

# Across space and time: making sense of community forest *ownership* and *management* in Europe

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**United Kingdom**

**Sweden**

**Italy**



Burbach, Germany 2011  
Remscheid, Germany 2013  
San Vito, Italy 2014

# *The research background*

There is a **long and rich tradition** of community forests in Europe (Merlo et al., 1989; Jeanrenaud, 2001; Kissling-Näf et al., 2001; Bravo and De Moor, 2008 amongst others) but **little comparative research**

Compared with the hundreds of papers devoted to community forestry in, for example, Nepal or Mexico, **only a handful of studies on European examples have been published**

# *The research questions*

What lessons can we draw from **community forestry institutions** and their **diversity** across Europe?

- What is the field of **interest**? i.e. what counts as a community forest or a forest common?
- What are the **important dimensions** of a typology of community forests and forest commons for Europe?
- What do our examples have in **common**, and how do they **differ**?
- What are the significant **emergent themes and issues** current in European community forestry?

# *Our methods*

- Learn by sharing experiences
- Reflexive, iterative development of indicators
- Coding of case studies
- Analysis of emergent similarities and variations

## *Start by describing ...*

Definitely community forests or forest commons:

- Something which we believe is **really a CF**
- Something which might be **very different** from all the other country cases
- Something which might be very **similar** to something in another country

Testing the boundaries of forest commons / community forests:

- Something which we are **not sure** about



Forest commons and community forests:

The ones we **feel sure** about!

# Swedish cases

## Vilhelmina Forest Common



## Älvdalen Forest Common



“The forest & the power”  
Spring issue 2015

THEME PAGES  
THE FOREST  
CHANGES HANDS

Interested in hunting  
HOW TO GET STARTED

Forest owner school  
LEARN ABOUT THINNING

SUBSIDIES 2015

Älvdalen, Särna & Idre  
EXCURSION GUIDED

Norge

Vilhelmina North Reindeer Herding District

Odlingsgränd

Vilhelmina Norra sameby

Utövning mellan r och vinterland

Vinterbete i skogslandet

The Baltic Sea

A collage of images related to reindeer herding. It includes a map of the Vilhelmina North Reindeer Herding District, a photograph of a reindeer herding event with many reindeer and people, a photograph of a reindeer herd grazing in a forest, and a photograph of reindeer in a snowy landscape. Text labels include 'Norge', 'Vilhelmina North Reindeer Herding District', 'Odlingsgränd', 'Vilhelmina Norra sameby', 'Utövning mellan r och vinterland', 'Vinterbete i skogslandet', and 'The Baltic Sea'.

# Italian cases

## Partecipanza di Trino Vercellese



*Partecipantia  
Nemorum Tridini  
quae sortes vocantur*



## Municipality of Asiago



## Bosco di Mestre

**IL BOSCO NEL NUOVO PRG**

**Il Bosco di Mestre allarga i confini**  
Piantati 1.200 alberelli in via Litomarino  
per realizzare il «Parco della Pietà»

**boscodimestre**  
ASSOCIAZIONE

Legenda:  
- Verde Pubblico Metropolitan (PTM)  
- Area Agricola di Agrimontebellio (SA)  
- Parco San Gabriele

# Slovenian cases



# British cases

Wooplaw Community Woodland

Home About Wooplaw Join Wooplaw What's On Log Cabin Blog Wooplure App Wooplaw Photos



Wooplaw Community Woodland, the first in Britain. Wooplaw has flourished as a community organisation for over 25 years. It offers a lot but needs active interest and support. It is 55 acres, has four distinct areas, several buildings, ponds, a stream, paths, 3 marked trails, sculptures and a whole load of imagination. Find out more in some other tabs.

Search

Now the trees can speak

Wooplaw Ex

FOREST KILFINAN COMMUNITY

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Recreation Forest Education Volunteering Housing & Crofts Sara's Natu

**If you go down to the woods today...**

A forest should be a place for visitors to exercise, relax and celebrate. There is now a path within the forest which starts by the car park and winds up through the woodland to an extra loop that carries on up the Allt Mor burn. If you're walking this route, keep an eye out for local primary school pupils' forest inspired artwork, as well as bird and squirrel sightings high up in the trees! We also plan to provide tables and benches in a clearing by the water. Visitors can picnic and enjoy this local beauty spot. We have also installed bike racks in the park, to encourage our visitors to cycle up to the site and lower their carbon footprint!

