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Beyond the trees

Social and emotional dimensions of forests and forest ownership

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To my mother Britta Bergstén Jonsson

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Forests comprise substantial proportions of rural areas worldwide.[1] They are vital to life on Earth and provide a wide set of benefits for us humans. Historically, in Sweden – the geographical scope of this thesis – as well as in other countries in Europe and elsewhere, rural people have relied on the surrounding forests for a variety of goods essential for their livelihood, such as timber for firewood and building, and berries and game meat for food (Koch & Kennedy 1991; Mårald et al. 2017; Siiskonen 2013). With the introduction of industrial forestry, forests became primarily associated with the production of timber for the forest industry, and were managed by employed or contracted forestry professionals (Fritzboger & Sondergaard 1995; Koch & Kennedy 1991; Mårald & Westholm 2016). However, over the years, a heightened focus on the diverse significance and values of forests has emerged as a result of increased environmental awareness and public debate about industrial forestry and its intensive management methods, which conflict with biological diversity, recreation, cultural heritage and climate change mitigation (Elands & Wiersum 2001; Kennedy 1985; Mårald & Westholm 2016; Tuulentie et al. 2025; Xu & Bengston 1997).[2]

In human geography – the academic discipline within which this thesis is situated – the increased emphasis on the diverse values and meanings of rural forests[3] has been linked to the terms 'post-productivism' and 'multifunctionality' in relation to rural areas[4] (Almstedt et al. 2014; Elands & Praestholm 2008; Mather 2001; Mather et al. 2006). Post-productivism refers to a broadened approach to rural areas beyond the intensified era after the Second World War of industrial production and land use (i.e. productivism). It includes measures that also take into account demands and activities related to outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism, and the preservation of natural and cultural environments (Almstedt 2013; Elands & Praestholm 2008; Mather et al. 2006). Thus, post-productivism

[1] There are various definitions of forests across places, times, disciplines and practices (Côte et al. 2018). Chapter 2 presents the definition of forests in the Swedish Forestry Act.
[2] Globally, this enhanced focus on the diverse benefits of forests led to the 1992 United Nations declaration on sustainable development, which established that forest resources and forest lands should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations.
[3] Rural forests are defined as forests outside of urban areas, i.e. not urban fringe forests (Olsson 2014).
[4] Here, rural areas mean less populated areas with a lower population density than urban areas (Keskitalo 2017).

regarding forests implies a shift in emphasis away from the primacy of industrial forestry and commercial values towards non-monetary and non-material aspects, including environmental values as well as the social values of forest recreation, cultural heritage, and emotional sentiments (Kennedy 1985; Koch & Kennedy 1991; Mather 2001; Mather et al. 2006).

Scandinavian forests have been taken as an example of the post-productivist trend (Mather 2001). It has been argued that changes have taken place in Sweden since the 1990s regarding forest policies and management in ways that benefit not only the legal owners but also society in general. These include concerns for public interests related to the protection of nature, and the provision of recreational use for the public. Along these lines, contemporary forest policies in Sweden and other countries now have a broader scope than previously, comprising not only economic interests but also environmental and social perspectives (Kankaanpää & Carter 2004; Sandström et al. 2011). Still, referring to the Swedish case, Brouder et al. (2015) have demonstrated that, although the number of people working in Swedish forestry industries is declining, there nonetheless continues to be a strong focus on production in rural areas.

'Multifunctionality', an alternative term to post-productivism, has been considered by some human geographers as better describing and explaining the actual complex changes in rural areas, i.e. that rural areas simultaneously produce a diversity of commodity and non-commodity values (Almstedt et al. 2014; Brouder et al. 2015; McCarthy 2005; Woods 2011). Multifunctionality relates to the multiple values, functions and land use in rural areas which co-exist and which, across their entire range, ought to be recognised and protected by policies and in planning processes (McCarthy 2005; Woods 2011). The term 'multifunctionality', which is generally divided into production, environmental protection and social values or recreational values, has been used in research related to forest policies, planning and management, forest governance and public interests in forests (Angelstam et al. 2022; Sandström et al. 2011; Sutherland & Huttunen 2018). It has also been used in relation to the large and heterogeneous group of individual private forest owners[5] (e.g. Cubbage et al. 2007; Urquhart et al. 2012; Wiersum et al. 2005).

[5] In this thesis, the term 'private forest owners' is used synonymously with the often-cited definition 'non-industrial forest owners', i.e. owners are 'non-industrial in their land ownership goals and behavior because by definition they do not directly own processing facilities and their principal responsibilities are not to stockholders' (Kittredge 2005:673).

Individual private forest owners are key stakeholders from the perspectives of both the forest industry and public planning interests aiming to preserve forests for social or environmental values. They possess and control large areas of land in Sweden, as well as in many other European countries and in the United States (Butler et al. 2021; Ficko et al. 2019; Haugen et al. 2016; Hirsh & Schmithüsen 2010). Meanwhile, this influential corps of private forest owners has become increasingly diverse through generational changes, as well as ongoing societal transformations, such as urbanisation and out-migration from rural areas, with 'new' types of owners emerging (Ficko et al. 2019; Haugen et al. 2016; Weiss et al. 2019; Živojinović et al. 2015). These 'new' owners are less dependent upon their forest properties for their income and work, they more often reside at some geographical distance from their forest properties, such as in urban areas, and a growing number are women (Fairchild et al. 2022; Follo et al. 2017; Haugen et al. 2016; Weiss et al. 2019).

In the case of Sweden, the shifting and diversified forest context, along with the increasing variation in uses, values and private forest owner types, have raised questions and challenges about how to balance the multiple values and demands of production with environmental values as well as the less tangible social values in policies, planning and management (Eggers et al. 2019; Sandström et al. 2011; Sténs et al. 2016). Above all, questions have been raised regarding how to identify and consider diverging private and public stakeholders, their varied and shifting relationships, values and meanings of forests, and their occasionally competing concerns and conflicting interests (Appelstrand 2002; Eriksson 2012; Jakobsson et al. 2021; Richnau et al. 2013; Sandström et al. 2011; Sténs et al. 2016;).

Sweden is a nation where forests dominate the national landscape, the forestry industry is pronounced, and where an increasingly heterogeneous private forest owner corps of more than 300,000 individual owners occupy a prominent position: about half of the forestland belongs to them (Haugen et al. 2016; Mårald et al. 2017). It is also a country where government policies strive to ensure multiple use and to cater for public interests in public and forest planning processes; in particular, public interests in biodiversity and forest social values, such as outdoor recreation (Stjernström et al. 2017; Sandström et al. 2011; Zhang et al. 2022).

To sum up, a heightened emphasis has emerged, in Sweden and beyond, on the multiple significances of forests, the various public and private interests they serve and the increasing diversity among private forest owners (Sandström et al. 2011; Fischer et al. 2010; Keskitalo 2017; Weiss et al.

2019). However, the social and emotional relationships, experiences and values embedded in the forest context have not yet achieved the same prominence in policy, planning and practice as the material considerations of production and environmental protection (Agnoletti et al. 2008; Buijs & Lawrence 2013; O'Brien 2005; Sténs et al. 2016; Widman & Bjärstig 2017). Because the social and emotional dimensions related to forests are less tangible, more subjective, involve numerous aspects and are more difficult to define, measure and describe in monetary terms, they pose challenges for those involved in public and forest policy, planning and management (Agnoletti et al. 2008; Buijs & Lawrence 2013; O'Brien 2003). Also, forest research has particularly focused on objectives, practices and outcomes in relation to the physical forest and the role of private forest owner types, their behaviour in forest management or in relation to policies and forestry production (e.g. Blanco et al. 2015; Dhubháin et al. 2007; Eggers et al. 2014; Hujula et al. 2013; Ingemarson et al. 2006). However, research has progressively adopted social science perspectives as a means of examining the importance of social and emotional dimensions in forest ownership. Such research considers how these dimensions are part of shaping people's relationships and perspectives, including the meanings and values that they attach to forests and forest ownership (e.g. Buijs & Lawrence 2013; Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Brown et al. 2020; Eriksson 2012; Follo et al. 2017; O'Brien 2005; McIntyre et al. 2008; Milbourne et al. 2006). These social and emotional dimensions embedded in the diversified forest context constitute the focus of this thesis.

Previous studies have recognised that private forest ownership involves feelings related to ownership and to their forest properties due to personal and emotional ties with the place, as well as feelings of responsibility towards previous and future generations of owners (Creighton et al. 2016; Grubbström 2011; Jörgensen & Stjernström 2008; Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014). Thus, although private forest owners are expected to protect public interests, such as biodiversity on their land, or provide space for the general public's recreational activities, their experiences and feelings relating to their forest ownership and land may come into conflict with public use, as well as with public planning policies and processes (Church & Ravencroft 2008; Stjernström et al. 2018; Urquhart et al. 2010). In spite of this, the emphasis in discussions regarding forest ownership in Sweden has mainly focused on private property rights in terms of owners' legal and economic rights and the issue of the public's right to access private forests (e.g. Sténs & Sandström 2013, 2014).

At the same time, forest owners' production-oriented goals and forest management may collide with place-specific social values and concerns

raised by people who legally do not have the right to control the use of forests, such as public users or local communities residing near a forest (Beland Lindahl et al. 2013; Eriksson 2012; Eggers et al. 2019; Nordström et al. 2011). However, forest social values have received lower priority in Swedish forest policies than the more tangible values of production and biodiversity (Sténs et al. 2016; Swedish Forest Agency 2018). Also, questions about how to define forest social values and apply them have been raised at both policy level and in research (Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Sténs et al. 2016; Swedish Forest Agency 2013, 2018).

In relation to the heterogenous private forest ownership, descriptions and categorisations of 'new' forest owner groups, such as non-resident and women, also raise important questions about how to understand the social and emotional dimensions related to forest private ownership. It has been indicated that 'new' forest owners may be, in comparison to resident and conventional owners, geographically as well as socially and emotionally more distant from their properties, sometimes less motivated by economic concerns, and less active in timber production (Caputo & Snyder 2023; Fairchild et al. 2022; Follo et al. 2017; Huff et al. 2017; Häggkvist et al. 2010; Kendra & Hull 2005; Westin et al. 2017; Živojinović et al. 2015). Women have been portrayed as 'different' from men in their forest ownership; for example, as more 'passive' in forest management and more inclined to consider the ecological and social values of forests (Uliczka et al. 2004; Umaerus et al. 2019). However, studies have concluded that non-resident owners' relationships to their properties have been underresearched, and that female forest owners have often been underrepresented or overlooked in forest owner studies (Butler et al. 2017; Fairchild et al. 2022; Kuhlman et al. 2023; Petrzelka et al. 2013; Vainio & Paloniemi 2013). It has also been established that the subject of gender and private forest ownership has been theoretically under-analysed as well as empirically less studied in the Global North than in the Global South (Colfer et al. 2019; Follo et al. 2017).

These kind of 'new' owners have presented divergent perspectives: either as a potential problem that may prevent policymakers and the forestry industry from achieving their goals (Weiss et al. 2019), or, within the Scandinavian context, as providing opportunities for changes in the forest policy context and thus for institutionalising new discourses related to forests (cf. Vainio & Paloniemi 2012; Westin et al. 2017).

1.2. Aim and research questions

The aim of this dissertation is to theoretically and empirically expand the body of research regarding understandings of social and emotional dimensions related to rural forests and private forest ownership in Sweden.

The following four specific research questions are addressed:

1. How do geographical distance and residency shape private resident and non-resident forest owners' relationships with their forest properties?
2. How are gender differences and practices in private forest ownership shaped and potentially reshaped or negotiated?
3. How do private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding private forest ownership manifest themselves in their relationship to public use and public planning interests for recreation and biodiversity on their land?
4. How can forest social values be understood and applied in a rural setting?

I employ empirical studies in Sweden and adopt theoretical and conceptual insights from the social sciences, especially the field of human geography. The discipline of human geography is centrally concerned with the relationship between humans and their environment and the changing nature of geographies and people (Hagget 2001). A human geography perspective emphasises that the spatial and the material are interlinked and intertwined with the social, which includes individual and societal relationships, as well as emotional meanings and processes (Gregory et al. 2009; Gren & Hallin 2003). In particular, human geographers examine the meanings, experiences and interrelations of spaces, places and people, as well as gender (Cresswell 2015; Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Tuan 1977).

In order to make it possible to investigate the more intangible social and emotional dimensions related to forests and forest ownership, I have pursued a research approach employing qualitative methods. A qualitative research approach facilitates the capturing of the different voices and perspectives of those who have a stake in the forest context, such as private forest owners and non-owners living in rural areas close to forests. The purpose is to develop a deep-seated and varied understanding of people's relationships, meanings, experiences, feelings and values, and how they are constructed in relation to forests, forest properties and forest

ownership. Thus, the focus of this thesis is not on measuring actual behaviour or forest management activities, or on instrumental objectives related to forest management. Also, I recognise that forests and private forest ownership in Sweden involve a wide range of material, economic, political and social features that extend beyond the scope of this thesis.

This thesis positions itself within a social constructionist epistemology, an analytical approach based on the idea that the particular social contexts and settings of individuals and groups contribute to people's perceived realities (Gregory et al. 2009; Holstein 2018). This approach considers forests as material entities, but it also acknowledges that they are not only commodities or something to manage and extract material benefits from. Forests are places involving social relationships and meanings that are continuously created and recreated through social interactions and practices (cf. Williams 2002a). Something may be seen as socially constructed if it is widely taken for granted and appears to be inevitable, although it has in fact been brought into existence or shaped by social events, forces and history, and could have been different (Hacking 1999). From this perspective, concerns about taken-for-granted phenomena and understandings related to the forest context can be examined.

1.3. Outline of the thesis

I begin this thesis with a description of the Swedish context related to forests (Chapter 2). This is followed by a depiction of the key concepts of the thesis and previous international and Swedish research relevant to the concepts and research questions (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I introduce the research design, methods and study settings of the thesis. Chapter 5 summarises the findings of the academic articles (Papers 1–4). Finally, in Chapter 6, I present, discuss and synthesise the empirical and theoretical results and contributions of the thesis, including some concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

2. The Swedish forest context

Below, I describe the forest context in Sweden, thus providing an overall contextual background to the thesis.

In Sweden, forests are a key characteristic of the country's landscape in that they cover about two thirds of the total land area, making Sweden one of Europe's most forested countries (Statistics Sweden 2013). Swedish rural forests are associated with a wide set of meanings – economic, ecological and social – and encompass both public and private relations and concerns (Sandström et al. 2011). Some of their functions and values have been established as significant in financial terms for their owners and the national economy, such as timber production, while others are considered more as public goods and services, such as biodiversity and outdoor recreation (Ibid). The largest forest owner group consists of more than 300,000 individual private forest owners, who possess about half of what is labelled 'productive forestland' in Sweden (Swedish Forest Agency 2023). The rest of the land is owned by private-sector companies (25%), such as Swedish Cellulosa AB (SCA); state-owned companies (12%), such as Sveaskog; the state, including national parks and reserves (8%); other public owners, including municipalities and regions (1%); and other private owners (6%), such as the Church of Sweden (Ibid). The definition of forestland according to the Swedish Forestry Act is land with trees taller than five metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. This definition corresponds broadly to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) definition of forestland. In the Swedish Forestry Act, there are also specific terms for different types of forests: 'productive forest land', which is capable of growing at least one cubic metre of wood per hectare annually, and 'unproductive forestland' where the total tree growth is less than one cubic metre per hectare per year (Forestry Act 1979:429).

Although forest owners hold the rights to their property and can use their land for their own purposes, forests are accessible to everyone, regardless of ownership or residency, in line with the Right of Public Access (every person's right or, in Swedish, '*Allemansrätten*') (Bengtsson 2004). This open-access policy permits people to roam freely over all land for recreational purposes provided that they do not disturb or destroy it, while also allowing certain commercial activities, such as collecting wild berries and mushrooms, and nature tourism, but not fishing or hunting (Ibid).

Formally, the main law relating to forests in Sweden is the Forestry Act, which in its revised version enacted in 1993 stipulates equal consideration for the two aims of timber production and protection of biodiversity, as well as the need to consider other public interests, such as cultural heritage, reindeer husbandry and outdoor recreation (Forestry Act 1979:429). The Forestry Act states:

> The forest is a national asset and a renewable resource, which shall be managed in such a way that it sustainably yielding a good revenue and at the same time preserves biodiversity. Forest management practices are obliged to take into consideration other public interests (Translated into English by the author).

The law therefore combines both private and public involvement in the forest (Sandström et al. 2011). Thus, Swedish rural forests with their multiple meanings and uses not only involve their owners, but are also in demand from the general public, the forestry industry, policymakers and public planners, as well as interest groups related to the diverse values linked to forests (Ibid). At times, the variety of societal and individual interests are contradictory or compete with each other (Lidskog et al. 2017; Sandström et al. 2011; Stjernström et al. 2017). It has been suggested that this multiplicity has resulted in Swedish forests being increasingly 'an arena for conflicting interests and diverging opinions on how forests should, and should not, be managed' (Nordlund & Westin 2011:31). The conflicts have been characterised as mainly being between public use and public planning interests of forests, including legal frameworks, on the one hand, and forest management issues and private forest ownership, including property rights, on the other (Eriksson 2012; Sandström et al. 2011; Sténs & Sandström 2013; Stjernström et al. 2017).

Forests have historically been of considerable importance for the Swedish economy due to the high yield from forestry and high employment rates in the forest industry, while also being of central importance to private landowners who have been dependent upon forestry for their work and income (Siiskonen 2013). After the Second World War, the aim was intensive forestry, but by the time the Forestry Act was revised in 1993 a far-reaching deregulation of the forestry sector had come into effect, usually named 'The Swedish Forestry Model' (Beland Lindahl et al. 2017). Private forest owners were considered key stakeholders in forests, and were expected – through the principle of 'freedom with responsibility', based on relatively low legislative requirements combined with

substantial autonomy and primarily voluntary measures, advice and guidance – to achieve the Forestry Act's overall aim of good productivity and biodiversity in their management decisions (Appelstrand 2012; Beland-Lindahl et al. 2017).

With these changes, the responsibility for balancing production with environmental, social and other values has shifted onto private actors (Mårald & Westholm 2016). As a result, the government and the public became more reliant upon the personal ideas of the large group of private owners, and how they are following the policies related to the various benefits that forests provide (Appelstrand 2012; Lidskog et al. 2017). At the same time, forest owners are required to meet the multiple demands from public planning interests and the general public. Their rights are circumscribed to some extent by legislation and the Right of Public Access, as well as the status of nature conservation and outdoor recreation, which are interests of national importance that must be taken into consideration in all land-use planning decisions, in line with the Swedish Environmental Code of 1998 (Haugen 2015; Lidskog et al. 2017; Stjernström et al. 2018).

The Right of Access as a guarantee of 'free space' for outdoor recreation enjoys strong support among the Swedish public in general, and most private owners seem to accept people roaming across their land (Sandell & Fredman 2010). However, some consider this right to restrict private land ownership, including privacy and economic interests in the use of the forest, and wishes to limit public access rights and instead strengthen the private property rights of forest owners (Sténs & Sandström 2013; 2014). Research findings have shown that private forest owners in general emphasise production more than the general public, who in turn emphasise recreation more than forest owners (Eriksson 2012).

Related to the issue of public versus private values and interests is the 'plural compromise' between 'fundamentally contradictory principles' that is enshrined in the Forestry Act (Lidskog et al. 2017:285). Part of the challenge posed by this multifunctionality has been the tension between, on the one hand, 'the dominant production discourse', which mainly focuses on forests as a natural resource to be managed in a 'rational' and economic way by their owners, along with existing public policies and planning instruments, and, on the other, 'the alternative green environmental discourse', which regards forests more as a common resource, which should be protected from the destruction inherent in industrial forestry for environmental and social reasons (Laszlo Ambjörnsson et al. 2015).

In fact, an assessment of 'The Swedish Forestry Model' has shown that the legacy of prioritising production in forest management has in fact persisted, and social and aesthetic values have been less highly prioritised because they lack the status of formal and explicit objectives (Beland Lindahl et al. 2017; Sandström et al. 2011; Widman & Bjärstig 2017). However, they have received some attention in the public debate, in policy formulations and in research. The emphasis on production as the main forest steering instrument has been questioned in the media, as has clear-cutting as the principal practice of forest management by forest owners at the expense of forest social values, such as local citizens' recreational and aesthetic values (Zaremba 2012).

Linked to policy, the Swedish Forest Agency – the key national institution dealing with forestry-related issues – has defined forest social values as 'the values created by people's experiences of the forest' (Swedish Forest Agency 2013:6). This definition includes diverse values, such as good health and wellbeing, outdoor recreation and tourism, aesthetics, education and knowledge about forests, as well as play and social relationships (Ibid). In research, social values have often been conceptually translated as meaning recreation and tourism, and in relation to urban fringe forests (Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Olsson 2014; Sténs et al. 2016).

Moreover, due to broad societal changes, the significance of forests for the national economy has declined in Sweden (Haugen et al. 2016). Although the forest industry is still considered valuable in the Swedish context, there is a reduced export value from the forest sector, the forestry-related industries' share of the country's total employment has become marginal and the forest sector employs 2% of the total workforce (Haugen et al. 2016). Furthermore, private forest owners' personal dependence upon forests for their income has reduced; in 2012, almost 90% of both resident (residing within the municipality where they own forests) and non-resident (residing outside the municipality where they own forests) owners aged 20–67 held employment outside of their properties (Lidestav et al. 2017). Reflecting wider societal transformations, such as urbanisation and out-migration from rural areas, and also due to the entry of new individuals into forest ownership, mainly through inheritance, the private forest ownership structure has changed in Sweden and become more heterogeneous (Haugen et al. 2016; Ingemarson et al. 2006; Nordlund & Westin 2011). Relatively few 21st-century forest owners are farmers, the proportion of women has increased and more owners are living as non-resident owners at a distance from their forest property, often in urban areas (Haugen et al. 2016). In 2010, nearly two-thirds of Swedish forest owners co-owned their properties with others, mainly siblings and

spouses, while around a third were the sole owners of their properties. Additionally, the percentage of owners who had studied at university level had increased to about 30% (in 2010) (Ibid).

While the percentage of forest owned by women increased from 20% in 1976 to the present 39% in 2023 (Swedish Forest Agency 2025c), numerous divergences between women and men have been highlighted. These expose gender differences and obstacles faced by women in their forest ownership (Andersson & Lidestav 2016; Lidestav 2010; Lidestav & Berg Leijon 2013). For example, women generally own smaller properties than men, are more likely to own their forest together with a man and manage their forests less extensively than men (Lidestav 2010; Lidestav & Berg Lejon 2013; Lidestav et al. 2017). A survey published in 2010 found that 67% of male forest owners and 59% of female forest owners had acquired their property from their parents or relatives (Lidestav 2010), while a more recent study showed that 64% of all of the forest owners who took part in the survey (both women and men) had inherited, received as a gift, or bought their property from a family member (Lidestav & Westin 2023).

Non-resident owners constitute more than a quarter (27% in 2023) of the total number of private forest owners in Sweden (Swedish Forest Agency 2025b). The average distance between non-resident owners and their properties grew from 160.7 km to 193.7 km between 1990 and 2010 (Haugen et al. 2016). In 2010, a growing proportion of non-residents lived in the three metropolitan areas of Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö) (41%) or in larger regional centres (41%) (Ibid). For example, the largest percentage (44%) of female non-resident owners in Sweden are located in the Stockholm region (Swedish Forest Agency 2025c). There are very few foreign-born owners (3% in 2023), and most of these are of Nordic origin. Non-resident owners differ from resident ones through having higher educational levels, higher incomes and a higher prevalence of co-ownership of their forest properties (Haugen et al. 2016). Moreover, it is more common for resident owners to have bought their forestland than non-resident owners, who mostly acquire their land through inheritance; the income from forestry is a larger part of resident owners' total income than that of non-residents; and resident owners assign stronger values to production than non-residents, who rate native locality and other non-monetary benefits higher (Berlin et al. 2006; Nordlund & Westin 2011).

