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Everyday life in a magnificent landscape: Making sense of the nature/culture dichotomy in the mountains of Jämtland, Sweden

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Abstract

Although the nature/culture dichotomy has been extensively criticized by scholars, it remains pervasive to our conception of the world. Discourses of nature as a pristine milieu and of culture as a realm of human dominance not only impact cognition, but also the local practices of those involved daily in such contested areas. In this study of the mountainous area of the Jämtland County, Sweden, we report on the ways local stakeholders make sense of their surrounding landscape in the wake of its magnificent character as they go about their daily lives as residents, entrepreneurs and recreationists. We turn to the notion of dwelling to frame these narratives. This ultimately becomes an exploration of the contradictions and confusions within and between the discourses of conservation, management, recreation, authenticity and tourism development that affect how local stakeholders consciously and subconsciously cope with the tensions brought about by the nature/culture dichotomy. The findings are used to propose a critical, as well as constructive, notion of dwelling that stresses the importance of opening up to new possibilities and responsibilities during negotiations over protected areas.

Keywords

Dwelling, nature conservation, landscape research, national park, tourism development

Introduction

The nature/culture dichotomy is fundamental to discourses of nature conservation, where untouched pristine nature must be protected from human contamination, despite the fact that all protected landscapes are fashioned by human activity (Adams, 2003; Brockington et al., 2008; Castree, 2003; 2014; Ryan, 2015). The glorification of environmental values to

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protect areas with magnificent scenery instils national pride and forms a common identity, which continues to be an important element of nature conservation. We use Sweden to illustrate this discourse and its related practices. Sweden has a history of policy-driven nature conservation that began in 1909 and since then the mountain areas in the north have played a special role in transmitting feelings of sublimity and outdoor recreation values. In the Swedish mountain landscape, discourses of nature and culture coexist in tension with each other, which at times surface as conflicts of interests when ideas and agendas differ (Sandell, 2005). The mountain landscape is viewed by many as an arena for nature conservation, for recreation and as an escape from civilization – while for others it represents a realm of inhabitation, where calls for local development and economic survival have been persistent, though not always heard and perhaps more seldom adhered to. Referring to nature conservation and national parks in the Swedish mountains, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) writes:

> No other area in Europe has such high combined qualities of wilderness and monumental landscape. There is still opportunity for exclusive experiences of the original nature and for individual week-long wilderness hikes. (SEPA, 2008: 25, authors' translation)

In national policy documents regarding protected areas, references to the everyday lives of residents are rarely visible (see Laven et al., 2015; Wall-Reinius, 2012). This erasure is furthermore apparent in documents related to Sweden's overall environmental objectives. One of these objectives is directly targeted at protecting mountain areas, sporting the title *A Magnificent Mountain Landscape*, a framing of the environment of high importance in this study. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency describes this objective as:

> The pristine character of the mountain environment must be largely preserved, in terms of biological diversity, recreational value, and natural and cultural assets. Activities in mountain areas must respect these values and assets, with a view to promoting sustainable development. Particularly valuable areas must be protected from encroachment and other disturbance. (SEPA, 2017)

This environmental objective acknowledges the existence of, and the need to preserve, both natural and cultural values. However, what those values are is not really clear, other than that they concern the protection of soil, vegetation and biodiversity, i.e. values usually considered as 'natural' (SEPA, 2017). The same type of language used by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is also used in tourism advertisement. One example comes from the nation-wide organisation The Swedish Tourist Association (STF), which highlights the magnificent 'natural' landscape in one of their promotional brochures about Jämtland:

> In the mountains of Jämtland, the wilderness is easily accessible. From our mountain facilities there are well-marked trails to generous vastness, valuable silence and wild forests. A pure pleasure from the first breath. (STF, n.d., authors' translation)

Such a text highlights a common tourism discourse based on visitors' privilege to access areas of high natural beauty. However, simultaneously the presence of local inhabitants and their daily practices become hidden elements of the landscape (Simmons, 2004; Waitt and Lane, 2007).

Defining land as wild or natural erases cultural heritage and livelihoods, which has negative material and immaterial consequences for local people (Dahlberg et al., 2010; Mels, 2002). Much scholarly criticism has been directed at the enduring nature/culture dualism (Castree, 2003; Head, 2007, 2010; Latour, 1993, 2005; Whatmore, 2002, 2006),

and specifically its effects on local communities and their development when a particular landscape is promoted purely for the sake of nature conservation and tourism (Laven et al., 2015; Wall-Reinius, 2009, 2012). Dahlberg (2015) argues that relying on static categories to describe landscapes can cause misunderstandings and potentially conflicts. Scholars have been effective at identifying erasures and at conceptualizing power dynamics in the wake of conflicts, where stakeholders such as residents, tourists, recreationists, governmental authorities and environmentalists are pitted against each other (Lai et al., 2013; Pitter, 2009; Sandell, 2005; Stoddart, 2011). Important to stress is that when the underlying causes of stakeholder frustrations – that we perceive different landscapes and rely on different discourses – remain hidden or unclear, negotiations about the future become difficult.

Through the study of the mountains of southern Jämtland, Sweden, our aim is to analyse how local stakeholders experience and practice their everyday lives in 'the magnificent mountain landscape', an epithet mostly framed by outsiders, which reflects the pervasive and enduring nature/culture dichotomy. Our interest lies with the notion of dwelling as put forward by Ingold (2011), as it gives primacy to the exploration of the lived world (Macnagheten and Urry, 1998; Muir, 1999). Through the concept of dwelling, we investigate the contradictions and confusions within and between related discourses of conservation, management, recreation, development, authenticity and tourism, which affect how people make everyday sense of their landscape as they consciously and subconsciously face tensions brought about by human conceptions of the natural world. We address the findings through four analytical themes: (1) the everyday magnificent, (2) the social limits of nature, (3) authentic development and (4) rules of natural engagement. This study contributes to landscape research by suggesting a critical and proactive notion of dwelling, not only to make sense of landscapes in light of enduring nature/culture dualisms, but also to guide practice and research towards new possibilities and responsibilities.

