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Sawing the Forest for its Trees:

**An analysis of the discussions regarding the EU Forest Strategy for
2030 in Sweden**

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Declaration

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Abstract

In July 2021, the European Commission proposed a new Forest Strategy for 2030 to harmonize European forest policy with the European Green Deal and achieve its environmental targets. This Strategy has stirred great debate in Sweden and led to a full-blown political crisis as the Green and Center parties threatened to withdraw their confidence in the government should their positions not be supported. In particular, the Strategy's proposal to reduce the use of clear-cutting production techniques has proven to be highly controversial in Sweden, as it clashes with the country's "freedom with responsibility" forestry model. First, this thesis explores the political landscape of modern Sweden, mired by instability and fragmentation since the 2017 elections, and the effects of this landscape on the forest debates. Then, this thesis applies frame discourse analysis to 45 newspaper articles from three of Sweden's leading newspapers to analyze the debate regarding the Forest Strategy for 2030 in Sweden. It categorized citations from articles into 14 different frames to assess how media frames Swedish forests and the EU Forest Strategy, then ranked these frames according to their dominance and prevalence to ascertain the most influential frames. The results indicate that there is broad consensus within Sweden that forests play a key role in climate change and that forest policy should reflect this role, but strong disagreement as to what that means. Both opponents and supporters of the Strategy claimed that their policies were the most environmentally-friendly ones. These disagreements may have been accentuated by the political constellation of the current Swedish parliament. Moreover, this study has also found that Swedish media has taken a relatively non-partisan stance on the issue, publishing a similar amount of articles from both sides of the divide. Ultimately, since the disagreements are of substance rather than principle, this thesis suggests that compromise may be possible.

Keywords: EU Forest Strategy; forest policy; freedom with responsibility; Swedish politics; Swedish media

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1. Introduction

This is a thesis about how Swedish media portrayed and debated the European Commission's Forest Strategy for 2030. This document, published in July 2020, sparked furious debate and controversy in Sweden, nearly bringing down the governing coalition.

This thesis is divided into five parts: introduction, background, methodology, findings, and discussion. The introduction briefly explains what is the EU Forest Strategy, why is it relevant to Swedish and European politics, and what are the aims of this project.

The background section provides information about the political background in Sweden that contributed to the debate about the Forest Strategy reaching the proportions it did. It also explains what policy proposals are made in the Forest Strategy, what problems the EU sought to address, and how the forest industry in Sweden is organized.

In addition to explaining the methodology, the methodology section also discusses the primary sources of this project: Swedish newspapers. It analyzes previous literature about Swedish media and media bias. The next section, findings, shows the results of the research. Finally, the discussion section provides a conclusion to the thesis by discussing the relevance and significance of the research results.

1.1 The new EU Forest Strategy for 2030

In July 2021, the European Commission released its new Forest Strategy for 2030. The purported aims of this strategy were to update the previous Forest Strategy for 2020 and integrate it with the European Union's objectives for climate change, sustainable development, and biodiversity.¹ However, the new strategy has come under harsh criticism in Sweden and Finland, which claim that it undermines their forest industries and leads to excessive centralization in Brussels.²

The issue has been particularly controversial in Sweden because the governing coalition depends on the support of two political parties with opposing views on the new Forest Strategy, the Center party, and the Green party. Both have threatened to bring a motion

¹ Commission to the European Parliament, New EU Forest Strategy for 2030, July 2021.

² Pia Gripenberg, "Svenska kalhyggen sagas av EU – ny strategi eldar på debatten om skogen," Dagens Nyheter, November 15, 2021.

of no-confidence against the Social Democratic government if it does not support their position, leading Sweden to a spiraling political crisis.³ The issue was considered so critical to the survival of the Swedish government that the prime minister immediately appointed his right-hand man, known in Swedish media as “the problem-solver,” to deal with the forestry issue.⁴

At the core of the criticism is a discussion regarding how much influence should Brussels have over national forest policies. Per the principle of subsidiarity, forest policy is a competence of the member states since there is no EU treaty on the topic; the Commission had until 2021 limited itself to issuing recommendations, usually in the context of the Common Agricultural Policy.⁵ Now, the European Commission seeks to play a bigger role in forest policymaking to achieve the goals of its Green New Deal.

Both Sweden and Finland have criticized the new plan for being overly detailed and prone to micromanaging. Among its most controversial features were a plan for a joint satellite-monitoring system for EU Forests (Sweden claims its national system is better), a proposal to ban the use of heavy machinery in forestry and to limit clear-cutting, a plan for increasing forest biodiversity, and a proposal to encourage using wood to create products with a long life-cycle, thus discouraging its use as biofuel.⁶

Sweden and Finland were joined by several other EU Member States, most notably Austria, in their loud protest against the Forest Strategy for 2030. This led the Council of the European Union to water the Strategy down in November. In a press release, the Council welcomed the Strategy but highlighted the need for it to strike a balance between environmental needs on the one hand, and social & economic needs on the other. The Council also stressed the importance of respecting and maintaining the diversity of forests and forest management practices within the EU.⁷ This averted an immediate crisis within the Swedish government and provided a draft text that was much more palatable to the skeptical EU Member States.

³ “Löfvens ’problemlösare’ Ibrahim Baylan avgår,” Svenska Dagbladet, September 9, 2021.

⁴ Jenny Nyman, “Han ska lösa knuten mellan C och MP,” Dagens Nyheter, July 23, 2021.

⁵ Helga Pützl and Karl Hogl, *European Forest Governance*, 11–15.

⁶ Pia Gripenberg, “Svenska kalhyggen sagas av EU,” Dagens Nyheter November 15, 2021.

⁷ Council of the European Union, “Council adopts conclusions on the new EU forest strategy for 2030.” November 15, 2021.

Despite this political victory, the Forest Strategy remains a burning issue, particularly in Sweden. The Center and Green parties remain at odds regarding the Strategy and are increasingly distrustful of one another. Moreover, the debate over the Strategy in Sweden was reignited in late 2020 after the election of the new prime minister Magdalena Anderson and the Green Party's congress. By November 2020, this debate had grown into a full debate about Swedish forest policy and how the country should manage its forests.

Researching how Sweden reacted to the Forest Strategy is, therefore, relevant for three main reasons. First, it sheds light on why some Member States express a desire to negotiate responsibilities with the EU on key issues and decide how much power to centralize in Brussels. Secondly, due to the Swedish government's fragile coalition, a relatively small issue – in terms of how much enthusiasm it generates among voters – could lead to a government collapse. The latter reason is why this study focuses chiefly on Sweden, rather than Finland: although both countries protested the new Strategy, only the former faced a political crisis. Finally, this research provides insight into how and why Swedish media framed forest policy and fostered the debate about forestry.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question

The chief aim of this study is to appraise the local political consequences of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. For this reason, the following research question has been chosen:

How did Swedish national newspapers frame and debate the EU Forest Strategy for 2030?

Therefore, the focus of this thesis shall not be on the elaboration of the Strategy, nor the negotiations between Member States and the EU – even though both need to feature in some way. Rather, the focus is on how an exogenous document, i.e. the Forest Strategy, was received in Sweden and what happened within Sweden. The research question has been designed to address the main actors of the forestry debate in Sweden: political parties, forestry associations, environmental NGOs, the media, and academia. These actors expressed their views and engaged in debate on a myriad of platforms: parliament, protests, and the media—it is the last one that is of interest to this project.

Fully understanding the reception and debate surrounding any policy is a key element to knowing how that policy is negotiated and implemented. Thus, it will shed light into the future development of Swedish forest policy.

1.3 The European Dimension

A Euroculture thesis must always consider the European dimension of its subject. Although the focus of the thesis may be Sweden, it also is strongly linked to the European Union. Indeed, its focus is a strategy devised by the European Commission. Moreover, investigating how that strategy is received, debated, and eventually negotiated or implemented in one country may facilitate understanding the European dimensions of said strategy. It could help shed light, for example, into how other countries deal with EU environmental policy, or, perhaps even more relevant, it could indicate the likely future development of European forest policy.

Ultimately, the thesis establishes a link between European politics and its effect on one of Europe's many Member States. In doing so, it covers many of the most important topics within Euroculture including politics, identity, and culture to name a few.

2. Background

To understand the debate concerning the Forest Strategy for 2030, it is necessary to become familiar with its history. This section briefly outlines three critical elements that shape the debate. First, it introduces the theoretical framework used in this thesis: frame analysis. Secondly, this chapter presents a brief literature review on the topic. Then it introduces the Swedish forestry model and explains how forest policy was conducted in Sweden until the publication of the Forest Strategy. The next part introduces the Forest Strategy, explaining how the document was drafted, what policies it advocated for, and how European governments—including Sweden—reacted to it. Finally, this chapter introduced the political context in Sweden and explains how certain political parties positioned themselves in the forest debates and how this affected the overall debate in Swedish society.

2.1 Theoretical Framework: frame analysis case study

This thesis uses frame analysis, a type of discourse analysis, and case study methodology to analyze it. Merriam-Webster defines a case study as “an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to the environment.”⁸ This thesis is a Case Study of Swedish stakeholders’ perception and stance regarding the EU Forest Strategy; i.e. it seeks to intensively analyze and explain the development of such positions in relation to the political, economic and social environment of Swedish society.

Case studies have been criticized for not following the hypothetico-deductive model of explanation, that is to say, they do not provide systematic accounts of broader phenomena, nor can they offer general theoretical (i.e. context-independent) knowledge. Nevertheless, Bent Flybjerg offers strong arguments as to why case studies are relevant within the social sciences and what should a case study methodology entail. First, case studies are important in human learning; general theory can help people achieve beginner levels, but more proficient mastery of any subject requires learning by example and thus case studies are excellent learning tools. Flybjerg further argues that case studies present “far better”

⁸ *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “case study,” accessed November 25, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/case%20study>.

assistance for policymaking than the social sciences of variables.⁹ In this sense, this thesis is a learning tool for forest policymakers, who can learn from what has been done in Sweden, as well as for those who are studying the local negotiation and implementation of EU regulations.

There are multiple theories and practices of discourse analysis; this thesis employs the frame analysis method. Frame analysis is a specific kind of discourse analysis that revolves around establishing frames and analyzing their meaning. Its precursor was James Paul Gee's Framework Analysis method, which remains very similar and relevant to frame analysis.¹⁰ James Paul Gee argued that people's ideas and beliefs are underpinned by assumptions known as "socially derived frameworks" or more generally as worldviews.

One example of how such frameworks function is the comparison between the Ptolemaic and the heliocentric worldviews. The former assumed the planet Earth to be the center of the universe while the latter supported the idea that the Earth spins around the Sun. These beliefs each underpin a series of other beliefs—for instance, how physicists explained motion. Thomas Kuhn argued that debates between paradigms, and by extension socially derived frameworks, would always lead to conflict since the goal of a debate is to prove who is wrong or to reach a definitive truth; James Paul Gee counterargues that the goal could be to deepen our understanding of our own framework and raise new questions. Thus, critical discussions between frameworks are not only possible but sometimes desirable.¹¹

The concept of framework has also been adapted for policy analysis, becoming a popular tool among constructivist scholars. Within political science, the favored approach is the *frame analysis* approach. Emma Björnehed and Josefina Erikson provide a valuable discussion on the use and usefulness of frames for policy analysis in their 2016 paper, "Making the most of the frame." While they do not define the term frame per se – it is implicitly understood as "pre-existing, subconscious assumptions and concepts," much like James Paul Gee's frameworks – they do discuss how the concept can apply to policy analysis. In their view, frame analysis often involves two key analytical tasks: uncovering

⁹ Bent Flybjerg. "Five misunderstandings about case-study research," 420–434.

¹⁰ James Paul Gee- "Discourse analysis matters: bridging frameworks," 344–345.

¹¹ Ibidem, 344–352.

the construction of meaning in a given context (i.e. the framing process), and identifying the effects frames have on actors and stakeholders.¹²

Notably, they proposed combining frame analysis with an institutional perspective as a means for capturing the framing process over time; that is to say, to study the level of institutionalization of frames. They propose a frame institutionalization ladder, starting from the least institutionalized position of reaching the political agenda and going all the way up to formal institutionalization, with clear definitions for each step.¹³ These categories are useful for several reasons. First, they could support popular path dependency theories. More importantly, however, is that they correlate to the effects frames have on actors and stakeholders. Björnehed and Erikson's frame institutionalization concept shall be applied to the frames studied within this thesis.

Frame analysis has already been applied to the study of forest policy debates in Sweden. Rolf Lidskog et al. used the concept of "frames" and "competing frames" to analyze how stakeholders assess the risks and benefits of intensive forestry. They define a frame as "Frames are structures of belief, values, perception, and appreciation through which actors reduce the complexity of an issue in order to support a certain understanding and promote a specific agenda." The theoretical underpinning behind Lidskog et al's frame theory and James Paul Gee's is similar, but naturally it has been applied to the specific issue of forest policy disagreements, thus making it particularly useful for this thesis.¹⁴

Lidskog et al. make distinctions between disagreements between actors who share the same frame, and those who hold different frames: the former are policy disagreements, and the latter are policy controversies. In the first case, actors share an understanding about the situation and the conflict can therefore be solved by analyzing the facts or by developing more knowledge. The second case is more common and more difficult to solve. These cannot be solved by appealing to facts because actors emphasize different facts or even disagree about them.¹⁵ Thus, by deriving the frameworks of forest stakeholders in Sweden from the data, this thesis will establish to which degree

¹² Emma Björnehed, and Josefina Erikson. "Making the most of the frame: developing the analytical potential of frame analysis," 109–126.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Rolf Lidskog et al. "Intensive forestry in Sweden: stakeholders' evaluation of benefits and risk," 145-160.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

frameworks converge or diverge and in which points they are conciliable or irreconcilable.

Other scholars have also recently used the concept of frames to study European forest policy issues. In their 2021 paper, Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pülzl defined frames as “inherent, unconscious structures that help make sense of the world.”¹⁶ Moreover, they also assert that frames are largely based on institutional interests while also shaping these interests, and that frames must be reconstructed because they are not self-evident. Their hypothesis is that policy fragmentation, a notorious issue within forest policy, happens in part because actors have different frames of what constitutes a forest. Hence, they conducted a study to analyze what are the forest frames in EU policy documents. Not only did they seek to reconstruct these frames but, notably, to determine which frames are dominant (i.e. more common) or downplayed (i.e. less common), according to Björnehed and Erikson’s categorization.¹⁷

Notably, Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pülzl collected their sample of 36 documents from the 2013 EU Forest Strategy. They assumed that since the Forest Strategy is the most important document with the goal of harmonizing forest-related policies, it would cite most other relevant documents. After collecting their sample, the documents were divided into 8 policy domains, such as agriculture, water, and biodiversity. Afterwards, they applied coding and content analysis methodology to reconstruct the forest frames in the documents: the authors identified and coded relevant segments of texts and citations. The codes are based on the authors’ interpretation of the texts, using a set of guiding questions, and expected results. They used the software Atlas.ti to organize and categorize the segments according to each code, and eventually found that there are eight main forest frames used in EU documents, such as “forests as providers of wood” or “forests as a climate change solution.”¹⁸

In sum, this thesis shall identify the main forest frames for both kinds of stakeholders – those in favor and those against the new Forest Strategy – categorize these frames, and analyze their effects. To better understand the effects of frames, one of the categories shall be institutionalization level, as proposed by Björnehed and Erikson. It is hoped that

¹⁶ Jerbelle Elomina, and Helga Pülzl. “How are forests framed? An analysis of EU forest policy.”

