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Envisioning future forested landscapes in Sweden – revealing local-national discrepancies through participatory action research

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1. Introduction

Forested landscapes are central to the sustainability challenge. They sequester carbon, support biodiversity and supply renewable materials for human livelihoods, to mention just a few functions. Here, we recognise forested landscapes as multifunctional and dynamic systems integrating both social and ecological dimensions (Mikusinsky et al., 2013; Selman, 2012; Svensson et al., 2012). The different uses of forests are a source of multiple, interlinked and often conflicting interests and values. Governing forest resources and landscapes is the act of handling these conflicts and trade-offs through policy measures (Krott, 2005). The turn from government to new modes of governance during the last two decades has put more emphasis on stakeholder and public participation in decision- and policy-making concerning forested landscapes (Berlandarqué et al., 2008; Jones and Stenseke, 2011; Secco et al., 2013). The basic notion of participation is that agenda-setting, policy- and decision-making should be inclusive of external opinions and interests, especially when addressing complex problems which influence many groups and individuals (c.f. Appelstrand, 2002; Arnstein, 1969; Rowe, 2004).

Participation can take many forms; it can be either *instrumental* (a mean to an end) or *transformative* (an end in itself), or indeed combine these forms (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000; Nelson and Wright, 1995). In its instrumental form, participation is a top-down venture where the implementation of participatory elements is made by governmental institutions, often as a requirement. Here participation is described as a process of motivating and mobilising people to use their human and material resources in order to shape their lives and hopes by themselves (OECD, 1999). Transformative or bottom-up approaches regard the participatory process as an end in itself (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000; Nelson and Wright, 1995). In this perspective, participation is not an element of institutional processes but an integrated part of the social transformation process that is democracy (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen, 2016). Empowerment of citizens and communities through personal and social learning, thus generating democratic societal change, is one main aim of transformative participation (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000). The ‘*commons*’ and the ‘*common third*’ are concepts central to this type of participatory processes when dealing with the future aspects of natural resource management and transcending the boundaries between the private sphere and the commons (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen, 2016; Hansen et al., 2016a). The ‘*common third*’ is an expression of the social responsibility necessary

for the living conditions of all members of society and crucial for the common third is the jointly created knowledge combining lay and expert knowledge for the sustainable management and planning of landscapes (Tolnov Clausen, 2016).

This paper highlights the challenge of developing participation in the Swedish forest sector where private property rights are strong and economic interests are influential. Forests cover 69% of Sweden and forestry is an important economic sector accounting for 11% of the total export value in 2013 (SFA, 2014). The present governance model features 'freedom under responsibility' for private landowners and the entire sector (Beland Lindahl et al., 2015). Implementation relies on soft policy instruments, and as a consequence promotes the production-oriented, economic side of sustainability while marginalising social dimensions. Representation of interests in policy-making forums is limited to a few traditional forest actors; other interests and less powerful forest user groups usually cannot influence policies to the same degree (Beland Lindahl et al., 2013; Beland Lindahl, 2008). In addition, sectors related to forestry, like rural development, transport infrastructure, water regulation and wind power generation are planned in isolation from each other (Andersson et al., 2013; Beland Lindahl et al., 2015; Mikusinski et al., 2013; Sandström et al., 2011). Locally, forest management planning is typically executed at the estate level and based on owner preferences (Brukas and Sallnäs, 2012). Only a few forums for discussing common issues in multifunctional forest management exist and connections to national-level policy-making are weak. The overall result is fragmented planning and management of the forested landscape, where decisions are made in isolation from one another, marginalising ecological and socio-cultural values (Andersson et al., 2013; Mikusinski et al., 2013).

Participatory processes offer a possibility to integrate wider interests, values and perspectives into policy-making, management and planning processes in the Swedish forest sector. Thus, they could encourage a more multifunctional perspective on the use of forested landscapes (Appelstrand, 2012; Sandström et al., 2011). However, the form of participation and methodology to facilitate the deliberation are crucial for the outcome of the process. Among the many difficulties encountered in practice are lack of skills, training and expertise among organisers, limited willingness to participate and political unwillingness to change according to the outcome of the participatory process (Secco et al., 2011). Participatory processes also risk becoming tools in the hands of already powerful actors to advocate their interests (Winkel and Sotirov M, 2011).

Transformative participation is an attractive approach in the context of the Swedish forest sector. A bottom-up perspective recognises the localised management of the forested landscape, and aim to empower the local level and thus the social dimension of forestry. More importantly however, it aims to create a common third, a shared knowledge base and sense of common responsibility for the landscape that cuts across different knowledge and value systems, expanding beyond conventional solutions of regulations and privatisation (Tolnov Clausen, 2016). One form of transformative participation where researchers take a central, facilitating role is participatory action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Action research is a scientific methodology involving actors in the creation of knowledge, effectively both creating and investigating the potential for change (Aagaard Nielsen and Svensson, 2006; Hansen et al., 2016b).

Facilitation methodologies of interest here are future-oriented methodologies which aim to activate participants' imaginations to think beyond the existing state and thus engage participants in the very essence of the democratic idea - the question of "how do we want to live?" (Hansen et al., 2016a). In vision-making processes, people are brought together to discuss and

jointly decide on long-term requirements and development objectives (Borch et al., 2013; Hermans et al., 2011). Exploring the desired future enables participants to distance themselves from current conflicts and concerns, changing focus to the *commons* (Andreescu et al., 2013; Nassauer and Corry, 2004). A shared future vision and commitment to action can help redefine problems and establish new policy networks (De Smedt, 2013).

In Sweden, there is a need to bring together a broad range of local stakeholders in the forested landscape to discuss common issues and link local desires for the future to national policy-making. Fulfilling this need through combining participatory action research and future-oriented methodologies has not yet been tried in Sweden. A successfully-implemented process should facilitate fair communication toward a common vision among local stakeholders regarding the future of the forested landscape and influence policy-making at the institutional level.

1.1 Objectives

We develop and implement a participatory action research model encompassing future-oriented methodologies and then evaluate it for its ability to reach our two objectives: (i) to engage participants in constructive communication regarding their common future in relation to the forested landscape, and (ii) to connect the local level with the national, institutional, level and thus influence policy-making. It is noteworthy that we are not aiming to develop a specific decision-making process, but to create a common third, a social institution and a local platform for on-going co-operation from where the outcome should be transferred into existing institutions and on-going societal transformational processes.

Rather than focusing on the specific visions created by the local participants, this paper aims to evaluate the performance of the developed model. This is done based on responses in two local case studies, one each in southern and northern Sweden, and a national-level workshop following up on the local case studies.

2. Theoretical and methodological underpinnings

2.1 Critical Utopian Action Research

Within the field of participatory action research there are several future-oriented methodologies. One of the best-developed with a substantial theoretical foundation is *Critical Utopian Action Research* (CUAR). CUAR builds on the work of Robert Jungk and on critical theory in the tradition of Theodor W. Adorno (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen, 2016). *Future Creating Workshops* (FCW), a methodology primarily developed by Robert Jungk, take a radical stand in relation to the democratic aspects of participatory processes (Jungk and Müllert, 1984). “How do we want to live?” is a question central to any vision-making processes, but it is also the question of democracy. FCWs were developed from the notion that democracy is not an end in itself but a continuing societal process (Aagaard Nielsen and Nielsen, 2016). Through facilitating personal and societal learning, citizens could start creating their own future through social inventions or other means. In CUAR the facilitation of social learning and imagination are the direct inheritance from FCW, but what sets CUAR apart from the original format is its scientific endeavour and theoretical conceptualisation.

Within CUAR, workshop participants investigate alternatives to the present, emerging from what they, as members of society, experience as problematic in everyday life and within contemporary society (Drewes Nielsen et al., 2004). The basic idea is that by critiquing existing conditions and creating utopian ideas, participants are empowered (Aagaard Nielsen and Nielsen, 2006; Drewes Nielsen, 2006). The focus lies in future images carried by people’s dreams and visions (utopias), which are seen as concrete ideas and a way to avoid making projections of existing conditions and circumvent the TINA-syndrome (**T**here **I**s **N**o **A**lternative) (Tofteng and Husted, 2011).

