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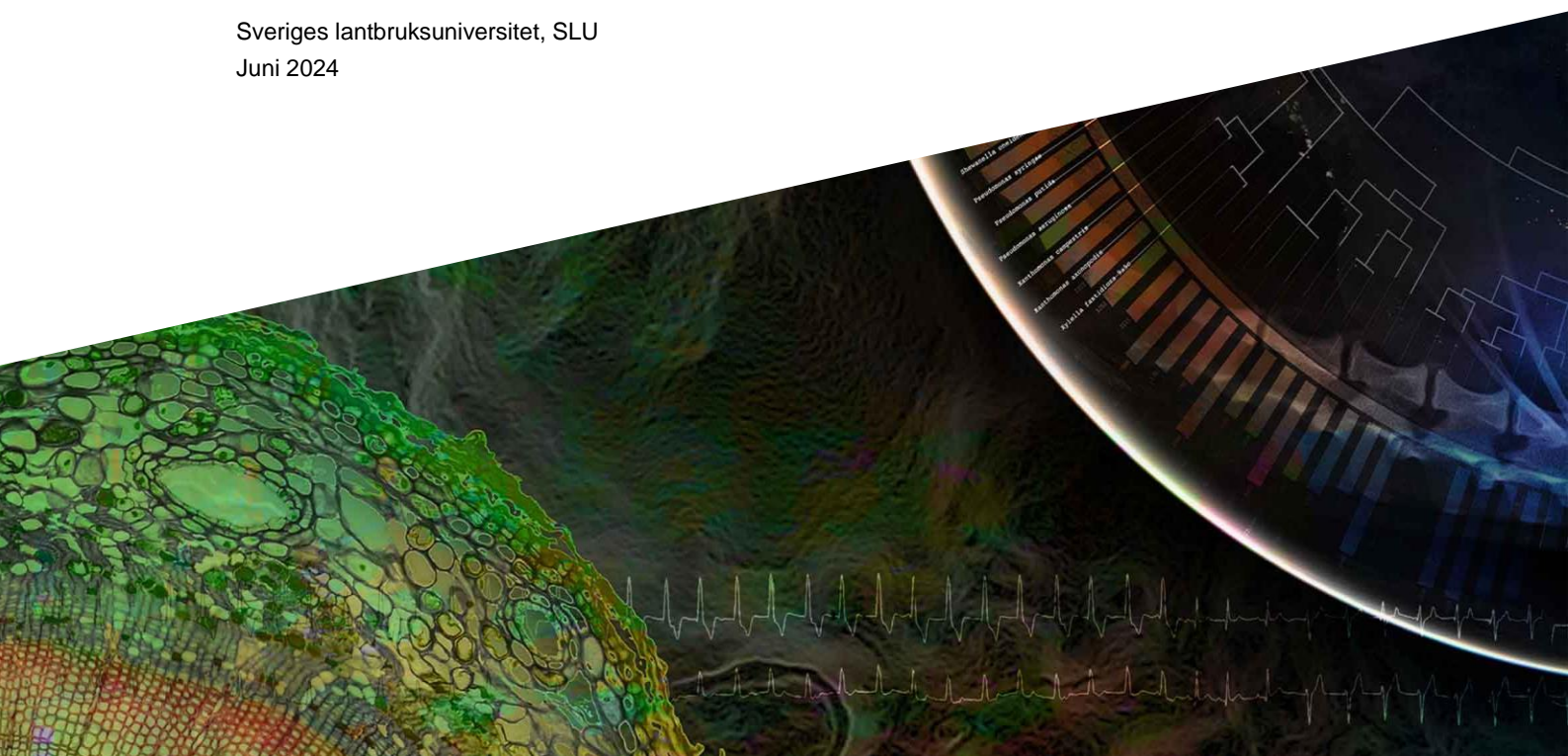
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Intressentkartläggning - studentarbeten inom Vildmarksriket

Tankar om organisering, samverkan och förvaltning

Skreven av studenter från masterprogrammet i miljökommunikation och naturresursförvaltning, inom kursen "Engaging critically with environmental governance practices"

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, SLU
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Inledning och kontext

Denna rapport har tagits fram som en del av projektet Vildmarksriket - ett Leader-finansierat projekt som ägs av Mora kommun, och drivs av Mora, Leksand och Vansbro kommun tillsammans med andra intressenter i området. Projektet syftar till att titta på möjligheterna att utveckla naturturism inom området som kallas Vildmarksriket, och centralt i projektet är etablerade samverkan och dialog med alla de olika aktörer som finns och verkar i området idag. Att hitta former för samverkan och organisering, för att lösa frågor som exempelvis förvaltning, framtida utveckling och intäktsmodeller, är ett ständigt pågående och väldigt viktigt steg i projektet. Som en del i detta har en grupp studenter från SLU genomfört intervjuer i området under april 2024, för att samla in information om hur olika aktörer ser ut och utvecklas. Studenterna som besökt området gjorde detta inom ramen för kursen ”*Engaging critically with environmental governance practices*”, som hålls inom masterprogrammet i miljökommunikation och naturresursförvaltning på SLU. Det är ett internationellt masterprogram och kursen hålls på engelska, vilket gör att alla studentrapporter liksom den avslutande sammanfattningen i denna rapport är på engelska. Detta är andra året i rad som denna kurs besöker området, och analysen studenterna gör är mycket värdefull för projektet och dess utveckling.

Studenterna, cirka 30 stycken, besökte området under två dagar i april 2024 och genomförde under dessa dagar cirka 30 intervjuer. Studenterna har själva valt vilka perspektiv och infallsvinklar de antagit för att titta på området, och alltså också vilka personer de pratat med. Men det är en bred grupp av personer som har intervjuats av studenterna, däribland kommunanställda, skogsägare, byaföreningar, vägsamfälligheter, naturturismföretagare, anställda på Visit Dalarna, projektledare för Vildmarksriket, med mera. Studenternas resultat presenterades under en digital workshop kvällen den 30e maj 2024. Vi inom projekt Vildmarksriket är mycket tacksamma över studenternas insatser, och vill rikta ett stort tack till studenterna för deras arbeten och engagemang. Vi vill också rikta ett stort tack till alla personer som ställt upp på intervjuer, i vissa fall för andra året i rad. Era synpunkter, tankar, reflektioner och idéer är centrala och viktiga för hur projektet ska tas vidare.

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Group 1: Responsibilities and expectations of local people in the Vildmarksriket project

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Introduction

Vildmarksriket, translated ‘the Wilderness Kingdom’, is a natural area in the province Dalarna between the villages of Mora, Leksand and Vansbro. It contains a surprisingly high amount of forest that still has a high biological value with an area of 8472 ha (Kirppu & Oldhammer, 2010). This is why it has been marked as an interesting area to increase nature tourism. The Vildmarksriket project started in 2022 and has since tried to bring stakeholders together in order to develop a sustainable plan for increasing nature tourism in the area (Mora Kommun, 2023).

Local landowners have an essential role in the realization of a successful implementation of the Vildmarksriket project, because their land is supposed to be used for e.g. cycle and hiking paths (“Delrapport Projekt Vildmarksriket”, 2024). From project reports as well as interviews from last year, it became clear that Vildmarksriket needs to pay close attention to the needs of local people, for example in the form of compensation (“Delrapport Projekt Vildmarksriket”, 2024; Aarthur et al., 2023). One example of this compensation is clearing the snow from the campsite of a landowner in return for the use of their land (Vildmarksriket, 2023).

Local communities that are most influenced by the Vildmarksriket project and with whom clear agreements are necessary for the development of the project, are the landowners, local village associations and road associations (Vildmarksriket, 2023). This is not only concerning the availability of their land, but also possible wear and tear caused by an increased amount of people. Getting the local communities on board is thus recognized as one of the most important aspects of the Vildmarksriket project and is also our area of interest.

Aim & research questions

To narrow our research down, we decided to focus on the role of local communities in Mora Kommun only. Our aim is to understand the responsibilities and expectations of the local communities from the perspective of multiple diverse stakeholders in Mora Kommun within Vildmarksriket project.

We developed research questions to help us achieve this aim:

1. What values and ideas do the stakeholders connect with the role of local people in Vildmarksriket?
2. How do stakeholders describe this role of local people in the future? (including local people themselves)
3. How is the current collaboration between the stakeholders and the local community going?

4. What doubts and fears do the stakeholders have within the project of Vildmarksriket?

Theoretical framework

In analyzing our data and coming to conclusions, we intend to utilize the theoretical perspective of representation and expertise. This perspective emphasizes that individuals possess specific knowledge and skills, leading stakeholders to anticipate a corresponding level of responsibility.

Representation in an environmental context consists of two things: the voice that can not be heard and the voice that speaks for the unheard. Power has to be given to the one representing the unheard voices, so that they can make decisions (Rödl, 2024). This power comes forth from a certain level of legitimacy that has been given to the representatives. This is based on three things (O'Neill, 2001):

1. Democratic accountability
2. Shared identity
3. Epistemic values

Democratic accountability concerns the authorisation of people based on voting, giving it a political element. There are a lot of problems arising from this type of representation, mainly because of voices still being unheard and unrepresented. Furthermore, representation through a political system often happens without the right authority, causing people to refer to other things to base their legitimacy on, such as identity or expertise (O'Neill, 2001). Although there are flaws to be discovered in legitimacy based on democratic accountability, this way of representing does make it possible to make decisions for a larger group of people, thereby making large scale development possible.

Having a shared identity with the representative helps with taking a position in relation to this representative (Böstrom et al., 2018). For example, growing up in the same area brings people together and makes them trust the person speaking up for them in more official settings. These same experiences are the sometimes necessary building blocks to form a strong foundation for representation, as they provide the understanding of the community being represented (O'Neill, 2001). As O'Neill (2001, p. 490) puts it straight-forward: "who does the representing matters". However, he also recognizes the need for some authorisation and democratic accountability to support the legitimate claim based on shared identity. Or maybe it is more the other way around: the shared identity supports the authorisation.

In many cases, someone is considered a rightful representative if the person has a certain level of expertise on the topic, so based on epistemic values. However, the existence of environmental problems and environmental expertise is not a linear relation, they are intertwined and constantly influencing each other (Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2018). Scientific knowledge is hereby seen as crucial to bring environmental problems to light, both in the academic world and to the public. In a certain way, science defines what we see as an environmental problem, because that which is not investigated, mainly stays unnoticed. This is

also seen in the Vildmarksriket project. The initiators of this project were local businesses and entrepreneurs, but the report created in 2010 by ecologists on the natural value of Vildmarksriket plays an important role in the recognition of this area.

Lidskog & Sundqvist (2018) also recognize that expertise should be explained while taking into account the context. It is not something that can be seen as separate from the person.

However, Böstrom et al. (2018) argues representation is strong when it is something objective and neutral, turning it into an abstract concept. Following the line of representation coming forth from expertise, these two ideas clash. When expertise is inseparable from context, representation is also inseparable from context. There lies an important assumption in the argumentation of Böstrom, which is that scientific expertise is purely rational. Science can only be as rational as the people performing it and assuming these people also bring a certain context with them, scientific expertise can never be purely rational. There is a certain context within expertise and thus within representation. Like Lidskog & Sundqvist (2018) describe, representation “ is developed in a particular setting and in interaction with organizations and groups” (p. 182). It is a process where expertise and context are continuously interacting and creating legitimacy.

To zoom-in on the expertise part of representation, we take the separation that Lidskog & Sundqvist (2018) made of substantive vs. relational. Substantive expertise is obtained by acquiring specific knowledge and can be defined as the competence of the expert. A way to test this kind of expertise is to look at a diploma acquired through studying. On the other side is relational expertise, which is context dependent. People get an expert status because their knowledge is acknowledged as being valid. These people that have to put their trust in the expert are both people from inside the community as well as outside the community. For example, within Vildmarksriket, the leader of a forest owner association has to have the trust of the people from the association, as well as the trust from other stakeholders. If one of the two is not right, it remains difficult to make long lasting decisions with inclusive representation.

To summarize, legitimacy of representation can be based on democratic accountability, shared identity or epistemic values. In many cases, this legitimacy is a combination of the three and it depends on where people put their trust. This trust can be based on the substantive or relational expertise that a representative has, concerning, respectively, the knowledge on the subject or how people value this knowledge.

Materials & methods

We started the project by doing literature research into the Vildmarksriket project and its development. We used websites of the municipalities involved in the project as well as project reports of last year.

This study utilized semi-structured interviews as a means to collect and analyze data, adhering to a predetermined interview guide. Tailored to the unique perspectives of each interviewee,

four distinct interview guides were made. One of the interviews was conducted in Swedish while the remainder were conducted in English. To ensure inclusivity, the Swedish interview was translated into English by Swedish-speaking group members. Prior consent for recording was obtained from all interviewees, and the interviews were subsequently transcribed. Beforehand, we made a division of interviewer and notetaker so that everyone would be present for at least two interviews.

To facilitate analysis aligned with the study's objectives, we applied qualitative data analysis in the form of an inductive color-coding system (Delve, n.d.). Inductive coding means that we first conducted interviews and then developed the codes. After all interviews were completed, we brainstormed on themes that we saw repeatedly coming back. We found four overarching themes: Collaboration, Representation & Expertise, Doubts/Fears, and Future Perspectives. We divided the themes amongst the group and for every theme, we read through all interviews and connected the content to the themes. We also highlighted overlapping themes, as this would be interesting to look at in the discussion later. The themes also form the framework of the results, after which we compare and dive deeper into the meaning of the results in the discussion.

Results of analysis of data

Collaboration

When interviewing the different stakeholders about collaboration in the project Vildmarksriket Interviewee 3, representative of a Local Forest Owner Association, describe how they have not really been involved in the project:

“We're not very involved; we've been to a few initial meetings with [the project leader] about 3 years ago. They presented their ideas, and we neither agree nor disagree. We just wanted to see how things would develop.”

He describes how they receive invitations to meetings and information when something happens, and that the meetings they have been participating in have had no issues at all. Although he does point out that he is unsure if the leaders of the project listen to their views. He highlights that: “Transparency is key, otherwise, there are grumpy forest owners”

Interviewee 1, representative of Visit Dalarna, discussed how the most important thing from their perspective is to establish good collaboration between the municipalities and the landowners to make sure that they can build a very important foundation. He points out that the municipalities have an important role:

“I think that the municipalities maybe need to engage even more if we're all going to succeed to make Vildmarksriket a really successful area of tourism.”

In the project Vildmarksriket, Visit Dalarnas main task is to provide objective input based on strategy 2030. He describes how their role is to act as a sounding board for the project management regarding more strategic matters, but that they try to participate in the meetings held within the project as much as possible.

Interviewee 2, representative of Mora Municipality, says that:

“This is not a one man show to do, this is a collaboration that everybody, if this is going to come true, then everybody has to pull in the same direction”

And that the important role of the municipality is to join in on meetings where they talk, listen and explain different points of views. They can get a common picture of what they want to do by talking to each other, so you have to put people together. She points out the importance of having big ears that listen to everybody's perspective and that they then can make wise decisions based on that. They want to have consensus as much as possible. She highlights a situation with a big forestry company where the municipality had to back off and start from the beginning:

“At some point we had to back off because there had been an application made for doing things, and they hadn't been involved, and we said, OK, this is a mistake. We back off, we start from the beginning. So, you have to back off if you meet a lot of resistance. Well, you have to listen. Oh, he's got a point. He should have been in this before, at the beginning, but that was forgotten. So we have to take it from the beginning. Let this person be in this discussion from the beginning”

She also argues that there is a need for formalization of the collaboration.

Interviewee 4, representative of a Local Village Association, describes the meetings within the project as good, but that they should spread them out more. Not everybody on the island and on the parish comes to these meetings. He also highlights the need for more information, and especially to people who are directly stakeholders:

“There should be more information in a wider sense. I think it has maybe been most important to inform and discuss who are more directly stakeholders. And then they can inform their folks. But when it has come a little longer now, then I think it is important to spread it a bit more.”

He also argues that a lot of the focus of collaboration in this project should be about how to organize it when people are coming to the area.

Representation and Expertise

In the interviews the stakeholders discussed representation and expertise in different ways, interviewee 1, representative of Visit Dalarna believes that the project management has done a

good job involving all stakeholders and emphasizes the importance of creating a sustainable and authentic destination that represents the unique character and values of the place within the tourism sector in Vildmarksriket.

Interviewee 2, representative of Mora Municipality: she expresses a hope that all stakeholders feel represented within the project, including landowners, associations, and municipal authorities. The goal is to involve all stakeholders and meet their expectations through meetings and surveys. She identifies the project leader as the main representative of the project and considers herself an expert in areas such as business development and rural development within municipal contexts. Her role focuses on coordinating and administering the project.

Interviewee 3, representative of a Local Forest Owner Association: he takes on the role of an experienced figure in forestry. He expresses some uncertainty about the project and its goals and emphasizes the importance of increasing public knowledge about Swedish forestry. Although not fully involved in the project, he has attended meetings and provides perspectives on how the project can be improved to better represent stakeholders

Interviewee 4, representative of a Local Village Association: he represents both Solleron's geographical location and the local associational life through his role as chairman of the parish association. He notes that they are not particularly involved in the project but still participate in discussions and emphasizes the need for broader representation to spread information to all stakeholders. The interview indicates strong community engagement and a desire to preserve the local culture and lifestyle in Solleron.

Doubts/Fears

When interviewing the different stakeholders about project Vildmarksriket they highlighted different doubts or fears about it. Interviewee 3, representative of a Local Forest Owner Association mentions that there has been discussions, without there being an official meeting where people have raised concerns about the area of Vildmarksriket. He says that for him, Vildmarksriket is not really a wilderness but a very large forest area where there is active forestry. He says that there are some pearls and natural areas that are very nice but that the area is designated for forest, and that every square meter is affected by humans in different ways.

“If there will be a lot of activity here, will it clash with the forest owners who manage the forest? For example, clear-cutting, which is very sensitive currently, yes, what will happen then? How will they react? Will they try to stop it? There are concerns about that, that they won't be able to conduct their normal economic forestry.”

He talks about the importance for the forest owners to feel in control and having ownership and that some might be a bit skeptical, especially concerning the right of public access.

“But I'm curious to see what they want to achieve with all of this. What will visitors pay for? And who will get the money? I know that land and forest owners have questions about this. There's a risk if they feel this isn't going well, they'll put up roadblocks. Then they won't be able to come in.”