¹⁷ Emma Björnehed, and Josefina Erikson. “Making the most of the frame: developing the analytical potential of frame analysis,” 109–126.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

by doing so, this thesis shall help understand the root causes of misunderstandings and eventually facilitate future dialogue between both sides of the debate.

2.2 Literature Review

There is a myriad of academic sources on forestry and forest policy, both in Sweden and in Europe. The first important one is Helga Pützl et al.'s *European Forest Governance*. This is a textbook on forest policy in the EU and in pan-Europe, published in 2013. It contextualizes European forest governance, i.e., what is the legal basis for EU and pan-European policymaking and policy areas, such as the European Common Agricultural Policy, affect forest policy. It discusses the previous EU Forest Strategy for 2020, and presents some important stakeholders, such as FOREST EUROPE, which is a pan-European, voluntary organization for discussing Forest Policy that has been attempting to negotiate a legally binding treaty for the past 10 years. In sum, this is the perfect introduction into the topic of forest policy in a European context.

Per Simonssen et al.'s paper "*Retention forestry in Sweden: driving forces, debate and implementation 1968–2003.*" (2015) provides an excellent historical overview of forestry practices in Sweden. It narrates how the Swedish industry became reliant on clear-cutting techniques and how stakeholders pressured the government to adopt conservation measures. Ultimately, the Swedish government adopted a model of "freedom with responsibility" for forest owners: the government introduces non-binding regulations which it encourages stakeholders to follow but does not punish those who are unable to. The governance of the Swedish forest industry is rather provided by the private sector, through international certification schemes. Nevertheless, despite the curious developments of the forest industry in Sweden, it has progressively adopted conservation measures, such as tree retention.¹⁹

Furthermore, Erik Löfmarck et al. also explored the "freedom with responsibility" model in a 2017 paper.²⁰ Their research focused on the meaning of "responsibility" within the

¹⁹ Per Simonssen, Lena Gustafsson & Lars Östlund. "Retention forestry in Sweden: driving forces, debate and implementation 1968–2003," 154-173.

²⁰ Erik Löfmarck, "Freedom with what? Interpretations of "responsibility" in Swedish forest practice." *Forest Policy and Economics* 75 (2017): 34–40.

Swedish context. This model will be explored in the next subchapter, which discusses the Swedish forest model.

These studies is complemented by Lena Gustafsson et al's 2010 study, "*Tree retention as a conservation measure in clear-cut forests of northern Europe: a review of ecological consequences.*" This is a meta-study of 50 peer-reviewed papers, collecting their data to analyze the efficiency of Sweden's use of tree retention as a method to mitigate the most damaging effects of clear cutting. It has found that tree retention does, indeed, alleviate the most serious consequences of clear-cutting on biota, and that the larger the number of trees retained, the higher the impact of tree retention. However, this method cannot maintain the characteristics of intact mature forests. Indeed, the study shows that only small remnants of natural forest are left, with most having become structurally simplified production forests with almost even age-class distribution. Moreover, it also confirms the facts that 76% of forest land in Scandinavia and Finland is private and that more than 90% of all productive forest land in Sweden is intensively managed, mostly with the clear-cutting harvest system. Most productive forests are regenerated with the indigenous *Picea abies* and *Pinus sylvestris* species, leading to reductions in biodiversity.²¹ In other words, the forestry industry in Scandinavia, and Sweden in particular, operates on a model that is substantially different from the EU's recommendations.

Johanna Johannson has conducted further research on the legitimacy of the Swedish "freedom with responsibility" model in her PhD dissertation.²² She has found that the model has led to a de-legitimization of the forest certification process in Sweden among many stakeholders such as environmental NGOs, though not among forest owners and the forest industry, which increasingly believe the process grants them more legitimacy. Her findings highlight that private forest governance should not reject the role of the state as a regulator lest they lose support from other stakeholders. The following year, Johanna explored the same subject further in a research paper published in *Forest Policy and Economics*.²³

²¹ Lena Gustafsson, Jari Kouki & Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson. "Tree retention as a conservation measure in clear-cut forests of northern Europe: a review of ecological consequences," 295-308.

²² Johanna Johannson, "Constructing and Contesting the Legitimacy of Private Forest Governance: The Case of Forest Certification in Sweden," PhD dissertation, Umeå University, 2015.

²³ Johannson, Johanna. "Participation and deliberation in Swedish forest governance: The process of initiating a National Forest Program." *Forest Policy and Economics* 70 (2016): 137 – 146.

According to Per Simonssen's study, retention forestry was introduced in Sweden to preserve biodiversity and protect endangered fauna and flora; climate change was not yet a concern. In the 2000s, as the climate crisis became apparent, some forest stakeholders assumed the position that forestry practices should become more sustainable. In 2008, the government commissioned a study to ascertain whether intensive-forestry practices, such as using fertilizers or genetically-modified seeds, could contribute to climate change and subsequently invited all stakeholders to comment and participate in its study. Moreover, the study also sought to investigate devoting a higher share of wood to biomass and carbon sinks, and whether intensive forestry could be practiced in abandoned farmland. Stakeholder opinion carries heavy political weight because just over half of all land area in Sweden is devoted to intensive forestry – the industry employs around 2% of the labor force, mainly in remote areas where job opportunities are remote. The report concluded that the benefits of intensive forestry outweigh the risks and recommended it be implemented under “adaptive management practices,” i.e. that forests should be monitored and if any risks or adverse situations emerge, these should be immediately remedied.²⁴

Rolf Lidskog et al. studied the stakeholder comments and analyzed their evaluation of benefits and risks of intensive forest practices in relation to climate change. Stakeholders were categorized into being either in favor or against of intensive forestry and their positions analyzed. Interestingly, *both* categories acknowledged that intensive forestry has a positive impact on climate change because it acts as a carbon storage. The root cause of disagreement was not different perceptions about the consequences of intensive forestry, but different evaluations of risk and benefits; in other words, stakeholders essentially agree on the benefits and the negative consequences, but disagree on how important each are. The study revealed that:

“As stated above, those in favour of and those opposing the proposal embrace different frames, and these guide their understanding of intensive forestry. These frames evaluate the pros and cons of intensive forestry differently, but also weight them differently.

Those positive to intensive forestry frame it primarily in terms of climate change, and their emphasis on forest resources conveys the idea that supporting production also means protecting the environment. [...] Negative

²⁴ Rolf Lidskog et al. “Intensive forestry in Sweden: stakeholders' evaluation of benefits and risk,” 145-160.

effects are seen either as possible to handle through adaptive management or as acceptable when balanced against the positive effects of intensive forestry. Those negative to intensive forestry frame it in a way that does not privilege the climate change issue, but instead considers other environmental goals (such as biodiversity) to have the same weight.”²⁵

Rikard Jacobsson et al. have conducted further research on stakeholder perceptions of forestry practices. In their 2021 study, they interviewed stakeholders in southern Sweden. Among their key findings is a perception among those stakeholders that past conflicts used to be mostly about technical dimensions of forestry practice whereas nowadays they are more about the political and cultural dimensions of forestry. The paper provides a plethora of definitions for “conflict” in its bibliographical review and theoretical framework, deepening the debate about forestry conflicts in Sweden.²⁶ Among the most relevant are the Walker and Daniel’s categorizations of *substance* (technical), *procedure* (political), and *relationship* (cultural) conflicts. The first is concerned with type and status of forest habitats, the second with policy, strategy, planning and stakeholder engagement, and the last one with the culture of individuals and organizations.²⁷

Finally, Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl applied frame analysis to EU forest policy documents. This thesis draws heavily from their study and their use of frame analysis to understand forest policy. They analysed dozens of EU documents and established 9 different frames for forests, i.e. “forests as climate change solution,” or “forests as providers of wood and non-wood products,” in order to understand which frames were more prevalent in EU policy documents.²⁸

The literature review reveals several important insights. The first, and perhaps most important, is that forest policy is an old issue in Sweden and even in Europe. Every kind of stakeholder has been debating it for decades. The new EU Forest Strategy did not come out of nowhere, even though some of its contents might have surprised Swedish commentators. Thus, while the main document being analyzed is new and, therefore,

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Rikard Jacobsson et al. “Stakeholder perceptions, management and impacts of forestry conflicts in southern Sweden,” 68–82.

²⁷ Gregg B. Walker and Steven E. Daniels. “Foundations of natural resource conflict: conflict theory and public policy,” 13–36.

²⁸ Elomina, Jerbelle, and Helga Pützl. “How are forests framed? An analysis of EU forest policy.” *Forest Policy and Economics* 127 (2021).

there is a dearth of debate about that particular opus, there is rich literature about forest policy debates in Sweden from which this thesis draws from. Likewise, Forest Strategies and forest policy are an old issue in Europe, having been discussed in the EU and in pan-European forums.

That is not to say the nature of the debate has remained the same. Forest conservation started off as an effort to protect biodiversity, but eventually grew to include climate change mitigation measures and even public recreational demands. Nor has the constellation of stakeholders and their influence remained the same – indeed, the debate would have not become so intense had Sweden’s 2018 election not produced such a fragmented Parliament in which the government depends on both the Green and Center Partie, events that this chapter will discuss later.

2.3 An Overview of the Swedish Forestry Model

Nearly 70% of Sweden’s landmass is covered in forest, the country boasts the world’s second-largest forest-products export industry, and—unlike most other EU countries—forestry plays an important role in its economy.²⁹ Direct and indirect employment from the forest sector is estimated to be around 200,000, or nearly 2% of all employment. Despite large-scale, export-oriented production, Swedish forests have consistently grown for nearly a hundred years.³⁰

Sweden adopts a unique forestry model known as “freedom with responsibility:”³¹ most forests are privately owned³² and there are few governmental regulations or laws dictating how forest owners should manage their forests. Instead, the industry relies on private certification schemes and self-regulation, with the government acting as a mediator and advisor to encourage the adoption of best practices. Due to its novelty, significant

²⁹ Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry. *Forests and Forestry in Sweden*, 2015.

³⁰ Swedish Wood. *The Forest and Sustainable Forestry*. Accessed March 31, 2022.

<https://www.swedishwood.com/wood-facts/about-wood/wood-and-sustainability/the-forest-and-sustainable-forestry/>

³¹ Erik Löfmarck, Ylva Ugglå, and Rolf Lidskog. “Freedom with what? Interpretations of “responsibility” in Swedish forest practice.” *Forest Policy and Economics* 75, 2017.

³² It should be noted that the Church of Sweden is the 5th largest forest owner in Sweden. Although nowadays the Church is a private entity, it is rather different from other private owners. The most important distinction is that the Church is democratic: all positions are elected. Forest policy occasionally becomes a topic of debate within Church elections.

scholarly attention has been devoted to the Swedish model. This section explains the Swedish model and briefly exposes some of the literature about it.

Sweden adopted its current forestry model of relying on private certification schemes in the mid-90s. After unsuccessful efforts to establish a global forest convention at the United Nations, a coalition of environmental non-government organizations, social organizations and forest industry representatives formed the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC works together with local institutions to devise market-based private certification schemes. In essence, forest certification schemes rely on third-party evaluators performing on-site inspections of forest land and assessing whether the forest owner has reached certain performance criteria.³³

Sweden was one of the first countries to implement FSC certification schemes and one of the most enthusiastic adopters. By 2002, one-third of all FSC-certified forest land worldwide was Swedish.³⁴ Before adopting the FSC model, Swedish forestry was marred by conflict and the Swedish state had struggled for decades to implement its forest policy; thus, forest certification was seen as a tool to limit conflict and advance environmental considerations in forestry. Moreover, Swedish forest owners feared boycotts from environmental groups and loss of market share if they did not adopt these schemes.

Due to concerns that large-scale forest companies dominated the FSC's economic chamber, several associations of smaller forest owners—usually individuals—created a competing certification scheme: the Pan European Forest Certification Scheme (PEFC). The PEFC was eventually renamed as the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) after gaining international recognition and market acceptance.³⁵

Unlike most other European countries, the PEFC did not replace the FSC, but rather Sweden maintained two competing schemes: the PEFC being more popular in the south whereas FSC dominates the north. This has been attributed to historical land use in

³³ Johansson, Johanna, “Challenges to the Legitimacy of Private Forest Governance – the Development of Forest Certification in Sweden.” *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 2012.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Sweden: large corporate industrial ownership predominates in the north, while Southern Sweden concentrates on small-scale forest owners who organize themselves through forestry associations. This different structure in ownership has furthermore been linked to considerable biological differences between northern and southern forests.³⁶

Some scholars conceptualize the Swedish forestry model as a non-state market driven model (NSMD) of governance.³⁷ NSMD relies on private authority and, like other private governance systems, holds self-regulation, corporate social responsibility, and public-private partnerships as principles. However, a distinct characteristic of NSMD is that it sets up binding and enforceable rules.³⁸ Steven Bernstein and Benjamin Cashore therefore define NSMD as:

deliberative and adaptive governance institutions designed to embed social and environmental norms in the global marketplace that derive authority directly from interested audiences, including those they seek to regulate, not from sovereign states. Operationally, they use global supply chains to recognize, track, and label products and services from environmentally and socially responsible businesses.³⁹

Scholars have devoted their attention to whether NSMD systems can be legitimate both in general⁴⁰ and in Swedish forestry.⁴¹ In the early 2010s, there was considerable debate in Swedish media and society about private forest certifications schemes and also about whether to adopt FSC or PEFC standards.⁴² This first debate generated a crisis of legitimacy that lies at the heart of the current forest debates in Sweden: environmental NGOs began to perceive private forest certification schemes as illegitimate whereas Swedish forest companies have paid more attention to environmental practices after acquiring their certifications, suggesting an increase to the system's legitimacy in their eye.⁴³

³⁶ Peter Schlyter, Ingrid Stjernquist, Karin Bäckstrand. "Not seeing the forest for the trees? The environmental effectiveness of forest certification in Sweden." *Forest Policy and Economics* 11, 2019.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Steven Bernstein and Benjamin Cashore, "Can non-state global governance be legitimate? An analytical framework." *Regulation and Governance* 1, 2007.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Johansson, Johanna, "Constructing and Contesting the Legitimacy of Private Forest Governance: The Case of Forest Certification in Sweden," PhD dissertation, Umeå University, 2015.

⁴² Johansson, Johanna, "Participation and deliberation in Swedish forest governance: The process of initiating a National Forest Program." *Forest Policy and Economics* 70, 2016.

⁴³ Johansson, Johanna, "Constructing and Contesting the Legitimacy of Private Forest Governance: The Case of Forest Certification in Sweden," PhD dissertation, Umeå University, 2015.

This crisis of legitimacy is linked to the current forest debate about the EU Forest Strategy: environmental activists support the document, whereas the forest industry opposes it. The Forest Strategy for 2030 advocates for a more centralized and state-led approach, which appeals to those demographics that see the private certification scheme system as illegitimate, but puts off those who support the current system.

2.4 The Forest Strategy for 2030

No debate about a document can be understood without reference to said document. The Forest Strategy for 2030 represents a watershed moment for the EU as it tries to harmonize forest policies and align them to the EU's climate goals. It also faces unprecedented Member State opposition. To understand what is the Forest Strategy and why it has caused so much controversy, this sub-chapter analyzes the Forest Strategy in light of the EU's ambitious climate goals, comparing it to previous Forest Strategies. It also looks into the drafting of the document and why Brussels made the policy decisions therein.

In July 2021, the European Commission published its Forest Strategy for 2030 after a period of open consultation. Despite the fact that the document represented a major policy shift for the EU, it made very few headlines and went by mostly unnoticed outside Sweden. Nevertheless, the Forest Strategy garnered quiet opposition from 11 Member States. This opposition is mostly related to the Strategy's boldness and its desire to centralize policymaking in Brussels.