Drewes Nielsen et al. (2004, p. 36) describe the successes of the CUAR research methodology as (1) the ability to handle complexity and insecurity in present postmodern societies, (2) stimulating the creation of visions and utopias in order to handle this insecurity by discussing future values, and (3) providing tools and strategies based on common shared values produced through transdisciplinary methodologies in a collaboration between science and stakeholders. Workshops are facilitated through certain rules of communication aiming at a relative evening of power in among the participants (Drewes Nielsen et al., 2004). After initial workshops, CUAR adds a meta-structure to the visioning process by inviting external researchers or experts to discuss the visions together with the participants (Aagaard Nielsen and Nielsen, 2016). These so-called Research Workshops take the form of face-to-face dialogue where the invited experts offer a critical but constructive response to the visions. According to Drewes Nielsen et al. (2004), the workshops aim to overcome the limitations of ‘desktop research’ and its missing links to practice and everyday life.

2.2 Limitations and problems of participatory action research

Institutionalisation. In any creative participatory process and visioning work it is crucial to have a realisation plan for incorporating and linking the visions to actual planning processes (Böhling and Arzberger, 2014; Carlsson-Kanyama et al., 2008), in order to establish commitment among stakeholders and increase the democratic content (Borch et al., 2013). Even if institutional-level participants are included in the process, their organisations rarely acknowledge the resulting visions and actions, as the preceding discussions are lost for non-participants (Nielsen et al.,

2016; Vasstrøm, 2013). For participatory processes to achieve a large societal impact often requires support from the broader public and some kind of bridging with the more institutional dimension of society. One way to incorporate the broader public in the process is to present and openly discuss outcomes of the workshops (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen, 2016). An unresolved aspect of the methodology is how the developed visions can be brought further into the institutional level of policy-making, public governance and management for implementation (Nielsen et al., 2016; Vasstrøm, 2016, 2013).

Adequate resources. Involving participants requires substantial commitments of time and money in order for them to get to know one another and develop mutual understanding and trust (Rickards et al. 2014; Shearer 2005). This is especially true if there are power inequalities or even open conflicts among participants (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000). The problem of resources may diminish with the perspective that ongoing and potential conflicts can be resolved or avoided pro-actively, increasing resource efficiency and saving time (Appelstrand, 2002).

Stakeholder terminology. Crucial to any participatory process is the involvement of representatives of different interests, values and preferences, as well as both scientific and non-scientific knowledge (Saritas et al., 2013). The strong theoretical emphasis on, and political domination of, stakeholders and interest groups within concepts such as ‘stakeholder governance’ and ‘stakeholder participation’, has been criticised for cultivating the strategic interests in society at the expense of shared common responsibility (Saul, 1999). It has also been argued that affiliating the stakeholder concept with participation reinforces existing power structures and deprives members of society of their roles and functions as citizens (Hansen et al., 2016a; von Essen and Hansen, 2016). This is a serious critique; the modern use of the stakeholder concept did not emerge from democracy studies but from organisational studies in the 1960s. It was defined by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 as comprising “those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (Freeman, 1984). Later the concept was applied in parallel to shareholders within the field of business administration in the early 1980s by Freeman (1984). Labelling participants in participatory processes as ‘stakeholders’ therefore creates some analytical ambiguity in terms of balancing particular private interests with the broader interests of society. Recognising these ambiguities of the stakeholder concept, it is still difficult to avoid an interest-oriented approach when dealing with forest issues rooted and reproduced by strategic economic and property interests. We have chosen to use the stakeholder concept throughout this paper. However, the overall objective is to exceed the level of traditional negotiation of particular interests and establish a communicative space for deliberation on the commons by unlocking fastened positions (Hansen et al., 2016a; OECD, 1999; Primmer and Kyllönen, 2006).

2.3 Norms of communication

Critical to the success of creating a commonly agreed vision for the future and institutional change is the communication among participants and between participants and organising researchers. Jürgen Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action analyses communication from a critical perspective, describing how mutual understanding and consensus are hindered by distortions of communication including pretence, misinterpretation, dependency-creation and ideology (Habermas, 1984). While some distortions are inevitable, such as imperfect information, there are unnecessary, artificial distortions that can be overcome. Forester (1985) builds on Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action and his ‘discourse ethics’ to put forth four norms

for undistorted communication to be adhered to by everyone involved in a planning procedure: comprehensibility (what?); sincerity (can I trust them?); legitimacy (is that right?); and truth (is that true?). The planning practitioner can use this set of critical questions to improve communication and avoid distortion.

Here we explain our interpretation of Forester's (1985) four norms for undistorted communication in the context of our study and other scholars' work:

Comprehensibility. It must be clear to the participants what is meant by the organisers' and other participants' communication. Jargon should be minimised and the structure of the process should be comprehensible. It is important to clarify to all involved what is meant by participation in the process and to reach a generally accepted idea of how participatory aspects should be understood, performed and accomplished (Westberg et al., 2010).

Sincerity. Trust building among participants and organisers is crucial and relies heavily on transparency of interests. Participants should be internally honest, avoiding deception or self-deception in their expression. Participants must be able to trust the intentions of other participants and organisers.

Legitimacy. A legitimate process assures that the resulting decisions are participatory – that the process is open and accessible to everyone capable of making a relevant contribution. All participants should have an equal voice, regardless of background, wealth or social status. This includes, for example, ensuring the participants see the benefits of taking part in an academic study, despite having no direct decision-making power. It is important to engage participants with varied backgrounds, expertise and value orientations who can challenge official norms and assumptions (Carlsson-Kanyama et al., 2008). This increases the legitimacy of the process (Appelstrand, 2002; Bäckstrand, 2005).

Truth. Information should be truthful, substantiated and relevant and not be withheld. It should be based on supporting independent evidence from a third party if necessary.

3. Methodology

3.1 The participatory action research model and evaluation process

Our participatory action research model was inspired by CUAR in the sense that we followed the workshop facilitation guidelines of Drewes Nielsen et al. (2004) to achieve our first objective of engaging local stakeholders in visioning their common future. Then, instead of following up with a Research Workshop, inviting experts and external researchers, we engaged national policy-makers to pursue our second objective. As stated in section 2.2, an appropriate direct deliberation between stakeholders with varying capacities and unequal power requires a lot of time and free space for trust building. Based on this knowledge and due to our limited time and funds, we decided to engage local stakeholders and national policy-makers separately. We then organised the national-level workshop as one-way communication of the visions from us (the researchers) to the participants, in effect legitimising local stakeholders' visions. To our knowledge, this type of meta-structure has not previously been applied.

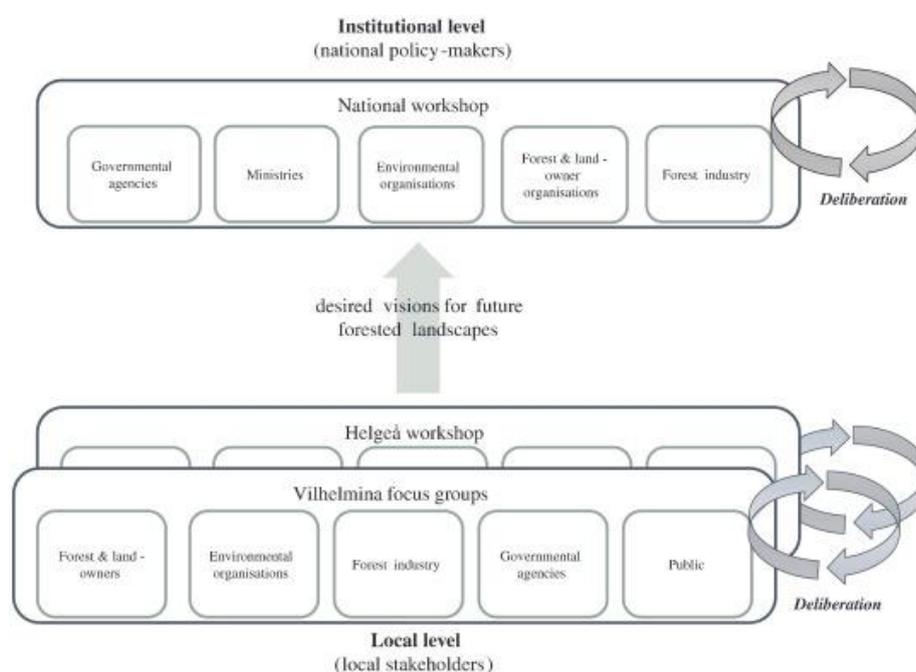


Fig. 1 The participatory action research model developed and implemented in the study.

