

A Conceptual Framework of Ecostrategies and Some Cases of Proposed Protected Areas In the High Mountain Region of Sweden

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Abstract

Out of a foundation in human ecology and development strategies a conceptual framework of ecostrategies (view and use of landscape) has been evolved. It utilizes one axis to illustrate the tension between "functional specialization" (point of departure in specific activities and landscape values) and "territorial adaptation" (point of departure in a specific landscape). A second axis illustrates the dichotomy between the strategies of "active" use vs. "passive" contemplation of the landscape – in short a choice between development and conservation. Out of this four main landscape perspectives are identified; the landscape as: (i) a factory for producing activities/products; (ii) a museum for external consumption; (iii) one's home district to be utilized and (iv) one's home district to be admired. These different ecostrategies involve various consequences in terms of democracy, environmental issues, views of nature, local development, planning, pedagogic, identity, and so on. Here, this conceptual framework is applied to the following cases of protected area projects in the high mountain region of Sweden: the Kiruna national park proposal, the Torneträsk Man and Biosphere area, and the Southern Jämtland national park proposal. Besides these cases the general picture of a "shift" from the traditional national park perspective to arguments for more of local participation and regional development with regard to protected areas is discussed. Also the parallel shift of data needed for the planning process and the legitimacy of different sources for data collected is discussed in the framework of the ecostrategies.

Introduction

In this paper a conceptual framework of ecostrategies for different landscape perspectives is presented. Founded in previous studies of development issues and basic resource issues in a Third World context it has thereafter been elaborated upon and applied to various studies of out-of-doors, nature-based tourism and conservation. Therefore, after the introduction of the conceptual framework some examples of applications to cases of protected area processes will be presented. The paper will end in a discussion of the characteristics of data and research needed in planning processes with regard to protected areas and also the question of using the conceptual framework as an analytical tool for questionnaire investigations will be raised as the case studies carried out so far have been focused upon specific projects and activities and have been based upon studies of documents and interviews with key persons.

A Conceptual Framework of Ecostrategies

A Foundation in Human Ecology and Development Strategies

When seeking a basic conceptual framework for discussing the dynamics and sustainability of mans' relation with nature and landscape we commonly identify a dichotomy of domination versus adaptation. A similar division with regard to regional development has been suggested by Friedmann and Weaver (1979) using the concepts of "functional" and "territorial" development. A major effect of this approach, in many ways a parallel between centralized and decentralized systems, is that various aspects of social integration (politics, economy, and culture) are brought into focus together with human-ecological issues. Out of this foundation in human ecology and development strategies, a conceptual framework of ecostrategies (view and use of landscape) was developed for studies of landscape perspectives and development issues in a Third World context. It was applied to issues of low resource agriculture and e.g. the tensions between "green revolution" inputs and traditional and more modern alternative ways to handle the need of irrigation and nutrients (see e.g. Sandell, 1988 and 1993; Palm & Sandell, 1989; but also e.g. Sivertsen & Lundberg, 1996). It should be noted that the prefix eco- indicates only that the mankind-nature relationship is in focus and does not involve any normative aspects of what relation is to be preferred. These different landscape perspectives – ecostrategies – are manifested and available for research through what is said and written with regard to the landscape ("eco-views") and what is done in the landscape ("eco-practices").

This framework has been further developed (using four main ecostrategies instead of previously three) and used for evaluations of outdoor recreation, public access and conservation (e.g. Sandell 2000; 200c and in English e.g. 2007). Even though this is not the place for a more in depth discussion of concepts like "landscape", "nature" or "development" it is important to see the strong linkages between the previous context of Third World rural development and the present conservation and leisure oriented applications of the conceptual framework. (Examples of inspirations are: Naess, 1973; Kvaløy, 1976; Hettne, 1982 and 1994; Tuan, 1990; Hägerstrand, 1988 and 1991; Emmelin, 1997; Barhnenberg & Dutkowski, 1993; Ingold, 1993; Massey & Jess, 1995; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Jones, 1998 and 2006; Sörlin, 1999; Setten, 1999 and 2006; Holden, 2000; Williams & McIntyre, 2001; Olwig,

2002; Whatmore, 2002; Paasi, 2002; Widgren, 2003.) The framework utilizes one axis to illustrate the tension between "functional specialization" and "territorial adaptation," and a second axis to illustrate the dichotomy between the strategies of "active" use vs. "passive" contemplation of the landscape – the latter tension in short is a choice between development and conservation (fig. 1). The critical questions are:

- (a) what is the main preference: the activity or function searched for OR a specific localized landscape, a specific place; and
- (b) what is the view of human change and intervention: something to strive for OR something to try to limit.