Theoretical framework

Critical views on nature/culture dualism have led to the adoption of a variety of relational approaches to study the world beyond binaries (Anderson, 2009). Landscape is apprehended not as a symbolic realm, but as a place where material and social actions intertwine through various networks and embodied practices (Ingold, 2011; Wylie, 2006, 2013). The understanding of landscape as a complex process of everyday interactions between nature and culture, in a mixture of the non-human and the human world, permits a relativization and continuum of the social and the natural in the landscape (Proctor, 2001; Wall-Reinius, 2009, 2012). Under this light, nature and culture are understood beyond dualism, in a unitary relationship (Harvey, 1996; Latour, 2005; Macnagheten and Urry, 1998; Muir, 1999). Highlighting such a relational perspective of the human–nature–environment nexus allows for the conception of hybrid and multifunctional aspects of landscapes, away from its sedimentation and purification into a natural and/or cultural realm (Ingold, 2011).

It remains that embodied practices, everyday interactions and networks are not common concepts outside of academia. Castree (2003), Head (2007, 2010) and Laven et al. (2015) argue that politicians, planners and activists – and many academics – still rely on dichotomies to conceptualize the world. Research in outdoor recreation and environmental behaviour demonstrates humans' inability to move beyond dichotomies in their interactions with nature. For Stoddart (2011), while discourses of nature can aim at its preservation by outlining its fragility, they can also discipline us to leave it untouched. Concurrently, nature can be framed as a resource for self-development, relaxation and

adventure (Stoddart, 2011; Stoddart et al., 2015). Landscape perceptions and uses of nature are intertwined with power relations that have numerous effects and implications (Demeritt, 2001, 2002). Stakeholder conflicts often arise due to plans of nature conservation (Dahlberg et al., 2010; Dahlberg, 2015; Lai et al., 2013; Mels, 2002). This is not only because of the relationship between powerful urban concentrations of demand and distant less powerful areas of supply (Sandell, 2005; Skjeggedal, 2008), but also in terms of power over representation related to imagery and narratives, and who dictates their diffusion (Simmons, 2004; West and Carrier, 2004).

Many studies related to tourism have underlined the paradox of reconciling perceptions of nature and culture in practice. For example, in Laponia, Sweden, Wall-Reinius (2012) found that tourists do not see it as problematic that a place can be perceived simultaneously as natural, used by native people, and developed for tourism. Dear and Myers (2005) found similar results in Alaska where outdoor recreationists showed discrepancy between their conception of wilderness and their appreciation of indigenous values. Waitt et al. (2003), speaking of Kimberley, Australia, found tourists attributing natural characteristics to a dammed area since they considered it a physical attribute of the landscape, but not to areas impacted by irrigation technologies as these appeared more domesticated. These cases show that humans do not live in a world of distinct categories, but rather, as Braun (2004: 169) argues: '[. . .] *we continuously mix things together into hybrid networks through countless acts of translation that go unacknowledged*'. Our tendency to form the world through categories becomes problematic in relation to the way we make sense of the landscapes we encounter (Dahlberg, 2015).

These cases highlight not only the pervasive way that nature is socially constructed, but also the contradictions that stem from this construction as individuals are left to make sense of binaries. Dilemmas surrounding the social perception of nature are reflected in human actions, for instance in individuals who embody conservation rules (Ryan, 2015; Wait and Cook, 2007). Experiencing nature does not necessarily move people towards a new perception of their relation to its non-humans elements. Waitt and Cook (2007: 542) associate this inability to the prevalence of the nature/culture dichotomy in environmental discourses, despite the best intentions of educators to involve humans in nature:

> Despite ESD [environmentally sustainable development] encouraging an interpretation that positions the complex links between humans and the rest of the non-human world as central to its agenda, a boundary is always maintained between humans (subjects) and non-humans (objects). 'Nature' is positioned in its remote original state as fragile and pristine. Nature only continues to exist in these remote locations through embracing specific actions and attitudes.

Mobilization against particular recreational outdoor activities highlights that there is a social unease about what is considered by some to be misbehaving humans in nature (Barnes, 2009; Collins, 2011; Monz and Kulmatiski, 2016; Pitter, 2009; Stoddart, 2011). Stoddart (2011) explains that outdoor recreation and environmental protection are not necessarily compatible as there are disagreements over what activities are appropriate in nature. For example, Stoddart (2011) identifies the existence of environmentalist mobilization against alpine ski resorts and off-road vehicle development in Canada, noting that other activities, such as hiking, canoeing and cross-country skiing, are accepted as legitimate ways to enjoy nature (see also Stoddart et al., 2015). These dilemmas further reflect dualistic conceptions of nature where humans should be left out of it.

The nature of everyday life

While studies of visitor experiences abound, there is space to explore the dilemmas characterizing the experiences of local stakeholders involved with matters of nature conservation, and recreational and tourism activities. We go further than acknowledging that local experiences are filled with tensions between dual discourses of nature and culture. This type of formulation does little to unravel how residents make sense, in practice and perception, of contested living spaces to be simultaneously enjoyed, exploited and preserved. Besides being a realm of biophysical conditions and changes, a landscape is a site of social bonds and political aesthetics, articulated through cultural practices steeped in power relations, affected and affecting the bio-physical (Mels, 2003, 2016; Olwig, 1996; Olwig and Mitchell, 2008). Our interest lies predominantly in the specificity of the human practices made visible in the landscape by those who inhabit it as they make sense of various representations and aspirations.

