

# BEYOND ETHICAL REFINEMENT:

## FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF FOREST ETHICS AS A BASIS FOR MUTUAL LEARNING

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CHANGE IN GOVERNANCE AS COLLECTIVE LEARNING PROCESS:  
MANAGEMENT, POLITICS AND ETHICS IN FORESTRY  
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# A CONNECTION BETWEEN ETHICS AND FORESTRY?

- **“As I remember, ethics was not an issue at the top of my agenda as a student or young professional. I vaguely remember discussing ethics in a philosophy class in college. At the time, I made no connection between ethics and the profession of forestry ... The discussion of ethics is necessary, timely, and productive”** (Ebel, F.W. 2000. Why debate the code? *Journal of Forestry* 98(7): 1)



# THE CONNECTION: TENSIONS IN FORESTS AND FORESTRY

- Forests and forestry are:
  - Seen as part of a sustainable solution
  - Viewed as a source of concern
  - Under increasing public attention – and scrutiny
- Behind the scientific and technical questions lie ethical choices based on our fundamental values
- Unfortunately there is a tendency to take these choices for granted
- This may lead to societal conflicts



# AIM OF PRESENTATION

- The aim of the presentation is to address two questions:
  - What is the role of forest ethics in relation to policy making, management and research?
  - How can forest ethics help to create a basis for mutual learning among forest stakeholders?



# HOW TO ANSWER ETHICAL QUESTIONS?

- **Ethics is notorious as being the discipline that has no clear answers**
  - No single reference guide in which one can look up the answers to ethical questions
  - Human beings are complex creatures
  - Values are often in opposition
- **‘Ethics’, as we use the term, has as its main function to reflect and clarify, not to ‘moralise’**



# OUTLINE

1. Development in forestry
2. Dilemmas
3. Four perspectives on doing ethics
4. The role of ethics
5. Conclusions



# 1. DEVELOPMENT IN FORESTRY:

## (i) CHANGES IN FORESTRY AGENDA

<b>“Past”</b>	<b>“Now”</b>
Hunting, multiple use	Biodiversity
“Rational” forestry	“Good health”
Secured supply	Recreation
Efficient production and increased productivity	Environmental protection (e.g. clean water, CO <sub>2</sub> sequestration)
Profitability	Environmental valuation
Sustained yield	Sustainability



# Sustainability

**Sustainable  
development**

**Sustained  
yield**

**Consideration  
of biodiversity, working  
environment, animal  
welfare, food safety  
profitability, ...**

**Distribution  
between generations  
and between rich and poor**

**Preservation  
of species and ecosystems**

**Wise use  
of resources**

**Procurement  
of goods**

Gamborg, C. & Larsen, J.B. 2005. Towards more sustainable forestry? The ethics of close-to-nature forestry. *Silva Carelica* 49: 55-64.

**Time**

# 1. DEVELOPMENT IN FORESTRY:

## (ii) POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR CHANGES

- A consequence of previous management philosophies/schemes
- Decreased economical importance (in some parts)
- Increased affluence
- Demographic development
- It is increasingly not only a question of what is it *possible* to, but also what is *acceptable* to do





father had never stopped in one place long enough for the family to make friends.

Hill laughs at the suggestion that her childhood was perfect training for life on a platform, up a tree and under siege by rough-hewn men in plaid shirts. She agrees, but looks shocked when I suggest that it also sounds as if she might have inherited her father's nature.

"One day, I was talking to my dad from Luna, and he suddenly said that my voice had changed," she says. "And then he said he could tell from my voice that I had found what I had been looking for, that my soul was content.

"He told me that all his life he had been on a quest to fulfil his soul, and had never found the answer, and that now he was coming out to join me in the forest."

Amazingly, that is what he did. So, as Hill finds herself

**'In my tree  
I learnt  
how magical  
and precious  
life is'**

preaching "a different truth" in the city, her father has disappeared into the redwood forests to join the environmentalists.

"Our entire family gave up everything so my father could spread the message of love and truth, and I guess that, in a way, I am doing the same thing," she says.

She mulls over her day, her first in front of an admiring, cheering crowd.

"A few times, just today, I've thought how my life has got so weird," she says. "I keep thinking, 'I'm just Julia', but everywhere I go, people want something from me, and I want to give it to them. I want to help, I really want to make the world a better place," but there is so much energy involved, it is all so complex."

Hill is beginning to understand just what it means to be a celebrity. For the moment, though, she just wants to get back to her trees. She has borrowed a candlelit cabin with an out-



in the woods: Julia learnt to wash herself in rainwater from puddles and to stay put during a storm

grimages to her vigil. "Julia's into an incredibly figure," said actor

a column of several hundred protesters, with television cameras in tow. A poll has revealed that 70 per cent of

ety's rules for my life were not valid. And then I spent 10 months recovering from the brain damage I got when

her father, a non-denominational evangelical, finally parked his caravan and his family in Arkansas.