Overview Timber Forest / Garden Sales Log Sales

Log Sales

You can buy well-seasoned soft wood logs and bags of kindling from the forest. We're open from 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Come to the forest during these times and there should be no need to call. Alternatively, feel free to call us on 01700 811159 to pre-order.

**MALLS MIRE COMMUNITY WOODLAND**



Malls Mire is an area of mixed woodland and wetland habitat situated between Toryglen and Rutherglen. People from the surrounding communities have been working with Urban Roots to manage the woodland since 2009, improving its value for wildlife and working on the paths so that more people can get in and enjoy it. Malls Mire is currently the only Community Woodland in Glasgow.

**RECENT POSTS**  
URBAN ROOTS  
**RECENT COMMENTS**

**The history of Malls Mire**

Most of the woodland was planted in 1993, with the trees planted very close together in rows. Ideally the trees would have been thinned out a bit after 15 years but this didn't happen at Malls Mire. The result is very dense woodland of tall and thin trees which are unstable and tend to blow down or snap under a strong wind.

**Wildlife in Malls Mire**

Malls Mire is designated an L-SINC (Local Site Important for Nature Conservation) after the discovery of rare plants in the 1980s. Being near to the railway line, and the river Clyde, a lot of wildlife passes through the area. There are regular sightings of deer, foxes, kestrels and in July 2012 there was a sparrow hawk nesting in one of the conifer trees.



**Looking ahead:**

Urban Roots are constantly making improvements to Malls Mire. The plan is to make it a better place for wildlife and a better place for people! This will mean thinning out the trees to create more space for the best trees to spread out, removing some of the dangerous and damaged trees and improving the path network so that people can enjoy it more easily.

**Get involved**

The Malls Mire Conservation Group is now in its fourth year and still meeting weekly to carry out conservation work in the woodland and open ground habitats. Examples of some recent work we have done includes:

- Tree felling
- Path Maintenance
- Habitat surveying
- Litter Collection
- Meadow management

The group meet every Thursday morning at the Urban Roots Offices (Toryglen Community Base, G42 8LA) from 10.45 - 3.00 every Thursday. We always welcome new members and all you need to join in is a good pair of boots, water-proof clothing and a packed lunch.



For more details about the Malls Mire Conservation Group or anything else about Malls Mire Community Woodland, contact Tom Cooper at:

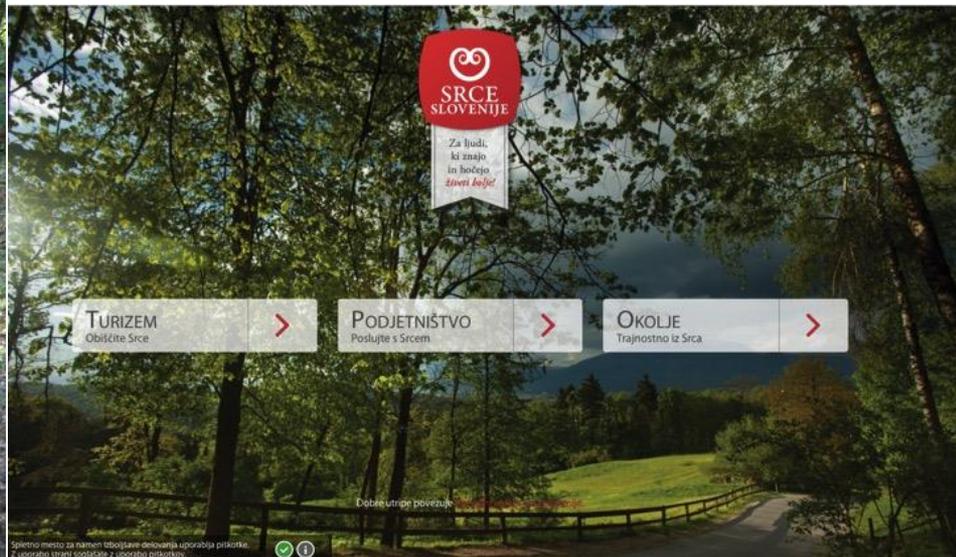
Forest commons and community forests:

The ones we **don't feel sure** about!

