

# Environmentalists versus foresters in Estonian forest policy processes

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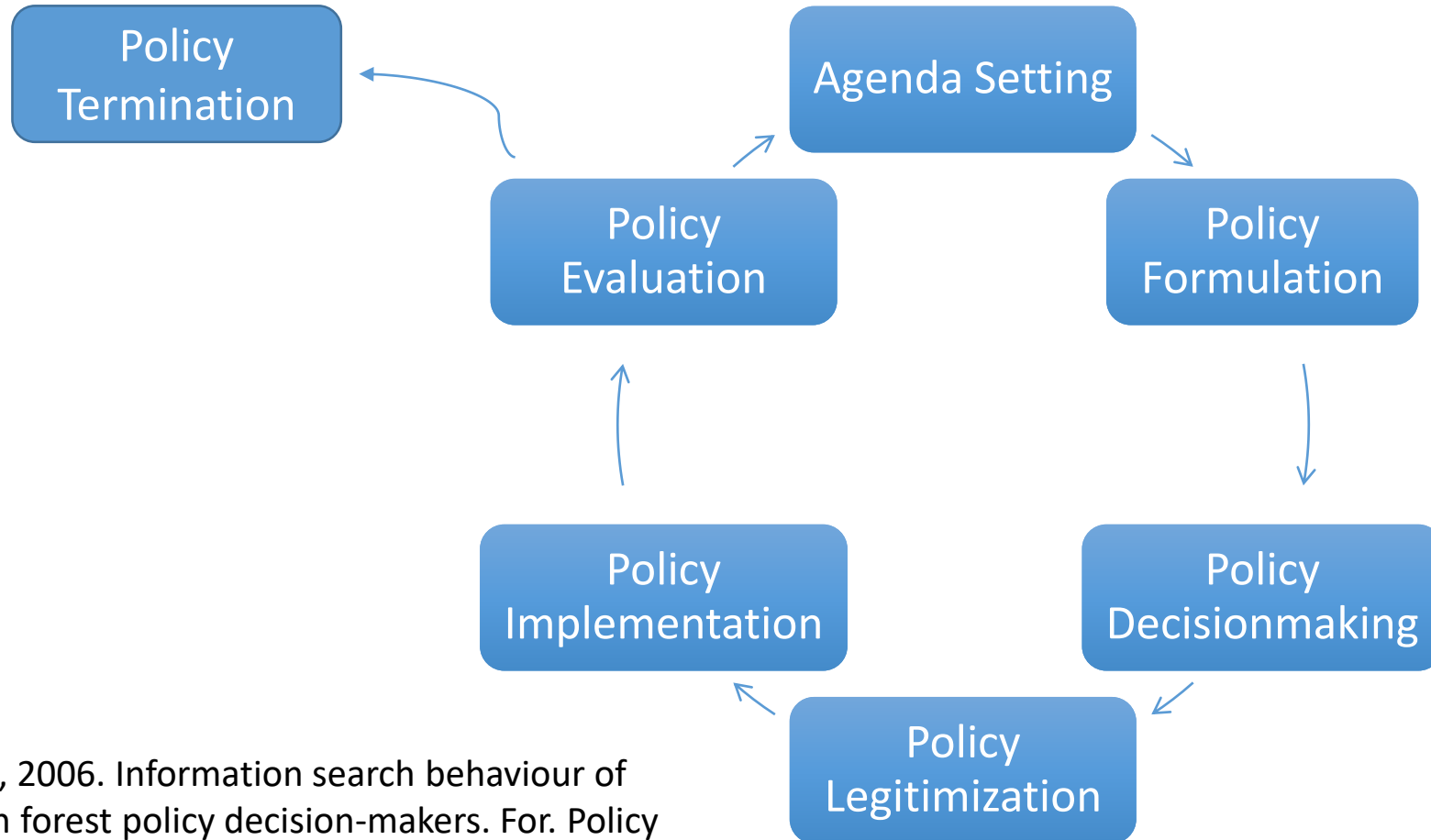
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# Agenda

