e.g., Hautz et al., 2017). Our model contributes to this literature by shedding new light on some of the mechanisms that explain why initially intended strategy outcomes are hard to achieve through participative strategy development. We contribute particularly to the understanding of tensions in participative strategy development and their consequences for the implementation of the initially intended change, focusing on the context of complex environmental challenges. Moreover, we offer a new understanding of interactive spaces as a method for mitigating such tensions.

## Tensions in participative strategy development

Prior research on participative strategy development has emphasized the benefits of an ambiguous definition of such strategy for facilitating the integration of different approaches and enrolling of a broad range of actors (see e.g., Ferraro et al., 2015; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2017). We have, by contrast, highlighted the downside of this ambiguity in the case of a strategy that aims at major change, pointing to the tensions that such ambiguity creates by allowing for different framings of the intended change to persist, and by yielding criticisms of lacking guidance, coordination, and knowledge, which together hamper the ability and willingness of stakeholders to engage in major change.

The framing lens has helped us to unveil these tensions. This lens allowed us first to understand the ambiguous definition of a change strategy as ambiguous “framing” of the change. It thereby directed our focus away from the espoused strategy toward participants' perceptions of the strategy and their consequences. Moreover, the framing lens helped us capture how the ambiguous initial framing of the change supports the persistence of stakeholders' different framing, and how this can impede frame change and major change of practices.

Our findings thus elaborate and add to prior notions of tensions in participative strategy development (see Table 2). We underscore previous observations of a tension between strategy openness and the need for closure. Prior research has highlighted that strategy openness can impede closure through information overload due to the input from multiple actors (Luedicke et al., 2017), unexpected courses of the discussion (Hautz et al., 2017), and due to the complexity of the problem at stake (Pop & Seidl, 2020). Our study additionally shows that the ambiguity inherent in open strategy hinders closure by allowing different framings of the intended change



**TABLE 2** Tensions in participative strategy development

Tensions identified in the literature on participative strategy		Tensions identified in our study	
Need for a broad knowledge base	Need for closure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade-offs between involving multiple stakeholder perspectives and the need for simplifying the problem to achieve shared understanding and action (Hautz et al., 2017)</li> <li>• Reduced speed and control over the decision-making process make it hard to reach a final strategy definition (Pop &amp; Seidl 2020)</li> </ul>	Need for ambiguous framing of the change	Need for closure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence of different framings of the change</li> </ul> Need for guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of lacking guidance</li> </ul> Need for coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of lacking coordination</li> </ul> Need for sufficient knowledge base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of lacking knowledge</li> </ul>
Need for democratic decision making	Need for guidance and coordination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic leadership is required to achieve innovative and long-term solutions (Van Gestel &amp; Grotenbreg, 2021)</li> <li>• A sanctioning and coordinating authority is needed to help frame the issue at stake as a commons problem, coordinate multiple actors, and enforce agreed solutions if necessary (Homsey et al., 2019)</li> <li>• Direction through decision makers is necessary to achieve strategic decisions and action (Heracleous et al., 2018)</li> <li>• Moderation of contributions by management is necessary (Hautz et al., 2017)</li> </ul>		

*Note:* Definition of tensions: Situations in which the fact that there are different needs causes difficulties.

to persist, including different answers to the fundamental question of whether major change is planned and needed. Going beyond prior research, we indicate how this unintended consequence of strategy openness not only creates a tension, but also affects stakeholders' willingness for major change, which potentially undermines the success of the change strategy. We hence shift the previous focus on the change agent's (manager's or policy maker's) perspective (see e.g., Hautz et al., 2017; Luedicke et al., 2017) toward the perspectives of stakeholders who participate in strategy making and suggest how these perspectives are relevant for resultant change.

Our findings also support prior views on tensions between strategy openness and the need for guidance. One facet of this tension has been the difficulty of compromise between multiple interests and the focus on short-term solutions, which necessitate strategic leadership to help achieve shared definitions and a focus on long-term solutions (Van Gestel & Grotenbreg, 2021). Another facet is the need for moderation by management (Hautz et al., 2017) or a "sanctioning and coordinating authority" (Homsey et al., 2019, p. 574) that allows for a common framing of the problem, coordination, and enforcement of agreed solutions.