These examples test our understanding and give us fresh perspective on what is, and what is not, a FC / CF



# Slovenian subregional partnership



# Associazione Forestale Veneto Orientale Italy



# Sala Municipal Forest, Sweden



# *Dimensions identified through an iterative process*

Four dimensions:

1. Forest: 6 sub-dimensions
2. Community Forest Group (CFG): 16 sub-dimensions
3. Relationship CFG-forest: 12 sub-dimensions
4. Relationship CFG-outside world: 10 sub-dimensions

# *Dimensions – an example*

## **Key-dimensions and sub-dimensions to understand what 'forest commons' have in common**

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### *Forest characteristics (6 sub-dimensions)*

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- Size of CFG forest
  - Size of CFG forest in a broader landscape context
  - Percentage of forest area in the total CFG area
  - Productivity of CFG forest
  - Changes in the CFG forest
  - Proximity of CFG forest to urban areas or remoteness
- 

### *Community forest group (CFG) characteristics (15 sub-dimensions)*

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- CFG is presently based on (what keeps group together)
- Easiness of CFG identification
- Legal structure of CFG
- Size of CFG (in number of individuals forming the group)
- Time of existence of CFG
- Formal regulations about CFG permanence
- Participation in decisions regarding CFG functioning
- Prevailing internal model of decision making
- Internal conflicts on CFG functioning or forest management
- Level of technical knowledge on forest management
- Ease of identifying members of CFG
- How CFG membership is acquired
- How CFG membership is lost
- Sense of attachment/importance/identification
- Pro-active behaviour of the CFG members

# The coding process – an example

## 3. The relationship between the CFG and the forest

### 3.1 Form of tenure (in the context of relationship btw CFG and forest)

I – CFG has informal management agreements or participates in volunteer work

M – CFG has a formal management agreement with the owner

L – the CFG leases the forest from the owner

O - CFG owns the forest (with rights to sell the forest land)

Op - CFG owns the forest (with no rights to sell the forest land)

Ot = other tenure niches

### 3.2 CFG rights are attached to:

I = Individuals

H = Households

L = Land

O = Other ?

### 3.3 Which additional rights do CFG members have (both as individuals and as a group) with respect to individuals and public in general =not belonging to the specific CFG ? (multiple answers)

