



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES  
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# Threats and opportunities in a contested field of integration – EU forest policy as framed in forest owner media

A frame analysis of media owned by and targeted at forest owners in Sweden, in 2006, 2013 and 2021



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## Abstract

This thesis discusses the framing of EU forest policy in Swedish forest owner media, in the years 2006, 2013 and 2021. While Swedish forest owners have historically been influential in shaping EU forest policy, no research has previously been made on how the EU is framed in forest owner media. As media is crucial for forming of opinion, this thesis contributes to the understanding of a contested field of integration. In recent years, the forest has been in the spotlight due to the heightened attention to climate change. The analysis shows that the conflicting perspectives on the role for the forest in the green transition can explain why the EU is, over the years, increasingly framed as a threat to Swedish sovereignty. The thesis furthermore adds a new perspective to the research on media coverage of the EU, which has previously focused on mass media.

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## Abbreviations, translations, explanations

Boverket – The Swedish National board of Housing, Building and Planning.

CEPF – Confederation of European Forest Owners.

CEPI – Conderation of European Paper Industry.

DG – Directorate General.

EAFRD – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

EC – European Commission.

ENVI – Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in the EP.

EP – European Parliament.

EUTR – EU policy on timber legality and anti deforestation policy.

EU-FAP – EU Forest Action Plan.

FS – New European Forest Strategy for 2030.

Land Skogsbruk – Rural Forestry. Media owned by LRF. Formerly published under the name Land Skogsland.

LRF – Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, The Federation of Swedish Farmers.

LULUCF – Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry.

MEP – Member of the European Parliament.

MS – Member States.

NSF – Nordiska skogsägarorganisationernas förbund, Nordic Family Forestry.

Skogsindustrierna – The forest industries, a trade association for pulp, paper and wood.

Sveaskog – state owned company. Swedens largest forest owner.

Taxonomy – The EU taxonomy for sustainable activities.

## Names of Swedish parties

Centre party (C) – Centerpartiet, a party historically intertwined with the farmers movement.

June list (J) – Junilistan, a eurosceptic party, represented in the EP during one term.

Moderate party (M) – Moderaterna, right wing party.

The Green party (G) – Miljöpartiet.

Swedish Democrats (SD) – Right wing nationalistic party.

Social democrats (S) – Socialdemokraterna.

# 1. Introduction

*"It feels almost unreal, in a forest country such as Sweden, that the government has done so little to protect the national resource that the forest is, against the meddlesomeness and envy of the EU."*

Erik Hjärtfors, forest owner, Land Skogsbruk 2021

Commenting on the perceived failure of the Swedish government to influence the latest EU Forest Strategy, this quote comes from the biggest media in Sweden targeted at forest owners, *Land Skogsbruk* (formerly published under the name *Land Skogsland*). Not only is it a channel for information on the EU, but also a forum for formation of opinion on the EU. As such, it matters: Sweden is home to more than 300.000 forest owners, and the biggest forest industry in the EU. Previous research shows that forest owners in countries such as Sweden have, through their organisations, been influential in shaping, and often hindering, EU forest policy (Winkel & Sotirov, 2016). At the same time, Sweden is viewed as a pace-setter in environmental policies, often taking the lead in the EU (Börzel, 2002; Tobin, 2022). As regards environmental forest policy, Sweden has rather taken the role of the foot-dragger. Yet, we know little about how forest owners perceive the EU, and nothing about how the EU is framed in their media. As media is a powerful tool for mobilising consensus, and thereby ultimately for exerting influence as an interest group, this research gap needs to be filled. Therefore, I aim to explore how *Land Skogsbruk* has covered EU forest policy in 2006, 2013 and 2021. With departure in the theory on collective action frames, I will analyse which perspectives are present in Land Skogsbruk, referring to which actors are given a voice in the media, as well as which kind of perspective they represent. Also, what kind of arguments are raised in opposition to EU forest policy, and are there any conflicts between actors appearing in the media? By constructing frames that reflect the content, an overview of trends in the reporting can be achieved. Over-time differences in the framing will be connected to developments in EU forest policy.

Through previous research, we know that the forest is a contested area of integration. While environmental groups have pushed for stronger protection of the forest, forest owners and the industry worry that such protection could limit business opportunities (Björstig, 2013; Winkel & Sotirov, 2016). At the same time, the forest sector acknowledges the benefits of common rules on the inner market and see the need for coordination of EU policies that affect the forest. In the tug-of-war between different interests, the forest has remained a national competency, even as a range of policy fields, such as environment and energy, increasingly spill over on the forest area (Sotirov et al. 2104). Scholars have criticised these policies for being fragmented, seeing that environmental-

and production-oriented objectives are often in conflict with each other. However, frame analysis shows that the forest is mainly presented as a producer of wood in EU legislation (Elomina & Pülzl, 2021). Likewise, a production-oriented perspective dominates Swedish forest policy (Lindahl et al., 2017). Frame analyses have also been carried out of the forest in global and Swedish media, as well as in Finnish media. (Takala et al., 2019, Hallberg-Sramek et al., 2020; Kleinschmit & Sjöstedt, 2014; Park & Kleinschmit, 2016). As these studies all focus on mass media, apart from Takala et al. (2019), no frame analyses have previously been made on forest owner media in Sweden. Considering the importance of the Swedish forest sector, both nationally and on the EU arena, this study adds a new and valuable perspective to the flora of frame analyses in the forest area.

The thesis furthermore aims to widen the perspective on EU media coverage. Previous studies have shown that reporting often revolves around major events, such as enlargement or EU summits (Boomgaarden et al., 2010). Heads of state and prime ministers are most visible in the reporting (R. Koopmans, 2007). Furthermore, EU coverage tends to focus on areas in which the pooling of sovereignty is high, as well as on topics on which elites disagree (Boomgaarden et al., 2013; de Wilde, 2019). As this research was all done on mass media, the thesis could contribute to understanding how the EU is framed in the media of an interest group. What actors are visible in forest owner media, and which events are covered there?

The thesis will unfold as follows: The choice of Sweden as a single case will be further motivated, followed by a presentation of the research questions. Next, the theoretical framework and the method are presented. A historical background will be provided: first, on the development of the Swedish forest sector, and second, on the development of EU forest policy. Next, the literary review is divided into two parts. First, frame and discourse analyses of the forest are reviewed, followed by studies on media coverage of the EU. The result of the analysis will then be presented. For each year, the most relevant and popular frames will be explained. Finally, a discussion is held on the findings, followed by conclusions.

## 2. Sweden as a single case

Sweden is selected as a single case, due to importance of its forest sector for the national economy, as well as its historical resistance to EU influence over forest policy. In 2020, Sweden had the highest level of available timber resources of all EU countries, together with Germany.

13,3% of all timber resources in the EU were found in Swedish forests, measuring not only the area covered, but also forest density, as well as height and volume of trees growing. The economic output of forestry and logging was, in the same year, slightly higher in Sweden (9,1 billion euro) than in Germany (8,5 billion euro). Of course, Sweden is significantly smaller than Germany in terms of population, meaning that, in relative terms, the forest sector is of greater importance for the Swedish economy. Furthermore, as seen in the literature, Sweden stands out for its reluctance to allow EU influence over the forest industry (Winkel & Sotirov, 2016), which will be further explored in the literary review. Adding to this, Sweden is an intriguing case, considering that it has often been seen as a frontrunner in environmental policies in the EU (Börzel, 2002; Tobin, 2022). In environmental forest policies, however, this is not the case, at least not from an EU perspective. How do Swedish actors, which oppose EU influence, defend their position, considering that Sweden has a reputation of being a frontrunner in environmental policies? There are likely differences in how the EU and Sweden views the forest in relation to climate change and biodiversity, and how the forest can best be managed to benefit the environmental goals in these areas. The study will provide insight into how these differences are dealt with.

### 3. Research questions

The overarching research question is: Which perspectives on EU forest policy are present in the selected media, and how does this change over time? Perspectives on the one hand refer to which groups are allowed to frame EU forest policy. On the other hand, it refers to *how* they frame EU forest policy.

Sub-questions:

1. What kind of policy perspectives and forestry-related expertise on EU forest policy is present in the selected media, in each studied year?
2. Which perspective(s) on EU forest policy dominate, in each studied year?
3. What policy related conflicts, if any, can be observed between actors represented in the media, in relation to EU forest policy, in each studied year?
4. When opposition against EU influence is raised, what kind of arguments are used? Are these, for instance, economic or environmental?



5. What kind of events in EU forest policy are covered by the selected media, in each studied year?

The last question asks what kind of events are covered in the media. This has often been the topic of previous studies on media coverage of the EU. Answering this question also helps understanding *why* certain perspectives are present in the media.

The content will be sorted into predetermined categories, following Kleinschmit and Sjöstedt (2014), see *Method*. The empirical material will be presented according to these categories in the Result part, while the research questions will be discussed in depth in *Discussion* and *Conclusion*.

## 4. Theoretical framework

### 4.1. Frame theory

The concept of frames is referred both to as a theory and a method for analysis. First developed by the sociologist Erving Goffman, framing was defined as the organisation of experience (Erving Goffman, 1974). Through framing, actors sponsor an interpretation of a an issue, and provide it with meaning. On media reports, Goffman writes that "understanding of the world precedes these stories, determining which ones reporters will select and how the ones that are selected will be told" (Erving Goffman, 1974, p. 13). Media reports both mirror and shape our understanding of events, and therefor they lend themselves well to frame analysis. In the literary review, several studies are included that apply frame analysis, all of them taking their departure in Goffmans theory. Three of these studies furthermore build on the work of Benford and Snow, likewise sociologists, who developed the theory on collective action frames, originally intended for the study of social movements, but often used in media studies.

