



Forest social values in a Swedish rural context: The private forest owners' perspective



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ABSTRACT

The sustainability paradigm of the European Landscape Convention calls for increased involvement of all affected parties in combination with active leadership to promote social values. As a result, the Swedish Forest Agency (SFA) has requested further development of methods for broad consultation and active participation in order to strengthen the social values of forests. This paper aims to identify in particular the private forest owners' perceived need for collaboration and dialog regarding the social values of forests. The study's primary empirical data was derived from interviews with 40 private forest owners. A framework developed by Emerson et al. (2012) was applied to facilitate analysis of the forest owners' perceptions of procedural and institutional arrangements, existing leadership, the current level of knowledge and access to different types of resources. The paper identifies a need for the SFA to become more proactive and assume more of a leading role. The level of knowledge regarding social values was found to be quite low among the majority of the private forest owners. They wanted more information; they asked for increased support and advice, and they wanted to see improved coordination rather than collaboration on social values.

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1. Introduction

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is an important tool for promoting social values in collaboration with various stakeholders (Council of Europe, 2000). The ELC promotes improved protection, management and planning of European landscapes. In addition to promoting cooperation on landscape issues, it aims to enhance private forest owner participation as well as public and community involvement (Agnoletti, 2014; De Montis, 2014; Jones and Stenseke, 2011). Therefore in recent years local collaboration and dialog have become an important basis for implementing natural resource management in all EU member states, including Sweden. The Dialog for Nature Conservation and the Comet Program are two examples of government initiated schemes protecting biodiversity in forests (Widman, 2015). However, such dialog and collaboration regarding the *social values* of forests are less well developed within Sweden.

It is only recently that social values have received attention in the media, among politicians, and in the forest sector in Sweden (Swedish Forest Agency, 2015, 2013a; Swedish Forest Industries, 2014; Zaremba, 2012). This newly awakened interest is expressed in the most recent forest policy formulations and decisions. For example, the Swedish Forest Agency (SFA) has developed a definition of forest social

values: “*forest's social values are the values created by human experiences of the forest*”, and provided examples of such values; including leisure, recreation and tourism; esthetics; health, wellbeing and a good living environment; identity and heritage (Swedish Forest Agency, 2013a: 6). It has also recently become possible for the state and local governments to make voluntary agreements with landowners regarding the management of forests with high biodiversity and/or recreational values (Swedish Forest Agency, 2014, 2013b).

International and national research on forest social values has so far been mainly focused on outdoor recreation in urban forests (Kaplan, 2001; Tyrväinen et al., 2007), while more rural contexts are less well studied (Carlsson, 2012 is one exception). However, rural studies of ecosystem services, not least cultural ecosystem services, including the social values of forests, are becoming increasingly important (Bryan et al., 2010; Fisher et al., 2009; Johnson and Lundqvist, 2014; Nordanstig, 2004; SOU 2013:68). Therefore in this explorative pilot study we focused on private forest owners in a rural rather than an urban context. There are several studies (both qualitative and quantitative) carried out to identify private forest owner' attitudes and management behavior, motives and characteristics both across Europe and in Sweden (e.g. Carlén, 1990; Ingemarsson, 2004; Ingemarsson et al., 2006; Lidestav and Nordfjell, 2006; Lönnstedt, 1997; Törnqvist, 1995; Uliczka et al., 2004; Wiersum et al., 2005). From this we know that the motives differ between the private forest owners, as also mirrored in their management behavior (Novais and Canadas, 2010; Pöllumäe et al., 2014). In many

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cases both monetary and non-monetary values (i.e. some of the social aspects) are valued (Primmer et al., 2014). We also know that views of the general public, private forest owners and forest officers do not always coincide (Eriksson, 2012; Kindstrand et al., 2008; Primmer and Karppinen, 2010). Still, there are no studies that address private forest owners and their perceptions of forest social values in a rural context, nor on if and how private forest owners want to collaborate on and manage the social values.

