

Table S1: Overview table of thematic summaries of all cases.

To retain the interviewees’ anonymity, this is a simplified version of the overview table that provides an anonymized overall case summary instead of the more detailed thematic summaries for each topic.

Actor #	# of land use conflicts	Explicitly say conflicts play a role	Case summary	How straining? Further quotes
<i>Low level of strain or unclear level of strain</i>				
1	2	Yes	Few passages about his conflict perception, remains rather unclear. He says conflicts "certainly play a big role here in our daily business" and in one case states there were "considerable problems with the local population and with the region".	
2	3	No	Perceives no severe conflicts and says they play a "very small role" in his daily work. In part, this is because there is less pressure in his community compared to others, because they agreed on a pathway of low development. On the other hand, it also seems to have to do with his personality and his attitude towards agreements and adverse conditions: He says that since they signed an agreement with the city, he does not want to complain about it afterwards: "[...] we have been educated like that, that we abide to such things." And about adverse conditions: "You have to accept it, that's the way it is."	"Yes, you want to hear conflicts from me, unfortunately I cannot really..." (laughs)
3	2	No	Perceives no severe conflicts, although he is aware that the affected individuals see this differently and might perceive the same conflict as severe. However, he calls these "individual cases" and believes there will always be someone who is against a project and in sum sees these conflicts as having a low-medium severity.	"R: I do not want to report this as too unimportant, but these are, I say this in quotation marks, 'individual cases', there isn't a lot of conflict potential, except for the individual maybe. I: So the individual resident [...] is maybe upset... R: For them it is certainly an eight [on the severity scale]. Yes, exactly. Yes, but on the whole we are in the low range." "The individual will always be opposed or find something."
4	3	No	Few indications of his conflict perception throughout the interview, seems to perceive relatively few conflicts, and these mildly. Mostly he believes the issues he encounters in his daily work are not conflicts, but problems in regional planning.	

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5	3	No	Perceives few conflicts and perceives them as very mild. Does not want to put obstacles in the way of others, and furthermore perceives low pressure to act. Whenever there was a problem, he feels that he was able to have a sensible conversation with the opponents. However, he also says that in his early days, he took things more to heart and that he developed a thick skin over time, knowing that you cannot satisfy everybody. He also has a very tolerant attitude: Even though he knows of people who have raised an Imperial War Flag in their garden, he feels one has to accept that as long as these people do not cause trouble.	"I noticed that myself, in the beginning you take many things to heart and later on you realize, okay, you cannot satisfy everybody. Someone always complains." "Really there are no major problems that occur here."
6	1	Yes	Few passages about how he perceives conflicts, but states they "do play a role" in his daily work and calls the conflict a "problem".	
7	1	No	Is aware of some conflicts, but does not perceive them as severe, mostly because he is content with the situation as it is. In his view, everything can always be optimized and in these processes he perceives some conflicts, but the overall situation he believes is good. He is willing to bear negative side effects from generally positive developments and has a positive attitude towards conflicts: "Conflicts exist so that we can solve them".	"There are minor conflicts and there is potential for optimization. But these are not the end of the world." "[...] that is to me, these are trivialities" "None of these are major conflicts. To me they are more gimmickries." "Conflicts exist so that we can solve them".
8	3	Yes	At first finds it hard to think of any conflicts at all, perceives most issues in her work in terms of cooperation rather than conflict. In the end she can think of a few conflicts but does not seem to perceive them as very severely, once she uses the expression "I would see this as a bit of a conflict point".	"This is more about cooperation than about conflicts." "It is a little difficult to really see the conflict." "So, that I would see as a bit of a conflict point."
9	1	Yes	Experiences conflicts regularly, though only one type, but no major conflicts. Is able to solve most issues before they turn into severe conflicts by compromising.	"That means we have jiggled into place and arranged ourselves. So this is generally a thing that works quite well. It is more in the case of exceptional events [...]. Then [conflicts] occur regularly." "It is rather an issue of: One always meets twice. So we try not to insist on our rights but try to solve it somewhat consensually."
10	4	No	Is aware of a few conflicts, but regarding many issues he does not see a conflict. He explains that the aspects that might involve conflicts end up on other people's tables and that therefore he might not be aware of them.	
11	7	Yes	Is aware of many conflicts, certainly also because her work involves a relatively large region and diverse land use fields. Perceives conflicts to	"But overall one can say that because we are a region with much space and a good economic development, but not