Benford and Snow see framing as an active process, which in social movements has the purpose of creating consensus and encouraging action (Snow & Benford, 1988:198). In order to produce collective action frames, three core framing tasks need to be fulfilled. First, diagnostic framing identifies and defines the problem, which includes attributing the role of causer. The framing needs to be clear and consistent on what the problem is, and who or what is to blame, in order to produce collective action. Second, prognostic framing means specifying what is to be done about the problem. This involves suggesting a solution, as well as attributing the role of a helper. Furthermore, prognostic framing can include identifying tactics, targets and strategies.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing serve consensus mobilisation. However, even if this is achieved, people might not be motivated to act, for instance if the issue appears as too technical, or if the cause seems lost. Therefore, motivational framing is needed. When the three core framing tasks are completed, the result is the collective action frame. However, for an interest group such as forest owners, moving people to take action is not central. Forest owners as studied here are members of an organisation, and political influence relies mainly on representatives of this organisation (Bjärstig, 2013). Identifying motivational framing will therefore not be included in the thesis. The focus will henceforth be on diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Three studies reviewed in this thesis build on the work of Benford and Snow (1998) in the analysis of media (Hallberg-Sramek et al., 2020; Kleinschmit & Sjöstedt, 2014; Park & Kleinschmit, 2016). These studies are all concerned with media targeted at the general public. In comparison, I expect media targeted at forest owners to more actively push an agenda. In that sense, they come closer to the logics of a social movement. There are differences in the way that authors apply the theory. I have drawn most inspiration from Kleinschmit and Sjöstedt (2016). Thus, similar to them, I will apply only diagnostic and prognostic framing, and identify roles that are attributed to actors within these frames. However, I will also take note of all EU actors mentioned, even if these are not highlighted neither as helpers nor as causers. In this case, EU actors are defined as EU institutions and representatives of these, with Member States and MEPs excepted, since these are often seen to represent their countries and their parties, rather than the EU. The intention is to get an understanding of which EU actors are paid attention to.

In the research questions listed below, question 2 and 3 refer to the diagnostic framing, while 4 and 5 refer to the prognostic framing.

## 4.2. Standing

In each article, speakers will be identified. These are actors who are allowed to frame an issue, through direct quotes, or if their frames are otherwise referred to. If an actor – or a group of actors, such as politicians – appears frequently, it has a standing. To determine which actors have a standing. Thus, the number of times that they appear needs to be assessed.

Journalists can be speakers if they are seen to often actively frame an issue, for instance when introducing or concluding an article. However, in the case of columns and editorials, it is very much their task to do so. Such articles, as well as letters to the editor, will be categorised as argumentative

articles, as opposed to descriptive articles, following Hallberg-Sramek (2020). In argumentative articles, by definition, the author is the speaker.

## 5. Method

### 5.1. Selection of media

The print edition of *Land Skogsbruk* is selected for the analysis. It is a weekly newspaper which, according to its own description, reports on forest management, technology, economy and politics for the individual forest owner. *Land Skogsbruk* is delivered as an annex to the magazine *Land*. (There is also an annex covering farming, *Land Lantbruk*.) Members of LRF receive *Land Skogsbruk*, as well as subscribing non-members.

Owner of *Land Skogsbruk* is *Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund* (LRF), The Federation of Swedish farmers. LRF has an office in Brussels and works actively to influence EU policy. A branch within LRF, *LRF Skogsägarna* (LRF Forest Owners) represents the three big Swedish forest owner associations *Södra*, *Mellanskog* and *Norra Skog*.

In 2020, *Land Skogsbruk* reached 188.000 readers, including readers of the E-newspaper (*ORVESTO Konsument 2020:1*, n.d.). This makes it the biggest forest-related news source for forest owners in Sweden. However, there is no number indicating how many of the subscribers are forest owners. (Even if LRF Forest Owners represents the three forest associations, as mentioned, members of these associations do not receive *Land Skogsbruk* unless they become members of LRF or subscribe.)

Prior to 2014, the newspaper was called *Land Skogsland* (“Rural Forest Land”). However, for reasons of clarity, I will write *Land Skogsbruk* throughout the thesis.

### 5.2. Time frame

The 2006, 2013 and 2021 editions of *Land Skogsbruk* are included in the study. In each of these years, the EC published a communication intended to coordinate forest policies and point out a direction for the future. These function as points of reference. The analysis starts with 2006, when the EU-FAP was published. This was a tool for implementing the first forest strategy, published in 1998. Equally legally non-binding, it summarised ongoing forest-related activities in the EU, and

established a new form of cooperation and coordination of forest-related issues. In 2013, a new forest strategy was published. According to previous research, this strategy was welcomed by the forest sector (Winkel & Sotirov, 2016). In 2021, the most recent forest strategy was published, which, as we saw in the introduction, was not well received among Swedish forest owners. The latest forest strategy will be further described in the historical background.

### 5.3. Content analysis

Following Kleinschmit and Sjöstedt (2014), the content will be sorted into predetermined categories, which is demonstrated below. Subsequently, I will develop issue-specific frames capturing the diagnostic and prognostic framing. The frames shall accurately reflect the content, even if constructing them involves simplifying the content to some extent. The frequency of frames will be assessed in order to get an overview and be able to discern patterns. The quantitative element is not central to my method, but a means to support the qualitative analysis. All articles that mention the EU will be assessed. However, if the EU is merely mentioned in passing, and if no framing can be connected to it, the article will not be analysed. If an article is only partly about the EU only that part will be analysed. However, the overwhelming majority of articles are analysed as a whole.

### 5.4. Argumentative and descriptive articles

If the article is descriptive, speakers will be identified. The comments made by each speaker is regarded as one statement. Within each statement, diagnostic and prognostic framing as well as attribution of roles will be identified, to the extent that they appear. If the article is argumentative, the author is the speaker. In such case the whole article is considered as one statement. Below is an example of how the content of an article is sorted.

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2013.

**Title:** New policy on biofuels favourable for both forest and the climate

**Kind:** Argumentative

**Author:** Christofer Fjellner, MEP, Moderaterna.

**Part of article analysed:** Whole.

**EU actors referred to:** European Parliament, ENVI, EU.

**Summary:** Recently, the EP voted on new rules for biofuels, including sustainability criteria. A step in the right direction according to Fjellner, but the threat of EU regulation prevails.

**Diagnostic framing 1:** The prevailing threat of a common European forest policy. Forest policy will not gain from needing to be compromised with greeks and spaniards.

**Diagnostic framing 2:** The other Swedish MEPs lack sufficient knowledge, as Moderaterna was the only party to consistently vote "in favour of the forest".

**Causer:** Other Swedish MEPs and parties.

**Prognostic framing:** The final negotiations in the Council, during which hopefully the last "forest unfriendly" parts of the proposal will be removed.

**Helper:** Fjellner, and the Swedish government in the CEU.

## 5.5. Construction of frames

In order to allow for frames to be applied to more than one article, some amount of generalisation is necessary. In the example above, one frame found was *EU as a threat to self-determination*. This frame can be applied to different threats posed by the EU. However, in order to further specify the content, I also use subframes. In this case the subframe is *Threat of common forest policy*. Here is a list of the diagnostic frames derived from the article above, including subframes.

EU actors lacking knowledge of the forest/MEPs

EU energy policy as a problem/Threat of sustainability criteria

The EU as a threat to self-determination/Threat of common forest policy

Regional differences as a problem/Greece and Spain

Each statement is considered as frames are constructed. This means that the same frame can be registered several times in one article, if it is deployed by several speakers.

## 6. Historical background: The Swedish forest sector

In Sweden, national policies have for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century promoted afforestation and even-staged stand management, with the aim to sustain or increase yields. In 1993, a major policy shift occurred, as environmental goals were introduced in parallel with the production goal. This approach has become known as “The Swedish model”. Here, a historical background will be given on the development of the Swedish forest sector, based on a few selected studies. These show that, from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1940’s, the state increasingly took control over Swedish forestry, turning it from “local, everyday practices into a major industrial sector in the Swedish economy” (p. 7, Mårald & Westholm, 2010). As we shall see, science played an important role in shaping Swedish silviculture, while also providing the tools for the state to gain control over privately owned forests. In this process, private forest owners were often viewed as shortsighted and lacking knowledge. The historical background will also cover the organization of forest owners, as well as biofuels.

### 6.1. From the 1850’s to 1945

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrialisation of Swedish forestry intensified (Mårald & Westholm, 2010). Studying the changing approaches to the future in Swedish forestry 1850-2010, Mårald & Westholm find that this resulted in a desire by the state to “govern the sector in line with scientific progress” (p. 4, Mårald & Westholm). In 1855, a governmental committee claimed that deforestation and forest degradation was occurring, due to short-sighted profit motives of forest owners. The committee suggested to investigate the possibility of whether the state could be legally obliged to oversee privately owned forests. While many of the Committees’ suggestions were not fulfilled at the time, a National Forestry Board was established, granting responsibility for state-owned forests and forestry education. At the turn of the century, the industrialization of forests had accelerated. Floatways were being built to transport timber to the coast, due to the high demand for timber in Europe. For this purpose, big trees were sought after. However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the pulp industry was established, increasing the demand for small trees as well. Consequently, natural forests were almost consumed completely. In 1896, another Forest Committee investigated the status of Swedish forests, finding that logging far exceed regrowth of new trees. Again, the shortsightedness of private owners was identified as a problem.

In 1903 a new Forest Conservation Act was introduced, aiming to promote regrowth in privately owned forests (Lindahl et al., 2017; Mårald & Westholm, 2010). To spread knowledge and promote

forest regrowth, Country Forestry Boards were established. Furthermore, the state invested in forestry research and education. In 1902, the Swedish Institute of Experimental Forestry (*Statens skogsförsöksanstalt*) was founded, focused on the classification and microbiology of soil. Studying the relationship between science and silviculture from 1900 to 1940, Jönsson argues that a shift occurred during this period in how forestry was viewed (Jönsson, 2019). While trees had previously been viewed as comprising the forest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “bacteria, sunlight, decaying leaves, the forest air”, among other things, were now added (p. 241, Jönsson, 2019). On the one hand, Jönsson argues, this “biological turn” bolstered the idea of nature as having infinite potential, by means of scientification, rationalization and planning. On the other, it also bolstered the idea of nature as complex and fragile, which is central for biodiversity and other environmental issues. Today, biology still plays an important role in silviculture, making the developments of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century relevant, according to Jönsson. Silviculture at the same time plays an important role for research: Funding is often granted to research studying how production problems can be overcome, and how production goals be reached. The Swedish Institute of Experimental Forestry was later amalgamated with the Forest University (*Skogshögskolan*). Today, the Forest University is one of three faculties at The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (*Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet*).

