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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Reconstructing the framing of resilience in the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy post-2020 reform

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Abstract

The concept of resilience has been increasingly adopted on the European Union's (EU) policy agenda as a principle for agro-food policy-making. However, resilience is an ambiguous concept, allowing for different understandings and uses in the context of agro-food policy-making. This study analyses whether and how resilience is framed and contributes to framing in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2020 reform process by policymakers and stakeholders. Combining deductive and inductive coding, we analysed 123 policy documents of EU institutions and stakeholders related to the CAP post-2020 reform debate and the associated Farm-to-Fork Strategy. Five distinct resilience frames were identified: (1) income resilience frame, (2) farmers' supply chain position resilience frame, (3) climate change impact resilience frame, (4) disease resilience frame and (5) ecological resilience frame. Whereas the resilience concept has been deployed by various actors, they differ in their preferred policy actions towards greater resilience.

KEYWORDS
ambiguity, climate change, farm income, frames, policy-making, resilience

INTRODUCTION

Against the background of an increasing sense of crisis in the European Union (EU), the resilience concept has grown to prominence on the EU's policy agenda and has been adopted as a guiding principle for the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020 (European Commission, 2018). Initially, conceptualised by the ecologist Holling (1973), resilience refers to the ability of ecological systems to respond to perturbations while maintaining essential functions (Folke et al., 2010). Since about 2015, the concept has been adopted in academic and political discourse on EU agriculture and its ability to deal with current and future shocks and stresses. Resilience was emphasised in the European Commission's communications on the CAP post-2020 and the *Farm-to-Fork Strategy*, where it refers to the ability of the farm sector to deal with, inter alia, volatile markets, geo-political tensions, generational renewal, climate change impacts and biodiversity loss (European Commission, 2018, 2020). The resilience concept bridges various ideas on how the farm sector should prepare for and respond to a broad range of potentially accumulating shocks and stresses and how it should be supported through public policies.

While there is broad agreement that improving resilience is essential for the future of farming and farming systems in Europe, contextual variation, various values and priorities and different subjective perceptions lead to multiple interpretations of how policies should enhance resilience (Béné et al., 2019; Jones, 2019; Lindow et al., 2020; Wilson & Wilson, 2019). For instance, studies on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation (e.g., Aldunce et al., 2014; McEvoy et al., 2013; Restemeyer et al., 2018) have found that different frames of system resilience among policy practitioners lead to divergent policy interventions regarding risks and disasters. Similarly, Buitenhuis et al. (2022) found that preferred policy interventions for enabling farming systems' resilience differed, sometimes even contradicted, across actor groups and farming system contexts. Resilience should thus be considered an ambiguous concept, raising questions about how policymakers and practitioners understand and perceive resilience and how this affects the design and implementation of resilience-enhancing policies (e.g., Feindt & Oels, 2005; Hansen et al., 2020; Helfgott, 2018).

The process by which actors perceive, give meaning to, and communicate about complex societal problems and preferred policy solutions is understood as *framing* (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). Framing takes place through narratives, that is, cognitive shortcuts that convey 'storified' interpretations of reality (Schön & Rein, 1995; Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). During the CAP post-2020 reform process, numerous actors raised the need for resilience, reflecting various, sometimes conflicting, causal narratives regarding the *issues* challenging resilience and their *causes*, the *purposes* or *reasons* why resilience is needed and the *policy solutions* to enhance resilience. Previous research has shown that ambiguity allows a concept to be framed in ways that fit different actors' interests and that ambiguity is often used strategically to influence policy debates (e.g., Candel et al., 2014; Metze, 2014). This is clearly relevant for the use of the resilience concept, which has been framed to endorse policies that sustain the status quo as well as policies that promote alternative practices or transformative change (Cretney, 2014; DeVerteuil & Golubchikov, 2016). Distinguishing between different resilience frames is, therefore, necessary to understand the competing views on

resilience in the CAP post-2020 reform debate and their impact on the future resilience of farming and farming systems.

Against this background, this study aims to analyse how the concept of resilience is framed in the CAP post-2020 reform process and which policy actors and stakeholders deploy different resilience frames. We combine a frame package approach (e.g., Van Gorp & Van der Goot, 2012) with the resilience assessment framework of Meuwissen et al. (2019) to analyse resilience frames in policy documents of EU institutions and stakeholders during the legislative process towards the CAP post-2020. This study contributes to the resilience debate within farming and agro-food system research by illuminating competing definitions of resilience and their implications for resilience-enhancing policy design (e.g., Darnhofer, 2021). By analysing how resilience is framed, we can compare how specific actors and actor groups comprehend resilience, how its meaning is communicated, which policy decisions for enabling resilience are suggested and for what reasons. This frame analysis also helps to find room for consensus and controversies that are hard to overcome (cf. Schön & Rein, 1995). Moreover, the analysis contributes to the study of framing and the role of ambiguous concepts in policy processes by reflecting on whether and how the ambiguity of resilience is suitable for bridging divergent frames and assembling broad actor coalitions for resilience-enhancing policies for EU farming systems (cf. Anholt, 2020; Hannah & Baekkeskov, 2020; Yanow, 1996).

The remaining part of the article proceeds as follows: We elaborate the theoretical framework that guided our analysis by discussing the scientific literature on policy framing, particularly in relation to the resilience concept (Theoretical Framework section). This is followed by an explanation of our methods and data for frame analysis (Research Methods section). Then, five resilience frames are presented as the result of the analysis (Findings section). We end our article by reflecting on the broader insights and implications emerging from our analysis (Discussion and Conclusion sections).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resilience and farming systems

The resilience concept is increasingly gaining attention within academic and practitioner circles across disciplinary fields and has therefore grown into a multidisciplinary concept with different conceptualisations. For instance, in the fields of risk and disaster management, resilience is mainly understood as the capacity to resist shocks or disturbances and to immediately recover to a perceived normal in the short term (Barr & Devine-Wright, 2012; Scott, 2013). Other fields, such as socioecological systems research, emphasise that resilience also entails a system's capacity to adapt or transform in response to shocks or stresses to continue functioning (Davidson, 2010; Folke et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2004). Despite these differences in roots and initial focus, the notion that systems can cope with changing environments and uncertainty by enhancing their resilience has made it an appealing concept for policy researchers and practitioners (Davoudi et al., 2012; Feindt et al., 2020).