This chapter is divided into four parts. First, it discusses policy fragmentation and the role of harmonizing documents like Forest Strategies. Secondly, it analyzes the 2013 Forest Strategy, arguing that the failure of that strategy in achieving its stated goals combined with increased pressure to address the environmental crisis has led to the development of the new Forest Strategy for 2030. Subsequently, this essay discusses whether the new Strategy can tackle the issue of policy fragmentation. Finally, it discusses the main challenge the new Strategy faces: Member State resistance.

2.4.1 The Challenge of Policy Integration

European forests provide a range of forest ecosystem services, from the supplying of timber products to climate change adaptation and recreational or cultural benefits. Although these benefits occur at global, regional, and local levels, the capacity to deliver forest ecosystem services is generally determined by local management regimes.⁴⁴ The European Union has hitherto had very little say in forest policy because it is not one of its policy competences, as established in the treaties of the European Union and European law, resulting in a myriad of uncoordinated practices throughout the EU. However, as pressure to address the climate crisis grows, so does the incentive to devise coordinated EU-wide approaches to forest policy.

Before the EU Commission published its new Forest Strategy for 2030, most policies and regulations concerning forestry had been enacted within the framework of related policy areas, such as biodiversity, climate change, agriculture, and energy. Thus, one could expect to find forest regulations within the Common Agriculture Policy or the Habitats and Birds Directive rather than an overarching forest policy document, even though the EU has published Forest Strategies for a long time.

However, forest policy scholars have pointed out that such fragmentation leads to goal conflicts: each policy area has its own separate goals and decision-makers must prioritize some over the others.⁴⁵ For example, policies to foster regional development and climate change mitigation under the EU Rural Development Regulation contradict the biodiversity conservation policies under the EU Habitats and Birds Directive.⁴⁶

Scholars are increasingly recognizing policy integration—i.e. Synergizing policies to achieve a larger goal—as a fundamental principle to achieve sustainable development. Integration of sustainable use of natural resources and conservation is considered essential for societies that strive for enhanced sustainability. For instance, subsidies for using

⁴⁴ Carsten Mann, Lasse Loft, Mónica Hernández-Morcillo. “Assessing forest governance innovations in Europe: Needs, challenges and ways forward for sustainable forest ecosystem provisions,” *Ecosystem Services* 52 (2021).

⁴⁵ Peter Mayer, “Preface,” in *European Forest Governance: Issues at Stake and the Way Forward*, 9.

⁴⁶ Metodi Sotirov and Sabine Storch. “Resilience through policy integration in Europe? Domestic forest policy changes as response to absorb pressure to integrate biodiversity conservation, bioenergy use and climate protection in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden,” *Land Use Policy* 79 (2018).

carbon-neutral wood for furniture could be complemented with industry regulations that encourage using renewable energy during the manufacturing process. However, natural resource policymaking remains characterized by struggles among competing policy sectors.⁴⁷

The EU has previously attempted to address this criticism with two Forest Strategies. The first one had limited impact because it failed to garner sufficient political traction—it did not even attempt to coordinate different policy areas and dealt mostly with rural development.⁴⁸ The second Strategy was much more relevant, as it sought to harmonize forest policies and establish some coherence. Yet for the most part, this second strategy failed to solve policy fragmentation. The new Forest Strategy for 2030 was developed partially as a response to its predecessor, the 2013 Strategy. For this reason, it would also advocate for the EU playing a greater role in forest policy and, consequently, be much more controversial than any previous initiatives.

2.4.2 The 2013 Forest Strategy: too modest to achieve anything?

The EU Commission published its second Forest Strategy in 2013, after high-level consultations with forest policy experts. It sought to address their criticism and establish a EU-wide strategy, coordinating policy goals from different policy areas.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the overall consensus is that this document was too modest to achieve its goals. Despite the explicit objective to formulate more coherent policy, forest policy remained fragmented across policy areas and EU initiatives still were not legally-binding.⁵⁰

An analysis of 36 EU policy documents related to forests, including the 2013 Forest Strategy, has shown that policy fragmentation remains a salient issue. Using frame analysis theory, Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl identified nine competing forest policy frames, which range from forests as “providers of wood and non-wood products” and “contributors to the bioeconomy” to “climate change solution” and “sustain socio-

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Filip Aggestam and Helga Pützl. “Coordinating the Uncoordinated: The EU Forest Strategy,” *Forests* 9, 2018

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl. “How are forests framed? An analysis of EU forest policy,” *Forest Policy and Economics* 127 (2021).

cultural well-being.” EU documents had not settled on a unified position for the role of forests nor weighed the tradeoffs from different policy frames. More importantly, the 2013 Forest Strategy was deemed to only “address a limited number of policy objectives and not fundamentally address or even try to resolve the tradeoffs generated by various forest-related documents.⁵¹”

Indeed, the 2013 Forest Strategy had four guiding principles: sustainable forest management (SFM), the multifunctional role of forests, resource efficiency, and global forest responsibility. The aforementioned study found that the multifunctional role of forests scarcely featured in forest-related policy documents because it was ambiguous and often left to be defined at the local level. On the other hand, SFM was not only a core principle but also the linchpin of both main stated objectives: first, to ensure all European forests are managed according to SFM principles, and secondly, to promote SFM at a global level.

SFM and resource efficiency are more closely related to the two most dominant frames in policy documents: the provision of wood and non-wood products (i.e. timber production), and contributing to the bioeconomy. These are much more in line with the traditional use of forests because they value forests for the tangible goods that they can provide.⁵² The focus on traditional economic goals has drawn harsh criticism from environmental groups. They claimed the Strategy “had no teeth” and did not address climate concerns properly. They also strongly criticized the lack of performance targets and an action plan.⁵³

The result was that despite attempts to craft a more holistic approach, the 2013 Strategy retained a narrow perspective of what can be considered “forest-related policy.” It did not consider the full forest value chain: several policy instruments that generate significant costs for forest-based industries and also many EU policy objectives that affect the forest value chain were not included in the Strategy. The 2013 Strategy also failed to adequately coordinate those policy objectives that were included and it lacked a dominant steering instrument.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl. “How are forests framed?”

⁵³ David Keating. “EU unveils forest strategy,” *Politico*, September 20, 2013.

In sum, there are three reasons the 2013 Strategy failed. First, it did not establish clearly-defined parameters about what makes a policy domain “forest-relevant.” This led it to fail to consider the entire forest value-chain, prioritizing traditional forestry practices over its multifunctional forestry objective. Secondly, it did not directly address the trade-offs generated between various policy instruments already affecting the forest-based sector. Finally, it did not gain sufficient political support.⁵⁴

2.4.3 The New Forest Strategy for 2030: too ambitious?

To address the criticism that the 2013 Forest Strategy had failed to tackle the issue of policy fragmentation, the EU Commission initiated an open consultation process in late 2020 to draft a new Forest Strategy. The EU received around 19,000 replies, over 90% of which came from private citizens voicing their concerns; the remaining were opinions from businesses, NGOs, and government officials. Curiously, nearly 17,000 respondents were Polish citizens, which raised concerns that the consultation might have produced biased or skewed results.⁵⁵

The consultation generally indicated that stakeholders placed great value in forest conservation, biodiversity, and climate change mitigation or adaptation. Polish citizens were also much more likely than other respondents to support prioritizing climate goals in the upcoming Forest Strategy. But the starkest and perhaps most important contrast was related to ranking the statement “Foster a stronger coordination between national forest policies and the European Green Deal’s objectives.” While Polish citizens overwhelmingly rated this as either very important (58%) or important (20%), organizations like businesses, NGOs, and governments were much more skeptical. Many rated it as “not important” (25%) or only slightly important (20%).

Nearly as relevant was that the same organizations were also skeptical of the EU’s proposal to “harmonize the monitoring of forests”—this would later become a burning

⁵⁴ Filip Aggestam and Helga Pützl. “Coordinating the Uncoordinated.”

⁵⁵ Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Stakeholder Consultation and Evidence Base for the New EU Forest Strategy for 2030*, COM 572 Final, July 2021

issue for the Swedish government.⁵⁶ Despite sample bias, the EU has chosen to pursue some objectives that were only popular among one demographic: it has added “improved monitoring” as one of the main stated goals of its Forest Strategy for 2030, to name one.⁵⁷

The resulting Strategy published in 2021 is much more ambitious in scope than previous efforts. In contrast with the previous Strategy, its guiding principles are the European Green Deal, the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, and the multifunctional role of forests.⁵⁸ While important, guiding principles do not mean much if policy targets and instruments do not correspond to them—the previous Strategy claimed multifunctional forestry as a principle, yet seldom acted on it.

The new Strategy for 2030 features more concrete targets. Its main aim is to achieve the EU’s target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% in 2030, as per the Fit for 55 package and European Climate Law. The other major targets are: planting 3 billion trees by 2030, encouraging the use of wood according to the cascading principle⁵⁹ and fostering larger, healthier and more diverse forests for carbon storage and sequestration, mitigating air pollution, and halting the habitat loss of species.

The Strategy for 2030 also establishes several minor targets. It determines that the EU Commission should develop a standard methodology to quantify the climate benefits of wood construction products and a 2050 roadmap for reducing whole life-cycle emissions in buildings. These are part of the Strategy’s focus on the cascading principle and encouraging the use of wood in construction. It also establishes that all primary and old-growth forests in the EU must be strictly protected, proposing a new law to establish a common monitoring mechanism for the entire EU for this purpose.

The EU Commission has also moved to define key terms in forest policy, but refrained from making any final decisions. The Strategy acknowledged the need for establishing technical criteria to define “primary” and “old-growth” forests—the definition varies

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ European Commission, *Nature and Forest Strategy Factsheet*, [FS/21/3670](#).

⁵⁸ Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *New EU Forest Strategy for 2030*, COM 572 Final, July 2021.

⁵⁹ Under this principle, wood is used in the following order of priorities: 1. Wood-based products, 2. Extending their life service, 3. Re-use, 4. Recycling, 5. Bio-energy, 6. disposal.

from country to country. But instead of defining the term outright, it established a Working Group that should work alongside Member States and provide a common definition within a six month deadline.⁶⁰

Likewise, the Commission has also recognized some of the trade-offs in forest policy, but postponed or delegated making decisions. The Strategy simultaneously calls for prioritizing the use of wood for long-lasting products as per the cascading principle, and replacing fossil fuels with biomass energy—two contradictory policy goals. While its only concrete solution is asking Member States to minimize the use of whole trees for bioenergy, it also determines that the Commission must eventually adopt a delegated act specifying how to apply the cascading principle for biomass.

The change in guiding principles, the establishment of better defined targets, and the recognition that trade-offs exist in forest policymaking have all contributed to the Forest Strategy for 2030's bold proposals. Like the previous document, most measures are voluntary. The EU Commission lays out goals and principles that are meant to harmonize national and EU policy and provides the technical know-how to Member States in an effort to improve policymaking. Nevertheless, though the proposals remain voluntary, their scope is unprecedented.

The Commission has explicitly called for Member States to establish national payment schemes for ecosystem services provided by forest owners. It cites Finland as its main inspiration: the Finnish METSO program pays private forest owners to set aside land for biodiversity. It also suggests that forest owners be compensated for the costs and income foregone by climate change and climate adaptation measures. Additionally, Brussels has encouraged Member States to adopt carbon farming practices, including the adoption of tradable carbon certificates.

Brussels has stoked even more controversy by telling Member States how to manage their forests. It says that clear-cutting—the practice of cutting down every tree in an area—should only be used in “duly justified cases,” due to concerns that it is detrimental for

⁶⁰ The Working Group did not meet its deadline. It has recently published a report about mapping and assessing primary and old-growth forests in which it considered six different definitions for those terms. See: José Barredo et al. *Mapping and assessment of primary and old-growth forests in Europe*, 2021.

biodiversity. It has proposed limiting the usage of heavy machinery in forestry and banning logging during the bird-nesting period. These proposals all have backing from environmental groups but raised eyebrows from the Swedish and Finnish governments. In addition, the Forest Strategy openly advocates for close-to-nature forestry, a system which the Swedish and Finnish governments claim is ill-suited for colder climates.⁶¹

Perhaps the most notable shift, however, is that the European Commission announced it will put forward a proposal for an EU-wide integrated forest monitoring framework. It claims that forest data within the EU is patchy and that it is hard to compare data from different member states. Though the details of this system have not yet been announced, the Strategy for 2030 determines that the EU should be in charge of the entire system. Data should be collected and reported according to “priority EU policy-relevant topics” such as climate change, biodiversity, health, forest management systems, etc. Unlike previous forest policies developed in Brussels, which were voluntary, this monitoring system would be mandatory: in effect, the Commission is seizing a new competence for itself.

Overall, the Forest Strategy for 2030 seeks to address most of the criticism that had been leveled at past initiatives. It attempts to define ambiguous terms, it recognizes and tries to deal with trade offs, it sets concrete targets and ambitious principles. It even establishes policy coherence as one of its sub-objectives. The Commission has addressed to some degree all three reasons cited as contributing to the failure of the previous Strategy.

2.4.4 Obstacles to the new Forest Strategy: political backlash

The Forest Strategy for 2030 faced immediate backlash from several Member States, chiefly Sweden and Finland. Their main concern is that Brussels is encroaching on policy domains that had until now been the exclusive preserve of Member States. Some of them, particularly Sweden and Finland, are also concerned that the Strategy threatens their own forest sectors.

⁶¹ Dr. Björn Hägglund. “The EU Commission got its Forest Strategy wrong,” *EU Observer*, August 27, 2021.

Sweden and Finland oppose most of the ambitious proposals of the new Forest Strategy. Specifically, they opposed limiting the practice of clear-cutting—on which their industries depend—the usage of heavy machinery, felling down trees during bird-nesting periods, and the EU monitoring system. They claim that while some practices might look ugly, their industry is advanced enough to employ those techniques in a sustainable and climate-friendly manner. It is not uncommon to find newspaper headlines implying that clear-cutting is actually good for forests.⁶²

Both Nordic nations are skeptical that the European Union is better suited to manage forests than local governments. Efforts to define what constitutes primary and old-growth forest, for example, have met ridicule from some Finnish politicians. One even claimed that “there is no European forest,” only “Swedish, Finnish, French, Greek...” forests.⁶³ Although the Commission claims in the Forest Strategy that it will take local considerations into account,⁶⁴ the Nordics fear that the Commission will ignore the needs of boreal forests and formulate policy based on the needs for warmer-climate forests. The Strategy advocates for close-to-nature forestry and the minimization of clear-cutting, a combination that Sweden claims does not work in colder climates.⁶⁵

The most contentious point, however, is the EU forest monitoring system. Unlike most other proposals, this one is not voluntary. It has faced opposition from 11 Member States, most notably Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Finland. These states have called for rejecting the Forest Strategy outright because it infringes on the principle of subsidiarity. They reject the EU taking over competences that had been the exclusive preserve of Member States and fear the proposal will only lead to more centralization, ineffective regulations, and administrative burdens.⁶⁶ One Finnish politician has gone as far as calling the measure a “power creep.”⁶⁷

⁶² For example, a major national newspaper in Sweden published an article titled “Clear-cutting is needed so that new tall trees can grow” (translation provided by the author of this essay). See: Lars Lundqvist. “DN Debatt: Kalhyggen behövs för att nya höga träd ska växa,” *Dagens Nyheter*, October 16, 2021.

