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The Recent Resurgence of Multiple-Use in the Swedish Forestry Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Multiple-use forestry has gained increasing emphasis in forestry discourse in recent years. This article examines how multiple-use forestry has been perceived among Swedish forest actors. Halsey's interpretation on 'modalities of nature' is used to address the tension and relations among various actors and the unfolding processes of becoming. Drawn on semi-structured interviews, we suggest seeing multiple-use forestry as a site for ideas and ideologies to collide, confluence and collaborate. We draw attention to interview materials that address the 'modalities of nature' where vision, naming, speed and affect all contribute to the becoming of multiple-use forestry. We thus show how multiple-use forestry has been used as a political concept and address the potentially creative and constructive relations generated by the forest users.

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Introduction

Swedish forest resources and forest lands have been used for multiple purposes since historical times (Eliasson 2002; Hytönen 1995). However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century a clear shift occurred toward a more pronounced industrial use of forest resources and therewith the establishment of a strong silvicultural tradition that persists to this day (Eliasson 2002; Mårald et al. 2017). This shift did not entail the disappearance of traditional and long-established multiple usage of forest resources, but rather a change of emphasis from agricultural and household multiple use toward industrial, recreational, environmental, and energy-source multiple-use (Andersson 2002). In particular, the regulation of *Allemansrätten* (the right of public access) in the mid-twentieth century has provided the Swedish '*mångbruk*' (multiuse) with its own uniqueness (Sandell and Svenning 2011), very distinct from how 'multiple-use forestry' is used in e.g. a North American context (Kardell and Bishop 2014).

After the Second World War, and especially during the 1970s and the 1980s, industrial forestry intensified (Sandström and Sténs 2015). During the same period,

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environmental movements grew strong, and intensive forestry was questioned from an ecological perspective and for its lack of consideration for other uses of the forest—its social values were also placed under scrutiny. Environmental criticism of this kind occurred in several countries, and through increased international cooperation between environmental movements in the 1980s the dominance of production-oriented forestry was somewhat weakened (Mårald and Westholm 2016). In Sweden, this weakening was reflected in the 1993 Forest Act, which gave equal space and emphasis to biodiversity and the social values inherent in forests. In the Act, multiple-use forestry became recognized as a distinct notion promoting other forest management practices than those stemming from the dominant industrial paradigm; thus multiple-use forestry slowly became more salient in Swedish forestry rhetoric and practices (Mårald et al. 2017). Ekelund and Hamilton (2001) suggest that multiple-use forestry shows that there are other commercial and noncommercial interests using forest resources, such as berry/mushroom picking, hunting, recreation, natural and cultural conservation, and reindeer herding (Ekelund and Hamilton 2001; Appelstrand 2007; Appelstrand 2012). Since the passing of the Act, Swedish forest policy has continued to be influenced by global discourses of sustainability, climate change, and ecosystems conservation, as expressed in, for instance, the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Forest Management, and the SDGs 2030 (Sandström and Sténs 2015), which together have contributed to an increased focus on different goals and increased multiplicity in Swedish forest policy (Beland Lindahl, Sandström, and Sténs 2017).

Despite its long pedigree and being noticeably present in contemporary forest discourse since at least the early 1990s, multiple-use forestry as a firm concept has led to more concrete proposals at larger scale only since 2010, when clear-cut free forestry (*hyggesfritt skogsbruk*) methods became increasingly discussed (Espmark 2017). In more recent years, multiple-use forestry has made a strong reappearance on the national political stage in the discussions on Swedish forestry, particularly through the 2018 Swedish National Forest Program (NFP) and later the 2020 Forest Inquiry (*Skogsutredningen*, SOU 2020:73). Multiple-use forestry is listed as one of five focus areas in the NFP and is emphasized repeatedly in the Forest Inquiry. The objective of the NFP strategy is to further develop forestry in a way that is compatible with a growing bioeconomy, the generation of more jobs, nationwide sustainable growth, and contributing to a more prosperous and attractive countryside, all laudable goals which simply by being on the table are increasing the emphasis on multiple-use forestry in Swedish forest policy. Finally, it is worth noting that multiple-use forestry became an amalgamating political concept in the difficult negotiations that took place between the Swedish government and two opposition parties after the even result in the 2018 parliamentary elections (*Januariöverenskommelsen* 2019).