Of particular interest, Ingold's (2011) dwelling perspective highlights that landscape is a realm of human involvement. This involvement is understood through attention to embodied movements, rather than focusing solely on the symbolic value of scenery (Lorimer, 2005; McCormack, 2008; Thrift, 1996, 2001, 2008; Wylie, 2006, 2013). Under these terms, landscape is formed through movements of incorporation, meaning the processes that give rise to the individuals' activity that are reproduced in the environment through their performative tasks (Ingold, 2011). As a set of activities, landscape is a realm where individuals continually feel the presence of others, and therefore will adjust their movements in response to their interrelations with other humans, non-humans and biophysical processes (Harrison, 2007; Simonsen, 2012). Human inhabit space through their involvement with its bodies and objects. It is through corporeal movements that individuals respond to the situations their material and symbolic realms afford them (Ahmed, 2000, 2006; Crossley, 1995; Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

A perception of landscape as a realm of dwelling emphasises the everyday habits and experiences that produce a living space (Ingold, 2011; Prince, 2018a, 2018b). Coole (2007: 417) argues: '*an analysis of bodies within concrete political situations must combine phenomenological attention to the sensuous and symbolic ways actors experience their own body, with attention to the structures of power that circumscribe this experience*'. Focusing on embodiment is a way to look closer at the experiential and practical dimension of social life, where discourses imbued with for instance sexism, racism and classism become lived experiences for individuals that have to navigate social expectations and who may face restricted access to different spaces (Coole, 2007; Simonsen, 2007, 2012; Young, 2005). The landscape is, as Matless (2000: 142) claims: '*the subject of codes of conduct and aesthetic of existence*' where proper bodily displays and performances are expected. Bodily norms can nonetheless be resisted, opposing, rather than reinforcing, their reproduction and representation.

Social life is continuously in the making through the combinations and events that emerge from the performances of various human and non-human relations over time (Latour, 2005; Power, 2009; Whatmore, 2002, 2006). Consequently, life cannot be contained into static categories due to its relational and experimental character (Anderson, 2009; Dahlberg, 2015; Thrift, 2008). Our present study implies a consideration of social and material relations, aimed at making sense of dual discourses of nature and development that detach, yet include, humans to a landscape as active agents. The concept of embodiment is central, and implies movements such as stumbling, trying out and worrying, in light of everyday events difficult to apprehend under a representational framework. An interest in dwelling is thus useful in articulating the information that flows out of social life as

something meaningful to its understanding (Lorimer, 2005; McCormack, 2008; Thrift, 2008). It is about being attentive to that which escapes categorization or clear explanations, and rather to keep difference and confusion as guiding lights in the study of local experiences (Anderson, 2009).

The mountains of Southern Jämtland

The study area is located in the county of Jämtland in Sweden, more specifically in the mountainous part of the two municipalities of Åre and Berg, which represents an area of about 2250 km^2. The lower mountains and forested lands are sparsely populated with about 500 inhabitants living in surrounding small villages (Statistics Sweden, 2016), while the total number of inhabitants in the two municipalities is nearly 18,000 (Statistics Sweden, 2016). The area is characterized by its high mountain peaks, highlands, valleys and forested lands. These features make it a popular destination for outdoor recreationists and nature-based tourists. Tourism is one of the major activities impacting the landscape as it has led to the development of infrastructure such as mountain cabins and related facilities such as trails, boardwalks, bridges and wind-shelters. Popular tourist activities in the area traditionally include hiking, mountaineering and cross-country skiing, with biking and trail running becoming increasingly popular. The mountain area has since long been used for several other purposes than recreation and tourism, such as reindeer herding, small-scale farming and pastures, mining, hunting, fishing, harvesting of wild produce – and more recently, energy production. Reindeer herding is an economic activity distinct to the Sami people, and also a marker of the group's cultural identity. The semi-domesticated reindeer roam freely in the mountain and forest landscape during most of the year. There are three Sami villages within the case study area and in its proximity. Sami villages are administrative units where Sami villagers regulate some of their own resource use (e.g. reindeer herding and hunting) in Swedish Sami areas (Rydberg, 2011).

Currently, a large part of the study area is officially demarcated as a nature reserve. Protection efforts include the regulation of activities such as snowmobiling, dogsledding, hunting and fishing, through the designation of areas for specific purposes or by requiring permits for practicing specific activities. Motor vehicles are prohibited in the protected mountain area, with exceptions for when needed for reindeer herding and public management (County Administrative Board Jämtland, 2017). In addition to the current nature reserve, authorities have proposed the establishment of a national park. Figure 1 shows a map over the study area and the planned national park. The national park process was initiated in 2012 by the SEPA and the County Administrative Board in Jämtland. The process itself, the overall objectives, and questions about who can influence park regulations continue to be debated locally and regionally. The national park process is an important reason why we embarked on this study. It is partly through the expressions of uncertainties regarding the consequences of the establishment of a national park (i.e., potential regulations regarding hunting and limitations in recreational activities and economic industries) that we have uncovered confusion and contradictions in the narratives of our interview respondents.

