Political Culture and the Implementation of National Forest Programmes

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Abstract

After a brief survey of the concept of political culture and a theoretical discussion of how it may impact the NFPs it is concluded that its fate will depend on whether economic interests, political power structures, and competencies and resource endowments of bureaucracies are strengthened or threatened in conjunction with the degree of support for the NFP-values among the general public.

If there are obstacles to the implementation, only political commitment and good political workmanship will prevail in enacting and enforcing a new policy. The most basic requirement for successful implementation would seem to be that the public either already supports or are ready to adopt any new values of the NFP principles.

Key words: Values and preferences, perceptions and beliefs, self-serving motives, appropriate and reasonable policies

1. Introduction

Today most states will maintain that a primary goal of forest policy is "sustainable forestry". In the international discussion on how to achieve this goal, the ideas presented within the framework of "National Forest Programmes" (NFPs) are seen as a system of policy design principles that will ensure sustainable forestry or at least bring the forestry of the state closer to this goal. Glück (1999:41) and Egestad (1999:19-20) summarize the design principles into 11. These can conveniently be rearranged and divided into one substantive goal: sustainable forestry, one responsible agent: the government of the country, and four broad procedural goals: 1) iterative and holistic policy development involving 2) participation by and empowerment of stakeholders, and 3) decentralisation and intersectoral coordination of activities, 4) secure land tenure arrangements (see Appendix).

Taking the goal and the responsible agent as given, one core problem for understanding the fate of National Forest Programmes is the way cultural, structural,

and general background characteristics of societies affect the decisions on the NFP procedural elements. It is particularly interesting in this case since the decisions involve the implementation of procedural principles with potential repercussions for other policy sectors. Two kinds of questions are interesting: 1) what determines the specific form of the required procedures, and 2) how effective are the implemented procedures in furthering the goal of sustainable forestry. These questions will not be addressed directly. The present paper will discuss the role of culture in general and in particular the role of political culture in the process of adopting the principles. Indirectly, the form that the procedures may be given in will be commented on.

2. What determines policy?

Four groups of factors affecting priorities and choices of politicians have been given attention by political science. The most obvious group of factors concerns the constituents of the politicians and their way of making their demands and wishes known. This is often called interest politics, and it is usually either about economic or moral interests. A second group of factors is the institutional structure surrounding and leading up to a legitimate decision. The structure and power of committees in a parliament (the government can in a parliamentary system be seen as a committee of the parliament) as well as the organization of parties that affect both the selection of issues to be decided on and the outcomes of the decisions. A third set of factors are found in the impact of the government bureaucracy on the information available to decision makers and their suggestions and recommendations for decisions. The divisions of competences among the branches of the bureaucracy, their professional expertise, and mandate will shape the information available and its interpretation. This will be reflected in the recommendations presented to the political system. The fourth group of factors seen to affect political decisions are here somewhat loosely called political culture.

3. The process of policy design

Policy design will usually start out with problem analysis, move on to information gathering, analyse possible solutions and present a proposal. If we situate these processes in a political context there is a «situation» before a problem is formulated. Let us call this the perceived forest conditions. And in this case: forest conditions as defined within the NFP approach. Perception and interpretation is an essential part of the problem formulation. Policy changes are tied both to perceptions of forest conditions and to what has been learned from previous policy outcomes.

In this process the relevant actors usually have been the owners of forest resources, the industries depending on access to forest resources, and the consumers of various types of forest products. But also, of course, the forest professionals staffing the various government agencies and private bureaucracies charged with duties towards the forest sector. The NFP expands the list of relevant actors by including "indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers" (see point 5 of Glück (1999:41) in Appendix).