Research has concluded that forest owners in general assign a multitude of values to their forests, such as values related to production, protection and recreation (Berlin et al. 2006; Eriksson 2012; Hugosson &

Ingemarsson 2004; Ingemarsson et al. 2006; Kindstrand et al. 2008; Nordlund & Westin 2011; Richnau et al. 2013). In fact, studies have pointed out that private forest owners in Sweden are not exclusively driven by financial gain and that economic values may be of complementary or minor importance (Ingemarsson et al. 2006; Lidestav & Westin 2023 Richnau et al. 2013). It has been suggested that a range of tangible, or material, and intangible, or non-material, social dimensions are significant to owners, such as the fact that the forest property provides a place to live, the basis for maintaining contact with family and friends, and a place for outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing or picking berries and mushrooms (Berlin et al. 2006; Nordlund & Westin 2011). Also, in the context of inheritance, the owners' personal and emotional connections to their forest property may be seen through the long-term perspective they take regarding their relationships with their properties (Lönnstedt 1997; Richnau et al. 2013; Uggla 2017).

In conclusion, the overall circumstances related to the Swedish forest context may be characterised by:

- broad societal changes in Sweden and beyond, such as urbanisation and increased mobility;
- historical developments in policy directions, from an emphasis on production towards an increased focus on multi-functionality within the Swedish forest context;
- diversity in the present situation with various, and sometimes conflicting, meanings, values and interests related to forests between private and public stakeholders;
- disparate private forest ownership, with an increased proportion of geographically distant, often urban, non-resident owners as well as female owners;
- enhanced attention being paid to non-material, social aspects related to forests, which are often referred to as forest social values in policies.

3. Theoretical concepts and previous research

This chapter focuses on the conceptual ideas that frame this thesis. Some of the concepts are key geographical terms while others are not, but they are linked and discussed in relation to literature and concepts from the field of human geography. Thus, thinking geographically provides a language – a set of concepts and ideas – which guides a process of seeing connections and understanding things that might otherwise be missed (Jackson 2006). These concepts were outlined at the start of the project to provide a theoretical basis for framing the empirical studies and were then further developed as I gained insights over the course of the work. I cannot claim to have taken into account the whole research fields of the different concepts, which are overwhelmingly large and disparate. From contemporary knowledge, I have identified key strands that I found applicable and relevant for discussing and achieving insights into the main themes of this thesis.

Below, I begin by discussing the most central spatial terms in human geography: 'space' and 'place'. The interwoven socio-spatial relations and meanings are theoretically highlighted. Then, I identify three main approaches to understanding the concept of 'sense of place', which is central to the thesis and is specifically discussed in Papers 1 and 3. Thereafter, I discuss conceptions of 'property rights', 'ownership' and 'ownership feelings' (Paper 3), followed by the term 'forest social values' (Paper 4). Finally, I delineate the concept of 'gendering', and how it may be used in the context of private forest ownership (Paper 2). Also, I position the thesis' concepts in connection to previous research, mainly in relation to theoretical thinking and previous empirical research linked to the forest context, and, where applicable, to Sweden.

3.1. Space and place

Space and place are often perceived as opposites and separate from one another, but they are also considered to be conceptual twins and internally related to each other. Thinking in opposing terms, space is believed to be open, general or abstract, often connected with the global, while place is thought of as specific, or concrete, and linked with the local (Agnew 2005; Cresswell 2015). Whereas space has often been related to so-called objectivist theories and spatial quantitative analysis, place has more often

been associated with subjectivist theories and postmodernism (Agnew 2005). The humanist geographers Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) and Edward Relph (1976) opposed the reduction of place to a mere physical location (such as a built or natural setting) or to a specific point on the earth's surface (as a co-ordinate). Tuan and Relph highlighted places as both spatial and social, with qualitative aspects of experiences and meanings that it is not possible to access through statistical analysis, and which evoke a *sense of place* (I further develop their ideas on sense of place below). From a phenomenological perspective, Tuan and Relph regarded place to be a phenomenon of people's everyday subjective experiences, grounded in specific contexts and people–place relations. In people's experiences, people and places are integrated: 'people are their place and a place is its people' (Relph 1976:34).

In place research, Tuan's comparison of spaces to movements and places to pauses on a continuum, has become influential (1977). Tuan claimed that it is possible for a space or location to be transformed into a place: 'What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan 1977:6).

With this conceptualisation, Tuan suggested that time or flow/movement was the mediator between space and place (1977). Space was associated with movement and distance, whereas place was something that was personally experienced and often familiar, such as a dwelling or a home (Tuan 1977).

Another leading human geographer, Doreen Massey (1994, 2005), also conceived of space and place as not profoundly separated from each other, and she stressed the social content related to space and place. Massey (1984, 1994, 2005) underlined the co-constitution of the social and the spatial:

> If the social is inextricably spatial and the spatial impossible to divorce from its social construction and content, it follows not only that social processes should be analysed as taking place spatially but also that what have been thought of as spatial patterns can be conceptualised in terms of social processes. (Massey 1984:65)

Massey's central research interest was in economic and feminist geography, such as in global socioeconomic processes and socio-spatial interconnections (1991, 1993, 1994, 2005). She emphasised that, during the complex processes of increased movement and communication, social and other relations are increasingly stretched out over long distances.

Massey (1994, 2005) defined space as the product of multiple social relations stretched out from the intimate household to global connections, and place as a particular meeting point of these intersecting social relations. Place may therefore be considered as a dynamic socio-spatial process (or moment), constantly shaped over time by social interactions and changes (Massey 1991, 2005; Massey & Jess 1995; McDowell 1999). In this manner, place as a concept has a broader geography than the place itself, and is relational in that the local and the global are mutually constituted (Massey 1993, 2004).

Massey's conceptualisation of place as an inclusive and progressive site of social life has been perceived in the human geography literature as an alternative to Tuan's and Relph's conceptualisations of place. The latter manifested as something more authentically and personally rooted in history and with clearer boundaries separating it from the world outside. In contrast, Massey appeared to be trying to avoid essentialism by stressing that, although places are unique mixtures of diverse relations, they should be regarded as processes and relational (Castree 2003; Cresswell 2004). Massey challenged the predominant view of place as nostalgic, bounded and rooted in history, a conceptualisation that, she argued, reinforces exclusion and inequality (1991, 1994).

From the above accounts of both Tuan/Relph and Massey on how space/place interact and are co-constituted with social relations at different geographical scales, I conclude that a *relational* conceptualisation of space and place is conducive to the theoretical framing of this thesis in order to recognise and understand the multiple and interlinked socio-spatial relationships, experiences and meanings involved in the rural forest context. Thinking in relational terms, I understand rural forest contexts as socio-spatially co-constituted through interactions between a wide range of actors and actions, both nearby and distant (cf. Massey 2005). People who have a stake in them are therefore both part of and manifestations of both local and external social and spatial processes and conditions, which transcend geographical boundaries (Heley & Jones 2012). Although the fact of geographical distance remains, globalisation has brought places closer together in terms of reducing the time needed to travel across space in relative terms (Castree 2003). In addition, with different ways of communicating, in particular online, geographical distance may not always imply social distance, since social interaction is no longer limited on the basis of geographical proximity. For example, Massey (2005) emphasised that space is more than distance and that it is not possible to reduce space to distance. She claimed that to only view

space as a matter of distance, and then negatively as a constraint, is to try to avoid the potentials and relations embedded in space.

3.2. Sense of place: three perspectives

The concepts of 'place' and 'sense of place' are closely interrelated: sense of place as a concept provides a basis for describing and analysing people–place relationships (Castree 2003; Convery et al. 2012; Holloway & Hubbard 2001). Conceptually, sense of place has received much attention not only from geographers and their different subfields, but also from other social science disciplines, resulting in various, often overlapping, theoretical approaches to and definitions of sense of place. Sometimes, sense of place has been used as an overarching concept, at times including different elements, while at other times it has been used interchangeably with the concept of 'place attachment' (Beidler & Morrison 2015; Hay 1998a, b; Jorgensen & Stedman 2006; Manzo 2003; Patterson & Williams, 2005).

While both sense of place and place attachment deal with people's subjective relationships with their environments, it has been suggested that place attachment focuses mainly on positive emotional bonds to a place, often measuring different components and the strength of personal emotions, whereas sense of place is considered to give a more holistic and qualitative understanding, including ambivalent or negative relations with a place (Butz & Eyles 1997; Hay 1998b; Kaltenborn 1998; Lewicka 2011; Manzo 2003). In this way, a sense of place reflects the feelings that people hold about a place, both positive and negative. Furthermore, it has been argued that employing the concept of sense of place allows greater inclusion of the social context than place attachment, because the latter concentrates more on the cognitive aspects and the individual mind (Hay 1998b; Stedman 2002; Stokowski 2008). In addition, the concept of 'place meanings' is often used in relation to sense of place, as a substitute for sense of place, or as the meanings that generate a sense of place (Davenport & Anderson 2005; Gustafson 2001; Kyle & Chick 2007; Williams 2014; Williams & Patterson 2008). For example, Kaltenborn (1998) has described the relation between sense of place and place meanings as follows: '… sense of place can be thought of as a collection of place meanings which express attachment to a place in a very broad sense' (p. 173).

Thus, I acknowledge the complexity and challenges involved in trying to define the concept of sense of place in that there is no real consensus about *what* the concept comprises or *how* it is constructed (Farnum et al. 2005;

Kaltenborn 1998; Williams 2014). However, taking a social constructionist approach as the basis for analysing sense of place, in this thesis I focus more on *how* sense of place is constructed than *what* it is comprised of (such as diverse dimensions or attributes). In essence, a social constructionist approach refocuses thinking away from the taken-for-granted physical characteristics of space and place and draws attention to the fact that there are more meanings of places than only objective and instrumental or utilitarian ones (Stokowski 2002; Williams 2002a). Thus, in this thesis I am focusing more on the non-material and non-monetary social and emotional aspects of how a sense of place develops.

Overall, I have been theoretically inspired by the qualitative, holistic and relational approaches of human geographers, or those who have adopted similar perspectives, as well as by some sociologists, who highlight the social basis of meanings related to place and sense of place (e.g. Gustafson 2001; Massey 1994, 2005; Williams 2002a, 2002b, 2008; Stokowski 2002, 2008; Tuan 1977). I believe that a 'pluralist' outlook and an awareness of diverse constructed positionalities can serve as a meaningful way to approach this complex concept (Patterson & Williams 2005; Williams 2014).

Below, I delineate sense of place from three focal perspectives, which highlight: (i) personally lived experiences; (ii) wider relations, linkages and processes; and (iii) the social context. My presentation of these different perspectives mainly follows three sets of theorists' thoughts in the sense of place field and the main lines of argument in the 'early' and 'later' sense of place literature (cf. Beidler & Morrison 2015). Tuan and Relph together signify the 'early' literature, while Massey and Stokowski represent perspectives of the 'later' literature. These perspectives allow me to discuss the divergent queries inherent in the concept of sense of place and the issues emerging from my research, as well as answering the research questions about how geographical distance and residency shape forest owners' relationships with their forestland (Paper 1) and how private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding private forest ownership manifest themselves in their relationship to public use and public planning interests for recreation and biodiversity on their land (Paper 3).

3.2.1. Personally lived experiences

Representing the 'early' literature on sense of place, Tuan (1975, 1977) and Relph (1976) stress that personally lived everyday experiences of places are the means to acquire a sense of place. Thus, sense of place is not

intrinsic to the physical setting itself, but rather, it resides in the human interpretation of a setting in particular contexts and situations (Tuan 1977). Tuan (1977) points out that experiences are a mixture of emotions and thoughts, including sensations, perceptions and conceptions. To experience is to learn, and what we know is a construct of our experience, created out of feelings and thoughts. A person may experience (or know) a place directly and intimately and/or indirectly and conceptually (Ibid). This means that a person may be able to communicate ideas about a place while simultaneously having problems articulating the sensations felt in relation to it.

Relph and Tuan both emphasise proximity and time as linked to experiences that can have an effect on one's sense of place. Experiencing being 'close' to a place is a combination of interpersonal intimacy, such as experiencing a sense of belonging to a community, and geographical proximity, as in the meaning of 'home', where your roots are and where you feel safe and secure (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). In terms of time, it takes time to evolve and gain experiences, and experiences are therefore perceived as more easily obtained through residence in, involvement with and commitment to a place. A sense of place, including a sense of deep care, concern and responsibility for a place, is thus created and developed over time out of personal stories, memories, sentiments and knowledge of the place. Relph articulates his thoughts around this issue:

> The places to which we are most attached are literally fields of care, settings in which we have had a multiplicity of experiences and which call forth an entire complex of affections and responses. But to care for a place involves more than having a concern for it that is based on certain past experiences and future expectations – there is also a real responsibility and respect for that place both for itself and for what it is to yourself and to others. (Relph 1976:38)

Relph and Tuan both express concerns related to globalisation and increased geographical mobility. I refer to mobility here as 'the overcoming of spatial distance' (Gustafson 2002:24). For Relph (1976), people's increased uprooting and mobility dilute authentic relations with places. Although Tuan (1977) argues that the quality and intensity of experiences matter more than duration for a sense of place, he maintains that in a short time people can only gain abstract knowledge about a place, while a 'feel' for a place takes longer to acquire. Relph identifies different levels of experience of 'insideness' of places (1976), from the deepest level, where the sense of place is authentic and genuine, to a shallow level, where the sense of place is inauthentic, artificial and superficial. Insideness, or to be 'inside a place', means to personally experience belonging and to identify

with a place and be aware of it as a meaningful setting for human beings and activities (1976). Not acknowledging the significance of a place, or being uncommitted to it, is to be an 'outsider' and experience 'placelessness', i.e. having no sense of place.

3.2.2. Wider relations, linkages and processes

In the 'later' sense of place literature, some geographers during the post-modern era of the 1990s were cautious about perceptions related to a rooted and authentic sense of place (Harvey 1996; Massey 1991, 1993, 1994). David Harvey (1996) claimed that a search for and preservation of an authentic and fixed sense of place in the era of global and mobile capitalism may result in groups of people competing with each other about the particular construction of a place, which could become politically exclusionary and antagonistic. Massey (1991) seemed to agree that increased mobility and globalisation may generate defensive responses (nationalism, competitive localisms and an introverted obsession with heritage) due to idealised views of places as coherent, fixed and homogeneous. However, based on her theoretical notion of place (see above), she proposed a progressive and inclusive sense of place. She termed it 'a global sense of place', which '…allows a sense of place which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local' (Massey 1991:28).

In this way, a sense of place is not only a product of daily life at the local level but it is also constructed out of the wider context, i.e. social, economic, political and cultural relations, linkages and processes beyond the place itself at other scales (Massey 1991, 1993). Massey argues that the concept of a global sense of place does not deny the specificity or uniqueness of a place, or people's need for attachment to a place, but rather that each place's meanings derive from a distinct mixture of local and wider social relations (Massey 1991), in that there is no single sense of place, but rather many different ones. Thus, Massey considers the conception of a global sense of place less threatening than other conceptions because it is not inward-looking or history-bound.

Still, because place at different scales is based on multiple and varied relations and processes, which in turn are often marked by power, domination and subordination, a global sense of place also takes into account the political struggles that are often inevitably based on place (Massey 1991, 1993). For example, globalisation processes may threaten local control over place and invite more stakeholders to make claims on what a place means and how it should be used. Places may also acquire

new meanings over a period of time, highlighting the social and conflictual aspects of the generation of meaning in encounters between social groups (Massey & Jess 1995). With this understanding, theoretical assumptions about feeling 'nearness' and 'distance' become more problematic, because geographical distance may be interpreted differently by different people at different scales (Massey 1994, 2005). In addition, when affections and responsibilities are not only associated with the physically proximate, it is possible to experience closeness across physical distance (Massey 2005).

3.2.3. Social context

In order to expand our understanding of sense of place within a social constructionist approach, it is necessary to explore the social context in terms of how people create and develop meanings and relationships in and with places. This has been a focus of some of the 'later' literature on sense of place. According to the sociologist and leisure scientist Patricia Stokowski (2008), a more social sense of place can contribute to the analysis of how people construct meanings about places. A social sense of place entails paying attention to the intersection of relationships, interactions and contexts, while simultaneously people are seen as active participants in creating a sense of place (Ibid). Stokowski argues that a sense of place is a social practice in the sense that people create and achieve meanings linked to place through social interactions and involvement. In the context of natural resources, Stokowski (2008) argues that meanings about use, values, ownership, resource protection and identity are part of the processes creating and transforming a sense of place.

Thus, theoretically, from this perspective, personal meanings of place are grounded in social and community relationships, experiences and contexts and not merely in an individual's internal cognitive perceptions and sentiments (Stokowski 2008). People and their actions are part of the surrounding world, and therefore context, history and culture influence and are influenced by social life (2008). Language is important in that people actively create and reproduce meaningful places through conversations and interactions with others (Derrien & Stokowski 2014; Stokowski 2002). In other words, while each individual can develop a personal sense of place, meanings of place are shared in verbal exchanges and practices, and may also persist in both personal and collective memories (Stokowski 2002, 2008). Sense of place can be learnt, and family and friends can be important facilitators in this learning process, which develops over time (Derrien & Stokowski 2014). It then becomes clear that social relationships and social contexts influence the meanings of places; that 'having a feeling for a place is always preceded by contextualized

social interaction' (Stokowski 2008:56). However, whereas the social construction of a sense of place suggests that meanings of place vary, are provisional and always in the process of being created, it also highlights that they may also be negotiated, defended or manipulated towards people's preferred individual or collective purposes (Williams 2002b).

In short, the three major perspectives described above identify and highlight how a sense of place may be created, acquired and shaped in multiple ways in people–place relationships. I believe that, together, they provide a holistic socio-spatial understanding of the complex ways in which people may develop and interpret relationships with their environments and the meanings of those environments.

3.3. Sense of place: previous research

With reference to people–place relationships and sense of place, a considerable amount of research related to natural resources, ecosystems and the valuation of environments had been conducted prior to the publication of the papers in this thesis. Overall, reflecting the topic of sense of place, research on people–place relationships concerning forests has, in conceptual terms, been disparate and mixed. The studies presented here sometimes provide different approaches to the terms 'place' and 'sense of place', and related terms. In relation to the three conceptual perspectives on sense of place described above, empirical investigations have based their research on personally lived experiences in line with the early literature on sense of place, including the effects of proximity/distance and time on people's sense of place; for example, with regard to private forest owners. More in line with the later literature on sense of place, several studies related to the politics of place stress the influence of the social context on sense of place, as well as the importance of wider relations, linkages and processes.

3.3.1. Rationales for place and sense of place

A common theme in the earlier studies is that the diverse experiences and meanings of places and the social processes, contexts and practices related to them have been overlooked in natural resource science and management, such as in forestry (Brandenburg et al. 1995; Cheng et al. 2003; Eisenhauer et al. 2000; Mitchell et al. 1992; Williams 2002a; Williams & Patterson 1996; Williams & Stewart 1998, Yung et al. 2003). One reason that has been suggested for this neglect of place and sense of place is the tendency to rationalise forests and forestry, and to focus on the material and instrumental values of forest environments.

Consequently, the more intangible dimensions are dismissed and emotional, social and historical connectedness and attachment are delegitimised (Buijs & Lawrence 2013; Williams 2002a; Williams & Patterson 1996). Thus, it is argued that the economic and technical considerations in forest science, policy and management are not sufficient for understanding people's diverse relationships with forest environments (Eisenhauer et al. 2000; Yung et al. 2003). Considering place as more than just a physical location, and incorporating people's subjective or shared experiences and meanings is seen as offering a more human-centred and holistic alternative to the prevailing 'commodity approach' to natural resources (Brandenburg et al. 1995; Cheng et al. 2003; Williams et al. 1992; Williams & Patterson 1996). Emphasising place therefore demonstrates that forests extend beyond something solely to be exploited as physical resources or environments to be used or geographical areas that provide for people's activities.

The concepts of place and sense of place reveal forests as perceived and emotionally felt special places, with cultures and histories that people care about and which embody a sense of belonging and purpose that give meaning to life (Brandenburg & Carroll 1995; Mitchell et al. 1993; Williams 2002b; Williams et al. 1992). For example, empirically Eisenhauer et al.'s (2000) research on sense of place identified some key reasons why the respondents considered certain places on public lands 'special': they were places linked to social interactions with family and friends, environmental features, access to and familiarity with a locale, ownership or being a caretaker of land. Daniel R. Williams, who has written extensively on place/sense of place with regard to forests, landscapes and natural resources, highlights that forests are socially constructed into places and therefore carry plural meanings that engender multiple representations of a particular forest (Williams 2002b). By integrating a place perspective, it becomes possible to clarify why people may have strong feelings or care so passionately about particular settings (Brandenburg & Carroll 1995; Williams et al. 1992). These settings are often valued as whole entities and not regarded as easily interchangeable (Williams et al. 1992). Additionally, a place and sense of place approach implies a more explicit geographical recognition of the fact that experiences, meanings and values linked to forests have a 'place', a concrete point and a 'somewhere' within a specific spatial and temporal social context (Williams 2002a; Williams & Patterson 1996).

3.3.2. Politics of place

Viewing forests as places highlights that they are arenas for socially constructed meanings that are both shared and contested (Anderson et al. 2013; Yung et al. 2003,). The meanings of forests may be constructed and shared within place-based social groups and transmitted from generation to generation (Brandenburg & Carroll 1995). However, it is not possible to presume that place meanings are uniformly shared within a specific social group, since place-based group identities are often complex and diversified, and have been found to sometimes challenge stereotypical categories, such as those of 'environmentalists' or 'loggers' (Anderson et al. 2013; Cheng et al. 2003). Moreover, meanings and attachments related to forests are not only limited to forest owners but also extend to local residents and recreational visitors without formal ownership, who may view a forest as not solely a setting for activities but one with which they feel strong emotional bonds (Mitchell et al. 1993; Williams & Stewart 1996). As a result, different sets of meanings and sentiments related to place may be accompanied by divergent expectations or concerns about forest management as well as feelings of possession, which may lead to controversies or conflicts related to forests (Anderson et al. 2013; Brandenburg & Carroll 1995; Mitchell et al. 1993). Research has also suggested that place-based collaboration and place-protective actions may evolve when it is believed that dominant societal groups are imposing meanings on a place or a forest that are too narrow (Anderson et al. 2013; Cheng et al. 2003). Therefore, by taking into account the social and emotional dynamics interrelated with place, it is possible to see that conflicts linked to forests are often driven by something stronger than 'interests' or diverging views; they may also be motivated by meanings, sentiments and engagement (Buijs & Lawrence 2013; Cheng et al. 2003). Cheng et al. (2003) suggest that '…natural resource politics is as much a contest over place meanings as it is a competition over the allocation and distribution of scarce resources among interest groups' (p. 98).

For this reason, taking sense of place into consideration can provide forest managers and planners with more comprehensive insights into the diverse relationships that different stakeholders have with certain geographical areas. It can also offer ways to respond to these, which can bring about more effective, settling and socially acceptable land management (Brandenburg & Carroll 1995; Williams & Stewart 1998; Yung et al. 2003):

> The concept offers managers a way to anticipate, identify, and respond to the bonds people form with places. By initiating a discussion about sense of place, managers can build a working relationship with citizens that reflects the complex

> web of lifestyles, meanings, and social relations endemic to a place or a resource. (Williams & Stewart 1998:18)

Sense of place becomes a reminder of the fact that land-use planning, forest policy and forest management are part of social and political interactions and processes, which can create, negotiate or destroy the meanings of place (Cheng et al. 2003; Williams & Patterson 1996; Williams & Stewart 1998). Sense of place can thus be used to examine issues concerning access to, use of and control over natural resources and landscapes and be linked to wider, politically contested, issues and ideas related to forests, such as property, conservation and governance (Cheng et al. 2003; Yung et al. 2003).