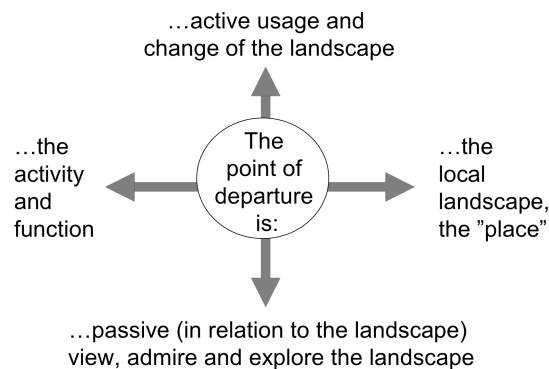


Figure 1. The points of departure for the two basic axes in the conceptual framework of ecostrategies.

Out of this axes framework, four main landscape perspectives are identified; the landscape as: (i) a factory for producing activities/products; (ii) a museum for external consumption; (iii) one's home district to be utilized and (iv) one's home district to be admired (fig. 2 and 3). These different ecostrategies involve various crucial consequences in terms of democracy, environmental issues, views of nature, local development, planning, pedagogic, identity, and so on. Even though in the figures the different strategies may appear to be clear-cut categories, in reality, of course, it is a question of tendencies and blends involving a greater or lesser degree of passive vs. active use of landscape, and of functional vs. territorial strategies.

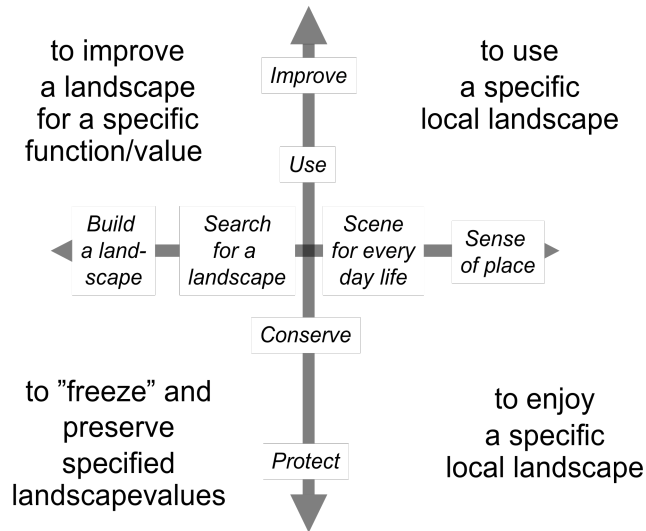


Figure 2. Some characteristics for different landscape perspectives along the two main axes and some key words for the four corner positions.

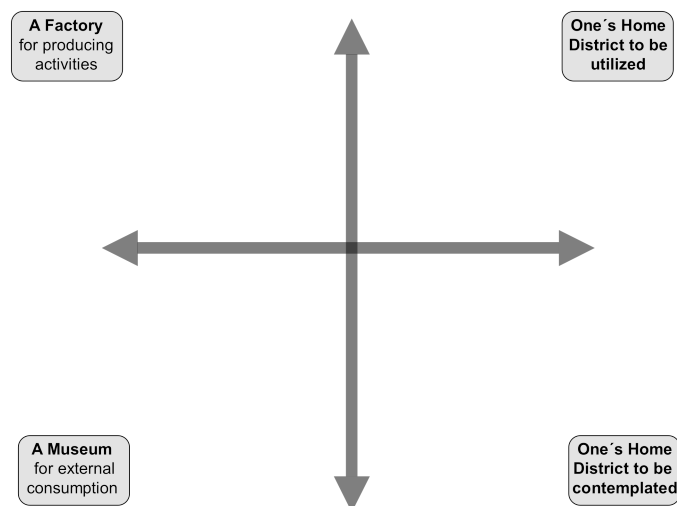


Figure 3. The four main landscape perspectives in the conceptual framework identified and labelled.