Following the above, it is therefore pertinent to say that multiple-use forestry has *always* existed in Sweden, even during the intensive timber production-oriented periods in the second half of the twentieth century. During that period, however, other uses of the forest tended to complement the production-oriented norm. After the 1993 Forest Act, broader opportunities were opened to conduct forestry for other purposes, but it took until the 2010s before alternative forest management methods began to be discussed in earnest and multiple-use forestry became a national political issue (Swedish

Forest Agency 2011). Actors such as the Green Party, the tourism sector, and environmental NGOs have since then presented multiple-use forestry not only as a complement to the industrial forestry that is still dominant but also as a more advantageous form of forest management. But how do forest owners at the local level perceive this growing national interest in multiple-use forestry, and what does this concept mean for them in practice?

Aim and Points of Departure

Previously, multiple-use forestry in Sweden has been largely studied within the concept of multifunctionality, where forests' other-than-economic values are discussed in terms of tradeoffs between different functions and conflict management (Sandström et al. 2011). Multifunctionality of forests has been on one hand recalled and recognized in relation to sustainability and biodiversity, and on the other hand relocated to individual stakeholder/forest owners' responsibilities to define and act upon (Nylund 2009).

In this vein, a number of studies have shed light on different stakeholders' perceptions of forests and pointed toward the need for a more deliberative and collaborative process for facilitating sustainable forest management (Sténs et al. 2016; Lidestav et al. 2020; Eriksson 2012; Johansson 2016).

There is another stream of work which is more focused on the practical and technical issues of land-use and which investigates models that could help in implementing sustainable multiple-use forestry practices (Nijnik et al. 2010; Lagergren and Jönsson 2017; Svensson et al. 2020). One recent work on multiple-use forestry in the European and Swedish context deals with the conceptualization and implementation of multiple-use forestry as a "boundary concept"; the authors argue that the term has mainly served the mediating process among various interests and practices in the forest sector (Hoogstra-Klein, Brukas, and Wallin 2017). However, what is missing in this, and indeed the whole body of literature, is a closer look at, and more nuanced understanding of how, the notion of multiple-use forestry has come to be perceived among different actors, and how multiple-use forestry may inform future conversations about forest policy.

With the guiding research question—How has multiple-use forestry come to be comprehended among different actors working within and alongside the forest sectors?—this article examines what the recent reinforcement of the notion "multiple-use forestry" in the arena of Swedish forest policy means in terms of new possibilities for envisioning, planning, and most importantly communicating how forests could be used. We conduct semi-structured interviews with forest owners and other actors who work in various forest sectors to find out how they perceive the notion of "multiple-use forestry" and how they have dealt with—and may yet work with in the future—the notion in their own practices.

Our analysis is guided by theoretical concepts that challenge the often taken-for-granted definitions used in environmental politics. We use Halsey's (2004) work on forest conflict to dive into the meanings of "nature," "forestry," and "multiple-use forestry," and consider how they become embedded in broader environmental discourses and policy transitions, and thus change accordingly (Halsey 2004). While "forestry" in Swedish forest policy debates is often presented as something that can be unequivocally and

unambiguously defined (i.e. in Stridsman and Lundmark 2019), we argue that “multiple-use forestry” gets its true meaning through much broader practices and discourses. To understand the “becoming” of multiple-use forestry in the Swedish forest model we pay particular attention to some of the new relations revealed in the process of using the notion in participants’ own settings. We contribute to the current forest debates in Sweden by rethinking multiple-use forestry in today’s context, and bring out new angles on how we may work with the concept in future forest policy and practice.

Theoretical Framework

The ambition of developing multiple-use forestry in policy is to address, maintain, and develop ecological, economic, and social values of forests harmoniously and simultaneously. This doing “more of everything” is thus firmly based in an ecological modernization discourse (Beland Lindahl et al. 2017). Ecological modernization can be seen as an expression of the ecomodernism discourse, where technical innovations, green design, and environmental reforms are seen as solutions to pervasive environmental crises (Sandström and Sténs 2015).

In *An Ecomodernist Manifesto* (Asafu-Adjaye et al. 2015), the logic of ecological modernization expresses an essential belief in modernization and personal, economic, and political liberties, and thereby the essential tool of solving conflicts between human flourishing and its impact on the non-human environment: namely, technology (Asafu-Adjaye et al. 2015). The “techno-fixes” in the ecomodernist vision have been pointed out as problematic as the vision itself neglects the real problems such as power relations, injustice, and the evident flaws in the market economy (O’Connor 1994; Huesemann and Huesemann 2011; Karlsson 2020). Yet, as Hajer (1995) persuasively argues, ecological modernization has become a new and standard language in environmental politics. And across the world (including in Sweden) nations are adopting this ecomodernist language to continue business as usual (Andersson and Keskitalo 2018; Blythe et al. 2018).