Prior to this research, few Swedish studies have incorporated issues regarding place into the forest context. Previous Swedish studies have mainly followed the increased international research focus on place politics, i.e. different groups' views linked to place-specific forests and participatory inclusion in forest planning and policy processes. One such study is Nordström and colleagues' study (2011) on 'place-specific values' linked to the north of Sweden, which is presented in the section on 'Forest social values'. Another study connected to a local forest conflict in the north of Sweden learnt how 'place perceptions' explained the meanings that different groups attached to forests (Beland Lindahl 2008; Beland Lindahl et al. 2013). These place perceptions included affinities to place and social components, such as diverging social loyalties within a community, which could cause divisions among groups regarding the forest, its management and related forest policy processes. The study revealed a lack of local participation or local perspectives in the policy process, which was thus deemed to have insufficient legitimacy (Beland Lindahl 2008).

3.3.3. Private forest ownership and sense of place

In relation to private forest ownership, some differences linked to different owner groups and sense of place, or place attachment, have been displayed regarding residency, generational issues and geographical distance or proximity.

Results from the US suggest that long-term resident owners' attachment involves emotional ties, family traditions, generational continuity, social interactions and being an integral part of the local community, while newcomers' attachment to their forestland revolves around a symbolic ideal of living and an escape from the city (Creighton et al. 2008). Another US study (Markowski-Lindsay et al. 2016) suggests that many long-term forest owners' personal and deep connections with their land, and with the

nearby community, leads to a desire to preserve the land or pass it on to their heirs, rather than to use it for financial or forest management purposes. An additional US study has discussed whether differences in sense of place may derive from differences in work experiences or livelihood related to forests between generations of private forest owners, which could increase problems in the transfer of properties between them (Creighton et al. 2016). The study also showed that, over time, social experiences and symbolic meanings of a place, such as through family relationships, could also generate a sense of place. Nevertheless, the study concluded that there might be problems in the transfer of forest property between generations.

On the issue of sense of place and generational transfers, findings from Estonia have highlighted the importance of emotional bonds with a place (Grubbström 2011; Jörgensen et al. 2010; Jörgensen & Stjernström 2008). These findings show that emotional and historical bonds to land and forests within families may persist over long time periods, between generations and independent of geographical distance. Estonian citizens, whose land was nationalised after the Soviet annexation in 1940, were able to regain their families' former property through restitution and privatisation processes after the fall of the Soviet era in the 1990s. The findings indicate that 'emotional rationality', based on attachments to their particular property and the symbolic meanings of place, rather than economic gain, was the main incentive for most owners to regain their property through restitution (Grubbström 2011; Jörgensen et al. 2010; Jörgensen & Stjernström 2008). Feelings for the family property had been maintained over many years, and despite the physical distances within and beyond Estonia, through their own or older generations' experiences, memories and stories about the land, the house, the family and other social relations and traditions linked to the area (Grubbström 2011). A key conclusion from this research is that the link between family and land was significant in the transfer of feelings and attachment to the property to the second generation of forest owners.

3.4. Property rights, ownership and ownership feelings

Consistent with the above conceptualisations of space and place, forestland entails a variety of socio-spatial relations. Ownership and property rights are among those socio-spatial relations that are central for this thesis. In order to try to comprehend the ways in which private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding private forest ownership

manifest themselves in their relationship to public use and public planning interests for recreation and biodiversity on their land, below I consider definitions of property rights, ownership and ownership feelings, which together with sense of place formed the basis for the conceptual framework for private forest ownership developed in Paper 3.

Ownership and property are mostly described as exclusively private and being about the distribution of financial and legal rights and benefits between people:

> Property is about rights over things and the people who have those rights are called owners. What powers do owners have over the things they own? Owners are free to use the property as they wish. They have the right to exclude others from it or grant them access to it. They have the power to transfer title – to pass the powers of ownership to someone else. They also are immune from having the property taken away from them without their consent, or they must be adequately compensated if the property is taken by the state for public purposes. We typically presume that the owner has, not just one or two powers, but all these powers – a full bundle – over the property. (Singer 2000:2)

The widely used term 'a bundle of rights', referring to a group of diverse property rights, as described in the quote above, is often employed in relation to natural resources, where it is associated with Elinor Ostrom's acclaimed research on natural resources, the commons and institutional arrangements.[6] Referring to 'a bundle of rights', Ostrom and colleagues (Ostrom & Hess 2000; Schlager & Ostrom 1992) point out that property rights are more complex than simply government, private and common property. They argue that property rights are a product of rules that stipulate both rights and duties (Schlager & Ostrom 1992). In order to possess rights, it is necessary to follow particular rules. To possess rights also implies that others have corresponding duties to observe these rights. In this way, ownership is recognised and protected by society, and vice versa; owners need to recognise and observe the rules set up in society related to property rights. There is a consideration of mutual rules between owners and society.

In human geography, the definition of property ownership as a matter of legally defined rights has been described as narrow and having some analytical shortcomings (Blomely 2005; Brown 2007). The literature I have reviewed expands the conceptual notions to include spatial,

[6] 'A bundle of rights', according to Schlager and Ostrom (1992), are rights to: 1) access a defined physical area; 2) withdraw products of a resource; 3) management; 4) the exclusion of others and how to transfer rights; and 5) alienation, such as selling or leasing rights.

relational, social and emotional dimensions. Conceptual ideas pursued in the field of legal geography treat property ownership as an inter-relationship between space, law and society (Blomley 2003). This makes it feasible to recognise property ownership as not only changing over time as society and institutional arrangements develop, but also as changing across space and due to the influence of context, social relations and emotions (Flemsæter 2009a). Theoretically, these ideas are extended to linkages to moral geographies, which further indicates that property relations in land intersect with morality, i.e. moral, normative and political assumptions about how rural land should be used, by whom and for what purposes (Brown 2007; Singer 2000).

The idea of moral obligations facilitates a conception of property ownership as also including a set of responsibilities (to compare with Ostrom and colleagues' 'duties') (Ibid). Moral obligations require owners to not entirely ignore the interests of others as well as to use their property in a way that does not affect or harm others. This reveals that property is both an individual entitlement and part of a social system involving mutual obligations among property owners and between owners and non-owners (Krueckberg 1995; Singer 2000). It also implies that explanations and resolutions regarding tensions related to property can lie in an understanding of the connection not only between the property and the humans, but also between humans and the tensions inherent in social relations (Singer 2000). Along these lines, by adopting a wide definition of property as 'relationships between persons with respect to the use or benefit of valued things' (Gregory et al. 2009:593), the meaning of property becomes explicitly social and relational in character.

With respect to forest ownership, studies have built on the conceptual thoughts outlined above. Research has shown that private forest owners have a 'social contract' with society that comprises both rights and responsibilities, which can be negotiated and changed over time and place as society transforms (Bliss 2003; Quartuch & Beckley 2013, 2014). A 'social contract' involves a set of mainly unwritten rules, behavioural norms and values delineated by the expectations between societal groups, which outlines responsibilities and the limits of acceptable behaviour (Bliss 2003). By using the term social contract to emphasise that there is an inter-relationship between owners and society, it may be possible to bridge the private/public divide in the analysis of private forest owners' relations to public use and planning, and to discuss the private and public as linked to each other (Freyfogle 2003). Both owners and the public have rights and responsibilities towards one another as well as towards their forestland. For example, research has found that private forest owners' articulated

role as stewards or custodians of their land is based on their sense of moral responsibility and duty towards both their land and social relations, such as family, ancestors and future generations, neighbours and society at large, including the public (Church & Ravenscroft 2008; Quartuch & Beckley 2013). Thus, private land ownership is both social and relational in its character and involves relationships and negotiations between different actors and competing interests (Munton 2009; Quartuch & Beckley 2013). Through planning and regulations, property rights can then be developed and modified to meet the needs of society (Quartuch & Beckley 2013, 2014). A Europe-wide comparative analysis of private forest ownership based on Schlager and Ostrom's framework[7] has concluded that there are substantial variations in property rights across Europe (Nichiforel et al. 2018). This confirms that property rights evolve and adjust to different places and societies through planning and regulations. Different regulations may also vary according to rights based on social and cultural customs, such as 'everyman's right' (in the Swedish case 'the Right of Public Access to nature'), which gives the public access to private land through an open access policy.

Turning to research on ownership dimensions, several studies (Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014; Matilainen et al. 2017; Matilainen et al. 2019) have added to the understanding of the importance of feelings related to the forest ownership context. Based on the concept of psychological ownership – also termed ownership feelings – from organisational research (Pierce et al. 2001; Pierce et al. 2003; Pierce & Rodgers 2004), studies on forest ownership in Finland and the wider European context argue that ownership feelings influence owners and their forest management behaviour (Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014; Matilainen et al. 2019). In particular, these studies focus on two dimensions of ownership feelings in private forest ownership: emotions related to owners' sense of identity and the sense of control that owners feel towards the forest area. In terms of identity, forests play the role of a link to identify with family or heritage, not only for those who have inherited and owned their forests for a long period (Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014) but also for newer forest owners (Matilainen et al. 2019). Related to the control dimension, restrictions to their perceived control over their forests vary, with many owners feeling that their ownership rights are limited by public forest administrations or by family traditions in using the forests, for example through identifying

[7] In relation to Schlager and Ostrom's framework, Nichiforel et al. (2018:537) categorised property rights to forests as follows: 1) access rights (the right of owners to enter their forest land); 2) withdrawal rights (the right to harvest or remove timber, firewood and non-wood forest products – NWFPs); 3) management rights (the right to plan internal forest activities and transform the forest); 4) exclusion rights (legal prescriptions to prevent access or the harvesting of wood and NWFPs by external users); 5) alienation rights (the right to sell forestland and forest products).

themselves as having responsibilities towards previous and future generations of owners. This leads to either enhancing or preventing active forest management (Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014). The third dimension of ownership feelings, having a place of one's own or a home in which to dwell (Pierce & Rodgers 2004), has received little attention here as a separate issue and has instead been integrated under the dimension of identity (Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014; Matilainen et al 2019). Moreover, since ownership feelings may be expressed through feelings of possessiveness (Pierce et al. 2001), they may be reasons for manifestations that are both positive and negative. Ownership feelings can increase the sense of responsibility and active stewardship towards the resource that is felt to be owned, regardless of whether formal ownership exists or not (Matilainen et al. 2017). On the other hand, negative attitudes, behaviour and conflict situations can be the result when private forest owners feel that their psychological ownership is being violated (Ibid).

A few Swedish studies have focused on diverging interests and ideas around property rights (e.g. Sandström et al. 2016; Sténs & Sandström 2013;). These studies have not incorporated the conceptual considerations outlined above on property or ownership. Instead, the focus has been on different stakeholder groups, such as proponents of private property rights and advocates of the public interest, including issues of the right to public access to private forests, hunting rights and the right of the Sami to practice their traditional way of life (Sandström et al. 2016). Otherwise, property ownership has appeared in Swedish research mainly in connection with how ownership and property rights are often transferred through inheritance to new generations of owners, a process that transfers not only capital, potential livelihoods, work and residence but also social and cultural heritage (Lidestav 2010; Lidestav & Nordfjell 2005).

3.5. Forest social values

The focus of the thesis' fourth research question (Paper 4) is 'forest social values' and how they are understood and potentially applied in relation to a local case in rural Sweden. In relation to 'forest social values' I have explored the different positions and perspectives on the concept to gain insights into wide-ranging considerations in the context of local and national processes of forest social values. The term 'forest social values' has been used in the forest context at least since James J. Kennedy's 1985 article about the role of planning and management in providing for current and future multiple forest social values in 'the western world'.

Kennedy (1985) discussed a broad terminology of forest social values from 'utilitarian' to 'romantic, non-product' values when he described how historical societal developments, in particular urbanisation, have brought about changing forest social values. Above all, he pointed out, since the 1960s and 1970s, these changes had turned into a challenge for professional forest managers:

> Environmental movements that stressed non-utilitarian and romantic/idealistic social values imposed new agendas on traditional forestry and on foresters in America and much of the urbanizing western world. Forest management has become even more challenging because of the conflicts between groups supporting consumptive and non-consumptive/symbolic forest values. Forest managers in North America, Sweden, the United Kingdom and New Zealand have had to cope with such future shock... (Kennedy 1985:122)

Kennedy (1985) highlighted that, historically, foresters have been used to understanding and responding to social values that were primary communicated by the economic system, focusing on the utilisation of resources and market prices. However, Kennedy argues, forest social values can be expressed in multiple ways, through economic, social and political systems. In fact, forest social values originate in the social/cultural system, and are expressed, for example, through the numbers or types of people using recreational areas. The political/legal system delineates social values in terms of legislation and policies. These systems can all intersect with and influence one other, as well as the environmental/ natural resource system, i.e. forests. Kennedy emphasised that social values are socially learned, and when forest managers fail to view their own role in managing and making adjustments for changing forest social values, such as the increased importance of recreation and landscapes, their resistance to these social changes can bring about conflicts over forest management practices in many countries.[8]

Later literature using the term 'forest values' (or the term 'values' relating to the forest context) follows Kennedy's analyses of the situation regarding historical social changes and changing forest values, the need for an understanding of diverse forests values, and the subsequent requirements for adapted approaches to forest policy, planning and management (e.g. Bengston 1994; Bengston & Xu 1995; O'Brien 2003; Tarrant & Cordell 2002; Reed & Brown 2000). In this and other literature, the terms 'forest values' and 'social values' differ from Kennedy's ideas to some extent. The literature on 'forest values' generally encompasses a range of economic,

[8] Kennedy (1985), for example, referred to Sweden and the harvesting of Swedish beech as an 'escalated national conflict', which had made front-page newspaper headlines.

social, cultural and ecological values (e.g. Brown & Reed 2000; Xu & Bengston 1997) and 'social values' are conceptually separated from other values, such as economic (production) and ecological (biodiversity) values (e.g. Brown 2013; Bryan et al. 2010). Social values relating to forests then tend to be expressed more in line with non-monetary, non-commodity and non-material terms in the literature.

The social values of forests in the so-called 'industrialised countries' seem to be largely associated with enhancing people's quality of life (Bengston et al. 1999; Lawrence 2004; O'Brien 2006). Forest social values can be considered as anthropocentric values, which underline forests as instrumental for humans and their societies, rather than emphasising forests' intrinsic values, i.e. biocentric/ecological values (Hatton McDonald et al. 2013; Tarrant & Cordell 2002;). Nonetheless, as Xu and Bengston (1997) state, from an anthropocentric perspective, forest social values can also provide material benefits, such as economic gain through recreation values. But then again, people can view forests non-instrumentally beyond their own self-interest, expressed in aesthetic values and moral or spiritual values, for example sense of place and heritage values (Xu & Bengston 1997). Moreover, social values have also been termed 'shared social values', where 'shared' refers to values held in common by a group, community or society, and 'social' stands for the societal context (Kenter et al. 2015). Reser and Bentrupperbäumer (2005) emphasise that values are not the features, qualities or components of the environment (the perceived) but refer to human value judgements, which reside within individuals, cultures and institutions (the perceiver). These have strong emotional and moral connotations, providing the basis for shared worldviews and legislative considerations (Ibid). Additionally, valuing is understood as a social process, influenced by social, cultural, historical and geographical relationships between the individual and society (O'Brien 2003). Forest social values are often highlighted as multiple, socially constructed and negotiated within society, and as influencing people's attitudes, behaviour, perceptions and experiences (O'Brien 2003; O'Brien 2005; Reser & Benntrupperbäumer 2005).

I conclude that there is no unifying definition of the term forest social values in the literature. Instead, the term relates to multiple, complex and often intangible values. In the *Encyclopaedia of Forest Sciences*, Anna Lawrence (2004) writes regarding forest social values:

> The term 'social values' has been used to refer to aesthetic and existence values, emotional attachment; sense of naturalness or wilderness; recreational values, privacy; moral and spiritual values; cultural values; mythic value (sense of

> primeval or mystery); rural employment opportunities, subsistence or health needs of local residents, and/or environmental improvement. (Lawrence 2004:2)

Furthermore, the need to distinguish between two types of 'values' in the understanding and management of forests, natural resources and ecosystems has been highlighted: 'held' and 'assigned' values (Bryan et al. 2010; Hatton McDonald et al. 2013; McIntyre et al. 2008; Seymour et al. 2010; Seymour et al. 2011; Tarrant & Cordell 2002;). Held values are defined as the underlying and abstract basic ideals of what is personally or socially desirable or preferred, expressed in generic terms towards the environment and forests in general (Adamowicz et al. 1998; Bengston 1994; Bengston & Xu 1995; Brown 1984; Jones et al. 2016; Tarrant & Cordell 2002). On the other hand, assigned values are based on experience and signify the relative importance or worth of a specific forest to an individual or group, such as what the general public values within a forest in a given context (Brown 1984; Jones et al. 2016; McIntyre et al. 2008; Tarrant & Cordell 2002). Held values are deemed to be enduring values that influence people's choices and actions, while assigned values partly reflect people's held values, and partly depend upon and apply to different contexts; thus, they are less stable and can change with changing environmental conditions (Adamowicz et al. 1998; Bengston & Xu 1995; Brown 1984).

In relation to this thesis' overall interest in socio-spatial relations and meanings, McIntyre and colleagues' (2008) focus on the geography of values is useful. They state that the geography of social values can be perceived at different spatial scales: assigned values at the level of a site or a special place in a forest and held values on a wider scale, i.e. a forest as a whole, regional, national or global levels. Thus, because assigned values are associated with specific and concrete contexts, it has been proposed that they are suitable for site-level evaluations, such as understanding and managing social values in a given community and/or certain natural place or forest in relation to recreational use and forest planning (Bryan et al. 2010; McIntyre et al. 2008; Seymour et al. 2010). By acknowledging the spatial context (place, place meanings and values) and employing interpretative data from focus groups, value mapping and surveys, McIntyre et al. (2008) spatially defined and located a broad range of the public's place-based social values in a Canadian Crown Forest. Accessibility to the forest was found to be the most important of the social values related to the forest. Therefore, the authors reason, if access to a particular place or point in this forest were to change, the values assigned to that place might also change (McIntyre et al. 2008). In their work, Seymour et al. (2010, 2011) learnt that people's assigned values may both compete and be shared within and between different place-based

communities. The similarities within and between communities were explained by the suggestion that people used to unite around certain meanings of place, and not merely regarding the use of or physical attributes of a place (Seymour et al. 2011). Also, Seymour and colleagues discovered that a range of socialisation factors influence the values that people assign, including family upbringing, number of years of residence in a district, occupation, proximity between interviewee and the site, and external factors, such as economic conditions (Seymour et al. 2010, 2011).

The social values mapping method has been used in various studies to spatially identify information about people's values for planning purposes, with respondents indicating areas and describing their values (e.g. Brown 2004; Reed & Brown 2003). Translating the discussion on assigned/held values, I refer to Kangas et al. (2008), who applied the social values mapping method to the Finnish context and found that place-specific information (similar to assigned values) about social values (such as recreational areas) was useful in forest planning, while questions regarding general values (similar to broad, held values) were helpful in expressing policy goals. Without referring to assigned values, but rather to 'place-specific values', Nordström and colleagues' study (2011) on participatory forest planning in a northern Swedish urban fringe context established that place-specific values have different meanings for different local stakeholders, depending on whether they are recreational users, environmentalists or reindeer herders. However, the different stakeholders had in common that they did not consider the specific forest in the study to be interchangeable due to the perceived importance of its location. Therefore, the study concluded that forest planning processes need to consider that it may not be possible to compensate for a specific forest and its place-specific non-instrumental values by preserving an alternative location (Nordström et al. 2011).

Although it has not received much focus, a third type of values, 'relational values' (Brown 1984), or the closely related 'felt values' (Schroeder 2013), has been recognised as important in explaining the relationship between held and assigned values, and in dealing with place-based values (Jones et al. 2016). 'Relational', or 'felt', values involve the feelings emerging out of the context-specific interactions and experiences between a subject and an object (e.g. between a person and her environment) (Brown 1984; Schroeder 2013). Felt values, built on relational values, are subjective feelings about the importance that something has for an individual (Schroeder 2013). Schroeder (2013) argues that relational values, although implicit in their nature, are more fundamental than both of the more explicit held and assigned values, because feelings are involved in

every aspect of human valuing. Schroeder maintains that it is necessary to incorporate these implicit felt values in order to better reflect and include values of place in decision-making processes.

Connected to Sweden, research has concluded that the concept of forest social values has been both contested and vague, and it has received lower priority in Swedish forest policies than the more pronounced values of production and biodiversity (Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Sténs et al. 2016; Widman & Bjärstig 2017). Forest social values have been studied with respect to urban fringe forests from a cognitive hierarchical structure, highlighting urban fringe forests' high social and experiential values to people as well as the importance of easy access to them (Eriksson et al. 2012). Focusing on the issue of recreation in urban fringe forests, Olsson (2014) concludes that an increased collaboration between private forest owners and municipality planners is needed to prevent conflicts of interest. Also, research specifically addressing private forest owners' forest social values has found that the majority of owners have low levels of knowledge about forest social values and that they need more information and advice (Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016, Bjärstig & Sténs 2018). However, at the same time, there were owners who perceived forest social values as an integral part of their forest and forest management practices (Ibid).

3.6. Gendering

> Gender is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category. An understanding of how gender is produced in social situations will afford clarification of the interactional scaffolding of social structure and the social control processes that sustain it. (West & Zimmerman 1987:147)

The above quote from West and Zimmerman's influential article 'Doing gender', published in 1987, sets the scene for why it is essential to consider gender in theory and research. From West and Zimmerman's proposal of gender as 'a doing' springs the term 'gendering' that is primarily used in this thesis in relation to gender. The concept of gendering suggests a relational theory of gender beyond descriptions of the categories of femininity and masculinity to apprehend the ongoing processes of 'doing' differences and inequalities between 'women' and 'men' (Bacchi 2017; Nentwich & Kelan 2013; West & Zimmerman 1987). Rather than being fixed, natural or self-evident entities, in this conceptualisation, 'women' and 'men' are constituted through processes of social interaction and practice (Bacchi 2017; West & Zimmerman 1987). 'Men' and 'women' and/or specific

forms of masculinities or femininities are constructed in relation to other men and women in active practices made both in and as a result of specific contexts or discourses (Bacchi 2017).

Here, the term 'practice' comprises ways of doing things that are socially recognised, shared and persistent (Gherardi 2009). However, although practices may appear consistent across time and space, they are constantly being negotiated among those who practise them. Practices become normative and institutionalised over time through rules, norms, values, customs and habits, which enable them to continue. However, because they are socially constructed, they can alter and become de-institutionalised. What is considered a correct or incorrect way of practising within a community or context (such as among forest owners) thus depends upon what these practitioners consider to be a correct or incorrect way of practising (Gherardi 2009). Accordingly, practices are multifaceted, temporary and can change when new ways of practising develop (Ibid).

