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# Active forest ownership – Perception of Finnish women forest owners

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ABSTRACT

"Active forest ownership" is often understood as a masculine and timber production-centric concept. The objective of this article is to study how women forest owners perceive the concept of "active forest ownership". Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted to study these questions. The interviews were analysed through the framework of feminist political ecology focusing specifically to different scales. The findings suggest that "active forest owner" is a more diverse concept for women forest owners than that described in Finnish forest policies or research. The definition includes feminine concepts like "taking care" of forests and understands that "being aware of forests" is a key part of being "active forest owner". Furthermore, the intimate, family and local environment scales were crucial in impacting women's active forest ownership. These results indicate that forest policies would need to include a wider perspective of "active forest ownership" to address a larger proportion of forest owners and create more inclusive policies that could empower women.

## 1. Introduction

Non-industrial private forest (NIPF) owners own about 60% of Finnish forests (Karppinen et al., 2020) and provide around 80% of the timber supply for the Finnish forest industry (Finnish forest statistics, 2021). Furthermore, timber production in Finland is facing growing pressure to support the industry (Haltia et al., 2017). One suggestion on how to secure the timber supply is to engage those forest owners who are seen as "non-active" (Korhonen et al., 2012; Haltia et al., 2017; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019, 2023).

Around 41% of Finnish forest owners are women (Karppinen et al., 2020), which makes them an important minority group. Although NIPF owners have been studied extensively, less attention has been paid to the gender even though it seems to be an important dimension when studying private forest owners (e.g. Häggqvist et al., 2010; Lidestav, 2010; Umaerus et al., 2013; Follo et al., 2017). A number of studies have confirmed that women forest owners are less active compared to men forest owners in the level of forest management activities (e.g. Lidestav and Berg Lejon, 2013; Häggqvist et al., 2014; Kuuluvainen et al., 2014; Coté et al., 2016; Butler et al., 2017; Eriksson, 2018; Kuhlman et al., 2022a). Women also feel less prepared and less confident in their land ownership than men (Follo, 2008; Hamunen et al., 2020; Markowski-Lindsay et al., 2020) and felt that it was difficult to be recognized as forest owners and to participate in the forestry sector activities (Andersson and Lidestav, 2016; Follo, 2008; Lidestav, 2010; Lidestav and Egan Sjölander, 2007). In addition, women forest owners are often underrepresented in forestry in general, including surveys, forest organisations and forestry practices (Lidestav and Wästerlund, 1999; Karppinen et al., 2020). This is an issue from the equality perspective, but also when studying forest owners at large (Umaerus et al., 2013).

Women forest owners also seem to have more diverse values, valuing the forest aesthetic, forest conservation and wood production more compared to men (Häyrinen et al., 2015; Kuhlman et al., 2022b). Additionally, women are found to express greater environmental concern than men in connection to forestry (e.g. Nordlund and Westin, 2011; Umaerus et al., 2019), but in Finland, the endorsement of nature conservation preferences was found to increase willingness to conserve forests only among men (Vainio and Paloniemi, 2013). The mixed results might reflect the more passive nature of women's forest ownership practices related to forest management or that women are more able to manage their forests, combining timber production with other values (Lidestav and Wästerlund, 1999; Umaerus et al., 2013; Eriksson and Fries, 2020; Karppinen et al., 2020).

Alternatively, the differences might be explained by the dominating

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masculine norms and marginalisation of femininity in forestry (e.g. Reed, 2003; Arora-Jonsson, 2005; Lidestav et al., 2017; Andersson et al., 2018a, 2018b; Johansson et al., 2019a; Johansson et al., 2019b; Lidestav et al., 2019; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2020; Bergstén et al., 2020; Butler et al., 2017; Huff, 2017). While there are different types of masculinities connected to forests (see e.g. Brandth and Haugen, 1998, 2000, 2005; Lidestav and Egan Sjölander, 2007; Colfer, 2020), within this study we have focused to the narrative of forests as masculine places focusing on timber production due to its dominance (Brandth and Haugen, 1998, 2000, 2005; Colfer, 2020). It is also noted that the masculine dominance in forestry has often resulted to policies that focus on masculine interests, concerns, and knowledge (Colfer, 2020). This is changing with the global efforts to understand forests as having multiple values beyond timber production (Colfer, 2020).

Although active forest ownership is often discussed in forest policy documents, it is not a particularly well-defined concept. For example, the main Finnish forest policy document, the National Forest Strategy 2025, does not define what active forest ownership is, but discusses means to make forest owners manage their forests more actively (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019). More active forest management is understood as forestry work, utilising forestry services or utilising geospatial data (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019). Although the National Forest Strategy states that "it is important to support forest owners to take care of their assets and make active decisions based on their own goals", the document talks about "active, resource-efficient and sustainable forestry" creating a basis for "the Finnish forest bioeconomy", and states that "raw material availability and sustainable utilisation of forests are prerequisites for new investments" (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2019, p. 59). While the policy document utilises the term take care or look after, it is used only in connection with forest assets, which refers to forests as an economic asset (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019, p. 59). The recently published National Forest Strategy 2025 emphasises that forests are used actively, sustainably, and diversely (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023). The strategy aims to have forests in active use, they bring income and active decisions are made diversely (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023). In addition to timber production, the new strategy emphasises climate change mitigation and ensuring forest growth, vitality and adaptability (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023). The focus of the new strategy is still on timber production and active use of forests, but the wellbeing of forests has been added (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023). Nevertheless, according to the strategy well managed forests should product timber, sequester carbon and ensure biodiversity – preferably at the same time (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023).

The Finnish forest policy focuses on "entrepreneur-like ownership, activity, growth and profitability" and discusses how "active forest management and utilisation will increase forest owner income and create markets for forest services" (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019, p. 59). Based on the policy, it can be argued that the concept of an active forest owner is linked to timber production, economic objectives and entrepreneurship, and can thus be understood as a masculine concept focusing on economic values and growth. The concept of "active forest owner" has been also studied in Sweden with similar conclusions related to the Swedish forest policy (Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson, 2015).

The "active forest owner" concept seems to be in line with earlier studies which have found that Finnish forestry has a dominant viewpoint which is predominantly economic (Takala, 2016). The predominance might be explained by the history and power structures of Finnish forestry, forest organisations and forest industry (Vaara, 2013). Any issues related to the marginalisation of women forest owners are not mentioned in the Finnish forest policy. Nor are differences in forest management and objectives of marginalised groups of forest owners discussed in any way, even though the Finnish government aims at actualising gender equality "in all fields of society at all times" (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2020, p. 9).