- Selected results from the article by Meelis Teder & Paavo Kaimre. ‘The participation of stakeholders in the policy processes and their satisfaction with results: A case of Estonian forestry policy’, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2017.05.007> (currently online only, waiting for special issue of journal ‘Forest Policy and Economics’
  - a part of COST Action FP1207 ‘Orchestrating forest-related policy analysis in Europe (ORCHESTRA)’ (2013-2017).
  - Analysis of Estonian forest policymaking 2009 – 2015
- Current situation in Estonian forestry and Forest Policy

# The Ideal Type Policy Cycle



Janse, G., 2006. Information search behaviour of European forest policy decision-makers. For. Policy Econ. 8, 6, 579-592.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2004.10.001>

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# Stakeholder analysis

**Policy evaluation** → evaluation of stakeholder collaboration in policy processes. As minimum - whether or not the mission, goals, output and outcomes were achieved

- **Quantitative data**, e.g. number of participating stakeholders & discussed proposals
- **Qualitative assessment** - to find out what worked, what did not work and what can be improved. Additionally, stakeholders might be asked
  - if they felt their views were heard;
  - if they learned anything during this process;
  - if they were satisfied with their own level of participation.

# Scientific framework

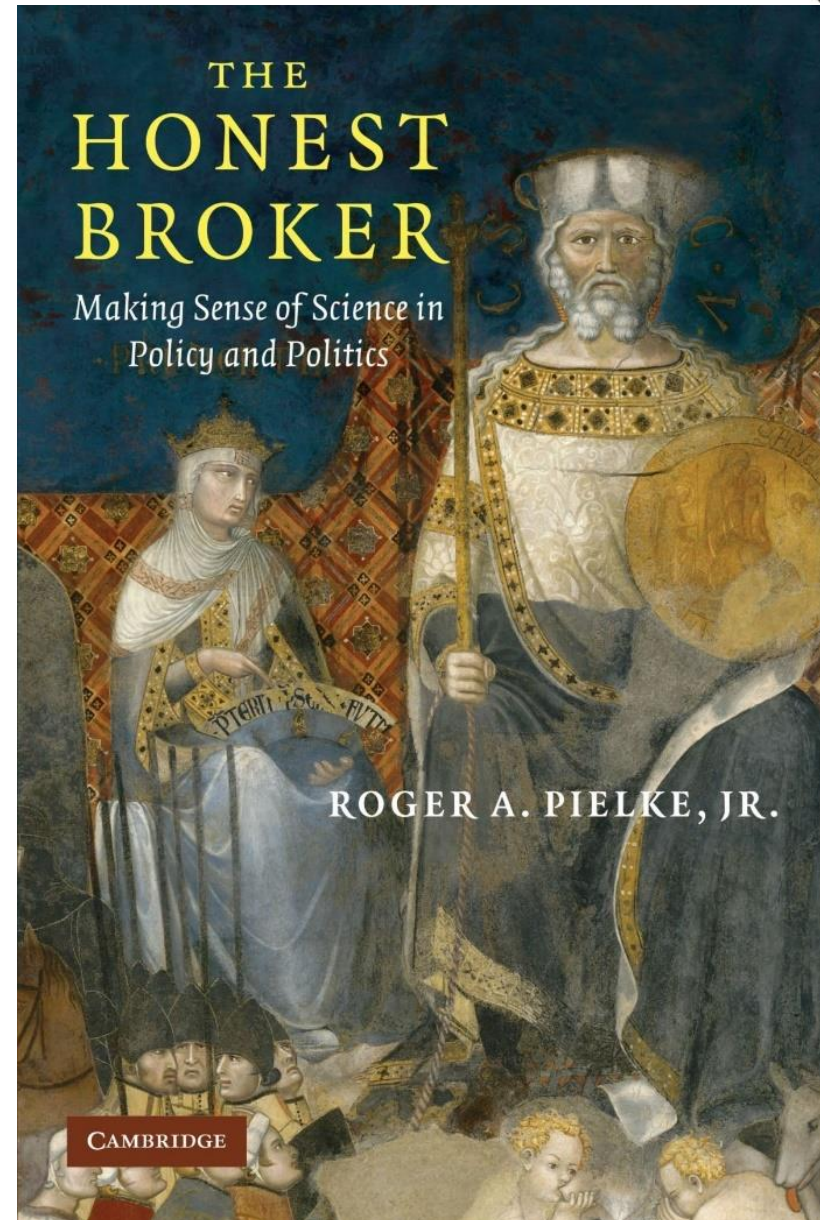
## THE HONEST BROKER: MAKING SENSE OF SCIENCE IN POLICY AND POLITICS

by Roger Pielke, Jr.