In this vein, Bacchi (2017) points out that, by using the verb gendering, 'the focus is not on *who* undertakes a practice but on the role of practices in *constituting* subjects' (Bacchi 2017:28). According to Bacchi, the verb form reveals more about the ongoing practices, or the 'doing' of subordination and inequalities, than it does about the more fixed categories of gender. The concept of gendering also carries with it an understanding that the doer/subject/person is never fixed and can sometimes take up subject positions in ways that challenge the existing hierarchical gender relations (Bacchi 2017). The argument advanced then is that the role of practising may involve not only assigning differences between persons, i.e. practising othering, but also that persons may claim differences, i.e. practising resistance towards preconceived ideas and conducts (Bacchi & Eveline 2009). This stability and instability in how gender is practised reveal how femininities and masculinities and their meanings may shift between contexts and may in different situations be emphasised, downplayed or subverted (Nentwich & Kelan 2013).

Additionally, gender is made at the intersection with other constitutive social practices and processes in certain situations and contexts, and is recognised in the feminist geography literature as being done in interaction with place and space (Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Valentine 2007). In the words of Doreen Massey (1994:186): 'Gendering of space and place both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in societies'. Similarly, another feminist geographer, Linda McDowell, argues that geography and gender are

interconnected and mutually constituted (McDowell 1999). From the feminist geography literature, it is then possible to propose that gendering, as a social practice, emerges out of the relations with and within specific spatial contexts and temporal moments. It does so as part of people's lived experiences, which form the person/subject (cf. Valentine 2007). Thus, this interaction between space/place and gender is deemed instrumental in producing 'gendered' spaces, experiences, power relations and inequalities:

> When individual identities are 'done' differently in particular temporal moments they rub up against, and so expose, these dominant spatial orderings that define who is in place/out of place, who belongs and who does not. (Valentine 2007:19)

Accordingly, spatial and gender divisions may conjointly constitute each other and become established meanings and practices within a particular place. Practices or people transgressing or crossing these socio-cultural and geographical lines may be considered 'out-of-place' (Cresswell 2015:165–166). In this discussion, the body – the primary physical site of personal identity – is central to the understanding of gender relations and what positions women's and men's bodies are given or taken within a particular space (Bryant & Pini 2011; McDowell 1999; Valentine 2001). In particular, according to the specific context, different bodies are privileged to a greater or lesser extent: 'gendered bodies are described, read and lived differently according to *whose* body is in question' (Bryant and Pini 2011:142).

Research on the interrelations between gender and space have been discussed in relation to the rural context (Bryant & Pini 2011; Forsberg & Stenbacka 2013; Little 2002, 2015; Pini et al. 2015) and the forestry context (Brandth & Haugen 1998, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Reed 2003, 2008). In connection to gender and the rural landscape, Little (2002) argues that the intersection of gender/space affects both humans and nature in that it influences working lives, recreational patterns, the use of space and consumption practices. Consequently, the rural landscape, and the power relations embedded in the production and the consumption of that landscape, are part of the processes and practices of gendering within which certain sets of expectations and constraints of the performance of femininities and masculinities are constructed (Ibid).

The overall emphasis on the rural as predominantly a masculine space (Forsberg & Stenbacka 2013:2) has included the idea of conventional and hegemonic masculinities, relating to the notion of men's control and dominance over nature, including farmed and forested rural landscapes, and

over women (Little 2002, 2015). From this perspective, men are seen as masters of the land, and their ability to understand the land is in their blood, not necessarily learnt, and therefore something to be passed down through the generations (Ibid). Women, on the other hand, are 'not always seen as "in place" in the rural environment', and their use of and presence within the countryside are sometimes uncertain (Little 2002:65). Although gender relations have undergone changes at the same time as rural areas have been transformed with new modes of production and consumption (Forsberg & Stenbacka 2013), research has shown that 'new' types of masculinities continue to be involved in control over the forest environment and transformation of the rural landscape (Brandth & Haugen 1998, 2000, 2005a, 2005b).

Brandth and Haugen's (2000, 2005a, 2005b) discourse analyses of the forest industry in Norway have demonstrated how the dynamics of masculinities have shifted with the changing nature of social expectations and work, from physical, manual work requiring bodily strength to the use of heavy machines and technology. The 'new' types of masculinities emerging in forestry are based on organisational and managerial control over the economic resources involved at the sites of forestry. Their findings suggest that both the 'old' and the 'new' gendered practices of masculinity were similarly constructed and represented through control over work related to the forest space (Brandth & Haugen 2000, 2005b). Reed (2003, 2008) also identified how gendered practices, together with the discourses of forestry, marginalise and exclude women from forestry work and occupations, both statistically and culturally.

Although not explicitly incorporating spatial perspectives, empirical research has shown that the above examples of gendering in the rural and forestry contexts have applied to Sweden. Lidestav and Sjölander (2007) have shown that the hegemonic masculinity in forestry is significantly shaped around a rural masculine identity, including a strong interest in hunting and wildlife, which is difficult for women to fit into. In the forest policy context, the issues of gender and gender equality have slowly been taken up, and the prevalent forestry discourse emphasising timber production and related activities has been associated with men and particular forms of masculinity in forestry (Andersson & Lidestav 2016; Andersson et al. 2018; Holmgren & Arora-Jonsson 2015). As a result, women have been largely absent from the Swedish forestry sector (Ibid).

In relation to forest ownership, differences and asymmetries in conditions, values and behaviour due to gender have been revealed in quantitative studies related to forest management (Eriksson 2018;

Lidestav & Berg Leijon 2013; Lidestav & Ekström 2000; Lidestav & Nordfjell 2005; Umaerus et al. 2013, 2019). In order to gain access to the forestry sector, and to some extent challenge the gendered notions of both forestry and forest ownership, some female forest owners have organised themselves into networks (Andersson & Lidestav 2016; Lazlo Ambjörnsson 2021). However, the patterns of differences and inequalities between female and male forest owners have continued in Sweden, patterns that have also been shown in studies of private forest ownership in other European countries (Follo et al. 2017). Overall, research observations from a European context conclude that 'traditional gender roles may limit control by female forest owners related to their forests' (Matilainen et al. 2019:48).

Related to my own project, I conclude that, by using the concept of 'gendering', it may be possible to develop a deeper qualitative understanding of how women and men are 'doing' gender in relation to their forest ownership, and answering research question 4 about how gender differences and practices in private forest ownership are shaped and potentially reshaped or negotiated. 'Gendering' is also in line with the social constructionist approach employed in my work, in that 'gendering' aims to capture something that is not inevitable, but is in fact is continuously constituted and shaped by social influences (Hacking 1999).

4. Research design, methods and study settings

For this thesis, I chose a qualitative research approach in order to provide rich and varied understandings and explanations related to the research questions. Qualitative research is considered particularly suitable as a means of capturing subjective relationships, experiences, perceptions, feelings and values (Winchester & Rofe 2010), all of which are at the centre of attention in this thesis. In addition, qualitative methods facilitate the investigation, interpretation and illustration of the different voices and perspectives of those who are involved in the phenomena being studied (Ibid). In this research, this means those who have a stake in the forest context, such as forest owners and those who live adjacent to forests.

Below, I describe the qualitative methods and analysis used in the thesis and the four papers that emerged out of this research. Of these, three papers involved individual interviews with private forest owners (Papers 1,2 and 3) on the subjects of how geographical distance and gender are shaping private forest ownership, and on private forest owners' relationships to public use and public planning interests. The fourth paper (Paper 4) involved focus-group interviews with villagers residing next to a rural forest with high recreational values identified by the municipality, where the owner of the land planned to carry out a final felling. This is the case of Dalasjö. However, I begin by reflecting upon my perspectives in the research process of this thesis, referred to as critical reflexivity.

4.1. Critical reflexivity

In qualitative research, and particularly that conducted from a social constructionist perspective (see the Introduction), it is expected that the researcher may bring biases to the research, and that she therefore needs to be aware of, make known, and explain any biases that may have influenced the research process (Patton 2015). Reflexivity is a process of self-conscious scrutiny of the self as researcher, and of the research process, and includes questioning how one may be influencing the research process, the data and its interpretation (Dowling 2010; Guillemin & Gillam 2004).

For my own part, I recognised biases appearing at several levels or points during the research process. One of the most obvious was biases established from the epistemological perspective of social constructionism, which has been part of influencing my choice of research subjects and methods. Another initial motivation to address the social and emotional dimensions related to forests derived partly from my personal background in rural areas and growing up in a family where local forests have been valued for their environmental and recreational benefits. I also have close-up experiences of reforestation when, as a young adult, I worked for several summers planting trees. Predominantly, and most importantly, my interest in some of the aspects covered in the thesis derived from my own experiences of residing for a year next to a large area of forest that was being clear-cut on private land in a Swedish mountain valley. My own sense of the place changed substantially as a result of the process of clear-cutting. Not being a private forest owner, I became interested in who these different owners were, how they related to their own land, what influenced their perspectives and decisions and, in particular, how they themselves experienced their sense of the place. When, years later, I became involved in a research project dealing with changing forest ownership and forest use, I took the opportunity to develop these thoughts. In the back of my mind were also previous studies I had conducted on forests, gender and development pursued in an African context.[9]

Since the researcher is 'the instrument' in qualitative research (Dowling 2010), my subjectivity – which consists of personal characteristics and social position – has contributed substantially to my social interactions with the interviewees during this project. I have been able to draw upon these personal resources to establish connections and during my communications with the interviewees. For example, several female interviewees told me that my being a woman was significant. This view is illustrated by this quote:

> I might not have said yes to being part of this study if it had been a man who had called. Do you understand? You were a woman. It had some importance for my saying yes and that I invited you to my home.

In addition, after I had introduced myself and my rural background at the beginning of the interviews, several of the interviewees considered me to be someone who had some understanding of their contexts. In particular,

[9] E.g. Andersson, M. & Bergstén, S. (1997) *Tree planting is more than planting trees: A field study about gender and the Vi Tree planting project in Uganda.* Thesis for bachelor's degree in Development Studies, Uppsala University.

after I made it known that I own a second home in the municipality in the northern study setting, many of the interviewees with forestland in the north regarded me as an 'insider'. For ethical reasons, however, I chose to conduct the interviews in a geographical area far away from my second home (it is a large municipality) in an area completely unknown to me, and therefore none of the interviewees were previously known to me. These 'insider' characteristics are more likely to make the interviewee talk freely, and the researcher is more likely to understand what they are saying (Dowling 2010). On the other hand, despite my efforts to make the interview situations as comfortable as possible for the interviewees, a few of them were not very outspoken or free in their answers, specifically in the south, which to some extent influenced the outcome of the interviews. Being more of an 'outsider' in the southern context, I noticed my academic position in academia as a PhD student to be more 'in the way' in a few of these interviews. I noticed that this perception among the interviewees of an asymmetrical relationship was also a result of the power dimension that can arise in an interview situation, which it may not be possible to eliminate (Ibid), because the interviewer is leading the conversation and poses questions to the interviewee, who is expected to respond to them.

During my fieldwork I kept a diary, where, in addition to noting down thoughts related to the research subjects, I also recorded and reflected upon the interviews, the research process and its social context, as well as my own role in it. In relation to these issues, if appropriate and possible, I occasionally made some adjustments during the fieldwork. For example, I included more probing questions in relation to gender differences in forest ownership because I saw that some respondents found it hard to fully understand and answer my questions on this topic. Later, in the analysis of the data, I have tried to be aware of the fact that I am not value-free as a researcher, and I recognise that the decisions that I have taken during this process may have had an impact on my research. However, by providing as much information as I can about the research process and procedures, conducting multiple analyses with co-authors of the research data, including quotes in the final research texts, and presenting my potential biases, others can scrutinise the 'trustworthiness' of the investigations contained in the thesis (cf. Snape & Spencer 2003; Mansvelt & Berg 2010).

4.2. Study settings

This thesis draws from three study areas in Sweden. For Papers 1, 2, and 3, the study areas included Vilhelmina municipality located in the north

and Hässleholm municipality in the south. For Paper 2, the setting is the village Dalasjö, which lies within Vilhelmina municipality. Below, I describe these areas.

Sweden is the largest of the Nordic countries, and owing to its length it encompasses diverse landscapes and climates, as well as several other divergences between different parts of the country. The two study settings, Vilhelmina municipality in the northern county (or region) of Västerbotten, and Hässleholm municipality in the southern county (or region) of Skåne, were selected to provide divergent geographical contexts (Figure 1). Both Vilhelmina and Hässleholm are rural and non-metropolitan municipalities, although on different scales. The geographically larger Vilhelmina municipality (8,741 km²) is one of 15 municipalities in Västerbotten, and Hässleholm (1,307 km²) is one of 33 municipalities in Skåne. The number of inhabitants and population density are many times higher in the southern Hässleholm municipality than in Vilhelmina municipality, which is located in the sparsely populated northern interior of Sweden. Hässleholm has a population of about 52,000 and 41 inhabitants per km² while Vilhelmina has a population of not quite 6,800 and 0.8 inhabitants per km² (Statistics Sweden 2017). The population of Hässleholm, in the north of Skåne region, has been slowly increasing during the 21st century, but Vilhelmina municipality in the western, far inland part of the region of Västerbotten is encountering long-term depopulation due to education- and work-related migration (Ibid). Infrastructure, including rail facilities and roads, is well-developed in the region of Skåne: from Hässleholm municipality, the geographical distance to Malmö, which is the regional administrative and commercial centre of Skåne, is approximately 90 km by car. By contrast, the distance from Vilhelmina municipality centre to Umeå, the regional administrative and commercial centre of the region of Västerbotten, is far longer, approximately 230 km by car. Citizens of both municipalities have historically been very dependent upon forestry and/or agriculture for their employment and income, but today people mostly work in other sectors of the economy. For example, tourism is a growing sector in Vilhelmina municipality. In addition, the municipality of Vilhelmina is part of a reindeer-herding district, although reindeer husbandry takes place predominantly in the northern part of the municipality, where no interviews took place. Thus, in Vilhelmina municipality, the indigenous Sámi group have the right to conduct reindeer husbandry on private forestland.

The area of productive forestland is physically many times larger in Vilhelmina municipality than in Hässleholm municipality (314,839 vs 72,570 hectares), but the percentage of productive forestland as a

proportion of the total land area is larger in the southern Hässleholm municipality (Eggers 2015). In the northern Vilhelmina municipality there is more unproductive forestland and other types of land, for example, alpine areas and nature reserves. Due to the climate, productivity is generally higher in the south than in the north, and the southern municipality is characterised by much more agricultural and pastureland than the northern municipality (Ibid). Apart from the predominant tree species of pine, spruce and birch in both municipalities, there are more broadleaved trees in the south than in the north. The total percentage of forestland held by private forest owners is larger in the south than in the north, and individual forest property sizes are smaller in Hässleholm than in Vilhelmina (Ibid). Thus, forest ownership is dominated by private owners in the south while in the north there is a more mixed situation with a higher percentage of ownership by the state (for example, nature reserves), and by forest enterprises, including SCA (Swedish Cellulosa AB) (Ibid).

Of all of the registered people owning forestland in Vilhelmina (approximately 2,300 in 2015), more than half resided outside the municipality, many of them at long distances from their holdings, such as in the regional centre of Umeå or in or around the capital region of Stockholm. The majority of the owners in Hässleholm (in total, approximately 3,100 in 2015) resided within the municipality or in the southern county of Skåne (Swedish Forest Agency 2025b).[10] Thus, a greater proportion of forest owners are non-resident in Vilhelmina municipality than in Hässleholm municipality. With regard to female/male private forest owners, more men than women owned forestland in the two municipalities in 2015, reflecting the national statistics (61% male vs. 39% female forest owners in Vilhelmina and 62% male vs. 36% female forest owners in Hässleholm) (Swedish Forest Agency 2025c).

[10] While I have previously received information from the Swedish Forest Agency about the number of private forest owners owning land in Hässleholm and Vilhelmina municipalities, the figures given here – which are somewhat different from those received before – reflect the current official information from the Agency's statistical database.

Figure 1. Study settings and locations of interviews

The setting for the case study for Paper 4 is the village Dalasjö and its surrounding forestland area in Vilhelmina municipality. Dalasjö is situated 15 km east of Vilhelmina, the municipal centre, and the population of the village is approximately 100 people. Close to Dalasjö, there is a 200-ha forested area with tracks for walking, jogging, skiing and biking. In the municipality's Comprehensive Plan released in the year 2000, this area around Dalasjö is labelled an area with high recreational value (Vilhelmina kommun 2000); hence, specific considerations are to be made there, in particular related to forestry activities. However, SCA (Swedish

Cellulosa AB), as one of the main owners of the area, made a plan for forestry activities in the area, to which many of the villagers objected on the grounds that forestry activities would obstruct this recreational area, and their forest social values.

4.3. Sampling – private forest owners

The data sampling method involved a maximum variation for Papers 1, 2 and 3. This method was chosen with the aim of ensuring inclusion and reaching a diversity of interviewees in order to obtain rich and varied data, and to facilitate an in-depth understanding (Sandelowski 1995; Ritchie et al. 2003). By purposely ensuring a variety of interviewees in the sample, the existing range of forest owners was reflected. The intention was not to achieve a representative sample, but rather to provide 'symbolic representation' by including the diversity of dimensions and constituencies that are central to explanation (Lewis & Ritchie 2003; Bradshaw & Stratford 2010). An additional consideration was that, in previous qualitative interview studies on forest owners, in Sweden and elsewhere, the sample has often been biased towards men (e.g. Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Lind-Riehl 2015; Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014; ; Richnau et al. 2013; Stanislovaitis et al. 2015), and sometimes biased towards larger forest holdings (i.e. Church & Ravencroft 2008). I have intentionally avoided this here (see Appendix I: Characteristics of private forest owners interviewed). To obtain maximum variation with as little bias as possible, I turned to a register of all forest owners in Sweden, Skogsägarförteckningen from Lantbruksfakta. This register included information about forest owners in Sweden by municipality, including name, residential address and telephone number, date of birth, sex, size of property and whether the owner was resident or non-resident in the particular municipality. Information not available in this register was: how the owners acquired their property or length of ownership, if it was co-owned or not, and the geographical location of the forest property within the municipalities.

From this register, the interviewees were strategically and systematically selected in light of the aim and research questions 1, 2 and 3, and to achieve a variety of interviewees in order to try to illustrate the prevailing heterogeneous corps of forest owners in Sweden. The definitions established by the Swedish Forest Agency were considered, whereby 'resident forest owners' are those who reside within the borders of the municipality and 'non-resident forest owners' are those who reside in another municipality. I grouped these two owner types into four approximately equal numbers of owner categories according to their place of residency and

geographical distance from their forest property within or outside of the municipalities containing their forest properties: residents living adjacent to or on their properties in the rural areas; residents living in the municipal centres at some distance from their properties; non-residents living in the main cities of the regional centres at a distance from their properties; and non-resident owners living in the national centre of Stockholm far from their properties (see Table 1 in Paper 1 and Paper 3). The sampling was also influenced by the criteria of gender (equal numbers of women and men depending on residency), age (a gradual scale of age) and the size of the forest property (both larger and smaller sizes of land) (see Appendix I).

4.4. Data collection and individual semi-structured interviews

First, I contacted all of the private forest owners with a written letter, which introduced the project, broadly outlined the question areas, and requested an interview. The letter was followed up with a telephone call, in which I asked whether the individual forest owner was willing to meet up with me for an interview. For those interested in participating, an interview date and time were booked. In total, 88 people were contacted by telephone, of whom 37 declined to take part in an interview. Thus, quite a good response rate was achieved. In total, 51 individuals (58% of all those contacted) who owned forest properties were interviewed face-to-face during the first half of 2015. The reasons for not taking part in an interview varied, such as lack of time, sickness, or issues related to work or family. For example, in the south of the country, some resident owners with farms could not to take part during the springtime because they were busy with agricultural activities. Some who co-owned their property did not want to enter into conversations about their co-owned land, and therefore declined to take part in an interview. Others did not want to be interviewed because they felt that they were not able to contribute to the subjects of the interview since they considered themselves to be 'not engaged in' or 'did not have knowledge about' their forest property. Regarding representativeness and potential limitations of the research, it is difficult to determine whether those who declined to take part in the study might have changed the results of individual studies within this thesis. For example, in relation to Paper 1, on forest owners' sense of place and feelings of closeness and distance due to geographical distance to their forest properties, those who perceived themselves as 'not engaged' and who therefore opted out of an interview might have experienced and felt more distant from their property. Subsequently, although the interview data

included input from forest owners with different degrees of engagement, it is possible that those who chose to participate were more engaged than those who did not take part, thus bringing a bias into the dataset. However, the meaning of 'being engaged' or 'disengaged' might also have differed between different forest owners: for example, it could have referred to engagement, or not, in activities related to forestry, or the (dis)engagement perceived due to co-ownership of a family property.

In the end, 28 of the interviewees were resident owners and resided within the borders of the municipality containing their property, and 23 were non-resident owners, residing in another municipality at a distance from their properties. The distributions of women and men were nearly equal in the sample (women=25/men=26). The age range of the people interviewed was 28–75 years, with a mean age of 53 for the northern study area and 55 for the southern one. Most of the interviewees had inherited, received as a gift, or bought their property from a close family member. Just a handful of owners had bought their properties on the market, mainly for the purpose of residing there, but also to gain hunting rights. The duration of ownership ranged from one to more than 50 years, with an average of about 20 years of ownership. The inherited properties had sometimes been in the owners' families for several generations. In addition, more than half of the total sample co-owned their forestland, mainly with spouses or siblings. The size of the forestland properties ranged from about 10 to 800 ha. Among the interviewed forest owners, the forest properties in Vilhelmina municipality were larger than those in Hässleholm municipality. The majority of interviewees had present or former residential houses, second homes or other buildings, such as farmhouses, on their property. Some of the owners in Hässleholm municipality rented out residential houses or pieces of land. A handful of the interviewees were farmers. Some of the farmers, but also a couple of non-resident owners, stated that they were dependent upon the income from forestry. About 10 of the interviewees presently worked or had worked within the previous 10 years in diverse jobs linked to forests, such as jobs related to forest management, recreation or nature preservation. Altogether, most of the interviewees worked within a variety of sectors, some owned their own businesses and some were retired. Almost 20 of those interviewed had taken part in some kind of academic education at university.

The interviews with the private forest owners were conducted in the study settings at or near the resident owners' forest properties in Hässleholm or Vilhelmina municipalities, in the municipality centres (Hässleholm and Vilhelmina), or in the regional centres (Malmö/Lund and Umeå) or the capital city of Stockholm. The majority of interviews took place in the

homes of the forest owners, where it was hoped that the interviewees would feel comfortable, thereby facilitating a more open and conversation-like situation and enabling longer and more detailed accounts. Some interviews took place at the interviewees' workplace or in a public venue such as a library or a hotel lobby, if that was the interviewee's preference. Also, if requested by the interviewees, the interviews were conducted in the evening or at the weekend. In three of the interviews, without my preknowledge, a spouse was present for part of the time and took part in the conversations to a limited extent. Due to their restricted participation, I have excluded the spouses' comments from the analysis of the interviews.

I followed the ethical considerations employed in qualitative research about the importance of obtaining informed consent from all interviewees to participate in the study prior to the start of the interviews, with a clear understanding that their participation was voluntary (Guillemin & Gillam 2004; Lewis 2003). Information was also given in advance of the interviews concerning how I would use the data and how much time would be required for their participation. Furthermore, I assured them of anonymity and confidentiality in the study prior to the interviews. For ethical reasons, the interviewees' identities have therefore been protected; they are referred to in quotes in Paper 1, 2 and 3 by gender, place of residence (rural, municipal centre, regional centre, national centre of Stockholm), owning property in the north or south, as well as by age, whether resident or non-resident owner and size of property.