While our findings resonate with each of these aspects, they also add important new insights. They demonstrate first that it can be the stakeholders themselves who ask for more guidance—for example, when farmers asked for clearer guidelines to be able to change their agricultural practices. Second, while stakeholders may generally welcome the invitation to participate in strategy development, they may also desire such participation to be confined. Going a step further, some stakeholders in our study asked for more governmental coordination and even enforcement of

the strategy—for example, when reaching consensus between conflicting parties was difficult in the Dartmoor commons. This insight goes against the view that moderation by management can frustrate and demotivate employees who have contributed to open strategy in organizations (Hautz et al., 2017). Arguably, the call for more guidance and coordination may emerge when the number of participating actors increases. In policy-making contexts such as ours, where multiple stakeholders of different organizational fields and diverse interests are involved, it can be harder to achieve a shared framing and a compromise that accommodates all stakeholders. The need for guidance and coordination may therefore be more apparent compared to open strategy development within organizations.

We observed another tension, arising from the perceived lack of knowledge that the strategy was based on, which we have not seen defined before. While many stakeholders accepted the preliminary state of scientific knowledge regarding peatland management, others criticized the knowledge gaps in the strategy and the neglect of local requirements (for example regarding sheep grazing in Dartmoor). This evaluation was significant, as it created mistrust in the strategy and hampered some stakeholders' willingness to change. The criticism of lacking knowledge again contradicts prior presumptions that strategy openness is commonly welcomed by those who are involved. These stakeholders concentrated on the strategy's lacking knowledge base rather than appreciating its openness to their knowledge input. This evaluation was closely related to the calls for more guidance, namely the preference to be led by a well-informed strategy rather than having to contribute to its knowledge base. To some extent, these stakeholders' apprehensions resonate with the view that open strategy can be a burden to employees in organizations as it requires them to deal with strategic tasks in addition to their regular tasks (Hautz et al., 2017). Stakeholders in policy making may similarly experience the call for their contribution as additional demand. More than in the organizational context, however, stakeholders in policy making may also feel that their knowledge contribution is insufficient, given the complexity of the issues at stake and the need for a comprehensive and scientific knowledge base.

## The context of complex environmental challenges

Particularly when dealing with today's highly complex and multi-faceted environmental challenges, the vast extent of local knowledge that is required and the multitude of stakeholder interests to be accommodated may reinforce some stakeholders' calls for a coordinating authority and a centrally coordinated, comprehensive knowledge base. Public change strategies dealing with today's large-scale problems, such as climate change, may thus be particularly vulnerable to the tensions between strategy openness and perceptions of lacking knowledge, guidance, and coordination.

We have argued that these tensions are consequential for actors' ability and willingness to change, and therefore the possible degree and speed of change. While we hold that the named tensions are relevant for participative strategy development more broadly, we thus argue that they are particularly important when dealing with grand challenges such as the current climate and biodiversity crises, which require both immediate and major change. Our findings hence indicate some of the reasons why such large-scale and urgent challenges cannot be achieved by participative strategy development alone, but will require central knowledge, guidance, coordination, and even enforcement at some stage. This insight echoes the view that the choice of participative strategy development should depend on the size and urgency of the required change. For organizations, Johnson and others (2020) recommend that issues that require major and rapid changes should be approached by small specialist project teams consisting of senior managers and possibly planners and consultants. In public policy making by contrast, small teams are not an option, because multiple stakeholders' interests and local knowledge have to be accounted for.

Nevertheless, the degree of change and the need for speed (dictated for example by environmental crises) set clear boundaries to the participative approach to strategy development in this context.

## The role of interactive spaces

As mentioned, prior research on interactive spaces has concentrated on their function of restructuring boundaries and enhancing commitment (see e.g., Johnson et al., 2010), and sensemaking (see e.g., Kwon et al., 2014) as part of strategy development. To our knowledge, research has not explicitly explored the important role of such spaces for mitigating the tensions inherent in participative strategy development. We address this gap and thereby answer to Hautz and others' (2017) call for more research on how the dilemmas in open strategy can be handled. We have highlighted the role of stakeholder workshops for mitigating the defined tensions created by ambiguous framing of the change, first by enabling knowledge exchange that helped to define the strategy, counteracting the persistent differences in framings of the change. The knowledge exchange also enhanced the knowledge base of the strategy and thereby strengthened the guidance and coordination it could provide and made nonchange agents more aware of the participative approach, which together mitigated their criticisms of lacking guidance, coordination, and knowledge (Figure 2). We have further reasoned that the workshops encouraged reflection on different priorities and social comparison, which supported stakeholders' willingness and ability for change. These effects, we have argued, supported the strategy aims for major change (Figure 2).