To open up the understanding of multiple-use forestry beyond this strand of ecomodernist rhetoric and discourse we turn to Halsey’s (2004) work on environmental visions. Halsey (2004) argues that our envisioning of earth is always limited by our vision (modes of seeing), which can only bring things into focus by ignoring their differences, from whereon differences are reduced or managed through “naming” or “categorizing” into identities, analogies, and determined oppositions. From this perspective Halsey contends that in a way forest conflict is not actually about forests at all—rather it is about the event of contest and conflict that resembles a process of “becoming” for the forests. In this process of “becoming,” four modalities of nature (or naturing) are at play, namely vision (ways of seeing nature), naming (categories of nature), speed (rates of transforming nature), and affect (relations between natural and artificial actors) (Halsey 2004, 35). Meanwhile, technologies of speed across time and space bring forth the idea of total control and absolute knowledge, showing how landscapes could be transformed and cultivated, casting powerful influences on our visions and visions of nature (Halsey 2004). Our ways of seeing nature, as well as other

modalities mentioned above, divide the world into various binaries (e.g. human/nature, men/women), from which new, affective relations emerge.

Halsey's (2004) theorization on environmental vision and the becoming process of forest conflict helps us to peer through the rhetorical smoke of "we have always had multiple-use forestry" and the ecomodernist envisioning of "more of everything". The modalities of nature enable us to go underneath the narratives gathered through the interviews, paying more attention to the individual forest actors' ways of seeing nature and forest, using certain terms (not least multiple-use forestry) and relating to the forest. While "becoming" indicates being in the future sense, it actually integrates the past and the present into the ongoing process of unfolding, transforming, and emerging. In a similar way, "becoming" also deconstructs what is known as "true" or "natural," destabilizing taken-for-granted notions and the structures of power associated with them (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). In forest policy terms, forests are often presented as passive objects to be acted upon even when it is the forests' timber production or other "functions" under discussion. Halsey's (2004) modalities of nature will, then, shed light on the aspects of seeing, naming, and relating to the forests from the participants, which are essential in understanding when and how normative "forestry" gets reflected and disrupted, revealing other efforts and desires than an ecomodernist one, and leading to a process of becoming something else—namely multiple-use forestry. From this expansive theoretical perspective, we can now read our materials with more open and exploring eyes.

Research Design: Materials and Methods

The empirical material is drawn from policy documents related to the concept of multiple-use forestry and semi-structured interviews. Specific policy documents include the *NFP Strategy for Sweden's National Forest Program*, the report produced by the working group focusing on multiple-use forestry *Growth, Multiple-use, and the Value Creation of the Forest as a Resource*, the pre-study report for the NFP strategy, the assignment texts of government instructions to the Swedish Agricultural University, and various stakeholders' official responses to the NFP focus theme of multiple-use forestry. Regarding the in-depth interviews, all 19 were conducted in the period June–August 2019 and transcribed verbatim. Our work followed the ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council. Through snowball sampling, starting with a list of forest owners who had developed well-known multi-use based businesses in their forests, 24 individuals from different geographical regions of Sweden were contacted; these included people who identified themselves as 'multiple-use foresters', while others worked in a forestry sector (Table 1). 17 of them agreed to conduct the semi-structured interviews over the telephone, while two of them accepted face-to-face interviews.

The 60–90-min long interviews consisted of four parts: (1) background and relations to the forest/forest use; (2) views on forests' functions, values, and potential for multiple-use; (3) experiences and understandings of networks, support, and collaboration for multiple-use forestry; and (4) ideas on presumptions and governance that might lead to a multiple-use forestry. All interviews were conducted in Swedish by the first author, and the transcribed scripts were sent back to the interviewees to ensure

Table 1. Profile of research participants.

No.	Age	Gender	Main interests/expertise in forest use	Type of interview	Date of interview
1	60s	Male	timber	Face-to-face	2019-06-07
2	40s	Male	wood processing	Telephone	2019-06-13
3	40s	Female	entrepreneurship coaching, artistic use	Telephone	2019-06-14
4	60s	Male	accommodation, conference location	Telephone	2019-06-14
5	60s	Male	Histories and cultures of forest resources	Telephone	2019-06-18
6	60s	Female	Medical and herbal use	Face-to-face	2019-06-20
7	60s	Female	Therapeutic, artistic and pedagogical use	Telephone	2019-06-20
8	50s	Female	Rehabilitating	Telephone	2019-06-20
9	60s	Male	Food product for fine dining	Telephone	2019-06-20
10	40s	Male	Rural development advisor	Telephone	2019-06-24
11	40s	Male	Eco, social and community-based tourism product development	Telephone	2019-06-25
12	30s	Female	Hunting	Telephone	2019-06-25
13	60s	Male	Ecopark and recreational use	Telephone	2019-06-25
14	60s	Male	Grazing, cultural heritage, historical use of forest land	Telephone	2019-06-27
15	40s	Female	Timber, ecosystem services	Telephone	2019-06-28
16	40s	Female	Wildlife observing and recreational use	Telephone	2019-07-05
17	40s	Female	Ecopark and recreational use	Telephone	2019-08-06
18	50s	Female	Restoration, preservation, accommodation, and artistic use	Telephone	2019-08-07
19	60s	Male	Mediating different actors, both timber and recreational use	Telephone	2019-08-08

