

Individual and community engagement in dealing with climate change

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Purpose

Dealing with climate change **demands for human responses to mitigate climate change and adapt to unavoidable impacts**. This often initiates developments in and near homes and communities - in places to which people feel attached to. Hence, a better understanding is needed of how attitudes and behaviours towards such measures are formed. **Individuals can be engaged on three levels: with their minds, hearts and hands.**

Research questions

- How do individuals perceive climate change in their living environment?
- How do people engage individually and collectively with climate change?
- What motivates individual & collective pro-active environmental behaviour?

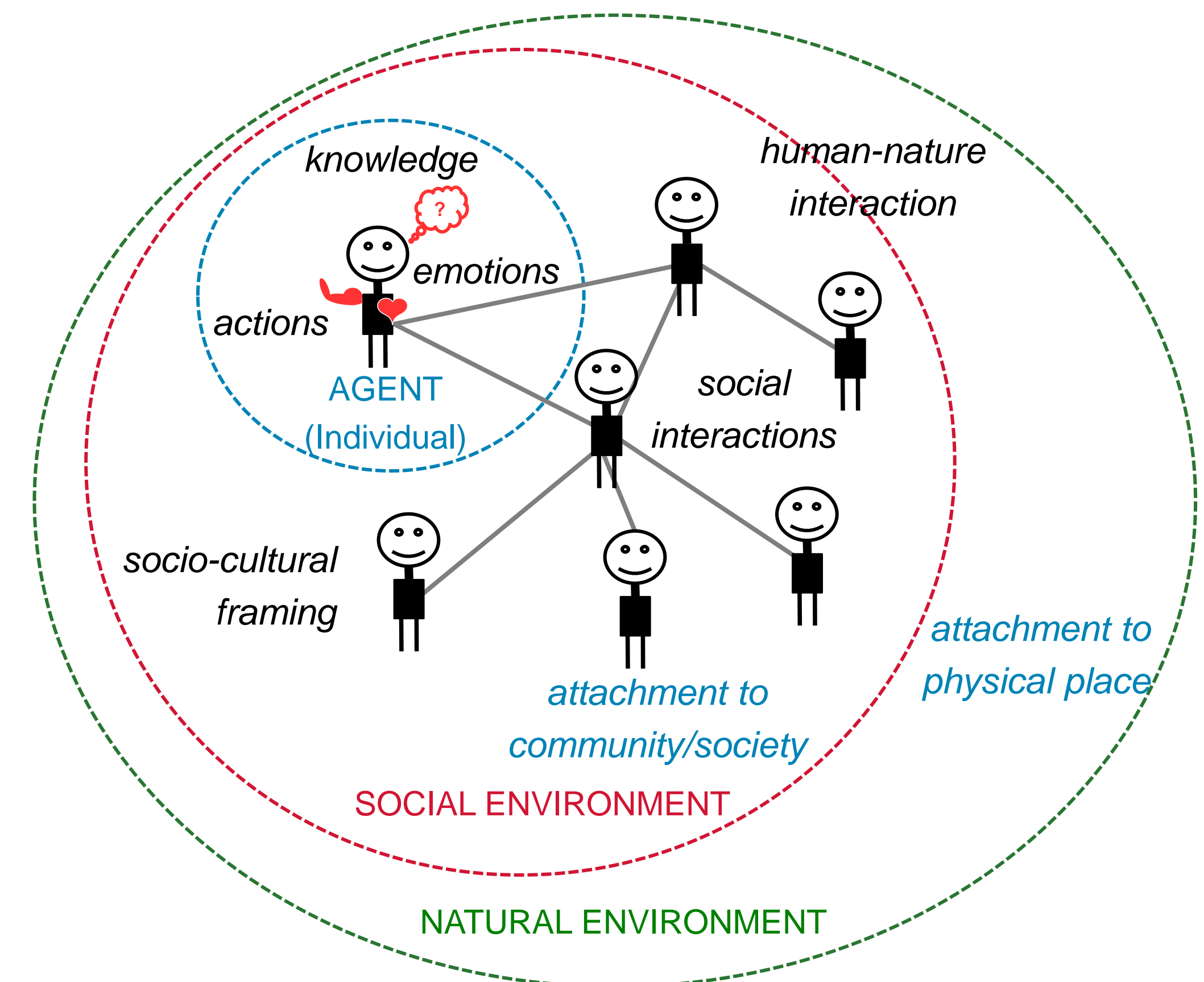


Figure 1: Framework for place-based individual and community engagement. Own figure.



Methodology: Mixed methods approach

Qualitative interviews: Face-to-face Interviews with 15 coastal inhabitants have been conducted in February and March 2014 in Reußenköge North Frisia, Germany.

Standardised survey: 47 coastal inhabitants have been surveyed based on a written questionnaire (closed and open questions). The survey has been conducted in August 2014 in Reußenköge, North Frisia, Germany.

Agent-based modelling: Spatial and cognitive computer model, which simulates household's adoption behaviour of renewable energy technologies and the societal diffusion over time.

Case Study: Municipality Reußenköge

Characteristic coastal region with a long history in land reclamation, coastal protection and development of renewable energy technologies.

