How do we get everybody at the table? Enhancing diversity in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration.

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Abstract: Global ecosystem degradation challenging ecological and social thresholds demands urgent responses that address systemically the complex interrelationships between humans and nature. To improve the adaptive capacity of the social systems and strengthen its resilience to respond to external challenges affecting landscapes, multi-stakeholder approaches for landscape restoration involving diverse actors expressing different perspectives are important. While historically absent groups are recognised as the actors that, when meaningfully engaged, achieve transformational change, the literature is unclear on how this is achieved.

This research aims to better understand the particular elements that enhance and limit the ability to establish a diverse range of participants within multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration. Using semi-structured interviews with practitioners with relevant experience in engaging historically absent groups, we found that including diversity is an iterative process of forming a microcosm as a complex, adaptive system representing the wider landscape through building on synergies and filling the gaps. A wide range of specific strategies exist to address concrete and structural obstacles hindering participation. Moreover, the specific role of the facilitator, their intangible skills that allow them to be capable of self-awareness, deep reflection and listening, are a key leverage point to navigate the complexity around many systemic obstacles preventing actors on the edge of systems from participating.

Keywords: Diversity, Resilience, Landscape Restoration, Historically Absent Groups and Multi-Stakeholder Process.

Statement of Contribution

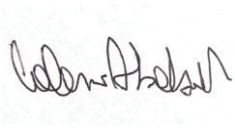
Amanda's care for details guided us through our thesis journey. She was a driving force for academic rigor and our guardian of deadlines. Her genuine enthusiasm for academic reading made her our 'literature review saviour'. Amanda had a natural instinct for detecting the perfect article and at some point, it seemed the articles would find her (even when she was not looking anymore!). Amanda's thrill at the beauties of nature (in particular, snow (!), flowers (all kinds), and the rare Swedish sun) brought lightness and wonder to our collaboration. Amanda is a freakishly quick note taker, loves a good master plan document in a well-organised Google Drive, and beautifully designed our half-way presentations (she shares a fondness for MIRO). Her teaching skills guided our team with clarity and simplicity as we tried to find connections in complexity.

Ilse was our chief sword slayer for sentence editing and did so with grace, compassion and meaning. She invited everyone to feel comfortable with her welcoming ways as facilitator and host while simultaneously translating a diversity of worldviews. She is a deep listener and speaks with kindness. Armed with a colourful marker and a whiteboard, she was able to help Paula make sense of the deeper understandings and research stages. She instigated strategic conversations both within the group and during interviews. In challenging times, she spoke with clarity, purpose and a sense of the greater work. Ilse was a friend to codes and quirk partner to Vale, while still managing to be a self-care activist and share her passion for delicious cooking. She has a way with words, a superpower of elegant synthesis in her writing. She sought clarity through the nuances of the interrelationships between so many elements and always focused on the heart of the matter.

Paula was our "communicator in chief" through the whole journey, organising the interviews, scheduling our internal and external meetings, maintaining control on an amount of emails and communication threads that would have petrified any other person. She always fought for keeping everybody updated and on the same page, which was sometimes the most challenging task. She brought an extra amount of care to the process within and without, holding the social threads connecting us with our practitioners, our mentors and the greater MSLS community. Her presence during the interviews opened spaces for connecting human to human, allowing deeper conversations. She always offered to 'just tag me' in things she could do to help, lighting the journey for each one of us.

Valentina is an artful synthesiser of complexity. Her commitment to embrace chaos within the data analysis process led her to birth our prototype diagram, several times over. Her search for precision committed her to keep iterating for clearer and clearer versions. Her commitment was such that we've had to threaten to take the coding software away from her, lest commitment turn to fanaticism. Valentina is also our group's designer, with a particular fondness for MIRO madness. She brought her sensitivity to interviews where her listening quality always seemed to pull out that extra nugget (consensually), as well as to group processes where through her presence she inspired a groundedness and connection to our bodies that others often forgot in the heat of deadlines. Valentina would have fit within our sample criteria for our research's population. Her experience as a facilitator herself has shaped our research at many levels and helped us search deeper and keep questioning until we found the root. When we found the root, Valentina was here to celebrate profusely and remind us to do the same.



Amanda Ilse Paula Valentina

Acknowledgements

We see this thesis as our way to put our hearts, energy, work, time and connections to work for all life, landscapes and people on this planet, so that we may all thrive towards a sustainable future for everyone. This learning journey has been like a yellow ferry rolling over the waves: to and from Aspö, to and from sickness, through peace and conflict, to bright laughs, to sorrows, from dark winter to flowery spring. We would not have been able to do so without the support of our own socio-ecological landscapes (ha!) we are interconnected with.

To our beloved family, friends and partners who, even from afar (Australia, Brazil, France, Italy, Mexico and The Netherlands), have been encouraging us throughout our research and life's journey.

To Elaine, our primary thesis advisor, thank you for joining the Ladies team and bringing light, direction, and strength. Thank you for not making us go down the 'Power rabbit hole'. And then thank you for still allowing us to do so anyway 3 weeks later. You have been a true inspiration as a researcher, a leader and as a woman. We are grateful to you and your presence and questions. We'll keep wearing the "Elaine teapot-hat" when in search of wisdom.

To Merlina, our second thesis advisor, thank you for your open-hearted guidance and for sharpening our work, jumping in with full power even on such short notice. Your quick and convergent mind helped us tremendously in those final miles where every paragraph reads like a word salad, the point is lost and the flow is missing. Thank you for every 'Nice!' comment you left. They have counted more than you know.

To Pieter, our first and important connection with the "real world" outside MSLS. Thank you for encouraging us to go that extra mile in our research, grounding us in reality, and for the work you do every day towards thriving landscapes. We look forward to seeing what is next for you and hope this thesis has been a help.

To our fantastic facilitators whose voices inspired us to dive deeper. Thank you for your humanity and so many delightful qualities you showcase whilst performing your ongoing work towards a better world. Your knowledge, experiences and warmth were to us like lighthouses in this complexity; you each shined your light on a part of the whole we could not have seen without you. Thanks also to all the facilitators that work with multi stakeholders for landscape restoration, whether we spoke to you or not. Your work is part of our wonderful findings. It is wonderful to learn that even though there is a lot of work to be done, humans like you are in the field and not giving up.

To the MSLS staff members, especially Jayne, James, Giles, Tita, Pierre and Göran, thank you for your presence and guidance throughout the year. Thank you for imparting your knowledge of the transformational education the world needs. We will no doubt be recalling your catchphrases in the months and years to come, but honestly the only place we want to look upstream this summer is a waterfall.

To the Department of Strategic Sustainable Development at BTH, we want to acknowledge your work in the shadows that supports the MSLS journey. Thank you!

To our MSLS family: we almost forgot to acknowledge you here; this is because you have become such a part of our interconnected landscapes that we sometimes forget this is not ‘normal’, but indeed very special. We take this as a reminder to cherish the weeks to come before all of us get to work transforming systems. After summer though; we wish you a wonderful summer first.

To Stephanie Heckman and Isabel Chender, thank you for your kind support on our Prototype Diagram. Working with both of you has been an honour. We hope to collaborate in many different projects in the near future.

To our personal networks and connections around the world, thank you for your quick response during interview times:

“*There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about*” Margaret J. Wheatley, author, speaker, leader (Wheatley 2002).

To all those absent, excluded, suppressed: we see you:

“*If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.*” Lilla Watson, Indigenous Australian artist, scholar, activist. (Leonen, 2004).

We strive to work everyday for the liberation of all of us.

To the Earth, Thank you for the ground we walk on and that feeds us, the water we need, the songs of the birds, and the flowers in bloom. Thank you for your wisdom, your flawless design, your beauty. Thank you for being our rock in space where we may experience the wildness of being conscious for a little while.

Until we see you again, love and kindness.

The “Vulnerables” Thesis group who studied the “H.U.G.S” (Historically Uninvited Groups)

Executive Summary

The health and wellbeing of ecosystems are crucial to support all life on earth. Earth faces an urgent need to respond to global ecosystem degradation which is challenging ecological and social thresholds (IPCC 2021. IPBES 2019. Rockström et al. 2009). The reciprocal and interconnected relationship between humans, nature and the resulting decisions on the degradation of landscape greatly affects ecosystem health and the physical and mental well-being of the people. The repeated removal of structural supports to both eco and social systems, where decisions that are made for initial trade-offs and considerations go only to immediate consequences, results in drastic long-term effects of the current decisions. In considering the most upstream root causes, it thus enables the identification of the leverage points in which to create the biggest impact for the health and well-being of all further downstream (Meadows 2008, Nguyen and Bosch 2013, ESCAP, UN. 2018). To face the depth and speed of change required to face the urgency of degradation and to better understand the broader system, including the complex interrelationships and their dynamic adaptations, interactions and feedback loops, systems thinking can be used as a strategic method to guide our thinking (Meadows 2008, Dale 2001, Hassan 2014; Nguyen and Bosch 2013; Senge, Hamilton, and Kania 2015; ESCAP, UN. 2018).

To address the complexity of both the social and ecological systems in a nested context, a strategic approach towards sustainability is important because the elements within systems are interrelated and any decision made will have both long-term repercussions and possible unknown consequences (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Improving the adaptive capacity of the social system strengthens the resilience of the system and its ability to be flexible in response to disaster and recovery in the case of external disasters such as climate change, social unrest, war, food and or water scarcity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). As they acknowledge the link between the social and ecological dimensions of ecosystems and address the complex interconnectedness of ecological, social, cultural, political, and economic landscapes in an integrated way, landscape restoration approaches are important within sustainable development (FAO, IUCN CEM & SER. 2021).

Multi-stakeholder processes (MSP) involving plural actors that express different sectors of society are acknowledged as a necessary feature to facilitate the transformative change needed within landscapes (ESCAP, UN. 2018, Sayer et al 2013, Global Infrastructure Hub. 2019). Further research in social systems highlights that diverse perspectives are fundamental to assist in creating a clearer picture of the system itself, thus in allowing the system to see itself (Weisbord and Janoff 2010). One of the current problems of the inequity of multi-stakeholder processes is that historically absent and vulnerable groups are frequently not in attendance at decision making opportunities where they are often the most impacted and affected by decisions made by those in power and privilege (Samson et al. 2011). For diversity to be sustainable, inclusive and ongoing, all participants need to have an equitable opportunity to engage meaningfully, in this way, the root causes are addressed and participants are not repeatedly systematically hindered in their ability to participate in shaping the social systems they are a part of (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). There is strong evidence that resilience-based approaches that promote diversity and engage those who have historically been most vulnerable, are those that achieve non-linear transformational change and enable local actors to transform their own futures (Global Resilience Partnership 2019). Diversity

and inclusive practices include being transparent in communication that addresses both the needs of the participant and the process.

The purpose of this research is to better understand multi stakeholder processes for landscape restoration and the particular elements that enhance and limit the ability to establish a diverse range of participants. We hope to explore the potential of whether increased diversity also strengthens the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities and contributes towards social sustainability for strategic sustainable development.

Research Question: How can practitioners enhance the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration?

Sub question A: What are the elements that enhance or limit the diversity of participants?

Sub question B: What are the elements for engaging historically absent groups?

Methods

While there is a range of literature about effective stakeholder engagement, there is a gap in the literature specifically in placing landscape restoration at the centre. To answer the research question, a qualitative approach was chosen as it allowed us to focus on exploring the way practitioners interpret their behaviours and make sense of their experiences. The researchers chose an iterative research approach (Maxwell 2013) which allowed adaptive iteration through the five components of the design; goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity. A narrative approach guided the work as our research questions were about the perceptions and stories of practitioners around the particular elements in diversity. The analysis and evaluation of these questions enabled practitioners to give a more comprehensive and reflective insight of the outline of the external factors.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced practitioners to create a framework for inclusive practices. These were chosen because they had at least five years' experience in multi-stakeholder processes and knowledge of inclusivity practices and stakeholder mapping. They also had specific expertise in landscape management and sensitivity in the inclusion of diverse groups (especially historically absent groups). The data was collected via recorded zoom interviews and was transcribed using Otter AI. Secondly, the data was then coded and analysed. Stage three; a prototype diagram was created on the themes that arose from diversity investigation. This diagram was then validated with a small group of previously interviewed practitioners. The participants were asked for critical analysis and feedback on the diagram about what was missing or required editing. Their feedback brought to light underlying root causes and systematic obstacles which were then further edited and clarified into the diagram. The edited prototype diagram was then finally validated with the practitioners from Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective, giving us an external dimension for perspective.

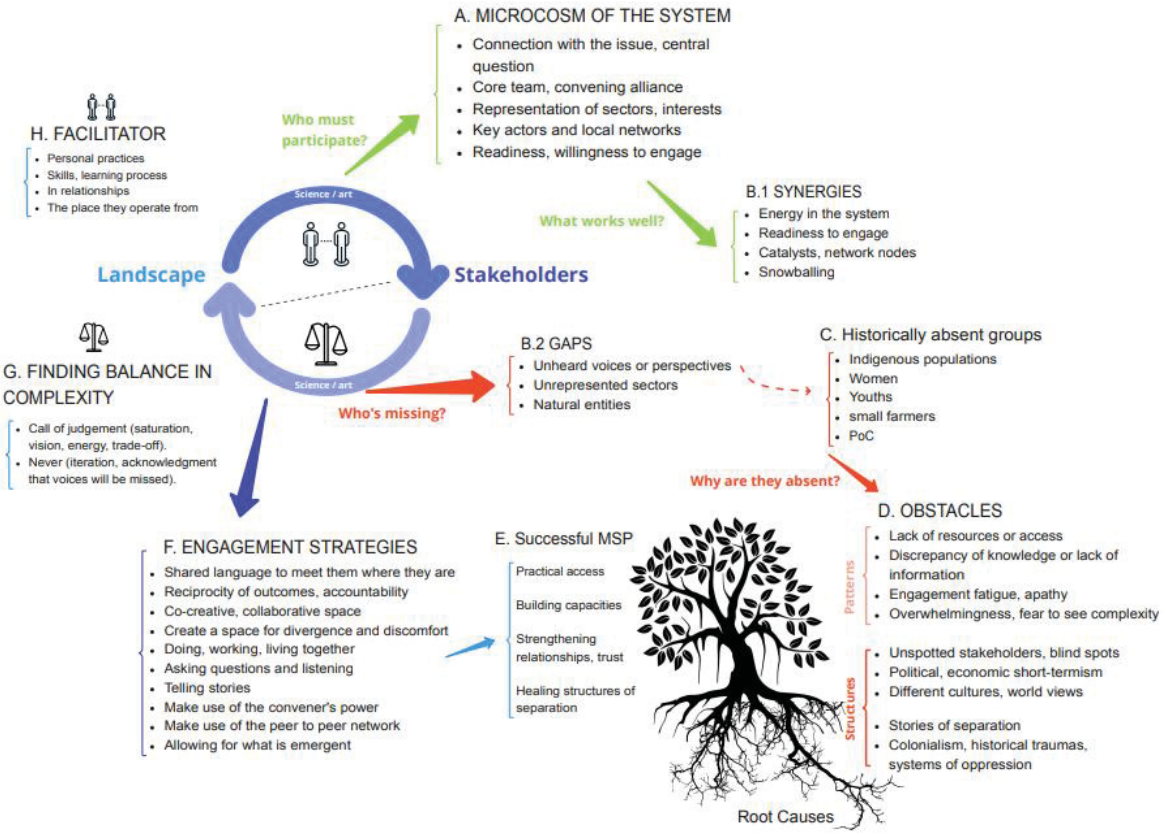
Results

The coding resulted in a total of 73 codes (13 out of scope), composed of 1134 quotes, and grouped into 8 macro-themes. These are 1) Microcosm of the system representing the landscape (7 codes, 107 quotes), 2) Missing voices in the room (8 codes, 94 quotes), 3) Obstacles (7 codes, 97 quotes), 4) Strategies for engagement (13 codes, 194 quotes), 5)

Stakeholders universe (10 codes, 113 quotes), 6) The facilitator (4 codes, 89 quotes), 7) Finding the balance in complexity (1 code, 24 quotes), 8) Successful MSP (3 codes, 103 quotes). Outside of scope were any codes touching upon process-related topics but not specifically about including diversity.

The researchers acknowledge that the practitioners in multi-stakeholder processes seek to recreate a fair representation of the complex, wider system of the landscape (Theme 1). The criteria they use to achieve this microcosm reflects questions around 'who is or has a stake?', and 'how is it decided?'. Themes include; mirroring diversity in the landscape within the core team, the participants' connection with the issue or central question, identifying key actors and local representatives of local sectors and identifying interests through stakeholder mapping, readiness or willingness to join the microcosm. We investigated the continuous iterative process of asking "Who is missing?" (Theme 2). We identified two ways practitioners answered this question; by building further on existing synergies within the microcosm, and through filling identified gaps in the microcosm. The synergies further build on the energy in the system, usually from the readiness to engage from participants. Practitioners identified catalysts and used their present network to 'snowball' further invitations. Practitioners also tried to fill the identified gaps by asking: 'who are the unheard voices and perspectives, historically absent groups and other underrepresented sectors?' Historically absent groups, in particular, face obstacles to engagement (Theme 3). Through the interviews and validation, the practitioners have highlighted the systemic nature of these obstacles, be it a lack of resources and time, discrepancy of knowledge between participants and other systems-economic and political factors that sustain the imbalance of power these groups face. The practitioners have varying strategies (Theme 4) to engage these groups and face the obstacles in their work. They range from creating a shared language, listening deeply, making use of the convening power, creating a space for divergence, reciprocity of outcomes, and more. They are all listed in the prototype diagram below. These strategies were not connected to any particular historically absent group, nor have we been able to rank them in any order of importance or impact.

The historically absent groups have been coded for in Theme 5. They include indigenous communities, women, youth, farmers, and people of colour. These voices require a multi-dimensional engagement that is in line with their needs. Although we did not set out to specifically investigate the role of the facilitator, this theme (Theme 6), arose with special significance. This role was more defined than our general parent term of practitioner as the facilitator has a certain set of necessary skills. Being able to hold discomfort, being a continuous learner and the ability to navigate the iterative process both internally and externally. Practitioners are required to find their balance in a complex duality (Theme 7): to make a 'call' or keep iterating for more missing voices in the microcosm. The 'call' is usually made based on pragmatic trade-offs. If a call can never be made and there is no accurate representation of the landscape, practitioners can turn to different criteria for success (Theme 8) for example: building relationships and capacities within the microcosm. The researchers have modelled this iterative process in the diagram below, validated with 5 practitioners.



Prototype diagram (researchers own diagram)

Discussion

Centering the landscape in the multi-stakeholder processes poses the question of the legitimacy of stakeholders (Colvin, Witt and Lacey 2020). This question is answered by our practitioners as they recreate a microcosm of the landscape through different pathways. Diversity of participants enables the microcosm to be more resilient by having a more robust view of the different perspectives within the system. This strengthens the wider social system's adaptive capacity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). However, the microcosm needs to question the systems' inequities already existing within the landscape, through the transparency of roles and values 'at the table'. The process of engagement to recreate a microcosm is never complete and an iterative process. Through pragmatic realities and the nature of complex social systems, the practitioners acknowledge the iterative process both has to have an end, and never does. This is partly because once the microcosm is built, the issue of representation arises and another loop begins to including the individual perspectives in a non-tokenistic way so as to reap the benefits (innovation, creativity) of having a diverse group in the process, as per the diversity paradox (Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022 and Falk 2021). Throughout the iteration practitioners identify and act on synergies and identify gaps, and they can use the leverage point of a diverse range of perspectives that are already in the microcosm. In this way, the system can see itself, acknowledge the blind spots and therefore reorganise its social structure, which in turn, enhances the resilience and adaptive capacity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

The engagement of historically absent groups by the practitioners is context dependent and relies on a variety of strategies. The data highlighted that the measure of success for the strategies is found in the quality of the relationships developed and the capacity built in participants to sustain engagement. Our validation session illuminated systemic obstacles, especially for the actors that are historically at the edge of the systems and absent in the process. Eliminating the concrete obstacles at the surface level identified by Haddaway et al (2017) as the failure to allocate adequate time and resources, and others is still necessary to level the playing field and enable participation in an equitable way. However, the researchers believe that the leverage points that need to be addressed are the obstacles that limit participation at a systemic level. Levitt Cea and Rimington (2017) advocate for changing the "who" of decision making, to shift power dynamics to those actors who have historically been on the fringe of the system. This requires unique qualities and skills from the facilitator of the processes- questions that have arisen from our data outside of the intended scope. Facilitators spoke of their own learning journey as they reflected on their place in the relationships and the landscape, did practices similar to a self-check, both within themselves and their teams related to a constant inner development, checking of their own biases and privileges.

Some of the study limitations of our research include; the demographics within our interviewee sample population was diverse, however the small sample population meant that the researchers were not able to identify strong patterns for particular sub-demographics, as it was not a large enough sample to be verified. There was an overwhelming reliance on personal contacts to reach out for interviewees, largely in white-dominated spaces. Further research would be beneficial to question the funding and planning systems in landscape restoration as convening historically absent groups is often hindered by a lack of time and resources (Haddaway et al 2017). Further investigation into the qualities of leadership for facilitators that work in complex social systems was also highlighted strongly as a leverage point in engaging diverse perspectives and historically absent groups.