Interviewee 1, representative of Visit Dalarna, mainly talks about the future after the project is finished. He asks questions such as what happens when the projects fundings are out? And who is going to take control of the process in the long run? He says: “... So the plan is really ambitious, maybe too ambitious in some ways”

Interviewee 2, representative of Mora Municipality, highlights the issue of who can speak for the whole village and how do you make decisions? She argues that if they want to know something about what the village of Sollerön wants to do – there is not a one person to ask. Therefore, they sometimes do surveys on social media, but some people might not have social media and can therefore not be heard. She mainly describes doubts or fears that other people have said to her and she mentions the importance of respecting the fears that people have.

“...Maybe I own forest here, I am afraid they come here and disturb the forest, and they will destroy my forest. They will drive on the road I paid for, destroy that road. Those are fears people have. And other's say: we have to develop, we can not go backwards... And who is to decide what way we will go”

Interviewee 4, representative of a Local Village Association, talks about how in the beginning of the project there was a lot of skepticism, people think that they would lose power. He argues that there is a need for more information.

“There has been some skepticism. E.g. they [tourists] damage the roads, or they leave garbage behind...There are problems, there is damage done. And then if people say that more people are coming, they can be a bit afraid about that... people are saying that they don't have enough information, they should know more about it.”

Future perspectives

When talking about future perspectives, there are a few similarities to the doubts and fear part. Interviewee 1, representative of Visit Dalarna highlighted significant aspects regarding future prospects. What actions will be taken after the project is completed? Who will assume responsibility?

Interviewee 2, representative of Mora Municipality. An interesting element in the discussion about the future was her desire to limit the number of tourists. She also emphasized the importance of involving more actors and continuing to work with dialogues

Interviewee 3, representative of a Local Forest Owner Association. In this interview, we found it particularly interesting that the respondent highlighted the potential for the project to serve as an educational platform to inform tourists about Swedish forestry. This constitutes a particularly intriguing perspective on the future.

Interviewee 4, representative of a Local Village Association: Even in this interview we could discern similarities with the second interview. Like the previous respondent, he raised the importance of disseminating more information and holding meetings about Vildmarksriket, not just to those directly involved. In addition, he highlighted the issue of the economic flow to and through society.

Discussion

Based on the results from the interviews, several conclusions can be drawn regarding representation, expertise, future perspectives, collaboration, and doubts/fears within the framework of the project.

Firstly, the interviews emphasized the importance of representation to ensure that all stakeholders feel heard and included in the project. Each interview provided insights into different aspects of representation, whether through their role in a specific organization or their expertise in areas relevant to the project.

Secondly, expertise emerged as a crucial factor for effective representation. While some interviewees, especially the representative from Visit Dalarna, emphasized the importance of objective viewpoints based on strategic planning, the representative from Mora Municipality underscored the significance of contextual knowledge and experience to meet the needs of stakeholders. The varying perspectives on expertise highlight the complexity of representation and the need for a balance between substantive and relational expertise. Similar to the division made by Lidskog & Sundqvist (2018) of substantive and relational expertise, the interviews emphasize the importance of creating a balance between different types of representation and expertise to ensure that all stakeholders feel heard and included in the decision-making process.

The findings of the project regarding the values and ideas linked to the role of the local community in Vildmarksriket indicate a pivotal understanding: the significance of integrating the local populace into the project, albeit with differing perspectives on the extent of involvement. Some stakeholders are satisfied with the current level of participation, while others desire increased involvement, particularly through active participation in meetings and decision-making processes.

To understand stakeholders' perspectives on the future role of the local population in the project, we identify their hopes, including those of the local residents themselves, to educate tourists about Swedish forestry practices and manage the growing tourism industry. It is evident that some aspire for deeper involvement in the project, while others find the current situation

satisfactory. Overall, the results indicate the need for continued dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of the Vildmarksriket project, considering the role and contributions of the local population.

Regarding collaboration most interviewees describe the current situation and meetings as good, but that it can be better with more formalization of the collaboration as well as better organization. The representative of a Local Village Association, also describes the need for more information to be spread to a wider audience. And the representative of a Local Forest Owner Association highlights the importance of transparency for the local forest owners.

Different doubts and fears are something that all the interviewees mentioned within the project of Vildmarksriket, most of them point out the uncertainty surrounding when a lot of people/tourists might come to the area. This uncertainty is something that could be reduced or solved with dialogue and/or collaboration between the relevant stakeholders. The representative of a Local Forest Owner Association, talks about the concerns of having the activity in the area disturbing the forest owners who are working. And the representative of a Local Village Association highlighted that people are afraid of tourists damaging the roads or leaving garbage behind, something that the representative of Mora Municipality also mentioned.

Furthermore, discussions about future perspectives revealed common themes such as the need for broader participation from stakeholders, dissemination of information beyond those directly involved, and considerations about the sustainability of the project beyond its completion. These insights underscore the importance of continuous dialogue, community engagement, and strategic planning to ensure the project's long-term success.

Summarizing conclusion

The project Vildmarksriket has now been going on for a few years and some parts of the local community describe how they are not particularly involved and highlights the need for a bigger spectrum of representation. The interviews with both the representative of a Local Forest Owner Association as well as the representative of a Local Village Association indicates strong community engagement and a desire to preserve the local culture and lifestyle in especially Sollerön.

Most stakeholders describe the need for a clearer formalization of the collaboration as well as organization. And some local people wish for more information within the project. Regarding representation and expertise, a shared background or comparable context of life is what makes people trust the representatives.

The conclusions from the interviews are that there are different opinions about the future of Vildmarksriket. Overall, there seems to be a shared idea of the responsibility and expectation of and from local people to engage in dialogue with each other and other stakeholders. This involves a lot of talking, but also active listening and trying to understand the other's different

perspectives, which varies a lot. Some are concerned about the impact of tourism and want better representation, while others see opportunities for education and improvements in the project. It is clear that dialogue and collaboration are important to ensure the success of the project and preserve the local community's culture and lifestyle.

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Group 2: Nature education for children in Vildmarksriket

Group members: Ania Ektate, Mozhdeh Abtahi, Lorenzo Bartocetti, Louise Engsmyre, Yu Jan Liu

Introduction

The Vildmarksriket (Wilderness kingdom) is a forest area across the municipalities of Vansbro, Mora, and Leksand, west of Lake Siljan. The majority of the terrain, which spans over 50,000 hectares, is made up of marshes, lakes, and woods. The predominant land use in the region is forestry. According to a recent World Wide Fund for Nature award, Dalarna's Vildmarksriket has been designated as a Swedish Pearl.

Based on the conservation value inventory and the initiative of local entrepreneurs, the goal of project Vildmarksriket, which Mora municipality took on as project owner in 2022, was to evaluate and create the conditions for carefully and sustainably developing accessibility and nature tourism development in the Vildmarksriket (Mora kommun, 2023). The Vildmarksriket project is a collaborative effort between Mora municipality, Vansbro municipality, and Leksand municipality, as well as SLU and other associations, landowners, and businesses operating in the various municipalities. The Swedish Board of Agriculture and Leader Duo Dalälvarna have given the Mora municipality support for a joint initiative that will look into the potential for growing natural tourism in the Vildmarksriket region. Entrepreneurs in the region reached out to the Mora municipality in 2021 to inquire about the potential for establishing natural tourism in Vildmarksriket. It became clear that a wide range of stakeholders is needed to get on board and reach a consensus on how to expand nature tourism. Each of the following parties needs to have a shared vision in order to protect everyone's interests: landowners, contractors, associations, and local citizens (Mora kommun, 2023).

The aim of our project is to assess the possibilities for nature based education for children and its effect on expansion of sustainable tourism in Vildmarksriket. Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of first-hand experiences and interactions with nature in fostering a positive connection with the natural world as well as generating interest in its preservation (King et al., 2020). Early childhood education can best convey basic knowledge of Earth's cycles, including how plants grow, how weather and climate affect human life, how humans interact with plants and animals, and how the living and nonliving worlds are interdependent, through fostering children's sense of curiosity and desire to explore the real world (Beery & Jorgensen, 2016). Overall, the early experience of the outdoors can lead to an increased knowledge of the local area, and the general appreciation of nature, which may lead to benefits to a personal level and to a societal level because of its relation to sustainability practices. Ecotourism is believed to provide the suitable context for educating both tourists and local population about the environment and wildlife, and also contributes to sustainability by offering vital advantages to people, communities, and society as a whole through nature-based tourism.

To protect biodiversity and natural heritage and to promote tourism that creates long-term economic opportunities requires cooperation, innovative governance techniques and the involvement of several stakeholders.

Aim and Research Questions

The aim is to seek the opportunity to broaden the target group to children and their families to ensure long-lasting sustainable tourism in Vildmarksriket. Ideally, the involvement of children and in consequence also their parents could broaden the audience to bring economic benefit to the area and at the same time strengthen the children's relationship with nature. In order to shed light on this, one main research question and two sub questions have been formulated.

Main research question:

- How do the Vildmarksriket stakeholders view the role of nature education for children within sustainable tourism?

Sub questions:

- What are the possibilities for nature education in Vildmarksriket?
- How does sustainable tourism make space for nature education for children?

Theoretical Framework

Social Practice Theory

Social Practice Theory focuses on the actions that people do in daily life, trying to identify patterns of behavior throughout a given group of people. It is one way of understanding how social dynamics include and exclude people in different contexts, which helps to understand how practices are formed. The focus of the practice-based approach lies in its ability to depict our world as continuously shaped through routine actions, utilizing tools, language, and physical engagement (Nicolini, 2017). As Nicolini (2017) mentioned, practices are 'a set of organized sayings and doings'. Practices only exist to the extent that they are reproduced, thus leading to discussing the meta-discourse of mediational, including both material tools and discursive resources (why we do it, how we do it, and what we do).

Social Practice takes shape when the following things come together: Meanings, Competencies, and Materials (Webb & Tarleton, 2018). Meanings refer to the opinion of society about the practice people are doing, how people feel about it, and how it relates to other things. Competencies indicate the skills and knowledge people need to do the practice. Last but not least, Materials are the resources, including finance, time, and infrastructure people need to do the practice. These elements are interrelated and heavily dependent on the settings in which they take place.

In this case, our group centers on the concept from *Getting things changed: Social Practices* booklet by Webb & Tartleton (2018), by analyzing the meanings, competencies and materials when conducting nature education for children within sustainable tourism, to seek the opportunities of developing both economic benefits and gain understanding of the nature by targeting our future generation.

We first pose the question: How do the stakeholders of Vildmarksriket perceive the role of nature education for children within sustainable tourism? To explore the differing meanings of "sustainable tourism" across various stakeholders within Vildmarksriket, including their perspectives on the demographic group and the potential impacts on Vildmarksriket if children are targeted as an audience. Subsequently, we analyze whether the current competencies of stakeholders from Vildmarksriket support tourism based on nature education. If feasible, we examine what plans they are currently managing or planning to manage. If not, we consider how we can assist. Finally, for ongoing or planned initiatives, what materials do Vildmarksriket stakeholders require to implement them? Do they need additional resources, or do they already possess sufficient resources to support the new practice? These are the aspects we aim to analyze.

What's the Problem Represented to be?

Bacchi (2009) developed the "What's the problem represented to be" (WPR) approach to distinguish how problem formulation constitutes and gives shape to problems. Consequently, this action carries multiple implications for how the issue is thought about, framed, and understood (Bacchi, 2009). By creating a solution for a problem, the problem becomes framed in a certain manner, rendering the solution as the appropriate means for addressing it. The approach can also be used as a tool to distinguish silences in the analyzed material, which can give insight into how the issue is portrayed (Bäckman, 2022). In this report, the WPR approach will be used for facilitating the understanding of social practice theory and how it relates to the responses from the conducted interviews. By using this approach, we aim to get further insight into what the stakeholders are considering the problem for sustainable tourism in Vildmarksriket to be and which will provide information on how to move further.

Material and Methods

In order to conduct our research on the potential for nature education practices in Vildmarksriket, we identified relevant stakeholders from the list provided by the teaching team, trying to divide them between those who already have some practices related to education and those who have different target groups and could potentially implement activities of the sort. All the stakeholders were contacted through emails and phone calls. Unfortunately, some of the stakeholders that could have been interesting to interview (such as Tomteland) were inactive in this period of the year, and thus were not possible to visit in person or contact.

We were able to conduct a total of four interviews, of which two were in person during the field trip to Vildmarksriket and two were held afterwards on Zoom. During the interviews, we

followed a semi-structured scheme, with some questions to better understand their view on nature education for children and its applicability in the present realities in the area. During the interview, one person would be in charge of asking the questions, and the other would be in charge of recording and taking notes. Both persons present at the interview were able to ask follow up questions in order to investigate further and stress different points. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Afterwards the interviews were transcribed and subsequently analyzed in our group through color coding and visual schemes, which allowed us to link similar interest points and ideas from the different stakeholders, to then relate to theory.

Additionally, in order to have different perspectives we created a survey using google forms containing some questions similar to those asked in the interviews and adapted to target mostly local families. This was done to grasp what local families do and what they feel like is lacking in the area. The form was accessible through a poster containing a QR code that was put up in posters across public interest points (such as libraries and supermarkets) in Mora, Sollerön, and Leksand. The results from this allowed us to have a more thorough view on the practices of local people, and how they could benefit from our suggested approach to the local realities. Lastly, during our stay we were able to visit the forest and the major cities, to better understand how the average person could have information about nature activities, or how forests provide nature knowledge. This would also give us hands-on experience of the practices of tourism that it performed in the area.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

For the project work, we arranged four interviews with relevant stakeholders. One of the interviews were with a representative of Vildmarksriket project group, one with a stakeholder with insight both into the project of Vildmarksriket as well as Mora municipality, one with insight into Naturum which is an organization with focus on nature education for all ages, and lastly one interview with a stakeholder at Outdoor Dalarna that works with adventure trips and activities related to outdoor wildlife.

Definitions

Before we dive into our main findings, we've decided to highlight that the various stakeholders have had different views on the concept of 'sustainable tourism'. This means that the resulting discussions are influenced by their own definitions and may differ from those of their coworkers in the Vildmarksriket project. To begin with, one of our stakeholders from the Mora municipality believed that sustainable tourism is largely value-based and that tourists should be invited into nature areas without being given permission to "*destroy*" elements within the landscape. There was consensus on this definition by one person from Naturum who identified that tourists should not represent a burden to the natural ecosystem and the people living in the area. Moreover, this idea of both involving and not impacting local people was also counted into the definition by many stakeholders. For example, the person from Mora said that sustainability involves "*taking into account everybody who needs to be in that area*" while the

representative from Vildmarksriket expressed that it's "*super important to involve all the stakeholders*" and that it's necessary to "*make it easier for all people and no matter their level of knowledge to enjoy nature*".

Our stakeholder from Outdoor Dalarna also focused more on mainly the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism, saying that "*if you take care of mother nature then mother nature would take care of you*" and furthermore that development should be "*in such a way that we do not destroy nature, do not pollute nature*" also that "*sustainability means for me also how we can limit emissions*" echoing the earlier notion that sustainable tourism should aim at reducing the negative impacts that tourists can have within the environment. Meanwhile, the representative from the Vildmarksriket project distinguished that there are different perspectives on sustainability; not only the ecological perspective that focuses on the "*high value of nature*", but also the economical perspective which involves "*income models that (...) bring some money to all the stakeholders*" and that they have to "*work in a way that everyone feels it is a win win (situation)*". In general, all the stakeholders shared these ideas of inclusive tourism and combined it with the environmental view of the 'cautious tourist', shaping the overall definition favored by our interviewees.

Stakeholders Contribution

The stakeholders we interviewed definitely recognised nature education's importance and were able to explain its value in long term formation of knowledge and connection with nature. The role of outdoor experiences would indeed be presented as crucial for long lasting appreciation and respect of nature itself.

During the interviews, however, the degree to which each of them were actually already working (or willing to do so in the future) towards these goals was variable, in most cases relating to restrictions in budget and knowledge about school's lack of time or funds for extracurricular activities, hence restricting the spectrum of possibilities. Generally speaking, none of the stakeholders currently has the means to outsource or provide an activity that would recurrently bring the children outdoors on their own, but they would all rather work in a network by making their organizations offer available and potentially expand its know-how to better suit the aims of the project.

Some of the stakeholders do have children as clients, such as Outdoor Dalarna and Naturum, and they expressed that they already have in mind some plans for future activities that would involve younger groups of people. Mostly, it would be activities about experiencing the outdoors and providing knowledge about it, in order to create a connection. Another point is that they accept (and would like to have more) interns for their organizations, and it seemed common to argue that more young nature guides would provide benefits to the whole project.

Regarding the Mora municipality, they expressed openness and enthusiasm for these kinds of projects, but not necessarily about their active role in providing them to the public, neither

through school boards or municipalities itself. Indeed they would provide the permits and support the project however possible, but not hosting or proposing activities themselves.

To get further insight into the practices of the local people in the area a survey by using Google Form was created and posts with QR-codes were placed in the area. Due to limited answers it was however not possible to analyze the local people's current practices of nature education in the area or utilize the answers for getting further insight on how to adapt nature education for children to the local context. The lack of answers could be a result of either the subject being of low prioritization of the local people or the challenge in engaging the locals to dedicate their spare time for answering the survey.

Role of Children in Tourism

The concept of 'children' was also conceived differently by the diverse stakeholders, some of whom thought firstly of younger ages (3-10), while others referred to teenagers and even young adults (18-20). Within our research we aimed to focus on the younger aged children, however this was not clarified at the beginning of the interviews because we believed it might narrow the scope of the research. Some stakeholders had hardly explored the role of children within tourism, while others had already made detailed plans to include them. For example, one person from Outdoor Dalarna already mentioned that they hire interns within their company, in order to "*teach people to become new guides*" with these interns being anywhere from 16 years old or above (some even older than 20). The focus here was on continuing the legacy of nature guides, which is also one way of viewing nature education. However, they also explored the possibilities of targeting younger age groups with a "*two-day weekend tour*" in Vildmarksriket where everyone can learn basic outdoor survival skills.

This attention towards outdoor learning was also echoed by other stakeholders, such as Mora municipality and Naturum. The stakeholder from Naturum highlighted that the museum (although the museum itself represents a nature education project) can be a "*place for inspiration*" to encourage children to spend time exploring the outdoors. Then there was also a joint discussion on how infrastructure developed in the Vildmarksriket region can enable children to navigate nature better. For example, the representative from the Vildmarksriket project exposed their ideas for making "*nature trails with information stops*" which would ideally contain physical stands or panels along with a digital QR code which kids could use to learn more about the area (elaborated more in the next subtopic).

