"I don't know if we should have that discussion now"

Negotiating procedural frames in collaborative governance of natural resources

Lars Hallgren, Hanna Bergeå, Emily Montgomerie, and Lotten Westberg
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Collaborative governance within natural resource management relies on dialogical forums where people can negotiate complex issues through conversations. In this paper, we investigate situations where procedural frames around these discussions are negotiated in the conversations between its participants in a corpus from five different natural resource management contexts. We present how frame discussions are initiated, how actors express that actions are not aligned with the frames, and finally, how these openings of discourse about the frames are interactively managed, maintained, and closed. We argue norms of inclusiveness, consensus, and performance shape the interaction and hamper the joint investigation of the frames, and undermine the entire justification of the collaborative processes and the core quality of dialogical conversations.

Keywords: collaborative process, dialogue, procedural frame, natural resource management, negotiation

1. Introduction

For participants in dialogues about important future-oriented issues in which they have a stake, a key question is whether the procedural frames of the dialogue admit them to talk about the issues they find important in ways that allow them to influence their stake. Stakeholders who have very concrete problems in common–for example, how to deal with agriculture crop raiding cranes, high mortality of domestic reindeer due to predator attacks or optimizing biodiversity and log production in forestry–need to sort out these issues in knowledge efficient

https://doi.org/10.1075/ld.00147.hal | Published online: 1 August 2023
Language and Dialogue 13:2 (2023), pp. 200–228. ISSN 2210-4119 | E-ISSN 2210-4127

and democratic procedures. They also need to sort out their collaboration's communicative and dialogic conditions. Research has recognized that in collaborative governance of natural resource management, participants and stakeholders often consider the procedural frames insufficient (Wesselink *et al.* 2011) for them to represent their stake, resulting either in manipulation (Connelly and Richardson 2004) and co-option of silenced voices (Quintin 2012), or in stakeholders leaving the collaborative process (Anguelovski 2011). However, few studies have paid attention to how questions and doubts about the procedural frames of the dialogue are articulated and negotiated within the dialogue process itself. In this paper, we pay attention to how doubtfulness about procedural frames is articulated and negotiated in conversations in collaborative governance about natural resource management in Sweden.

The paper aims to identify and discuss what conversational procedures are used to articulate and negotiate doubts about the legitimacy and functionality of procedural frames of participatory and collaborative processes and how these conversational procedures correspond to what is expected of a normative dialogue in collaborative governance processes. We will also discuss the reasons why the articulation of doubts about the procedural frames of a collaboration generates so relatively little attention and follow-up in the conversations in which they are articulated. One could easily assume that since doubts about the procedural frames of a collaboration process are of constitutive importance, such doubts would be debated and investigated until the doubt and its reason and consequences are fully clarified, understood, or even solved. But our data instead suggests that the conversation leaves these doubts quite un-investigated. We will discuss what institutional and contextual conditions we think are important reasons why.

In this paper, the concept of 'procedural frame' is used as an overarching and inclusive concept for all sorts of norms, limitations or restrictions concerning collaborative processes, participation, and conversations as such. Procedural frames are factors recognized by the dialogue participants that regulate what they think they can and cannot do in dialogue. These frames can include explicit and implicit assumptions about what a collaborative process is about and how participants are expected to contribute to that. These assumptions can, for example, concern the goal and mandate of the process, the topics that should be talked about and with what terminology and procedure, how sub-tasks are interpreted and performed, and with what criteria knowledge claims are evaluated.

We use the term 'collaborative governance' or 'collaborative initiative' throughout the paper, although other concepts have been used in research, policy, and practice, such as participatory or deliberative process. The terms carry slightly different connotations; however, it is not relevant for this paper to distin-

guish between the different types of processes since it is rather the negotiation of the procedural frames as such that is our study's object.

In this paper, we use 'dialogue' mainly as an emic concept used by the participants in the collaborative governance processes when they talk about the communication they anticipate and desire. This indeed has a connection, albeit sometimes unclear, with formal theory about normative dialogue as well as with analytical dialogical perspectives (we discuss these connections more in Section 2).

To clarify the potential and applicability of collaborative governance, it is important to scrutinize whether the conversations of the collaborative processes have the qualities expected of them. This study contributes to this by looking into situations where the frames of the process are addressed in the very meeting by its participants. This is important since the frames are constitutive of the process and decide what can be done, how, and by whom. Since the frames become constitutive for the process, so do doubts, ambiguity, disagreements, and problems with the frames. The extent to which such problems are constructively dealt with will decide the democratic and epistemic value of the process. Knowledge about the dialogic procedures that are used to negotiate the procedural frames in collaboration in natural resource management is therefore an important contribution to the debate about collaborative governance and the question if and how the principles of deliberative democracy can be implemented.

In the next section, we will review the literature on collaboration and participation in natural resource management as well as the literature on dialogue as a normative and analytical concept. This review demonstrates that although research has engaged in both proposing and evaluating a collaborative approach to natural resource management, we have not found studies that discuss how issues, complaints, suggestions, and doubts about the procedural frames of the dialogue are interactively managed. This is surprising and important to note since the body of literature suggests that often the dialogue in collaborative processes is hampered by unclear or constrained mandates or unclear procedural frames and participants' dissatisfaction with these procedural frames. Despite this, the investigation of how the frames are interactively negotiated has been left unexplored. In the next section, we describe the analyzed corpus and the analytical procedure which were used to shed light on interactive management and negotiation of procedural frames . This is followed by a section in which we describe the administrative and communicative context of collaborative governance of natural resources, a context in which dialogue has been normed as a preferred but unclear form of social interaction. This is followed by the finding section, which is divided into three subsections describing how expressions of doubts about frames are initiated, how perceptions of frame transgressions are expressed and managed, and

how these openings of discourse about the frames are interactively managed. In the last section of the paper, we suggest three overarching norms that are responsible for the avoidance of in-depth investigation of disagreements about procedural frames: normative inclusiveness, normative performativity, and normative consensus.

2. Collaboration and normative dialogue in natural resource management

In Swedish public governance in general and especially in environmental and natural resource management (NRM), public actors have recognized that complex and conflictual issues should be managed through participatory and collaborative processes in which stakeholders with different perspectives are invited to conversations with the responsible public authority and other actors who are concerned about the same issue (Wesselink *et al.* 2011; Castell 2016).

The term 'dialogue' has different meanings in different contexts (Abma *et al.* 2001; Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, and Ge 2006; Wierzbicka 2006; Ganesh and Holmes 2011; Carbaugh *et al.* 2011). In sociology and philosophy, 'dialogue' can refer both to a normative theoretical ideal of communication (Isacs 2001; Buber 2003; Bohm 2004) and to an analytical approach to society and communication (Kim and Kim 2008; Linell 2014; Weigand 2015). Létourneau (2017) recognizes that both the analytical and the normative perspective on dialogue has roots in Bakhtin's theorizing of dialogue as text and talk. Létourneau suggests that analytical and normative perspectives should be seen as dialectically related in that the analytical attention of the first is necessary to be able to understand the normativity of the second. We agree with this proposition, and in this study, we apply analytical dialogism (Linell 2014) to understand better the practice of normative dialogue in the collaborative governance of contested natural resources.