Conclusion

Diversity of participants has been highlighted as a key element in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration. Practitioners convene diverse participants through a complex iterative process, acknowledging issues of legitimacy, representation and power and privilege. The convened representation of the system will only reap the benefits of diversity, which are innovation, creativity, resilience and adaptive capacity, if individual perspectives are included, particularly from historically absent groups. The complexity of convening historically absent groups is heightened by the need to address the systemic obstacles that have hindered their participation. Therein a leverage point can be found for systemic change. Multi-stakeholder processes would be better supported if funding was provided for longer-term processes and further support for meaningful engagement of historically absent groups. The unique role of the facilitator also arose from the research, such as their ability to navigate complexity and the soft skills of listening, self awareness and deep reflection.

Glossary

Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective: Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective; a concept of multi-stakeholder processes with a growing coalition of 25+ system changing social innovators that are building bridges to address the urgent climate and biodiversity crises. It aims to engage local innovators, policymakers, corporates and citizens towards restoring ecosystems, creating green economies and thriving communities (Müller, Hoogland and Sacks 2022.)

Commonland: the partner organisation in our research. They are on a mission to transform degraded landscapes into thriving ecosystems and communities based on sound business cases and aligned with international policies and guidelines.

Convening: The initial group of people (initiator's) who come together to begin a multi-stakeholder process.

Diversity: There was an absence of a common definition between practitioners due to the fact that it is strongly dependent on the context, background and experience. Generally, it is the inclusion of a variety and difference. It is also the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations.

Diversity Paradox: The diversity paradox is that a focus on visible diversity (gender, ethnicity, age etc) doesn't equal innovation or creativity, until you reach inclusivity of the individual perspectives. The paradox identifies that the greatest threats of communication difficulties, conflicts and weak commitments are also the greatest strengths if we can overcome them to produce creativity and innovation (Hackett and Hogg 2014, Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022, Falk 2021).

Facilitator: The role of facilitator was more specific than our general parent term of practitioner as the facilitator actively moves the process along in a focused, inclusive way using a certain set of necessary skills such as listening, self awareness and deep reflection.

Global Sustainability Challenge: The global sustainability challenge is moving towards solutions for climate change, over exploitation of resources, depletion of sources, excessive waste production, waste management, terrestrial biodiversity loss, permafrost thaw, global carbon cycle and changes in marine biodiversity among others (Lade 2019).

Historically Absent Groups: Groups or populations that are missing in several spaces of society or have been marginalised throughout the history of humanity; frequently not in attendance at decision making opportunities.

Initiator/initiating: For the purposes of this work; a person or organisation that feels the need, purpose or call to begin a multi-stakeholder process.

Landscape: "A socio-ecological system that consists of interconnected natural and/or human-modified land and water ecosystems and which is influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and sociocultural processes and activities" (Dudley et. al. 2021, 4).

Landscape Restoration Approach: A conceptual approach where stakeholders in a landscape aim to reconcile competing social, economic and environmental objectives. A landscape approach aims to ensure a full range of local level needs are met, while also considering goals of stakeholders, such as national governments or the international community (Dudley et. al 2021, 4).

Multi Stakeholder Process (MSP): "A process of interactive learning, empowerment and participatory governance that enables stakeholders with interconnected problems and ambitions, but often differing interests, to be collectively innovative and resilient when faced with the emerging risks, crises and opportunities of a complex and changing environment" (Brouwer et al. 2015, 12).

Practitioner: For the purposes of this work, it is defined as a parent term of the facilitator, a person who is actively engaged in the role of multi-stakeholder processes in a professional capacity with relevant skills and experience in this area.

Resilient landscape: "Consists of a landscape, waterscape or seascape that is able to sustain desired ecological functions, robust native biodiversity and critical landscape processes over time, under changing conditions, and despite multiple stressors and uncertainties, to enable the principles of sustainable development" (Dudley et. al 2021,4).

Stakeholder: "An overarching concept which highlights the idea that different groups can share a common problem or aspiration, while nonetheless having different interests or 'stakes'." (Brouwer et al. 2015, 12)

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Figures

1 Introduction

"*Privileged insiders are those of us who have reaped advantages associated with our education, our socio-economic background, our citizenship, our gender, or our race. We have both responsibilities and opportunities associated with the significant influence we have in our organisations and beyond. This makes it especially important for us to consider our role in addressing the converging environmental and social crises we face, as well as the possible unconscious biases we may hold. Importantly, we also have leisure time to reflect, skills we can leverage, and networks that can facilitate action. We have the means to challenge the status quo*" (Feront 2021, 4).

The authors feel that this thesis is an opportunity to use the leverage point of our privilege of education and socio-economic background. The researchers aim to take responsibility for our role in the system, our own biases and speak up and address the degradation of the social and ecological systems of our earth and its people.

1.1 The global sustainability challenge

The health and wellbeing of ecosystems are crucial to support all life on earth. We are facing an urgent need to respond to global ecosystem degradation, which is challenging ecological and social thresholds (IPCC 2021. IPBES 2019. Rockström et al. 2009). The planet's capacity to sustain human and non-human life, now and in the future is compromised. Unsustainable human activities endanger our social and ecological systems causing systemic crises in climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and inequality (IPCC 2021, IPBES 2019, Fischer et al. 2021). These degraded socio-ecological systems affect human well-being and civilization itself, as our whole existence relies on a stable climate, breathable air, supplies of water, food, materials, protection from disaster and disease (IPCC 2021, IPBES 2019, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).

The reciprocal relationship between humans, nature and the resulting decisions on the degradation of landscape greatly affects ecosystem health and the physical and mental well-being of the people. This is intensifying the already susceptible conditions of many communities and ecosystems, and particularly those most disadvantaged, which then affects the overall system (Fedele et al. 2018). This feedback loop between landscape and social system degradation is self-reinforcing and eliminates internal structural resilience (Calkin, Thompson, and Finney 2015). The repeated removal of structural supports to both eco and social systems, where decisions that are made for initial trade-offs and considerations go only to immediate consequences, results in drastic long-term effects of the current decisions. This results in perpetuated degradation in the long term and has far reaching impacts that undermine a sustainable system (Calkin, Thompson, and Finney 2015). Seeing the system as a whole, by being mindful of the long-term generational repercussions and ripple effects of choices means that decisions are less likely to create ongoing damage. In considering the most upstream root causes, it thus enables the identification of the leverage points in which to create the biggest impact for the health and well-being of all further downstream (Meadows 2008, Nguyen and Bosch 2013, ESCAP, UN. 2018). An interconnected nested system helps to shift the mindset from ego (individual) to connection with the earth as a nested global interrelated system (whole), by healing the disconnect of the system to move towards a sense of duty and responsibility to be in service of the well-being of all in the system and ending the

idea that we are separate and divided between social, ecological and spiritual selves (Macy 1976, Scharmer 2009, Andreucci et al. 2021)

To face the depth and speed of change required to face the urgency of degradation and to better understand the broader system, including the complex interrelationships and their dynamic adaptations, interactions and feedback loops we can use systems thinking as a strategic method to guide our thinking (Meadows 2008, Dale 2001, Hassan 2014; Nguyen and Bosch 2013; Senge, Hamilton, and Kania 2015; ESCAP, UN. 2018). Systems thinking is a relational understanding of the interconnected elements and their influences within a system and their properties of emergence (Visser 2020). In action it is the ability to shift logic to the most upstream initial cause, work on multiple dimensions and levels, harness synergies and be continually iterative (Bojer 2015). It is also one of the key competencies to build capacity in sustainable development (Nguyen and Bosch 2013). It emphasises the value of seeking information and perspectives from a diverse array of sources by specifically including those institutions and people to whom have not always been at peace (ESCAP, UN. 2018).

1.2 A strategic sustainable approach to sustainability

To address the complexity of both the social and ecological systems in a nested context, a strategic approach towards sustainability is important because the elements within systems are interrelated and any decision made will have both long-term repercussions and possible unknown consequences (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Without knowledge of the full system, this could result in siloed thinking, which lacks the ability to see the system as a whole and then probe, sense and respond to problems, which is useful when making changes in large interrelated systems as problems are complex and require emergent practice (Snowden and Boone 2007). A strategic approach acknowledges the systemic nature of the interrelated wicked problems and focuses on the long-term aims in order to plan the most optimal solutions. In this way, many parallel and flexible pathways can be explored towards the realisation of the aims. Addressing these problems scientifically allows for data collection, experimentation and analysis and enables us to address problems related to the nature of the world and our own perceptions (Miller 2013). The rigorous nature of scientific research enables people to reach consensus and through this process, we can use scientific knowledge to create a vision for a sustainable future (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017, Meadows, Meadows and Randers 2012, Capra 1996). The world's population is currently exceeding planetary boundaries and at the very minimum, we need to ensure that we do not further degrade the systems on which we rely (Steffen et al. 2015, Lade et al. 2019). If we are to move towards a world that can sustain eco and social systems in an equitable way; this will require strategic sustainable development (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017; Broman and Robèrt 2017).

Strategic sustainable development arises from a nested perspective of eco and social systems, it uses systems thinking to address the urgency of the degradation of our systems and creates a shared mental model of a process to move towards a more sustainable society. It supports a strategic planning process of both current realities and outlines what success clearly looks like within the ecological and social boundary conditions to which society needs to adhere in order to move towards a sustainable society (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017; Broman and Robèrt 2017). Strategic sustainable development is useful because it clearly prioritises the actionable steps to move towards the vision of success and describes the strategic planning

processes. In order to make changes within the system, the more flexible the choices, the faster that adaptation can occur, therefore increasing the pace at which society can keep up with moving dynamic changes within the system. The degradation of systems and the crossing of earth's thresholds (Steffen et al. 2015) highlights that humans are not automatically strategic nor sustainable and strategic sustainable development is one process that can help users navigate towards a clearer vision of success.

Sustainability in this sense, would mean that; "at a systemic level, people in an ecologically and socially sustainable society will not be subject to structural obstacles by way of political, economic or cultural issues" it identifies and creates the space where people can meet their needs (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017, 33). Especially by obstacles which are; "embedded in societal organisation and upheld by those in power which are therefore difficult to overcome by the people who are exposed to them" (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017, 34). These obstacles can be seen strategically as root causes and strong leverage points in which to intervene in the system (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

Other approaches, such as the sustainable development goals ("THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development" n.d.), the 3 pillars of sustainability ("ESG | The Report" n.d.) and regenerative sustainability (Gibbons 2020), while comprehensive in their respective areas, do not have a specifically defined common goal which is measurable or accountable and also detailing a plan to address the basic needs of all involved. A principle based definition of sustainability enables clarification of the boundary conditions of the system and thus creates a baseline that at a high enough level, could apply to everyone (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). It is also concrete enough to guide problem solving (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). In this way, sustainability could be unambiguous and avoid debate as to what is and is not sustainable. This would also enable focus to be on upstream root causes within the system where it is more effective (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

The goal of strategic sustainable development is to have strong systematic awareness of the complexity of both social and ecological relationships and the interactions and interrelationships between all elements (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017; Broman and Robèrt 2017; Missimer 2015). The complexity of relationships between both individuals and groups forms a complex adaptive system which is characterised by uncertainty, is able to change over time and respond to the environment (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017; Bohensky and Lynam 2005; Allen, Maguire, and McKelvey 2011). Adaptive capacity is the ability to withstand shocks and rebuild when necessary, adapting and evolving in current problems or future uncertainties (Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017). Studies have found that there are a number of elements that strengthen a social system's adaptive capacity; these elements are; trust, common meaning, diversity, capacity for learning and capacity for self-organisation (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

Acknowledging that the current systems have degraded past the ability to sustain life for all, means that we now need to actively work to enhance the resilience of the systems. We do this in order to cope with ongoing climate change, ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, thawing permafrost and many other problems where we are past the earths' thresholds (Steffen et al. 2015). This is especially relevant in the context of developing countries with vulnerable and marginalised communities as they need to remain sustainable by changing in the face of current impacts and also evolving to deal with future influences (Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017). Resilience is defined by The Global Resilience Partnership as; "having the capacity to persist, adapt and transform in the face of change" (Global Resilience Partnership 2019). The

Stockholm Resilience Centre expands this definition to include renewal and innovative thinking; “Resilience thinking embraces learning, diversity and above all the belief that humans and nature are strongly coupled to the point that they should be conceived as one social–ecological system”(“What Is Resilience?” 2015). Resilience is described as the main field which connects social sustainability and complex adaptive systems (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017, Folke et.al. 2002). In this way, improving the adaptive capacity of the system, strengthens the resilience of social systems and its ability to be flexible in response to disaster and recovery in the case of external disasters such as climate change, social unrest, war, food and or water scarcity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Resilience can also enhance the system’s ability to reorganise, change and learn so that social structures function more effectively during non-crisis times (Global Resilience Partnership 2019).

To build resilience of both social and ecological systems, it is important to consider the ecological, historical, economic and sociocultural processes and activities that have influenced the natural and or human-modified land and water ecosystems in a nested and strategic way (Dudley et. al 2021). Lehtonen et al. (2018) suggests that the reconnection between humans and landscapes will help to reinforce the view of interwovenness and build the resilience within the system, while concurrently restoring the land.

1.3 Landscape restoration

Landscape restoration approaches are important because they acknowledge the link between the social and ecological dimensions of ecosystems and address the complex interconnectedness of ecological, social, cultural, political, economic landscapes in an integrated way (FAO, IUCN CEM & SER. 2021). Landscape is defined as “a socio-ecological system that consists of interconnected natural and/or human-modified land and water ecosystems and which is influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and sociocultural processes and activities” (Dudley et. al. 2021, 4). The global movement of restoration is further supported by the United Nations which have declared 2020 - 2030 the current decade for preventing, halting and reversing ecosystem degradation worldwide (“UN Decade on Restoration” n.d.).

Restorative approaches help to rebuild ecological integrity and restore functionality for both flora and fauna and improve the long-term resilience and stability of the system (IUCN “Forest Landscape Restoration" 2016). Landscape restoration is important in rebuilding in three areas; ecosystem services, the landscape itself and socio-economic systems (see appendix A for full diagram). These areas are important to address because they restore function, incorporate uncertainty and improve social and ecological conditions and demonstrate an effective approach for enhancing resilience towards a more sustainable future (Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017). Restoration of the environment is seen as a key piece for enhancing resilience (Global Resilience Partnership 2019) and thus creating the ability to meet both present and future needs towards sustainability to offer multiple benefits and land uses across time (Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017).

The “landscape approach” seeks to balance competing stakeholder demands in a mosaic of different management approaches to supply a full range of natural, social and economic returns (Dudley et. al. 2021, 4). Many studies show great benefits to the landscape approach. Among others, systems thinking supports methodologies that engage participation of multiple

stakeholders who have knowledge of the system so that problem solving is addressed within the system rather than by external parties (Tippett 2005). There is a great importance of bringing stakeholders together who are interested in long-term, intergenerational projects of more than 20 years for both short and long term sustainable impact (Ferwerda, 2015). By focusing on partnerships, networks and alliances for the context of ecosystem restoration, local farmers, landowners and other stakeholders can collaborate more effectively and be more efficient in their implementation (Ferwerda, 2015, Mansourian and Vallauri, 2014). Expanding the role of local stakeholders in forest landscape restoration, towards more direct implementation and decision-making was seen as a central factor for acceptability, sustainability and inclusion and therefore must also be equitable and build on social realities of the system they represent (Mansourian and Vallauri, 2012).

1.4 Engaging local actors in landscape restoration

Engagement of local communities in decision making and implementation of landscape restoration strategies and actions has been identified as a fundamental condition for long-term success, while at the same time, still a major gap in landscape management approaches (Höhl et al 2020, Ros-Tonen et al 2018). Building social relationships and networks within the landscape are known to be key in facilitating transformative change in land management, however the relationships between collaboration dynamics, the creation of trust, decision making structures and patterns of change need to be further explored (Eastwood et al 2022). Multi-stakeholder processes (MSP) involving plural actors that express different sectors of society are acknowledged as a necessary feature to facilitate the transformative change needed within landscapes (ESCAP, UN. 2018, Sayer et al 2013, Global Infrastructure Hub. 2019).

The integrative systems approach of the restoration approach also allows for a diverse and effective stakeholder collaboration and recognition (Jellinek et al. 2019). Involving the full range of stakeholders in the system yields a more robust understanding of the system and fosters the development of relationships necessary for effective action (Hammer 2010) and the lack of involvement of key stakeholders has been identified as a factor for failure in landscape restoration projects (Goltiano et. al 2021). This is further highlighting the importance of systems thinking to enable a view of the entirety of the system (Meadows 2008, Dale 2001, Hassan 2014; Nguyen and Bosch 2013; Senge, Hamilton, and Kania 2015; ESCAP, UN. 2018, Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). A strategic sustainable development approach would also help stakeholders by analysing the long-term, interrelated view of both the current picture and future envisaged success to make informed, strategic and sustainable choices (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

The field is extremely rich in variations in the terminology used to define differently nuanced multi-stakeholder processes. Both at a conceptual and practical level: multi-stakeholder partnerships or platforms, strategic alliances, social labs, living labs, stakeholder dialogues, roundtables, large groups interventions are some of the many labels used to describe these new forms of innovative polycentric governance arrangements (Brouwer et al 2015, Warner 2006, Dentoni, Hospes, and Ross 2012). While there are a range of definitions in the literature, the researchers do not yet align with any one definition and seek to further clarify the practice and intention of the process with practitioners in our research.

Within the field of stakeholder engagement approaches, the ones that include people-centred practices, build on deep motivations through trust and collaboration are the most successful (Sayer et al 2013), especially those considering diverse actors, local and traditional knowledge of landscapes (Adade et al 2020). As stated above, trust is an essential element to the adaptive capacity of human systems. It is described as the glue that holds social systems together as it allows for coordination when adaptation is required and maintains a connection despite internal or external complexity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). The element of interpersonal trust is also closely related to collective decision making and resilience and plays an integral role in the effectiveness of a system (Caldwell and Clapham 2003). However, there is little research regarding what reasonably to expect from multi-stakeholder processes and how best to design them (Hammer 2010). Inclusion is especially important when perspectives are held by high-power stakeholders in landscape restoration who have decision making power and are in a position of privilege (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). The uniqueness of landscape approaches is that the landscape is centred in the process (as opposed to being an external consideration of the system). This means that multiple perspectives therefore must be considered and negotiated in the decision-making process towards ongoing sustainability for landscape restoration (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020).

In landscapes, the decentralised power of decision making to one of several stakeholders (usually a government or other high power entity) implicitly confers privilege to those powerful stakeholders' landscape perspectives over those held by low power stakeholders (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). The priority for making power dynamics explicit and prominent in landscape perspectives is important to identify privilege, especially when the facilitator is part of the privilege (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). This is especially important not to perpetuate power imbalances through the privilege of aligning their decision-making power with their own individual or landscape perspective (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). Thus, bringing both social and ecological considerations around landscapes together calls for a diverse and equitable multistakeholder process.

1.5 Diversity

It is known that diverse groups show increased quality of performance and innovative decision making (Brouwer et al., 2015, Bojer 2008 and Hemmati 2012, ESCAP, UN. 2018, Papageorgio 2017) and bring better outcomes (Cuppen 2012). Compared with non-diverse groups, groups that contain diverse perspectives can engage critically with problems and test solutions by exchanging a range of ideas and opinions which can be discussed and critically questioned (Hemmati 2012, Corrigan 2016, Leventon et al. 2016). Innovation and creativity arises from diversity, they are inextricably linked, which enables groups to be more resilient and resourceful when confronting novel and confusing situations (Corrigan 2016)

Engaging diverse stakeholders can be also considered as a constraint, as more resources are involved, more time, stakeholder fatigue, more complications, problems and conflict. These factors need careful handling to produce constructive outcomes (Corrigan 2016). Diversity can also be a factor in failure when there is tokenistic engagement that leads to misrepresented or unequal control in decision making in landscape restoration (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). Other elements are failure to allocate adequate time and resources, lack of transparency in unspoken biases, unbalanced or misrepresentative groups of participants and engaging in unproductive conflict (Haddaway et al. 2017). Diversity is also ineffective when groups do

not achieve their potential and have lower performance; in these cases diversity needs to be integrated so that all perspectives are included (Hemmati 2012, Brouwer et al. 2015). If consensus is sought too soon, or for the wrong reasons, for the sake of peace and agreement, it lessens the leverage point to reap the benefits of diversity. These benefits are realised after there has been challenge and critical questioning of the system as this allows the group to rise above and challenge the status quo, therefore making the unity gained after exploration of differences, stronger and more robust (Hemmati 2012, Levitt Cea and Rimington 2022, Cuppen 2012).

This also relates to the diversity paradox (Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022, Falk 2021); that a focus on visible diversity (gender, ethnicity, age etc) doesn't equal innovation or creativity, until you reach inclusivity of the individual perspectives. For diversity to thrive, there needs to be both visible and invisible (diversity of perspectives) diversity (Falk 2021). Inclusivity needs to be seen as a daily practice of building relationships with openness, respect, tolerance and questioning of the underpinning drive of what we are trying to be in service of (Hackett and Hogg 2014). To engage in inclusivity, we need to overcome our brain's bias to repeat the behaviour common to us, if we are not exposed to people who are different to us, then to our human instincts, diversity seems a threat (Hackett and Hogg 2014, Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022, Falk 2021). The paradox is; that the greatest threats of communication difficulties, conflicts and weak commitments are also the greatest strengths if we can overcome them to produce creativity and innovation (Hackett and Hogg 2014, Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022, Falk 2021).