A Presentation Focused on Out-of-doors, Tourism and Conservation

With focus on conservation, outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism, we may summarize the four ecostrategies as follows, starting with the lower left position (cf. fig. 4):

- The ecostrategy of "freezing" ("conserve"!) a specific landscape (and maintaining that "frozen" landscape) to be "set aside" as a *museum* for external consumption. This for the sake

of, e.g., biodiversity, nature tourism or science – priorities carried out on a national or international basis.

- An ecostrategy in line with an active functional domination. The point of departure is the activities searched for. Special areas, equipment and organizations are established for these specialized outdoor activities. Long-distance travel and heavy use of material resources are often involved. It could be argued that the landscape is looked upon as a *factory* for the production of adventure, e.g., bathing, snowboarding and climbing. In its more extreme forms the activities are rebuilt indoors (climbing and swimming indoors, computer-games etc. (Sandell, 2004).

- An ecostrategy in line with active adaptation. Here, as in the strategy of passive adaptation, interest is directed towards the features of the local natural and cultural landscape, the topography, the season etc. But the ecostrategy of active adaptation also involves direct utilization of the landscape – firewood, fishing, hunting etc. Outdoor recreation is one of many locally integrated aspects of *one's home district to be utilized*. What area is "one's home district" basically is a question of identity – to feel at home. Also it should be noted that this "feeling at home" of course could be an important aspect of urban as well as rural landscape and be a part of permanent living as well as leisure visits and multiple dwelling (Sandell, 2006).

- In the strategy of passive adaptation appreciative activities like strolling, cross-country skiing, bird watching, looking for flowers etc. are carried out in *one's home district to be admired*. These activities are characterized by passive amusement and on a superficial level (what is done, what type of equipment used etc.) it could be very much the same as the museum ecostrategy (but the latter is carried out without any deeper integration and identification with the local natural and cultural landscape apart from the special feature(s) visited).

Also, in line with the two latter ecostrategies – from the entrepreneurs point of view – we will find many of the current attempts at ecotourism and small-scale locally based nature-oriented recreation involving active utilization as hunting and fishing (in line with one's home district to be utilized) or passive admiration as in hiking and photo excursions (in line with one's home district to be contemplated). Here the tourists are "invited" to one's home district –

although the context, from the tourist's point of view, is still a part of the tourist industry in accordance with the strategy of functional specialization.

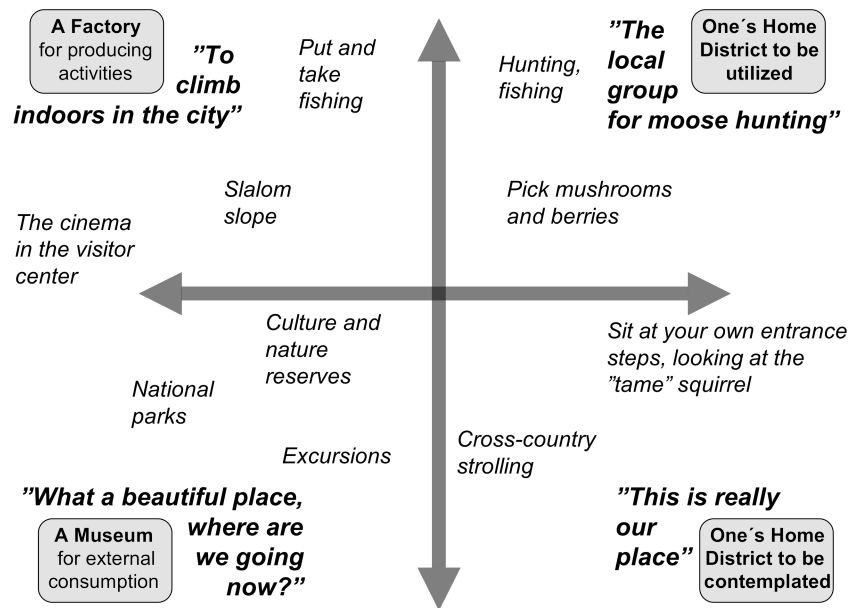


Figure 4. The conceptual framework of four ecostrategies with regard to man's relation to nature and landscape, here with examples illustrating various aspects of out-of-doors and conservation.