The perception and interpretation of the forest conditions are cognitive processes shaped by social and cultural values. There may be smaller or larger chunks of scientific investigations involved. But these are also situated in a social and cultural matrix of competing valuations and interests. With a basis in the perceived forest conditions the actors go about securing their interests. In this we can rely on them to maximize their returns both in material terms and in mental terms. The trade offs between efforts spent on material or mental gratification will vary across actor groups.
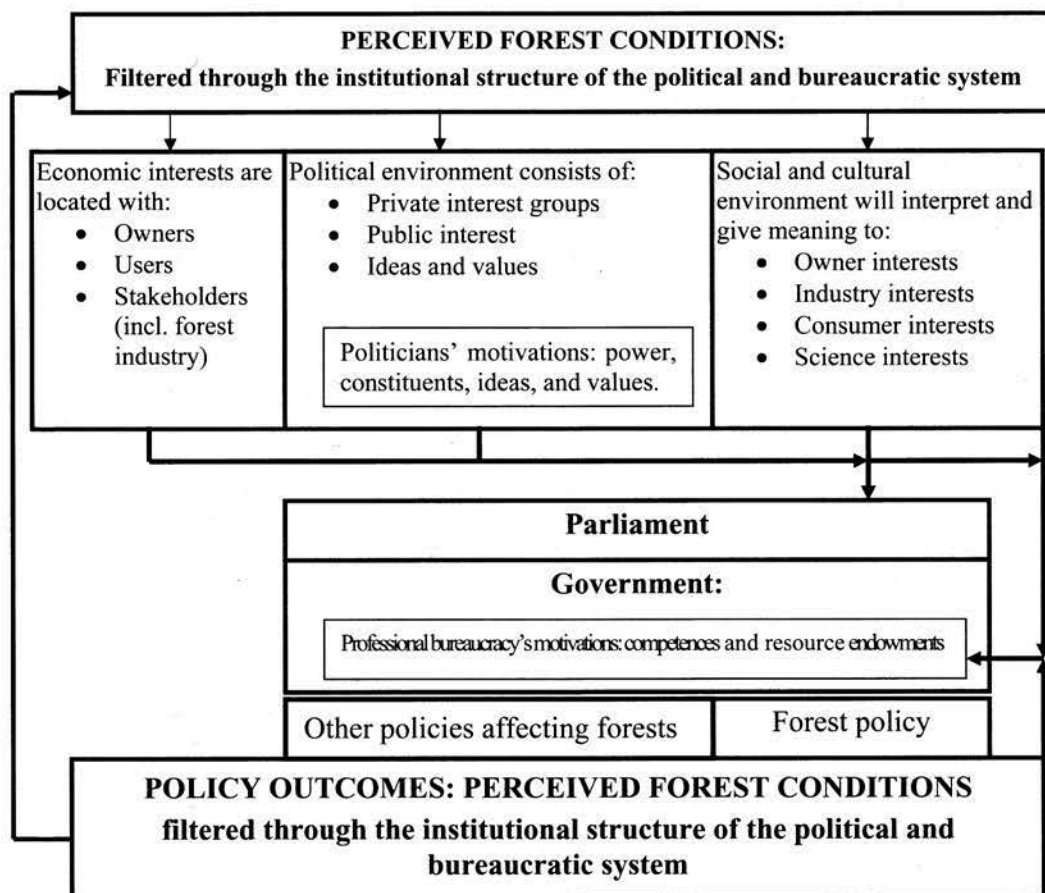

Figure 1. Elements of the social and cultural environment in relation to the making of forest policy

The struggle for government coordination of action in relation to perceived problems in the forest conditions is a political process. But social and cultural forces also affect this process. It is important to keep in mind that the outcome in the form of forest policy impacts the forest conditions only through its impact on the relevant forest actors. The way these groups perceive the policy and interpret its requirements are also social and cultural processes. In so far as the policy requires people to do something that they would not have done voluntarily, the policy requires power. But in a

democratic polity a government's power to enforce its policy is a precarious commodity. Its use of power needs to be seen as legitimate. Without careful attention to problems of enforcement, policies will fail. Null results and counterproductive outcomes of government policies (as measured against stated policy goals) are far from unknown (Hall 1980, Sieber 1981). But governments generally stay in power. One of their main powers lies in the ability to shape agendas and select problems for attention. Another is the politician's ability to persuade, to make people agree to a certain interpretation of the world. In this process the social and cultural environment plays a crucial role.

4. What is political culture?

It is now generally acknowledged that even though interest politics locally will take priority in most political activities, such things as ideas about justice and ranking of values varies among countries as well as groups and make important impacts on actual policy choices and specific outcomes, for example through the way interest politics is defined and decided. In some sense it can be said that the values people hold will determine the interests they pursue.

The classic approach to political culture was basically the study of attitudes of voters and their correlation with political choices. Attitudes here are seen as observable phenomena of the more abstract concept of culture as shared meanings and values. Political culture can also be used to more limited fields such as the study of how values and preferences concerning what democracy is and how to implement it, or the study of how policy maker's beliefs, values, and norms may affect their positions on a public policy issue. What people believe to be true and just may be as important to decisions as what people want (their interests) and the ranking of their wants (their preferences).