Further research in social systems highlights that diverse perspectives are fundamental to assist in creating a clearer picture of the system itself, thus in allowing the system to see itself (Weisbord and Janoff 2010). In this way, the system gains a variety of perspectives, beliefs and clarity and this strengthens and builds resilience of the healthy functionality of the social system (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). This is further acknowledged by Corrigan (2016) who suggests that complex systems also thrive on diversity. The diversity of varied talents and interests contributes to the creative process and innovation is vital to ongoing sustainable development (Hemmati 2012, Brungs et al. 2021). In this way, diversity can be seen as a leverage point in which to strengthen the system as a whole; by creating a microcosm of the system, it allows the system to see itself, its communication difficulties, conflicts and weak commitments, as well as its range of perspectives. In this way it can acknowledge where it's failing and heal from within the system.

Understanding what diversity is and having a common criterion to consider when looking for qualities of diversity in a group is not a straightforward task and depends on the context. Some categories found to have high impact on decision making group processes are gender, ethnicity, age, educational or occupational background, knowledge, areas of expertise, attitudes, values, status, power (Hemmati 2012) and sectoral, cultural and social diversity (Bojer 2008).

One of the major problems of the inequity of multi-stakeholder processes is that historically absent and vulnerable groups are frequently not in attendance at decision making opportunities where they are often the most impacted and affected by decisions made by those in power and privilege (Samson et al. 2011). Balanced engagement of participants in landscape restoration needs fairness and impartiality; otherwise, it can unintentionally be reinforcing the privilege and power structures already ingrained in the system, therefore reinforcing the position of minorities and their lack of expression (BiodivERsA 2013).

Achieving key stakeholder participation can be difficult in general, since both structural or individual constraints may be present. For diversity to be sustainable, inclusive and ongoing, all participants need to have an equitable opportunity to engage meaningfully, in this way, the root causes are addressed and participants are not repeatedly systematically hindered in their ability to participate in shaping the social systems they are a part of (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Possible dissonance arises when not all stakeholders place the same priority on an issue or lack the resources to participate, thus resulting in alienation from the group, increasing distrust of the facilitator and disagreements around land rights and ownership (Hammer 2010). Some specific social groups are historically underrepresented in decision-making processes: "racial minorities, immigrants, women, older adults, children, people with functional diversity, and the homeless" can be defined as vulnerable groups (Nunes, Björner, and Hilding-Hamann 2021, 19). In addition to this baseline social dimension, vulnerability can also be defined as "the exposure of individuals or collective groups to environmental stress as a result of landscape transformation and the impact of climate change" (Adger 1999, 249).

However, it has been shown that the engagement of vulnerable groups, especially indigenous communities, has a significant impact on landscape management and governance, including both elements of ecosystems and social systems health (Leiper et al. 2018, Adade 2020). The involvement of women in landscape restoration efforts is a contributor to success (Mbile, Atangana, and Mbenda 2019). The engagement of young people in stakeholder groups is also necessary in order to respond to the needs of taking a long-term view, so that the decision making process engages those who will be most impacted in the future (Lyver et al. 2016), (McKay and Tantoh 2021). When both women and youth are engaged in decision-making, social sustainability increases because they have vested interests in land management and innovation (Mansourian et al. 2020). This also provides an opportunity in landscapes to go further than simply inviting groups or individuals who typically have less influence; it can enable a transformation of power dynamics to a more equitable and engaged process but requires explicit transparency to participate meaningfully and tangibly with the reality of inequalities (Bojer 2008).

There is strong evidence that resilience-based approaches that promote diversity and engage those who have historically been most vulnerable, are those that achieve non-linear transformational change and enable local actors to transform their own futures (Global Resilience Partnership 2019). They enhance the adaptive capacities of vulnerable groups and places to thrive in the face of surprise, uncertainty and change which can help achieve longer term sustainable development (Global Resilience Partnership 2019). Community level resilience and the ability of people and groups to have autonomy and make empowered choices through self-determination greatly enhances both ecosystems and social systems alike (Folke et al. 2002, Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017).

In one study, changing the "who" of decision making, where the power dynamics were moved to dispersing and enabling more innovation within the system, via a flat hierarchy allowed for more leadership roles within a diverse array of actors to be created (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017). Change was implemented in the system beyond the plan, which influenced and transformed the system (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017). Typically these actors were from the fringes of their fields, not typically the ones in power or who had influence (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017). Bollier (2016) confirmed that actors on the edge of systems can innovate without the expectations or judgements of existing systems, and tend to be more

inclusive, participatory, socially engaging and transparent. This is also confirmed by Cuppen (2012) who suggests that fringe actors tend to have more divergent thinking, independent perspectives and diversity of ideas, thereby reducing groupthink, which hinders diverse thought. In this way, change can occur from the edge towards the centre as these fringe actors create a plan which considers the system they are designing for, solutions are quickly moved from concept to fulfilment and have very high engagement (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2022, Bollier 2016). This needs to be done with care, as marginalised groups need to be engaged in a way that they can have influence (Leventon et al. 2016). Brodbeck et al. (2002, 39) also supports this and suggests that; "Minority influence facilitates open-mindedness towards alternative solutions".

1.6 Working with diversity in practice

When initiating selection of participants towards diversity, factors of representation, legitimacy, participation, power, and knowledge need to be considered, particularly in the context of "who's in, and why?" (Reed et al. 2009). Attention needs to be paid to the certain qualities of participants including; their interest and influence, how they are defined by the problem and who defines these problems by considering the underlying agenda of those initiating the group (Reed et al. 2009). There is a danger in the design, where the frame can be abused; to empower or marginalise certain groups (Reed et al. 2009). In building adaptive capacity, it is important to identify the specific nuances of land restoration in getting 'the whole system in the room'. Meaning, how to define what is the appropriate representation of the system; who are the key stakeholders, balancing the needs for performance while including unrepresented and vulnerable groups and integration of different perspectives. This is an ongoing work in progress (Dudley et. al. 2021).

One such group, Future search (Weisbord and Janoff 2010, 48), suggests five criteria for "getting the whole system in the room". These are; the authority to act on their own, resources of time, money, access and influence, expertise in the topic (social, economic, technical), information that others require and a need for those who are affected by the outcome. They describe the importance of first exploring the common perspectives, by each sharing their individual puzzle piece before confirming this as a whole to create a common understanding before progressing to addressing the future vision and present situation (Weisbord and Janoff 2010). Levitt Cea and Rimington (2017) argue for 7 practices of breakout innovation in multi-stakeholder processes; beginning with dissolving the lines between traditional hierarchies and sharing power throughout the whole process for decision making, prioritising relationships, seeking diversity, legitimising multiple ways of knowing, prototyping ideas early and often, trusting there is time and reckoning with history (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017, Rimington and Levitt Cea 2022).

Stakeholder Mapping

Diversity of participants is typically derived initially by stakeholder mapping (Brouwer et al., 2015). It is important that the diversity of the group has the power to see the whole system and can act or influence it, in this way there is a balance between stakeholders and it forms a microcosm of the system it represents (Bojer 2008). Stakeholder engagement is effective when it is a reliable, transparent process, which is verifiable and objective because it allows

participants to see the scope of the project and the relevance from a broader perspective which allows the collective to interpret the findings together in context (Haddaway et al. 2017). In this way it invites the richness of difference in perspectives to have a voice, be heard and be acted upon towards more radical innovation (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2022).

Addressing the needs of participants

In environmental management stakeholders are usually identified by whether they are affected or can affect. However there are also considerations about whether nature in and of itself should be considered as an entity with rights, such as the Whanganui River (Argyrou and Hummels 2019) as opposed to a resource for human interest and management (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). Addressing and understanding the diversity of people who interact with the land also requires time and attention so that not just those who are actively engaged are considered, as those responses are not always representative of the collective (Seymour et al. 2011). Listening to the collective may also help decision makers understand the root causes of disagreements (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). Effective diversity in multi-stakeholder groups need to welcome constructive conflict by including different demographics, cultivating multiple perspectives, tolerance and encouragement for dissent (Hemmati 2012). Constructive conflict is that which probes problem boundaries, especially those with diverse perspectives and focuses on problem definitions rather than problem solving (Cuppen 2012). It is imperative to have both strong representation and the support to speak in a variety of ways to work through conflict in a thoughtful and engaged way. (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017). Certain elements can assist in conflict resolution such as the differences in validity of perspective and values which can create a shared understanding (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). The capacity of people to hold conflict needs to be grown through processes, especially in landscape works where there will be differences in values and these need to be expected and embraced in a constructive way (BiodivERsA 2013).

Once invited to be an ongoing stakeholder, vulnerable groups also need to gain enough knowledge and influence to be able to make empowered choices that honour their place and garner respect for their participation and addition to the group (McKay and Tantoh 2021). Leaders in landscape restoration need to invite conversations around contrasting lived experiences, knowledge of challenges and capacities to interact. It is most powerful when mediated by trained intermediaries who navigate differences in interests, knowledge, power, attitudes of contribution and diversity of perspectives (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020).

This translates to prioritising relationships, which is an important element of engaging diversity (West et al. 2020). Relationships between participants and groups, especially those with shared values, commitments and expectations which are co-created together, build trust; the kind of bonds which outlive the project, as these are the connections that allow for emergence (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017, West et al. 2020). This element is also highlighted in the context of learning by; deliberation, listening and collaboration through relationship building in landscape restoration, which is important for further growth of the group both individually and collectively in future projects (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020).

Addressing the needs of the multi-stakeholder process

True participatory collective decision making builds resilience and allows for mutual learning between diverse groups of people (Arlati et al. 2021, Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016, Spencer-Keyse, Lukhsa and Cubista 2020). This is vital because it enables individuals in the system to have a voice and the autonomy to act, which strengthens trust and thus the adaptive capacity of the social system and moves towards a more collaborative and sustainable future (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Learning improves perspectives through different lenses of individual diversity of both problems and solutions, by synthesising divergent perspectives and having a greater understanding of the problem in a more robust way creating many pathways for solutions before agreement (Cuppen 2012). For this to happen there needs to be openness and no assumptions on who can deliver facts or value, especially those seen as experts, as this will be different depending on context and individuals. A better question would be "who has relevant expertise and would be willing to contribute?" (Cuppen 2012). Given the depth of the elements raised in the literature, the purpose of our research is to address the practical ways to address the "how to" of engaging a diverse array of participants through further research with practitioners.

1.7 Purpose of our research

The purpose of our research is to identify the factors which enhance or limit the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration, particularly addressing historically absent groups.

1.8 Research questions

Research Question: How can practitioners enhance the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration?

Sub question A: What are the elements that enhance or limit the diversity of participants?

Sub question B: What are the elements for engaging historically absent groups?

1.9 Scope

The focus of this research was seeking diversity in multi-stakeholder processes in landscape restoration, focusing particularly on those groups who have been historically absent. The researchers felt the first stage of inviting and establishing was important because we sought to investigate the hypothesis of; the more diverse a group is, the more likely it will be able to represent the system. The researchers focused on engaging diversity within the range of participants, with a particular focus on historically absent groups as these groups are more vulnerable to climate change and ongoing unsustainable development. The researchers inquired with practitioners about their stories for success and failure in their work and the kind of practices they use for inclusivity, decision making, judgements, bias, power and privilege.

This topic contributes to sustainable development by increasing the diversity of actors, intended as having the whole system represented in the room, which in turn builds the resilience of the social system and increases adaptive capacity. The researchers chose to interview practitioners as those were the ones with decision making power, had influence in future invitations to make more of a difference and also enabled us to discuss how to more effectively engage historically absent groups from an inter-system perspective. This study will benefit facilitators and practitioners in multi-stakeholder processes looking to engage more vulnerable and historically absent groups, particularly in the initial convening stage of the process.

The authors specifically researched for positive outcomes that can be synthesised for Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective; a concept of multi-stakeholder processes that aims to engage local innovators, policymakers, corporates and citizens towards restoring ecosystems, creating green economies and thriving communities (‘Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective´| Ashoka n.d.). Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective were chosen for their inspired long-term view of landscape restoration. They approached us with a question about engaging historically absent groups which inspired our research. We were also able to use their communication network to find a small number of our interviewees. Some data is therefore informed by the opinions of those we interviewed.

The researchers did not wish to consider diversity as only "a number of vulnerable people in a room" and made the assumption that a diverse range of stakeholders would be better for processes, and this was supported in the literature. The researchers sought to test the hypothesis that multi-stakeholder processes that include historically absent groups, make a difference to the project outcomes. Their lack of participation is a factor in failure, is less effective and doesn't enable a full view of the system in which the problem was faced. The researchers sought to confirm this in the interviews. Literature highlighted that the diversity of participants is important for the successful outcome of a process in the short and long term, however the researchers investigated this further in the interviews. The researchers also sought to confirm in the interviews that diversity adds value, contributes to innovation and increases resilience in the social system and process in which the participants were engaging.

The researchers also sought to address that diversity could bring conflict, can be divisive and possibly bring uncomfortable dissonance in the process. The researchers questioned practitioners about how they navigated this and what requirements in terms of specific skills or methods of facilitation were required on an ongoing basis. The researchers also made the assumption that Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective (BWL) are at least one way that merits attention and focus to restore landscapes. The researchers also assumed that multi stakeholder processes (MSP) are an effective way to convene groups for collective progress in landscape restoration and investigated with practitioners what theories and frameworks they used in their practice to navigate these settings. The researchers assessed what works in the MSP across the population sample and what would be highly likely to also work effectively for BWL.

The researchers were not focused on any of the other phases other than the original establishing of participants because it would have led more into the ongoing management, monitoring and growing development and we wished to use our available time to focus on the initial establishment of participants as the first stage.

2 Research Design

2.1 Methodological approach

The researchers chose an iterative research approach (Maxwell, 2008) which allowed adaptation through the five components of Maxwell's framework. These are; goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity (or credibility). It allowed us the ability to create parallel pathways to establish the most effective path in our research. The benefits of this approach were that it allowed us to see problems early and divert to alternative ideas. Continual assessment both benefited and refined our focus throughout the learning journey. The drawbacks to this model were that the design required a lot more time and considerable detail in the initial phase and it needed continual and consistent assessment and management by all four researchers.

The researchers chose a narrative approach to guide our work because our research questions were about the perceptions and stories of practitioners around the particular elements in diversity. We felt the answering of these questions were best navigated by the perspective of stories through narratives as it enabled participants to give a more comprehensive and reflective insight of the outline of the external factors. In contrast, direct questioning around diversity could have intensified the conflict and discomfort around engaging historically absent groups. By taking a narrative approach it allowed us access to the knowledge without directly addressing the possible previous failure to do so. In this way, we could address the value of diversity by learning from practitioners from both what is and is not being said about engaging participants. We could also address why historically absent groups are or are not being involved and why. It also allowed us to learn about what story was being told about getting people in the room. The narrative allowed for more reflective practice from hearing stories of success and failure and helped us navigate what value participants placed on diversity with the negative impact of discussing only limitations and failures of engaging individuals or groups. The drawbacks of this approach was that there was a limited perspective due to the interpretation of the narrators, the information couldn't always be verified and it was a singular person's specific and personal point of view (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). The researchers aimed to mitigate these factors by choosing a contrasting range of individuals and groups from the practitioners and had time permitted, we would have also aimed to engage with those people and or groups who had chosen not to participate.

The purpose of this research is to understand the particular elements that enhance and limit the ability to establish a diverse range of participants in multi stakeholder processes for landscape restoration. While it was clear from the literature that the engagement of historically absent groups plays a crucial role for a systemic perspective, the subtle art of practical engagement was not well documented, nor were the underlying root causes of why it wasn't already happening clearly defined. Therefore, the researchers decided to research by systematically investigating the diversity of participants through exploring the narratives with expert practitioners in the field and more clearly articulate the elements which could enhance diversity. This enabled us to establish the elements which enhance and limit a diverse range of participants from engaging in the process. Therefore, the sample for primary data collection was composed of practitioners whose work is related to multi-stakeholder processes, specifically in landscape restoration, which supports the transition towards a more sustainable society.

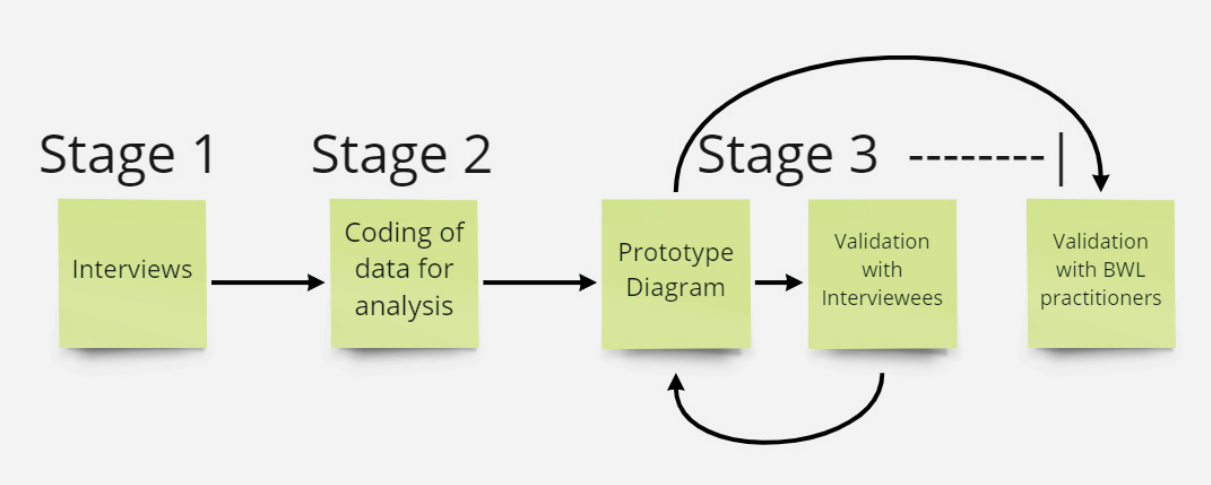

Figure 2.1: Research stages

The study was organised in three stages (as per figure 2.1): first, we conducted semi-structured interviews with experienced practitioners to create a framework for inclusive practices. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews which allowed us to gather stories and experiences from practitioners with the nuances of information that emerged through open conversation. This data collection method allowed the interviewees to share their perspectives about their work as practitioners, their perspectives and stories about multi-stakeholder processes, their personal successes and failures and lessons they've learned in the process. The data was collected via recorded zoom interviews and was transcribed. Secondly, we analysed and coded the data. In stage three; we created a prototype diagram of the process of including diversity highlighting the elements in the initial convening stage. This diagram was then validated with a small group of previously interviewed practitioners, who were asked for critical analysis and feedback on the diagram about what was missing or required editing. This allowed the prototype diagram to be further edited and elements clarified. Their feedback enabled changes that brought to light underlying root causes and systematic obstacles. The edited prototype diagram was then validated with the practitioners from Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective who were not part of the interview process, thus giving us an external dimension for perspective.

Answering the research questions

Research Question 1: How can practitioners enhance the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration?

Sub question A: What are the elements that enhance or limit the diversity of participants?

Sub question B: What are the elements for engaging historically absent groups?

Due to the overlapping nature of the answers to both sub questions A and B as they relate to the main question, the shaping of the interview questions was organised by categories, first looking at the overall process and then diving deeper to our focus on historically absent groups. By verifying this data with the literature we were able to find answers for our research questions.

2.2 Data collection

To best scope our design phase, we collected data from experienced practitioners to learn about differing processes across a broad range of restorative practices. This was done through semi-structured online zoom interviews. The drawbacks of an interview with allocated time was that not all of the information could be deduced or expressed given time constraints. Zoom interviews are less than ideal as the full interaction of body-language is not always visible. The researchers were able to navigate a language barrier as two of our members spoke Spanish and Portuguese. This allowed us to communicate with organisations in their native language and later translate it to English for all to benefit. Due to the time available for submission and pragmatic reasons, we chose the most accessible and available personnel in relation to our communication network. The people the researchers had access to, often included friends and acquaintances of the authors. See appendix B for the invitation email.

Population sample

We originally identified 32 practitioners and interviewed 19. We reached out via our personal networks, Commonland, REOS Partner and MSLS connections.

The researchers chose the criteria below to establish a high level of experience and expertise, a thorough understanding of the processes and the elements required in engaging particularly historically absent groups:

- self-identification as a person working with multi-stakeholder processes,
- at least 5 years of experience facilitating multi-stakeholder processes,
- knowledge of inclusivity practices and stakeholder mapping,
- connection to people, land or territory where they work, specific expertise in landscape management,
- sensitivity in inclusion of diverse groups (especially historically absent groups),
- engagement and inclusion of participants through innovative and co-creative processes,
- available in our time frame.

The criteria also showed consideration for the soft skills required in the ethical implications of discussing minority groups. The researchers used these criteria to ensure that the sample population was focused on multi-stakeholder processes and specifically focused on landscape restoration. Each interviewee had to confirm that they met this criteria in either written emails or spoken clarification to establish that they fit our parameters. Whenever doubt arose, a decision was made based on their experience in engaging with historically absent groups, particularly indigenous populations, people of colour, women and youth. If there was a doubt about fitting one of the above mentioned criteria and they had also not worked with both historically absent groups or landscape restoration then these participants were excluded. This helped us gain access to the most suitable participants for investigating our research questions and focus our knowledge to the scope of our research.