The consideration of children as a target group in Vildmarksriket is still in its earlier stages. Many of the stakeholders have ideas on how to involve children in the area, however, these ideas are still mostly being discussed verbally. Moreover, the stakeholders had not extensively considered how focusing on children could create a ripple effect on other target groups, such as their parents, and consequently attract more tourists. One exception might be Naturum, their target groups are of all ages and with varying earlier experience of nature. Naturum has however not an established relationship with Vildmarksriket and is mostly a visitor center with mostly

indoor activities. Therefore, Naturum has limited possibilities of contributing to sustainable tourism in Vildmarksriket, as expressed by the representative for Naturum.

Applying Theory

The interviewees had different views on what the meaning of nature education would consist of. Different conceptions on that meaning lead to different realizations and thus outcomes when analyzing the social practice. Furthermore, analyzing a social practice like this requires knowledge of other social practices that may foster or impede its successful realization. A representative from the Vildmarsriket project group thought that providing smartphone-activated games or sites during the trails would result in more children being out in nature. The stakeholder had an idea of “*combining the experience of being in nature and using the digital knowledge of children*”. This can be viewed as exploiting the recurrent practice of children’s use of technology and applying it for a different purpose. This would use the children’s competence of technology but relate it to a different outcome, using it as a tool to enhance other activities. Other stakeholders discussed the more traditional practice of nature education where the focus should be on “*attracting children to just be outside and spend time in nature*”. Also the representative from Mora municipality thought that the experience of being out in nature would enhance the children’s competence in nature and thus change the recurrent practice of children being increasingly less exposed to the outdoors. The point of nature education would be to provide both experiences and competences, ideally to spark a connection between people and nature, enhancing children’s appreciation and thus enhancing respect for nature itself. This will improve the meaning of the practice and will, according to the representative from Naturum, be “*something that will stick with the kids out as they grow older*”.

Moreover, the stakeholders discussed that nature education should focus on practical competencies essential for being outdoors. Providing these competencies would facilitate the practice of being out in nature. The representative from Outdoor Dalarna has the goal to teach their customers several methods such as “*how they can navigate with nature, how they survive in nature, what they can eat, what they can use from nature*”. These competencies are aligned with the aims of the representative from Naturum, described as “*how to move in nature, how to dress, how to stay warm and dry, and where is a good place to take a break*”. Focusing on traditional knowledge and competencies would provide the opportunity to reproduce the traditional practice of nature knowledge and adapt it to the context of nature education for children.

In addition, the stakeholders discuss problems related to lacking resources, especially financially, that makes it difficult to create a practice of nature education for children in the area. The lack of resources from all the stakeholders deeply impacted the quantity and quality of their proposed activities and possibilities and their ability to take part in developing the practice. To overcome this all stakeholders highlighted the need for collaboration between stakeholders. In addition, the municipalities are mentioned as important for providing necessary infrastructure and funding that would enable entrepreneurs to develop nature education for

children through a network between different associations. This would repeat the current practice of the municipalities functioning as a link between different stakeholders.

However, in the case of nature education, the representative from Mora municipality recognized the municipality's role but directed the focus to schools instead. The representative from Naturum however deemed the school's involvement as difficult, because of the strictness of the curriculum and again the schools limited resources. This implies a slight asymmetry in the stakeholders impression on who should be responsible for providing nature education in the area, and in addition to the fact that the stakeholders do not prioritize nature education for children to a large extent, compared to other priorities. Focusing on the meaning of the practice and the beneficial outcomes could provide initiatives for it being a higher priority from the stakeholders.

Within the theoretical aspects covered by the course, the “*What’s the problem represented to be?*” approach by Bacchi (2009) provided us with an interesting tool to challenge the most common tourism related plans and their outcome. The situation described by the Vildmarksriket plan is a development in the tourism of the area, with the aim of being careful about preserving the nature around. The expansion of tourism plans must follow certain guidelines, and often risk being treated firstly as a business with the only aim of having as many people (and thus revenue) as possible, only secondly adopting measures not to impact nature. Since the managers and developers of the project will be local people, it is most likely that they will be careful in practice about how the project is developed. However, following the literature, the WPR approach by Bacchi (2009) allows us to further problematise the assumptions involved in the case. Bäckman (2022) uses the WPR approach as a tool to “look at the silences behind sustainability”, along with the tendencies that this labeling exposes. Plans labeled as “sustainable” remain human centered, following a narrative of passive impositions on the present nature. Labeling plans that involve mostly humans as something sustainable, might be theoretically misleading and enhance the theoretical problems involved, along with a reinforcing of the common assumption that the term “sustainability” is anthropocentric.

Improvement of the Practice

Throughout our research some avenues for improvement were evident; first of all, defining the target group since the role of children in tourism varies among stakeholders. Secondly, to engage more children in nature, implying technology may be a good way to attract digital natives. Last but not least, the fact that not a lot of organizations can act on their own towards the common goal makes the establishment of a network more complicated and less varied in the offer.

By clarifying target groups, we can offer different activities for different age groups. For instance, the two-day weekend tour currently being planned by Outdoor Dalarna is intended for younger children. In addition to this, we can also consider providing a longer-term summer camp. The potential clients for the summer camp wouldn't necessarily need to be confined to within Sweden; it could attract children aged 7-12 from all around the world. For 13-17

teenagers, organizing outdoor survival training sessions, teaching skills like shelter building and wilderness navigation. Moreover, organizing nighttime adventures, including activities such as stargazing and nocturnal wildlife observation, to enhance practical outdoor competence and environmental awareness.

Using technology in nature education is getting crucial with children since they grew up as digital natives. One of the stakeholders mentioned the concept of smartphone-activated games; an example could be Pokémon GO in Japan, an app game with the elements of treasure hunt that can indeed provide children with the motivation to venture into the wilderness. Developing an app similar to PeakVisor, which accurately measures the elevation of any mountain peak in view, for instance, or a tree age measuring app can enhance people's engagement in the forest and provide them with the knowledge to take away even after leaving the forest.

The challenge of establishing a network stems from the limited autonomy of organizations in pursuing common goals independently. This limitation results in a lack of diversity in offerings within the network. Moreover, nature education often takes a backseat to other priorities due to stakeholders' constrained resources and varying levels of commitment. However, by raising awareness of its benefits and advocating for its integration into broader educational agendas, nature education can gain prominence. Effectively prioritizing nature education would not only address this issue but also foster stronger collaboration among organizations within the network. When nature education becomes a higher priority, stakeholders are more likely to allocate resources and commit to collaborative efforts, thus facilitating the establishment and effectiveness of the network. Therefore, prioritizing nature education is crucial for both addressing the challenges of establishing a network and ensuring its success in offering diverse and impactful initiatives.

One crucial element is the common knowledge that children and youths nowadays are often lacking stimuli to go outdoor, they lack the willingness to build their own experience-based knowledge, and these kinds of projects could function as a bridge between group activity and individual activities later on. If the children and youths that are targeted are very young, the easiest possibility would be for the school themselves to work with Vildmarksriket, Naturum or other organizations to provide some activities, making the project easily beneficial because of the high involvement and attendance that the school related activities provide. In case the people involved are a bit older, and in case they have some interest, having young nature guides or interns seemed appealing to all the organizations interviewed.

Conclusion

This project aimed to explore the possibilities of enabling nature-based education and its effect on the expansion of sustainable tourism within the Vildmarksriket region. Tourism within this area has often neglected children as a target group, and hence we sought to shed light on how the involvement of children and their parents could bring socio-economic and environmental benefits to Vildmarksriket. Our main research question: *'How do the Vildmarksriket stakeholders view the role of nature education for children within sustainable tourism?'* along

with two sub-questions: ‘*What are the possibilities for nature education in Vildmarksriket?*’, ‘*How does sustainable tourism make space for nature education for children?*’ were answered using the lens of social practice theory and the WPR approach.

Our four semi-structured interviews revealed to us that all stakeholders have different definitions of ‘nature education’ and ‘sustainable tourism’. This meant that their answers to our questions differed in some aspects, although some common themes emerged. We discovered that although some stakeholders had explored ways to incorporate nature education within their future activities (such as Outdoor Dalarna and Naturum), they all expressed their limited capabilities in facilitating nature education for children. This meant that stakeholders would have to rely on bigger networks of organizations, along with the municipalities, to ensure the development of nature education within Vildmarksriket. Furthermore, the stakeholders had very broad ideas of how old children should be, with some referring to younger ages (2-10) and others talking about teenagers or young adults (18-20). Despite this variance, the value of nature education for children and children as a target group was recognized by all the interviewees.

Lastly, we looked at how the current sustainable tourism practices within Vildmarksriket can be challenged or transformed to make space for children and nature education. We highlighted three key ways of enabling such changes, namely: distinguishing possible target groups (and thus tourism activities) within the broad category of ‘children’, finding novel ways to engage children in exploring the outdoors (such as via technology) and the establishment of organization networks through prioritizing nature education to foster greater collaboration and hence ensuring the development of nature education initiatives for children within Vildmarksriket. To conclude, our report explores the views of different Vildmarksriket stakeholders about the role of children within nature education, as well as how such ideas may be carried out within current and future projects, by challenging current tourism practices to make space for children and consequently, long-term sustainability and future generations.

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Group 3: Collaborative governance and revenue models in Vildmarksriket: Exploring municipal views and support for conservation and community-beneficial nature tourism in Mora, Leksand and Vansbro

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Introduction & background

The Vildmarksriket project encompasses a vast forest region located within the triangular region of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand municipalities. It is a collaborative attempt aimed at exploring the potential for nature tourism within the Vildmarksriket area. This initiative involves partnerships between the three municipalities, Visit Dalarna, alongside numerous associations, businesses, and landowners in the area. Mainly activities focus on stakeholder engagement, resource mapping, and organizational development, aiming to create a sustainable tourism plan by October 2024. (Mora kommun, 2023)

Within this expansive landscape, local entrepreneurs have embarked on a mission to cultivate nature- and eco-tourism, recognizing the potential to harmonize environmental conservation with economic prosperity. (Mora kommun, 2023). Given the complexities and challenges inherent in establishing eco-friendly tourism in the region, a pivotal question arises: How might the municipalities engaged in the Vildmarksriket initiative improve their connectivity and cooperation to further revenue models?

Aim & research questions

The aim of this study is to investigate how the municipalities of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand support sustainable revenue models connected to the nature area of Vildmarksriket. This investigation focuses on models that contribute to conservation efforts and address the needs and demographics of the local communes, ultimately promoting eco-tourism and benefiting the local populations.

To achieve this, we have formulated three key research questions. These questions intend to uncover both the shared and unique strategies among the three municipalities, assess how local needs and demographic factors influence the development of these models, and explore the support systems in place for community involvement and benefit. By addressing these questions, in combination with the theoretical framework of environmental governance and discourse analysis, we aim to provide a detailed analysis of the mechanisms through which

revenue can be generated in a way that harmonizes with the ecological and social dynamics of the region.

- What are the similarities and differences in the perspectives of the municipalities of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand regarding revenue models linked to the Vildmarksriket area?
- What are the project's barriers for organization of revenue models for Vildmarksriket?

Theoretical/conceptual framework

To create more insights into consideration of revenue collection models in Vildmarksriket, we considered using environmental governance and representation theories for our analysis.

Environmental governance, as Evans (2012) observes, is viewed synonymously with interventions aiming at changes in environmental-related incentives, knowledge, institutions, decision making and behaviors. It takes place at different levels through international accords, national policies and legislation, local decision making structures, transnational institutions and environmental Non Governmental Organizations.

Van der Molen (2018) and a growing body of researchers suggest that the governance-oriented modes of environmental management may contribute to realizing the balance between conserving the environment *viz-a-viz* utilizing it. They identify that this can be done through collective decision making and action that are aimed at protecting the environment, economic value, and resolving conflicts over the resource.

Collaborative governance, as Kooiman (2003) observes, is linked to active involvement of both government and non-governmental actors around three core principles of governance: a commitment to collective action to enhance legitimacy and effectiveness, a recognition of the importance of rules to guide interaction, and acknowledgement that new ways of doing things are required that go beyond the state, in the case of this project, the municipalities.

The usefulness of collaborative governance in considering revenue collection models is because the Vildmarksriket project has many different stakeholders represented under state (municipalities), communities (locals) and market (both individual and business investors) who have divergent interests and perspectives on revenue in the project. Across these three levels, as Lemos (2015) observes, the major forms of collaborations are: co-management (state and communities), private-public sectors (municipalities and market actors) and private-social partnerships (between market actors and communities).

These levels of representations have differing interests in revenue models and perspectives on meanings of conservation and sustainability hence collaborative governance brings together a variety of scientific and experiential knowledge and deals with disputes (divergent views) that may exist between various groups of stakeholders (Kooiman, 1993), which is crucial in environmental management (Van der Molen, 2018).

Environmental researchers agree that within the traditional linear model of decision-making, (where scientists first set the facts right, then decision-makers decide what to do based on these facts), lies an objective reality upon which rational decisions can be based. However, the obstacle to this framework is that environmental issues are characterized by high levels of uncertainty hence can rarely be solved or managed in this way.

In the absence of scientific certainty, therefore, the definition of revenue models, conservation and sustainability and their solutions vary according to the perspectives from which they are derived (Bacchi, 2009). This view is supported by Kooiman (2003) that every system of governance is a result of choices and these choices cause inclusions and or exclusions by default.

There is no one given way to construct a system of governing environmental resources (Raitio, 2024). Governance of environmental projects therefore should be collaboratively organized by asking and seeking to understand the current state of the world (local or international) we are inhabiting, what we want to inhabit (future state) and how we can coordinate getting there. Uncertainty and doubt about these aspects should therefore not be brushed off, but embraced as creative forces for governance (Evans, 2012).

Being a project connecting three municipalities who have divergent perspectives and problem definitions is based on divergent knowledge, experiences and realities, collective governance therefore requires recognizing and respecting the divergent perspectives and problem definitions and establishment of trust and frameworks that create certainty for the actors involved (Bacchi, 2009; Österlin & Raitio, 2020).

Collaborative governance works hand in hand with representation and expertise. O'neil (2001) observes that in addition to authorization and shared identity, epistemic values gives one the possible legitimation to speak for nature. He adds that problems are represented as problems depending on contexts. This underscores the importance of representation and understanding different perspectives when discussing and solving environmental problems.

In looking at the roles and responsibilities of municipalities and other stakeholders in Vildmarksriket, we supported Boström et al (2018) argument that contemporary environmental governance is characterized by multiple sources of authority and that 'boundaries between societal spheres – state, market and civil society – are increasingly blurred. We agree to their suggestion that to make environmental solutions sustainable, understanding who has the authority to speak on behalf of the environment and what constitutes effective representation is vital. This as Boström et al (2018) puts it involves critically examining the roles of representatives in environmental decision-making processes and ensuring that their decisions align with broader environmental goals rather than narrow human-centric interests.

Mouffe's (2009) notion of agonistic pluralism could be an important framework for consideration in collaborative governance. This is because it places emphasis on exploring

divergent views and problem definitions between and among adversaries hence recognizing (and thus beginning to address) imbalances in the agenda-setting power of the stakeholders involved.

While considering the varied degrees of stakeholder communication, planning, engagement, knowledge base and relationships in Vildmarksriket, collaborative governance could increase the accuracy, legitimacy and acceptance of social and economic decisions and make revenue collection solutions more relevant, feasible to implement, and thereby sustainable in the long run. It is a promising framework and theory to help in identifying weaknesses but also the potential of addressing divergent views hence addressing conflicts.

Materials & Methods

Our research embarked on an exploration of the role of municipalities in supporting sustainable revenue models within the Vildmarksriket project. To initiate this investigation, we engaged in a preparatory interview with the project organizer. This initial step proved invaluable, providing foundational insights into the project's objectives, strategies, and challenges. Additionally, with this knowledge, we proceeded to conduct semi-structured interviews with municipal employees from Mora, Leksand, and Vansbro municipalities (Table 1).

The interview process was orchestrated to ensure breadth of inquiry. Each session was led by a primary interviewer, tasked with guiding the discussion and eliciting insightful responses. Meanwhile, an additional interviewer supported the process by managing logistics, note-taking, and time-keeping. This collaborative approach allowed for seamless facilitation of interviews, ensuring that all aspects of the conversation were captured effectively.

Stakeholders	Name	Virtual meeting	In Person Meeting	Language used
Project Organizer	Interviewee 1			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 2			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 3			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 4			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 5			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 6			English
Member of Municipality	Interviewee 7			English

Table 1: Each interviewed stakeholders, the way of conducting the interview (virtual meeting, or in-person), and the language in which the interviews were held (English or Swedish).

Our first visit took us to Mora municipality, where we engaged in a rich dialogue with municipal representatives. Discussions centered around the municipality's involvement in the

Vildmarksriket project, particularly regarding the development and support of sustainable revenue models. Insights gleaned from this interview provided valuable perspectives on Mora's contributions to conservation efforts and community engagement within the project.

Following our visit to Mora, we journeyed to Leksand municipality for our next interview session. Here, we delved deeper into the municipality's role in supporting revenue models for the Vildmarksriket project. Through thoughtful questioning and active listening, we gained valuable insights into Leksand's collaborative efforts and innovative approaches to promoting eco-tourism while addressing local needs and demographics.

Our final interview was conducted with stakeholders from Vansbro municipality, providing a comprehensive perspective on the collaborative efforts of all three municipalities within the Vildmarksriket project. This session shed light on Vansbro's unique contributions to sustainable revenue models and its integration into the broader framework of the project.

Throughout the interview process, all group members actively participated, contributing their insights and perspectives to enrich the discussions. This collective engagement ensured a holistic understanding of the municipalities' roles and responsibilities within the Vildmarksriket project.

Following the interview sessions, meticulous transcriptions of the discussions were carried out according to a predefined guide. This step was essential in preserving the integrity of the data and facilitating subsequent analysis. With transcripts in hand, we embarked on a systematic topic analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and key findings across the interviews.

Our analysis primarily focused on revenue models within the municipalities and their collaboration within the Vildmarksriket project. By connecting our findings to our research question, we drew conclusions based on our interviews regarding the municipalities' contributions to sustainable development and eco-tourism. It is important to recognize that the scope of our findings is limited to the responses of our limited number of interviewees, and is not necessarily representative of the municipalities or the project as a whole.

For our analysis, we adopted the theoretical perspective of "Environmental Governance" to examine the revenue models within the Vildmarksriket area. This theoretical framework allowed us to explore how various stakeholders coordinate their efforts within the region.