"Active forest owner" could also be understood as the opposite of passive forest owner. The potential increase of passive of forest owners has been a concern raised by many studies (e.g. Kline et al., 2000; Bieling, 2004; Uliczka et al., 2004; Ingemarson et al., 2006; Ní Dhubhain et al., 2007; Ficko et al., 2019; Karppinen et al., 2020; Matilainen and Lähdesmäki, 2023). However, there is no widely accepted definition of passive forest owner (Matilainen and Lähdesmäki, 2023). A passive forest owner has been defined in Swedish forestry as someone who is not very interested in their forests, manages their forests extensively, and whose forests are often too small to generate substantial income (Ingemarson et al., 2006; Trubins et al., 2019). Kline et al., (2000, p. 306) defined passive forest owners as someone who "do not appear to own forest land for any specific stated purpose" whereas Bohlin and Roos (2002, p. 47) define it as "forest owner who considers neither silvicultural, environmental nor economic concerns". The results of Bohlin and Roos (2002) were based to a forest owner questionnaire. The concept of a passive forest owner has also been used in studies on Finnish forest owners (e.g. Korhonen et al., 2012; Heinonen et al., 2020). Often the passivity of forest owners in research has been connected to forest management, timber production or sales (e.g. Blanco et al., 2015; Hänninen et al., 2011; Mattila et al., 2013; Ní Dhubhain et al., 2007). This repeats the masculine understanding of what it means to be a forest owner. Some studies have also understood passivity as lack of interest to their forests (Wiersum et al., 2005; Malovrh et al., 2015). It has been concluded that passive forest owners often do not respond to policy incentives (Boon et al., 2004; Deuffic et al., 2018). According to the recent review of Matilainen and Lähdesmäki (2023), many attributes have been connected to the group of passive forest owners, such as being female (Eriksson and Fries, 2020) and being a highly educated male (Malovrh et al., 2015).

Previous research on gender differences indicates that women might relate differently to the concept of active forest ownership than how it is defined by forest policies and research (Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2020). These differences could rise e.g. from differing value structures (Nordlund and Westin, 2011; Häyrinen et al., 2015; Umaerus et al., 2019; Kuhlman et al., 2022b). In this study we want to better understand the concept of "active forest owners", and hence we interviewed a group of Finnish women forest owners. The aim of this study is to study the different attributes impacting forest ownership through the lens of feminist political ecology focusing to the different scales of these attributes. Feminist political ecology is a subfield of political ecology that suggests that gender together with other categories such as class, race and age, impact the control of natural resources (Sundberg, 2015). Feminist political ecology also focuses to study the relationships between different scales ranging from the intimate to the global to provide understanding of the political economic processes (Sundberg, 2015). Within this study we focused on two research questions: 1. How do women forest owners define "active forest owners"? and 2. What kind of attributes impact forest ownership? We use the theoretical framework of feminist political ecology to reveal how different scales enable or hinder women's activeness in forest ownership. This is important to be able to open the discussion related to the gendered nature of natural resource policies and how that impacts the equality of these policies and the management of natural resources.

## 2. Theoretical background

In this study, we analyse active forest ownership through feminist political ecology. Gender has been acknowledged as an important attribute in environmental management and governance. The literature on gender and natural resource management can be divided into four themes: 1. how different groups value and understand the environment differently, 2. property rights, economic security, and women's labour in connection with them, 3. women in decision-making connected to

environmental management and 4. the significance of changing the roles of women and the role of support from external actors (Arora-Jonsson, 2014). Our research focuses to themes 1. and 4. including how women understand forest ownership and to the roles of women as forest owners and the external actors within forest ownership. While themes 2. and 3. are also important, they were excluded from the study due to the focus to the definition active forest ownership rather than decision making or property rights, women's labour or economic security.

In North America, the existing research on gender and forestry encompasses for example gendered discourses, representations, practices, women's organisations and work identities (Reed, 2003; Reed and Varghese, 2007; Mills, 2012; Huff, 2017; Markowski-Lindsay et al., 2020). Furthermore, intersectional analysis have been conducted for forest management (Sweeney, 2009; Reed, 2010; Ekers, 2013). In the Nordics, in addition to the forementioned studies on gender and forest management, women's organisations (Arora-Jonsson, 2004, 2009, 2010; Brandth et al., 2004, 2015; Andersson and Lidestav, 2016; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2020; Hamunen et al., 2020), gender constructions in forestry sector and gender mainstreaming has been studied (Brandth and Haugen, 2000, 2005; Lidestav and Egan Sjölander, 2007; Johansson and Ringblom, 2017; Andersson et al., 2018a, 2018b; Johansson et al., 2019a, 2019b; Ringblom and Johansson, 2020).

Research on gender and environment has been developing during the recent years. Feminist political ecology can be seen as a field focusing to "gendered processes underpinning the politics of resource access as well as the gendered agency of subjects involved in negotiations over environmental resources struggles" Elmhirst et al. (2017, p. 1137). Feminist political ecology holds that gender is a crucial element when access, control and knowledge of environmental resources (Elmhirst et al., 2017). Furthermore, the field discusses how social identities, such as "active forest owner" are formed through relations with nature and everyday practices. Even that gender and natural resource management has been the focus of research for many years, still the feminist analysis of gender in environmental policies and practice is asked for, especially in the global north (Reed and Christie, 2009; O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2011; Arora-Jonsson, 2014).

Feminist political ecology focuses on gendered processes in connection of natural resource politics (Elmhirst et al., 2017). It is a loosely defined field of studies, which was influenced largely by thinking of Rocheleau et al. (1996). In the field of feminist political ecology analysis a significant position has been given to space, place and scales (Elmhirst, 2011a). For example, the impact of different types of scales (national vrs. household or family) as well as how these scales impact the environmental governance and practices is central (e.g., Rocheleau et al., 1996; Gururani, 2002; Nightingale, 2011; Sultana, 2009, 2011; Elmhirst, 2011a, 2011b; Truelove, 2011; Mollet and Faria, 2013; Bezner Kerr, 2014; Buechler and Hanson, 2015; Sundberg, 2015; Gay-Antaki, 2016; Elmhirst et al., 2017; Vaz-Jones, 2018; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021). Within this study we focus on how these scales form the basis for how the women forest owners interviewed see the concept of "active forest owner".

Within this study, gender is understood as a process where gendered subjectivities are performed (see e.g. Butler, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2004). Butler (1990) argues that while gender is influenced by the norms and socialisation of the environment, the subject is still not a passive bystander, but an active agent that is constructing gender. Performing gender is understood as a process that is continuously done in the society through daily actions, which build on existing norms in the society and change over space, place and time (Butler, 1990). Within this study gender is also seen as relational. What is masculine and feminine are defined in relation to each other, and both can be performed by men and women. The women's performance of masculinities is also called female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998/2019). Female masculinity is not understood as an imitation of maleness, but more of practicing or performing what is understood as masculine (Kazyak, 2012). These types of practices have been shown to be normative or generating status for example in the field of girls basketball, women working in a farm or as forest owners (Pascoe, 2007/2012; Kazyak, 2012; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021).