However, in the context of this research, we need also to consider an emic meaning of dialogue, referring to when the word 'dialogue' is used by participants in collaborative governance of natural resources to distinguish communication of different and better quality, meeting certain but often unclear criteria that single out this social interaction from other acts of coordination in the context (Polk 2010; Lundholm and Stöhr 2014). In these contexts, dialogue is talked about as a tool to manage technically complex issues in which knowledge is ambiguous and contested, with the assumption that these situations will be better managed when stakeholders are involved in conversations about the issue and contribute to the search for acceptable solutions. However, when the importance of dialogue is emphasized in governance and policy production, this also adds new layers

of complexity consisting of social relations, interaction dynamics, and expectations. In the natural resource management emic use of the term dialogue, the aim is often expressed as to have "a good dialogue" (Wallace 2020). One example is when the Swedish mining agency writes in the policy document describing "Sweden's mineral strategy" that an important task is "to offer meeting places and conduits for good dialogue [...] in order to distribute responsibility between corporate and public organizations" (Sveriges mineralstrategi 2014). From an analytical point of view, such an undefined normativity of dialogue as something inherently good without specifying what dialogue is and what makes it good, is confusing. This tends to turn dialogue into an empty signifier; it is a concept that, although used with different meanings, does not require metacommunicative repair. Hence, the concept becomes undistinguished and empty. This risk has been recognized in post-structuralist research and political philosophy and, among others, Ganesh and Zoller (2012) point out that, in the literature on social change, dialogue appears as an unclear normative expectation but also as a form of cynical manipulation in which dominant power relations are reproduced under the umbrella of dialogue. Ganesh and Zoller (2012) instead suggest an agonistic normativity of dialogue in which the function of dialogue is to explicate difference and power.

There are great expectations on collaborative initiatives for governing NRM and other issues of complexity in modern society (Blackstock 2009; O'Connor *et al.* 2021). The argument is that the participatory and deliberative components can substantially benefit NRM (e.g., van den Hove 2000; Waylen *et al.* 2015). However, research has recognized limitations in many such processes in the operationalization of the deliberative ideals and in what they legally have the mandate to change. Findings suggest that collaborative processes are more time-consuming than expected, and questions about whose voices are heard create tensions (Blackstock and Richards 2007). One great challenge, amongst others, is to balance efficiency and inclusion of all voices (Blackstock 2009; Waylen *et al.* 2015; Cinque *et al.* 2022). This tension and its implications are still poorly understood (Waylen *et al.* 2015). We agree with Blackstock and Richards (2007) that these collaborative processes are important, and if these processes are to develop and maintain legitimacy and efficiency, we must understand both the governance structure and the micromanagement of turn-taking in dialogue.

Research on collaborative governance cases around NRM is growing, with several cases from Swedish contexts. Swedish initiatives to govern conflicts around the controversial issue of the licensed hunting of wolves have been investigated, highlighting the need to study how the facilitators handle their mandate (Cinque 2015). Researchers debate the potential of collaborative governance to live up to the high ambitions and expectations of these dialogues (Arias-

Maldonado 2007; Sjölander-Lindqvist *et al.* 2015; Curato *et al.* 2017). The communication procedures in collaboration meetings seem to be designed and managed to facilitate efficient agenda management rather than to facilitate learning and deliberation. However, it was the benefits of learning and deliberation which were emphasized as the reason for organizing governance collaboration in the first place (Hallgren and Westberg 2015). Collaborative processes are often idealized as *open* and *inclusive*, in which all participants can express their interests, knowledge, and concerns (Johansson 2018; Innes and Booher 2018; Coleman and Stern 2018), but they are also often explicitly constructed to achieve results within specific frames (Eckerd and Heidelberg 2020). These frames are defined by the initiator of the collaborative initiative based on their particular perspective, while other actors' perspectives risk being classified as off-topic (Connelly and Richardson 2004; Wesselink *et al.* 2011). Consequently, a lot of conversational space is used to negotiate what is on-topic and what is off-topic, and whether what is considered on-topic is relevant and important enough for participants to maintain engagement in the collaboration process (Eckerd and Heidelberg 2020). For example, in a collaborative process about reducing diffuse water pollution in Scotland, participants spent much meeting time to explain and understand the concept of 'Favourable Conservation Status' (a legal concept that could not be changed within the collaborative process), because some participants believed this concept to be constraining the collaboration (Waylen *et al.* 2015).

Although stakeholders say they are interested in collaborating in the hope of finding solutions to problems, they also express doubts about the meaningfulness of their own participation or the relevance of the dialogue when they consider the process to be based on too narrow frames that restrict them from fully expressing their stakes (Connelly and Richardson 2004; Black, Leighter, and Gastil 2009; Wesselink *et al.* 2011). It has been suggested that the criteria of deliberative democracy (Curato *et al.* 2017), which motivate the dialogic approach of the collaborative initiative, cannot be met when the frames are narrow (Connelly and Richardsson 2004; Ganesh and Zoller 2012). The sincerity of the democratic ambitions of such processes has been questioned, and it has been suggested that the labels dialogue and deliberative, collaborative, or participatory democracy can obscure manipulation (Cooke and Kothari 2001). In some of these 'dialogues', the participants leave the collaborative initiative when they consider the frames of the process to be too limited to allow them to represent their interests and instead develop other non-dialogic communication arenas, such as street rallies, media debates, and civil disobedience, to voice their concerns (Anguelovski 2011). From studies like that of Anguelovski (2011), we know a lot about how and when such dialogue exit strategies appear and how they act as both discursive closures and discursive openings. However, few studies report how perceptions of too narrow

or problematic procedural frames are expressed, managed, and negotiated interactively within the dialogue in cases where it does not escalate into dialogue exit. In this paper, we investigate how doubts about the frames are articulated and negotiated in collaborative processes in Swedish natural resource governance. We focus on how participants in dialogues initiate conversations about the procedural frames and pay attention to their own and others' frame transgression and how these concerns about the frames are managed interactively.

3. Method

The question of how participants in collaborative governance processes about important futures express doubts about and negotiate the procedural frames of the process demands a close look at the interaction sequences through which the procedural frames of the dialogue are discussed and how these negotiations are interactively performed. In order to do so, we have searched through a corpus of collaborative governance meetings originating from five different NRM contexts. For an overview of the corpus, see Table 1. The collaborative processes were selected because they concern technically and socially complex and contested natural resource issues in which the participants have different perspectives and stakes. In four of the five cases, the researchers initiated contact with the organizers of the collaborative processes and asked for permission to participate and observe. In the fifth case, the researchers were invited as dialogue experts to provide advice to the organizers of the collaborative process, and observations were made as part of the support.

Each of the five cases consists of several meetings, and our total empirical material is composed of observations and recordings conducted by the authors of this paper with informed consent from participants from nearly 60 meetings, each with a duration of one to six hours. Some meetings took place through videoconferencing and were recorded with a computer screen recorder, while other meetings took place in a room and were recorded with one or several voice recorders or video cameras. The recordings were transcribed on a rough level, and these crude transcripts were scanned for situations and episodes in which participants are explicit in addressing frame issues by expressing complaints, doubts, wishes, or questions concerning such issues as process goals, sub-tasks, and assessments of knowledge and relevance. These episodes were, for their part, transcribed verbatim. More generic meta-communication and discourse coordination, such as general repair sequences, topic changes, or coordination of the setting in the room, about how and when to take a break and how to use the technical device (especially for online meetings) have not been coded although it could also count

as frame issues. The reason is that we focus on negotiations of the frames that are explicitly connected to the future-oriented stakes in relation to the natural resources. Sequences were coded into the following categories: (a) sequences in which negotiations about frame issues are initiated, (b) sequences in which participants make comments or complaints about their own or other participants' actions in relation to frames, and (c) how negotiations about frame issues are maintained, managed and closed. In this paper's findings section, we describe, analyze and interpret some of these sequences.