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			<p>"definitely play a role" in her daily work and says about several that they were "very intensely discussed". Nevertheless, she does not feel that conflicts are very severe. On the one hand, she compares the situation around Schwerin with the city of Hamburg and is aware that conflicts in Hamburg are much more severe. On the other hand, she says about herself that she has a very positive attitude about conflicts because she sees them as constructive and that they mean that you are working on an issue, and for that reasons regards all the conflicts known to her as of lower severity.</p>	<p>comparable to for example Hamburg in terms of competition for land, that these conflicts exist, but I believe not on such a distinct level as you can find it in the agglomerations and metropolises." "Land use conflicts have a different explosive force in Hamburg, in the inner city. That is the way it is. [...] That is simply a different situation." "Now you are talking to a political scientist who, I believe, sees conflicts always very constructively. Because it always means, that one is working on a topic and usually also that one will come to a result. So for me the worst case would be when the fronts become so hard that no solution is in sight anymore. And that I do not see [...] in any of the examples. So they are all, from my point of view, rather in the low range."</p>
<i>Medium level of strain</i>				
12	2	No	<p>Perceive few conflicts, of medium severity. They say they were "nastily against" some points of regional planning, but now communication has become more smooth.</p>	<p>"And then we were rather nastily opposed to that, after all."</p>
13	2	Yes	<p>Land use conflicts appear all the time in his daily work and they impact his ability to conduct his work, but he perceives them as medium-severe because he has always been able to have a sensible conversation with the conflicting side.</p>	<p>"We constantly and always have to deal with this conflict, between land uses, in a manner of speaking." "I: And on that scale, where would you place that? R: Well, on the five, I would say. Because we have always, I would say tried to have a sensible conversation."</p>
14	4	Yes	<p>Perceives several conflicts, of low to medium severity. He calls conflicts a "trouble" and that they are "mad" about some things, but at the same time says overall they are "not grave", "bearable", "below the pain barrier" and states that the situation is much worse near major cities like Berlin, where conflicts are "massive". In comparison, he finds local conflicts mild and says "we don't shoot each other because of that".</p>	<p>"Here where we are it is bearable, it is still below the threshold of pain. [...] We are angry, but we don't shoot each other because of that [the conflict]."</p>
15	4	Yes	<p>Perceives several conflicts, of mixed severity, but mentions no very severe conflict. She says conflicts "certainly" play a role in her daily work and states that trying to find compromises is "sometimes very difficult and time-consuming, sometimes it works very well". Regarding a specific type of conflict, she again emphasizes that the process of solving it is "very time-consuming", involves "much paperwork" and causes "additional costs".</p>	<p>"[...] and we always try to find a compromise. That is sometimes very difficult and time-consuming, sometimes it also works very well, when we already know each other."</p>