⁶³ Frédéric Simon. “Finnish MEP: ‘I’m against the power creep in the EU’s forest strategy’,” *Euractiv*, September 23, 2021.

⁶⁴ One of the Strategy’s principles is “The right tree in the right place and for the right purpose.”

⁶⁵ Dr. Björn Häggglund. “The EU Commission got its Forest Strategy wrong,” *EU Observer*, August 27, 2021.

⁶⁶ Elena Sánchez Nicolás. “EU diplomats oppose common forest-monitoring rules,” *EU Observer*, September 16, 2021.

⁶⁷ Frédéric Simon. “Finnish MEP: ‘I’m against the power creep in the EU’s forest strategy’,”

The Council of the European Union has already proposed watering down the Forest Strategy for 2030. On the one hand, it welcomed the Commission's desire to promote sustainable wood products, and agreed that forests should contribute more to the European Green Deal. On the other hand, it claimed that the Strategy must strike a balance between environmental, social and economic aspects of forestry and expressed doubt about centralizing policymaking in Brussels. The Council of the EU called for respecting the diversity of forest management practices, a rebuff to the Commission's desire to limit clear-cutting and promote close-to-nature forestry. It also expressed doubt about the monitoring system.⁶⁸

What distinguishes Sweden from other Member States that dislike the Forest Strategy is that in Sweden it has caused a full-blown political crisis. The prospect of the European Union telling Sweden how to manage its forests has infuriated many Swedish industry representatives and politicians.⁶⁹ The Swedish Social Democratic government depends on support from the pro-Strategy Green Party and the anti-Strategy Center Party. Both have threatened to call a motion of no-confidence if their wishes are denied, leaving the government in a tightrope. In response, the then-Prime Minister Stefan Löfven appointed his right-hand man Ibrahim Baylan to lead negotiations at the Council of the European Union to water down the Forest Strategy as much as possible and make it palatable to both Green and Center parties.⁷⁰

In September 2021, the Swedish government submitted a report on the EU Forest Strategy to the Swedish parliament. The government welcomed the prioritization of climate and environmental issues and recognized that declining biodiversity is a challenge that must be addressed and that forests play a central role in combating climate change. However, it also declared its concern that the Strategy is moving "in a direction that entails

⁶⁸ Council of the EU. "Council adopts conclusions on the new EU forest strategy for 2030." November 15, 2021. Accessed March 31, 2021. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/15/council-adopts-conclusions-on-the-new-eu-forest-strategy-for-2030/#>.

⁶⁹ Charlie Duxbury. "Sweden goes to war over its forests," *Politico*, July 27, 2021.

⁷⁰ "Löfvens 'problemlösare' Ibrahim Baylan avgår," *Svenska Dagbladet*, September 9, 2021.

increasingly detailed regulation, increased centralization, and increased supranational elements.”⁷¹

In this report, the Swedish government laid out its official position. First, it stated that when rules are required at a EU-level, they must be preceded by a cost-benefit analysis before enforcement. Secondly, it says that national self-determination in forestry issues must be protected: the EU has no collective forest policy and responsibility for forests must lie with Member States. Finally, the report states that the government believes its current forest policy is sustainable and that any forest policy must fully account for all different benefits that forests provide: environmental, social, and economic.

The report states that although the Strategy is non-binding, some elements may be or become binding when implemented, a fact that the government sees with concern and led it to accuse the Strategy of undermining national self-determination. It lamented the proposed monitoring system and also a proposal that all national governments should elaborate strategic forest management plans—using an EU framework. The government did not share the EU Commission’s assessment that EU Member States lack long-term vision and strategic plans for their forests and oppose the creation of common structures for these plans at an EU level.

In sum, the Swedish government generally welcomed all principles under which the Forest Strategy was drafted but rejected its policy proposals. It welcomed the efforts to prioritize biodiversity and the environment but questioned to what extent the EU should be involved in policymaking.

2.5 The Politics of the Forest Debate

It is impossible to understand the Swedish media debate about the EU Forest Strategy without setting it into its appropriate political context. In this case, this means explaining the conflict between the Center and Green Parties, and how the ruling Social Democrats

⁷¹ Regeringskansliet. *EU:s skogsstrategi för 2030*. Faktapromemoria 2020/21:FPM145, Stockholm: Regeringskansliet, 2021. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/fakta-pm-om-eu-forslag/eus-skogsstrategi-for-2030_H806FPM145. Accessed April 9th, 2022.

were caught up in this argument. This section will contextualize Swedish politics in 2021 and explain the roles of the key political actors in the forest debate.

While most political parties had a position on the forest debate, only three of them truly mattered in this debate: the Center Party (*Centerpartiet*), the Green Party (*Miljöpartiet*), and the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokraterna*). Although other parties such as the Moderate or the Left parties may have had strong opinions on the subject, they did not have the power to bring down the government and therefore were not capable of capturing the spotlight in the debate.

The 2018 elections produced the most unstable Swedish parliament since World War 2. No party or coalition was able to produce a majority and the negotiations to form a government lasted for months. The main reason behind the instability was the right-wing populist Swedish Democrats⁷² party attaining 17.5% of the vote. All other parties refused to negotiate with the Swedish Democrats, making it virtually impossible for any political block to attain a majority.⁷³

After months of negotiation, parliament reached an uneasy agreement: the January Agreement (*januariavtalet*)⁷⁴. This was 73-point agreement between four parties from two rival blocks: on the left, the Social Democrats and the Greens, and on the right, the Center and the Liberals. The main objective of this agreement was to form a government without the Swedish Democrats; the Center and Liberal parties promised to support a Green-Social Democratic coalition as long as they respected the 73-points of the agreement. Most of their demands concerned budget negotiations and the allocation of resources, but one concern for both right-wing parties was also limiting the influence of the Left party, a traditional ally of the Social Democrats. Seeing no alternative way to form a government, the Social Democrats agreed.

The Center and Liberal parties never joined the ruling coalition, but would vote in favor of choosing Stefan Löfven from the Social Democratic party as the prime minister. They

⁷² Elif Saglam, and Marcellino Roaks, *Sverigedemokraterna och populismen: Retorik eller verklighet?* Bachelor Thesis, Mälardalen University, 2021.

⁷³ Bryan Bayne, *Swedish Politics: Boring no more?*, 2021.

⁷⁴ Available in Swedish at: <https://januariavtalet.se/>.

also promised to support him when enacting policies from the agreement. Thus, while not being part of the government per se, their support was essential for the Social Democrats to remain in power—and in particular, the support from the Center party, which had nearly 9% of the seats in parliament, compared to 6% for the Liberals. In other words, the Center party had become the kingmaker in Swedish politics.

There were two provisions in the January Agreement that were related to forest policy. Point 26, included at the behest of the Center Party, was to *strengthen the property rights of forest owners*. They also demanded that should any forest area be granted protection status, forest owners should be financially compensated for that. Point 27, though, went in another direction: it was to *increase resources destined to protect valuable nature*, including forests. This tension would manifest itself again during the forest debates in 2021.

Having established *why* the Center and Green parties have taken the spotlight in the debate, it is now necessary to explain *what* were their positions and *who* did they represent.

In the past, the Center party used to be called the Farmer's party. Although it changed names in an attempt to modernize itself, it remains strongly associated with agriculture and small-town voters. David Berg and David Svenbrink have shown that in recent years, the Center party has tried to project an image of entrepreneurship and environmental protection, but it remains nevertheless associated with rural voters and draws most of its support from rural Sweden.⁷⁵ It is thus relatively more environmentally-friendly than similar parties elsewhere and even other parties within Sweden. Nevertheless, it also strongly supports its rural base, even when that might clash with the demands of environmental activists.

This explains taking positions such as “nature must be preserved” but also “landowners must be financially compensated if their land is set aside for protection.” Likewise, it also explains the Center party's position that clear-cutting—when done in specific conditions—is good for the environment and the forests. That is an attempt to balance the

⁷⁵ David Berg, and David Svenbrink, *Samband mellan Identitet & Image - En studie av Centerpartiet*, Master's Thesis, Uppsala University, 2011.

concerns of their voters, many of which are forest owners, with environmental and sustainability considerations. In the GAL-TAN scale—a popular tool for measuring ideological alignment in Sweden—the Center party lies closer to the Green party than to other parties on the right-wing alliance block.⁷⁶

On the other hand, the Green party draws most of its support from highly-educated youth in Sweden's three biggest cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö—over 50% of its voters are concentrated in these municipalities. It enjoys little support outside these cities or among other demographic groups.⁷⁷ This results in a party with a much more international and activist outlook than the Center party, and thus much more supportive of the European Union.

Thus, despite both parties portraying themselves as pro-environment, and ranking as more environmentalist than most other parties on the GAL-TAN scale, their very different support bases result in different positions in the forest debate. The Center party strongly opposed the EU Forest Strategy, whereas the Green party strongly supported it, to the point where the issue became existential to both parties. Both defended their positions by claiming to defend the environment and support sustainable development.

It is important to note that shortly before the EU Strategy had been unveiled, the Green party left the government coalition. In June 2021, an unrelated matter resulted in the first successful motion of no confidence in Sweden since the Second World War, bringing down Stefan Löfven's Green-Social Democratic government. Once again, as other parties refused to work with the Sweden Democrats, it was impossible for anyone to form a majority. After weeks of negotiation, once again the Swedish parliament chose Stefan Löfven to lead a Green-Social Democratic minority government, with support from the Center (but not the Liberals) and the Left parties.

Although the government remained the same after the no-confidence vote, it was a significant moment in Swedish politics. It represented a level of political instability

⁷⁶ Richard Svensson, "Partiernas Ideologiska Positioner," 2019.

⁷⁷ Töbjörn Sjöström, Miljöpartiets väljare juni 2018, Novus institute. Available at: <https://novus.se/novus-svensk-valjaropinion/valjarforstaelse/partiernas-sympatisorer/oversikt-2018/miljopartiet-2018/>. Last access: June 18, 2022.

hitherto unknown. Moreover, since this was, technically, a new government, Stefan Löfven was no longer bound by the January Agreement—which would open up debate in many policy areas, from rent control to forest policy. Finally, it signaled to small political parties that they could press their demands and the unstable government might not be able to deny them.

At that time, the Green party had been consistently polling below the 4% threshold necessary to attain seats in parliamentary elections.⁷⁸ Therefore, energizing their voter base was becoming an existential issue—if they were perceived merely as “Green Social Democrats,” they would disappear. Thus, shortly after the EU Forest Strategy was unveiled, the Green Party threw its weight behind the proposal. It would then consistently choose to increase its support for the Strategy, transforming it into an existential issue for the party.

Shortly after the EU Forest Strategy was unveiled and both political parties stated their positions, prime minister Stefan Löfven assigned the forest issue to Ibrahim Baylan, his business minister who was often described as his “right-hand man.”⁷⁹ The objective was to water down the proposal in the European Council so that Stefan Löfven could present a Strategy that was acceptable to both parties. Although Ibrahim Baylan eventually succeeded—as multiple European countries stated their objections and the Forest Strategy was slightly watered down—the move was not particularly popular in Sweden. Political parties and industry insiders complained that such a sensitive issue such as forestry should not be added into a busy ministry, like business, but rather should have an entire agriculture & forestry ministry dedicated to it.

Therefore, although the government managed to avoid the initial crisis and collapse, the issue was far from resolved. Continuing political instability in Sweden led prime minister Stefan Löfven to announce in August that he would resign and retire from politics. His replacement would come in early November after the Social Democratic party congress chose a new party leader.

⁷⁸ Miljöpartiet få den lägsta stödet någonsin, *Sveriges Radio* April 11, 2022.

<https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/miljopartiet-far-det-lagsta-stodet-nagonsin>

⁷⁹ “Löfvens ’problemlösare’ Ibrahim Baylan avgår,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, September 9, 2021.

Stefan Löfven's retirement combined with the Green party's congress in October added fuel to the fire of the forest debate. The forest debate in Swedish media reignited with a burning passion in October 2021, shortly before the Green party's congress, and continued raging until the end of the year. Around October it had also become clear who would be chosen to succeed Löfven as prime minister: it would be his previous finance minister, Magdalena Andersson from the same social democratic party.

As the Green party's political fortunes continued to decline and it failed to poll above the 4% threshold, it held its congress in October. Among the many issues discussed was forest policy. The party decided to intensify its position and support even stronger limits against clear-cutting as well as stronger conservation measures.⁸⁰ At that time it was already widely expected that the Green party would honor its promise to leave the governing coalition if its demands were not fulfilled.⁸¹

On November 24th, Magdalena Andersson was chosen to be Sweden's next prime minister. The Green party supported her nomination and despite the tensions joined the ruling coalition. It was not to last. Just a few hours later, the Green-Social Democratic coalition failed to approve its budget in parliament. Instead, the right-wing opposition approved their own budget—this time, with support from the Sweden Democrats—which also opposed the EU Forest Strategy. The Greens decided announced they could not remain in coalition with a government that ruled with the opposition's budget, so they left.

This triggered, once again, a collapse in the government and, once again, parliament would have to choose a new prime minister. Once again, due to political fragmentation, no coalition could achieve a majority. In order to prevent the right-wing populists Sweden Democrats from having a position in the government, the Green party decided it would not oppose a Social Democratic minority government. In Swedish law, for a person to be chosen prime minister, this person must only avoid being rejected by 50% of parliamentarians, that is to say, 175 parliamentarians. It does not matter how many

⁸⁰ Per Bolund (MP): "Vi kan välja att skydda skogen och stränderna," *Sveriges Radio*, October 15, 2021. Available at:

<https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/per-bolund-mp-vi-kan-valja-att-skydda-skogen-och-stranderna>.

⁸¹ "Fullt möjligt" att MP lämnar regeringen, *Västerbottens Kuriere*, October 15, 2021. Available at: <https://www.vk.se/2021-10-15/fullt-mojligt-att-mp-lamnar-regeringen>.

favorable votes they receive. Therefore, with the support only of her 100 Social Democratic parliamentarians and one independent MP, Magdalena Andersson was re-elected prime minister on November 29th. The Green, the Left, and the Center parties all abstained. Thus, despite having received only 29% of the vote, Magdalena Andersson was brought back into the office, but this time with the Green party in opposition.

The forest debate was not the only issue that led the Greens to break away from the governing coalition. There were disagreements about protecting beaches and avoiding new construction near the shore, and budget conflicts, among other tensions. Looming large was the threat of not achieving 4% of the vote in the September 2022 elections and thus failing to get any seats in parliament, which would be a catastrophic result for the party. Breaking away from the government and shifting to the opposition was seen as an effective way to energize the Green base and increase support. While it did have an effect in that Green debates, among them the forest debate, became much more prominent in media, the move did not result in better polling for the Green party.

In conclusion, this section has explained why the Green and the Center parties assumed the limelight in the forest debate in Sweden. That is not to say other parties did not have strong positions, or that they were not relevant. The Social Democratic party chose whenever possible to either attempt to water down the EU Forest Strategy and make it palatable to both its allies, or to side with the bigger, more relevant Center party—decisions that were crucial to understanding Swedish politics. The main reason that the Center and Green parties assumed the spotlight was that each had the power to bring down the Social Democratic government and that they became increasingly hostile to each other as they identified the Forest Strategy as a critical issue. The issue was particularly salient with the Green party as that party desperately tried to avoid an electoral catastrophe the following year.