accuracy. When needed for quotes, Swedish text (policy documents or interview materials) was translated into English by the authors.

Our analytical procedure can be described as empirically based theorizations as we went through an ongoing interchange between theoretical ideas and specific data observations. This equates to “abductive analysis,” where the abduction occurring in our mediating process between study materials and theories exposes us to unexpected points (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). With ‘perceptions of multiple-use forestry’ as our unit of analysis, the procedure includes repeated reading through the interview transcripts, coding, analysis, and interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Multiple-Use Forestry: Visions and Naming

In the NFP pre-study report multiple-use forestry is defined as forest that “is used for several different purposes (e.g. industrial forestry, nature-based tourism, reindeer husbandry, nature conservation, wood processing, hunting, recreation, well-being and other cultural activities and expressions) (Skogsstyrelsen 2013). The purposes may be commercial or noncommercial” (Andersson et al. 2016). This rather broad definition makes multiple-use forestry an umbrella term for all sorts of utilization without any prioritization. In the final version of the NFP strategy released two years later, a similar broadness can be observed. It appears to suggest that forests can generate further benefits “than the *traditional* forest production and conservation of biodiversity” and a more varied utility of forests will create prerequisites for more diversity in enterprise and value creation (NFP 2018, 19, our italics). Curiously enough, both the dominant mode of industrial forestry and conservation are thus referred to as the “traditional” forms of management in contrast to multiple-use forestry. The label of “traditional” demonstrates again the normalization of how “forestry” posits any other interpretation or intention as

“alternative” and thus in need of justification and further legitimization (Andersson and Keskkitalo 2018).

According to the NFP strategy, multiple-use forestry will lead to: (1) more activities in forests, meaning increasing employment for both men and women who live in either cities or the countryside; (2) valuable natural and cultural environments and new knowledge that will benefit multiple-use forestry businesses; and (3) increased knowledge on the public right to access and forest ownership (Andersson and Keskkitalo 2018, 19–20). In the assignment text from the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation to the Swedish Agricultural University to develop and communicate transdisciplinary knowledge of multiple-use forestry, it was stated that the present mission is a continuation of the government’s ongoing investment in forests’ ecological and social values; however, more weight is put on points such as creating conditions for land- and forest owners to develop new business areas in their forests, which in turn means higher expectations for increased employment, economic growth, and rural development (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation 2018).

The policy documents alluded to above seem to expect that different forest values can be developed without conflicts and without a clear plan on how to reconcile or compromise differences. As a result, the notion of multiple-use forestry in the NFP strategy obscures differences as a “boundary object” (Star and Griesemer 1989; Hoogstra-Klein, Brukas, and Wallin 2017)—“a frame that is weak and vague enough not to clash with the different interests ... but at the same time strong enough to serve as a meaningful political tool” (Hoogstra-Klein, Brukas, and Wallin 2017, 256). Rather than seeing the obscuring of differences as a diplomatic act to avoid conflicts, the lens of Halsey (2004) helps us to see that the vagueness is inevitable, as any political vision of utilizing natural resources is based on a certain mode of seeing and envisioning “nature,” which always comes with the cost of ignoring the differences or “deep disparity” (Halsey (2004, 40). The question is whether the ways of envisioning multiple-use forestry among individual actors induce the same kind of disparity.

The interviews clearly show that when participants used the term multiple-use forestry there were differences in definition. For instance, a forest owner who was interested in wood processing defined multiple-use forestry as a complete deviation from timber production, pulpwood, and bioenergy, stating “*my definition of multiple-use forestry is the parts that are not timber or pulpwood or bioenergy from the forest but give me money*”. The same participant believed that getting a “name” for practicing multiple-use forestry is important to make it a legitimized category:

We are creating this branch of industry for entrepreneurs who are practicing multiple-use forestry now, so in three years you could get an SNI code and say “I am a multiple-use forester” to Statistics Sweden, in the same way as you can say that you are a forester or farmer. (Participant 2)

Another participant pointed out that the values of pastoral farming (*fåbodbruk*) were often falsely equated with reindeer herding, but they have not gained the same amount of attention or support (as reindeer herding has) from the politicians. Multiple-use forestry for him was a term to address the disappearing ways of using forest land. Being able to label pastoral farming as part of multiple-use forestry would therefore not only

signal its potential in generating revenues but also highlight its uniqueness in terms of cultural heritage to politicians and the public.