Table 1. Overview of recorded collaborative governance meetings

Collaborative governance process defined by topic	Number of meetings	Observed number of hours	Meeting venue	Approximate number of participants per meeting	Monitoring procedure
Forest management (F)	17	46	Online – Skype	6–16	Screen and audio recording
Domestic reindeer and large carnivores (R)	18	60	Meeting room	3–7	Audio recording
Conservation plan large carnivores (C)	13	13	Online – Skype	2–6	Screen and audio recording
Crop damage protected big birds (B)	3	6	Meeting room	12–15	Audio recording
Public access to land and freedom to roam (A)	6	24	Meeting room	9–12	Audio recording

The episodes coded as relevant to the negotiation of procedural frames, according to categories a, b, and c above, were analyzed following the principles of sequence organization analysis (Schegloff 2007; Heritage and Clayman 2010). According to these principles, an utterance's meaning depends on its interactive context, that is, the preceding utterances it is responding to and the utterances responding to it. In our analysis, an utterance is considered as a doubt of procedural frames if the utterance is responded to as such by other participants in the interaction. Also, if the analysis is done on more than three turns, in some cases, only what we consider the core utterance for the analysis from one of the

participants is presented in the paper since the complexity of these conversations sometimes makes it difficult to provide an overview of the turn-taking without substantial contextualization. We base our analysis on verbatim transcripts and are not notifying other interaction features, such as delays or emphasis, since it does not seem like the precision of transcription convention, according to, e.g. Jefferson (1983), is necessary to make qualified assessments of negotiations about doubts about procedural frames.

4. Empirical contexts of collaborative governance

The recordings analyzed in this study have been extracted from meetings that took place as part of collaborative processes initiated by a national or regional state agency. These public agencies are responsible for implementing sustainable management policies for one or several natural resources in accordance with Swedish national policies and goals, and the collaborative processes are a tool for policy production and implementation. In all cases, the management of the natural resource is subject to contestation between stakeholders, who have different knowledge claims about the natural resource and the different management methods, and who differ in their interests as well as in opinions about values and expected consequences of possible decisions and actions. These stakeholders are deeply concerned about and dependent on these natural resources and the decisions made about their future management. Hence, the discussions are important to them beyond the conversation situations themselves since the outcome will have long-term implications for them. The frames for the interactions thus set the prerequisites for a substantial outcome, which is of importance for the participants, as well as for what is considered appropriate interaction. A typical example would be when the Swedish forest agency invites forest companies and environmental NGOs to a series of meetings to talk about and suggest a procedure for evaluating the environmental impacts of forestry. Forest companies and environmental NGOs have different views on how different outcomes affect timber production and biodiversity, and hence they also have different views on what questions are relevant to discuss in such conversations, i.e., different views on appropriate frames.

The cases are defined in terms of the natural resource issue they are aiming to manage: Forest management (F), Management of killing of domestic reindeer caused by large (protected) carnivores (R), Conservation plan for large carnivores, which is contested due to their impact on sheep, reindeer, and game (C), Management of crop damage caused by grazing big birds like cranes, swans, and geese, which are also protected (B) and finally; Management of public access to

land and freedom to roam (A), which is appreciated by outdoor recreation and tourism organizations and contested by some landowners. There are many different aspects of these cases, but for space reasons, we will leave that aside, given that the main focus in this paper is on how the participants jointly deal with expressions of doubts about the frames of the dialogues.

The debate about these natural resources and their management takes place in many different public forums, media, and formal decision-making and administrative procedures. The collaborative meetings we observed were organized in a project format, and occurred in parallel to the day-to-day administrative activities of the concerned government agencies, and entertained ambiguous relationships with their procedures. As a result, and as we will witness in the data excerpts, participants in the meetings doubted the role and practical impact of the documents they produced together. The meetings are all chaired by a person employed or hired by the respective organizing authority, who calls for meetings, leads them, and facilitates the discussion. Although the extent to which the ambition and need for facilitation are acknowledged varies, we consequently call the person having this role the facilitator to distinguish them from other participants.

One intended outcome of the collaboration processes is to produce different sorts of text documents, which are supposed to influence future decision-making. What is said in the dialogue of the collaborative process is supposed to generate text in the text document. We think this is an important contextual condition. The issues, which the collaborative processes are meant to deal with, are material and concrete and involve such things as live and dead animals, forests and trees, and income from agriculture and forestry. These concrete issues are supposed to be managed by the text documents, but in some of the meetings, participants express frustration with producing text documents of an abstract character, when at the same time, their reindeer or crop is in danger. Often, the text document also includes a meta-communicative description of the dialogue of the collaborative process: who participated, what interests were represented, how many meetings took place, what questions were discussed, and so forth. In these meta-communicative comments, a desire to broadly represent a diversity of different and potentially competing or disagreeing interests is often expressed. The legitimacy of the process and its outcome seem to depend on how well the process represents this variety of interests. In a document that resulted from one of the cases contributing to the analyzed corpus, the foreword states:

> The proposal [...] has been produced within a collaborative process with extensive participation. Since we have not reached consensus [...] in the process, the [name of organization] has produced a revised proposal and intend to establish this revised proposal. This has been done in accordance with the premises that were decided on at the beginning of the collaborative process. Although we have

> not reached consensus on the final results, the [name of organization] maintains that the participants of the collaborative process have contributed to the work in a constructive spirit.

We observe that this quote emphasizes that participation was extensive as if the legitimacy of the proposal that will follow is dependent on the extensiveness of the participation. In another of the studied collaborative processes, a process facilitator tells in an interview that he has invited some stakeholders multiple times with email and phone calls, which were left unanswered before he finally could convince them of the benefits of participating. In another collaborative governance process about game and wildlife management (which is not included in this corpus), the legitimacy of the process, as well as the capacity to deal with societal conflict, were deemed insufficient due to some stakes being overrepresented (see also Lundmark and Matti 2015). We suggest that this concern about participation and representation of multiple and broad interests that seems to be common in collaborative governance processes indicates that the legitimacy of these processes is connected to who is participating, what stakes they represent, and how these stakes balance each other. Consequently, it becomes important to organizers of these processes that a variety of stakeholders are motivated to participate and that these stakeholders' understanding of the frames of the collaborative processes generates such motivation.

5. Findings – Negotiating frames

In this section, we will discuss how frame negotiations are interactively done in our corpus. First, we discuss and show examples of how frame discussions are initiated when participants raise questions about or express wishes about changing the frames. Second, we discuss some examples where actors express that other actors' actions are not aligned with the frames, and finally, we discuss how these openings of discourse about the frames are interactively managed, maintained, and closed.

5.1 Initiating frame negotiations

The first question is: How are discussions about the procedural frames initiated? One way this happens is when one of the participants questions or expresses doubts about the process's frames. This questioning often takes the form of a statement rather than a proper question, as seen in the examples below. A participant may, for example, bring up a topic, signal that she knows that the topic is beyond

the frames of the discussion, and still insist that the topic is relevant enough for discussion. Alternatively, a participant may express a complaint towards a particular frame, for example, the aim or mandate of the process. The following excerpt, originating from the forest management case, is an example of how this is done. Here, a participant criticizes the design and the overarching aim of the process:

Example 1F
Participant: "No, I mean... You are well aware that we really think there is... That we begin this discussion from the wrong end. Since we are not very happy about the definitions of the goals that we have, and still one begins with sub-goals […] for them. [...] At the same time I understand that we have this mission. So it's a bit silly."