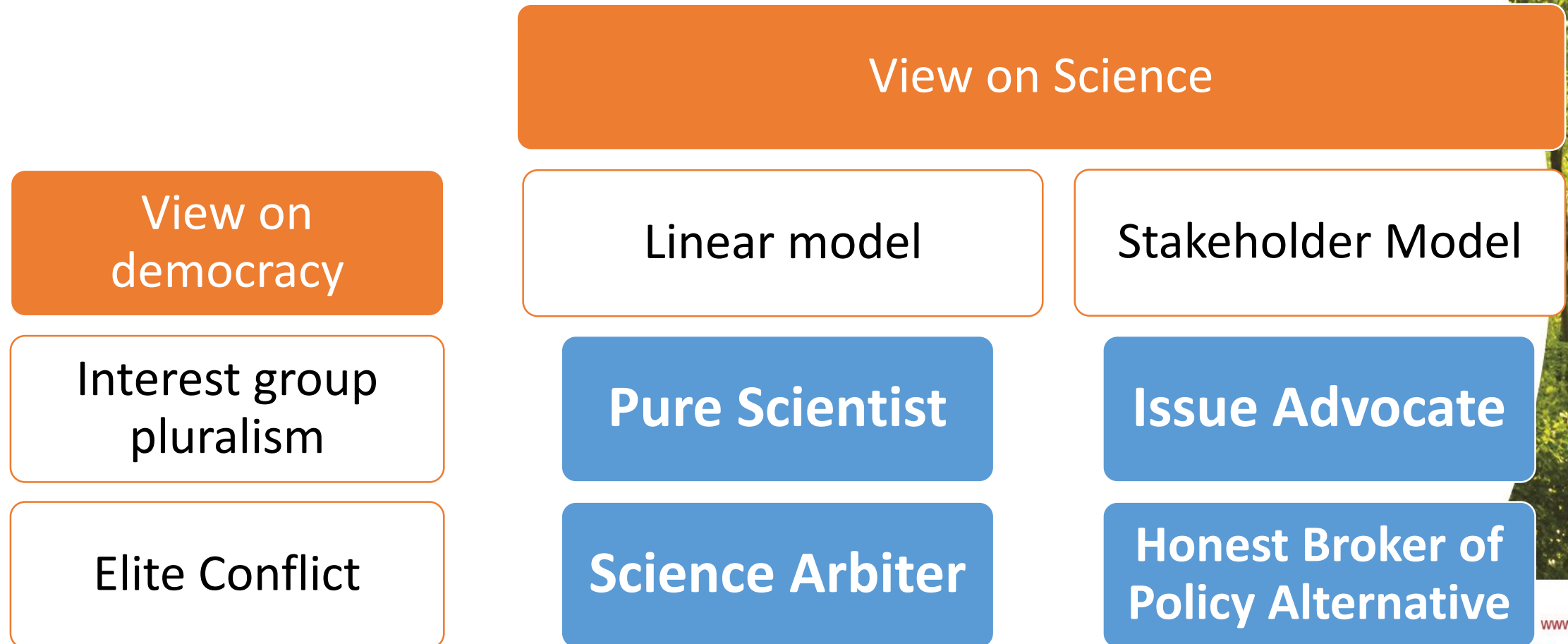
Publisher: Cambridge University Press (2007)

ISBN-13: 978-0521694810

Additionally, please look Roger Pielke Jr presentation in (US) National Academy of Science roundtable ['The Roles of Scientists in Policy and Politics'](#)