Likewise, this does not mean the debate was carried out completely through political parties. While several political parties published opinion pieces weighing in on the forest debate in major Swedish media, most opinion pieces were written by researchers, industry insiders, environmental activists, and so on. It is tempting to label the stances as “pro Green” or “pro Center,” but that would be a mistake considering much of this debate has taken place outside party structures. It is much preferable to speak as “pro-Strategy” and

“anti-Strategy.” Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Swedish politics has had an impact on the debate—actors were all aware of the stake of the debate for the political fortunes of both parties and of the role each party could play in the forest issue.

3.3 Methodology

This chapter explains the research methodology for the thesis. It is divided into two segments: first, a description of the primary sources and their relevance to the project, and second, a description of the thesis methodology *per se*.

3.1 Primary Sources: forest debates within Swedish national media

The primary sources for this study are newspaper articles. These play a crucial role for two reasons. First, because the Forest Strategy debate is remarkably new, having arisen only in July 2021. Thus, there are few academic sources on this specific document, even though there are plenty of papers about forestry in Sweden. The second reason is even more relevant. The aim of this study is to analyze the reaction and debate among political actors and stakeholders – many of which publish their views and arguments on newspapers.

The main newspapers used for this study are *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, and *Aftonbladet*. These two have been chosen because they are large and reputable national outlets, with vast readerships. *Aftonbladet* is Sweden's biggest national newspaper: its website attracts around 3 million unique visitors per week, or roughly one-third of Sweden's population. The second biggest newspaper in Sweden is *Svenska Dagbladet*, whose website attracts 1.5 million unique visitors every week.⁸² Although there are no publicly available readership figures for *Dagens Nyheter*, it also ranks among Sweden's largest and most influential newspapers, boasting over 350,000 paid subscribers in 2021.⁸³ Taken together, these newspapers reach at least half of all voters in Sweden and hold considerable sway over national political discourse.

These newspapers are not identical. *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* are both considered center-right publications, whereas *Aftonbladet* is a center-left one. Scholars have described *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* editorial board as ideologically

⁸² Kennan Ganic and Alexander Wennberg, "Politiska tendenser i dagspressen" (Bachelor thesis, Halmstad University, 2011), 5–8.

⁸³ Caspar Opitz, "Dagens Nyheter slår rekord i antal prenumeranter," *Dagens Nyheter*, January 8, 2021. <https://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/dagens-nyheter-slar-rekord-i-antal-prenumeranter/>.

liberal, but with a neutral newsroom.⁸⁴ In other words, their reporting is mostly factual, but their opinion pieces tend to espouse liberal views. They do not, however, exclusively publish right-wing pieces: both feature an important Debate section in which they invite experts from the entire political spectrum to voice their opinions. They are generally considered similar newspapers, though some might claim that *Dagens Nyheter* is slightly more liberal whereas *Svenska Dagbladet* is slightly more moderate or conservative. Even though these newspapers are very similar, both have been included in this study because important articles have been published in both. It is expected that most articles will depict the EU Forest Strategy negatively, but dissident voices supporting the Strategy are also expected.

Aftonbladet is halfway between what in Sweden is known as a morning paper and an evening paper (i.e., a tabloid). Unlike the other two publications, it is mostly free: a subscription is only required to read the sports and entertainment sections, while most political news and opinion pieces are free to read. Its website is supported mostly by ads and its headlines tend to be more sensationalist. Nevertheless, the reporting is usually considered to be of good quality and opinion pieces are serious—it is not a tabloid. *Aftonbladet* is ideologically social democratic and tends to support unionism.⁸⁵ It is expected that most articles will depict the EU Forest Strategy somewhat positively.

It must be clarified that when these newspapers are labeled “liberal,” “social democratic,” or “moderate,” this does not refer to the Liberal, Social Democratic, or Moderate parties in Sweden. They are all independent outlets and do not explicitly support any political party. Rather, these labels correspond to their ideological leanings or their guiding principles—which these parties do not necessarily follow. For example, occasionally the Liberal Party might take stances that would not be considered liberal; it would be expected that *Svenska Dagbladet* would take the liberal stance rather than the Liberal Party’s stance. Indeed, in 2018 *Svenska Dagbladet* published a piece titled “The Liberal Party isn’t always liberal.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Kennan Ganic and Alexander Wennberg, “Politiska tendenser i dagspressen” (Bachelor thesis, Halmstad University, 2011), 5–8.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Carl Rudbeck, “Liberaler är inte alltid särskilt liberala,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 22, 2018. <https://www.svd.se/a/Ond66k/liberaler-ar-inte-alltid-sarskilt-liberala>.

In 2019, Linda Jönsson and Dorentina Rama conducted a study of Swedish media attitudes to climate change using framing theory. Politically, all three newspapers analyzed in this thesis have been found to consider climate change a real threat and to support more action from the Swedish government. Additionally, *Dagens Nyheter* was found to blame climate change on foreign countries more often than other media and has called for a Swedish foreign policy demanding that polluters like Russia, the United States, and the Gulf countries, do more.⁸⁷ This position that foreigners should contribute more is relevant because when the Council of Europe reviewed the Forest Strategy for 2030, it lamented that the document did not address the issue of deforestation outside Europe. Thus, this is a view that is represented in the Swedish government and several other European capitals too.

Economically, however, the newspapers adopted more varied stances. *Aftonbladet* was much more likely to advocate for immediate, drastic action, whereas *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* called for a more pondered approach. *Aftonbladet* supports using tax policy to achieve climate goals; i.e. taxing polluters more highly. It also supports more direct government economic interventionism. On the other hand, both *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* take a cost-benefit approach. They support slow and gradual policy changes and advocate for investing in clean energy and green technology rather than using tax policies to punish polluters.⁸⁸ *Svenska Dagbladet*'s editorial board even wrote an article claiming that implementing the Paris Agreement will be more expensive than dealing with climate change – especially so for the developing world – and that therefore rich-world climate activists are condemning millions to poverty.⁸⁹

Thus, given each newspaper's position in the ideological spectrum and on climate change, it is expected that *Aftonbladet* will generally be more supportive of the Forest Strategy while *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* will be more oppositional. This is not an absolute predicament: all newspapers are known for publishing opinion pieces from dissenting voices. Moreover, a single article could well present both views in favor and against the Forest Strategy.

⁸⁷ Linda Jönsson and Dorentina Rama, "Klimatdebatten är en ideologisk hybrid," 25–27.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 35–37.

⁸⁹ Bjørn Lomborg, "Det mänskliga priset för dyrare el," *Svenska Dagbladet*, March 1, 2018. <https://www.svd.se/a/A2xKMz/bjoern-lomborg-det-manskliga-priset-for-dyrare-el>.

It is likely that much of the debate about forestry will take place within these three outlets. These three newspapers cover much of Sweden's ideological spectrum and are all high-quality, national publications. Therefore, it is expected that most of the newspaper debate concerning the EU Forest Strategy will take place within these three newspapers. Likewise, it is also expected that their coverage of the EU Forest Strategy will have a significant impact on the debate.

As discussed in the data collection chapter, the main method for collecting newspaper articles has been to search for the keywords *skogsdebatten* (forest debate) and *skogsstrategi* (forest strategy) on the websites of these newspapers. The latter term found all articles that made direct references to the Forest Strategy—Swedish media always translated its title and never refers to it in English—while the former term found articles that indirectly debated the Strategy. Quite often in Swedish media the document would not be mentioned by name, but newspapers would refer to it as “a recent proposal from the EU regarding forests” or similar phrases. Moreover, the term *skogsdebatten* also found articles that discussed the contents of the Strategy without mentioning neither the document, nor the EU; for example, several such articles were published about the practice of clear-cutting, which is one of the most contentious points of the Strategy. Together, these two keywords were expected to find most relevant publications for this research project.

Only articles published between July 16th, 2021, and April 8th, 2022 have been considered. The first date was chosen because debates about the EU Forest Strategy was published on July 16, 2021. It should be noted that *Dagens Nyheter* published a leaked draft of the Strategy a few weeks before it was published, but since there were substantial changes between the draft and the final document, the articles concerning this draft were not included in this analysis. The second date was chosen because April 8th is the last day for candidates to announce that they will run for political office, so it marks the beginning of Sweden's electoral season. Since political discourse can be significantly affected during elections, it was decided that this thesis should focus entirely on the period between the Forest Strategy's publication and April 8th.

After the research was conducted and all newspaper articles were collected, it was found that *Aftonbladet* only published 7 articles related to the topic. However, six out of these

seven articles were reprints from stories published in either *Svenska Dagbladet* or *Dagens Nyheter* — a common practice in Swedish media, in which one newspaper prints stories originally published somewhere else. In Sweden, most factual reporting comes from a news agency, known as TT, which sells their stories to other newspapers; what newspapers actually write usually are the analyses and opinions, rather than factual reporting. Normally, however, TT sells a story to one major national newspaper and a few smaller, local ones.

These six reprints on *Aftonbladet* were not considered for the analysis and thus only one article of its articles was taken into account for this analysis. As argued in future chapters, it was deemed worthwhile keeping *Aftonbladet* as part of this research project despite the low amount of articles published, because the finding that this newspaper mostly avoided the subject is a finding in and of itself.

2.2 Methodology: frame analysis

This thesis employs an adaptation of Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl's⁹⁰ methodology of frame analysis⁹¹ applied to EU policy documents. As previously stated, it analyzes articles from three Swedish national newspapers, collected by searching for the keywords *skogsstrategi* (forest strategy) and *skogsdebatten* (forest debate) on their websites. In total, 45 articles were analyzed, being 25 from *Svenska Dagbladet*, 13 from *Dagens Nyheter*, and 7 from *Aftonbladet* (see Chart 1). The articles were published between July 16, 2021, when the Strategy was released, and April 8th, 2022, when the electoral season in Sweden began.

It should be noted that print versions of the newspapers were excluded from the analysis. Likewise, this analysis did not use search external databases. Finally, it is also possible to discuss the issue without using the two aforementioned keywords. For this reason, it is possible that some relevant articles might not have been found due appearing only on print versions of newspapers, due to only being indexed on other search engines, or due

⁹⁰ Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl. "How are forests framed? An analysis of EU forest policy," *Forest Policy and Economics* 127, 2021.

⁹¹ The frame analysis methodology was first developed by James Paul Gee. Emma Björnehed and Josefina Erikson expanded on the concept and established methods to apply frame analysis to policy making.

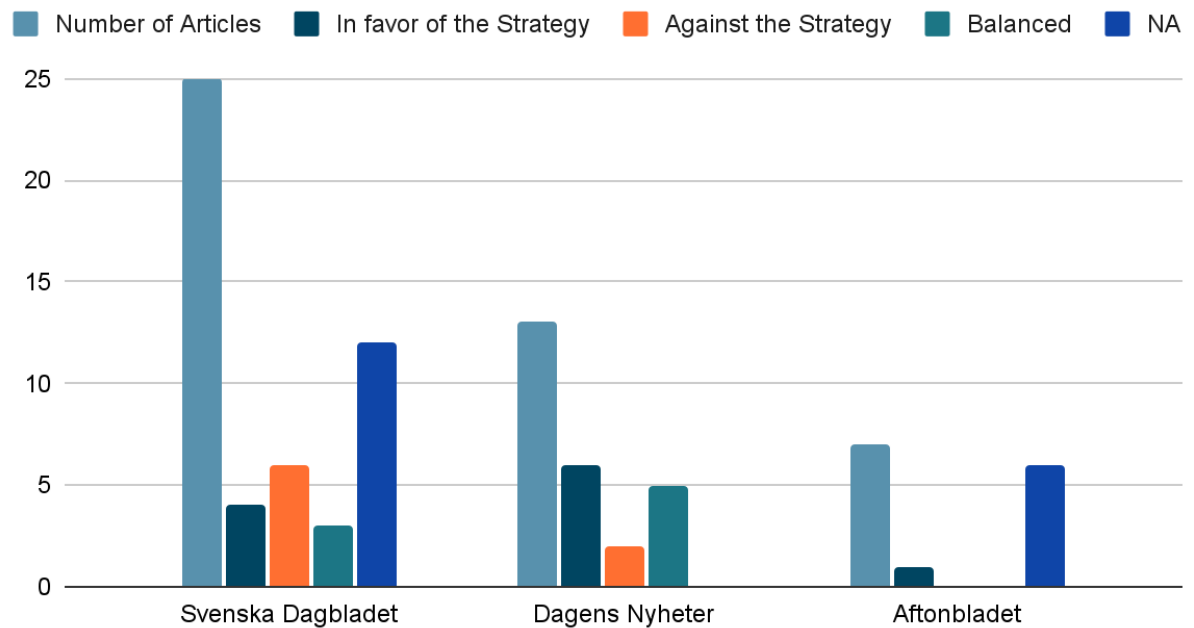
to a lack of keywords. Nevertheless, a significant amount of articles has been found, providing enough material to answer the research question in hand.

It must also be noted that after the articles had been collected, it became clear that 6 out of the 7 *Aftonbladet* articles were reprints either from *Svenska Dagbladet* or *Dagens Nyheter*. These reprints were not taken into account for frame analysis. Nevertheless, *Aftonbladet* was kept as a newspaper of analysis because the finding that this newspaper published few stories about the topic is *per se* a research finding. The results chapter will discuss why *Aftonbladet* might have avoided the subject or printed a few original stories on it.

To measure potential newspaper bias, each article was classified as “In favor,” or “Against,” the Forest Strategy, or “Balanced.” The following methodology was used to classify whether articles supported or opposed the Forest Strategy. Opinionated or analytical pieces that criticized either the Strategy or that supported clear-cutting—the most contentious point of the Strategy—were classified as “against.” Those that directly supported the Strategy or that claimed Sweden should limit clear-cutting were classified as “in favor.” Finally, articles that devoted equal attention to both sides of the argument, or that merely reported on facts, were classified as balanced. Examples of balanced articles include pieces discussing how countries reacted to the Forest Strategy, or how Sweden’s political parties positioned themselves because in these articles there is no judgment of the Strategy or its contents.

Some articles were classified as N/A because they do not address the Forest Strategy or any of its main proposals. These were mostly articles published in *Svenska Dagbladet*’s debate series. As a follow-up to the debate on the strategy, this newspaper published several debate articles on specific forestry topics, such as profitability and industry trends, biodiversity and conservation laws, etc. These articles all contain valuable frames for what role should forests play in Swedish society, but do not support or oppose the EU Forest Strategy nor any of the main proposals of the Strategy, therefore, their position was classified as Not Applicable.

Table 1. Data collection statistics



Frame analysis is the crucial step in this study and it relies mainly on coding and qualitative content analysis. This study adopted the approach taken by Elomina *et al* and Gläser *et al*⁹², in which the analysis employs pre-existing categories based on a guiding concept that can be modified and expanded as the analysis proceeds. This preserves the integrity of the concept and avoids superimposing it on the data, or vice-versa.

Based on this approach, relevant excerpts of text or citations corresponding to the research question were identified and coded inductively. In other words, they were coded based on the interpretation of the text. A set of guiding questions and expected results were used to guide the content analysis and coding process, see Table 12.

Codes facilitate the identification of links between and among citations. This makes it possible to observe and group patterns into sub-frames and main frames, see Table 3. A total of 183 citations were coded, which corresponded to how forests and the forest strategy were addressed. From these citations, 14 frames were constructed from the material.

⁹² Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel. “Life With and Without Coding: Two Methods for Early-Stage Data Analysis in Qualitative Research Aiming at Causal Explanations,” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 14, vol 2, 2013.