Method

To obtain an in-depth understanding of how the residents of the southern mountain area of Jämtland experience the everyday in their magnificent landscape, we used a qualitative research design. Fieldwork was undertaken during 2014 and 2015 by two of the authors

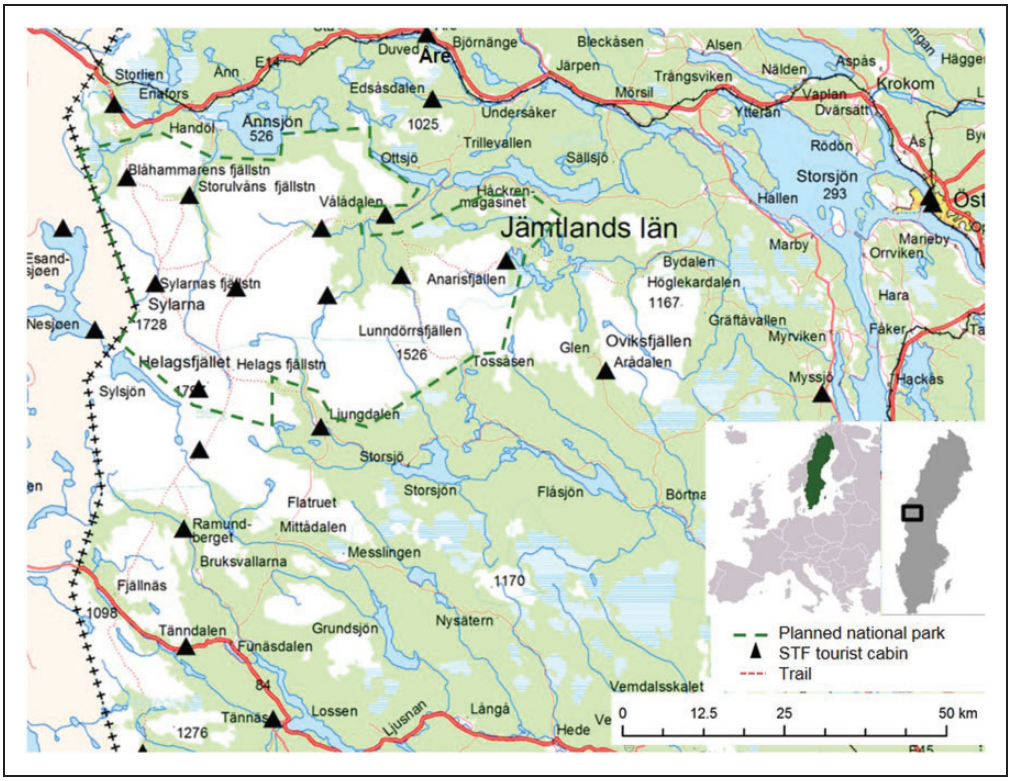

Figure 1. This map shows the delimitation of the planned national park in the mountain area of Jämtland County (Jämtlands län), Sweden. Åre can be found at the center-top of the map along the European route E14 and the railway. Ottsjö is a bit south of Åre and directly at the border of the planned national park. Ljungdalen can be found further south, also very near the border of the planned national park. Funäsdalen is located in the south-western part along the national route 84. The map also shows the location of mountain trails and tourist cabins operated by STF. Reindeer owned by three Sami villages roam in the whole area showed in the map. The geographical location of the Sami village of Handölsdalen is in the western parts and they keep reindeer mainly within the planned national park, while the geographical area of Tossåsen Sami village is the central and eastern parts of the map and the location of the Sami village of Mittådalen is in the south-western parts. Sources: Marika Wennbom has produced the map by using open data from Lantmäteriet and Sandra Wall-Reinius has adapted the map for the purpose of this paper. The coordinates for the STF cabins are modified from https://www.svenskaturistforeningen.se.

to study the perceptions of the people living in the smaller villages in the proximity of the planned national park. The first study participants were identified due to their roles in formal local groups, such as being a spokesperson for a community association, or being an owner of a café or a hotel in one of the villages. These people were contacted by telephone and agreed to meet either in their homes, at the workplaces or in a café. Other individuals were identified through snowball sampling while doing fieldwork, i.e. those interviewed first gave suggestions for additional people to interview (Smith, 2017). These were approached either directly or contacted after the fieldwork and a time was decided to conduct the interview. In total, 18 people (13 men and 5 women) participated in the study. Nine of them were members of different local organizations, of which three were spokespersons for what is called in Swedish '*byalag*', an institution that acts as a municipal advisory body. Two were

affiliated to a local network aimed at improving business development. There were three members of Sami villages, including two chairpersons and one vice-chairman in their respective villages. One respondent was a member of a legal body overlooking the interests of home owners in her neighbourhood. Other respondents were workers in restaurants/cafés or people that had their own small company. Generally, the interviewees were long-term residents, with many of them having grown up in the area, some leaving it in their youth to then move back later. Many of the respondents had multiple means of income, often combining a small-scale tourism business (like a restaurant or outdoor activities company) with other work (such as construction or transportation). Many of the respondents can be considered to be lifestyle entrepreneurs, driven by values and goals not limited to profit maximization and growth (Anderson Cederholm and Hultman, 2010; Lundberg et al., 2014; Margaryan and Stensland, 2017).

The interviews covered a broad range of topics, but the questions of relevance to this study related to people's relationship to their surrounding landscape and to how they used this as part of their everyday lives. Interviews were semi-structured, using the same list of themes for each participant. Follow-up questions were used, often leading to the development of unstructured dialogue between respondents and interviewers. This strategy was considered crucial to let important themes and anecdotes surface during the study, giving the respondent power over the interview (Kvale, 2006). This led to the collection of numerous statements, rich descriptions and illustrations of how the respondents perceived their own and others' relationship to the area, how the landscape was accessed, for what and why. The respondents were asked to comment directly on their daily lives; what they worked with, recreational habits, how the landscape had changed over time, and their general thoughts about the future.

Interviews averaged between one and two hours in length and were conducted in Swedish, the native language of the interviewers and interviewees. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed in Swedish afterwards; notes were also taken in Swedish during, and directly after, the interviews in order to capture details of the context of study and to ensure the validity of the qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2013). These notes and transcripts were read and re-read carefully by the three authors, all fluent in Swedish, working collaboratively to identify emerging themes that would give clues as to these individuals' everyday relation to their landscape. The authors also worked collaboratively to translate as reliably as possible the interview material and notes they chose to use in this article. All respondents were given pseudonyms according to their gender.