# Four idealised roles for scientists in decision-making



# Survey respondents

Organisation	Position
Ministry of Environment	Advisor
Ministry of Environment	Senior officer
Local FOA*	Chairman of the board of FOA
Local FOA; Estonian Private Forest Union	Chairman of the board of FOA and chairman of the board of National Union of FOAs
Estonian Forest and Wood Industries Association	Managing director
Estonian Fund for Nature	Chairman of the board, nature protection specialist
Estonian Fund for Nature	Former forestry specialist
Estonian University of Life Sciences	Professor
Estonian University of Life Sciences	Professor
Estonian University of Life Sciences	Vice Rector

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\*FOA – Forest Owners Association

# Forms of participation and decision-making power (1)

- **Participation in the form of sharing information**
  - forestry officials or forestry scientists in high administrative positions shared forestry-related information for use in other, non-forestry policy processes.
- **Participation as consultation** was rarely described.
  - Scientists - EFDP 2020 (Estonian Forestry Development Programme); also Estonian FSC workgroup
- **Participation as advocacy** was indicated by all representatives of different interest groups.



# Forms of participation and decision-making power (2)

## Participation in the form of decision-making

- **Most popular** form of participation.
- Respondents interpreted **membership** or took part in decision-making processes, such as participating in a workgroup or round-table discussions;
- although, in government-supervised policymaking processes, the decisions are made by the minister, the government or Parliament.
- The respondents' attitude shows how important consensus is for them.

# Opinions about national level forest policy processes – Environmentalists about government officials

Government officials are **passive**,

- Sometimes they **do not have enough personal motivation**
- During the discussions, the **officials do not express their opinions**, but later a decision prepared by the officials emerges.
- Need for high personal communication skills
- Different departments under the same ministry should implement similar policies. Officials from the **Nature Conservation Department** of the **Ministry of the Environment** support the positions of **environmental NGOs**, while officials from the **Forest Department** **prefer** other stakeholders, e.g. **forest owners or timber industries**

# Opinions about national level forest policy processes – Environmentalists about forestry scientists

- Forestry scientists may have in-depth knowledge while their **promotion skills are weak** because the transfer of knowledge calls for simplicity.
- Scientists are **relatively modest**, they will not start an altercation and perhaps it does not suit them.
- Usually heated vigorous discussions of policy processes are not based on scientific information presented by the scientists, but on the *Weltanschauung* (world-view) of the stakeholders.
- The policymaking discussions are not academic in their nature; thus, **scientists act more like observers**, just monitoring the struggles of other stakeholders.

# Opinions about national level forest policy processes – Others about forestry scientists

- Forestry scientists are neutral in expressing their opinion. First they think and then talk; when they talk, they definitely know their subject.
- Forestry officials have not had any problems with the scientists. Easy to communicate with as well as interested in thinking along and joining the processes; they are good advisors who never refuse to contribute.
- Scientists are sometimes expected to take a more authoritative attitude in challenging discussions, rather than being compliant.
- High-ranking forestry official with a researcher's background was evaluated more highly than other forestry officials.

# Opinions about national level forest policy processes – others about environmentalists

- The environmental NGOs have been the **most active stakeholders**.
- Environmentalists tend to be superficial, sometimes **they neither have a clear vision** of the whole process **nor analyse their own ideas in detail**. For example, in discussions about the financial support measures for forestry, their ideas were not supported because they lacked complexity.
- Environmentalists **do not systematically cooperate** with other stakeholders, except in cooperation with scientists specialising in environmental protection.
- The ideological discussions in the most important forest policy round-table forum (FCME) show **obvious contradictions** between the forest owners' representatives and forest industries (**environmentalists do not have any coalition partners there**).

# Respondents' satisfaction with the participation in forest policy processes

Satisfaction level	Policy process	Advisory Boards, Board membership in national union	General opinion
<b>Not at all satisfied</b>	FSC (3x)		
<b>Slightly non-satisfied</b>	EFDP, FCME (2x), LHC		
<b>No opinion</b>	FCME		
<b>Slightly satisfied</b>	EFDP, FSC, LHC	EFWIA, FrtEFN	X (4x)
<b>Extremely satisfied</b>	EFDP, FCME	AbPFC, EFS	X

AbPFC – Advisory board of Private Forest Centre; EFDP – Estonian Forestry Development Programme until 2020; EFS – Estonian Forest Society; EFWIA – Estonian Forest and Wood Industries Association; FCME – Forestry Council at the Ministry of the Environment; FrtEFN – Forestry round table of Estonian Fund for Nature; FSC – Estonian FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) workgroup; LHC – Local Hunting Council; X – general opinion about all (or other, non-specified) participated processes

# FSC workgroup – as the most problematic forest policy body until 2015

One environmentalist (participated until 2010) was ‘slightly satisfied’, he evaluated the process as such.

