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

Anna Lawrence, Nevenka Bogataj,
Paola Gatto, Gun Lidestav

Norwegian Sea
Sweden
Norway
Finland
Baltic Sea
Estonia
Latvia
Lithuania
Moscow
Москва
North Sea
United Kingdom
Denmark
Ireland
London
Netherlands
Berlin
Poland
Warsaw
Belarus
Germany
Belgium
Prague
Czech Rep
Paris
Slovakia
Ukraine
Austria
Moldova
Hungary
France
Romania
Croatia
Serbia
Black Sea
Italy
Rome
Bulgaria
Portugal
Madrid
Spain
Tyrrhenian Sea
Greece
Turkey
Syria

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

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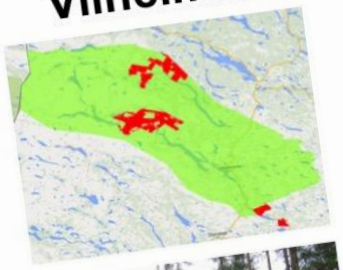
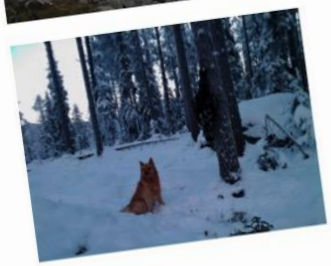
Forest commons and community forests:

The ones we feel sure about!