The Ecostrategies Illustrated with the Right of Public Access

The discussion – and the failure – of the proposed reserves presented below were to a large extent underpinned by the issue of access (the need of unrestricted vs. restricted access for different groups) linked to the tradition of the right of public access. This, together with the fact that the right of public access in e.g. Sweden and Norway is very much important and interesting with regard to landscape perspectives (cf. Sandell, 1997; Kaltenborn et al, 2001; Fredman & Sandell, 2005) motivates its role here as a more general illustration of the conceptual framework. In summary, the right of public access in Sweden is laid down in common law and can be seen as the "free space" between various restrictions, mainly: (i) economic interests; (ii) local people's privacy; (iii) preservation; and (iv) the actual use and change of the landscape. For example, camping for not more than 24 hours is generally allowed, traversing any land, lake or river, swimming, lightning a fire etc. are permitted wherever the restrictions mentioned above are not violated. Even though guidelines are provided by, e.g., the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, it is important to note that, to a large extent, it is "the landscape" that tells you what is – and is not – allowed, e.g. the way

the land is being used may indicate how sensitive it is for people walking on it, and the weather tells you how safe it is to make a camp fire. Figure 5 suggests that the current content of the right of public access in Sweden can be divided into two main regions using the ecostrategy framework. First, we can identify its uncontroversial core area associated with passive/appreciative recreation typical of much traditional Swedish recreation activity. The much larger and increasingly divisive fringe areas of commercial recreation and tourism, national park designation and various resource-based uses represent a much larger area of contestation within the Swedish community today.

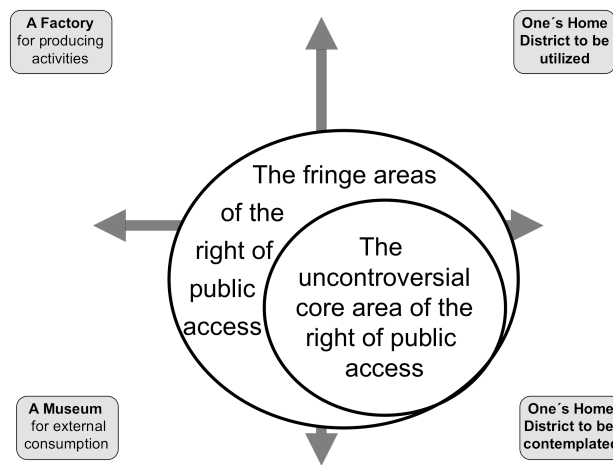


Figure 5. The conceptual framework used to illustrate the right of public access with its relatively uncontroversial core area and its much more debated fringe areas

Case studies of Protected Areas in the High Mountain Region of Sweden

A National Park Proposal and a MaB Reserve in the Lake Torne Area

During the latter part of the 1980s there was a debate concerning the possibility of establishing a large national park in the high mountain area around Lake Torneträsk, close to the town of Kiruna in the North of Sweden. It involved two smaller existing national parks, a number of marked trails, mountain huts and the Abisko tourist centre. If established, it would be one of the largest national parks in Europe (4360 km²). But, even though various interested parties were represented in the working group for the national park, there was such a clash of interests that the project could not be carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency

(Sandell, 2000). Besides the Sami people the area has been important for tourism since the beginning of the 20th century and during the same period of time the mining town Kiruna was established. In 1976 the area was included in the list of 25 primary recreation areas in Sweden, and at the beginning of the 1980s a road was built parallel to the railway between Kiruna and Narvik that was established 1903. Further, it is important to note that after the road had been built, no specific "threat" or major change with regard to status or use of the area was at hand when the plan for a new national park was put forward.

As mentioned above, the plan for a new national park was shelved for an indefinite period (and still is) and the main obstacle was the resistance from local groups, principally in Kiruna, who were afraid that their use of the area would be curtailed, partly because of possible restrictions on such outdoor activities as fishing, hunting and the use of snowmobiles. These perspectives were argued for in the local newspapers and at local meetings and an important channel and actor turned out to be the local hunting and fishing association. In an appeal (with more than 15,000 signatures) it was asserted that the establishment of a Kiruna national park is a clear intrusion upon the right of public access. As part of a general scepticism regarding the intentions of central authorities (e.g. the Environmental Protection Agency), there also seemed to be a general fear that there might be more severe restrictions in the future than those initially proposed, for instance, with regard to hunting and fishing. It might be noted as well that national organisations involved in tourism, conservation and the outdoors seemed to be positive to the park plan, but did not take a very active part in the discussion when the proposal was heavily criticised. It was clearly stated in the plan that reindeer farming would not be subject to restrictions but, even though generally maintaining a low profile in the debate, the Sami people (the Laplanders) seemed to be somewhat sceptical. The main actors in favour of the plan were the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the regional tourist organisation, the former e.g. carrying out public meetings in Kiruna that due to the conflict turned out to be quite stormy (Sandell, 2000).