One may broadly distinguish two traditions in the literature. One tradition looks comparatively at how national styles of making politics shape public policy and affect the outcomes (Freeman 1986, Vogel 1986). In these studies ideas about political culture are blended with the ideas from the institutional structure approach and the styles of making collective choices. Basically it provides a perspective on national styles of making policy.

Another approach looks more closely at the differences among sectors of state and society: are there different styles or (sub-)cultures affecting how policy is designed and executed? In this approach one may see a more explicit concern with the emergence and effect of ideas and beliefs. The role of ideas in deciding on policy (Litfin 1994, Yee 1996, Rayner and Malone (eds.) 1998) is of particular interest in relation to the implementation of the NFP principles.

The study of forest policy is concerned with a narrow sector of modern societies. But even so, and based on the reviews by Campbell (2002) and Berezin (1997), it seems reasonable to also take a rather general approach to the sector specific role of political

culture. It seems reasonable to assume that there will be both distinct aspects of a national political culture affecting the forest sector along with other sectors, and that there will be more specific factors affecting policies and policy outcomes in the forest sector. The present discussion will emphasise sector specific factors such as the roles of

- Cognitive Paradigms and World Views,
- Normative Frameworks,
- World Culture,
- Framing of Issues, and
- Programmatic Ideas.

Cognitive paradigms and worldviews refer to the taken for granted ideas about nature and society and how they work. Among these ideas there will of course be, more or less explicit normative ideas about how people ought to behave. These normative frameworks may be given more specific attention by focusing on how both the taken for granted priorities and the more consciously articulated values represent a structure within which judgements and priorities take place. World cultures refer to ideas about how the emergence of global (sub-) cultures tied to particular arenas or issues will tend to homogenise the politics concerned with those issues. This idea is closely related to concepts of epistemic communities and (international) policy networks (Haas 1992). Epistemic communities are networks of professionals and experts with an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge. The members of the community share a set of beliefs, programmatic ideas including causal models, notions of empirical validity, and a common policy agenda. The members of the community meet in arenas where issues and policies are discussed, ideas and solutions evaluated, and agendas and action priorities proposed. People go home to their own bureaucracies or constituencies armed with new arguments, strengthened values, and at times new programmatic ideas. Framing of issues and programmatic ideas are particular mechanisms affecting policies. Framing of issues is used by bureaucrats and politicians to fit a new or emerging issue into a well-known and accepted political agenda. Here the policy may be prescribed by existing or new programmatic ideas. But programmatic ideas may prescribe policy solutions irrespective of framing effects. Their power is to some extent contingent on the popular acceptance of the causal theory and concomitant solution of a policy problem that the programmatic idea contains.

The policy choices of modern democracies are to some, largely unknown, degree determined by the ability to defend the policy as reasonable to a general public. Hence, the cognitive paradigms and worldviews of the electorate become important. Even if many or even most policy decisions do not become public issues, the mere possibility that any particular policy decision may become a public issue will sensitise bureaucrats and politicians to the problem of giving their decisions a form and direction that can be defended in public. This will tend to increase the importance of framing and programmatic ideas since these can be used actively by the politicians. But the effects of framing and programmatic ideas in terms of gaining acceptance of policy choices are contingent on the status and development of the cognitive paradigms and worldviews of the electorate. As part of the local or national culture these aspects are largely out of the control of any single actor, agency, or group of

agencies. Even the most totalitarian states have problems directing the beliefs of people for any significant amount of time.

It seems reasonable to assume that there in democratic polities will be a broad agreement on basic values such as those implied by the procedural recommendations of the NFP. Then we can think of political culture as comprising the impact of ideas, beliefs, and values on the form and direction of public policies. But in gauging their effect we need to keep in mind the institutional structure of the political and bureaucratic system. The party system and the committee structure of the parliament as well as the division of powers among the various branches of the bureaucracy can bee seen to function as filters on the impact of ideas, beliefs, and values.

5. Studies of political culture and forest policy

To my knowledge there are no comprehensive studies on how political culture as such affects forest policy decision. But there are relevant studies where political culture can be read into the dynamics of government bureaucracies and parliament systems, or more relevant, where it is invoked as an explanation for the performance of forest bureaucracies.

One important early contribution was Kaufmann's (1967) study of how the bureaucracy of the US Forest Service created its own culture, moulding the behaviour of its members making them serve the "public interest" rather than be affected by the pressure from local economic interests.