Swedish cases

Vilhelmina Forest Common





Älvdalen Forest Common

"The forest & the power"
Spring issue 2015

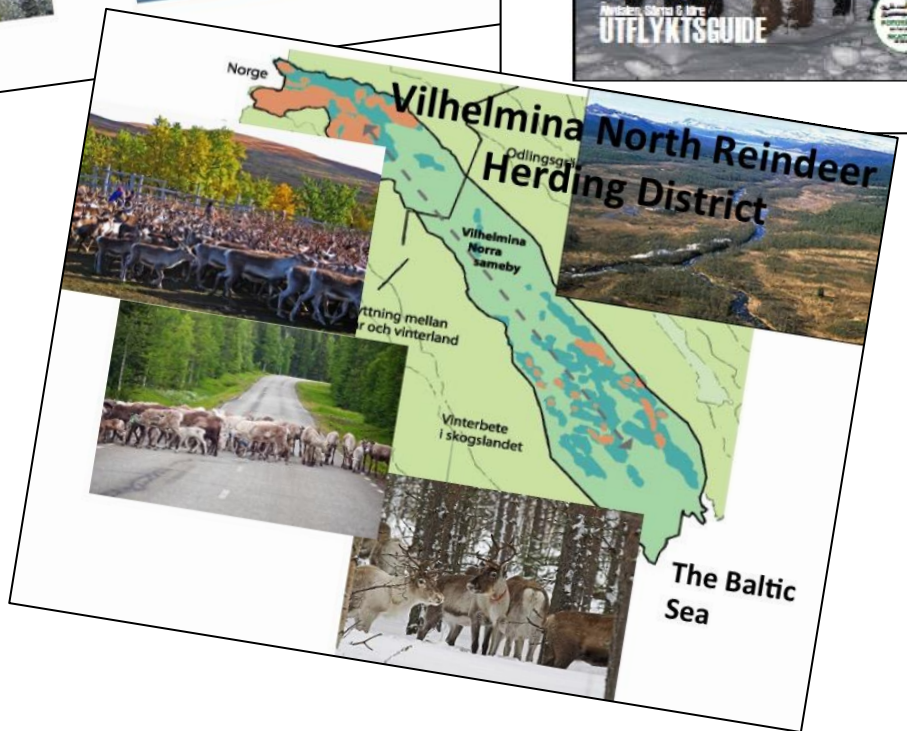
THEME PAGES
THE FOREST
CHANGES HANDS

Interested in hunting
HOW TO GET STARTED

Forest owner school
LEARN ABOUT THINNING

SUBSIDIES 2015

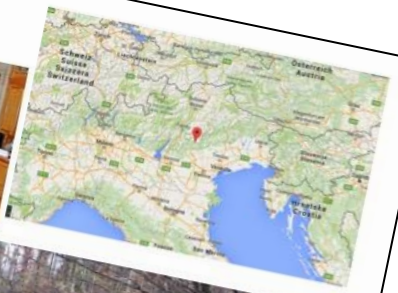
Älvdalen, Särna &Idre
EXCURSION GUIED



Italian cases

Partecipanza di Trino Vercellese

Municipality of Asiago



Bosco di Mestre

Slovenian cases

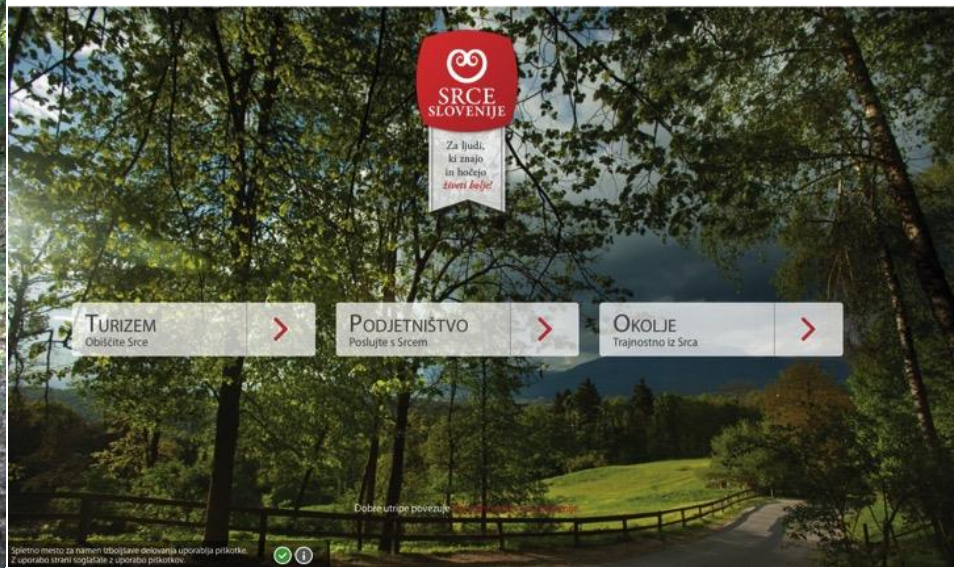
British cases

Forest commons and community forests:

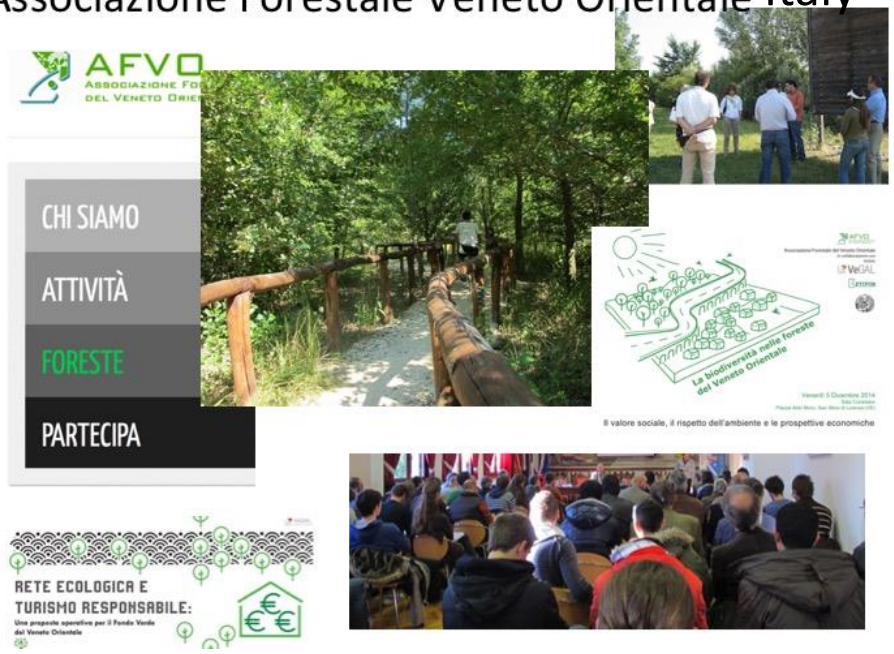
The ones we **don’t feel sure** about!

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
Forest characteristics (6 sub-dimensions)
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)
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,