Thus, this study analyses the concept of "active forest owner" as a gendered performance through the lenses of gender seen as changing, performed and relational concept. Further, in line with feminist political ecology, we analyse how different scales enable or hinder "active forest ownership".

## 3. Materials and methods

### 3.1. Interviews

The study is based on 22 semi-structured interviews of Finnish women who own forest land. The interviewees were recruited from a Facebook group called LadyForest – *naismetsänomistajat* (women forest owners), which is a group for all women forest owners who own or will own forest land. The Facebook group is used by the participants to ask the community for opinions, guidance and help in various topics connected to forest management. It is likely that the participants of this group are more active than if the sample would have been collected with other means. At the time of the interviews, the group had more than 4600 participants. The researchers contacted this Facebook group to recruit voluntary participants for an interview. The thematic topics of the interviews are presented in the interview guide and focused on forest ownership, womanhood, active forest owners, and support (Appendix I). The interviews were conducted in February 2022 through Microsoft Teams. The interviews length varied from around 30 min to 1 h. All participants have provided appropriate informed consent in the beginning of the interview. In Finland, this kind of data collection does not require ethical evaluation (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, 2019).

The size of the forest properties owned by the interviewees varied from just a few to thousands of hectares, with a median area of 60 ha (Table 1). The interviewees were younger and more educated than forest owners on average. More specifically, they were about 47 years of age on average, which is 13 years less than Finnish forest owners in general (Karppinen et al., 2020). About 60% of the interviewees had a university degree and about 40% had a higher vocational diploma, whereas about 18% of Finnish forest owners in general have a university degree and 27% a higher vocational diploma (Karppinen et al., 2020, Table 1).

The majority of the interviewees had inherited their forests (27%), whereas about one quarter had bought them (23%) or acquired them during generational renewal (23%). Generational renewal is a procedure whereby the continuity of agricultural production is transferred from retiring farmers to next generation farmers (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2022). Earlier studies have reported that women

**Table 1**
Sample characteristics.

| | Average Finnish forest owner | Sample of this study |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 60 years | 47 years |
| Median property size | 9,7 ha | 60 ha |
| Educational background | | |
| University degree | 18% | 60% |
| Higher vocational diploma | 27% | 40% |
| Vocational diploma | 27% | 0% |
| No vocational education | 28% | 0% |
| Way of acquiring forests | | |
| Inheritance | 46% | 27% |
| Purchase | 20% | 23% |
| Generational renewal | 20% | 23% |
| Gift | 7% | 5% |
| Multiple means | 6% | 23% |

Source: Karppinen et al., 2020, Metsäkeskus, 2024.

forest owners inherit their forests more often than men due to their longer average lifespan and being younger on average than their spouses (Chen and Volpe, 2002; Hacker, 2010; Lidestav, 2010; Butler et al., 2017; Umaerus et al., 2019). Half of the interviewees had sole ownership of their forests and half owned them together with a relative or family member.

### 3.2. Methods of analysis

The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), listing what type of themes emerge from the interviews. Based on the interviews, 12 themes were identified (Table 2). Interviews were conducted by one researcher. The interviews were transcribed using the transcript function of Microsoft Teams, followed by correction round by one of the researchers using the recordings of the interviews. The transcripts were then carefully analysed, and all sections related to the concept of "active forest owner" or attributes impacting to forest owner were collected to Excel. A number of iterations were made during analysing and re-analysing of the interviews. The comparison and adding themes were a result of discussions with the three researchers. Within this study the interviewees are referred to as forest owners (FO) and with an individual number e.g. FO 1.

When analysing the attributes that impact forest ownership, we used the lens of feminist political ecology. Feminist political ecology brings feminist theory, objectives and practices together (Sundberg, 2015). One key aspect of feminist political ecology has been the relevance of different scales of political ecological life. Feminist political ecology has always included the intimate as a relevant scale in addition to other scales ranging to the national and global policies (Gururani, 2002; Sultana, 2011; Truelove, 2011; Sundberg, 2015). Within this study we use the scales derived from earlier feminist political ecology studies but leave room for adding new scales based on the interviews (Table 3).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Definition of active forest owner

The majority (70%) of interviewees described themselves as active forest owners. Three distinct dimensions emerged from the definition of "active forest owner" (Fig. 1). When asked what active forest owner meant, most of the interviewees stated that an active forest owner is interested in and aware of their forests (FO 1–5, 7–10, 12, 14, 17–19 and 22[1]). For example, forest owners stated: *"Well, an active forest owner is of course interested in their own forests"* (FO 22),"*Active forest owner is one that knows. Knows what happens in the forest, like if you have had storms or pests and knows about the annual plan and what type of forest there is, like if it is ready for harvesting or needs to be planted…"* (FO 5) and "*Active forest owner firstly knows or finds out about their own forests*" (FO 4). Awareness was understood as broad awareness, knowledge, and an interest in forests and following forest-related topics, as well as different forest stakeholders: '[Active forest owner] *follows news. Politics. Both in Finland and internationally. Takes a stand.*' (FO 3) and" … *that they are aware of things, forest industry needs, needs of nature, what development is happening in the field of* [nature] *protection or harvesting or forest management*" (FO 1) (Fig. 1). Taking a stand was referring to providing an opinion when asked for example in questionnaires, more than any political activity. Many also felt that an active forest owner acts based on their own values (FO 1, 2, 4, 7, 8–10, 14 and 19). For example, "[Active forest owner] … *thinks about their own values for it* [forest] *and what they want from that forest*" (FO 4) and "[Active forest owner] *knows how to define their own values… and knows what they want from their forests*" (FO 9). However, concrete action was also an important part of the definition. Action was defined as visiting forests to support awareness and/or doing activities in the forest (FO 9–11, 14, 16–18 and 22). Forest owners stated for example that "*visiting the forest is surely an essential part of…* [active forest ownership]" (FO 10), "[Active forest owner] *visits their forests.*" (FO 9) and [Active forest owner]…*visits when something is done to check* (FO 11). "Doing" entailed traditional forestry work such as planting or more leisurely activities such as walking or berry picking: "[Active forest owner] … in addition does forestry work in the forest if wants to" (FO 11) and "[Active forest owner]… can then for example do those things that you can do by yourself, plant and cut brushes… and go berry picking" (FO 14).