Presentation & discussion of findings

Roles & Responsibility

This part of the analysis explores the roles and responsibilities that the municipalities of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand, along with the project leader, feel that they hold in connection to revenue models within the Vildmarksriket project. Additionally, we examine stakeholder roles in project implementation, maintenance, and communication to assess their impact on

achieving ecotourism and sustainable economic development within the project and in the region.

Involvement and influence in Vildmarksriket

Environmental governance theory emphasizes the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities among different actors involved in environmental projects. In this case, the three municipalities of Mora, Leksand, and Vansbro are mentioned to play important roles in the Vildmarksriket project. However, their roles vary slightly due to the project's origin and funding sources. Interviewee 1 clarified that the roles vary slightly because the initiative originated from private companies from the Mora municipality, resulting in Mora municipality taking the lead as project owners and also playing a crucial role in securing funding from the EU. Interviewee 1 explained that *“[Mora municipality] was very clear that they go into this project with the same ambition as Leksand and Vansbro municipality”*. Environmental governance theory promotes collaborative decision-making processes involving various stakeholders. Despite Mora municipality taking the lead in the project, there is recognition among all interviewees that collaboration among municipalities is essential for project success. Interviewee 2 agreed, but stressed that the responsibility to make Vildmarksriket profitable is in the role of the entrepreneurs. Interviewee 5 also put emphasis on the fact that a lot of the work has to be done within the project itself, referring to their municipality's lacks of both time and financial resources, *“our role is also to make sure that the project is conducted in a way that benefits our municipality, so we can also be those ambassadors internally to speak to our politicians, to make the right decisions whenever the project raise their hands and say we want funding for the next part of this journey to develop this area. And there we have a role, and to do that we have to be involved somehow in this project forward”*.

Creation & maintenance of revenue

Interviewee 5 expressed that regarding the creation and maintenance of revenue, they as municipality employees lack the training to generate revenue and therefore don't have the adequate knowledge for that task. Interviewee 2 agreed with that statement, emphasizing that it's not the municipalities role to create revenue models for Vildmarksriket. Instead, they see their role as 'the spider in the web', to facilitate connections between entrepreneurs and relevant stakeholders. Interviewee 2 continued by explaining that if someone comes up with a revenue model, it is first reviewed by the project leader and then by Mora municipality to see if it fits into the budget. This could be connected to the collaborative governance approach (Kooiman, 1993), where municipalities act as intermediaries to connect entrepreneurs with relevant stakeholders to develop revenue models. By facilitating these connections, municipalities contribute to the collaborative effort of sustainable revenue generation within the Vildmarksriket project. Additionally, Interviewee 2 explained that even if they don't create businesses and revenue models, they have a responsibility for the installation and availability of necessary infrastructure. Interviewee 5 agreed on the importance of ensuring accessibility to the area, something he believed could be enhanced with the help of the project.

Interviewee 6 agreed that while the municipalities may not directly generate revenue, they might have a responsibility in influencing the mindset of both visitors and municipal view regarding payment for nature visits. It was frequently mentioned in most of our interviews with the municipalities how the Swedish concept of ‘Allemansrätten’ could create a challenge in motivating people to pay for their visit in nature. Interviewee 7 found it almost paradoxical that society often takes nature for granted, despite both relying and using its resources. She suggested how it might be beneficial to take inspiration from other areas but also from other activities, such as cross country skiing, to shift societal and municipal attitudes towards valuing and paying for nature experiences.

Internal and external communication and collaboration

Interviewee 1 highlighted the municipalities' multifaceted role and responsibility in balancing the diverse perspectives of local interests with environmental concerns, a complexity mentioned by O'Neil (2001) when it comes to environmental representation. Interviewee 6 further stressed that there is a large number of interests and stakeholders within this area, who themselves lack the capacity to self-organize for this project, something the municipality should be responsible to help out with. Interviewee 7 also noted the low awareness of the project among both stakeholders and the local population. She emphasized how the municipality should take on the role as coordinator for spreading the knowledge, highlighting the active involvement of both government and non-governmental actors that Kooiman (2003) talks about when it comes to collaborative governance. *“We as a municipality quite often is like a gatekeeper because this project is not well known maybe in some parts of it. But we as a municipality are a known thing. So we could be those who invite for a meeting and so on to make it easier for the project to reach out to all those stakeholders in the area”* - interviewee 7.

Interviewee 2 agreed that the municipalities play a vital role in facilitating involved stakeholders in the project, stressing how it's a joint responsibility between the municipalities and the project leader. She also highlighted the importance of external communication between the municipalities, which is not a new phenomenon, but at present there are no common meetings about the project. Interviewee 5 expressed that collaboration isn't very common among the three municipalities, but expressed optimism about the potential for Vildmarksriket to foster increased collaboration for the future.

In regards to the internal communication and collaboration within the municipality, interviewee 2, despite being the main project leader, expressed diverse views from within the municipality and its population regarding what should be done in the area, *“The other day we were contacted by a forestry company and they were afraid that we've gone too far and we haven't got anywhere as I see it, but his perspective was that we've gone too far”*.

In a group interview with three municipal employees (interviewee 4, 5, and 6), interviewee 6 also discussed challenges with internal roles and responsibilities related to Vildmarksriket. *“Which of us will do what issues in this Vildmarksriket? ... My part from the beginning was*

all three parts [businesses, trails and environment], and I have said in the Vansbro commune to my boss that I can't take these parts. We have to be more people to do this, and now we are, which I'm very glad for. And it's also, I think, the first time that we have done this [them all talking together]. Because it's not often that our role is connected.”.

Community & Economic impact

In this part of study, we analyze the involvement of the three municipalities and their community within Vildmarksriket project, with respect to the revenue models. To be precise, the study is firstly based on the diverse involvement levels of each municipality, as well as the expected economic benefits. Finally, cultural, financial and demographic factors will be addressed within the framework of Vildmarksriket revenue models.

Community engagement levels

First of all, it is important to remind that each of the municipalities consider that their role is not to develop income and local economic growth on their own. The municipalities are rather support structures. They collaborate with the project organizer, to connect the different stakeholders, in favor of sustainable nature tourism. To summarize their actions, the interviewee 2, indicates that she plays the role of “Spider in the net”. Hence, the municipalities are intended to supervise local entrepreneurs, to engage them in a beneficial way within the project.

In spite of this common role of supporting revenue, the levels of commitment still seem to diverge within each municipality. Indeed, as the project owner, the municipality of Mora appears to be more involved compared with the others communities. Its relationship with the project manager is much stronger because it was at the project origins. Mora municipality also has a loaning power. This capacity allows investors to have quickly accessible funds, from the municipality of Mora. Consequently, they can establish their eco-project while awaiting funding from the European Union, which promises income for sustainable projects. Additionally, it seemed that the municipality of Leksand is less invested in Vildmarksriket project, compared with others municipalities. Actually, the Leksand municipal officers interviewed argue that: “We are pretty separated from the project. [...] We don't actually have time to get involved too deep in it”. To explain this, the distance from the municipality possibly makes it isolated or divided from the main project leaders. For Vansbro town, the situation is different, indeed, it seems that its situation is unfavorable, compared to the two others. This is because its size and attractiveness are less important. In this context, one of the Vansbro municipal officers states that: “We are a small municipality with lack of resources”.

Vansbro's power of action seems indeed weaker. The municipality is in fact away from all seaside activities, consequently it appears more complex to develop a lucrative tourism activity. However, Vansbro community seems well committed to the project, with an organization based on 3 project managers. One manager of outdoor activities, one business developer as well as one ecologist. Therefore, the consideration of the Vildmarksriket project seems to be taken very

seriously by the municipality, which places its organization in a perspective of sustainability, in order to generate revenue.

Economic benefits for local municipalities

In terms of economic benefits targeted, the three municipalities are in agreement: municipalities emphasize the importance of generating local revenue. As indicated, this project aims to establish beneficial activities, in order to promote local attractiveness and develop the local economy. Precisely, in keeping with Mora municipality, Vildmarksriket can thus bring diversification: “That’s important to have our business diversified”. This constitutes additional sources of income. This can additionally promote job creation, site appeal, as well as favor economic and demographic growth.

Cultural and demographic factors

Finally, we were able to analyze demographic and cultural factors on the local level. In this sense, it appears that the municipalities of Mora and Leksand are the most advantaged, their proximity to the lake promise greater attractiveness. These two municipalities have thus underlined their objectives to raise awareness among the local population. This type of population is indeed often reluctant to the arrival of tourists or project establishment. In this regard, interviewee 1, claims that tourism can represent a big disruption for the very rural populations of Mora: “They have fears [...] to live with the tourists [...] they hope that they will not destroy their lands or sort of push it away”. Especially, the agents of Leksand mention this local distrust, more precisely for rural elder populations, living off the logging of their ancestors. These agents declare that: “The elderly people are upset about the bikers most. Especially the ones who are living close to the trails [...] because of the increased traffic”.

Therefore, awareness of each stakeholder appears to be a very strong agent in generating revenue. Its role is to coordinate each of the local actors and entrepreneurs with the project, in order to explain the economic benefits of attracting tourism to the Vildmarsriket area.

Challenges to collaboration

This section addresses the challenges that the project faces in stakeholder organization, collaboration and engagement. Understanding these difficulties is important to identify barriers in implementing sustainable revenue models to ensure the project’s long term success, and provides guidance on how to better coordinate efforts for the benefit of both nature and community. Challenges to collaboration should not be dismissed, but welcomed as catalysts for creative governance (Evans, 2012).

Stakeholder Differences in assets and perceptions

There are a large number of key differences between the municipalities, including in their primary industries, economic opportunity, municipal resources, population demographics, and

access to natural resources, that affect each municipality's positioning within the scope of the project as a whole. Regarding differences in municipal resources, Interviewee 7 stated, “and it's just this can be so different between the municipalities [...] I realized that they have people who really work with the trails and that my colleague had whole days to work with this, while I have one time in a week.” Interviewee 5 highlights additional barriers to their municipality’s involvement, “But I must also say because we are a small municipality with lack of resources, most of the work has to be done inside the project. We don't have really time or time to do a lot between meetings.” Regarding the differences in economic opportunity between the municipalities, Interviewee 5 also believed that another municipality’s “[...] sense of importance of this project could be slightly less because it's quite a small part of their tourism industry.” Consequently, in line with Mouffe’s (2009) notion of agonistic pluralism, it is crucial that the project has a holistic understanding of the individual needs of each municipality, giving particular consideration to their imbalances in agenda-setting power. This is necessary to factually assess where, how, and whether overlap can be found within their divergent views and problem definitions, for funding and organizational purposes. From the interviews we conducted, it seems that though the three municipalities share a united vision of the project’s end-goals, there is still a large divergence in the perspectives and interests of the individual stakeholders within those municipalities. For example, Interviewee 6 addressed the municipality’s role in mediating distribution of revenue between landowners stating, “There are so many landowners, and they can't work together and get along with how to do it.” Likewise, the project relies on the municipalities to negotiate cooperation with individual landowners and secure their agreement to conserve the land, build trails and infrastructure, and increase belief in the project overall. Without an open and complete understanding of the differences in the municipalities’ interests, the project may have difficulty meeting their citizen’s unique needs, distribute funding in a sustainable manner, and ultimately organize the municipalities effectively to provide a united link between all the stakeholders.

History of Unsuccessful Vildsmarkriket Projects

There is a prior history of projects in Vildsmarkriket failing to increase tourism and drive enough revenue, post initial funding, to make the project sustainable long term. Three of our interviews indicated that failures of these previous projects appear to have impacted the general morale and optimism exhibited by some municipal officials and stakeholders. Interviewee #5 stated, “Projects come and go [...] So it's not an ideal situation. But I think and I hope that this is one of those projects that could continue. But you never know when it comes to funding.” Interviewee 7 also expressed, “I have a small fear for what you're mentioning. That we in three or four years maybe think that "okay that was an old project, it was nothing". Similarly, Interviewee #3 stated, “this is like the 10th product in 10 years and usually nothing happens [...] if you think about the logistics and what that financial burden would look like for a community is quite high. I mean very few people would be willing to do that for free, so you can understand why a lot of these projects die out if the funding doesn't exist, because you're not getting return very quickly.”

Current Funding and Revenue model gaps

All five of our interviews indicated there appears to be a lack of funding required to meet immediate infrastructure and developmental needs on the municipal level, such as roads necessary to link the three municipalities, as well as infrastructure within the park, including new trails, shelters, toilets, picnic areas, and water access. Interviewee 7 stated, “The more tourists who comes to our trails the more you need to take care of them, and we just don't really know how we finance that.” Interviewee 6 also expressed concern in this respect stating, “And a really important part, you mentioned the roads in this area, how to finance the roads in this area if we have to [...] Who will finance that connection? And the different organizations in Vansbro, Leksand and Mora, their roads go to the borders from different ways, but they don't work together.” Our interviews with all three municipalities further established that no one we spoke with had knowledge of specific revenue models that would provide enough money to trickle down to meet the economic needs of all the various stakeholders, particularly the landowners. Interviewee 5 stated, “we have hopes for this project that they develop and find out revenue, sort of a way to deal with money, so that we could have funding for things continuously. And we don't have that right now. [...] because they're trying different way to monetize these kinds of trails throughout Sweden. And it's no silver bullet. No one has cracked the code really yet how this should be done. [...] Yes, and then if they sell packages for cycling, they also include a sum for fee that goes to those sports clubs. So it's an embryo it's a start but we don't have the answers.” Moreover, while our conversations with some municipalities indicated that they believed the project was responsible for developing revenue models, our conversation with the project organizers attributed a large part of this responsibility to the municipalities. Interviewee 1 stated, “But seeing in an economical perspective, these municipalities have all the ingredients to develop this kind of ecotourism, in a sustainable way.” However, as a project connecting three municipalities with differing economic realities, collective governance requires that the project recognizes their divergent interests and establishes frameworks that create certainty regarding sustainable revenue models for the municipalities involved (Bacchi, 2009; Österlin & Raitio, 2020).

It is evident that the project's success is dependent on its ability to drive continuous revenue for landowners. To this end, Interviewee 5 states, “That's one more thing that we hope this project will bring along. It's quite a lot of things, but the revenue streams are maybe the most important one. Because that's the key to unlock those landowners permission to use their land.” Our interviews showed a consensus that the municipalities and project organizers are dependent on local entrepreneurs to create and drive these revenue models. Regarding the municipality's role in creating revenue models, Interviewee 2 stated, “No, we don't create anything. I think that we are not good at that. It's not what you do when you work in a municipality.” Even so, our interviews indicated a need for increased outreach to local entrepreneurs, as we heard that many do not know about the existence of the project. Regarding local entrepreneurs, Interviewee 3 stated, “[...] one needs to ask do they even know that that project exists? I don't think most of them know it exists.” Lack of entrepreneur outreach and engagement necessarily impacts the project's development of vital revenue models. Consequently, without this understanding, the municipalities seem generally cautious about managing landowners' expectations in case they are unable to deliver results. At times, it appears this has resulted in

reduced municipal communication to local stakeholders regarding the project. Interviewee 2 states, “But yet we haven't had anything from Vildmarksriket. We have space on our website. And we wrote in a newsletter as well, as this project is now starting. But we have not yet had it on deliberately, because we wanted to come a little bit further. So we have something to tell.”

Overall, our interviews with all three municipalities indicated that there is some confusion regarding specific roles within the project and some lack of communication between individuals involved both within the municipality, and between the municipalities themselves. Interviewee #6 commented about participation in the interview itself, “It gives me a clearer view of what we're doing...we had some problems in turn in [the] municipality. Which of us will do what issues in this Vildmarksriket? [...] And for me, at least, the project is more clear when we have to answer these questions.” Regarding communication with the other municipalities, Interviewee 6 stated, “But I have no discussion with your parts of the other municipalities. Not at all. I don't know them [...] And I don't work together with their colleagues in other municipalities. So it's very different, it's a difficult work in that way. Because we don't know each other in different branches.” Conversely, Interviewee 2 stated, “Yes, we do collaborate [...] we work together and we have a common goal about this,” regarding collaboration between the municipalities. Moreover, Interviewees 5 and 7 said that, outside of those directly involved with the project, there is not a shared vision within the municipality of what should be done with Vildmarkriket. Interviewee 5 stated, “[...] we have politicians that don't know what this project is [...] we as a municipality, we have a lot more function than people, so we're stretched so thin. So it's up to us three to communicate this in different meetings. To get any attraction, to get anyone beside us to know what this is.”

Moreover, our interviews suggested a general lack of information regarding the existence of the project to important local stakeholders. For instance, in Vanbro's interview, it was stated that Fiskevårdsområdet, an organization that all landowners are a part of, was invited to a meeting regarding the project, but because they had no knowledge of the project, they did not understand the meeting was for them, and consequently did not attend. There is also some confusion regarding who is ultimately responsible for stakeholder outreach. Interviewee 1, as a representative of the project, stressed the importance of having “Good dialogue with the end owners.” However, it is unclear from our interviews whether informing local stakeholders about the project, is ultimately the responsibility of the municipality or project's leadership. The municipalities both believe it is the project's responsibility to coordinate collaboration with the local stakeholders, and at the same time, also indicated their responsibility in linking the various stakeholders to the project. It was clear from the interviews that the local stakeholders communicate primarily with the municipalities, and that some distrust the project entirely. Interviewee 5 indicated that collaboration between stakeholders “[...] is part of this project. It's inside the project,” and at the same time stated, “We as a municipality quite often is like a gatekeeper because this project is not well known [...] But we as a municipality is a known thing. So we could be those who [...] make it easier for the project to reach out to all those stakeholders in the area.” Interviewee 2 also attributed stakeholder coordination to the project leaders saying, “Right now, I think it's the project leader that has to manage that.” Instances of local stakeholder concerns regarding governmental overreach, expressed in our Mora and

Vansbro interviews, reflects some negative perceptions of the local stakeholders towards the municipality's involvement in the project, which only seems to be aggravated by a lack of direct communication from the municipalities and project organizers, even in these early phases. Left unaddressed, landowner concerns of overreach can lead to some extreme consequences as outlined by Interviewee 6, "[...] when we did this, a few landowners thought, "oh, oh, here is the government going to take our forests, and we get nothing of it". So they cut their forests in fear that we will take their land, without them getting the money they can get when they cut it. So that's a risk." Because environmental issues are characterized by high levels of uncertainty, increased outreach is vital to combat landowner mistrust resulting from perceptions that the project is implementing a traditional linear model of decision-making, and non inclusive of their views or economic interests (Bacchi, 2009; Van der Molen, 2018; Kooiman (2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our study aimed to investigate how the municipalities of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand view and support revenue models connected to the nature area of Vildmarksriket, with a focus on conservation efforts, local needs, and eco-tourism promotion. Through our analysis, we sought to address two key research questions with the following findings:

Similarities and Differences in Perspectives:

- We found that while all three municipalities share a common goal of supporting sustainable revenue models in Vildmarksriket, there are notable differences in their perspectives and levels of involvement.
- Mora municipality emerges as the most involved, given its role as the project owner and strong relationship with project leaders, while Leksand and Vansbro face challenges related to distance, resources, and economic opportunities.
- Despite these differences, collaboration among municipalities is deemed essential for project success, highlighting the importance of understanding and navigating individual municipality dynamics.