A recent study (Lindayati 2003) looks at the role of ideas in shaping local forest tenure through the national politics in Indonesia. The role of culture in Indonesian forest resource control is also discussed by Peluso (1992). Lindayati (2003:221) observes that "Policymakers' ideational conceptions are, arguably, key to understanding policy adoption". By tracing the debate around the basic forest legislation it is argued that the way ideas make an impact is highly contingent on the power structure. A major force has been the interest of the Ministry of Forests to preserve its power over the forestlands.

Lacking empirical studies of how political culture affects forest policy in developed democratic polities, the discussion will use available theory to reason about likely links between culture and NFP, trying to formulate hypotheses.

6. Political culture and interest groups

People and groups acting on behalf of themselves to further their interests are well understood and in general a phenomenon profitably discussed apart from the impact of culture. However, as noted above, there is a connection between values held and interests emphasised. As members of the general culture, as well as members of interest groups acquire new or changed values. It is a moot point if we can increase our understanding of their behaviour qua interest groups by adding cultural values to their

interests. However, in judging the performance of a political system as a whole and in comparisons of political systems we obviously do need culture (or political culture) as a part of the environment affecting interest groups, bureaucrats, and politicians.

It seems in this paper for several reasons that it is prudent to focus on politicians and bureaucrats. And in this context "politicians and bureaucrats" mean politicians and bureaucrats concerned with forest policy. As representatives from the state in various international bodies bureaucrats and politicians are of course the entry points for new ideas circulating in international policy networks and epistemic communities. In addition to this we may observe that politicians are sort of stand-ins for the general public of the country and as such they are the fulcrum on which a national culture most obviously will impact forest policy as a separate force. Bureaucrats are likewise important because of the tendency to develop institutional sub-cultures within central government offices. In one sense they are to be considered an ordinary interest group, but on the other hand, their material and moral interests are not quite comparable to other lobbying groups. It is a main assumption that their interests are determined in terms of professional knowledge, careers, and power, rather than individual economic interests. The role and impact of such professional interests have probably increased as the fraction of the staff that is professionally trained outside the bureaucracy has grown.

Recognizing that bureaucracies form local sub-cultures does not imply that anything sinister is going on. It is a normal process in any group with some stability. Thus, the same happens in political parties or Environmental NGOs. However, it does mean that there is a certain kind of closure in terms of perception, interpretation and judgements of the group supporting the sub-culture. It is a characteristic of such sub-cultures that its effects in terms of closure are more easily observed in other groups than in one's own. Thus government bureaucrats can easily see it in Environmental NGOs, and Environmental NGOs can easily see it in government bureaucracies.

Many NGOs and interest groups will of course also participate in such policy networks and epistemic communities and in this way they may develop values and priorities at odds with or in advance of the general political culture of their country. But, perhaps, more often their international connections will work to strengthen or broaden their arguments for the things they already are working towards.

It may be a reasonable guess that if environmental NGOs, labour organisations, or owner interest organisations take part in international policy discussions they will most easily adopt new ideas not directly impacting their established material or moral interests. If the NFP principles do not affect the established interests of the NGO and in some ways support them, they will be supportive of efforts to implement these. Similar assumptions will also seem reasonable for politicians and bureaucrats (remembering that the interests of bureaucrats will be in the framed in terms of the scale and scope of the application of their professional knowledge).

7. Democratic polities, cultural values, and appropriate policy

One may reasonably expect democratic polities to highly value principles such as
- iterative and holistic process
- decentralisation and coordination
- participation by and empowerment of all stakeholders

This means that the most significant aspect of the NFP principles will be the judgement among bureaucrats and politicians about the status of these principles in the current forest policy of the country. They will ask if the values of NFP are well taken care of by current practice. The sources for the judgement are many, ranging from scientific investigations to newspaper stories and personal experiences of forest policy. The judgements of what needs to be done will also be founded on the views of what is appropriate and reasonable as well as what the general public will accept as appropriate and reasonable (March and Olsen 1989).

The general culture of the country enters the judgements particularly through the views on what is "appropriate and reasonable". For example: can it be seen as appropriate that the tourist association is being given legal standing in questions such as permission to clear-cut in a forest? How much weight should one give the tourist industry compared to the economic interests of the forest owner and demands from the forest industry? What kind of participatory mechanisms will give appropriate weight to the various interested stakeholders and produce reasonable outcomes?

In general one might think that perceived distance between what NFP suggests and what politicians and bureaucrats believe to be appropriate and reasonable will affect the proposals of what to do.