To answer the research question and grasp the bigger picture of Swedish forest debates in media, these main frames were then divided into two types: those that deal with how forests are perceived, and those that deal with how the Forest Strategy for 2030 is perceived. The forest frames and sub-frames were adapted from Elomina and Pützl's methodology, while the Forest Strategy frames were constructed from scratch. The first category aims to clarify the underlying assumptions that Swedish actors have about forests and their role, while the second aims

According to Gläser and Laudel, when citations do not fit into the theoretical considerations during coding, it is necessary to expand the categories to avoid bias and maintain the integrity of the bigger picture. Thus, as some codes did not fall neatly into the initial categories, either these categories or frames were extended to accommodate such codes.⁹³ This step was repeatedly checked and re-validated.

One major limitation of this research is that the coding was done by only one person and, as such, remains subjective and difficult to replicate. This is a common limitation of every content analysis. To address this, the codes were repeatedly consulted with other researchers and this thesis' supervisors, going back to determine contexts and ensure that codes were appropriately categorized.

To determine frame dominance, this thesis has followed Björnehed and Erikson's⁹⁴ concept of dominant frames and the frame institutionalization ladder. This ladder measures a frame's dominance in four steps: from reaching the political agenda and receiving support from key actors to official acknowledgment and formal institutionalization (see Table 4). The final level of institutionalization implies that the frame has been adopted into official government policy—but as this study has not dealt with policy documents, a decision was made to only use Björnehed and Erikson's first three levels of institutionalization.

⁹³ For example, the citation "If Sweden were to harvest and export less than today, it is likely that deforestation will increase in other countries" generated the code "clear-cutting in Sweden is necessary to protect forests globally," which was then incorporated into the broader "clear-cutting is necessary for forests' health" frame.

⁹⁴ Emma Björnehed, and Josefina Erikson, "Making the most of the frame: developing the analytical potential of frame analysis," *Policy Studies* 39, 2018.

Furthermore, this study has also employed Elomina and Pützl’s method of measuring relative dominance — i.e. the influence of frames that fall within the same ladder category — based on the number of times each frame was referred to among the corpus. Further description of how each frame manifested in the research corpus is available in the Results chapter.

Table 2

Guiding questions and expected results

Section title	Guiding question	Expected result
Measurement of media bias	Is the overall tone of the article in favor or against the Forest Strategy?	Number of articles in favor and against the Forest Strategy.
Identification of citations	What is the role of forests? How is the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 addressed?	Citations that address forests directly and indirectly. Citations that address the role of forests directly and indirectly. Citations that address the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 directly and indirectly.
Categorization into sub-frames and main frames	What are the frame sub-groups and main groups?	Clustered citations of forest-related and Strategy-related sub-frames and main frames.
Frame dominance	How many times were the frames referred to?	Degree of institutionalization of the frame. Number of citations across

		the corpus.
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Table 3

Summary of the results and codes grouped into main frames and sub frames with sample citations. All citations were originally written in Swedish and were translated by the author.

Frame	Sub frames	Example citations
Frame 1: Forests are multifunctional	No subframes	<p>Most agree that forests play a very important role in climate work, for the economy and for biodiversity.</p> <p>They are afraid of losing the right to hunt. Or fish. Or to be frozen out or harassed by the forest companies</p> <p>Our forests can and should be enough for so much more than just supplying resources to the forest industry.</p>
Frame 2: Forests as providers of wood and non-wood products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiber Wood Non-wood forest products Raw materials Water Wood Biomass timber 	<p>products from the forest, such as timber, paper and pulp, are exported for around SEK 145 billion each year</p> <p>In addition, forestry contributes to the climate - timber can replace fossil products.</p> <p>The clear-cutting method gives us large amounts of wood raw material</p>
Frame 3: Forests as contributors to bioeconomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aid to rural development Bio-based products Bioenergy Contributor to green economy Economic welfare and jobs New products Renewable energy Substitute material 	<p>The cultivated forest creates, in addition to serving as the backbone of Sweden's rural economy, a triple climate benefit. It binds carbon as it grows. It binds carbon in wooden buildings after it has been felled. It replaces fossil raw materials and fossil energy.</p>

<p>Frame 4: Forests as a climate change solution</p>	<p>Carbon sequestration Carbon sink Carbon stock Climate mitigation Climate regulation</p>	<p>It is thanks to the urgent need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that the Swedish forest must take its share of responsibility [as a carbon sink].</p> <p>A well-maintained forest carbon sink and active forestry is thus one of our most important tools in the journey towards a more sustainable and climate-neutral society.</p> <p>In addition, the products from the forest are needed for us to be able to convert to a fossil-free society.</p>
<p>Frame 5: Forests regulate soil, water, and buffer to natural hazards</p>	<p>Buffer to extreme weather events Flood regulation Soil protection</p>	<p>In practice, the forest's other public benefits, such as clean water and Sami land rights, must be left behind for what benefits the industry.</p>
<p>Frame 6: Forests as providers, hosts and protectors of biodiversity</p>	<p>Adaptation Conserve biodiversity Host of biodiversity Provider of habitat</p>	<p>A basic idea was that by saving small but very species-rich or otherwise special areas from felling, this would be the most cost-effective way to maintain diversity in our forests.</p> <p>According to the EU Birds and Habitats Directive, forest owners are required to have knowledge of the species found in the forests to be farmed. Forest owners must also know how these species are affected by forestry and how forestry can be adapted so that the species can continue to live in the forest even when it is farmed.</p>
<p>Frame 7: Forests sustain socio-cultural wellbeing</p>	<p>Heritage Human wellbeing Landscape recreation Sami traditions</p>	<p>Very large and rather brutal forestry methods such as large clear-cutting have many negative effects. Emissions from the ground are increasing and this is hitting hard on the right of public access⁹⁵ and the hospitality industry,</p>
<p>Frame 8: Forests are vulnerable to pressures</p>	<p>Vulnerable Vulnerable to climate change Vulnerable to hazards</p>	<p>[Forest] fires in Canada and the USA after new temperature records.</p> <p>It is well known that in all forests there are natural disturbances such as storm felling, snow breaks and insect infestations that create larger or smaller openings in the forest where light-demanding tree species quickly establish themselves.</p>

⁹⁵ Known in Sweden as allemänsrätten and sometimes as the right to roam.

<p>Frame 9: Forests as CO2 sources and causes of water deficit</p>	<p>CO2 source Causes water deficit</p>	<p>approximately 11 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, according to the climate policy route choice study, leak from drained forest, agricultural and grazing land</p>
<p>Frame 10: Strategy as essential to protect forests and the climate</p>	<p>Protect biodiversity</p>	<p>Should the Green Party dare to stand behind [this proposal to limit clear-cutting], we are much more in line with what the EU's forest strategy requires and what other EU countries apply. That would be a big step forward.</p> <p>Large-scale clear-cutting practices threaten biological diversity and should only be used in exceptional cases. Here we welcome the green ambition of the EU's new forest strategy.</p> <p>A well-thought-out European forest strategy, which promotes increased natural carbon stocks, is crucial to achieving the Union's climate goals.</p>
<p>Frame 11: Strategy as EU overreach</p>	<p>EU competencies Micromanagement Brussels overregulation</p>	<p>Too much micromanagement [as part of the EU Forest Strategy] and too little consideration for things that the countries themselves must decide on.</p> <p>The EU Forest Strategy wants to micromanage Swedish forestry.</p>
<p>Frame 12: Strategy as a controversial issue domestically</p>	<p>Debate Coalition partners Politics</p>	<p>Ever since the Forest Administration communicated that forestry requires a new order, a huge forest debate has blown up.</p> <p>The Swedish government published no press releases because coalition partners S and MP have different opinions about the Strategy.</p>
<p>Frame 13: Clear-cutting is necessary for forests' health</p>	<p>Nordic forests require constant renewal Clear-cutting in Sweden protects forests elsewhere Clear-cutting is not harmful</p>	<p>It is not the case that the whole of Sweden is clear-cut, we harvest about 1 percent per year. This means that one percent of the land is cut down, then we replant and new trees emerge. There will be no dead surface.</p> <p>Of our four most common tree species, pine, birch and aspen are fully adapted to take advantage of forest fires and to colonize bare fire fields. Without such severe disturbances, they lack the long-term ability to form new forests. For these tree species, clear-cutting is a way of mimicking the severe disturbance that a forest</p>

		<p>fire entails.</p> <p>Long-term sustainable forestry requires clear-cutting that is reminiscent of a forest fire.</p>
<p>Frame 14: Clear-cutting is a threat to forests</p>	<p>Threat to biodiversity Loss of habitat</p>	<p>The current large-scale clear-cutting is irresponsible.</p> <p>According to the EU's new forest strategy, which focuses on biodiversity and climate, clear-cutting should only be used in exceptional cases.</p>

Table 4

Björnehed and Erikson's frame institutionalization ladder.⁹⁶

Reaching the political agenda	The first critical step is for a frame to reach the political agenda and be explicitly discussed in relevant venues.
Support from a coalition of actors or key actors	At this step, either a coalition of actors or a few key actors express the frame, and various actors advocate either for it or its core elements. Such actors include ministers and spokespersons of political parties as examples of frame institutionalization.
Official acknowledgment	This can occur either formally, when a particular frame is expressed in such official statements as commission reports or governmental directives, or informally, when all actors who participate in a given

⁹⁶ Emma Björnehed, and Josefina Erikson, "Making the most of the frame: developing the analytical potential of frame analysis," *Policy Studies* 39, 2018.

	debate acknowledge a particular frame by relating their statements to it in one way or another.
Formal institutionalization	The fourth step is for a frame to become expressed in formal institutions, which often involves legislation with respect to policy. This step was not measured in this thesis because this research project did not study policy or government framing.

4. Findings

For ease of reading, the results chapter has been divided into two subsections. The first is the Frames section, in which each frame is discussed individually. That section explains how frames manifested themselves in the corpus and discusses the research results. The second subsection is entitled Other Findings and it deals with other relevant findings from this research, such as how each newspaper reported on the issue.

These findings will be subsequently discussed in the next, and final, chapter of this thesis, the Discussion chapter.

4.1 How are forests and the Forest Strategy framed in Swedish media

From the frame analysis, a total of 14 frames were inductively reconstructed from the source material. This section discusses how these frames manifested in the document and how often each frame appeared in each newspaper.

Table 5	Newspaper			Total
	<i>Svenska Dagbladet</i>	<i>Dagens Nyheter</i>	<i>Aftonbladet</i>	
Frame 1: Forests are multifunctional	14	2	1	17
Frame 2: Forests as providers of wood and non-wood products	13	4	2	19
Frame 3: Forests as contributors to the bioeconomy	14	6	1	21
Frame 4: Forests as a climate change solution	22	11	1	34
Frame 5: Forests regulate soil, water, and buffer to natural hazards	1	0	1	2
Frame 6: Forests as providers, hosts	5	3	3	11

and protectors of biodiversity				
Frame 7: Forests sustain socio-cultural wellbeing	4	2	1	7
Frame 8: Forests are vulnerable to pressures	2	3	0	5
Frame 9: Forests as CO2 sources and causes of water deficit	0	1	0	1
Frame 10: Strategy as essential to protect forests and the climate	4	5	1	10
Frame 11: Forest Strategy as EU overreach	13	6	0	19
Frame 12: Forest Strategy as a controversial issue domestically	7	3	0	10
Frame 13: Clear-cutting is necessary for forests' health	4	6	0	10
Frame 14: Clear-cutting is a threat to forests	11	4	2	17

1.1 Frame 1: Forests are Multifunctional

Forests are depicted as providing multiple services simultaneously: economic, social, and environmental, among others. They are depicted as providing benefits in at least two different policy areas (e.g. economy & the environment). This frame is an overarching and general frame highlighting that forests provide a great many different services. For example, *Dagens Nyheter* published a piece on how hunters in northern Sweden fear that clear-cutting endangers their profession,⁹⁷ and *Svenska Dagbladet* highlighted the role forests play in Sami society. *Aftonbladet* commented that forests are also important for leisure. This frame has reached the political agenda and garnered support from a coalition of articles, placing it at the second level of institutionalization in Björnehed's ladder.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ "Sveaskog vill hugga ner gammal skog – kräver samers tystnad," *Dagens Nyheter*. <https://www.dn.se/sverige/sveaskog-vill-hugga-ner-gammal-skog-kraver-samers-tystnad/>.

⁹⁸ Emma Björnehed, and Josefina Erikson, "Making the most of the frame: developing the analytical potential of frame analysis," *Policy Studies* 39, 2018.

1.2 Frame 2: Forests as providers of wood and non-wood products

Forests are framed primarily as providers of wood, timber, pulp, and paper. This frame emphasizes the economic role of forests in Swedish society and how they provide essential products. Sometimes, this frame appeared alongside other frames, in particular frames 3 and 4. For example, *Svenska Dagbladet* commented that Swedish forests provide woods to make long-lived products that may replace products made with fossil fuels.⁹⁹ *Dagens Nyheter* echoed the same argument in one of their articles.¹⁰⁰ Sometimes, forests were also framed as providing non-wood products such as berries—one article highlighted that picking up berries is a popular hobby in Sweden and that deforestation makes it less viable. The overarching theme of this frame is that forests provide tangible goods, usually exploited for economic purposes. This frame has garnered official acknowledgement, as it is strongly supported by the forest industry and its allies, including government officials, placing it at level 3 in the institutionalization ladder.

1.3 Frame 3: Forests as contributors to the bioeconomy

Forests are framed as having a major role to play in the objective of achieving a functional bioeconomy, as defined in the European Commission’s Bioeconomy Strategy. This concept interlinks ecosystems, their services, primary production resources (e.g. forests and agriculture), and industrial sectors that use biological resources or processes. In practice, this frame comprises the idea that forests should be used to provide biomass for the production of bioenergy, and to serve as substitute materials for the development of bio-products. Moreover, forests are also represented as creating jobs and income through forest-related industries and rural development. Most entries into this frame were discussions about how forests can provide either biomass or can serve as a carbon sink by providing long-lived products bio-products as alternatives to products made from fossil fuels. Many citations for this frame overlapped with frame 4. Like the previous frame, this one too has garnered official support.

⁹⁹ “Åsa Johannson, Sju skäl: Därför blir skogen så politisk.” <https://www.svd.se/a/rW5Pn0/sju-skal-darfor-blir-skogen-sa-politisk>.

¹⁰⁰ “Interna kritik mot kyrkans skogbruk: ‘Tjänar mammon,’” *Dagens Nyheter*. <https://www.dn.se/sverige/interna-kritiken-mot-kyrkans-skogsbruk-tjanar-mammon/>.

1.4 Frame 4: Forests as a climate change solution

Forests are represented as mitigating climate change or playing a major role in protecting the environment from climate change. In practice, this means forests are represented as capable of acting as carbon sinks and carbon storage areas and also of being able to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to reduce emissions. Many citations for this frame overlapped with frame 3—newspapers would often argue that biofuels and bio-products are essential to stopping climate change. Interestingly, some articles suggested that cutting down forests is a climate change solution because their wood-base products serve as carbon sinks and as substitutes for fossil fuel-based products. Others argued that each tree cut in Sweden is one fewer tree cut in tropical countries and, given the ecology of each region and how timber is used in each industry, a benefit to the climate. This was by far the most common frame, as all actors in the debate attempted to frame their positions as the most environmentally-responsible ones. For this reason, it ranked at the highest level of institutionalization according to Björnehed’s ladder.

