

The role of non-material values in peatland protection – do they matter?

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Introduction

State of peatlands

- In Europe > 50 % are not accumulating peat any more
- In UK ~ 80% are degraded
- In Germany up to 99 % are degraded

Peatlands and the Ecosystem Service approach

- Inclusion of peatlands in the UNFCCC in 2007
- Listed in the Kyoto protocol in 2011
- FAO report on climate change mitigation by peatlands (2013)
- Most research focused on supporting and regulating services

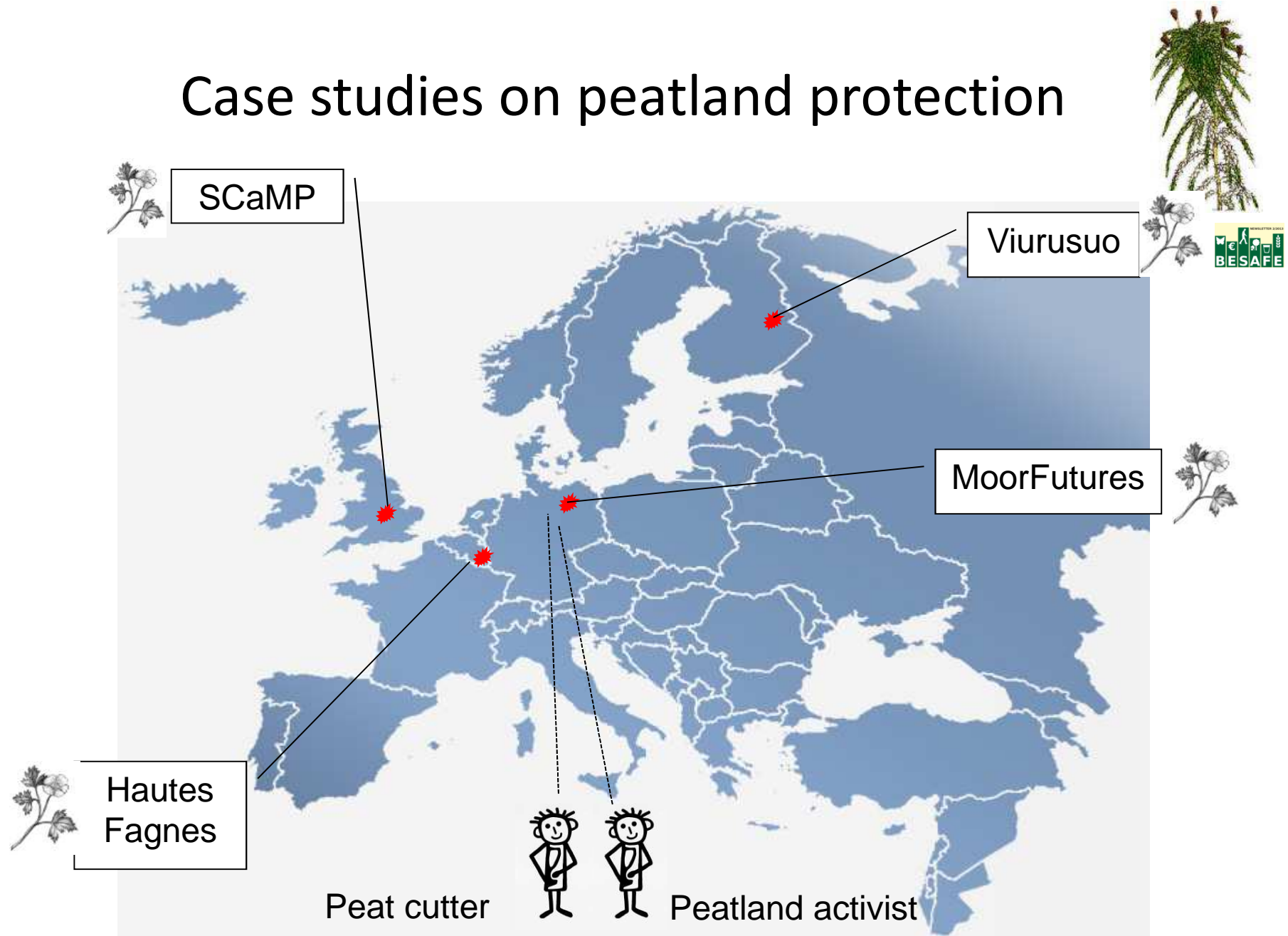
Motivations to engage in peatland protection