Upon interviewing 19 participants, it was discovered that we would need to exclude 4 people from the final sample because they did not specifically fit the criteria mentioned above. Their perspectives did help frame our knowledge within the larger system for our research. Our total

sample coded interview population was 15, as they offered unique perspectives within the parameters of our criteria.

Geographically, we interviewed practitioners from; Netherlands (1) Sweden (1), Brazil (1), Australia (3), Indonesia (1), Kenya (1), South Africa (1), United Kingdom (2), Mexico (2), Canada (1) and the USA (1).

Four of our interviewees did not work specifically with landscape restoration; however, there were important and relevant aspects of their experiences that justified them being part of our sample. Two of these four were included as they represented a racially diverse community who presented unique knowledge of inclusion practices in racial diversity that we would otherwise not have had an understanding of. Another two practitioners were included for their expertise in facilitating and addressing complex social issues, with a focus on understanding bringing together diversity in a variety of contexts both socially and geographically.

Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of this stage was to sharpen our understanding of inclusion and diversity with the experts in the field. The data gathered from interviews helped us bridge the gap between knowing how theoretical frameworks translated in the practices in the field and allowed us to refine our research questions to more nuanced understanding of likely scenarios.

We investigated the key elements in the process that enhanced diversity and inclusion. We asked for information from the practitioners about their perceptions of supporting and hindering factors that enabled or precluded participation. We also asked about their perceptions, the participants' reasons to join, their perceptions of diversity and inclusion qualities, levels of personal engagement and the participants' reasons for engaging in the process.

We chose semi structured interviews because we wanted the flexibility of having guiding questions but not necessarily asking those questions in the exact order or in the same way. This was important in this diverse group of participants because although the topic was the same, often the type of language used and the terms changed depending on the geographical location and we wanted to be able to reach our participants in their language. Interviewing in a semi-structured frame allowed each interviewee to express their own personal experience and share their own way of navigating challenges in an open and reflective way. This narrative also allowed us to navigate each conversation in the rhythm of the moment rather than strict structure. It also enabled us to establish a connection with participants and allowed them to connect with their work in a reflective way to make sense and meaning of the discoveries. See appendix C for the interview questions.

Participants were sent a preparatory email which discussed the purpose of the interviews and the questions to be asked. The 60 minute interviews took place online in Zoom so we could screen record it to our computers (with their consent). All participants signed the ´consent agreement´ (see appendix D) for ethical security. The precautions taken to protect the data of our interviewees included; using the university Zoom room as it had a specific link and code to join the meeting, interviews were saved on our personal computers and not online and our online notes had no identifying information. We engaged at least two researchers per

interview; one would lead and the other would take notes and ask follow up questions as required.

2.3 Data analysis

Transcription

After the interviews, we gained permission from interviewees for the audio (from the zoom screen recordings) to be transcribed according to GDPR. The researchers used Otter AI to transcript the audio recordings. The researchers used Trints to transcribe the Spanish and Portuguese interviews and DeepL for the translation from Spanish/Portuguese to English. The researchers also gained permission from interviewees for this translation.

Analysis through inductive coding

We chose inductive coding, for a ground-up approach where we could derive our codes from the raw data. In the first round of coding using Quirkos (GRPR compliant), two researchers analysed a cross-section of 6 interviews individually and coded them thematically. Both researchers separately coded each of the 6 interviews. The researchers then converged on the similarity of the themes and what individual codes meant and why, the specifics of each code and how it was useful to the research. Once many themes were shown to be similar they were then merged into macro themes and began to notice there were not many new elements or outliers arising. Each new interview could then be coded within the same macro themes. There were originally around 30 main themes (see appendix 8) and 6 of them too large for clarity or analysis so the large themes were divided into sub-themes and groups. This was done multiple times to establish the level of detail where the patterns still arose consistently across the interviews. The other two researchers then came with fresh eyes to discuss and question the themes and prototype as a research quality strategy. Communication as a team about the finite codes and their exact and precise meaning, helped the process greatly by establishing a common ground and consistency between researchers.

It was also incredibly important to move iteratively between large themes and also see the detail of the red threads within. This was done by consistently and intentionally stepping back and looking at the whole system while also mindfully engaging in the detail of the patterns and processes. The relationships that arose between the larger family themes and their sub themes then highlighted how they interrelated to tell the stories of the whole. Our own personal practices to create mindful spaciousness and capacity for a dynamic exploration of both the details and the system as a whole were crucial to “dance the complexity of the landscape” and navigate the sensemaking process.

2.4 Creation of the Prototype diagram

While analysing the data with Quirkos, connections and relationships between themes and patterns began to arise and these dynamic interactions were then represented in a visual diagram. See appendix H for examples of the initial prototype diagrams. This prototype went through many iterations by the two researchers who coded the data. Themes, patterns and

relationships were then further refined, combined and enriched by the four members of the team in an ongoing collaborative process which elaborated on the elements gained from literature and the nuances from the themes in the interviews. This allowed themes to be clarified in further specifications of codes in a continuous dialogue with the data. The coherence of the coding was therefore refined by the prototype.

Validating our findings with expert practitioners

The validation process was achieved in 2 parts. We initially invited a small group of our previously interviewed practitioners (there were 5 available in our timeline) to give us feedback on the prototype diagram. We sought feedback to further investigate the data points, to refine, clarify and collaborate on the ideas, criteria and practices that were found in the coding, assess if any elements were missing and establish how the key elements enhanced or limited diversity. We sought to explain the reasons behind a particular occurrence by discovering causal relationships and establish the factors that could be changed in order to influence the chain of causality. This was done to cross examination and make our diagram and research more credible and robust. An additional consent form was also signed by all participants.

We invited 13 out of the 14 people from our final sample (see Appendix E for the initial invitation), as one of them did not speak English. We received 11 reponses and 5 people attended the validation session and were from 5 different countries; Australia, Brazil, United Kingdom, United States and Sweden. See appendix F for the preparatory email we sent to the participants of the Validation Session and Appendix G for the agenda of this session.

Part two of validation was presenting the prototype diagram to the practitioners at Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective. This enabled us to create an extra level of clarity and insight by an external point of validation as they had not previously seen the data or diagram. We believed that introducing an external party could avoid contamination of ‘groupthink’ and avoid confirmation bias, as the first validation was based on the availability of participants from whom we had previously interviewed. An additional consent form was also signed by all participants.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Narrative approaches present critical issues around ethics in research, in design, treatment of individuals, transparency of processes. In terms of ethical considerations, we began with respect for persons involved, as any person with diminished autonomy needs to be protected (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). The selection of practitioners was assessed on their relevance to the content and context and we carefully considered those persons who might have been categorised as “vulnerable” in the interviews. This was relevant in our thesis as we were discussing diversity, in particular those groups who had been historically absent. We mitigated this by interviewing facilitators rather than participants. This was supported by a sound scientific methodological basis by defining clearly what participants in particular and from which groups we were going to interview (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). In interviews, we identified the groups and organisations at risk rather than individuals.

Our interview protocols included explicit requests for participation and informed consent forms in a language that they could understand (English, Spanish or Portuguese). It explained time expectations, risks and benefits related to their participation (See appendix D). The beginning of the interview also established verbal consent for recording on zoom. Confidentiality of the information provided was guaranteed by storing transcripts and audio/video data on our personal computers or external hard drives. We protected participants' privacy by assuring that names and other personal information that could allow identifying individuals were coded and not included in the research. Transcription of videos was GDPR compliant, and all data was fully portable, deletable and processed in the EU. At the close of the research, all data was removed from the servers and stored exclusively on the researchers' computers. The researchers plan to delete this data after 6 months.

We were aware of power issues in situating ourselves in relation to the data and to the participants during the process of co-creating meaning. We made a commitment to understanding the challenges that could arise around managing cultural diversity and mistrust, power dynamics, the collective memory of oppression and other social patterns that influence (sometimes negatively) on the social participation and collective interaction in this research. To mitigate this, we carefully engaged in self-disclosure, being fully transparent about data use and owning our perspectives. We committed to be excellent to each other (Savin-Baden and Major 2013), by showing respect for everybody through providing full, adequate information about the study, making space for autonomy and honouring people's time and life responsibilities; giving equal and just treatment. We used the diversity within our research group to practice this respect.

2.6 Quality of research considerations

We took notes individually and as a group to make visible our own biases, purposes and assumptions. It allowed us to see our biases as individuals, the bias of the methods that we chose and the way we ran the research process. A strength of this research was the diverse group of experts interviewed; we had 9 different countries represented from 6 continents. Benefits of participating in our study included a deeper understanding of the impact of diversity in multi-stakeholder processes and what key elements led to future success. There was also potential to connect, exchange information and current data with other organisations doing similar work and every participant in our study received a copy of our work. The data gathered in the interviews, combined with the validation stages and the information gained from the literature allowed a clear outline of criteria for diversity relevant to this particular project.

As researchers we were a group of four women, so we were not gender diverse within our team. We were not as balanced on gender diversity with our participants with 10 women and 5 men and also would have preferred to have a more ethnically (and culturally) diverse range of participants. It was a limitation of our research that we did not have a diverse array of racial ethnicities in our study. There were no right or wrong answers, our responses were based on what people could recall at the time and included subjective thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the individual who was also in a position of power. We were limited by the quality of interview questions and honesty of the participants as we relied on their recalled experience, based on their memories.

Sample size was 15 and although in depth, further research and greater data sampling would be required to confirm this information in bigger groups. A significant part of the interviewees were MSLS-related contacts, so they already had shared mental models, frameworks, and similar contextual language. It required critical thinking to compare their experience and knowledge with the external contacts who had different backgrounds and applied different frameworks. We also had different researchers for each interview which was required due to time zones and availability of our team, however this could have impacted on personal bias. The mode of interviews being online occasionally presented us with technical difficulties that arose with zoom and this also assumed that our practitioners would also be technologically minded and had access to a computer and stable internet connection.

We chose to contact organisations across the world from differing backgrounds, rather than focusing on the Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective in Europe, due to the relatively short time frame that they had begun their projects and the availability of the staff that we would have access to from the company.

Our research was biased towards personal opinions of what has worked for practitioners in their own histories. We tried to diversify our knowledge and lessen personal bias by choosing a contrast of external actors, Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective practitioners and also cross-checking our data with the literature review.

3 Results

The process of coding for elements related to enhancing diversity of participants to multi-stakeholder processes resulted in a total of 73 codes, which were iteratively expanded upon, then merged. 13 codes were identified as outside of the scope of our research or double coded elsewhere, resulting in 60 codes in total, composed of 1134 quotes. See appendix I for a detailed overview of the table of codes.

These codes are grouped into 8 macro themes.
1) Microcosm of the system representing the landscape; total: 7 codes, 107 quotes.
2) Missing voices in the room; 8 codes, 94 quotes.
3) Obstacles; 7 codes, 97 quotes.
4) Strategies for engagement; 13 codes, 194 quotes.
5) Stakeholders universe; 10 codes, 113 quotes.
6) The facilitator; 4 codes, 89 quotes.
7) Finding the balance in complexity; 1 code, 24 quotes.
8) Successful MSP; 3 codes, 103 quotes.

There are also some overlapping or smaller codes which warrant highlighting called; 'what brings people together' (14 quotes), 'Process related codes' (total 184 quotes) that we have declared outside of our scope. These codes still warrant highlighting as they show that there is an emphasis on general process in our data that we have coded, but have only used that which specifically touched on diversity.

3.1 Theme 1. Microcosm of the system representing the landscape

Within this macro theme we have further coded the following themes; 'Core team and convening alliance' (7 quotes from 7 interviewees), 'Key actors and local networks' (16 quotes from 12 interviewees), 'Connection with the issue and central question' (12 quotes from 6 interviewees), 'Representation of sectors and interests' (8 quotes from 6 interviewees), 'Readiness and Willingness to be there' (4 quotes from 3 interviewees).

As a result of the interviews we have seen that many of our experts seek to recreate a fair representation of the complex, wider system of the landscape within their multi-stakeholder process. There are varying criteria and approaches that the experts used to achieve this 'microcosm' of their landscape.

One way that was mentioned, referred to forming a core team or convening alliance mirroring the landscape's diversity: *"You want to have a microcosm of the system in the room. (...) the same goes for your convening alliances, so you want your convening alliances to also be a microcosm of the system. So that will allow you to invite a bigger diversity of people"* (Interviewee, Netherlands).

In some processes the connection with the issue or central question (around, for example, restoration) was used to create a microcosm: *"Holding it as a question is really important. And*

as soon as we hold it as a question, we pay attention to it. And it helps us see, you know, the people that we might not be noticing that needs to be included" (Interviewee, Australia).

Another approach was to identify (often through stakeholder mapping exercises) the key actors and local networks or representatives of specific sectors and interests: *"First it is important to know who is in the territory, it could be a map of actors, or one of the many network approaches to have an idea of who is in the territory. But also to make a collective knowledge, an approach using allies"* (Interviewee, Mexico).

Finally a criteria that emerged from our coding that spoke to the readiness or willingness of the participant to engage, to go on a learning journey: *"We need someone who's really open to this learning mindset, because we're learning this all the time, like Black Lives Matter recently, and social justice, social environmental justice, that's a big learning curve. (...) So we need someone who's really willing to come on that learning journey with us, and work with us to challenge each other"* (Interviewee, UK).

3.2 Theme 2. Missing voices in the room

Whilst creating their microcosm of the landscape within the multi-stakeholder processes, two ways practitioners answered the question "Who is missing?"; by building further on existing synergies within the microcosm, and through filling identified gaps in the microcosm.

Synergies: 'Readiness to engage and energy in the system' (10 quotes from 4 interviewees), 'Catalysts or networks nodes' (4 quotes from 3 interviewees), 'Snowballing' (8 quotes from 4 interviewees).

Gaps: 'Unheard voices and perspectives' (19 quotes from 9 interviewees) within which we have further subcoded for 'Historically absent groups' and 'Natural entities', and 'Unrepresented territories or sectors' (16 quotes from 8 interviewees).

The synergies further build on the energy in the system, usually from the readiness to engage from participants. Practitioners look at what works well within the already present microcosm and build further on the energy in motion in the system and readiness to engage. Practitioners identify catalysts and use their present network to 'snowball' further invitations.

Who can be identified as catalysts in this system? *"It really is often in those informal players, you have a lot of knowledge, a lot of information and ideas and power*" (Interviewed, South Africa).

One participants builds on existing intangible energy, or feeling: *"Sometimes people want to be too analytical, but you always need to allow for a little bit of the magic and synchronicity and it's not just about who should be in the room, but who, you know, have a strong sense of feeling needs to be there"* (Interviewee, Australia). This is used to further 'snowball' invitations within the network.

Practitioners also tried to fill the identified gaps in the microcosm by asking the already present actors: 'who are the unheard voices and perspectives, historically absent groups and other underrepresented sectors?'. *"you have to hold space for people being uncomfortable with who's on the stakeholder map and who's not. (...) There's got to be trust there to really*

have these conversations. But it's, it's exploring, you know, where there might be gaps, and you kind of become a bit of an investigator and inspector" (Interviewee, South Africa).

The different categories for gaps to explore and iteratively fill in were coded in 'Unheard voices and perspectives' and 'Underrepresented territories or sectors'. Within Unheard voices and perspectives we coded 'Natural entities' and 'Historically absent groups' as sub themes. *"So there are multiple ways we go about, like lines of inquiry to find out who are the people who have been missed in the past, but also, who is needed right now on this particular issue? Who might be left out? Who might be forgotten if it is not thought twice? Or three times or four times"* (Interviewee, UK).

In code theme 5 the 'Stakeholder universe', we will further elaborate on the 'Historically absent groups', especially as to whom the practitioners usually identify as missing.

3.3 Theme 3. Obstacles

Within this macro theme we coded the themes 'Pitfalls' (40 quotes from 9 interviewees) 'Constraints' (26 quotes from 5 interviewees), applying to barriers affecting the whole MSP process, and 'Obstacles to accept the invitation' (31 quotes from 9 interviewees) referring more specifically to what hinders participation. 'Obstacles to accept the invitation' was further subdivided into the following codes: 'Lack of resources or access' (7 quotes from 3 interviewees), 'Discrepancy of knowledge and lack of information' (2 quotes from 2 interviewees), 'Unspotted stakeholders and blindspots' (3 quotes from 1 interviewee), 'Historical trauma and systems of oppression' (3 quotes from 3 interviewees).

Within our interviews, we asked about what the practitioners believe to be the obstacles for groups to engage in multi-stakeholder processes. This element of the model was heavily reworked and clarified in the validation session with our validating-practitioners. Several new themes emerged in validation; 'Engagement fatigue and apathy', 'Overwhelmingness and fear to see complexity', 'Political and economic short-termism', 'Different cultures and worldviews' and 'Stories of separation'. Both the initially coded themes from interviews and new themes that emerged during validation regard both pragmatic obstacles hindering participation on a surface level and also the deeper structural obstacles that stand as root causes of marginalisation and historical exclusion. Among the obstacles that are more immediately identifiable on a superficial level, the interviewees often mention the lack or shortness of physical resources such as access, time, digital gaps, or lack of information: *"The logistics. Where meetings are taking place, the time of the day, those sorts of things, which I think are very well known. But we continue to make the same mistakes, right? So inviting people to a Zoom meeting when the people don't have access to good Wifi or data"* (Interviewee, South Africa).

Practitioners acknowledged that the physical difficulties to engage in the process, especially among the groups generally identified within the gaps, are related to structural differences in the possibilities for access: *"the people who you really want to have in the room are often the people who are most impacted by the issue that you're working with. And those people can't often afford to spend three hours in a workshop or even an hour in a conversation."* (Interviewee, Australia).

The historical asymmetry in the dynamics of participation is reflected both in the identification of engagement fatigue and apathy, as well as the sense of overwhelm and fear to address complexity. As both of these interrelated obstacles hinder full participation: *"Particularly from the global north, coming into the global south and wanting more information and [then] leaving. Not being deeply engaged and building relationships with the communities… And also overwhelm, the complexity they're dealing with, they have apathy. So they don't want to be engaged."* (Validation session, Australia).

Discrepancy of knowledge and lack of information, have also been identified as an obstacle to participation: *"A failure of being able to be in the same room, went back to the knowledge or the things behind this. Because what we did at that time, they wanted our animals to be there at first. And then they were really, really wanting to do good things for the climate. And then they said, Oh, you must take them away, we cannot be a part of this bad climate thing. Maybe something was missing, that could have been bridged in that case. It's been a global campaign of disinformation on this topic".* (Interviewee, Sweden).

Power structures can keep some stakeholders unidentified and out of networks of influence, which makes them difficult to identify: *"But often, I'm not sure [doing a stakeholder mapping from the point of view of the people who feel at the centre of the map] tells you much that you don't already know. (...) And not all stakeholders have equal power, right?"* (Interviewee, UK).

Short termism refers to economics and policy, relating *"back to the point about fear of changing, like subsidies are like not working in your favour, and they're very short term. It's then a huge barrier to transition"* (Interviewee, UK), which also speaks of a misalignment from "*the pace of life an*d *the expectation that things will happen quickly"* (Interviewee, USA).

Differences in cultures and worldviews can be an obstacle to participation because: *"The whole engagement process, it comes from a very different worldview, very different culture, and this is not considered. (...) And often, reconciliation and healing does not happen first, and coming together around common meaning making around culture and worldview, it does not happen and this is because of many systems of oppression"* (Interviewee, Australia).

All these obstacles to engagement are deeply entangled with the deeper, root causes that sustain imbalances of power. These hinder the possibilities for some stakeholders to fulfil their human needs, beyond the participation of landscape restoration processes such as; historical traumas, colonisation, systems of oppression and stories of separation. This will be further elaborated upon in the discussion.

"Let's talk about how we're going to collaborate and do this project. And it's like, hang on a second, there is intergenerational trauma in this community. And we haven't spoken together for 20 years, and we actually have to come together and share stories and heal. And I think of (...) just meeting the communities where they're at, and just not pushing forward with projects." (Validation session, Australia)

3.4 Theme 4. Strategies for engagement

In this macro theme we have coded the following themes: 'Shared language' (13 quotes from 6 interviewees), 'Doing, working, living together' (9 quotes from 3 interviewees), 'Reciprocity of outcomes and accountability' (9 quotes from 7 interviewees), 'Asking questions and listening' (6 quotes from 4 interviewees), 'Telling stories' (8 quotes from 3 interviewees), 'Make use of the peer to peer network' (1 quote), 'Make use of convening power' (18 quotes from 9 interviewees), 'Create a space for divergence and discomfort' (6 quotes from 4 interviewees), and 'Others' (19 quotes from 9 interviewees). After validation two additional themes emerged and were coded, 'Allowing for what is emergent' (6 quotes from 3 interviewees), 'Co-creative and collaborative space' (6 quotes from 3 interviewees).

Within this macro theme, we have also coded 'Layers of engagement' and 'Centering the vulnerable stakeholders' needs', that speak to the "how" the strategies should be enacted.

Our practitioners use many different strategies to engage stakeholders in their landscape, often combining several strategies within the same process. They do this according to the needs of the landscape and the specific context of the stakeholders they aim to engage. This is an ongoing adaptive process that starts with the initiation phase and continues iterating throughout the unfolding process in sequences of actions, reflections and readjustments.