Analysis of study findings

Our results are divided into four analytical categories, named to highlight the curiosities, tensions, ironies and paradoxes we came across during this study of the mountainous landscape of Jämtland. We seek to give a voice to as many of the various actors of our case area as possible as their activities and practices and senses of meaning of the mountain landscape differ in many regards. Taken together, these narratives are insightful to the conceptualization of landscapes of everyday life in light of the diverse perceptions and practices that turn them into magnificent landscapes.

The everyday magnificent

It was common among the interview respondents to state that the proximity to the outdoors and the scenic landscape were the main reasons why they chose to move back, settle or

remain in the area. Those living permanently in the small communities close to the mountains mostly worked with different part-time jobs, commuted to work in larger towns, or lived on various small sources of income. It is not easy to live far from economic centres, where there are few people and limited infrastructure, but, for our respondents, it was a lifestyle that fulfilled aspirations to live close to the outdoor environment. For instance, Birgitta, who worked part-time at a local café, describes the mountain landscape like this:

> Everything! [This landscape] means everything and if it was not for the landscape I would not live here.
>
> One lives here because one likes this place. One does not live here because there are jobs to be found here, but because it is worth living here even though it is difficult to find work.

Birgitta decided to cut back on certain comforts in order to afford to live in the village on a part-time job. Working part-time, she has more time for recreational activities like walking, skiing and horse-back riding, as well as for subsistence activities like picking berries and mushrooms and fishing. For some respondents, their passion for the mountain landscape resulted in the creation of micro-businesses related to nature-based tourism. Many of these entrepreneurs believe that the calmness and silence of the area, is what attracted their clients.

The scenic character of the mountain landscape has simultaneously formed its inhabitants into spectators of its aesthetics, as well as recreationists and entrepreneurs, attesting to the many ways individuals are involved in their physical space (Ingold, 2011). While the landscape of the mountains generates awe amongst respondents, it is also the stage to practice activities that are part of an everyday routine, may it be for work, subsistence or leisure (Crouch, 2000, 2003). Many of the outdoor activities the respondents enjoy, such as fishing, hunting and picking berries and mushrooms, contribute to their household economy. One respondent claimed that he did not recreate in the outdoors as his activities in the surrounding landscape were for subsistence purposes. Though the relationship to the mountain landscape is essential to why people live in the area, it is not a relationship between people and an untamed pristine wilderness, but between people and a landscape of everyday practice.

Some practices in the mountain landscape are socially sanctioned, attesting to landscapes as realms of codes of existence (Matless, 2000). It was apparent that the entrepreneur taking tourists to the mountains faces a routine entrenched in codes of behaviour. For example, Maria needs a special permit from the regional authorities to be exempted from following trails when she goes out in the mountains with a tour-group. She also needs to be aware of the location of reindeer herds when she plans her trips so to not disturb the animals. For Maria, the mountain landscape is a space she needs to share with other stakeholders. Her movements are negotiated through politics of resource use established through local codes of conduct (Mels, 2016; Mitchell, 2003a, 2003b). She finds herself directly involved in social and material relations with her surroundings, where she carries out her sanctioned mundane practices. The physical and non-human elements of the landscape are not only scenery, but need to be dealt with through social practices. This is apparent in the negotiations between Sami and non-Sami inhabitants when it comes to the movements of the reindeer and other uses of the landscape. Sofia works at a helicopter company, and like Maria with her tourist groups, she needs to be aware of the location of reindeer herds before taking off, keeping in contact with the Sami to know where the reindeer are so to avoid disturbing them.

Although the reindeer were appreciated by many other residents, there is a tension between the exotic and the everyday of living close to the mountain landscape. Residents around the area are often in contact with the animals as they roam freely from April to October (i.e. summer grazing, during winter the reindeer roam in the forested areas below the mountains). Maria mentioned that reindeer come to her backyard during spring, and she calls this '*really exotic!*' She nonetheless also mentioned getting irritated at these animals because they eat her narcissus. Moments of awe occur when elements of the landscape present themselves as scenery. The visual then takes precedence; the observer inscribes upon the reindeer a discourse of wilderness and untamed nature. However, as these animals enter the realm of the cultural and its aesthetics, such as flowerbeds and gardens, they become a nuisance of everyday life. Both the visual and the practical define the local perception of the landscape, creating discrepancies similar to those identified in research on human interactions with tourist landscapes (Dear and Myers, 2005; Waitt et al., 2003; Wall-Reinius, 2012).

The social limits of nature

The landscape of everyday practices described above outlines that humans have an active presence in the landscape (Ingold, 2011; Macnagheten and Urry, 1998; Muir, 1999; Prince, 2018a, 2018b). Many respondents described what was valuable for them in the landscape, and by doing so mentioned the importance of being able to continue to use the landscape. The café owner Birgitta stated that she would not mind if windmills were erected in the area since villages need electricity to function. She thought it was unfortunate that the nearby quarry and soapstone factory had closed down, taking away jobs. Margareta, a retired woman who moved back to her father's place of origin, described how she frequently uses the mountain landscape, its surroundings and its resources for recreation, like for picking berries and mushrooms. She emphasised the importance of safeguarding the natural environment, for both residents and visitors, also hoping that the area continues to foster thriving communities. These accounts reveal that respondents did not present themselves and their ambitions as disconnected from nature. The respondents constantly positioned themselves as carers for their natural environment as they sought to foster their desired lifestyles and livelihood within the community and the surrounding landscape. To them, their desire for economic development did not seem incompatible with their sentiments concerning safeguarding nature.