This example shows how a participant implicitly questions the frames of the process by formulating a complaint about the design of the process, "we begin the discussion at the wrong end". It is not entirely clear which end the participant would like the discussion to begin with, but the next sentence could imply that she would like to begin by discussing the overarching goals. These goals can then be seen as something that constitutes a frame for the dialogue by constraining what can be talked about and what solutions can be suggested. Although not explicitly articulated in this turn, the statement suggests that the participant has other topics or solutions that she would like to talk about, but which are not in line with the perceived frames. She then says, "I understand that we have this mission", which can be regarded as an acknowledgment of the frames (as defined by the "mission") and which then closes down the complaint, or at least shows an understanding, albeit not an agreement, with the process. She ends with a comment that "it's a bit silly", but never clarifies what "it" is. From the context, we may suppose that the participant is expressing the ambivalence of being involved in a process that works towards an overarching goal with which you disagree, but in whose outcome you nevertheless have a stake.

A similar example can be found in the reindeer herding case. Here too, one of the participants questions the frames of the dialogue, this time in the form of the mandate of the process, maintaining that the problem will not be solved unless they decide on a particular solution (culling permit of large carnivores) which the collaborative process in question has no mandate to implement.

Example 2R
Participant: "I believe that as long as there is no [culling permit] we will never get rid of that problem... But at the same time, we cannot influence that in these [text documents], so, well, working with this is a total waste."

This is a way of insisting on a particular solution and that the problem will "never" be solved unless this solution is implemented. Since these text documents, which

describe a future management strategy, do not include the question of culling permits, the possibility of discussing this and suggesting culling permits as a solution to the problem addressed in this collaborative process, is constrained. In his statement, the participant points to this frame, the limiting mandate of the process, and the problem these constraints are causing, according to him. In this way, he has made the frames visible and brought them up for discussion by problematizing them. The conclusion that is expressed is that the work with the plans is not only pointless but "a total waste". The above examples show how a single participant initiates a negotiation of certain frames (in both cases, the outcome or overarching goal of the process) by pointing to the frame and then problematizing it. We will return in later sections to how these complaints are met and how the discussions develop. First, we will look at another way of making the frames visible – by transgressing them or by accusing another participant of transgressing them.

5.2 Pointing out frame transgressions

In this section, we turn to examples where frames become visible because a participant points out that another participant has, or may have, transgressed the frames. Transgression may in itself be an attempt to renegotiate the frames. However, in our material, it is hard to tell whether the transgressions are deliberate attempts to renegotiate frames, or if the transgressor is simply unaware of crossing a line. Thus, our analysis focuses on how the transgression is treated by the participants in the interaction because that is what the participants have access to and what our empirical material allows us to study.

The first example originates from the carnivore conservation case. Two participants have expressed different opinions about a particular matter, and the facilitator then suggests they should put the discussion on hold here:

Example 3C
Facilitator: "I think we'll drop that question and then you can call each other later and continue the conversation."

Participant 1: "Yes, yes, we'll get back with a letter [to the public authority] about this."

Here, the facilitator indicates that the conversation at hand is outside the frames of the discussion. She does not dismiss the issue as irrelevant but suggests the speakers bring it up in another forum, more specifically, that they call each other. This is responded to by one of the speakers by first accepting this ("yes, yes"), but only conditionally. He says they will return to this in a letter, which becomes the accepted alternative way forward. Hence, he accepts to leave it for now, thereby acknowledging the re-established frames of the discussion but insists on the issue

being important. This move can also be seen as a way to express that they do not believe dialogue within the current frame will bring this particular issue forward but choose more formal ways, i.e., a letter to the public authority.

The next case is a situation where another participant, and in a later turn, the facilitator, remarks that the speaker is not acting according to the rules for the meeting, therefore transgressing the frames. The example originates from the public access case. One participant stands out in this process by repeatedly expressing strong opinions in lengthy speeches in a way that violates the explicitly expressed code of conduct for the dialogue. This, seemingly, creates frustration among the other participants. In the example below, he has just talked about his opinion on the discussed matter, although he was asked to report on the group work and, more specifically, on what the group thought could and could not be solved through the collaborative process. Another participant then questions whether his account was a fair summary of the group's discussion. In other words, he indicates that the first participant is transgressing the frames set for the task at hand. He does this in the format of a question expressing a doubt:

Example 4A
Participant: "Was that really what you talked about?"
After some turns, the facilitator also comments on what the first participant did when asked to report from the group discussion:
Facilitator: "Now, you are starting to put into words the solutions that you see that we need to propose, and I understand that you do this because you want it so much, but perhaps you have said enough?"

Here the facilitator steps in and makes a meta-communicative statement about what the participant has just done. She does not explicitly accuse him of having the wrong opinion nor for having done something wrong, but she spells out what he has done, leaving it for others to assess it in relation to the frames. She then suggests that he "has said enough", i.e., that he should not talk more, thereby indicating that he has indeed violated the frames by talking too much (which the word "enough" implies) and possibly also about the wrong thing and/or in the wrong way. The facilitator navigates between expressing understanding for the action ("you do this because you want it so much") and attempting to defend and repair the frames. In this example, negotiation of the frames is initiated by breaking the frame set by the task at hand. Other participants do not seem to accept this implicitly suggested change of frames and comment on the transgression, thereby taking part in the negotiation. However, at this point in the meeting, there is no further discussion about the frames, what they are, and whether they should be changed. That discussion is brought up again in a subsequent meeting, and we will return to this case in the following section.

5.3 What happens when frames are brought up for discussion?

The examples above show ways in which the frames are brought up for discussion. In the following section, we analyze what happens next, i.e., what happens after a frame has been transgressed or when a participant expresses objections about the frames. We start the section by describing how frame discussions are closed down and continue by showing how such closures are justified. This leads over to demonstrating how the frames are negotiated by lifting the issue of the mandate of the process and its meaningfulness for the participants.

Our initial observation from our corpus is that, at first glance, not much seems to happen. When frames become visible, either by someone transgressing them or by someone explicitly pointing to them, for example, by commenting on the transgressing, you could expect an open discussion about them, possibly leading to a clarification of the frames or a change of frames. However, when looking at instances when frames are made visible and could become the topic for investigation or change, we see that most often, the discussion is closed after only a few turns. This closing of the topic can be done either by the facilitator, the person who initiated the negotiation of the frames, or another participant.

We will first turn to an example where the facilitator closes the discussion about the frames, and the other participants act as if they accept this. Here, a participant raises doubt about the meaningfulness of the process, and the facilitator points out that this is an off-topic question. This excerpt originates from a meeting about protecting domestic reindeer from being killed by large carnivores. A participant expresses mistrust at the point of departure of the process. He does so by ironically saying he did not exactly become happy when he realized the process was "another endless story". The facilitator responds by neutralizing the critique, suggesting that this endlessness is typical of all politics. The participant responds by once again expressing doubts, this time suggesting that if the facilitator were the one having his reindeer killed by wolves, he would not tolerate the lengthy processes, thereby challenging the facilitator to take his (the participant's) perspective. The facilitator responds with a discursive closure, suggesting that this particular discussion should not take place now. He also adds that anger will not make the "plan", i.e., the text document, which is the product of the process, any better.

Example 5R
Participant: "Yes but… It's not like you rejoice in that decision… [...] You did so at first until you realized this is really just another endless story."

Facilitator: "Yes, but that's the same for all the politics…"

P: "Sure, but would you tolerate your loss if it was you who felt [sic] the wolf bastards!"

F: "I don't know if we should have that discussion now. You can be as very angry as you like. It won't make this plan any better."

P: "No."
Another participant suggests a lunch break.