8. The general model

Based on the discussion above it seems reasonable to suppose that the perceived distance between what NFP suggests and what politicians and bureaucrats believe to be appropriate and reasonable in their own political system will affect the proposals of what to do.

This is a model for thinking about the impact of beliefs and common values where it is possible to include the rational pursuit of self-serving motives within an institutional framework. The framework poses limits to actions and channels actions in certain direction. It allows only some kinds of self-serving activity and only in limited measures. How much and which type depends on culture and social factors: what is considered appropriate within the circumstances. For example: if a policy proposal is seen to threaten the personal interests (career, power over important issues) of the bureaucrats in charge of the policy it would seem likely that the policy would be recast to minimize the threat or outright abandoned.

9. Preliminary conclusions

Based on the model and some assumptions about the priorities and values of politicians and bureaucrats one may venture some predictions:

- If central politicians and bureaucrats believe a particular NFP principle is important, they probably will do something to strengthen it:
    - If bureaucrats and politicians control an instrument believed to institute a form of the principle fitting into the existing bureaucratic procedures they are likely to do it
    - If bureaucrats and politicians believe the principle is well instituted they are likely to signal support by a symbolical act
    - If bureaucrats and politicians do not have any means to institute a form of the principle fitting into the existing bureaucratic procedures they probably will not do it

- If central politicians and bureaucrats believe a particular NFP principle may threaten the growth of resources and competences of the bureaucracy they are likely to shape their proposal in ways minimising the probability of this outcome.

- If central politicians and bureaucrats believe a particular NFP principle will be difficult to defend in public discourse they will try either to frame or reformulate it to fit the prevailing world view of significant opinion makers, or to argue that it already is well taken care of and not in need of any action now.

If such conclusions may seem a bit dismal and cynical we should take comfort in the fact that they also are of the kind that may be self-negating: once the mechanism is known or suspected it has a tendency to become invalid. People do change as a consequence of new insights – also self-insights.

10. Political culture as an explanatory variable in Norwegian forest policy: some hypotheses

10.1 Studies of forest policy in Norway

In Norway there are few studies of forest policy by independent scholars. A recent descriptive survey is presented by Vevstad (1992). One resent study relevant for our discussion is Gulbrandsen's (2001, 2003) examination of how international environmental agreements affect national policy, in particular how the Convention of Biological Diversity affects Norwegian forest policy and forest practice. His conclusion is that the CBD has not affected the national policy to any significant degree.

Political culture is not a primary focus. However he finds some indications (Gulbrandsen 2001:64) that there is a particular culture within the forest segment

(consisting of the forest section of the Ministry of Agriculture, the forest services, and the forest owners association) that may help explain the lack of legally binding instruments promoting the protection of biodiversity. The voluntary efforts of the forest owners to comply with the CBD requirements are seen as being mostly driven by considerations of the market for timber and timber products. But the changing demand of the market presupposes changes in values at least among some important consumers, and the readiness to follow up on this implies that at least some important forest owners have adopted environmentally friendly values. One may tentatively infer that culture affects the implementation of the CBD policy.

In the absence of real data or relevant studies, the problem of how political culture might affect the implementations of the NFP principles will be discussed hypothetically, based on educated observations of the public discourse on environmental policy issues in Norway.

10.2 Epistemic communities and NFP

The National Forest Programme approach to forest policy is clearly a case where ideas and arguments have been generated within an international policy network. The ideas have been carried home by involved politicians and bureaucrats. The way each government handles the new policy agenda will depend on the particular institutional structure of the country, and on the possibility for gaining acceptance of the new ideas. The ideas must pass through the bureaucratic and political filters, and it must be possible to defend them in public if questions should be asked.

10.3 Filtering effects

Forest policy is clearly within the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture. The issue cannot be sent along to some other ministry. But the Ministry of the Environment has a strong interest in sustainability issues. While the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Agriculture will deny it, most people will believe the Ministry of Environment to be more committed to sustainable forestry than the Ministry of Agriculture. Bureaucrats of the Ministry of Environment will remind those in the Ministry of Agriculture of the problems in forestry and push for solutions judged by them to further sustainability. In so far as an NFP developed by the Ministry of Agriculture can be defended successfully in public, as for sustainable forestry the support of the Ministry of Environment should be secured. No other ministry can be seen to have strong interests in the policy outcome one way or another. The structure of the bureaucracy is clearly not an obstacle to NFP and may be seen as supportive.