When implementing the model we first engaged local stakeholders in facilitated deliberations with the goal of creating a common desired vision in each case study area in Sweden (see Fig. 1). We then communicated these desired visions to national policy-makers in a separate workshop setting, facilitating a deliberation regarding how to implement the visions through policy measures. These two steps, as visualised in Fig. 1, jointly constitute the participatory action research model developed in this study.

Each workshop was first evaluated by the participants themselves by answering a questionnaire. The workshop or focus group's performance was next evaluated by the researchers based on the norms for Communicative Action (see section 2.3). To evaluate our model's ability to meet our second objective (connecting to the national institutional level and influencing policy-making) we have included a fifth evaluation criterion (see section 3.6).

3.2 Case study descriptions

Because ecological and social conditions differ greatly between the north and south of Sweden we included one case study area (CSA) in each part of the country (Fig. 2).

The southern CSA of Helgeå comprises the catchment of the Helgeå River within Kronoberg County and is located in the hemi-boreal zone. This area of 152,000 ha is heavily forested - about 80% of the area is productive forest land, defined as annual increment $>1 \text{ m}^3/\text{ha yr}^{-1}$. About 80% of the forest is owned by non-industrial private forest owners.

The northern CSA is the Vilhelmina municipality, covering boreal forest and the Fennoscandian mountains over a total area of 850,000 ha, of which 40% is subject to forest management, 21% is protected forested area (mostly non-productive forest), and 38% is non-forested area. Forest ownership is dominated by a mix of state and industry (64% of the productive forested land) and non-industrial private forest owners (36%). Specific for Northern Sweden, the indigenous Sami population has the reserved right to conduct its traditional livelihood of reindeer herding (Sandström et al., 2016).



Fig. 2 A map of the case study locations: Vilhelmina municipality in Northern Sweden, and the Helgeå river catchment area within Kronoberg County in Southern Sweden.

3.3 Workshop design

The task given to the participants was to define how they would like to live and work in relation to their forested landscape 30 years from now.

A stakeholder analysis (Reed, 2008) was conducted by identifying individuals and organisations relevant for the objectives in the study and based on previous knowledge of the area and population. Consequently, we did not invite representatives from mining, wind- and hydro-power interests as our capacity was limited and these industries were considered to have less impact on forested landscapes. To a smaller degree the identification of stakeholders relied on snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961). Participants were contacted individually or, in the case of organisations, the head of the office was contacted. Formal invitation letters were sent by email or post including information about the research project, how the workshop was organised, the scope and voluntary nature of the participation and the intended outcome.

In the workshops, desirable visions were generated by the participants in three phases. First, in the Critique Phase (CP) the participants were invited to criticise the present situation. The CP aims to let the participants vent their frustration, and also inspire to ideas of what to change. This phase was followed by the Utopian Phase (UP) where the desired future was explored through creative brainstorming. The design of the UP aims to enable the participants to see beyond barriers, current possibilities, power relations and law restrictions. For example, a desired goal can be improved consideration of ground conditions when harvesting timber caused by changed weather conditions, or that forest owners have knowledge about buffer zones along water. Lastly, in the Realisation Phase (RP) the visions were made more concrete by discussing actions to achieve the goals - *who* will do *what* and *when*? (Drewes Nielsen, 2006; Friedman, 2001).

3.4 Workshop implementation

Workshop formats were modified slightly for local contexts, but essentially followed the workshop design in section 3.3.

In Helgeå CSA, a full-day workshop was organised in Alvesta. 13 local stakeholders and enthusiasts representing various interests, age groups, professions and competences took part (see Table 1). The workshop included all three CUAR phases (CP, UP, RP). The RP work took place in smaller groups each guided by one organiser.

In the Vilhelmina CSA, the workshop was organised as four separate focus group discussions due to difficulties in finding a date for a full group workshop. The focus group setting was also chosen to provide each participant more time to discuss and be heard compared with a larger group setting. The participants were invited from the network of the Vilhelmina Model Forest¹. A total of 12 people representing various interests, age groups, professions and competences took part (see Table 1). Originally, 16 had signed up for the focus group meetings but four of them cancelled at short notice due to illness, work or confusion over dates. After the meeting, two people handed in written desired visions which were also incorporated in the final document (also included as participants in Table 1). In order to stimulate creativity and provide an alternative to the traditional indoor meeting room, the meetings were held outdoors in the forest in close vicinity to Vilhelmina urban centre. Each group meeting consisted of a CP and a UP, the latter also containing elements of RP. In the CP, three explorative scenarios (*what could happen?*) previously developed for Vilhelmina (Carlsson et al., 2015) were discussed. In the UP, desirable goals as well as policy means (RP) were suggested and combined into a future vision. The visions produced in

¹ Vilhelmina Model Forest is a partnership organisation for multifunctional forest landscape management that is part of the international network of Model Forests (www.imfn.net; www.vilhelminamodelforest.se).

the four groups were compiled into one, and sent out to all invited participants for comments and justification by email.

The local participants were informed that their visions were to be presented to national policy-makers in order to discuss implementation possibilities, but were not promised any feedback from that event.

On national level, one full-day workshop was held in Stockholm with 15 policy-makers representing regional and national authorities and agencies, forest companies, NGOs and governmental departments (see Table 1). Their task was to explore possible policy measures and actions for how to reach the locally desired visions (RP). The participants also added goals to the local visions that were missing from their national perspective.

In all workshops and focus groups, the role of the researchers was to introduce the tasks, moderate the discussions, and take notes (they are not included as participants in Table 1).

Table 1. Interests and stakeholder types represented in the local and national workshops. As several participants represented more than one interest, the sum of participants from different groups exceeds the total number of participants.

| Stakeholder type | Helgeå | Vilhelmina | National |
|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Governmental organisation</i> | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| <i>Regional authority</i> | - | - | 2 |
| <i>Local authority (municipality)</i> | - | 3* | - |
| <i>Forest authority</i> | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Forestry organisation or individual private owner</i> | 9 | 13 | 3 |
| <i>Forest industry company</i> | 2 | - | 1 |
| <i>Forest entrepreneur – timber or NTFP based</i> | - | 5 | - |
| <i>Non-governmental organisation</i> | 2 | 9 | 3 |
| <i>Specific user group</i> | | | |
| <i>Outdoor recreation, hunting & fishing, mushroom & berry picking</i> | 13 | 14 | - |
| <i>Sami people or reindeer herder</i> | - | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Education and research</i> | 3 | 5 | - |
| Total participants | 13 | 14 | 15 |

* Three participants are or have recently been part of the municipal council, however not part of the council steering board (higher decision making level).

3.5 Documentation and analysis

The workshops and focus groups were documented through posters created by the participants and notes taken by the organising researchers. In the case of the national workshop, the software *Microsoft Office Vision* was used to illustrate the discussion in real time for the participants (projected on a wall) and for documentation. Written questionnaires were made in connection to the local workshops (response rate 76% in Helgeå and 85% in Vilhelmina), and a web questionnaire was sent out after the national workshop (response rate 53%). The evaluation forms included questions to be answered with ordinal scales, written comments or both (see Fig. 3-5 and Appendices A-B). The analysis is based on all written materials and quotes are taken from the participants' evaluation questionnaires.

3.6 Evaluation criteria

The four norms of communication described in section 2.3 plus our second objective were operationalised as evaluation criteria using general criteria for successful participatory processes in forest management planning as recently reviewed by Menzel et al., (2012). We found their list (Menzel et al., 2012; pp 1377) comprehensive and targeted to our needs and purpose to operationalise Forester's (1985) norms of communication, as both studies are focusing on participatory planning. Several criteria of Menzel et al. (2012; pp 1377) were categorised into the four norms by Forester (1985) through comparing definitions and deliberating the categorisation based on our joint understanding (see Table 2).