The position of our respondents as carers for the environment is compounded to the perception that nature needs to be managed by humans. This perception implies that natural elements should not overstep the boundary into the cultural realm, remaining an asset rather than a threat to humans (Castree, 2014). Patrick, an entrepreneur and committed community member, stressed that it is important to safeguard nature, not only for its intrinsic value, but for development purposes. For him, the main issue concerned how to develop business products, while maintaining and restoring natural assets. The thought of leaving nature untouched was not part of his narrative as he described different ideas for the commercialization and management of natural assets. For example, he argued that pastoral activities like bringing cows and sheep to the lower mountains in the summer, such as previously practiced in the area, could be reintroduced to encourage the growth of rare flowers – which may attract visitors. Another example was to develop more high quality trails which would make the mountains more attractive and accessible. Similarly, Kenneth,

who moved to the area 25 years ago, mentioned the importance of grazing to keep the landscape open (i.e. cleared from shrub and trees):

> The old transhumance regime with moving sheep and cattle to summer pastures must be re-created to maintain the cultural environment [...] just like the Sami manage the reindeer on the mountains.

The importance of keeping parts of the landscape open was framed as something directly beneficial to its value. Patrick mentioned areas where orchids grow due to past seasonal grazing as the activity cleared space for their emergence. However, these orchid species are threatened by bush encroachment due to current lack of grazing activities. For Patrick, this means that more pastures need to be opened up again to preserve this aesthetic. There is, as with the effects of the reindeer, an inscription on the physical elements of the landscape, materialized through managerial practices (Waitt and Cook, 2007). Nature is to be enjoyed for those who live close to it, but it should not interfere with social spaces, where a certain aesthetic is defined and produced to separate the former from culture. Instead of a symbiosis, there is a fear that nature erases human presence from the landscape, and there ensues local support for the management of this frontier (Braun, 2002; Castree, 2014; Ryan, 2015).

Authentic development

The mountainous parts of Jämtland are characterized by a sparse population, thus also by a relatively low-level of infrastructure and commercial facilities. In this context, respondents' statements concerning economic development were often juxtaposed to desires of preserving authenticity, which scholars have generally attributed to tourists (Hinch, 2004; McCannell, 2013; Selwyn, 1996; Wall-Reinius, 2009). For many respondents, their village displays a rural authenticity worth preserving in light of regional development standardizing other towns in Jämtland into winter resort destinations. For example, Kenneth claims:

> I believe Ottsjö today stands as the old picturesque mountain village, open landscape, animals in the field, it smells of sheep shit, there can be sheep shit on the road if you are unlucky. There are cows. It is alive. There are people who live here all the time. There are not so many such villages left.

Such comments were often made in comparison to Åre, a small town in terms of population, but large in its number of second homes, hotels and tourists. Just north of the case area, Åre has developed quickly in the past decades into an international ski-resort destination (Nordin, 2017, Figure 1 shows a map over the study area). The monopolization of the slope infrastructure by one large company, along with the appearance of hotel and restaurant chains, denoted to many of our respondents a lack of authenticity.

Although Åre conveyed negative images of commercialization and standardization brought by tourism development, it was often tourism that the respondents saw as the key to the economic sustainability of their rural community. Mair (2006) sees the discourse of tourism development as pervasive to regional development, where often tourism is uncritically accepted as the only solution to a lagging economy, without any form of reflection over alternatives. This discourse often prevails even where the long-term negative impact of tourism are known (Mair, 2006). The study respondents often stated that the increase in the number of tourists and related infrastructure to promote some local development should not be too significant. Lennart, a tourist entrepreneur,

mountain rescuer and construction worker, argued that development should be minimal. He outlined a desire from the community to develop tourism somewhat more than as it is today to create much needed employment, but it should not be developed so much that the community becomes like Åre, where he thought development threatened local ownership and what they perceive as the village's authenticity.

Another respondent, Kenneth, also displayed an ambiguous position towards his community's future, first stating that it is fine as it is. Yet, just as with Lennart, it turned out that he wants to see more job opportunities in the area. Lennart is actively engaged in regional development through his participation in various tourism projects. It is a precarious balance these residents face, where villages should not shrink, but not grow beyond a certain point where they would lose control over the authentic features making these areas appealing spaces – for them as residents and for visitors. The type of development the interviewees defined is one that impacts the landscape as little as possible – but which still allows people to go about their daily lives. For example, Margareta believes the only hope for local development is to host more tourists, which means welcoming more people to discover the local nature. She welcomed having more hotels and commercial activities, but again, as long as it does not harm the environment.

There is a perpetuation of discourses that place the natural and under-developed as special in the mind of a detached observer (Nost, 2013; Saarinen, 2004, 2015; SæÞórsdóttir et al., 2011; Wall-Reinius, 2012). The residents share a similar conception of authenticity as tourists, questioning the possibility of human presence and practice as elements that valorise the landscape (Simmons, 2004; Waitt and Lane, 2007). The search for authenticity in relation to desires of development results in seemingly paradoxical narratives about an envisaged future. Gunnar, a tourist entrepreneur, wished that his village would preserve its authenticity:

> Many tourists think that Ljungdalen is an authentic and cute mountain village. We have to be careful with this because there are not so many [such villages] left. Funäsdalen for instance is turning into a bad copy of Åre.

However, at the same time he and others were critical about the present lack of infrastructure, mostly in terms of schools, public transport, internet availability, job opportunities and local medical care. It is as if tourism development should be kept small to benefit local preservation, while being significant enough to keep communities, businesses and their related infrastructure afloat. Maria, who is keen on developing nature-based tourism products, insists that she does not want her business to grow too much so that their activities would harm the environment. Maria would prefer to focus on tourists in smaller groups. These are the tourists wishing to experience what she defines as '*real nature*'. According to her, their location's character makes their operation special in comparison to those based in Åre, and attracts tourists interested in a more authentic experience. There is a difficulty to reconcile the presence of humans in natural areas with the practices necessary for making a living in the mountain landscape. Nature is here perceived as only valuable and enjoyable to humans when void of signs of development (Braun, 2004; Watts, 2005).