Likewise, academics and practitioners concerned with farming and agro-food systems have shown growing interests in resilience and how to cope with increasing or accumulating economic, societal and ecological shocks and stresses. Meuwissen et al. (2019) therefore developed a framework for identifying and assessing the resilience of farming systems in relation to their specific contexts and challenges. The framework distinguishes five questions to specify the system's

resilience. The first question, *'resilience of what?'*, provides insights into the identity, borders, elements and characteristics of the system. The second question, *'resilience to what?'*, aims to identify the challenges and threats to the system's resilience. By asking the third question, '*resilience for what purpose?*', the desired functions of the system (i.e., the provision of which private and public goods) are identified. The fourth question, '*what resilience capacities*?' aims to assess these along three distinct dimensions: (1) robustness is the capacity of a system to resist external perturbations and to maintain previous levels of functionality, without major changes to internal elements and processes (Urruty et al., 2016); (2) adaptability is the capacity of a system to adjust internal elements and processes in response to changing external circumstances. The system can continue to develop along the original trajectory while maintaining important functionalities (Folke et al., 2010); (3) transformability is the capacity of a system to change fundamentally, particularly when structural changes in the ecological, economic or social environment make the existing system untenable or unable to provide essential functionalities (Walker et al., 2004). The fifth question, '*what enhances resilience*?', provides insights into attributes or elements that might strengthen a system's resilience.

In addition, we ask the question '*resilience according to whom?*' Different actors likely have different answers to the resilience questions, which reflect how resilience is understood. The answers to the sixth question help to reflect on the perspectives from which the previous resilience questions are answered. For example, different functions of a system might benefit different groups to varying degrees, affecting assessments of which functions need to be preserved or require change, and what type of change is desirable for whom. In this study, we utilise the resilience questions for specifying the type of resilience that is being discussed in the policy documents.

Resilience and ambiguity

Resilience has both contextual and subjective elements that allow it to be interpreted in different ways (Béné et al., 2019; Jones, 2019; Lindow et al., 2020; Wilson & Wilson, 2019). For instance, previous research has shown that the perceived resilience and resilience (policy) responses depend on particular farm and farming systems' characteristics, local context and specific challenges (Buitenhuis et al., 2022; Nicholas-Davies et al., 2021). Moreover, policymakers across European countries favour different policy interventions for enhancing farming systems' resilience because of differences between the systems' context and the challenges it faces (Buitenhuis et al., 2020b). For example, whereas coupled income support was considered useful for stabilising an extensive grazing system in Spain, coupled support was, for example, regarded as distorting markets in highly intensive farming systems with high competition on land markets. In other words, answers to the questions of, for example, resilience *of what*, *to what* or *for what purpose* can largely differ across actors and contexts. Consequently, the general notion of resilience is surrounded by a level of ambiguity (Brand & Jax, 2007; Davidson, 2010; Olsson et al., 2015; Reghezza-Zit et al., 2012).

Critics of the resilience concept claim that its ambiguity allows actors to attach almost any meaning to it to justify any specific objective or to suit any agenda (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020; Manyena, 2006; Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2014). Previous research has already shown that ambiguous concepts are often used strategically to influence policy debates. For instance, Cretney (2014) and DeVerteuil & Golubchikov (2016) found that the resilience concept was used by higher-level governments to perpetuate and sustain dominant (neoliberal) values and business-as-usual practices. However, the resilience concept is also used by community and activist groups

for developing grassroot approaches that emphasise transformative change and alternative practices to address local-to-global social and environmental issues (Cretney, 2014). Moreover, Hannah & Baekkeskov (2020) show that ambiguous or polysemic ideas, such as the 'One Health' concept,[1] can be useful for attracting different interests and mobilising broad attention to complex problems. Likewise, Béland & Cox (2016) argue that skilled policy entrepreneurs can use the ambiguity of polysemic ideas to connect potentially divisive policy goals and instruments, allowing them to gather broader stakeholder support. While ambiguous ideas can thus be helpful in bringing together actors with different interests, their drawback is that a disproportionate focus on inclusiveness can potentially hinder the adoption and implementation of effective responses (Hannah & Baekkeskov, 2020).

Framing

Within the large body of framing literature, frames are generally understood as a lens or perspective that determines how actors perceive and define a situation or problem and how they communicate and act on it (Rein & Schön, 1993; Schön & Rein, 1995). Despite the common understanding that frames are the result of processes through which actors interpret a problem, the wide application of the concept has led to multiple approaches to frame and framing analysis. Our understanding of framing builds on the interactional and political approaches to framing (Dewulf et al., 2009; Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016), which consider framing as a communicative and interactional process in a political context rather than an individual cognitive process of information processing. Our focus is not so much on the patterns of frame interaction over time (Dewulf & Bouwen, 2012) but rather on the framings publicly communicated by actors as part of a politicised policy-making process, that is, the CAP reform process. While the interactional approach in principle assumes that framing is implicit or tacit, several scholars have argued that the interactive framing of policies involves contesting policies' meanings and, therefore, the strategic use of frames (e.g., Dodge, 2017; Metze, 2014). Due to the CAP's politicised reform process, we assume that frames are used strategically by actors in this context.

From a political perspective, framing is understood as the process by which actors perceive, give meaning to and communicate about complex and ambiguous societal problems and how this translates into preferred courses of policy actions (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). How actors frame a situation can differ widely, reflecting various causal narratives, that is, what is the problem, what is its causation, what is the moral evaluation, how it should be treated and resolved and by whom (Entman, 1993; Lewicki et al., 2003)? The concept of framing has been applied to study a wide range of societal and policy phenomena, for example, the construction of large infrastructural projects (Wolf & Van Dooren, 2017) or mega-farms for intensive livestock farming (Van Lieshout et al., 2011), food security and malnutrition (Candel et al., 2014; Namugumya et al., 2021), climate-smart agriculture (Faling, 2020), local migrant integration policies (Dekker, 2017) or climate change (Van Eck & Feindt, 2021). These framing studies demonstrate that policy problems, especially when many actors are involved, can be subject to various frames that can overlap or compete based on the actors' understanding of the problem and their interests.