Some of these functions of the interactive space resonate with the mechanisms outlined in prior research. For example, "framing the change" during workshop discussions can be regarded as a form of sensemaking (Maitlis, 2005), which was previously described as a function of interactive spaces, including the adjustment of frames (Zimmermann et al., 2021) and values (Isacs et al., 2022; Kenter et al., 2016). We did not examine the functions of boundary work or fostering emotional commitment (Cartel et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2010) in the interactive space directly, but our participants emphasized the collaborative atmosphere in our workshops, which suggests some strengthening of social bonds within the boundary of the workshop and the creation of positive emotions. We can also assume that these boundaries and emotional energy facilitated the social exchange in the workshop that helped the knowledge exchange, reflection on priorities, and social comparison (Orchard-Webb et al., 2016; Ranger et al., 2016). Our study hence hints at additional benefits of boundary work and emotional dynamics during stakeholder interactions—namely, for mitigating tensions and facilitating stakeholders' motivation and ability for change.

We also add to the literature that has suggested measures for mitigating tensions in open strategy in organizations, for example central structuring (Heracleous et al., 2018) and selective participation (Luedicke et al., 2017). To our knowledge, this research has not examined the role of interactive spaces for mitigating the tensions inherent in open strategy. Our findings suggest that interactive spaces can assist with what Heracleous and others (2018, p. 25) call the "precarious balancing act" of creating conditions for dialogue while dealing with conceptions of strategy as directive. We have shown that interactive spaces can create ideal conditions for dialog, namely "information exchange by equals, self-reflexivity, and a joint ongoing exploration aiming to appreciate others' points of view, build convergence, and to open new vistas of being and doing." Heracleous and others further suggest that organizations need to combine these conditions with the conflicting need for direction through decision makers (2018, p. 25). In line with the common assumption that openness is welcomed, the authors report that some participants in open strategy criticized such top-down guidance. Our focus on stakeholder perceptions suggests a different route. We have shown that not only actual guidance, but also stakeholders' perceptions of guidance matter and that participants may even ask for more of it. In other words, perceptions of lacking direction, rather than actual direction, created the tensions. Justifying the lacking direction to stakeholders then becomes an important measure for mitigating the tensions.

At the stage where direction is necessarily limited, due to lacking knowledge and the early stage of consultation, change agents can use interactive spaces to communicate the participative approach and its need for openness. This promises to motivate stakeholders to provide their knowledge input, and dampen their concerns regarding lacking knowledge, guidance, and coordination. The interactive space thus helps to modify not the actual lack of direction, but stakeholders' evaluations of it. We therefore argue that researchers and change agents should pay more attention to how stakeholders interpret and evaluate a participative strategy, and to create interactive spaces to influence these interpretations.

## Limitations and directions for future research

Our qualitative case study, using workshop observations and interviews, allowed us to tap stakeholders' perceptions, the importance of stakeholders' evaluations for creating tensions, and the potential of the workshop space for alleviating these tensions. The qualitative case study approach does however create certain limitations. We expect that our model, and more generally the use of the framing lens to examine framing of change in relation to frame change, could be transferred to a range of settings beyond the public policy context, such as strategy development in organizations and international multi-stakeholder initiatives. However, this remains to be explored. While we have provided a rich description of the setting to allow other researchers to explore the transferability of the findings, additional factors may influence the proposed relationships under different circumstances. For example, stakeholders in other scenarios, such as urban planning or nuclear waste management, may be less open to compromises between different perspectives than the farmers, ENGOs, and government members in our case, making it harder to increase the willingness for change through workshop discussions.

Future research could hence use our model to explore other settings and identify its boundary conditions. Some of these comparisons could be made through a more comprehensive study covering a broader range of regions and including stakeholders who did not participate in the workshops. Such large-scale research may surface additional factors such as regional constraints and conflicts, and stakeholders' prior experience of participation in policy making, which may affect their evaluation of the strategy.