The core of the example is to suggest that there is no space to talk about the things the other participant wants to talk about. The conversation becomes a mix of questioning the pillars of the collaborative process and whether to close the discussion here and now. This is a rare example of where someone's emotions – in this case, anger – are noticed and explicitly mentioned. Despite this, in the same sentence, they are dismissed as not contributing to their work ahead, and therefore not productive. In the way this is formulated, the facilitator demonstrates that producing the plan is given priority. Another participant emphasizes the discursive closure by suggesting a break for lunch. By going for lunch instead of continuing the discussion, all participants act as if they accept the closure as defined by the facilitator: that talking about emotions – both about how the facilitator would feel if he'd lost domestic animals to wolves, and about the anger of the first participant – is outside the frames of this conversation.

In the next example, taken from the forestry case, a participant talked about a certain topic, "voluntary forest protection", but dismissed it himself as being too controversial. The potential negotiation of the frames is closed already by the very participant bringing it up, which he does by justifying it, i.e., it is too controversial. Before brushing it aside, though, he discussed that topic for several minutes, even though it had been explicitly deemed, at a previous meeting, to be outside the frames of the collaborative process. In the following quote, it becomes clear that he considers the topic "voluntary forest protection" too controversial since his next proposition for what to discuss, "nature and cultural heritage conservation", is featured in contrast as not being too controversial to discuss:

Example 6F
"But maybe there is something that is easier for us to agree upon, that would be nature and cultural heritage conservation. That one is surely not very controversial to any of us."

So, by his account, the speaker negotiates the frames around what an appropriate topic would be by first talking about something, classifying it as beyond the frames, and then suggesting another topic, which he denotes to qualify through his justification. In what follows, the other participants accept this and start to discuss the newly suggested topic without commenting on the "controversial" issue

that was initially brought up. When looking only at this excerpt and the surrounding turns, it does seem like all participants accept this frame, that is, that only non-controversial issues should be discussed. Notably, we find a number of examples where the participants seem to agree that topics that are hard to agree upon or where the consensus seems to be difficult or impossible to reach are best left out of the dialogue. However, when looking at the rest of the recorded meetings from this process, it becomes clear that all participants do not accept this frame of leaving out controversial issues, although they seem to do so momentarily in this excerpt. Both the controversial issue itself and the question of whether this topic should be included in the collaborative process are brought up again in subsequent meetings. On one occasion, a participant in the forestry case explicitly objects to the tendency to avoid topics that are difficult to agree upon:

Example 7F
"I think it would be good if [...] that one actually, that there is clarity when one has different opinions and different point of views. So that is actually brought up so that you don't try to sort of... because it's better to take the bull by the horns than to, and discuss it thoroughly, than to avoid, sort of, potential differences in opinion, which then comes back to bite you."

The facilitator confirms this statement, but at the same time, notes that there is a need to balance the desire to discuss these issues and the need to make progress:

Example 7F, continued
"No, but that is good. Good that you emphasize that. That is what we want to have as an ambition, but at the same time there are many issues that we can... That we would need to discuss so to speak, so it's, it's a balance there, about making progress."

The facilitator and other participants seem to accept that the topic is brought up and engage in the discussion, even though they keep bringing up problems with discussing the controversial issue in the context of the process. In this way, it remains unclear whether the frames have been renegotiated or not – has this topic now been deemed relevant for the dialogue, and should it be discussed here or not?

The facilitator's statement is also an example of something we see repeatedly in our corpus, although it is rarely this explicit. In most of the processes we have observed, one of the aims of the meetings is to produce some sort of text document, for example, an action plan. The process also has a time frame, often connected to the product, for example, the need to deliver this action plan at the end of the current year. This is presumably what the facilitator is referring to in the example above when he talks about making progress. The collaborative process this excerpt comes from is indeed supposed to deliver a document within a set

time limit. Thus, discussions that do not contribute to writing up the document are deemed too time-consuming and are therefore closed down.

The excerpt above is not the only example of this ambivalence between when a topic is closed down or still within the frames. We return to Example 3C, introduced in the section *Initiating frame negotiations*. To recap quickly, the facilitator signals in one turn that the topic currently discussed is outside the frames of the process, to which the participant who brought the topic up suggests that he will instead send a letter concerning this topic to the facilitator. After one turn, where the facilitator approves of the idea of a participant sending a letter, another participant brings the dismissed topic back and then comments, possibly jokingly, that she likes "side tracks", referring to the off-topic things they repeatedly get into. This demonstrates that she also considers what just happened as a side track and that this is a pattern she has noticed before. She thereby acknowledges the frame but despite this, violates it. The reminder of the frame works as a justification for her simultaneous violation of it. She reintroduces this through an apologizing downplaying "Just a thought about this...".

Example 3C, continued
Participant 2: "Just a thought about, about this discussion. I like that we get into side tracks every time we are in a meeting together..."

What follows next is that the facilitator actually responds to the question and discusses this, thereby embracing it within the frames of the dialogue, although previously announced as off-topic.

This example contains several interesting things in terms of how the boundary between on or off-topic is navigated. The facilitator who suggested leaving the topic never provided any justification for the suggestion, but it is certainly not that it is considered solved. The dismissal of the topic is treated as if it is accepted by the participant who raised it, although the suggested way forward is adjusted to a more formal one, sending a letter. Another participant insists on investigating an issue considered off-topic, and the facilitator allows that to happen. From this example, it is apparent that repairing the frames can be considered co-constructed interactional work. A similar turn of events follows the statement in Example 1F, where a participant in the forestry case problematizes the frames of the dialogue. At the time when this complaint is brought up, there is no further discussion about the frames, partly because it is closed by the participant who raised the issue and partly because no other participant picks up on the question. However, in another meeting from the same collaborative process, this complaint is also mentioned. What we exemplify with this is how the issue of the mandate of the process is brought in. In response to the complaint about the frames, one of the facilitators, also representing a governmental authority, says:

Example 8F
Facilitator: "I think it's important this that we are talking about here. That the goal must always be assessed based on the aim as described by the government [...]. That is what we [the Agency] must base our assessment on in the next step"

To this, the participant who raised the complaints answered:

Participant: "Absolutely, I understand that too. And I know it's another discussion. But, but, in terms of description, it becomes relevant here anyway."

Here, the facilitator notes that this is an important discussion. It is important that everyone understands the limitations of what can be decided within this process, and that is limited by the decisions already made by the government. This is made more concrete by saying that the evaluation of the goals (which is carried out by the Agency) must be done in line with the overarching goal set by the government. Thus, it would not make sense to discuss issues or suggest solutions that are not in line with the overarching goal (this is not explicitly stated but seems to be implied by the statement). The participant confirms that she understands this, and explicitly says that she knows the topic to be outside the frames of the process: "I know it's another discussion". Exactly what is meant with "it" here, which is another discussion, is not clearly articulated nor evident from the interpretation of it but seems to refer to talking about the relevance of the overarching goal. Still, she claims that the topic is relevant in this discussion as well. In the next turn, the facilitator repeats that they have to keep to the overarching goal:

Example 8F, continued
Facilitator: "Yes but we are talking about partly that we have the frame that we as an authority must always assess the goal based on the description that the government has decided on [...] that... that is the point of departure for our job when we come to the step... the next step when we are to make the next assessment."

Here, the facilitator makes it more explicit that this collaborative process must stay within the frames set by the government. Notably, no one is explicitly saying that they should not *talk about* problems with the overarching goal, only that the solutions must still be in line with that goal. However, the succeeding turns seem to imply that since this is the case, there is no point in discussing the potential problems or relevance of the overarching goal.

To end this findings section, we will demonstrate how the meaningfulness of the process is challenged through the discussions of the procedural frames. We return to Example 4A, where a participant expresses doubts about the meaningfulness of the process, and the facilitator mirrors that the doubt has been heard

before pointing out the limitations of the frames of the process. This episode appeared in the case on public access to land.