In 1986, part of the area for the proposed national park also was designated as an UNESCO Man and Biosphere reserve (MaB) emphasising research and nature conservation (Sandell, 2005). And even though this was not linked to any formal changes of regulations it is noticeable that this happened simultaneously as one of the most intense debates – and refusal – of a proposed national park occurred in the same area. The establishment of the biosphere reserve was carried out with traditional natural science arguments concerning valuable nature

and the need of scientific reference areas, perspectives underpinned by the long tradition of scientific (mainly natural science) work in the area. But UNESCO has during recent years asked for more of a development approach with local engagement (Biosphere Reserves, 1996; Price, 1999). So far this is a challenge not clearly answered by the local population, the municipality or the region, and therefore the future position of this MaB reserve is currently somewhat unclear (Sandell, 2005).

The Role of Tourism in the Two Lake Torne cases

The intention behind the plan for the national park, as put forward by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, was closely linked to tourist perspectives. It was said to give much larger groups of people the opportunity for genuine and first-rate experiences of nature offering an wilderness-type landscape with an unique combination of alpine topography and unexploited road less brush moors and stupendous massifs. Also it is important to note that the proposed national park involved the ambition of widening the traditional Swedish view of the national park concept with inspiration from national parks in North America with zoning, rangers and visitor centres. The ambition was to strengthen the area's legal protection against exploitation, but also to raise its status and attraction value and to bring into being in a practical sense a co-ordinated administration that protects nature, was outward-looking, locally based and generated jobs. Thus the goal was that there should be a high degree of interplay between nature conservation and tourism development including a tourist centre in Abisko with exhibitions, shops and a cinema for 220 persons.

As traditionally a mining society new employment prospects in the area of tourism and service for many in Kiruna was very much unfamiliar. This in combination with a "tradition" of local scepticism towards central authorities, e.g. due to previous tensions around the use of snowmobiles and the perceived linkage between the concept "national park" and a lack of local power were reasons for the local opposition. In summary it may be argued that there was a clash between basically very different cultural views (cf. "ecostrategies" above) of conservation and outdoor recreation and the possibilities for traditional local recreation activities such as fishing, hunting and the use of snowmobiles were here crucial.

Tourism was not an argument when the biosphere reserve was established but in line with the shift of arguments mentioned above tourism is now an element in the discussions e.g. from

the national MaB committee. But when doing so it is e.g. in terms of science tourism linked to the tradition of scientific work in the region and the more conspicuous arguments are instead that the biosphere reserve could be of value for physical planning and for preserving good opportunities for local outdoor recreation. In other words the argumentation is more in line with a sustainable local and regional development in broad terms (and in accordance with the modern biosphere reserve concept) than tourism per se (Sandell, 2005).

The Case of a Proposed National Park in Southern Jämtland 1995-2000

The general plan for national parks in Sweden (Nationalparksplan, 1989) included the establishment of a national park also in the southern part of the high mountain region of Jämtland and in 1995 a working group was formed to prepare a detailed plan for this (Sandell, 2005). But a couple of years later it was obvious that the working group could not agree on basic issues and in 1998 the further process was changed and directed towards a national park based on "local conditions" using the thematic regional synoptic plan as an arena for discussions. The two municipalities involved were instructed to produce a joint comprehensive plan and resources and participation by various national and regional interests supported the process. The main reason for this shift of strategy was the local resistance and scepticism very much in line with the national park proposal in the Lake Torne area as presented above. The goal for the planning process was to deal with the questions of development and nature conservation without being tied to a national park proposal as an instrument for conservation. The role of tourism in the case of Southern Jämtland before and after the shift in 1989 was mainly a question of different types of tourism. Simplified it could be described as a tension between:

- (i) the original suggestion, before "the shift", of highlighting the need of access for external low impact tourism interested in natural sceneries; and
- (ii) after "the shift" to a proposed national park on local conditions highlighting the need of all tourism to adapt to current local land use and to have a profile giving priority to local entrepreneurs.

But in the beginning of the year 2000 also this work in the Southern Jämtland was stopped and the municipality of Åre proceeded on its own with comprehensive planning for the area within that municipality. The work on a national park on local conditions was put on the shelf for the foreseeable future time.