In the Norwegian Parliament the situation is somewhat different. The committee responsible for forest policy is the Committee on industry treating not just issues from the agricultural sector but also other industries. Hence forestry will be fairly low on the agenda of most committee members. The same situation obtains for environmental questions in the Committee on energy and environment where most members will be more interested in issues dealing with extraction of oil and generation of hydroelectric

power than in sustainable use of renewable forest resources. However, the political rhetoric includes a strong general commitment to sustainable development among all parties (perhaps with an exception for "Fremskrittspartiet"). If an NFP policy reaches the committee appropriately framed and furnished with the right arguments it could pass without opposition.

One may from this conclude that the institutional structure of the political and bureaucratic system will not filter NFP processes in any obvious way. Some features may tend to strengthen the process. Political culture enters the process in two ways. One is the general political requirement that the policy be publicly defensible as reasonable and just to achieve the goal of sustainability. All concerned bureaucrats and politicians keep this requirement in mind. The other is the professional (sub)cultures of the bureaucrats of the two involved ministries.

10.4 The NFP and bureaucracies

When the NFP enters the bureaucracy it is not only the ideas, values and beliefs of the bureaucrats that are involved, their interests in terms of careers, powers, and competencies will also be involved. Some of the procedural elements of the NFP such as decentralisation and participation involve the future shape of bureaucracies as well as the sustainability of forest usages. To assess the fate of the NFP on its way through the bureaucracy we need to know what centrally positioned politicians and government bureaucrats say about the reality of the values entailed by the NFP. If they for example argue that a particular procedural element already is instituted and functional it would not be reasonable for them to propose to do anything about it.

Table 1 outlines hypothetically the beliefs of central policy makers and government bureaucrats about the reality of the values entailed by NFP in Norway. It must be emphasised that the table is fictitious and is presented only to argue some theoretical points.

One important theoretical assumption is that the information, evaluations, and proposals presented by the bureaucracy are based on what they – to the best of their knowledge – believe to be true. This may or may not correspond to what for example stakeholders in the forest policy believe to be the case. While the beliefs of bureaucrats and central politicians are crucial for the policy enacted, the beliefs of stakeholders are crucial for the fate of the NFP. But the problem of the efficacy of the policy is seldom if ever tested in a rigorous way (at least not in Norway). The feedback to bureaucrats comes through ordinary bureaucratic channels for example in terms of disputes about interpretations of regulations or questions about permissions to act in certain ways. Politicians obtain feedback through ordinary political channels and through the mass media. In both cases it would seem reasonable to assume that the way feedback is generated and the confluence and confounding of many factors affecting the sustainability of forests will make inferences about the efficacy of the forest policy impossible. Basically the beliefs of central policy makers and bureaucrats about NFP issues can remain undisturbed by the impacts of the policy. When they change - and they do change - it is because of changes in the political culture.

Table 1. Conjectures of what central policy makers and government bureaucrats concerned with forest policy say of Norwegian politics in terms of the values entailed by elements of the NFP (hypothetical data)

Values	Import-ance of value involved	Beliefs about current situation	What needs to be done?	Forest Policy Stakeholder: beliefs about current situation
Long term-iterative process	High-Medium	We do it	Nothing	Don't know
Holistic approach	High-Medium	We can become better	Not much	Single species management
Intersectoral approach	High-Medium	Not a problem	Small steps	Sector approach
Decentralisation	High	We do it	We must do it even better	Centralisation
Empowerment of regional and local governments	Medium	Regional governments have too much power	Regional governments need direction and education to use their powers wisely	Bureaucratisation
Coordination mechanisms	High	Not good enough	We need to find new ways of coordinating the activities of regional and local governments	Why?
Partnership and appropriate participatory mechanisms	High	We can become better	Don't know	Bureaucrats do not listen anyway
Conflict resolution	High	Not good enough	More resources are needed	Not good enough
Recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners	High	Fairly acceptable	The Sámi need particular attention	We believe it when we see it
Secure land tenure arrangements	High	The situation is mostly seen as good, some believe land owners are too well protected, others think ownership rights are eroding	Some public goods are not well protected under the current system and need improved protection	Property rights are being usurped by the government and bureaucracy

10.5 The fate of NFP in Norway: a fictitious example

The taken-for-granted worldviews of policy makers will usually constrain the options they are willing to consider. If politicians believe Norway is a decentralized country with extensive powers allocated to local governments they will have a difficult time to see how more decentralisation and more power to local governments will help for any problem. The proposal for the NFP will in this case most probably give high regard to the principle but conclude that nothing needs to be done. If anything, and perhaps also based on the view that the activities of regional and local governments need coordination to achieve the centrally set goals, the proposal may include rules circumscribing the powers of local authorities, for example by transferring decision from local governments to local bureaucracies or by centralisation of some of the issues now decided by the local bureaucracy.