- Other respondents were not satisfied: the national FSC process was ‘hijacked’ by the environmentalists in March 2011, when six members (five from the Economic Chamber and one from the Social Chamber) were expelled from the workgroup.
  - Representatives of the biggest organizations of forest owners and forest industries in Estonia: RMK, EPFU and EFWIA, three private individuals.
- *‘Estonian FSC workgroup was not a body representing the wide range of interests related to forest management and various stakeholders, the workgroup was lacking economic stakeholders and its economic chamber did not exist’.*

# Discussion and conclusions (as of end 2015)

- Estonian results confirm the findings of various other studies (Edwards and Kleinschmit, 2013; Hellström, 2001; Kangas et al., 2010; Vuletić et al., 2013), where the most serious conflicts in forestry occur between the utilisation of forest resources and nature protection.
- Polarised scientific debates also occur between forestry and environmental scientists, both groups having solid scientific knowledge in their field of activity (Sarkki and Karjalainen, 2012).



# Discussion and conclusions (as of end 2015)

- A larger group of forestry-related stakeholders outside the forest sector should participate in forest policy formulation. This could give the processes a wider scope and greater public support.
- Different stakeholders who participate in policy processes tend to believe their main form of participation is decision-making. Stakeholders, as participants in policy processes, prefer achieving consensus and appreciate being influential for the final decision; however, in government supervised policy processes the final decision is made by high ranking forestry officials or by politicians.

# Some important changes in 2016

- Ministry of Environment started the consultations for planned changes in Forest Act, where one aim was
  - to decrease the bureaucracy in management of private forests
  - to decrease the minimum clearfelling age of spruce from 80 to 60 years (60 – 120)
- Various protests from Environmental NGOs
- New environmental movement – ‘Helping Estonia’s Forests’ (EST: Eesti Metsa Abiks)