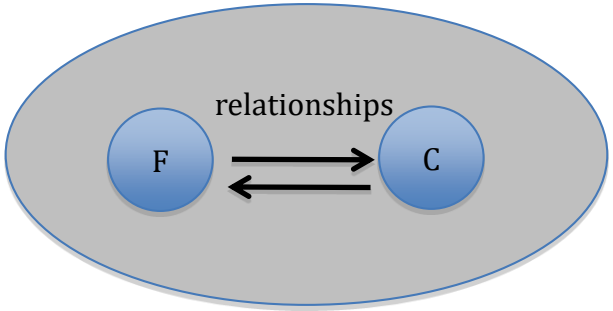
E = exclusion,

Al = alienation

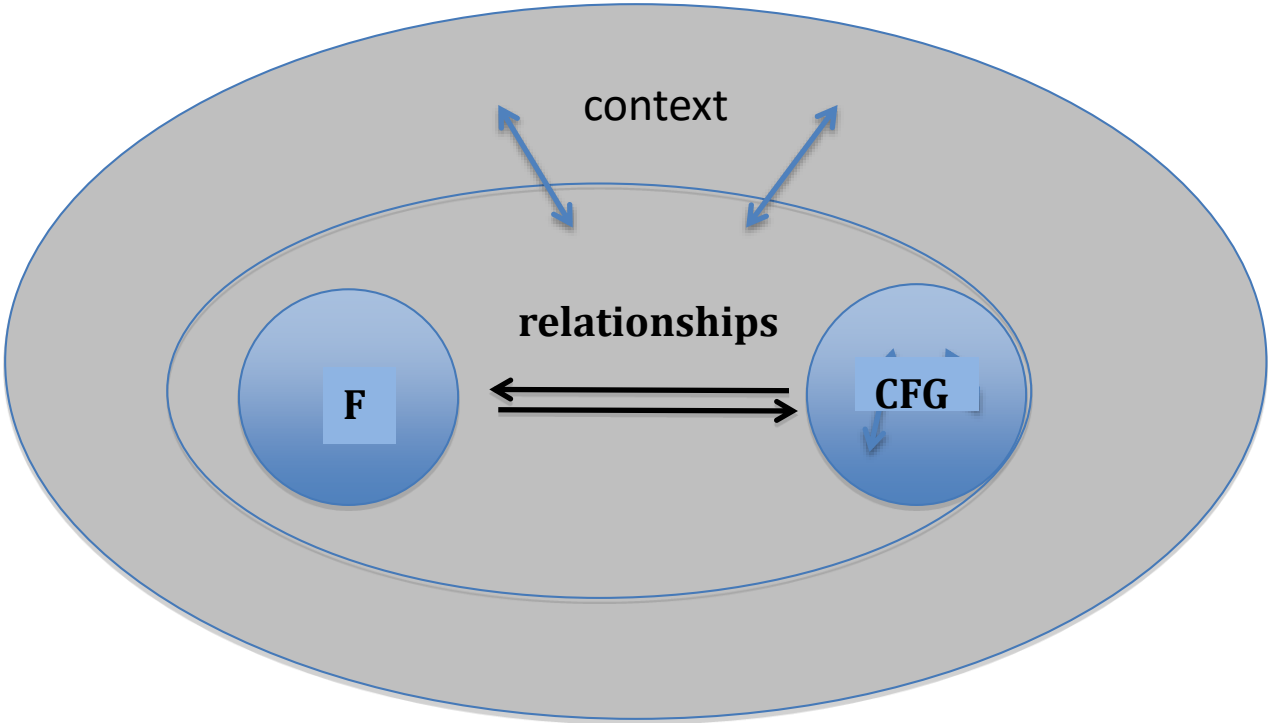
0 = difficult to judge

Our model

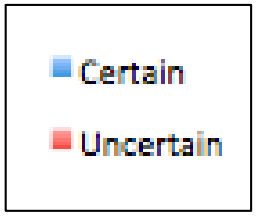
From this one:

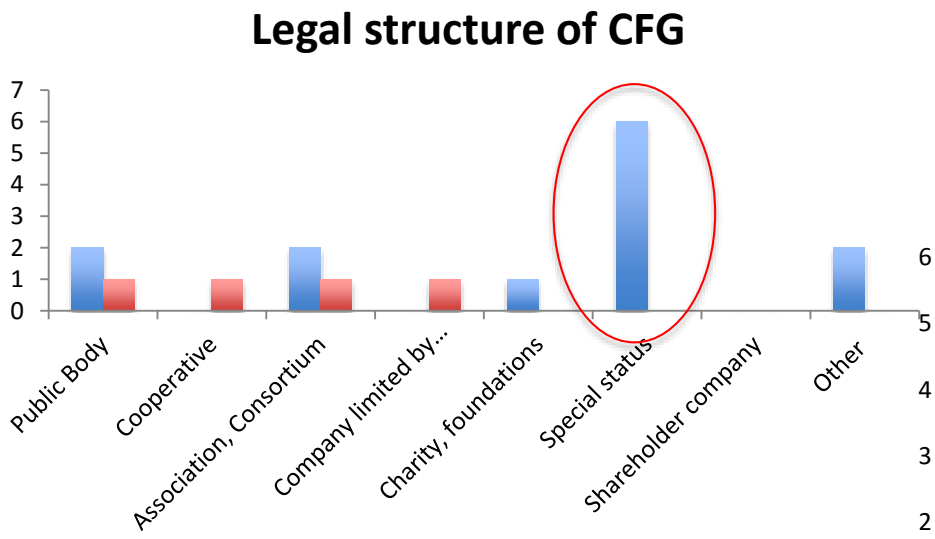


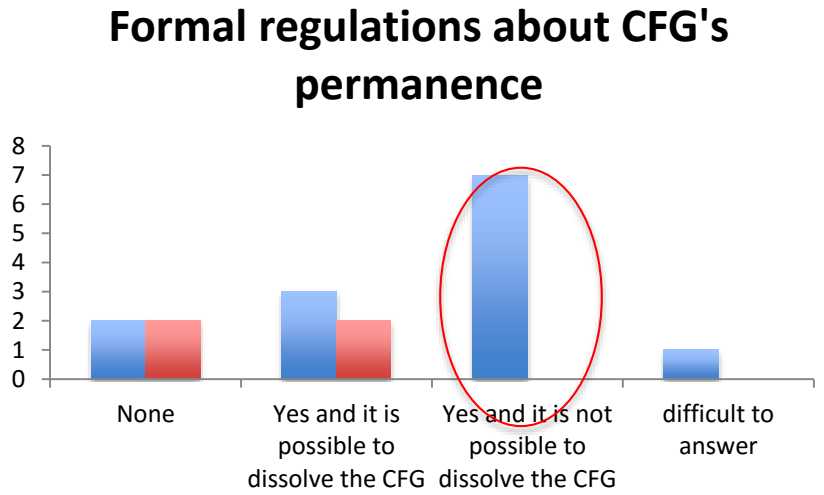
To this one:

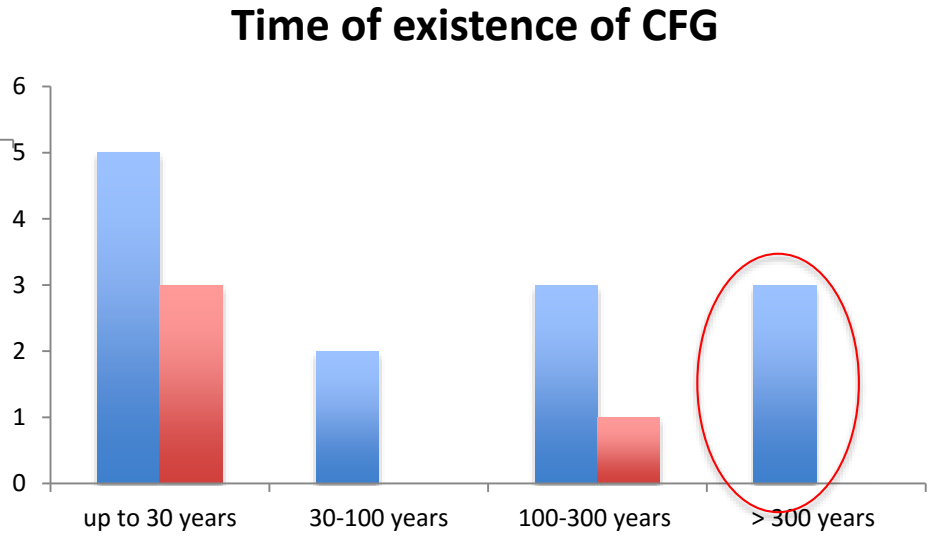


Results: "CFG" dimension - example

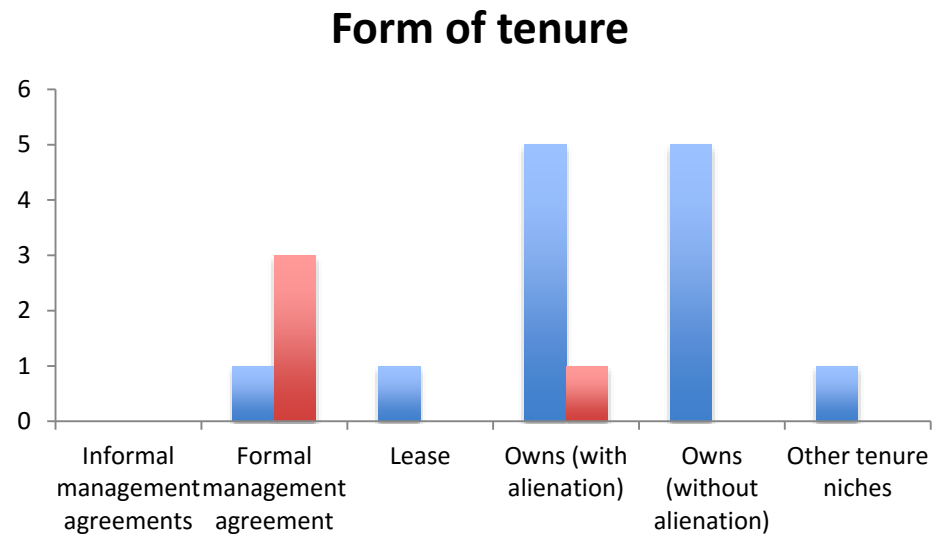


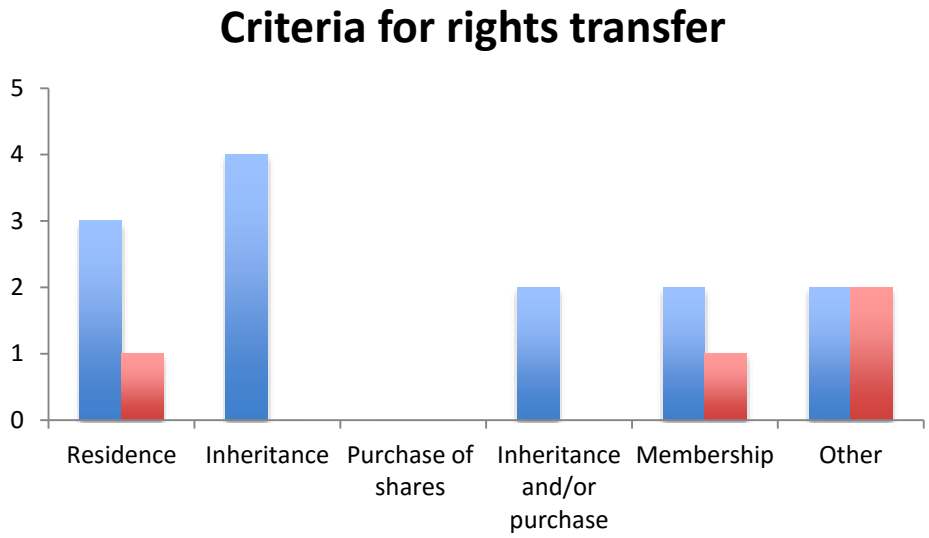


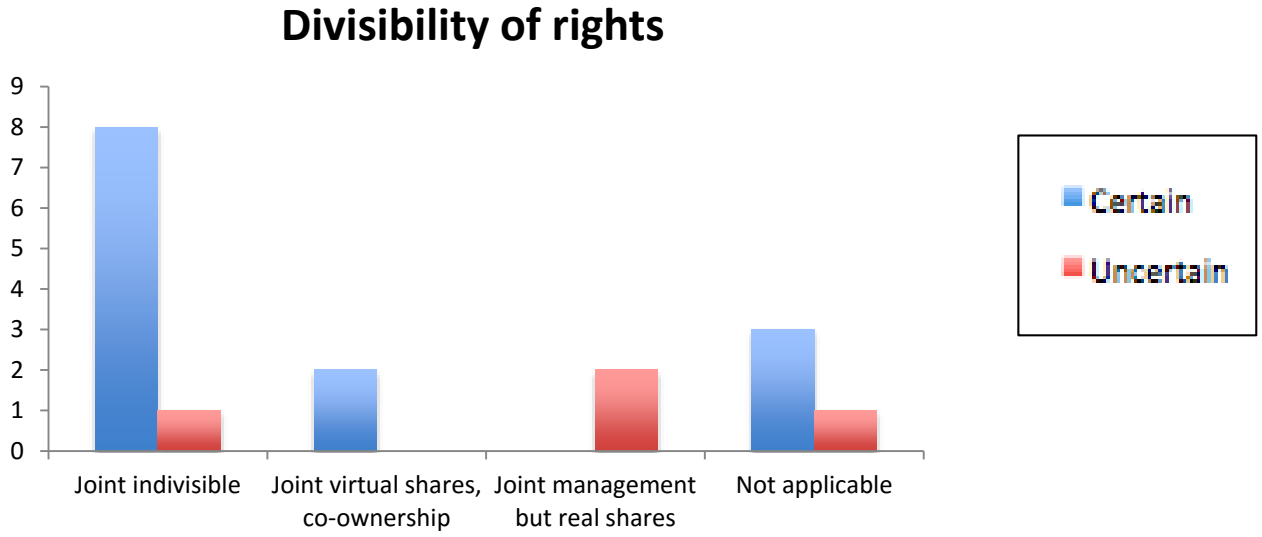




Results: "CFG-forest relationship" dimension







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 !