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16	6	Yes	Perceives many conflicts of medium severity. He says conflicts "absolutely" play a role in his daily work and regarding one type of conflict states that "you get massively attacked" and "rudely attacked", and that that was "pretty fierce", but rates it at medium severity on a scale from one to ten.	"Yes, absolutely. I did not chose this location [for the interview] randomly. Here, in half an hour you could probably already see how the conflicts clash." "That was fierce, but passed without involving the police."
17	8	Yes	Perceives many conflicts and says they deal with conflicts "all the time". Regarding one conflict she states that the local population is "not delighted" and calls the situation "an imposition" and "a burden".	
<i>High level of strain</i>				
18	1	No	Perceives only one conflict, but that as severe. He says the relations between some actors are "not the way one would like them to be", and calls one conflict "dire", "difficult" and "burdensome". Apart from this conflict he feels he has a good relationship with the opposing actor, but the conflicts troubles it.	
19	1	Yes	Perceives only one conflict which is now over, but that was very severe. He calls the conflict "a very big thing, I have to say, which is very negative", and says it was an issue which "backfired completely" because his community did another actor a favour, which resulted in them having to bear a "dire" burden, and no one tried to accommodate their preferences in return. He says they "fought" against this issue but they had the feeling that everything had already been decided without them. He perceives the other side as "arrogant" and is indignant that they did not take them seriously. The behaviour of the responsible political actors has left a "lasting" and "sad" impression on him and other involved actors, they are "disappointed" and "startled". In all, the experience has a "lasting effect" on him until today and he is worried that such episodes might bring people to vote for extremist parties. He emphasizes that the conflict has also had a severe impact on his health and rates its severity as 15 on a scale from 1 to 10. He explains the absence of further conflicts with his own character, because he is very cooperative and also tries to think about the other parties. He is aware of issues that someone else who was made of a different type of wood might turn into a conflict, but he prefers to handle things "normally". He also perceives many of the issues in his community as "luxury problems". However, he also states that after that one severe conflict, he lacks the physical strength to fight out another conflict that could be as severely.	"Well... We are actually always rather cooperative. Because I always believe that when you sit at the same table you always have to think about the others. But this is rather one-sided." "This inability to talk to each other, or also the arrogance of one side, that I have felt strongly, I have to say." "I have to say, I have suffered also in terms of my health from that issue [...], so that I said from the very beginning [...] I will not be able to do that again, in terms of my health, to commit like that. Because when I do something, I do it with all my body and soul, and the more disappointed you are when you are then treated like that." "Yes, that was a 15 to me. Yes, that has really, I do not say this lightly, that has very much harmed me physically."

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20	1	Yes	Perceives only one conflict, which she calls "a very difficult topic" and which in the past was "hairy" and "fierce" and they "fought like crazy". However, she says in the last couple of years the situation has improved somewhat, mostly because of political change.	"We are all cultivated disputants after all, but at times it has been pretty hairy."
21	4	No	He clearly is dissatisfied with the way some things went. He perceives that conflicts were worse in the past, because he feels that his attempts to negotiate and his efforts to solve conflicts were ignored, which frustrated him a lot. He is glad that this changed in the past years and he is now able to discuss problems with conflicting actors.	"And you could drive there, walk there, no one was interested. You wouldn't have gotten an appointment, when you wanted to go there. But oh well, fine. Luckily this has changed in the past years. We talk to each other and once in a while we meet and talk about the problems which exist. I believe this is important." "And we are very happy that we have come so far and talk about things, what everybody wants and is able to, before..." "[...] I would try to convince the parties. I would stand there and buy them Bratwurst and everything, to say this plainly. And [the issue] never even ends up [on their tables]. And that is [swears]."
22	5	Yes	Perceives several conflicts, one of them as severe, mostly because he is upset about the salami tactics with which it was handled, and calls this a "provocation".	
23	4	No	Perceives many conflicts, but at very different levels of severity and some of them interestingly very differently from other, similar actors. He perceives one conflict as minor, even though he was turned down 12 times, because he feels that a certain stubbornness has to be part of his job. Possibly, this is a positive hindsight view, because now, he is generally content with the situation in this conflict, he feels he was able to push through everything he wanted. However, regarding other topics he feels the conflicts very strongly. In one case, he mentions the monetary costs of the conflict. He also feels injustices in these issues, and that his views were disregarded by responsible actors. Still, now that he feels his voice is being heard he perceives the conflict as much less severe.	"[...] and then of course the whole village is upside down, rightfully. And when you then call the responsible office and then you receive the reply 'we will deal with it next month', then you know what a good mood arises here. But these are difficult topics..." "Eight, nine. That was-, so when the windows vibrated, that was-, (R2: The air burnt, literally.) there was quite something going on. I believe, if you were to come home and your living room window goes like that, you too would have..." "By that time it was expensive with no end."
24	6	Yes	Perceives several conflicts, with mixed levels of intensity, ranging from very mild to medium-high severity. One conflict he perceives as mild, even though there were some quarrels just in the year he was interviewed, because overall he says they could "arrange" themselves with the situation and they can "live with it". He also finds the responsible	