To assess our second objective we added a fifth evaluation criterion called *Institutionalisation*. We define it as the transfer of results into an institutional setting and contribution to social change, either during the process or after completion, or as expressed by Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen (2016) "to flow back into the on-going societal transformational processes". This evaluation criterion translated into three criteria from Menzel et al. (2012; pp 1377), see Table 2.

Table 2. The theoretical and operationalised evaluation criteria of Forester (1985) and Menzel et al. (2012).

| <i>Forester (1985)</i> | Comprehensibility | Sincerity | Legitimacy | Truth | Institutionalisation |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Menzel et al., (2012)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear mandate and goals - Structured group interaction - Facilitation of constructive individual/group behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships and social capital building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - between researchers and participants - among participants - Independence and neutrality of process - Transparency (of interests) - Opportunity to influence process design - Challenging status quo and fostering creative thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessibility of process - Representation - Fairness - Opportunity to influence outcome - Acceptance of outcome - Search for common values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and selection of information - Transparency (of information) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping decision-makers informed - 2nd and 3rd order effects (institutional change) - Relationships and social capital building – between levels |

4. Results

4.1 Summary of workshops

The outcome of the local workshops, although performed differently, included for both cases a critique of the present situation, a list of desirable future goals and suggestions for policy measures needed to reach the goals. In both case study areas, the discussion and final vision had a rural development perspective. No formal consensus regarding the visions could however be reached. As for policy measures, the local participants mainly advocated soft policy instruments and emphasised information, collaboration and dialogue among forest stakeholders. The national workshop participants similarly discussed new ways of collaboration between traditional and new stakeholders and sectors. They foremost discussed the National Forest Program, rather than policy measures to implement the local visions as intended.

Overall, the local workshops were greatly appreciated by the participants and the evaluation questions regarding meaningfulness, learning and knowledge exchange received high scores (see Fig. 3 and 4). The method of envisioning a desired future was highly appreciated and considered useful, as it opens new perspectives and creates substantial outcomes to deliberate further. The participants expressed gratitude for getting the chance to discuss the issues and described it as a pleasant experience in general. In the national workshop the participants were less satisfied with the structure of the workshop as well as with the general preconditions for deliberation (see Fig. 5).

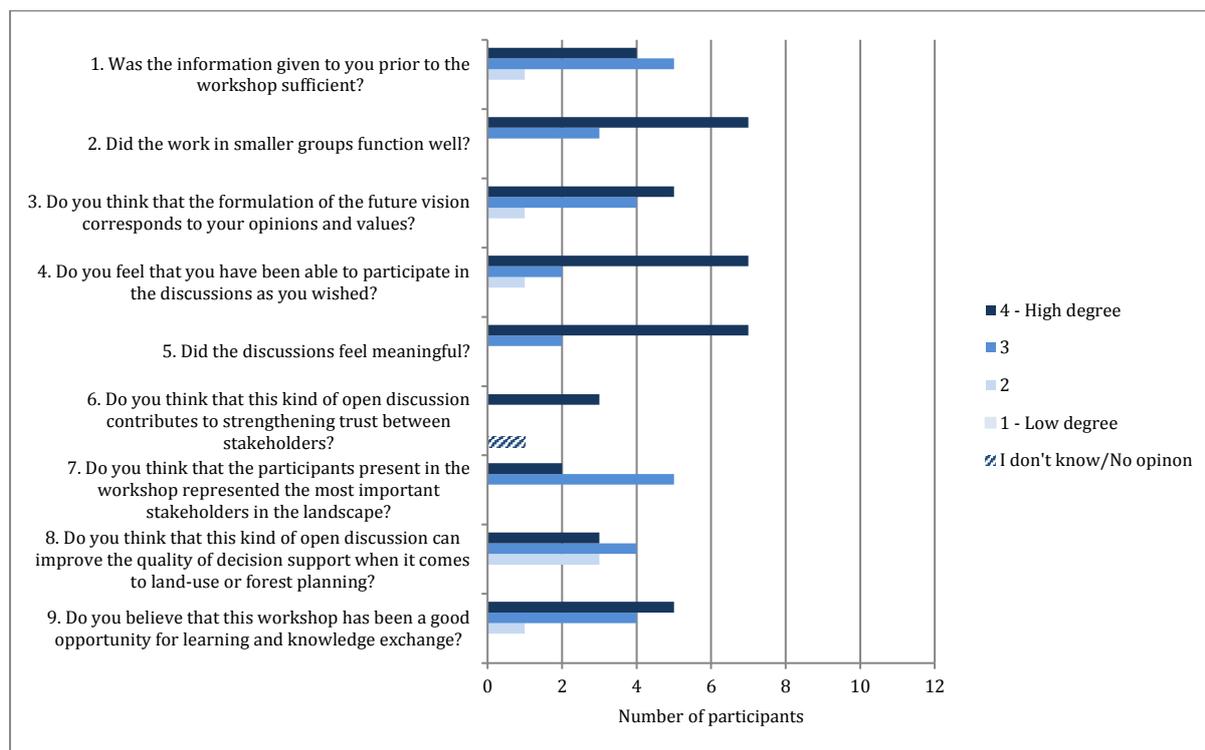


Fig. 3 Responses to the quantitative evaluation questions by participants in the workshop in the Helgeå case study area. The response rate was 76%.

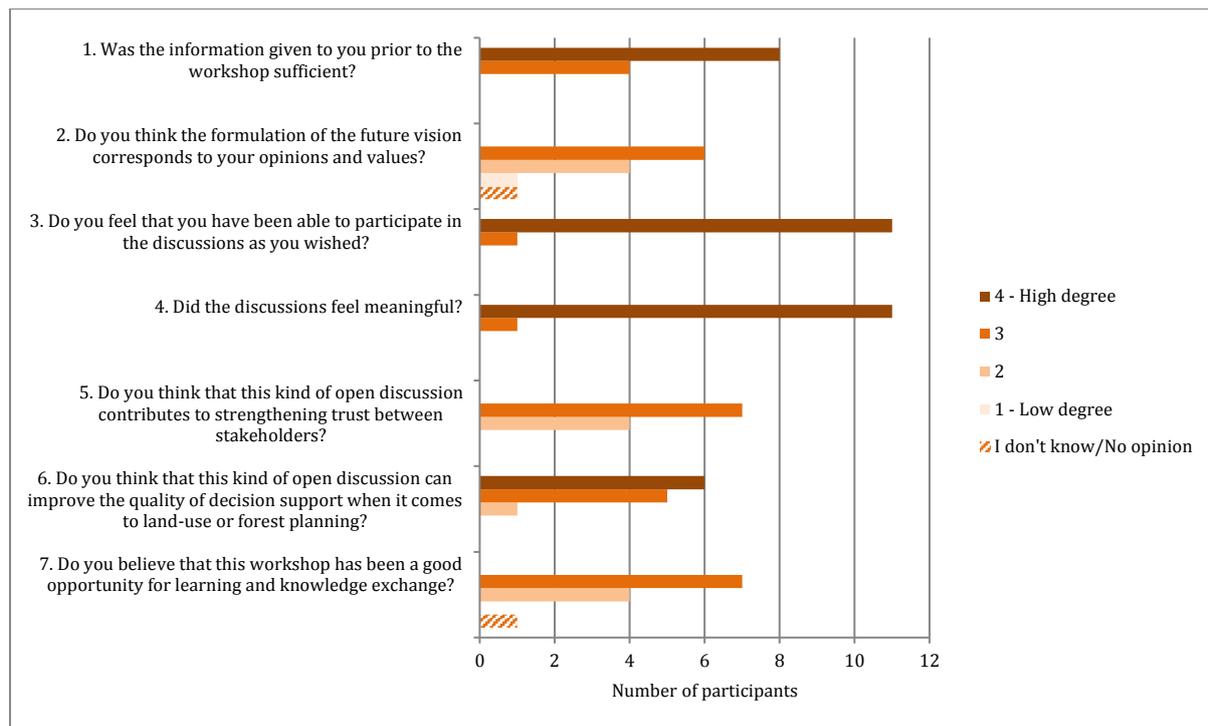


Fig. 4 Responses to the quantitative evaluation questions by participants the Vilhelmina case study area focus groups. The response rate was 85%.