Rules of natural engagement

Living in proximity to the mountain landscape, where there are few people and much space, represents a form of freedom for those who chose to live there. The feeling was well expressed by Peter who grew up in a village at the foot of the mountains, and who now

owns a small tour-operating company nearby. When asked what the mountain landscape meant to him, he replied:

> Freedom to do what I want, to walk in the forest without having to apply for a permit, make a fire, hunt moose, take the snowmobile and go fishing. No one from Stockholm is to decide that I am not allowed to use my snowmobile.

His freedom is experienced through the practices of roaming and fending for himself. Peter's words highlight that movements and activities in the outdoors should not be restricted by official bodies and authorities. '*Stockholm*' (the capital of Sweden) to him, represents the state's power to demarcate protected areas and enforce regulations, making decisions from afar that affect local lives. This feeling, based on the experiences of many generations, has resulted in a suspicion against authorities like the SEPA, fearing that they will enforce new restrictions affecting traditional uses of the landscape. This fear was especially related to the discussions surrounding the establishment of a new national park in the area. The views expressed by Peter were not uncommon in our interviews. The quote above illustrates how the mountain landscape represents a space where humans express feelings of freedom from top-down rules and social codes of conduits.

Humans generally embody through their everyday movements the formal and informal rules of the nature/culture dichotomy that dictates how nature should be used and experienced (Waitt and Cook, 2007). During the interviews, we found that local people follow some of these rules subconsciously as they perform their freedom to utilise the mountainous landscape, like keeping to the trails and not disturbing wild animals. These embodiments are so ordinary that the respondents perceive their practices as essential to their status as local residents in connection with a landscape, rather than influenced by the effects of the nature/culture dichotomy. Out of this emerges a tendency to believe that local embodied knowledge translates into sound environmental behaviour, which overrides the need to comply with official regulations aimed at monitoring behaviour. Speaking about her nature-based company, Maria said that once she took a group on a tour without an exemption permit from the regional authorities. She could not wait for the permit, but that did not matter she argued, because she knows how to behave in nature. For many respondents, the misbehaving individuals are outsiders, damaging nature because they do not know how to behave in it like they themselves do.

The practice of taking tourists to the mountains raised questions about ethical business operations. Peter mentioned being displeased with tour-operators who do not agree with the permit system concerning how and when to access protected areas. To him, permits are necessary since these individuals are making money out of damaging nature. Ryan (2015) explains that, while there is a certain hesitation for individuals to accept restrictions to their experience of nature, these same individuals are not opposed to the idea of preserving the species and landscapes they consume through their activities. Although the mountains bring bodily freedom, they still write upon its users a social code of conduct which they then promote as rules of engagement. The sensuous and symbolic both give the body its agency, making places social, political and experimental at once (Coole, 2007; Simonsen, 2007, 2012; Young, 2005). These regular users, the residents, believe they have adopted this code on their own, and thus perceive their behaviour as normal, which enables them to retain a sense of freedom (Ryan, 2015).

Some respondents, especially those with rental and tour-guiding operations, did not necessarily see a need to reduce the amount of people recreating in the mountains, but rather saw a need to channel these people onto trails. Human-made trails are a way to order human presence in the landscape by limiting human involvement with the natural

sphere. They are a form of intervention to preserve the landscape as scenery, rather than letting it become a zone of contact between humans and the elements of the physical world (Ryan, 2015; Timothy and Boyd, 2015). This reasoning implies that, while the physical world must not encroach upon the social sphere of mountain villages, as presented earlier, the social sphere must not interfere with the physical world out in the mountains.

Negotiating contact zones between humans and nature is part of the various corporeal ways people living in the mountains make sense, for themselves and for others, of a landscape highly influenced by cognitive imprints. For many of the study participants, rules defining the contact zone between humans and their natural surroundings especially mattered when it came to snowmobiles, since these motorized vehicles have an impact on the environment due to the noise pollution and physical damages they can cause. Even Lennart, who owns a snowmobile tour-company, supports official regulation concerning where snowmobiles are allowed to drive in order to minimize the environmental impacts of the activity:

> This [regulation] increases security and provides spaces where it is calm and quiet, and it means an improved consideration for the animals and other [elements of] nature, and the skiers can then use the snowmobile tracks.

Seemingly, to Lennart, a growing interest in snowmobiling can be reconciled with good environmental stewardship, as long as the drivers keep to designated trails. The motorized activity can even be beneficial to other users who seek to enjoy natural spaces by creating tracks.

Discussions concerning the need to regulate snowmobiling as much as possible symbolize what Stoddart (2011) and Stoddart et al. (2015) established, that certain outdoor activities are perceived to be better than others in terms of respecting the environment. Also perceived as having a negative effect on nature by certain respondents, were particular activities that had lately increased in popularity, especially amongst tourists, like horseback riding and mountain biking. The respondents who did not practice these activities, nor feature them in their tourist products, were inclined to view them as particularly problematic compared to activities such as walking and skiing. Kenneth claimed: '*Hiking is the old cultural way to go about in the mountain and it damages very little*'. To him, the mountain marathon, which invites thousands of runners every year, damages the mountain landscape less than the other newer activities recognized for causing significant problems of erosion. Horses and bicycles are positioned by some as unnatural in the idealized mountain landscape, while other long-term residents view at least horses as natural elements of the landscape. These non-humans reflect the dynamic relational involvement of humans with the landscape (Crouch, 2000, 2003; Michael, 2000). However, these objects used for recreation are here put under scrutiny by those individuals who wish to distance certain human impacts from the physical landscape. This is an example of the social construction of nature where certain objects, animals, activities and people are considered natural, but others are not afforded this label from a cognitive viewpoint (Castree, 2014; Proctor, 1998; Watts, 2005).