While the data in our study were sufficient for reaching saturation for our grounded model, they only allowed us to infer potential effects on changes of frames and practices. To consolidate these effects, it would be necessary to consult additional data, including for example a large-scale analysis of policy documents, local reports by stakeholder organizations on changes in agri-environmental practices. Such broader research would offer the chance to examine institutional- and field-level changes similar to prior studies on change in institutional logics (Hardy & Maguire, 2010; Purdy et al., 2019) (“the belief systems and related practices that predominate in an organizational field”; Scott, 2001, p. 139).

## CONCLUSION

Building on insights from the participative development of the England Peat Action Plan, we have conceptualized how the necessary ambiguous initial framing of intended change creates tensions with the persistence of stakeholders' different framings of the change and with their perceptions of lacking knowledge, guidance, and coordination. We also argued how these perceptions impede stakeholders' willingness and ability to change their frames and practices, and thereby counteract the change agents' aim to achieve major transformation. This chain of mechanisms provides a new explanation of difficulties in achieving major change through multi-stakeholder participation.

Our insights contrast with prior views of participative strategy development which have emphasized the benefits of initial ambiguity. We also contribute to research that has pinpointed inherent tensions in open strategy. The framing lens helped us unveil tensions created by the ambiguous framing of the change and their important consequences for stakeholders' ability and willingness to change. This lens also led us to shift the focus from the change agents to the stakeholders who participate in the strategies, and to demonstrate how the tensions arising from their perceptions and evaluations can counteract initial strategy aims. We further extend prior insights into tensions in open strategy by highlighting the important role of interactive spaces for mitigating tensions and facilitating the intended change. We invite future research to establish boundary conditions, scrutinize the suggested effects on actual change, and explore consequences for institutional- and field-level transformation.

While we hope that our model will help researchers understand tensions in participative strategy development in various strategy contexts, we hold that it is particularly relevant for tackling today's large-scale and complex environmental challenges. These challenges require drastic and instant action, but are also prone to different framing of the problems and required solutions, which makes it harder to achieve major change. We hope that our insights have indicated some of the pathways for reducing the barriers to a shared framing of the change and to the required change of frames.

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## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Could you give me a little bit of background: What is your current role?
2. What do you remember most about the discussions at the workshop?
3. Do you recall any instances where people disagreed on anything?
4. Were these disagreements resolved? How?
5. What do you think are the main disagreements generally (if there are any)?
6. Has the workshop influenced your perspective in any way (for example strengthened or changed this perspective)?
7. Did you/will you do anything differently now, after the workshop?

## APPENDIX 2: FINAL CODES (ABBREVIATED)<sup>4</sup>

Name	Description
Change	Information about change: How it is achieved, openness to change, etc.
Actual change in practice	Degree to which/whether change occurs in practice
Ambiguity of change goals	Ambiguous framing of the planned and needed change
Need for change	Perceptions that/why/which change is needed
Paradigm change	Whether or not paradigm change is wanted/needed. Paradigm change includes new vision of peatlands, moving to wetland farming in EA, moving farmers to more intensively farmed areas in Dartmoor
Guidance	Need/lack of/actual guidance
Feasibility	Technical, financial, etc. feasibility
Openness to change	Willingness and readiness for change
Knowledge	Information regarding knowledge and expertise
Blending local and scientific knowledge	Scientific knowledge needs to be integrated with knowledge of local conditions and requirements
Lack of expertise	Insufficient knowledge and skills, e.g., regarding peat conservation techniques
Need for education	Education for farmers/land managers is needed to achieve change
Piecemeal knowledge	Lack of comprehensive, integrated knowledge and data
Frames	Interpretive schemata: concerning the collaborative process, issues at stake, solutions, etc.
Collaboration frame	Understanding/willingness to collaborate, achieve shared overarching aims, be open to others' perspectives
Participation frame	Understanding/willingness to participate in decisions, involvement of different stakeholders
Economic frame	Focus on economic concerns (e.g., of farmers)
Financial frame	Focus on financial issues/solutions
Distribution of payment	Between farmers/landowners
Financing of peat conservation	Includes financing peat farming, restoration, maintenance, sustainable agriculture, etc.
Food production	Focus on food security as duty/priority of farming
Environmental frames	Different aspects and priorities regarding the environment
Biodiversity versus carbon focus versus other environmental focus	Taking the view that carbon is priority versus other environmental concerns, e.g., flooding, biodiversity
Climate change per se	Focus on climate change
Water management per se	Focus on water management issues

<sup>4</sup>This list includes codes that fed into the analysis but are not mentioned in the findings.

## APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

Name	Description
Environmental responsibility	Focus on own/others' environmental responsibility
Social or aesthetic vs. functional value of peatlands	Peatlands as areas of beauty/recreation versus "carbon sinks"
Localisation frame	Focus on local requirements, issues, need to adapt generic guidelines
Long- vs. short term approach	Issues arising from short term thinking, need to think long term
Perspectives	Information about perspectives/views per se
Conflicting perspectives	Conflicting/divergent perspectives, viewpoints
Conflicting stakeholder groups	Conflicting perspectives/interests of different stakeholder groups
Public awareness or perception	Awareness/perception by the general public of peatland functions, farming, environmental schemes, etc.
Deliberation outcomes	Information about workshop interaction outcomes
Balancing perspectives and interests	Aim/effort to balance different perspectives and interests
Creating shared understanding	Of issues, local requirements, the strategy, etc.
Not changing perspective or frames	Lacking change of perspectives/frames
Micro-level deliberation mechanisms	Types of (inter-)actions during the workshop as part of the deliberation
Agree/confirm	Agreeing to/confirming someone else's utterance can lead to reinforcement and salience of frame/view
Build	Building on/adding to someone else's utterance
Balance	Balancing/integrating/merging different views or frames
Contradict	Contradicting/disagreeing with someone else's utterance
Cueing of view or frame	Signaling a view/frame during the conversation. Others can respond to it by taking up the frame, contradicting, etc.
Dominate or seek input	Dominance by certain people, greater speaking turns, or the opposite

## APPENDIX 3: INTERACTIONS THAT EXEMPLIFY BUILDING AND BALANCING

**Building:**

Local Gov 2: I think the grand ideas of, oh well, we'll just bring water levels up, when historically the water levels have been found to find a balance between water availability and ability to farm, I think the answers are not as simple as that. So I'm just throwing that one out.

Farmer 4: Can I just comment to [name of Local Gov 2] on that? He is well aware as all of us here on drainage boards that your rate payers pay for drainage and not for irrigation. So from that point of view there's a fine balance to be made between irrigation and drainage just really through a rate payer, the way that the rate paying system is set up.

Local Gov 2: Currently.

Farmer 4: Correct.

**Balancing:**

**Farmer 1:** I think it's really interesting to have listened to [name of ENGO 2] and then [name of Farmer 3], a conservationist and then a farmer, perfectly illustrating the fine balance point. And I think [name of ENGO 2] was speaking from the heart about the world as he sees it and policy and imperatives, and [name of Farmer 3] was speaking from the heart as a businessman and a land manager. And that just highlights this part of the social science research about perspective and how we can bring them together.

**Facilitator:** Thank you [name of Farmer 1], yeah, appreciate that point—[Name of ENGO 2].

**ENGO 2:** Thanks, [name of Farmer 1]. I'd just slightly disagree with that, I was speaking from the heart, I was merely speaking from the science is telling us, particularly about climate change, I did not really mention much about biodiversity. We know a lot now about climate change and



how this is going to change our world and we have to address that. So it's a scientific approach rather than a—and it's good to hear ... what farmers can do in the intervention afterwards.

**Farmer 1:** The point I was making [name of ENGO 2], I wasn't disputing anything that you were saying, the point I was trying to make that here we are in a workshop on social science and values and how do we move things forward, the point I was making is that you were illustrating a perspective that is based in your understanding of the science and why that makes it an absolute political imperative for society as a whole. Which is a view of our world which can then be brought down to the level of action on the ground in the fens. And that is a global perspective and what I was trying to illustrate was the contrast between that global perspective and the imperative it creates and the decision-making framework of an individual landowner. So I was just trying to tease out some of what [name of social scientist] was saying about how we arrive at our values and where we can find common ground.