The Cases Analysed in the Conceptual Framework of Ecostrategies

Using the conceptual framework of ecostrategies presented above to analyse the cases we can in the national park proposal in the Lake Torne area first note the somewhat extended approach toward the "factory" position through tourism investments proposed, followed by critics from a more "purist" and traditional national park position (fig. 6). Also we could illustrate the main conflict between (i) the traditional national park perspective, and (ii) the local opposition very much engaged in local hunting and fishing (fig. 7). In the case of the biosphere reserve in the Lake Torne area the transition of the original MaB concept to the current ambitions with local engagements and regional development in line with a broad understanding of sustainable development is striking (fig. 8). A similar shift is seen when the case in Southern Jämtland was changed to a proposal for a national park on local conditions. But here more or less abandoning the traditional "museum" position (fig. 9).

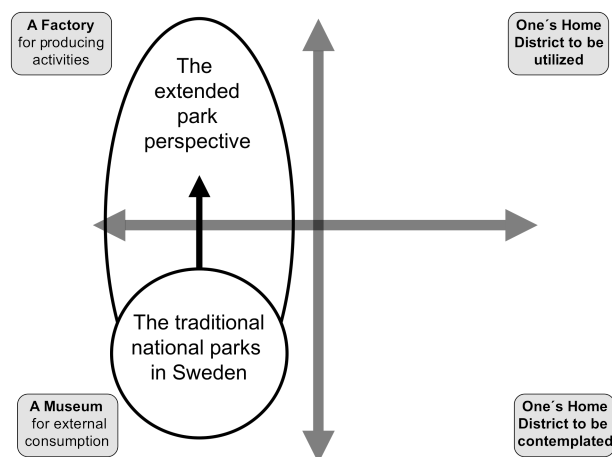


Figure 6. The ecostrategies applied to the main conflict with regard to the national park proposal in the Lake Torne area.

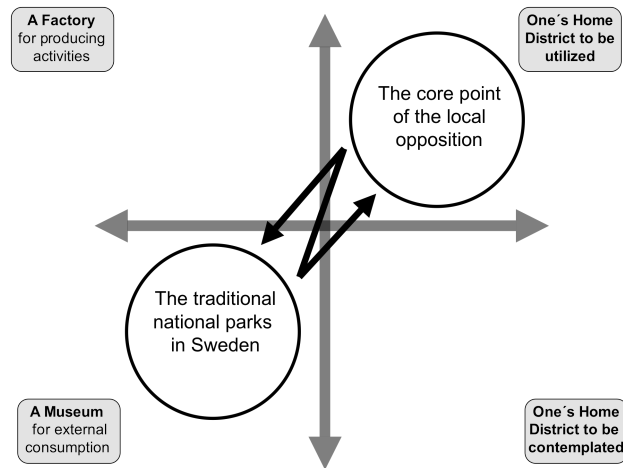


Figure 7. The ecostrategies applied to the national park proposal in the Lake Torne area with its extended approach.

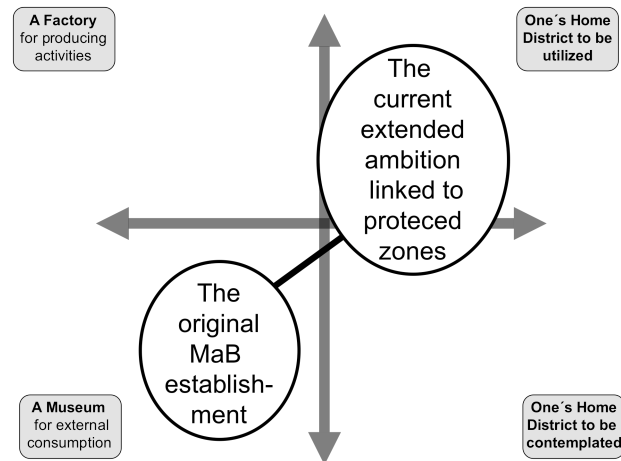


Figure 8. The ecostrategies applied to the biosphere reserve in the Lake Torne area and the current ambitions linked to the modern MaB concept with local engagements and regional development