## 6.2. From 1945 to today

Despite the institutionalization of the forest, until 1945 the actual impact of the state on forestry was limited (Mårald & Westholm, 2010). Instead, the forest continued to often be used for agricultural purposes, such as firewood and grazing. Forests were often thinned out, which was explained by the practice of selective logging. This was accordingly forbidden in a 1948 act. In 1950, the Swedish National Forest Enterprise launched a new approach to the state-owned forests in Northern Sweden. The idea was to create even-aged and highly productive stands, through clear-cutting, slash burning, moulder scarifying of the ground and wetland drainage. In the 1960's, production was increased through biocides, fertilizers and new, highly productive, tree species. The forest volumes increased considerably. In 1979, a new act confirmed the right of the state to intervene if private forest owners were not managing the forest in accordance with the standards set by the state.

In parallel, however, even-aged monocultures and intensive management methods were increasingly questioned. In 1993, a new Forest Conservation act introduced the aim of preserving biodiversity, alongside with production goals. Furthermore, aesthetic, and cultural values were to

be considered. Greater freedom was granted to forest owners, which were expected to voluntarily maintain high wood production, while also improving environmental conditions (Lindahl et al., 2017; Mårald & Westholm, 2010). This approach is known as "freedom with responsibility", often referred to as "The Swedish model". However, the model has been criticised for not fulfilling the environmental goals set by the state (Lindahl et al., 2017; Danley et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to scholars a production-oriented perspective still dominates Swedish forest policy (Lindahl et al.). Analysing the underlying governance model through frame analysis, Lindahl et al. (2017) find that wood production and the economic dimension of sustainability is being prioritised over the environment. Furthermore, the goal of mitigating climate change is used to legitimise more intensive forest management methods, since increase in forest growth is expected to increase the uptake of carbon dioxide, while more wood production can contribute to the substitution of fossil-based materials and fuels. Lindahl et al. also find that policy documents do not recognise a conflict between the goal of a growing bioeconomy, and the goal of increasing the number of protected areas.

In recent years, EU has positioned itself as a critic of Swedish forestry, suggesting that The Swedish model is neither sufficiently protecting biodiversity, nor fulfilling the aim of mitigating climate change. In this way, the discussion on EU forest policy cuts right through the domestic discussion.

### 6.3. Biofuels and the forest sector

Biofuels policy is an important component of EU forest policy. At the same time, attempts to develop biofuels in Sweden have, from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, been closely connected with the forest sector. Therefore, a brief historical background to biofuels in Sweden will be given here, based on the book *Motorspritén Kommer! En historia om etanol och andra alternativa drivmedel* (Egan Sjölander, 2014). At the end, an overview of recent developments in biofuels policy in the EU is given.

Biofuels have often been seen as the "fuel of the future", providing a solution to several perceived threats. First, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the worry that oil was running out motivated a drive for producing ethanol from pulp industry waste. This was furthermore a solution to an environmental problem, as the waste contaminated lakes and streams. However, the ethanol was strongly questioned, being seen as competing with the production of snaps. The restrictive alcohol policies of the time, as well as the critique of the sobriety movement, also hindered its development.



In the 30's, the use of wood gas became a solution to the stagnation of the forest sector, which had resulted in widespread unemployment in Northern Sweden. Even if the effect and quality of wood gas could not compete with oil, it came to replace oil in civil vehicles almost completely during the second world war. During this time period, the risks of wood gas, causing fires and poisoning, became apparent. The end of the second world war was therefor also the end of the wood gas era.

If local environmental problems contributed to prompting the attempts to develop biofuels in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the awareness of global green house gases were decisive in prompting the second wave, at the turn of the millennium. However, as the authors show, the global environmental goals have been combined with the old economic and national motives, which build on the assumption that what is good for the economy, is also good for the economy and vice versa. This is applicable especially as regards forest biofuels: The “green gold” has been perceived as a renewable resource which can limit carbon dioxide emissions while generating employment and export opportunities. At the same time, forest biofuels are questioned, being said to compete with other wood-based businesses, as well as threatening biodiversity and the ability of forests to store carbon.

In recent years, EU has increasingly influenced the Swedish biofuels sector. In this regard, the Renewable Energy Directive of 2009 was a game changer, introducing a 10 percent target for biofuels in transport, to be reached in 2020. However, the target became increasingly questioned, seeing that the production of biofuels could compete with food production, especially in the case of crops such as palm oil (which is mainly produced in Indonesia and Malaysia) (Stattman et al., 2018). Furthermore, the quest for biofuels can drive deforestation, as areas for cultivation of crops are expanded. The 2015 amendment of RED limited the amount of biofuels produced from crops which can be counted towards the target. Instead, attention was directed at “advanced biofuels”, produced for instance from Swedish forest residues. However, these biofuels are as well contested, since they can be seen to compete with the production of industrial wood (Winkel, 2017). Gradually, sustainability criteria have been introduced in the EU, regulating exactly what kind of forest residues and by-products can be used for biofuels to avoid competition with other forest products. According to the FS, the drive for biofuels has lead to increased harvesting in the EU. The FS therefor introduces the cascading principle, which prioritizes wood for long-lived products.

While the discussion on biofuels continues, in the EU and in Sweden alike, it can be noted that fossil oil still dominates in transport. At the same time, electric cars are on the rise. It remains to be seen what role biofuels will play in the future.

#### 6.4. The organisation of Swedish forest owners

Today, 105.000 of Swedish forest owners are organised in three forest associations: *Södra* (Southern), *Mellanskog* (roughly translated: Middle forest) and *Norra Skog* (Northern forest) (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, 2020). These associations are part of *LRF Skogsägarna* (LRF Forest Owners), which is a branch within LRF, coordinating and representing the interests of forest owners. Here, a brief historical background will be given on the organisation of Swedish forest owners, based on a report published by LRF Forest Owners (Sjunnesson et al., 2018).

At the end of the 30's, around 30 forest owner's associations were operational in Sweden. Education and advising to members as regards forest management were their central activities. However, increasingly the associations started focusing on cooperating in selling the timber, as well as engaging with political issues, representing the interests of its members towards the state. As an example, the forest owner associations aimed to change the system of measuring timber, which was seen to benefit the buyer. Joining forces, the National Federation of Swedish Forest Owner Associations was founded in 1932. In 1935, a milestone was reached as a new law was introduced, assuring the equal influence of seller and buyer in measurement of timber.

During the second world war, demand for wood soured, as the import of oil and coal was stopped. During these years, despite the increasing state intervention, the forest owner movement managed to strengthen its position.

In the 50's, individual ownership of forest continued to be questioned by the government. Radical proposals were being discussed, including the forced association of small enterprises to bigger units, for the sake of profitability and to meet demands of rationalisation and mechanisation. The Federation of Swedish Forest Owner Associations responded by founding forest management areas (*skogsbruksområden*), the resources and management which were coordinated by educated staff. This enabled a more intensive forest management and created a foundation for common investments. In the 50's, 60's and 70's, the associations acquired their own industries, including pulp industries and saw mills. During the industrial crisis of the 80's, however, some of these proved to have been bad investments.

Successively, the associations merged. In 1999, the Federation of Swedish Forest Owner Associations became a branch of LRF, named LRF Forest Owners.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that, in the report from LRF Forest Owners, the importance of the different channels through which information was spread to members of the associations is emphasised. A prominent example, from the 30's onwards *Jordbrukarnas Föreningsblad* (Newspaper of the Farmers Association) gave weekly updates on the price of timber, turned the attention to certain topics of forest management, and functioned as a platform for formation of opinion on political issues. This journal was the forerunner of what would later become the weekly magazine *Land*, which today includes the titles *Land Lantbruk* and *Land Skogsbruk*, the latter of which is studied in this thesis.

## 7. Historical background: EU forest policy

Attempts to better integrate forest policy in the EU can be dated back to the 1970's (Winkel & Sotirov, 2016). These have resulted in a "soft" approach based on coordination and communication. However, scholars have found that forest policies in the EU present contradicting goals, and that little guidance is being offered on how trade-offs should be dealt with. This lack of integration is seen as a problem also by the forest sector, as revealed in interviews with forestry interest groups, forest associations, environmental NGO's and other forest policy experts such as parliamentarians and scientists. Here, interviewees point to goal conflicts, most frequently between nature conservation and bioenergy policy. Often, the "forest countries" are said to hinder integration. Consisting of Finland, Sweden, Austria, Germany – and sometimes also France and Poland – these countries form a blocking minority against forest policy. According to several environmental interviewees, a small elite group of top national bureaucrats as well as related forestry interest groups (called "the forest coalition") are especially influential. These prefer "symbolic" forest policy, which has little actual impact. The environmental interviewees argue that the "forest coalition" pushed for the forest strategy of 2013 as a way to divert attention from a Green Paper published by the DG Environment. Some forest sector interviewees confirm that this was indeed the case. However, their resistance is mainly based on the concern that the forest could be integrated under the environmental competency, in which case the industrial and economic dimension of the forest would be neglected. The authors conclude that it is mainly the economic interests of the forest sector, together with the MS where these interests play a role, that block forest policy integration in the EU.

Despite the resistance, strategic alliance building and compromise has over time enabled for establishing environmental forest policy (Sotirov et al., 2014.). In the following, three examples of this will be presented. First, adopted in 1992, the Habitats Directive established the Natura 2000 network, an EU network of protected areas where forests make up 50%. Among actors pushing for the policy were the environmental movement and DG Environment. The forest sector was largely absent from the discussion, due to the lack of international organisations representing the forest sector, as well as the fact that Sweden and Finland had not yet joined the EU. Second, the EU policy on timber legality and anti deforestation policy (EUTR) was adopted in 2010. While measures had been taken before in order to prevent the import of timber driving tropical deforestation, these were found to be insufficient. In Sweden, forest interest groups and national forestry state authorities opposed the EUTR, partly due to a worry that the measure would create a precedent of EU environmental competence in forest policy. A compromise was reached, and the CEU voted yes in October 2010. Sweden was the only Member State to vote against in the EUTR. The last case concerns the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation (LULUCF). Here, the forest sector was part of a "forest bioeconomy coalition", which framed the substitution of materials and energy with forest based products as a way to mitigate climate change, and pressed for national flexibility in implementing the LULUCF. This coalition also included The Swedish Forest Agency. Eventually, a compromise was reached, allowing for flexibility, while also referring some power to the EC. In 2018, a LULUCF regulation was adopted.