The interview guide consisted of themes with questions, sub-questions and prompts (see Appendix II). These related first to the background of the private forest owner and their forest ownership, such as how and when they became owner of their forests, descriptions of the forest property and where it was located. For Paper 1, on sense of place and geographical distance, the interview themes revolved around the forest owners' meanings of and relationships with their forestland and the location of the forest property. Questions concerned 'feelings of home', changes over time and ownership, as well as their perceived physical distance/proximity to their forest and how they believed living at a distance from their property influenced their relationships with their forestland. For Paper 2, on the gendering of forest ownership, the questions concerned potential differences and expectations they perceived, experienced and practised as 'men' and 'women' linked to their forest ownership context. Questions relating to Paper 3 regarding private forests owners' relationship with public use and planning interests focused on their experiences and feelings about the public's use of their forestland, and their relations

to land-use planning organised by the municipalities and the county administrations in the regions.

By trying to follow the respondents' narratives as closely as possible, and bringing up interview themes as they arose in the conversation rather than rigorously following the order of the interview guide, as well as listening carefully and encouraging the respondent, I attempted to create a beneficial flow during the interviews, with their experiences and perceptions at the centre. I also brought a map of the municipality, on which I asked the interviewees to locate their forest property. This often sparked off further discussions. With permission from the interviewees, I recorded the interviews, which were later transcribed verbatim. Interviews lasted between 45 and 150 minutes, with an average of 75 minutes. During the interviews, I made some notes to complement the recording, and after I left the interviewees' houses, I made brief audio fieldnotes about the interview, for example if something interesting came up in my mind that might contribute to the data analysis. Towards the end of the fieldwork, it became clear that new information or insights were becoming rare during the interviews, which led me to conclude that sufficient data had been collected to be able to analyse and draw the required conclusions from it; i.e., data saturation had been achieved (Cameron 2010).

4.5. Focus-group interviews: the Dalasjö case

In order to investigate villagers' social values related to the forest area in the Dalasjö area (Paper 4), I conducted two focus-group interviews together with two other people. Focus-group interviews are a form of qualitative research where data is generated through interactions between group participants in the interview situation (Finch & Lewis 2003). The group context is important and can trigger thoughts and discussions, which further facilitate deeper and more refined discussions, as occurred during the focus-group interviews conducted in this study. In responding to other participants' comments, spontaneous and revealing discussions emerged, which might not have come up in a one-to-one interview. Jenny Cameron, a human geographer, states: 'The focus group method has an important contribution to make to geographic research. It is a highly effective vehicle for exploring the nuances and complexities with people-place relationships' (2010:157). Potential limitations in conducting place-based focus-group interviews include the fact that all the participants are likely to be known to each other, which can produce peer pressure and a desire amongst participants not to appear controversial (Cameron 2010). The research team did not sense any peer pressure during the focus-group

discussions in Dalasjö; rather, it appeared to us that the participants were able to discuss their views and thoughts quite freely in a 'safe' discussion environment.

To select participants for the focus-group interviews, two people from the thematic group on forest social values in Vilhelmina Model Forest, a local information and network organisation regarding forest issues in Vilhelmina municipality, were asked to propose people whom they anticipated might be interested in participating. The criterion for selecting participants was that they lived in the village on a permanent basis. On their recommendation, 14 people were invited by letter to take part in the focus-group interviews, which took place in 2014. The invitation letter included a map of the Dalasjö area, on which they were asked to mark particular areas they used for activities related to forest social values. To facilitate the villagers' participation, one of the focus-group interviews took place in the evening and the other during daytime at two different facilities in the middle of the village. In the end, a total of eight people took part, with three people in one group and five in the other. An equal number of women and men participated, aged between approximately 40 and 75 years old. Three of the participants had been born in the village while five of them had moved there, between six and 50 years previously. Due to the small numbers, these groups are not representative of all villagers, but they do nonetheless offer valuable insights into the perspectives of a select group of informants.

An interview guide was designed with the overarching thematic areas to be covered, and including some follow-up questions. The thematic areas concerned the participants' understanding of forest social values, the social values they identified with the forest area next to Dalasjö, and any conflicts of interest linked to the forest. The focus-group interviews took ninety minutes and two hours respectively. Authors 1, 2 and 4 of Paper 4 took part in the interviews. The first author moderated the discussions, the fourth author mainly observed and the second author made notes. The second and fourth authors took part in the discussions to a limited extent when required. The focus-group interviews were recorded, transcribed and subsequently thematically analysed. The participants gave consent for the interviews to be recorded, and the importance of confidentiality within the group was stressed. The discussions took place around a table so the participants could all see each other. The sessions each started with a short introduction by the researchers, stating which roles they would play during the interview situation. This was followed by an introduction in turn by all the villagers present, stating how long they had lived in the village of Dalasjö, and why they wanted to take part in the focus group.

The group composition, with both women and men and with some differences in age and years of residence, appeared to facilitate the sharing of contrasting views. Sometimes during the discussions, the moderator had to guide or probe in order to ensure that issues were covered in greater depth or that diverging views were clarified.

4.6. Thematic data analysis

Thematic data analyses were conducted of the data from both the individual interviews with the private forest owners and the focus-group interviews with the Dalasjö villagers. A thematic analysis within social constructionist epistemology was used (Braun & Clarke 2006). The thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews with the forest owners followed a procedure whereby the entire dataset for Papers 1, 2 and 3 was organised and coded according to identified themes and sub-themes using the qualitative software programme MAXQDA 11. The themes captured important elements within the data in relation to the research subjects, aims, questions and theoretical concepts and understandings, such as repeated patterns of meanings, similarities, differences or relationships.

Before conducting the interviews (including finalising the interview guide) and beginning the analysis, I reviewed the relevant literature related to the papers. I identified certain themes in the literature, and these acted as a basis for the thematic analysis. Accordingly, before the coding started, I developed an initial coding guide list connected to the theoretical background for the papers, which was re-organised and developed during the coding procedure. Thus, much of the coding process was driven by a theoretical pre-understanding, which deductively sought to determine the extent to which the data could support the existing conceptualisations, explanations and theories in each paper. Other emerging themes and sub-themes were added depending on the interpretations of the interview texts. Accordingly, the data was analysed both deductively and inductively into themes. Loosely following Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic coding, this process included reading, reviewing and revising the codes and the content of the interview texts until all the collected data had been interpreted and analysed, such that each theme appeared to form a coherent pattern, and the individual themes and sub-themes were considered valid. For Papers 1 and 2, a multiple analysis was made by both the first and second authors as a verification procedure of the interpretations of the data, as a means of enhancing the credibility of the research (Bradshaw & Stratford 2010). The

themes for each research question are presented in the individual research papers of the thesis.

Subsequently, brief summaries were made of each sub-theme, including selected extracts, to identify their essential points, as well as how they would fit together with the main themes and the overall 'story' of the papers. The final analysis was concluded during production of the texts for each paper, when extracts with quotes were embedded in the results sections of the articles. Quotes from the interviews with the forest owners have been incorporated in order to provide a richer understanding of the thematic analysis, and to exemplify owners' lines of arguments or discussions. Importantly, the quotes ensured that the analysis and conclusions formed in the writing up of the individual papers were supported by adequate evidence (Lewis & Ritchie 2003). The advantage of using thematic analysis was that it provided a rich thematic description and analysis of a large body of data, and could highlight patterns of similarity and diversity (Braun & Clarke 2006). One disadvantage, as I discovered, is the fact that the thematic analysis did not always facilitate the unpacking or adequate discussion of contradictions expressed in an individual account.

The thematic analysis of the transcripts of the focus-group interviews (Paper 4) followed a similar process to that described above. After analysis of the data, the villagers who had taken part in the focus groups, along with Dalasjö villagers in general, were invited to a meeting in Dalasjö, where the results were discussed. The comments made at that meeting validated the results of the thematic analysis. In addition to the thematic analysis of the focus-group transcripts, Paper 4 was also based on a review of the policy context both nationally and locally. Existing forest legislation, policy documents from the Swedish Forest Agency that define social values, and other policy documents steering forests were included. Two other researchers interviewed the informants to contextualise the process of trying to identify and apply forest social values.

4.7. Contributions to papers

With regard to the four papers included in the thesis I have contributed to the papers as follows:

- For Papers 1 and 2, I had primary responsibility for conceptualisation, theory, methods, data collection, the thematic analysis of the data using MAXQDA 11, as well as writing, review and editing.

For Paper 1 and 2 I did a multiple data analysis of the coded data with second authors. For Paper 1, the second author contributed to writing, review and editing. For Paper 2, the second author contributed to theory, writing, review and editing.

- For Paper 3, I had primary responsibility for conceptualisation, theory, methods, including data collection, the thematic analysis of the data using MAXQDA 11, as well as writing, review and editing. The second and third author were responsible for the research questions of Paper 3, and contributed to writing, review and editing.
- For Paper 4, I contributed to the conceptualisation, theory, methods, including data collection, and was responsible for the thematic analysis of the data from the focus group interviews. I contributed to approximately one third of the writing, review and editing.

5. Paper summaries

In this chapter, I provide summaries of the four research papers included in the thesis. At the end of the chapter, I present a table with a brief overview of the papers. Full versions of the papers can be found as appendixes.

5.1. Paper 1: Feeling at home from a distance? How geographical distance and non-residency shape sense of place among private forest owners

Questions have been raised about whether geographical distance and non-residency result in changing and/or weakening relationships between private forest owners and their forestland. This paper aims to develop an understanding of how geographical distance and residency shape private resident and non-resident forest owners' relationships with their forest properties by using the concept of 'sense of place' as an analytical framework. Conceptually, the study considered the ways in which 'early' and 'later' literature on sense of place has discussed distance and proximity between people and places. The early literature from the 1970s focuses on personal intimate experiences developed over time and through geographical proximity, such as long residency, as requirements for a sense of place characterised by feelings of closeness. The later literature emphasises that a sense of place is socially constructed in diverse ways over time and space, such as through social contexts, and is part of wider social linkages and processes.

Fifty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with resident and non-resident private forest owners living in Sweden at various distances from their properties, which were located in the two municipalities of Hässleholm in the south and Vilhelmina in the north. A thematic analysis exposed the manifold and mixed ways in which a sense of place and feelings of closeness to and distance from forest properties were formed and could change over time. The findings demonstrated that the owners extended the meanings of their forestland beyond the scale of the physical forest environment to encompass the wider property, including their social settings and interactions and the circumstances of ownership. The owners' sense of place had often been gained and developed over time and through their ownership, frequently within the family, through intergenerational relationships and the social context of the place of the

property. Irrespective of residency or geographical distance, the results therefore highlighted that the forest owners' sense of place and feelings of closeness or distance did not only derive from long-term personal experiences and residency but were also socially constructed by their particular social and ownership contexts; for example, through property inheritance, family heritage, and whether or not the property was (or had been) a place of residence or was used as a second home. Because of their particular social and ownership contexts, both resident and non-resident owners could feel social or temporal distance from their properties, such as social alienation from the place of the property, no engagement with or interest in the property or the place of the property they seldom visited. Additionally, changes to owners' sense of place could arise from alterations in the place of the property, changes in the social or ownership context as well as because of wider social processes, such as urbanisation, negative economic development or depopulation.

The results revealed variety in terms of how geographical distance and residency status shaped forest owners' sense of place. Overall, there were no distinct similarities or differences between the groups of resident and non-resident owners, including those that could have been brought about because of different geographical distances, in feelings of closeness to or distance from their properties. Geographical distance was interpreted differently among the forest owners, as were the meanings of 'nearness' and 'farness'. Both resident and non-resident owners' sense of place could reflect engagement, belonging, well-being and custodianship in relation to their properties, as well as feelings of 'home'. While, some non-resident owners who resided far away from their properties felt distant from them, especially those without houses or second homes there, which resulted in them seldom or never visiting their properties, other non-resident owners emphasised their emotional anchoring to their properties. In fact, non-residency, geographical distance and mobility could sometimes cultivate feelings of longing and emotional closeness among the non-resident owners.

This paper has established that non-resident owners' sense of place and feelings of distance are not necessarily, or not only, shaped by geographical distance and residential status. Rather than generalising forest owners' relationships to their properties in terms of geographical distance or (non-)residency, the paper concludes that policy, planning and practice processes should take into account the fact that non-resident owners may not inevitably have a weaker sense of place in comparison to resident or previous owners, but may feel a different kind of sense of place formed by relationships stretched out over time as well as over space and place.

5.2. Paper 2: Same-same but different: Gendering forest ownership in Sweden

Globally, research has found gender to be a significant dimension embedded in the social relations related to forests. The forest environment has been identified as a gendered space that both contributes to and reflects gender biases and the marginalisation of women. In Sweden, as well as elsewhere, research has established the seemingly fixed nature of the gendered forest ownership that displays differences and inequalities between female and male forest owners. Employing a qualitative approach and based on the theoretical concept of 'gendering', this study aims to examine and analyse gender differences and practices in private forest ownership in the Swedish production-oriented setting in order to understand how they are shaped and potentially being reshaped or negotiated. 'Gendering' is defined as a set of ongoing contested spatial and constitutive differencing practices. The verb 'gendering' emphasises the social practices of gender as the 'doing' of differences and inequalities in interactions with space, place and bodies. Using the concept of gendering, the paper explored how forest owners perceived, understood and experienced gender differences in forest ownership. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with 25 female and 26 male forest landowners of properties located in two municipalities in Sweden.

The thematic analysis revealed both a dichotomised and a varied understanding of gendering practices in private forest ownership, and thus it demonstrated that the seemingly fixed forms of gendered forest ownership involve some variety and flexibility. A large group of interviewees, both women and men, perceived gender as irrelevant to their experiences as forest owners, they considered forest ownership to be gender-neutral, or they said that gender differences and inequalities belonged in the past. Moreover, there were some women who took an active leading role in connection with their forest ownership and in forest management activities, in opposition to established gendered stereotypes. However, there were also owners who had experienced the rigid nature of the gendered forest ownership, and they often emphasised differences through a complementary or dichotomy-related understanding of gender, practices and spaces.

Four key themes evolved from the interviews. **First**, it emerged that the gendered differences and divisions in forest management activities, behaviour and knowledge had derived from historical and socialisation processes. These gendered differences often positioned women's and

men's bodies in different spheres, in which men dominated in the space of the forest, including knowledge and decision-making, and women were more associated with the domestic sphere. **Second**, dichotomies corresponding to the recognised practices of 'passive' and 'active' forest ownership were socially reproduced. Men were perceived as 'active' forest owners, i.e. linked to practical and manual work in the forest, while women were perceived as 'passive' forest owners. **Third**, the notions of women being 'different' and 'soft' in their forest values was related to their ownership, and their focus on environmental and social values of forests. By contrast, men were seen as more connected to the prevailing values concerned with production and economic returns from the forest. **In addition**, deviations from the assumptions and expectations of forest ownership were associated with women and femininity, and were seen as a way to break with the conventional forest ownership and the prevalent production-oriented forestry discourse linked to dominant masculinities in the forest context. These alternative practices by some women were represented by a few men as something positive, new and innovative.

This paper demonstrates that the gendering of practices influenced whose bodies were considered eligible and who should be excluded from certain places and tasks in forest ownership. These gender and spatial divisions restricted the range of ways in which women and men practised and experienced their forest ownership. However, women appeared to embrace a wider set of choices in practising their forest ownership than the men, who had more often been socialised into their ownership by older generations of men. Attributing 'difference' was at times a way of 'othering' femininities and female forest owners, but it was also a way for some women, or for those men who thought or acted like them or in line with femininities, to claim differences and resist preconceived ideas about the gendered forest ownership and how to practise forest ownership. Thus, the paper argues that the gendered 'doing' of forest ownership – and the dominant, conventional rationales of production-oriented forestry – could be challenged, negotiated and potentially altered by the 'doers' of the practices.

5.3. Paper 3: Experiences and emotions among private forest owners versus public interests: Why ownership matters

In the case of privately owned forestland, the public's use of it, as well as public policies and planning processes may come into conflict with private ownership when owners are expected to preserve forests for biodiversity

or enable the public's access to nature. Since the relationship between private landowners and public interests is at times complex and challenging, it is vital to consider the different elements that this relationship includes. This Swedish study developed a conceptual framework related to private forest ownership, consisting of the partially overlapping and interacting dimensions of 'property rights', 'feelings of ownership', and 'sense of place'. The framework highlights that private forest ownership is social, emotional and relational, and that it includes not only formal but subjective dimensions, which influence owners' relationships and decision-making in relation to their properties and public interests organised by municipalities and county administrations. Hence, this study provides insights into how private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding private forest ownership manifest themselves in their relationship to public use and public planning interests for recreation and biodiversity on their land. Fifty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with forest owners who owned land in two geographically different municipalities: Vilhelmina in the north and Hässleholm in the south.

The findings demonstrated that private forest ownership extend beyond legal rights to include social rights and responsibilities, moral obligations, and emotional bonds. While property rights are often understood as a 'bundle of rights', including the right to exclude others, it was demonstrated that the Right of Public Access to nature in Sweden played an important role in the private property owners' broad acceptance of people roaming on their land, i.e. as a 'social contract' of mutual obligations and restrictions between themselves and the public. Owners also often viewed public access as a benefit, since it allowed them, as members of the public, to access other privately owned forests elsewhere.

The hypothetical question about how private forest owners would respond to future public planning measures (using, buying or exchanging their land) by the municipal or county planning authorities on their land for recreation or biodiversity, generated diverse replies: ambivalent, clearly affirmative and not at all convinced. The few owners who already had been contacted by planning authorities (i.e. county administrations) regarding protection of biodiversity values had perceived the planning process in positive terms. A few others in the southern municipality had objected to wind power projects that they associated with municipal planning, partly because of social and emotional place-specific reasons. Many of the owners who were ambivalent stated that they would have liked to have received more information or to discuss the issue more before deciding how to answer. Some considered it acceptable if people spent time on or used their land, but at the same time they wanted to maintain custody of

their particular piece of forestland. Other owners were not convinced because of their ownership feelings and sense of place, often deriving from long-term family connections to their forestland. They were concerned about being denied or otherwise restricted in their ownership and control over their property. Reimbursement for land lost to public planning processes was considered inadequate to compensate for their emotional loss. Some, more usually those who resided at a distance from their properties, and in some cases those who were not financially dependent on or emotionally attached to their forestland, were more in favour of public planning interests on their properties than other owners.

How forest owners' experiences and emotions manifested themselves with regard to public interests depended also on the geographical context. For example, owners with forestland in the more densely populated and urbanised southern municipality of Hässleholm experienced more recreational pressure on their land, and some related problems. The 'social contract' was perceived as more at risk here, and some owners' used place-claiming and exclusionary practices. Some also expressed concerns about a loss of their present sense of place due to possible future municipality planning measures, such as building. Others preferred their forests to be protected by the county administration rather than having recreational activities increased on their land.

This study highlights the importance of integrating and making visible not only financial and legal rights in policy and public planning procedures, but also understandings of the social and relational aspects of property rights and the diverse feelings related to ownership and place held by private forest owners about public use and public planning interests. In particular, the study recommends planning authorities to recognise experiences and emotions related to sense of place and ownership feelings, which can enable them to understand why forest owners may resist or approve public interests. Also, by acknowledging the social and emotional aspects of private forest ownership, as well as the diversity of forest owners, the planning process might be made more legitimate from the viewpoint of the forest owners and this may more efficiently address conflicts of interests between stakeholders around land use issues.

5.4. Paper 4: Forest social values: the case of Dalasjö, Sweden

'Forest social values' has become recognised in research and at policy level as an umbrella term for describing the 'new', less material relationship

between people and the forest environment, often associated with recreational activities and urban fringe forests. The aim of this study was to explore how forest social values can be understood and applied in a rural setting by examining the local case of Dalasjö, a village in Vilhelmina municipality in the north of Sweden, where there was a planning process that aimed to protect the local forest social values.

In the Dalasjö case, the term 'forest social values' had been explicitly referred to in a local planning process regarding the conflict of interests between a forest owner company (Swedish Cellulosa AB) - which planned the final felling of parts of the nearby 'recreational forest area' - and the Dalasjö villagers' desire to retain its forest social values there. During the research, interviews were conducted with the aim of gathering information about the planning process that considered protection of forest social values. Two focus-group interviews were also conducted with eight villagers from Dalasjö. In addition, the national and local policy and planning context was reviewed regarding forest social values.

The study revealed that the villagers' context-specific and place-based understandings of forest social values derived from natural as well as social and emotional meanings, as well as from both individual and shared, collective experiences and perceptions. The adjacent rural forest area was valued for a wide range of meanings, for example those values that previously been more associated with urban fringe forests, such as its natural aesthetics, a place for recreation, meditation, promoting mental well-being, and for its being easily accessible, close to people's homes. These results suggest that forest social values may be more shaped by relationships to place than by geographical contexts alone. The forest social values were also an integral part of the individual villagers' lives and the village's history. In particular, some of the forest's social values were in part a product of collective local efforts and investments to build and maintain trails and infrastructure in the forest (running and skiing tracks, mountain bike tracks, a shooting range). The interviewees described caring about and having feelings of responsibility for the forest. Most of the interviewed villagers were concerned that both the physical forest and the more intangible social values of the forest would be at risk due to the planned felling.

Although several different planning proposals were discussed, the identified forest social values in Dalasjö proved difficult to translate into practice. The challenges around how to apply and protect the forest social values of Dalasjö thus drew attention to the differentiation between, on the one hand, generic considerations of forest social values at the policy

level, which were coupled with nature conservation during the planning process, and, on the other hand, the diverse locally place-based understandings of forest social values. The findings showed that, in policies and planning, the ambiguities in the definition of forest social values made it difficult to translate them into planning procedures in order to be able to protect local forest social values. In the end, the proposed plans for the forest to become a reserve did not take shape due to a political decision at the municipality level. At the same time, the forest owner did not pursue the final felling of the forest.

To sum up, by moving beyond the generic categories of forest social values and focusing on a particular location, the study emphasises the importance of context-dependent and place-specific interpretations of forest social values. This paper argues that forest social values cannot be understood only in relation to forests as physical entities or to their recreational functions. Instead, they are shaped by people's relationships to specific places, histories and social contexts. The case study of Dalasjö illustrates the challenges and problems that arise in policies and planning processes regarding forest social values when seeking to provide a conceptualisation that can be operationalised in relation to a particular forest and its multiple and specific, place-based social values. Bridging the gap between policy and planning, on the one hand, and place-based forest social values, on the other hand, requires dialogue and participatory processes.