In certain cases, actors use a shared concept or idea to frame a policy problem despite contradictory understandings of the problem or different policy positions. These types of frames are called *consensus frames* (Gamson, 1995). These specific frames are based on an apparent agreement linked to a widely accepted concept that is ambiguous enough to attract multiple interests and values (e.g., 'sustainability' or 'inclusion'). While superficial consensus over the lead concept

might suggest agreement, incompatible frames concerning the causal narrative and the solution prescriptions can remain hidden (Gamson, 1995; Mooney & Hunt, 2009). Candel et al. (2014), for example, analysed that while the concept of 'food security' found wide resonance among a broad range of stakeholders in the CAP post-2013 reform debate, stakeholders framed food security in overlapping and conflicting ways in line with their different policy positions and interests. Moreover, the European Commission (EC) deployed multiple food security frames simultaneously, using the concept of food security in different contexts to mobilise public support and consensus for an alleged common goal of the reformed CAP.

Accordingly, frames can be used strategically or politically by actors for influencing policy-making processes. Actors can portray a problem or select and highlight aspects of the problem in accordance with their own or their group's interests to persuade others (Benford & Snow, 2000; Entman, 1993; Metze, 2014; Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). Framing involves actors continuously (re)using specific causal narratives and discursive elements (e.g., metaphors) to promote preferred policy actions and to contest other frames (Benford & Snow, 2000; Van Gorp, 2007; Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). For instance, Metze (2014) demonstrated that in the case of hydraulic shale gas fracking in The Netherlands, actors engaged in framing as a strategy to negotiate the economic benefits and environmental impact of shale gas fracking (i.e., causal narrative), which led to a change in policy. Thus, analysing the causal narratives and discursive elements used by actors in relation to resilience is necessary to understand how actors frame resilience and which CAP design they promote for enhancing resilience.

RESEARCH METHODS

A research protocol (Appendix I) was created to guide the methodological steps of the frame analysis. We now present the main steps of the protocol regarding data collection and analysis.

Data collection

For the frame analysis, relevant policy documents of EU institutions and stakeholders that functioned as input to the CAP post-2020 reform process were identified. The analysed policy documents ($n = 123$) consist of *European Commission's Communications* (e.g., preparatory documents used to prepare EU legislation and Commission recommendations for individual Member States); *European Parliament* and *The Council of the European Union's documents* (e.g., regulations, resolutions, documents of the Committee of Agriculture and Rural Development [AGRI] and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety [ENVI][2]); *stakeholder input into the CAP's public consultation round* (stakeholder position papers and summary reports of 'The CAP: Have your say' stakeholders conference) and *Member States' position papers* and *preliminary national strategic plans* (NSP). In addition, we included policy documents related to the Farm-to-Fork Strategy because we consider them part of the CAP reform process. Whereas the EC under President Juncker introduced the legislative proposals of the CAP post-2020 in June 2018, the new EC under President von der Leyen published the Farm-to-Fork Strategy (20 May 2020) to align the CAP with its renewed ambitions (European Commission, 2021).

We followed a set of selection criteria for the abovementioned policy document types to ensure that they addressed the CAP post-2020 and elements of resilience. First, we only selected policy documents that covered the period from mid-2016 until the beginning of 2021, which corresponds

to the CAP post-2020 reform round apart from the final stages of negotiations when bargaining considerations dominate over conceptual framing. Then, for collecting policy documents of the EU institutions, we used different databases and selection criteria per document type (Table A1, Appendix I). Additionally, a *data repair strategy* was developed to include extra stakeholder position papers in the dataset, consisting of two steps: (1) a general Google search based on a detailed search query and (2) a specific search for position papers of major Eurogroups[3] that were involved in past CAP reform rounds (Klavert & Keijzer, 2012). More details about the document selection and the data repair strategy can be found in Appendix I and Appendix II.

Data analysis

To analyse the content of the documents, we conducted a frame package analysis (Van Gorp, 2007, 2009; Van Gorp & Van der Goot, 2012) using the qualitative content analysis software ATLAS.ti. Frame packages are a heuristic approach to systematically disentangle causal narratives of different types of frames about a specific (policy) problem. Frame packages consist of a set of logically organised devices that together constitute a certain frame (Van Gorp, 2007). The devices can be subdivided into *framing devices* and *reasoning devices*. *Framing devices* consist of linguistic elements that serve as indicators for a specific frame. We specifically coded for three types of linguistic elements: keywords, verbal devices and metaphors (Van Gorp & Van der Goot, 2012). Keywords are words or concepts that are used frequently to particularise the central notion of the frame (e.g., 'volatility', 'extreme weather' and 'risk[s]'). Verbal devices include depictions to visualise the issue, such as descriptions, examples, images and statistics and expressions or catchphrases to make subjects relatable. Metaphors are implicit comparisons that link familiar and meaningful ideas to more abstract concepts to make them intelligible and strengthen policy arguments (e.g., 'a fair income support to help farmers to make a living'; Namugumya et al., 2021; Van Gorp. 2009; Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016).

Reasoning devices are explicit or implicit statements about a problem's definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation and recommended solutions, forming a frame's causal narrative of the problem (Van Gorp, 2007; Van Gorp & Van der Goot, 2012). Regarding the reasoning devices, we were particularly interested in how actors address the resilience questions (Meuwissen et al., 2019) in relation to the CAP and its instruments, forming the causal narrative underlying possible resilience frames. We, therefore, coded for content related to the following questions: '*what is resilience?*' (includes how actors describe or define resilience); *'resilience of what?'* (refers to the subject, who or what needs to be resilient); *'resilience to what?'* (problem definition and causal attribution, referring to the challenges that are presented); '*resilience for what purpose?'* (to identify the desired functions); *'how to (not) enhance resilience?'* (recommended or preferred policy solutions or nonsolutions, e.g., when a policy instrument is regarded as not working); *'resilience for what reason(s)?'* (refers to the moral evaluation, to identify values that underpin the recommendations or specific frame) and *'resilience according to whom?'* (refers to who is making the statement[s]).