In this theme, we have listed every strategy identified to engage a diversity of stakeholders. Often, these manifest through concrete actions realised by the facilitators on the ground; adapting the language, doing, working and living together, asking questions and listening are among the strategies commonly adopted in this range to meet the people where they are. *"I am very careful with words, it's been incredibly important. (...) In every email, every everything, thinking about: am I speaking to each group with respect for their point of view, and in plain language that they understand and, and use and find normal"* (Interviewee, U.S.).

"We need to go and work with them, you know, as they're picking olives. So they're doing something and actually just sort of, shadowing or going and supporting them with something for the day and having informal conversations along the way" (Interviewee, Australia).

Designing specific moments in the process, for framing, allowed for communication around content. Examples are; telling stories, using art and creativity for showing results. These were also considered key to successful engagement, sustained by reciprocity of outcomes and the maintaining of accountability. *"I feel like traditional workshops only appeal to particular people. Whereas actually, when we started involving arts, (...) we would hear so many stories that they wouldn't have shared directly"* (Interviewee, Australia).

"The results, the results and giving them back to the communities. Our great success was to not withdraw. Something that often happens is that even a result in terms of ecological flow, a result of whatever you measure, if you don't share it, they don't own it. And maybe you've served your scientific research purposes and you go off and you do your study and you follow it. But that community stayed like, 'OK, here they came, then they left and we don't even know what happened here'" (Interviewee, Mexico).

Developing awareness and making use of the convening power held by specific stakeholders, as well as letting invitations disseminate peer to peer, seems to reach people through networks

of established trust. *"There's a lot of work being done in order to make sure that the invitation also gets sent out by people that they know of, like, 'if this is the people that are sending out this invitation, this must be a really interesting group coming together'. There's a lot of value in putting a lot of time and attention into finding the right convening alliance"* (Interviewee, Netherlands).

Other strategies aim to welcome emergent tensions by creating a space for divergence and discomfort. They speak to particular ways of showing up at a personal level in order to hold the space. *"So for me, a successful multi-stakeholder process is where we've created a safe space. (...) It's a safe space for all, even if it's uncomfortable, it can still be uncomfortable. But it's safe. And it's inclusive, and every voice is heard. And every person is seen and valued as the part of a whole"* (Interviewee, female, Australia).

"It's a lot of internal work to hold space of diversity and to ensure everybody's at the table. It's connecting with your heart. And it's a strong personal practice, which falls off sometimes. (...) That has been helpful for me, to be in really uncomfortable conversations" (Interviewee, Australia).

'Layers of engagement' refers to how the engagement process has layered dimensions depending on who are the core team, the stakeholders, and the wider system. *"We set up a variety of layers, textures to the process, so that people could be involved in different ways. So we had traditional workshops with about 30 to 50 people, but then we set up all the outputs and results of that workshop. So that a much broader range of people could come through at their own pace, and look at everything and contribute in their own way"* (Interviewee, Australia).

'Centering the vulnerable stakeholders' needs' captures the necessity of questioning the suitability of engaging certain stakeholders at all, when their needs are discordant. *"And so what does it mean to hear a voice that has never been heard properly before? I think that requires active listening, but it also requires an invitation to put it in the context, an invitation to that person to define what it is for them to be heard, they might not want to be heard right now. Or they might not feel that they have the voice yet, or they do, but they don't feel comfortable to share it yet"* (Interviewee, UK).

The codes within 'Strategies for engagement' have been strengthened and further acknowledged during the validation session. They were highlighted as being particularly important in shaping the capacities of the facilitator to hold the space during the whole process. Without the support of a skilled facilitation, any other strategy for engagement risks 'being on the surface' and meaningless. These themes will be further explored in section 3.6 'The facilitator'.

3.5 Theme 5. Stakeholders universe

In this macro theme we have further coded the following themes specifying the previously mentioned 'Missing Voices' (Theme 2) that have come up during interviews. The 'Strategies for Engagement' (Theme 4) adopted by our practitioners generally refer to 'Historically absent groups'. 'Other stakeholders' were also named during the interviews as sometimes part of the missing voices, however we did not further ask about them in our data collection, as they were out of scope. Thus they are out of the model.

‘Historically absent groups’: ‘Indigenous communities’, (20 quotes from 7 interviewees), ‘Women’ (19 quotes from 4 interviewees), ‘Youths’ (17 quotes from 5 interviewees), ‘Farmers’ (12 quotes from 4 interviewees), ‘People of colour’ (9 quotes from 3 interviewees), ‘Centering the vulnerable stakeholder needs’ (23 quotes from 7 interviewees) and ‘Layers of engagement’(7 quotes from 5 interviewees).

‘Other stakeholders’: ‘General stakeholders’ (21 quotes), ‘Government’ (6 quotes), ‘Land owners’ (4 quotes), ‘Environmental stakeholders’ (4 quotes) ‘Corporate’ (1 quotes).

In this theme we have grouped every mention of diverse stakeholders that were less immediately included in the process, since being ‘at the edge of the system’ they are often more difficult to reach and engage. It includes some groups that were identified by our interviewees as historically absent from the landscapes. There were also some related narratives around concrete experiences where specific combinations of strategies for engagement worked well in those environments.

With indigenous communities, some experiences refer to finding a way for integrating different ways of knowing and doing and acknowledging the need of healing past wounds that may be worked out through longer processes and welcoming a different relationship with time. *“When we're engaging with our First Nations colleagues, we can't do that in nominal ways. And so it requires a huge amount of resources, a lot of time, it requires space to build trust and new ways of listening and practising. And that's also challenging in the face of working with private sector businesses that have a lot to do. And they have quarterly returns and all of these things. And so how do we begin to hold open a space for that, (...) the space of what does it mean to work with our First Nations colleagues and families? And how do we integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and practices into our work?* (Interviewee, Canada).

With women and youths, there are stories around shaping or strengthening governance structures in a way that can heighten their voices. Stories told by the practitioners suggest that groups can build on existing fabrics where involvement is already present, like family, school, resources management and play. *“How do we get people to participate at the family level, at the school level, at the municipal level? We start to lay the foundations of water governance. And water governance facilitates the participation of people, community participation and women. From the beginning. And by doing it at the family level and at the school level, women get involved, children get involved.”* (Interviewee, Mexico)

Other stakeholders such as ‘Government’, ‘Land owners’, ‘Environmental stakeholders’, and ‘Corporate’ were mentioned as sometimes missing from the process and actively looked for during the process of filling the gaps. Other reasons, such as pre-existing tensions and expectations can also be hindering factors for collaboration and need to be addressed carefully. *“If relationships haven't been built, and you haven't given time for those to be built, or, you know, say there's a leader in government that you want in the room, but you don't have a connection to that person, that can be a constraint”* (Interviewee, Australia).

3.6 Theme 6. The facilitator

The role of facilitator was more defined than our general parent term of practitioner as the facilitator has a certain set of necessary skills as defined by the following themes. ‘Learning, process and skills’ (23 quotes), ‘In relationships’ (23 quotes), ‘Personal practices’ (4 quotes) and ‘The place they operate from’ (39 quotes).

In the first round of interviews and more thoroughly from the validation session, it emerged that the realm of personal skills shown by the facilitators during the process are key to the synergy and success of the process. This also added further depth to the strategies for engagement and the requirement to address structural obstacles to participation beyond just the surface level gaps.

Some of our facilitators consider themselves as learners, because the art of bringing people together requires a continuous refinement of intangible skills through endless practice: *“A lot of what happens in this work is kind of intangible. It means that there's all kinds of kinks and things that happen along the way with which you only learn how to do through experience. So, you know, it's a bumpiness. But it's a bumpiness that's necessary, because you want to allow the people to show up how they're gonna show up”* (Interviewee, Kenya).

Facilitators' awareness of the sense of relationship with each other as a team and with participants has also been remarked: *“The power of people talking to each other cannot be underestimated”* (Interviewee, Sweden).

Most of the skills mentioned as fundamental to sustain the work of effective facilitation, belong to the realm of personal practices and the quality of the place from which to operate from: *“It's an art as a facilitator, you know, it's about where you intervene, and, and who you are as a person and how you can build relationships and trust. And then on the flip side, things can be self organised”* (Interviewee, Australia).

3.7 Theme 7. Finding balance: ‘making a call’ in complexity

This macro theme was not further subcoded. Rather, we have identified within it a duality that we explored deeper during the validation session, discussing how the practitioners would make the decision about the adequate level of diversity represented in the room. On the one hand, this code attempted to bring together the criteria that our practitioners use to “make the call”: “*When do you have the right ones? When things start happening, when there's enough actors to support a new idea and make it happen. I mean, the ones that have the capacity to mobilise”* (Interviewee, Mexico).

Some of the criteria could be; the traction of energy in the process, limitations in time and/or funding, a collective alignment within the core-team and trade-offs. On the other hand, the following question arose: is there a call to make in an iterative process? Our facilitators acknowledge that no, you never have enough or the right people in the room. *“Never. We're*

always unsatisfied. At the end, like there's always a perspective missing, there's always a voice that you would have loved to bring in. And you always find, when you bring a group together, like, 'Ah, yes, this group is leaning a little bit towards this piece'. So like, just as a practitioner, never. And then there's just a practical cut off where you say, all right, and now we need to move forward, right?" (Interviewee, Netherlands).

Finding and engaging the right people in the room is therefore a continuously evolving process that balances the needs of representing the complexity of a landscape and the practical possibilities of participation to the multi-stakeholder process of diverse groups. *"I think there's an interesting tension between like, the desire to make things representative, versus the desire to make them participatory"* (Interviewee, UK).

3.8 Theme 8. Successful MSP

In this macro theme we have further coded the following themes: 'Relationships' (25 quotes), 'Building capacities' (6 quotes), 'Factors for success' (48 quotes).
Since the accurate representation of the landscape is a changing outcome of an ongoing process, practitioners can turn to different criteria for success.

The first is building 'Relationships'. This needs to occur often before convening and official proceedings with historically absent groups, and then also built and maintained continuously. In the end, this became a measure of success for our practitioners. "*I think it's- relationships need to be built first. So, before you decide on any invitations, or anything like that, you need to be in the community, you need to be building relationships. (...) it's about being with someone and getting to know them, and then maybe bringing in the project or the process or what you're trying to achieve, and see how they feel about it*" (Interviewee, Australia).

A second factor for success is building capacities inside the multi-stakeholder process, such as the skill of listening. "*I think building the capacities for the lab at the very beginning becomes important, so over the lab process (...) if people do not have the capacity to listen to each other, (...) the lab won't have that same impact. If people don't have the capacity to build deep relationships with each other, not just in the role capacity but as human beings...*" (Interviewee, Canada). This practitioner also touches on building the capacity of (re)building relationships and trust within the microcosm. It is not only that relationships need to be built with the convening team or the practitioners, although this is also necessary; it's also building relationships within the microcosm itself. This leads to another code that came up in our large 'factors for success' theme, and was then elaborated upon to a significant extent in validation: 'Healing and Reconciliation'. One of our practitioners put it like this: "*[success for me is] that every participant has felt connection and healing*" (Interviewee, Australia). This touches on tackling the structural obstacles, particularly around working with vulnerable groups. To build relationships back in the microcosm sometimes (particularly with indigenous populations according to 3 interviewees) requires first facilitating healing and reconciliation in the process. This will be further addressed in the discussion.

The full history of codes, including other themes related to the procedural aspects of a multi-stakeholder process, were not considered as relevant in regards to the main themes emerging in our research, and can be found in appendix I.

3.9 Prototype diagram

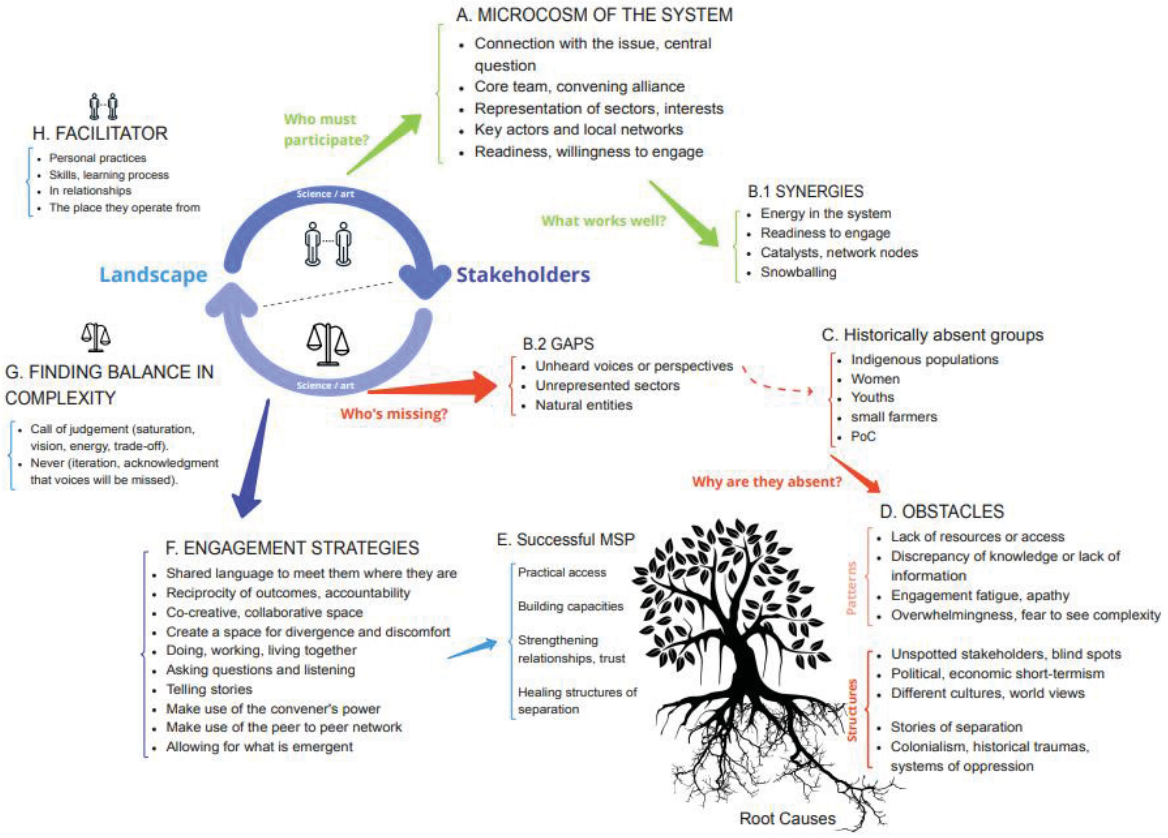

Figure 3.1 The prototype diagram (Researchers own diagram)

The diagram (figure 3.1) is a visual representation of the dynamic connections of the themes that emerged through our research, which are divided into sections from 'A' to 'E', in an iterative process that seeks to convene diverse actors in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration.

It starts with the question of how to represent the landscape within the multi-stakeholder process. This is a continuously iterative process between building a microcosm (A) And identifying who is missing (B). 'Who is missing?' is being answered through building on the existing synergies within the system (B1), and the filling of the identified gaps (B2). 'Who is missing', often historically absent groups (C), are missing due to (systemic) obstacles (D) that prevent their engagement. Practitioners come up with their own strategies (F) to overcome these obstacles. Because of the complex natural landscape we are trying to represent in our microcosm, the skilled facilitator (H) is asked to 'make a call' in a complex system as to when it is being represented 'enough', knowing there is no such thing as an accurately represented system. Acknowledging this complexity means that they turn to different factors for success (E) like building relationships and capacity in the system.

4 Discussion

This research was inspired by the need of the Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective to engage a more diverse array of actors, especially historically absent groups, in multi-stakeholder processes for long term landscape restoration. We focused on interviewees' stories of engagement or disengagement to analyse patterns and hypothesise about “How do we get everyone at the table?”. The data highlighted many pathways and elements that surround this question. This chapter discusses the results as they relate to the following research question and sub-questions.

Research Question: How can practitioners enhance the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration?

Sub question A: What are the elements that enhance or limit the diversity of participants?

Sub question B: What are the elements for engaging historically absent groups?

While we sought to answer the research questions with these practitioners, the results from this sample were much more extensive, complex and interconnected. Our original questions were framed around the specific elements that could enhance diversity and the answers from practitioners revealed much deeper root causes and points of influence. Therefore, it was not practical for the results and discussion to be structured specifically around the individual research questions; rather, figure 4.1 highlights the themes from the coding and answers as they relate to the main and sub-questions in an overlapping way. The questions relate to each of the themes and the discussion will highlight how we answered these through our research.

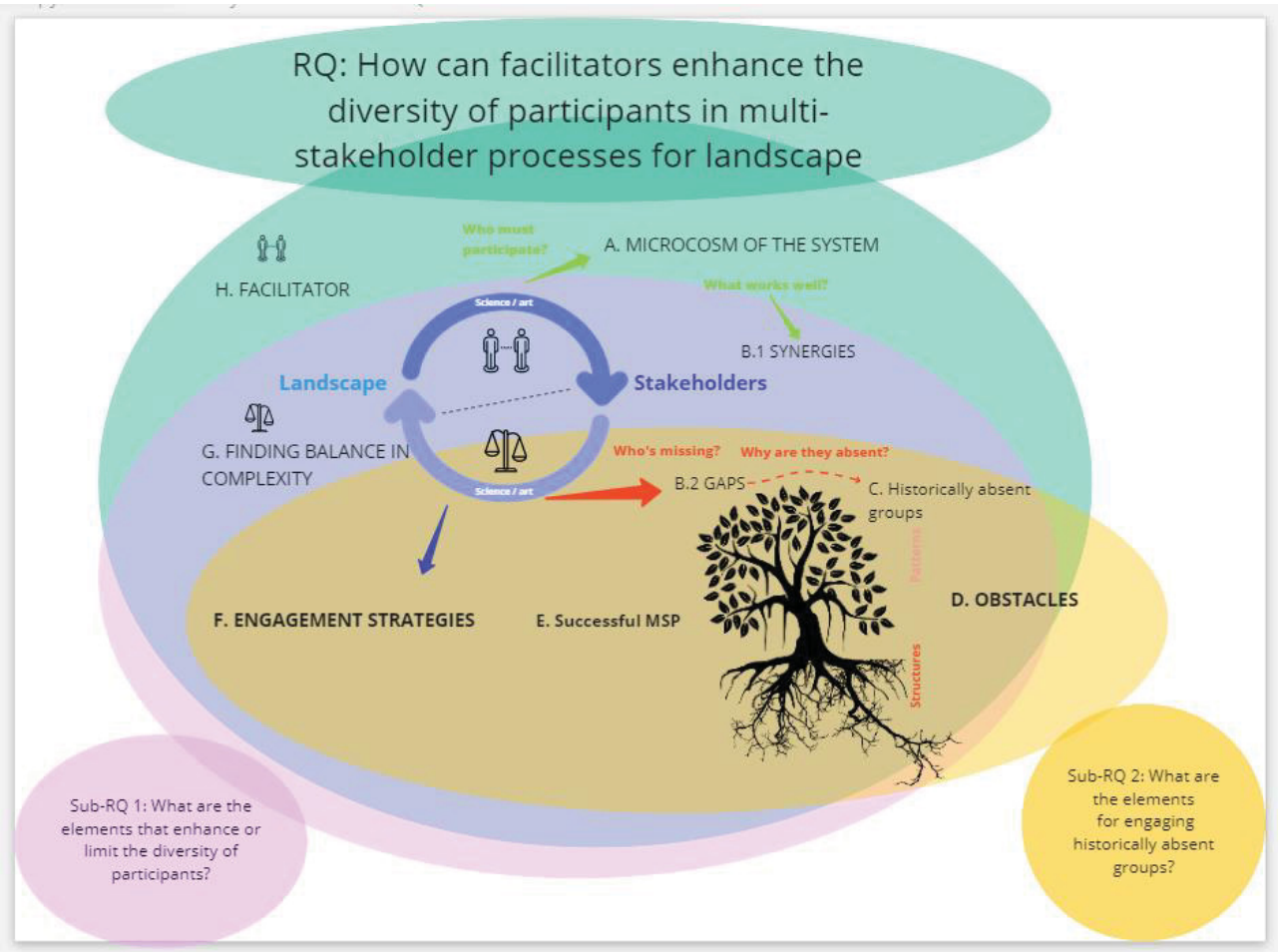

Figure 4.1: How the themes answered the research question (Researchers own diagram)

4.1 Centering the landscape in multi-stakeholder processes

We focused specifically on multi-stakeholder processes in the field of landscape restoration because this area has specific pressures and impacts for enhancing the resilience of social systems. These affect the microcosm that is established to restore it, especially around topics of power, privilege and values. This was shown in theme 1 “Microcosm of system” within the code ‘Core team and convening alliance’ where facilitators of multi-stakeholder processes take time to recreate and mirror the diversity in the landscape within the group established in the process. In traditional multi-stakeholder processes the central reference is typically a business entity (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). However, for multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration, the central focus is on the land as an entity and its needs and this changes the dynamics. In traditional business contexts, Colvin, Witt, and Lacey (2020) suggest that power and perspective are centred on the business entity, so groups are defined in reference from the business entity. However, in environmental resource management, the group is centred on the landscape problem and this changes the structure of decision making power as not all external parties have the same power and privileges (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020).