In addition, the dimension of taking care of the forest emerged. This dimension was understood in different ways: firstly, maintaining the economic value and production of the forest and, secondly, taking care of its biodiversity and/or natural state. One forest owner said that active forest ownership is "… *two-sided. It can be somebody that sees to it that the forests produce timber. But also a forest owner that sees to it that the forest remains a forest. That the diversity of forests and other vegetation prevails, along with the animals*" (FO 20), while others stated that "[Active forest owner] is someone wo takes care of forests, that they do not leave them standing alone" (FO 6) and "[Active forest owner] is someone who takes care of the forest assets (FO1). According to our results, timber production and economic values were not at the centre of the "active forest owner" discourse. From the interviewees, 12 noted that an active forest owner can be someone focusing on timber production and/or safeguarding the forest ecosystem (FO 1,2,4,7–9, 12,14, 19–22).

In the interviews the importance of awareness and acting based on ones own values were repeated. FO 21 stated that "[Active forest owner ] *is aware … and it requires listening to the controversial views* [about forest management] *and then making your own decisions based on them.*" When asked to define what an active forest owner is, none of the interviewees mentioned only economic attributes. Instead, there was always an element of following own values, being aware of the forests or visiting forests that qualified being an active forest owner.

Even that the basis of contacting these forest owners was their

**Table 2**
Thematic categories of "active forest owner" based on the interviews.

| Theoretical background | Interview-based themes |
|---|---|
| The concept of "active forest owner" | – Takes care of the economic potential of the forest<br>– Has updated forest plan<br>– Makes independent decisions based on their own values<br>– Is aware of and interested in their forests<br>– Follows forest topics (politics, discussions, EU decisions, economy and industry)<br>– Visits forests<br>– Understands forest management<br>– Takes care of forests<br>– Collaborates with forest stakeholders<br>– Checks the quality of forestry work<br>– "Does" [activities] in forests<br>– Acts according to one's values |

**Table 3**
Thematic categories of scales of "active forest owner" based on the literature and interviews.

| Literature based scales | Interview-based scales |
|---|---|
| The intimate | The intimate |
| Daily life | Family |
| Household | Education |
| Local community | Local community |
| National | National |
| Global | Global |

Sources: Gururani, 2002, Sultana, 2011, Elmhirst, 2011a and Truelove, 2011.

[1] All interview participants were coded with FO and a number from 1 to 22.

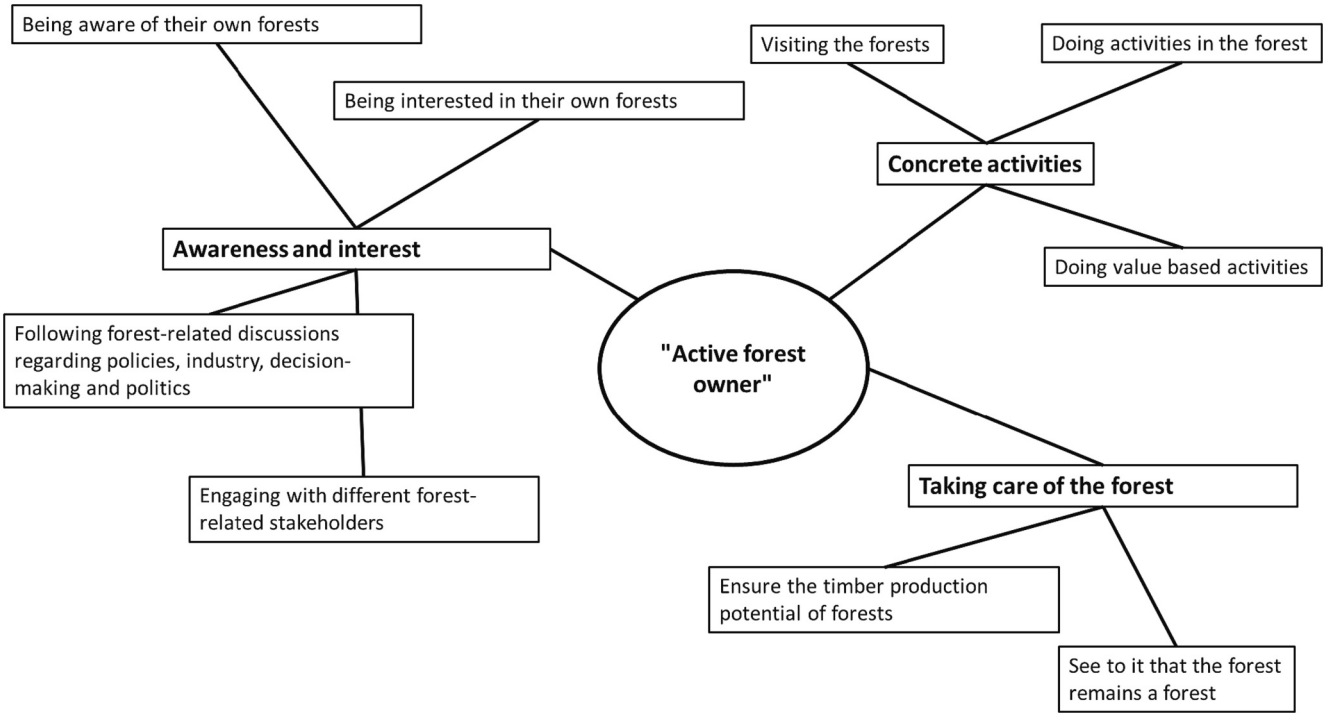


**Fig. 1.** "Active forest owner" dimensions based on the interviews.

womanhood, being part of the LadyForest Facebook group and volunteering to the interview, womanhood was not a topic that came up in the interviews. Even when prompted if the interviewees would have experienced that womanhood had impacted their forest ownership or treatment as a forest owner, only one forest owner mentioned that it had: "*I was in a brush cutting course and then I asked that what kind of shoes would be good for planting… and they answered that certainly not high heel shoes. Then I thought that if a man would have asked that question, would he had the same answer to the question." (FO 5)*. This does not mean that womanhood is not an impacting attribute, but more that these interviewees thought themselves primarily as forest owners, not women forest owners. This can also be a result of the dominance of masculinity in the field. Thus womanhood was not taken as an attribute to the active forest ownership. Furthermore, none of the interviewees mentioned about the need to be a certain kind of forest owner to be accepted by e.g. family, local social groups, forestry professionals or society. This of course does not mean that they would not have a large impact to the forest ownership. What was noted however, was that if forestry professionals or service providers did not accommodate the needs of forest owners, they were frustrated by their incompetence. For example, one forest owner stated that after an unsuccessful encounter with a forest professional "… *there was nothing else to do than figure it out yourself*" (FO 21).

Interviewees 2, 11, 14–16 and 20 stated that they did not consider themselves "active forest owners". All others stated that they defined themselves as active. The definition of active did not differ based on if the interviewee defined themselves as active or not. For example FO2 defined themselves as non-active and stated that "[Active forest owner] … *is someone who is aware of their forests*" and FO 11 (also non-active) mentioned that "[Active forest owner]… *visits forests*". Three of those interviewees mentioned that their life situation (studies, small children, health issues) prevented them from being active (FO 11, 14 and 15). Forest owners 16 and 20 forest owners had decided to leave their forests untouched, which led them to think that they were non-active in their forest ownership. One forest owner described how her father largely managed her forests, and hence they were actively managed, but not by her (FO 2).