Barriers to Organization of Revenue Models:

- Our research identified several barriers to organizing revenue models for Vildmarksriket, including differences in municipal resources, past failures of similar projects, lack of current funding, gaps in knowledge regarding revenue models, and communication and coordination challenges.
- Municipalities face challenges in balancing the diverse needs and interests of stakeholders, negotiating cooperation with landowners, and securing sustainable funding for infrastructure and development.
- These barriers underscore the complexity of developing revenue models that align with the ecological and social dynamics of the region while meeting the needs of local communities.

- Our interviews revealed confusion about roles and limited communication within and between stakeholders. Responsibility for stakeholder outreach is unclear, which contributes to lack of project awareness by local entrepreneurs and landowners, leading to missed engagement opportunities.

In addressing these research questions, we have provided an analysis of the mechanisms through which revenue can be generated in a sustainable manner within the Vildmarksriket area. Our findings highlight the importance of collaborative governance, effective communication, and tailored strategies that consider the unique characteristics and challenges of each municipality. Gaps in stakeholder communication and engagement could hinder the successful implementation of sustainable revenue models for Vildmarksriket. Prioritizing efforts to bridge these gaps is essential for promoting the project's goals of eco-tourism, conserving natural resources, and benefiting the local populations of Mora, Vansbro, and Leksand.

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Group 4: Communication, c, and the potential for establishing an umbrella organisation in Vildmarksriket

Group members: Emma Lefèvre, Patricia Balla, Saga Iseskär & Ferdinand Nkurunziza

Introduction

Vildmarksriket was established in 2021 and is a collaborative investigative project among Mora, Leksand and Vansbro municipalities (Mora kommun, 2023), local business entrepreneurs and SLU, in Dalarna, Sweden. It focuses on developing nature tourism in the Vildmarksriket area, spanning approximately 50,000 hectares of forested land shared by the municipalities. This initiative was sparked by a nature conservation inventory from 2010 which highlighted the area's unique nature values, revealing the presence of old-growth forests, diverse wildlife, and red-listed species (Kirppu & Oldhammer, 2010), leading to its recognition as a “Swedish pearl” by World Wide Fund for Nature in 2013 (WWF, 2013). The Vildmarksriket project aims to explore the possibilities to harness these natural assets while also preserving its natural values and creating local economic opportunities, by developing sustainable eco-tourism practices within the area (Mora kommun, 2013).

Building upon the stakeholder-mapping conducted within the project and data collection from previous student projects, findings suggested a need for implementing functional collaborative practices in Vildmarksriket (Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet 2023). More precisely, a previous student project mentioned the need of an “umbrella organisation” (Group 1, 2023).

This case study aims to explore and investigate the possibilities for long-term collaboration between local stakeholders in Vildmarksriket. Our report seeks to delve further into the subject of building collaborative practices among local stakeholders, by comprehensively understanding collaboration among these, with the goal to find strategies for fostering inclusive and sustainable collaborative practices in Vildmarksriket. This will be conducted by investigating perceptions (how collaboration is perceived); desired changes (how current collaborative practices can be improved or done differently); and needs (what local stakeholders need in order to have functional collaborative practices). In order to investigate collaborative practices, this case study will respond to the following research questions:

- How is collaboration perceived?
- How is collaboration going to be achieved?
 - What do the locals need in order to have functional collaborative practices?
- What are the current collaborative practices performed in the area?
 - How are the collaborative practices organised between themselves?

Theoretical framework

Governance

As introduced earlier, Vildmarksriket is inherently a collaborative project shared by multiple municipalities, and further stakeholders' activities are expected to be influenced by decisions taken about the area which Vildmarksriket encompasses. Collaboration and knowledge building in partnerships is emphasized in several environmental governance literatures which is of relevance in the case of Vildmarksriket's sustainable protection and touristic development (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Van der Molen, 2018).

Environment-related decision-making, behavior changes, and interventions carried out in collaborative forms such as public-private partnerships and social-private partnerships hold promise for nature to thrive and recover from human activities (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006). To organize and steer collective action is key in environmental governance practices (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Van der Molen, 2018). Researcher Van der Molen (2018) states that to perform environmental governance, there needs to be a sort of capacity that (1) steers collective action, such as the collaborative action of stakeholders, (2) with respect to the environment, such as Vildmarksriket's nature, in (3) desired directions, namely its protection. This kind of capacity can be present in various forms - such as an umbrella organization.

There is the possibility to create or implement so-called boundary organizations (understood in this report as umbrella organizations) that play an intermediate role throughout the incorporation of knowledge production and decision-making in environmental governance processes (Van der Molen, 2018). The aim of such organizations could be to achieve cooperation towards such a shared objective as Vildmarksriket's sustainable protection and touristic development (Van der Molen, 2018). An umbrella organisation may support the "formulation and pursuance of normative goals or visions, such as objectives laid down in environmental regulations or policies, or normative visions that have been formulated in the context of collaborative practices" (Van der Molen, 2018, pg. 20).

Environmental governance may not be synonymous with an umbrella organization - in this report, an umbrella organization aims to facilitate cooperation, and environmental governance is carried out under this cooperation. Environmental governance refers to the adaptive processes, mechanisms, and regulatory forms, through which particular environmental actions and outcomes are influenced (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Van der Molen, 2018). Usually, a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors are included in environmental governance practices, who tend to hold diverging perspectives and different interests. Decision-making with implications towards environmental change oftentimes invite both scientific and other, local and practical knowledge, and the consequent mix of these stakeholders' backgrounds can generate disputes (Van der Molen, 2018). To cultivate collaborative action amongst them, their perspectives and interests need to be bridged together and merged (Van der Molen, 2018).

Such can be done throughout participatory processes like coproduction, a type of process where the diverse group consisting of, but not limited to, experts, policy-makers, and stakeholders, collaboratively create knowledge by interactive participatory means (Van der Molen, 2018). Combining and interconnecting different knowledges, values, and social order within the diverse group can coproduce a relevant knowledge base made up of practical experiences, models, and data, which can inform decision-making and provide an ability to govern (Van der Molen, 2018).

Representation

The pursuit of sustainable development initiatives demands effective collaboration and stakeholder engagement. In this context, the Vildmarksriket project stands as a beacon of hope, aiming to harmonize nature and ecotourism in a protected forest area shared by the municipalities of Mora, Leksand, and Vansbro. However, realizing the project's potential requires navigating complex power dynamics, fostering inclusivity, and leveraging expertise. By exploring the application of the "representation and expertise" framework in advancing the goals of the Vildmarksriket project, we draw insights from O'Neill (2001), Lidskog and Sundqvist (2018), and Boström et al. (2018).

O'Neill's (2001) examination of representation underscores the significance of power dynamics in decision-making processes. In the context of the Vildmarksriket project, stakeholders hold divergent interests and visions, necessitating a nuanced understanding of representation mechanisms. Mapping stakeholders and discerning their roles can illuminate who holds influence and how decisions are made. This understanding forms the bedrock for establishing an umbrella organization that ensures equitable representation and fosters collaboration.

Lidskog and Sundqvist (2018) shed light on the social construction of expertise within environmental governance. They emphasize the subjective nature of expertise and the importance of trust and inclusivity in decision-making processes. In the context of Vildmarksriket, local stakeholders possess invaluable knowledge of the area's ecology and community dynamics. Recognizing and valuing this expertise is paramount for building trust and fostering collaboration. Moreover, integrating diverse perspectives enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of decision-making processes.

Boström et al. (2018) provide practical perspectives on stakeholder engagement within organizational contexts. Their insights into how representatives navigate decision-making processes offer valuable guidance for the Vildmarksriket project. By engaging stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, and surveys, the project can gain a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives, needs, and expectations. This inclusive approach ensures that the umbrella organisation reflects the diverse interests and aspirations of its constituents, thereby promoting sustainable development.

The "representation and expertise" approach offers a robust framework for advancing the goals of the Vildmarksriket project. By integrating insights from O'Neill (2001), Lidskog and

Sundqvist (2018), and Bostrom et al. (2018), the project can navigate the complexities of political representation, power dynamics, and expertise. Through inclusive engagement and equitable representation, the project can foster collaboration, legitimacy, and sustainable development. As the project moves forward, leveraging the diverse knowledge and perspectives of stakeholders will be essential for creating a thriving ecosystem where nature and tourism coexist harmoniously.

Material and methods

To answer our research questions, we aimed at collecting several types of data through semi-structured interviews, literature research and field assessment. Firstly, we did some background research about Vildmarksriket, and read previous years reports, to forge an idea about the actual state of the project. These researches were used to construct our research questions and therefore to choose who we should aim at interviewing. We then contacted potential interviewees first by email and if we did not get any answers we tried to call. We arranged in person meetings with them for when we could be in Vildmarksriket.

Secondly we conducted literature research about governance and expert/representation theories. We wanted to use these theories to interpret our results, and accordingly we tried to include some of their perspectives when we designed our questions. Once we collected enough information about who we were going to interview and what data we were looking for, we started structuring our interviews questions. We used “Doing ethnographies” by Crang & Cook (2007) to help us construct our questions and organize them. We thought about our interview questions in temporal order, and came up with two sections. The first one was about the present collaboration and the second one was about the future of collaboration. These questions were common for all of our interviewees, but we also thought of more “personal questions” that were directed to specific interviewees. We created these questions according to the interviewee role in the project. Most of our conducted interviews were with other groups, and therefore we had to rethink our questions in order to not overwhelm the interviewees.

All our interviews took place in person in the Vildmarsriket area, in either English or Swedish according to the interviewee preference. Before starting the interview, we orally asked all interviewees their consent to record them and take notes of the interview. Once the interview was over, we informed the interviewees about the stakeholder workshop, that they can attend if they would like to hear about our project results.

Once all interviews were conducted, we transcribed all the recordings using the software “Word” from the Microsoft office suite, and used the color coding method to analyze our results. We organized them according to, if the statements fitted in the representation or collaboration perspective. We colored all ideas of representation in the same color, and within the collaboration perspective we sorted the statements in four different sections: perceived collaboration, active collaboration, desired collaboration and lack of collaboration (as it can be seen in Table 1).

All our interviewee names were changed in our report, according to their roles, to preserve their anonymity. Our interviewees names are then as follows: Forest Owner 1, Forest Owner 2, Parish Representative, Municipality Representative and Business Owner. All statements from the interviewees in our results are personal communication.

CATEGORY	MUNICIPALITY REPRESENTANT	PARISH REPRESENTANT	BUSINESS OWNER	FOREST OWNER 1	FOREST OWNER 2	SUMMARY
Perceived collaboration	Sweden's foundation on associations for structure. Vildmarksriket's collaborative intention. Recognition of differing opinions (develop or not develop). Role of the Municipality as neutral, democratic and supportive.	Communication simplicity, due to relations among SH. Contact and discussions with about Vildmarksriket. Acknowledgement of limited information dissemination. Which might cause complaints.	Communication is key, should be kept simple. Collaboration happens when you want it to and share an interest. Challenges with slow-moving Swedish processes. Difficulty in convincing SH of new perspectives. Sees everyone in project group as equals.	Concern about targeted information dissemination. No issues with meetings, being listened to and able to express views. Fear that forestry concerns and views not being listened to. Anticipation of being invited by Vildmarksriket to discuss contracts.	Relevant and needed information has been received and provided from project.	Collaboration is perceived as existent and carried out. Collaboration definition perceived variously between different actors.
Active collaboration	Monthly breakfast meetings. Ongoing surveys. Social media content. Does not force collaboration, backs off when needed (not overpower discussion and find new solutions).	Meetings of active participation with those directly engaged in the project.	Leksands and Vansbro municipalities active involvement. Not actively involved in communication w. landowners.	Invited to fika meetings. Sees active progression of the project. Satisfaction w. current structure, unsure about the project's future structure.	Receives information when project leader attends forestry associations annual meetings.	Active collaboration occurs mostly through meetings with information sharing.
Desired collaboration	More people involved from beginning. Need for people to come together, talk and listen, in order to move forward. The work should be based on consensus, all actors should go in the same direction and little conflict. Sees benefit of a formalised organisation with rules, umbrella organisation, perhaps in the form of an NGO.	Desire to spread collaborative meetings wider (increase attendance numbers and involve more than just "direct" SH. Sees need for umbrella organisation, non-profit.	Landowners should understand that they will get money/compensation. Would like to see more money going into the project.	Bridge out the reach of meetings. Include compensation and agreements with landowners. Desire for Vildmarksriket to generate money for the community. Vildmarksriket could educate people about forestry.	Sees the need for larger, broader meetings, with more stakeholders included. Wants agreements between project and landowners.	General desire for more wide spread meetings with more SH. Could be useful with formalised organisation for collaboration that is non-profit or NGO. Desire for contracts with compensation for landowners.
Lack of collaboration	There is no collaboration at the moment. Incorporate SH from beginning. Democratic structures missing in rural development, one person cannot represent all interests.	Lack of attendance in meetings, which hinders collaboration. Lack of defining direct SH. More municipality could play more of an active role.	Concern about losing time throughout the formal processes.	Lack of communication around the Vildmarksriket project.	For some SH it can be difficult to get information, direct information and communication is lacking.	Generally a lack of a structured collaboration. Lack of defining SH (for meetings etc.), which in turn generates a perceived lack of communication and information.

Table 1: Presentation of findings, categorised based on how the interviews were thematically coded ("stakeholder" is abbreviated as "SH").

Collaboration

The interviews reveal a consensus regarding the significance of collaboration within the project, especially in relation to project success. However, notable differences emerge in how the interviewees perceive the simplicity or complexity of collaboration. Where the Business Owner expresses confidence in the feasibility of collaboration by saying that "the collaboration will become automatic, because if we have a desire to to make something new, to make something better, or to create something, then the collaboration is not a problem". While others speak of collaboration as more of a challenge, such as the representative from the municipality saying that collaboration "is not there at the moment". This underscores a nuance of different perceptions of collaboration and its feasibility within the project. The differing perceptions of collaboration offer insights into the complexities of governance and collective action in practice, with some emphasising the ease of collaboration (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006) and others highlighting challenges in facilitating or steering collaboration (Van der Molen, 2018). Furthermore, we can link the current approach to collaboration within the project, to the triangle

of environmental governance triangle connecting state, market and community by Lemos and Agrawal (2006). The triangle provides a contextualization of the various perceptions on what actions are necessary (state, market or community) in environmental governance, shaped by social mechanisms. This is similar to the varied perceptions of collaboration visible in the case of Vildmarksriket, differences suggestably caused by these social mechanisms. By recognizing such differences in collaboration perspectives, and fostering a more structured approach to collaboration, all stakeholder perspectives can be taken into account.

From our results we understand that the idea of collaboration within Vildmarksriket does not seem to be shared, and that collaboration as a practice may not be understood in the same way by everyone. In some interviewee answers we analyze that there is to some extent “collaborative practices” happening in the project, such as meetings. We argue that there is a need for a better clarification of what collaboration is and that every stakeholder does not expect the same collaboration within the project. As explained previously, stakeholders may think that there is collaboration happening and are satisfied with it, on the other side others may not. This does not necessarily mean that collaboration is not happening, but their views and expectations for collaboration within the project are not met. As explained in Boström et al (2018), there may be differences in expectations and norms between the stakeholders that will entail certain behaviors and what can be said during interviews. As these may differ in our case, we cannot strictly state collaboration is not happening. Here we could argue that there is a lack of “regulatory capacity” as explained in Van der Molen (2018) paper. Indeed, he explained that it is the ability to get collaborative actions through the creation of common “goals or vision”. Our results suggest the common goal as the creation of Vildmarksriket, but there is a lack of effective collaborative practices toward this goal.

Stakeholders

Van der Molen (2018) raises the importance of stakeholder involvement in environmental governance practices as it encompasses diverse perspectives and interests of scientific, local and practical knowledge. Bridging these perspectives through inclusive participatory processes facilitates collective action, enabling stakeholders to collectively create a knowledge base that informs the project. The findings show a shared recognition of the need for early and inclusive stakeholder involvement. For instance, the Municipality Representative emphasises the importance of involving many people for consensus, but also to incorporate relevant stakeholders from the beginning to avoid conflict (Table 1). However, we identified uncertainties in terms of who is defined as a stakeholder within the project. The Parish representative raises a lack of defining and identifying direct stakeholders in the project, in relation to a wider and structured approach to information sharing. Forest Owner 2 also mentions the need for involving more stakeholders by saying that “there would be a need for a slightly larger meeting where you invited the private forest owners”. Forest Owner 1 expresses that “they inform us well, those of us who have been involved in the project”, but also that “I’m not sure how well other landowners are informed about this project”. This indicates that information may be selectively targeted, as well as the identification of stakeholders, without a clear approach for it visible in our data. The uncertainties surrounding stakeholder definition

can be connected to representation, as the composition of stakeholders shapes the diversity of perspectives and interests that are represented in decision-making processes and hence affects the power dynamics of the project. Mapping stakeholders clarify their roles, laying the foundation for an umbrella organisation that promotes equitable representation and fosters collaboration (O'Neill, 2001).

Compliance

Another finding from the interviews is that there are different ideas in relation to how the project should continue to progress moving forward in relation to compliance between stakeholders. While the Business Owner expresses an idea of “sometimes people need to be pushed” to make a change, the Municipality Representant contradicts this perception rather strongly by saying that “we cannot force people” and raising the need for consensus, while also necessitating that “you have to back off if you meet a lot of resistance”. In relation to the statement by the Business Owner, Forest Owner 2 also raises an example that “there have been some incidents around this with fishing and rafting, canoeing and so on, where some tourist entrepreneurs may have been a little too forward and not respected the landowners” in relation to local businesses influencing others and their relationship with other stakeholders if having an approach to push. Forest Owner 1 also expresses that “the project is progressing” in the sense of moving forward, but raises the need for transparency, which can be compared with the idea of something being pushed for it to progress. As mentioned previously in relation to bridging stakeholder perspectives (Van der Molen, 2018) and different perceptions of governance portrayed in the triangle of the state, market and community (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006). These findings raise a need for agreement and consensus in relation to the project expansion and how collaboration should look in relation to compliance moving forward.