A combination of deductive and inductive elements was used in the frame analysis, starting with a preset codebook with a priori codes relating to the resilience questions, which was complemented with inductive codes that emerged from the data (Appendix I). The coding took place in three rounds, including a trial coding round to test the codebook. During all coding rounds, possible ambiguities or in case of doubt regarding the correct use of certain codes, quotations and coding decisions, were discussed within the research team to ensure a common interpreta-

tion. After the coding, we used ATLAS.ti's data analysis tools to iteratively compare and recognise interlinkages between coded text fragments related to the resilience questions and between codes and actors and made connections based on patterns in themes. For example, text fragments that discuss that farmers' resilience (resilience of what?) is challenged by volatile income because of unstable prices and severe market fluctuations (resilience to what?) and requires farmers' income support and risk management tools to enhance resilience (how to enhance resilience?), were identified across multiple texts, compared, and captured into a *frame matrix* (Appendix I). We completed the frame matrices by identifying which (group of) actors deployed the different resilience frames.

FINDINGS

We identified five different resilience frames in the CAP post-2020 reform process (2016—2021; Figure 1). We first present overarching observations regarding the question 'What is resilience?' (Resilience Conceptualisations section), followed by a description of the resilience frames and the actors that deploy them based on the *complete* resilience frame matrices (Appendix IV).

Resilience conceptualisations

Whereas the concept of resilience is mentioned extensively throughout the collected documents, only eight documents elaborate what is understood by resilience or present a definition of resilience and often only summarily. The EU institutions and stakeholders proved to define resilience in different ways. A commonality between these definitions of resilience is that they emphasise the capacity to deal with unpredictability and unexpected, changing circumstances. At the same time, considerable differences between the given definitions for resilience are observable, which resonates with the distinction between resilience as robustness, adaptability, and transformability. On the one hand, a French national farmers' representative organisation defined resilience from a robustness perspective:

> Resilience is defined by the capacity of a farm to return to the growth trajectory after having suffered a shock, which implies anticipation through risk management and the development of farm robustness. (FNSEA, 2017, p. 2)

On the other hand, scientists participating in the Commission's stakeholders conference emphasised the existence of multiple definitions of resilience: besides the ability of coping with shocks, resilience also includes the capacity to adapt or to be flexible because change is unpredictable and might require adjusting original responses. This definition of resilience resonates with the understanding that resilience is more than robustness, but also requires the capacity to adapt or change in response to shocks and stresses. Similarly, the Environment and Nature Advice Council of the Flemish government recognised that resilience also includes the capacity to adapt and even transform. These definitions focus on the ability to take advantage of changing circumstances to potentially strengthen the system.

Various actors criticised the EC for its ambiguous use of the resilience concept. For instance, the usage of the concept was rejected by a French employer in the beef sector because it would imply leaving farmers to their own devices to withstand shocks until it was too late, instead of