Previous research has shown that non-state actor participation in decision-making, implementation, and management processes in particular, can help create a shared problem perception, and generate alternative solutions to a given problem (Bäckstrand et al., 2010; Sandström, 2009; Zachrisson, 2009). Participation can thus foster greater consensus between authorities and citizens, and between different interest groups, leading to increased collective knowledge. The need for more collaboration, appropriate methods for consultation and participation processes, and clearer accountability measures, in order to strengthen the social values of forests, are highlighted by the SFA (Swedish Forest Agency, 2015, 2013a; see also Berg, 2013). However, the SFA applies an urban biased conception, and the collaboration is initiated from above. By studying the private forest owners' views and needs concerning collaboration and dialog on social values in a rural context, this pilot study provides an approach that is complementary to the SFA's perspective (Swedish Forest Agency, 2013a), making it possible to examine the preconditions necessary for further development (i.e. establishment of an collaborative governance regime regarding forest social values).

More precisely, the aim of this paper is to identify private forest owners' perceived need for collaboration and dialog on the social values of forests, and what roles and responsibilities these owners consider themselves to have. From this we analyze the preconditions necessary for fruitful collaboration and dialog on social values in a rural context. The results of the study will be applicable to other European and Nordic countries that have a large proportion of non-industrial/small-scale private forest owners.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical basis for this paper is taken from collaborative governance, which is a term used increasingly in the literature concerning public administration, particularly natural resource management (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Yaffee and Wondolleck, 2000). The term is used in a variety of contexts and includes a range of “new” forms of public governance, from public-private partnerships to co-management and network governance, all of which aim to achieve more legitimate and effective policy outcomes through increased participation of various non-state actors (Bäckstrand et al., 2010). The advantage of collaborative governance is that it includes contextual (socio-economic, ecological and civil society relationships, and institutional arrangements) and process (characteristics of emerging institutional arrangements) variables, while seeking to explain the outcomes or results of these interactions. A theoretical framework was applied to analyze the data, specifically focusing on collaboration and participation (Emerson et al., 2012). Since there is no developed collaboration on the social values of forests currently, we focus on examining the prerequisites for such developments in the future. Thus this pilot study focuses on the system context and the drivers that are supposed to affect the establishment of a collaborative governance regime (CGR), rather than on the interactive components that constitute the collaborative dynamic which together shape the overall quality and extent to which a CGR is effective once established (Emerson et al., 2012).

The system context refers to the legal policy framework, prior failures, levels of conflict/trust, socio-economic factors, and available resources, all of which are factors that we consider relevant to how private forest owners perceive the social values of forests (Ansell and Gash, 2008). This is reflected mainly through the expressed priorities and experiences of the owners. We also examine the drivers that are

presumed to be necessary for a CGR to begin, i.e. leadership, consequential incentives, uncertainty and interdependence (Emerson et al., 2012: 9–10). These factors is discussed in connection to the private forest owners' needs and requests. Regarding the driver of *leadership*, the presence of an identified leader is important, who has the potential to handle the transaction costs for initiating a collaborative effort, for example by providing staffing, technology, and other resources that may help reinforce the endeavor (Emerson et al., 2012:9). *Consequential incentives* are also regarded as an important driver, referring to both internal (problems, resource needs, interests, or opportunities) and external (situational or institutional crises, threats, or opportunities) catalysts for collaborative action. The driver of *uncertainty* is primarily the challenge of managing “wicked” societal problems. Uncertainty that cannot be resolved internally can drive groups to collaborate in order to reduce, diffuse, and share risk (Emerson et al., 2012). Another broadly recognized precondition for collaboration is *interdependence*, implying a situation where individuals and organizations are unable to accomplish something on their own (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

According to Emerson et al. (2012), one or more of the drivers of leadership, consequential incentives, uncertainty, or interdependence are necessary for a CGR to emerge. The more drivers that are present and recognized by participants, the more likely a CGR will be initiated. This is examined critically in our study, when we analyze the preconditions for collaboration and dialog regarding the social values of forest from the perspective of private forest owners in a rural context.