Ac = Access,

W = withdrawal,

S = exploitation (sale of produce),

M = management,

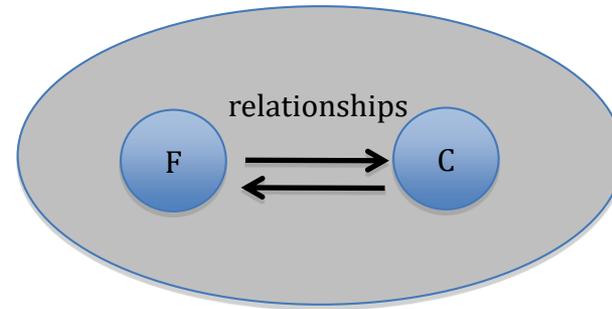
E = exclusion,

Al = alienation

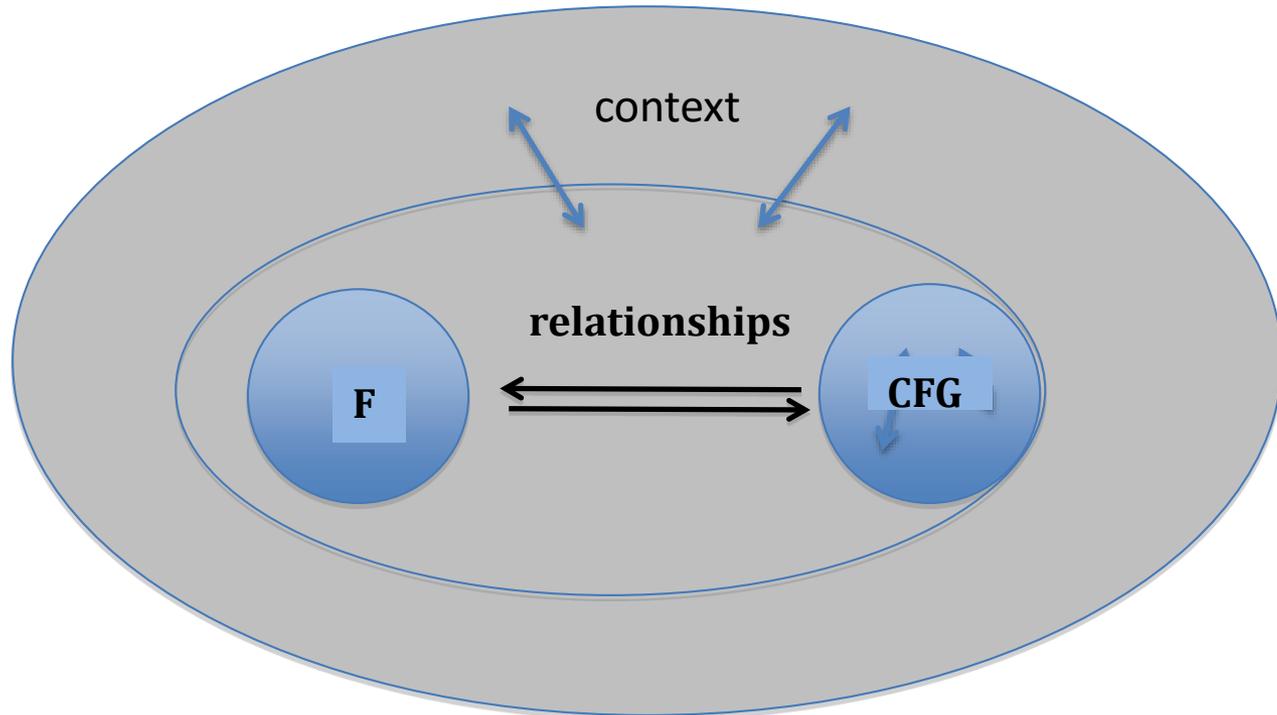
O = difficult to judge

# *Our model*

From this one:

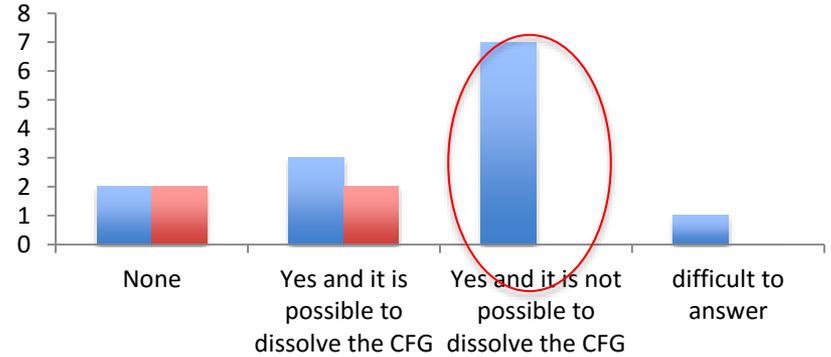


To this one:

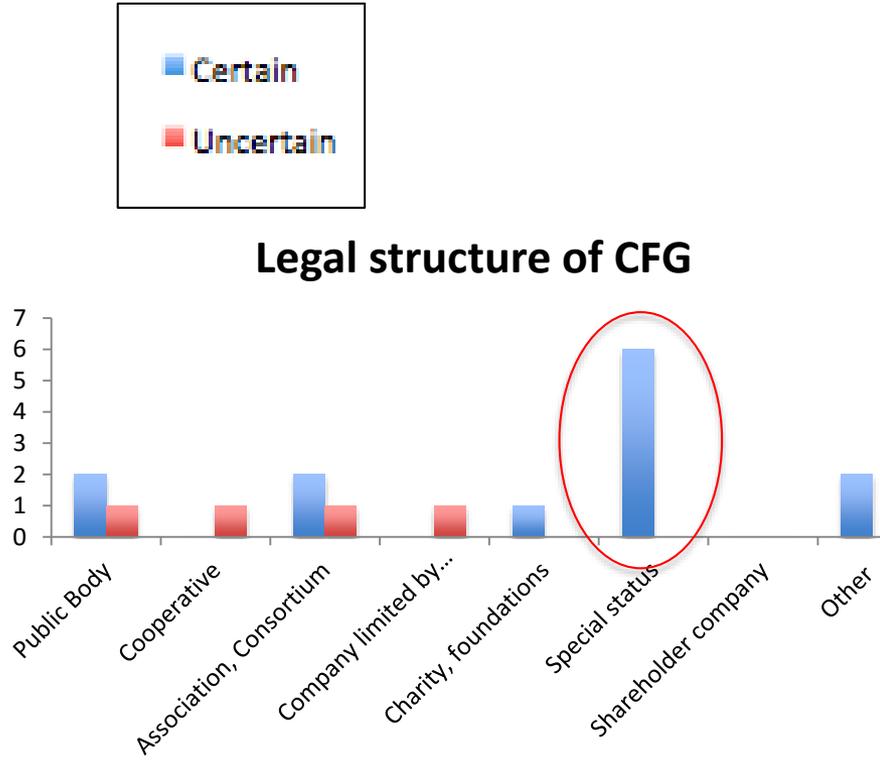


# Results: "CFG" dimension - example

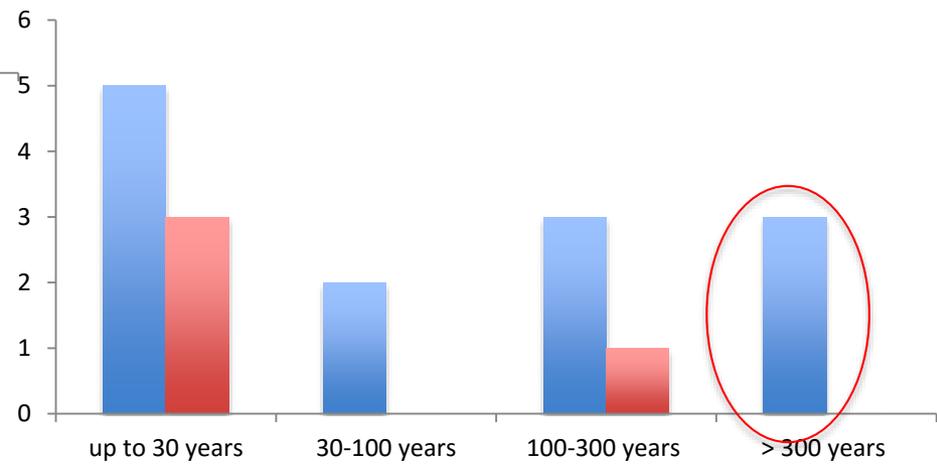
Formal regulations about CFG's permanence