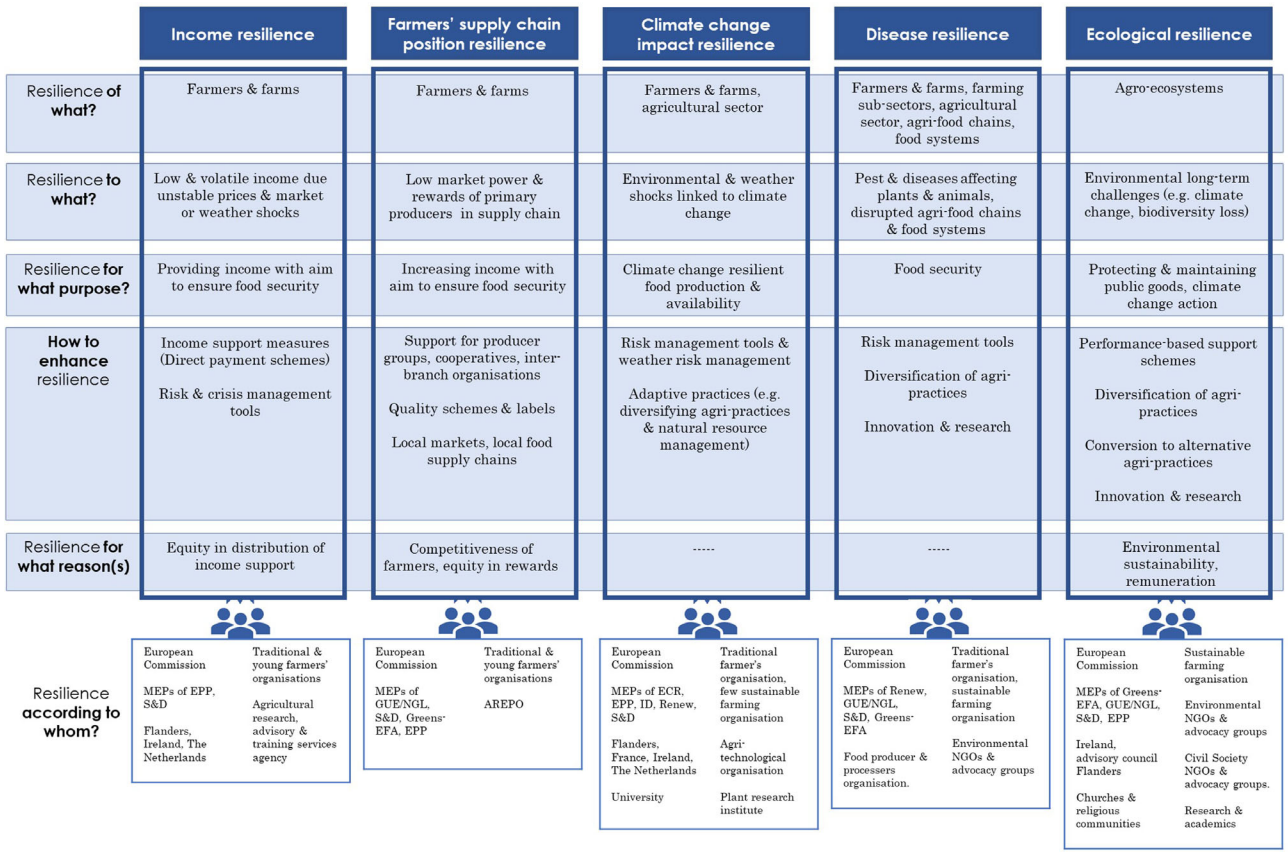

FIGURE 1 Overview of the resilience frames

supporting farmers' livelihoods (Consultation PAC 2020, 2017). Moreover, the German Scientific Advisory Board on Agricultural Policy, Food and Consumer Health Protection advised to critically assess the Commission's focus on resilience *'as this focus may overly emphasise maintaining the status quo instead of adjusting to future challenges'* (WBAE, 2018, p. 70), and two members of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group in the European Parliament called on the EC to explain clearly what was meant by a *resilient* food system (Tertsch & Aguilar, 2021—Amendments Farm-to-Fork Strategy).

Income resilience frame

The income resilience frame focuses on the below-average and volatile income of farmers, which affects the viability of farming businesses, and the EU's responsibility to reduce instability in farmers' income levels through the CAP beyond 2020. The frame emphasises that the average farmers' income remains low and lags behind other economic sectors at the national or EU level. Short-term external shocks threaten farmers' income, such as unstable prices and severe market fluctuations or (extreme) weather events. The frame accentuates that income resilience is essential to ensure viable and agricultural active farming businesses that contribute to food security. Proponents of the frame use statements, such as 'fair income support to help farmers to make a living' or 'making farmers' income less vulnerable'. Moreover, the Commission continuously stated that supporting 'viable farm income and resilience across the EU territory to enhance food security' was a core goal of the CAP.

Proponents of the income resilience frame propose income support measures and risk and crisis management tools to enhance farmers' resilience against low and volatile incomes. They stress that the CAP's direct payments, or more generally income support measures, were a valuable income source that contributed to farming businesses' viability. Actors, among them the European Commission (2017, pp. 15, 16), mainly recommend that the direct payments required better targeting or redistribution. While better targeting of the direct payments appeals to other actors as well, for example, agricultural interest groups or the European People's Party in the European Parliament, the recommendation was largely used to reaffirm the legitimacy of the direct payments. Better targeting of the direct payments could thus be regarded as a familiar adjustment for maintaining the existing direct payments schemes rather than altering the income support measures. While being proponents of income support measures, the proposal of the European Council of Young Farmers to link direct payments not only to land suggests a shift away from purely area-based direct payments.

Risk and crisis management tools are proposed to deal with or absorb market or weather-related shocks that lead to income loss. For example, the Commission recommended several Member States to deploy or strengthen risk management instruments and strategies (e.g., insurance or incentives for precautionary savings) to mitigate income volatility due to unpredictable weather events. Also, agricultural interest groups, such as Copa-Cogeca, highlighted the importance of risk management for income resilience:

> Risk management tools are an important measure to improve farm resilience. These instruments include national schemes that help private income stabilisation tools to tackle income volatility, which is made possible through national agri-taxation measures. (Copa-Cogeca, 2019, p. 3)

Farmers' supply chain position resilience frame

The farmers' supply chain position resilience frame emphasises that farmers' resilience is being challenged by an imbalance in risks, costs and rewards between farmers and other stages of the food supply chain. Moreover, the position of farmers as primary producers is framed as restraining their bargaining position and capability to capture a larger share of added value in the food supply chain. Framing devices that characterise this frame are keywords such as primary producers, food supply chain (and farmers' position therein), added value, co-operatives, producer organisations or statements such as 'rebalancing the distribution of power' or 'capture a greater share of added value'.

In this frame, improving farmers' resilience requires reducing the economic disadvantages that farmers experience due to their position in the supply chain. Proponents of the frame suggest enhancing horizontal collaboration among farmers or producers through co-operatives, producer organisations and interbranch organisations. The horizontal organisation among farmers has benefits for their resilience, for example:

> Farmers' cooperation is therefore critical to ensure viable farm income, to increase the ability of farms to be resilient and to absorb the impact of volatility, and market and food supply chain failures. (Copa-Cogeca, 2019, p. 2)

This frame promotes the availability of CAP Pillar I and II measures for supporting the organisation and functioning of producer or interbranch groups, particularly in sectors or among small farmers where such groups are not yet common. The Commission recommended that Member States use their NSPs to support horizontal collaboration, and the governments of Flanders, Ireland and The Netherlands declared their intention to improve the position of farmers in the supply chain. The frame also emphasises the potential of recognised EU and national quality labels or schemes (e.g., EU geographical indications) to increase the added value of agricultural products, enabling farmers and producers to command higher prices. This suggestion was predominantly made by the Association of European Regions for Products of Origin. Last, this frame contains the prescription to improve farmers' resilience by strengthening legislation against unfair trading practices (EPP, 2017) or via more general measures (inter alia available under the CAP) that stimulate and strengthen shorter supply chains and direct marketing:

> Short supply chains allow for farmers to sell their produce either directly to the consumer, or with a minimum of intermediaries; ultimately enabling them to retain a greater share of the final sales price and receive a higher farm income. This increase in revenue may also provide farmers the opportunity to reinvest that money back into their farm in order to expand or modernise it, leading to its greater resilience. (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Ireland, 2019b, p. 45)

The farmers' supply chain resilience frame was deployed by largely the same institutional actors and stakeholders that also deploy the income resilience frame. However, there were notable differences among the party groups in the European Parliament. Besides the European People's Party, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) of the left group—GUE/NGL (*Gauche Unitaire Européenne*/Nordic Green Left), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats and the Group of Greens/European Free Alliance deployed elements of this frame.