These accounts show a paradox that emerges alongside the singular meaning assigned to “forestry”: while “multiple-use forestry” may help individual actors to distinguish themselves as an independent category away from the large-scale forest products such as timber, pulpwood, and biofuel, the actors’ practices have to comply to the current system and put on the “money” label in order to survive. The differences derived from the different positions that the forest actors have are important here, as the Swedish forest model often presents private forest owners as having much decision-making power; therefore, whether multiple-use forestry can be implemented is up to individual forest owners. One participant noted that private forest owners’ decision-making was in fact greatly affected by big forest companies who usually prioritized felling:

We are so incredibly influenced by, I would say, propaganda as well as by the forest companies. Because when you are a forest owner, you get regular magazines and reports about the forest and some are very interesting, but basically everything is about felling the forest sooner or later. (Participant 18)

Another participant talked about forestry in the context of industrialization, that it was “*totalitarian industrial society laying down norms and forms on everything and in its blindness eliminating a lot,*” especially “*preserving natural resources*” (Participant 14).

To explicitly discuss these differences in the capacity to influence and affect in turn enables private actors to elaborate on what they see as the “real problem”. Here, one forest entrepreneur’s narrative on the difference between “trees” and “forest” deserves to be quoted in full:

The real problem is ... to call planted forests “forests” without making any difference. That there aren’t two different words for these, you know? Like on Wikipedia a planted forest still gets to be called a forest. All the time these lies continue to spread. “We have never had so much forest today”, they say. Yes, if we look at the numbers of trees, maybe. But we have never had so little forest, if we look at ecologically functional forests. I think this is a real problem. I can only hope that with this government mission on multiple-use forestry, they will somehow get some insights on how this is related. Because so far everything is affected by economic interests. (Participant 18)

While a participant working at a forestry company believed the differences between multiple-use forestry and conventional forestry should not be perceived as a problem, she did say:

Between a developed multiple-use forestry and forestry...I don’t really think they are against each other ... you just have to get competitive entrepreneurs and dare to invest in developing products. It is not what nature looks like that is a problem, rather it is the product development... and we do not have enough driven entrepreneurs who have the resources to invest. (Participant 15)

Shifting the “problem” from the different status and the differences in viewing forests to the lack of innovation, entrepreneurship, and product development is a typical way of thinking in ecomodernism. We will return to this in the next theme, where a time perspective shows how “fast” a problem can be fixed plays a role here even though that may not be a long-term solution.

Halsey (2004) contends that how we see and imagine forests is essentially industrialized, which affects how we think and envision forests' usefulness. The industrialization of vision has kept us from seeing differences among various forest uses as potentially productive for finding a solution together. Yet to find such a solution, different forest actors need to be open about their differences, and moreover to challenge the fixed ways of looking at these differences. A manager from a big forest company who has worked with local forest owners on different ways of using forests said:

From the beginning it was quite polarized...but today... I think many of these entrepreneurs, who were almost aggressive before, they are perhaps our best ambassadors. So it's a lot of talking and listening. Then we do not agree on everything. But we often come to good decisions. (Participant 19)

So in this way having multiple-use forestry present in the discussion among forest actors who at first experience radical differences could nevertheless enable them to find a common ground, which can then lead to more dialogue and cooperation: multiple-use forestry may provide a space where different ways of seeing are allowed.

Time and Speed: Multiple-Use Forestry as Irregularities

Halsey (2004) argues that one major reason for forest conflicts around the world lies in the different perceptions of "time" and/or the different abilities for perceiving the "future," and the potential consequences of current human practices in the future. This is also evident in our interviews. One forest owner expressed how sustainability for him as a self-governing forest owner was to increase the economic values of his forests over a hundred years' perspective, and thus multiple-use forestry must also be incorporated in such a time frame (Participant 1). Another forest entrepreneur viewed it as a matter of urgency that we change the way of using forests, as she observed dramatic environmental changes in the forest she lives and works in: "*the last two years have been very different and it feels like nature has been saying to us that it is urgent now*" (Participant 17). Yet another forest owner asserted that there was a "*lack of faith in the future*" among small companies who run tourism activities, as "*the forests just disappear, disappear and disappear and it happens fast*" (Participant 18). A further participant—who worked with a tourism facility—talked about the importance of having open and precise communications with the big timber companies about their respective schedules, i.e. when and where timber workers will do clear-cutting in the same area where the tourism company organizes tourist hikes or dog sledging, so that "*we don't need to be afraid that when we come there with our dogs we'll suddenly run into some transportation*" (Participant 11).