"After all those years"



# Välj svensk julgran!



**Köp inte en dansk julgran.**  
Det är ett av Naturskyddsföreningens tips om hur man får en "grönare" julgran:

- ◆ Köp inte ädelgran som kräver mer konstgödsel och bekämpningsmedel än vanlig gran.
- ◆ Satsa på en permanent utegran i trädgården. Du slipper köpa ny gran varje år och sparar både pengar och miljön. Med belysning och robust julpynt kan den ersätta granen inomhus om du bor i hus.
- ◆ Fråga var granen är odlad och försök få tag på en närproducerad! **De flesta granar som**

**säljs här hemma kommer från Danmark. Där odlas de snabbt och med massor av bekämpningsmedel och konstgödsel.**

Försök hitta en närodlat gran istället, så slipper vi de långa transportererna. Dessutom är danska granar ofta gamla när de säljs hos oss.

- ◆ På senare år har danskarna även börjat odla ekologisk julgran utan vare sig konstgödsel eller bekämpningsmedel. Fråga efter det, så märker försäljarna en efterfrågan. Då kanske vi får ekologiska granar även här nästa jul.

BE

## 3G-antennerna upp i stolpar

SVENSKA KRAFTNÄT OCH Svenska UMTS Nät AB har skrivit ett ramavtal om att installera antenner för tredje generationens mobiltelefoni, 3G, i kraftledningsstolpar.

Stamnätet rymmer totalt 57 000 stolpar med höjden 20-60 meter. Att installera 3G i stolparna ger minimal miljöpåverkan, går snabbt och är en enkel hantering av tillstånd

LD

# 1. DEVELOPMENT IN FORESTRY:

## (iv) CONFLICTING AIMS

- We have a situation where:
  - The agenda in forestry has expanded
  - Society has changed
- It is a situation where aims and functions are potentially conflicting – we run into dilemmas



## 2. DILEMMAS (i)

- A simple solution to a forestry problem would be one:
  - allowing things that we can all agree are good and useful
  - banning things which we can all agree are bad and useless
- However, often we face a situation which presents itself as a dilemma: Whatever solution we choose we will:
  - do something which appears to be bad
  - prevent something which appears to be good or useful





*Season's Greetings*



**SAVE THE  
PLANET**

**PLANET**

**KILL**

**YOURSELF**



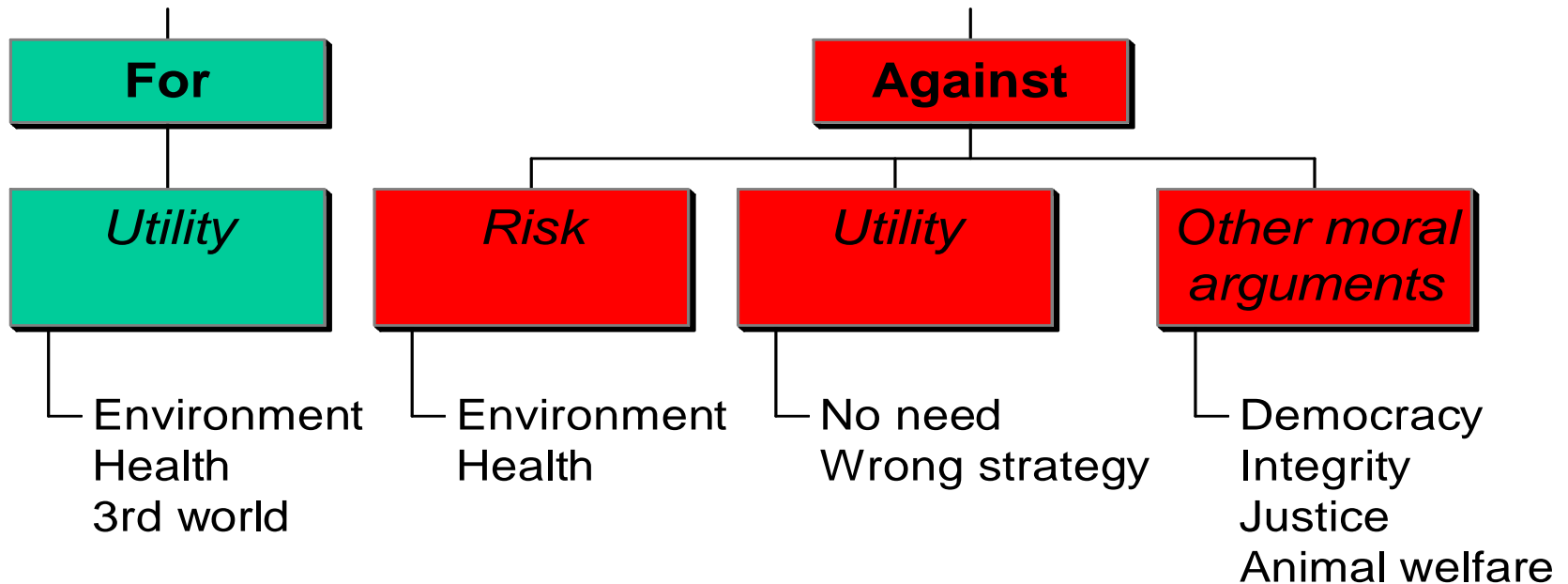
## 2. DILEMMAS (ii)