As seen, while the forest sector was largely absent in the drafting of the first biodiversity policy, it has increasingly taken on an active role in the EU policy process. An additional interview study supports this finding. In interviews conducted 2004-2007, forest stakeholders express that they have previously been opposed to any form of formal forest policy since. However, having recently reconsidered, they now favour a forest policy in terms of supporting and coordinating actions at the lowest level of formal cooperation in the EU (Bjärstig, 2013). According to an industry representative, this approach builds on the insight that even if stakeholders had "tried to keep the forest policy outside the EU it would come in the back door" (Bjärstig, 2013, p. 134). Mainly, interviewees worry about the functional spillover from environmental policy. If the forest was established as its own policy field, environmental interests could be kept at bay. Furthermore, forest stakeholders are optimistic about their chances to influence the integration process. In this regard, Sweden is viewed as the central arena. However, stakeholders are critical to the Swedish government, which is viewed as passive in relation to the EU. This critique might be well founded. In her PhD, Bjärstig (then named Andersson) takes on a broader perspective on EU forest policy (Andersson, 2007), finding that forest stakeholders have a more positive approach to EU forest

policy than does the government. Furthermore, Swedish politicians are found to lack knowledge of EU forest policy.

Previous research has shown that both the EU-FAP of 2006 and the forest strategy of 2013 were welcomed by the forest sector (Winkel & Sotirov, 2016). This was not the case for the most recent forest strategy, launched by the Commission in June 2021. Here, the forest is viewed as a "natural ally" for EU in reaching the goal of carbon neutrality in 2050. The role of the forest as a carbon sink is emphasised, and worry is expressed at the increase in harvesting, which can allegedly be observed in the EU in recent years (European Commission, 2021, p. 2). Furthermore, the strategy goes into detail on management methods, suggesting to allow clear-cutting only "in duly justified cases". Clear-cutting is common practice in Sweden. While the strategy is merely a legally unbinding document, the level of ambition stands in stark contrast to previous strategies. It is likely that the FS has had an impact on forest owner's attitudes to the EU, and that this will be demonstrated in how the EU is framed in *Land Skogsbruk*.

## 8. Literary review

The literary review is divided into two parts. In the first, frame and discourse analyses of the forest are reviewed, most of them focusing on Sweden or the EU. A study on the forest in Finnish print media is also included. Its conclusions are relevant for Swedish conditions, considering the similarities between the two countries. All studies help understanding how the forest is and has been framed and perceived. The time period covered by the studies ranges from the early 90's to today. In the second part, media studies on the EU are reviewed.

### 8.1. Frame and discourse analyses of the forest

Already mentioned in the Historical background, a study on frames in Swedish forest policy documents shows that wood production and the economic dimension of sustainability is being prioritised over the environment (Lindahl et al., 2017). A similar view on the forest is found in a critical discourse analysis of Finnish print media, among them a media targeted at forest owners (Takala et al., 2019). Studying developments over time, the authors find that the discourse on nature as the primary objective for the forest has gained ground in media targeted at the general public. However, the "wood production discourse" still dominates in the forest owner media. At the same time, nature conservation has been included in this discourse as an objective. In the case of climate

change, the wood production discourse even presents intensive forest management methods as a solution, a finding resembling that of Lindahl et al.

Studying discourses on bioeconomy in policy framework documents, Kleinschmit et al. come to a similar conclusion (2017). In the EU as well as in several EU countries, growth is seen as compatible with a growing bioeconomy, which is – again – viewed as a solution for mitigation of climate change. Whether this is the case or not, is a question on which scientists are not in agreement, since there are gaps in the knowledge on how changes in forest cover affect carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as difficulties in calculating the substitution effect (Kleinschmit et al., 2017; Söderberg & Eckerberg, 2013).

Two additional studies show that bioeconomy is prioritised in EU legislation. First, Söderberg & Eckerberg find that bioenergy is overwhelmingly being framed in EU legislation in such a way as to motivate an increase in production (2013). Second, a frame analysis of EU policies shows that the forest is mainly framed as a "provider of wood and non-wood products" (Elomina & Pülzl, 2021). At the same time, other frames, such as "solution to climate change" and "contributor to bioeconomy", further serve to legitimise more forest use, according to the authors.

Not only is climate change mitigation central to the current debate on the forest, but climate change is already affecting forests. This phenomena is being differently perceived by practitioners and policy stakeholders, as seen in a discourse analysis (de Koning et al., 2014). On the EU level, the dominant view is that climate change poses a big threat to forest ecosystems, and hence, the protection of forests must be strong. At the regional level, most interviewees view climate change as unpredictable, which means that there is no use in no use in implementing Natura 2000 rules strictly.

With departure in the conflicting views on forests and climate change, Kleinschmit and Sjöstedt analyse how the forest-climate change nexus is framed in the Swedish daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter between 1992 and 2009 (2014). As speakers, scientists appear most frequently. These tend to highlight the complexity of the issue, which contributes to depoliticising the topic. Similarly, politicians and administrators are found to avoid political conflict, often vaguely referring to "society" as a causer (of climate change). Neither forest owners nor the forest industry has a standing. However, forest sector enterprises are sometimes pointed out as causers.

As we have seen, goal conflicts between biodiversity and forestry are ignored in EU and Swedish forest policy (Elomina & Pülzl, 2021; Lindahl et al., 2017). This is not the case in print media,

according to two studies. First, Hallberg-Sramek et al. focus on media reporting on woodland key habitats in Sweden (Hallberg-Sramek et al., 2020). These are areas with a particularly high nature conservation value, which have been inventoried by the Swedish Forest Agency since the early 90's. Over time, land owners have become increasingly constrained in selling timber from woodland key habitats. In the media, forest owners are sometimes framed as victims to the woodland key habitat concept. However, the dominant frame is that of forestry as a threat to biodiversity, to which nature conservation is the solution. In global media as well, forestry is framed as a threat to biodiversity (Park & Kleinschmit, 2016). Forest sector enterprises are often framed as causers, driven by economic interests, harming the forest in different areas of the world. Individual forest owners are also occasionally framed as causers. Environmental NGO's and individuals are instead framed as helpers, bringing attention to the topic and pushing for political action.

## 8.2. Studies on media coverage of the EU

Studies on media coverage of the EU focus on mass media, primarily television and newspapers. In fact, I have not found one singly study on the EU as presented in specialist press/trade press. This is surprising, since the EU is an important actor in fields such as agriculture, environment and trade. EU policies have a direct effect on people in general, and on people within certain trades or interest groups in particular. However, conclusions drawn from studies on mass media provide valuable input, even if they cannot be expected to fully apply to an interest groups media.

Mass media is important in order for political actors to reach out to mass audiences and form opinion on European integration (Boomgaarden et al., 2010; de Wilde, 2019). While mass media remains mainly nationally organised, research has often focused on the lack of a European sphere, where the EU is discussed cross-boundary and where convergence is taking place in terms of how the media reports (Boomgaarden et al., 2013). But instead of a European public sphere, a Europeanisation of national public spheres has occurred (R. & S. Paul. Koopmans, 2010). This simply means that the EU is visible in the public sphere, to the extent that EU institutions are central for decision-making, while national frames of reference are still used for national audiences.

Media coverage of the EU tends to focus on major events, such as elections for the European Parliament, changes in the presidency and installations of a new European Commission (Boomgaarden et al., 2010). Furthermore, news attention increases when elites disagree, or if political elites become more negative (Boomgaarden et al., 2013). These conclusions can be seen as interconnected, since opinions tend to be accentuated in connection to election campaigns, for

instance. EU coverage is also higher on issues where pooling of sovereignty is high, than on issues that remain member state competencies (de Wilde, 2019).

Regarding which actors are given a voice in news coverage of the EU, research shows that prime ministers and Heads of States are the most prominent actors to appear in EU news coverage (R. Koopmans, 2007).



## 9. Result

For each year, a selection of some of the most relevant frames are presented. These are sorted into categories according to theme or main frame. Subsequently, causers and helpers, speakers and mentioned EU actors are presented. z

### 9.1. Frames in 2006

Number of articles analysed: 28, of which 10 argumentative, 18 descriptive.

#### Diagnostic frames

#### Prognostic frames

<b>The EU as a threat to self-determination: 5</b>	<b>Frames on the governance of EU forest policy: 21</b>
The forest strategy paving the way for a common forest policy The EU as a threat to Swedish forest management methods/clear-cutting	Better coordination of EU forest policy: 13 A holistic approach to EU forest policy: 6 Role of forest strengthened in EU policy: 2 No EU influence over the forest at all
<b>Frames on the governance of EU forest policy: 14</b>	<b>EU forest policy as an opportunity: 6</b>
Lack of coordination in EU forest policy: 5 Governance through energy policy as a problem: 3 Governance through environmental policy as a problem: 4 Recreational perspective on the forest as a problem: 2	Stop bioenergy threat through EU policy. Intensified forestry as achieved through EU policy and targets EUTR stopping import of illegal wood
<b>Frames on bioenergy: 11</b>	<b>Forest products good for the environment: 3</b>
Bioenergy is needed since fossil energy is unreliable: 4 Lack of bioenergy in the EU: 3 Bioenergy as a threat: 3 Market distortion through subsidies for bioenergy	Forest products for climate change mitigation Bioenergy/fuels for climate change mitigation
<b>Other frames</b>	<b>Other frames</b>
Examples: Sweden exerting too little influence on EU forest policy: 3 Regional differences as a problem: 2 Imports of illegally harvested timber Natural catastrophes (insects, storms, fires) Lack of EU funds to the forest	Sweden exerting influence on EU forest policy: 5 Bioenergy for energy security: 5 EU funds as an opportunity: 11 EU benefitting business: 2

Table 1. Frames in 2006.