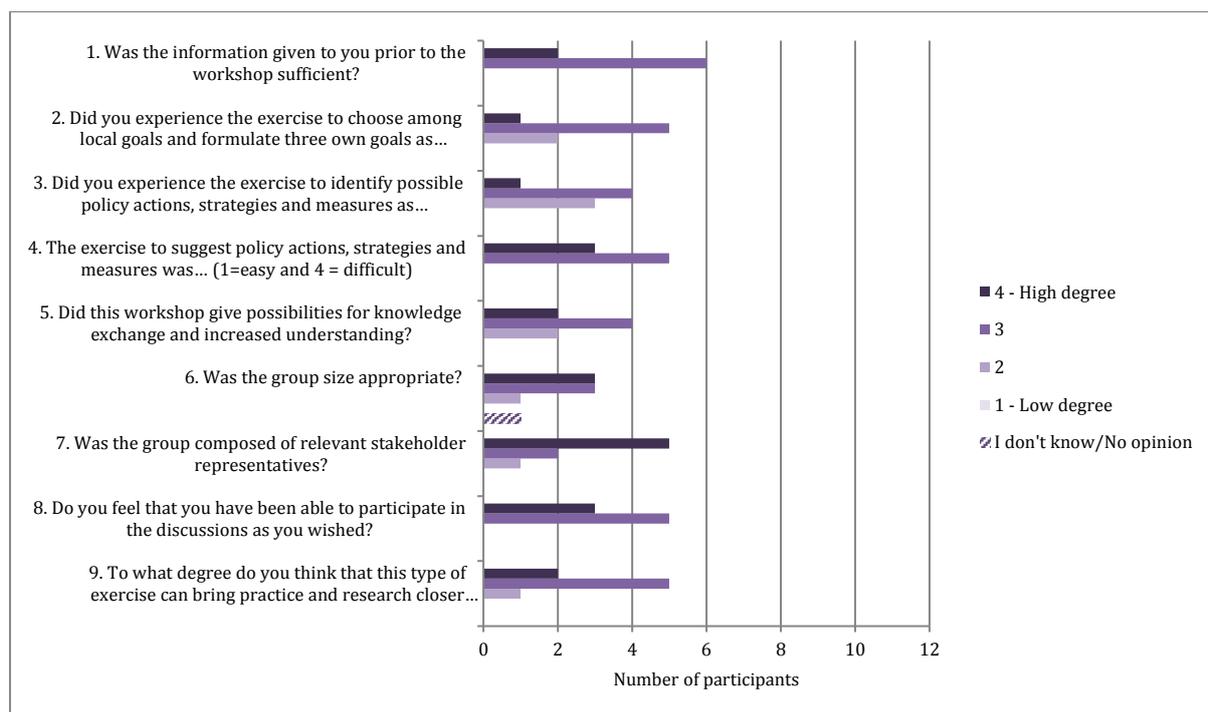


Fig. 5 Responses to the quantitative evaluation questions by participants in the national workshop in Stockholm. The response rate was 53%.

4.2 Participant evaluations

This section presents a performance evaluation for the local and national workshops and the institutional aspects of the overall process. Additional quotes from the participants' evaluations can be found in Appendices A and B.

4.2.1. Helgeå case study area

In the Helgeå workshop, a majority of the participants were satisfied with the information given prior to the meeting, with the functioning of the group work, and with their possibility to take part in the discussions, which were considered meaningful by all participants (Fig. 3 questions 1, 2, 4 and 5). A majority also believed that the future vision corresponded with their own opinions and values (Fig. 3, question 3). The questions regarding the usefulness for decision support, the trust building and learning capacity were given varied agreement as represented by this quote (see also Fig. 3, questions 6, 8, 9).

“Think we came up with solutions that “others” have to solve”

Less positive answers were given concerning the representativeness of participants as some important organisations were missing in the workshop according to the participants.

“Surprised that the County Board did not participate”

“Maybe someone more from the industry and the environmental movement”.

Unfortunately, the Kronoberg County Board declined participation despite repeated invitations. There were comments revealing misunderstandings regarding the idea of representation.

“Unclear whether one should represent one typical stakeholder”.

Positive comments were given concerning the CP and the UP.

“Very open discussion and many opinions from different perspectives”

“Good, felt good to “dream” freely”

Several persons elaborated on the issue that it is easier to criticise than to come up with a desired future. More time was asked for, especially regarding the work in smaller groups.

“More time... but do you have enough energy for that?”

4.2.2. Vilhelmina case study area

The participants in the Vilhelmina CSA focus groups regarded the information provided beforehand as sufficient, and stated that the discussions felt meaningful and that they had been able to take part as desired (see Fig. 4 question 1, 3, 4). The organisation was considered as comprehensive and participants expressed their appreciation.

“Good organisation, good method, clear and transparent”

The introductory discussion on the explorative scenarios (corresponding to the Critique Phase) was considered interesting, constructive around obstacles and opportunities, reflecting and uniting the participants. Some respondents mentioned the challenge to focus on the future rather than present time and the slightly single-tracked discussion as opinions and views were often shared within the group. The phase of describing a desirable endpoint was also positively perceived. The task was described as fun, stimulating, considerate, creative, democratic, difficult and challenging.

“Difficult to view 30 years ahead. We should have been more people in the group”

“Perhaps more utopian than reality-based”

“Interesting and thought-provoking. Perhaps a bit single-tracked when we all were of the same opinion”

“Exciting and difficult. It is an art to be able to let go of all the “ifs and buts” that exist in the present and try to formulate what you would like to become reality”

Almost everyone thought that the list of desired goals represented their own opinions.

“Recognised much of my opinions. Good that the Sami interest was clearly included”

“It corresponds. On the spot!”

The discussion increased trust among the participants and helped them get to know one other and understand the different opinions. They were especially enthusiastic about the outdoor setting, regarding it as inspiring, relaxed, creative and motivating for participation.

“One gets to know each other in a good way”

[the outdoor setting] “Increased the motivation to take part, suitable place, more special meeting, very good”

The discussions in small groups were highly appreciated by some as it gave everyone space to fully take part and feel included. The two groups where participants cancelled would understandably have preferred to be somewhat larger. Some participants regarded 5 persons as optimal, whereas some suggested 7-10 persons to be better regarding mix of gender, age and varying opinions. The representation was understood to be restricted in the small group settings.

“One problem is that not all stakeholder groups can participate (groups become too big then) but good nevertheless”

“Good conversations take place in smaller groups. 4-5 people is optimal.”

Overall, the participants were satisfied and inspired by the meeting, describing the workshop as interesting, clear, transparent, well planned, illustrating both problems today and suggestions for solutions, and stimulating to learning and knowledge exchange.

4.2.3. National workshop

The national participants regarded the pre-workshop information to be sufficient and that they had been able to take part in the discussions as desired (see Fig. 5 question 1 and 8). The workshop enhanced possibilities for knowledge exchange and increased understanding to a rather large extent according to the participants' answers (Fig. 5). The number of participants was good and they represented relevant interests, however the local connection could have been improved according to some respondents. One participant believed the knowledge of forest management to be insufficient in the group.

“Good organisation and discussions.”

“Interesting to prioritise between several different important issues in comparison with others, with other perspectives than my own.”

“Good to gather broad expertise, but the connection to the locals (the people) or society was weak.”

“Generally too little knowledge about forestry practice in the group.”

On the positive side, the discussion was appreciated as an opportunity to have a conversation rather than a debate and provided new insights and inspiration, e.g. around regional development, the view on policy measures and the role of organisations in governance. The workshop design was considered to have the potential to bring research and practice closer, an interactivity that was stressed as important for actual decision-making.

“It is incredibly important from the practitioners’ perspective that these kinds of discussions are made together with researchers! Research is very important, but the marriage with practice is crucial so that the politicians get a basis for wise decisions that are somewhat based on reality.”

“To work together creates understanding and closeness if it doesn’t only result in debate, which it didn’t.”

“We must meet and have exchange in order to understand each other.”

“Because we succeeded rather well in not taking on our usual roles where we would defend our organisations’ interests, or guard our positions.”

However, critiques were directed toward the workshop method performance and structure. The second task, discussing policy measures to reach desired goals, was tentative and obstructed due to time limits, unclear goal definitions, weak background knowledge and vague instructions and guidance. Over-all the discussion suffered from insufficient time, participants coming and going and tasks being too complicated for such a big group. Several suggestions for improvement were mentioned and experiences were shared of similar workshop methods that had worked out better.