Example 9A
Participant: "Dialogue and dialogue… We won't reach anywhere."

Facilitator: "You don't see any space for dialogue, but there is no space for changing laws here. There is no use in spending time on that."

This exchange appears in an environment where the frames of the process have been discussed previously. Now, the participant questions the potential of the process. In fact, he even claims with this design, they will not reach anything (anywhere) worth the effort, according to him. It is expressed in a slightly rallying phrasing ("dialogue and dialogue"). The facilitator responds to this by articulating the expressed doubt. The facilitator knows from previous discussions that the participant would like the process to be about how to change the laws and regulations concerning the right to public access. This has been pointed out not to be in the mandate of the process and its participants, referring to the fact that they cannot change the laws. Here, the facilitator connects what is expressed here with what has been expressed before. Based on this, she dismisses the implicit suggestion that they would change the framework as the speaker seems to want. She then makes the addition that there is no point in spending time along those lines. This functions as a discursive closure and shuts down the discussion, also with reference to time reasons. We see here that the frames are negotiated by both participants: The first one sees no point in continuing the process if the current frames remain, the other one dismisses the first one's implicit suggestion to change the frames, and that the question about frames should be the topic of their discussion.

At the very last meeting, from the case on public access to land, the facilitator returns to the topic of the meeting frames. The question about the frames has been a topic all along the process and has partly dominated the conversations both as a topic in itself and as something the participants have been navigating around in different sorts of repair sequences. Still, when analyzing the conversations, this has not resulted in an investigation of the underlying reasons for the resistance against the frames. Then, in the very last of the six meetings, the facilitator brings this up to a meta-level:

Example 10A
Facilitator: What we agree and disagree on is a question of what the dialogue is about. Is it a showdown/force measurement? Is it an entrance to [the governmental authority] and an opportunity to influence them? Is it okay with what is in the invitation to the dialogue, that it is about conversation and about understanding or how much is it possible to work politically within the framework of the dialogue? […] My opinion is that this is not a wrestling match. Important things come to the surface

independently of the number of people who speaks for it. We must continue to listen and understand how others view the issues.

The facilitator comments that the frames have been exceeded several times. She combines formulating questions and summarizing claims according to her reading of the situation. Being at the very last meeting, this does not so much function to reconstruct the frames but rather to verbalize, contextualize and maybe assess the common experiences of frame management in the process.

When scanning through our corpus searching for episodes in which doubts about frames are articulated and negotiated, we were surprised not to find any cases in which these doubts, their background reasons, and future consequences were investigated jointly and in-depth, resulting in some kind of shared, confirmed understanding of how the actual processes with their frames relate to the perceived needs and wishes of the participants. Instead, all the different methods for expressing doubts about the frames seemed to result in either a closure of the question about the frames or in unclear and unarticulated tensions between different views on what the frames mean and how they can be negotiated. We also recognize that when participants express an explicit critique of the frames constraining the meaningfulness of the process, they remain involved in the process.

6. Discussion and recommendations

Collaborative governance within NRM relies on dialogical forums where people can negotiate complex issues through conversations (e.g., van den Hove 2000; Waylen *et al.* 2015). In this paper, we have investigated situations where frames around these discussions are negotiated in the conversations between its participants.

Participants in collaborative processes orient themselves toward the explicit and implicit procedural frames for the interaction. These frames are most visible when they are questioned or transgressed, and when violations – or potential violations – are commented on by the participants. In this paper, we have analyzed how frame negotiations are initiated, what happens during these negotiations, and what they lead to in terms of if and how the frames change, and we demonstrate this through different examples. The overarching observation is that the participants are indeed jointly navigating around frames of different sorts. It is through these negotiations that the frames are enacted, re-established, or changed.

To summarise, we see two main ways to initiate frame negotiations. One procedure for this is when a participant explicitly questions the frames, for example, by questioning the purpose of the collaborative process or its usefulness if

the mandate is perceived as too limited. Another way is when a participant, or a facilitator, comments on the frames because they perceive that someone has transgressed them. We note that frame negotiations seem to be closed after only a few turns. It may be the person who brought up the issue of limited frames, who also acknowledges the relevance or necessity of the limitations, and then drops the question. In other instances, a question about the frames is raised, or a transgression is noticed, and another participant clarifies the existing frames. All participants then act and respond as if they accept these frames, thus closing the negotiation. However, the questioning of the frame is occasionally brought up again later, or a person may repeatedly transgress the same frame. Frame negotiations then play out over many turns, sometimes over more than one meeting. In these cases, it often seems at first glance like the negotiation is closed after a few turns, but questioning or transgression of a particular frame keeps recurring. Moreover, it is often not quite clear whether the frames have been renegotiated or not. For example, issues that have decidedly been considered by the group as off-topic are brought up again and are discussed by the group as if they were now considered appropriate issues within the frames of the process, and then, in later turns, they are yet again dismissed as being off-topic, leaving the unarticulated tensions unresolved – doubts about the frames remain. We find it interesting that although doubts about the frames of a collaborative process take a lot of time and are expressed as being of constitutive importance to the process and the participants, to the extent that they sometimes say that changed frames are a condition for their future participation, these questions rarely result in any deeper investigation of frames or the underlying motives for redefining them.

In order to discuss the consequences of closures of doubts and negotiations of procedural frames, we argue that it is important to connect to the criteria of normative dialogue suggested in the literature and included (although vaguely formulated) in the emic expectations of natural resource management. Dialogue is expected to be a conversation with more openness and more appreciation of differences than other conversations (Johansson 2018; Innes and Booher 2018; Coleman and Stern 2018). We suggest that the premature and unclear closures of doubts about frames hamper the core quality of dialogical conversations because of the uncertainties it creates. As suggested by Habermas (2007), dialogue should consist of a joint investigation of disagreements, knowledge, legitimacy, and sincerity. When the relevance of the procedural frames, and the impact these frames have on actors' ability to represent their perspectives in the dialogue, cannot be discussed until all participants understand the frames and the different perspectives on the frames, then Habermas' (2007) criteria of communicative rationality can of course not be achieved either. This undermines the entire justification for the collaborative processes and the emic talk about dialogue.

This raises questions about why conversations about doubts of the procedural frames are closed before comprehension is reached. Why are there no further discussions around the participants' doubts, and what are the consequences of this ambivalence regarding the frames for the collaborative process and governance of natural resources? It has been suggested by scholars that the sincerity of the democratic ambitions is dubious (Cooke and Kothari 2001), but we rather propose three norms and a fourth condition, which we argue are shaping the interaction and hamper the joint investigation of the frames.

In these kinds of collaborative processes, the legitimacy of the process comes from the fact that all relevant stakeholders are being represented. There seems to be a normative assumption that it is important to include participants in a dialogue process. The initiating public authority, facilitators and other participants need all participants to remain engaged. To maintain this legitimacy, it is strategic to avoid activities which clarify to participants that the process will prevent them from doing what is important to them since such clarity would justify exits. Hence, indistinctness and ambiguity about frames can, at least in the short run, give the impression that it is, or may be, valuable for an actor to stay in the process and argue for their stake. Hence, when negotiations about the frames appear in a culture of ambiguity, in which participants do not know if and how negotiations of frames can be done, it can, paradoxically, maintain the legitimacy of the process. In order not to risk exits due to clear articulation of the narrowness of the frames, there is a co-constructed avoidance of scrutinizing the frames since this might result in some participants deciding to leave the process if the frames turn out to be in ways they cannot align with. The sense of inclusion or even attendance is given priority over profound engagement and clarity about different views about the frames. We call this *normative inclusiveness*.