Discussion and concluding remarks

Through our case study of the southern mountains of Jämtland, we have analysed local understandings of a landscape that is ordinary on the one hand, and magnificent and exotic on the other. We have turned our interest to the interface between local stakeholders and conservation, recreation and tourism activities, and explored how local residents make sense of their landscape. As human beings we are surrounded by multiple, parallel and sometimes

overlapping, divergent, or competing, discourses, including inherent power relations, all of which may create paradoxes (Dahlberg, 2015; Wall-Reinius, 2012). The local stakeholders of the southern mountains of Jämtland are caught in a fabric whose material value enables practices ranging from gazing and roaming, to tour-guiding and hunting. This fabric also has a symbolic character through its political representations (Mitchell, 2003a, 2003b), which bestows codes of conduct through which the local stakeholder make sense of their surroundings (Coole, 2007; Matless, 2000).

The empirical accounts presented in this article highlight the confusing and irregular character of making sense of a magnificent landscape ordered through Western knowledge and the separation of the cultural and the natural. The nature/culture dualism was apparent in the managerial conceptions of the landscape of the study participants, where, for instance, trails and cattle grazing were seen as crucial elements to delimit the two realms. The findings show that the nature/culture dichotomy plays a major role in dictating what is a living space and a natural landscape for local stakeholders. This was evident in the discussions of preserving authenticity through low levels of development, yet hoping that also limited development and expansion would suffice to keep rural communities thriving in the long-run. Of interest, also, was that while nature should be preserved through bodily rules, it should still be a milieu of various involvements free of rules. Differences in what was perceived as the 'right' versus 'wrong' activities to perform in the mountains, as well as the objects to make use of in outdoor activities, and the objectives behind various uses, are difficult to resolve and create tensions among community members. Instances of dwelling, which Ingold (2011) considers as people's active involvement in their world, infuse the negotiations these stakeholders carry out as they build a living space in relation to a social, politicized and physical landscape, and this, in a context of an enduring nature/culture dichotomy.

As local inhabitants have often been removed or ignored in relation to protected landscapes (Adams, 2003; Agrawal and Redford, 2009; Brockington et al., 2008; Dahlberg et al., 2010; Mels, 2002), promoting the frameworks that will make them meaningful actors in the latter's formation become crucial. We conclude by reiterating the importance of considering local experiences during processes of establishing national parks, managing protected areas, and while defining environmental objectives in general. This is especially important when negotiations are affected, and often hindered, by a lack of recognition by state authorities of how perceptions of a landscape can differ between and within groups with different interests and attachment to a place. Presenting landscapes as complex realms of human involvement, as this study has done, can go further than simply providing a discursive critique over the way local groups are represented and included in policy. Studying the actions and values of local stakeholders only in light of the stakes of governmental authorities can reaffirm the nature/culture dichotomy where certain elements, such as local livelihoods, are cultural and others, such as landscapes, are to be kept natural.

Scholars know that theories embracing the complexities of relational viewpoints do not usually transcend planning and policy processes and structures (Castree, 2003; Head, 2007, 2010; Laven et al., 2015). This mismatch between research and practice means that there is still room to dismantle the impacts of the Western ordering of knowledge that gives primacy to detached observing to order the world. Important to recognize is that the nature/culture dichotomy directly affects local stakeholders in their perception of their social and material interactions with their landscape. Our findings evidence that local stakeholders will generally express the same discourse of nature uncontaminated by humans as those with whom they tensely negotiate the future of their rural communities and landscapes. The persistence of the nature/culture dichotomy amongst local actors implies that it is simplistic to ascribe to them

an unproblematic cultural relation to the natural world. The interviewees went back and forth between the cultural and natural realm, without accepting to engage with what Ryan (2015) calls a new metastable condition where new parameters would define the stability of the nature/culture relation. It must be accepted during negotiations over matters such as resource management and nature protection that instances of dwelling such as those we identified as the everyday magnificent, the social limits of nature, authentic development and rules of natural engagement, permeate everyday life in rural areas.

Negotiations between local actors and extra-local authorities over the future forms of use and protection of magnificent – yet mundane – landscapes will never be easy. Nonetheless, the perplexing can be brought to the negotiation table to open up new debates and possibilities anchored in inquiry and engagement (Anderson, 2009). A scholarly interest in everyday life and its overwhelming character considers the multiple ways people live and negotiate their position in a world that is meant to make sense through the ordering of knowledge, but which in fact does not (Lorimer, 2005; McCormack, 2008). What the observer cannot quite make sense of should not be dismissed right away as irrelevant. It is when all actors involved in the negotiation process open up to the irregularities and disorder that spill over the cognitive realms that the world can be imagined differently (Thrift, 2008). It is by accepting their social, cultural and historical entanglements with the ecological and geological processes of the world that humans will be able to enact sensitively towards its non-human elements, and hopefully coming closer to breaching the nature/culture dualism (Whatmore, 2002, 2006). We thus suggest that a critical notion of dwelling is needed to make sense of landscapes during negotiation processes. This notion should also guide those involved practically and scientifically in their ambitions towards new possibilities and responsibilities. How can the reindeer be admitted in the social spaces of the mountains of Jämtland? Can we engage with mountainous landscapes beyond trails? More generally, for other rural (and perhaps also urban) areas, are there ways to engage with nature that promotes an engagement with the landscape that involves more of the human senses? How can we appreciate the landscapes created out of the chaos between the natural and cultural? The nature/culture dichotomy will remain if no attention is given to the unintelligibility of everyday life. With such questions, there could be a shift from negotiations traditionally focused on managing separate realms, to seriously engaging with the attributes of a dynamic landscape.

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