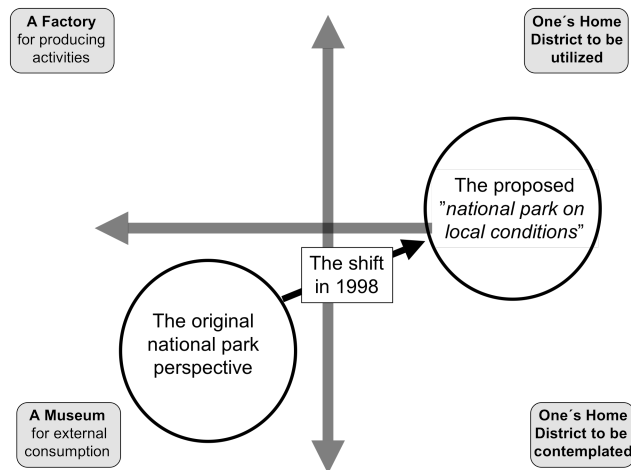


Figure 9. The ecostrategies applied to the case in Southern Jämtland and the change to a national park proposal on local conditions.

A General Shift of Conservation Policy?

The confrontation policy illustrated above has proved ineffective as a conservation measure in many aspects. It has, as shown here but also internationally, evoked local resistance and has therefore been difficult to implement since strong monitoring mechanisms are needed (Brockington, 2002; Adams & Mulligan, 2003). Even in ecological terms, this policy has had problems since biodiversity may even decrease when human interference (e.g. domestic animal grazing) is interrupted. Since the end of the 1980s, local participation in the management of protected areas has been emphasised (Zachrisson et.al., 2006; fig. 10). Nature conservation is now supposed to be done with and for people, instead of the previous protection from people (Zachrisson, 2004). The new paradigm is informed by the concept of sustainable development, which aims to combine ecological sustainability with socioeconomic development. In terms of nature conservation, this has included attempts to reconcile the interests of local communities with those of conservation by pointing to the economic benefits that could follow from tourism development promoted by protected areas. Protected areas can be of considerable value for nature-based tourism if designation brings recognition or increased tourism value and there is a regulatory framework within which tourism can be managed. Recreation and tourism can, in this way, be critical to fostering support for protected areas and conservation.

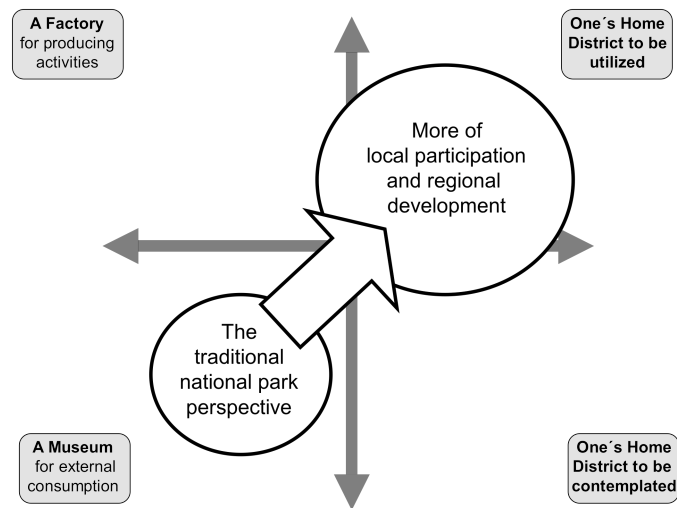


Figure 10. The ecostrategies applied to a perceived general shift in conservation policy (Zachrisson et.al., 2006).

A Discussion of Supply of Knowledge and Further Applications

Ecostrategies and Legitimacy of Data Collection

What type of knowledge for a planning process that could be seen as legitimate is among other things a reflection of what landscape perspective that is taken as the point of departure for the planning process. Therefore the conceptual framework of ecostrategies was used for a general discussion of suggested linkages between different ecostrategies and what type of data are to be looked for and could be seen as legitimate in a planning process (Vuorio et.al., 2003).

In figure 11 a few key words have been suggested with regard to some general characteristics of what could be seen as basic aims and threats with regard to the different ecostrategies in a planning process. Of course, in a real case there are many circumstances that will influence this picture but it could be argued that these key-words indicates some of the interests that probably will be manifest when different landscape perspectives are claiming their interests in what type of data should be collected to feed a planning process.