The second normativity concerns the experienced difficulty in investigating differences. The differences in perspectives between stakeholders are often well-known to everyone and are articulated in numerous forums before these perspectives are expressed in any given collaborative process. In other words, "everyone" already knows what opinions certain actors have, to the point that it is presumed that the honesty and open-mindedness to investigate and learn from each other are lacking. Hence, when doubts about the process are articulated, rather than being read as a desire to improve dialogue, they can be seen and treated as a continuation or reproduction of these well-known perspectives, resulting in a shared sense that there is little hope for success in discussing them yet one more time. Hence, while the essence of dialogue should be to investigate and increase understanding jointly, many participants may interpret attempts at establishing better frames for dialogue as attempts by some participants to impose a form of consensus around their own position. We call this *normative consensus*.

The output of these collaborative processes is often a text document and, as we have shown in the analysis, activities that contribute to the production of text are preferred over activities that slow down the production or increase complexity. Discussions about frames might induce a mutual sense of stress about not producing, not performing, which might motivate leaving doubts about frames aside, even when they have been articulated. We call this guiding principle the *normative performativity*, and it is in line with previous arguments that the efficiency of the meeting is given higher priority than the inclusion of all voices (Blackstock 2009; Waylen *et al.* 2015, Cinque *et al.* 2022).

Although the problems investigated and discussed in these collaborative processes are often very concrete – dead reindeer, protective culling on wolfs, cutting or not cutting forest – the output of the collaborative processes is abstract text documents with unclear function in governance and decision making, text documents such as strategies, guidelines, policy briefs, indicators, etc. Hence, it is unclear to the participants how these texts will influence their lifeworld, and thus it is unclear how insisting on doubts of frames will result in changes in terms of the survival of reindeer, wolves, or forests. This uncertainty is articulated in the expression of doubts about frames, but it works both ways: there might also be uncertainty concerning the meaningfulness of insisting on articulating the need for different frames.

One emerging question from our research is why participants who express doubts about frames or face responses and sanctions for exceeding frames continue participating in the meetings. Throughout the five collaborative processes we have studied, we have only seen two of all the participating organizations leave the process. This actually attracted some attention in public media, which we interpret as the act of leaving being considered an unexpected reaction to what happens in the processes. These exits were done more than one year after the participants started questioning the procedural frames and the legitimacy of the process, which – as we have demonstrated – generated minor interactional consequences in the dialogue meetings. We know of some cases where participating organizations or persons have acted outside the frames of the process and, for example, produced debate articles to argue for their stake in other forums and other ways than the dialogic conversations of the collaborative process, but this is a minor issue in our extensive empirical material and in opposition to how it has been described by others in similar contexts (Anguelovski 2011). The participants say in interviews that they are present because their organizations have asked them to, and they do not want to risk missing the chance to have an influence or at least to monitor what is happening in issues where they have a stake. At the same time, this can lead to tensions since having such an agenda is counterproductive and against the proposed frames for the dialogue process, which is to have

conversations for increased understanding, not for convincing others of your own standpoint. In the public participation literature, there are abundant case studies of collaborative governance dialogues in which stakeholders exit the dialogue since the frames of the dialogue do not allow them to represent and defend their stake (Davies 2007; Anguelovski 2011; Mannarini and Talò 2013; Moog, Spicer and Böhm 2015). However, this literature does not display how these frames are negotiated in the dialogue prior to the exit. In this paper, we have shown that such negotiations of frames take place, although they are mutually and repeatedly closed due to what we call inclusive normativity, consensus normativity, and performance normativity and the double-edged ambiguity of unclear frames, which motivate both the questioning and the acceptance of the unclear frames. This leads to a question with implications for policy and practice: Why is this avoidance of more in-depth negotiations about the frames something to vex about?

The typical anticipated approach to this from political science scholars interested in governance would probably be that collaborative processes do not function when the mandate of the process is unclear or too limited. Our approach is rather that the potential and fate of the collaborative processes lie in the extent to which its participants manage to discuss the mandate as part of the frames of the process and how to use it. What we have found through our research is the paradox that the processes are justified because of the possibilities of the dialogical qualities, but as soon as differences come to the surface, accentuated in doubts and negotiations about the frames, they are jointly closed. Hence, paradoxically, the entire justification of the collaborative processes is counteracted due to the avoidance of anticipated risk of what will come to the surface and the norms of inclusiveness, consensus, and performance. We propose that instead, participants and especially process facilitators need to presume that frames will be the issue of investigation. Cases where this does not happen, cases that are similar to the ones in our corpus, would, in the long run, undermine societal processes and the commitment of participants if the potentially important critique of the frames is ignored.

Based on these findings, we propose a norm for the interaction in the collaborative processes that participants cultivate their joint capacity to investigate and clarify differences in opinions, perspectives and understandings concerning the frames of the dialogue. We argue that these joint investigations also have a value when it is unclear how this immediately leads to a decision or results in a written product.

Funding

This work was supported by the Swedish Research Council for sustainable development FORMAS (Grant number 2016-00657 and 2011-2014-545) and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Grant number Dnr 802-0090-12 and NV-03357-12).

Acknowledgement

The authors thank all participants in the meetings for giving us access as observers and for sharing their experiences with us. We are also grateful for the insightful comments on an earlier version of the paper presented at the November 2021 conference for the International Association for Dialogue Analysis.

References

Abma, Tineke A., Jennifer C. Greene, Ove Karlsson, Katherine Ryan, Thomas A. Schwandt, Guy A. M. Widdershoven. 2001. "Dialogue on Dialogue". *Evaluation* 7 (2): 164–180.

Anguelovski, Isabelle. 2011. "Understanding the Dynamics of Community Engagement of Corporations in Communities: The Iterative Relationship between Dialogue Processes and Local Protest at the Tintaya Copper Mine in Peru". *Society and Natural Resources* 24 (4): 384–399.

Arias-Maldonado, Manuel. 2007. "An Imaginary Solution? The Green Defence of Deliberative Democracy". *Environmental Values* 16 (2): 233–252.

Black, Laura W., Jay Leighter, and John Gastil. 2009. "Communicating Trust, Community, and Process in Public Meetings: A Reflection on How Close Attention to Communication Can Contribute to the Future of Public Participation". *Journal of Public Deliberation* 5 (2): Article 8.

Blackstock, Kirsty L. 2009. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Incompatible Objectives at the Heart of River Basin Planning?". *Water Science and Technology* 59 (3): 425 – 431.

Blackstock, Kirsty L., Caspian Richards. 2007. "Evaluating Stakeholder Involvement in River Basin Planning: A Scottish Case Study". *Water Policy* 9 (5): 493 – 512.

Bohm, David. 2004. *On dialogue* [Electronic resource]. New ed. New York: Routledge.

Buber, Martin. 2003. *Between man and man*. London: Routledge.

Carbaugh, Donal, David Boromisza-Habashi and Xinmei Ge. 2006. "Dialogue in cross-cultural perspective". In *Aspects of intercultural dialogue*, ed. by N. Aalto and E. Reuter, 27–46. Köln: SAXA Verlag.

Carbaugh, Donal, Elena V. Nuciforo, Makoto Saito, and Dong-shin Shin. 2011. "'Dialogue' in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Japanese, Korean, and Russian Discourses". *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 4 (2): 87–108.

Castell, Pål. 2016. "Institutional Framing of Citizen Initiatives: A Challenge for Advancing Public Participation in Sweden". *International Planning Studies* 21 (4): 305–316.

Cinque, Serena. 2015. "Collaborative Management in Wolf Licensed Hunting: The Dilemmas of Public Managers in Moving Collaboration Forward". *Wildlife Biology* 21 (3): 157 – 164.