In 2006, governance of forest policy through other policy fields, such as environment and energy, is framed as a problem. However, the discussion is held on a principal level, and the potentially bad consequences appear to lie in the future. Often, the solution is described as better coordination and a "holistic approach", where the industrial dimension of the forest is enhanced in EU policy. To the extent that the EU-FAP is mentioned, it is mainly seen as improving coordination.

However, some perceive it as paving the way for a common forest policy. A recurring topic in 2006 is bioenergy. Forest owner representatives perceive forest based bioenergy as a way to enhance energy security and create opportunities for business, while industry representatives frame it as a threat.

### 6.1.1. Diagnostic frames

The lack of coordination in forest policy is framed as a problem. Often, energy and environmental policy are pointed out as a problems, since each policy field takes only one aspect of the forest into consideration.

*”The reality is that important forest policy issues have long been influenced by EU decisions, but with lacking coordination and often without paying attention to the interests of the forest industry. We must, with help from our politicians, change this.”*

Elisabet Salander Björklund, Senior Executive Vice President Stora Enso, Stefan Wirtén, Director at Skogsindustrierna.

The authors appear optimistic about forest stakeholders chances to influence EU forest policy, an attitude commonly found in 2006. However, some speakers also warn about the implications of the 1998 forest strategy and the EU-FAP. Helene Goudin, MEP for Junilistan (J), warns about ”the signals sent out by EU institutions” in the forest strategy, finding that it is paving the way for a common forest policy. Christofer Fjellner, MEP for Moderaterna (M), replies that this interpretation is ”exaggerated”. According to him, ”strong forces” in the EU have wanted a common forest policy, but this threat was, at least to the most part, counteracted in an EP resolution, as a result of his hard work. A common forest policy is not feasible, according to Fjellner, since differences between the EU Member States are ”bigger than the common problems”. He nevertheless wishes for better coordination of forest policies in the EU, in order to avoid goal conflicts between different policy fields.

A recurring topic in 2006 is bioenergy. In an argumentative article, Bo Dockered, head of board at Sveaskog, argues that funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) should be used by Sweden to plant trees for energy production on land lying in fallow. This would create a ”unique opportunity” to get rid of oil dependence, which is urgently needed since, according to him, oil is due to run out in 5 to 25 years. In the only editorial mentioning the EU in 2006, editor Rolf Segerstedt presents a similar narrative. Since oil is due to run out, Segerstedt is favourably disposed to the intention of the EC to increase production of biofuels on agricultural

land. However, bioenergy is also framed as a threat. In an argumentative article, representatives of the forest industry worry that energy production could compete with the production of other forest products, as a result of EU energy policy, with its one-sided focus on the forest as a source of energy. Again, the lack of coordination and holistic approach is framed as the source of the problem. The framing of bioenergy as competing with other forest products is not found in 2013 or 2021, and neither is the idea of oil running out.

### **6.1.2 Prognostic frames**

While governance of forest policy through environmental and/or energy policy is seen as a problem, the solution is often described as better coordination of EU policies, as well as a "holistic approach" to, or "holistic view" on, the forest. This means that different aspects of the forest are considered in EU policy, but also that the industrial dimension is strengthened. As an example, representatives of the forest industry propose to integrate the forest under The DG for Internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SME's. In another article, LRF representatives Linda Hedlund and Ulf Österblom see a risk of potential limitations to the production of bioenergy if the industrial dimension of the forest is not considered. Again, a "holistic view" of the forest is needed. Thereby, environmental standards can be maintained while the forest is recognised as a producer of renewable raw materials, which contribute to mitigation of climate change.

Swedish actors, including both forest stakeholders and politicians – most often the government – are framed as helpers, which can bring about a holistic approach and improved coordination in EU forest policy.

*"It is really important to invest power and energy into "forest politics" in the EU. Not to extend it but to influence what is already decided about in the CEU, the Parliament or the Commission."*

Linda Hedlund, LRF Skogsägarna.

## 9.2. Frames in 2013

Number of articles analysed: 35, of which 9 argumentative, 26 descriptive.

### Diagnostic frames

### Prognostic frames

<b>Frames on energy, climate and bioeconomy: 28</b>	<b>EU policy as a solution: 6</b>
Threat of sustainability criteria: 12 Sustainability criteria harming forests potential to mitigate climate change Fossil fuels the problem, not forest biofuels Swedish government lacking interest in bioeconomy	Coming legislation aiming to stop insects and diseases Developing forest industry with industrial dimension ILUC rules favouring Swedish forest
<b>EU as a threat to self-determination: 9</b>	<b>Cooperation: 5</b>
EU disregards Swedish sovereignty and democracy Threat of common forest policy: 4 EU rules making forestry difficult, threatening Swedish self-determination: 2	LRF cooperating with CEPF Sweden cooperating with CEPF, Eustafor etc. Sweden cooperating with other MS in the CEU
<b>Illegal timber and deforestation in non-EU countries: 5</b>	<b>Forestry/forest products good for the environment: 6</b>
Import of illegal timber to the EU: 3 EU imports causing deforestation	Forest products for climate change mitigation: 2 Forestry mitigating climate change: 2
<b>EU actors lacking knowledge of forest: 5</b>	<b>Sweden exerting influence: 6</b>
Swedish MEPs lacking knowledge of the forest: 2 EU actors claiming too much forest is harvested in Europe	Forest owners exerting influence LRF exerting influence Swedish government exerting influence:
<b>Regional differences making EU forest policy difficult/impossible): 3</b>	<b>EU benefitting business: 5</b>
Common forest policy not possible, since the countries are so different. (Spain and Greece examples): 2 Nordic countries differ from Belgium and Britain	Removal of custom duties benefitting trade Exporting outside of the EU made possible by EU legislation EU removing trade barriers to the US

Table 2. Frames in 2013.

In 2013, EU sustainability criteria for biofuels are on the agenda, with several MEPs part-taking in the discussion. Many speakers highlight the differences between the Nordic countries on the one hand, and other EU countries on the other. It is suggested that Swedish actors need to explain to these countries, and to the EU, how sustainable forestry works. The EU is framed as threatening the potential of the Swedish bioeconomy. At the same time, the EU is seen as a positive force on the international market, enabling trade and benefiting export of wood.

### 6.2.1 Diagnostic frames

Regarding the sustainability criteria, articles often revolve around the developments in the EP. Here, the ENVI has proposed to remove forest residues from the list of advanced biofuels,

containing the biofuels which are considered to be the most sustainable. If the proposal passes, sustainability criteria could threaten business opportunities for forest owners, according to the framing. Furthermore, the criteria could add an economical and administrative burden, while paving the way for a common forest policy. Biofuels from the Swedish forest are seen as sustainable by definition, and important for mitigation of climate change. Therefore, to apply the same sustainability criteria to Swedish forest as to forest in other countries is framed as absurd.

*"For us there is a decisive difference between for example deforestation in the jungles of Brazil and the raw materials and by-products of Swedish forestry."*

Social democrats Marita Ulvskog, Olle Ludvigsson, Åsa Westerlund, Göran Färm

Eventually, the proposals made by the ENVI were not adopted in plenary. As a result, the sustainability criteria became acceptable, according to the framing. However, there are other obstacles to developing the bioeconomy, where biofuels are an important component. In an article, LRF representative Minna Gillberg finds that the bioeconomy is threatened by "EU interests": Other MS view the Swedish forest as a coal sink, which can be used in order to compensate for their own emissions. This idea is to become more prevalent in 2021.

*"The Poles would for sure like to see that harvesting in our forests is limited, so that they have space to extract fossil shale gas"*

Minna Gillberg, LRF

This is also an example of how other EU countries are framed as different to Sweden. Because of these differences, EU forest policy is framed as inappropriate, difficult to achieve, or impossible. One speaker mentions that Greece and Spain have demanded financial support to regrow forest. In Sweden, in contrast, forest regrowth has long been an integrated part of forest management, according to the speaker. Non-Nordic countries and EU institutions are furthermore described as less knowing of forestry and sustainability.

*"The forest related discussion in Brussels is on a more basic level, for instance they talk about how you can use the forest and what sustainable forest management is."*

Tatu Liimatainen, policy advisor, Nordic Family Forestry (NSF)

However, Swedish actors are also sometimes referred to as lacking knowledge. According to MEP Christofer Fjellner (M), the "Swedes in the European parliament need to do their homework" on the importance of biofuels from the forest.

### 6.2.2. Prognostic frames

As a solution to the perceived lack of knowledge in the EU, Swedish actors are called upon to explain how Swedish forestry works, and to exert influence on the EU. Tatu Liimatainen, policy advisor at NSF, finds that forest owners must make their voices heard, and not simply rely on their governments. Similarly, Kent Johansson urges "the Swedish family forestry", with LRF at the front, to spread the message about the Swedish model. In order to achieve influence, cooperation is also framed as important. According to Cristofer Fjellner, the Swedish government can achieve more reasonable sustainability criteria through cooperation with other MS in the CEU. Sven-Erik Hammar, head of LRF Forest owners, emphasises cooperation with CEPF. MEP Kent Johansson (C) wants to cooperate with other Swedish MEPs in order to make a change in EU forest policy.

As already mentioned, forestry is seen as a solution to mitigation of climate change. For acknowledging this, the 2013 forest strategy receives praise from the LRF. MEP Kent Johansson, Centerpartiet (C), finds that harvesting should be increased in order to produce more environmentally friendly products, a development he would like the EU to support financially. Minna Gillberg, LRF, pushes for developing the bioeconomy, finding that the forest is uniting "environmental, economic and social development". Thus, growth and environmental consideration go hand in hand, according to the framing.

While the EU is often criticised, it is also framed as a positive force on the international market. For instance, the EU has ensued negotiations with the US to remove custom duties for wood. A new labelling for wood is questioned for entailing an administrative burden for producers. Yet, most speakers find that the labelling will facilitate the export of wood from Sweden.

*"We cannot do it in one way in Sweden and an other way in Germany. [...] In order to achieve free movement for products within Europe technical barriers to trade must be removed."*

Sara Elfving, The Swedish National board of Housing, Building and Planning.