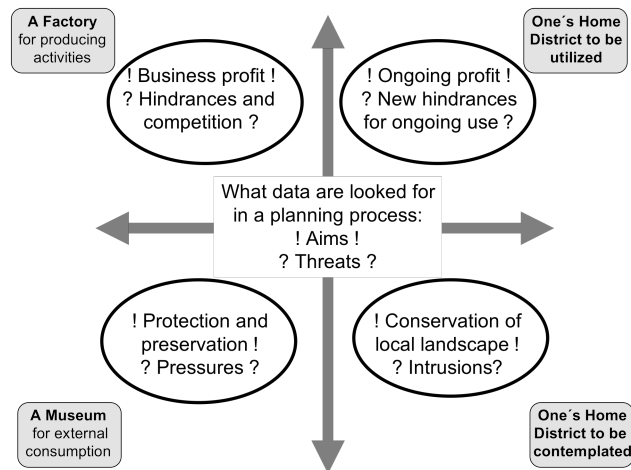


Figure 11. Some suggestions with regard to what type of aims and what types of threats that probably could be found among different landscape perspectives with regard to what data a planning process should be fed with (adapted from Vuorio et.al., 2003).

Above the "shift of strategy" in 1998 with regard to the proposed national park in Södra Jämtlandsfjällen was mentioned. This shift of perspective also could to some extent be described as a shift in what data are to be looked for to feed the planning process and what is the legitimacy of different sources of collected data. Here it could be noted that in the beginning of 1999 a program was written with regard to the new approach – and only a few months later the interest of new data to be collected was addressed to the European Tourism Research Institute. This simultaneous shift in the case of Södra Jämtlandsfjällen of (i) planning/landscape strategy and (ii) shift of data needed and legitimacy could be illustrated as in figure 12, that could be compared with figure 9 (see further in Vuorio et.al., 2003).

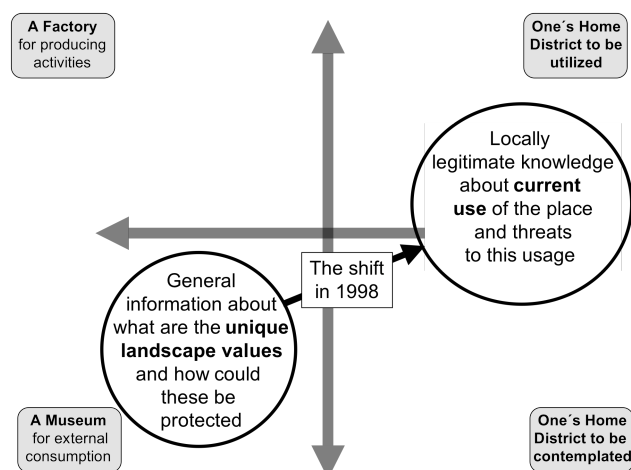


Figure 12. An illustration of the shift of data needed for the planning process and the legitimacy of different sources for data collected that could be seen as part and parcel of the shift of planning strategy in 1998 with regard to the planning process including a proposed national park in Södra Jämtlandsfjällen (adapted from Vuorio et.al., 2003).

As a consequence of a shift in landscape and planning perspective to some extent new themes and new groups have to be taken into consideration with regard to what should be investigated (also of course involving a discussion of what type of methods that are suitable). Also a planning process more in line with communication and bottom-up (which the "shift" discussed above must be interpreted as) must involve the fact that also not previously known themes and groups could be manifested as an outcome of the investigation. The planning process therefore in such a case must include openness for what values (attitudes, activities, groups) that has to be taken into consideration with regard to the need of knowledge and legitimacy. This in line with the basic difference between (i) functional strategies of general approaches to be applied in various local contexts, and (ii) the territorial adaptation strategies there the local context is to be seen as the point of departure (the left and right directions respectively, in the conceptual framework).

Further Applications?

This paper will close with some comments about further elaborations and applications of the ecostrategies. Out of its previous use for analyzing mainly written documents and semi-structured interviews with key-persons linked to specific cases of choices and conflicts it could be of interest to try to elaborate upon the use of the conceptual framework in e.g. survey material. But as investigating and analysing specific projects, policies etc. as manifested through what is said/written and done – not individuals or populations – it is problematic to formulate adequate questions. Probably it must be very much situated questions with regard to time, activity etc. The linkages between the different ecostrategies and pedagogic aspects of outdoor learning, environmental education and education for sustainable development is part of an ongoing interdisciplinary research program. Also its deeper linkages, parallels and differences with regard to current conceptual landscape discussions in e.g. human geography are something that will be given priority to.

Acknowledgement

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