4.2 Landscape and the legitimacy of stakeholders

This also leads to the question: “who is a legitimate stakeholder in landscape restoration?”. The data from our interviews supported establishing a microcosm of the social system representing the broader landscape, as an accurate representation allows for a clearer picture of the entirety of the system. This was also highlighted by theme 1 in codes; ‘Key actors and local networks’, ‘Connection with the issue and central question’, ‘Representation of sectors and interests’ and ‘Readiness and Willingness to be there’. All of these codes showed that there were multiple pathways to establishing a diverse range of participants and often from different places of initiation. Some gathered due to connection with the purpose, others as representatives of impact regions, others for the readiness or necessity to learn. This also further focuses attention on the many ways that legitimacy can be defined. Colvin, Witt, and Lacey (2020) suggest that legitimacy (in landscape restoration) is defined by how genuine a persons’ interest is and the inclusion of their concerns in any role or group. This also depends on the authority and control they have over the process.

The authors conclude that there needs to be consideration further than just levelling the playing field if the impact upon people has been unequal. Societal structures often do not allow some voices to be heard and more effort needs to be put forth to engage and actively dismantle the innate power structures already formed. If drawn from the ‘usual suspects’ in the landscape, this tends to amplify already existing power structures and reinforces system inequities (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020). This was further highlighted in theme 2 which highlighted the missing voices in the room, which will be discussed in more detail in the sections to come. Questions also arose as to the rights of natural entities as stakeholders, whether this be legal or as a representative voice. Engaging thoughtfully about the rights of the land was addressed by interviewees by interacting with traditional and indigenous peoples and acknowledging a voice for future generations. These voices were recognised as stakeholders by a small number of facilitators, but not the majority.

4.3 Roles of participants in landscape restoration

The importance of establishing the microcosm of the landscape is mirrored by the creation of a diverse range of perspectives and establishing their role in the process. This is represented by the code ‘Representation of sectors and interests’. This is done in order to better establish each of the puzzle pieces that come together to form a full view of the system as a whole (Weisbord and Janoff 2010). Establishing diverse perspectives in the landscape is also important for enhancing the resilience of social systems and is highlighted as a key element for adaptive capacity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Diversity enables the system to be more resilient by having a stronger, more robust view of the different perspectives of the whole to which they are trying to enact change. Effective implementation of diversity in landscape restoration requires clarity and transparency of traditional roles to see the system in terms of their values and representation and in contrast; it requires role fluidity to include the opinions, emotion and attributes, as it helps to create connections between differences (Bojer 2008). Actors are then addressed by their stake in the process, those most affected by how the system works and then representation is specific to these processes, especially where the values that individuals place on the land differ. The identification and transparency of roles was also highlighted in the interviews by the theme ‘Key actors and local networks’. It is

important to acknowledge that without participants who are high stake and well-networked who can put their fingerprint on the work, the process would not have the power to change the system.

4.4 Transparency of power structures

It is important to address the roles in a transparent way so that participants and practitioners can address the underlying need to shift and transform our social system so that processes do not perpetuate the systemic obstacles to people's needs for influence and impartiality (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). The transformation of systems to create space where people can meet their needs, is a key requirement for moving towards strategic sustainable development (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). Seymour et al. (2011) suggests that the values that underpin power structures be expressed and transparent, especially where decision making is shared. This is particularly relevant for vulnerable populations and historically absent groups where vulnerability is related to the economic aspects of livelihood and land use, which is contextualised by power and political dimensions, experienced by individuals or groups differently over time and is affected by environmental change. Restorative approaches can be beneficial, as they address those that are part of addressing the system and can help address climate change and also those problems that tend to increase the vulnerability of the people who rely on the landscape (Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017). The specific effects for historically absent groups will be addressed in more detail later in the discussion.

4.5 Deciding powers and representation in the landscape

This also leads us to the question of "who has the power to establish the participants for the landscape?". Specific engagements of diverse actors can differ greatly since methodologies vary and are highly dependent on the skills and experiences of the individuals running them. Stakeholder mapping and 'Representation of sectors and interests' in theme 1, is then only as powerful as the facilitator and the process being conducted. Consideration needs to be given to who to invite based on their perspective and representativeness, to ensure that it is defined beforehand and is transparent to all in the process (Cuppen 2012). To establish a diverse array of voices, there is an ongoing question of who decides the right balance? As our data began with the landscape, we attempted to find an appropriate representation of the way that decisions could be made, being evident to the landscape as the source while also acknowledging the level of complexity due to the relational elements of all actors involved. It arose from the data that this process of engagement never seemed complete, as it is always changing and ongoingly iterative. Our data supports that there are many criteria for this initial stakeholder mapping around representation, which then recreates an accurate microcosm. This is further supported in the prototype diagram (figure 3.1) by the loop, between the science of establishing the right balance and as an art form: there is not just one way – there are many.

4.6 A complex iterative process

When the authors commenced this research we expected to find 'a way' amongst our expert practitioners, the "How", of being able to bring a group of diverse participants to the table in a multi-stakeholder process for landscape restoration. The lack of literature around the

actionable steps towards inclusive diversity practices was puzzling. Numerous literature in varying fields highlight diversity as a crucial element inside multi-stakeholder processes (BiodivERsa 2013, Brouwer et al., 2015, Bojer 2008 and Hemmati 2012, ESCAP, UN. 2018). This is especially the case in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration (Leiper et al 2018; Adade 2020).

After our data collection phase, a key element was made evident to us by numerous interviewees: convening a diverse group of participants is not a task that can be ticked off. When asked 'when do you know when you have the right people in the room?', their answers told us it was an iterative process, rather than a single task. As illustrated by the following quote: "*[you] make a decision by seeing the decision not just as an event but also a process so as [other practitioner] was saying that's part of the process. We make a decision but we also sometimes change the decision later on, because it wasn't the right one in the first place and take feedback back into, (...) even before making the first event*" (Interviewee, UK). The nature of the iteration led us to drawing a loop in our model. The process usually began with a stakeholder map and continuously moved from trying to recreate the microcosm of stakeholders from the landscape, iterating back to the core team asking themselves: "who is missing?"

How our practitioners decide who should be in the microcosm and who is missing can be seen as an exercise of where to draw the boundaries in a system. As mentioned by Bojer (2015), systems thinking calls upon the ability to be continuously iterative. The criteria that practitioners use to decide how to form the microcosm can also be described as the criteria practitioners use to decide which parts of the system are in or outside of the system boundary, thus invited or uninvited to the multi-stakeholder process. "*How do you define a system? Well, it depends on the question that you're asking (...), what's the question that you're holding, or what's the intention that you're holding within this stakeholder engagement process?*" (Interviewee, Australia). This practitioner uses a central question as a criteria and anyone who needs to (or wants to) answer this question is then invited to be in the process. Other practitioners use, amongst others: "who has a stake?" "Who has the power to change the system?" and : "who is ready or willing to engage?". Tippett (2005) touches on systems thinking to support the engagement of those stakeholders who have knowledge of the system to address the problem within the process rather than from the exterior. In this way, the purpose and central problem then decides the boundaries and who to invite in the process.

Drawing these boundaries in a landscape cannot hide that it is also interconnected systemically with other parts of the landscape, other landscapes, all the way to the whole of socio-ecological systems on Earth. For practitioners, this means a call has to be made: "*It's never enough? (...) I think we're always unsatisfied. At the end, like there's always a perspective missing, there's always a voice that you would have loved to bring in. (...) So like, just as a practitioner, never. And then there's just a practical cut off where you say, all right, and now we need to move forward, right?*" (Interviewee, Netherlands). This cut-off, or call, is often fuelled by practical reasons, funding and timing being the most salient in our sample population. These system boundaries are therefore also fuelled by pragmatism in a similar way, we cannot have the whole system in the room, only a representation of it, which will never be the "real thing". "*But you shouldn't, you know, (...) it's not a doomed process if you don't have every single voice around the table; because most voices have far better things to do and sit around your table and help you*". (Interviewee, UK)

This leads to an interesting 'dance'. Some practitioners do make a call and then move on with the process having acknowledged the gaps, finding ways to make them visible in the microcosm in other ways, other than participation. Sometimes, practitioners never really make a call and if needed, will continue this process of iteration along the process beyond the pragmatic cut-off point as well. In this sense, there is and there isn't a cut-off point in our data. The microcosm inside the multi-stakeholder process, as a representation of the system, is a complex adaptive system. This dance is an acknowledgment of this continuous dynamic and the adaptive nature of the systems that the practitioners work within. In our data, we could not find a singular way to work in this complexity, rather, it depends to an extent on the quality of the leadership of the facilitator within the core team. This is an element we will further investigate later in this discussion.

4.7 Questioning the definition and role of diversity

As our practitioners created a microcosm by representing the system, they sought to see the landscape represented in its range and diversity of voices. This raises issues around representation: are participants present as themselves, or as a representation of their interest, stake, or population? The same criteria that helps to build the microcosm, as explored in Theme 1 of our coding, raise a paradox that is acknowledged by some of our practitioners in this issue of representation. This is reflected in the literature as the diversity paradox. The diversity paradox tells us that visible diversity does not equal innovation or creativity until you reach inclusivity of the individual perspectives (Schimmelpfennig, Razek and Muthukrishna 2022, Falk 2021). The paradox for our practitioners is thus: the criteria (of who has a stake, an interest, who is historically absent…) are both useful to build an accurate representation of the system, but will not be enough to have an accurate representation of individual perspectives. This furthers the argument that this is an iterative process: once the microcosm is built, another loop begins to start by including the individual perspectives in a non-tokenistic way. Some of our practitioners acknowledge that the individual perspectives are required, others acknowledge that pragmatic obstacles (often lack of time and resources) get in the way of going through this second iteration. One of our interviewees acknowledges the role of the practitioner in this paradox and how these individual perspectives grow to form the intangible "magic" of the process: "*So the process or the people hosting do not presume to know what are the most important questions that need to be addressed or tackled. But there is a trusting and a knowing that people carry those fragments as they enter the space. And so the work of the host is to create a tissue of curiosity and inquiry that allows these different flavours of inquiry to come into this melting pot and to meet each other in this direct way*" (Interviewee, Kenya). The diversity paradox also goes on to say that the greatest obstacles of diversity are also its greatest strengths.

One of our practitioners actively builds the capacity to acknowledge bias and lack of diversity inside their process: "*but my first question to the group would be, is everybody here that needs to be here, or wants to be here? And those that don't want to be here? Why? Why do they not want to be here?*" (Interviewee, Australia). This element of building capacity within the participants is a transparent acknowledgment that diversity's obstacles can be overcome by increasing the diversity of the microcosm, and this increases the resilience of the system, thus the adaptive capacity of the social system. These benefits however, can only come from having explored the differences together (in a non-tokenistic way, with adequate time and resources, …) (Hemmati 2012, Levitt Cea and Rimington 2022, Cuppen 2012). When you

have a range of diverse individual perspectives in your microcosm, there is an opportunity here to explore these differences and face the challenges. The diversity paradox tells us that only through investigating these points of difference, can the greatest benefits of diversity, such as innovation, creativity and resilience be reaped. In addition, the social system has also grown stronger from increasing the adaptive capacity of the system, thus developing resilience to further challenges (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). This can be seen as a positive feedback loop. This is further strengthened in our results, by our theme: 'Successful MSPs', where we have coded for our practitioners listing 'building capacity' and 'relationships' as identified goals for a successful process.

4.8 Enhancing diversity through building on synergies and filling the gaps

To enhance the diversity of participants, all actors involved in the landscape microsystem could continually ask the question: "Who is missing?". This happens in two ways which are often simultaneously undertaken by practitioners. The first is by building on the active synergies of the process. This is done by fuelling the participants' energy through the welcoming of the actors in the landscape who show a certain readiness to engage as shown by the theme 'Readiness to engage and energy in the system', working with 'Catalysts or networks nodes' and 'Snowballing'. The second way tries to actively fill the identified gaps between the microcosm which is partially representing the system and the complex, diverse landscape by looking for the missing voices and perspectives. The gaps identified by the practitioners correspond to the themes 'Unrepresented sectors', 'Unheard voices and perspectives', and 'Natural entities'. The unheard voices and perspectives are mostly identified by the practitioners as 'Historically absent groups'.

When asked about the need of enhancing diversity and what the qualities or characteristics of diversity in stakeholders are, our practitioners tend to define it mostly in terms of historically absent groups. These groups are defined differently depending on the specificities of the landscape and the perceived value they may add to the process. In our population sample, the historically absent groups who were considered as missing in the processes of landscape restoration were indigenous populations, women and youths. Also mentioned, but only in a few cases, were small farmers and people of colour.

The lack of diversity was only occasionally explained by 'Unrepresented sectors' referring to the 'usual suspects' who are often perceived to be the key actors for decision-making processes (government, corporates, NGOs, land owners). In general, practitioners are strongly aware that the historically absent groups are the missing voices that need to be in the room in order to foster systemic change in the landscape for the long term. In our interviews and validation sessions, we allowed the facilitators the space to share the elements that were most highly prioritised. What was most important to them was the processes of building on synergies and filling the gaps, as well as the strategies for engagement addressing the obstacles, within a context mainly referring to historically absent groups.

The theme of 'Natural entities' can be positioned as an element of the missing voices, where nature in and of itself can be considered as an entity with rights, such as is the case of the Whanganui River (Argyrou and Hummels 2019). Some practitioners also explicitly identify non-human beings as important unheard perspectives. *"If we go to a forest, who makes the*

decision? If it is in crops, who makes it?" (Interviewee, Mexico). Although, in a minority of interviewees, there was an awareness of natural entities as a legitimate voice to speak on behalf of the landscape, strategies around active engagement wasn't prevalent across the broader range of our sample. *"The rivers aren't heard from but you're treating those as a quiet participant (...) and I really appreciate that, because it represents a movement away from the idea that's been so prevalent for hundreds of years that we are separate from nature"* (Validation, USA).

The internal capacities for self-determination of the microsystem are strengthened by working with the synergies that are already in motion. These are enhanced through an integrated practice of the continuous engagement of participants, the deepening of relationships and systematically addressing the gaps. Finding these gaps in the system requires continuous reflection around the missing voices in the landscape. In this way, a shift can happen in decision-making power structures, since the "who" is increasingly owned by the microcosm itself. The legitimacy of the representation can be questioned by the diversity of perspectives and the process can create a space and opportunity for the system boundaries to shift in a more equitable way. *"When a bunch of people come together and the sense of representation is limited, it's possible to arrive to a place of recognising why it is limited with the people that are in that group, rather than resorting to the easy answer, thinking, Oh, we just need more African people here, more women here. Because there's a part of that that can manifest in a way that says, we were trying to fulfil this criteria, and then that reduces the space of possibility that people can occupy. So for me, it was really just really noticing that, besides the inevitable that we inevitably need more people in the room, what is alive in the room?"* (Interviewee, Kenya).

When the relationship with the central question changes, triggering deeper interconnectedness between participants, then there is a deeper capacity for self-determination between participants and the issue at stake. This is highlighted by the theme 'Readiness to engage and energy in the system'. This process is built over time with the ongoing engagement of participants. *"The more, you know, people get familiar with the process, familiar with each other, the more the questions that are forming in the vanguards of our attention, find their way in how they feel important and it's usually only after that fifth session, it feels like I have people find the groove. And then you have all kinds of interesting things coming up"* (Interviewee, Kenya).

Through the continuous process of identifying and acting on synergies and identifying gaps, practitioners can use the leverage point of a diverse range of perspectives in which to represent the microcosm of the system. In this way, the system can see itself, acknowledge the blind spots and therefore reorganise its social structure, which in turn, enhances the resilience and adaptive capacity (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). In choosing to more deeply question the reasons why gaps arise, either by investigating blind spots or inquiring about why voices are missing, a wide range of immediate and deeper structural obstacles are acknowledged by the practitioners. Specific elements that limit diversity in multi-stakeholder processes emerged as a larger theme of 'obstacles' especially to historically absent groups and will be further elaborated in the following section.

4.9 Strategies for engaging historically absent groups

Our research showed a wide range of strategies for engagement enacted in varying combinations by the practitioners. Some were specific engaging historically absent groups, these included some very concrete and action-based strategies, such as 'Doing, working, living together', 'Asking questions and listening', and 'Telling stories'. Others were more approach-based, related to the shaping of the inter relational space, such as 'Make use of the peer to peer network', and 'Make use of convening power'. Another group of strategies relate to qualities of the facilitation, such as creating a 'Co-creative, collaborative space' and a 'Space for divergence and discomfort', or 'Allowing for what is emergent'.

The data didn't show any specific ranking between strategies, nor specific association to a particular group or situation. The process of engaging historically absent groups is undertaken by the practitioners with a situational approach, combining different strategies while always sensing what the specific situation requires. This was done by pursuing a deep understanding of the needs of the groups and the context of the landscape, by always trying to "meet the human" in relationships of reciprocity. *"Every relationship needs to be right. There needs to be respect, and there needs to be reciprocity. How are we both benefiting from this? How can we both meet our needs?"* (Validation, Australia). It could be concluded that the core strategies from practitioners underline the process of establishing a range of diverse perspectives which responds to the needs of the landscape. Practitioners meet this need by actively going further to meet participants where they are on a personal level, rather than expecting them to arrive on terms dictated by external parties. *"Open, transparent, with truth to generate trust. And you have to be respectful of the ways they work and you have to listen to them"* (Interviewee, Mexico). To engage historically absent groups in the process, practitioners need to first, deeply engage by fully showing up with their full heart: *"If you really want to have diversity, you need to work your ass off. It is hard work and it means knocking on doors. It means reaching out and asking for recommendations, and often it's easy to say* '*Oh yeah, we tried but it didn't work*'*. And then we move on to the next one. And because that's what we normally do, because there are alternatives but our networks and our invitational power is so biased that if we use the same principles for the bigger group and we apply those to the people that we really want to get in, we'll never gonna get those people in. So you need to work differently with them, and just put your heart into it and be willing to work that extra mile"* (Interviewee, Netherlands).

Although our sample was small, and clear associations between specific strategies cannot be deduced from this data, there were, however, some common themes that emerged which indicated possible patterns. These warrant further exploration with a larger population sample and possibly a focus on a specific region, context or focus on a historically absent group. Some of the strategies that arose in the interviews relate to indigenous populations, women and youths. Our data shows that successful strategies are not implemented in isolation. They are deeply interrelated with the context of the landscape and cultural realities. They are not meant to be intended as straightforward procedures to apply when working with minorities. It does not override the need for undertaking a process of listening and deeply understanding what the community needs.

We are cautious of generalising, however it was noted in some of the interviews that in working with indigenous populations, successful strategies relate to the integration of different ways of knowing and doing, and opening to longer processes of time which allowed

the space to heal past societal wounds. Leiper et al. (2018) and Adade (2020) agree that when indigenous populations are genuinely included for governance and restoration of land, the ecosystems and social systems are greatly strengthened. Another interviewee mentioned that one way of working with women and youths, aimed to strengthen governance structures that can raise unheard voices. It also highlighted the opportunity to grow the community around existing dynamics of resources management and places of shared value as concrete manifestations of the strategies 'Making use of the peer to peer network' and 'Doing, working, living together'. Mbile, Atangana, and Mbenda (2019) highlight that women are particularly important when it comes to successful outcomes for long term landscape restoration. Mansourian et al. (2020) also agree that when women and youth are engaged, social sustainability increases because they both have vested interests in land management and innovation. Lyver et atl. (2016) and Tantoh (2021) also support that as youth groups are greatly impacted in the future, empowering this group is important when considering the long term view. Empowering individual voices and their autonomy to act, strengthens the adaptive capacity of the social system by moving it towards a more collaborative, resilient and sustainable future (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017). In particular, when fringe actors such as indigenous populations, youths and women, are given an equitable opportunity for influence, they are able to critically question the status quo, bringing creativity and innovation that can radically transform the system and shift the dynamics of change from the edges to the centre (Levitt Cea and Rimington 2017). Some stories of success were confirmed and shared by practitioners with experience in projects older than 15 years. "*Through participatory models of governance and water care, communities get involved, young people get involved, they start to see results. Reforestation and agroecology are incorporated. And the process of being a scientific process begins to take on a more human form of governance and of the communities' use of their own resources. From this project, a whole model of living that's going to allow them to stay on the watershed emerged*." (Interviewee, Mexico)

The research interviews highlighted that the measure of success of the strategies for engagement is found in the depth and the quality of the relationships developed in the process. It is also about the capacity building of participants to nourish and sustain the engagement over time. Strong relationships built on trust and the capacity for listening are mentioned by practitioners as a condition for success for a multi-stakeholder process. Several practitioners mentioned the existence of trust as a key element for initiating the process and without which, the process would fail. *"If you don't get it right at the small level, it's not gonna work at the big level. So paying attention to relationships, and paying attention to acting with integrity. (...) And also the thing about change moving at the pace of trust, that if you genuinely want to bring people along, doing something complex together, then it's gonna take time."* (Interviewee, Australia). When trust is absent, engagement efforts could prioritise the creation and strengthening of relationships, nourishing reciprocity and strengthening the social fabric in the very first stage of a MSP, before any collaboration around specific goals related to landscape restoration can begin. The building and enhancing of trust, and the quality of the relationships, are also intertwined with the effectiveness of the strategies in addressing the obstacles hindering participation. The fundamental role attributed by our interviewees to relationship building is consistent with the findings of Colvin, Witt and Lacey (2020), who state that listening to the collective may also help decision makers understand the root causes of disagreements, which correspond to the obstacles in the work. Listening and collaboration through relationship building in landscape restoration is also important for further growth of the actors both individually and collectively in future projects (Colvin, Witt, and Lacey 2020).