Legal structure of CFG

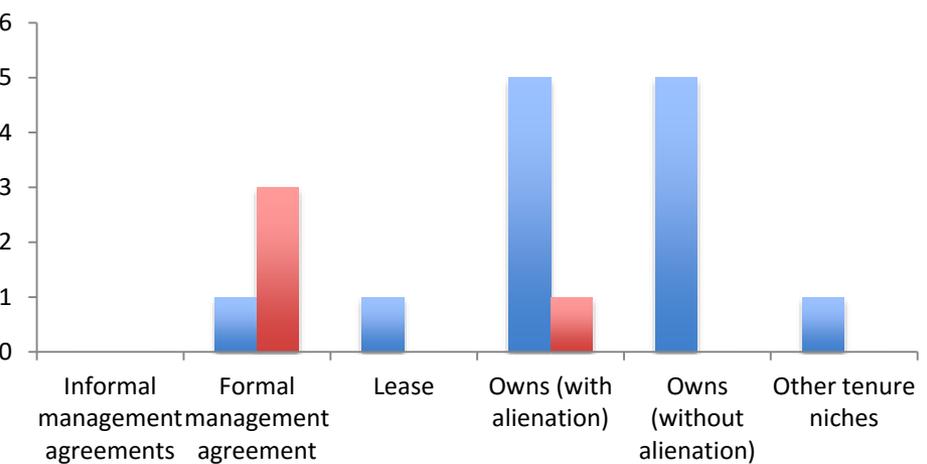


Time of existence of CFG

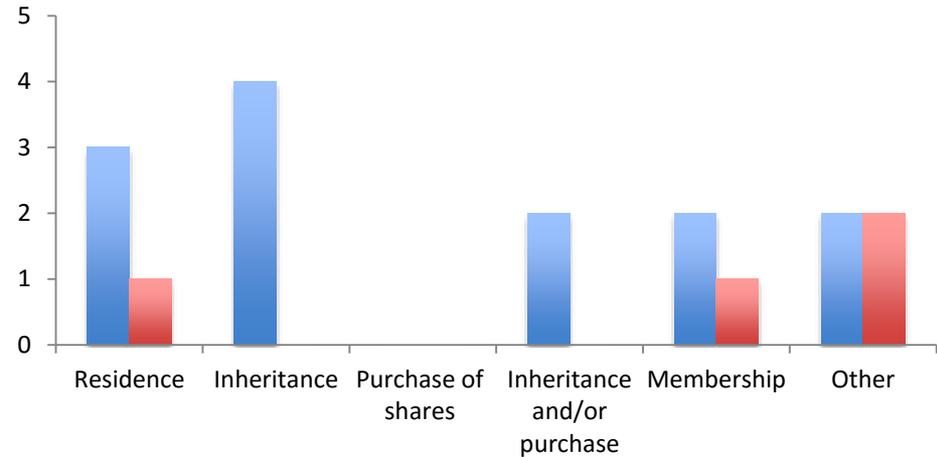


# Results: "CFG-forest relationship" dimension

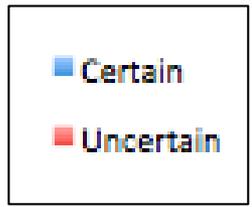
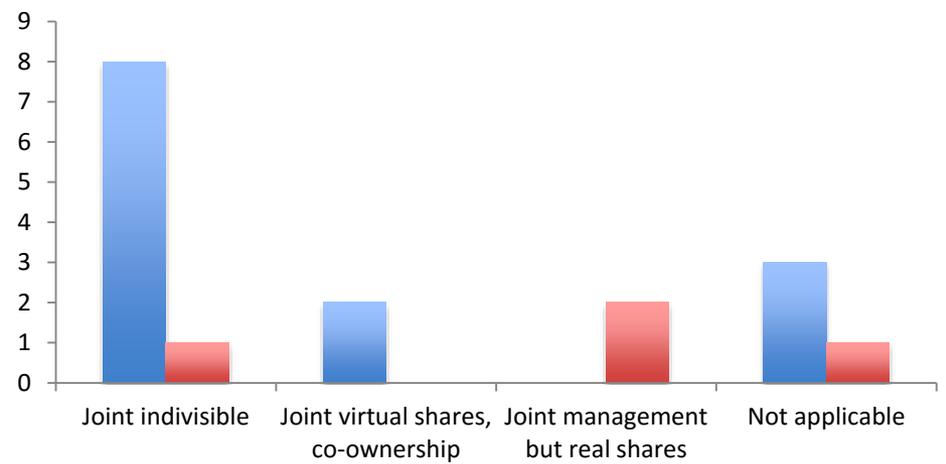
## Form of tenure



## Criteria for rights transfer



## Divisibility of rights



# *Five significant themes*

## 1. history, change and innovation

- important in the European context as they exist nearly anywhere
- most of those which have survived or newly appeared, have had to adapt and innovate to do so

## 2. 'ownership'

- more complex 'bundle of rights'
- Often the most important part of their bundle of rights is not alienation
- Comes with constraints as well as rights

# *Five significant themes*

## 3. technical knowledge and forest management

- questions of knowledge and expertise in relation to forest management
- ownership and shared rights do not always map onto technical decisions

## 4. multi-level governance

- community governance takes place in the context of other vertically and horizontally related layers of governance
- affect the power and motivation of the group

## 5. visibility

- Many not recorded in official statistics, or are recorded in ways that are ambiguous or inaccurate.
- Visibility is associated with the potential for these forms to offer models for sustainable resource management and human ecology.

# *Conclusions*

- Methods for making sense of diversity
- Institutions which link forests with a community are very diverse in time and space
- They are characterised by more than ownership
- We see added value in multifunctional roles, spanning from productive to symbolic



Thank you for attention !