3. Method

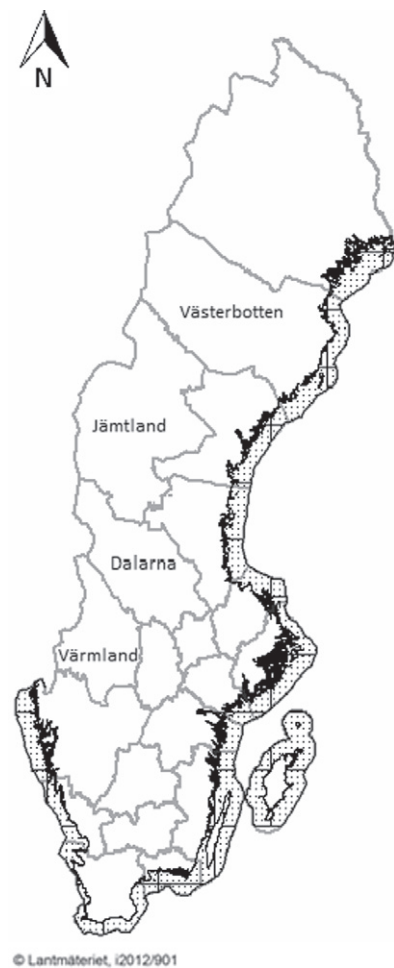
3.1. Case selection and sample

This pilot study focused on private forest owners with land in any of four forest counties (Västerbotten, Jämtland, Dalarna and Värmland, see Fig. 1) in the north and middle of Sweden. All four counties are sparsely populated rural areas but they differ regarding the landownership structure (larger forest companies are more common in the north and non-industrial/small-scale private forest owners dominate in the south) and forest cover (see Fig. 1).

As the perception of the social values of forests is assumed to be context-dependent and place-specific (Bryan et al., 2010; Kangas et al., 2008), interviews were conducted with both resident and non-resident private forest owners. Based on previous research, we know that there are differences between forest owners depending on where they live (on the property or not), their gender and age, in their views on the social values of forests (Berlin et al., 2006; Eriksson et al., 2013; Lidestav and Ekström, 2000; Nordlund and Westin, 2011). These socio-demographic differences and specific characteristics informed our sampling of forest owners to make the data as representative as possible. A random sample of private forest owners was ordered from Skogsägarförteckningen, a complete database of all Swedish forest owners (<http://www.skogsagare.se>). The forest owners were divided into two categories: “residents”, living adjacent to their forest, i.e. in the same municipality (five for each county), and “non-residents”, living in the same county but not in the same municipality as their forest holding (two for each county), or living in another county (three for each county). This provided a total of 40 private forest owners, 10 in each of the four counties studied (see Appendix A for an overview).

3.2. Interviews

The empirical data was derived from semi-structured interviews conducted mainly by telephone (Kvale, 1996; Miller, 1995). In total, we tried to contact 69 private forest owners and succeeded to conduct 40 interviews in the early spring of 2015. To maximize the number of respondents, we offered to conduct the interviews also in the evenings and at weekends. The participation rate (29 owners did not respond) was not evenly distributed among the counties (most came from



County	Productive forest land (1000 ha)	No. private forest owners	Species (% of productivity)	
			Pine	Spruce
Västerbotten	3 002	23 927	45.6	23.2
Jämtland	2 573	13 988	32.1	34.4
Dalarna	1 904	22 206	59.7	16.8
Värmland	1 306	20 673	30.7	37.3

Fig. 1. A map of Sweden with county boundaries marked in dark gray and the coast line in black. The four counties included in the study are named on the map. The corresponding table provides data on productive land area and private ownership, by county (Forest Statistics, 2014).

Västerbotten and Värmland), nor among the type of forest owners (non-residents tended to participate to a higher degree than residents, and males to a higher degree than females). The reasons given for declining interviews were primarily lack of time, and age/sickness, and one owner asked for economic compensation for participating, which we did not offer. However, the main reasons for a lack of response were incorrect phone numbers and no response in spite of repeated calling. The first pilot interview was carried out face to face, and one respondent had impaired hearing and so answered the interview questions by e-mail; all other respondents answered the interview over the telephone.

An interview manual based on the earlier presented factors that allowed us to study the system context and drivers (see Section 2) guided the interviews. The interviews lasted between 15 and 57 min, and all were recorded with the permission of the participants and then transcribed in full. The participants had the opportunity to read the transcribed interviews and were able to clarify, change, and/or alter what they had said, in order to ensure validity (Baxter and Eyles, 1997).

The interviews were read closely and all information pertaining to the private forest owners' views on the need for dialog and collaboration regarding social values was extracted from the data manually. Specific quotes were identified that strengthened, clarified, or illustrated the importance/non-importance of the system context and drivers. Confidentiality was maintained throughout, therefore we refer to the participants by gender, birth year, residency, and county, rather than by name. The original interview language was Swedish: all the interview excerpts presented are our translations into English.