Communication

Communication within the Vildmarksriket project is not merely a functional aspect but a cornerstone of collaborative efforts towards sustainable development. As reasoned by Boström et al. (2018), communication encourages transparency, and accountability [...] and can enhance trust and legitimacy in decision-making processes. Our investigation delves deeper into the intricacies of communication dynamics, shedding light on nuanced perceptions, modalities, and challenges faced by stakeholders.

Stakeholders exhibit a spectrum of perceptions regarding communication effectiveness within the project. While some stakeholders advocate for simplicity in communication, emphasising the importance of clarity and conciseness (as encapsulated by Business Owner's mantra, "Keep It Simple Stupid"), others express concerns over its complexity and insufficiency. While Lidskog and Sundqvist (2018) argue that building trust within interdisciplinary teams and expert networks fosters effective communication, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, enabling experts to leverage diverse perspectives and expertise in addressing complex environmental challenges; Forest Owner 1 and Forest Owner 2, for instance, highlight the frustration stemming from the lack of communication between forest associations, indicating a

breakdown in inter-stakeholder dialogue. Additionally, disparities in information accessibility emerge as a pressing concern for certain stakeholders, revealing gaps in transparency and inclusivity.

An intriguing aspect uncovered in our investigation is the lack of discourse surrounding the modes of communication utilized within the project. Stakeholders do not elaborate on the specific channels through which communication occurs, whether it be through traditional mediums such as email and phone, or modern platforms like social media. This oversight raises critical questions about the inclusivity, accessibility, and effectiveness of communication methods employed within the project. The Municipality Representative expresses concerns that the use of Facebook as a communication tool within the Vildmarksriket project may inadvertently exclude certain stakeholders when it comes to collective decision-making as far as democratic norms are concerned, particularly those who may not have regular access to the internet or who are not active users of such platforms. Consequently, relying solely on Facebook for communication may unintentionally marginalize these actors, hindering inclusivity and widening communication disparities within the project. Understanding and optimizing communication modalities are imperative for enhancing stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Meetings in the Vildmarksriket project have become central to collaboration, facilitating dialogue and decision-making. Yet, concerns arise about their exclusive reliance, as stakeholders note limitations in sustaining engagement and inclusivity. Parish representative proposes widening meeting participation beyond direct stakeholders. This prompts reflection on the necessity for diverse collaboration platforms. Despite these considerations, stakeholders unanimously stress the importance of communication through talk and listening for effective collaboration. They advocate for open dialogue and diverse perspective exchange to foster understanding and consensus. Business Owner's observation of the absence of local opposition highlights the efficacy of such communication in addressing concerns and building collective ownership. However, a Municipality representative suggests limiting conflicting perspectives to avoid potential conflicts, advocating for a balanced approach to finding solutions.

From our point of view, our investigation unveils a nuanced landscape of communication dynamics within the Vildmarksriket project, characterized by diverse perceptions, modalities, and challenges. While meetings serve as pivotal spaces for collaboration, their exclusivity poses challenges to inclusivity and continuous engagement. Moving forward, there is a pressing need to diversify communication modalities, prioritize transparency and accessibility, and foster a culture of open dialogue and active listening (Boström et al. 2018). By embracing these principles, the Vildmarksriket project can cultivate robust communication dynamics that empower stakeholders, nurture collaboration, and advance the collective vision of sustainable development in the region. This is rooted from Evans (2012) who reasons that by fostering collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility among businesses, NGOs, government organizations, and the public, society can work together to promote environmental sustainability, address pressing environmental challenges, and create a more sustainable future for all.

Umbrella organisation

Within the interviewed stakeholders we understood that there is a need for a more structured organization. Indeed Business Owner and Municipality Representative emphasize this aspect (see Table 1). This idea has also been explored by Forest Owner 1 and 2 as they talk about the fact that there is a need for “agreements and contracts”, which hints at the lack of structure, at least in the administrative part of the project. However Forest Owner 1 is happy with the actual structure of the project, but shared his fear about the future of the project (Table 1). This, again, showed the uncertainties surrounding the project that could be due to lack of communication within the project as developed previously.

This lack of structure could be solved by the implementation of an umbrella organization that would manage the project. We investigated this proposition and asked the stakeholders their opinion on it. The Business Owner state that “There is one already [...] but we don't have the structure like it is applied to Skatteverket or that way. But we already have created it”. The existence of such an organization hints at the idea of an existing collaboration within the project from their perspective. However, the Business Owner was the only one to mention that such an organization exists. When asked about the idea of an umbrella organization Forest owner 1 and Municipality Representative agreed on its necessity and both emitted the idea of it to be run by a NGO. It does suppose that there is no such organization existing at the moment, or if there is one it is not well understood by the other stakeholders.

This could be explained by the lack of shared understanding of collaboration meanings and communication previously analyzed. This can lead to misunderstanding and other problems within the project. Indeed if some stakeholders already perceive a “supervising” organization but others don't, we can raise questions about representation, legitimacy and the role of the said organization as some do not seem to recognize it. O'Neill (2001) questions “Who is doing the representation?” and “What is the source of the legitimacy of the representation?” seem to fit our results quite well. We can ask ourselves who are the representatives of the “umbrella organization”, as described by Business Owner, and which position they hold within stakeholders, in the community, what are their roles etc. But also how they got their position in the organization? Business Owner say that he was taking “a leading role”, with others in the project. They seem to justify their involvement, leading position, by their experience and network, which could be understood as “supporting audience” and “knowledge, expertise, and experiences” aspects from Boström et al. (2018). As in the Boström et al. (2018) paper, they seem to use it to show why they are in the said position in the project. Then as explained in O'Neill (2001), the legitimacy of the project leaders seems to come from “epistemic values”. We can argue that these claims were not supported by other interviewees, and we can circle back to the communication and definition problem explained in previous parts, as the points of views differ.

Another representation disagreement can be seen in the Municipality role. Parish Representant stated that the municipality “are the project owner” or the Business Owner saying that they are

“more the main shareholder who is keeping the money”, on the contrary the Municipality Representant sees the municipality as the bank, but is neutral in the project (see Table 1). Boström et al. (2018) warned against the neutrality aspect as it could stress the representative and what they represent relation but it also highlights Pitkin’s (1967, as said in Boström et al. (2018)) paradox. As the role of the municipality is viewed differently between stakeholders, it suggests that there might be a need for clarifying and communicating the role of the municipality in the project, and question what the municipality represents or is expected to represent in the project.

Conclusion

Our findings focus on project communication, collaboration structure, and the potential for establishing an umbrella organisation. Initially, communication emerges as a primary concern, with stakeholders having differing perceptions of the project and unclear communication protocols and leadership responsibilities. We propose implementing a communication strategy to facilitate effective collaboration and information dissemination to stakeholders, diversifying communication methods beyond meetings.

Addressing communication issues necessitates establishing a clear collaboration structure early on, defining roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols. Our study revealed varying perceptions of collaboration among stakeholders, with some seeing it as straightforward and others as complex, leading to confusion about stakeholder involvement and differing expectations. We realised that there is a need for a defined collaboration structure through the establishment of a formalised organisation, creating an umbrella organisation to clarify collaboration approaches, streamline decision-making, and address questions regarding collaboration dynamics, stakeholder inclusion, roles, and communication protocols within the collaborative framework.

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Group 5: Sustainable biking tourism practices in Vildmarksriket

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Introduction

Case Background

Vildmarksriket (eng: the Wilderness Kingdom) is an EU LEADER project carried out in collaboration with the municipalities of Mora, Leksand, and Vansbro (Mora Municipality, 2024). A LEADER project is a project that has been granted financial support from the EU via the Swedish Board of Agriculture with the aim of contributing to development within a specific area (Swedish Board of Agriculture, 2024). The purpose of the Vildmarksriket project is to explore the possibilities for the development of nature tourism in the area that constitutes Vildmarksriket, and its goal is to, at the end of the project, have established an anchored plan for this development together with potential stakeholders (Mora Municipality, 2024). The project area consists of one large forested zone located within all three municipalities, and the stakeholders involved include landowners, entrepreneurs, various associations, and local residents (Mora Municipality, 2024).

This report examines how different actors within the biking sector perceive and define 'sustainable cycling tourism' and what potential consequences these perspectives may have for the development of cycling tourism in the area. The perceptions of cycling practices – both current and future – of various actors are also examined. The reason for this is to find out if there are any major differences in perceptions and definitions which need to be aligned before proceeding with the project since it could lead to complications if different actors are working towards different goals. The data was collected through interviews and the results were analyzed using Social Practice Theory (SPT).

The report includes a methodology section, a results analysis and discussion, and a summary of the most relevant findings. On May 30th, the work concludes with a stakeholder workshop held via Zoom, where the results are presented, and the interviewed stakeholders are given the opportunity to further discuss with the authors and the project leaders.

Aim and research questions

This study aims to investigate biking practices and biking tourism in Vildmarksriket and to understand the variations in stakeholders' interpretations of sustainable biking tourism. The following research questions have been defined:

1. How do stakeholders within the biking sector conceptualize 'sustainable biking tourism', and what are the potential implications of these diverse perspectives for the advancement of sustainable biking tourism initiatives?
2. How do stakeholders within and connected to this sector perceive and engage with sustainable biking tourism practices?
3. What resources, connections, and support do they require to integrate sustainable activities into their sectors effectively?

Theoretical framework

In the following report, Social Practice Theory (SPT) is applied to 1) investigate and understand present biking and biking tourism practices in Vildmarksriket and 2) discuss the potential implications of these perspectives for advancing sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket. SPT is an umbrella term for different approaches aiming at understanding and re-assembling social phenomena at the level of practices rather than individuals (Nicolini, 2017). A practice is described as “a routinized type of behaviour” (Reckwitz, 2002, 249) that is contextdependent (Nicolini, 2017) and consists of intertwined arrangements of materials, competences, and meanings (Shove et al., 2012). Practices are intentionally and historically created yet open to changes (Kanarp and Westberg, 2023).

The application of SPT in investigating tourism is rather new (Chimirri 2021). Tourism is seen as a field of practices (Warde, 2014) with a variety of connected practices, such as transportation, hospitality, or information services (Lamers et al., 2017). Likewise, tourism planning itself can be seen as a social practice (Ricaurte-Quijano et al., 2023) As for any other practice, tourism practices and actors require materials and competences to carry out their practices (Chimirri, 2021). The aim of the present report is therefore to not only understand biking practices but also connected tourism practices in Vildmarksriket. Applying SPT is a possibility for providing critical feedback and possible improvements in tourism practices and policies (Lamers et al., 2017). Since SPT aims at asking questions rather than finding answers (Nicolini, 2017), we believe that our outside perspective provides valuable insights and possible implications for establishing sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket and see this report and the application of SPT as a form of feedback on the status of the current biking practices and biking tourism in Vildmarksriket.

Methodology

To answer the research questions, we carried out both field observations and interviews. Before this, we conducted background research on SPT in general and in tourism research in particular, the current situation of cycling in Vildmarksriket, and the actors involved. This research and more particularly the snowball method was used to find potential interviewees and places we could visit. Contacts provided during the course, by the project management team and additional contacts determined during the background research were reached out to. Unfortunately, we encountered some difficulties in arranging interviews and therefore

conducted joint interviews with other groups. This allowed us to get a broader picture of tourism in Vildmarksriket and to combine cycling practices with other topics, such as collaboration. The interviews were conducted in groups of two or three people from our side, either as interviewers or as note-takers to record and transcribe the interviews. The interviews were conducted in person and, in one case where the availability of the interviewee did not allow this, by video conference. We were able to conduct four interviews which are described in the table below.

Interviewee(s)	An employee in the tourism sector	Three employees at Vansbro municipality that are directly involved with the project Vildmarksriket	A forest owner in Siljansnäs involved in the local forest owner association	A local resident living on Sollerön within the area of Vildmarksriket
Approach	In-person during the field trip	In-person during the field trip	In-person during the field trip	Video conference during the field trip
Language	English	English	Swedish	English

Table 1: Appellation of interview subject(s), interview method and used language of four interviews conducted during the field trip.

The biking and connected tourism practices in Vildmarksriket were investigated by a combination of zooming in on the biking practice itself and zooming out and investigating how biking practices are connected to other tourism practices. To conduct the interviews, we drew up a guide with questions prepared in advance on the aspects of meanings, materials, and competences of biking practices in Vildmarksriket. The questions aimed, inter alia, at assessing the understanding and expectations of sustainable biking tourism of the stakeholders, their connection to biking in the area, present and needed biking infrastructures, and potential challenges. As suggested by Nicolini (2017) we included questions on the situational, genealogic, configurational, and conflict-sensitive orientation of biking practices in Vildmarksriket in our interviews. The questions were partially customized for each interview in consultation with the other groups present in the interviews, but a core set of questions was maintained in all cases. To avoid the risks of quasi-praxeology (reporting of individual behavior) and interactional reductionism (focusing on local interactions) mentioned by Nicolini (2017), we broadened the scope to take the cultural and historical context into account and were self-reflective on assumptions, interpretations and possible biases during the research process.

After the field trip, the interviews were transcribed and the dimensions of meanings, materials and competences analyzed and coded thematically to identify recurrent patterns. During this process, the topic of cooperation and conflicts also stood out and we therefore decided to include an additional chapter on this in the results.

Finally, it has to be noted that Lamers et al. (2017) highlight the importance of participating in the tourism practice investigated when using SPT. Due to the circumstances, it was unfortunately not possible for us to engage in biking practices during the field trip, however, biking facilities were visited. That gave us a better idea of the reality of biking in the region. Furthermore, there was no significant biking tourism at the time of the field trip and we could not investigate the perspectives of biking tourists. Due to the difficulties in finding interview partners, we also want to state that additional perspectives from other stakeholders (e.g. trail operators, biking guides, sports shop owners) could not be included. A different investigation period with a higher volume of biking tourism and the possibility to participate in biking practices, preferably in the summer months, would provide additional insights into biking tourism in Vildmarksriket and is therefore recommended for further research.

Results and analysis

The following chapter presents the findings on meanings, materials and competences using SPT. Furthermore, the themes of cooperation and conflict that emerged during the interviews are discussed.

Meanings

Meanings describe the interpretations of how practices are viewed by society (Webb and Tarleton, 2018). In this context, meanings involve different understandings and interpretations of sustainable biking tourism and biking culture in Vildmarksriket among stakeholders.

According to the employees of Vansbro municipality, sustainable biking tourism is about visiting nature with high natural value in a way that doesn't destroy anything. This perspective was shared by the local resident interviewee, who also added the perspective of safety. The tourism industry employee highlighted the importance of using already existing infrastructure for sustainable biking. The views of the forest owner suggested that sustainable nature tourism and cycling practices require respect for the natural environment and a careful balance between the needs of different stakeholders, including tourists, landowners, and local communities. The forest owner acknowledged the potential benefits of these practices for the local economy while noting that nature tourism and cycling practices can be influenced by other factors such as communication, agreements, and the behavior of tourists. Both the forest owner and the employees at Vansbro municipality highlighted the variety of perspectives and expectations on sustainable biking tourism, especially from the local population. The forest owner also mentioned that some people might not think it's a good idea to attract more people to nature, while others might see it as a positive development. Examples of unsustainable cycling tourism talked about were crowding, overuse of biking infrastructure, unsustainable journeys to Vildmarksriket in the first place, littering, and interference with other interests.

Our field observations and interviews revealed a cycling culture in Vildmarksriket, with both cycling tourism and cycling as a means of daily transport, mainly in the towns. While two

interviewees noticed an increase in biking tourism in recent years, the forest owner did not see an increase in bikers but rather encountered solitary hikers. When asked how to attract repeat tourism, several interviewees mentioned that a good way would be to market the biking opportunities in connection to already existing events. They brought up both specific bike events (e.g. Cykelvasan, Siljan Runt) as well as other sports events (e.g. Vansbrosimmet, Flygfesten). Concerning the latter, it was mentioned that the visitors of these events usually also have a bike strapped to the roof of their car and are therefore the right guests to attract. These events were also seen as essential elements of the biking culture in Vildmarksriket by participants of a stakeholder workshop on biking in February 2024 (Vildmarksriket, 2024).

The interviewees from Vansbro municipality claimed that there is already a strong biking culture in Vansbro, which is the result of a biking-focused high school education program 10-15 years ago. Many of the students in this program came from all over Sweden and some of them stayed in the area and are still more or less involved in local sports clubs and cycling in Vansbro in general. Our interviewees talked about this culture of biking as a good starting point for further development of biking tourism in Vansbro. In addition, Vansbro already has well-known cycling infrastructure (e.g. Dammsjörundan, which is part of Biking Dalarna), which makes it particularly suitable for developing cycling tourism in Vildmarksriket. Vansbro municipality employees also emphasized the importance of the LEADER project Vildmarksriket for developing tourism in Vansbro in general. According to them, tourism in the municipality is currently rather limited, and the project therefore offers a chance to benefit from the tourism in Mora and Leksand. They claimed that they had more to gain from the project than other municipalities and that an expanded tourism industry could support other businesses as well as the local sports clubs that maintain the trails, while allowing them to focus on nature conservation. This illustrates the interconnectedness of different tourism practices in Vildmarksriket.

In all interviews, the topic of potential conflicts between different leisure activities in Vildmarksriket came up at some point. Two interviewees said that they had personally not experienced any conflicts, but they saw them as inevitable. On the other hand, the local resident interviewee has experienced conflicts with bikers during horse riding activities. The interviewee mentioned that some cyclists focus on speed and are unwilling to adjust their behaviour when meeting other trail users. From this point of view, cycling is incompatible with quiet and more nature-oriented tourism, as it may also attract those who do not respect nature. When asked directly, the local interviewee answered to prefer marketing to focus on hiking tourists rather than biking tourists. Similarly, another interviewee expressed doubts about guided mountain bike tours with the sole purpose of biking as fast as possible and said that the purpose of tourism in Vildmarksriket should rather be to experience nature. The forest owner also stressed the need for agreements and communication to avoid misunderstandings and avoid conflicts.

Materials

Materials include all resources that are required for performing a practice (Webb and Tarleton, 2018) and are co-constitutive of practices, which is particularly important for a practice like biking that requires both materials in action as well as background materials (Bäckman, 2023). Additionally, certain materials such as bikes can symbolize sustainability (Bäckman, 2023), where a connection to sustainable biking tourism can be drawn. Hence, the specific units of assessment and analysis were the resources and support to perform the biking practices and for integrating sustainable activities, and the infrastructure and other material resources (money, time and gadgets) for bicycle tourism. In the interviews, both present and needed infrastructures for biking and sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket were assessed.