“[...] a bit difficult against the background of what came up during the previous step”

“Could have been structured differently”

“Even more simplistic exercises”

“Smaller groups”

“Lack of time. Unclear future visions and objectives”

“Interesting but the results were maybe not that spectacular.”

“Maybe it is required that one meet in a more relaxing environment to reach further, without mobile phone interruptions and other meetings one wants to go to. I think one gets closer to each other then. More time is also needed probably.”

“We would have needed a better briefing of the outcome, or been given the opportunity to agree on 1-2 main directions to discuss. Don’t understand why we used so much time in the beginning to discuss for example water. [...] we could not see what was written on the post-it notes.”

Strikingly, the first task to choose among the local desired goals and suggest additional ones was regarded as meaningful and interesting by a majority when answering quantitatively (Fig. 5 question 2), but a few written comments contradicted this. Especially strong opinions regarding the suitability of using local visions in such a manner were expressed;

“Local dreams, formulated without guidance, feel risky as a basis for the kind of decisions they intend to improve!”

“With my own insights about general limitations and frameworks it didn’t feel meaningful to choose among goals that had been formulated without knowledge about the same. I perceive it only as giving legitimacy to goals which lack the possibility to be realised.”

In conclusion, the group of national policy-makers was not able to freely discuss and reach consensus on what goals to focus the policy discussions on.

4.3 Evaluation results

In this section we evaluate the workshop’s and focus group’s performances based on the four norms of Communicative Action from the second part of the study: comprehensibility, sincerity, legitimacy and truth (Forester, 1985) and the fifth criterion called institutionalisation. As an illustration to the text and for facilitation of a comparison among levels, workshops and focus groups, each criteria has been evaluated on a scale from minus (-) to plus (+), see Table 3.

Table 3 Comparison between evaluations regarding the outcome of the workshops and focus groups according to the criteria of Forester (1985) and Menzel et al. (2012). The evaluations were made on a scale where (-) = bad performance; (+/-) = moderate performance; and (+) = good performance.

| | Helgeå workshop | Vilhelmina focus groups | National workshop |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Comprehensibility | | | |
| - Clear mandate and goals | + | + | - |
| - Structured group interaction | + | + | - |
| - Facilitation of constructive individual/group behaviour | + | + | +/- |
| Sincerity | | | |
| - Relationships and social capital building – between researchers and participants | + | + | +/- |
| - Relationships and social capital building – among participants | + | + | + |
| - Independence and neutrality of process | + | + | + |
| - Transparency (of interests) | +/- | + | + |
| - Opportunity to influence process design | - | - | - |
| - Challenging status quo and fostering creative thinking | + | + | +/- |
| Legitimacy | | | |
| - Representation | +/- | +/- | +/- |
| - Fairness | + | + | + |
| - Opportunity to influence outcome | + | + | + |
| - Acceptance of outcome | + | + | - |
| - Search for common values | + | + | +/- |
| - Accessibility of process | + | + | + |
| Truth | | | |
| - Quality and selection of information | + | + | +/- |
| - Transparency (of information) | + | + | +/- |
| Institutionalisation | | | |
| | | Over-all process | |
| - Keeping decision-makers informed | | + | |
| - 2nd and 3rd order effects (institutional change) | | - | |
| - Relationships and social capital building – between levels | | - | |

Comprehensibility. There are clear differences between the local and national levels and smaller differences between the local workshop and focus groups regarding organisational and structural matters. The aim of the activity was best understood in the local workshop and focus groups while national participants found the aim less clear. The mandate to participate was partly based on representation of interests, but the participants were encouraged to think freely as individuals and citizens independently from their organisations. A majority of the participants regarded the pre-workshop information and the introduction phase of the workshops as sufficient and informative. The expected outcome was more clearly formulated and concrete at the local level than in the national meeting. The local participants were informed about the subsequent steps of the study but were not promised any feedback from the national workshop. Based on the judgement of the researchers all participants behaved with respect towards one other. Constructive behaviour, as in participants striving toward the objective of the workshop or focus groups, was clearly evident in both local case studies but not as clear in the national workshop. Participants in the latter gave somewhat diverging statements regarding the facilitation of the discussion. The researchers had the impression that the participants struggled in the discussion to understand the task at hand and the objective to formulate policy measures in order to implement the local visions was not reached.

Sincerity. The majority of participants in all workshops agreed that the workshop method increased their own capacity to understand other perspectives and the ability to learn from others. It is the judgement of the researchers that the way of creating future desired visions worked out as a relevant, concrete, and constructive tool to strengthen social capital both among participants and between researchers and participants, but to a lesser extent between local and national participants. The national participants described the local visions as insufficient to bridge the local and national levels. The participants did not have the opportunity to influence the process design, mainly due to time constraints. The neutrality of the process can be regarded as generally satisfactory, as the majority of participants said they had been able to engage in the discussion according to their wishes and the facilitation by researchers did not accommodate specific interests, but rather the commons as intended.

The transparency of interests was somewhat vague, as we had asked the participants to step out of their role as representatives, even though they were invited as stakeholders. Some of the invited participants were connected to a certain interest or stake, but without an official mandate to represent any organisation. Afterwards, there seems to have been some confusion among the participants about how to handle this representation, explicitly discussed in the Helgeå workshop evaluations.

According to our interpretation, the criterion of Menzel et. al's (2012) that corresponds best with the objective of the local workshops is the challenging of status quo and fostering creative thinking, which was one main task of the meetings aimed at creating a future vision based on the CUAR methodology. This criterion was fulfilled according to the local participants' answers to the evaluation questions, however not in the national participants' evaluations.

Legitimacy. The representation of interests was satisfactory, but could have been improved. In Helgeå CSA, representatives from e.g. the Kronoberg County Board could not be persuaded to participate. In Vilhelmina, the participants representing reindeer herding and Sami heritage cancelled at short notice. In both local workshops, politicians and decision-makers from the municipal steering committee were pointed out as missing participants (denial after invitation).

There were also last-minute cancellations for the national workshop due to illness. Those invited who declined the invitation mentioned the following reasons: that they could not see the relevance for their own work, that they were occupied, that they could not take a day off for participating, or that the dates were not suitable.

The participants felt they had a good opportunity to influence the outcome and search for common values, especially in the local workshops. The degree of consensus around and acceptance of the outcome was fairly well achieved in the local workshops, but no final vision formulation could be made during the actual workshop and focus group meetings. The email conversations about final visions that followed the physical meetings were not enough to claim consensus for the visions. In the national setting, not all participants were equally engaged in the discussion and small group discussions were suggested in the evaluations as potential improvement. Some of the participants represented larger organisations than others and subsequently had more experience of taking part in policy and negotiation processes. However, this was not the main problem. Acceptance of and consensus around the outcome of the national workshop failed.

Truth. No factual statements were openly questioned by other participants on the local level. In the written evaluation, one participant in the national workshop questioned the over-all forestry competence of the group. The quality and selection of information that was provided to the participants before the workshops was regarded as satisfactory. The transparency of information internally (between participants and organisers) seems to have been satisfactory to local participants, while national participants were not given as much time for questioning the local input and were to a greater degree asked to accept the information that was the basis for the workshop. This was regarded as a problematic part of the workshop by national participants.

Institutionalisation. Evaluations by participants in the national workshop included critiques against the idea behind the workshop and especially the use of local visions, even declaring them non-legitimate. While no such negative opinions were raised during the actual workshop, it is clear that the outcome of the national workshop was far from what the study aimed for. There were fewer constructive discussions and little agreement regarding potential alternative policy instruments. The workshop performance did not sufficiently convince the national participants to interact and act upon the local visions. Since no national policy-makers were present during the local activities, any relationship and social capital building between levels was subsequently not created. While the method managed to keep the decision-makers informed, the negative reactions tells us that no 2nd or 3rd order effects are likely to take place.