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			<p>employee working on the issue for the other side "quite agreeable". Two other conflicts he perceives as more severe: One he calls "a catastrophe" and the other "troublesome" and "on the border of the acceptable". However, he says they did not get upset about it because the opposing party had the law on its side, so there was no point in that. He is also aware that in other regions restrictions are much more severe and therefore is glad that in comparison their situation is not so bad.</p>	
25	6	Yes	<p>Perceive several conflicts, of mixed intensity, but two as severe. At first they state that land use conflicts play a bigger role in other topics than in theirs and that conflicts play a "subordinate role" in their work, but over the course of the interview they come to think of more conflicts and some of them they perceive as severe: They call conflicts "a severe problem", "very complex", "very, very difficult", "the interests are very difficult", "a big discussion", communication is "sometimes not so easy", managing conflicts is "a big challenge", the relevance of a conflict topic is "extremely high" and the topic "very, very important". However, also positive view on conflicts: One conflict, which they see as a positive example how it is currently in the process of being solved, they call "a big opportunity" even though the road to success is still "a little rocky". The two conflicts they perceive as most severe they rate as six to seven and seven to eight on a scale from one to ten.</p>	<p>"And to coordinate this and to control this is indeed a big challenge." "So no agreement. It is very, very difficult." "From the view of the association I would say the relevance of the topic is unbelievably high. Even though it is not so obvious, because there are many other relevant topics, but in general that is... [...] for the region very, very important."</p>
26	6	Yes	<p>Perceives several conflicts, and several as severe. Conflicts are "not so easy", "a big problem", "troublesome", "more than troublesome", "a burden, definitely", "really difficult", "a major problem", "a drastic experience", something that farmers "struggle a lot" with. He also describes a conflict between agriculture and neighbours / people from the city who criticize agricultural practices, that impacts farmers because the frustration from conflict action perceived as provocation accumulates over time, until it unloads at some point even though the farmer may not want it to.</p>	<p>"[...] it potentiates and increases, and there is no upper limit. The conflict becomes more and more severe, that's the way it is. And also on the farmer's side, well how should I say this, it eventually begins to accumulate and when you are frowned at or attacked in an adverse moment, then you explode, without wanting it. That is only human, it is not intended in that moment. [...] Those are the types of things, when you feel not guilty at all and you are stressed out, one has to add in these years, we now already have the second or third year of bad harvest, one is under pressure. A lot of problems add up and when you have an adverse moment, then it is only human, that this happens sometimes. It's not always intended and one has to apologize, no question. But that is not so easy, that is not so easy, honestly not." "And these are things... this is more than troublesome, I have</p>