When examining the existing materials related to biking tourism in this area, all interviewees revealed that there are some roads and trails for biking but not all are suitable for biking practices. And most roads and trails are not only used for biking activities but rather for many other activities. The interviewees from Vansbro municipality mentioned that about 15-20 small tourism companies are already offering biking activities and some sports clubs that are maintaining trails with QR codes for donations. They mentioned that some hotels in the area offer cycling tour packages with fees for trail maintenance. However, they discussed the need for more resources to develop biking tourism infrastructures. Moreover, they mentioned the limited time they have to work on the project outside of scheduled meetings due to other municipalities having a leisure management unit but they do not.

Considering the insights of the residents living in Sollerön, we can identify the need for signs for trails and information centres for visitors to get a better experience from biking activities in this area. Moreover, it was mentioned that the placement of trash bins along trails and marking those bins on maps is more valuable for efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, it is better to have access to appropriate biking equipment for tourists who are visiting this area. Furthermore, the need for mapping tools and apps for trail information was brought up by the resident. The forest owner mentioned the need for improved gravel roads for better forest access. Further, infrastructures like snow removal in the winter season are important for bike riders to get an efficient, safe and effective experience.

The interviewees from Vansbro municipality mentioned that the trails need to mark start-end points and parking areas to get a better experience for the visitors. They also brought up the need for toilets and trash cans along trails. Despite having few hotel facilities, they suggested that it would be better to have more accommodations such as hostels and hotels with bike facilities equipped with certain things, places to lock up bikes during nights and places for maintenance. They also mentioned the existing information app but they need to update one.

The insights from the employees in the tourism sector revealed the need to adjust existing bike trails to make them more suitable for biking, particularly in the area of Åsengården. Moreover, it was mentioned that maps with bike trail information like difficulty levels, accommodations, and services are crucial to get a better experience for the bike riders.

Finally, based on the ideas of different stakeholders in the biking sector we find out the key needs for sustainable biking tourism are the improvement of basic infrastructures, trail development, accommodations, and parking facilities.

Competences

Competences include the necessary skills and knowledge needed to perform a practice (Webb & Tarleton, 2018). Such practical skills are often taken for granted (Bäckman, 2023), which makes them specifically interesting units of examination. As previously mentioned, practices are intentionally and historically created – yet open to changes (Kanarp and Westberg, 2023). Hence, based on interviews with actors in the nature tourism sector in the area of Vildmarksriket, we investigated what competences related to the practice of biking, as well as to the implementation of sustainable biking tourism practices, are required from tourists and local people, and local business owners and landowners, respectively, to promote sustainable biking tourism in the area. Further, we examined in which ways these competences could be enhanced, and specifically the role of the LEADER project Vildmarksriket in achieving that.

Analysis of the conducted interviews with actors in the nature tourism sector in Vildmarksriket revealed a range of competences that are desirable, or required, among tourists, local people, business owners and landowners, for performing the practices of sustainable biking and biking tourism. Recognising these competences is crucial for understanding and enhancing the current state of biking tourism in Vildmarksriket, and several strategies and ideas for how to enhance competences and promote sustainable biking tourism were presented by the interviewees.

Among tourists, competences related to biking practices and sustainable biking tourism in the area, apart from the presumed competence of how to ride a bike safely, were mentioned by most interviewees and related to both environmental and social aspects. Firstly, the local resident interviewee considered navigation skills and trail awareness to be important competences for tourists to have to be able to choose trails suitable for their skill levels and preferences, and thereby safely practice biking. However, the resident recognised a lack of information dissemination about biking trails, such as their locations, difficulty levels, terrain types, and lengths. To increase these competences, the resident interviewee suggested introducing a navigation app that would provide accurate and accessible information about the different trails of the visited area. Further, they suggested the involvement of local people to engage in guiding services, which would include providing tourists with knowledge on how to choose appropriate trails and educating them on sustainable trail use. However, this would require engaged local people to both have the skills to guide tourists as well as proper knowledge about the trails and the practice of sustainable biking, which could need to be acquired from e.g. training programs.

Secondly, interviewees expressed environmental concerns about the impact of biking activities on natural habitats and stated the need for tourists to be aware of environmental conservation practices to minimize environmental damage. The resident interviewee considered competence

about nature an important element of practising sustainable biking tourism in the area, including knowledge about wildlife habitats and conservation areas, and even safety protocols if encountering wildlife. Similarly, the forest owner interviewee expressed concerns about increased littering related to increased nature tourism. For this, the resident interviewee suggested providing information about environmental conservation practices that could favor the practices of sustainable biking tourism, such as trail etiquette and other competences that would minimize environmental damage.

Lastly, biking trails often are located on land consisting of several separately owned terrestrial areas, and thereby involve multiple landowners operating within respective areas. This was brought up as a concern by the forest owner interviewee who recognized several problems associated with increased biking tourism, such as trespassing and disturbance of ongoing activities, e.g. hunting and forest industry. To deflect these potential issues, they stated the importance for visitors and biking practitioners to acquire knowledge about, and be attentive to, the regulations governing the visited area (including the boundaries of Allemansrätten, see 4.4.2. Allemansrätten), such as landowners' rights and the different activities taking place in the area. The forest owner specifically emphasized the importance of respecting the natural environment and the activities that take place within it. The employees from Vansbro municipality further addressed this by stating the need to educate guests, i.e. tourists, visiting Vildmarksriket about these matters – something they state not to be doing today.

Further, important competences for local tourist businesses and landowners to have for integrating sustainable activities were considered by the local forest owner to be communication and collaboration skills for engaging with other tourism businesses and land owners, knowledge of landowners' rights, current agreements for access to roads and land, and a common understanding of the need to protect nature and not disturb activities such as hunting and forestry industry.

Here, municipalities and local authorities play a key role in enhancing such competences by acting as coordinators and facilitators for communication and collaboration among stakeholders. The Vansbro municipality employees directly involved with the Vildmarksriket project particularly stated that, as a municipality, they have a major responsibility in coordinating landowners' collaboration, e.g. when developing contracts and agreements with landowners for trail access and maintenance. However, according to one of the Vansbro municipality employees, the most crucial factor for achieving this is to “find the right people to work on the project”, implying that those municipal employees, and other influential stakeholders, involved with the project need to have sufficient communication and collaboration skills for engaging with the different stakeholders. Also, they stated the importance of increasing awareness among stakeholders (businesses, landowners, etc.) about the current efforts for increasing sustainable nature tourism to make the Vildmarksriket project effective, e.g. by inviting them to meetings about the project.

Cooperation and conflict

Several interviewees expressed concerns about cooperation within the project, mostly concerns regarding cooperation with landowners. One interviewee expressed concerns about conflicts arising with landowners in the future when trying to establish new trails. Another interviewee emphasized the importance of good communication for cooperation to work smoothly and suggested establishing a forum or a platform for discussions between different stakeholders, allowing for discussion about challenges and opportunities of nature tourism, regarding both conservation and economic interests, especially in areas where multiple landowners are involved. The interviewees from Vansbro municipality suggested it might be their responsibility to create and coordinate such a forum.

Responsibility and ownership

Another conflict that was mentioned frequently was that of ownership and responsibility of the trails in the project area.

“People have walked that trail for hundreds of years, and now it’s different landowners and no one owns the trail” – Interviewee at Vansbro municipality.

In Vansbro local sports clubs are tasked with maintaining the trails, but the municipality stated that the responsibility of funding the trails lies with them. However, their answer to the question of whether the responsibility of maintenance lay with them was no. They explained that, here, they saw a difference between themselves and the other two municipalities in the way that the other two have leisure management in the municipality. This means that they have people hired whose sole responsibility is working with the trails. Therefore, they speculated that the other municipalities might answer 'yes' to the question while Vansbro municipality answers 'no'.

There was a clear worry expressed around the question of the ownership of the trails; when development starts on the trails and decisions need to be made, someone needs to own them. A lot of this hesitance seemed to stem from the same reason for several of the interviewees: Allemansrätten.

Allemansrätten

Allemansrätten is a right in Sweden based on shared responsibility, and its purpose is to ensure everyone's right to access nature, including areas that are privately owned (Naturvårdsverket, 2024). It therefore creates a big question when developing nature tourism about what you're allowed to charge for. And who is allowed to charge, depending on what? The interviewees from Vansbro mentioned this as a big concern for them and as something that needs to be discussed and decided about on a nationwide level.

Allemansrätten entails both rights and obligations when visiting nature (Naturvårdsverket, 2024). However, the interviewees from Vansbro municipality mentioned that their experience was that most people only talk about and know their rights, not their obligations. The

interviewees saw this as a concern and something that they would need to plan to educate their guests about to keep nature tourism sustainable. The debate on Allemansrätten shows a clear connection to the competences of biking practices.

Conclusion

- The meanings associated with sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket brought up by the interviewees include respect for nature, use of existing infrastructure, sustainable journey and avoidance of unsustainable practices. Furthermore, balancing the different needs of different stakeholders is seen as essential.
- A biking culture with existing infrastructure and events is present in Vildmarksriket. The question of which kind of biking tourism to focus on is a key point to be debated.
- The issue of potential conflicts shows how biking activities overlap with other activities and user groups (e.g. other leisure activities but also forestry, hunting, and landowner interests) and the societal concern to preserve natural resources and maintain harmonious interaction among visitors. In addition, it indicates a strong need for tourist education and information, where a connection to other facets of biking practices (competences, materials) can be drawn.
- Several interviewees expressed that the question about ownership of the trails was a big issue. A lot of these issues seemed to stem from questions regarding how to relate to Allemansrätten.
- Even though the existing biking sector has some resources, stakeholders who are engaged with this sector believe in the need for more resources like basic infrastructures, trail development, accommodations, parking facilities and sustainable biking tourism.
- There is a need for a project on Vildmarksriket to enhance resources. This can be accomplished by looking for potential sponsorships to boost the resources needed for sustainable biking tourism.
- Regarding competences, having a multi-pronged approach for enhancing the requisite skills and knowledge across various stakeholder groups, including tourists, emerges as a critical factor for the successful development of sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket. The interviewees highlighted various competences for sustainable biking tourism practices related to both environmental and social aspects and presented potential strategies for enhancing them, such as a navigation app providing information about the different trails of the visited area – which we suggest could include information about environmental conservation practices for minimizing environmental impact of biking as well – as well as guiding services provided by engaged local residents. However, additional initiatives are required to educate visitors on the regulations and activities in the visited areas, as well as training programs for guiding.
- Further, communication and collaboration skills among stakeholders are seen as imperative, and municipalities have to coordinate collaboration among stakeholders and raise awareness about sustainable tourism initiatives within Vildmarksriket, the success of which ultimately depends on the engagement of knowledgeable and skilled

individuals dedicated to the project's objectives. Moving forward, enhancing these competences among tourists and stakeholders, supported by coordinated efforts from municipalities and local authorities, emerges as a priority for realizing the vision of sustainable biking tourism in Vildmarksriket and ensuring its long-term success.

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Group 6: When in Vildmarksriket...

Understanding the existing and shaping the emerging practices to utilize ecosystem services in the wilderness kingdom of Dalarna

Group members: Jasmijn Godding, Julia Jakobsson, Maria Johansson, Yu-Han Teng, Viranga Darshana Dahanayake

Introduction and background

For this report we have, in collaboration with project Vildmarksriket, conducted a case study investigating the possibilities and limitations of ecotourism in Vildmarksriket. Ecotourism is defined as tourism in natural areas or nature that does not hurt the environment or locals in a touristic area (TIES 2015). To better understand how to avoid harm to nature and local communities, we utilize the framework of Social Practice Theory (SPT). Learning about the practices of the locals to analyze what tourists should (not) do.

Vildmarksriket is located in Dalarna, Sweden, and is an area shared by the municipalities Mora, Leksand, and Vansbro. The area has a varied natural landscape with diverse wildlife, making it a suitable destination for outdoor activities, such as hiking, skiing, fishing, etc. (El Soudi, 2023). These outdoor activities are part of what makes Vildmarksriket a popular tourist destination and a place that holds a lot of potential for developing ecotourism. Such potential is currently being mapped out in project Vildmarksriket, where local businesses, municipalities, and SLU work together to develop the area and attract more tourists, aiming to increase the area's development and economy.

In this study we consider the nature of Vildmarksriket to be a so-called 'ecosystem service'. ES's are defined as how an ecosystem can contribute to human well-being (Rüdisser et al., 2020). This highlights the reliance of humans on the environment and nature. Among these services, nonmaterial and intangible benefits are usually categorized as cultural ecosystem services. (Hegedűs et al., 2021). We argue that leveraging cultural ecosystem services can enhance ecotourism development by offering cognitive, emotional and mental benefits that maximize human well-being (Hegedűs et al., 2021).

We are specifically interested in the ecosystem services Vildmarksriket offers for hiking, biking, and equestrianism. We focus on these activities because they take place on the same trails in the same seasons, thus increasing the use of the Vildmarksriket ecosystem services. Previous research has found that multiple use and increased stress on trails can damage both nature, by harming the trails and their surroundings (wilderness.net, n.d.), and communities, by causing conflicts between users of the trails (Moore, 1994). We approach our research through interviews with local practitioners of these activities. To increase the chances that our interviewees use the same trails and to narrow the scope of who to interview we focus on one

area within Vildmarksriket, namely the island Sollerön. It is part of Mora municipality, situated in lake Siljan with an open landscape which lends itself well to the selected activities (Dalana.nu, n.d.; Solleron.se, n.d.). To develop ecotourism on Sollerön, but also the wider Vildmarksriket area, we hope to learn from, and build on the ways in which local practitioners of hiking, biking and equestrianism interact with nature and each other.

Aim and research questions

The aim of our research is to investigate how existing practices by the local population that utilizes the ecosystem services of Vildmarksriket can help shape emerging eco-tourism in the area. To get a more nuanced view on the different elements of this aim, we developed three sub-questions. Firstly, we want to gain insight into the ecosystem services Sollerön has to offer according to local inhabitants. Secondly, we want to build an understanding of how practitioners of biking, hiking and horseback riding interact with each other and with nature on Sollerön. Finally, we ask what insights the practices of locals on Sollerön can provide for developing practices of ecotourism in the area.

Theoretical framework

We structure our research about the development of ecotourism in Vildmarksriket, specifically concerning the activities of hiking, biking, and equestrianism in Sollerön, around the framework of Social Practice Theory (SPT). SPT became established as a theory in the last decades of the 20th century across various research fields, most notably anthropology and sociology (Rouse, 2007). It understands society as being constituted by different sets of practices that build upon and reinforce one another (Kanarp, 2024; Niccolini, 2017). In doing so, SPT is situated between older, structuralist notions of society, and neo-liberalist notions of individualism, or agency (Niccolini, 2017). SPT does not find its origin in a single social theory or philosophy, meaning that the definitions of its core component, namely practices, can vary per author with no clear theoretical coherence (Kanarp, 2024; Rouse, 2007). As explained, we focus our research on biking, hiking, and equestrianism in Sollerön. These activities can be considered ‘practices’. We combine the views on SPT of two authors, namely Niccolini (2017) (based on Schatzki (2002)) and Shove et al. (2012) to analyze the existing practices of the local population and based on these, formulate recommendations for tourist practices.

According to Niccolini (2017), the definition of practices used by Schatzki (2002) is a popular one. In this definition, practices are considered ‘as open and spatially, temporally dispersed sets of doings and sayings organised by common understandings, teleology (ends and tasks), and rules (Niccolini, 2017, p. 21). An important feature of these practices according to Schatzki (2002) is a certain element of performativity, where the practice turns into a thing of its own, with potential negative effects (Niccolini, 2017). Niccolini (2017) proceeds to build on that notion, arguing that practices only exist as long as they are being reproduced, thus entailing a connection to space and time. Finally, practices not only reproduce themselves, but are also bundled with other practices, and build upon another (Schatzki, 2002, in: Niccolini, 2017).

These ideas form a crucial inspiration for the development and analysis of our research of ecotourism in Vildmarksriket. Locals in the area have their own, established practices relating to nature. As tourism in the area is going to increase, new practices will emerge. We argue that these new practices are likely to build on existing practices in the Vildmarksriket area, as well as existing practices by the tourists that go there. The combination of existing practices in Vildmarksriket, existing practices by tourists, and the developing practices by tourists in Vildmarksriket can be considered one of the practice bundles that Schatzki (2002) refers to. Now, based on our interactions with Projekt Vildmarksriket, we can state that current practices in Vildmarksriket are not explicitly harmful to nature or the local community. However, as explained earlier the increased use of the trails by multiple activities could cause problems as tourism grows. In our research, we aim to understand the practices of the local community, to help understand what should be done and what should be avoided, in the building of new practices by tourists. This way, we aim to contribute to a development of the area in an ecotourist manner. Moreover, we take into account Niccolini's (2017) argument about practices being bound to space and time, by focusing our research on one area within the larger Vildmarksriket Projekt, namely the island Sollerön. We expect that this will make it more likely that we can find similarities and differences between the practices of biking, hiking and horseback riding, for example about which trails are being used, thereby enabling us to formulate more specific, relevant recommendations.

Whilst Niccolini (2017) focuses on how practices interact with each other, Shove et al. (2012) provide a framework about what constitutes practices, arguing they are 'defined by interdependent relations between materials, competences and meanings' (Shove et al, 2012, p. 24 in: Kanarp, 2024). Figure 1 shows a simple diagram, created by Spotswood et al. (2015), describing a practice according to Shove et al. (2012). We use the framework of materials, meanings and competences to structure our interviews with people practicing biking, hiking and equestrianism on Sollerön. This provides insights about where the practices differ and overlap, in turn helping us formulate what tourists should (not) do. A useful addition to this framework is provided by Webb and Tarleton (2018), who argue that a practice can be reshaped to become more inclusive by shifting matters around between meanings, competences and materials. We use this assumption in our research to see if differences between the practices of locals compared to tourists could perhaps be made up for by adding or changing some things in meanings, competences and materials of ecotourism.