4.10 Obstacles to participation

There were a number of layers, highlighted by our interviewees, that spoke to the depth of the obstacles that limited the participation of historically absent groups. On the surface, practitioners mentioned concrete obstacles related to the material difficulties of physically being there, coded under 'Lack of resources or access'. Another element was the misalignment in information, coded as 'Discrepancy of knowledge and lack of information'. Slightly deeper was the acknowledgement of the bias of 'Unspotted stakeholders and blind spots' which acknowledged the difficulty of identifying stakeholders outside of known networks of power and influence. At a much deeper level, 'Historical trauma and systems of oppression' and 'Stories of separation' were briefly touched upon by a smaller number of interviewees and this speaks to the underlying root causes and systematic obstacles within the social system of influence and impartiality.

The conversation around obstacles to participation went further, in validation, to investigate these root causes. Through the discussion, our interviewees progressively distinguished the obstacles that minorities experience and the powerful influence held by unequal structures of authority on the participation of historically absent groups. The themes of 'Engagement fatigue and apathy', 'Overwhelmingness and fear to see complexity', 'Political and economic short-termism', 'Different cultures and world views' were mentioned as additional obstacles to participation.

The reason for the initial surface investigation with our original interviewees may have been the way the researchers framed the interview questions. They may have highlighted the constraints that hinder participants in coming to a workshop or specific encounter, rather than the deeper architectures hindering participation and decision-making power within the process as a whole. In contrast, during validation, there was a deeper acknowledgment of the existence of structural patterns of marginalisation, especially for the actors that are historically at the edge of the systems. Another reason for this lack of depth, could be the specific profile and background of the practitioners participating in our validation session. The interviewees from validation showed more awareness of the structural obstacles that limit participation and the need to address the systemic nature of oppression.

Eliminating the concrete obstacles at the surface level is still necessary to level the playing field and enable participation in an equitable way. However, the researchers believe that the leverage points that need to be addressed long term, are those structural obstacles that limit participation from a systemic level.

To achieve landscape transformation at a systemic level, Levitt Cea and Rimington (2017) advocate for changing the "who" of decision making, to shift power dynamics to those actors who have historically been on the fringe of the system. Beyond bridging the immediate gaps, actors that are historically marginalised need to be engaged in a way that they can have influence (Leventon et al. 2016). In this way, the system gains a variety of perspectives, beliefs and clarity and this strengthens and builds resilience of the healthy functionality of the social system (Missimer, Robèrt, and Broman 2017).

Some of the practitioners explicitly recognised the need of any landscape restoration in MSP to both initially and ongoingly, create space for the process of healing. In this way, the process then specifically addresses the systems of oppression and stories of separation. *"The*

whole engagement process comes from a very different worldview, very different culture, and this is not considered. And so I see this often as an obstacle. And often, reconciliation and healing does not happen first, and coming together around common meaning making, around culture and worldview, it does not happen. And this is because of many systems of oppression. And then with the systems of oppression, we get fear and the story of separation. And I think it was spoken about that, organisations have their own stuff going on, they're in survival mode, they don't want to come together and collaborate because they're in survival mode." (Validation, Australia)

For practitioners who are committed to addressing these deeper, systematic obstacles, this means letting go of the agenda, of any previously stated goal, as well as any time schedule or expectation around the outcomes of the process. *"The illustration that comes to mind when I compare that to my work is when I watch the milkweed seeds burst out of their seed pods in the fall and just fly. I will never know where those show up. I will never know which ones grew. But I know I'm contributing to the seed bank. And that that seed might grow next year, it might never grow, or it might grow in 25 years when the conditions are right. And that's how I look at it. And it takes faith, you know?"* (Validation, USA).

In the validation session, lack of synergies also emerged in the reverse, as obstacles to be addressed. When the synergies (mentioned earlier in the discussion) were not present, the process of building an increasingly diverse microcosm faces some restraints. For example, the lack of synergies around shared cultural commitments or worldviews hinders participation, mirroring the synergies identified in 'unreadiness to engage'. This element seems to be both related to fear or unwillingness to see the complexity and also hopelessness and disempowerment. The system is perceived by participants as stuck, harmful and also impossible to change. *"The unwillingness to see complexity, and readiness to oversimplify is a huge obstacle. Like, farmers are good, so they couldn't cause erosion, as the basis for a thought that comes out in advertising and everything. It's everywhere in our politics, in our conversations. So I would say, not going to complexity and putting it in black and white, (...) this is probably part of your historical trauma and disempowerment. But I would also say that lack of belief in the power to make a difference is common".* (Validation, USA).

The range of concrete, structural obstacles acknowledged by our practitioners significantly widen the gaps to achieving diversity. This is also identified by Haddaway et al (2017) as the failure to allocate adequate time and resources, lack of transparency in unspoken biases, unbalanced or misrepresentative and engaging in unproductive conflict. Practitioners acknowledge that it is the pre-work that needs to be done in addressing conflict, reconciliation and healing, beyond including diverse actors in the process.

In order to address the root obstacles which manifest as the hindering of participation of historically absent groups and confines their roles to the margins of the system, practitioners acknowledge the need to build awareness of a more integrated structural approach. This requires taking charge of creating and holding the spaces where diverse groups can participate in collaborative, long-term landscape restoration efforts. This fundamental role of careful facilitation and the soft skills required for these practitioners will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

4.11 The unique qualities of the facilitator

In the context of our research, it arose out of the data, that there is a specific role that was defined both in interviews and validation as the 'facilitator'. This role is unique (in this context) because these particular facilitators have further developed their soft skills of listening, self awareness and deep reflection. It seems to be because the inner work and the presence of the facilitators deeply shapes the quality of the space and the relationships that develop within it. They are aware of their own needs in self development so that they can navigate their own biases so as to not affect their work with others. They establish the inner and outer balance of personal and professional boundaries while checking their own privilege in complex social systems. The role that facilitators play in enhancing the diversity of participants in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration was not specifically in our original scope of research and yet was highlighted as a crucial finding.

The five elements of our unique facilitator roles include; 'learning', 'process and skills', 'relationships', 'personal practices' and the 'place they operate from'. These elements shed light on the specific characteristics that facilitators need to perform their work. The patterns and structures of the social system are deeply rooted in the landscape and facilitators that work with the engagement of historically absent groups need to have an awareness of the complexity of the system.

The facilitators that work towards identifying the root obstacles such as 'systems of oppression', 'colonialism', 'stories of separation' are deeply invested in supporting the historically absent groups. The facilitators acknowledge that for their work to be effective, within complex systemic problems such as these, there is a precursor step of finding an internal balance before initiating with external parties. This internal check point allows them to work within the deeply ingrained social patterns and it's a process of ongoing self-awareness. In addition to the skills outlined earlier in our research such as, seeking unheard voices, working with synergies, the iterative process to 'make the call' and engagement strategies, these facilitators go further in exploring a specific set of 'soft skills' which will now be discussed in more detail.

Of the facilitators we interviewed, those that work in complex social systems for landscape restoration were often aware of the ongoing learning journey which requires endless practice. Our interviewees and validation highlighted the mutual learning between the facilitators and their diverse participants are in process a refinement of these often intangible skills. This learning also relates to the iterative process of navigating the social dynamics of the participants in attendance. Working in complexity requires the facilitators to trust in the process and curiously engage the unique perspectives of what people bring 'to the table' as these perspectives will continuously change the system and ongoing dynamics. It requires balance and a willingness to learn.

There is also a correlation of inner and outer practices in developing the skills and processes in multi-stakeholder processes. The process to 'get everyone at the table' includes being present, reflecting deeply and listening. Our interviews and validation sessions showed that applying these types of soft skills are part of the inner and outer balance while navigating complexity. The facilitator's work is oriented by the quality of the relationships that they are engaged in and in community with. The time dedicated to building trust with participants are the means to achieve deep collaboration and safe spaces of connection. Working in

complexity requires time, often more than expected, in order to build connections as they form the main elements in the endless learning journey for mutual collaboration.

Some of the facilitators list ‘personal practices’ as further resources to build deeper connections for collaboration while working in complexity. These practices are similar to a self-check, both within themselves and their teams which are related to a constant inner development, to balance internally and it influences the way they are able to be present. These self-checks and reflections are an ongoing process, an exercise done both internally and externally that enhances the process. When the inner and outer balance of personal and professional boundaries is established, there can be an ongoing checking of their own biases and privileges and this greatly assists in social complexity.

The fifth theme of the facilitator was ‘the place they operate from’. This theme is related to the interconnection of their own life and contrasting worldviews. The sense of navigating from different contexts, cultures and voices. It meant having an awareness of the complexity of both their own and participants' viewpoints as well as their own privileges. Some of the facilitators have specific foundations in values like humility, reciprocity and deep listening. These values allow them to operate from a humble, curious and ongoing learner mindset.

4.12 Alternatives to participation

In this thesis the researchers have focused on how practitioners in landscape restoration can convene a diverse range of participants, particularly engaging historically absent groups. Underneath this research is an unspoken assumption that inviting these groups ‘to the table’ is the best way for these groups to be participating. The researchers also wish to acknowledge that this has been challenged by some of our practitioners, both in interviews and validation, to consider the following question: “is engagement in a multi-stakeholder process the only way to have these groups participate in the landscape restoration process?” Having considered the needs of the groups, particularly historically absent groups; and the needs of the process, arguments can be made for alternatives to engagement. We have touched at length on the obstacles for engagement of historically absent actors and on strategies for engaging these participants. However, this does not acknowledge this checkpoint for the convener. One interviewee put it candidly: “*most voices have far better things to do than ‘sit around your table’ and help you”*. One strategy might be to live and work and be together, to listen deeply and build a connection. This still does not answer the question of whether all this energy spent on engaging these groups in the multi-stakeholder process is the right way.

From practitioners of these processes as well as ourselves as researchers, there is a bias to be acknowledged around engagement in the process being the metric for success. The group sitting at your table could be seen as a success in and of itself. This is because of the nature of our sample; this is their work, their worldview. This also highlights our own pronounced academic interest in the facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes. Alternatives that have been mentioned to us are plain: go to *their* table, listen, have their voices heard in different ways than through their physical presence in the process. This could be through stories, through tangible and intangible reminders. Other alternatives require a deeper reflection indeed. Another candid practitioner has learned to ask: *“So I think it's even before convening and collaborating, getting people at the table. It's like, hang on a second is this convening collaboration project? It's like really early on, is this leading to liberation, justice and the*

root causes? Or are we just doing another thing to meet the SDGs for the government, and making practitioners aware of that?" (Validation, Australia). In essence, is this process tackling the surface level obstacles and pushing for external objectives that do not benefit the historically absent group or is this process truly placing the needs of this group [in addressing the indigenous populations] front and centre? The addressing of the historical traumas and systems of oppression can also be the foundations for healing and reconciliation processes.

4.13 Limitations of our research

Our population sample showed a strong awareness of the need to include historically absent groups in multi-stakeholder processes, both for reasons of historical reparation and justice and for a better fulfilment of landscape restoration efforts. The core of their work and the main crux of their energy and attention focuses on collaborative decision-making for engaging marginalised and vulnerable groups. The profile of practitioners within this specific orientation and expertise was part of our selection criteria because the researchers wanted to further investigate this in greater depth. The researchers would like to indicate that this may not be representative of the wider community of practitioners involved in landscape restoration.

Another limitation of this research is that the validation data favours the voices of the three interviewees because of their immediate availability and they personally highlighted aspects in the diagram that were important to them. Their focus elements then weighed heavier in the data specifically; the role of the facilitator, structural obstacles and root causes. Further iterations of validating the diagram with others would be useful for a wider confirmation and clarification.

Our results (albeit from a small sample) highlights that although the researchers tried to contact a diverse array of indigenous people and people of colour, there was an overwhelming reliance on personal contacts and within this, the researchers have all personally worked largely in white-dominated spaces. The researchers question whether this lack of contacts is due to a lack of presence in occupying these spaces and roles, which perhaps highlights the ongoing systemic lack of engagement and representation and historic exclusion of non-white people, or whether it was due to scheduling unavailability - perhaps also due to being the minority working in these spaces, further highlighting the problem. In the time allowed for our research, the researchers tried to reach out to both indigenous and racially diverse communities and were not able to get replies. The researchers tried to contact five people across workplaces in Africa and indigenous representatives in the Philippines and Australia. The researchers also question whether this is because marginalised communities may not wish to have their story told by those who have historically oppressed their people or perhaps misrepresented their voice. We may never know. With more time, reaching out further and with more resources to compensate for distortions of the system, perhaps we would have been able to include a more diverse range of ethnicities in our study.

The researchers didn't use a specific definition of 'diversity' in interviews to avoid generating bias and better understand how it was defined by practitioners. The absence of a common definition and the fact that it is strongly dependent on the context, background and experience of our interviewees, which leaves the quagmire intact. The definition was usually context dependent and was also further addressed in the discussion.

The interview sample was highlighted as a diverse group of practitioners from all four continents. They were selected as highly specialised practitioners of multi-stakeholder processes in landscape restoration projects with a minimum of five years of experience in the field. If their landscape restoration experience fell short of the 5 years, they were still admitted on the grounds that they had worked extensively with historically absent groups or had experience convening highly diverse MSP projects. This diversity in our sample allowed us to find conclusions that seem to hold some truth across continental and national divides, for many different types of landscapes and types of populations. However, patterns were identified that the researchers could not draw conclusions on for the whole group, as they were only shared by a few of our practitioners with shared characteristics. To our research this was deemed unidentifiable and thus possibly biased. These shared characteristics included age, type of population worked with (for example, indigenous populations, or women specifically), setting (rural or urban), worldviews (pro-corporate, small-government, and others…), educational background (for example the MSLS program). However in each of these sub-demographics, our total number of participants never exceeded 2-4 practitioners. Hence any conclusion drawn for this particular sub-demographic did not have any scientific value beyond anecdotal evidence. This is another element the researchers would like to highlight as requiring more in depth research.

4.14 Further research

With more time and resources, particularly to find practitioners in the Global South working with historically absent groups, it would be valuable to see what specific strategies would emerge, specifically around the type of population which is convened. The researchers would like to highlight that research is needed around the systemic obstacles that historically absent groups confront and the process of practically engaging these groups in multi-stakeholder processes.

Systems and cycles of funding for large multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration seem to remain focused on short term results and objectives related to projects. The focus on short term change for project design and management and at a systemic level misses the mark in terms of changing the structure of systems to be more equitable. While there are some changes in the dynamics, such as creating more time and space for relationship building, activities like meeting people where they are and shifting the power of goal setting still aren't being included in processes and policies. Benefits could be maximised if agendas had more time and at present, all practitioners that we interviewed agree that it does not go far enough. They are still working against the boundaries of the system. In the same way that the obstacles to engagement of historically absent groups build on deeper, systemic obstacles, landscape restoration projects can not be examined outside of a systemic lens. These projects sit within larger systems that form their own obstacles to the time and resources required to engage historically absent groups. Further research needs to go to addressing the deep layers of these structural foundations and move the focus to invest in the long term process rather than results-based programs. Both result focused and process focused approaches have a place. To address the structural limitations, investment for the greatest leverage long term would be better situated in systemic change with a focus on the processes and using the value of results based programs as stepping stones, rather than the current structure which is the inverse.

Another area for future research was further investigation into the qualities of leadership for facilitators that work in complex social systems. This was highlighted strongly as a leverage point for indicators for success in engaging diverse perspectives and historically absent groups.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, diversity of participants, and how to ensure their inclusion in the process, has been highlighted as a key element in the success of multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration.

Centering the landscape changes decision making power and raises questions around the legitimacy of stakeholders, as everyone within the landscape can claim legitimacy. Power and privilege is placed in the hands of the convening team to place boundaries on who to invite and not. When trying to represent a landscape in a multi-stakeholder process, it poses the question of where the landscape boundaries can be placed for 'accurate representation', and who gets to make this 'call'. Literature tells us that this is done through transparency of the roles. System transformation requires both the people with the power to influence the system, whose fingerprint can change structures and policies, and the actors who are on the fringe, those with unique perspectives of the system from its edges. It is by empowering actors on the edge, that transformation can be built on foundations of interconnected knowledge.

The practitioners answer the questions of legitimacy through convening a representation of the social and ecological landscape within their process, the microcosm, which is created iteratively by building on synergies and filling identified gaps. The participants, through seeing their own social system represented, are able to build capacities to engage with a diverse range of perspectives. This self-reflection process means the microcosm is able to acknowledge missing voices and becomes aware of blind spots. The diversity of participants helps to build the resilience of the system and thus the adaptive capacity of the convened microcosm. The diversity paradox highlights that this only applies if diversity includes the individual perspectives, is engaged in a non-tokenistic way, with appropriate resources and does not avoid the possibility of productive conflict collectively.

There is a gap in literature around 'how' to engage the historically absent groups meaningfully and long term, as it is crucial for systemic transformation, and around how to bring diversity beyond representation including the individual perspectives in multi-stakeholder processes. In our research, the two-pronged abilities of the facilitator came out as a key element of the 'how' to navigate the complexity. In one, a call is made about an acceptable representation of the complex system, and the search for more missing voices stops. In the other, the facilitator continuously reorients themselves to self-assess whether the process and strategies for engagement are used to address 'root causes' of obstacles they encounter. In doing so, they are posing the question of the alternatives for engagement and what role the facilitator can play in the larger systems that fund and plan landscape restoration projects.

Practitioners and participants alike must navigate the complexity around many systemic obstacles preventing actors on the edge of systems from participating. While engagement strategies address some obstacles and practitioners are using them to varying degrees, there is still more to do in this regard. This was highlighted initially by the Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective, who inspired this particular focus on historically absent groups. The priority to investigate inclusion practices more deeply was further agreed upon by practitioners in our study.

The involvement of historically absent groups has shown to be vital and results in greater creativity and innovation. It also provides the opportunity for social inequities to be illuminated in the process. Literature highlights the importance of centralising indigenous groups, women and youth as actors on the edge of systems are able to engage without the expectations or judgements of existing systems. This can lead to a more inclusive, transparent and socially engaging process. If historically absent groups are engaged in a meaningful and inclusive way, this appears to be a powerful leverage point for transformation of the landscape as a socio-ecological system, through the addressing of root causes. Meaningfully engaged alludes to the diversity paradox once again, in that the depth and range of outcome of the processes are strengthened by the inclusive participation of all perspectives.

The engagement of historically absent groups is context dependent and relies on a variety of strategies. The data highlighted that the measure of success for the strategies is found in the quality of the relationships developed and the capacity built in participants to sustain engagement. Systemic changes can occur by including a diverse range of perspectives, particularly perspectives held by those who have historically been on the fringe of systems. Shifting this dynamic can further help to address structural dynamics of privilege and build the capacities and relationships of communities working together.

True engagement of historically absent groups however, is no small task as systemic obstacles and root obstacles are more difficult to acknowledge than surface level gaps and limitations. Both need to be addressed in order to work towards collective equity. Multi-stakeholder processes would be further supported if funding was given for longer-term processes and deeper engagement for historically absent groups. The practical implication of 'how' engagement occurs also needs to be transparent and the power and privilege of all contributors should be acknowledged. True empowerment and equity for all participants needs to address the necessary shifts in power; this may mean taking more time to initially heal the layers of historical oppression and separation.

After we had presented the prototype diagram to the Bioregional Weaving Lab Collective, they also suggested that further resources could be developed for practitioners which would be beneficial. The researchers hope that this could be used as a basis for further design or conceptualisation of a tool that could support the facilitator's navigation of complexity in engaging historically absent groups.

The unique role and skills of the facilitator arose as a crucial element in the research. It was suggested that their personal practices enhanced their ability to navigate complexity and the intangible "soft" skills that created an element of magic. This particular element was not accounted for in the literature in multi-stakeholder processes nor acknowledged as such a high priority in this sector as a leverage point. It is important to acknowledge that all of the elements above play a role in the multi-stakeholder process. Viewing multi-stakeholder processes in a systemic interrelated way enables both participants and practitioners to learn how to navigate complex social and ecological issues connected to their landscape.

The researchers have aimed to take responsibility for their role in the system, the biases and influence they hold and used their privilege to address, within this scope, the converging social and ecological crisis. The urgency of the global sustainability challenge means collaboration across all perspectives will be required to create effective and timely solutions for wicked problems. The researchers believe that the greatest challenges of the coming decades will demand from all of us, the ability to move with change. Choosing to work

towards strategic sustainable development enables actors to enhance the resilience of social systems and move with the pace of change.

"*The crises are urgent, but the transformation that emerges from radical imagination is still slow, relational, imperfect work. We are learning*." - (Brown, 2021)

Bringing everyone to the table, including their individual perspectives, starts with learning, together and from each other, with curiosity, respect, and openness.