### *4.2. Scales enabling or hindering women's active forest ownership*

#### *4.2.1. The intimate*

There were many scales that the women forest owners identified having an impact to their forest ownership. In the more intimate, interviewees 9, 10, 14, 18 and 21 mentioned the need to reflect own values in the management of the forests, thus having an impact of what kind of forest owners they have become. For example, forest owner 9 stated that it is important that"*one can define those own values… what one really wants from there* [the forest]". Forest owners 1, 5 and 18 mentioned that forest management work gives them empowerment. Forest owner 1 mentioned that "when *I saw the impact of my own hands in brush cutting, that then… made me enthusiastic about owning forests*" *and Forest owner 5 continued that " It is also kind of cool to swing chainsaw or brush cutter* [in the forest] … *you get this feeling of empowerment"*. Within the interviews forestry work was the only part of forest ownership mentioned that gave the sense of empowerment to the women forest owners. Could it be that the feeling of empowerment was connected to forestry work because there women could perform masculinities as forest owners? For forest owners 2, 5 and 11 forests were important part of income generation or economic security. For forest owner 11 forest ownership was"*what I will do now and will do in the future and this is my livelihood*".

#### *4.2.2. Family*

Family traditions, childhood environment and family members were seen as important part of becoming forest owner. Interviewees 2–11, 13 and 15–22 described their childhood or inheritance as the starting point for their interest in forests. For example, FO 3 mentioned that "*forest has been part of life from childhood*" and FO 6 stated that " *starting from when I was small I was part of different types of jobs like planting, shrub cutting and the like"*. Forest owners 4, 9–11, 20 and 22 also reported both elements.

Almost all of the interviewees mentioned their father as an important person who had influenced their interest in forests and helped in decision making (FO 2–4, 6–14, 16–20 and 22). Forest owner 10 stated that "*dad has definitely been the largest impact*". Other relatives mentioned were mothers, spouses, grandfathers, and other relatives. Men were mentioned as persons influencing interviewees' forest ownership three

times more often than women.

For most of the interviewees, the forest had been a childhood environment (FO 2–11, 13, 17–15, 19–22). This meant that forests were discussed and visited, and forestry work was carried out together with family members or relatives: "*forests are family forests and that has been a central thought … We planted trees and then went to check how the trees were growing…*" (FO 10). The childhood environment had already created an interest in owning forests at an early age among these interviewees. In some cases, this formative environment guided the interviewees to study forestry as their future profession: "*I grew up in the forest, so I didn't think of any other possible options than a forestry-related education*" (FO 7). In other cases, even if the forest had been present during childhood, the interest in forest ownership emerged later in life, usually when the forest was inherited or bought.

The concept of a "family forest" was also mentioned by interviewees 10,11, 13–17 and 19–22. This concept was understood to be a mixture of the impact of family members and relatives, but also due to heritage. Some interviewees referred to family history dating back hundreds of years (FO 11), others to long dead relatives that still affected the way in which forests were managed, even if the interviewees had never met them (FO 11 and 10). There was a strong link between the concept of a "family forest" and feeling a sense of duty or responsibility to the past and future generations: "*… I'm just one part of a long family chain; I take care of the forests for a time and then I pass them forward*" (FO 10).

Forest owners 1–3, 5–7, 10–13 and 15–20 indicated having a trusted person in their family with whom to discuss forestry-related topics and who was inspiration to the interviewees. It was often a husband, father, or mother. For example, Forest owner 1 stated that*"my spouse got carried away [about forestry] and I got carried away with him"* and forest owner 7 mentioned that "*dad always took us kids* [to forest]*… and so we did forestry work with dad.* Family, childhood environment and family forest can be all regarded as being part of the socialisation process into forest ownership. Family and relatives were seen as empowering and supporting for the women forest owners interviewed. No mentions of directly restrictive or supressing family members or relations were mentioned.

#### 4.2.3. Education

Interviewees 8, 9, 14, 21 and 22 had decided to study forestry after they had inherited forest. The reasons for studying forestry after receiving an inheritance were increased interest in forests and/or confusion related to forest management and the guidance received from forestry professionals. For example, one forest owner stated that after an unsuccessful encounter with a forest professional "*… there was nothing else to do than figure it out yourself*" (FO 21).

A forestry professional was also sometimes mentioned as a trusted person. However, interviewees who had started studying forestry topics did not mention this type of trusted person, or they mentioned that the trusted person had passed away or was elderly (FO 8, 9, 14, 21 and 22). "*After my uncle passed away, these forest topics became actual, like that before I didn't know anything*" (FO 22). Some interviewees stated that the contradictory information coming from forestry professionals was so confusing that they needed to study forestry to be able to manage their forests (FO 9, 14 and 21). Forest owner 9 told us that "*It was so contradictory the information (related to forest management) …. that I didn't have other options than to study forestry myself.*" Furthermore, forest owner 14 stated that" *I first got bad experiences from forest professionals… so I decided that I have to find out things by myself. And then I found information out about … forestry studies."*. Forestry studies mentioned by the interviewees were vocational school or university of applied sciences type of educations. Studies were seen as a scale which was including and empowering for women forest owners.

#### 4.2.4. The local

Interviewees 3, 7, 8, 11–13, 16, 18 and 21 mentioned a local trusted forestry professional as someone who had impacted their forest ownership. The connection that the interviewees had formed with these trusted professionals was deeper than a formal relationship, almost family like FO 3 described "*in the family circle there are also* [forest] *entrepreneurs and contractors*". In contrast, some of the interviewees expressed a lack of trust towards forestry professionals (FO 5, 9, 10 and 14). They felt that such professionals working for forest management associations or private companies promoted their own agenda and lacked the ability to listen: " *and in addition I have a bit prejudice against forest professionals, that they are men that talk about things that I don't understand anything about"* (FO 14).

Furthermore, varying local social environments were mentioned by interviewees 5–7, 9 and 10. They included the small-town communities where the forest was located, local hunting groups, colleagues, and forest professionals. These groups had particularly influenced how the forest was managed and how the forest owners thought that their actions were evaluated and valued. This scale seemed to both include and exclude women forest owners. Women felt that local groups listened to them (e.g. local hunting groups) but at the same time local communities evaluated the actions of woman forest owners.