Interestingly, a few participants brought up what they perceived as the historical way of using forests and how we might learn from this to rethink what could be sustainable. One stated that moderate human disturbance was in fact the most natural and sustainable way to use forests, and historically it has been so: therefore "*multiple-use forestry has existed for thousands of years*" (Participant 14). Another participant talked about the role of the forest in the making of Swedish history and identity (Participant 5). Moreover, both participant 4 and 5 believed a less romanticized image of forests should come into today's forest debates, and that history itself can say much about what we should do now

and in the future to further develop multiple-use forestry (e.g. heritage tourism and knowledge tourism).

Interviewees also spoke about how practicing multiple-use forestry required time and patience, and that it involved more communication, collaboration, and creativity to make agreements with other parties whose interests were at stake. But mostly the interviewees felt that it required another level of understanding, knowledge, and relation to the forests, which all took time to cultivate. A few forest owners claimed that time shortage was a major hurdle for them to take further actions on the path of multiple-use forestry: *“Almost all talented entrepreneurs know pretty well what should be done but they do not have time”* (Participant 4).

Halsey (2004) describes that changes in technology have enabled the rapid transformation of “nature,” for instance binoculars, maps, satellites, remote sensing devices, and so forth are replacing—or at least supplementing—our eyes, demonstrating how vision has been industrialized. At the same time the modern political economy of globalization further ensures the high speed of capital flows from one scale to the next, or, in Tsing’s (2012) term, “scalability” that allows expansion and growth. The conventional mode of forestry in Sweden has established itself through such mechanisms of speed and scaling up and is well situated in the global market to supply timber, paper pulp, and biomass, which makes any changes of vision and attitudes difficult. As one forest owner said:

We have had this large-scale forestry for over 100 years, and everyone is used to it being that way. Then it takes time, courage and attitudes and knowledge to dare to say something else. (Participant 9)

One participant who has been working in various forest-related organizations immediately put multiple-use forestry in the context of the commodity chain:

When I hear the term multiple-use forestry, I connect the word “use” to the understanding that it is a business activity so that it is not purely non-commercial. But then I mean that even if you meditate or have a hiking trip in forest, you are still part of a commodity chain. (Participant 5)

The point made here is that everything is connected to a web of capital regardless of whether it is clear-cutting, nature guiding, or a yoga retreat. At the same time, there is the irregularity of translating time into capital through the rationale of quantitative and qualitative measurement. Another participant talked about multiple-use forestry bringing back capital to rural areas:

If the whole of Sweden is to live and we are to have an attractive countryside, then multiple-use forestry is an extremely important piece of the puzzle. The new jobs created through, for example, tourism, they end up more often for women, foreign-born and young people, unlike other industries. (Participant 4)

In comparison to conventional forestry, multiple-use forestry is seen as odd, or at least as something people are not used to, both in terms of how much time it would take and how one is relating to the forests. Multiple-use forestry in this sense encourages people to look at things from another perspective, time-wise as well as space-wise; this eventually links perspectives across scales, and slows down the hectic flows of seemingly unproblematic modern trading, and consequently exposing each actor on the chain to new sets of relations.

Tension and Attention: Multiple-Use Forestry as Affective Relations

The process leading up to the take-off of the NFP strategy, as well as the discussions that were aroused after its launch, were accompanied by political debates connected to the 2018 general election in Sweden (Bjärstig et al. 2019). During the difficult process of forming the government, the NFP and its content became one of the key items of concern. A minority government (comprising the Swedish Social Democrat Party and the Green Party) was formed after signing the January Agreement (*Januariöverenskommelsen*) with the Center Party and the Liberals (*Socialdemokraterna* 2019). The January Agreement addresses the NFP specifically and urges the strengthening of private forest property rights, the creation of good conditions for entrepreneurship to thrive in the forest sector, and reconciliation between biodiversity conservation and a growing bioeconomy (*Socialdemokraterna* 2019). Hence, multiple-use forestry has become even more meaningful in this context of post-election tensions, as the changing political climate brought new sets of visions, categorizations, and temporality to forest policy.