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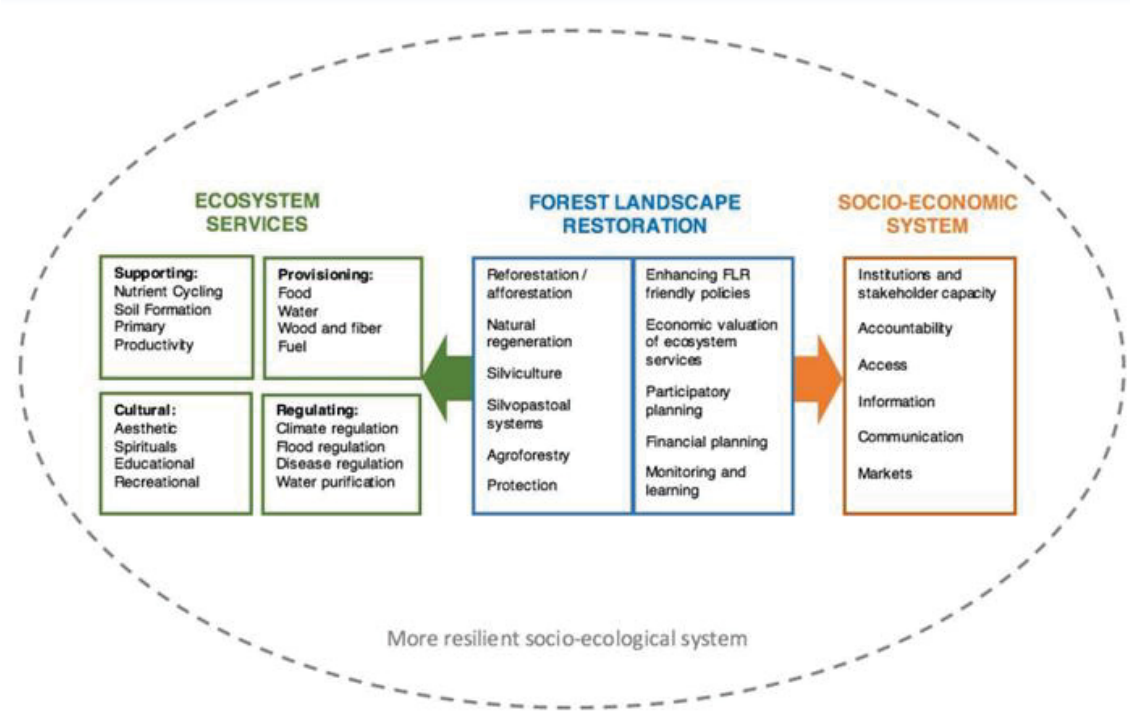
Appendices

Appendix A: Diagram of "How forest landscape restoration can enhance resilience"

(Baig, Rizvi and Jones 2017)



Appendix B: Invitation to practitioners

Dear _____,

I am reaching out to you today to ask for your possible participation in our research.

I received your contact through _____ (cc-ed here)

My name is Paula, I am currently studying a Master in Strategic Leadership for Sustainability (MSLS - https://www.bth.se/eng/education/masters/msls/), in Sweden. In order to complete my masters degree I am writing a thesis together with 3 other students (CC-d in the email).

For our thesis on the inclusion of diverse participants in multi-stakeholder processes we are looking to interview experts / practitioners with at least 5 years of experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder processes with a focus around the inclusion of vulnerable or marginalised populations.

Should you be interested, we would like to get in touch in order to schedule a 60 minute interview via Zoom. The questions and consent form would be sent in advance. The interview would preferably take place during the month of March.

If this is not the case, would you be able to connect us through someone you feel fits the above-mentioned criteria?

Thank you for your time and help,

With kind regards,

Paula

Appendix C: Interview questions

Definitions

How do you define a Multi Stakeholder Process?

How do you define success as a result of these processes?

Process

Are there any specific criteria or frameworks for engaging a diverse array of actors (eg. stakeholder mapping, system mapping, relationship building, convening)? If yes - please explain. If no - why not? What are some of the challenges in this area?

What requirements or criteria must a participant have in order to engage in the process?

What are the specific steps you take when initiating a MSP?

What (if any) theories do you rely on to inform the MSP?

Having everyone at the table

How do you decide/quantify if you have "enough" the "right" people / range of actors for MSP?

Are you (or your organisation) aware of any bias you could have in this phase?

What do you do when the whole system is not sufficiently represented? How do you establish those who are missing?

What are the key elements in this process that you believe result in having the RIGHT/ENOUGH people at the table?

Once there are "enough" defined actors - how do you ensure they are included in the process?

Do you feel like any of your past or current processes are constrained by anything specifically? If so, what?

In the context of diversity (or having everyone on the table/the right people in the room) could you share a story of when something was successful?

Could you tell us a story of a MSP that has gone wrong historically and what you wish you could have done differently / what did you learn?

Recommendations / Suggestions

Do you have any recommendations on articles/references related to diversity, inclusion, engagement in MSP that strongly shaped your approach?

There is a possibility that we may reach out to our interviewee's again once we have more data - are you interested in being contacted for a few further reflection questions?

Appendix D: Consent form

This appendix shows the **consent form** all our interviewees which were signed before our interviews.

Hello,
We greatly appreciate you taking the time to participate in our research. Thank you very much in advance! In the following we provide you with more information on the interview process and ask for your formal consent.

Aim of the research
As mentioned before, we (a team of Master students in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden) are currently researching the power of invitation in enhancing diversity in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration.

In concrete terms, the aims of this study are to (1) identify what are the particular elements that enhance diversity of participants in the invitation phase in multi-stakeholder processes for landscape restoration, (2) identify what are the limiting factors of establishing a diverse range of participants? (Particularly those groups who have been historically absent).
Please reach out to us if you have any further questions about our research.

Invitation
As an expert and/or a practitioner on the topic of multi-stakeholder processes including diverse groups of participants, we would like to invite you to share your knowledge with us. The proposed interview will take a maximum of 90 minutes and we do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but of course you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Formalities
Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from EU institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to be interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you, therefore, read the information provided in this document carefully and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- The transcript of the interview will be analysed by the research team.
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to the research team and academic colleagues and researchers with whom the research team might collaborate as part of the research process.
- Unless otherwise specified, any summary interview content or direct quotations from the interview, that is made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be destroyed after the research project has been concluded (latest September 2022).
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

● All data, transcriptions, recordings, will be stored in accordance with EU-regulations (GDPR).

Please tick as appropriate:	
	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
	I agree to be quoted directly.
	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

By signing this form, I agree that:

● I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.
● The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
● I have read the information section at the top of this document.
● I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation.
● I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
● I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact one of the research team members with any questions I may have in the Future.

Your name

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____
Participants Signature Date

_____ _____
Researchers Signature Date

Contact Information

This research has been reviewed and approved by the staff of the Masters in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability at the Blekinge Institute of Technology. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:
Merlina Missimer, PhD. Co-Director,
Masters in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability.
E-Mail: merlina.missimer@bth.se
Phone: +46 455 385680

If you wish to speak to us, you can reach us under the following contact details:
Paula Carramaschi Gabriel
E-Mail: pacr21@student.bth.se
Phone: +46.0706475327

Appendix E: Validation invitation email

Dear XXX,

We have been really excited about the information we've received from our research interviews so far and we'd like to thank you again for being a part of this learning journey with us. We have now spoken with 14 experienced professionals from Brazil, Australia, South Africa, Europe, Mexico and Northern America. It's been really exciting to learn about the practicalities of engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships from the professionals who make change in the world.

We are preparing for a further round of validation in the last week of April and would love to have you join us. We aim to come together as a group cohort to clarify and further develop the key elements that have arisen from our research. We hope that the group dynamics will help us illuminate the finer nuances of the important phases of the invitation process in multi-stakeholder processes and really hope that you are available to attend one of our sessions.

We really loved your quote "(quote from interview)" it really shone a light on an area we hadn't considered.

The first date is April 25th at 5pm – 7pm CET

The second date is April 26th 10am – 12pm CET

It would be wonderful to have your response/availability on the dates above, as soon as possible :)

Thank you very much!

Sincerely yours,

Amanda, Ilse, Paula and Valentina

Appendix F: Validation preparation email

Validation Session Preparation Email

Dear all,

Thank you very much for accepting our invitation for the Validation session next monday, April 25th at 5pm CET (zoom link: https://bth.zoom.us/j/69588355707 l ID: 695 8835 5707). We really appreciate you giving us your time and being part of our research.

The list below, highlights the amazing experts that will be in our room on Monday, you can check their Linkedin profile for more details:

(we shared their professional profiles in the message)

We invite you to come with open hearts and minds so that we can have a meaningful and productive 2 hours to cocreate. We hope that together we can:

- Help to see different ways of doing similar work
- See your work represented in our presentation
- Collaborate with shared language while understanding that there are different processes, terms and ways of naming this work
- Mutual learning and inspirations

It's important to acknowledge that we are seeking your many and varied perceptions and opinions and are not looking for everyone to agree on our results as we are not trying to (yet) create a common understanding, we seek to further clarify and illuminate what has arisen and see what parts resonate and what is still missing. We understand that "All models are wrong, but some are useful" - George F P Box.

Although this will be scheduled as a 2 hour session, there are some participants that need to leave earlier, so we will have an online Miro board (online collaborative whiteboard) that you will be able to offer with your thoughts ongoingly.

Thank you very much and see you on Zoom next Monday!

Kind regards,

Amanda, Ilse, Paula and Valentina

Appendix G: Validation session agenda

5:10 - Vulnerable Presentation

- Flow & Agenda of the session
- Presenting our team
- Expectations (important that we set them up with perception and acknowledgement that they do not have to agree / we are not trying to make a common understanding)
- Aims & Purpose of the Validation Session

5:20 - "Globe" Check in

(a 5 minute activity where they all share where are they now in the world and where is a place their hear call "home" - another brain distraction to get ready for moment content)

5:25 - Introduction about our Research

- How we have got here
- Where we think we are not (which of them are the fundamental soil and which are the ones they respond to)
- Fundamental soil
    - *Definitions*
    - *Shared mental models*
    - *Microcosm of system*
    - *Elements and Strategies for Engagement (who is the centre of the frame)*
        - *Who is looking through the lens of complexity and who is not?*
        - *The ones who don't that's where the stakeholders are not centred*
        - *Stakeholder/landscape centred – all needs covered = complexity lens*
        - *Centre things differently*
        - *Centre the vulnerables or landscape or community or greater whole*
        - *Landscape isn't just representing itself – more towards empowerment*
        - *Relationship based approach, building bridge between stakeholders*
    - *Practitioners*
        - *Their needs and interests*
        - *Is the expectation to solve in a certain way?*
        - *Broad interest of future landscape*
        - *Has a weight in how the strategies are shaped afterwards*
        - *Local or outsiders*

5:35 - Quick explanation of next steps for today & Breakout rooms

- In pairs/trios, reflect on the question:
  "Which is your initial response to what we presented?"

5:40 - First Round of Brainstorming

- In pairs/trios, reflect on the question:
  "Which is your initial response to what we presented?"

5:50 - First Round of Collective Sensemaking

- Back in the main room, they all share their reflections / discoveries

6:00 -Quick distraction / music /icebreaker (TBD)

(a 5 minute activity to "distract" the brain and then make it focus again)

06:05- Introduction about our Research (continuation)

- Flexibility/what we would love to make sense collectively during Validation Session
    - *Complexity lens*
    - Visualisation of the loops (Vale´s draw)
    - Forming representation – check for who's missing?
- Where we are going (making sense today - guidelines shaped - presenting to Commonland in 2 weeks)

06:15 - Second Round of Brainstorming

- In pairs/trios, reflect on the questions:
    - "What are the differences in your context/territory?
    - "What are we missing?

06:25 - Second Round of Collective Sensemaking

- Back in the main room, they all share their reflections / discoveries

06:35 - Final collective round to narrow down

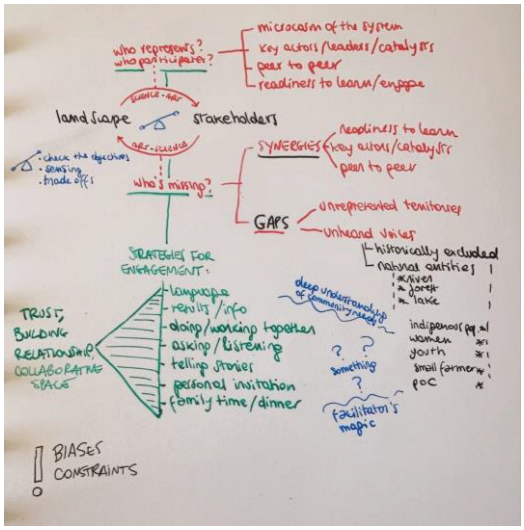
- Cocreate/Validate a possible Guideline that they could all apply in their context

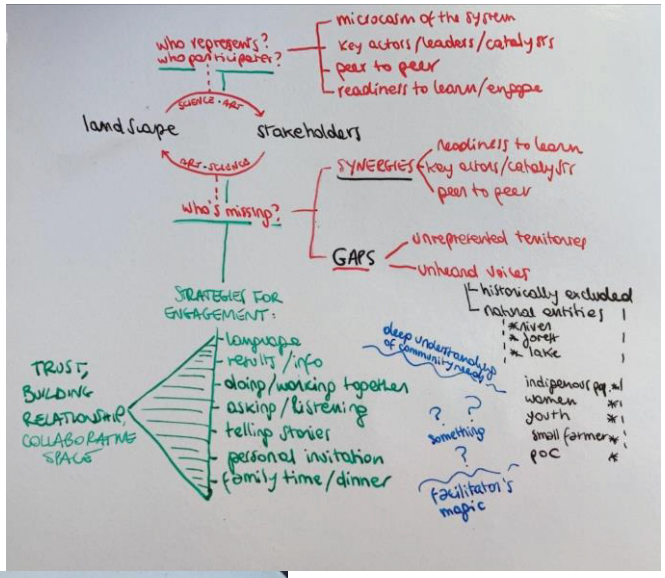
06:50 - Checkout, Final Thoughts and Inspirations

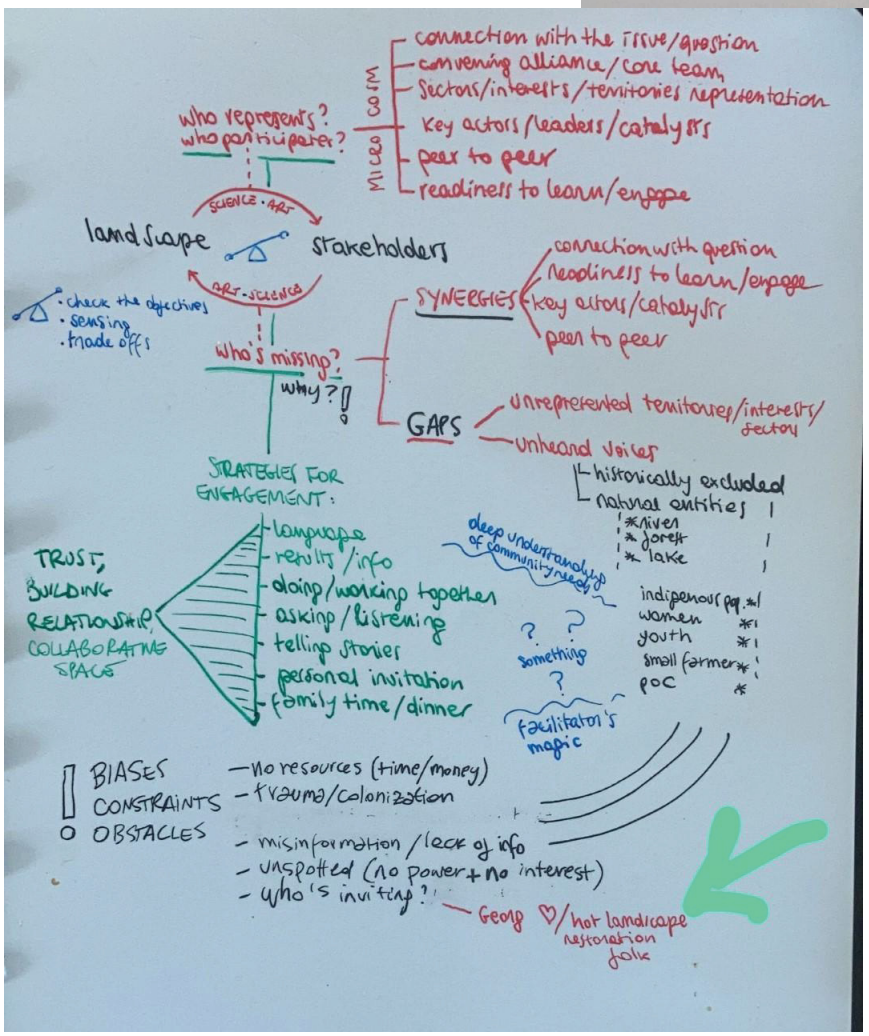
- A quick round of checkout
    - One thing I am taking with me
    - One thing I am leaving behind /changed my mind about

Appendix H: Previous iterations of the prototype diagram

Previous prototype diagrams







Appendix I: The table of codes

Macro-theme then code Title	Parent	Grandparent	Total quotes	Total quotes per macro-theme	After validation (re-named or re-coded for)
Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape			43	107	
Core team, convening alliance	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		7		
Snowballing	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		7		Now in Missing Voices
Readiness, willingness to be there	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		3		
Bringing in the existing tensions	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		11		
Key actors and local networks	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		16		
Representation of sectors, interests	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		8		
Connection with the issue, central question	Microcosm of the system / Representation of the landscape		12		
Missing voices in the room			37	94	
Historically excluded groups	GAPS: Unheard voices and perspectives	Missing voices in the room	1		
GAPS: Unrepresented territories or sectors	Missing voices in the room		16		
GAPS: Unheard voices and perspectives	Missing voices in the room		19		

SYNERGIES: Readiness to engage, energy	Missing voices in the room		10		
Natural entities	Missing voices in the room		1		
SYNERGIES: Catalysts, networks nodes	Missing voices in the room		4		
SYNERGIES: snowballing	Missing voices in the room		1		Now merged with Snowballing (from Microcosm)
GAPS: others	Missing voices in the room		5		
Obstacles				97	
Constraints	Obstacles		26		
Pitfalls	Obstacles		40		
Obstacles to accept invitation	Obstacles		16		
Historical trauma, disempowerment	Obstacles to accept invitation	Obstacles	3		
Unspotted stakeholders	Obstacles to accept invitation	Obstacles	3		
Lack of resources, access	Obstacles to accept invitation	Obstacles	7		
Misinformation or lack of information	Obstacles to accept invitation	Obstacles	2		Now Discrepancy of knowledge and lack of information
Strategies for engagement			70	194	
Presence, personal practices	Strategies for engagement		6		Now recoded for in 'Allowing what is Emergent'
Safe space for conflict and uncomfortability	Strategies for engagement		6		Reworded as ' Create a safe space for divergence and discomfort'
Asking questions, listening	Strategies for engagement		6		

Showing results, sharing information	Strategies for engagement		5		Brought together in code 'Reciprocity of outcomes and accountability'
Others, whatever is needed	Strategies for engagement		19		
Who is inviting? Convening power	Strategies for engagement		18		
Peer to peer network	Strategies for engagement				Now 'Make use of the peer to peer network'
Resources, benefits	Strategies for engagement		4		Brought together in code 'Reciprocity of outcomes and accountability'
Doing, working, living together	Strategies for engagement		9		
Language	Strategies for engagement		13		Now 'shared language'
Telling stories, art	Strategies for engagement		8		Now 'telling stories'
Centering the (vuln) stakeholder needs	Stakeholders universe		23		
Layers of engagement	Stakeholders universe		7		
Stakeholders universe				113	
Farmers	Stakeholders universe		12		
People of color	Stakeholders universe		9		
General stakeholders	Stakeholders universe		21		
Government	Stakeholders universe		6		
Environmental stakeholder	Stakeholders universe		4		
Corporate	Stakeholders universe		1		
Land owners	Stakeholders universe		4		

Youths	Stakeholders universe		17		
Indigenous communities	Stakeholders universe		20		
Women	Stakeholders universe		19		
The Facilitator				89	
Learning/ process/ skills	The Facilitator		23		
Relationships	The Facilitator		23		
The place they operate from	The Facilitator		39		
Facilitator personal practice	The Facilitator		4		
Schrodinger // The right balance			24	24	Finding Balance in complexity
Successful MSP			24	103	
Factors for success	Successful MSP		48		
Relationships	Successful MSP		25		Now under 'Goals'
Building capacities	Successful MSP		6		Now under 'Goals'
OUTSIDE OF SCOPE: PROCESS				184	
Scale up	Previously: Successful MSP		17		
MSP what is it?	Previously: Successful MSP		7		
Polarities			17		
Process: Vision for the landscape			22		
Links between social and ecosystems					

Designing for diversity			45		
Process: common intention			16		
Initiating			53		
P: Iterativeness					
P: Research			7		
OUTSIDE OF SCOPE: OTHER THREADS				22	
When engagement is not right			2		
water thread / what brings people together			14		
Connection to Land	water thread / what brings people together		6		
OTHER				82	
Cool quotes			44		
Storytime (collected stories)			38		
TOTAL NUMBER OF CODES	73				
TOTAL NUMBER OF QUOTES	1134				

Appendix J: A history of quirkos codes

A History of Quirkos Codes as told through a very large table

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