Specific EU policies, which were already adopted, are seldom referred to. The EUTR is an exception to the rule. In several articles, the EUTR is framed as a solution to the import of illegal wood. Furthermore, EU funds are positively framed. Often, these are reported to having been granted to research aiming to solve a specific problem. For instance, EU funds support the development of a new wax, protecting pines from the pine weevil.

### 9.3. Frames in 2021

Number of articles analysed: 50. 24 argumentative articles, 26 descriptive articles.

#### Diagnostic frames

#### Prognostic frames

<b>Sweden not standing up to the EU: 11</b>	<b>Frames on Swedish influence in the EU: 29</b>
Government not standing up for "Swedish interests": 2 Green parties fault that the government is not standing up for forest sector interests: 3	Sweden exerting influence: 6. A minister for rural affairs needed, to better represent Swedish interests: 4 Cooperation with other MS: 3
<b>EU as a threat to self-determination: 19</b>	<b>Keeping forest policy a national concern: 8</b>
EU attempting micro-management of forestry: 3 EC acting outside of its competency in the FS: 2	Forest must remain a national competency: 4 Sweden maintaining power over forest policy: 3
<b>EU lacking knowledge of the forest/EU distrusting Sweden/EU not caring: 9</b>	<b>Frames on climate change and bioeconomy: 21.</b>
EU not understanding that forestry is good for the climate EU not caring about forest owners	Forest products good for the environment: 4 Stop using fossil fuels/products: 3 Forest actors explaining why bioeconomy is good for the environment/climate: 3
<b>Frames on carbon storage, climate, forest conservation and bioeconomy: 42</b>	<b>Frames on forest owners: 9</b>
EU wanting to conserve forest, not manage it: 6 EU rules leading to decreased harvesting: 3 EU as a threat to bioeconomy: 6 EU ignoring the climate benefit of forestry: 6 EU wanting to store carbon in Swedish forest in order to compensate for emissions elsewhere: 3 Fossil fuels/products the problem, not forestry: 4	The Swedish model (Freedom with responsibility) as a solution: 2 Forest owners and entrepreneurs remaining the foundation of Swedish forestry Take advantage of forest owners knowledge Better conditions for forest owners, since the climate strategy is dependent on them
<b>Regional differences as a problem: 10.</b>	<b>Innovation and research: 5</b>
Sweden disadvantaged by taxonomy rules: 2 Sweden and Finland one of a kind: 5	Innovation to attract investments Research/making forestry more efficient and environmentally friendly

Table 3. Frames in 2021.

In 2021, EU forest policy is high on the agenda. Discussions revolve mostly around the forest strategy, the taxonomy and the LULUCF. The forest strategy is seen as a threat to Swedish sovereignty over forestry. The salience of EU forest policy is reflected in the number of articles, which is significantly higher than in 2013. The increase consists entirely of argumentative articles. Among these, most are columns and editorials.

### 6.3.1. Diagnostic frames

Speakers find that, with the forest strategy, EU is acting outside of its competency. Critique is directed at how EU attempts to "micro-manage" Swedish forestry, for example by proposing that clear-cutting should be avoided. Editor Pär Fornling notes that, "[e]ven if the proposals are not binding, it will be as working under a heavy, wet EU blanket". In terms of threats to Swedish self-determination, LULUCF and the taxonomy are hinted to sometimes, but this is done in the context of critique against the FS. Editor Knut Persson finds that the last years "have seen several initiatives with names difficult to understand, such as LULUCF and taxonomy. The offensive is now topped with a forest strategy where focus lies on decreasing harvesting". Persson refers to decreased harvesting. Other speakers frame the EU as an actor wanting to conserve the forest, not manage it – as if there is a choice of either or.

*"[T]he EU would now prefer us not to manage the forest at all – or burn it up – but that we conserve the forest, despite what forestry has meant to the welfare of our country historically."*

Jenny Karlsson, head of LRF Norbotten

Forest conservation is framed as short-sighted: Even if GHG emissions can be decreased, this applies only temporarily, until carbon leakage starts. The forest can better contribute to climate change mitigation when managed. EU actors, however, overlook the substitution effect, according to the framing. Columnist Ester Hertegård finds that the EC is not basing its forest conservation aims on facts, which can be explained by "frighteningly successful" lobbying on part of the environmental movement. Therefore, "it appears as ambiguous what is actually best for the climate, to manage the forest or let it stand as a so called coal sink. The debate often lapses into emotional arguments." According to Hertegård, the real "climate thief" is Greenpeace, whose activists have tried to stop harvesting in northern Sweden. Forest conservation is furthermore framed as a threat to business and jobs, which would hit the rural area in particular.

Instead of focusing on the forest, the EU should focus on the real problem, namely fossil fuels, according to speakers. The EU is furthermore framed as wanting to store carbon in the Swedish forest in order to compensate for emissions elsewhere, sometimes defined as Southern or Central Europe. Erik Forsberg, member of the regional board of LRF Västernorrland, argues that the EU aims to achieve carbon neutrality by "stopping all harvesting of forest in the North while letting the industries down in Europe get some more time to transition".



Biodiversity is almost never mentioned in connection with the forest strategy. Instead, the critique focuses on how forest conservation is not the best way to achieve climate change mitigation. Nevertheless, biodiversity is framed as desirable in a few cases. Pär Holmgren, MEP for Miljöpartiet (MP) – who is the only politician to clearly speak out in favour of the FS – finds that forest owners which improve biodiversity and climate benefit on their lands should be financially compensated. MEP Jytte Guteland (S), argues that the forest plays ”a big role in replacing fossil materials. We need more forest, and at the same time biological diversity must come along.” Far from being critical, Guteland finds that Swedish forestry is on track both to produce more, and to improve biodiversity. Again, growth and sustainability go hand in hand.

Repeatedly, the Swedish government is accused of not standing up for Swedish forest sector interests, sometimes framed as ”Swedish interests”. Reference is made to a joint letter sent by several Member States to the European Commission, containing critique of the forest strategy. Sweden failed to sign the letter. Palle Borgström, president of the LRF, finds that this failure was due to the the lack of a minister for rural affairs. According to MEP Jessica Polfjärd (M), the failure is ”no one-time occasion, but there can be a clear pattern discerned, where the Swedish government has refrained from representing Swedish interests.” The blame is often passed on to the Green party, which was in government at the time. As a new government is formed, this time without the Green party, editor Knut Persson is optimistic:

*”[A] big difference compared to before is that Sweden is now represented by politicians who want to protect the Swedish forestry and industry. Prime minister Magdalena Andersson was in her key note speech clear on how Swedish forest policy should be decided on in Sweden.”*

### **6.3.2. Prognostic frames**

More Swedish influence is needed in the EU, according to the most popular prognostic framing, typically referring to the influence of political representatives or forest owners through their organisations. Commenting on the forest strategy, Hans Ramel and Ann Marke at LRF Skåne set their hope to ”the Swedish representatives to stand up for our model, where production and environment is woven together.” Palle Borgström, president of LRF, finds that ”[I]ately, we have seen that the forest owners movement is strong when we join together with our colleagues from around Europe. There is hope for the future.” Forest owners influence is important to bring EU forest policy in the right direction. According to the framing, forest owners possess a lot of knowledge. Their freedom, in accordance with the Swedish forest model, is crucial in order for

maintaining a high environmental and productive standard in the forest. The EU fails to recognise this, according to the columnist Ester Hertegård, who argues that a "climate strategy which makes itself completely dependent on farmers to succeed should make an effort to create better conditions for their activity instead of punishing those that actually do the job."

While forest owners do their job, there is nevertheless potential in developing the bioeconomy, according to the framing. Research and innovation are presented as solutions to this. Torgny Persson, head of innovation and research at The Forest Industries, speaks of innovative products derived from forestry, finding that "the more we manage the forest, the more climate benefit it yields." However, he asks why forest owners have not succeeded in reaching out to the public with the message of "our forestry and all the exciting opportunities that research creates". Due to the complexity of the issue, it is the responsibility "of all of us" to keep explaining, according to Persson. Forest owners need to learn to "reach out to the emotions of the recipient", such as the environmental movement.

Sometimes, EU actors are positively framed, but seldom so in connection to the most contentious topics of 2021. The MS in the CEU are an exception to the rule, as they are seen as capable of bringing the FS closer to forest owners preferences. EU is furthermore framed as a solution when it comes to coordinating resources for fighting the spruce bark beetle, and when financing the trial of a new model for improving biodiversity. One article reports on a Swedish decision to ban a certain chemical. This decision is based on an EU regulation which is altogether positively framed.

#### 9.4. Speakers

Representatives of forest owners have the best standing in 2013 and 2021. In 2006, forest industry representatives are slightly more frequently heard, to have disappeared from the scene completely in 2021. Few politicians appear as speakers in 2006, but their number increases in each year. An overwhelming majority of the politicians appearing are MEPs. EU institutions or representatives of these rarely appear as speakers.

A category is included on the list only if it contains more than one speaker. The rule is that one statement has one speaker. Therefore, in the case of argumentative articles, several actors may have signed an article, but if all of these actors are politicians, it is only counted as one politician.

### 6.4.1. 2006

Descriptive articles	Argumentative articles
Forest industry representatives: 6	Forest industry representatives: 3
Forest owner representatives: 5 (2 of these are LRF members)	Forest owner representatives: 2 (Both are LRF members)
EU actors: 3	Politicians: 3, of which all are MEP's

Table 4. Speakers in 2006.

of European Paper Industry (CEPI), among others. Three times, EU actors are referred to as speakers, but only once does the actor have a name: Kyriakos Maniatis, commissioner for energy and transport.

In 2006, speakers from the forest industry appear slightly more often than speakers from forest owner organisations. These speakers represent Sveaskog, Stora Enso and the Confederation

### 6.4.2. 2013

Descriptive articles	Argumentative articles
Forest owner representatives: 10, (6 of these are LRF members)	Politicians: 6
Politicians: 6, of which 5 are MEP's	
Forest industry representatives: 5	
The environmental movement: 2	

Table 5. Speakers in 2013.