Climate change impact resilience frame

The core premise of the climate change impact resilience frame is that the resilience of farmers and the agricultural sector are challenged by the impact of climate change, especially in the form of more extreme weather events and increasing natural hazards (e.g., heavy rainfall, droughts, floods, fires). Proponents of the frame use examples of short-term extreme weather events or other environmental shocks to make longer-term climate change impact tangible. These shocks are expected to become more frequent and intensive, which makes it more difficult for farmers and the agricultural sector to ensure food production and availability, but farmers' income is also threatened. The frame is characterised by the frequent use of the word 'climate-resilience' or derivatives thereof.

Recommendations for enhancing climate change impact resilience are mostly based on recovering from or adapting to rather than mitigating climate change. The climate impact resilience frame is therefore not deployed to advocate for large changes to the CAP. For instance, the Commission recommended in its communications, its Farm-to-Fork Strategy and in almost all recommendations for the NSPs to promote and deploy (already existing) risk management tools and strategies that support farmers to recover from, for example, weather-induced damage and stressed the need for increasing participation in risk management schemes. Agricultural and rural interest groups, mainly traditional farmer's organisations, and a few sustainable farming organisations deployed the frame in a similar fashion.

Proponents of the frame also focused on climate adaption measures (e.g., adapting water and soil management practices, altering agricultural practices) to maintain current farming activities despite weather-related disturbances or shocks, for example:

> Increasing resilience to climate change by stepping up climate adaptation measures to address the drought and hail risks and severe soil erosion, while preserving the status of water resources. Measures should include capacity building on climate change adaptation, support for practices enhancing soil health and setting up a system for monitoring soil quality as well as investments in more drought-resistant crops and the efficiency of irrigation infrastructure. (European Commission, 2020, p. 6–Staff recommendations for Slovenia's NSP)

The MEPs of the European Conservatives and Reformist Group, the European People's Party, the Identity and Democracy Group and the Renew Europe Group mainly focused on (technological) innovations (e.g., new plant breeding techniques and introducing new varieties) to increase farmers' resilience against climate change impact. MEPs on the left side of the political spectrum regarded climate change impacts as a risk for resilience, but their recommendations related more to the ecological resilience frame (Ecological Resilience Frame section).

Disease resilience frame

The disease resilience frame emphasises that the resilience of farmers, certain farming subsectors and the agricultural sector is challenged by the occurrence of diseases or pests. Diseases and pest outbreaks that affect the health of plants or animals are potential external shocks with negative effects on production levels and yields. Concerning framing devices, this frame is characterised by keywords such as 'threat', 'diseases', 'pest resilience' and 'outbreak'. Proponents highlight that

certain farming subsectors or production systems are more vulnerable to pests (arable monocultures) or diseases (animal husbandry). For example:

> For livestock, the sector is characterised by a high concentration of intensive farms. In combination with a reliance on export–the Netherlands has an environment that has the potential to facilitate the spread of pests and epidemic diseases that can affect production levels and yields. (European Commission, 2020, p. 9—Staff recommendations for The Netherlands' NSP)

Since 2020, the disease resilience frame has included an additional focus because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The frame began to include the consequences of (communicable) disease outbreaks on production and value chains (i.e., agro-food chains) or food systems. The Covid-19 outbreak was used as an example to show that disease outbreaks could have enormous consequences, are not unlikely to occur and to explain the importance of building resilience to possible future diseases and pandemics. Actors that deployed the frame underlined that the purpose of being resilient against diseases and their impacts was to guarantee food security, especially in the case of pandemics. For instance:

> Recalls that improving food security and the resilience and sustainability of the food chain requires investments in farmers, cooperatives and SMEs and points out that the ongoing Covid-19 crisis has emphasised the strategic role that agriculture plays in avoiding a food crisis, by providing safe and high-quality food at affordable prices. (Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020, p. 6)

In the European Parliament, MEPs from liberal or left parties, such as the Renew Europe Group, The left group—GUE/NGL, Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats and the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, mainly argued that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis had highlighted the need to ensure resilience and adapt agro-food chains. In contrast, the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation framed the Covid-19 crisis as proof of the resilience of the EU feed and supply sector because of the sector's ability to provide uninterrupted access to feed and food during a crisis.

The proposed policy recommendations for enhancing disease resilience focus mainly on risk management or adaptive measures rather than proposing systematic changes to deal with occasionally mentioned potential causes of disease outbreaks (e.g., mitigating climate change, ecosystem degradation or biodiversity loss). The frame was used by traditional farmers' organisations and the Commission to recommend strengthening risk management through insurance schemes or mutual funds and to promote their uptake. Mainly sustainable-farming organisations and environmental Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) deployed the frame to advocate (support for the) diversification of cultivated species or using varieties and species that are more resilient to pests. More general suggestions were research and development of production methods with a focus on pest resilience. In this regard, diseases were largely presented as external shocks that lead to volatility and, therefore, require tools to deal with the associated risks.

Ecological resilience frame

The ecological resilience frame highlights the relationship between agriculture and its surrounding environment. Natural ecosystems that are modified for agricultural production, that is,

agro-ecosystems require resilient ecological processes to guarantee the resilience of farmer's farms and agricultural practices in the long run. However, the resilience of agro-ecosystems is challenged by the environmental impacts of agriculture, for example, emissions that contribute to climate change or agricultural and land management practices that degrade natural resources or cause the loss of habitats and species. Ecological resilience depends on the provision of public goods by farmers, such as protecting biodiversity and preserving habitats and maintaining ecosystems and their services, as well as efforts to reduce agricultural impact on the environment and climate.