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				<p>to say frankly. That is more than troublesome. And it is not the way I would like it to be. Although my opinion, I am not always the norm but still, these are things that could be designed better and if mistakes were made elsewhere then they do not need to be repeated in other places. That does not have to be."</p> <p>"These are things that we really struggle with, really struggle with. That is difficult. Very difficult. And there would be many, many more stories that would only come to mind after a day of talking."</p>
27	15	Yes	<p>Are aware of many conflicts and say they play a role in their work "every day", several of these conflicts they perceive as severe themselves or say they are perceived as severe by other involved actors. In one case they say inhabitants are "impaired" and some of them feel this is "extreme". Another case they call "an extreme conflict" and yet another "very, very difficult" for themselves, because they had to advice two actors which had opposing goals, which also led to personal attacks on them and aggressive behaviour from citizens' initiatives.</p>	<p>"Every day. You perceive that differently, but that happens every day. Land use conflict plays a role practically every day."</p>
28	7	Yes	<p>Perceives many conflicts, some of them severe. He calls conflicts "a very difficult topic", "a severe problem where we do not know how we could solve it at the moment", "a trifold problem" "for the local community a major problem, or at least perceived as a problem", "a very, very big problem", "difficult problem", says a conflict remains "unanswered, in the whole country" and finds it "alarming" that politicians do not seem to understand that. Regarding one conflict he predicts that the "federal government will fail" trying to solve it, that politics has to find answers if "one does not want to endanger democracy" and that "we are sadly at the moment very far" from finding such answers. In another case, he states that conflicts cause many projects to fail.</p>	<p>"And if one does not want to endanger democracy, then politics needs to find an answer to these questions. And currently we are unfortunately very far away from that."</p>
29	9	Yes	<p>Perceives many conflicts and says they are "all the time" part of her daily work. One conflict she feels has currently relaxed somewhat ("at the moment, it's o.k.") but she says it used to be "very different" and she is also worried that it will become more severe again in the near future, as current regulations run out. Another conflict she calls "a very, very, very big conflict" and says that people believe it has a "severe impact" on the landscape. Yet another conflict she calls "a true burden" for local</p>	<p>"Yes, absolutely, we encounter it insofar all the time as we have one of these topics continuously [...]. That comes up all the time."</p> <p>"And that is also very, very frustrating, when a representative of the community is opposed to something and knows his community backs his position but also knows he cannot change anything, because his position will be ignored within</p>

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			residents. She also says it is "very, very frustrating" for local politicians when they object to a land use and they know the local population supports them, yet they can still be legally overruled. In these cases, the local population feels as "losers". However, there are also other conflicts that she perceives as minor.	the agency that will approve the issue, that is a very frustrating thing, because the citizen simply feels his will as a citizen is disregarded. Insofar I believe there is a very large potential for conflict."
30	11	Yes	Perceives many conflicts, and several of them very severely; speaks about "strong competition", "major points", "a fiercely contested factor", "grave consequences", "would have hit the industry hard", a "terrifying" situation, and in one case about "ecological madness" and a "very, very sad" situation. Believes it will be necessary to rely on legal support more frequently in the future. However, when she believes that the contested land use is also useful for the region she perceives the conflict as less severe, and sorts it into the medium range.	"That is, I don't know, like when a private household is told all of a sudden: 'Okay, your house now belongs to the birds. Move out.' What would a private house builder, house owner think of such a legislation? That's what I always give as an example. So that people can comprehend. That your subsistence is pulled out from under your feet, so to speak."
31	8	Yes	Perceives many conflicts, several of them as severe. He says conflicts "play a large role" in his daily work, there are "many conflicts" and that for various reasons land use conflicts exist almost everywhere within the city. He calls conflicts "a very difficult topic", a "delicate topic", "a major topic", a "painful" experience, "highly complicated", "massive", a situation that "truly exploded", "a big drama", and says they tried with "struggle and strain" to handle a conflict, out of "desperation". He also names a project that according to him mainly failed because of land use conflicts. Regarding one conflict he feels the situation has improved since they involved a professional conflict management team and is optimistic that a solution can be found, yet still calls it a "difficult topic".	"10. Maybe 11. Because there is no perspective for a solution in sight. Except these settlement options. Which are highly unsatisfactory, because we would only settle in three cases. All other cases which will come up remain unsolved. Then the whole thing will start again. The situation is so bad that any investor who wants to build jetties on any large lake, also in the Müritz, hears from local agencies: I don't know, I cannot tell you how you should plan it. It's impossible. There are complaints from investors at the Federal Ministry of Transportation, at the state parliament. It is a complete drama."
32	8	Yes	Land use conflicts play a large role in her daily work, she calls them "intense", "a real problem", "a major problem".	