4. Results

The results present the system context (mainly reflected through priorities and experiences) and drivers (mainly discussed in relation to needs) from the private forest owners' points of view. The results are divided into four sections: three covering the respondents' priorities, experiences and needs regarding collaboration and dialog on the social values of forests in a rural context, and a final section focusing on the similarities and differences among the respondents.

4.1. The private forest owners' priorities

This section illustrates how the private forest owners perceived the social values of forests, and what knowledge they currently have, which has immediate consequences for their overall priorities, and what societal role and responsibilities they believe they had when it came to the enhancement of social values.

4.1.1. Definition and view of social values

Many of the respondents were not familiar with the term “social values” and accordingly they had not given social values any thought. Furthermore, many of them highlighted social values as something they more or less take for granted because it is an integral value of their forest holdings and the life they live:

“We're out in the woods on a daily basis, it's more of an ordinary lifestyle for us than for city dwellers. They go out and do “recreation”, but

for us it is a part of our lives. I've lived and grown up in the woods, it is our way of life. The forest is where we live, its commonplace." (Male, 1977, resident, Västerbotten)

From this it was no surprise that the majority of the respondents mentioned heritage and identity as important social values because most of them had a family connection with their forest holdings:

"...it's a connection to family traditions and... and it's the place where we have our roots..." (Male, 1961, non-resident, Västerbotten)

However, the first thing most of the respondents mentioned when asked to define social values was recreational values in general, with hunting, fishing, and berry and mushroom picking given as specific examples (the importance of hunting as a social value is further developed by Gunnarsdotter, 2005). Several respondents also emphasized the esthetic values of forests (cf. Sténs, 2014), and stressed the importance of a "beautiful" forest and accessibility:

"Recreation, to go out and breathe, destress and just be in the woods. But also picking berries and mushrooms is a social value. That you can go into the woods, accessibility." (Female, 1954, non-resident, Dalarna)

In this respect the respondents' views of social values are to a large extent in line with those highlighted as important by state actors (such as the SFA), and also in accordance with the views of other non-state actors (Sténs et al., 2016). However, one important difference could be detected, namely that many of the respondents emphasized exclusiveness and privacy as important aspects when they discussed social values: *"...it's the solitude of the woods, that's what you want"* (Male, 1970, resident, Dalarna). They do not want to share "their" special places with other local people or tourists. Social values were associated with physical and mental health, mainly by female respondents, while male respondents to a greater extent emphasized the economic security that their forest holdings would provide them when they retire (cf. Vainio and Paloniemi, 2013). In summary, there seems to be as many definitions and views on the social values of forest as there are forest owners. Some respondents perceived this as a problem.

4.1.2. Knowledge

When it came to knowledge of social values, the majority of the respondents were self-critical and agreed that knowledge in general is very sparse and needs to be improved both at a personal level and among other sectors of society. A handful of the respondents stated that the knowledge level is adequate, at least judging by their own experiences. However, many did not have an opinion on this at all, stating that they do not know and therefore need a clearer definition of social values:

"I think there are many forest owners who are not really completely certain about the definition of the social values. You would first need to have a proper definition of what it means exactly." (Female 1948, non-resident, Värmland)

Several of the respondents pointed out that there is a need for education and information on social values among themselves, and some also emphasized the importance of increased knowledge regarding social values among the entrepreneurs they hire to carry out a variety of management activities. When asked if they would like to have more, the same as today, or less support and advice on social values, the majority of the respondents were positive, and asked for more support; a handful of respondents were satisfied with how it is today, and none wanted less support:

"I would like to receive more support and advice, absolutely." (Male, 1962, non-resident, Jämtland)

There was, however, one respondent who was reluctant to receive any form of new information regarding social values, and stated that it

is up to the individual to acquire information if it is needed (Female, 1970, non-resident, Jämtland).