#### 4.2.5. The national and the global

When asked about attributes influencing forest ownership, no elements at national or global scales were mentioned However, when defining what active forest ownership includes, forest owners interviewed mentioned for example "*Follows news. Politics. In Finland and internationally and takes a stand"* (FO3)*,* "*Follows forest related public discussions and follows industry. Like how forest industry is doing…"* (FO12) and "*… follow a lot of* [Forest related] *media"*. (FO21). Given these answers national and international policies, news and discussions were interesting and something that the forest owners were following and some also participating into: [If there are] "*…questionnaires or some surveys … I will actively answer"* (FO3). So even that the scale of national and global was not seen as actively impacting forest ownership, it was still seen as important for "active forest owner". It could be that the scale of the national and the global in forest policies are seen as a tool of masculine power which is interpreted as excluding for women forest owners.

## 5. Discussion

This qualitative interview study explored the concept of "active forest owner" from the perspective of Finnish women forest owners. The objective was to study how women forest owners conceptualize the concept of "active forest owner". This approach was selected due to the fact that the forest sector in general is dominated by masculinity, leaving femininity marginalised (e.g. Lidestav and Ekström, 2000; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021). Thus, it is likely that by focusing on women, new aspects of forest ownership could be discovered.

The findings indicate that for the women interviewed awareness, interest, activity, and taking care of forests were central to the concept of "active forest owner". It can be argued that women include both masculine and feminine attributes to the concept of "active forest owner". While economic activity and forestry practices can be understood as masculine, care taking can be understood often as an activity of women (Liepins, 1998) inducing that women have the responsibility of caring (e.g. Acker, 2004). While taking care expands the concept of what "active forest owner" is, at the same time it reinforces the normative understanding of what femininity entails.

In her study Laszlo Ambjörnsson (2021) found out that women forest owners were performing female masculinities in relation to the concept of active forest owner. Similar results were not noted within our study. The interviewees described that both economic and masculine attributes are part of being an active forest owner, as well as more feminine attributes such as taking care of the forests. None of the interviewees mentioned a need to be a certain kind of forest owner to be accepted by e.g. family, local social groups, forestry professionals or society. When

encountering conflicting advice or not getting the forestry services that they wanted, they persisted with finding other service providers or advisors or figuring out things without help.

The results of this study also discuss a sense of duty towards forests and the responsibility of passing the forests to the next generation. Similar results have been reported by other forest owner studies (e.g. Lähdesmäki and Matilainen, 2014; Matilainen, A. and Lähdesmäki, M. 2022). In the study of Lähdesmäki and Matilainen (2014) forest ownership was seen as source of intergenerational continuity. Similar results have been reported by Bliss and Martin (1989) who found out that forests were seen as a legacy by many forest owners. On the other hand, legacy has been seen as an attribute of passive or inactive forest owners (Matilainen and Lähdesmäki, 2023). Within this study, intergenerational continuity was understood as an attribute activating forest owners.

According to the results of this study, active forest owners' who valued economic timber production did not conflict with forest owners valuing nature protection, heritage, or climate change mitigation. The results point out that all of these values could indicate that a forest owner is active (Fig. 1). More important than certain type of values was that the forest owner is able to act according to one's values. This contradicts Laszlo Ambjörnsson (2021), who found that nature protection and "active forest owner" were opposing interests. The coexistence of nature protection and economic values is present in "taking care of the forests". Taking care has a feminine social value (Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021) and includes environmental values. However, in our study, it also meant taking care of the timber production potential of the forests. This result can be interpreted in many ways. Does including economic values into the concept of taking care reflect actual differences in activity, or is it more of a language difference? Furthermore, including economic and production values into the concept of taking care, enforces the dominance of masculine economic values in forestry. In addition, is this reflecting the current discourse of the national discussions related to forests which might differ between Sweden and Finland? How forests are seen in public discourse is changing through time, and as such, these results should be interpreted against the current discourses of forests in Finland, where controversial discussion for example between using forests for timber production, protecting biodiversity and sequestering carbon is increasing.

Another explanation to this peaceful co-existence of feminine environmental values and masculine economic values is that a conflict with these two sides might be understood as a challenge to the prevailing dominant understanding of forest ownership. Maybe directly challenging the dominant understanding is still seen somewhat controversial among forest owners. If this is a feature of women forest owners only, or if similar phenomena could be found from men, should be studied further. Nevertheless, in our interpretation, these different values can coexist peacefully in the concept of "active forest owner" as different type of forests owners are accepted as active. It does not necessarily mean that each active forest owner would value different things in their forests, but that there are multiple ways of being an active forest owner. This might be a feature of Finnish forest owners or impact of the sample method. To be able to understand if and how nationality or sample method have impacted results, further studies are needed.

Within this study, the active forest ownership entailed both feminine (environmental protection and taking care) and masculine values (timber production and economic benefit). In the Nordic context the forest owners who have many, even contradicting objectives to their forests can be seen as the mainstream (Karppinen et al., 2020). If this plurality of values that is seen in discourse related to forest ownership is reflected in the forest management can be questioned.

These results differ from Laszlo Ambjörnsson's study (2021), where timber production and the connected activities were essential part of the concept of "active forest owner". Awareness, especially connected to various stakeholders, was a dimension which was not present in the studies by Ambjörnsson (ibid.), and Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson (2015), nor in the National Forest Strategy (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019). However, the results of Ambrjörnsson's study (ibid.) and our study are similar with regard to the notion that being able to demonstrate individual preferences in forest management decisions was seen as important for the definition of an active forest owner. The reason for the differences in the results might be explained by the differences in the forest related discourses of Finland and Sweden.

This study suggests that forest policy was not seen as an important attribute impacting active forest ownership of the studied women. It seems that forest policy was followed to some extent, as following forest policies was mentioned to be a part of being active forest owner. Finnish forest policy can be seen as reflecting and reinforcing the masculine dominance and economic values, thus impacting women forest owners in a subtle way that might not be identified by the forest owners. On the other hand, forest policies related to e.g. financial support related to biodiversity protection and forest management seemed to be familiar to the women forest owners interviewed, although struggles related to understanding these topics were mentioned.

The results of this study indicate that the women forest owners seemed to have a much wider understanding of the active forest owner concept than the official forest policy (Fig. 2). When policy documents focus on economic potential of the forests, forest plans and independent decisions, the results of this study include attributes such as awareness, visiting and checking the condition of forests, collaboration with stakeholders and doing different activities in the forests. The women interviewees actively challenged the prevailing understanding of an economically focused forestry culture that dominates forestry in Finland (Takala, 2016). In their understanding, a forest owner can be active in many ways such as visiting one's forests, being aware of ones forests and protecting forests.

To understand how our results align to previous results in other Nordic countries we compared the Finnish policy and literature, results of this study and results from a previous Swedish study connected to the concept of "active forest owner". The concept of "active forest owner" in the studies of Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson (2015) and Laszlo Ambjörnsson (2021), in the Finnish policy and literature used within this study (Korhonen et al., 2012; Haltia et al., 2017; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019) had more overlap than with this study (Fig. 2). In Sweden, an "active forest owner" was seen as a "masculine expression of the neoliberalisation of Swedish forest governance" (Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021, Appendix II, p. 1). Dimensions such as awareness, interest, nature conservation or doing activities were not mentioned by the Swedish studies (Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson, 2015; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021).