- **Dilemma of forestry**  
Nature as a resource vs nature as unique
- **Dilemma of integrative forestry**  
The common good vs autonomy
- **Dilemma of ecological restoration**  
Biodiversity vs naturalness
- **Dilemma of close-to-nature silviculture**  
Animal welfare vs ecosystem health
- **Dilemma of modern biotechnology**  
Avoiding risks vs gaining new opportunities



## 2. DILEMMAS

### (iii) EXAMPLE: ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE USE OF GENE TECHNOLOGY



## 2. DILEMMAS

### (iv) DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS UNDERSTAND KEY TERMS DIFFERENTLY

- Usefulness can mean different things:
  - that it is commercially viable
  - that it fulfils vital needs of the population
- Risk can be understood as:
  - Experts: Risk = effect × probability
  - Lay persons: risks have several dimensions, e.g.:
    - Uncertainty, dread, catastrophic potential, controllability ...



# HOW TO PROCEED?

- How to deal with these dilemmas, complex trade-offs and how to assist with a mutual learning process?
- One way – as we see it – is to use ethics



### 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

- 'Sociological'
- 'Philosophical'
- 'Regulatory'
- 'Professional'



# 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

## (i) 'SOCIOLOGICAL' PERSPECTIVE

- Description of values and norms and their development
- Relies on descriptive ethics
- Involves empirical research to uncover attitudes and beliefs of people
- ***Example:* Which proportion of urban dwellers find biodiversity conservation a good aim of forest management?**



# 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

## (ii) 'PHILOSOPHICAL' PERSPECTIVE

- Clarification and critical reflection on different sets of value and norms
- Relies on normative ethics and meta-ethics
  - Normative: Which values should we adopt?
  - Meta: What is the basis of ethics?
- Involves no empirical research
- ***Example:* Is correct or not to hold such a belief, grounded in different moral theories?**



# 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

## (iv) 'REGULATORY' PERSPECTIVE

- Understanding of legislation and other instruments to regulate
  - development and management of forests and other nature areas
  - Behaviour
- Relies on descriptive as well as normative ethics
- ***Example:* Which values are underlying a certain piece of legislation concerning biodiversity conservation?**



# 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

## (v) 'PROFESSIONAL' PERSPECTIVE

- Definition of norms (codes for good practice) for different professions or scientists
- Relies on normative ethics
- The underlying theme is that association "... in a profession creates moral obligations for those so associated ... (Davis, 2001: 382-383)
- ***Example:* Will implementation of forest policy on biodiversity conservation place forestry professionals in a difficult ethical and moral situation?**



### 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

#### (vi) IF ONLY ONE PERSPECTIVE...

- If only the ‘sociological’ perspective is applied:
  - It is not possible to establish a connection to influential ideas (e.g. environmental ethical theories)
  - It is not possible to say how our relationship to the natural have been, could be
  - Thus, it is not possible to state what we *ought* to do



### 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

#### (vii) IF ONLY ONE PERSPECTIVE...

- On the other hand, doing ethics solely from the so-called ‘philosophical’ perspective:
  - Danger that the relevant practice (here: forest biodiversity conservation) is not fully understood
  - No information about how these theories align with current sets of e.g. public perception of forests in society



### 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

#### (viii) IF ONLY ONE PERSPECTIVE...

- Doing ethics based on the ‘professional’ perspective means that specific standards are clearly spelled out
- But there are certain risks with this approach:
  - A code may become a convenient document for marketing purposes
  - Keeping a code updated and in line with current thinking and topical issues



### 3. FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

- All four perspectives are needed in combination to create a basis for mutual learning
- How should we then use ethical analysis, and what are the possible outcomes?



# 4. THE ROLE OF ETHICS

## (i) AN ETHICAL 'TOOL BOX'

- We may use ethics as an analytical tool:
  - Conceptual clarification  
"What do we mean when we say ...?"
  - Value identification and clarification of concerns  
"What do we disagree about?"
  - Formulate a more comprehensive (ethical) position  
"How would we act in other, similar situations?"



## 4. THE ROLE OF ETHICS

### (ii) POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- Possible outcomes of ethical analysis:
  - Understanding of what is really going on
  - Agreement about what we/parties *disagree* about
  - A compromise – trade-off of values
  - Or, in the event, that this is not possible, mutual recognition of different views of values
- One aim is that it may lead to a more clear communication on what is done, and why



# CONCLUSIONS

- In our view, we may make good use of ethics in relation to policy making, management and research and to help create a basis for mutual learning, if:
- We use ethics to critically reflect and clarify – *not* to 'moralise'
- We make room for dialogue – *not* giving 'commandments'
- Ethics is interdisciplinary – *not* segregated from natural and social sciences
- Ethics is integrated in policy making, management and research – *not* solely as isolated afterthought