4.1.3. Priorities

When it came to the private forest owners' priorities, it was clear that social values in general has a low ranking. Social values were often described as an integrated value of their forests that are seldom managed for their own sake, being instead a positive outcome of traditional management activities:

"...I'm not saying it cannot go hand in hand, but if you look at it strictly economically and how one can get the best possible return from the forests, then maybe it is not the social values that are first priority. But by that I'm not saying that they (economy and social values) contradict each other, it is possible that they can complement each other." (Female, 1970, non-resident, Västerbotten)

A lack of resources was the major reason given for not prioritizing social values, and several of the respondents stated that they did not have the time, knowledge, interest or financial means to enhance social values:

"It has to do with interest, I guess. And what time you can spend on it, I feel. My personal interest for the forest social values is not that high I can tell." (Female, 1980, resident, Värmland)

In this respect, it was obvious that the system context, in terms of available resources, puts constraints on private forest owners' prioritization of social values. Among the respondents who were financially independent, or did not rely on the forest economically, the natural and social values were of higher priority:

"I believe it is linked to the fact that they have a different income. I think it is so simple that those who are managing social values, or what shall we call it, esthetic values, are those with a higher income." (Male, 1962, non-resident, Västerbotten)

Another indicator of how the forest owners prioritized social values could be to what degree they had chosen to write voluntary agreements on nature conservation and/or certified their forest. In this respect it was telling that the vast majority of the respondents perceived certification and voluntary agreements as the preferred policy tools for enhancing social values in the future (see Section 4.2.1); nonetheless, only a handful of the respondents had certified their forest holdings and/or agreed on some form of protection, such as Natura 2000 or cultural reserves, which imply that traditional production is the main prioritization for the forest owners in a rural context.

4.1.4. Perceived responsibility towards society

When asked if they, as private forest owners, perceived themselves to have any responsibility towards society in general regarding social values, the majority of the respondents said yes with emphasis, and gave concrete examples, such as making their forests accessible for other people, and the importance of managing their forests in such way that it was appealing for other people to spend time there:

"Yes, of course one has, everyone can go into the woods, so then you would like it to be well managed." (Female, 1954, non-resident, Dalarna)

One of the respondents referred to his responsibilities to future generations, and another did not see them as being regulated by law, but rather as personal and moral responsibilities. However, there were a few respondents who did not see that they had any responsibility to society regarding the social values of their forests, which indicated that

the degree of interdependence was perceived as quite low by some of the respondents.

4.2. The private forest owners' experiences

This section discusses the private forest owners' views on the legal policy frameworks, previous failures, and levels of conflict/trust, as their experiences in a rural context are an important prerequisite for the development of collaboration and dialog on social values (Emerson et al., 2012).

4.2.1. Preferred policy instruments

In the 1900s Swedish forestry was more extensively legislated, but since the 1990s there has been a tradition of “freedom with responsibility”, with the overarching equal objectives of economic production and preservation of biodiversity (Appelstrand, 2007; Lämås and Fries, 1995; Kjellin, 2001). Instead of being detail-driven, Swedish forest policy departs from general goals, with the majority of decisions are made by the people involved (Kjellin, 2001). Therefore it was no surprise that the majority of the respondents did not want to see any new laws or regulations regarding social values, and they were in general skeptical of more bureaucracy:

“Legislation, there is absolutely enough legislation for forests!” (Male, 1939, resident, Värmland)

However, a few of the respondents could not answer or did not have a view on the issue, and a handful of them were in fact positive towards legislation:

“Yes, I think so, that one should legislate. Of course, it depends on how the laws are formulated, but I would probably be in favor of it.” (Male, 1961, non-resident, Västerbotten)

According to the majority of the respondents, voluntary agreements and certification are the way forward, because the owners want to be in control of how to manage and use their forests:

“Agreements rather than legislation. I do not believe in forcing forest owners to provide... then it may rather be some kind of agreement.” (Male, 1947, resident, Västerbotten)

In this respect it is interesting that only a few of the respondents had chosen to certify their forests. Still, the majority were curious about the new potential of making voluntary agreements for areas with high recreational values, similar to nature conservation agreements, and perceived this as a promising policy tool for the future (cf. Korhonen et al., 2013 on the diffusion of voluntary protection among family forest owners in Finland), i.e. a consequential incentive that could play a positive role in establishing a CGR on social values (Emerson et al., 2012). However, a few respondents were very critical of such agreements for forests with high recreational value because of bad experiences with nature conservation agreements and Natura 2000. Several respondents also requested that the state would set a better example than it currently does in managing and protecting social values in state-owned forests, before they compel private forest owners to do so.