The results of this study indicate that there were many different scales of attributes that enabled active forest ownerships ranging from the intimate to the national and global. This might be one explanation why the women forest owners interviewed within this study have more diverse understanding of what "active forest owners" mean compared to the Finnish forest policy and existing studies (e.g. Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson, 2015; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021). In addition, it can be argued that gender impacts this versatile understanding of what "active forest ownership" is, however as we did not include men into our study, it is hard to assess in what ways gender might impact and what kind of differences there are. Whatever the reasons behind this difference are, it is clear that the masculine and economic descriptions of active forest owner differ greatly from the ones provided by these forest owners.

According to this study, important scales enabling women's active forest were childhood environment, family, and the initiation of forest ownership. Childhood environment and family have an influence on forest owners through the years and the influence is subtle. Most of the interviewees had spent their childhood in the countryside, close to the forest. Due to urbanisation in Finland (Rehunen et al., 2018), fewer forest owners will have the opportunity to have a similar childhood environment. This development might impact the activity of women forest owners in the future. The initiation of forest ownership was

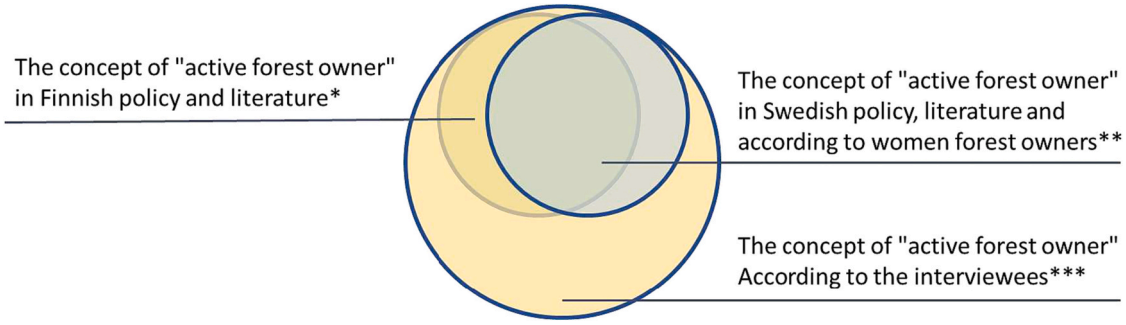


**Fig. 2.** Overlap between the three different concepts of "active forest owner".
*Sources:* * Kline et al., *2000;* Bohlin and Roos, *2002;* Wiersum et al., 2005*;* Ingemarson et al., 2006*;* Ní Dhubhain et al., *2007;* Hänninen et al., *2011;* Korhonen et al., 2012*;* Mattila et al., *2013;* Blanco et al., *2015;* Malovrh et al., *2015;* Haltia et al., 2017*;* Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2019*;* Trubins et al., 2019.** Holmgren and Arora-Jonsson, 2015, Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021 *** *Results of this study.*

important in generating motivation towards forest management. The need for support and information at that point in time was noted by many interviewees.

The women forest owners often had a trusted person helping them with decision-making. These women had social capital, meaning social networks and the ability to utilise them for mutual benefit (Tripp et al., 2009) in forest management. The trusted persons were often family members, but sometimes forest professionals as well. The relationship with the trusted person needed to be confidential. If confidence was lacking, forest professionals were seen as people acting for their own ends. This is in line with earlier studies (Hujala and Tikkanen, 2008). Some interviewees also expressed frustration towards forest professionals as their guidance was unclear and misleading. In the absence of a trusted person, some of the interviewees felt that they lacked the understanding needed to manage their forests. Sometimes this resulted in a decision to engage in forestry-related studies. This is in line with Hamunen et al. (2020), who found that women forest owners have a need for solid information before they make forest management decisions.

The results of this study indicate that to be able to be an active forest owner, information, and knowledge of one's forests and the surrounding environment is needed. It can be assumed that supporting trusted persons are an important part of transferring knowledge and awareness. The Finnish national strategy emphasises active forest management and use but does not mention the importance of this type of transfer of information (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, 2023). If the strategic focus of the policy is in active forest ownership, should the focus be in providing more information and create awareness to forest owners to support them in their decision making?

Fathers or other male family members often influenced women's forest ownership. The role of male support in has been studied for example in transferring businesses to daughters, where parental support has been seen as important for successful transitions (Overbeke et al., 2013). It has been suggested that father-daughter relations support the building of successor identity and legitimacy (McAdam et al., 2021), and hence the father-daughter relationship could also be significant in building an "forest ownership" identity and in helping daughters in the transition to the masculine environment of forestry.

The importance of family and childhood environment in the results of this study can indicate that the socialisation process into forest ownership has significant impact to active forest ownership. Previously it has been noted that socialisation processes in forestry favour men (Lidestav, 2010). Are women forest owners also socialised to the prevailing masculine forestry or do women have the opportunity to be forest owners that do not reinforce the dominant understanding of forest ownership? These results indicates that at least some women forest owners perform forest ownership that reflects a wider value base than the one the dominates forestry.

The family forest concept was also a frequent influence on forest ownership. This corresponds to the role of women as transitive elements between generations, leaving the management of the forest in the hands of a professional or a family member and taking only a transitive role in forest management (Lidestav, 2010). In the case of active women, there were many who had adopted the role of being a transformative element instead, transforming forest management in the direction they preferred (Lidestav, 2010). These women felt free to make decisions as they wished, but also felt a responsibility towards past and future generations. However, for the most part, the women participating in this study could be described as transformative agents, managing their forests based on their own goals, needs and opinions (Lidestav, 2010).

Womanhood was not mentioned as an attribute impacting the active forest ownership of the women interviewed. Nevertheless, womanhood and gender was an important factor defining the scope and approach of this study. The noted differences between Swedish and Finnish women forest owners might be also explained by the different discourses related to womanhood and feminist infrastructures. Nygård and Duvander (2021) compared the discourses connected to Finnish and Swedish parental leave policies. They found out that gender equality dominated the discourses in Sweden, while social inclusion was prevailing in Finland (Nygård and Duvander, 2021). If gender equality is more prevailing in the policy discourses in Sweden, it might also impact women forest owners and how they see their womanhood in the masculine environment of forestry.