Environmentalists protest against Estonia's state forestry policy

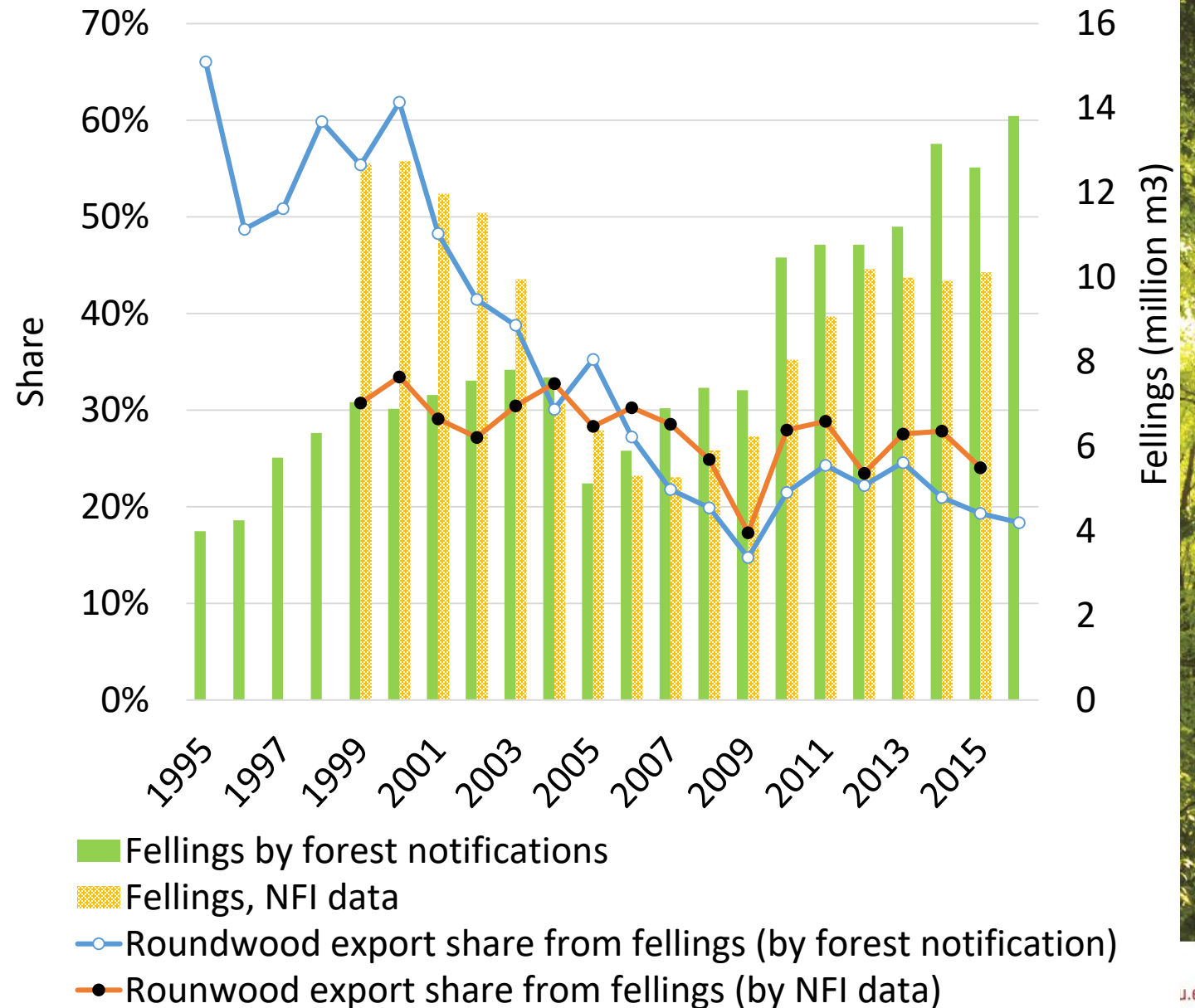
Minister of the Environment Marko Pomerants (IRL) gave comments to the media as protestors demonstrated in front of the Ministry of the Environment building in Tallinn. Friday, Dec. 16, 2016.

<http://news.err.ee/120070/environmentalists-protest-against-estonia-s-state-forestry-policy>



# „Banana Coefficient“ or what to do with pulpwood?

- Estonia does not have modern pulpmills for pine, spruce and birch wood, so the pulpwood is exported
- Modern biorefinery: domestic investors with forestry and woodworking background initiated the environmental impact assessment and planning process at the beginning of 2017.
- Factory launch, first pulp production in 2022



# Situation in 2017

- Environmentalists protest against planned changes in Forest act, also against Bio-refinery, increasing forest harvesting volumes, etc.
- A lot of public debates, e.g. conference in Estonian University of Life Sciences, various TV debates, conferences in Parliament, etc.
- In debates forestry scientists are participating, but environmental scientists are more active, sometimes using populist or demagogic communication tools.
- Increasing popularity of environmentalist group 'Helping Estonia's Forests'. Facebook as communication channel is actively used.

Urban persons in protection single tree – White willow (Salix Alba), to be cut for road reconstruction of a large traffic junction

## The white willow farce had a violent end



Uwe Gnadenteich  
reporter

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# Estonian citizens (self-made-environmentalists?) against forestry and foresters



Logs studded with nails.



Additionally the timber trucks have been blocked in small rural roads

Source: Risto Mets, Postimees, October 02, 2017, <https://tartu.postimees.ee/4263131/kurjad-sildid-ja-palkidesse-taotud-naelad-isehakanud-looduskaitsejad-naitavad-louna-eesis-metsameestele-hambaid>

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# Conclusion/ Take-home message

- Forestry and forest policy issues are currently actively discussed in Estonia.
- Some environmentalists are more active than foresters or forestry scientists. Seems, that citizens tend to believe environmentalists
- Recently forestry scientists were forced to be more active in news media and in public debates, but a lot of additional work has to be done.
- If modern biorefinery is not to be built in Estonia, the investors might look to Latvian direction.