5.5. Overview of the papers of the thesis

Paper	1	2	3	4
Title	Feeling at home from a distance? How geographical distance and non-residency shape sense of place among private forest owners	Same-same but different: Gendering forest ownership in Sweden	Experiences and emotions among private forest owners versus public interests: Why ownership matters	Forest social values: The case of Dalasjö, Sweden
Aim	To develop an understanding of how geographical distance and residency shape Swedish private resident and non-resident forest owners' relationships with their forest properties.	To examine and analyse how gender differences and practices in private forest ownership are being shaped and potentially reshaped or negotiated in the production-oriented setting of Sweden.	To investigate and analyse how Swedish private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding forest ownership manifest themselves in their relationship to public use and public planning interests for recreation and biodiversity on their land.	To explore how forest social values can be understood and applied in a rural setting in Sweden.
Research questions	• How do forest owners residing at varying geographical distances from their forestland construct their sense of place?	• How can we understand the gendering of private forest ownership in Sweden? • How might practices of gendering in private forest ownership potentially be (re)shaped or negotiated?	• What are forest owners' experiences and feelings related to the general public's use of their forests? • What are forest owners' contacts with and considerations regarding municipal and regional planning that provides recreation and protects biodiversity? • How are forest owners' relationships to public interests influenced by their experiences and emotions linked to private forest ownership?	• What are local people's understandings of forest social values? • How are forest social values potentially applied at the local level in a planning process?
Data sources	Individual semi-structured interviews	Individual semi-structured interviews	Individual semi-structured interviews	Focus-group discussions Informant interviews Documents

Paper	1	2	3	4
Key concepts	Sense of place	Gendering Practice Space and place	Property rights Ownership feelings Sense of place	Forest social values Place
Main contributions	• Enhances understandings of owners' diverse relationships with forest properties • Highlights how sense of place is socially constructed through various influences • Shows how social and ownership contexts shape feelings of closeness and distance • Demonstrates how geographical distance and non-residency may generate emotional closeness • Concludes that 'new' owners may form different kinds of relationships with their forest properties	• Examines the gendering of private forest ownership in a Swedish context • Analyses how gender in ownership is spatially linked to spaces, places, bodies and practices • Reveals both a varied and dichotomised understanding of the gendered ownership • Highlights how difference is both attributed and claimed as an act of resistance • Demonstrates owners negotiating the gendered ownership and the production discourse	• Provides a conceptual framework for analysing private forest ownership • Highlights the importance of forest ownership's subjective meanings in public interests • Demonstrates the role of a social contract of rights/responsibilities in public use • Exemplifies feelings of ownership and sense of place in public planning processes • Contributes to addressing conflicts of interest in land-use policy and planning	• Discusses forest social values in the context of local and national processes in Sweden • Focuses on a conflict between the protection of place-specific forest social values and forestry • Highlights villagers' diverse and context-specific, place-based forest social values • Reveals challenges in moving from conception to application of forest social values • Suggests considering 'place' in policy and planning of forest social values

6. Discussion and conclusions

This thesis is written in the context of changes in the relationship between people and forests. Such changes include an increased diversity in values, policies, practices and stakeholders related to forests, including the heterogenous group of private forest owners. Understanding this diversity has become increasingly important in policies, practices and planning processes related to forests. This thesis has highlighted the role and significance of social and emotional dimensions embedded in forests and forest ownership in Sweden. Theoretically, I have sought to bring social science and human geography perspectives to the field of forest research through the key concepts framing this thesis, i.e. place and space, sense of place, gendering and forest social values, as well as the developed conceptual framework of private forest ownership. Empirically, through the use of qualitative research methods and face-to-face interviews, I have aspired to give space to voices and perspectives of people who have a stake in the Swedish forest context. Interviews with 51 private forest owners owning forest properties in Vilhelmina municipality in the north and in Hässleholm municipality in the south as well as focus group interviews with villagers from Dalasjö, Vilhelmina municipality, have provided the basis for the empirical studies.

My work has addressed four separate research questions, which have been answered in four peer-reviewed articles. The results gathered in the four enquiries and papers are summarised in Chapter 5. In this final chapter, I present, discuss and synthesise these results in relation to the research questions and the overall aim of the thesis. I examine some common themes that have emerged across the papers, and draw some linkages to the starting point of the thesis, concerning changes in the Swedish forest context. I round off the chapter with some concluding remarks and provide suggestions for future research.

6.1. Diversity in private forest ownership: beyond stereotypes

Private forest ownership in Sweden has been identified as increasingly diversified. This thesis' qualitative approach has provided rich data from interviews conducted with a variety of private forest owners (see Appendix I), which displayed the socio-spatial diversity within the Swedish forest owner corps. Together with the concepts employed, it has been possible to draw out some similarities but also variances and nuances in the social

and emotional dimensions related to geographical distance and non-residency, gender differences and practices, and private forest ownership linked to public interests (Research questions 1, 2 and 3). On the subject of the 'new' types of forest owners (i.e. non-resident and female forest owners), the diverse results raised some queries. These concerned the inside/outside dichotomy that has been associated with resident/non-resident forest owners as well as the seemingly rigid and stereotypical division of women and men in the gendered forest ownership displayed in research (Research questions 1 and 2). These results are discussed below.

Drawing on the concept of 'sense of place', the findings from the interviews demonstrated how geographical distance and residency shape resident and non-resident forest owners' relationships to their properties in diverse and complex ways (Research question 1). It was possible to recognise that sense of place was socially constructed in manifold ways over time, space and place. Owners' sense of place was formed not only by geographical distance or residency but also by a range of personal experiences, social contexts and interactions, as well as wider social processes (cf. Tuan 1977; Massey 1991, 2005; Stokowski 2008). For many owners, their sense of place was often associated with, and a product of, a sense of time (history, traditions, memories, continuity), a sense of home (family, childhood, community interactions, belonging) and a sense of commitment (caring, involvement, responsibilities, identity as a custodian or caretaker). Grounded in the owners' social and ownership context, and regardless of residential status or geographical distance, the forest owners could therefore develop a sense of place based on emotional closeness, but also feelings of distance, in relation to their forest properties. Thus, the results revealed that geographical distances and (non-)residency did not solely or necessarily explain or determine forest owners' experiences and feelings of distance from, or closeness to, their forest properties.

The study supports the notion that absence or geographical distance 'can make the heart grow fonder' (Tuan 1977:50), and that mobility can bridge distances and therefore enable people–place relationships (Gustafson 2006; Massey 2005). While some forest owners felt detached from their properties due to absence and geographical distance, the results showed that some non-resident owners residing at a distance could still feel a sense of belonging and of feeling at home at their property. In fact, non-resident owners' mobility and access to houses on their property were important for their relationships to their properties. Thus, non-resident forest owners with houses converted to second homes on their forest properties (which sometimes also applied to resident forest owners living in

the same municipality but not on their properties) often demonstrated a sense of place developed from social relations and long-term experiences at the location of their forest property, similar to patterns identified in second-home research (cf. Stedman 2006). In the same way as second homes, the properties sometimes offered non-resident owners an 'enduring home' in a mobile world, even sometimes extending between generations of owners, as people relocated their permanent residence across the life course (Jaakson 1986; Williams & van Patten 2006; Williams & Patterson 2008). In this respect, it is possible to draw parallels with a Swedish study on place attachment (Westin & Holm 2018), which found that almost half of all non-resident forest owners who changed their permanent place of residence during a five-year period had moved to the municipality where their forestland was located. To speculate, some of the non-resident owners interviewed in this thesis may have kept their forest property as a possible avenue for them to return and settle in the place where they felt emotionally at home (cf. van Dijk 2007).

Overall, the findings indicate a perspective on sense of place that is not bounded by physical geography or insider/outsider distinctions but recognises that people–place ties are context-specific and at the same time dynamic and relational, co-constituted with mobility as people move through life and across social and geographical contexts (cf. Devine-Wright et al. 2020; Gustafson 2009; Kaltenborn & Williams 2002; Massey 1991, 2005; Raymond et al. 2021). There is thus no single sense of place, but a range of different ones (cf. Massey 1991). The results modify the presumptions of the 'early' sense-of-place literature, which asserted that feelings of closeness require everyday physical proximity and long-term residency (Relph 1976). They also indicate that there are subjective experiences of distance, and that these include not only spatial distances, but also social and temporal distances that can shape forest owners' relationships to their properties (cf. Simandan 2016, 2020). Consquently, concerns within forest ownership research regarding non-residents' weakening geographical and detached emotional ties to forest properties could be discussed in light of these findings. This is likely to reveal that it is not inevitable for non-resident owners to have weaker relationships, feelings and sense of place in relation to their properties than resident owners. However, since the focus of this thesis is on sense of place, it cannot distinguish whether behaviour or owners' forest management activities have been influenced by either geographical distance or non-residency. I suggest that, in comparison to resident owners, non-resident owners may have a sense of place formed through meanings and relationships linked to their forest property other than residency, such as being financially independent of their forest property and/or being a

second-home owner. Rather than generalising forest owners' relationships to their properties in terms of geographical distance or (non-)residency, the results suggest that both resident and non-resident owners should be understood as being owners or caretakers of places, rather than simply landholders owning trees. Recent findings from the US about non-resident landowners, which revealed strong feelings of place attachment and a heightened land stewardship, support these results (cf. Lopez 2024).

Turning to research question 2, on the gendering of forest ownership, in the same vein as the study on sense of place above, this study demonstrates that private forest ownership is not always rigid or uniformly gendered but is in fact continuously shaped through socially contested and evolving practices. Rather than the more fixed category of 'gender' usually discussed in research, the verb 'gendering' emphasises the ongoing social practices of 'doing' gender, gender differences and inequalities in the interaction with space and place (cf. Bacchi 2017; Gherardi 2009; Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Nentwich & Kelan 2013; Valentine 2007). With its socio-spatial focus, the concept of 'gendering' contributes in a new way to the gender and forest research field in exploring the socio-spatial interconnections of gender/practices/space in forest ownership.

Thus, the analysis of how gender differences and practices in forest ownership are being shaped and potentially reshaped or negotiated demonstrated mixed results. In line with previous, mostly quantitative studies in Sweden (Eriksson 2018; Lidestav & Berg Lejon 2013; Umearus 2019), the gendered nature of forest ownership was identified as producing different experiences, inequalities and power relations between female and male owners. The analysis underlined how the gendering of activities, experiences, expectations, and forest values was constructed by emphasising differences through a complementary or dichotomy-related understanding of gender, and by associating specific bodies (women/men) with specific spaces (forest/household), tasks (manual forest labour/domestic labour), characteristics (strong/caring), and perspectives (economic/ecological). Persistent, normative and institutionalised differences reinforced the male forest owner as the primary and legitimate subject of forest ownership, while women were constructed as 'different', 'passive' and with 'soft' values in the forest context. As a result, so-called female and male spaces and places were constructed in relation to forest ownership, which explains why some women said that they could feel 'out of place' in their forest ownership (cf. Cresswell 2015). With these results in mind, the issue that many forest owners did not recognise gendering practices as having any significance in their ownership required further discussion. From a

perspective of gendering practices, this apparent 'gender neutrality' may be interpreted as a reflection of institutionalised practices that make gendered inequalities invisible, while they continue to shape forest ownership. Nonetheless, the results also established deviations from the standard perception of the gendered forest ownership in that some women took a leading and active role in forest ownership and forest management activities. Also, it was possible to identify some instability and potential changes in the results, which showed that some women *claimed* 'differences', giving more consideration to environmental and recreational values as a form of resistance to the conventional production-oriented forestry rationales and managements of forests. At the same time, these kinds of practices were *attributed* by some men as being 'different' and 'innovative' in a positive way. Female owners thus appeared to be freer than men to negotiate, resist or 'redo' the normative practices and values of forest ownership.

These outcomes reflect the insight that 'the doer' of practices, here the forest owner, was able to take up other positions, challenge and renegotiate preconceived ideas and conduct, and step outside of the socio-spatially constructed gendered spaces of forest ownership (cf. Bacchi & Eveline 2009; Valentine 2007). These new or alternative practices resisted the conventional production-oriented forestry discourse of Sweden, and the closely related dominant masculinities (cf. Andersson et al. 2018; Brandt & Haugen 2005a). The findings also highlight the continuum of perceptions and experiences in relation to forest ownership among not only women but also men. The findings that some men considered women who emphasised environmental and recreational meanings in their forest ownership in a positive light stands in contrast to the more usual assumptions that forest owners in the Swedish context who prioritise values other than the economic – mostly equating to women – appear to others as irrational or ignorant (Holmgren & Arora-Jonsson 2015).

6.2. Ownership and place matters

In this thesis, the importance of the social and emotional dimensions of place and ownership in the forest context have been highlighted. The empirical studies exploring the perspectives of private forest owners on public interests (Research question 3) and those of the Dalasjö villagers living adjacent to a rural forest (Research question 4) demonstrated how ownership feelings, sense of place and place-based social values had shaped not only the individual interviewees but also public–private relationships. In particular, the thesis suggests that the overarching property rights

model in private forest ownership is insufficient to explain people's relationships, decisions and behaviour in relation to forests. For example, the findings from both studies suggested that the social and emotional dimensions of ownership and place can lead to place-protective feelings and possessiveness. These can potentially influence decision-making processes among private forest owners concerning possible conflicting interests, such as public use and public planning processes on private forestland. Also, the Dalasjö case showed how concerns related to locally defined forest social values contributed to resistance to a planned final felling in the nearby forest.

In fact, from the interviews, I observed that both owners with formal ownership and villagers without formal ownership could share comparable perceptions, experiences and feelings about private forest ownership and forest social values. Both groups often saw the forests and forest properties as special places contributing to their well-being, as well as sometimes having concerns about public or forest planning processes. Many of the interviewed private forest owners and the villagers of Dalasjö were inclined to care about, protect and preserve the meanings and values of 'their' particular forests or properties, for which they felt responsible and in which they had invested themselves (cf. Andabaka et al. 2021; Leahy & Lyons 2023).

An understanding that tensions can be driven by emotional and social sentiments interrelated with places in similar ways for both owners and the public, such as local communities, could assist in moving beyond the dichotomy of public interests versus private ownership. It could thus bridge what is usually understood as the public–private divide amid controversies in planning issues (cf. Cheng et al. 2003). Consequently, the two studies show that improving knowledge about the social and emotional dimensions of forests and private forest ownership, and integrating the concept of place and the conceptual framework of private forest ownership suggested here into analyses, policies and planning procedures, can benefit policymakers and planners by helping them to understand and address the reasons for owners' and local communities' concerns and conflicts of interest in land-use planning processes.

The three-dimensional conceptual framework developed to investigate how private forest owners' experiences and emotions regarding private forest ownership manifest in their relationship to public use and public planning interests on their land (Research question 3) provided an inclusive description of the multiple relationships and emotions that private landowners hold in relation to their forests (Beckley et al. 2025). This

framework incorporates a focus on the relational and social nature of *property rights*, the subjective feelings connected to ownership (*ownership feelings*) and the location of the property (*a sense of place*). In the Swedish context, the integration of these three concepts within the analysis offered more comprehensive explanations than the usual studies on forest ownership, which have focused on the aspects of property rights associated with legal and financial rights (cf. Sténs & Sandström 2013; 2014).

The wide range of responses in the interviews to questions about public planning interests – from ambivalent to clearly affirmative to unconvinced – suggests that the forest owners' experiences and emotions in relation to their forest ownership and public planning interests involved both complexity and some flexibility. This was manifested in the fact that many of the owners who were ambivalent about public planning processes on their land stated that they would have liked to have received more information or wanted to discuss the issue more before deciding how to answer.

Moreover, the geographical differences detected – in which the owners in densely populated Hässleholm were particularly hesitant about public use or municipal planning on their forestland – have similarly been noted in a recent study about private forest owners in the nearby southwestern corner of Skåne. As in this thesis, that study identified owners' place attachment as part of the explanation for their lack of support for the development of new outdoor recreational opportunities (Johansson & Beery 2023).

In relation to research question 4 – asking how forest social values, as part of public interests in forests, should be understood and applied in a rural setting – the addition of the concept of 'place' to the investigation in the case study of Dalasjö emphasised forest social values as context-dependent, place-specific and socially shared (cf. Kenter et al. 2015; McIntyre et al. 2008; Seymore et al. 2010). The Dalasjö case drew attention to uncertainties and challenges in how to translate and apply local understandings and experiences of forest social values in policy and planning processes in order to protect them. The planning process was found to focus overmuch on nature conservation, for several possible reasons. First, social values are not in themselves an aim of the Swedish Forestry Act but are included in the overall environmental aim concerning the protection of biodiversity, which may be partly responsible for the confusion of social values with nature conservation. It could also be that forest social values were perceived as intangible and more difficult to take

into account than the physical values of nature (cf. Agnoletti 2008). In addition, the generic (or held) values of forest social values may have supplied the basis for policy goals, but planning processes require specific information, which only a place approach (or an assigned values approach) can provide (cf. Brown et al. 2020; Kangas et al. 2008). Thus, the findings provide a recognition of the tensions between, on the one hand, generic and issue-based approaches and, on the other, contextual and place-based planning and policy approaches (cf. Agnoletti 2008; Gundersen & Mäkinen 2009; Jones et al. 2016; Schroeder 2013). Here, it is also vital to bear in mind that, according to the literature, place-based forest social values are concerned not only with the use-values of forests but also with certain meanings of places, around which place-based communities can unite, and which are based on the feelings emerging out of context-specific interactions and experiences at a particular place (Jones et al. 2016; Schroeder 2013).

6.3. Social dimensions and changes in forest ownership

A pronounced overall finding from this thesis concern how socially derived relationships, contexts and processes were prominent in the explanations and understandings related to the research questions. In particular, family connections to the forest owners' properties and the family as a social group stood out as social factors shaping private forest ownership. I identify the following interrelated and intertwined socially derived aspects. First, at the core, was the inherited forest ownership, supported by the point that most of the interviewed forest owners (irrespective of whether they were resident, non-resident, woman or man) had acquired their forestland from a family member through inheritance, gift or by buying it. Inherited forest ownership is a prominent form of private forest ownership in Sweden (Lidestav 2010; Lidestav & Westin 2023). Second, the place of the property often held long-term social significance for the owners and their family. Third, there were intergenerational linkages of ownership of forests, sometimes over several generations. Fourth, the socialisation processes into forest ownership between the generations of owners in a family included social interactions and practices, and the potential transfer of a sense of place, knowledge and gendering practices related to the property.

The references to family signify that, historically, the family has been the foundation of the ways in which land has been controlled and managed in rural Sweden, often combining farming with forestry. As a matter of fact,

the concept of 'family' reflects the way in which Swedish and international forest research often refers to private forest owners as 'family forest owners', which implies that the family as a collective unit is where decision-making and management regarding the forest property takes place (Andrejczyk et al. 2016; Bjärstig & Sténs 2018; Danley et al. 2021; Lidestav 2010; Markowski-Lindsay et al. 2020; Snyder et al. 2020). Family forest owners are presumed to have a strong interest in keeping the forestland within the family, not only as a 'family business' linked to occupation and livelihood but also as part of the 'family's heritage', socially, culturally, historically and emotionally (cf. Bjärstig & Sténs 2018; Creighton et al. 2016; Grubbström 2011; Lind-Riehl 2015; Markowski-Lindsay et al. 2016). Historically, forest property and forest ownership have been held to have high social importance. This has ensured that forest owners are socialised into a perspective beyond the lifespan of a single generation into a broader social entity bridging several generations of family members (cf. Bliss & Martin 1989). The results of this study illustrate these findings and support the literature in which private forest ownership is referred to as 'custodianship' or 'stewardship'. Hence, the intergenerational linkages can arouse feelings of ownership, social responsibility, long-term thinking and an ethics of 'taking care of' the property in order to ensure continuity from previous generations to future generations (Andrejczyk et al. 2016; Church & Ravenscroft 2008; Lidestav 2010; Lähdesmäki & Matilainen 2014; Urquhart et. al. 2012). These results correspond to what Relph (1976) refers to as 'fields of care', i.e. the places to which people are most attached and for which they feel responsibility.

However, as the findings have shown, the socio-spatial relations of forest owners are not only stretched out across time, but also increasingly extended over space and geographical distance (cf. Massey 1994, 2005; Murray et al. 2019). In spite of the established and durable social influences relating to family and intergenerational socialisation processes, the findings suggest that some changes are appearing. The results indicate that, overall, in comparison to previous generations, 'new' generations of owners were likely to have dissimilar relationships with their properties and experience forest ownership differently (cf. Weiss et al. 2019). Thus, the findings suggest that intergenerational socialisation processes were not always at play at all times, sometimes being loosened up or removed due to societal changes, changing values, generational shifts and the growing diversity among the corps of forest owners. There were owners who had acquired new or different kinds of meanings to and relationships with their properties, as well as gendering practices that differed from those of previous generations of owners. In relation to sense of place, some forest owners stated that the present generation of owners' sense of

place was more shaped by an appreciation of the social and natural environments of their properties (such as it being a place for recreation) than that of previous generations, who had been more reliant upon their property's economic opportunities (farming and forestry). Current owners suggested that former owners had had a more 'functional attachment' to their properties than themselves (cf. Cross et al. 2011; Eaton et al. 2019). These changes were connected to the fact that, in general, the current generation of owners considered themselves less economically dependent upon their forest property than previous generations, and that they had been less thoroughly socialised into forest ownership as an occupation. Amongst other factors, they had quite different lifestyles and higher education than previous generations (cf. Haugen et al. 2016). Accordingly, the location of the family property was more rarely the 'new' generations of owners' main workplace or the basis for their income, and at times it was not their permanent place of residence either.

To conclude from above, forest owners' – including non-resident owners' – sense of place and relationships to their forest properties may not have become 'weaker' or 'stronger', and neither should 'new' owners, such as female owners, necessarily be interpreted as 'different', 'non-traditional' or 'new'. In fact, their sense of place or gendering practices may be in the process of becoming renegotiated or reconstituted along with societal changes, thus constructing *other* senses of place and *other* gendering practices (cf. Cheshire et al. 2013; Stokowski 2008).

With respect to the above discussion on 'family forest owners', I suggest that some of the changes could be linked to the alterations in the socio-spatial context and relations of 'family forest owners' that have taken place over the last few decades. Adaptations are likely to have occurred with societal changes, reconstructing the meanings and practices of 'family' in the forest ownership context. The normative ideas and expectations about what a family and its individual members should or should not do 'to take care of' the property are likely to change when the family unit is no longer dependent upon the forest property for their day-to-day work, livelihood or residence. However, as this thesis has suggested, and other studies have also implied, regardless of ownership context, a sense of place and feelings for the property linked to 'heritage' seem to remain consistent and part of the intergenerational socialisation processes, suggesting that forest ownership may remain important to ensure the continuity of the inherited property as part of the family (cf. Grubbström 2011; Staal Wästerlund 2018.) As a result, emotional ties may not always require connections to work or livelihood as part of forest ownership (cf. Creighton et al. 2016).

The question may therefore be asked: does the property and the forest ownership represent more of a link to 'family heritage' and less of a place for the 'family business'? And could this constitute a potential rupture emerging in the concept of 'family forest owners' between 'family' (with an emphasis on heritage) and 'forest' (with an emphasis on business)? This implies that new generations of forest owners might have access to a broadened repertoire and more individualistic choices to choose a life and values outside of the conventional private forest ownership (cf. Grubbström & Eriksson 2018). From this thesis' results, it seems that women, who were already considered 'different' in forest ownership, had a wider set of choices in how to practise their forest ownership than men. These findings are consistent with conclusions from a recent Finnish study, which shows that female forest owners' objectives are more diverse than those of men (Kuhlman et al. 2023).

6.4. From production to other meanings and relationships?

Given the shifting and diversifying context of the Swedish forest context, this research has contributed to the emphasis on values and meanings beyond production in land use in line with the assumptions of 'post-productivism' and 'multifunctionality'. Dimensions other than economic or legal rights in private forest ownership, such as sense of place and ownership feelings, manifested themselves in the interviewed forest owners' relationships to public use and public planning for recreation and biodiversity on their land (Paper 3). In spite of challenges related to their conceptualisation and application, forest social values were recognised in policy and planning as well as being identified by villagers in the case of Dalasjö (Paper 4). The forest owners' sense of place appeared to be shaped less by 'functional attachments' than they had previously been, such as being less dependent upon incomes from forestry, and more by the appreciation of the social and natural environments of their properties (Paper 1). Also, non-resident owners sometimes identified themselves more as second-home owners than as forest owners (Paper 1). There were some potential moves by women, or those who identified with femininity, to renegotiate or resist the hegemonic forestry discourse and the closely related production-oriented masculinities (Paper 2). Some emerging tensions between the historically interlocked relationship between forest spaces and the space of forestry was indicated. In addition, individual forest owners' relationships, meanings and practices were liable to change over time and space, through changes in social and ownership contexts, the place of the property, and broader societal processes (Papers 1 and 3).