1.5 Frame 5: Forests regulate soil, water and buffer natural hazards

Forests are widely understood to hold and protect water sources as well as to serve as buffers to extreme weather events such as floodings and landslides. Citations that emphasized the role forests play in these events were classified as belonging to this frame. This frame was part of Elomina’s forest frames research¹⁰¹ and was expected to play a role in Swedish media, but it seldom appeared. Swedish media mostly ignored this aspect of forests—a sign perhaps that what the EU Forest Strategy had to say in this regard was deemed uncontroversial. *Aftonbladet* briefly mentioned that the government’s policy of prioritizing the forest industry over other actors results in forest’s ability to provide services such as clean water is diminished and *Svenska Dagbladet* argued that the more diverse forests are, the better they can withstand hazards such as beetle infestations or storms.¹⁰² In both cases, the articles were broadly supportive of the EU Forest Strategy.

¹⁰¹ Jerbelle Elomina and Helga Pützl. “How are forests framed? An analysis of EU forest policy,” *Forest Policy and Economics* 127, 2021.

¹⁰² Isadora Wronski, “Center se inte skogen för alla träd,” <https://www.svd.se/a/Ore8R1/centern-ser-inte-skogen-for-alla-trad>.

In any case, this frame seldom appeared and failed to reach the political agenda—perhaps because the fact that forests regulate soil, water, and buffer natural hazards is taken for granted in Swedish society.

1.6 Frame 6: Forests as providers, hosts and protectors of biodiversity

In this frame, forests are depicted as hosts of biodiversity and providers of habitat. This is often discussed in the context of preservation in general and, in Swedish media, in the context of clear-cutting. Many articles cited impact on biodiversity as the worst consequence of clear-cutting practices. *Svenska Dagbladet* published three articles debating the concept of key biotopes, in which small but diversity-rich areas of forests should be protected because they maintain diversity in the entire forests.¹⁰³ *Aftonbladet* published a piece arguing that clear-cutting is a threat to biodiversity and that naturally-grown forests are more biodiverse than plantation forests. Similar statements were also found in *Dagens Nyheter*: i.e. that forests with notable biodiversity are not cut or should not be cut. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this frame is that it has been frequently associated with frame 14: clear-cutting is a threat to forests. This frame has garnered the support from a coalition of actors, but has not gotten official support from the forest industry because this frame is frequently invoked as an argument to limit clear-cutting. It ranks at level 2 of the institutionalization ladder.

1.7 Frame 7: Forests sustain socio-cultural wellbeing

Here forests are framed as providing cultural services such as recreation, beauty, education, heritage and generally increased human well-being. In Swedish media, this was frequently manifested as mentions to the *Allemansrätten*, or the right to roam.¹⁰⁴ Other relevant mentions are tourism or the importance of the forest to the Sami.¹⁰⁵ *Svenska Dagbladet* for example reported that the EU Forest Strategy sought to boost tourism and the well-being of people living in rural areas. *Svenska Dagbladet* also

¹⁰³ Aron Westholm, “Viktig kunskap om skogen går forlorad,” <https://www.svd.se/a/QyWGyV/aron-westholm-viktig-kunskap-om-skogen-gar-forlorad>.

¹⁰⁴ The right to roam is a tradition dating back to medieval times that Swedes are allowed to walk, eat, and sleep wherever they want as long as they do not disturb the environment. Swedes are allowed, for example, to go to private forests or farms. The *Allemansrätten* is a deeply-valued cultural tradition in Sweden.

¹⁰⁵ “Sveaskog vill hugga ner gammal skog - kräver samers tystnad,” *Dagens Nyheter*. <https://www.dn.se/sverige/sveaskog-vill-hugga-ner-gammal-skog-kraver-samers-tystnad/>.

published a piece about internal debates within the Green party in which many members of the Green party advocated for a strategy of affirming that clear-cutting and the current forestry practices in Sweden threaten the *allmännsrätten* in order to boost the support for their positions. Although seldom discussed, this frame has strong official support from the all key actors in the shape of support for *allmännsrätten*—indeed, it most likely is seldom discussed because of its strong support. That being said, support for other aspects of this frame, such as Sami rights, seems to be lower than for the right to roam.¹⁰⁶

1.8 Frame 8: Forests are vulnerable to pressures

This frame sees forests as negatively affected and vulnerable to a series of pressures: habitat and biodiversity loss, climate change, fragmentation, and natural hazards such as forest fires, storms, landslides, pests, and so on. It also includes framing forests as liabilities, since their vulnerabilities could negatively affect society. This frame did not appear often, but when it did, it meant different things to different actors. In *Dagens Nyheter*, the forest industry claimed that vulnerabilities to pests and fires required an increase in clear-cutting,¹⁰⁷ or even that forest fires were a desirable feature of boreal forests that was required for new trees to grow—and that for this reason forests should be cut-down because clear-cutting resembles fires.¹⁰⁸ But *Dagens Nyheter* also published a reply to the latter article claiming the opposite: that clear-cutting increases vulnerabilities rather than diminishing them.¹⁰⁹ Overall, however, this frame did not appear often nor did it garner much official support, indicating that Swedish media and society do not see large vulnerabilities in their forests.

1.9 Frame 9: Forests as CO2 sources and causes of water deficit

This frame appeared in Elomina’s frame analysis of forestry documents and was expected to also appear in the Swedish media debate about forestry. However, it only appeared

¹⁰⁶ “Gröna mot mörkgröna - hur långt vågar MP gå?,” *Svenska Dagbladet*.

<https://www.svd.se/a/KzjwA4/mitt-i-striden-mp-vill-skarpa-skogspolitiken>.

¹⁰⁷ “Sveaskog vill hugga ner gammal skog - kräver samers tystnad,” *Dagens Nyheter*,

<https://www.dn.se/sverige/sveaskog-vill-hugga-ner-gammal-skog-kraver-samers-tystnad/>.

¹⁰⁸ “Kalhyggen behövs för att nya höga trä ska växa,” *Dagens Nyheter*,

<https://www.dn.se/debatt/kalhyggen-behovs-for-att-nya-hoga-trad-ska-vaxa/>.

¹⁰⁹ “Vi behöver ett nytt skogsbruk – inte fler kalhyggen,” *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/debatt/vi-behoover-ett-nytt-skogsbruk-inte-fler-kalhyggen/>.

once: in an opinion piece published on *Dagens Nyheter* which strongly defended the EU Forest Strategy.¹¹⁰ That article pointed out that current forestry practices result in the emissions of CO₂ and supports measures contained in the EU Forest Strategy to update land use guidelines for forests. Nevertheless, the absence of this frame remains a relevant finding. It most likely reflects the fact that Sweden lacks issues that plague many other countries, such as deforestation or water scarcity—future research may eventually show that this frame is much more dominant in places where deforestation, forest fires, and water scarcity are common.

1.10 Frame 10: The EU Forest Strategy as essential to protect forests and the climate

This frame gauges support for the EU Forest Strategy. It frames the document as essential for the protection either of forests or of the planet's climate as a whole. The Forest Strategy must be mentioned either explicitly or implicitly as a positive development. For example, *Svenska Dagbladet* published an opinion piece by a Greenpeace activist who claimed that the Commission's demand for more climate action is a step in the right direction for Swedish forests.¹¹¹ *Dagens Nyheter* published a piece by two Green MEPs who "welcomed the Green ambition" of the EU Forest Strategy as it imposed limits on clear-cutting, a practice they argued is dangerous.¹¹² Perhaps the most noteworthy finding is that whenever the Strategy was framed positively, this would be tied either to protection of forests and their biodiversity, or to fighting climate change. Not once has the Strategy been framed as a positive development for the economy or the industry. Overall, this frame has garnered support of a coalition of important actors, but no official recognition from either the government or the forest industry, placing it at the second level of institutionalization.

1.11 Frame 11: The Forest Strategy as EU overreach

¹¹⁰ "Svensk klimatpolitik för skogen måste uppdateras," *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/debatt/svensk-klimatpolitik-for-skogen-maste-uppdateras/>.

¹¹¹ "Center se inte skogen för alla träd," *Svenska Dagbladet*, <https://www.svd.se/a/Ore8RI/centern-ser-inte-skogen-for-alla-trad>.

¹¹² "Ge skogsägare betalt för att vara goda planetskötare," *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/debatt/ge-skogsagare-betalt-for-att-vara-goda-planetskotare/>.

This frame gauged direct opposition to the EU Forest Strategy. It deems the Strategy as a negative development for Swedish forests, forestry and even climate. It sees the European Commission as an outside power that does not understand Swedish forests and forestry and whose misinformed actions would cause more harm than good. The most common word associated with this frame was “micromanagement.” The key finding here is that the nearly all critique of the EU Forest Strategy was framed as “Brussels micromanagement” — even if media ostensibly agreed with the stated goals of the document. One reason why opponents of the Strategy might have chosen to frame it this way is because climate change and sustainability are two major issues in Swedish society. Had the Strategy been framed as “too green,” rather than “too detailed,” the opposition to it might have backfired and the document could have gained support. This was tied for the 3rd most common frame and it had garnered official acknowledgement, ranking it on the third level of institutionalization.

1.12 Frame 12: The Forest Strategy as a controversial issue domestically

This frame classifies the Forest Strategy and the debate as controversial or divisive. Framing a document as divisive serves several purposes. It encourages debate and questioning in the public sphere; it reduces the chances that said document might become policy enacted by technocratic policymakers; it delays the implementation of this policy should it be likely to be implemented; and it raises visibility of an issue that might otherwise not have garnered much attention. For example, by framing the Strategy as the root cause of profound conflict between the Green and Center parties, *Dagens Nyheter* hoped to attract a wider audience to pay attention to and participate in the forest debates.¹¹³ This frame appeared fairly often and had support from key actors, but never garnered much official acknowledgement because the Social Democratic party preferred to avoid the public debate to increase their negotiating maneuver behind-the-scenes. It ranks at the second level of institutionalization.

1.13 Frame 13: Clear-cutting is necessary for forests’ health

¹¹³ “Svenska kalhyggen sågas av EU – ny strategi eldar på debatten om skogen,” *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/varlden/svenska-kalhyggen-sagas-av-eu-ny-strategi-eldar-pa-debatten-om-skogen/>.

The most contentious point of the Forest Strategy was its stance on clear-cutting, the main production method in Swedish forestry. This frame represents support for clear-cutting. Swedish forest industry representatives sought to frame the practice as good for forests because the species that inhabit Sweden's boreal forests need plenty of open space and sunlight to grow; new forests typically grow after devastating forest fires and clear-cutting simulated these fires, thus bringing balance to the ecology of Swedish forests and allowing them to grow. This frame was expected to be common, and although there were a significant number of citations associated with it, 40% of all citations came from a single opinion piece published in *Dagens Nyheter*.¹¹⁴ One article published in *Svenska Dagbladet* had a slightly different nuance to the argument: banning clear-cutting in Sweden would encourage deforestation in other countries, where forests take longer to grow and that thus need more protection than Swedish forests.¹¹⁵ Overall, despite clear-cutting being acknowledged by institutions and practiced by the industry, opponents of the Strategy chose to attack the document's tendencies for micromanagement rather than support clear-cutting in the media debates, which indicates that they might be well-aware that the practice is not popular among Swedish voters.

1.14 Frame 14: Clear-cutting is a threat to forests

This frame represents opposition to clear-cutting. In most cases, this manifested as a correlation between clear-cutting and reduced biodiversity; opponents of clear-cutting argued that banning or restricting the practice was necessary to protect biodiversity. Other threats imposed by clear-cutting were diminished forest resources and increased carbon emissions. One *Dagens Nyheter* article argued that clear-cutting threatens traditional uses of Swedish forests, such as hunting.¹¹⁶ *Aftonbladet*'s article argued that most of the 1,400 endangered species in Swedish forests are at risk of extinction because of clear-cutting. This frame was more common than support for the EU Forest Strategy.

1.15 What is the dominant frame?

¹¹⁴ "Kalhyggen behövs för att nya höga trä ska växa," *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/debatt/kalhyggen-behovs-for-att-nya-hoga-trad-ska-vaxa/>.

¹¹⁵ "Sju själ: därför blir skogen så politisk," *Svenska Dagbladet*, <https://www.svd.se/a/rW5Pn0/sju-skaldarfor-blir-skogen-sa-politisk>.

¹¹⁶ Sveaskog vill hugga ner gammal skog – kräver samers tystnad," *Dagens Nyheter*, <https://www.dn.se/sverige/sveaskog-vill-hugga-ner-gammal-skog-kraver-samers-tystnad/>.

The dominant frame is, by a large margin, frame 4: forests as a climate change solution. There seems to be consensus in Swedish media that forests play a key role in combating climate change, and that they should be managed in a sustainable and green fashion. This is something that both opponents and supporters of the EU Forest Strategy agree with.

4.2. Other research findings

The main other finding of this research project is that most articles on the forest debate did not take a stance on the EU Forest Strategy. Some were simply factual reporting, others took a balanced approach seeking to showcase arguments from both sides. However, 12 articles from *Svenska Dagbladet* were not at all related to the Forest Strategy.

Starting in December 2021, *Svenska Dagbladet* invited a series of experts and industry insiders to take place in forest debates on their newspaper. These were four collections of three articles each. Each collection debated one specific aspect of Swedish forest policy, such as: the legal definition of the term *key biotope* and how courts should interpret it;¹¹⁷ land use policy and regulations and whether and to what extent to use Swedish forests as carbon sinks;¹¹⁸ the budget allocation to forest conservation in areas near mountains;¹¹⁹ using forests to produce biofuel; and the enforcement of the Birds & Habitats directive in Sweden.¹²⁰

These debates started for a series of reasons. First, the debates around the EU Forest Strategy during summer and early fall had opened up the scope for debating forest policy. Secondly, the Swedish political instability encouraged both key actors and political parties to take part in forest debates. Finally, some of these public debates in *Svenska Dagbladet* were direct counterparts to debates in the Swedish parliament or to changes in

¹¹⁷ Aron Westholm, "Viktig kunskap om skog går förlorad," *Svenska Dagbladet*, February 14, 2022. <https://www.svd.se/a/QyWGyV/aron-westholm-viktig-kunskap-om-skogen-gar-forlorad>.

¹¹⁸ Emma Wiesner, "EU-förslag straffar ut Sveriges skogsbruke," *Svenska Dagbladet*, December 12, 2022. <https://www.svd.se/a/a7qLR5/eu-forslag-straffar-ut-sveriges-skogsbruk>.

¹¹⁹ Ulf von Sidow, "C och L kan rädda fjällskogspaketet," *Svenska Dagbladet*, January 27, 2022. <https://www.svd.se/a/nWnEJx/ulf-von-sydow-c-och-l-kan-radda-fjallskogspaketet>.

¹²⁰ Herman Sundqvist, "Tolkningen redan gjort av domstolar," *Svenska Dagbladet*, February 23, 2022. <https://www.svd.se/a/a7qLR5/eu-forslag-straffar-ut-sveriges-skogsbruk>.

policy. For example, the debate on whether to give special protection status to old forests near mountains was triggered by Magdalena Andersson's new right-wing budget, which promoted reduced protection for those areas.

Although none of these were directly related to the EU Forest Strategy, they are all relevant to this study. First, because they showcase the extent of the forest debates in Sweden, which were for the most part triggered by the publication of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. Secondly, because they all offered relevant insights into how Swedish media frames forests and forest policy—frames that invariably are relevant to the Forest Strategy and the stances that actors take on that document.

Another key finding of this research project is how little attention was paid to the problem of *policy integration* within Swedish media. As explored in the background chapter, many scholars such as Metodi Sotirov and Sabine Storch¹²¹ identified policy integration as a key issue that previous Forest Strategies and international forest policy initiatives faced. Many blamed the low impact of the previous Strategy on its failure to address policy integration; consequently, the new Strategy sought to address this issue.