4.2.2. Right of public access

In Sweden, allemansrätten (in brief every individual's right to public access) implies that all land (with some exceptions, e.g. military, agriculture, and private backyards) may be visited, and to some extent also harvested for resources, by anyone, either on foot or in non-motorized vehicles (Sténs and Sandström, 2014). This right of public access is debated in Sweden, and, for example, issues regarding nature tourism and foreign commercial berry picking is often highlighted locally as a problem (Sandell, 2006; Sandell and Fredman, 2010; Sténs and

Sandström, 2013). Accordingly, many of the respondents referred to the right of public access, and how it affected them:

“...one can say what you want about it, but the right of public access is a bit of a problem sometimes. Some believe that they can do what they want under the protection of it. So it's actually like cursing in church saying that one should restrict the right of public access, but I'm actually a little bit in favor for that.” (Male, 1970, resident, Dalarna)

Littering in the forest seemed to be the main problem, when local people use the forest as a dumping ground or when visiting mushroom and berry pickers leave garbage behind:

“...there is just too much rubbish left behind.../I phoned the municipality because I wonder, if it really is the land owner that should pay for this when it's other people using the forest?” (Male, 1944, resident, Värmland)

Several of the respondents told stories of how their forests had been used by commercial enterprises that brought in foreign mushroom and berry pickers: the pickers camped on their grounds and littered. The respondents emphasized the importance of commercial enterprises informing the pickers of their responsibilities in relation to the right of public access (cf. Sténs and Sandström, 2013). One respondent also gave an example of a foreign company bringing in people on guided fishing tours without buying fishing licenses, which led to over-harvesting and the locals had to stop selling licenses.

In summary, these experiences indicate that the driver of uncertainty is prevalent among the forest owners in a rural context, as the commercial use of the right of public access could be perceived as a “wicked” societal problem (Emerson et al., 2012) that needs to be managed with some form of collaboration between landowners and other interested parties to reach a sustainable solution.

4.3. The private forest owners' needs

This section focuses on the private forest owners' perceived needs in terms of what they request in order to be able to enhance social values, and to what degree they see the same need for dialog and collaboration as the SFA.

4.3.1. Coordination and information

The majority of the respondents wished that the state and authorities would become more proactive and engaged when it comes to social values. Simultaneously, many intimated that they are quite happy and satisfied with the way that the authorities do not intervene to any great extent. Accordingly, when it comes to the overall responsibility of coordinating and collaborating on social values there were mixed views among the respondents, some stating it is the responsibility of all concerned, others that it is up to the single forest owner to handle, while a few stressed the role of specific authorities, such as the SFA, municipalities and county administrative boards:

“... of course the municipality and SFA can invite, but it is still the individual forest owner's interest to engage, to be involved in this. That's what I mean, there's a need to change the forest owners' basic attitudes.” (Female, 1957, resident, Jämtland)

In forests near villages and urban areas, several respondents wanted to see municipalities take on a more active role in coordinating and informing activities with relevance to social values and/or rural development. But strikingly, when it comes to what the perceived role and responsibility the forest owners had themselves to engage and collaborate, most did not have an opinion and/or found it hard to answer such a question.

As for who should provide relevant knowledge and information, it was mainly the SFA and the forest owners' associations that were

mentioned by the respondents. The majority wanted to see the SFA take on a more leading role and become more proactive with the forest owners, providing information and coordinate activities:

"I think they [the SFA] should be more active. As a small-scale forest owner, you often have your land enfolded between large forestry companies and you have no control of what they do." (Male, 1962, non-resident, Jämtland)

One respondent, however, was quite skeptical about more involvement of the SFA because it could imply more costs for the forest owner, and stressed the importance of more general information rather than support that would have to be purchased. Furthermore, many of the respondents are members of different forest owners' associations, and would like to see these work more actively on social values and inform and coordinate their members when appropriate:

"It would be gratifying if forest owners' associations could help their members develop their social values, just as today they help to cut up the timber into wooden planks." (Male, 1962, non-resident, Västerbotten)

The forest owners' associations were highlighted as important agents for disseminating knowledge, sharing good examples (i.e. "new" business opportunities as well as management practices) and coordinating efforts and activities among members regarding social values in a rural context via the networks that they have established over the years (see also Berlin et al., 2006; Fabra-Crespo and Rojas-Briales, 2015; Guillén et al., 2015). Many forest owners wanted the forest owners' associations to help to develop the commercial potential of social values. However, a few respondents were quite critical of the associations as such, and did not believe that they had the interest, capacity or resources to engage in social values.