The ecological resilience frame was mainly used by sustainable-farming organisations, environmental and civil society NGOs, the Society for Conservation Biology and an association of churches. These stakeholders deployed the frame to present agro-ecosystems, or more generally the environment, as requiring protection or restoration for increasing resilience and to propose alternatives to reduce the environmental impact of agricultural practices. For example, diversification, or even conversion, of agricultural practices by integrating principles of regenerative agriculture, agro-diversity, agro-ecology or improving the sustainability of natural resource management were proposed:

> Whereas regenerative agriculture as an approach to food production and land management could mitigate those challenges, helping the transition towards a highly resilient agriculture based on the appropriate management of lands and soils. (Rodríguez Palop,[4] 2021, p. 154—Amendment Farm-to-Fork Strategy)

Moreover, proponents argued in favour of a CAP that would adjust or even replace current instruments that incentivise intensive practices with instruments that help to sustain ecological resilience. This includes, for instance, proposed adjustments to the CAP's direct payment scheme or alternative income support schemes that compensate farmers and other actors for their efforts for maintaining public goods because the market barely remunerates such efforts. Such income support would reward farmers for their performance and incentivise them to implement practices beneficial for the environment or climate, thus contributing to ecological resilience. Moreover, several proponents argued that the current CAP or national risk management instruments were insufficient for enhancing ecological resilience. Current risk management instruments solidified conventional farming practices that were causing ecological damage while disincentivising farmers to adapt their practices or to take mitigation actions. For example:

> Risk management—the intensive farming model based on specialisation and few crop varieties, is locking farmers into a vicious cycle of input dependence and making them more vulnerable to price volatility and crop failures. Publicly financed risk management instruments are merely another dis-incentive for moving to a more resilient and diversified production system; it incentivises farmers to use more resources, be more risk taking and creates leakage of CAP money into private hands. (EEB et al., 2018, p. 7)

Within the European institutions, the ecological resilience frame was commonly supported by MEPs to the left of the centre: the Greens/European Free Alliance Group, the left group in the European Parliament—GUE/NGL, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. The Commission deployed only some elements of the frame, for instance, in its Farm-to-Fork Strategy or in recommendations for the NSPs of Member States, particularly linking ecological

resilience to forests and the forestry sector and the EU forest strategy. However, the Commission's focus was mainly on advocating for environmental sustainability rather than on introducing major adjustments to the CAP.

DISCUSSION

The frame analysis identified five distinct resilience frames that have been used by policy actors and stakeholders in the CAP post-2020 reform process. We now reflect on the broader implications of the insights emerging from the frame analysis.

First, our findings show that while the resilience concept has been deployed by many policy actors and stakeholders involved in the reform process, different causal narratives and discursive elements were attached to the concept. Consequently, the political orientation towards greater resilience can be considered an example of a consensus frame. Whereas there seems to be broad consensus on the need for a resilient EU agricultural sector, actor groups varied in the preferred policy actions they endorsed and promoted other types of targets, challenges, purposes and reasons. Especially the ecological resilience frame seems not well-aligned with the other frames lying underneath the call for strengthened resilience, which mainly shares a focus on enabling agriculture to resist and recover from shocks through existing policy measures. For example, proponents of the income resilience frame hardly proposed any adjustments to the CAP's area-based direct payments – perhaps considering them sufficient, while many supporters of the ecological resilience frame wanted to replace these payments with performance-based income support schemes for maintaining public goods. Likewise, the climate change impact resilience frame prioritises the buffering of potential damage caused by adverse weather shocks, while the ecological resilience frame highlights mitigation measures to protect agriculture against longer-term issues caused by climate change. Also, whereas risk management tools were proposed, for example, by the disease resilience frame to uphold agricultural productivity, proponents of the ecological resilience frame presented current risk management tools as inadequate, as they locked farmers into intensive monocultural farming models that damaged long-term ecological resilience.

Second, resilience frames focusing on short-term challenges and solutions dominated frames that proposed major adaptations or changes to deal with longer-term challenges. Put differently, apart from the ecological resilience frame, resilience was mostly framed in terms of *robustness* (Buitenhuis et al., 2020a; Meuwissen et al., 2019). The four resilience frames that were largely compatible with each other shared a bias towards recovering from short-term (economic) shocks rather than long-term environmental stresses, mainly proposed risk management tools and familiar adjustments to existing CAP instruments and aimed to protect the status quo. The resilience concept was apparently utilised to repackage established narratives that justify familiar CAP interventions (cf. Alons & Zwaan, 2016). For instance, the income resilience frame and the farmers' supply chain position resilience frame both related resilience to the vulnerable economic position of farmers, which makes them susceptible to market-related shocks. Additionally, the income resilience frame and the climate change impact frame showed compatibility, as both frames highlighted how weather-related shocks threaten farmers' income and profitability. Both frames focused on risk management instruments to improve farmers' resilience to recover from weather shocks and climate change impacts. Similarly, the climate change impact resilience frame and the disease resilience frame both emphasised the occurrence of external events (i.e., diseases or extreme weather events) that negatively affect production levels and, therefore, resilience. Actors that deployed these frames recommended that the CAP should further promote and deploy risk

management tools and measures to diversify agricultural practices to recover and buffer shocks caused by the external events.

These findings resonate with other studies that criticise that the resilience concept is often deployed for maintaining the status quo within existing systems and to ensure stability in dominant systems (Cretney, 2014; DeVerteuil & Golubchikov, 2016; Darnhofer, 2021; Olsson et al., 2015). Moreover, CAP reforms are generally recognised for largely modulating policy instruments that retain the status quo, for example, due to the strong influence of traditional farmers and agro-food industry groups (proponents of the robustness-oriented frames; e.g., Greer, 2017; Swinnen, 2015). A dominant robustness-oriented framing of resilience has implications for the CAP's policy design. For instance, previous research has already discussed that focusing on only one dimension of resilience leads to policy trade-offs or undermining of the other two dimensions, that is, adaptability or transformability (Ashkenazy et al., 2018). The risk of a dominant robustness orientation is that certain resilience-enhancing or resilience-constraining factors are considered while others are disregarded as demonstrated by, for example, the absence of long-term ecological challenges in the robustness-oriented frames. Additionally, a disproportionate focus on robustness can usher in policies that devote too many resources to risk compensation rather than risk reduction, such as income support or financial risk management tools. These types of instruments do not address systemic risks that, together with longer-term challenges (e.g., climate change, rural demographic changes, biodiversity loss), ask for adaptations or transformation to prevent longer-term pain (Cai, 2020; Darnhofer, 2021; Feindt et al., 2018). Moreover, policies that dominantly focus on protecting existing functionalities, that is, supporting robustness, risk reinforcing unsustainable existing values and causing undesirable lock-ins that complicate future change (cf. Simoens & Leipold, 2021), as well as possibly leading to future inclusion or exclusion of specific actors in policy-making processes (Popp et al., 2021). While supporting robustness via the CAP is relevant for protecting desirable or well-performing functions, solely following a robustness-oriented approach to resilience will likely prevent effective support for adaptation or change within the EU's agricultural sector.