Results

Meanings and perceptions of climate change

Climate change as actor, directly and indirectly

„And for me, it is a driving force to do what I am doing.“

Temporal – Shift of climate change to the future

„I don't believe that I will see a lot about climate change during my life time.“

Social – Mainly a partial perception of threat

„That I do now feel a threat by climate change due to sea level rise [...], I can not say.“

Geographical – From global to regional perception of climatic changes

„But global warming is coming now, that we have milder winter, more precipitation [...]“

Hypothetical – Uncertainty related to climate change, scepticism

„That every time it occurs a flood or frost, we do say climate change is eating us, I don't think nothing of it.“

Importance of education to deal with climate change

„Because education is a crucial point to stop climate change, in my point of view.“

Importance of consistent governance of climate change, which also considers local needs and benefits

„And I hope, [...] on the one hand, that they [politics] will always attribute the right to exist to renewable energies, and on the other hand, to be more aware of the societal benefits.“

Mitigation & adaptation measures adopted on individual & community level

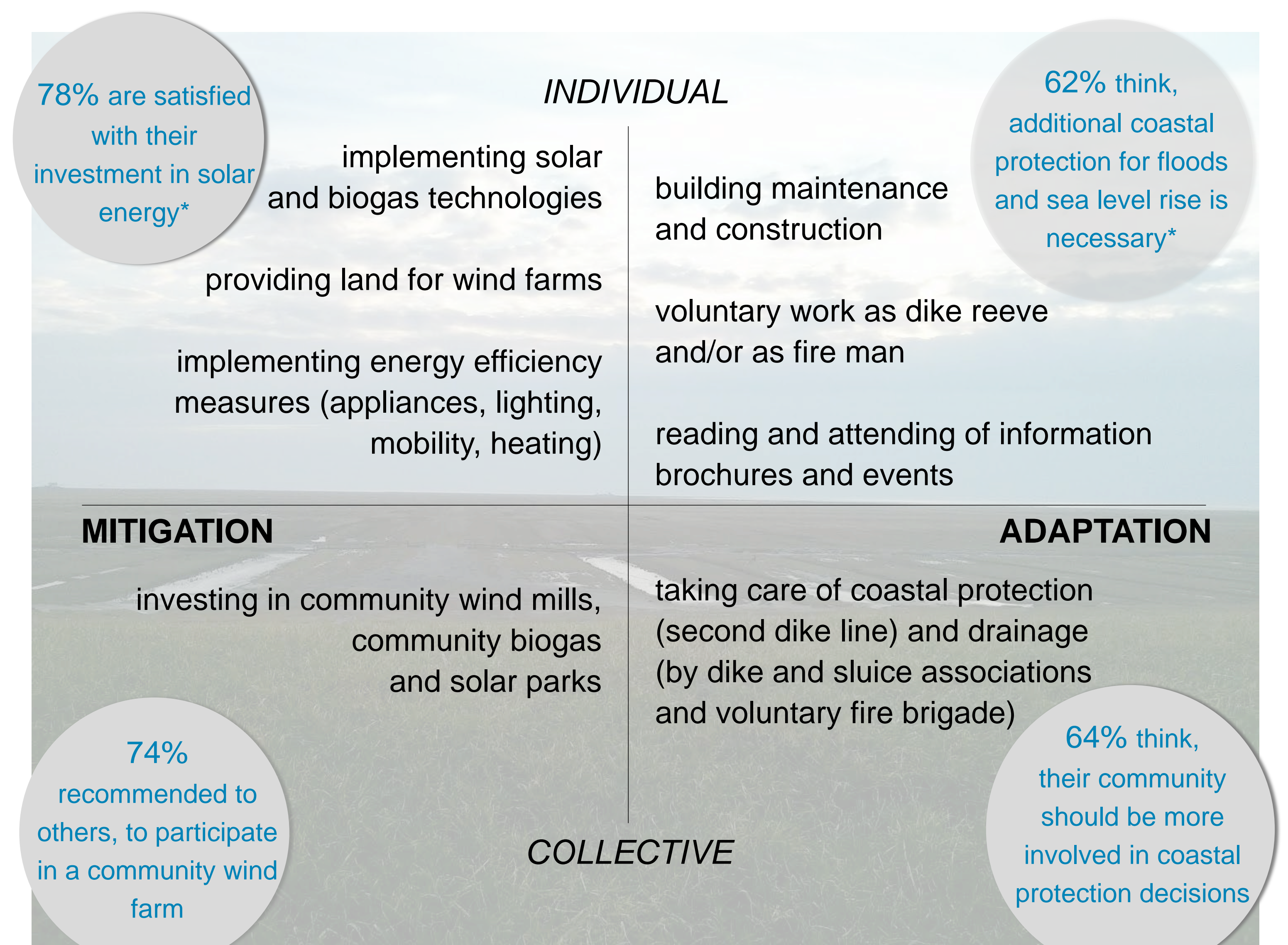


Figure 2: Mitigation vs. adaptation, individual vs. collective measures (Results of the interviews, 2014, N=15; and survey, 2014, N=47, *percentage of surveyed people, who answered really strong or rather strong).