Portrayed in a descriptive article, Fjellner and Johansson are called "Our EU voices for the forest". EU institutions and representatives of these are almost completely absent, with only EU auditors being referred to as speaker on one occasion.

In 2013, politicians often appear as speakers. Two particular politicians appear very frequently: MEP's Christoffer Fjellner (M) and Kent Johansson (C). They are seen as representing the interests of forest owners.

### 6.4.3. 2021

In 2006, the EU was mentioned in only one editorial. Similarly so in 2013. In 2021, 8 editorials mention the EU, which means journalists have a standing. MEP's keep dominating among politicians. In terms of party affiliation, a bigger range of politicians appear in 2021. These belong to the Swedish Democrats (SD), Social Democrats, Moderaterna, Centre party, The Green party and the Christian Democrats. Politicians from the Social Democrats appear most frequently.

<b>Descriptive articles</b>	<b>Argumentative articles</b>
LRF representatives: 15	Journalists: 8
Other forest owners and forest owner representatives: 8	Forest owners/forest owner representatives: 8, of which 4 are LRF members
Politicians: 11	Politicians: 5

In the case of EU actors, only one article refers to commissioner Frans Timmermans as a speaker.

Table 6. *Speakers in 2021.*

## 9.5. Helpers and causers

### 6.5.1. 2006

<b>Helpers</b>	<b>Causers</b>
Swedish actors: 14	Swedish actors: 9
EU actors: 13	EU actors: 7

Table 7. *Helpers and causers in 2006.*

EU actors are defined as EU institutions and representatives of these, with Member States and MEP's excepted. In 2006, EU actors are seen as a helpers more often than they are seen as causers. EU is seen as a potential helper in

supporting the production of bioenergy policy, and the EUTR is presented as a solution to the import of illegal timber. Furthermore, the EU is framed as a helper when funds are granted. Among Swedish actors, the government is most frequently pointed to as a helper. Often, speakers hope that the government will exert influence on EU forest policy. But the government is also accused of failing to exert influence, mostly by H el ene Goudin (J). She also frames the EU as causer, as it threatens Swedish sovereignty in forest policy.

### 6.5.2. 2013

<b>Helpers</b>	<b>Causers</b>
Swedish actors: 30	Swedish actors: 10
EU actors: 12	EU actors: 21

Table 8. *Helpers and causers in 2013.*

In 2013, EU actors are more often framed as causers than helpers. The framing is sometimes vague. This is the case when the problems described are not perceived as very big. As an example, "EU officials" are

blamed for generally lacking knowledge of the forest. In response, forest owners need to make their voices heard. Other MS are often framed as causers in 2013. For instance, Spain, Greece, Germany, Holland, Belgium and Britain are blamed for lacking knowledge of the forest. Christofer

Fjellner and Kent Johansson are often presented as, and present themselves as, helpers. Again, the EU is framed as a helper when the topic is funds. For instance, Kent Johansson perceives the EU as a threat to self-determination. Even so, he sees the opportunity of developing forestry through EU funds and research.

**6.5.3. 2021**

Helpers	Causers
Swedish actors: 35	Swedish actors: 13
EU actors: 23	EU actors: 39

*Table 9. Helpers and causers in 2021.*

In 2021, the EC is more often framed as a causer than in previous years, to a large part due to the critique against the FS. Swedish actors are predominantly framed as helpers. Forest owners are helpers as their work benefits the climate,

while their knowledge about the forest is something that needs to be spread. The government is appealed to as a force capable of influencing the EU, and the FS. However, the government is also accused of having been too passive in influencing the FS. Often, the Green party is seen as the source of this passivity. The CEU and other forest rich MS are framed as helpers. These are seen as a counterweight to the EC as regards the FS. Sweden and Finland are framed as one of a kind, sharing the same understanding of forestry. Twice, Finland is framed as helper.

**9.6. Mentioned EU institutions, and representatives of these**

	2006	2013	2021
EU	13	15	35
EC	10	9	16
EP	6	8	3
CEU	5	1	3
ENVI	1	5	-
Named commissioners	2	3	3
ITRE	-	2	-

*Table 10. Mentioned EU institutions, and representatives of these.*

Only actors that were mentioned more than once in either one of the years are included on the list. In all three years, the most typical article only refers to "the EU", without further specification. For instance, articles often refer to the EU as having granted funds. In such a case, it might not be relevant to mention an institution. However, sometimes "the EU" is referred to in a way which makes it slightly vague what is actually intended. In

such articles, the EU is framed as one uniform actor, not institutions which often struggle to agree. In a column published in 2021, the speaker argues that "now, the EU doesn't want us to manage the forest at all, or burn it, but that we conserve it". In this particular case, the speaker (Jenny

Karlsson, president of LRF Norrbotten) doesn't specify neither an institution nor a policy or measure. The share of articles that only mention the EU are highest in 2021. This can be explained by how the EU is often being put on par with Sweden. One example: When Torgny Persson argues that "it is the responsibility of us all to keep telling, convey and explain" the opportunities offered by forestry, this is to be done "in Sweden as well as in the EU". Other times, EU and Swedish legislation is referred to as two equal units. I believe this reflects how the forest has increasingly become integrated – in EU policy as well as in the minds of the speakers.

As an institution, the EC is most commonly referred to in all three years. Representatives of the EC are seldom mentioned. For instance, in 2021 Frans Timmermans is referred to twice, and Ursula von der Leyen once. CEU and the EP are referred to three times respectively. In 2013, the EP is referred to 8 times, which can be connected to the reporting on the sustainability criteria.

## 10. Discussion

Altogether, 113 articles were analysed in the years 2006, 2013 and 2021. In each year, the articles reflect the proceeding integration of the forest. Furthermore, the articles show that the level of conflict over EU forest policy is continuously rising. The number of articles increases accordingly, in line with previous research on EU media coverage.

Forest sector representatives are the most frequently appearing speakers. However, dividing the group, we find that forest industry representatives appeared slightly more often than forest owners in 2006, while in 2013 and 2021, forest owners dominate. In fact, in 2021 forest industry representatives were completely absent from the scene. While the study cannot explain this fact, previous literature shows that the engagement with EU forest policy has grown among forest owners (Bjärstig, 2013). Perhaps this has made the participation of forest industry representatives superfluous, or perhaps these have other arenas of opinion formation which are deemed as more important.

In 2006, environmental EU forest policy is often pointed to as a problem. At the same time, the tone is quite optimistic. Most speakers express the need for better coordination in EU forest policy. They desire a more "holistic approach", which means that the industrial dimension of forest policy needs to be enhanced. Speakers from the forest sector (forest industry and forest owners alike) appear optimistic about the prospect of achieving these goals through Swedish influence, and so

do most politicians. Only Helene Goudin (J) diverges from this view, warning that the way is being paved for a common forest policy. Politicians appearing in *Land Skogsbruk* otherwise tend to be of similar views, even if they do not always agree on details. This is the case in 2013, as discussions revolve around the sustainability criteria for biofuels, which are currently being drafted. MEPs from several parties engage in the discussion, all of them claiming to represent Swedish interests, and all of them finding the amendments proposed by the ENVI to be inappropriate for Swedish forestry. In particular, Christofer Fjellner (Moderate party) and Kent Johansson (Center party) often appear. In one article, these two MEPs are explicitly framed as representing forest owner's interests in the EU. Even if no clear points of disagreement can be found among MEPs in 2013, they mark their distance to each other. For instance, Christofer Fjellner finds that other Swedes in the EP “need to do their homework” on the importance of biofuels from the forest.

In 2021, the range of MEPs being heard is bigger than before, but this is hardly true of the range of opinions. Only one MEP, Pär Holmberg of the Green party, expresses opinions that go against the narratives typically found among forest sector representatives, as he speaks out in favour of the Forest Strategy (FS).

Over the years, politicians increasingly appear, these being almost exclusively MEPs. This is an interesting finding, since previous research shows that EU media coverage focuses on heads of state and prime ministers. In *Land Skogsbruk*, governmental representatives are little mentioned and almost never heard. Yet, the government is often framed as both causer and helper. In 2021, however, the dominating frame is that of the government not having stood up for forest sector interests, even if – at the end of the year – hopes are expressed that a government not containing the Green party will do better in this respect. (As we saw in the historical background, the mistrust between the state and forest owner has deep historical roots.) Nevertheless, at no point any representative of the government is interviewed. While this could be due to journalistic choices, one explanation could also be that these politicians do not seek to participate in the discussion on EU forest policy. As seen in previous research, Swedish politicians interviewed from 2004 to 2007 were found to lack knowledge on EU forest policy. Whether or not this is still the case, government representatives remain absent. Instead, MEPs have clearly contributed to putting the topic of EU forest policy on the agenda, especially in 2006 and 2013, when the EU was barely mentioned in editorials.

Interestingly, 2006 is the only year in which a policy-related conflict *within* the forest sector can be identified: While representatives of the forest industry express worry at the prospect of competition over forest material in the light of EU bioenergy policies and funds, the editor of *Land Skogsbruk*, as well as the head of board of *Sveaskog* (a state-owned forest enterprise), are in favour of these.

Being a media owned by an interest group, *Land Skogsbruk* could be expected to actively push an agenda. However, in 2006 and 2013, EU forest policy was hardly at all discussed in editorials, the exception being one editorial on bioenergy. Instead, MEPs and forest sector representatives were allowed space to express their opinions in, predominantly, letters to the editor. At the same time, speakers have to the most part agreed on crucial issues. Throughout the years studied, a production-oriented perspective dominates. This way, the articles have served to mobilise consensus, the exception being – as mentioned – the discussion on bioenergy in 2006.

While in 2006 the EU was more often seen as a helper than a causer, and the prospect of integration was mainly viewed as a possibility rather than a threat, this has changed in 2013. In 2021, the framing is, with few exceptions, consistent: The EU threatens Swedish sovereignty over the forest, and Swedish actors need to stand up against the EU. Furthermore, frequent claims are made that the EU wants to stop harvesting and conserve the forest instead. This is presented not as a possible outcome of EU proposals, but as a fact. Often when these claims are made, it is unclear what EU proposal or institutions are referred to. Articles refer to "the EU" without further specification. This kind of rhetoric and unclarity is problematic, possibly leading to a lack of understanding for EU forest policy. Among institutions, the EC is most often mentioned. However, the EC, or representatives of the EC, are very rarely allowed to frame an issue. Apart from MEPs, the absence of EU actors as speakers is striking throughout the years studied. Similar to the government, the EU is blamed, but almost never represented.