Our interviews show that there is much reflection on how forestry and changes in forest policy and governance have shaped forest owners' relations with forests, which has led to a geographical shift of forest ownership and consequently a change of relations, such that "*many private owners work and live in big cities and are almost never in their forests. Then they develop no relation with the forest and just ask some forest company [to do the job]*" (Participant 18). Instead of a two-way relationship, one-way dependency is developed; for instance "*90% of our municipality is owned by Sveaskog. So of course, we are very dependent on what the company gets for ownership directives [by the government] and their decisions on how they should use the forest here*" (Participant 17). Meanwhile, several participants with experience working in big forest companies point out that we often forget that conventional forestry has provided some beneficial conditions, not least the infrastructure such as roads that can be used for developing multiple-use forestry in remote areas. Therefore, "*forestry is important for multiple-use forestry because if there is no forestry there is no one maintaining the roads and then there will be no tourists coming out to you*" (Participant 15).

Tensions arise here as the meaning of relations in this context, the ways of making relations (both with other forest actors and with the forest itself), and on which level these relations are happening, are all perceived differently. What the above participants seem to disagree on is centered around whether alternative ways of using forest are positioned as inferior or equal to conventional forestry, and whether the role of conventional forestry with regard to other ways of using forest resources is limiting or facilitating. Yet one thing is certain: multiple-use forestry does make people reflect on these relations, even perhaps to the point of becoming more willing to create new relations in which they themselves can actively choose to affect and be affected. Almost all participants talked about the importance of collaboration and the necessity of writing agreements between the owner and the user of forest land as enablers of new relations. The right of public access is also perceived by all participants as an important foundation to enable more possibilities:

The right of public access in itself does not really give any money, but it is a prerequisite for people to come here, that they feel that they have an opportunity to get out into the Swedish forest and take part in nature. (Participant 2)

Furthermore, disagreements need to be discussed in relational and constructive ways, to develop more affective relations in the process of developing multiple-use forestry:

If you do not want conflicts, nothing will happen ... conflict may not be as dangerous as it sounds. It is often in a conflict that you can take things forward and if people could only listen to each other's arguments, much would be gained. (Participant 4)

These accounts thus move the question from “how forestry has shaped relations in the past” to “how relations might change forestry in the future,” which puts human–forest and human–human relations in a more active position. Halsey (2004) argues that forests and many other non-human bodies are historically made to enter relations, that is induced to produce, as if it is the very meaning of their existence to be used and consumed. As has been written before, and arising out of the engrained habit of human extraction of natural resources, forest policy debates and research have put more attention on the changes of human use of forests, and have consequently lost sight of the changes of human–forest relations over time. One participant reminded us that “*most people who own forests also love forests, and they would think it was great if they didn't have to fell so hard, but today they don't see many alternatives,*” highlighting a relationship that is often forgotten but which indicates that:

We have to find other ways of living with the forest because it needs so much more than just being a timber worker – and multiple-use forestry can give us that. (Participant 17)

Seeing multiple-use forestry through this lens gives us another way of living with forests. For instance, in one participant's view, multiple-use forestry becomes a concept which makes talking about the “value of nature” less politically contested:

I like the term multiple-use forestry better. It is ... a little bit about feeling good, public health, and recreation ... but it does not weigh as heavily when you talk with representatives of the forest industry or the forest owners. (Participant 13)

Another participant raised the point that multiple-use forestry might lead to a better approach of “*working across*” to “*find solutions instead of finding conflicts*” in forestry practices (Participant 7). Such willingness was also palpable in a big forest company's representative who wanted to “*stimulate a multiple-use ... to be open for those who want to use our forests for other uses*” because “*we want them [the forests] to do well*” (Participant 15). New relations can also be found on a local community level, where entrepreneurs who had practiced multiple-use forestry for a long time observed opinions changing among their neighbors: “*many were kind of negative ... afraid of changing and think we do things differently and ... it became provocative*” in the beginning, but then “*as they have been and visited us, almost all the neighbors are very positive now*” (Participant 18).

Relations between forest owners and their forests are multiplied once they start to see forests in new ways, and thereafter develop other ways of working with the forest. For instance, with a view to creating a visitor-friendly forest many participants talked about how to open up spaces for more light, for different tree species, and to create meeting points as well as hiding places for family visitors. Here, the human–forest relations are

driving changing management strategies, which put the forest resources in an active position. As one participant mentioned, the “holistic view” of looking at forests’ multiplicity also leads to thinking more from a forest’s point of view as it were, realizing that “... the forest also has an intrinsic value that we must respect. What exists in our world does not become valuable just for the benefit of man” (Participant 5).