Research questions



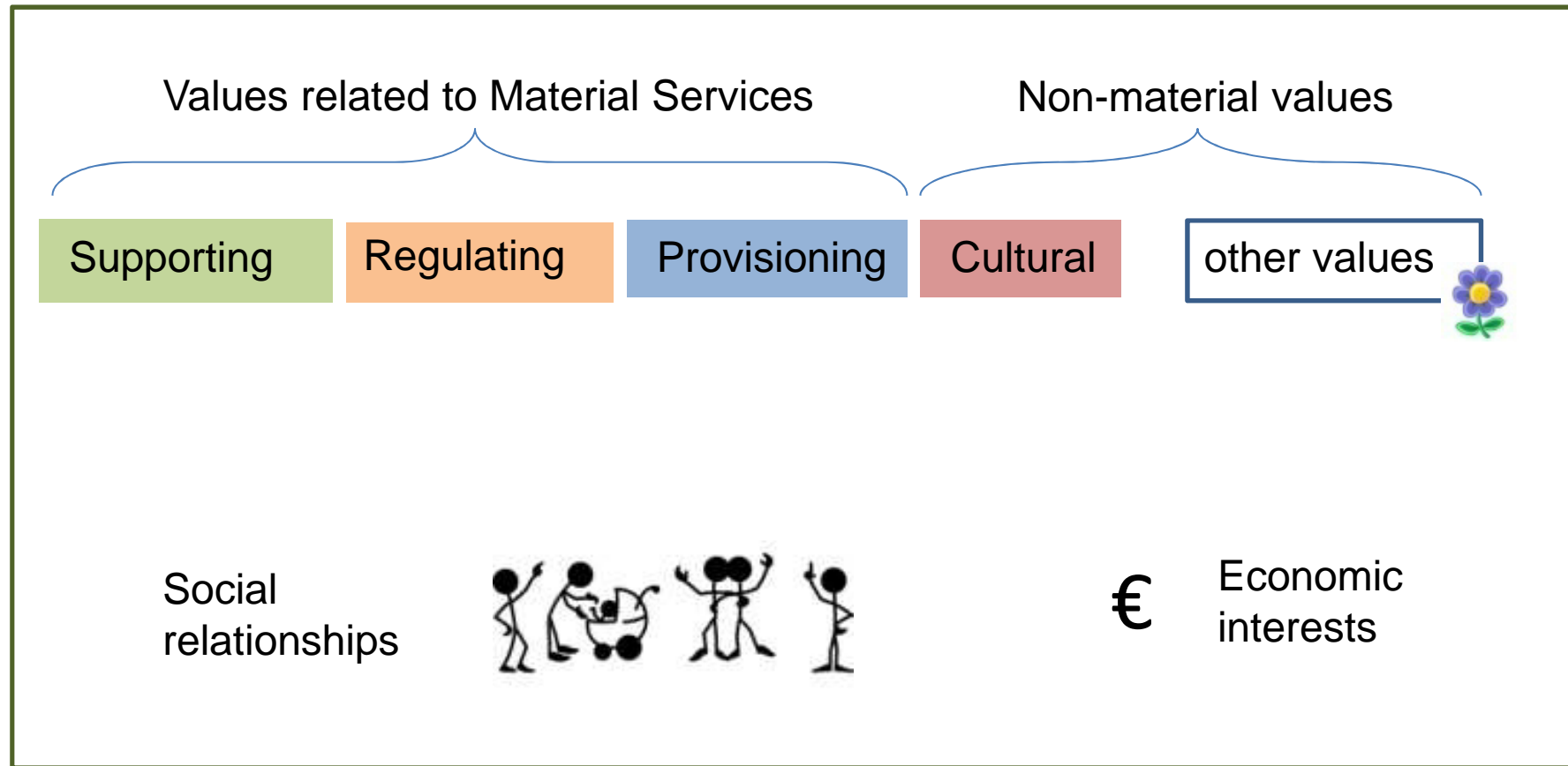
- Are ES strong motivational drivers in specific initiatives for peatland conservation?
- Who is concerned about cultural and other non-material values of peatlands?