In relation to private forest ownership, these findings are in line with a range of studies which, over the years, have established that forest owners in Sweden have multiple, sometimes equally strong, objectives and values in relation to their forest properties, and, not seldom, owners' social and emotional values may be more important than economic gain (Hugosson & Ingemarsson 2004; Lidestav & Westin 2023; Karlsson 2007; Olofsson & Jakobsson 2023; Richnau et al. 2013). Thus, the findings from this thesis indicate a potential basis for change in relationships, meanings, and practices in private forest ownership. In 21st-century Sweden, then, is it possible to conclude that private forest owners holding a wider range of relationships to their forest properties and their forest ownership therefore have more choices than previously? Do they keep their properties due to a sense of place that is less based on 'functional attachment', and do they practise more alternative forms of forest ownership beyond a focus on production?

Statistics from research and official sources, however, suggest a complex picture. Although it has been established that harvesting intensity is higher on company-owned forestland than on private individual forest owners' land (Lidestav et al. 2017), private owners have added to the overall level of final felling of forests in Sweden, which has increased since the 1990's and reached all-time-high levels in the early 2020s[11] (Haugen et al. 2016; Swedish Forest Agency 2025a). Indeed, research has found that private forest owners as a group have a strong focus on production, and they have a higher preference for production-oriented forest practices than the general Swedish population (Danley et al. 2021; Lidestav et al. 2017; Nordén et al. 2017). Ecological values have also been found to be stronger among the general public as compared to private forest owners (Eriksson 2012).

The expected changes in forest management, with its increased proportions of 'new' non-resident and female forest owners, have so far not affected the Swedish forest industry's production volumes (Haugen et al. 2016; Lidestav et al. 2017). More specifically, it has been established that non-resident and urban owners' forest management activities are not necessarily lower than or can reach almost the same level as those of resident owners (Eriksson & Fries 2020; Lidestav et al. 2017). In fact, non-resident owners with long geographical distances to their properties, especially northern owners living at greater distances, more often than other owners tend to choose a management strategy linked to timber

[11] With the exception of 2005 and 2006 due to storms Gudrun and Per, the years 2021 and 2022 have statistically reached the highest ever levels of felling of forests in Sweden (about 96 million cubic metres) (Swedish Forest Agency 2025a).

production, which is a strategy that is often outsourced by forest owners in Sweden (Eggers et al. 2014). In this regard, the forestry industry has intentionally adapted to the increasing distances between owners and forests in their business strategies (Andersson et al. 2020; Andersson & Keskitalo 2021). Given this, private forest owners become reliant upon professional foresters and, as research has pointed out, their values differ from those of owners because their primary focus is on the commercial aspects of forests (Kindstrand et al. 2008; Löfmarck et al. 2017).

Official statistics also reveal that women as a group have not increased proportionally to men since 1999: women constituted in 2024 39% of all forest owners, and men 61% (Swedish Forest Agency 2025b). In the Swedish case, this levelling off in the rise of female ownership may mean that female forest owners' values and preferences have not gathered more weight, as some of the forest owner literature had anticipated (cf. Follo et al. 2018; Nordlund & Westin 2011). Also, men tend to own larger pieces of forestland than previously in Sweden: on average almost twice the size of women's holdings (40 vs 25 ha) (Swedish Forest Agency 2025c). Research has found that forest property size is the most important factor in determining the choice of forest management strategy in Sweden (Eggers et al. 2014). Owners of larger properties more frequently choose a more production-oriented management strategy than owners of small properties (Ibid). These developments suggest a continuation of the prevailing production-oriented practices linked to assumptions about certain notions of masculinities and the gendered forest ownership (cf. Andersson et al. 2018; Andersson & Lidestav 2016; Holmgren & Aurora-Jonsson 2015; Ville et al. 2023).

Overall, then, it seems uncertain whether 'new' forest owner groups have provided the opportunities for actual changes in the Swedish forest context hypothesised in forest research (cf. Vainio & Paloniemi 2012; Westin et al. 2017). In fact, with the continuously high industrial production and production interests, 'productivism' continues to govern the rural forest context, including the areas of policy, planning and practice (cf. Almstedt et al. 2014; Andersson & Keskitalo 2018; Brouder et al. 2015; Holmgren & Arora-Jonsson 2015; Laszlo Ambjörnsson et al. 2016; Mårald et al. 2017). In line with human geography studies, this implies that post-productivist changes may emerge more in ideas and policies than in actual practice (Almstedt et al. 2014). Also, the concept of multifunctionality has proved challenging to apply to the Swedish context because, in practice, rural forest areas tend to be more used as industrial sites for resource production rather than as places for co-existing multiple uses, where the entire range

of values in forests would be recognised and protected (cf. Brouder et al. 2015; McCarthy 2005; Woods 2011; Zhang et al. 2022).

In general terms, one could therefore conclude that there is a divergence between the increased diversity among the forest owners and their values on the one hand, and what appears to be their widely held focus on production on the other hand. This divergence could point to possible gaps and shortcomings in the policy and management context of forests. The 'biodiversity protection gap on family-owned forests' identified by Danley et al. (2021:10) suggests that the failure to achieve environmental goals in Sweden is a result of the deregulated forestry policy model of 'freedom with responsibility', and the accompanying voluntarism in how to manage privately owned forests as a means of achieving forest policies. Studies have underlined that, while the commercial market provides services and economic rewards to private forest owners for supporting production goals, the support and advice structures, service provision, communications from the authorities and incentives required to address other values, such as the protection of forests and biodiversity, are inadequate or reliant upon the short-term commercial perspectives of forest companies and contractors (Danley et al. 2021; Löfmarck et al. 2017; Lidestav & Westin 2023). Also, in line with the findings presented in this thesis about challenges related to the translation of local forest social values in the planning process in the Dalasjö case, other Swedish research has concluded that forest social values are marginal in policies in comparison to environmental and, in particular, production values (Bjärstig & Kvastegård 2016; Widman & Bjärstig 2017).

As this thesis' results show, forest ownership is multifaceted and the reasons for the divergences may therefore be that forest ownership decisions are complex, entailing many considerations (including those related to the conceptual framework of private forest ownership, i.e. property rights, sense of place, ownership feelings), while simultaneously needing to combine different and conflicting values and objectives, such as national policies and market demands (cf. Deuffic et al. 2018; Eriksson 2012; Lawrence et al. 2020; Lind-Riehl et al. 2015; Markowski-Lindsay et al. 2016; Westin et al. 2023). This may lead to personal preferences, internal values and emotions having less influence, and social pressures and external, structural factors, such as social, political and economic aspects, having more influence (Deuffic et al. 2018; Olofsson & Jakobsson 2023).

However, Swedish studies have previously found that individual owners are able to balance the potential conflicts of interest regarding different forest values, such as achieving both strong production and strong eco-

logical values on their land (cf. Eriksson 2012; Nordin & Westin 2011). So, might the persistent focus on production among private forest owners signify that owners' social and emotional relationships to their property do not necessarily conflict with the pursuit of production goals? Along similar lines, the notion of 'taking care of' forest properties has long been recognised in Sweden as being closely linked to norms of forest management productivity for coming generations of owners (Löfmarck et al. 2017).

This point prompts a discussion on the subject of 'family forest owners' and the possible split I elaborated on earlier between 'family' (with an emphasis on heritage) and 'forest' (with an emphasis on business), which may have taken place over the last few decades. Practising 'business' separately from 'heritage' indicates - independent of owner category - for new generations of forest owners a more individualised approach in how to 'take care of' forestland. On the one hand, it may present options for owners to practice their forest ownership beyond a focus on production. On the other hand, could this also mean for some owners that the notion of ensuring long-term productivity and 'business' advantages of the forestland for future generations increasingly carries less weight in decision-making processes than the imperative to serve current forest owners' more short-term financial needs or goals? (cf. Deuffic et al. 2018).

6.5. Relevance of this research

From the specific sample examined in this thesis, it is not possible to make universal generalisations. Rather, the aim has been to provide illustrations and to expand theoretical and empirical understandings of the phenomena under investigation. The understandings developed through this analysis may then be transferable and generalised in accordance with the principles of theoretical generalisation. In addition, because the intention was for the understandings to be well rooted empirically, the findings and interpretations may be observed in and potentially applied to other places and contexts (cf. Baxter 2010; Bradshaw & Stratford 2010; Lewis & Ritchie 2003). Thus, although the study was carried out in the Swedish context with its distinct historical, social, economic and political context, I maintain that aspects of these findings may be of relevance beyond the sample and the specific context of this research, including in the forest regions of Northern Europe and North America.

Regarding the relevance of the research questions and results to current scientific understandings, the overall issues that were significant at the

outset of the research – the social and emotional dimensions of forests and forest ownership – are no less relevant today. While the data was collected in 2013 (Paper 4) and 2015 (Papers 1, 2 and 3), and the articles constituting the thesis were published between 2018 and 2020, current theoretical and empirical research in these topic areas is still addressing broadly similar issues. Indeed, several key articles in this area of research have used the findings presented in this thesis as a background to discuss and support their own work. Examples include research from the US on emotional connections to forests in relation to conservation intentions among male and female forest landowners (Mook et al. 2022), as well as on non-residential landowners' stewardship (Lopez et al. 2024). A study in Finland about gender differences among forest owners (Kuhlman et al. 2023) has referred to the results of this thesis, as has research in southern Sweden on private forest owners' perspectives on environmental values (Olofsson & Jakobsson 2023) and on social values, place attachment and public access (Johansson & Beery 2023). Furthermore, the Canadian researcher Thomas M. Beckley describes the 'small and growing literature in [the] area' of theorising emotional attachments to forestland in the context of forest land ownership (Beckley 2025: 1295), referring to just two studies in the field, of which one is Paper 3 of this thesis.

Thus, just as this thesis developed out of previous research, the results it presents in the field of forests and forest ownership have provided some of the context and relevance for subsequent studies. Some of these recent studies have been included and referred to in the Discussion.

In addition, although there have been substantial societal changes over the past few years due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing war in Ukraine, economic fluctuations, as well as some changes in policies and conditions related to forests, the overall contextual background for forests and forest ownership in Sweden is broadly comparable to the way it was at the start of these studies. Specifically, the challenges of balancing diverse stakeholders' values and demands regarding forests persist. This is true even in the face of the ever-increasing global challenges of climate change and loss of biodiversity, and their increasing political salience.

6.6. Concluding remarks and future research

From the studies conducted for this thesis, I have arrived at the following overall conclusions. In connection with these, I provide suggestions for some future research topics.

First, the thesis has provided an understanding that forests and forest properties are not only about forests and trees, but also about social and emotional relationships, meanings, and values. The social contexts, interactions and processes embedded in forests and forest ownership and beyond, from family and community relationships to societal processes, proved to be more critical in the analyses and findings than I had expected at the outset of this research process.

Highlighting these social aspects contributed to exposing differences and inequalities, as well as similarities, while also recognising potential changes in the socio-spatial relationships and meanings of the forest context (cf. Rönnlund & Tollefsen 2016). Through recognising the phenomena and understandings in this thesis as socially created and shaped, it became possible to examine and expose variations as well as their sometimes taken-for-granted nature. In this respect, the social constructionist epistemological approach taken in the thesis contributed to pointing out that the social relationships, meanings, values and practices studied are produced within historically contingent and geographically specific contexts. They can therefore also potentially be renegotiated and changed over time and space/place in different ways. As the human geographer Tim Cresswell has written; 'To say something is socially constructed is to say that it is within human power to change it' (2015:46).

In light of the discussion above about 'family forest owners', 'heritage', 'new' generations of forest owners, and the notion of 'taking care of' the forest, future inquiries could be carried out specifically to address social and emotional dimensions connected to changes in private forest ownership and decision-making regarding forest properties. For example, what is the role of co-ownership – which connects multiple family members, who may live geographically distant from each other – in influencing decision making about their forest property?

Related to the above, although sense of place may, in different ways, induce place-protective behaviour, its potential role in contributing to the

protection of forest environments (Paper 3) merits further investigation (cf. Lopez et al. 2024; Mook et al. 2022; Olofsson & Jakobsson 2023).

Moreover, an under-researched group of private forest owners are those who were sometimes referred to in the interviews as 'outsiders' with no previous personal or family connection to the location of the property before they became forest owners. In the north of Sweden, some of these owners were sometimes depicted as men who had acquired large forest properties in various places as an economic investment, which often involved felling large areas of forest early in their ownership. They were referred to, with a double meaning, as 'klippare' in Swedish, i.e. 'cutter' or 'profiteer'. As mentioned above, forest owners of larger properties more often prefer a production-oriented management strategy (Eggers et al. 2014). Research could investigate how these owners' social and ownership contexts influence and shape their experiences and practices related to their forest properties.

Second, the thesis has provided an analysis that exposes diversity and nuances in relation to the research questions investigated, making it possible to move beyond and discuss some of the distinctions and differences that are often simplified as being dichotomous. In particular, the thesis has demonstrated that it is important not only to take into account the diversity within the corps of private forest owners, but also to shed some refined light on this heterogeneity, as well as the plural and intersecting ways in which forest ownership is shaped and forest owners shape their forest ownership. In line with the human geography perspectives of this thesis', private forest ownership can be seen as a mixed product of both local and broader contexts and processes related to the location of the property and to the owners (cf. Massey 1991; Stokowski 2008). When we recognise that private forest ownership is dynamic, complex and subject to reconstruction over time and space, it becomes questionable to claim that there are such things as 'typical' or 'atypical' forest owners, or to make conclusive generalisations about 'new' types or 'new' generations of owners. The findings from this thesis reflect research exploring the heterogeneous private forest ownership, which increasingly pays attention to the diversity within forest owner groups, such as in relation to non-resident or absentee forest owners (Sorice et al. 2018; Fairchild et al. 2022), so called 'passive' forest owner types (Matilainen & Lähdesmäki 2023), and women as forest owners (Butler et al. 2017; Kuhlman et al. 2022).

This diversity exposes both complexities and challenges. As a result, for policymakers and others it may be perceived as being 'messy' and difficult

to draw straightforward conclusions. It also mirrors the wide range of subjective perceptions and experiences examined in this thesis, which are not easily generalisable or quantifiable, but they nonetheless comprise a significant proportion of people's perceived and experienced realities. By taking this diversity, including intersectionality, into consideration, some of the stereotyping and dichotomising may be reduced. These insights need to be taken seriously into account not only in research but also in policy, planning and practice, to be able to more fully reflect forest owners' diverse social and emotional circumstances, contexts and geographies (cf. Weiss et al. 2019).

Thus, this thesis supports the call for a more holistic and integrated mode of approaching the forest context and forest ownership in policy, planning and practice, as well as in research. By taking such a holistic approach, future qualitative research could further delve into the issues of the socio-spatial context of private forest ownership. For example, it could build on and develop a more holistic understanding of how the conceptual readings of this thesis interrelate and intersect, both analytically and empirically. For example, further exploring the inter-connections and divergences among the concepts of sense of place, ownership feelings and place-based forests social values may provide enriched insights into not only their analytical linkages and potentials but also their relationships to empirical questions, such as how they contribute to people's well-being in the forest context (cf. Rajala & Sorice 2021). In addition, future studies could explore in greater depth the role played by context, given the geographical differences between Vilhelmina and the more densely populated Hässleholm, in relation to public use and public planning interests.

Third, from this research I conclude that the increased application of a place approach involving considerations of people's feelings related to forests and forest ownership could provide a basis for a more comprehensive and involved way to inform policy and planning about how to cater for and balance different private and public stakeholders' interests and values. In line with this thesis, place-based information offers opportunities to provide more relevant understandings of private forest ownership as well as forest social values, and their importance at particular locations and during conflicts of interests related to forests. Place should be considered as a dynamic socio-spatial process, which is shaped over time by social and geographical interactions and changes (Massey 1991, 2005; Stokowski 2008).

A place-based approach requires a focus on place politics. These take forests into account as part of the social and political processes and ideas

about the use and control of land, while also considering how they can be politically contested (Yung et al. 2003). Emphasising 'place' provides insights into who holds more social power and responsibility for the relationships and practices in forests, such as private forest owners or policy and planning authorities, as well as who can determine other people's place-based relationships with and meanings of forests (cf. Massey 2005). Consequently, the incorporation of a place-based approach facilitates the identification of different perspectives and people, who can then become acknowledged and incorporated into policy and planning processes. It is, for example, necessary to recognise that there are many different, or other, 'stories' co-existing at the same time (Massey 2005). These are stories reflecting the fact that there are relationships and meanings other than the instrumental or utilitarian linked to forests, and it is important to make these visible and legitimate if the reasons for tensions or conflicts related to particular forests are to be addressed (cf. Buijs & Lawrence 2013). Thus, it is crucial in both public and forest planning to consider the local level, such as local circumstances and local people's place-based forest social values. For this purpose, this thesis' conceptual understandings and empirical results can be useful, together with place-based participatory and collaborative approaches in planning and management to identify, locate and integrate place-specific values (cf. Cheng & Mattor 2010; Kangas et al. 2008; McIntyre et al. 2008).

In the context of politics of place, I have identified some possible topics for future research. To begin with, the wide-ranging views related to public planning interests on private forest owners' land could merit further investigation. This relates in particular to the group of owners who were ambivalent about public planning interests on their land and stated that their uncertainty was due to their desire to receive more information or discuss the issue more before deciding. Could these uncertainties among the owners serve as a basis for dialogue with planning authorities and potentially for collaborations about public interests on their land? Moreover, based on the case of Dalasjö, future research could delve into the question of how to efficiently and appropriately acknowledge, apply and protect identified place-based forest social values. This question could relate to the recent, multiple-use perspective on forest social values presented by the Swedish Forest Agency in 2023, which takes into consideration both non-commercial and commercial values (Swedish Forest Agency 2023). This multiple-use perspective considers forest social values as comprising both the production and the environmental aims of the Swedish Forestry Act (Ibid). From this thesis' results about challenges with the translation of forest social values into planning measures,

questions can be raised about how 'the social' is considered in current planning processes about forest social values.

Finally, this thesis has drawn attention to the seeming divergences in private forest ownership with regard to the gap between the demonstrated diversity in forest owner types, values and relationships with their forest properties, and the pronounced focus on production. Building on the many studies on diversity in private forest ownership – which show that forest owners often place equal, or sometimes greater, emphasis on social and emotional meanings and relationships than conventional and explicit economic values – my research suggests that it would seem logical to give more weight to these experiences and influences of private forest ownership, and incorporate them more explicitly into forest policies, planning processes and practices in Sweden. Specifically, future research could further examine how to recognise, incorporate and increase such an emphasis on the social and emotional dimensions of forest ownership in policy, planning and management.

7. Svensk sammanfattning (Summary in Swedish)

7.1. Bakgrund

Människors relation till skogen har förändrats över tid i takt med samhällsförändringarna och idag framhålls att skogen har flera olika värden som behöver beaktas. Vid sidan av skogens ekonomiska och ekologiska värden har skogens sociala värden framhållits som ett brett begrepp innefattande varierande sociala, estetiska, kulturella, emotionella, hälsomässiga och historiska betydelser. Samtidigt har den stora och betydande privata skogsägarkåren förändrats med så kallade ”nya’ ägartyper. Färre skogsägare är beroende av skogen som huvudsaklig inkomstkälla eller är verksamma som jordbrukare på sin skogsfastighet; fler ägare bor på längre geografiskt avstånd från sin skogsfastighet, ofta i städer, och en större andel kvinnor innehar skog än tidigare. Den här mångfalden av skogens värden och den breddade privata skogsägarkåren har medfört ett större fokus på hur man i forskning, policy, planering och skogsbruk kan urskilja, förstå och ta hänsyn till de olika privata och allmänna aktörerna involverade i skogen, samt deras föränderliga relationer till skog och skogsägande och ibland motstridiga syn på skogen och dess nyttjande. Medan de materiella, kvantifierbara värdena beträffande produktion och biologisk mångfald har varit framträdande har de sociala och emotionella dimensionerna i de skogliga sammanhangen erhållit mindre uppmärksamhet.

7.2. Syfte och frågeställningar

Syftet med den här avhandlingen är att teoretiskt och empiriskt utveckla och öka förståelsen av sociala och känslomässiga dimensioner relaterat till skog och skogsägande i Sverige. Med avhandlingen har jag för avsikt att bidra till den skogliga forskningen med samhällsvetenskapliga och i synnerhet kulturgeografiska perspektiv samt kvalitativa undersökningar och analyser.

Avhandlingen består av en kappa och fyra vetenskapliga artiklar som behandlar olika aspekter av sociala och känslomässiga dimensioner i den svenska skogskontexten. Kappan introducerar och kontextualiserar forskningsämnet och forskningsområdet, fördjupar metod- och teoridelarna, redovisar tidigare forskning samt sammanfattar och slutligen

övergripande diskuterar resultaten från artiklarna. Empiriskt tar avhandlingen avstamp i Sverige med dess två jämlika mål i skogsvårdslagen om nyttjande av skogen för produktion och bevarande av skogens miljö och biologiska mångfald. Dessa mål reglerar skogsmarken och dess skötsel. Skogens sociala värden är inte i sig själv ett mål utan nämns under miljömålet i skogsvårdslagen om att skogens kulturmiljövärden samt dess estetiska och sociala värden ska värnas. Trots den tvåfaldiga målsättningen präglas dock den svenska skogen av det produktionsinriktade ändamålet, vilket ibland kolliderar med andra värden i skogen, såsom mellan allmänhetens sociala värden i skogen och privata skogsägares produktionsmål och mellan privata skogsägare och statlig eller kommunal planering kring bevarandet av skog för biologisk mångfald och rekreation. Sverige är också ett land med ett stigande antal privata skogsägare som bor på geografiskt avstånd från sina fastigheter och en ökande andel kvinnor som äger skog, vilket genererar frågor om hur dessa förändringar påverkar eller förändrar deras skogsägande och anknytning till skogsfastigheten.

Det övergripande syftet för avhandlingen har delats upp i fyra forskningsfrågor som behandlas i respektive artikel:

Artikel 1: Hur formas privata skogsägares relation till deras skog av geografiska avstånd och av att inte vara bosatt i kommunen där skogsfastigheten finns?
Artikel 2: Hur kan man förstå genusskillnader i skogsägandet, hur de formas och eventuellt omformas?
Artikel 3: Hur påverkar erfarenheter och känslor kopplade till skogsägandet de privata ägarnas relationer till allmänna intressen på deras mark, det vill säga allmänhetens tillgång till natur samt kommunal och statlig planering för rekreation och bevarande av biologisk mångfald?
Artikel 4: Hur kan skogens sociala värden förstås och tillämpas på landsbygden?

7.3. Teoretiska begrepp

Begreppsmässigt bygger avhandlingen huvudsakligen på begrepp från det ämnesteoretiska området kulturgeografi, men även från andra samhällsvetenskapliga kunskapsfält. Nyckelbegreppen som väglett tolkning och analys av det empiriska materialet är rums- och plats- och rumsbegreppen (*space/place*) och termen *platskänsla* (Artikel 1, 2, 3, och 4). Begreppet platskänsla fokuserar på skogsägarnas känslomässiga relationer till och betydelser av deras skog och skogsfastighet (Artikel 1 och 3). Definitionen

gendering används för första gången i forskning kopplat till skogsägande i betydelsen att genus, rum/plats, kropp och olika sociala praktiker, som normer, värderingar och vanor, vilka kontinuerligt samspelar och skapar normativa och institutionaliserande sätt att utöva skogsägandet (Artikel 2). Dessa sociala praktiker kan producera rumsliga och sociala skillnader och ojämlikheter mellan kvinnor och män. För att klargöra de olika sociala och känslomässiga aspekterna i privat skogsägande utvecklades ett begreppsmässigt ramverk med de tre dimensionerna *äganderätt*, *ägandekänslor* och *platskänsla* (Artikel 3). *Skogens sociala värden* diskuteras utifrån begreppet plats som förklarar de plats- och kontextspecifika värden som ingår i skogens sociala värden (Artikel 4). Begreppen som används i den här avhandlingen påvisar den nära sociala och rumsliga integrationen som inom kulturgeografin benämns socio-rumslig dialektik där det sociala och rumsliga påverkar och formar varandra.