Environmental arguments are often deployed in mobilising opposition against EU forest policy. Swedish forestry, and Swedish forest owners, are framed as contributing to the mitigation of climate change. It is suggested that intensified forestry and more outtake of forest raw materials would further serve this purpose. This framing is especially frequent in 2021, when the EU, in its FS, criticises Swedish forest management and emphasises forest conservation as a solution to mitigating climate change. But while the FS also presents forest conservation as a solution to improving biodiversity, biodiversity is barely at all discussed in *Land Skogsbruk*. It is not far-fetched to assume that the objective of mitigating climate change can be used to legitimise current and intensified forest management methods, while the objective of biodiversity cannot, and that this can explain why biodiversity is barely at all discussed.



The environmental arguments are sometimes presented in scientific terms: When the columnist Ester Hertegård frames forest conservation as “short-sighted”, she uses terms such as carbon leakage and substitution effect, after which she accuses the environmental movement of lapsing into “emotional arguments”. Forest owners, in contrast, are framed as knowledgeable and rational. Their knowledge is often referred to as something which should be taken advantage of, in contrast also to EU actors, which are framed as lacking knowledge. Even if the environmental arguments sometimes have a scientific framing – terms such as substitution effect and carbon leakage are used – scientists do not appear as speakers at all, in neither of the years studied. This is surprising, since previous studies on mass media have shown that scientists frequently appear in articles on climate change.

As shown, Swedish forestry is seen as serving the purpose of mitigating climate change. Furthermore, forest materials and products are framed as “environmentally friendly”, the production of which the EU is often seen to be threatening, as in the case of the 2013 sustainability criteria. However, the need to limit EU influence is also framed as a matter of principle: Sweden, or Swedish forest owners, know best how to manage the forest, and therefore, self-determination must be maintained. Sometimes, this principle is framed as a matter also of Swedish identity: One LRF representative emphasises how much “forestry has meant to the welfare of our country historically”, this being an argument against the alleged EU intentions to stop Sweden from managing the forest. In 2021, the EU is framed as threatening “The Swedish model”, and thereby the freedom of forest owners. This freedom is framed as crucial for maintaining Swedish forestry – both its productiveness and its high environmental standard.

As seen, even if Sweden – in an EU perspective – is not viewed as a frontrunner in environmental forest policies, Swedish actors stress Swedish forestry as environmentally friendly. Often, EU actors and other EU countries are framed as not understanding Swedish forestry. A policy advisor for the interest organisation Nordic Family Forestry states that the “forest related discussion in Brussels is on a more basic level, for instance they talk about how you can use the forest and what sustainable forest management is.” Furthermore, the difference between Sweden and other countries are underlined as an argument against EU forest policy. Three MEPs from the Social Democrats emphasise that there is “a decisive difference between for example deforestation in the jungles of Brazil and the raw materials and by-products of Swedish forestry”. It is thus absurd to apply the same sustainability criteria to both countries, they find. In 2021, Sweden and Finland are framed as one of a kind, sharing the same understanding of forestry, while other EU countries are criticised for not understanding Swedish forestry. Sometimes, the EU is being accused of wanting

to store carbon in the forests of the North to compensate for emissions elsewhere, sometimes defined as Southern and Central Europe.

Analysing what kind of EU events are covered by *Land Skogsbruk*, we find that these are policies which are currently being drafted, or forest strategies which are legally unbinding – the impact of which are therefore yet to be known: In 2006, speakers warn about the threat of a common forest policy. In 2013, the sustainability criteria are seen as possibly restricting business opportunities for forest owners. In 2021, the FS is framed as threatening the very existence of Swedish forestry. The lack of coverage on existing policies is striking. What explains this? First, the result is in line with previous research, which shows that media reporting on the EU tends to focus on major events. For forest owners, the launching of the FS or the plenary vote on the sustainability criteria are major events. News attention also tends to be directed at topics on which elites disagree, which is true in both these examples. The lack of reporting on existing policies could also be explained by the logics of the legislative procedure in the EU: At the point of implementation, the responsibility lies mainly with the Member States. As an example, in a 2006 descriptive article, severe criticism is directed at the implementation of Natura 2000. Swedish authorities are in focus, while the EU is merely mentioned in a fact box. (Since the EU could not be connected to any of the framings, the article was not included in the frame analysis.) Adding to this, The EC and the EP (or certain committees in the EP) tend to make proposals that cause debate in the Swedish forest owner community. But having gone through the legislative process, these proposals often end up not very far from the preferences of the Swedish government, and forest owners, as seen in the historical background. The sustainability criteria is one example of this. In case of the forest strategy, it remains to be seen what will in the end be left of the proposals presented there. Finally, the decisive role of MEPs in putting EU forest policy on the agenda has already been discussed. These MEPs have an interest in positioning themselves in relation to EU forest policy, and evidently, they are keener to debate legislative proposals at the point where these are being processed in the EP – not after they have been adopted.

While the EU is often framed as a threat, it is continuously also framed in positive terms, for instance when granting funds to research and innovation, or when enabling trade. In 2013, an article describes a new labelling for wood. Producers have allegedly criticised it for entailing an administrative burden. However, all speakers find that the label is necessary for achieving free movement in the EU, and emphasise that it will facilitate the export of wood from Sweden. In 2006, a certain EU policy is mentioned several times: The EUTR is reported to successfully limit

the import of illegal wood to the EU. Considering what was just stated about EU policies being reported on primarily during their drafting period, the reporting on EUTR is an exception.

## 11. Conclusions

This study has set out to analyse how media owned by and targeted at forest owners in Sweden covers EU forest policy. As we have seen, a production-oriented perspective dominates throughout the years studied. Forest owners dominate the reporting in 2013 and 2021, while being second after forest industry representatives in 2006. At the same time, it is striking which actors do *not* appear as speakers: Government and EU officials are almost completely absent, except for MEPs. This finding contrasts previous research on EU coverage in mass media, which has found heads of states and prime ministers to be the most dominating actors. One explanation is that MEPs deliberately seek the attention of the media – often, MEPs appear in letters to the editor. Furthermore, lacking knowledge among national politicians, as seen in previous research, could explain why these so seldom appear. Nevertheless, their absence is curious, considering how often the government is being blamed. Especially in 2021, the government is accused of not standing up for Swedish interests. Over the years, however, it is overwhelmingly the EU which is being framed as causer, making the absence of EU officials similarly problematic.

Furthermore, no scientists appear as speakers. Considering how often climate change is being discussed, this is a surprising finding which contrasts previous research. Even if scientists do not appear, science is sometimes referred to. Forest owners are, furthermore, framed as knowledgeable and rational, also in matters of climate change.

In 2006, the prospect of EU integration in forest policy is framed mostly in positive terms. Better coordination is expected to be beneficial for Swedish forest owners, and Swedish actors are seen as capable of influencing the course of EU forest policy. Over the years, the EU in general, and the EC in particular, are increasingly framed as threats to Swedish sovereignty in forest policy. This framing is especially consistent in 2021, as the EU publishes its Forest Strategy. The FS is framed as threatening “The Swedish model”, and thereby the freedom of forest owners, as well as their ability to contribute to mitigation of climate change. According to the framing, such mitigation is better achieved through intensive forestry than through forest conservation. Biodiversity, on the other hand, is almost never mentioned, even if biodiversity is a similarly central objective of the

FS. Possibly, the topic of biodiversity is avoided since it cannot be seen to legitimise current forest management methods, the way that climate change mitigation can.

The EU, or other EU countries, are often framed as not understanding Swedish forestry. Due to the great differences between countries, EU policies are seen as unsuitable for Swedish conditions. For instance, in the case of the sustainability criteria on bioenergy in 2013, these are framed as inapplicable to a Swedish context. Far from ensuring that bioenergy does not lead to deforestation, the criteria could instead hinder the production of environmentally friendly bioenergy in Sweden, according to the framing.

Few speakers present a critical view of Swedish forestry, and speakers are seldom clearly in conflict with each other. One exception is the discussion on EU bioenergy policy in 2006: Industrial actors are critical of EU funds and policies, fearing competition over forest material. The official standpoint of *Land Skogsbruk*, as presented in an editorial, instead sees EU bioenergy policy as beneficial for Swedish forest owners.

The reporting intensifies in each studied year, reflecting the increasing EU influence over forest policy, as well as the rising conflict over this influence. Interestingly, media attention is mainly directed at legislation currently being drafted, or strategies having not yet resulted in proposed legislation. These are the “major events” covered by forest owner’s media, as described in previous research. At the point of implementation, however, there is no discussion on EU forest policies. As discussed, the logics of the EU legislative process could explain the lack of attention to existing policies: At the point of implementation, policies appear to be viewed as Swedish. Furthermore, MEPs, which are the most frequently appearing politicians, have an interest in debating legislative proposals *before* they have been finally adopted. One exception is the EUTR, which is reported on after its implementation. The EUTR is described as a successful measure, limiting the import of illegal wood to the EU. Otherwise, the EU is positively framed when granting funds to research and innovation, or when taking measures to enable trade. However, these positive framings are clearly in minority in 2013 and 2021.

This study sheds light on the dynamics of a field currently exposed to attempted integration in the EU, from the point of view of an interest groups’ media. The result is of interest to scholars studying EU coverage in the media, especially since research in this field has previously focused solely on mass media. As discussed, there are differences in how *Land Skogsbruk* covers the EU, compared to mass media. Probably, there are also differences in how different interest groups cover the EU. Future research could explore such differences, allowing for comparisons to be made

between the forest sector and other sectors. The study furthermore adds a new perspective to the research on framing of the forest in media and legislation. In particular, the study broadens the understanding of how the forest is framed in relation to climate change, a topic which is currently being intensively debated both in a Swedish context and in the EU.

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