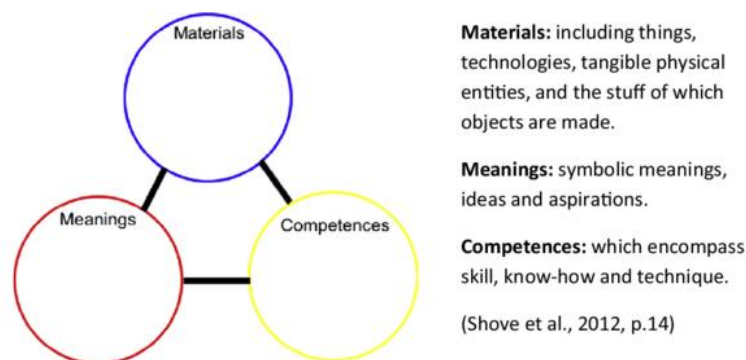


Figure 1: Meanings, materials and competences illustrated by Spotswood et al., 2015)

Materials and methods

At the start of the project, we gathered information by reviewing grey literature concerning Vildmarksriket and surrounding areas prior to the scheduled visit to the area. This helped in narrowing down the scope of the research. Sollerön was chosen due to the presence of all three activities and the limited area, which meant that the activities would likely be sharing the same space. Consequently, we contacted potential participants through a contact list provided by the course. We selected potential participants either based on their relevant experience in the activities of hiking, biking, and equestrian sports or on their expertise regarding nature in the area. In addition to reaching out via the email template provided by the course, we made a poster with a QR code to reach people who had not been involved in the project previously. We hung up the poster in the supermarket on Sollerön and other public announcement boards. We also spread the QR in relevant Facebook groups to reach a bigger audience.

In order to collect data, we conducted semi-structured interviews lasting 30 minutes to an hour. In this regard, it is important to note that when using SPT, the literature suggests a more embedded, ethnographic approach with observations of practices and longer, more open interviews (MacDonald et al., 2013). However, under the given constraints in time and resources, we deemed semi-structured interviews, combined with brief observations and personal experiences of outdoor life in Sweden appropriate. As a result of the outreach, a total of six semi-structured interviews were carried out, one of which was utilized for contextual information only. Three interviews were held in person, while another three were conducted via Zoom. The interviewees gave consent at the beginning of the interview both for participating in the research and recording their responses. The names of the interviewees were not used in the report due to privacy reasons. Instead, interviewees were referred to through the aspect that makes them relevant for the research (see Appendix A).

We transcribed the interviews first by using AI tools and then proofreading. As all interviews were carried out in English, minimal translation was needed. After this, we coded the interviews by categorizing the transcript into materials, meanings and competences as discussed in Section 3. We also highlighted other relevant contextual information and points of friction in the material due to their relevance for sub-question 3. Finally, findings were summarized according to their relevance to the research questions.

Results and discussion

Sub-question 1: What are the ecosystem services on Sollerön according to locals?

To answer the first research question, key concepts from the interview were linked to ecosystem services. We use the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) to structure the results (see Figure 2). Based on this framework, we created a table showcasing the findings, connecting ES to key concepts found in descriptions of Sollerön (see Table 1).



Figure 2: Cultural Ecosystem Services. (Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005)

Since the interviews focused on specific activities in nature and tourism, recreational values were mentioned in all interviews. Tourism in particular, is seen as important because it allows for the small island to have access to work and services locally. The opportunities for social relations during activities were mentioned by both of the equestrians/hikers and a local hiker/biker. They specified that the culture on Sollerön “invites” people to converse on the trails. This extends beyond the locals, as tourists also tend to interact on the trails according to the local biker/hiker. Additionally, aesthetic and spiritual values of nature were brought up by multiple interviewees, describing Sollerön as calm, remote, and beautiful. The openness of the land was mentioned multiple times especially in connection to outdoor activities, which help upkeep the open trails and agricultural landscape of Sollerön. This was often seen as a positive effect of outdoor activities by practitioners. Finally, locals highlighted the importance of the cultural heritage value of Sollerön. Most local interviewees had a strong familial tie to the island. To them, Sollerön is home, including its nature.

Table 1: Ecosystem services linked with results from interviews.

Ecosystem service based on UN MEA	Key concept(s) found in interview while describing Sollerön
Recreation and ecotourism (livelihood)	Sports activities by locals, Tourism
Aesthetic value	Beauty, Openness of the land
Spiritual value	Calm, Remote
Social relations	Community being brought together by the existence of common paths/nature
Cultural heritage values	Home (multigenerational)

The ES’s present on Sollerön as summarised in Table 1 are relevant for two reasons. Firstly, identifying ES’s informs what should be protected from the perspective of locals when considering the context of ecotourism. It is not only the existence of nature in itself that is imperative to protect, but also the calm and friendly atmosphere on the trails, which make the

island special to its inhabitants. In order to maintain this, it is imperative to recognize unspoken rules, which may be alien to people who arrive from outside the region. This difference between locals and tourists will be further explored in sub-questions 2 and 3. Secondly, the financial aspect of ecosystem services was seen as vitally important for the survival of the island because nature enables the selling of activities to tourists that would not be possible otherwise. Despite not having been a key intention in the beginning of the research, the livelihoods enabled by the ecosystem are noteworthy as they contribute significantly to the lives of Sollerön locals. Examples include how horse driving as a service for tourists requires nature to exist and how nature tourism in the area brings revenue to maintain a supermarket on the island as described by the local biker/hiker.

Sub-question 2: How do practitioners of biking, hiking and horseback riding interact with each other and with nature on Sollerön?

This section explores how locals interact with other practitioners who use the same trails, and how they engage with nature to ensure enjoyment and not cause harm.

We found that demonstrating respect is crucial when interacting with other practitioners, especially since many trails are shared. One example is highlighted in an interview with a local biker, *“If you have multi-use trails, there needs to be an element of respect shown to each user”*. A second example can be distinguished from the interview with one of the equestrians, *“when I am out training young horses, they can sometimes get scared because people are driving by too fast”*. This illustrates how driving speed can significantly impact all users of the paths, and driving slower is regarded as demonstrating friendliness.

Furthermore, locals take measures to avoid inconveniencing other users, as well as damaging the paths, through their equipment and behavior. For example, a local equestrian mentioned, *“So for riding, it's really important that if it's wet, you don't ride on the actual path....So if you do it, people will get pretty upset”*, illustrating how local practitioners exercise caution in selecting paths and using equipment to prevent path damage and conflict. Since animals often accompany these activities, such as horses in horseback riding and dogs brought by hikers and equestrians, both owners and other practitioners remain vigilant to prevent startling animals or others to minimize accident risks.

In addition, certain social norms are crucial in interacting with others. One significant social rule involves engaging in brief conversations when encountering others. As highlighted in the interview with local biking practitioners, *“The tourists also, it's like that like it's invites to stop and interact a few seconds”*, reflects the local culture's emphasis on friendliness. This is even considered an ES of the island, as explained earlier. Another crucial rule is to respect others' space, especially when practitioners are taking a break. As noted by a local equestrian, *“If someone has stopped at a slugboot..., people don't usually stop there”*, this indicates local inclination of not seeking company and maintaining a comfortable distance.

Demonstrating respect is considered vital in interacting with nature. Firstly, local people uphold *allemansrätten*, or the roaming freedom in Sweden, as a principle for engaging with nature. As the Mora ecologist mentioned in the interview “*if you only have the allemansrätten in the back of your mind, you will go far with that*”. This reveals that locals adhere to this concept when interacting with nature. Additionally, minimizing human interference and preserving nature's pristine condition are seen as examples of respecting nature, which encompasses refraining from littering, avoiding leaving empty recreational vehicles in natural areas, or destroying wildlife.

Besides, local natural environment knowledge allows locals to avoid activity-related harm to nature. One example is the adverse impact on wetlands caused by the use of equipment. Locals refrain from riding or biking in wet areas or during early spring to mitigate harm to nature. This is demonstrated by the equestrian, who said, “*I know when the parts in the woods are very wet, I usually don't go there*” Another example is being mindful of local wildlife and natural areas to prevent disrupting nature. The Mora ecologist explained that in Sollerön, there are several naturally valuable areas where frog mating or bird nesting occurs during specific seasons. To avoid negatively impacting these processes, it is essential to be aware of this knowledge and avoid disturbing them.

This exploration underscores the significance of demonstrating respect in interactions, by adhering to social norms when sharing the trails, and by respecting nature. Locals manage to strike a balance between enjoying nature - alone and with others - and ensuring its conservation. Hence, these findings reflect local collective social norms to foster harmonious relationships among activity practitioners and promote responsible engagement with the natural environment. These competencies have become second nature to the locals, but it is not a given that tourists have the same competencies to prevent harm to nature and local communities. Sub-question three explores what can be learned from the practices and relationships of the locals to shape ecotourism. On a final note, we would like to address that the relationships to nature in this section are based on the experiences and knowledge of the interviewees. Further research about the impacts from a biological perspective is required.

Sub-question 3: What insights can the practices of local citizens in Sollerön provide for developing practices of ecotourism in the area?

The most important topic regarding meanings that we found is the difference in meanings of the practices of biking and equestrianism. We touch upon this in sub-question two when discussing the interactions between bikers and equestrians. A local biker as well as a local equestrian and the Mora ecologist identified biking as a sport where one aims for speed, and trains to become better. The local equestrian gave a negative meaning to this, saying “*They're not so eager to adjust or to stop, especially the people that seem to be out doing exercise. They just want like, the fastest time on this trail*”. The local biker also identified this meaning, but in a positive light: “*I want to get better, faster*”.

For equestrianism, we found different meanings that we did not encounter in biking. For example, a local equestrian described activities with horses to mean connecting to the horses; *“to share the bond between the horses”*. Moreover, both equestrians described their activities with horses to be relaxing and calming. With one saying *“the horses don’t judge you, and they like, calm your mind”*. And the other *“I can just feel absolutely free from all expectation, [from] all the stress”*. As explained in sub-question 1, calmness is considered an ES of Sollerön, which should be preserved as tourism increases. The meaning of calmness and connection to the horses may cause friction with the meaning of speed for bikers, which was mentioned by both equestrians, and the Mora ecologist, and was also acknowledged as a risk by the local biker.

Two potential solutions to this friction, were found in the interviews. Firstly, as explained in sub-question 2, the local biker and both local equestrians indicated that it is important for bikers to slow down or even stop completely when they see horses. If tourists are given information about this unwritten rule of the local community, for example through a material such as a sign or a website, they could take it into account and not disturb the horses, their owners (or other animals, such as dogs) when biking. Secondly, both local equestrians, the local cyclist and the Mora ecologist mentioned that the area surrounding Sollerön, specifically Gesundaberget, may lend itself better to fast biking than Sollerön. Again, materials like signs and websites could help clarify which areas of Vildmarksriket are best equipped for what practices. In both cases, in line with the framework by Webb and Tarleton (2018), the local practice can be transformed slightly to fit with ecotourist ideas by making up for the difference in meaning tourists have to locals through additional materials, like signs, a website, information folder, or even guided tours (as recommended by one of the equestrians).

Regarding competences, our main interest lies in how the practitioners of biking, hiking, and equestrianism interact with nature, and which knowledge and skills are needed for this. We found overlap in nature-related competences between the activities, which are discussed in sub-question 2. The most important commonalities in competences relating to nature were correctly understanding and respecting allemansrätten, knowing which trails can be used for which activities at which times, and not leaving trash in nature. These competences seemed intuitive for local practitioners. However, concerns were voiced several times about tourists not sharing them. Regarding Allemansrätten, one of the equestrians noted: *“but I don’t think many people know about the Allemansrätten”* and suggested that *“maybe they need some signs that express what the Allemansrätten means”*. Regarding what paths (not) to take with certain activities and at certain times, the ecologist from Mora explained that *“I don’t think there’s information about the island [Sollerön] itself, about how you need to take care”*. Regarding, the trails, one of the equestrians noted *“a lot of people think, oh well, it’s just a bike it’s not going to destroy anything, but they actually do quite a lot, specially when it’s wet ... so I think information is important”*. As explained in sub-question 2, this relates to respect for nature and other users of the trails. Finally, regarding the importance of cleaning up behind oneself, one of the equestrians noted that infrastructure on the island is limited, something we also noticed ourselves when we visited the island. Locals indicated to keep their trash with them, but as tourism increases, improving infrastructure could be beneficial for people to continue to behave with nature in mind. For interactions between practitioners we thus encounter the same

reasoning as was identified for meanings. Namely, to shift the practices of biking, hiking and equestrianism from locals to tourists, differences in competences can best be made up for by additional materials. Most notably, information about allemansrätten, information about how to take care of the trails and nature, and infrastructure to clean up behind oneself, such as public toilets and trash cans.

Finally, we already discussed the need for more materials several times in this sub-question, but through interviews, it also became apparent which materials can already be found on the island. In all interviews, trails and information signs were mentioned. Moreover, the local village association, whose representative we interviewed, has a website with information about the trails and the ‘Angenmyren’ nature reserve (Sollerö Socken, n.d.). Based on the interviews, no material seems to be lacking on the island for the existing practices of biking, hiking and equestrianism. However, the interviewees did explain that some materials are lacking for tourists. Firstly, one of the equestrians and the local biker explained that bike rental on Sollerön is not possible, meaning locals as well as tourists need their own equipment or go to Mora to access the material. Secondly, the Mora ecologist noted that there is limited information about valuable natural areas and biodiversity. Thirdly, one of the equestrians explained that signs, maps, and online information about the routes that can be taken are limited and often outdated, something we also experienced ourselves when exploring Sollerön. She mentioned that *“I would really appreciate an app or something very simple to hand out to tourists to show them the different trails.”*

Thus, for the emerging practices of tourism on Sollerön, specifically in biking, hiking, and equestrianism, to be shaped in a sustainable manner, the materials on the island need to be improved. In line with Niccolini (2017), the new practices can build on and be bundled with the local practices. The interrelated meanings, competences and materials that make up these practices, as explained by Shove et al. (2012) show where the differences in practices between locals and tourists will most likely occur. Webb and Tarleton’s (2018) writing clarifies how these differences can be solved by shifting matters around between interrelated meanings, competences and materials.

The materials which we suggest to improve are firstly, to put signs on the island, perhaps coupled with a website such as the one of the local village association, which should provide information about how to respect nature, others, and the calmness of the nature; how to take care of the trails; and what allemansrätten entails. Secondly, we suggest icons that show which trails are accessible to which activities. Thirdly, we suggest the development of an app (or use of an existing app such as Naturkartan or Komoot) to show which trails are accessible to which activities. Finally, we suggest setting up training or guided tours for hiking, biking, and equestrianism to teach people the competences and meanings that locals have on the island, and bring in revenues, thus utilising the financial aspect of ES identified in sub-question 1. Regarding the material of bike rental, we believe further research is required. Finally, several interviewees mentioned the lack of public transport, an important material, on Sollerön. If the island wishes to increase visitor numbers, this is important to take into account.

Conclusion

- Six semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate how bikers, hikers and equestrians share space with each other and nature on Sollerön to inform future developments of ecotourism with the Vildmarksriket Projekt.
- Several cultural ecosystem services were identified on Sollerön: recreational value through activities, the calm of nature, social relations from interactions on the path, aesthetic value through the beauty of nature and the open landscape, and cultural heritage values in the form of long familial histories on the island.
- The interviewees highlighted the importance of respect on trails towards other people, animals, and nature. In order to be able to show respect, practitioners sharing space need to have the right competencies.
- Important competencies are knowing when activities can have negative impacts on others and nature, slowing down on bikes when approaching horses, disposing waste correctly, giving space for people when taking breaks, respecting allemansrätten and being friendly towards others on the paths.
- Non-local tourists may not be equipped with these competencies, which can be addressed by providing additional materials, such as signs or guides.
- Recommendations on what materials are needed and how they should be integrated into the practice of ecotourism were explored in sub-question 3.
- Although this report is specific to Sollerön, its findings can be applied to other contexts in Vildmarksriket to inform what is needed for responsible ecotourism, including how non-local practitioners can gain the competencies of respectfully biking, hiking or practising equestrian sports in the area.

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Appendix A: Interviews and the People Referred

Actor	Category
Leksand trail management	Trail management
Sollerö Sockenförening	local village group
Local resident	Local Biking/hiking practitioner
Snickars Brukshästar	equestrian
Local resident	equestrian
Mora ecologist	ecologist

Concluding reflections

Many of the discussions that the students bring up in their reports are topics that are central for the project. Some issues, for example future organization, revenue models, and forms of collaboration, are key issues that the project sets out to investigate. It is therefore not surprising that we do not yet have the final answer to these questions. The target of the project is to engage many actors in thinking together about these issues, so we are able to formulate solutions that many people agree on. The student's interviews and group works have helped us getting this discussion going even more, and added insights on how these discussions can be strengthened.

Several student reports raise that stakeholders hold a broad range of expectations, ideas and visions for what the Vildmarksriket is today, and should be in the future. Some interviewees argued that Vildmarksriket could act as an informational area to show forestry practices, and the ways that tourism and active forestry could be combined. Other student groups discussed how different interviewees put different meaning into the term "sustainable tourism". Some highlighted ecological aspects and the preservation of nature, while other interviewees highlighted the potential for creating economic "win-win" situations where many stakeholders can benefit from the forest. This diversity of ideas and visions for the Vildmarksriket area are important for the project to take into account going forward.

Many student groups also discuss and capture the duality and complexity of collaboration. On the one hand, several interviewees expressed to the students that they want more information, and that they want to be more actively involved in the project. At the same time, other people express that they want to see where the project is going, what the intensions are and how the work will be organized, before coming on board. Different people wish for and hold different expectations in terms of amount of involvement at these early stages of the project. Clear and continuous communication, different ways of being engaged in the project, as well as identifying those who want to take a more active part, is essential. Also, this relates to the organizational decisions and forms. Several interviewees request more clear forms of organization, and that an umbrella organization responsible for the strategic planning of Vildmarksriket is set up. But forming an organization too soon could potentially also risk creating a feeling for others that the project and its goals are already fixed and decided, and not formed in collaboration with the different stakeholders in the area.

However, an umbrella organization of some sort is requested and planned, and will also be important for the physical management of the area. One student group discuss that ownership of the trails is an unclarity that needs to be resolved. Several interviewees requested more clear communication around who owns trails and infrastructure, and thus who is responsible to manage and uphold the quality of the physical infrastructure and the trails. Well-functioning infrastructure as well as management around nature tourism is also a prerequisite to minimize littering, and to design revenue models that all actors can sign up on. The ownership and management of trails and infrastructure is one key question the project sets out to investigate,

and the group works in this report bring important knowledge on how different stakeholders perceive their role, which will be useful in this task.

Lastly, we want to say thank you to the students for your insightful discussions and reflections, and to the interviewees who contributed with your time, your thought and ideas. All of this is useful for the project going forward, and we (the project group around Vildmarksriket) are grateful for the time and thought that has been put into this!