In summary, there was a perceived need among the private forest owners for strong leadership: they wanted to see an authority that takes responsibility for overarching planning and management issues, and informs the forest owners of ongoing activities. In this respect SFA should ideally become more active in its coordinating efforts. However, the need for more developed collaboration on social values was not something the forest owners requested.

4.4. Is there any difference in views among private forest owners?

Two main categories of forest owners were identified in this study (for other typologies and/or categories of private forest owners see Boon et al., 2004; Høgl et al., 2005; Ingemarsson et al., 2006; Urquhart and Courtney, 2011). One large group of forest owners did not consider themselves to be particularly active in forest management, and had not elaborated any thoughts about the forest's social values nor considered how these could and should be developed. Another much smaller group of forest owners described themselves as active and engaged in practical management, forest owners' associations and/or work in the forest sector. The latter category had more developed opinions and thoughts about how social values can and should be managed (cf. Pöllumäe et al., 2014). As for gender disparities, the only tendency detected was that female forest owners in general seemed to be more positive and willing to enhance social values than males (cf. Karppinen and Berghäll, 2015; Nordlund and Westin, 2011; Vainio and Paloniemi, 2013).

No major differences between forest owners by county were identified; the only tendency was that the commercial use of the right of public access was perceived as a more of a problem in Västerbotten and Dalarna, than in Jämtland and Värmland.

Most surprisingly, no major differences were identified between residents and non-residents in their views on social values (cf. Berlin et al., 2006, resident and non-residents tend to value their forest property benefits similar as long as they are members in forest owners'

associations'). All respondents, regardless of whether they are residents or not, stated that it is important to live adjacent to the forest holdings, both for practical forest management and for rural development. They all agreed that it is easier to enhance social values as a resident: non-residents neither have the same opportunities for engaging in practical work (such as forest road maintenance, clearings after storms etc. that makes the forest more accessible and esthetic) nor being involved in different collaborations and participating in the local community. The increased number of private forest owners not living adjacent to their holdings was thus perceived as a problem because "as long as you do not live here completely, you neither have influence nor access to other people's ears." (Male, 1945, non-resident, Jämtland). This has the potential to impede a dynamic collaboration and dialog on social values that in the long run could negatively affect sustainable rural development.

5. Concluding discussion

One of the most striking results of this pilot study is that many private forest owners in a rural context are not familiar with the term "social values", and accordingly have not given social values any thought. Rather, social values are something they more or less take for granted because those are an integral value of their forest holdings and the life they live. Hence, it is not surprising that private forest owners in a rural context do not see the same urgent need for collaboration and dialog regarding social values as the SFA does. Instead they are asking for more information and coordination on social values. Another finding is that according to the forest owners' self-assessment the level of knowledge regarding social values and how to develop and enhance them is generally quite low (cf. Uliczka et al., 2004, but then in relation to nature conservation values). According to Emerson et al. (2012), knowledge can be described as the "currency of collaboration" and thus a prerequisite for collaboration. With this in mind it is logical that the respondents at this initial stage ask for more information and education, and request that the SFA becomes more proactive, taking on a more leading role, increasing the amount of advice/support offered, and at the very least coordinates interested parties and facilitates activities on social values to a greater extent than today. In this respect, it also seems important that the forest owners' associations become more engaged, and coordinate and disseminate examples of how to enhance social values among the rural private forest owners (cf. Berlin et al., 2006; Kvarda, 2004).

The majority of the private forest owners in this study felt that they have a general responsibility for social values, yet in spite of this they do not prioritize social values, which are primarily seen as an integrated part of their forest and so do not require specific management. This low priority arises mainly because of a lack of knowledge, interest, and resources such as time and finances. Interestingly, among those respondents with a lower reliance on the forest as an economic resource, and/or who said they are financially independent, natural and social values were perceived to be of more importance. From this it is clear that the social context to some degree constrains private forest owners' perceived possibilities for managing social values. Furthermore, the few respondents who perceived no responsibility to society concerning social values indicates that the degree of interdependence is perceived as quite low by some, although this precondition is recognized as important for collaborative action.

The preferred policy tool among the private forest owners to manage social values in the future is through voluntary agreements and certification schemes (cf. Sténs et al., 2016; Primmer et al., 2014), but only a few of the respondents have so far chosen to engage in such agreements and/or certify their forest. Nonetheless, the newly instigated opportunity for the state and local governments to make voluntary agreements with landowners regarding the management of forests with high recreational value, can be perceived as a consequential incentive and a possible driver to facilitate future collaboration and dialog on social values. The private forest owners' negative experiences of the commercial use

of the right of public access also have the potential to work as a driver for increased collaboration.