Third, the Commission was the only actor that deployed elements of all five resilience frames in its CAP and Farm-to-Fork communications, but also accentuated some resilience frames more than others. While the Commission repeatedly emphasised the need for income, climate change impact and farmers' supply chain resilience, it less frequently used elements of the disease or ecological resilience frames. Deploying elements of multiple resilience frames might suggest that the Commission aimed for broad consensus and to appease multiple actors in the policy-making process - both within the Commission, consisting of different directorate-generals, as well as outside (Candel et al., 2014; Dekker, 2017; Hannah & Baekkeskov, 2020; Stone, 2012; Yanow, 1996). For example, the Commission did not elaborate on what it understood by resilience, making the concept malleable enough for actors to fit with their respective views (cf. Anholt, 2020). Moreover, the successful implementation of the CAP is very dependent on its implementation within the Member States, especially through the NSPs. The Commission therefore might have wanted to integrate elements of dissimilar frames into the CAP to increase its alignment with multiple Member States' existing agro-food policy discourses. Simultaneously, Member State governments might want to strategically use the ambiguity of resilience to legitimise the CAP reform at the domestic level (cf. Alons & Zwaan, 2016). Whereas considering this multilevel governance is needed for reaching consensus over and increasing the legitimacy of the CAP, it can also introduce unclear resilience choices in policies (cf. Sibbing, 2021). Future research should therefore focus on how the Commission could initiate novel multi-actor, multilevel governance arrangements that allow collective deliberation and negotiation of what resilience means, what it requires

for Europe's agricultural systems and how it can be enhanced through policy interventions (cf. Hansen et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2018).

However, we should critically reflect on the introduction of the ambiguity surrounding resilience in the CAP post-2020 reform debate because incompatibilities hidden behind the consensus over resilience can impede the implementation of actionable resilience-enhancing policies (cf. Hannah & Beakkeskov, 2020; Van Eeten, 1999; Wolf & Van Dooren, 2017). For instance, in its CAP post-2020 proposals, the Commission introduced stronger mandatory greening requirements ('enhanced conditionality') complemented by new eco-schemes to incentivise farmers to adapt and implement agri-environmental or climate activities. However, a large share of CAP funds continues to support the status quo (e.g., area-based income support). Moreover, the degree to which eco-schemes will foster adaptiveness will depend on how ambitious Member States are in their design and implementation as set out in their NSPs. Furthermore, broad stakeholder attention to shared concepts like resilience does not necessarily result in the bridging of actors' frames and in effective policies (cf. Hannah & Beakkeskov, 2020; Howlett et al., 2015; Sharma & Daugbjerg, 2020). At the time of writing, a resilience frame conflict was taking place within discussions about the Farm-to-Fork Strategy. Environmental organisations and MEPs argued that the Farm-to-Fork's strategic targets on pesticide use, fertilisers and organic farming were necessary for realising resilient and sustainable EU food systems. However, farmers' organisations and agro-food industry groups criticised the Farm-to-Fork Strategy because it would constrain resilience by reducing agricultural productivity and farmers' income. Such conflicts between competing resilience frames will likely constrain the capacity of the Farm-to-Fork strategy to legitimise long-term resilience-enhancing actions. Follow-up research could investigate to what extent ambiguous concepts like resilience feed into polarisation, stalemate or productive consensus in policy debates, especially by focusing on interactions among involved actors in the debates over time.

CONCLUSION

This article started with the question of how the concept of resilience has been framed in the CAP post-2020 reform process and which policy actors and stakeholders deployed these frames. By conducting a frame analysis on policy documents of EU institutions and stakeholders that participated in the CAP post-2020 reform, we identified five distinct resilience frames: (1) income resilience frame, (2) farmers' supply chain position resilience frame, (3) climate change impact resilience frame, (4) disease resilience frame and (5) ecological resilience frame. Our study demonstrates that the ambiguity surrounding concepts such as resilience allows actors to use them strategically to influence policy-making processes by attaching different, sometimes conflicting, policy actions. Moreover, the analysis contributed to further reflection on how the dominant bias towards robustness within resilience frames might impede consistent and actionable resilience-enhancing policy design.

Now that the resilience concept and its ambiguity are firmly established in the CAP post-2020, the Commission should critically reflect on how this ambiguity can be turned around into broad resilience-enhancing solutions. Deploying elements of the different resilience frames might have ensured that resilience became recognised by various actors and that it is maintained on the CAP's agenda, but the Commission should follow up on the fractured consensus if it truly wants to continue utilising the resilience concept within the CAP. Rather than neglecting or trying to depoliticise the incompatibilities between the resilience frames, the Commission could actively

address the frame (in)compatibilities by collaboratively reflecting on the causal narratives and interests underlying the resilience frames while looking forward to identify actors' resilience needs. However, the aim should not be to integrate all resilience concerns and needs within the policy but to ensure that potential trade-offs between resilience capacities, that is, robustness, adaptability and transformability are recognised and used to address potentially inconsistent resilience solutions.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualisation (lead), methodology (lead), investigation, formal analysis (lead), data curation, writing–original draft, writing–review and editing, visualisation: Yannick Buitenhuis. *Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, writing–review and editing*: Jeroen J. L. Candel. *Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, writing–review and editing*: Katrien J. A. M. Termeer. *Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, writing–review and editing*: Peter H. Feindt.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

A list of all researched data is provided in Appendix III of this article, and all data are publicly available. Other data will be made available on request.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The assumption that human, animal and environmental health are interdependent against the background of the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

[2] The European Parliament discusses legislative proposals from the Commission in the plenary and in specialised standing committees, usually adopting many requests for amendments. The standing committees can also instruct legislative proposals via, for example, the adoption of reports on Commission initiatives and own-initiative reports.

[3] Eurogroups are organisations that represent European stakeholder organisations that share opinions on a specific topic or issue in Brussels.

[4] The left group in the European Parliament–GUE/NGL.

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Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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