Alas, forest policy researchers are not representative of key actors such as politicians, policymakers, forest owners or environmental activists. What forest policy researchers identify as a key issue may not be of concern to those actors. There were no instances at all of support for the EU Forest Strategy on account of improved policy integration, no were there any calls to improve policy integration—with the EU or even within Sweden. If anything, there was *resistance* to policy integration, as opponents of the Strategy frequently complained about Brussels micromanagement.

That is not because these actors desired policy fragmentation *per se*, for they made no reference to the academic debates on forest policy integration. Their actions most likely reflect Euroscepticism in general, or an electoral strategy to gain public support—after all, Brussels-bashing is a popular strategy with many demographics.

¹²¹ Metodi Sotirov and Sabine Storch. “Resilience through policy integration in Europe? Domestic forest policy changes as response to absorb pressure to integrate biodiversity conservation, bioenergy use and climate protection in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden,” *Land Use Policy* 79 (2018).

The next important finding is the extent to which each newspaper chose to engage with the topic. *Svenska Dagbladet* published 25 pieces, most of which were opinionated editorials or op-eds from key actors. Nearly half of those pieces were, as previously mentioned, debate articles on very specific points of Swedish forest policy that did not directly relate to the forest strategy. *Dagens Nyheter* published fewer pieces overall on forest debates, but had the highest amount of content dedicated to the Strategy itself; indeed, this newspaper even published a leaked draft of the Strategy a few weeks before the document's official publication, thus starting the debate early. *Aftonbladet*, on the other hand, seldom engaged with the debates. It published 7 pieces, six of which were factual reporting that had been previously published in one of the other two major national newspapers. In late January 2022, *Aftonbladet* invited a series of environmental activists to publish its only exclusive piece on the debate, an editorial strongly condemning current Swedish forest policy.

One possible explanation for such discrepancies is that *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* are both subscriber-only newspapers that target a more educated demographic. These are also more likely to have among their readers potential key actors in the forest debates, such as forest owners or politicians. *Aftonbladet* is a free-to-read outlet that somewhat resembles a tabloid and is known for having a more working-class audience; the newspaper might have judged that its readers are not too interested in this particular debate, and thus chosen not to play a huge role in it.

Finally, this project has provided valuable insights into the stances of each newspaper. In the methodology chapter, it was expected that *Aftonbladet* would support the strategy whereas the other two newspapers would be more skeptical. Indeed, *Aftonbladet*'s only article was strongly supportive of the strategy and its proposals. *Svenska Dagbladet*, as expected, was much more critical. As expected, the newspaper published pieces from all spectrums of the debate, but favored the voices that oppose the Strategy by a small margin. Surprisingly, however, *Dagens Nyheter* went in the other direction. It also published pieces from all sides of the debate, but had slightly more publications in favor of the Strategy and its contents than opposing it.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The research results offer several valuable insights into how Swedish media frames forests and the Forest Strategy as well as into how each side of the debate positions itself and why they take their positions. Moreover, the results also offer some insight into how the debate might develop in the future and what solutions, if any, might be reached. Finally, it is worth discussing what are the implications of these findings for other research and policymaking areas.

For ease of reading, this section has been divided into two smaller subsections. The first is the European Dimension of the debate. This being a Euroculture MA thesis, it is necessary to consider how do these findings apply to the European Union, the relationship between Sweden and Europe, and European politics, society & culture at large. The last section considers the implications for the forest and Forest Strategy debate in Sweden.

5.1 The European Dimension

As the Forest Strategy for 2030 was drafted by the European Union, by definition there is a European dimension to the debate. This subchapter seeks to analyze the European dimension of the topic by answering one main question: how do the Swedish actors engage with the EU (i.e. a social sciences perspective)?

The reactions of Swedish media and actors to the EU Commission's proposal has been quite interesting. The findings show that the number one argument against the Strategy was that it consisted of "Brussels micromanagement." In other words, opponents of the Strategy preferred to attack the EU rather than publicly try to defend clear-cutting or attack the contents of the Forest Strategy. What is surprising, however, is that the opponents of the EU Forest Strategy are not, for the most part, staunch Eurosceptics, while supporters are known for having been somewhat skeptical of the EU.

The Green Party used to be one of the most Eurosceptic forces in the Swedish parliament until a vote in 2008 softened their stance somewhat.¹²² Nowadays, they are closely associated with the Greens in the European Parliament and advocate for much stronger EU action in terms of environmental policy, but are still far from being EU enthusiasts. The Swedish Green Party remains opposed to the adoption of the Euro and is deeply skeptical of increased EU efforts in defence.¹²³

The Center Party, on the other hand, is far from being a hardcore Eurosceptic party. They are part of the ALDE bloc of liberal parties. They also support strong EU action on climate, but tend to support changes in European foreign policy or customs & tariffs policy to include big polluters like China to pollute less, rather than increased regulation from Brussels.¹²⁴

Current research indicates that eurosceptic sentiment is not particularly strong in Sweden, though there is not much research on the topic.¹²⁵ Strong rhetoric against the EU is not common and no party takes a hard anti-EU stance, according to Robin Vestin.¹²⁶

Thus, the fact that the opponents of the EU Forest Strategy have chosen to direct their attacks at the EU, rather than the contents of the document, implies that they believe Swedish voters would strongly support the goals and even policies of the Strategy. It also indicates that these opponents of the EU Strategy believe that although Swedish voters are generally pro-EU, they are not 100% Europhiles and can be convinced that the EU has made a mistake, but it would be much more difficult to convince them that measures to protect the environment or biodiversity are wrong.

Indeed, this may explain why although the most common attack against the Strategy was complaining about Brussels micromanagement, opponents of the Strategy never resorted

¹²² Göran von Sydow, *Politicizing Europe: Patterns of party-based opposition to European integration*, 2013.

¹²³ Miljöpartiet, *EU-Valmanifest*, 2019. Available at: <https://www.mp.se/sites/default/files/eu-valmanifest.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Centerpartiet, *Så pressar vi Kina att minska sina uttsäpp*, July 6, 2022. Available at: <https://www.centerpartiet.se/press/pressmeddelande/nyhetsarkiv-2022/2022-07-06-sa-pessar-vi-kina-att-minska-sina-utslapp>.

¹²⁵ Robin Laestander Vestin, *Det skeptiska Europa: En jämförande fallstudie av euroskepticism hos Vänsterpartiet och Sverigedemokraterna inför Europaparlamentsvalen 2014 och 2019.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 3 – 4.

to outright anti-EU tirades. Their criticism was relatively mild compared to anti-EU parties in other European countries and very much directed to the issue at hand, rather than general opposition to the European Union. This also indicates that these actors would support a revised EU Forest Strategy that does not clash with their interests, should the EU Commission propose one.

5.2 The Swedish Dimension

Linda Jönsson and Dorentina Rama have conducted a key study into how Swedish media frames environmental issues. Among their key findings is that left-wing newspapers view the climate crisis as acute and in need of immediate action whereas right-wing ones see it as a long-term issue.¹²⁷

In their study, Jönsson and Rama also found that *Dagens Nyheter* exhibits “more anxiety” in relation to the climate crisis than *Svenska Dagbladet*. In other words, *Dagens Nyheter* was more likely to describe environmental issues as “acute” and in need of immediate action—and to urge its readers to take individual responsibility to fight climate change by e.g. recycling. *Svenska Dagbladet* on the other hand acknowledged the existence and danger of climate change but treated it as a long-term problem; it was much more likely to defend that other countries like China should step up their efforts, and much more likely to argue that environmental measures needed to also be assessed on their economic merits.¹²⁸ This is an important distinction between two otherwise similar center-right newspapers, and those findings were replicated in this study.

As seen in the results section, *Svenska Dagbladet* was much more likely to publish articles opposing the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 than *Dagens Nyheter*. This may be explained by different paradigms in relation to climate change. Drawing from James Paul Gee’s paradigm theory in the Background section, one could argue that two different paradigms manifested themselves in this debate: first, *climate change is a crisis*, and second, *the climate is a long-term concern*.

¹²⁷ Linda Jönsson and Dorentina Rama, “Klimatdebatten är en ideologisk hybrid.”

¹²⁸ Ibid, 40–42.

Those who believe that the climate crisis already is upon us are much more likely to support immediate action to avert what they see as an incoming catastrophe. While it might be true that cutting down trees and letting them regrow is best for the environment *in the long term*, humanity does not have an extra 50 years to spare, they argue. Therefore, the trees must not be cut down at all. Likewise, since the climate catastrophe is nearly upon us, economic cost to mitigate or avert climate change is not taken into account—measures should be enacted regardless of the cost or the planet dies.

This paradigm manifested itself in some of the frames found in the debate. Most notably, it was the paradigm driving the argument that clear-cutting is a threat to forests. It also justified support for the EU Forest Strategy, since relinquishing policymaking power to Brussels is a small cost compared to the environmental benefit of protecting Swedish forests, in the eyes of supporters of the Strategy. It also featured heavily in frame 4, forests as a climate change solution. This was perhaps the most interesting finding, since both sides of the debate heavily framed forests as a climate change solution but, depending on their paradigm of climate change, had very different interpretations of what that meant.

Those who believe that climate change is a long-term concern are much more likely to argue that environmental measures must take into account socio-economic factors. For example, instead of advocating that the government invest billions into renewable energies, they might advocate for reduced bureaucracy so that markets can itself create a renewable energy infrastructure in a more efficient manner. Likewise, instead of advocating for stronger climate measures in already climate-friendly Sweden—where marginal gains are low—it is better to press big polluters like India and China to be cleaner, in their eyes.

As the research findings demonstrate, followers of the second paradigm do not deny that forests are a climate change solution. However, they argue that forest policy should also take social and economic factors into account. One argument they used is that every tree cut down in Sweden is one fewer tree cut down in Indonesia—it cannot be denied that there is demand for timber, so it is best that it be produced in Sweden, where environmental standards are higher. Another one is that forests may serve a purpose in the decarbonization of the economy: every wooden chair is one fewer plastic chair. Since

wood is much more sustainable than other materials, it should be used more often—and in that sense, clear-cutting would be a climate-friendly production method.

That is very different from what supporters of the Strategy advocate for Swedish forests. Stopping clear-cutting helps these forests act as carbon sinks and has a more immediate effect than using timber to produce wooden furniture—whose effects are only felt through the life cycle of goods.

Indeed, these attitudes can also be observed in the stance toward the EU Commission's new LULUCF¹²⁹ policy which establishes carbon storage targets for each European Country. In late 2021, the EU proposed a new policy that drastically increased the Swedish targets, essentially forcing the country to reduce its reliance on clear-cutting if it were to reach the proposed target. Even though the LULUCF was not the focus point of this study, the data shows a considerable overlap between attitudes to the Forest Strategy and the new LULUCF regulations. Strategy supporters strongly defended separating an even larger forest area for carbon storage—regardless of the cost to forest owners—while Strategy opponents strongly criticized the fact that Swedish targets increased much more than in other European countries. They argued that climate-friendly Sweden should not be punished by its more polluting neighbors; if higher targets were needed, it was for other European countries, not Sweden. Further research into attitudes towards the LULUCF and potential overlaps with forest policy is recommended.

Furthermore, these attitudes are reflected in the belief of *who* should be responsible for managing forests. Those who view climate change as an immediate threat expressed a desire for the Swedish state or even the EU to play a much larger role not only in forest policymaking but also in their management. More centralized government is capable of larger-scale action and also of ignoring local interests to pursue goals that are relevant to broader communities (i.e. mitigating climate change), and thus, preferable. Those who see climate change as a long-term issue advocate for local management of forests: local forest councils, private owners, municipalities and so on. They believe that only those with local knowledge are capable of managing forests correctly and efficiently; regulation from Stockholm would be inefficient and from Brussels would be catastrophic, since,

¹²⁹ Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry

according to them, the EU has no understanding of the local reality in Swedish forests. Further research is recommended into who actors believe should be responsible for managing forests.

Thus, the fact that frame 4, *forests as a climate change solution*, was the most common frame among all actors in the debate is no coincidence. It stems from the different paradigms and interpretations of climate change and environmental issues. Both sides of the debate believe that their solutions are good for the environment and both frame it that way. It should be noted that this pattern was consistent not only among newspapers, but also among individual actors writing for the newspapers.

As previously mentioned, all newspapers invited prominent actors to write articles for them: forest owners, industry association representatives, politicians, scholars, NGO activists, among others. Nearly all actors framed forests as a climate change solution, but what they meant by it differed based on their paradigm.

Those close to the Green party or environmental NGOs such as Extinction Rebellion all saw climate change as an immediate threat. They supported the Strategy, despite its economic and even political costs. Those close to the Center party or the forest industry saw climate change as a long-term crisis to be managed through good environmental and economic policy. Both went to great strides to present themselves as environmentally-responsible.

As James Paul Gee argues, debate between different paradigms is possible, even if difficult. In the Swedish forest debate, both sides already agree on two essential points: first, that climate change is real, and second, that forests play a key role in fighting it. Debate would have been much more difficult if climate deniers played a prominent role in Swedish politics, like they do in other countries. Indeed, the prime minister's decision to send a key minister to Brussels to negotiate a watered-down version of the Strategy indicates a belief that compromise is possible.

Finding the right balance for forest policy is difficult. Scholars frequently point out to policy fragmentation as a key issue in forestry, because policymakers expect a myriad of different things from forests and want to reach often conflicting objectives. Protecting

biodiversity, storing carbon, producing wood for sustainable products, providing recreational services to local populations: these are just some of the different goals of forest policy.

For nearly thirty years, Sweden has been an outlier in forest policy within Europe, as one of the few defenders of the “freedom with responsibility” model. After an intense debate in the 90s, there had been very little debate about forest policy, which could lead one to assume that there was consensus around the Swedish model. However, the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 reignited the debate in Sweden.

Initially constrained to the Strategy and its effects on Sweden, the debate eventually grew much larger. At stake were issues such as what should Swedish forests look like and what role should they play in society. Now that enough time had passed to assess the effectiveness of the Swedish model, was the “freedom with responsibility” model truly working?

Finding the right balance for Swedish forest policy in the future will not be easy, but continued debate in media, society, and parliament can only help.

5.3 Conclusion

Finally, this subsection will answer the research question: *How did Swedish national newspapers frame and debate the EU Forest Strategy for 2030?*

National newspapers framed forests above all as a climate change solution, though they often disagreed on what that meant. Those who opposed the Strategy believe Sweden’s forestry model to be sustainable, arguing that clear-cutting provides significant climate benefits: biomass fuel and the substitution of products made of fossil fuels for long-lived wood products. Supporters of the Strategy stress that cutting down trees is harmful for biodiversity and negates the carbon sink effect of forest.

Other significant frames were the roles forest play in the bioeconomy and in the provision of wood and non-wood products, which may reflect the influence of the Swedish forest industry in the debate.

Swedish media mainly framed the EU Forest Strategy as “Brussels micromanagement.” This might have been seen as a more effective strategy than attacking the Strategy on its content, which could backfire given Swedish voters’ penchant for sustainability. Some media also framed the Strategy as essential to protect Swedish forests; they often also framed clear-cutting as a threat to forests, and attempted to equate the Strategy as a solution to clear-cutting.

There was a surprising balance between articles in favor and against the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. One contributing factor to this might have been the tendency among Swedish media to invite public figures to the debate. A significant amount of opinion articles about forest policy published after July 2021 were written by forest industry insiders, academics, politicians, environmental activists, and other stakeholders.

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List of abbreviations

FSC: Forest Stewardship Council

NSMD: non-state market driven model (of governance)

PEFC: Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes

SFM: sustainable forest management