5. Discussion

We deem the first step of our participatory action research model, the participatory visioning of future forested landscapes, suitable for enabling local stakeholders to raise their focus and expand their views from individual interests to a common future related to the landscape. The exercise was greatly appreciated by the local participants and considered useful as it opened up for new perspectives and created substantial outcomes to deliberate further. The activities were moreover believed to stimulate discussions, promote knowledge exchange and have the potential to bring research and practice closer (Fortmann and Ballard, 2011). Similar to Palacios-Agundez et al. (2013) the Vilhelmina focus group discussions confirmed that comparing explorative scenarios facilitates group discussion and the development of a common horizon, illustrating existing challenges and trade-offs between forest landscape values in Vilhelmina CSA. Such a discussion was also achieved in Helgeå CSA but based on critiques of the present situation and not on explorative scenarios. The first objective of the study was thus reached.

The model's ability to link local visions with the national institutional level to influence policy-making proved deficient. The second objective of the study and the criterion for institutionalisation were not achieved. The national policy-makers' lack of acceptance and declarations that local visions were incompetent and illegitimate were especially serious drawbacks. Our idea to rely on the trust in us as researchers to legitimise the visions was not successful. In a similar process, Aagaard Nielsen (2005) used a CUAR approach where experts were asked to comment on the utopian ideas that were presented to them. The experts accepted the role of constructive commentators. In our case, there are evident discrepancies between local and national levels where local needs, knowledge claims and rights are not recognised by all policy-makers. Paradoxically, in our study the importance of communication and knowledge exchange between different levels was stressed in evaluations from all workshops; participants locally and nationally proposed collaborative and dialogue approaches combined with enhanced local decision-making in order to achieve a desirable future. This demonstration of goodwill for collaboration among participants on all levels is an important result, as linking multi-level participatory processes is the key to successful forest policy (Secco et al. 2013). However, this goodwill is contradicted by the quotes from the national evaluation questionnaire (Appendix B) which cannot be neglected.

This apparent paradox seems to result from two observed factors. First, we observed national-level stakeholders manifest their power by delegitimising the local visions and thus the claims to rights over the landscape of the local stakeholders. Second, we observed how knowledge of local practitioners was disqualified in comparison with the knowledge of the national stakeholders. The requests for increased collaboration and knowledge exchange could then be regarded not as a wish for mutual exchange of knowledge, but rather as a means to impose a predetermined national-level understanding about management on the local level: an understanding embedded in a certain kind of rationality. These observations are in line with the previously mentioned critique of stakeholder governance that the stakeholder rationality causes citizens to become inert, instrumental agents with a strategic rather than a communicative rationality (Hansen et al. 2016a; von Essen and Hansen, 2016). It also confirms the challenge of bridging the divide between a locally-rooted level embedded in a wider range of perspectives and the more technical and instrumental logic of actors operating at the higher institutional and national level.

What could nurture a sense of common responsibility and create a common third across the local and national levels of the Swedish forest sector? Ideally, extended face-to-face meetings among local and national stakeholders, perhaps in a place free from work-related distractions may have created a needed sense of free space and a more common platform for envisioning the future (Drewes-Nielsen et al. 2004). Such a setting would likely bring local realities closer to the reality power of the predetermined steering logic of national policy-making. That would stay truer to the original format of the Research Workshops by inviting national policy-makers to work on actual plans for implementing utopian ideas and visions together with the local stakeholders (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen, 2016).

This study required several compromises in our approach due to limited time and resources. These included not inviting all imaginable forest-related stakeholders, a one day time limit as no funds were available to compensate participants' time with an honorarium, no follow-up workshops where local and national stakeholders could meet face-to-face and no long-distance traveling for others than the researchers. The negative influence on process outcomes from time and resource constraints is indeed a conclusion made by many participatory studies (c.f. Appelstrand, 2002; Rickards et al., 2014; Shearer, 2005). We view the limitation of invitations to forest-related interests and lack of financial compensation to participations as less significant for the outcome. More important was the lack of face-to-face interaction between the local and national levels. Nevertheless, before actively experimenting with a more face-to-face approach it is not certain that time and resources were the main constraints to reconcile local and national interests in this study. The workshop design itself might not be sufficient to create a desired common third among participants with unequal powers. Future research that investigates the potential to reconcile local and national levels must allocate enough resources to rule out this as a variable, but unlimited resources are not realistic. A useful approach to this issue could be to compare costs among similar methods (Faehnle and Tyrväinen, 2013).

An additional explanation for the institutionalisation failure could be our adherence to the stakeholder concept when inviting participants, even though we discouraged this in the actual workshop situation. Ambiguities in terms of societal responsibility and scope occur when working with stakeholders, compared to applying the concept of citizens in participatory processes. The stakeholder concept is problematic in several ways as it by definition reinforces pre-defined interests, locking participants into particular positions often separated from a broader societal responsibility and ignoring *all* other social and professional roles individuals hold within families and communities (Böhling and Arzberger, 2014; Hansen et al., 2016a). Stakeholder categorisation risks reinforcing the problems supposedly addressed by public participation. Divergent stakeholder interests are often driven by perceptions and entrenched interests. These sometimes play out as 'hidden agendas' (OECD, 1999) and can systematically distort communication (Habermas, 1984). Addressing these tendencies in the national workshop was difficult as the participants held stronger to their positions than the local participants had, even if some participant evaluations stated that these positions were less prominent. This behaviour might have been further discouraged by forming smaller discussion groups and inviting participants who were less invested in the status quo.

The initial idea of the Future Creating Workshops was to build permanent forums in a continuing process, as a sort of everyday life cooperation to handle peoples' common affairs regarding how they want to live (Nielsen and Aagaard Nielsen 2016). Reed (2008) states that the continuity of stakeholder participation has to be secured through institutionalisation and organisational

cultures. Depending on the definition of engagement, there is probably no way to guarantee people's continuous longer-term engagement, but the relevance and ownership of the issues are crucial for the duration and depth of engagement. The development of an inclusive institutional frame to exercise one's engagement and the development of cultural democratic practices seem to be crucial as well. There are several examples of successful participatory processes in terms of people's engagement over several years (Nielsen et al., 2016; Aagaard Nielsen and Nielsen, 2016). We suggest that the initial visioning work described here could continue in the Model Forest arenas, available in both Helgeå and Vilhelmina.

6. Conclusions

Local arenas for discussing common landscape management issues are desired by local stakeholders. Envisioning of future forested landscapes is a functional exercise for promoting engagement around common issues and for creating new perspectives on future possibilities. The findings in this paper confirm that such functional arenas can be established at least on a local level. The study outcomes also confirm that bringing policy-makers closer to the local actors and to the landscape level is a big challenge of forest governance. However, we identify great potential in the participatory action research approach and specifically in the Critical Utopian Action Research methodology for facilitating deliberation among researchers and stakeholders to identify a stronger common ground and internalise multiple values in forest management and planning. Future research should focus on strengthening the linkage between local and national levels through more face-to-face interaction and establishing or reinforcing long-term participatory processes.

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Appendix A. Typical quotes in the written evaluations by participants in the local workshop and focus groups.