Case studies on peatland protection



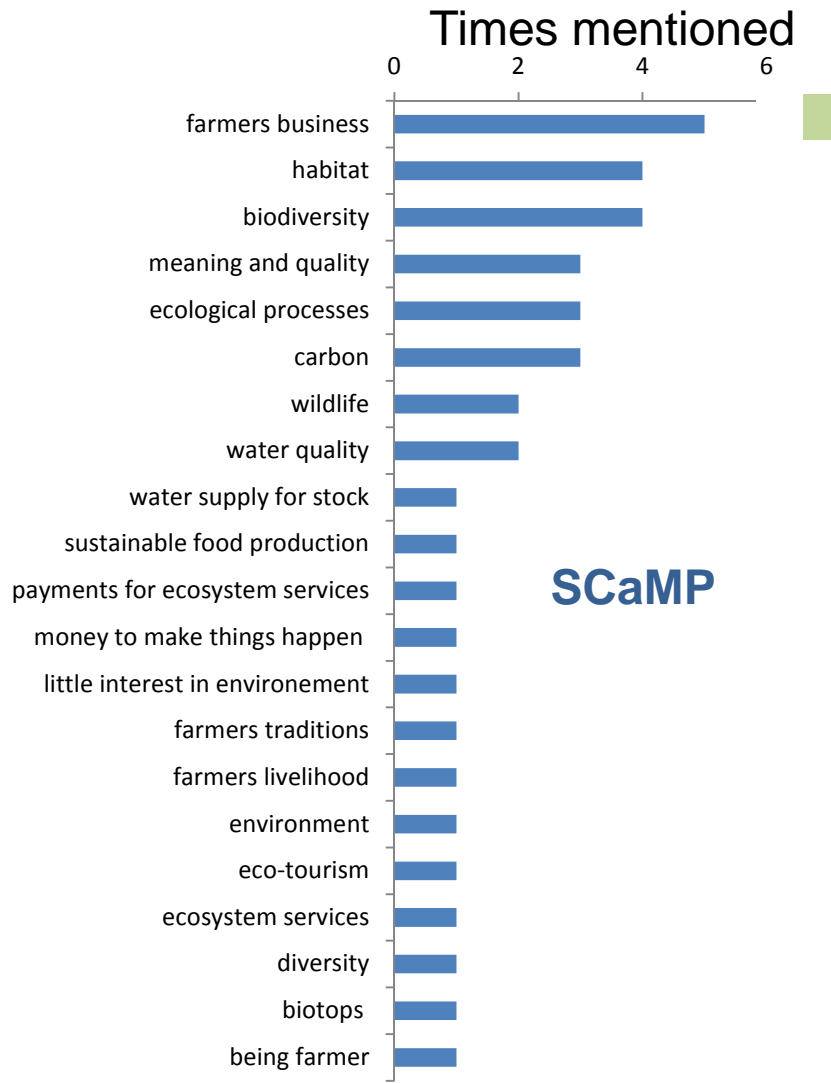
Motivations to engage in peatland protection