In general we can say that bureaucrats will follow the golden rule: "if it isn't broken, don't fix it!" unless fixing it may entail some benefit for the bureaucracy. If the bureaucracy has reasons to believe some value is well taken care of in Norwegian politics in general, and with no good evidence that forest activities are an exception, they will probably not attempt to change the status of the value or in other ways improve upon the situation by proposing changes in the forest policy. Long-term iterative processes, decentralisation, and empowerment of local and regional governments may belong to this category.

In cases where the bureaucracy does acknowledge that improvements are needed, three cases may obtain:
1. the acknowledgement may be symbolic to flag the importance of the value: holistic and intersectoral approaches may come in this category
2. the acknowledgement may be real, but the bureaucrats do not have the faintest idea of how to improve the situation without jeopardising the long term interests of the bureaucracy: partnership and participation may come in this category
3. the acknowledgement may be real and the bureaucracy proposes what they think may be both a feasible and efficacious policy: in Norway this might be the case for conflict resolution and coordination mechanisms but coordination will probably be limited to the decisions and activities of local governments and stakeholders. And it will most likely imply a strengthening of the local bureaucracy.

Overall one may from this exercise come to expect that a proposal for enacting NFP in Norway will give high praise to the values and principles involved but probably contain only marginal changes on issues such as conflict resolution and coordination of local forest related activities. The proposals will marginally and subtly shift power from local governments to local bureaucracies and from local bureaucracies to central bureaucracies: that is if central politicians, bureaucrats, and other forest stakeholders hold the ideas, beliefs, values, and interests as stipulated here. *There is absolutely no evidence that they do.*

But before we leave the fiction: note that the status of reality does not really enter into the process either in terms of what stakeholders believe, or what local governments

want, not even the efficacy of the proposals in terms of sustainable forestry is a real issue. NFP will by definition further sustainable forestry. "All" will agree on that. Therefore, the local interpretation of what the various elements mean in terms of feasible proposals for policy will do the same. Even if we do not get anyone to say so, the entire process implies it.

Also note that this is a case where "reality" is not a physically observable phenomenon. It is what Searle (1995) would call a constructed social reality. For example: do we have a sufficient degree of decentralisation in Norway? The answer involves judgements and values. It depends very much on the point of view of the person answering the question. Hence, when properly understood, both the bureaucrat's and the stakeholder's verdict are valid evaluations of the situation. But the discrepancy of evaluations is by itself a factor affecting first, the proposals presented, and second, the impact of the enacted policy. If for example the discrepancy of the status of decentralisation is as stipulated the motivations of local stakeholders and their ability to adapt to local conditions will not be as assumed in the NFP theory. Hence one cannot presume that the outcomes of their activities will conform. If they do, it is not because of the policy but because other factors were stronger.

11. Property rights are part of the political culture

Security of tenure (property rights) was at the outset listed as a procedural element. So far not much has been said about either security of tenure or land tenure itself (statutory and customary rights to land). While security of tenure depends on the legal system of the country, the rights themselves: that which should be secured, can be seen as a strong and important component of the political culture. The prevailing property rights to land will be affecting the implementation and outcome of a forest policy. And their degree of security will profoundly shape their dynamic. A very readable exposition of the consequences of lack of secure tenure is presented by Soto (2000).

The taken-for-granted views of stakeholders in terms of what they legitimately can do to or within any particular forest, determine the fate of government regulations. This applies to owners as well as users and those valuing the wilderness in general. Their beliefs formulated as legitimate rights and duties in relation to other stakeholders define the level of conflict about the forest. As long as all agree on what the rights and duties of everyone are, current practice will go on no matter what externally determined rules and regulations say. Only if someone externally starts questioning current practice or if conflicts arise, will an appeal to the disinterested third party to all contracts become interesting and only then will statutory laws and regulations become significant norms.