In summary, the system context implies both potential and limitations that could affect the level of success and dynamics of initial collaborations (and also over time). Within this system context drivers are emerging that include leadership, consequential incentives, uncertainty and interdependence. For a CGR to emerge at least one of these drivers must be present, and with more than one the probability of a CGR begin initiated is increased (Emerson et al., 2012). If we look at the prevailing social context and drivers, it seems that the prerequisites for a CGR regarding social values are present. However, many interests and stakeholders are affected, and there is a need for collaboration nationally, regionally and locally among authorities, municipalities and forest owners, as well as there is a need to cooperate and work to exploit the social value resources of the forests for the community, businesses, landowners and public. According to Emerson et al. (2012) it is important to specify the collaborative dynamics between the interested parties at the beginning of the process to increase the efficiency and suitability of a CGR. To make this happen, private forest owners need to be involved and engaged through improved communication, information, and coordination. The first important steps in this process could include the SFA becoming more proactive and taking on a leading role regarding social values, and forest owners' associations becoming more engaged (cf. Fabra-Crespo and Rojas-Briales, 2015), coordinating and disseminating good examples of how to enhance the forests' social values in a rural context among private forest owners.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured interview participant list:

(Gender, birth year, municipal where the forest is situated. Type and date of interview).

Västerbotten

Resident.

Male, 1968, Storuman. Phone interview 2015-02-09.

Male, 1977, Vindeln. Phone interview 2015-02-11.

Male, 1947, Vilhelmina. Phone interview 2015-02-20.

Male, 1958, Bjurholm. Phone interview 2015-03-02.

Male, 1982, Vilhelmina. Phone interview 2015-03-11.

Non-resident.

Female, 1970, Vindeln. Face to face interview 2014-12-11.

Male, 1990, Vindeln. Phone interview 2015-02-09.

Male, 1962, Norsjö. Phone interview 2015-02-10.

Male, 1961, Storuman. Phone interview 2015-02-11.

Female, 1975, Lycksele. Phone interview 2015-04-10.

Jämtland

Resident.

Female, 1957, Strömsund. Phone interview 2015-02-16.

Male, 1966, Bräcke. Phone interview 2015-03-20.

Male, 1973, Strömsund. Phone interview 2015-03-23.

Male, 1943, Strömsund. Phone interview 2015-03-23.

Female, 1956, Krokom. Phone interview 2015-04-16.

Non-resident.

Female, 1971, Bräcke. Phone interview 2015-02-09.

Male, 1945, Krokom. Phone interview 2015-02-26.

Female, 1970, Strömsund. Phone interview 2015-02-23.

Male, 1953, Härjedalen. Phone interview 2015-02-26.

Male, 1962, Bräcke. Phone interview 2015-03-09.

Dalarna

Resident.

Male, 1941, Falun. Phone interview 2015-03-03.

Male, 1970, Avesta. Phone interview 2015-03-10.

Male, 1944, Älvdalen. Phone interview 2015-03-23.

Female, 1961, Smedjebacken. Phone interview 2015-03-24.

Male, 1957, Malung-Sälen, Phone interview 2015-06-01.

Non-resident.

Female, 1954, Leksand. Phone interview 2015-02-16.

Female, 1945, Älvdalen. Phone interview 2015-03-05.

Male, 1935, Malung-Sälen. E-mail interview 2015-03-11.

Female, 1951, Mora. Phone Interview 2015-03-31.

Male, 1952, Ludvika. Phone interview 2015-04-20.

Värmland

Resident.

Male, 1944, Karlstad. Phone interview 2015-02-10.

Male, 1939, Eda. Phone interview 2015-02-11.

Female, 1980, Kil. Phone interview 2015-02-11.

Female, 1976, Arvika. Phone interview 2015-03-24.

Female, 1950, Sunne. Phone interview 2015-05-08.

Non-resident

Female, 1948, Årjäng. Phone interview 2015-02-10.

Male, 1965, Torsby. Phone interview 2015-03-04.

Male, 1945, Årjäng. Phone interview 2015-03-11.

Male, 1952, Hagfors. Phone interview 2015-03-18.

Female, 1982, Årjäng. Phone interview 2015-04-20.

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