Cinque, Serena, Annelie Sjölander-Lindqvist and Camilla Sandström. 2022. "Frontline Bureaucrats in Wildlife Management: Caught in the Dilemma between Effectiveness and Responsiveness". *Environmental Policy and Governance* 32 (1): 17 – 28.

Coleman, Kimberly and Marc J. Stern. 2018. "Exploring the Functions of Different Forms of Trust in Collaborative Natural Resource Management". *Society and Natural Resources* 31 (1): 21–38.

Connelly, Stephen and Tim Richardson. 2004. "Exclusion: The Necessary Difference between Ideal and Practical Consensus". *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 47 (1): 3–17.

Cooke, Bill and Uma Kothari (eds). 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed.

Curato, Nicole, John S. Dryzek, Selen A. Ercan, Carolyn M. Hendriks, and Simon Niemeyer. 2017. "Twelve Key Findings in Deliberative Democracy Research". *Daedalus* 146 (3): 28–38.

Davies, Jonathan. S. 2007. "The limits of partnership: an exit-action strategy for local democratic inclusion". *Political studies* 55(4): 779–800.

Eckerd, Adam and Roy L. Heidelberg. 2020. "Administering Public Participation". *The American Review of Public Administration* 50 (2): 133–147.

Ganesh, Shiv and Prue Holmes. 2011. "Positioning Intercultural Dialogue – Theories, Pragmatics, and an Agenda". *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 4 (2): 81–86.

Ganesh, Shiv, and Heather M. Zoller. 2012. "Dialogue, Activism, and Democratic Social Change". *Communication Theory* 22 (1): 66–91.

Habermas, Jörgen. 2007. "Truth and Society: The Discursive Redemption of Factual Claims to Validity". In *Theorizing Communication: Readings across Traditions*, ed. by Robert T. Craig and Heidi L. Muller, 447–457. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Hallgren, Lars and Lotten Westberg. 2015. "Adaptive Management? Observations of Knowledge Coordination in the Communication Practice of Swedish Game Management". *Wildlife biology* 21 (3): 165–174.

Heritage, John and Clayman, Steven. 2010. *Talk in Action: Interactions, Identities, and Institutions* [Electronical resource]. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell.

van den Hove, Sybille. 2000. "Participatory Approaches to Environmental Policy-Making: the European Commission Climate Policy Process as a Case Study". *Ecological economics* 33 (3): 457–472.

Innes, Judith E., and David E. Booher. 2018. *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy*. Second edition. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Isaacs, William N. 2001. "Toward an Action Theory of Dialogue". *International Journal of Public Administration* 24 (7–8): 709–748.

Jefferson, Gail. 1983. "Issues in the transcription of naturally-occurring talk: Caricature versus capturing pronunciational particulars". *Tilburg papers in language and literature* 35.

Johansson, Johanna. 2018. "Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Forestry in the Emerging Bio-Based Economy in Europe". *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 32: 9–16.

Kim, Joohan and Eun J. Kim. 2008. "Theorizing Dialogic Deliberation: Everyday Political Talk as Communicative Action and Dialogue". *Communication theory* 18 (1): 51–70.

Létourneau, Alain. 2017. "The Bakhtin case. An apparent tension between two traditions in dialogue studies". *Language and Dialogue* 7 (2): 236–252.

Linell, Per. 2014. "Interactivities, Intersubjectivities and language: On Dialogism and Phenomenology". *Language and Dialogue* 4 (2): 165–193.

Lundholm, Cecilia and Christian Stöhr. 2014. "Stakeholder Dialogues and Shared Understanding: the Case of Co-Managing Fisheries in Sweden". *Sustainability* 6 (7): 4525–4536.

Lundmark, Carina and Simon Matti. 2015. "Exploring the Prospects for Deliberative Practices as a Conflict-Reducing and legitimacy-Enhancing Tool: The Case of Swedish Carnivore Management". *Wildlife Biology* 21(3): 147–156.

Mannarini, Terri and Cosimo Talò. 2013. "Evaluating public participation: Instruments and implications for citizen involvement". *Community Development* 44(2): 239–256.

Moog, Sandra, André Spicer, and Steffen Böhm. 2015. "The politics of multi-stakeholder initiatives: The crisis of the Forest Stewardship Council". *Journal of Business Ethics* 128: 469–493. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-013-2033-3

O'Connor, Ruth A., Jeanne L. Nel, Dirk J. Roux, Joan Leach, Lilly Lim-Camacho, Fabien Medvecky, Lorrae van Kerkhoff and Sujatha Raman. 2021. "The Role of Environmental Managers in Knowledge Co-Production: Insights from Two Case Studies". *Environmental Science and Policy* 116: 188–195.

Polk, Merritt. 2010. "Sustainability in Practice: The Interpretation of Sustainable Development in a Regional Planning Arena for Dialogue and Learning in Western Sweden". *Planning Theory and Practice* 11 (4): 481–497.

Quintin, Bradley. 2012. "A 'Performative' Social Movement: The Emergence of Collective Contentions within Collaborative Governance". *Space and Polity* 16:2, 215–232.

Schegloff, Emanuel A. 2007. *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis* [Electronic resource]. Cambridge University Press.

Sjölander-Lindqvist, Annelie, Maria Johansson and Camilla Sandström. 2015. "Individual and Collective Responses to Large Carnivore Management: The Roles of Trust. Representation, Knowledge Spheres, Communication and Leadership". *Wildlife Biology* 21 (3): 175 – 185.

Sveriges mineralstrategi. För ett hållbart nyttjande av Sveriges mineraltillgångar som skapar tillväxt i hela landet [E-book]. 2014. Available at http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/17076/a/209657

Wallace, Derek. 2020. "'A Very Good Dialogue'?: The oral consideration stage in UN human rights monitoring". *Language and Dialogue* 10 (2): 171–193.

Waylen, Kerry A., Kirsty L. Blackstock and Kirsty L. Holstead. 2015. "How does Legacy Create Sticking Points for Environmental Management? Insights from Challenges to Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach". *Ecology and society* 20 (2): 21.

Weigand, Edda. 2015. "Dialogue in the Stream of Life". *Language and Dialogue* 5 (2): 197–223.

Wesselink, Anna, Jouni Paavola, Oliver Fritsch, and Ortwin Renn. 2011. "Rationales for Public Participation in Environmental Policy and Governance: Practitioners' Perspectives". *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 43(11): 2688–2704.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 2006. "The Concept of 'Dialogue' in Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Perspective". *Discourse Studies* 8(5): 675–703.

Address for correspondence

Lars Hallgren
Department of Urban and Rural Development
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Division of Environmental Communication
P.O. Box 7012
SE-750 07 Uppsala
Sweden
lars.hallgren@slu.se

Biographical notes

Lars Hallgren is an Assistant professor of Environmental Communication at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. He studies conflict, collaboration and democracy in management of natural resources and environmental governance. He also researches meta-discourses of communication cultures and how such meta-discourses are involved in the production of instrumental environmental communication.

Hanna Bergeå is an Assistant professor of Environmental Communication at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. She studies social interaction in instrumental environmental communication in relation to collaboration, knowledge co-creation and change.

Emily Montgomerie is a Research Assistant of Environmental Communication and a PhD candidate at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences with an interest in trust and distrust as meta-communicative concepts in environmental conflict.

Lotten Westberg is an Associate professor of Environmental Communication at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. She studies social practices in environmental management and climate adaptation.

Publication history

Date received: 31 May 2022
Date accepted: 7 February 2023
Published online: 1 August 2023