While new relations are not always necessarily positive, they do expose us to different ways of viewing, handling, and thinking, and sometimes make visible tensions that might have been shrouded under normalized use of terms such as “tradition,” “vision,” or “sustainability.” Musing on multiple-use forestry in the current political system, one participant pointed out that sustainable use of forest resources—such as through nature-based tourism—has been a “forbidden topic” within forest debates because “*it was an unwanted activity. And it shows a little how, from the authorities’ point of view, it is difficult to deal with this*” (Participant 13). While such unease indicates difficulties of going beyond business as usual, it also sheds light on a desire for crossing the boundaries and making new relations. In this perspective, the language used in forest policy (or even in academic writing) needs reworking, so that more attention is paid to relations fostering potential rather than pinning down things as “hurdles” or “problems”.

Conclusion

We have discussed the increasingly explicit interest in the notion of “multiple-use forestry” in today’s Swedish forest policy, particularly in relation to the Swedish National Forest Program (NFP), and how the notion of multiple-use forestry has come to be perceived among different forest actors. We have done this through analyzing and interpreting policy documents and interview materials, whilst using Halsey’s (2004) lens of environmental visions and modalities as our theoretical framework. Three themes are presented which show that the contentions generated through the different usage of the notion of multiple-use forestry are part of its process of “becoming,” namely how perceptions of vision, naming, speed, and affect are unfolding in the forest discussion.

First, a close reading of the NFP strategy and associated documents reveals that they assign multiple-use forestry as something which is additional to conventional forestry. In doing so, a singular vision is created that leaves little room for other kinds of differences, nor much allowance for exchanges between differences. Yet from the interviews, the forest actors actively name the differences, and want to explicitly use associated categories (e.g. the name multiple-use foresters) to engage with the existing value system. Second, while multiple-use forestry exists in the same market economic system where the commercial use of natural resources continuously scales up, many interviews brought up the time and speed perspective and pointed out that multiple-use forestry requires new sets of visions, planning, and skills that are highly time consuming. This touches on the related points of tradition, sustainability, and diversity, where multiple-use forestry could provide more opportunities for new practices, structures, and an innovative mindset rather than becoming just another solution to handle only urgent demands and challenges. Third—and because of the previous two points—once we acknowledge the differences, gain the right to define them, and slow down the speed of capital chains, new possibilities pointing toward multiple-use forestry arise. But this

requires paying more attention to both tensions and human–forest and human–human relations.

Importantly, we argue that these three themes, echoing Halsey’s (2004) critique on our ways of seeing nature, collectively illustrate that multiple-use forestry itself can be seen as a process of “becoming” that has always existed and seamlessly connects the past, present, and future: it cannot be reduced to the logic or rhetoric of ecological modernization. The becoming process of multiple-use forestry points out what is happening in between the binary envisioning and categorizing, and highlights that the actual becoming of multiple-use forestry needs to be valued anew. For some time both policy and research have aimed for constructive strategies to move forward, away from conflicts and convergencies. We suggest that a better understanding can be gained through listening to the actors explain why they think that the vicious circle of increasing demands—increasing differences, increasing conflicts—and increasing pressure, embedded in the Swedish forestry model, has come into being (Mårald et al. 2017).

A potential criticism of the recent emphasis on the concept of multiple-use forestry is that it puts more pressure on individual forest owners. While being mindful (and cautious) of this point, we argue that despite the highly institutionalized tendencies within forest policy (Arts and Buizer 2009), the meanings of how forest resources should be used are already being redefined by an increasingly diverse array of actors who are becoming more aware of their own engagement with the forest resources. Rather than heaping more pressure on the forest owners, we suggest that policymakers recognize the “untapped potential” within such engagement which entails other ways of seeing forests and new sets of human–human and human–forest relations.

Therefore, the focus of multiple-use forestry in the particular discourse of Swedish forestry may be an opportunity to bring forward new ways of comprehending and engaging as part of an ongoing “becoming” among the dynamic groups of forest actors. Better understanding of this process will also help to address messy but important relations and histories. For instance, the NFP’s intention of using the term may have been to bridge and resolve forest conflict, but once the term was put into use, tensions that were thought to be long-buried and obscured stirred up again. While some may see this messy process as something which needs to be tidied up by clearer definitions, we have tried to show that this is an inevitable process once a political term is put into use, and forest actors’ accounts show that though political tensions are still prevailing, they can be pathways to new relations. We are also reminded that within these relations and histories, multiple-use forestry can provide opportunities for different actors to gain capacity to affect and connect, rather than merely serving as a “bridge” or “boundary object” convenient to use for different interest-groups in general terms. If those opportunities are seized the future vision of Swedish forest may then be discussed more collectively and constructively.

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