| Evaluation question | Quotes from Helgeå CSA | Quotes from Vilhelmina CSA |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Was the information given to you prior to the workshop sufficient? | <i>Good with personal contact. Not only by email.</i> | <i>Good to get the information in advance, there was time for reflection.</i> |
| | | <i>Did not take the time to read all in advance.</i> |
| 2. Did the work in smaller groups function well? | <i>Interesting to lift the discussion together in a group. Good discussion.</i> | <i>It was beneficial to work in a small group, as it gave good space for discussion.</i> |
| | <i>Short on time.</i> | <i>Good conversations take place in smaller groups. 4-5 persons are optimal.</i> |
| 3. Do you think that the formulation of the future vision corresponds to your opinions and values? | <i>A bit difficult to formulate the “scale” of the vision.</i> | <i>Recognised much of my opinions. Good that the Sami interest was clearly included.</i> |
| | <i>But the step before felt less good. Think it got to general. More interesting in the steps before.</i> | <i>It corresponds. On the spot!</i> |
| | <i>Do not have any high hopes.</i> | |
| 4. Do you feel that you have been able to participate in the discussions as you wished? | <i>Everyone has had the opportunity to say what they wanted.</i> | <i>Was allowed to say and contribute as I wished.</i> |
| | <i>Thank you for a nice day!</i> | <i>Difficult to view 30 years ahead. We should have been more people in the group.</i> |
| | | <i>Always fun to get to know others’ opinions, knowledge and experiences.</i> |
| 5. Did the discussions feel meaningful? | | <i>Good participants, good distribution and age range.</i> |
| | | <i>One gets to know each other in a good way.</i> |
| 6. Do you think that this kind of open discussion contributes to strengthening trust between stakeholders? | <i>Hoping for the future.</i> | <i>One problem is that not all stakeholder groups can participate (becomes too big groups then) but good nevertheless.</i> |
| | | <i>Communication and knowledge exchange is essential!</i> |
| 7. Do you think that the participants present in the workshop represented the most important stakeholders in the landscape? | <i>Unclear whether one should represent <u>one</u> typical stakeholder.</i> | |
| | <i>Missing industrial rep. [representatives]</i> | |
| | <i>Surprised that the county administrative board did not participate.</i> | |
| | <i>Maybe someone more from the industry and the environmental movement.</i> | |
| 8. Do you think that this kind of open discussion can improve the quality of decision support when it comes to land-use or forest planning? | <i>Under the condition that the results are returned to the forestry sector.</i> | <i>Difficult to reach all the way through, I believe.</i> |
| | <i>Think we came up with solutions that “others” have to solve.</i> | <i>Really hoping that it will be the result.</i> |
| | <i>Unfortunately I think they do as they want.</i> | <i>Perhaps, although many factors influence decisions.</i> |
| 9. Do you believe that this workshop has been a good opportunity for learning and knowledge exchange? | <i>Creative workshops open up for new ideas.</i> | <i>Good organisation, good method, clear and transparent.</i> |
| | | <i>Others’ knowledge and experience is always interesting.</i> |
| 10. How did you experience the outdoor setting compared with meetings indoor? | | <i>Creative and inspiring.</i> |
| | | <i>Better! Nice and more relaxed. Easier to come up with ideas.</i> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | <i>Better contact in the group.</i> |
| | | <i>Increased the motivation to take part, suitable place, more special meeting, very good.</i> |
| 11. How did you experience the introduction to the workshop? | <i>Good.</i> | <i>Good introduction of the method.</i> |
| | <i>Interesting.</i> | <i>Well-prepared.</i> |
| 12. How did you experience the CP (Helgeå) / discussion of the possible scenarios (Vhma)? | <i>Very open discussion and many opinions from different perspectives.</i> | <i>Interesting, fun, constructive, stimulated new reflections and learning.</i> |
| | <i>Fun! Good way to start.</i> | |
| | <i>Good, just enough time. Grouping of suggestions was so and so.</i> | |
| 13. How did you experience the UP? | <i>Good, felt good to "dream" freely.</i> | <i>Perhaps more utopian than reality-based.</i> |
| | <i>[It was good but]...always easier to criticise.</i> | <i>Difficult but fun and rewarding.</i> |
| | <i>Good description - "utopia".</i> | <i>Interesting and thought-provoking. Perhaps a bit single-tracked when we all were of the same opinion.</i> |
| | <i>Positive.</i> | <i>Stimulating and creative.</i> |
| | | <i>Exciting and difficult. It is an art to be able to let go of all the "ifs and buts" that exist in the present and try to formulate what you would like to become reality.</i> |
| 14. Any additional comments about the day? What could have been improved? | <i>More group time.</i> | <i>Thank you, I am very pleased!</i> |
| | <i>Good size of group - good.</i> | <i>More participants in that case, but this was ok as well.</i> |
| | <i>Good! And fruitful.</i> | <i>A very good day. I don't know if it could have been done better considering the purpose.</i> |
| | <i>More time... but do you have enough energy for that?</i> | |
| | <i>A bit longer breaks, 2 hours longer day and with longer breaks.</i> | |

Appendix B. Typical quotes in the written evaluations by participants in the national workshop.

| Evaluation question | Quotes from the National Workshop |
|--|---|
| 1. Was the information given to you prior to the workshop sufficient? | <p>8 out of 8 respondents answered that they had read the pre-information.</p> <hr/> <p><i>It was noticeable that not everyone had read the information given prior to the workshop</i></p> |
| 2. Did you experience the exercise to choose among local goals and formulate three own goals as meaningful and interesting for you? | <p><i>With my own insights about general limitations and frameworks it didn't feel meaningful to choose among goals that had been formulated without knowledge about the same. I perceive it only as a giving of legitimacy to those goals, which lack the possibility to be realised.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Good organisation and discussions.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>We would have needed a better briefing of the outcome, or been given the opportunity to agree on 1-2 main directions to discuss. Don't understand why we used so much time in the beginning to discuss for example water [...] we could not see what was written on the post-it notes.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Interesting to prioritise between several different important issues in comparison with others, with other perspectives than my own.</i></p> |
| 3. Did you experience the exercise to identify possible policy actions, strategies and measures as meaningful and interesting for you? | <p><i>Yes, but a bit difficult against the background of what came up during the previous step</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>As a matter of fact it was, but looking back it would have been good to make it an exercise with post-it notes as well, in order to get a broad view in the mapping, and then finish with discussion /reflection.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Good to gather broad expertise, but the connection to the locals (the people) or society was weak.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Interesting but the results were maybe not that spectacular.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Generally too little knowledge about forestry practice in the group.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Could have been structured differently.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Those that [came to the workshop would have had] clear positions before the exercise.</i></p> |
| 4. Was any part of the workshop more interesting than the others? | <p><i>The final discussion.</i></p> |
| <p>5. There was not enough time to go through all the goals in the suggestions for policy actions. Was that due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited time • Insufficient background knowledge • Unclear visions and goals • Unclear instructions • Unclear objective • Other | <p>Limited time (4), Unclear visions and goals (3), Unclear instructions (1), Insufficient background knowledge (1).</p> <hr/> <p><i>[...] large respect for that it isn't so easy.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Lack of time. Unclear future visions and objectives. I have been to an exercise by the company Open Eye (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency - mapping of environmental objective "No damages to cultural heritage") that used a similar mapping technique. There the discussion was more clearly driving that one should summarise with one sentence one's viewpoint, and the group decided where the notes belonged in the scheme on the computer. That felt more creative. Now it was much too hard to summarise long statements with several points to them and get them into the right context.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>[...] insufficient background knowledge.</i></p> |
| 6. Was the group composed of relevant stakeholder representatives? | <p><i>Sufficient spread.</i></p> |
| 7. To what degree do you think that this type of exercise can bring practice and research closer together? | <p><i>It is incredibly important from the practitioners' perspective that these kinds of discussions are made together with researchers! Research is very important, but the marriage with practice is crucial so that the politicians get a basis for wise decisions that are somewhat based on reality.</i></p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p><i>To work together creates understanding and closeness if it doesn't only result in debate, which it didn't.</i></p> <p><i>We must meet and have exchange in order to understand each other.</i></p> |
| 8. Do you feel that you have been able to participate in the discussions as you wished? | <p><i>Chatty group.</i></p> |
| 9. Any additional comments about the day? What could have been improved? | <p><i>Smaller groups.</i></p> <p><i>Local dreams, formulated without guidance, feels risky as basis for that kind of decisions they intend to improve!</i></p> <p><i>Maybe it is required that one meet in a more relaxing environment to reach further, without mobile phone interruptions and other meetings one wants to go to. I think one gets closer to each other then. More time is also needed probably.</i></p> <p><i>Even more simplistic exercises.</i></p> |
| 10. Did the day render anything new for your regular work? | <p><i>"Partly" was the answer by 7 out of 8. One answered "No". Comments were as follows:</i></p> <p><i>Thoughts about regional development and the view upon policy instruments.</i></p> <p><i>I have been thinking some about for example what role SSNC (as an organisation) is ready to take in the future for governance.</i></p> |
| 11. Did you experience that this kind of exercise added something extra in comparison to other workshops and exercises in other contexts? | <p><i>"Yes" was the answer by 3 out of 8, 4 answered "Partly" and 1 person answered "No".</i></p> <p><i>But we would have gotten closer with a different basis for discussion I think.</i></p> <p><i>Because we succeeded rather well in not taking on our usual roles where we would defend our organisations' interests, or guard our positions.</i></p> <p><i>This is a bunch of people that meet each other in various contexts and to a rather big extent knows each other's arguments.</i></p> |

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