Scheme of analysis

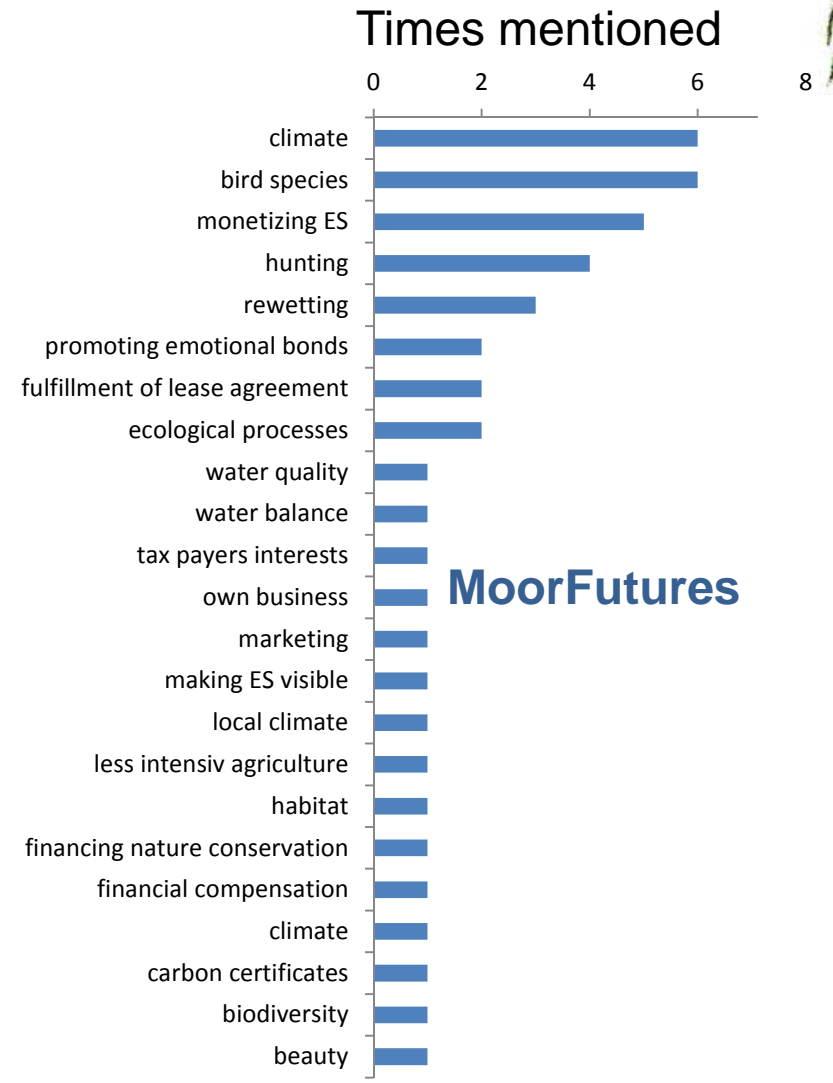


Results

Personal motivations in peatland protection initiatives



SCaMP



MoorFutures

Supporting Regulating Provisioning Cultural

biodiversity 

Results – Narratives on cultural values
Recreation and contemplation



- Peatlands as spaces for hiking, mushroom and berry picking, hunting, skiing, meditation ...

Results – Narratives on cultural values
Recreation and contemplation



- Beauty of peatlands

“Another positive result is that a beautiful area has developed, this year I have seen about 2000 cranes there!” (MF-ST)

Results – Narratives on cultural values
Recreation and contemplation



- Beauty of peatlands

„You are impressed by the beauty of such a living mire, you are impressed by its vastness“ (peat cutter)

Results – Narratives on cultural values
Recreation and contemplation



- Peatlands as spaces for retreat:

*„When I had difficulties, then I took a walk in the peatlands“
(peatland activist)*

Results – Narratives on cultural values
Recreation and contemplation



- Peatlands as contemporary witnesses:

„this sadness of peatlands, [...] that is probably important that I experience it in this landscape“ (peatland activist)

Results – Narratives on cultural services

Learning from peatlands



Time dimensions:

“that is one aspect that we do not understand fully, time [...] and many things can only be understood when you think in the long-term and make strategic plans, for example for this area we did a plan as a protection group where we want to be in 50 years.”

*(peatland
activist)*

Results – Narratives on cultural values

Fascination by ecological processes



„It was very interesting, the [...] hole, because you could see the profile. [...] the sward, and this black [...] soil [...] and subjacent this sponge [...] with a structure easy to identify. This was very interesting I have to say“ (MF-UB)

Results – Narratives on cultural values

Attachment to place



- Typical Finnish scents
- Traditional management of landscape
- Familiar landscape
- Feeling of responsibility
- Uniqueness of landscape

*„And this (a living mire) is a special kind of landscape, that one grieves about, we do not have it any more in northern Germany“
(peat cutter)*

Results

Motivations beyond the ES approach



The intrinsic value of nature:

„A swamp should be able to remain a swamp“ (Viu-BESAFE)

„Goshawk nestlings were so ugly that they were beautiful“ (Viu-BESAFE)

„it takes a hold of you [...] if you have such a bird that becomes extinct right in front of your eyes“ (MF-CO2)

Conclusions



- In our fast-paced world, peatlands provide spaces of tranquility and stability.
- Non-material values of peatlands have to be experienced personally, they are not strong arguments.
- In the short term, the commodification and communication of ES is a powerful tool to involve people in initiatives for peatland protection.
- In the long term, the ES approach has the potential to „bring people back to peatlands“ - *if coupled with promoting curiosity, respect and responsibility towards these landscapes.*

Thank you for your attention