The NFP advises governments to take all kinds of rights seriously, not just the rights of the registered landowners. Usually policy has been designed for the big landowners, either to contain their power or to facilitate their economic activities. By focusing on big land owners it is easy for central politicians and bureaucrats to frame all holders of rights as adversaries of the public good of sustainable forestry: "forest owners are only

looking for profit". The lawmakers may then use programmatic ideas and rhetoric inherited from the long period of social democracy. By so doing, they will tend to end up with more of the types of regulations they usually have relied on to improve the performance of the forest sector: direct regulations by means of prohibitions, prescriptions, and permissions. But more importantly: in the process other stakeholders will easily be forgotten. The worldviews of the bureaucrats and central politicians and their local networks of discussants will be important. The filtering of viewpoints and issues allowed to enter the process of designing the national NFP will set the agenda. If representatives of indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and small scale forest owners are left out of the policy making process and only large forest owners and representatives of forest industries are consulted, their viewpoints will tend to crowd out any good intentions the bureaucrats may harbour to take care of the interests of those not represented in the process.

The issue of the rights of the various stakeholders may be the element of the NFP where the institutional structure of the bureaucracy and the political system will affect the policy by its ability to filter both the persons and issues entering into the policy making process.

12. Conclusion

Based on the preliminary conclusions and the discussions of the hypothetical example of Norway the conclusions may be reformulated as
- if the world views of central politicians and bureaucrats is that some element of the NFP is well taken care of in current political practice then they will not propose any changes compared to current forest policy
- if the world views of central politicians and bureaucrats is that some element of the NFP is not well taken care of in current political practice then three situations may obtain
    - the policy proposal may express intentions for improvement of an element from the NFP as a rhetorical means to express support for the value involved
    - the policy proposal may express intentions for improvement of an element from the NFP but without proposing any instruments since feasible instruments are unknown or inconceivable within the world views of the policy makers
    - the policy proposal may express intentions for improvement of an element from the NFP and also propose specific and feasible instruments to achieve the goal

In somewhat more general terms we may say that the fate of an NFP to some large degree will depend on the answers to the following questions:
1. Are economic interests threatened or strengthened?
2. Are political power structures threatened or strengthened?
3. Are competencies and resource endowments within the bureaucracy threatened or strengthened?

4. Can new values (within NFP) find support in shifting views, values, and priorities among the general public?

In answering these questions the values, preferences, and judgements of the stakeholder is the basic determining force. That is, the cultural background of the affected group. So if the concerted judgement is that some economic interests are strengthened and none threatened, if some political structure is strengthened and none threatened, if the competencies and resource endowments of no branch of bureaucracy are threatened, and if the new values involved in the NFP can be defended in public debates as reasonable and just, then the NFP has a maximum probability of being enacted. It will come nearly without any effort.

However, at the other end of the scale: if there are obstacles of the above mentioned kind, only political commitment and good political workmanship will prevail in enacting and enforcing a new policy. And the more obstacles there are, the stronger the political commitment needs to be. At least some cultural forces, such as bureaucratic cultures, can be changed and opposition overcome. That is not the case for the general culture of a democratic polity. Thus the most basic requirement for successful implementation would seem to be that the general public either already supports or are ready to adopt the new values that areembodied in the NFP principles.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Glück (1999) summarizes the design principles as
1. national and country leadership,
2. partnership and appropriate participatory mechanisms to involve all interested parties,
3. decentralisation, where applicable,
4. empowerment of regional and local governments,
5. recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners,
6. secure land tenure arrangements,
7. long term-iterative process,
8. consistency with national policies and international commitments,
9. integration with the country's sustainable development strategies,
10. holistic and intersectoral,

and Egestad (1999) adds:
11. establishment of effective coordination mechanisms and conflict resolution schemes.

These recommendations can be rearranged and simplified as
1. The goal of the policy is sustainable forestry
    9. integration with the country's sustainable development strategies,
2. The policy is developed by legitimate political authorities in an international context
    1. national and country leadership,
    8. consistency with national policies and international commitments,
3. The policy process should be iterative and take a holistic and intersectoral approach
    7. long term-iterative process,
    10. holistic and intersectoral,
4. The policy must be decentralised and include effective coordination mechanisms,
    3. decentralisation, where applicable,
    4. empowerment of regional and local governments,
    11. establishment of effective coordination mechanisms,
5. The policy must be based on participation by and respect for the legitimate rights of all stakeholders
    2. partnership and appropriate participatory mechanisms to involve all interested parties,
    5. recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners,
6. Secure land tenure arrangements,