The women interviewed did not mention forest policies as something that would impact their forest ownership and clearly the definition of "active forest owner" differed from the policy documents. However, forest policies were mentioned as something to follow (Fig. 1). According to the results of Deuffic et al. (2018) forest owners tend to adopt forest policies that support their management views. Could it be that women forest owners did not feel that the forest policies would directly consider them as they do not entail many values important to women? It could be argued that with a wider understanding of what active forest ownership entails, more forest owners would feel connected to the forest policies. Deuffic et al. (2018) also discusses emerging group of forest owners that might redefine what it means to be a forest owner instead of following rules. It seems that the definition of active forest owners from this study at least challenges the current understanding of forest ownership if not redefine it. It also could be argued that the Finnish forest policy excludes women forest owners from the active forest ownership when they define it in a narrow and masculine way. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the current way forest policy is driven from up towards forest owners, and forest owners have limited opportunities to participate defining the policies. The forest policies seem to have more masculine and econonomic viepoint to forest policy than for example the current forest related discourses in Finnish media.

The scales identified within this study were seen as enabling and

empowering such as the intimate, family and education. These scales were seen as supportive, enabling active forest ownership and empowering women forest owners. Nevertheless, some scales were seen as also distant, excluding, and utilising power over women forest owners, such as the local and especially the national and global. Discourses and advice from professionals connected to how forest should be managed was mentioned as too difficult, resulting to a feeling of exclusion.

As this study focused exclusively on women forest owners, it would also be important to study how different scales enable or hinder the paths towards forest ownership among men. For example, do men turn to education if they feel that they lack forest management information? Or do men turn to a trusted person to feel capable of taking care of their forests? And are these trusted persons more likely to be men or women? As mentioned, all of the interviewees were recruited from a social media group, which was exclusively open to women and through which the women were looking for peer support related to forestry. According to an earlier study in Finland, women forest owners gain inspiration and courage via safe and supportive peer-learning groups due to the information they have gotten from the group (Hamunen et al., 2020). It would be interesting to find out if this need for peer support is more common among women than men, or if it is a result of masculine dominance over forestry.

This study had its limitations. For example, only a small number of women forest owners in Finland were interviewed for the study. The majority of the interviewees described themselves as active forest owners, which indicates that the group consisted of forest owners that describe themselves as active more often than forest owners on average. This was expected as the recruitment of interviewees took place through the LadyForest Facebook group. In addition, those who volunteered to participate in the study might describe themselves as active more often than other LadyForest Facebook group members. The results would likely have been different if the sample had been collected by means of random selection and had included men. The paths of those interviewed did not represent women forest owners as a whole but were individual stories.

Furthermore, it is likely that by interviewing actors within a structure limits the information that they can provide about the structure themselves (e.g. Whitmeyer, 1994). This might be a reason why in the results the scale of family is highlighted instead of national forest policies and regulations. It needs to be also noted that people tend to exclude uncomfortable experiences and reducing complexity to follow social norms or rationality (e.g. Smith and Mackie, 2007). The interviewees generally also had high socialisation into forestry as many had forests as a big part of their childhood environment.

In this paper, we focused on analysing gender as one attribute shaping persons' access to managing forests, but we are also aware of the importance of other categories such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, which are also at play and form intertwined relationships. Furthermore, we understand that gender is more of a continuum than something that could be defined by a single term. However, in this study, womanhood is at the core of the connection between the interviewees and the LadyForest group. Salem (2013) suggests that it might be beneficial to acknowledge that in some situations, certain social categories carry more weight than others. We feel that this applies to our study as the sample is based on one social category above others.

Further research would also be needed to study the relationships between forest professionals and forest owners. There is an indication that forest owners feel confused with the guidance they receive from forest professionals. Confused in a sense that the advice did not help in deciding what to do with the forests with contradictory advice or advice that not follow the values of the forest owner. This confusion even created a need to study forestry. This could be due to the sector's lack of service-dominant logic, as suggested by previous studies (Häyrinen et al., 2015; Mattila et al., 2013; Pynnönen et al., 2018), a communication problem, or something else. For example, Takala et al. (2021) suggest that forest professionals could play a key role in taking different forest owner ideologies into account and lessening the feeling of exclusion that environmentalist forest owners experience. Thoroughly understanding the reasons why forest owners feel the need to study forestry instead of utilising the services available could significantly improve the forest service industry in Finland.

## 6. Conclusions

This study focused to the concept of "active forest owner" of Finnish women forest owners to open the discussion related to the gendered nature of natural resource policies and how that impacts the equality of these policies and the management of natural resources. According to the results of this study, instead of the economic and forest management centric view of forest policy differs greatly from the understanding of women forest owners. The women interviewed understood active forest ownership as a concept entailing awareness, taking care of the forests, acting according to one's values and doing in the forests. The active forest ownership definition of these women included both more masculine economic values as more feminine values of nature protection, taking care of forests and biodiversity. It seems that the current active forest owner of Finnish forest policy leaves out many aspects of what forest owners themselves see as active forest ownership. To increase the impact of forest policies, more inclusive definitions of forest owners might be considered (see also Takala, 2016; Deuffic et al., 2018). Although this study focuses to the Finnish women forest owners and Finnish forest policy, it raises questions regarding the forest policies in the global North. Is the understanding of active forest owners as narrow in other countries outside of Finland?

This study reinforces the notion that childhood environment, family and family members are an important part in enabling active forest ownership. Forest ownership is done together in a social environment and support for decision making is sought and needed. If suitable support is not available within the existing social circle, forest owners can face a situation where they feel that the only way to acquire reliable information is through forest education. This indicates that the forest professionals and service providers available for forest owners are in some situations failing in offering relevant help or creating a relationship of trust with forest owners. Understanding the many sides of forest ownership might help both forest policy makers and forest professionals in reaching their target audience in the future.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Juulia Kuhlman:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Katri Hamunen:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Annukka Vainio:** Supervision, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

## Declaration of competing interest

None.

## Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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## Appendix I. Interview guide

| Main theme | Sub-themes |
|---|---|
| 1. The interviewee | – Personal information such as education, age, profession, type of living environment, if has any forest related education.<br>– Background information to forest ownership (is forest owned by the interviewee only or together with someone, how did they become a forest owner and if the forest owned is located close to the place of residence) |
| 2. Role as forest owner | – How does the interviewee see themselves as a forest owner and what kind of relationship do they have to forests, forestry, and to their forest.<br>– Does the interviewee see that someone or something would have impacted the way they see themselves as forest owners<br>– Does the interviewee feel that they are managing their forests in a way that aligns with their values |
| 3. Active forest ownership | – How does the interviewee see active forest owner?<br>– Do they describe themselves as active forest owners?<br>– What has led the interviewee to become active / non-active forest owner? |
| 4. Women forest owner | – How do they feel about being a women forest owner<br>– Experience of equality/inequality in forest-related issues<br>– Gender and local forest community |
| 5. Support | – Experiences of support received related to forest management<br>– Experiences of challenging situations related to forest management |
| 6. Other | – Additional topics brought up by the interviewee |

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