7.4. Metod

I arbetet med de fyra artiklarna genomfördes kvalitativa intervjustudier som analyserades genom tematisk kodning och dataanalys. För artikel 1, 2 och 3 utfördes semi-strukturerade intervjuer med 51 privata skogsägare som äger skog i Vilhelmina kommun i Västerbottens län och i Hässleholm kommun i Malmö län. Urvalet av skogsägare skedde genom urvalet maximal variation. Intervjuerna inbegriper lika många kvinnor som män, olika åldrar, skogsägare som bor i kommunen där de äger skog (på sin fastighet eller i kommunens tätort) och utanför kommunen (i regionens städer eller i huvudstaden Stockholm), samt innehar varierande fastighetsstorlek. Två gruppintervjuer med totalt 8 invånare från byn Dalasjö i Vilhelmina kommun la grunden till artikel 4 tillsammans med ett antal informantintervjuer och studier av dokument relaterat till skogens sociala värden lokalt och nationellt.

7.5. Resultat

Artikel 1 undersöker genom olika tolkningar av begreppet *platskänsla* hur privata skogsägares känslor till deras skog formas av geografiskt avstånd och att inte vara permanent boende i kommunen där fastigheten finns. Frågan är om ett geografiskt avstånd till skogen också betyder en känslomässig distans till fastigheten? Resultaten uppenbarade många och skiftande sätt som platskänsla och därmed även känslor präglade av närhet eller distans till skogen och skogsfastigheten kunde formas över tid och rum. Betydande var att både boende i kommunen och de som var bosatta längre bort värderade inte bara skogen utan även hela

skogsfastigheten och området kring fastigheten, inklusive de sociala, känslomässiga och historiska banden till platsen. Det framkom att det inte alltid var det geografiska avståndet utan ägarnas särskilda och ibland förändrade sammanhang i samband med deras ägande och den sociala kontexten som påverkade skogsägarnas känslor av närhet eller distans till deras skogsfastigheter. De flesta ägarna hade ärvt sin fastighet eller hade anknytningar dit genom att själva ha bott där eller att familjen ägt fastigheten i flera generationer, vilket ofta genererade en platskänsla präglad av närhet. Platskänslor präglade av distans hade för några formats genom att de tidsmässigt varit borta länge från fastigheten. Det framkom att i synnerhet distansägare boende långt borta och utan hus på fastigheten upplevde känslor kännetecknade av distans. Andra distansägare, såsom fritidshusägare, kunde känna sig ”hemma” på skogsfastigheten trots, och ibland som en inverkan av avståndet, genom deras egen mobilitet. Det blev tydligt att ägare tolkade geografiska avstånd olika och ägare trots långa geografiska avstånd till fastigheten kunde uppleva att den inte var långt borta**.**

Slutsatser som dras från forskningsresultaten är att genom att studera skogsägarnas platskänslor förefaller det inte möjligt att generalisera att boende på geografiskt avstånd till skogsfastigheten automatiskt innebär en känslomässig distans. De sociala och ägandespecifika kontexterna, som familjeband och fritidshusägande, genererar känslomässiga och sociala relationer över både tid och rum som kan ändras när platser eller ägarnas förhållanden till skogsfastigheterna förändras. Därmed bör tolkningen i skogliga sammanhang ta i beräkning att ”nya” skogsägare som bor på distans till fastigheten inte nödvändigtvis behöver ha svagare känslomässiga band dit utan i stället kan upprätthålla eller skapa andra sorters meningar av och känslor till sin skogsfastighet som sträcker sig över både tid och geografiska avstånd.

Artikel 2 tar utgångspunkt i forskning som påvisar stadigvarande olika och ojämlika omständigheter och relationer mellan kvinnor och män avseende skogsägande inom den privata skogsägarkåren. Med bakgrund av de övergripande omdaningarna i både samhället och i den skogliga kontexten med utvecklingen att fler kvinnor äger skog ställs frågan om hur man kan förstå genusskillnaderna i skogsägandet och om de potentiellt är under förändring och kan omformas? Med hjälp av det teoretiska begreppet *gendering*, som lägger tonvikten på att samspelet mellan genus, rum/plats och sociala praktiker är något som ”görs” kontinuerligt genom värderingar, normer, vanor och sedvänjor, uttolkades resultaten. Intervjuerna visade på varierande erfarenheter och uppfattningar om genus och dess inverkan på skogsägandet. En grupp skogsägare, både kvinnor

och män, påtalade att genus inte hade någon betydelse och att det inte fanns några skillnader mellan kvinnor och män angående deras skogsägarskap. Olikheter mellan könen tillskrevs det förflutna. Några andra kvinnor var aktiva i deras skogsägande och skogsbruket, i motsats till de påvisade stereotyperna för manligt och kvinnligt skogsägande. En annan grupp anmärkte på de enträgna praktikerna inom skogsägandet som skapar skillnader mellan kvinnor och mäns aktiviteter och var de utförs, vilka var förenade med olikheter mellan deras beteenden, värderingar och kunskaper rörande skogen och skogsbruk. Män bedömdes generellt i jämförelse med kvinnor vara mer aktiva och med mer kunskap, samt utföra mer praktiskt arbete kopplat till och i skogen och ha värderingar mer i linje med det produktionsinriktade skogsbruket. Föreställningarna om kvinnor var att de var 'annorlunda' jämförelsevis mot män i deras skogsägande, såsom mer 'passiva' och mindre delaktiga i fysiskt ansträngande arbete i skogen, och med 'mjuka' värderingar med högre grad av fokus på miljö och biologisk mångfald. Orsakerna till särskillnaderna tillskrevs historiska olikheter mellan kvinnor och män, i synnerhet socialiseringsprocesser mellan olika generationer av manliga skogsägare i skogsmiljön. Dessa rumsliga och sociala separationer mellan kvinnor och män skapade olika erfarenheter, maktrelationer och ojämlikheter, såsom att en del kvinnor upplevde sig fysiskt och socialt exkluderade från vissa platser och aktiviteter på deras skogsfastigheter och i deras skogsägande. Dock, avvikelserna från de konventionella, produktionsinriktade värderingarna och aktiviteterna i skogen som en del kvinnor stod för tolkades bland några män som positiva och innovativa och som ett sätt att bryta med det konventionella, produktionsinriktade skogsbruket i Sverige.

Slutsatser från undersökningen är att skogsägande innefattar dikotomier vad gäller genusrelationer men även avvikelser från de sociala och rumsseparerande praktikerna eller 'görandet'. Genus kunde med andra ord "göras" på flera sätt av skogsägarna. Ibland uppfattades eller "gjordes" genus neutralt eller osynligt. Ibland kunde olikheter hänföras som ett sätt att "göra" kvinnliga skogsägare till "den andre" men också ett sätt för några kvinnor att "göra" olikheter som utmanar och omformar inte bara de till synes enträgna praktikerna eller 'görandet' av genus i skogsägandet utan även produktionsfokuset i skogsägandet nära kopplat till den dominerande maskuliniteten i skogsägardiskursen.

Artikel 3 undersöker förhållandet mellan privata och allmänna intressen genom att utforska privata skogsägares erfarenheter och känslor vad gäller skogsägandet och deras syn på allmänhetens vistelser i deras skog och på statlig och kommunal planering som berör eller skulle kunna komma att påverka deras skogsmark. Resultaten klargör de privata

skogsägarnas generella godkännande av allmänhetens vistelser i deras skogar i enlighet med den svenska Allemansrätten. Det 'sociala kontraktet' med ömsesidiga sociala rättigheter och skyldigheter mellan skogsägare och allmänheten förankrad i Allemansrätten och i äganderätten visade sig vara gynnsamt. Undantagen var främst en del skogsägare i den mer tätbefolkade Hässleholm kommun som upplevt överträdelser och störande beteende från allmänheten. I vissa fall hade detta lett till "platshävdande" åtgärder av ägarna som avstängning av vägar in till deras fastigheter. Avseende skogsägarnas relation till presumtiva planeringsåtgärder på deras mark visade en mer flerdelad bild uppdelade på tre olika svar: de som var ambivalenta, de som svarade klart jakande och de som uttryckligen inte var övertygade. De som var ambivalenta och som uttryckligen inte var övertygade om kommunal eller statlig planering hade farhågor förenade med känslor sammankopplade med ägandeskapet och fastigheten som en plats som de hade personliga och sociala band till, såsom historiska familjeband. Med anledning av dessa känslor skulle ägarna känna sig begränsade i eller berövade på deras ägandeskap om de skulle behöva ge upp den specifika skogsmarken som de ägde, som de planerade överföra till kommande genenerationer. Kompensation i form av pengar eller annan mark var därför känslomässigt inte tänkbart för dessa ägare. Även den geografiska komponenten i Hässleholm med närheten till staden Hässleholm och andra orter i kommunen bidrog till att några skogsägare hellre föredrog bevarande av skog av staten/Länsstyrelsen än kommunal planering som de förknippade med exploatering och byggande av bostäder med ökad grad av problem med allmänhetens närvaro och en inverkan på deras platskänsla.

Slutsatser är att känslor kring ägandet och platsen för skogsfastigheten påverkar skogsägarnas syn på sin skog och kommunala och statliga planeringsprocesser. Därför är det viktigt att ta hänsyn till de privata skogsägarnas olika erfarenheter och känslor relaterat till dimensionerna äganderätt, ägandekänslor och platskänsla som diskuteras i den här artikeln och inkorporera dem i planering för rekreation och biologisk mångfald. Det framstår som angeläget att uppmärksamma känslor och erfarenheter kopplade till ägande och plats, vilka i vanliga fall inte uppmärksammas, för att förstå varför skogsägare kan vara tveksamma eller kritiska till allmänna intressen och planeringsprocesser. Den begreppsram som presenteras i artikeln föreslås vara ett instrument för Länsstyrelser och kommuner att mer effektivt kunna förstå och hantera ägarnas betänkligheter, men även användas för att från skogsägarnas synvinkel uppleva ökad acceptans för deras olika perspektiv i planeringsprocesserna.

Artikel 4 är en fallstudie av skogens sociala värden. Studien utforskar hur skogens sociala värden tolkas och definieras av invånare i byn Dalasjö i Vilhelmina kommun i norra Sverige där en närliggande skog som identifierats med höga sociala värden planerades att avverkas av ägaren Svenska Cellulosa AB (SCA). Avverkningsplanerna skapade farhågor bland lokala bybor och utredningar och planer för att bevara skogens värden genomfördes, såsom genom ett naturreservat via Länstyrelsen och ett kommunalt reservat via Vilhelmina kommun. Vid samma tid pågick en process på nationell nivå för att införliva och definiera skogens sociala värden i policy och planering. Studien understryker att skogens sociala värden i fallet Dalasjö inbegrep en rad olika värden som bidrog till bybornas rekreation och välbefinnande. Utmärkande var att skogens sociala värden var synnerligen plats- och kontextspecifika och härrörde från både individuella och gemensamma uppfattningar och engagemang. Från de intervjuade bybornas perspektiv var det en närliggande, lättillgänglig skog med särskild höga estetiska värden, en plats för en rad olika aktiviteter (löpar- och skidspår, mountainbike-banor, skjutbana) samt en plats för meditation och att stärka den mentala hälsan. Intresseväckande var hur skogen och dess sociala värden uppfattades av många som en integrerad del av både enskildas dagliga liv och livet i byn där byborna själva finansierat och byggt en del av den infrastruktur som fanns i skogen. Sammantaget kände många bybor ansvar och omsorg för skogen samt farhågor för skogens sociala värden kopplade till den. Planeringsförsök som genomfördes för att bevara skogens sociala värden tog inte form eller genomfördes under studien. Samtidigt avverkades inte den aktuella skogen. Det framkom osäkerheter och otydligheter kring termen skogens sociala värden under planeringsförsöken och hur sociala värden kan tillämpas, exempelvis sammanblandades social värden med miljömässiga värden.

Slutsatser från fallet Dalasjö är att det finns utmaningar och problematik i planeringsprocesser kring definitionen skogens sociala värden och dess tillämpning för att kunna värna lokalt identifierade platsbundna sociala värden. Studien påvisar att ett en integrering av innebörden plats i policy och planering skulle kunna tydliggöra förståelsen av begreppet skogens sociala värden och därmed tillämpningen och bevarandet av dessa värden. Ännu en slutsats är att dialog och deltagandeprocesser på lokal nivå erfordras för att minska avståndet mellan, å ena sidan, policy och planering, å andra sidan, lokalbefolknings uttryckta sociala värden.

7.6. Diskussion och slutsatser

Sammantaget konstaterar jag att resultaten från de fyra artiklarnas frågeställningar empiriskt och teoretiskt har visat hur sociala och känslomässiga dimensioner har betydande vikt och inflytande i de skogliga sammanhangen. I synnerhet åskådliggjordes den stora betydelse och inverkan som sociala relationer, interaktioner och kontexter har i förhållande till människors relation till skog, skogsfastigheter och skogsägande. Känslor och sociala relationer och praktiker i anknytning till ägandet och platsen där skogen finns visade sig ligga till grund för och ha betydelse för hur skogsägandet och skogsfastigheten upplevdes av olika skogsägare, vilka värderingar och kunskaper som ägarna hade, vilka beslut som kunde tas och av vem, hur skogsägandet praktiserades och hur allmänna intressen uppfattades och hanterades. Skogsägarnas relation till allmänna intressen och fallet Dalasjö pekar på att de olika och ibland oförenliga intressen och värderingar som återfinns i den skogliga kontexten kan härledes till sociala och känslomässiga relationer och betydelser som olika intressenter eller aktörer förknippar med en skog eller en skogsfastighet. Även skogsägarnas genuspraktiker och separationer av olika s k kvinnliga och manliga rum inom skogsägandet var tecken på hur makt konstrueras genom sociala relationer, vilket har betydelse för vem som får göra vad i vilka rum och sammanhang. Trots att resultaten exponerar en del dualistiskt präglade relationer och meningar visar de även på nyanser och mångfald. De påvisar både likheter och skillnader mellan skogsägarna vad gäller relationer till allmänna intressen, deras platskänsla och syn på avstånd mellan dem och deras fastigheter, samt hur genus ”görs” i ägandet av skog. Påfallande är att sociala och känslomässiga relationer och betydelser kopplat till skogsägande och skogsfastigheter inte var statiska men förändrades över tid och rum på olika sätt.

En övergripande slutsats är att begreppen, inklusive det konceptuella ramverket kopplat till skogsägande, som använts i den här avhandlingen är användbara i forskning, policysammanhang och all typ av planering (skoglig, kommunal och statlig) för att öka förståelsen för relevansen av sociala och känslomässiga relationer och betydelser i den skogliga kontexten. De kulturgeografiska perspektiven med framför allt platsbegreppets innebörd framstår som användbart för att förstå känslomässiga, sociala, historiska och kulturella relationer och betydelser i den skogliga kontexten. Jag rekommenderar att policy och planering tar hänsyn till de relationer, innebörder och värden som framkommit här i olika planeringsprocesser mellan privata och allmänna intressen för att öka kunskapen, möjligheterna för att förebygga motstridiga intressekonflikter

och främja skydd av speciella platser och skogar. För de privata skogsägarna kan det innebära ökade möjlighet att få insyn i hur och var allmänhetens värden kan ta plats på deras fastigheter och för allmänheten kan det innebära ökade möjligheter att få sina sociala värden beaktade och tryggade. Att även i policy- och planeringsarbeten bli medveten om hur olikheter och ojämställdheter 'görs' och att det finns en mångfald och valmöjligheter kan utöka handlingsalternativen för både kvinnor och män som skogsägare och möjligen motverka ojämställdhet i skogsägarskapet. Det framkom även under studien att sociala och känslomässiga relationer i form av platskänsla, skogens sociala värden och ägandekänslor har anknytningar till varandra och ofta är djupt sammanflätade med mänskligt välbefinnande, vilket bör lyftas i framtida forskning. Avslutningsvis visar avhandlingen på ett ökat behov av forskning som på ett mer holistiskt och integrerat sätt belyser de sociala och känslomässiga relationerna och betydelserna rörande skog och skogsägande.

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Appendix I

Characteristics of private forest owners interviewed (Papers 1-3)

No	Gender	Born	Size of property (hectare)	Location of property North/ South	Resident/ Non-resident (residing in municipality or outside)	Geographical place of residency
1	W	1970s	51-100	N	Resident	Rural
2	W	1960s	201-500	N	Resident	Rural
3	W	1950s	51-100	N	Resident	Rural
4	W	1940s	501-900	N	Resident	Rural
5	M	1970s	101-200	N	Resident	Rural
6	M	1960s	51-100	N	Resident	Rural
7	M	1950s	501-900	N	Resident	Rural
8	M	1940s	201-500	N	Resident	Rural
9	W	1980s	51-100	N	Resident	Municipality
10	W	1970s	101-200	N	Resident	Municipality
11	W	1960s	201-500	N	Resident	Municipality
12	M	1970s	≤ 50	N	Resident	Municipality
13	M	1950s	501-900	N	Resident	Municipality
14	M	1940s	51-100	N	Resident	Municipality
15	W	1960s	51-100	N	Non-resident	Regional
16	W	1950s	201-500	N	Non-resident	Regional
17	W	1940s	51-100	N	Non-resident	Regional
18	M	1970s	≤ 50	N	Non-resident	Regional
19	M	1960s	201-500	N	Non-resident	Regional
20	M	1950s	51-100	N	Non-resident	Regional
21	W	1970s	201-500	N	Non-resident	National
22	W	1950s	101-200	N	Non-resident	National
23	W	1940s	101-200	N	Non-resident	National
24	M	1980s	501-900	N	Non-resident	National
25	M	1970s	201-500	N	Non-resident	National
26	M	1950s	201-500	N	Non-resident	National
27	W	1970s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Rural
28	W	1960s	51-100	S	Resident	Rural
29	W	1950s	101-200	S	Resident	Rural
30	W	1940s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Rural
31	M	1980s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Rural
32	M	1970s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Rural
33	M	1960s	101-200	S	Resident	Rural
34	M	1950s	51-100	S	Resident	Rural
35	W	1960s	51-100	S	Resident	Municipality
36	W	1950s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Municipality
37	W	1940s	51-100	S	Resident	Municipality
38	M	1960s	51-100	S	Resident	Municipality
39	M	1950s	≤ 50	S	Resident	Municipality
40	M	1940s	51-100	S	Resident	Municipality
41	W	1950s	51-100	S	Non-resident	Regional
42	W	1940s	≤ 50	S	Non-resident	Regional
43	M	1970s	201-300	S	Non-resident	Regional
44	M	1960s	≤ 50	S	Non-resident	Regional

45	M	1950s	≤ 50	S	Non-resident	Regional
46	M	1940s	≤ 50	S	Non-resident	Regional
47	W	1970s	101-200	S	Non-resident	National
48	W	1950s	201-500	S	Non-resident	National
49	W	1940s	201-500	S	Non-resident	National
50	M	1980s	101-200	S	Non-resident	National
51	M	1960s	≤ 50	S	Non-resident	National

North: Vilhelmina municipality
South: Hässleholm municipality
Municipality: municipality centre, i.e. Vilhelmina in the north or Hässleholm in the south
Regional: regional centre, i.e. Umeå in the north and Malmö or Lund in the south
National: national centre, i.e. the capital of Stockholm

Appendix II

Interview guide (Papers 1–3)

(translated from Swedish into English)

Introduction

- Thanking the participants for taking part in the study.
- Presentation of myself, the PhD project, and an explanation that the findings from the studies will be developed into scientific articles as part of my PhD thesis.
- Presentation of the PLURAL project, of which my PhD project is a part.
- General aim of the project: to talk with people who own forests in Vilhelmina and Hässleholm municipalities in order to understand how private forest owners think and feel in relation to their forests and their ownership of these forests.
- General assumptions of the project: It is important to gain knowledge for researchers, policymakers, planners and the public about different forest owners and their disparate views in relation to forests, forest properties and their forest ownership.
- Specific focus of the interviews: forest owners' own experiences, personal perspectives, feelings and views.
- Everything you say will be treated confidentially, and I will refer to you in general terms. I can assure you that your name will not be found anywhere in the published material and it will not be possible to link the answers you give in the interviews to you.
- You decide yourself whether or not you want to participate in the study and therefore you can tell me at any point during the interview, or later, if you no longer want to participate.
- Information about the structure of the interview: length about one hour.
- Use of recorder: in order to document and at the same time listen to what you say, I will use a recorder. If you would rather not be recorded, I will note down what you say by hand.
- Do you agree to participate in this study?
- Do you have any questions before the interview starts?

Background of owner and ownership, links to forestland

1. Can you please tell me about yourself and your background (place of residence, work, whether you work(ed) within the forestry sector or related issues to forests).
2. Can you please tell me how you became a forest owner, and when?
3. If you inherited the forest, please describe what relations you had with the previous owner and if this person is still engaged with the forestland.
4. Do you know how the previous owner or your relatives first acquired the forestland?
5. Do you know what the previous owner used the forestland for?
6. Do you co-own the forest with anyone else and what relations do you have with this/these person/s?
7. Were you yourself engaged with the forestland prior to your ownership?
8. Did you have connections to the forest or the countryside where the forestland is located before you became owner of the land?
9. To resident owners: Do you reside on your property? If so, for how long? If not, where?
10. To non-resident owners: Have you ever resided on your property or in the municipality of your property? Please explain why you do not currently reside on your property.

The forest property and who is doing what with regard to it

11. Where is your forestland located? Please show me on the map (of Hässleholm or Vilhelmina municipality).
12. Please describe your forest and forest property (size, buildings etc).
13. To non-resident owners: Please describe how often you visit and how much time you spend there?
14. To all: Do you spend time in your forest?
15. If yes, what do you generally do in your forest?
16. Who is doing what in relation to your forest property, such as within the owner group or within the family?

The forest owner's relationship to the forest property and the place of the property

17. Can you please describe your relationship to your forestland (over time and ownership)?
18. Can you please explain what the forestland means to you, and why?
19. What do you consider important about your forest property?
20. Do you feel at home there? Please explain.

21. Please tell me about the village/countryside where your forest property is located?
22. What does this area mean to you?
23. Are you engaged with or involved locally linked to your ownership of forest property? Please explain.

Geographical distance from forest property

24. How far away do you reside from your forest property?
25. Do you perceive yourself as living near to or far away from your forest property? Please explain.
26. In what ways do you think your geographical distance (near or far) from your forest property influences how you relate to your forestland?

Forest ownership

27. Please tell me how you perceive and experience your forest ownership.
28. What does it mean to you to be a forest owner?

Gender differences in forest ownership

29. Do you think that your gender, or being a woman/man, influences how you perceive and experience your forest and your forest ownership? Please explain.
30. Do you think that being a woman/man influences what you do in relation to your forest? Please explain.
31. Do you think that you have certain expectations related to your gender or you being a female or male forest owner in your forest ownership? Please explain.

Private forest ownership and relationship to public use and public planning interests

32. Do you think people other than yourself visit or use your forest for anything? Please explain.
33. How do you experience and feel about other people using your forest (such as those who use it according to the Right of Public Access/Allemansrätten)?
34. Have you had any contact with planning authorities about public planning issues regarding your forest, e.g. the municipality regarding local planning issues or county administration regarding national planning issues? If so, please explain.
35. Have these authorities contacted you specifically about providing public recreational opportunities or protecting biodiversity on your forestland? If so, please explain.

36. If you have been, or were to be, contacted by planning authorities about use, exchange or buying your forest for the purposes of recreation or biodiversity, how do you think you would respond to them? Please explain.

Future

37. What are your thoughts about the future of your forestland and your forest ownership?

Concluding question

38. Would you like to add anything?